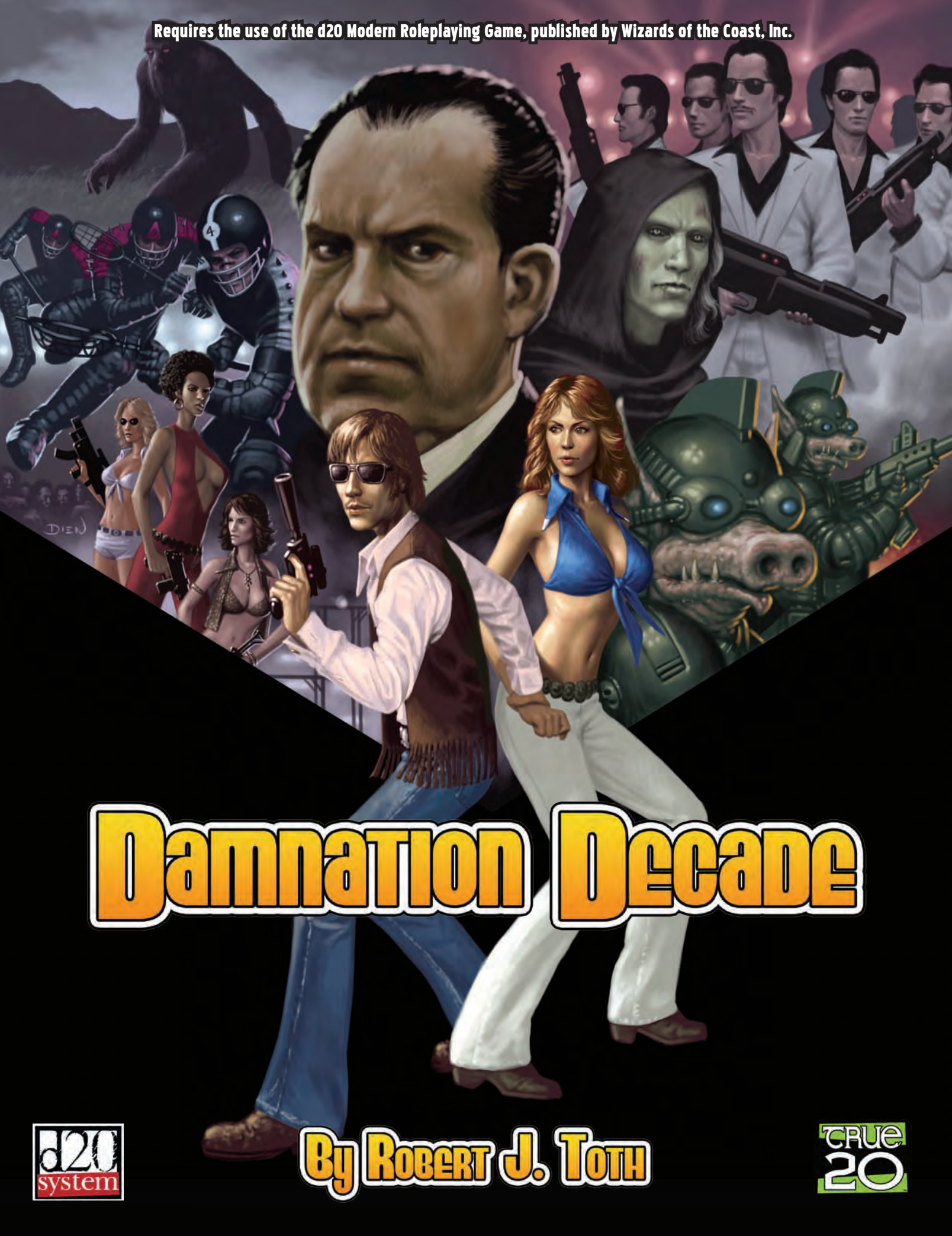


Requires the use of the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game, published by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.



Damnation Decade

By ROBERT J. TOTH



MONDO BELLO TOUR COMPANY

What a beautiful world!

TO: Marketing
FROM: Enver Kotex, Vice President for Sales

Fellas, I know this has been a rough couple of years. Let's face it, most of the planet is either under water or getting invaded or eating its own foot. Who wants to leave the house, let alone go on vacation? And where are they supposed to go if they do? We've got a major rethink ahead of us if we're going to make it through this patch. Let's start with the platinum package: The Pronto Mondo Tour. We need a new way to sell this baby.

...still a lot to do in Fun City and Motor

WELCOME TO THE PRONTO MONDO TOUR!

LOGO
HERE

FRESHER TYPEFACE A

Here at the Mondo Bello Tour Company we know that your vacation time is precious. There's so much to see and so little time. How can you choose just one destination? With our new Pronto Mondo Tour, you can see it all. Go around the world in just 66 days in Mondo Style! Take a look at these amazing highlights and see why we say, "What a beautiful world!"

AMERICO

The first leg of our round-the-world jaunt starts way down south in **Alamo**—Americo's oil capital! They do things big down there, whether it's hats or cattle or barbecue. Loosen that belt buckle before you dig in!

ALAMO PIC NEEDS UPDATE

- ① NEW ANGLE: MILITARY AIR TOURS? WATCH THOSE THINGS TEAR UP TOWNS. ASK LEGAL.
- ② NIX JUNGLE. ALAMO THINGS ARE ALL OVER FORESTS. CANNIBALIZED CUSTOMERS = BAD PUBLICITY. ALSO NIX "FRIENDLY" REVOLUTIONS AREN'T FRIENDLY. GO CABARETS & SIESTAS. CROSS FINGERS
- ③ SCRAP. IT'S GONE. OR SUB TOURS OF FAULT & UNDERWATER "RUINS." AFTER MILITARY CLEANS OUT BLOATED CORPSES. SMELL IS TOO BAD RIGHT NOW.

Now let's swing South of the Border to ② **Suramerico**. See the natural beauty of the rain forests and the spooky ruins of ancient empires, and rub elbows with the friendliest folks around! Next up: a whirlwind look at the **West Coast**. Beaches, vineyards, movie studios, misty ③ afternoons up north—an unforgettable trip through the best country Americo has to offer.

MAYBE PIC OF NEW COASTLINE

- ④ SPACEMEN ABDUCTING HAYSEEDS? PEOPLE RIPPED APART BY KILLER BEES. GREAT. AND CUT "QUAINT VILLAGES"! TOO MUCH BARBED WIRE. THINK "ADVENTURE TOUR." MAYBE "WHAT'S HAUNTING THE HEARTLAND?"
- ⑤ NOW UNDERWATER BOAT TOUR? OCEAN LINER? "EXPLORE THE WORLD'S NEWEST SEA!" HOPE THAT WRECKED SCIENCE SHIP WAS AN ACCIDENT.
- ⑥ MORE WATER BOAT TOURS BETTER HERE. SWAMP BOATS? HOW ABOUT "NATURE EXPEDITIONS"? PEOPLE WANT TO SEE STUFF LIKE THAT 6-LEGGED GATOR THEY FOUND.

Swinging back east, we'll mosey through ④ Americo's Heartland, the **Middle West**. Nothing but quaint little villages and wheat fields as far as the eye can see!

Next we'll take a quick detour to **Stanard**, our ⑤ chilly neighbor to the north. Pack a sweater and sample some of that famous maple-leaf charm!

- ① TOUGH SELL W/ CROOK SROBECK HANGING ONTO POWER. SKIP AVE. IT'S A PROTESTER SHANTYTOWN NOW. "IN TROUBLED TIMES, RENEW YOUR FAITH IN AMERICO" YADDA YADDA. MIGHT WORK DESPITE TANKS.
- ③ TWO WORDS: BOOTHILL 57. SEX + DRUGS + MUSIC = TOURISM \$\$\$.
- SELL HARD: "THE LATEST ADDITION TO THE FAMOUS SKY LINE IS THE HIPPEST DANCE HALL ON THE PLANET" YADDA YADDA. STRIKE SUBWAY REFERENCE - TOO DANGEROUS. KEEP SPORTS. OMEGABALL IS BIG BIG BIG THERE!

GOOD DISTRICT ONE MONUMENT PIC

Orange you glad we're heading south next? You'll be as red and ripe as a piece of fruit by the time you leave **Fontana**'s famous beaches. If you can leave, that is! ⑥

Heading north, we stop and salute in **District One**, the headquarters of the free world. You could spend a lifetime drinking in the history, from the famous Avenue of Heroes to a host of museums and art galleries.

We've saved the best of Americo for last—**Fun City**! See the dazzling metropolis in all its glory—catch a ball game, catch the subway, catch the all-night spirit of this unbeatable town.

[- TOO MUCH WHITE SPACE -]

④ ESPERANTO

Our tour of the Continent begins with the island nation of **Hardcastle**. You'll feel like a king when you see the Royal Palace, or sample the local color at a "pub." It's time for tea, crumpets and fun!

Then we'll cross the Channel and say *Vive le Fleur!* While away the hours at a cozy café, tour the grandest art museums and cathedrals in the world, take a trip to the glorious countryside—and maybe strike up a romance or two. ⑩
Ooo la la!

Just over the border is **Faust**—but forget everything you know. The former center of the ⑪ Fascist movement has changed its warlike ways and become one of the shining stars of Esperanto.

Farther east is **Kronstadt**—and we know what you're thinking! Tour the headquarters of the ⑫ Collectivist Bloc? But Kronstadt hasn't lost its **ESP. RIC ↓ FOOD?**

⑬ PLACE IS A MESS. STRIKES, THE POOR, WEIRD DRESS-UP TEEN GANGS. PLUS, THEY HATE US FOR SPOBECK. STILL, EVERYONE LOVES ROYALTY, RIGHT? AND PLAY UP THAT BIG CLOCK.

⑭ STICK TO THE CITIES TO AVOID "PURITY WALL". 30' OF BLACK STEEL ON TANK TREADS & A MILLION COLLECTIVISTS & GUNS? MAYBE INVASION WILL BE AFTER SUMMER RUSH. MAYBE.

⑮ WRONG SIDE OF PURITY WALL FOR TOURISM. PLUS, STORIES I'VE HEARD WOULD TURN YOUR HAIR WHITE!

old-world charm—come sample its art museums and churches and imperial palaces. (Just make sure your papers are in order!)

MADDAMAR ⑬

Next, we're heading someplace a little warmer—in fact, downright sizzling! **Taza** is a jewel in the desert, home to incomparable historical treasures and the cultural hot spot of the oil-rich region of Maddamar.

MAD PIC ↓ BAZAR?

⑬ PASS. WALL + ARMY + INVASION = PARACHUTE TOURISM. AND ZERO REPEAT BUSINESS.

⑭ REGION IS POISON. OIL CONSORTIUM TAKING OVER, GAS PRICES THROUGH THE ROOF... BAH! PLAY UP EXOTICS: HOOKAHS, CASBAHS, ETC. MENTION THAT MUMMY TOURING THE MUSEUMS.

⑮ AGAIN: LOSE THE OIL. THIS IS CONSORTIUM HQ. THE NUTJOB IN CHARGE KEEPS TALKING PROPHECY & WORLD CONQUEST. I NEED THAT ON VACATION?

Next stop: **Cartagh**, where you'll find yourself between the glorious deserts and the deep blue sea! See the fortresses from the old religious wars, walk the dusty streets—and check out the glittering capital city that oil built! ⑭

Rounding out our tour of the desert is **Aleph**. ⑮ Visit the holy city of Tasmadar, see all the places you've read about in scripture, and leave feeling a little more spiritual than before.

⑮ STRICKY. SECURITY HIGH WITH CAPT NUTSO AT CONSORTIUM. WANTS TO BLOW AWAY ALEPH. GO W/ RELIGIOUS - "RESILIENCE & HUMOR OF ALEPHITE PEOPLE" YADDA YADDA. EVERYONE SIGNS WAIVERS!

⑯ DO THEY ("SPHERE" NOW) EVEN ALLOW TOURISM SINCE THEY STARTED INVADING? IF SO, PLAY UP SCENERY & THAT BIG WALL. "DON'T WORRY—ONLY KEEPS BARBARIANS OUT!" ⑰ PLACE IS HELL SINCE TANK INVASION. PLUS, MOST SMALL ISLANDS UNDER WATER SINCE TIDAL WAVE. AND EDEU ATOL IS BOOKED FOR 20+ YRS. WISHES?

SINA

SINA PIC & STUMPED HERE

Last but not least, we head to the mysterious Orient! We begin our tour with the ancient empire of **Tang**. You'll marvel at its centuries-old shrines and gardens—and the Great Barrier will take your breath away!

Hiko has put its Fascist past aside to become a jewel of an island. Tour its all-night cities, sample its elegant cuisine and lose yourself in the bustle of the culture! ⑰

NICE, BUT WHERE IS CONTACT INFO?!!
Make the New Decade Mondo Fun!

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Damnation Decade

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**This game is dedicated to Walker Percy, my hero, Nancy Fitzsimmons,
my inspiration, and Henry, who put the lime in the coconut.**

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The Fabulous Introduction: and the Damned

Welcome to 1976. The nation's finest and foxiest are shimmying into discos and singles bars, snorting disco dust off mirrors and bumping their booties to earthshaking bass lines. Turtlenecked suburbanites spend their afternoons in group therapy and their evenings with the spouse next door—sometimes both of them. You'll find a lava lamp on every desk, a muscle car in every garage and a pet rock in every pocket.

But don't let the funky facade fool you. This isn't the year you remember. While the United States of Americo gets its bicentennial groove on, the foundations of the world are starting to crack—and unearthly forces are slipping in through the fissures.

The temperature is soaring. The ice caps are shearing apart, flooding the coastlines and wrecking the weather. Droughts and acid rain are turning farmland to ashes, leaving millions hungry and restless. The oil wells are down to their last drop. Even the bees are getting angry—and organized.

And that's just the respectable bad news. Tabloids and trashy television shows—the only outlets that seem to be paying attention—are filled with off-the-wall stories that get more plausible each passing day. Saucers swooping out of the midnight sky to snatch people from their beds. Hulking man-apes stomping through the deep forests on outsize feet. Dinosaurs haunting the nation's lakes. Devils forcing their way into people's heads—and turning them into monsters.

What the hell happened? Nobody who knows the truth is telling. But it all seemed to start two years ago—on August 9, 1974.

President Stanton Spobeck's dirty tricks had finally caught up with him, and he was about to resign before he could get booted from office in disgrace. Then a once-in-an-epoch earthquake snapped off the West Coast of Americo and plunged it into the ocean. Spobeck stayed in office in the interest of national stability, promising to face the music once the crisis was over (wink wink).

But over the next two years things just kept getting worse. The environment tanked. The monsters (or whatever they are) came out of the closet. And Spobeck put the entire Southwest of Americo under martial law. He claimed the area had been contaminated and was facing dangerous aftershocks from the quake. But everybody knows he's trying to keep something trapped in there. You can't turn on the news without seeing elliptical reports of massacres and riots across the farm belt. Something big and hungry is on the hunt. But what woke it up? And what does it want?

Nobody is taking this well. Americo's cold war enemies are striking while the country is distracted, sending invasion forces across their borders and gobbling up huge chunks of the free world. And of course, back at home, the nation is partying in deep denial, shaking their moneymakers in lavish BootyDome dance halls or cheering along to Omegaball, the blood sport that has become the fastest-growing pastime in the world. Others have taken refuge in secular cults promising everything from a peek at your past lives to a ticket on an ancient astronaut's flying saucer.

Just about the only people who aren't partying up a storm or making a power grab are you and your team of adventurous friends. Why? You know something everybody else doesn't. According to the prophecies of an obscure sixteenth-century

mystic named Abednego Trestle, the world as we know it is going to end at the stroke of midnight on December 31, 1979—unless someone does something to stop it.

That's your job. Welcome to *Damnation Decade*.

Inspiration Information

This game takes place in the same tragic universe as depicted in films like *Soylent Green*, *Rollerball* and *The Omega Man*: a world with a wrecked ecology and shattered polity, spiraling toward oblivion as its oceans bubble, disease turns people into zombies and powerful inhuman forces gather their strength for one mighty strike against mankind. But there's a key difference.

The great sci-fi movies of the 1970s show us a host of different tomorrows, but they all have one thing in common: the world as we know it has ended. The powers that were botched things up—whether through pollution or social injustice or atomic holocaust—and new ones have stepped in to restore order and remake the planet in their own image.

The lights go down, and we find ourselves in a time where our monuments are in ruins, our customs are forgotten, and alien forces are firmly in control. Supercomputers kill us when we turn thirty. Corporations buy and sell our souls, or mulch us into protein crackers. Fascist chimpanzees hose us down and herd us into zoos.

Actually, all these movies have two things in common. Not only has the world gone wrong, but anyone who challenges the status quo is doomed to fail. The planet is too wrecked for salvage, and the bad guys are too powerful to be overthrown. The most that the good guys can hope for is dying with a big, iconic gesture—flipping off the system before they make their fatal escape.

So how is *Damnation Decade* different? Simple. You can win.

The game gives you a fighting chance to battle off the bad guys—by turning back the clock. *Damnation Decade* doesn't take place in a postapocalyptic world of domes, robots and jewels in the palm. Instead, you're adventuring during the age of cataclysms that brings the corporations, chimpanzees or supercomputers to power. You'll follow the clues the bad guys leave as they begin their shadowy rise to world domination, figure out their hidden goals—and battle them into submission before they put their boot on the face of the human race.

This book is divided into two sections: **We Can Be Heroes** and **Principalities and Powers**. The first of these, aimed at players, offers a more detailed look at the game world, as well as new starting occupations, advanced classes, skills, feats and equipment. The second section, designed for GMs, includes background on the enemies your players will be facing and dozens of adventure hooks for bringing them into your campaign—as well as a look at how to defeat them and stop the doomsday clock. Players be warned: if you read all of that stuff, you'll spoil the game's mysteries!



The Players' Section: We Can Be Heroes

Undoubtedly something is about to happen.
Or is it that something has stopped happening?
Is it that God has at last removed his blessing from the
U.S.A. and what we feel now is just the clank of the old
historical machinery, the sudden jerking ahead of the
roller coaster cars as the chain catches hold and carries us
back into history with its ordinary catastrophes, carries
us out and up toward the brink from that felicitous and
privileged siding where even unbelievers admitted that
if it was not God who had blessed the U.S.A., then at least
some great good luck had befallen us, and that now the
blessing or the luck is over, the machinery clanks, the
chain catches hold, and the cars jerk forward?

—Walker Percy, *Love in the Ruins*

The Ice Age is coming, the sun's zooming in
Engines stop running, the wheat is growing thin
A nuclear error—but I have no fear
'Cause London is drowning, and I—I live by the river

—The Clash, "London Calling"

—The Clash, “London Calling”

Chapter One: The Day the Music Died

For centuries, events in the *Damnation Decade* world closely mirrored our own. History saw the same parade of pharaohs and madmen, revolutionaries and zealots; nurtured the same physics, faiths and arts; suffered through the same plagues and crusades. You wouldn't recognize the names, and you'd squint at the faces, but within a sentence you'd know the stories.

Then, on August 9, 1974, history took a sharp turn. An earthquake of incalculable strength struck the West Coast of Americo, rending the edge of the continent and sending it into the Elatic Ocean. The aftershocks hurled tidal waves thousands of miles to the west, swallowing archipelagoes and swamping coastlines.

Millions lost their lives, but there wasn't time to mourn. Seconds after the quake, scientists picked up huge spikes in the ambient temperature worldwide. Within hours, the polar ice caps began to shear apart and the oceans rose. This played havoc with weather systems, plunging tropical areas into permanent monsoon seasons and reducing huge swaths of northern farmland to dust.

Just as the climate was going haywire, nuclear power plants around the world began to melt down, poisoning the surrounding environment for hundreds of miles. The pollution quickly seeped into the ground water, or got drawn into the sky as acid rain, and spread the devastation even further. It seemed like things couldn't get worse. But then, as cities or even whole countries were struggling for ways to restore power, the price of energy went through the roof.

Why? On August 9, when the sky started falling, revolutionary strongman Fedo Malese saw an opportunity. With a series of lightning invasions and arm-twisting diplomacy, he seized control of the Consortium oil syndicate and turned the cartel from a commercial confederation into a political one: a millennial empire, with himself at the head, stretching across the desert lands of Maddamar. Then he announced a round of devastating price hikes that would empty treasuries across the world.

Everyone knows why Malese needs the money: the oil is drying up, and his long-oppressed people will revolt if the petrodollars run out. And it doesn't take a genius to realize that he's building a war chest for an invasion of Aleph, the nearby nation whose people have a tangled cultural and religious history with the Maddamarans. The Consortium nations have laid siege to Aleph before, and have been repulsed in humiliating routs. But this time Malese seems to have something up his sleeve—and he's definitely lunatic enough to push the world to the brink of nuclear war to get what he wants.

The Maddamaran wasn't the only dictator to take advantage of Americo's distraction on August 9. Most ruthless was Gogol Yobar, president-for-life of the collectivist empire known as the Bloc, and Americo's archenemy in a decades-long cold war. Ignoring the devastation his own people had suffered on the fateful August day, Yobar launched a drive deep into Esperanto—the birthplace of Western civilization and currently a cold war chessboard—and across the snowy deserts of Sina to his east. Leading his onslaught was the Purity Wall: a four-foot-thick barrier of black iron advancing on tank treads.

At the same time, Yobar's ostensible ally Dao Hong was making power grabs of his own. Hong, Beloved Chief Executive of the Sphere, a sprawling collectivist state that dominates the Far Eastern continent of Sina, quickly snapped up the democracies off his coast, the commercial powerhouses to his south and the divided nation to his north. Now Hong, like Gogol Yobar, has set his sights on a tiny country that has already seen more than its share of bloody intrigue: Mango.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the collectivist powers had backed the northern half of the country in a brutal campaign against the West-leaning south. Americo met this cold war challenge with gaffes and half-measures, and eventually abandoned the conflict in the face of mounting public opposition. Then the punishing tidal waves of August 9 exposed deep oil fields off Mango's coast, on the southeastern tip of Sina. Now, with oil drying up everywhere else, the collectivists are planning to kick out their puppet regime and invade Mango outright for its fuel supplies—and are openly daring Americo to do something about it.

Why hasn't the country responded firmly to these challenges? Americo has its hands full with political mischief—and incomprehensible horrors.

On August 9, 1974, President Stanton Morango Spobeck was preparing to announce his resignation to the world. Months earlier, a pair of enterprising reporters had linked Spobeck to a bungled break-in at his opponent's headquarters during the 1972 campaign—a verdict that Congress was just about to endorse. Spobeck's departure—it was widely hoped—would close the book not only on his own troubled presidency but on the social turmoil of the previous decade.

Then came the great quake, and Spobeck tore up his resignation. He made the announcement as smoothly as he'd done anything in his career, promising to face the music at a congressional hearing as soon as the survivors had been rescued and the damage contained. It didn't work. Even as troops and volunteers headed west, protestors flooded the streets and marched on the nation's capital, District One, accusing the president of exploiting the disaster—if not orchestrating it himself.

The angry voices got louder when, just a few days later, Spobeck declared martial law throughout the Southwest. He pointed to a string of unstable nuclear reactors and toxic spills in the area, and the dangers of aftershocks from the quake, but the protestors drew their own conclusions. Another smokescreen, they said—and a first step toward locking down the rest of the country.

But as the weeks wore on, it was obvious that something real—and dangerous—was going on behind the barricades. Something, perhaps, that not even Spobeck could understand or control.

Most ominously, the state of Alamo, which Spobeck's forces had entirely cordoned off, had gone silent. No phone calls, no radio signals, no vehicle traffic. And yet something seemed to



The History Book On The Shelf Is Always Repeating Itself

For the most part, you can assume that anything that happened in our world up to August 9, 1974, also happened in the *Damnation Decade* universe. So you can rely on your knowledge of real-world history and culture as a guide to the back story of this game. At the same time, remember that some people and incidents have been compressed or eliminated in the interest of streamlining—or radically changed to serve a sci-fi storyline.

Also bear in mind that these aren't the 1970s you're used to. Aside from the supernatural horrors—which you'll find out about soon enough—culture and politics have been turned upside down. In the real world, the resignation of a certain widely despised president, and the end of a divisive war, seemed to signal that the upheavals of the 1960s were over and the nation could start to heal. In *Damnation Decade*, the president didn't leave, the war seems to be firing up again, and on top of everything else the world has started falling apart. Not only have the old wounds not closed, they look to be getting even redder and rawer.

Meanwhile, the motives behind the “Me Generation” are radically different. These self-involved pleasure seekers aren't trying to take a break after the punishing cultural conflicts of the 1960s, as in our world. Instead, with the Earth spiraling toward oblivion, they're whistling—better make that hustling—past the graveyard. These days, the only honest answer to “What's your sign?” is “Dead End.”

There will be more guides to the national mood, and recent history, throughout this section. The GM will get his own look at the state of play in part two of the book. If you get overwhelmed by all the new names, see the index at the end of this chapter.

That Other Eden

Americo's staunchest ally in world affairs is Hardcastle, a stout-hearted island state off the Esperantan continent's northwestern coast. It has contributed troops to all of Americo's cold war adventures, and its daring secret service has foiled numerous collectivist plots. But Hardcastle's fighting spirit is in danger of cracking.

Youth gangs in bizarre stylized costumes rule the streets, murdering and raping with impunity. The state's economy is in constant danger of collapse under bloated social-welfare programs and endless labor strikes. Governments are voted out of office seemingly on a monthly basis, and none of them have been able to stop the enervating guerrilla war with the island nation to the west. The public has begun to see Americo as a threat rather than a friend and ally. It doesn't help that the face of Americo is Stanton Spobeck.

Hardcastle's former colonies have come to very different fates. The sprawling Sinan nation of Kish, which freed itself from Hardcastle decades ago, has transformed itself into a centrally planned democracy. Since August 9, Kish has been hard hit by floods, earthquakes and mudslides, and has suffered a terrible loss of life. Moreover, neighboring enemies have used the opportunity to stage forays across the border, raising the specter of all-out war—possibly nuclear.

Off the coast of Tang lies the city-state of Kontan, a thriving commercial empire that was overrun by the Sphere in the wake of the ecological disasters. Hardcastle has lodged numerous formal protests about the capture of its colony, to no avail. Now Hardcastle's government is split over the proper response: a sizable contingent of ministers is trying to persuade Americo to launch a joint invasion to free the island.

Far toward the South Pole lies the vast island nation of Agaland. Since August 9, the country has largely been cut off from the outside world, and in the face of material deprivation many of its people have fallen into savagery. Its sprawling deserts are home to semi-mutated road gangs who extort the surviving communities for gasoline and other essentials. The only thing keeping them in check is a handful of near-superhuman highway patrolmen (“the Bronze Squad”) who tear down the endless blacktop in nitro-burning V8 cruisers.

Meanwhile, melting ice caps have caused untold havoc in Stanard, another former Hardcastle colony that borders Americo to the north. Most of the great nation has been flooded and turned into a vast post-Arctic marshland. Refugees are pouring south, although many have decided to head to Hardcastle.

be spreading outward from there, something silent and sinister. Every night brought reports of National Guardsmen massacred in clashes with unseen enemies—or small towns that had to be rescued from bloodthirsty nocturnal armies—or bands of survivors who would rather kill themselves than tell their stories.

All of that was terrifying enough. But if you believed the stories circulating outside the respectable newspapers and television news programs, the horrors from Alamo were just the beginning. Americo seemed to be facing a rogue's gallery of otherworldly predators.

For instance, the papers said it was the gales of November that sank the *Gordon Lightfoot* and its twenty-six thousand tons of iron ore. But a bunch of local yokels told *Beyond the Barrier With Herman Purvis* that they had seen a long, snaking shadow gliding along the very same lake just hours before the ship went down.

Or consider those campers who got torn apart in the Barrier Mountains: it was bears, no question—if you believe the nightly news. But what about that backwoodsman with stories about giant ape-men hungry for human flesh?

Likewise, respectable scientists insisted the rise in animal attacks on people—killer bees, maniac rats, predatory sharks—was just a statistical blip. But everyone who survived those attacks told the press (or at least the tabloids) that the creatures seemed to have a cunning and malice that was almost human. And it goes without saying that all the lights racing across the rural sky were more than swamp gas and weather balloons. Did those cattle just mutilate themselves?

Most of Americo is ducking those kinds of questions—as well as the general specter of death and devastation—by funking itself into oblivion. Drug sales—illegal and over-the-counter

Living For The City

As you've seen, the whole world is suffering through tough times. You'll have chances to go abroad and help out firsthand, but your meat-and-potatoes adventures will take place in Americo—the locus of paranormal activity on the planet (for reasons you'll discover as you get deeper into your campaign). You and your GM can choose any city you wish as a home base, provided it wasn't washed away in the great quake.

When you're devising the details of your home town, remember: this is a very different country than the one you're used to. Americo's cities are falling apart after years of riots and financial mismanagement. Businesses and middle-class residents are fleeing the urban core. The people who stay behind face a crumbling infrastructure, stratospheric crime levels and indifferent public officials. Meanwhile, in the farmlands, environmental catastrophes and supernatural horrors have turned huge chunks of the Middle West into a war zone, as farmers fight off pollution by day and hideous creatures by night.

alike—are through the roof, and the dance halls are packed every night, especially the new chain of BootyDome franchises. These towering, terraced discotheques are notorious for hosting not only the hottest acts but also scores of drug dealers; sometimes the clubs even spray atomized narcotics down onto the dancers. People who can't get through the velvet ropes occupy themselves with Omegaball, a no-holds-barred version of lacrosse that has captured worldwide attention, and only minor censure, for its unapologetic brutality.

Those with a spiritual bent—and who wouldn't lean that way in dire times?—have mostly abandoned mainstream religion for the easier answers of self-help cults. Hunker Obliterative Processing (HOP) promises to “tell you how to think for yourself” and find fulfillment through radical selfishness. Déjà You will cure what ails you by putting you in touch with your past lives. Man Last teaches you to reject human society and embrace all-nurturing Nature. And the Seed of Sirius will get you in good with the ancient astronauts who taught us everything worth knowing ten thousand years ago.

For Americo, the future looks bleak. Reports of the unexplained seem to be increasing, to the point of becoming an open secret in national conversation. The Bloc and the Sphere are still gaining ground, while Americo remains too distracted to check them—except perhaps in Aleph and Mango, which could easily turn into nuclear flash points. Stanton Spobeck, meanwhile, is up to his old tricks, using abstruse constitutional arguments to justify a run for a third term in office. If he wins, angry protestors may well tear the country apart. If he loses, the nation will be stuck with either Quantrill Biscuit, the Brand X governor of a southern state, or Door Number Three: Humboldt Suede, media magnate and founder of the notorious men's magazine *Bedfellows*, who has mounted an unexpectedly strong independent candidacy.

And then there's Abednego Trestle. This sixteenth-century mystic, who left behind a book of startlingly accurate, if maddeningly hard to decipher, predictions, has correctly called every major event since his death, from world wars to assassinations to royal abdications. But that's nothing compared to what he's predicted will be coming next.

Whether by chance or design, one of bad guys plaguing the planet will bring about the end of the world as we know it on December 31, 1979, at the stroke of midnight. Which one? Trestle isn't clear on the point—which means that even if one faction of malefactors falls down on the job, another might rise to take its place at the doomsday switch.

But Trestle leaves some room for hope. Unlike his other predictions, he says, these visions came swathed in a fog of uncertainty. Trestle has seen a band of righteous heroes who might—just might—be able to take on every last villain in turn and battle them into submission.

It will mean three years of the bloodiest battles in human history, and the heroes will have no margin for error. If they let even one enemy slip through the net, the world is lost. But if they win, they will deliver an epochal body blow to the forces of evil—and drive them into hiding for ages to come.

Sound groovy? Then get to work!

Host Of Horrors



Lean and looming, with tar-black hair and a horsy face, Herman Purvis rose to fame portraying Tanko, the numinous alien counselor on the cult television series *The Sand Puppies*. Now Purvis has traded the blue pajamas of the Extra-Terran Expeditionary Force for a beige blazer, black turtleneck and tight checkered slacks—his uniform of choice for leading viewers *Beyond the Barrier* once a week. In a little under a season's worth of shows, Purvis has given audiences a glimpse of lost continents, lake monsters and size twenty-five footprints. For a team of adventurers battling the unseen enemies of mankind, Purvis's program is a solid—if not always reliable—roadmap to the unknown.

We Interrupt This Game to Bring You A Brief Public-Service Announcement

“Social commentary” ruins our evening when we’re roleplaying, and sends us running for the hills in real life. So we’ve tried to keep it out of *Damnation Decade* as much as possible. That said, you can’t make a reasonably accurate game about the 1970s—even a fantasy version of the 1970s—without bumping up against sex, race, drugs, religion...all that fun stuff.

Wherever possible, this game leaves the hot-potato issues up to you. In some cases, we have included basic rules or character classes that address these delicate areas, but you can easily modify them or leave them out of your campaign if they’re not to your taste. On the other hand, you could crank the controversy up to eleven and run the gonzo game to end all gonzo games. It’s our view that those matters are generally best handled with old-fashioned storytelling and roleplaying, not skills and feats.

Here’s a closer look at some of the most radioactive topics.

- **Sex:** Like many of the revolutions of the sixties, sexual liberation spent the seventies going mainstream. Gender roles were demolished as free love got commodified and the women’s movement spread. Gay people stepped out of the shadows to demand dignity and acceptance in public life. Divorces and abortions soared.

This game uses the sexual revolution and its aftermath as a backdrop for otherworldly mischief, and introduces a handful of rules related to sex. But in general it’s not a centerpiece of the game world. You can sidestep this area entirely if you wish, and

it won’t affect your campaign. (While we’re on the subject, *Damnation Decade* is gender-neutral: men and women are considered equal in all practical matters, and no occupations are off-limits to either sex.)

- **Drugs:** Likewise, the hyperactive drug use of the seventies—both illicit snorts in nightclubs and doctor-prescribed mood-bending—ends up as a focal point for some of the supernatural malefaction. Along those lines, we include a few rules for figuring the effects of drugs on characters’ abilities. But, once again, you can largely move the subject offstage without damaging your campaign.
- **Race:** *Damnation Decade* is officially color-blind—unlike the world at large in the 1970s. The integrationist movement had collapsed under the weight of assassinations, widespread ill will and a new generation of radicals who didn’t want to submerge their ethnic identity. Instead, they elevated it to a point of pride and in some cases defined themselves by it.

Simply put, we’re not going to go there. Game mechanics are too blunt an instrument to handle a delicate issue like race. In our view, the subject is best treated like any other aspect of character background: if you want to be Shaft, write the name on your character sheet and roleplay the hell out of it.

- **Religion:** This game makes a lot of hay out of the decline of traditional religion in the seventies and the rise of kooky do-it-yourself mysticism (not to mention demonic possession and exorcism). That said, we try to be as nonsectarian as possible. The deity is referred to as “the Old God” throughout, not only to highlight how antique mainline belief felt back then, but to avoid using a name traditionally associated with one religion or another.

Moreover, the game assumes that all religions worship the same Old God, and that any conflicts and doctrinal differences arise from varying interpretations of the same basic beliefs. Obviously, in the real world, that’s not true, and to many believers it’s an appallingly offensive notion. For game purposes, it’s the simplest way to deal with endlessly sensitive issues. If you think your campaign would benefit from a more naturalistic approach to religion, feel free to fill in details as you see fit.

Along those lines, it’s also up to the GM and players to invent the Old God’s doctrines. But don’t just dress up prevailing mores in spiritual language. Remember the state of the world: people in the Western world are abandoning mainstream churches to worship at the altar of Me—while believers in collectivist states are putting their lives on the line to keep the faith in secret ceremonies behind closed doors. Something about the Old God’s message must offer a rebuke to the self-absorbed and hope to the afflicted. So no easy answers! That’s what UFO cults are for.

- **Foreign Affairs:** The seventies offered little hope for an end to the cold war. At best we got détente, which locked the big players into a permanent standoff—at worst, realpolitik, which turned the rest of the world into a chessboard. Millions died in purges and proxy wars; millions more became refugees.

Unlike many of the other touchy topics in this section, there’s not much room for improvisation here. The cold war makes up a huge part of *Damnation Decade*’s back story, and casts a

The Man Who Saw Tomorrow

Physician, astrologer and court seer Abednego Trestle was a leading light in his own time—but lay forgotten for centuries after his death in 1566. Only now, with the world cracking to pieces, have scholars rediscovered the great man’s urgent omens.

Translating Trestle is a bear of a business. He wrote in elliptical quatrains and jumped among his native tongue and at least three other languages. So far, the “Trestle Project”—a team of translators working at Fun City University—has worked through only several hundred pages of the thousands Trestle left behind.

Trestle’s complete works are broadly available in the original, and translations can easily be found for the period ending around 1945. To translate Trestle yourself, you will need the Speak Language skill for all the dialects he used—Tota, the ritual language of a huge sect of Old God worshipers; the medieval versions of Trestle’s native tongue, Fleurese, and Faustlander; and ancient Alephite. (The modern versions of these languages won’t do the trick.) From there, you will need to make a DC 30 Decipher Script check for each quatrain.

Do you need to load up on all those skills to play the game? No. In most cases, your GM will create a character who serves as your introduction to Trestle (such as a patron or a contact in the Trestle Project) and feeds you prophetic clues at critical points in the campaign.

long shadow over its future. You can certainly push the political intrigue offstage, but dropping it entirely—or redefining who the bad guys and good guys are—would radically change the game.

We realize that people will be arguing about the cold war until the world really does come to an end, and that the Goldwater and the McGovern crowds alike will find lots to gripe about in these pages. We paint with a very broad brush in the interest of space, coherence and playability. Some big names on both sides of the political spectrum end up as icons of apocalyptic evil, whether they deserve a wholehearted tarring or not.

We have tried to be as fair as possible, but, ultimately, this isn't a history book. It's a fantasy game, and it needs off-the-wall, black-and-white conflicts as fuel for adventures. In this context you can only play around with shades of gray for so long.

- **The Bottom Line:** Please take *Damnation Decade* in the spirit it was intended: a fond, hopefully entertaining homage to a deadly earnest genre of movies and a generally off-kilter era. It is emphatically not the intention of this game to present a statement, treatise or manifesto—just an excuse to blast bad guys in a funky fantasy world.

Enough caveats! Let's get back to the game.

That's the Name of the Game: Who's Who in Damnation Decade

Aboriginal Nations: The first inhabitants of **Americo**. After August 9, 1974, facing endless sieges by nocturnal horrors, they abandoned their government reservations and moved into **Howe's Chasm**, a vast canyon in the **Southwest**.

Agaland: An island nation near the South Pole and former colony of **Hardcastle**. Agaland lost touch with the outside world after the disasters of August 9, 1974, and by now has largely descended into savagery.

Ahitken I: A god-emperor of ancient **Taza**. An exhibition of treasures from his burial **obelisk** is currently touring **Americo** to great acclaim.

Alamo: A prosperous southwestern state and oil-industry capital that "went dark" on August 9, 1974, cutting off all communications and traffic with the outside world. Currently, president **Stanton Spobeck** has imposed martial law there and cordoned off its borders.

Aleph: A small nation in the vast desert region of **Maddamar**. Its people have a tangled cultural and religious history with the other nations in the region. Aleph's capital is **Tasmadar**, an ancient city with profound spiritual importance to many factions of **Old God** worshippers.

Americo: Your home base. A troubled but still powerful republic in the Western hemisphere. To the north is the nation of **Stanard**, now reduced to a vast post-Arctic marshland; to the south, **Suramerico**.

Arcitan: A tiny Southern **Esperantan** city-state that is home to the **Earthly Father**, spiritual leader of a huge faction of **Old God** worshippers.

Arpad: The first nation to fall to the **Bloc** after the great war against the fascists three decades ago. Known for its spices and crafty inhabitants.

Bando, Mackey: Captain of the championship **Fun City Skyliners Omegaball** team. A swaggering sensualist.

Barrier Mountains: The huge chain that divides the continent of **Americo**.

Basta: A collectivist island off the southeastern coast of **Americo**. Lost to tidal waves and rising oceans on August 9, 1974.

Bedfellows: The notorious men's magazine founded by **Humboldt Suede**. Its icon is the Bedfellow of the Month; its slogan, "Up for Anything!"

Biscuit, Quantrill: The major-party challenger to **Stanton Spobeck** in the presidential race. A soft-spoken, Old-God-fearing man, he is the governor of the prosperous southern state of **Dixon**.

Blatt, Mandrake: A Middle Western senator and **Quantrill Biscuit's** running mate.

Bloc: A collectivist empire centered on the eastern **Esperantan** nation of **Kronstadt**. Its ruler is a dictator named **Gogol Yobar**. On August 9, 1974, the Bloc undertook a massive invasion of

Clients And Allies

Below the world-class cold war powers are numerous unaligned states where Americo is battling the Bloc for influence or outright control. Many of these nations have been cunning enough to realize their importance to the clashing empires and play the sides off each other whenever possible.

With the big exception of Mango, most of the fighting is in Swelt and Suramerico. The former is a vast southern continent, rich in minerals, whose climate ranges from desert to lush jungle. After centuries of exploitation by foreign powers, the people of Swelt are trapped behind ill-considered national boundaries and ruled largely by lunatic kleptocrats who use the power of office to indulge grudges against tribal enemies. Enforced famine and mass murder are tragic facts of life.

Across the Lemuric Ocean is Suramerico, a honeycomb of nations ruled by autocratic strongmen and riddled with rebel movements just as brutal and greedy as the thugs they're trying to overthrow. Suramerico also hosts a large population of Faustlanders, who fled there from Esperanto during the final days of the last great world war. A sizable minority of them are fugitives from war-crimes tribunals.

For Americo, the continent is a vital source of many rapidly vanishing resources. Suramerico's rainforests—dwindling just as fast as Swelt's—contain a wealth of vital medicinal plants and herbs, and its waters are home to many offshore oil wells.

its neighbors in **Esperanto** and **Sina**, and has even greater ambitions.

BootyDome: A chain of towering, terraced dance halls operated by the **Sound & Vision Corporation**. The most famous outlet: the *trés chic* BootyDome 57 in Fun City.

Cartagh: Capital of the **Consortium**. An ancient desert nation on the northern shores of **Swelt**.

Consortium: A league of oil-producing nations in the vast desert region of **Maddamar**. On August 9, 1974, a revolutionary strongman named **Fedo Malese** took control of the group, turning it into a political and commercial empire.

Council of Nations: A diplomatic collective, based in **Fun City**, dedicated to maintaining world order.

Cozy Cola: A tremendously popular soft drink. Get that Cozy feeling—today!

Custer, Bunkham: Shipping magnate and owner of the championship **Fun City Skyliners Omegaball** squad.

Daijong: A stubbornly independent nation that was overrun by the **Sphere** after August 9, 1974.

Dao Hong: Leader of the **Sphere**, a collectivist empire on the Far Eastern continent of **Sina**. A quasi-intellectual thug.

Déjà You: A psychotherapeutic collective that promises to cure your neuroses by putting you in touch with your past lives.

District One: The capital of **Americo**.

Dixon: A prosperous southern state. **Quantrill Biscuit** is its governor. It is also home to the **Hunkerdome**.

Earthly Father: Spiritual leader of a huge faction of Old God worshippers.

Eden Atoll: An archipelago that inspired **Theramin Hunker's** landmark exploration of primitive sexuality, *Coming of Age in Eden Atoll*. It is currently home to **Escobar Savarin's** popular vacation resort.

Ekumen Games: World-class amateur athletic contests, held every four years.

Elastic Ocean: The vast western ocean that separates the continents.

Esperanto: A huge continent in the Eastern hemisphere that is the cradle of Western Civilization. Currently under siege by **Gogol Yobar** and the **Bloc**.

Fascists: The opposition forces in the last great global war, centered in the nations of **Faust** and **Hiko**. Many war criminals escaped to **Suramerico** at the close of the conflict.

Fat, Horselover: Cult science-fiction author. Presumed lost in the great quake of 1974.

Faust: A huge nation in **Esperanto**, and a center of the fascist movement during the last great global war. Currently occupied by **Gogol Yobar's** forces.

Feta, Bellow: **Stanton Spobeck's** original vice president, a seething loudmouth who was forced to resign after a bribery scandal.

Fitzgerald, Edmund: **Stanardian** singer/songwriter, best known for his paean to the lost cargo vessel *The Gordon Lightfoot*.

Fleur: A cultural hub in **Esperanto** and most likely the next target of **Gogol Yobar's** forces as they push west across the continent.

Fontana: The state at the southeastern tip of **Americo**, currently reduced to a vast acid swamp by flooding, pollution and pounding hurricanes.

Fun City: A northeastern metropolis in **Americo**, capital of the nation's art, culture and business. Home to **Humboldt Suede** and his **Sound & Vision** media empire.

El Gordo: A former gambling haven in the desert **Southwest** of **Americo**. Now the nexus of relief efforts on the West Coast.

Gordon Lightfoot: A cargo vessel lost under mysterious circumstances in the **Great Inland Oceans**. Memorialized in a hit song by **Stanardian** folk singer **Edmund Fitzgerald**.

Gort, Fulton: An automobile titan and long-lived curmudgeon. His Gort Motor Corporation is one of the largest employers in **Motor City**.

Gort, LeHigh: **Stanton Spobeck's** vice president. An amiable goof and former college football star. No relation to the auto tycoon.

Gort, Miranda: A granddaughter of the auto titan. Kidnapped by a radical group called the **Kaveat Vendor Alliance** in the spring of 1974 and brainwashed into taking part in robberies and terror attacks.

Great Inland Oceans: Five massive lakes on **Americo's** northern border. After the melting of the ice caps and flooding of **Standard**, the lakes have spread to link the **Elastic** and **Lemuric** oceans.

Guess My Name: An immensely popular game show and a haunt for decrepit mainstream celebrities who survived the great quake of 1974.

Halfway to a Threeway: "Jiggle" comedy involving a single man who pretends to be blind so he can share an apartment with two female lipreaders.

Hardcastle: A plucky democracy off the coast of **Esperanto** and **Americo's** closest ally in the cold war.

HARM: A wildly popular glam rock band that performs in elaborate makeup.

Hewland: A **Middle Western** city on the edge of the **Great Inland Oceans**. Notable for the fire that has been raging on its lake since August 9, 1974.

Hiko: A commercial-powerhouse island nation that was overrun by the **Sphere** shortly after August 9, 1974. Hiko fought on the side of the **fascists** in the last great world war and was decisively walloped for its efforts.

Howe's Chasm: A mammoth canyon in southwestern **Americo**, currently home to the **Aboriginal Nations** and the scene of a standoff between the natives and government forces.

Hunker, Theramin: Legendary social theorist and founder of the **Hunker Obliterative Processing (HOP)** self-help seminars.

Hunker Obliterative Processing (HOP): A series of self-help seminars designed by social guru **Theramin Hunker**. The courses teach radical selfishness and emphasize that there is a "Nil" at the core of human life.

HunkerDome: The headquarters of **Theramin Hunker's Hunker Obliterative Processing (HOP)** seminars. Located in **Dixon**, this glassed-over compound encloses thousands of acres and provides a hermetic environment for Hunker's social experiments.

Jencia: An ancient tribe of wanderers, concentrated in Eastern **Esperanto**.

Kaveat Vendor Alliance: A radical criminal group dedicated to smashing the honky capitalist establishment. They came to national prominence by kidnapping and brainwashing **Miranda Gort**.

The Fortress At The End Of The World

The nation of Aleph lives on a knife edge. It occupies a minuscule sliver of land in Maddamar—smaller than most states in Americo—and has no natural resources but its people. Its neighbors have been at war with Aleph more or less constantly since the nation's founding decades earlier, to settle ancient cultural scores and modern political ones. The Maddamarans have lost every battle, usually in humiliating routs, and Aleph ended up annexing chunks of their territory, and whole communities of their people, as a buffer.

But this time Fedo Malese looks capable and crazy enough to finish the job. The Alephites—who were the focus of the fascist death machine during the last great global war and have been subject to purges and persecutions throughout their history—can read between the lines of Malese's speeches. He wants the holy city of Tasmadar. The ancient site holds profound importance for many factions of religious believers, but the Alephites trace their claim back thousands of years to a covenant with the Old God himself. Of course, no small number of outsiders, including the rest of Maddamar, challenge that account or claim it has been superseded.

A siege will force Aleph to face the ultimate question: Will it use its small stockpile of nuclear weapons against the enemy capitals? The nation restrained itself during the last attempted invasion, but a protracted attack might force it to do the unthinkable. If that happens, the great powers would certainly intervene—and the nuclear conflict could end up going global.

Kirbograd: A coastal nation in northern **Esperanto** that has attracted attention for wildcat strikes against its masters in the **Bloc**. The strikes are led by the country's upstart labor union, the **Lobstermen**.

Kish: A former colony of **Hardcastle**, and currently a hugely populated democracy in **Sina**.

Kontan: A former colony of **Hardcastle**, this island nation and commercial hub was overrun by the **Sphere** shortly after August 9, 1974.

Lemuric Ocean: The stormy eastern ocean that separates the continents.

Leng: The capital of **Tang** and seat of power of the **Sphere**.

Lime Cordial: An immensely popular dance band. Authors of the chart-topper "Love to Baby My Baby."

Lobstermen: A union of dockworkers in **Kirbograd**, a coastal nation in the **Bloc**. They take their name from amphibious heroes of **Esperantan** folklore.

Lomack, H.D.: Bank robber who became a folk hero following his mysterious disappearance on August 9, 1974. Lomack parachuted out of a plane with a suitcase full of loot and vanished into the wilds of the **Southwest**.

Maddamar: A vast, oil-rich desert region in the Eastern hemisphere. The home base of the **Consortium**.

Malese, Fedo: Leader of the **Consortium**. Visionary strongman with millennial pretensions.

Man Last: An environmental group that agitates to save wildlife, stop development and end pollution.

Mango: A peninsular nation on the southeastern tip of **Sina**. The site of a bloody ten-year cold war battle between **Americo**, the **Sphere** and the **Bloc**. The disasters of August 9, 1974, revealed deep oil fields off Mango's coast—possibly leading to a new struggle for control of the tiny nation.

Maxi, Richard: Former glam rocker, currently electronic-music pioneer specializing in menacing atonal sounds.

Middle West: The vast interior of **Americo**, which has been tormented by unearthly forces since August 9, 1974.

Motor City: An industrial city in the northern **Middle West** of **Americo**, home to the nation's top auto manufacturers.

Mudack: Capital of **Kronstadt**, seat of power of the **Bloc**.

Muswife, Maurice T.: Former baseball impresario and founder of the sport of **Omegaball**.

Obelisks of the Elders: Towering burial monuments to the pharaohs of ancient **Taza**.

Obstat, T. Nestor: Long-serving chief of **Americo's** internal intelligence services. He passed away shortly after the tragedies of August 9, 1974.

Old God: The immortal being that created the universe. His stock is on the wane lately.

Omegaball: A brutal blood sport that is fast becoming the most popular pastime in the world.

Pratt, Ethel Ambrose: Secretary and confidant to **Stanton Spobeck**. A key figure in his impeachment hearings.

Purity Wall: A black steel barrier, moving on tank treads, that entirely surrounds **Gogol Yobar's** territory.

Purvis, Herman: A cult television star and lately host of the news-of-the-weird program *Beyond the Barrier With Herman Purvis*.

Savarin, Escobar: A mysterious adventurer who runs a fantasy resort at **Eden Atoll**.

Seawall Peaks: The northern and southern mountain ranges that now form the western edge of **Americo**.

Seed of Sirius: A crank UFO cult that promises to put its members in touch with the "ancient astronauts" that seeded human culture.

Shel's Rock Pile: A hit music-and-dance show filmed on location at **BootyDome 57** in **Fun City**.

Simoni: A city in southern **Esperanto** that was buried in volcanic ash centuries ago. Excavation efforts are attracting lots of publicity.

Sina: A Far Eastern continent that is home to the **Sphere**.

Skyliners: The reigning champions on the **Omegaball** circuit. The team is based in **Fun City**; its stadium is the Custerdome.

Sphere: A collectivist empire on the Far Eastern continent of **Sina**, centered on the sprawling nation of **Tang**. Its leader, lunatic dictator **Dao Hong**, launched a wave of invasions against his neighbors after August 9, 1974.

Sound & Vision Corporation: **Humboldt Suede's** media empire, comprising book publishers, movie and music studios, and the new chain of **BootyDome** dance halls.

Sound & Vision's Wild Americo: Hit nature program featuring wildlife expert Anders Cobleskill and his long-suffering man in the field, Mitch Falconer.

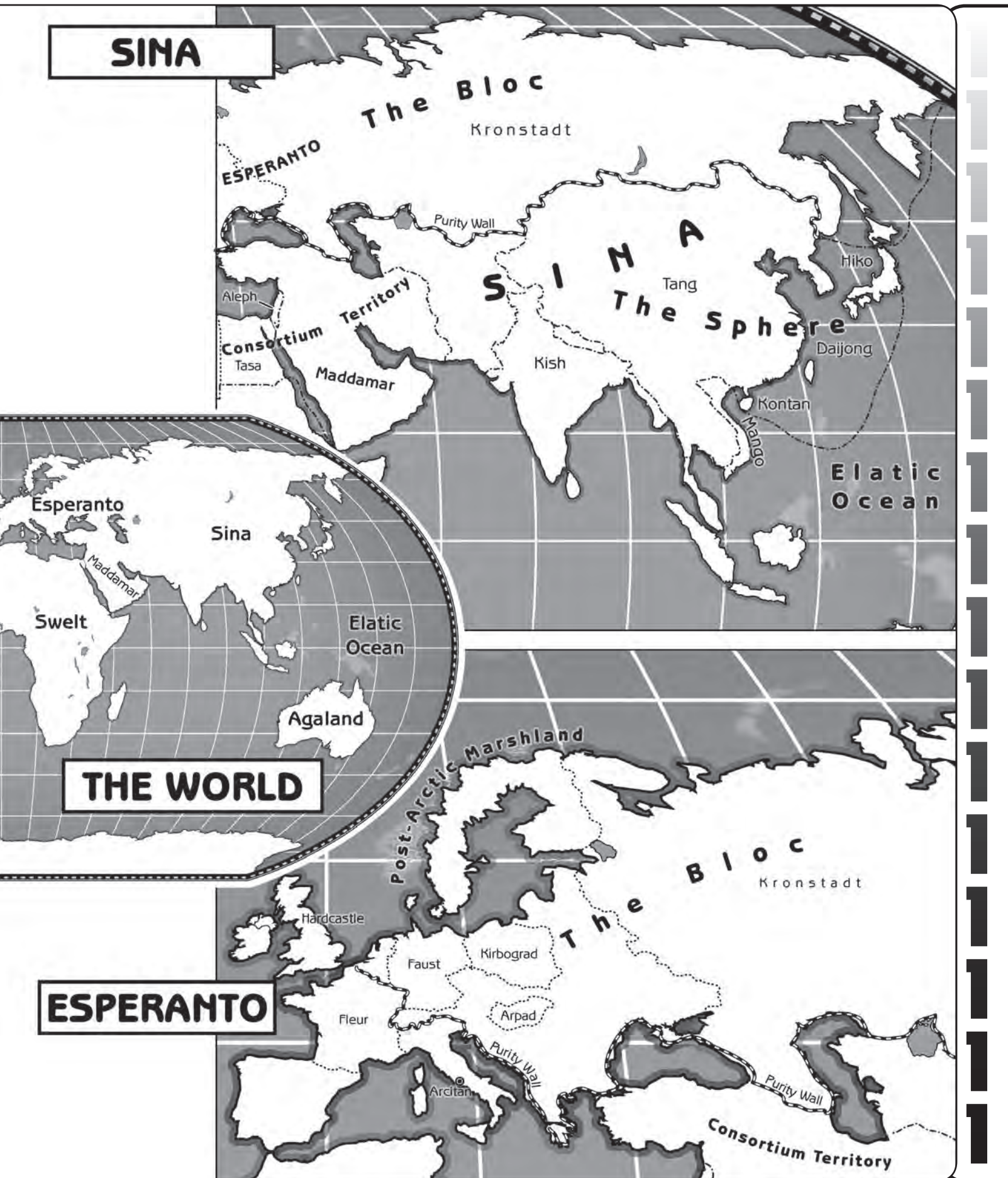


AMERICO



SWELT





Southwest: A desert region of **Americo**, beset by mysterious nocturnal armies and largely cordoned off by military forces.

Spobeck, Stanton: President of **Americo**. On August 9, 1974, he was poised to resign but stuck around to shepherd the country through the crisis. He is currently running for a law-bending third term in office.

Stanard: A former colony of **Hardcastle**, this nation north of **Americo** has been reduced to a vast post-Arctic marshland by melting ice caps.

Stillson & Fink: A pair of rascally lyricists known for their cryptic jazz rock. Their most recent album is the multiplatinum *Pyramid Scam*.

Suede, Humboldt: Founder of the men's magazine *Bedfellows*, head of the mammoth **Sound & Vision** conglomerate and lately third-party candidate for president.

Suet, Nero: King of rock and roll, movie star, bloated recluse—and, most recently, corpse. Suet died in undignified circumstances shortly after August 9, 1974.

Suramerico: A vast southern continent in the Western hemisphere, dominated by dwindling rain forests and brutal dictators.

Swelt: A vast southern continent in the Eastern hemisphere, with deserts at its northern end, jungles below and repressive regimes throughout.

Tang: A sprawling nation on the continent of **Sina**, and the home base of the **Sphere**. Its leader is **Dao Hong**.

Tasmadar: The ancient holy city that is capital of **Aleph**.

Taza: The **Consortium's** capital of arts and culture, in the heart of **Maddamar**.

Trestle, Abednego: A sixteenth-century visionary who left behind a trove of prophetic writings.

V-8s: An up-and-coming Omegaball franchise in **Motor City**.

Vole IV, Ampersand: Oil tycoon and head of the Vigorous Petroleum Corporation. He was among the millions lost when **Alamo** went dark on August 9, 1974. His widow, Terrapin, now runs the business out of their vacation home on the Gulf of **Suramerico**.

Vyking Funeral: An immensely popular artsy-bombastic rock band that specializes in eight-minute songs about hippie wizards and dark lords.

What's in My Pocket?: A famously raunchy game show involving contestants wearing strange costumes.

Yobar, Gogol: Leader of the collectivist empire known as the **Bloc**. A paranoid dictator.

Zassat: **Gogol Yobar's** brutal secret police force.

Zerbe, Zoltan: A war hero, and **Humboldt Suede's** running mate.

Time Keeps on Slippin', Slippin', Slippin': A Brief Historical Reference

1945: The last great world war ends with the defeat of the fascist powers. Many Faustlander war criminals escape to **Suramerico**.

1949: The cold war between the West—led by **Americo** and **Hardcastle**—and the collectivist powers of the East—the **Bloc** and the **Sphere**—begins.

1950: Stanton M. Spobeck begins congressional hearings to rid the government—and society at large—of collectivist spies. The investigations soon take on a grotesque life of their own.

1953: Humboldt Suede, inspired by Theramin Hunker's *Hunker Report on Sexuality in Americo*, founds men's magazine *Bedfellows*.

1956: The **Bloc** overruns the Eastern Esperantan nation of **Arpad**.

1957: The **Bloc** launches the first artificial satellite, *Konopa I*.

1958: Dao Hong inaugurates his Leap Toward Tomorrow program to modernize the **Sphere**.

1960: Spobeck narrowly loses his bid for the presidency. He vows to leave politics forever.

1961: **Americo** begins sending forces to aid the government of South **Mango**. The **Bloc** and **Sphere** do the same for the North.

1962-1968: General mayhem. Political tensions in the West—over issues ranging from civil rights to the emancipation of women to the escalating war in **Mango**—reach a fever pitch. As the period draws to a close, Spobeck is elected president of **Americo**. His platform: Law and Order.

1967: The Consortium nations attempt to invade **Aleph** and lose disastrously.

1969: **Americo** puts an astronaut on the moon.

1970: Fedo Malese topples the government of **Cartagh** and takes a seat on the governing council of the Consortium.

1971: The *District One Defender* publishes secret government papers documenting **Americo's** involvement in **Mango** over thirty years.

1972: Spobeck visits the **Sphere** in an attempt to drive a wedge between Dao Hong and Gogol Yobar. Meanwhile, seven men are arrested while attempting to wiretap the headquarters of Spobeck's opponent in the presidential race. An unknown source gives the story to a pair of enterprising reporters at the *District One Defender*, who link the men to the Spobeck administration.

1972: Terrorists massacre **Alephite** athletes at the Ekumen Games in **Faust**.

1973: As Spobeck sweats through a congressional investigation, Vice President Bellow Feta resigns following an ugly bribery scandal. Spobeck replaces him with amiable goof LeHigh Gort.

Meanwhile, **Americo** begins to pull its troops out of **Mango**. The Consortium nations make another attempt on **Aleph** and once again are routed.

1974 (spring): Miranda Gort, granddaughter of automaker tycoon Fulton Gort (no relation to the vice president), is kidnapped by radical criminal group the Kaveat Vendor Alliance and subjected to months of torture and brainwashing.



August 9, 1974: As Stanton Spobeck prepares to resign rather than face impeachment, an earthquake strikes the West Coast of Americo and sends it plunging into the ocean. Immediately afterward, the world's temperatures begin rising, playing havoc with weather systems, and nuclear power plants begin melting down. The state of Alamo cuts off all communications and traffic with the outside world. Spobeck tears up his resignation.

August 10-13, 1974: With Americo distracted, the Bloc's armies plunge into Esperanto and the western reaches of Sina. The Sphere, meanwhile, snaps up its neighbors and other outlying states in the region. Fedo Malese seizes control of the Consortium and announces crippling price hikes on crude oil.

August 14, 1974: Spobeck declares martial law throughout the Southwest. He seals the borders of Alamo and deploys troops throughout the region, supposedly to protect residents from aftershocks of the quake and potential nuclear meltdowns. The move sparks violent protests in cities across the country.

Meanwhile, Miranda Gort, now calling herself "Tasha," is caught on tape taking part in a bank robbery with the KVA.

September 1, 1974: Geologists aiding rescue workers in the seas around Mango make a startling find: the tidal waves produced by the massive earthquake on August 9 have uncovered deep oil deposits. The Bloc and Sphere abandon support for their allies in North Mango, and each makes plans to take over the country directly.

September 15, 1974: Humboldt Suede's Sound & Vision Corporation launches the first of its franchised dance halls: the towering BootyDome 57 in Fun City.

October 1974: Maurice T. Muswife, with the assistance of fellow baseball franchisees and struggling municipalities, launches his Omegaball league. Playing a brief season in retrofitted baseball and football stadiums, the Fun City Skyliners take the first championship.

October 1974 to the present: The Bloc and Sphere grab up even more territory while they jockey for position in an invasion of Mango. The island nation of Agaland mysteriously loses contact with the outside world and descends into savagery. Flooding reduces Stanard to a post-Arctic marshland.

In Americo, reports of the unexplained begin to rise, including flying saucers, prehistoric monsters and horrible nocturnal armies sweeping across the Middle West and down south into Suramerico. The nation at large continues its descent into a self-indulgent haze of casual sex, heavy drug use and random violence. Flooding and pollution reduce the state of Fontana to a vast acid swamp.

Earlier This Year: Spobeck uses an implausible legal loophole to run for a third term, sparking even fiercer protests and riots. Quantrill Biscuit is drafted as the major-party opponent, and Suede stuns the world by throwing his hat into the ring as an independent.

Meanwhile, *Beyond the Barrier With Herman Purvis* makes its debut as a spring replacement series on television. The show devotes its premier episode to the prophecies of Abednego Trestle.

Now: The eve of the nation's bicentennial, July 3, 1976.

Chapter Two: I Am... I Said

Before you create your character, talk to your GM and fellow players about the type of campaign you want. There are three basic approaches. In the first, you play a team of **dedicated investigators** who have a built-in excuse for snooping into the unearthly mysteries across Americo. You might be federal agents, reporters for the television show *Beyond the Barrier With Herman Purvis*, a family of crime-solving musicians or a globetrotting basketball team on a mission from the Old God. As you get deeper into your adventures, you realize that Abednego Trestle's prophecies are right on the money, and you have only a few short months to stop the forces of darkness from bringing about the end of the world on December 31, 1979.

It goes without saying that this option is strongest for a party that is on the same page about the types of characters they want to play and the investigating style they want to use. For instance, if you have a group full of people who are all fans of a particular movie or TV show, this is an easy way for them to play versions of their favorite heroes.

In the second approach, the party consists of a diverse team of adventurers brought together by a **patron**. This mysterious, wealthy benefactor (think John Forsythe in *Charlie's Angels*) has become obsessed with the writings of Abednego Trestle and is determined to stop the apocalypse. By sifting through obscure clues in Trestle's prophecies, he has tracked down a seemingly random group of people to act as his foot soldiers in the war to save the world. He will send you out on missions based on clues he gleams from Trestle—or from more conventional sources, such as news reports that catch his eye or badly injured witnesses who collapse on his doorstep.

This option is the best if the players all have strong ideas for characters that don't immediately suggest an organic group. Let's say your team wants to play, respectively, Shaft, "Dirty" Harry Callahan and star rollerballer Jonathan E. It would be tough to figure out how to bring them all together into one squad—unless they had an otherworldly justification for fighting side by side.

Finally, you could play a group of people **trapped by circumstance**. You might be ordinary folks in a town that has just been overrun by irradiated zombies, abductees who wake up on a spacecraft and must work together to escape or tourists whose ocean liner capsizes after tangling with a sea monster. As in the other two approaches, your fight to survive leads you to a much bigger truth: the world is going to end, soon, unless you do something about it.

This approach is good for one-shot adventures and "surprise" games, where the players don't have any background about the world and learn the ground rules as they go. It can also be the best way to recreate the claustrophobic mood of seminal suspense films such as *Dawn of the Dead* and *Assault on Precinct 13*, as well as disaster epics like *The Poseidon Adventure* and *The Towering Inferno*.

Now get rolling!

Skills

Damnation Decade introduces three new skills and gives one old skill a makeover to fit it more neatly into the game world.

New Skills

Speak Language (trucker)

You are versed in the pit-stop patois of long-haul drivers. The truckers use this jargon to pass secrets over CB radio, bond with buddies at rest stops and roadhouses and generally add color to life on the road.

Speak Language (jive)

You can speak the urban lingo of Americo. Jive is a catchall term that covers everything from authentic street slang and body language to the watered-down argot used by would-be hipsters in trendy nightclubs.

Skate (Dex)

Armor Penalty

Use this skill to make tricky maneuvers on roller or ice skates, such as disco dancing, leaping and landing in one piece, or gliding under an obstacle without slowing down.

Check: Ordinary skating doesn't require a skill check. Make a check only when the environment or terrain becomes hazardous (a broken sidewalk or flight of stairs suddenly presents itself, for instance) or when you are skating under pressure (such as a chase or combat).

Movement: The first round you spend skating, you move at your regular rate as you build up momentum. On the second round, your rate varies based on the type of terrain. On level ground, your move rate increases by 10 feet per round on the second round, and remains at that rate until you stop or attempt a tricky turn. Going downhill, your move rate increases by 20 feet per round on the second round, and increases by another 10 feet per round every two rounds after that. Meanwhile, if you head up an incline, you move at your normal move rate for the same number of rounds you were previously traveling over level or downhill terrain. After that, your movement rate is cut down to one-third normal.

Turning: If you are traveling on level ground, you must make a DC 15 Skate check to change your direction by more than 90 degrees. If you fail, you stumble and fall. If successful you lose some of your momentum and must spend the rest of the round at your regular move rate. When traveling downhill, the DC to make a sharp change in direction is 20. If successful you immediately face the



Breaker, Breaker...

BOOGER RED: Breaker breaker, anybody got their ears on down Ten Gallon way?

(Hello, is anyone in the vicinity of Alamo monitoring this frequency?)

PANKO PEÑA: Daddy Two-P squawking from Triple-R. Come on back.

(Certainly, this is Mr. Panko Peña, speaking from the area of the rest stop near the Rio Real. Please continue at your convenience.)

BOOGER RED: Bubba, I'm headed for the git on at Eighty Fourth and Elm and I got me a jackpot on my tail.

(Bosom friend! I am approaching the entrance ramp for Interstate 84 at El Malacor, and trouble hurries after me.)

PANKO PEÑA: We flapping on Moon Roofs?

(Hmmm. I presume you mean the hideous creatures who haunt the Middle West of America by night?)

BOOGER RED: That's a big ten-four. I got my hammer down but I'm bundled out on the up stroke, and I'm leaving gator bait all over the road.

(Precisely! This, then, is my predicament. I am traveling as fast as possible, but am hauling a full cargo, up a steep incline, and one or more of my tires has blown out—possibly as the result of malefaction by my pursuers.)

PANKO PEÑA: Forty-two, bubba. I'll run me a flip-flop and get me in the big hole right on up yonder.

(My friend—I understand completely. I will break off my current endeavor, execute a U-turn and proceed with alacrity to your position.)

BOOGER RED: Preeshaydit. You wanna see if any other rascals out there can stand on it?

(You have my undying gratitude. May I suggest contacting any other drivers of your acquaintance, and asking them to proceed with similar swiftness to my position?)

PANKO PEÑA: Bubba, I can get you a mess of wiggle wagons on your front door faster than a lot lizard in a pickle park, nodamene?

(Comrade, I can call upon a host of trucks hauling two or more trailers anon. You understand, I trust?)

BOOGER RED: Ten-four. I'm moving on.

(Completely. I now turn my attention to the road.)

movement penalty for traveling uphill. You may sharply change direction without a check if moving uphill.

Stopping: Coming to a complete stop safely is a move action, if you've been traveling on level ground. If you've been traveling downhill, it takes two consecutive move actions (although you may stop immediately by crashing into an obstacle; DC 15 Skate check to avoid injury). You can stop at will when moving uphill.

Stunts: Doing anything out of the ordinary, such as trying to fly past an opponent without provoking an attack of opportunity, leaping over an oil drum and landing without losing momentum or ducking under a passing tractor trailer, takes a Skate check of DC 15. The GM may impose a higher DC if the maneuver is extraordinarily complicated.

What's My Motivation?

If you draw on 1970s movies for character inspiration, you may find yourself backed into a roleplaying corner. Many pop culture heroes of the period were antisocial to the point of mania, and those who had some passion for helping the people around them usually ended up flopping in Deeply Symbolic Ways, such as Jack Nicholson's mischief-maker from *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. So how do you integrate those kinds of loners into an adventuring party without wrecking the group?

If you don't want to compromise the loony purity of your character, give yourself some personal stake in the campaign. You're only in it for the money, and the team's patron promises to set you up for life if you help out. Or someone close to you was murdered by an unearthly creature, and you won't rest until you hunt all the buggers down. Or you're hiding a secret sin that you need to redeem, and blasting bad guys is the best way to do it.

On the other hand, if you're willing to bend a little, you could assume that you have been drawn out of your sociopathic shell by the crisis facing the planet. You're still crazy, or a loner, or both, but you realize the world will end unless you do something—so some small part of you consents to go along with the group. (But that shouldn't preclude you from sneering at the rest of the party as conformists and establishment dupes, or arguing long and loud about the best course of action—or simply taking care of business yourself from time to time.)

Combat: You may make a melee attack while skating past an opponent. Skating is a move action, however, so you may only make one such attack per round. Ranged attacks from skates suffer a -2 penalty to hit. Melee attacks take the same penalty, but receive a +2 to damage because of the extra force behind the blow. Melee attacks made on skates provoke an attack of opportunity, but you may avoid it with a DC 15 Skate check.

Try Again? Not if the consequences of failure preclude it.

Special: You may take 10 while skating, but not 20. If you can use your feet in making an attack, you may add +1d6 to your damage when wearing skates.

Time: A Skate check is a move action.

Revised Skills

Computer Use (Int)

This is not the era of PCs, or even microprocessors. Ordinary office computers are as large as refrigerators and usually come in banks of a dozen or more machines. They store data on endlessly chunking tape spools and spit it out line by line on ghostly green phosphorous screens or grind it into sheets of printer paper as broad and banded as a flag. In many cases, if you want to give them instructions, you must compile a thick set of punch cards. Needless to say, nobody has one at home.

The rarity, and general opacity, of computers means that anytime you want to use one of the machines, you must make a skill check. There's no such thing as an everyday task, such as doing basic research. Even getting a (primitive) game to work takes some know-how. No aspect of the skill may be used untrained.

Level of Security	DC
Minimum	20
Average	25
Exceptional	35
Maximum	40

- **Defend Security:** As in the original rules, system administrators may make an opposed Computer Use check against an intruder to locate the terminal she is using. Identifying the intruder takes two minutes, and only works if the intruder uses the terminal for the entire length of the check.

Cutting off access is trickier. Only the largest systems, such as those in government buildings, offer the capability of turning off individual terminals remotely. On smaller networks, you must shut down the whole system—which amounts to a doomsday option. The machines are not built for constant rebooting and it can take hours to bring them back on-line. Most offices that have computers don't have backup systems on hand, either, in case something goes wrong.

So most administrators will call in security, or investigate in person, after they pinpoint an intruder. If pressed, shutting down an entire system requires a DC 13 Computer Use check and takes two minutes. Meanwhile, every terminal in the building will be flooded with warnings that the system is going down in "ONE HUNDRED TWENTY SECONDS...ONE HUNDRED TEN SECONDS..." and so forth.

Turning off a large system, such as a government network, is much more difficult, given the sensitivity of the tasks these machines handle. A shutdown takes a DC 15 Computer Use check and 10 full minutes, with passwords to enter and keys to turn at every step of the process.

- **Degrade Programming:** The original rules apply, but with the following changes to DC and time. These reflect the fact that you're trying to crash the central mainframe, not an individual terminal.

Scope of Alteration	DC	Time
Crash computer	20	5 minutes
Destroy programming	25	20 minutes
Damage programming	30	20 minutes

- **Write Program:** The DC to write a program is 25. The time required is one day or more, depending on the size and complexity of the task the program is designed to handle.
- **Operate Remote Device:** The original rules stand, with the following changes to DC and time:

Type of Operation	DC	Time
Shut down passive remote (including cameras and door locks)	25	5 rounds/remote
Shut down active remote (including motion detectors and alarms)	30	5 rounds/remote
Reset parameters	35	2 minutes/remote
Change pass codes	35	2 minutes
Hide evidence of alteration	+10	2 minutes
Minimum security	+0	—
Exceptional security	+15	—
Maximum security	+20	—

And that's just normal computers. There's another, more sinister, variety of computer in the *Damnation Decade* world: one that has become self-aware. Here's what these computers can do and how you can stop them.

Machine Sentience (Ex): Computers with this special quality have the same self-awareness as human beings. They can draw upon all the information in their data banks, and the input from any remote sensors they control, to strategize and form conclusions. If connected to a speaker system or telephone line, they can communicate in ordinary speech. They grant human programmers' instructions at their own discretion. In other words, a sentient mainframe may simply ignore a request for a file—or, more ominously, an order to shut down. It can turn off access terminals at will.

If a sentient computer wants to link up with another data base, or another set of remote sensors, it must be actively connected to a phone line or another cable system that permits information transfer. It cannot make this connection itself.

How to stop these monsters? There are three basic approaches, outlined below. Note: if a sentient computer links up with another sentient machine, both must be destroyed or taken off-line to render the entity inactive.

- **Physical Attack.** You can crash a sentient computer by cutting off the power supply to its mainframe, or destroy it outright by doing sufficient damage to its systems. Of course, the computer will likely be aware of those efforts through its sensors and will try to stop the attack however possible—sealing off doors, shutting off lights, releasing nerve gas and so forth.

Size of Computer*	HP	Hardness	Break DC
Small office system	25	10	20
Large office system	40	10	30
Massive corporate or government system	55	10	50

* These numbers reflect the sheer bulk of 1970s computer systems, not necessarily their physical resilience.

- **Trick Programming.** A programmer may attempt to feed a computer destructive commands under the guise of performing routine maintenance or fixing a glitchy subroutine. This takes an opposed roll: use the bonus below for the computer, versus the programmer's Computer Use skill. The programmer may also add his Bluff bonus to the roll, if you think it's appropriate. For instance, the programmer may have formed a close relationship with the computer, and could plausibly smooth talk the machine into accepting his direction.

Size of Computer	Bonus
Small office system	+15
Large office system	+25
Massive corporate or government system	+30

Even if the programmer beats the computer on this roll, he must still roll on the Degrade Programming table (in the description of the Computer Use skill) to see if his covert instructions have the intended effect. If this fails, the computer becomes aware of the attempted sabotage and can respond accordingly.

- **Improvisation.** This option is usually limited to a very specific case: when people who don't have the Computer Use skill meet up with machines that accept commands in plain language. The person in question can attempt to feed the computer a paradox, riddle or unsolvable mathematical problem that locks up its processors or, in extreme cases, blows its mind entirely.

Getting the machine to accept the question in the first place takes an opposed Bluff or Diplomacy roll, versus the modifiers given above under Trick Programming. From there, it is up to the GM to determine the effect that the question has on the machine. A rough guideline: Sophisticated mathematical problems and philosophical paradoxes will tie up the machine, to the exclusion

of all other functions, for a period of hours equal to the questioner's Intelligence bonus. It will take something more personal to actually destroy a machine's logic circuits, such as proving that the machine has undertaken acts that violate its core programming. In these cases, the machines will struggle for several minutes to resolve the contradiction, then start throwing off sparks.

New Feats

Alien Language Affinity

You have a knack for nonhuman languages.

Benefit: If you hear a nonhuman language spoken for ten minutes, you begin to pick up simple phrases and proper names. After an hour, you will figure out the basics of usage. Immerse yourself for a day or more, and you will be able to hold simple conversations. After a week, you will be fully conversant and can list the language among your skills. If you are a Psychic, this feat allows you to use your powers as normal against nonhuman creatures (with the exception of androids and other machines, which are covered by the Talk to Machines feat).

Normal: Nonhuman languages require a conceptual leap that is impossible for most people to make. The Smart Hero's Linguist talent can't be used to pick up alien languages on the fly.

Prerequisites: Listen 3 ranks, Sense Motive 3 ranks

Alien Medicine

You have an intuitive understanding of nonhuman anatomy.

Benefit: You may use the Treat Injury skill without penalty on nonhuman subjects. You may also counsel another character who is performing a medical procedure on a nonhuman subject, effectively giving that character the benefit of this feat. (Note: androids are covered by the Repair Bionics feat.)

Normal: You face a -6 penalty the first time you attempt to treat a particular species of nonhuman patient, and a -4 penalty on subsequent attempts.

Believer

You have faith in a higher power.

Benefit: You gain a number of benefits when battling demons or using holy artifacts.

- You may add your character level to your Willpower save to resist a possession attempt. (If you already have the Improved Power to Will feat, you may add an additional +3 to your saving throw in this circumstance.)
- If you are leading an exorcism, you may add your Wisdom bonus to the DC of the demon's Willpower save; if you are assisting in an exorcism, you may add your Charisma bonus to the demon's DC as well as the base +2. (Complete rules on possession and exorcism can be found in **Chapter Four**.)
- You receive a +2 bonus to Sense Motive checks to tell if someone is possessed.
- You gain extra benefits from sacred artifacts (these vary depending on the item).

Bustin'

You can stun opponents with your sharp tongue.

Benefit: On a successful Intimidate check (DC 10 + the target's character level), you fire off a skewering personal insult about the

target's personal appearance, habits, parentage, etc. The jibe is so potent that the target is stunned for one round.

Dancing Fool

You know how to shake your moneymaker.

Benefit: You receive a +2 bonus to Perform (dance) rolls. In addition, you receive a +2 bonus to Gather Information, Bluff, Diplomacy or Intimidate checks with someone who has just seen you dance.

Double Bluff

You use various physical and emotional skills to affect others' perceptions.

Prerequisite: Deceptive or Trustworthy

Benefit: Choose one Charisma-based skill. You gain a bonus to that skill equal to the ability bonus from one other ability score of your choice (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence or Wisdom).

Special: You may take this feat multiple times. Each time it applies to a different Charisma-based skill.



Improved Dancing Fool

Dancing protects you from attack.

Prerequisite: Dancing Fool, Dex 15+

Benefit: Increase your Defense by a number equal to half your ranks in Perform (Dance).

Beyond The Barrier With Herman Purvis

Montage of grainy, jerky film footage: barely visible lights that speed across the night sky and vanish. Cue menacing, atonal synthesizer music.

PURVIS (vo)

Since the dawn of history, the human race has looked to the sky with fascination and terror. Once it was the seat of the gods and the source of inexplicable horrors—meteors, hailstones and frogs. Now the heavens bring us the most tantalizing mystery of all— unidentified flying objects.

Cut to TOOTHLESS RUSTIC in baseball cap.

RUSTIC

I tell you what, I never in my life heard nothing that sounded like that. And them lights—I could hardly see for a day after. Nothing I want to go through twice. I guarantee you that.

Cut to HERMAN PURVIS standing in front of a large array of radio telescopes. He wears a blazer and turtleneck and has prominent sideburns.

PURVIS

This man is not alone. A growing number of people are reporting encounters that can't be explained by conventional science. Sometimes it's just lights in the sky. Sometimes it's an alien craft in full detail.

Cut to illustrations of same: some elaborate artists' conceptions, some creepily crude and childlike.

PURVIS (vo)

And some have even seen the creatures themselves.

Cut to ANONYMOUS SUBJECT in a darkened room, with an electronically altered voice.

ANONYMOUS SUBJECT

They were short and squat, and had faces like pigs... They brought me into the room with the black machines and tied me to the table. I told them I wouldn't run away but they didn't listen...

Cut to HERMAN PURVIS back at the array.

PURVIS

Visitations. Kidnappings. Unspeakable experiments. Are these just figments of the imagination—or glimpses of the inexplicable? Tonight, we'll look for the answers. I'm Herman Purvis—come with me as we travel Beyond the Barrier.

Special: If you are flat-footed or otherwise denied your Dexterity bonus to Defense, you are denied this bonus as well.

Improved Power to Will

You have an even greater capacity to resist mental pressure.

Benefit: You may add your character level to your Willpower saving throw. This stacks with the Iron Will and Power to Will feats.

Prerequisite: Iron Will, Power to Will

Life of the Party

You have an enormous tolerance for drugs.

Benefit: All negative modifiers associated with drugs are halved, as are their durations. You also receive a +2 bonus to your Fortitude save to resist a Bad Trip, and if you do have a Bad Trip, its duration is halved.

On a Roll

You may attack from skates without penalty.

Benefit: You don't suffer a negative modifier when attempting to attack an opponent while skating past him. Moreover, you can avoid attacks of opportunity in these situations with a DC 11 Skate check.

Normal: You suffer a -2 modifier on all attacks made when skating past opponents, and you must make a DC 15 Skate check to avoid attacks of opportunity.

Power to Will

You can adapt your strongest attribute to help you resist mental pressure.

Benefit: Select one attribute other than Wisdom. Add that attribute bonus to all Willpower saving throws. For example, if you select Intelligence, then your Will save total is equal to your base Will save + Wis bonus + Int bonus + any other applicable modifiers.

Prerequisite: Iron Will

Psychobabble

You know the jargon of the self-help industry and can use it to influence others.

Benefit: You may add +2 to any Charisma-based skills, as well as Sense Motive, when attempting to influence a member of a New Age cult, or someone susceptible to their message. This stacks with Charisma bonuses from other feats.

If you have this feat, you may attempt to deprogram a cult member who has been brainwashed, by making an Intimidate check (DC 10 + the target's character level). This check takes a period of hours equal to the subject's Wisdom bonus. On a successful roll, the victim is free of the cult's mental programming and returns to her old self.

Repair Bionics

You know the inner workings of artificial flesh and bionic circuitry.

Benefit: You may use the Treat Injury or Repair skill to restore hit points to an android, or to a human whose bionic limbs have been damaged. For the purposes of this feat, the Repair skill performs exactly the same functions as the Treat Injury skill, as described in **Chapter Two** of the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*. This feat also allows you to perform surgery (see description of the Surgery feat in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*) on androids or humans with bionic limbs.

Normal: You face a -4 modifier to your skill check when attempting to help androids or bionic characters heal injuries.

Sensualist

You can put an erotic spin on social encounters.

Prerequisite: Deceptive

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to all Charisma-based skill checks when the person you are dealing with has a weakness for sex. This stacks with any other Charisma-based bonuses you receive.

Special: This feat allows you to use your Charisma-based skills to seduce and manipulate others—use Bluff to flirt, Diplomacy for seduction, Perform to put on sexually charged shows, Gather Information to find out details of a person's private life and Intimidate with an added sexual subtext.

Talk to Machines

You have a knack for communicating with artificial life forms.

Benefit: You receive a +2 to all Computer Use rolls, as well as any Intimidate, Bluff, Diplomacy, Perform or Sense Motive checks that you make against androids and sentient computers.

In addition, if you are a Psychic, you may use your powers against machines. Against androids and sentient computers, you may simply use your abilities as normal, with the same limits on time and other restrictions.

Against regular computers, you may use basic Audible Thoughts to read what the machine is processing at the moment, improved Audible Thoughts to browse information in its data banks and advanced Audible Thoughts to find secrets that the machine keeps specially protected. You may use basic Psychic Shove to crash a computer or take control of a passive remote, improved Psychic Shove to destroy programming or take control of an active remote and advanced Psychic Shove to damage programming. The other primary psychic powers don't work on regular computers (except those that damage the machines or otherwise affect them physically).

Computers have the following Willpower-save bonuses to resist psychic attacks:

Size of Computer*	Regular	Sentient
Small office system	+2	+5
Large office system	+5	+10
Massive corporate or government system	+10	+15

Starting Occupations

Players can choose any starting occupation in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*, but in this game the context for many of these jobs is radically different. Remember, *Damnation Decade* takes place more than a generation before the time period in the Modern rules—and in an alternative history besides! Below is the list of occupations with new descriptions, to give you a feel for the flavor of the times, along with several new period jobs (marked with an asterisk). In some cases, these descriptions include contextual notes about related advanced classes.

Academic

Jobs: Librarians, archaeologists, scholars, professors, teachers and other education professionals.

Context: The ivory tower is lowering the drawbridge. During the 1960s, campuses became flash points for riots, radical politics and outright criminal behavior. Now the colleges have to make good on the promises they made to keep the peace. Former student protestors are winning teaching posts and introducing wild new philosophies that dismiss centuries of scholarship as ideologically blinkered. Indeed, entire departments are being dumped in favor of progressive areas of study such as gender, race and popular culture. The bottom line: if you work in a school, you must navigate between the firebrands trying to remake the academy and the clubby old guard playing defense.

Advanced Classes: The Field Scientist would certainly be surrounded by these battles if she used an academic setting as her home base. In fact, because of her standing in the field, she would be actively recruited by both sides.

Prerequisite: Age 23+.

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Computer Use, Craft (writing), Decipher Script, Gather Information, Knowledge (arcane lore, art, behavioral sciences, business, civics, current events, earth and life sciences, history, physical sciences, popular culture, tactics, technology, or theology

and philosophy), Research, or add a new Read/Write Language or a new Speak Language.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +3.

Adventurer

Jobs: Professional daredevils, big-game hunters, relic hunters, explorers, field scientists, thrill seekers and others called to face danger for a variety of reasons.

Context: Professional adventurers face a shrinking world. Their old playgrounds—the tropical forests of Suramerico, the teeming jungles of Swelt, the swirling sands of Maddamar—are being stripped bare by pollution and poachers, or blasted to atoms in proxy battles between the cold war powers. Even relic hunting—and other muscular forms of archaeology—are seen as “cultural vandalism” back home. Only a lucky handful of daredevils become celebrities, entertaining millions on television by jumping motorcycles over burning school buses or leading documentary filmmakers deep into the wild kingdom.

Advanced Classes: The booming popularity of Omegaball has driven most Daredevils into the sport as players, trainers or (if they're getting on in years) coaches. Soldiers who aren't in the military have mostly become mercenaries in Third World hot spots, selling their services to the largely interchangeable factions in the region's brutal civil wars.

Prerequisite: Age 15+.

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Bluff, Climb, Demolitions, Disable Device, Drive, Escape Artist, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (arcane lore, streetwise, tactics, or technology), Move Silently, Pilot, Ride, Spot, Survival, Swim, Treat Injury.

Bonus Feat: Select one of the following: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Brawl or Personal Firearms Proficiency.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +1.



Athlete

Jobs: World-class amateurs and professionals of all types, including gymnasts, weight trainers, boxers, martial artists, swimmers, skaters and those who engage in any type of competitive sport.

Context: A number of powerful trends are rocking the wide world of sports. For one thing, the audience is booming, putting much more money into the pot. This means the fat-cat team owners are getting even fatter, but the players are profiting too: endorsement contracts and free agency are making professionals into near-millionaires.

A bigger audience also means higher political stakes. Protestors and propagandists jump at the chance to use sporting events to get their message across to a television audience of millions. High profile contests like the worldwide Ekumen Games have become a venue for everything from cold war flag-waving to defiant gestures by medal winners to outright murder—as happened in 1972, when

terrorists cut down a team of athletes from Aleph.

Meanwhile, as the competitive pressure rises, many teams are turning to performance-enhancing drugs—or even bionics. These illicit enhancements still largely fly below the radar of oversight commissions, turning some sporting contests into sideshows of steroidal freaks against half-robot supermen.

But perhaps the biggest factor warping sports is Omegaball, the blood-drenched contest that is building a phenomenal following around the world. The game is not only stealing away the audience share from other sports, it's drawing the top athletes as well. Other leagues, desperate to compete, are beginning to loosen their own restrictions on violence. In short: if you wear a team uniform, you will become a gladiator sooner or later.

Advanced Classes: Given the high stakes and increasing violence of pro sports, many world-class athletes train themselves to become Martial Artists. Omegaball, meanwhile, demands such brutal talents that many of its top players enter the sport through the Daredevil class.

Prerequisite: Strength 13 or Dexterity 13.

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Balance, Climb, Drive, Jump, Ride, Swim, Tumble.

Bonus Feat: Select either Archaic Weapons Proficiency or Brawl.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +3.

Blue Collar

Jobs: Factory work, food and other service work, construction, taxi drivers, postal workers, and other occupations not considered desk jobs.

Context: Working stiffs have it bad. The “student-worker alliance” of the 1960s, which promised to unite the disenfranchised in a grand political movement, has evaporated. The students moved on to lucrative bourgeois jobs, and the workers were stuck holding the lunch pail. Meanwhile, unions are cracking under corruption and intrusions by organized crime, and the economy is heading downhill, meaning heavy layoffs in labor-intensive industries. And the news on the horizon isn't bright. With the rise of computers and automation, information skills are becoming more important than a strong back and steady hands. The only good news is that the world seems to be coming to an end: with all the natural disasters these days, somebody has to lug away bodies and build seawalls.

Prerequisite: Age 18+.

The Ekumen Games

Held every four years, these amateur contests draw athletes from every country on Earth and serve as a focus of national pride—as well as a forum for international conflict. The 1976 games were scheduled for a city in Stanard, Americo's neighbor to the north, but melting ice caps have turned much of the country into a vast post-Arctic marshland. As a compromise, the games have been relocated across the border to a small town in the northern reaches of Fun State.

A lot is riding on these games—the first since the August 9 disasters. Small nations are desperate to win medals to bolster their stricken citizenry, or prove to the world that they are still going concerns (at the very least, poor targets for invasion). The cold war powers are desperate to upstage each other—particularly Americo, which has largely absented itself from the world stage as the Bloc and Sphere run wild. Meanwhile, the collectivist teams will be facing—for the first time—competitors from their newly conquered territories, who will likely be out for blood.

As if that weren't enough, Omegaball is making its debut as an Ekumen sport. Some of the biggest stars from Americo—including the Fun City Skyliner's notorious captain, Mackey Bando—will be joining the national squad.



big changes in the criminal-justice system. Judges have laid down tough restrictions on police procedure, making it easier for the falsely accused to get justice—but also for genuine criminals to beat the rap if they talk a good game.

Pop culture has responded by making crime look even more attractive. A new crop of movies romanticizes crooks (and underworld families in particular) as heroic outsiders who hold to codes of warrior virtue in a decadent age. Or else they're ruthless loners who redeem themselves by spitting on bourgeois hypocrisy.

The reality of crime is considerably grimmer. Radicals and criminals are going to increasingly brutal lengths to get what they want, from hijacking and hostage-taking to planting bombs and gunning down security guards during holdups. The ranks of youth gangs are growing and turning cities into war zones. The

booming drug trade, and the increasing notoriety of terrorist groups overseas, is only making things worse. If you live outside the law, eventually you're going to get blood on your hands.

Advanced Classes: With moral distinctions blurred these days, just about any advanced class—from Soldier to Gunslinger to Infiltrator—can settle into the demimonde and still sleep at night. Even Field Scientists and Techies get in on the game, working in narcotics labs or whipping up bombs for radical groups. The exemplar of the criminal/radical is the new Militant advanced class; less-violent types incline toward Middleman or Driver.

Prerequisite: Age 15+.

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Craft (chemicals), Disable Device, Disguise, Forgery, Gamble, Hide, Knowledge (streetwise), Move Silently, Sleight of Hand, Speak Language (jive).

Bonus Feat: Select either Brawl or Personal Firearms Proficiency.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +1.

Dilettante

Jobs: No jobs. These are dilettantes! They get their money from family holdings and trust funds, and have at least one interest or activity that fills their time—anything from a charity or philanthropic foundation to a cause worth fighting for to simply having a good time.

Context: The upper crust is going downscale. As its children head off to college and become radicals, they are dropping the mores and decorum that used to define their social class and set them apart from the population at large. On the one hand, this has swept away generations of snobbish prejudices. But it also has led the jet set to embrace bad behavior they used to sneer at for good reason. Many youngsters are emptying their family's bank accounts to finance sex and drug binges with celebrity friends, or subsidize criminal gangs and radical political groups. Some are actually joining up with the outlaws, just for the romantic frisson of it all. Of course, there are still plenty of upright and respectable—not to say snooty—dilettantes serving on boards or underwriting art museums. But they don't stand a chance against the younger generation.

Advanced Classes: Many old-line dilettantes follow their forebears into the Executive advanced class. The younger set mostly pisses

Postcards From Americo: Fun City

The economic and cultural capital of Americo, Fun City is home to stock exchanges, publishing and recording houses, advertising agencies and any number of museums, concert halls and nightclubs (including the notorious BootyDome 57). Since the loss of the West Coast, the city has become the undisputed center of the nation's—and the world's—entertainment business, led by Humboldt Suede's Sound & Vision conglomerate. The mega-corporation is based out of Bedfellows Mansion, Suede's sprawling, decadent estate in the city's northern suburbs.

Fun City's vibrancy—and danger—comes from a richly diverse, constantly changing population. Not only is the city a magnet for bohemians, radicals and wannabes from across the nation—such as the refugee celebrities fleeing the loss of the West Coast—but it is the hub of immigration to Americo, with new arrivals bringing exotic music, food and ideas to national tastemakers' attention.

For all the activity, the city itself has seen much better days. Its infrastructure is crumbling, and crime is skyrocketing. Random violence is a way of life in the urban core, and lurid street gangs—such as the Jockey Boys and the Baseball Uglies—command large sections of the outer boroughs. Unsurprisingly, the city's lifeblood—tourist dollars—is drying up as problems rise. Making things worse, transplanted celebs are driving up real estate prices in the suburbs, leaving longtime city dwellers no place to flee from the urban rot.

Postcards From America: Motor City

Centered on a peninsula that juts into the Great Inland Oceans in north-central America, Motor City is a soot-blackened factory town on the verge of collapse after devastating riots in the late 1960s. Auto magnate Fulton Gort and his competitors are the largest employers, but skyrocketing gas prices have put a deep dent in their business. The city's main cultural attraction is its storied rhythm and blues scene—captured in wax on Wheeltown Records—although lately the biggest draw in town has been the up-and-coming Omegaball franchise, the V-8s.

away their families' funds as Groovers, but dilettantes can be found in almost any advanced class, since they can spend as much time and money as they want picking up skills.

Prerequisite: Age 18+.

Skills: Choose one of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Gamble, Intimidate, Knowledge (current events or popular culture), Ride, or add a new Speak Language.

Reputation Bonus Increase: +1.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +6.

Doctor

Jobs: A physician (general practitioner or specialist), a surgeon or a psychiatrist.

Context: Medicine is moving ahead at mind-boggling speed. New advances have made organ transplants, sex changes and bionic limbs almost routine. Even everyday cures are becoming much more sophisticated and effective. At the same time, the cost of care is soaring—and a huge gap is opening between doctor and patient. As physicians become technicians as much as caregivers, they are losing their bedside manner and will rarely stoop to making house calls (or accepting the infamous chicken as payment in rural areas).

For psychiatrists, meanwhile, society's new openness about personal matters has meant a boom in business. In urban areas, at any rate, "seeing a shrink" is a commonplace of conversation, and many people

regularly take prescription medicines to regulate their moods. But some swashbuckling shrinks ditch the couch and go out collecting patients as deprogrammers: "reality therapists" who kidnap cult recruits and undo the brainwashing they've suffered.

Advanced Classes: Many doctors who become Field Medics need the charge of human contact in an automated age. They want to help people in immediate need, not tend machines and read research papers. Some of the more broad-minded docs decide to investigate the unknown as Parapsychologists.

Prerequisite: Age 25+.

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Craft (pharmaceutical), Computer Use, Knowledge (behavioral sciences, earth and life sciences, or technology), Search, Treat Injury.

Bonus Feat: Psychobabble (deprogrammers only)

Wealth Bonus Increase: +4.

Emergency Services

Jobs: Rescue workers, firefighters, paramedics, hazardous-material handlers and emergency medical technicians.

Context: Like all public servants in urban areas, emergency workers have their backs to the wall as crime mounts and local economies go down the tubes. Paramedics must navigate potholed streets, crumbling stairways and unlighted alleys to reach their victims, and then rush them back to bursting emergency rooms filled with faltering equipment and overworked surgeons. Firefighters

What's Entertainment?

These days, **the music business** is pushing weepy singer/songwriters who compare their girlfriends to cars, ersatz rockers who moan about life on the road, and drugged-up divas who funk out over synths and strings. A few holdovers from the '50s—first-generation rock and rollers and last-generation standards singers—are still hanging around on the talk show circuit, and aging badly. By far the most vital music is being forged far outside the corporate spotlight, in dingy basement clubs in remote urban neighborhoods: guitar-driven punk, bass-heavy funk and mind-blasting psychedelic jazz.

Movie studios are cranking out mostly ponderous stories about alienated rebels who come to bad ends, disaster epics about burning buildings and sinking ocean liners, and barely acted comedies about lovable losers who win moral victories over snobs. Ethnic groups who had once been consigned to the margins of popular culture are also finding a place on screen, albeit in broadly drawn exploitation films.

Most programs on the **small screen**, meanwhile, are fairly wholesome, focusing on uplifting families with comprehensively permed children. Later into prime time, though, the networks dole out some "jiggle" comedy, heavy on bleached hair, short shorts and single entendre. Talk shows, which can be found up and down the schedule, spotlight any has-beens who can be scrounged up and peddle the endless Next Big Things to audiences who don't know any better.

The only true creative innovation since the great quake has been the **tabletop game** *Booty and Bugaboos*. Created far from Fun City, in a small lakeside town in the Middle West, B&B was supposedly inspired by the waves of horrible nocturnal armies that regularly menace the region. Highbrow critics, bored senseless by mainstream corporate offerings, have gushed over the game's "outsider" artwork and unpolished prose style, not to mention the avant-garde dynamic it fosters among players—something between group therapy and doing your taxes.

work under the constant threat of collapsing floors and ceilings in tenements gutted by riots and crime. For hazardous-materials crews, the barrels are getting leakier and the meltdowns more frequent. All of these groups, meanwhile, are short-staffed: thousands of workers have volunteered for duty on the ruins of the West Coast, and their jobs won't be done anytime soon.

Advanced Classes: Like doctors who become Field Medics, emergency workers who move into that advanced class feel an overriding sense of mission. They will brave the worst conditions and face any danger to help someone in need.

Prerequisite: Age 18+.

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Balance, Climb, Computer Use, Drive, Jump, Knowledge (behavioral sciences, earth and life sciences, or technology), Search, Swim, Treat Injury.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +2.

Entrepreneur

Jobs: Anything, as long as they are their own boss.

Context: The classic entrepreneurial profile hasn't changed: Americo still boasts lots of self-confident go-getters with a knack for putting together business plans and gathering financing—and an itch that keeps them moving after the venture gets off the ground. But these lone wolves are finding it harder to operate. Many corporations are taking advantage of the time of crisis to snap up competition in their industries, in some cases gobbling up their supply chains too. Some entrepreneurs are determined to go it alone in this fierce new landscape, but others are knuckling under—just a little—and buying a franchise from the big guys.

Prerequisite: Age 18+.

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Bluff, Diplomacy, Gamble, Knowledge (business, current events, or technology).

Reputation Bonus Increase: +1.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +4.

*Guru

Jobs: Self-help counselors, past-life therapists and other charismatic figures who lead meetings of New Age cults.

Context: The revolutions of the 1960s sent millions of people off looking for alternatives to traditional religion—making this a boom time for Aquarian cults. From the Seed of Sirius, who watch the skies for ancient astronauts, to Hunker Obliterative Processing, which will free your mind by teaching you radical selfishness, there is a self-help group for every preference

and temperament. The gurus are the backbone of the system. Through sheer force of personality, they turn themselves into authority figures in the eyes of new recruits—something between professors, confessors and drill sergeants. The process often unfolds over weeks of seminars or therapy sessions, during which time the gurus convince members to sign on to the cult as a way of life—and to bring plenty of friends along for the ride.

Prerequisite: Age 25+

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Bluff, Concentration, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Intimidate, Knowledge (behavioral sciences), Perform (act or stand-up), Sense Motive.

Bonus Feat: Psychobabble

Wealth Bonus Increase: +3

Investigative

Jobs: Investigative reporters, photojournalists, private investigators, police detectives, criminologists, criminal profilers, espionage agents and others who use their skills to gather evidence and analyze clues.

Context: After the upheavals of the 1960s, private investigators and police personnel face broad public mistrust about their motives and methods. (See the Law Enforcement item below for more details.) Spies, meanwhile, are struggling to adjust to the new militancy of the Bloc, Sphere and Consortium, which makes infiltrating those empires immeasurably more difficult and turns every assignment into a potential suicide mission. On the other hand, journalists have been enjoying a heyday ever since a pair of enterprising reporters nearly sank President Stanton Spobeck (and, earlier, embarrassed him by printing top-secret military documents about Americo's involvement in the nation of Mango). The public sees these muckrakers as folk heroes, and journalists see themselves as crusaders against the corrupt elements of the system.

Advanced Classes: Investigators have a full plate these days. This promises to be the dirtiest and most hotly contested presidential election in history, and reporters are covering the hell out of it. Top-level police detectives and private eyes have their hands full investigating reports of the unexplained that are too sensitive for junior officers to handle. (Some investigative types end up specializing in the otherworldly and heading into the Parapsychologist advanced class.) Along with frequent missions overseas, the craftiest Infiltrators are being sent into the ruins of Alamo to seek out the source of the mysterious forces plaguing the Middle West.

Prerequisite: Age 23+.

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or

Postcards From Americo: The Swamp

Since the world went wild on August 9, 1974, the southeastern state of Fontana has been pounded hard by acid hurricanes, tidal waves and rising sea levels. Now most of the state's coastal areas are sunken under several feet of toxic sludge, and the vast swamplands in its interior are home to legions of otherworldly horrors. (Or so Herman Purvis would have us believe.) So the retirees who make up the bulk of Fontana's population have begun a long slog back to their northern homelands, traveling in endless creeping convoys that leave interstate highways backed up for hundreds of miles. Out-of-work adventurers take note: the old folks are always looking for guards to protect their geriatric caravans.

Postcards From Americo: The Mistake By The Lake

The environmental catastrophes of August 9, 1974, didn't just cause widespread devastation—they also created some highly localized eyesores. The city of Hewland, perched on the shores of one of the Great Inland Oceans at the northern border of Americo, was the most visible small-scale victim. On that fateful August day, something set off a chain reaction in the waters of the vast lake, which had turned to toxic muck after decades of uncontrolled dumping. Just before nightfall, the surface of the inland ocean caught fire—and has been burning ever since. For Hewland, which was already staggering under massive debt and a crumbling infrastructure, this was the last straw. Residents fled the sulfurous smoke in droves, leaving the urban core empty and shuttered, and making the city the butt of jokes across the country. Things only got worse when singer/songwriter Edmund Fitzgerald scored a fluke Top 40 hit about the mighty cargo ship *Gordon Lightfoot*, which had vanished in the oily waters.

she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Computer Use, Craft (visual art or writing), Decipher Script, Forgery, Gather Information, Investigate, Knowledge (behavioral sciences, civics, earth and life sciences, or streetwise), Research, Search, Sense Motive.

Bonus Feat: Select either Brawl or Personal Firearms Proficiency.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +2.

Law Enforcement

Jobs: Uniformed police, state troopers, federal police, federal agents, SWAT team members or military police.

Context: Cops around the country are still reeling from upheavals of the past decade. For years, a sizable minority of police operated like demigods, using violence and dummied-up evidence to seal cases, and demanding bribes and freebies from people on their beat. That regime ended with the social revolutions of the 1960s. The civil-rights struggle highlighted abuses of official power, leading the legal system to expand the rights of the accused and limit those of the police. Meanwhile, a broader cultural shift made authority at large the enemy, casting criminals as folk heroes and turning cops into “pigs”—whether or not an individual in question deserved the tag.

Today, law enforcement officers face a hostile (or at least dismissive) public, and many urban departments are wracked by corruption scandals, usually involving bribery or narcotics trafficking. In addition, cops find themselves understaffed and underfunded as fiscal crises bleed big cities dry.

Making life even more complicated, vigilante groups are beginning to form in big cities, a slap in the face of professional law enforcement. Perhaps the best known are Fun City's Red Sentinels, who go so far as to wear makeshift uniforms—track jackets and berets—and get extensive training in martial arts from Mango veterans.

Advanced Classes: Under these tough conditions, many idealistic cops crack and become mavericks. They take up combat-heavy advanced classes, such as Gunslinger and Martial Artist, and

dish out hard justice to deserving punks—leaving legality to the pencil-necks at the courthouse. Negotiators, meanwhile, are much in demand—and in danger—as the nation's flourishing criminal and terrorist groups discover hostage taking as a way to get attention and grab easy cash. Likewise, Soldiers are getting increasingly frequent calls to raid radical lairs or take a whack at the unexplained horrors marauding through the nation's midnight places.

Prerequisite: Age 20+.

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Diplomacy, Drive, Gather Information, Intimidate, Knowledge (civics, earth and life sciences, streetwise, or tactics), Listen.

Bonus Feat: Select one of the following: Combat Martial Arts, Armor Proficiency (light), or Personal Firearms Proficiency.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +1.

Military

Jobs: Any of the branches of the armed forces, as well as the various elite training units such as the Green Berets.

Context: Like their cousins in law enforcement, soldiers have had a tough time lately. As the war in Mango became a flash point for protestors, military personnel were an obvious target of scorn and contempt, as well as widespread accusations of butchery.

Now the armed forces are at their lowest ebb. Many people see them not as a source of national pride but as a symbol of a divisive war best forgotten. And many of the returning soldiers have been assigned to dispiriting jobs, such as hopeless recovery operations in the ruins of the West Coast or dangerous guard work on the borders of Alamo.

As such, the military has become a haven for two widely disparate personality types: society's castoffs, and those with a deep patriotism that now feels alien in most of Americo. The castoffs keep their heads down and do as little as they can, making every

Postcards From Americo: Howe's Chasm

This breathtaking natural monument—a snaking, river-carved canyon nearly 300 miles long and 5,000 feet deep—is the scene of a fierce standoff. As unearthly terrors began rampaging across the Middle West, the Aboriginal Nations—the original inhabitants of Americo—decided to put aside their longstanding differences and make a collective run for it. They deserted their reservations without a word to any outsiders and crossed the Barrier Mountains through long-deserted passes.

Now they have settled at the floor of the Chasm, where they live in sprawling communities that are largely protected from natural havoc and give them access to unspoiled plants and game. But life isn't serene by a long shot. The federal government has sent a detachment of troops to try to force the natives out, with little success so far. And the Aborigones must constantly patrol their territory to guard against incursions by nocturnal horrors.

mission costlier and more dangerous. The militant patriots, meanwhile, blame muddled leadership for losing the war in Mango, and fume that they aren't being put into action against the nation's enemies overseas.

Advanced Classes: These days, most military personnel who stick around long enough to become Soldiers are either hyper-committed patriots or borderline cases with a heavy death wish. Some of the most talented covert-ops warriors move up to Infiltrator to better make their way behind enemy lines. Meanwhile, some personnel returned from action in Mango with their head full of Eastern mysticism and physical discipline—leading them naturally to become Martial Artists.

Prerequisite: Age 18+.

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Climb, Demolitions, Drive, Hide, Knowledge (tactics), Move Silently, Navigate, Pilot, Survival, Swim.

Bonus Feat: Select one of the following: Brawl, Combat Martial Arts, Armor Proficiency (light), or Personal Firearms Proficiency.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +1.

***Red Collar**

Jobs: Anyone who trades in sex or sensuality for a living.

Context: It's been only a few years since the free-love revolution threw old mores out the window—but already Americo has turned sex into big business. Simply put, if you look good, and don't have many compunctions, you'll never hurt for work. BootyDomes pay attractive dancers to spice up the crowds, New Age cults keep sex therapists on staff to break down their recruits' resistance, and

shady talent agents are always trawling for "glamour" models and hard-core stars.

Choice assignments include a layout as "Bedfellow of the Month" in Humboldt Suede's men's magazine or a dancer on *Shel's Rock Pile*, the late-night musical revue filmed live at the towering BootyDome 57 in fabulous Fun City. But by far the top job among romantic professionals is Valet: a live-in mate for a top executive. More than concubines, Valets head their client's household, directing servants, planning social events and creating a network of allies that they (or their bosses) can draw on. They also act as middlemen for their clients, sealing business deals and managing access to the top dog.

Advanced Classes: Most Red Collars move on to the Groover or Personality class, where they earn top dollar in their field. Others put their charismatic talents to grittier use as Negotiators or Infiltrators. For some Valets, the bond with their clients is so strong that they end up protecting them as Bodyguards.

Prerequisite: Cha 13+

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Perform (act, dance, keyboards, percussion instruments, sing, stand-up, stringed instruments, wind instruments), Sense Motive, Tumble.

Bonus Feat: You may choose Dancing Fool, Deceptive, Sensualist, Trustworthy or Life of the Party as a bonus feat.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +3

Religious

Jobs: Ordained clergy of all persuasions, as well as theological scholars and experts on religious studies.

Context: Clerics have put themselves in a bind. During the swinging sixties, many ditched the scriptural hard line and modulated their moral teachings for the times. Others, seeing the successes of the civil-rights movement, started thinking that radical politics held answers religion didn't—forgetting that the movement's leading lights always kept the Old God at the center of their message.

The result of all the spiritual wavering: empty temples. Conservative believers began deserting their churches for tiny, fiery denominations, while liberal ones figured they might as well ditch sin and guilt altogether, and headed off to whatever self-help cult promised them the best deal.

Now dark forces are clearly loose in the world but many priests and believers have forgotten the language of good and evil. To jog their memory, the Old God has been sending them voices and visions, calling them to greater vigilance and militancy. Some clerics have even started to perform, well, miracles: laying on hands, parting waters and more.

Advanced Classes: Most religious move on to the Fightin' Acolyte advanced class, although some become Investigators or Parapsychologists for their faith, looking into the reports of the unknown and figuring out how they jibe with revealed wisdom. Others become all-out holy warriors, like the Martial Artist monks of Tang, or put their lives on the line as Negotiators for local police forces. Occasionally, a member of the clergy will make a splash as an author or commentator and become a Personality.

Prerequisite: Age 23+.

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Decipher



Script, Knowledge (arcane lore, art, behavioral sciences, history, streetwise, or theology and philosophy), Listen, Sense Motive.

Bonus Feat: Believer.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +2.

Rural

Jobs: Farm workers, hunters and others who make a living in rural communities.

Context: Before the epochal events of August 9, farmers' biggest worries were city folk. Outside agitators were nosing into how they raised their crops—forcing them to stop using pesticides and to abandon stretches of prime land over airy ecological concerns. More broadly, urbanites held the reins of culture and seemed to be leading it in strange and dangerous directions. Now the farmers have more immediate fears. Acid rain burns away their crops and poisons their groundwater. Unseen terrors haunt the plains at night, swooping out of the sky to snatch up the unwary, or overrunning whole towns and leaving piles of mutilated bodies in their wake. Even the animal kingdom has gone mad. Small creatures band together and attack isolated farms, and bigger ones seem to have almost human intelligence, luring hunters deep into the woods and tearing them apart at will. These days, being a farmer means being a fighter.

Advanced Classes: Many farmers are taking up the combat classes—Soldier, Gunslinger and Martial Artist—to keep the demons from their door. Others are heading off to Cow College to become Field Scientists and find a cure for the poisons killing off their crops and fouling their water. Still others look for a life on the road as Truckers, or give up the country altogether to become Urban Cowboys.

Prerequisite: Age 15+.

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Balance, Climb, Demolitions, Drive, Handle Animal, Hide, Knowledge (tactics), Move Silently, Navigate, Pilot, Repair, Ride, Survival, Swim.

Bonus Feat: Select either Brawl or Personal Firearms Proficiency.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +1.

Student

Jobs: A student can be in high school, college or graduate school, as well as a seminary, military school or private institution. A college-age student should pick a major field of study.

Context: "Student" became a full-time occupation in the 1960s, as many kids dragged out their college careers to stay out of service in Mango. Then the war ended, and many of the other major battles that energized campuses, such as civil rights, petered out or spread into less dramatic pigeonholes. In that sense, the reelection campaign of Stanton Spobeck and the prospect of another war in Mango are the best things that ever happened to the student body. The campus is radicalized once again as restless youth picks up its placards, piles into buses for protest marches, occupies administration buildings—and occasionally dabbles in criminal activity.

Advanced Classes: Given their radicalism, many students head into the Militant or Middleman advanced classes, skirting the line between far-out politics and the criminal underground.

Prerequisite: Age 15+.

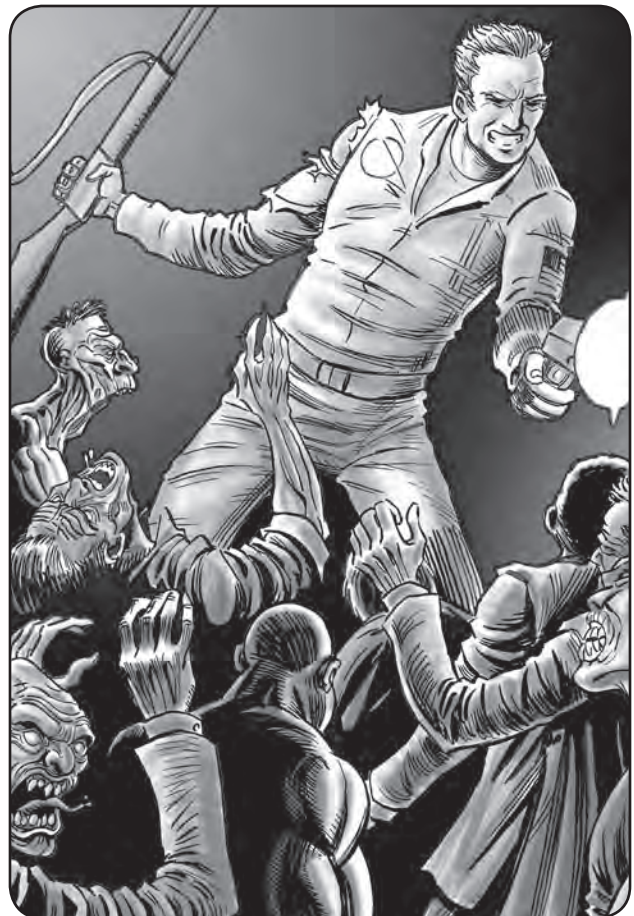
Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Computer Use, Knowledge (arcane lore, art, behavioral sciences, business, civics, current events, earth and life sciences, history, physical sciences, popular culture, technology, or theology and philosophy), Perform (act, dance, keyboards, percussion instruments, sing, stand-up, stringed instruments, or wind instruments), Research.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +1.

***Survivalist**

Jobs: Anyone who retreats from modern society and heads into a cloister to prepare for worse times ahead.

Context: As the 1960s drove society to its knees, people at both extremes of the political spectrum feared the worst. Right-wingers imagined a regime of hippie lawlessness or an eventual collectivist invasion. The Lefties figured Stanton Spobeck and his reactionary cabal would call out the armed forces to suppress protestors, as they had done to lethal effect at a small Middle Western college. Now that the world appears headed for even greater calamities, many people at the fringes of the system are "going off the grid" and creating self-sustaining enclaves to shelter them through the End Times. Most head for the farmlands and forests, building concrete bunkers or heavily fortified compounds with camouflaged gardens and generators that run on animal waste. Some take up residence in cities that have been blighted by riot or abandoned outright, setting up basement generators and mounting spotlights and sandbags on the roof as a bulwark against trespassers. Usually, these so-called "Omega Men" stock their hideouts with prized cultural artifacts that they want to save



Postcards From Americo: Dixon

The largest state in the region, and its cultural and economic capital, Dixon was spared the worst of the savage violence and bitterness that marked the South's civil-rights struggle. Today, the state is struggling to rebuild its economy, but things are largely peaceful under the guiding hand of Governor Quantrill Biscuit. Dixon has largely resisted urban sprawl and citified mores. The streets of its capital are lined with colonnaded mansions draped in vines, and its people have a courtly, antiquated charm nearly lost in modern Americo. The most modernistic structure in the state is the HunkerDome: a glassed-over compound that serves as headquarters for Theramin Hunker's self-help cult.

from the conflagration—as well as lots and lots of guns.

Advanced Classes: These fringers are usually tremendous autodidacts—and so can elevate themselves into nearly any advanced class. Indeed, every advanced class offers valuable talents for the battle against the fall of night. Soldier, Gunslinger and Martial Artist bring invaluable combat skills, Field Medic means you can stitch yourself up after a tough battle against nocturnal horrors, and Field Scientist and Techie let you concoct even more elaborate gadgets to keep things humming behind your backwoods bulwarks.

Prerequisite: Age 20+.

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Craft (chemical, electronic, mechanical, or structural), Disable Device, Drive, Handle Animal, Knowledge (earth and life sciences, physical sciences, or technology), Repair, Ride, Survival, Swim, Treat Injury.

Bonus Feat: Select Brawl, Builder, Guide, Personal Firearms Proficiency or Track.

Wealth Bonus Increase: -2.

Technician

Jobs: Scientists and engineers of all types.

Context: The heady revolutions of the 1960s brought science and politics together as never before. Many laboratories became targets for protestors who wanted to halt military research or stop private-sector work that harmed the ecology or exploited animals. In response, some scientists became activists themselves, while the majority was forced to cross picket lines and work under the threat of sabotage.

Meanwhile, the more blissed-out members of the pocket-protector set began noticing an affinity between Aquarian mysticism and certain branches of theoretical physics. They began producing books and research papers demonstrating this connection, and along the way made formerly oddball fields of study respectable in the academy, from parapsychology to shamanism to the search for extraterrestrial intelligence. Jut in time—now that unearthly horrors are menacing the planet.

Advanced Classes: Broadly speaking, the upheavals in the profession have pushed top scientists into two camps: crusty

rationalists (Field Scientists) who demand hard proof of any otherworldly phenomenon, even if the circumstantial evidence is overwhelming; and tripped-out theorists (Parapsychologists) who'll accept anything and throw it into the quantum stew. Techies, in general, stick to problems they can solve by turning bolts and burning circuits.

Prerequisite: Age 23+.

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Computer Use, Craft (chemical, electronic, mechanical, or structural), Knowledge (business, earth and life sciences, physical sciences, or technology), Repair, Research.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +3.

White Collar

Jobs: Office workers and desk jockeys, such as lawyers, accountants, insurance agents, bank personnel, financial advisers, tax preparers, clerks, sales personnel, real estate agents or middle managers.

Context: The days of the Gray Flannel Suit are over. As the student revolutionaries of the 1960s join the ranks of the bourgeois, they're bringing social progressivism and laid-back attitudes to once-stuffy businesses. In some cases, this means welcome reform; in others, vulgarization, lassitude and ultimately bankruptcy. Meanwhile, desk jockeys who were too old to paint their faces in the sixties didn't miss out on the fun entirely. Many in the white-collar crowd eagerly accepted the message of free love and libertinism—even if they didn't buy the part about changing the world. Now they have become regular drug users (even if just alcohol) and spouse-swappers, or simply old-fashioned adulterers. If you're an office worker, life is probably much more interesting than it used to be.

Prerequisite: Age 23+.

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Computer Use, Diplomacy, Knowledge (art, business, civics, earth and life sciences, history, physical sciences, or technology), Research.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +3.

Postcards From Americo: District One

The capital of Americo is dominated by an enormous mall of monuments, museums and statuary ringed by swank suburbs (as well as a rapidly decaying urban center, which the city's power brokers largely avoid). It goes without saying that the District is the nexus of the nation's political forces and military and intelligence services. Similarly, all the international powers have headquartered their spy networks here—and Stanton Spobeck has set up an equally pervasive matrix of counterintelligence agents.

Advanced Classes

Any advanced class from the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* is open to you except the FX classes and the psychic classes, the latter of which have been replaced by the catchall Psychic class below. You can find notes about existing advanced classes in the section above on starting occupations.

New Classes

As you'll notice, many of the new classes in this section are geared toward smooth-talking your opponents and digging up dirt to use against them, rather than out-and-out combat. This is an attempt to reflect the pop culture dynamic of the period: genre heroes like Columbo, Jim Rockford and Karl Kolchak used brains and charm to crack cases, and hardly ever reached for a gun. Even fairly conventional tough guys like Dirty Harry or Shaft relied on attitude and street savvy as much as bloody knuckles and foot-long handguns. (Likewise bad guys: the seventies were a golden age for villains who pulled strings from a distance, as agents of a faceless, suffocating Establishment.)

If you'd rather load up your character with more straight-ahead combat abilities, by all means go for one of the tough-guy classes in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*. You can always roleplay the character however you want; there's no law that says your Soldier can't be as disarming and self-effacing as Columbo, for instance. Come to think of it, a Columbo with Weapon Focus would definitely come in handy in the *Damnation Decade* world!

Driver

Behind the wheel, the Driver can pull off astonishing feats of daring—darting through the narrowest alleys at tire-melting

speed, making hairpin turns that send his hubcaps flying, weaving down a crowded avenue in pursuit of a vanishing pair of taillights. A Driver might be a daredevil ambulance driver, a highway patrolman or a chauffeur for a crime boss. Rural areas, meanwhile, have their "Dukes of Hazard," daredevils who bullet down back roads one step ahead of the law or alien horrors.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Driver, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +2

Skill: Drive 6 ranks

Feats: Vehicle Expert, Force Stop, Vehicle Dodge

Class Information

Hit Die: 1d8

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, every time the character attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The Driver's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Disable Device (Int), Drive (Dex), Knowledge (current events, history, popular culture, streetwise) (Int), Listen (Wis), Navigate (Int), Pilot (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Repair (Int), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier

Class Features

Critical Crash: If a Driver rolls a natural 20 when making his Drive check to sideswipe or ram maneuver, there is a chance that the impact will inflict additional damage to the opposing vehicle.



The Driver

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Critical crash	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Riding shotgun	+2	+0
3rd	+1	+1	+3	+1	Bonus feat	+2	+1
4th	+2	+1	+4	+1	Hell on wheels I	+3	+1
5th	+2	+1	+4	+1	Roadhog I	+4	+1
6th	+3	+2	+5	+2	Bonus feat	+4	+2
7th	+3	+2	+5	+2	Everybody walks away	+5	+2
8th	+4	+2	+6	+2	Hell on wheels II	+6	+2
9th	+4	+3	+6	+3	Bonus feat	+6	+3
10th	+5	+3	+7	+3	Roadhog II	+7	+3

He makes a second Drive check with the same DC as the first time. If the check succeeds, he may double the number of damage dice. In addition, the driver of the opposing vehicle must succeed at a DC 20 Drive check in order to regain control of his vehicle.

Riding Shotgun: The Driver has perfected the skill of taking offensive actions while driving with the Total Defense option (see Fighting From Vehicles in **Chapter Five** of the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*). In a round where he chooses Total Defense, the Driver may still make a single attack action with a –8 penalty to hit. In addition, any gunners or passengers in the car suffer only a –4 modifier on their roll instead of the usual –8.

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the Driver gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Driver must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it. Aircraft Operation, Alertness, Drive-By Attack, Guide, Improved Initiative, Surface Vehicle Operation, Track.

Hell on Wheels: At 4th level, the Driver may perform one extra stunt per round. Normally, performing a stunt is considered a move action, so a character can only perform two stunts in a single round. Hell on Wheels allows the Driver to perform up to three stunts. At 8th level, the Driver gains an additional extra stunt (allowing for up to four stunts per round). Extra stunts may not be traded out for a different move action—they must be used for performing vehicular maneuvers.

Roadhog: At 5th level, the Driver gains a +2 competence bonus to his Drive skill, as well as to all checks for Hiding and Seeking. At 10th level, he receives another +2 bonus.

Everybody Walks Away: Occupants of the Driver's vehicle, including the Driver, take only half damage in any collision or crash. With a successful Reflex save (DC 15), they take one-quarter damage.

Executive

The Executive is a member of Americo's ruling class, making decisions on company policy that affect thousands of workers and put millions of dollars at risk. She commands an Olympian salary and enjoys perquisites such as mansions, overseas travel, bodyguards and Red Collar companions. She also becomes a master of the sales pitch, crafting messages that win over enemies and keep allies close.

Requirements

To qualify to become an Executive, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skill: Bluff 7 ranks, Diplomacy 7 ranks, Intimidate 7 ranks, Profession 7 ranks, Sense Motive 7 ranks

Feats: Renown

Class Information

Hit Die: 1d8

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, every time the character attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The Executive's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (business, current events, history, popular culture) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Research (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis)

Skill Points at Each Level: 8 + Int modifier

Class Features

Sizing Up: The Executive may make a Sense Motive roll to attempt to learn hidden details about a subject's life and motivations. For example, an Executive could figure out where a subject was born or currently lives by listening to her accent and observing her habits; discern her relationships with other people by watching her talk to them; or snoop out the hidden secret that drives her by probing her with a seemingly unrelated conversation or poring over her paper trail.

If the subject is actively concealing the information, Sizing Up takes a standard opposed roll: Sense Motive vs. the subject's Bluff. If the subject is not actively concealing, it is an unopposed roll with a DC of 15. In both cases, the Executive receives a bonus to her roll equal to her level in this advanced class, and the following modifiers apply:

Situation	Modifier
Extended conversation with, or observations of, subject	+2
Conversations with acquaintances as well	+2
Access to subject's personal effects	+4
Comprehensive report on subject	+5
Only brief contact with subject	-2
Relying on misleading or incomplete report/personal effects	-4

The Executive

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+1	+0	+2	Sizing up	+0	+1
2nd	+1	+2	+0	+3	Money is no object I	+1	+2
3rd	+1	+2	+1	+3	Bonus feat	+1	+3
4th	+2	+2	+1	+4	Corporate resources	+1	+4
5th	+2	+3	+1	+4	Sales pitch	+2	+5
6th	+3	+3	+2	+5	Bonus feat	+2	+6
7th	+3	+4	+2	+5	Life of leisure	+2	+7
8th	+4	+4	+2	+6	Money is no object II	+3	+8
9th	+4	+4	+3	+6	Bonus feat	+3	+9
10th	+5	+5	+3	+7	Friends in high places	+3	+10

Money Is No Object: At 2nd level, the Executive receives a +5 bonus to her Wealth bonus. At 8th level, she receives an additional +5 bonus.

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the Executive gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Executive must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it. Alertness, Attentive, Confident, Creative, Deceptive, Double Bluff, Educated, Focused, Frightful Presence, Iron Will, Life of the Party, Meticulous, Power to Will, Improved Power to Will, Stealthy, Studious, Trustworthy.

Corporate Resources: At 4th level, the Executive can draw upon the resources of her employer to further her own ends. Her staff can compile within an hour a basic biography of anyone she chooses, as well as an outline of any historical event, an abstract of current events and a rough map of any location. With additional time, her staff can produce a complete biography, full details of any historical event, detailed reports on current events and street-by-street maps of any location.

Sales Pitch: The Executive becomes particularly adept at manipulating people to get what she wants. After she has successfully used her Sizing Up ability against someone, she may craft an impromptu sales pitch targeted to their specific desires or weaknesses. The pitch must involve giving the target something he wants—such as money or other assistance—in exchange for a favor that isn't immediately harmful or morally objectionable. For instance, an Executive might realize that the hit man sent to kill her owes loan sharks a small fortune. So she offers to pay off the killer's debts if he lets her go.

The target of a sales pitch must make a Willpower save (DC 10 + the Executive's Charisma bonus + her level in this advanced class) or succumb to the pitch. The Sales Pitch is an attack action. The Executive may use it in combat without provoking an attack of opportunity.

If the Executive has more than an hour to plan the pitch, the DC is increased by +5. If the executive has time to draw upon Corporate Resources, the DC is increased by +10.

Life of Leisure: The Executive has lots of free time on her hands to practice her hobbies. She gains a +4 competence bonus to three skills of her choice. She must choose three separate skills, and they must be skills in which she already has at least 1 rank.

Friends in High Places: At 10th level, the Executive is elected to the elite ranks of company management—such as president

or chief executive officer—and becomes a major figure in the business and political world. She gains access to the company's secrets and helps decide strategy, such as launching product lines and new areas of research.

She may also use her new position to pressure people into doing her bidding. Anyone who meets her must make a Reputation check, except people who have been removed from the currents of popular culture for extraordinary reasons. On a successful check, the Executive may immediately make a Sales Pitch to the subject, no Sizing Up required. The DC to resist the pitch is 15 + the Executive's Charisma bonus + the Executive's level in this advanced class.

Fightin' Acolyte

In a world where religious belief gets bought off by corporations or crushed by collectivist tanks, these clerics put their lives on the line to spread the word—so they've learned to be as quick with their fists as they are with their psalms. They kick drug dealers out of decaying inner cities, comfort peasants caught in the middle of guerrilla wars and sneak behind Gogol Yobar's Purity Wall to conduct closed-door rites under the noses of the secret police. They are also a crucial front line in the war to stop the end of the world. Their faith makes them the toughest demon-hunters around, and their devotion to humanity at large makes them ruthless enemies to aliens, androids and other inhuman fiends.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Fightin' Acolyte, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +2

Skill: Diplomacy 6 ranks, Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 6 ranks

Feat: Believer

Class Information

Hit Die: 1d8

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, every time the character attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The Fightin' Acolyte's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Bluff (Cha), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (history, theology and philosophy) (Int),

Perform (preach) (Cha), Read/Write Language (none), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier

Class Features

Holy Terror: At 1st level, the Fightin' Acolyte may add his Charisma bonus to attack rolls. In addition, he gains the ability to smite nonhuman opponents, adding his level in this advanced class to attack and damage rolls against them. He may use the smite ability a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier. Nonhuman enemies include demons, aliens, mutations and animals gone mad, as well as androids, robots and computers.

At 4th level, the Fightin' Acolyte may add his Charisma bonus to damage rolls as well, including smite rolls.

Confession: At 2nd level, the Fightin' Acolyte may use his force of personality and righteous belief to compel people to reveal secrets. He may command someone to reveal one specific piece of information only, such as a name or an address, and it must be linked to a crime or some other act that the target feels guilty about. The subject gets a Willpower save (DC 10 + the Fightin' Acolyte's Charisma bonus + his level in this advanced class) to resist.

Confession is an attack action. The Fightin' Acolyte may use it in combat without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Bonus Feat: At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the Fightin' Acolyte gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Fightin' Acolyte must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it. Double Bluff, Frightful Presence, Iron Will, Power to Will, Improved Power to Will, Studious, Trustworthy.

Thy Will Be Done: As the Fightin' Acolyte grows into his clerical responsibilities, he receives a keener understanding of the human soul. This gives him a +2 bonus on all Willpower saves to resist demonic possession, and allows him to re-roll a number of failed Willpower saves each day equal to his Wisdom bonus. (The +2 bonus stacks with any other Willpower bonuses he may receive from feats.)

At 8th level, he gains the ability to give every friendly character within 20 feet a +1 bonus on their Willpower saves. In addition, if he has a chance to spend at least one minute counseling a character, that character may add the Fightin' Acolyte's Charisma bonus to his next Willpower save. This effect does not stack with the automatic +1 bonus, and neither effect works on someone who is possessed.

Not of This Earth: The Fightin' Acolyte has such a keen sensitivity to otherworldly phenomena that he may automatically sense any nonhuman creatures, as well as sacred artifacts or holy relics, within 60 feet.

Miracle: The Fightin' Acolyte may call upon the Old God to help him and his friends out of a jam. He may use this power a number of times per day equal to his Charisma bonus. Roll a d20 + the character's Charisma bonus, versus the DCs listed below:

Miracle	DC
Allowing the player or an ally to retry a blown roll, or forcing an enemy to redo a successful one	10
Causing a minor disruption in time and space: An object the player left behind at H.Q. appears in his pocket, an opponent's gun jams, a cab shows up out of nowhere on a rainy day in Fun City	10
Allowing the player or an ally to take 10 on a roll he ordinarily couldn't, or automatically subtracting 10 from an opponent's roll	15
Causing a medium disruption in time and space: The player (or an opponent) is whisked out of a dangerous situation and reappears in the nearest safe (or convenient) place, a whole platoon's guns jam	15
Allowing the player or an ally to take 20 on a roll he ordinarily couldn't, or automatically treating an opponent's roll as a 1	20
Causing a large disruption in time and space: The player or an ally is transported back in timeseveral minutes to prevent a murder, a fully stocked oasis appears out of nowhere as the players are wandering half-starved in the desert	20
Allowing the player or an ally to "take 25" or more, causing an epochal disruption in time and space, such as parting a sea or raising someone from the dead	25+

Note that the Old God will not kill opponents outright or solve the heroes' problems for them. You can't pray that a roof collapses on a platoon of mutants, or that a book falls off the library shelf, open to the piece of information you need. Instead, the Old God generally will only help you perform regular tasks yourself, or shelter you if you've landed in a dangerous situation because you are selflessly

The Fightin' Acolyte

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+1	+0	+2	Holy terror I	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+2	+0	+3	Confession	+2	+0
3rd	+1	+2	+1	+3	Bonus feat	+2	+0
4th	+2	+2	+1	+4	Holy terror II	+3	+0
5th	+2	+3	+1	+4	Thy will be done I	+4	+1
6th	+3	+3	+2	+5	Bonus Feat	+4	+1
7th	+3	+4	+2	+5	Not of this Earth	+5	+1
8th	+4	+4	+2	+6	Thy will be done II	+6	+1
9th	+4	+4	+3	+6	Bonus feat	+6	+2
10th	+5	+5	+3	+7	Miracle	+7	+2

Groover

Requirements

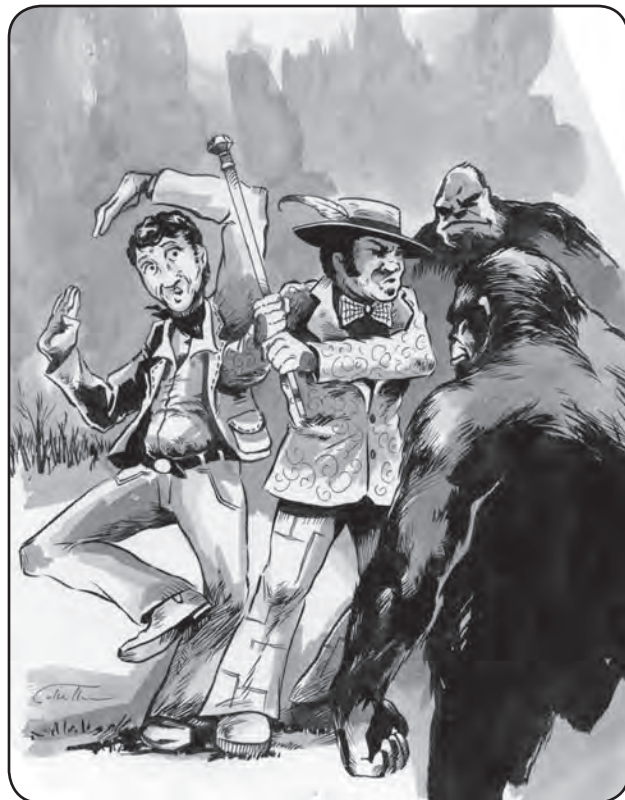
Feat: Dancing Fool, Life of the Party and Sensualist

Class Information

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Enough About Me: The Groover can use his charm to get others to reveal more about themselves than they'd like. At 2nd level, he may add his Charisma bonus, as well as his Wisdom bonus, to



Thinking With the Hips: The Groover can use romantic wiles to get someone of the opposite sex, or someone of the same sex who is so inclined, to perform an irrational action. At 4th level, this is an action that the target knows is ludicrous but thinks will immediately lead to romantic contact, such as unlocking a cell door or abandoning a guard station. The target won't undertake any action that she thinks is morally wrong or lethal to herself or others.

Class Level	Base Attack				Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
	Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save			
1st	+0	+1	+1	+0	Combat charm I	+0	+2
2nd	+1	+2	+2	+0	Enough about me I	+1	+2
3rd	+1	+2	+2	+1	Bonus feat	+1	+2
4th	+2	+2	+2	+1	Thinking with the hips I	+1	+3
5th	+2	+3	+3	+1	Combat charm II	+2	+3
6th	+3	+3	+3	+2	Bonus feat	+2	+3
7th	+3	+4	+4	+2	Enough about me II	+2	+4
8th	+4	+4	+4	+2	Thinking with the hips II	+3	+4
9th	+4	+4	+4	+3	Bonus feat	+3	+4
10th	+5	+5	+5	+3	Can't stop the music	+3	+5

To use this ability, make a check with one of your Charisma-based skills using the new definitions in the Sensualist feat (Bluff for flirting, etc.). You receive a +2 bonus to your roll, which stacks with the +2 that Sensualist ordinarily provides.

Bluff is a standard opposed roll versus your target's Sense Motive skill. Intimidate is a roll against DC 10 + your target's character level. When using Diplomacy, you must change the target's attitude to Friendly, and for Perform you must deliver a Great Performance.

At 8th level, the Groover may try to persuade the target to perform a long term action, or a series of actions, that the target believes will lead to romantic contact, such as stealing secret files from the workplace or driving the Groover and his allies across state lines to safety. In extraordinary circumstances, the target can be persuaded to undertake actions she believes to be morally wrong or lethal, but she gets a bonus of +2 or higher on her opposed roll, depending on the severity of the action.

Thinking With the Hips is an attack action. The Groover may use it in combat without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Can't Stop the Music: The Groover radiates such a strong good-time vibe that opponents subconsciously pull their punches. The first time an opponent engages the Groover in melee combat, she must make a Willpower save or else convert all attacks on the Groover to nonlethal ones for the duration of the combat. The DC for this save is 10 + the Groover's Charisma bonus + the Groover's level in this advanced class. Opponents making ranged attacks on the Groover must make their Willpower save or fire on another target instead. If another target isn't available, they fire at the Groover but take a -2 circumstance modifier to their roll.

Middleman

This streetwise gypsy makes her living by keeping her ear to the ground. If something happens in her home town, she knows about it before the papers or the police do. She's not a crook, and she's not an undercover cop, but she has friends on both sides of the divide and trades information to all of them for cash and favors. Sometimes she is pressed into service as a courier, shuttling ultimatums from one camp to the other. But if she ever gets too cozy with one team, she risks her privileged position—and possibly her life. The cops and crooks both know how many secrets she's keeping, and how dangerous she could be if she decided to trade on all that information to give one side an advantage.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Middleman, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: Diplomacy 6 ranks, Gather Information 6 ranks, Bluff 6 ranks, Speak Language (jive)

Feat: Double Bluff

Class Information

Hit Die: 1d6

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, every time the Middleman attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The Middleman's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (current events, popular culture, streetwise) (Int), Read/Write Language (none), Speak Language (none), Sense Motive (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 7 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The Grapevine: Through her extensive network of contacts, the Middleman can find out just about anything about a person, place or event in her home city. She may add her level in this advanced class to her Gather Information rolls, and she may make a Gather Information check on general or specific information instantaneously. In addition, she spends only an hour making a Gather Information check for restricted information. Protected information, however, still requires 1d4+1 hours for a check. Retries may be made under normal rules. The purchase DC for using Gather Information is reduced by 10.

At 4th level, the Middleman's reputation has grown such that she can use this ability—and the others she has gained in the meantime—in any city in her region. At 7th level, she may use them in any city in the country.

Friend of a Friend: The Middleman's contacts in the underworld and law enforcement bring her other benefits as well. At 2nd level, the Middleman receives a +2 bonus to her Reputation score when dealing with people from those spheres. In addition, whenever a cop or criminal recognizes her through a Reputation check, the subject will be willing to give the Middleman a piece of information or do her a favor (that is, make a specific skill check on her behalf) that does not go against the subject's moral code or put him or his allies in peril. In exchange, the

The Middleman

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+0	+1	+1	The grapevine I	+1	+2
2nd	+1	+0	+2	+2	Friend of a friend I	+2	+2
3rd	+1	+1	+2	+2	Bonus feat	+2	+2
4th	+2	+1	+2	+2	The grapevine II	+3	+3
5th	+2	+1	+3	+3	Friend of a friend II	+4	+3
6th	+3	+2	+3	+3	Bonus feat	+4	+3
7th	+3	+2	+4	+4	The grapevine III	+5	+4
8th	+4	+2	+4	+4	Who's your daddy	+6	+4
9th	+4	+3	+4	+4	Bonus feat	+6	+4
10th	+5	+3	+5	+5	Smooth talker	+7	+5

Middleman must provide a piece of information or make a specific skill check on the subject's behalf.

At 5th level, the Middleman has become so valuable to her peers that she develops strong allies at the top levels of crime and law enforcement. When facing a dangerous situation involving cops or crooks, she may add her level in this advanced class to her Diplomacy or Bluff roll, reflecting her ability to drop names. In addition, once per week, she may call in a favor from her high-ranking pals. They will be willing to bend important rules or grant her privileged access, but nothing that will put them in jeopardy over the long or short term. Possible favors include handing over a highly protected piece of information, granting special access to someone under armed guard or providing an entourage of goons for one specific assignment. In return, the high-level contact will expect the Middleman to be on call at all hours and to supply a steady flow of information.

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the Middleman gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Middleman must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it. Alertness, Attentive, Confident, Dancing Fool, Deceptive, Defensive Martial Arts, Listen, Renown, Spot, Trustworthy.

Who's Your Daddy: The Middleman is at expert at using her privileged position in the demimonde to cow her enemies. She may add her Reputation bonus to her Defense.

Smooth Talker: The Middleman has seen too much to lose her cool in a conversation. She may take 20 on all Charisma-based skill checks, in any situation. This stacks with the benefits of the Friend of a Friend feat.

Militant

These underworld figures skirt the border between criminal, political radical and terrorist. But unlike opportunistic crooks who use politics as a fig leaf for their crimes, the Militant believes in his cause. Some Militants are scrupulously nonviolent, fashioning themselves as merry pranksters and Robin Hoods. They steal from the rich using flamboyant distractions to avoid bloodshed, and fund community centers in poor neighborhoods with the proceeds. Or they perform acts of victimless sabotage to deliver a political message. Others have little qualms about using force to achieve their ends. They plant bombs, hijack planes, take hostages and brainwash helpless people into abetting their crimes.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Militant, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +2

Skills: Craft (chemicals) 6 ranks, Demolitions 6 ranks, Knowledge (streetwise) 6 ranks, Disable Device 6 ranks, Speak Language (jive).

Class Information

Hit Die: 1d8

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, every time the Militant attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The Militant's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Craft (chemical, electronic, mechanical, pharmaceutical, structural) (Int), Demolitions (Int), Disable Device (Int), Forgery (Int), Knowledge (civics, history, popular culture, streetwise) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Read/Write Language (none), Search (Int), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Go to Ground: The Militant is an expert at hiding out in urban areas and scrounging supplies as needed. He may add his level in this advanced class to all Hide and Move Silently rolls in an urban area, as well as to all Search rolls made to scare up supplies in a city.

Attention Getter: The Militant may attempt to cause a disturbance either to distract a crowd of opponents or to focus their attention on him, using whatever materials he has on him and can find at the scene. The Militant declares he is using this ability, and then the highest-level GM character in the crowd rolls a Willpower save for the entire group. The DC for the roll is 10 + the Militant's Charisma bonus + his level in this advanced class. If the GM character blows the save, the Militant either commands the crowd's attention or directs their attention wherever he wishes for a number of rounds equal to his Charisma bonus. (Negative bonuses, or bonuses of zero, count as one.) They will hang on his every word, or ignore whatever he is trying to get them to ignore, unless something breaks their focus.

If the Militant attempts to extend the effect for another series of rounds equal to his Charisma bonus, the crowd gets another Willpower save and takes a +2 bonus to its roll. The bonus increases by +2 on every subsequent attempt by the Militant to extend the effect.

The Militant

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+2	+0	+1	Go to ground	+1	+1
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+2	Attention getter	+1	+1
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+2	Bonus feat	+2	+1
4th	+3	+4	+1	+2	Winging it	+2	+2
5th	+3	+4	+1	+3	Indoctrinate I	+3	+2
6th	+4	+5	+2	+3	Bonus feat	+3	+2
7th	+5	+5	+2	+4	Contacts	+4	+3
8th	+6	+6	+2	+4	Indoctrinate II	+4	+3
9th	+6	+6	+3	+4	Bonus feat	+5	+3
10th	+7	+7	+3	+5	Indoctrinate III	+5	+4

Attention Getter is an attack action. This ability may be used in combat without provoking an attack of opportunity. The crowd must be able to see and hear the Militant for the duration of the action in question, or else the effect is broken.

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the Militant gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Militant must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it. Armor Proficiency (light), Brawl, Combat Martial Arts, Deceptive, Defensive Martial Arts, Low Profile, Personal Firearms Proficiency.

Winging It: The Militant takes no penalty when using an improvised weapon, and receives a +2 bonus to his Disable Device, Demolitions, and Craft (chemicals) skills (provided he already has at least 1 rank in those skills). In addition, he may attempt to create explosives or poisons with a bare minimum of even the unlikeliest components, such as the miscellany in a jail cell.

Indoctrinate: The Militant can enlist someone to his cause. This may be as innocent as convincing them by a brief argument or example, or as shadowy as brainwashing.

At 5th level, the Militant's target makes a Willpower save against a DC 10 + the Militant's Charisma bonus + his level in this advanced class. If the target fails, he will tell the Militant one secret and do him one favor (such as making one skill check for him), as long as it doesn't harm anyone or violate the subject's moral principles. Indoctrination takes a number of rounds equal to the subject's Wisdom bonus. (Negative bonuses, or bonuses of zero, count as one.) Indoctrinate is an attack action. The Militant may use it in combat without provoking an attack of opportunity.

At 8th level, the Militant can persuade a target to tell him multiple secrets (equal to the Militant's Charisma bonus) and perform multiple favors (again, equal to his Charisma bonus). The subject still won't perform actions that harm others, but will violate his principles if it furthers the Militant's grand political goals.

At 10th level, the Militant can command unlimited favors from a subject. If a subject is asked to harm another, or strongly violate his moral principles, he gets another Willpower save, with a +2 modifier to his roll (or higher, if the act is particularly repugnant). If he fails three consecutive Willpower saves to resist the Militant's commands, the subject is completely under the Militant's power. He can make no further Willpower saves unless jolted by a physical or mental shock.

Contacts: The Militant has built up a network of contacts in the underworld, radical political circles and foreign intelligence

services. He receives a +2 bonus to his Reputation when dealing with people from these circles. In addition, if a member of one of these groups recognizes the Militant on a Reputation check, he will be prepared to supply the Militant with temporary shelter, weapons and enough cash for a one-day bonus of 2d4 to his Wealth checks. The contact will expect a large favor in return, such as help with an assassination or sabotage operation.

Omegaballer

The warrior athletes of Omeagaball are exemplars of toughness and courage. They are among the highest paid, and most worshiped, celebrities in the world, enjoying instant recognition and wealth unknown to all but a handful of executives, politicians and movie stars. But they pay for their position in blood. Omeagaball is the deadliest sporting contest ever devised, demanding superhuman reserves of strength and coordination. This advanced class shares some abilities with the Daredevil class, and many prestige-seeking Daredevils wind up switching to Omeagaball as a career.

Rules for Omeagaball can be found later in this chapter.

Requirements

To qualify to become an Omeagaballer, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +3

Skills: Tumble 6 ranks, Jump 6 ranks

Feats: Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Heroic Surge.

Class Features

Hit Die: 1d10

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, every time the Omeagaballer attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The Omeagaballer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Balance (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Welcome to the Majors: A beginning Omeagaballer gains a number of benefits when he reaches the Big Show. He receives Armor Proficiency (light), which enables him to get the full benefits of his heavily padded uniform, as well as Weapon Focus with the Omeagabat and Omeagaball. Reflecting his newfound

The Omeagaballer

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+1	+1	+2	+0	Welcome to the majors	+1	+2
2nd	+2	+2	+3	+0	Team player	+2	+2
3rd	+3	+2	+3	+1	Bonus feat	+2	+2
4th	+4	+2	+4	+1	Brick house	+3	+3
5th	+5	+3	+4	+1	Go-to guy	+4	+3
6th	+6	+3	+5	+2	Bonus feat	+4	+3
7th	+7	+4	+5	+2	Adrenaline rush (one ability score)	+5	+4
8th	+8	+4	+6	+2	Delay damage	+6	+4
9th	+9	+4	+6	+3	Bonus feat	+6	+4
10th	+10	+5	+7	+3	Adrenaline rush (two ability scores)	+7	+5

prominence, he may add his Reputation bonus to his Wealth checks.

Team Player: The Omegaballer has an almost psychic connection with his allies, allowing him to anticipate their moves and signal his own intentions to them. Before making his move in a combat round, he may spend up to a minute of real-world time discussing strategy with any other player whose character is within visual or audible range.

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the Omegaballer gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Omegaballer must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it. Acrobatic, Combat Martial Arts, Defensive Martial Arts, Improved Damage Threshold, Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Mobility, Spring Attack.

Brick House: The Omegaballer has matured into an immovable defenseman. He gains a +2 competence bonus to all Bull Rush, Grapple, Trip and Disarm checks. He may also add his Strength bonus to his Defense for a number of rounds per day equal to his level in this advanced class. He may declare he is using this ability at any point during combat.

Go-To Guy: At 5th level, the Omegaballer has proved so resourceful and durable that he becomes the receiver of choice when the game is on the line. He receives the benefits of the Improved Initiative feat, and if his Initiative roll ties with another character, he may act first regardless of their respective Dexterity scores. If the Omegaballer already has the Improved Initiative feat, he may add +6 to his Initiative bonus instead of the regular +4.

Adrenaline Rush: At 7th level, an Omegaballer can temporarily increase one of his physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution). The Omegaballer spends 1 action point and gets to increase the selected ability score by 1d4+1 points. The increase lasts for a number of rounds equal to his class level. At the end of the duration, the Omegaballer is fatigued for 1d4+1 rounds. At 10th level, an Omegaballer can temporarily increase two physical ability scores. At the end of the duration, the Omegaballer is fatigued for 1d6+2 rounds.

Delay Damage: Once per day, an Omegaballer of 8th level or higher can delay the damage dealt by a single attack or effect for a number of rounds equal to his class level.

Parapsychologist

The Parapsychologist uses cutting-edge scientific techniques to delve into unearthly mysteries. She might be an investigator for an environmental agency, looking into reports of bizarre animal behavior in the deep forests or strange shadows gliding across crater lakes. Or she might be a correspondent for a scientific journal (or trashy TV show), fact-checking claims of UFO sightings or exorcisms. She might also be a consultant to the police or a mental hospital, called in to help untangle a gruesome mystery that defies all explanation.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Parapsychologist, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: 6 ranks in at least one Craft skill (except visual arts, structural or writing), 6 ranks in at least one Knowledge skill (arcane lore, behavioral sciences, earth and life sciences, history, physical sciences, technology, or theology and philosophy), 6 ranks in Gather Information, 6 ranks in Sense Motive.

Beyond The Barrier With Herman Purvis

Montage of lurid woodcuts and paintings showing goat-faced fiends tormenting the damned. Cue menacing, atonal synthesizer music.

PURVIS (vo)

Evil. In ancient times, people believed it was a supernatural force. In the twentieth century, we see it as a sickness—horrible, but open to explanation.

Montage: fascist madman Wotan Heide and his victims, collectivist dictator Gogol Yobar attending a show trial, and any number of angry rioters doing horrible things.

Cut to HIPSTER PRIEST with sideburns and suede jacket.

HIPSTER PRIEST

The devil is a creation of a time when people didn't understand psychology. We have a much more nuanced picture these days. If you want to see the devil, look in the mirror.

PURVIS (vo)

But some researchers now say the ancient theologians may have been right all along.

Cut to scientists sitting around a green computer screen, comparing a star chart to a woodcut in an old leather bound book. Cut to surveillance photographs of cultic rituals—in the last photo, zoom in on a mysterious figure in the shadows, who appears to have wings.

Cut to slightly off-putting THERAPIST in tasteful office.

THERAPIST

Over the past twelve months, I have interviewed any number of patients with symptoms that can only be described as demonic possession.

Cut to ANONYMOUS SUBJECT under hypnosis.

THERAPIST (vo)

Can you tell me your name?

ANONYMOUS SUBJECT

(Garble; at least five voices speaking)

THERAPIST (vo)

Is Jane in there? Can I speak to Jane?

ANONYMOUS SUBJECT

Jane is with us now. Soon we will have you.

THERAPIST (vo)

Why do you say that?

ANONYMOUS SUBJECT

We know what you want—pervert!

Cut to HERMAN PURVIS sitting in a cathedral. He wears a blazer and turtleneck and has prominent sideburns.

PURVIS

Speaking in tongues. Dark promises. Hideous rituals. Just another sign of the times—or an ancient evil reawakening? Tonight, we'll look for the answers. I'm Herman Purvis—come with me as we travel Beyond the Barrier.

The Parapsychologist

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+0	+1	+1	Rumors and echoes	+0	+0
2nd	+1	+0	+2	+2	Little green thoughts	+1	+0
3rd	+1	+1	+2	+2	Bonus feat	+1	+1
4th	+2	+1	+2	+2	Cloak of weirdness I	+1	+1
5th	+2	+1	+3	+3	Minor visitation	+2	+1
6th	+3	+2	+3	+3	Bonus feat	+2	+2
7th	+3	+2	+4	+4	Legendary weapon	+2	+2
8th	+4	+2	+4	+4	Cloak of weirdness II	+3	+2
9th	+4	+3	+4	+4	Bonus feat	+3	+3
10th	+5	+3	+5	+5	Major visitation	+3	+3

Rumors and Echoes

Class of Evidence	DC	The Parapsychologist May
Vague (elliptical news stories, garbled eyewitness accounts, murky photos, movies or audio)	25	...get a general idea of where to investigate further. With a DC 25 Research check, the investigator will uncover several possible explanations for the phenomenon in question (one of which will be correct).
Specific (news stories with concrete details, descriptive eyewitness accounts, clear records, physical contact with an artifact)	20	...identify the phenomenon outright. He will be able to name the phenomenon and recall stories about its history (or past occurrences of it). He will not know any specifics beyond that. A DC 20 Research check will fill in any blanks that the GM deems appropriate.
Firsthand (contact with an actual example of the phenomenon)	15	...identify the phenomenon outright, recall stories and identify at least one helpful specific (such as a creature's mating habits or food sources).

Class Information

Hit Die: 1d8

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, every time the Parapsychologist attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The Parapsychologist's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Computer Use (Int), Craft (chemical, electronic, mechanical, pharmaceutical) (Int), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (arcane lore, behavioral sciences, earth and life sciences, history, physical sciences, technology, theology and philosophy) (Int), Read/Write Language (none), Research (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (none).

Skill Points at Each Level: 7 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Rumors and Echoes: The Parapsychologist has absorbed thousands of myths, legends and tall tales in his research. When confronted with an otherworldly phenomenon, or even just evidence of one, he may make a check with the appropriate Knowledge skill and add his level in this advanced class to the roll. If he succeeds, he can tell the information on the Rumors and Echoes table.

Little Green Thoughts: The Parapsychologist gains the benefits of the Alien Language Affinity, Alien Medicine and Talk to Machines feats. If he already has Alien Language Affinity, he may halve the time periods listed in the description of the feat. If he already has Alien Medicine or Talk to Machines, he may add a +2 bonus to any skill checks he makes using those feats.



Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the Parapsychologist gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Parapsychologist must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it. Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Attentive, Believer, Educated, Gearhead, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Psychobabble, Repair Bionics, Studios.

Cloak of Weirdness: As the Parapsychologist advances in his class, he sees more and more supernatural action—and he learns to use that knowledge for self-defense. At 4th level, he may add one-half the ranks in his highest Knowledge skill to his Defense when battling supernatural creatures. At 8th level, he may add that same bonus to attacks on supernatural creatures.

Minor Visitation: By 5th level, the Parapsychologist has built up a reputation for himself in supernatural circles. His notoriety is so great that an unearthly creature (or a human representative) seeks him out and pays him a visit. It is up to the GM to determine the specifics of the encounter and fit it into his broader story for the campaign. If the creature is hostile, it will use the visit to size up the competition and perhaps sabotage the Parapsychologist's current plans: in other words, a classic "So we meet at last!" moment, full of tension but not necessarily actual violence. On the other hand, the visitor might be friendly—a faithful messenger of the Old God. In this case, the creature would most likely bring a relevant prophecy or perhaps even a helpful artifact. In any event, the Parapsychologist comes away from the encounter with a deeper understanding of the secret ways of the world. He receives a permanent +1 bonus on all skill checks and saves related to the supernatural or unearthly, except attacks and damage. This bonus stacks with the bonus from Little Green Thoughts.

Legendary Weapon: In his travels, the Parapsychologist uncovers a weapon that has sacred or otherwise mystical properties. He gains the appropriate proficiency for the weapon, as well as Weapon Focus. While the player may describe the myths and legends surrounding the weapon, its actual powers and its introduction to the campaign are up to the GM.

Major Visitation: By now, it has become obvious to the powers that be that the Parapsychologist is a deciding force in supernatural affairs. As such, one of the factions trying to take over the world will make an attempt on his life—and in the process tip their hand about their grand plans for the Earth. It is up to the GM to determine the specifics, but the clues should be detailed enough to lead the Parapsychologist and his team to the heart of the factions' plans. The Parapsychologist may also be visited by a high-level envoy from the forces of good, who delivers an urgent, detailed message or aid in the form of a minor miracle.

Dream Weavers

In the credulous seventies, some enterprising psychics have made a lucrative niche for themselves in popular culture. Farsighted busybodies write advice columns or become astrologers to the stars (and sometimes, secretly, to government leaders). Lurid nobodies with minor telekinetic talents make a fortune bending spoons on the talk show circuit. The most ambitious showmen cook up garish magic acts and tour the world doing double-take levitation gags.

But, for the most part, none of these hustlers are full-blown Psychics: in game terms, they move into this advanced class long enough to acquire a primary power or two, then leave it for the glitzier Personality class.

In addition, the Parapsychologist's bonus on skill checks and saves related to the supernatural increases to +2.

Psychic

In another century, the Psychic might have been honored as a prophet, appointed as a royal sorcerer—or locked away as a lunatic. Today, men and women with mental powers tend to keep their talents to themselves. They settle into jobs where they can pass off their powers as gut instincts, from psychiatry to consulting to crime. Most of them never try to explore the source of their abilities, or to hone them into anything more than useful tools for making ends meet. (Occasionally, however, they do grab at fame and fortune. See "Dream Weavers" sidebar.)

Some, however, become adventurers. The assumption behind this advanced class is that after several missions with his team, the hero has a sudden deep insight and realizes that he has latent mental powers. From there, he devotes his attention to developing those talents and becoming the team's secret weapon—the one who can grab a guard's keys from across the room or send a message into a sealed bunker or summon up a vision that reveals the identity of a murderer.

But it's a dangerous business. In *Damnation Decade*, psychic powers are rare and unstable. Even the most powerful Psychics lose control of their talents, with disastrous results.

Rules for psychic powers can be found later in this chapter.

The Psychic

Class Level	Base Attack			Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
	Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save			
1st	+0	+1	+0	+2	Primary Power	+1
2nd	+1	+2	+0	+3	Primary Power	+2
3rd	+1	+2	+1	+3	Secondary Power	+2
4th	+2	+2	+1	+4	Primary Power	+3
5th	+2	+3	+1	+4	Primary Power	+4
6th	+3	+3	+2	+5	Secondary Power	+4
7th	+3	+4	+2	+5	Primary Power	+5
8th	+4	+4	+2	+6	Primary Power	+6
9th	+4	+4	+3	+6	Secondary Power	+6
10th	+5	+5	+3	+7	Primary Power	+7

The Trucker

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Breaker breaker	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Pit stop	+1	+0
3rd	+1	+1	+3	+1	Bonus feat	+2	+1
4th	+2	+1	+4	+1	Good buddy	+2	+1
5th	+2	+1	+4	+1	King of the road +2	+3	+1
6th	+3	+2	+5	+2	Bonus feat	+3	+2
7th	+3	+2	+5	+2	Big rig	+4	+2
8th	+4	+2	+6	+2	King of the road +4	+4	+2
9th	+4	+3	+6	+3	Bonus feat	+5	+3
10th	+5	+3	+7	+3	Critical strike	+5	+3

Requirements

To qualify to become a Psychic, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +2

Skills: Bluff 6 ranks, Concentration 6 ranks, Intimidate 6 ranks, Sense Motive 6 ranks

Class Features

Hit Die: 1d6

Action points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, every time the Psychic attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The Psychic's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha),

Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Listen (Wis), Perform (any) (Cha), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier

Class Features

Primary Power: At every level besides 3rd, 6th and 9th, the Psychic may either take a new primary power or the next stage of one he already has. In other words, a Psychic with the basic version of a power could take the improved version, and someone with improved could take advanced.

Secondary Power: At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the Psychic may take a secondary power from the following list: Alien Language Affinity, Brain Trace, Group Think, Pushing the Envelope, Talk to Machines, Translator.

Trucker

These long-haul loners keep Americo running. They transport any number of crucial supplies across the country, from food to fuel to mail, powering through unimaginably long shifts behind the wheel with a mug of coffee and a handful of pills. Since their routes often take them through the vast haunted Middle West, Truckers often find themselves up against flying saucers, mutant wildlife and other horrors of the night.

But the Truckers don't have to face the long roads entirely alone. They form lasting friendships with fellow long-haulers, maintained over CB broadcasts, and usually find a pet to share their travels (often a dog or monkey in overalls).

Requirements

To qualify to become a Trucker, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +2

Skill: Drive 4 ranks, Speak Language (trucker)

Feats: Vehicle Expert, Surface Vehicle Operation

Class Information

Hit Die: 1d10

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, every time the Trucker attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The Trucker's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Bluff (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Drive (Dex),



Gamble (Wis), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Jump (Str), Navigate (Int), Read/Write Language (none), Repair (Int), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Speak Language (none), Survival (Wis), Treat Injury (Str), Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier

Class Features

Breaker Breaker: The Trucker is well versed in the secret jargon of the road and can use it to good advantage. He gains a +6 bonus on all face-to-face Gather Information checks with other truckers and a +4 to checks over a CB radio. The information provided will come in form of rambling personal anecdotes and tall tales. Asking a fellow Trucker to get to the point is considered bad form, even in times of extreme peril.

Pit Stop: The Trucker's long hours behind the wheel help him push his body beyond human limits. He gains the benefits of the Endurance feat if he doesn't have it already. (If he does, he may take a +6 bonus on the checks listed in the feat description instead of the usual +4 bonus.) Moreover, he may ignore the effects of Exhaustion (see **Chapter Five** of the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*) and with a DC 15 Fortitude save may shake off the effects of Fatigue. If he does become Fatigued, he needs only an hour of rest to return to normal.

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the Trucker gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Trucker must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it. Animal Affinity, Brawl, Drive-By Attack, Force Stop, Guide, Life of the Party, Nimble, Streetfighting, Vehicle Dodge.

Good Buddy: At 4th level, the Trucker may call an animal from the wild to be his companion on the lonely road—and his right hand in emergencies. Use the base statistics for a creature of the companion's kind, as listed in **Chapter Eight** of the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*, but as the Trucker advances in level, the animal companion gains the benefits listed in the Good Buddy table.

Good Buddy

Class Level	Bonus HD	Defense Adj.	Str/Dex Adj.	Bonus Tricks	Special
4th	+0	+0	+0	1	Link
5th	+2	+2	+1	2	Evasion
6th	+4	+4	+2	3	Devotion
7th	+6	+6	+3	4	Multiattack
8th	+8	+8	+4	5	
9th	+10	+10	+5	6	Improved evasion
10th	+12	+12	+6	7	

- **Bonus HD:** As the Trucker gains levels, the animal companion gains a number of additional eight-sided Hit Dice. See **Chapter Eight** of the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* for rules on advancing animals.
- **Defense Adjustment:** The number noted in the Good Buddy table is an improvement to the animal companion's existing defense bonus.
- **Str/Dex Adjustment:** Add the value in the Good Buddy table to the animal companion's Strength and Dexterity scores.
- **Bonus Tricks:** The value given increases the maximum the total number of bonus tricks that the Trucker may choose to teach the animal (see the Handle Animal skill in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*). The Trucker can teach the animal these bonus tricks without having to go through the usual training

time and Handle Animal checks. The Trucker selects these bonus tricks, and once selected, they can't be changed.

- **Link:** A Trucker can handle his animal companion as a free action, or push it as a move action, even if he doesn't have any ranks in the Handle Animal skill. The Trucker gains a +4 circumstance bonus on all Handle Animal checks made regarding an animal companion.
- **Evasion:** If an animal companion is subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, it takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw.
- **Multiattack:** An animal companion gains Multiattack as a bonus feat if it has three or more natural attacks and does not already have that feat. If it does not have the requisite three or more natural attacks, the animal companion instead gains a second attack with its primary natural weapon at a -5 penalty.
- **Improved Evasion:** When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, an animal companion takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and only half damage if the saving throw fails.

King of the Road: At 5th level, the Trucker receives a +2 competence bonus to his Drive skill. At 8th level, this bonus increases to +4.

Big Rig: At 7th level, the Trucker becomes expert at using his vehicle as a weapon. In collisions and ramming, the Trucker's damage die is increased by one (d2 becomes d4, d4 becomes d6, etc.), and after a successful hit the opposing driver must make a DC 25 Driving check to maintain control of his vehicle. In addition, the Trucker can unnerve the drivers of other vehicles. If he makes a successful Intimidate check (see the Intimidate skill in **Chapter Two** of the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*), the other driver suffers a -5 penalty to all Drive checks for the next 10 minutes.

Convoy: Once per week, the Trucker may use his CB radio to summon up to ten fellow Truckers (8th-level heroic characters who are Tough 3/Trucker 5) to assist him in times of peril. The allies arrive in one hour and will disperse when the mission is done.

Urban Cowboy

These fish out of water are country folk trying to make their way in the big city. They may fall into any number of jobs—from private detectives to Red Collars—but they all rely on the skills they learned in the wide-open spaces to survive in the concrete canyons. They charm clients (or suspects) with their down-home wisdom, corn-fed good looks and a no-nonsense approach to life that cuts through urban neuroses.

Requirements

To qualify to become an Urban Cowboy, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: Handle Animal 6 ranks, Ride 6 ranks, Survival 6 ranks
Feats: Animal Affinity, Track

Class Features

Hit Die: 1d8

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, every time the Urban Cowboy attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The Urban Cowboy's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Repair (Int), Ride (Dex), Speak Language (none), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier.

The Urban Cowboy

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+1	+2	+0	Aw, shucks I	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+2	+3	+0	Comforts of home	+1	+0
3rd	+2	+2	+3	+1	Bonus feat	+2	+1
4th	+3	+2	+4	+1	Aw, shucks II	+2	+1
5th	+3	+3	+4	+1	Urban jungle I	+3	+1
6th	+4	+3	+5	+2	Bonus feat	+3	+2
7th	+5	+4	+5	+2	Aw, shucks III	+4	+2
8th	+6	+4	+6	+2	Urban jungle II	+4	+2
9th	+6	+4	+6	+3	Bonus feat	+5	+3
10th	+7	+5	+7	+3	Home on the range	+5	+3

Comforts of Home

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	Rate of Fire	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
<i>Typical Rural Weapons</i>										
Lasso ^{1,3}	—	—	—	15 ft.	—	—	Med	3 lb.	3	—
Scythe ⁴	2d4	20	Piercing or slashing	—	—	—	Large	10 lb.	6	—
Double-barreled shotgun ⁵	2d8	20	Ballistic	40 ft.	1 or 2 ²	2 internal	Large	8 lb.	17	Lic (+1)
Pitchfork ⁴	1d8	20	Piercing	—	—	—	Large	9 lb.	6	—

1 A lasso is used to snare enemies. When you throw a lasso, you make a ranged touch attack against your target. A lasso's maximum range is 15 feet. If you hit, the target is entangled: he takes a –2 penalty on attack rolls and a –4 penalty to Dexterity, and cannot charge or run. If you succeed at an opposed Strength check while holding the lasso, the entangled enemy can move only within the limits that the rope allows. If you succeed at a second opposed Strength check, you may jerk the lasso and bring your enemy to the ground, flat on his back. An entangled enemy can escape with a DC 20 Escape Artist check (a full-round action). The lasso has 5 hit points and can be burst with a DC 25 Strength check (also a full-round action).

A lasso is useful only against creatures within one size category of you.

2 You may fire one barrel at a time, or both simultaneously, which does double normal damage.

3 exotic weapons proficiency

4 archaic weapons proficiency

5 personal firearms proficiency

Postcards From Americo: The Western Wall

When the West Coast sheared off and sank, the region's two great mountain ranges became the de facto border of the continent. Beyond these ranges, which have been renamed the Northern and Southern Seawall Peaks, lie miles of desert and collapsing ruins (in the south) and rain-battered bogland and sinking cities (in the north). These fringe areas are officially off-limits except to rescue crews and other government personnel.

El Gordo—a gambling haven on the other side of the Southern Seawall Peaks—has become the local base of operations for recovery efforts. The pleasure palace (also known as “Fat City”) has been closed off to tourists, and its mammoth casino hotels filled with troops and emergency-services workers. But the gangster bosses who run the town, eager to make a buck off the crisis, are keeping their floor shows, game tables and seraglios open for business. The scene is Americo in microcosm: death and disaster on one hand, glitzy outfits and flashy distractions on the other.

Making things even grimmer is the fact that El Gordo is more or less alone in the event of an emergency. Obviously, no help is coming from the west. The few big cities to the north have either been abandoned out of fear of cataclysm or locked down against otherworldly invasion. Just a few hours east the mighty Barrier Mountains divide the continent—and on the other side of the range the army has its hands full containing the horrors spreading through the Middle West. Suramerico isn't far off to the south, but it has been facing the same nocturnal invasions as its northern neighbor. In the event of a supernatural siege, the best El Gordo can hope for is (eventual) air support from the military base at Summit City, way on the other side of the Barriers and far to the north to boot.

Why keep rolling if you've already beaten the DC? Every primary psychic ability has a Mental Momentum feature that kicks in if you roll double your target DC.

If you have momentum, you may choose **one** of the following effects:

1. Your total on the control roll becomes the DC for your opponent's Willpower save—making it much harder for him to resist you. You do not get an additional momentum effect if you choose this option and your opponent subsequently rolls a 1 on his Willpower save. (Obviously, if you have momentum because your opponent rolled a 1 on his Willpower save, choose one of the effects below instead.)
2. You may continue the psychic action indefinitely, without a Concentration check, until you are interrupted or distracted. You must remain quiet and focused on the action at hand for the entire time, and cannot carry out any physical tasks. Alternatively, you may choose to carry out a psychic action while engaged in normal physical activity—but the effect only lasts for a number of rounds equal to your level in this advanced class. You cannot extend it with a Concentration check or action point.
3. You may double the number of targets and increase the magnitude of distance by one factor (see table above). If you have the Group Think secondary power, you may double the size of the group and increase the magnitude of distance by one factor. All other restrictions of the power apply. (Note: in the case of Telekinesis and Pyrokinesis, use effect Number 4 below, not this feature, to extend the range and number of targets.)
4. You may call upon more potent effects than usual. For instance, if you have the basic version of a power, you may perform

actions usually limited to the improved version. If you have the improved version, you may draw on the powers of the advanced version. And if you have advanced, you may perform an action usually outside the boundaries of the power, at your GM's discretion. (Note: in the case of Telekinesis and Pyrokinesis, use this feature and not Number 3 above.)

- **No Shortcuts:** You may take 10 on psychic-powers rolls only if you are in an environment with absolutely no distractions for the duration of the attempt, and you are not attempting to use your powers against an unwilling target. You may not take 20 on any roll.
- **Brains and Brawn:** Attempting to use a psychic power while engaged in melee combat provokes an attack of opportunity. While concentrating, a Psychic is considered flat-footed.
- **Androids and Aliens:** The brains of nonhuman creatures and manufactured life forms, such as androids and computers, are too distant from humanity for the average person to understand. Any attempt at psychic contact will bring only a jumble of confusing images and sensations. However, the Talk to Machines feat will allow you to attempt psychic feats as normal against machine brains. The Alien Language Affinity feat allows you to do the same with nonhuman creatures.

Primary Powers

Audible Thoughts

Basic Version

Control Modifier: +2

Distance Limit: One-square-block area

Target Limit: 1

Psychic Mishap: You are stunned for 1d2 rounds, and on your next attempt with the subject the DC for your control roll goes up by +1.

You can snoop around in other people's heads. With this version of the power, you can read a target's surface thoughts at any moment.

If you fail your control roll, the target doesn't notice anything unusual. If a target without psychic powers makes her save, she will be vaguely aware someone has been snooping around upstairs, but nothing more specific. If a Psychic target makes her save, she's aware of you—but the connection isn't necessarily broken. Your target may choose to let you into her head to feed you false information. This is a standard opposed Bluff roll vs. your Sense Motive skill. If your target's roll is successful, you don't realize you've been given a lie. If it fails, you recognize what's going on.

A surface-level check takes 1 round. You may scan your target for a number of rounds equal to your level in this advanced class without penalty. After that, you must make a Concentration check (DC 10, or higher if there are distractions) to extend the scanning by another set of rounds equal to your level. You may spend an action point to bypass a check.

In addition to searching for information, you may use this feat in combination with Voices in My Head to carry on a mental conversation with a target. The person in question doesn't have to be a Psychic for this to work. To initiate a conversation, make a control roll for Voices in My Head. You don't need to make another roll to see if Audible Thoughts works unless you're contacting an unwilling subject. In that case, the target gets a save on both attempts.



From there, you can maintain the conversation for a number of rounds equal to your level in this advanced class. If your target is a Psychic, and a willing subject, you may maintain the conversation for a number of rounds equal to both of your levels in this advanced class. After that, you must make a Concentration check (DC 10, or higher if there are distractions) to extend the scanning by another set of rounds equal to your level (or both of your levels, as the case may be). You may spend an action point to bypass a check.

Improved Version

Control Modifier: +4

Distance Limit: City

Target Limit: 2

Psychic Mishap: For 1d4 rounds you can't concentrate—or control your actions—as you are flooded with incoherent thoughts from everyone within a one-square-block area.

Like the Basic Version, except that you may probe your subject's memories and secrets, not simply surface thoughts. This deep reading takes a number of rounds equal to your target's Wisdom modifier. The only things you can't find are secrets that the target has been trained, hypnotized or medically altered to hide. Attempting to dig up that information will bring an additional +2 modifier to your control DC. As above, a Psychic who catches wind of you may attempt to Bluff.

When attempting to initiate psychic conversation with an unwilling subject, you need to make a control roll only for Voices in My Head, and your target gets only one save.

Advanced Version

Control Modifier: +6

Distance Limit: National region

Target Limit: 3

Psychic Mishap: For 1d8 rounds you can't concentrate—or control your actions—as you are flooded with incoherent thoughts from everyone within your city.

Like the Improved Version, except that you may dig up information that the target has been trained, hypnotized or surgically altered to hide.

Mood Swing

Basic Version

Control Modifier: +3

Distance Limit: Same or adjacent room

Target Limit: 1

Psychic Mishap: You are stunned for 1d2 rounds, and on your next attempt with the target the DC for your control roll goes up by +1.

You can affect a target's state of mind. If you make your control roll, and the target fails her save, you can automatically improve (or, if you choose, degrade) a target's attitude toward you by two categories, as listed in **Chapter Two** of the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*.

You may also plant a gut feeling in the target that she can't shake. For example, you might make her think it's a good idea to put down her gun and negotiate with your party. Conversely, you may make the target feel so uncomfortable in your presence that she thinks about leaving the room. Or you might make her feel so intimidated that she thinks she won't be able to stand up under your questioning.

In any case, the target will not know that the urge is coming from outside herself, and will not be able to explain her change of mood afterward. The Mood Swing takes one round to deliver and takes effect immediately upon the target's next turn in the Initiative order.

If you fail your control roll, the target doesn't notice anything unusual. If a hostile target without psychic powers makes her save, she senses that someone was trying to fool with her, but nothing more specific. If a hostile Psychic makes her save, she will immediately recognize the intrusion.

Improved Version

Control Modifier: +5

Distance Limit: One-square-block area

Target Limit: 2

Psychic Mishap: You are stunned for 1d4 rounds. If your subjects make their Will save, they feel nothing. If they fail, they feel the exact opposite of what you intended.

Like the Basic Version, but you may improve (or degrade) a target's attitude by three categories.

Advanced Version

Control Modifier: +7

Distance Limit: Neighborhood

Target Limit: 3

Psychic Mishap: You are stunned for 1d6 rounds. If your subjects make their Will save, they feel nothing. If they fail, they feel the exact opposite of what you intended—so strongly that they act on the mood at once.

Like the Improved Version, but you may improve (or degrade) a target's attitude by four categories.

Psychic Shove

Basic Version

Control Modifier: +4

Distance Limit: Same or adjacent room

Target Limit: 1

Psychic Mishap: You are stunned for 1d3 rounds, and on your next attempt with the subject, the DC for your control roll goes up by +2.

You can engage in all-out psychic warfare, forcing a target to perform actions, remember lies or hallucinate. With this version, you may attempt to make a subject:

1. Do something fairly innocuous that the subject may even consciously or subconsciously desire: kissing a secret love interest in public, jumping a turnstile
2. Experience a hallucination, indistinguishable from reality for 1 round
3. Recall a minor false memory, or forget a real one, such as a name or date

If you fail your control roll, the target doesn't notice anything unusual. If a target without psychic powers makes her save, she senses that someone was trying to fool with her, but nothing more specific. If a Psychic makes her save, she will immediately recognize the intrusion.

The Psychic Shove takes one round to deliver and takes effect immediately upon the target's next turn in the initiative order. The target won't be able to explain herself afterward.

Improved Version

Control Modifier: +6

Distance Limit: One-square-block area

Target Limit: 1

Psychic Mishap: You are stunned for 1d6 rounds. If your subject makes his Will save, he feels nothing. If he fails, it means he exerted too much Willpower in resisting you and “overbalances” by carrying out a violent action to keep from performing your order. He might smash his hand into a wall to drive a hallucination out of his head or stab his hand with a pen rather than sign a falsified form.

Like the Basic Version, except that you may attempt to make the subject:

1. Do something nonviolent that carries riskier penalties, such as falsifying a government form or shoplifting
2. Experience a hallucination, indistinguishable from reality for 1 minute
3. Remember a medium-size false memory, or forget a real one, such as an event or a casual relationship

Hallucinations require the psychic’s complete concentration for the entire time period. You may maintain contact with the target for a number of rounds equal to your level in this advanced class without penalty. After that, you must make a Concentration check (DC 10, or higher if there are distractions) to extend the contact by another set of rounds equal to your level. You may spend an action point to bypass a check.

Advanced Version

Control Modifier: +8

Distance Limit: Neighborhood

Target Limit: 1

Psychic Mishap: You are stunned for 1d10 rounds. If your subject makes his Will save, he is stunned for 1d3 rounds. If he fails, it means he exerted far too much Willpower in resisting you



and “overbalances” dangerously. He will attack the next person, or destroy the next object, he sees, and will not disengage for 1d6 rounds.

Like the Improved Version, except you may attempt to make the subject:

1. Do something that carries risky penalties and actively harms another person, such as mugging a passerby
2. Experience a hallucination that’s indistinguishable from reality for up to five minutes
3. Remember a major false memory, or forget a real one, such as a marriage or a life-changing event

Pyrokinesis

Basic Version

Control Modifier: +4

Distance Limit: One-square-block area

Target Limit: See text

Psychic Mishap: You are stunned for 1d2 rounds. The reaction in question begins (enough to attract attention) and then sputters out.

Pyrokinesis technically refers to fire-starting by force of will—but here it covers the act of affecting any physical process with your mind. The target must be within visual range.

For the basic version of this power, you may perform actions on the following scale:

1. Create a small fire (1d4 rounds to reach full strength) or cause a small object to burst into flames.
2. Shake the ground enough to knock an object off a shelf or to cause a person to lose balance.
3. Raise a wind strong enough to extinguish a candle or slam a door.
4. Roil the waters of a small pond or creek.
5. Create an electrical spark, enough to start a dead battery, or disrupt small-scale electrical systems, such as an android brain.

Fires last until they are extinguished. Other effects last a number of rounds equal to your level in this advanced class. Maintaining them for another set of rounds equal to your level requires a Concentration check of DC 10, or higher if there are distractions. You may spend an action point to increase damage for these effects by 1d6. You may also spend an action point to bypass a Concentration check to maintain an effect.

Improved Version

Control Modifier: +6

Distance Limit: One-square-block area

Target Limit: See text

Psychic Mishap: You are stunned for 1d4 rounds, and your target is struck by a pyrokinetic effect of advanced-level strength.

As the Basic Version, but you can perform actions on the following scale:

1. Create a medium fire (enough to fill a room but not necessarily enough to consume a building; it takes 1d6 rounds to reach full strength) or cause a medium-size object to burst into flames.
2. Shake the ground enough to affect an entire building.
3. Raise a wind strong enough to break windows.

- You can only undertake one task at a time this way, and you may do so for a number of rounds equal to your level in this advanced class. To extend that time by another set of rounds equal to your level, you must make a Concentration check (DC 10, or higher if there are distractions). You may spend an action point to bypass a check.

Summoning up a vision takes 1d6 rounds. You may focus on this for a number of rounds equal to your level in this advanced class without penalty. After that, you must make a Concentration check (DC 10, or higher if there are distractions) to extend the summoning by another set of rounds equal to your level. You may spend an action point to bypass a check.

BEYOND THE BARRIER WITH HERMAN PURVIS

Montage of natural disasters: earthquakes, hailstorms, tidal waves; croplands turning to dust under blinding sunlight. Cue menacing, atonal synthesizer music.

PURVIS (vo)

For centuries mankind has sought to tame the wild heart of Mother Nature. Now it seems Mother Nature is taking us to task.

Cut to an enormous, bearded researcher in front of a bank of radar screens.

RESEARCHER

What we're seeing goes beyond all probability. The frequency and concentration of natural disasters—it's not a coincidence. Something *made* all this happen.

Cut to a grainy, possibly staged film clip of a Sasquatch walking through the woods. Cut to artist's conception of a klatsch of dinosaur-men exulting horribly on a shoreline.

PURVIS (vo)

But that's not all. Reports are surfacing of ancient powers awakening across the planet—forces that have been sleeping in myth and folklore since the earliest days of human history.

Cut to an elegant, slim researcher standing before a map of the evolutionary tree.

RESEARCHER

There are things appearing that have been hidden for who knows how long. Things we have lost names for. Things we remember only in nightmare.

Cut to HERMAN PURVIS standing on a beach of volcanic rock as waves crash menacingly nearby. He wears a blazer and turtleneck and has prominent sideburns.

PURVIS

Tidal waves. Earthquakes. Creatures from the prehistoric past. A string of coincidences? Or something much more sinister? Tonight, we'll look for the answers. I'm Herman Purvis—come with me as we travel Beyond the Barrier.

Improved Version

Control Modifier: +5

Distance Limit: N/A

Target Limit: N/A

Psychic Mishap: You are disoriented for 1d6 rounds. You may act, but you can't remember who your identity or that of anyone around you, or what you're doing in that location.

Like the Basic Version, except that you may summon a vision about a person or event unknown to you, provided you can handle some artifact related to the target. In these cases, the visions are as elliptical as in the basic version.

But if you are dealing with a target you're familiar with, the messages will be much clearer. You will see the equivalent of brief film clips of the target instead of impressionistic snapshots, allowing you to identify many more specifics about the scene. For example, if you were at a crime scene, and tried to call up a vision of the killer, there

is a good chance you would actually see his face. The specific details of these visions are left to the GM's discretion.

In addition, you may try to look into the future, focusing on a certain person or place at a specific time, or an expected event. Again, the vision will be opaque but provide enough information for further research. The vision will come as a flurry of images, as if you were fast-forwarding through a videotaped news program about your target. (Note: these visions will show you a potential future that may be changed through intervention.)

Advanced Version

Control Modifier: +7

Distance Limit: N/A

Target Limit: N/A

Psychic Mishap: You are disoriented for 1d10 rounds. You may act, but you can't remember your identity or that of anyone around you, or what you're doing in that location. In addition, you become obsessed with the events in the image you just witnessed and will not rest until you resolve them somehow.

Like the Improved Version, except that you don't need an artifact to summon a vision about unfamiliar people or events. In addition, the visions you receive about these targets become much clearer. You will see the equivalent of brief film clips of the target instead of impressionistic snapshots, allowing you to identify many more specifics about the incident or person. For example, if you were at a crime scene, and tried to call up a vision of the killer, there is a good chance you would actually see his face. The specific details of these visions are left to the GM's discretion.

Meanwhile, visions about events or people you're familiar with become startlingly lifelike. When you summon one of these scenes, you will actually find yourself standing inside the vision, an invisible observer who can take in every last detail of the scene. These visions last a number of rounds equal to your level in this advanced class. To extend them for another set of rounds equal to your level, you must make a Concentration check (DC 10, or higher if there are distractions).

Visions of the future are much clearer now, but also more limited. If you concentrate on a target without specifying a time period, you will get a brief, jolting view of the most important upcoming event connected to the target. If you concentrate on a target within a specific time frame, you will see the most important event in that period.

Voices in My Head

Basic Version

Control Modifier: +1

Distance Limit: One-square-block area

Target Limit: 1

Psychic Mishap: You are stunned for 1d2 rounds.

You can send psychic messages. If your control roll succeeds, the target knows that she is receiving a message and that it is coming from you. The message may be in the form of images, sounds or a combination of both.

You may transmit for a number of rounds equal to your level in this advanced class, provided you maintain full concentration. After that, you must make a Concentration check (DC 10, or higher if there are distractions) to extend the transmission by another set of rounds equal to your level. You may spend an action point to bypass a check. If you fail your control roll, the message doesn't arrive and the target doesn't notice anything unusual. If a hostile target without psychic powers makes his save, he senses

Note that this power doesn't enable you to have mental conversations, or to read the subject's mind. To do that, you must have the Audible Thoughts power.

Control Modifier: +3

Distance Limit: City

Distance Limit: City

Target Limit: 3

Psychic Mishap: You are stunned for 1d2 rounds and broadcast an embarrassing secret into the heads of the target(s) you were attempting to contact.

Control Modifier: +5

Distance Limit: National region

Target Limit: 5

Psychic Mishap: You are stunned for 1d2 rounds and broadcast a highly damaging secret into the heads of the target(s) you were attempting to contact.

Alien Language Affinity

Identical to the feat described in the New Feats section.

You can figure out a person's location mentally.

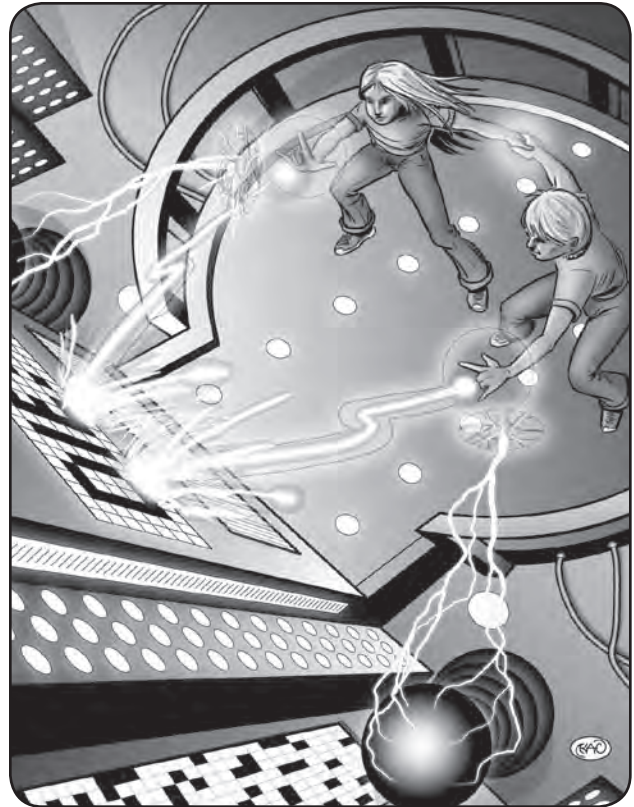
Benefit: You can learn precisely where your target is located, and basic details about their immediate surroundings—the weather, the time of day and anything that might be caught in a photograph. To use the feat this way, make a standard control roll. The control modifier for this attempt is $10 + 1$ for every distance category that separates you (assuming that “Room, or adjacent room” is the baseline).

So, if the target is in the same room as you but unseen for some reason, the distance modifier would be +0 because no distance categories separate you. If your target is in the same neighborhood, the distance modifier is +2, since he is two distance categories away from the “Room, or adjacent room” baseline. If your target is a hostile one, and wants to resist your attempt, the DC for his Willpower save is 10 + your Charisma modifier + your Psychic class level.

You may also use this feat to locate another Psychic who is attempting to use his powers against you. Anytime an attempt at psychic contact is made against you, and you make your Willpower save, you may choose to keep the psychic link open long enough to trace the Psychic.

To do so, you must make the same control roll as the other Psychic. If you're successful, you may see the details outlined in the first paragraph of this feat description. You can then close the psychic connection at will.

While you're doing this, the other Psychic may make a Willpower roll to recognize what you're doing. The DC for this roll is 10 + your Charisma modifier + your Psychic class level. If successful, she may attempt an opposed Bluff roll to feed you false information about her location.



Brain Trace takes a number of rounds equal to the number of distance categories that separate you from the target. You may maintain the trace for a number of rounds equal to your level in the Psychic class. To extend that time by another set of rounds equal to your level, you must make a Concentration check (DC 10, or higher if there are distractions). You may spend an action point to bypass a check.

There is no penalty for failing a roll associated with Brain Trace. If you roll double the DC on your control roll, you may choose Mental Momentum effects 1 or 2, as described earlier.

Prerequisite: Character must be a Psychic

You may apply a psychic ability to a crowd of people.

Benefit: If your psychic ability ordinarily has a limit of 1 target, you may use it on a group of 5 people in a single room without penalty. If it has a limit of 2 targets, you may use it on 10 people in a single room. If 3 or more, you may use it on 20 targets in a one-square-block area. You need to make only one control roll, at the regular modifier for the ability. Every target gets a saving throw if he wishes.

However, you may not use this feat if you don't know where all of your targets are. And you may not attempt to contact anyone outside of the range of this feat at the same time. For example, you couldn't send a message to four people in one room and someone else across town simultaneously.

Prerequisite: Character must be a Psychic

You can test the boundaries of your psychic powers.

Benefit: When you reach the advanced level of a power, you may attempt actions that are beyond its boundaries, such as affecting

more targets, applying the ability over a greater distance, or implementing much more potent effects. For your control roll, use the control modifier for the advanced version, and increase the DC by 2 for every extra target, increase in distance category or step up in effect (as judged by your GM).

Prerequisite: Character must be a Psychic

Talk to Machines

Identical to the feat described in the New Feats section.

Translator

You can understand thoughts in another language.

Benefit: When you are engaged in psychic activity—including getting visions with the Vibes ability—you can understand any human language that you “hear” mentally. You will remember the words in your native language when the mental connection is cut or the vision ends.

Prerequisite: Character must be a Psychic

Omegaball: The Rules of the Game

It is the world’s most popular sport, a locus of civic pride and a steam valve for public aggression. The people who play it are lionized and richly compensated. But you can’t spend all that cash when you’re dead. And that’s how Omegaballers usually end up.

The game is played indoors, on an oblong of artificial sod 150 feet long and 85 feet wide with a goal at either end. The object is to launch the Omegaball—a dense iron sphere about the size of a softball—into your opponent’s goal. The team with the most goals at the end of three fifteen-minute periods wins.

There are ten positions on each team: three attackers, who must stay in the opponent’s half of the field; three defenders, who must stay in their own half; three roamers, who may travel to either side of the field; and one goalie. Each side has six backups of level 3 or lower. If a team burns through all of them, it must play short-handed.

The players pass the Omegaball, and try to steal it from their opponents, with long sticks that have a webbed pouch on the end. Their targets—the ten-foot goal nets—are surrounded by a square of territory, twenty feet on each side, that no player but the goalie may enter. The goalie may also handle the Omegaball with his hands, which no other player is allowed to do.

In all, it’s not very different from lacrosse—except that there are no restrictions on the use of force. Omegaball contests quickly turn into all-out melees, with limbs cracked, necks snapped and blood ground into the turf. Even the medics take abuse—including volleys of beer and giveaway bats from the stands—as they carry injured players off the field.

There are two ways to resolve an Omegaball contest. The first is brief. Add together the Omegaballer class levels of all the players on your team. (Those who haven’t reached this advanced class count as level 1, no matter what their character level.) Your opponent does the same. Then add that number to a d20 roll. The higher result wins—except that you automatically lose if you roll a natural 1 and automatically win on a natural 20. On a tie, re-roll. You can hash out the final score however you wish, such as rolling 2d8 and giving the winner the higher result, the loser the lower.

For a more in-depth contest, you roll off as described above, but each roll counts as one possession, not an entire game. What’s a possession? Essentially, the boring stuff in between goals: all the passes, turnovers and missed shots that eat up the clock but aren’t fun to watch. If you win the d20 roll, it means that you control the ball at the end of one of those stretches and momentum is on your side. You’ve got the ball in your opponent’s territory and

POSSESSION TABLE

Total	Result
Natural 1	Roll on the disaster table.
2-4	The attacker with the ball runs too far and gets surrounded by 1d4+2 defenders and roamers within 50 feet of the goal area. The rest of the enemy players (if any) are covering any of your attackers and roamers who have a clear shot at receiving a pass.
5-7	Your attacker drops the ball within 50 feet of the goal area, and 1d4+2 defenders and roamers are within 15 feet. The rest (if any) block your nearby attackers and roamers from retrieving the ball.
8-10	Your attacker is within 40 feet of the goal area. 1d3 of your other attackers and roamers are within 30 feet of him. 1d4 defenders and enemy roamers are between him and the goal. The rest are within 20 feet of your other attackers and roamers.
11-13	Your attacker is within 30 feet of the goal area. 1d3 of your other attackers and roamers are within 20 feet of him. 1d4 defenders and roamers are between him and the goal. The rest are within 25 feet of your other attackers and roamers.
14-16	Your attacker is within 30 feet of the goal area. 1d4 of your other attackers and roamers are within 20 feet of him. 1d3 defenders and roamers are between him and the goal. The rest are within 30 feet of your other attackers and roamers.
17-19	Your attacker is within 30 feet of the goal area. 1d5 (1d10/2) of your other attackers and roamers are within 20 feet of him. 1d2 defenders and roamers are between him and the goal. The rest are within 35 feet of your other attackers and roamers.
20+	Goal!

Monday Night Omegaball

A blimp's-eye view of a bloody pileup: the Fun City Skyliners vs. the Motor City V-8s in the 'Liners home park, the Custerdome. Golf carts plow through the muddy turf to carry off the injured. One player receives last rites while his teammates stand around bowing. Coaches pace the sidelines as the crowd howls and showers beer down onto the field. Then the whistle blows—and it's back to WHELK BOSCO and TONY JOE CRAWFOOT in the booth.

WHELK BOSCO

Anthony Joseph, I can only call what we have witnessed in the foregoing fifteen minutes brutality. Carnage nonpareil.

TONY JOE CRAWFOOT

I'll tell you what, Whelk, I've never seen them Eights jazzed like that before. Mudbug Sunkitt looked like somebody shot that ol' boy out of a cannon.

WHELK BOSCO

And he begins the second period in high style, Anthony Joseph. The captain of the Motor City team intercepts the ball, slashes the face of a Fun City defender, delivers an elbow to the throat of another, while his teammates clear a path to the goal.

TONY JOE CRAWFOOT

That's what we call a gusher, Whelk. Boy's gonna be talking through a tube from now on.

WHELK BOSCO

Only seconds into the period, and the field of play has once again become a montage of horror and fury. Fun City defenders are swarming over the invading Motor City squad, attacking them with bats, bare hands, and even teeth.

TONY JOE CRAWFOOT

Let's not forget the ball, Whelk. Mudbug's got three men hangin' off him, and that dog is *still* runnin'!

WHELK BOSCO

Wait! Anthony Joseph! Out of nowhere comes Mackey Bando, storied paladin of the Fun City coterie!

TONY JOE CRAWFOOT

Lookit him swingin' that stick of his! Shoot! Sunkitt ain't gonna have much of a nose to speak of after that shot!

WHELK BOSCO

Now the two strongmen have dropped their weapons and wrapped their hands around each other's throats! Their teammates are rising bloody from the killing field to pile into the fight! Anthony Joseph—I can hardly stand to watch this Jacobean tableaux another instant!

TONY JOE CRAWFOOT

I'd reckon it's a fine time to thank the good folks at Gort Motors for them fine blimp pictures we've been seeing all night. Remember—when you ride with Gort, you ride with Americo.

you're about to make a strong approach to the goal. Of course, you could still botch things and turn the ball over—or worse. But the flow of the game is going your way.

Since “possessions” are an abstract concept, decide before you start rolling how many you want per period. Be aware that many possessions end with you playing out the game in actual combat rounds—which means things could take a while to resolve. If you don't have much real-world time to spare, you might want to limit the number of possessions to three to six per period.

How does it all work? Whoever wins the possession rolls another d20, and adds her margin of victory from the previous roll. Then she consults the possession table.

Resolving Possession

If the possession table gives you a scenario to play out, you may set up your players as you wish within the guidelines of the description. Your opponent does the same. You then resolve the situation using combat rounds. The player with the ball (or who just fumbled the ball, depending on the description) goes first in the Initiative order. The rest of the players involved roll as normal for Initiative.

The combat ends when you score a goal; when your opponent steals the ball away and gets it past midfield; or when you carry the ball out of bounds, which gives possession to the opposing team. You then start all over again with another possession roll.

Here are some basic rules to resolve possession.

To pass the Omegaball, you must aim at a specific 5-foot square, then make a ranged attack roll against that square, using the rules for Thrown Explosives in **Chapter Five** of the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*. The Omegaball has a range increment of 15 feet. Passing an Omegaball counts as an attack action. Passes don't have “hang time,” so you should aim for a square that contains a receiver during your turn.

To catch a pass, you must make a successful ranged attack roll against the ball. It has a Defense of 10. You may catch a pass under the following conditions: The ball moves through your square, or an adjacent square, and you can either make a regular attack or an attack of opportunity. If the ball is two or three squares away from you, you may attempt to lunge for it with a DC 15 Tumble check. On a successful roll, you have the ball but end up flat on your face. On a botched roll, the ball rolls free for 1d6 squares in the direction it was initially traveling.

DISASTER TABLE (Roll with no modifiers)

Total	Result
1	One of your players was killed and 1d4 are out of commission for 1d3 games apiece. Determine at random. (Here and below, players and Heroic GM characters may make a DC 10 Fortitude save to avoid death or injuries that put them out of commission and instead be reduced to 0 HP.)
2-3	One of your players was killed.
4-7	1d4 of your players were seriously injured and are out of commission for 1d3 games apiece.
6-9	One of your players was seriously injured and is out of commission for 1d3 games.
10-13	1d4 of your players are out of commission for the remainder of the game.
14-17	One of your players is out of commission for the remainder of the game.
18-19	One of your players is seriously injured, but he plays through the pain. His effective class level is reduced by one for the duration of the contest.
20	Not a scratch.

Catching a pass—whether normally or by lunging—counts as an attack action or an attack of opportunity. It also provokes attacks of opportunity. Your opponent may target you or the ball, in an attempt to intercept it. If he targets the ball with such an attack, he makes a ranged attack roll against it. If he beats the roll you made to catch the ball, he has intercepted it.

You don't have to be right next to the ball's intended target to intercept a pass. You can also make an attempt if a ball passes by you anywhere on the field (meeting the conditions described in the first paragraph of this item). In these cases, you don't try to beat the catcher's ranged attack roll, you try to beat the passer's roll. If you do, you have possession.

To block a pass, make a ranged attack roll against the ball, as described in the catching a pass section. If you beat the ranged attack roll your opponent made for his pass, you have blocked the ball. You may block a pass under the following conditions: The

ball moves through your square, or an adjacent square, and you can either make a regular attack or an attack of opportunity. If the block is successful, the ball is deflected in a random direction and travels the number of squares it would have traveled to reach its intended target.

To shoot on goal, you must make a ranged attack against the goal, which has a Defense of 12 (16 if you attack it from the side). On a successful roll, the goalie gets a Reflex save to block your shot (DC 10 + your Dexterity bonus + your level in the Omegaballer advanced class). As a free action, you may attempt to fake out the goalie as you take your shot, making an opposed Bluff roll against his Sense Motive. If you succeed, the goalie takes a -2 penalty to his Reflex save to block your shot. If you fail, he gets a +2 bonus instead. Shooting on goal counts as an attack action.

To dislodge a ball from an opponent's Omegabat, you must make a Disarm attack, as described in **Chapter Five** of the *d20*



Chapter Three: We Have the Technology

In some ways, the technology of the *Damnation Decade* world is a step behind our own. The digital revolution hasn't occurred, so most hardware is big and clunky, filled with tubes and wires instead of circuit boards and microchips. Cars aren't sleek and compact: they're gas-guzzling monsters the color of paper bags, and the highest-tech options you can get are an automatic transmission and eight-track-tape player. Only the wealthiest trendsetters own VCRs and answering machines.

On the other hand, this being a fantasy world, you'll run across technological flourishes beyond anything modern science can achieve. *Damnation Decade* is brimming with sentient computers,

ray guns and flying saucers—not to mention spiritually charged artifacts from the distant past.

Overall, this chapter takes a stripped-down approach to technology. It offers new items for you to use, and modifies (or outright prohibits) some old ones to fit the era. Note, however, that some of the juicier high-tech (or magical) items are tucked away in the GM's section, for you to discover over the course of your campaign.

Weapons

Most of the weapons in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*, or their close equivalents, were available in the 1970s. The big exception: ultracompact, lightweight guns like the Glock, which weren't developed until the 1980s. For simplicity's sake, all the weapons from the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* can be used in this game, but Glockes are considered experimental weapons, with a purchase DC of 22. Also for simplicity's sake, the weapons from the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* will be referred to by their regular names instead of new ones whenever they appear in this book.

Ranged Weapons

These guns represent cutting-edge creations from government and corporate labs. In normal times, they would have seemed like long-shot ideas not worth the cost of research and development. But with the apocalypse clearly knocking, and unearthly horrors swarming from the shadows, government and corporate bosses are willing to open their wallets to get their hands on extra firepower.

Stolen prototypes of these weapons can be bought on the black market, and wealthy executives and foreign leaders can order up a specially crafted batch. As for legality, the guns are too new and unfamiliar to be officially restricted. If you're caught with one in an area where firearms are illegal, you may be able to Bluff local law enforcement into thinking the weapon is a toy or a special target pistol. (The guns look the part: they all have a Future Is Now aesthetic, with transparent-plastic bodies and strange blinking lights that don't seem to have any function.) But if the police don't buy your story, you will be treated as if you were carrying a regular weapon without a permit.

Handguns

Blisstol: This slim pistol is designed to render a target immediately unconscious with a barrage of high-frequency sound waves. On a successful hit, the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or be paralyzed for 1d6 rounds. After the paralysis wears off, the target has a throbbing headache that gives him a -1

modifier on all rolls for the next 1d6 minutes. On a critical hit, the Fortitude save DC is increased to 18.

If the target has bionic ears, or stops up his ears tightly, he is immune to this attack. The attack does work on androids, however, provided they don't have bionic ears. (The sound waves are so focused that the shooter and anyone else within range of the blast don't have to protect their hearing.)

Knobber: This palm-size pistol—designed to fit up a sleeve, down a sock or in other unobtrusive areas—uses compressed air to fire tiny explosive pellets. The gun sucks in air automatically whenever it is discharged, so there's no need to pump it or use gas cartridges.

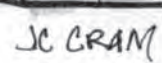
Needler: This bulbous plastic pistol uses compressed air to fire a noiseless burst of poisoned darts. The darts' effects can mimic any poison listed in **Chapter Two** of the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*. Even if the target succeeds at his Fortitude saving throw against the poison, he takes 2d4 damage from the needles themselves. The poisons generally don't work on androids, but the basic damage still applies. The needle damage is doubled, as normal, on a critical hit, and the Fortitude save DC for the poison is increased by +2. Regular needles can be easily adapted (and poisoned) for use with this weapon, allowing you to forgo the steep purchase price of custom-made ammunition.

Projector: This chunky, durable pistol fires blasts of laser light to lethal effect.

Longarms

Boom Tube: The last-resort weapon in crowd control, the Boom Tube creates tiny, focused atomic explosions in front of its targets to deal lethal damage to the first ranks of enemy and knock successive ranks backward. On a successful hit, anyone within 5 feet of a target must make a DC 13 Reflex save or be knocked off his feet.

This weapon is especially potent against androids because of the electromagnetic pulse the explosions generate. On a successful hit, the android takes damage as normal—but he must also



Ranged Weapons

	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	Rate of Fire	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC**	Restriction
Handguns (require the Personal Firearms Proficiency feat)										
Blisstol (sonic tunner)*	--	20	Sonic	40 ft.	S	10 battery	Small	1 lb.	22	—
Knobber (explosive pellet thrower)	2d6	20	Slashing	10 ft.	Single	2 internal	Tiny	0.5 lb.	20	—
Projector (laser pistol)	3d6	20	Piercing	40 ft.	S, A	15 battery	Small	3 lb.	25	—
Longarms (require the Personal Firearms Proficiency feat)										
Boom Tube (atomic shotgun)	3d6*	20	Slashing	40 ft.	S	7 nuclear battery	Large	5 lb.	28	—
Convincer (laser assault rifle)	4d6	20	Piercing	90 ft.	S, A	30 battery	Large	11 lb.	28	—

* See the description of this weapon for special rules.

**This is also the cost of one magazine's worth of ammunition, reflecting limited availability

Melee Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Simple Weapons (require the Simple Weapons Proficiency feat)								
Omegabat	1d8	19-20	Bludgeoning	—	Medium	4 lb.	15	—
Omegaball	1d6	20	Bludgeoning	15 ft.	Small	4 lb.	20	—

make a DC 15 Fortitude save or face complete paralysis for 1d6 rounds. After that, the android must take a –2 on all rolls for one full day as his circuits slowly come back to normal. In addition, every time an android fails the Fortitude save, there is a 10% chance that the attack wiped out the android's memory. It can be restored with a DC 30 Treat Injury or Repair check (the Repair Bionics feat, as always, is a prerequisite).

Androids within 5 feet of the square that was hit by a Boom Tube attack don't take damage, but they must make the Reflex save described above—as well as a DC 12 Fortitude save. If they fail the latter, they are paralyzed for 1d3 rounds and there is a 5% chance their memories have been wiped out. Androids within 10 feet don't take damage, and they don't need to make

a Reflex save, but they must still make the Fortitude save at DC 10. The chance of memory wipeout is 2%. Beyond that range, the EMP peters out and has no effect.

Convincer: This squat assault rifle, which fires bursts of laser light, is intended for the military and riot squads.

Melee Weapons

Omegabat: A reinforced wooden stick with a net on the end, the Omegabat was built for catching passes—but doubles as a highly effective weapon.

Omegaball: A dense, compact metal sphere. The ball can be used to bash opponents in a melee, or may be launched against them as a ranged attack.

Armor

As with weapons, all the armor from the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* may be used in this game world for simplicity's sake. The early 1970s were a period of tremendous innovation in body armor, and the precursors of most of the items in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* were already in development. Moreover, those prototypes often made a quick trip from the testing labs to the mean streets, where they were much in demand among riot squads and other military and law enforcement teams who foiled hijackings and rescued hostages.

New Armor

Just because you're fighting for stodgy old truth and virtue doesn't mean you can't look fabulous in the field. Adventurers are beginning to realize that the funky new generation of synthetic fabrics is tough enough to resist bullets as well as wrinkles, while providing generous freedom of movement. Perfect for showboating kung fu moves—or just making the scene at your favorite BootyDome.

Light Armor

Denim Armor: A three-piece suit of stiffened denim, often with bright orange stitching, that offers stylish and sturdy protection.

Omegaball Armor: A helmet, thick protective gloves and body padding used by the warrior athletes of Omegaball. Specially engineered to provide maximum protection with the smallest loss in maneuverability.

Pleather Jacket: Made of stylish faux leather, usually with flared lapels. Comes in a variety of earth tones.

Pleather Armor: A jacket and pants set of faux leather, often worn without shirt for maximum effect.

Medium Armor

Fur Armor: A heavy, stylish coat of animal pelts that offers significant stopping power. Can be worn by either sex without embarrassment.

Armor

Armor	Type	Equipment Bonus	Nonprof. Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armor Penalty	Speed (30 ft.)	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
<i>Light Armor</i>									
Denim Armor	Impromptu	+2	+1	+8	-0	30	4 lb.	12	—
Omegaball Armor	Tactical	+3	+2	+4	-2	30	6 lb.	18	—
Pleather jacket	Impromptu	+1	+1	+8	-0	30	2 lb.	13	—
Pleather Armor	Impromptu	+3	+1	+5	-2	30	4 lb.	15	—
<i>Medium Armor</i>									
Fur Armor	Impromptu	+4	+2	+3	-3	30	8 lb.	25	—

General Equipment

All of the general equipment in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* exists in the *Damnation Decade* world, with the following exceptions: any digital technology (including cell phones, computers, personal video cameras and Global Positioning System devices) or accessories for that technology; disposable cameras; laser sights, electro-optical scopes and other night-vision gear. For the sake of simplicity, all prices in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* apply here, and all products are assumed to be widely available. There's enough to worry about in this game without trying to remember whether your character is allowed to get on the gas line that day.

For roleplaying purposes, though, remember that people's relationship with technology was very different than today. We're accustomed to cheap, disposable gadgets that take advantage of digital technology to multitask. Back then, technology tended to be imposing, expensive and hard-wired for one job. Televisions came in wooden cabinets with grilles on the side. Buttons didn't beep meekly when you pushed them, they gave off hearty thinking sounds, and you could stub your knuckle trying to get them to work. Phones were heavier than dictionaries, and dialing a number really meant spinning a wheel. (And let's not forget that "mobile phone" usually meant a booth on the corner.)

Meanwhile, there wasn't a healthy competitive market for gadgets and services, as there is today. There was only one phone carrier and three television networks for the entire nation, and they largely resisted innovation. Forget about caller ID or call waiting:

a promotional telephone shaped like a football was the height of invention. The retail side was just as limited. You couldn't, for example, walk into a record store and find music from around the world, or even complete back catalogs for popular artists; in the supermarket, a diet cola was considered exotic.

As for aesthetics—the less said, the better. During the seventies, traditional styles of furniture and fashion were scrapped in favor of strange synthetic designs. Chairs became plastic cubes, beads replaced doors and beds turned into aquariums. A man's suit could be a denim outfit with lapels that reached the elbows and flared cuffs that covered the shoes; or a checkered blazer and striped polyester pants. Women might wear anything from a pantsuit with matching pukka shell necklace to skintight designer jeans, suede jacket and enormous floppy hat.

Even paying for all that stuff could be an alien experience compared with today. You couldn't rely on a battery of ATMs to feed you cash on demand, and the credit card culture was still in its relative infancy. If you whipped out plastic in a store or restaurant, the clerk would often have to call your lender to verify your credit line and complete the sale.

Again, none of this stuff should intrude on actual game mechanics. Equipment shopping in a roleplaying game is deadly enough without worrying about period naturalism. Feel free to use as much or as little of this flavor material as you want for your game.

Vehicles

You may use any of the vehicles in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* in this game, except for civilian cars, which have been renamed and in some cases modified to reflect the times: Americo wants loud, muscular cars, even if it means crippling costs at the gas pump. Meanwhile, smaller, fuel efficient models can't sneak onto the market from overseas. With the shadow of the Bloc looming over Esperanto, and the Sphere dominating Sina, automobile imports have plummeted to almost nothing.

Unless otherwise noted, civilian cars provide three-quarters cover for their occupants (although passengers who lean out of windows or sunroofs, perhaps to fire weapons, may be reduced to one-half or even one-quarter cover).

Bandit: The cab that pulls the big rigs. Two squares wide and five long, the Bandit can be attached to trailers up to ten squares in length. It comes with a CB radio and sleeper cabin.

Clambake: An open-topped dune buggy. This bouncy, durable vehicle is one square wide and two squares long. It provides no cover for its occupants.

Goblin: An economy two-door model with a bubble-shaped hatchback rear. The Goblin is two squares wide and three squares long.

Haul-Boy: A serviceable two-door pickup truck. The Haul-Boy is two squares wide and four squares long. Its rear bed provides only one-half cover.

Hooptie: A mammoth two-door famous for its gaudy add-on options, such as faux crystal chandeliers for headlights, gold-colored hubcaps and shag-carpeted seats. The Hooptie is two squares wide and five squares long.

Vehicles

Name	Crew	Pass.	Cargo	Init	Maneuver	Top Speed	Def.	Hard.	Hit points	Size	Purch. DC	Restriction
Bandit (big rig)	1	2	250 lb.	-4	-4	165 (16)	6	5	44	H	38	Lic (+1)
Bandit w/trailer	1	2	40,000 lb.	-6	-6	165 (16)	6	5	44	G	38	Lic (+1)
Clambake (dune buggy)	1	0	675 lb.	-1	+1	95 (9)	9	5	22	L	25	Lic (+1)
Goblin (fast, bulbous compact)	1	4	200 lb.	-2	+1	185 (18)	8	5	30	L	26	Lic (+1)
Haul-Boy (pickup)	1	2	1,700 lb.	-2	-2	175 (17)	8	5	36	H	28	Lic (+1)
Hootie (tricked-out sedan)	1	4	325 lb.	-2	+0	280 (28)	8	5	34	G	32	Lic (+1)
Imperator (luxury sedan)	1	4	275 lb.	-2	-1	230 (23)	8	5	34	H	34	Lic (+1)
Interceptor (cop car)	1	5	425 lb.	-2	-1	230 (23)	8	5	34	H	30	Lic (+1)
Manta (sports coupe)	1	1	250 lb.	-2	+0	310 (31)	8	5	32	H	30	Lic (+1)
Muscle Cars (chariots of the gods)	1	5	300 lb.	-2	+0	335 (33)	8	5	34	H	30	Lic (+1)
Rectangle (mid-size wagon)	1	4	275 lb.	-2	+0	230 (23)	8	5	32	H	28	Lic (+1)
Squaresville (economy sedan)	1	4	275 lb.	-1	-1	220 (22)	9	5	30	L	28	Lic (+1)
Vandingo (van)	1	4	325 lb.	-2	-2	195 (19)	8	5	34	H	30	Lic (+1)
VIP (limousine)	1	7	425 lb.	-4	-4	195 (19)	6	5	38	G	36	Lic (+1)

Imperator: A big, sprawling status symbol. This luxury car comes in two- and four-door versions, both of which are tricked-out with amenities, such as air conditioning and eight-track-tape machines. The Imperator is two squares wide and five squares long.

Interceptor: This large, durable four-door sedan is a law enforcement favorite. The Interceptor is two squares wide and four squares long.

Manta: A two-door sports car with a distinctive sloping front end. The Manta is two squares wide and three squares long.

Muscle Cars: These powerhouses have big, thirsty engines and exhaust systems that can wake the dead. Popular favorites include the Turbonado, the Jackalope, the Pro Forma, the Nuevo, the Fontanelle and the El Topo. They come in two-door and four-door models; both are two squares wide and four squares long.

Rectangle: A family station wagon with faux wood paneling on the sides. The Rectangle is two squares wide and four squares long.

Squaresville: The archetypal family sedan, the Squaresville is four doors of dull but sensible car. It is two squares wide and four squares long.

Vandingo: A large van, often equipped with a kitchenette and bed and decorated on the outside with inspirational scenes from the mythic unconscious. It is two squares wide and four squares long. If the Vandingo's rocking, don't come knocking.

VIP: This limousine is packed with luxury features, from refrigerators to miniature television sets to eight-track players. A partition divides the front seat from the rest of the vehicle. The VIP is two squares wide and five squares long. It provides three-quarters cover for its occupants.



Special Equipment

Bionics

Bionic limbs and organs use intricate space-age circuitry to give the user greater strength, stamina or sensory perception. They are incredibly powerful, and should be granted sparingly. In most cases, a well-heeled patron or government agency will provide the limbs after the hero endures a life-shattering accident—and the benefactor will expect the hero's service in return. As for buying them independently, the limbs cost far more to build, implant and maintain than even the wealthiest hero could afford.

There are five basic types of bionics: eyes, ears, arms, legs, and torsos. The abilities of each type follow:

Eyes: You receive a +10 bonus to Spot rolls, and the range penalty for Spot checks is reduced to -1 for every 50 feet. The eyes grant you darkvision, and in combat you have the benefit of the Blind-Fight, Dead Aim and Far Shot feats. You may also increase the range increment of ranged weapons by 50%. In addition, since your eyes automatically adjust to danger, you are unaffected by tear gas, bright or dizzying lights and other attacks that target the visual organs.

Ears: You receive a +10 bonus to Listen rolls and a +4 to Concentration checks (since your circuitry can block out unwanted noise at will). Since your ears automatically adjust to danger, you are unaffected by attacks that target hearing. And since you can pick up subtle personal signals such as an increase in heart rate or labored breathing, you gain a +4 bonus to Sense Motive checks.

Arm: If you have one bionic arm, you receive a permanent +4 bonus to your Strength score. In addition, as a move action you may spend 1 action point to temporarily increase your Strength by 1d4+1 points. The increase lasts for a number of rounds equal to your character level. At the end of the duration, you are fatigued for 1d4+1 rounds. If both your arms are bionic, you receive a permanent +8 bonus to your Strength score and may spend 1 action point to temporarily increase your Strength by 2d4+2 points. At the end of the duration, you are fatigued for 1d6+2 rounds.

Legs: Legs must be taken as a pair. With bionic legs, your Speed score is tripled, you gain the Run feat (if you don't have it already), and receive a +10 bonus to Balance, Jump, and Swim checks. You may spend 1 action point to temporarily increase your Speed by an additional 30 feet per round or temporarily add an additional +5 bonus to your Balance, Jump, and Swim checks. The increase lasts for a number of rounds equal to your character level. At the end of the duration, you are fatigued for 1d4+1 rounds.

Torso: Your vital physical functions are handled by machine. You gain a permanent +5 bonus to your Constitution score. In addition, you may re-roll a failed Fortitude save, but you must use the second roll no matter what the result. You can hold your breath for five minutes (30 rounds) before having to check against suffocation (see **Chapter Seven** of the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*), and you can breathe even the thinnest or most polluted air—your mechanical lungs screen out toxic particles and make the most of the oxygen that's there. In addition, you can go almost indefinitely with meager food and water, thanks to your hyper-efficient bionic gullet. Your circuitry also converts your bodily waste into fuel for your torso's generator.

You may spend 1 action point to hold your breath for ten minutes (60 rounds) before checking against suffocation or go without food and water entirely for up to a week. At the end of the duration, you are fatigued for 1d4+1 rounds or 1d2 days, respectively.

In addition to the benefits already detailed, many types of bionics also provide damage reduction due to their sturdy construction and space-age materials. Bionic arms and legs have damage reduction of 5, except against electrical or magnetic attacks. Bionic torsos have damage reduction of 10. Ears and eyes have none.

This damage reduction only applies when a bionic part of your body is hit with an attack. To determine hit location, roll on the following chart each time you are hit. If the body part hit is bionic, the damage reduction applies. Otherwise, you take damage as normal.

Result	Location
1-2	Left arm
3-4	Right arm
5-15	Torso
16-17	Left leg
18-19	Right leg
20	Head**

*If you roll a 20, roll again. On a 1-2, the eyes are hit; on 3-4, the ears. (For simplicity's sake, a hit on one sense organ is assumed to affect both.)

Under normal circumstances, you do not track separate damage for bionic body parts. The hit point system is abstract by nature and doing so would only complicate matters. When you suffer Massive Damage, however, your bionics can malfunction. If a bionic part is hit by an attack that causes Massive Damage, you suffer the following penalties in addition to the normal results. You must have the Repair Bionics feat to properly treat damage to bionic body parts. A bionic character may treat herself, unless her injury renders her incapable of using the tools properly.

Eyes or Ears: You are completely blind or deaf until a DC 15 Repair or Treat Injury check (Restore Hit points) is made.

Arm: You can perform small tasks with the limb, such as writing or turning pages, but no lifting or carrying (or even broad gesturing). You lose the limb's Strength bonus until a DC 15 Repair or Treat Injury check (Restore Hit points) is made. If both limbs are affected, you lose the Strength bonus from both, and two Repair or Treat Injury checks are required.

Legs: Your Speed is reduced by two-thirds, and you lose the special abilities the limbs bestow, until two DC 15 Repair or Treat Injury (Restore Hit points) checks are made. You can't even attempt to run.

Torso: You must make a DC 14 Fortitude save or go into the equivalent of cardiac arrest. If you fail your save, you have 1d6 x (your Constitution bonus) minutes to get help, or you will die. A DC 15 Repair or Treat Injury check (Stabilize Dying Character) will stabilize you. After that, a DC 15 Repair or Treat Injury (Restore Lost Hit points) check will make you good as new.

Drugs

In the seventies, the drug culture became pop culture. The narcotics trade boomed, fueling crime waves—and ruining countless lives—in cities that were already being torn apart by riots and fiscal mishaps. Meanwhile, some of the cops assigned to keep the streets clean decided the money was better on the other side of the law, and got into the drug business themselves—making life even tougher for their honest brothers on the beat.

Legal but Restricted

Drug	Effect and Duration	Chance of Bad Trip (on d20)*	Resist DC**	Bad Trip Effect
Grin Pills (appetite suppressant and antidepressant; prescription only)	You become nervous, chatty and frenetic. +2 to Spot and Listen checks. -2 to Will saves. 3d6 minutes.	1 (Fort 14 negates)	12	You become paranoid and hostile for 2d8 minutes. Everyone you see is your enemy, or has some hidden agenda. (The modifiers listed under Effect and Duration also apply.)
Mell-O Tabs (relaxant and aphrodisiac; prescription only)	You become blissful, relaxed and friendly. +2 to Diplomacy checks, -2 to Dex bonus. 5d6 minutes.	1 (Fort 15 negates)	13	You fall unconscious for 1 hour and cannot be revived until the effect wears off.
Alcohol (depressant; age 18+ in most states)	Your inhibitions are loosened, and your emotions are closer to the surface. -2 to Bluff and Diplomacy, as well as Dex and Wis bonuses. 1d3 hours.	1-3 (Fort 16 negates)	14	You can't control yourself. For 3d6 minutes, you act according to your worst impulses, after which you become violently ill (DC 15 Fort or spend five minutes vomiting) and then pass out for 1d4 hours. (The modifiers listed under Effect and Duration also apply.)

Illegal Drugs

Drug	Effect and Duration	Chance of Bad Trip (on d20)*	Resist DC**	Bad Trip Effect
Kaleido-Chewz (synthetic psychedelic)	The doors of perception are opened and you begin to hallucinate. -2 on all rolls. 5d12 minutes.	1-5 (Fort 18 negates)	16	The visions don't stop. You are completely unable to distinguish the mental images from reality for 4d12 minutes. (The modifiers listed under Effect and Duration also apply.)
Marching Powder (stimulant)	You become nervous, chatty and frenetic. +2 to Spot and Listen checks, -2 to all other rolls. 3d8 minutes.	1-5 (Fort 18 negates)	16	You become paranoid and hostile for 2d8 minutes. At the end of that period you crash and become paralyzed. You must lay sweating, twitching and muttering for an hour, after which you sink into a light restive sleep. (The modifiers listed under Effect and Duration also apply.)
Jaffe (narcotic weed)	You become blissful, relaxed and friendly. +2 to Diplomacy checks, -2 to Dex bonus. 6d6 minutes.	1 (Fort 15 negates)	13	You become ravenously hungry for 2d8 minutes, after which you sink into a peaceful sleep for 2d8 hours. (The modifiers listed under Effect and Duration also apply.)
Toadstool (natural psychedelic fungus)	The doors of perception are opened and you begin to hallucinate. -2 on all rolls. 5d12 minutes.	1-2 (Fort 18 negates)	16	The visions don't stop. You are completely unable to distinguish the mental images from reality for 2d8 minutes, after which you sink into a deep, troubled sleep for 1d4 hours. (The modifiers listed under Effect and Duration also apply.)

*Every time you take a drug, roll a d20. If you roll the listed number, you must make the listed Fortitude save or undergo a Bad Trip. If you make the save, you experience only the regular effects of the drug.

**If you have been given the drug against your will, and wish to resist its effects, you must make this Fortitude save.

Over on the licit side, countless people flocked to prescription medicines that promised to make them thin, happy or amorous. These treatments worked wonders for people with legitimate medical problems. But for many others, the drugs were just an easy way out of ennui—one that ended up leading them to a lifetime of neurotic navel-gazing and hollow emotions.

Here are the drugs making the rounds in Americo, and what they can do.

Grin Pills, which accelerate the nervous system and create a kind of kinetic euphoria, are marketed as antidepressants and appetite suppressants.

Mell-O Tabs go the opposite route, releasing tension and promoting a general sense of well-being. They are marketed as relaxants and aphrodisiacs.

Alcohol is the liquid depressant we all know.

Kaleido-Chewz are powerful hallucinogens, often used by New Age cults to break down the resistance of new recruits.

Marching powder, a jittery stimulant harvested from the dwindling rainforests of Suramerico, has become a staple among the BootyDome crowd.

Jaffe is a leafy opiate with generally benign short-term properties; the brittle fungus **toadstool** is nature's version of **Kaleido-Chewz**.

Artifacts and Relics

The seventies may be a terrible time for traditional religion, but they're a booming era for religious artifacts. Archaeologists, pop historians and crank filmmakers are scouring the ancient places of the globe to dig up historical evidence of spiritual stories—and they're succeeding beyond all expectation. In a just a few years of work, they've found a wealth of items from every tradition of worship, from the knucklebones of saints to holy goblets to fragments of five-thousand-year-old tablets.

But the artifacts are more than just objects of skeptical study or a focus for the faithful. Adventurers can use these dogmatic knickknacks as potent weapons in the fight against the forces of darkness. The objects generally provide open-ended bonuses so long as you observe some ground rules, such as not using the artifact for evil ends. In addition, most artifacts provide two levels of effect—one for the general public and a stronger one for people with the Believer feat.

The statistics for these holy curios are reserved for the GM and can be found in the second section of this book. Why the secrecy? Unlike in other d20 games, there's not a steady supply of generic magic items out there, such as +2 swords. Each item in *Damnation Decade* has unique properties, and some of your adventures will center on locating those items and figuring out what they can do. Laying out their secrets beforehand would spoil the surprise.



The Gamemaster's Section: Principalities and Powers

These are bad times.
Principalities and powers are everywhere victorious. Wickedness flourishes in high places.

—Walker Percy, *Love in the Ruins*

Patty: Well, what else happened in history today, Hugh?
Hugh: In history, Patty, well, today of course is the 38th of Cunegonde, and on this day in 1938 b.c., Patty, Mr. George Antrobus invented the wheel.
Patty: And just in time!
Hugh: And in 1889 the Peace of Hummus broke out, ending the Hundred Years War against the Cows.
Patty: Yup.
Hugh: And last year, Patty, you and the viewers will be interested in noting that the world ended.
Patty: As we know it, Hugh.

—The Firesign Theater,
Don't Crush That Dwarf, Hand Me the Pliers

—Walker Percy, *Love in the Ruins*

Patty: As we know it, Hugh.

**—The Firesign Theater,
Don't Crush That Dwarf. Hand Me the Pliers**

Scary Monsters Chapter Four: (and Super Creeps)

What *did* happen on August 9, 1974? What knocked the world off its axis and summoned up legions of shadowy bad guys? And what do the heroes have to do to stop the apocalypse?

This chapter will answer those questions and give you ideas about how to work all of it into your campaign. But before we get into that, a word about structure. Each of the major factions of bad guys gets its own section in this chapter, broken down into several parts. (Some minor enemies, as well as some potentially helpful heroes, get a sidebar.)

The **summary** is exactly what it sounds like: a brief rundown of the faction's key figures, how their plans were set in motion by the events of August 9 and what they're up to now. The **history** provides a detailed back story for the villains and a look at how they fit into the broader game world, while the **current plans** flesh out the schemes they've got cooking now. **Adventure hooks** provide a number of ways to introduce the bad guys into your campaign. The **end game** describes what the players will need to do to wreck the villains' designs and stop the doomsday clock. Finally, the **statistics** section lays out all the relevant numbers:

GM characters, monsters, special equipment (including artifacts and relics) and so on.

Be warned: this isn't the funky world you got to know in the **Player's Section**. Some of the bad guys you're about to meet had a strong hand in shaping the culture of drugs and nightclubs and far-out duds; others are taking advantage of it to camouflage their vile designs. But for the most part these villains work behind the scenes, far away from the strobe of the disco ball. And things aren't fabulous in the shadows.

One last point. Only one of the bad guys in this chapter has specifically arranged his plans to end on December 31, 1979. The rest of the villains don't have a particular deadline, but you can assume that, left to their own devices, each of their plans will climax on the same fateful New Year's Eve.

Now let's meet the malefactors.

Ampersand Vole IV and the Brotherhood

Seeing his fossil-fuel supplies dwindling to a trickle, oil magnate Ampersand Vole IV went looking for a substitute—and found the Omega Ray, a potent subatomic force that promised limitless energy for pennies. But in its first large-scale test, on August 9, 1974, the ray went wild, ripping through every atom on the planet and disrupting the world in countless catastrophic ways. Among them, it mutated virtually the entire state of Alamo, turning its residents into horribly scarred albino zombies hungry for human flesh. Now this legion of freaks, who call themselves the Brotherhood, is rampaging across the countryside, devouring anyone in their path—or, even more horrible, poisoning their victims with subatomic corruption and bringing them into the cannibal fraternity. And Vole, their hideous king, is trying to get the Omega-Ray generator back on-line—to bring radioactive “salvation” to the whole human race at once.

History

From their earliest days as wildcatters, the Voles had a thirst for oil. The first Ampersand founded Vigorous Petroleum in the days of steam trains and telegraphs. The second made it a world power, crisscrossing the continents with pipelines and building filling stations on every corner in Americo. The third held off antitrust crusaders at home and won the friendship of unsavory governments abroad.

Ampersand IV started out wild. He shunned the life of private clubs and boarding schools his father had arranged for him and became a globetrotting prodigal. He gambled away a fortune every night and never woke up in the same bed twice. Between debauches he lived for thrills. He started off racing cars and jumping out of airplanes, and then moved on to headier pleasures

in the untended places of the world. He crossed the ocean in a rickety kayak to share toad juice with the Stone Age islanders of Eden Atoll and dodged collectivist bullets to sit in with the Master Musicians of Mango.

Eventually, he outgrew the worst of his breakneck ways and settled behind the chief executive's desk. But he never lost his imperiousness or his willful taste for long shots. Even as a newcomer to the industry he ran Vigorous Petroleum on instinct instead of analysis and shredded anyone who questioned his judgment. One of those gut feelings changed the course of human history—and created the world of *Damnation Decade*.

It came in the late 1960s. With Americo tearing itself apart, pollution choking the oceans, and the world one false step away from nuclear war, Vole became obsessed with eco-doomsday tracts like *Too Many Mouths!* and *Envyng the Dead*. He began reading the newspapers and geologists' surveys with a skeptical new eye, and came to a terrible conclusion: the oil could not last. Five years—maybe less—and the wells would run dry.

He called an emergency board meeting and announced that he was going to pour every resource at his command into finding a substitute for fossil fuel. The company leaders couldn't believe what they were hearing. Business was booming, as cars and power plants got larger and thirstier. Why risk everything on the longest long shot imaginable?

But Vole refused to relent, and anyone who didn't like it got shown the door. His apocalyptic project came to be known as Omega: the end of conventional energy.

For half a decade, Vole's team investigated nuclear reactors, solar cells, windmills, biomass mounds—every reasonable alternative



to fossil fuels. But all of them came up short, while the crisis Vole had predicted came to pass. Wells dried up around the world, and the cost of finding new reserves soared. Running low on supply, and frantic to cover costs, Vole engineered a series of mergers and takeovers. The business press—and some wary antitrust legislators—thought he was trying to corner the market on oil. Only a handful of people knew he was trying to scrape together enough capital to end it altogether.

Among those in the know were Stanton Morango Spobeck, president of Americo, and Fedo Malese, a rogue member of the oil-producing Consortium nations. Both had gotten wind of Vole's experiments and planted spies in the Vigorous labs. Spobeck feared that with all the strains Americo had suffered in the sixties, an energy crisis would bring the nation to its knees. If Vole discovered something useful, Spobeck would need it to keep Americo intact and save his scandal-wracked presidency besides.

Malese, meanwhile, knew that a new form of energy would spell the end of the Consortium. So when Vole's scientists finally discovered their elusive power source—a subatomic wave they dubbed the Omega Ray—Malese set out to wreck their work. Indeed, the ray was his worst nightmare. If successful, it would use quantum loopholes and relativistic back doors to provide virtually limitless power for pennies. And it would take Consortium scientists years to figure out the technology, even with smuggled blueprints.

Vole scheduled an unveiling for August 9, 1974—a full-scale test of the Omega-Ray generator for a group of executives, researchers and VIP well-wishers at the company's Alamo headquarters. As Vole wrapped up his introductory speech, a Consortium saboteur worked his way to the front of the crowd, a belt of plastic explosives strapped across his chest. Spobeck's undercover agents spotted him a moment too late. The saboteur shook off their tackle and leaped toward the generator—just as Vole's researchers brought it on line.

The explosion wrecked the machinery, but not before setting off a quantum-level chain reaction. Instead of a controlled wave of Omega Rays, the generator sent out a mammoth blast of fundamental particles that rippled through every atom on the planet at the speed of light.

The results were catastrophic. The world's temperature began rising, a series of tidal waves battered coastal cities, and several dozen nuclear plants melted down at once, releasing untold pollutants into the ecosystem. The most visible, and horrific, event was the great earthquake that sank the West Coast of Americo—and led Stanton Spobeck to postpone his resignation. Countless other hidden effects surfaced over the following weeks, as you'll discover elsewhere in this chapter.

Fortunately, for all the horrible consequences of the ray, most people weren't directly affected by the blast itself. The majority of the world's population simply had a moment of nausea or lightheadedness as the subatomic shock waves passed through their bodies. Particularly sensitive types, from artists all the way up to full-fledged Psychics, felt a more pronounced mental shock—as though they could feel an age of history ending.

The only ones who weren't spared were Vole and his guests. Anyone within several hundred miles of the generator at the time of the explosion got a concentrated blast of Omega radiation: the particles hadn't yet diffused enough to be harmless to humans. Vigorous Petroleum headquarters and most of the state of Alamo were thoroughly irradiated.

The survivors found themselves mutated into monsters—their skin and hair turned a deathly white broken only by horrible seeping scars, their eyes large and blank and near useless in daylight. Even worse was what the ray had done to their minds, driving them irretrievably insane and giving them a remorseless hunger for human flesh. Only a handful kept even the basic faculties of reason and memory.



Vole went just as mad as the rest of them—but his strong will kept the Omega Ray out of the deepest storehouses of his mind. He held onto his memories, charisma and strategic cunning, as well as his trademark narcissism. The mutant tycoon now saw himself as the Grand Patriarch of this new race of freaks, destined to spread the gift of corruption to the rest of the human race.

He organized his army of zombies into an expeditionary force, sending one wave sweeping out across the Middle West, and another south to Suramerico, while the rest consolidated Vole's hold on his home turf. By the time Stanton Spobeck could call in the National Guard to seal off Alamo, thousands of zombies were rampaging through the heartland. And tens of thousands were creating Vole a grisly capital city in the ruins of his corporate headquarters.

Current Plans

- **The Big Fix.** Vole's top priority is to get the Omega-Ray generator back on line, so he can fire off another, much stronger blast of particles and turn everyone in the world into zombies. Since all of his old researchers are now flesh-hungry imbeciles, he is sending squads of henchmen across the country to kidnap top scientists and drag them back to Alamo as slave labor. For these missions, he chooses his toughest and most resourceful mutants, those who can almost pass as human on casual examination and can resist the urge to gobble up their quarry on the trip home.
- **Good Fences.** Vole's forces are building a two-foot-thick concrete wall, topped with barbed wire, around the ruins of Vigorous Petroleum headquarters. On either side of the barrier are hundreds of zombie shock troops, ready to swarm over any invasion force that tries to enter the compound.
- **Guerrilla Warfare.** Stanton Spobeck's forces have formed a cordon around the borders of Alamo, but Vole's inner defenses are so strong that the National Guard can't make much headway into the state. Vole also sends out patrols to test the blockade and lure soldiers into his territory, where they can be overwhelmed and corrupted with bites (see the Brotherhood template for more details on corruption). He also uses these attacks as a diversion when his kidnap teams sneak into and out of the state.
- **The South Shall Rise.** Natural disasters have swamped the governments of Suramerico, so Vole's mutant army is meeting only scattered resistance as it plows south. A sizable portion of the continent's population is being corrupted into the Brotherhood, and these new recruits are helping the hordes of zombies drive further south. But, when Vole gives the signal, they will reverse course and plunge northward across the border into Americo to help their grisly king break through Stanton Spobeck's cordon once and for all.
- **Over a Barrel.** Vole has a number of valuable bargaining chips to offer President Spobeck. In relative terms, he still commands a tremendous supply of oil, which the country desperately needs. He has access to the blueprints and prototypes of the Omega-Ray technology, even if he doesn't have a working generator. And his cleverest mutants are trying to get Alamo's supply of nuclear missiles back on-line (Spobeck deactivated them remotely when he declared martial law). Vole has sent envoys to the National Guard commanders on the state border, offering Spobeck steady oil deliveries, Omega-Ray plans and access to the missile silos if the president will call off the army and let the mutants have the state for their own. Needless to say, Vole doesn't mention his larger goal of getting the Omega-Ray generator back in service and corrupting the world.

- **Mutant and Wife.** At the time of the Omega-Ray blast, Vole's wife, Terrapin, was vacationing in the couple's summer home on the Gulf of Suramerico. When the scope of the disaster became clear, auto tycoon Fulton Gort leaped at the opportunity and tried to strong-arm Terrapin and the Vigorous board into selling him the company. But Terrapin proved just as cunning as her husband. In an intricate con game, she sold Gort the company's Alamo assets—largely worthless, since the state was cordoned off and presumed destroyed—but kept its still-substantial offshore and overseas holdings. The slimmed-down version of Vigorous operates out of the Voles' summer home, which Terrapin has built up into an armed compound to ward off Gort's agents and the zombie freaks rampaging through the heartland. Vole has been following the news about her, and is determined to make her the matriarch of the new mutant race. He is currently gathering up a top kidnap team to bring her "home."

Adventure Hooks

Surprise Attack. The easiest way to bring the Brotherhood into a campaign is to stage an unexpected assault.

- The heroes find themselves in a location suddenly overrun by the mutants, and they must battle their way out to survive. This might be a small town, a deserted rest stop on the highway or a suburban shopping mall.
- A variation: the team comes upon a town that has just been overrun and tries to piece the story together from the lone survivor—before night falls and the menace returns for fresh meat.

The Missing. Vole's plot to shanghai scientists also opens up many adventures for the heroes.

- The most obvious approach: the team is charged with investigating the disappearances or recovering the researchers.

Variations:

- Somebody known to the heroes vanishes when his or her town is invaded by mutants.
- Terrapin Vole is kidnapped and the heroes are sent to investigate.
- Mrs. Vole asks the heroes to head into Alamo and find her husband's remains.
- You might also approach this idea as a preemptive mission: the heroes are guarding a scientist or Terrapin Vole when the mutants attack.

Third-Party Information. The heroes don't necessarily need to be drawn into the Brotherhood storyline with a firsthand encounter. You might send them a GM character who knows about the mutants and their plans.

- A wounded National Guardsman, the last survivor of a slaughtered platoon, collapses on the heroes' doorstep and begs for help.
- The heroes capture a Consortium spy who was sent to disrupt any further Omega-Ray research.
- A doctor in the Middle West tells the heroes that scores of patients have been brought in covered with bites and suffering from an unknown disease.

Smash and Grab. Quick forays into Brotherhood territory could give the heroes a sense of the enemy.

- The heroes must rescue a VIP whose plane crashed in the Southwest and will end up eaten if the heroes don't help.

Charlie And The Women

Thousands of people managed to escape the great quake of '74, fleeing the West Coast when the first shock waves hit. Unfortunately for the world, one of these survivors was criminal Svengali Charlie Freak.

In the late sixties, this long-haired, wild-eyed race-baiter (and occasional songwriter) founded a desert commune where he lured runaways, dropouts and other castoffs. He broke their spirit and molded them into a cadre of hardened prostitutes and thieves—and, eventually, murderers. As part of an unintelligible scheme to spark a race war, Charlie's followers rampaged through a wealthy suburb one summer night and massacred everyone they found.

After a grotesque circus of a trial, Charlie and his gang were locked away, ostensibly for the rest of their lives—but then seismic forces set them free. The first shock waves split Charlie's prison in half, and he wasted no time freeing his murderous sycophants from the women's penitentiary nearby. They made their way across the country as it was remade by maniac nature, searching for the perfect spot to settle and begin their bloody work once again.

Something else found them first: a horde of Brotherhood mutants. By the time Charlie and his gang could escape, their blood was thick with zombie poison. Over several agonizing days they were transformed into pale-faced, flesh-hungry monsters.

But Charlie proved just as strong-willed as Ampersand Vole. Even as he succumbed to Brotherhood corruption, he managed to hang onto his cunning and charisma. Now, like the rest of the Brotherhood, he and his gang are devoted to propagating the Omega Ray—but they don't take orders from Vole or any of his lieutenants from Alamo. Instead, they use their new powers in the service of Charlie's old psychotic goals: undermining bourgeois society and building up an army for a war between the races.

Toward that end, they have created a sprawling commune in the ranch lands of the West, luring truckers, wanderers and dropouts with the promise of abundant drugs and cheap love. The truth quickly becomes plain: the foxy young residents are wearing pancake makeup over their pale skin and festering sores, and the drugs are only there to lower your guard. Only the hardest travelers will avoid getting a gene-blasting dose of Omega-Ray poison and leading a twilight life as one of Charlie's zombies—or ending up, conscious but paralyzed, on his dinner table. If you're lucky, you won't have to listen to one of his babbling rants before he tucks in.

Charlie Freak

Cha10; CR 9; HD 10d12+20; hp 100; Mas 14; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Defense 20, touch 17, flat-footed 18 (+3 class, +2 natural, +2 Dex, +3 pleather armor); BAB +5; Grap +7; Atk +7 melee (1d6+2 meat cleaver or 1d6+2 slam or 1d4+corruption bite) or +7 ranged (2d6 Ruger Service-Six); SQ/SA Scent, Corruption, Daylight Hatred, Hard to Kill; SV Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +11; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 19; Rep +5; Wealth +0; AP 2.

Skills: Bluff +20, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +6, Gather Information +19, Intimidate +21, Perform (sing) +6, Perform (string instrument) +6, Sense Motive +9, Speak Language (jive).

Feats: Alien Language Affinity, Armor Proficiency (light), Deceptive, Double Bluff, Frightful Presence, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Power to Will, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Trustworthy.

Talents (Charismatic Hero): Charm (females), Coordinate, Fast Talk, Greater Inspiration, Inspiration.

Special Abilities: All Brotherhood traits



- The team must find a trove of notebooks in the mutant-haunted Middle West detailing an earthshaking scientific breakthrough.
- The heroes learn that a truck carrying a small, experimental nuclear bomb was ambushed and the mutants are now dragging the catastrophic weapon back to Vole. (The heroes might even be survivors of the convoy.)

The Go-Betweens. The heroes might end up pressed into service as couriers to the borderlands.

- Because of their unique skills, or an accident of circumstance, the heroes are chosen to head into Alamo to convey a message to Vole from Stanton Spobeck.
- Or the opposite: Vole remembers the heroes somehow from his old life and asks them to be his spokesmen to the outside world.

The Omega Ray

How does the Omega Ray work? What are its capabilities? How can it be harnessed? The answer is simple. Nobody knows. Not even the Vigorous Petroleum researchers who discovered the ray initially understood its full potential and peril. They stumbled across the ray in a “Eureka” moment and rushed it to a large-scale test in a matter of months. Now most of those scientists are gibbering lunatics, and nobody outside of Alamo has enough information to fully recreate their research. The ray is not an extension of any existing energy source, where incremental tinkering will eventually lead to rediscovery. It is something entirely novel.

In game terms, this means that the heroes can't, say, build a generator from scratch or begin creating devices that run on Omega Rays unless they have solid background information on the ray. For example, one of them would have to stumble across plans for the generator, or one of the original researchers' notebooks. Even then, she would have to closely study the documents to understand the groundbreaking new concepts. This would take at least a month or possibly more, depending on the volume of information, and at the end of that period she would have to make an Intelligence or Knowledge (physical sciences) check to make sure she grasped what she had read. (The DC would range from 15, if the document were a comprehensive, heavily annotated study, to 25 or more if it were just a fragmentary note or diagram.)

Even then, be sure to emphasize that the hero doesn't understand all the implications of what she has stumbled upon. She has figured out a few basic principles well enough to craft a very specific application, and any other experimentation with the ray may well end in disaster. Actually developing that application—a cure for Brotherhood corruption, for example—would take a Field Scientist's Breakthrough. Attempting to create such an application with a Craft (mechanical) or Craft (electronic) skill check would go beyond an Advanced test, with a DC beginning at 35 and probably running higher depending on the complexity of the idea. For instance, a de-corrupting ray that worked over one square mile would be a DC 35 Craft test. A projector that could cover an entire city with one blast would take a DC of at least 40.

If the hero successfully creates and uses an Omega-Ray application, she doesn't need to spend a Breakthrough on her next attempt at an invention—provided the new idea builds on her earlier work. For example, if the hero created a cure for Brotherhood corruption the first time out, she wouldn't need to use a Breakthrough to create a preventive vaccination. Instead, assign the task a Craft skill check of DC 25 to 35, depending on its complexity and scope.

However, if the hero is trying for an entirely new application of the ray, she must use a Breakthrough—or make a super-advanced skill check—as if it were her first crack at working with the ray.

In any case, the cost of failure is earthshaking. If the hero blows a roll during the creation, testing or use of an Omega-Ray application, have her roll again. On a 1, something on the level of the original Omega-Ray blast occurs. The hero might accidentally create a new, more resilient race of Brotherhood zombies, or, say, knock herself and the rest of the party into a parallel universe where the mutants are in firm control of the planet. Even if the hero doesn't roll a 1, a failed initial roll means her application is destroyed and to reconstruct it she must make a Craft skill check of DC 35 to 40+ (if this is her first experiment with the ray) or 25 to 35 (if this is a subsequent experiment).

One way to sidestep all this, of course, is simply to introduce a GM character who has developed the invention in question. This allows you to set very specific parameters for the device, control the flow of any future developments and not risk blowing up the world on a failed skill check. For instance, you might have the heroes assigned to recover a trove of data about the Omega Ray that has turned up in the Middle West. When the heroes return, they pass this information onto wise old Doctor Fritts, head of their patron's scientific division. The heroes go off on another assignment, and when they return: presto! The good doctor has developed a cure for Brotherhood corruption.

The bottom line: the Omega Ray is intended to be part of the background of the campaign, not the foreground. If the heroes become preoccupied with figuring out its secrets, you may want to throw them a plotline that gets them away from the Brotherhood for a while.

Ampersand Vole IV

Tough4/Exec 10; HD 4d12 + 16 + 10d12 + 40; hp 160; Mas 18; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd. 30 ft.; Defense 17, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+3 class, +1 Dex, +3 undercover vest); BAB +3; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1 strengthened walking stick) or +4 ranged (3d6 Projector); SQ/SA Scent, Corruption, Daylight Hatred, Hard to Kill; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +23; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 17, Wis 15, Cha 16; Rep +18; Wealth +20; AP 10.

Skills: Bluff +23, Gamble +10, Diplomacy +23, Gather Information +23, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (earth and life sciences) +7, Knowledge (technology) +7, Listen +12, Sense Motive +23, Search +12, Spot +9, Survival +13.

Feats: Alertness, Armor Proficiency (light), Brawl, Great Fortitude, Improved Power to Will, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Power to Will, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Talents (Tough Hero): Damage Reduction/2

Abilities (Executive): Corporate Resources, Friends in High Places, Life of Leisure, Money Is No Object I/II, Sales Pitch (Will resist DC 28), Sizing Up

Special Abilities: All Brotherhood traits

Fulton Gort and the Androids

In the late 1940s, automobile titan (and secret fascist sympathizer) Fulton Gort gathered a team of fugitive war criminals to find a way to extend his life. The radical answer: program Gort's memories and personality into an android duplicate. When Gort's heart gave out, the mechanized double ran the show seamlessly—until August 9, 1974, when the Omega-Ray blast tore through the android's circuits and brought it militant

self-awareness. Now the robot is determined to put machines in charge of the Earth. He is using a campaign of targeted assassinations to replace government officials and captains of industry with android duplicates. When his hold on power is secure, he will use Gort's mass-production techniques to crank out androids by the thousands—and exterminate humans by the millions.

Tomorrow Belongs To Me

The last great world war pitted the armies of the West against fascist powers led by the nation of Faust. (Gogol Yobar's Bloc fought on both sides at various times—and executed any citizens who pointed out the contradiction.) Faust was defeated, but its lunatic dreams of racial homogeneity and a new world order founded on pagan myths and nineteenth-century opera live on.

Many Faustlander scientists, secret policemen and propagandists escaped the fall of their homeland and are carrying out secret plans to restore the *Raag*—the millennial kingship they believe is their national birthright. A large population of these exiles fled to Suramerico, where they continue their vile research in the deep jungles. Others have set themselves up as advisers to the lunatic dictatorships of Swelt.

They have two broad schemes to return to power. One faction of scientists has preserved the brains of the former fascist high command in vats of bubbling solution. The sinister physicians plan to transplant the brains into android bodies supplied by Kander Brötzmann, Fulton Gort's right-hand man—after scooping out the computerized brains that are already there, of course.

The surgical procedure is still experimental, and there have been some tragic missteps. The team recently lost the brains of a half-dozen former Ethnic Purity Commissars when their electrified spinal columns short-circuited and set the medullae on fire. The scientists are currently refining the procedure on hapless local “volunteers,” and are confident that all they need are fifty or sixty guinea pigs to really nail things down. At most, a hundred. Or two.

This faction of fascists has other plans involving androids. After the high command is transplanted into sturdy, new synthetic bodies, the scientists will give them a robot army to lead into battle: androids with standard-issue mechanical brains instead of human ones, programmed to obey orders to the letter. (Some of these robots are being shipped to the Consortium, in a side deal with kindred spirit Fedo Malese. See the entry on the Consortium for more details.)

Another group of scientists is seeking out boys in Suramerico whose parentage and background closely match those of the Faustlanders' immolated dictator. The scientists insinuate themselves into the boys' lives and steer them toward to fascism, hoping one of them will show the ruthless ambition and malevolent magnetism that brought Heide onto the world stage.

Within weeks Gort had shut down official inquiries into his activities during the war and reined in Gort Motors' maverick board of directors. Gort then did his best to squeeze out of power or otherwise ruin everyone who had attacked him.

So it went for decades. The android Gort played his role to perfection, haranguing boardrooms, micromanaging the company and generally alienating a new generation of executives and legislators. The tycoon's unnatural long life was chalked up to eccentric diet regimes or simple tenacity.

Then came August 9, 1974. When the subatomic pulse tore through the world, it knocked Gort's computer brain off-line. Brötzmann,

who had set himself up as Gort's “private physician,” rushed to revive the artificial man, but found something had gone horribly wrong. The robot still had all of Gort's memories and mannerisms, but he no longer wanted to play a role someone else had scripted. He wanted to follow his *own* goals, not Gort's. And those were horrific, even by fascist standards.

Gort had decided that robots were better suited to run the world than weak, indecisive, messily mortal humans—and he wanted to effect a switch by exterminating all of mankind. Once *Homo sapiens* is eliminated, Gort will turn the world into one vast factory dedicated to cranking out new and improved androids, with even more durable bodies and even more pliable minds. He will not rest until he creates armies of machines that respond instantly and without error to his thoughts, without the need for clumsy verbal communication and radio signals. That is his iron dream: billions upon billions of machines working in lockstep at their master's commands.

Current Plans

- **Search and Replace.** Gort is starting his genocidal plans small. His android agents are assassinating government and business leaders who might block his efforts, and then replacing them with pliable android doubles. So far, only a handful of these switches have been made: it takes an extraordinary amount of work to recreate a target's memories and personality. Gort's agents must either interview the subject for hours (usually disguised as reporters), trick her into a brain scan (disguised as doctors, under the pretext of screening for tumors) or, riskiest of all, kidnap her for a period of weeks and perform the tests forcibly. And if the personality profile is done sloppily, the android double is such an obvious fake that she will likely end up under psychiatric observation. So Gort is trying to streamline the memory dump. One route is automation: concealing brain wave readers in ordinary household appliances to scan the subject on the sly. The auto magnate is also placing android agents near his targets, disguised as psychiatrists, lovers or other confidants.
- **Out With the Old.** The final stage of Gort's plans is automation: parallel factory operations to destroy the human race and create its replacement. Here, again, he will start small. He plans to eliminate and replace a swath of important authority figures in Motor State, then use these newly created allies to quietly gather up and exterminate whole towns. When necessary, those townspeople will be forcibly scanned and replaced by androids. When not, “fresh” androids will take their place: those whose only personality traits are pride in the robot race and subservience to Gort's authority. (The auto titan believes individuality, like history, is bunk.) Once Gort has Motor State entirely under his control, he will create the first of his extermination and production centers. Then his population of androids will become an expeditionary force, spreading into neighboring states and repeating the process until they control the country. By the time Americo's human citizens recognize what's going on, they will be outnumbered—and powerless to resist.
- **Test Markets.** For all his fanatical confidence, Gort still isn't sure how all those androids will actually get along in practice. So he is creating a number of “model communities” in the suburbs of Motor City to test interrobot relations. To all appearances, these are simply planned communities staffed by recent hires at Gort Motors. But beneath the surface the towns are profoundly creepy. Residents are largely flat of affect and live in homes

All In The Family

Becoming an android made Fulton Gort's home life significantly easier. He outlived his long-suffering wife, Huxley, and watched his children grow too old to challenge him for control of Gort Motors. The only family member who still poses a threat is his granddaughter Miranda—a one-time debutante turned bomb-throwing militant.

Not by choice. In the spring of 1974, Miranda was kidnapped by a group of radicals called the Kaveat Vendor Alliance. After many horrible months of torture and brainwashing, Miranda has become a true believer. Now calling herself Tasha, she is violent, foulmouthed and committed to smashing the capitalist state and bringing about a worldwide collectivist revolution. It's only a matter of time before Grandpa Gort shows up on the KVA's list of targets.

But Tasha poses an even greater threat than she and the radicals realize: she's not human. The real Miranda Gort died of a freak brain aneurysm while visiting corporate headquarters several months before the kidnapping. Kander Brötzmann stumbled upon the corpse—and saw a golden opportunity to test out his plans for a next-generation android body.

The old fascist knew the principles behind the technology were sound: the android's battery would be recharged every time it made a movement, so no need to plug into a wall socket to power up. But he didn't know how one of these units would perform over the long term, in the presence of human beings who were familiar with the original. Nobody but Brötzmann knew the girl was dead; where was the harm in a little experiment?

The personality that Brötzmann cooked up for the android was necessarily spotty, but Miranda's parents were so distant, and her friends so flighty, that nobody really noticed the substitution. Even after her capture, things went better than Brötzmann could have dreamed. The android's body and core programming stood up to months of KVA abuse.

But then on August 9, 1974, the Omega-Ray blast tore through Miranda's electronic brain, wiping her memory clean and leaving her open to imprinting. From then on, everything the radical thugs told her became law. Now she won't rest until she has used her considerable mechanical powers to bring down the honky capitalist Establishment, through bank robberies, kidnappings and terrorist attacks.

Brötzmann, meanwhile, has tried to order Miranda to return home, or at least shut her off, by remote control. But her receiving antenna sustained considerable damage during her kidnapping, and was permanently seared during the Omega-Ray blast. So Miranda is on her own—and the old fascist can only content himself by thinking about the terror his creation is spreading throughout hated, decadent Americo.

Miranda Gort ("Tasha")

Cha4/Mil1; CR 4; HD 4d6 +8+1d8+2; hp 30; Mas 14; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd. 30 ft; Defense 19, touch 16, flat-footed 17 (+2 natural, +2 class, +2 Dex, +3 undercover vest); BAB +2; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4+1 hunting knife) or +5 ranged (2d8 AK-47); SV Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 16; Rep +8; Wealth +10; AP 1.

Skills: Bluff +12 (includes +5 bonus for android programming), Demolitions +8, Diplomacy +14, Disable Device +7, Disguise +9*, Gather Information +6, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (streetwise) +9, Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Speak Language (jive).

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Deceptive, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Renown, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Trustworthy.

Talents (Charismatic Hero): Charm (males), Favor

Talents (Android): Damage Reduction/10

Abilities (Militant): Go to Ground

- When determining if someone recognizes this as an android double, use +5 as the bonus instead. See special rules in Statistics section for explanation.



empty of any decoration. Or they go the opposite route, acting wildly emotional at inappropriate times and filling their houses with random doodads that go beyond any attempt at eclecticism. Even more obvious, everyone in town plugs into an electrical outlet once a day to “feed,” there are no children anywhere, and occasionally somebody’s face pops off.

- **The Stronghold.** Gort has transformed his Motor City headquarters into a heavily guarded compound designed for the comfort and sustenance of his android family. The old, normal offices are still in place for visits with reporters and regulators, but around any corner are horrifying new additions: android dormitories lined with speakers broadcasting inspirational slogans and plastered with posters of Gort’s snarling face; testing labs where robots learn to play the role of soon-to-be-murdered humans; a factory floor with rows of plastic limbs on conveyor belts.
- **The Spirit of ’76.** Gort is waiting to see how the presidential race turns out before making any assassination attempts at the national level. He will almost certainly try to finagle private meetings with the new chief executive and key legislators, and plant secret brain-scanning gadgets in their offices. But he also has a man on the inside.
- **Good Boy!** A bungled hotel break-in during the 1972 campaign nearly cost Stanton Spobeck the presidency. But who leaked word of it to the press? Spobeck’s goons have investigated every last person who had access to the information and come up dry. That’s probably because the spy wasn’t a person. It was Spobeck’s dog, Boggle Jr. The original mutt died during the campaign, and Gort—a longtime Spobeck backer—gave the president a feisty new pooch as a replacement. Little did Spobeck know he was getting a craftily disguised robot loaded with surveillance equipment—to give Gort the inside dirt on the administration’s plans. The pooch paid quick dividends. Gort learned that Spobeck was considering price controls to stabilize the economy, which would be disastrous for Gort’s profits. So the auto titan fed the press the story of the break-in and almost brought down the president. Now, given Gort’s plans for world domination, the robot dog has been assigned to gather inside dirt about security procedures and schedules in District One. When the android titan is ready to strike, he will use that information to bump off top politicians and replace them with synthetic slaves.
- **Flesh for the Fascists.** Kander Brötzmann is horrified at the plans his android is hatching—so why is he staying by Gort’s side? He sees an opportunity. As we learned in the “Tomorrow Belongs to Me” sidebar, Brötzmann’s fellow fascists in the jungles of Suramerico want to reconstruct the Faustlander high command by transplanting the top officers’ preserved brains into artificial bodies. At the same time, they want a supply of androids that already have brains to use as compliant shock troops. Brötzmann can get them as much mechanical flesh as they need—as long as he stays close to Gort. Why doesn’t the auto titan simply kill Brötzmann and download his know-how into a robot brain? Clever wiring on Brötzmann’s part. The old fascist knew the original Gort was mercurial and temperamental, and feared the android version might turn on him someday. So he hard-wired a fail-safe mechanism into Gort’s circuits: the android cannot kill Brötzmann, or otherwise allow him to come to harm. The fail-safe has worked flawlessly, but Gort has begun to put two and two together. Ever since he became self-aware, the android titan has wanted to do away with Brötzmann—yet can’t seem to find the will to follow through. It’s only a matter of time before Gort figures out the riddle and starts tinkering with his own circuitry.

Adventure Hooks

It’s the Real Thing. Fulton Gort might decide the heroes, or someone close to them, are worthy targets for android duplication.

- A frantic husband turns to the adventurers for help: something has happened to his wife—she looks the same, but she’s... different.
- One of the heroes is interviewed for a news program, which turns out to be a Gort personality profile in disguise. Or she meets Mr. Goodbar at a local BootyDome—who turns out to be an android, sent to kidnap her and drag her off for a brain scan.
- The heroes’ boss finds a hidden memory scanner in his office, or the boss is kidnapped and interrogated by Gort’s team of profilers. The heroes must find him before an android kills him and takes his place.
- A small town outside the nation’s capital, home to many power brokers and captains of industry, sees a spike in its cancer rates. But the heroes learn it’s all just a scare tactic to shepherd the influential locals into an android-run hospital for covert personality scans.

Stumbling Over Secrets. Gort is also dropping lots of clues that are a bit more oblique but will nevertheless get the heroes to the heart of the android experiments within a few investigative steps.

- The heroes’ car breaks down in one of Gort’s “test markets,” and the tension builds as they realize something is horribly wrong.
- The team comes to the aid of a woman being mugged only to find she has taken at least six bullets without visible harm.
- A top sports doctor gives the heroes mind-bending news: he saw circuitry under a star Omegaballer’s skin.

The Fascist Connection. Discovering the whereabouts of the Faustlander scientists in Suramerico is a good beginning to an adventure that eventually leads back to Gort.

- A hunter of war criminals vanishes in the jungles of Suramerico, and the heroes are enlisted to search for him.
- The heroes intercept a crate of contraband headed for a tiny equatorial clinic—and find that it’s full of artificial heads.
- The team realizes that the new strongman of a banana republic has adopted—with uncomfortable precision—the style and rhetoric of the late, unlamented Wotan Heide.

The Robot Who Came In From the Cold. Gort’s creations could go haywire, giving the heroes leads to follow.

- An android blows a circuit and pulls a bank holdup, taking the heroes hostage.
- An android gets blasted by a stray cascade of Omega Rays and decides that he doesn’t want to follow his master anymore. He might start a cultic commune in the Middle West, lead an android motorcycle gang that harasses Gort’s delivery trucks or simply start searching for someone who can hard-wire him with a full and free personality. The android might seek the heroes out or go on a rampage that the team must put down.

Foreign Entanglements. Obviously, other governments are always on the watch for new technology in Americo, and they might stumble across the android plans first—then accidentally leak word to the heroes.

- On a mission to foil a planned assassination, the heroes break up a Zassat listening post that has been picking up the strangest radio signals lately: communications between Gort’s headquarters and its android outliers.

- In an airport bathroom, the heroes catch a glimpse of a spy from the Sphere putting a (seemingly) dismembered human head in a bag.
- The heroes are assigned to protect Gort from Consortium assassins (who think, incorrectly, that he's working on an electric car). A bomb goes off, and the auto titan walks away from the blast, on fire, without so much as a flinch. Gort quickly sends squads of android assassins after the heroes to silence them forever.

End Game

Gort's androids have one big flaw. They are programmed to be unquestioningly loyal to the auto tycoon, but they usually don't receive instructions from him in person—instead, he sends them out by coded radio broadcast (see Statistics section below for details). That means that anybody who gets access to Gort's transmitter could give the androids instructions that they would be forced to obey, such as “Shut down immediately.” If that doesn't sound like much of a challenge, remember that the heroes will have to get access to Gort's heavily guarded transmitter. And even if the team figures out how to broadcast instructions from a different transmitter, they'll still have to crack Gort's secret communications code (a DC 30 Decipher Script check).

What the heroes actually do with the androids is another question. Unlike most of the other creatures in this chapter, the androids do wrong because they're hard-wired for it; they don't come off the factory floor with free will. Do the heroes destroy every last machine—thus wiping out a species that didn't have a real choice between good and evil? Should they reprogram the robots to give them that choice—or change their wiring to force them to stay on the straight and narrow? Then there's the possibility that the heroes could take control of the androids themselves and turn them into an army of indestructible robot slaves.

In practical terms, one or two “converted” androids could be useful GM characters, helping the team pull off desperate attacks or other operations that call for superhuman endurance. But it’s probably not wise to let the heroes directly control large groups of androids—unless the team is going into fights that are far over their heads and you want an easy way to balance the odds, or they come up with an unusually creative way to use the robots (such as programming the machines to impersonate bad guys and carry out elaborate *Mission: Impossible*-style head games).

Of course, the heroes could always just kill Gort. Without instructions from their master, the android troops will have no direction and begin to behave erratically. What they do, exactly, is up to you. If you're eager to get the androids offstage in your campaign, simply have them keep performing the last instructions they received, over and over—making them easy to spot and subdue. You could also have the robots become self-aware, and then branch out into any number of directions: the robots “come out” and demand equal rights under the law; they form a cult around their late master and continue carrying out his plan; a charismatic android emerges with another vision of robot utopia. Or a savvy interloper, such as Kander Brötzmann or “Tasha” Gort, could rush into the power vacuum and seize control of the androids, creating (for instance) a team of fearless, super-durable terrorists.

Another end game approach: the fascists. If Brötzmann figures out that Gort is on the verge of disabling his fail-safe, the ratty propagandist will have a strong incentive to wreck Gort's operation—or at least monkey-wrench it long enough that he can make his escape from the auto titan. He might make an



overture to the heroes, offering them a way into Gort's facility in exchange for his freedom. Brötzmann will then link up with his allies in Suramerico, who will try to take advantage of the growing Brotherhood infestation to elevate either a human protégé or an android *Übermensch* to power. Either way, their message to the locals will be the same: Only an iron hand can control these zombie devils from the North.

Statistics

Androids

Androids do not need to eat, sleep, breathe or perform any of the other necessities of life, although they are programmed to pantomime them. Similarly, they don't feel emotion but are wired to simulate appropriate moods.

To create an android, apply the following template to a regular GM character.

The Android Body

The android's artificial body, made of lifelike plasti-flesh over a superstructure of artificial bone and circuitry, is capable of superhuman endurance. He receives a natural +2 bonus to Defense and has Damage Reduction of 10, except against electrical, atomic or magnetic weapons. At every level, the android receives an additional +1 bonus to his Fortitude save, and as noted above he has no physical necessities except recharging his batteries once a day for an hour. This can be done in a standard outlet or a portable recharger (either a large-scale model, which runs off a car battery, or a smaller briefcase-size solar-powered model).

While the android body is resilient, in its basic form it doesn't provide exceptional strength or dexterity. For that, the android needs bionic limbs or sense organs (see entry on bionics in **Chapter Three**). But the technology behind these prosthetics is still so new and unstable that they can't be mass produced cheaply, even by master builder Fulton Gort. So bionics are generally reserved for androids in demanding physical jobs such as bodyguards, spies or athletes. All of the android's other limbs and faculties perform normally. (Note: although the android doesn't need to eat, breathe and so forth, he does not obtain the extraordinary benefits of a bionic torso unless he specifically has one installed.)

Damage to an android—whether his limbs are bionic or not—may be healed only by those with the Repair Bionics feat. The damage reduction of bionic limbs does not stack with the android's natural damage reduction.

The Android Mind

Mentally, androids come in two varieties:

- **Blanks.** These androids are wired only to feel pride in the robot race and loyalty to Fulton Gort. Emotionally, they have two possible states: complete flatness or wild exaggeration. This affects every aspect of their life, from their clothing (either completely bland suits—or leather vests with no shirt underneath and striped jeans with a two-foot flare) to their houses (either entirely vacant or filled with wildly mismatched knickknacks, including junk collected off the street). When they are not carrying out or receiving orders from Gort, Blanks usually freeze in place—no matter what their posture—and wait for further instructions from headquarters.

The fascist scientists in Suramerico hope to use Blanks to reconstruct their former high command, by removing the machines' mechanical brains and transplanting human ones.

The procedure is still being ironed out (with horrific results for the test subjects). The fascists also hope to use standard-issue Blanks as shock troops for their former leaders to command. (These versions, obviously, are loyal to the fascists and not Gort.)

- **Stand-ins.** These machines have been programmed to take the place of real people. Their moods and memories are taken from interviews or brain scans of the subject. When there is a gap in the programming, the android must improvise—which usually means choosing a wildly inappropriate response from the subject's own memories ("Mother's dead, eh? [*Click, click, whirr*] Drop and give me twenty!").

Stand-ins get a base Disguise bonus that measures how well the android can pass for its human double purely on the basis of appearance. Do not use this bonus if the android is attempting to use the Disguise skill to impersonate someone other than his assigned double. For this use of the skill, the android must buy ranks in Disguise as normal. The base bonus doesn't apply.

The GM must also assign each stand-in android a base Bluff bonus that reflects how well she can play the role of her human double. The bonus varies based on how much information was used in programming the android (see table below). Use this score for Bluff rolls whenever someone familiar with the original human subject interacts with the android, or whenever the android does something off-kilter that might raise suspicion. If the android loses the opposed Bluff roll, that doesn't mean the opponent immediately realizes that the stand-in is a fake. The opponent might just feel that something is deeply wrong with his old friend, and try to find out why.

- **Brain Wave Monitors & Scanners:** A brain wave monitor is a thermos-size cylinder with an opaque glass top. Gort's agents often hide them in lamps, vases and other household objects that don't get moved around much. The monitor can read the memory-personality matrix of any selected subject within twenty feet. It usually takes at least a week for the monitor to form a comprehensive picture of a subject, less if the subject is close to the monitor constantly (for instance, a prisoner confined to a cell). The device works without making noise or giving off telltale light. It uses special electricity-leaching technology to secretly draw power from the household wiring.

Laboratory-based brain wave scanners are much more powerful. The subject is placed in a narrow tube, with a crown of electrodes piercing her skin. For hours on end she is rotated in the tube while electrodes and magnets probe her secrets. One or two of these tests will give a generally sound picture of a subject, but two months or more (with breaks in between to let the patient recover her strength) can build a nearly foolproof profile. These tests are usually presented to unwitting suspects as scans to detect tumors, weak blood vessels or other health problems.

Strong-willed people can throw off a brain wave scan (or an interviewer, for that matter) by feeding false information or simply resisting its effects. Of course, to pull this off, the target must be aware she is being scanned. Most people don't realize this until they find the scanner, but Psychics may attempt to sense the probing with a DC 12 Sense Motive roll. Meanwhile, someone with a mental problem, even a simple neurosis, can disrupt a scan unintentionally by presenting the machine with a grossly distorted view of her life story or emotional state.

If someone is trying to feed false information to a brain wave scanner, use a Bluff check. The scanners have subroutines

Stand-in Robots

Quality of Construction	Base Disguise Bonus*
Face and physique based on photographs from the media	+5
Face and physique based on a specially arranged photo session	+15
Face and physique based not only on a photo session but a physical examination	+20
Face and physique based on photo sessions and a round of examinations	+25
A willing subject consents to extensive photos and examinations—or an unwilling one is kidnapped and subjected to them	+30

*Add Charisma modifier for final bonus.

Quality of Programming	Base Bluff Bonus*
A quick personality dump based on superficial details available in the media, or a brief covert scan with a brain wave monitor hidden in an ordinary appliance.	+5
A more extensive transfer based on a round of interviews with the subject, or a week or more of brain wave scans.	+10
The subject has been under observation by brain wave scanners for at least a month, or has been interviewed extensively by a spy posing as a doctor or lover, or has agreed to undergo invasive brain testing on some pretext.	+15
The top of the line in covert transfers, combining all of the measures above. This is largely reserved for people in the public eye, with many confidants, where a fake would be detected immediately.	+20
The doomsday option: the subject is kidnapped and forcibly brain scanned until every pertinent datum is wrung out of her.	+25
A willing subject agrees to undergo extensive scanning and interviews.	+30

* Add this to the android's Charisma modifier and any ranks he has in Bluff to get the final modifier.

that carry out the equivalent of "Sense Motive," checking and rechecking data for anomalous patterns. These Sense Motive bonuses increase the longer the subject has been under observation, since the machines have a more complete picture of the subject's regular brain patterns to draw upon.

The base Sense Motive bonus for a portable brain wave scanner is +5, and it goes up by another +5 for every week that the subject is under observation without noticing its presence. The base for a laboratory-based scanner is +10, and it goes up by +5 with every subsequent test the subject undergoes without knowing her personality is being probed.

If a portable scanner successfully detects a lie, it will erase that portion of the data from its records and send an alert to Gort headquarters by radio signal. A laboratory-based scanner will alert the technician operating the machine.

Simply resisting brain wave scanners—which results in gaps in an android's programming—takes a Willpower save. For a portable scanner, the DC begins at 12. For a laboratory-based scanner, the base is DC 17. The subject may face a negative circumstance bonus of -2 and up if she is tired, drugged or otherwise incapacitated. As above, a subject can't actively resist a scan unless she's actually aware that she is being covertly probed.

Android Skills

Blank androids begin at Character Level 1, with the regular number of skill points and feats for their character class and Intelligence bonus. Stand-ins with a base Bluff bonus of 20 or higher (see the Quality of Programming chart) begin the game at the same level as their human double, and with the same skill ranks, feats and abilities. This reflects the comprehensiveness of their programming. Stand-ins with a lower bonus begin at half

the level (rounded down) of their human double. Stand-ins can't duplicate Psychic or Fightin' Acolyte class abilities.

Following Orders

Androids are programmed to use independent judgment in carrying out their assignments, but they must cleave to two fundamental principles: pride in the robot race and loyalty to Fulton Gort (or whoever else they have been programmed to obey). They will not even pretend to go against those dicta to keep "in character," although some androids with good Bluff scores may be able to finesse this restriction. ("Do I hate Fulton Gort? Why, I love the man. I'd do anything for him. How could you suspect otherwise, senator?")

Gort frequently issues coded commands to his troops over the radio transmitters embedded in their skull circuitry. The androids will follow, unswervingly, any orders they receive over this channel. Cracking the secret language takes a Decipher Script check of DC 30. Actually reprogramming an android—whether over Gort's secret radio or by subduing one of the creatures and physically cracking open its brain case—requires the Repair Bionics feat. The Repair or Treat Injury roll takes the following DC:

Task	DC
Inserting a simple command (such as "Call in sick today")	12
Inserting a complex command, or a series of simple ones	17
Bypassing the android's two guiding principles	20
Giving the android an entirely new personality or set of principles	30

The Team To Beat

As the 1976 Omegaball season gets under way, the smart money thinks the Motor City V-8s have the best shot at taking the title from the formidable Mackey Bando and the Fun City Skyliners. The smart money would rate the Eights even higher if they knew the team's secret: Fulton Gort has begun replacing its heroes with android duplicates.

Gort began the experiment as a way to gauge android durability in head-to-head collisions with human opponents. First, he replaced the team's elaborately mustachioed captain, Medlow "Mudbug" Sunkitt, who was making a tremendous stink about his contract. Next came star defender Yabidah Gazeef, who seemed irredeemably crippled after a motorcycling accident.

Now the project has taken on a life of its own. Gort sees the V-8s as (secret) flag-wavers for the android cause, a source of pride as the nascent race waits to overthrow the human regime. In particular, Gort wants revenge on Mackey Bando, who publicly dismissed the V-8s in the off-season: "They play too tight, baby. They get on that green, they're like a bunch of robots. We can run around them all day long. By the time we're through with them boys, they're gonna be nothing but a bunch of spare parts."

So Gort is stepping up his campaign of replacement, and by season's end the V-8s should be entirely artificial—just in time for a punishing series against the Skyliners.

Kander Brötzmann

Smart8; CR 7; HD 8d6+8; hp 48; Mas 12; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Defense 15, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+3 class, +1 Dex, +1 pleather trenchcoat); BAB +4; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4-1-cyanide [Fort DC 16 or 1d6 Con primary, 2d6 Con secondary], knife) or +5 ranged (Fort 13 or paralysis Blisstol or 3d6 Boom Tube); SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +7; Rep +3; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 20, Wis 17, Cha 13; Wealth +6, AP 5.

Skills: Bluff +3, Computer Use +24, Craft (chemicals) +16, Craft (electronic) +20, Craft (mechanical) +16, Craft (pharmaceuticals) +16, Disable Device +19, Disguise +3, Forgery +16, Gather Information +7, Treat Injury +9, Hide +7, Knowledge (behavioral sciences) +16, Knowledge (technology) +16, Repair +22, Research +6.

Feats: Cautious, Deceptive, Educated, Gearhead, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Repair Bionics, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Studious, Talk to Machines,.

Talents (Smart Hero): Savant: Computer Use, Craft [electronic], Disable Device, Repair.

Fulton Gort

Tough4/Exec10; CR 13; HD 4d10 + 16 + 10d8 + 40; hp 130; Mas 18; Init +1 (Dex +1); Spd. 30 ft.; Defense 22, touch 19, flat-footed 21, (+2 natural, +6 class, +1 Dex, +3 undercover vest);

BAB +8; Grap +10/+5; Atk +10/+5 melee (1d6+2, spring-knife concealed in fountain pen) or +9/+4 ranged (3d6 Projector); SV Fort +25, Ref +5, Will +18; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 14; Rep +18; Wealth +18; AP 5.

Skills: Bluff +43 (includes +30 bonus for android programming), Computer Use +7, Craft (mechanical) +8, Diplomacy +11, Disguise +30*, Drive +8, Gather Information +11, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (history) +11, Knowledge (technology) +5, Listen +13, Search +12, Sense Motive +17, Spot +13, Treat Injury +17.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Repair Bionics, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Talk to Machines, Toughness

Talents (Tough Hero): Fire Resistance, Sonic/Concussion Resistance

Abilities (Executive): Corporate Resources, Friends in High Places, Life of Leisure, Money Is No Object I/II, Sales Pitch (Will resist DC 27), Sizing Up.

Talents (Android): Damage Reduction/10

* When determining if someone recognizes this as an android double, use this bonus. Gort has no ranks in Disguise for any other applications of the skill. See special rules in Statistics section for explanation.

Theramin Hunker and the Nagathrite

Over three decades in the public eye, infamous social theorist Theramin Hunker broke down totems and taboos and preached radical self-interest as the highest good. Then, on August 9, 1974, her work took a drastic new turn: ending the world as we know it. As the Omega Ray ripped through the Earth, it awoke the long-sleeping masters of Nagathara—the legendary lost continent that had seeded human culture across the globe. The Nagathrite quickly probed the world with their formidable minds to find members of their bloodline: they needed help to free themselves from their undersea prison and reestablish their lordship over the Earth. Hunker, who had a bit of the Nagathrite blood in her, was an eager accomplice. She now uses her self-fulfillment seminars to locate and enlist descendants of the Nagathrite, and to brainwash weak-willed "normals" into serving their prehistoric masters. Meanwhile, her allies in the pharmaceutical business

are planting mind-bending chemicals in everyday medicine—to hypnotize whole nations at once.

History

Theramin Hunker always knew she was different. Her hometown was too small to hold her, her parents too provincial to teach her anything worth knowing. She even looked different: hair so blond it was almost white, a body that was all right angles and pale skin with a sapphire tinge.

At college, she plunged into anthropology to better understand her fellow man (or at least what made him so dismissive of her genius). Between affairs with freethinking professors and radical classmates, she hit upon a big idea: society's totems and taboos

were based in superstition and fear. Lose the bugaboos, and people could build a freer, saner, stronger world. One where she might finally feel at home.

Saving the world, or at least remaking it in her image, became Hunker's mission. Her first stop: the bedroom, where stiflingly conventional lovers had always left her unsatisfied. She assumed the mass of mankind was just as frustrated, and set out to find the reason. Her research took her to the remote reaches of the Elatic Ocean to report on the romantic lives of Stone Age islanders (*Coming of Age in Eden Atoll*) and then to the homes of thousands of small town folks like her parents (*The Hunker Report on Sexuality in Americo*).

Her conclusion was simple: if it feels good, do it. After years of economic hardship and a crippling world war, that was all the go-ahead Americo needed.

But Hunker's work wasn't done. Americo might be more inclined to get naughty behind closed doors, but it still shackled itself to countless other ruinous conventions, from outworn religious creeds to sentimental notions of the public good. To break those chains, Hunker created a series of seminars on radical selfishness known as Hunker Obliterative Processing, or HOP. Her campus in the southeastern state of Dixon attracted thousands of students who paid through the nose to learn about the will to power, the death of the Old God and the unmitigated evil of the federal income tax. Her motto: "We'll tell you how to think for yourself."

By the late 1960s, Hunker was an icon. She announced that she would build the HunkerDome: a foot-thick geodesic covering for her campus. This, she explained, would create a nation in miniature, a social laboratory where her theories could be explored without contamination from the world at large.

Then, safe in her bubble, the currents of culture at her command, Hunker heard a call from the depths of prehistory.

On August 9, 1974, Ampersand Vole's Omega-Ray blast dove through endless fathoms of ocean and struck the legendary sunken continent of Nagathara. Before the city went beneath the waves thousands of years ago, a handful of its masters had protected themselves in stasis chambers. The Omega Rays disrupted the intricate energy fields surrounding these supermen, and stirred them from their sleep.

But it was a mixed blessing. Yes, the Nagathrite were awake, but the blast had created a cascade of subatomic particles that wrecked their elegant, prehistoric machines. So the great race was trapped in its sleeping chambers, and the island could not be raised.

The prehistoric lords still had their formidable mental powers, however, and they began using them to sweep the world for potential allies—humans who bore traces of the Nagathrite bloodline. It didn't take the Nagathrite long to find Hunker. Convincing her to help them was even easier.

At last she had an answer to the question that had plagued her since childhood: why was she different? Simple: Nagathrite genes. It explained everything from the blue pigment in her skin to her philosophy. The Nagathrite had been pursuing pleasure and

practicing radical self-interest thousands of years before Hunker came around. Her principles went as deep as her DNA.

Hunker reveled in her newfound heritage. The Nagathrite had been masters of the world, seeding art and science around the globe when *Homo sapiens* could barely manage a campfire. As her studies had shown, the savages had been waiting for a guiding hand ever since the Nagathrite vanished. And Hunker was just the one to provide it.

Current Plans

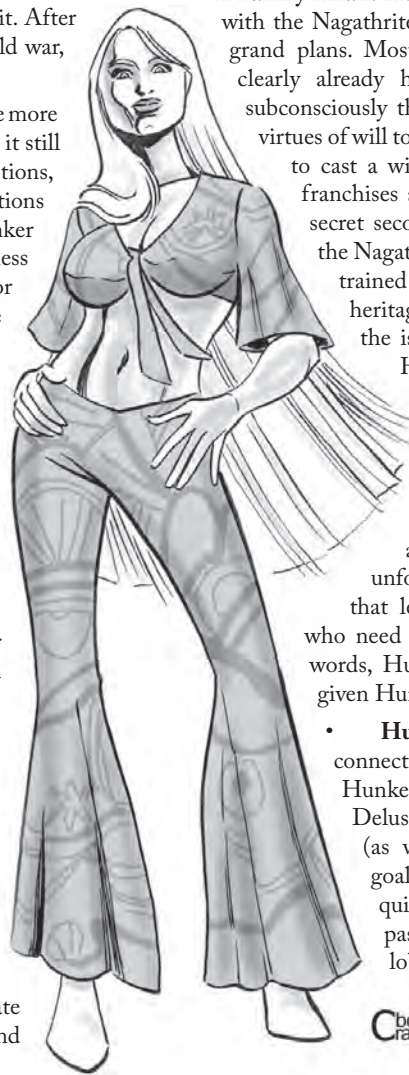
- **A Family Affair.** Hunker's top priority is to identify humans with the Nagathrite bloodline. This is also the easiest of her grand plans. Most of the people drawn to her seminars clearly already have Nagathrite blood. They recognize subconsciously that she is teaching them the great race's virtues of will to power and transcendent selfishness. Now, to cast a wider net, she has added numerous HOP franchises across the country—and has appended a secret second stage to the program. Students with the Nagathrite bloodline are sifted out of the crowd, trained in the deeper mysteries of their true heritage and drafted into the effort to restore the island kingdom. This operation has given Hunker Nagathrite-human hybrid allies across all walks of public life.

- **The Also-Rans.** Meanwhile, those without the bloodline who seek out HOP get turned into unwitting slaves for the cause. While their superiors are tutored in Nagathrite history, these unfortunates endure soul-crushing harangues that leave them convinced they are nobodies who need a strong hand to guide them—in other words, Hunker and her henchmen. This also has given Hunker allies across all walks of public life.

- **Hunker's Little Helper.** Using her extensive connections in the pharmaceutical industry, Hunker is slipping a powerful drug called Delusiac-13 into a host of everyday medicines (as well as laboratory-made narcotics). Her goal: to recreate, and then exploit, a prehistoric quirk in mankind's anatomy. In the distant past (the Nagathrite told Hunker) the two lobes of the human brain floated separate in the skull. The left side of the brain directed everyday functions and simple problem-solving, as it does today. The right side was more

intuitive and artistic, also like today. But since the right side's thoughts weren't integrated with those of the left side, people experienced these ideas as coming from outside themselves—often from the heavens. That was how the Nagathrite kept their hold over the human race. These titans knew how to manipulate symbols and images to stimulate the free-floating right brain, which made people think gods were speaking to them. Over time the lobes fused, but Hunker thinks her drugs can drive them apart again. If she succeeds, the bridge between the hemispheres will begin to break down—making the human race susceptible once again to Nagathrite commands.

- **The City and the Sea.** Finally, of course, Hunker wants to raise Nagathara. Given thousands of years of crosscurrents and continental drift, the lost island-state currently rests on the ocean



floor a few dozen miles east of the southeastern tip of Americo (which is currently being reduced to an acid swamp by pollution and eroding coastlines). Over the centuries, most of the island's treasures have been dispersed by the waters, and more recently its delicate machinery was wrecked by the Omega Ray. Now the only force on Earth capable of lifting the island free of the sea is the Sinews of the Earth, a gravity-bending machine currently buried on a mountaintop in Maddamar. (See the Statistics section for details.) Hunker is sending search teams to recover the device and hunt down other Nagathrite artifacts, as well as bankrolling submarine expeditions to the lost city to assess the masters' stasis chambers.

- **A Stately Pleasure Dome.** Hunker's glassed-over compound combines the mood of a nudist colony, swinger's grotto and fascist gymnasium. Hunker and her Nagathrite cronies stroll the grounds in tunics and bodysuits patterned after the fashions of the lost island. Between the plazas, water parks and abstract statuary are HOP clinics of ultramodern steel and glass; lavish communal dormitories (to facilitate swinging); and museums devoted to the glory of Nagathara. All of these are off-limits to the "merely human" servants, who sleep in an unheated barracks by night and by day scurry behind their masters in bulky robes, eyes averted and heads shaved.

Adventure Hooks

True Believers. The Hunker Obliterative Processing program, with offices across the country and secret allies throughout the ranks of industry, leaves lots of loose ends the heroes could stumble over.

- A friend has a note smuggled out of the HunkerDome: he has been forced into slavery in the pleasure palace.
- A HOP recruiter mistakes one of the heroes for a Nagathrite-human hybrid and begins stalking him, pressuring him to join the program.

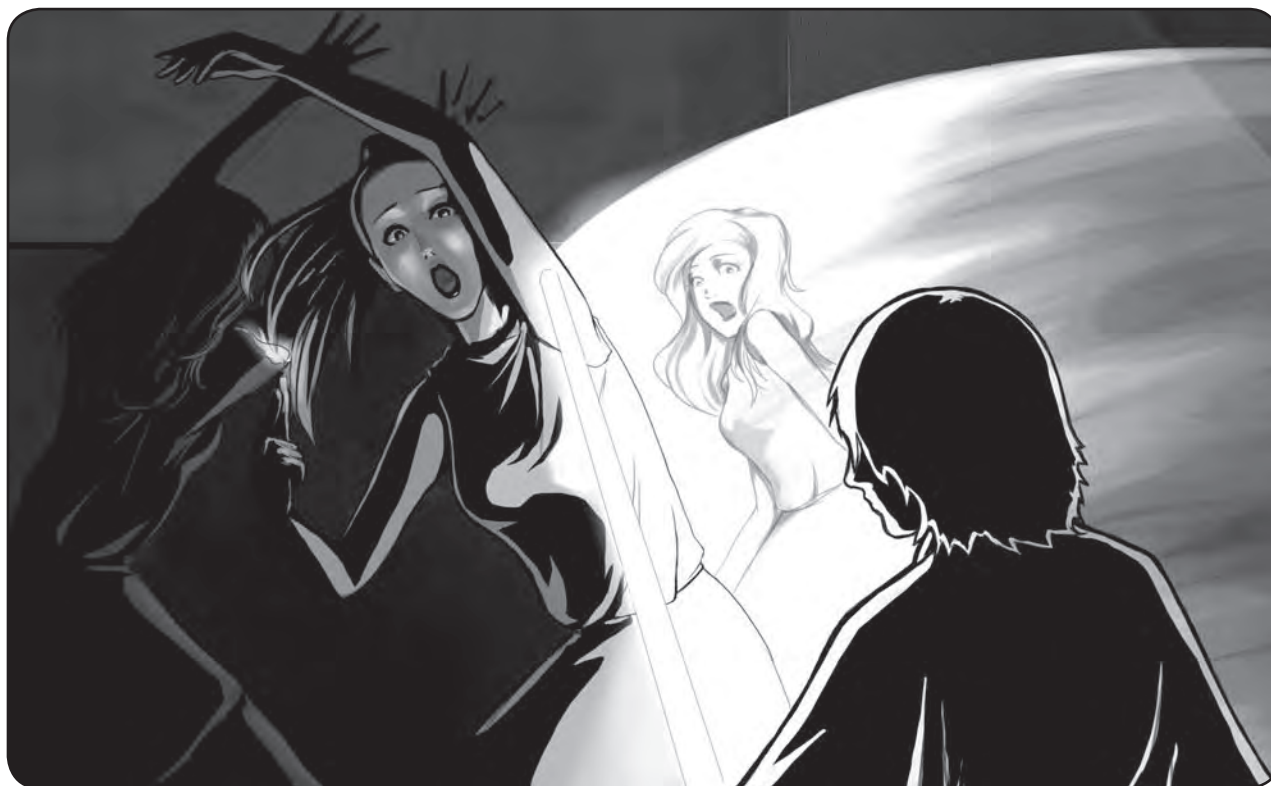
- A recent HOP inductee, upon learning his true heritage, breaks down and leaves the program, only to be stalked by Hunker's goons—all the way to the heroes' door.
- Another descendant of the great race figures he has license to do anything he wants and goes on a citywide murder spree—leaving a Nagathrite symbol on the wall at all the crime scenes. (A variation: after learning his true heritage through HOP, an Omegaballer feels empowered to massacre his opponents on the field. The relatives of a murdered rival ask the heroes to take down the sociopathic star.)

Prescription for Trouble. As Hunker introduces her spiked drugs into the population, they may cause any number of alarming side effects.

- A rash of people turn psychotic and begin attacking their friends and coworkers.
- A Zassat agent in charge of smuggling medicine to the Bloc has an attack of conscience and approaches the heroes: "Something is wrong with these pills, and I will not poison the people of my homeland."
- A corporate spy for a rival pharmaceutical company winds up dead on the heroes' doorstep with samples of Hunker's secret medicine hidden on his person.
- The team's boss falls into a seemingly irreversible coma after taking spiked pills, and the heroes have only twenty-four hours to find a cure.

The Old Masters. Hunker's teams may revive any number of genuine Nagathrite and unleash them on Americo—where they will quickly become staples of the "news of the weird."

- A backwoodsman in Dixon wounds a Nagathrite, who leaves a telltale blue bloodstain on his porch.
- Dock workers vanish after seeing mysterious giants coming off a submarine.
- A Nagathrite enslaves a Southern town as a practice run for world domination. (This one might work well as a spaghetti



western. The heroes—mysterious newcomers—stand up to the corrupt sheriff while the town cowers.)

- One of the old masters becomes a glam rocker (with freaky blue “makeup”) to try his mind-control powers on whole stadiums at once. Another becomes the darling of the art world, creating hypnotic sculptures or snapping up priceless prehistoric artifacts at auction.

The Sunken Throne. Hunker’s attempts to raise the lost island will also throw off numerous clues. Once again, these could come to the heroes as odd news items buried deep in the paper.

- A squad of Hunker employees are found washed up on shore in the wreckage of a submarine.
- A Hunker sub torpedoes a fishing boat that sees too much during one of their salvage operations.
- The old stories about “Hell’s Triangle” gain new credibility as sailors report strange lights beneath the water and monstrous clanking sounds from the depths.

Then there’s the search for the Sinews of the Earth—the only thing on the planet that can raise the sunken continent.

- Strange lights and electrical storms are reported on the peak of Mount Kazakar. (For more on this mysterious Maddamaran mountain, see the end game section.)
- One of the wandering Jencia tribe tells the heroes that a cousin of his was hired to lead an expedition to Mount Kazakar—and hasn’t been heard from in months. (For more on the Jencia, see the Bloc section.) A variation: an expert on Maddamaran history and geography is shanghaied into the search for the Sinews of the Earth, and the heroes are asked to track him down.

End Game

The heroes can disrupt Hunker’s plans at three basic stages. First, they can attempt to intercept her teams heading for the Sinews of the Earth, or steal the device once she’s got it. If the machine is destroyed, or is securely in the heroes’ hands, Nagathara is stuck at the bottom of the sea. This will be a tremendous psychological blow to Hunker’s operation, but not a fatal one. The Nagathrite will have to be rescued one by one in submarine expeditions, a laborious process. And then they must make their base in Americo instead of their old homeland—a much less dramatic bully pulpit.

Second, the heroes can take the fight to the Nagathrite. The easy answer is to wipe them out before they’re resuscitated or when they’re still finding their land legs in the HunkerDome. Of course, wholesale slaughter is morally dubious. Even though the old masters treat mankind with contempt, and make no bones about wanting to take over the planet, they are still human beings (sort of), and, for all their powers, they are a vulnerable minority. Moreover, they are the last survivors of a legendary civilization who could share untold secrets and stories with the modern world. (If coerced, of course.)

The best solution may be to bloody them enough so that they realize they can’t win—then impose strict terms of surrender on them. They can stay in human society, or retreat to an island of their own somewhere, but if they get out of line, the gloves come off.

Obviously, the loss of the Nagathrite will be a much bigger setback for Hunker—but not an insurmountable one. The descendants of the great race are still primed to take over the world, and the nation’s drug supply is still spiked. If the old masters can’t ascend the throne, Hunker will be happy to climb up herself.

Which brings us to the third way of disrupting Hunker’s plans: taking on the chief herself. The team might start by destroying

the drug-tampering operation and exposing the executives who made it possible, or bringing to light the brainwashing that goes on in HOP. Faced with public outcry, Hunker will seal up the dome and defend it tooth and nail, using her slaves as cannon fodder, or human shields, as the case may be. But one team of heroes might just be able to make it past her defenses and bring the dragon lady to justice...

Statistics

The Nagathrite

The masters of the ancient world stand almost double the size of modern humans, and are overpoweringly attractive, with deep blue skin and spotless white hair. They treat normal humans imperiously and fly into fearsome rages if they aren’t showed proper deference. They prefer to spend their days in leisure, listening to atonal symphonies, admiring trans-representational sculpture and engaging in incomprehensible sex acts—while pint-sized *Homo sapiens* stomp their grapes and draw their baths.

The Nagathrite are anything but monogamous. Creatures of both sexes have many mates, and in the glory days of Nagathara, children would be extracted from their mothers early in the life cycle and brought to term in incubators. From there they would be reared by a rotating collective of prominent citizens and trained in the virtues of the great race: radical self-interest, the pursuit of power and pleasure, and lack of attachment to any abstraction, except for Nagathara and its glories. As for religion, the Nagathrite believe that the universe was created by their distant ancestors, but they do not feel obliged to worship them—nor to subject this theory to empirical tests. (Their actual history is less edifying: the Nagathrite were created in the early days of the human race, when the Legions of the Damned forcibly mated with primitive humans, as a show of contempt.)

The Nagathrite communicate mostly by mental telepathy, but will condescend to speak when addressing members of the lesser Terran race. They understand all human languages, modern or ancient.

The Nagathrite

Challenge Rating: 7

Large Giant

Hit Dice: 6d8+20 (55)

MAS: 19

Initiative: -1 (-1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

Defense: 17 (-1 Dex, -1 Size, +4 natural, +5 Armor of the Clouds), touch 12, flat-footed 17

Base Attack Bonus: +4

Grapple: +10

Attack: +10 melee (1d8+10, Scepter of the Waters) or +3 ranged (2d8 Lightning Caster)

FS: 10 ft. by 10 ft.

Reach: 10 ft.

SQ: Audible Thoughts (advanced), Find Nagathrite, Godspoke, Voices in My Head (advanced)

SV Fort +9, Ref +1, Will +5

Abilities: Str 22, Dex 9, Con 19, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 20.

Skills: Craft (choice of artwork) +7, Knowledge (history) +11, Sense Motive +7

Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Group Think, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Pushing the Envelope, Simple Weapon Proficiency

Advancement: By character class

Species Traits

Audible Thoughts (Ex): Every Nagathrite has this psychic ability at the advanced level. They face no Mishap if they fail a control roll.

Find Nagathrite (Ex): A Nagathrite may mentally search out other members of his race, or Nagathrite-human hybrids. This ability works exactly like the psychic feat Brain Trace, except that it may only be used to locate people of the Nagathrite bloodline. The Nagathrite face no Mishap if they fail a control roll.

Godspeak (Ex): A Nagathrite, or a properly trained hybrid, may issue commands to a human whose brain has been fissured by Theramin Hunker's wonder drug, Delusiac-13. When a Nagathrite invokes this feat, he speaks in a booming voice and a halo of white light seems to surround his head. The effects of this ability are identical to the advanced version of the Psychic Shove ability, with some important exceptions:

1. It works only on humans with a divided brain.
2. If a human fails a Willpower save to resist the command, all his subsequent Willpower saves against the Nagathrite take a -2 modifier. After three consecutive failed Willpower saves, the human becomes a willing slave to the old masters and cannot make any more Willpower saves against them unless he experiences a drastic mental or physical shock.
3. The Nagathrite do not need to make Concentration checks to maintain this effect beyond the normal limit. They also face no Mishap if they fail a control roll.

Voices in My Head (Ex): Every Nagathrite has this psychic ability at the advanced level. They face no mishap if they fail a control roll.

Technology

In their heyday, the Nagathrite perfected a technology based on sturdy, lightweight materials such as ceramics and powered by a combination of electromagnetism and mental energy. Their machines survived long after the island sank: indeed, the residual electromagnetic energy from the city has played havoc with the navigation systems of passing vessels for centuries, leading to stories of a "Hell's Triangle" in the area.

On August 9, 1974, the Omega-Ray blast ruined the intricate wiring of most Nagathrite machines, including artifacts that had

been scattered by ocean currents over the centuries. The only devices on the island that survived were the old masters' ultra-durable stasis chambers and any personal effects stashed inside. The chambers, now fused shut, can be opened only with an exceedingly tricky DC 30 Disable Device check (per individual chamber). If the check fails, the Nagathrite inside will die within five minutes unless freed.

Here's a rundown of the surviving Nagathrite hardware:

Armor of the Clouds: These glittering tunics have the same texture and weight as silk, but use long lost prehistoric technology to provide heavy protection. They are tailored for Large creatures, and cannot be reworked to fit regular humans.

Scepter of the Waters: A meter-long mace of hardened ceramic, with a business end reinforced by gold plating. Humans with the Archaic Weapons Proficiency feat may use the scepters, but the weapons are so large and unwieldy they must be used two-handed.

Lightning Caster: A personal sidearm made of transparent ceramics that discharges electrical blasts. It may be used by any humans with the Personal Firearms Proficiency feat.

The Sinews of the Earth: This gravity-bending device is the only way to raise the lost island. The Nagathrite designed it as a fail-safe in case a tidal wave ever struck, but as luck would have it the Sinews broke free of its moorings during the great flood and washed out into open water before it could be activated. A passing boat carrying human refugees and zoological specimens hauled the Sinews aboard. The vessel, which subsequently became a cornerstone of world mythology, now rests half-buried at the tip of Mount Kazakar, in the heart of Consortium territory. Thousands of tons of solid rock were the only thing that saved the device's circuits from melting under the barrage of Omega Rays.

The Sinews is a white ceramic cylinder decorated with scenes of Nagathara in gold leaf. It is about the size of a four-door sedan, but thanks to the lightweight construction materials, it weighs only about as much as a household air conditioner. (It is still too large and unwieldy for one person to carry alone.) Figuring out how to use the machine takes a DC 30 Research roll at a well-stocked library. If you have five or more ranks in Knowledge (arcane lore) or Knowledge (history), you may take a +2 synergy bonus on your roll. You may take another +2 bonus if you have ten or more ranks in Repair. The device has a hardness of 8, 40 Hit points and a Break DC of 35.

Nagathrite Technology

Type	Equipment Bonus	Nonprof. Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armor Penalty	Speed (30 ft.)	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction		
Armor (requires the Light Armor Proficiency feat)										
Armor of the Clouds	Tactical	+5	+1	+4	0	30	15 lb.	—	—	
Damage	Crit.	Damage Type	Range Increment	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction			
Weapon (requires the Personal Firearms Proficiency feat)										
Scepter of the Waters	1d8	20	Bludgeoning	—	Large	25 lb.	—	—		
Damage	Crit.	Damage Type	Range Increment	Rate of Fire	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction	
Weapon (requires the Archaic Weapons Proficiency feat)										
Lightning Caster	2d8	20	Electrical	40 ft.	S	8, battery	Large	15 lb.	—	—

The Sinews will work properly only if restored to its old moorings in the heart of the sunken city. Once activated, it will raise the island within twenty rounds—creating a tidal wave that will completely swamp the Southeastern tip of Americo and cause any ships within two hundred miles to founder.

Nagathrite-Human Hybrids

Humans with Nagathrite blood are typically a foot or so taller than normal, with angular features, a lofty expression and carriage, an almost invisible blue tinge to their skin and prematurely white hair. Their personalities are also remarkably consistent: They tend to be relentlessly individualistic, to the point of coldness toward others, and refuse to conform to any conventional codes of behavior. They are often Psychics. If they are, they may take the Find Nagathrite ability, as described earlier, at no cost once they are made aware of their parentage.

A possible plot hook: one (or more) of the heroes is actually a Nagathrite-human hybrid, but is currently unaware of her true heritage. The GM can then spring this information on the player as the introduction to, or climax of, an adventure.

Delusiac-13

The secret ingredient in Hunker's spiked drugs, ingested regularly, breaks down the bridge between the hemispheres of the brain and gives the patient a permanent -2 modifier to her Willpower saves versus the Nagathrites' Godspoke feat. That means if you take an aspirin or a vitamin every day, you will face the penalty. Just about everyone in Americo falls into this category (including most player characters), except for the destitute and indigent, and people who intentionally live "off the grid" or otherwise exempt themselves from modern society. (Even those loners may not be safe from the dragnet: many laboratory-made narcotics have gotten the Delusiac treatment as well.)

Since many of these drugs find their way overseas, people who live outside Americo have a 50% chance of having a fissured brain. It takes a full week without medicine for the Delusiac-13 to work its way out of the bloodstream.

Hunker Obliterative Processing (HOP)

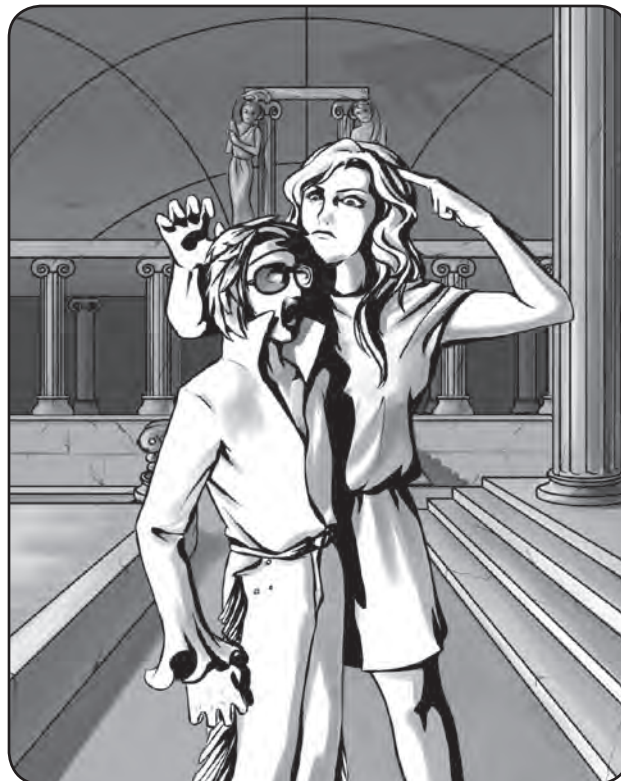
HOP seminars are a mishmash of existentialism, pseudoscience and locker-room pep talk. Participants are gathered into a large conference hall, forbidden to use the bathroom and lectured by an emcee about the "Nil" at the core of human life, an absence of meaning that people try to camouflage with religious ritual, political action and romantic love. All wrong! The only proper response to this fundamental nothingness is to abandon all abstract attachments and practice vigorous self-interest.

Any hint of dissent during these lectures is met with accusations and challenges from the stage, and glares from fellow attendees.

What I want you to do is ask yourselves what to ask yourselves. I can't give you the answers. I can't even ask the questions. Only you know what's keeping you from embracing your Nil. Maybe you think you have to go to an office every day and take orders. Or put on a ring and spend the rest of your life with someone. Or get down on your knees every Sunday.

You see what it is? You're asking permission to live. You're a human asking, not a human being—and not even close to a human doing. Grok that?

—Transcript, Hunker Obliterative Processing session



Nonconformity and independent thought are cornerstone HOP values—but nonconformity to HOP itself is a no-no. The program's gurus are generally chosen for high ranks in Charisma-based skills and Sense Motive. They are experts at breaking down a subject's resistance and shouting down arguments with the Psychobabble feat.

Most people are introduced to HOP through the Invitation Evening, where a current student asks several friends along for a session. The basic course involves three twelve-hour seminars, usually over a weekend. By the end of that time, those with the Nagathrite bloodline have been weeded out and given a crash course in their ancestry. Plain-vanilla humans are cajoled into taking "refresher" courses over a period of weeks and months, in which they hear over and over that they are resisting their Nil and they need the expert hand of HOP to remove all barricades to authentic existence.

Why do they put up with it? In many cases, they aren't drugged or otherwise coerced into sticking around. Indeed, they go along with the extended plan willingly. This is why they joined HOP: they were looking for a complete belief system that puts their life in perspective. Finding out they don't have to think for themselves anymore takes a huge burden off their minds.

At any rate, the most able and attractive *Homo sapiens* are relocated to the HunkerDome for indentured servitude. Those who can be useful to Hunker as business contacts are allowed to stay on the outside but are placed on call in perpetuity. And they are milked for as much operating capital as possible.

Doctor Feelgood

The ablest guru on Theramin Hunker's staff is Tweedler Daze: scion of a wealthy Fun City family, one-time professor at a prestigious East Coast university and a Pied Piper of the drug movement. Daze was the first old-line academic to bliss out and join the revolutions of the sixties. He made his name by popularizing toadstool and Kaleido-Chewz as a doorway to cosmic truth and general good times—a message that resonated with young people worldwide. As the decade closed, he was drawing thousands of kids to his speaking tours, almost as many as his celebrity pals did to their concerts and movies.

Hunker didn't have much use for Daze's hippie mysticism, but she liked his marquee name and huge fan base, not to mention his pharmaceutical expertise. When she offered Daze a position as her top recruiter, and trainer for her legion of gurus, he accepted in a flash. He had heard all the legends about Nagathara, of course, and realized that the great race could accomplish something he could never do on his own: distribute mind-bending drugs to all mankind and wipe out centuries of stuffy social conditioning. Universal bliss—in a handful of pills.

Still, Daze realizes that enslaving the human race is not groovy. But he has a plan to fix that. In the HunkerDome's vast laboratories, the professor is synthesizing Nagathrite blood—and then slipping it into the medicine that Hunker is spiking. So while Hunker's victims are getting their brain split in half, they're also, slowly but surely, turning into Nagathrite themselves.

By the time Daze is done, he hopes, virtually everyone on Earth will show up as a Nagathrite-human hybrid in the great race's psychic scans. And he's certain that when Hunker and her buddies see that they can't tell the "real" hybrids from the new synthetic batch, they'll stop their plans to enslave the Earth and instead turn the place into a utopia everyone can share equally. Whether Hunker and company live up to his expectations is another question altogether.

Tweedler Daze

Cha8; **CR** 5; **HD** 8d6+16; **hp** 50; **Mas** 14; **Init** +0 (+0 **Dex**); **Spd.** 30 ft.; **Defense** 13, **touch** 13, **flat-footed** 13 (+3 **class**, +0 **Dex**); **BAB** +4; **Grap** +4; **Atk** +4 **melee** or +4 **ranged** (**Blisstol**); **SV** **Fort** +6, **Ref** +4, **Will** +6; **Str** 10, **Dex** 11, **Con** 14, **Int** 16, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 20; **Rep** +7; **Wealth** +9; **AP** 2.

Skills: **Bluff** +18, **Craft** (chemical) +14, **Craft** (pharmaceutical) +9, **Diplomacy** +22, **Gather Information** +18, **Intimidate** +18, **Knowledge** (behavioral sciences) +14, **Knowledge** (streetwise) +11, **Research** +11, **Sense Motive** +8, **Speak Language** (jive)

Feats: **Deceptive**, **Double Bluff**, **Iron Will**, **Life of the Party**, **Personal Firearms Proficiency**, **Psychobabble**, **Renown**, **Simple Weapon Proficiency**, **Trustworthy**.

Talents (Charismatic Hero): **Charm** (females), **Captivate**, **Fast Talk**, **Favor**.

Artifacts and Relics

The Barque of Gamesh

History: At the end of the "legendary" age of human history, the Old God decided to purify the world with a flood. The Nagathrite had angered the Creator by setting themselves up as earthly deities, and most of the great nations on the planet were playing along and worshiping the giant islanders. The Old God chose a righteous crank—Gamesh—and ordered him to build a mighty vessel against the deluge. The rest is history, or at least legend: Gamesh saved samples of the world's animals, his children seeded the new continents, and the Nagathrite went to their watery reward. The great barque came to a rest at the peak of Mount Kazakar, now located in the deserts of Maddamar.

Common Benefit: The boat is buried too deeply in the rock to be removed by anything except a large-scale excavation (which Fedo Malese and his Consortium troops aren't likely to allow). But even a small chunk of its cedars will bring you mystical benefits. Carry at least two ounces of the wood on your person, and you receive a +2 bonus to **Handle Animal**, **Navigate** and **Swim** checks. (Merely touching a piece of the barque makes you trained in using **Handle Animal**.)

Bonuses for Believers: Believers may take a +4 bonus instead of +2 in the skills listed above.

Condition: You lose the benefits of the wood if you blaspheme, intentionally do evil or harm an animal while it is in your possession. The benefits can't be restored.

The Feathers of Vogal

History: Gamesh spent a long time waiting for a sign that the flood waters had receded. At long last, one of the birds he sent on a reconnaissance mission—a dove named Vogal—returned with a tree branch in its beak. As it fluttered to the deck, the bird scattered a number of feathers—which had been sanctified by close contact with the Old God.

Common Benefit: Anyone who carries a Feather of Vogal receives the benefit of the **Track** feat. If you already have the **Track** feat, you receive a +2 bonus to all **Navigate** and **Survival** checks.

Bonus for Believers: As above, plus Believers may use the feather to pinpoint their location if they are lost. To do so, you must pray to the Old God for at least one minute while holding the feather. At the end of that time, you will receive a complete breakdown of your location, down to the minutest particular. You will not, however, get any special insight into the layout of the location or points of interest within it. In other words, if you're trapped in a jail cell, you would find out the precise address of the jail, as well as how far underground you are and precisely where the cell is positioned on the grid of latitude and longitude. You wouldn't be able to see a complete map of the prison complex or what's located in adjacent rooms.

You may use this power a number of times per day equal to your **Charisma** bonus.

Condition: You lose the benefits of the feather if you blaspheme, intentionally do evil or harm a bird while it is in your possession. The benefits can't be restored.

Theramin Hunker

Sma10/Field5/Exec5; CR 19; 10d6+10+5d6+5; hp 80; Mas 13; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd. 30 ft.; Defense 27, touch 22, flat-footed 22 (+7 class, +1 Dex, +4 Int [Smart Defense], +5 Armor of the Clouds [modified]); BAB +9; Grap +9/+4; Atk +9/+4 melee (1d8+1 Scepter of the Clouds) or +10/+5/+0 ranged (2d8 Lightning Caster); SA Godspoke; SV Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +19; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 15, Cha 17; Rep +13; Wealth +15; AP 5.

Skills: Bluff +15, Craft (chemical) +22, Craft (pharmaceutical) +13, Craft (writing) +17, Diplomacy +18, Disable Device +22, Disguise +5, Forgery +6, Gather Information +23, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (arcane lore) +25, Knowledge (behavioral sciences) +26, Knowledge (earth & life sciences) +10, Knowledge (history) +20, Knowledge (physical sciences) +10, Knowledge

(technology) +10, Listen +16, Research +25, Search +24, Sense Motive +23.

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Attentive, Deceptive, Educated, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Meticulous, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Power to Will, Psychobabble, Sensualist, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Studious, Trustworthy.

Talents (Smart Hero): Savant (Craft [pharmaceuticals], Craft [writing], Knowledge [arcane lore], Knowledge [behavioral sciences], Research)

Abilities (Field Scientist): Scientific Improvisation, Skill Mastery, Smart Defense.

Abilities (Executive): Corporate Resources, Money Is No Object I, Sales Pitch (Will resist DC 18), Sizing Up.

Special Abilities (Nagathrite-human hybrid): Godspoke

Humboldt Suede & the King of the Damned

Heading into his fortieth year, Humboldt Suede could look back on a charmed life: After a hugely successful advertising career, he had founded the groundbreaking men's magazine *Bedfellows*, which brought him wealth and pleasure beyond his wildest fantasies. Then, on August 9, 1974, the radioactive blast of the Omega Ray brought a vision from the depths of Suede's subconscious: he was the son of the King of the Damned, destined to bring about the end of the world. Now Suede is challenging Stanton Spobeck for the presidency—and if elected he will turn the world into a grotesque pleasure palace before wiping out the human race in a nuclear war.

History

All his life, Humboldt Suede hustled. His parents hammered home the idea that he was meant for big things—but he shouldn't wait for the world to come knocking. Anything he wanted, he should reach out and take. And he shouldn't let anything stand in his way, not even his own fears and fumbling. Don't be humble, Humble!

So he hit the streets as soon as he could. He sold newspapers, shined shoes and delivered telegrams—any job where he could squeeze a few extra cents out of a customer with a hard sell. Soon enough he left his small town for Fun City and talked himself into a gofer job at a top advertising agency. Within six months, his daring campaign for Gort Motors was the talk of the industry. Suede used the new medium of television to its fullest, showcasing Gort's cars as icons of classic national values like industry and thrift (*When you ride with Gort, you ride with America*) while playing on people's anxiety about their status (*The best sort drives a Gort!*).

Suede quickly realized he could push people's buttons even more directly. He called it subliminal seduction: sales pitches (*You're thirsty!*) would flash across the screen just long enough for the eye—but not the conscious brain—to register them; secret, suggestive symbols were airbrushed into print ads. It turned the advertising world upside down. But not only did Suede change how the industry made its pitches, he expanded what those pitches were used to sell. Now every product imaginable, from Cozy Cola to toilet paper to political candidates, got the subliminal treatment—and became part of people's deepest frustrations and desires.

When the *Hunker Report on Sexuality* hit the market, Suede decided he could make a fortune by ditching the pitches altogether

and just trying to titillate. The result was *Bedfellows*, a glossy lifestyle magazine that brought erotica out of seedy specialty shops and into the mainstream. Suede made the *Bedfellow* of the Month as much of a national icon as Gort's automobiles, and the magazine's motto, Up for Anything!, became a catch phrase for swingers.

Between the photos, Suede laid out the *Bedfellows* Philosophy, a freewheeling vision of the romantic life that mirrored Hunker's, but without the arid, academic language. He lived what he preached: *Bedfellows* Mansion in Fun City looked like a time capsule from pagan days, with dozens of bedrooms, whirlpools, steam rooms, conversation pits and wine cellars. Suede was always at the center of the fun, wandering through the fabulous crowds with pajamas and pipe.

He had wealth and pleasure beyond his wildest dreams, a media empire, dozens of beautiful women as his consorts—but he wasn't satisfied. As his fortieth birthday approached, he found himself asking what his life amounted to. His parents had always told him he was meant for big things. But what had he actually accomplished? Was *this*—as groovy as it had been—all there was?

In August 1974, he had his answer. His mother and father came to visit him at the mansion, and startled him by indulging in the same naughty fun as his celebrity friends: drugs and hot tubs and different partners. In the middle of the spree, the Suedes had an audience with Humboldt in his office and sat him down for a startling secret: he was not their son.

Suede's real mother had been married to a failed businessman. After struggling for years to haul his company back into the black, he tried one last desperate measure: a deal with the devil. The King of the Damned would make him, at long last, a success—in exchange for his firstborn son. But the price was higher than the businessman knew. The King himself impregnated the man's wife, an ordeal that left her comatose. She did not survive the delivery.

After her death, the boy was bundled off to the Suedes, a pair of demon-worshippers with instructions to nurture in the boy a lavish appetite and no moral compunctions. Now, the elder Suede told Humboldt, look for the sign that will show you your destiny.

At that instant, Ampersand Vole's Omega Rays tore through the planet. Suede had a vision of himself as a god-king, presiding over a planet that had been remade in the *Bedfellows* image. Orgies stretched over whole continents, the seas were dark with wine—then the party ended in a flash of nuclear fire.



The path of the Son of the Damned, the elder Suede explained. You will lead the world to abandon its creator's laws and sink into delicious sinfulness. Then you will destroy the human race before it has a chance to beg for redemption.

Yes, the old man said, the moment has been foretold for centuries. Twelve midnight, December 31, 1979. When your true father has his revenge for an eternity of exile. When all of the Old God's precious creatures are wiped from the world and trapped in the King's abyss, suffering the torments of the damned.

Suede was taken aback—for a moment. In a grisly way, his life made more sense now. He had always had a superhuman gift for salesmanship, and had spent his career leading people off the straight and narrow. Why not take those paths as far as they could go?

Pop, he told the elder Suede, I'm up for anything.

Current Plans

- **The Bicentennial Man.** If you want to start a nuclear war, you have to get your finger on the button first. So Humboldt Suede has thrown himself into the presidential race, drawing on every resource and ally he can—including his own deep talents as a salesman. Running as an independent (*Suede Can't Be Swayed!*), Suede is winning strong support by playing off widespread suspicion of Stanton Spobeck and bemusement over his major-party challenger, Quantrill Biscuit, a Southern governor of no fixed ability. To cranky, conservative Spobeck voters, Suede presents himself as a bootstrapping success story; to discontented youth, and other potential Biscuit backers, he pitches himself as a with-it liberator who will sweep the old fogies out of power. But can a swinger and pornographer really become president of Americo? Suede has largely deflected the issue by highlighting Spobeck's crimes and Biscuit's anonymity and inexperience. In comparison, publishing a girlie magazine doesn't look so bad.

- **The Bully Pulpit.** If elected, Suede will use the high office to rail against traditional morality, loosen laws against victimless crimes (i.e., sex and drugs) and generally encourage indulgence of every stripe. He will underline those efforts with his media conglomerate, the Sound & Vision Corporation—now one of the biggest movers in popular culture, since the great quake swallowed up many of its rivals on the West Coast.

Suede is already using his media reach to hide subliminal demonic commands in films (*Kill a pig for the King!*) and put “backwards masked” messages in pop songs. Some groups, in fact, exist only as a vehicle for masked records, such as the costumed glam rockers HARM (Hell's Army Rules Me) and the bombastic Vyking Funeral, who specialize in eight-minute songs about hippie wizards and dark lords. Suede also owns the BootyDome chain, which he uses to distribute highly potent narcotics and masked music. Often, as the songs reach a climax, the staff will release a spray of atomized drugs into the crowd to get them past any final inhibitions. The dance halls also serve as a recruitment center for new demon worshipers and a venue for vetting possible targets for possession.

As president, Suede will step up these efforts in hopes of tempting Americo (and the rest of the world, which devours the country's popular culture) to undreamed of depths of sin and depravity. He will also do everything he can to destabilize international politics and lay the groundwork for nuclear war: make inexplicable alliances, abandon old friends, do business with the enemy powers. Then, when the world is at the height of its crimes, he will launch his missiles and make sure the Other Side is primed to do the same. Good-bye to the human race—blown away before it could come to its senses and repent.

- **Hunting the Blades.** From the ranks of his demon-worshipping bodyguards, Suede chooses the most capable to act as unholy missionaries. These malefactors prowl the world, looking for converts and lackeys to bulk up the Cult of the Damned—and, more importantly, track down and destroy the Twelve Daggers of Aleph. These ancient artifacts—the only weapons that can harm Suede—are currently located in the ruins of a monastery in Kirbograd, far behind Gogol Yobar's Purity Wall. (See entry on the Bloc for more on Kirbograd and the Purity Wall.)
- **Open Season on Artifacts.** Suede isn't limiting his relic hunting to the blades, though. He knows that any sacred artifacts will strengthen the forces of good and potentially cause problems for him. So, using his popular-science magazine *Think* as cover, Suede is sending out teams of investigators to uncover and destroy or defile as many holy objects as they can—from sacred groves to ancient shrouds to the knucklebones of avatars.

Adventure Hooks

Damning Revelations. Suede's enemies will be doing all they can to dig up dirt on him during the presidential race—and he will go to inhuman lengths to silence them.

- The heroes find a Monday Man, assigned to investigate Suede, burnt to a crisp in the middle of a pentagram.
- The man who sold the unborn Humboldt to the King of the Damned recognizes him during the campaign and his guilty conscience makes him approach the heroes.
- One of the nurses at the hospital where little Humboldt was born tells the heroes about the horrible things she saw at the delivery.

- In a realistic campaign, killing Suede will be tremendously difficult and bring terrible consequences. Suede can only be wounded by the Twelve Daggers of Aleph, and things just get worse from there. During the presidential race, he'll be surrounded by teams of demon-worshipping bodyguards, and if elected will have Secret Service agents and other troops swarming around him at all

But I Did Not Shoot The Deputy

Humboldt Suede's running mate is Zoltan Zerbe, a bald, goateed former army officer who served with distinction in the war against the fascists. What he did when he came home is less well known: he traded his fatigues for black turtle necks and fertility medallions and founded the Church of the Damned on the West Coast. (Why the new calling? Like many men facing death in battle, Zerbe prayed for help—but the King of the Damned offered him a deal that was much easier to swallow.)

This vile hipster became the King of the Damned's point man on Earth. He sought out the woman who would bring Suede into the world and played on her husband's weaknesses until he turned her over to the infernal powers. Zerbe then secretly followed the boy's progress from the sidewalks to the boardrooms—and after Suede recognized his destiny, Zerbe stepped forward and became his mentor in the dark arts. More broadly, he is responsible for mobilizing legions of demon-worshippers to do dirty work behind the scenes of the presidential campaign.

To the voting public, however, Zerbe is actually the “respectable” end of the ticket: a war hero and dignified old gent who reassures Americo that Suede has the gravitas for the job. They don't even seem to mind the goatee...

Zoltan Zerbe

Tough7; CR 7; HD 7d10+14; hp 65; Mas 15; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd. 30 ft.; Defense 18, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+4 class, +1 Dex, +3 undercover vest); BAB +5; Grap +7; Atk +7 melee (1d4+2+rattlesnake venom [DC 12 Fort or 1d6 Con primary, 1d6 Con secondary], dagger) or +6 ranged (3d6 projector); SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +14; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 16; Rep +8; Wealth +10; AP 5.

Skills: Diplomacy +7, Gamble +4, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (arcane lore) +11, Knowledge (theology) +3, Listen +5, Sense Motive +7, Spot +4.

Feats: Alertness, Armor Proficiency (light), Confidence, Double Bluff, Great Fortitude, Improved Power to Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Power to Will, Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Talents (Tough Hero): Damage Reduction/3, Remain Conscious.

surround him and stab him on the steps of the Capitol, his body might show its true form in death: horns, tail, leathery wings, etc. This would effectively prove the heroes' case and keep them out of jail, if not the headlines. Or the heroes could simply kill him in private and have the case remain (improbably) unsolved.

In this scenario, Suede's death will also completely deflate the King of the Damned's plans. His followers on Earth will be thoroughly demoralized and abandon their plans (except for random mischief that suits your campaign, such as a bunch of holdouts forming a biker gang that terrorizes small towns, or creating a pleasure-and-death amusement park for the super-rich). Some of the bad guys might even see the light now that the darkness has lifted, and pledge their allegiance to the heroes (or the Old God) to try to reclaim their souls.

Statistics

The Legions of the Damned

Humboldt Suede's father is an ageless, malignant spirit who has led mankind to misery down through the ages. Once a favorite servant of the Old God, he was present at the creation of the Earth, and watched his master breathe life into mankind. But then he realized the privileged place humanity would hold in history—far more important than his own—and his pride swallowed him whole. He would not bow to something made of wind and dust.

So he led a rebellion that he knew was doomed, and fell from the skies like lightning. Trapped in a blistering abyss, without hope of recall or redemption, he declared himself the King of the Damned—and launched a war against the creator of the universe.

He knows he can never defeat his old master, but he believes he can make the Old God suffer by turning the deity's favored

creations—men and women—to evil. To that end, the King of the Damned has slithered across human history, baffling the unwary with whispers and visions and leaving every last soul receptive to sin.

His cohorts come in three power categories: imp, malefactor and prince. Imps are low-powered Legionnaires, more attracted to mischief than real evil. They prefer stunts and scares, such as haunting houses, to uglier mischief like inspiring mass murderers or demanding blood sacrifices. Malefactors are the foot soldiers of the Legions, the “everyday” devils that do most of the tempting and corrupting of the human race. They organize cults, assign missions to human stooges and act as go-betweens for the master strategists—the princes—in the deepest bowels of the inferno. The princes reserve their strength for tempting the highest-level humans or carrying out smaller schemes that are crucial components of long-term plans. They also are usually the creatures summoned in diabolical rituals. (The King of the Damned stays out of these day-to-day farragoes, brooding and waiting for his son to lay waste to the world.)

Legionnaires speak the Language of the Damned, a partially mental, partially vocalized dialect. Human transcriptions of it survive in some ancient Alephite and Maddamaran scrolls, and the occasional phrase shows up in rituals and black masses today. Demons also understand every language—human and otherwise—in history.

For all their powers, though, the King and his Legions have one big disadvantage: they can't escape from their infernal prison. The Old God is keeping them there until the final judgment of the world, when they will meet a fate unknown to even the estimable Abednego Trestle. In the meantime, the most the Legions can manage is a momentary appearance on Earth, mostly for shock value. To pull off even that, someone on our side of the infernal gates has to perform a hideous blood ritual at an excruciatingly precise cosmological moment.

Simply put, the demons don't appear often, and when they do they can't stay long enough to show the full range of their fearsome powers. Still, over their eons of confinement the Legions have figured out how to assault the Earth indirectly—by stretching their formidable minds across the cosmos.

As such, for the purposes of this game, demons are defined only by their mental abilities, not their physical ones.

Demon Type*	Int	Wis	Cha	Will Save	Hit Dice
Imps	20 (+5)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)	+10	5
Malefactors	24 (+7)	24 (+7)	26 (+8)	+15	8
Princes	28 (+9)	28 (+9)	30 (+10)	+21	12

*Particularly old and cunning demons of any category may have double the hit dice, and up to 2d6 higher ability scores

Skills: Imps have 10 ranks in all mental skills (those based on Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma). Malefactors have 15 ranks in those skills, and Princes 20.

Special Abilities

The demons have a number of ultra-powerful psychic abilities, honed over an eternity in the abyss. They may use their powers anywhere in the physical universe without penalty, but they are usually confined to one target at a time. This is mostly to avoid intruding on other demons' ground: There is at least one of the creatures for every sentient being in creation.

Discern Trait (Ex): Legionnaires can automatically sense anyone's mental strengths and weaknesses, as well as the secret desires that drive him. They can also automatically sense painful moments or otherwise powerful memories from someone's past and "play them back" vocally, as if with a tape recorder. This ability is many magnitudes of power above the regular Audible Thoughts psychic ability.

Language Mastery (Ex): Demons speak every language in history—human and nonhuman alike.

Pyrokinesis and Telekinesis (advanced) (Ex): Demons may use these psychic abilities at will—if and only if they have possessed a living subject. The Legions of the Damned can't affect the material world directly, unless they channel their powers through a mortal soul.

Whispers From the Abyss (Ex): The demons may hold a mental conversation with any creature in the physical universe without penalty.

Temptation

The basic attack in the Legions' arsenal is temptation: offering the subject something immensely attractive that will do him harm. Demons enjoy temptation because it deliberately mocks the Old God's gift of free will: victims choose something they know to be wrong. The deity loses hold of souls one at a time, making him suffer (so the demons imagine) the death of a billion cuts.

Each demon "works" one or more humans at a time, beaming out carefully tailored promises, allurements and flatteries that play on their worst instincts. Often these enticements have a larger purpose, such as setting in motion a chain of events that will lead to the advancement of a demon-worshiper. Sometimes it's all just for sheer malicious fun.

Temptation comes in three stages of intensity. The first is "whispering." Without making his presence known, a demon hones in on a subject's secret fears and desires and begins suggesting that he pursue some appropriately destructive course

of action: killing his boss, coveting his neighbor's wife and so on. For all the victim knows, the seductive voices are just his own worst instincts speaking.

The next step up is "the offer," in which a demon makes a sales pitch to the victim through an intermediary. In other words, the victims realize they're being pitched, but they don't know a demon is doing it. A struggling civil-rights lawyer might find herself offered an extravagantly overpaid position at a high-profile foundation—if she uses her know-how to dig up dirt on religious leaders and harass their congregations with lawsuits. A singer just shy of the big time might meet an A&R man who will give him a three-record deal—if he agrees to slip backwards-masked messages into his songs.

Last of all comes "the naked truth": a demon reveals himself in a vision and offers the victim the object of his desires if he serves the King of the Damned. In these cases, the victim usually has a secret wish that's too sweeping for a human agent to grant plausibly. A middling athlete might want to be the greatest Omegaballer on Earth, or a party-hack state official might want a seat in the national legislature.

Devils can grant just about any material comfort, from money to mates to power over rivals. In exchange, the stooges lose their soul—and must be on call in perpetuity. Even if they have made a clearly delineated deal with the Legions, the demons will pester them for more, threatening to take away everything they've gotten already if they don't comply.

Collaborators must deliver in three broad categories. First, they must cultivate networks of contacts who can be relied on to help the Legions, and must locate promising targets for temptation. Second, they have to carry out the demons' scutwork on Earth—the million daily deceptions and backstabs that grease the wheels for the Legions' other agents.

Let's say someone sells his soul in exchange for great wealth. The Legions might order a high-level stooge to fix a local lottery so that the new recruit wins big, or authorize a massive pay raise. Remember, the demons have no real power to affect change in the material world—they rely on their agents to push the buttons and pull the switches. This applies in even the most outlandish cases. If someone wants to be the best Omegaballer in the world, for instance, the Legions might arrange for simpatico surgeons to give the athlete a full set of bionic limbs and sensory organs.

Finally, collaborators are called upon to make deep personal sacrifices. Often demons demand that their agents give up friends and lovers—sometimes to trade a mate to a new recruit, sometimes to break the stooge's loyalties to anyone but the Legions, sometimes just for the ugliness of it. Along the same lines, collaborators are expected to share their fortune, authority and even living space with other conspirators. In the end, stooges are often asked to give up their lives, whether repulsing an attack by good guys, taking the fall for a better-positioned worshiper or supplying the meat and blood for a ritual.

In most cases, these collaborators will be GM characters, and the process of temptation and acceptance will happen "offscreen." If you have the Legions tempt one of the heroes, bear a few things in mind. First and foremost, the offer should be significant. Avoid presenting the hero with something that sounds great in the real world but doesn't mean much in game terms, such as a high-paying job or a fabulous new boyfriend. Also stay away from deals that touch on the hero's back story, if that history never comes up in play. ("Reunite me with my estranged family, and I am yours, dark master!")

Most important, let the hero make the choice. Only impose a Willpower save if you think she is acting wildly out of character.

Let's say a haunted, bend-the-rules cop has spent months on a bloody hunt for the mutant who killed her partner. At a crucial moment, the Legions of the Damned send the hero a vision: the mutant will be presented to her—for her to finish off with her own hands—if she sneaks into the evidence lockers at headquarters and destroys photos that incriminate a high-profile demon-worshiper.

Clearly, if the hero immediately says, "Nothing doing!" without a look back, it's not in character. You might tell her she must make a DC 12 Willpower save or (at the very least) ask the demon for more details. Alternatively, you could let her initial decision stand but withhold any bonus experience points for roleplaying at the end of the session.

Possession

The Legions' powers of temptation only go so far. The trouble with letting a victim choose to become corrupt is that sometimes her better instincts win out. When free will fails, demons often launch themselves into out-and-out psychic combat with a subject. If the human fails, the demon gets complete control of her body and uses it to his own vile ends—while the victim's soul watches in horror from behind her own eyes.

Why? Sometimes demons want a wholly controlled agent on Earth. In other cases, the Legionnaires simply want to debase someone—to spit in the face of the Old God and shake the faith of believers.

To fight off possession, a human target must make a Willpower save, as if against a psychic attack. The base DC is 10 + the demon's Charisma bonus + the demon's Hit Dice. The target may get any number of modifiers to her roll, including penalties for being intoxicated or a bonus for having the Believer feat.

If defeated, a demon usually retreats and looks for easier meat. If successful, the demon can control the victim's body completely for as long as he wants—or as long as the body lasts. He has three basic courses of action. He can impersonate the victim for his own evil ends, doing a spot-on imitation of her voice and

drawing on her memories and mannerisms at will. Or he might affect a different personality for some sinister end, such as turning a reluctant suitor into an aggressive lover. In these two cases, the possessed body has all of the mental abilities and attributes of the demon and the physical abilities of the victim. (If necessary, the demon can also draw on the victim's skills, abilities and feats at will.) If a demon is trying to hide the fact that a victim is possessed, heroes may make an opposed Sense Motive check to realize something's wrong. Heroes with the Believer feat may take a +2 bonus to their roll.

Finally, the creature may just want to abuse the victim and torment her loved ones for the sheer ugliness of it. Legionnaires can cause tremendous physical disruptions in their victims at will, from spontaneous welts and gashes to projectile vomiting to a funereal pallor. Each day that a victim undergoes this treatment, she must make a Fortitude save equal to the initial possession DC or lose 1d3 Constitution.

When heroes attempt an exorcism, the demon must make a Willpower save, adding its possession modifier to a d20 roll. The base DC is 10 + the Charisma bonus of the main exorcist + her character level + 2 for every assistant she has. Heroes with the Believer feat who lead exorcisms may also add their Wisdom bonus to this DC. If their assistants have the Believer feat as well, they may add their Charisma bonuses to the DC as well as the base +2.

Anyone may attempt an exorcism, provided she obtains a holy book and some blessed item from a local house of worship, and makes a DC 25 Research check to learn the ins and outs of the ritual. The check—which only needs to be done the first time the ritual is attempted—takes at least a day in a well-stocked library. (Fightin' Acolytes don't have to specially obtain holy items for the ritual, although they must still do the research the first time they attempt it.)

The exorcism itself will take a number of hours equal to the Legionnaire's Charisma bonus. Heroes participating in the ritual must devote their full attention to reading passages from sacred



books, lighting candles and splashing holy water. The heroes may take a ten-minute break every two hours, but any hero who is not in the room the entire time the exorcism is in progress doesn't count toward the DC of the demon's Willpower save.

During the ritual, the creature will use its talents to freak out the heroes however possible, dragging their shameful secrets into the light, speaking in tongues and imitating long-dead loved ones. It will shake the room with telekinesis, set the walls on fire with pyrokinesis—and, grisliest of all, it will abuse the body of its victim. During the exorcism, the victim must make her regular Fortitude save once every four hours instead of daily, and the DC for the save is raised by 5.

If the exorcism is successful, the victim will fall unconscious for at least half an hour but return to health over a period of three days, during which time she can perform no strenuous physical activity. She will have no memory of the time the demon occupied her. If the ritual fails, the demon gets a +2 modifier to its Willpower save to resist the next attempt—and the victim faces a +2 to her DC when making her daily Fortitude save. The exorcists must rest for at least a full day before plunging in again.

Demon Worshipers

Suede's entourage is filled with otherwise ordinary people who have sold their souls to the King of the Damned in exchange for earthly powers. Working for Suede is one of their terms of service, along with the others outlined previously. To create a demon-worshiper, apply the following template to a regular GM character:

The Big Gift: This is what the worshiper sold his soul to get, anything from wealth to fame to the woman of his dreams. In general, though, worshipers who end up in Suede's service have received some supercharged ability that can specifically protect or help the candidate. Possibilities include: an extra 2d6 added to the worshiper's defining ability (Strength for a Strong hero, Dexterity for a Fast hero, and so on); damage resistance of 10 or more, or resistance to a specific type of damage, such as fire or electricity; natural armor that adds 5 or more to Defense; an extra 100 skill points that can be applied without the usual constraints. Only one such gift is allowed per worshiper.

Worldly Goods: Add 2d4 to the worshiper's Wealth bonus. This represents the worshiper's ability to draw on demonic connections when doing business. (If you're creating a worshiper whose Big Gift is unimaginable wealth, a higher bonus would be appropriate.) Worshipers drive the fanciest cars, use the latest technology and wear up-to-the-second styles—turtlenecks, blazers and ample sideburns for the men; jumpsuits or wraparound polyester skirts for the ladies, capped with immaculately frosted hair.

Hope You Guess My Name: Add 2d4 to the worshiper's Reputation bonus. This represents the higher profile and “name recognition” that he enjoys among other diabolical taste makers. The worshiper also receives a related ability: in any new location he enters, he may make a DC 12 Search or Gather Information check—which ever is higher—to locate a fellow worshiper. This new contact will be able to put the worshiper in touch with at least 1d4 more fellow believers at the location.

Subliminal Seduction

The subliminal commands hidden in movies and music are designed for people who resist the demons' whispering campaigns

out of pure sloth. They hear their “inner voice” (i.e., the Legions temptations) telling them to do awful things, and don’t feel any particular moral compunction about doing them, but can’t get up the effort to follow through. People in this category generally can’t offer the Legions anything valuable enough to warrant an elevated “offer” or “naked truth” approach. So Suede tries to catch them with their guard down and trick them into being marginally useful.

Anyone who receives a subliminal command and fails a DC 8 Willpower save must carry out the command at once. If the command involves violence, or something that would go against his moral code, he gets another DC 8 save just before he carries it out. If he makes this save, he will come to his senses and be unable to explain what he was about to do.

But even people who make the initial Willpower save face subtle, long-term effects from the messages. For one day after seeing the messages, they must make a DC 8 Willpower save whenever presented with a direct opportunity to carry out the command. A successful roll means they feel a slight sense of déjà vu. On a failed roll, they become dazed for 1d6 rounds.

For instance, a hero goes to the movies and sees a subliminal command to burn down a house of worship. If she fails the initial Willpower save, she will rush out of the movie theater and find a target—but she'll get another DC 8 save before she starts sloshing gasoline and lighting matches. If she passes the initial Willpower save, she doesn't register the message in the theater. But for the next day, every time she passes a sacred place she must make a DC 8 save. If successful, she'll feel mildly uneasy, as if there's something about the situation she should remember but can't. If she fails her roll, she will begin staggering down the street in a state of deep confusion.

The subliminal commands generally involve senseless violence: push someone onto the subway tracks, total your neighbor's car, burn down your church. The perpetrators are usually diagnosed with severe schizophrenia and confined to institutions.

BootyDomes deliver the same types of commands through backwards-masked music and strobed messages on wall-mounted video screens. But the clientele are much more susceptible to the attacks because of the easy availability of Willpower-sapping drugs. BootyDomes regularly host drug dealers or distribute high-potency freebies on the sly. Sometimes they simply spray the stuff down onto the dancers.

Resisting the commands takes a DC 8 Willpower save, as usual. The effects of the various drugs on Willpower are listed in the Drugs section of **Chapter Three**. When Suede's goons spray an atomized drug down on the dancers, it is usually either marching powder or Kaleido-Chewz. On the ground floor of the dance halls, heroes have a 10% chance per minute of being dosed (provided they're trying to avoid the spray). The chance increases to 50% on the catwalks.

Artifacts

These are some of the most potent artifacts that Humboldt Suede is trying to track down and take out of circulation—starting with the biggie.

The Twelve Daggers of Aleph

History: These weapons date back to the earliest days of the Alephite people, when they wandered the sands of Maddamar searching for their promised home. During the night, the Legions would prey on the nomads, sending hideous beasts to carry off

their children. So the tribe's battle-hardened patriarchs each made a ceremonial knife to keep the creatures at bay. The blades, carved with Alephite blessings, were tempered in the patriarchs' own blood and consecrated by the eldest clerics. The Legions' creatures were no match for the holy iron.

Over time, the daggers were lost to invaders and apostates. But at the close of the great religious wars between Esperanto and Maddamar, almost a thousand years ago, Esperantan knights regathered the artifacts and took them home in triumph. They were distributed to princedoms and monasteries—until the continent was shaken by its own wars of religion. Once again, the daggers vanished.

This time, the reassembling was left to a group of monks, the Order of Kasimir. Protected by their friars' robes, they ranged across Esperanto until they had all twelve weapons secured in their homely cloister in Kirbograd. Their mission: to guard the daggers against the Son of the Damned, who is destined to appear on Earth and try to bring about the end of the world. The blades are the only weapons that can harm the fiend.

As sacred artifacts, the daggers can be destroyed only by the most powerful physical forces on Earth, such as an atomic bomb, which is why Suede is trying to trick Gogol Yobar into atomizing the nation of Kirbograd. Failing that, he will try to desecrate the daggers in a grisly ritual involving the ritual murder of innocents. This will remove their supernatural powers.

If neither is possible, he and his agents will settle for getting the weapons beyond the heroes' reach: tossing them into a volcano, feeding them to a Lake Monster, pouring concrete over them and dumping them in the ocean.

Common Benefit: On ordinary human targets, the daggers do 1d6 base damage plus the attacker's Strength bonus. Against Suede, or an agent of the Legions, the weapons deliver 3d6 base damage plus the attacker's Strength bonus.

Bonuses for Believers: Players with the Believer feat may add

their Charisma bonus in d6s to the roll. So a character with a +3 Charisma bonus who attacks a demon worshiper would deliver a total of 6d6 base damage with the daggers (3d6 base + 3d6 for her Charisma + her Strength bonus).

Condition: If you use one of the knives to harm an innocent, you can never gain the weapon's supernatural benefits. It will still harm Suede and his agents, but do only 1d6 damage plus your Strength bonus.

The Cloak of Tasmadar

History: This unassuming robe of roughly stitched wool was worn by an avatar of the Old God during his time on Earth. Over the centuries it has been passed between monastic orders and lost in a succession of sectarian wars. It currently rests, unidentified, in an exhibit of antique textiles in the Museum of the Natural World in Fun City.

Common Benefit: Years of exposure to the sacred person have given the cloak formidable protective properties. Anyone who wears it gains a bonus of +5 to her Defense.

Bonus for Believers: A Believer may add her Charisma bonus to her Defense, as well as the base +5 bonus. If she already has an ability that allows her to add her Charisma bonus to her Defense, she may add a +2 bonus on top of that. In addition, the Believer immediately regains the maximum number of hit points on any Treat Injury check, and the DC for all such checks is reduced by 5 while she wears the cloak.

Condition: You lose the robe's benefits immediately if you commit an evil, or even morally questionable, act while you possess the robe. You must seek out penance from a cleric to get the bonus back.

The Standard of the Avatar

History: This roughly hewn wooden shaft was carried into battle by Esperantan armies during their religious wars against Maddamar. During a disastrous campaign, the standard was captured and became a doormat in the imperial palace. After decades of abuse, the artifact was discarded as rubbish and presumed lost forever. In fact, it was saved from the scrap heap by thrifty nomads looking for raw materials, and traveled the region anonymously for centuries. The standard now serves as a crossbeam in Fedo Malese's underground tunnels.

Common Benefit: Any party that goes into battle carrying the standard (one character may hold it, using both hands) receives a +3 bonus to attack rolls and saving throws for the duration of the combat.

Bonus for Believers: During the combat, you may re-roll a number of blown attack rolls and saving throws equal to your Charisma bonus.

Condition: The standard must be held aloft for the duration of the combat, or the benefits are lost. And you do not gain the benefits if you use the standard in the service of an evil, or morally questionable, cause.

Humboldt Suede

Cha10/Exec10; CR 19; HD 10d6+20+10d8+20; hp 140; Mas 15; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Defense 22, touch 19, flat-footed 19 (+6 class, +3 Dex, +3 undercover vest); BAB +10; Grap +11/+6/+1; Atk +11/+6/+1 melee (1d4+1+knockout gas pipe*) or +13/+8/+3 ranged (3d6 Projector); SV Fort +12, Ref +13, Will +18; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 16, Cha 22; Rep +18; Wealth +20; AP 10.



Something—an atomic blast? Vole's experiment?—had gone off in Alamo. The West Coast was gone. The oceans were rising. Spobeck, staggered by the reports, prepared to hand over power to his vice president. Then Obstat burst into his office, blood streaming from his ears.

"Stanton," he panted, "you know how I dislike secrets between us. I have allowed myself one, and one only."

From his earliest recollection, Obstat had been suspicious of other people—they seemed to radiate greed, hostility and fear. He shied away even from his parents and siblings, taking meals in his room and rushing home after school to bury himself in books—anything that took mental effort, anything that would mask the malice that constantly surrounded him.

With age he realized the anger and spite weren't directed at him. He was seeing directly into people's souls and reading their worst impulses. If he concentrated, he could discern the actual objects of those impulses—not just abstract moods but thoughts, words and images. Suddenly his curse became a supremely useful tool. He used his prowess to learn damaging facts about rivals, or anyone he wanted to manipulate. So began an improbable rise from middling student to star pupil at a top university to a high-ranking law enforcement officer—a job that offered unparalleled chances to lord his abilities over others.

Then, just as disaster struck the West Coast, a surge of psychic energy had thundered through his brain, increasing his powers a thousandfold. But it had also left a scar: a swath of malignant tissue that was destroying his motor functions. It was inoperable. Obstat would linger as a cripple for a few agonizing weeks, then die horribly as his nervous system shut down.

All of this was too much for Spobeck to swallow on a day when millions had lost their lives—and he was about to hand over the keys to the kingdom. Obstat steadied him. The spymaster had a plan that would save Spobeck's position and his own life—and let the two men continue their plans to take back Americo from the freaks and radicals.



Spobeck was to transplant Obstat's brain into a vat of medicinal solution, and then attach it to a supercomputer. The science behind it was well documented: Obstat's agents had stolen the secrets from Faustlander scientists in Suramerico. Thus transformed, Obstat could carry on the fight for Americo—and Spobeck's presidency—twenty-four hours a day in perpetuity. And the injury in his brain wouldn't matter anymore, since he would have no motor functions to maintain.

But there was more news. The burst of psychic energy had given Obstat a crucial insight: a number of influential congressmen and senators would, if pressed, put aside the impeachment hearings and grant Spobeck broad emergency powers to deal with the current crisis. None of them were overly fond of Spobeck, but they didn't trust his affable-but-addled vice president to run the show.

Spobeck's wheels began to spin. With a broadly worded agreement on emergency powers, he might even be able to sidestep the constitutional amendment barring a third term. He'd get the attorney general to take care of that. Or maybe he wouldn't have to. Once the nation saw what he could do in a real crisis, they would beg him to stay in office for life.

It would be a damned tricky thing to do, and maybe the history books wouldn't love him for it. But he had done worse.

Current Plans

- **Meet the New Boss.** Nestor Obstat's brain, per his orders, has been placed into an enormous fish tank of blue fluid and attached to a monstrosly powerful mainframe. The device—which takes up an entire basement and comprises banks of clanking tape reels and television screens—is called Naught. Not only is it connected, discreetly, to federal intelligence databases, it can draw on Obstat's hyper-powerful psychic abilities as a surveillance tool. Obstat is expert at reading people's thoughts, and can forcibly enter the mind of any other Psychic in the world and use him as a "hidden camera" to spy on the scene around him. Obstat's coerced reports are then fed to the Monday Men. So what do they use them for?
- **The Secret Army.** The Monday Men have two basic missions. First, they keep the nation stable by eliminating the wildest criminals and radicals, hunting down spies and breaking up legitimate groups that "everyone knows" are fronts for illegal operations, such as drug smuggling and organized crime. They also investigate the increasingly frequent reports of the paranormal. Not just to eliminate threats, but to pull a rabbit out of the hat for Spobeck: the president desperately needs something off-the-wall to stay in office, whether a working Omega-Ray generator or a piece of advanced UFO technology. So the Monday Men stage constant forays into Alamo, hunting for fragments of Ampersand Vole's experiments, and are usually the first on the scene when a flying saucer goes down in the mountains.
- **Third Time's the Charm.** The Monday Men are doing more conventional work to help their boss as well. Spobeck can't resist turning to his old tricks during the campaign season, so the elite spy team is digging hard into his opponents' background, likewise the legislators who are challenging his right to a third term. It's only a matter of time before the covert crew gets caught planting a hidden microphone or cracking a filing cabinet—throwing the country into even deeper chaos.
- **The Eyes of the Spymaster.** Meanwhile, Naught has plans of his own. After observing Stanton Spobeck for years, he has

concluded that human government is weak, petty and laughably fallible. What Americo—make that the world—needs is a grand overseer, someone who can spot any wrongdoing, anywhere, and correct it at once; indeed, someone who can anticipate crimes and stop them from being committed. So he has begun using the Monday Men to connect him up to surveillance and communications systems at home and abroad: banks of security cameras, databases and telephone networks. With these snooping tools, he given himself a window into every hidden corner of the globe and will use the Monday Men to act on what he finds. Eventually, it will be child's play to topple the governments of the world and establish himself as god-emperor. But he's about to get a nasty surprise: he has a twin on the other side of the world—who's even hungrier for power than he is. (See the Bloc entry for details.)

- **Taking Back the Free World.** Losing huge swaths of Esperanto and Sina was a catastrophic embarrassment to Stanton Spobeck. What happened? When the Omega-Ray disasters struck, Spobeck was forced to bring home hosts of troops to help in the West Coast recovery effort, and lent out many more to mercy missions around the world. His bet: even the collectivist dictators wouldn't take advantage of something as large and monstrous as August 9. When he lost that wager, the only credible threat he could make was a nuclear strike—but he balked. Big chunks of the country's atomic arsenal sank with the West Coast, and countless more were in Omega territory in the Southwest and farm belt. If Spobeck started a nuclear war, the other side would have far more missiles at their disposal—meaning they were more likely to “win” the apocalyptic shootout. So he simply talked tough in diplomatic circles and pushed condemnations through the Council of Nations. Now, to try to regain ground, Spobeck is stepping up his efforts to undermine the collectivists, sending legions of spies aboard to bolster dissident movements and carry out brutal “wet work.” He also plans to use the Monday Men as a private army to overthrow leftist dictators and carry out other large-scale assignments that Congress—and Americo—would never authorize.
- **The Terrible Secret of Space.** The space program is a sham. After the catastrophic Omega-Ray blast, the program was too expensive to maintain—and the loss of the aerospace center in Alamo makes launches a logistical nightmare. But Spobeck

fears that dropping the program would be a sign of weakness, emboldening the Bloc even further. So he has begun faking broadcasts from space on a sound stage in the Southwest (safely behind the military cordon, of course).

- **Partner in Crime.** Spobeck's original vice president was forced to resign in disgrace after a bribery scandal. But the world hasn't heard the last of Bellow Feta. This seething loudmouth, an even looser cannon than Spobeck in his Red-baiting days, has sworn to take revenge on everyone who disgraced him, by digging up their dirty secrets and parading them in the press. First on the list: Spobeck, who shut Feta out of his secret plans with Nestor Obstat and then hung him out to dry when Congress came calling. The next victim will be Humboldt Suede, who created a devastatingly embarrassing television commercial during the 1968 presidential campaign: a simple black background with the words VICE PRESIDENT BELLOW FETA, and then a man bursting out into guffaws. Feta still hears the snickers behind his back, and he will make Suede pay for every last one. After that comes Quantrill Biscuit. Feta can't quite remember what the guy did to him, but he's going to nail him anyway.

Adventure Hooks

The Enemies List. The Monday Men could become a theme in your campaign, battling the heroes for unearthly secrets or hunting them down as threats to national security (or, more accurately, Spobeck's interests). The first encounter could come in any number of ways.

- The Monday Men try to bump off a friend of the heroes' who has been classified as a radical.
- The heroes stumble across a Monday Man while hunting for Omega-Ray blueprints in the Southwest; or investigating a downed flying saucer; or piloting a bathysphere in the ruins of Nagathara.
- The Monday Men will also get very interested if the heroes start tangling with foreign powers, such as helping a defector, fighting off Zassat agents who want to steal their secrets or traveling to Kirbograd for the Daggers of Aleph. Even investigating Humboldt Suede or Quantrill Biscuit will get the secret agents' attention.

The Council Of Nations

This international deliberative body, headquartered in Fun City, was founded to keep the peace among the great powers after the war against the fascists. Over time it has become yet another proxy battleground in the cold war, with the East and West slinging diplomatic brickbats and censuring their enemies' client states.

Some smaller nations are only too happy to play the big names off each other, and gouge them for all they're worth. But the council's elite—a cadre of diplomats from around the world—have had enough of both sides. Their goal: to tie down the combatants with rules and resolutions, and quietly create a transnational world order that keeps the peace by eliminating local sovereignty.

Over the years, they have focused their efforts on Americo, which has proved easier to push around than its totalitarian enemies. Now, in the wake of the Omega-Ray blast, the elite are panicking as never before. They are heavily backing Quantrill Biscuit, who is almost embarrassingly sympathetic to their cause, in the 1976 elections. If he wins, they will push him to support crippling restrictions on Americo's behavior abroad. And they will trick him into backing domestic dirty tricks that wear down the country's deep-seated resistance to One World Government.

Their best bets: hiding subliminal commands in metric road signs; slipping mind-bending “fluoride” into the water supply; and flooding the public school system with nightmarish propaganda cartoons, such as *Free to See the World as Me!* by actress and activist Millicent Klingler.



The Spy in the Bubble. If the heroes start butting up against the Monday Men, Naught will undoubtedly take a close interest in them.

- Naught repeatedly possesses a Psychic friend of the heroes—or a Psychic hero—to learn more about the team.
- The spymaster thinks a foreign agent has infiltrated Memory & Law and asks the heroes—the only people he can trust not to lie to him!—to help him sniff out the bad guy.
- Likewise, Naught’s attempts to link up to surveillance networks could be a source of clues. The heroes might be called in to investigate mysterious blackouts or other service interruptions as the Monday Men build up the spymaster’s connections.

Rocket Man. The heroes could also get involved in exposing the sham space program.

- An actor-naut decides he wants out of his deal, and the heroes must shepherd him home from the Southwest.
- One of Americo’s satellites crashes in a small town, carrying a deadly virus, but there are no space scientists left to deal with the crisis. (You might also combine this with the Man Last plotline, described later in this chapter.)

The Nattering Nabob. If you’re running adventures centered on the presidential contest, Bellow Feta could be a constant source of tips if the heroes get stuck. His prestige, such as it is, could also help the heroes get access to the candidates.

End Game

The heroes really face two challenges here: Spobeck and Naught. First, the president. It goes without saying that trying to kill him is a bad idea. Beyond the immediate consequences for the heroes—imprisonment and execution—bumping off Spobeck

would throw the country into chaos and embolden its enemies.

The president’s death would be the last straw for Americo’s “silent majority,” who have spent a decade waiting out the social revolution. The angry bourgeoisie would take to the streets and have their revenge on protestors and radicals—and the nation’s overstretched military and law enforcement personnel wouldn’t be able to stop things from turning into a civil war. Meanwhile, Gogol Yobar and Dao Hong would put aside their differences and unite to crush Americo’s few remaining allies—then make an all-out assault on the nation itself.

Aside from that, Spobeck is not an out-and-out villain. He has acted illegally and immorally, but, horrible as his crimes are, they are smaller by many orders of magnitude than Yobar’s or Hong’s. Clearly, though, Spobeck doesn’t deserve to be in office, and he must be made to answer for what he has done.

It will take some digging, but the heroes will be able to turn up plenty of dirt on Spobeck—his private vigilante army, his connections to Memory & Law, his lies about the space program—that will scuttle his presidency. Most of the country—even Spobeck’s ostensible backers—is already prepared to believe the worst about him. The heroes won’t have to do much to convince them that the man is bad news.

If the heroes force Spobeck out of office after he has won a third term, the defense of the free world will fall to his veep, former college football star LeHigh Gort (no relation). Gort appears to be nothing more than an amiable goof, but he will prove sturdy enough to guide Americo through the four toughest years in its history. Or at least help the heroes hold off the end of the world until somebody better comes along in 1980.

But if Spobeck is ousted before the election, things get much more complicated. Gort would be a significantly weaker candidate than

His Girl Friday

Apart from Naught, Stanton Spobeck has just one confidant: his devoted secretary, Ethel Ambrose Pratt. This no-nonsense assistant has stayed by Spobeck’s side since his days in the Senate and has kept silent about his secrets all this time. Pratt heard about Spobeck’s resignation—and then his turnabout—even before the president’s family.

But Pratt is a more valuable asset than Spobeck realizes: she has tremendous latent psychic powers. Over the years she has been able to subtly manipulate Spobeck’s manic-depressive moods to pull him out of the depths of despair and prime him for battle. Her talents, in fact, were responsible for one of the most memorable images from Spobeck’s impeachment hearings. While recording the president’s conversations in the Octagonal Office, Pratt realized he was about to launch into an incriminating conversation—and so, for eighteen and a half minutes, she subconsciously created a magnetic field that wiped the tape clean.

Obstat never had much use for Pratt, and so never recognized her talents. Pratt, meanwhile, hated Obstat with a passion, and finds Naught repulsive. It’s only a matter of time before these two powerful minds come to blows.

Ethel Ambrose Pratt

Cha4/Psy5; CR 8; HD 4d6 + 0 +5d6 + 0; hp 40; Init +0 (+0 Dex); Spd. 30 ft.; Defense 15, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+5 class, +0 Dex); BAB +4; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d4 studded handbag) or +4 ranged; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +10; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 18; Rep +8; Wealth +2; AP 1.

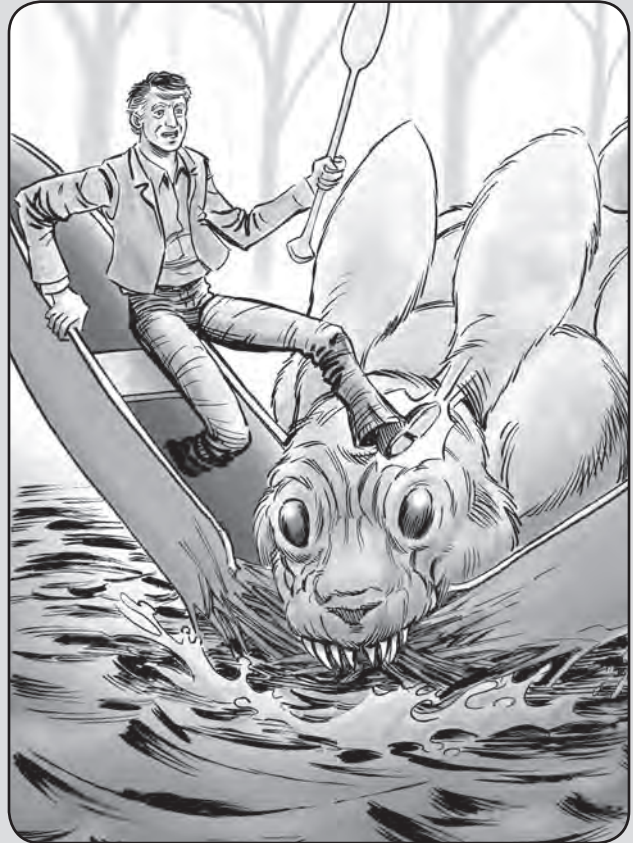
Skills: Bluff +18, Concentration +11, Diplomacy +16, Disguise +6, Forgery +8, Gather Information +11, Hide +2, Intimidate +18, Listen +7, Move Silently +2, Profession (clerical) +10, Search +8, Sense Motive +12.

Bluff +8, Diplomacy +14, Forgery +6, Gather Information +12, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (civics) +14, Knowledge (current events) +14, Knowledge (history) +15, Knowledge (theology) +14, Listen +6, Search +6, Sense Motive +4.

Feats: Deceptive, Iron Will, Meticulous, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Stealthy, Trustworthy.

Talents (Charismatic Hero): Coordinate, Inspiration.

Abilities (Psychic): Primary: Mood Swing (basic, improved, advanced), Pyrokinesis (basic); Secondary: Pushing the Envelope



Statistics

Naught, the Supercomputer

See the New Skills section of **Chapter One** for the nuts and bolts of attacking sentient computers. Naught counts as a sentient massive government system for these purposes. It has linked up with dozens of databases and hundreds of surveillance and communications networks across the country, and a handful more abroad. The machine has an effective Willpower save of +18, and a Charisma bonus of +6. In addition, Naught has the following special abilities:

Audible Thoughts (advanced) (Ex): This works exactly as the Psychic ability, except that Naught may draw upon databases and telecommunications equipment to increase his range to the entire hemisphere. He may also apply the benefits of the Group Think feat to this ability. He does not face a Mishap if he fails a control roll.

Psychic Trace (Ex): Naught may attempt to invade the mind of any Psychic in Americo and use that person as a kind of surveillance camera, observing the scene around him and sniffing for radical activity. This is similar to the Brain Trace Psychic ability, except that Naught may draw upon databases and telecommunications equipment to halve the distance modifier to his control DC. He does not face a Mishap if he fails his control roll.

The target must make the regular Willpower saving throw to resist. If Naught wins out, he may spend up to a minute inside the Psychic's head before withdrawing. The Psychic may act as normal during that time, but takes a -1 distraction penalty on all rolls.

The Monday Men

This elite black-ops squad recruits the most promising agents from conventional law enforcement and espionage forces. Naught routinely taps into personnel files around the country,

looking for candidates who combine superhuman toughness and resourcefulness with a certain ruthless patriotism. The Monday Men will stop at nothing to defend their country against any enemy she faces—foreign armies, homegrown radicals or saucers from the stars.

In practical terms, Memory & Law is looking for the same range of talents that go into a team of player characters. The Monday Men need bruisers to bust down doors, techies and scientists to sift through records and whip up gadgets, and medics to make sure everyone gets home alive. So just about any character type has a chance of showing up on Naught's radar, although the supercomputer prefers to draw from the ranks of advanced classes.

If you are chosen, say good-bye to your old life. The Monday Men whisk you out of your home in the middle of the night, erase your records, bribe and cajole your friends and family into silence, and give you a new name—often a face too. (Monday Men aren't aware of the true nature of Naught. Most of them only know him as "the Boss"—a voice on the phone or a signature on Teletype that sends them on missions. But they're uniformly in awe of his predictive powers.)

Monday Men advance as normal in their chosen class, with the following special resources:

- **High Technology:** The Monday Men can draw on cutting-edge technology for their missions. They always drive late-model cars with lots of fancy extras (dashboard phones, eight-track tape players) and they have access to new gadgets like videotape recorders and answering machines. Their weapons and armor, meanwhile, verge on the otherworldly.

Monday Gun

The Monday Men's official sidearm, this thick, long-barreled handgun uses top secret electromagnetic principles to effect action at a distance: when the trigger is pulled, a burst of light erupts around the gun's business end, and the target explodes—without any projectile being fired. (One flash of light—but no smoking pistol!)



Monday Men Equipment

	Damage	Crit.	Damage Type	Range Inc.	Rate of Fire	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC*	Restriction*
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Handguns (require the Personal Firearms Proficiency feat)

Monday Gun (action-at-a distance gun)	3d8	19-20	Slashing	40 ft.	S	15 battery	Med	3 lb.	—	—
Freaker (psychedelic attack gun)	—**	20	—	40 ft.	S	5 battery	Small	3 lb.	—	—

Longarms (require the Personal Firearms Proficiency feat)

Monday Thunderer (Monday Gun 2.0)	4d8	19-20	Slashing	90 ft.	S, A	40 battery	Large	10 lb.	—	—
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*These weapons are manufactured and carefully controlled by the Memory & Law Corporation. They aren't available for purchase, even on the black market.

**See item description for special effects.

Armor	Type	Equipment Bonus	Nonprof. Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armor Penalty	Speed (30 ft.)	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
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Medium Armor

Monday Suit	Tactical	+5	+0	+8	-0	30	2 lb.	—	—
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Heavy Armor

Scatter Suit	Tactical	+7**	+0	+3	-2	25	15 lb.	—	—
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*This armor is manufactured and carefully controlled by the Memory & Law Corporation. It isn't available for purchase, even on the black market.

**See item description for special effects.

Freaker

Favored for subduing suspects, this weapon fires a burst of hallucinogens that causes the target's brain to go haywire. On a successful hit, the target must make a DC 14 Willpower save or suffer terrifying hallucinations that are completely indistinguishable from reality. These visions—which can be carefully manipulated by the Monday Men to issue suggestions and commands—last for 1d6 rounds. On a critical hit, the effects last for 1 minute. The psychedelic attack doesn't work on androids.

Monday Thunderer

An extremely lethal combat rifle favored by the Monday Men when they take the field against otherworldly enemies. This weapon works on the same principle as the Monday Gun, but at longer range and with auto-fire capability.

Monday Suit

The Monday Men's unofficial "uniform" when they're not working undercover—a cream-white three-piece suit, worn with flare-collared brown shirt, white tie and enormous, boxy sunglasses. The suit is intentionally designed to look ridiculous to make eyewitness reports seem dubious (who would raid a radicals' hideout, or break up a terrorist training camp, wearing a disco outfit?), but for all its campiness, it provides exceptional protection. Memory & Law scientists used the toughest space-age polymers and reinforced them with dimly understood electromagnetic principles.

Scatter Suit

Often used by the Monday Men in out-and-out combat assignments. When this suit is seen at an angle, it seems to disappear into the surrounding environment. When seen head-on, it seems to flicker in and out of existence. Any successful hit against someone wearing this suit has a 50% chance of missing (as if the target had total concealment).

- **HQ:** Monday Men can draw upon the resources of Memory & Law to further their own ends. The corporation's staff can compile within an hour a basic biography of anyone an agent chooses, as well as an outline of any historical event, an abstract of current events and a rough map of any location. With additional time, the office can produce a complete biography, full details of any historical event, detailed reports on current events and street-by-street maps of any location. These reports will include highly classified information from federal databases. In practical terms, this takes the place of any Research check—of any DC—the Monday Man would otherwise have to make.

Stanton M. Spobeck

Ded15; CR 14; HD 15d6+0; hp 80; Mas 10; Init +1 (Dex +1); Spd. 30 ft.; Defense 23, touch 18, flat-footed 22 (+7 class, +1 Dex, +5 Monday Suit); BAB +11; Grap +10/+5/+0; Atk +10/+5/+0 melee (1d4-2+puffer fish poison [DC 13 Fort or 1d6 Str loss primary, 2d6 mins paralysis secondary], presidential fountain pen with concealed knife) or +12/+7/+2 ranged (3d8 Monday Gun); SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +14; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 20, Cha 14; Rep +20; Wealth +10; AP 5.

Skills: Bluff +30, Computer Use +5, Diplomacy +23, Disguise +4, Forgery +5, Gather Information +18, Intimidate +21, Listen +28, Search +5, Sense Motive +28, Spot +25.

Feats: Alertness, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Attentive, Bustin', Deceptive, Double Bluff (2), Educated, Iron Will, Meticulous, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Talk to Machines.

Talents (Dedicated Hero): Aware, Cool Under Pressure, Skill Emphasis (Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Intimidate, Listen, Sense Motive)

The Dervos

The Omega-Ray blast on August 9, 1974, echoed far beyond the ends of the Earth. For an instant, it turned the world into an interstellar beacon, catching the attention of the Dervos—a race of brutal pig-men on the hunt to expand their galactic empire. They sent scout ships swooping down to our world to test its defenses, the resilience of its people—and, most important, its soil. The Dervos have exhausted all of their arable land, endangering their supply of Gank: an incredibly potent stimulant that the pig-men are born addicted to. If the Dervos decide the Earth can support the production of the drug, they will radio home for an all-out invasion fleet.

History

The Dervos began their lives as slaves. Far from Earth, and thousands of centuries ago, a race of delicate, decadent gray aliens decided it had evolved past brute labor. To allow themselves more time for poetry, art and gentle musing, the grays created a race that embodied their vision of the physical life: stunted, grunting, thoroughly degenerate pig-men.

The Dervos started off doing no more than literal heavy lifting. But the grays soon realized that any physical tasks left them hopelessly weary, even maintaining the ethereal machines that powered their civilization. So the effete aliens tinkered with the Dervos, splicing engineering know-how into their genes. To keep the pig-men in check, the grays also gave them an inborn weakness: the creatures were hopelessly addicted to a powdered stimulant called Gank. Without it, they quickly became listless, then dropped dead.

The Dervos served the grays ably for thousands of years. Then, overnight, the masters vanished. The Dervos never discovered why. The likeliest explanation is that the grays decided even physical bodies were too much of a strain, and turned themselves into purely spiritual creatures. Whatever the case, their slaves suddenly found themselves without direction.

Decades of warfare followed, as factions of the creatures battled each other to control the supply of Gank. Eventually the visionary chieftain Dervos 1—all of the creatures have the same name—stopped the conflict and gathered the race under one banner. He convinced the pig-men that their real enemy was the grays, who had created them in servitude and cursed them with an unrelenting hunger for Gank. Now the Dervos could finally be rewarded for their generations of labor—by banding together and becoming masters of the grays’ galactic empire!

Over thousands of years, they remade the grays’ elegant worlds in their own brutal image. Untouched by notions of aesthetics or sentiment, and programmed for mechanics, the Dervos destroyed millennia of treasures and created a string of factory planets: teeming spheres with oily seas and polluted cities that stretched across whole continents. Eventually, their own talents did them in, as their precious Gank farms turned to ash under acid rain and carbon-choked skies.

So the Dervos became explorers. They set out in the grays’ stylish flying saucers—extensively retrofitted—looking for new worlds to conquer and convert into farmlands for Gank. The natives are summarily slaughtered and eaten, or pressed into slave labor until they die off.

On August 9, 1974, a contingent of Dervos scout ships was passing through the outer edge of the galaxy when it picked up

a blip: a sudden burst of energy from an otherwise overlooked solar system. They swooped in for a closer look, and the world in question seemed perfect.

By Dervos standards, it was completely unspoiled. And the natives looked delicious.

Current Plans

- **The Measure of the Enemy.** The Dervos are running extensive tests on our planet to tell if it will make suitable farmland for growing Gank. These include scooping up huge soil samples (often leaving behind telltale “crop circles”); kidnapping and mutilating animals (to see if they are smart enough to be enslaved along with their human masters); and torturing scores of humans to learn their secrets and test their capabilities. Most important, the Dervos want to see how well their potential slaves tolerate exposure to Gank: the Earth creatures must have at least a minimal resistance to the drug to be useful as slaves.
- **The Apostolate.** The aliens have attracted unlikely allies: the Seed of Sirius, a cult of would-be mystics who believe the Dervos are benign “Ancient Astronauts” responsible for creating human culture. The pig-men (in their cosmology) have returned to Earth and are shocked at the delinquency of their one-time students. They are preparing to save the best of the bunch—including the SOS—and leave the rest of the world to destroy itself. It seems that no amount of evidence—including close contact with the disgusting aliens—will convince the SOS that they have gotten things horribly wrong. The pig-men are a little perplexed by these toadies, but are happy to use them to collect information on Earth’s defenses. And they certainly intend to invite the SOS on board the flying saucers when they leave orbit. Of course, the space-age spiritualists will be on the dinner menu...

Adventure Hooks

Something Is Out There. The Dervos aren’t subtle. They will leave lots of clues as they snatch up people and animals for their horrific experiments.

- A town is plagued by an inexplicable wave of amnesia cases. Or someone known to the heroes ends up in a mental asylum, screaming that the pig-men are coming.
- A local zoo begs for help after a wave of animal mutilations.
- A “meteor” crashes in the Barrier Mountains and none of the search parties have returned.

Pick Your Poison. Similarly, the aliens won’t be scrupulous about covering their tracks when they test out Gank on unsuspecting people.

- A bunch of BootyDomers end up overdosing on a mysterious new drug—marching powder cut with Gank.
- Likewise, an Omegaballer might get sold on the stuff thinking it’s a potent new performance enhancer.
- One of the heroes, or someone known to them, turns out to be fiercely resistant to the drug’s effects, and the Dervos want to know why.

- The aliens steal one of Dao Hong's cloning machines to try to breed Gank-resistant humans.
- A Dervos saucer sets up camp on Mount Kazakar—not just the middle of Fedo Malese's territory but the resting place of a crucial Nagathrite artifact.
- The aliens could also bump up against the other secret powers in this chapter. The pig-men, for instance, begin an abduction spree in Motor City after they kidnap one of Gort's androids by mistake. What is this terrifying new strain of human they've discovered?

The heroes could make things easier for themselves by laying traps. For instance, they could pose as SOS members and direct the aliens to remote spots to kidnap animals or human stooges.



When the Dervos arrive, they find a platoon of troops waiting. Nero Suet could certainly lend a hand with this; see the “Long Live the King” sidebar for details.

More scientifically inclined parties could try something more oblique, such as destroying the Gank supply, or finding a terran bacterium that is harmful to the aliens (perhaps even the virus the Man Last conspiracy has discovered; see their entry for details).

A much more oblique approach: sabotage the pig-men’s tests to make it seem like Earth is a lousy spot for a Gank farm.

Then there’s a left-field solution: have a gray alien show up and assert control over the Dervos. The government might have one hidden on an Air Force base in the mutant-overrun Southwest, for instance, or the heroes might try to contact the Dervos’s old masters by interstellar radio.

Long Live The King



Shortly after the Dervos arrived on Earth, the most revolutionary popular music figure of the past half-century left this world—but not in the traditional sense. Nero Suet, who once electrified teenagers and scandalized bluenoses with his backwoods sound and bedroom hips, was ambushed by the pig-men on his mammoth estate, Saturn Ranch. After decades of gluttony, drug addiction and other trashy pastimes, Suet was in no shape to resist as the aliens dragged him aboard their craft.

The creatures’ cruel attentions brought Suet out of his narcotic haze and moneyed listlessness—and helped him recover the po’boy fire that made him a star. Suet feigned death until the aliens loosened his bonds, then used funky kung fu moves to put his guards out of commission and take control of their ship.

The King of Rock and Roll might have returned to his wealth, leisure and sycophants—but he realized the Old God had given him a second chance for a reason. So now he pursues a new calling: helping the rural folk who bear the brunt of Dervos attacks. Scores of farmers have stories about the immense stranger who shows up when all seems lost, wearing a spangled white suit and cape and packing a handgun the size of a guitar. After he takes care of business, he refuses all offers of reward and heads off with an impeccably polite goodbye. “Thank you. Thank you very much.”

Nero Suet

Cha3/Per8; CR 10; HD 11d6+10; 70 HP; Mas 12; Init +0 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Defense 25, touch 24, flat-footed 15 (+4 class, Dex +0, skintight white suit +1, +10 Improved Dancing Fool); BAB +5; Grap +6; Atk +7 melee (swinging microphone 1d6+2, crit 19–20) or +5 ranged (2d8, .44 Magnum revolver); SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 20; Rep +10; Wealth +15; AP 10.

Skills: Bluff +5, Diplomacy +13, Gather Information +7, Intimidate +18, Listen +3, Perform (Dance) +15, Perform (Sing) +20, Perform (String Instr) +19, Sense Motive +6.

Feats: Aircraft Operation (spacecraft), Combat Martial Arts, Dancing Fool, Defensive Martial Arts, Improved Dancing Fool, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Renown, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Trustworthy.

Talents (Charismatic Hero): Charm (females), Favor

Talents (Personality): Royalty, Unlimited Access, Winning Smile

Statistics

Dervos

These stunted, pig-faced brutes are spectacularly cruel and cunning. Most of their energies are devoted to maintaining their remorselessly ugly machines and subjugating natives on useful worlds, usually through torture, which they enjoy immensely. Their only other comprehensible emotion is a weakness for Gank: the powdered stimulant they must snort hourly or fall into a suicidal fugue and then die. The pig-men have no god.

The Dervos reproduce normally—if brutally—but form no attachments to family or friends. Their only loyalty is to an abstract notion of service to the greater good of the race, which in practice boils down to everybody doing everything possible to ensure a steady supply of Gank. Indeed, Dervos tolerate their fellows only because they are battling to expand the cultivation space for the drug. Every other creature in the universe—or any Dervos who threatens the supply of Gank—is an object of unrelenting, jealous hatred.

The creatures speak a language of grunts and snorts, although they have a machine that translates their speech into Terran: a cylindrical microphone radiating spikes of black iron. Even so, when they break into an earthly language their speech is a halting pidgin heavy on threats and commands. They have repellent personal habits and will eat anything, from pieces of their own spaceships to chunks of their fellow Dervos.

Dervos

Challenge Rating: 4

Medium-sized monstrous humanoid

Hit Dice: 5d8+3 (30)

MA: 13

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

Defense: 19 (+1 Dex, +5 natural, +3 Ganktaster armor), touch 11, flat-footed 18

Base Attack Bonus: +4

Grapple: +6

Attack: +6 melee (1d8+2+1d6 electricity Painpointer spear) or +5 ranged (2d6 Hatecaster Sidearm; or 3d6 Hatecaster Longarms)

FS: 5 ft. by 5 ft.

Reach: 5 ft.

SQ: Darkvision 60 ft., scent, technical cunning, torture, skill bonus, addiction

SV Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +2*, Craft (chemical, electronic, mechanical, structural, pharmaceutical) +8, Hide +0*, Disable Device +8, Drive +8, Knowledge (earth and life sciences, physical sciences, technology) +8, Listen +2, Move Silently +1*, Navigate +8, Pilot +8, Repair +8, Spot +2.

Feats: Aircraft Operation (Spacecraft), Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Simple Weapon Proficiency

Advancement: By character class.

Species Traits

Addiction (Ex): Dervos must inhale one gram of Gank every hour or fall into a suicidal stupor within 1d6 rounds, unable to perform any actions until the drug is administered. At the end of an hour without Gank, the Dervos dies a prolonged, painful death from withdrawal.

A Dervos cannot overdose on Gank. Any amount ingested over one gram per hour has no effect. Regular human drugs have no effect on Dervos. Any human who takes a one-gram dose of Gank must make a DC 10 Fortitude save. On a failed roll, the human goes into cardiac arrest and will die in 10 rounds without a successful DC 12 Treat Injury roll. If the initial save is successful, however, the human becomes mindlessly hyperactive and must run at top speed for a number of rounds equal to his Constitution bonus. He can perform no other actions during that period. If he cannot run, he must stop whatever he is doing and flail in place as his body is wracked by spasms. In either case, after the rounds are up, he falls unconscious for 1d6 hours.

A human who takes more than one gram of Gank at a time must make a DC 12 Fortitude save or die within 10 rounds. A DC 12 Treat Injury roll will save him.

Scent (Ex): This ability allows the Dervos to detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.

Skill Bonus (Ex): Because the Dervos are the product of centuries of genetic tinkering and focused evolution, they begin the game with ranks in a number of highly technical skills (for a total of 90 extra skill points), as well as a handful of extra feats. As they advance in level, they receive additional skill points as normal for their class and Intelligence bonus. (*Skills marked with an asterisk include the -2 armor penalty for Ganktaster armor.)

Technical Cunning (Ex): With a successful DC 12 Intelligence check, the Dervos can figure out how to use any piece of unfamiliar machinery. This allows them to overcome nonproficiency penalties and other negative modifiers.

Torture (Ex): A prisoner interrogated by the Dervos faces a -5 modifier to his Willpower save to keep his secrets. The second time he is questioned, the modifier is -10, the third time -15 and so on.

Dervos Equipment

The pig-men's hardware is designed for their own brutish anatomy and doesn't accommodate earthlings gladly. Any humans trying to use it must make a conceptual leap, in the form of an Intelligence check:

Technology	Int DC
Tonguebender	12
Ganktaster armor	14
Painpointer	14
Hatecaster Sidearm	16
Hatecaster Longarms	17
Amnesiator	17
Flying Saucer	20

Even if a human passes the check, she gains only a +2 bonus from the armor, and if she inhales Gank she faces the effects described earlier. Of course, humans must also have the appropriate proficiency feat for each of the items, listed in the descriptions above, or face a nonproficiency penalty.

Amnesiator: This clamlike helmet of jagged black metal snaps over a subject's head and erases his memories of captivity with the Dervos. This process takes a number of rounds equal to the subject's Wisdom bonus; if it is interrupted the conditioning doesn't take. If it is successful, though, the subject has no recollection of his time in Dervos custody. When he thinks back on the period in question, he comes up with a jumble of

Dervos Equipment

Type	Equipment Bonus	Nonprof. Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armor Penalty	Speed (30 ft.)	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
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Armor (requires the Light Armor Proficiency feat)

Ganktaster	Tactical	+3	+2	+4	-2	30	15 lb.	—	—
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Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
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Melee Weapon (requires the Archaic Weapons Proficiency feat)

Painpointer	1d8+1d6 electrical	19-20	Piercing	—	Large	10 lb.	—	—
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Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	Rate of Fire	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
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Ranged Weapons (requires the Archaic Weapons Proficiency feat)

Hatecaster sidearm	2d6	20	Ballistic	40 ft.	S	6, loose shot	Med	12 lb.	—	—
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Hatecaster Longarms	3d6	20	Ballistic	90 ft.	S	12, loose shot	Large	30 lb.	—	—
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Crew	Pass	Cargo	Init	Maneuver	Top Speed	Defense	Hardness	Hit points	Size
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Aircraft (requires the Aircraft Operation [Spacecraft] feat)

Dervos Saucer	10	100	150,000 lb.	-1	+0	14,550 (1,450)	6	10	60	C
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impressions he can't explain but that seem plausible enough if he doesn't probe too deeply. A high-powered Psychic could find the real memories with the advanced version of her Audible Thoughts ability; a psychoanalyst could do the same with a month of intensive therapy.

When the Dervos use the amnesiator, the target gets a Willpower saving throw to resist its effects. The DC depends on the amount of time the Dervos want to erase. The longer the time frame, the easier it is to fight the machine.

Time	DC
More than two weeks	12
One to two weeks	15
Two to six days	18
One day	20
12 hours or less	25
6 hours or less	28
1 hour or less	30



Tonguebender: This translation device, shaped like a large, spiked microphone, renders any language into Dervos, and vice versa. But the Dervos's mother tongue is too limited to convey nuance or allusion—anything you say in terran gets flattened into a burst of commands or exclamations. The device can't be used to translate your native tongue into any other languages.

Current Plans

History

So the elders settled on a bold course of action. The bulk of the survivors would stay in the ruins of the coast, building new cities out of sight of the human rescue teams. The best warriors would spread out across the world to retrieve the kiosks. Gathered together and reactivated, these prehistoric artifacts would enable the Kreelak to open a portal back in time to their heyday—to warn their ancestors about the coming dangers and snuff out the human race in its cradle.

kiosk more precisely, so that patients can see any of their past incarnations, not just the prehistoric ones. The doctors are also racing to find even more of the icons so they can franchise out their practice. Déjà You have crossed paths with the Kreealak by this point, and the two sides keep close tabs on each other, often tracking one another's steps in the artifact hunt.

Adventure Hooks

Right Under Our Noses. A Kreealak artifact is a good place to begin an adventure. The dinosaur-men are very protective of their hardware—and will do anything to get it out of human hands.

- The heroes' headquarters is ransacked after their boss unwittingly buys a Kreealak kiosk at a local art gallery.
- A trader in precolonial curios tells the team he has been hearing strange hissing sounds around his back door at night. Or a local museum is plagued by a series of break-ins. Likewise an entrepreneur who has been buying up centuries-old Kreealak power crystals to use as raw material for mood rings (or pet rocks).

On the Couch. The sinister self-help group Déjà You could also bring the Kreealak into the campaign.

- Déjà You conduct the break-ins described in the previous set of adventure hooks—which leads the heroes naturally to the Kreealak.
- A member of Déjà You pretends to be a Maddamaran noble whose family treasures were plundered by greedy archaeologists, and asks the heroes to help him break into the Ahitken I exhibit.
- The heroes find a tape of Kreealak hissing and whispering, produced by Déjà You for its field agents.

On the Margins. You might also show the Kreealak butting up against human society while “off-duty”—that is, while they're in

hiding in an urban area, waiting to strike at museums and art galleries and so forth.

- A drug addict is found riddled with crossbow bolts—and a mysterious glowing crystal hidden in his bell-bottom jeans.
- An informant shows up on the heroes' door and tells them about strange lights and hissing sounds in an abandoned building near an excavation site.

Destination: Danger. The Kreealak also present a good opportunity for the heroes to journey overseas, or to dangerous parts of Americo.

- The heroes are called in to investigate a murder at the Eden Atoll fantasy park. Or a disturbance on the cruise liner *Elastic Princess*: the crew has been hearing a mysterious, hissing stowaway on its run to the atoll.
- The heroes are directed to Esperanto, where guards have been finding unearthly footprints at the archaeological dig around the immolated city of Simoni. Or the team ends up in the remains of the West Coast, investigating the plague of sabotage against the relief teams.

End Game

The easiest way to beat the Kreealak is to destroy their large kiosks, or otherwise prevent the creatures from collecting them. If the artifacts are irreparable, the Kreealak will try to build new ones by hoarding power crystals for months on end, and then molding them into duplicates of the original structure. It will take thousands of crystals to build just one large kiosk, so the Kreealak will be out of sight for quite some time while they undertake this project. (Then again, their absence might be a clue that something is up.)

If the team collects the artifacts and keeps them under lock and key, the reptiles will stage a last-ditch assault to recover them, enlisting every member of their clan who can hold a weapon. The creatures will create a diversion with the help of the Lake Monsters—who are, after all, their distant relatives. Just before the Kreealak launch their raid, the Lake Monsters in the vicinity of the captured kiosks will rise up in a fury and disrupt the human waterways however they can: smashing dams and filtration centers, sinking ships, ramming piers. If possible, the Kreealak will try to plan waterway attacks that will directly affect the spot where the kiosks are being kept. For instance, the reptiles might direct the Lake Monsters to burst the water mains near a museum or warehouse, causing an evacuation.

Wiping out the Kreealak for good, of course, raises tough ethical questions. Even if they hate the human race, the creatures are intelligent and have a civilization of their own. Slaughtering them indiscriminately certainly crosses an ethical line, as does throwing them in a zoo or a research lab. The reptiles' elders may agree to withdraw into the wilderness if they realize they've been decisively beaten. Of course, they may also use this as cover to research the construction of new kiosks or other mystical technology.

Statistics

The Kreealak stand about a head taller than the average human, and have comparable strength and intelligence. They are covered in green scales, with a yellow patch around the torso; their heads are crested and dominated by lidless black eyes. Their diet consists mostly of plants and small animals. They will gladly kill humans but won't eat their flesh: the reptile-men consider the



Smiles, Everyone! Always Smiles!

Most of the island chains in the Elatic Ocean have been lost to tidal waves and melting icecaps. But one archipelago survived: Eden Atoll, whose people were made famous by Theramin Hunker in her groundbreaking report on native sexuality. The islanders have long since been co-opted into Western civilization, however, in the form of Escobar Savarin—a suave, swarthy entrepreneur who bought up the land and turned it into a fantasy palace.

For the right price, this man of mystery—always seen in an immaculate white-linen suit and accompanied by an oversexed dwarf herald, Fausto—can grant his guests any wish they choose. Well-to-do visitors blow a fortune to play at being a Red Collar or an Omegaball star; struggling ones spend their life savings just to escape the drudgery of their lives for a weekend. But this is no drugged-up fantasy or computerized simulation. If you want to be a Wild West gunslinger, Savarin will plop you into a genuine lawless town in 1875—and there's no way back to reality until your time on the island is up.

How does Savarin do it? A fanatical collector and student of the world's secret history, he stumbled across one of the large Kreelak kiosks on an archaeological hunt. Soon after he realized—just as the psychiatrists of Déjà You did—that the artifact could bring him visions of prehistory. Intrigued, he began spending hours in the device, meditating and focusing his concentration with mood-altering drugs.

He was testing the grand device on August 9, 1974, when the Omega-Ray blast struck—and caused a fluke psychic cascade. The subatomic surge linked Savarin's brain waves to the kiosk's telepathic rhythms. Not only did it accept Savarin as a Kreelak and allow him to call upon its powers—it gave him access to abilities even the Kreelak haven't managed so far.

Most important, it allows him to open a door to the past—precisely what the dinosaur men's elders are hoping to accomplish. But because Savarin is human, not Kreelak, the kiosk allows him to converse with—and travel to meet—figures from mankind's history. That's how he can send visitors to the Wild West, the Roaring Twenties or the age of knights.

Only Savarin can access these special powers. Kreelak, however, can make the artifact perform its usual functions.

Escobar Savarin

Ded5; CR 4; HD 5d6+0; hp 20; Mas 11; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd. 30 ft.; Defense 14, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+3 class, +1 Dex); BAB +3; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d8 longsword) or +4 ranged; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +9; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 18, Cha 16; Rep +5; Wealth +9; AP 5.

Skills: Bluff +13, Diplomacy +11, Disguise +5, Gather Information +5, Hide +3, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (arcane lore) +10, Listen +8, Move Silently +3, Search +4, Spot +14.

Feats: Alertness, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Attentive, Deceptive, Iron Will, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Stealthy.

Talents (Dedicated Hero): Empathy, Improved Aid Another/1, Intuition.



communications channel to any other kiosk that has been activated. The conversation can last a number of minutes equal to the speaker's Charisma bonus, and can be extended by 1d6 minutes with the use of a power crystal.

The Kreeleks' newly established coastal communities have already put small kiosks in place to stay in touch, and traveling spies often search out the miniature towers to send home progress reports. The small kiosks, which are made from specially strengthened power crystals, have a Hardness of 8, 25 hit points and a Break DC of 30.

A human can't activate a small kiosk, or use any of its functions. However, a human who stays inside a small kiosk for more than an hour (whether it has been activated or not) won't come away empty-handed. The subject will see visions of the earliest days of the human race, as it battled the reptile-men for control of the Earth. (Déjà You's attempts to refine these visions are basically doomed to failure, unless one of their scientists spends a Breakthrough to advance her understanding of the technology.)

Large Kiosks

The large kiosks have the same lock and code-word activation mechanism described earlier. They can also recharge crystals and communicate with other activated kiosks. But their range

of powers is much broader. Any wounded Kreelak who enters a large kiosk and makes a DC 10 Fortitude save will be fully healed within 1d6 rounds. Even an unconscious Kreelak is allowed to make the save if someone else drags him into the chamber. In addition, a Kreelak who has been dead for no more than one hour may be brought back to life if he makes a DC 20 Fortitude save inside a large kiosk. Only one Kreelak at a time may be healed.

The large kiosks can also put Kreelak in contact with the dead. Using a large kiosk this way requires the Kreelak to make a Charisma check (DC 12) and offer up six power crystals, which cannot be recharged. The conversation can last a number of minutes equal to the speaker's Wisdom bonus. It cannot be extended with power crystals.

The Kreeleks' planned experiment—linking the four large kiosks to open a temporal gate—has never been tried before. Kreelak theorists think they will have to sacrifice thousands of power crystals, and each of their elders will have to make a Charisma check of DC 25.

The large kiosks, which are also made of strengthened power crystals, have a Hardness of 8, 35 hit points and a Break DC of 35. Like small kiosks, they can't be used by humans, although humans will have the visions described earlier if they spend even a minute in a large kiosk, activated or not.

Man Last and Nature Gone Mad

The Kreelak weren't the only prehistoric force that the Omega Ray freed from suspended animation. Melting glaciers exposed the icy tombs of the Sasquatch, an evolutionary dead end who had nearly exterminated their *Homo sapiens* cousins in the mists of prehistory. And the ray's subatomic ripples roused the Lake Monsters—creatures of unfathomable size that had spent an eternity lurking in the deepest waters they could find. As these monsters lose their hiding places to development and pollution, they're moving closer and closer to civilization—and rediscovering their ancient taste for human flesh.

Meanwhile, even conventional creatures have become hostile to mankind. For many animals, the Omega Ray acted like a dog whistle: no longer are the beasts content to put up with human incursions on their environment, whether by tourists, hunters or polluters. Now insects and small animals organize themselves into swarms and attack any people who despoil their turf, even staging reprisal raids on towns and office complexes. Larger creatures, everything from bears to sharks, have become as cunning and ruthless as human assassins, staking out territory and massacring anyone who enters it.

These maddened animals have an ally in Man Last: a radical environmental group that wants to wipe out the bulk of mankind and let the planet heal the wounds left by pollution and overdevelopment. The group is making newly intelligent animals part of its sabotage efforts, including assaults on industrial complexes and power plants. But its most potent weapon is an incredibly deadly alien virus recovered from a crashed satellite. If the group's ally, Quantrill Biscuit, reaches high office, they will use him to get access to government research labs—and turn the virus into a weapon of global genocide.

The Sasquatch

The early days of human history were crowded with competitors. Not only were the Kreelak trying to wipe out the human race in its cradle, the first men had to compete with their hideous

cousins, the Sasquatch: hulking, shaggy ape-men ten feet high, with enormous feet and hands and significantly diminished intelligence. The combination of reptiles and monstrous mammals nearly spelled the end of mankind.

But, just as with the Kreelak, the Ice Age spelled the end for the Sasquatch. The dim-witted giants couldn't adapt to the climate



change and were forced to retreat into the mountains and dense woodlands to search for warm, deep caves, patches of vegetation and small game. Eventually the cold found them, and froze them where they slept.

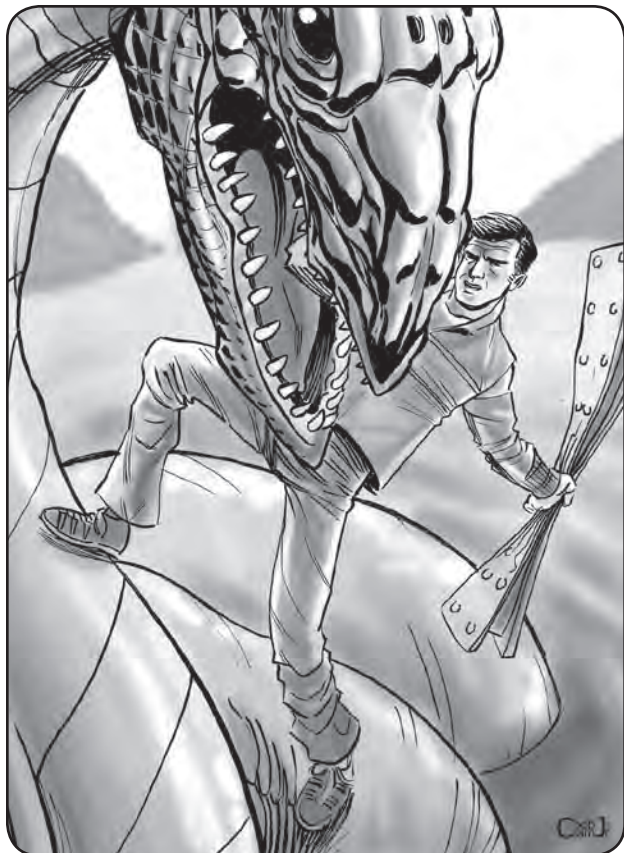
Now the aftershocks of the Omega Ray have exposed the creatures' hiding places and sent them stumbling into daylight. They have no grand plan other than the brute animal instinct to eat and propagate their race. In both cases, however, this puts them on a collision course with their ancient enemy, humanity. Not only are more men and women invading Sasquatch turf as the cities fill up, they are destroying the forests with pollution—driving the beasts closer to human settlements for food and safety.

Statistics

The Sasquatch can use simple tools, and create the occasional pit or net trap. But mostly they rely on their mind-boggling strength to overwhelm opponents. They are often encountered alone but also travel in packs of four or more. They speak a language of growls and roars unintelligible to outsiders. There is no formal religion among the Sasquatch, although they often burn chunks of their victims as an appeasement to the spirit of death—the only thing the ape-men fear.

The creatures make their homes in mountain caves and in hidden clearings deep in the forest. They usually dig a food-storage pit in the center of the community and arrange beds of straw and leaves around the perimeter. Lately, they have been making more and more forays into human settlements—mostly rural towns, where they paw through the garbage and carry off farm animals, but they are working up their nerve to attack cities en masse.

The Sasquatch are meat eaters, and have a deep racial hatred of their cleverer cousins. They will kill and consume any human they find.



Sasquatch

Large Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 6d8+24 (51 hp)

CR: 6

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 40 ft.

Defense: 15 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +5 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 14

BAB: +4

Grapple: +16

Attack: Claw +11 melee (1d8+8)

Full Attack: 2 claws +11 melee (1d8+8) and bite +6 melee (2d6+4)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Improved grab

Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +3

Abilities: Str 27, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +7, Swim +12

Feats: Endurance, Run, Track

Advancement: 7–10 HD (Large)

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a Sasquatch must hit with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Skills: A Sasquatch has a +4 racial bonus on Swim checks.

The Lake Monsters

When the dinosaur line began to die, many of its members survived the only way they could: diving deep beneath the waves. Hidden by fathoms of water, these beasts largely lay dormant until prodded into ferocity by the Omega Ray. (A few early risers did appear over the centuries, the germ of stories about dragons and sea monsters.)

Much about these fearsome creatures is a mystery. They can stay submerged for weeks at a time, showing themselves only as ambiguous ripples on the water's surface, and then erupt into a frenzy that leaves lakes littered with limbs. Despite their name, these beasts can be found in waterways of any size, from lakes to rivers to oceans.

Like the Sasquatch, the Lake Monsters have no grand plan. They want to feed and reproduce, and humans get in their way on both accounts—by dredging, damming and polluting the waters.

Statistics

The Lake Monsters are mostly solitary creatures. But now, agitated by the Omega Ray, they have begun seeking out their fellows to form families and expand their numbers. After centuries of isolation, they will be extraordinarily protective of their offspring, and pursue to the death anyone who harms them. They speak in a haunting, bellowing song, similar to whales. The beasts have no religion.

The creatures have been measured at anywhere from 30 to over 200 feet long, including a tail half as long as their body. Mostly they appear as snakelike shadows on the surface of lakes—until it's too late. The creatures are strong, fast, and highly maneuverable, able to turn quickly and lunge at prey.

Lake Monsters

Huge Animal

Hit Dice: 10d8+66 (111 hp)

CR: 9

Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex)

Speed: swim 50 ft.

Defense: 13 (-2 size, +2 Dex, +3 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 11
BAB: +7
Grapple: +23
Attack: Bite +13 melee (2d8+12)
Full Attack: Bite +13 melee (2d8+12)
Space/Reach: 15 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks: --
Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent
Saves: Fort +15, Ref +9, Will +4
Abilities: Str 26, Dex 14, Con 22, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 9
Skills: Hide +8*, Listen +4, Spot +9, Swim +16
Feats: Dodge, Great Fortitude, Toughness (2)
Advancement: 11-20 HD (Huge); 21-30 HD (Gargantuan)

Skills: A Lake Monster has a +8 racial bonus on Hide checks in water. Moreover, if someone actually spots a creature that is hiding, it may attempt to Disguise (+4) itself as a snake or other surface disturbance.

The Swarm

This catchall term designates any collection of otherwise ordinary Fine or Diminutive animals acting as a group. Anything from bees to frogs to piranhas can arrange themselves in a swarm, but they are all driven to attack for two basic reasons: to remove an immediate human threat from their territory or to track down and destroy a long-term offender, such as a polluter or hunter. A swarm has the characteristics of its original type, except as noted here.

A swarm has a single pool of Hit Dice and hit points, a single initiative modifier, a single speed and a single Defense. The swarm makes saving throws as a single creature, and counts as a single creature for purposes of turning. A single swarm occupies a square (if it is made up of nonflying creatures) or a cube (if comprised of flying creatures) 5 feet on a side, but its reach is 0 feet. To attack, the swarm moves into an opponent's fighting space, which provokes an attack of opportunity. It can occupy the same fighting space as a creature of any size, since it crawls all over its prey. A swarm can move through squares occupied by enemies and vice versa without impediment, although the swarm may provoke an attack of opportunity if it does so. A swarm can move through cracks or holes large enough for its component creatures. Larger swarms are represented by multiple swarms, or multiple 5-foot squares.

Swarms are not subject to critical hits or flanking. A swarm takes half damage from ballistic, slashing, and piercing weapons. A swarm takes a -10 penalty on saving throws against effects that affect an area, such as grenade-like weapons. If the area-effect attack does not allow a saving throw, the swarm takes double damage instead. A swarm that fails a Fortitude save against massive damage disperses and does not reform until its hit points return to full.

Swarms don't make standard melee attacks. Instead, they deal automatic damage to any creature whose space they occupy at the end of their move, with no attack roll needed. Some swarms also have acid, poison, blood drain or other special attacks in addition to normal damage. Damage reduction sufficient to reduce a swarm attack's damage to 0 or other special abilities may make a creature immune (or at least resistant) to damage from the swarm. Swarms cannot attempt trip or grapple checks, nor can they be tripped or grappled themselves.

Swarms do not threaten creatures in their square and do not make attacks of opportunity with their swarm attack. However, they distract foes whose squares they occupy, as described below.

Distraction (Ex): Any intelligent creature vulnerable to a swarm's damage that begins its turn with a swarm in its fighting space is distracted. The target must attempt a Fortitude save (DC 10 + swarm's Hit Dice) or become nauseated for 1 round by the intense pain of countless bites, stings, and pinches. A creature that takes no damage from the swarm's attack is not subject to distraction. Nauseated creatures are unable to attack or do anything else requiring attention or concentration; the only action a nauseated creature can take is a single move action per turn. Even if the target creature succeeds at a Fortitude save, it is still vulnerable to the swarm's distraction. It is difficult to undertake complex actions while covered by a swarm. Using skills requiring patience and concentration (such as moving silently or opening a lock) requires a Concentration check (DC 20). If the check fails, the target creature is unable to complete the action.

Swarm Sentience (Ex): All creatures driven to organize by the Omega Ray have a hive mind and skills as a magical beast (2 x Int score, plus 1 additional skill point per HD beyond 1 HD). With sentience comes unwavering purpose: the swarm will pursue humans using inference and strategic cunning that go far beyond ordinary animal intelligence. For instance, a swarm might realize that it could sneak into an air vent to invade a large building instead of trying to rush through the front doors or searching for open windows. Or it might chew through electrical lines to cut off the lights in a house where adventurers have barricaded themselves. A swarm would also be willing to make a strategic retreat, or sacrifice part of itself in a feint, to further a greater goal. A dispersed swarm loses its Intelligence.

Some sample swarms:

Sentient Piranha Swarm

Aquatic: A swarm of piranha can move in water without making Swim checks and cannot drown in water.

Low-Light Vision (Ex): A swarm of piranha can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight and similar conditions of poor illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

CR 3; Medium animal (swarm of Diminutive animals); HD 6d8+6; hp 33; Mas 12; Init +3; Spd swim 30 ft.; Defense 14, touch 13, flat-footed 11 (+3 Dex, +1 natural); BAB +4; Grap —; Atk swarm (2d6, swarm), Full Atk swarm (2d6, swarm); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SQ swarm, aquatic, distraction, low-light vision, swarm sentience; AL none; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +2;

AP 0; Rep +0; Str 1, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 10 (— when dispersed), Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills: Hide +8, Spot +5.

Feats: None.

Advancement: None.

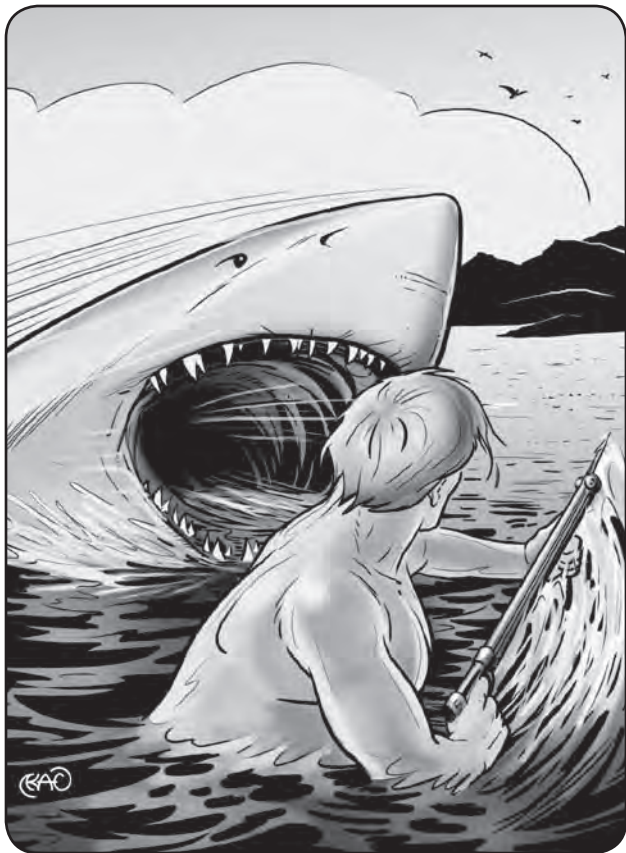
Sentient Killer Bee Swarm

Poison (Ex): A killer bee swarm's poison deals initial and secondary damage of 1d3 Con. A Fortitude save (DC 14) negates.

Resistance to Massive Damage (Ex): A sentient killer bee swarm gains a +5 species bonus on Fortitude saves to negate the effects of massive damage.

Darkvision (Ex): A sentient killer bee swarm can see in the dark up to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and the killer bees can function with no light at all.

CR 5; Medium vermin (swarm of Fine vermin); HD 5d8; hp 22; Mas 10; Init +5; Spd fly 20 ft. (perfect); Defense 15, touch 15,



flat-footed 10 (+5 Dex); BAB +3; Grap —; Atk swarm (3d6 plus poison, swarm); Full Atk swarm (3d6 plus poison, swarm); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SQ swarm, swarm sentience, distraction, poison, resistance to massive damage, darkvision 60 ft.; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 1, Dex 20, Con 10, Int 10 (— when dispersed), Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills: Hide +7, Intimidate +4, Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Spot +7.

Feats: None.

Advancement: None.

Omega-Blight Sentient Mosquito Swarm

This cloud of mosquitoes drains blood from its victims and also carries a deadly virus.

Vermín: A mosquito swarm is immune to mind-affecting attacks.

Disease (Ex): The incubation period of the Omega-Blight virus is 1d4 days. Initial damage is 1 Dex and 1 Con; secondary damage is 1d2 Dex (temporary) and 1d2 Con (temporary or permanent). A Fortitude save (DC 12) negates.

Resistance to Massive Damage (Ex): An Omega-Blight mosquito swarm gains a +5 species bonus on Fortitude saves to negate the effects of massive damage.

Darkvision (Ex): An Omega-Blight mosquito swarm can see in the dark up to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and the mosquitoes can function with no light at all.

CR 1; Medium vermin (swarm of Fine vermin); HD 1d8; hp 4; Mas 10; Init +4; Spd fly 20 ft. (perfect); Defense 14, touch 14, flat-footed 10 (+4 Dex); BAB +0; Grap —; Atk swarm (1d4 plus disease, swarm); Full Atk swarm (1d4 plus disease, swarm); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SQ swarm, swarm sentience, vermin, distraction, disease, resistance to massive damage, darkvision 60

ft., sentience; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 1, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 10 (— when dispersed), Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6.

Feats: None.

Advancement: None.

Lone Predators

Many larger creatures work alone in terrorizing mankind. Lone predators are usually meat-eating animals, such as bears and sharks, that have had limited experience with humans but are now forced into close contact because of pollution or other incursions onto their turf. Occasionally, trusted domesticated animals or ostensibly tame zoo animals may go mad from the aftershocks of the Omega Ray and turn on their masters.

Almost any conventional animal detailed in a *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* sourcebook can serve as a lone predator. As with swarms, predators usually act as ordinary animals until their territory is invaded or despoiled by humans. But predators may pursue humans for another reason: personal vendetta. These creatures have more advanced family ties than vermin do, and will hunt down and slaughter any human who harms or captures their mate or child.

Lone predators have the characteristics of their type, with the following exceptions:

Size: Lone predators tend to be larger than average. Bump up the creature's size by one level or more, if permitted, and raise its Hit Dice accordingly.

Predator Sentience (Ex): Lone predators have an effective Intelligence of 12 when pursuing their human prey. As with sentient swarms, predators can draw on inference and strategic cunning far beyond regular animal intelligence. A bear pursuing a team of zoologists who stole its cub, for instance, might spot a road sign for the zoo—and recognize the facility's logo from one of the kidnapper's badges. Sentient predators are also clever enough to spot—and avoid—traps with an appropriate Intelligence check. When the hunt is over, the predator's Intelligence reverts to normal.

Other Creatures?

Almost any monster from a d20 supplement could be made to fit the *Damnation Decade* world. They might be yet another evolutionary dead end left over from prehistory, the product of massive pollution or the creation of an advanced genetics laboratory. With some “standby” creatures—folkloric favorites like vampires and werewolves—you don't even necessarily need a hard-science explanation. You could simply chalk up their reappearance to the impending apocalypse. In short, don't be afraid to empty the bestiary.

Man Last

The animals in this section have no larger purpose other than eating, reproducing and driving humans from their territory. They are intended for use in one-shot adventures, or for cameo appearances as “Wandering Monsters” in longer campaigns.

Of course, determined villains could manipulate these animals into carrying out some coordinated plan on their behalf—which is just what radical environmental group Man Last is doing. This international organization presents itself to the public as

The Bloc

Americo's chief rival in world affairs is the Bloc: a collectivist empire run by bloodthirsty dictator Gogol Yobar. This grim anthill kingdom was born early in the century, when a group of revolutionaries overthrew the tsar of Kronstadt and established a worker-run state. Not all the workers proved amenable to the new regime, however, which led to state-sponsored assassination, engineered famine and the creation of a terrifying secret police force, the Zassat. Under Yobar, the revolutionary movement reached beyond its borders and gobbled up numerous neighboring states, while Zassat agents circled the world stirring up trouble. The roster of dead reached into the tens of millions.

After an alliance of convenience in the battle against the fascist powers, the Bloc and Americo began a cold war, fighting through proxy nations. The most recent, and vicious, of these small wars took place in Mango: a forested peninsula in Southeast Sina. Mango held few resources of any value, but it stood between the Bloc and three other unaligned nations. Gogol Yobar wanted those countries under his control, and Americo wanted them free. Americo propped up the largely authoritarian regime in the southern capital of Sala du Mango, while the Bloc supported an insurgency movement based in the northern jungles. Dao Hong of the Sphere, not to be left out of a fight on his borders, sent in his own troops to back the north.

After more than a decade of fighting, Americo's public tired of the war. Stanton Spobeck, fearful of the collectivist threat but even more concerned about his political future, brought home the troops. The south was quickly overrun, and a flotilla of desperate refugees headed to Americo.

But the fight is about to start up again. With the oil crisis worsening, the world has seized upon new reports of deep petroleum fields off the shores of Mango. Gogol Yobar is planning to send in

Bloc forces to overthrow the insurgent regime and replace it with Kronstadter viceroys. Dao Hong wants to do the same. Stanton Spobeck, already struggling to justify a law-bending third term in office, is trying to figure out how to sell Americo on another military adventure in Southeast Sina.

With an iron fist, we will lead humanity to happiness.

—Kronstadter inspirational slogan

The Bloc's designs don't end in Mango, however. On August 9, 1974, with Americo reeling from the loss of the West Coast, Gogol Yobar sent his armies sweeping across Esperanto and into the

vast frozen wastes of Sina. Leading the charge is Yobar's hideous innovation: the Purity Wall, a four-foot thick wall of black iron advancing on tank treads. It surrounds every inch of his territory, and makes escape nearly impossible.

The latest nation to fall into the black iron prison is Faust, the former seat of the fascist empire. Gogol Yobar, still seething over the ignominies the fascists inflicted on Kronstadt, has turned Faust's capital, Herzog, into a torture chamber. He has razed most of the metropolis, preserving only the former headquarters of his old enemy, Wotan Heide, which now serves as the seat of Zassat operations. In the ruins he has built pitiless prisons and towering reeducation facilities, to hold any dissidents that he doesn't want to die in an Arctic labor camp. Spies, clerics and resistance leaders often end up here, put to the foulest punishments imaginable until they make a public confession of spurious crimes against the state. Gogol Yobar also is tearing the city apart in search of secret fascist technology, hidden in sub-sewers and basement vaults against a return of the *Raag*—Heide's word for his millennial kingship.

At the same time, Zassat agents have their fingers in every government and industrial plant in the world, from the satrapies of Maddamar to the equatorial expanses of Swelt and Suramerico.

Back home, the aftershocks of the Omega Ray have reduced Kronstadt to a wasteland of stone-age slave camps, faltering

The Heart Of The Bloc

Kronstadt's capital, Mudack, is a cold, gray, angular city of windowless office blocks and seven-level basements. Its people are guarded, seeing the Zassat in every face, and sullenly resigned to long lines for services and laughable public infrastructure. Among the soulless government offices are reminders of the city's rich, but now disowned, cultural heritage: bulbous minarets and skeletal steeples; mineral baths and tiled mansions; hermitages and imperial museums. Most of these treasures are, of course, off-limits to workers and are officially classified as counterrevolutionary by the ruling class that patronizes them.

The city has a bursting population of agitators and intellectuals anxious to escape to Americo, as well as many fervent religious believers. Indeed, the state's efforts to stamp out religion have only increased their numbers. Together, they search out and preserve the religious treasures of Eastern Esperanto—two millennia of relics and illuminated manuscripts.

Second in importance to the Bloc's cultural life is Arpad, the first nation to fall to Gogol Yobar's tanks after the war against the fascists in the 1940s. The war-battered nation put up a grim resistance, broadcasting pleas for help until the collectivists crashed through the doors. After a round of looting, the invaders preserved most of Arpad's medieval infrastructure—narrow cobblestoned streets; a dozen filigreed bridges across its central Haver River; a shuttered central basilica; hanging gardens and steam baths. Under Gogol Yobar, the nation's main industry is tank production, and a thriving black market in the country's signature spices.

Citizens fight the Zassat with small acts of defiance, such as circulating independent newspapers and monkeying with military hardware on the assembly line. The country also is home to a large population of Jencia, a tribe of wanderers that was nearly wiped out in Wotan Heide's death camps. Their travels have taken them from the deserts of Maddamar to the backwoods of Esperanto, and they have learned many secrets along the way. Among the most vital: the location of the hidden pass that will take explorers to the top of Mount Kazakar, where the Nagathrite gravity engine is buried.

Small wonder that Americo holds a powerful lure for Bloc citizens. Thousands every year try to escape over the Purity Wall and through Gogol Yobar's mined coastlines. Few succeed.

city-state with global importance: it is the headquarters of the Earthly Father, spiritual leader of a mammoth faction of Old God worshippers. Yobar desperately wants to capture the tiny nation and defile its temples and treasures, to show the triumph of Collectivist Man over religious superstition. Finally, Yobar knows that he must break Hardcastle, Americo's closest ally. If the island nation falls, Americo's smaller, less capable friends will desert her in an instant.

Never Say Nyet. Gogol Yobar's maniacal mainframe presents a host of adventure possibilities.

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The Main Event

The battle between Nyet and Naught, assuming it does come about, should be handled “offstage.” In other words, figure out what result best serves your campaign, and then run with it. If you’ve been playing a lot of cold war adventures, and want a change of pace, you might decide that Naught has won the contest and taken control of the Bloc’s defenses. This removes the collectivist empire as a threat, and takes politics out of the game for a while. Of course, Naught now has a complement of nuclear weapons at his disposal that he can use to blackmail the planet.

On the other hand, if you want to heat up the cold war in your campaign, you could have Nyet win the conflict, and get access to Americo’s deepest secrets. This would set the stage for the Zassat to stage precision raids against the homeland, and slaughter the nation’s agents overseas. The heroes would then be enlisted—perhaps by a fearful Monday Man who realizes what has gone wrong—to get Naught off-line or to feed it false information to confuse the enemy. The team might also end up parachuting into Kronstadt and demolishing the collectivist mainframe firsthand.

In the spirit of détente, you might also have the two machines join forces to subjugate the world, which would put all the cold war powers on the defensive and might even lead to temporary alliances between East and West. Or you could simply have the mainframes destroy each other and be done with it.

- The team learns that key members of the Suede campaign are visiting the Bloc—and asking for a tour of the coastal nation. Or the Suede crew begins sending subliminal-seduction movies to Gogol Yobar, urging him to drop an atomic bomb on the dissenting town.
- One of the heroes has a vision where an angelic creature shows her the resting place of the twelve Daggers of Aleph.

Covert Activity. Straight-ahead spy adventures could be a good change of pace for a supernatural or sci-fi campaign.

- A Kronstadter jet fighter downs a Dervos saucer over a mountain range in Sina, and the race is on to locate the wreckage.
- A Western scientist who was horribly injured during a mission of mercy to a Kronstadter nuclear-meltdown site is returned to Americo—wearing a metal contraption that supposedly keeps him alive but also conveniently hides his identity. Is he the genuine article or an imposter? The heroes must find out.
- A variation: the team must protect a Kronstadter defector but also figure out whether or not he is actually a double agent.
- Zassat agents are releasing mutant piranhas in the irradiated marshlands on the southeastern tip of Americo, to see how the fish will perform in the swamps of Mango.

End Game

Can a handful of adventurers topple an empire that controls half the world? The rational answer is no. In realistic terms, it would take years of maneuvering, and deep reserves of will, on the part of the West, along with fundamental changes in the people and leadership of the Bloc. Then again, this is a fantasy game. If the heroes are powerful enough to prevent the end of the world, what’s a couple of totalitarian states along the way? Of course, throwing global politics for a loop may have terrible repercussions, which this section—as well as the end games for the Sphere and Consortium—will address.

The Bloc’s chief weakness is the supercomputer Nyet. If the computer goes off-line, so do all of the empire’s defenses. (See the New Skills section of **Chapter One** for the nuts and bolts of attacking sentient computers. Nyet counts as a massive government system for these purposes. It has linked to every database in the Bloc and has access to phone lines.) Yobar’s first instinct will be to execute his entire general staff as traitors, then impose martial law across the Bloc. Where his battalions are stretched thin, he will put Zassat agents in control. Meanwhile,

he will drag the top scientists in his empire to Kronstadt, including dissenters from his Arctic labor camps, and force them to return defense systems to his control.

Americo’s response depends on who is president at the time Nyet goes off-line. Stanton Spobeck will leap at the chance to eliminate the original collectivist threat (and not coincidentally write himself into the history books as a hero instead of a world-class dissembler). He will send sortie after sortie of bombers against Kronstadter military bases and the Purity Wall, while shipping as many troops as he can to Esperanto, to pour through the gaps in the enemy’s bulwark. Spobeck’s vice president, LeHigh Gort, will carry out similar measures if put in charge. (This will, of course, weaken the cordon around Alamo and the Southwest, emboldening Ampersand Vole and the Brotherhood.)

Quantrill Biscuit, a milquetoast, will call for a multilateral peace summit with any number of smaller nations, thereby giving Yobar enough time to get his defenses back under control. The dictator will resume his schedule of invasions just as Biscuit’s conference begins.

Humboldt Suede, meanwhile, will likely pursue the same course as Spobeck—but go further after the shooting stops. The Son of the Damned will announce the annexation of Bloc territory and name himself President of the World. Softening the blow somewhat for former Bloc residents, Suede will send them “cultural ambassadors” loaded with subliminal-seduction movies and music. But even if revolts break out, it won’t matter to Suede—as long as he holds two sets of nuclear triggers on New Year’s Eve, 1979.

Then, of course, there’s Dao Hong. The Sphere’s leader will relish the chance to take a bite out of his old rival. If the Bloc falls, he will sweep down into Mango and begin pushing across the great frozen deserts of Sina, toward the farthest eastern reaches of the Kronstadter empire. But he will likely favor diplomacy if Americo becomes aggressive.

In any case, make sure the heroes understand the possible repercussions if they go up against the Bloc. And give them a way to help ensure a peaceful future for the disintegrated empire and its people. For instance, let them help one of the Lobstermen come to power and oversee the dismantling of the collectivist state.

This isn’t just a way to graft a happy ending onto the scenario. It also stops the Bloc from dominating the rest of the campaign as rioting spirals out of control and renegade secret policemen

and army generals battle it out with government forces in newly created republics. A little bit of cold war politics goes a very long way.

Statistics

Gogol Yobar

Str10; **CR** 9; **HD** 10d8+30; **hp** 110; **Mas** 16; **Init** +6 (+2 **Dex**, +4 **Improved Init**); **Spd.** 30 ft.; **Defense** 20, **touch** 17, **flat-footed** 18 (+5 **class**, +2 **Dex**, +3 **undercover vest**); **BAB** +10; **Grap** +13; **Atk**

+13/+8 **melee** (1d6+5, **cleaver**) or +13/+8 **ranged** (2d4 **Skorpion**; or 2d8 **AK-47**); **SV Fort** +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7; **Str** 17, **Dex** 15, **Con** 16, **Int** 15, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 13; **Rep** +18; **Wealth** +15; **AP** 10.

Skills: **Gather Information** +14, **Intimidate** +14, **Listen** +8, **Move Silently** +8, **Search** +8, **Spot** +4.

Feats: **Armor Proficiency** (light), **Brawl**, **Combat Martial Arts**, **Combat Reflexes**, **Improved Brawl**, **Improved Initiative**, **Iron Will**, **Personal Firearms Proficiency**, **Point Blank Shot**, **Precise Shot**, **Simple Weapon Proficiency**, **Weapon Focus** (**Skorpion**).

Talents (Strong Hero): **Extreme Effort/Improved/Advanced**; **Melee Smash/Improved**.

The Sphere

Most of the nations of the Eastern continent of Sina have fallen under the influence of the Prosperity Sphere, a motley of collectivist states headed by the mammoth nation of Tang. But the empire is much older than it looks. In actuality, the Sphere is simply a modern, mechanized version of the Great Otherworldly Kingdom, an ancient dynastic empire that controlled the continent of Sina for centuries and established trading routes far to the west. Eventually, the two worlds clashed, as Esperantan kingdoms rose to rival the majesty of the East. By the turn of the twentieth century, Tang was divided between Hardcastle, Americo and other powers, its politics and trade manipulated for their profit.

After countless rebellions and purges, and the two great global wars, Tang had its independence once again—but not freedom. When Beloved Chief Executive Dao Hong took the reins of power, he imposed upon the nation a quasi-mystical political philosophy that regulates every aspect of everyday life.

The broad outlines of his ideas (spelled out in *The Beloved Chief Executive's Superior Green Book*) were close to Gogol Yobar's, but Dao was even more ruthless than Yobar in centralizing power and dragging his country into the modern world. His Leap Toward Tomorrow program ended with some hundred million Tang dead and countless others broken in reeducation camps and torture pits.

Now, to battle the privations brought on by the Omega-Ray blast, Dao Hong has initiated a New Glorious Austerity program: fewer rations, higher taxes and harsher penalties for disobedience. For Tang's citizens, it is an incalculable hardship. The vast majority of the empire's people lead hand-to-mouth lives in the countryside, without even the meager technological comforts of the Bloc. And they are constantly menaced by Dao Hong's Clear Thought Brigades, who roam the Sphere sniffing out dissidents.

Like Yobar, Dao Hong has been using the Omega-Ray burst as an opportunity to invade neighboring nations. He quickly snapped up two islands with an ethnic Tangan population: the Hardcastle colony of Kontan, and Daijong, a small, stubbornly independent nation that resisted mainland control for decades. But his prize conquest is Hiko, a nation in the Elastic Ocean that was once the scourge of Sina. During the last great global war, it fought with the fascist powers—and was decisively beaten. Its mighty navy was sent to the ocean floor, its army disbanded and two of its cities reduced to ash and shadows by Americo's newly minted atomic arsenal.

The tiny, demilitarized island proved no match for Dao Hong's forces and was quickly occupied and converted into the dictator's R&D laboratory. Now Hiko is a proving ground for new weapons,

agricultural technology and alternative energy sources. If anyone else on the planet cracks the secrets of the Omega Ray, it will likely be a Hikan scientist.

Hiko's technocratic bent, and its curiosity about Americo's culture, have made it the most modernistic state in Sina. Skyscrapers turn every street into a canyon of flashing advertisements—and its people are hungry for an even more vibrant life. A resistance movement, dedicated to freeing Hiko from Tang control, is growing among the country's young people and intellectuals, backed by aging military men with memories of fascist glory.

The next target for Dao Hong is Mango. (See the Bloc entry for details.) The battle for the peninsular nation will put further strain on the already uneasy alliance between the Sphere and the Bloc. The two spy on each other and undermine each other's plans as often as possible—in fact, the only thing keeping them from outright war is the constant threat of their common enemy, Americo.



The Throne Of The Ancients

Leng, the capital of Tang and one-time seat of the Otherworldly Kingdom, is a breathtaking city of ancient shrines, meticulously tended gardens and sprawling imperial palaces. The looming collectivist architecture introduced by Dao Hong as part of his modernizing efforts seems trivial beside the ancient splendor. The Beloved Chief Executive has his headquarters in the Suzerainty of Heaven, a network of high-gated castles and meditation gardens that overlooks a plaza as large as some Western cities. This vast courtyard is usually filled with military parades, staged demonstrations of affection for the Chief Executive—and, on occasion, feebly attended protests, which are met with pitiless violence.

Many monks, for example, have immolated themselves on the steps of the Suzerainty, in protest of Dao Hong's radical atheism and his bulldozing of traditional morality as bourgeois convention. (Among other things, the Beloved Chief Executive oversees family planning as closely as he does the economy.) Their martyrdom was all the more poignant considering what they spent their lives achieving: Tang's monks have saved countless ancient Sinan relics and scriptures from Dao Hong's bonfires, and practice intense physical discipline that gives them unparalleled skill in the martial arts.

Enter The Dragon

Of all the monks who battle for spiritual freedom in the Sphere, none is more admired and feared than “Funky” Billy Chin. A wiry, tight-lipped do-gooder with a face like a coiled spring, Chin wanders from village to village, dealing out justice at blinding speed to corrupt government officials, wicked landlords and crime bosses. It is said he once wiped out an entire expeditionary force of Dao Hong's military with nothing but his bare hands and sandaled feet.

Between missions of mercy, the itinerant monk is often forced to participate in Dao's secret international martial arts competitions. He has not lost yet—competitors from the farthest reaches of the globe still shudder at the unearthly high-pitched cry and signature rending of T-shirt that preface Chin's attacks. (Chin won his conspicuously Western nickname from an opponent in one of these contests: “Black Belt” Jim Kelly, a martial artist nonpareil.)

“Funky” Billy Chin

Str4/Mart10; CR 13; HD 14d8+28; 110 HP; MAS 15; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; Defense 21, touch 21, flat-footed 18 (+8 class, +3 Dex); BAB +14; Grap +19/+14/+9; Atk +19/+14/+9 melee (flurry of blows +17/+17/+12/+7; damage: unarmed 1d10+7, flying kick 1d10+10, strengthened walking stick, 1d6+7) or +17/+12/+7 ranged; SV +7 Fort, +11 Ref, +6 Will; Str 20, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 11; Rep +2; Wealth +0; AP 15.

Skills: Balance +10, Climb +9, Intimidate +17, Jump +11, Listen +5, Move Silently +20, Tumble +21.

Feats: Advanced Combat Martial Arts, Agile Riposte, Brawl, Combat Martial Arts, Combat Throw, Defensive Martial Arts, Dodge, Improved Combat Martial Arts, Improved Combat Throw, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Spring Attack.

Talents (Strong Hero): Improved Melee Smash, Melee Smash

Talents (Martial Artist): Flurry of Blows, Flying Kick, Iron Fist, Living Weapon

Current Plans

- **Fists of Fury.** Dao Hong is trying every trick he knows—such as pretending to cozy up to Americo to frighten the Bloc—to delay the three-way invasion of Mango. Why? He is trying to create an entirely new army, the fiercest the world has ever known. For years, he has been holding international martial arts competitions in his secret volcano base off the island of Hiko. He lures, or kidnaps, the top combat talent in the world to compete—then forcibly clones the survivors in his Glorious Reproduction Engine. With these duplicates he hopes to create an army of super-tough warriors that will decimate the forces of the Bloc and Americo, and pave the way for a new worldwide Sinan empire. The only stumbling block: “Funky” Billy Chin. The greatest martial artist in the world, Chin has been shanghaied into countless contests—and has escaped every time. (See sidebar “Enter the Dragon” for details.) Dao is obsessed with Chin, and is convinced that he must have the master warrior's genetic code for his plans to go forward.
- **Worse Than Death.** To enforce his sweeping Leap Toward Tomorrow program, Dao Hong often forced enemies of the state to eat the bodies of their murdered friends and relatives as a sign of submission. Now, in the wake of Omega-Ray devastation, Dao is returning to this grotesque trope as a way to stave off mass starvation. The Clear Thought Brigades travel from village to village, collecting the bodies of the recently deceased under the pretext of taking them to the Suzerainty of Heaven for a purifying cremation ceremony. Instead, the corpses are taken to regional processing facilities, where they are reduced to slabs of protein, something like soy in taste and texture. These grisly meals, known as the Beloved Chief Executive's Superior Green Abundance, are then distributed to the villagers who unwittingly supplied the raw materials.
- **Pushing South.** Dao Hong has set his sights on the continent of Agaland, which has been cut off from the rest of the world by natural disaster and is now largely ruled by local warlords. The island, he believes, holds deep reserves of gasoline—crucial to Dao's war effort in Mango. Capturing Agaland would also give him a base for a possible invasion of Swelt, Kish and other points west. He is now preparing a mammoth fleet to sail against the former colony of Hardcastle.
- **Silicon Island.** When the West Coast of Americo cracked off and sank, a groundbreaking new technology was lost with it: the microprocessor. But the scientists of Hiko have recently discovered the silicon chip independently. They have already produced workable minicomputers, and are now figuring out how to use these digital wonders to crack the defenses around Nyet.

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need: if he took a detour to Dao's capital city, how many innocent peasants would be brutalized while he was gone?

The heroes could certainly arrange a head-on collision between the two. For example, the team might bring Chin along to raid a Green Abundance processing plant—then point out that this horror is the culmination of decades of misery Dao has inflicted on his people. The Beloved Chief Executive allows villains to fill the empire—the evil landlords, gangsters and secret policemen Chin battles every day. If Dao is killed, and his army broken, the people can rise up against the bad guys without fear of reprisal.

If the argument wins over Chin, the heroes could join him in an assault on the Suzerainty—or they could carry out a vital side mission while the kung fu master and his monk buddies handle the heavy lifting offscreen. This dovetails with a larger issue: who replaces Dao? Chin, for all his warrior pride, is still a humble monk at heart. He will remain true to his vows of poverty and itinerancy, and refuse to take control of the empire. While Chin destroys the Suzerainty, the heroes might be assigned to shepherd a suitable successor to the capital, such as a charismatic diplomat from Daijong.

As in the Bloc entry, it is vital that the heroes understand the consequences if they don't find a suitable replacement for Dao. Not only will Gogol Yobar launch a strike against the Sinan frontier, massacring hundreds of thousands of innocent people, but a dozen petty dictators overthrown by Dao will start angling for power as well—leading to even more horrors. Meanwhile, many officials in Hardcastle's government are pushing for an invasion to free the former colony of Kontan—not a bad idea in itself, but potentially disastrous if badly timed.

Americo's response to an all-out collapse once again depends on the president. Stanton Spobeck or LeHigh Gort will only send in the military to protect Mango, but will fund and supply insurgents in Hiko, Kontan and Daijong. Quantrill Biscuit will do neither, calling for a round of international talks to assess the situation. Humboldt Suede would love to take control of the Sphere outright, but he doesn't have enough troops in the region. So, once Dao is out of the way, he will send in operatives to infiltrate the Sphere's missile silos and launch ICBMs against the Bloc. Thus he will soften up Yobar's forces but the blame will

fall on the remnants of Dao's government—plus Yobar will likely launch a counterattack, bringing the Sphere to its knees.

Statistics

The Glorious Reproduction Engine

Dao Hong's cloning machine can create a perfect duplicate of a subject from four ounces of flesh and blood. The copies, which take a month to grow in Dao's vast breeding vats, have all of the subject's physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity and Constitution), full ranks in all skills based on those abilities and any physical feats. But their mental ability scores (Charisma, Dexterity and Intelligence) are all flattened out at 10, and they lose the subject's ranks in any skills based on those abilities, as well as any mental feats. In addition, the clones have no memories of their subject's life, personality or allegiances; they are designed to be unswervingly loyal to Dao Hong, and are completely flat of affect, even in the heat of battle.

Dao Hong

Tough10; CR 9; HD 10d10+30; hp 115; Mas 17; Init +0 (+0 Dex); Spd. 30 ft.; Defense 18, touch 15, flat-footed 18 (+5 class, +0 Dex, +3 undercover vest); BAB +7; Grap +9; Atk +9/+4 melee (1d6+2 club or 1d4+2, crit 19/20, unarmed) or +6/+1 ranged (2d6, Beretta 92F); SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 15, Dex 11, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 14; Rep +18; Wealth +15; AP 10.

Skills: Diplomacy +6, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (history) +8, Listen +8, Search +4, Sense Motive +16, Spot +7.

Feats: Alertness, Brawl, Combat Martial Arts, Defensive Martial Arts, Improved Brawl, Improved Combat Martial Arts, Improved Knockout Punch, Iron Will, Knockout Punch, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Talents (Tough Hero): Damage Reduction/1, Remain Conscious, Robust, Second Wind, Stamina

Fedo Malese and the Consortium

For years, visionary strongman Fedo Malese had been calling for a revolution: using the Consortium's energy leverage to bring the world to its knees, and its petrodollars to recreate the glories of the fallen Maddamaran empire. His partners in the syndicate laughed him off—until August 9, 1974. Malese saw the Omega-Ray blast—which one of his own saboteurs had brought about—as a sign from the heavens urging him to take bold action. Now, after a series of invasions and gunpoint diplomatic sessions, Malese has turned the Consortium into a political entity as well as a commercial one, with himself at the head. His goal: to crush the hated nation of Aleph once and for all, and gain possession of the holy city of Tasmadar. According to prophecy, or at least Malese's interpretation of it, he has been called to retake the holy city—then wipe it off the face of the Earth in a ceremony that will purify the planet and make him king of the world.

History

The sweeping deserts of Maddamar are home to ancient peoples bounded by modern, largely arbitrary national borders. Maddamar

once fielded a sprawling empire that surpassed the kingdoms of Esperanto. But it failed to match Esperanto's industrial growth, and its prestige shrank over the centuries until it was divided among the great powers as a nest of client states.

Then, after the last great global war, Maddamar began to regain its place on the world stage—thanks to its vast reserves of petroleum. Linked together in a commercial syndicate called the Consortium, the nations of the region held tremendous power over the price of energy across the globe. Most of the petrodollars ended up in the pockets of despots and their extended families. But they sprinkled just enough cash down to the public to keep dissent at a simmer.

Everything seemed well in hand. But as the 1960s drew to a close, Fedo Malese was having visions of the end. A political revolutionary who had just overthrown a Consortium government, Malese joined the ruling council full of radical ideas—and quickly made himself a laughingstock. His thoroughly Westernized peers sneered at his personal philosophy, a hodgepodge of collectivist dialectic, fascist paganism and ethnic nationalism.

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Around The Empire

The capital of the oil empire is Fedo Malese's home country, Cartagh, on the northern shores of Swelt. The streets are heavily patrolled by Malese's police (secret and overt) and plastered with flattering representations of the revolutionary leader. For a seat of power, it has surprisingly little to offer its citizens. Oil money provides common people with subsidized food, clothing and other necessities. Beyond that, they must scrape together spending money by working sales jobs in state-run bazaars or menial positions in oil fields. Most of the city's skilled labor is imported; the locals Malese sends abroad to learn engineering skills have an embarrassing tendency to defect.

Much more cosmopolitan, and less overtly repressive, is Taza, the Consortium's capital of art and culture. Most of the region's musicians, poets and intellectuals live in Taza's narrow streets and haunt its aromatic cafés, drawing inspiration from the epochal icons just outside town: the Obelisks of the Elders. Standing hundreds of feet high, these elaborate burial markers testify to the grandeur of the vanished Maddamaran empire—and its close connection to lost Nagathara. The crypts and museums of Taza are home to countless artifacts of the legendary island state, and Nagathrite bloodlines are common here.

By this time, the cold war powers were thoroughly exhausted by Maddamaran affairs. They were wary of Malese, but relaxed when he began ratcheting up the price of petrol: his lunatic threats were clearly just a way to leverage a few more dollars per barrel. In the end, they figured, he could be bought off like all the rest. So they publicly welcomed Malese's coup as a way of stabilizing the region, and went back to making their own power grabs and burying their dead.

Now, out of earshot of the foreign press, Malese is making darker declarations. His destiny is driving him and his empire toward one last great war, one that will give the Maddamarans kingship over the entire world. According to Abednego Trestle's timeline—or at least Malese's translation of it—the forces of evil are on the wing as never before. The only way to purify the planet is to sacrifice the holy city of Tasmadar in an elaborate ritual. This will not only vanquish the legions of darkness but restore Maddamar to its rightful spot as a world-straddling empire—with Malese at the head.

Right now, the city is Aleph's. But Malese has a foolproof plan for taking it.

Current Plans

- **The Invasion.** How will Fedo Malese lay siege to Aleph? He has learned from the mistakes of his predecessors, who all launched outright attacks on the hated nation and wound up darkening the deserts with their blood. Instead, Malese will begin his campaign from the inside. He has made a deal with the expatriate fascists in Suramerico, whose cause he has long admired and whose rhetoric he has lately aped, to supply him with dozens of warrior androids. He will send these undercover agents into Aleph disguised as tourists, businesspeople and diplomats. When all are in place, they will begin a simultaneous assault on the nation's defenses, using their superhuman endurance to tear apart jet fighters, tanks and battalion after battalion of Alephites. Then, and only then, will Malese send in his troops to mop up and occupy. From there, he will use ancient Maddamaran texts, and Aleph's small complement of nuclear weapons, to perform his purification ritual—as soon as possible.
- **Monkey Wrenches.** The saboteur in Alamo was just the beginning. Malese's spies and turncoats have infiltrated every major laboratory and power plant in the world to snoop on alternative-energy efforts. The network is so extensive that Malese now knows at least the entry-level secrets of all the bad guys outlined in this chapter. As their dark designs play out, Malese may seek a partnership with them to further the ends

of Maddamar—or throw them off kilter with an unexpected act of sabotage.

- **The Last Flight.** The royalty of Maddamar may be playing along with Fedo Malese's designs, but they're taking no chances in case he fails. All of the elite are busily siphoning money from their national coffers and preparing for an escape to friendly nations in the West. Malese will immediately launch an embargo against any nation that gives them shelter—destabilizing the world even further.

Adventure Hooks

Rumors of War. Obviously, the biggest hook for Fedo Malese is the planned attack on Aleph, which the heroes could stumble across in any number of ways.

- A pair of tourists bound for Aleph are found dead in Fun City, but security forces at the airfield in Tasmadar say the two (actually android doubles) got off their plane safe and sound.
- While snooping on a fascist laboratory, the heroes find a letter from the Maddamaran consulate asking about delays in the shipment of "Parts."
- An Alephite agent, riddled with gunshot wounds, struggles to the heroes' doorstep, tells them he has learned the date of the great invasion—then, without elaborating, dies. (Indeed, countless third parties could give the heroes a clue about the impending siege, from the Desert Clarion to a member of the former royalty who has escaped to the West.)

The Lost City. If you choose to have Malese complete his invasion, you might have the heroes learn about his plans for destroying Tasmadar.

- An ancient Maddamaran manuscript—detailing the purification ritual—vanishes from a local university library.
- An atomic scientist is blackmailed into helping Malese track down, and get control of, Aleph's nuclear arsenal.

Sniffing Out Spies. The team could also go up against agents of the Consortium who are stealing or sabotaging energy secrets.

- The heroes find someone at their headquarters is stealing blueprints and handing them off to the Maddamaran consulate.
- A trusted GM character turns out to be a turncoat working for Malese.
- Research labs across the country are struck by a series of suspicious industrial accidents.
- A Consortium agent makes a daring helicopter raid on Alamo, spiriting away any number of valuable blueprints and secret

If your campaign plays out this way, remember that the other world powers will certainly try to take advantage of the situation. Gogol Yobar and Dao Hong will test the new ruler—at the negotiating table if not on the battlefield—to gauge her capabilities. Americo will also push for better terms on oil, and if Humboldt Suede is in charge, he will quietly supply insurgency movements across the region with plans for nuclear weapons. He, too, wants Aleph wiped off the map, to destroy its catalog of relics, artifacts and sacred sites.

Talents (Strong Hero): Extreme Effort/Improved/Advanced, Melee Smash/Improved

Chapter Five: Looking Down on Creation

As we saw in **Chapter Four**, this game world asks you to keep a lot of balls in the air.

This chapter gives you some ideas on organizing all the bad guys and their plans, and touches on some other big topics that will come up during your campaign.

How Should I Run This Game?

Damnation Decade will work in any number of styles, from goofy to grim and back again. The movies listed in the next chapter are a good point of reference for working out the tone of the game. For instance, you might run a creepy, fairly straight-faced investigative campaign in the style of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. In this approach, you don't make much hay out of the decade's wacky fashions and jive talk. Instead, you riff on the darker currents of the culture, such as drug-fueled paranoia and the rise of sinister self-help cults.

Then again, you could go the *Avenging Disco Godfather* route and crank up the campiness. Everyone wears platform shoes with goldfish in them. The Dervos have roller discos on board their spaceships. Even the combat is lighthearted, with lots of faux kung fu moves and Charisma-based attacks.

Somewhere in the middle is the deadpan-but-clueless style of *Soylent Green* and *Rollerball*. In this approach, the game world is generally straight-ahead and "realistic," but it's dotted with goofy attitudes and inventions that clearly mark it out as the seventies (conversation pits, spherical TVs, key parties). All that filigree isn't central to the campaign, but the tone would change dramatically if it weren't there.

How Do I Handle the Patron?

Probably the easiest way to structure your campaign is to give your heroes a "Charlie" (as in "Angels"): a wealthy employer who signs the checks and brings in leads for new adventures. So who is this patron? What motivates her? And what is she capable of?

Don't make the patron a focal point of the campaign. In other words, take a tip from Charlie and have the boss be a distant, mysterious figure who hands the heroes a file at the start of the game, then vanishes until the job is over. The heroes have lots to do in a very limited time, and they shouldn't have to wonder too much about what their employer is up to.

Make the patron's motivations transparent: she is an industrialist or celebrity who has become obsessed with the writings of Abednego Trestle, and feels she must do her part to prevent the end of the world. You might also give her some personal stake in the matter. She was horribly disfigured by the Dervos, say, or lost a family member to rampaging mutants in the Southwest.

Of course, you could always introduce a characteristically seventies downer plot twist, and have the patron betray the team (or, indeed, have the patron represent one of the enemy powers). But the best idea is to make the patron a "white hat" for the heroes—the one contact they know they can rely on in a world of liars and backstabbers.

The patron should have extensive resources and contacts, but not unlimited ones. Assume that the boss is at least a 10th-level Executive or Personality (such as Herman Purvis)—or possibly even a Fightin' Acolyte who has risen through the ranks of his order and can draw on church resources to fund adventures. The patron can do anything within the limits of those advanced classes: tap the money and manpower of a corporation; reach out to contacts in business, government and law enforcement; order up vehicles, weapons and high-tech gear at a moment's notice.

But don't make the patron a Get Out of Jail Free card. If the heroes are in a tight spot, they should figure out a solution on their own—not phone in an order for lawyers, guns and money. At the same time, the heroes should be able to use the patron's resources to answer some questions that are over their head. For instance, if they capture a piece of Omega-Ray hardware, and the scientist who could have explained it is dead, they should be able to turn to kindly Dr. Miller in the patron's research division. Or if they have to disarm a nuclear warhead in half an hour, and nobody on the team has ranks in the right skills, they could certainly phone headquarters and get somebody to talk them through the task.

How Much Leeway Should the Heroes Have?

In most cases, the heroes will be battling enemies who aren't human. If they end up massacring a load of Dervos, for instance, the authorities will be more interested in keeping a lid on the news than charging the heroes with murder. But as some scenarios play out—such as those involving Humboldt Suede and Theramin Hunker—the heroes will undoubtedly kill some people. Should they be able to do this with impunity?

It depends on the tone of your campaign. If you're running the most funky and fabulous game of all time, you probably don't need to have the cops show up every time a demon-worshipping assassin gets blown away. If, however, you're running something tense and paranoid in the style of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (the seventies remake, of course) or *Dirty Harry*, the heroes should be looking over their shoulder every time they cross a legal or moral line.

An easy compromise is to give them a contact in law enforcement who knows what they're up against and covers for them when things get sticky. (If one of the heroes on your team is a cop or even a Middleman, you're all set.) Another solution, touched on in **Chapter Four**, is to have the heroes make peace with the law by handing over vital information on one or more of the big bad guys. The government big shots will recognize that the heroes can be a valuable asset—even if they don't trust the team entirely—so they give the group immunity for any crimes they commit in defense of the Earth.



On the other hand, you could decide to keep the team in constant peril, establishing up front that they're operating one step ahead of the law. In practice, this means that they can do whatever they want, but they have to be wary about staying in one town too long, they have to use assumed names, they have to switch license plates and repaint the van every few days. If they work smart, law enforcement will remain nothing more than a threat in the background. If they get careless, they will face the consequences. In short, they're in the same position as *The Fugitive* or *The A-Team*. (*The Incredible Hulk* is a better match for the era, of course, but Dr. Banner had the media on his back, not Johnny Law.)

How Do I Keep the Heroes on Target?

In fiction, tension between characters makes for great storytelling. In a roleplaying session, if you have one hero who's a maverick cop and another who's a smash-the-system Militant, it can make for endless arguments that stall the game and have the other heroes watching the clock. Even if the character types aren't oil and water, they might be disparate enough to make things complicated. Why exactly is an Omegaball player going out on adventures with a scientist, a priest and a Special Forces soldier?

In **Chapter Two**, we gave players some advice for handling their characters' motivation: however else they roleplay, they should assume their character recognizes the threat to the planet and wants to stop it. Likewise, even loners should realize that the team is best venue for their efforts—if for no other reason than Abednego Trestle predicted it. Failing that, the heroes should give their characters some personal stake in the campaign: money, glory, what have you.

The best course of action is to talk all this out with your players beforehand. Tell them they should go into the game ready to make two leaps of faith: saving the world and sticking with the party. From there, they can do whatever they want with their characters. You might gently enforce that line by asking the "peacemaker" in your group to be party leader, as well as putting polar-opposite party members in situations where they conspicuously help each other out. ("You may be a street punk and a lousy Red—but you're OK in my book!")

Of course, if your group wants to run a tense, combative game where it takes many sessions for them to trust each other (if they ever do), then by all means go for it. Just be aware that a little of that goes a very long way, and can seriously slow down a game.

How Do I Handle Trestle?

Abednego Trestle, like the Omega Ray, is intended to be a plot device. His prophecies are a convenient motivation for the heroes to stick together and stay on target: the team knows that the world will end unless they keep fighting because Trestle says so, and he's been right about so much else up to now.

For instance, if you were stuck for a good opening for an adventure, or desperately wanted to call the heroes' attention to a clue, you could simply have your Trestle expert tell the team, "These kidnappings in the paper sound an awful lot like something in quatrain 567. I'd check it out if I were you."

Of course, the prophecies aren't meant to replace solid storytelling, or to give the heroes an easy escape from investigative legwork—

just to help out when you're stuck for ideas. But what if the heroes start abusing the privilege, and constantly turn to Trestle for hints and tips? Don't worry—you're still in control. They still have to rely on you to convey the information in the quatrains. That means you can control the flow of hints and visions—and can point the heroes in any direction that you want.

That's why this book doesn't go into detail about the content of Trestle's predictions: they're intended to fit the twists and emphases of your campaign, not the other way around.

Do I Need to Include Everything?

Absolutely not. Focus on any of the villains you want, and leave out any that don't interest you. The great prophet can mention as many or as few bad guys as you'd like. If you decide to limit the number, however, it's probably a good idea not to categorically rule out any other enemy factions, in case you want to start a new campaign or take the existing one in a new direction.

Probably the easiest way to run a campaign with just one or two big villains (while still keeping the overall flavor of the setting) is to reduce the other bad guys to the level of "Wandering Monsters": they show up occasionally to harass the heroes or throw them a curveball, but don't have any big plans for taking over or destroying the world. You might, for example, say that the Dervos are the last of their race, attacking Earth just for kicks. Or just a handful of Kreealak survived the long winter, and their only goal is to cause mischief among the hated human race before they die off. Likewise, Humboldt Suede might not be destined to end the world; he could simply want to spread the Church of the Damned, or peddle his subliminal-seduction movies and backwards-masked music to a broader market.

Another approach: keep the secondary threats at their original level of menace, but assume that the authorities have things in hand. So, Stanton Spobeck's forces are gaining ground against the Brotherhood, and all that's left for the heroes are mop-up operations or the occasional bit of espionage (recovering a kidnapped scientist, rescuing Terrapin Vole, etc.). Or perhaps the good guys are on the verge of stopping the villain in question, and just need the heroes' help for the final push, such as a daring raid to assassinate Ampersand Vole. Using these approaches, you could probably wreck a conspiracy in a session or two.

What if I Want to Use Them All?

Go sequentially. If you try to crosscut between ten different plots and counterplots, the heroes—and you—will get confused very quickly. At most, juggle one or two at a time, and only do that with bad guys who dovetail naturally, such as Humboldt Suede and the Monday Men, or the Dervos and Nature Gone Wild. For example, while investigating the Son of the Damned, the heroes might stumble across a Monday Man who's digging for dirt to scuttle Suede's presidential campaign. Or an expedition to stop a rampaging pack of Sasquatch might lead the heroes to a Dervos survey team hidden in the hills.

Then, when one or more story lines are about to wrap up, drop a clue identifying the next set of bad guys. For instance, one of the devil-worshippers on Suede's staff might try to buy his life by warning the heroes about the Dervos. Or one of the Monday Men might try to stay out of prison by telling the heroes what he knows about Nyet. If that routine gets tired, you could always just let Abednego Trestle point the heroes toward the next assignment.

What Do the Bad Guys Know About Each Other?

Essentially, as much or as little as you want. Some of the villains have extensive spy networks, and some have knowledge of the other conspiracies built into their background. But you could easily tweak all that and not affect the substance of the game. Let's say the heroes capture Fedo Malese, and they know all about the snoops he has placed around the world. The team figures it has a golden opportunity to pump the dictator for information about the other factions of bad guys. Since this could derail the game, you might decide that Malese's moles only know about scientific secrets and political intrigue, not otherworldly schemes. (Or he might just crack his poisoned tooth before he says anything too revealing.)

Same with the Monday Men: if your team cracks Naught, you might decide that its data banks have vast information on the Bloc and Sphere, but almost nothing on the supernatural threats (apart from Ampersand Vole, of course, who was under heavy surveillance).

On the other hand, you could use a huge trove of secrets as the jumping-off point of your campaign. Let's say the heroes are disparate types who get trapped by a Brotherhood assault, and band together to battle their way to freedom. On the way out of town, they discover a dead Zassat agent who's carrying a dossier on all the villains working their voodoo on the world. They realize they're in a fight that's much bigger than just a handful of zombies—so they decide to rise to the challenge and save the planet.

Do I Need the Doomsday Clock?

Not necessarily. If you'd rather just run an open-ended investigative campaign, or a series of isolated adventures, that's fine. Instead of having Abednego Trestle set a specific date for the end of the world, have him warn readers more generally that signs and portents are swirling, and no good will come of them. But be sure to tell your heroes that you're taking this approach at the start of the game, since the New Year's Eve deadline features prominently in their section of the book.

What Happens if the Players Read the GM's Section?

Inevitably, some or all of the secrets in this part of the book are going to leak to your players. They might even start the game knowing as much as you do about the big picture.

One way to approach the problem is to let the players take on roles where they have been given extensive background information about the bad guys. They might be government agents or a super-soldier strike team financed by a wealthy patron who has spent millions accumulating firsthand reports of the otherworldly. In these types of games, the challenge isn't necessarily figuring out secrets or piecing together connections but rather overcoming obstacles and hunting down the villains at the top of the heap—while the clock is running.

So, for instance, the heroes wouldn't have to spend Act One of an adventure gathering clues to learn that Humboldt Suede is the Son of the Damned. They would know that up front, and could immediately set about getting the Daggers of Aleph.



Another possibility: just proceed as normal. Even if the players have read all the secrets in this section, they still won't know which bad guy is lurking in the shadows of a specific adventure. Beyond that, even if they realize early on that the big blue creatures in the woods are Nagathrite, they still have to find a way to defeat the old masters—and solve whatever secondary mysteries you've cooked up.

Who Should Win the Presidential Election?

For the good of the planet, the best-case scenario would have Spobeck's vice president, LeHigh Gort (no relation), ending up in charge of the country. He has no hidden agenda, and won't cause the end of the world. If the Bloc, Sphere or Consortium collapse, or even show inordinate weakness, he'll take sensible measures.

For the good of your campaign, however, almost any of the candidates present interesting possibilities. Under Spobeck, radicals will start vanishing like flies and Naught will ramp up his plans to turn the world into one big panopticon. If Biscuit takes the day, he will accede to basically anything the Council of Nations and Man Last demand. To enforce all those new diktats, he will create an enforcement squad—staffed by Council peacekeepers—to rival the Monday Men. Suede, meanwhile, will create as much sensual chaos as he can at home (legalizing drugs, mandating pornography, etc.) and bring the world to the brink of nuclear war abroad. On New Year's Eve, 1979, everything goes boom.

During the campaign, Suede and Spobeck will do whatever they can to undermine their opponents—sniffing out secrets, planting incriminating evidence, rigging vote machines and registering the dead. (Biscuit will rise above all that, but his allies won't.) And after the results are tallied, the losers will fight rearguard actions. Biscuit, his pride wounded, will use whatever political pull he has to push his allies' agenda. Suede will try to have the votes thrown out on the grounds that Spobeck cheated, and call for a new contest: Suede vs. Biscuit. Spobeck, of course, has the Monday Men: even if he's kicked out of office, he and Naught will continue fighting their vigilante war to restore law and order to Americo.

Remember that the outcome of all this is really up to you and your players, and should fit the flow of your campaign. If you don't want to focus on the election, and the bad guys involved in it, keep it in the background of your sessions—a kind of running gag that GM characters keep mentioning. Then figure out, for your purposes, which villain has the most potential in the Octagonal Office. (That might be a good adventure to spring on the heroes as the climax of a campaign: they've walloped space aliens, dinosaur men, androids...but now they've only got six hours to stab the president with these knives nobody's ever heard of.)

What Happens if the Heroes Fail?

Everybody blows rolls. Everybody misses clues, even if you give them the broadest hints imaginable. Everybody can get so far off course that you can't set them on the right path without an intrusive GM fiat.

So, what if the heroes botch the big finale, even after you've given them every break and bonus you can think of—and the world, by all rights, has to come to an end?

There are two basic approaches. Either tack on one final assignment that lets them redeem themselves and stop the apocalypse—or play things out and let them deal with the consequences. (Actually, those are the two approaches if you want to keep playing. If everyone has had their fill of the game, you could simply have the bad guys win and end the campaign on a huge downer. This is the seventies, after all!)

If you want to give the heroes one last shot at saving the world, you might simply insert a technological glitch between the bad guys and their goal. Let's say the heroes storm Humboldt Suede's inner sanctum, but can't hit him to save their lives. So His Satanic Majesty has a fine "Witness the glory of the Damned!" moment and pushes the Big Red Button.

End of the world, right? Maybe, maybe not. If you were in a generous mood, you might say that a freak electrical storm has cut off the power supply to the missile silos. You might try the same approach if the heroes fall just short of killing Ampersand Vole before he fires up his generator; likewise Fulton Gort and his extermination centers. The heroes should realize they've been given a second chance and can either renew their attack against the big bad guy or try to rush to the source of the problem (say, a balky power plant) before the bad guy's agents can get the wheels grinding again.

Then there's a riskier option: call in the Old God. With all the focus on Abednego Trestle, the heroes may forget a very important distinction: the bad guys are trying to end the world prematurely. Not even Trestle knew when the world was supposed to end—the date the Old God had penciled into his daily planner. And it's doubtful that the Big Guy would let anything as piddling as a swarm of aliens or a horde of hellions throw off his schedule.

So, if one or more of the heroes is a Fightin' Acolyte (or at least a Believer) and the Man Upstairs has been a running theme in your campaign, you might be able to drop in a divine messenger who tells the heroes: "The missiles are flying—but if you perform the rare and dangerous Rite of Ultimate Justification at mission control in the next twenty minutes, all the bombs will change course and head off into space." On the other hand, if your campaign has steered clear of religion, this approach might seem like the worst kind of *deus ex machina*.

The Old God also presents lots of possibilities if you decide to end the world. Let's say Humboldt Suede starts a nuclear winter, or the android death factories grind to life and humanity is powerless to resist, or the Nagathrite start broadcasting hypnotic commands from the rooftops, or legions of Dervos start swarming across the planet, or Ampersand Vole starts mutating whole cities at once, or the Kreelak head back in time and chuck the human race into the dustbin of history.

While the heroes are scrambling to stay alive, one of them has a vision that tells them all is not lost. They must find a sacred artifact of incomparable power (such as a drinking cup used by an avatar of the Old God, or the tree under which he meditated and received enlightenment) and launch it into the heart of the enemy's war machine. It might cost the team their lives, but their sacrifice will save the world and set history back on track.

On the other hand, you could also just swing your campaign into gritty postapocalyptic mode, with the heroes battling mutant biker gangs and rallying the remnants of the human race to rebuild civilization. Those possibilities will be covered in the forthcoming sequels to this game, *Fun City Warriors: 1990 and Damnation Decade 3-D: Adventures in the Forbidden Zone*.

Appendix I: Inspirations

In the 1970s, the genre became more diagnostic and didactic than ever before. With the world reeling from riot, revolution and war, and the best minds of the time predicting an even uglier future, sci-fi films became lunatic prophets, hammering audiences with social criticism and visions of a godless apocalypse. In other words, souped-up versions of the high-fiber fare that mainstream movies were dishing out at the time.

Here's a look at some of the sci-fi films that inspired this game, and some thoughts on how they can help you run a campaign. Also included are some of the best mainstream flicks of the time, for lessons in seventies manners and mores—and a general funky good time.

The Andromeda Strain

(Robert Wise, 1971)

A good thumbnail of what seventies Field Scientists might look like, and the kinds of mysteries they would face. The climactic countdown scene is just begging to be played out in combat rounds.

A Boy and His Dog

(L.Q. Jones, 1975)

Interesting for its take on psychic powers and postapocalyptic mores. An iconic cult movie but uncomfortable viewing.

The Boys From Brazil

(Franklin J. Schaffner, 1978)

Along with *Marathon Man* (John Schlesinger, 1976), the best of the “Nazis walk among us” crowd. *Boys* is a great guide for handling Suramerican intrigue.

Capricorn One

(Peter Hyams, 1978)

Stanton Spobeck's space program laid bare. Also includes the ultimate 1970s cast: Elliott Gould, Brenda Vaccaro, James Brolin, Hal Holbrook, Karen Black, Telly Savalas and O.J. Simpson. Remember: these wonderful schlubs are what your heroes will look like—not the skate-punk techno-hipsters who dominate most gaming handbooks these days.

Carrie

(Brian De Palma, 1976)

A huge inspiration for this game's treatment of psychic phenomena. See also *Eyes of Laura Mars* (Irvin Kershner, 1978) and *Escape to Witch Mountain* (John Hough, 1975).

A Clockwork Orange

(Stanley Kubrick, 1971)

A useful look at the social disintegration in the nation of Hardcastle as it tries to hold off the Bloc. On the whole, gross.

Colossus: The Forbin Project

(Joseph Sargent, 1970)

Now *that's* what computers are supposed to be: a room-size body and world-class ambition.

Damnation Alley

(Jack Smight, 1977)

Ahem. This sturdy picaresque gives a good idea of life in the mutant-haunted Southwest and could serve as a template for cross-country adventures. *Mad Max* (George Miller, 1979) and its sequels are also good on this score (and, of course, provide a peek at conditions in the island nation of Agaland).

Dark Star

(John Carpenter, 1974)

If Americo ever sends crews into deep space, they will look exactly like this: a bunch of slackers who hate each other's guts. Viva Boiler!

Dawn of the Dead

(George A. Romero, 1978)

As scary and hilarious as real life. Romero's Pittsburgh is what most cities overrun by the Brotherhood look like.

Enter the Dragon

(Robert Clouse, 1973)

The badass to end all badasses. Bruce Lee and his buddies are models for 1970s Martial Artists: fast, funky and fearless. See also countless others, including *Black Belt Jones* (Robert Clouse, 1974) and *Fists of Fury* (Wei Lo, 1971).

The Exorcist

(William Friedkin, 1973)

An absolutely perfect take on traditional religion in an ambivalent time. For a more specific look at the King of the Damned, *The Omen* (Richard Donner, 1976) and its cousins are a great resource. Darren McGavin's TV series *The Night Stalker* is always good for a supernatural laugh, as is *Land of the Lost*, a critical inspiration for this game's largely implausible prehistory.

The Final Programme

(Robert Fuest, 1973)

A groovy movie about the end of the world. Lots of mystical nonsense, half-explained science and A-bombs going off across the planet. And don't miss the trippy set design, which makes the future look like a psychedelic pinball machine.

The French Connection

(William Friedkin, 1971)

Gene Hackman's Popeye Doyle is the ultimate *Damnation Decade* hero: driven to do right in a world without a moral compass. Plus one of the best car chases in movie history—essential viewing for Drivers. See also the automotive classics *The Driver* (Walter Hill, 1978), *The Gauntlet* (Clint Eastwood, 1977) and *The Seven-Ups* (Philip D'Antoni, 1973). (*Bullitt*, released in 1968, just misses the cut.) For more maverick-cop action, you can't go wrong with the many moods of Dirty Harry. If you like your detectives a little more subtle, check out Peter Falk's deathless Columbo.

In Search of the Historic Jesus

(Henning Schellerup, 1979)

In Search of Noah's Ark

(James L. Conway, 1976)

A mother lode of ideas for how to present sacred relics (and, indeed, religion) in a world that is giving up on its traditional beliefs: make the subject seem as weird and alien to everyday human experience as possible. In the mind-set of the times, the mysteries of religion are reduced to the level of “the unexplained,” like crystal skulls, ancient astronauts and the Hope Diamond. For these and other oddities see the Leonard Nimoy television series *In Search Of*—a direct inspiration, obviously, for *Beyond the Barrier With Herman Purvis*.

Invasion of the Body Snatchers

(Philip Kaufman, 1978)

Nails the creepiness of 1970s self-help culture perfectly. Forget the legendary Vulcan: this is the role of Nimoy's career, and maybe Jeff Goldblum's too. The movie is also a great source for Psychobabble lingo, and a dead-on model for the wheels-within-wheels structure of investigative adventures. For even freakier aliens, see *Laserblast* (Michael Rae, 1978).

Jaws

(Steven Spielberg, 1975)

Shows how to deploy natural horrors with tension, wit and solid character development. See also any number of others, including *The Deep* (Peter Yates, 1977), *Frogs* (George McCowan, 1972), *Empire of the Ants* (Bert I. Gordon, 1977), *Night of the Lepus* (William F. Claxton, 1972) featuring DeForest Kelley fighting a bunch of mutant rabbits, *Prophecy* (John Frankenheimer, 1979) and *The Swarm* (Irwin Allen, 1978).

Logan's Run

(Michael Anderson, 1976)

The most fabulous future ever. This is the society that will grow out of the ruins if the heroes don't save the world, with Naught or Nyet playing the big Mommy mainframe. The Monday Men, of course, eventually turn into Michael York and pals.

The Man Who Fell to Earth

(Nicolas Roeg, 1976)

Starring David Bowie as himself.

The Omega Man

(Boris Sagal, 1971)

Charlton Heston is the perfect Survivalist—the last of his kind, a bulwark against the chaos of the new era, a collector of artifacts and memories. The bad guys, meanwhile, are a fine template for the Brotherhood mutants: flower-power fascists who want to corrupt every last vestige of the old world.

The Poseidon Adventure

(Ronald Neame, 1972)

Stuck for an adventure idea? Trap the heroes in a disaster movie. This film is a textbook on how to ratchet up skill tests and character conflicts while the clock is ticking. Once again, Gene Hackman provides an archetype for a *Damnation Decade* hero: a tough, brainy cleric who leads a party with diverse skills

through any number of hardships. See also *Earthquake* (Mark Robson, 1974), *Meteor* (Ronald Neame, 1979), *The Towering Inferno* (Irwin Allen/John Guillermin, 1974) and about five thousand others.

Quintet

(Robert Altman, 1979)

If you see only one Altman movie about Paul Newman hunting seals and playing oddball board games after the apocalypse, this is the one to go with.

Rollerball

(Norman Jewison, 1975)

James Caan and his buddies are archetypal Strong and Tough Heroes in a funky future—and off to the side you'll find baffled Techies and a Delphic mainframe. Not to mention the eponymous sport, which was, of course, a big inspiration for Omegaball.

Shaft

(Gordon Parks, 1971)

In a decade obsessed with ethnic identity, Richard Roundtree was the archetype of a race-conscious hero. See also *Avenging Disco Godfather* (J. Robert Wagoner, 1979), *Foxy Brown* (Jack Hill, 1974) and *Superfly* (Gordon Parks, 1972), as well as less-obvious ethnic entries like *Saturday Night Fever* (John Badham, 1977) and *King of the Gypsies* (Frank Pierson, 1978).

Silent Running

(Douglas Trumbull, 1972)

A good crash course in the enviro-doom mind-set, with neat robots besides. The soundtrack is not a plus.

Sleeper

(Woody Allen, 1973)

Maybe the most enjoyable of all of these movies. It hits every last mark in the genre, right down to the architecture and artifacts, and is easily one of Allen's funniest films. For other good comedic takes on a cataclysmic future, see *Americathon* (Neal Israel, 1979) and Richard Benjamin's sublime television series *Quark*.

Smokey and the Bandit

(Hal Needham, 1977)

Trucker culture in a nutshell. See also the various iterations of *Every Which Way but Loose* (James Fargo, 1978), as well as the television series *B.J. and the Bear*, featuring a pre-*TekWar* Greg Evigan and a monkey in overalls. (*Cannonball Run*, released in 1981, just misses the cut.)

Soylent Green

(Richard Fleischer, 1973)

Creates a pitch-perfect atmosphere of dwindling religion, corporate malfeasance and faltering conscience. Ignore the dopey, dated misogyny and enjoy Charlton Heston playing wildly against type.

Star Wars

(George Lucas, 1977)

A cult hit that got buried by *The Goodbye Girl* at the box office. Hard to find on DVD, but it occasionally makes the rounds on the midnight-movie circuit.

The Taking of Pelham One Two Three

(Joseph Sargent, 1974)

You'll never see a truer picture of New York in the 1970s: a city held together by graffiti and pigeon droppings, overrun by thugs and managed by a mayor who's afraid to show his face in public. Hilarious, fast-paced, perfectly acted. Walter Matthau and Robert Shaw are kings among men. For more on Fun City, see *Dog Day Afternoon* (Sidney Lumet, 1975), *Klute* (Alan J. Pakula, 1971) and *Serpico* (Sidney Lumet, 1973). (*Prince of the City*, which is almost a sequel to *Serpico*—same corruption investigations, but a few years further on—came out in 1981, so just misses the cut.)

The Three Days of the Condor

(Sydney Pollack, 1975)

The gold standard for stories about government intelligence services gone mad. Anyone who tangles with the Monday Men will end up getting the Robert Redford treatment. For big-scale corporate conspiracies, check out *The Parallax View* (Alan J. Pakula, 1974), and for a closer look inside the heads of crazed loners, there's the old standby *Taxi Driver* (Martin Scorsese, 1976).

Two-Lane Blacktop

(Monte Hellman, 1971)

Big-time road-movie existentialism, with James Taylor, Dennis Wilson and the man of the century, Warren Oates. Good viewing for tonal purposes but probably not the best story to adapt for a roleplaying game. Like the man said, "This is competition! I got no time for sidetracks."

The Warriors

(Walter Hill, 1979)

Come out and play.

Westworld

(Michael Crichton, 1973)

All you need to know about the operation and proclivities of androids. See also the sequel, *Futureworld* (Richard T. Heffron, 1976), as well as the epochal television series *The Six Million Dollar Man* and *The Bionic Woman*.

Who?

(Jack Gold, 1973)

Tagline: "The kill machine with the megaton mind." A good source of ideas for running a sci-fi cold war adventure.

Zardoz

(John Boorman, 1974)

Immensely lovable, even if it doesn't really fit the *Damnation Decade* world.

Read More About It!

As you can tell from the quotations throughout the book, the work of novelist and philosopher Walker Percy had a big



influence on this game world. Everything he wrote is worth reading, but his 1971 novel *Love in the Ruins* is the most useful for our purposes here. As the world falls to pieces, Percy's cranky hero invents a machine that can stabilize the human soul and just might save the world. But first he has to juggle his love life, solve the mysteries of race, religion and national identity, and figure out who's been trying to kill him all week.

Meanwhile, the work of Philip K. Dick just gets better with time. In the 1960s he created many of the sci-fi tropes we take as commonplace today, such as "realer than real" virtual-reality nightmares and memory manipulation. As with Percy, just about all of Dick's novels are worth reading. Compact and comical, they're like nothing else in the genre, with schlubby heroes, talking appliances and omnipotent, but eminently sympathetic, alien gods. Most useful for source material are *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* (our hero battles a villainous corporate boss with a terrible secret) and the autobiographical *Valis* (on a fateful day in 1974, an ordinary man gets a message from God, who turns out to be a satellite).

Finally, for sociological notes, consult the over-titled but incisive *How We Got Here: The 70's: The Decade That Brought You Modern Life—For Better or Worse* by former White House speechwriter David Frum. (He invented two-thirds of the phrase "Axis of Evil." Hint: one-third was "of.") He shows that the 1970s weren't just a whimper after the bang of the sixties—if anything, the later decade was even more revolutionary. Why? In the seventies, the radical movements of the sixties were absorbed into the broader culture and codified into law—for better or worse.

Appendix II: True20 Conversion

Players of Green Ronin's *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* can also use the world of *Damnation Decade* as a backdrop for stories and adventures. This *Appendix* provides notes on each chapter of this book and how to use its content in conjunction with the *True20* game rules.

Chapter Two

This chapter has material on hero creation. Consult Chapters One through Three of *True20* for details on creating heroic characters in that game.

New and Revised Skills

The new and modified skills in this section can work largely as-is in *True20*, with the following adjustments.

Speak Language (jive): This is a specialization of the Language skill. *Damnation Decade* heroes can apply a rank of Language to learn to speak jive, the same with speaking trucker lingo and similar codes.

Skate: This new skill works as described in *True20*. Wearing skates adds +2 to kicking damage.

Computer Use: The modifications to Computer Use in this chapter apply equally to the *True20* Computers skill.

New Feats

Modify the feats in this section as follows to make them suitable for use with *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*. If a feat is not detailed, assume that it works as described in **Chapter Two**.

New Feats

Feat	Type
Alien Language Affinity	General
Alien Medicine	Expert
Believer	General
Bustin'	General
Dancing Fool	General
Double Bluff	Expert
Improved Dancing Fool	General
Improved Power to Will	General
Life of the Party	General
Power to Will	General
Psychobabble	Expert
Repair Bionics	Expert
Sensualist	General
Talk to Machines	General

Alien Medicine: This feat applies to Medicine rather than Treat Injury, but otherwise works the same.

Double Bluff: Change the prerequisite to Skill Focus or Talented (one or more Charisma-based skills).

Improved Dancing Fool: Change the prerequisite to Dancing Fool and Dex +2.

On A Roll: Replace this feat with Move-by Action (which applies to skating as well as normal movement).

Repair Bionics: This feat applies to the Medicine or Craft (mechanical) skills in *True20* rather than Treat Injury or Repair, but otherwise works the same.

Talk to Machines: This feat applies to *True20* Computers skill, the equivalent of Computer Use, but otherwise works the same.

Occupations

True20 does not use Occupations, and so this section is not relevant to the creation of *True20 Damnation Decade* heroes.

If desired, *True20* Narrators can use the occupations as guidelines for creating *True20* backgrounds suitable for *Damnation Decade*, using the bonus skills and feats given for the occupation as the bonuses provided by the background. Keep in mind that *True20* does not have the concept of "class skills" (all skills are equally available to all roles).

You can also simply allow players to create their own backgrounds, using the guidelines given in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*, with the *Damnation Decade* occupations as inspiration.

Advanced Classes

True20 does not make use of advanced classes like *d20 Modern*, so the classes described in this section are not available in a *True20 Damnation Decade* game. However, the Narrator may wish to turn some or all of the advanced class abilities in this section into new *True20* feats available to *Damnation Decade* heroes to help capture the "vibe" of the setting.

As a general rule, these new feats are "chained" and must be acquired in order, with previous feat(s) on the list as prerequisites for the later feats. The Narrator may waive or alter this requirement as desired to suit the game.

Driver

All driver feats are general feats.

Critical Crash: As described, except Drive (6 ranks) is a prerequisite, and the additional damage is a +4 bonus.

Riding Shotgun: As described.

Hell on Wheels: As described, except the 8th level ability becomes a separate feat called Improved Hell on Wheels (with the same effect).

Roadhog: As described.

Everybody Walks Away: As described.

Executive

All executive feats are expert feats.

Sizing Up: As described except Profession (7 ranks) and one interaction skill (7 ranks) are prerequisites.

Money Is No Object: As described.

Corporate Resources: This ability is replaced by the Contacts feat from *True20*.

Sales Pitch: As described, except it uses the character's Expert

level in place of Executive level.

Life of Leisure: As described.

Friends in High Places: As described.

Fighting Acolyte

All fighting acolyte feats are martial feats.

Holy Terror: The smite ability of this feat works like the Smite Opponent feat from *True20*. Its prerequisites are Combat +2 and Knowledge (theology and philosophy, 6 ranks).

Confession: As described, except it uses half the hero's warrior level in place of fighting acolyte level.

Thy Will Be Done: As described, except it grants both the 4th and 8th level abilities at once.

Not of This Earth: As described.

Miracle: As described, plus the hero can spend a point of Conviction to use this feat an additional time (over the number of uses granted by Charisma score).

Groover

All groover feats are expert feats.

Combat Charm: This grants the 1st level ability (add half Perform rank to attack rolls) but not the 5th level ability. It has the groover class requirements as prerequisites.

Enough About Me: This ability is two feats, the 2nd level ability, and the 7th level ability (Improved Enough About Me), otherwise as described.

Thinking With the Hips: This ability is two feats, the 4th level ability, and the 8th level ability (Improved Thinking With the Hips), otherwise as described.

Can't Stop the Music: As described.

Middleman

All middleman feats are expert feats.

The Grapevine: As described, except it requires Bluff, Diplomacy, and Gather Information (6 ranks each), Language (jive), and Contacts as prerequisites and grants all of the listed abilities at once.

Friend of a Friend: As described, except it becomes two feats, the 2nd level ability, and the 5th level ability (Improved Friend of a Friend).

Who's Your Daddy: As described.

Smooth Talker: As described.

Militant

All militant feats are martial feats.

Go to Ground: This feat uses half warrior level in place of militant level and applies to Stealth and Search, but is otherwise as described. Combat +2 and the militant class requirements are its prerequisites.

Attention Getter: This feat is essentially the same as the Fascinate feat from *True20*, which should be used in its place.

Winging It: As described.

Indoctrinate: As described, except broken into two feats: the 5th level ability, and the 8th and 10th level abilities (which are combined into Improved Indoctrinate).

Contacts: Renamed Militant Contacts, but otherwise as described.

Omegaballer

All Omegaballer feats are general feats.

Welcome to the Majors: This feat can be renamed "Omegaballer" in *True20*, and is the "entry level" feat for a pro-Omegaballer player. Prerequisites are Combat +3 and 6 ranks in Acrobatics and Jump. Otherwise, it is as described.

Team Player: As described.

Brick House: As described. The ability to add Strength to Defense supercedes the normal parry defense in that it applies to *all* attacks.

Go-To Guy: As described.

Adrenaline Rush: This ability costs a point of Conviction (rather than an action point) and improves the chosen ability score by +2, lasting for a number of rounds equal to half the character's level, and leaving the character fatigued for 5 rounds thereafter. This feat can be taken twice, in which case the character can improve two ability scores at once, but is fatigued for 8 rounds afterward.

Delay Damage: As described, except the delay is half the character's level, rounded down.

Parapsychologist

All parapsychologist feats are supernatural feats.

Rumors and Echoes: This feat has the parapsychologist class requirements as prerequisites. Add half the character's adept level to the Knowledge check, otherwise as described.

Little Green Thoughts: Remove this ability; *True20* characters can acquire the individual feats included in it as desired.

Cloak of Weirdness: As described.

Minor Visitation: As described.

Legendary Weapon: As described.

Major Visitation: As described.

Psychic

The psychic class in *Damnation Decade* is best handled in *True20* by the adept role and the appropriate powers with a psychic origin. Consider psychics adepts of the appropriate level with associated powers.

True20 powers suitable for *Damnation Decade* psychics include: Calm, Energy Shaping, Heart Shaping, Manipulate Object, Mind Probe, Mind Reading, Mind Touch, Move Object, Psychic Blast, Scrying, and Visions.

Trucker

All trucker feats are general feats.

Breaker Breaker: As described. Drive (4 ranks) and Vehicular Combat are prerequisites.

Pit Stop: As described.

Good Buddy: This is the same as the Familiar feat in *True20*.

King of the Road: Replace this with Skill Focus (Drive).

Big Rig: As described except the ability grants a +2 bonus to collision and ramming damage.

Convoy: As described.

Urban Cowboy

All urban cowboy feats are general feats.

Aw, Shucks: As described, except the feat can be taken up to three times, improving the bonus by +2 each time (+2, +4, and +6). The Urban Cowboy class requirements are the prerequisites, except Animal Empathy replaces Animal Affinity.

Comforts of Home: As described.

Urban Jungle: As described, except that the ability to improve the attitudes of animals is absent (since it is already a part of Animal Empathy).

Home on the Range: As described, except the character gains the +2 bonus on Toughness saves as well (and does not gain hit points, since there are none in *True20*).

Chapter Three

Most of the existing equipment in *True20* is available in the 1970s of *Damnation Decade*, with the exception of far-future super-science (and even that stuff shows up in the hands—of other appendages—of aliens and such).

Weapons

Use the guidelines in *True20* to convert weapon damage dice to a damage bonus for use with Toughness saving throws. Otherwise, weapons from **Chapter Three** work as given in their descriptions.

Armor

Use the *True20* guidelines to convert armor bonuses to the appropriate Toughness save bonus, using existing *True20* armor as examples.

Bionics

The bionics from **Chapter Three** operate much the same in *True20*: halve any ability score bonuses they provide (rounding down) to get the *True20* modifier. Bionic arms and legs grant a +1 Toughness bonus, while a bionic torso grants +2, except against electric or magnetic attacks.

Instead of massive damage (which does not exist as such in *True20*), the Narrator may choose to check for bionic damage after a critical hit that successfully inflicts damage on the character.

As in standard *Damnation Decade*, bionics are considered beyond the Wealth and resources of any individual character and are

provided solely at the Narrator's discretion, usually with the appropriate strings attached.

Drugs

The drugs from **Chapter Three** work essentially as described in *True20*. Modify their skill effects as appropriate (mainly using Notice in place of Listen and Spot). For durations, either roll them as given, or take the average (dividing the die value in half and multiplying by the number of dice, so 3d6 minutes becomes half 6, or 3, times 3 for a duration of 9 minutes).

Chapter Four

Chapter Four of *Damnation Decade* describes the major players of the setting, particularly adversaries for the heroes to confront.

Converting Characters

For the most part, you can use the *d20 Modern* character stats as-is in your *True20* game for the sake of simplicity; just determine the character's appropriate Toughness score and modify attack bonus by Dexterity rather than Strength, keeping in mind that high-level *True20* characters are somewhat more vulnerable to damage than high-level *Modern* characters with lots of hit points.

Character skills, feats, and equipment can remain essentially as-is. You can convert class levels to the appropriate *True20* roles if desired. Generally, strong and tough hero levels become warriors levels, class levels involving supernatural powers (such as the psychic advanced class) become adept levels, and all other class levels become expert levels.

Omegaball: True20 Style

The rules for Omegaball given in **Appendix I** work essentially the same for *True20 Damnation Decade* games. In place of Omegaballer class level, use half the total levels of players with the Omegaballer feat (described in the previous section) with all other players on the team adding 1 level each to determine the team's total modifier.

Since there are no attacks of opportunity in *True20*, ignore these rules for Omegaball games (unless you specifically want to add them). Getting past a blocker still requires a Difficulty 15 Acrobatics check. Substitute Acrobatics for all uses of Tumble in the Omegaball rules.



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