

Zamei Al'Shaitan Presents:

NEXUS

A RIFTS Sourcebook for Risus: the Anything RPG by S. John Ross

Sourcebook Information

This sourcebook is an attempt at bringing the world and technology of the RIFTS game to the Risus system. As such, it will be a serious-toned campaign setting, character mortality could prove to be rather high. The reasons for wanting to write this manual are quite simple, I enjoy the world of RIFTS, however I do not enjoy the countless hours spent on creating characters and tutoring new players in it's ways – instead, I would like to be able to sit down and play shortly after introduction.

For GM's, this sourcebook will assume at least a passing familiarity with the world of RIFTS. Little world information will be presented – feel free to use the “Official” Palladium world view, or (which I often prefer) create your own.

As always, this is only a sourcebook. To play in the world of Risus:NEXUS you will need a copy of the (free) Risus: the Anything RPG by S. John Ross. If you do not already have a copy, addresses are provided at the end of this manual.

Character Creation

Character creation is quite straightforward. 10 dice, hooks and tales, no funky dice. Pumping and double-pumping allowed. No character should begin play with more than 4 dice in any one cliché. Unlike RIFTS, where a character normally only has 1 role (“O.C.C.”) they will have 2 or more cliché in this setting, so your Headhunter(4) may also be a Operator(2).

Cliché List

As always, this is only a list of possible cliché. Others may be allowed at GM option. Psychic and Magic cliché are noted with (Psychic) and (Magic) under the cliché name. After each cliché, there will be a listing of the most common things a cliché would be used for, though others may apply. Tools of the trade will list all the “standard” equipment carried by that character type.

Body Fixer

The Body Fixer or “Fixer” is the slang term for a medical Doctor (M.D.); a person who can fix or heal the human body. The Body Fixer is a tough adventurer, and sometimes, freedom fighter dedicated to life and the pursuit of happiness. Whether pacifist or a man of action, the Body Fixer is often a local hero – offering their services to any in need, regardless of social class or monetary gains.

Good For: Healing the wounded or sick; Being a wanted outlaw

'Borg
Whether a labor 'borg or military combat cyborg, 'borgs are individuals that have had their body either partially or completely reconstructed using hi-tech materials, making them much stronger and more resilient than mere men. The military 'borg is often as tough and well armed as a tank or power armor unit.

Good For: Dealing damage; Taking damage; Carrying heavy stuff; Small arms combat

Burster (Psychic)

The burster is a physical psychic whose powers manifest themselves in the area of pyrokinesis, the creation and manipulation of fire. As the name suggests, these psychics can create fire out of thin air, causing things to simply burst into flames.

Good For: Being immune to fire and heat; Extinguishing fires; Creating fires, Shooting bolts of fire; Sheathing himself in an aura of (really cool looking) flames

City Rat

The city rat is one of the denizens of the city who lives in its lower levels, tunnels and sewers. Most have never been beyond the city walls, and view the outside world as wondrous, scary, and alien. Their world is the dark city streets, crowded with people, garbage, vehicles, and vermin. They know the back streets, and often the sewers and access tunnels, like most know the highways and avenues. They can spot a drug dealer from 1000 feet away, and know the advantages and dangers offered by the cyber-doc.

Good For: Knowing the city and its denizens; Hand-to-Hand combat; Stealing; Picking locks; Piloting automobiles and motorcycles

Coalition Dog Pack (Psychic)	<p>The Coalition's obsession with maintaining the purity of the "true" human race is both the motivation for the creation and enslavement of mutant animals, as well as the one thing that curbs them from even greater exploitation of genetically engineered creations. "Dog Boys" as individual members of a dog pack are called, are used in cities as patrol units, as well as for hunting magic-using or psionic criminals.</p>
	<p>Good For: Tracking by smell; Tracking psionic or magical residue; Empathy; Hand-to-Hand combat</p>
Coalition Grunt	<p>The grunt is the everyday infantry soldier of the Coalition Armed Forces. Generally the soldier has no significant education or skills other than combat. In regard to combat, they are rough and ready warriors who greet the jaws of death with a smile.</p>
	<p>Good For: Taking orders; Hand-to-Hand combat; Small arms combat; Piloting Coalition military vehicles; Vehicle combat</p>
Coalition Military Specialist	<p>The arts of espionage and reconnaissance are the trademarks of the Coalition Military Specialist. These are always Officers, who have undergone special training in spying, information gathering, stealth and may very well have cybernetic augmentation to aid in such tasks.</p>
	<p>Good For: Hand-to-Hand combat; Small arms combat; Espionage; Demolitions</p>
Coalition RPA Elite or "Sam"	<p>The Robot Power Armor Elite are specially trained pilots and experts in the use of power armor and robots. These are the men and women behind the terrifying visage of the Sky Cycles, SAMAS, Enforcer UAR-1's and Spider Skull Walkers. As they are normally issued the SAMAS power armor for field operations and urban defense, they are known by the nickname "Sam."</p>
	<p>Good For: Piloting robot vehicles; Piloting SAMAS power armor; Power armor and robot combat</p>
Coalition Technical Officer	<p>This is the technician of the Coalition Armed Forces. They are corporal or higher rank, and are charged with keeping the battle machines, communications systems, and other gear in working order. Weapons of choice include laser pistols, rifles and other light personal energy weapons, as well as robot vehicles.</p>
	<p>Good For: Repairing broken technology; Piloting vehicles; Piloting robot vehicles; Small Arms Combat</p>
Crazy	<p>The warriors known as "crazies" are a cross between ninja masters and raving lunatics. They are trained warriors schooled in the arts of combat and athletics. Then they are augmented through the implantation of tiny electromagnetic devices placed in the brain (which tend to cause mental instability.)</p>
	<p>Good For: Hand-to-Hand Combat; Small arms combat; Stealth & Infiltration; Being crazy</p>

Cyber-Doc	<p>In the broadest sense of the word, a cyber-doc is any doctor, surgeon, or scientist who specializes in cybernetics and/or bionics. However, the term "cyber-doc" usually refers to the notorious underworld figure found in the Down Side of most cities. The Down Side cyber-doc is a cybernetics doctor who offers his illegal services on the black market, often specializing in (stolen) military bionic implants.</p> <p>Good For: Implanting cybernetics and bionics; Patching up or replacing implants; General medical practice</p>
Cyber-Knight (Psychic)	<p>Cyber-Knights are mechanically augmented warriors who follow the old code of chivalry. They are physically powerful, being cybernetically enhanced, but more potent are their psychic abilities, one of the most powerful is the Psi Sword, a weapon conjured of pure psionic energy.</p> <p>Good For: Hand-to-Hand combat (with Psi Sword); Lifting heavy things; Being chivalrous; Sensing evil, magic, and/or danger</p>
Dragon (Magic)	<p>Dragons are not indigenous to Earth, but are beings from an unknown dimension. They seem to have left behind any homeworld they may have had in favor of transdimensional exploration, for dragons have been found to inhabit numerous worlds and dimensions. Dragons are creatures of magic, and have a limited degree of magical ability in addition to their tough, scaly hides and leathery wings.</p> <p>Good For: Being big, scaly & scary; Being strong; Flying; Eating cattle; Breathing fire, ice, poison gas, or something similarly nasty; Metamorphosis (changing from one creature form to another); Instantaneous teleportation anywhere up to 5 miles away. <i>Also see the Magic chapter.</i></p>
Glitter Boy	<p>One of the most famous creation of the Time Before Rifts as well as in the time of Rifts is the "Glitter Boy." The Glitter Boy (as well as their pilots, often called by the same name) is one of the most potent battlefield weapons ever created by man. It is a sophisticated robot vehicle, though it is the size of many Power Armor (10' tall) it packs heavy armor and the devastating weapon known as the "Boom Gun" - it's main drawback being it's comparatively low speed.</p> <p>Good For: Taking lots of damage & not exploding; Small arms combat; Power armor combat; Being all sparkly</p>
Headhunter	<p>A headhunter is a mercenary; a warrior-for-hire. However a "true" headhunter is an expert in weapons and tracking. They are the die-hard men-of-arms who love the challenge of combat and the chance to cheat death. The headhunter's credo is "Fight the good fight and die with the enemy's heart in your hand."</p> <p>Good For: Small arms combat; Hand-to-Hand combat; Tracking; Piloting military vehicles, Vehicle combat</p>

Juicer	<p>The Juicer is a chemically-augmented warrior. Using sophisticated drug injection systems and monitors, the human is raised to it's ultimate performance level. The chemically "juiced-up" subject is 10x faster, stronger, and more alert than the normal human. The price? An early death. The average Juicer has a lifespan of only six years after "augmentation."</p> <p>Good For: Being strong; Being fast; Small arms combat; Hand-to-Hand combat; Being jittery</p>
Line Walker (Magic)	<p>The Line Walker is more of a traditional spell casting wizard who is especially attuned to ley line energy. The mage is so attuned to ley lines that he can see magic energy emanating from even weak ley lines normally invisible to the human eye. Likewise, he can see invisible magic energy radiating from living beings, enchanted/magic objects, techno-wizard devices, and supernatural creatures.</p> <p>Good For: Sensing the presence of magic energy and lay lines; Knowing the length, direction, nexus points and rifts along a ley line; Teleporting to any point along a ley line; Floating along a ley line (flying slowly); Healing themselves with ley line energies. <i>Also see the Magic chapter.</i></p>
Mind Melter (Psychic)	<p>Like most psychics in the world of Rifts, the mind melter relies more on his super psychic powers than education or anything else. The more arrogant mind melters may even refrain from using more than a handful of modern weapons and devices as a sign of just how powerful they are, or believe they are. Mind melters are forbidden entry to all Coalition cities. Their strong psychic essence is easily detected by psi-stalkers and dog boys, and they are always pursued by them.</p> <p>Good For: Seeing auras; Sixth sense; Telepathic powers, attacks & defenses; Hand-to-Hand combat (with Psi-Sword); Other psychic contests; Being chased by Dog Boys</p>
Mystic (Psychic) (Magic)	<p>A mystic is more of an intuitive fellow who can sense different aspects and happenings on the physical and metaphysical levels of life. They are often acclaimed advisors and prophets who can glimpse the future.</p> <p>Good For: Sensing supernatural evil; Acting as a spiritual "Medium"; Clairvoyance (Seeing remote places); Performing exorcisms; Having "Sixth Sense". <i>Also see the Magic chapter.</i></p>
Operator	<p>The operator is a sort of mercenary repairman. They are the mechanics and electrical whiz-kids who can fix just about anything. As such, they are always a welcome sight in any community and are treated with respect and admiration.</p> <p>Good For: Repairing broken things (Weapons, Power Armor, '57 Chevy, Toasters, Spider Skull Walkers, E-Clip chargers, Hairdryers, Wafflemakers, Computers, PDA/Cell phone combos, etc.)</p>

Psi-Stalker
(Psychic)

The psi-stalker is a mutant whose psychic sensitive powers enables him to sense other psychics, psychic energy, and magic. The character can be human, or a D-bee, or a mutoid. Unlike normal humans, the psi-stalker is a natural predator and psychic vampire! The predator can sense the use of magical and psychic energy and can follow the distinctive energy trail like a bloodhound following a specific scent. Coalition Psi-Stalkers generally lead a *Dog Pack*.

Good For: Sensing and tracking magic users, psionics, and supernatural beings; Needing not to eat or drink, only to feed off psychic energy; Having a psychic empathy with animals (animals will try to please them); Hand-to-Hand combat; Small arms combat

Rogue Scholar

The rogue scholar is considered by the Coalition States to be more dangerous than the men of science, because the scholar seeks out knowledge and truth and teaches it to others. Science is confusing and intimidating to most people, but the scholar teaches on a much more rudimentary level, and is therefore more dangerous.

Good For: Teaching; Defying the Coalition States; Collecting pre-rifts artifacts

Rogue Scientist

One of the new Earth's great frontiersmen is the rogue scientist. These men and women suffer from an insatiable lust for knowledge that drives them into the wastelands and wilderness to rediscover their planet, and humankind's past. They explore the ruins of toppled cities and the habits of new and menacing life forms that have emerged from the rifts.

Good For: Exploring lost cities; Poking aliens with a stick; Using/Researching old Earth artifacts (including weapons.)

Shifter
(Magic)

The Shifter's focus of magic study is understanding how ley lines and nexus points work and how to use them for trans-dimensional travel and summoning. Unlike the ley line walker, the shifter is not so much a vessel where magic energy is drawn into him, but instead, the shifter learns to manipulate the energy around him.

Good For: Sensing rifts; Being able to dimensional teleport back "home" without a rift. *Also see the Magic chapter.*

Techno-Wizard
(Magic)

The techno-wizard is the most unconventional of the magic classes. They are men of magic who have learned to combine magic with technology. Although they can cast spells and read magic scrolls, the focus of their magic is the creation of magic devices. The wizard has learned to direct his potential psychic energies into machines, enabling those devices to do strange and magical things that seem to defy known science.

Good For: Psychically interfacing with machines & electronics; Photographic memory; Speed reading; Reapiring broken things; Building new things. *Also see the Magic chapter.*

Vagabond

Not everybody who gets involved in adventure is a specialist in combat or other area of training. Some are just ordinary people who get swept up in the flow of events or decide that it is time they make a change in their life. The vagabond may know a little bit of everything, but is a master of none.

Good For: May be used to attempt ANYTHING, but is always considered an inappropriate cliché.

Wilderness Scout

The known world is one vast wilderness with tiny pockets of civilization, both human and alien, low technology and high. Most civilized people stay away from the wilderness or challenge the forces that roam the wilds with mechanical juggernauts that can bash through the toughest terrain or monsters. Wilderness scouts are individuals who have learned to live in the wilderness without forcing nature to conform to their needs.

Good For: Navigating wildernesses; Knowing edible/healing plants, as well as poisonous ones; Knowing animal's (and monsters) habits, territory, and how not to get eaten; How not to leave a trail in the woods.

Magic

When the Time of Rifts came, the Earth was transformed. The once subtle and forgotten magic energies that quietly flowed across the planet are now rushing rivers and seething oceans of mystic energy. Magic can not be ignored, because it's a daily reality. At night, the ley lines glow an eerie white blue; even during the day, the most powerful ley lines and nexus points can still be seen to glow. Dimensional rifts appear across the land every time there is an eclipse, planetary alignment, and every summer and winter solstice, letting in more creatures from the rifts. Madmen and practitioners of magic, who seek to tame the lines of magic, open new rifts and attract menaces from hell spawned worlds. "Demons," supernatural horrors, aliens, mutants, and other Dimensional beings (D-bees) of all kinds claim the decimated planet as their domain.

Ley lines are a matrix of natural potential psychic energy that run in *straight lines* across the globe. The source of the energy is unknown, and apparently inexhaustible. At places where several ley lines cross, the energy is at it's greatest. These P.P.E. Intersections are called ley line nexus points.

- * When in close proximity to a ley line (within 2 miles) all magic cliché are at +1 point.
- * Being on/at a ley line, or one mile from a nexus point, all magic cliché are at +1 die.
- * Being at, or within 200' of a nexus point, all magic cliché are at +2 dice.

Magic Abilities by Class:

Dragons	As supernatural creatures, Dragons can cast any "Normal" magic spell, though they are not attuned to any particular type.
Line Walkers	Line walkers are the most "traditional" of spellcasters, attuned to the magic of the ley lines. Line walkers may cast any "Normal" spell without penalty.
Mystics	Mystics are intuitives, they may cast any spell to gain knowledge, read the mind or auras of others, or perform healing without penalty.
Shifters	Shifters are attuned to the dimensions, and as such may cast any spell that is based on dimensional travel, summoning creatures from the rifts, or controlling extraplanar creatures.
Techno-Wizards	Techno-wizard spells normally revolve around producing energy (lightning, electricity, light, fire) to power "conventional" mechanical or electronic devices and augmenting such devices, though any spell a techno-wizard "attaches" to a device is considered an attuned spell.

Casting Spells

When casting a spell, a few simple points must be kept in mind:

First of all, is the spell an "attuned" spell? Attuned spells are those that are directly related to the cliché casting them, and are listed in the table above. If the spell is not one that is attuned (such as a mystic casting a fire spell, or a techno-wizard casting ANY spell directly, rather than through a mechanical device) the cliché suffers a 2 dice penalty.

Second, is there a ley line affecting magic spells in the area? If within 2 miles of a ley line, bonuses to spell casting apply.

Finally, the cliché dice are rolled, and the results are compared to the difficulty chart below. If the die roll is equal to or greater than the TN, the spell effect occurs. Magical combat is resolved using the normal manner (high roll wins) rather than relying on TN's.

Base TN by Impact

Difficulty	Game Impact	Reason
Trivial, 0 (Normally automatic)	Any attempt to magically warm a beverage, open an unlocked door, tie shoes, or fill an ice-chest are Trivial. Trivial Magic is stuff that the mage could do himself if he weren't so lazy.	The spell has no practical effect to speak of.
Simple, 5	Any spell that helps the party achieve something as a whole, or acts as a tool to achieve an end is Simple. Any spell that actually achieves something directly is probably Ordinary.	The spell will make things more fun for everybody.
Ordinary, 10	A spell is "ordinary" if it is meant to overcome a single obstacle that faces the caster, or the caster's share of an obstacle that faces the group. Unlocking a (simple) door, receiving divinatory insights and random clues, cleaning up a small building, creating a brief summer rainfall (in the summer), or a standard "light" spell go here.	The spell would be nifty. Nothing special.
Complex, 15	Attempts to extinguish a house-fire, feed a small army, teleport the mage long distances or the party short ones, unlock a level-5 encryption MagLock, or fool the senses of a single Dog Boy goes here.	The spell would hog the scene a bit.
Difficult, 20	The caster could visit an alternate dimension (without a rift) with this, or take the party to another city. Any one significant hidden fact can be revealed, and freakish weather is possible. In general, any attempt by the caster to act as a one-man party of adventurers is Difficult. Attempts to create/summon large animals or humanoid slaves with animal intelligence go here.	The spell would upstage the other characters.
Dangerous, 30	Any attempt to create/summon an intelligent being, or a big beastie, is Dangerous. Attempting to fool the senses of a whole Dog Pack, teleport the entire party to their home plane from an unknown dimension (without the aid of a rift) or to destroy the GM's scenario also fall under this category.	The spell would upstage the whole scenario.
Impossible, 50+	Any attempt to utterly wreck the campaign world or campaign plot line. Notice that even the 'impossible' is possible (with a VERY high TN.)	The spell would upstage the GM.

Types of Conflicts

Conflicts in Risus NEXUS are most commonly divided into the following types:

Battle of Wills

Haggling over the price of repairs to your Glitter Boy, extracting information from less-than-willing people, and other such things fall under the battle-of-wills. Unlike other cliché-based contests, this contest's appropriateness is based rather on how a player presents their character. A 'Borg(3) who ruthlessly slaughters innocent kittens would be better at (and hence, an appropriate cliché for) intimidating a gang punk, than would a 'Borg(3) whom secretly desires to become a hairdresser...

Hand-to-Hand Combat

Hand-to-Hand combat is any close-range combat, whether unarmed, with knives, swords, neural maces, or psi-swords. This may or may not be lethal (combatant's option).

Small Arms Combat

Small arms combat involves pistols, rifles, railguns, basically any weapon a normal human can carry and use either in-hand, or on a bipod or tripod. This is a lethal combat type.

Robot/Power Armor/Vehicle (RPV) Combat

Though it is called by many names. This is augmented combat, using weapons mounted on robot vehicles, power armor suits, or military vehicles. This is a lethal combat type.

Magic/Psychic Combat

Magical or Psychic combat is just that – combat using magical spells (fireballs, lightning bolts) and/or psychic abilities (Mind wipe, telepathic battery). This combat may or may not be lethal, depending on the types of spells or abilities used.

Equipment and other Tools of the Trade

Tools of the trade are those things needed to perform a cliché, and are normally provided to a character at creation. Other equipment may be listed as bonus die gear, or may allow a character with a cliché (for example Small arms combat) participate in another type of contest (such as Robot/Power Armor/Vehicle combat).

Body Armor

Body armor ranges from metal plates and kevlar jackets, to high tech plastics and ceramics, the one thing they all have in common is protection – they add +1 to +3 dice to a combat cliché, only for determining injury. For example, a Gang Punk(3) is wearing a Armored Jacket (1) and is in a firefight with a Police 'Borg(4). The punk rolls 3d6 and gets 11, the 'Borg rolls a solid 20. Rather than losing a die, the Gang Punk's Armored Jacket is now reduced to 0 (worthless) and the fight continues..

Sample Armor Types:

- Coalition Light Deadboy Armor(1)
- Coalition Heavy Deadboy Armor(2)
- Coalition 'Borg Deadboy Armor(3)*
- Crusader Armor(1)
- Gladiator Armor(2)
- Plastic-Man Body Armor(1)

Modern Weapons

Modern weapons range from revolvers to particle-beam weaponry, but they generally fall into 2 categories; Small Arms, and Robot/Power Armor/Vehicle (RPV) scale weapons. Inappropriate cliché rules apply – a gang with laser pistols can indeed be very dangerous to a character in an armored vehicle...

Sample Small Arms Weapons:

C-18 Laser Pistol(+0)
C-10 Light Assault Laser Rifle(+1)
C-14 "Fire Breather" Assault Laser and Grenade Launcher(+2)
Wilk's 320 Laser Pistol(+0)
Wilk's 447 Laser Rifle(+1)
NG-57 Northern Gun Heavy-Duty Ion Blaster(+1)

Sample Small/RPV Weapons:

C-27 Heavy Plasma Cannon(+3)
C-40R Coalition SAMAS Rail Gun(+3)
CR-1 Rocket Launcher(+3) - Single shot weapon
Cyborg Forearm Blaster(+2)
NG-P7 Northern Gun Particle Beam Rifle(+3)
NG-101 Rail Gun(+2)

Sample RPV Weapons:

Glitter Boy Boom Gun(+4)
Mini-Missile Launchers(+3)
Heavy Rail Guns(+3)
Long Range (Nuclear or Plasma) Missiles(+4)

Robots/Power Armor/Vehicles

Robots, Power Armor and Vehicles all have their own cliché, denoting speed, sensors, and structure (damage capacity). To damage a character inside, a vehicle's structure must first be overcome (with the exception of vehicles where the pilot is exposed, such as motor/hovercycles.) Piloting a vehicle requires cliché rolls based on difficulty – with an appropriate cliché driving is automatic, quick turns (a la traffic weaving) requires a TN 5, and jumping over an opening draw bridge or busting through a police road block may require a 15+.

Speed is based roughly on human capability. A vehicle with a speed of 1 is horribly slow, and a person on foot could likely catch up to it. A vehicle with speed 2 is roughly twice as fast, etc.

Armor is listed either as bonus dice to the piloting cliché, or a standard number for those that do not protect the pilot. Either way when reduced to 0 a vehicle is useless.

Typical Hovercycle:

Speed(4) Sensors(0)
Armor(1)
Weapons:
None, only hand-held personal weapons

Typical Military Hovercycle:

Speed(4) Sensors(2)
Armor(2)
Weapons:
Light Laser(+1)
Hand-held personal weapons

Typical Light Power Armor:

Speed(3) Sensors(2)
Armor(+2)
Weapons:
Light Laser(+1)

Hand-held personal weapons

Typical Glitter Boy Power Armor:

Speed(2) Sensors(2)
Armor(+5)
Weapons:
Boom Gun(+4)
Hand-held personal weapons

Typical SAMAS Power Armor:

Speed(4) Sensors(2)
Armor(+3)
Weapons:
C-40R Rail Gun(+3)
CM-2 Rocket Launcher(+3)
Hand-held personal weapons

Credits and Thanks

Risus: the Anything RPG by S. John Ross

<http://risus.cumberlandgames.com>

Without Risus, there'd be no Risus NEXUS.

Risus Magic by Jason Puckett and S. John Ross

<http://www.intemperance.net/rpg/risus-magic.html>

As usual, the magic system herein is based on an excerpt from that site.

LordZamiel.is.Dreaming

<http://lordzamiel.is.dreaming.org>

My site, where this, as well as all my other sourcebooks reside in PDF and PalmDOC format.