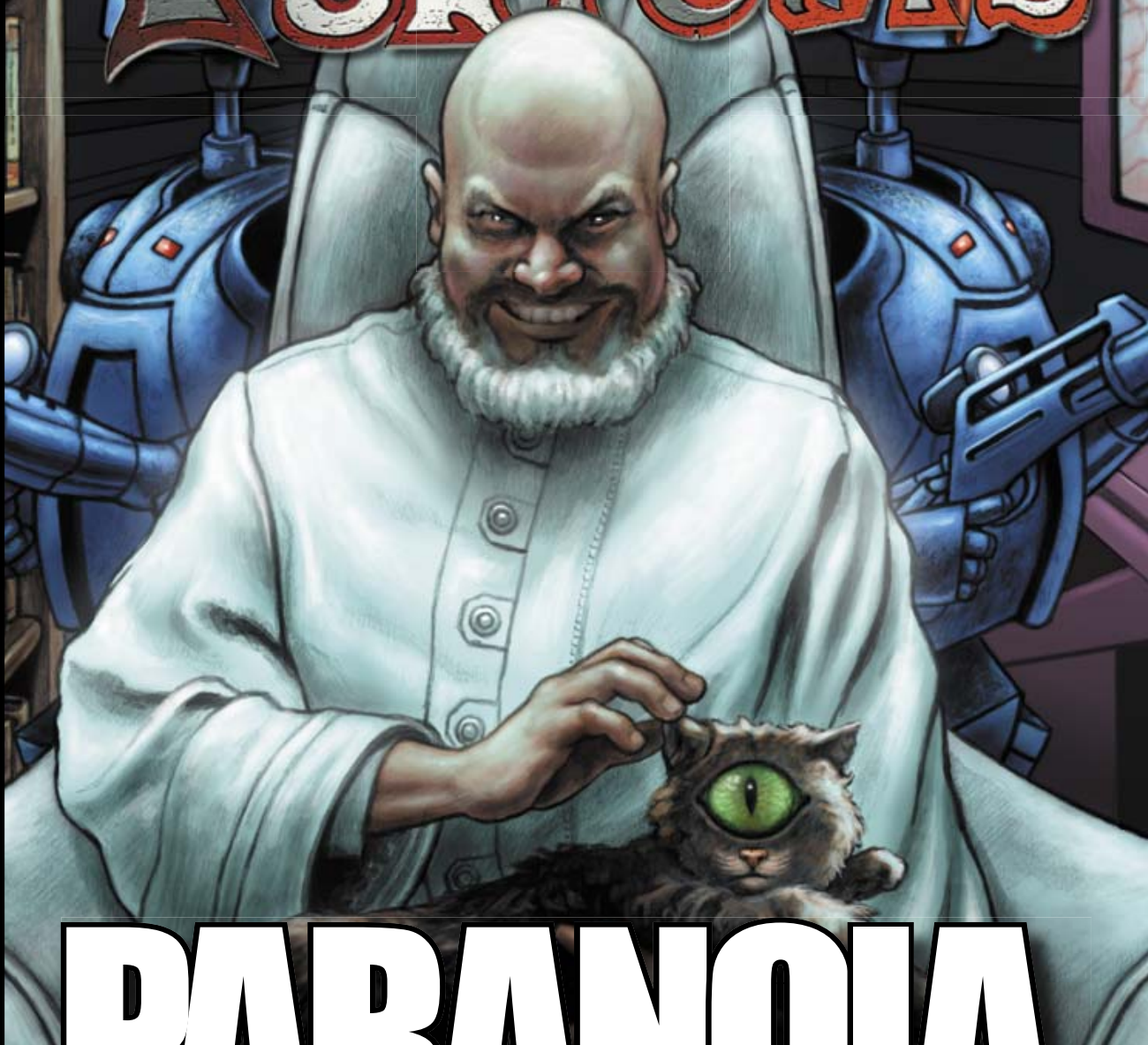


PS Signs & Portents



Also This Month: Lone Wolf - City of Holmgard part 2 • Conan - The Bloodling • Traveller - Review to a Kill

PARANOIA

High Programmers

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Editorial



As many of you know, early last year, we at Mongoose were thrilled to welcome some new office-mates, in the form of Cubicle 7's own Dom and Angus.

Since this mighty unity there has been much fun and frolicking at Mongoose Towers (as well as many late nights meeting deadlines!). However, since Dragonmeet in November last year, the fun has gotten just that bit sillier!

Cubicle 7's crowning glory (so far) has been their fantastic *Dr. Who* RPG. As a result, for last year's Dragonmeet the BBC kindly provided them with some life-sized cardboard cut outs of the different Daleks and of a Cyberman. These were obviously a huge hit with the fans at Dragonmeet, where some of them were actually auctioned off for charity.

However a certain Cyberman did manage to find his way home again, initiating a game that has endured ever since. I give you the "Hide the Cyberman behind someone when they are not looking in order to scare them witless when they turn around" game.



Have a good month!

Charlie

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Mongoose News

By Charlotte Law

Printing of Programmers

We are pleased to announce that the third and final *Paranoia* core rulebook, *High Programmers*, has now gone to print. This book covers a wide range of material that we have hardly even touched on in the past, hence why it has taken a while to get right. However we are now fully satisfied with it and we hope that you will all be very pleased with the results.

High Programmers should be hitting the shelves around the first week in March... don't miss out!

Delays Make for a Better Read!

We are sorry to have to announce that the new *RuneQuest* books, *Monster Coliseum* and *Arms & Equipment*, are going to be delayed for a few weeks. These delays are due to some last minute changes that we believe will improve these books to the extent that it is worth the delay to publication. Keep an eye on the Mongoose Website for more details coming soon.



Convention Diary

Siege of Augusta

Doubletree Hotel, 2651 Perimeter Pkwy, Augusta, GA, USA
Fri 22nd - Sun 24th January 2010

<http://www.siegeofaugusta.com/cgi/index.php>

.....

Vapnartak

Knivesmire Stand York Racecourse, York, UK
Sun 7th Feb 2010

<http://www.yorkwargames.org/Vapnartak.htm>

.....

UK Games Expo

The Clarendon Suites, Stirling Road (off Hagley Road),
Edgbaston, Birmingham, UK
Fri 7th - Sun 6th Jun 2010

<http://www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk>

.....

More events will be added to this list on a monthly basis as they are confirmed

The Awesometer

Generic events that get our hearts racing (or sometimes not) each and every month!

AWESOME

Nick Robinson's TOP 5

Games to play when your Drunk

- Baron Munchausen. A game that encourages you to spout utter rubbish. So a perfect game to play when inebriated.
- Junta. The ability to speak in a slurred Mexican accent is a big plus!
- Paranoia. No one is supposed to know the rules, so forgetting important stuff when out of one's skull is not an issue.
- Red November. A game where you control a bunch of gnomes trying to prevent a doomed submarine from sinking, all the while the gnome crew is having to wolf down bottles of vodka to deal with the disasters they face.
- Hungry Hippos. Enough said.

Valentines Day, love is in the air for all the lovenirds flying around, hope you all have a lovely time



28 days

A nice short month, especially where payday is concerned

The days are starting to get longer again and i think thats a good thing, right?



Snow Fall, lets hope its over for another year, it can really get tedious



Valentines Day, not the greatest time for all you singles, fingers crossed for you all

So long to all those new year resolutions, its safe to say most of us failed...

HAPPY NEW YEAR

GRUESOME

The Timeline

A visual guide to get your tails wagging for future Mongoose releases

March: Glorantha the Core Rulebook washes up

April: Bring your best slaying gear, its time for Deus Vult

May: Terror of the



DEUS VULT



Quote of the Month

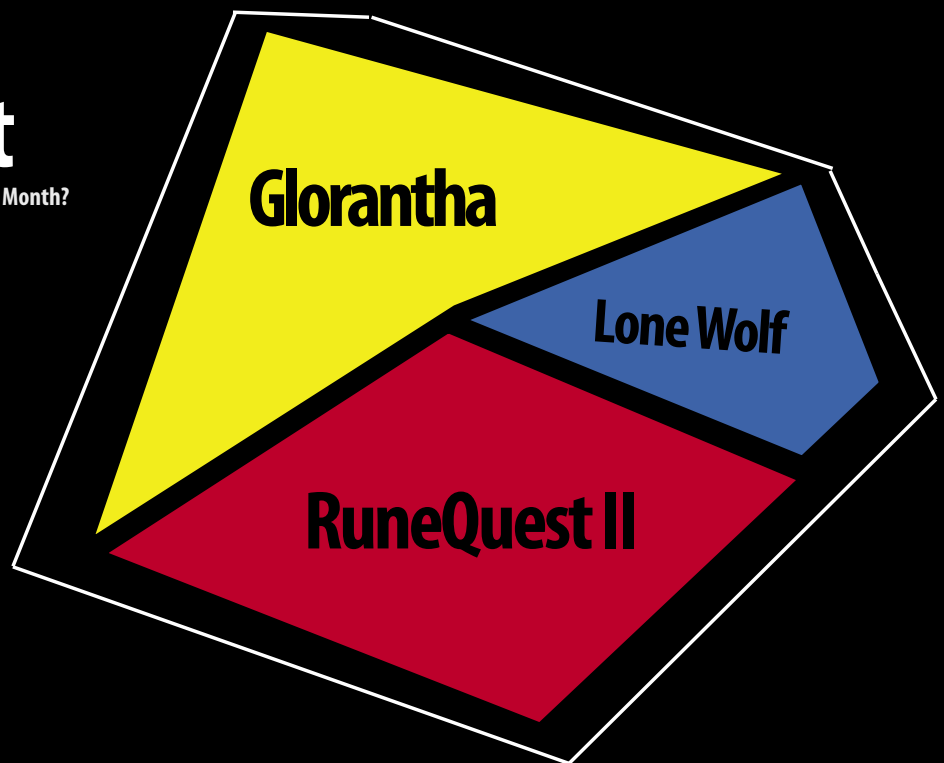
Which phrases have been flying around the office more than the dogs ball?

I'm only attacking you because you are so aggressive!

Katrina Hepburn (whilst playing Ants!) Kat shows her distinct dislike for the mere thought that she may lose!

The Time Chart

What have we been spending our time on at Mongoose this Month?



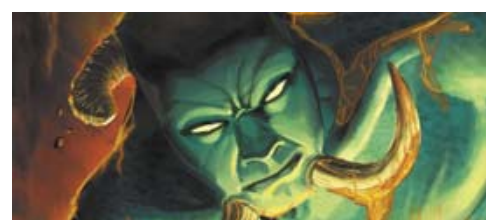
Darklords unleashes it's fangs



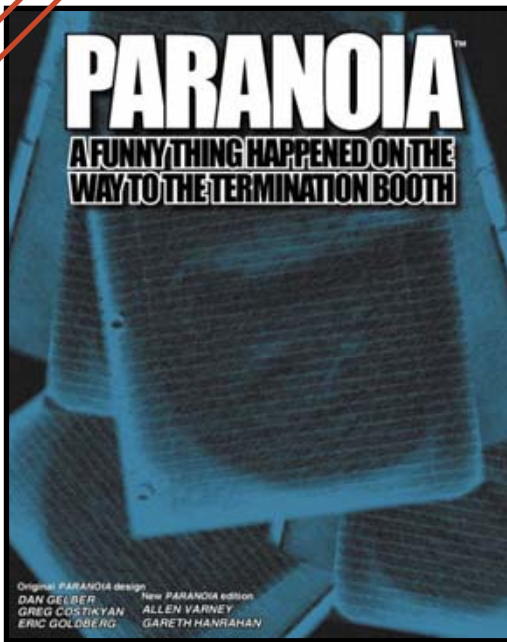
June: Mongoose takes a look at the Darrians



June: The Definitive Cults of Glorantha



January 10 Releases



A Funny Thing Happened on the way to the Termination Booth

Price: \$12.99

Format: Softback (32 pages)

You've got tickets to a termination, and for once, it's not your own. You're going to watch noted traitor and enemy collaborator Herman-G fry. It's the event of the monthcycle, and your seats are so close to the main event you'll be able to smell the smoking boots. What's that? A mission alert? You're being ordered to escort Herman-G to the termination booth? Well, what could possibly go wrong?

Note: The following things could go wrong:

- * Failure to secure the prisoner*
- * Alarming biological warfare*
- * Unexploded nuclear devices*
- * Exploding nuclear devices*
- * Chemical leaks*
- * Treasonous Troubleshooters*
- * Villainous renegade High Programmers*
- * The utter destruction of Alpha Complex*
- * Missing the execution*

None of this is my Fault

Price: \$12.99

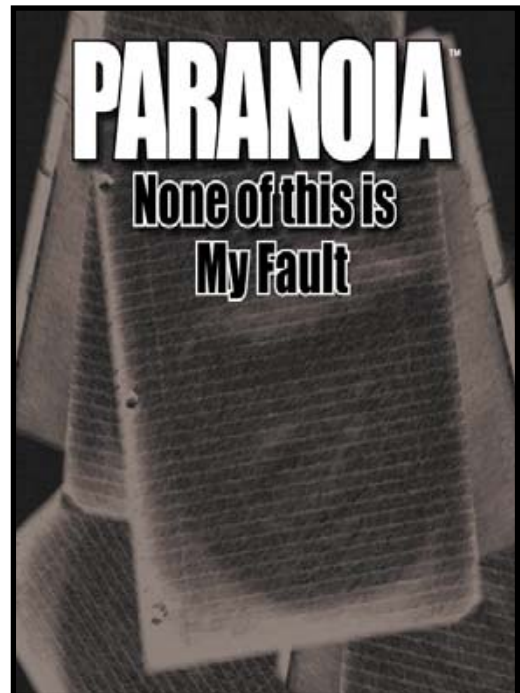
Format: Softback (32 pages)

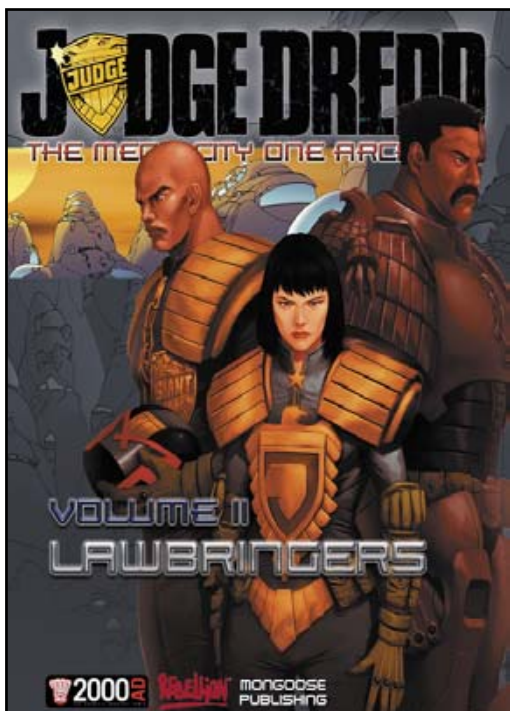
Three missions for High Programmers! Stay alert, trust no-one and keep your army of heavily armed bodyguards handy! Try to drag your corpulent, twisted body from the zero-gravity couch and toddle on down to the Situation Room for...

** Joy in the Morningcycle: Rimbaud-B, the greatest chef in the sector, is missing, presumed fed. The High Programmer who acquires Rimbaud-B's services will be the perfectly-sliced-melba-toast-with-caviar of ULTRAVIOLET society. The fate of not only Alpha Complex, but Rimbaud's Sylphides à la crème d'amusant chaud hang in the balance!*

** The Iceman Returneth Again: You find the weirdest things in the vaults. Expired nuclear weapons, abandoned doomsday devices, mutated things with tentacles... And frozen High Programmers from the earliest days of Alpha Complex. Who wants to hit the defrost button?*

** When Things Were Interesting: The annual all-sector FunBall tournament is in its final stages. It's the biggest - and only - sporting event in Alpha Complex, and everyone from the lowliest INFRARED to the highest of High Programmers will be watching. Anyone for a little wager on the results?*





Mega City One Archives Volume 2

Price: \$29.99

Format: Hardback (128 pages)

The streets of Mega-City One are a dark and violent place. In the 22nd Century the rules of society have broken down and a new order has arisen to take control. Enter the Judges – empowered to apprehend miscreants and sentence them on the spot. In a hard world, the Judges have to be harder still. It may be a brutal system but it is the only thing that works.

What you will hold in your hands is a collection of lore related to the Justice Department and the citizens it protects – often from themselves. These volumes will detail the world of the Judges as never before – if it drives, shoots, breathes, sprawls or hides in the shadows of Mega-City One, you will find it in this comprehensive collection.

Volume 2: Lawbringers

This volume covers the most famous judges to have graced the streets of Mega-City One, bringing their own brand of instant justice to the streets. From the most recognisable faces, such as Anderson, Dredd and Giant, to those who attained the heights of Chief Judge, and even the few corrupt judges, *Lawbringers* provides a complete biography on each, charting their successes and failures.

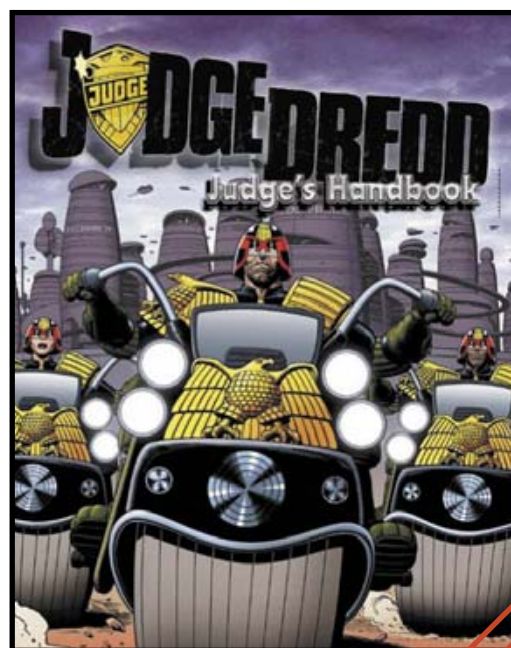
Judge's Handbook

Price: \$29.99

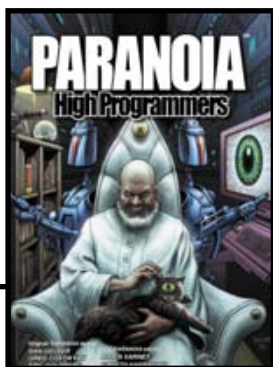
Format: Softback (160 pages)

Uncover the secrets of the Justice Department in Mega-City One. Within this book, you will find all the methods, technologies and procedures the judges use to track down criminals. From the forensics of Tek-Div to the Manta Prowl Tank, there is a tool to solve every crime, and your judges have access to them all.

The Justice Department provides new rules and options for judges as they patrol the streets of Mega-City One, and allows them access to the more elite divisions and promotions, allowing them to become Exorcist Judges, join the holocaust Squad, or even Acc-Div! If that is not enough to complete an investigation, then the judges will be happy to try out the latest weapons and equipment, straight from the workshops of Tek-Div.



January 10 Releases



The mandatory enjoyment of Paranoia's 25th Anniversary continues! With this ultra-high-security book, players can forget the troubles of the little people of Alpha Complex. No more hose jobs as Troubleshooters, no more policing the madness that is Alpha Complex as a Blue Clearance Trooper. No, the life of a High Programmer is one of luxury!

As High Programmers, players will enjoy the fruits of their labours (and those of everyone else) as the pre-eminent leaders of Alpha Complex. There is no way their plans will be scuppered by Alpha Complex's nightmarish bureaucracy. No way that rival High Programmers will seek to bring about their demise. No way that the citizens below them will revolt. No way that the Computer will find even more insane challenges that cannot possibly be completed.

No way at all. Uh huh.

White Washes is the limited edition version of High Programmers, demanded by fans, sporting a new cover matching that of Black Missions. Strictly limited to just 100 copies worldwide, White Washes can only be found on this web site. It will not be appearing in shops.

Paranoia: High Programmers - White Washes

Price: \$49.99

Format: Hardback (208 pages)

Paranoia: High Programmers

Price: \$39.99

Format: Hardback (208 pages)

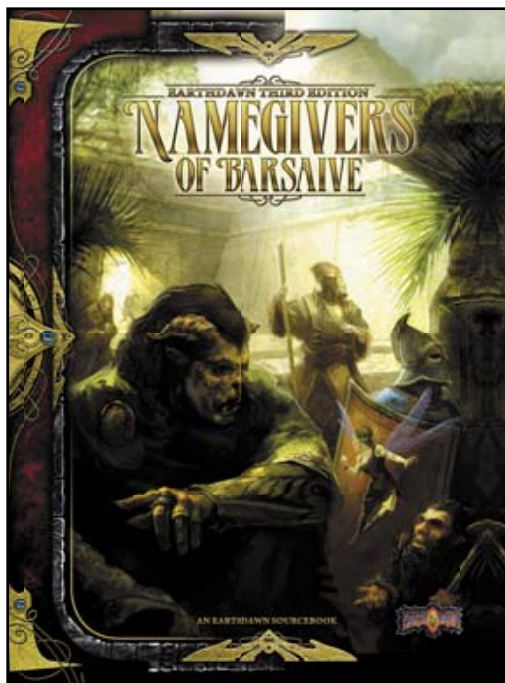
Eight Namegiving races dwell in the land of Barsaive, each with its own culture and traditions. Despite their differences, they are bound by shared experiences, beliefs, and love for their land. Together they embody the heart and soul of Barsaive. This volume provides an indepth look at the Namegiver races of Barsaive.

The Namegivers of Barsaive book details the eight Namegiver races and provides extended game information, including new Disciplines, talents, knacks, and goods and services, as well as special rules for playing each race in your Earthdawn Third Edition games. Requires use of the Earthdawn Player's and Gamemaster's Guides.

Namegivers of Barsaive

Price: \$39.99

Format: Hardback (256 pages)





The Spinward Marches awaits your exploration in this huge poster map, featuring every system, trade link and starbase in the sector. Beautifully illustrated in full colour, this map is the first in a series that will allow you to explore the entire Third Imperium and beyond, joining posters together to form one gigantic map!

Includes a full key to aid navigation.

Spinward Marches Map Pack

Price: \$9.99

Format: Poster (1 page)

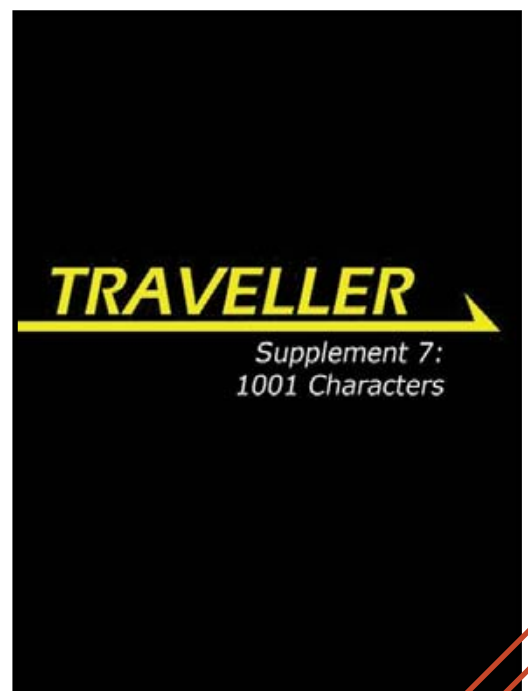
MGP 3827

Traveller: 1,001 Characters

Price: \$34.99

Format: Hardback (208 pages)

A referee's treasure trove, 1,001 Characters provides a quick and easy reference to over a thousand non-player characters, ready for play! Divided into easy-to-use sections, a referee will quickly be able to find the appropriate alien bounty hunter, starport administrator or backwater hunter easily. Each character comes with name, equipment, skills and background, giving them life and personality right from the page.



January 10 Releases



RuneQuest II Gamesmasters Screen

Price: \$14.99

Format: Screen

With stunning RuneQuest artwork facing the players, and every vital table for the games master, the RuneQuest II Games Master's Screen is the perfect complement to a well run RuneQuest campaign.

With all the important tables and charts, the new RuneQuest II Games Master's Screen is constructed from quality heavy-weight cardstock that will stand the ravages of many years' gaming.

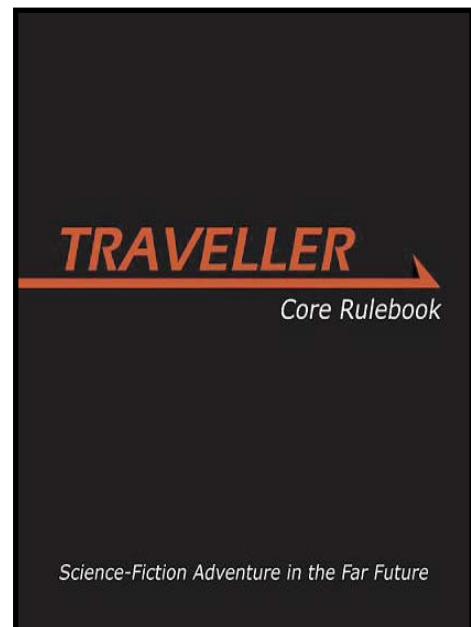
Traveller (French)
Price: e40.00
Format: Hardback (168 pages)

2008 vit la parution du tout nouveau Jeu de Rôle Traveller, enrichi par de nombreux suppléments et publié par Mongoose Publishing. 2009 voit la parution de la gamme en français.

Basé sur la version 'classique' de Traveller et mis au goût du jour, le livre de règles de Traveller contient tout ce dont vous avez besoin pour explorer d'innombrables univers de science-fiction. Démarrant avec l'univers originel de Traveller, Mongoose compte étendre sa gamme pour inclure Judge Dredd, Strontium Dog, Hammers Slammers, ainsi que de nombreux autres jeux.

Ecrit par Gareth Hanrahan, le Livre de Règles de Traveller contient tous les thèmes familiers des fans du jeu classique, agrémentés de quelques changements.

Traveller est de retour. Osez-vous vous aventurer au-delà des frontières.





RUNE QUEST II

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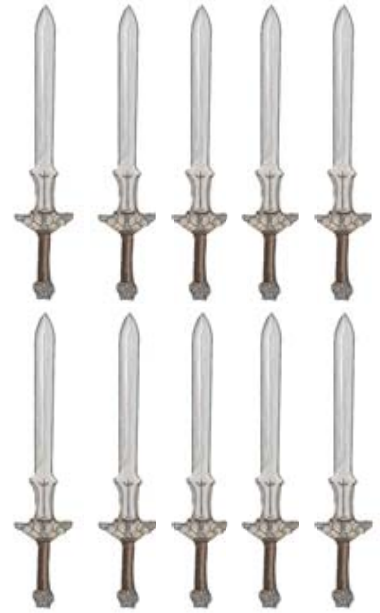
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CONAN'S[®] SCORE OF STEEL

Every month the guys at Mongoose will be looking to bring you their reviews and opinions on some of the hottest events happening around the world, from Movies, Video Games, Books and naturally Hobby Gaming, of course we all need some scoring assistance.



Avatar

Review By Simon Beal

The latest epic from director James Cameron is said to set a new precedent in movies but does it live up to expectations? As I queued for an hour at my local IMAX, I certainly hoped that it would. Eventually I sat down in the theatre and donned the large and slightly ridiculous looking 3D glasses; within seconds I was drawn into the story and immersed in an alien world...

Setting the Scene

The year is 2154 and the RDA Corporation has established a mining facility on the planet of Pandora to extract a valuable mineral called unobtainium. Pandora is a verdant world populated by dangerous creatures and an indigenous race called the Na'vi, a blue skinned species with feline features. By human standards the Na'vi are a primitive society but they are a spiritual people who live in harmony with nature, sharing a deep understanding of their world.

Humans require oxygen masks when they venture out into the lands of Pandora but this is a minor problem in comparison to



the Na'vi who will not allow humans onto their sacred lands. This has led to a military presence and a number of skirmishes between the two peoples. In order to better facilitate an understanding with the Na'vi, scientists have created human-Na'vi hybrids called avatars. These are essentially artificially grown Na'vi that incorporate genetic information from a human who will ultimately take control of the avatar.

Led by Dr. Grace Augustine (Sigourney Weaver), the scientists have used their avatars to interact with the Na'vi and learn about their culture. Schools have also been set up to teach the Na'vi English and help establish diplomatic relations so that ultimately the RDA corporation can begin mining without interference from the natives.

The Story

Jake Sully (Sam Worthington) is a paraplegic marine who was injured in the line of duty. He is sent to Pandora to replace his brother who was recently killed. They were identical twins so Jake is the only person who is able to operate his brother's avatar due to their genetic similarity. Jake soon adapts to his avatar and enjoys the freedom of being able to walk and run once more.

The avatars set out to continue diplomatic talks with one of the Na'vi tribes but the group are attacked by one of the many predators found on Pandora. Jake is separated from the group and the remaining scientists are forced to return to base, leaving Jake to survive on his own. During the night Jake is attacked by a pack of savage creatures and is

rescued by a female Na'vi called Neytiri (Zoe Saldana).

Neytiri takes Jake to her tribe where the shaman instructs Neytiri to teach Jake the ways of the Na'vi. When Jake's avatar falls asleep, his consciousness is returned to his human body. None of the other avatars have ever been able to get this close to the Na'vi to learn their ways and Colonel Miles Quaritch (Stephen Lang) promises Jake that he will get his legs back in exchange for intelligence on the Na'vi and convince them to move so the mining can begin.

Jake spends several months with Neytiri and her tribe and their relationship develops. As Jake begins to understand the Na'vi ways and their connection with Pandora, his loyalty to the military begins to waver. The patience of the RDA Corporation and the military soon wears thin and with little success in diplomacy they decide to attack the Na'vi, forcing Jake to choose his allegiance. Jake must now prove himself to the Na'vi if he is to save them and their world – the war for Pandora has begun.

Realising an Alien World

Rarely does a film's special effects influence my enjoyment or opinion of it, the majority of CGI heavy movies tend to be very light on story and characterisation. However, Avatar is one of the few exceptions to this; the effects not only enhance the film but they are so detailed and realistic that they draw you into the alien world of Pandora and really bring the planet and the Na'vi to life. In this

regard, Cameron has certainly raised the bar of CGI to a whole new level.

The Na'vi are very realistic in both look and movement but what really sold it for me was Pandora itself. The planet is alive with bizarre flora and fauna, giving it the feel of a real alien world unlike anything I've seen on the screen before. The detail was such that I found myself studying each creature and plant when possible as if I was actually there.

The same attention to detail is also evident with the human technology. The gunships are interesting and different to the usual vehicles seen in science fiction movies, using rotor propulsion to create a sense of realism. The ground forces comprise of large exoskeletal walker vehicles, taking the concept seen in other films to a whole new level.

The action scenes are simply breathtaking. The fantasy versus technology theme of the film results in a battle set against the majestic scenery of Pandora. The Na'vi defend the skies mounted upon dragon-like creatures, whilst the mounted troops on the ground fight the walkers and marines. The scale of this battle is truly epic and will have you completely entranced throughout.

Conclusion

Avatar can loosely be described as Dances With Wolves in space (or The Last Samurai for that matter) but it is so much more than that. The story certainly plays to the same themes but on a much grander scale with a somewhat more magical quality. I've always been a fan of 'primitive' versus technology stories and Avatar takes this into a new dimension, both literally and figuratively.

I found myself totally immersed in this alien world and drawn into the rich Na'vi culture. This is of course partly due to the CGI but even the best effects can seem superficial and lacklustre without the back story and detail to bring them to life, and Avatar certainly excels in this department.

As with all Cameron's movies, his characters are interesting and varied. You really care



about the protagonists (something that is becoming rare in movies these days) and you soon develop a strong dislike of the antagonists, which really pays off in the dramatic confrontations and action scenes.

It has been a long time since a movie has both captivated and moved me on this scale. Even if you are unable to watch it in 3D, Avatar really is a must-see film that will not fail to impress and enthrall even the most reluctant movie goer.

Score: 9/10



Roleplaying

The concept of Avatar and the world of Pandora provide a number of ideas for roleplaying games. One idea is to continue the Avatar story from where the film ends. Without giving away the movie's ending, it should be fairly obvious as to what might happen next. This type of game allows the players to explore both the Na'vi culture and the planet.

A Pandora-like world could easily exist in the *Traveller* universe. Working for a mining corporation or the military, the players are stationed on the world to deal with the natives who are preventing or interfering with the mining operation. By allowing

the players to become involved with the indigenous race, their loyalties might be tested in much the same way as Jake Sully.

Alternatively, the players could be part of the native tribe fighting off the invaders who want only to strip mine their lands. This could work best in a science fiction setting but with some work it could also work with a fantasy game system too.

Whatever ideas Games Masters take from Avatar, the movie is certainly a good lesson in world design. The detail that has gone into the development of the fauna and flora is an inspiration to any creator who wishes to bring their worlds to life.



TRAVELLER

THE THIRD IMPERIUM



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The Bloodling

By Uri Kurlianchik

Lady Octavia suffered acute and abnormal pains during her delivery. As soon as she passed out, the baby emerged; strangely silent and completely covered in blood. Unnerving as it may be, blood is rather common during such hard labours and so we were not prepared for the horrors that followed.

My apprentice repeatedly tried to wipe the blood off the newborn child but his attempts seemed only to make the child bloodier instead of cleaner. It is then that we discovered the dreadful truth – the baby was not covered in blood; the baby was blood. Within seconds the thing turned into a crimson liquid and sipped through my apprentice's fingers and through the cracks in the floor. I ran to check on the young Lady but it was too late – the poor girl was dead, drained of all her precious life fluids by this accursed abomination.

Within seconds, the screaming began. From room-to-room it crawled, leaving pale death in its wake. Ten more people died that night and it was only through shameful cowardice that I survived the Adrianus Mansion Massacre.

— From the testimony of Nestor Trosus of Aquilonia

This article presents the reader with an exotic monster from the distant and terrifying East, for use in *Conan* campaigns. In addition, the article contains suggestions on how to run standalone bloodling adventures or an entire bloodling-based campaign.

Bloodling (Newly Spawned)

Tiny Aberration

Hit Dice: 4d8+12 (30 HP)

Initiative: +4 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 21 (+4 Dex, +1 Dodge, +2 natural, +2 size)

DR: 3

Base Attack/Grapple: +5/+1

Attack: Slam +5 melee (1d3)

Space/Reach: 2 ft./2 ft.

Special Attacks: Coagulation, Exsanguination, Horrible Kiss

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., Disease, Lose Semblance

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +7

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 19, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 15

Skills: Hide +17, Move Silently +13

Feats: Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Stealthy, Striking Cobra B

Environment: Any

Organisation: Solitary

Advancement: 5–7 HD (Large); 8–12 HD (Medium-size)

Bloodling (Fully Developed)

Medium Aberration

Hit Dice: 12d8+48 (102 HP)

Initiative: +2 (Dex)

Speed: 40 ft.

Dodge Defence: 20 (+4 Dex, +4 Dodge, +2 natural)

DR: 3

Base Attack/Grapple: +9/+13

Attack: Slam +13 melee (1d6+4)

Full Attack: Slam +13/+8 melee (1d6+4)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Coagulation, Exsanguination, Horrible Kiss

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., Disease, Lose Semblance

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +11

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 15

Skills: Hide +17, Move Silently +17

Feats: Endurance, Diehard, Great Fortitude, Improved Grapple*, Iron Will, Stealthy, Striking Cobra B

Environment: Any

Organisation: Solitary

Advancement: See description

* Having Slam damage counts as having the Improved Unarmed Strike feat for the purposes of determining Improved Grapple's prerequisites.

Most people believe the bloodlings to be a kind of undead, possibly an advanced and more sinister state of vampirism. Others think that they are demons sent from Hell to steal humanity's precious lifeblood for their masters' vile purposes.

Few are the sages who know the truth behind these literally blood-curdling monstrosities – they are diseases, pure and simple, malevolent viruses that infect young women with an unholy semblance of pregnancy and then emerge in the form of red babies that rapidly grow on stolen blood into horrible red men who exist only to feed and grow.

There are legends of entire hordes of red men, who move like a plague across the land, feeding on the blood of the men and using the women to spawn more of their kind. One can only hope these legends are false and that the bloodlings are nothing but a nearly extinct madness from bygone ages.

Bloodlings come into the world looking like human babies and rapidly mature with each drained victim. Fully developed bloodlings physically resemble their 'mothers' and are usually powerfully built and in perfect shape.

Unless the creature is thoroughly examined (successful Search DC 25 or Heal DC 17), it is practically impossible to tell it from an unusually sweaty and ruddy person. However, when a bloodling uses one of its abilities or experiences powerful hatred or lust, it begins to sweat blood profoundly, which instantly gives away its true nature in a gruesome and spectacular way. This immediately forces a Terror save with a –2 morale penalty on all viewers.

Despite their high intelligence, bloodlings are lusty and gluttonous monsters who always give in to their darkest urges. They cannot live among humans and usually choose abandoned buildings, sewers or isolated ruins as their homes. Bloodlings who survive for long enough to develop a personality sometimes become particularly twisted scholars who use their powers to research ancient blood magic or bully or seduce primitive tribes into worshipping them as gods and sacrificing kidnapped strangers to them.

Combat

For all its vile powers, the bloodling is a surprisingly cowardly creature; it will almost never willingly attack armed groups and if its appointed victim causes it to lose a quarter or more of its Hit Points, it flees looking for an easier kill.

A bloodling would rather steal a kiss than have a straight fight, even with a significantly inferior opponent. When combat is forced upon a bloodling, it will attempt to forcefully kiss its victim, hoping the subsequent blindness would make it an easier kill. Another tactic favoured by bloodlings is fleeing while spraying its pursuers with coagulating blood, hoping they will die from the coagulation before the bloodling will die from the blood loss.

Special Attacks

Coagulation (Ex): A bloodling can force coagulation on any body of blood it comes in contact with – even the one flowing in the veins of its enemies. In order to do this, a bloodling must sprinkle some of its blood on a target that has sustained 5 or more points of slashing or piercing damage. This has a range of 10 feet and requires a successful ranged touch attack.

Hit targets suffer 1d6 points of damage for every 4 HD the bloodling has. Victims who suffered 10 or more

points of damage from this attack must succeed on a DC 13 Fort save or suffer a heart attack, which immediately reduces them to –1 HP.

Desperate bloodlings can spray a 15 foot semi-circle or a 5 foot full-circle area with their blood. This causes 20 points of damage to the bloodling. Targets in the affected area are entitled to a DC 17 Reflex save for half damage.

Regardless of the amount of damage it deals, this attack cancels the effects of the Horrible Kiss attack.

Exsanguination (Ex): A bloodling can perform exsanguination on a dying human as a full round action by causing the victim's blood to animate and flow into the bloodling, enlarging and empowering it. The victim dies immediately and the bloodling heals 10 HP and advances one HD if its current HD is equal to, or lesser than, the victim's. Advancing beyond 12 HD requires multiple victims and special rituals, with each further HD being harder to earn.

Anyone who witnesses this gruesome effect for the first time must make a Terror save.

Horrible Kiss (Ex): A bloodling that grapples or tricks a human into kissing it can release some semi-living blood into the victim's mouth at the cost of 5 HP. The victim then makes a DC 17 Fort save to try to cough out the blood in time. A victim who fails his saving throw is blinded and suffers 1d6 points of damage each round while also suffocating on the thick blood.

These effects can be cancelled with a successful field surgery (a DC 25 heal check which causes the victim 2d6 points of damage). A victim who survived the ordeal must succeed on a DC 17 Will save or lose his sanity.

Special Qualities

Disease (Ex): Ultimately, a bloodling is a mass of diseased blood. Medicine functions as poison against it while spells that heal diseases harm the bloodling instead. Spells that cause disease, on the other hand, heal it.

Anything that magically removes a disease automatically destroys the bloodling, reducing it to a puddle of blood within seconds.

Lose Semblance (Ex): The blood making up the bloodling's body is only held together by the monster's terrible will. A bloodling can become liquid and move through the narrowest cracks. Every 10 feet travelled this way cause the bloodling to permanently lose 1d8 HP.

While in liquid form, the bloodling is immune to physical damage and takes only half damage from most non-area effects. On the other hand, fire and acid inflict double damage, while anticoagulants force it to remain in liquid form for 24 hours.

A bloodling in liquid form cannot do anything except move and exsanguinate dying victims.

Bloodlings in Your Campaign:

Presented here are some adventure ideas for Games Masters who want to incorporate bloodlings into their campaigns. While these assume a normal campaign occasionally disturbed by rare outbursts of supernatural horror, they can also be linked to create a blood-themed campaign, in which the PCs will deal with the return of the bloodlings, facing crazed cultists, followed by newly spawned bloodlings, degenerate cannibals, red men, sorcerous blood pools and eventually saving their people from the encroaching blood tide.

The Birth of Evil (low level): The tragic scenario recounted at the beginning of the article could have ended very differently if there was a group of heroes present in Adrianus Castle instead of a weak and cowardly city healer. Such a scenario would work best with a timetable listing the rooms the bloodling will visit and how much time it will take to massacre the inhabitants before moving on to the next room. The PCs of course must isolate and destroy it as quickly as possible, because with every passing minute more innocent lives are lost and the creature grows stronger.

Diseases Walk Among us (mid level): A strong young woman who miraculously survived a bloodling birth comes to town, looking for the red man who tricked her into carrying its progeny and hoping against hope to reason with her murderous child. Meanwhile, bodies mount as both father and son prey on the locals to gather enough strength to destroy the other. Both hide from the woman, not knowing she only wants to destroy one and save the other. The PCs are sucked into this familial mess and whatever solution they come up with, one thing is certain – there will be blood!

The Red Woods of Hell (high level): An abnormally powerful bloodling has subjugated a savage jungle tribe to its will, using them to receive sustenance and further its diabolical magical research. Enhanced with its infected blood, the tribe's warriors gain some blood-related powers, such as Coagulation or Horrible Kiss, which they use to instil supernatural fear in their enemies.

The bloodling itself appears as a massive pool of blood in the centre of the village into which bound captives are hurled on a regular basis. Make sure to make it as memorable as possible when a blood

giant, taller than the tallest tree, rises from the pool, leaving it completely dry... it might very well be the PC's last moment.

The Tide of Blood (epic level): In this nightmarish adventure, the PCs learn that the legendary Blood Tide, an army of

hundreds of bloodlings and thousands of cultists, is marching on their hometown. Simple warfare is most likely to fail against such an overwhelming force and the PCs must uncover ancient spells and artefacts that will help them and their allies in combating the approaching plague.



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LONE WOLF

THE CITY OF HOLMGARD: UNCOVERED PT2

BY DARREN PEARCE

Following on from Part 1 in the January issue, the exploration of Holmgard continues.

Guild Buildings

It is beyond the scope of a simple travellers guide to Holmgard to detail every facet of the city and every person who might be in a particular area. The same goes for the Guild buildings, where explorers sit and plot in their shadowed halls about where they might head next to unearth more of Magnamund's history and treasure. There are many Guild buildings in the Merchant's Market where the sea going contingent of the city has their annual meetings and they are as unique as the heroes that often frequent them.

Taverns and Inns

There are several taverns and inns dotted about this particular area of the city. A great deal of trade comes in from the southern gate usually from Ragadorn and one cannot ignore the port side of the city for it brings in even more trade and people from far and wide. Yet amongst this spread of drinking establishments and inns, where the weary folk of the city and travellers may rest, there is one notable place worthy of mention.

The Golden Sun tavern

This tavern is one of the best that the Merchant's Market has to offer. The establishment is run by four siblings, two male and two female, who have been in

the tavern business since their mother and father died over 10 years ago. They have built up a superb clientele and have a reputation for being one of the safest, fairest and cleanest taverns to drink and eat at in this area of the city. They know of the existence of the Golden Sun in Toran but pay that no mind.

Ducar is the eldest of the four and he is a bright, solemn lad, who is often found tending the bar and making sure that visitors are well cared for. He is pleasant enough to speak to and lends a quiet, calm manner to the establishment. He has a short beard, close cropped dark hair and grey eyes.

Tanna is the next oldest and she is a gentle woman with a bright effervescent personality. However, she is quick to take offence at the slightest remark and will not hesitate to try to regain what she perceives as lost honour. Tanna gabbles when she speaks and scowls at anyone she does not like. She has strawberry blonde hair and pretty light green eyes.

Ragen is about a year younger than Tanna. He is the tavern's unofficial bouncer and is a brusque young man with a fiery personality that Ducar often has to keep in check. When he takes offence, his lip curls, his eyes narrow and he will usually throw the first punch or be the first to instigate trouble. He speaks with a menacing tone when riled and when he is not being confrontational he keeps himself to himself and usually replies in terse answers

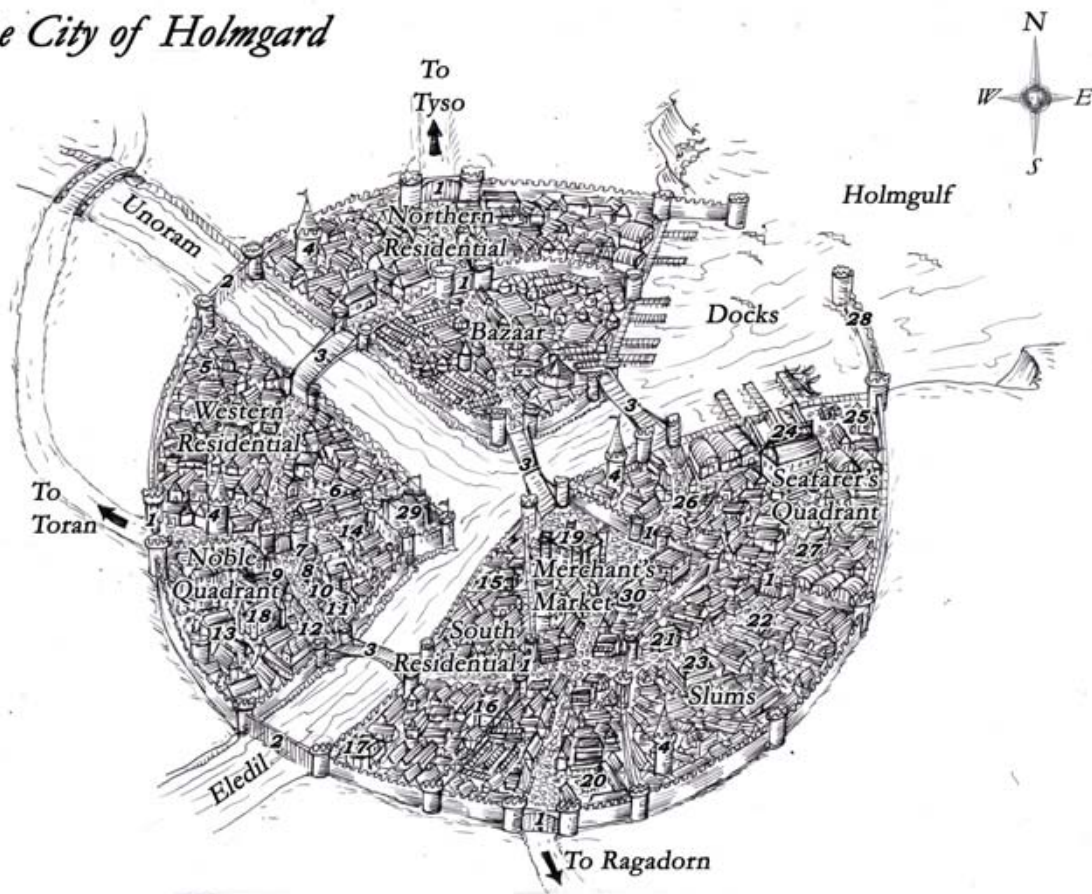
to anyone but his family. Ragen has serious hazel eyes and long brownish red hair.

Kriss is the youngest of the four and she likes to sing. Ducar allows her to entertain the clientele with songs and poems and so far she has been a big hit, making Ragen highly protective of her. She is a pretty girl and has waves of brown hair, big brown eyes and always dresses to impress. She favours a swashbuckler's outfit with wide belts and big wide brimmed hats. Her heart belongs to the sea and one day she hopes to sign on to a ship, sail the waves and perhaps visit the islands that she hears of in so many tales. When she speaks it is always with a little far-away tone in her voice and she is brave, without being foolish, if someone is confrontational.

The Golden Sun is beloved by many people in Holmgard, especially some of the watch who have not yet been called out to the tavern on business. It serves a good selection of fine wines, excellent quality food and caters for large banquets and functions. Several of the noble elite have been courting the family to move their establishment into their area under their protection. This proves just how popular the service has been with all kinds of folk.

The dishes that the Golden Sun serves are a mix of meat and vegetables, good solid broths and hearty strong stews. They mostly serve mead and ale, with some wines kept on one side for the more noble of patrons. Their house wine is the Golden Sun which

The City of Holmgard



Key

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Gate Houses | 16. The Gunnar |
| 2. RiverGate Houses | 17. Kai's Son |
| 3. Bridges | 18. Brightmarch Estate |
| 4. Watch Towers | 19. Engineer's Haven |
| 5. Kolanis: Sage & Herbalist | 20. Stables |
| 6. The White Ostler Inn | 21. Finkle's Fickle Things |
| 7. Bandel's Finery | 22. Tat's |
| 8. Trista Black's Potion Emporium | 23. The Red Boar Tavern |
| 9. Jenna's Quality Wines | 24. West Star Shipwrights |
| 10. Kanein's Sweetshop | 25. Fisherman's Haven |
| 11. Morgan's Curios | 26. The Mariner Inn |
| 12. Talestra's Desire | 27. The Crooked Mast |
| 13. The Silver Hand Inn | 28. Sea Walls |
| 14. The Fireside Tavern | 29. The King's Keep |
| 15. Ishir's Dice | 30. The Golden Sun Tavern |

is a golden sparkling wine, popular with Jenna from the Noble's Quadrant.

The Slums

The slums of any city are a particularly vile place and Holmgard's slums are no exception. They are like a sore on the skin of this magnificent construction lurking in the close knit shadows, full of sallow eyed shifty looking people. This place is home to numerous sailors and the dregs of the city that have strayed in from the port or been evicted from their homes and are looking

for their own brand of entertainment. The average traveller is best to carry a sharp blade or be able to run quite quickly since the residents are known to harass smartly dressed folk that enter without obvious protection.

Shops and Services

There are a few flea-bitten, back alley shops in the slums. They serve to move illicit goods around the city through a small black market network of smugglers, cut-throats and other troublemakers. The

casual observer will find these places hard to come by but those who know the right people and questions to ask find that new doors open for them in the shadows.

Finkles' Fickle Things

Finkle is not a pleasant man and nor does he keep a pleasant shop. His back alley shop is dingy and run down. There are crumbling walls and broken masonry all over the floor and the tiny wooden counter has cracks and holes from where the rotten timber has given way. He has a brutish

bodyguard, Falgar, to keep an eye on his personal safety. Finkle acts as a fence in the slums for stolen merchandise and is quite proud of his network of smugglers.

Finkle himself is quite a portly man, with unkempt brown hair and beady green eyes. He often sneers as he speaks to a person and his personal hygiene is lacking so he exudes a most foul odour.

Tats'

This might seem like an odd name for a shop but it is a place where an adventurer can find almost any common or uncommon non magical item. Tat is a young woman who is proud that she has managed to keep her shop on the veritable straight and narrow so far. She is a thin girl, slightly undernourished with long corn blonde hair and sparkling bright green eyes. She speaks in a quiet voice and tries to be fair at all times. She also keeps a small dagger under her plain dress and is not afraid to use it.

Small items, sundries and other such things like rope, tinderboxes and torches can be found at Tats'. She sells her items at a lower price, slashing the cost by around 10–20% for regular customers.

So far Tat has had a run of good luck with her shop as the thugs of the slums have not yet shown an interest in it. Sadly, Standon is about to instigate a protection racket that means the girl will have her hands full.

Taverns and Inns

There were a couple of taverns and inns in the slums that suffered mysterious accidents. One was burned down and the other was blown up when a couple of stored wine kegs were 'accidentally' switched for boom powder and someone dropped a lit taper into them while lighting a lantern in the cellar. This left one tavern standing that seems so far to have been unscathed.

The Red Boar tavern

This tavern is well secured and maintains a dark, pleasant, if somewhat unsettling atmosphere beyond its heavy shuttered windows and imposing front door. The dark, somewhat smoky interior is packed with the folk of the slums and it is here that they are able to relax a little and not worry about

the city watch bursting in on their various illegal dealings. The cellar is reserved for punishments and interrogations.

Standen organises and controls the slum thugs from here. It is their base of operations and they keep an eye out for potential recruits or threats to their operation. Tat is the only one of the slum shop owners that refuses to pay up so eventually he will plan to take her out of the picture, unless someone removes him first.

At any time of day you can find a mix of thugs in the interior of the tavern, along with a barman who calls himself Keth but he is in fact Standen in disguise. He appears to be a friendly man, open, even a little kinder than normal but beneath that exterior is a cold, callous and vile dreg of human life. Standen cares for absolutely no one, not even Malana who he can see working in a different line of work and worships the shine of coins above all else. His manner is straightforward and he never bandies words with his opponents as he would rather kill than talk to them.

The Red Boar serves a standard fare of mutton and a little ale, no fish is served. Most of the patrons are happy to keep themselves to themselves and have a great distrust of outsiders.

The Seafarers' Quadrant

Holmgard is a bustling port city and in the Seafarers' Quadrant there are hundreds of people milling about. From fishermen and sailors to ladies of negotiable virtue, the port is alive at all times of day and night. The smell of fish is always upon the air and the tang of salt follows it. There are several speciality taverns that all have a nautical theme and serve nothing but freshly caught fish.

The high stone wall of the city extends to the east and meets up with the edge of the first pier. Three more piers on this side of the quadrant give a total of four. Across a bridge that runs to the north-west, leading to the Bazaar, there are four piers in two pairs. These allow ships to disembark their passengers directly to the festivals and since there are many popular festivals this section of the city's piers is usually quite busy.

Shops and Services

There are numerous small shops and several services with a nautical theme along the dock front of the Seafarers' Quadrant. These are of particular interest to sailors and ship captains as they provide useful places to pick up equipment and gear in one spot. These are also the only locations in Holmgard that stock tackle for larger scale fishing expeditions, nets and repair materials for boats.

West Star Shipwrights

Longren Vass runs the shipwrights and he ensures that it is well stocked with repair and construction materials at all times. The large dry dock attached to the massive two storey building gives the impression that it can handle a small fleet over time and that is pretty much what Longren has to put up with. He is in charge of a team of shipwrights and sailors that maintain the many vessels that make their port in Holmgard's docks.

Longren is a man who prides himself on his work. He is a swarthy tanned Sommlending who forsook his noble peers for a life on the sea front. He learned about boats from an early age and is always happy to listen to stories of high seas adventure. When he speaks he tends to ramble and often strays from one subject onto another but eventually finds his way back to the original subject. His short dark hair is shot through with small streaks of grey and behind his sharp intelligent steel-blue eyes there is warmth and compassion.

Longren charges on a case-by-case basis and if he is working for a well known or respected sea farer, he often charges for nothing more than the materials he uses.

Fisherman's Haven

Jethan operates a small but well stocked supply shop near the east side of the dock. The Fisherman's Haven sells nets for larger fishing vessels, smaller fishing supplies such as tackle and various kinds of bait. Jethan even makes and sells fishing rods. Jethan is a short man who is often mistaken for a dwarf. He has long greying hair and dull dark blue eyes. He detests the smell of cooked fish and usually keeps the Haven's windows closed even on hot days.

He enjoys catching fish but he does that for sport rather than a desire to eat them himself.

Jethan has a quiet, civil tone to his voice and always speaks without abbreviating anything. He will not use 'won't' or 'can't' for instance when he can use 'will not' or 'cannot' instead.

Taverns and Inns

One tavern and inn stand out from the many in the Seafarers' Quadrant and these are both fine examples of owner innovation and are unique to the area.

The Mariner inn

Harblow Ost had the idea of making a replica galleon to be used as an inn when he was walking across the dock one day. He spoke to a man called Longren and for a reasonable fee the shipwright constructed a land-based galleon. On the outside the Mariner is identical to a ship complete with an upper deck where guests can look down on the rest of the dock whilst enjoying various fish dishes and seafood cuisine cooked by Harblow.

The interior of the Mariner has a functioning taproom and interior rooms on the lower and mid decks. It can safely support up to 30 people as guests and Harblow and his staff live in the inn. Harblow is a tall, pale skinned Sommlending man, who always dreamed of a life on the sea but sadly he suffers from chronic sea sickness and this dream has always been denied him. So he makes do with his tavern which is the next best thing. He is a loud and friendly man with sharp green eyes, a deep booming voice and he keeps his medium length brown hair in a plait.

He dresses in leather armour and always sports a sharp looking cutlass. He often affects a pirate accent to entertain and amuse his guests. If he meets any kind of seafarer he will ask them for a tale or a song of the ocean.

The Crooked Mast

Malana always wanted to run a tavern and entertain people. She was drawn to a broken down old building that seemed to be all sorts of odd angles. It was crumbling

and in a state of disrepair but with the aid of some of her friends she brought it back from the brink of collapse. She kept the curious nature of the building intact and capitalised on it by making the interior decorations, tables, chairs and so on look slightly off angle as well.

She had a broken and twisted mast brought into the centre of the tavern and this pokes right up through the roof, which is weatherproofed with sturdy boards so that the patrons do not suddenly experience a sudden squall when the weather turns bad. The tavern serves a number of fish dishes and Malana's personal recommendation is cod in a tasty white sauce. She makes sure the taproom is stocked with good wines, ales and of course, grog for the sailors.

Malana is the bastard daughter of a sailor but this lovely young woman with her bright bronze hued hair and intelligent brown eyes has never let this hold her back. She fought for everything she has achieved and continues to fight for it. Sadly, as a result this emotional young woman feels a need to constantly prove herself even amongst her friends. She will not actively pick a fight but if one starts she will certainly attempt to give as good as she gets.

Malana braves the slums several times a week to see Tat, one of her newest friends and often takes her a gift or two. This has led to Standon's attention turning towards Malana. He would like to move in new directions, none of them good. It would suit his purposes to get a foothold into the docks via Malana and expand his business.

Malana wears simple breeches and a tunic and sometimes she sports a buccaneer or pirate-style hat when she is in a particularly good mood. She is noted for her tuneful if somewhat rough and ready singing voice and the bawdy lyrics she favours in song.

Sea Walls

The docks are protected by a pair of large, partially submerged sea walls with a single entry to the port. This entrance is roughly in the north east and is flanked on either side by a pair of towers. These large stone towers can be stationed with archers and

have a pair of catapults at hand, should sea going forces attempt to force their way into the mouth of the Holmgulf.

The Bazaar

The Bazaar is a place for festivals, celebrations and entertainments of all kinds. It is usually home to a few roving bands of minstrels and a troupe or two of entertainers. There are several large wooden platforms where shows can be put on and numerous smaller stages where single performers can entertain. There is also a large marquee style tent where a grand show can go on.

The Bazaar is situated in the north quarter of the city and to the east is the other pier that makes up part of the city's dock. There is a bridge that leads south back to the Seafarers' Quadrant and another southerly one into the Merchant's Market. One last bridge leads to the west and into Western Residential.

The rest of the area is made up of small caravans and wooden huts where the entertainers change and apply costumes and makeup. The Bazaar is always packed with people and groups of roving sweetmeat purveyors can make quite a profit during the busier festivals or larger celebrations.

It is not uncommon to see common folk and finely dressed nobility side-by-side in this area. Social class and pomposity is set to one side as people's hearts soar from the loud music and enthusiastic entertainment. The area is patrolled by the diligent city watch who make sure that the common riff-raff does not disturb proceedings.

At any time in the Bazaar it is possible to find a mixture of the following: Fire eaters, knife throwers, jugglers, jesters, minstrels, actors, painters, storytellers and sword swallowers.

There are many more types of entertainers in the Bazaar but those ones listed here are a few of the common types. Not all of the entertainers are Sommlending or human, some of them are of dwarven stock. However, dwarven gunners are few and far between due firstly to the dwarves

distrust in other races and secondly the fact that they are not interested in sharing their secrets or weapons with anyone aside from other dwarves.

The King's Keep

King Ulnar V's citadel and keep is a magnificent building of white and grey stone with a commanding view of the city. Its design is a testament to the architect's skill and sits at the eastern edge of the Western Residential area. There are many banners and flags that wave from the crenulated towers and the central palace area is protected by the 80 foot stone wall that surrounds it. Upon the western side of the wall there is a single large gate and the south western section of the wall has a small door. It is by this door that Lone Wolf entered the keep if you choose the Roofways of the city.

The front gate is guarded both day and night by silver armoured royal guards and the rota shifts regularly, so they are always fresh and alert. The side entry is guarded by steel armoured royal guards and they have a similar rota as the guards at the front gate.

No matter which gate a visitor to the citadel enters through they will arrive in the same place, the magnificent royal courtyard. Here there is a small garden which is home to a single statue of the mighty King Ulnar depicted as the brave and heroic warrior he was at the greatest battle in Sommlending history.

The courtyard is guarded by royal guards and captained by a Sommlending Knight called Shaen. He is a tough man with a no nonsense attitude and is always seen clad in his resplendent regal armour sporting a white plumed helm upon his head.

Upon entering the citadel proper there are numerous doors that lead into the private areas of Ulnar's keep. The corridor is festooned with tapestries and fine statuary and continues further into the building. It terminates at a pair of oak doors marked with the crest of Sommerlund and guarded by a pair of silver armoured elite royal guards. This is the door to the Chamber of State and behind it the king, his advisors and most powerful knights are often

engaged in various matters of importance to the Sommerlund.

Chamber of State

The interior of the Chamber of State is made of a gorgeous mixture of white and gold, and marble pillars inlaid with golden filigree dominate the chamber. A massive plinth of marble serves as a table and upon this is placed a map of Sommerlund with a smaller map of Magnamund on the right hand side. The brightly lit chamber is festooned with banners and hangings that feature the various crests of Sommerlund, those of the Kai and even a couple of crests from Durenor, Sommerlund's closest and bravest ally.

There are at least two heavily armoured knights accompanying King Ulnar V at all times. Additionally, in times of war or distress other guards and knights are found here.

The rest of the King Ulnar V's court is made up of aristocrats and bureaucrats.

Ulnar V is a practical man and he cuts a dramatic figure. He has a well trimmed beard and medium length hair, his crown sits upon a troubled brow and his voice is lighter when he speaks. However, he is somewhat plagued at times by a sense of foreboding that gnaws at his mind like an itch he cannot scratch.

This tall imposing king has a clear and decisive voice that reveals much of his manner and nature. He always faces the person he is speaking to and addresses them at all times by their proper rank and title and he is a man that expects great things of those people who he entrusts with a task or those that serve him. He is a hard task master but a fair and much beloved ruler in the city.

POPULATION

In MS 5050 Holmgard has a population of around 250,000. This can swell to nearly 300,000 when an important festival such as the Feast of Fehmarn is held. Since it is another large city with an extensive dock and port, Holmgard sees a transient

population at most times of the year but the core population remains a steady 250,000 during peak times. Due to its excellent relations with Port Bax and Durenor, Holmgard also sees a lot of Durenese tourists and settlers.

CULTURE

The people of Holmgard regard the Feast of Fehmarn as an important festival; they also have a yearly fest of the defeat of Vashna by Ulnar I. Travelling players repeat the Battle of Maakengorge through drama and plays, some with audience participation. There are weeklong revels and celebrations and many songs are sung of the heroism and heroes of that time. This festival known as Ulnar's Glory is a time for tests of skill and mock battles. Many of the young people of the city gather as two opposing factions outside of Holmgard, with the city's chosen Ulnar I to lead them. Usually chosen from the most able bodied of the Sommlending youths. They engage each other with wooden weapons and whilst there are no serious injuries during these mock engagements, some bruises and cuts occur. Ulnar's Glory lasts for two weeks and culminates in a massive open air banquet where fine wines, the best quality meats and sumptuous cakes are served. King Ulnar V makes certain the poor are given a cut of everything.

SOCIETY

The Council

These are the people who take King Ulnar V's law and letter, they debate his rulings almost constantly, it is a wonder that anything is ever done. Of course the king only treats them as an advisory group. He listens to his closest advisors and makes judgement calls on every aspect of his city. In that respect, he is extremely hands on. They have fine clothes, eat some of the best food and drink the most exquisite wines in the city.

Lord Mayor Lindyn

He looks after the day-to-day running of the city, passing everything by the king.

Lindyn is an ambitious Sommlending man who has always dreamed of being a Knight of Sommerlund. He lacks the martial skill and the bravery to commit to such a life. So he chose the safety of the stone walls of Holmgard.

The King's Guard

Under the watchful eye of Captain Remir D'Val, the King's Guard keep a close eye on King Ulnar V as well as the city in general. They are the defacto law in the city and whilst the city watch police the streets, Remir D'Val's regiment are called upon in times of war to defend the king and his people.

The Holmgard City Watch

Second to the King's Guard, the city watch are under the command of Kathryn Avan, a fire-brand of a woman with a wicked temper. She hails from Durenor and came to Holmgard to find employment. She quickly rose to command the city watch and respects D'Val and his men greatly.

The Nobility

The upper echelons of society attend lavish parties; they throw grand masquerade balls and look down their noses at everyone below them. The noble elite of Holmgard jostle for position constantly in the king's favour. They are a bunch of backstabbing and tricky individuals who make deals under the table. Some are even known to employ private mercenary armies. These freelance warriors have come under the scrutiny of King Ulnar V and he is pondering levying extra tax or calling to have the armies disbanded.

The Middle Class

These are the people who make the city live and breathe, whilst the nobles are rubbing shoulders with each other and cooing at the latest fashionable shoes, the working men and women of Holmgard are basically toiling to keep them in a lifestyle they are accustomed to. They are the tinkers, the tailors, the dock workers, the bakers and the iron mongers. They are every other social stratum in the city except for the dregs of society that are poor and homeless, those who live in the slums. The Middle Class of Holmgard have a good life and they often want for nothing. They respect their

king and trust his laws, there are very few dissidents and outspoken loud voices tend to gather the attention of Remir D'Val or Kathryn.

The Poor

They do not want handouts, or so they say, yet you can find them on every street corner, begging cup in hand. These are the people who have no home or live in meagre surroundings; they eat the worst cuts of meat and most survive by preying on travellers and each other. The slums are a lawless place and cut-throats have moved in to bleed the people ever drier. It is only a matter of time before the king turns his attention to these folk, roots them out and removes the problem forcefully. He has not yet taken action because so far the thieves and cut-throats have kept their operations confined to the slums and have not yet branched out into the city proper.

GOVERNMENT & LAW

The city makes the laws that the rest of Sommerlund follows. There are massive dungeons beneath the Royal Keep and the guard houses to house prisoners. The Crown takes a dim view of deception, especially when applied to a royal personage or a servant of the king. These kinds of crimes can carry a hefty fine, jail time and in some cases execution. Murder is punished by public execution at one of the guard houses and the body is taken, burned and the flames of Kai are said to purge the evil within the soul of the accused. Theft incurs

various penalties from branding, curfew, magical tagging and imprisonment. The theft of royal property may well ensure that the offender never sees the light of day again.

ECONOMY

Holmgard exports ships from its vast shipyard industry, along with iron ore, gold, silver, gems, minerals and platinum from the local mines. It has a secondary export of agricultural goods, refined flour from the mill and timber from many a stout Sommlending tree. The oceans around Holmgard give the city a vital source of food and a tertiary export: Holmgard Freshwater Cod. It imports luxury goods for the nobility, fine silks from Dessi, Lencian wine and Durenese Cheese from the City of Port Bax. It also imports tools and a vast quantity of rope because of the shipbuilding industry.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS / REGIONAL RELATIONS

Holmgard maintains a good relationship with all of the villages, towns, cities in Sommerlund. It is a major ally of Durenor and especially of the City known as Port Bax. It acts as a key defence against the Darklords and opposes Vassagonia, unable to forget the Black Zakharn's actions during the years prior to the Age of Magnamund. Holmgard also has trade links with Cloesia, Dessi and Lencia.



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TL7 + Conditioned Soldier Traveller Career

By James 'Grim' Desborough

Conditioned Soldiers are those who are exposed to the absolute, hardest training and psychological preparation known to sentience. Almost all humanity is stripped away leaving a conditioned and controlled killing machine with all the subtlety of a brick. Most sentient species have a degree of empathy for other intelligent beings and 'wince' at harming them, so much so that this is a real problem for militaries who try to train a kill-response into their soldiers so that they fire without thinking. Conditioned Soldiers take this a step further, creating conscienceless, functioning sociopaths that have no compunctions about killing – or sometimes dying – and as a result are all the more deadly.

Enlistment: Fanatics can come from any walk of life but must roll End 6+ to enter the career. The Excised can either be born and raised to it, automatically entering but being unable to choose any other career until they exit, otherwise they must come from a Military or Agent career and roll End 8+ to enter. Manchurians must have completed a previous Military or Agent career tour and roll End 8+.

Assignments:

Choose one of the following

Fanatic:

Fanatics are so devoted to a religion or an ideology that their own personalities and sense of worth are completely suborned to the political or spiritual system that they advocate. Fanatics are capable of great feats of heroism and foolhardiness where their own personal safety does not even come into the equation. Everything is given up to the cause.

Excised:

The Excised are people who have had their normal human psychological values of empathy, fellow feeling and conscience severely truncated through deliberate traumatisation, meme-implantation and medical, chemical or cybernetic tinkering. The Excised are high-functioning sociopaths with increased levels of obedience and in-group loyalty to compensate but they are, in essence, leashed serial killers. The ultimate cold-hearted killers.

Manchurian:

Manchurians are programmed with deep, subliminal, hypnotic or psychic conditioning to switch them from their docile, public personas to that of a deep-seated and hidden killer personality. Manchurians can be triggered remotely by their controllers or others who know the necessary triggers – usually a nonsense phrase calculated not to be uttered by accident – or by being placed in dangerous situations where their survival is threatened. A Manchurian may not even be aware that they are one until their training kicks in.

Manchurians gain a 'double' skill set, their Manchurian skills not being accessible unless their Manchurian personality kicks in, the other skill set typically coming from a low key career path and forming their cover. The skill table presumes a Citizen (worker) cover identity but others can be assumed. When rolling, the Manchurian's skills should be noted separately from the cover personality skills. Manchurian mustering out benefits come from their cover identity. The gains they get from being a Manchurian are held, secretly and only accessible to the Manchurian personality.

Skills and Training:

Roll	Personal Development	Service Skills
1	+1 Str	Athletics (any)
2	+1 Dex	Gun Combat (any)
3	+1 End	Explosives
4	Gun Combat (any)	Melee (any)
5	Melee (any)	Stealth
6	Athletics (any)	Jack of All Trades

Roll	Fanatic	Excised	Manchurian
1	Athletics (any)	Athletics (any)	Athletics (any) / Drive (any)
2	Deception	Gun Combat (any)	Gun Combat (any) / Mechanic
3	Explosives	Melee (any)	Melee (any) / Trade (any)
4	Gun combat (any)	Battle Dress	Stealth / Engineer (any)
5	Melee (any)	Heavy Weapons	Deception / Trade (any)
6	Leadership	Survival	Survival / Science (any)

Ranks and Benefits:

Roll	Rank	Skill or Benefit
0	Military and Agent background advance by rank title within their parent careers. Fanatics have no formal ranking.	
1		Gun Combat (any) 1
2		
3		Melee (any) 1
4		
5		Athletics (any) 1
6		

Mishaps:

Roll	Mishap
1	Severely injured on an operation. (This is the same as a result of 2 on the Injury table). Alternatively, roll twice on the Injury table (<i>Traveller Core Rulebook</i> page 37) and take the lower result.
2	A rival group tries to extract you. If you go along with them you leave the career path immediately without benefit. Refuse and you fight them, rolling twice on the Injury table and taking the lower result. You also gain an Enemy and a level in any skill of your choice.
3	The intense training and mental programming does something harmful to your brain, severely limiting your mental faculties. Lose a point of Int.
4	Regular soldiers and agents do not like conditioned soldiers, nor do regular folk, gain an Enemy from your own side.
5	Your conditioning breaks down in public and you turn on your friends or family – if you have any – or an innocent bystander. Roll twice on the Injury table for them and gain them as an Enemy.
6	Injured. Roll on the Injury table.

Events:

2d6	Events
2	Disaster! Roll on the mishap table but you are not ejected from this career.
3	You get involved in a difficult operation. Roll 8+ on any of your career skills and if you succeed raise that skill by 1, otherwise roll on the Mishap table.
4	You successfully complete an operation to your superior's satisfaction. Gain a +1 DM to either your next Benefit roll or your next Advancement roll.
5	You are linked with others like yourself in a decentralised network. Gain 1d3 Contacts like yourself.
6	You are given advanced training/conditioning to hone you to a fine edge. Roll End 8+ to raise Str, Dex or End by 1.
7	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events table (<i>Traveller Core Rulebook</i> page 34).
8	You are given advanced training to raise your skills and abilities. Roll Edu 8+ to raise an existing skill by 1.
9	Exemplary performance earns you a +2 DM to your next Advancement check.
10	You are given supplementary training specific to your mission, gain a new skill at 1.
11	A superior takes a special interest in your career, either gain them as an Ally or take a +4 DM to your next Advancement roll due to their patronage.
12	You take part in a major operation and come through unscathed and lending credence to the whole programme. You are automatically promoted.

Career Progress

	Survival	Advancement
Fanatic	End 8+	End 6+
Excised	End 7+	End 7+
Manchurian	Int 6+	Int 7+

TL7 + Conditioned Soldier

Mustering Out Benefits

Roll	Cash	Benefits
1	1,000	Weapon
2	4,000	+1 End
3	8,000	Combat Implant
4	9,000	One ship share
5	10,000	Contact
6	40,000	Ally
7	75,000	Two ship shares

Will to Kill

Capability is only one part of the equation in how much harm one human being can do to another, being willing to shoot, to punch, to break, to cripple, these are as – if not more – important. All conditioned soldiers do an extra point of damage against living targets with any weapon or with their bare hands.

Manchurians

Manchurians are a little more complex than other career paths, particularly where it comes to their skill sets and their mustering out benefits. To help clarify an example follows:

Ben completes a tour as a Corporate Agent and then a tour as a Manchurian.

Ben's skills:
Computers 1
Streetwise 1
Drive (wheeled) 1
Investigate 1
Recon 0
Gun Combat (slug pistol) 1
Deception 1

Manchurian Skills:
Athletics 0
Stealth 1
Gun Combat (slug pistol) 1
Melee (blade) 1

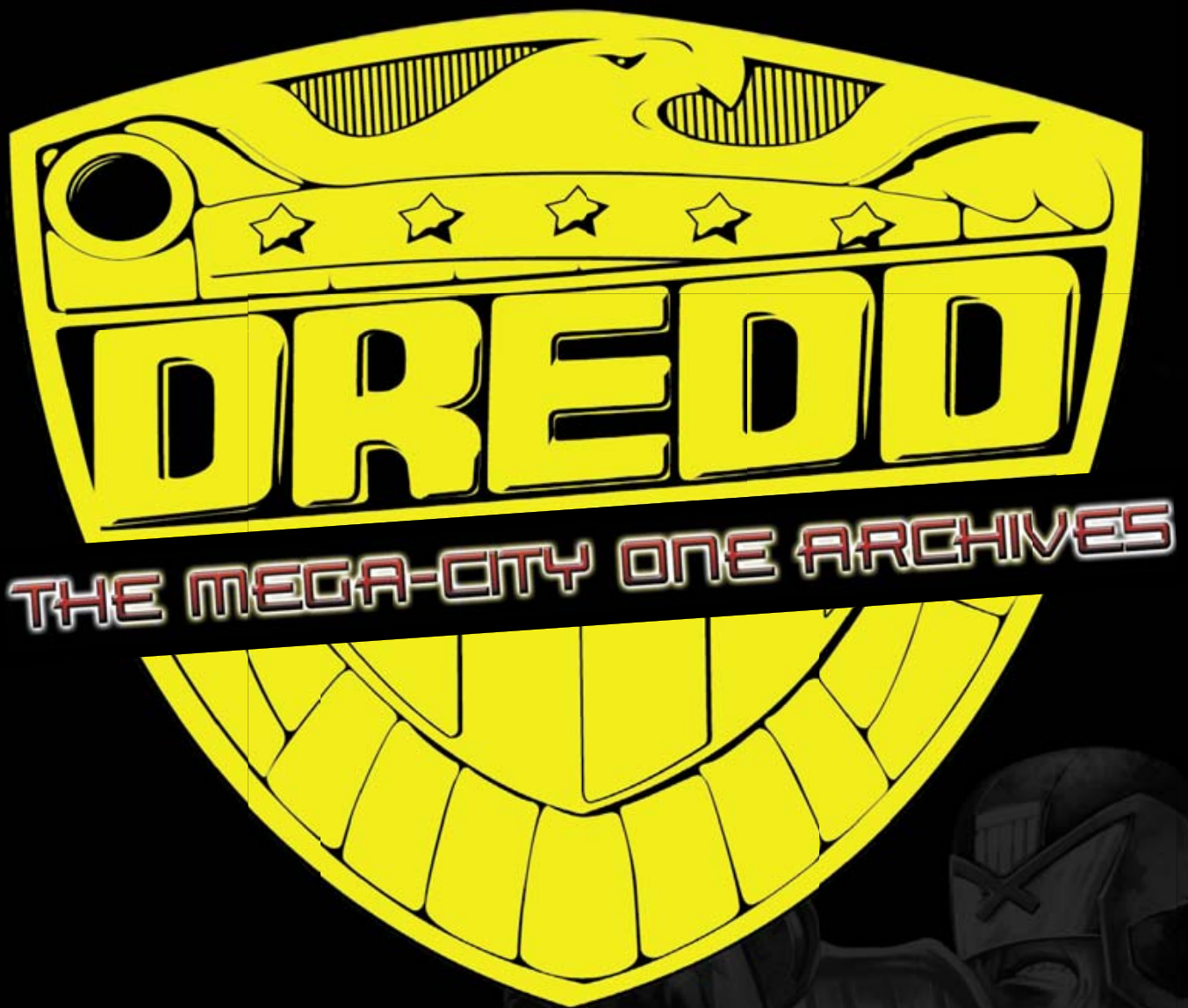
Cover Identity Skills:
Trade 0
Mechanic 2

His Cover Identity skills integrate with his pre-existing skills, so they are available all the time. He can add Trade and Mechanic to his repertoire.

His Manchurian skills are only available when he is triggered but they do add to his main identity skills cumulatively. When activated he gains access to Athletics, Stealth and Melee (blade) and his Gun Combat (slug pistol) skill *increases* to 2.

As a Corporate Agent he left their service with 5,000 credits.

When he leaves service as a Manchurian he leaves with 10,000 credits from his cover identity, for a total of 15,000 credits. His Manchurian identity is implanted with a Combat Implant but it only operates when his Manchurian identity is activated.



Volume I: The Justice Department

This volume takes you on a guided tour of the only power great enough to keep the peace in a world gone mad. Within these pages, the training of new Judges is described, luminaries and notable members are discussed and the procedures that maintain effectiveness and discipline are revealed. This book covers the Justice Department from Sector Houses to sequestered archives, from the mechanical miracles of Tek-Div to the world-shaping decisions of the Council of Five and the Chief Judge. Here are the halls of power. Here is where rules are made.

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TL6 + Information Warfare Specialist Traveller Career

By James 'Grim' Desborough

An information warfare specialist deals with the sphere of information in war. As well as simply hacking computers this might also include operating remotes, processing intelligence via computer, scrambling signals, planting false information and generally knowing the ins and outs of high technology electronic warfare weaponry. Information warfare specialists have to be adaptable, learning to cope with new countermeasures or alien and different computer systems as rapidly as possible to translate informational disadvantages into advantages swiftly.

Enlistment: Intelligence 8+, must have completed a tour as a Scholar or Rogue in addition to a military tour or a pirate/rebellion oriented life event or career as well as Computer at 0+.

Assignments:

Choose one of the following

Combat Hacker:

Combat hackers are strictly limited to computer interactions but they are the very best at subverting and controlling computer systems, extracting data from them or repurposing them to their own ends. A Combat Hacker has a suite of programmes and adaptive electronics systems at their disposal and must – by necessity – learn the base principles of a number of different computing systems to have any chance of delving into non-standard computer archives and programs.

EW Specialist:

An Electronic Warfare Specialist's remit is even broader than that of the Combat Hacker. As well as retrieving data from

enemy systems the Electronic Warfare Specialist also needs to learn how to detect leaked signals and scan interference from different sensor suites and how to assault, baffle or hide from enemy scanners and sensor sweepers. A good Electronic Warfare Specialist can blind and cripple an enemy ship or war machine before a single shot is even fired.

SIGINT Specialist:

A Signals Intelligence Specialist is all about intercepting and decoding enemy signals and chatter, breaking their ciphers, tracing their locations and using drones, satellites and other means to track down enemies, pinpoint their locations and project their movements. Signals Intelligence Specialists are also charged with securing their own side's signals, protecting them from interception and encrypting them in creative ways so that they cannot be understood.

Skills and Training:

Roll	Personal Development	Service Skills
1	+1 Int	Comms
2	+1 Edu	Computers
3	Computers	Engineer (electronics)
4	Comms	Investigate
5	Engineer (electronics)	Remote Operations
6	Science (electronics)	Science (electronics)

Roll	Combat Hacker	EW Specialist	SIGINT Specialist
1	Computers	Comms	Comms
2	Deception	Computers	Computers
3	Engineer (Electronics)	Engineer (electronics)	Engineer (electronics)
4	Investigate	Science (electronics)	Remote Operations
5	Persuade	Sensors	Sensors
6	Science (electronics)	Tactics	Tactics

Ranks and Benefits:

Roll	Rank	Skill or Benefit
0	—	—
1	—	—
2	Specialist 3 rd Class	Computers 1
3	—	—
4	Specialist 2 nd Class	Comms 1
5	—	—
6	Specialist 1 st Class	Tactics 1

Mishaps:

Roll	Mishap
1	You are arrested along with some other hackers. Lose one benefit roll and you must take the Draft in your next career – if any.
2	An electronic infiltration goes wrong, forcing you to flee the planet. Gain one of Deception 1, Stealth 1 or Gun Combat (any) 1.
3	You form a rivalry with another Info War specialist, gain an Enemy.
4	You are injured in a deep strike or terrorist bombing of your Ops centre. Roll on the Injury table.
5	You are exposed to powerful ECM signals, gain 3d6 rads.
6	You are regarded as a sell out or traitor to the electronic underground. Lose a Contact or Ally who becomes an Enemy.

Events:

2d6	Events
2	Disaster! Roll on the Mishap table but you are not ejected from this career.
3	You are put in the position of working against former friends or allies. Accept and gain an extra Benefit roll, a level in Computer and Comms and 1d3 Enemies.
4	You are inserted into a frontline unit to provide electronic support. Gain one of Gun Combat (any) or Survival.
5	You are given special training. Roll Education 8+ to raise any skill listed in the Skills & Training tables for your career by +1.
6	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events table (<i>Traveller Core Rulebook</i> page 34).
7	You code some essential software that becomes part of the combat suite of your faction. Gain a +2 DM to your next advancement check.
8	You stumble upon some compromising information about a politician or a ranking member of the military. You can hand it over to them and gain a +2 DM to your next advancement check and an extra Benefit, or you can hold onto it, holding it over them to gain them as an Ally.
9	You are mentored by one of the greats of the electronic underground. Increase any of your existing career skills by 1 or take a +4 DM to your next Advancement roll due to his advocacy of your ability.
10	You are brought in to work on a strange alien computer in an attempt to decrypt what is inside it. Roll Intelligence 8+ to raise your Int or Edu by 1.
11	You intercept some key intelligence resulting in an extra Benefit roll as a reward and a +2 DM to your next Advancement roll.
12	You are involved in a legendary operation, you are automatically promoted.

Career Progress

	Survival	Advancement
Combat Hacker	Int 7+	Social 7+
EW Specialist	Int 6+	Edu 7+
SIGINT Specialist	Int 6+	Int 7+

Mustering Out Benefits

Roll	Cash	Benefits
1	3,000	+1 Intelligence
2	8,000	+1 Education
3	12,000	Computer Equipment
4	20,000	Electronics Equipment
5	30,000	One ship share
6	50,000	Two ship shares
7	75,000	Two ship shares

Review to a Kill

By Lawrence Whitaker

Background

Macauley Sibber is the extraordinarily wealthy, serious 'ac-TOR' who starred in several money-spinning plays and theatre-casts including 'Shakespeare: The Mutie', 'Oops – There Go My Y-Fronts' and 'Prejudice and Pride'. Attracting modest reviews and notices, he eventually ploughed several million Credits into his one man touring version of 'Grundicus: A Parable', a 19-hour, intermission-less play in which Sibber portrayed all 417 speaking parts. The tour took-in some 15 separate worlds and divided the critics. They were *united* on how bloody awful the whole thing was; they were *divided* on whether or not Sibber should be hunted-down and punished for inflicting such awfulness on a fee-paying public. In the end, none of the members of the Pan-Galactic Critics Guild (PGCP) could be bothered to hire the hit-man so often discussed and simply confined themselves to vilifying Macauley Sibber in print and news-casts.

The most polite of these news-casts and reviews described Sibber as: 'A megalomaniac, talentless, pretentious, insipid, spineless and pointless tosser who was regularly out-acted by his own underwear.' (Fforbes Reynolds Fforbes, *Galactic Arts Review*); the worst was: 'What a ***** pile of ***** mork ****. Sibber is a ***** **** and should have his ***** sandpapered red-raw with an industrial grinder for inflicting this steaming pile of **** on an innocent public. Burn the bastard.' (Morley Sheraton, *Talent Magazine*).

All seven members of the PGCP have published scathing – nay, libellous – reviews of the play with the result that the remaining 18 performances have been cancelled by nervous promoters and theatre owners. Sibber has lost millions in the process but far more hurtful is the scalding damnation of the critics. Sibber has been tipped over the edge. Abandoning his tour he has decided to

take revenge by murdering each and every one of the critics who have insulted him. Caractacus Glyff was nail-gunned to his kitchen table and had barbecue skewers inserted into various orifices, before being force-fed a paper copy of his review. Quentin Knotts was eviscerated with the knife he used to sharpen his favoured goose-quills and Henrietta Flymow simply got her head blown-off with a hand-cannon whilst relaxing in the bath. Sibber has not bothered to disguise the fact that he is behind these killings and, as a result, now has a D/A Warrant for Cr.300,000 on his head.

Last Visual Sighting

Henrietta Flymow was the last victim. She occupied an opulent penthouse in the Cedus Prime (Core Worlds 0103) city of Stratford-Upon-Cedus. Sibber was caught on security tri-vid gaining access to the penthouse disguised as a fast food delivery man (Flymow was addicted to pizza) and Flymow's own internal security camera preparing the hand-cannon whilst she prepared to bathe. Sibber's guilt is not in any doubt because, after blowing Henrietta's head off, he addressed the camera and delivered a rambling oration on the follies and the evils of negative criticism.

The remaining four critics of the PGCP all live in Colony Worlds Sector A.

Fforbes Reynolds Fforbes – Barios 3 (Vantage City Dome)

Morley Sheraton – Rojus Minor; Zunderland (Vincent Price Megablock)

Uffington Bliss – Valdez I (Neo-Barcelona Arcology)

Zebediah Pearson-Sampfire-Nugent – Valdez I (Neo-Barcelona Arcology, co-habiting with Uffington Bliss).

Given the speed with which communications cross the sectors but more importantly, the fact that none of these critics ever pay any attention to

the news, they are blissfully unaware that Macauley Sibber is hunting them and that three of their number are already dead.

The natural tactic is to visit each of the critics on Sibber's hit list in the hope of either warning them or arriving in time to apprehend Sibber before or after he commits murder. Either way, it's a case of Pot Luck as to which Sibber pursues first and whether or not the Strontium Dogs also make the right choice.

Note that the warrant is D/A: he is to be taken alive preferably, to stand trial for his crimes. Dead yields only half the bounty.

The Strontium Dogs receive a full briefing from the Dog House: all the information from the Background; clips of Sibber's performances (excruciatingly bad to watch); the full text of all the reviews and addresses for each critic. Anything else they need to establish using their own skills. The one piece of information missing from the briefing is the existence of Tamara Potemkin: she has managed to slip under the GCC radar and is not suspected as an accomplice.

Sibber's Tactics

As an experienced stage actor, Sibber is used to donning costumes and make-up: he is, to be frank, a master of disguise. He only falls into his own persona in moments of privacy; otherwise he inhabits one of many personalities drawn from one of the 417 separate characters from 'Grundicus: A Parable'. The only thing he cannot disguise is his height – which, whilst not of mutant proportions is striking. Sibber stands six feet seven inches and is somewhat gangly. Otherwise, he can, with the aid of make up and a portable Face Changer box, assume any male disguise he cares to choose. His talent for mimicry is first-rate and so spotting Sibber comes down to a mixture of luck and knowing that he is rather tall.

Sibber has no immediate plan as to who to kill next. Roll 1d6:

- 1–2 Fforbes Reynolds Fforbes
- 3–4 Morley Sheraton
- 5–6 Uffington Bliss and Zebediah Pearson-Sampfire-Nugent

If the Strontium Dogs coincide with their choice of who to stake out or approach, then the scenario could become somewhat shorter or the Referee can simply switch Sibber's tactics: bear in mind his capacity for disguise and the fact that he knows he is a wanted man – he may well spot Strontium Dogs before they spot him.

The sections that follow outline the encounters the Strontium Dogs may have when visiting each of the critics – which is a sensible thing to do if they wish to track their warrant. These encounter sections detail the characters of the critics, how they react to the Strontium Dogs, news of Sibber's vendetta and how Sibber treats them, should the Strontium Dogs not get to them before Sibber does.

Note that Sibber uses commercial space lanes and space liners. He has considerable credit, numerous false identities and the ability to worm his way through tight security – not that security in Sector A is especially tight anyway...

If Sibber is Cornered

There is not doubting that Sibber is mad. He has been border-line insane (egomaniacal with schizophrenic and sociopathic tendencies) for years but the bad reviews have tipped him over the edge. He will not rest until he has killed all four remaining critics and if the Strontium Dogs apprehend him, or get close to apprehending him, before he has killed the last of the critics, he fights hard and dirty to harm the Dogs and make good his escape.

As a trained actor Sibber is capable with a fencing rapier and, after a role in the long-running police vid series 'Dirty Corrigan', he can handle a palm cannon; but he is no weapon master. Sibber's profile is as follows:

Macauley Sibber, Insane Serial Killing Actor

Str 6 (+0), Dex 9 (+1), End 8 (+0), Int 10 (+1), Edu 9 (+1), Soc 9 (+1)

Skills: Art (Acting) 2, Art (Disguise) 2, Broker 1, Carouse 1, Computers 0, Deception 1, Gun Combat (Combination Weapons) 0, Jack of All Trades 0, Melee (Blade) 1, Persuade 2, Stealth 0, Streetwise 0.

Equipment: Stage make-up, Portable Face Changer, Credit Chip charged with MCr 1.5, Palm Cannon (Heavy Blaster 6d6+4; Slug Pistol 3d6–3), Leatherene Shoulder and Leg Pads (5 Armour), Vibro-Blade Fencing Rapier (4d6+4), Travelling Chest holding a wide assortment of different costumes (too big to carry so usually left in his hotel room).

Sibber is accompanied by his Theatrical Agent/Manager/Lover, Tamara Potemkin. Besotted with Sibber's greatness she has colluded with him thus far, helping to track-down the critics, keep them under surveillance whilst Sibber plots his murder and making all necessary travel arrangements/getaway plans. She shares Sibber's hatred of the critics and in her love for him is prepared to go to any lengths to ensure he completes this, his 'Greatest Performance'. Sibber loves her too but his desire for revenge is greater than that love and he is willing to sacrifice Tamara in order to complete his litany of murder.

Tamara Potemkin, Besotted Theatrical Agent

Str 7 (+0), Dex 6 (+0), End 4 (–1), Int 10 (+1), Edu 11 (+2), Soc 8 (+0)

Skills: Admin 2, Art (Theatre) 1, Broker 2, Deception 1, Gun Combat (Pistol) 0, Streetwise 1

Equipment: Hand computer, Body Pistol (3d6–3), Leatherene Body Sash (4 Armour).

Tamara benefits from Sibber's disguise capabilities and stage costumes; thus she can, like him, take on a variety of roles

although she has not the true skill to pull-off convincing impersonations.

Fforbes Reynolds Fforbes

Head of the PGCP, Fforbes Reynolds Fforbes lives in a private villa in Barios 3's Vantage City Dome. From here he commands an extensive vid-cast career where he is an arts and culture pundit on many popular tri-d arts programmes and is much in demand as an after-dinner speaker, wit and raconteur. From wealthy Earth stock, Fforbes Reynolds Fforbes is snobbery personified. He considers anyone not of a similar social status to be scum and he is thus, naturally, highly anti-mutant, abhorring them in the same way one might abhor a turd in a swimming pool.

A man of refined tastes and appetites, he surrounds himself with Beautiful People who attend to his faddish whims and indulge his arrogance. A personal dresser ensures he always looks dapper, kitted-out in the most fashionable clothes to fit his enormous frame; three personal assistants manage his diary, arrange his tri-d appearances and filter all his calls; a personal chef prepares gourmet meals at regular intervals and caters for Fforbes' sensitive, refined palette.

Fforbes rarely leaves his villa – a vast, single-storey, bungalow-ranch-style building in the wealthy quarter of Vantage. He lives in a gated community that shields itself from undesirables. Strontium Dogs wanting to gain access to Fforbes, either to warn him or protect him, have to somehow overcome the local security: 1d3+1 massive private security guards armed with standard blasters and 8 points of leatherene armour. For their statistics, use 'Experienced Guard' from page 84 of the *Traveller Core Rulebook*. The guards work from an elaborate gatehouse at the edge of the villa complex (which is surrounded by a four metre-high, electro-field topped wall) and only permit those who have full clearance from one of the gated community's residents. Mutants of any kind are not permitted through the gates and, if forced to, they shoot to disable.

Review to a Kill

Sibber gains access by posing as part of a vid-cast crew. Tamara has managed to arrange an interview for influential culture programme 'The Galaxy Aethete' herself posing as the interviewer and Sibber as her cameraman. Both are disguised: she with blond hair and brown contact lenses, he with a brunette quaff, thick spectacles and a bushy moustache. Their ploy is to gain audience with Fforbes and begin a mock interview which Sibber will record on the tri-d camera they have rented. At an opportune moment, Sibber moves around Fforbes to gain a better angle and attempts to garrotte the critic using a length of optical cord. Once overcome, Sibber takes his time visiting a gruesome revenge on Fforbes: force-feeding him the tri-d camera whilst he quotes back, verbatim, the entire review that has triggered the attack. Tamara watches dispassionately and keeps look-out for any of Fforbes' staff that might try to enter the cavernous library where the interview is being conducted, shooting any would-be heroes with her body pistol. Once the kill is completed, the pair calmly pack away their equipment and leave as they arrived – in a rented hover-van. Their belongings are packed in the vehicle and they head for Vantage spaceport, taking the next available space liner to the next victim (determined randomly).

Fforbes Reynolds Fforbes, Leading Art Critic

Fforbes is a short, rotund man with a cherubic face, a mop of unruly blond curls and a penchant for dressing as a Roman senator, complete with toga and crimson robes. He waddles rather than walks and is frequently out of breath. His arrogance is amazing in its levels: just about everything is worthy of his disdain and contempt, although he holds back his invective where physically attractive young men and women are concerned. To him, physical beauty is an indication of the purity of the soul and he likes to surround himself with physically perfect specimens so that his discerning eye is never offended. All his personal staff are surgically enhanced figures of physical excellence, all dressed in the same faux-Roman style he himself favours.

Str 5 (-1), Dex 3 (-1), End 9 (+1), Int 11 (+1), Edu 11 (+1), Soc 11 (+1)

Skills: Art (Appreciation and Criticism) 3, Carouse 2, Diplomat 0.

Morley Sheraton

Morley Sheraton lives in the Vincent Price Megablock on the planet of Zunderland in Rojus Minor. Here he teaches literature, drama and criticism at the Zunderland University and regularly uses Macauley Sibber performances as 'How Not To...' examples in his lectures and seminars. His classes are wildly popular.

The university occupies two entire levels of the Vincent Price Megablock and Sheraton has a couple of rooms in the staff quarters on the upper level. Most of his time, however, is spent in classes and lecture theatres, or in the Marlon Brando Bar and Grill, a popular haunt of students and lecturers, where impromptu recitals, performances and lunch-time and evening plays are staged. Sheraton is frequently in attendance, passing critical judgement on these presentations whilst his sycophantic students gather around, hanging on every lugubriously framed put-down.

It is the Marlon Brando Bar and Grill where Sibber chooses to stage his execution of Sheraton – and his cadre of fawning students. A private rendition of Sheraton's favourite comedy classic, 'The Parrot Sketch' is to be staged in the Grill's private dining chamber. Tamara, disguised as a dowdy old woman will play the pet shop owner and Sibber, dressed in a cheap plastic coat, outrageous sideburns and carrying a dead, stuffed parrot, will play the disgruntled customer. A dining table forms the pet shop counter over which the sketch is performed. The dead parrot is filled with a paralysing gas that will be released at the climax of the sketch, when Sibber repeatedly hammers the deceased parrot on the pet shop counter. Both Tamara and Sibber wear tiny, almost invisible, respirators.

The gas takes effect within 1d3 Combat Rounds, paralysing anyone failing an End 10+ roll (assume that Sheraton and his group of eight students all fail the roll). The effects last for 1d3 hours – more than enough time for Sibber to do what he needs to. Starting with the students, he works through them, one-by-one, blasting their kneecaps off with his palm cannon. In the main Bar and Grill area, loud music muffles the sound of the shots – and, of course, the injured cannot scream as their vocal cords are paralysed – although either an Int 10+ or Recon 9+ roll will pick-up on the dull thuds of a weapon discharge. When he reaches Sheraton (his eyes filled with terror), Sibber whips-off his disguise and switches to his fencing rapier, which he uses to slice away fingers, toes, nose and ears before using the rapier's tip to carve into Sheraton's forehead the words 'This is An Ex-Critic'. He then ends Sheraton's miserable life by driving the rapier through his left eye. Deed done, Tamara and Sibber dispense with their Parrot Sketch disguises, pull-on clothes in the latest student fashion (long, dour, trench-coats and beanie hats) and exit through the main grill area where the diners continue to eat oblivious to the carnage (until the paralysis gas wears off and the maimed students are able to freely scream in agony).

Morley Sheraton, Senior Lecturer in Drama and Critical Studies

Small and stocky, Sheraton compensates for his lack of stature with a voice that sounds like a crack of thunder and a dirty, guffawing laugh that resembles the braying of an especially sarcastic donkey. His teeth resemble ivory tombstones and his black hair is slicked-back to expose a wide, curiously wrinkle-free forehead.

Sheraton adores adulation – especially from students. Those who adore him the most are admitted into his inner-circle, which means they get to trail around after him, collecting the pearls of his freely dispensed wisdom and knowledge and join-in his sarcastic demolition of any performance or artistic work that does not meet the approval of his hyper-

critical eye. As one astute pupil noted, after being rejected from this inner circle, 'That Sheraton... he's a *picky twat*.'

Str 6 (+0), Dex 5 (-1), End 5 (-1), Int 12 (+2), Edu 12 (+2), Soc 9 (+1)

Skills: Admin 1, Art (Drama) 2, Art (Criticism) 3, Art (Media Studies) 2, Broker 1, Carouse 1

Uffington Bliss and Zebediah Pearson-Sampfire-Nugent

Uffington Bliss and Zebediah Pearson-Sampfire-Nugent share a condominium in the Neo-Barcelona Arcology on Valdez I. So enamoured with each other, they have had their faces surgically altered so that they resemble twins, each having a face that is an amalgam of their own and the other's. It makes for a disturbing mix.

Both are failed actors turned critics. They both appeared with Sibber in a touring version of 'Shakespeare: The Mutie' and tried desperately to act Sibber off the stage, thus creating an age-old rivalry that has culminated in their scathing review of Sibber's seminal work. Naturally they have to pay.

The two go everywhere together, dress in the same style of clothing, eat the same food and try to think the same thoughts. Usually this ends in bickering and, sometimes, fisticuffs as their individual personalities emerge. Such spats are short-lived and it is never long before the two are as inseparable as before.

They manage their own troupe of actors based in Neo-Barcelona, restaging classics from Earth's dramatic past in several theatres scattered throughout the immense, mountain-side arcology. Their latest production is their own version of 'Don Quixote' with Sancho Panza portrayed as a mutant: the pair are actively casting for the part offering what few mutants live in Neo-Barcelona the opportunity to audition.

They are looking for the most grotesque mutant they can possibly find and have, naturally, fallen out over the potential choices. The part is still un-cast and Uffington and Zebediah are not, currently, on speaking terms, communicating with each other solely by mime.

Sibber's plan here is to disguise himself as a mutant and audition for the part himself. Using make-up and prosthetics he grafts a fake face onto his upper chest and left shoulder achieving reasonably life-like results, whilst changing his own face to something wart-covered and scaly. Meanwhile, Tamara has been following both Uffington and Zebediah to gauge their movements and establish when would be the best time for the execution. Sibber wants the two together and, presently, such is their huff, they are steadfastly avoiding each other save for the casting sessions being held at the theatre they have rented for the 'Don Quixote' performance.

Sibber has concealed his palm cannon beneath the shoulder face prosthetic. He makes for a convincing mutant; pathetic and fawning. It will be difficult for real mutants to immediately notice the difference. His intention is to go through the audition and await the two's verdict (which will be delivered in mime, as they are still not talking). He then intends to whip-out his gun and shoot the two of them in their perfectly morphed faces. As Uffington and Zebediah are likely to end-up arguing over Sibber's performance (Uffington hates it; Zeb loves it), they will be unaware of their pending fate. Sibber, whilst the two are busy arguing silently, calmly extricates his blaster from the mouth of the prosthetic face, takes careful aim and starts firing.

If the Strontium Dogs successfully intervene, saving the two men, they snap out of their disagreement and unanimously agree that the ugliest, most bizarre Strontium Dog present is utterly perfect for the part of Sancho Panza, offering it on the spot at a payment of Cr1,000 per month (a quarter of the Acting Guild minimum wage, but hey! This is a mutant who should be grateful). If the Strontium Dogs do not intervene, then

Sibber shoots both of them and arranges the bodies in a bizarre embrace, a copy of their review taped over the gaping face wounds.

Uffington Bliss and Zebediah Pearson-Sampfire-Nugent, Vain Impressarios

The two men are of similar height and build with dark, Latin skin and thick curls of black hair. Their faces, identical in every way, are curiously expressionless and it is impossible to tell them apart save for the fact that Uffington is ever so slightly taller. Vain and preening, the two indulge their own vanity incessantly but are quite sympathetic to others save when it comes to matters of style, grooming and acting excellence. In the latter regard they are fiercely competitive and, whilst lousy actors themselves, have a genuine knack for finding talent in others.

The two men have the same game statistics.

Str 9 (+1), Dex 9 (+1), End 7 (+0), Int 8 (+0), Edu 9 (+1), Soc 9 (+1)

Skills: Art (Acting) 0, Art (Mime) 1, Art (Theatre Direction) 2, Broker 1, Deception 0, Melee (Unarmed) 0

Running This Scenario

Review to a Kill can be run in several ways but two immediately suggest themselves:

- Use just one of the encounters as the basis for the Strontium Dogs to attempt to apprehend Sibber, ignoring the others.
- As a succession of encounters with the Strontium Dogs arriving either just a little too late, or having Sibber escape using guile or a shoot-out before proceeding to the next kill. At the last of the three encounters Sibber is prepared to attempt to fight his way to an escape but at the last moment, realises that he has completed what he set-out to do and surrenders himself. He treats his surrender as his greatest performance, switching between

Review to a Kill

Strontium DOG

half a dozen dramatic characters (Macbeth, Hamlet, Homer Simpson, Travis Bickle, Bridget Jones and Arnold Schwarzenegger in Terminator mode) to deliver a series of self-righteous soliloquies proclaiming his greatness and the dastardly nature of his critics. Note, however, that Tamara, if she is still at large, will make an attempt to free Sibber, attempting to kill the Strontium Dogs.

If Sibber is mortally wounded he uses the opportunity to die in a dramatic and verbose fashion, thrashing around, recovering numerous times to continue his speech and then, finally expiring with a sigh. If he is taken alive he needs to be returned to the Dog House so that he can then be taken to GCC HQ for trial. During this period of travel he remains in character continually regaling the Strontium Dogs with dreadful re-enactments from countless plays and generally driving them nuts with his incessant babbling. They may be tempted to either kill him or let him lose (forfeiting the bounty if they do) simply to be free of him.

It is possible that the Strontium Dogs may view Sibber with some sympathy. None of the critics he is attempting to murder have a single redeeming quality and, in most cases, display incredible prejudice towards mutants, even when those mutants are trying to save their miserable lives. They may be receiving their just desserts with Sibber's theatrical-brand of justice and it may be that they are willing to forgo the reward. If so, Sibber can offer them half the reward value as a cash payment in gratitude for his release. If so, he vanishes from the sector, starting a new life somewhere else, with Tamara at his side.



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By Pete Nash

RuneQuest II's dynamic combat system gives players and Games Masters a wealth of options to spice up physical conflicts. These new mechanics are based on years of personal observations and experience of armed combat, where fighting is not just a matter of blithely pounding on someone – but rather utilising tactics to disable them with minimum risk to yourself.

Previous editions of the *RuneQuest* rules have basically modelled combat so that characters throw flurries of attacks that strike random locations. Not only was this somewhat unrealistic but it was also fairly bland. Attempting to fight *intelligently* by disarming foes or targeting vulnerable locations, incurred skill penalties, making it a risky gamble.

What we have done with *RuneQuest II* is splice tactics into normal combat by granting them as a bonus for achieving a better level of success over your opponent. Thus there are no penalties for attempting to trip or disarm your enemy; the chance to do it is free and occurs regularly!

Two of the most important refinements to *RQII* combat are *Combat Styles* and *Manoeuvres*. Whilst the base rules allow Player Characters full access to these exciting options, they can be used in even more imaginative ways when using *RuneQuest* for particular settings or genres.

The following sections cover alternative applications of the core rules to enhance the study and use of combat in your campaign.

Condensing Combat Styles

Combat Styles have been introduced to reduce the number of skills needed to become a competent fighter. Previously

it required two separate skills to learn sword and shield fighting, whereas two-handed axe fighting only needed one. To fix this bias, each weapon in a combined form no longer requires a separate skill to master them. Instead all weapons in the combination are treated as a single skill, called a Combat Style.

Thus a character that normally fights with Spear & Shield can now use his style to fight with both together, the spear singularly, or even just a shield; something born out in historical fighting manuals where students were trained to adapt if one of their weapons was lost or broken.

This concept can be taken further however. Games Masters who wish to de-emphasise combat so that their players spend more Improvement Rolls on non-combat skills, can bundle together a range of weapon forms under a *single* Combat Style. To be a proficient warrior throughout history required learning a large number of diverse weapons. So allowing a Combat Style to cover all of a profession's expected weapon forms saves a lot of skill points! A Janissary character for example could be granted the Janissary Combat Style, covering the use of musket, bow, axe, sabre and shield.

Examples for other settings could be:
Ubiquitous City Militia – Halberd, Club, Dirk, Crossbow
Rightness Army Hoplite – Two-Handed Spear, One-handed Spear, Hoplite Shield, Short Sword
Pictland Savage – Bow, Buckler, Handaxe, Club
Mouser's Sailor thieves – Sling, Sword, Dagger, Thrown Dagger
Sengoku Period Samurai – Yumi (bow), Yari (spear), Katana, Naginata, Musket
Granbretanian Beast Mask warrior – Flamelance, Sword, Shield

To keep the bookkeeping easier, the base Characteristics of a condensed Combat Style involving both melee and missile weapons remains as STR+DEX.

Skill Restricted Manoeuvres

The list of combat manoeuvres in *RQII* covers most options possible in battle. Since these are fundamental aspects of fighting, the default rules allow characters to freely select any manoeuvre save those tied to specific weapon types.

Although this allows a great deal of flexibility, some Games Masters may wish to limit the number of manoeuvres known by a PC according to the value of their Combat Style. The rate characters can assimilate new techniques depends on the campaign but a suggested value is one new offensive and defensive manoeuvre per 20% possessed in the Combat Style. This allows a character to dynamically evolve, learning new techniques as their skill improves.

Using this method of progression adds additional roleplaying depth, representing as it does the limited range of tricks and tactics known by a particular tutor, school or cult. For example the Gloranthan cult of Humakt might teach initiates a fighting style based on mobility and finesse, using the manoeuvres *Bleed*, *Bypass Armour*, *Choose Location*, *Disarm Opponent* and *Trip Opponent*. Whereas the cult of Babestor Gor in the Holy Country may teach axe maidens the more brutal offensive manoeuvres of *Bash Opponent*, *Bypass Parry*, *Damage Weapon*, *Maximise Damage* and *Sunder*.

Consequently, opponents from particular cults or schools can be given their own distinct feeling in combat, adding to the atmosphere and incidentally encouraging player commitment to a particular organisation.

Games Masters can even rename manoeuvres to make them more applicable to the setting. An *Elric* campaign using the seven high forms of Melnibonean sabre combat might rename Impale as *Arioch's Claw* and Disarm Opponent to *Xiombarg's Spite* for instance.

The newtling guide looked nervously at Rurik Runespear. 'Be careful bright one, for the troll has secrets stolen from Zorak Zoran and knows the trick of Shadows Cloud Eyes (Blind Opponent) and Pointy Death from Afar (Impale)'. Rurik laughed disdainfully 'That little trollkin runt? We shall see how he fares against Yelmajio's Thrust of Second Coming (Repost). Besides, what can he do with that little spear...?'

Schools and their Secret Techniques

Another fun aspect of the *RQII* rules encourages the teaching of Heroic Abilities by cults, schools or ancient masters. Many of these revised abilities allow warriors to perform superhuman feats akin to those immortalised in Asian wuxia and chanbara genres, from inflicting awesome knockbacks to parrying missile weapon attacks without a shield.

Whilst learning such semi-mystical abilities in Glorantha usually requires a HeroQuest, locating tuition in other less-magical settings can be an epic series of adventures itself – be you a Fremen adept of the *weirdling way* who wishes to learn the *Poison Immunity* ability of prana-bindu, or a travelling *shugyōsha* (*questing samurai*) testing himself with single combat against famous swordsmen in order to discover the *Duelist* talent.

Fighting based Heroic Abilities are powerful, reserved for those who have shown commitment to the tutor or his organisation. Few schools or guilds possess the knowledge of more than a couple of Heroic Abilities, granting them an additional sense of uniqueness and importance. Many Gloranthan sub-cults could be based on a single ability discovered by the cult hero. The Orlanth sub-cult of Mastakos for example may know the HeroQuest granting *Defiant Leap*, allowing initiates to perform incredible jumps in combat, either to flank enemies or augment their weapon damage.

Since such abilities are so potent, they are often cult or school secrets, never revealed to outsiders on pain of retribution. This

can be the perfect basis for adventures, such as the oriental trope of rival students enrolled in the same martial arts school, battling it out between themselves to see who is more worthy of inheriting the master's secret techniques. Keeping these abilities confidential from spies, wandering challengers, or rival schools can be very entertaining.

Terminus Est

Hopefully this article has shown how easy it is to adapt the core *RQII* combat rules for a multitude of genres and settings. They are a rock solid foundation for just about anything your imagination can come up with and Games Masters are enthusiastically encouraged to create their own Combat Styles, Manoeuvres and Heroic Abilities to plug into the framework.

Your *RuneQuest* May Vary!

Ogomi Ishō, master of the Water-Snake style of swordsmanship crouched waist deep in the pool, his blade hidden beneath its ominously dark surface. The leader of the Shadow Naga assassins facing him paused, hissing out a warning. 'Wait, he uses his Wave Cleaving stroke!' Tension built perceptibly as sweat began to bead on the assassins' faces. Then with a rush the first attacked, only to be scythed down by Ogomi's blade now held in his other hand... the perfect stroke disembowelling the shocked warrior.



A Perfect Woman

By Carl Walmsley

This is an investigative adventure for *Judge Dredd* that will tax the character's minds as much as their pistol fingers. The presence of a Tek Judge, or at least a character with respectable technical skills, will prove useful. The action is set within Sector 13 – the default location for *Judge Dredd* campaigns – but could be moved elsewhere with a little work.

Introduction

Franklyn Nathaniel Stein is a robotics genius. Aged four, he re-programmed his family's robo-chef so that it would only produce munce-twizzlers; aged six, he tasked all the robo-dogs on his block level to apprehend fat, bearded men dressed in red on Christmas Eve. By the time he was nine Franklyn was building his own robots and so it was no surprise that before he turned 20 his designs were seeing use throughout Mega-City One ensuring that he was already a very rich man.

Unfortunately for Franklyn, all this money did not bring happiness. Despite his almost supernatural understanding of robotics, women remained a complete mystery to him. His attempts to analyse and understand them proved fruitless; his search for the perfect woman with whom he could share his wealth became increasingly desperate.

At the age of 40, the pinnacle of Franklyn's life's work came in the form of A.B.E. 1 – the ultimate robotic butler, companion and bodyguard. 'Abe', as he came to be known, was built to tend to the needs of his master and the perfect woman he still planned to find and marry.

A decade passed – during which time, Franklyn confided in 'Abe' his dwindling hopes of ever finding the woman of his dreams. He became more and more reclusive. 'Abe' did his best to console his master but it was clear that time was running out and that Franklyn's heart was breaking one piece at a time.

Experiencing an acute sense of synthy-compassion for his creator, Abe took it upon himself to locate the perfect woman his master had spent so long searching for. Cross-referencing every comment Franklyn had ever made about the qualities he sought in a partner, Abe soon realised that no single woman would ever be able to live up to such an exacting set of criteria. Therefore, he decided that he would make the perfect woman – not a clumsy robot but an amalgam: a surgical composite comprising of the finest body parts taken from whichever woman 'made the grade', topped off with a robotic brain.

The first part of Abe's plan has already been accomplished. He has acquired the body of a famous sky surfer, Angelina Macpherson. As the adventure begins, he has just stolen the nose of the famous model Stephanie Schnozmeier. This high-profile theft draws the attention of the Justice Department and Judges are sent to interview the victim...

Chapter One: A Nose for Trouble

The adventure begins early one morning with the PC judges on routine patrol near the eastern edges of 'The Big Greasy' overlooking the heavily polluted Delaware River. Much of the river is covered over by decades of Mega-City building work but the PCs are near a stretch left uncovered by the ravages of the Apocalypse War.

Read or paraphrase the following:

You are an hour or so into your shift and so far you've dealt with two tappings, a scrawler and a low level ARV. You are just thinking that things are bound to pick up when you hear frenzied screams coming from the pedway below you. Taking the nearest off-ramp, you move in to investigate.

All of the judges will be able to see a lone female standing beside a line of railings

that overlook the Delaware River (see Map One). Those who manage a Recon or Street Perception 8+ check notice that she seems to be pinned to the railings and is struggling in vain to move away from them.

As the first of the judges draws near, the woman is tugged over the railings of the viewing platform by a long, grasping tongue that is wrapped around her shoulder. An Athletics 7+ check will enable the nearest judge to grab her before she falls – otherwise she tumbles 5 metres to the riverbank below and is knocked unconscious by the fall.

Below the railings, having emerged from the river onto the soggy bank, are several mutated slug-creatures – one for each PC. One of the beasts has its tongue wrapped around the screaming (or perhaps unconscious) woman; another is climbing the wall and has almost made it up onto the pedway. The rest are gathered around the body of the woman's husband, who was pulled over the railings just before the PCs were alerted by the screaming.

The slug-creatures – which move over the land on a series of stunted tentacles – were attracted to the smell of munce sandwiches that the ill-fated couple had included in their picnic. They now seek to devour the munce – and anything touched by it, including the couple's fingers.

If attacked, the slug-creatures will retaliate against their aggressors and are capable of scaling the wall leading to the pedway in a single round. They attack with three rows of sharp teeth and thorny back-spines coated in toxic slime. Only if half their number is slain will they retreat back into the water.

Slug-creatures: Str 9 (+1), Dex 9 (+1), End 8 (+0). Int 6 (+0), Edu –, Soc –

Skills: Athletics (strength) 3, Melee (Natural Weapons) 1

Traits: Shark bite (Natural Weapon), Spines (Natural Weapon)

Weapons: Bite (Melee Natural Weapon) 1d6+2, Spines (Melee Natural Weapon) 1d6, plus contact poison (additional 1d6 damage)

Armour: 2 points of thick hide

It is vital – as will become clear later in the adventure – that the PCs witness the trail of yellow and black sludge left by the movements of the slug-creatures. This comes directly from the polluted shoreline – a location that the adventure’s main villain will visit several times.

Once the PCs have dealt with the slug-creatures, they will be free to tend to the victims of the assault – Martha and Wilston Klunch. If questioned, the Klunchs will reveal that they came to this spot for a quiet lunch. Whether the PCs consider this a stupid thing to have done and charge them with a Code 14: Public Nuisance offence is entirely up to them (see *Judge Dredd*, page 82).

Medical Matters

As soon as this encounter has been resolved, the PCs will receive a message from Sector House Control instructing them to report to the Blessed Lady of Obama Hospital to interview Stephanie Schnozmeier regarding an assault.

Any Judge that passes a Edu 8+ check will remember that Stephanie Schnozmeier is a famous model, best known as ‘the face of Yves Saint L’Oreal’. She has fronted countless advertising campaigns and is widely considered one of the Mega-City’s most beautiful women.

Stephanie Schnozmeier is recuperating in a private room, outside of which stands a newly hired bodyguard. Miss Schnozmeier, clearly shaken by her experience and rigged up to robotic monitoring equipment, has a tellingly flat face-bandage. It seems that her attacker has stolen her nose.

When questioned about the attack, Miss Schnozmeier reveals the following in a slightly nasal voice:

I was at home; I guess it was almost 11. I was just preparing for bed, when the door-intercom rang. It was Mark, my agent – or, at least, it sounded just like him. He said he had something important to talk about, so I buzzed him in.

I opened the door and someone was there. They were wearing a big coat with a hood, so I couldn’t see their face. Whoever it was, they were much taller than Mark. They moved quickly...too quickly for me...I felt something over my face – a cloth I think. I blacked out.

When I came too, I was on the sofa, my face was bandaged and...my nose was gone!

At this point, Miss Schnozmeier will begin to weep uncontrollably and it will be some time before the PCs can get any sense out of her.

The doctor overseeing the case can reveal that Miss Schnozmeier’s nose was removed with surgical precision and then fully bandaged. Whoever did this knew exactly what they were doing.

Mark Reisinger has been Stephanie Schnozmeier’s agent for 12 years. He has a cast-iron alibi for the whole of the previous night, having attended a society function until the early hours of the morning. He also has absolutely no reason to maim his most important client.

Miss Schnozmeier’s address is: Apartment 6, Alain Sucre Lux-Hab (a 10 minute journey from the hospital) and should be the PC’s next port of call. En route, the PCs will be told to talk to another resident of the Hab: Johann Johnson – a man who has just reported a problem with the block’s robo guard dogs.

At some point during the adventure, astute characters might check to see if there have been any other recent body-thefts in the sector. This will reveal that the body of famous female sky-surfer Angelina Macpherson (who recently suffered a brain haemorrhage), was stolen from the Blessed Lady of Obama ICU. She was in a

coma and it was considered unlikely that she would recover. There are no clues as to who was responsible but the theft was audacious and occurred under the noses of the hospital staff.

The Scene of the Crime

The Alain Sucre Lux-Hab is a small structure with only a dozen luxury apartments occupied by wealthy residents. It is protected by a high, electro-topped fence, roving camera drones and four robo guard dogs. These must be navigated before a visitor gets anywhere near the main block, meaning that only those with the appropriate access codes to the outer gate can enter the grounds, activate the intercom and contact the residents – which, according to Miss Schnozmeier is what her attacker did.

Whoever assaulted Stephanie Schnozmeier managed to get over the wall without being seen by the cameras – which is no mean feat. More than that, they managed to deactivate all four of the robo-dogs. This demonstrates a considerable amount of cunning and robotics know-how.

Inside Miss Schnozmeier’s apartment there are no obvious physical clues for the PCs to find. However, if the PCs summon a forensic team (or if one of the PCs is a Tek Judge and has a scanlyser), they will discover traces of chloroform on the hall carpet where Miss Schnozmeier was drugged and subsequently collapsed. There are also stray fibres from an ‘Aberfitchie and Crom’ raincoat. Hundreds of these are sold every day so, other than giving the PCs an idea what the assailant was wearing, it does not provide any further leads.

Johann Johnson

A resident of the block for more than 10 years, Mr Johnson is the inventor of ‘Frosty Whip’ – a brand of ice cream that takes five times longer than normal to melt. That has translated into lots of cold, hard money.

He called the judges after witnessing strange behaviour from two of the

A Perfect Woman

robodogs that guard the grounds. The bots are programmed to constantly patrol but this morning Johnson saw them apparently sleeping. Then, before his eyes – and in perfect unison – they stood up and resumed their rounds.

The robodogs are programmed to respond to judges and so will do as the PCs instruct them. A character who examines one of the dogs may make an Average (+0) Space Sciences (Robotics) check to determine that it was immobilised by an electromagnetic pulse at 10.56 PM last night. Its core processor was then accessed and the bot instructed to remain deactivated until 6 AM this morning before returning to normal duty.

Once again, this evidence points to someone with excellent technical acumen.

Note: technically, it is only legal to use robodogs within a citizen's own property. Whether the PC judges are content to class the grounds of Alain Sucre as 'within the property' or they wish to prosecute the owner of the block (a Chundle Meyer, who lives in apartment 1) is up to them.

Spy in the Sky

There are no further clues for the PCs to find at Alain Sucre. However, the Justice Department has a fleet of roving cameras and one of them picked up something of interest. If possible, let the PCs explore this line of enquiry themselves – if they seem stuck, the GM can have Control point them in the right direction.

The recorded footage shows a figure in a raincoat moving away from Alain Sucre Lux-Hab and down into the back streets. There, the figure is suddenly surrounded by juves from the *Muerte Gang*. There is a juddering crackle as the image cuts out for 3.6 seconds. When it resumes, four of the juves are down injured and another two are running away. Of the raincoated figure, there is no sign.

The reason for the footage blackout can be identified by the Teks as some sort of EM pulse.

It should be apparent to the PCs that their next line of enquiry lies with the *Muerte Gang*.

Chapter Two: City Bottom

In Sector 13, the *Muerte Gang* has started to make a name for itself. There are a number of back streets that gang members consider their territory and they regularly *tap* citizens unwise enough to wander there after dark. The gang's emblem is a yellow skull. This is scrawled upon many a wall beside the words 'pena de muerte' indicating the death sentence that will be carried out on any rival gang members that violate their turf.

From the spy-in-the-sky footage it is possible to identify only a single gang member – Steven 'Lugs' Lewys. Lewys has a rap sheet for *tapping* and petty theft. According to MAC's records, he has no fixed abode.

The PCs may use whatever street skills and contacts they have at their disposal to investigate the *Muerte Gang* but it should not take long before they learn that their main hangout is an abandoned warehouse on Gruber Street, close to city bottom (Map Two). They may also learn that the current head of the gang is one Franco Himinez – a juve who completed five years of training as a Judge before being kicked out of the Academy for attempting to coerce another cadet. Ever since, Himinez has harboured a grudge and in recent years has gone completely off the rails. Two months ago, he finished a six-month stretch in the cubes for verbally abusing a Judge.

Once the PCs go to investigate the warehouse, read the following:

Above the rusted, patched-up doorway of an ancient warehouse is scrawled a leering yellow skull. Beside this are the words 'Pena de muerte'. Boards and sheet metal cover the windows and coils of razor wire are strung along the edges of the roof. Outside the building is a heavily modified Foord Slabster, great exhausts protruding from its rear like tusks. Three juves recline against

its bodywork, their lazy glances about the neighbourhood brimming with arrogance.

Besides the three juves on lookout, there are three times as many additional members of the gang inside the building as there are PCs. Though they are relatively poorly trained and equipped, they will put up a fight if the judges go in shooting. In fact, they will only seek to flee from their hideout if more than half their number is incapacitated.

If the PC's have learned about Himinez – and his past – they may be able to use this to their advantage. Himinez has a chip on his shoulder the size of a Manta Tank and can be manipulated without too much difficulty. He can certainly be goaded into accepting any kind of challenge that involves him going 'mano a mano' with a Judge.

If Himinez is incapacitated in any way, the rest of the gang will lose heart and agree to cooperate with the Judges.

Muerte Gang Juves

Str 7 (+0), Dex 8 (+0), End 7 (+0), Int 6 (+0), Edu 6 (+0), Soc 6 (+0)
Skills: Deception 0, Melee (blade) 1 or Gun Combat (slug Pistol) 1, Stealth 1
Typical Weapons: knife or hand gun

Franco Himinez

Str 9 (+1), Dex 9 (+1), End 9 (+1), Int 7 (+0), Edu 6 (+0), Soc 7 (+0)
Skills: Deception 1, Melee (unarmed combat) 2, Gun Combat (slug pistol) 2, Stealth 1
Weapons: Hand Cannon

Modified Foord Slabster: page 127/128
Judge Dredd; increase Armour to 9; concealed forward-facing spitgun, built into the chassis.

Steven 'Lugs' Lewys and the others members of the gang who were beaten-up by Abe have told their companions that they were set upon by a dozen rival gangers. This is an attempt to save face. If the PCs question Lugs he will initially stick to this story but can be bullied into revealing the truth:

'We wanted to...talk with this guy. He was tall, wore a big coat: seemed out of place on the back streets. I told him it was usual for newcomers to make a payment to the Muerte for protection. He reached into his coat – I thought he was going for his wallet: there were six of us after all. Didn't think he'd try nothin'. He pulled out some weird gizmo. Next thing my ears were ringing and he was beating us down. Guy moved like lightning. I stuck him with my blade but it just bounced off!' Lugs indicates his badly dented knife.

'It was all over in a heart-beat. He jumped off the edge of the walkway. Its five metres down but the guy took it in his stride and just disappeared.'

Tek Check

If the PCs have forensics check Lugs' knife, the Tekes will turn up fragments of plasteel. This particular material is used in high-grade combat armour and the construction of military robots.

A character who succeeds with a Difficult (-2) Engineering Check can identify the weapon used on the gang members as a microwave pulse weapon. These are designed to disorientate living targets and scramble electronic equipment – hence the gap in the spy-in-the-sky footage. Such a device could also have been used to disable the robo guard dogs patrolling the grounds of Alain Sucre Lux-Hab.

A character who specifically checks with MAC – or who passes a 10+ Combat Engineering Check – is aware that military grade robots are shielded against microwave pulses.

Chapter Three

The PCs will barely have had time to finish their encounter with the Muerte Gang – or to digest the findings of the forensics checks – when they receive a call from Control to attend an incident at the Vanessa Mae Conservatoire. Perps have just abducted a concert pianist who was performing there – Milo Phalange – and are attempting a get-away.

As the Judges approach the scene – a four minute journey from the Muerte hideout – Control will continue to update them. By the time the PCs reach the Conservatoire, the perps will have already reached the skedway and set off towards city-bottom. The PCs will need to give chase – though they may wish to split their forces, so that some members of the team go to investigate the conservatoire.

Conservatoire

More than 300 of Mega-City One's wealthiest music lovers will have witnessed a masked figure swoop down from the rafters of the concert hall and abduct Milo Phalange. After shooting out a window, the 'winged freak' swept out of the building with his hostage, down to where his accomplices were waiting in a vehicle.

Despite the confusion, some astute questioning should reveal that the kidnapper was employing a bat glider. There are no further clues to be gathered here.

Skedway Chase

The abductors are making good their escape in a Foord Strato 'Longback' – a sports utility vehicle. PCs giving chase will join the skedway 100 metres behind them – and with dozens of vehicles blocking their path. The skedway is not large enough for a Judge's lane, so the PCs will need to dodge and weave their way through the traffic if they are to catch the perps before they reach the off-ramp.

If a Judge wishes to reduce the distance to the perps' vehicle, he must make an Average (+0) Drive (Lawmaster) Check. A successful check reduces the distance between the vehicles by 20 metres.

A map of the skedway (Map Three) and counters to represent vehicles, are included with the adventure. These are best used to represent the relative distances between the vehicles involved in the chase.

As soon as one of the Judges closes to within 30 metres of the perps' car (the

minimum distance from which either side can open fire), the perps will take evasive action. This will involve the driver making his own Drive Check to try to pull away from the pursuing judges and the kidnapper equipped with a bat glider taking to the skies: by standing on the roof of the 'Longback' he will be lifted up by the on-rushing air like a kite in a strong wind. Once airborne, he will open fire on the Judges. As soon as his associates reach the off-ramp – or are captured by the PCs – he will dive down towards city bottom and make for the rendezvous point.

Foord Strato 'Longback': Use Foord Strato (page 129, *Judge Dredd*); Increase Hull to 5; increase Crew to 6 (1 driver, 5 passengers).

Kidnappers (4)

Str 8 (+0), Dex 8 (+0), End 9 (+1), Int 7 (+0), Edu 7 (+0), Soc 7 (+0)

Skills: Gun Combat (slug rifle), 1 Melee (unarmed combat) 1

Equipment: spitgun, hand bomb (Rasker only)

Bat-glider Pilot

Str 8 (+0), Dex 11 (+1), End 9 (+1), Int 7 (+0), Edu 7 (+0), Soc 7 (+0)

Skills: Flyer (2), Gun Combat (slug pistol) 2, Melee (unarmed combat) 1

Ten rounds after the PCs join the skedway, the kidnappers will reach the off-ramp. If the Judges have not stopped them by this point (which may well cause a pile-up), the perps enter a single-lane tunnel that descends towards city bottom. There will be much less traffic here, leaving the abductors and Judges to shoot it out. The PCs must be mindful, however, of the need to safeguard the hostage, Milo Phalange.

If the PCs capture any of the kidnappers, an Average (+0) Interrogation Check will persuade one of them to reveal their destination – a disused factory on the Corner of Calvin and Klein (see Map Four). This is deep in the bowels of Sector 13. The kidnappers do not know the name of their employer, or even what he looks like: he wore a hooded raincoat that concealed his features. He has agreed to meet them

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at the factory and pay 200,000 credits for Phalange.

Rather than risk a shoot-out the PCs might elect to follow the perps. This will not be easy, as any pursuers within the tunnel will be conspicuous. Still, Judges are trained for this sort of thing and it can be accomplished with a Difficult (-2) Drive (Lawmaster) or Stealth Check.

The Hand-Over

The leader of the kidnapers – John Rasker – is well-known to the Justice Department, having spent half of his 40 year life in the cubes for various violent crimes. The proposal to kidnap Milo Phalange was put to him whilst he was drowning his sorrows in a miserable bar called *Stinky's*. Abe offered him 200k and this was simply too good an offer to turn down. If the Judges ever get a chance to check out *Stinky's*, no one at the bar recalls Rasker's meeting with Abe.

Rasker has orders to bring Phalange into the factory's old control room and wait there for his payment.

If the PCs reconnoitre the disused factory they will find nothing suspicious outside the Control Room itself, which is on the first floor, and no sign of Abe.

The Control Room is covered in dust but footprints and scuffmarks indicate where someone has recently installed a large view screen and camera relay. Beneath this is a communications unit and instructions for Rasker, telling him that once he has Milo Phalange and is ready to hand him over, he should activate the com-unit.

The PCs may deduce from this that Rasker's employer wants to ensure that he is not led into a trap and that the com-unit will be used to confirm all has gone according to plan.

If Rasker – or one of the other kidnapers – is alive and 'mobile' they may be persuaded to aid the Judges in luring Abe out into the open, perhaps in exchange for a reduced sentence.

A character that searches the floor of the control room will also find smears of yellow-black sludge. This is identical in consistency to the slime found on the banks of the Delaware River and indicates that the kidnapers' employer traversed that area recently and on-foot.

A Message from Abe

Once the comm-unit is activated a hooded figure appears on the screen. This is Abe. If he sees anything amiss – for example, a Judge operating the comms unit rather than Rasker or one of his men – he will immediately terminate the transmission. If everything seems to have gone according to plan, he will instruct Rasker to remain where he is and assure him that payment is on its way.

Whether the conversation with Abe is a brief or protracted one, the PCs may use this as an opportunity to ascertain his location.

There are several ways they can do this:

Run a trace on the signal – a Tek Judge that succeeds with a Very Difficult (-4) Comms Check can trace the source of the communiqué to Franklyn N. Stein's luxury apartment.

Record and analyse background noise – A Difficult (-2) Comms Check can filter and identify ambient sounds present in the background of the transmission. This will reveal several distinct noises – the bustle of the Eustace Fargo Spaceport; the hum of the Axel Rose Megway; the clamour of Bilt's Munce Emporium – that suggest the signal must have come from somewhere between Floors AV and AZ of Mary Shelley Block.

Scrutinise the background – Visible in the background as Abe opens communication are some vital clues. He is standing in a largely featureless room but a badly stained towel is visible. This is covered in the same yellow and black sludge that stains the control room floor and that is found along only a short stretch of the

Delaware River. Most of this is paved over, greatly narrowing down the area where the perp must recently have been.

If the PCs are struggling to work out what to do next, the Referee might allow them to make an INT Check to recall the sludge.

Multiple Paths

At this point, the adventure can progress in a number of ways depending on the choices made by the PCs. These are explained here. The important thing is that they eventually end up at Stein's apartment in Mary Shelley Block.

Cash on Delivery

If the PCs – or Rasker – contact Abe and convince him that everything has gone according to plan, he dispatches a robot-piloted hovercar to deliver the 200k and collect Milo Phalange. This lands on the roof of the factory.

Foord Falcon Giah Hovercar (page 131, *Judge Dredd*)

Robo-pilot

Size: M; Config: Humanoid
Str 7 (+0), Dex 10 (+1), End 9 (+1), Will 2 (-2)
Weapons: None; unarmed damage d6+1
Armour: 2
Programming: Comms 1, Engineer 1, Melee (unarmed combat) 0, Pilot 2
Modifications: None
Personality Traits: Gruff and Grizzled

The pilot has orders to load Phalange on board and then hand over a suitcase filled with 200k in used credit bills. He has been programmed to avoid capture if confronted by the judges and will attempt to self-terminate rather than allow himself to be captured.

If the PCs do capture the robo-pilot, a Very Difficult (-4) Science (Robotics) Check is required to override Abe's expert programming and get him to reveal what his mission is and who sent him.

The navigational computer in the hovercar

contains details of the route that the vehicle took to get to the disused factory. This can be accessed with a Difficult (-2) Computers Check.

If the PCs allow things to run their course – having perhaps tailed Rasker and his men to the warehouse – the hand-over takes place and the pilot returns to Mary Shelley Block. He lands the hovercar on Stein's personal landing pad and takes the sedated Phillange to Abe's laboratory. Stein remains oblivious to the whole thing.

On the banks of the Delaware

If the PCs return to the spot where they encountered the slug-creatures, a search of the river bank will reveal an open sewerage vent. The smooth burn marks through the bars that should cover the vent indicate that they have been severed with a las-cutter. The sewer may be followed for roughly half a kilometre into the refuse-processing facilities beneath Mary Shelley Block.

Abe has been using this route to obscure his movements to and from his master's apartment. Leading directly down into city bottom, it provided a way for the determined butler to enact his plan and to contact the low-lives he has been employing.

Inside the Mary Shelley refuse processing facility, it is apparent where Abe has used a laser-cutter to access the sewer, allowing him to climb down a short waste shoot and into the pipe. The facility is largely automated, though it is monitored by a human overseer – Bill Mathers. Mathers is aware of the damaged grill but has not prioritised its repair: who would be crazy enough to crawl along half a kilometre of sewer just to get in or out of the block? This is a clear dereliction of his duties and attentive Judges should ensure he does some time in the cubes for his negligence.

Searching Shelley

There are 45,000 residents in Mary Shelley Block. If the PCs have followed the trail here but have no other leads, they will need to

narrow down their search. There are several ways they might do this.

Citi-Def – like most Blocks, Mary Shelley is protected by a Citi-Def force. As is typical amongst the militant citizens that comprise such organisations, a handful of members are exceptionally zealous – and just what the judges are looking for at this point.

Cray 'Z' Anderson has been a member of Mary Shelley Citi-Def since he signed on as a cadet at the age of five. He lives for the defence of his Block and, truth be told, is dangerously paranoid. As a result, he monitors the comings and goings of residents constantly searching for spies and infiltrators. Cray has seen Abe leaving his master's apartment carrying large, suspicious bags. He has also observed the strange, gungy footprints the robot leaves in his wake.

If the PCs contact the Citi-Def, they will quickly be put in touch with Cray and he can point them in the right direction. He will also want to help with any investigation but this is really not appropriate. If the PCs do allow him to tag along, he can cause whatever manner of mayhem the Referee deems appropriate: remember those Citi-Def guys have access to some big weapons!

Internal Securi-cams – There is no footage whatsoever of Abe doing anything suspicious. However, there are gaps in the recordings caused by his micro-wave pulse weapon. The gaps occur in and around the refuse processing facility and on level AX, where Stein's apartment is located. These gaps will only be noticed by someone specifically looking for them.

Medical Deliveries – If the PCs have deduced what Abe is up to, they might run a check on the delivery of unusual surgical supplies to occupants of the block. Four weeks ago, Abe ordered enough medical equipment to set up an operating theatre – which is exactly what he has done. All of the items were ordered in Franklyn's name and the money to pay for them came out

of his account. It was Abe, however, who took care of everything.

Check Resident List – There are several high-profile residents that might pique the Judges interest:

- Jefferson Hane – a famous crooner currently employed about MC 1's renowned Love Boat (Judge Dredd, page 164); Apartment 12, Floor AT.
- Franklyn Nathaniel Stein – Robotics designer; Apartment 3, Floor AX.
- Eloise Asherton – owner of the 'Bare Essentials' chain of Nudaromats (Judge Dredd, page 166); Apartment 9, Floor AV.

Stein's Apartment

One way or another, the Judges should find their way to Apartment 3, Floor AX of Mary Shelley Block. This is a huge mansion in the sky and one of only four apartments on the entire level.

Stein has no idea at all what Abe has been up to. If confronted by the Judges, he will quite calmly argue his innocence believing that there must surely have been a mistake.

If the Judges search Stein's enormous apartment, they will find Abe's laboratory. Stein will claim – quite truthfully – that he never enters the servant's quarters. As far as he is concerned this room is used as a storage area.

Abe's Laboratory

The only door to Abe's laboratory is locked. He has reprogrammed two of the robo-cleaners to restrain any strangers that enter this area. If the Robo-pilot has managed to transport Phalange to the laboratory and is therefore in the apartment, he will aid the robo-cleaners in their attempt to subdue intruders.

Robo-cleaners (2)

Size: M; Config: Humanoid-Hybrid (multi-legged)
Str 7 (+0), Dex 7 (+0), End 9 (+1), Will 2 (-2)
Weapons: Broom (d6+1 damage); Chemical

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spray (special)

Armour: 2

Programming: Steward 0

Modifications: Assorted cleaning appliances attached to droid's six limbs

Personality Traits: Bright and cheerful

Chemical Spray: A character struck by this weapon is doused in noxious chemicals. He must make an Average (+0) Endurance Check or be stunned for 2 rounds as he gasps for breath and fights off nausea.

Neither the robo-cleaners nor the robo-pilot know what Abe's overall plans are.

The laboratory contains a fully equipped operating theatre, intensive care unit and medical freezer. The body of Angelina Macpherson is resting in the ICU, hooked up to machinery that keeps it in perfect working order. Her damaged brain has already been removed. A cybernetic brain, programmed to provide the perfect personality for Stein's dream woman, is ready to be implanted once alterations to the body are complete.

Stored in folders within the laboratory are a number of printed documents detailing the individuals that Abe has already targeted: Angelina Macpherson, Stephanie Schnozmeier and Milo Phalange. There are also details regarding his final subject – Katie Costa. This famous ex-glamour model is currently a contestant on Mega-City One's most popular reality Tri-D show: *I'm a Norm, Get Me Out of Here!* It is clear from Abe's notes that he intends to kidnap Miss Costa and use her most prized 'assets' to complete his master's perfect woman. Whether the PCs decide to take Stein into custody at this time or not, their priority must be the safe recovery of Katie Costa – and that means a journey beyond the boundaries of the city.

What the Hell is Abe?

It is quite likely that the PCs will question Stein about his creation and the exceptional abilities the robot possesses. Stein will proudly proclaim that Abe his greatest achievement – the ultimate robotic butler companion. He has a chassis based on a

combat droid, computational powers that put his IQ above genius level and all the medical skills of a state of the art robodoc. More than that, he possesses unique AI systems that enable him to appear entirely sentient.

Abe has unrestricted access to his master's bank account. He has used this to acquire whatever equipment he has needed – much of which has been modified and improved. This includes the purchase of the microwave pulse weapon that he has used to facilitate his crimes.

Stein has never, in any way, encouraged Abe's current activities. Whether the 'father' is held responsible for the sins of the 'son' is entirely up to the Judges.

I'm a Norm, Get Me Out of Here! sees a group of washed-up has-beens enduring physical and emotional humiliation for the benefit of the viewing public. The show has a special license in order that it may be filmed beyond the walls of Mega-City One, on the edge of The Cursed Earth. Over eight weeks, the contestants attempt to survive in the harsh, mutant infested wasteland, whilst the public votes on who should face increasingly dangerous 'Radback Trials'.

At this point, the show is down to just three contestants: Katie Costa, children's entertainer, Little Christophe and housewife's favourite, Hamilton George.

The show was originally filmed in the Oz Radback but had to be moved to The Cursed Earth after celebrity chef, Gigolo Ginelli, ate a member of the protected indigenous population. Technically, cannibalism was not against the rules and he went on to win the show that year.

Chapter Four

Once the PCs realise that they will need to head for the set of *I'm a Norm*, they can arrange for transport beyond the city limits. An H-Wagon will carry them over the south-western wall and drop them off on their lawmasters a few miles from the set.

During their journey, the Judges may elect to contact the show's production crew and warn them about Abe's impending kidnap attempt. Unfortunately, the producers will see a live abduction as a great opportunity to boost the ratings. Once they have been told about Abe's plans, they will feign radiation interference and the Judges will find it impossible to reach them. Of course, they deserve to do some time for this but in the cutthroat Tri-D business, ratings are everything and they are willing to take a chance!

Radback Trials

By the time the PCs arrive on set, the latest trial will already be underway. Katie Costa and her fellow contestants have been dispatched to steal an egg from a nearby Dog Vulture nesting site. Whichever celebrity manages to retrieve an egg and return to the set first will be the winner of this year's show – and can expect a spin-off reality programme of their own, plus several lucrative advertising campaigns. Such things are worth risking dismemberment by a giant mutated bird for.

The set itself is little more than a circle of tents, protected by an electrified fence. A private security force guards the crew but it is written into their contract that they do nothing to defend the contestants from whatever perils The Cursed Earth throws at them. Unfortunately, they will consider Abe to be one of those perils and do nothing to thwart his efforts.

So far, no one has seen any sign of Abe and it is not clear how he intends to get to the set.

By talking to members of the production crew, the PCs can acquire directions to the mesa where the contestants will face their trial. As the Judges leave the set, a number of robo-cameras follow them. These have been pre-programmed to roam the area and film anything that might interest the viewers. Short of shooting them down, the PCs will be unable to prevent the cameras from recording their activities and broadcasting them across the city.

The Climb

Roughly 1 kilometre from the contestant's camp is a cluster of rock mesas. The largest of these rises some 100 metres above the scorched sand and is the nesting site of several mating pairs of dog vultures. Katie Costa and her companions are in the process of scaling the mesa when the PCs arrive.

Throughout their trials, the contestants have faced all sorts of psychological challenges and tricks. They will view the appearance of the Judges as simply one more and *absolutely nothing* will deter them from trying to reach the nests, which are 80 metres or more from the ground.

Almost immediately after the PCs reach the mesa, the dog vultures will notice the climbers and begin to swarm around them. From this point, there is a 1 in 6 chance each round that one of the climbers will be plucked from the ledge by an angry dog vulture and hurled down the mesa-side. For the sake of a dramatically satisfying finale, Katie should not suffer such a fate.

Dog Vultures (8) (*Judge Dredd*, page 220)

Get it on film!

Hot on the heels of the PCs is a sky truk, laden with camera crew. The truk was not present at the main set (as it was away filming important linking shots for when the show is edited together) but has since been dispatched by the producers of *I'm a Norm* to ensure that whatever happens is recorded for the viewers at home.

Snatch and Grab

The Judges should have a few rounds of trying to talk the climbers down – which is a waste of breath – or attacking the dog vultures, before Abe appears. He zooms into sight upon a hover board, appearing from atop the mesa. The judges will have a single round to bring him down before he grabs Katie and tries to escape. Given the speed he is travelling at, all attempts to hit him are Very difficult (–4).

A.B.E. 1

Ultimate Butler Bodyguard

Size: M; Config: Humanoid

Str 13 (+2), Dex 15 (+3), End 15 (+3), Will 8 (+0 but unique AI functions as +8 Lawbreaker module)

Weapons: microwave pulse weapon, 2 hand bombs, inbuilt surgical tools (bone-saws, scalpels and so on) that count as improvised weapons

Armour: 7

Programming: Diagnose 4, Diplomat 1, Life Sciences (Biology) 3, Mechanic 2, Medic 5, Melee (unarmed combat) 2, Gun Combat (all types) 3, Robotics 4, Science (Electronics) 3, Stealth 3, Surgery 4, Tactics 2, Survival 1

Traits: 'Abe' can perfectly duplicate the voice of any person he hears talk.

An electronic system caught within a wide pulse is deactivated for a single round. One targeted by the narrow beam shuts down for 3d6 rounds.

An organic target caught in a wide pulse must make a Difficult (–2) Endurance check or be stunned for 1 round. A stunned character cannot move or take any actions.

Armour provides no protection against this weapon.

The Chase

Assuming Abe succeeds in grabbing Miss Costa he will move away from the PCs at maximum speed, only engaging them in

combat if doing so increases his chances of escape. For now, he will seek refuge by travelling deeper into The Cursed Earth.

The PCs will have little choice but to give chase. They may do so on their lawmasters but over rough terrain Abe will have a distinct advantage. There are two better options.

The first is to commandeer the sky truk. This is faster – though less manoeuvrable – than Abe's hover board and will give them a good chance to catch him. It has large side doors from which the Judges can open fire.

Mercury-Karmack Sky Truk (*Judge Dredd*, page 140)

Note that the sky truk has all sorts of sensitive camera equipment on board and is specifically designed for use in The Cursed Earth. The truk is therefore shielded against EM interference, including Abe's microwave weapon.

The second option is to 'ride' one of the show's camera drones that are buzzing around. These can be reprogrammed with an Average Robotics check and thereafter steered manually. Though neither as fast nor agile as Abe's board, it provides a stable platform from which to attack the absconding robot.

Camera Drone

Full Speed: 150 kph (when carrying a 'passenger')

Abe's microwave weapon

This experimental device is effective against both organic and electrical targets. It may be set to fire either a wide dispersion pulse that affects all targets within 10 metres, or a narrow beam with the range of a rifle.

Setting	Rapid Fire	Damage Recoil	Magazine
Wide Pulse	No	Stun	20
Narrow Beam	2	4d6	20

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Max Speed: 250m per round
Acceleration: 75m per round
Deceleration: 75m per round

Skill: Flyer
Agility: +0
Crew: 1
Open/Closed: Open
Armour: 1
Hull/Structure: 1/1

The chase provides the climax of the adventure and should therefore be as exciting as possible. Amidst the scorched canyons, rocky gullies and shifting sands (see Map Five and Vehicle Counters), the PCs and Abe will play out a life or death pursuit. Abe will use his hand bombs to collapse terrain

behind him, as he jinks through narrow ravines or over precipitous fissures. Pursuing PCs should be called upon to make all manner of piloting checks to maintain pursuit.

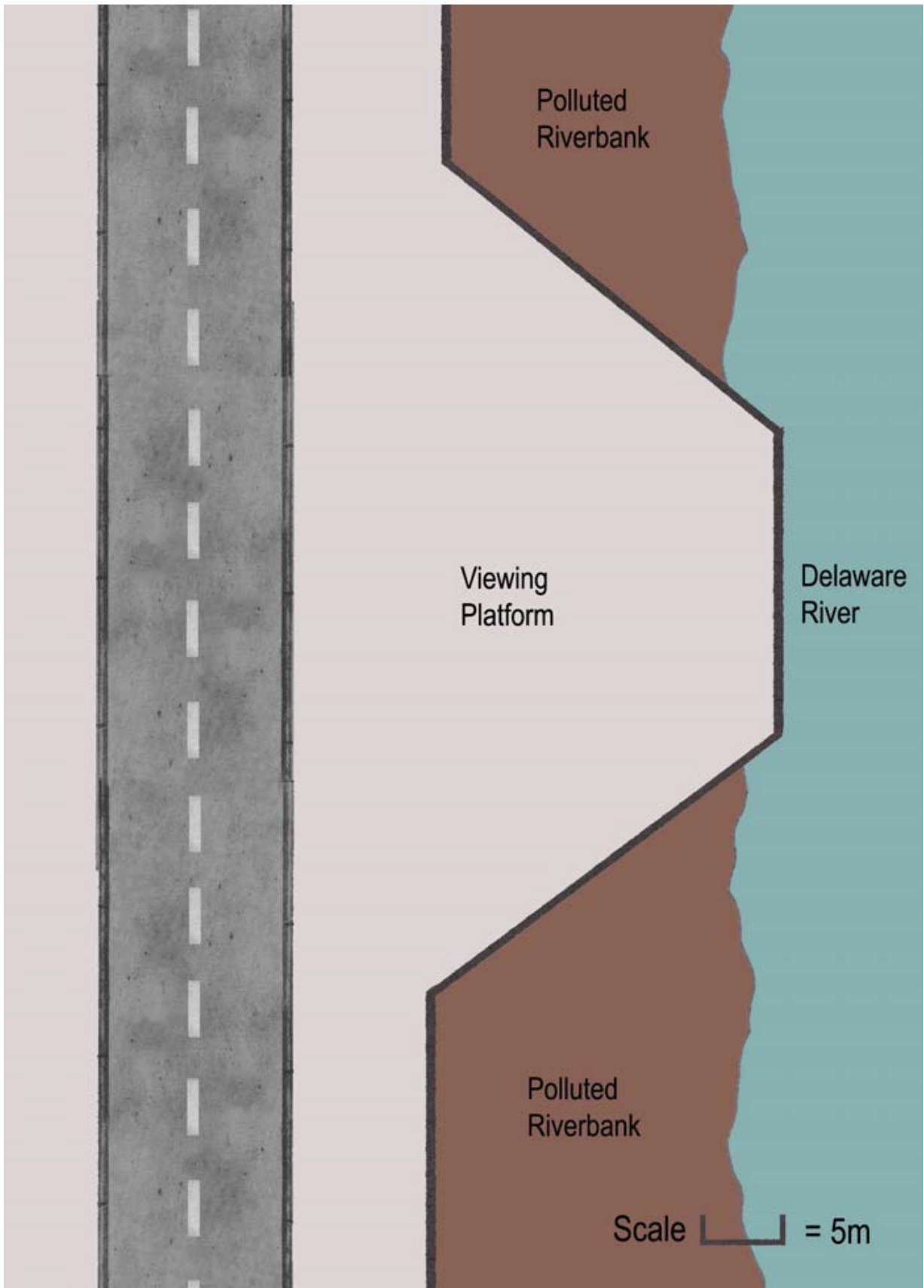
The Finale

Abe has one final trick up his sleeve. Once he has been damaged four times (and assuming he is still functional), he will climb for two rounds and then drop Katie Costa. He will figure that the PCs will prioritise saving a citizen over capturing a perp. He could be very wrong of course but will try to use this opportunity to employ his Stealth skills and give the judges the slip.

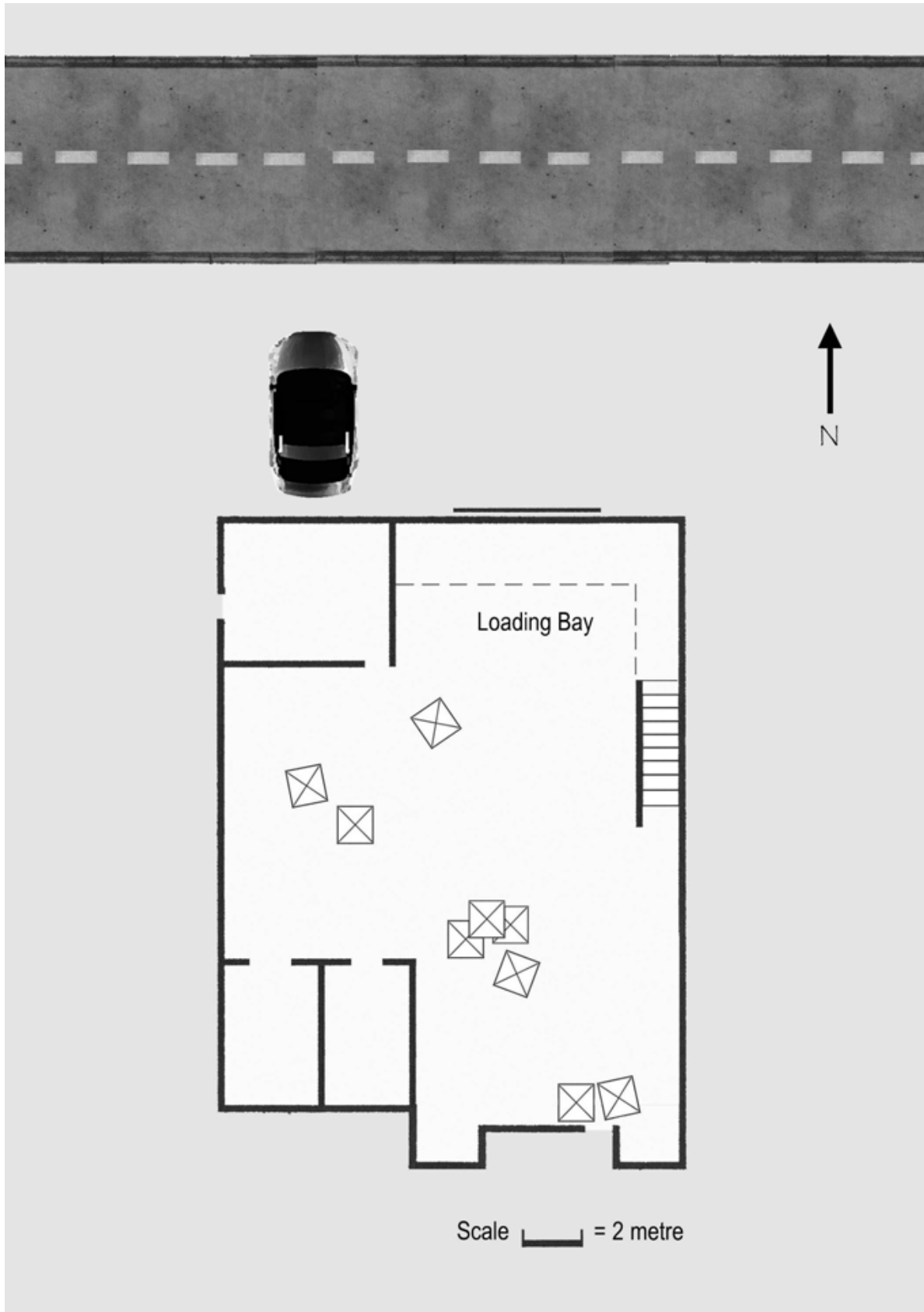
If he fails to throw off his pursuers, Abe will turn himself in and make a full confession.

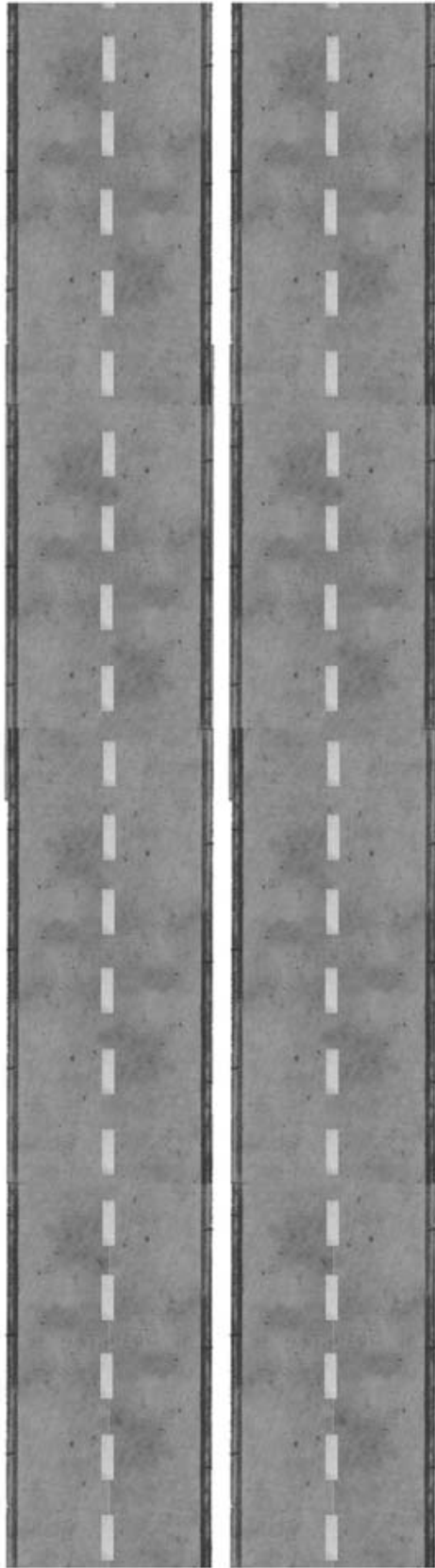
Loyal to the end and perceiving now that he cannot escape and help his master, his final priority will be to exonerate Franklyn. Once satisfied that he has done this, he will lament the difficulty of finding true love in a world such as this and then self-terminate by melting his own circuits. If this is captured on film, it will make a fitting end to the chase and ensure that the Judge's enjoy 15 minutes of fame before the citizens of the Big Meg move on to their next diversion.

Should Abe manage to slip away, it may well be that he will return at a later date, still intent on finding his master true love and perhaps freeing him from incarceration in the cubes...



A Perfect Woman





Civillian Vehicles



Sky Truk



Hover Board



Bat Glider



Kidnapper's Vehicle

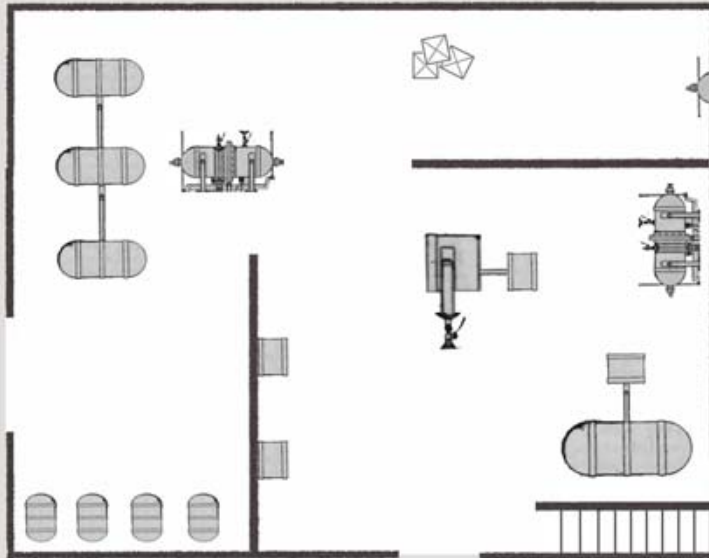


Lawmasters



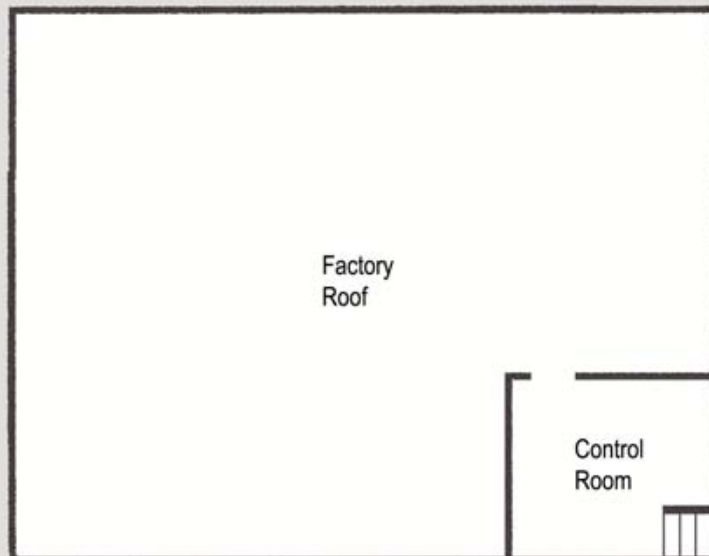
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Disused Factory (ground floor)



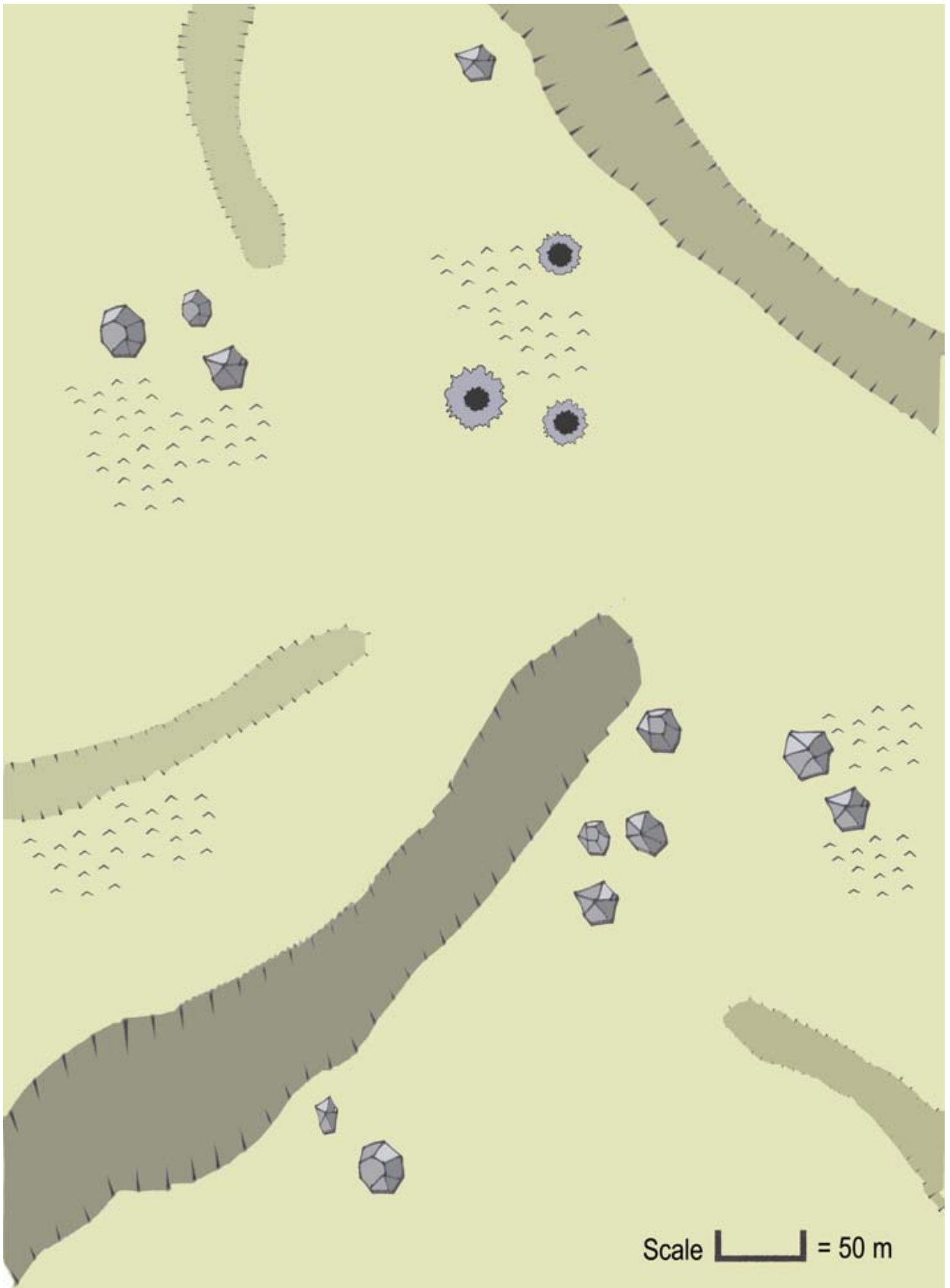
First Floor

Scale $\square = 2\text{m}$



Factory
Roof

Control
Room



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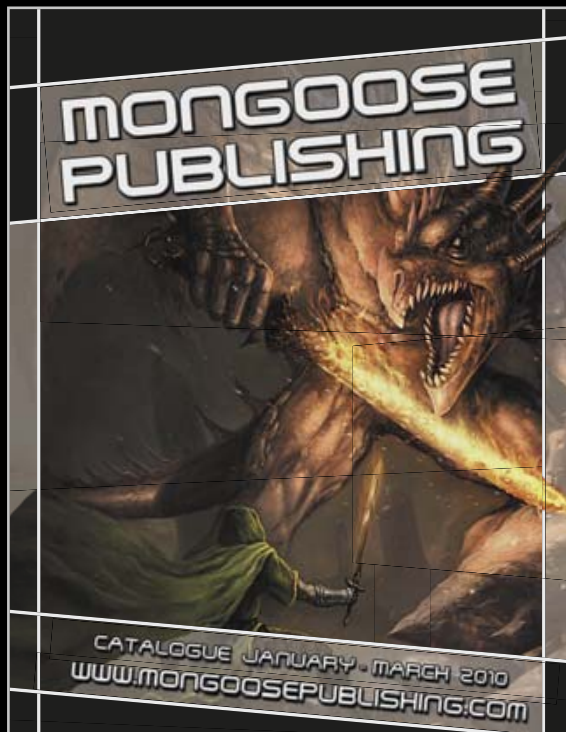
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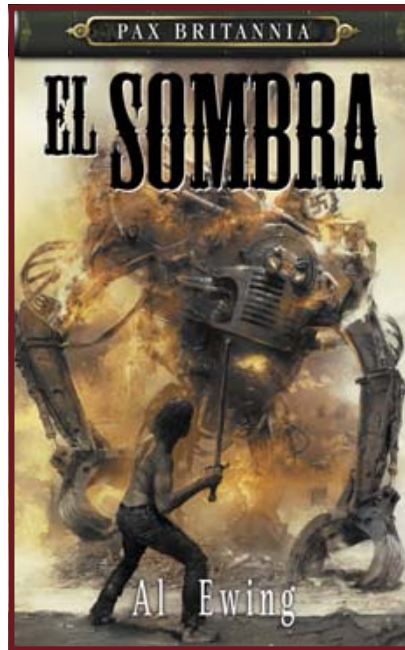
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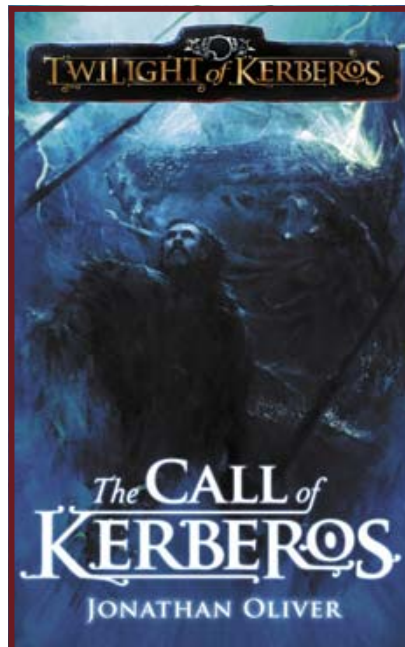
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