

Rain o' Terror



ANTHONY RAGAN



RAIN O' TERROR:

CALIFORNIA'S DESTINY

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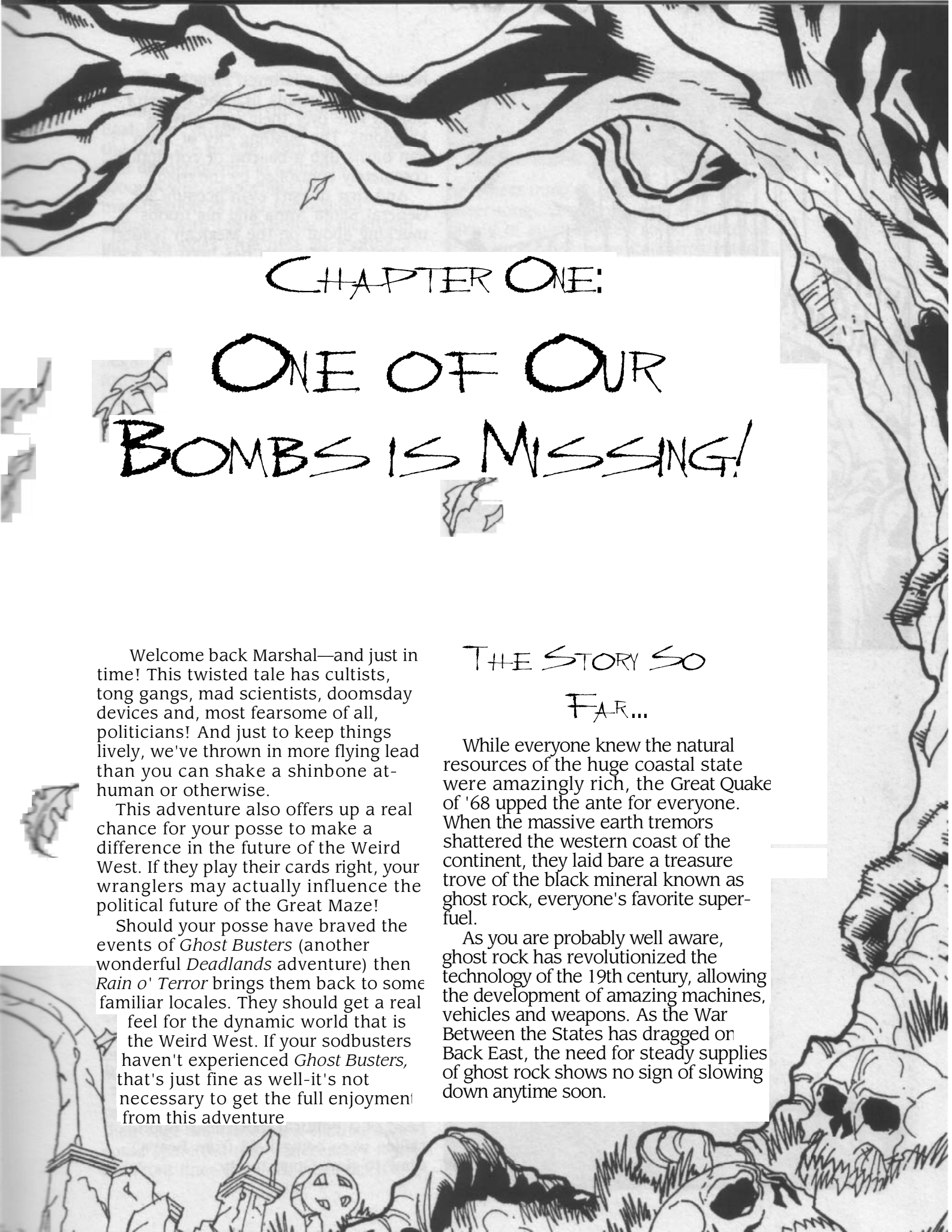
Deadlands was created by Shane Lacy Hensle

Dedicated to: The people & city of Sacramento, and, of
course, to Harry T. Cat.

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CHAPTER ONE:

ONE OF OUR BOMBS IS MISSING!

Welcome back Marshal—and just in time! This twisted tale has cultists, tong gangs, mad scientists, doomsday devices and, most fearsome of all, politicians! And just to keep things lively, we've thrown in more flying lead than you can shake a shinbone at—human or otherwise.

This adventure also offers up a real chance for your posse to make a difference in the future of the Weird West. If they play their cards right, your wranglers may actually influence the political future of the Great Maze!

Should your posse have braved the events of *Ghost Busters* (another wonderful *Deadlands* adventure) then *Rain o' Terror* brings them back to some familiar locales. They should get a real feel for the dynamic world that is the Weird West. If your sodbusters haven't experienced *Ghost Busters*, that's just fine as well—it's not necessary to get the full enjoyment from this adventure

THE STORY SO FAR...

While everyone knew the natural resources of the huge coastal state were amazingly rich, the Great Quake of '68 upped the ante for everyone. When the massive earth tremors shattered the western coast of the continent, they laid bare a treasure trove of the black mineral known as ghost rock, everyone's favorite super-fuel.

As you are probably well aware, ghost rock has revolutionized the technology of the 19th century, allowing the development of amazing machines, vehicles and weapons. As the War Between the States has dragged on Back East, the need for steady supplies of ghost rock shows no sign of slowing down anytime soon.



This has made California a bit of a hot potato, with both the Union and Confederacy laying claim to the rich ghost rock deposits that vein the cliffs, canals, and canyons of the Great Maze. Neither the USA or CSA have been able to devote much in the way of military assets to settling the California issue, but there has been sporadic fighting for a few years now.

The Confederates strike here, the Union strikes there — and the wide variety of bandits, pirates, warlords and religious fanatics prey on just about anyone they run into. The chaos is taking a huge toll in terms of humans lives, as well as money.

Hard working people are taxed by local strongmen, robbed or outright killed. The Reverend Grimme makes noises about "converting the

heathen," — by whatever means necessary. Warlords like the Emperor Norton rule over their own private kingdoms. The bustling city of Shan Fan burns like a beacon of corruption, completely controlled by the triads.

And that doesn't even account for General Santa Anna and his troops mucking about on the Mexican border!

Thus the situation has been for years now. With the war Back East draining USA and CSA resources, it seemed unlikely that anything was going to change soon.

Until the late summer of 1877, that is. Some of the more civic-minded residents of California decided they've had enough. In the state capitol of Sacramento an organization formed to resolve the California situation one way or the other and brings some much needed stability to this broken and brutalized state. The California Independence Party, led by Hiram Montgomery, has gathered many of the prominent citizens of Sacramento — as well as a few folks from the other towns scattered along the California coast.

Their goal?

Decide California's fate once and for all— by the will of the people!

**DON'T TREAD ON
US!**

The California Independence Party started out quietly as little more than a gleam in Hiram Montgomery's eye and some heated political rhetoric exchanged over a few too many whiskeys. But before you could say "Bear Flag Republic," Montgomery's passion for order and innate oratory skills led him to make a series of soapbox speeches on the street corner of Sacramento.

So compelling was he that his impassioned words ended up in print soon after. Pamphlets containing Montgomery's fiery speeches circulated all over the Great Maze, and before the former butcher knew it, he was the head of a political movement! Soon rallies were being held from Bear's Claw to New Opportunity.



A BITTER PILL TO SWALLOW

Unfortunately for the powers Back East, most of the "special resources" in the area are tied up with the strange and deadly doings in Gomorra (Doomtown), California. The investigation of and subsequent struggle with the manitou Knicknevin left both sides little time for routine intelligence tasks.

The military, used to being warned about subversives and strange events by their intelligence services, were caught a bit flatfooted when mobs began setting up outside their fortifications screaming "get off our land!" The Union and Confederate military leaders were not happy with the situation at all.

It all came to a head in January of 1878. Out of the blue, the commanders of both sides received petitions containing literally thousands of signatures (or "X"s, for illiterates) requesting - actually demanding - that the people of California be given a choice to decide their own fate. Hiram Montgomery and his California Independence Party had been working quietly for months, collecting the backing of everyone they could.

Before they really knew what was happening, both sides were informing their superiors Back East that a referendum was going to be held to determine California's status once and for all, unless their respective governments were prepared to finally lend them the troops necessary to take control of the Great Maze.

This may seem like a bit of a surprising move, but in the face of what looked like it might become a popular revolt if handled the wrong way, what else could the US and CS forces do? They are well outnumbered by the civilians of California, and both Union General Lawrence Ellsworth and Confederate Admiral Birmingham are more than aware that their comfortable operation in the state is at the sufferance of the people.

In Washington and Richmond, the response was a cry of outrage—but their rage was toothless. Neither side could spare the troops necessary from the front lines. So, both sides did the



next best thing: they sent their most silver-tongued orators (and aides with plenty of slush money) to do whatever it takes to make sure California votes the right way.

Or to make sure the other side doesn't win, at least...

A COAST DMDED

The situation, then, is a three way race for control of California's future. At one point of this political triangle stands the Union, at another stands the Confederacy, and at the third corner stands Hiram Montgomery's California Independence Party. The three sides agreed the vote would be held in late spring 1878, in Sacramento, California. (The exact date is up to you, Marshal, to best suit your campaign.)

Not surprisingly, the upcoming vote has attracted folks from all over the shattered state. From New Crescent City in the north to Bear Claw in the south, folks big and small are determined to have their say, and they're converging on Sacramento to help make the decision.

"Well, all this is very interesting" you might be thinking, "but what does it have to do with my heroes?" It's not the movers and shaker in the three factions that should grab your attention, Marshal, but rather the forces lurking in the background. Ezekiah Grimme intends to have his own say in the future of California and, as you should be well aware, the intentions of the Reverend are never pure.

GRIMME CHOICES

He's had his hand in this referendum mess for quite a while now. Early on, his agents positioned themselves behind the California Independence Party, providing him with a source of anonymous funding. Without that money—which Montgomery naively believed came from wealthy donors



Back East—the referendum on California's status would still be little more than barroom talk.

If Montgomery's party gets its way, things would get even more disorganized in California, and Grimme could spread his influence that much farther. Victory for the California Independence Party would galvanize the whole state against both the Union and Confederate troops stationed there, and leave Grimme with secret control of the power bloc in control of the state. Of course, if the CIP loses the vote, Grimme still gets what he wants: the further destabilization of the whole region as the two national governments step up their armed competition for the region in the wake of the referendum.

That's the plan, at any rate.

AN HONEST POLITICAN?

Montgomery discovered the origin of a large part of his backing and subsequently purged Lost Angels influence from the California Independence Party. He wanted no more to do with Grimme than any sane man.

That changed Grimme's plans significantly. While the Reverend still wants the CIP to triumph, Montgomery has shown himself to be far too strong-willed to make an effective puppet. Grimme is not happy.

It's clear to Reverend Grimme that a whole lot of people involved in this referendum needed to end up dead at the end of the day to ensure that things went his way. The answer to this problem was obvious: Hiram Montgomery and his inner circle have to be eliminated, and in a way that won't point back to the Church!

If he could be made a martyr to either Union or Confederate aggression, so much the better for the Grimme.

NEWS FROM THE NORTH

A cult agent named Magnus Greel in the town of Gomorra provided the answer to the problem. Greel is a rare breed of Lost Angels cultist—a mad scientist, which is one reason he works outside of the city. Grimme's not one to throw away a perfectly good fanatic over a few philosophical concerns.

The consortium of "new" scientists called the Collegium forged an alliance with Hellstromme Industries in an effort to rebuild things after the "troubles" up in Gomorra. Greel had wormed his way into the development of Project Ghostfire, an attempt by Hellstromme to harness the power of ghost rock for incredible destructive purposes. According to Greel's reports, the bomb's power was unprecedented, and the project was actually in the process of building a working prototype.

Here was a way to revenge himself on Hiram Montgomery, eliminate the most powerful leaders of all of the power blocs in California, sow even more seeds of discord in the fertile ground of the Great Maze, and sacrifice a big ol' bunch of people to his evil lords—all at the same time.



What Grimme, nor even Hellstromme, know is that Project Ghostfire is almost *too* powerful. When detonated, it will weaken the barrier between the Hunting Grounds and the physical world enough to create a 5-mile wide Deadland! Not that Grimme would mind...

THE DOOMSDAY PLAN

Grimme gave the mission to an Avenging Angel named Paul McDonnell, a longtime partner of Greel's. The two met years ago in Salt Lake City and found a mutual interest in all things mechanical and religious insanity.

McDonnell's orders are to secure the ghost-rock bomb and a method to transport it. Then, he's to go to Sacramento with the bomb and do as much as possible to ensure that the California Independence Party wins. Once enough time for news of the election results to spread has passed, he's to blow the whole city of Sacramento to Kingdom Come!

If the Independence Party loses, he's to blow the place anyway, but above all, make sure that someone else—preferably the Union—takes the blame. Grimme's already got another iron in the fire for the Confederacy... but that's another tale!

Grimme sent a message to Greel and McDonnell about a month ago. Greel's twisted mind has hit upon a double layer of misdirection. Anyone investigating the theft of Project Ghostfire should think it a plan of the warlord known as Kang—and anyone noticing the cult's activities in Sacramento should blame the Union.

McDonnell and his band of cultists are working even further undercover than in previous Cult o' Lost Angels activities. More than anything, Grimme wants to keep his nose clean in this one!

READY...SET...GO!

After leaving Lost Angels, McDonnell and his flunkies made a stopover in Shan Fan just long enough to acquire some uniforms from the small Union force permitted there (and leave a little gift for anyone who discovers their handiwork), and steal enough items to implicate the Union and Kang's Iron



Dragon railroad in the actual theft of the bomb. McDonnell and his Lost Angels have been in Gomorra for about a week. After consulting with Magnus Greel, the cultists are about to make their move.

Until the posse gets involved, that is. You see, Dr. Hellstromme has put a lot of money into Project Ghostfire, and he wants his own people there to provide security. Guess who are taking the next flight to Gomorra, Marshal?

THE SETUP

Hellstromme brings the posse in as hired help for a couple of reasons. The first is a simple lack of resources. The Great Rail Wars consume a lot of Hellstromme Industries' security assets. Second, deniability is a big plus, especially when technology of mass destruction like that of Project Ghostfire is concerned. The more distance put between it and Hellstromme Industries (HI) the better. Though they are officially sponsors of the Collegium, HI only donates money so as to keep clear of any legal entanglements the Collegium might become entangled with.

The heroes also allow HI to provide competent bodyguards without directly supplying HI personnel. To that end, Hellstromme's agent in this affair, "Mr. Smith," offers the posse cold hard cash for what should be a relatively easy escort job. If the heroes are interested, they are asked to meet in the private dining room of a Salt Lake hotel called "Angel's Rest." After brandy and cigars, Simpson explains the job to the posse. Read or paraphrase the following:

"For those of you not familiar with the Collegium, it is a research group involved in the New Science, headquartered in the Great Maze mining town of Gomorra."

"To make a long story short, the Collegium is now involved in certain projects of scientific interest to our company, and we provide them with financing.

"A project under development at the Collegium is now reaching an important milestone. We have decided to send an observer for the final stage...and security for him as well.

"It's a simple job. We don't expect any trouble, but it is a boomtown. A rough and tumble locale like that is a bad place to take unnecessary risks. We're offering \$25 a day for your services, just for keeping things at the Collegium peaceful. While there, you'll take direction from a Dr. Pillman, who will be in your care for the journey to and from the region—assuming, of course, you are interested in the job.

If the party asks what the project is Simpson regretfully informs them that

they aren't cleared for that information; it's not necessary to their duties.

If they agree, he says:

"Wonderful! Your transportation to Gomorra by air has already been arranged. You leave tomorrow morning at 12:00 noon. Now if you could just fill out this little bit of paperwork..."

With that, Simpson pulls a stack of papers out from his valise, passing each hero one. Each one is entitled Hellstromme Industries Non-Disclosure Agreement. He asks the characters to sign, adding:

"It's a standard legal document, ensuring that any industrial secrets you come across will be kept in the strictest confidence. We can't have you talking to rags like the Epitaph or those hacks at Smith & Robards."

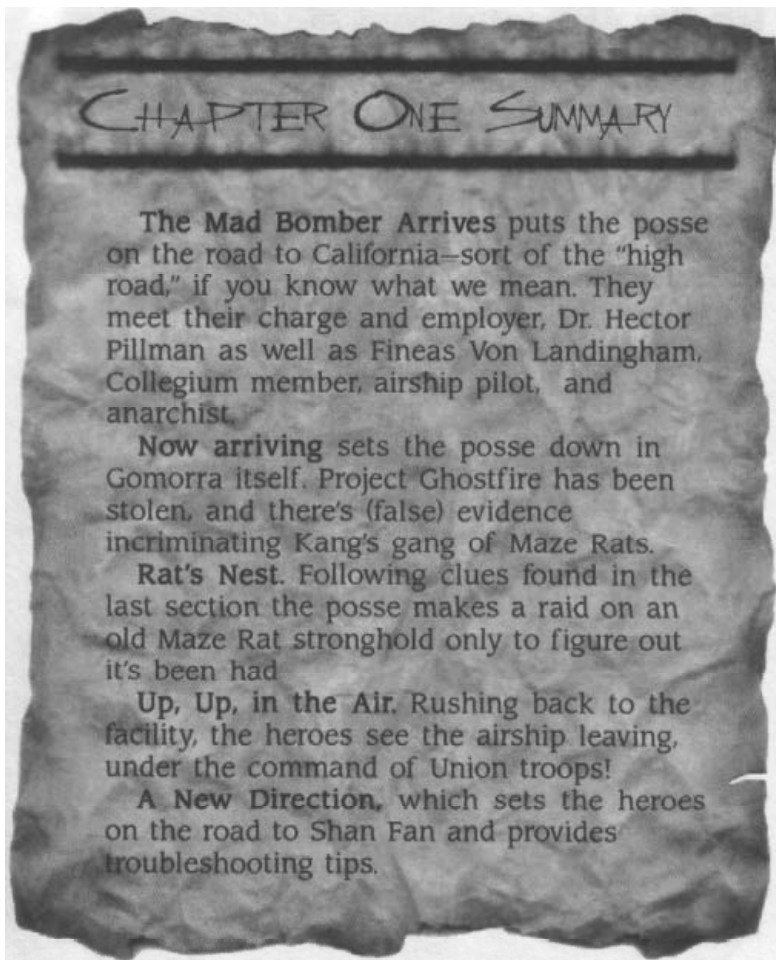
Any cowpoke making an Onerous (7) professional: legal or a Hard (9) Smarts check can tell that the document is nothing sinister and exactly what it seems to be, with penalties for violation commensurate to the value of the secrets revealed. Should anyone refuse, Simpson doesn't push it—his nefarious employer has other ways of dealing with those who reveal their secrets.

After the heroes sign the papers, Simpson says he'll meet them at noon the next day at Hellstromme Industries' private aerodrome, just outside the Salt Lake City limits.

OTHER WAYS IN

If your posse has no reason to be anywhere near the City o' Gloom, you may need to work a little more to hook them into *Rain o' Terror*, but it's not an insurmountable problem.

Perhaps the Collegium or Dr. Pillman himself is nervous, and contracts the posse for assistance and protection. Alternatively, the Rangers or the Agency. Could have heard about Project Ghostfire and asked the heroes to "get themselves hired" as Hellstromme's hired guns.



There are all kinds of other possibilities for hooking your heroes into *Rain o' Terror*, Marshal. Just tailor the situation to fit your needs. As long as you end up with an air carriage full of heroes, everything else should play out just fine.

THE MAD BOMBER ARRIVES

However and wherever you have dragged your heroes into *Rain o' Terror*, the action really gets underway with the arrival of the group's transportation to Gomorra. This is also where the posse meets its new employer, Dr. Hector Pillman.

DR. HECTOR PILLMAN

The posse's traveling companion and employer is Dr. Hector Pillman, a senior Hellstromme scientist recently assigned to Gomorra. Pillman is one of the foremost experts on ghost rock in North America, and it's not unlikely that any mad scientist hero will have heard of him (an Onerous (7) *Knowledge/mad science* check). It might seem a bit strange to anyone knowing of him that such an esteemed researcher is traveling to a Hell-hole like Gomorra, but Dr. Pillman isn't talking.

Pillman looks extremely out of place out on the frontier—largely because he is. A rotund, balding egg of a man with a pinched face and clammy, sweaty palms, he wears wire-rimmed glasses and a variety of ill-fitting tinhorn suits of questionable taste and fashion. Normally he wouldn't be caught dead out in the Great Maze, but he's in the unfortunate position of having to go where the ghost rock (bomb) is. That doesn't mean he has to like being there, though.

The scientist whines constantly about the abominable heat, filth and disorder of everything around him. Phrases like "civilized men shouldn't have to live like this" and "this is quite intolerable" spew from his pudgy mouth with amazing frequency. Only the large paycheck the heroes are



collecting for accompanying him should keep them from giving the man a swift boot in the behind.

The doctor loves to discuss the science of ghost rock at length with any like-minded scientist. These conversations are illuminating to be sure, but the doctor carefully avoids mentioning anything about Project Ghostfire—at least until a few important events have run their course.

If you need game stats for Dr. Pillman, just use the Mad Scientist archetype from the *Weird West Player's Guide*, but add *science: geology 5* and *renown 1*.

FINEAS VON LANDINGHAM

Von Landingham is a character, even for the Collegium. He's an avowed anarchist and terrorist, utterly convinced the only way to save humanity is the destruction of all governments. He's a wanted criminal in so many locales and countries that the Great Maze is the only place left to him.

His airship and knack for timing devices causes the rest of the Collegium to overlook his flaws, but no one's particularly comfortable when his airship flies overhead, given his penchant for explosives! The truth be known, he's one of the main reasons Hellstromme passed Project Ghostfire to the Collegium; if anyone would detonate the experimental bomb, it's von Landingham—giving the good doctor a free (and utterly deniable) field test!

Fineas is as much comic relief as he is important to the story. Have fun with him, Marshal!

PROFILE: FINEAS VON LANDINGHAM

Corporeal: D:3d10, N:3d8, S:2d6, Q:2d8
V:4d6
Climbin' 2d8, drivin': air carriage 5d8,
filchin' 3d10, shootin': dynamite
launcher 3d10, sleight o' hand 3d10,
sneak 2d8, throwin': unbalanced 4d10

Mental: C:2d10, K:4d10, M:2d8, Sm:4d10, Sp:2d10
Academia: philosophy 4d10, artillery 4d10, demolition 5d10, disguise 2d10, guts 4d10, mad science 5d10, science general 3d10, science: chemistry 5d10, scrutinize 3d10
Edges: Arcane background 3: mad scientist, big ears 1, fleet-footed 2, light sleeper 1, tenure 1
Hindrances: Fernier -3, loco -3: delusional
Pace: 8
Size: 6
Wind: 16
Gear: Dynamite, grapeshot bombs, fuses, timers, a watch, tools and the *Proletariat*, his fancy, new, specially-designed air carriage.
Description: Considering his anarchic bent, it's a bit ironic that Von Landingham dresses in the style of a Prussian naval officer. He has black hair and a walrus mustache.

THE PROLETARIAT

Von Landingham's air carriage is an impressive sight to be sure, larger than any that the posse are likely to have encountered before. The *P.A.C. Proletariat*, as the large red letters on the side of the flight envelope proclaim it, is a massive craft. The air-bag is at least 150 feet in length, and a double-decker cabin of considerable size hangs suspended beneath it. Twin propeller-driven ghost rock powered engines sit on either side of the carriage.

The furnishings inside the cabin are sumptuous, better than the fanciest Pullman car the posse has ever ridden in. Dark wood and brass fittings line the interior, while the seats are as plush and comfortable as a feather bed. The food's of high quality and the liquor is the best-though Pillman doesn't take kindly to bodyguards who are anything less than teetotalers. Von Landingham may be an anarchist, but he likes to live in style.

AN INTERESTING

FLIGHT

The flight from Salt Lake City (or wherever your posse starts *Rain o' Terror*) is an uneventful one, taking about three days. Well, uneventful is a bit of a misnomer for a trip over the Great Basin and Sierra Nevadas by zeppelin. The scenery from high up in the air is breathtaking, with the whole sweep of the salt flats and the Nevada desert beneath them. The *Proletariat* crosses the Sierras while passing over Reno and Virginia City, which look like children's toys from this height. Eventually the airship passes over the Sacramento Valley and heads northwest to Gomorra, in the heart of the Maze.

POKING AROUND

If your heroes are the troublemaking type and start poking around Von Landingham's air carriage, go ahead and let them. You can find the complete layout and description of the *Proletariat* in Chapter Four.

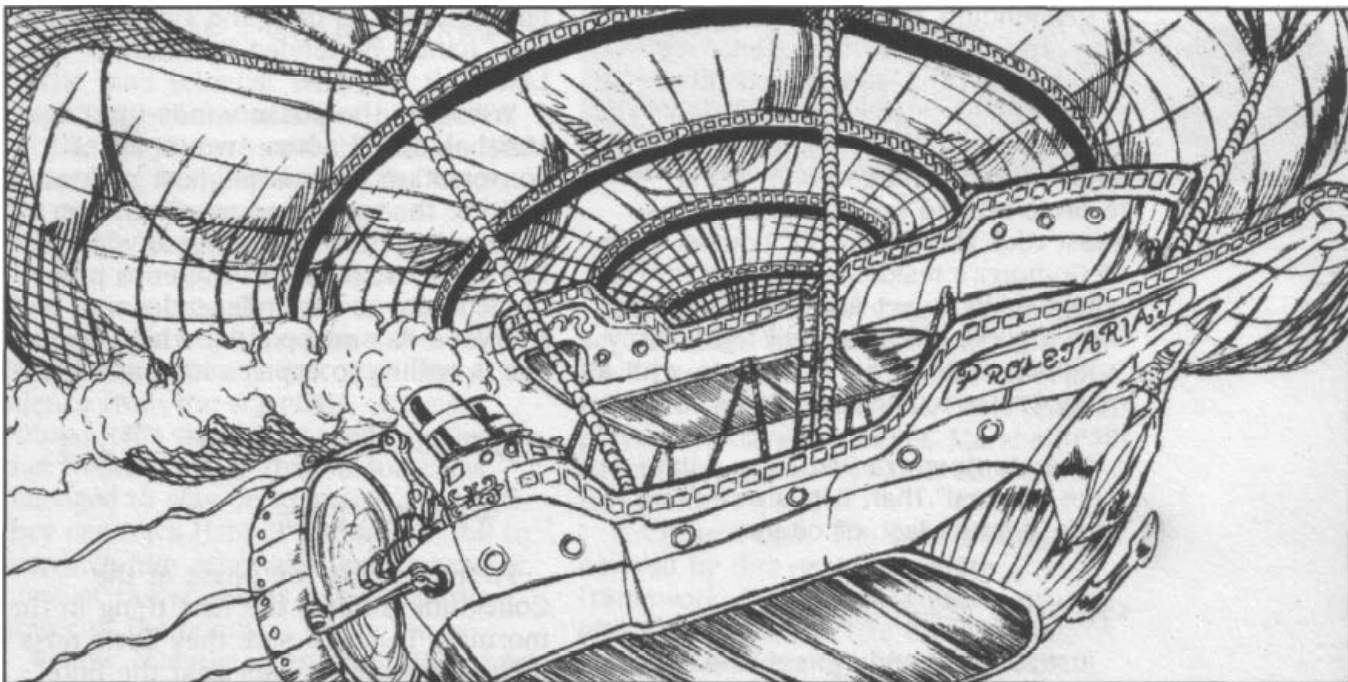
The personal quarters, captain's quarters, engine room, machine room and flight envelope are marked as off-limits. Any of the crew catching a cowpoke nosing around in there cordially but formally asks them to return to the permitted areas of the airship "for their own safety."

We're not too worried about the heroes causing any damage-the *Proletariat* holds no secrets at this point. In fact, exploration of the airship now may come in handy to your heroes later. As long as they don't break anything, we suggest you let them poke around a little, with the reprimands of the crew and captain used only to keep them on their toes.

NOW ARRIVING...

Around late afternoon of the fourth day, the *Proletariat* arrives at Gomorra. Von Landingham touches down a few miles to the south and east of town, near the observatory temporarily





serving as the Collegium's headquarters while repairs take place on their old facility.

He meets the party at the exit stairs.

"Vell, my friends. Rooms for you have been booked at the Red Hill Hotel; one of our steam vagns vill transport you there immediately. Vee vill send the steam vagon for you again in the morning for the first test of the device. Dr. Pillman, good day."

With that, he tucks his elbow tightly against his body, clicks his heels once, and bows slightly to the man, in a very mock-military fashion before striding purposefully off to oversee his crew as it secures the *Proletariat*.

IT AIN'T QUITE HELL...

Sitting on the biggest known source of ghost rock in the Maze, Gomorra has attracted fortune hunters of all types—and all of them armed. Half-a-dozen factions converged on the town, all eager to get Gomorra's mines under their control. And all of them were being used by the manitou Knicknevin to further its plans.

We've not detailed much of Gomorra in these pages. Things are going to heat up pretty quickly, so the posse doesn't have much time for exploration. If you're interested in making a long-term setting out of the town, take a gander at the *Doomtown or Bust!*, sourcebook; it has all the details on who's who about Gomorra.

If the heroes were here for the events covered in *Ghost Busters*, they find the place a bit less of a wreck than on their last visit. While the craters created by the big battle with Knicknevin still dot the landscape things seem to be returning to what passes for normal in Gomorra. Townsfolk are busy clearing up the debris from the fight, mending windows and tearing down wrecked buildings to make way for new ones.

A small force of Union soldiers has settled and has imposed some harsh restrictions on the down during the reconstruction. Many of the saloons are closed for "selling poisoned whiskey"—part of the Agency's cover story for Knicknevin's rampage—and the local brothels and gambling halls haven't fared much better for similar reasons. On the north end of town, the Collegium is beginning to rebuild its old "campus," and other construction projects are underway throughout Gomorra.

Referendum fever has reached Gomorra as well, with leaflets and handbills tacked, pasted and otherwise attached to just about any available flat surface. Conversation in the few open bars, brothels and gambling halls revolves around politics as much as ghost rock these days. Of course, some of Gomorra's residents just look at the whole thing as yet another reason to start a good, old-fashioned fight. Many "soapbox orators" are ending up with as many bruise to their bodies as to their ideas.

Overall, Gomorra just feels a little more "normal" than it has in quite a while. It won't last, of course.

GETTING SETTLED

Just as von Landingham said, rooms are ready for the posse at the Red Hill Hotel, with the bill taken care of by the Collegium, which is trying to impress their partners in Deseret. (The posse's bar bill and room service are not part of the deal, however! The Collegium is generous, but not stupid.) Dr. Pillman has a room of his own as well, and heads there faster than you can say "vamoose," giving the posse orders to be ready to depart for the observatory at first light.

The posse has rooms on the second floor of the Red Hill. Comfortable and clean, there are as many rooms as needed and the heroes are bunked two to a room—where decorum allows. The hotel is generally safe and peaceful, so nothing untoward should happen here, unless you want it to.

For a few hours, then, the heroes are on their own to relax and kick up their heels a bit. Let them head-off to a local saloon for some whisky, gambling, and companionship-provided they can find one that hasn't been shut down by the boys in Blue! Both the New Moon Saloon—owned by the Collegium and complete with "clockwork bartenders"—and the Lad (for those who don't think the New Science and rotgut mix!)

remain open, as does the ever popular Fat Chance, bartended by Charlie Landers.

Wherever the posse winds up, Marshal, they'll notice two topics of conversation dominate—ghost rock and politics, the upcoming referendum in particular. The whole range of opinions can be heard, from pro-Union to pro-Confederate to pro-Independence. Everyone has an opinion, which he or she is willing to express long and loud.

OFF TO SEE THE WIZARDS

Pillman wants the posse at the Collegium grounds the first thing in the morning. To make sure they don't miss their appointment, he's paid the hotel staff to wake the posse at first light—no matter how hung-over they are.

If necessary, the staff uses pass keys to enter and douse the lazy cowpoke with a jug of water. The hotel employee hastily explains Dr. Pillman was emphatic about waking them on time.

True to their word, the Collegium scientists have dispatched a steam wagon and it arrives on time. Dr. Pillman becomes impatient when the driver tells the group he was asked to "move with utmost haste and retrieve Dr. Pillman!" Evidently, there's a problem, but the driver doesn't know what it is.

The first thing that may strike the posse as odd is the lack of anyone coming out to meet them as they approach. They know they're expected, so it would be natural to see some sort of welcoming committee. Instead, on a Fair (5) *search* roll, a posse member notices the door to the supposedly secure project building is wide open and people are dashing back and forth between it and the main building.

Otherwise, nothing seems unusual until a frantic man runs up to them just as they round the corner to head for the project building, shouting:

"Dr. Pillman! Don't stand there dawdling, come quickly! This is terrible! Project Ghost fire has been stolen!"



THE SCENE OF THE CRIME

The mad scientist who met them, Magnus Greel (more about him, later), hustles Dr. Pillman and the heroes into the project building. Inside, the heroes see several Collegium members frantically arguing with each other and running around like chickens with their heads cut off.

Questions from the posse about Project Ghostfire are met with stony silence from the scientists, while Dr. Pillman tells them they aren't cleared for that information. If they've somehow managed to stay on Pillman's good side, they can try a Hard (9) *persuasion* roll to convince him otherwise. Just remember, none of the scientists know the true power of the bomb.

Fellow scientists can make the check at one step lower. Otherwise, a mad scientist can try a Hard (9) *science: engineering* roll to try and guess the basics of Project Ghostfire (a *really* powerful bomb) from the diagrams hanging on the wall and the equipment scattered around.

Whether the posse finds out what the device is, it's clear from the empty framework that it was something big—perhaps the length of a tall man and twice as wide.

The bomb hasn't actually been removed from the base. The device is far too heavy and unwieldy to be moved quickly from one location to the other. Since Frank McDonnell and his Guardian Angels are planning on stealing Von Landingham's airship anyway, they have secreted the bomb to the most sensible location—under a tarp in the cargo hold of the *Proletariat*.

I SMELL A RAT!

The posse notices pretty quickly that the scientists may be good at book learning and tinkering, but they don't know much about investigating. As they're Hellstromme's hired security, no one will stop them from examining the scene for clues. If they don't think to do it, Dr. Pillman orders them to get busy.

"You're the troubleshooters.
Shoot some trouble!"



THE CLUES

Before the discovery, Greel planted several clues to lead the posse astray. Each can be found on an *Fair (5) search* roll, one clue for each roll. Don't tell the players the target number, Marshal! Greel tried to make it look subtle and he's good at his job

A *Chinese coin*. The coin is partially covered by dirt near the empty framework. It has a hole in the center and Chinese characters on each side. A Hard (9) *theology* roll identifies it as a coin used in the Chinese divination art, the I-Ching. Chinese posse members know this immediately

A *cartridge from a Union issue .44-40 Winchester 73*. This one is found only on an *Onerous (7) search* roll, Marshal.



The casing bears a mark from the New York armory. This was dropped as a backup red herring by Greel. If the posse suspects the clues leading to Kang's people are too obvious, this one is meant to plant the idea the Union is behind the theft and tried to frame the Maze Rats.

Wagon tracks. Just outside the main entrance is a set of wagon tracks—heavily loaded ones—heading off to the southwest. The Angels made sure to load the wagon with scrap metal from around the compound to make it appear to be carrying the bomb. Following them is quite easy; although the Angels brushed over the tracks in a couple of places to make it look like they were *trying* to hide the trail, it's just part of the act.

THAT DOES IT!

As soon as the posse shows the scientists the clues, one of the scientists shouts "*It must have been Kang's pirates! We've had run-ins with them before, but now they've gone too far!*" The other scientists readily believe this, given past experiences with Kang's desperadoes. They argue that, if they move quickly enough, they can recover *Project Ghostfire* before the pirates can get away. Some don't wait and run to grab weapons from the Collegium.

Greel doesn't really expect his framing of the Rats to stand for long, but he's learned enough about the fierce feud between the Collegium and Maze Rats to know that he has at least a fair to middling chance of clearing out most of the facility for a while as the scientists hasten to revenge themselves on their favorite enemies.

BUT WHAT KIND OF RAT?

Cagey heroes might wonder about the clues pointing too easily at Kang's pirates, or how they got Union firearms. Greel or another scientist says they probably stole them or bought them on

the black market in Shan Fan— "*that's a den of corruption if there ever was one!*" If the posse is reluctant to get on the trail or expresses doubts, Pillman orders them into action, saying there's no time to waste.

He, of course, must stay behind to write a report to Dr. Hellstromme.

RAT'S NEST

When the party leaves the workshop, they see a number of Collegium scientists waiting for them, all of them armed with a mix of flamethrowers and Gatling pistols from the Collegium armory. Exactly how many is up to you, Marshal; we recommend you use just enough to get the point about their hatred of the Rats without overburdening you.

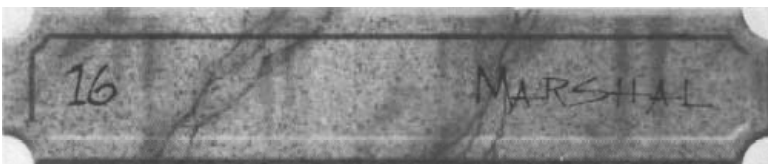
These people are scientists, not gunslingers, so none of them are particularly skilled with firearms. Use the standard Mad Scientist profile from the Deadlands rule book (p.73), substituting the *Gatling pistol* skill for *flamethrower* when necessary. If you've got your hands on *The Collegium* sourcebook, you can pull a couple of the personalities from there, or spice up the mix with the Collegium Associate archetype.

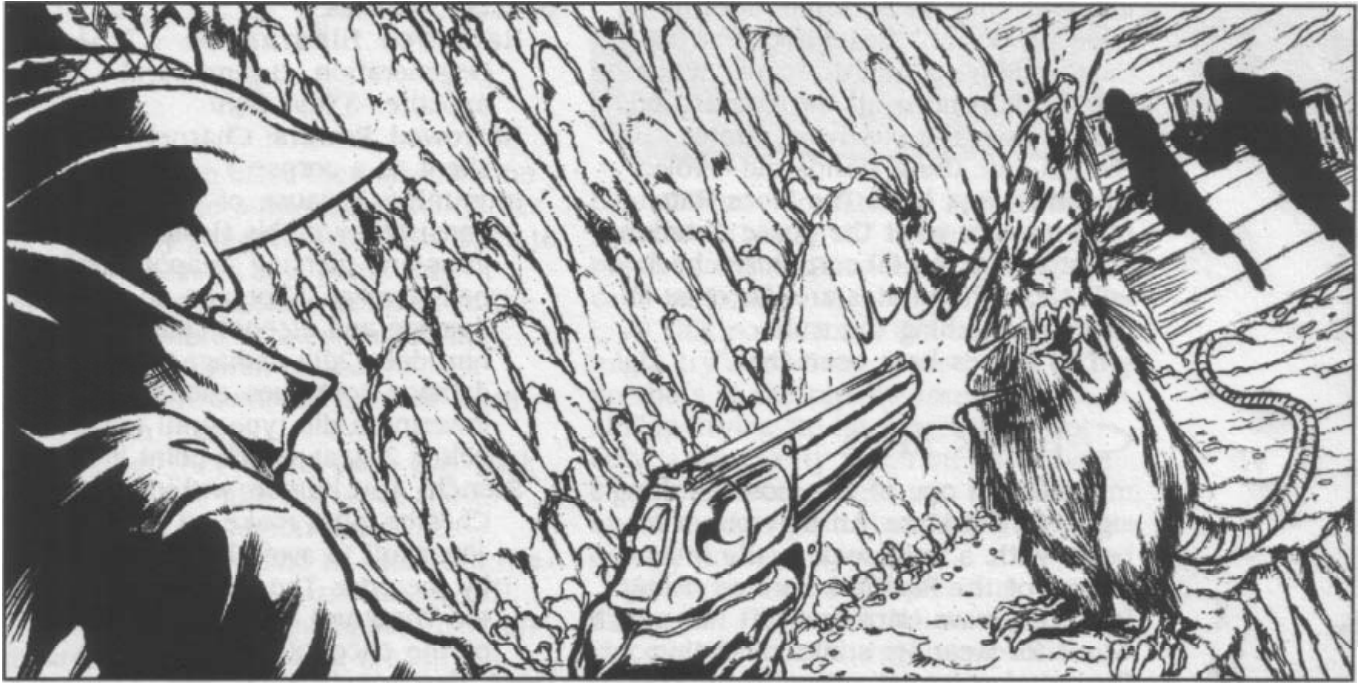
Fortunately, since the posse works for Hellstromme Industries and the scientists are embarrassed about the loss of the bomb, they're willing to take direction from the heroes— but they refuse to be left behind. They're *mad*, after all!

A GOOD TIME TO STRIKE

As it happens, this is, in fact, a rather good time to strike the Maze Rats. Captain Sim Yut-San and most of his crew have briefly left the area for a council with Red Petals Su, his superior in Kang's organization. Only a few pirates are left around Gomorra, mostly the "undesireables" the Rats won't miss.

To say the least, the remaining Rats aren't expecting any trouble, especially from the Collegium. The pirates have no reason to expect the scientists to





prosecute their little feud at this point, as concerned as they are with rebuilding the Collegium. They don't know a thing about Project Ghostfire.

THE RAT'S HARBOR

The wagon tracks lead to a secluded harbor three miles south of town along the coast of the Maze, at the base of cliffs 150' tall.

Following the tracks is only a Fair (5) *trackin'* roll (or *search* if the posse is short on the wilderness-savvy). As we mentioned, the Angels left a pretty obvious trail, with only occasional smudges to give the impression they were trying to be sneaky but failing badly. Just the sort of thing one would expect from a bunch of sea dogs.

Back when the *Typhoon* was still afloat, it occasionally put in here to make repairs that couldn't be done at sea. The harbor itself is in a crescent shape, about 200 yards from tip to tip. Scattered around the sandy beach are piles of crates, crude shacks, and cook fires. A ramshackle dock extends out into the bay, but only a few small rowboats are there now.

The wagon tracks lead to a small trail and then away to the south, but noticeably lighter. There are a number of footprints around the top of the trail,

but a Hard (9) *trackin'* roll proves that no one went down, should the posse think to ask.

Also, a Hard (9) *search* roll up top finds the body of a single pirate, hidden behind a rock and partially covered with brush. He was unlucky enough to be on guard when the Angels arrived. One of them cut his throat before he could call out the warning. Also hidden with him is a pile of scrap iron the Angels unloaded to lighten the wagon.

Presented with these clues, even the scientists are convinced they've been duped and agree to head back immediately!

Should the heroes continue on, access is by a natural trail wide enough for one person at a time—no horses. It switches back and forth with enough cover from rock outcroppings that a reasonably cautious group can sneak down to the shore on a Fair(5) *Sneak* aptitude check made against the lowest aptitude in the group.

RATS IN RESIDENCE

The Maze Rats left behind are definitely not the cream of the crop. There are two for each hero, but once a third of the Rats are incapacitated, or if Chester Nero is killed or captured, the rest of the pirates quickly surrender-

although they do so while uttering a wide variety of threats about "What Captain Sim's gonna do to ya," when he gets back. Among all the threats and curses from the surviving pirates, though, one thing stands out-Project Ghostfire isn't here. The Maze Rats have no idea what the posse is talking about and a *Fair* (5) *scrutinize* check will show the pirates are (for once in their lives) telling the truth.

The heroes have been "had."

CHESTER NERO

Chester is one of the most revolting sights in the Maze. An ugly pirate to begin with, a long soak in the briny waters of the Pacific before returning from the grave Harrowed left him much worse for wear. He stinks of rotting flesh and stagnant seawater, and his skin is bloated and waxy, with the consistency soap scum.

Sim kept him around because it was just so darned convenient to have a crewmember who could stay underwater indefinitely, but only "Buckets" Nelson, the *Typhoon's* shark chummer will even talk to the man. Now he sits and soaks in the water beneath the dock.

PROFILE: CHESTER NERO

Corporeal: D:1d6, N:2d8, S: 3d8, Q:2d10
V:2d8

Climbin': 2d8, dodge: 3d8, fightin':
brawlin', spear 4d8, shootin': shotgun
4d6, sneak 4d8, swimmin' 4d8,
throwin': balanced 4d6

Mental: C:2d8, K:1d6, M:1d6, Sm:1d6,
Sp:2d6

Guts 2d8, overawe 4d6, trade:
seamanship 3d6

Edges: none

Hindrances: Habit -3 (picks open
sores), outlaw -3, ugly as sin -1

Pace: 8

Size: 7

Wind: 14

Terror: 9

Special Abilities:

Harrowed Hindrances:

Degeneration -3, unnatural
appetite -3 (live fish)

Harrowed Powers: Charnel breath 3,
silent as a corpse 4

Immunity: Because of the goo-like
consistency of his flesh, most
guns and piercing weapons only do
half damage. Shotguns do full
damage and alcohol splashed on
him does 2d10 damage. The
damage continues each round,
lowering a die type until reduced
below 2d4, at which point it ends.

Stench: Any human within 10' of
Chester must make an Onerous (7)
Vigor roll to avoid being sickened
by the odor. Those who fail suffer
1d6 Wind and are at -2 for the rest
of the encounter.

Gear: Harpoon (spear), sawed-off
shotgun with trigger guard cut off to
allow his bloated fingers to fit (on
shore near dock)

Description: See above.

MAZE RAT RABBLE

Even Sim won't miss most of these
thugs-which is most likely why he left
them behind in the first place!

PROFILE: MAZE RAT RABBLE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d8, S:2d8, Q:2d6,
V:2d6

Fightin': brawlin', knife 3d8, shootin':
pistol, rifle 3d6, sneak 2d8

Mental: C:1d8, K:2d4, M:2d4, Sm:1d6,
Sp:2d6

Gamblin' 2d6, guts 3d6, ridicule 2d6,
search 2d8, streetwise 3d6, trade
seamanship 2d4

Edges: Fleet footed 1

Hindrances: Outlaw -3, vengeful -3

Pace: 8

Size: 6

Wind: 12 (30 hits)

Gear: A large knife, Colt Navy pistol,
and a pair of dice or deck of cards,
each.

Description: These castoffs of society
are usually, filthy, unshaven, barefoot,
and dressed in ragged, smelly clothes.
These guys add new meaning to the
term "dregs of humanity."



UP, UP IN THE AIR

Not too soon after they discover the truth about the pirate base, the heroes are probably going to high-tail it back to the Collegium. At this point, they should know the clues pointing to the Maze Rats were planted. And it may have occurred even to the thickest cowpoke that someone wanted them away for a reason...

Whether they hustle their way back on foot or ride like the wind, the heroes get to Gomorra and the Collegium just in time to hear rifle fire and to see *The Proletariat* taking off!

Trouble is, Von Landingham isn't on board. He sees the posse return and runs over to them, madder than a wet hen.

"Mein airship! Mein beautiful Proletariat! Those schweinhund tools of the oppressor classes have stolen it! And they have Dr. Pillman und Project Ghostfire!"

A LUCKY SHOT...

As they arrive, the posse sees almost all the visible people in the carriage are wearing Union Army uniforms. One luckless sap is still hanging from a boarding ladder trying to climb up.

The heroes are welcome to take a shot at the dangling fool—in fact, we hope they do! It's a Hard (9) *shootin'* roll to hit him. If they drop him with wounds, Wind, or if he just plain fails a stun check, he loses his grip and plummets to his death on the hard desert ground. Even if they don't, a lucky shot from below takes him out and he drops.

...AND ONE NOT SO LUCKY!

We said almost all the people are in Union uniforms, Marshal, because the second thing they see is a very terrified Dr. Pillman standing in the open entry hatch, precariously perched on the edge. Wailing and blubbering like a baby, he's saying something to someone



behind him who can't be seen in the shadows. They're 150' up and, over the noise of the engines, what's being said can't be heard.

At this point, some in the posse might try something foolish, like taking potshots at the rapidly ascending airship, trying "to hit a fuel line." Not only is this pretty much an impossible shot at this range, but von Landingham and the other Collegium scientists quickly and strongly object.

He doesn't want his precious *Proletariat* filled with holes—especially since it's filled with highly explosive *hydrogen*!—and others point out the dangers of setting off Project Ghostfire with a (un)lucky hit. If pressed about what will happen, they mumble, "It would be...bad. We think, anyway..."



Whether or not they're arguing on the ground, the airship makes a turn to head south. To the horror of those below, a gunshot cracks and Pillman's head erupts in red spray. The figure behind him shoves the body out, which falls and lands on the roof of the observatory with a sickening crunch.

Any cowpoke still looking up catches a glimpse of the murderer leaning out and flashing a jackal's grin—Frank McDonnell, although they won't recognize him yet.

The last thing they see is the airship moving at top speed toward the south.

WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED?

Most of this happens "off-screen," Marshal, but here's the low-down for your eyes only.

Greel needed to clear the area so he and McDonnell's Guardian Angels would have time to secure the airship and get away. They loaded the bomb into the cargo hold of the *Proletariat* when everyone was asleep the night before, and then the Angels laid the false trail. Once the heroes and most of the more belligerent scientists took off chasing a wild goose, McDonnell and the Angels, in Union uniforms, took both Greel and Pillman "prisoner," destroyed the plans for Project Ghost Fire, and hijacked the airship. The posse arrived just in time to catch the last few minutes of the show.

McDonnell didn't kidnap Pillman because he needed him—he needed him out of the way. His murder was planned the whole time so that Greel would be the only one to know how the bomb works.

The Collegium scientists can confirm that while Pillman drew up the plans, Greel actually built Ghost Fire, and that with both dead or "captured," no one else in the organization really knows how it works!

CLUES

First of all, there's the airship's course. Until it's well out of site, the *Proletariat* will head on a beeline south—roughly towards Shan Fan, but don't beat the posse over the head with that; let the heroes figure it out. Once out of sight, Greel and McDonnell turn the ship due east and head for a secret landing area prepared for them in the foothills near Roseville, a small town outside Sacramento.

Also, an Onerous (7) *search* roll finds a pair of bolt cutters with "Property of Iron Dragon Railroad Company" stamped in English and Chinese on the handles scattered among the tools in the landing area. This was stolen (along with other tools) from the Iron Dragon offices in Shan Fan. A Collegium member speculates that Kang might still be involved, even if the pirates at the base weren't part of the operation.

FALLEN ANGEL

The raider who didn't quite make it aboard the *Proletariat* has some really important clues on him as well.

First, there's his uniform itself. An Onerous (7) *Cognition* recognizes the unit emblem pin as different from that worn by the soldiers in Gomorra; any hero with a military background (or who's a member of the Agency or Rangers) gets a +2 to the roll.

The emblem's design identifies it as that of the 23rd Nevada Infantry. An Onerous (7) *professional: military* or Fair (5) *area knowledge: Maze* roll lets a hero remember there is a small detachment from that unit stationed in Shan Fan to preserve a fiction of Union authority. One of the scientists who recently visited Shan Fan also knows this information, if the posse doesn't.

A Fair (5) *Cognition* tells her the uniform doesn't quite fit, either. The sleeves and pant legs are rolled up. Worse yet, he's got a regular shirt under the jacket!

Finally, an Onerous (7) *search* roll turns up a poker chip imprinted with a rose and the legend "Shan Fan Sally's" in the inside shirt pocket. On the back, is a name neatly printed: "Lilli."



This is from a well-known gambling den and brothel in Shan Fan. One of McDonnell's less than righteous boys stopped off for some "fun," unbeknown to the boss. Though the soiled dove didn't survive the visit and the Avenging Angel was wearing a Union uniform at the time, a clue from beyond the grave can be found here pointing to Grimme's involvement! More on this in Chapter Two.

SHAN FAN, HERE WE COME!

All clues point to Shan Fan, and, assuming your heroes aren't lily-livered cowards, they're probably rarin' to head south. Of course, being on the Hellstromme Industries payroll and having the darned thing stolen on their watch can't help but motivate them a bit as well!

If the posse is reluctant to head off to Shan Fan, they're approached by Von Landingham.

"My friends, vee need your help. Even if you have no regard for Dr. Hellstromme or the late Dr. Pillman, surely vee must capture his murderers! And I fear to think of Project Ghostfire in the wrong hands—the oppressors of the vurking class! Oh, my beloved Proletariat-ach, I must have her back! Vill you help us?"

If the posse doesn't respond to this Marshal, close the book and call it a night. Von Landingham looks at them with contempt and stalks off on his own mission—and Sacramento gets destroyed a few weeks later.

If they do agree—and hopefully that's the case!—Von Landingham meets them a couple of hours later with fresh horses, supplies, and a determined look. It's time to go kick some butt.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Not much can go wrong here, Marshal, without some concerted effort on the posse's part! There are two likely possibilities though.



First, conscientious heroes might want to get to work guarding the Collegium the night they arrive. Now, that would be bad, very bad for Greel's (and our) plans. If this happens, it turns out that the Collegium members weren't expecting hired security people from Hellstromme Industries. One reason the posse was put up at the hotel was the objections of scientists who didn't want strangers poking around their labs.

If the posse shows up to go on duty, a couple of the mad scientists pitch a fit. Dr. Pillman orders the heroes to return to the hotel, reminding them that the scientists have taken care of the project thus far, and that the posse is really along to protect *him* and not the Collegium! If necessary, feel free to play Pillman up as quite the overbearing tinhorn here, Marshal.

Second, one or more of the posse might stay behind when the group heads off to the pirate base. Pillman is truly insistent, but if they refuse, he eventually relents. In this case, Greel first attempts to drug their coffee (or tea, or milk, or whatever) with enough poppy juice to knock a horse for a loop. Give them a *Vigor* check against an Incredible (11) TN.

If they fail, they're out cold when the Angels arrive; even if they succeed, they're at -4 to all rolls for 1d6 hours. If all else fails, there are a good number of Angels and likely to be more than a match for a few stay-behinds—especially since Greel takes Pillman hostage at the first opportunity!


BAUNTY

Beating the Maze Rats: One white chip to each hero involved.

Avoiding the fight with the Maze Rats: One red chip to the "negotiators."

Figuring out Shan Fan is the next stop: One blue chip to the character who discovers the poker chip.





CHAPTER TWO: SHAN FAN SURPRISE!

By this time, Marshal, the posse (including Von Landingham) should be on their way to glorious Shan Fan, the biggest den of sin and corruption in California outside of Lost Angels itself. Here they have a chance to do some investigating and learn more of the nature of the threat, and also maybe pick up a clue to Grimme's involvement.

Likely the two clues in the posse's possession are the poker chip from Shan Fan Sally's and the unit identification patch from the raider's body at the observatory.

CITY BY THE BAY

Shan Fan lies about 80 miles or so south of Gomorra. Given the terrain in the Maze, that's a good three- to four-day ride. If you've got *The Great Maze* boxed set, you're set! If not, here's all the information you'll need to handle Shan Fan.

When the Great Quake of '68 destroyed San Francisco and shattered the California coast, it did leave behind one gift—a beautiful harbor for a new port city. The survivors who moved inland—mostly Chinese laborers and members of the Hsieh Chia Jen criminal triad—called it Shan Fan Bay and named their new city after it. Since then though, Shan Fan is technically still part of California and the Union, the triad has run it as its own little empire, answering to no one.

The city forms a crescent on the southeast part of the bay, spreading out from the docks district. Hilly and rugged, its streets wind up, down and all around. The east-west streets are called avenues, while the north-south roads are streets. In between the mostly wooden buildings twist cramped and dark little streets and even smaller alleys, making it easy for cowpokes from out of town to get lost!

While Shan Fan's population includes a mix of races, the vast majority is Chinese. Their influence is unmistakable-the city looks like it could have been transplanted directly from Asia. Business and street signs are in Chinese, though most sport English translations. Small temples to the gods and ancestors are a common sight on the city's hills. Walk through the markets and you'll see exotic fruits, vegetables, and the carcasses of animals most other folks would never think of as food. Of course, with the ever-present shortage of food in the Maze, people get over their squeamishness real quick.

A visitor to Shan Fan quickly gets the impression of a city constantly awash in motion and noise at all hours of the day and night. Crowds swirl through the streets, making way for the brawls that regularly spill out of the saloons and gambling halls. It's the playground of choice for miners and sailors in from the Maze, and the locals are only too happy give them whatever they want, whenever they want it—as long as they pay for it.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Like any big city, Shan Fan has a number of distinct districts, each with its own personality. People tend to live

where they work, unless they're wealthy enough to afford a standalone home.

Red Lantern Town is just what it sounds like-the "official" sin center of Shan Fan. Here the visitors find the wildest saloons, brothels, gambling dens, opium parlors, and cheap, no-tell hotels. It's the preferred place for outsiders to let off steam, but it's also the easiest place to run afoul of triad goons. More than a few whiskey-soaked sailors have gone toes-up permanently here.

Stinktown is Shan Fan's barnyard. Slaughterhouses, tanneries, animal auctions and more are all crammed together here thicker than cowpokes at a bar on payday. The place smells as bad as you'd expect-one reason the hotel rooms are so cheap! And be careful what you eat-the triad sometimes disposes of people it doesn't like in the sausage grinders...

The Waterfront is one of Shan Fan's two main business districts, concentrating on shipping and ship repair. Kang's Iron Dragon Railroad has just opened offices here, and owns a nearby quay where his ships dock. Tensions are high here as most folks figure this is the start of Kang's attempts to gain control of Shan Fan.

The Skids are where you wind up after you've had a long ride down a



sewer of misfortune. It's the home of the dregs of Shan Fan-everyone here is desperate and willing to do anything to anyone to escape. The meanest triad goons are assigned here when they need a little fun terrorizing folks a lot weaker than themselves.

Taeltown is Shan Fan's financial center. Banks, counting houses, shops that serve a "better" clientele are all found here. Folks with money live here unless they can afford someplace really fancy. The local law dogs, Long-Haired Tony and his deputies, make sure the area is well-patrolled and the residents happy.

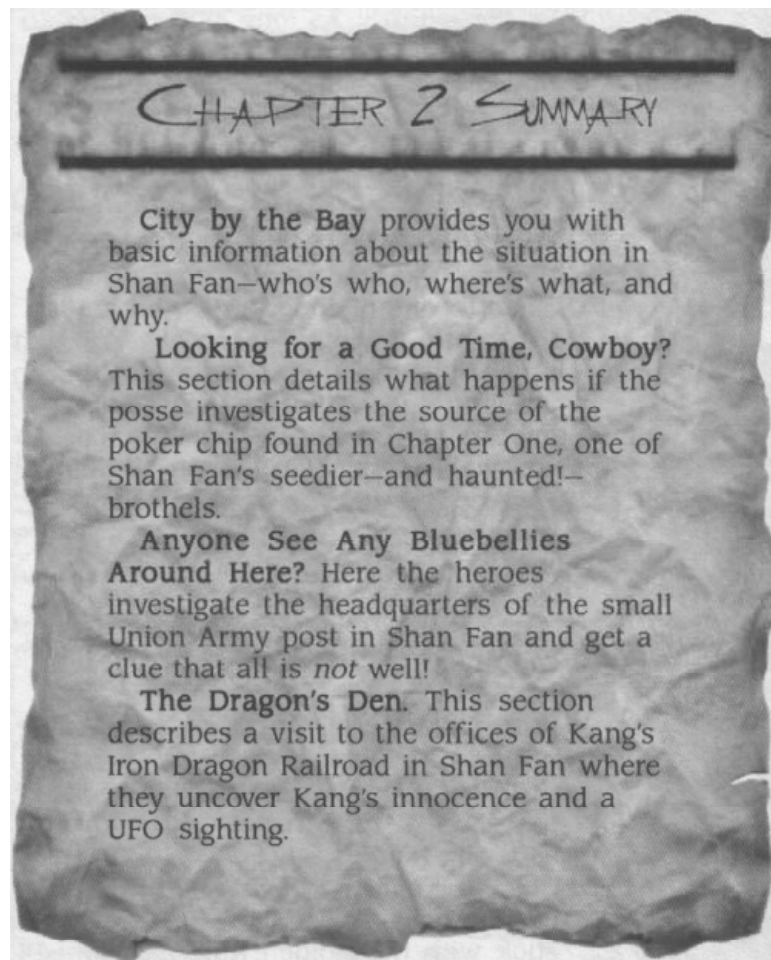
Splinterville is the heart of Shan Fan's timber industry. Lumber, crates, barrels, and other wood goods are in high demand in the Maze, and the timber interests in Splinterville are doing their best to cut down Northern California's forests as fast as they can.

Prawn Valley sits on the bay at the north end of the city. Seafood is a major part of the diet in Shan Fan, and the export industry to the California interior is big business. Prawn Valley is home not only to the city's fishing fleet, but canneries, packing houses, and facilities for processing the oil from captured whales. If the name "Stinktown" weren't already taken, this place would have had it hands down.

POWERS THAT BE

Although nominally a part of the State of California, which is itself nominally a part of the Union, Shan Fan is a law unto itself. The main power in the city is the Hsieh Chia Jen triad, whose name means "Family of Deliverance." Most folks just call it the "Shan Fan triad." They've carved the city up into fiefdoms run by the head honchos-triad boss Big Ears Tam and his immediate circle.

But their power isn't rock-solid. Kang's Iron Dragon Railroad has opened offices in Shan Fan and it's clear to anyone with half-a-brain that he'll try to take over someday. There have already been ruckuses between triad and Kang's goons. For now, though, they're content to feel each other out and probe for weaknesses.



THE LEADERS

Shan Fan doesn't have politicians in the traditional sense. Instead, the city is run as an extension of the triad. At the top is "Big Ears" Tam, the Big Boss of the Shan Fan triad. A cagey old man, he lives in a secluded estate north of the city surrounded by a small army of triad thugs, or "regulators" as they're called in Shan Fan.

Under Big Ears Tam is a layer of six or seven "Big Brothers." These upstanding gentlemen each control a section of the city and have a gang of regulators working for them. The regulators, also called "rascals," do the grunt work of collecting the triad's cut of all activities in the Big Brother's patch.

Another part of a rascal's job is as a foot soldier for his Big Brother. Each Big Brother tries to gain an edge over the others by diminishing his rival's "face," the sense of honor and dignity. A Big Brother who loses too much face can almost count on becoming a dead Big

Brother shortly. As long as they stick to killing each other and don't bother outsiders too much, Tam encourages this. The blow and counterblow of the triad wars keep his underlings too busy to plot against him.

The two most important Big Brothers are Thin Noodles Ma and Rat-Skinner Hou. All the other Big Brothers are allied to one of these two, who are constantly maneuvering to destroy each other. Since they don't figure in this adventure, we've not provide detailed information on Tam, Ma, or Hou, but if you want to spice up the trip to Shan Fan, fee free to drop a name or two!

THE LAW

The law in Shan Fan is simple. You can do almost anything you want as long as you don't mess with the property or person of any triad member nor anyone under the triad's protection.

Sheriff Wong Chau Sang is the "Law" hereabouts, though he's better known as "Long-Haired Tony." Of mixed Chinese-Anglo heritage, Sheriff Tony is easy to get along with as long you stick with the Golden Rule mentioned above. Break that, though, and Tony or his deputies will gun you down faster greased lightning.

The triad wants things taken care of nice and quick, and Big Ears is very happy with the work Tony's doing.

While it might seem Long-haired Tony is some out-of-control lunatic, the truth is quite the opposite. He doesn't shoot till he's sure he has the guilty party and that the crime warrants killing. The fact that he still has his head, let alone his job, shows how highly Big Ears Tam regards him.

PROFILE: LONG-HAIRED TONY

Corporeal: D:4d10, N:2d8, Q:3d12, S:3d6, V:2d8

Dodge 4d8, fightin': brawlin' 4d8, horse ridin' 2d8, quick draw 4d12, shootin': pistol, shotgun 4d10, speed load 4d10

Mental: C:3d8, K:1d6, M:4d8, Sm:2d12, Sp:2d4

Area knowledge: Shan Fan 4d6, guts 4d4, overawe 5d8, scrutinize 2d8, search 2d8, streetwise 3d12

Edges: Brave 2, "Don't get 'im riled" 2, law man 3, the stare 1

Hindrances: Hankerin' (cigars) -1, obligation (sheriff) -3

Pace: 8

Size: 6

Wind: 12

Gear: Shotgun, single-action
Peacemaker, badge of office, chewing tobacco, wood and knife for whittling.

Description: Tony wear his hair long, and his pockmarked face seems to have a perpetual sneer on it.

ELECTION FEVER IN SHAN FAN

As the characters ride into town, they see posters everywhere advocating one or another of the three choices. All of them have slogans like "Union Forever," "Liberty and States' Rights! Vote Confederate," or "California for Californians! Independence Now!"

If they look close, they see the latter posters carry the name of an organization, the "California Independence Party, Hiram Montgomery, Chairman" and gives an address in Sacramento.

While the Shan Fan triad figures it can cut a deal with whoever wins, they'd prefer a Union or Confederate victory. The other heavy hitters rumored to back the CIP are starting to make Big Ears nervous. The thought of someone else's army nearby to act as a counter has its appeal. With that in mind, Big Ears is sending a large contingent of "respectable" Shan Fan residents to Sacramento to vote for whichever of the two governments seems most likely to win.

A GATHERING STORM

Kang and his flunkies aren't involved in Reverend Grimme's plot, except to provide more red herrings for the posse. He does, however, present a long-term



threat to the Hsieh Chia Jen's power, one that has Big Ears Tarn seriously worried for the first time since he took over.

Kang needs a bigger and more secure base nearer the big ghost rock deposits in the north end of the Maze and Shan Fan is an ideal location, both geographically and culturally.

Also, Reverend Grimme and his opposition to the expansion of the Iron Dragon Railroad to Lost Angels are of concern to him. He knows a fight with Grimme is likely and he doesn't like his lack of a solid base in the Maze. Control of Shan Fan would give him the anchor point from which to take on Grimme when—not if—the shooting starts.

So how does this play out in Shan Fan, then? Iron Dragon opened an office in Shan Fan about two months ago in the waterfront district, ostensibly because Kang wanted to open a shipping business. The real reason is to give Kang's marauders (like the Maze Rats) a relatively safe place to dock and unload their ill-gotten gains.

It also serves as an observation post for Kang, working through the eyes and ears of his manager, Zhen Kao Shang. Shang observes and reports on doings in Shan Fan, advising Kang of where the triad's weaknesses might be. He also uses Red Petals Su's pirates and Iron Dragon thugs to test the triad's will.

With each confrontation where Shang's crews stand-up to the triad's regulators, a little more face is lost by the triad and a little more gained by his master. When he has enough, he will advise Kang to make his move.

LOOKING FOR A GOOD TIME COWBOY?

One of the clues found by the posse in Gomorra is a poker chip imprinted with the sign of a rose and the legend "Shan Fan Sally's." This section tells the sad story of Lili, a soiled dove at Sally's, and gives the posse their first real hint of Reverend Grimme's involvement.



SHAN FAN SALLY'S

FEAR LEVEL 3

Shan Fan Sally is a Madame who operates a combination saloon, gambling house, and brothel in Red Lantern Town, recently under the protection of Zhen Kao Shang.

While her soiled doves aren't the prettiest and she waters her drinks, she does her best to make her "guests" feel welcome. She treats her girls reasonably well and she expects their clients to do likewise.

At least, she did until recently.

Now Sally has a big problem. Three weeks ago, a Union soldier came by and picked Lili out of the lineup. The two went upstairs and, a few minutes later, Sally heard Lili scream. Grabbing a couple of her big bouncers, they ran upstairs to Lili's room and burst open the door only to find her dead, gutted like a fish. The soldier had escaped through an open window.

She reported the crime to Long-Haired Tony, but she hasn't heard anything since. Since Sally is under Zhen's protection, Big Ears pulled Tony off the case; Zhen, on the other hand, doesn't want to risk running afoul of the Union just yet, so he's moving slowly.

UNQUIET DEAD

About a week later, the new girl in Lili's room came running out screaming about ghosts. Sure enough, the room was haunted. Sally closed the room and told the girls not to use it till she could get someone in to clear it.

Another week past and things got worse. They heard crying coming from Lili's old room. Upon opening the door, Sally was greeted with a horrible sight-Lili's body had returned. The room was back exactly the way it was the day she died, blood everywhere, and her rotten corpse back on the bed with its entrails spread all over. Worse than that (and the smell), as Sally entered the room, Lili's spirit rose from the corpse, weeping as if it contained all the world's sorrow. It attacked Sally with its long hair, but the madam escaped.

Since then, Sally's business has gone to Hell. Most of her soiled doves have quit, and the men are going elsewhere-both for the women and to get away from the unearthly crying that comes from upstairs at night. If this keeps up, she'll soon be forced to close her doors forever.

REALLY, I JUST WANT INFORMATION

When the heroes pass through the doors of Shan Fan Sally's, they're immediately struck by the dreary atmosphere. If the posse thought it sounded quiet from outside, inside, the place is deader than a morticians' convention.

As they walk in, the heroes see a few men idly playing penny-ante poker, while a burly bartender cleans his glasses and some soiled doves chat nearby. A middle-aged Chinese woman, apparently the Madame, sees them and leaps to her feet. She claps her hand, smiles, and says "Line up, girls, company's here! Good evening, welcome to Shan Fan Sally's, the finest house of pleasure in the Great Maze! What's your desire? Games of chance? Fine whisky? A lovely companion? Just tell Sally what you want, your wish is my command!"

Any cowpoke making a Fair (5) *Cognition* roll notices each of the girls has a poker chip in her hand similar to the one they found on the "soldier." The chips are Sally's idea; the serve to both identify the customer's choice and help repeat visitors remember a favorite...companion.

Showing Sally the poker chip or asking about Lili wipes the smile right off her face. *"If you can get her out of that room, you can keep her for all I care! She's wrecking my business. And after all I did for her when she was alive!"*

Puzzled looks or questions from the posse get a paraphrased version of the story above from Sally. Since everyone else she hired to do the job failed, Sally is at wits' end. Out of pure desperation, she offers the posse a hundred dollars in gold-if it can get rid of the ghost.

EVICTING A GHOST

Shan Fan Sally's is a two-story building, converted a few years ago from a hotel. The second floor holds the rooms where Sally's working girls "entertained" their guests-that is, until Lili spoiled the party. Lili's room is at the end of the carpeted hallway, past five other doors-three on the right, two on the left. Tin letters on the door label them "A" through "F."

(Marshal, if you're using the *Boomtowns* set, the layout corresponds to the Small Hotel, second floor.)

Under normal conditions, the soiled doves would live in the rooms where they saw their clients. Those women who didn't just quit after Lili returned now work downstairs, making use of a room behind the bar. Other than the



heroes, the second floor is now empty and quiet as a tomb.

The fun starts when the posse first steps on the carpet. Read or paraphrase the following to the heroes:

It starts softly at first, like a choked-off sob. Then it grows until you can hear it plainly, the sound of a woman crying. But not just crying-sobbing her heart out, sad and angry at the same time as if all the friends she ever had betrayed her. And there's something else, too. Behind the crying is a deep, deep hate. A hatred so intense it chills you to the bottom of your soul.

Have the posse make a Fair (5) guts check at this point. The crying seems to come from nowhere and everywhere at once, but a Fair (5) Cognition check reveals that the sound originates from behind the door marked "F"—Lili's room. If the heroes decide to investigate the other rooms, they find the doors unlocked and nothing of interest inside.

IT'S MY BODY AND I'LL CRY
IF I WANT TO

Unlike the other doors, the door to Room F is locked. Shan Fan Sally doesn't know this (she hasn't been back here since the day Lili's ghost attacked her), but she has a key if the posse asks. Otherwise, cowpokes who like to do it the hard way can shoot the lock off (an automatic success), kick-in the door on an Onerous (7) Strength check, or pick the lock on a Fair (5) lockpickin' roll.

The moment the door opens, the crying stops. The posse has a couple of seconds to scan the room before Lili attacks. Read or paraphrase the following:

You see a sad sight before you. What was once the home of a young woman, filled with all the frills of a romantic girl's dreams, is now a place of horror. Fresh blood drips from the walls and the ceiling and flies buzz around the room.



On the bed lies a thing of horror—a rotting corpse that must once have been the soiled dove called "Lili." Even with all the decay, you can see she was horribly mutilated by her attacker. Her belly was slit open like the stomach of a fish and her guts draped around the bed like so many grisly streamers.

As you take it all in, you suddenly notice a beautiful Chinese woman standing in the room—she wasn't there a moment before. More lovely than anyone you've ever seen before, her hair billows around her in a breeze only she feels.

The gruesome spectacle of the room and appearance of what the posse



knows *has* to be a ghost necessitates a Hard (9) *guts* check at this point! By the way, in case you're wondering, Lili's great rage lets her manifest during daylight hours as well, unlike a "normal" crying ghost.

The posse can attack her straight away, in which case the fight is on, or they can try talking to her. On an Onerous (7) *persuasion* roll, Lili listens to what the hero has to say. Note she's a little put out with men at the moment-to say the least-so the check for a male character is Hard (9)!

Questioning Lili produces short, pouting answers. Her English was never very good and she resents these people in her room. Asked who killed her, she replies only, "*Union boy. He say he love me. He lie!*" Asked to "move on," she wants to know why: "*This my room!*"

There are a few ways to drive Lili off. The first is a straight-up fight, but she'll be back at the next full moon.

A preacher can *exorcise* her, though Lili fights tooth and nail.

If the posse has gotten her to talk, they can prove they already got the monster who did this to her by showing her the chip or piece of his uniform. If they do, she goes to her eternal rest. When she vanishes, so does her corpse and the blood.

PROFILE: WING L I L I "LILI,"

CHINESE CRYING GHOST

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:3d6, Q:4d8, S:2d6, V:2d6

Filchin' 2d6, fightin': brawlin' 4d6, sneak 5d6

Mental: C:2d6, K:2d6, M:4d12, Sm:2d6, Sp:3d8

Bluff 3d6, persuasion 4d12

Size: 6

Terror: 7

Wind: NA

Special Abilities:

Deadly Hair: Lili can control her long hair and use it as a weapon, engaging up to four opponents per

action up to three yards away. She uses *fightin'*: *brawlin'* when fighting with her hair. If she hits, she deals 2d6 damage the first time. On each of her following actions, she gains 1d6 damage. So the third squeeze is 3d6, the fourth 4d6, and so on to a maximum of 5d6. The only way to stop this progressive damage is to cut the hank of hair that's latched on with a successful *fightin'* roll and an edged weapon that does 12 or more points of damage.

Immunity: When "killed," Lili disappears, but returns to Sally's on the next full moon.

Spirit Extinction: A character killed by a crying ghost is D-E-A-D. No returning as one of the Harrowed, a ghost, or even the soul of a housefly. His soul is eaten, end of story.

Description: Lili appears as a beautiful Chinese woman with long hair and almost translucent robes. Her hair and robes move as if in some unfelt breeze.

GRIMME TIDINGS

However the heroes get rid of Lili, they now have a chance to examine her room. Among the clothes and other fixings of daily life, characters notice quite a few books, mostly trashy dime novel romances, often featuring a dashing soldier rescuing the good-hearted heroine from a life of drudgery.

When the disguised cultist walked into the brothel and chose her, Lili thought her fantasy had come true. Little did she know it was only a nightmare.

The significant clue here is left on the bed after her corpse disappears. No Trait or Aptitude roll is needed to spot it. A crumpled piece of currency, coated with dried blood as if it had been clutched in Lili's dying hand is the money "paid" by her murderer. He left payment Lost Angel's scrip with the words "*The wages of sin*" scrawled on it.

Union soldiers would never carry the scrip, as it's useless everywhere but Lost Angels.



FRIENDS IN LOW PLACES

Sally is very grateful for the posse's help and pays them as agreed. Of course, if the heroes only drove Lili away and didn't truly lay her to rest, about a month later Shan Fan Sally will be one very angry Madame, perhaps even complaining to Zhen Kao Shang that the posse cheated her.

More importantly, word gets to Zhen quickly that a group of outsiders have taken care of one of his problems. If von Landingham is with the posse, the news is doubly intriguing to the man!

ANYONE SEE ANY BLUEBELLIES AROUND HERE?

The Union has billeted a tiny force in Shan Fan earlier in the past year, more to prove that it considers the city technically part of its territory than anything else. The commanding officer of Union forces in the Maze had enough sense to both keep the number of troops and their involvement in local affairs to a minimum.

Since neither Zheng nor Tarn wants to risk getting on the bad side of the possible winning in the upcoming referendum, they've taken a hands-off attitude toward the Union force as long as it stays out of their business.

The US Army's token force of about 25 men has its quarters in the dirtiest, smelliest part of Stinktown, next to The Skids.

Asking for directions succeeds on a Foolproof (3) *streetwise* check. The person they ask smiles and adds: "*but they're all gone. Place is locked up tight as a drum. They must've left around three weeks ago, maybe to Sacramento to vote.*"

An Onerous (7) *Smarts* check tells the cowpoke that the Yankees left at roughly the same time Lili was murdered, if the posse's already been to the brothel.



ANYBODY HOME?

The dilapidated barracks building is a converted warehouse with an office at one end for the Lieutenant. The sliding delivery doors at one end have been sealed with several lengths of heavy chain and a couple of padlocks.

A handwritten sign on the door reads "*Property of US Army. Keep out.*" The sign over the main door, also locked and boarded, identifies this glorious edifice as "Fort Shan Fan."

Knocking-or banging-gets no response.

MESS CALL!

Getting into the warehouse is no problem. The boards can be ripped off the main door and the lock picked on an Onerous (7) *lockpickin'* check. The door opens into a short hallway that leads past the office and into the bunk room. The light inside is poor, but a cowpoke making a Hard (9) *search* check spots man-sized shapes on the beds, apparently sleeping. It doesn't take a genius to notice the smell of rotting meat coming from inside.

There are a total of 25 rotting corpses inside the makeshift barracks. Most of them lie in their blood-soaked beds, where each was killed quickly and efficiently by a knife-cut across the throat. Heroes who walk into the main bunk room with a light see that each man was apparently murdered in his sleep, as they dressed only in their longjohns.

The stink and the gruesome scene are enough to turn any man's stomach; posse members examining this room must make a Hard (9) *guts* check.

And, of course, it is just at this moment that the not-quite dead decide it's time for a snack. Five of the soldiers, plus an additional one for each posse member, are zombies, left by Greel as a parting gift.



PROFILE: WALKIN' DEAD

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d8, Q:2d10, S:3d8, V:2d8

Climbin' 1d8, fightin': brawlin' 3d8, shootin': pistol, rifle, shotgun 2d6, sneak 3d8, swimmin' 1d8

Mental: C:2d10, K:1d6, M:1d6, Sm:1d6, Sp:1d4

Overawe 5d6

Pace: 8

Size: 6

Wind: 12

Terror: 9

Special Abilities:

Damage: Bite: STR, or club (STR+1d6)
Fearless

Undead: Focus: Head.

Gear: Clubs improvised from pieces of lumber and leftover tools, and their

fists and teeth. McConnell's boys stole all their shootin' irons.

Description: These dead are in a bad state. They're all dressed in standard Union longjohns stained with blood from the horrible gashes across their necks.

SOMETHING'S MISSING

After clearing out the shambling corpses of the poor Union soldiers, the posse can have a look around the bunkhouse. Digging through the mess reveals the following clues. Give one to the heroes after each successful check

Hard (9) search. A posse member realizes that the Bluebellies' uniforms are missing, along with their guns. These were taken by McConnell and his Guardian Angels.

Onerous (7) search: A search of the Lieutenant's office finds a memorandum describing security concerns for the upcoming referendum. From General Ellsworth's office in Sacramento, it orders Platoon B of Company C of the 23rd Nevada Infantry to report to Sacramento. On a Hard (9) *Smarts* check, an observant cowboy notices that the accompanying transit authorizations are missing. The platoon would need them to pass Union pickets.

Incredible (11) search: Scouring the bunk room reveals a pair of pants under a bunk with a crumpled up handbill from the "Theater of Lost Angels" in the pockets. The pants were left behind when the Angels changed clothes after the killings.

TEA WITH A DRAGON

The posse's appearance in Shan Fan has not gone unnoticed. As we mentioned before, Shan Fan Sally's is part of Zhen Kao Shang's "turf" and he's aware of their actions there.

If they've been to "Fort Shan Fan," a spy or two in the area has sent word back to Kang's underling as well. By this time, he's also gotten word that the group was seen in the company of the Collegium as well.



Kang's crowd is nothing if not well-informed.

Zhen Kao Shang is interested in what the heroes' intentions are. Granted, they've rid him of a minor problem at Sally's and possibly another at the Union post, but with the complicated politics of the street, he's not positive this isn't an elaborate plot on the part of the triad to dishonor him.

Not liking uncertainty and not being a man to pussyfoot around, Shang sends the posse a messenger with a written invitation to take tea with him. As the heroes approach a street corner, a young Chinese girl runs up to them and hands one a letter. It's sealed in an envelope embossed with the mark of the Iron Dragon Railroad, and the paper is of high quality. The letter itself is written in a neat, precise hand. It reads:

*"Gentlemen,
My congratulations on your
earlier heroism. You have done me
and my associates a great service.
As you have done me a favor,
honor demands I return it.
Perhaps I may be of assistance in
your own endeavors.*

*Please follow this messenger
back to my offices, where we can
take tea. I assure you I mean no
harm and you have my personal
guarantee of safety.*

*Your servant,
Zhen Kao Shang
Iron Dragon Railroads,
Shan Fan Offices*

HOW RUDE!

Shang is being honest with the posse. He just wants to get the information needed to accurately assess the situation. He is a civilized man who does not reach for the gun or knife at the drop of a hat.

However, he's quite certain he must ascertain the group's intentions. If the posse snubs his invitation, Zhen dispatches a slightly more forceful invitation in the form of Iron Dragon enforcers. The enforcers don't resort to violence unless forced to it, but they do mean business. Zhen figures if the



posse won't speak civilly with him, they must part of a triad scheme.

There are two enforcers for every posse member. If forced to fight, they attempt to subdue the heroes with martial arts (brawling damage); only if pressed do they resort to lethal damage.

PROFILE: IRON DRAGON ENFORCER

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:3d8, Q:2d10, S:2d8, V:3d8

Climbin' 1d8, fightin': hand axe, martial arts 4d8, shootin': pistol, shotgun 3d6, sneak 3d8, throwin': balanced 3d6

Mental: C:2d6, K:1d6, M:2d8, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d6

Area knowledge: Shan Fan, guts 3d6, overawe 3d8, scroungin' 2d6, search 2d6, streetwise 3d6

Edges: Friends in high places (Iron Dragon) 2, martial arts training 3

Hindrances: Enemy (Triad) -2, obligation (Iron Dragon) -3

Pace: 8

Size: 6

Wind: 14 (Hits 30)

Special Abilities:

Martial arts training: Their barehand (or foot) attacks do STR+1d6 damage and can cause either brawling or normal damage.

Gear: Hand axes (STR+2d6, DB +1), Colt Army pistols or shotguns, 20 shells.

Description: These goons are dressed in loose fitting clothing with green headbands. Their weapons are tucked into a sash around their waists.

DRAGON'S DEN

The Iron Dragon offices sit in a fenced-in yard on the dockside of the Waterfront. There's also a carriage house and a bunkhouse on the property, which looks like it could hold 50 men. Behind the main building is a private dock. No ships are tied up there at the moment.

About a dozen men are visible on the property, all of them armed with pistols and shotguns. (Use the earlier Iron Dragon Roughnecks profile for these goons) They keep an eye on the posse as they approach the office, but no one tries to stop them.

As they reach the door, Zhen Kao Shang opens it and greets them personally. He allows them to keep their weapons, but two enforcers armed with shotguns remain in the office with Shang as bodyguards.

PROFILE: ZHEN KAO SHANG

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:3d6, S:1d6, Q:1d8, V:2d6

Dodge 3d6, quick draw 2d8, shootin': pistol 4d6, sleight of hand 3d6, sneak 2d6

Mental: C:3d8, K:2d8, M:4d10, Sm:2d10, Sp:3d6

Area knowledge: Shan Fan 3d8, bluff 3d10, languages (native tongue) Cantonese 4d8, English 3d8,

leadership 3d10, persuasion 4d10, ridicule 3d10, scrutinize 4d8, tale-tellin' 4d10

Edges: Dinero 3, friends in high places 4, nerves o' steel 1

Hindrances: Loyal: Kang -3, obligation: Iron Dragon Railroad -3

Pace: 6

Size: 6

Wind: 12

Gear: Pistol (Colt Peacemaker double action), fancy Western suit, gold watch with Iron Dragon emblem, book of Chinese poetry

Description: A man of average height, solidly built, with a pencil-thin mustache. Shang wears western clothing and slicks down his hair with lime cream-so much that his office smells like a lime grove. He carries himself with a quiet confidence.

I'D LIKE AN EXPLANATION...

Zhen wants to know the heroes' connection to the triads (if any) and what their relationship to the Collegium is. If they're allied to the triad, he plans to offer them double what Tarn is paying to work for Iron Dragon. Once he learns the posse is not working for the triad, he will rapidly lose interest, having decided the adventurers pose no real threat.

No doubt the heroes are going to be nervous about dealing with Kang's representative-especially since they may well have recently attacked some of his goons in Gomorra!

However, Red Petals Su, Kang's lieutenant to whom Captain Sim and the Rats report, is more a rival of Zhen's than an ally. For him to rise further in the ranks here in the Maze, she must fall at least a little. One way that may happen is for the Maze Rats to become an embarrassment, so at the moment Zhen may actually *aid* them simply because they represent the Collegium!

If the posse is reasonably honest with him, for example telling him they attacked the Maze Rats because evidence at the scene implicated the pirates in the theft of Collegium property and they're in Shan Fan



following leads, Shang accepts this, if a hero makes an Onerous (7) *persuasion* check. Failure means he needs more convincing. It shouldn't be too hard, though, unless the posse is feeding him obvious bull.

Assuming the heroes are reasonably honest, polite, and don't act like a bunch of oafs, Shang is willing to answer a few questions—in a roundabout, non-implicating way, of course!

"What about the Iron Dragon tools we found?" If the posse mentions the evidence planted in Gomorra implicating Iron Dragon, he denies any involvement, *"On my word as a gentleman."* He even shows them records indicating the theft of a crate of tools a few weeks ago.

"Where's the Proletariat?" Shang is thoughtful for a moment and says he hasn't seen it over Shan Fan. But one of his agents in the interior reported seeing it over the northern part of the Central Valley. It was heading southeast, toward Sacramento. Looking to Von Landingham, he jokes *"I thought you were flying there to vote, my friend."* Landingham isn't amused.

"Could the Union be involved?" Shang thinks it's possible, but it wouldn't be like them. Instead, he asks the posse, *"Who profits from the discredit of the Union in such a matter? I would look to the sheep wearing the clothing of a wolf—perhaps you'll find under the sheepskin is merely another wolf..."*

Shang's a busy man and doesn't let the posse question him endlessly. Once he's got the information he needs and has returned a polite amount to the posse, he ends the interview.

ON TO SACRAMENTO!

By this time, the posse may very well recognize the touch of Reverend Grimme's hand in recent events. The clues all point to Sacramento and, given the current situation in the state, likely something to do with the coming



referendum. Since it involves a potential doomsday device, it can't be good...

However, exactly what the group of murderers intends remains to be seen.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Here are a few tricks you can pull out of your sleeve to help get a derailed posse back on track.

The heroes are sure Kang and his Iron Dragon Railroad is behind it all. If they're still stuck on this idea after Shang's assurances and the evidence of the similar thefts at the Union barracks, a day on the streets and a Fair (5) *streetwise* roll turns up evidence that Shang is doing his own investigating. It seems he would like to know who took the airship too.

The posse picks the wrong fight. Packs of cowboys and buffalo gals tend to be hot-headed, Marshal. They might start a fight with Shang and his boys of the triads, or even go south, hunting Confederates, thinking they're behind it all! In Shan Fan, Big Ears Tarn won't like "unauthorized" violence, so he has the posse run out of town-fast. Once outside of city limits (by choice or not), they run into a miner coming down from the mountains to the north.

Over a shared whisky (especially the posse's), he tells them a tale about the "big flyin' cigar" he saw heading southeast a few days ago. He swears it's true—he hadn't started drinking yet.

BOUNTY

Dispelling Lili's spirit: 1 white chip each.

Laying Lili's spirit to rest: 1 red chip each.

Noting the missing transit authorizations: 1 red chip to that hero.

Talking with Shang: 1 red chip for talking instead of fighting.

Figuring out Grimme's involved: 1 red chip to the sleuth.

SACRAMENTO

UNION

REBEL

INDEPENDENT

UNION

REBEL

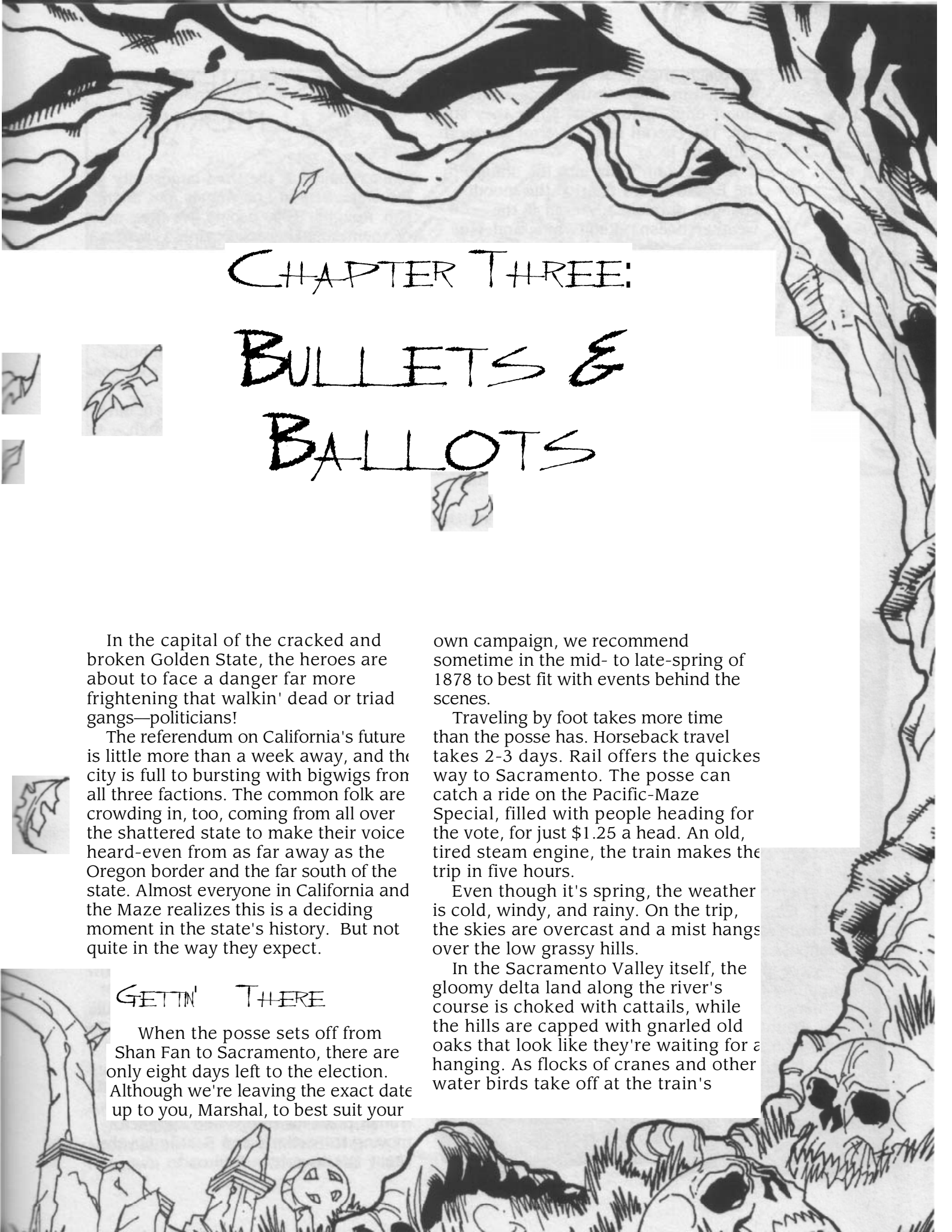
REBEL

INDEPENDENT


INDEPENDENT



WESTERN RAIL





CHAPTER THREE: BULLETS & BALLOTS



In the capital of the cracked and broken Golden State, the heroes are about to face a danger far more frightening than walkin' dead or triad gangs—politicians!

The referendum on California's future is little more than a week away, and the city is full to bursting with bigwigs from all three factions. The common folk are crowding in, too, coming from all over the shattered state to make their voice heard—even from as far away as the Oregon border and the far south of the state. Almost everyone in California and the Maze realizes this is a deciding moment in the state's history. But not quite in the way they expect.

GETTIN' THERE





When the posse sets off from Shan Fan to Sacramento, there are only eight days left to the election. Although we're leaving the exact date up to you, Marshal, to best suit your

own campaign, we recommend sometime in the mid- to late-spring of 1878 to best fit with events behind the scenes.

Traveling by foot takes more time than the posse has. Horseback travel takes 2-3 days. Rail offers the quickest way to Sacramento. The posse can catch a ride on the Pacific-Maze Special, filled with people heading for the vote, for just \$1.25 a head. An old, tired steam engine, the train makes the trip in five hours.

Even though it's spring, the weather is cold, windy, and rainy. On the trip, the skies are overcast and a mist hangs over the low grassy hills.

In the Sacramento Valley itself, the gloomy delta land along the river's course is choked with cattails, while the hills are capped with gnarled old oaks that look like they're waiting for a hanging. As flocks of cranes and other water birds take off at the train's



approach, the heroes might feel justified in thinking the birds are the smart ones—getting out while they still can. The overall Fear Level of Northern California is 2.

As the train pulls into the station in the Embarcadero district, the mood changes dramatically even if the weather doesn't. Red, white, and blue bunting decorates the place making it look like a patriotic wedding cake, while every square inch of wall space is covered in posters for one or the other faction.

When the train comes to a stop, three different bands start playing—"Dixie" for the Confederates, "Battle Hymn of the Republic" for the Union, and "Bear Flag Bravos," a song written especially for the Independence movement. Supporters of each faction cheer loudly, which leads to catcalls, and scattered fistfights.

If you're feeling like complicating the heroes' lives even more, this is also a prime hunting ground for pickpockets and snatch-and-grab artists.

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

FEAR LEVEL 2

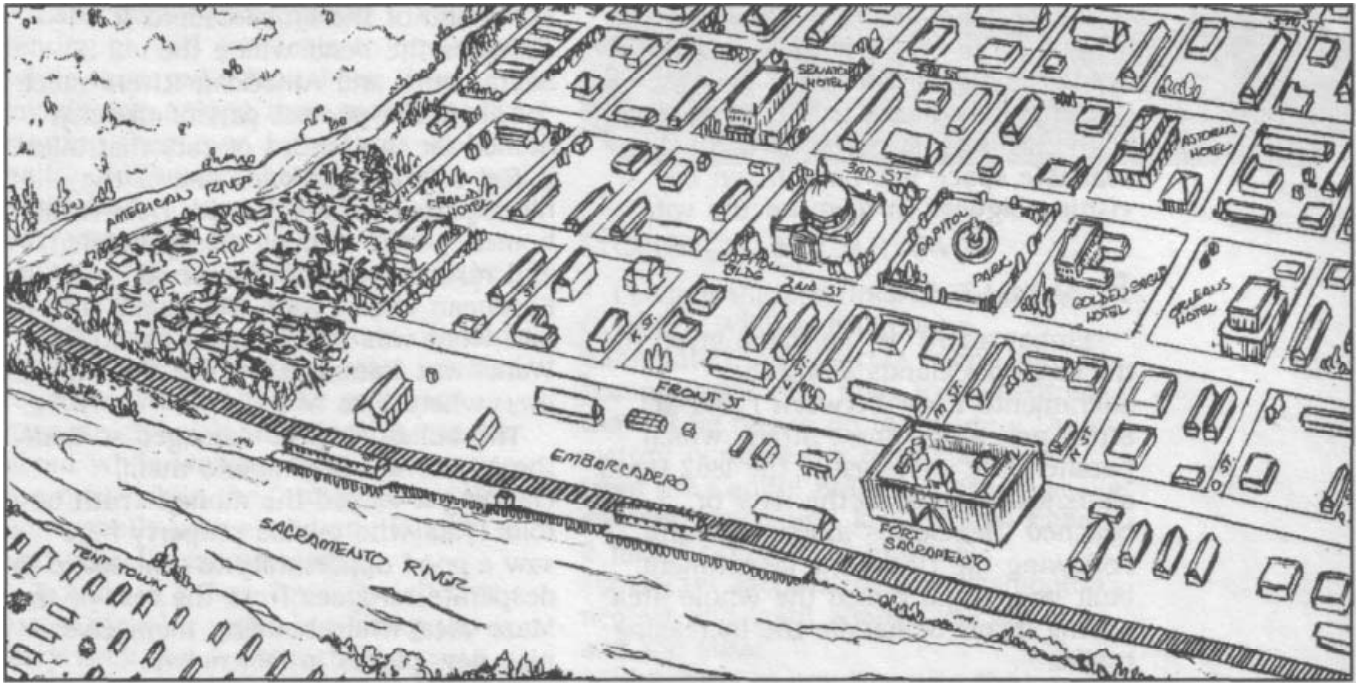
Sacramento is the third-largest city in the state, behind Los Angeles and San Francisco. Roughly 8,000 people live here, most of them shopkeepers, business owners, and people working for the State government or the military. There's a large transient population, too, made-up of sailors serving the heavy river traffic, and miners down from the foothills and the Sierra Nevadas looking for supplies and to sell their gold and ghost rock—or just for a good time.

The crime rate is high and lynchings are unfortunately common, though currently the presence of so many soldiers keeps such incidents to a minimum. Even so, Sacramento has all the hustle and bustle of a boomtown, made worse by the crowds gathering for the referendum.

Sacramento came through the Great Quake of '68 better than her sister cities on the coast. While many buildings were destroyed both by the shaking and the flooding that came after, it recovered swiftly and is now the gateway to the mining territories to the east and north.

With all the gold and ghost rock flowing down the main drag, J Street, banking and finance have become important industries. The banking houses here have important connections to interests Back East and to the triads in San Francisco. In fact, there are triad representatives among the large Chinese community in Sacramento, though they don't advertise themselves to avoid antagonizing the Union.

California is still technically part of the Union, though Union control does not extend far into the Maze itself nor much further south than Stockton. Still, the city is without doubt Union territory—it's too important a link between Virginia City in Nevada and Fort Lincoln in the Maze for the Union to risk losing it. It's also an important transit point for troops and supplies moving to Portland and Seattle via the Great Northwestern Railroad.



Two hundred Union infantry and 50 cavalry are stationed at Fort Sacramento, and more are being brought in to provide security for the referendum. Of course, some folk have been arguing that all those soldiers are for a darker purpose, to subvert the will of the people should the Union lose the vote. More about that later.

BASIC LAYOUT

Sacramento sits on low-lying land south and east of the confluence of the American and Sacramento rivers. As you can expect, Marshal, the city gets regularly flooded during especially wet winters. The state and municipal government had started a project to build dikes and levees to control the floods, but the Quake of '68 destroyed most of what had already been done. With the turmoil since then, rebuilding the system has lagged.

The California Independence Party uses this issue to show Union neglect of California's welfare.

North and east of the city lies farming and ranch country. This way also leads to the nearest gold and ghost rock mines.

An Army-controlled rail line runs south along the Sacramento River to the town of Stockton. This marks the

limit of effective Federal Government control south of Sacramento regardless of what the map-makers might claim.

The land further south is disputed by the forces of Warlord Kwan and the missionaries expanding out from Lost Angels-not to mention the Confederates and the Mexican Army!

DOWNTOWN

Downtown lies back from the Embarcadero between H Street and Q Street. This is the home of the City's commercial and political elites-Governor Irwin has his mansion here. The streets are unpaved and are often little more than mud paths, with shotgun-wielding guards protecting a stuck wagon full of gold or ghost rock a common sight.

Downtown is also the site of the Capitol Building, recently completed with the help of Federal money. An imposing structure built to resemble the Capitol in Washington, the dome is painted a bright orange-gold that can be seen for miles on a sunny day.

All the major political factions have their headquarters here, and the Capitol Park is busy with workmen building the scaffolding from which the Governor will announce the referendum's results.

The best hotels are in Downtown, including the very posh hotels Astoria, Golden Eagle, Orleans, and Senator. Unfortunately, Marshal, there's no room at the inn for the posse here. All the available space has been taken by visiting bigwigs in town for the vote.

EMBARCADERO

"Embarcadero" is the name given to the city's docklands along the Sacramento River between I and M Street and along Front Street, which parallels the river. Before the 1862 flood, ships just moored in the river or beached themselves along the bank. Following the flood, the government built levees and raised the whole area, adding quays to handle the increasing traffic.

With the changes brought about by the Quake of '68, shipping along the Sacramento to Shan Fan and the Maze has become so heavy the docks are once again overcrowded and always noisy.

Embarcadero, along with Tent Town, is where political arguments take a less-than-gentlemanly turn. Fights break out frequently among miners, sailors, and locals, especially after a few too many whiskeys. Union general Ellsworth has detailed an additional 20 men to help the Sacramento Police Department maintain order. His headquarters at Fort Sacramento is located at the south end of the Embarcadero.

Posses looking for accommodations in the Embarcadero can find rooms at a flophouse called "the Grand Hotel." It hardly lives up to its name, but there are enough rooms open for two posse members per room at a dollar a night. Fresh sheets are a dollar extra, Marshal.

THE RAT DISTRICT

The Rat District lies about a mile from the Pacific Maze and Great Northwestern rail terminals, past the

north end of the Embarcadero. It occupies the bend where the Sacramento and American Rivers meet.

This is the poorest part of the city, named for the hordes of rats that infest it. Rat District was once one of the nicer parts of the city, with river-front homes, a new theater, classy hotels, and restaurants with imported European chefs. Then the quake hit and what was once known as "River Walk" was hammered worse than most everywhere else in town.

The buildings were damaged so badly the city refused to rebuild them, claiming it lacked the money. Truth be told, folks who owned property here saw a good opportunity to rent space to desperate refugees from the rest of the Maze area while building themselves nice new places in Downtown.

Things have grown steadily worse in the ten years since the Quake. Buildings that teeter dangerously collapse more and more often. The decay seems to have spread from the buildings into anything taken into Rat District. Mad Scientists who entered the area claim their gizmos fail more often than they should.

There's good reason; Rat District suffers from an infestation of gremlins. Things really do break down here more often—including the buildings. Keep that in mind when and if the posse does some investigating, Marshal. We're sure they'll thank you for it.

Rooms are available here for indiscriminating posses. They're either dirt cheap in the few remaining hotels (25 cents a night, and forget about a bath), or free of charge if the heroes want to squat in a ruined building with the rats.

TENT TOWN

With the excitement surrounding the referendum, Sacramento looks like it did in the early Gold Rush days of the 1840s—too many people and not enough places to put them. As a result, tents have once again sprung up in profusion.

The farm lands west of the Sacramento River are covered in white canvas tents, giving shelter to people from all over the state.



Land owners are making a killing renting ground and tents to newcomers, while those who have been there awhile are making their money back by starting their own businesses—beer halls, cookhouses, gambling tents, and brothels, and even hotel tents. What Sacramentans are calling "West Sacramento" is rapidly becoming the vice capital of the area.

Tent Town is a chaotic mix of ethnic groups from all over the state jumbled together with no rhyme or reason. Chinese, Spanish, and English can be heard while walking from one tent to the next, while the "streets" are filled with smells both exotic and familiar—and sometimes nauseating.

Rooms in a Tent Town "hotel" cost just a nickel a night, but riding the ferry back and forth each day costs another 25 cents. This area is also a hotbed of Independence and Confederate sympathies.

POWERS THAT BE

Seeing as it's the seat of the State government, Sacramento has more than its fair share of movers and shakers. We're not going to list them all, but here are the most important people and groups the posse is likely to come in contact with.

MAYOR JABEZ TURNER

Sacramento's mayor is Jabez Turner, owner of a successful hauling and cartage company in Downtown. An ambitious man originally from Mississippi, Mayor Turner came here during the Gold Rush and stayed to make his fortune on the frontier.

A Confederate sympathizer since the start of the war, Mayor Turner allied with Hiram Montgomery to pressure Governor Irwin and General Ellsworth to allow a small Confederate detachment in Sacramento for the election "in the interests of fair play"—and to have soldiers handy in case the Union decides not to respect the vote's outcome.

General Ellsworth vetoed that idea without a second thought. There's a limit to how far he'll go for the sake of appearances!



GOVERNOR WILLIAM IRWIN

Leading the pro-Union faction is Governor William Irwin, who immigrated to California from Ohio. A pompous ass of a man, Irwin assumes that all he has to do to ensure a Union victory is make the right speeches from the Capitol Building portico, shake enough hands, and kiss enough babies. It hasn't occurred to him that significant factions resent Washington's neglect and want change in California and the Maze.

He's blind to any threat to the election.

THE POLICE

Sacramento has its own police force of 20 officers, all operating out of a building at the intersection of Front and I streets in the Embarcadero. Headed by Chief Lou Parsons, the force is stretched to its limits and almost overwhelmed.

While grateful for the aid of General Ellsworth's troops, he's decided to stay a strict neutral—his men are to put down riots, not start them. The department maintains an additional jail on the Union vessel *Estrella*, docked nearby. Cowpokes who get too rambunctious might find themselves cooling their heels in the bilge.

Use the Typical Law Dog profile on page 82 of the *Marshal's Handbook* for Chief Parsons and his deputies.

THE MILITARY

Heroes idealistic enough to think that it should be easy to spot the imposter Union soldiers in Sacramento should forget that silly idea on the double. The place is crawling with military men wearing Union blue.

The Union Army garrison in Sacramento normally stands at 250 infantry and horse, based in Fort Sacramento. In the run-up to the



election, these forces have been reinforced by another 200 foot soldiers. These troops are scattered around the city to help with crowd control and policing, while a flying squad of 50 men is held at the fort for emergency use.

The Federal forces in Sacramento are commanded by Union Major General Lawrence Ellsworth, who is also in overall command of the Union Army in California. Of medium height, thin, and balding, General Ellsworth is torn by the politics of the referendum.

On the one hand, he is solidly pro-Union and will do almost anything to retain the State-in fact, he has orders to use whatever force is necessary to deny California and the Maze to the Confederacy, including imposing military government.

He has also come to love the people and the land and refuses to use the violence he knows would be necessary should it vote for Independence or the Confederacy. Ellsworth has decided to resign rather than fight his own people, and has an unsigned, undated letter of resignation in his tunic pocket for use after the election.

Should you need game statistics on the soldiers at Fort Sacramento, use the Typical Soldier profile on page 82 of the *Marshal's Handbook*.

THE PRESS

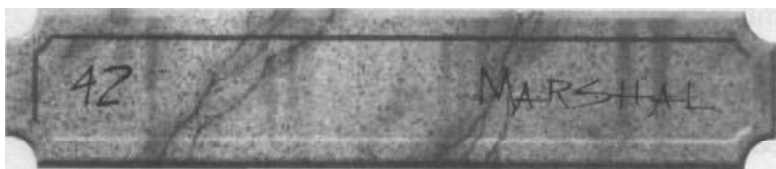
Sacramento is blessed with two newspapers, the *Sacramento Bee* and the *Sacramento Union*.

An afternoon daily, the *Union* lives up to its namesake and is solidly behind keeping California as part of the Union. It runs articles meant to scare the readership with the horrible things sure to happen should California secede. Its editor, a former fire and thunder preacher named Jedediah Holmes, makes liberal use of the Bible when denouncing secessionists.

The *Sacramento Bee* is the morning daily and is firmly pro-Independence. It's editor, James McClatchy, writes editorials meant to stir outrage in the hearts of all true Californians. Articles in his paper detail the neglect the state has suffered (in his eyes) ever since the War began and especially since the Quake. If you believe the *Bee*, Washington is draining California and the Maze dry of blood and treasure and doesn't give a tinker's cuss for the folks who live here.

Besides those two bastions of unbiased yellow journalism, the city is full of reporters, including many who came from both the Union and the Confederacy, all there to cover the referendum. Looking for any scoop, they're sure to pester cowpokes who go flapping their yaps about plots and conspiracies-and then the reporter is sure to get it wrong in the papers!

If you need game statistics on a given muckraker for any reason, Marshal, use the **Muckraker** archetype from the *Weird West Player's Guide*.



ANYONE SEEN A ZEPPLIN AROUND HERE?

With a town this full of people, Marshal, the posse has plenty of places to go looking for news of the *Proletariat*. If the cowpokes have forgotten their mission, von Landingham is quick to remind them.

FORT SACRAMENTO

The Union command is busy with security preparations for the referendum, so heroes asking about missing airships are likely to be ignored or told to lay off the jug. However, persistent characters who mention the missing unit from Shan Fan are ushered in to see General Ellsworth on a successful Onerous (7) *persuasion* check. Reduce this TN to Fair (5) if they think to specifically identify the unit. It's several days overdue and listed as AWOL.

Sad to say, General Ellsworth is too preoccupied with his own concerns and too unimaginative to believe wild tales of airship suicide bombs and zombies in their skivvies. He does, however dispatch a rider to Shan Fan. By the time the rider gets there and learns enough to make a report, Greel and McDonnell have already put their plan into action.

GOVERNMENT

There's no headway to be made here, Marshal. The Governor and the Mayor are too busy politicking for their respective sides, while Chief Parsons has his hands full making sure the drunks don't burn down Embarcadero during a "political debate." All inquiries will refer the posse to the "appropriate military authorities"-in other words, "go tell your crazy story to the Army!"

THE PRESS

Muckrakers are only too happy to listen to anything the party has to say, and embellish it to make even better copy. Von Landingham uses this as his chance to get up on a soapbox, railing



against the "capitalist exploiters and the obvious government conspiracy that stole my airship!"

An unlucky hero might even see his own picture on the next edition of the *Union* or the *Bee* with a caption reading "DOOMSDAY PREDICTIONS OF DEATH FROM ABOVE." Naturally, several muckrakers follow the posse around after this, hoping for more good copy.

Contrary to popular opinion, though, the press isn't a complete waste. If a hero is calm and rational and succeeds in an Onerous (7) *tale-tellin'* or *overawe* check ("You're not doubtin' my word, are you?"), one reporter takes them seriously and offer a little tale in return.

When he was riding the rails from Portland, just before pulling into Roseville he thought he saw a "flying cigar" in the dusk over the foothill country. After that, the train went round a bend and he lost sight of it. "Kind of like those weird reports out of Ghost Creek, where all the cattle mutilations have been happening."

HITTING THE STREETS

Give each character who's working the crowds for information (shooting the breeze at a campaign rally, for example) an Onerous (7) *streetwise* check to pick up one of these bits of information. Don't give them all out at once, Marshal-let them work for each piece.

"These ain't all the soldiers around here." Heard from a rancher from near Roseville. A unit of Bluebellies showed up in Roseville a week or so ago. He thought they were there to guard the rail yards, but they just bought supplies and left. "Said something about establishing a new fort. Don't know where, though."

"Emperor Norton's planning to seize power right after the election!" The posse hears this red herring in a couple of different places. Emperor Norton supposedly has a huge army of Mexican and Chinese cutthroats hidden just a few

miles to the southeast, planning to make the whole state his kingdom. This wild tale is repeated with greater fervor after the incidents described in **Campaign Events**.

"I heard Kang's finagled this whole thing so he can buy all the railroads after independence. Montgomery'll seize them and sell 'em for a song in payment for Kang's support. If that's true, he'll own the whole damned state...and us, too!" This one was actually planted by agents of the Great Northwestern, who want to scare people into voting Union.

"There's a Confederate Army moving up from Shannonsburg—5,000 men, horse, and artillery! That's why General Ellsworth is calling in all the troops he can, he's planning to make a last stand right here! If the election goes against the Rebs, Admiral Birmingham himself will sweep in and make Mayor Turner governor. With so many strangers in town, there could be spies everywhere!" This rumor is the product of too much whisky and paranoia, but, after the incidents in **Campaign Events**, armed vigilantes start looking for "rebel spies." And the heroes are a bunch of strangers, after all...

THE ELECTION

With all the hubbub going on, the posse may get involved with the election—if only to ferret out Grimme's agents. This section covers the various parties to the election and gives you some hooks to draw the posse into the event. There are also rules for handling the heroes should they set their minds to fixing...er...working a campaign.

WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

Just how do you get these drifters and cowpokes involved in the referendum, presuming they aren't already jumping in with both feet? Here are a few suggestions to help hook them.

They have to be here somewhere!

Since they know the Guardian Angels stole some Union uniforms and the Union Army is providing much of the security, volunteering for one of the campaigns would be a good way to get into special events where they can keep an eyeball peeled for undercover Angels. Von Landingham argues for the Independence campaign, of course.

My country, right or wrong. Some posse members may be ardent loyalists who still believe in "Union or death," or Southerners who've come from devastated border states and want to strike a blow for Dixie. Perhaps the hero is someone so in love with California or so disgusted with both sides that she thinks the state is better off as an independent country.

If you don't, somethin' bad will happen... This is the strongest hook, which comes into play if the posse gets to know Hiram Montgomery. See the section on **The Independent Camp** for details.

THE UNION CAMP

The California Unity Party is headquartered in the Parr Building next door to the Capitol. Headed by Governor Irwin himself, the CUP is pulling out all the stops.

Food shortages? Not at a CUP rally! There's fried chicken, mashed potatoes, beer, and candy for the kiddies.

And presiding over it all is Governor Irwin making speech after speech about the benefits of staying with the Union. Of course, some folks say the CUP is being so generous with the food as a way of apologizing for Irwin's long, dull speeches.

CONFEDERATE PARTY

The Sons of Sovereign California have their offices right in the town hall on Front Street. Mayor Jabez Turner makes no bones about his desire to see the Stars and Bars fly over the whole state, and he has put the city administration to the task of pulling in votes. While he's a might ticked with Chief Parsons



for the latter's steadfast neutrality, he's more concerned with his party's current third place in the race.

Mayor Turner can't match the resources brought to bear by the Union, nor is he a public speaker to match Hiram Montgomery. And the rumors of President Davis stealing the election of 76 haven't helped, either.

Fact is, Mayor Turner is thinking of telling his supporters to vote for Independence. If it looks like his party will lose the election, he'd rather settle for the lesser of two evils—at least the Union won't have easy access to the Maze's wealth, either.

THE INDEPENDENT CAMP

The headquarters of the California Independence Party (CIP) are in the main room of Rusty's Saloon in the Embarcadero, right next door to "Montgomery's Quality Meats and Fish." The wife made him move his campaign offices when the customers couldn't fit in for all the reporters.

Montgomery is honest in his desire to see California independent and was truly disgusted to learn that much of his early backing came from Grimme's Church of Lost Angels. He's made a tremendous effort to spread the word, and he has managed to surpass the Confederate party and move into second place behind the Union bloc.

GRIMME TIDINGS

Hiram is a very worried man. In a letter since burned by Montgomery, Grimme wrote that Montgomery's betrayal might well cost the CIP the election, and the Reverend could not forgive that. He warned of terrible consequences should CIP lose the election, though he did not spell them out. Grimme didn't have to—the menace projected by the Reverend's agents when Montgomery confronted them was enough to convince him.

Trouble is, the CIP *may* well lose the election. With the loss of Grimme's money, Hiram has failed to find big backers to take his place—and elections



are expensive. The Union is outspending him by a country mile. He's taken-out loans with several banks, but his lines of credit are nearly exhausted and his war chest is rapidly approaching empty. He needs help.

TALKING TO HIRAM

Assuming they spoke with Zhen in Shan Fan, the posse may look into the CIP as a potential suspect. If so, the heroes are in for a surprise when they finally meet Hiram Montgomery!

Getting to see Montgomery isn't hard, since he likes the "man of the people" image. But the moment the posse mentions stolen bombs, murder, and/or Guardian Angels, Montgomery's guard goes up. It's not that he doesn't believe them—he's been waiting for Grimme to try something—but he has to be sure these strangers are not assassins sent to exact Grimme's revenge personally.

Give the posse member doing the talking a Hard (9) test against either

persuasion or tale-tellin' Aptitudes. On a success, he agrees to talk with them in a back room, but only after they check their guns and knives at the bar. If the heroes agree, he tells them:

"We're in a barrel of trouble, no doubt. You've already figured out Grimme's interest in the vote, but I have to ask you to take me at my word—there's no way in Hell I want anything to do with him or his cult. I threw the lot of them out when I discovered who they were."

"But the Reverend isn't a man to take rejection lightly. I'm scared to death they're planning something, maybe something involving this bomb of yours, if we lose the election. And we just might. It's close, but the Union has a lot more resources than I do."

"Will you help us? I don't care what you do, as long as people don't get killed or hurt bad, but we have got to win or something terrible may well happen."

A Fair (5) *scrutinize* roll tells a sharp-eyed cowpoke that Montgomery isn't just yanking the heroes' collective chain; the man honestly fears Grimme's retribution will cost innocent lives.

Do++!

If the posse fails to convince Montgomery to talk to them, it isn't the end of the line. Montgomery may believe their story, but he just doesn't quite trust them yet to fill them in on his fears. Don't worry, they'll have a chance to earn his trust later.

In the meantime, he gives them his pitch for working on his campaign as a volunteer anyway—with the election slipping away, Montgomery needs all the help he can get.

HIRAM MONTGOMERY

Hiram Montgomery has come to the head of the California Independence Party. This was not a choice he made lightly, mind you. He was a loyal Union man, until his disgust with the country's policies toward his beloved state drove him to his current stance.

PROFILE: HIRAM MONTGOMERY

Corporeal: D:2d8, N:3d8, Q:2d10, S:3d10, V:3d8

Fightin': brawlin' 4d8, shootin': pistol, rifle 2d8

Mental: C:3d8, K:2d6, M:4d12, Sm:3d8, Sp:3d6

Area knowledge: Sacramento 4d6, bluff 3d8, gamblin' 3d8, leadership 4d12, overawe 3d12, persuasion 4d12, professional: politics 5d6, ridicule 3d8, scrutinize 4d8, tale-tellin' 5d12, trade: butcher 3d6

Edges: Brawny 3, level-headed 5

Hindrances: Loyal -3: California

Pace: 8

Size: 7

Wind: 14

Gear: Pistol (Colt Thunderer double action), lucky silver dollar

Description: A formidable man with a barrel-chest and arms thick as hams. He sports a thick curly beard and slicked-down dark hair. His deep voice is naturally hypnotic.

SUFFRAGETTE CITY

There is one more faction that has a part to play in the Sacramento referendum, although they can't legally participate in the process. The California Women's Suffrage Brigade, led by a fiery Sacramento seamstress named Nellie Leonitis, has finally found a forum in which to express their desire for inclusion in the political process. Women may not be able to vote in this election, but Mrs. Leonitis, along with her "Brigade of 75" suffragettes, aim to make sure that women are, at the very least, heard from.

Nellie and her campaign workers can be frequently seen on street corners passing out literature and beating the drum for women's suffrage.



Not shy at all, they'll argue with anyone—man or woman, Union or Rebel or Independent—about the God-given right for all Americans to vote. They're fiercely dedicated, and they've taken their fair share of rotten tomatoes and cabbages for the cause.

But they have more influence than the scoffers give them credit for. Should any party endorse a woman's right to vote, Nellie and her ladies will do their darnedest to see that their husbands vote "for a just cause." And, of all the party leaders, Hiram Montgomery is the most willing to consider this.

PLAYING AT POLITICS

With the decisive vote just a few days away, the free-spending California Unity Party has taken the lead over Montgomery's CIP, while Turner's Sons of Sovereign California are a distant third.

Just in case your posse decides to get involved with the voting process, here's a quick system for determining who wins and how much the heroes influence the outcome.

KEEPING TALLY

Rather than try to track individual votes, we've simplified it to a system based on "points" that represent a party's standing against its competitors. Right now, the CUP has 20, the CIP has 11, and the SSC is way back at 5. The winner is the party with the highest vote total at the end of Election Day. We'll show you how the posse can change these totals, but if they don't step in, the Union wins hands down.

For every day at least some of the posse spends campaigning, give each hero one Aptitude check based on which of the possible campaign activities she's engaged in. Use the highest aptitude score if more than one are trying the same activity at the same time, with a +2 modifier for each additional hero lending a helping hand. The TN is Onerous (7), regardless of which Aptitude the hero is using. For details on which are appropriate for what campaigning tactics, read on!



Success means the hero's party has gained 1 point, with an additional point for each raise. Failure means the party loses 1 point, while going bust costs the party 5 points—plus any other consequences if the party gets caught doing something illegal!

For the parties the posse isn't helping, give them an automatic two points per day. If you use the incidents described in **Campaign Activities**, the ensuing rumors and fear-mongering costs the Union three points.



"Sunny Jim" Wallis, a famous British muckraker touring the Weird West, has decided to support the cause of Independence for California. (The possibility Britain could then grab the Great Maze has nothing to do with it. Really.)

On his first day in town, he mounts the "Speaker's Stump" in Capitol Park and makes an eloquent speech filled with biting humor, leaving Governor Irwin and the Union looking like fools. Wallis not only succeeds at his *persuasion* check, but gets two raises. The CIP gains 3 points that day. Montgomery ought to put that boy on salary!

SCROUNGIN' VOTES

Listed below are possible activities the posse can engage in and which Aptitudes are appropriate. Exactly how many days they have to participate in campaigning depends on when they finally threw their collective hat in the ring. Remember the TN for a roll is always Onerous (7), unless otherwise noted.

Door-to-door: Getting out and meeting the people is a good way to make the party's platform known—and it helps to be a smooth talker when doing so. Any hero trying this method rolls *persuasion*.

Oratory: This is considered a high art in the Weird West, and for many folks it's a form of public entertainment. A well-delivered speech, peppered with just the right amount of humor sways more people than truth and reason. *Tale-tellin'*, or *performin'*: *actin'* are appropriate Aptitudes for this sort of tactic.

Mud-slinging: A few well-placed innuendoes, scandalous rumors, and outright lies go a long way in an election. Use *bluff*, *ridicule* or *professional: journalism* for this sort of campaigning.

Strong-arming: Although not a legal method of garnering votes, threats, unspoken or otherwise, can convince a fence-sitter it's in his best interest to vote the party line. Going bust on this method either lands the cowpoke in a fistfight or the city jail for a night! A hero trying this method rolls *overawe* or *streetwise*.

Bribery: Money can buy nearly everything, and votes are no exception. This tactic requires at least \$50 a day in

expenditures, and a successful *streetwise* roll; every additional \$50 spent adds +1 to the roll. Unfortunately, getting caught pulling a stunt like this is bad news. The hero is locked up until at least the end of the election-maybe longer depending on the outcome of the trial!

Dirty Tricks: Ranging anywhere from putting a whoopee cushion on the Governor's chair to moderately risky tricks like panicking the horses hitched to a speaker's stump wagon, dirty tricks are meant to embarrass the speaker and make him and his associates look like idiots.

A creative posse has dozens of ways to harass the opposition-too many to list here. Depending on what scheme the heroes cook up, appropriate aptitudes may include *disguise*, *filchin'*, *tinkerin'*, and so on. Failure means the trick doesn't happen, but the cowpoke's party doesn't lose any vote points.

If the poor sap goes bust, however, not only does the trick not happen but he's arrested and his picture gets in all the papers as a "hooligan." Take 5 points away from his cause and toss his keester in jail for the night.

THE ART OF DIPLOMACY

Horse traders in the posse might try to put their faction ahead by making deals with other parties. There's more work involved, but the potential rewards are higher. Just remember that the Confederate party will not ally with the Union party for any reason.

As an example, Mayor Jabez Turner wants to deny California and the Maze to the USA, as much as he wants them to join the Confederacy. Posse members acting as representatives of the CIP can try to convince the Mayor to throw his votes to the CIP. It's an Incredible (11) *persuasion* test to get Turner to agree. In return, the Mayor wants a post in Montgomery's future Cabinet and the opening of alliance talks with Richmond.

On the other hand, Montgomery doesn't like the Mayor one bit. It takes an Onerous (7) *persuasion* check to convince him to play practical politics. Success in this case means the CIP gains the Confederate party total.



Another possibility is Mrs. Nellie Leonitis and her suffragettes. Posse members approaching her for an alliance learn she has one condition— whoever she supports must agree to give women the vote after the election. No ifs, ands, or buts about it, Marshal. She's willing to ally with any of the three parties- Montgomery only needs a Fair (5) *persuasion* check to be swayed, while Governor Irwin and Mayor Turner require Onerous (7) successes.

The party that gains the suffragettes' support gains five points, while failure costs the heroes' party one. Going bust means Mrs. Leonitis and her ladies campaign actively *against* the posse's party, costing it three points. (They wield a mighty influence with their husbands, when determined.)

COUNTDOWN TO DOOMSDAY

Now, while the posse's running wild all over Sacramento, Marshal, you've probably been wondering just what McConnell, Greel, and the Guardian Angels have been up to.

A ROSEVILLE BY ANY OTHER NAME

When Greel and the cultists stole Project Ghostfire and the *Proletariat*, they knew they couldn't take it too close to Sacramento. Something that big would be too easy to spot. Fortunately for them, one of their cultists who had been part of Montgomery's crusade back in the early days of the campaign spotted an abandoned farm, complete with an oversized barn, in isolated country just outside the small town of Roseville, 18 miles northeast of Sacramento.

From Shan Fan, McConnell sent an advance party disguised as Union troops ahead to set up a base and heavily modify the old barn ready to act as a hanger. Sheltered as the property is behind the old oaks common to the area, it's almost impossible to find without knowing where to look.



McConnell and Greel overflowed the area during the day to spot the site, but landed at night.

Given its remote location and the speed with which they worked, no one in the area is the wiser. Locals think simply that the Union is setting up a new fort at the old Schumacher place.

The Lost Angels' plan is simple. This is a suicide mission. They intend to commit "suicide by Project Ghostfire" and take as much of Sacramento as they can with them, in the process making sure the Union takes the blame. In the meantime, they have a few "events" of their own planned to liven up the election and spread a little preliminary fear.

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

Marshal, here are a couple of incidents you can use at any point you want to stir the pot and remind the posse of Grimme's threat.

THE BELL TOWER

At some point during the final week of the campaign, Hiram Montgomery addresses a rally in the Capitol Park. A fiery, hypnotic speaker, he has the crowd in the palms of his hands as he rails about the sins of Washington and the Grant Administration against the good people of California. If any of the heroes are present at the rally, either working for a party or simply as observers, an Incredible (11) *Cognition* roll reveals the glint of sunlight on multiple rifle barrels in the church bell tower at the other end of the park.

There are four gunmen in the tower. For statistics, use the standard profile in Chapter 4, The Assault. Whether the posse sees them or not, the assassin fires his first shot at Montgomery with a Winchester 76. He hits, but Montgomery is only wounded. The other gunmen fire randomly into the crowd to create a panic.

What happens next is up to the posse. The Union troops guarding the plaza are too busy taking cover and trying to protect civilians to go after the gunmen. At best, some of them ineffectively return fire. Characters can rush the church, help protect the crowd, or guard Hiram Montgomery himself.

The cultists want folks to get a look at them in their spiffy Union uniforms, but try to get away. However, the heroes rush the church immediately, it leads to a fight to the death in the steeple stairwell—these men will not be taken alive, even if they have to kill themselves!

If the heroes are the ones to kill the gunmen, any present notice immediately the unit badges are those of the 23rd Nevada. No other identifying marks or items are on the bodies; in fact, even their pockets are empty! A Hard (9) *streetwise* check over the next day or two uncovers someone who remembers seeing Union soldiers with uniforms of that description near Roseville.

In the meantime, characters who fought the assassins or shielded Hiram Montgomery have earned his trust. After getting patched up, he thanks them and, talking to them privately, relates the same story and request detailed in The Independent Camp.

Bringing the unit badges to the attention of General Ellsworth adds credence to the heroes' claims of sabotage and murder, but the officer still awaits the return of his rider before acting. He does, however, issue detention orders for any members of the 23rd Nevada in the area. Unfortunately, the cultists don't intend to stage any further stunts like this, so the order comes too late.

FIRE!

Late one night, while the posse is in the Embarcadero district, the laughter and loud talk of the crowd along the waterfront is interrupted by an

explosion and the sound of shattering glass and screams. Someone has set a firebomb off in a crowded saloon and the place is an inferno!

The scene is chaos. Customers and employees flee into the street from the saloon, a known watering-hole for Confederate Party sympathizers. Many are horribly injured and several are afire. As people rush to help and others call for the fire brigade, a cry for help comes from the upper story—a woman and her baby are trapped up there!

The posse can help in several ways—heal the injured, contain the fire, or rescue the woman and her child.

IS THERE A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE?

There are 20 injured folks in the crowd. Eleven have a few Light wounds, but nothing more serious; six are sporting Heavy wounds; and three have Serious wound levels. Obviously, the Serious wounds are the most badly injured and need medical (or arcane) help quickly or they are likely to lose consciousness or worse from Wind loss. *Medicine: general* lets a hero handle the other injuries, but only an educated cowpoke with *medicine: surgery* can treat the Serious wounds.

Of course, characters with arcane abilities can treat the wounded as well, but hucksters and the like had better be careful not to wind up at the wrong end of a witch hunt!

BUCKET BRIGADE

Fighting the fire requires an Onerous (7) *Smarts* or *leadership*, whichever is higher, every five minutes until the fire is extinguished. This roll represents either knowing how to fight a fire or how to organize panicked people into an effective bucket brigade.

A successful check keeps the fire from spreading to other buildings and gives rescuers more time to figure a way to save the mother and child. Failed checks mean the fire has a chance to jump to a building next door—don't bother to roll, Marshal, just do whatever gives the posse the biggest worry (and fun).



After the impromptu fire fighters have made five successful checks (not necessarily in a row), they bring the fire under control. However, if the bucket brigade fails three or more checks before the woman and babe are rescued then some other hero saves the day and steals the posse's thunder.

SMOKE EATIN'

The safest way to save the woman and child is to hold a large tarp or blanket between a group of rescues and convince her to jump to safety. The woman is frightened nearly out of her wits and not thinking straight, so it will take a Hard (9) *leadership* or *persuasion* check to get her to jump. Catching them is no problem. Failure means she dithers and dawdles for precious minutes.

Of course, some cowpoke more than likely rushes into the burning building for a dramatic rescue. If the heroic fool forgets to take off his gun belt and drop his six-shooters, they go off at his hips inside the burning building and leave him in a world of hurt-3d6 to the appropriate leg for the first round. Give him a chance to drop the belt before hitting him with the other five rounds, though!

If the hero is smart and wraps himself in a soaked blanket, he makes it to the woman's room with little trouble—just smoking round the edges a bit. If he charges straight in without precautions, he gets to the room only after his shirt catches fire for 2d6 damage. With a Fair (5) *Strength* check, he can kick the door in, grab the two victims, and lead them to safety.

WHODUNIT?

In the aftermath, whether characters are heroes or not, rumors fly around Sacramento about the terrorist attack. Some are sure the Union Army set it, others think the CIP, or even the Rebels set the blaze to get voter sympathy. While we know the truth that McConnell's Guardian Angels did the deed, the poor people of Sacramento have no idea what the truth is, spreading the fear and doubt Grimme's fanatics so dearly desire.



TROUBLESHOOTING

It's always possible that the heroes couldn't give a hoot about politics and stick to finding the *Proletariat* and Project Ghostfire, in spite of your (and our) best efforts. If so, that's fine. The election is a chance to get involved with a major event in the *Weird West*, but it's not vital to have fun with this adventure.

Don't force the posse down the straight and narrow path of what's been written here. Rather, play the events in Sacramento in the background while they're nosing around. Let them see the assassination attempt and the fire, let them experience all the hoopla of the election. You might drag them in later than you expect. If not, don't worry too much, just head on to **Chapter Four**.

The story assumes the posse supports Hiram Montgomery and the California Independence Party, but it doesn't matter which the heroes back nor which wins-Greel and McConnell will still try to blow the place up, no matter what!

BOUNTY

Along with the Fate Chip awards, Marshal, you might want to reward the posse with friends and enemies based on their actions in Sacramento—they're moving on the edges of high political circles, now. Having powerful friends in the state (or national!) government of California can be a very handy thing!

For heroics at the fire: 1 white chip to each hero actively assisting. A blue chip goes to anyone who saves the woman and child.

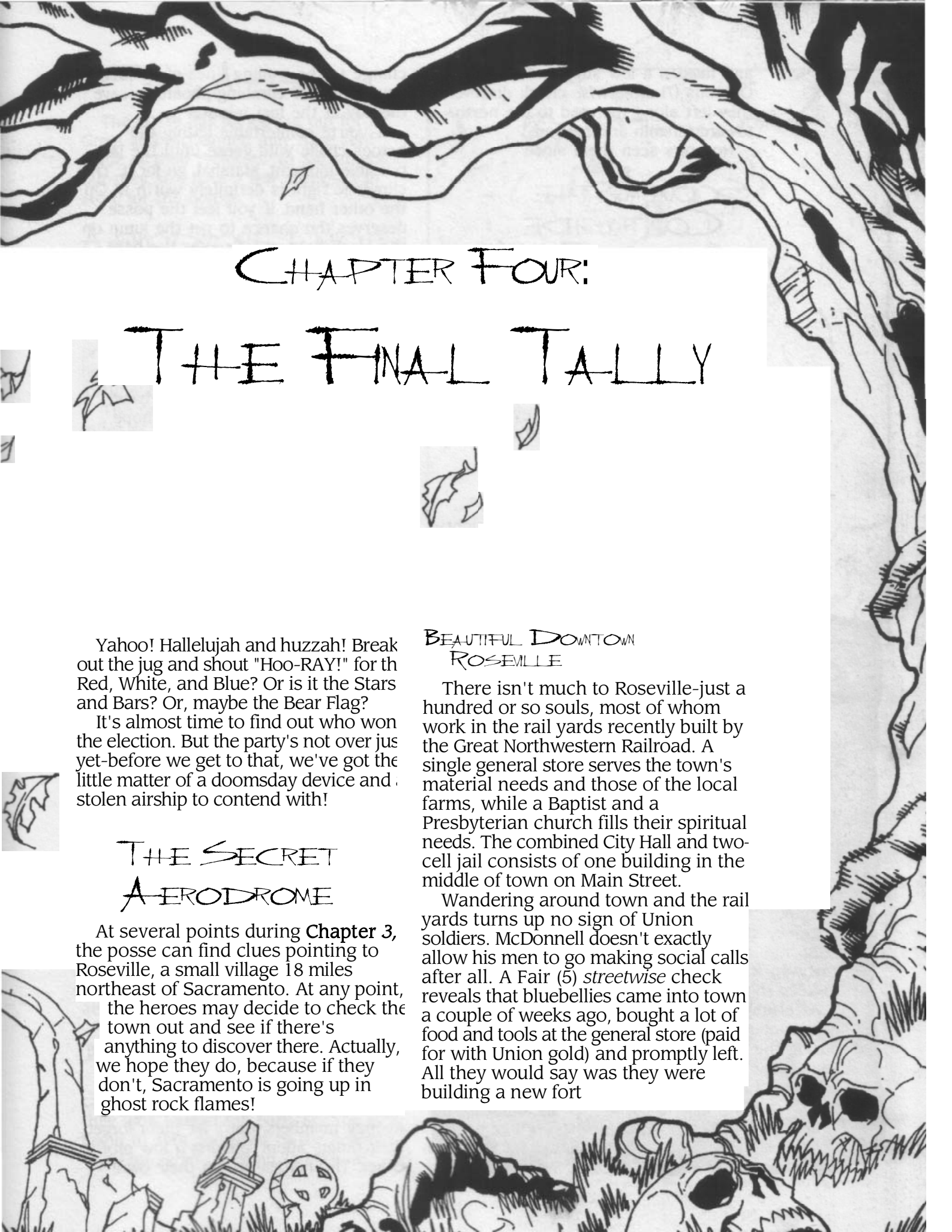
For getting involved in active campaigning: 1 white chip to each hero involved.

Realizing McConnell and his gang are in Roseville: 1 red chip.

For risking their lives to save Montgomery: 1 red chip.

For backing the winning party and putting it over the top: 1 blue chip





CHAPTER FOUR:

THE FINAL TALLY

Yahoo! Hallelujah and huzzah! Break out the jug and shout "Hoo-RAY!" for the Red, White, and Blue? Or is it the Stars and Bars? Or, maybe the Bear Flag?

It's almost time to find out who won the election. But the party's not over just yet-before we get to that, we've got the little matter of a doomsday device and a stolen airship to contend with!

THE SECRET AERODROME

At several points during **Chapter 3**, the posse can find clues pointing to Roseville, a small village 18 miles northeast of Sacramento. At any point, the heroes may decide to check the town out and see if there's anything to discover there. Actually, we hope they do, because if they don't, Sacramento is going up in ghost rock flames!

BEAUTIFUL DOWNTOWN ROSEVILLE

There isn't much to Roseville-just a hundred or so souls, most of whom work in the rail yards recently built by the Great Northwestern Railroad. A single general store serves the town's material needs and those of the local farms, while a Baptist and a Presbyterian church fills their spiritual needs. The combined City Hall and two-cell jail consists of one building in the middle of town on Main Street.

Wandering around town and the rail yards turns up no sign of Union soldiers. McDonnell doesn't exactly allow his men to go making social calls after all. A Fair (5) *streetwise* check reveals that bluebellies came into town a couple of weeks ago, bought a lot of food and tools at the general store (paid for with Union gold) and promptly left. All they would say was they were building a new fort

and needed a few supplies. A further Onerous (7) *streetwise* check discovers they left along the road to the north, toward Lincoln and beyond.

No one's seen them since.

SCOURING THE COUNTRYSIDE

There are a lot of isolated farms and cattle ranches out that way, Marshal, spread over quite a bit of country. Many of them were abandoned after the Great Quake and the subsequent Ghost Rock rush. A posse searching for Union soldiers in this area gets one Incredible (11) *Cognition* test per day, so it had better have it's most sharp-eyed scout on point! Grimme's agents did a good job of hiding their base.

TIMING THE DISCOVERY

Obviously, it would work out mighty nicely to have the posse find the cultist's secret aerodrome moments before the airship takes off. Then only a

charge to the trailing lines gives them any chance of climbing aboard to save the day at the last minute!

If you're comfortable letting the heroes chase wild geese until the last possible moment, Marshal, go for it. The climactic fight is definitely worth it! On the other hand, if you feel the posse deserves the chance to get the jump on the black hats and discover the base ahead of time, that's fine too.

Whatever is most fun for you and your players is the course we recommend!

CLUELESS!

If the posse doesn't find the base before the election, there's still hope. Wherever they are—an Onerous (7) *streetwise* check connects a hero with a cowpoke still cooling his anger with beer-lots of beer. He says:

"I rode down from Lincoln for the referendum. It was gettin' toward dark and I figgered to bed down at this abandoned cattle ranch—the old Schumacher place. I was getting' ready to make camp when all of a sudden a bunch of them Union boys start comin' outta the woodwork takin' potshots at me!

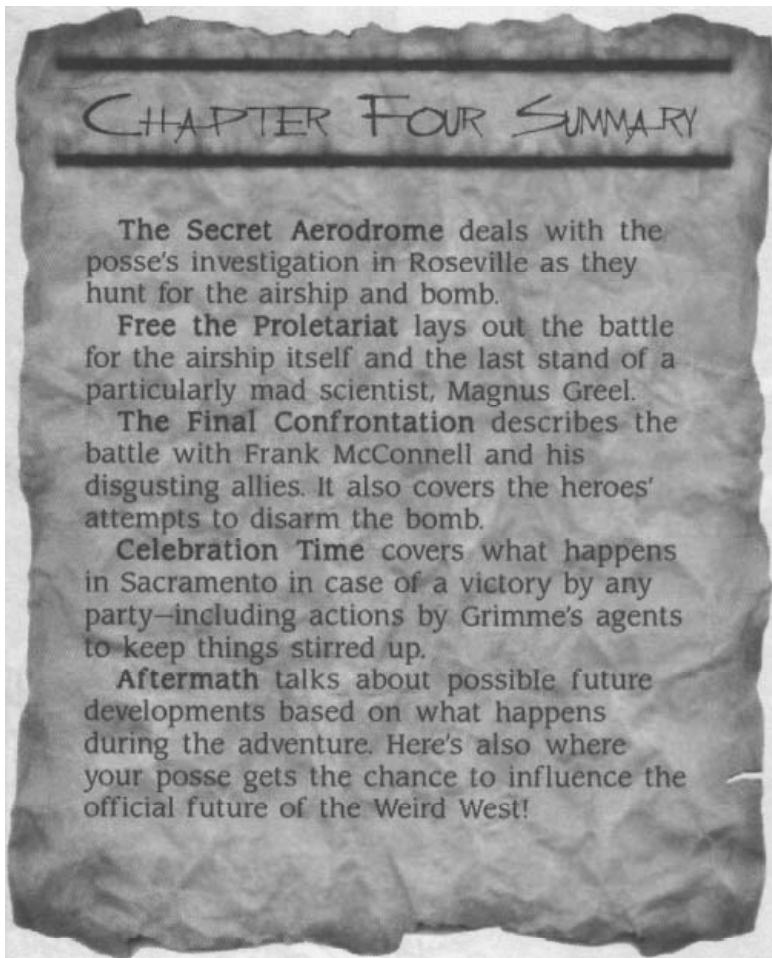
"I hightailed it to Roseville, but they got a round in my horse and I ended up walkin' the last couple o' miles. That's just like the government, takin' property without payin', and then tryin' to kill an honest man for bein' in the wrong place!

"And no, I ain't tellin' how I'm goin' to vote!"

REINFORCEMENTS

Try as they might, they won't be able to "borrow" any real soldiers for the attack—General Ellsworth and Chief Parsons have their hands full with security in Sacramento and don't want to hear any more of the posse's wild stories (if they've heard them before).

If the posse contains any Ranger or Agency members, don't let them forget their orders about keeping a low profile either. The heroes are on their own!



THE ASSAULT

The posse has its job cut out for it. Greel and McDonnell may have sent some of their "soldiers" to Sacramento, but they still have a few surprises in store for the heroes.

AERODROME LAYOUT

The secret aerodrome sits on the old Schumacher ranch, about a mile off the road north from Roseville to Lincoln, in the middle of lonely foothill country. The prior owner, old Mark Schumacher, headed for Shan Fan to make his fortune. Nobody's seen him since.

The ranch sits on a couple square miles of property, surrounded by a high split rail fence and low, tree-covered hills. Examining the fence with a Fair (5) *scrutinize* check reveals it's been recently repaired. After a successful Onerous (7) *sneak* roll, a scout can make a Fair (5) *search* check to spot a sentry guarding the main gate.

About a quarter mile back from the gate sits the single-story ranch house. A buckboard and a couple of old horses are visible, tied up at the front. Beyond the house sits a huge barn-the nose of the *Proletariat* just visible through the front of the barn, which was removed to make room for the great craft.

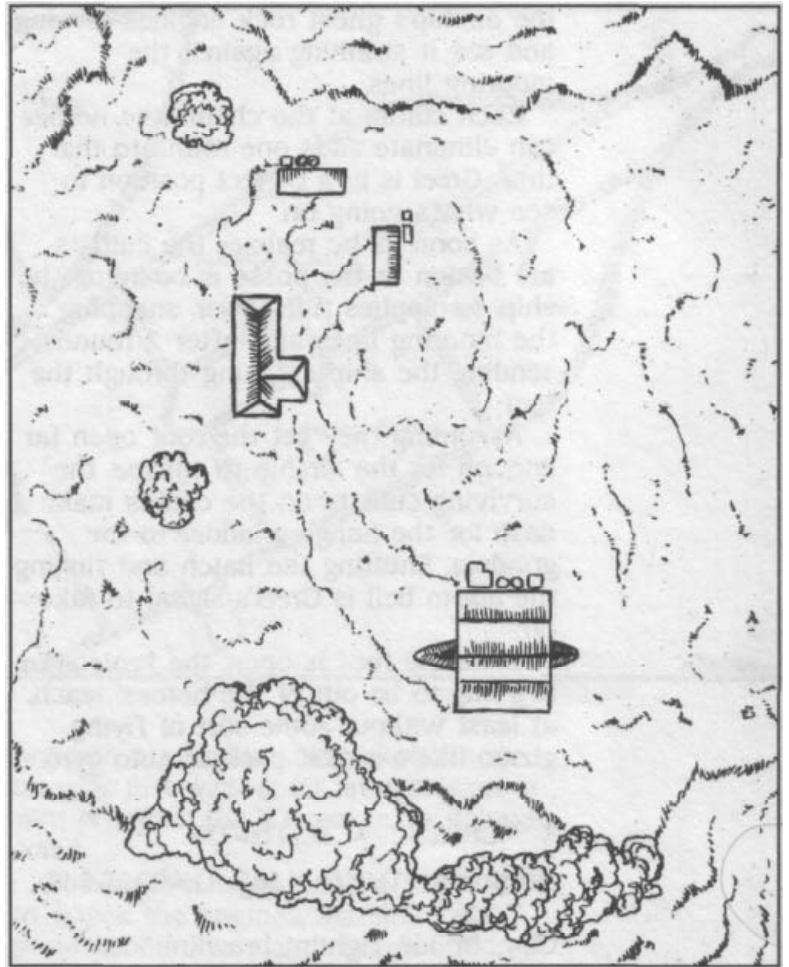
ARRIVING AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

If the posse gets to the Schumacher place before the announcement of the referendum results, they catch sight of a couple of "Union soldiers" patrolling the grounds. Counting the sentry at the gate, the heroes only see about five or six total. The guards' locations are marked on the map by a "G."

There's no sign of the rest of the group. They're out of sight inside the aerodrome making final preparations.

DOWN TO THE WIRE!

No people are visible, but the posse can hear a great grinding noise and, if they look toward the barn, see the roof begin to split and open to the heavens. The *Proletariat* is about to take off!



LIFT-OFF

As soon as the cultists get wind there's a problem, they prepare to get airborne as quickly as possible.

McDonnell and Greel kept fifteen cultists with him when the others were sent to Sacramento. One guards the gate, four work the chains to raise the roof, five guard the grounds, and another five are already on board. When the posse attacks, the cultists keep at the chains, counting on the ones assigned to guard the aerodrome to take care of the attackers.

The cultists' plan counts on delay. He and Greel don't have to kill the posse to win, they just have to hold them off long enough to get the bomb over Sacramento when it goes off. With that in mind, Greel sets the bomb for detonation and seals himself in the bridge.

It takes the group 10 rounds to get the roof open once alerted to the posse's presence. The posse can hear

the airship's ghost rock engines revving and see it straining against the mooring lines.

Each cultist at the chains the heroes can eliminate adds one round to that time. Greel is in a perfect position to see what's going on.

As soon as he realizes the cultists are beaten or the posse is boarding the ship, he applies full power, snapping the mooring lines and, after 2 rounds, sending the ship crashing through the roof.

Assuming they get the roof open far enough for the airship to escape, the surviving cultists on the chains make a dash for the hanging ladder to the gondola. Shutting the hatch and ringing the alarm bell is Greel's signal to take off.

Once the roof is open, the *Proletariat* is going to be out of the heroes' reach, at least without some sort of flying gizmo like a rocket pack or auto-gyro.

PROFILE: CULTISTS

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:3d6, Q:3d10, S:2d8, V:2d6

Climbin' 1d8, fightin': brawlin' 3d8, shootin' pistol, rifle, and shotgun 3d6, sneak 2d8

Mental: C:2d8, K:1d6, M:1d8, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d6

Guts 3d6, faith: Lost Angels 4d6, overawe 2d8, search 2d8, streetwise 3d6

Edges: NA

Hindrances: Loco: delusional cultist -5
self-righteous -3

Pace: 6

Size: 6

Wind: 12

Gear: Union uniforms, Winchester 73 rifles, Colt Army pistols (all stolen from the Shan Fan base), 25 rounds of ammunition for each weapon, a Lost Angels prayer book

Description: Although dressed like Union soldiers, close examination reveals their uniforms fit badly and their appearance is very un-military.

FREE THE PROLETARIAT!

The heroes may have to make a mad dash to get on the airship in time. It's quite possible some are left behind. Characters can either try for the hanging ladder or climb the mooring lines that are dangling free once Greel powers the engines fully.

Onerous (7) *climbin'* tests are necessary either way. Success means the character made it on board through the hatch or an open cabin window—more about that in a moment. Failure means the character's hands have slipped and he now must make an Onerous (7) *Nimbleness* trait check just to hang on. If she fails that, Marshal, you can have fun describing the sound the character makes as she hits the ground!

Success doesn't mean the hero is home-free, either. McDonnell left two cultists in the cabin to frustrate any last-minute stowaways. Just as the cowpoke climbs in through the window, the fanatic attacks. It's very possible that the first hero in gets attacked, blocking the window and leaving the next one dangling several thousand feet above the floor of the Sacramento Valley!

One or two of the chain-working Guardian Angels may have made it onto the airship, in which case they defend the engine room and the way to the bridge.

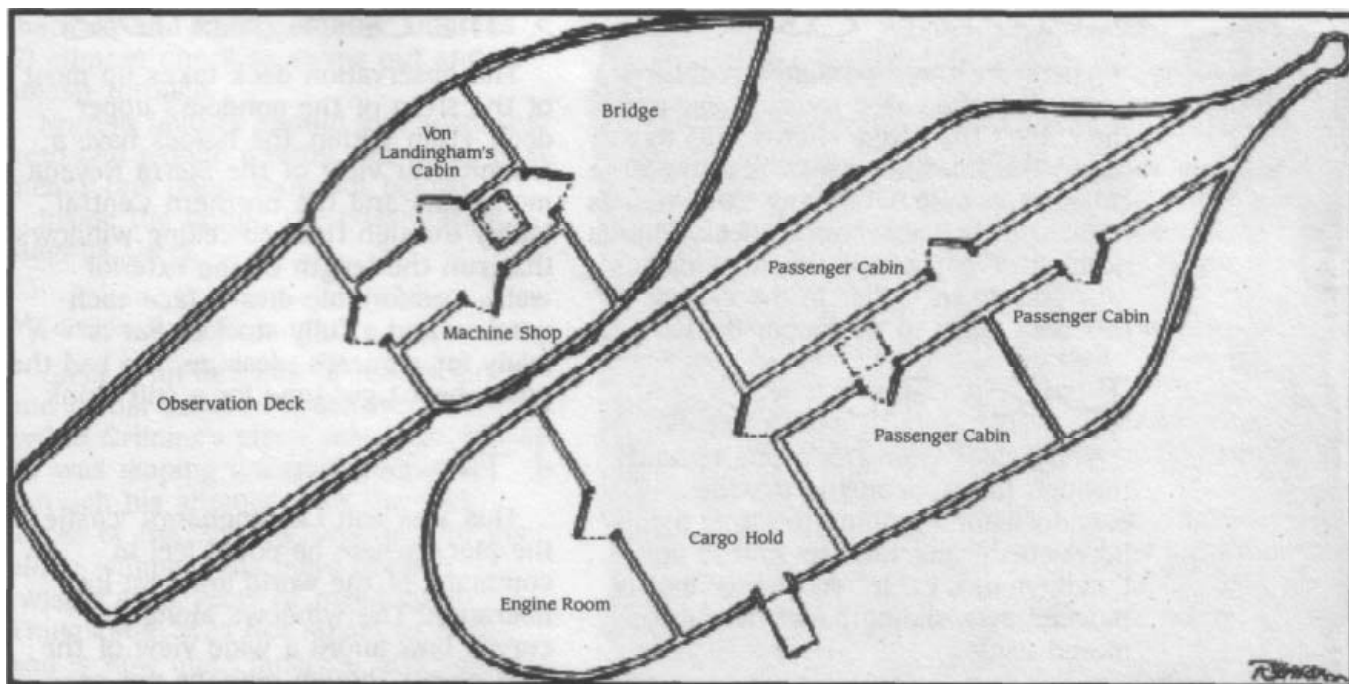
DECK ONE

The gondola is 70' long, 30' wide, and hangs from the gas bag envelope by strong cables. It is divided into two decks—all the entrances available to the posse are on the first (lower) deck. The gangway entrance comes through the cargo hold, while each of the passenger cabins has a window. Two of the windows are open.

1. THE CARGO HOLD

The *Proletariat* was not meant as a heavy-hauler, and this room is meant mainly for carrying luggage and any





supplies the Collegium might need. It is currently empty. The loud wail of burning ghost rock comes from the engine room, but above the rushing wind and wailing fuel, the posse can hear the almost deafening thrum of the rotary propellers.

2. THE ENGINE ROOM

If a cultist made it from the barn floor onto the airship, he has locked himself in here and barricaded the door. If not, one of the two guards McConnell left in the cabin retreats here. His mission is to keep the posse from disabling the engines.

The interior of the engine room is filled with bizarre things.

There are ticking clockwork motors, gauges and dials of all sizes measuring who knows what, whirling spinners and flashing lights and clattering relays no cowpoke has a hope in Hell of understanding, and all sorts of weird belts and tubes running through the walls to the engine nacelles mounted outside.

If a gunfight starts, have fun! Let the bullets and hexes fly—they really can't hurt anything without trying to. But you don't need to let them know that!

Sparks flying from devices of Mad Science, lead ricocheting all around and von Landingham screaming at them to

not ruin his airship should keep them on edge just waiting for an explosion or vent of steam that's never *really* going to come.

The heroes might get the bright idea to wreck the engines, Marshal. It's possible, but von Landingham opposes this with all his heart.

First, he implores them to concentrate instead on finding Project Ghostfire. It's obviously not here and, even if the airship is just drifting, the bomb will do tremendous damage to the area below. If the engines are working, he adds, at least they can maneuver it to an unoccupied region.

If that doesn't work, the mad Belgian sputters and shouts there's no safe way to stop the engines, short of powering them down from the bridge. Cutting the cables or wrecking the machinery might cause the ghost rock engines to overload and explode—setting off Project Ghostfire in an even bigger blast.

He's making all this up, of course. He just doesn't want to see his precious *Proletariat* damaged.

If the posse does sabotage the engines, the wind from the northeast carries them toward the capital city anyway. Sure it won't be *right* on target, but when dealing with doomsday devices, as in horseshoes, close *does* count!

Some days, a hero just can't buy luck.

3. PASSENGER CABINS

There are three passenger cabins forward of the cargo room. These are the cabins the posse shared, two to a room. The late Dr. Pillman had the large cabin, of course, while any extra heroes bunked in the observation deck. There's nothing of importance in these cabins.

A pull-down ladder in the ceiling in this area leads to the upper deck.

DECK TWO

The ladder from Deck One ascends through the floor in the 5' wide corridor running along the long axis between the machine room and von Landingham's cabin. The upper end is blocked by a sliding panel that is easily moved aside.

1. THE MACHINE ROOM

This room is von Landingham's work room and in-flight repair shop. All sorts of tools and implements line the walls, including crowbars, drills driven by air compressors, metal shears, hatchets, axes, and welding torches. Not only can these be used as weapons, but they might provide a quicker way into the bridge than trying to shoot a way through.

2. VON LANDINGHAM'S CABIN

Like the rest of the gondola, it's decorated in rich woods and comfortable cushions. On the wall are posters promoting various radical causes, all of them on anarchist themes and denouncing various "enemies of the working people" or calling for world revolution.

The most interesting items to the posse are two medieval broadswords hanging on the wall—heirlooms of von Landingham's family. Using them effectively requires the *fightin'*: sword aptitude. Their damage and other game statistics are exactly the same as a sabre.

3. THE OBSERVATION DECK

The observation deck takes up most of the stern of the gondola's upper deck. From within, the heroes have a magnificent view of the Sierra Nevada mountains and the northern Central Valley through floor-to-ceiling windows that run the length of the exterior walls. Comfortable divans face each window and a fully-stocked bar is ready for a guest's pleasure. Too bad the posse hasn't got time for a stiff drink.

4. THE BRIDGE

This was von Landingham's "castle," the place where he could feel in command of the world and plot its liberation. The windows along the curved bow afford a wide view of the land ahead, though perhaps not as magnificent as that seen from the observation deck.

The first problem the posse faces is how to get in here. Not only is there the thick oak door barring the way, but Greel had brackets mounted inside and a heavy wood beam placed across the door. Blasting the lock off won't do any good, and the door is too thick to get a good shot at anyone on the other side.

Short of arcane methods, the only way through is to break down the door with the tools in the machine room. Doing this will take 5-10 minutes, depending on how many heroes help (a maximum of two) and how close to the skin of their teeth you want them to get, Marshal.

There is another, less-sensible way to get into the bridge: climb outside and smash through the windows. A suicidal maniac..uh, hero can grab one of the dangling mooring ropes from a passenger cabin window, climb up the side of the gondola, crab-walk to a spot above the bridge windows, swing out and smash through—all the while flying at 5,000 feet above the ground.

Sure it's crazy, but you know some cowpoke is going to try it!

Success requires the cowpoke make the following successful rolls: an Onerous (7) *Nimbleness* trait check to grab the rope and pull himself out the window. Then a Hard (9) *climbin'* roll to climb up the gondola and scurry across



the roof, and finally another Onerous (7) *climbin'* check to swing out and smash through.

Normal failures should just scare the hero and require a reroll, but going bust means one thing—look out below!

Inside the bridge, the posse faces Magnus Greel.

MAGNUS GREEL

Greel is an odd mix of mad science and cultist beliefs. He discovered the evil in Grimme's plans years ago, but as he was reaping undeniable rewards through his alliance with the dark forces of the Hunting Grounds, he went along willingly. His mind became twisted after years of meddling in Things Man Was Not Meant to Know, and is now quite fanatical and insane.

On the other hand, his warped soul has been granted arcane powers beyond those available to other mad scientists in the form of black magic and science. His black magic appears to be truly twisted science and the trappings are iron, electricity, alchemy, and the like.

PROFILE: MAGNUS GREEL

Corporeal: D:2d8, N:4d8, S:1d6, Q:2d10, V:2d6

Climbin' 1d8, **drivin':** airship 3d8, **fightin':** brawlin' 4d8, sneak 3d8, teamster 2d8

Mental: C:3d10, K:3d12, M:2d8, Sm:4d10, Sp:2d6

Area knowledge: Gomorra 2d12, demolition 2d12, **faith:** Lost Angels 4d6, guts 2d6, mad science 4d12, science: engineering 4d12, chemistry 2d12, physics 2d12, scroungin' 3d10, scrutinize 2d10, search 3d10, tinkerin' 4d10

Edges: Arcane background 3: mad scientist, mechanically inclined 1

Hindrances: Loco: delusional cultist -5
loyalty (Grimme) -3, stubborn -2,

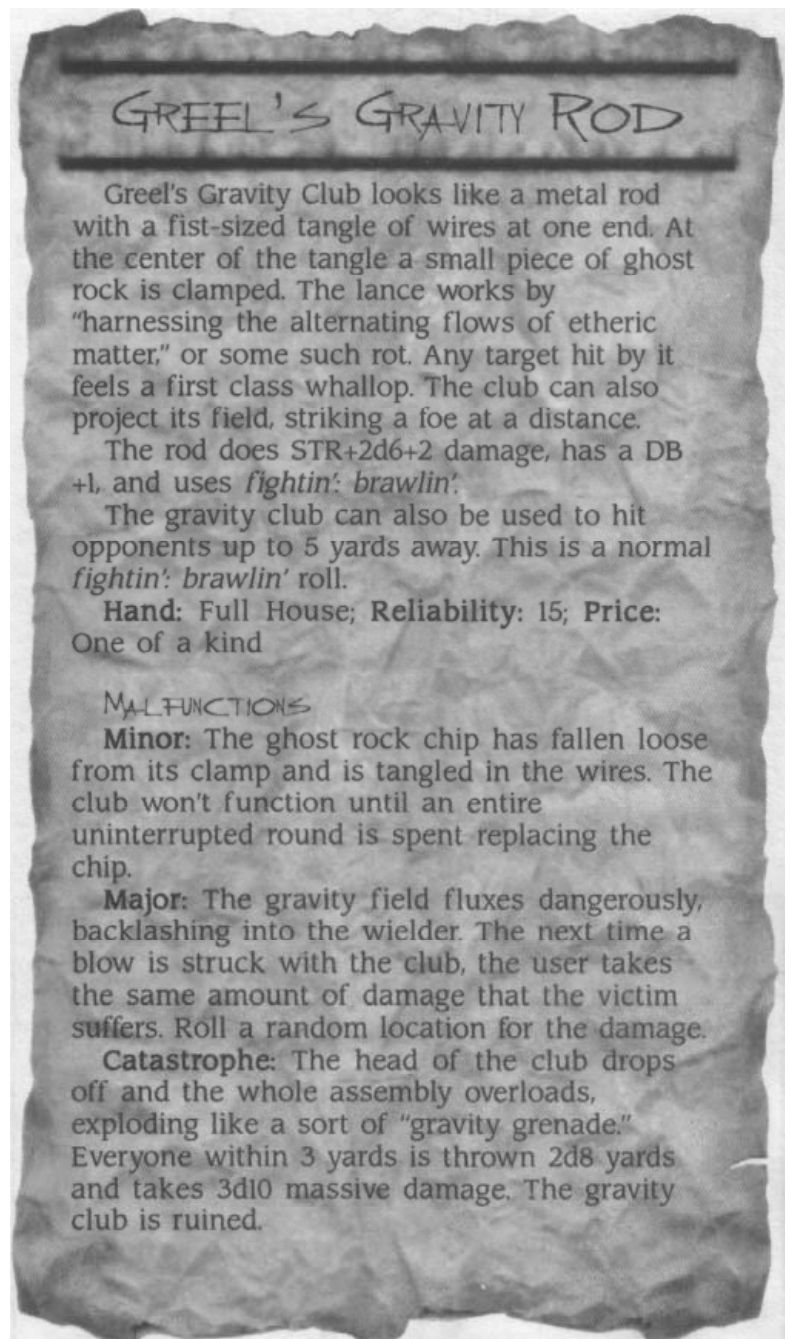
Pace: 8

Size: 6

Wind: 12

Special Abilities:

Black Magic: Dark protection (bulletproof metal plates, etc.) 3, stun 2 (electricity from rod), zombie 1 (reanimation fluid)



Black Science: Greel's duel role as a mad scientist and cultist means the gremlins go a little easier on him than most crazed inventors. Greel does not need to make Malfunction checks when using mad science items of his own devising—in other words, the Gravity Rod (see above).

Gear: The uniform of a Union lieutenant and his Gravity Rod.

Description: Greel is a little less than average height, with dusky blond hair and a trim beard. He has the wild-eyed look of a true nut-job.

AIRPORT '78

The moment Greel is out of the way, von Landingham rushes to the ship's wheel to turn the *Proletariat* around. The posse can see Sacramento in the distance, growing nearer by the minute.

Von Landingham fusses and fiddles with the control panel, obviously distressed about something. After a moment at the controls, the Belgian cries out in frustration.

"Ach! The Devil take his soul- Greel jammed the controls! I can't turn the ship and I can't land it! There isn't much time. You must find the bomb!"

If it's not in the cabin, it must be among the catwalks in the flight envelope. There's a way up through the machine room. Hurry! We only have a few minutes and I may not be able to get these controls un-jammed in time!

GO!"

CHECK HIS POCKETS!

A quick search of Greel's belongings turns up an item of particular interest, a large folio of plans, diagrams and blueprints, all clearly labeled Project: Ghostfire. The plans are nearly incomprehensible to the lay person, but a mad scientist should make a Hard (9) mad science check. If she succeeds, she gets the general idea of what Project: Ghostfire is supposed to do.

THE FLIGHT ENVELOPE

From a trap door in the roof of the machine room, a steel ladder leads up into the intricate catwalk system among the gas bags. The wind whips fast and cold up and the noise from the engines makes it hard for a cowpoke to hear himself think.

Much closer now, the heroes can make out Sacramento and should realize that only a short time stands between them and a fiery ticket to the Hereafter.

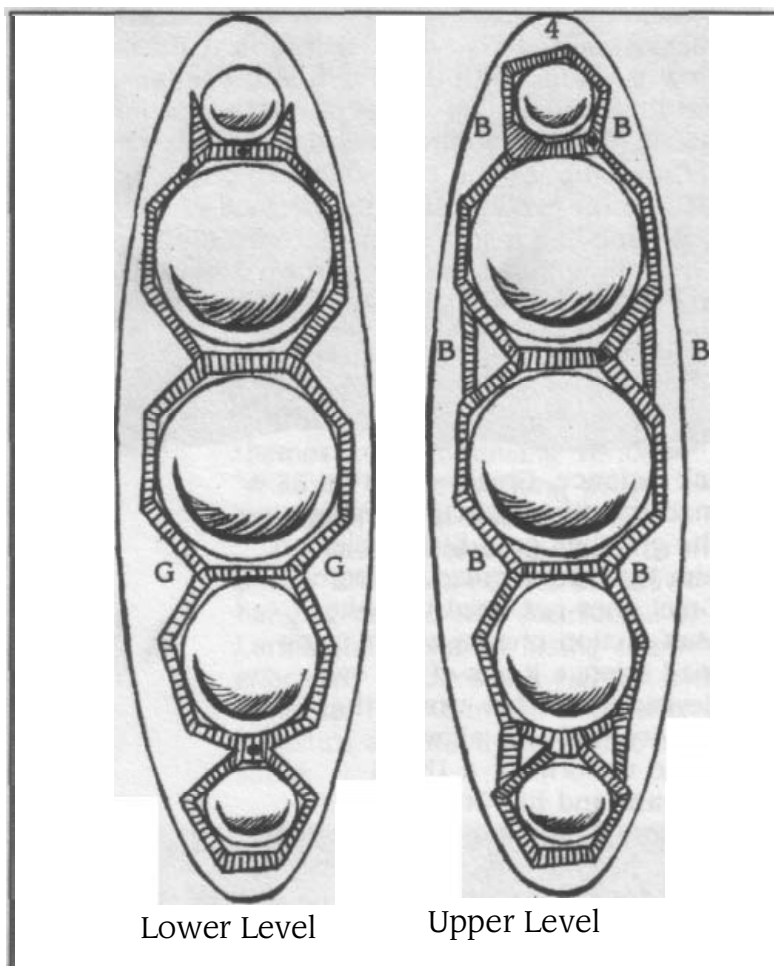
1. THE GASBAGS

The gas bag of the *Proletariat* contains six giant balloons filled with explosive hydrogen. Any mad scientist-or von Landingham himself - is able to tell the posse this. A single stray shot or open flame could set off a tremendous explosion—whether it also detonates Project Ghostfire is up to you, Marshal!

Whenever a shot misses, shuffle the deck and have the player draw a card for each stray bullet. If a Joker comes up—ka-BOOM! The people in Sacramento get to see a pretty fireball and anyone on the airship is now just ash blowing in the wind.

2. THE CATWALK SYSTEM

The catwalk system is a network of metal paths with handrails on each side that snake among the gasbags. There are two levels in the flight envelope with stairs between the levels at the midway point of the envelope on each side. Between each pair of bags from the bow to the stern runs a crosswise catwalk.



At each location marked with a "G" on the map, there is a cultist "soldier" waiting to make the posse's trip miserable—or at least more so...

Hand-to-hand fighting on the catwalk system is possible, but extremely dangerous. Any character taking a wound in combat on the catwalk has to make an Onerous (7) *Nimbleness*. Failure means the character is knocked over the side of the catwalk!

On a second Hard (9) *Nimbleness* check, he can still grab the rail and try to pull himself back up—anything held in his hands is lost, though. Failing this second check means falling. Normally, this means landing on the roof of the gondola or a lower level of the catwalk if falling from the upper for 1d6+5 falling damage.

Going bust buys the hero a one-way ticket to the valley floor. And don't forget, it's not the fall that kills the sod-buster (literally!), it's that sudden stop at the end!

3. THE ROOF

The top of the gas bag is accessible from the forward catwalk (area 4). Anyone up here sees a single catwalk running the length of the envelope with a crow's nest for observation at either end. The same rules for maneuvering up here apply as in **The Catwalk System**, except that a fall from the top means a drop with nothing between you and the ground, since the envelope is longer and wider than the gondola.

THE FINAL CONFRONTATION

Franklin McDonnell, Guardian Angel and faithful servant of Reverend Grimme, waits for the posse here, at the end of the catwalk at the bow of the gas bag at the location marked by the number "4."

Behind McDonnell sits Project Ghostfire. Though it's probably just their imaginations, some members of the posse are pretty sure they hear it ticking...



At each spot marked with a "B", a bloody one hangs beneath the catwalk ready to attack the posse as they pass the abomination. The horrific creatures try to jerk as many heroes off into space as they can.

McDonnell's a lunatic. He's made his peace with his dark masters and he's ready to die for the cause. He fights to keep the posse from reaching the bomb—to get to it they have to go through him. McDonnell fights hand to hand, saving the last rounds in the Gatling pistol for a desperate last shot. If it looks like his defeat is imminent, he plans to point his pistol at the nearest hydrogen bag and pull the trigger, sending as many rounds into the explosive gas as possible. It might be a good idea if the posse knocked that thing out of his hand!

PROFILE: FRANKLIN

MCDONNELL

Corporeal: D:2d10, N:4d12+2, Q:3d12, S:2d8, V:2d8

Climbin' 3d12, dodge 3d12, Fightin': brawlin, buzzsaw 4d12, sneak 2d12, shootin': automatics 3d10, throwin': unbalanced 2d10

Mental: C:3d8, K:2d4, M:3d10, Sm:2d6, Sp:1d6

Faith: Lost Angels 2d6, guts 3d6, leadership 3d10, overawe 4d10, persuasion 2d10, scrutinize 3d8, search 4d8, streetwise 3d6, trackin' 3d8

Edges: Brawny 3, don't get 'im riled 2, sand 3, thick-skinned 3, tough as nails 3,

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty -2, loco: delusional cultist -5, mean as a rattler -2, ugly as sin -1

Pace: 12

Size: 7

Wind: 20

Special Abilities:

Abdominal Armor: McDonnell has iron plates attached to his body, covering his guts and gizzards with AV 2. He suffers -2 to any *dodge* or *sneak* rolls due to the plates,

however. For upper guts wounds, check to see if the attack strikes the chest brace (see below). If so, it hits AV 3 instead of the usual AV 2. *Reliability: NA.*

Buzzsaw: STR+3d8 damage, DB +1. This miniature circular saw is set into his metal forearm and constantly runs. *Reliability 18:* On a failure, it locks up and is useless for the combat.

Chest Brace: This is what the abdominal armor hangs from, but roll 1d6 any attack that hits the upper guts. On a 6 (or 4-6 for a broad or slashing attack), it strikes the thick crossbars which provide AV 3. *Reliability: NA.*

Metal Right Forearm: This provides the housing for the buzzsaw attachment. Roll 1d6 for any attack that connects with the arm; on a 4-6, the attack hits the forearm which has AV 2. *Reliability: NA.*

Skull Plate: A large section of McDonnell's skull has been replaced with an iron plate. His

head has AV 2 (except against electrical-based attacks!) as a result. *Reliability: NA.*

Gear: The uniform of a Union lieutenant, a Gatling pistol.

Description: Frank McDonnell is mean, ugly, and sporting more iron and steel than the average locomotive. He's horribly scarred from years in bloodsport competition—and on the operating table.

PROFILE: BLOODY ONES

Corporeal: D:3d6, N:3d10, Q:3d10, S:3d8, V:3d8

Dodge 2d10, fightin': brawlin' 4d10, sneak 4d10

Mental: C:4d8, K:1d4, M:2d8, Sm:2d8, Sp:3d6

Overawe 4d8, ridicule 4d8, search 4d8, trackin' 3d8 (by scent)

Pace: 10

Size: 6

Terror: 9

Wind: NA

Special Abilities:

Damage: Claws (STR+1d6), bite (STR+1d6).

Undead: Focus-Head

Description: Bloody ones look like corpses with their flesh gnawed off—which is exactly what happened

WHAT'S THAT

TICKING SOUND?

The heroes may be celebrating the defeat of their enemies, but they shouldn't forget they're still on a collision course with destiny, carrying a bomb powerful enough to turn Sacramento into a huge smoking crater.

BLUE, RED OR YELLOW?

The heroes are standing before Project Ghostfire and their moment of truth. Now what?

Von Landingham doesn't know anything about the bomb because he wasn't on the project—that was Greel and Pillman's job, and Pillman's dead. Even if Greel is still alive, he won't help. That loco would bite off his own tongue and spit it out before betraying Reverend Grimme.



Opening the service panel, the posse sees three wires—blue, red, and yellow. Now ask them which one they want to pull? Any mad scientist or cowpoke with *demolitions* can tell the group that choosing the wrong wire could very well set the bomb off...

Which one is the right wire, Marshal? Well, all of them actually. Severing any of the wires causes the bomb to deactivate. Do you need to tell your players that? We think not. Just because they've won doesn't mean you can't still make them squirm a bit.

If you're feeling generous, let a hero figure out the simple truth on a Hard (9) *demolitions* roll. Otherwise, drag it out—let them see the Capitol getting closer and closer. And then, when they finally break down and pull a wire out of desperation, the ticking stops.

CELEBRATION TIME!

Now that we've covered that bit of unpleasantness, let's get back to the referendum and the future of California.

The morning after the vote dawns clear and cool in Sacramento. Throughout the night, election workers count the ballots under the watchful gaze of observers from each party.

As thousands of people crowd into the park and hundreds of soldiers struggle to keep order, officials from the military, the state government, and the leaders of the three parties gather on top of a huge wooden reviewing stand in front of the Capitol. At the far edge of the park, half a dozen Pony Express riders are ready to carry the news to all corners of the state the moment it's announced. Everyone is waiting for the Secretary of State to announce the results—at high noon.

AND THE WINNER IS...

At precisely high noon, Secretary of State Stephen Camper mounts the rostrum on top of the reviewing stand to the roar of the cheering crowds and popular tunes played by a brass band. The little bureaucrat is clearly enjoying the biggest moment of his life. With a



flourish, he holds the sealed envelope with the results high above his head. The crowd raises a cheer one more time and then abruptly falls silent when Camper makes a slashing motion with his other hand.

Breaking the seal of the State and slowly opening the envelope, he draws forth a folded piece of parchment. He unfolds it slowly, almost to tease the crowd. Officials behind him crane their necks to get a quick peak—from their expressions, you can see they don't know a thing. Clearing his throat, Camper begins to speak. "*Ladies and Gentlemen! Distinguished guests! Members of the press! The winner of yesterday's referendum is...*"

All you've got to do is fill in the name of the winning party from your own referendum results, Marshal.

IN CASE IT FIZZLES...

The announcement of the election results and the dispatch of messengers to spread the word are the Guardian Angels' signals to put their plan into motion and destroy Sacramento. It's time for the heroes to earn that title and go in with guns blazing, hexes flying, and feet ready to kick some Lost Angels butt.

Frank McDonnell has a backup plan ready in case the suicide run on the *Proletariat* fails. Figuring he needs only a few men plus his Bloody Ones to guard the airship till it takes off, he sent 10 of his flunkies in Union uniforms to infiltrate the forces maintaining order on Capitol Park. (Use the profile for Guardian Angels found in **Aerodrome Layout**.) If the posse killed any (or all) of the four assassins in **Chapter Three**, subtract that number from the total cultists in the park.

The fanatics plan to give the riders plenty of time to get away with the news of the election results, and then they attack the reviewing stand and the

crowd with bullets and dynamite, yelling pro-USA slogans and threats like "Death to rebels and traitors!" Their goal is to make sure the Union is blamed for the crimes even if the airship fails for some reason.

BULLET-STOPPERS

Heroes in the crowd can spot three of the fake soldiers on an Incredible (11) search test, lowered to merely Hard (9) if they are specifically looking for members of the 23rd Nevada at this point. Each raise above that TN catches sight of another group of three, until all the cultists are located.

If they managed to bring down one or more of the assassins from the bell tower and presented the uniformed body to General Ellsworth earlier, the real Union troops are on the lookout as well. In that case, pointing out the imposters to real troops in the square gets the cultists captured or killed before they can take part in the attack. It's possible the heroes can completely short-circuit the park attack if they've got sharp eyes!

However, if at least four of the imposters remain uncaptured, the attack goes forward as noted above. The panic in the crowd hinders real Union Army efforts to protect civilians, giving the cultists time to do plenty of damage. General Ellsworth himself dies in a hail of gunfire when he tries to stop what he thinks are some of his men gone berserk, unless one of the posse protects him somehow.

And, unless the posse's already found it and neutralized the other group of fanatics, the *Proletariat* is on its way.

SPLIT DECISION

It may be, Marshal, that you have to deal with separated parties here; some may have gone off in search of the *Proletariat*, while others stayed behind to guard Hiram Montgomery, for example. If that's the case, alternate

scenes so the big climax on the airship happens as the celebrations in Capitol Park are in full swing.

On the other hand, the posse might give up trying to find the *Proletariat* and instead wait for Grimme's boys to strike in Sacramento. In that case, they have a grand time at the celebrations, and they may save a few lives when the cultist agent attack, but it's *adios muchachos* when the airship arrives!

AFTERMATH

Of course, success is never guaranteed in the Weird West. If it were, then Smith & Robards would get a lot of requests for refunds! It's always possible that the posse will fail to save Sacramento. Here are some suggestions about what happens if the bomb goes off.

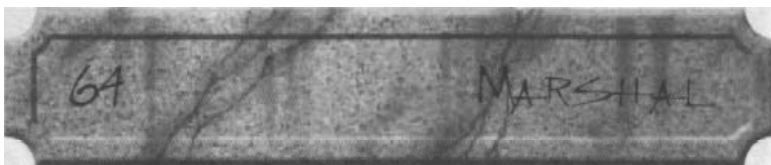
If the heroes fail, Sacramento is largely destroyed in Project Ghostfire's explosion, the area becomes a Deadland. Any hero in downtown Sacramento at the time takes 6d20 massive damage; any across the river in Tent Town or on the outskirts take 3d10 massive damage. The casualty rate in Sacramento proper is about 95%; within two miles of the explosion it's still nearly 25%.

Perhaps worse for the state of the region, the Union takes the blame for the disaster. The only good to come of it is the fact that not only is Project Ghostfire destroyed, but so are the only remaining copies of the plans and the last person who understood it-Greel.

If they succeed, Grimme's henchmen are exposed and the vote goes through. Of course, there are varying levels of success between these two-the heroes prevent the explosion, but don't prove the Union blameless, for example.

Whatever happens, Grimme has a contingency plan in place to save his own neck. You just knew he did, didn't you?

Just after the election results, a telegram arrives at the Governor's Office warning of a plot by "rogue extremists excommunicated from the Holy Church." This is enough to convince some fools to give Grimme the benefit of the doubt, while only



you and we know he intended that telegram for the Dead Letter Office...

Of course, if the heroes were able to thwart the worst of his machinations, the telegram helps divert some of the hard feelings toward the Union—especially if it won. However, diehard opponents of the North will never be convinced and hard feelings continue in the region.

THE STATE OF DISUNION

Okay, so what does this mean for your campaign?

Things stay largely the same in the Maze, to be completely honest. Regardless of the outcome, neither the Union nor Confederacy is going to pull out; the ghost rock is just too necessary for their survival.

If either of the national governments wins, fighting in the area between the two picks up as one asserts its claim while the other resists.

If Independence wins, you can have all sorts of fun with the politics in the state, Marshal. Kang, Emperor Norton, Grimme, Mexico, and about fifty other groups are all going to see this as open season on the Golden State.

Montgomery, of course, is likely to remember the group of gunslingers that saved not only his neck but the city of Sacramento when he starts looking for folks to handle the "tough jobs."

One way or the other, Montgomery's plan to save the state may actually damn it to years of worse conditions! Even if Greel and McDonnell fail, Grimme wins in the end; the area is thrown into temporary confusion as the effects settle out across the Maze, leaving him a little breathing room to grab even more territory!

TROUBLESHOOTING

We've already covered most of the sidetracks that can occur and how to avert them, Marshal. About all that's left is if the heroes just plain abandon the hunt or are so bullheaded that they still charge off chasing windmills. If so, well, we will always have fond memories of Sacramento.



BOUNTY

Saving Sacramento from certain destruction gains each surviving hero 1 Grit and drops a Legend Chip into the Fate Pot.

Additionally, the following rewards also apply:

Finding the aerodrome before the last day: 1 white chip to each hero involved in the search.

For getting aboard the airship : 1 white chip to each hero who does.

Fighting off the Capitol Park attack: 1 white chip for each hero involved.

Completely averting the Capitol Park attack: 1 red chip for each hero involved.

Defeating Greel: 1 red chip to each hero involved.

Taking down Frank McDonnell: 1 red chip to each hero involved.

Clearing the Union of blame: 1 red chip.

Saving Sacramento: 1 blue chip.



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Check out *The Collegium* at your local game
store, or online at www.peginc.com!**



Sacramento... We Have a Problem!



Most cowpokes with a lick of sense know the recent alliance between Gomorra's resident crackpot scientists, the Collegium, and Dr. Darius Hellstromme spells trouble. And these two groups might just whip out a thesaurus for even more chaotic misadventure!

In this 64-page adventure, the posse finds themselves thrown into a breakneck chase through the Great Maze to recover Fineas Von Landingham's airship and a top-secret Collegium project to boot! Are these events related? It wouldn't be much of a conspiracy if they weren't!

As if this weren't bad enough, the heroes might be forced to enter the slimy world of territorial politics! That ought to send a shiver down even a Harrowed's rotten spine!

Like *Ghost Busters*—a great way to lead into this adventure, by the way!—*Rain o' Terror* gives your posse the chance to influence the course of events in the Maze and Weird West in a major way. If they play their cards right, they may even carve their names on the list of *Deadlands*' greatest heroes!

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