



HELL ON EARTH
Hell or High Water!



Burned on the Bayou!



Life in the Wasted West™ is hard, and there are few places where it's harder than the Mississippi Delta. Waltzing around within spitting distance of the roving undead minions of the Necropolis is something that's done only by diehard heroes—or brainers either too stupid or desperate to get the Hell out of the place.

Still, that's where *Hell or High Water* finds the posse, wandering around the bayou in what used to be Louisiana before the ghost-rock bombs nearly blasted humanity from the face of the Earth. There the heroes stumble upon Nouveau Baton Rouge, a post-Apocalyptic Venice in which what's left of old Baton Rouge's taller buildings poke out of what's now the middle of the mighty Mississippi like the skin-stripped fingers of some gigantic, waterlogged corpse.

The people of Red Stick (as the town's also known) have trouble coming in the shape of a ramshackle riverboat full of cutthroats roaming down the river and looking for prey. The town's right in the path of these post-modern pirates, but that's the least of the populace's problems.

Somewhere out in the steamy swamps, a great evil has been awakened by the townsfolk, and it's up to the heroes to put the damned thing down for good. If they fail, every man, woman, and child—and the heroes along with them—are going to meet a watery doom!





Hell or High Water

Credits

Written & Designed by: John Goff

Editing & Layout: Matt Forbeck & Matthew Tice

Cover Art: Toren Atkinson

Interior Art: James Chandlee Stowe & Loston Wallace

Maps: Jeff Lahren

Playtesting & Advice: Joyce Goff, Shane & Michelle Hensley,
John & Christy Hopler, Neil L. Martin & David Wilson

Special Thanks to: Rachel Butterworth, Barry Doyle, Shane, Michelle & Caden Hensley,
Christy Hopler, Ann Kolinsky, Ashe Marler, Hal Mangold, Jason Nichols, Charles Ryan, Dave Seay,
Zeke Sparks, Maureen Yates & John Zinser



Pinnacle Entertainment Group, Inc.
P.O. Box 10908
Blacksburg, VA 24062-0908
www.peginc.com or deadlands@aol.com

Dedicated to:
Neil L. Martin for his sage advice.

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Deadlands created by Shane Hensley.



Hell or High Water



Marshal: 4



Chapter One: Hell or High Water



Now that all Hell's broken loose and the Reckoners are walking around laying waste to the world, folks tend to forget that things weren't all that great before the bombs started falling. Most people remember the "good old days" and how easy things were back then. They'll give you a list a mile long about all the wonderful reasons life was better: electricity, fast food, television, and so on.

Well, every now and then, somebody stumbles across something to remind him that it all wasn't peaches and cream back then. The posse is about to get firsthand experience with the fact that Evil, with a capital E, was around even back when you could get a pizza delivered—without glow-in-the-dark toppings.

And, the funny thing about Evil with a capital E is that it seldom dies easy.

The Story So Far

When you say "city" nowadays, people tend to think of mile upon mile of concrete rubble. See, there aren't too many cities standing any more—The nukes, ghost-rock bombs, and good, old-fashioned high explosives of the Last War saw to that. And those that are still around are jealously guarded by their inhabitants.

The ruins of the once-great metropolises are now the playgrounds for scavs, mutants, or worse. Ghost-rock radiation has a tendency to

keep the more desirable tenants away. That means the few communities remaining tend to be shanty towns or tent cities somewhere safer—like the middle of nowhere.

There are a few places that escaped the worst of the ravages of the Last War, however, and folks lucky enough to stumble onto them fight tooth and claw to keep them.

Baton Rouge is one such place.

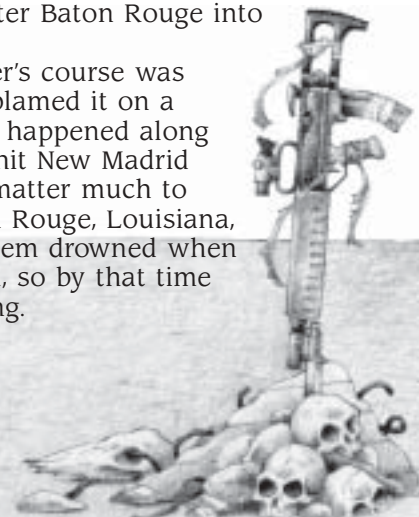
Baton Rouge

Why did the former capitol of Louisiana escape the beating cities a tenth its size got?

Simple: Nature got to it first.

The Mississippi put a hurting on Baton Rouge long before the Yankees ever thought about getting around to it. Back in 2071, the ground underneath the city shifted and sank more than 50 feet in less than three hours. The Mississippi shifted its course, overran the city's levees, and turned most of greater Baton Rouge into Bayou Baton Rouge.

The change in the river's course was unexpected—Geologists blamed it on a massive earthquake that happened along the same fault line that hit New Madrid back in 1811. That didn't matter much to the fair citizens of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, since a fair portion of them drowned when the river came roaring in, so by that time they were well past caring.





Hell or High Water

Before the flood, the city's position on the river had contributed to its financial success. After it, what was left of the capitol was a crescent of land between a swamp on one side and a clogged bayou on the other. The state capitol was moved downriver to the Big Easy, New Orleans. Within a year, if monetary ruin didn't chase out the inhabitants, the mosquitoes did.

Dr. Death

The flood wasn't all bad though. You see, down in the heart of the city, in the Baton Rouge Municipal Hospital, one of the city's medical examiners had taken a giant step across the line between genius and insanity.

Dr. Joseph Delacroix had been conducting quite a few unauthorized experiments on bodies placed in his care. The good doctor was fascinated by the process of Harrowing—being a medical examiner he'd actually witnessed one himself—and he was determined to find a scientific explanation.

His studies pushed him closer and closer to the Reckoners, until he decided his only chance was to study the recently deceased—very recently, if you get our drift here! Even taking matters into his own hands didn't quite satisfy his questions, so finally he decided to take the final step himself—autopsy and all. Now that's a tall order and most sane folks would have scoffed at it, but the doctor hadn't been playing with a full deck for some time.

Dr. Delacroix was just getting under way when the Mississippi came pouring into his morgue and put a halt to his experiment.

Unfortunately, it was only a temporary halt. You do remember what we said about Evil with a capital E, don't you? The doctor is out and about once again, and this time he's a bit more than a mild-mannered coroner—quite a bit more.

The Big Bang

When the ghost-rock bombs started falling, the generals ignored Baton Rouge. They figured it was already dead, so why waste any expensive toys on it that could blow up some other place? The waterlogged skeleton of the city escaped the worst of the war.

New Orleans, on the other hand, took it on the chin during the bombing. As the largest port in the Confederacy, it caught more than its share of the bombs. Worse yet, the bombings, combined with the aftereffects of the Baton Rouge quake,

caused the Mississippi to jump its banks upriver from New Orleans. The river now cuts almost due south through the swampland and into the Gulf of Mexico.

The shattered ruins of New Orleans no longer sit astride the mighty Mississippi. Instead, a stinking marsh nearly a mile wide cuts through the remains of the city.

Nouveau Baton Rouge

Now that the history lesson's out of the way, let's fast-forward to just a few years ago. Like we said, Baton Rouge escaped most of the destruction of the Last War, but it didn't pull through entirely unscathed. You know how stubborn the military can be sometimes.

Anyway, what was left didn't hold much appeal for anyone. Swampy ruins and a whole mess of mosquitoes just don't make for prime vacation territory. Besides most anything worth looting had been taken by gutter scum long before the first shots of the Last War were fired. All in all, not much was left to attract folks back to Baton Rouge.

Unless those folks happened to be a visionary like Ms. Evelyn Reynard. Evelyn's the Sheriff of what's left of Baton Rouge. She used to be a Texas Ranger years and years ago, but she'd hung up her guns long before the Reckoners broke into our world. Seeing humanity teetering on the edge, she dug out her badge and sidearms for one last go-round.

Evelyn is older and wiser than most Lawmen. She rounded up a group of survivors and led them through the swamps of Louisiana to the ruins of Baton Rouge. Under her guidance, and with the assistance of a former civil engineer, Rupert Tinsdale, they've begun rebuilding a small community they named Nouveau Baton Rouge.

There's one last thing about Nouveau Baton Rouge. Evelyn knows there's folks and things out there ready to prey on anything weaker, so she's taken a step to protect her community. Nouveau Baton Rouge is built among the buildings still standing out in the river. The river protects it from threats from the land, and the walls of rubble make it difficult for large river craft—or creatures—to assault.

The Gators

Unfortunately, coming downriver about the time the posse arrives is a band of cutthroats called the Gators. Their leader is an enormous man who goes by the name "Big Al" for reasons that will become clear in a little while.

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For a few years, the Gators ran the show in the ruins of Little Rock. Then they ran out of bullets for all their guns. Not being big planners, they'd not even been saving their brass to reload, so what the gang was left with was a bunch of fancy clubs.

Pretty soon, the locals they'd been bullying caught on and ran the scavs out of town. Big Al's "empire" was reduced to a bunch of poorly dressed bandits with bad hygiene.

But, as the saying goes, even a blind squirrel gets a nut every now and then, and that's how it went with the Gators. Now they're on the move again, and no one along the Mississippi River is safe.

"Big Al" Gaithers

Allan Gaithers used to be an enforcer for a crime boss in New Orleans. Gaithers had a reputation as the meanest of a whole bunch of mean. He collected protection money, roughed up targets, and even killed on command. He was up north in Little Rock, Arkansas, paying a visit on a delinquent bookie, when the bombs began to fall.

The bookie's underground office protected Gaithers from the worst of the blast, but not from the aftereffects of the ensuing radiation, which warped him into a walking bogeyman. Few people as badly mutated as Gaithers even survived the experience. He not only lived, he gained power from his mutations.

After crawling out of the ruins, Big Al, as he now calls himself, decided it was time to be the boss himself. He spent a few years around the Little Rock area raising a gang, the Gators, and then looting and pillaging.

When the pickings got slim there, the Gators got lucky. They stumbled upon and soon after commandeered a derelict steamboat, the *Delta Queen*, and started downriver—with a little help from some shanghaied locals—for greener pastures.

Profile

Corporeal: D:2d8, N:2d10, S:3d12+4, Q:3d10, V:4d12
Shootin': rifle, pistol, automatics 4d8
Mental: C:3d6, K:2d6, M:2d10, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d8
Guts 4d8, leadership 2d10, scrutinize 3d6, overawe 5d10, streetwise 4d6

Size: 7

Wind: 24

Edges: Brawny, thick-skinned, tough as nails 4

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, mean as a rattler, outlaw 3, ugly as sin

Special Abilities:

Big Nose: Al's nose is like a lizard's. He gains +4 to any *Cognition* rolls that involve smelling things.

Croc Bite: STR+1d4. Big Al files his teeth to pointed fangs. He's fond of taking a bite out of his enemies.

Leathery Skin: Big Al's leathery hide provides him with light armor -2 to all locations.

Gear: Kevlar vest, SA Assault rifle, 50 rounds, hand axe.

Black Gold—Um, We Mean Black Powder

In the Ozark Mountains, a while back, the Gators came across an old tourist attraction: Piney Creek Village. Piney Creek was built as a living history lesson. There, folks could see how the pioneers lived a few centuries ago. The village had remained untouched by the war, and the people there were happy to keep it that way.

The Gators swarmed into the town and took over. There wasn't much to steal, except a small arsenal of working flintlock weapons and a blacksmith who could work them. The Gators slaughtered the other inhabitants and made off with the weapons and the smith.



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The Delta Queen

Armed with the primitive firearms, Big Al knew he couldn't take on the better-armed communities and hope to live. But once again, Fate smiled on the bandit.

While wandering around the wastes, the Gators found a beached and battered tour boat on the Arkansas River, a few miles below Pine Bluff, Arkansas. The boat, the *Delta Queen*, was built to resemble an old steamboat—paddlewheel and all.

Although its engines were ruined and useless, the Gators began using it like an old keelboat and letting the river carry them. They floated downstream, raiding river towns until they reached the Mississippi.

A short, nearly disastrous, run-in with Elvira's better-armed River Rats near the mouth of the Arkansas convinced Big Al that the direction for them to head was south—way south. A short stop in Natchez netted the gang an old cannon, which they forced their captive smith to refurbish and mount on the roof of the boat.

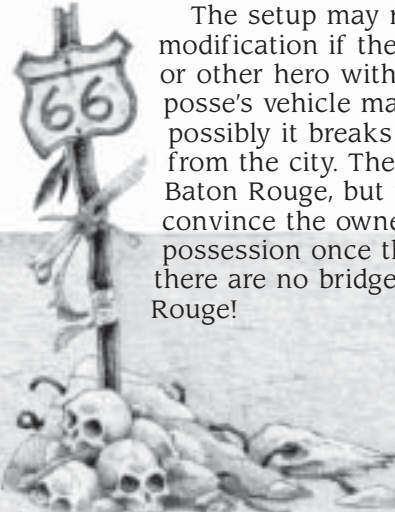
Just about the time the posse staggers out of the swamp, the Gators sight the ruins of Baton Rouge.

Things Best Left Buried

As if a band of waster outlaws with a cannon wasn't trouble enough for the posse, just three days ago, two recyclers—what the townsfolk have named their scavengers—entered the Baton Rouge Municipal Hospital.

Rooting around in the sunken morgue, they unknowingly roused Dr. Delacroix. Both men fell victim to the now grotesquely altered physician. Delacroix has resumed his “studies” and is seeking a new source of subjects for his gruesome experiments.

The Setup



The setup may require a little modification if the posse has a road warrior or other hero with a vehicle. In this case, the posse's vehicle may get mired in a marsh, or possibly it breaks down a few days away from the city. The posse can also ride into Baton Rouge, but it might prove tough to convince the owner to part with the prize possession once the adventure starts—and there are no bridges into Nouveau Baton Rouge!

The adventure begins as the posse emerges from the jungle-like undergrowth of the southern Louisiana swamps.

You've been stumbling east through the Louisiana swamps for days. At first it seemed like a good idea to follow the less-traveled dirt roads and avoid the dangers of road gangs on the highways. Unfortunately, road maps for the area are about 10 years out of date, and you'd swear the ones you have were written by blind men following the instructions of escapees from an insane asylum!

You finally realize you're quite lost.

Now that you've been chased by poisonous snakes, threatened by gators that looked big enough to eat a semi, and bitten by so many mosquitoes you're just one big itch, an honest fight with a couple hundred murderous cutthroats is starting to sound like a fair trade.

Then you stumble out of the fetid marsh onto honest-to-God asphalt.

The ruins around you look like the outskirts of a city that somehow escaped the worst of the bombings. Sure, there's a lot of destruction, but no sign of the black cyclone of a ghost-rock detonation.

Then a low, drumming boom reaches your ears from somewhere to the east.

A Friend in Need

Once the heroes have gathered their wits and begun to look around, read the following:

Poking through the ruins for a while, you find very little of worth. Not even so much as a refrigerator—and who takes refrigerators? It was pure optimism to think the luck of the past weeks was going to change today anyway.

Down near the river's edge, you do find one thing—a faded sign that welcomes you to Port Allen, Louisiana. From off in the distance, the low, rhythmic booming still echoes through the ruins.

On an Onerous (7) Knowledge roll, one of the old timers—not a savage—in the group remembers Port Allen was a sister city to Baton Rouge. Baton Rouge was a ghost town long before the Last War—flooded by the Mississippi—so nobody wasted the big bombs on it.

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The geography lesson's cut short by the sound of a burst of gunfire—automatic gunfire—and close by! It's not aimed at you, but anyone who's burning up that many bullets that fast is either mighty wealthy or in a whole heap of trouble.

Rats, It Had to Be Rats

Whether or not the posse goes to investigate, within moments a young man runs out from an alley between a couple of low buildings. He's carrying a submachine-gun and trying to reload it on the run. He's too well-dressed to be taken as the run-of-the-mill scav, but what's behind him quickly pulls the heroes' attention from his wardrobe.

A pack of some of the most God-awful looking rats the posse has ever seen pours out of the alleyway. These creatures are mutant nutrias, a rodent imported from South America back in the early 20th century. Normal nutrias look like the result of an unholy crossbreeding experiment with a water rat and a beaver. They weigh in at about 15 pounds, measure nearly three feet in length, have a ratlike tail, webbed feet, and really, really big teeth.

Of course, the mutant version is much worse. They've gained a few pounds, lost most of their fur—although a few tufts still hang on here and there. They're covered in sores and scabs and seem to have developed a taste for human flesh. Right now, the flesh they've got a hankering for is running about five steps in front of them with an empty gun!

The posse quickly realizes there are so many rats that the poor sap they're chasing probably wouldn't feed half of them if they catch him. The nutria seem to know this too, because most of them break off and charge the posse.

There are three nutria for every posse member, plus three more for Luke Kirby—the fellow they're chasing.

Luke Kirby

Luke is a young, blond-haired man about 20 years old. A few decades ago, he'd have been president of a college debating team. Now he's lucky he's not a savage.

Rupert Tinsdale has seen to Luke's education, and the young man idolizes the engineer. Luke is Tinsdale's intended successor, and he sees him as the son he never had. The feeling is mutual, and Luke is constantly pulling stunts trying to win Tinsdale's respect.

A year or so ago, Luke found a submachine-gun on a scavenge mission. Reynard and Tinsdale let him keep it for protection because he was so often out on his own.

Profile

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

Shootin': SMG 3d8

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

Guts 2d8, search 3d6, science: engineering 2d8, scroungin' 2d10, tinkerin' 1d10

Edges: Brave, mechanically inclined

Hindrances: Loyal, curious

Gear: NA Commando SMG, 50 rounds 10mm ammo, flashlight, crowbar, and pliers.

The Verminators!

The nutria are predatory and extremely hungry. Gunshots don't scare them, but once two-thirds of their number are down or wounded, they run back into the ruins. Of course, they drag off the remains of any nutria unlucky enough to get killed by the posse. If they're hungry enough, they've got no compunctions against cannibalism.



Hell or High Water

Profile

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:3d8, S:2d6, Q:3d8, V:2d8
Dodge 3d8, fightin' brawlin' 3d8, sneak 4d8
Mental: C:1d4, K:2d6, M:2d4, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d4
Search 3d4, trackin' 6d4
Terror: 3
Special Abilities:
Claw: STR
Chisel Bite: STR+1d6. The razor-sharp incisors treat armor as if it were one level lower. Light armor only provides half its normal protection. Given time, these monsters can chew through reinforced concrete!
Pace: 8 (on land or water)

Howdy, Stranger!

Luke is very grateful to the heroes for saving his life. He tells them that the rats surprised him a few minutes ago, and he was sure he was done for until the heroes stepped in. (Whether or not they did voluntarily, Luke doesn't know)!

He tells them he's an apprentice engineer from Nouveau Baton Rouge—but most folks call it "Red Stick" because it's easier to pronounce. His boss, Mr. Tinsdale, and the sheriff still refer to it as Nouveau Baton Rouge, but that's no surprise, since they're the one's who came up with the name.

He briefly describes the city—the system of boardwalks and suspension bridges, the rooftop gardens, and rubble walls which protect it from attackers—all works of engineering genius by his boss Mr. Tinsdale.

Luke claims he was on a routine recycling run for Mr. Tinsdale. He says he was looking for copper piping and electrical wiring for some of Mr. Tinsdale's recovery work. Actually, Luke had snuck off to do a little solo scavenging, but he's a little embarrassed about almost becoming rat droppings.

Luke is a little naive, particularly since the posse just saved his life. He immediately offers to take them to Red Stick. There, he's sure Mr. Tinsdale or Sheriff Reynard will see to a reward of some sort. If the heroes are short on food or are having vehicle trouble, he's sure someone at the town can help them.

If asked, Luke knows no more about the constant booming than the posse does. It's the first time he's heard it as well.

Unfortunately for Luke and the heroes, they're about to learn what the source of the sound is.

Shakedown Cruise

Moving steadily downriver is the recently refurbished *Delta Queen*. The boat's engines are long gone, but the Gators have had no problem securing enough "volunteers" from riverside communities to row the vessel, just like an old galley. That's the drumbeat the posse has been hearing since arriving.

The *Delta Queen* has kept close to the western bank of the river. Even if the heroes had looked out toward the river, ruins and trees along the shore would have prevented them from catching sight of the boat before now. Big Al was pretty quick to learn the dangers of making a target of yourself in the middle of the river. If scavs on the shore aren't taking potshots at you, then some Hellspawn from the river bottom is grabbing at the boat.

The Gators heard the recent exchange of gunfire and have come looking for the source. Almost all of the river gang is armed with flintlocks, and the thought of getting their hands on a couple of real firearms, particularly machine guns, has got their mouths watering.

Sure, some of them are probably going to get a bad case of lead poisoning before they capture the guns, but scavs are a dime a dozen.

The Delta Queen

The boat itself is in pretty bad repair. The pilot house has been knocked off and replaced with a battered armchair Big Al uses as his "throne", from which he watches the river ahead. The trademark twin stacks of the steamboat are rusted, and one is sheared off about halfway down. An old, black-powder cannon is mounted on a bolted-down merry-go-round on top of the boat, just behind the remains of the stacks. (Pretty inventive, huh?)

Below the pilot house, the passenger deck's promenade is lined with sandbags. All the windows have been broken out, and skins or cloths have been hung over them. A number of the Gators are gathered on this deck, trying to get a look at the posse.

Finally, on the main or bottom deck, a number of overlong oars emerge from the boat. They are moving slowly in unison with the drumbeat from above. The shattered remains of the stern paddlewheel drag behind the boat, actually making it harder for the rowers to propel the *Delta Queen*.

For full details on the *Delta Queen's* layout, see Chapter Four.

Hell or High Water

Outriders

There are four gasoline-powered flatboats moored to the back of the *Delta Queen*. The Gators use these for raiding and landing parties. They're running pretty low on fuel, so most of the time the boats drag behind the *Queen*, or they use oars.

Now, however, Big Al is willing to burn a little fuel to get his scaly hands on the guns he just heard a minute ago. About the time the posse sights the *Queen*, he sends a couple of the boats and some Gators to round up the firearms, as well as any new rowers they can lay their hands on. There are two Gators, plus five more for every posse member.

It takes the boats about six rounds to reach the shore. The Gators fire off a couple of rounds at the heroes just so they know the scavs mean business, but the movement of the boat and the range give the musketeers at least -6 to hit. They hug the bottom of the boat when not shooting, so any shots the heroes take at them are at least -4, plus the effects of cover.

During this time, the cannon on top of the *Delta Queen* gets off two shots. Roll some dice, but don't worry about the results. Big Al has directed his gunners to miss the posse on purpose. He has no desire to see their high-tech weaponry ruined by a stray cannon shell. (Of course, the heroes don't have any way of knowing any of this.)

Once the Gators reach shore, they spread out and try to overwhelm the posse. The Gators hug cover while advancing on the posse, trying to keep from getting hit by those fancy guns they're hoping to steal. They take prisoners if it's easy, but not one of the lot risks his hide to do so.

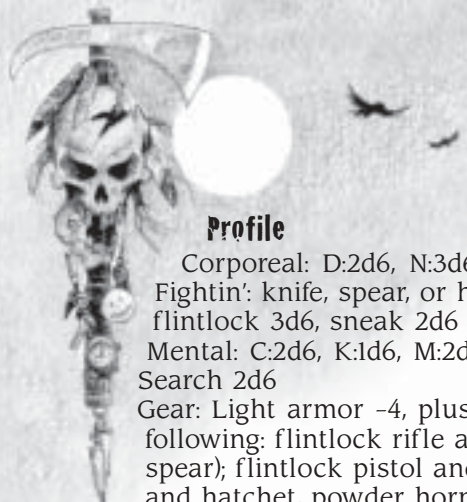
The cannon continues to shell the posse every five rounds, but unless the battle goes badly, the gunners continue to aim away from the group. Should it become evident the posse is winning, Big Al orders the gunners to shoot to kill.

Gators

These gang members are all equipped with flintlock firearms (see page 10) and a melee weapon of some sort.

Each group of four Gators includes two cutthroats with rifles, one with a pistol, and one carrying a blunderbuss. They're wearing hardened animal hides—many taken from their namesake, the alligator. They're also prime examples of how not to practice personal hygiene in the post-Apocalyptic world.





Hell or High Water

Profile

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:3d6, S:2d8, Q:2d6, V:2d8
Fightin': knife, spear, or hatchet 3d6, shootin':
flintlock 3d6, sneak 2d6
Mental: C:2d6, K:1d6, M:2d6, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d4
Search 2d6
Gear: Light armor -4, plus one set of the
following: flintlock rifle and bayonet (treat as
spear); flintlock pistol and knife; blunderbuss
and hatchet, powder horn, and enough
ammunition for 10 shots.

Flintlocks

Real cartridges are getting harder and harder to find. Now that civilization has taken a dirt nap, a fellow can't just run down to the corner store and pick up a box of .50 rounds. It's likely that ammunition for his prize slugthrower is dearer than food.

Less fortunate—and more creative—folks, have come up with another solution by turning back the technological clock about 500 years or so. They've started using old, muzzle-loading, flintlock firearms and black powder. (For more information, check out *Wasted West*.)

Compared to modern guns, a flintlock weapon is definitely outclassed. It's slow, nowhere near as accurate, and most importantly just doesn't look as cool. On the other hand, black powder is better than no powder! A flintlock weapon provides a solid punch at a safe distance. If the shooter's skilled, that's usually enough to bring down a game animal or any sizable threat wandering the wastes.

Since they lack convenient cartridges and have to be reloaded from the muzzle, flintlocks take a long time to reload. It takes seven actions to reload one of these archaic weapons. Every success on a for *speed-load: black powder* roll lowers the number of actions by one.

Because the weapons are so slow to reload, some folks have modified their flintlocks to include a hand-to-hand weapon as well.

Bayonets are common attachments to rifles (making it count as a spear in a fight), and knife or ax blades are sometimes seen on

pistols. The simple mechanism of a flintlock is sturdy enough to withstand the shock of normal combat when used in this fashion.

Blunderbusses

A blunderbuss is the primitive equivalent of a shotgun. Although it doesn't pack quite the punch as a modern scattergun, it can be loaded with almost anything from nails to coins or pebbles.

A hero gets a +2 bonus to all *shootin': flintlocks* rolls made when firing a blunderbuss out to 30 yards. It doesn't require a separate skill from other flintlocks to use correctly.

Like a shotgun, the blunderbuss becomes less effective the further away the target is. Use the Shotgun Table in the *Hell On Earth* rulebook to determine how many dice to roll. Just remember to use d4s instead of d6s when rolling for damage.

Making Black Powder

These weapons are easier to keep supplied with ammunition because they only need gunpowder and bullets. Black powder can be easily manufactured from potassium nitrate (saltpeter), charcoal, and sulfur. With the proper components, a Fair (5) *science: chemistry* roll produces 10 shots worth of powder.

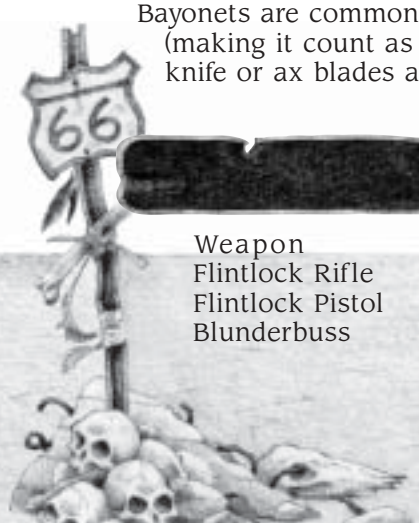
Bullets can be cast for these weapons easily as well (and the blunderbuss is the easiest of all to find ammo for. Because flintlock rounds are nothing more than lead balls, the operation can be performed by anyone with a supply of lead, a way to melt it, and a simple kit including metal molds and special tools.

The Cannon

The cannon is a bulky, primitive affair. Big Al's gang dragged it from the front of some small-town courthouse back upriver and mounted it on a modified merry-go-round on the hurricane deck of the *Delta Queen*. After tinkering with it for a few days (and a few accidents which took the lives of three crewmen), one of the Gators actually got the antiquated thing working.

Black-Powder Weapons

Weapon	Ammo	Shots	Speed	ROF	Range	Damage	Price
Flintlock Rifle	.50 Musket	1	2	1	20	4d8	\$100
Flintlock Pistol	.40 Musket	1	2	1	5	2d6	\$50
Blunderbuss	Junk	1	2	1	5	4-8d4	\$75



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A crew of four is required to fire the cannon. It takes five rounds (not actions) for the Gator cannon team to reload and prep the ancient artillery piece for firing. Anyone manning the gun must have the *artillery: black powder* Aptitude to work as a part of the (relatively) well-oiled cannon team.

The crew for the cannon has been firing the big gun quite a bit lately, so they're fairly practiced with it now. They each have an *artillery* Aptitude of 2d6. However, firing a piece of artillery with any kind of accuracy is a bit tougher than plugging away at some scav with a hand gun.

The base TN for artillery shots is Incredible (11). As high as that seems, remember, artillery is usually supposed to fire at fairly large targets—targets that have, say, a +4 to +6 size modifier—not some poor sucker hunkered down praying.

Well, that's how they're supposed to be used anyway. The Gators haven't figured that out yet, so they're apt to try to target individuals with the gun. Since they don't have anything but solid cannonballs to shoot, this makes near misses scary, but far from deadly!

Unfortunately for the gang, the cannon is too old to be getting the kind of use they're putting it through. Should the crew ever go bust on a roll, the cannon explodes, doing 4d20 with a burst radius of 5 yards. This either kills or incapacitates the entire cannon crew, and it throws Big Al's smoking form from his lazy boy to the deck below. Big Al is knocked unconscious if this happens, causing an outcry among the bandits and any Gators on shore retreat back to the ship.

Big Al's skull is far too thick, though, and he isn't badly hurt. The fall from the Hurricane deck just makes him mad (when he regains consciousness), and now he's out for blood. The Gators continue downstream to find some poor community to take their aggressions out on.

Run Away!

After a few rounds of combat, the posse should be feeling a little overwhelmed. Even if they're not, Luke is, and he suggests a "tactical withdrawal." Luke tells the posse he has a boat hidden nearby, and if they can get away from

the scavs attacking them, they can sneak out across the river to Nouveau Baton Rouge after nightfall. Besides, he knows he'd better warn the sheriff about the gang of murderers coming downriver on the steamboat.

The Gators don't follow the heroes very far when they're out of sight of the river. The cutthroats may want the guns badly, but they're just not desperate enough to go up against a well-armed posse of heroes without the cannon to back them up.

The Getaway

After nightfall, Luke leads the posse through the ruins to the former edge of the Mississippi (where the river used to flow, that is). A short and messy hike across a mudflat ends at a pile of driftwood at the edge of the river. There, hidden by brush, Luke has a pontoon raft capable of holding the entire posse—but just barely. The water is brackish, and a slight current pulls the raft away from shore.

After about 10 minutes of poling his boat along, Luke moves to the back of the craft. There, he strips back a piece of canvas and reveals a small, electric motor pinned to the back. He explains that the water is too deep for his pole in these parts, and he starts the tiny motor, which buzzes along quietly. As the raft moves out into ever deeper water, Luke quietly tells the posse more about the founding of Nouveau Baton Rouge.

Use the information from the background section for this. Feel free to embellish the roles of both Evelyn Reynard and Mr. Tinsdale. After all, these are Luke's heroes.

Bounty

This is the section where you find out all the goodies the players get. The posse can earn chips as well as valuable goods, services, and allies. Oh, and enemies too.

Posse aids Luke voluntarily: 1 red chip for each player who does

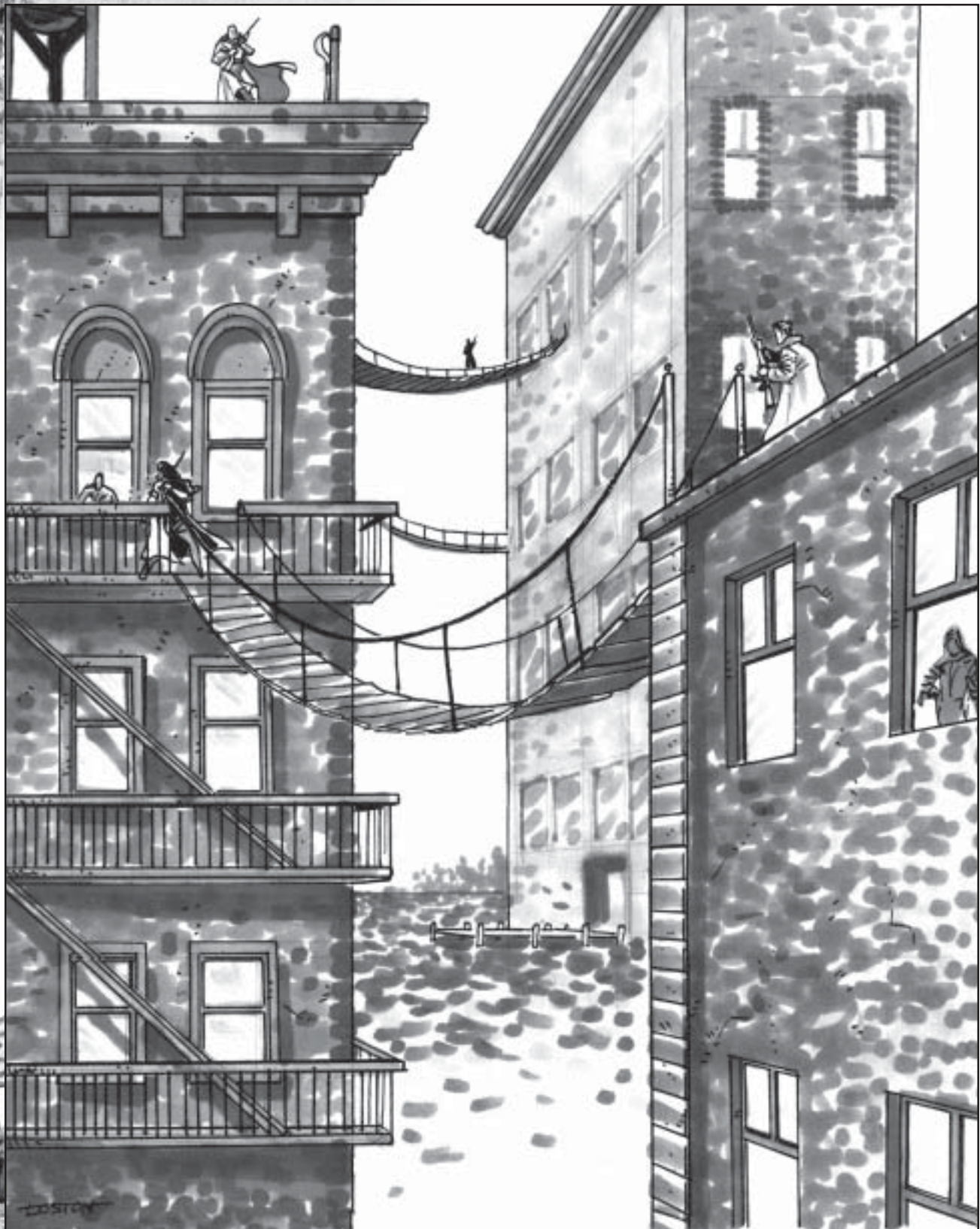
Ally: Luke Kirby of Nouveau Baton Rouge
Posse escapes gators: 1 white chip each

Black-Powder Cannon

Weapon	Type	Speed	Crew	Range	Round	Damage	Price
6-pounder	Muzzleloader	4	4	200	Solid	4d20	—

Marshal: 13

Strangers in Town





Chapter Two: Strangers in Town



It takes about an hour for the painfully inadequate motor to propel the boat to the center of the former city. There the posse catches its first look at Nouveau Baton Rouge.

Ahead of the posse, rising from the surface of the river, are the ruins of former high-rise buildings. To the south, the wreckage of a large bridge reaches half way into the Mississippi, only to collapse in rubble at midstream. The city skyline has the look of the stripped ribcage of some colossal being that lies half submerged in the murky river.

Most survivors probably haven't seen too many buildings reach above a few stories. What the ghost-rock bombs didn't shatter, the conventional ones had long since blasted down.

Luke guides the tiny craft into the channels—once streets—between the concrete towers.

The murky river hides the pavement below, so the heroes can't get a clear idea of the water's depth. As many as four stories or more could be under the water here. Occasionally, a ripple in the water reveals the top of a submerged building or a pile of rubble.

Most of the city's structures collapsed in the earthquake. The local building codes didn't take into account an earthquake that would register well above 9.0 on the Richter scale!

Many of the buildings still standing tower to heights of 10 stories or more above the river, but the upper floors are jagged ruins with girders exposed like bones on a decaying corpse.

Entering the River City

After about 15 minutes, the posse catches sight of light in some of the buildings ahead. The sounds of a clattering engine echo through the man-made canyons. Luke tells the posse the sound comes from Mr. Tinsdale's generator and they are near Red Stick.

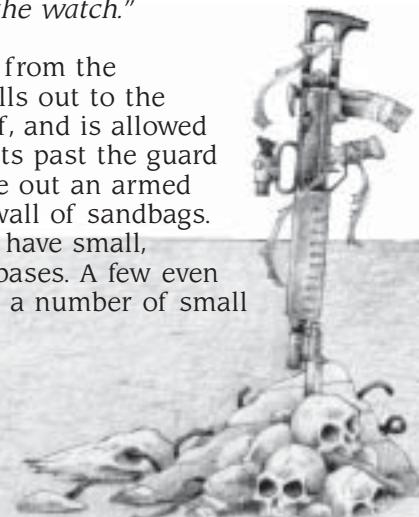
By the faint moonlight, the heroes see that a number of the buildings in this area are connected by swinging bridges made from steel cables with wooden planking. Some of the windows in the buildings are covered with makeshift curtains.

About the time the posse begins to catch sight of signs of life, Luke turns off the tiny electric motor and lets the boat drift. If a hero asks him about this, he answers:

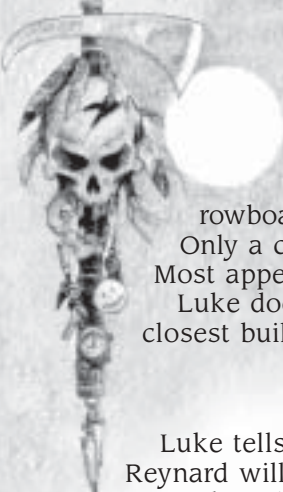
"We're coming up on the guard post. I don't want to spook the watch."

A sharp "Halt!" comes from the darkness ahead. Luke calls out to the guard, identifying himself, and is allowed through. As the boat drifts past the guard post, the posse can make out an armed man standing behind a wall of sandbags.

Many of the buildings have small, lantern-lit piers at their bases. A few even have multiple docks, and a number of small



Strangers in Town



rowboats and rafts are moored at them. Only a couple of the craft have a motor. Most appear to be rowed or poled.

Luke docks the boat at the base of the closest building, the sheriff's office.

The Law Dogs

Luke tells the posse he's sure Sheriff Reynard will want to know about the river gang. Also, since they get visitors in Red Stick so seldom, she is sure to want to meet them and hear other news as well.

Luke leads the group across the dock, into the building, and up to the front office on the second floor. There they find Sheriff Reynard's second-in-command, Deputy Russel Comfort. Although the room has obviously been cleaned and refurbished, the wear and tear of an earthquake, a flood, and the Last War show in the cracked plaster and stained carpet. Furniture was obviously not a concern in the room's design, so the heroes have to either sit down on the floor or stand while they wait.

Luke introduces the posse and tells the Deputy what happened that afternoon. At first, he's a little reserved about the heroes, but after

Luke gets to the part about the river gang, Comfort seems to forget his concern about the motley crew the boy dragged into town.

Realizing immediately the danger a band of armed scavs poses Red Stick, the deputy asks the posse to sit tight while he gets the Sheriff. Within a few moments, he returns and asks Luke to step in and repeat his story to Reynard.

Sheriff Evelyn Reynard

Evelyn Reynard is approaching 60 years of age, and the strain of the past years has worn her down. Her silver hair is cut short, and her face has more lines on it than a street map of old New York.

Although she's wearing the calm composure of a veteran law official, she looks more like a schoolmarm. Even the SA Officer's Sidearm on her hip doesn't totally dispel the image of her teaching geography to a group of sixth graders.

Still, Sheriff Reynard is the driving force behind the community of Nouveau Baton Rouge. Her resolve and dedication built the town and continue to hold it together.

Profile

Corporeal: D:2d8, N:2d6, S:3d4, Q:2d8, V:2d6

Shootin': pistol, rifle, shotgun 4

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

Guts 5d10, leadership 4d10, overawe 3d10,

scrutinize 2d8, search 4d8, survival: desert, swamp 3d8

Edges: Brave, Law Dog 1 (town sheriff)

Hindrances: Obligation 5 (the town), Geezer

Gear: SA officer's sidearm, and 50 rounds of .50 ammo.

There's an Old Sheriff in Town...

About five minutes later, Luke comes out and the deputy asks the heroes to step into the sheriff's office. The place has only a bit more furniture than the front room. Outside of Reynard's desk, two chairs, and a locked gun rack holding two pump shotguns, there is little else in the way of furnishings.

When the posse meets the Sheriff, they may be in for a bit of a surprise. An older woman with a kindly face might seem somewhat out of place as the guardian for a town of survivors—particularly one as unique as Nouveau Baton Rouge.

However, once she starts talking, it's obvious why she's in charge. Her tone is all business, and her eyes let the posse know she's not one to



Strangers in Town

take any guff. Sheriff Reynard introduces herself and fills the posse in on her part in founding the community (if they've not already gotten the story from Luke).

Once the pleasantries are out of the way, Reynard gets right down to business. She's quite interested in the posse's whereabouts for the past few days. She questions them thoroughly for a few minutes, and then says the following:

"Sorry to put you folks through the third degree, but these days it pays to be careful."

"I've talked to Luke, and from what he says, you're good people. Now, Luke is a little too friendly sometimes, but I'm willing to give you the benefit of the doubt. For saving his life, you've earned yourselves a couple days' keep here—and don't think that ain't a reward. Food don't come cheap anymore, even out here."

"You folks want a little more, I'll give you the chance to earn it. Now, Luke tells me we've got a whole mess of river scum drifting down to us. From the sounds of it, we're going to have a bit of a fracas here pretty soon."

"I've made sure every adult that lives here is armed. Of course, when it comes to weapons, we've got to make do with what we can find. I don't think more than half of them have anything more advanced than a board with a nail in it. All told, we've only got 10 guns in the whole town."

"From what the young man says, you folks are pretty handy in a fight, and we sure could use you if it comes to that. Also, it looks like you're carrying nearly as much ordinance as we have here in town. Even if we had that kind of firepower, most of my folks wouldn't know how to use it anyway."

"Mr. Tinsdale's recyclers found an old Civil Defense pod a few weeks ago. Give us a hand holding off the scavs long enough for them to look elsewhere. In return, I'll give you some of our stock of milrats—enough to feed the lot of you for a week. And, they won't make you glow in the dark, either."

"Listen, we're a small community. We'll give you all that we can afford to give, but we really need your help—that's the bottom line."

If the posse haggles, have the most persuasive hero make a *persuasion* roll against a Fair (5) TN. Every success nets the heroes an offer of 20 rounds of either .45, 10mm, 7.62mm, or 12-gauge ammunition, in any combination they desire. (Try to match it to the posse's needs.)

The group likely has questions for the sheriff. Unfortunately, she knows nothing about the Gators beyond what the heroes have told her. If the posse is interested in what types of guns the town has, she tells them the two pistols the Law Dogs carry, four shotguns (two in the sheriff's office and two for Tinsdale's recyclers), three hunting rifles for the gate guards, and Luke's SMG.

Deputized!

Since it's getting late, the Sheriff (with a relieved look on her face) recommends the heroes bed down for the night. There will be plenty of time to see the town come morning. Besides, she tells them, checking her watch, Mr. Tinsdale will be turning the generator off in a few minutes anyhow.

Deputy Comfort leads the heroes up to the fourth floor of the building and tells them they can bed down there.

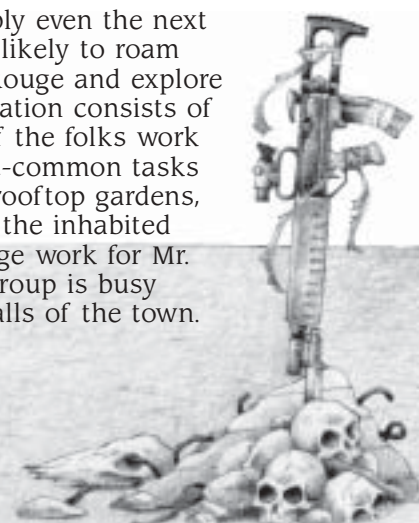
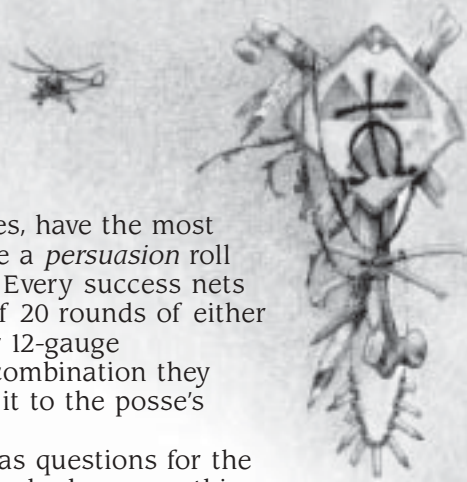
We'd Rather Not

It's always possible that the posse may turn down the sheriff's offer, no matter how much she offers. If that happens, that's okay. She's disappointed, but she tells the heroes they're still welcome to rest up for a few days in town. She has the deputy escort the posse up to the fourth floor and show them an area to bed down. Maybe the bad guys will attack anyway before the unheroic posse skips town.

Nouveau Baton Rouge

Fear Level 3

At some point—probably even the next morning—the heroes are likely to roam around Nouveau Baton Rouge and explore a little. The town's population consists of nearly 200 souls. Most of the folks work during the day. The most-common tasks are fishing, farming the rooftop gardens, renovating and repairing the inhabited buildings, or doing salvage work for Mr. Tinsdale. Today a large group is busy reinforcing the rubble walls of the town.





Strangers in Town

The water around the buildings is deep, almost 60 feet in some places. Piles of rubble can be seen around the area and the shadowy rooftops of smaller buildings are occasionally glimpsed beneath the water's surface.

Unlike the first flooded buildings the posse caught a glimpse of, those of Red Stick appear fairly sturdy. Mr. Tinsdale was able to secure a good deal of dynamite from an abandoned government construction site. Under his guidance, they cleared most of the unsafe structures from the town's confines. The unsafe upper floors of the buildings were also removed.

In spite of the earthquake's devastation, the townsfolk have worked hard to make Red Stick a livable place. With Mr. Tinsdale's direction and the citizens' honest labor, the interiors of many of the buildings have been restored to fairly high levels of livability. Some even have carpeted floors!

Most townsfolk are curious about the heroes. Some are suspicious and refuse to let them into certain areas—the Scrapyard and the Farm, in particular—until they've proved themselves.

The Walkways

The buildings are connected by swinging bridges made from planking and steel cable. In some places, the walkways stretch over 50 feet between buildings. Since they may be swaying as high as 40 feet above the water, this causes any hero with a fear of heights a lot of worry.

Moving normally on the walkways is fairly safe, if somewhat disturbing because of the bounce and swing to the bridge. Shooting a normal firearm or using a power of some sort doesn't cause problems, but hand-to-hand fighting is another matter altogether.

All *fightin'* rolls are at a -4 due to the added frustration of the bridge's movement. Any character going bust on a *fightin'* roll is going for a swim!

It's possible to get blown or knocked off the bridge as well. A hero receiving a wound on the bridge must make a Fair (5) *Nimbleness* roll. Don't forget the wound modifiers. If she fails, she's over the side.

Damage to the bridge can bring it down. The bridges are considered to have 1 level of Armor, and they each take 50 points of damage (unmodified) before snapping.

A hero dropping to the water takes 1d6+2 damage every 10 feet fallen to the river's surface (which is full of sharp rubble).

Rooftop Gardens

The posse notices the exposed top floors of most of the buildings are covered with soil and serve as small food gardens.

Over the years, the citizens have brought topsoil from the eastern riverbank and built a layer of dirt in which to grow simple vegetables. Mr. Tinsdale refers to them as the town's "hanging gardens." Tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, and even corn are grown on the tops of these buildings.

Combined with the crops raised on the Farm, the vegetables add nicely to the townsfolk's diet of fish and small game.

Wall of Rubble

Red Stick is almost completely surrounded by a wall of rubble. The townsfolk dropped outlying buildings using more of Mr. Tinsdale's dynamite. With careful placement, they were able to ring the town with concrete wreckage. The inner ring is 15-20 feet high in most places.

Only three openings allow entrance to the community by water: one near the Sheriff's office (page 17), one at Mr. Tinsdale's workshop (page 19), and one at the Scrapyard (page 19). At each of these areas, there is a guard post.

The guard post is manned around the clock by a watchman armed with a hunting rifle. He also has an alarm bell to ring in case of attack. A submerged chain, attached to the rubble opposite the guard post, can be raised to further slow an attacking force.

The Farm

The Farm is actually an old parking building. Unless the posse has accepted the sheriff's offer, they aren't allowed up to the top level.

Only the topmost level is completely above water. A set of rickety wooden stairs leads up from the dock. The entire top level has been covered in a thick layer of rich topsoil.

The town grows a variety of crops. Corn, beans, and even potatoes are being cultivated on top of the garage. A Siphon based irrigation system uses the river to water the plants in dry spells.

In the southwestern corner of the parking lot, a small, wooden shed has been constructed to serve as a chicken coop. So far, the town has managed to capture 15 of the birds. The chickens are used only for eggs. They're far too valuable to eat!

Strangers in Town

A large number of the folks in town work in the farm on a rotating basis, and the food stuffs from it are rationed as community property.

Sheriff's Office

This building serves as both office and home to Sheriff Reynard and Deputy Comfort. There are a total of four stories above water level to this building, and with the exception of Shady Sadie's (page 18), it's the smallest of any in town. The middle two floors are lit by electric bulbs.

Because it's nearly at water level, the first floor of this building, like many in town, is left empty and uninhabited. The second floor holds the sheriff's office.

The town's meager arsenal of firearms is kept in the rack in the sheriff's office when not in use. In total, there are three hunting rifles, two pump shotguns, and a SA officer's sidearm in the collection—not including personal firearms noted in individual character descriptions. There are also about 200 rounds of the appropriate ammo for each weapon stored there as well.

The town jail is also housed on the second floor. Calling it a jail is truly a delusion of grandeur. In reality, it's simply two janitorial closets with cots that can be locked.

Sleeping quarters for the Lawmen are on the third floor. Unlike atop most of the buildings, there is no roof garden on the sheriff's office.

Deputy Comfort

Deputy Russel "Rusty" Comfort is a young man, having only a few years on Luke. However, the deputy has lived some hard times and looks older than he is.

He's proud to have a position of such importance in the community. He takes his position and duties seriously. He's an able protector for the town, and the sheriff rightly believes all he lacks is experience and a little humility.

Profile

Corporeal: D:1d10, N:2d8, S:3d8, Q:4d8, V:2d10
Drivin': boat 2d8, fightin': brawlin' 3d8, shootin':
pistol, shotgun 3d10, swimmin' 2d8
Mental: C:3d6, K:2d6, M:2d8, Sm:2d6, Sp:1d8
Guts 2d8, overawe 2d8, search 3d6, survival:
swamp 2d6
Edges: Brave, law dog: 1 (town deputy)
Hindrances: Loyal, heroic, oath
Gear: SA officer's sidearm, and 50 rounds of
10mm ammo.

Living Quarters

These three buildings house most of the people in the city. The former office buildings have between three and four livable stories to them. Thanks to Mr. Tinsdale, the living areas even have limited running water to communal bathrooms on each floor, and electric lighting when the generator is on.

In the family quarters, each family has an office or suite of offices to live in, and the living conditions are actually fairly pleasant. The overall atmosphere is more that of an odd apartment building than a flooded office complex.

The individual living quarters are a little less cozy, but that has more to do with the fact the residents don't devote as much time to niceties than to any bias in the town.

The Market

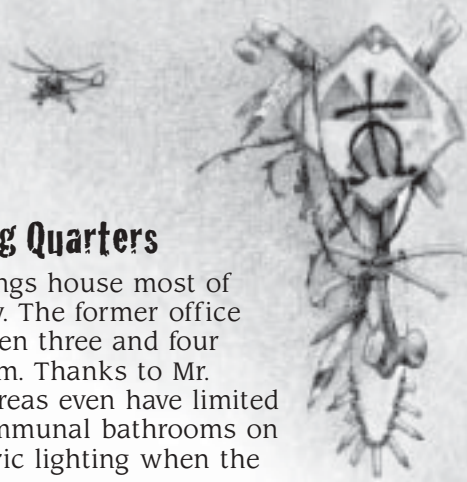
Folks along the river come here to trade with the citizens of Red Stick. The market is open every Saturday from sunup to sundown. Depending on the season, there may be as many as 20 out-of-town farmers or scavengers here on a given trade day. The volume is greatest during the fall harvest season.

Any goods scavenged by the recyclers are traded to the country folk for foodstuffs like wheat and grain or fresh meat. Also, Mr. Tinsdale usually makes an appearance to look over any technological items that may be brought in for trade.

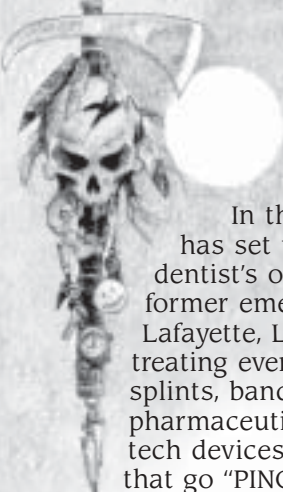
Most of the time, the items brought in for trade are common goods or food. However, there is always the chance that some lucky scavenger stumbled across a real find, like a bottle of prewar whiskey, a pair of sneakers, or even a water tester. The heroes are welcome to barter for any goods, but if it's an item of technical value, they may find themselves bidding against Mr. Tinsdale. For something he deems worthwhile, he may bid up to double its listed value in trade goods.

Town Hall

The largest building in the community, the town hall stands five stories above water level. Only three floors are currently in use. As usual, the first floor remains unoccupied in case of flooding, and the top floor is still empty.



Strangers in Town



In the first occupied floor, the town has set up a primitive hospital and dentist's office. It's run by Janice Rawls, a former emergency medical technician from Lafayette, LA. There are ample supplies for treating even serious injuries, such as air splints, bandages, and even a small supply of pharmaceuticals. Of course, there are no high-tech devices like x-ray machines or machines that go "PING."

The next floor has a large open area with bench seats that serves as the auditorium for town meetings. It also doubles as town square for dances and festivals on Christmas, Thanksgiving, and other holidays. Most of the time, the auditorium serves as a classroom for the town's younger inhabitants. Mr. Tinsdale, Sheriff Reynard, Janice Rawls, and others take turns teaching the children a variety of subjects.

On the third floor, there is an actual working movie theater—courtesy of Mr. Tinsdale and his recyclers. The projector is powered by the town's generator, and old films are shown every Saturday night, but with new films from Movie Town arriving on a regular basis. "Cole Ballad: Nemesis of Evil" and "Law Dogs: Badges and Bullets" get an unusual amount of play.

Janice Rawls

Janice is in her early 40s and was just out of the military when the Big Bang came. While in the service, she served as a medic and got a lot of hands-on experience with battlefield injuries. Next to Sheriff Reynard and Mr. Tinsdale, Janice is probably the most important member of the community.

Initially, she comes across as gruff and taciturn, but that's just a show. Janice sees every injury or illness in town as a personal challenge, and she hates to lose.

Profile

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d6, S:3d4, Q:3d6, V:3d6

Shootin': pistol 3d6

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

Guts 2d8, medicine: general 4d10, scrutinize 2d8, search 2d8

Edges: Nerves o' steel

Hindrances: Habit -1 (gruff manners), stubborn

Gear: Crash kit (+1 on *medicine* rolls to treat light and heavy wounds).

Shady Sadie's Saloon

A brightly painted sign down above the dock identifies this small building as "Shady Sadie's." After night fall, this little building becomes the most popular place in the whole community.

Sadie started the saloon after some recyclers brought back a few kegs of beer they found in a sunken bar. The beer was flat, but that didn't make much difference to the folks of Red Stick.

Since then, she's set up a couple of stills and makes her own brand of corn-mash whiskey and an awful concoction of fermented potatoes she claims is vodka. She also serves meals during the daytime hours.

At night, Shady Sadie's is one of the most brightly lit buildings in the town. An old gentleman by the name of Elroy Graves provides the patrons with zydeco music played on an antique accordion.

Sadie trades drinks for ghost-rock nuggets, salvage, or foodstuffs. She's fair, but she makes a judgment call on a case-by-case basis.

Sadie MacGregor

Sadie and her husband used to have a small homestead off in the backwoods of Arkansas. She lost her husband and her farm five years ago to a group of murdering bandits. Since then, she's rebuilt her life and is ready to fight like a wildcat to keep it.



Strangers in Town

Sadie believes there's reason enough for folks to be depressed since the Big Bang. She spends the majority of her time trying to keep up her customers' spirits. Her spitfire attitude is what persuaded Sheriff Reynard to allow her to open the bar in the first place.

Profile

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:3d6, S:3d6, Q:2d6, V:2d8
Shootin': shotgun 4d6
Mental: C:3d8, K:1d8, M:3d8, Sm:3d6, Sp:4d6
Guts 2d6, overawe 2d8, persuasion 2d8,
professional: brewer 3d8, scrutinize 4d8
Edges: Purty, "the voice" (soothing)
Hindrances: Stubborn
Gear: Double-barreled shotgun and 10 rounds.

Tinsdale's Scrapyard

This long, two-story building is where Tinsdale's recyclers bring their miscellaneous salvage goods. On the occasions when Mr. Tinsdale sends a crew out to find a specific piece, the recyclers bring it directly to his workshop, but the majority of the junk they find ends up here.

There are always a couple of folks working here, usually recyclers who aren't out scavenging the ruins. If the heroes have yet to earn the town's trust (your decision, Marshal), they aren't allowed into this building, or are permitted inside only with an escort.

Unlike most other buildings, the bottom floor of the Scrapyard is used. Large items that are likely to withstand water damage are kept here. Water tanks, empty gas cylinders, sheet metal, piping, and large pieces of wood are all stored on this level.

The second floor houses the smaller, more fragile pieces. Ruined television sets, refrigerator coils, electrical wiring, and so on line row after row of shelving in here.

At the eastern end of the building there's even a complete 40mm anti-aircraft gun. It was taken from the sunken hulk of the *CSS Kidd*, a mothballed Confederate destroyer on display in Baton Rouge at the time of the earthquake. However, like all the weaponry on the *Kidd*, the gun was rendered useless by plugging the barrel over a century ago, so it's more of a novelty than anything else.

Use your imagination if the posse really starts digging around in here. It's possible to find just about anything except firearms or other high-tech weapons in the mix—but it's not likely any of it is working.

Recyclers

Mr. Tinsdale refuses to call his salvage crews "scavengers." It's his opinion that such a title indicates they're just picking over the bones of a dead animal for a few tasty tidbits. He contends his recyclers are "reclaiming" items to be reused by the emerging civilization in Nouveau Baton Rouge.

A rose by any other name. Whatever.

The recyclers usually work in pairs. They are equipped with a pontoon raft powered by a trolling motor (like Luke's). They also have various tools for securing salvage, such as crowbars, screwdrivers, and saws. A couple of the rafts also have an air compressor and primitive air hoses to allow the recyclers to work underwater for a short time.

Usually, no more than a single group of recyclers go out at a time. This isn't due to a lack of rafts, but rather because the sheriff doesn't want them to go unarmed. The town only has two shotguns to spare after arming the gate guards and the local law.

Tinsdale's Workshop

This three-story building serves as Mr. Tinsdale's workshop and living quarters for both him and Luke. Except for the jail, it's the only building in town without a rooftop garden.

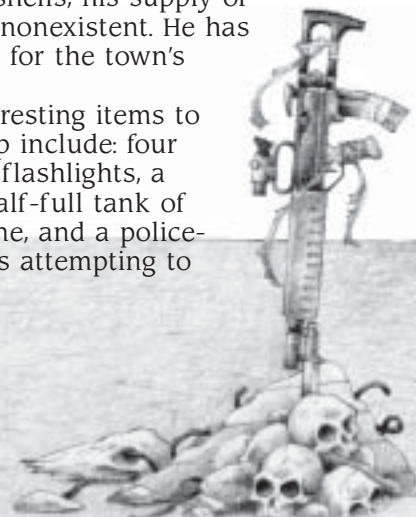
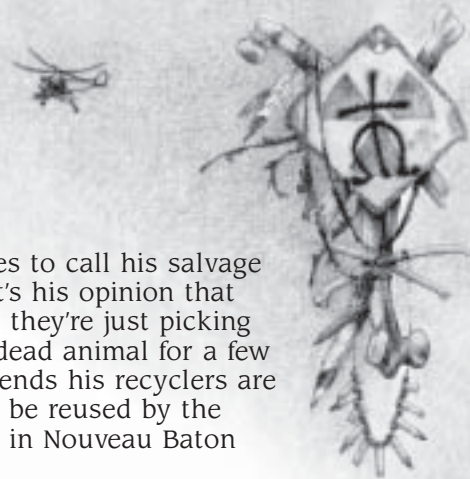
The first floor, as usual, is unoccupied. The second floor houses living quarters for Mr. Tinsdale and Luke. This floor is also the location of the town's generator. The generator is fueled by ethanol made in the distillery on the third floor.

The third floor is where most of the high-tech gadgets found around town are fabricated.

Except for teaching a class or attending town meetings, Tinsdale spends most his time here.

In addition to the distillery, Mr. Tinsdale also has a bullet press for reloading ammunition on this floor. Unfortunately, while he can easily mix up the powder for more shells, his supply of shell casings is virtually nonexistent. He has loaded everything he has for the town's arsenal already.

Some of the more interesting items to be found in the workshop include: four waterproof rechargeable flashlights, a propane welder with a half-full tank of fuel, an electric grindstone, and a police-band radio Mr. Tinsdale is attempting to repair.



Strangers in Town

Rupert Tinsdale

The genius behind most of the wonders of Nouveau Baton Rouge is Rupert Tinsdale. If Sheriff Reynard is the heart of the community, Rupert is certainly the brains.

At 54, Rupert Tinsdale is a little younger than Sheriff Reynard, but still no spring chicken. He's a small, bookish man who's losing what little gray hair he has remaining. Rupert is meticulous about hygiene and is always clean-shaven, although his work often leaves his face and hands covered in dirt or grease.

Tinsdale appears to be a somewhat addled inventor who doesn't quite get it. Nothing could be further from the truth. Tinsdale is a shrewd and careful man. He's found the absentminded professor routine tends to make folks underestimate him.

Before the war, Rupert was a civil engineer for the Confederate government. He worked on projects from bridges to buildings. In his spare time, he amused himself by tinkering with electrical equipment—a hobby that has paid off in spades now that civilization is crumbling! Although he was intrigued by mad science before the war, and by the skills of junkers after, he puts no faith in the "pseudo-sciences," preferring to trust in the tried and true.

Rupert knows the day will come when he will no longer be able to run and repair the machinery of the town. He hopes Luke will be ready to take over when that time arrives.

Mr. Tinsdale, I Presume?

By the time the posse locates Mr. Tinsdale in his workshop, Luke's already told him the whole story. He greets the heroes, turning off his headlamp and wiping his hands on his already dirty work shirt.

He's grateful to the posse for pulling Luke's fat out of the fire, but isn't completely won over yet. He takes a while getting to know the heroes and their intentions before fully trusting them.

Although the posse may initially take him for a junker, Tinsdale gladly explains he's actually just a talented engineer. He expounds on Nouveau Baton Rouge and the advances made through hard work and clear thinking. Tinsdale is a likeable fellow and always gives credit to the ability of his fellow citizens.

Once he's convinced the posse is trustworthy, he asks the heroes about their recent travels. He seems particularly interested in their whereabouts over the last three or so days.



Strangers in Town

Should the heroes question him on the reasons for his interrogation, Tinsdale replies:

"Three days ago, I sent a couple of recyclers—Henry Johnson and Bill Clark—into the ruins to attempt to locate one of the city's hospitals. I'd hoped you might have some information on them. Unfortunately, it appears you were on the wrong side of the river."

If the posse members ask him for more details, Tinsdale continues:

"I was hoping we'd be able to recover some more-advanced medical equipment, or maybe even unspoiled supplies."

Normally, a job like that seldom takes more than a day. I'd have worried when they didn't return that night, but Henry and Bill are two of the most experienced men I've got, so I figured they'd just run a little long and decided to hole up out there in a building for the night."

"As long as you stay in the buildings out in the Mississippi, you're usually pretty safe. Few scavs or dangerous wildlife leave the security of the shore."

"Come evening yesterday there was still no sign of them. That's when I guessed something was really wrong. I'd planned to send out an expedition to look for them today, but young Luke's impromptu expedition put a temporary halt to that."

If the posse questions him about Luke's "mission," Mr. Tinsdale explains that the young man occasionally slips off on his own to explore and scavenge. When he found Luke gone this morning, he postponed sending out anyone else until the young man returned.

Now that there is a gang of scavs in the area, Mr. Tinsdale knows Sheriff Reynard will want to keep everyone inside Nouveau Baton Rouge for safety. Once they've passed by, he plans to organize a search for the two men.

Should the posse offer to assist in this, Mr. Tinsdale is very receptive and obviously relieved.

Alarm!

Sometime in the late afternoon during their first day in Red Stick—preferably after they've had time to do some exploring—the heroes hear the sound of a bell being furiously rung. The bell is one of the alarms on the guard posts.

The town erupts into a beehive of activity. Workers clear from the rooftop gardens, and the children are moved into the town hall. If the posse doesn't catch on to the significance of the bell, one of the citizens explains it as she hurries by carrying her frightened child.

A couple of small river boats buzzed past the western guard station—the same one Luke brought the heroes through the night before.

Unknown to Luke or the heroes, a Gator boat caught sight of them last night and followed them into the city. Although the bandits were unable to keep track of them as they wound through the streets, they did manage to home in on the sound of the generator.

After a few hours, they located the community. As soon as he got word this morning, Big Al launched an attack.

Barbarians at the Gate

Only two of the four gasoline-powered launches are involved in the attack. However, the Gators have a number of motorless flatboats and rafts stowed on the *Delta Queen*. There are 10 of these man-powered boats involved in the attack.

Each boat, including the power boats, has four Gators on it. Use the stats in Chapter One for the Bandits.

The Gators' plan is pretty straight forward—rush 'em!

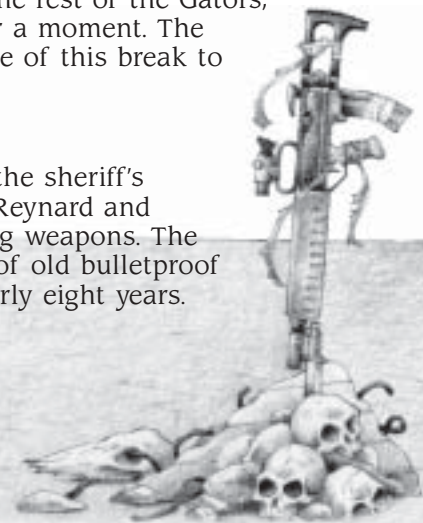
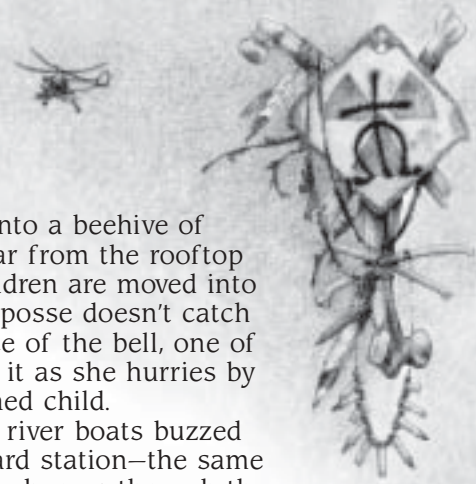
Right about the time the posse gets a look at the ragtag fleet approaching the rubble walls of Red Stick, one of the gas boats makes a rush for the gate. Luckily, the guard is ready for just such a tactic.

He heaves back on the lever lifting the chain, which rises out of the water just as the boat enters the gate. Boat meets chain, and the end result is a spectacular boating accident that throws the passengers a good 20 feet into the water and eliminates one boat.

The wreck surprises the rest of the Gators, and the attacks stalls for a moment. The posse can take advantage of this break to get set for the attack.

Battle Stations!

If the heroes head to the sheriff's office, they find Sheriff Reynard and Deputy Comfort gathering weapons. The two have donned a pair of old bulletproof vests they've had for nearly eight years.





Strangers in Town

The sheriff and deputy are also carrying the shotguns from the wall rack.

Acting quickly, the sheriff directs the posse to take up positions on the wall near the guard post. The deputy ferries them over in a flatboat moored to the dock. Then, he and the sheriff move on to the other side of the gate and hunker down amid the rubble.

If they decide to handle the situation themselves, the heroes can set up pretty much wherever they want.

By the way, while running out on the town is always an option, it's certainly not the stuff heroes are made of—and could prove quite difficult unless one of the posse can handle a boat!

The Going Gets Tough

Three boats of Gators land on the wall north of the gate, and two boats land to the south. The bandits rush to secure the gate and lower the chains back into the water.

If the posse is where the sheriff placed them, that means they're facing 12 of the river scavs. The beached gang members pause long enough to fire their weapons and then charge into melee with the heroes. Also, every round, each posse member is the target for a shot by a Gator on one of the boats.

Most likely these shots miss, since the scavs have a -2 for firing from the rocking boats and the rubble gives partial cover (from the lower guts down). However, the musket balls whizzing by should keep the heroes nervous.

If the Gators are unable to reach the chain, the rest of the raiders pull back, and the attack is over. Should they succeed in opening the passage, the other boats begin moving through the open gate and into Red Stick. Eventually, the citizens overcome the attackers by sheer numbers, but only at a high cost in casualties.

Scufflin' in the Water

Should the fighting move into the water, the combatants find it to be a little more difficult to duke it out. In water up to the waist, all *fightin'* rolls are at -2. *Shootin'* or *throwin'* attacks suffer no modifier.

Water up to the chest gives a -4 to *fightin'* rolls. Deeper than that, and the fighters are going to have a -6 penalty, and may thrust only.

Each round the hero is in deep water, she must make a Fair (5) *swimmin'* roll or suffer the affects of drowning (see the *Hell on Earth*

rulebook). Even if she makes the roll, the only *fightin'* attacks that can be made in water over a character's head are *brawlin'* and *wrasslin'*. Pistols can be fired at -2, and rifles and shotguns at -4. *Throwin'* attacks also get a -4 modifier.

That's a Lot of Gators

Now, we know it looks like we're asking you as the Marshal to handle 44 goons and a bunch of good guys to boot. That's quite a load of folks—not to mention a whole lot of dice to roll! Actually, all you really need to worry about are the attackers the posse is facing. Assume the rest of the battle runs pretty much the same as the posse's portion.

This is also a good time to make use of the Marshal's shortcuts from the *Hell on Earth* rulebook.

Aftermath

One way or the other, the Gator attack is eventually repulsed.

If the posse held the Gators at the wall, the casualties in Red Stick are light. Other than any wounds suffered by the heroes, only the gate guard is killed, while Deputy Comfort received a nasty (serious) wound in his left leg, and Sheriff Reynard caught a graze (light) on her forehead.

If the Gators succeeded in making it into Red Stick, the toll is much higher. In addition to the gate guard, 16 other citizens are killed fighting the raiders, and another 32 are wounded in some fashion. Deputy Comfort takes a serious wound to his leg as well as his right arm. Sheriff Reynard receives a heavy gut wound from a rifle ball and a serious head wound.

Regardless of the outcome, provided the heroes stayed to fight, the citizens of Red Stick are very grateful to the posse. Sheriff Reynard praises their actions in defense of the town, but tells them she's afraid the battle's not over yet.

Patching Up

After the attack, Janice Rawls' little hospital is kept busy for quite a few hours. Any hero with medical skills who volunteers to help her treat the wounded is welcomed.

Although she is well aware of a Doomsayer's ability to heal the injured, Janice is wary about letting one aid any of her own people. She's an old-fashioned medic and the idea of manipulating a person's body on a molecular level makes her a little uneasy.

Strangers in Town

If a Doomsayer is in the posse, she makes it clear he's more than welcome to treat his posse members, but she refuses to let him lay his touch on a citizen of Nouveau Baton Rouge. She has no such issues with Templars, however.

Council o' War

Once everyone's wounds are tended to, Sheriff Reynard calls the posse to a meeting in Mr. Tinsdale's workshop. She tells them she plans to discuss how the town can deal with the bandits. Included in the meeting are herself, Deputy Comfort, Mr. Tinsdale, and the posse.

If the posse hasn't taken the sheriff up on the offer to work for the town, she invites them anyway. The town needs all the help it can get, and she plans to petition them once more.

The sheriff says she expects the town could only hold off one or maybe two more attacks like the one this afternoon. Somehow, the bandits have to be stopped from continuing their attacks. She's convinced that the best way to do this is to take the fight to them.

The problem with that plan is from what the posse and Luke have told her, she believes there may still be as many as 50 or more bandits left on the main boat. Any direct assault on the boat would likely lead to failure.

After saying her piece, Reynard opens the idea up for discussion. Let the posse bat the idea around a bit, throwing in occasional comments from either the sheriff or Mr. Tinsdale. Deputy Comfort remains quiet through most of the meeting. He's more accustomed to taking orders than making war plans.

Tinsdale's Idea

After a few minutes of batting ideas back and forth, Mr. Tinsdale speaks up. He says:

"From the primitive weapons we've observed, it's my guess the raiders have a large stock of black powder somewhere on their boat. In fact, from what you've told me about the cannon on top, I'd even venture a supply is kept up there as well as elsewhere in the boat."

"I still have three sticks of dynamite and some plastique left. With a little effort, I'm sure I could rig them with a timing device and make a crude bomb. If someone could sneak the bomb onto the boat and place it near a supply of the powder. Well, let's just say our problems with the raiders would be solved."



After Comfort presents his idea, allow some open discussion. If no one in the posse points it out, the sheriff brings up the problem of getting the dynamite onto the boat. If they could lure the boat into the city, someone could drop it on the boat from above, but if they can't, the bomb is nearly useless. As long as the boat remains in open water, getting aboard is nearly impossible.

The discussion continues for some time. Finally, Tinsdale agrees to send a small group of recyclers to locate and spy on the Gator's boat. Any heroes may go with the scouts if they wish. Once the scouts report back, they can discuss plans in further detail.

Bounty

Posse decides to help sheriff Reynard:

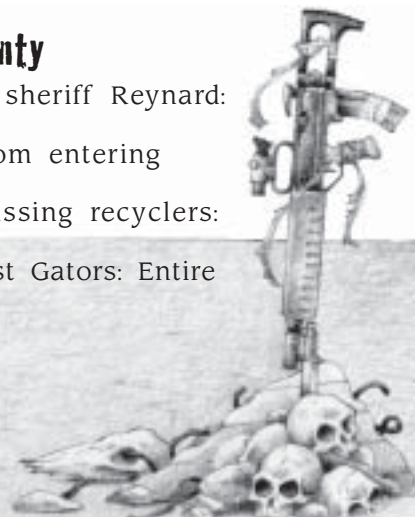
Red chip each

Posse keeps gators from entering town: Red chip each

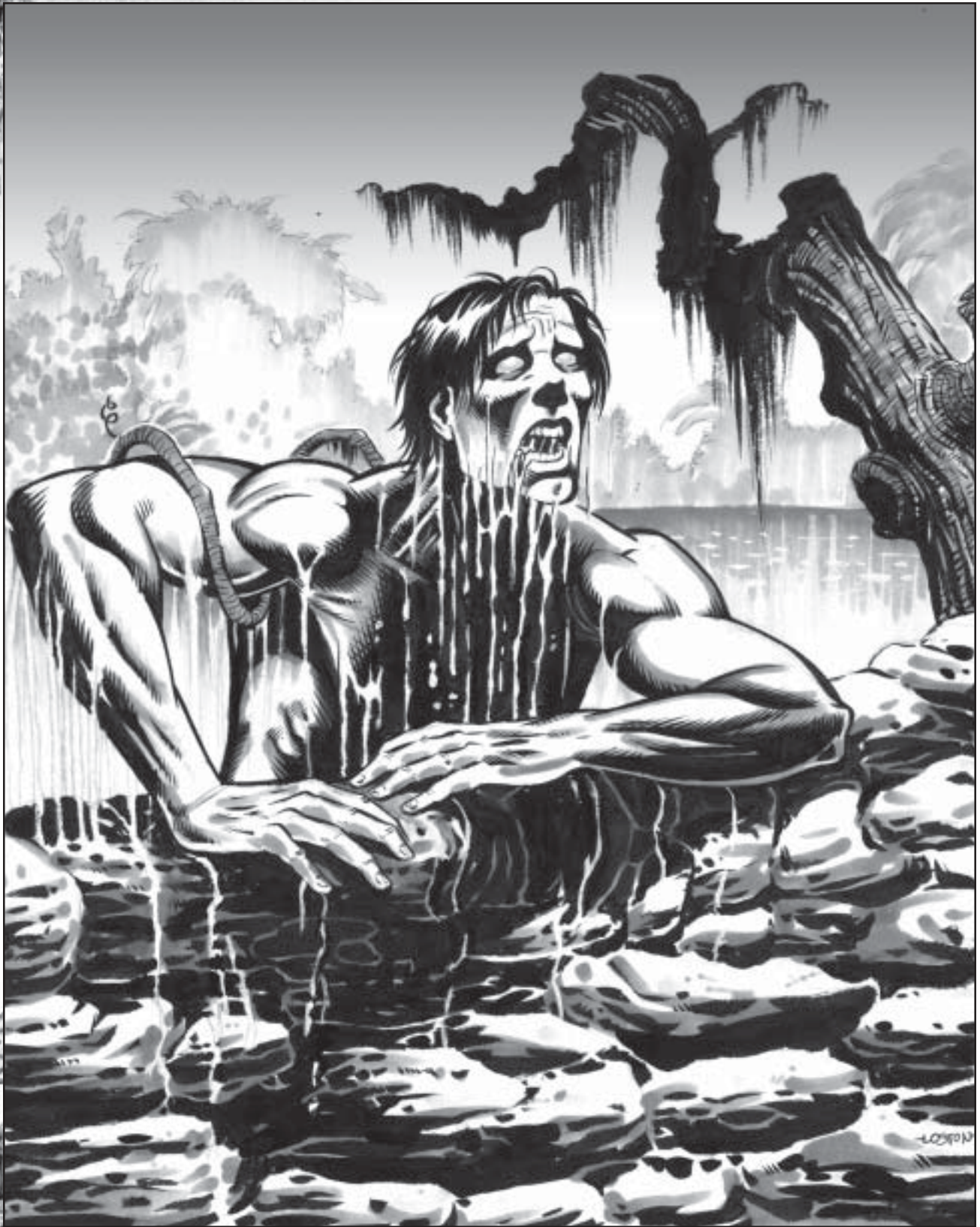
Heroes learn about missing recyclers:

White chip each

Posse aids town against Gators: Entire town becomes an ally



Unwelcome Homecoming





Chapter Three:

An Unwelcome Homecoming



By the time the posse is through with the meeting, a single shot rings out. Have the posse members each make an Onerous (7) *Cognition* roll. Those who succeed figure out the shots came from the direction of the scrapyard. The sheriff and deputy immediately get up and start moving toward the gate.

Moments later, the alarm bell sounds from the same direction, but only twice before going silent.

Behind the Scenes

Henry Johnson and Bill Clark have returned to Nouveau Baton Rouge. Unfortunately for just about everyone involved, they're now undead servants of Dr. Delacroix.

The two swam underwater until they reached the rubble wall. Henry Johnson clambered out and was moving into the scrapyard when the guard, Mike Stevens, saw him and took a shot.

The poor lighting caused Stevens to miss. It also let Bill Clark slip out of the water behind him unnoticed. Stevens turned around and got a good look at the naked and mutilated corpse standing there. Understandably, he lost his nerve and staggered back into the alarm bell, causing it to ring twice.

Clark grabbed Stevens by the throat and dragged him back into the water. Johnson is still loose in the scrapyard.

Movin' Out

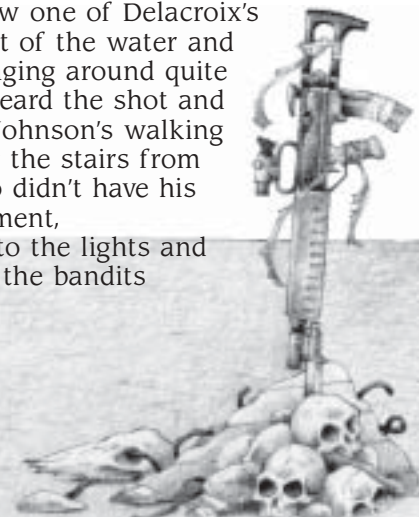
There are two ways for the heroes to reach the guard post.

The first is to travel across the swinging walkway between the workshop and the scrapyard. Then they have to climb onto the rubble wall outside the scrapyard and scramble across it to the gate. If they choose to take this route, the heroes reach the encounter At the Scrapyard first.

The second involves taking a boat from the workshop dock directly to the guard post. The sheriff and the deputy have a craft moored there, but their boat only has room for four passengers. Any waster going this way reaches At the Guard Post (page 27) first.

At the Scrapyard

Luke was roaming around the scrapyard when Henry Johnson, now one of Delacroix's walkin' dead, climbed out of the water and entered the building (banging around quite a bit downstairs). Luke heard the shot and alarm, as well as Henry Johnson's walking corpse clumsily climbing the stairs from the first floor. Luke, who didn't have his gun with him at the moment, disconnected the power to the lights and hid, afraid it was one of the bandits coming up the stairs.



Unwelcome Homecoming

First Floor

The entire floor is dark. This floor of the building is filled with large, bulky objects, making it difficult to get around in the dark, since the obstacles aren't stacked with any rhyme or reason. A few inches of water cover the floor here, and the slosh of the posse's footsteps echo in the open room.

A search of the floor turns up nothing. Have the heroes make a Fair (5) *Cognition* roll. Those succeeding hear a noise from upstairs. Any hero with a light and the forethought to check the stairs finds watery tracks heading up.

Second Floor

The lights on this floor are out as well. The darkness makes moving through the maze of shelves difficult. Unless the posse has a light source, have each hero make a Fair (5) *sneak* roll. Anyone who fails bumps into a bench or shelf, causing a racket.

If the heroes located the watery trail on the steps, they can follow them through the shelves. However, the prints seem to follow no pattern and cross themselves several times.

Stalking through the mismatched rows of shelving should be a creepy, paranoid experience for the posse. Occasionally, the heroes catch sight of a shadow passing across the faint light filtering in a window. After the suspense has built for a bit, the heroes hear the sound of running footsteps, followed by a loud crash of breaking glass and the splash of something dropping into the water.

Henry hurled a ruined typewriter out a window, and laid down by the window to play dead—which he's had some practice at recently!

Taking Inventory

Rushing to the sound of the crash, the posse finds a badly mutilated dead body laying under a broken window. The state of the corpse requires a Fair (5) *guts* check. After the heroes recover from the initial shock, they have a chance to discover a few clues.

While the posse investigates, reveal the information to them as they make the relevant Trait and Aptitude rolls.

Trackin' (5): The water trail leads to the window and stops. It looks as though the person jumped out.

Search (5): The corpse has a soggy tag attached to its toe by metal wire. The tag says: "*Cause of Death: Natural Causes, Examining Physician: Dr. Joseph Delacroix, Time/Date: August 2, 2094 (three days ago), BRMH.*"

Cognition (7): The back of the tag has a strange symbol on it. This is also revealed if any of the heroes looks at the back of the tag.

Medicine (3): His internal organs have been removed via a cut in the middle of his torso.

Medicine (5): The man has received an autopsy—not too common anymore! This roll also finds the toe tag as described above.

Occult (7): The black magic symbol (or variations on it) found on the toe tag is often associated with the dead and resurrection. (Make one up if the players insist on seeing it).

Out from Hiding

A few moments after the crash, Luke realizes the voices he hears are those of the posse. He crawls out from his hiding place and calls out to the heroes.

Once he's sure everything's okay, he reconnects the power cable and moves to where the posse is. He tells them what he knows, which is surprisingly little. What he can do is identify the corpse as belonging to Henry Johnson, one of the missing recyclers.



Unwelcome Homecoming

A Scheming Corpse

Henry's plan is to play possum until he gets alone with another person. Then he attacks and tries to drag the person into the water with him and back to Dr. Delacroix.

He does nothing to give himself away unless someone tries to remove the tag (which would kill him—see below). Then he rears up and attacks. Surprise checks followed by *guts* checks are in order if that happens.

Henry Johnson (Walkin' Dead)

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

Fightin': brawlin 3d8

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

Size: 6

Terror: 9

Special Abilities:

Damage: Bite (STR)

Fearless.

Undead.

Vulnerability: As with all undead, a maiming head wound puts Johnson down for good, but Delacroix's walkin' dead are also put down by removing the toe tag.

At the Guard Post

The guard post is abandoned when the posse reaches it. Reynard and Comfort take a quick look around. Finding the guard missing, sound the alarm bell and head back to alert the town.

If the heroes are here, Sheriff Reynard asks them to stay and hold the position in case the town is being attacked. Otherwise, Deputy Comfort stays behind while the sheriff heads back to the main buildings.

Investigating the Post

A few clues at the abandoned post might lead the posse to realize something fishy is going on. Because of darkness, the heroes receive a -4 on any Trait or Aptitude roll to find clues at the guard post, unless they have some form of light.

The results are cumulative, so a hero can get more than one clue if he rolls high enough.

Trackin' (5): A pair of wet tracks lead up from the water's edge and back into it.

Trackin' (7): The guard either stumbled, or was knocked back into the alarm bell. Then, he was dragged into the water.

Cognition (5): The guard's rifle is lying just above the waterline, and only a single round appears to have been fired from it.

What's All This, Then?

About 10 minutes after the posse has had time to investigate both the scrapyard and the guard post, the sheriff comes back. Unless the deputy was left at the guard post, he stays back in the main part of town.

The sheriff questions the heroes and Luke about what happened. Then she thoroughly searches the area and carefully considers any evidence the heroes have already found. Feel free to use her to point out any clues the posse may have missed.

As it becomes obvious the town isn't under a renewed bandit attack, things begin to settle down. Mr. Tinsdale arrives at the posse's location, concerned about Luke's whereabouts. Although obviously relieved to find the young man safe, he is quite disturbed by the identity of the corpse.

Playin' Dead...

If Johnson hasn't revealed his undead state yet, the sheriff has his corpse taken to the hospital. She wants Janice Rawls to look it over to see if she can learn anything the posse may have missed.

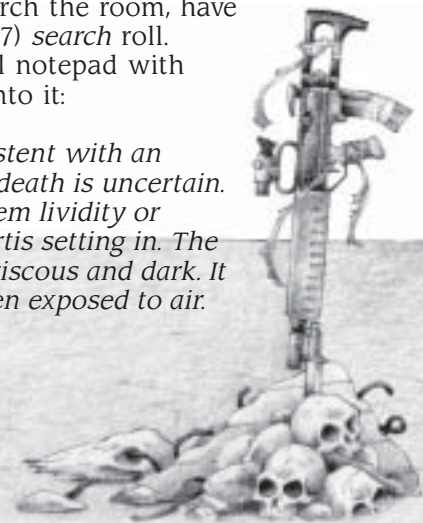
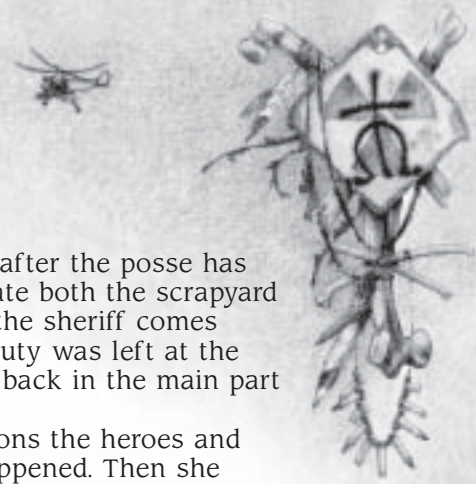
Until proven otherwise, Sheriff Reynard is pretty sure the recycler fell victim to the same bandits that attacked the town. This strengthens her resolve to take the fight to them.

On first look, Janice Rawls confirms the body was subject to an autopsy. She can't find any other wounds, but the damage done by the autopsy could have obliterated them. She tells the sheriff she needs to examine the body closer to give a better answer.

If Janice is left alone with Henry, the zombie attacks and kills her, dragging her off to Delacroix. The only obvious clues left for the heroes are a single scream in the night, a wrecked treatment room where Janice was performing her investigation, and two missing bodies: those of Janice and Henry.

Should the heroes search the room, have them make an Onerous (7) *search* roll. Success turns up a small notepad with the following scribbled into it:

Incisions are consistent with an autopsy. The time of death is uncertain. There is no postmortem lividity or evidence of rigor mortis setting in. The blood appears fairly viscous and dark. It also clots readily when exposed to air.





Unwelcome Homecoming

Any hero who reads the notes can make a Fair (5) *occult* roll. A successful roll indicates the description is consistent with that of an undead creature, most likely walkin' dead.

...or Walkin' Dead

Once Henry has been revealed as undead, the sheriff is at a loss for words. She confers with Mr. Tinsdale for a moment and then tells the posse that they realize this is most likely not the work of river scum, but they intend to still go ahead with their plan to eliminate the obvious threat: the bandits.

Whether or not Henry is exposed as a walkin' dead, the sheriff orders a double guard at all posts and two people awake in each of the living quarters at all times. Although there aren't enough guns to go around, she spreads them out as evenly among the guards as possible.

The Next Day

Nothing else happens the rest of the night, although few people sleep easily in Nouveau Baton Rouge. If Janice Rawls was taken by the corpse, the townspeople are on the verge of panic.

The sheriff and deputy are at a loss to explain her disappearance, and they make an uncertain guess that maybe a few of the raiders slipped into town and kidnapped her.

If the posse finds the notebook and determines Henry Johnson to have been undead, see the section ...or Walkin' Dead above.

Scouts Out!

The mission to scout out the location of the Gators' boat continues, in spite of the strange occurrences during the past night.

Should the heroes tag along, the recyclers are taking a small boat and only three of the heroes can squeeze aboard. The rest of the heroes are asked to take a watch each in one of the guard towers.

The Recyclers

The two men sent by Mr. Tinsdale are Joe Ratliff and Charles Leroux. Both are experienced in navigating the ruins of the city and have been scavenging for years.

The Sheriff issues the recyclers the last two shotguns and 25 rounds of ammo. Mr. Tinsdale produces a pair of binoculars.

The raft the men use is a dual-pontoon model similar to the one Luke had, complete with the small trolling motor on the back. Most of the time, however the men rely on poles or paddles to move the raft.

Joe and Charles

Joe is a bit more friendly than Charles, who spends most of his time looking nervously at the empty buildings around the raft—all the while tightly clenching his shotgun. Joe is in his late 20s and has dark hair and a deep tan. Charles is a little older, and his hair is beginning to show a little gray.

As far as game statistics go, the two men are nearly identical

Profile

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d8, S:3d6, Q:2d6, V:3d8
Climbin' 3d8, drivin': boat 4d8, fightin': brawlin, knife 3d8, shootin': shotgun 4d6, swimmin' 2d8
Mental: C:2d8, K:2d6, M:2d6, Sm:3d6, Sp:3d6
Size: 6
Wind: 14
Edges: Keen
Hindrances: Loyal (Joe), superstitious (Charles)
Gear: Pump shotgun, 25 shells, knife, and a flashlight.

Be Very Quiet, We're Hunting Gators

The buildings rise on all sides, looming over the channels taken by the recyclers. The ruined buildings are usually a good deal higher than those in the town, but they also look a whole lot less sturdy. From time to time, a block of concrete falls off the top of one of the skyscrapers, bouncing off the side of the building as it tumbles down to the water with a very large splash.

Girders reach up out of the wreckage like claws in some places, and Joe points out that twisted metal like that is the biggest danger.

The broken windows reveal nothing of the ruined interiors of the buildings, but every so often an echo of something moving through the ruins reaches the heroes, reminding them there are unknown things lurking in the walls of the man-made canyons through which they're winding their way.

Gulpers

Joe, sensing the heroes' uneasiness, decides to play it up a little bit. He tells them about giant catfish-like creatures that prowl the ruins:

Unwelcome Homecoming

"They're called 'gaspers,' you see, cause they can take a man down in a single gulp. They usually stay to the bottom, hiding in the ruins, but once in a while, one of them comes up.

"It's easy to spot one of them when they're near the surface. They're a whitish color, and sometimes you even see the tips of those big spines around their mouth breaking the water.

"They can't help but splash those big fins if they're trying to move right near the surface, and when they open their mouths to take a gulp, you can hear the water rush in with a 'SLURP.'

"Course, by the time you hear that, it's probably too late anyway"

Charles is obviously unnerved by the story, and he stares down into the murky waters as he angrily tells Joe to keep it down. Gaspers do live in the wreckage, but one has never gobbled up anyone—at least not that Joe knows. However, he doesn't let anyone know that.

Thar She Sits!

The recyclers keep the raft inside the shady cover of the buildings for most of the trip, working their way along the outskirts of the former business district. They slowly cruise the flooded streets for most of the day, until they finally sight the *Delta Queen* in late afternoon.

The steamboat is stopped in the water near the ruins of the old interstate bridge, about 10 miles to the southwest of Nouveau Baton Rouge. The boat is canted at an odd angle, and there appears to be a lot of activity on it.

Earlier this morning, Big Al decided to move the *Delta Queen* into the ruins of the city to hide. Not being familiar with the waters and hazards in the city, the Gators ran the boat onto the submerged wreckage of the *CSS Kidd*. Not only did this ground the boat, it also put a good-sized hole in the hull! Right now, the Gators are buzzing around like a bunch of hornets that just had their nest swatted. After a moment, Charles says:

"It looks like the old Kidd might have gotten herself one more—even after she was sunk!"

If the posse hasn't heard about the *Kidd*, Charles tells them it was an old warship used as a museum back before the earthquake. He's not

sure what war it fought in, but its wreck lies right about where the steamboat is located under the bridge.

While it's plain to the group that the boat isn't moving anytime soon, the fact that the *Delta Queen* is holed isn't too obvious from their vantage point.

Kick 'Em While They're Down

The recyclers get back with their report just before nightfall. If no members of the posse went along, the heroes can learn about the wreck at this time.

Sheriff Reynard is of the opinion that the raiders are going to be preoccupied with freeing the boat and a stealthy group may slip in unnoticed.

The Offer

Sheriff Reynard turns to the posse and asks:

"Deputy Comfort and I are still pretty banged up. We need somebody willing (and able) to go out there and bell the cat, so to speak.

"The recyclers are good at what they do, scouting around and finding decent salvage, but they're not fighters. If you're willing to take up this fight, there's little left for me to offer you as payment. We can provide you with some ammunition and free lodging whenever you need it, but little else. I guess this is one of those cases where doing the right thing has to be its own reward."

If the heroes accept, the sheriff provides them with up to half of the town's remaining ammo in any caliber they can use. She also says Mr. Tinsdale can reload any shell casings they might have.

If the heroes refuse—or they claim they need some help—Deputy Comfort, Joe the recycler, and a couple other townsfolk agree to give it a shot.

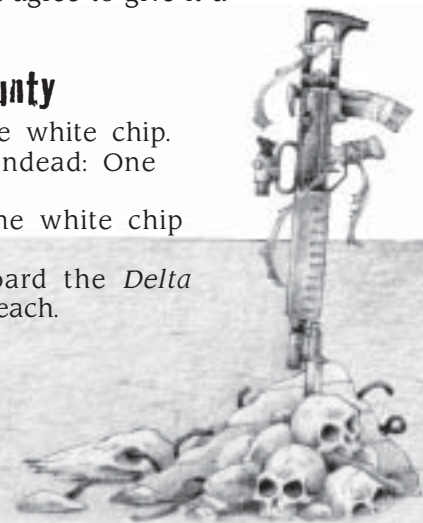
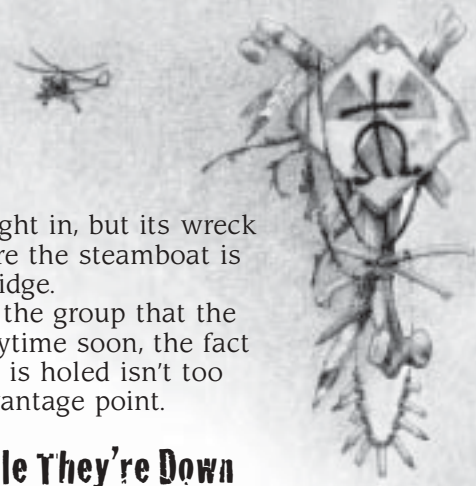
Bounty

Finding the toe tag: One white chip.

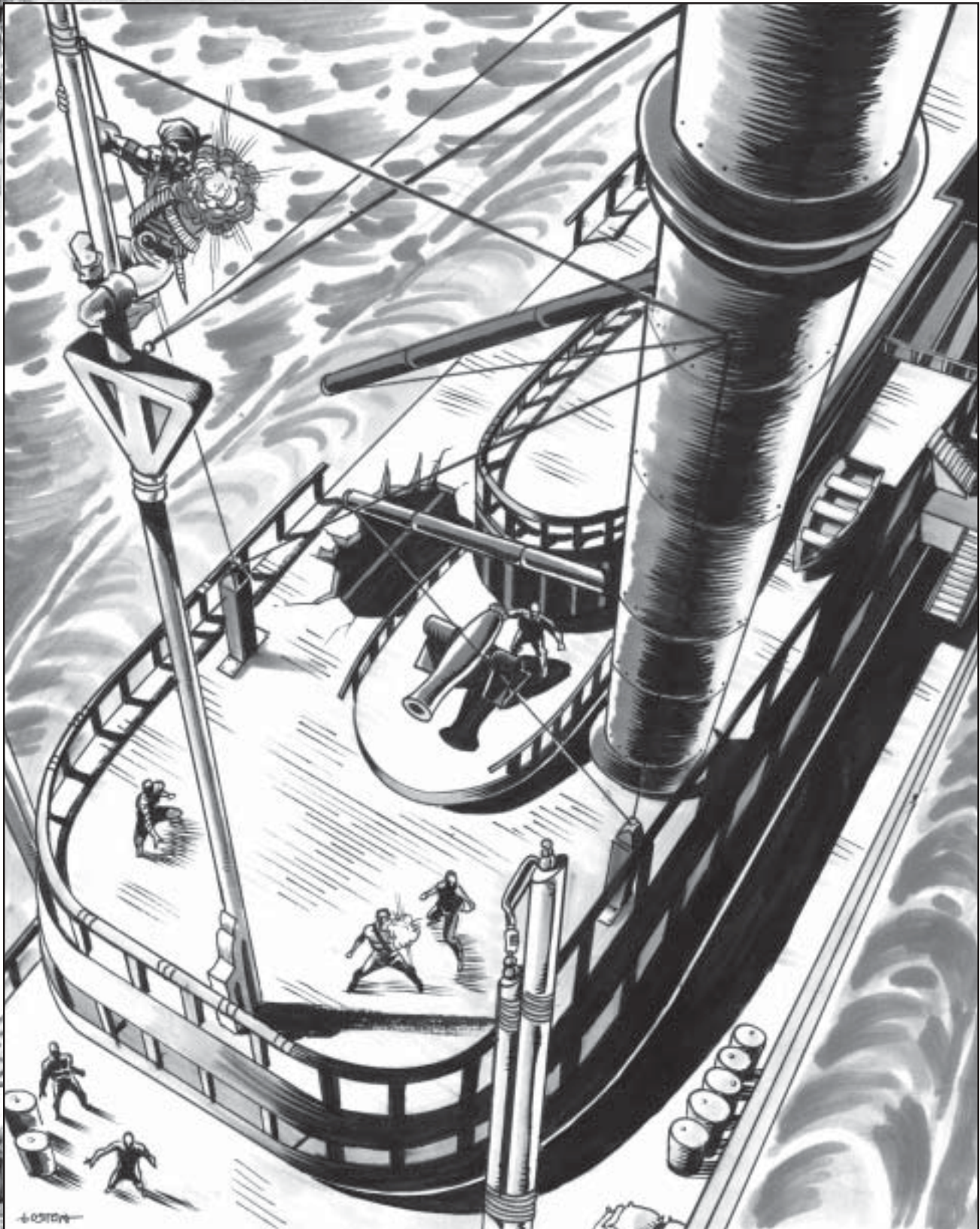
Realizing Henry was undead: One white chip.

Killing Henry—again: One white chip each.

Agreeing to sneak aboard the *Delta Queen*: One red chip each.



Gator Bait



Marshal: 32



Chapter Four: Gator Bait



Assuming the heroes agree to the sheriff's request—and that's what heroes do, isn't it?—they're probably going to make a little preparation for the attack. Sheriff Reynard wants the attack to occur that night, but unless the Heroes ask her for advice, she leaves the planning to them.

If the heroes don't go along with the sheriff's request, see the section But They Didn't Go! on page 37. In addition to looking lily-livered in front of the sheriff (and the rest of the town), they also miss out on a chance to earn a lot more Fate Chips if they choose to bow out of this one.

Along for the Ride

Regardless of the plan the heroes come up with, Joe Ratliff volunteers to go with them to pilot the boat and operate any other machinery necessary. He refuses to get involved in a battle unless his own life is at stake, but his knowledge and experience in the ruins should prove valuable. Joe carries only his knife with him.

If the posse is a small one, Deputy Comfort offers to throw in his gun with them. Sheriff Reynard isn't keen on the idea, but after talking with the young man, she agrees it's a good idea. He takes his vest, pistol, and 50 rounds of ammunition for it.

The Low Road

The posse can try to steal up to the *Delta Queen* in a raft. This requires the least planning, and leaves the posse with a ready escape route.

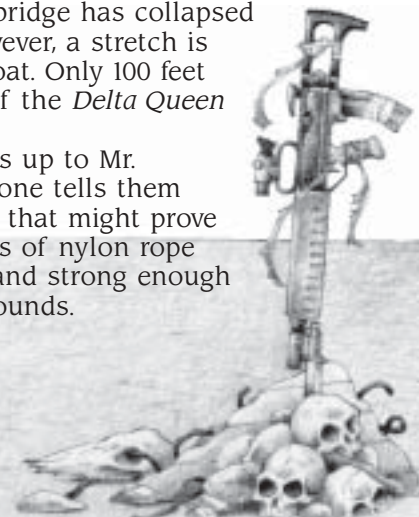
The trolling motors don't make much noise, but there's still a lot of open water to cover. If the heroes are spotted, a single shot by the cannon could bring the expedition to a quick and violent end.

The High Road

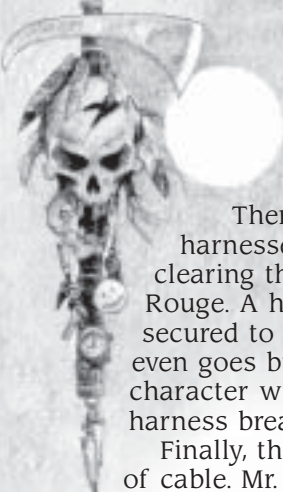
During the planning for the attack, a hero may ask about the bridge in relation to the *Delta Queen*. Well, the answer is the boat is directly underneath the bridge! Give the brainer a white chip for asking.

The bridge used to stand nearly 250 feet above the river, but the earthquake dropped it a good deal closer to the river. The main span of the river has fallen and the bridge has collapsed in numerous places. However, a stretch is still standing near the boat. Only 100 feet separates the top deck of the *Delta Queen* from the bridge.

If the posse brings this up to Mr. Tinsdale or Luke, either one tells them they have a few of items that might prove useful, like a couple coils of nylon rope about 150 feet in length and strong enough to hold a few hundred pounds.



Gator Bait



There are also some crude climbing harnesses the townsfolk used while clearing the buildings around Nouveau Baton Rouge. A hero wearing one of these remains secured to a rope or cable even if she fails or even goes bust on a *climbin'* roll. (Of course, a character with *bad luck* might just have the harness break)

Finally, there is a cable winch with 125 feet of cable. Mr. Tinsdale modified it to run off battery power, and it's easily capable of supporting up to 450 pounds, if properly braced. The winch raises and lowers a load at a Pace 5. The only problem is it weighs about 90 pounds total.

The Bomb

True to his word, Tinsdale provides the posse with a homemade bomb. It consists of a stick of plastic explosive wired to a detonator with what looks like a gold pocketwatch attached (which, in fact, it is).

Mr. Tinsdale seems a little melancholy when he turns over the device to the heroes. If the posse asks him, he explains the watch was a gift from his wife of 25 years. She died in the Big Bang.

He explains he's set the bomb to a five minute timer and shows the posse how to activate the countdown. It's pretty simple. Pull up the winding mechanism, then press all three buttons on the watch at the same time. Once it's started, there's no way to stop it, so the heroes have to be careful about when they activate it.

The bomb is a powerful explosive doing 6d20 with a Burst Radius of 10, so the heroes would be wise to not fool around with it!

Assault on the Delta Queen

Somebody else is planning to attack the Gators tonight. Dr. Delacroix has dispatched 15 bloats (waterlogged walkin' dead) to seize the ship and fill his morgue. Just before the posse gets to the *Delta Queen*, the bloats arrive and begin attacking the river bandits.

Many of the raiders lose their nerve at the sight of the horrific undead and jump over the side in a panic, trying to escape. These poor fools are quickly pulled under and drowned by bloats still in the water.

Those that stay and fight fare little better. The Gators' primitive flintlocks and melee weapons don't do them much good against the abominations. By the time the posse arrives, the Gators are on the ropes.

The Direct Approach

If the heroes decide to take the direct approach, it's actually a little easier than they thought. The Gators are so occupied by the bloats, they could care less about a boat full of wasters.

However, the yelling and gunfire from the boat may lead the heroes to believe they've been spotted. After a moment or two of not even a near miss, it becomes obvious something else is the cause of the ruckus.

Death From Above

Joe takes the posse to a point about a half mile east of the *Delta Queen*. There, the bridge has collapsed into the river. The bridge didn't shear off, but rather it forms a steep ramp up to the intact span above.

Getting up the ramp is tough, requiring a Fair (5) *climbin'* roll. Failing the roll means the hero can't climb it until somebody drops a rope down. Going bust on the roll gives the waster a bumpy ride down the wreckage into the river, doing 2d6+10 falling damage in the process.



Gator Bait

Joe secures the boat and scampers up the bridge as well. He offers to man the winch if the posse plans to use it. Better yet, he agrees to carry the 90 pound piece of equipment as well!

Even at night, the view from the bridge gives the posse a good look at the flooded ruins of Baton Rouge. The sunken buildings stretch out to the north, south, and east of the span. On the opposite side of the river, the heroes can make out the remains of the rest of the bridge and the buckled wreck that used to be a highway.

Moving on the bridge is fairly easy, as it was designed to accommodate more than six lanes of traffic. Although there are several holes in the span, some up to 20 feet across, there's still plenty of room for the heroes to avoid them.

Guess Who Dropped In!

A short hike across the former highway bridge brings the heroes to a position above the *Delta Queen*. Below, they can hear the sound of gunfire and an occasional scream. If they take a look over, they see the top of the boat is empty, but can't make out any other details about the cause of the fight below.

There are ample places to secure the ropes and brace the winch. Joe tells the posse he'll stay on the span and run the winch.

Using the harnesses provided by Mr. Tinsdale, getting down the rope is fairly simple. A Foolproof (3) *climbin'* roll is all that's necessary for a hero to make it down in five rounds. Anyone who is in a harness doesn't fall if he misses the *climbin'* roll, but it does take another roll to get untangled and try again.

A skilled climber can rappel down the rope, getting to the boat's roof faster. Every raise the hero's roll beats the Foolproof (3) TN by cuts a round off the time needed to get to the *Delta Queen*. No matter how high the hero rolls, the minimum time to cover the distance is a round.

The winch takes seven rounds to lower or raise a waster from the *Delta Queen*, and it can handle up to two heroes at a time. No *climbin'* roll is needed to use the winch, but someone—probably Joe—has to stay behind to run it.

It's possible to fire a weapon while descending either by using the winch or rappelling, but it's pretty tough. Shooting a target directly beneath your gun is a lot harder than it sounds, since gunsights take into account the rise of the bullet. Firing while hanging from the winch cable is at -2. Repelling heroes get a -4 to their rolls. After all, they're juggling two tricky jobs.

The Delta Queen

By the time the heroes get to the boat, the action is cooling down. Most of the bloats have grabbed a couple of bodies and headed back to the hospital. There are still a few left for the posse though.

Here's a deck-by-deck description of the derelict riverboat, starting from the main deck. What the heroes see first depends on how they got to the boat. Check out the map on page 48 for the general layout of the ship.

The Main Deck

This is the closest deck to the waterline. In the water outside the ship are eight empty boats. Many of these are normally stored on the *Delta Queen* itself, but the Gators were using them to attempt to free the boat. Two additional boats with gasoline motors (their tanks are about a quarter full) are moored to the broken paddlewheel behind the boat. The boats are capable of hitting 25 m.p.h. and can travel about 80 miles on what fuel they have left. Two other powered boats are gone.

A sharp-eyed waster catches sight of a couple of boats being furiously paddled out into the Mississippi on an Onerous (7) *Cognition* roll. These are manned by the few Gators lucky enough to get away from the bloats.

Promenade

This covered walkway wraps around three quarters of the boat, missing only the stern and boiler room. A long walkway hangs off the bow of the boat. This used to serve as a gangplank, but recently Big Al was forcing prisoners to "walk the plank" on it. A stairway leads up to the second deck.

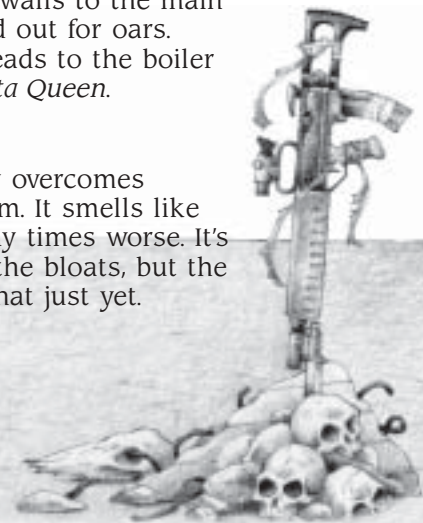
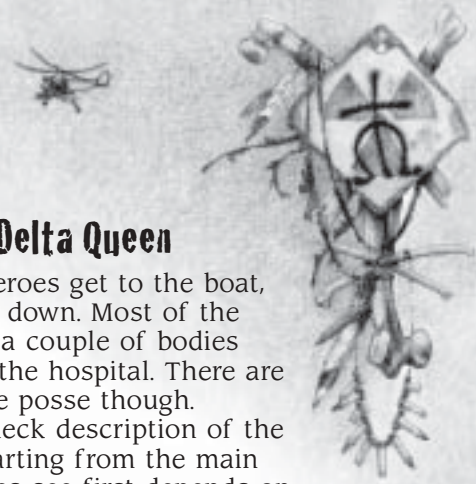
A few crude weapons, like axes and cleavers, are scattered around the walkway. A couple of flintlock weapons can be found out here as well. Any hero making a Fair (5) *Cognition* roll can find blood smears along the walls.

Large portions of the walls to the main cabin have been knocked out for oars.

An outside stairway leads to the boiler (second) deck of the *Delta Queen*.

Lower Cabin

A horrible odor nearly overcomes anyone entering this room. It smells like decaying flesh, only many times worse. It's the stench produced by the bloats, but the posse shouldn't realize that just yet.





Gator Bait

Crude benches are set up in rows in here. About 25 rowers remain chained to the benches here, but many of them were killed in the melee between the bloats and the Gators. Most of the surviving slaves are terrified and cower whimpering under the benches. A few beg the heroes to release them before the bloats come back. The chains on their legs actually saved them from being dragged off by the bloats.

Laying parallel to the benches on the floor are a number of large, rough-hewn oars.

A fair-sized hole has been torn in the bottom of the *Delta Queen*, but it hasn't begun to sink yet because the part of the *CSS Kidd* that holed her is also holding the hole just above water.

After the heroes have been in the lower cabin for a minute or two, they hear a shotgun blast and incoherent yelling from the rear of the boat. It's coming from the boiler room.

Boiler Room

This room used to hold the *Delta Queen's* engines, back in the days when she was working. Once the Gators took it over, they ripped out the useless machinery and built a crude smithy for their captive blacksmith.

A huge, potbellied stove, an anvil, and a few smith's tools lie around the room. Also in the room are five completed flintlock rifles and a bullet press for the weapons. The keys to the slaves' shackles hang on an enormous ring next to the door.

Big Al holed up in here when the abominations started to overrun his boat. He tossed the blacksmith out, hoping to distract the creatures. It worked for the most part, but one still got into the room.

The gang leader took out the monster with his shotgun, but he's raving mad from fear now. He attacks when the heroes enter the room and doesn't stop until he's dead or they retreat.

The bloat's stench still fills the room, so anyone entering has to make an Onerous (7) *Vigor* roll or suffer the effects described in the creature's profile (see page 35).

Once the posse has time to get a look at the dead bloat, an Onerous (7) *guts* check is called for. These things make quite a mess when they're finally killed, and the shotgun just made it all that much worse. Any hero with an iron stomach that examines the disgusting mass and makes a Fair (5) *search* roll finds a toe tag just like the one on Henry Johnson.

Boiler Deck

Although this is called the boiler deck, the boilers are mounted on the deck below. That's just what the second deck on a riverboat is called. Go figure.

Promenade

Unlike the walk on the main deck, this one wraps all the way around the boat. Sandbags line the outer edge of the promenade to provide cover to anyone on the walkway.

A couple of dead Gators and their weapons lay about the promenade. It's hard to determine a cause of death without better light and more time, but any waster looking them over is pretty sure they were just beaten to death. There are a couple of nasty bites as well.

Since the *Delta Queen* was originally a tour boat, the entire upper cabin used to be ringed in plate-glass windows. Those have long since been busted out. The holes give the posse a look at what's going on in the upper cabin.

Upper Cabin

This used to serve as the sleeping, dining, and living area for the majority of the Gators. The blankets and hides on the floor probably hide more fleas and other parasites than all the junkyard dogs in Texas. Now, the main cabin is being put to another use—this time by bloats.

A group of the swollen abominations are battering and biting the life out of the last of the Gators. If the heroes landed below, they see one of the bandits make a break for a door behind an old, battered wet bar. The man clears the door, and the bloat chasing him takes notice of the heroes gawking at it.

If the heroes are coming down from above, they meet the bloat chasing the Gator as they exit Big Al's room. Either way, this is a good time for a *guts* check!

Once the checks are over, it's time for the fight. The abominations all have laid their hands on steel pipes, cleavers, broken muskets, and the like from the bodies of the Gators. These bloats don't run away unless they're taking someone with them. Oh, and don't forget the *Vigor* checks for the bloats' stench.

Searching the living area after the bloats are defeated turns up a bunch of basically useless junk. A bottle of corn-mash whiskey, a deck of playing cards missing two aces, and a broken pocket knife are good examples of what the posse might find.

Gator Bait

Bloats

Bloats are waterlogged walkin' dead. To become a bloat, a body has to have been submerged for at least a year. These conditions are usually only found in sunken vessels or the like, although many towns in the Maze have fallen into the ocean and could be home to these swollen bags of bones. Bloats are only encountered near bodies of water.

The water reacts with the corpse's tissues, turning most of it into a waxy, soap-like substance called adipocere. Adipocere is lighter than normal flesh, but also a good deal bulkier. The result is that the corpse's flesh becomes pale and distended, hence the name "bloat". The swollen features make the creature's eyes look like foggy black marbles. In general, their appearance is quite repulsive—thus the higher Terror score than the run-of-the-mill undead.

Additionally, the adipocere causes a bloat to reek with an overpowering stench. The odor is very distinct and much stronger than normally associated with the dead.

The composition of these abominations make them even more resistant to damage than normal walkin' dead. They take only half damage from most firearms or piercing weapons. Shotguns and cutting or slashing weapons do full damage to the monsters.

Bloats are particularly susceptible to alcohol, which causes their flesh to dissolve on contact, like acid. The liquid does 2d10 damage to each location splashed the first round, 2d8 the second, and so on.

Each bloat created by Dr. Delacroix's processes is wearing a toe tag similar to that found on Henry Johnson—although the dates of demise go back just prior to the earthquake that sank Baton Rouge. Removal of this tag kills the bloat.

Profile

Corporeal: D:1d4, N:2d8, S:3d8, Q:2d10, V:2d8

Fightin': brawlin' 3

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

Size: 7

Terror: 11

Special Abilities:

Damage: Bite (STR)

Stench: Any human within 10 feet of a bloat must make an Onerous (7) *Vigor* check to avoid retching at the odor. Those who fail lose 1d6 Wind and are -2 to all rolls for the encounter. Characters need only make this roll once per encounter.



Toe Tags: The bloats found in this adventure were all created by Dr. Delacroix. As a result, these bloats can also be destroyed by removal of the toe tag.

Undead.

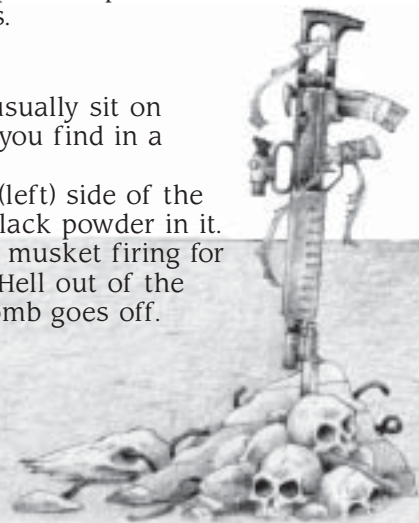
Vulnerability: Alcohol does 2d10 damage to any location hit by the liquid. The damage continues at the beginning of each round, but it's reduced by a die type each time. Once the damage is reduced to less than 2d4, it ends.

Weapons: A bloat's fingers are usually too swollen to manipulate a trigger, but they may have other simpler weapons, like clubs or even knives.

The Heads

No, not the kind that usually sit on shoulders—the kind that you find in a boat.

The room on the port (left) side of the boat, has three kegs of black powder in it. This is enough to keep a musket firing for a long time, or blow the Hell out of the *Delta Queen* when the bomb goes off.



Gator Bait

Big Al's Room

The entrance to Big Al's room is behind the long, closed bar in the upper cabin.

This former utility room was commandeered by Big Al. He crammed a mattress into it, along with some of his "earnings". Under the mattress is half a bottle of old, prewar Scotch, two boxes of 25 12-gauge shotgun shells, and a busted solar cell.

A ladder leads up to a hatch to the top of the *Delta Queen*.

The Hurricane Deck

The top deck of the *Delta Queen* no longer has a pilot house. Big Al had it ripped off to make room for his ratty but comfortable Lay-Z-Guy recliner.

Beside the chair sits an old marching-band bass drum. Big Al used this to pound the beat for the rowers. They seldom paid attention but it gave him something to do. The entire hurricane deck is ringed with sandbags.

The twin smokestacks of the old riverboat are badly rusted, and half of one is missing. They never worked in the first place. They were just put on the boat for looks.

The cannon sits atop this deck as well, but getting it off proves a difficult task. It easily weighs over a quarter of a ton. Three more kegs of black powder are stowed in a box beside the artillery piece, and another holds nine cannon balls.

Heroes dropping onto the hurricane deck from the bridge have a moment to look around before a badly frightened Gator bursts screaming out of the hatch covered in blood. He's completely incoherent. If the posse doesn't kill him outright, he bolts over the side at the first chance he gets.

A ladder near the armchair leads down to Big Al's cabin on the boiler deck.

Kaboom!

Although it's not necessary any longer, the posse may decide to blow up the boat anyway. That's fine. After all, there's nothing like a huge explosion to cap off an evening of fighting bloated, flesh-eating zombies on a rusted-out tour boat!

If they set off the plastic explosive, which causes a chain detonation of any black powder left aboard. The total effect is a 10d20 explosion with a Burst Radius of 10 yards—that means one big bang!

Gator Bait

The posse has five minutes to get out of range of the explosion by the time it goes off. Considering the explosion is going to affect characters more than a hundred yards away, that's a long way to run.

Any character climbing the rope moves at Pace 2 plus her *climbin'* Aptitude level. That means a waster with 3 levels in *climbin'* has a Pace 5 while climbing the rope. Ascending with the winch takes seven rounds.

Treat anyone on the bridge who is hugging asphalt as out of range, and halve the damage for anyone underwater when the boat goes up. If a curious waster insists on watching the fireworks, he catches the full effects of it.

The bridge begins to shake and buckle after the explosion. It's not going to fall, but don't let the heroes know that. Have them make *Nimbleness* checks against a Fair (5) TN as they make their way back to their boat. Any that fail are knocked from their feet.

Back to Town

The trip back to town can be as eventful or dull as you'd like. Odds are, though, by the time the heroes have made it to this point, they probably need a break.

Once they get back, the sheriff gets a quick report from them and tells them to bed down. She also makes arrangements for any of the Gators' slaves the posse may have rescued. Sheriff Reynard is obviously disturbed by the posse's tale about the bloats and the fate of the bandits, but she makes only a few comments that night.

The next morning, she and Mr. Tinsdale approach the posse for one last favor: find out what is going on in the ruins of the city and put a stop to it. During the night, two more townsfolk turned up missing. From what the posse has told the sheriff about the events on the *Delta Queen*, it's likely Nouveau Baton Rouge hasn't seen the worst of it yet either.

The sheriff tells the posse she can offer them only two things for their help. They can remain in Nouveau Baton Rouge as full citizens as long as they like—although they'll still be expected to pull their share of the work. If they're not ready to settle into one place, she offers them one of the town's recycler boats (described in the next chapter, page 46).

If they don't accept, read on. Otherwise, the heroes are ready for the final chapter of the adventure.

But They Didn't Go!

So you say your posse didn't agree to help the sheriff. Well, that does make it tougher, but never fear. We've got a plan for that, too.

The Gator Raid

The small group that went instead of the heroes did make it onto the boat. As with the heroes' attempt, the bloats had distracted most of the Gators from the group sneaking along the bridge, but they didn't fare well against the combined threat of the undead and Gators.

Three of the five volunteers were killed by gunfire from the Gators. Deputy Comfort and Joe Ratliff made it down into the boat, but before they could place the bomb, they were overwhelmed by the horrid walkin' dead in the *Delta Queen*. The jerry-rigged bomb fell overboard and now rests on the bottom of the river.

None of the Gators survived either, not even Big Al. If the heroes go to investigate the boat now, all they find is an abandoned hulk with signs of a desperate battle.

Dead Men Walkin'—Again

Bill Clark returns to Baton Rouge every couple of nights to steal another person for Doctor Delacroix's experiments. Soon, he's joined by a group of zombies from the *Delta Queen* victims—and Deputy Comfort and Joe are among them, (either way).

Mr. Tinsdale and the sheriff are now certain something sinister is working somewhere in the ruins of the city. The sheriff approaches the posse one more time, and asks them to find the source as above.

If the heroes still refuse the sheriff's request, she tells them their restful vacation in Nouveau Baton Rouge has come to an end, and she has Luke ferry them to the western bank of the river. They're on their own now, and they're not welcome back.

Bounty

Defeating Big Al: One white chip each.
Rescuing the slaves: One red chip each.
Agree to defeat the doctor: One blue chip each.

Blowing up the *Delta Queen*: Hey, Explosions are their own reward!



Hospital Visit





Chapter Five: Hospital Visit



Before the heroes head out into the ruins to do find the source of the horrific walkin' dead, the sheriff suggests they talk to Tinsdale for information about the recyclers' plans.

Talking to Tinsdale

If questioned about the two men, Tinsdale's very helpful. He tells the posse:

"Henry and Bill were looking for more equipment for Janice's medical station.

I was just hoping for basic equipment and furnishings—beds, carts, equipment stands, and so on. And, who knows? Maybe they would get lucky and find a real treasure or two, like a stock of nondegradable supplies and medicines."

He also tells the posse he wasn't aware of their planned destination, but can provide them with access to the same map the recyclers use.

The Map

Mr. Tinsdale takes them to a wall map of Baton Rouge prior to the earthquake. He explains that they found it early on in one of the government buildings and that it's been invaluable in plotting recycling missions, but far too large to take with them.

The map is rather complicated and cluttered, so any hero examining it should make an Onerous (7) *Cognition* roll. Success locates three medical facilities within five miles of Nouveau Baton Rouge. They are the Leonard K. Earl Medical Center (two miles), the Lakepark Hospital (two miles), and the Baton Rouge Municipal Hospital (one mile).

Not only is Baton Rouge Municipal Hospital the closest, it sits fairly near where the *Delta Queen* met its end. Also, a few of the heroes may remember the letters "BRMH" from the toe tags on Henry Johnson and the bloats.

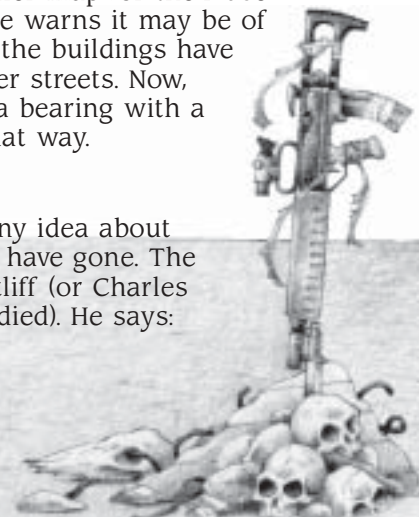
If asked about the hospitals, Mr. Tinsdale says he'd sent a couple of recyclers to BRMH before, but he admits Henry and Bill were looking for other types of salvage than the earlier trips, so it is possible the duo went to the nearest hospital.

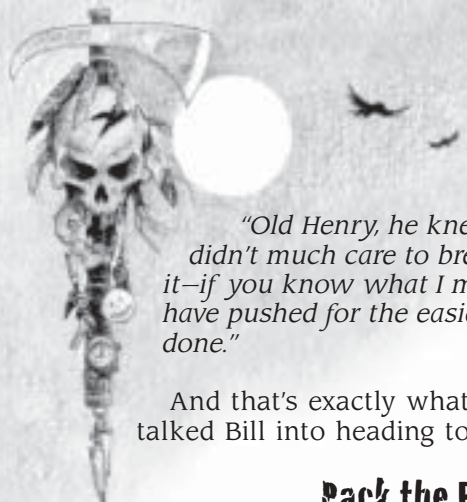
Mr. Tinsdale tells the posse he can prepare them a simpler and smaller map for their use if they desire. However, he warns it may be of little use, since many of the buildings have collapsed, blocking former streets. Now, their best bet is to take a bearing with a compass and navigate that way.

Asking Around

Nobody in town has any idea about where the recyclers may have gone. The only clue is from Joe Ratliff (or Charles Leroux, should Joe have died). He says:

Marshal: 41





Hospital Visit

"Old Henry, he knew his job, but he didn't much care to break his back doing it—if you know what I mean. I figure he'd have pushed for the easiest way to get it done."

And that's exactly what happened, Henry talked Bill into heading to BRMH first.

Pack the Bags

When the heroes have gathered all the information from the townsfolk they can, Mr. Tinsdale tells them he's got their raft ready to go and has a few other items for them as well.

Das Raft

First, Mr. Tinsdale provides the posse with a raft. He also tells the posse that he's sending Joe Ratliff (or Charles Leroux if Joe was killed) as a pilot and guide.

The raft is wooden, but it rests on two metal pontoons. Like Luke's, this one is equipped with a electric motor, and Tinsdale explains its operation to the posse. The motor is very simple to use, and no Aptitude roll is necessary to pilot a raft with it. Tinsdale tells the heroes that the battery has a full charge—good for about 12 hours of constant operation. It can propel the craft at about five miles an hour, or slightly slower against the current.

The Air Pump

This raft also has a piece of equipment that Luke's didn't. Toward the front is a small, battery-powered air pump and four air hoses (each with diving masks). Tinsdale tells the posse his recyclers use this for underwater salvage and gives a short lesson in its use. Joe or Charles are also very experienced in its use.

The pump can support four people for up to two hours. Each hose has is 100 feet of length.

Tools of the Trade

Also on the raft are two sets of shovels, picks, axes, and crowbars. Fifty feet of rope is coiled near the bow. For this trip, Mr. Tinsdale loans the posse a pair of mini-chainsaws (see the *Hell on Earth* rulebook for details) and four flashlights.

Bang-Sticks

The last thing Mr. Tinsdale issues to the heroes are a few long poles with a blunt tip. He explains these are "bang sticks," a weapon

devised for scuba divers years ago. Basically, it's a shotgun shell attached to the end of a pole. When the shell is thrust against a target, the shell explodes.

They are easy to employ, and they're effective underwater. Anyone with *fightin': spear* can use them with no penalty. The sticks do 6d6 damage to whatever they are touching when they fire.

They're fairly simple to make, and Tinsdale provides enough for each member of the posse to have two of them.

After providing the heroes with the various pieces of equipment and instruction on how to use them, Tinsdale recommends they wait until the next day and get an early start. With everything that has occurred lately, he cautions them against being caught out after dark in the ruins.

Nothing happens in town that night. Doctor Delacroix has his hands full with the Gators the bloats brought back. The posse can get a night of well-earned rest or, if they're of a mind, carouse at Shady Sadie's. The wasters find they're the heroes of the hour in Nouveau Baton Rouge, and nobody lets them pay their own bar tab that night.

Setting Out

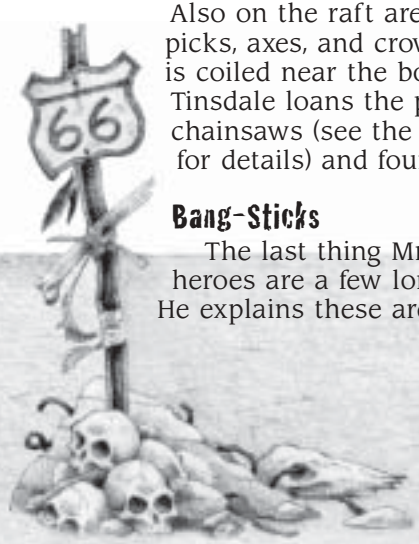
The next day, Luke meets the heroes and tells them he's going to lead them and pilot the boat. He says Joe Ratliff came down with a stomach flu and Mr. Tinsdale asked him to step in for him. Actually, Tinsdale would have a brain hemorrhage if he found out Luke was going with the posse. Luke, however, has been bitten by the adventure bug and can't rest until he sees this through.

Luke has outfitted the raft, and it's waiting outside for them. The posse can't get ready fast enough for him.

If the posse checks with Mr. Tinsdale, they discover Luke's little deception. Mr. Tinsdale forbids the young man to go on the trip, reminding him of his obligations to the citizens of the town. His tongue lashing leaves even the heroes' ears smarting as they leave the workshop.

En Route

Once they get started, the heroes find the trip to the hospital a creepy experience—especially since the brackish water hides the posse's view of anything more than a few feet down. Broken windows and gaping holes pockmark the buildings. Spanish moss hangs from just about



Hospital Visit



everything, and the posse can't escape the feeling of being watched. Even at high noon, the ruins are dark and foreboding.

The raft's tiny electric motor seems to propel it only slightly faster than a slow walk—far too slow to outrun whatever might be lurking under the murky waters. The trip goes agonizingly slowly and despite the map from Mr. Tinsdale, it takes the heroes a while to work through the maze of flooded streets to the hospital. All told, the entire voyage lasts a good three hours, more than long enough to make everyone on board very uncomfortable.

A Helping Hand

At some point during the voyage as the posse nears the BRMH, have the heroes make an Incredible (11) *Cognition* check. Any who succeed see a bloated white hand slip out of the water and grip the raft. Shooting at the hand causes its owner to pull it quickly back into the safety of the water.

Some of Delacroix's creations have swum up underneath the boat. All the posse can see of them in the murky water is the abominations' hands, arms, and occasionally a head.

Within moments, 10 pairs of hands, some bloated, some not, break the surface of the water, grab the raft, and begin to shake it. The heroes must each make a Fair (5) *Nimbleness* check or lose their balance.

Anyone unfortunate enough to go bust on the roll gets tossed into the water! The poor waster is immediately grabbed by a couple of the undead, who try to drag her under.

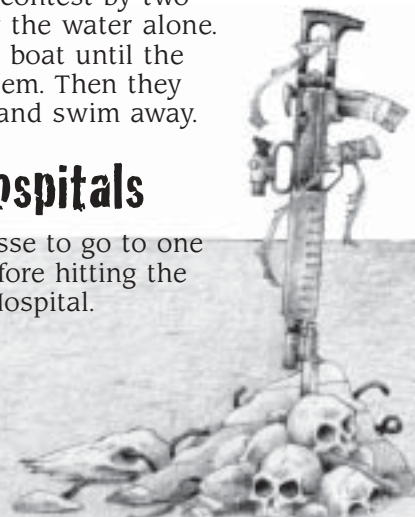
Pulling her out requires winning an opposed contest of *Strength* and getting at least one raise. For every rescuer after the first, the heroes get a +2 bonus to the roll. For the purposes of this contest, treat the undead as if they had a total of 3d10+6 in *Strength*.

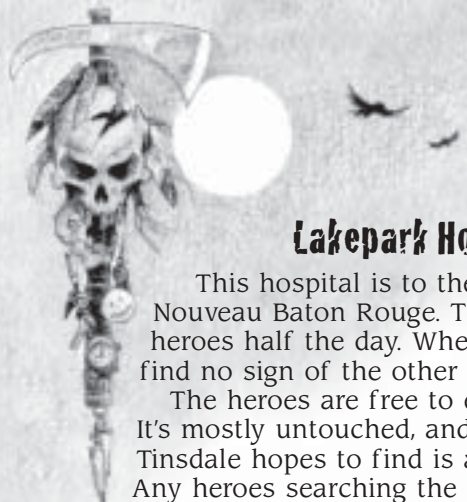
If the undead win the contest by two raises, she's pulled under the water alone.

The creatures rock the boat until the posse begins to fire at them. Then they slip back into the water and swim away.

The Other Hospitals

It's possible for the posse to go to one of the other hospitals before hitting the Baton Rouge Municipal Hospital.





Hospital Visit

Lakepark Hospital

This hospital is to the southeast of Nouveau Baton Rouge. The trip to it takes the heroes half the day. When they arrive, they find no sign of the other recyclers.

The heroes are free to explore the building. It's mostly untouched, and much of what Tinsdale hopes to find is actually available. Any heroes searching the building may make a *scroungin'* roll and consult the table below.

Other than the medical supplies, there is little else of interest in the building.

Scroungin' Around Lakepark

Result	Items Found
3	Equipment carts and a few un-rotted mattresses.
5	Bandages, air splints, and some basic scalpels, forceps, etc.
7	Microscope (working).
9	Sealed and nondegraded medicines (penicillin, sulfa drugs, morphine).
11	Desktop computer (<i>an Incredible (11) science: electronics</i> roll to repair) and a gas-powered generator.

Leonard K. Earl Medical Center

Located two miles northeast of Nouveau Baton Rouge, it takes the posse half a day to reach it.

The medical center has completely collapsed beneath the muddy Mississippi waters. Not surprisingly, there is no sign of the recyclers' boat here either.

Baton Rouge Municipal Hospital

Fear Level 4

The hospital weathered the quake and flood poorly. Barely three stories stand above the river's surface. A gaping hole in the southeast gives the posse easy access to the building.

Beached on the rubble around the hole, the heroes find a raft nearly identical to the one Tinsdale loaned them. It obviously belonged to the missing scavengers—it even has the same type of air pump.

A search of the boat reveals 2 shotguns—one loaded, the other one fired, and two unused bang sticks. The heroes also find a handheld camcorder.

There is one other sign of the missing men: a single air hose is dropped over the side of the raft into the water. The air pump's fuel tank is empty, although the pump itself is switched on.

The Camera

This is the camera Delacroix used to record his own final moments. He dropped it during the opening moments of his self-autopsy and it's laid on the floor for over two decades.

It's covered with silt and rust, unusable but in one piece. Inside, however, is a recording slug that appears to be intact. Unfortunately, to play it requires a video projector (there is one in the "movie theater" back in town) or a computer.

What's on the Disk

Once the heroes get the disk to play, they're in for a gruesome scene: the beginning of Delacroix's self-autopsy. Fortunately, before he was able to get very far into the operation, he dropped the camera and was in no shape to retrieve it. Read the following:

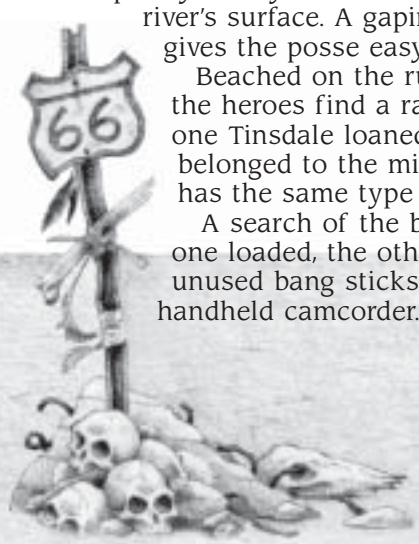
"The view is of a body visible from the neck down, resting on a morgue table. However, the "corpse" appears to be holding the camera and narrating. The camera turns toward the man's head, and he speaks directly at the viewer.

"This is Dr. Joseph Delacroix. I'm beginning the final experiment into the phenomenon of the spontaneous resumption of life after death. I have noted a higher than normal incidence of this occurrence in bodies I myself have autopsied over recent years and intend to experience this phenomenon firsthand this evening and break new ground in the science of animate mortuary studies.

"I have not pinpointed what point in the process triggers the reanimation, so I will follow the procedure exactly by the book. First, I place an identifying tag on my toe."

(Any heroes who make an Onerous (7) Cognition check get a glimpse of the same mark on this toe tag as was on the one they found on Henry Johnson's foot.)

"I anticipate this may prove the most difficult portion of the process—opening the chest and abdominal cavity. I am unable to use general anesthetics, and I expect to feel some discomfort."



Hospital Visit

At this point, Delacroix balances the camera on his right shoulder and picks up a surgical instrument, not unlike a large, crescent-shaped pizza cutter, from off camera. He places it on the center of his chest parallel to his arms and prepares to cut. Just as he begins to press down, the camera falls to the floor.

Nonetheless, the entire affair is more than a little disturbing, as the heroes can still hear loud crackings as the blade does its work and the screams of the doctor as he discovers exactly how much “discomfort” the process causes him. Soon, blood begins to flow from the table into the camera’s view.

Anyone viewing this disk must make an Onerous (7) *guts* roll.

If the posse fast-forwards the disk, there is more cracking and screaming, some loud slurping and squishing noises—and lots of blood. After about two hours, they see the room begin to vibrate severely. This is the beginning of the subsidence that sank Baton Rouge. Less than 30 minutes later, water begins to flood into the morgue, and soon the camera is completely underwater and goes to static.

Into Davey Jones’ Meat Locker

If any of the heroes are brave enough to take a dip into the brackish water, give them a red Fate Chip. That’s the stuff heroes are made of, after all! Following the hose down leads the intrepid souls down to the bottom floor, almost 40 feet underwater. There, it goes into a large set of double doors, obviously recently broken from the outside. A crowbar lies near the base of one of the doors.

Unless the heroes have a source of light with them, they can’t see anything inside the doors. It’s too dark. Heroes who follow the hose find it leads into a fair-sized room with several large, metal tables and some odd, metal lockers along the walls. There the hose floats in the water, hung on the corner of one of the tables. The mask appear to have been forcibly pulled from its wearer’s head. Its strap is bent and broken.

All 15 locker doors are open, each revealing a space about a foot and a half square and 6 feet deep. A non-savage character who makes a Fair (5) *Knowledge* roll recognizes this is a morgue. Any hero who makes a Foolproof (3) *Cognition* roll notices all the “lockers” are empty.

There are also two bloats floating near the ceiling in this room. They attack once the heroes have entered the room. For full details on bloats, see page 35.

First Floor

The floors are listed in the order they’re above the water line. The floor the posse enters is the fifth from the ground.

Checking In

Once the posse moves into the hospital, the first level they enter is fairly empty. Years worth of dust cover everything, but this makes tracking someone a cakewalk!

A hero who makes a Foolproof (3) *trackin’* roll finds tracks all over this level. The tracks appear to belong to barefoot humans. A raise on the *trackin’* roll tells the hero the prints are a little larger than a normal-sized man’s.

Most of the tracks appear to be in the intact (western) staircase. There, the footprints lead up from the water to the next floor.

The Elevators

Prying open the elevators reveals no cars are on this floor. The shafts are filled almost to floor level with murky water. There’s nothing to be found here.





Hospital Visit

The Nurses Station

The nurses station contains a few records and charts but these should be of no interest to the heroes. However, it does contain a computer station. This computer has remarkably escaped the worst of the ravages of time and weather.

A hero who uses a battery from one of the rafts and makes an Incredible (11) *tinkerin'* roll can power up the computer long enough to view the camcorder disk. A Doomsayer using the *powerup* power can accomplish the same thing. This is important information, so use Luke to nudge the posse toward this. If no hero can bring the computer online, Luke can do so after fiddling with it for a bit.

Supply Closet

Behind the nurses station is a supply room. Linens, smocks, and the like are kept here, along with bulkier medical equipment. A few unspoiled bandages and air splints can be found, but no pharmaceuticals are stored here.

Patient Rooms

The patient rooms on this floor contain hospital beds, chairs, and nightstands. A few broken television sets remain, but most items of value have been removed. The sheets and mattresses are all badly molded and rotting.

Second Floor

The posse can get to the second floor by either scaling the outside of the building, climbing the elevator shaft, or taking the western staircase. The outside wall is crumbling dangerously, and anyone who tries to climb it must make an Onerous (7) *climbin'* roll or fall. Those who fall take 3d6+3 damage from falling debris in addition to the standard falling damage. Using the stairs is difficult, but safe.

The first thing to greet the posse is the nurses' station for the floor. Like the one on the lower floor, this one contains the remains of various charts and other files.



ICU

The intensive care unit was on this floor, along with one of the hospital's operating theaters. Investigation of the ICU rooms yields little. Most usable machinery was evacuated after the flood. However, enough debris remains to hint at the rooms' former functions.

The Scrub Room

This room used to be used by surgeons to clean up prior to entering surgery. Now it's a shambles: broken sinks, burst pipes, and a crumbling ceiling. Also in the room is a bloat—one of the corpses that was trapped in the morgue with the doctor when the city flooded.

The bloat attacks immediately upon seeing the posse. Don't forget surprise rolls and the creature's stench. Fortunately, waterlogged undead aren't known for their powers of observation. Unless the posse made a lot of noise, roll for surprise normally.

Surgery Prep

The entry to the surgery room contains a couple of rusted and rotting gurneys, but little else. Any hero making a Fair (5) *trackin'* roll can tell there's been a fair amount of traffic in here.

The surgery preparation room has a number of broken cabinets and ruined equipment. A few jugs of isopropyl alcohol are in a cabinet near the entry door. (If you're feeling generous, leave one out and allow it to be "accidentally" hit so the posse can see the effect on a bloat.)

Stacked like cordwood opposite the operating theater door are 19 corpses of Gators. (The remains of the river scum the bloats dragged off the *Delta Queen*.) The sight is quite unnerving. Have the heroes make Onerous (7) *guts* checks.

A Fair (5) *medicine* roll tells a waster examining the raiders appear that they either to have been strangled or drowned. Have any character looking at the bodies make a Fair (5) *Cognition* roll. If she succeeds, she notices two of the corpses appear to have already been cut open just like Henry Johnson.

These two are actually walkin' dead! (They're not bloats. They're too fresh for that.) Unless they're found out, they wait until the posse starts examining the bodies to attack them.

Any loud fighting alerts Delacroix and the other abominations on the floor.

The Doctor Will See You Now!

The thing that used to be Dr. Delacroix has set up its unholy shop in the operating theatre on this floor. He's about to begin his autopsy of a Gator when the posse arrives.

The room is badly damaged by the effects of the earthquake. Rubble lies about the floor, and most of the equipment has been toppled and lies in piles on the floor. The only major piece still standing is the operating table.

Hospital Visit

Currently, Delacroix has eight bloats (see page 35) on hand: two assisting him, and six observing from the theater seats. The two citizens of Nouveau Baton Rouge that were captured a few nights ago are also in the balcony, along with Janice if she was taken.

Viewing the twisted scene requires anyone viewing it to make a *guts* roll against a TN of 9! (And don't forget the -4 modifier for the Fear Level of the hospital.)

Delacroix tries to avoid entering combat, instead seeking to escape if the fight seems to turn against his creations. The bloats and walkin' dead are a different story. The abominations flood down over the retaining wall in a wave of bloated flesh and attack!

Dr. Joseph Delacroix

Delacroix's fascination with the return to life exhibited by the walkin' dead has translated into a unique ability to confer life after death. Any corpse upon which Delacroix performs an autopsy becomes a walkin' dead under his control. Such walkin' dead always bear the evidence of his autopsy, usually in the form of a terrible cut in the corpse's torso and the all-too-familiar toe tag.

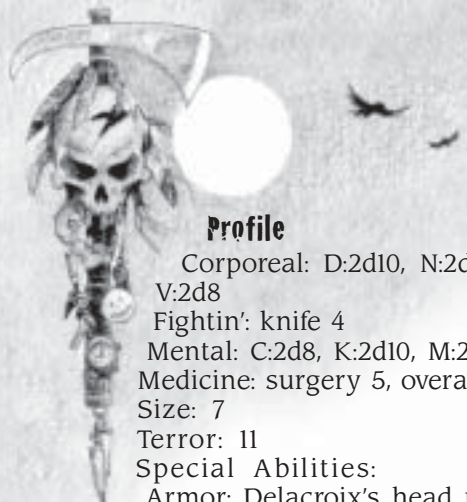
Delacroix's physical condition has suffered from years underwater. His bluish flesh is swollen and waxy, like a normal bloat. He's almost totally bald. His distended features make his dead, black eyes appear small and beady.

Additionally, some of his instruments were fused into his flesh when the Reckoners turned him into a true abomination of the Apocalypse. The flesh of his left hand has swollen around a rusty bone saw, and the fingernails on his right have been replaced by a razor-sharp scalpels. On his forehead is an archaic reflector from an examination light which provides him some protection from head shots.

Although the doctor has many aspects of a bloat, he doesn't share their weakness for alcohol. Only removing his own toe tag puts the doctor down for good. Burning the tag doesn't help. The wire must be removed from his toe—or the toe from his body—to destroy him.

Other injuries cause him to suffer a stun check, as usual, but no other effect. Even dismemberment (other than of his toe) only temporarily incapacitates him—although he may feign defeat in such a case, to get away later.





Hospital Visit

Profile

Corporeal: D:2d10, N:2d8, S:3d8, Q:2d10, V:2d8
Fightin': knife 4
Mental: C:2d8, K:2d10, M:2d6, Sm:2d8, Sp:1d6
Medicine: surgery 5, overawe 5
Size: 7
Terror: 11
Special Abilities:
Armor: Delacroix's head reflector gives him a 50% chance of deflecting frontal attacks to the head. Eye shots bypass this armor.
Damage: Scalpel (STR+1d6), bone saw (STR+2d6)
Undead.
Vulnerability: The removal of his toe tag kills Doctor Delacroix, as does a maimed wound to the noggin.
Zombie: Any human corpse autopsied by Delacroix becomes a walkin' dead under his control. Additionally, any walkin' dead (or bloat) created by this power has a toe tag and can be destroyed by its removal.

Checking Out

If Delacroix is able to escape the floor, he jumps into the murky water. Once in the river, unless one of the posse can breathe underwater, he's gone. If the heroes put him down, all the bloats immediately drop lifeless (of course) to the ground and begin decomposing.

Nuke It!

It's possible the heroes have the bomb Mr. Tinsdale built to destroy the *Delta Queen*, or another large explosive. Detonating it in the operating theater finishes what the earthquake and flood began. The BRMH breaks apart and slides beneath the waters of the Mississippi.

Any bloats or walkin' dead trapped inside are effectively put down—along with any hero unlucky enough to still be there! Dr. Delacroix, on the other hand, eventually claws his way from the rubble to begin his experiments again.

Third Floor

The wasters may climb all the way up here before heading into the doctor's lair.

Getting There

Actually scaling the crumbling wall outside is the only way to reach the top floor of the ruin. This is even harder than the climb to the second floor, requiring the

heroes to each make a Hard (9) *climbin'* roll. Failure here, as before, means the hero takes 3d6+3 damage from the fall and rubble cascading onto her.

Break Room

This room contains a few overturned round tables and chairs. Broken vending machines line the wall opposite the theater. If the posse manages to open the machines, they find nearly 100 cans of soda drinks of various brands and flavors, including 20 cans of Dr. Pepper (quite a score for the Wasted West).

The candy and food in the machines has long since spoiled, except for a single pack of Junior Mints (which is still curiously refreshing).

The Operating Theater Upper Level

The posse sees the scene described on pages 44 and 45. However, this time, they're above the Doctor and behind the bloats and walkin' dead. Since the heroes may not have alerted the monsters to their presence, check for surprise for both parties if the heroes enter through the upper floor.

The TN for the *guts* check for viewing the "operation" remains a 9.

Aftermath

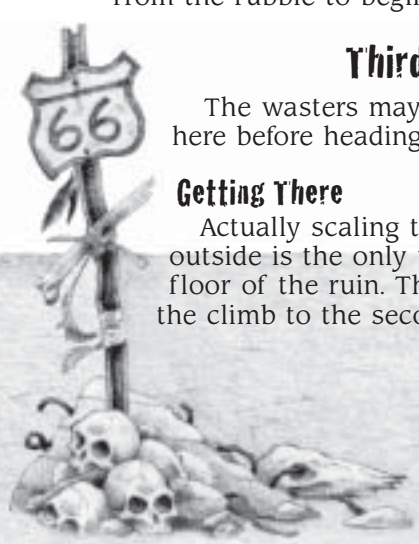
Regardless of the outcome, provided the posse survives the encounter and returns to Nouveau Baton Rouge, Sheriff Reynard provides them with the promised reward. She repeats her offer of a place in the community to the heroes. Mr. Tinsdale is grateful to the heroes for their efforts, and he offers them work as recyclers.

If the heroes choose to accept the offer, don't despair. There are plenty of adventures possible in the flooded ruins of the city. If the heroes start getting too settled, a visit from Elvira's River Rats (detailed in *The Wasted West*) could stir things up a little. All that, combined with the nearby Hell Swamp and the ruins of New Orleans serve to keep life in Nouveau Baton Rouge anything but boring for the posse.

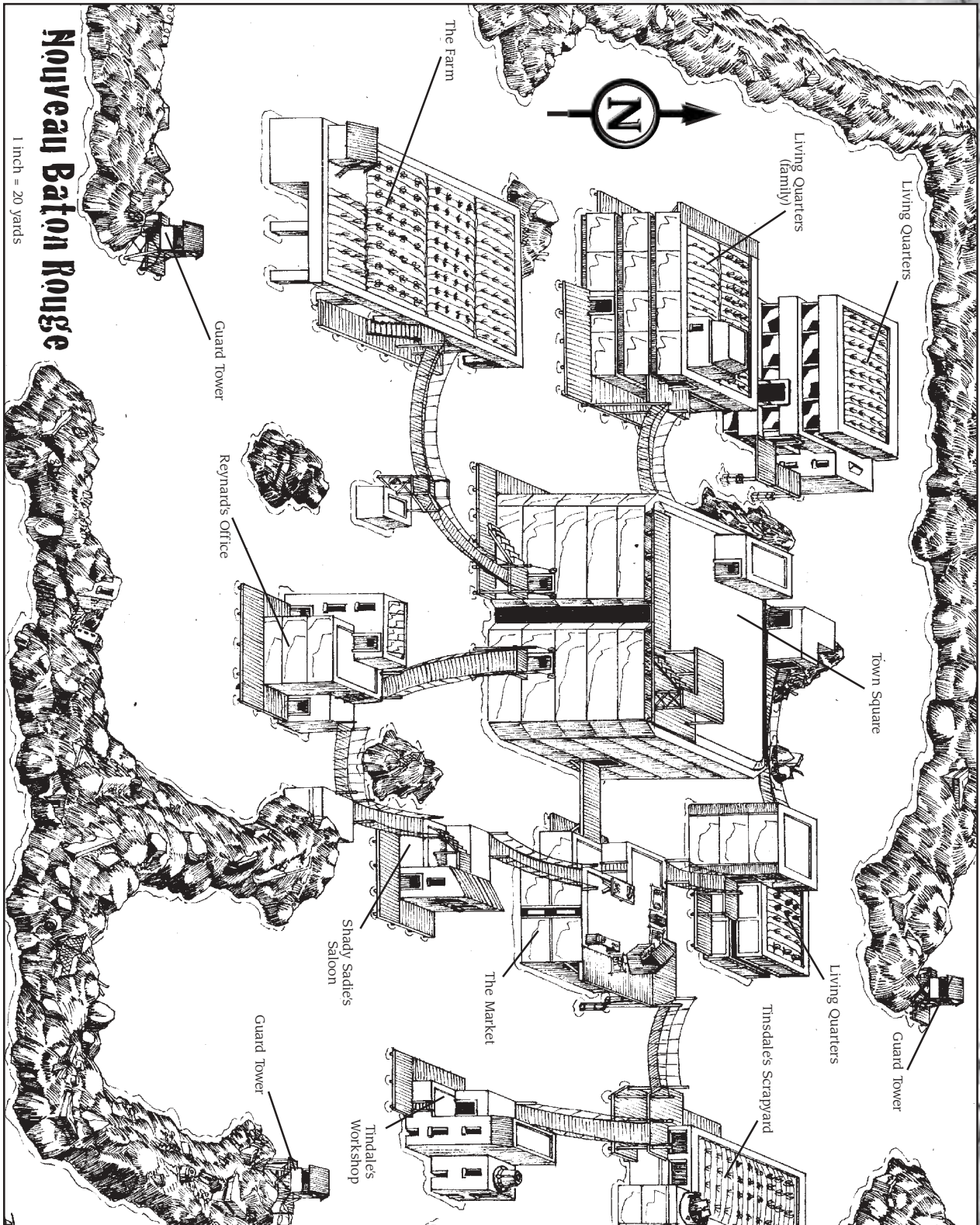
Bounty

Finding a way to play the recorder disk: One white chip each.
Deducing Delacroix's weakness: One red chip each.
Putting Delacroix down for good: One blue chip each.

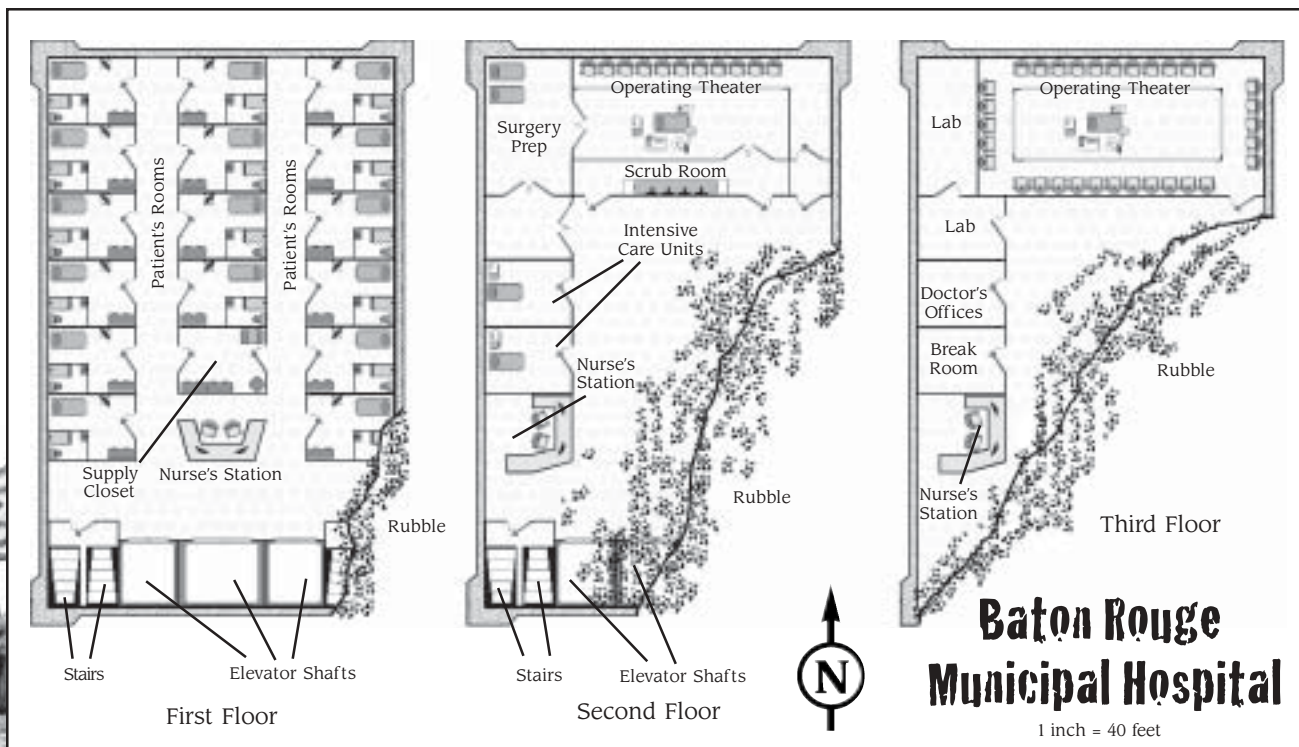
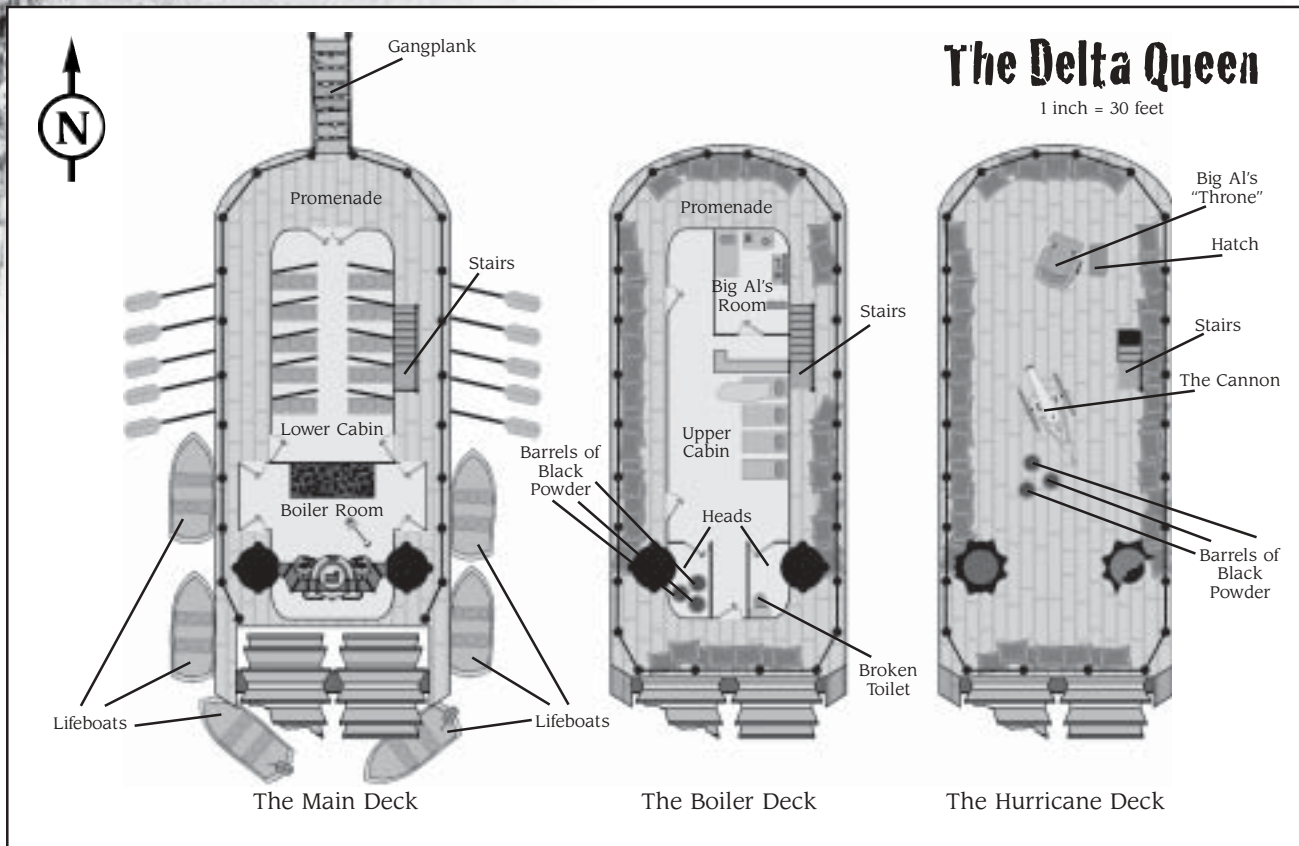
Marshal: 48



Maps



Maps



Marshal: 50