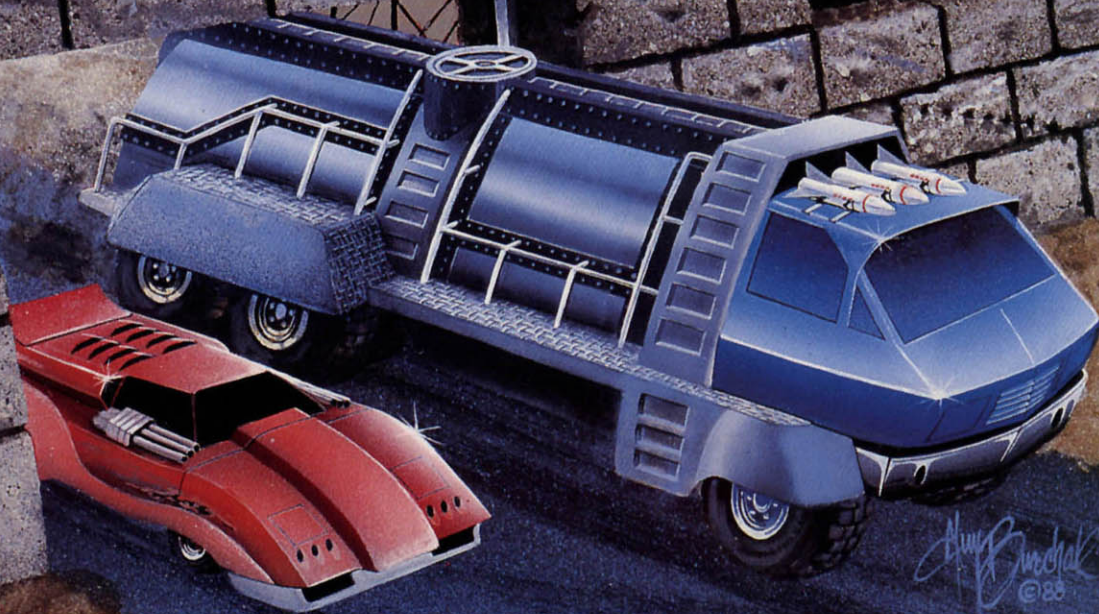


Supplement for
GURPS® Autoduel®
and
CAR WARS®

The AADA Road Atlas and Survival Guide VOLUME SIX: THE FREE OIL STATES



By Stephen Beeman



STEVE JACKSON GAMES

The AADA Road Atlas and Survival Guide VOLUME SIX: THE FREE OIL STATES

A Supplement for *Car Wars*® and *GURPS Autoduel*®

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THE FREE OIL STATES

Louisiana

Louisiana has more in common with the states of the Deep South than with the Free Oil States — but with a flavor all its own. Louisiana was settled by the French rather than the English, and thus has traditions and people very different from the South. French Catholics and Creoles also have their differences from their more straight-laced English neighbors. Louisiana has three basic terrain types: alluvial land, generally in the southeast portion of the state, and less than 50 ft. above tide level; rolling to hilly in the north; and prairie lands shading off into coastal marshes in the southwest.

Northern Louisiana

The north and northwestern regions of the nation feature gently rolling hills, rich soil, minerals and piney woods. This is good land, easy to farm.

Northwest Louisiana is also the industrial heart of the republic. There are several large manufacturing centers for such goods as weapons, ammunition, algae-food and plastics. The cities here are a lot like the industrial towns of the Midwest or the East Coast. Outside the few cities, however, are long stretches of empty country. There are almost no small towns or other signs of civilization, and the gang activity in this area is fairly high.

Southern Louisiana

The bayou is a particularly Louisiana feature — essentially, a cross between a sluggish river and a swamp. Including bayous, Louisiana contains more than 7,400 miles of navigable waterways. Life here demands a rapport with the water. While there is a constant struggle against the water to keep one's fields and home above the tidal surges, the swamps and bayous provide Louisians with a wide variety of fish, game and fowl. The rivers are also a cheap source of transportation.

South central Louisiana is the land of the Cajuns, (see p. 30). Their villages and farms, deep within the bayous, survived the Bad Years primarily because no cycle gangs were foolhardy enough to test the Cajuns' mettle on their home turf.

The southeast thrives on trade along the Mississippi River, its branch, the Red River, and the Atchafalaya River. Some minor manufacturing is scattered around the area. However, once ranked first in the U.S. catch of fish, Louisiana still relies heavily on her fishing industry for economic support.

The Boom Years

Ever since the Spindletop gusher of 1901 kicked off the first Texas oil boom, petroleum has been the lifeblood of Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas. By the 1980s, these states were responsible for over half of the United States' oil production, and well over 5% of the world's production. Volume consumption combined with high prices to deliver high income to those in the oil business and the host states. That income, combined with favorable state tax laws, led to a boom in industry. Texas in particular used the boom to attempt to become a "Third Coast" — a haven for the science, technology and the arts.

The Bust Years

Alas, nothing lasts forever. Oil prices continued to drop after the energy crisis, and the petroleum industry, used to dollar-per-gallon gas prices, couldn't keep up production at 75 cents per gallon. (The difference seems trivial now, when gasoline costs \$40 per gallon. However, the 20th-century oil companies were accustomed to high volume sales since *everyone* drove gas-powered cars. Some families had two or three cars, and filled each with gas (an average of 15 gallons *every week!*)

The local economies, that had subsidized their growth with oil revenues, were just beginning to diversify. They couldn't maintain the momentum without the support of the oil industry. Oil prices fell, oil production fell, oil employment fell, state employment fell . . . the soon-to-be Free Oil States led the rest of the country into the greatest depression since the 1930s.

Things began to brighten up in the late 1990s. The high level of Arab oil production, the main cause of the disastrous oil price drop, slackened unexpectedly. Some nations stopped exporting oil altogether. Prices skyrocketed as supplies dwindled. The long-predicted oil shortage had come.

The U.S. government felt the pinch also. The U.S. military began to switch to alcohol fuel for their equipment. However, the needs of the country were still so great that the government reacted in a typical manner: If it couldn't buy oil, it would take it. The Petroleum Conservation Act of 2000 nationalized all oil and natural gas resources.

To this, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas also reacted in a typical manner: They seceded.

The War Years

Oklahoma and Texas declared independence on August 9th (Louisiana on the 10th), 2000, and the three formed a loose alliance known as the Free Oil States (F.O.S.). Like the First Civil War, the Second Civil War was caused by a broad range of factors beyond the conspicuous cause. Initially, the federal government tried to coax the states back into the union through diplomatic discussions. These parleys failed, even though the government was willing to back off from its position on nationalizing the oil fields.

Talks broke off abruptly when, in a well-coordinated surprise maneuver, rebelling National Guard units moved out from their posts to besiege federal military installations across the newly formed Free Oil States.

The Battle of Selma was one of the first clashes between U.S. and F.O.S. units. Secessionist troops marched from Austin to seize the five U.S. military bases in San Antonio, and were met by a small force dug in at Selma, a northern

suburb of San Antonio. The battle was inconclusive until, in a tragic incident that has yet to be fully explained, two low-yield tactical nuclear weapons detonated over the battlefield. The secessionists claimed a victory, but casualties on both sides were heavy. To this day, no one knows who fired the weapons.

The Battle of Selma had repercussions for the rest of the war. Since both sides had the capability to use tactical nukes, military plans had to assume that a nuclear strike was always imminent. Strength couldn't be concentrated in one place, lest the target become too tempting. Supply lines had to spread out and be flexible, lest a single strike be capable of crippling an entire army. Both sides moved very cautiously.

Indeed, sluggishness and caution were the hallmarks of the war. The federal forces had troops and equipment, but limited oil supplies and long transportation lines for its alcohol fuel; the rebels had oil to spare, but a shortage of troops and equipment, made especially acute by federal naval blockades in the Gulf of Mexico. Neither side could afford the expense of a major assault, so the war bogged down into protracted skirmishes.

While Texas and Louisiana saw relatively little action on their borders, the war wandered back and forth in skirmishes across the open plains of Oklahoma. As the U.S. massed forces in southern Kansas, Oklahoma evacuated many of its civilians to southern cities. In the battle for the Tulsa oil refineries, the U.S. Army initially broke through the National Guard lines with their superior armor and forced a retreat. The Oklahoma Air Guard, however, ensured that U.S. forces could not use the 11,000-foot runway at the airport for reinforcements — they torched the adjacent fuel dump.

The defenders pulled back across the Arkansas River and blew up the bridges. At first, the U.S. forces were content to stay north of the line and concentrate their effort on taking the refineries. However, they could not maintain their positions for long. The attack had cost the U.S. forces dearly in men and material, and the defenders left little behind to scavenge — food or ordnance. When the corporate security forces based in Bartlesville, broke out and captured a major supply column, the U.S. forces withdrew. Without supplies, hanging on to Tulsa would have meant starvation.

During the next two years, no real ground was gained by either side. The stalemate was finally broken by General Gloria "Brave" Falsey's "Gulf or Bust" campaign in late 2003. Using every military unit and drop of oil available on the west coast, Falsey struck hard from New Mexico. The assault was a strategic surprise to Texas, and conventional troops couldn't be mustered to hold back the oncoming tide.

The Texas generals made a difficult decision. The city of Lubbock was evacuated, and all its defenders pulled out, leaving behind a small force of volunteers. These volunteers (mostly Texas Rangers) spread out, to appear like

Oklahoma

The public image of Oklahoma is a bleak, barren plain sporadically dotted with fortified oil derricks and company towns. While the oil derricks and company towns are an integral part of Oklahoma, the facts make it one of the fastest recovering republics (states) in North America.

The Blight hit hardest in the north and eastern portions of the republic. When the Blight withered the wheat fields, it decimated the major cash crop of Oklahoma and all the related industry. Because of the resulting confusion and unemployment, the area became a dust bowl. Many farmers retreated into the highland areas of the Ozark Plateau and the Oauchita Mts. for shelter and sustenance.

When the government stabilized, the farmers co-opted their forces to protect themselves, and returned to their land in the sheltered triangle between I-40 and I-44. Frequent patrols keep cycle gang activity to a minimum and the farms prosper again as they produce another major Oklahoma crop — peanuts. There is great demand for the edible oil and by-products as well as the protein-rich legume.

The plains and prairies of western and central Oklahoma, survived the Blight in much the same way as similar areas of Texas — range grass didn't wither. Therefore, the cattle industry survived. Cattle and buffalo, raised on the wild grasses, are becoming plentiful again and providing Oklahoma with another income source.

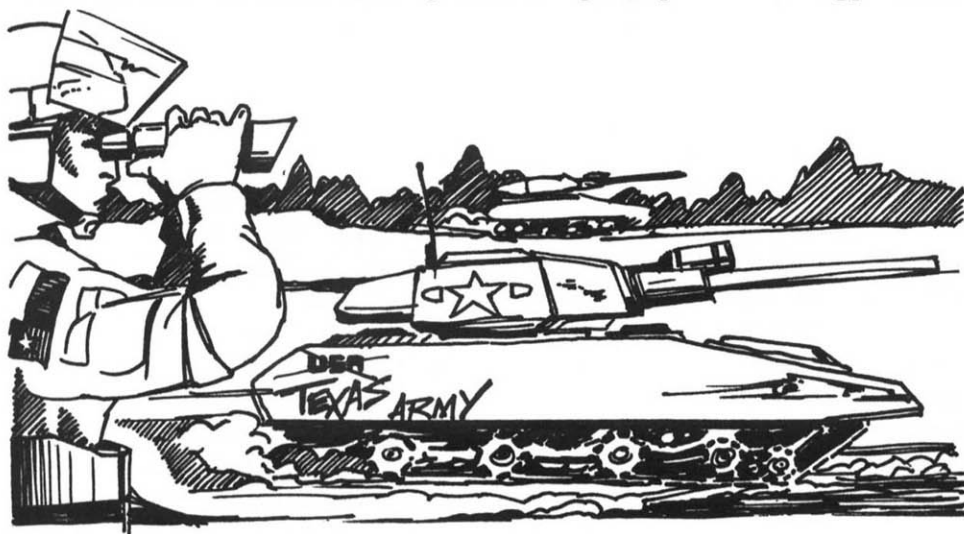
The Osage

Between 1808 and 1870, this North American Indian tribe sold most of their land to the United States. In 1870, they entered a reservation in northeastern Oklahoma after securing exceptional terms with the U.S. government on land leases and interest on trust funds. When oil was discovered on their land, they became the wealthiest Indian community in the nation.

The Osage hardly felt the oil bust because they had diversified their financial interests when the first trouble signs appeared in the '70s. However, as with other Oklahoma corporations, they did move to secure the reservation and oil holdings by increasing their security forces.

When Oklahoma seceded, the Osage voted to go with them. The tribe's security forces were a major factor in the defense of Bartlesville, which led to the end of the attack on Tulsa (see maintext). Subsequently, they maintained an early warning system for the republic along the Kansas border.

Due to their wealth and their contribution during the War, the Osage became a major political force in the new government. A major stockholder in Oklahoma, Ltd (see p. 46), the Osage maintain a good-size voting block, and therefore are represented in the Chamber of Commerce.



Texas

It's really no surprise that Texas seceded from the United States — the ties were never strong from the beginning. Texas began as a Spanish colony, but American settlers threw off the yoke of Mexican rule. After ten years of independence, Texas joined the United States — only to secede less than 20 years later when they joined the Confederacy! Relations improved after the First Civil War, but Texans have always considered themselves a breed apart.

Southwest Texas

Southwest Texas looks a lot like Mexico and New Mexico — deserts, scattered grasses and low mountain ranges, with an occasional town or, more likely, ghost town. While some of the inhabitants survive through oil drilling, farming or ranching, most survive out of sheer cussedness. *Jefes* — Mexican warlords or gang leaders — own this part of the republic, and the few small villages are constantly terrorized and plundered. But the lure of black gold keeps the region from becoming an abandoned wasteland.

Northwest Texas

The Panhandle region, extending east to Arlington, changed very little during the Bad Years. Cattle are still the main claim to fame in these parts. The Blight didn't affect the range grasses that supported the local herds. Civilization has been maintained here. However, the large cities and corporate compounds are separated by miles and miles of nothing but miles and miles. Still, this region is responsible for a large portion of the republic's industrial production, and trucks travel the roads night and day.

Central Texas

The ground cover becomes greener and trees more common towards the center of the republic. Known as the Hill Country, central Texas marks the southernmost limits of patrols and civilization. If you don't mind isolation, it's possible to maintain a small farm or orchard in peace and security here.

East Texas

This area is almost indistinguishable from western Louisiana. Rivers wind through pine forests, while oil derricks rise above the trees. Other areas of the nation are best suited to ranching, but east Texas is good farmland. The constant threat of war with Louisiana keeps Texas farmers co-opted for security reasons.

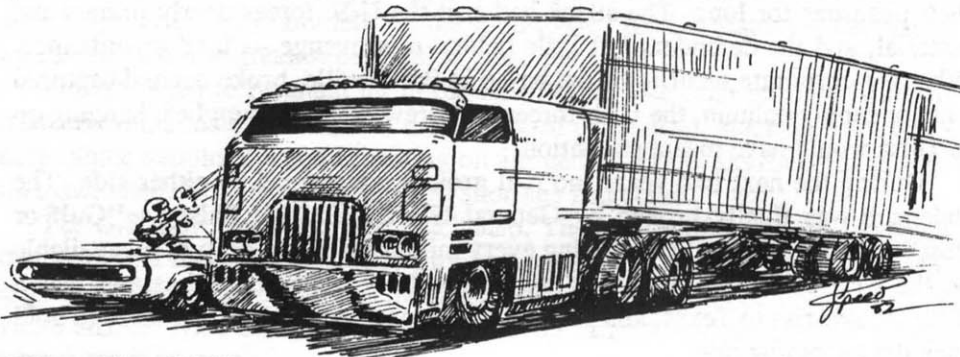
a much larger force. They lured the U.S. forces into a full-scale attack. The defenders couldn't hold out, of course — but by the time the attackers realized the ruse, it was too late. A bombing run from Abilene dropped four tac-nukes on the forces, smashing a third of Falsey's impressive army.

This time, there was no doubt who detonated the device, and the diplomatic furor was immense. The United States threatened to use its strategic nuclear arsenal if Texas made another such attack. Wisely, Texas refrained. However, the assault had given the republic time to scrape up a defensive line, and Falsey's drive was stopped 50 miles short of Austin. The delaying effect of the Battle of Lubbock won the war. Today, January 20th, the date of the battle, is observed in Texas as Memorial Day.

The Second Civil War, known in Texas as "The War for Freedom," had the potential to be even bloodier than the first. Three factors, however, mitigated that potential. First, neither side trusted its own troops enough to really go on major offensives until late in the war. Second, the high-tech vehicles that formed the backbones of these armies, ran on the same oil whose depletion had started the conflict. Finally, the states were too busy with their own problems to care whether the Free Oil States remained part of the union. The federal government finally decided the principle wasn't worth the expense in men and material to continue.

The Texarkana Accords, signed January 12, 2005, established the independence of Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana, in return for their holding to their original state borders. One of the last acts of the dissolving United Nations was to recognize the Republics of Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas as sovereign nations.

Still, the war was devastating enough. Over 200,000 died during the four years of bloodshed. Of these, roughly 50,000 were civilian casualties.



The Bad Years

Independence didn't shelter the Free Oil States from the hard times that lay ahead. Louisiana, for example, suffered severe flooding — oil companies, no longer restricted by EPA regulations, drained much of southern Louisiana, causing widespread subsidence. As the water table rose, cities and roads were kept dry only by massive dikes and levees.

As the second largest producer of rice and sugarcane, Louisiana suffered a severe blow, economically, from the Blight. However, the swamps continued as a major food source and soybeans replaced rice as the major crop. The dikes and levees became effective defenses against cycle gang raiders from the southern United States during the Food Riots. Overall, the republic was better off than most, but Louisiana's economy has always been marginal.

Oklahoma fared worse than Louisiana. The war, which took place mostly on Oklahoma soil, wrecked the republic's economy and infrastructure. As the fourth largest producer of wheat in the United States, the republic's major cash crop was devastated by the Blight. "Wheatbacks" flooded into the state from the other plains states adding to the Food Riots and compounding the problem. Clouds of red dust blown from the now-barren wheat fields coated the land.

Texas definitely had an easier time of it. Range grasses, hardier than hybrid food grains, proved more Blight-resistant, and so the great cattle ranches of Texas suffered far less than the wheat fields of the Midwest. By the time the ranches began to hurt for lack of grass, ConTexCo, an Arlington company, introduced commercially-produced, algae-based food substitutes. The highly efficient Texas Rangers repulsed bandit raids from Mexico and New Mexico. Other than the utter collapse of Houston and San Antonio (see pp. 19 and 22), Texas remained fairly stable throughout the Bad Years.

The Reconstruction Years

Drastic measures were taken to bring the Free Oil States out of the chaos of the Food Riots. In Louisiana, the constitutional government collapsed. A charismatic television evangelist, Gary Stevenson, stepped forward “to lead my people to prosperity in Christ.” Ordained “His Most Holy Majesty, President-for-Life and Defender of the Faith,” Stevenson actually did accomplish what he said he would. He put Louisiana back on its feet and brought law and order back to the cities. Unfortunately, he achieved all this through an iron-fisted theocratic monarchy. Before he was finally deposed and imprisoned in 2027, his egomania led to an unsuccessful border war with Texas. (Stevenson later escaped from prison, and now roams the bayou country with his “Crusade on Wheels,” plying both Texas and Louisiana with his propaganda.)

Oklahoma suffered a similar governmental collapse. After the Food Riots, the only significant armed strength in Oklahoma belonged to corporate security forces. Company towns grew up around the factories defended by these forces. While it was a welcome relief, the introduction of algae food compounded the problem. The corporations were the only organizations (aside from the cities of New Tulsa and Oklahoma City) able to afford tank facilities. When national elections were held in 2022 to re-establish a central government, corporate candidates won by landslides. Not surprisingly, the government they built had only two purposes: enforce contracts and defend property rights. Oklahoma became a plutocracy — ruled by the rich, for the rich, with an iron fist in an iron glove.

Again, Texas fared the best out of the three Free Oil States. Having weathered the Food Riots with little social collapse, Texas maintained the representative democracy created after the Second Civil War. Unfortunately, when faced with Louisiana’s expansionism, United States hostility and Mexican chaos, Texas plowed billions of dollars into its military, money which was needed for reconstruction. Thus, even though Texas came out of the Bad Years in relatively good shape, it didn’t start getting any better until the early 2030s.

Today

The Free Oil States today are, on the whole, as well off as any other part of the world, with the exception of Australia. Louisiana is the poorest of the three, but still thrives, due to oil as well as to commerce in the Gulf and on the Mississippi. On the other hand, the government is still a theocracy, albeit an elected one.

Oklahoma is the wealthiest nation, per capita, in North America, but nearly all of that wealth is controlled by the captains of industry. Their economic success is founded on oil capital, cheap indentured labor, aggressive marketing and tax-free profits.

Texans have freedom and prosperity, but war continually threatens, and gang activity is on an upswing. Still, these problems are trivial compared with the chaos of the past fifty years. The Free Oil States successfully weathered the Bad Years by relying on the tough pioneering spirit that founded their territories. That spirit is still strong, and will take them forward for many good years to come.

The Threat of Warfare

Apparently not satisfied with the bloodshed of the Secession War, the Free Oil States are constantly involved in diplomatic intrigue that threatens to explode into open warfare at any moment. Louisiana wants control of the East Texas oil fields, while Oklahoma wants to “liberate” Amarillo and especially Arlington, to create more tax-free industrial havens. Since Oklahoma and Louisiana have little to gain by attacking each other, they have informally allied against Texas.

Even so, Texas would be more than a match for the two, because the republic is one of only two nuclear powers in North America. But Oklahoma and Louisiana have treaties with the United States that assure nuclear retaliation against Texas should it decide to dip into its nuclear stockpile.

On purely conventional terms, Texas is about evenly matched with Oklahoma and Louisiana. In numbers, the Texas military is about 25% larger than the combined force, and is better trained and equipped; but Texas has far more territory to cover, since even the United States and United Mexican States are potential threats. Many military historians have compared Texas to Israel in the late 20th century — a nation with limited resources but a large army, surrounded by nothing but potential enemies. (Texans especially like to make this comparison, since Israel grew from that position to control a large empire.)

So how will the Border War go, should it ever begin? Military analysts are constantly debating this topic. Without resorting to nuclear arms, Texas can hold out indefinitely from an attack by just one of the pair — that point was made clear by Louisiana’s attempt to conquer the Big Thicket (see p. 27). Texas’ naval power makes Louisiana vulnerable to reprisals and blockades. However, a concerted surprise attack by the combined forces could very well overcome Texas’ defenses. The Texas National Guard maintains four large bases along the borders, in Amarillo, Wichita Falls, Tyler and Beaumont; opposition bases are located in Lawton, Ardmore, Shreveport and Garysburg. Swift, unexpected attacks could bypass the major Texas defensive positions.

There’s simply no telling who would come out on top after a border war, but things look worse for Texas. That nation’s greatest hope lies in avoiding the conflict — but war looks more and more inevitable every day.

THE AADA ROAD ATLAS AND SURVIVAL GUIDE: THE FREE OIL STATES

Driving Customs

Traffic regulations and traditions of the Free Oil States are very different from those in the United States, and vary widely even among the three nations. Travelers are strongly encouraged to pay attention to these differences.

The Police

The police forces of the Free Oil States have two things in common — ruthless efficiency and intolerance of foreigners — both stemming from the bad years after the Second Civil War. The police in Louisiana and Oklahoma are not bound by the Bill of Rights that restrains United States police; even Texas officers have a fairly free hand in enforcing the law. These powers are backed up by good training and equipment.

The police keep their sweeping powers because they're polite and lenient towards citizens. Unfortunately, this tolerance doesn't extend to foreigners. Enough bad feelings are left from the war, that U.S. travelers should exercise caution when dealing with Free Oil States police.

Speed Limits and Traffic Laws

There are no speed limits in rural areas. Speed limits around towns and cities are set and enforced locally and range anywhere from 30 to 70 mph. Although the police can and do hand out tickets for just about anything, the commonest offense is illegal duelling, with willful destruction of government property (using dropped weapons on highways) running a close second. Because the economies of the Free Oil States depend so heavily on trade, the police give big rigs a little more slack, and truckers need not fear speeding tickets. Indeed, the police will often come to the aid of oversized vehicles, even in legitimate road duels.

Weapon Laws

The Free Oil States permit visitors and citizens to openly carry weapons of any sort, including vehicular ordnance. Local governments sometimes require visitors to register their weapons; some, especially company towns in Oklahoma, go so far as to prohibit citizens from carrying weapons. Concealed weapons are illegal everywhere.

Pedestrian duels are legal in most places. Duellists are responsible for property damage and bystander injuries. Vehicular duels are seldom prohibited, even on patrolled roads, but most cities and towns have outlawed duelling within the city limits. Road-damaging dropped weapons (mines and spikes) are prohibited on all highways, and deliberate destruction of the road surface is a capital offense.

Road Courtesy

The Free Oil States residents are friendlier than the police. However, they will take offense if it is given.

One custom that may be unfamiliar to foreign drivers is the "road howdy" — a two-fingered gesture made to passing vehicles, much like a Boy Scout salute made with the hand resting on the steering wheel. This gesture is not an insult, merely a sign of friendliness towards fellow travelers (a waving hand is unlikely to pull a trigger), and the visitor to the Free Oil States will have an easier trip once he masters this signal of highway camaraderie. Failing to return the wave of a police officer, for example, is a sure way to attract his unwelcome attention.

International Travel

Travel among the Free Oil States and to the United States is mostly unrestricted, except for cursory customs examinations at the borders. Occasionally, however, one nation or another will seal its borders as part of the

common disputes and rivalries between these countries. This can be highly inconvenient, and travelers are advised to pay close attention to international news during their visit.

Passports and Licenses

To facilitate dealings with law officers, international travelers are advised to carry identification showing proof of citizenship. This is seldom necessary, but can prove invaluable when the need arises. For more information, contact your local AADA office or your nation's state department.

The Free Oil States honor any U.S. driver's or gunner's license or weapons permit, and the United States reciprocates. This is to facilitate international trade. However, local regulations may vary. It is smart to get information on the area before you arrive. Most police look unkindly on foreigners who start (or even participate in) duels in their jurisdictions.

Customs and Currency

Food of any sort, including livestock, may not be imported to or exported from the United States, but no other trade restrictions apply. The Free Oil States themselves don't worry about contraband, and their borders are mostly open. However, some trade restrictions apply from time to time, usually as the result of border hostilities or trade wars. Contact your local AADA office before planning any international journey.

Upon secession, the Free Oil States established their own currencies. For convenience, those of Louisiana and Texas were tied to the value of the United States dollar, and remain so today. In fact, some merchants in those nations will accept U.S. dollars. However, transactions are simpler, and the exchange rates better, if dollars are traded for Louisiana francs or Texas stars at a bank.

The Oklahoma Constitutional Convention of 2023 established the Oklahoma petrodollar, a very solid unit of currency whose value is tied directly to the price of oil. Like United States silver certificates or British pounds sterling, petrodollars can actually be exchanged for the medium they represent — in this case, unrefined petroleum. One hundred petrodollars are equal to one barrel of crude oil (around \$800 U.S. dollars). The stability of the petrodollar makes it a popular unit of currency in international trade, even in non-North American nations.

THE REPUBLIC OF LOUISIANA

Government: Quasi-dictatorship with strong religious overtones. The "President for Life" is elected by popular vote from a list of candidates approved by the Archbishop of Baton Rouge. The government strictly enforces Neo-Revivalist Charismatic Pentecostal Catholic morality, but the current President, Wesley Jordan, is far more lenient than his two predecessors. Jordan enjoys tremendous popular support, and whomever he backs as his successor will undoubtedly win the next election. Since Jordan is currently in poor health, and many speculate that the next election will be quite soon.



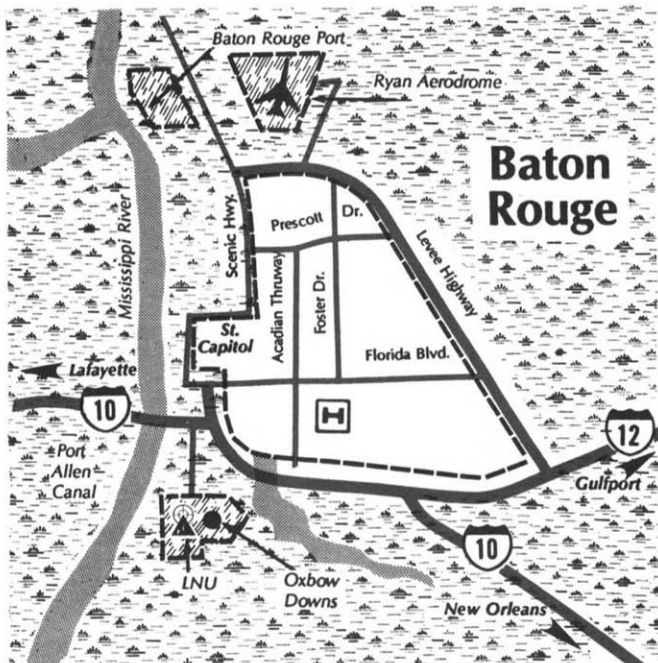
Police: Generally polite, but extremely dangerous if not treated with the high level of respect they demand. (For example, restaurants that charge cops for meals coincidentally tend to be closed soon thereafter for health violations.) An old adage says, "An honest Louisiana judge is one who stays bought; an honest Louisiana cop is one who doesn't haggle for bribes." Bribery rating +3, but this is countered by the general -3 reaction of Louisiana police to lawbreakers, foreigners, minorities and nearly everybody else. The AADA advises that, when conversing with a Louisiana trooper, every statement be followed by "sir" (or "ma'am," as appropriate).

Major roads: I-20, I-10, fair condition; other roads poor in north, non-existent in south. I-10, I-12 and I-55 are kept above the swamp waters of southeast Louisiana by levees and elevated bridges. Travellers to the Gulf areas should keep an eye on the weather particularly in the summer. While hurricanes generally do not hit suddenly, they can be unpredictable. It's best not to be caught out in the open during one. The elevated highways are dangerous during the winds, and the roads themselves can be washed out from the torrential rains.

Duelling climate: Moderate. Duelling is absolutely prohibited on the highways (especially the elevated ones), for fear of road damage. Louisiana troopers will shoot to kill to prevent road duels. However, arena duelling is an extremely popular sport.

Tourism: New Orleans is the prime attraction, especially during Mardi Gras. For those not in the festival mood, the "Sportsman's Paradise" still features fine hunting and fishing, although overhunting during the Food Riots has led to heavy regulation and conservation.

Facilities: Along the major highways, about one garage every thirty to forty miles. Off these roads, frequency ranges from one per 50 miles in the north to practically no services in the south. Repair costs average about 120% of norm; mechanics here are usually honest but many dislike foreigners. Fortified truck stops are uncommon, except on the borders, where the government-operated Welcome Centers provide services and protection. These fortresses also serve as customs checkpoints and military bases.



Many garages and truck stops, especially in the southern marshes, are equipped to handle boats. Gasoline is available very rarely on the highways, somewhat more often in the cities.

Violence frequency: Once per two weeks (urban), weekly rural. Cajun violence is overplayed in the media — a friendly and polite stranger will be welcomed in the bayous, but a belligerent traveler may very well find himself swimming home through snake-infested water.

ALEXANDRIA

AADA Advisory: All evidence shows that the town of Alexandria is a haven for cycle gangs and river pirates. Avoid travel through this area if possible.

Population: 4,000.

Description: Alexandria's only reason for existence appears to be the several truck stops and garages in the town. These establishments are reasonably honest and inexpensive. However, trucks and boats are often hijacked in the area, and several victims have reported finding pieces of their vehicles in Alexandrian parts stores. The local sheriff has investigated these rumors but hasn't yet uncovered any concrete evidence. (Naturally, other rumors say that he's in on the plot.)

Duelling Facilities: None. All the local truck stops sell ammo and make repairs, usually at less than the average price. In addition, a few garages are equipped to service boats.

Other Facilities: One of the truck stops has a small clinic with a full-fledged doctor. Gold Cross can, for a hefty fee, make helicopter pick-ups here from the facilities in Shreveport or Baton Rouge.

Gang Activity: High, both on Hwy. 167 and on the Red River. Alexandria is extremely vulnerable to raids from cycle packs in Mississippi. So far, the sheriff has refused to call for National Guard reinforcements, preferring to handle the situation himself.

BATON ROUGE

AADA Advisory: Road combat is heavily discouraged along the causeways and near the Mississippi. The Coast Guard and National Police who patrol the area are well-equipped, well-trained and bad-tempered.

Population: 500,000.

Description: Unlike many other state and national capitals, Baton Rouge's main employer is *not* the government. A major Mississippi River port, the city derives most of its wealth from shipping and oil refining, with tire production and petrochemical manufacturing a close second. Oil money, reinforced by the government presence, has made Baton Rouge a fairly prosperous and secure place to live.

That doesn't make it pleasant, however. Fumes from the refineries constantly hang over the city, trapped in the hot, humid, stagnant air. The citizens live huddled inside the tall levees that keep the swamp waters from reclaiming the land; massive pumps hum day and night to handle the inevitable leaks.

History: Fish and fowl from nearby swamps and the Mississippi helped the city's residents weather the Food Riots fairly well. As Louisiana slowly sank into the swamps, local citizens banded together to build the system of dikes that keeps Baton Rouge dry. The walls kept the city safe as well during the '20s, when river pirates and overland raiders ravaged most of the surrounding countryside.

Duelling facilities: Duelling is very popular here, but it is outlawed within the city itself. The only local arena is Oxbow Downs, located on the campus of Louisiana National University (see below). Oxbow Downs hosts both off-road and boat combats, and is the home of the national AADA headquarters.

Other facilities: The Baton Rouge Port is a separate island, where most of the truck stops and garages in the area are located. There is a minor airship port nearby, also walled, to handle long-distance traffic. The Louisiana National University forms yet a third compound — a separate city, really, with its own government and facilities (including a hospital and an algae-food plant); the University has a population of about 7,000. Other facilities in Baton Rouge include several hospitals (and the national Gold Cross headquarters), the national capitol complex, and the headquarters of the National Guard and the Coast Guard. There is one local TV station, owned and operated by the state government.

Gang activity: Light. The military keep boat gangs to a minimum, while police patrol the local roads carefully.

LAFAYETTE

Population: 8,000.

Description: Lafayette is on the outer edges of the bayou country. It was once a showcase of Cajun culture and the site of beautiful antebellum architecture and historical buildings. However, the city was burned to the ground in 2023 by "Howlin' Jack" Houma and his Bayou Rats, a gang that used amphibious cars to wreak havoc throughout the swamps. Today, the city has been partially restored by the New Acadia Oil Company (NAOC); they operate an ethanol plant here, producing pure alcohol as well as gasohol.

Duelling Facilities: Evangeline Downs is a small off-road arena, without AADA status. For those with amphibious cars, Cypress Lake is the place to go. The informal duels held here every week, challenge duellists to navigate between the trees at high speed. There are also several truck stops, with fine service. The New Acadia Oil Company sells ethanol and gasohol here for \$10 and \$25 per gallon, respectively, and many people in the area operate IC vehicles (gas is easier to come by than electricity in many parts of the bayous).

Other Facilities: There is a small clinic here, with a helicopter landing pad to facilitate Gold Cross transfers. Tourists shouldn't miss the Lafayette Museum, a walled area built by NAOC, with dozens of exhibits about Cajun culture, including a few reconstructed bayou homes.

Gang Activity: Moderate. Lafayette is right at the edge of the military patrols centered around Baton Rouge. However, it's situated at a major crossroads, so gangs flock to the area once the patrols leave. Howlin' Jack Houma has never been caught, and some bandit attacks are still attributed to his crew.

GARYSBURG

[Formerly LAKE CHARLES]

Population: 55,000.

Description: Due to the tension on the border, the republic maintains its largest military garrison here, to defend against (or perhaps to launch) cross-border raids. Garysburg is also the home of SafeTeePro, a major armor manufacturer.

History: When former President Stevenson (see p. 5) first took office, he needed a symbol to spearhead his national reconstruction program. He found that symbol in



Lake Charles. Through wheeling and dealing, he enticed SafeTeePro to set up their headquarters at the old industrial parks here. He also built a major National Guard base, both to provide employment and to defend the border. The city was renamed Garysburg in honor of the man who was almost single-handedly responsible for its new prosperity.

Duelling Facilities: There is one arena, Delta Downs, currently in the process of becoming AADA accredited. In addition, the SafeTeePro Proving Grounds are occasionally open to the public. Here the company tests and demonstrates its defensive equipment. SafeTeePro products are available at the showroom here at only 60% of their retail price.

In addition to the SafeTeePro factory, there are several truck stops in town, giving adequate service for fair prices — though the service is worse and the prices are higher for Texas citizens. The only police on the highways around Garysburg are military patrols, who don't care about road duels, so fights are common.

Other Facilities: A hospital center (without Gold Cross), dozens of bars, used-car dealers and other facilities for off-duty soldiers.

Gang Activity: Light. The military patrols *do* care about gangs, and aggressively pursue any they find. The greatest danger to visitors (especially visitors from Texas) are the soldiers themselves, who are often eager to pick fights.

MONROE

Population: 15,000.

Description: Monroe is a town that exists only for its food factories. Louisiana purchased a ConTexCo algae plant (see p. 13) and set it up here to feed millions of residents. Genetically engineered algae, grown on vast, shallow tanks, is processed into a wide variety of tastes and textures. (The specialty of the Monroe plant is an excellent *faux* rice pudding.)

Duelling facilities: None. There are several truck stops and garages, to support the fleets of trucks that ship Monroe's products around the republic.

Other facilities: None. The ConTexCo plant maintains limited emergency medical facilities, primarily for its employees, but for most other services one must make the 80-mile trip to Shreveport.

Gang activity: Heavy. The police do their best to patrol the area, but bandits from Mississippi and Arkansas constantly swarm over the border. (Some suspect that many of the raids are actually funded and equipped by Mississippi, the U.S. as a whole, or perhaps the Confederate Commando Corps, see the *AADA Road Atlas Volume 3: The South*, p 13.)

NEW ACADIA

[Formerly NEW IBERIA]

Population: 10,000.

Description: New Acadia is the result of the vision of one man, Jean-Jacques Roulon, a Cajun entrepreneur and oil wildcatter (see p. 30). Roulon snapped up several offshore oil wells, abandoned during the Food Riots. Then, aided by reconstruction money from President Stevenson,

he built an oil receiving and refining facility at New Iberia, dredging the bayous to allow oil tankers up to the town. New Acadia provided employment for thousands of swamp residents who, up until then, had been barely scraping by off the land.

Today New Acadia is a colorful and thriving community. Roulon has gone to great pains to keep the Cajun heritage very much alive. Remarkably, what started out as merely a company town is now something of a tourist attraction, as the good food, good music and good times typical of Cajun society draw visitors from all over the nation.

Duelling Facilities: None. Residents in the mood to watch autoduelling turn on their TVs or make the short trip to Lafayette or New Orleans. The duellists here sneer at arena duelling and take out their aggressions by bayou duelling, in boats and amphibious cars. The truck stops in the area are well equipped to handle boats, and provide decent service for cars as well. Gasoline is available here for \$35 a gallon.

Other Facilities: Most of the facilities are for the employees of New Acadia Oil Company, though a few of the truck stops have motel rooms available for visitors.

Gang Activity: Moderate. Bayou boat gangs and Gulf pirates are the main threat here. NAOC maintains a small military arm (including two pontoon-equipped, hunter-killer choppers) to cut down on banditry, but the lure of oil money is too great to keep gangs away.

NEW ORLEANS

Population: 900,000.

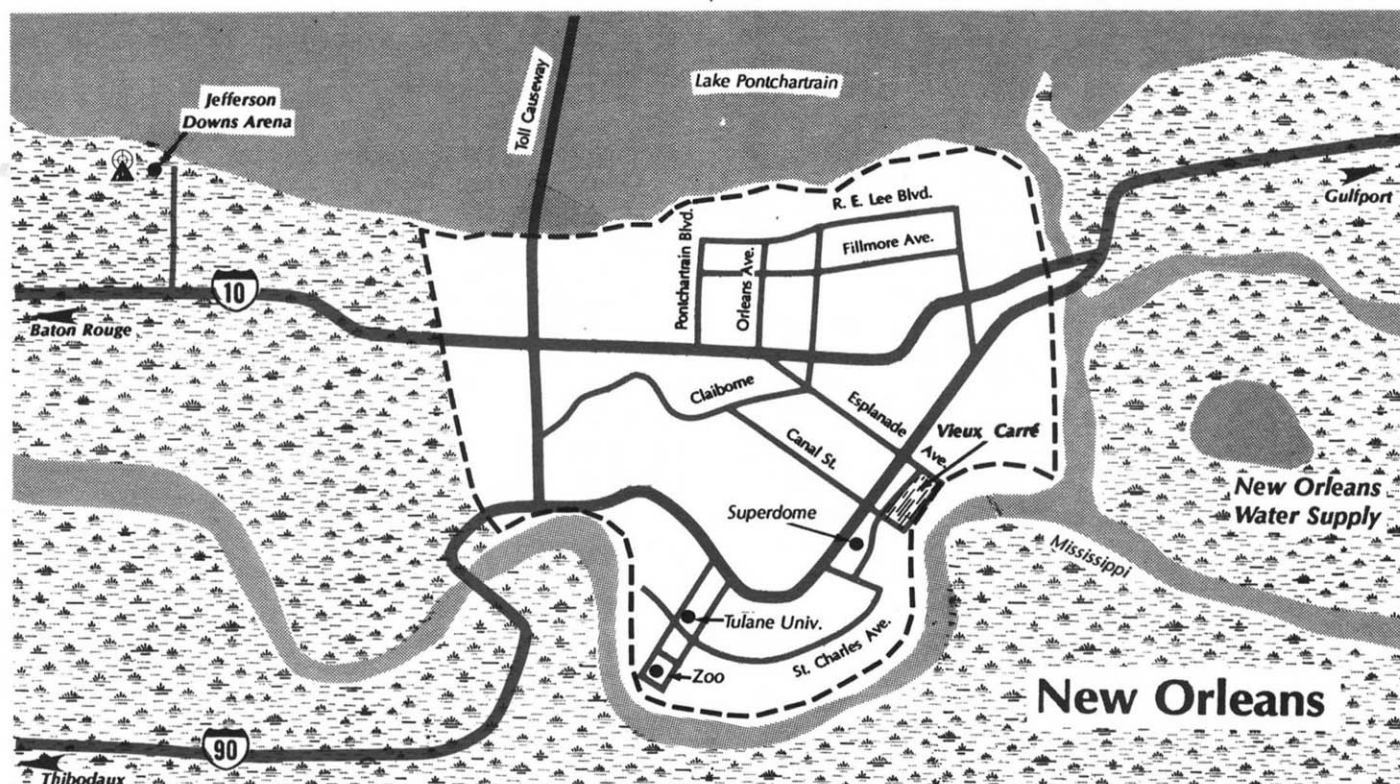
Description: New Orleans is the first thing that comes to the minds of foreigners when they hear the name Louisiana. New Orleans (pronounced "N'Arlens" by the

natives) is steeped in Old World charm, with its cable cars and architecture dating back hundreds of years. The food, nightlife and music of the world-famous Vieux Carré ("Old Square," or the French Quarter) draw visitors throughout the year. During Mardi Gras, the city is filled with wild and reckless frivolity. The Louisiana government's repressiveness the rest of the year just makes the citizens that much more uninhibited when the restrictions are lifted the day before Lent.

Tourism is far from New Orleans' only industry. Situated at the mouth of the Mississippi and surrounded by water, the city was once the second largest port in the world (Amsterdam was first), and was a major financial center. Though New Orleans lost much of its preeminence during the Food Riots, it is still vital to the economy of Louisiana as well as the rest of North America.

History: New Orleans was founded by French-Canadian explorer Jean Baptiste Lemoyne, Sieur de Bienville in 1718 and soon became a refuge for the bottom rungs of French society — criminals, servants and runaway Caribbean slaves. This "melting pot" atmosphere continued, as Spanish, British and Americans came pouring into the prosperous city. New Orleans developed a flamboyant yet sophisticated culture, a montage of widely varying traditions. Though the hard times of the 20th century reduced the city's prosperity, they couldn't dampen the citizens' spirit.

Massive subsidence following the violence of Hurricane George in 2009 flooded most of southeast Louisiana. New Orleans became the "American Venice," and flooding ruined many historic sections of the city. New Orleans was kept habitable through the construction of hundreds of levees and dikes. When the Food Riots struck, the city was devastated — traffic bottlenecked on the few elevated roads through the surrounding swamps, keeping food out and



people in. "Cajun pork" (human meat) became a common dish.

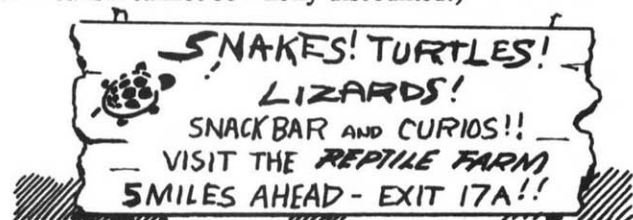
President Stevenson's reconstruction programs restored order to the city, and one of the first projects was a major reclamation effort to return the Vieux Carre to its former grandeur. Today the city once again thrives.

Duelling facilities: The Superdome is an accredited AADA arena that occasionally hosts boat events. The Jefferson Downs Arena houses the AADA headquarters. There are dozens of truck stops and garage facilities, serving the heavy tourist and cargo traffic through New Orleans.

Other facilities: Several hospitals, with Gold Cross services; one university; major river port; minor airport; two local TV stations.

Gang activity: Light. Police presence in the gem of Louisiana is almost overbearing, but polite tourists have nothing to fear. There are no criminal gangs, but the intense rivalries between the "Karnival Krewes," fraternal organizations who sponsor Mardi Gras floats, often break out into open violence.

Outside the city, there are thousands of bayou residents, most of whom ride combat-ready swamp boats. Their reactions to anyone new or foreign are highly variable, and travelers are advised to be cautious. (Persistent rumors of cannibalism cannot be wholly discounted.)



SHREVEPORT

Population: 750,000

Description: It is said that buildings in Shreveport are designed to look gray and run-down; certainly there's no other explanation for the absolute dreariness of the industrial and economic center of the Republic.

Shreveport boasts many of the few remaining oil equipment manufacturers in the world. Furthermore, Artech, one of the largest weapons and munitions producers in North America, is based here. Monroe, to the east, keeps the city well fed, with three major algae processing plants. Shreveport, in fact, is more prosperous today than it was fifty years ago, a remarkable example of recovery.

Duelling facilities: As the prime manufacturing center of weaponry in the Free Oil States, Shreveport is, naturally enough, a major duelling center. The Bossierdrome is a unique arena. The walled-off downtown district of a nearby city, it is currently under AADA review after a collapsing building killed the two front runners in a recent Regional Championship. There are two other minor arenas in the area. There are numerous truck stops and garage facilities, and wholesale outlets selling ammo and weaponry for only 60% of the national average.

Other facilities: The second largest Louisiana National Guard base is here (the largest is Garysburg); the national headquarters of the Air Guard is located here as well. There are two hospitals, both with Gold Cross. There are two TV stations — one private and one operated by the National Guard.



Gang activity: Light. The National Guard patrols the area heavily, and no bikers in their right minds would even attempt violence here. Of course, many bikers *aren't* in their right minds . . .

THIBODAUX

Population: 5,200.

Description: Right in the heart of the Cajun bayou country, Thibodaux exists primarily to serve the rural population. This is the only community of any appreciable size deep in the bayou region, and swamp dwellers come from miles around to do business here. In addition to the general stores and garages, the town has a large fish packing plant and a tanning company. Thibodaux today bears a strong resemblance to the frontier trading posts of two hundred years ago — right down to the trappers and hunters coming into town dressed in homespun clothes and leather jackets. Of course, today they come in electric armed boats rather than canoes.

Duelling Facilities: None. If you want a fight, it's easy enough to find around here. The mechanics are generally quite good, but not especially honest — cheating each other is a game that even visitors are expected to play. (In other words, if you get gypped, it's your own fault.)

Other Facilities: Thibodaux doesn't have a lot to offer foreigners. One thing that makes life for the tourist especially difficult is the fact that nearly everyone here speaks Cajun, which can be confusing to non-natives. Still, visitors who can converse and be friendly with the residents will find a warm welcome, good food and good times.

Gang Activity: Light. Cajun trappers, off alone in the swamps for months at a time, sometimes come into town and get rowdy. Other than that, there's little violence — gangs have few reasons to come here, and many reasons to stay away. Despite rumors of burned-out farms, Thibodaux hasn't seen any sign of the infamous Bayou Rats (see p. 31), or any other swamp gangs.

THE REPUBLIC OF OKLAHOMA

AADA Advisory: Use of dropped weaponry of any sort on patrolled roads is a capital offense. Duelling is not illegal, but care should be taken; police have been known to come to the aid of wealthy residents, even in legitimate road duels.

Government: Parliamentary plutocracy — as one sociologist puts it, “In Oklahoma, the rich don’t rule the poor — they own them.” The Presidency is an elected office; voting privileges (essentially shares in Oklahoma, Inc.) are sold on the Oklahoma Stock Exchange. The President nominates members of the Chamber of Commerce, the judicial branch, from the top officers of Oklahoma’s largest corporations and the selections are confirmed by vote. Oklahoma has the best government that money can buy.

There are no municipal governments; “cities” consist of fortified company enclosures. The phrase “company town” doesn’t even begin to convey the reality of these communities. Workers are born in free company hospitals, raised in free company schools, live in free company housing, eat free company food, buy luxuries in company stores, get paid next to nothing, fear constantly for their jobs, and are eventually buried in company graveyards. There are no labor unions in Oklahoma. However, the profit-sharing success of Norman Enterprise and the tribal corporations of the Osage, maintain a ray of hope for better employee conditions.

Police: Varies. The Highway Patrol is polite, efficient and not very lenient; bribes are expected and expensive. Local police (usually corporate security forces) ruthlessly look out for their company’s interests — corporate guests are well treated, while contract laborers are well advised to avoid conflict with the police. Bribery rating +4, provided the bribe is high enough (\$100+ for even a trivial offense); status modifiers on reaction rolls are very important here. While they are as polite and efficient as the Highway Patrol, the Osage Reservation Police (OSP) more closely resemble corporate security forces in caring for tribal interests. Unlike the other two, however, they don’t take bribes . . . at least not from non-Indians.

Major roads: I-44, I-35, I-40. Roads are generally poor; I-35 south from Ardmore and I-40 between Oklahoma City and Muskogee are being renovated. I-44 from Oklahoma City to New Tulsa is a well-patrolled toll road (\$50 per tire), but state-licensed couriers and carriers drive free. Travellers should be aware of the weather in Oklahoma particularly in winter and summer as temperatures reach both extremes. It isn’t unusual for a major snow storm to come screaming across the plains in winter, and paralyze traffic along the wide-open stretches between towns. In summer, tornado-spawning thunderstorms roar through “Tornado Alley” (most of Oklahoma) with little notice.

Duelling climate: Unfavorable. Road duelling is not illegal, but dropped weapons are. Furthermore, the Oklahoma Highway Patrol displays such blatant favoritism towards corporate officers that “fair fights” are impossible. Similar accusations have been leveled against arena managers here, but the AADA keeps a close eye on them. Duellists are advised, as always, to participate only in fully

accredited AADA events. Autoduelling has become a popular pastime on the Osage Reservation, especially off-road duelling. However, the by-invitation-only rule is strictly enforced by the OSP.

Tourism: Tourists, especially wealthy tourists, are treated very courteously by the government, and by most citizens; however, few people other than businessmen find any reason to come here.

Facilities: On patrolled roads, fully-equipped garages may be found every 50 miles, with Highway Patrol emergency stations every ten miles. Be prepared to pay well for emergency services — up to 100% more than the North American average! Outside these roads, garages occur once every hundred miles at best, although facilities are improving on the road sections currently under reconstruction. Petroleum is sometimes available at highway truck stops, and is nearly always available in cities.

Violence frequency: About once per six weeks. The poor are more often victim to violence than the wealthy. Violence is greatly reduced, however, by the mere threat of police action. The most common punishment is indentured servitude, and the most common use for indentured servants is in jobs that no one would do voluntarily.

ARDMORE

Population: 60,000.

Description: Ardmore produces oil and boredom — both in large quantities. Ardmore’s main reason to be is trade service — vehicle repair, freight handling and road construction. Ardmore is also a military town, housing a large Oklahoma National Guard base.

Duelling facilities: Numerous truck stops provide ammo and repairs, with good service at reasonable rates. There is one arena, with events scheduled every weekend. Amateur Night events are very popular, the ranks of the unemployed providing lots of cannon-fodder. Gas events are also common.

Other facilities: Okoco and Two Eagles Oil Companies, and Skidder & Hunt Civil Construction, provide services to their employees. Company hospitals accept non-company patients in emergencies only. The Ardmore Arena has a Gold Cross cryochamber, to hold patients for transport to Oklahoma City’s Gold Cross center. No other services available to travelers.

Gang activity: Moderate. A “political” cycle gang, styling itself as the Oklahoman People’s Front, preys on commerce between Ardmore and Texas, and on oil trucks going to Ardmore from fortress wells in the area. Though publicly dedicated to true revolutionary ideals, their activities are little more political than any other cycle pack’s.

LAWTON

Population: 100,000.

Description: Lawton was once a major agricultural center, receiving cattle and wheat from the local farms. Ranching still provides employment among the civilians. However, today, the city is a major Oklahoma National Guard base, housing the bulk of the Oklahoma ground and air forces. The city exists primarily to provide food, drink and entertainment for off-duty soldiers.

Duelling Facilities: There are two arenas, drawing the military crowd. Little trade passes through Lawton, so the garage facilities here are minimal.

Other Facilities: Restaurants, bars, theaters and all the other Saturday-night-pass necessities. The base hospital accepts nonmilitary emergency cases for a fee.

Gang Activity: Light. The only danger here is the possibility of violence from drunk soldiers.

MUSKOGEE

Population: 125,000.

Description: Muskogee, like most cities in Oklahoma, consists of little more than industry. In this case, the industries are algae-food production, weapon sighting systems, armor glass, metallurgy and, of course, oil production. Muskogee is also a major river port, with extensive commerce traveling down the well-patrolled Arkansas River to the Mississippi.

Duelling facilities: The famed Muskogee Fairgrounds and Family Emporium duelling center is located here. Gasoline events are standard fare, as Muskogee sits on top of one of the largest oil reserves remaining in Oklahoma. While not AADA accredited, Muskogee draws some of the finest duellists in the world. An official AADA arena, where only standard electric events are held, is near the Fairgrounds.

Other facilities: SafeTeePro, Hendricks Oil, Muskogee Metals and OpTech have corporate facilities. The Fairgrounds have first aid and Gold Cross holding facilities. River port, minor airport, one TV station (MuskogeeVision).

Gang activity: Light. No organized activity, only random violence from the unemployed.

NEW TULSA

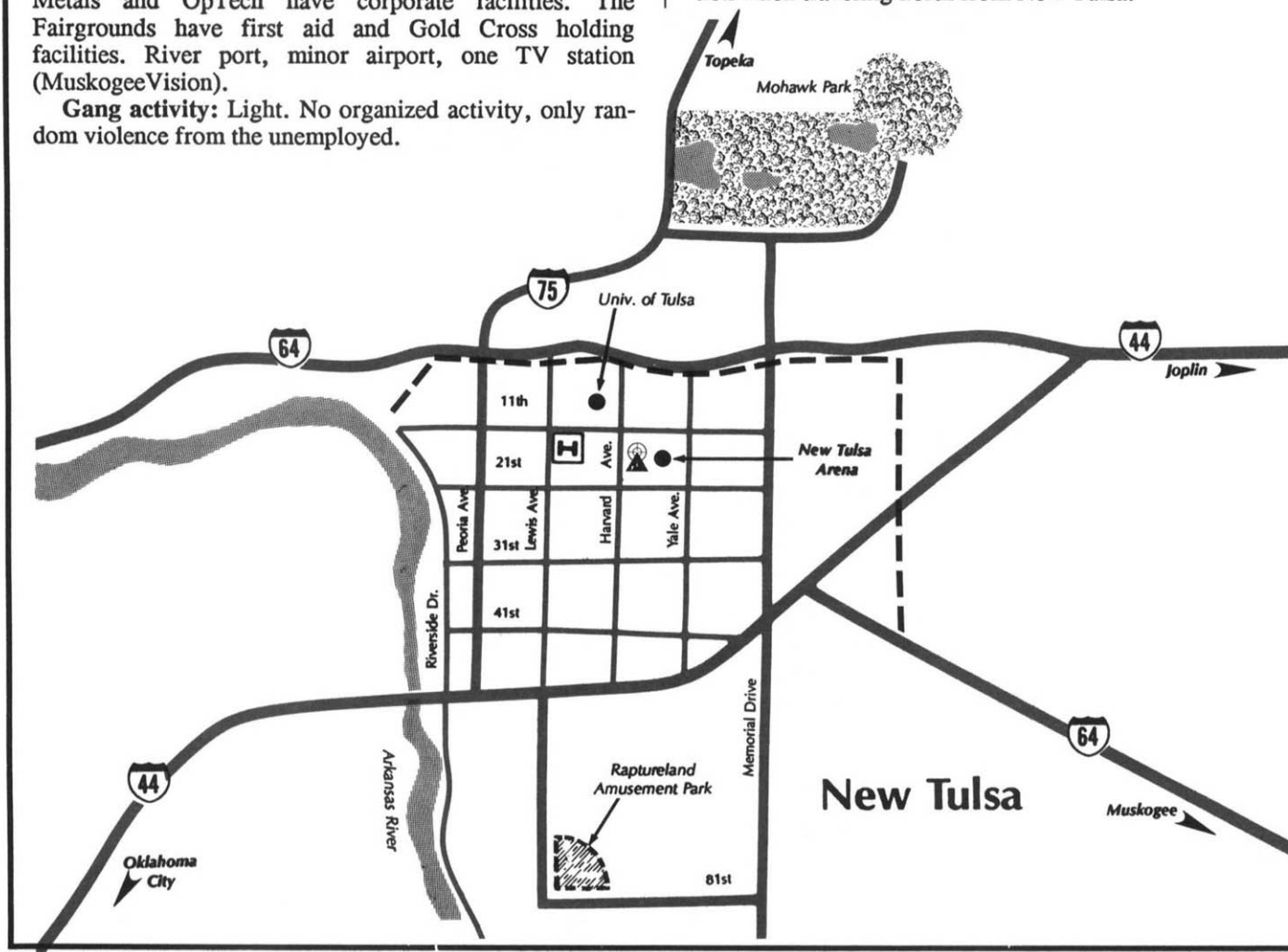
Population: 250,000.

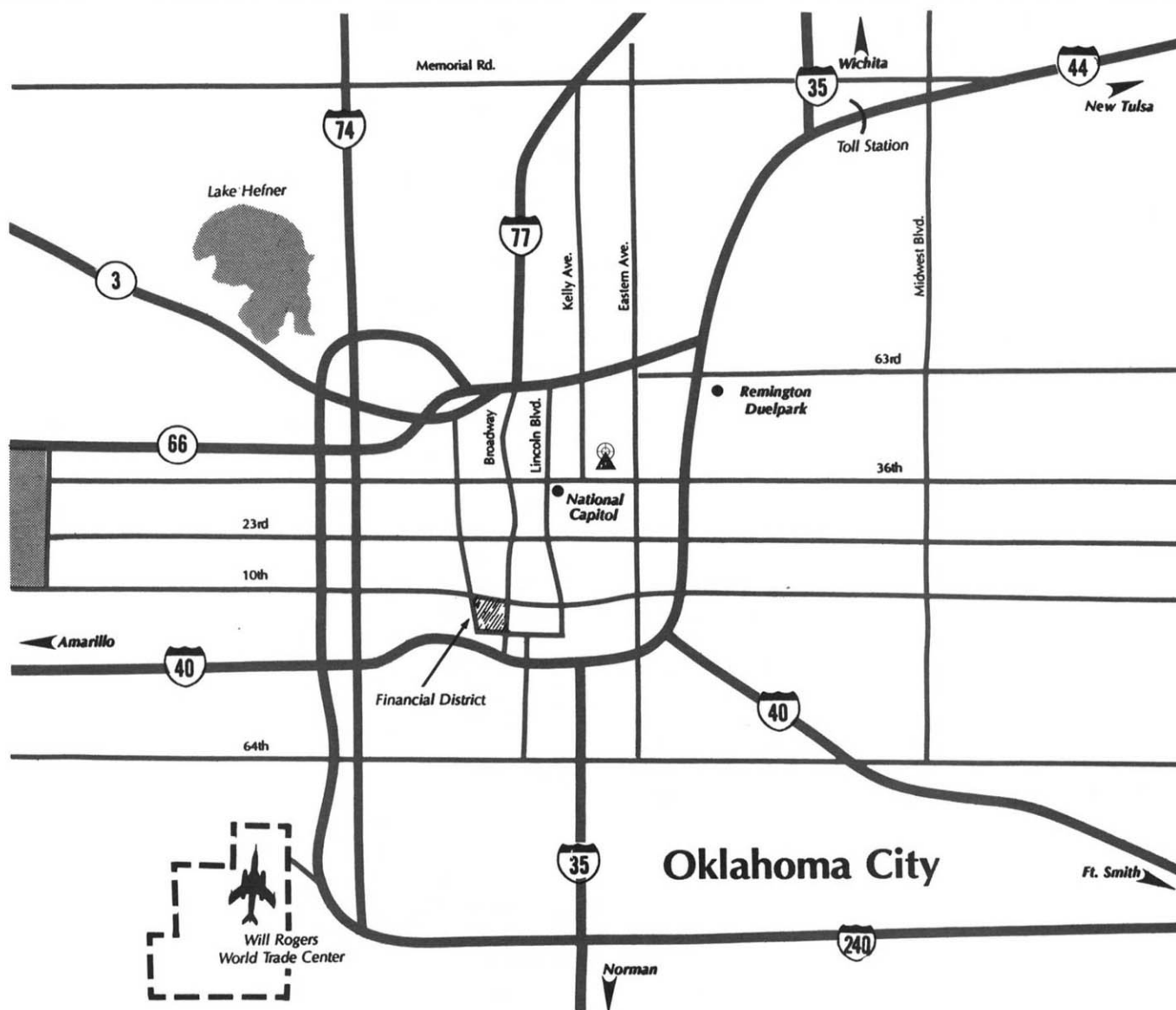
Description: Tulsa saw some of the heaviest fighting of the Second Civil War, as U.S. forces tried to secure the oil refineries and thereby fuel their drive southward. Rebuilt after the devastation of the Secession War, New Tulsa today is a prosperous oil town. All the major oil companies have large refinery complexes here; the airport serves as the main airline center of the Free Oil States; and, due to the large concentration of wealth, New Tulsa is the cultural center of the nation. New Tulsa is also a haven for independent businessmen; part of the reconstruction program included small business grants.

Duelling facilities: New Tulsa Coliseum is a standard AADA arena.

Other facilities: There are several corporate refinery complexes here, with the usual employee services; there are many other smaller company compounds. New Tulsa also has private facilities: one hospital with Gold Cross services, a university and a TV station. The Raptureland Amusement park is built on the ruins of an old theological university, and features born-again Christian theme rides, games and exhibits.

Gang activity: Moderate. One cycle gang, the Rogues, serves as a mercenary force for corporations. Most other gangs simply prey on the unwary. Mohawk Park, to the north, is a home for bikers, unemployed and other dregs of society, and is an extremely dangerous area. Exercise caution when traveling north from New Tulsa.





NORMAN

Population: 75,500.

Description: In the midst of the corporate control of Oklahoma, there is a ray of hope. Like all other towns in the nation, Norman is a company town. However, Norman Enterprises is not like the other corporations — it's a social experiment, set up by a group of wealthy Eastern liberals. The city is owned by the workers themselves, and is administered with the aid of large artificial-intelligence computers. The computers operate the town for the maximum profit, which is then split among the workers depending on the amount of work they did. So far the experiment has worked — the city runs smoothly, and the workers make wages that are actually *above* the North American average, and on a par with Australian salaries!

This success is funded by profits from the Port of Norman, a large dry-dock and cargo facility along the Canadian river, which handles goods from Oklahoma City and oil barges from upriver and helps them on their way down to the Mississippi. The town also has a large boatyard complex.

Duelling Facilities: None. The services of Oklahoma City are very close, so there's no need for separate facilities here. (Truth be told, that's part of the reason for Norman Enterprises' success — but they pay their bills, so no one can really complain.)

Other Facilities: Again, no need — Oklahoma City is only a few miles up the road.

Gang Activity: Light — another benefit from lying just outside the national capital. However, once outside the shelter of the Highway Patrol, NE trucks take heavy losses — the Oklahoman People's Front has vowed to destroy the "outrageous techno-capitalist mockery of socialist ideals," and they make their anger known by deliberately destroying any Norman Enterprises boat trailer they find.

OKLAHOMA CITY

Population: 1,500,000.

Description: While not as new or cultured as New Tulsa, Oklahoma City is the most prosperous city in the republic, and for that matter, in the Free Oil States.

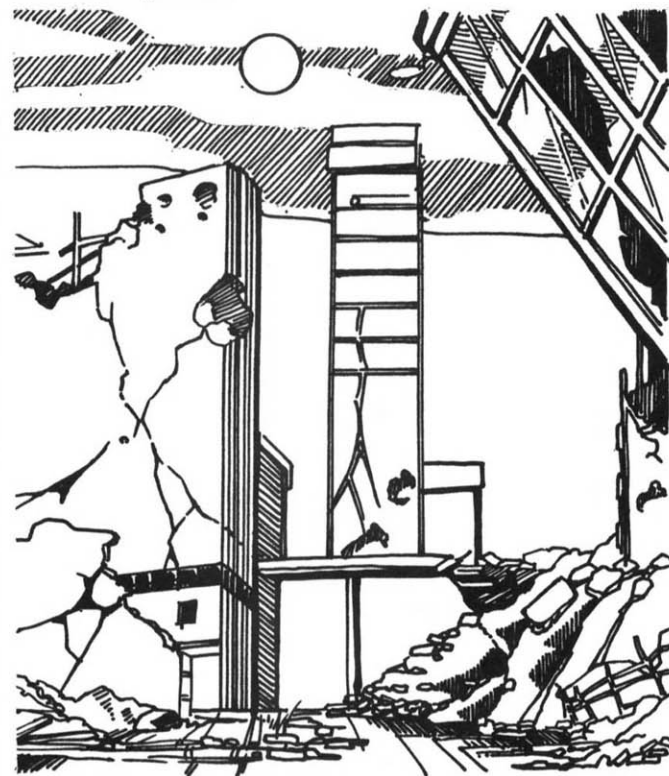
Oklahoma City is the nation's capital and the financial center; the Oklahoma Stock Exchange has the highest trading volume of any exchange in North America, short of the New York Stock Exchange, and Oklahoma's banks are recognized as the finest in North America. Oklahoma City also serves as a major convention center.

There is a bitter rivalry between the New Tulsa and Oklahoma City upper classes. The workers, of course, are too busy to care, but the rich take the competition very seriously. Most of the time, the rivalry takes the form of artistic competition — seeing which city can attract the most famous ballet company, or which one can put together the largest symphony orchestra, and so forth. However, sometimes the question becomes which city can field the best duelling team. On those occasions, dozens of idle rich from each city meet in their \$100,000+ duelling cars to battle it out in the middle of I-44. Though the road is supposedly a no-duelling zone, the rich can do whatever they please in Oklahoma. These combats make for spectacular video, but travelers are encouraged to flee at the first sign of one of these mass battles.

Duelling facilities: The Remington Duelpark, a major sports complex, has facilities for combat football (the Cimmeron Cuties, the only all-woman combat football team in the world, are based here), autoduelling, gladiatorial combat (team and individual) and even hack hockey.

Other facilities: As the center for the government, Oklahoma City has offices of every major national corporation. Many of these companies also have full-fledged manufacturing compounds here. This city also has non-corporate facilities, including a public hospital (with Gold Cross), an independent TV station, and dozens of small businesses. Many of the city's truck stops are located at the airport — The Will Rogers World Trade Center.

Gang activity: Light, due to the heavy concentration of corporate security, as well as the presence of the Highway Patrol headquarters.



THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS

Government: Democratic, for the most part. However, the will of the people is often subordinated to political demands — the Texas government operates primarily through “wheelin’ and dealin’.”

Police: The Texas Rangers, elite military police/commandos, are very efficient; local police are usually less efficient but friendlier. Local cops will let a lot slide if their reaction to you is good, and the best way to insure a good reaction is through a bribe. However, monetary bribes may often insult an officer — friendly gifts (such as tobacco) are more commonly accepted. Of course, even local cops react poorly to serious crimes. And the Texas Rangers take themselves very seriously, and are always offended by bribes. Bribery rating: +2 for local police, -4 for Texas Rangers.

Major Roads: TX1, TX2, TX6. Most roads fair to poor, generally unpatrolled, though some sections of TX1 are currently patrolled and under repair. Tourists should be alert to weather conditions. The Panhandle suffers from the same blustery winters storms as Oklahoma and is firmly in “Tornado Alley” during the summer. The Gulf area has the same potential for hurricanes as the Louisiana coastline.

Duelling climate: Favorable. Tearing up the roads is frowned upon, but Texans are firm believers in the principle of “boys will be boys” — duellists can get away with a lot here, especially if they’re locals.

Tourism: During the 20th century, Texas attracted a fair number of tourists. However, satellite TV and dangerous travel conditions have cut down on visitors. Texas doesn’t have a lot to offer that can’t be seen on TV just as readily.

Facilities: One per 50 miles on main highways and in East Texas; one per 100-150 miles in West Texas. Gas is usually available in cities, occasionally on highways.

Violence frequency: Once per week. Most violence in Texas is of the barfight-duel sort; every adult in Texas packs a gun, and Texans are famed for their short tempers.

ABILENE

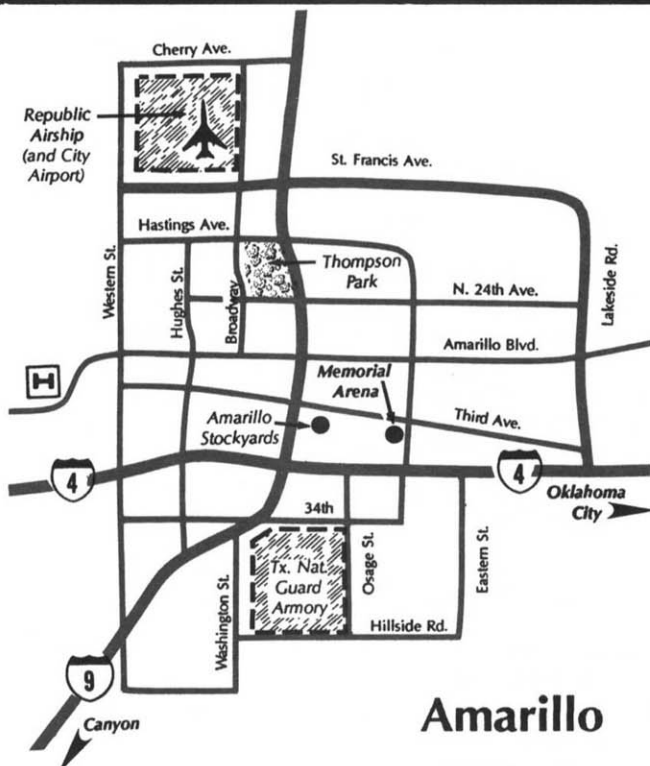
Population: 35,000.

Description: Though the ConTexCo corporate headquarters are in Arlington, the company’s main Texas production facility is here. The Texas branch of ConTexCo almost has a national monopoly on food processing and packing, and the Abilene plant handles more than just algae food. Abilene is close enough to the civilized portions of Texas that there are a number of cattle ranches in the area, producing beef for distribution. A small Air National Guard unit maintains the former Dyes AFB.

Duelling Facilities: None. There are deserted roads for duelling, and truck stops for repairs. And there are cowboys here every weekend, itching for a fight, if you lack for opponents.

Other Facilities: One minor hospital (no Gold Cross).

Gang Activity: Moderate. Even though Abilene is in the patrolled region of Texas, it’s still close enough to the West Texas deserts to see occasional raids. Cowboys roaring through town on the weekends are another problem.



AMARILLO

Population: 90,000.

Description: Amarillo is one of Texas' two main industrial centers. Sitting on top of a major source of helium (the only other in the Western Hemisphere is in Wichita, Kansas), Amarillo naturally has an extensive airship production and servicing industry. In addition, it is a major production center for ablative plastic armor. The city also serves as a collection point for the West Texas oil fields. The Texas National Guard has a large base here, where

part of the republic's respectable nuclear arsenal has been transferred and stored.

Duelling facilities: The Amarillo Dueltrack holds weekly gas and electric races; though most of these "races" are little more than high-speed duels, non-combat events are occasionally held. The AADA is currently reviewing the status of race-car events.

Other facilities: Texas National Guard and Air Guard bases; one hospital; one TV station; minor airport.

Gang activity: Light. Naturally, the military has never used nuclear weapons on a cycle gang — but there's always a first time . . .

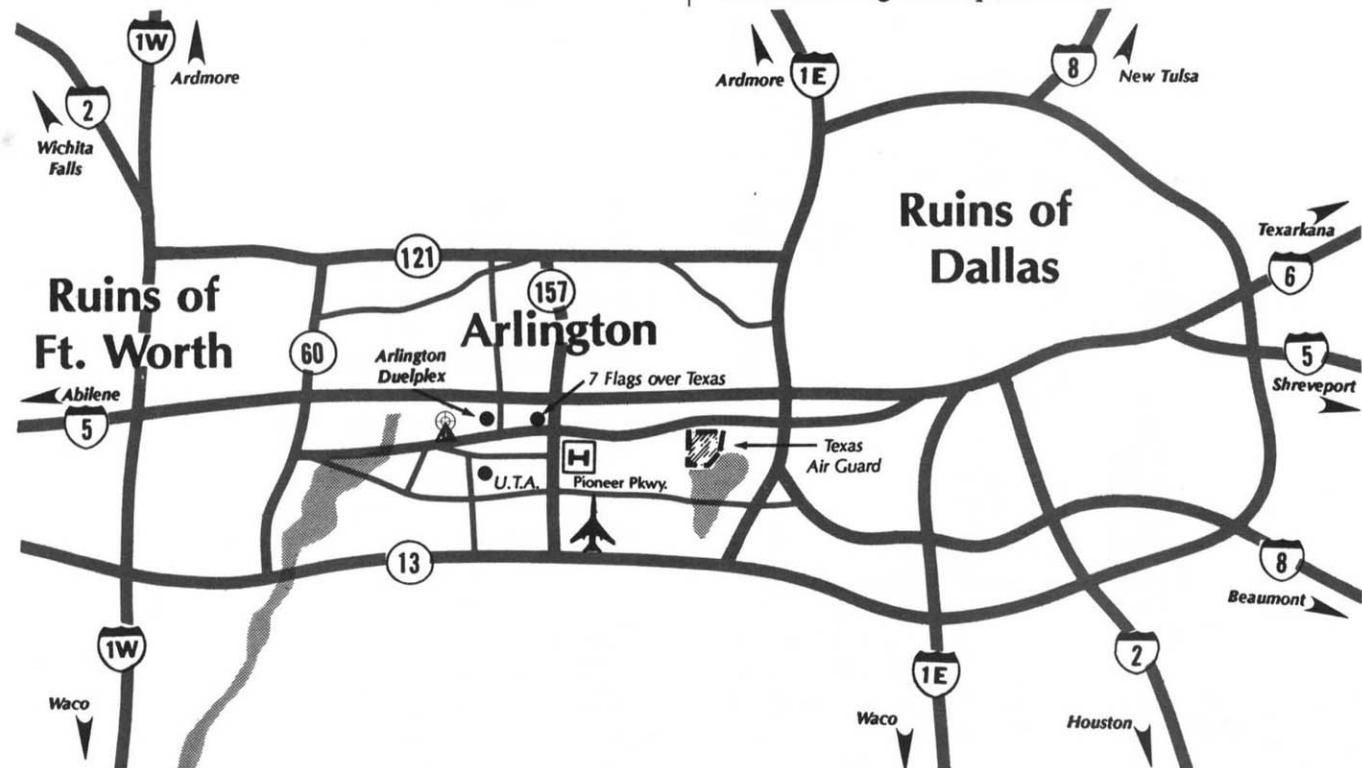
ARLINGTON

AADA Advisory: The urban ruins are highly dangerous, and should be avoided.

Population: 2,000,000.

Description: As Dallas and Fort Worth declined, Arlington grew and expanded into the largest city in the nation. Center of industry, finance, and commerce, Arlington can attribute most of its wealth and prosperity to ConTexCo, the first commercial grower of algae cultures. Arlington is also the home of Grenadier Motors, who are bringing back gas-burner autos capable of incredible acceleration. The city serves as a trade center for the heavy industrial base of Oklahoma.

Duelling facilities: The Arlington Duelplex hosts both autoduelling events and combat football (though there have been no crossover events), and is AADA accredited. The DFW Duelstrip is a non sanctioned open-air arena, built on the runways of the ruined DFW Airport; dragster duels are a favorite here. Grenadier Motors, the largest manufacturer of internal-combustion cars in North America, opens its proving grounds to the public every Saturday, and shows off its latest high-tech speed demons.



Other facilities: Large hospital complex, with national Gold Cross headquarters; Texas Air Guard base; one university; two TV stations; minor airport; Six Flags Over Texas amusement park.

Gang activity: Moderate, consisting mostly of youth violence in the suburbs, and roaming cycle packs who occasionally camp in the ruins of Dallas and Fort Worth.

AUSTIN

AADA Advisory: Do not enter the clearly marked dreg zones; these regions are highly hazardous.

Population: 50,000.

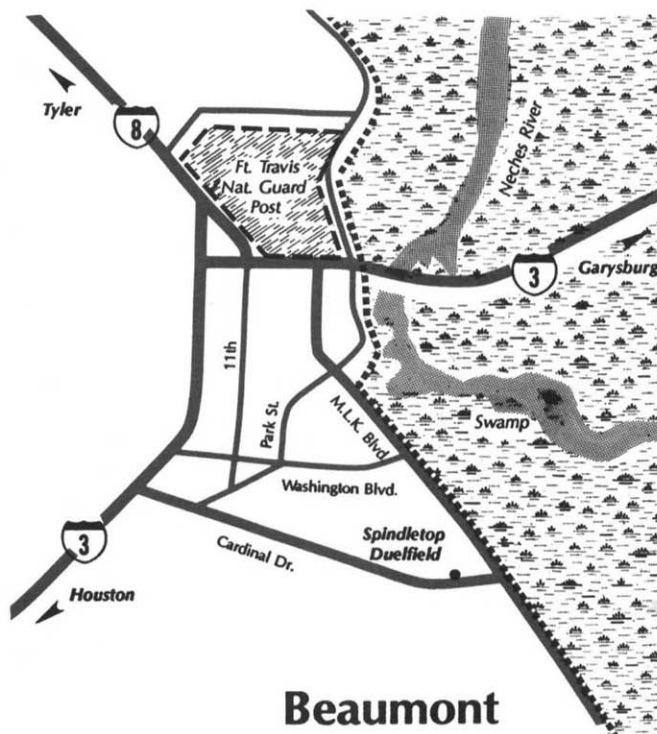
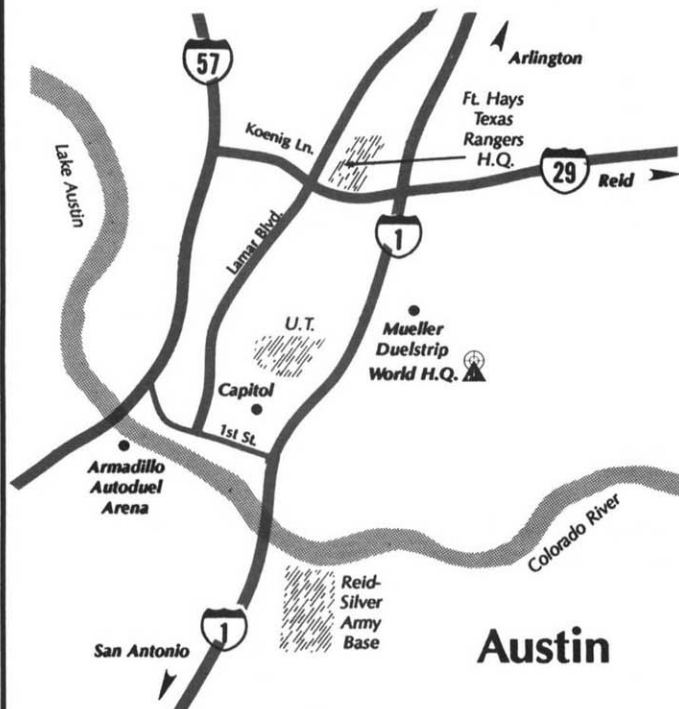
Description: Though the only large city in Texas to survive the Food Riots intact, Austin is a broken shadow of its former self. Most of its residents live in a few walled compounds, while outside the walls the city lies in criminal-infested ruins.

Still, Austin remains the center of government for the republic. Austin is also world-famous for its micros and sense-tapes. (Sense-tapes are movies that feed directly to the brain, involving all the senses of the viewer; micros are interactive sense-tapes.)

Duelling facilities: Naturally, the town that houses the AADA World Headquarters has a strong autoduelling presence. The Armadillo Autoduel Arena was the world's first commercial autoduelling facility. The Mueller Duelling Arena handles the overflow from the Armadillo and hosts a number of racing events. Finally, the Republic Motors showrooms display the newest cars in Republic's world-renowned line of stock duelling vehicles.

Other facilities: National government complex; large hospital center, with Gold Cross; one university; Reid-Silver National Guard Base; Texas Rangers base; two TV stations.

Gang activity: Moderate. The heavy police presence keeps most of the roving bandits under control, but the city's old sections are just too dangerous to clear out.



Beaumont

BEAUMONT

Population: 95,000.

Description: Beaumont's economic value is far overshadowed by its strategic value; the largest industry in the city is the National Guard base. Besides servicing the military, Beaumont is a major port, and has a small shipyard. Most other industries, however, were destroyed by warfare over the past thirty years and never rebuilt.

Duelling facilities: Spindletop Duelfield is a fully accredited AADA arena from Sunday to Friday; Saturday is "Gas Day," and the largest variety of gas-powered combat events to be found anywhere takes place here, under the rebuilt derrick of the first oil well in Texas.

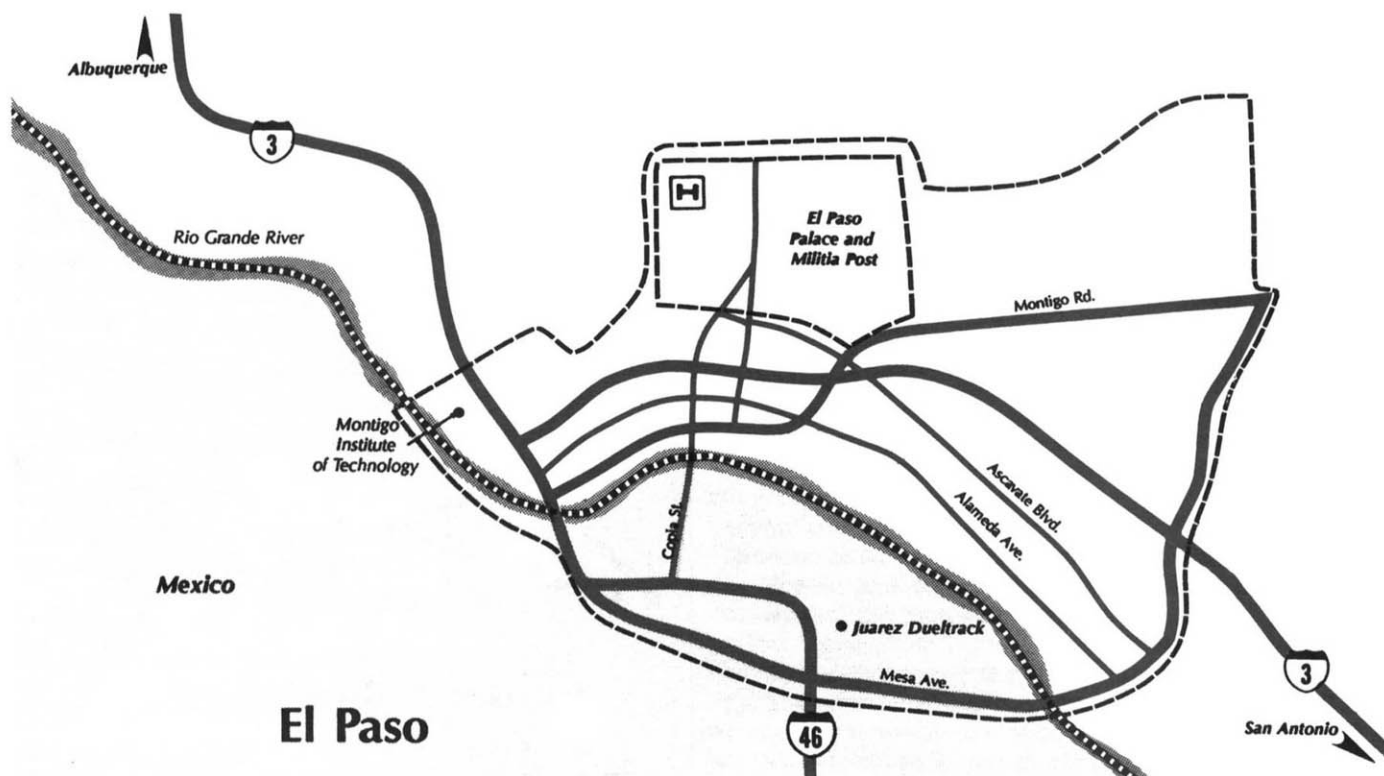
Other facilities: Seaport; large Texas land, air, and naval bases; two military hospitals (one will accept private patients).

Gang activity: Moderate. Largest threat is sabotage raids from Louisianan commandoes. Minor piracy is kept to a minimum by presence of the renovated WWII battleship, R.T.S. *Texas*, current flagship of the Texas Naval Guard.

CANYON

Population: 6,000.

Description: Even today, the highways are far from safe. Oil shipments in particular lure bandits from across North America. Thus, many companies prefer to ship as much of their production as possible along Texas' many navigable rivers. Waco collects oil from East Texas and manufactured goods from Arlington; Canyon collects oil from West Texas and manufactured goods from Amarillo. TX9 hums with trucks hauling oil from the Midland/Odesa refineries to the Canyon docks, where it is shipped to collection points near Wichita Falls and Arlington. To



keep this major trade artery flowing, the Texas Naval Guard has a number of flat-bottomed river patrol boats based here, to guard the river from bandits and possible Oklahoman attacks. They also perform dredging operations when necessary to keep the waterway open.

Duelling Facilities: None. Amarillo is only a short drive to the north, and residents travel to "the big city" for their entertainment. There are, of course, truck stops and garages for the oil trucks, as well as drydocks for the oil barges.

Other Facilities: Again, Canyon relies on Amarillo for its facilities. The town has nothing but a river port and a dozen truck stops.

Gang Activity: Light. The military presence here and in Amarillo keeps the highways clear.

CORPUS CHRISTI

AADA Advisory: Corpus Christi is controlled by Gulf pirates, and their hospitality is dubious at best. Avoid this city if at all possible. If you must go there, be wary of any sailors — they are a violent lot, and jealously defend their "sailors only" bars.

Population: 125,000.

Description: Corpus Christi is a freewheeling, rowdy town, filled with sailors on shore leave from their pirate vessels. There's surprisingly little crime or destruction; Corpus is the only haven the Gulf pirates can be sure of, and they do their best to keep the city safe and clean. The citizens of Corpus likewise do their best to protect and serve their benefactors.

History: During the Food Riots, the Texas government was unable to help distant cities like El Paso and Corpus Christi. So the mayor here tried to help his city weather the

Bad Years by making a deal with a bandit lord. In this case, the bandit was Captain Blumhardt, a feared Gulf pirate (see p. 31). In return for money and protection, Corpus Christi became a safe haven for pirate vessels. The Texas Naval Guard tolerated the situation at the time because there was little it could do. Today, however, the pirates have an uneasy truce with the Navy. The terms of this treaty are unknown, but attacks on Texas vessels have dropped off recently, while attacks on U.S. and Louisiana ships have increased.

Duelling Facilities: The pirates don't bother with land duelling. On the other hand, if you want a boat duel, this is the place to come.

Other Facilities: Corpus Christi actually welcomes visitors and traders — there's a lot that the pirates need and want that a small town can't provide by itself. In addition to the port facilities, there are two truck stops with motels, and numerous bars and restaurants that serve "landlubbers."

Gang Activity: Light. The pirates keep crime to a minimum, but the sailors themselves are a threat to visitors. The best solution is to stay off the streets after dark.

EL PASO [CIUDAD LIBRE DEL PASO]

Population: 200,000.

Description: Though technically still part of Texas, El Paso has been effectively independent for 20 years. El Paso is a fortress town; its surrounding mountains have been fortified enough to hold off an army.

El Paso survives mainly through agriculture. Its mayor/prince, Jefe Montigo, is a man of vision, and huge hydroponic gardens produce such expensive delicacies as coffee and tropical fruits for sale throughout the world.

While not prosperous in the same sense that Combine, New Hampshire or Oklahoma City are prosperous, El Paso is a good place to live, if you don't mind hard work.

History: During the chaos of the Bad Years, the administration of El Paso was "lost in the shuffle." Unaided by the rest of Texas, the El Paso government decided to accede to the demands of Jefe Montigo. In 2018 a new city was proclaimed, "Ciudad Libre del Paso," with Montigo as Prince. As a result, El Paso was spared much of the destruction that other South Texas towns faced, and funds from Montigo's deep coffers helped El Paso bloom into "The Garden of the Southwest."

The national government still lays claim to El Paso, and occasionally rattles its sabre. However, the Ciudad would be a tough nut to crack, and the hard truth is that most of El Paso's citizen's like the current state of affairs.

Duelling facilities: The Juarez Dueltrack hosts a variety of events. Because of El Paso's dubious political situation, the arena is not AADA affiliated.

Other facilities: The Montigo Institute of Technology is an internationally respected university and research facility, where some of the world's most advanced genetics and agricultural studies take place. There is also a hospital (no Gold Cross), a TV station (broadcasting in Spanish throughout northern Mexico) and a minor airport. Most city facilities and services are free to citizens, and are available at reasonable rates to non-citizens.

Gang activity: Within the fortress walls, none — Montigo doesn't like crime, because it's bad for business. Outside the city walls, gangs run rampant; the Jefe often hires duellists to guard convoys headed for markets such as the West Coast, Mexico City and New Orleans.

GALVESTON/TEXAS CITY

Population: 132,000.

Description: Galveston and Texas City are the nation's largest port. Ships arrive here daily from Waco via the New Brazos River/Canal project (see below) as well as from all corners of the globe by sea. The city was largely rebuilt after the Food Riots and is rivaled only by Combine, New Hampshire and Los Disneys, Florida as the most modern city in North America. Many of the port facilities and residential areas are built on huge artificial islands that rise dozens of stories above the sea.

Most of the actual port and shipyard facilities are part of Texas City. Galveston is primarily a tourist attraction, business district and resort community.

History: Galveston was once a bustling center of economic activity in Texas, and it has returned to its 19th century prominence. Hurricane George in 2009 devastated the city. When the Texas government drew up plans to reconstruct Galveston, a group of investors proposed the New Brazos River-Canal project, an ambitious plan to make the Brazos river navigable from Waco, through Houston, down to Galveston/Texas City.

The canal was built within four years, but before it could make an economic difference the Food Riots struck.

After the Riots virtually destroyed Houston's commerce, the new port at Texas City naturally began to take over Houston's trade, while the business and financial concerns moved to Galveston.

Duelling Facilities: Both Galveston and Texas City are too crowded to have the free space it takes to build an arena. However, there is a major arena in Houston (the Astrodome) — that, and televised duelling from other fine arenas across Texas, satisfies most of the citizens' entertainment needs.

Other Facilities: The large port and shipyards are supplemented by a major airship port, as well as dozens of truck stops. There are two hospitals, both with Gold Cross, and one TV station.

Gang Activity: Light. The area is heavily patrolled, to keep bandits from Houston out, and the Navy protects the port from pirate raids. However, crime is a problem on the floating arcologies, where scum from the lower levels sneak up into the residential decks at night to steal and wreak havoc.

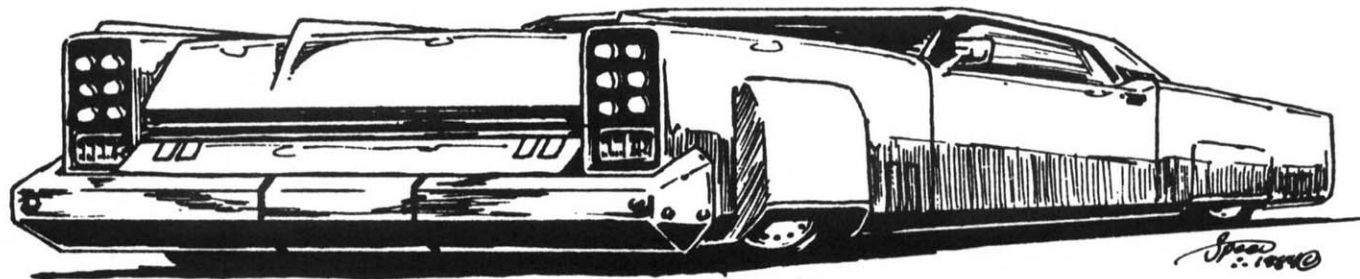
HOUSTON

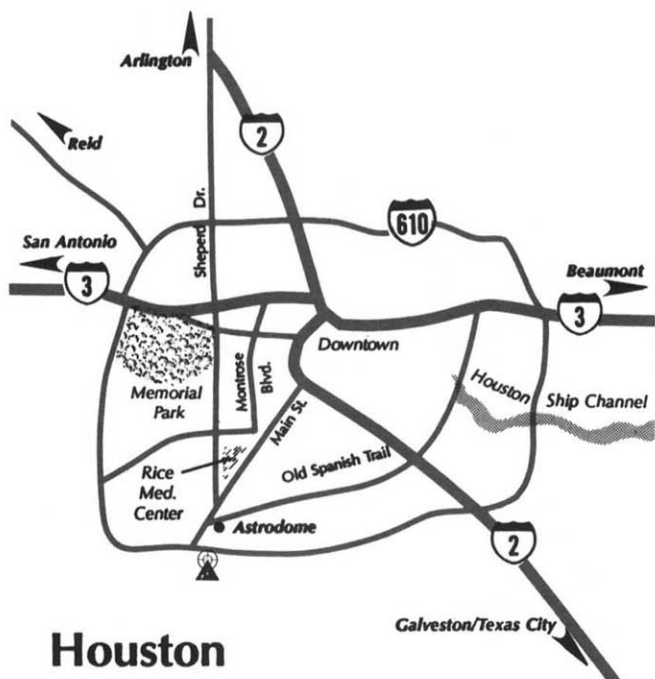
AADA Advisory: Do not enter the downtown district of Houston. The buildings are dangerous, the streets deadly, and the inhabitants, while not well armed, are desperate.

Population: 93,000.

Description: The Houston government thoroughly collapsed during the Food Riots. Today, the city has no central government or law and order, but die-hard residents persist in living here.

To be fair, the city does have some economic value today. The refinery complexes are still busy, processing oil piped from the nearby Texas City petroleum ports. The Rice-Medical Center fortress district, known as Rice-Med to the locals, conducts the nation's most up-to-date medical research. Since land is cheap here, many small companies





Houston

operate here rather than in expensive Texas City or Galveston. Still, Houston is a dangerous place, gang activity is high, and the downtown is sealed off, to protect the rest of the city from the criminals who live in the shattered business district.

Duelling facilities: The Astrodome is a fully-accredited AADA arena.

Other Facilities: The Rice-Med Fortress is an internationally acclaimed university and hospital center. There are truck stops scattered along the highways leading out of the city. All other services are provided by the wealthier Galveston/Texas City metropolis to the south.

Gang activity: Heavy. Memorial Park is the home of several off-road gangs. The suburbs were once very dangerous. However, the gangs have turned to the protection racket and so locals have no problems (unless they forget their tax). Visitors should be sure to have their invitation ready if confronted by "gang security." However, nothing can compare to the violence of the downtown district of the city. That area is completely controlled by gangs and criminals — it's so bad that the Texas National Guard has blockaded the exits and patrols the area, to make sure no one gets out. The Ship Channel is a hideout for numerous gangs that use small boats to move cargo — legally or illegally — along the coastal waterways of the Gulf.

KINGSVILLE

Population: 50,000.

Description: The King Ranch is North America's single largest producer of beef. The patrolled sections comprise 450,000 acres; the King Ranch lays claim to another 11.3 million acres in South Texas, but this claim is only loosely enforced. To keep such a vast expanse of land safe from predators (human and otherwise), the Ranch employs nearly seven thousand "cowboys," from motorcycle patrollers to hunter-killer chopper pilots to actual cattle handlers. The King Ranch receives a stipend from the Texas govern-

ment to guard the Rio Grande, as well; the few raiding parties from Mexico in recent years were easily rebuffed by the Ranch's might. The rest of the residents all work in one capacity or another in the Ranch's only industry: raising, processing, and shipping beef, with a little oil drilling on the side to help pay the bills.

Duelling facilities: None. The Ranch's well-equipped garages are sometimes available to truckers, but almost never to private vehicles. However, as part of their long tradition of cattle-raising, the King Ranch holds a large moto-rodeo every Texas Independence Day; some of the best autoduellists in the world turn out to compete in events requiring more skill and ability than even the toughest duel.

Other facilities: The King Ranch welcomes truckers, and provides emergency services for tourists and travelers, but facilities for nonresidents are minimal.

Gang activity: Light. Though vast stretches of the Ranch are randomly and sparsely patrolled, gangs can never know just when their number will come up; the Ranch has earned a reputation for enforcing its "Trespassers will be shot" signs.

LAREDO

Population: 2,500.

Description: Stubborn is the only word to describe Laredo's residents. The town is plagued night and day by attacks from random cycle gangs and Mexican warlords, but the citizens still remain. Laredo survives through minor agriculture in the fertile Rio Grande valley, and gets



rich off oil wells in the area. But keeping that wealth is a constant battle.

Duelling Facilities: None. The Laredans don't have time for duelling; they get enough action without it.

Other Facilities: None. Laredo citizens are very suspicious — some would say paranoid — of outsiders, even truckers, and so it's hard to get service here. Indeed, it's hard to get into town here. Most of the oil shipments are hauled in trucks owned and operated by Laredans.

Gang Activity: Heavy. It's a wonder the citizens survive. That they do is a grim testament to their skill and determination (and to their six-foot-thick concrete walls).

LUBBOCK

AADA Advisory: The ruins of Lubbock are very radioactive. Avoid driving through the central city at all costs.

Population: 50.

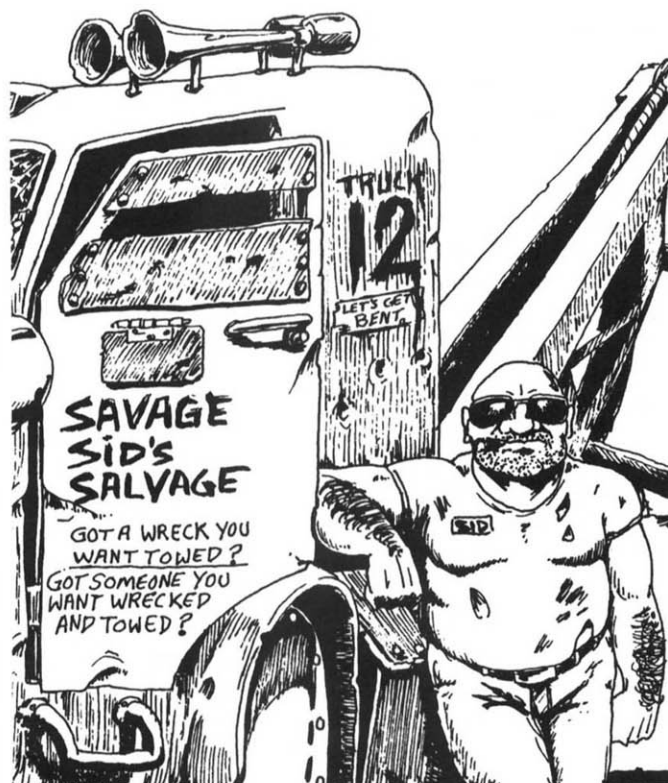
Description: Though the central areas of Lubbock are a radioactive wasteland, the city sits in the middle of a major trade route. A few truck stops line the bypass that goes around the city.

History: Lubbock was bait for the trap that stopped the "Gulf or Bust" campaign of the U.S. forces in 2003. The city was leveled by several tactical nuclear weapons from the Amarillo stockpile.

Duelling Facilities: Other than the truck stops, none.

Other Facilities: Most truck stops have rudimentary first aid services, but other than that the city is empty.

A team of volunteer construction workers, wearing



Speed:
860

TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD
INQUISITION POST
DO NOT ATTEMPT TO FLEE
THE EYES OF TEXAS
ARE UPON YOU

heavy radiation shielding, constructed a small monument to the handful of brave Texas Rangers who lured the U.S. forces into attacking the city. This monument is, naturally, not much of a tourist attraction, but paintings of it can be found just about everywhere in Texas. (Photographs and electronic recordings are, unfortunately, impossible, due to the extreme radiation here.)

Gang Activity: Light within the city, Heavy along the highways. Not even cycle gangs are crazy enough to hide in downtown Lubbock, but a lot of money rides these highways, and the Rangers are only beginning to patrol the area regularly.

MIDLAND/ODESSA

Population: 75,000 (combined).

Description: Though separately walled compounds several miles apart, these cities are united under a single government. All the oil produced in West Texas (and there's a lot of it) comes to the processing and refining facilities in these two cities. On weekends, all the oil workers come here too.

History: During the Bad Years, many were willing to risk the nearly constant bandit activity in order to tap the wealth of the West Texas oil fields. Several of the oil barons formed a consortium to fund the fortification of Midland and Odessa; the consortium soon became the government of the two cities, and remains so today.

Duelling Facilities: No official arenas, though there are several abandoned malls and parking lots where belligerent oil workers gather to test their skills and vehicles. There are dozens of truck stops and garages to service the oil trucks. And, for the out-of-work duellist, there are always employment opportunities for escort drivers on the oil convoys to Canyon.

Other Facilities: Minimal at best. There is a hospital, but it has no Gold Cross capacity. These cities are devoted almost 100% to the oil industry, and there's just not a lot available for the visitor.

Gang Activity: Moderate. West Texas is a lawless and dangerous place, but the Midland and Odessa militias do their best to keep the highways safe. And speaking of best, these two militias are constantly engaged in a bitter rivalry to see which one's better. This rivalry has led to occasional highway duels between patrol vehicles, but the city

government is trying to cut down on the counterproductive friction.

REID [Formerly BRYAN/COLLEGE STATION]

Population: 48,000.

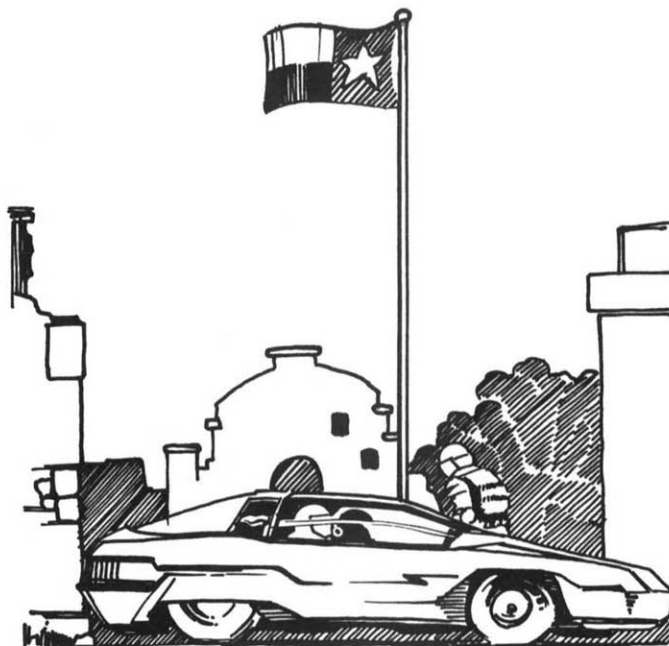
Description: Reid is the home of the Texas Military, Agricultural and Mechanical Academy. It is the second largest university in the F.O.S. (the largest is the University of Texas at Austin). Known as MAMA, the Academy was founded shortly after the Secession; the college was originally Texas Agricultural and Mechanical University. MAMA is run by the military, and though many of its graduates never pursue full military careers, all go through basic training and serve in the reserves.

In addition to the university, Reid also has a number of cotton gins. Cotton is something of an archaic luxury these days, but there is still enough of a market for it that it is widely grown in Texas. Reid is a collection and processing center; from here, the cotton goes by boat to textile mills in the United States South.

History: Reid was originally a college town called Bryan/College Station. The name was changed to honor the first post-secession president of the Republic, Daniel Reid.

Duelling Facilities: None. The university has a number of combat driving courses, and there is a test track on campus, but the school does not participate in the collegiate autoduell circuit.

Other Facilities: Other than the obligatory hospital and truck stops, there aren't many services here. The cadets are



seldom allowed off campus, and when they are they are strictly enjoined to partake only in "wholesome" entertainment, so the nightlife here is fairly lame.

Gang Activity: Light. Reid is right in the middle of one of the most pacified portions of the nation, and cycle gangs are virtually nonexistent here. Reid isn't even subject to the frat fights that plague other college towns, since the cadets are very disciplined.

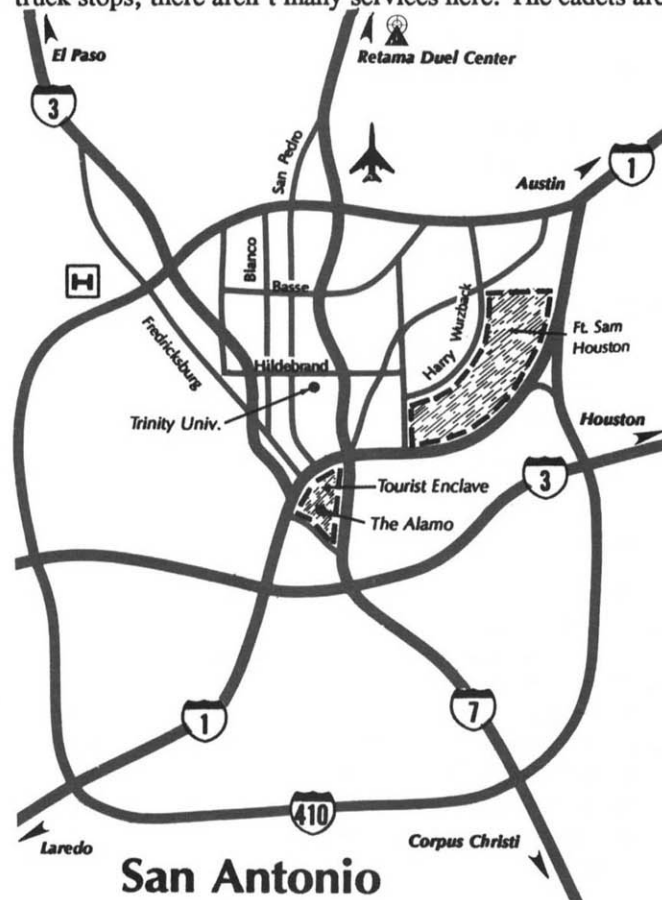
SAN ANTONIO

AADA Advisory: Travellers must drive 90+mph through the Selma suburbs, due to lingering radiation. Violators will be stopped beyond Selma and their vehicles impounded for decontamination. Takes one day.

Population: 100,000.

Description: Virtually destroyed by the Bad Years, San Antonio is under martial law, as the Texas government attempts to reconstruct the city. The restoration projects, which include hefty tax incentives for businesses, are intended to bring civilization back to San Antonio and from there, to the rest of South Texas. Until then, though, the city struggles along as a tourist attraction and military town. There is also a small amount of trade, with distant cities such as El Paso and with local farmers.

History: San Antonio was very probably the city hardest hit by the Bad Years in all of the Free Oil States, and reconstruction is proceeding very slowly. The presence of four major U.S. military bases made it a key target in the War for Freedom. The Battle of Selma (see p. 2) and the following warfare left most of the city in ruins. However, San Antonio's population remained high, even during the war — until the Food Riots destroyed the inner city. Cannibalism is *still* a problem in the downtown area. For some unfathomable reason, bandit gangs fought over San Antonio as if this crippled shell of a city were some prize. The city, however, held off its attackers long enough to begin





recovering. Today, San Antonio is the home of a few manufacturing facilities, and a large military complex.

Duelling facilities: The Retama Duel Center on the north side of the city is an ambitious project, funded by a group of Australian investors. The Center is a huge entertainment complex and shopping mall, designed to draw customers from Austin as well as San Antonio.

Other facilities: Large military presence (San Antonio is Texas' southernmost line of defense); military hospital complex, serving civilian patients as well; The Alamo, Shrine of Texas Independence, is a fortified tourist enclave in the heart of the downtown area. Trinity University is a well defended fortress; several gang leaders have vowed to destroy it, but so far those who defend it have repulsed all attempts.

Gang activity: High. Though the town is nominally governed by the Military Reconstruction Board, the real rulers are the various minor *jefes* and gang leaders. Actual banditry is low, but extortion and bribery are the law of the land.

TYLER

Population: 6,500.

Description: Tyler was hard hit during the Secession War; it formed the corner post of Texas' northeastern defenses, and was shelled by artillery off and on for four years. After the war, the defenses were converted to a full-time army base, and businesses returned to the area. Tyler today still consists of nothing but the base (headquarters of the Texas Rangers Frontier Battalion), a few bars, and several rose gardens. (Roses are Tyler's main export, and still bring a profit even in these hard times.)

Duelling Facilities: None. The soldiers watch duelling on TV in their spare time, but there's no demand for an arena in the area.

Other Facilities: The base hospital provides medical service for Tyler residents, and emergency service for travelers. There is one truck stop in town.

Gang Activity: Light. Gangs stay away from the border zone along here — there are too many trigger-happy soldiers with too many guns. However, over the past five years there have been twelve border skirmishes in which shots were exchanged, and Tyler lives constantly under the shadow of impending warfare.

WACO

Population: 55,000.

Description: Waco is the nexus of oil collection and distribution in Texas. Its port on the New Brazos, a river-canal built during the late '20s, collects agricultural products from area and manufactured good from Arlington as well as crude oil from the East Texas fields. By the same token, Waco distributes goods from the Gulf area to point north. Due to its central location fromf all three of Texas' main industrial centers, Waco is a major truck stop. This city is a prime entertainment center for oil hands and cowboys — on weekends, the population nearly doubles! Finally, the national headquarters of the Texas Rangers is located here.

Duelling facilities: The Double Drum is a world-famous AADA arena. There are many garages and repair facilities, including extensive dockyards.

Other facilities: Baylor University, river port, Texas Rangers headquarters, one hospital (with limited Gold Cross facilities).

Gang activity: Moderate. The lure of high (and valuable) road traffic outweighs the threat of the heavy Ranger presence here.

WICHITA FALLS

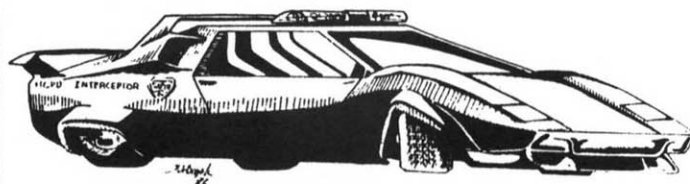
Population: 5,500.

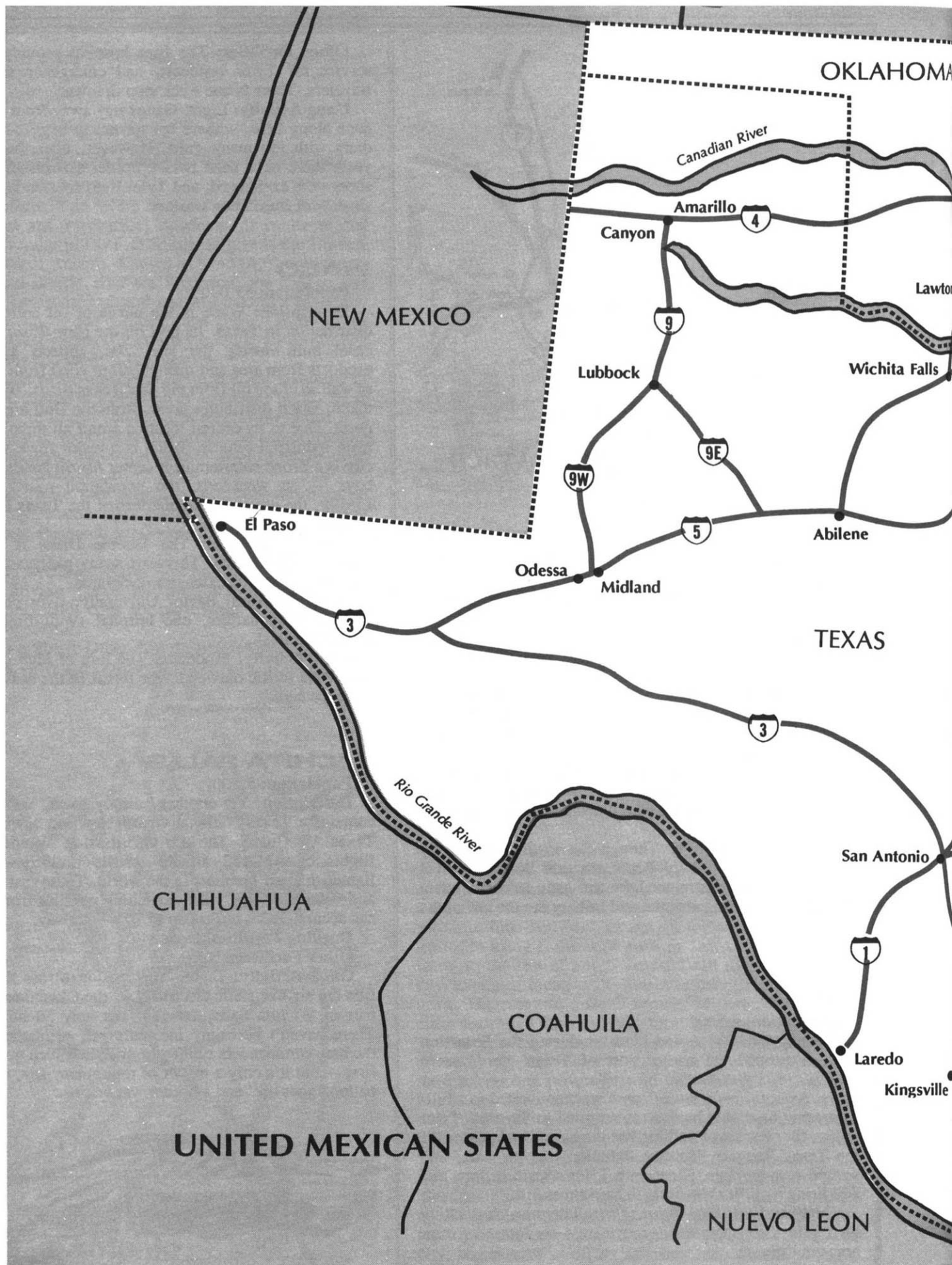
Description: Yet another military town, Wichita Falls contains a Texas National Guard base and a wing of the Texas Air Guard. The Air Guard wing includes several flights of AM-132 airship missile cruisers, the only lighter-than-air bombers in the world. These craft are slow and vulnerable, but when launching missiles from altitude can accurately hit targets up to 70 miles away.

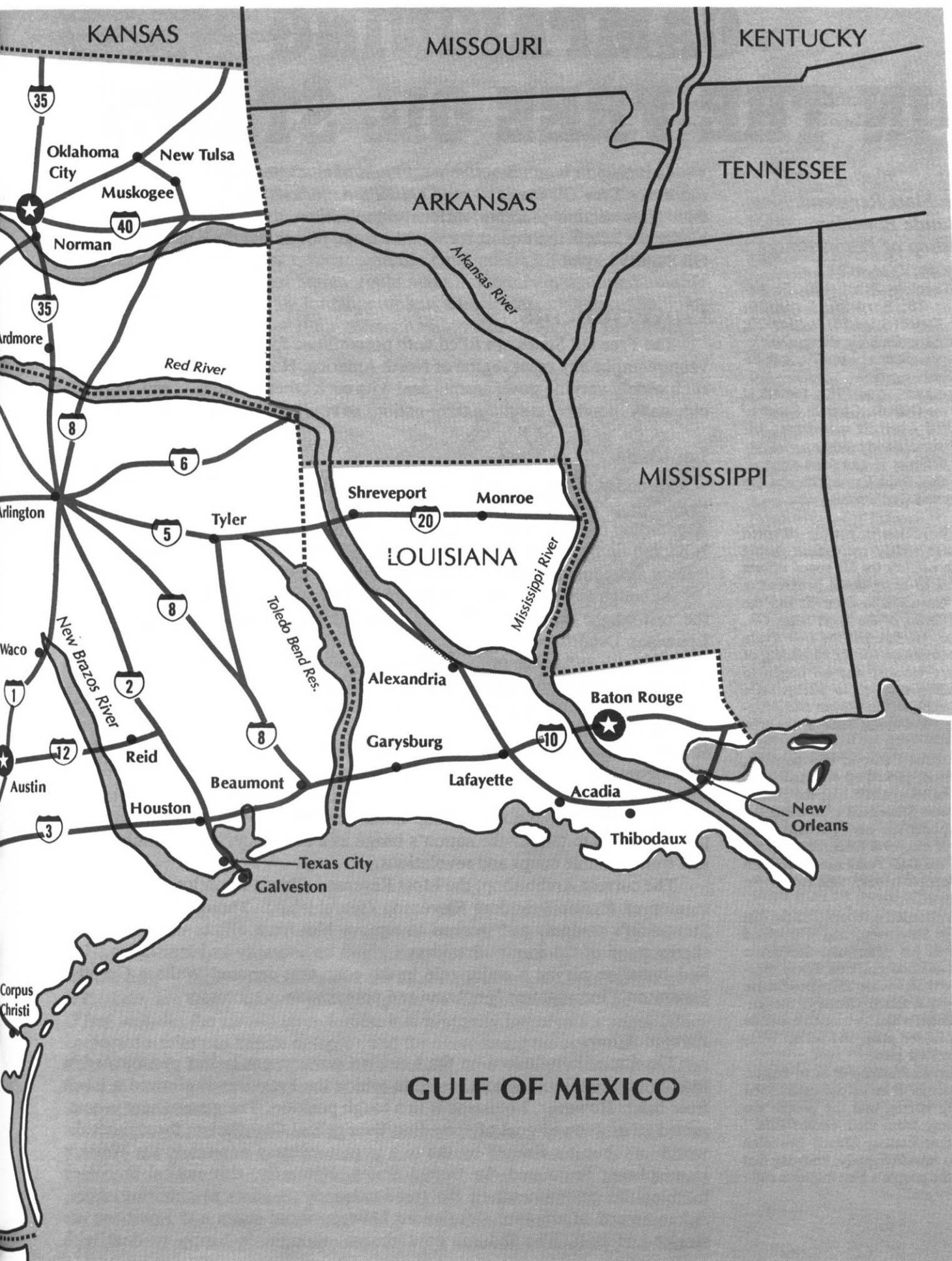
Duelling Facilities: None.

Other Facilities: None.

Gang Activity: Light. The tension across the border fills the air like static electricity — the Oklahoma counterpart of Wichita Falls, Lawton, sits only 50 miles away. There haven't been any incidents yet, primarily because the base commanders ruthlessly drill their men not to shoot first — but it's only a matter of time, many say, until "the balloon goes up" and a border war begins.







CAMPAIGNING IN THE FREE OIL STATES

The Most Reverend Claude Bordelon, Archbishop of Baton Rouge

ST 9, DX 10, IQ 16, HT 8.

Skills: Theology (Catholic)-25; Administration-20; Bard-20; Latin-20; French-20; Detect Lies-25; Acting-20; Professional Skill: Catholic Clergy-20.

Advantages: Status +6; Clerical Investment; Wealthy.

Disadvantages: Age (78); Fanatical devotion to the Catholic Church; Sense of Duty toward Church members; Intolerance of sinners and infidels.

Quirks: Believes in and fears voodoo; Refuses to use Gold Cross; Thinks the Grain Blight was God's punishment.

Claude Bordelon is a truly devoted man, and was widely recognized during the late 20th century for his social efforts and his work to bring about progressive reforms in the Catholic Church. But the pain and suffering of the Food Riots . . . changed him. He felt that the Bad Years were holy retribution for the loosening of the Church's taboos, and he began to regret "leading my people astray." He published a book on the subject and struggled to turn the Church back to the true path.

An ambitious Catholic televangelist, Gary Stevenson, picked up on Bordelon's preaching and recognized it as the perfect ticket to power. Stevenson used Bordelon to draw support for his reconstruction program — if medieval theocracy was the way to end the Bad Years (and Bordelon assured the people it was), then the people would accept it.

However, Bordelon recognized the lust for power in Stevenson, and it troubled him. When in his egomania, Stevenson launched an unaided attack on Texas, Bordelon removed Stevenson from power. He also removed Wallace Groutly, Stevenson's henchman, when he tried to continue Stevenson's insane plan, and set up Wesley Jordan in their place.

Today the Archbishop is in ill health. But the government he helped established is still going strong, and the people are "turning away from their earlier sins." When the time comes, Claude Bordelon will go to his reward happily, knowing that he acted in the people's best interests right up to the very end.

This chapter won't describe what kinds of characters and campaigns one can run in the Free Oil States — read *GURPS Autoduel*, pp. 20-21 and 70-74, for that. This section presents various organizations and individuals to help or hinder the PCs in their quest for wealth, fame, power and the American (or Free Oil States) way of life.

Governments

The Free Oil States are filled with possibilities for political intrigue and adventure unlike any other region of North America. Nowhere else do nations with such widely varying governments deal with each other so often — and, not coincidentally, nowhere are there three nations so ready to go to war with each other.

Louisiana

Shrouded in democratic trappings, Louisiana is essentially a theocracy. The President is selected on the basis of his religious reliability. However, the Archbishop of Baton Rouge (see sidebar) pulls many of the strings of power and is backed up by the Red Battalion (the Archbishop's personal guard) — a well-trained and equipped armored infantry unit.

Although New Orleans is more lenient, strict morality laws are enforced in the rest of the state and all other religions are ruthlessly suppressed. The Louisiana Department of Penance and Reconciliation is a government agency charged with enforcing many of these laws and with monitoring the religious dedication of government employees and leaders. The group uses braintaping machines rather than torture devices, but the principle is the same.

Though a "lifetime" office, the Louisian Presidency is a precarious position at best, and the President has to appease the various political/religious factions. If too many corporations, unions, religious orders or other power groups align against the President, the Archbishop would have no choice but to remove him. On the other hand, the Archbishop needs someone else to wield the reins of power — both to temper the nation's image as a theocracy, and to insulate himself from possible coups and revolutions.

The current Archbishop, the Most Reverend Claude Bordelon, was an early mentor of former President Stevenson (see sidebar). Though he recognized Stevenson's madness and worked to remove him from office, the Archbishop shares many of the former President's views on morality and legislation. His Red Battalion played a major role in the coup that deposed Wallace Groutly, Stevenson's incompetent henchman and presumptuous successor.

Foreign Affairs

The Catholic influence on the Louisian government is less pronounced in foreign and economic affairs, areas in which the President is allowed a much freer hand. However, Louisiana is in a tough position. The government is committed to its avowed goal of spreading Evangelical Catholicism throughout the world . . . but it's flanked by the two largest military powers in the Western Hemisphere, Texas and the United States. Naturally, this radical theocracy troubles the governments of the (predominantly Baptist) neighboring states, Arkansas and Mississippi — relations between those states and Louisiana are strained at best. The federal government, though, is happy to deal with

Louisiana, since it holds the key to traffic along the Mississippi/Gulf area. Although the U.S. government remains politically opposed to the religious repression, it supports Louisiana militarily (see sidebar p. 28).

Oklahoma is Louisiana's ally through association — the United States also supplies the Oklahoma government with military aid to maintain a threat against Texas. However, Louisiana has nothing really to gain from Oklahoma, and the two certainly aren't fast friends.

Texas is both a tempting target and an intimidating threat. Louisiana oilmen would love to get their hands on the East Texas fields, and Catholic leaders would love to "liberate" more territory. However, when Texas retook Beaumont in the Battle of Big Thicket, Louisiana learned that Texas is a tough opponent, even without its nuclear arsenal. Only an Oklahoma-Louisiana alliance, funded by the United States, could make any headway against Texas. If the current President, Wesley Jordan, ever sees the slightest advantage, he'll immediately press the attack — if for no other reason than to appease the hawks in his power bloc.



Oklahoma

Oklahoma's government is a plutocracy. The government has two primary responsibilities: to enforce contracts and to protect private property. To a lesser degree, the government is also responsible for maintaining the national infrastructure — highways, canals and the like. Apart from the administration itself, there are really only two major parts of the government. The National Guard includes the air and river forces; it is primarily intended for attack (since corporate armies can handle defense), and for overcoming the armies of corporations who defy Chamber of Commerce decisions. The Highway Patrol maintains law and order on the roads, and is responsible for awarding road construction contracts and such.

The Oklahoma government is very calm and stable, especially when compared to the governments of Louisiana and Texas. The President is chosen by vote and can be recalled by a two-thirds majority vote at any time. The members of the Chamber of Commerce are chosen for their wisdom and share value. Like the President, they serve until recalled by a two-thirds vote. The President administers the government and appoints its very limited bureaucracy; the Cham-

Brax Milton, Head of InterFist Security Associates, Inc.

ST 12, DX 14, IQ 14, HT 12.

Advantages: Combat Reflexes; Wealth (Comfortable); Status +3; Common Sense.

Disadvantages: Greed; Enemies (rival intelligence agencies).

Quirks: Talks as little as possible; Never takes off body armor (especially helmet) in public.

Skills: Acting-14; Administration-14; Area Knowledge (Oklahoma)-14, (Texas)-14; Computer Operation-14; Computer Programming-14; Criminology-14; Detect Lies-14; Disguise-14; Driving (Cars)-16; Electronics (Security Systems) 14; Escape-14; Fast-Talk-14; First Aid-14; Gambling-14; Guns (SMG)-16, (shotgun)-16, (pistol)-16; Gunner (MGs)-16, (RL)-16, (Laser)-16; Interrogation-14; Karate-15; Law-14; Lockpicking-14; Motorcycles (Med./Hvy.)-16; Poisons-14; Shadowing-14; Stealth-14; Survival (Desert)-14, (Woodlands)-14; Tracking-14; Traps-14.

Brax is the head of InterFist Security Associates, the organization under contract to the Oklahoman government to provide international intelligence services. Little is known of his past. The first record of him is as a freelance industrial espionage agent — a very successful one. Through shrewd investments (and, some say, even shrewder blackmail), he bought Internal Security Associates, a failing security consulting firm, and turned it into Oklahoma's most successful espionage agency. It was only natural that he won the government espionage contract.

The adjective that best describes Brax is ruthless. Some have said he must be an android or robot — no human could be so emotionless. Most of his ruthlessness stems from his mental imbalance — he has two personalities, his everyday one and his "business" one. Both are greedy, but the business side of Brax is brutally efficient.

No one knows what Brax looks like, or if they do they don't know they do. He never removes his body armor and mirrored helmet off duty, and he never calls attention to himself on duty. There are rumors that at least some of the time "Brax" is actually an actor wearing the armor — this would certainly explain why the numerous assassination attempts have always failed.

The United States

The United States government has two goals in the area: first, to remove the nuclear threat of Texas; second, to reabsorb the Free Oil States into the Union.

To meet the first goal, the government sells arms to Oklahoma and Louisiana at reduced rates, supplies military intelligence from its spy satellites, and promises to shelter the two republics from Texas' nuclear wrath, should a war occur. Eventually, according to government planners, Oklahoma and Louisiana will have too much to gain and too little to lose in a war, the balloon will go up and Texas will be crushed by the two powers.

The United States can't become directly involved in the war, however, because that would tip the delicate balance. Texas is almost a match for a combined Oklahoma-Louisiana front, and so its military would have too much to lose from a possible nuclear exchange. But if the United States were involved as well, Texas would be doomed — and the generals would no longer have anything to lose by using their atomic stockpiles.

Assuming that Oklahoma and Louisiana conquer Texas, the U. S. would then activate step two of their plan. Taking advantage of the weakened republics, United States forces would pour across the Free Oil States borders and conquer all three nations. The nuclear weaponry would then be within the U.S. control again.

Meanwhile, it's in America's favor to keep the area as unstable as possible, using the CIA's widespread "fifth column" network.

The United Mexican States

The United Mexican States (U.M.S.) isn't nearly as "united" as its government would like people to think. *El Presidente* has enough trouble keeping his own states in line; he surely can't afford an outright attack on another country at this time. Still, the northern states look greedily across the Rio Grande at land forbidden them by the Treaty of Del Rio.

It all depends on which way the political winds blow in Mexico at the time, but it is very likely that the U.M.S. will be a participant in the Border War — either on the side of Oklahoma and Louisiana, or on the side of the United States.

ber of Commerce presides over intercompany disputes. The halls of power in Oklahoma City are very boring.

It's the corporations themselves that get into the backstabbing and mudslinging. At one time, the companies fielded private armies to defend against bandits; now the armies exist primarily to defend against other corporate forces. "Private property" is all well and good, but business is business. Many Oklahoma corporations are not above a little industrial espionage. It all takes on a surreal cloak-and-dagger aspect, since above all the company mustn't get caught — "deniability" is the watchword, lest the Chamber of Commerce impose a stiff fine. Of course, there are times when an above-board corporate war (complete with tanks and air support) is called for — the Chamber of Commerce tolerates this, as long as the Codes of War (regarding treatment of prisoners, families, etc.) are followed.

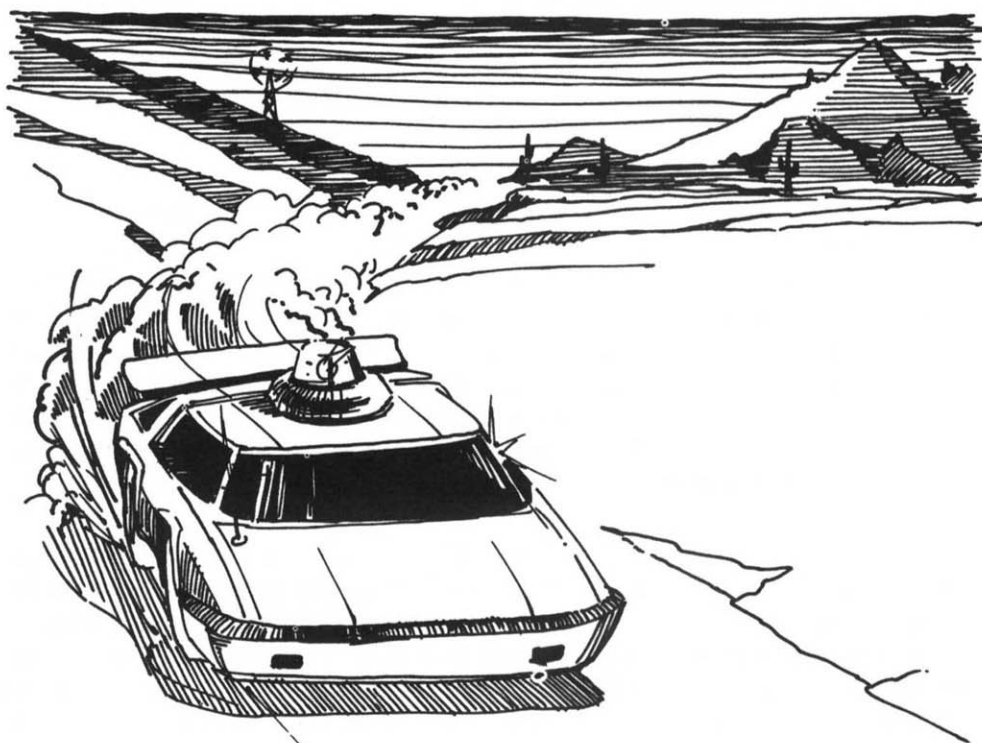
Foreign Affairs

These same principles extend into Oklahoma foreign affairs as well. The government caters to the demands of Oklahoma businessmen, most of whom are willing to fund a war against Texas in return for shares in the conquest. The industrial centers of Amarillo and Arlington are tempting targets, as long as Texas' nuclear hands are tied. In the meantime, though, the government carries out an elaborate program of intrigue (financed by the U.S. government), to weaken Texas in preparation for the seemingly inevitable war.

Texas

The Texas constitution is, in most major respects, identical to the United States constitution. But whereas political dealing is a fact of life in Washington, it's an art in Austin. Nowhere in the world are politicians so blatantly . . . *politicians*. Political promises are broken the minute the election is over, campaign contributions are paid back with political favors, crucial votes are made with political concerns rather than the will of the people in mind — and yet, for some reason, the voters put the same people in office like clockwork every four years.

To be fair, though the process may be distasteful, it *works*. If you have something to give the government, it will give you something in return — and any suf-



ficiently large group of voters has at least one thing to give: their votes. The Texas government is remarkably like the Oklahoman government, except that in Oklahoma the political currency is money, while in Texas the coin of the realm is favors. And, like the Oklahoman government, the Texas government runs very smoothly indeed.

Foreign Affairs

Texas is in a dangerous spot. Not only are there sworn enemies on all sides, but those enemies are paranoid because Texas has a nuclear arsenal. Should the republic give up its weapons, a concerted attack by its enemies would surely follow. Texas would like nothing more than to flex its muscles a bit, especially towards the Louisiana oil fields, but the government has enough on its hands with internal affairs and keeping the borders free. Texas is attempting talks with the United States that might turn the tables on Louisiana — Texas' main allies in these discussions are the governors and senators of Mississippi and Arkansas, who would prefer a larger Texas to a larger Louisiana. But until then, the republic maintains its huge military and waits.

Organizations

There are many groups active in the power struggles of the Free Oil States. The following are the most prominent ones.

The American Autoduel Association

The AADA World Headquarters is in Austin — and there is perhaps no better place for it, because like good Texas politicians, the current AADA president Bill Wendland is a savvy wheeler-dealer. The AADA publicly takes no stand on the international political issues of the Free Oil States . . . but every time an important piece of autoduellling legislation comes up, Wendland is on the phone to the “good ol’ boys” in the Texas legislature. “I’m sure we can work something out,” is his favorite phrase. Naturally, the AADA has interests in other nations, and the organization plays both sides of the fence. The AADA is definitely a player in the game of politics — but the group’s sole concern is the promotion of autoduellling and autoduellists, and everything the AADA does is towards that goal.

(For more complete information, see *Autoduel*, pp. 76-78.)

The Shooting Stars Circuit

The Shooting Stars autoduellling circuit covers Mexico and the Free Oil States. Duelling is popular in the area, and this circuit is one of the AADA’s busiest. The administrators of this circuit are currently experimenting with allowing internal-combustion engines into AADA Divisional events. The response to this has been mixed. Gas-powered duelling is more spectacular and more intense, but it’s also deadlier and more expensive. Corporate sponsors have flocked to the Shooting Stars Circuit, and thus the tempers run as high as the stakes and duellists compete for the top-dollar sponsorships. Rumors of sabotage and duel-fixing abound. The supporters of gas duelling say that the sport just needs time to settle down. Meanwhile, though, this season has had more off-track deaths than any other, and the World Headquarters is considering reversing the circuit administrators’ decision.

The Brotherhood of Truckers

Like the AADA, the Brotherhood is a very specialized group — it exists for truckers and no one else. But, while wars are good for business, they’re

General of the Republic Juan Ordaz y Espinoza

ST 11, DX 12, IQ 15, HT 12.

Advantages: Appearance (Attractive); Military Rank +7; Status +4; Strong Will +4; Combat Reflexes. Voice; Wealth (Filthy Rich).

Disadvantages: Addicted (Havana cigars); Enemies (foreign intelligence agencies); Lecherousness; Sense of Duty towards his army.

Skills: Administration-16; Area Knowledge (Texas’ borders)-16, (Cuba) 14; Driving (tracked vehicles)-12; Diplomacy-16; English-15; Guns (SMG) 14; Gunner (MGs)-14; History (Military)-20, Interrogation-15, Leadership-16, Politics-14; Savoir-Faire-16; Sex Appeal 20; Spanish (native language)-15; Strategy-20; Tactics-16.

Quirks: Likes to reminisce about “good old days”; Always wears mirrored sunglasses; Doesn’t understand democracy (“Well, why don’t you just threaten to shoot anyone who doesn’t vote for you? It worked for my cousin Fidel. Ah, those were the days . . .”).

When the Texarkana Accords were signed in 2005, the Texas government realized it needed a strong, skilled general to take charge of the rag-tag forces. There were no less than four separate “armies,” and the command-control confusion was part of the reason why the Lubbock Tragedy couldn’t be avoided.

The Rastafarian Revolution in 2006 not only created the Caribbean Confederation, it provided Texas with the leader it needed. Juan Espinoza was the leader of Cuba’s army, and was forced to flee the newly-formed confederation. He barely escaped with his life let alone a trunk filled with gold bars and Havana cigars. Texas made Juan a better offer than the Soviet Union or the People’s Republic of Central America did, so he fled to the land of capitalism.

Espinoza quickly pulled the army into shape. The organization he was most familiar with was the Soviet military structure — so today, the Texas National Guard looks very much like the Red Army of 2005. Naturally there was some adverse reaction in the Guard to “that damn Commie Hispanic,” but his smashing success in the Battle of Big Thicket soon put an end to such comments. Today, Espinoza is the most colorful figure in the Texas government. He still doesn’t understand democracy, but he’s always had a firm grasp of capitalism, and inside sources refer to him as “one heck of a party animal.”

**Jean-Jacques Roulon,
President of New Acadia
Oil Company**

ST 11, DX 11, IQ 13, HT 12.

Advantages: Appearance (Very Handsome); Extraordinary Luck; Status +4; Wealth (Filthy Rich).

Disadvantages: Fanaticism (Cajun patriot); Stubbornness; Vow (to avenge his father's death).

Skills: Accounting-15; Administration-13, Computer Operation-13; Cajun-13 (native); Diplomacy-13, Driving (cars)-11; English-13; French-13; Guns (shotgun)-13, Gunner (MGs)-13, History (Cajun) 16, Leadership-13, Merchant-15, Powerboats 11, Prospecting* (Oil)-15, Savoir-Faire 15, Sex Appeal-15; Strategy-13.

Quirks: Ladies' man; Always tries to recruit support for Cajuns' cause.

Though few know it, Roulon and his New Acadia Oil Company are the driving force behind the Martinist movement.

His fanaticism dates back to the early years of the Stevenson administration. Roulon's father was a prominent businessman with an infamous (and overactive) fondness for the fairer sex. He was assassinated by Reconcilers (or so Jean-Jacques believes). His father's death hurt the 20-year-old Roulon, and he used his inheritance to build support for the Cajun separatist movement.

Roulon is quite dashing, and definitely follows in his father's footsteps. Although Roulon loves good times, the playboy image is primarily a cover for his work with the Martinist movement. His involvement is suspected by many, since Roulon never hesitates to fill sympathetic ears with his arguments for Cajun justice.

*Prospecting defaults to IQ-5 or Geology-4. It is the skill of finding valuable minerals by on-site examination. Prospecting from a distance, by instrument or map reading and extrapolation, requires Geology skill. A successful Prospecting roll will also tell good ore or minerals from a small sample, and judge their commercial value. A prospector is, by necessity, a good practical geologist. Geology defaults to this skill at -4.

notoriously bad for truckers (or shippers, for that matter), and several Knights have publicly stated that they will do everything they can to avert a border war.

Again like the AADA, that's essentially the only political issue the Brotherhood has in the area — all three Free Oil States are very friendly towards truckers and fairly lenient towards duellists, and so there really aren't many sweeping causes here to champion. Certainly EDSEL has no footholds in the region; the last vocal EDSEL supporter in Texas was shot by a sheriff on the charge of "bein' a jackass."

(For more complete information, see *The Brotherhood* p. 34.)

Cajun Clans

The Cajuns are a race with a colorful past. "Cajun" is a slurring of the word Acadian. These people were the original settlers of Acadia, a part of Nova Scotia. There, they developed a culture based on their steadfast Catholic faith, strong familial ties and deep respect for the land. However, when Acadia passed into British hands, the King demanded that the Acadians swear loyalty to him — and they refused, because swearing allegiance to a Protestant king would require forsaking their Catholic faith. The British seized their farms and deported the Acadians on ships. Most found their way to southeast Louisiana, where a new French colony was growing.

The swamps and bayous held cheap land and plentiful game, and there the Cajuns settled for good. As Louisiana changed hands to the Spanish, back to the French and then to the Americans, the Cajuns remained oblivious, isolating themselves in their backwoods homes.

Except for the extinction of rice (a major ingredient in Cajun cooking), the Bad Years left the Cajuns relatively untouched. When the new Louisiana government took charge, they ignored it just as they had ignored their previous "rulers." This government was Catholic, which was nice, but it didn't really impact their lives.

But Stevenson wasn't going to be ignored. The "deep faith" of the Cajuns didn't interest Stevenson — obedience did. The new morality laws were especially enforced in the bayous . . . or at least the government tried to enforce them. The Cajuns developed a bad habit of sending pieces of his Reconcilers back to Baton Rouge.

President Jordan has loosened up a bit, and the Department of Penance and Reconciliation stays out of the swamps . . . for now. But Cajun leaders with a nose for political affairs know that repression and bloodshed is never very far away. In the meantime, the Cajuns maintain their rambunctious and carefree lifestyle undisturbed in the backwoods of southeast Louisiana.

The Order of St. Martin

This is not a religious organization. Rather, it is a radical Cajun separatist movement with strong terrorist tendencies. The Order's main goal is the establishment of an official Acadian homeland in Louisiana, with an independent government. There are rumors that this group is connected with the infamous Bayou Rats and Howlin' Jack Mouton (see p. 31) — but the Rats attack anything valuable, while the Martinists are clearly dedicated to their goal of driving foreigners from their homeland.

Gangs

Though the Free Oil States aren't as gang-dominated as some areas (such as the southern U.S.), there are still large expanses of lawless territory. The areas with the highest incidence of gang activity are central Louisiana, west Texas, south Texas and rural Oklahoma. Many of these gangs are funded by foreign governments, a practice that the Brotherhood strongly opposes. If any proof ever

turns up showing, for example, CIA support of hijack gangs, the United States may well find itself with a nationwide trucker's strike.

The Bayou Rats

The notorious Bayou Rats are the only gang ruthless and talented enough to survive in the swamps of southern Louisiana. The Rats are led by Howlin' Jack Mouton, a self-admitted lunatic. The gang uses flatbottomed boats and amphibious cars to make lightning raids and unpursuable escapes. Rumors link the Rats with the Order of St. Martin, the CIA, the Texas Rangers and Gary Stevenson himself. There's no proof of any of these, and Howlin' Jack isn't talking.

The Oklahoman People's Front (OPF)

Not surprisingly, there is bitter resistance to the heavy-handed Oklahoman plutocracy. The OPF is a "revolutionary nomad organization" — a cycle gang in all but name. The OPF has on occasion committed acts that have definite revolutionary goals, but the group lacks dedicated and decisive leadership. For the most part, the band wanders Oklahoma stealing and pillaging from the bourgeoisie and proletariat alike. Their publicly declared hatred of Norman Enterprises (see p. 13) is considered by many to be yet another example of their lack of true support for the Oklahoman working man.

Supporters of the OPF, however, say that many of the more heinous crimes attributed to the group are actually the work of other gangs, using the OPF's name and style as camouflage — some go so far as to accuse the Oklahoman government of funding these gangs, to ruin the public image of the Front. The OPF's public image has been compared to that of the Anarchist Relief Front — indeed, some suggest a connection between the groups. Just who is behind the OPF, and what their true beliefs and activities are, remains a mystery.



Gulf Pirates

Unlike other forms of transportation, ocean and river shipping is almost as

Captain Andrew Blumhardt

ST 12, DX 12, IQ 14, HT 12.

Advantages: Charisma +3; Military Rank +6 (among his own crew only; the improved Status +3 applies among pirates in general); Wealth (Wealthy).

Disadvantages: Code of Honor; Enemies (various bounty hunters and governments).

Skills: Area Knowledge (Gulf of Mexico)-14; Fencing-14; Guns/TL7 (Pistols)-14; Gunner/TL7 (Naval Cannon)-14; History (17th-century pirates)-20; Hobby Skill (Swashbuckling trivia)-16; Leadership-16; Meteorology-14; Navigation-14; Powerboat-14; Seamanship-14; Tactics 15; Savoir-Faire-14.

Quirks: Wants to recreate the "Golden Age of Piracy," the 17th century; Errol Flynn is his role model; Loves swashbuckling movies and literature.

Captain Blumhardt is the King of Corpus Christi. He is a quite dashing and debonair 30-year-old, living up to the film reputation of his hero, Errol Flynn. He truly believes in the mythical "Pirate Code of Honor," a belief instilled by years of swashbuckling novels and movies. Although most of his peers are amused by his nostalgia, they admire his skill as a captain and respect the work he's done to make Corpus Christi a pirates' haven.

It's very difficult for an outsider to discover much about a pirate's past. Blumhardt's background only stretches back to 2029, the first time a merchantman reported being attacked by Blumhardt and his vessel, the *Lady of Tortuga*. Ever since then, Blumhardt has gained notoriety for his skill in combat and his trustworthiness in victory — Blumhardt has never killed a defenseless prisoner and has always left his victims with a way to return to shore.

The Lady of Tortuga

Victims' reports accurately identify Blumhardt's ship to be an old modified Coast Guard cutter. However, with her brown-painted hull (to blend into coastlines) and its lofty sails and rigging (to save on fuel), the *Lady of Tortuga* resembles one of the pirate ships of yore. Her hull has 10 PD, 9 DR and 160 HT per side. The front turret mounts two tank guns, the rear turret contains a battery of three radar-guided missiles (each with a 10-round magazine), and there are several tripod-mounted MGs around the ship for point-defense. She has a crew of twenty and a cargo bay that can hold several tons of booty.

Jack Corcoran, President of Corcoran Enterprises

ST 13, DX 9, IQ 13, HT 13.

Advantages: Extraordinary Luck (30 points); Status +4; Wealth (Filthy Rich).

Disadvantages: Impulsiveness; Overconfidence; Odious Personal Habit: Loud-mouthed, opinionated and arrogant (-3).

Skills: Administration-13; Diplomacy 13; Driving (cars)-10, (minibuses)-10, (tracked vehicles)-10; Engineering (Petroleum/Chemical)-16; Fast-Talk -18; Geology (of the Free Oil States)-16; Gunner (MGs)-10; (Lasers)-10; (tank weapons)-10; Merchant-15; Politics-13; Prospecting* (oil)-16.

Quirks: Lights cigars with hundred-star bills; Has everyone call him "J.C."; Always relies on his hunches; Spends his money extravagantly; Hires and fires staff on whims — sometimes firing the same person several times in one day, and hiring him again after each time!

"J.C." is the archetypal Texas wildcat. He drives a 30' minibus with longhorn horns on the hood; its airhorn plays the opening bars of "The Yellow Rose of Texas." He owns three ranches, each with an airstrip for his private (gas-burning!) jet plane. When he likes the service at a restaurant, he doesn't leave a tip — he *buys* the place; when he doesn't like the service, he buys the place and fires the waiter! And speaking of buying, J.C. personally owns fourteen Texas senators, and keeps another dozen on retainer. He spends his money as if there were no tomorrow — and there may well not be, because nearly every cent that he doesn't squander goes straight back into his risky business ventures.

J.C. got his start in the oil business right after the Secession War, when he mustered out of the Army of the Republic. The land grant in west Texas he was given in lieu of back pay turned out to have oil underneath, and he's never looked back. Every time he made a star or petrodollar, he put fifty cents back into some other crazy scheme, and spent the other fifty cents trying to impress people. Remarkably, nearly every one of his business deals works — he's been accused of being either a genius or a warlock.

*See sidebar, p. 30.

common today as it was 50 years ago. There is still a global economy, of sorts, and airship traffic simply cannot handle the heavy cargoes that ocean vessels can. River transport is often safer and cheaper than highway trucking. There's a lot of money on the waters in and around North America, and wherever there's money, there are those who wish to steal it. Piracy is a major problem on the high seas as well as closer to shore.

Many pirate vessels are old Coast Guard or Navy ships that turned to theft when the Free Oil States seceded. Some are still manned by their original (if somewhat older) crews and/or their descendents. Others are converted freighters or speedboats. All are heavily armed — even the most incautious of freighters carries much thicker armor than a duelling vehicle, so pirates have to have firepower to match.

Despite the popular image of thrilling sea chases and dramatic broadsides, pirates seldom actually fire their weapons. The mere threat of combat is enough to make most cargo ships heave to.

Real pirates don't have to constantly reinforce their reputation as ruthless murderers — victims generally don't resist enough to ask for a demonstration. The pirates simply take what they want and leave, letting the victims go on their way. However, pirates (with a few exceptions) have no special "code of honor" and are just as reprehensible as cycle gangs. Thus, piracy is a life balanced between boredom and anguish when military patrols catch up to the miscreants.

River Pirates

The mouths of navigable rivers along the Gulf of Mexico are very well defended, and few Gulf pirates operate up into these areas. River piracy is an occupation only for the most desperate. Most of these "pirates" are little more than bandit gangs, and many don't even use boats. Those that do usually use non-descript barges that can return to port unremarked after a raid. Although piracy on the high seas will be a fact of life for many years to come, river piracy is on the decline. As the republics regain organization and stability, they are patrolling and protecting the river commerce as a national resource.

Smugglers

With the succession and resulting collapse of governments (and government customs laws) came a collapse of the underground market. Why smuggle what can be imported legally? But, as is often the case, new laws create new crimes — smuggling is once again a problem in North America. Most drugs are synthesized in local labs, so drug running isn't much of an industry. In the backlash of the Blight, the United States issued quarantine laws to keep foreign foods out of the country. Those who want *real* coffee, or bananas, or whatever, have to acquire it from smugglers. El Paso is, naturally, a major supplier for these smugglers — its hydroponics gardens perfectly recreate climates from around the world, allowing anything to be grown here in large quantities.

Other smugglers carry petroleum, avoiding the hefty consumption-reduction taxes imposed by both the United States and the Free Oil States governments. Black-market crude can be as much as 50% cheaper than its above-board equivalent, but there are no guarantees as to quality or purity. As always, it is a risky business since the government's treatment of tax dodgers is harsh.

Oil

The topic that created the Free Oil States deserves special treatment. Oil is still the dominant factor in life here. Despite the fact that most vehicles are not gasoline powered, there have been no major breakthroughs in finding suitable substitutes for the multiple by-products of oil. "Black gold" is money and power, and people will kill and die for it.

Prospecting

Even today, no one can predict with 100% accuracy whether a piece of land will have oil underneath it. The best geologists can do is determine the probability that a well will strike oil. So, there's a constant incentive for prospectors to scour the land, dropping test hole after test hole. Drilling is expensive, so a hole only gets dug if seismic and gravitational analyses look promising — even then the ratio of oil wells to dry holes is roughly 1 to 20. But because the potential profit is so high, people will do nearly anything to get the mineral rights in an area where a company is drilling test holes — and the best way to get on the bandwagon is to beat the rush and buy the rights while the prospectors are still mapping the area.

Drilling

Once a producing field has been found, derricks are set up to drill deep shafts to the oil pools. Once a drill strikes oil, the derrick superstructure is removed and one of two things are installed — a christmas tree or a mule. Christmas trees are systems of pipes and valves that regulate the flow from a high-pressure well; mules are pumps that draw oil out of low-pressure holes. Either kind of cap is heavily guarded and is surrounded by fire-extinguishing equipment; oil fires usually start at wellheads and are extremely dangerous.

Shipping

Once the oil is out of the ground, it has to be carried to a refinery center. Back during the Golden Age, the crude was most often transferred via pipeline. However, the difficulty of patrolling a line hundreds of miles long in the open desert precludes the use of pipelines today in most areas. Instead, the petroleum is stored in tanks at the individual wells (or is piped to a central tank in the case of fortified fields) and is transported to the refineries on trucks or river barges. This is the point where the oil companies are most vulnerable — crude oil shipments are (comparatively) easy to hijack. They're also easier to fence than gasoline shipments, since refineries don't usually care where their oil comes from and are willing to buy large lots; gasoline can only be distributed on a limited scale, and most gas suppliers are big-name companies who only buy directly from refineries.

Processing

Oil is used for more than just gasoline. Other steps in the process produce: kerosene and jet fuel for high-performance vehicles and aircraft; base molecules for plastics; various lubricants (including petroleum jelly); and organic molecules for use in cosmetics and synthetic foods. In fact, only about 10% of the crude petroleum refined in North America winds up as gasoline.

A Petroleum Primer

Wildcatter. A wealthy prospector — an oilman who buys and drills land away from the established fields, looking for new gushers. Wildcatters are famous for being a little crazy and a lot lucky.

Gusher. Is a term that refers to a new well that shoots pressurized oil into the air. Oil wells are drilled using a large drillbit attached to the end of a long hollow pipe. When the drillbit breaks into an especially large reservoir, the pressurized oil *gushes*. The derrick crew quickly caps the well, but everyone within a hundred yards becomes coated with "black gold." Gushers today are very rare and very valuable.

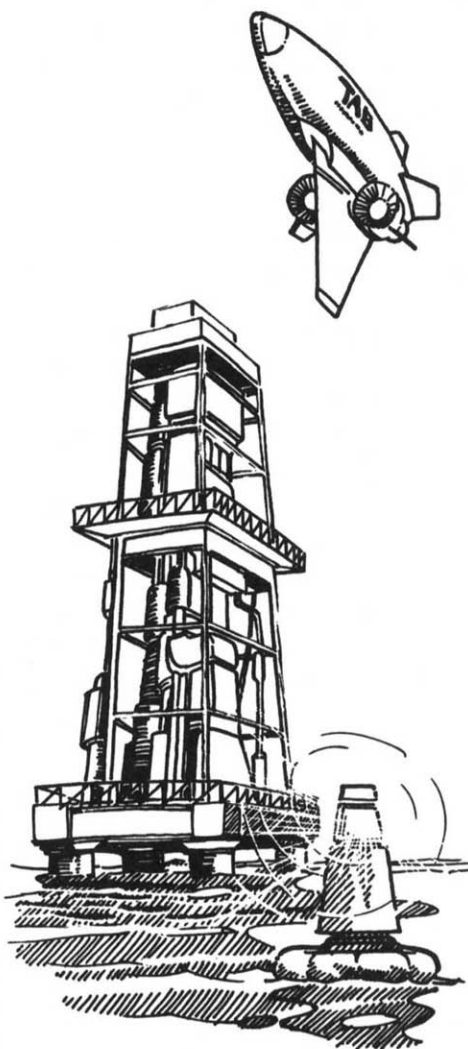
Slant Drilling. Slant-wells are drilled at a slight angle — not enough to notice above ground, but enough to put the bottom of the shaft under someone else's property. Since mineral rights laws give property owners possession of the oil directly beneath their land, slant drilling allows someone to tap a neighbor's reserves rather than his own.

Cracking. Old, dried-out wells can sometimes be rejuvenated by dropping explosives down the shaft — the concussion breaks up oil-bearing rock and refills the well. When done improperly, cracking can result in an oil-well fire, one of the most dangerous and intense conflagrations known to man.

Mineral Rights. These are essentially the ownership of everything underneath the surface of a piece of land. These are vitally important in the Free Oil States — never sell them! Owning the mineral rights to a piece of land allows someone to exploit those minerals, without regard to what's on the surface. As a Texas oilman once said, "The meek shall inherit the Earth, but the strong will keep the mineral rights." Renting the mineral rights to someone is called a *lease*.

Schlumberger® Truck. A ten-wheeled truck filled with electronic sensing gear, designed to help prospect for oil. One schlumberger truck will set up its seismic recorders and send out three crews. Each crew sets off an underground explosion, and the resulting shockwaves are analyzed to determine the composition of the ground. Recent improvements in the technology include gravitic anomaly sensors as well.

Mule. The typical pump for a producing well. It gets its name from its shape — it looks like a donkey repeatedly dipping its nose into a pool of water. Mules consist of a 20' long hammer-shaped bar rocking up and down.



THE BROTHERHOOD

Life On The Open Road

Even as far back as the 1980s, people were living in eighteen-wheelers. The practice is even more common today, where a truck is safer than a house in many areas. Married pairs are common, and some even raise children on the highway — while the image of Mama driving, Papa manning the turret and Junior hitting the flaming oil jet may not be Norman Rockwell, it's a decent way to live.

Such a life has very few expenses beyond those of the truck itself. Nearly every truck stop offers parking spaces, along with shower and restroom access, for \$25 per night (more for fortified stops in especially rough areas). When compared to the usual \$75+ cost for motel rooms at truck stops, the benefits are obvious. For those on a truly tight budget, the truck can be parked at a rest area or off the side of the road, though this is extremely dangerous in many regions.

Life on the road can be fairly plush. "Highway homesteads," as live-in trucks are called, often have fold-out beds, TVs, kitchenettes (including refrigerators and microwave ovens), showers, bathrooms and other amenities. It may be small, but it's home.

Thus, a lot of Brotherhood members spend most of their lives in their trucks. These truckers are especially dangerous to confront in a duel — the normal attachment a trucker has for his vehicle is much greater when it's his only home! Furthermore, many trucking families band together into clan-like convoys. The wandering gypsy tribes of the old have returned to the world, in a much more heavily armed incarnation.



A popular myth is that oil is the key to the prosperity of the Free Oil States. Certainly oil plays a part, but the true lifeblood of these nations is commerce and shipping. Louisiana controls trade up the Mississippi and into the Gulf; Oklahoma rivals the Northeast as an industrial center; Texas trades on land, sea and air.

Commerce today would be impossible, however, were it not for the efforts of the Brotherhood of Truckers, a loose affiliation of professional drivers dedicated to mutual support and advancement. Though it has no leaders, no rules, and no membership rosters, the Brotherhood is one of the most powerful organizations in North America.

History

Life on the open road has always held romantic images for the American public. Romantic images, however, never stopped anyone from trying to score a fast buck, and the truckers have always had some sort of defense organization to look out for their interests. Initially, this organization was the Teamsters Union, a far more rigid and hierarchical group than the Brotherhood. The Teamsters Union mediated wage disputes and lobbied for more favorable highway laws and taxes. They were totally unprepared for the problems that the truckers would face in the 21st century.

As the Grain Blight eliminated food reserves, the population responded with desperate attempts to hoard whatever food was available. The nationwide network of transportation and commerce was wrecked. The government attempted to deal with the situation by nationalizing both the food and the last effective means of transport, the trucks. National Guard units were assigned to escort large convoys of trucks across the country. In this manner, the rich areas could support the poorer ones, food rioting would be lessened, and society would be preserved.

Unfortunately, this plan faced opposition not only from the bikers and crazies who ruled the countryside, but also from the hoarders who ruled the cities. Losses on the convoys were high. In 2017, the Midwest independent truckers, led by Michael "Mongo" McGuire, called a general strike on the government food runs. They were supported by their Guardsmen escorts, who had their fill of shooting and being shot at by United States citizens.

The Teamsters Union tried to maintain its position as the sole voice of the independent trucker. However, evidence was discovered showing collusion between the Teamsters' leadership and the infamous Whitney Gang, the corrupt Cabinet of President Harris' administration. Though this "betrayal" has now been shown to be an honest attempt by the union to handle a problem it had never faced before, it shattered the Teamsters' public image. Talks broke down, and the government sent in Army forces and scab truckers to break the strike. When a striker's truck was blown up in Pittsburgh on June 3, 2017, both sides converged on the city for a climactic confrontation.

The "Battle" of Pittsburgh, a week-long series of riots and skirmishes, ended in a victory for the independents. Mongo McGuire, who personally drove his rig through the last government barricade, was fatally wounded in the combat. According to legend, Mongo proclaimed his vision of a "Brotherhood of Truckers" with his dying breath. (According to another legend, Mongo's death was staged to protect him from government retribution, and McGuire lives on today as an incognito Knight of the Brotherhood.)

After the Battle of Pittsburgh, the government began to accede to the truckers' demands. The original government plan had been to ship food from well-off cities to feed starving ones — understandably unpopular with the rich towns. The new plan was to merely keep the transportation system open between local farms and the cities, and let free enterprise handle the rest. The truckers continued their food runs, but this time they were met with much less resistance.

Unfortunately, transportation and rationing wasn't enough. Many cities could have gotten by — vegetables, fruits and even range grasses had survived the Blight — but too many people decided that their only hope was to hoard and steal food. The food runs were still dangerous, and became more so as raids became more and more common, but this time the truckers were working for themselves. Furthermore, this time the truckers had safe havens — the worst of the urban riots had ended, and cities were now islands of law and order in a sea of violence.

The National Guard escorts stayed with the convoys. Today, escort drivers are still recognized as members of the Brotherhood, even if they don't drive trucks — a custom that dates back to the Food Riots. The Guardsmen proved to be an even match for the cycle gangs — most trucks made it through, but many didn't. Often, an entire convoy would be lost when its escort APCs were lured away by false attacks. The truckers began to recognize the need for inherent defense.

The advent of autoduelling made trucking much safer. Now, a rig could be its own escort. Heavily armed highway juggernauts could carry enough guns to mow down an entire cycle pack, and enough armor to laugh off whatever retribution the gang could muster. Convoys of trucks became almost invulnerable — and when a situation called for Brotherhood retribution, a fleet of trucks could be put together to lay waste to any camp, truck stop or town. The truckers were invincible gods of iron and gunpowder, bound together by a code of loyalty, honor and vengeance. The Golden Age of Trucking had arrived.

Organization

The Brotherhood isn't quite as loose-knit as its public image. In the early years, the Brotherhood had no structure and was simply the embodiment of a code of highway ethics. Today, however, a kind of hierarchy has grown up to meet the needs of modern truckers.

Membership

Becoming a Brother is simply a matter of being associated with *trucking* and acting like a Brother. There are no dues or membership rosters. There is, however, a complex "pecking order" among members. Novices rank below pros, gunners below drivers, employees below free-lancers, bus drivers below truckers, ten-wheelers below eighteen-wheelers, escort drivers and couriers below "real" truckers.

But loose membership is essentially meaningless membership — what counts is whether you're *treated* like a Brother. The key to that is the motto of the Brotherhood: "Do unto Brothers as you would have them do unto you." Those who share information, hire down-and-out truckers, come to the aid of truckers



Computers and the Brotherhood

A bright comment on the future: Today, the computer rivals the machine gun as a trucker's most important tool. (Telecommunications are used to get weather and road condition reports, as well as to advertise for cargos, databases are used for navigation, and data processing is used to leech runs for as much profit as possible. A very few, very expensive programs are even available that tap the net automatically for information, analyzing the data and providing detailed business, financial and travel plans. As banditry subsidies and commerce rises, the computer becomes even more essential to a profitable enterprise.

At least one crewman on the average truck will be "computer literate"; some are out-and-out hackers, designing their own trucking economics programs. Most truckers just have high-capacity versions of portable computers, tying into the data net at truck stops. Many have vehicular computers and tap into the net through radio links; some even have portable earth stations, so as to never be out of touch. A very few truckers just rely on hotel computers, or worse yet, don't use computers at all. They are generally in an unsuccessful minority.

The Electric Mayhem

The *Electric Mayhem* is a modified Atlantic Mamluk/Quinine Q-1 tractor-trailer rig, donated by that company as a promotional service. Doctor Teeth drives, but his gunner (Zoot, a laconic long-time companion) has extra driver controls and takes over while the Doctor operates his computer terminal. The tractor's fire extinguisher has been replaced with a portable earth station, to keep ROUTE/66 in touch with the Brotherhood. The trailer contains an electrical engineer and three gunners, plus sleeping space for the entire crew. The trailer also contains the mainframe computer that runs ROUTE/66, plus a backup mainframe and another portable earth station (replacing the autocannon turret).

Custom Mamluk — Sleeper longnose, x-hvy. chassis, large truck power plant, 10 PR tires, driver, gunner, vehicular computer for driver, cyberlink (connected to trailer's lasers) for gunner, extra driver controls for gunner, long-distance radio, portable earth station, ramplate (HT 132). LRF armor: F 21/44, R 11/24, L 11/24, B 6/12, T 6/12, U 3/12, six 10 DR wheelguards. \$135,525; 431 lbs. for crew. No extra space.

Custom Quinine — Van trailer, 8 solid tires, 4 gunners, QR kingpin, 3 lasers and 2 small cycle power plants in extra-large universal turret TB, 5 MGs (FR, FL, BR, BL, B), 5 SSs with 2 extra magazines each (FR, FL, BR, BL, B), 3 MD with 4 extra magazines each (BR, BL, B), 3 FOJ with an extra magazine each (BR, BL, B), large mainframe computer (see *GURPS Space*, p. S52), backup mainframe computer, portable earth station TF, 3 hi-res computers, one vehicular computer (for the gunner/engineer), radar, two improved fire extinguishers, portable shop, eight sleeping spaces, spacious lounge/kitchen/living area (with room for several passengers during travel). LRF armor: F 16/32, FR, FL, BR, BL all 28/56, FT, BT both 24/48, FU, BU both 8/32, B36/72 (all fully sloped); four 10 DR wheelguards. \$517,230; 1,498 lbs. left for crew and cargo. 159 extra cu. ft.

on the losing side of a duel (or on the side of the road) and so forth will soon find themselves receiving similar help, as their reputations among Brothers grow. Those who don't display the proper spirit of solidarity will find themselves receiving colder and colder shoulders from their colleagues as their reputations sink.

The Books

The word-of-mouth system by which the Brotherhood operates has a physical manifestation: the Books. These three volumes — the Green, the Black and the Red Books — list people or organizations deserving special attention. Each entry includes names (if available), colors, license numbers, addresses and other identifying information, along with a brief summary of the reason for the listing and the name of the Brother responsible for the entry.

The *Green Book* lists all those who merit above-average help from Brothers. Such people include the Knights of the Brotherhood (see below), highway samaritans, and others who have helped out Brothers "above and beyond the call of duty." Helping a trucker fix a blown tire won't get you on this list — single-handedly wiping out a hijacking gang will. Most Brothers will go out of their way to help out someone in the Green Book. (+4 Reputation among Brothers, always recognized: 10 points. The GM should be *very* leery of letting a character begin campaigning with such an advantage — this is the sort of honor that should be *earned* through play.)

The *Black Book* lists all those declared anathema by the Brotherhood for one reason or another. This includes corrupt shipping agents, unreliable truck stops, conspicuously unfriendly truckers and so forth. Again, this list is reserved for truly outstanding examples — gypping a trucker in an average business deal won't put you on the list, it will just make you locally unpopular. Brothers will go out of their way to avoid or ignore people in the Black Book. (-2 Reputation among Brothers, always recognized: -5 points. Characters may very well begin play with this, provided they give the GM a good rationale.)

The *Red Book* is the shortest list of all and comprises everyone who's earned "shoot on sight" status from the Brotherhood. Hijackers, corrupt police and bad samaritans fit the bill here. EDSEL used to top this list, but recently the Brotherhood's position on EDSEL has mellowed to mere hostility rather than gunplay. A Brother won't necessarily gun down someone from the Red Book in cold blood, but out on the open road, a Red Book entry is a death warrant. (-4 Reputation among Brothers, always recognized: -10 points. This is *dangerous* — keep it to NPCs, unless the crime was truly heinous.)

The Books aren't actually published. They're electronic data files, distributed among the truckers. For those without computers, the data files are occasionally printed out and photocopied at no charge. The files are maintained on a database computer system, operated by the Brotherhood for the assistance of its members, called ROUTE/66. This system is based in a van trailer that constantly roams the country, keeping in touch with Brothers via satellite (see sidebar, this page).

ROUTE/66

Anyone with a computer and a satellite uplink system (such as a portable earth station or a hotel computer) can contact ROUTE/66. The open-access level contains databases with weather, police and road condition reports. Another database contains reviews, mostly by truckers, of thousands of truck stops across the continent. Finally, there are message bases and an E-mail system, to provide a forum for Brothers (and others — ROUTE/66 is a free-access database) to discuss issues or just chat.

Most of that, however, is available from other nexi in the datanet. A higher level, with access restricted to roughly one third of all the Brothers on the road, contains huge lists of available cargos, trucks and crew. It's an immense "classified ads" section. Though only a select few can read posts here, anyone who has reason to can advertise on this board. Cargo, truck and crew ads are free; all others cost a small amount, depending on the ad. To obtain access to this level, a trucker must be nominated for membership by someone who already has access; unless that member is a Knight, the nomination requires a second from another member. Most gypsy truckers have this level of access.

The highest level is reserved for the use of the Knights of the Brotherhood. They can read and download the Books, and are responsible for distributing new editions. They can also post proposed changes to the Books, changes which will usually be made without question. ROUTE/66 also supplies information on the location and activities of Knights, organized Brotherhood convoys and so forth. Even though Knights are the only ones with free access to this information, they aren't loathe to give information to truckers (and others) who convince them that they truly need it. For instance, if an independent trucker is having problems with a bike gang in his area, he can e-mail a request for help to just about any Knight, who will forward the request on to a Knight in the area.

The Knights of the Brotherhood

The Knights are the Brotherhood's elite champions. Already wealthy, and supported by donations from their fellow truckers, the Knights forego cargos and roam the countryside in their heavily armed trucks, serving as shining examples for the rest of the Brotherhood. Knights can be counted on to come to the aid of anybody, not just truckers, and are renowned for their skill and firepower.

Knights serve three purposes in the Brotherhood. First, they are the cavalry, guardians and shock troops of the Brotherhood. Second, and equally important, they are the public relations department — many Knights spend most of their time lobbying for truckers' causes in state and national capitals, and most carefully cultivate their images, to gain popular support. Last, the Knights are police — though truckers are loathe to discipline their own, they'll clean house when necessary.

The Knights are naturally a bit secretive regarding their numbers, but at a rough guess there are about a hundred or so out on the roads. They drive a wide array of Q-trucks and do their best to travel inconspicuously. The Brothers themselves help keep Knights incognito — by tradition, no Brother makes a big deal about meeting a Knight, but simply treats him with the respect all fellow truckers deserve. By tradition, though, no one asks a recognized Knight to pay a bill. He will, of course, if failing to do so will cause financial hardship.

Encounters

Brothers are one of the few constants on the road: no matter where you go, they are there. The following section describes a few of the places the Brotherhood can be encountered in Autoduel America.

Trucking

Naturally, this is the main occupation of

Doctor Teeth

The sysop (system operator) of ROUTE/66 is a Knight of the Brotherhood known only by his road name, Doctor Teeth. He personally owns and monitors the computer equipment that runs ROUTE/66; the equipment is located in the trailer of his heavily-defended semi, the *Electric Mayhem*. The Doctor himself is a tall, burly 45-year-old, with a ready smile. He's very friendly most of the time, but he refuses to discuss the Riot Years or his past. As befits a Knight of the Brotherhood, he's very vocal on the topic of truckers' rights.

Because of the Doctor's secrecy about his past, his stats are left to the GM to devise. However, he definitely has Driving, Gunner, Electronics, Computer Programming and Computer Operations, all at high levels. Rumors say he was involved in the Battle of Pittsburgh — exactly how involved, nobody knows.

The Doctor roams North America incessantly. He travels with the crew of his rig, and whomever else wants to tag along.



In Touch On The Road: The Vehicular Computer

Many truckers like to keep a constant watch on the datanets. For this, the portable computer is inadequate. The *vehicular computer* (\$4,000, 5 lbs., 2 cu. ft.) is an on-board version of the home computer. It comes with a wide array of databases and programs, including map/navigation programs, accounting and business programs and even video games. The computer also comes with a targeting program that gives a +1 Gunner skill bonus, just like the targeting computer. The vehicular computer is located at a specific crew station and may only be operated by that crew member, though its data display can be projected on any vehicle's heads-up display.

The vehicular computer can contact any datanet within two miles. If attached to a long-distance radio, the computer can contact a net within 25 miles. If the vehicle has a portable earth station, the computer can uplink with any satellite in the sky, for world-wide communication.

Average Trucking Income

Most shippers in 2038 are more concerned about *whether* a cargo arrives than *when* it arrives. Thus, standard rates are based strictly on mileage, with bonuses for cargo size, speedy delivery and so forth. Here is the schedule of rates recommended by the Brotherhood (all costs are per mile):

Base Rate (ten-wheeler)	\$1.00
Base Rate (tractor-trailer rig; shipper supplies trailer)	\$1.00
Base Rate (trucker supplies trailer)	\$1.50
Heavy Cargo (per ton after the first five tons)	\$0.01
Hazard Pay (only for very hazardous runs)	up to \$0.25
Obviously Valuable Cargo (gasoline, gold, etc.)	up to \$0.10

Average Trucking Expenses

Trucks cost a lot to run. These figures were compiled through an E-mail survey of ROUTE/66 members, and are in dollars per mile:

Tires (good roads)	\$0.20
Tires (average roads)	\$0.25
Tires (poor roads)	\$0.30
General Upkeep	\$0.05
Repairs and Ammunition (patrolled roads)	\$0.05
Repairs and Ammunition (unpatrolled roads)	\$0.10

The above expenses apply only to tractors or ten-wheelers; if the trucker owns a trailer as well, double them.

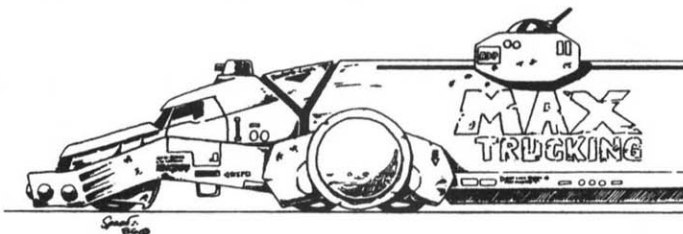
Power Charges	\$0.50
Salaried Gunner	\$0.05

Brothers. Thanks to the Brotherhood, the transportation network of North America is only slightly less extensive than it was before the Food Riots.

Working for a shipping line or bus company is easy: You drive the same route over and over, and at the end of each month you get a decent paycheck. There aren't even many road encounters to deal with — trucking lines tend to run over patrolled or otherwise safe roads. Brothers have a word for this kind of job: *dull*.

Freelance or "gypsy" trucking is more what the average American has in mind when he thinks of trucking. Roaming the open road, your only boss the free market — this is the "good life" many people dream of in 2038. The reality, however, is not so appealing. Admittedly, the up-front income is high — most truckers put in about 250,000 miles a year, at anywhere from \$1 to \$2 per mile. But expenses (especially tire replacements and power recharges) eat into that. The trucker who pulls in more than \$30,000 a year after expenses is a rare and lucky bird.

Campaign Ideas. Trucking is an ideal centerpiece for a *Making a Living* campaign (see *Autoduel*, p. 71). Or, a *Clubhouse Blues* campaign can be based around a small shipping firm. Trucking can also provide a wealth of adventure ideas for other campaigns. Remember that the roads still aren't safe in 2038 — a simple trip to a neighboring town can be quite an adventure . . .



Politicking

Several Knights of the Brotherhood are retired from active trucking and instead lobby national governments for truckers' rights. Occasionally this lobbying has gotten out of hand. In particular, the Brotherhood and EDSEL are constantly engaged in back-and-forth legislative battles which often explode into gunplay.

Even some espionage and assassination attempts have been blamed on the Brotherhood. Few accusations have been proven, but it would hardly be surprising if more were true. Brothers have a long history of doing whatever is in their best interest — they've had to, to survive.

Campaign Ideas. Another good *Clubhouse Blues* campaign can be set up in a national capital, with the PCs all being special agents for a retired Knight of the Brotherhood. The Knight spends all his time working for truckers' causes (a 10-point Patron who appears on a 9 or less, or perhaps even a 6 or less) and sends the characters out to do his fieldwork — which would probably include some espionage and investigations. Or a group of freelance characters could be hired to pull off a bit of nastiness either for or against the Brotherhood.

Serving

ROUTE/66 has a vast amount of information about highways, governments, gangs, truck stops and just about anything else a trucker could hope to know. This data is continually being updated and expanded. Most revisions are submitted by independent truckers in the normal course of their business. Rumors abound, however, that a few truckers are actually incognito critics, working for Doctor Teeth and spending all their time on the road observing the quality of truck stops and local governments. There's no real proof one way or the other, but almost any truck stop owner will jump if he hears one of these inspectors is coming to his establishment.

Campaign Ideas. This aspect of the Brotherhood is best used for adventure ideas in a campaign centered around something else. Roleplaying a Fearless Team of Crusading Restaurant Critics just doesn't have a very dramatic feel. But if you want a good gimmick for a humorous session, just have the PCs "recognized" as ROUTE/66 data collectors, and watch them try to figure out why everyone is so eager to help them . . . (This is especially fun to do to characters with Paranoia!) On a more serious note, the threat of a bad report to ROUTE/66 will often bring recalcitrant truck stop owners in line with the PCs' requests.

Protecting

This is the aspect of the Brotherhood that the media loves the most. Trucks and buses aren't invulnerable; a well-planned and organized attack can take one out easily. The Brotherhood responds to this in two ways: convoys and retribution. Two trucks are more than twice as difficult to kill as one truck, and specialized escort cars can be far more effective than a single rig's brute force. Thus, convoys are the best defense a truck can have.

But even convoys get taken out. When this happens, the rest of the Brotherhood acts fast, to try to eliminate the threat. Few raiders only strike once, so it's in everyone's best interest to find them. And, since the threat of retribution is one of the most potent means the Brotherhood has to discourage attacks, it's in everyone's best interest to make the retribution as spectacular as possible.

This applies to anyone who's done a Brother dirt, not just to bandits. The most notable example is Freddy's Waco Truck Stop. A trucker and his gunner literally died from the food there (Freddy kept his prices down by buying tainted meat). So all the local truckers gathered together and gave Freddy a whole new meaning to the term "drive-in." When the smoke cleared, the two-foot-thick concrete walls had all been pounded flat beneath the wheels of over 75 buses and big rigs.



The Knights and the Books (q.v.) play a major role in this. A single Knight will often organize and lead such attacks; when the situation doesn't call for an overwhelming response, the Knight will simply use his own heavily armed rig alone to take out the offender. And few cycle packs will last long on the road once they're in the Red Book — no one reputable will deal with the pack, few criminals are brave enough to deal with the pack, and it's only a matter of time until the Brothers catch up to them and deal with them.

Campaign Ideas. The possibilities here are endless. Characters in just about any campaign can make some money by escorting convoys — it could even be the centerpiece of a *Clubhouse Blues* or *Making a Living* campaign. The characters could crew and escort a Knight's rig, helping him (or her) eradicate threats to the Brotherhood across the country. And, if the PCs are in a tight spot, the Brotherhood is an ideal cavalry to have charge over the nearest hill.

Owning Your Own Rig

The backbone of the Brotherhood are the owner-operators — the independent truckers. Nearly every trucker hopes to save up enough to own his own rig someday. Owner-operators get access to the second level of ROUTE/66; this is free, a part of their background. However, in order to merit the privilege, they must own a rig — no mean feat, when a tractor can cost \$50,000 or more.

While it may seem that every trucker needs to be at least Wealthy, it's really not that tough. First of all, the Wealth and Jobs rules from *GURPS Basic Set 3rd Edition*, *Horror* and *Space* supersede those of *Autoduel* — thus, starting wealth is \$15,000, of which only \$5,000 may be spent on "adventuring" equipment such as guns, armed vehicles and so forth. A rig would normally count as "adventuring" gear, but the GM should give gypsy truckers a break — after all, the truck is all they have. Thus, the full starting cash can go towards the vehicle. Since an owner-operator is liable to be Comfortable (after all, he owns more property than most people in *Autoduel America*), that comes out to \$30,000. This still isn't enough for a full tractor-trailer rig. The remainder can come out of other characters' pockets (rigs co-owned by their crews are quite common), or it can be borrowed.

Credit is still available in *Autoduel America*, at an average interest rate of 1% per month. The interest must be paid out of each month's income; the principal can be paid back at any time. Penalties for defaulting on the loan can range from repossession of the truck to imprisonment or death in some places. Many banks hire "skip tracers," professional hunters, to track down bad debtors and repossess their vehicles. Even with skip tracers, however, big rigs aren't a very good credit risk — most banks demand a 30% (or more) down payment. If you don't have that much, you can always borrow from guys named Guido or Luigi — but if you do, you'd better pay on time! Also remember that you still have to pay out the loan, even if you lose the truck.

BIG RIGS AND LITTLE TRUCKS

Windjammers: An Optional Accessory

It can be a long way between charges in the Free Oil States. Much of Oklahoma and West Texas, never very well populated, is virtual wasteland these days, with power stations dotted every 150 miles (or more!) along the major roads. Thus, trucks need to be as energy-efficient as possible in these areas.

The Windjammer is a large "wing" mounted on the top of a tractor to cut down on the trailer's wind resistance. Windjammers are fairly common, even in more populated areas, since they make the truck cheaper to run. Here are the appropriate rules:

Windjammers cost \$500, weigh 70 lbs. and take up no space. They may be mounted on tractors and ten-wheeler cabs. If a truck has a Windjammer, it cannot mount a turret or rocket platform. Buses and mini-buses cannot use Windjammers.

If a truck pulls a trailer (or has a carrier), its maximum range is *reduced* by 10% — thus, at cruising speeds, a tractor-trailer rig has a maximum range of 180 miles. If a Windjammer is used, maximum range is instead *increased* by 10% — therefore, that same tractor-trailer rig, if it had a Windjammer, would have a maximum range of 220 miles, rather than 180. The maximum range of a tractor without a trailer, cab without a carrier, a bus or mini-bus is neither increased by a Windjammer nor reduced without.

In combat, Windjammers are targeted just like turrets. They have no PD or DR, are not protected by the armor of the cab, and have HT 40. A Windjammer takes damage before the front of a carrier or trailer (the Windjammer is assumed to cover the entire front of the cab, to reduce drag).

This section presents some new accessories found on the trucks and buses of 2038. It also describes a new class of truck: the *ten-wheeler*.

Ten-Wheelers

The eighteen-wheeler is an efficient vehicle for carrying large, expendable loads on today's highways, but the tractor-trailer combination is expensive and has a major weakness — the fifth wheel-kingpin connection. The ten-wheeler, a smaller truck that mounts the "trailer" directly on the chassis of the tractor, solves both these problems, and is a common sight on the roads. Ten-wheelers are most useful running frequent but small shipments between two close cities, and carrying small, expensive goods across country. They're also used to haul cargo *within* larger cities. No duellist should travel the roads of the Free Oil States without knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of these light trucks.

(Note: Ten-wheelers are virtually identical to other oversized vehicles from Autoduel (see pp. 41-44) Thus, many of these rules refer back to the rules for oversized vehicles.

Ten-wheelers are composed of two parts: the cab and the carrier. These parts are constructed separately, then fitted together, the carrier riding on the frame of the cab. Though the two sections are considered separate vehicles in combat, they can never be separated (never, that is, outside of a garage).

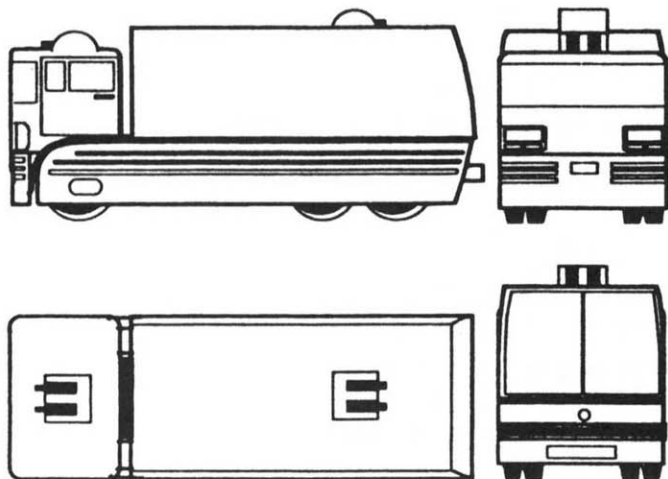
Cabs

Cabs are related to big-rig tractors, but are smaller (to make room for the carrier) and have lighter (but stronger) frames than their big brothers. Like tractors, ten-wheeled cabs come in two different styles, longnoses and cab-overs, and the base price includes lights, horns and other fittings. They use ten truck tires, just like tractors, and can use any weapons and accessories (including turrets) that other oversized vehicles can.

Cab type	Cost	Weight	Max. load	Cu. ft. cap.
10-wheel cab-over	\$10,500	3,000	15,000	85
10-wheel longnose	\$12,500	3,200	16,500	100

Chassis and Suspension

Maximum load refers to the amount of weight the cab chassis can carry.



Since the carrier is mounted directly on the frame of the cab, this is also the maximum weight of the combined vehicle. This strength can be improved exactly as for tractors, with Standard, Heavy or Extra-Heavy chassis. Also like tractors, ten-wheelers have only one kind of suspension, which does not affect the truck driver's Driving skill roll.

Power Plants

Ten-wheelers use the same type of power plants that all other oversized vehicles do. However, the standard truck power plants are all far larger than

necessary for a ten-wheeler. Thus, there are two smaller sizes available, usually found only in ten-wheeled trucks.

<i>Plant</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Cu. ft.</i>	<i>HT</i>	<i>Max. weight</i>
Small truck	\$8,000	2,500	40	40	15,000
Medium truck	\$10,000	2,800	45	45	20,000

Armor

Cabs have the same six armor locations as tractors and cars. However, if the cab has any carrier other than a flatbed, back armor is unnecessary. A cab's underbody armor protects the cab *only*. Carrier armor is totally separate and is discussed later. All Custom Armor Options are available for cab armor.

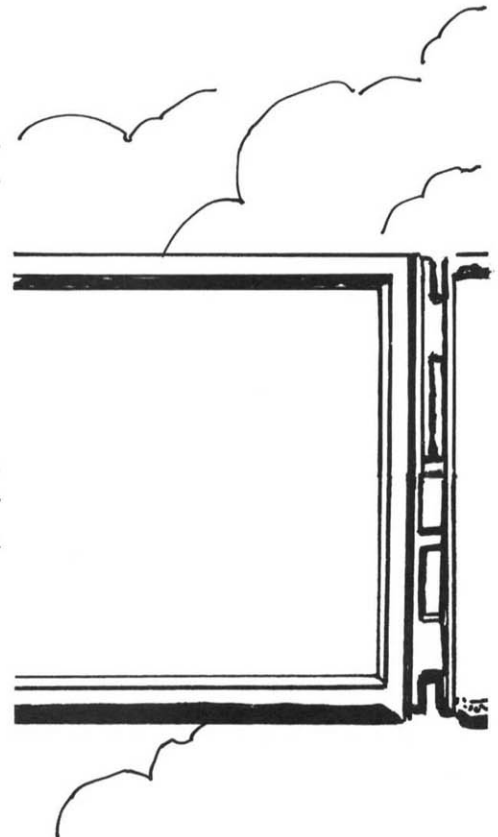
<i>Cab</i>	<i>Normal (\$/lbs.)</i>	<i>FP (\$/lbs.)</i>	<i>LR (\$/lbs.)</i>	<i>LRFP (\$/lbs.)</i>
Cab-over	300/140	600/140	330/154	750/154
Longnose	320/150	640/150	352/165	800/165

Carriers

A carrier is essentially a big, armored box, welded onto the back of the cab chassis. Carriers are easy to build — they don't have chassis, suspension, power plants or even tires! Carriers come in the same varieties as trailers, as shown below. Note that a cab need not have a carrier at all, though nearly all do.

<i>Carrier type</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Cu. ft. cap.</i>
Flatbed	\$1,100	750	400
Van	\$2,300	1,150	850
Reefer	\$3,800	1,350	800
Tanker	\$6,150	1,900	700
Dumper	\$4,000	2,300	700

The dumper trailer may not allocate more than 25 of its cubic feet towards weaponry or accessories. Van or reefer carriers may mount a single turret of any type. For information about these various types, see *Autoduel*, p. 42.



Streamlining: An Optional Rule

If you use the Windjammer rules, you should consider the following addition to the rules regarding streamlining:

A streamlined vehicle has its maximum range increased by 10%, in addition to the increase in top speed. Buses and mini-buses (but *not* other oversized vehicles) may also be streamlined, at the standard penalties. Streamlining *does not* increase the top speed of a bus, but does increase the maximum range.

Q-Trucks

Q-trucks are vehicles designed to look weaker than they really are. They serve a variety of purposes on the road. Q-trucks are used as bait to lure out hijackers and bandits. Q-vehicles sending out distress calls are used by vigilante gangs and police forces (such as the Pennsylvania Transit Authority) to catch bad samaritans. And many experienced road duellists prefer to travel discreetly — even today, a heavily armed car will provoke hot-headed challenges in many areas.

Q-vehicles are most often custom-built. Some truck manufacturers, however — most notably Republic Motors and Atlantic Industries — mass-produce Q-trucks. They build two different versions of each model: One is a cargo hauler and the other is a Q-truck. Such practices help discourage attacks, since a truck is equally likely to be full of valuables or full of guns.

Armor, Weapons and Accessories

Carrier armor covers six locations and is available in all types. Flatbeds, of course, have nothing but underbody armor; dumpers have no top armor; tankers must have at least one unit of armor in each location to prevent leaks. Carriers are not protected by the cab's armor, even from the front — the carrier rises above the cab, and thus has visible front armor. Armor costs and weighs the same for every type of carrier.

	Normal (\$/lbs.)	FP (\$/lbs.)	LR (\$/lbs.)	LRFP (\$/lbs.)
Carrier	300/140	600/140	330/154	750/154

Carriers may mount weapons and accessories just like cabs. Carriers may not mount weapons to the front; cabs may not mount weapons to the back. For \$200 (no weight or space), a cab may have doors that open into the carrier, allowing passage back and forth. Obviously, if the carrier is a tanker, this isn't such a good idea.

Mini-Buses

The mini-bus is to the 30-foot bus what the ten-wheeled truck is to the eighteen-wheeler. They are used to carry lots of passengers through quiet areas (such as cities), or to carry a few passengers cheaply and safely over longer distances. Mini-buses come in only one size:

	Cost	Weight	Max. load	Cu. ft. cap.
Mini-bus	\$4,000	3,000	12,000	175

Mini-buses, like ten-wheeled trucks, may have improved chassis but not suspensions. They use the same tires and power plants as ten-wheeled trucks. They have six armor locations, using the same Custom Armor Options available and the following armor cost and weight:

	Normal (\$/lbs.)	FP (\$/lbs.)	LR (\$/lbs.)	LRFP (\$/lbs.)
Mini-bus	320/140	640/140	352/154	800/154

Mini-buses may use any weapons and accessories that other oversized vehicles can. As in larger buses, commercial passengers require 8 cu. ft. and an extra 50 lbs. of baggage weight. Private buses may forego the baggage requirement. Military and emergency buses may cram passengers into 5 cu. ft. each.

Movement

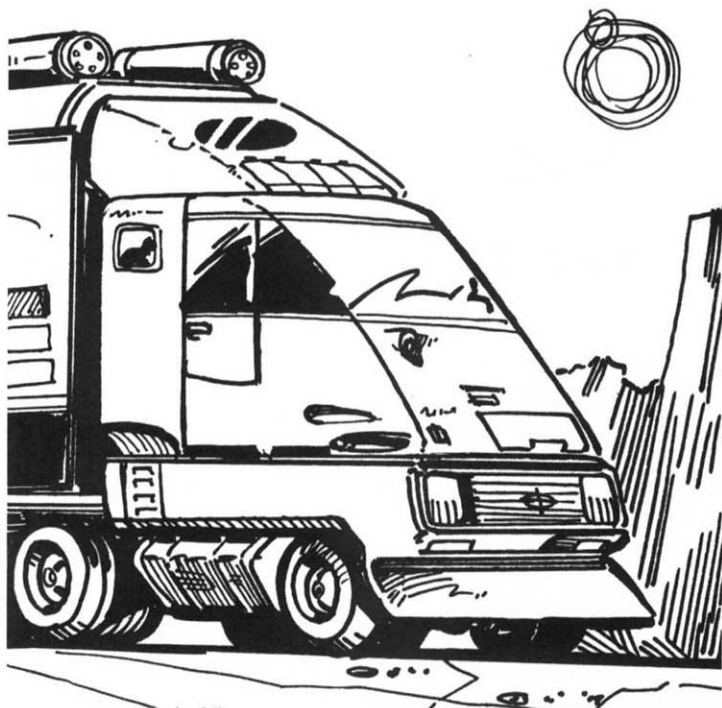
Ten-wheeled trucks and mini-buses are represented, in *Car Wars* scale, by counters ½" wide by 1 ½" long.

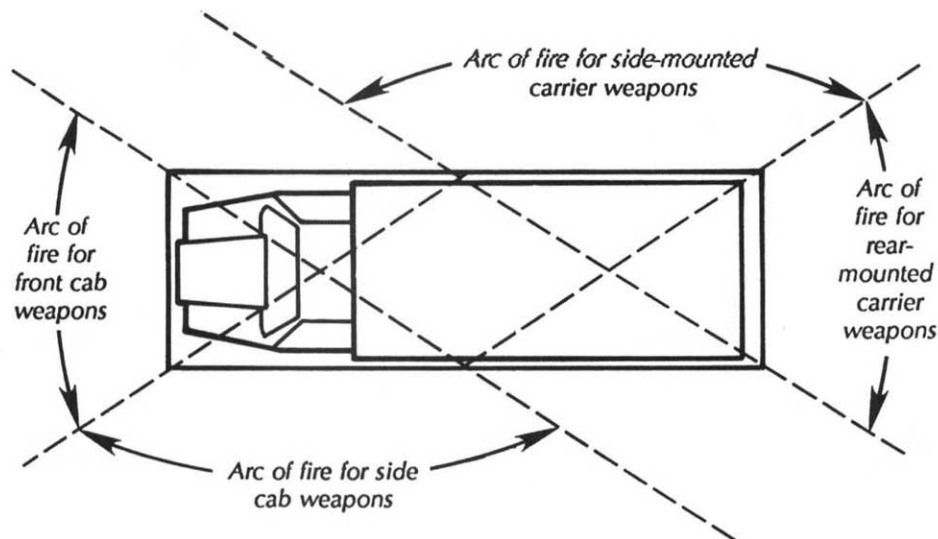
Ten-wheelers maneuver the same way other oversized vehicles do. They require the Driving (Truck) skill to operate, and count as an "unfamiliar vehicle of known type" for drivers used to operating buses or tractor-trailers.

Combat

For the most part, ten-wheelers are just like every other vehicle in combat. However, they have just enough quirks to make them interesting . . .

Weapons arcs. The arcs of fire for mini-buses are





identical to those for cars. For ten-wheeled trucks, the arcs of fire are a little different, since the cab and the carrier are considered separate vehicles. See the diagram above for details.

Turrets. A turret on the cab of a ten-wheeler cannot fire into the back arc unless the carrier is a flatbed (or nonexistent). A turret on the carrier has a full 360 degree arc of fire.

Targeting. There is a +2 modifier to skill when firing at any armor location of a mini-bus or ten-wheeled truck. However, there is instead a -2 penalty when firing at the *front* of a *carrier* — the cab is in the way. Remember that the cab and the carrier must be targeted separately.

Sample Vehicles

Mule (Republic Motors/Texas) — 10-wheel cabover cab, x-hvy. chassis, medium truck power plant, 10 solid tires, driver, gunner, 3 MGs linked in universal turret, improved fire extinguisher, 2 SWCs. Cab armor: F 4/18, R 4/18, L 4/18, B 0/0, T 4/18, U 4/18. Van carrier: 2 VMGs linked in universal turret, 2 SDs (explosive-tipped spikes, linked right and left), 3 SSs (linked right, left and back). Carrier armor: F 2/8, R 3/18, L 3/18, B 3/18, T 3/18, U 3/18. 16,105 lbs., \$81,250. 1,895 lbs. left for crew and cargo. 815 extra cu. ft. in carrier, none in cab.

Q-Mule (Republic Motors/Texas) — Add 2 concealed VMGs linked back, gunner in carrier, add third computer and upgrade all to hi-res. 17,205 lbs., \$98,650. 795 lbs. left for crew and cargo. 790 extra cu. ft. in carrier.

Caesar (Ital Works/Oklahoma) — Mini-bus, x-hvy. chassis, small truck power plant, 10 solid tires, driver, gunner, 8 passengers, 2 VMGs linked in turret, minedropper back, improved fire extinguisher, SWC. Armor: F 0/36, R 0/30, L 0/30, B 0/30, T 0/30, U 0/30, 6 5-point wheelguards. 11,380 lbs., \$50,450. 3,020 lbs. left for crew and cargo. 45 extra cu. ft.

Constantine (Ital Works/Oklahoma) — Mini-bus, x-hvy. chassis, small truck power plant, 10 PR tires, driver, gunner, 4 passengers, 2 RLs linked in turret (each with extra magazine), VMG front, MD and PS linked back. FP Armor: F 5/20, R 5/20, L 5/20, B 5/20, T 5/20, U 5/20, six 10-DR wheelguards. 11,795 lbs., \$51,950. 2,605 lbs. left for passengers and cargo. 56 extra cu. ft.

More Accessories

Pop-up Turrets. Takes up the capacity of any normal turret, plus \$1,000, 150 lbs. and 8 cu. ft. for the raising-lowering mechanism. A turret may be designed to retract into the body of the vehicle. While this is a handy way to guard a turret from damage, the main use of pop-up turrets is surprise.

Based on any size normal turret, space *inside* the vehicle equal to the capacity of the turret must be allocated, so that the turret has storage space when not in use. To raise or lower a pop-up turret takes one turn. The turret may not fire unless it is fully raised. HT and armor protection are the same as a normal turret. If the turret is destroyed, it may not retract.

A pop-up turret is undetectable by most observers when lowered. Someone looking at the top of the vehicle gets a Vision roll to notice the doors over the turret.

Weapon Concealment. \$50 and 10 lbs. per cu. ft. of weapon concealed, 1 cu. ft. for every 5 cu. ft. of weapon concealed. Extra magazines count as part of the concealed weapon, and the concealment counts towards the 1/3-per-side rule (*Autoduel*, p. 34). Concealing or unconcealing a weapon takes one turn. A weapon must be fully unconcealed to fire.

When concealed, however, a weapon is virtually undetectable. A viewer must be within five yards (perceived range; binoculars will increase this distance) to have a chance to notice the concealed weapon port. The viewer must make a Vision roll at -5 to spot the port. The GM may substitute a roll vs. an appropriate Mechanic, Engineering or Armory skill (at -5) for the Vision roll.

Most states outlaw concealed weapons of any sort, though the penalty is usually a fine rather than imprisonment or death.

Even More Accessories

Extra Driver Controls. \$1,000, 50 lbs., 1 cu. ft. This accessory converts any one gunner's (not passenger's) seat to a backup driver position. Control of the vehicle may be switched from one location to another at the push of a button, but the main driver's controls always take precedence over backup drivers.

Fake Weapons. \$100 and 10 lbs. per weapon, no space. This is a piece of plastic fitted into the armor and designed to look like a real weapon port. It's very realistic — use the rules for spotting concealed weapons to determine whether a character notices the fake. Fake weapons have no HT and are destroyed whenever their armor location takes any damage.

Sleeping Areas. No cost or weight, 15 cu. ft. per area. This provides a single bunk, for sleeping during long hauls. To save space, passenger and crew seats can fold out into beds; such seats only take an extra 5 cu. ft., but they're much less comfortable than a real bed.

Vehicular Computer. \$4,000, 5 lbs., 2 cu. ft. See sidebar, p. 36, for more information on computers.

Heavy-Duty Smokescreens and Paint Sprayers. These are identical to their smaller counterparts, but they produce smokescreens (or paint clouds, as appropriate) *four times* as big — 5 yards wide by 10 yards long. The HDSS costs \$500, weighs 50 lbs., takes up 8 cu. ft., has 15 HT and holds 10 shots (at \$40 and 20 lbs. each). The HDPS costs \$800, weighs 50 lbs., takes up 10 cu. ft., has 15 HT and holds 10 shots (at \$40 and 8 lbs. apiece).

Cargo Safe. This is the ultimate in cargo protection — an actual safe, with an electronic locking mechanism. The cargo safe takes up 75 cu. ft. and weighs 12,000 lbs. empty, and can hold up to 50 cu. ft. of cargo; it costs \$22,000. Its armor is inherently fireproof (but not laser-reflective) and has 15 DR and 75 HT on every side — to create a 3" hole in the safe, one must do 75 HT to a single spot; the damage can be done over a series of hits, but each must bypass the armor first. The electronic lock on standard models can be picked with an Electronics (Security Systems)-5 roll. Failure means that particular lock is beyond the character's skill; *critical* failure activates the lock's tamper-resistant countermeasures and makes the lock utterly unopenable to anyone but the safe's manufacturer!

Single Weapon Computer (SWC). As a regular targeting computer, but it only works for a single type of weapon (MG, VMG, autocannon, etc.) firing from a single weapon location (left, right, etc.) The SWC costs \$500, takes up 1 cu. ft. and weighs nothing.

Petroliner (Republic Motors/Texas) — 10-wheel longnose cab, x-hvy. chassis, medium truck power plant, 10 solid tires, driver, gunner, 2 VMGs linked in turret, 2 HDSSs (linked right, left), fire extinguisher. FP Cab Armor: F 0/18, R 0/12, L 0/12, B 0/0, T 0/18, U 0/12. Tanker carrier, SS (back, linked to HDSSs), 2 MD (linked right and left). 14,350 lbs., \$92,580. 2,875 lbs. for crew and cargo. The tank has a 450 gallon capacity, plus cargo space for an additional 15 cu. ft. of dry goods.

Petroliner Plus (Republic Motors/Texas) — Add 2 GGs (each with extra magazine) in pop-up universal turret on carrier, 3 concealed FOJs (linked R, L, B with extra magazines). One link connects SSs, turret and all weapon's concealment triggers. 19,100 lbs., \$127,480. 700 lbs. left for crew and cargo. Tank is worthless and can hold no cargo, but there are still 15 cu. ft. for dry goods — usually used for valuable cargos or extra ammunition.

Flattop (Crane Industries/Louisiana) — 10-wheel longnose cab, x-hvy. chassis, medium truck power plant, 10 solid tires, driver, gunner, 2 RRs in turret, RR front, 2 SWCs (driver/front, gunner/turret), improved fire extinguisher. Cab armor: F 6/24, R 6/24, L 6/24, B 6/24, T 6/24, U 3/12, six 10 DR wheelguards. Flatbed carrier. Carrier armor: U(3/12). 15,210 lbs., \$73,760. 4,590 lbs. left for crew and cargo. 400 cu. ft. on flatbed (this can be exceeded as for flatbed trailers).

VMG Option — Replace RRs with VMGs. 15,410 lbs., \$75,460. 4,390 lbs. left for crew and cargo.

Portland (Crane Industries/Louisiana) — 10-wheel longnose cab, x-hvy. chassis, medium truck power plant, 10 PR tires, driver, AC in turret, 2 HDPSs (linked right, left). Cab armor: F 6/24, R 6/24, L 6/24, B 3/12, T 6/24, U 3/12, six 10 DR wheelguards. Dumper carrier: PS back (linked to cab HDPSs), 2 MDs (linked right, left), link for all dropped weapons. FP Carrier Armor: F 1/4, R 1/4, L 1/4, B 4/16, T 0/0, U 1/4. 16,645 lbs., \$81,200. 3,155 lbs. left for crew and cargo. 673 cu. ft. in dumper.



MINI-SCENARIOS

Rolling on the River

The New Brazos River-Canal carries a substantial percentage of Texas' gross national product down to the Gulf. Naturally, the canal is heavily patrolled — Texas Ranger choppers fly up and down the river constantly. And the barges themselves are floating fortresses. But the wealth is a heady lure, and every now and then a gang comes up with "the perfect plan."

This one might actually work. Canal repair has closed off the main river temporarily, forcing barges to bypass the site via a narrow side channel. Rerouting the heavy traffic has been a nightmare, and one barge is scheduled to pass through the channel at 3 a.m. . . . right underneath a farmer-to-market bridge. The bandits' plan is to attack the barge, blow the bridge to get it to stop, board and steal whatever loot they can and get away before the next Ranger patrol.

This is a scenario for one person, who plays the bandits. A second player could operate the Ranger choppers, but running the barge itself is a tad dull.

The bandits get \$150,000 worth of vehicles. One of the vehicles has to be a ten-wheeler or other cargo hauler; at the beginning of the scenario it must be loaded with a winch and a 15-space, 2,000 lb. portable bridge (see below). The other vehicles can be of any type (other than helicopters or grasshoppers). Remember that the scenario takes place at night — infrared or light-intensifier goggles are a good idea. The bandits can have up to three people per vehicle, and each person has 20 skill points.

The barge is represented by a counter 4" long and 2" wide — cut one out of a 3x5 index card. It has 12 exposed armor locations (one every inch), each with 50 points of FP plastic armor. It is targeted for all purposes as if the long sides were two semi trailers lined up and the front and back were single semi trailers. There is a turret with operator on each corner — the front turrets are four-space cupolas, each with a VMG (with HD ammo) and a Gunner +2 (don't forget their +1 for being in the cupola); the back turrets are operated by the pilot and copilot (each Gunner +1) and have two VMGs each; each turret has 50 points of armor. At the far back of the barge, taking damage from the back and from the furthest-back side locations, are the engines — each has 25 DP. All turrets have SWCs their operators, the barge has

IR, radar and LD radio, and there is a super fire extinguisher system on board, putting out flames on a 1-5. There are two HDSSs mounted in front; these switch to continuous output automatically the instant any portion of the barge takes damage. Assume that all the barge's weapons have an essentially unlimited ammo supply — this thing has got a *lot* of room.

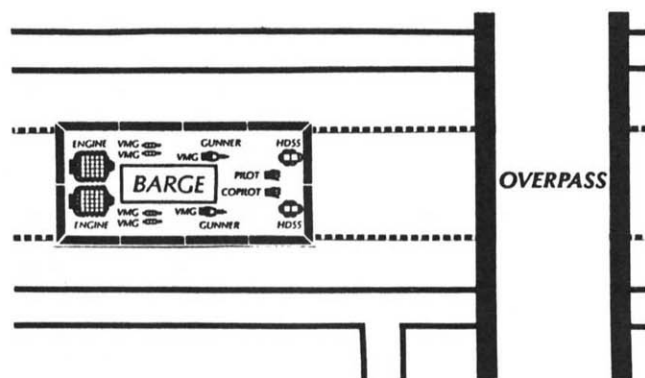
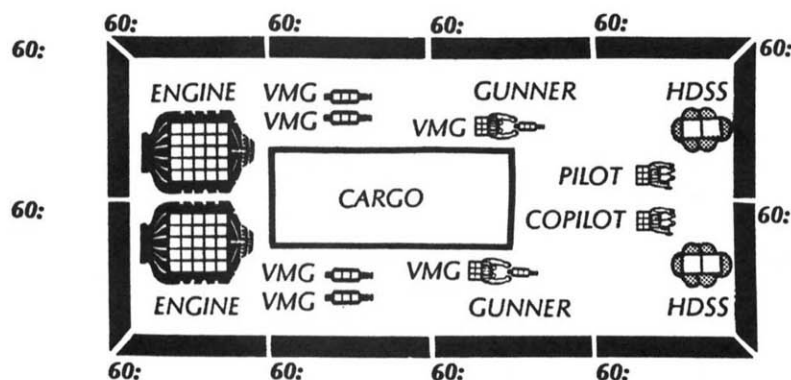
The barge travels at 30 mph until stopped by the bridge (see below). Once the raiders open fire, each turret will target the closest bandit (if two are equally close, pick at random or shoot at the one targeted the previous turn). The HDSSs continue to operate for the duration of the battle, giving a -1 (less than 1/2" of smoke) to hit and blocking normal lasers.

The map consists of standard road sections. The white shoulders are access roads — *narrow* access roads — along the banks of the canal. The three road lanes themselves represent the canal. The bandits *must* drive along these roads (all except for the truck; see below). The barge floats down the middle of the canal. The bandits may attack anywhere before the bridge.

When the bandits trigger the bridge, it immediately collapses. Anything underneath takes 3 dice damage to its top armor (which is zero for the open-topped barge — each turret has individual armor) — they probably want to bring it down *in front* of, rather than on top of the barge. When it hits the wreckage, the barge takes 1 die damage to both front armor locations and immediately stops.

If either the pilot or copilot is alive and both engines are working, five turns later the barge will start moving in reverse at 2.5 mph; after another five seconds, it will be moving 5 mph; and so forth, up to a maximum of 10 mph. If one engine has been destroyed, the above acceleration periods are doubled. If the barge moves backwards and then loses both its engines, it will slow by 5 mph every turn, and then accelerate by 2.5 mph every turn *forward*, to a maximum of 10 mph — until it hits the bridge again, where it stops permanently.

Naturally, it would be a good idea to neutralize the barge's weapons and crew first — each crewman wears body armor and carries a heavy pistol, and will resist any boarding parties. Once the barge has been stopped, the truck can back down the access road marked on the map. The portable bridge (3/4" long) can now be unloaded and used as a boarding ramp. Two characters should board the barge to hook cargo crates up to the truck's





winch — the crew can steal one crate every five seconds this way.

This scenario would be a cake walk no matter how tough the barge were, except for one annoying little detail — the Texas Ranger patrols. 30 seconds after the barge first takes damage, start rolling two dice every ten seconds, adding one to the roll for every ten seconds that have elapsed since the scenario began; on a 15 or more, the Rangers arrive. *For example, 30 seconds after the attack begins, the Rangers show up on a 12 on two dice; 40 seconds after the attack, they only need an 11; and if the raiders are still hanging around two minutes later, the cavalry comes over the hill on a 3 or more.* The Rangers have a stock Dark Angel (*Vehicle Guide 2*, p. 53) with the standard military options package and general-purpose (gauss gun) DWPs; they shoot at the bandits in whatever manner seems best.

Victory. Every crate contains \$25,000 worth of goods, takes up 4 spaces and weighs 1,000 lbs. Total up the expenses the raiders incurred — how much would it cost to restore the whole gang to its pre-fight condition? If that's more than the total value of the crates they stole, they lost. If they made a profit, they win. (Don't count dead gang members — that just reduces the number of ways the profit has to be split. Banditry is a rough life.)

Autoduel Stats. The barge sides have PD 10 (sloping) and DR 20. HD ammo for a Vulcan MG increases the weapon's damage to 5 dice. The SWC connects one gunner to one weapon (or set of linked weapons) and gives a +1 to Gunner skill. The HDSS is just like a regular smokescreen, but is 15' wide by 30' long. The portable bridge takes up 75 cu. ft.; each cargo crate takes up 20 cu. ft. For the Rangers' helicopter, build a \$200,000 attack chopper using the rules from the *AADA Road Atlas Volume One: The East Coast* p. 42; convert the Dark Angel if desired.

Big Trouble in the Big Thicket

The Big Thicket, a heavily forested area along the Louisiana-Texas border, has long been a hot spot. Both sides of the border are heavily guarded, and the troops are tense. They know they will be the first participants in a border war. Small-

scale violence often erupts along the border — violence that later gets "hushed up" to prevent diplomatic incidents.

A Texas spy helicopter overflying the area one night was mistaken for an attack chopper, and a Louisiana scout platoon shot it down over the Big Thicket. Its pilot parachuted to safety with the camera and film. The Texans want their film, but can't afford publicity because they were illegally spying; the Louisians want the film, but can't afford publicity because they shot down an unarmed chopper. So both sides use the only option left — a "limited engagement."

This is a mini-scenario for two or more players — the Texans and the Louisians. Use the maps from *Car Wars Expansion Set #9: Chopper Challenge*, or make up your own 42" square off-road terrain; pick one edge of the map to be north. The Texas player chooses a location for the downed pilot anywhere along the center north-south line of the map; the distance of this location from the north edge of the map is written down secretly. (See diagram below). When the pilot is discovered, he is represented by a pedestrian counter; the camera should be represented by a marked grenade counter on top of the pilot. This battle takes place at night. (The pilot won't show up on radar, so infrared or LIGs are advised.) Furthermore, all "clear" areas are actually covered with light brush: no effect on movement, but every full 1" of brush is a -1 targeting penalty (negated by radar or IR), and lasers cannot fire through the brush.

The Louisians enter first from anywhere along the east edge, moving at 25 mph. They have five \$20,000 off-road vehicles, none of which may be air-capable; each vehicle may have at most two 40-point characters. One of the vehicles must have two turreted SAMs with a two-space rocket magazine for each; this vehicle shot down the chopper and thus has used all its SAMs.

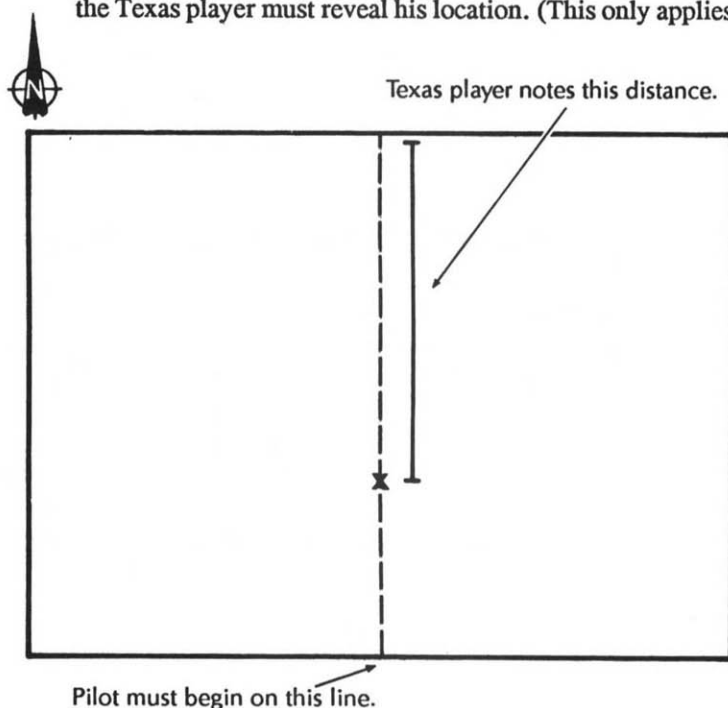
If: a Louisiana vehicle with IR sighting moves to within 4" of the pilot;

or one whose crew is equipped with LIGs moves within 2" of the pilot;

or any Louisiana vehicle comes within 1" of the pilot;

or a searchlight is swept across his location by a vehicle within 2";

the Texas player must reveal his location. (This only applies





if there is line-of-sight between the observer and the pilot, and if the light brush doesn't block this line-of-sight.) Double these ranges if the pilot moves (see below); halve the ranges for any vehicle moving more than 25 mph.

In addition to the 3-grenade-equivalent camera, the pilot has IBA and 2 grenade-equivalents of additional equipment (no more than \$1,000). The pilot may move and take firing actions just like a regular pedestrian. However, if the pilot moves at all during a turn, double the above spotting distances for that turn. For simplicity, assume that once spotted the pilot remains in view for the duration of the battle. Naturally players are free to change this rule (or any other, for that matter).

Every turn after the Louisians come onto the map, roll two dice: On a 10 or more, the Texas Rangers arrive on the western map edge. Add +1 to the roll for every *full* five turns since the beginning of the scenario. The Rangers have four \$25,000 cars and can enter at any speed(s); the Rangers each have 50 skill points, and there are up to two per vehicle.

Both sides' objective is the camera with its film. Any time the pilot is hit, roll one die: On a 1, the camera is destroyed. The pilot will drop the camera if killed or knocked unconscious; if dropped, the camera may be picked up by a pedestrian with a firing action.

Victory Conditions. Vehicles may only escape off the edge from which they entered. The side that escapes with the camera wins; the victory is only marginal if the winning side has taken more casualties (in terms of personnel) than the other.

Helicopter Variant. Instead of vehicles, the Rangers have a single Dark Angel, with the same equipment as in the previous scenario. This chopper, however, doesn't have a gunner, since there needs to be a space for the downed pilot. All other aspects of the scenario are identical. The chopper will have to land for the pilot to climb aboard. The process takes three seconds; if the Ranger pilot has to recover the camera on foot, he'll have to land the helicopter, spend three seconds getting out, grab the camera and spend another three seconds to get back aboard. Obviously, a helicopter is not the best choice for this scenario — however,

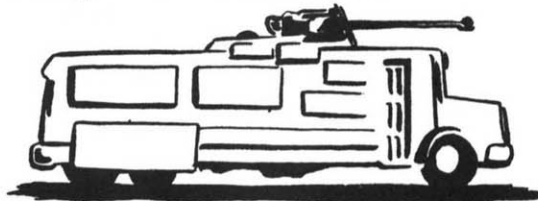
it has the firepower to cleave through the Louisians like a laser through algae-butter. The Louisianan player can be handicapped with this scenario — allow the Texas player to choose secretly whether he will have the ground or air force.

Autoduel Stats. This is an excellent scenario to play out in pedestrian scale, provided there is enough room for the map, since most of the vehicles will be moving slowly. If using *Autoduel*, use the *GURPS* rules for target sighting rather than the above system. The Louisians are all 40-point characters, while the Rangers are 50-point characters. The camera weighs 15 lbs. As in the previous scenario, build a Ranger helicopter using \$200,000.

The Magnificent Six

South Texas isn't lawless — there is a strong government. It's just not an *elected* government . . . The *jefes*, Mexican warlords and gang leaders, rule the villages of south Texas with iron fists. The villagers live in constant fear that *los hombres del Jefe* will roar through town, shooting, looting and raping. Many leave these villages as soon as they can, but many more stay — the trek northward is difficult, and, because they have lived in an Hispanic society for all their lives, legitimate Texas citizens are often mistaken for illegal immigrants.

One jefe, Lorenzo de Hidalgo, rules most of the Valley, the fertile land along the southern-most stretch of the Rio Grande river. He is as notorious for his lecherousness as he is for his ruthlessness. Every year, he picks the prettiest maiden from a town in the Valley to join his harem. This year, it's Pueblo Centro's turn . . . and this year, the villagers are fighting back. By smuggling produce up to the rich tourist hotels in San Antonio, the farmers of Pueblo Centro have scraped up enough cash to buy some firearms and hire a small band of mercenaries. Since *el Jefe* himself will be coming to town, the villagers hope that the attack will kill him and free them from his men. So, with the aid of a few well-trained men, the villagers prepare to fight the most important battle of their lives.



This is a scenario for two players; a variant set-up allows for more players per side and for more sides. The scenario uses the Midville map stats (*Deluxe Car Wars* or *Crash City*) to represent Pueblo Centro. All the buildings are intact and have their full DP, but most are unused — this was once a much larger town, but over the years the population has dropped. During the scenario, there are no noncombatants in the town, so all the buildings are deserted. And, since the village player is not allowed to make use of any equipment he does not specifically begin the scenario with, the contents of the buildings are unimportant. The weaponed bunkers at City Hall are gone, the pedestrian overpasses don't exist and the fence on the west side of Kazango is gone, but other than that assume all buildings match their portrayals on the map.

The mercs have six men (each with 70 skill points) and \$60,000 worth of vehicles; they have brought with them an additional \$15,000 worth of personal equipment — all of which must fit in the mercs' vehicles. In addition, the mercs have 30 villagers on their side, each of whom has 10 skill points. The villagers have four *unarmed* pickup trucks, with super power plants, x-hvy. chassis, OR suspensions and OR tires; these farm

trucks have one single point of metal armor on every side. No one else is in the village — all those not participating in the battle (e.g., small children, old people and pregnant women) are hiding on a local farm.

In addition to the ordnance, the village has miscellaneous junk available everywhere — chains, rope, paint and so forth. Anything higher-tech than this (especially oil, mines, spikes and flammables) must be purchased out of the mercs' equipment allowance and carried in their vehicles.

The jefe has four identical pickup trucks, each costing \$15,000. Each truck must have OR suspension and the ability to carry 10 men; the trucks are each crewed by one driver (30 skill points) and ten thugs (10 skill points). These 44 men have \$10,000 worth of personal equipment. The trucks are escorted by three \$10,000 OR motorcycles, each ridden by a cyclist with 30 skill points. Finally, the jefe himself and his gunner/lieutenant drive the jefe's personal duelling vehicle: a \$50,000 gasoline-powered car; each man has 40 skill points.

The villagers set up first, secretly. They have had many days to prepare their defenses, so just about anything the player wants goes. *However*, since there is no referee, every trick or trap *must have its game effects described in an "official" publication*. (E.g., anti-tank trenches dug across the street are fine — but painted plywood covers over those trenches are not, since there aren't any official rules for spotting such traps.) Also the player must set up all his forces within the town — anything on the roads would have been spotted before the townsfolk were ready. (Remember that the equipment loaded into the mercs' vehicles need not begin the scenario in them — there simply has to be room in the vehicles for the gear.

To set a trap or prepare a trick, the village player writes down on a sheet of paper what exactly will happen in a particular location under a certain condition. The description must be unambiguous, and it must include a list of all the personnel at that location. When the triggering condition is met, the village player reveals the description — writing them on separate pieces of scrap paper is advised.

The villager must also reveal anyone or anything not inside a building that is in line-of-sight to one of the jefe's vehicles, or to a man with a radio.

Once the villager has placed all his men and vehicles and set up all his surprises, the jefe enters town. The jefe's vehicles enter in any formation from anywhere along the western map edge, at any speed. The vehicles need not enter all at once, but when a vehicle is brought on it must enter the west edge; the men from a pickup truck cannot enter the map without the truck. However, hanging back is cowardly, and the jefe's men have a very strong sense of *machismo*. Any vehicle not on the map within ten turns of the first signs of resistance from the villagers is considered to have run away.

Victory Conditions. The jefe's objective is to smash the spirit and defenses of the villagers. The villagers' objective is to kill or drive off the jefe, breaking his reign. Each side scores one point for every villager/thug from the other side that it kills; the jefe gets two points per merc, while the villagers get eight points for *el Jefe* and four points for his lieutenant. Each side gets five points for killing one of the opposition's vehicles (ten points for the jefe's car or one of the mercmobiles). The jefe scores no points for property damage — the villagers have plenty of time to rebuild later. A vehicle or pedestrian that leaves the map for any reason is considered to have run away, an act so cowardly that the pedestrian or vehicle (including crew) is considered killed. The side with the most points wins. The scenario is over whenever both players agree to stop playing, or when there are no enemy troops left.

Two defenders. The mercs can be played by a separate player. The merc player is more interested in fulfilling his contract at a profit than he is in winning or losing. Keep score as before — the mercs' points are equal to the villagers. However, for the mercs' score only, *subtract* from this the points scored by the jefe for killing mercs — two per lost merc and ten per vehicle; mercs that flee the map are *not* considered killed for these purposes. If the jefe's total is higher than the reduced mercs' score, the mercs lose, regardless of whether the villagers win. (If the mercs flee, determine everyone's score at the instant the last merc leaves to see if the mercs win, but keep playing to determine whether the villagers win. The mercs have "done their duty" if the villagers are ahead, even if they later lose. Business is business). It is possible for both mercs and villagers to win.

Two attackers. Give the jefe only \$30,000 for his vehicle and give his lieutenant a separate \$20,000 vehicle. One player runs the jefe and his men, another runs the lieutenant and his men, and the third (and fourth) run the villagers/mercs. Before the game begins, the lieutenant chooses either to control three pickup trucks (with crew), or one pickup truck and the three bikes. The jefe's forces cannot attack the lieutenant's troops until the lieutenant disobeys the jefe — indeed, the jefe doesn't even know which forces are his until they start breaking orders! The lieutenant has long been disloyal and is taking this opportunity for a coup.

Determine whether the villagers win as before. If they win, both the jefe and his lieutenant lose — there's no sense in taking over a fallen empire. But if the villagers lose, the lieutenant wins if he can kill the jefe, and the jefe wins if he kills the lieutenant. If they both die, the villagers win — even if they've all already been killed!

Autoduel stats. See p. B109 for the HT and DR of typical walls. This scenario is ideal for *Autoduel*, since the *GURPS* rules cover many more situations than the *Car Wars* rules. In *Autoduel*, the mercs are 75 point characters, as are the jefe and his lieutenant — but the jefe has to be Wealthy, with Status +3; the lieutenant has Status +2 and is Comfortable. The drivers and cyclists are 50-point characters, and the villagers and thugs have 25 character points each. Don't take non-combat disadvantages.



THIRTY SECONDS OVER NEW ORLEANS

WARNING: This information is for GMs' eyes only! If you intend to play this adventure, *read no further!*

The Hook

This adventure begins with the disappearance of the Dependent of one of the PCs. If none of the PCs have Dependents, then just pick a likely friend or relative. Hereinafter we will refer to this NPC as a sister; this isn't necessarily the actual relationship, though a kid sister going to college in the Free Oil States is the ideal character for this role — the Dependent/friend/relative needs to be female, fairly young and attractive.

The date is sometime in mid-February, 2039. About a week ago, the PC's sister disappeared — she stopped attending classes, and her roommate hasn't heard from her. Efforts to find her have failed. There's not a lack of leads — there are too many! The sister was very socially active and often went off with friends for weekends — nobody missed her for several days, because they all thought "she must be with someone else." The PC should be getting fairly frantic by this time.

Then an Elmay telegram arrives:

DEAR [PC'S NAME]. AM FINE. HAVE SEEN LIGHT AND NOW FOLLOW THE ONE TRUE WAY. LOVE TO MOM. — SIS.

There's no return address, but a fairly straightforward bit of checking will pinpoint the computer that sent the message — a Fast-Talk or Administration roll to find it out from the computer service itself, or a Computer Programming roll at -3 to trace the message. The telegram was sent from a public computer terminal in the company town of Atoka, OK (the corporate headquarters of the Atoka Chemical Company).

The characters now have several sources of more investigation (with the skill roll required):

The Road Atlas (Research +5). Atoka is wholly owned by the Atoka Chemical Company, a publicly-traded corporation. It has a population of around 250, all of whom work for the company. The town sits on the main truck route from Arlington to New Tulsa, and operates a small cafe, motel and charging station.

The Stock Exchange (Research or Economics +3). Atoka Chemical primarily manufactures petroleum-based pharmaceuticals and other chemicals; the corporation has almost no research and development, and is strictly a factory. It is divided into three stock blocks: Richard Allion III (company president) owns 40%; his son, Richard Allion IV, owns 30%; and, as part of stock options and benefit plans, the company's employees owned nearly all of the remaining 30%.

(Research-3 or Economics). Three days ago, however, *all* the shares of the employees and of Allion IV were signed over to a small company called St. Stephen's Oil, now the majority stockholder and thus owner of Atoka Chemical. St. Stephen's Oil has only one other recorded asset, an offshore oil well in the Gulf (along with two supply and tanker ships). It is privately owned.

(Economics-5). Unless St. Stephen's Oil has a large undeclared source of capital, there's no way the company could have afforded 60% of Atoka's stock — Atoka is roughly five times the size of St. Stephen's.

The phone (no roll required). Atoka is cut off — apparently their satellite dish is malfunctioning (as is the backup).

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Using This Adventure

It's hard to fit a fully-detailed adventure in only 16 pages — after all, most of our adventure books have adventures twice as long. What's presented here is the main plot line of this adventure — nothing but the encounters that further the primarily plot.

You *can* run the adventure straight, without any special preparation. But in literature as in "real life," not everything that happens is strictly relevant to the main plot. There are subplots, red herrings, plot branches . . . any number of ways to keep the characters guessing, "Are we on the right track?"

That sort of thing makes any adventure much more enjoyable, but it also makes it much longer and more difficult. We encourage GMs to take the effort.

Tailoring the Adventure

On a related subject, no packaged adventure can be as suited towards a particular group of PCs as a homemade adventure can. The subplots and sidetracks should all be individually tailored to the characters in your party.

In particular, the Dependent's story will vary so much from campaign to campaign that we've glossed over it. Just how this woman got lured into Reverend Wright's web of religious fervor is up to the GM to decide.

Similarly, the specifics of the nuclear arms truck are variable. The PCs must be able to destroy this rig — so if all they have are two MG-armed dune buggies, the rig must somehow be vulnerable to that attack.

So, before running this adventure, the GM needs to first read through it quickly, to get a feel for the plot. Then read through it again, looking for opportunities for subplots and the like, and inserting the campaign-dependent features. Once this is done, the adventure is truly ready to play. Enjoy!

The Oklahoma government (Administration). Financial questions are referred to the Stock Exchange (see p. 00). Atoka is unremarkable otherwise, having a minor (ten-man) security force. The company owns a few votes in the government, but Allion himself has none.

News networks (Computer Operations-5 or Research-5). An extensive cross-index brings up a story about the Louisiana Showcase of the Saints, a traveling revival meeting operated by Reverend Wright, a minor Catholic evangelist. (Wright is a priest of Neo-Revivalist Charismatic Pentecostal Catholicism, a schism from Roman Catholicism that is barely tolerated in Louisiana.) It was scheduled to stop by Atoka for a two-day revival last week — the weekend the Dependent disappeared. After Atoka, the meeting was to stop for two days each in four other towns, then head straight on to New Orleans, to run continually during Mardi Gras.

The Brotherhood (Streetwise or Professional Skill: Trucking). Truckers have noticed three things unusual lately. First, there's a circus tent set up next to the interstate, outside the town's fence; there are about half a dozen rigs parked next to the tent.

(Streetwise-3 or Trucking-3.) Second, all the people there act "funny" — wide-eyed and cheerful. They try to convert anyone they meet to Catholicism (see above).

(Special — this information only available to truckers with access to the second level of ROUTE/66 — see p. 36.) There is an unconfirmed report on ROUTE/66 that says the Atoka Cafe's food may be tainted — one trucker who ate there later reported hearing his truck talk to him, and another "could feel the electricity flowing through his truck."

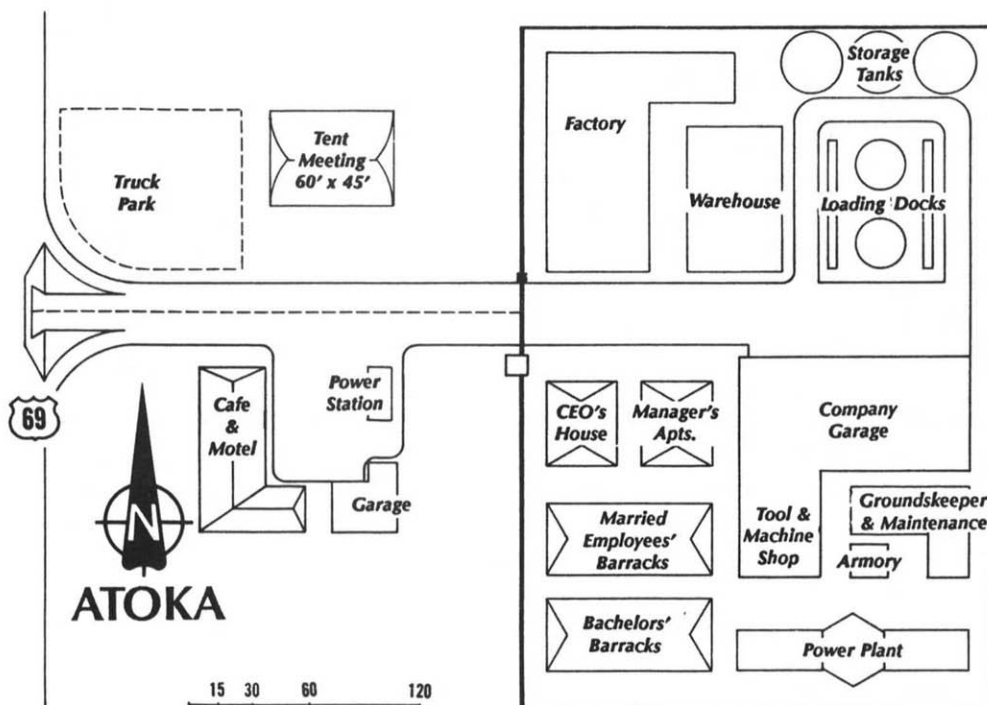
After exhaustive research, the PCs should arrive at only one conclusion: To find out more, they must travel to Atoka themselves.

Atoka

The drive to Atoka is uneventful, but *cold* — February is Oklahoma's coldest month, and blizzards frequently scour the plains. Atoka is just across the border from Texas — it's 130 miles north of Arlington, or 105 south of Muskogee, along US-69 (TX-2). Old Atoka, the former city, is a burned-out ruin, but a few miles outside of town is the Atoka Chemical Company compound, a chain-link fence surrounding several barracks and warehouses. There is a small motel, cafe, garage and recharge station outside the fence — all very typical.

What *isn't* typical is the huge purple-and-gold circus tent standing across the street from the motel. Flags with crosses on them fly from the tops of the three tent poles,





Atoka Features

Cafe & Motel. The cafe is the south wing; the motel is the northern part. The motel has 10 rooms, all of which are filled by the tent meeting's road crew. The windows of the motel are narrow slits, and the walls are very thick.

Garage/Recharge Station. Only provides limited services in the best of times — now it's barely worth mentioning. There's no one on duty, but the recharge station is automated and works off credit cards.

Fenced Compound. Normally the fence is electrified, but that's been turned off — they don't want people to get lit up with anything other than the One True Way.

Factory. A cavernous building filled with pipes, tanks, condenser coils and all sorts of other technological whirlygigs. The factory is controlled by the corporate mainframe, located in the CEO's office.

Storage Tanks. High-capacity chemical tanks. Most of these have petroleum, though one has been emptied and now contains some other chemical (see p. 54).

Loading Docks. Underground pipes bring processed chemicals from the factory to tanker trucks loading here.

Warehouse. This is where crates of dry chemicals — both raw materials and processed products — are stored, awaiting shipment or use.

Company Garage. Atoka Chemical runs its own fleet of cargo trucks, primarily tanker trailers.

Groundskeeper/Maintenance Building and Tool/Machine Shop. Self-explanatory. These are deserted now that the company is idle.

Armory. This contains the central security station as well as the racks of guns and ammunition for the security forces. Atoka Chemical is fairly undefended, with none of the artillery, tanks or APCs that larger corporations own.

Power Plant. This is a brand-new, sodium-cooled nuclear reactor, virtually 100% maintenance- and danger-free. It's set to idle now, providing basic power for the residential buildings.

Barracks. These are filled most of the day with the company's 300 employees, constantly engaged in singing and prayer.

Managers' Apartments. These are empty — the managers have all moved into the employee barracks. The infirmary is on the first floor of this building.

CEO's House. The company's corporate offices are on the ground floor, the CEO's offices are on the second, and the CEO's apartment is on the top floor.

and half a dozen tractor-trailer rigs are parked next to the tent. The trailers have "LOUISIANA SHOWCASE OF THE SAINTS" painted on them in big, garish letters, and atop one is a huge billboard: "HAVE YOU SEEN THE LIGHT? REVIVAL MEETINGS EVERY NIGHT AT SUNSET." At night, the entire area is lit, and searchlights from the compound sweep the sky.

Arrival

As the players pull into town, they immediately notice a few things. The gates appear torn down, and the guard booth is unmanned. The sign across the top of the gate looks recently repainted and says "ST. STEPHEN'S OIL COMPANY — WELCOME, BROTHER." The whole company seems shut down — the streets are deserted and there's none of the bustle back and forth between buildings that one normally finds in a plant like this. The whole place is silent . . . except for the sound of church hymns coming from the barracks. (If the PCs arrive between sunset and midnight, everyone — *everyone* — will be at the tent meeting, and the only noise in town will come from there.)

The PCs find themselves in a town filled with people fundamentally indifferent to them. Residents who have jobs to do (the waitress and cook at the cafe, for example) go about their business happily and efficiently — the rest of the residents stay inside their barracks all day, singing and "praising Him." The PCs aren't pointed in any particular direction by the town's residents.

If they try to enter just about any building, they will be met with either a locked door or a guard. The guards are all big residents, with the usual vacant smiles. They ask the PCs if they have seen the light of the One True Way. No matter what the characters answer, they can't get past the guard without violence — which is sure to bring the town down on top of them.

If the PCs loiter near a locked door, three or four guards will appear very quickly. There aren't any guards (or anyone else) wandering around outside — they all apparently watch the characters from within the buildings, then wander over whenever the PCs seem too interested in something. The constant surveillance will be sure to foil any plans the PCs may concoct — but the guards will all be gone during the revival meeting . . .

There are only two buildings the PCs can enter. The cafe serves good, cheap food; none of the PCs can find anything wrong with it, even with chemical

Atoka Residents

Richard Allion III

ST 10, DX 10, IQ 13, HT 10.

Wealth (Wealthy); Status 4; Eidetic Memory.

Disadvantages: Alcoholic.

Skills: Engineering (Chemical)-20, Guns (Shotguns)-12, Computer Operations-15, Computer Programming-20.

Allion used to have control of his alcoholism, but the terror of the past week has pushed him over the edge. He won't be much use to the players unless they stay with him constantly to sober him up.

Typical Resident

ST 10, DX 10, IQ 10, HT 10.

Advantage: Random advantage (see sidebar, p. 56).

Disadvantage: Fanatical devotion to Reverend Wright, Intolerance of non-believers, Vow of belief in Catholicism, Berserk, Weak Will -4.

One job skill at 12 or less, one hobby skill at 10 or less.

These people constantly wearing a wide-eyed, vacantly cheerful expression and constantly referring to religion.

Though the drug makes them calm and weak-willed most of the time, if they see one of their number harmed they will all immediately set upon the offender, tearing him to shreds with their bare hands. GMs may wish to require a Fright Check in such situations, as an entire mob of smiling people suddenly becomes a howling mass of murderous fiends.

Thugs

ST 14, DX 10, IQ 10, HT 12.

Same advantages and disadvantages as other residents.

Skills: Brawling-12 in addition to other residential skills.

Just a larger and more obstinate version of the Typical Resident. The thugs watch the PCs and show up whenever the characters get too snoopy.

analysis equipment. (In fact, there's nothing wrong with the food — it's the *water* that's bad, and heat destroys the contaminant. Keep a close but unobtrusive eye on the characters — if any of them drink any water from the town, make a note of it and see the sidebar on p. 56.)

The motel section of the cafe building is closed to the PCs. There are no rooms here — they're all filled with personnel from the road show. In fact, the entire motel is inaccessible to the players — all the rooms are at the end of a long corridor, which is filled by two very big, very obstinate guards. The motel manager smiles nicely and apologizes for the lack of vacancies. "By the way, have y'all seen the light of the One True Way yet?"

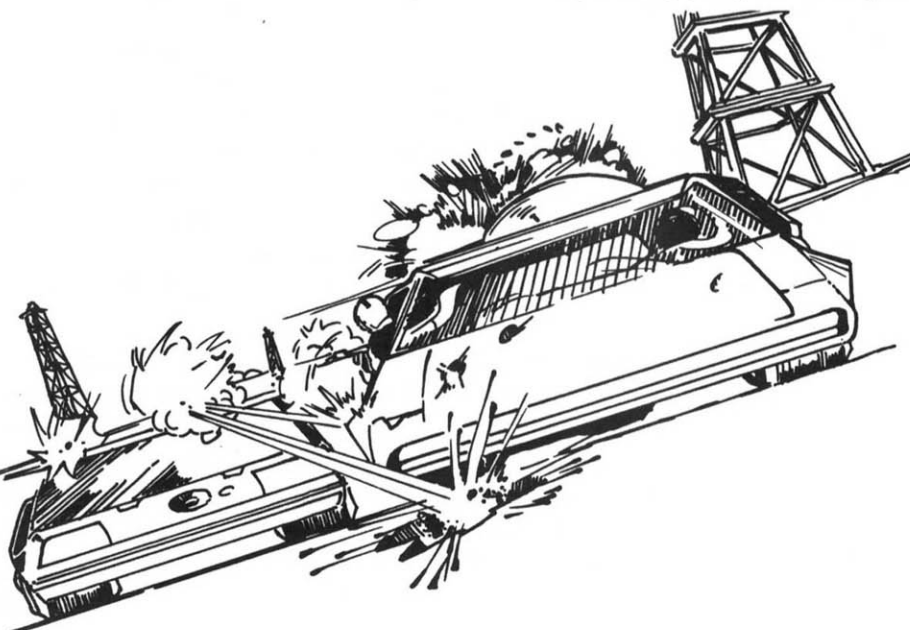
The other building the PCs can visit unaccosted is the CEO's house. As they walk up to the front door, a voice accosts them from the intercom grille: "Get outa here, you damn Catholic Moonies! This is *my* company, and I'm keepin' it, and you lunatics can't make me leave! Scat before I open fire!" It should be fairly simple for a PC with Fast-Talk to convince the speaker the group isn't like the others — as long as the character never asks him if he's seen the light of the One True Way . . . Once he realizes the PCs aren't "crazy like the rest of them," he'll buzz the door open and let them in.

Allion's Story

Richard Allion III (see sidebar, p. 52) greets the PCs at the door. He has a very haggard look in his eye, and he's obviously been drinking heavily. He ushers the PCs into his office. The first floor of the building is a spacious business center, with a secretary's office, a meeting room and Allion's large office. He shows the characters to seats and offers drinks from his extensive bar. He pours himself a bourbon-and-branch-water, making a feeble joke, "Good thing I've got a taste for bourbon-and-branch; it's the only water I drink." Once everyone has settled down, Allion will tell what's been going on.

"A week ago, this traveling tent meeting set up outside the fence — said they'd be here just a couple of days. About a day or two later, everyone in town started acting real funny — going around smiling and talking about true lights or one way streets or some such nonsense. I didn't get upset — I mean, they did their work — until the *managers* started gettin' wild-eyed.

"Ricky — my boy — tried to keep things under control. He figured the revival meeting folks had something to do with it, so he closed the gate and kept them out. Well, long 'bouts sunset, regular as clockwork all the employees started marching to the tent. When they came to the gate they just pushed it open,



there were so many of them. Ricky ordered them to stop, and shot one man to prove he was serious. But when the crowd saw that, they — they just went berserk. It was horrible — one minute they were peaceful and singing, the next they were tearing my poor son's . . .”

He sobs for a few moments, then straightens up and continues. “Well, Ricky lived for a little while, but they wouldn’t let me see him in the infirmary. Then the next day that Reverend Wright fellow came to my office and showed me his stock certificates — he’d bought all the employees’ stock-option shares, and he tricked Ricky into signing over his 30% as well. That damn fake preacher, may he rot, killed my son and stole my company!

“Well, I knew it was a trick, so I holed up here. The master computer is here — you can’t process anything in the factory without the computer, and they’ll never get that. But I can’t get ahold of the Chamber of Commerce to get a judgement against this charlatan, and my personal security forces are just as wonko as the rest of them. I’m stuck here, stuck in the middle of this crazy mob, and they got my son . . .” He breaks down into wracking sobs, then suddenly passes out.

Allion has no more information, and there’s not a lot the PCs can discover by wandering around the town. The characters should soon realize there are only two ways to get more information: Wait until all the residents are at the meeting and then break into buildings; or go to the revival meeting themselves.

During the Meeting

If the PCs chose to snoop around town during the revival meeting, they’ll find that yes, indeed, *everyone* in town goes to the meeting. The characters have the town to themselves. However, all the doors are locked (Lockpicking-3) and alarmed (Electronics [Security Systems]-3), and an alarm will bring four of the house-watchers from the tent to investigate. Similarly, all of the St. Stephen’s Oil vehicles have anti-theft systems — if a character tries to open a vehicle without a successful Electronics (Security Systems)-5 roll, a booby-trap explodes, doing (1 + 3) impaling to everyone within 5 hexes of the vehicle!

The GM should determine the trivial details of what the PCs find — “You’re in a small, dusty closet. There are brooms against the walls, a few mops resting in tin buckets . . .” — all that’s listed here are the clues the PCs can discover by searching. The GM must be sure to camouflage the clues in amongst unimportant items, lest the players have everything handed to them on a silver platter.

The motel. If the PCs break into Reverend Wright’s room, they’ll discover a complete stage makeup kit. A Disguise skill roll will reveal that the kit is professional *disguise* equipment — far more than what a simple stage performance would require. The only other noteworthy thing about the room is that it contains a woman’s clothing as well as mens’ suits — obviously the Reverend isn’t quite as pure as one would imagine. (The PC whose Dependent is missing gets an IQ roll to notice that the clothes are his sister’s exact size — but he’s never seen her wear these before.)

The CEO’s Office. True to Allion’s word, the master computer controls everything that goes on here — at least it used to. The security system is on a separate network, for safety, and has been isolated by the employees. Similarly, the power plant was cut off from the main computer and now operates on its emergency backup mainframe. But the factory remains under control of the computer — only this large mainframe can run the complex programs required to operate the automated facility. Along with the computer, the characters can find a complete set of keys to all the doors in Atoka — but deactivating the alarms requires codes that Allion cannot recall in his drunken stupor (a Computer Programming-7 roll will pry them from the computer).

Roof of the CEO’s Office. Atop the building is a single large satellite dish

The Showcase of the Saints Road Crew

Reverend Wright

ST 10, DX 12, IQ 14, HT 10.

Advantages: Clerical Investment, Voice, Charisma 4, Status 3, Wealth (Wealthy), and whatever else the GM feels appropriate.

Disadvantages: Megalomania, Major Delusion (“I am God’s most important servant, and He talks to me all the time.”), Fanatical devotion to self and his cause.

Skills: Acting-21, Bard-21, Disguise-20, Theology-14, Guns (Pistols)-16, Demolitions-10.

The PCs won’t have a very good idea what the Reverend looks like — he’s a master of theatrics and disguise. “Reverend Wright” appears to be about 80, and dresses in archaic black suits. “Brother Wilbur,” the young preacher who starts the tent meeting, is the Reverend in disguise and appears to be in his late 20s. And on board the *City of New Orleans* (the airship in the later part of this adventure, see p. 59), the Reverend could be just about *anybody*!

The Dependent

The Dependent is a major (albeit involuntary) villain in this adventure, and the GM should draw up stats for her. She is heavily dosed with Religex, so the GM should pay close attention to the descriptions of the typical Atoka residents when creating the Dependent.

House Watchers

ST 14, DX 12, IQ 10, HT 12.

Advantages: Combat Reflexes, Alertness +2.

Disadvantage: Fanatical loyalty to the Reverend.

Skills: Brawling-14, Guns (Automatics)-14.

These guards no longer take Religex; the chemical would dull their reflexes. They are nevertheless tremendously faithful to the Reverend, protecting him from harm and following his orders — even to the extent of laying down their lives for him. They wear Kevlar under their conservative business suits and carry silenced .45 automatics in shoulder holsters under their suit coats.

Religex

During the late 20th century, the United States' Central Intelligence Agency experimented with many mind-altering drugs, for possible use as chemical weapons or interrogation tools. One location of such experiments was concealed underneath a wildlife research facility in western Louisiana. When Louisiana seceded, the facility was abandoned.

Recently, agents of the Reverend rediscovered the laboratory. In the wreckage they found a gold mine of information about Lot #114, one of the CIA's most promising experiments.

Lot #114 made its subjects distracted, edgy and uncomfortable, until they were subjected to a particular subsonic frequency. The subsonic noise soothed them and made them highly receptive to suggestion. However, unconfirmed but detrimental side effects relegated the drug to the back shelf — the experiment was considered a failure.

Until now. The Reverend immediately recognized the drug's potential. His own experiments soon showed that the drug was extremely potent and could be easily dissolved in water — a single gallon could affect 50,000 people! And a drug which made its users highly impressionable had obvious uses to a faith healer and TV evangelist like Wright.

There was an additional benefit. The "unconfirmed side effect" was caused by the way the drug increased a subject's gullibility. Subconscious beliefs ("I really *can* fly!") were amplified — and, as it turned out, humans are capable of many "impossible" or "miraculous" feats if their subconscious believes in them — witness the effectiveness of placebo treatments.

When administered to a church full of believers, Lot #114 triggered fits of religious ecstasy and made many of the subjects capable of miracles such as speaking in tongues (subconscious memory of foreign languages heard once and then forgotten), faith healing (related to the placebo effect), immunity to rattlesnake bites (subconsciously slowing circulation and filling the bloodstream with anticoagulants to flush out the venom), psi abilities (see *GURPS Horror*, p. 27) and prophesying (educated guesses resulting from subconsciously enhanced reasoning).

flanked by two smaller backups. Anyone going up here can immediately tell what's wrong with the satellite links — someone has dismantled them, leaving behind the cruciform braces that once supported the dishes. There's no way to repair this sort of damage without ordering new parts.

The Company Garage. Along with dozens of fairly old ten-wheelers painted in the Atoka Chemical Company's colors, there is a single new ten-wheeled flatbed. The truck has 25 or so steel oil drums on it, and the sign on the side of the truck says it belongs to the St. Stephen's Oil Company. The oil drums are empty. In the glove compartment of the truck is a hardcopy printout of a road map, showing a route from Atoka to Muskogee; a second printout is a city map of Muskogee, with a route from the highway to the freight entrance of the airport. On the map is a scrawled "23." Also among the company cargo haulers is an oddly styled luxury car; a character familiar with cars (duellist or mechanic) who makes an IQ roll recognizes the car as a grasshopper (see the *BIF Blighthopper* in *AADA Road Atlas Volume Four: Australia*, p. 46, in case the stats matter — but it has no bombs, an extra MG and a passenger seat). In its glove compartment are printouts identical to the ones in the truck. There is nothing else of note here.

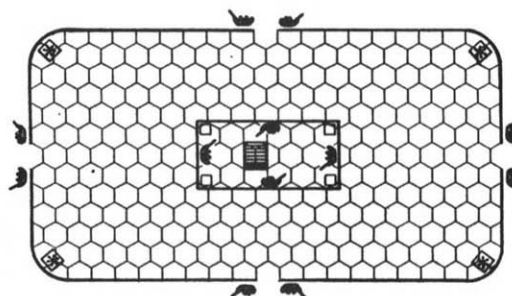
Storage Tanks. One of the smaller tanks has a large damp spot in the ground around it. Characters with Engineering (Chemical/Petroleum), Prospecting (Petroleum) or Pro Skill: Oil Drilling will immediately notice that the ground is *soaked in crude oil!* The dampness is heaviest around a valve marked MANUAL DUMP — apparently someone emptied the entire tank (at least ten thousand dollars worth of petroleum) for some reason. The tank is now full — if the PCs open the valve to find out what's in the tank, a clear liquid pours out. This is LSD, a component of Religex, but it would take sophisticated analysis equipment (or observing someone who tasted it!) to determine the liquid's identity.

Armory. This building is *empty* — all the weapons and ammunition are gone.

This is all the relevant information the PCs can discover here. Unless they have deliberately taken a long time to investigate the area, the PCs will be finished with their search long before the five-hour revival meeting is over. They'll have time to visit the tent as well . . . if they dare.

At the Meeting

At sunset, *everyone* in town, with the exception of Allion and the PCs — and maybe even some of the PCs, if they've drunk the water (see sidebar, p. 56) — stops whatever they're doing and walks to the tent. They fill the place past capacity, and people are forced to stand in the aisles to make room. Once everyone is inside, house watchers (as friendly as the residents of the town, but the PCs won't have seen these men before) take their positions, two at each of the four entrances and four on the stage. The stage is in the center of the tent and raised about seven feet off the ground, with solid wood sides. It looks like a small, windowless building. And indeed, precisely fifteen minutes later, a young conservative-looking man and woman climb out onto the stage from underneath. They carry microphones and exhort the crowd, leading hymns and loud prayer.



- Speaker Stacks
- PA Speaker
- 🏠 House Watchers/Guards
- Stairs to Beneath the Stage

The PA system is easily heard all over Atoka, and the PC with the missing Dependent instantly recognizes the voice — it's his sister! If the characters are in the tent, the PC can tell that his sister is the female preacher; she's wearing heavy stage makeup and looks much older, but the voice is unmistakable. She won't seem to recognize the PC if he tries to catch her attention, but he'll get threatening glances from the house watchers. Nothing will happen, though. The other PCs will restrain him and emphatically point out the cons of being impulsive — a seven-foot-high stage and a tent packed with potential enemies.

This continues, with occasional breaks, for four hours. During this time, things are relatively calm. The PCs can mill around and try to investigate a bit. There's not a lot to discover — no one in the crowd will even acknowledge the PCs' existence, and the tent is jam-packed with nothing but the people. But there are two items of interest:

The exits. Once in, no one leaves until the meeting ends at midnight. The guards are polite and friendly, but won't let anyone out.

The speakers. At the four corners of the tent are huge stacks of loudspeakers, presumably for the PA system. But anyone who makes a Hearing roll, at -1 per hex away from a speaker, will realize that the loudspeakers aren't broadcasting the preachers' voices — in fact, all the speakers are playing is a faint background hiss. Anyone directly next to a speaker, though, can feel it vibrating — there's some sound coming out of it, but it's apparently subsonic.

Punch Break

Three hours later, about halfway through this part of the show, there is a long intermission. During this time, the guards bring out several large coolers filled with grape punch. They distribute cups of this to everyone in the crowd. Of course, this punch was made with the local water supply — which is heavily laced with Religex (see sidebar, p. 54). Did a PC drink the punch? . . .

The Grand Finale

Nothing truly extraordinary happens until a few minutes before 11 o'clock. If the PCs have been scouting the vacant town during the meeting, this is the point when they arrive at the tent meeting. The preachers on the stage announce that the Reverend Wright will soon appear, and they climb down beneath the stage. The tent falls silent and still. A minute passes.

Slowly, a wide-brimmed black hat appears in the center of the stage, as an old man climbs up the stairs. The crowd remains still as Reverend Wright reaches the top of the stairs; the characters can hear the wooden stage creak as he walks across it. The Reverend looks to be about eighty. He wears a severe black suit with a clerical collar. In his left hand he holds a large Bible and his right hand grasps a rosary. The Reverend says a short prayer, crosses himself and says "Amen." As if the word were a cue, the entire crowd shouts out "Amen" in unison and suddenly breaks out into singing, shouting and general pandemonium.

The tent is utter chaos. The Reverend simply walks around the edge of the stage, surveying the crowd. The people down below, however, writhe in the throes of religious ecstasy. Many perform "supernatural" or "miraculous" acts — see the sidebar on p. 54 for some possibilities.

Miss Taken Identity

In the midst of this chaos, the PCs notice a panel slide open in the side of the stage. The sister walks out, pushing her way through the crowd. Oblivious to the PCs, who are at least twenty feet away, she makes for an exit, followed closely by one of the guards from the stage.

If the PCs follow, they'll have to force their way through the slaving

The Reverend's Plan

Reverend Wright knew he had a hit. He quickly filed a patent on the chemical and started producing Religex, a "food additive" that is sold as a street drug. There isn't much demand, but it does bring in enough money to keep his operation running. But Wright had bigger things in mind. If he could dose an *entire town* . . .

Unfortunately, Religex requires complicated processing equipment and tons of raw materials (including its main ingredient, LSD) to produce gallons of the chemical. So the first step in the Reverend's plan was to conquer a small company town, where he could produce a much larger batch of Religex.

The Reverend started a traveling revival show to tour Oklahoma, visiting dozens of small towns and looking for the town that would best fulfil his needs. (At one of the stops, the Dependent drank some of the grape punch and proved to be especially susceptible — and as she was young and pretty, she caught the Reverend's eye . . .)

Atoka turned out to be ideal. The security forces, led by a religious man, were among the first people who succumbed to the Reverend's grape punch, thus allowing the town's entire water supply to be easily dosed.

Unfortunately for the Reverend, the plan met with a major obstacle. Richard Allion, the president of Atoka, doesn't drink the local water — he doesn't drink any water at all other than the creek water in his favorite bourbon-and-branch drink. So when he noticed the rest of the town's residents becoming zombies, Allion locked up the controls to the factory and barricaded himself in his house.

Time is running out, and the Reverend is getting desperate. The revival meeting is scheduled to spend all of Mardi Gras in New Orleans, "attempting to save the sinners at the height of their depravity." The Reverend has scheduled TV ads to blanket the city — and each ad carries the special subsonic frequency. With the thousands of gallons of Religex he'll produce at Atoka, he can dose the entire water supply of New Orleans, and thus bring the city's residents under his complete control!

So the Reverend orders the entire town to seize the company computer. They won't use violence — they'll just roll through the house in a human wave. There's a danger that the computer will be destroyed, but the Reverend has to take the chance — and, as it turns out, Allion is too drunk to destroy the computer, so the Reverend will succeed. As long as he can get the PCs out of the way . . .

Religex: Game Mechanics

It takes only a small dose of Religex to make a character vulnerable. Figure that a single glass of Atoka's water (or the Reverend's punch) contains one full dose.

A character who gets a dose must make a HT roll to avoid the drug's effects; the roll is at -2 for every additional dose the character has received within the past 24 hours. If the roll is successful, the drug has no effect — and on a critical success, the character is *permanently immune*! But on a failure, the character succumbs to the chemical, and on a critical failure he is particularly susceptible — double effect or double duration, as appropriate.

Under the Drug

While under the influence of Religex, a character acquires the disadvantages of Berserk and Weak Will -4 (see Duration below). The drug saps the character's will and makes him very pliable, but under enough emotional stress the mental weakness snaps and the character goes temporarily insane.

On the other hand, the character gains 15 points of *advantages*. These should be something that the character's subconscious is likely to already believe in. For example, a private detective with the quirk "Always relies on his hunches" will get Intuition or Danger Sense, while a religious person might suddenly be able to speak in tongues — Language Talent +8!

In addition to the other disadvantages, the character becomes very edgy — others may very well think the character is trying to shake an addiction, because the edginess seems like a need for a "fix." The victim will suddenly acquire a craving for low tones — deep organ music, factory noises, etc.

If subjected to noise of a specific subsonic frequency, the character becomes totally enthralled. He has *no* will — he cannot resist any suggestion made under such conditions, no matter how absurd. Even after the sound goes away, the suggestions will remain in force for the duration of the drug's effects.

Duration

The effects of Religex, no matter how large a dosage, will wear off after 24 hours have passed since the last dosage. At the end of that time, the victim becomes steadily weaker (-1 fatigue per minute), until he passes out. The unconsciousness lasts for another 24 hours, at the end of which time the character has absolutely no memory from the moment of the first dose of Religex.

crowd. In doing so they leave a "wake" behind — even in a milling crowd, a knot of people making a beeline for someone is quite noticeable. The Reverend Wright will spot them and immediately identify their target. He'll grab a microphone and shout to the crowd, "They have not seen the light of the One True Way, my children! Bring them up to me, that I may give them my testimony and show them the error of their ways!" The same thing happens if the PCs don't follow her — she spotted her brother and has told the Reverend.

The crowd surges toward the PCs, grabbing them and lifting them into the air. The PCs are passed hand-to-hand overhead and shoved onto the stage. There's not a lot they can do — the crowd won't listen to reason, and their combined strength is sure to overcome any defense the characters can muster . . . even gunfire. (If the players decide to draw their guns and mow down the crowd, remind them of Allion's son and offer them the following problem in applied mathematics: If you have five characters, each with fifty shots, each shot kills an enemy and there are 300 enemies, how many enemies will survive? Now guess how many PCs will survive. Get the picture?)

Once on the stage, the PCs are ushered down into the "understage" area by the three remaining guards. Underneath the stage, the characters find a dimly lit room filled with a couch, a makeup table with mirror, and a large bank of electronics equipment — obviously the PA system. The guards have the PCs sit down and wait. (Observant PCs may realize that the Dependent's co-preacher didn't leave the room and isn't here now — the Reverend must be this man in disguise.)

The Reverend delivers an hour-long sermon to the crowd, finishing just after midnight. After the meeting is through, he walks down the stairs.

"Well, you're all comfortable, I trust. Now, we have a bit of business to discuss. I've been quite patient with Allion, but the man is stubborn beyond all reason. And I fear you might plan to assist him somehow, and that simply won't do. I have great things planned, things that require the use of this factory — with or without his cooperation.

"So I sent your sister," he says to the appropriate character, "on a little trip. It's a shame, really, because the spirit truly moved within her. Still, I suppose



she'll do many a good deed, spreading the Good Word around the pirates of the Gulf.

"Where is she? Why, she's in the back of a tractor-trailer rig that just stopped off here, heading south to Beaumont. She should fetch quite a high price on the slave market in Corpus Christi, money which you can rest assured will be put to good use serving the Lord.

"Now, here are your choices. You can stay, help Allion, probably die and certainly let your sister spend the rest of her life in a pirate's harem. Or you can chase after the truck and stop it. Its license-plate number is Texas AR-9047. But I assure you its drivers won't listen to anything you have to say — I hope you have enough firepower to stop it. Good night, gentlemen." With that, he gathers his Disguise kit, slides open the door and walks out into the tent, followed by his three guards. The PCs are not restrained in any way.

Interrogating the Reverend. He won't answer questions with anything more informative than a smile. A successful Contest of Skills between Detect Lies and his Acting of 21 will reveal that he is lying about *something*, but there's no telling exactly what. An Area Knowledge (Texas) roll will tell that there's no real reason why the Dependent would be sent to Beaumont before Corpus Christi — there's a road that goes straight south from Atoka to Corpus.

Attacking the Reverend. Not a good idea — again remind the players of the what happened to Allion's son. Unless the characters somehow dispose of the Reverend and his guards without anyone noticing, they won't be able to escape before the mob of residents rips them to shreds.

Staying in Atoka

The PCs now have essentially two options. They can either stay in town or chase the truck. No group of PCs is likely to have enough firepower to handle the truck *and* leave some people behind, so their options are limited.

At 3 am, the entire population of the town will converge on Allion's house, battering down the door and storming the office. Unless the PCs are there with him, he will be unconscious during the attack, passed out from drinking. If his defense is bolstered by the PCs, the GM will have to determine what happens. In general, though, the cause is fairly hopeless. However, the mob will not attack or kill anyone who doesn't fire weapons or kill one of the residents. These are peaceful people — *lots* of peaceful people . . .

Once the office is taken over, the computer will be used to start up the factory. The reverend will operate the factory for several hours.

Chasing the Truck

The most likely route for the truck is straight down I-69 (TX-8), through Arlington and down to Beaumont. The truck has an hour head start — figure it's going 60 mph, so the PCs will have to travel at 80 mph to catch up before they reach Beaumont. Fortunately, this isn't much of a problem — the Highway Patrols in the Free Oil States are fairly easy-going when it comes to speeding. Again fortunately, the truck will have to stop somewhere along the route for a recharge.

In actuality, the truck the PCs are chasing did *not* leave Atoka an hour ago. It will leave Arlington about fifteen minutes before the players arrive there. At 80 mph, they'll be able to catch up with it about 60 miles south of Arlington — characters with Absolute Time Sense or who make a Navigation or Mathematics skill roll will realize that the group caught up far too soon.

A Rear Assault

The party spots a tractor-trailer rig ahead of them, traveling with a single es-

The Truck

The truck is a heavily armed tractor-trailer rig. Many of its weapons are *concealed* — see p. 43. Depending on the party's vehicles, the escort may be a dueling car, a battlebus (ten-wheeler with nothing but weapons — no cargo capacity at all) or even a helicopter.

There are no concrete stats here for either the truck or the escort, because these depend entirely on the players' vehicles. The plot demands that the truck be taken out — which means that it can't be too much more effective than the players' vehicles.

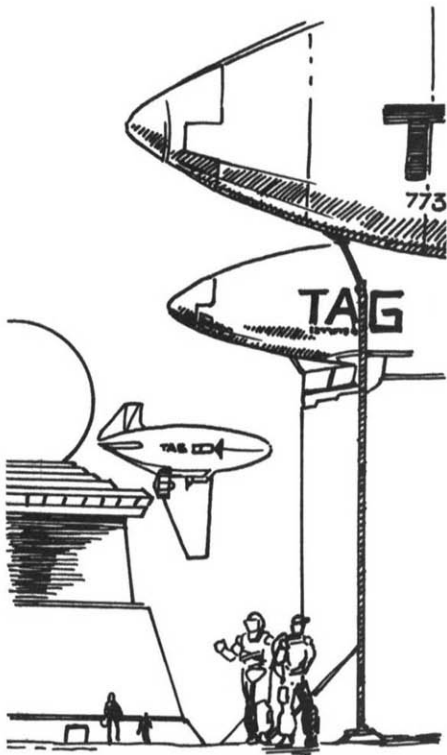
Figure that their heaviest weapon should do internal damage to the truck about 40% of the time, and that the truck's heaviest weapon should do internals to the players' heaviest armor about 25% of the time. And be sure to give the truck a fatal weakness to exploit — for example, unprotected tires or fewer dropped weapons.

If the players don't attack the truck, a cycle gang will. In that case, the truck can have any stats you want — just create a cycle gang that's even better! Figure that the bandits will drop a log (DR 3, HT 200) across the road in front of the truck, stopping it while hidden troops open fire with tripod-mounted weapons. The rest of the gang, riding motorcycles, will patrol, take out the escort vehicle, and in general handle emergencies (such as PC intervention!).

No Nukes Is Good Nukes

The nuclear weapon is a small (50-kiloton) tactical device, used for destroying supply centers and the like. Texas keeps nearly all of its nuclear weapons at the construction facility in Amarillo, but maintains a very few devices for emergency use at the border bases. The bomb has no timing and detonation circuitry — that's all added at the base, for security. Thus, it's pretty useless to anyone but the Texas military as anything but a source of plutonium (unless they get ahold of the firing circuitry). Still, it's *very* valuable, and the Rangers want it back *very* much.

If the PCs put the crate in one of their vehicles, figure it weighs 250 lbs. and takes up 10 cu. ft.



Those Pesky PCs

The basic plotline of this adventure assumes, for the most part, that the players make the most logical decisions.

But in real life they often don't. In this adventure, that could get them killed. If they decide to hang around in Atoka, or if they shoot the Reverend at the tent meeting, or if they wait around at the truck to talk to the Rangers . . . for them, the adventure will be over. What to do?

Well, the GM could give them Temporary Common Sense — "Er, do you really want to do that? 'Cause if you do, this is what I'm going to have to do . . ." Not a good idea in general, but probably the easiest way to handle momentary lapses of reason.

Or the GM could let the players do the dumb thing, and let them suffer the consequences — "Gee, real sorry you failed that HT roll there, Bob. Looks like the mob killed you, too. And you were the last PC. Oh well. I guess we can all go home now." This is the most realistic way — no one keeps you from doing Dumb Things in the real world — but it's not much fun.

Or the GM could change things. Maybe the mob *won't* rip the PCs to shreds, but rather just grab them and lock up somewhere — allowing them to escape later at their convenience.

In general, the plot of this adventure is very linear, but not manipulative — the PCs will *want* to follow the main line. Just as the GM should add whatever subplots he wants, he should also add side branches to flesh out this adventure to match his particular campaign.

cort vehicle. It will not respond to radio calls, though if asked for passing rights it will pull over into the far right lane. The rig and escort are traveling 60 mph, with the escort driving several hundred yards in front of the tractor. The PCs have no way of knowing this is the vehicle without checking its license plate number — when a character's vehicle approaches to within 100 feet (around 6''), he discovers that yes, indeed the number is a match. The truck has no other markings of any sort and is painted a matte brown; the escort car matches. The road is straight and smooth. If the PCs want to make a blind, rear attack on the truck, there's no better time than the present. (See sidebar, p. 57 for more information on the truck and its escort.)

Lufkin Keep Us Together

Another option is to wait for the truck to stop for a recharge. It pulls into the only truck stop in Lufkin, a farm and oil community. The truck pulls up to the full-service charger while the escort waits; after five minutes, the truck pulls away and waits for the escort to recharge. At no time do the drivers or gunners leave their vehicles. The truck stop is well lit, and the vehicles cover each other's backs. There's no real way for the PCs to sneak onto or even near the truck. This would be a good place for an assault, though, since the place is nearly deserted and trucks are most vulnerable when they're stationary — you can use the *Truck Stop* map.

He Who Hesitates Is Lost

If the PCs simply pace the truck all the way to Beaumont, someone takes the decision off their hands. A small bandit gang (in no way related to the PCs or to Reverend Wright) attacks the truck. The details of the bandits are left up to the GM — make them formidable enough to take out the truck *and* the PCs, if necessary. The bandits won't attack the PCs if the party simply stays out of the fight.



Victims of Circumstance

As the attack on the truck begins, the PCs will hear a single radio message: "Stork One to Baby Factory. Under attack by a band of vehicles. Description follows." The speaker will then give a complete description of all the party's vehicles that have been spotted by the truck. If the Beaumont bandits attacked the truck, he will describe the bandits first and *then* describe the PCs, saying "I think these guys are their spotters."

Once the truck is taken out (as it is doomed to be), it's short work to get the trailer open. No Dependent here, however, there is another door — a large, armored door with an electronic lock! An Electronics (security systems) -4 roll will open the safe — it's a standard but very secure type of lock. (If bandits rather than the PCs captured the truck, they'll definitely get it open, since they do this sort of thing all the time.) Inside the safe is nothing but a small white plastic crate with "PROPERTY OF TEXAS AIR GUARD" and a radiation trefoil stenciled on the side.

At this point, the PC with the most military experience realizes what the party has been chasing — a nuclear arms shipment from Amarillo to Beaumont! If the bandits have the truck, they'll take the crate and flee. If the PCs took the truck, they'd better do the same — because the Texas Rangers are liable to want their toy back! And if the PCs leave it behind in the demolished truck, someone else is sure to take it instead . . . And, in fact, someone else will — within five minutes a car sent by the Reverend Wright will pull up, take the crate and escape.

On the Run

Suddenly the PCs have found themselves hunted by the most famous police force in North America, for one of the most significant crimes they could have possibly committed. Meanwhile, the PC's Dependent is still missing, the Reverend Wright is carrying out some fiendish plan in Atoka . . . There's not much constructive that the PCs can do other than try to get back to Atoka and trace the Reverend.

Amazin' Abe's Arlington Car Swap and Body Shop

The initial confusion of the attack on the nuke shipment lets the PCs get well down the road before the Rangers start sweeping the highways. Furthermore, it's probably still night during this time. Thus, the PCs have a little time before they're tracked down and captured — enough time, let's say, to make it to the outskirts of Arlington, or some other large city.

The first thing that catches the fugitives' eyes is a huge neon billboard advertising "Amazin' Abe's Arlington (or wherever) Car Swap and Body Shop — CHEAP CHEAP CHEEP." (Yes, it's really misspelled.) Amazin' Abe's is open all night (of course) and for only a nominal fee (\$500+ each) will thoroughly repaint every one of the party's vehicles. If the PCs have a particularly distinctive car, Amazin' Abe will give them a scandalously exploitative swap — their finely tuned duelling machine for any one of the "top quality previously owned" weaponless cars in his lot. It beats jail . . . though prison is cheaper.

Over the River and Through the Woods

Provided the PCs have switched and/or camouflaged their cars, they should make it across the Oklahoma border and up to Atoka without incident. Though border security is very heavy, the *cars*, not the characters, were identified — disguised vehicles slip through easily. (The GM can give the PCs a scare if they're carrying the nuke — "The Ranger walking down the line of cars is carrying a Geiger counter. What do you do?" — but unless the players seem too relaxed, they'll get through without trouble — "His partner calls to him and says, 'Don't bother with the rest of them; traffic's stacking up.'")

North to Atoka

When the PCs arrive back at Atoka, they stumble into a scene of devastation — the town is on fire! Racing away down the highway is a luxury car — and as the PCs watch, helicopter rotors fold out from its roof and trunk

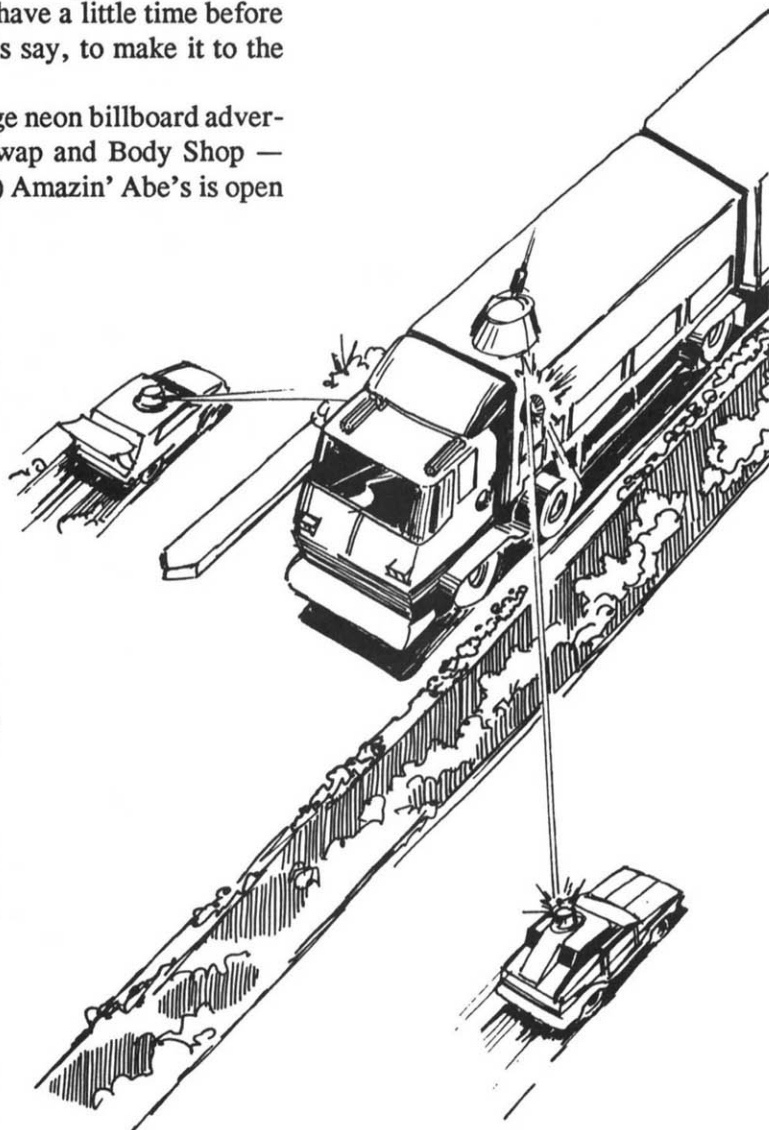
Airship Passengers

ST 10, DX 10, IQ 10, HT 10.

Appropriate advantages (wealth, appearance, etc.) and disadvantages (shyness, odious personal habits, etc.).

Skills: Professional skill at 12-, hobby skill at 10-.

Use these stats for most characters as necessary. Special characters — for example, anyone in disguise — should be worked up individually. The GM is encouraged to individualize all the NPCs, and bring all of them into play in one way or another.



Flying on The City of New Orleans

The *City of New Orleans* is a standard passenger/cargo airship. It can carry 28 people and up to 10 tons of cargo, traveling at a cruising speed of 80 mph (varying heavily with wind speed and direction, of course). Airships like this handle most of the passenger and valuable cargo traffic in the West and the Free Oil States.

Key to The City of New Orleans

1. *Gun Locker*. Passengers are required to give up their weapons upon boarding, and the guns are stored here for safekeeping. There is a metal detector at the airship's entrance, but plastic guns (twice the cost of the regular version) can slip through — security is lax on this boring milk run.

2. *Galley*.

3. *Steward's Compartment*. This is where the steward's seat is. It is primarily intended as a bunker to defend against hijacking attempts, and has small observation/firing slits that open into the passenger cabin.

4. *Observation Deck*. There is a wide window here, giving a sweeping view out the front. The ladder at the front of the deck is for access to the envelope, and is closed by a hatch; the hatch is locked and an alarm sounds if it is opened.

5. *Lavatory*.

6. *Passenger Compartment*.

7. *Access Ramp*. When the airship is moored, a ramp drops down from the cargo deck to the ground. Similarly, this ramp drops down to the cargo deck.

8. *Engineering Deck*. This is normally kept unlocked, because there is little a hijacker can do — if the engines fail on an airship, you just wait for a tow. There is a small rearward observation window here. The ladder here is identical to the one on the forward observation deck.

9. *Cargo Deck*. Airships are an expensive means of cargo transportation, so they typically only carry the most valuable of cargos. In this case, the airship is carrying several crates of computer parts . . . and two dozen mysterious oil drums, stenciled "PROPERTY OF ST. STEPHEN'S OIL COMPANY" . . .

10. *Cockpit*. Airships don't demand much attention during flight, especially with the use of sophisticated autopilot computers. In fact, there's little real need of pilots at all — the computer can handle everything except docking, and airports could use radio control for that. But safety regulations rule supreme, and so the ship has two pilots. They spend most of the flight playing gin.

and the grasshopper rises into the air! Gunfire from the party will do no good, though let them roll anyway.

The Ruins

All the trucks are gone, but the tent is still here — burning. Every building in the town is ablaze, and occasionally spectacular gouts of fire shoot up from the factory and the chemical storage tanks.

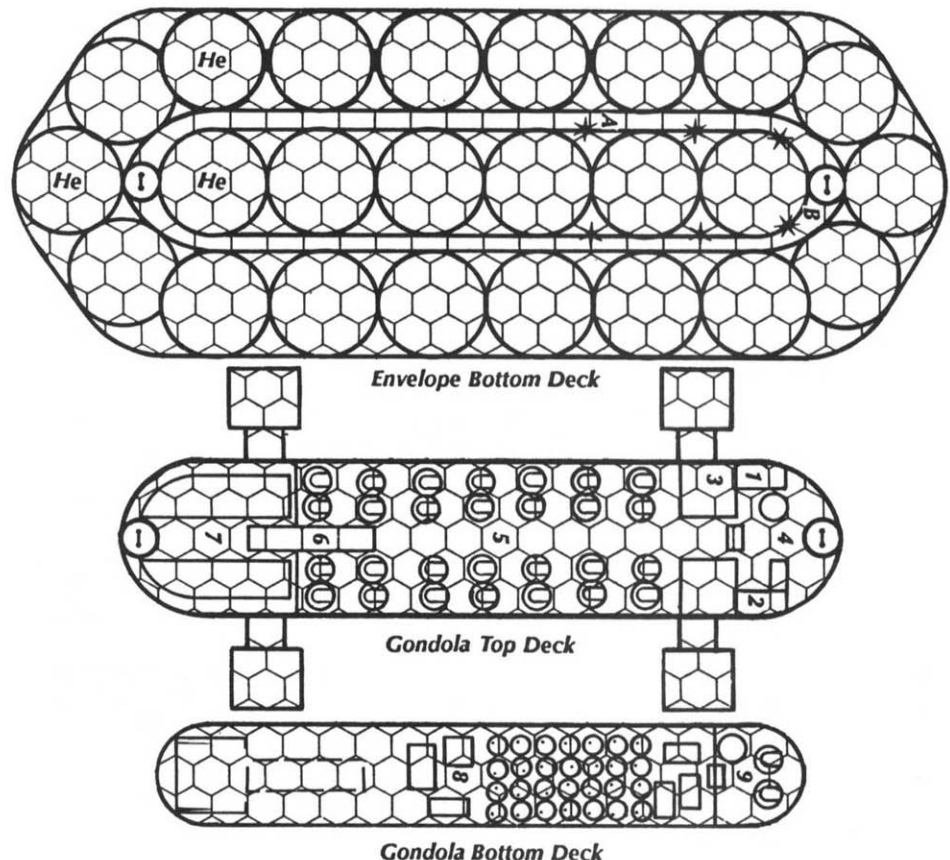
The PCs soon discover Allion, face down in the road just outside the gate. Near his outstretched right hand is a .45 automatic. Close inspection immediately reveals that he's dead, apparently bludgeoned to death. On his body, should the PCs search it, is a torn computer printout — apparently the bottom half of an airline ticket reservation. The paper lists two seats reserved on Flight 23 to New Orleans, leaving from Muskogee — in just over one and a half hours! The names are on the missing part of the paper.

Should the characters seem inclined to linger here, remind them of the fleeing grasshopper. Then mention the burning *nuclear* power plant . . . But this reactor is heavily fail-safed and has already shut down automatically at the first sign of trouble; there's no radioactive danger here. Still, the nuclear bogeyman is enough to send even the most stalwart PCs fleeing towards Muskogee.

Muskogee Airport

The Muskogee Airport has a very good security system. Passengers show their tickets at the gatehouse and are allowed in on foot — everyone else (and everyone's car) is kept out. There are ticket booths for the airlines here, of course. The PCs can get in by buying tickets — there are still seats left on Flight 23.

Or, they can try talking the airport officials into holding the flight. "Well, see, he makes people speak in tongues, and he tricked us into stealing a nuclear weapon, and he's on that airship. Proof? Well, we've got the bomb right here . . ." Uh-uh. The Oklahoma security forces have all been notified of the theft —



Texas is desperately trying to make sure that, if the bomb *does* go off, no one will blame the Texas government.

Flying the Unfriendly Skies

In addition to the PCs, there are a dozen other passengers on board the airship — half male, half female, seated wherever the GM feels appropriate. Since the PCs don't know what names the pair they're looking for are traveling under, and since they *do* know that the Reverend is a master of disguise, they'll need to scrutinize every passenger to discover their quarry. But they've got time — the 400-mile trip will take over five hours. And it's a nonstop flight . . .

Dramatis Personae

Female Suspects

Jo-Beth McAllister. A young, attractive, “perky” female executive for Hendricks Oil visiting New Orleans for a Mardi Gras vacation. Her date had to work, so she's traveling alone. She spends all her time buried in her briefcase, trying to ignore how disappointed she is. During the flight, she breaks her last pencil and goes forward to ask the steward for another.

Sister Mary Ignatius. Old, stereotypical Catholic nun, returning to her abbey in New Orleans. She sleeps most of the flight, but goes to the forward observation deck to pray.

Jenny Stokes. Student at Tulane University. Her daddy is a major Oklahoman CEO. Jenny is deathly afraid of flying and will hardly respond to questions. She'll rush forward to the lavatory during a particularly rough bit of turbulence.

Dorene Lewis. A mildly famous nightclub singer of the early '10s; now spends her time on the social circuit. Less than an hour into the flight she becomes completely incoherent from heavy drinking. When the steward refuses to serve her any more alcohol, she stalks forward to the galley to get some for herself.

Janet Smith. Newlywed wife of Johann Smith (q.v.). *Very* preoccupied — she and Johann spend most of the time either whispering to each other or gazing deeply into each others' eyes. At some time during the flight, she and Johann will have a lovers' quarrel, and she'll stalk off to the forward observation deck.

Maxxeen. Might be pretty if she didn't look so weird — Maxxeen is heavily punked-out, with chrome-and-carbon body armor and a two-foot high electric blue Mohawk that throws off *sparks* whenever she shakes her head. (We do mean *electric* blue . . .) Could be teenaged, could be older — it's hard to tell. Spends the entire flight listening to her cube player, paying no attention to her surroundings. At one point during the flight, Maxxeen gets too close to an overhead reading lamp and her hairdo shorts out, collapsing into a stringy mess; she goes forward to the lavatory to recharge it.

Captain Amy Lufthartz. The captain of the airship, Lufthartz is a German-American immigrant who speaks with an impenetrable accent. She wanders through the passenger cabin once or twice. If questioned, the steward will say that he's never seen Lufthartz before — she's a new pilot for the airline.

Male Suspects

Brian “Bee-Line” Leinmann. Moderately successful AADA circuit duellist. He is constantly busy with a portable computer, working on the plans for next season's car — *very* secretive of those plans! Late in the flight he'll go back to the rear observation deck to get more light for his computer's solar cells.

Howard Weatherby. Texas wildcatter on a business trip. He flamboyantly spends his money, but he's not nearly as rich as he tries to act. He spends all his

Capturing the Reverend

The Reverend is concerned for his own safety and freedom above all. Even if the gasbags aren't destroyed, the airship can be piloted into the New Orleans Reservoir; even if the airship isn't hijacked, the explosive charges will dump Religex into the water. So if the PCs give the Reverend too hard a time, he'll abandon ship.

How? Well, the Reverend has a harness underneath his clothing, and a rope in his briefcase. He'll secure the rope to part of the airship and just *jump* — the rope-and-harness will slow his descent, and the water will catch him at the bottom. Make a DX roll; on a failure, he's stunned upon impact — treat it as a failed Swimming roll. On a critical failure, he takes 3 dice of damage in addition!

But setting up the rope takes time (several turns at least). The Reverend will do everything he can to buy that time, but if it's not possible then he'll give up (and hope to escape later).

Who is the Reverend?

If the PCs capture the Reverend, they'll be able to remove his disguise. The GM will have to make a decision — Who exactly is he? There are two possibilities that are most likely:

Exactly who he appears to be. The Reverend really is just a megalomaniacal televangelist.

Gary “The Weasel” Stevenson. This is by far the more interesting (and complicated) alternative. Stevenson is rumored to be in hiding in Louisiana. What better hiding place than in plain view? He certainly fits the part — Stevenson was himself a televangelist before becoming President of Louisiana. And his megalomania would prevent him from just laying low — he'd have to concoct elaborate schemes to conquer the world (or at least this part of it).

But having the Reverend be Stevenson in disguise complicates matters. Stevenson is a major background NPC in *Autoduel America*, and anything that happens to him will have a marked effect on the world. See the sidebar on the next page for details on how to handle Stevenson in this adventure.

Gary Stevenson

ST 10, DX 12, IQ 14, HT 10.

Advantages: Clerical Investment, Voice, Charisma +4, Status +3, Wealth (Filthy Rich — different from “Reverend Wright”), +4 Reputation among half of Louisiana as a saint.

Disadvantages: Megalomania, Major Delusion (“I am God’s most important servant, and He talks to me all the time.”), Fanatical devotion to self and his cause, -4 Reputation among other half of Louisiana as a villain, Enemy (Texas Rangers and Louisiana police).

Relevant Skills: Acting-21, Bard-21, Disguise-20, Theology-14, Guns (Pistols)-16, Demolitions-10, Politics-20, Administration-14, Detect Lies-14.

Dropping Clues

If Reverend Wright is really Stevenson, the GM should drop clues for the players so that they can figure it out. The details are left to the GM, but some good examples are: All the guards calling the Reverend “Your Excellency,” “Your Holiness” or “Mr. President” (if you want to get boldface about it).

PC Conflict

If any of the PCs are from Louisiana, they may have a problem — because half the population of the nation wants Stevenson returned to power! Few players have characters who believe religious repression is a good idea, but it makes for good roleplaying. “Realistically,” there is a very good chance that a Louisianan PC would be on Stevenson’s side, even without drinking any Religex!

And the same idea applies to NPCs — if he reveals his identity, Stevenson may very well gain several new followers.

Capturing Stevenson

Because Stevenson is so popular, it will be very difficult to capture him — there’s bound to be *someone* on the airship who will help him. Even if the PCs do get ahold of him, it’s very likely that he’ll “accidentally” escape from the police — unless, of course, the PCs put a guard on him themselves.

On the other hand, because Stevenson is so *unpopular*, all the PCs have to do is prove his identity to the authorities (especially the Texas Rangers) — the charges against them will be dropped immediately.

Killing Stevenson

If the Reverend is not Stevenson and he dies, he stays dead; he doesn’t believe in Gold Cross. But Stevenson has half a dozen clones — he may even have more than one active at the same time, allowing him to be in two places at once! So if the PCs kill Stevenson, they won’t have solved anything — they’ll become the sworn enemies of a large, violent organization!

time trying to impress one of the female passengers (probably not Sister Ignatius). During the flight, one of the passengers asks Weatherby to “take your smelly cigar to the back of the ship”; grumbling, he’ll do so.

Roscoe Q. Wilberforce III. Archetypal timid, stuttering, introverted accountant. He spends the entire flight reading *Red Chrome*, *Blue Steel*, the number-one bestselling autoduelling novel. When Leinmann walks to the back of the airship, Wilberforce will suddenly recognize him and follow, seeking an autograph.

Louie Larson. Polyester-clad traveling salesman. Larson is more than happy to talk to the PCs — “Me? I’m from New Tulsa. And so are Widgets™ the product I happen to represent. Let me tell you why every home needs a Widget™ . . .” While the airship is climbing through a pocket of turbulence, Larson’s sample case falls off a luggage rack, and the Widgets™ roll toward the back of the ship; Larson scrambles after them.

Johann Smith. The male counterpart of Janet Smith — the two almost look like clones. When he and she have their fight, he’ll storm off to the rear observation deck.

Yorobazu Taro. A diminutive Japanese tourist, complete with elaborate camera and loud Hawaiian shirt. He supposedly doesn’t speak a word of English. During the flight, he’ll go to the rear observation deck to take pictures.

Lieutenant John Shriper The co-pilot. Shriper became an airship pilot for the fame, girls and money, none of which he’s so far acquired. He’ll wander through the airship several times, making passes at just about every woman on board.

Kurt Edwards. The steward. Edwards is a tall blond bodybuilder with a friendly disposition — something like a cross between Arnold Schwarzenegger and Yogi Bear. He naturally spends most of the flight attending to the passengers, but has enough free time to read a book (or whatever) in the steward’s cabin. He’ll make a number of inspection trips to the back of the airship, checking on the engines.

Wheels within Wheels

The PCs probably have a good idea that at least two of these people aren’t who they appear to be.

The Reverend. Pick any one of the men to be the Reverend in disguise. Or maybe he’s disguised as a woman — Sister Ignatius is a likely candidate. In any case, he has a carry-on bag filled with six plastic LAWs, and he carries a plastic .357 Magnum (with two spare speed loaders).

The Dependent. She’s probably one of the women, possibly a man. However, she’d be a little hard to disguise as Kurt Edwards; Roscoe Wilberforce is slightly more likely. In any case, *don’t* make her Janet Smith, unless you make the Reverend Johann — and don’t do that, because it’s too obvious. (On the other hand, have you ever read *The Purloined Letter*?) No matter who she is, she carries a plastic .357 Magnum, two spare speed loaders and a small shaped charge to blow out the lock on the cockpit door.

Of course, that doesn’t have to be all. For example, to throw the PCs off track, there could be another pair of disguised people on board — say, a fugitive and a bounty hunter or two rival spies. The gunplay between these two would act as a welcome if unplanned diversion for Wright, and if the PCs discover *four* disguised people rather than only two they’ll be justifiably paranoid.

The Reverend Strikes

As the airship begins its final approach to New Orleans, the Reverend (who has been sitting as close to the back as possible) picks up his carry-on bag and heads for the back of the airship. This isn’t immediately suspicious — every

character has some pretense for getting up, given under the capsule descriptions above. But the “Fasten Seat Belts” light is on. Furthermore, anyone near the door hears the Reverend lock it. And in a few moments, there’s the loud buzzing of an alarm — he’s climbed up into the envelope itself!

The PCs can either pursue immediately (breaking the DR 2, HT 6 lock) or wait for the steward (in which case they’ll have to convince him that they know what they’re doing). If the PCs pursue immediately, they will be able to interrupt the Reverend before he plants the first LAW (starting at A on the map); if they wait for the steward, there will already be three LAWs set up, and the Reverend will be hidden from view by the gas cells (at B on the map).

In any case, once the PCs enter the envelope they are engaged in a gunfight with the Reverend. It’s dark in here — not totally, since some light shines through the fabric, but enough to give a -5 penalty.

Shooting through a gasbag or the envelope has no detrimental effect — it takes a really large rip in a gasbag to vent enough helium to sink the ship. But that’s exactly what the Reverend is trying to do. He’ll try to complete setting up the LAWs — a five-second process per LAW that involves strapping it to a railing and setting the timer. Each LAW is aimed up into the envelope and, when detonated, will rip open several helium bags. The Reverend’s priorities are to set up the LAWs, to escape and to shoot the PCs. If things look hopeless (especially if he gets wounded), he’ll abandon the rest of the LAWs and continue with the rest of the plan.

The Dependent Attacks

Once Wright leaves the envelope, he goes down into the steward’s compartment. The floor hatch to the cockpit is locked by now — standard emergency practice — but the Dependent has a shaped charge that will take out the hatch. Wright lets her into the compartment and sets her to work; if Wright is dead or otherwise not available, she’ll shoot out the lock to the steward’s cabin and *then* start to work.

If the PCs try to interfere, Wright will hold them at bay; if he can’t, then the

Dependent will take shots at them while setting up the charge. In five seconds, everything is set up to blow, and she triggers the bomb.

The concussion stuns both the pilot and copilot, giving her time to drop down and shoot them both. Again, if there is interference, Wright will handle it.

And during the confusion and gunplay, the Dependent’s disguise falls apart (at the most dramatically



Continuing the Adventure

Recovering the Nuke.

If anyone but the PCs stole the nuclear bomb, then *someone* will have to recover it. If the PCs are cleared of the crime, the Rangers will lead the hunt — but if they’re looking for the PCs, the characters had better find a nuclear device to give the Rangers!

This is especially good adventure material if the bandits stole the bomb, and the Reverend got away. To clear themselves, the PCs will have to raid the Reverend’s secret base (see below) and deal with the pirates and bandits of the Gulf Coast!

Raiding the Base

Research (before or after the adventure) will reveal that St. Stephen’s Oil owns an offshore oil platform in addition to the Atoka Chemical Company. If Reverend Wright escapes, that’s where he’d most likely go — and in any case, that looks like the best source for proof of the PCs’ tale. So to clear their names they’ll have to attack one of the most well-defended corporate possessions on Earth, an offshore derrick.

Frontal assault by any group of PCs is suicidal. They’ll have to hire mercenaries or bribe pirates to help them if they want a straightforward military confrontation. Stealth and guile is an option — the PCs could disguise themselves as new workers, or they could hijack one of the supply ships and sneak aboard the platform.

Mardi Gras Madness

If the PCs fail to stop the dispersal of the Religex, then they’ll have to stop the broadcasts of Reverend Wright’s commercials. In most cases, the only way will be to break into the radio or TV station and physically stop the broadcasts, though perhaps the PCs will find a sympathetic station manager or two.

appropriate moment, of course). If the PCs haven't realized her identity yet, they do so now.

Into the Drink

As soon as either Wright or the Dependent gain the controls, they'll pilot the airship straight toward the New Orleans Reservoir, the water supply for the entire city! The PCs have to make DX rolls to maintain their footing on the steeply sloping decks, and they have less than a minute to regain the controls somehow and pull the airship up out of its dive.

As if that weren't enough to worry about, if there are any LAWs set up in the envelope, they detonate just as the PCs get control of the airship. The LAW rockets are set to fire straight up through the closest packed portions of the gas cells, rupturing most of the cells in the front half of the airship. Once again the ship plows downward, this time with no hope of stopping. (If less than six LAWs were set up, roll one die: On a result *equal to or less than* the number of LAWs successfully placed, the airship crashes anyway! Otherwise, the explosions have no immediate effect.)

Finally, assuming the PCs gain control of the ship and have deactivated the LAWs, they have only a few minutes to get the ship away from the Reservoir before the shaped charges in the bottoms of the oil drums detonate, shooting several tons of Religex out through the bottom of the airship. If the water supply of New Orleans is contaminated with the Religex, the city will soon fall victim to the evil designs of Reverend Wright . . . maybe.

Conclusion

Total Success — Wright Captured, Airship Saved

The PCs land the airship and escort Wright to the authorities. With Wright's presence, the traces of the chemical in the airship, and evidence that can be gained by a police raid on Wright's tent meeting (already set up in town), the PCs will be cleared. The Dependent's fanaticism wears off after a few days without dosage, and she soon returns to her old self.

Partial Success — Wright Captured, Airship Wrecked

The Religex dosage in the water puts everyone on edge for several days, and there are numerous reports of odd occurrences. But with Wright in custody the authorities are able to shut down the catalyst broadcasts, thus preventing widespread conversion.

Pyrrhic Success — Wright Escapes, Airship Saved

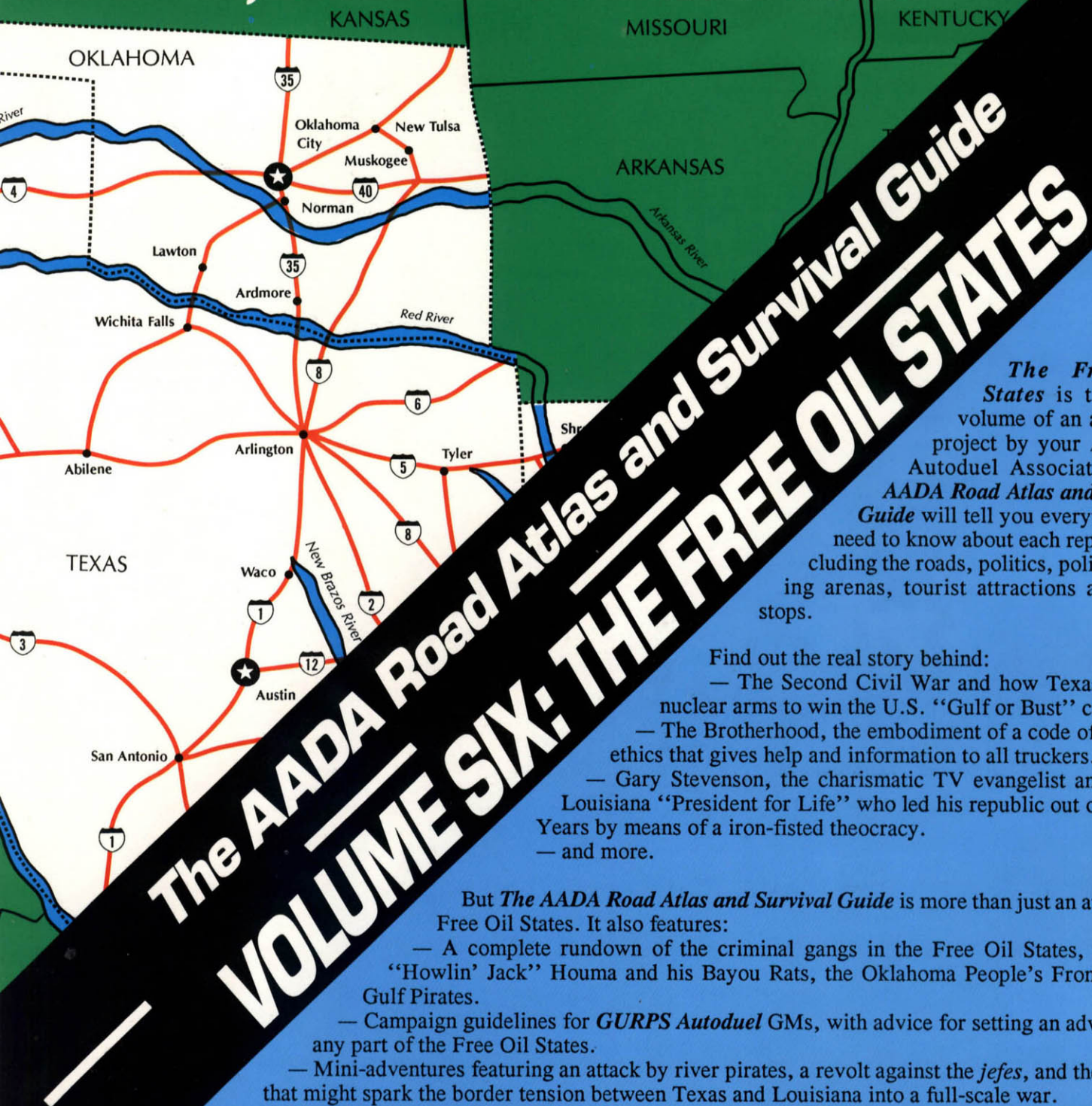
Only the PCs themselves know how they saved New Orleans from a fate worse than the Food Riots. The characters are incarcerated and interrogated; they'll probably be in prison for many, many years.

Total Disaster — Wright Escapes, Airship Wrecked

Bad news and good news. The bad news is that nearly every citizen of New Orleans becomes a willing slave of Reverend Wright. Soon the New Orleans chemical plants are producing tons of Religex per day, and Baton Rouge is the next stop on Wright's road to glory. The good news, though, is that in the confusion the PCs have a chance to escape, change identities and evade the Rangers' wrath. (Of course, they'd be well advised not to flee to, say, Baton Rouge, but oh well . . .)



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