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By Kevin Siembieda



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The Vanguard™



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A Rifts® Adventure Sourcebook: *The Vanguard*™
The Chi-Town 'Burbs, Firetown & the Coalition States

Dedication

To Apollo Okamura and Freddie Williams, a pair of fine artists who seem to get better with every job they turn in, and two of Palladium's unsung heroes. They never miss a deadline, accept rush deadlines and their artwork still looks fantastic. Thanks guys, I'm glad to have you on our team.

— Kevin Siembieda, 2003

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The cover is by *Freddie Williams II* and his long time pal, *Dan Scott*. The illustration of a wizard crackling with magic energy was originally done for the second set of booster cards of the ill-fated *Rifts® Collectable Card Game*. The second set of cards never saw print, so this is the first time the artwork has seen publication.

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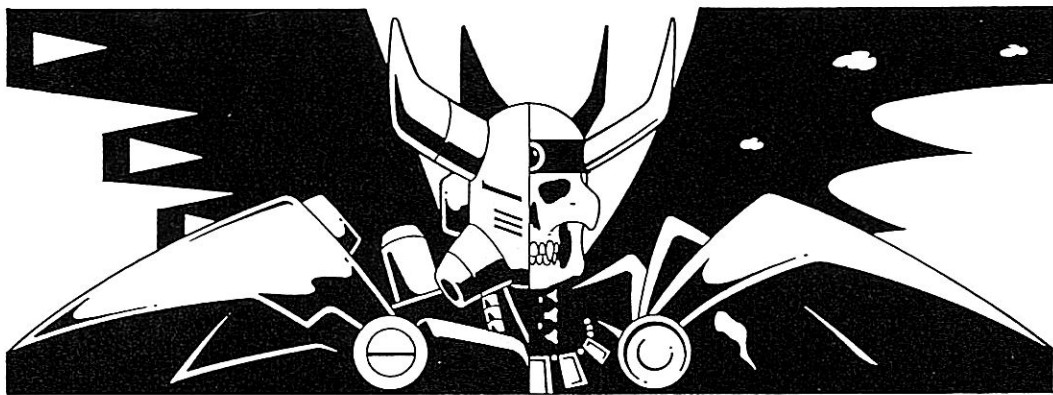
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RIFTS®

Chi-Town 'Burbs™

Rifts® Adventure Sourcebook: The Vanguard™

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– *Kevin Siembieda, 2003*

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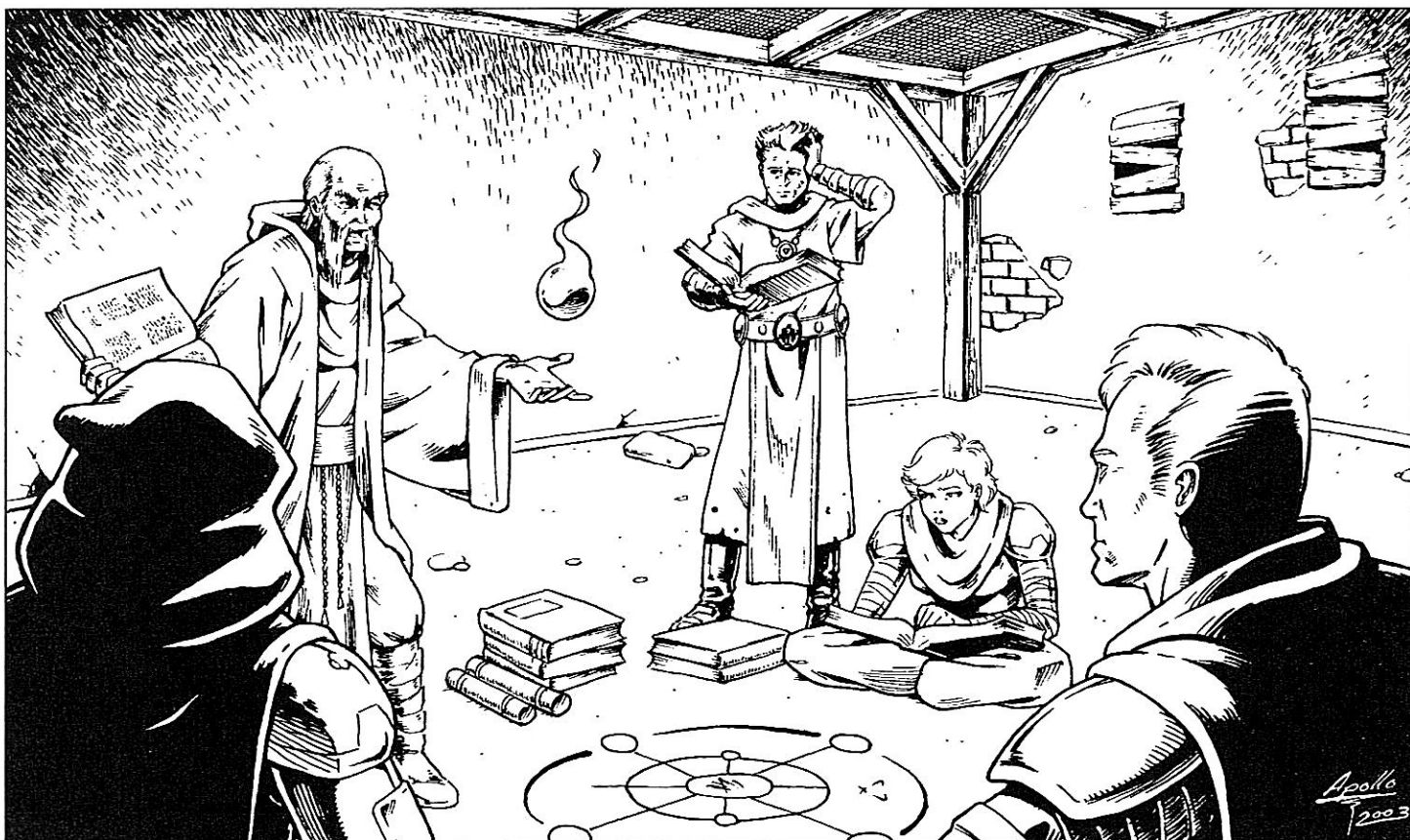
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The Birth of the Vanguard

The Vanguard were practitioners of magic sponsored and sanctioned by the Chi-Town government. Their origin dates back to around 6 P.A., six years before the *Bloody Campaign*, and before Chi-Town forever banned the use of magic on Coalition soil. It was a time when Chi-Town was a young and powerful city-state, and inquisitive minds asked the question: "Could magic have its use within human society?" Of course, the use of magic would have been (and was) strictly controlled and monitored by the Chi-Town government. The members of **Project Vanguard** – so named because they were the first to study magic in the name of science – were among the most steadfast loyalists and human supremacists from within the budding Coalition States. Most were patriots who had fought alongside Joseph Prosek the First and other heroes of Chi-Town to stop incursions by men and creatures of magic for years. They knew, first hand, the terrible, destructive power magic was capable of unleashing, but also pondered the limitless marvels that could be had if magic could be harnessed for the betterment of humankind. These patriots volunteered to explore the constructive possibilities, for they knew that no outsider could be completely trusted, and they needed to look at magic through the eyes of the burgeoning nation that would become known as the Coalition States. Thus, they understood going into the project that should things go wrong or take a turn for the worse, their very existence would be disavowed, purged from the pages of history, and they would be cast out into the hostile world. As fate would have it, Project Vanguard would suffer such an ignoble end.

Two great powers had risen up during the last few decades of the Dark Age to stand head and shoulders above the hundreds of tiny kingdoms that managed to survive two hundred years of savagery and chaos in North America. One was the city-state of *Chi-Town*, the other the *Federation of Magic*. Where Chi-Town had adopted and adapted pre-Rifts technology and science, the Federation rose up in the Ohio Valley, better known as the *Magic Zone*, as a nation of magic. Its size and scope paralleled that of Chi-Town, and both promised to be new bastions of human society. The Federation of Magic, however, embraced nonhumans as well as magic, two elements that made the people of Chi-Town uncomfortable. The residents of Chi-Town had a long tortured history dealing with magic and nonhumans going back to the days of old Chicago and the Great Cataclysm. Though facts about the first hundred and fifty years after the Great Cataclysm were lost, folklore and myths survived to tell of demon plagues, D-Bee invasions, and repeated treachery and betrayal by users of magic. It was these events that would turn Chi-Town into a fortress city closed to nonhumans and practitioners of magic. Yet, despite their history, magic was not officially banned, and limited trade existed between Chi-Town and the Federation of Magic for generations. Chi-Town, however, desired to keep their contact with the Federation of Magic and other outlying communities of magic and nonhumans very limited and worked to keep relations at arm's length. This angered the Federation who felt slighted.

The Federation of Magic had existed for decades but had, in just the last generation, galvanized and grown into a respectable and cohesive power (some would say, "super-power").

A turn of events that made them cocky and hungry for more power. Its leaders and people felt they were the new heirs appar-

ent of the old American Empire, a new nation that would carry the Americas back to new heights of greatness. The fact that the isolationists of Chi-Town rebuked their overtures and the human leaders were visibly repulsed and shaken by having to deal with the inhuman members of the Federation bothered the rulers of the magic kingdom immensely. Soon word circulated throughout the Federation that the people of Chi-Town thought they were better than they, and looked down upon them. Tensions grew with each new polite rejection from Chi-Town, and armed conflict erupted when the Federation claimed land to build new colonies on Chi-Town's doorstep. Ironically, Chi-Town was the insecure pacifist nation and the Federation, full of its own short-lived and shaky success, the aggressor. The leaders of the Federation of Magic saw their nation as "the" power in North America, and snobbish Chi-Town an annoying obstacle to be conquered and assimilated.

Full of themselves, the Federation tested the waters with several incursions against the human city-state. When the people of Chi-Town exhibited fear and abhorrence of magic, the Federation misinterpreted their reaction as weakness, and decided the soft city-dwellers would surrender in short order when bombarded by magic and faced with monstrous invaders. Knowing nothing about Chi-Town's past and confident the people had no will to fight against magic, the Federation launched a sneak attack against the human community without provocation or formal declaration of war. Many lives were lost on both sides. The invaders from the south soon discovered, however, that Chi-Town's defenses were much stronger than they had realized, its army much more experienced than they had expected, and neither its defenders nor the people crumbled when magic and monsters were leveled against them.

The attack on Chi-Town had been ill-conceived from the beginning. Supremely confident in their own abilities and the softness of their opponent, the leaders of the Federation forces had based their plans on the assumption the enemy would surrender almost immediately. Virtually no intelligence had been done to accurately measure the strength or depth of Chi-Town's army or the fortress city's defenses. Nor did the Federation leaders know the full magnitude of technological resources at the peaceful city-state's disposal. So confident that the people of Chi-Town would fold against the (not so) superior forces of the Federation and (not so) terrifying specter of magic, the invaders were not prepared for strong resistance or a protracted military campaign. When Chi-Town did not fall in a matter of days, the tide of the battle turned in favor of the human stronghold and the invading sorcerers were driven back.

Thousands had perished in both armies and thousands more suffered injury. The surprise attack on Chi-Town seemed to validate all of the city-state's worst fears and apprehensions about the Federation of Magic, and magic and D-Bees in general. Boiling with righteous indignation and eager for payback, a young General rose up from the ranks to take charge. He pointed to their attackers' arrogance and lack of preparation, and in a bold move of his own, speculated that if Chi-Town forces acted swiftly and decisively, he could crush the retreating Federation army before they crossed the border back to their homeland. Acting on outrage and a knee-jerk lust for revenge, that General was given command of the army to make the Federation "pay for their treachery." The General was *Joseph Prosek*

the First, and the war of retribution he'd wage would become forever known as the **Bloody Campaign of 12 P.A.**

True to his word, General Joseph Prosek the First found the Federation Army unprepared for his brutal counterattack and it fell like chaff before a whirling tornado. Bolstered by his quick, easy victory against the fleeing army, Prosek carried his campaign into the Magic Zone. A combination of true military genius, the element of surprise and a little luck helped General Joseph Prosek catch the Federation of Magic sleeping. The General had turned the table on them, for they were expecting the triumphant return of a victorious Federation Army, not the army of the Chi-Town Defensive League thundering into their midst like an angry hurricane. General Prosek's cunning strategies and tactics ripped the fledgling nation to shreds, for here again, the foundation of the Federation of Magic was not as strong as all had believed. The nation had been formed from a thousand splintered factions, held together by one strong leader and a shared dream of power and greatness. When their army was decimated and their dream crushed, it was the nation of magic that shattered, crumbling back into a thousand discontented fragments.

The end for the Vanguard came a year after the infamous **Bloody Campaign**. The pervasive sentiment of Chi-Town's leaders was that magic was much too dangerous to be allowed even in a controlled environment. Even the Vanguard had to admit that a fundamental problem with magic was that a single person could wield incredible power, and if that individual turned bad, he could cause tremendous damage before brought to an end. The new hero of Chi-Town, General Joseph Prosek, and others riding on his coattails spoke of even greater horrors and surreal feats of magic witnessed during their **Bloody Campaign**, convincing them that Chi-Town needed to purge itself of magic and make a massive push towards industrialization and military buildup. The people agreed in a landside vote of support.

What transpired next has never made it to the history books and has been forgotten by Chi-Town's inhabitants. Practitioners and supporters of magic were quietly and peacefully, rounded up and asked to leave – the unspoken part of the operation, *or else*. Though this velvet covered strong-arm tactic may sound heartless, it was exercised with compassion and kindness. First, the number of people practicing magic at Chi-Town was minuscule, less than a third of one percent of the total population. Second, most citizens, even those who were pro-magic, could, in the wake of the Federation's surprise attack, understand the government's decision, so most left willingly and peacefully. (What happened to those who refused is unknown, but it probably wasn't pretty.) Third, proponents of magic were not harassed, and were allowed to take all of their possessions with them. Some were even given government assistance.

As for the Vanguard, they were given a choice, they could subject themselves to "reconditioning" at the hands of psychics who would reshape their minds and erase their knowledge of magic, or leave Chi-Town forever. Rather than have their minds altered, most chose to leave their beloved city. They knew the risk when they took the assignment, and, as super-patriots, packed up and left without so much as whimper in protest. All were given medals for their patriotism (by none other than General Joseph Prosek the First). They were also given a 100,000

credit stipend as a sort of severance pay and reward for their sacrifice in the face of patriotic duty, and received additional assistance to make their exile as smooth a transition as possible. Some left their families behind, feeling it was unfair to subject their loved ones to the uncertainties of life outside the fortress city. Others left with their family in tow. While it may be hard to believe looking back at it all from a 109 P.A. perspective, and the legacy of the Prosek regime at its zenith, the men and women of volunteer group Project Vanguard were regarded as brave and nobles heroes back then, pioneers who got caught in the changing times. As a result, they were treated with respect and kindness. One must also realize that this was a more paranoid but kinder, gentler time, and Chi-Town was ruled by a different administration. The Coalition States would not officially form for another 20 years. Much would change between then and now, especially after the Prosek family got a stranglehold on the seat of government. Even back in 13 P.A., however, the government decided it best if the project, the people and everything associated with them were expunged, wiped from government records and left out of the history books.

The Vanguard

Secret Protectors of the Coalition States

The volunteers of *Project Vanguard* understood the government's course of action, and many agreed with it wholeheartedly. In the grand scheme of things, they saw it all for the best. However, many of the Vanguard were of the personal opinion

that magic *could* be used for the betterment of humankind. Patriots in exile, a large number of the Vanguard (not all) chose to live in the communities springing up around their beloved Chi-Town known as the 'Burbs. They also elected to keep Project Vanguard going on their own. At first, this was strictly a scientific study, but the rugged life in the 'Burbs quickly changed that, as members of the Vanguard soon found themselves using magic to help fellow humans. Since Project Vanguard was a top secret operation to begin with, no one outside of the Chi-Town government knew about the operation or their abilities in spell casting. To the 'Burbies, these people were refugees, society's cast-offs and the homeless, just like them. This put the Vanguard right in the middle of 'Burb society on equal footing with everyone else. Actually, they had an edge, because the members of Vanguard had a small fortune, compared to the typical refugee, with which to start a business or buy a nice home. Many Vanguard were able to become important people within the community, and a number helped form what is known today as the *Old Town 'Burbs*.

Keeping close tabs on Chi-Town politics and with connections "inside" the fortress city, the Vanguard were kept very well informed. As "regular folks" in the 'Burbs, they soon found themselves privy to local 'Burb gossip and knowledge of underworld operations taking place around them. As regular folk, people would freely share their feelings about Chi-Town, the government, changing times, magic, D-Bees and politics. The many Vanguard who started businesses were even more privy to rumors, gossip and grumbling about Chi-Town as well as rumblings about people and events away from Chi-Town that might threaten or have an adverse effect on their beloved nation.



At first, the Vanguard tried to pass information and concerns to officials inside the city, but as time passed, security tightened and old contacts faded. It was only a few years after their exile that the Project Vanguard participants decided to change the parameters of the organization. The time for studying magic, they decided, had come to an end. It was now time to put the very concept of Project Vanguard to the test: to use magic for the betterment of humankind, specifically the defense and support of Chi-Town. From their unique position inside the 'Burbs, they could gather information innocently revealed to them on the street and through the normal course of business, and use it to defend and promote the well-being and growth of Chi-Town. Thus, the Vanguard turned themselves into an ultra-secret society within the 'Burbs, its members becoming ever more active in taking a direct hand in the defense of their birthplace. Soon, the Vanguard found themselves using magic to undermine and assassinate fellow practitioners of magic, mercenaries, raiders, monsters and agents from rival kingdoms who plotted ways to exploit or undermine Chi-Town out of fear, hate or jealousy.

When General Prosek became Chairman-Elect, tensions around the growing nation of humans intensified. New enemies like Tolkeen and Lazlo were identified, and more D-Bees and rogue kingdoms seemed to turn fearful and hateful eyes toward Chi-Town. That escalated again with the formation of the Coalition States in 33 P.A. By this time, the Vanguard organization was well established. The children of the original Vanguard, and occasional like-minded members carefully recruited from outside the original group, were raised within the secret society, taught magic and given the mission of perpetuating their forefathers' work. Many of the original group members served as leaders, counselors and statesmen for generations, while others remained active in the field as cell leaders. Advances in medicine would extend life spans so that many of the founding members lived to see Karl Prosek take over and carry the CS to new heights of greatness. The last Vanguard founder died in 72 P.A., leaving the second and third generations in charge and the fourth and fifth generations rising to the new challenges of changing times.

The Coalition way is the only way

The Coalition States and the Prosek regime, particularly under Emperor Karl Prosek, changed Chi-Town from an open society tolerant of magic into one driven by fear to destroy those different than they. Whipped into a near-frenzy about the evils of magic and inhumanity, the Coalition leadership sees festering evil forever on the verge of breaking out and assaulting Chi-Town and the rest of the Coalition States. The Vanguard share this apocalyptic viewpoint and never stop looking for harbingers of doom so they may eradicate them before they can take hold. They are also equally fanatical human supremacists and obsessed with protecting Chi-Town and the Coalition States from practitioners of magic and the supernatural, in particular, and all other anti-Coalition forces in general. The Vanguard culture is a mirror of the Coalition States in every way except one, they are willing to use of certain types of magic. To them, magic is not a corrupting force. Rather, it is just another tool for humanity to use to drive out the monsters, aliens and enemies who threaten the Coalition States. It is this departure from the CS mandate that compels them to fight in secret, as wolves in

sheep's clothing, quietly undermining agents of the Federation of Magic and other CS hate groups who use magic and/or draw upon supernatural forces.

The Coalition & the Vanguard

Though the Vanguard often fights on behalf of the CS and is known to feed information, clues and warnings to members of the Coalition military and police in the 'Burbs, it has *never* had any direct ties or official affiliation to the Coalition States, its government, military or law enforcement officers. The Coalition States has no record of the Vanguard whatsoever, and even top military officials, ISS officers and historians don't believe the group has ever really existed. Most consider tales about the group to be nothing more than folklore and fiction – 'Burbie fairytales and bogeymen to frighten those who speak against the CS.

Coalition Intelligence has volumes of whispered reports and wild stories about demented mages who use magic to defend the Coalition in a secret war of their own. They have even heard the name, "The Vanguard," and rumors that the origin of these madmen goes back to the old Chi-Town magic division, but they don't believe a word, ignore new reports of alleged Vanguard crimes, and seldom investigate anything having to do with the Vanguard. They truly believe the Vanguard is an urban myth born in the 'Burbs, and that any incident where a practitioner of magic may "seem" to have helped Coalition authorities has more to do with treachery from within their own vile ranks of evil sorcerers or rival factions than any secret society fighting for the CS. The very notion is preposterous. If it's true, it illustrates (to the Coalition's thinking) how crazy these deviant mages must be, and they would not be regarded as heroes or allies. It matters not that these sorcerers *supposedly* continue to fight and die in the defense of the CS and everything they hold dear. These "Vanguard" are madmen corrupted by magic who have broken their covenant with the government and its people when they refused to give up the mystic arts. Thus, they are not enlightened, but misguided. They are not "super-patriots," but demented misanthropes. Probably pawns of supernatural forces beyond their comprehension. This means even if the Vanguard made itself known to the CS, their help would NEVER be accepted, and Coalition troops would gun them down where they stood, just as they would any sorcerer, human or not. Thus, the Coalition's secret benefactors suffer the nation's prejudice and injustice along with all practitioners of magic.

On the streets of the 'Burbs, however, stories about the Vanguard (real, exaggerated and imagined) are constantly circulating, but none can ever be proved. The Vanguard is like an urban legend or the flying saucers of 20th Century Earth. Most people have heard the stories, some claim to be eyewitnesses, even credible eyewitnesses, but nobody can prove they are real. What physical evidence exists is questionable at best, and supposed eyewitness accounts often contradict each other. Conspiracy theorists and those who claim to have fallen victim to the mysterious Vanguard believe they exist, but proof is not there. As bogeymen of myth and legend, the Vanguard are often credited or blamed for strange occurrences and acts of violence and murder the group is not responsible for, and when the real culprits are found, the fact that they are not Vanguard only casts more ques-



tions and creates disbelief that the Vanguard are anything but pure figments of the imagination, a quaint Chi-Town 'Burbs tradition of fictional lore. The 'Burbs are, after all, known to be a dangerous place filled with transients who come and go on a daily basis. Many newcomers, refugees, mercenaries, adventurers and spies stay for awhile and leave, often without a trace or ever being seen again. It doesn't mean there is a secret magic society sending them to an early grave. But some people can't help noticing that sorcerers, Tolkien Retribution Squads, agents of the Federation and those known to be plotting against the Coalition States, its military or its government have a nasty habit of vanishing or dying under mysterious circumstances, especially over the last five or six years since the Siege on Tolkien began. Practitioners of magic, spies, mercs and adventurers who suffer through an unusual string of mishaps or bad luck may also point at a shadow and wonder if they are being hampered by an outside force like the Vanguard.

The one who knows. Only the Director of Propaganda for the Coalition States at Chi-Town knows about the original Project Vanguard. All other departments and leaders, even the Emperor, himself, know only of the legend and dismiss it as nonsense. More than knowing the origins, he actually has the names of all the original participants in the Project, pulled from some dank file cabinet buried in the old Chi-Town Library, and discovered long after the CS seized its contents and faked the library's fiery destruction. Ironically, this data sat buried and unnoticed for decades, it was only by chance it made its way into the Director's hands. Over the last seven years, the Director of Propaganda has tracked down all but a half dozen of the original families, in addition to gathering a large file on each and every one of them as well as reports and circumstantial evidence about Vanguard activity since about 67 P.A. to present. That man, of course, is *Colonel Joseph Prosek the Second*, son of the Emperor, grandson and namesake of the legendary Joseph Prosek the First. A man who some say is more dangerous than his father, and twice as treacherous.

Learning about the Vanguard has been a pet project of Joseph's since he first heard the legends during his teens. Since unearthing the ancient document, he has gone out into the 'Burbs, disguised and alone, to follow leads and has no doubt the Vanguard is real. He even believes he has identified six active cells, their leaders and seconds in command. Personally, he finds the Vanguard to be a wonderful organization and applauds their patriotism and obsessive devotion to Chi-Town, his family and the Coalition States. He would never officially reinstate them into the Coalition States – the magic powers they wield make them too dangerous and unpredictable – but he is certain there must be some way he can use them for his own gain.

For now, he keeps a watchful eye on them through standard 'Burb patrols and their reports; sometimes in person. In fact, Joseph the Second has bumped shoulders with a dozen of the Vanguard, literally passing them, unnoticed, on the street or in a place of business. He has even treated himself to making contact with one Vanguard Espionage Agent who he believes is highly placed in the society by pretending to be a Coalition double-agent. To the outside world he is a Headhunter known as *Mitch the Snake*, but he has leaked information to his Vanguard contacts that he is really *Captain Joseph Karls*, undercover agent in the Intelligence Division of the Coalition Army. His mission, the same as the Vanguard's, to identify sorcerers, monsters and rebels plotting against Chi-Town and the Coalition States. Since he and the Vanguard serve the same purpose, they have been watching each other's backs and carefully exchanging information (often in the form of an unmarked letter or warning through a third party pawn). Joseph has also arranged for military, police and covert CS operations to give the known Vanguard operatives and safe houses a wide berth, while coordinating CS military efforts with the Vanguard efforts he knows about, to indirectly support Vanguard operations and protect its members. It is a strange, secret alliance to be sure, and a dangerous game for Joseph the Second. Dangerous because he, heir to the throne, is putting himself at great risk. Unknown to his father,

ther or Military Intelligence, he regularly goes into a hostile 'Burb environment, unescorted. A wolf in sheep's clothing walking among those who would give anything to get a crack at capturing or killing Joseph Prosek II. So far he has proven he can handle himself and his alter ego, Capt. Joseph Karls has his share of Vanguard guardian angels, but he is still in jeopardy.

Should the Vanguard ever discover his true identity (and right now they don't have a clue), they will be honored beyond belief, and not in the least surprised that the son of the great Emperor would be the only one to pierce their veil of secrecy in nearly 100 years.

Meanwhile, the Vanguard operates without sanction from the Emperor or any member of the CS government. If captured, a member of the Vanguard will be assumed to be a magic wielding rebel or trouble making outsider, punished accordingly, and probably killed as readily as any sorcerer or D-Bee. Their secret war means nothing to the CS authorities, who regard all practitioners of magic as trouble if not an outright enemy. To most Coalition soldiers, a Vanguard is just another nameless sorcerer better dead than alive. Consequently, members of the Vanguard must be afraid of Coalition soldiers and peacekeepers, who don't know anything about their secret crusade to protect them and Chi-Town from evil. The fallout from the War on Tolkeen, however, has prompted the Coalition authorities to place the Vanguard on the bottom of the Coalition's bounty list, just in case they really do exist and really do fight on the behalf of the CS. However, hardly anyone takes a bounty on an urban myth serious in the first place, and the bounty is ridiculously small, hardly worth any adventurer or man-hunter's time and trouble to try to find a Vanguard (Joseph Prosek II has made sure of that).

The Vanguard, Today

— circa 109 P.A.

"We are brothers in arms locked in a secret war that has waged for five generations.

"We are the ghosts of the fallen, the shadows of justice, and hope for the future.

"We are retribution and justice for some, the specters of doom for those who would tear down human society.

"We fight and die in anonymity, but seek not glory or reward, only the satisfaction of knowing we serve a greater purpose, and that our spilt blood means the innocent were saved.

"We are the Vanguard, the first, the secret, the heroes who use the mysteries of magic to defend our enlightened brethren who choose to live without it.

"We are the Vanguard, first line of defense against the enemies of man.

"We are the Vanguard, secret protectors of Chi-Town and defenders of the Coalition States.

"So it has been for generations, so it shall ever be."

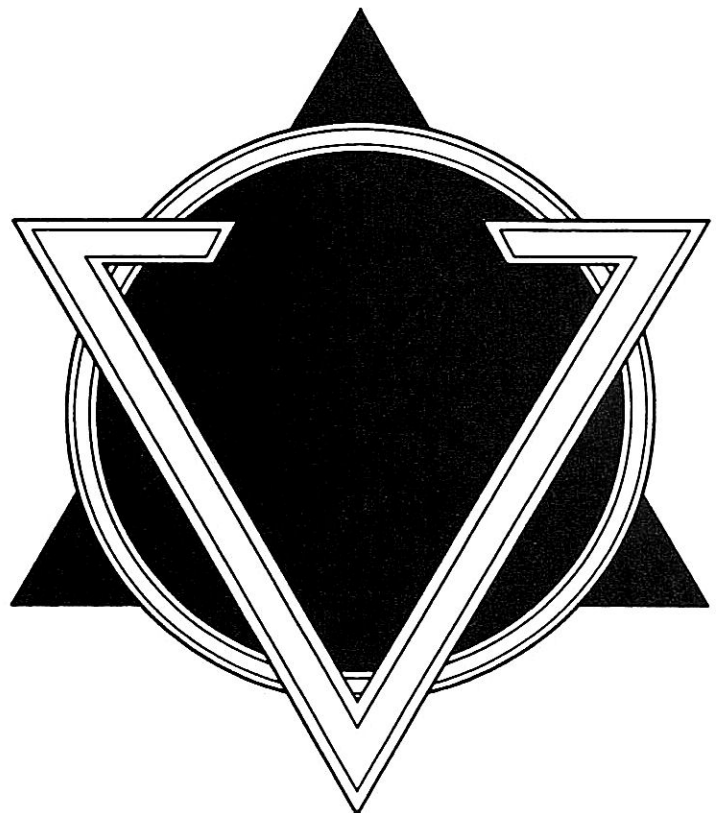
— The Creed of the Vanguard

Today, the Vanguard is a seasoned organization, secretly entrenched within every level of 'Burb society, from Shanty Towns and the criminal underworld to the Old Towns. Their hidden agenda is simple and straightforward, to identify threats to the Coalition States in general and Chi-Town specifically, to determine the immediacy of the threat and to respond appropriately.

Chi-Town & the Enemy

These pro-Coalition mages disapprove of all nations and gatherings of sorcerers and psychics. They see them as havens for excessive fraternization with inhuman and, presumably, evil aliens who are not welcome to this world. Numerous Vanguard members have infiltrated these communities, including the despised Federation of Magic, other places in the Magic Zone, Lazlo, New Lazlo and Whykin, but their presence is felt most in the Chi-Town 'Burbs which serve as their base camp and portal to the world.

The Chi-Town 'Burbs are so large, sprawling and inviting to adventurers, mercenaries, D-Bees, sorcerers, and anti-Coalition opposition, that they draw the enemy right to their door step. Once an enemy is identified, he can be observed, followed, tricked, cheated, robbed, brought to Coalition attention or slain. Being so invisibly integrated into every facet of Chi-Town society, there are Vanguard hidden almost everywhere. The sorcerer healer, the friendly shop owner, the lovely barmaid, the vagabond begging for food, a thief or adventurer or person walking by could all be Vanguard. Agents of the Coalition ever vigilant for enemies of the States. Furthermore, the 'Burbs being the rumor and gossip mill that it is, word of powerful or ominous new strangers, or someone looking to buy or sell magic, spreads like wildfire and inevitably reaches the well heeled ear of a Van-



guard or one of his many informants. Best of all, since the 'Burbs are a lawless no-man's zone where the authorities hate practitioners of magic and D-Bees, anything goes, and the Vanguard can strike without much fear of a thorough investigation or repercussions from the authorities.

Coalition Dissidents. The members of any anti-Coalition movement always get the attention of the Vanguard. The group has become skilled at figuring out who is nothing more than a loudmouth or just venting anger, and who represents a genuine threat or an agent of a terrorist outfit or enemy nation.

The Forces of Darkness. Supernatural beings, especially those who like to create dissension and provoke chaos and war, are always a danger.

Creatures and Practitioners of Magic. The fall of Tolkeen has left many practitioners and supporters of magic without a home or afraid they will fall next. Other nations and powers are repositioning themselves, and hundreds of thousands of refugees and disenfranchised Tolkeen warriors are on the move. Many make their way to the Chi-Town 'Burbs, seeking supplies, transportation or just passing through. Some choose to live in the shadow of the fortress city of Chi-Town to keep their hatred burning and wait for an opportunity to strike back. Others seek to join new opposition forces, and others look for their own brand of revenge. The least fortunate simply have no place else to go. All represent a threat to CS security and potential new recruits for those who can appeal to their suffering and offer relief by way of revenge.

Other sorcerers, dragons and creatures of magic come to the 'Burbs seeking opportunities in the fallout of war. Opportunities to acquire wealth, magic items, favor among other groups, or revenge against the CS for reasons of their own. Others are curious or adventurers who happen to be in the area at this time. All are wild cards that could turn against the CS at any time.

The Dragon Kings and other inhuman beings of Tolkeen seek revenge against the nation that destroyed their home and sent them fleeing. The Dragon Kings don't like being embarrassed, and some among them seek to even the score. Others seek different opportunities but won't hesitate to give the CS a few licks when they get the chance.

The Minions of Splugorth. An unknown quantity that represents everything the CS fears, an independent, powerhouse nation of aliens, monsters and sorcerers. With the fall of Tolkeen and a growing conflict along the eastern seaboard, the Splugorth and their minions have exhibited an increased presence on American soil. Tolkeen's fall has brought their minions in search of magical weaponry and the secrets of new magicks — things best kept out of their hands. The Vanguard also fear the Splugorth of Atlantis may be gearing up for an invasion of the North American continent, a development no one wants to see.

Tolkeen Sympathizers. The spectacular and devastating fall of the Kingdom of Tolkeen has sent shockwaves across the continent and stirred up new anti-Coalition hatred. Anger and bile that has compelled other groups and individuals who stayed out of the war to reconsider their position and take action against the CS themselves. In some cases they act out of guilt for not having joined in Tolkeen's defense. In other cases, they fear the Coalition, more than ever, and seek to bring it down. Others seek revenge for the loss of friends or loved ones, and even the ideal Tolkeen once represented, which were lost in the war. They

come to the Chi-Town 'Burbs seeking ways to strike at and bring down Chi-Town, Emperor Prosek or the Coalition States. They strike on small and large scales or seek to form new opposition forces to the CS. Whatever their agenda, the Vanguard is there to undermine and stop them.

Tolkeen Freedom Fighters, Monster Squads, Daemonix and Retribution Squads wish they could find any Vanguard and make them pay for their role in the Siege on Tolkeen. While they cannot prove the secret society is real, they know it as a fact. They have borne eyewitness to bands of sorcerers, often dressed in dark long coats, ambushing their fellow sorcerers and coming to the rescue of fallen Coalition troops. The insignia of "V" and the name "Vanguard" appeared repeatedly throughout the war, especially the days after the Sorcerers' Revenge. They have traced the name to, and have found the insignia in, the Chi-Town 'Burbs, and know the 'Burbs are either the Vanguard's home or a key front of operation. More than nameless Coalition soldiers, these vengeful Tolkeenites crave the blood of the Vanguard whom they regard as vile traitors to their own kind.

The Vanguard don't really care that these groups harbor such hatred for them. Other than making the Vanguard more careful, all Tolkeen forces are already on their list of Top Ten Enemies of the Coalition States (where Tolkeen currently holds onto the Number Two slot).

The Federation of Magic is, and always shall be, Enemy Number One. Not only is the Federation an ongoing threat, but the Vanguard have their own reasons for hating them. First and foremost is the fact that it was the Federation's attack on Chi-Town that would make the volunteers of Project Vanguard and their offspring persona non grata in the community — outcasts wiped from the pages of history and forgotten. Second, the Federation of Magic have a long history of conflict and treachery with the CS and the Vanguard, both. Third, the Federation is a malignancy that threatens humans and freedom everywhere on the continent. If they could do it, the Vanguard would exterminate the entire lot of them. Need we say more?

Ernst Vinien

The reported leader of the Vanguard is a mysterious figure named *Ernst Vinien*, a person who everybody in the Vanguard supposedly knows about, but nobody has ever actually met. Like major terrorist figures from the pre-Rifts era, a vast body of rumor and conjecture swirls around the man, making it impossible to learn what is true and what is not. The most common bits of information suggest that he was born on a farmstead north of Chi-Town, showed an early aptitude for magic, and joined the Chi-Town Defense League when he was only 14, back around 8 P.A. He served as a junior defender until he turned 18 and began his combat training and serious mystic studies. During the Bloody Campaign against the Federation of Magic, Vinien served with distinction, destroying several Federation automata himself, and rallying Chi-Town troops to victory at *the Battle of Blasted Pines*. Over the years, Vinien and his followers have waged several small wars on the Federation of Magic and Tolkeen, but he also has had his run-ins with Coalition patrols. It is said he remains the group's top commander to this day, and is reportedly coordinating all Vanguard actions in and around Chi-Town, participating in numerous operations himself.

If this story is true, then Vinien must be well over 112 years old. Technically, it is possible, especially if he has found some form of magic to extend his life, perhaps even to become immortal. This only inspires a greater number of rumors to circulate about “Vinien.”

The truth is Ernst Vinien is a red herring – he doesn’t exist, never has. It is a clever ploy by the true top guns within the Vanguard to send bounty hunters, spies and enemies in a futile search that wastes their time and resources and, more importantly, brings them out into the open. Anyone asking about *Ernst Vinien* is NOT a member of the Vanguard and is almost certainly an enemy of the secret society.



The Vanguard Organization

Most members of the secret society do not know more than a dozen comrades nor where everybody is located or what all the ongoing operations are. Only a couple top leaders know that information. This is done deliberately so if one person or group is discovered, he or she cannot be forced to identify the others even under torture and threat of death. The general knowledge is that the Vanguard’s presence in the Chi-Town ‘Burbs, especially since the collapse of Tolkeen, numbers over a thousand, possibly more. Another hundred or two are said to be divided between *Kingsdale*, *Lazlo*, *New Lazlo*, the *Federation of Magic* and the *Magic Zone*. Presumably, at least a small number of others are scattered to the four corners of the continent or even the world. Reliable estimates at present, however, place around 65% to 75% of the entire Vanguard in the ‘Burbs.

Five hundred troops break down into five 100-man *companies*. Each company breaks down into four 25-man *platoons*. Each platoon breaks down into five 5-man *squads*. For the most part, the Vanguard operates on the squad level, with all of these five-man groups setting their own agenda, periodically reporting their progress and intelligence to their superiors. Furthermore, most have identities within the ‘Burbs and/or the society of adventurers and mercenaries that frequent the ‘Burbs, and work on the covert level, never blowing their cover identity.

To maintain their secrecy, the Vanguard is organized into a *cell system*. This is a standard kind of hierarchy commonly used by criminal organizations and terrorists to prevent their operatives from knowing the identity of other operatives. The reason why the Vanguard chooses this structure is to prevent their enemies and victims from learning who all of the members are by capturing only one or a few of them. The Coalition, Federation of Magic, Tolkeen avengers and others would certainly torture a man to death to get secret information out of him, and eventually, the poor soul would almost certainly talk, revealing everybody and everything he knows. If torture failed, there’s the use of drugs, magic and psionics to pry loose information. The only true defense against this is *ignorance*, so the Vanguard choose to operate without knowing who most of their very brethren are.

The way a cell system works is in any given group, there is a single leader who reports to his superior in the next cell up. For example, each five-man squad has one commander in it who reports to a superior on the platoon level. That platoon-level operative reports to a single person on the company level, and so on. Any given operative will know who his or her fellow cell members are, but even then, operatives typically use aliases and keep their faces hidden as an additional security measure. Cells almost never conduct joint operations unless a truly extraordinary plan has been set into motion.

The good thing about this is that it keeps even leaders from knowing too many other operatives. Other than his platoon-level contact and the four squad members under him, a *squad leader* knows no other Vanguard members. The bad thing about this is that it is a vertically integrated chain of command. That is, the supreme ruler of the entire organization is also a leader on the company, platoon, and squad levels. Capture this one individual, and the spine of the whole organization is torn out in a single blow. It is the single greatest vulnerability to this form of hierarchy.

So far, the cell system has served the Vanguard well, as no one has come even close to figuring out who or where any given Vanguard member is. The Coalition suspects that if the Vanguard really exists, the group perpetuates itself by each member recruiting his or her oldest child, or children, into the order and training them personally. Although this theory has not been verified, considerable circumstantial evidence points to it as the only real explanation for how the Vanguard has kept itself going this long without its members actually meeting each other outside of their own cell.

Independents. There are also independent, lone operatives. Some are sleepers or sleeper families (effectively a squad), others are lone wolves allowed to go off on their own. They still have all the Vanguard beliefs and follow the usual mode of operations, but do so alone. Such loners are, as a rule, loosely associated to a cell, but act alone most of the time. The most

common Vanguard O.C.C.s to be loners are the VE Agent, Waylayer and Mystic Thief.

Modus Operandi

From the beginning, the Vanguard has been a small, secret army fighting a very large war. Even if all of the Vanguard's members were master mages (which they are not), they still could not assault an entire kingdom of magic-users or D-Bees and hope to win. The only alternative has always been for the Vanguard to adopt guerrilla tactics, fighting small-scale engagements, making surgical strikes at the heart and head of its enemies, and making the most out of what they have. Over the years, this kind of thinking has given rise to a series of general philosophies that all members of the Vanguard uphold. By studying these ideas, one gets to the heart of what it means to be one of them.

Know the Enemy. This is the prime directive of the Vanguard. The face of the enemy is myriad and ever changing, as are their tactics to weaken and undermine Earth's native sons. The soldier of humanity must beware, for everywhere he looks, everywhere he goes, the enemy is present. Earth is not humanity's safe haven any longer. It is a world of monsters and invaders. The Vanguard's (and Coalition's) task is to reclaim Earth for human civilization and keep them safe. Chi-Town and the Coalition States are the first two steps at making that dream a reality, at least in North America. The 'Burbs offer a great opportunity to identify the enemies of humanity, and strike down the most deadly or potentially dangerous as they are discovered, as well as providing a great buffer zone between the myriad enemy forces and the pinnacle of human society, Chi-Town.

Run Silent, Run Deep. The Vanguard has always held that the first, best way to destroy the enemy is to infiltrate it and strike from within. Many times, this requires extended contact with D-Bees, monsters, and sorcerers, perhaps establishing relationships with them, working alongside them, etc. According to Vanguard philosophy, it is only natural to want to befriend such folk after long enough exposure to them. So this is a test of one's resolve. When the time comes to strike, one must not hesitate and make no mistakes. The window of opportunity is what one has been waiting for, and it must not be squandered.

One Against All. The Vanguard believe that just as a single grain of sand can change the course of the ocean, so too can a single soldier inflict terrible damage or even destroy the whole of his enemy. This is what gives them the courage and strength to face overwhelming odds against them. In terms of day-to-day guerrilla operations, this means that any Vanguard can bring the largest or most powerful enemy to its knees. All one needs to do is know where, when and how to strike. It all comes back to knowing one's enemy (his weaknesses, strengths, goals and desires) and using that knowledge to strike where the blow will cut the deepest. This also means being prepared for battle, choosing one's fights wisely, and knowing when to retreat to fight another day. They also know that a crippling blow can be as devastating as a kill shot, and one battle does not win a war, but that each battle can weaken an opponent until he is whittled down and vanquished once and for all.

Fight Wisely. Successful guerrilla warfare is as much about knowing when to hold fire or run away as it is about ambushing

the enemy. Vanguard frequently act alone, in pairs or small groups with minimal weaponry and support. If one cannot realize that there are times when it is better to cut and run, or harass the enemy rather than kill, then his death is inevitable.

The Cause is Supreme. Those in the Vanguard support a cause outside themselves or the secret society to which they belong. They are held to the cause of eradicating all alien life from the face of the planet, and to that end, one must be prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice without thinking. Naturally, the Vanguard do not train their troops to be suicide bombers, but in every "war" there are casualties, and the Vanguard know that their day could come at any time. When that time comes, the guerrilla had better be at peace with it or else he'll get caught or killed without completing the job. That, more than anything, is the only reason for disgrace; failing a mission because one put his own fears, wants or life before the mission.

Be Patient. Vanguard often operate as "sleepers" who infiltrate enemy settlements and permeate civilian rosters where they live, work and wait weeks, months or even years for the perfect opportunity to strike. Sometimes, the greatest virtue for the underground fighter is patience. This does not always mesh with the over-activeness of the average field adventurer, who is more used to dodging energy beams than he is simply watching the days go by in anticipation of the arrival of his target. The best soldiers master both combat and patience.

Hands Off the Dead Boys. Vanguard warriors must always keep an eye out for Coalition presence, since these are the one group the Vanguard are instructed never to attack if it can be helped. It is a hard order to obey, since Vanguard may not fire upon Dead Boys, but Coalition soldiers *will* fire on Vanguard, who they see as another scum sucking sorcerer. As the Vanguard saying goes, "We're on the same side, but they haven't figured that out yet."

Stay the Course. The Vanguard see magic as a tool useful for preserving humanity's destiny. But there are many forms of magic, such as Witchery, Shifting, Necromancy and Elementalism that involve alien powers and can not be trusted. The Vanguard teaches its own to avoid these areas of mystic study and to stick only with those paths that are considered pure and clean.

Fight Fire with Fire. This is why they will not abandon the practice of magic, not even for their beloved Chi-Town or Emperor Prosek. The Vanguard feel one must fight the magical evildoers, D-Bees, dragons, monsters, demons and sorcerers with magic. Magic is often one's best defensive and offensive weapon against the supernatural and evil practitioners of magic mad with power. To reject magic is like asking Coalition soldiers to fight tooth and nail without their Dead Boy armor and precious technology. It's just plain crazy. Besides, magic is a tool like anything else. Use it wisely and it will serve one well.

Vanguard Home Front Operations

Although most of the Vanguard's operatives work alone or in small, autonomous groups, the organization at large currently shares certain strategic initiatives. These are designed to keep Chi-Town and the Coalition States safe from Tolkeen retribution, or aggression from any of the Coalition's enemies who might see the Coalition's weakened state after the war as a good time to strike.

The Vanguard usually operate as an irregular guerrilla force that does not adhere to the strict planning and organization of a standard Coalition military unit. Rather they are a covert and reactionary force who respond to threats of a demonic, supernatural and magical nature leveled at Chi-Town, Emperor Prosek, and the Coalition States, including innocent humans living in the 'Burbs.

Response consists of one of three actions: *Observation* (monitoring or infiltration), *sabotage* (undermining the danger to reduce or prevent the potential threat) or *neutralization* (covertly stopping the threat cold through assassination, murder, magic or whatever means necessary). The only condition to these operations is *never* compromise or confirm the existence of the Vanguard organization.

Common Vanguard Missions & Goals

Intelligence: Non-Humans. Identify and gather intelligence on all creatures of magic. Neutralize those who actively threaten CS interests.

Intelligence: Sorcerers. Identify and gather intelligence on all active practitioners of magic, particularly those who have taken up adventuring, causes contrary to Coalition interests and/or have affiliations with enemies of the CS, from known individual dissidents, anarchists, criminals, terrorist groups, cults, and gangs to enemy nations like the Federation of Magic, Lazlo, New Lazlo, Whykin, Colorado Baronies, Pecos Empire, Atlantis, etc. Sabotage and neutralize as necessary. **Note:** The Vanguard are uneasy about Lazlo despite its long peaceful history and staying out of the War on Tolkeen, as well as Free Quebec, even though it has been restored as an allied nation.

Neutralize. Identify and undermine or neutralize dissidents, terrorists, assassins and freedom fighters known to be actively plotting and working against the Coalition States or the Vanguard, as well as individuals and groups known to help, support, sympathize and fraternize with the enemy (i.e., fences and dealers who specialize in dealing with the Federation of Magic, the Splugorth, Tolkeen terror cells, etc.).

Liquidate. Identify and undermine or neutralize spies, foreign agents and the dangerously curious. The old saying, curiosity killed the cat, can certainly apply to Vanguard operations. Snooping around and asking about Emperor Prosek, military leaders, how to get into Chi-Town or circumvent Chi-Town security, as well as investigating the Vanguard or trying to hook up with known enemy forces, has a good chance of getting the snoop killed.

Defend Coalition Authorities (and citizens). Vanguard often shadow Coalition spies, military patrols and police to watch their backs especially when word on the street suggests there will be an attack on Coalition personnel. Whenever possible, the Vanguard will try to locate and prevent the attack by undermining or neutralizing the would-be assailants or terrorists. Otherwise, they respond to the attack, helping to rescue, heal and save Coalition personnel, CS citizens and innocent *human* bystanders caught in the attack. **Note:** Although the Vanguard have lived among D-Bees for generations, they still keep their distance and regard them as hostile and unwanted invaders to be, ultimately, driven out or destroyed.

Infiltrate. The Vanguard are masters in the art of espionage, subterfuge and infiltration. Most Vanguard can spin a cover story and present one or more false identities off the cuff, but they are also experts in deep undercover insertion – i.e., placing an agent in an enemy or suspicious organization (including adventurer groups). Deep insertion agents will have complete, verifiable identities (though they are false or fictitious) and live, sleep and breathe their alter ego flawlessly to get in good (and deep) within the organization. Once the false identity is established the Vanguard spy subtly learns all of the organization's secrets, strengths and weaknesses, as well as earns the trust of its leaders. While operating within the group, the infiltrator sneaks out vital information to his Vanguard cell, works to invisibly undermine the group from within and without (by having others act on the info he's provided or leaked) and, when the time is right, to destroy it, usually by targeting the group's leaders or resources. Vanguard currently masquerade as adventurers, mercenaries, criminals, Federation spies, anti-Coalition activists, Tolkeen revenge cells, foreign agents, and ordinary 'Burb citizens and are believed to have a few infiltrators deep within the Federation of Magic, Lazlo, New Lazlo, Kingsdale, the Colorado Baronies, the Pecos Empire, the Calgary Kingdom of Monsters, Northern Gun, Free Quebec, the Black Market and perhaps even inside Chi-Town or the Coalition army! The Vanguard Espionage Agent and Mystic Spy are the most likely candidates for deep insertion undercover jobs. It keeps them in the thick of things, so they know what the people and their leaders hope, plan, fear, and so on. It also enables small cells to mobilize quickly and respond to events unfolding in their neck of the woods. This is a tactic commonly employed by guerrilla forces and terrorists. It has worked for centuries before the Coming of the Rifts, and it continues to work today.

Investigate. The Vanguard place a high priority on observing and knowing their enemies. It is a tactic that has proven vital to their success and longevity.

Confiscate. The Vanguard survives by living off its enemies' property. Nowhere has that proved more true than in the battlefields of Tolkeen and the streets of the 'Burbs, where Vanguard operatives have stolen vast quantities of weapons, armor, supplies and goods to use in their own operations. The secret society also has a number of legitimate businesses to bankroll operations, as well as underworld resources. Taking away by stealing or destroying key weapons, magic items and equipment, as well as rescuing prisoners and kidnapping key personnel also comes part and parcel with *confiscation* of enemy resources (and, in so doing, may steal away morale and confidence as well).

Obfuscate. Misdirection and false intelligence are a superb way of getting one's enemy to allocate precious resources to unworthy causes. Against an enemy such as Tolkeen Revenge Squads, mercenary outfits, bounty hunters and adventurers, which must make every soldier and weapon count, pursuing non-existent enemies, rewards and goals, or preparing for attacks that will never happen, is a solid drain on their overall resources, time and credibility. This is the offensive side of the *investigate* strategy – find something out about the enemy and use it to delay, undermine or destroy themselves. Misdirection and confusion has many other obvious applications. The perpetuation of the Vanguard as a legion of bogeymen and urban myth is another example of misdirection and obfuscation.

Harass and Sabotage. The enemy can be harassed on many levels, from simple acts of vandalism and petty theft to annoy and confound, undermining confidence or command, disrupting lines of supply or communications, causing delays or embarrassment, and character assassination, to outright destruction of property, terrorist attacks and murder. Turning vital military information over to the CS or rivals or other enemies also serves to harass and confound, leading them to suspect their own as a spy or traitor, and causing all sorts of problems on several levels. Blackmail, frame jobs, and set-ups to make highly placed operatives and leaders look incompetent, insane or treacherous all fall into this category.

Assassinate and Ambush. The elimination of key personnel is perhaps the most dangerous but potentially most rewarding initiative the Vanguard can pursue against enemies of Chi-Town and the Coalition States. Although the Vanguard would love to hit every top leader in an enemy kingdom, it contents itself by killing high-level military officers, weapons designers, spies, undercover agents, Special Forces and public figures as well as ambushing small units up to company size. The Vanguard do this to attack the strategy-making and deployment capabilities of the enemy as well as to demoralize and confuse the lower-level troops and henchmen. They successfully launch hundreds of ambushes and missions of sabotage every year in the 'Burbs alone.

Repay Betrayal with Death. Vanguard relentlessly track down and kill double agents working against the CS, Coalition officers on the take, enemy undercover agents, spies and traitors. (They tend to ignore petty corruption and payoffs that are ultimately harmless, but anything that puts Coalition troops, police, citizens, security or the nation in harm's way is an act of treason and betrayal repaid with death.) Undermine, use, turn tables, out and otherwise neutralize those who betray their nation.

Perpetuate the Vanguard as an urban myth. That means identify and undermine all attempts by outsiders and enemies trying to reveal or undermine the existence of Vanguard operations. Neutralize those who get too close to the truth or who may successfully infiltrate, betray or threaten the secret society.

Note: In the broad sense of the word, "neutralize" means to stop or prevent, but in most cases it means "kill."

Operations since the fall of Tolkeen

The collapse of Tolkeen has had a significant impact on the Chi-Town 'Burbs and other communities in the Midwest. They include wandering bands of marauders and monsters that once fought for Tolkeen, bandits, fugitives on the run, companies of freedom fighters and Retribution Squads out for revenge, runaway machines of magic, rogue Daemonix and monsters, angry and scheming dragons, vengeful dragons, ruthless bands of adventurers, mercs, monsters and practitioners of magic seeking magic items, rare artifacts, secrets, valuables, or revenge and other misanthropes, lunatics, crooks and trouble. Thus, the Vanguard have added the following to their operation.

Rogue Agents. Identify and neutralize rogue agents, dragons and paranormal beings with a vendetta against the CS because of Tolkeen.

Dragon Kings. Identify and neutralize Dragon Kings and their henchmen who have a vendetta against the CS and/or the Vanguard.

Retribution Squads. Identify and neutralize Tolkeen Retribution Squads and freedom fighters who have a vendetta against the CS and/or the Vanguard.

Minions of Splugorth. Identify and neutralize agents of the Splugorth.

Spies everywhere. Identify, infiltrate, and undermine the operations of spies and agents of the Federation of Magic, Lazlo and other enemy kingdoms. Neutralize as necessary.

Undermine the Infrastructure. Undermine or neutralize all agents working against the best interests of the CS (and the Vanguard). This includes the criminal underworld, mercenaries, adventurers and independent practitioners of magic dealing in stolen Coalition military equipment, CS arms and armor peeled from the bodies of dead soldiers, contraband and dangerous magic items.

Disengage. Retrieve, acquire (through purchase, robbery and murder) or destroy dangerous magic items before they can fall into the hands of Coalition enemies. Or, when appropriate or desirable, manipulate circumstances to draw the attention of Coalition forces to intervene, helping them secretly from the shadows. **Note:** May acquire some items for themselves to better help them in their missions in the preservation of the CS.

Vanguard as Villains

The Vanguard make excellent villains as rivals and outright adversaries. As a secret society of spies, thieves, extortionists and killers, they might target or interfere with the player group at any time for any number of reasons. If the group openly speaks against the CS, they might be targeted for investigation (if not destruction). If the group plans to attack Coalition soldiers or police, or raid a Coalition supply depot, or break into Chi-Town, they may be met by a team of Vanguard before they even reach their target. And characters plotting acts against the CS can expect the Vanguard to attempt to stop them and kill every last one of them. Likewise, should the group become entangled with Coalition authorities, they may find the Vanguard watching the Coalition's back and attacking them or using magic and/or treachery to defeat and undermine them. Fugitives wanted by the CS also have to worry about Vanguard in addition to bounty hunters, because the Vanguard is always on the lookout for "enemies" of the States — and they don't care about any reward, just the elimination of CS enemies! Interfering with Vanguard operations is also begging for trouble, even if the characters did so without knowing it. Any player character(s) who willfully or accidentally interferes with a Vanguard operation, or worse, kills a member of the Vanguard, is likely to be *marked* for retribution by the secret society. Outsiders looking to uncover information about the Vanguard are seen as a potential threat, and those who or seek them out, even if it is offer the Vanguard their services or valuable information, are regarded as danger or spies. **Note:** The Vanguard, as an organization, never buys or sells information directly, nor hires or recruits freelancers as the Vanguard, they always approach outsiders with a false identity and cover story. This is how the secret society remains an urban legend.

The Vanguard can also make great **Non-Player Characters (NPCs)** in the 'Burbs, entering the picture as a secondary or incidental character, rather than an obvious opponent. They can



contribute or lead to subplots, story twists, surprise interventions and/or serve as the root cause of problems for the player characters as a result of their covert activities. The Vanguard can play an instrumental role in the back-story of almost any situation, functioning as rivals or movers and shakers behind the scenes stirring up trouble for independent adventurers and practitioners of magic or anyone who happens to stumble onto one of their plots. Thus, one or more Vanguard can be the instigator or villain behind almost anything happening in the 'Burbs, particularly when it involves promoting, protecting and supporting the Coalition States and the CS authorities who represent it. A member of the Vanguard trying to acquire information or a valuable magic item, or trying to get an enemy agent (Federation, Tolkeen, etc.) to show himself, might use the *player characters* to accomplish their goal, or clash with the player characters because they too seek the same info, item, person or goal. The manipulative Vanguard are constantly in motion, implementing new schemes or secret agenda in the 'Burbs, so it is easy to accidentally get caught in the middle of one of their operations. Similarly, the activities of the player characters might catch the eye of the Vanguard, who may step into the scenario at any moment to give the story a new twist.

As a secret society of spies influencing the world around them (namely the 'Burbs and the defense of the Coalition States from the supernatural and forces of magic), the Vanguard are constantly involved in some scheme or another to further the agenda of the CS. The *Vanguard Espionage Agent*, *Mystic Spy* and *Savant* are the most adept at instantly adopting a false iden-

tity and masterfully role-playing their new alter ego to trick and use outsiders as pawns, or enemies of the CS to be undermined and destroyed, but *all* Vanguard are skilled at deception and chicanery. One may never even know they have just had a close encounter with the Vanguard, because he or she appeared to be someone of little consequence. Thus, a Vanguard may assume the role of employer, fugitive on the run, naive bumpkin, stool pigeon, entrepreneur, or pretend to be a fellow independent adventurer, a potential friend and ally, a City Rat, mercenary, bounty hunter, enemy of the CS, a Federation of Magic spy, a Tolkeen Freedom Fighter, a dealer in (buying and selling) magic, a fence, a harmless vagabond, a drunk, a priest, a hero, a demon, and the list goes on and on.

Though often a direct rival or adversary, Vanguard intervention may also come indirectly through a third party pawn, dupe, or shadowy actions from behind the scenes that have a ripple effect or subtly help or hurt the player group. The Vanguard may secretly feed player characters information, lead them into conflict to destroy them or to get them to destroy an enemy or rival, and even intercede on their behalf. The latter usually occurs when the Vanguard sees the characters as Coalition supporters in their own right or as pawns who can be manipulated and used to accomplish Vanguard goals. The unwitting role one can play in the Vanguard's scheme could be something as manipulative as causing a diversion, leading the authorities or an enemy on wild goose chase or out into the open, or to something the Vanguard want them to discover, to undermining a rival or enemy, or helping the Coalition. Furthermore, the Vanguard are cun-

ning, and may manipulate the player characters to doing things that have no apparent political impact or anything to do with the Vanguard. For example, they might be manipulated into stealing a magic item from some obvious scum bags, and even be allowed to keep it for themselves if the Vanguard deem they won't use the item to hurt the CS, and it keeps the item out of the hands of those who would. (In this case, the Vanguard's goal is simply to keep the item out of the wrong hands and they don't care who else has it.) Or our heroes might learn about a group of evil terrorists, Tolkeen extremists, Splugorth monsters or Federation madmen engaging in criminal or terrorist acts that threaten the lives of innocent 'Burbies or other people, and, because they are heroes, the player characters take the group down, never knowing they were also an anti-Coalition terrorist group plotting to hurt the CS in some way. Likewise, the player group might be hired or tricked into rescuing a victim of a kidnapping only to learn later that the individual was a high ranking official of the Coalition Government, or they, themselves, may be blackmailed or "leveraged" to help the CS in some way or another.

The Vanguard are great characters to confound, trouble, and harass the player characters as well as get them into adventures and trouble. Use them wisely and have fun!

Vanguard as Player Characters

First and foremost, whether a gamer can have a Vanguard player character is left to the *sole discretion* of the Game Master. If your G.M. says no, then the answer is *no*. He or she must have reasons and doesn't have to explain them to you. So talk to your G.M. before rolling up a Vanguard O.C.C.

If the answer is yes. Select one of the Vanguard O.C.C.s and roll on the following three tables.

Player Note: It is important to remember that a Vanguard's agenda is *always* the defense of Chi-Town and the preservation of the Coalition States. Unless stated otherwise, the character's allegiance to the secret society comes first and the Coalition second. Friends, family, and personal success all come in a poor and distant third. This character would die before betraying the Vanguard or the Coalition States.

While the Vanguard character may pretend otherwise, a Vanguard will never completely trust a D-Bee, dragon, or a practitioner of one of the perverted and dangerous disciplines of magic they avoid. In most cases, the Vanguard character pretends to be a dedicated member of the player group, but at least in the beginning, his true allegiance is to the Vanguard organization and the players are nothing more than trouble, pawns or a means to an end. This sentiment may, however, change as the Vanguard among the player group gets to know the other characters and grows to like and trust some or all of them. This can turn into a moral dilemma for the Vanguard character should he be asked, at a later time, to sacrifice, betray or destroy one or all of his teammates. At that point he has only two options: One is to try to manipulate events to get the outcome his superiors desire without seriously hurting his *friends*; the other is to choose between the Vanguard (part of his family legacy) and the player characters (his new family).

Should a Vanguard reject a command and abandon the secret society, he is never accepted back into the fold, is shunned by his old friends and family, and must make a new life for himself. If his actions are perceived to have betrayed the secret society or hurt its members (i.e., people are captured and tortured, or people die, or some critical mission is flubbed) the character responsible is branded a traitor, can no longer be trusted and is marked for death. If he is found by other Vanguard they will either capture, interrogate and take him to a cell leader for final determination of his fate (only has a 01-10% chance of being let free), or attack and try to kill him on the spot. The latter is the more likely of the two scenarios. Ironically, his attackers may know nothing about him personally or the reasons he is marked for death other than their leaders have proclaimed him a traitor, the most grievous offense possible. Vanguard tend to be a little nuts about loyalty, so any member accused of treason is absolutely despised.

Vanguard Player Tables

Roll percentile dice on each table to determine the character's reason for joining the player group, his status within the Vanguard secret society, and his mission parameters.

In the alternative, the Game Master may choose a selection from each table and give it to the Vanguard character as his reasoning, status and assignment. Presumably, this is a long-term mission (months or years) in the field.

1. Reason for Joining the Player Group

01-20% A resource. Sees the group as perfect pawns for a number of operations his superiors have in mind. At least initially, the other members of the player group are nothing more than pawns or tools to get what the secret society desires (which may be information, a specific magic item, weapons, money, the head of an enemy, infiltration into a larger organization the player group is affiliated with, and any number of other possibilities).

21-40% Like minds. Believes the group shares similar views to the Vanguard and will make good, unwitting allies, especially with a Vanguard like him or her to influence them.

41-60% Convenient identity. Believes the group is the perfect cover for him (or her) to gather intelligence in or away from the 'Burbs. As one of them, the Vanguard can move about without suspicion, seen by the outside world as a would-be hero or adventuring opportunist, nothing more.

61-80% Sacrificial lambs. Whatever the group is currently up to, the Vanguard wants in, because it will benefit the organization or their cause in some way or because the secret society intends to use them for their benefit. The player group is seen only as sacrificial lambs, pawns to help the Vanguard achieve their own goals and then be hung out to dry. The Vanguard among them is to encourage and manipulate the player group to engage in activity that furthers or helps the Vanguard's agenda and to take the heat for any trouble so the group or its other valued members are *not* implicated or hunted for the trouble. When something goes wrong, or the adventurers have worn out their usefulness they are either abandoned to fend for themselves or set up to take the fall. At least that's how the player group is seen by the Vanguard infiltrator at first.

81-00% A power best observed. For one reason or another, the player group is seen as a potential, influential power (or danger) that could have an impact (negative or positive) on the CS, the 'Burbs, the Vanguard, the Federation of Magic (or some other rival or enemy), or the world at large. The Vanguard has decided it best if one (or more) of their members infiltrate the group and become one of them. This sleeper mole is to keep an eye on them, and, if and when it becomes necessary, to help, hinder or destroy them. Until then, the Vanguard among the heroes seems like a stalwart ally, brave teammate and friend.

2. Status within Vanguard Society

01-10% Vanguard in excellent standing. A zealot, this character is a fanatic willing to do anything for the Vanguard cause (i.e., the protection and perpetuation of the CS and the secret society). He has a reputation for keeping a low profile and getting the job done without trouble.

11-25% Vanguard in excellent standing. Trusted, respected, and known to others within the organization, but a complete enigma to the outside world who sees him as an ordinary fellow.

26-40% Vanguard in good standing. A loyal member working quietly and diligently for the cause.

41-50% Unknown and faceless. Nobody really knows who this "Joe" is or his capabilities. Many Vanguard seek to attain faceless status because they are a ghost within their own shadow organization, giving the ghost the freedom to be independent and act on his own, provided his actions fall in with the agenda of the parent organization and do not interfere with larger operations.

51-60% Vanguard in poor standing. Has a reputation for being unreliable. This may be due to lack of experience, personality, personal issues or a streak of bad luck. Other Vanguard try to avoid him. No one wants him to botch a big mission or bring trouble to their cell. This may be why he or she has been assigned to join the player group.

61-70% Vanguard in poor standing. Hot headed and reckless, with a reputation for getting himself and his teammates into trouble.

71-80% Vanguard "out in the cold." Shunned by all other members. His cover is blown! Word on the street is that this character is a living, breathing member of the legendary Vanguard.

Unable to associate with his fellow Vanguard (which includes his family) without fear of bringing them down, this "outed" Vanguard must go it alone and fend for himself. He knows he can never turn to his old cell, family or any member of the Vanguard without jeopardizing the entire secret society or his loved ones. The Coalition authorities and 1D6 other outside organizations/groups keep tabs on him, placing him under frequent (constant?) observation and/or make regular contact with the character in an effort to extort or force information out of him (about the secret society, his operations, and other things he knows), and/or to prove the Vanguard really exists, and to trick or force the character into identifying other Vanguard members, cells and operations for any number of nefarious reasons. Those on to this character could be one or more local 'Burb gangs, band of City Rats, a criminal organization, adventurer group,

Bounty Hunter, Spy, Tolkeen Retribution Squad, Minion of Splugorth, agent from the Federation of Magic (and/or Lazlo, or Whykin, or Kingsdale, or the Pecos Empire, or Atlantis, or ARCHIE Three, or Free Quebec, or a dragon, or Daemonix, etc.), an old enemy or friend of someone the Vanguard made "disappear," and so on. He or she may have joined the player group to get away, start a new life, try to fabricate evidence to prove he's not a Vanguard (an extremely difficult challenge), to get revenge on the one who outed him, or to continue to serve the Vanguard cause away from the 'Burbs and in other ways.

81-90% Vanguard in poor standing as a "sell out."

Whether it's true or not, the character is a pariah to the rest of the secret society, who believe he is a backstabbing traitor or even a double agent! For now, the Vanguard allow him to live (they have their reasons, or lack concrete evidence and don't want to kill an innocent member; the group is very diligent about that), but won't have anything to do with him. If the accusation is a lie, the character is probably trying to prove his innocence to get back into the good graces of the organization he loves. If the allegations are true . . . the Vanguard may have allowed him to live because they want to find out who this rat really serves, what his real goals are, and why he is hanging around with the player group. A third possibility is the accused may have been set up, framed by an enemy, and a fourth, that he has been framed by a leader in the Vanguard so the ousted character is believed to be a traitor for some ulterior reason (perhaps to be contacted by one or more enemy groups who want to recruit him to get at the Vanguard, enabling the character to infiltrate and get to them, or to get information or make a kill, etc., that would not be possible without this ruse). Joining a group of outsiders like the player characters is all part of the plan.

91-00% Vanguard in poor standing. This guy is so relentless and extreme that he scares even other Vanguard. Consequently, they tend to let the character operate as a lone wolf. Nobody knows why he chooses to do anything.

3. Current Objective/Mission

01-14% Eradicate hate groups. Sniff out individuals and groups who hate the CS (Tolkeen Retribution Squads, freedom fighters, dissidents, assassins, saboteurs, etc.). Identify and gather information on their goals and operations, and when possible infiltrate, undermine and neutralize.

15-28% Confiscate. Keep dangerous magic items, secrets and damaging information out of the hands of the Coalition's enemies. This may involve stealing or capturing such things and getting them to the secret society, destroying them, hiding them, discrediting them, and/or placing them with benign or allied forces (including the CS).

29-42% The Federation of Magic. Identify and undermine Federation operations, and neutralize their spies and key operatives. The Federation of Magic sees the recent turn of events as an opportunity to engage in all sorts of operations that threaten the security of the Coalition States: the acquisition of rare and power magic items, breaking into Chi-Town, finding and breaking into the legendary Black Vault, assassinating Emperor Prosek, his family and other high ranking officers in the Coalition military and government, recruiting adventurers and others with a grudge against the CS, establishing spies within the

'Burbs and other communities in the Midwest, and god only knows what else.

43-56% Reconnaissance and intelligence. The collapse of Tolkeen has thrown the world into chaos. Rumor has it a second Juicer Uprising is brewing, the nefarious Federation of Magic is making all kinds of moves, fugitives from Tolkeen are forming new groups but there's no telling for what purpose, the Xiticix are in a frenzy, the gangs of the Pecos Empire are more aggressive than ever, new alliances are being formed, old pacts are crumbling, old communities are being disrupted by the flood of Tolkeen refugees, new communities are being formed, enemies of the CS are everywhere, and it's the Vanguard character's job to go out into the world to help assess the situation and pinpoint the most troubling threats to Chi-Town and the CS.

57-71% Harass and undermine the enemy. Without drawing attention to the Vanguard organization or implicating the Coalition States. This is one of the fundamental precepts upon which the Vanguard was founded.

72-86% Stop the alien incursion. Identify, undermine and, when possible, neutralize alien, demonic, and foreign agents, spies, recruiters, insurrectionists and anyone who may represent an immediate or growing threat to the Coalition States and humanity. The Kingdom of Monsters in Calgary, the Xiticix in the north, the mysterious Lynn-Srial, Worm Wraiths and the fractionalizing Cyber-Knights in the New West, the Shemarrians and Splugorth conflict in the east, Splugorth operations in Minnesota and eastern Canada, rumors of strange happenings in the Dinosaur Swamps of the southeast, aggression by the Pecos Empire in the southwest, and other groups, people and places involving monsters, the supernatural and aliens are a constant concern for the Vanguard.

87-00% Defend and protect Coalition interests. Including secret operations, CS spies, Coalition troops, military bases, the Lone Star Complex and CS resources.

Vanguard O.C.C.s

Alphabetical Listing of O.C.C.s

Vanguard Conjurer
Vanguard Espionage Agent/VE Agent
Vanguard Ley Line Walker
Vanguard Mystic Spy
Vanguard Mystic Thief
Vanguard Savant
Vanguard Translocator/Teleporter
Vanguard Waylayer



A narrow discipline in magic, but unique in focus and ability. The Vanguard are much more limited in their range of powers than most practitioners of magic. Their Coalition sensibilities, human supremacist attitude and secret allegiance to the CS means the Vanguard avoid certain types of magic and may even avoid certain spells. For example, the Vanguard don't pursue magic that summons and controls nonhumans, monsters, or

the supernatural – it is too unsavory and dangerous, so they don't do it. Never. Consequently, the *Shifter* (and *Summoner*) is not an option for this character. Likewise, a Vanguard will *never* practice any magic in which the character must pledge allegiance to a supernatural being of any kind, so *Warlock* and *Witch* are also right out. Nor will they practice *alien* magic, eliminating *Cloud Magic*, *Temporal Magic*, *Tattoo Magic*, *Atlantean Stone Magic*, *Bio-Wizardry*, *Dolphin Magic*, *Nazca Line Magic* and most *foreign* magicks (i.e., magic that originates in another country such as Russian Spoiling and Fire Magic, or English Herbology or Australian Dream Time Magic). *Necromancy* seems obviously evil and unsavory, and is avoided.

The magic of the *Native Americans* is not regarded as inherently evil or bad, and Shamans and Mystic Warriors are among the few magic O.C.C.s the Vanguard don't automatically assume to be enemies. However, Indian magic involves belief in spirits and nature beings, which prohibits the Vanguard from practicing such magic and, generally, rubs them the wrong way. They haven't decided what to make of *Techno-Wizardry*. They recognize it as "home grown," originating in North America and created by humans, but their reverence for true science and technology makes the study of Techno-Wizardry feel wrong. The Vanguard will, however, use TW weapons and devices, and have agents in the Colorado Baronies and Lazlo.

That pretty much leaves only the **Ley Line Walker/Wizard** and **Mystic** (psionics and spell magic) as viable Magic O.C.C.s. *Focus*, however, creates a few interesting Line Walker and Mystic subsets that have, within the Vanguard secret society, become a sort of Occupational Character Class (O.C.C.) in their own right.

Note: Roughly five or six percent of the Vanguard are psychics who don't know a lick of magic. They are usually born into the secret society and trained to put their god given talents to work for the organization. All human, Psychic O.C.C.s are acceptable. See the *Rifts® Ultimate RPG* and *World Book 12: Pyscape* for the full range of psychic possibilities.

One last fun fact most people don't know about the Vanguard, 57% of its operatives are female.

Vanguard Espionage Agent O.C.C.

This is your classic spy who engages in undercover work, infiltration, tailing, intelligence, sabotage, and theft. Though any Vanguard *may* spy, steal or gather intelligence (information), the *VE Agent* and *Vanguard Mystic Spy* are the most likely to take on elaborate false identities for deep insertion undercover work within enemy organizations (i.e., moles and double agents).

What distinguishes this VE Agent from any other *Ley Line Walker* is the character's range of skills and choices in magic, which focus on hiding, concealment, avoiding detection, disguise, and escape. The VE Agent's specialties are infiltration, impersonation, and intelligence.

Though the Vanguard Espionage Agent possesses the fundamental knowledge of a Ley Line Walker, the Agent does *not* have all the same abilities nor show the same level of expertise.



However, his training (skills) and focus (types of magic spells) more than make up for any shortfalls in his magic abilities.

The orientation of the Vanguard Espionage Agent is spying, gathering information and sabotaging the enemy, and 90% of all his mystic knowledge reflects these goals. They abhor practitioners of magic who are demon worshipers, command or associate with creatures of magic and the supernatural, as well as humans who associate with such beings or who use magic regarded as the black arts. All such individuals, along with all D-Bee and inhuman sorcerers, are automatically seen as enemies to be observed, undermined and destroyed. Agents may use captured Rune weapons, TW items, and other magic devices, but are equally comfortable with CS technology and tend to prefer Coalition (or CS-based) weapons, vehicles and equipment. Small, light weapons, easy to conceal, are their favorites, though some Agents (about 25%) pride themselves on relying on nothing but their wits and magic. To be a Vanguard Espionage Agent, one must be resourceful and think quick on his feet.

VE Agent O.C.C. Special Abilities

1. Sense Ley Line and Magic Energy. The mage is so attuned to ley lines that he can see magic energy emanating from even weak ley lines normally invisible to the human eye. Likewise, he can see invisible magic energy (P.P.E.) radiating from living beings, enchanted/magic objects, Techno-Wizard devices, and supernatural creatures. This is not an ability to see auras, but to actually see mystic energy waves. This power is similar to the Ley Line Walker and Dog Boy, enabling the VE Agent to feel the presence of magic. All the following sensing abilities are automatic powers and do not require the expenditure of P.P.E.

Sense ley line: The VE Agent is able to feel whether there is a ley line within the area of his sensing abilities, 5 miles (8 km) per level of experience, and can tell whether it is near or far. He can also follow the feeling to locate the ley line at a skill level of 25% +5% per each additional level of experience.

Sense ley line nexus: Once the ley line has been found, the character can follow the ley line to as many nexus points as it intersects. Skill level is 35% +5% per each additional level of experience.

Sense Rift: The mage will automatically feel the sensation of a Rift opening anywhere within a 25 mile area (40 km) +5 miles (8 km) per each additional level of experience. Although he cannot tell exactly where this Rift is, the wizard knows if it is near or far, big or small.

Sense magic in use: The expenditure of magic in the form of a spell, Rifting, a Techno-Wizard device, etc., can be felt, if not seen, up to 100 feet (30.5 m) away per every level of experience. The character does not know the location nor is he able to trace the energy to its source, but he will feel it and know that magic is being used in the area of his sensing range. **Note:** This does *not* include the use of psionic powers.

See magic energy: The VE Agent can see magic energy/P.P.E. radiating from people, creatures, objects, and areas, as long as more than 20 P.P.E. points are present. Unlike the Ley Line Walker, the sensing ability is *not* so acute that the character can see things made invisible by magic and invisible things that are magic, including many supernatural creatures. **Range:** Line of sight; about 1000 feet (305 m) without obstructions.

2. Ley Line Transmission. Like the Ley Line Walker, the Agent can send a verbal and/or audio message directly along a ley line to another person, so long as that person is located somewhere on the line. The best messages are brief ones of under a hundred words to avoid overwhelming the recipient. Unfortunately, the message is a one way transmission unless the other person is also a Line Walker or other mage with the Transmission spell. Range is limited only by the length of the ley line and the people's position on the line. The time lapse between sending and receiving a ley line transmission is only a matter of seconds. The message can be sent to several people (one person per level of experience) at different locations, as long as they are all on the ley line.

The only danger is that a Telepath (psionic or magic) may be able to listen in on the message. There is a 1-20% chance that any psionic or magic character with Telepathy will sense a ley line transmission coming through, and there is a 1-31% chance that they too can receive the message. There is no way for the sender to know if others have eavesdropped on his message. Nor is there any way to scramble the message. This power is an automatic ability for the wizard and does not require the expenditure of personal P.P.E.

3. Ley Line Rejuvenation. The VE Agent can absorb ley line energy to *double* the rate of natural healing. To do this the character must concentrate and relax on a ley line, letting the mystic energy fill him and heal him over a period of days. The wizard can also perform an instant rejuvenation as often as once every 24 hours at the site of a ley line. After about ten minutes of concentration, the character is completely

rested, alert, and 2D6 Hit Points and 2D6 S.D.C. are restored. No personal P.P.E. is expended.

Note: The VE Agent does not have the following Ley Line Walker abilities: Read Ley Lines, Ley Line Phasing, Line Drifting or Ley Line Observation Ball.

4. Special Streetwise Skill. The standard Streetwise ability including Streetwise: Drugs, but with special bonuses: +40% in the 'Burb where the character has lived most of his life (and was probably born and raised); +20% in the surrounding 'Burbs and places where the Agent may be assigned to infiltrate or live undercover for more than six months; +10% in a city or town anywhere else in the world. Remember, the Vanguard originate from Chi-Town and 85% still live in, and operate from, the Chi-Town 'Burbs. Even the 15% on assignment away from the Chi-Town 'Burbs consider them to be their true home.

5. Initial Spell Knowledge. The pursuit of magic is a means to utilize natural energy and direct it with one's own mental abilities. The VE Agent spends years learning to focus his thoughts and build his will to direct and mold mystic energy. He also spends years learning spells that fit the profile of infiltrator and spy.

Starts with the following spells: Armor of Ithan (10), Blinding Flash (1), Breathe Without Air (10), Chameleon (6), Charm (12), Climb (3), Cloak of Darkness (6), Cloud of Smoke (2), Energy Bolt (5), Featherlight (10), Float in Air (5), Fist of Fury (10, self), Frequency Jamming (15), Globe of Daylight (2), Lantern Light (1), Levitation (5), Life Source (2+), Mask of Deceit (15), Mend the Broken (15+), Mystic Alarm (5), Mystic Fulcrum (5), Negate Poison (5), Reduce Self (20), Reflection (7), Repel Animals (7), See the Invisible (4), Sense Magic (4), Swim as the Fish (6), Sustain (12), and Tongues (12).

6. Learning New Spells. Select 1D4 new spells per each new level of experience (starting at level two) from those listed here. Selections can be made from any of the three categories, but no others!

Combat (often defensive or restrains/impairs one's adversary rather than kill): Befuddle (6), Blind (6), Carpet of Adhesion (10), Crushing Fist (12), Deflect (10), Disharmonize (150), Electric Arc (8), Energy Disruption (12), Fear (5), Fireblast (8), Forcebonds (25), Fuel Flame (5), Ignite Fire (6), Impervious to Fire (5), Impervious to Poison (5), Implosion Neutralizer (12), Invincible Armor (30), Paralysis: Lesser (5), Magic Net (7), Magic Shield (6), Mute (50), Sickness (50), Sleep (10), Speed of the Snail (50), Spoil (30; can make a good diversion), Swords to Snakes (50), Trance (10), and Wisps of Confusion (40).

Disguise: Spells that change or disguise the character's appearance including Death Trance (1), Charismatic Aura (10), Invisibility: Simple (6), Invisibility: Superior (20), Multiple Image (7), Shadow Meld (10), and any Metamorphosis spells.

Espionage: Spells that hide the character and help to find, gather, or transmit information, including Astral Projection (10), Cleanse (6), Commune with Spirits (25), Dispel Magic Barrier (20), Distant Voice (10), Domination (10), Escape (8), Eyes of Thoth (8), Eyes of the Wolf (25), Familiar Link (55), Fly (15), Fly as the Eagle (25), Globe of Silence (20),

Instill Knowledge (15), Ley Line Time Capsule (15+), Ley Line Phantom (40), Ley Line Transmission (30), Locate (30), Magic Pigeon (20), Manipulate Objects (2+), Memory Bank (12), Purge Self (70), Re-Open Gateway (180), Seal (7), Second Sight (20), See Wards (20), Swap Places (300), Transferral (50), Watchguard (10) and Words of Truth (15).

7. Magic Bonuses. +4 to save vs Horror Factor, +2 to save vs possession and mind control, +1 to save vs magic at levels 3, 6, 11, and 15, +1 to Spell Strength (the number others must save against when you cast a spell) at levels 3, 7, 10, and 13.

8. P.P.E.: Like all men of magic, the VE Agent is a living battery of mystic energy that he can draw upon to create magic. **Permanent Base P.P.E.:** 2D4x10 +P.E. attribute number. Add 3D6 P.P.E. per each additional level of experience. The mage can also draw P.P.E. from ley lines, nexus points, blood sacrifices, and other people whenever available.

VE Agent O.C.C. Stats

Alignment: Any, but many Vanguard are Unprincipled, Anarchist or Aberrant. Remember, they are human supremacists who share the same beliefs as the Coalition States, so they are similar in conduct and attitude to the Coalition soldier and police.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 10, M.A. 12 or higher. A high M.E. and P.P. are also suggested but not mandatory.

O.C.C. Skills:

Basic Math (+20%)

Climbing (+5%)

Computer Operation (+10%)

Disguise (+20%)

Basic Electronics (+5%)

Escape Artist (+10%)

Imitate Voices & Impersonation (+12%)

Intelligence (+20%)

Literate in American and Dragonese (+15%)

Speaks Dragonese/Elven fluently (+30%)

Speaks two additional languages of choice (+15% each)

Surveillance Systems (+10% to systems, +15% to Tailing)

W.P. one of choice (any).

Hand to Hand: Expert; can be changed to Martial Arts (or Assassin if an evil alignment) for the cost of one O.C.C. Related Skill.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select two other skills from the categories of Communications and/or Espionage, three from Rogue and four from any other available skill category listed below. Select one additional skill at levels 3, 6, and 9. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+5%).

Cowboy: None.

Domestic: Any.

Electrical: None.

Espionage: Any (+10%).

Mechanical: Basic only.

Medical: First Aid or Paramedic only (the latter counts as two skills, +5%).

Military: None.

Physical: Any except Wrestling, Acrobatics and Gymnastics.

Pilot: Any.

Pilot Related: Any.

Rogue: Any (+10%).

Science: Any.

Technical: Any (+5%).

W.P.: Any, Ancient or Mordern, except Heavy Weapons and Heavy Energy Weapons.

Wilderness: None.

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select two Secondary Skills from the categories listed above at levels 1, 4 and 8. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parentheses. All start at the base skill level.

Standard Equipment: Long coat/trench coat (any color; typically made of light M.D.C. fabric from the New West and available from the Black Market; typically has 18+1D6 M.D.C.). Hooded robe or cape, set of "working clothes" (black or dark colored jumpsuit, ski mask, weapon/ammo belt and holster, utility waist belt, one or two belts for strapping to the thigh for additional equipment or shoulder holster/belt, boots with straps to hold and conceal extra weapons, tools and gear), traditional Ley Line Walker garb, set of civilian clothing, light M.D.C. body armor (seldom wear heavy armor, because it reduce their speed and mobility by half and interferes with spell casting abilities), sunglasses or tinted goggles, backpack, duffle bag, 1D4 small sacks, one large sack, six wooden stakes and mallet (for vampires and other practical applications), silver cross, pocket mirror, pocket computer, canteen, binoculars, sunglasses (an extra pair), air filter and gas mask, pen flashlight, 1D6+2 markers, pens or pencils, 1D4 note or sketch pads, language translator or 1D6+4 bugs/surveillance devices. VE Agents like Techno-Wizard items and other types of magic items, but don't start with any.

Weapons: VE Agents prefer small, close quarter weapons that are easy to conceal on one's body or hide in a jacket, backpack, purse, desk drawer, etc. Typically starts with an M.D. pistol that has good stopping power, a Vibro-Knife, one or two other S.D.C. daggers, a silver-plated dagger and an S.D.C. pistol or revolver. All weapons have 1D4 extra ammo clips. However, any weapons may be acquired or used by the VE Agent and NPCs may have magic weapons or other special equipment.

Vehicle: None. Foot power works great in the crowded 'Burbs.

Money: Starts with 1D6x1000 in credits and 1D4x1000 in black market items.

Cybernetics: None and tries to avoid any cybernetic augmentation because it interferes with magic. Will use Bio-Systems when necessary.

Level of Experience for NPCs: 1D6+3



Vanguard Conjurer O.C.C.

Conjuring is one of the few magicks that is given the stamp of approval by the Vanguard, however, only about 5% of its members pursue this area of magic. See **Rifts® World Book 16: Federation of Magic™** for details on this O.C.C.

Vanguard Ley Line Walker O.C.C.

Approximately 10% of the Vanguard are dyed in the wool Ley Line Walkers commanding a wide range of magic. Roll up as usual. See the **Rifts® Ultimate RPG** for details.

Vanguard Waylayer O.C.C.

The Vanguard Waylayer is the heavy hitter of the organization, a wizard who specializes in combat and magic that kills and destroys. The Waylayer may have a few defensive and benign spells in his or her bag of tricks, but for the most part they are masters of combat, destruction and sabotage. Thus, these ruthless individuals function as the Vanguard's enforcers, bodyguards, defenders, assassins and saboteurs. As a hit man, the character often observes his "target" for several days, taking note of habits and patterns before making the "hit." Like most professional assassins, the Vanguard Waylayer strikes when and where his victim(s) should least expect it, often laying in wait for them in the shadows, a back alley or rooftop. The exception is when the society wants to send a message by making the destruction a public spectacle.

The character may work as a lone assailant or bodyguard, or work in concert with other Vanguard. It is not uncommon to find small bands of 2-6 Waylayers working as a team or "hit squad," or as a sort of "Special Forces/SWAT team," but they also work with and assist other Vanguard O.C.C.s. Basically, wherever and whenever a Vanguard or Coalition citizen needs a protector or hit man, one or more Waylayers are there ready to take action. (Note: The most diverse and flexible Vanguard teams will have two VE Agents and/or Waylayers and one of each other Vanguard O.C.C. Teams designed for sabotage, commando-style raids and surgical strikes typically consist of 2-4 Waylayers, 1-2 VE Agents, one Mystic Thief and one Translocator.)

When not on special assignment, Vanguard Waylayers prowl the streets shadowing Coalition police, military patrols, spies and CS citizens to keep an eye on them. When trouble appears, especially trouble in the form of monsters or practitioners of magic, the Waylayer or Vanguard team will work, from the shadows and in the background, to help, protect, and rescue members of the Coalition States. Ideally, this is accomplished without the Coalition individuals ever realizing they had a "guardian angel" looking over their shoulder. The best Vanguard Waylayers identify and neutralize trouble before it strikes,



taking down or blocking assailants or spies before they make their move. In a similar vein, one or more Waylayers or a Vanguard team may tail a group of suspicious characters (or known spies and agents of enemy magic nations, criminal gangs and terrorist cells) to see what they are up to or to, jump them and either beat information out of them or slaughter them in some back alley.

Vanguard Waylayers are not known for their tact or stealth, and usually take very direct action against suspected enemy forces when they are confident that they will successfully destroy them. Some people have characterized the Vanguard Waylayer as a spell casting pit bull. It is a fitting analogy, though the Waylayer often exhibits surprising restraint, care and planning. It's just when they move in for an attack, that they are very decisive and obvious, making a flamboyant strike before disappearing back into the shadows. They are the kings of hit and run tactics, attacking, getting the job done and leaving. A Waylayer seldom lingers to gloat, rave or take on new challengers. They get in, do the job – even if it is loud and spectacular – and get out.

Most Vanguard Waylayers don't see themselves as assassins or pit bulls, but rather as *judge*, *jury* and *executioner* charged with keeping the Coalition States and Chi-Town safe from outsiders, terrorists and mad men who would destroy them. This automatically makes members of the Federation of Magic and expatriates from Tolkeen villains to be eliminated. Even more hated than they, are monsters and demonic beings, their worshipers, and dark mages like Shifters, Necromancers, Witches and Temporal Raiders. These beings are targeted for destruction

whenever they are spotted, though the Waylayer is sharp enough never to rush in unprepared or without first observing them for a while to make certain they are not yet involved in a larger plot against humanity or the CS, and to track them to their nest and exterminate them all in one fell swoop. This character's extreme nature makes them something of a Coalition *super-patriot* who practically worship the ground the Coalition Military and Chi-Town authorities walk upon. Thus, they are quick to help Coalition troops and police even at the risk of their own life.

Waylayer O.C.C. Special Abilities

1. **Sense Ley Lines and Magic Energy.** The Waylayer is the least attuned to ley lines and mystic energy. He can see magic energy emanating from ley lines and can see invisible magic energy (P.P.E.) radiating from living beings, enchanted/magic objects, Techno-Wizard devices, and supernatural creatures, but his perception is not as good as other Vanguard or true Ley Line Walkers. This is not an ability to see auras, but to actually see mystic energy waves. This power is similar to the Ley Line Walker and Dog Boy, enabling the Waylayer to feel the presence of magic. All the following sensing abilities are automatic powers and do not require the expenditure of P.P.E.

Sense ley line: The character is able to feel whether there is a ley line within the area of his sensing abilities, 3 miles (4.8 km) per level of experience, and can tell whether it is near or far. He can also follow the feeling to locate the ley line at a skill level of 20% +5% per each additional level of experience.

Sense ley line nexus: Once the ley line has been found, the character can follow the ley line to as many nexus points as it intersects. Skill level is 25% +5% per each additional level of experience.

Sense a Rift: The mage will automatically feel the sensation of a Rift opening anywhere within a 25 mile area (40 km) +5 miles (8 km) per each additional level of experience. Although he cannot tell exactly where this Rift is, the wizard knows if it is near or far, big or small.

Sense magic in use: The expenditure of magic in the form of a spell, Rifting, or a Techno-Wizard device can be felt, if not seen, up to 100 feet (30.5 m) away per every level of experience. The character does not know the location nor is he able to trace the energy to its source, but he will feel it and know that magic is being used in the area of his sensing range. **Note:** This does *not* include the use of psionic powers.

See magic energy: The character can see magic energy/P.P.E. radiating from people, creatures, objects, and areas, as long as more than 20 P.P.E. points are present. Unlike the Ley Line Walker, the sensing ability is *not* so acute that the character can see things made invisible by magic and invisible things that are magic, including many supernatural creatures. **Range:** Line of sight; about 500 feet (152.4 m) without obstructions.

- 2. Ley Line Transmission.** Like the Ley Line Walker, the character can send a verbal and/or audio message directly along a ley line to another person, so long as that person is located somewhere on the line. The best messages are brief ones of under a hundred words to avoid overwhelming the recipient. Unfortunately, the message is a one way transmission unless the other person is also a Line Walker or other mage with the Transmission spell. Range is limited only by the length of the ley line and the people's position on the line. The time lapse between sending and receiving a ley line transmission is only a matter of seconds. The message can be sent to several people (one person per level of experience) at different locations, as long as they are all on the ley line.

The only danger is that a Telepath (psionic or magic) may be able to listen in on the message. There is a 1-20% chance that any psionic or magic character with Telepathy will sense a ley line transmission coming through, and there is a 1-31% chance that they too can receive the message. There is no way for the sender to know if others have eavesdropped on his message. Nor is there any way to scramble the message. This power is an automatic ability for the wizard walker and does not require the expenditure of personal P.P.E.

- 3. Ley Line Rejuvenation.** The character can absorb ley line energy to *double* the rate of natural healing. To do this the character must concentrate and relax on a ley line, letting the mystic energy fill him and heal him over a period of days. The wizard can also perform an instant rejuvenation as often as once every 24 hours at the site of a ley line. After about ten minutes of concentration, the character is completely rested, alert, and 2D6 Hit Points and 2D6 S.D.C. are restored. No personal P.P.E. is expended.

Note: The Vanguard Waylayer does not have the following Ley Line Walker abilities: Read Ley Lines, Ley Line Phasing, Line Drifting or Ley Line Observation Ball.

- 4. Special Streetwise Skill.** The standard Streetwise ability including Streetwise: Drugs, but with special bonuses: +40% in the 'Burb where the character has lived most of his life (and was probably born and raised); +20% in the surrounding 'Burbs and places where the character may be assigned to infiltrate or live undercover for more than six months; +10% in a city or town anywhere else in the world. Remember, the Vanguard originate from Chi-Town and 85% still live in, and operate from, the Chi-Town 'Burbs. Even the 15% on assignment away from the Chi-Town 'Burbs consider them to be their true home.

- 5. Initial Spell Knowledge.** The pursuit of magic is a means to utilize natural energy and direct it with one's own mental abilities. The Vanguard Waylayer spends years learning to focus his thoughts and build his force of will to direct and mold mystic energy. He also spends years learning spells that fit the profile of enforcer, hit man and destroyer.

Starts with the following spells: Armor of Ithan (10), Befuddle (6), Blinding Flash (1), Cloud of Smoke (2), Death Trance (1), Deflect (10), Electric Arc (8), Energy Bolt (5), Energy Disruption (12), Energy Field (10), Fire Ball (10), Fireblast (8), Fire Bolt (7), Forcebonds (25), Fuel Flame (5), Globe of Daylight (2), Ignite Fire (6), Lantern Light (1), Levitation (5), Light Target (6), Magic Shield (6), Orb of Cold (6), See the Invisible (4), Sense Magic (4), Shatter (5), and Swim as the Fish (6).

- 6. Learning New Spells.** Select 1D4 new spells per each new level of experience (starting at level two) from those listed here. Selections are made from this one category only.

Spells of Combat & Destruction: Agony (50), Annihilate (600), Armorbane (100), Armor Bizarre (15), Aura of Death (12), Aura of Doom (40), Aura of Power (4), Ballistic Fire (25), Barrage (15), Blind (6), Breathe Without Air (5), Call Lightning (15), Carpet of Adhesion (10), Circle of Flame (10), Collapse (70-400), Constrain Being (20), Create Water (15), Crushing First (12), Desiccate the Supernatural (50), Disharmonize (150), Dispel Magic Barriers (20), Distant Voice (10), Dragon Fire (40), Eyes of the Wolf (25), Energy Sphere (120), Extinguish Fire (4), Fear (5), Featherlight (10), Fire Globe (40), Firequake (160), Fists of Fury (10 or 50), Fly as the Eagle (25), Fortify Against Disease (15), Frostblade (15), Frequency Jamming (15), Giant (80), Havoc (70), Heal Self (20), Heal Wounds (10), House of Glass (12), Ice (15), Implosion Neutralizer (12), Impervious to Energy (20), Impervious to Fire (5), Impervious to Poison (5), Invisibility: Simple (6), Invisibility: Superior (20), Invulnerability (25), Lightblade (20), Lightning Arc (30), Locate (30), Magic Net (7), Manipulate Objects (2), Mental Shock (30), Meteor (75), Mystic Fulcrum (5), Negate Mechanics (20), Negate Poison (5), Null Sphere (220), Power Bolt (20), Power Weapon (35), Purge Self (70), Purge Other (100), See Aura (6), Sense Evil (2), Shockwave (45), Sonic Blast (25), Spinning Blades (20), Sub-Particle Acceleration (20), Superhuman Speed (10), Superhuman Strength (10), Superhuman Endurance (12), Sustain (12), Ricochet Strike (12), Sorcerous Fury (70), Targeted Deflection (15), Throwing Stones (5) and Turn Dead (6).

- 7. Magic Bonuses.** +5 to save vs Horror Factor, +2 to save vs possession, +1 to save vs magic at levels 3, 6, 11, and 15, +1

to Spell Strength (the number others must save against when you cast a spell) at levels 3, 7, 10, and 13.

8. **P.P.E.:** Like all men of magic, the Waylayer is a living battery of mystic energy that he can draw upon to create magic. **Permanent Base P.P.E.:** 2D4x10 +P.E. attribute number. Add 3D6 P.P.E. per each additional level of experience. The mage can also draw P.P.E. from ley lines, nexus points, blood sacrifices, and other people whenever available.

Vanguard Waylayer O.C.C. Stats

Alignment: Any, but many Vanguard are Unprincipled, Anarchist or Aberrant. Remember, they are human supremacists who share the same beliefs as the Coalition States, so they are similar in conduct and attitude to the Coalition soldier and police.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 10, P.E. 12 or higher. A high M.E. and P.P. are helpful but are not mandatory.

O.C.C. Skills:

Basic Math (+20%)

Computer Operation (+10%)

Intelligence (+5%)

Interrogation (+15%)

Literate in American and Dragonese (+15%)

Speaks Dragonese/Elven fluently (+30%)

Speaks two additional languages of choice (+15% each).

Surveillance Systems: *Tailing* only (+20%)

W.P. Ancient, any two of choice.

W.P. Modern, any two of choice.

Hand to Hand: Expert; can be changed to Martial Arts (or Assassin if an evil alignment) for the cost of one O.C.C. Related Skill.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select three skills each from the categories of Physical and Military, and a total of four from any other available skill category listed below. Select one additional skill at levels 3, 6, and 9. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+5%).

Cowboy: None.

Domestic: Any.

Electrical: None.

Espionage: Any.

Mechanical: Basic only.

Medical: Paramedic only (+5%).

Military: Any (+10%).

Physical: Any.

Pilot: Any.

Pilot Related: Any.

Rogue: None.

Science: Math: Advanced only.

Technical: Any (+5%).

W.P.: Any.

Wilderness: Any.

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select two Secondary Skills from the categories listed above at levels 2, 6 and 12. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get

the advantage of the bonus listed in parentheses. All start at the base skill level.

Standard Equipment: Long coat/trench coat (any color; typically made of light M.D.C. fabric from the New West and available from the Black Market; typically has 18+1D6 M.D.C.), mage armor, or light, non-metal body armor that does not interfere with magic (30-45 M.D.C. for non-magic armors, 70-90 for magic suits of armor), set of "working clothes" (black or dark colored jumpsuit, ski mask or hood, weapon/ammo belt and holster, utility waist belt, two belts for strapping to the thigh for additional equipment or shoulder holster/belt, boots with 4-6 straps to hold and conceal extra weapons, tools and gear), traditional Ley Line Walker garb, set of civilian clothing, sunglasses or tinted goggles, backpack, duffle bag, 1D4 small sacks, one large sack, six wooden stakes and mallet (for vampires and other practical applications), silver cross, pocket mirror, pocket computer, canteen, binoculars, sunglasses (an extra pair), air filter and gas mask, flashlight, 1D6+2 markers or pens, 1D4 note or sketch pads, RMK Robot Medical Kit (Knitters) or IRMSS Internal Robot Medical Surgeon System. The character likes Techno-Wizard items and other types of magic items, but doesn't start with any.

Weapons: May use any kind, but leans toward heavy weapons and explosives. Typically starts with a M.D. energy pistol and rifle, a Vibro-Knife, one S.D.C. dagger, a silver-plated dagger, 1D4 hand grenades (conventional or TW) and one weapon for each W.P. All guns come with 1D4+3 extra clips. Additional weapons and magic items may be acquired over time, and NPCs may have special gear, especially experienced operatives.

Vehicle: None. Foot power works great in the crowded 'Burbs.

Money: Starts with 1D6x1000 in credits and 1D6x1000 in black market items.

Cybernetics: None and tries to avoid any cybernetic augmentation because it interferes with magic. Will use Bio-Systems when necessary.

Level of Experience for NPCs: 1D4+3

Vanguard Savant O.C.C.

The Vanguard Savant takes an unorthodox approach to magic. First, their focus is on magic that instills knowledge/information, effects magic and conveys information. Second, it is the only Vanguard O.C.C. that allows its practitioners to draw on similar spells outside the normal range of wizard invocations (i.e., other types of magic). The Savant is a recent development, coming onto the scene in only the last 20 years. Some within the Vanguard, including the Vanguard Waylayer and Mystic Spy, think they set a bad precedent, go too far outside the old boundaries, and should be banned. Currently, only a couple dozen elite operatives in two particular cells have been authorized to become Vanguard Savants.

The Savant has a natural aptitude for magic and an inquisitive mind that compels him to think "outside the box." That inquisitive nature is also what makes them look at other disciplines of magic and to tread on the line of traditional

limitations. If the Waylayer is the “pit bull” of the organization, the Savant is the “boy genius and cool elitist.” They are usually analytical thinkers, resourceful, insightful and curious. On the down side, they tend to be arrogant, condescending, overconfident (they believe they can “think” their way out of any situation), and less socially adept than any of the other Vanguard O.C.C.s. That means they aren’t as good at pretense and assuming false identities for deep cover, but are great at unraveling puzzles, piecing together clues and evidence, and sniffing out enemy spies, sinister plots and shape-changers. Their natural abilities in magic also make them formidable spell casters close to on par with the Ley Line Walker.

What keeps them in the Vanguard fold is the fact that they are as rabidly loyal to the CS and as obsessed with rooting out Coalition enemies as the Waylayer. As a result, they are always searching for conspiracies and treachery boiling below the surface of the ‘Burbs. This also makes them merciless when it comes to dealing with CS enemies. Though not good at keeping their disdain disguised for long, they love to infiltrate rebel groups where they can undermine them from within, and delight in all forms of betrayal and treachery. It is their undisguised and heartfelt glee at tricking, betraying and slaughtering their enemies, that is unnerving to their comrades and makes some afraid of what a Savant might do to them if he or she should ever turn against them. However, that has never happened, and the Savant appear to be so dedicated to the Vanguard’s cause they may be the organizations true “pit bulls” hungry for the blood of their enemies.

Vanguard Savant O.C.C. Special Abilities

1. Sense Ley Line and Magic Energy. The mage is so attuned to ley lines that he can see magic energy emanating from even weak ley lines normally invisible to the human eye. Likewise, he can see invisible magic energy (P.P.E.) radiating from living beings, enchanted/magic objects, Techno-Wizard devices, and supernatural creatures. This is not an ability to see auras, but to actually see mystic energy waves. This power is similar to the Ley Line Walker and Dog Boy, enabling the character to feel the presence of magic. All the following sensing abilities are automatic powers and do not require the expenditure of P.P.E.

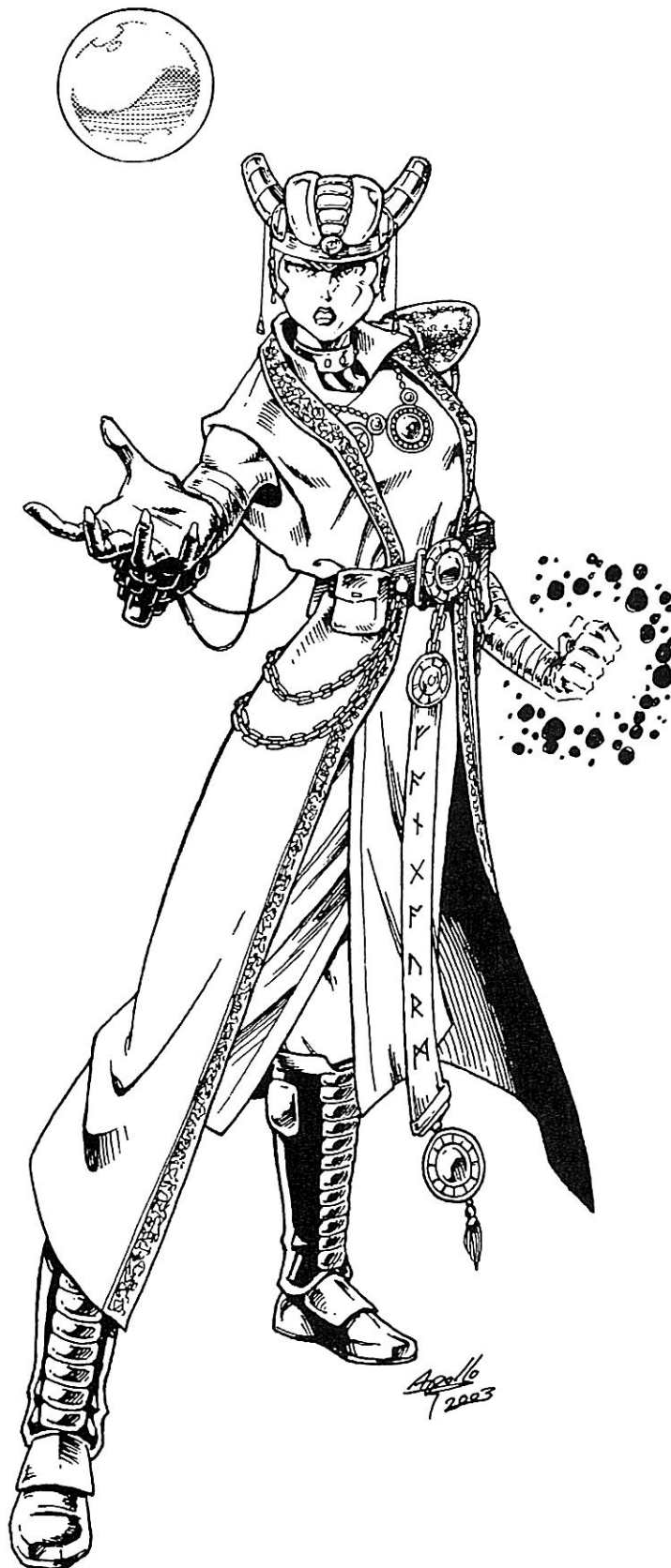
Sense ley line: The Savant is able to feel whether there is a ley line within the area of his sensing abilities, 5 miles (8 km) per level of experience, and can tell whether it is near or far. He can also follow the feeling to locate the ley line at a skill level of 30% +5% per each additional level of experience.

Sense ley line nexus: Once the ley line has been found, the character can follow the ley line to as many nexus points as it intersects. Skill level is 40% +5% per each additional level of experience.

Sense Rift: The mage will automatically feel the sensation of a Rift opening anywhere within a 30 mile area (48 km) +5 miles (8 km) per each additional level of experience. Although he cannot tell exactly where this Rift is, the wizard knows if it is near or far, big or small.

Sense magic in use: The expenditure of magic in the form of a spell, Rifting, a Techno-Wizard device, etc., can be felt, if not seen, up to 200 feet (61 m) away per every level of ex-

perience. The character does not know the location nor is he able to trace the energy to its source, but he will feel it and know that magic is being used in the area of his sensing range. **Note:** This does *not* include the use of psionic powers.



See magic energy: The character can see magic energy/P.P.E. radiating from people, creatures, objects, and areas, as long as more than 20 P.P.E. points are present. Unlike the Ley Line Walker, the sensing ability is *not* so acute that the character can see things made invisible by magic and invisible things that are magic, including many supernatural creatures. **Range:** Line of sight; about 1000 feet (305 m) without obstructions.

2. **Ley Line Transmission.** Like the Ley Line Walker, the mage can send a verbal and/or audio message directly along a ley line to another person, so long as that person is located somewhere on the line. The best messages are brief ones of under a hundred words to avoid overwhelming the recipient. Unfortunately, the message is a one way transmission unless the other person is also a Line Walker or other mage with the Transmission spell. Range is limited only by the length of the ley line and the people's position on the line. The time lapse between sending and receiving a ley line transmission is only a matter of seconds. The message can be sent to several people (one person per level of experience) at different locations, as long as they are all on the ley line.

The only danger is that a Telepath (psionic or magic) may be able to listen in on the message. There is a 1-20% chance that any psionic or magic character with Telepathy will sense a ley line transmission coming through, and there is a 1-31% chance that they too can receive the message. There is no way for the sender to know if others have eavesdropped on his message. Nor is there any way to scramble the message. This power is an automatic ability for the wizard and does not require the expenditure of personal P.P.E.

3. **Ley Line Rejuvenation.** The character can absorb ley line energy to *double* the rate of natural healing. To do this the character must concentrate and relax on a ley line, letting the mystic energy fill him and heal him over a period of days. The wizard can also perform an instant rejuvenation as often as once every 24 hours at the site of a ley line. After about ten minutes of concentration, the character is completely rested, alert, and 2D6 Hit Points and 2D6 S.D.C. are restored. No personal P.P.E. is expended.

4. **Ley Line Observation Ball.** A globe of light, about the size of a soccer ball, can be conjured out of thin air and linked to the Savant like a third eye. The sphere of blue or white light can be directed by its creator to zoom ahead or behind like a remote control spy device or familiar. Everything that the ball sees and hears is instantly transmitted to its maker. The sphere will remain in existence as long as the character stays within the ley line, or until he dispels it, or until it is destroyed.

A Typical Observation Ball: S.D.C.: One per level of its creator. (No Hit Points as it is not alive.) **Range:** Up to 500 feet (152 m) away from its creator. **Speed:** Up to Spd 33 (22 mph). **Bonuses:** +3 to dodge. It has no offensive capabilities other than to buzz on-lookers and possibly startle them (not likely). Actions are directed by its creator and count as his melee actions for that round.

Note: The Savant does not have the following Ley Line Walker abilities: Read Ley Lines, Ley Line Phasing, or Line Drifting.

5. **Special Streetwise Skill.** The standard Streetwise ability including Streetwise: Drugs, but with special bonuses: +20% in the 'Burb where the character has lived most of his life (and was probably born and raised); +10% in the surrounding 'Burbs and places where the Savant may be assigned to infiltrate or live undercover for more than six months; +5% in a city or town anywhere else in the world. Remember, the Vanguard originate from Chi-Town and 85% still live in, and operate from, the Chi-Town 'Burbs. Even the 15% on assignment away from the Chi-Town 'Burbs consider them to be their true home.

6. **Initial Spell Knowledge.** The pursuit of magic is a means to utilize natural energy and direct it with one's own mental abilities. The focus of the Savant is assimilating knowledge and figuring things out.

Starts with the following spells: Armor of Ithan (10), Breathe Without Air (10), Charm (12), Cleanse (6), Detect Concealment (6), Distant Voice (10), Energy Bolt (5), Energize Spell (12), Eyes of Thoth (8), Eyes of the Wolf (25), Frequency Jamming (15), Globe of Daylight (2), Heal Self (20), Instill Knowledge (15), Lantern Light (1), Levitation (5), Manipulate Objects (2+), Memory Bank (12), Negate Mechanics (20), See Aura (6), See the Invisible (4), See Wards (20), Sense Evil (2), Sense Magic (4), Sustain (12), Tongues (12), Turn the Dead (6), and Words of Truth (15).

7. **Learning New Spells.** Select 1D4+1 new spells per each new level of experience (starting at level two) from those listed here.

Spells that appeal to the Savant: Any spell invocations levels 1-3, plus Agony (20), Beat Insurmountable Odds (70), Blind (6), Calling (8), Charismatic Aura (10), Chromatic Aura (10), Commune with Spirits (25), Desecrate the Supernatural (50), Dispel Magic Barriers (20), Energy Disruption (12), Energy Field (10), Energy Sphere (120), Escape (8), Exorcism (30), Expel Demons (35), Familiar Link (55), Featherlight (10), Forcebonds (24), Greater Healing (30), Hallucination (30), Implosion Neutralizer (12), Influence the Beast (12), Invisible Armor (30), Ley Line Tendril Bolts (26), Ley Line Transmission (30), Magical-Adrenaline Rush (45), Magic Pigeon (20), Magic Shield (97), Mend the Broken (15+), Mystic Alarm (5), Mystic Fulcrum (5), Negate Magic (30), Negate Poison (5), Oracle (30), Power Weapon (35), Protection Circle: Simple (45), Protection Circle: Superior (600), Purge Other (100), Repel Animals (7), Reality Flux (75), Restore Limb (80), Seal (7), Sheltering Force (20), Swim as the Fish (6), Time Slip (20), Transferral (50), and Wards (90).

Major Magic: Can select one of the following at levels 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12: Amulet (290), Anti-Magic Cloud (140), Create Magic Scroll (100), Null Sphere (220), Remove Curse (140), Resurrection (650), Sanctum (390), Soul Twist (170), Rift Teleportation (200), Talisman (500), Time Hole (210) and Wall of Defense (55).

Unorthodox Magic: In the alternative (that means instead of the above), the character may learn spells from the following types of magic: Cloud Magic, Ley Line Magic, Ocean Magic, Living Fire Magic (Russian) and/or Nature Magic (Russian).

8. **Magic Bonuses.** +4 to save vs Horror Factor, +4 to save vs possession, +1 to save vs magic at levels 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15, +1 to Spell Strength (the number others must save against when you cast a spell) at levels 2, 4, 7, 9, 12 and 15.
9. **P.P.E.:** Like all men of magic, the Savant is a living battery of mystic energy that he can draw upon to create magic. **Permanent Base P.P.E.:** 2D4x10 +P.E. attribute number. Add 3D6+2 P.P.E. per each additional level of experience. The mage can also draw P.P.E. from ley lines, nexus points, blood sacrifices, and other people whenever available.

Vanguard Savant O.C.C. Stats

Alignment: Any, but most lean toward Anarchist, Diabolic and Aberrant. Remember, they are human supremacists who share the same beliefs as the Coalition States and are similar in conduct and attitude as the Coalition soldiers and police.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 13 or higher. A high M.E. and P.E. are helpful, but not mandatory.

O.C.C. Skills:

Basic Math (+30%)
 Advanced Math (+20%) or Anthropology (+20%)
 Computer Operation (+20%)
 Land Navigation (+5%)
 Prowl (+10%)
 Lore: D-Bees (+10%)
 Lore: Demons & Monsters (+15%)
 Lore: Magic (+15%)
 Literate in American and Dragonese (+20%)
 Literate in two additional languages of choice (+20% each).
 Speaks Dragonese/Elven and one language of choice fluently (+25%).
 Seduction (+6%)
 Surveillance Systems (+10% to systems, +15% to Tailing)
 Research (+20%)
 W.P. one of choice (any).
 Hand to Hand: Basic; can not be changed.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select two skills from each of the following categories: Communications, Science and Technical, and three from any other available skill category listed below. Select one additional skill at levels 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 14. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+10%).
 Cowboy: None.
 Domestic: Any.
 Electrical: Basic and Computer Repair only.
 Espionage: Intelligence and Forgery only (+5%).
 Mechanical: Basic and Automotive only.
 Medical: Brewing and Paramedic only (+10%).
 Military: None.
 Physical: Any except Boxing, Wrestling, Acrobatics and Gymnastics.
 Pilot: Any.
 Pilot Related: Any (+5%).
 Rogue: Computer Hacking only (+10%).

Science: Any (+10%).

Technical: Any (+10%).

W.P.: None.

Wilderness: None.

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select two Secondary Skills from the categories listed above at levels 1, 4 and 8. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parentheses. All start at the base skill level.

Standard Equipment: Long coat/trench coat (any color; typically made of light M.D.C. fabric from the New West and available from the Black Market; typically has 18+1D6 M.D.C.). Hooded robe or cape, set of "working clothes" (black or dark colored jumpsuit, ski mask, weapon/ammo belt and holster, utility waist belt, one or two belts for strapping to the thigh for additional equipment or shoulder holster/belt, boots with straps to hold and conceal extra weapons, tools and gear), traditional Ley Line Walker garb, set of civilian clothing, light M.D.C. body armor (seldom wears any armor, because it reduce their speed and mobility by half and interferes with spell casting abilities), sunglasses or tinted goggles, backpack, duffle bag, one small sack, one large sack, silver cross, pocket mirror, pocket computer, disk recorder/player, canteen, binoculars, air filter and gas mask, pen flashlight, 1D4+2 markers or pens, 1D4 note or sketch pads, language translator or digital camera. The character loves all types of magic items, even Bio-Wizard and Rune weapons, but doesn't start with any.

Weapons: Only a few basic odds and ends like an energy pistol, Vibro-Knife and a silver-plated dagger. All weapons have 1D4 extra ammo clips. However, any weapons may be acquired or used by the character, and NPCs may have magic weapons or other special equipment.

Vehicle: None. Foot power works great in the crowded 'Burbs.

Money: Starts with 1D6x1000 in credits and 2D4x1000 in black market items.

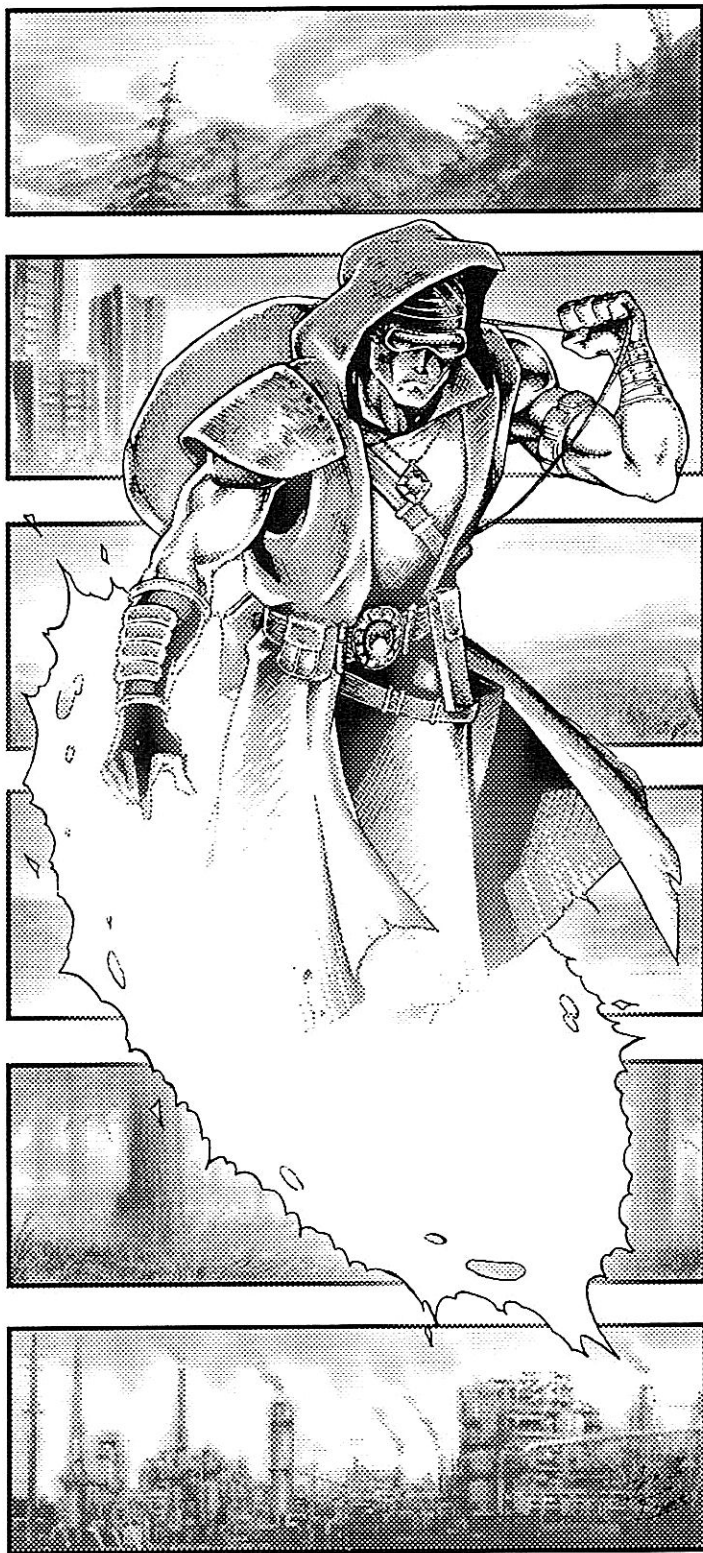
Cybernetics: None and tries to avoid any cybernetic augmentation because it interferes with magic. Will use Bio-Systems when necessary.

Level of Experience for NPCs: 1D6+3

Vanguard Translocator O.C.C.

On one hand, it can be argued that the Vanguard Translocator is the most narrowly focused and limited of all the Vanguard wizards. On the other, one could argue the Translocator is one of the most powerful and vital of the Vanguard O.C.C.s, provided the individual uses his abilities wisely.

Translocators are the Vanguard's gateway to the world, because their focus is magical transportation, travel, and movement, including teleportation and dimensional travel. The role they play in the organization is that of human transporter, opening portals and weaving magic to transport themselves and/or other Vanguard (and sometimes enemies) from one location to another.



Need a way into a locked room without picking the lock or breaking down the door? The Translocator is your man. Want to make a lightning quick exit and be miles away before that hidden explosive charge detonates? The Translocator is right for the job. Need to avoid an outer wall and electronic security measures? Call a Translocator. Looking for someone to do a little stealthy advance scouting or to be able to open a backdoor where none actually exists? You get the idea. Of course, the character does have his limits. In many cases the mage needs to

have visited the location to access it again. Furthermore, most of the more impressive means of magical transportation cost a great deal of P.P.E., which means the Translocator may only have enough mystic power to make a one way trip, or to pop in using one kind of spell and exit via another, less convenient method. Then again, there are a number of *travel* magicks that are simple but surprisingly effective and cost little P.P.E. For example, Flying spells, Escape, Levitation and Superhuman Speed can be very handy, and even Teleport: Simple and Time Slip don't cost more than 20 P.P.E. per use. Furthermore, transportation/travel spells are the character's specialty, and as such, they know how to maximize the effect and use the spells in imaginative and creative ways – like using Levitation and Cloak of Darkness to escape the notice of a patrol or guards, for avoidance is also part of the character's skill in using transportation, travel and movement magicks.

The Translocator is a team-player skilled in coordinating with others and working as a team, and gifted with impeccable timing (characters who are also Minor or Major Psychics will have Sense Time as one of their abilities). Yet, though they most frequently work with a partner or in a team, Translocators can also be lone wolves using their unique powers to come and go as they please. In the 'Burbs, these characters seem to appear and vanish at will. Even lone wolves tend to work with City Rats or have a number of informants scattered across the 'Burbs. True to their name, the Translocator is always on the go, and never feels comfortable or safe when stuck in any one place or a regular routine.

Vanguard Translocator O.C.C. Special Abilities

1. **Sense Ley Line and Magic Energy.** The Translocator is more attuned to ley lines than most of his Vanguard compatriots and can clearly see magic energy emanating even from the weakest ley lines invisible to the human eye. Likewise, he can see invisible magic energy (P.P.E.) radiating from living beings, enchanted/magic objects, Techno-Wizard devices, and supernatural creatures. This is not an ability to see auras, but to actually see mystic energy waves. This power is similar to the Ley Line Walker and Dog Boy, enabling the character to feel the presence of magic. All the following sensing abilities are automatic powers and do not require the expenditure of P.P.E.

Sense ley line: The character can feel when a ley line is within the area of his sensing abilities, 10 miles (16 km) per level of experience, and can tell whether it is near or far. He can also follow the feeling to locate the ley line at a skill level of 40% +5% per each additional level of experience.

Sense ley line nexus: Once the ley line has been found, the character can follow the ley line to as many nexus points as it intersects. Skill level is 50% +5% per each additional level of experience.

Sense Rift: The mage will automatically feel the sensation of a Rift opening anywhere within a 40 mile area (64 km) +5 miles (8 km) per each additional level of experience. Although he cannot tell exactly where this Rift is, the Translocator knows if it is near or far, big or small, and if someone or something is currently going in or out of the dimensional portal. Unlike others, the Translocator can also sense when a dimensional portal is about to shift to a differ-

ent dimension or location (30 second warning), and if it is someplace he has visited in the past, he'll know it.

Sense magic in use: The expenditure of magic in the form of a spell, Rifting, a Techno-Wizard device, etc., can be felt, if not seen, up to 200 feet (61 m) away per every level of experience. The character does not know the location nor is he able to trace the energy to its source, but he will feel it and know that magic is being used in the area of his sensing range. **Note:** This does *not* include the use of psionic powers.

See magic energy: The character can see magic energy/P.P.E. radiating from people, creatures, objects, and areas, as long as more than 20 P.P.E. points are present. Unlike the Ley Line Walker, the sensing ability is *not* so acute that the character can see things made invisible by magic and invisible things that are magic, including many supernatural creatures. **Range:** Line of sight; about 1000 feet (305 m) without obstructions.

2. **Ley Line Transmission.** Like the Ley Line Walker, the mage can send a verbal and/or audio message directly along a ley line to another person so long as that person is located somewhere on the line. The best messages are brief ones of under a hundred words to avoid overwhelming the recipient. Unfortunately, the message is a one way transmission unless the other person is also a Line Walker or other mage with the Transmission spell. Range is limited only by the length of the ley line and the people's position on the line. The time lapse between sending and receiving a ley line transmission is only a matter of seconds. The message can be sent to several people (one person per level of experience) at different locations, as long as they are all on the ley line.

The only danger is that a Telepath (psionic or magic) may be able to listen in on the message. There is a 1-20% chance that any psionic or magic character with Telepathy will sense a ley line transmission coming through, and there is a 1-31% chance that they too can receive the message. There is no way for the sender to know if others have eavesdropped on his message. Nor is there any way to scramble the message. This power is an automatic ability for the wizard and does not require the expenditure of personal P.P.E.

3. **Ley Line Rejuvenation.** The character can absorb ley line energy to *double* the rate of natural healing. To do this the character must concentrate and relax on a ley line, letting the mystic energy fill him and heal him over a period of days. The wizard can also perform an instant rejuvenation as often as once every 24 hours at the site of a ley line. After about ten minutes of concentration, the character is completely rested, alert, and 2D6 Hit Points and 2D6 S.D.C. are restored. No personal P.P.E. is expended.
4. **Ley Line Phasing.** Like the Ley Line Walker, the Translocator has the ability to instantly teleport from one place on a specific ley line to another place on the same ley line or a connecting line. To initiate a ley line phase/teleport, the mage must concentrate, opening himself to the ley line energy and focusing his all of his thoughts to the task of teleporting to a new location. Engaging in conversation or combat, even self defense, will break the concentration and force the mage to start over. The process requires 1D4 melee rounds (15 to 60 seconds) every time a phase is done. The teleport is always on target, because the character is one with

the ley line and will appear exactly at the point along the ley line he desires (whether he has ever been there before or not). However, there is no way that the character can know what else is also presently in that area, and he could phase right into the middle of an armed camp or pack of hungry wolves.

Phasing is done at no P.P.E. cost, but it does take its toll on the body. The maximum number of phasing possible is four times per hour. The maximum number of phasing for a Translocator in a 24 hour period is eight plus one per each level of experience.

The only other phasing limitations are: 1. That the character can only teleport himself and his possessions, nobody else (due to the intermingling with the ley line energy). 2. The locations to where one can teleport must be along the same ley line (directly on the path of the ley line), like a mystic rail way. To switch to a different line, the character must travel to the junction point and change direction at a ley line nexus, the point where several different ley lines cross paths.

5. **Line Drifting.** The Translocator can open himself to the ley line energies and walk or float through the air along the length of the ley line. The speed factor is a mere Spd 10, but is relaxing and requires no exertion. As usual, the mage does not need to expend any personal P.P.E., but draws on the existing energy of the line.

Note: The Translocator does not have the following Ley Line Walker abilities: Read Ley Lines and Ley Line Observation Ball.

6. **Special Streetwise Location Skill.** The Translocator has the standard Streetwise ability including Streetwise: Drugs with a +15% bonus. Tied in with that skill is a keen understanding and memory of the streets, back alleys and little known nooks and crannies of the 'Burbs. All of which are places the character can teleport to without fear of failure. As part of the Streetwise skill, the character also knows what the general neighborhood is like (wealthy or poor, safe or dangerous, bustling with people or deserted at various times of the day, etc.), as well as regular routines and notable people, troublemakers, friends, businesses and places to hide in the area. Roll as Streetwise skill +20% in the 'Burb where the character has lived most of his life (and was probably born and raised); +10% in the surrounding 'Burbs and places where the wizard may be assigned to infiltrate or live undercover for more than six months, and +5% in a city or town anywhere else in the world. Remember, the Vanguard originate from Chi-Town and 85% still live in, and operate from, the Chi-Town 'Burbs. Even the 15% on assignment away from the Chi-Town 'Burbs consider them to be their true home.

7. **Initial Spell Knowledge.** The pursuit of magic is a means to utilize natural energy and direct it with one's own mental abilities. The focus of the Translocator is travel and movement.

Starts with the following spells: Armor of Ithan (10), Chameleon (6), Climb (3), Cloak of Darkness (6), D-Step (50), Escape (8), Featherlight (10), Lantern Light (1), Levitation (5), Manipulate Objects (2+), Throwing Stones (5), Float in Air (5), Fly (15), Fly as the Eagle (25), Invisibility Simple (6), Mystic Fulcrum (5), Mystic Portal (60), Superhuman Speed (10), Superhuman Endurance (12), Swim as a Fish (6), Teleport: Lesser (15), Tongues (12), and Re-Open Gateway (180).

8. Learning New Spells. Select 1D4 new spells per each new level of experience (starting at level two) from those listed here.

Dimensional/Transportation-Based Magic: Astral Hole (120), Bottomless Pit (100), Circle of Travel (600), Dimensional Portal (1000), Dimensional Teleport (800), Ley Line Fade (20), Ley Line Ghost (80/240), Ley Line Phantom (40), Ley Line Time Flux (80), Ley Line Transmission (30), Phantom Mount (45), Plane Skip (65), Rift Teleportation (200), Rift to Limbo (160), Speed of the Snail (50), Speed Weapon (100), Swallowing Rift (150 for this character), Swap Places (300), Swim as a Fish: Superior (12), Telekinesis (8), Teleport: Superior (600), Time Hole (210), Time Slip (20), Transferal (50), Warped Space (90), Winged Flight (35), and any Temporal Magic spells.

9. Magic Bonuses. +2 to save vs Horror Factor, +2 to save vs possession, +1 to save vs magic at levels 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15, +1 to Spell Strength (the number others must save against when you cast a spell) at levels 3, 6, 9, and 12.

10. P.P.E.: Like all men of magic, the character is a living battery of mystic energy that he can draw upon to create magic. **Permanent Base P.P.E.:** 2D6x10 +P.E. attribute number. Add 3D6 P.P.E. per each additional level of experience. The mage can also draw P.P.E. from ley lines, nexus points, blood sacrifices, and other people whenever available.

Vanguard Translocator O.C.C. Stats

Alignment: Any, but many Vanguard are Unprincipled, Anarchist or Aberrant. Remember, they are human supremacists who share the same beliefs as the Coalition States, so they are similar in conduct and attitude to the Coalition soldier and police.

Attribute Requirements: M.E. and P.E. of 11 or higher. A high I.Q. is helpful, but not mandatory.

O.C.C. Skills:

Basic Math (+25%)

Advanced Math (+10%)

Climb (+5%)

Running or Swimming (pick one)

Navigation (+15%)

Land Navigation (+20%)

Wilderness Survival (+5%)

Find Contraband (+10%)

Lore: Cities (+5%)

Literate in American (+15%)

Speaks Dragonese/Elven and one language of choice (+25%).

W.P. one of choice (any except Heavy Weapons).

Hand to Hand: Basic; cannot be changed.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select two Piloting skills of choice and a total of six other skills from any of the available skill categories listed below. Select one additional skill at levels 4, 8, and 12. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+10%).

Cowboy: None.

Domestic: Any.

Electrical: Basic only.

Espionage: Detect Ambush (+10%) and Tracking (+5%) only.

Mechanical: Basic and Automotive only.

Medical: None.

Military: None.

Physical: Any except Boxing, Wrestling, Acrobatics and Gymnastics.

Pilot: Any.

Pilot Related: Any (+5%).

Rogue: Prowl only (+5%).

Science: Astronomy and Advance Math only.

Technical: Any (+5%).

W.P.: Any, except Sharpshooting, Heavy Weapons and Heavy Energy Weapons.

Wilderness: Any (+5%).

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select two Secondary Skills from the categories listed above at levels 1, 5 and 10. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parentheses. All start at the base skill level.

Standard Equipment: Prefers hooded cloak (any color; typically made of light M.D.C. fabric from the New West and available from the Black Market; typically has 18+1D6 M.D.C.). Hooded robe or cape, ski mask, floppy hat, weapon/ ammo belt and holster, utility waist belt with many pouches, bandoleer, one or two belts for strapping to the thigh for additional equipment or shoulder holster/belt, boots with straps to hold and conceal extra weapons, tools and gear), traditional Ley Line Walker garb, a set of civilian clothing, non-metal body armor that does not interfere with magic (30-45 M.D.C. for non-magic armors, 70-90 for magic suits of armor), sunglasses or tinted goggles, backpack, duffle bag, suitcase, one small sack, two medium and two large sacks, compass, laser distancer, silver cross, pocket mirror, pocket computer, disk recorder/player, canteen, binoculars, air filter and gas mask, small flashlight, book of matches, 1D4+2 markers or pens, 1D6 pieces of white chalk, a flare, one note or sketch pad, and language translator or field radio. The character may use magic items, but doesn't start with any.

Weapons: Only a few basic odds and ends like an energy pistol, Vibro-Knife and a silver-plated dagger. All weapons have 1D4 extra ammo clips. However, any weapons may be acquired or used by the character, and NPCs may have magic weapons or other special equipment.

Vehicle: Hovercycle, a mechanical horse or live horse. Also uses foot power; works great in the crowded 'Burbs.

Money: Starts with 1D6x1000 in credits and 1D6x1000 in black market items.

Cybernetics: None and tries to avoid any cybernetic augmentation because it interferes with magic. Will use Bio-Systems when necessary.

Level of Experience for NPCs: 1D6+3





Vanguard Mystic Spy O.C.C.

A Mystic is a mixed character class that combines magic and psionics. Unlike the highly disciplined Ley Line Walker and most other practitioners of magic, the Mystic's powers are based on intuition and mental focus. Consequently, the character can sense different aspects of, and occurrences happening in, the physical and metaphysical world. The intuitive nature of the Mystic's power means that they simply accept suddenly knowing something, and have learned to trust their feelings. This also means that most Mystics ignore formal education in favor of following their own cosmic path. Most believe that too much education creates walls that block one from the natural psychic emanations and deaden's one to the true world around them. They also believe that too much reliance on technology will have the same effect. Consequently, a Mystic will avoid relying on advanced weapons and machines as well as avoid cybernetic, bionic, and all other forms of human augmentation. That having been said, the Mystic will use basic tools, computers, energy weapons, body armor and basic vehicle, like a robot horse, hovercycle or car.

An individual hones his abilities by studying philosophy, meditation, and opening his mind and body to the world, but most Mystics will tell you that one does not learn to become a Mystic, but is born with the "gift."

The focus and orientation of the Mystic Spy is stealth, intelligence gathering and espionage. The Vanguard Mystic Spy is unique, however, because his psychic and magical powers are

more evenly divided, with more psionics and less magic than the traditional Mystic or the Mystic Thief.

Like the VE Agent, the Spy gathers information, follows and observes suspicious characters and known enemies of the Coalition States and engages in acts of sabotage and combat. However, the character's psychic abilities make the Mystic Spy better suited for dealing with alien and supernatural beings.

Vanguard Mystic Spy Special Abilities

Psionic Powers:

1. **Sense Supernatural Evil.** The Mystic Spy is keenly aware of the world around him, thus, he or she feels or senses major psychic, magic or supernatural disturbances nearby. One such disturbance is the presence of supernatural evil. All supernatural beings radiate their alignment; most are evil. The Mystic can feel that evil like an icy chill cutting through him. The sensation is unmistakable, costs no I.S.P., and is automatic, meaning that the character does not have to concentrate or focus himself to sense evil. The evil essence will just wash over the character, warning him like an alarm.

The sensation is very general, alerting the Mystic Spy to the presence of supernatural evil, but not specific data. Thus, he won't know what type of supernatural being or its intentions or its exact location. However, he will know whether the being is near or far, a horrible evil or lesser evil. **Range:** 300 feet (91.5 m) plus 10 feet (3 m) per each additional level of experience.

Along these same lines, the Mystic Spy can sense when another character is *possessed* by a supernatural force, as well as recognize magic enchantment. **Base Ability:** 50% +5% per each additional level of experience.

2. **Starting Psionics for the Mystic Spy:** Alter Aura (2), Detect Psionics (6), Resist Fatigue (4), Deaden Pain (4), Deaden Senses (4), Death Trance (1), Intuitive Combat (10), Mask P.P.E. (4), Object Read (6), Sense Time (2), See the Invisible (4), Telepathy (4) and three of choice selected from the Physical or Sensitive category.

At levels 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, and 13 the Mystic Spy can choose one additional ability from the Super-Psionics category (Mentally Possess Others is a powerful tool for a spy) or a total of two selected from the Healing, Physical or Sensitive category.

3. **I.S.P.:** Roll 1D6x10+12 plus the character's M.E. attribute number to determine the base Inner Strength Points. The Mystic Spy is considered a Major Psychic and receives an additional 1D6+2 I.S.P. per each additional level of experience.
4. **Psychic Bonuses:** As a Major Psychic, the character needs a 12 or higher to save vs psionic attacks. In addition, the character is +1 to save vs psionics at levels 4, 9, and 13, and +2 to save vs possession.

Magic Abilities:

1. **Initial Spell Knowledge.** The Mystic Spy's spell knowledge, like everything else, comes from within the character himself on an intuitive level. In this case the character's orientation is espionage, and the spells reflect that intense focus.

At first level the Mystic Spy has the powers of Armor Bizarre (15), Chameleon (6), Cloud of Smoke (2), Energy Bolt (5) Fear (5), Invisibility: Simple (6), Lantern Light (1), Levitation (5), Mask of Deceit (15), Paralysis: Lesser (5), and Sense Magic.

2. **Learning New Spells.** The Mystic Spy intuitively senses when he or she has reached a new metaphysical plateau (new level of experience), and at each new junction in life (experience level) the character finds the time to meditate on life, his goals, and magic.

At each new level of experience the Mystic Spy can select one new spell from Invocations Levels 1-6 or one of following. Once *selected* they can not be changed. Enemy Mind (100), Eyes of the Wolf (25), Forcebonds (25), Globe of Silence (20), Heal Self (20), Invisibility: Superior (20), Invulnerability (25), Ley Line Fade (20), Lightblade (30), Lightning Arc (30), Locate (30), Metamorphosis: Animal (25), Mystic Portal (60), Power Weapon (35), See in Magic Darkness (125), Wall of Wind (40), and Wind Rush (20).

Note: Unlike other magic O.C.C.s, the Mystic Spy can not be taught nor purchase additional spell knowledge. In fact, the character never even tries to learn additional spells, knowing he doesn't have the mastery of magic to go beyond this point, and the Mystic accepts this without question or regret. May use Techno-Wizard devices, magic scrolls and other magic items.

3. **P.P.E.** Like all men of magic, the Mystic is a living battery of mystic energy that he can draw on to create magic. **Permanent Base P.P.E.:** 1D6x10 plus P.E. attribute number. Add 1D6+2 P.P.E. per additional level of experience. The Mystic Spy can also draw P.P.E. from ley lines and nexus points, but not other people.
4. **Magic Bonuses.** +3 to save vs Horror Factor, +1 to save vs magic at levels 2, 4, 8, and 12. +1 to Spell Strength (the number others must save against when you cast a spell) at levels 4, 8, and 12.

Vanguard Mystic Spy O.C.C. Stats

Alignment: Any, but many Vanguard are Unprincipled, Anarchist or Aberrant. Remember, though, they have the same beliefs as the Coalition States so they are similar in conduct and attitude to the Coalition soldier and police.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. and M.E. of 10 or higher. A high M.A. and P.E. is helpful, but not mandatory.

O.C.C. Skills:

Basic Math (+30%)
Climbing (+10%)
Basic Electronics (+10%)
Escape Artist (+10%)
Find Contraband (+10%)
Land Navigation (+12%)
Prowl (+10%)
Radio: Basic (+10%)
Recognize Weapon Quality (+15%)
Seduction (+10%)
Tracking (+15%)

Literate in American and one language of choice (+15%).

Speaks two additional languages of choice (+15% each).

W.P. one Ancient of choice (any).

W.P. one Modern of choice (any).

Hand to Hand: Martial Arts; cannot be changed.

- O.C.C. Related Skills:** Select two skills from the category of Communications or Military, three from the Espionage or Rogue category and three from any other available skill category listed below. Select one additional skill at levels 3, 6, and 9. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+10%).

Cowboy: None.

Domestic: Any.

Electrical: Automotive only.

Espionage: Any (+10%).

Mechanical: Basic only.

Medical: First Aid or Paramedic only (the latter counts as two skills, +5%).

Military: Any (+5%).

Physical: Any.

Pilot: Any.

Pilot Related: Any.

Rogue: Any (+5%).

Science: Math only.

Technical: Any (+5%).

W.P.: Any.

Wilderness: Any.

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select two Secondary Skills from the categories listed above at levels 1, 4, 8 and 12. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parentheses. All start at the base skill level.

Standard Equipment: Long coat or hooded cloak (any color; typically made of light M.D.C. fabric from out of the New West and available from the Black Market; typically has 14+1D6 M.D.C.; also has 1D4+1 interior pockets). Hooded robe or cape with 1D6+2 interior pockets (and two concealed pockets), set of "working clothes" (black or dark blue colored jumpsuit, ski mask, weapon/ammo belt and holster, fancy utility waist belt, one or two belts for strapping to the thigh for additional equipment or shoulder holster/belt, boots with straps to hold and conceal extra tools, weapons, or stolen goods), sunglasses or goggles, set of civilian clothing, non-metal body armor that does not interfere with magic (30-45 M.D.C. for non-magic armors, 70-90 for magic suits of armor), backpack, duffle bag, two small sacks, two medium sacks, two large sacks, silver cross, pocket mirror, digital laser distancer, canteen, passive nightvision binoculars, air filter and gas mask, pen flashlight, 1D4 markers or mechanical pencils, a note or sketch pad, pocket digital camera, pocket disk recorder/player, and a language translator or RMK Robot Medical Kit. Likes Techno-Wizard items and other types of magic items, but doesn't start with any.

Weapons: Anything. Typically starts off with an M.D. pistol, energy rifle, Vibro-Blade, S.D.C. pistol and 1D4+1 extra ammo clips for each weapon. However, any weapons may be

acquired or used by the character over time and NPCs may have special, rare or magical weapons.

Vehicle: None. Foot power works great in the crowded 'Burbs.

Money: Starts with 1D6x1000 in credit and 1D6x1000 in black market items.

Cybernetics: None and tries to avoid any cybernetic augmentation because it interferes with magic. Will use Bio-Systems when necessary.

Level of Experience for NPCs: 1D6+3

Vanguard

Mystic Thief O.C.C.

The focus and orientation of the Mystic Thief O.C.C. is using his psionic powers and magic for stealing, concealment, forgery, breaking and entry, and getting away. Though any Vanguard *may* rob and steal, this individual is a professional expert at stealing, making forgeries (often replacing an original with a fake that may go unnoticed for months), stealing evidence, planting false evidence to frame somebody or remove suspicion from himself or the Vanguard society, and similar things. Again, the career/mission or focus of the character is what distinguishes the Vanguard Mystic Thief from other practitioners of magic drawing from the same pool of magical invocations.

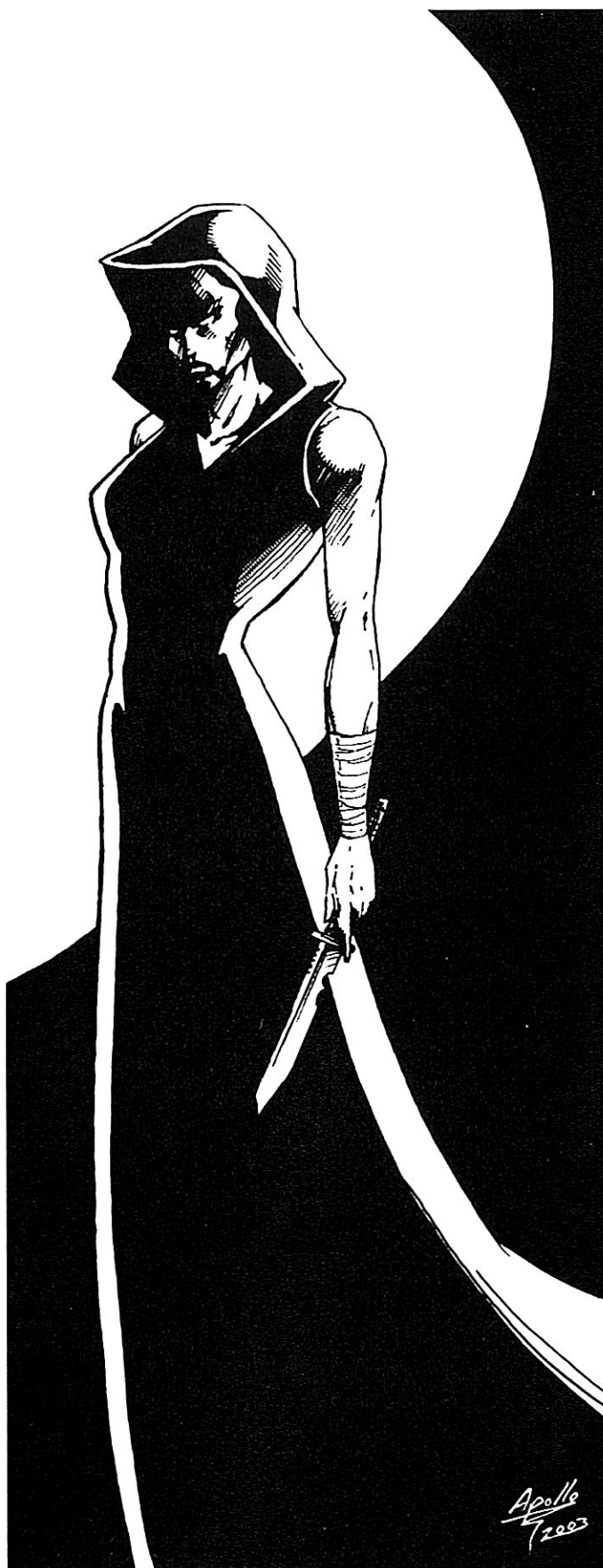
When not operating alone Vanguard, Thieves often work in concert with a VE Agent, Translocator or Mystic Spy. The Thief may be charged with acquiring specific weapons, magic items, valuables or evidence on the behalf of the secret society – or to prevent other parties from getting, or holding onto, articles the Vanguard deem they should not. The Mystic Thief is also charged with helping to provide revenue for the organization (20% to the Thief, 80% to the secret society) by stealing credit cards, jewelry, magic items, contraband and other resalable goods. They may also engage in blackmail and extortion, provided it does not draw attention to the organization.

The Vanguard Mystic Thief always has ties and connections to the criminal underworld, the Black Market, and groups of mercenaries, adventurers and D-Bees, all of whom are used as pawns, fences and clients. Such “clients” may be reliable purchasers of weapons, magic, contraband or information, and freelancers who can be hired to go adventuring or to do thug-work or operate as (willing or unwitting) mules for delivering contraband, as well as informants, snitches and stool pigeons always willing to sell or trade information.

The Mystic Thief's knowledge of formal magic is basic and limited at best, but his unique combination of psionics and magic makes the character a force to be reckoned with. Training (skills) and focus (the types of magic spells and application of psionics) on thievery and chicanery more than makes up for any shortfalls in his magic abilities.

Though the Mystic Thief may associate with his share of lowlifes and brigands, they despise demon worshipers, death cultists and practitioners of magic who willingly associate with or give themselves to evil supernatural forces. This includes the Witch, Shifter, and Necromancer, as well as actual demonic be-

ings and most creatures of magic, like dragons. As a “known criminal” in the 'Burb underworld, however, the Mystic Thief usually hides this disdain for disreputable sorcerers and nonhumans, so he can get in with them, learn their plans and se-



crets, and either undermine them directly or alert other Vanguard so they can (the Mystic Thief pretending to be an innocent victim of a hate group, like the rest of his inhuman buddies, only he just happens to get away). The same strategy and tactic used with D-Bees and anti-Coalition forces. Thus, the Mystic Thief needs to develop a thick skin, because he is likely to associate with D-Bees and all manner of unsavory characters in the line of duty. To better accomplish this, many Mystic Thieves pose as ordinary crooks or freelance Mystics or Ley Line Walkers with a taste for larceny. Those who pretend not to possess magic (or psionics) use their special abilities only when their "associates" aren't looking or to bushwhack them at a later time. The way most Vanguard Mystic Thieves look at it, to be the best, one must wallow in slop with the pigs to find pearls and to butcher the swine before they know what hit them.

Mystic Thieves adore magic and will try to amass a nice collection of Techno-Wizard devices, magic items and even Rune Weapons and alien magic. However, they are equally comfortable with technology and tend to prefer Coalition (or CS-based) weapons, vehicles and equipment. Small, light weapons, easy to conceal, are their favorites, though some (about 10-15%) pride themselves on relying on nothing but their wits, magic and psionics. The most cunning and treacherous are always ready to exploit an opportunity when one presents itself, and just as quick to blame or frame the other guy when someone points an accusing finger in his direction.

Vanguard Mystic Thief O.C.C. Special Abilities

Psionic Powers:

1. **Sense Supernatural Evil.** The Mystic Thief is keenly aware of the world around him, thus, he or she feels or senses major psychic, magic or supernatural disturbances nearby. One such disturbance is the presence of supernatural evil. All supernatural beings radiate their alignment; most are evil. The Mystic Thief can feel that evil like an icy chill cutting through him. The sensation is unmistakable, costs no I.S.P., and is automatic, meaning that the character does not have to concentrate or focus himself to sense evil. The evil essence will just wash over the character, warning him like an alarm.

The sensation is very general, alerting the Mystic Thief to the presence of supernatural evil, but not specific data. Thus, he won't know what type of supernatural being or its intentions or its exact location. However, he will know whether the being is near or far, a horrible evil or lesser evil. **Range:** 300 feet (91.5 m) plus 10 feet (3 m) per each additional level of experience.

Along these same lines, the character can sense when another character is *possessed* by a supernatural force, as well as recognize magic enchantment. **Base Ability:** 50% +5% per each additional level of experience.

2. **Starting Psionics for the Mystic Thief:** Alter Aura (2), Object Read (6), Presence Sense (4), Remote Viewing (10), Sense Time (2), Telekinesis (varies), Telekinetic Leap (8), Telemechanics (10) and three of choice selected from the Physical or Sensitive category. **Note:** Rather than being able to open himself to the supernatural, like the true Mystic, this character gets a few additional psionic powers. Cannot open himself to the supernatural.

At levels 4, 7, 10, and 13, the Mystic Thief can select one additional ability from the Super-Psionic category or two from the Physical or Sensitive category.

3. **I.S.P.:** Roll 1D4x10 plus the character's M.E. attribute number to determine the base Inner Strength Points. The Mystic Thief is considered a Major Psychic and receives an additional 1D6+1 I.S.P. per each additional level of experience.
4. **Psychic Bonuses:** As a Major Psychic, the character needs a 12 or higher to save vs psionic attacks. In addition, the character is +1 to save vs psionics at levels 4, 9, and 13, and +2 to save vs possession.

Magic Abilities:

1. **Initial Spell Knowledge.** The Mystic Thief's spell knowledge, like everything else, comes from within the character himself on an intuitive level. In this case the character's orientation is thievery, and the spells reflect that intense focus.

At first level the Mystic Thief has the powers of Armor of Ithan (10), Climb (3), Cloak of Darkness (6), Charismatic Aura (10), Cleanse (6), Concealment (6), Detect Concealment (6), Escape (8), Fool's Gold (10), Invisibility: Simple (6), Lantern Light (1), Levitation (5), Manipulate Objects (2+), and See the Invisible (4).

2. **Learning New Spells.** The Mystic Thief intuitively senses when he or she has reached a new metaphysical plateau (new level of experience), and at each new junction in life (experience level) the character finds the time to meditate on life, his goals, and magic.

At each new level of experience the Mystic Thief can select two new spells from the following list. These are part of the mystic's permanent spell casting capabilities, once *selected* they can not be changed. Blinding Flash (1), Calling (8), Chameleon (6), Charismatic Aura (10), Cloud of Smoke (2), Distant Voice (10), Eyes of Thoth (8), Extinguish Fire (4), Fear (5), Featherlight (10), Fingers of the Wind (5), Fly (15), Fuel Flame (5), Fire Bolt (7), Float in Air (5), Fly (15), Frequency Jamming (15), Impervious to Fire (5), Impervious to Poison (5), Light Healing (6), Locate (30), Globe of Daylight (2), Globe of Silence (20), Magic Net (7), Magic Shield (6), Mental Blast (15), Multiple Image (7), Mystic Alarm (5), Mystic Fulcrum (5), Reduce Self (20), Repel Animals (7), See Aura (6), See in Magic Darkness (125), Seal (7), Shatter (5), Shadow Meld (10), Sleep (10), Swim as the Fish (6), Teleport: Lesser (15), Thunder Clap (4), Throwing Stones (5), Tongues (12), Turn Dead (6), and Water to Wine (40).

Note: Unlike other magic O.C.C.s, the Mystic Thief cannot be taught nor purchase additional spell knowledge. In fact, the character never even tries to learn additional spells, knowing he doesn't have the mastery of magic to go beyond this point, and the Mystic Thief accepts this without question or regret. May use Techno-Wizard devices, magic scrolls and other magic items..

3. **P.P.E.** Like all men of magic, the Mystic Thief is a living battery of mystic energy that he can draw on to create magic. **Permanent Base P.P.E.:** 1D4x10+18 plus P.E. attribute number. Add 1D6+1 P.P.E. per additional level of experience. The Mystic Thief can also draw P.P.E. from ley lines and nexus points, but not other people.

4. **Magic Bonuses.** +2 to save vs Horror Factor, +1 to save vs magic at levels 2, 4, 8, and 12. +1 to Spell Strength (the number others must save against when you cast a spell) at levels 4, 8, and 12.

Vanguard Mystic Thief O.C.C. Stats

Alignment: Any, but typically Unprincipled, Anarchist, Miscreant or Aberrant. Remember, though, they have the same beliefs as the Coalition States so they are similar in conduct and attitude to the Coalition soldier and police.

Attribute Requirements: M.E. and P.P. 12 or higher. A high I.Q. and P.E. are helpful, but not mandatory.

O.C.C. Skills:

Art (+15%)

Basic Math (+30%)

Calligraphy or Dance (+10% for either).

Climbing (+10%)

Basic Electronics (+10%)

Escape Artist (+15%)

Gemology (+10%)

Find Contraband (+20%)

Forgery (+20%)

Palming (+20%)

Pick Locks (+15%)

Pick Pockets (+10%)

Prowl (+15%)

Literate in American and one language of choice (+15%).

Speaks two additional languages of choice (+15% each).

W.P. one Ancient of choice (any).

W.P. one Modern of choice (any, except Heavy Weapons, Heavy Energy Weapons and Sharpshooter).

Hand to Hand: Basic, but it can be changed to Expert for the cost of one O.C.C. Related Skill.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select two skills from each of the following categories: Communications or Domestic, Espionage, and Rogue, and three from any other available skill category listed below. Select one additional skill at levels 3, 6, 9 and 12. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+5%).

Cowboy: None.

Domestic: Any.

Electrical: None.

Espionage: Any (+5%).

Mechanical: Basic only.

Medical: First Aid or Paramedic only (the latter counts as two skills, +5%).

Military: None.

Physical: Any except Wrestling, Acrobatics and Gymnastics.

Pilot: Any.

Pilot Related: Any.

Rogue: Any (+10%).

Science: Any.

Technical: Any (+10%).

W.P.: Any.

Wilderness: Any.

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select two Secondary Skills from the categories listed above at levels 1, 4, 8 and 12. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parentheses. All start at the base skill level.

Standard Equipment: Long coat or hooded cloak (any color; typically made of light M.D.C. fabric from out of the New West and available from the Black Market; typically has 14+1D6 M.D.C.; also has 1D4+1 interior pockets). Hooded robe or cape with 1D6+2 interior pockets (and two concealed pockets), set of "working clothes" (dark red or other dark colored jumpsuit, ski mask, weapon/ammo belt and holster, fancy utility waist belt, one or two belts for strapping to the thigh for additional equipment or shoulder holster/belt, boots with straps to hold and conceal extra tools, weapons, or stolen goods, sunglasses or tinted goggles), set of disguise clothing, set of civilian clothing, non-metal body armor that does not interfere with magic (30-45 M.D.C. for non-magic armors, 70-90 for magic suits of armor), backpack, duffle bag, three small sacks, two medium sacks, two large sacks, silver cross, pocket mirror, digital laser distancer, canteen, passive nightvision binoculars, sunglasses or goggles (an extra pair), air filter and gas mask, pen flashlight, 1D6+2 markers, pens or pencils, 1D4 note or sketch pads, digital camera, and a language translator or two small, short-range communicators (6 mile/9.6 km range). Thieves like Techno-Wizard items and other types of magic items, but don't start with any.

Weapons: Prefers small, close quarter weapons that are easy to conceal on one's body or hide in a jacket, backpack, purse, desk drawer, etc. Typically starts with a high-tech, M.D. pistol that has good stopping power, a Vibro-Knife, one or two other S.D.C. daggers, a silver plated dagger and an S.D.C. pistol or revolver with 1D4 extra clips for each weapon. However, any weapons may be acquired or used by the character over time.

Vehicle: None. Foot power works great in the crowded 'Burbs.

Money: Starts with 1D6x1000 in credits and 2D6x1000 in black market items.

Cybernetics: None and tries to avoid any cybernetic augmentation because it interferes with magic. Will use Bio-Systems when necessary.

Level of Experience for NPCs: 1D6+4



Firetown, Part Three

A. Abandoned Buildings

Any structure on the map indicated with an "A" without an accompanying description is an abandoned building – 70% are empty two story warehouses, 10% are empty three story warehouses, 10% are empty two story office buildings and 10% are two to four story condemned apartment buildings (typically the larger buildings).

Abandoned warehouse buildings are often in surprisingly good condition. Most have 1000 to 2000 square feet (93x186 m) of office area (4-10 offices with one or two of good size, or twice as many small ones). The rest of the building is typically divided into one or two huge open areas where stock is stored. If a machine shop, half is where the equipment goes and the rest is where parts/products are kept.

An empty building for sale or lease may still hold some working machines, office furniture or boxes of supplies and other materials from the old business. These buildings should be in a good state of repair as they sit idle, waiting for the next tenant. Only 15% of the buildings with an "A," however, are considered empty but in excellent condition, ready for a new tenant to move in.

Most abandoned buildings are stripped of anything of value and may be in good to terrible condition. Most are in need of paint and cleaning, have leaking roofs, 1D4x10% of the windows are broken out and half the doors have been pried or kicked open (maybe even removed completely). These buildings are also likely to be used by criminals, fugitives, refugees and vagabonds as places to live or hide. Inside are piles of human waste, paper, food wrappers, rags and garbage cover the filthy blood and urine stained floors, and the walls of the first floor and stair wells are often covered in graffiti.

In addition to the indigents who come to these places for shelter, abandoned buildings are also the meeting places for the exchange of contraband, drugs, and sex, as well as duels, gang fights, vandalism, torture and murder. Bodies are also frequently "tossed" or disposed of in and around abandoned buildings. Buildings in reasonable condition or avoided by the CS can hold 200-1000 squatters, vagabonds and homeless people, 1D4x10+15% of which will be D-Bees, though most, under normal circumstances, hold only 50-100 homeless, double that in winter. However, with the number of refugees coming out of the fallen kingdom of Tolkeen, 400-1200 could be packed into a single building. That's bad news for the people inside, because these crowded conditions make Coalition military raids, purges and roundups easy, like shooting fish in a barrel.

Adventure Hooks: Empty and abandoned buildings are great places for adventure and conflict. Fugitives may try to hide in the ruins or establish a secret lair, weapon or treasure cache, or use them as a meeting place. In heavily occupied buildings, a fugitive may try to lose himself among the masses, or prey upon them with impunity. This means not only are abandoned office and apartment buildings home to refugees, fugitives and low life

criminals, but they are also visited by Bounty Hunters, mercenaries and adventurers looking for specific people.

Cults, gangs, drug dealers, Retribution Squads, bands of thugs, bandits and monsters may all make their homes/lairs in such places or do their business at them. Likewise, dissidents and rabble-rousers may venture inside to recruit henchmen for their cause or to stir up trouble that may result in crime sprees, riots or other forms of violence. As noted earlier, demons and monsters may hide and/or hunt inside them as well.

Empty and deserted warehouses may also be the meeting places of criminals, informants, cultists, practitioners of magic, Rogue Scholars or Scientists, gang members, drug dealers and users, frightened D-Bees, monsters, fugitives, and refugees, as well as the designated locations for gang wars, duels and grudge matches.

They can also be the site for illegal activities like rave dances, gambling operations, boxing matches and gladiatorial games, selling or holding slaves or contraband, vehicle theft rings and chop-shops, secret or religious ceremonies, magic rituals and human sacrifice.

All of the above could attract and involve the player characters. There are opportunities to exploit, people to meet and capture, revenge to be had, treasure or reward to be gained, and clues and intrigue, even romance and redemption to be found. Player characters may tail a villain, monster, criminal or fugitive to such places. Or an innocent person might get kidnaped by one of the unsavory gangs, crooks, lunatics or monsters that live inside an abandoned building, forcing any rescuers to go inside and face the consequences not only from the perpetrator, but other foul villains inside. Or the player characters might need to visit or make a delivery to somebody inside, or find something inside, or rescue somebody inside, and so on. The possibilities and potential are endless. Exploit them.

V. Vanguard Safe Houses

Vanguard safe houses are marked with a "V." These are only some of the more notable ones currently in use as they change every 6-18 months.

All are nondescript places with inhabitants who are friendly but quiet and keep to themselves. In short, a house that seems quiet and ordinary in every way. Nothing to attract attention or seem suspicious. Twenty percent are long established homes (never a business) where the same family has lived for years and years, sometimes generations. Most, however, are rented apartments, flats, and houses picked out of the neighborhood, swept for surveillance devices and inhabited by an undercover agent or group of Vanguard posing as a family or group of friends sharing a flat. Most safe houses have easy access to the street and/or alley with numerous escape routes and/or hiding places in the home or nearby. Though some have secret compartments, false



walls, and hiding places, the majority do not, because if the hiding places were discovered, they'd alert the authorities to something unusual going on.

Roughly one quarter of the safe houses actually have a real family to front for the Vanguard. "Front" is not entirely the right word, because these are usually innocent dupes with no ties to the secret society – people who don't have a clue about what's going on right under their own roof. Thus, a Vanguard may move in to a spare room or an attic or basement apartment of an established (not too nosy) family.

50. Recent Purge Site

Several city blocks have been leveled during a recent *purge* by the Coalition Army. Except for the walls of several buildings that remain standing (and #49; see **Firetown & the Tolkeen Crisis sourcebook**) the neighborhood is gone. Approximately 120 homeless people have taken up residence in the ruins of this part of the purge site, finding shelter from standing walls or living in tents or shacks. A few dozen more people come during the day to dig through the rubble in search of personal belongings and/or the remains of loved ones still missing, buried in the debris. Flocks of crows and swarms of flies, rats, and other vermin infest the area, feeding on the remains of the dead. Local children and the homeless visit to dig for valuables, but this half of the purge site has fewer visitors and squatters than the other. According to the word on the street, people who linger here disappear, never to be seen again, especially at night. Some blame the Vanguard bogeymen, others blame the Splugorth, still others blame demons and monsters.

Rumors for Adventure Hooks: This is the word circulating on the street. All, some or none of them may be true.

1. The CS purged this neighborhood because it was infested with Tolkeen Retribution Squads and Federation of Magic spies. The Coalition found out from the Vanguard! After all, the Vanguard are CS lap dogs and traitors to 'Burbies.

2. The Vanguard lost a couple of their own during the purge as they tried to help save the lives of innocent human families. The Vanguard are heroes, you know.

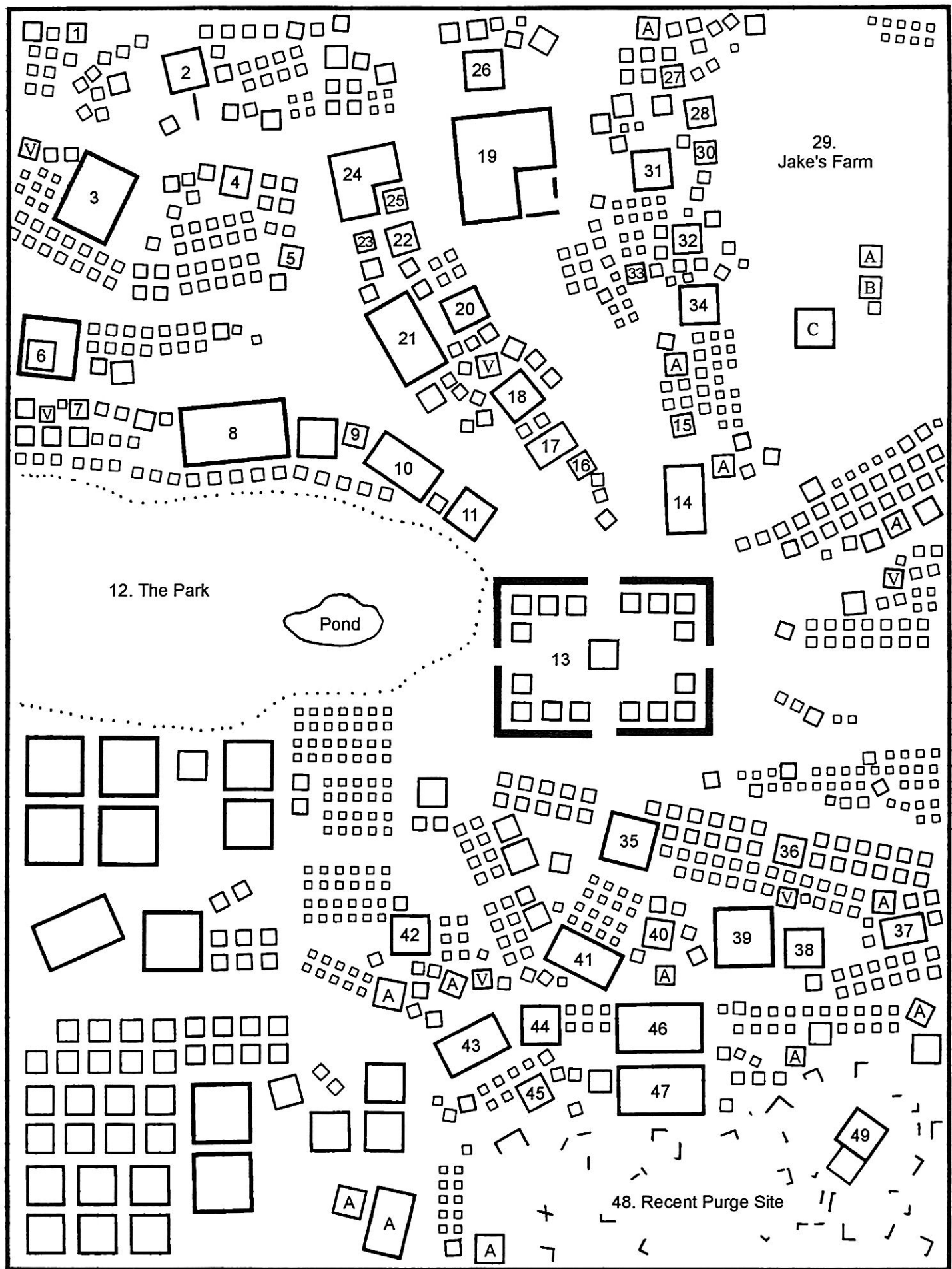
3. A number of Tolkeen Daemonix have taken up residence in the ruins and have dug a network of tunnels underneath the debris as their lair. The CS ignores the rumor. Those who believe the Vanguard are real hope they, or some noble adventurers, will appear to clean out the nest of monsters so honest people can return and rebuild.

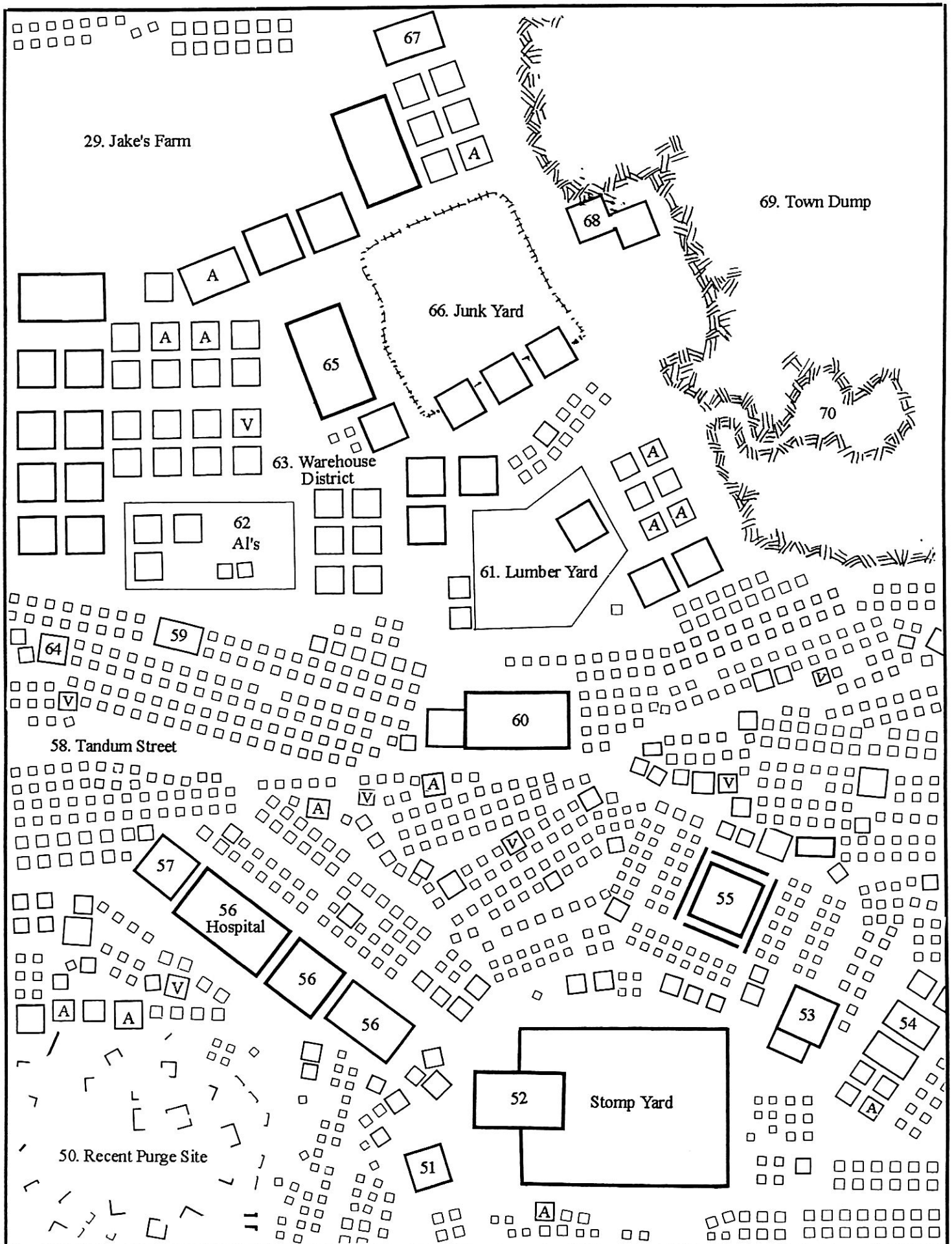
4. Splugorth Slavers are kidnaping people at night from the debris field, figuring nobody will miss these impoverished homeless people.

5. Ghouls and monsters that eat the dead have moved into the purge site.

6. The Black Market is hiding supplies and contraband someplace under the ruins.

7. Retribution Squads are using the area as a dueling ground where they call out and battle Vanguard and others who supported the Coalition and let Tolkeen fall.





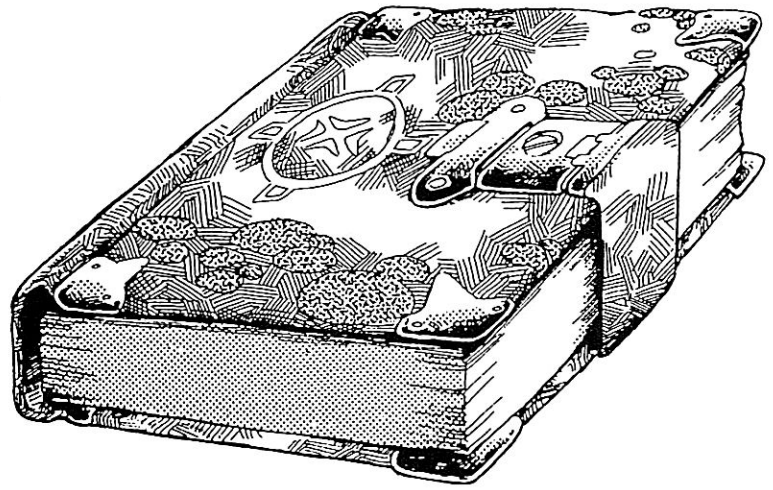
51. The Professor & the Book House

A former assistant professor at Chi-Town University, he simply got fed up with the official party line dictating to him what he could or could not teach. The Professor spoke out against the CS and its educational system a little too loudly, was branded a dissident, and lost his tenure and position at the University. After he sent a bug through the Chi-Town public internet system containing a message condemning the Coalition government, he was subjected to “interrogation and re-education.” Unfortunately, this “re-education” included being “adjusted” by Coalition psychics who tried to Mind Wipe his memory. This process was only partially effective and the Professor still remembers certain things but has forgotten others (including his real name).

After the authorities deemed him no longer a threat to the CS, the Professor was banished from Chi-Town and tossed out into the ‘Burbs. Penniless and sleeping on the streets, the Professor was almost killed by bandits, but was rescued by City Rats from the *Tandum Street Gang*. The leader of these City Rats took a liking to the Professor and the pair soon became fast friends. The City Rat got the Professor hooked up with a Black Market operation that deals in illegal books and other mediums of personal expression. It is the Professor’s job to examine hundreds and skim through scores of books every day, identifying what they are, their relative value and their level of “heat” (i.e., just how explosive the material is, and how badly the CS wants it kept quiet or destroyed). The “hotter” the book, disk or video, the more money it can command in the underground market. The Professor has taken it upon himself to educate a dozen City Rats and many of the children running loose in the streets as his unofficial crew of helpers. This has made him popular among some ‘Burbies and spurned by others, who see the crazy man as nothing but trouble.

Adventure Hooks: 1. Marked for death. One local rumor suggests the recent Coalition purge was really meant to take out the Professor and the Black Market book operation. Somehow the coordinator goofed, and the Book House was missed. Not wanting to cause riots in the streets, the CS has decided to wait until things cool off before arranging an “accident” for the Professor. However, the Professor is under the protection of the *Tandum Street Gang*, as well as the Black Market and some local adventurers, all of whom have sent clear messages to the Coalition authorities that they should leave the Professor alone. At least for the time being, the CS seems to have heard the messages and are keeping their distance, but that doesn’t mean their secret advocates, the Vanguard will do likewise.

Normally, the Vanguard would probably ignore a guy like the Professor, except in this case, there are extenuating circumstances. One is the rumor that among the Professor’s students is a dragon hatchling metamorphed to look like a child – a dragon from Tolkeen who may wish harm on the CS and who may be plotting with the renegade Professor to extract revenge on Chi-Town leaders. Another is that the Professor is reputed to have found a way in and out of Chi-Town (on paper) through the massive vents and tunnels of the lower levels by studying some old city schematics. It is unknown whether or not he remembers this information or whether such a secret passage really even exists (it may have been found and blocked off years ago). Another is that among the Black Market’s stash of books waiting for review by the Professor, are some rare books of



magic. Books smuggled out of Tolkeen and worth a fortune to practitioners of magic because they teach the disciplines of magic and contain a number of working spell invocations (nothing new, and nothing higher than seventh level). Lastly, the Vanguard agree with the Coalition’s secret agenda to keep the masses uneducated (they consider themselves one of the elite exceptions). This “Professor” and the Black Market’s book-ring challenge that fundamental precept and represent a potential threat to the government and CS society.

2. The Professor is a squirrely, middle-aged man who is the stereotypical absentminded professor. He has no genuine understanding of what he is doing, or any allegiance to the Black Market. In his mind, he’s conducting research for the University and teaches youngsters on the side. Consequently, though the Black Market provides for his needs, housing, basic protection, and feeding him, they are using him, playing to his delusions to get him to use his expertise for them. This means the Professor regards most adults as his superiors or fellow professors, will accept anybody (seeing D-Bees as fellow humans), and will examine and translate or present his opinion on any book, computer disk, film or digital recording brought to him, at no charge. He’s just doing his job. This makes him a potential resource for player characters who might hear about him.

3. The Book House where the Professor lives and works is a small, two-story, M.D.C. office building that the Professor thinks is his own special wing at the University. Half the place is empty and deserted, the other half is filled with boxes of incoming (new titles) and outgoing books (i.e., books evaluated by the Professor or his team). Though the Black Market would like to keep him under lock and key, the Tandum Street Gang won’t allow it, so gang members, their friends and family, kids getting tutored, the prof’s helpers and other people are constantly coming and going. In case of serious trouble or a CS raid, there are three Black Market enforcers (5th level) instructed to protect and whisk the Professor out of harm’s way. Another two hang out at the *Coffee Nook*, a dive of a donut and coffee shop across the street. The Tandum Street Gang is also very protective of the addled Professor, members make regular visits and the gang has the Book House under constant surveillance. Armed mercenaries and adventurers are given a careful looking over by both groups, and the scary or menacing looking ones are sent away . . . or else. Since the CS are keeping their distance, almost anything can unfold here without the interference of the authorities. **Note:** The Professor (equal to an 11th

level Rogue Scholar) who is absorbed in “his work,” has food, drink, visitors and every amenity brought to him, so he has no reason to leave the building.

52. The Stomp Yard

The Stomp Yard is a sort of poor man’s race track and sports event arena. It offers a regular schedule of stock car races, motor and hover cycle races, demolition derbies, horse races and even some track and field events and some homespun contests, as well as boxing and wrestling matches, strongman competitions, robot battles (usually unmanned), football, hockey, circus shows, and similar raucous sporting events. It is also host to the occasional loud concert, theatrical play and comedy jam. Basically, if it’s loud and action-packed, it’s held at the Stomp Yard. None of the events are gladiatorial or to the death, though the Stomp Yard has its share of spilled blood, broken bones and brutal roughhousing.

Adventure Hooks: 1. Depending on the event, the noise from the show and/or audience can cover/drown out the sound of duels, gunfights, explosions, raids, etc.

2. The Stomp Yard can be a good place to meet associates, informants, spies, secret contacts, City Rats and underworld figures. Many underworld figures meet here to exchange money or information. This can be done before or during an event (though it may be hard to hear each other talk during). Some select the Stomp Yard when they want to meet at a very *public* place, but the noise level at most events is so loud that a hit man can shoot and kill somebody without anyone realizing it until long minutes after he has vanished into the sea of spectators; 1-4 people in the audience are found murdered at half the events.

There are a half dozen places a person can sneak into the facility after hours (and even during events), and most City Rats and underworld characters know all of them. There is no security to speak of other than locked doors and a feeble alarm system protecting the offices and storage areas, and there’s nothing valuable kept here except stage, audio and lighting equipment (which no Stomp Yard loving fan would ever think of stealing). The bottom line is, the Stomp Yard can be used for illicit meetings and exchanges of cash, info or contraband, or just goofing around.

3. Afterhour events. The local underworld, City Rats, practitioners of magic and adventurers sometimes break into the Stomp Yard to throw a private party, or conduct a meeting, duel, wizard’s duel, summoning, or full scale gang fight. Except for parties that can last till dawn or until somebody in authority shows up to send them scattering, most *battles* don’t last longer than 2-12 minutes. (CS or local authorities typically take 30-90 minutes to respond to trouble here, if they show up at all.) Those conducting serious business (including gangland hits) need to remember that the ‘Burb’s City Rats and other gangs and juveniles frequent the Yard after hours and could be eyewitnesses to their business.

4. The illicit activities and large crowds also attract pick pockets, muggers, and thieves during events. These brigands may randomly victimize anyone attending a show or may have followed a player character or suspected underworld figure, spy, City Rat, Vanguard, etc., with the hope of seeing or overhearing something they can blackmail the individual with, or steal from him.

5. Mysterious deaths, freak occurrences and the discovery of slain or incapacitated sorcerers, supernatural beings and creatures of magic at the Stomp Yard are usually blamed on the Vanguard whether it’s true or not. Why have a bogeyman like the Vanguard if one can’t blame weird stuff on him? Nobody knows if the Vanguard have any official policy about the Stomp Yard or not.

Slum Town

This large residential area of Firetown is almost a separate ‘Burb in and of itself, except it is not self-sufficient and its inhabitants rely on work in Firetown and other ‘Burbs to make ends meet. This large, sprawling neighborhood is a field of tiny and small S.D.C. houses, with a few scattered businesses here and there. It has a reputation for being a sad, squalid slum that is inhospitable to outsiders, including adventurers and heroes. This is where a huge number of Firetown’s poor reside. Despite its unsavory reputation and filthy streets, most of its residents are god fearing, hard working families struggling to put food on their tables and pay the rent.

53. Grandad’s Storage

This building is supposed to be a self-storage complex, but it has been a Black Market book printing plant for 11 years. All kinds of illegal books, including the works of Erin Tarn, have rolled off these presses. If the illiterate neighbors around them have any idea of what the place does, they sure don’t care.

Adventure Hook: 1. Grandad’s has utilized a staff of mages to help make, supply and acquire paper and paper goods for years. The Vanguard must know about the place, but why would they have any interest to infiltrate it, right?

54. An Abandoned Warehouse

It is really a Black Market book distribution and shipping facility. Even though most ‘Burbies and Chi-Town residents are illiterate, there is a big market for books on paper and on computer disk. This is one of the Black Market’s secret warehouse and distribution facilities. Sometimes other goods are held here, too.

Adventure Hooks: 1. If the Coalition authorities find out about this book depository they will certainly raid it. Historically, the Black Market does not put up a big fight when up against the Coalition Army, figuring it’s better to absorb the loss than anger the CS. However, they will engage in a pitched battle with any other force, including spell casting raiders like the Vanguard. **Black Market Note:** The many tentacles of this crime organization have enough information to know the Vanguard are, indeed, real on some level, but they just don’t know how large, or whether the Black Market has been infiltrated by them (and it has). They suspect the Vanguard have hit a number of their operations over the years, particularly those trafficking in books and magic, but don’t know how to hit them back. Oh, they’ve killed a few people they’re certain were Vanguard, and have their eyes on a few others, but even the Black Market has been unable to get a lock on the organization as a whole. Leaders in the Black Market are not happy with the idea that a

super secret society may exist that is as connected as they are and which can hit them with relative impunity. As a result, they are constantly in the market for reliable information on the Vanguard, no matter how trivial or limited it may be. They are also keen on killing Vanguard agents even if it's one by one.

2. The Vanguard know about the warehouse and have considered launching an attack to burn it to the ground, only their own information shows it is a Mega-Damage building. Furthermore, they've learned that the facility is being used to store books on magic and magical artifacts acquired from Tolkeen.

Problem: The Vanguard have reason to believe this might be a trap; false information to a) lure them into an ambush, and b) reveal there is a mole in the Black Market organization. (How else could the Vanguard know about the magic items unless an insider fed them the secret information?) So the Vanguard are in a quandary, if they attack they could be ambushed (initial reconnaissance probes seem to indicate there may be magical barriers and defenses at this "warehouse"), and even if they use outsiders (like the player characters) as pawns, it might still serve to confirm or even pinpoint the mole inside the Black Market organization. If the Vanguard take any action, it will almost certainly be through an unsuspecting third party. To help protect the mole, they'd just have to give their pawns some reason to raid the warehouse other than the fact that magic items might be inside.

55. Square Park

Located in the center of Slum Town is a town square-like park enclosed in 10 foot (3 m) walls made of M.D.C. concrete. The enclosure gets its name from the fact that it is perfectly square. The park is reasonably well taken care of, though it is nothing special, just a manicured lawn, some trees, bushes and a few park benches and swings.

Adventure Hooks: The following rumors may, or may not, be true.

1. A cult of Druids live in the park and protect it from evil.
2. A brotherhood of Warlocks regularly meet at Square Park, where they summon Elementals to do their bidding.
3. There is a secret underground compound, or secret a lair, or weapon cache, of the Vanguard concealed someplace under the park or in its stone walls.
4. The Vanguard lure unsuspecting Coalition authorities and Black Market rivals to the park where they are ambushed, slain and their bodies ground up and used for fertilizer!

5. *Street Entertainers.* Talented people in the 'Burbs sometimes try to make a little extra as street performers. A small group of actors might stage a small play or comedy act with a large piece of cloth as a backdrop and simple costumes. Musicians are also quite common, playing guitars, horns, flutes, drums and buckets. Jugglers, stage magicians and others may be encountered as well. All can pick up and go at a moment's notice and vanish at the first sign of trouble. All events are spontaneous, drawing a crowd from the sounds and actions of the entertainers. Pay is gratuities dropped in a hat or pail (and might include fresh fruit, vegetables, and other food stuff), or a few credits slipped off a debit card onto a portable card reader. Coalition patrols and local militia or police usually ignore street

performers unless they are blocking traffic or creating some other problem or difficulty. And that's a hint, a) the performers are faceless and the authorities tend to look past them, which means they are semi-invisible and not well remembered (may be wearing makeup, masks and costumes that conceal their features, too), b) such performers can make good undercover agents, reconnaissance teams, and/or informants, and c) street entertainers can cause a seemingly innocent, random diversion or traffic jam. **Note:** Street entertainers are regularly encountered at *Square Park*, all around the *Stomp Yard* and near the *Firetown Hospital* as well as other parks and public areas where there is heavy foot traffic and an audience willing to pay.

56. The Firetown Hospital Complex

The Firetown Hospital Complex is large, modern and one of the best in the Chi-Town 'Burbs. It was rebuilt after the last great fire not very long ago and received all sort of funding from local businesses and kind adventurers to make it a top flight medical facility. (Those "businesses" and "adventurers" included the Black Market, the Vanguard, Federation of Magic, and other rival forces who saw the benefit of having such a complex at their disposal.) The hospital is a legitimate medical facility with no allegiance to any one group. The only people not happy with it are Chi-Town, whose leaders aren't keen with attracting or healing mercenaries and humans. Coalition patrols keep a close eye on the complex to make sure magic healing is not performed and that *nonhumans* aren't treated there.

Adventure Hooks: 1. Trying to get medical treatment for nonhumans.

2. Stealing or extorting medical supplies (and services) to get help for an inhuman comrade or innocent D-Bees in need of help.

3. Harassing the Coalition patrols.

4. Oddly enough, a couple of different Cyber-Snatcher gangs prowl the streets around the hospital. Visitors beware.

57. Hospital Parking Structure

At night, the parking structure becomes a hangout for the Tandum Street Gang and bands of City Rats and other nocturnal ruffians, but the Tandum Street Gang are the undisputed lords of the structure.

58. Tandum Street

Tandum Street is a curving street that loops down and to the Hospital Parking Structure (#57). It is notorious as the "turf" of a powerful gang of thugs, City Rats and practitioners of magic who have named themselves after their street.

The Tandum Street Gang is one of the largest, most organized and powerful gangs in the city. One quarter are City Rats, one quarter are Headhunters and cyborgs, one quarter professional thieves and smugglers, and one quarter practitioners of magic (mostly Ley Line Walkers, Techno-Wizards and Conjurers, with a few psychics thrown in for good measure). The average ages range from 12-29, and though they can be violent, vindictive and deadly, they are comparatively benevolent. A

third are Unprincipled, a third Anarchist, and the rest various alignments from good to evil. The Tandum Street Gang function as self-styled vigilantes who rule an urban fiefdom and challenge all others around the 'Burb. Their own neighborhood is completely under their sway, and the surrounding area gives in to them more often than not. While the gang function in a sort of vigilante/Robin Hood fashion, and do a lot of good by protecting poor families who the authorities generally ignore, they also cause their share of trouble. The Tandum's like to prowl the entire 'Burb challenging other gangs, beating them up, stealing from them as well as CS patrols and adventurers who they take a dislike toward. They also like to pester practitioners of magic, particularly Tolkeen and Federation of Magic fanatics. This has made some wonder if the Tandum Street Gang (which is also 90% human) might not be a cover for, or affiliated with the Vanguard – a query the gang members laugh at, but never exactly deny.

59. Black Max's Tavern

Black Max is really Maria Alvarez, an attractive woman with long black hair and dark brown eyes that smolder like warm coals. Maria won the tavern from Black Max in a card game. Local legend has it that Max, a poor loser, tried to murder the beautiful Ms. Alvarez, but met with a fatal accident. In fact, a number of people who have threatened Ms. Alvarez have met with a similar fate. Rumors about the Latin beauty abound, some are obviously the lewd fantasies of her many male customers, others seem ordinary while still others seem outrageous. The lady herself never speaks about her past, saying she prefers to live in the moment and forget about her history. Most agree she was once a gambler and thief of considerable skill before settling down in Firetown about four years ago. Her knowledge of vampires and their destruction is second only to her knowledge of gambling (she knows dozens of games of chance), which has led some to speculate that she was once a vampire hunter and perhaps once rode with the infamous Doc Reid.

The booze is strong, cheap (1-3 credits per drink) and comes in three dozen varieties. Entertainment at the tavern includes live musical performers (mostly favorite regulars), tango and flamenco dancing, dancing girls, and flirting barmaids, as well as games of cards, dice and chance that seem to go on around the clock. The ever fascinating Maria Alvarez with her wit, charm and endless stream of stories also provides her share of intrigue and entertainment. The lady often participates in high stakes card games herself. (Maria is Anarchist alignment, 7th level Mystic Thief, I.Q. 18, M.A. 15, M.E. 21, P.S. 12, P.P. 22, P.E. 11, P.B. 15, and Spd. 10.)

Adventure Hooks: 1. Maria Alvarez is a smuggler of books, magic, and other contraband. She, herself, is a collector of pre-Rifts books and exotic magic items. Any of her illegal interests as a collector could lead to adventure for the player characters. She could have something they need or want, they could have something she wants or she might hire them to "acquire" a magic book, artifact or bit of information. Or they could find themselves competing against her to acquire the same article. Or one or more of the player characters could run up a huge gambling bill and become obliged to do her a favor (or else). Or one of the characters could fall in love with this sharp-witted and

manipulative vixen and be tricked into doing something for her. In the alternative, the Black Max Tavern is the watering hole for a number of unscrupulous adventurers and criminals with whom the player group could get involved or clash. The possibilities go on and on.

2. It's true, Maria was/is a thief, but not just any thief, a Vanguard Mystic Thief! The question one must ask: is she really retired or is she an active or sleeper agent? Could she have used her magic or psionics to take down those, like Black Max, who raised a hand against her, or does she have one or more guardian angels among the Vanguard. And if she is ex-Vanguard or an active agent, do other Vanguard visit the Black Max for rest and relaxation? Or is Black Max a Vanguard safe house where its members can safely lose themselves in a crowd, or drop-off or pass on information? Who there could be a Vanguard spy watching you right now?! One of the dancing girls? The bartender? That dusty vagabond who just moseyed through the door?

3. Any one (or more) of the books or magic items, or other contraband could be targeted by thieves, mercs, Federation of Magic (or Splugorth, or Tolkeen Retribution Squad, or a competitor, etc.), creating a problem or causing Ms. Alvarez to hire extra defenders, like the player characters. Or an attack on her or her establishment while the player group is present, could draw them into unexpected intrigue.

60. The Flea Trap Hotel

The Flea Trap used to be called the Regency Hotel, but it is a two-bit flea bag (pun intended) of a flop house that everyone nicknamed the "Flea Trap," so after a while, the owner changed the name. Unknown to the general public and Coalition authorities, it is has been taken over by mutant and D-Bee canines. A tall, thin man and his family front for them, but the dogs run the show. To help conceal its true nature, the rooms on the main floor and two above it are rented to humans at vagabond prices. The ballroom and conference rooms are used as large flop areas always packed with people. A cot costs a mere five credits, and pets, namely dogs, are welcome for one credit per animal. A private room (there are 36) costs 15 credits plus 10 for each additional individual residing inside. There are four top floor suites that are actually fairly nice, but they cost 70 credits a night and one must make his way through the sea of human flotsam and jetsam to get to them. The place also has a distinct odor that is a mixture of mustiness, sweat, booze and wet dog. The decor and ambience is loud and friendly, but poor and dirty. Most people with a taste for anything above poverty won't like it here. Outside, the three-story wood and brick building looks shabby and run down, begging for a paint job. However, the place is notable throughout the 'Burbs for more than its poor looks and poorer clientele, it is known for catering to pet owners, dog-lovers and *Dog Boys*.

The Howling Moon Dog Shop and Salon specializes in canine equipment, merchandise and services. The shop sells dog collars (both studded and ornamental), leashes, dog whistles, dog flutes with playing keys for the musically inclined human owners and Dog Boys, electronic and sonic flea collars, flea dip, a large variety of fragrant dog soups, shampoos and conditioners, dog combs and brushes, electric hair dryers, vitamins, cloth-

ing, blankets, bedding, and an impressive selection of local dog foods, treats, and toys for canines of the four- and two-legged variety.

The shop is so highly regarded among *mutant canines* that its customers include many of the local Dog Boys serving in the CS military. For them, there is *the salon* – part beauty, part lounge – where Dog Boys can get a wash, body massage, their teeth cleaned, their breath freshened, their nails trimmed, and hair cut and styled (though nothing extreme for those in the CS military). A “canine only” lounge is attached to the salon where Dog Boys can gather to relax on big comfy couches, and fluffy bean bag style cushions laid out on the floor. Snacks and non-alcoholic drinks blended special for the Dog Boy’s canine pallet are available for 1-4 credits each. Food includes steaks (usually prepared rare, cost 8-12 credits), ground hamburger, real animal bones (1-3 credits depending on size and flavor), three different varieties of blood soup, egg dishes, cheese snacks, and tasty hard and soft (dog) biscuits.

Adventure Hooks : 1. The Flea Trap is also a haven for rogue Dog Boys, runaway mutant animals and animal-like D-Bees who get along with canines. (Feline mutants and aliens give this place a wide berth, and those looking for trouble are turned away.) They live in the *Dog House*, four underground floors beneath the Flea Trap’s basement that were once part of a pre-Rifts parking structure. The concrete structure has been dug out and remodeled to provide average quality rooms that are clean and safe. The facility caters to rogue Dog Boys, mutant animals, D-Bee canines and other nonhumans who are canine or animalistic (or who just want a quiet haven where they can lay low). There is a secret entrance at the back of the Flea Trap flop house, another down the alley and a secret tunnel to be used only in the case of emergencies that opens up behind an abandoned house a block away; so far the secret tunnel has never had to be used.

A standard private room at the Dog House costs 30 credits, a large room costs 50, and a suite (roughly the size of three standard rooms) costs 75 credits. Prices are intentionally kept low because the owners know mutants and D-Bees are regularly overcharged and mistreated at most “human” establishments in the ‘Burbs, and because they want to be the hotel of choice for animalistic visitors to Firetown. The Dog House is surprisingly peaceful with few incidents of crime, brawling or trouble of any kind.

2. As a haven for mutant canines and animal-looking D-Bees, shape changers (including dragons, Loup Gar Lou, Zenith Moon, and some demons) are able to hide among them. So can sorcerers (and other shape-shifters) with the power of metamorphosis who may be hiding from the CS or the Vanguard, or recruiting inhuman agents for one of their schemes or adventures.

62. Al’s Truck Stop (Station Base)

Hearing people talk about *Al’s Truck Stop* might lead one to think it’s a Deli or Restaurant. Not so. A man who calls himself Al Wesson owns a fleet of semi-trailers that serve as department stores on wheels. “If you’re gonna survive in the ‘Burbs, ya gotta be resourceful and mobile,” is one of Al’s favorite sayings. One truck has a solar-powered refrigerator for meat and vegetables, another has blankets, clothes and shoes. Another car parts,

another electronics, movies and music disks. Another offers stoves, pots, pans, cookware, and kitchen utensils as well as serving as a mobile hardware store with an array of basic tools. Yet another is a mobile bakery with a wide range of breads, bread mixes, muffins, pastries, cakes and pies, as well as baking cookware and a variety of teas and coffee. The last is a specialty truck which could contain seasonal items from fur coats and snow boots, to sporting equipment, to seeds and gardening for planting, depending on the actual season when the truck is on the road. The trucks can be driven off to go solo, but usually travel in a convoy of 3-6.

Al’s purchasing agents are called *Scroungers*, and each is given a small amount of credits and trade goods and a pickup truck. Armed with a list of things to buy or trade (or steal), each goes to legitimate and Black Market suppliers, as well as independent traders and adventurers to get the goods at the best price. When he is all stocked up, Al and his truckin’ sales team go on the road, hitting all the ‘Burbs, particularly Shanty Towns and the outer communities around Chi-Town. Prices are fair (mostly list price) with specials on items Al happens to get a better than usual bulk deal on. When a particularly good “hot spot” is found, the truck may stay there for a day or two, sometimes up to a week, before moving on. When the mobile store runs low on supplies, it heads back to base to resupply. But everyone knows he’ll be back, and Al keeps a list of the regular hot sales stops and the most desired items. Al’s been in business for six years with the Firetown Warehouse District as his base of operation, and business is booming.

His trucks are a special design so they can “button up” in sixty seconds and be taken out of harm’s way. The last week a Coalition patrol chasing two fugitives shot up a few of Al’s trucks in an exchange of gunfire. Al just shrugged it off and put some duct tape over the holes, because, “Customers just don’t like seein’ fresh bullet holes. Hurts business.” Al runs a clean ship, no contraband and hitchhikers (or “strays” as he calls them), so he’s never had trouble with CS patrols. In fact, he regularly sells to Coalition troops, and during the Tolkeen War he used to make runs to the outskirts of the Coalition perimeter to sell surplus goods to the troops at a discount.

Al also has a soft spot for “poor folk” and frequently sells goods to church groups, orphanages, large families and those who get under his heart, at close to what he paid for them wholesale. If asked if that makes good business sense, Al chuckles and says, “Folks remember a kind act and they’ll keep buyin’ in the future even when prices go up, so I guess you could say I’m buildin’ for the future.” Truth is, Al’s a got a heart of gold and a successful business that lets him help others from time to time. (Al has a Scrupulous alignment, I.Q. 12, M.E. 13, M.A. 14, P.S. 17, P.P. 9, P.E. 10, P.B. 10, and Spd. 8; an 8th level, self-educated Merchant Vagabond.)

Al’s Trucks: The trucks look like regular semis but with important modifications. In the back of each trailer, just below the doors, are a half dozen mines that can be dropped by remote control from the trailer while the truck is in motion and detonated by impact or by radio depending on the situation. If the explosives (each does 6D6 M.D.) don’t stop a pursuer, a smoke screen can be released and a radio in the cab can be used to call for help. Most local authorities, friends (Al has a million of ‘em) or the Coalition military will usually come and intercede, especially if it is Al, himself, in trouble.

The cab is fully armored (135 M.D.C.) and is fitted with the following: Smoke ejection ports in the back, a rear firing slit and cover, also used for dropping hand grenades. Small, round firing ports in the doors. Finally, the front bumper can be swung up to reveal a row of four mini-missiles for clearing obstacles in front of the truck. Standard defensive gear carried in the cab includes: One shoulder launched anti-aircraft missile, 12 high explosive hand grenades, two hand-held radios, one field radio (long range), first-aid kit, two Wilk's laser rifles, six extra E-Clips, one S.D.C. shotgun (5D6 S.D.C. damage per blast), a survival knife and a pocket knife, fire extinguisher and basic tools. Everyone in the cab must carry a sidearm and wear a flak jacket.

63. The Firetown Warehouse District

This entire part of town is filled with warehouses, fenced in stock yards and storage facilities. It is noisy and bustling during the day, but mostly quiet at night (only a few places stay open around the clock or work till midnight). A few clusters of homes are scattered about here and there, but this is largely a business district. A number of the warehouses are empty or abandoned and designated with an "A."

64. Walter Clinton, Suspected Vanguard

Though the man denies it, word on the street is that he is a Vanguard. Luckily for him, the CS authorities don't believe the Vanguard are real so they have ignored him and the allegation. However, others in town, including agents of the Federation of Magic, several Tolkeen Retribution Squads and others have appeared to give him grief. Someone has tried to kidnap Clinton on two different occasions, he's been attacked on the street seven times, verbally accosted or threatened so many times he's lost count, and his home set on fire twice and blasted with lightning just last week. Because the surrounding area is mostly deserted and away from other residences, the CS don't care and local authorities don't want to become embroiled in Vanguard affairs, assuming they really exist and Walter Clinton is one of them.

The lawn is covered in patches of dead grass and scorch marks, the garden is filled with weeds, the perimeter fence broken with holes punched through where local kids, the curious and attackers have made their way in or made openings to watch the action; the entire length of fence behind the house has been knocked down by some malicious force. A third of the house is burnt out and sealed off from the surviving half from the inside. Local kids have covered the rest of the exterior of the home in graffiti with words and slogans like, "Beware! Vanguard live here." "Vanguard," "Beware," "Coalition Rules" "Tolkeenites keep out," and an array of colorful drawings, cartoons, insignias and designs.

The Rumor Mill. Word on the street about the home fluctuates with claims the owner has killed himself inside, has fled to parts unknown, or has barricaded himself inside. As for the man, himself, pick the rumor you like best:

- He is an innocent victim falsely accused.
- He is really a Federation spy whose life has been made a living Hell by the real Vanguard.

- He is a wizard, but has no ties with the Vanguard (because they aren't real), and he is indeed barricaded inside where he prays the madness will stop.

- He is ex-Vanguard who turned on the group to fight on the side of Tolkeen, and is the sorcerer who lead the Sorcerer's Revenge against the Coalition.

- He is really a dragon in human guise and barbecues any vandal or attacker he catches, before eating them.

- He is an evil Necromancer who sends out zombies and animated dead at night to extract murderous revenge on those who have wronged him during the day. A terrible fate also befalls those he catches vandalizing his home or snooping around on the premisses; including foolish children and orphans. He turns some into zombies, eats others and uses others in horrible experiments.

- He is really a Federation spy and the house a Federation of Magic hideout that is still used. There are Teleportation circles in the basement and when a monster, demon or undead is found causing trouble in the 'Burb, it's because it was summoned and unleashed from this house.

- A horrible supernatural being has seized the mind of a Shifter working for the Vanguard and it has taken over his mind and helps him do terrible things to the people of the 'Burbs. Only those who join its death cult are spared.

Adventure Hooks: Any of the rumors could have some morsel of truth to them and the G.M. can spin off from there.

65. Lee's Garage

A large facility that specializes in the repair of trucks, cranes and heavy equipment. This joint is busy around the clock.

Adventure Hook: Lee and his sons moonlight in the wee hours fixing power armor and robot vehicles for adventurers. Can also make illegal modifications to vehicles, installing weapons, extra armor, souping up engines for speed or stealth, and so on. The price is 50% higher than usual for humans and double for D-Bees, but the workmanship is first rate. Unknown to anyone, both the Vanguard and the Black Market use Lee's from time to time.

66. The Junkyard

This is another 24 hour facility. Known only as "the Junkyard." Anybody can come and dump scrap metal, old cars, car parts, machine parts, chain, and similar scraps just to get rid of them. Working parts, damaged but running vehicles and scrap metal with obvious resale value can be sold for 10% of their original value, and are cleaned up, fixed a bit and sold for 30-50% of their original value. The place is packed with all kinds of scrap and spare parts, but it takes most visitors 1D4 hours to find a gem buried among the junk piles. The most resalable items are in the front and even the folks who run the place don't know what all they have.

Adventure Hooks: 1. Hidden among the scrap piles is a battered but (barely) working robot vehicle or military vehicle. For 1D4x10% of its original cost, the vehicle can be brought back to good working order at 1D4x10+35% of its original M.D.C. and features.

2. Buried in the junk pile is a Techno-Wizard vehicle (large or small, rare or common; G.M.'s choice). In the alternative, it could be an alien device (Naruni or other). It is in very good shape and seems likely that someone hid it here, but who, and will they be coming back for it? If so, they won't be happy to find it missing.

3. Sticking halfway out of the scrap pile is one of Archie-Three's robots (or an alien or foreign robot). It has 1D6x10+25% of its M.D.C., its main weapon system (if any) and a power supply good for 1D6 years of life, but its memory has been damaged, it has no memory and requires a significant amount of reprogramming. A talented City Rat hacker or Operator skilled in robotics might be able to do the job, but it will take 2D6 days of work and cost 2D6x10,000 credits! Is it worth it?

4. Local gangs jump the fence and hide some of their loot, especially large items, at special places in the Junkyard where they don't think visitors or the owner will find them. Likewise, weapons and incriminating evidence from a crime are often tossed into the yard over the fence, dumped or sold. The owners have no idea any of this is going on.

67. Miller's Farmer's Market

Located near Jake's Farm, area farmers come into town to sell some of their harvest on weekends. Tents are pitched and, rain or shine, people come out to get what they can. Aside from seasonal fruits and vegetables, one can find honey, preserves, dried and smoked meat, pickles and canned fruit, and candles. Prices are fair, but quality varies from poor to very good.

68. The main office for the Town Dump

This is the main office, main gate and truck yard for the town garbage dump.

61. Firetown Lumberyard

Fair to good quality building supplies. Fair prices. Will sell to anyone, humans and D-Bees alike.

69. Town Dump

A mountain of packed garbage and refuse. The 'Burbs generates garbage like any city and hauls its garbage to a local dumping ground, often near the Shanty Towns. Firetown has its own dump for the sake of convenience.

It is a sad fact of life that the poor wait for the trucks to leave so they can dig through the garbage for anything worth salvaging. The truly desperate look for food. On a good day, a family might find a metal fork or spoon that is bent but otherwise usable. Maybe part of a comb or a hair brush or an article of clothing that can be cleaned and used.

Adventure Hooks: 1. On occasion, something of value is discarded and found by the indigent. This could be a ring, book, or energy rifle, to a magic item or contraband. In the alternative, the player characters might lose something in the garbage and have to go to the dump in an attempt to find it, though the search is probably like trying to find a needle in a hay stack.

2. Dead bodies also find their way to the dump – sometimes stuffed in a garbage bag and put out with the trash, other times, just dumped (at night) to get rid of the evidence. 1D4 bodies are found in the dump every week, half are beyond identification by the time they are discovered.

3. The dump is a good place for Necromancers to find dead bodies and skeletons to animate, as well as a place to hide their hideous dead automatons when they aren't needed. Ghouls and scavenging animals and monsters also inhabit the dump.

70. Dump Dueling Ground

The Town Dump is also the scene of gang violence and duels. At one end is a winding trail that leads into the dump, but opens up into a cul de sac where people fight and duel, gangs wage skirmishes, gladiatorial contests take place and sorcerer duels can be waged away from the prying eyes of neighbors or the authorities.





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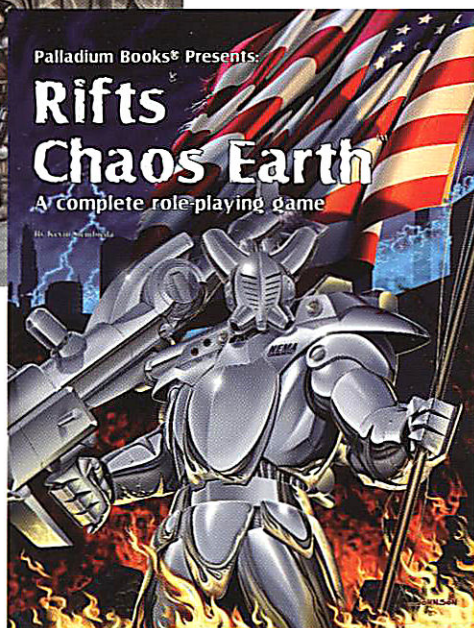
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