SAVAGE INSIDER

For All Things Savage

Technology at the Table

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WORLDS
LICENSED PRODUCT

Any World.
Any Time.

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REGULARS

FROM THE DESIGNER

Technology at the Table

By Vickey A. Beaver

Welcome to the April edition of *Savage Insider*! While we didn't net any reviews on DriveThruRPG for *Issue 7: End of Days*, we did garner a five-star rating, for which we thank you.

This eighth issue, *Technology at the Table*, takes a look at technology as it pertains to the real-life act of gaming, as well as technology within the settings we play. I had a terrific time editing the submissions. I'm always intrigued by what people turn in, but this one was different.

I could really connect with a lot of the material as technology as a concept transcends any particular genre or play style. We get to hear what a wide variety of Savages have to say on the subject in *Tabletop Tech Today*. Phil Vecchione delivers a look at how technology has altered his gaming in an outline of the transition from the days when pen and paper was the only real option to today where there are more electronic RPG titles than those in print in *Gone Digital*.

And in a departure from our usual focus on game design, this issue's *Designer's Diary* gives us our first in-depth Q & A on a gaming tool. Will Herrmann tells us all about coming up with Wild Card Creator, a project he was able to undertake thanks to Kickstarter, in itself, a whole new way to leverage technology for creators.

While the temptation was great to pull an April Fool's joke on you, I've managed to refrain. Here's to the start of spring and the hope that you enjoy this issue from cover to cover.

Have a great day!

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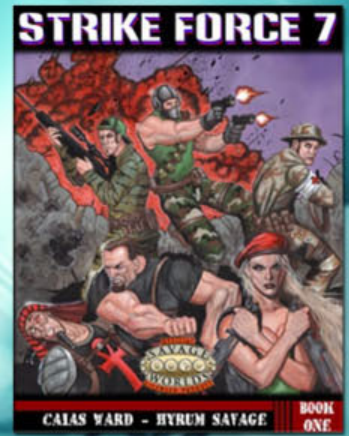
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By Phil Vecchione of Engine Publishing

GONE DIGITAL

In the back of my gaming room is a clear plastic storage box full of empty binders; an elephant graveyard of various ring sizes, materials, and quality. Before they found their fate in the back corner of my gaming room, they were once the bearers of all my campaign materials. They held the secrets of my campaigns, the notes for my sessions, maps of lands strange and not so strange, and a gallery of NPCs and monsters. They were decorated with stickers and printouts of rulebook covers. They had a sacred spot at my gaming table to my right, behind my GM screen, for easy reference. That was before I got my first laptop and went digital.

Going Digital

The transition for me from paper to digital was quick and painless. Computers were a hobby of mine, from back when most people considered them a hobby. As an IT professional for nearly 20 years, I have always been very comfortable with technology, using it on a daily basis. I am also a fast typist and a lousy speller; in other words a natural candidate for word processing. Before I had a laptop, any game prep I could do on a computer had to be done at my desk in my office, printed, and put into one of the binders. For a time, it was a reasonable compromise.

When I got my laptop, that all changed. Not only could I compose my session notes directly on the laptop, but I could soon replace my GM's screen at the table. Within my laptop were my session notes, PDFs of all the major tables for the game, all the rulebooks, and a music library for background music. It was sizeable, taking up a portion of my GMing space - as well as room in my gaming bag - but it was also performing a number of tasks for me. For a few years, that was my GMing setup, sitting at the table with my laptop to my right, as my GM screen and notes.

The arrival of the iPad signaled a major shift in how we interacted with digital data. I was fortunate enough to get an iPad shortly after its release, and I started to look at how it could be applied to gaming. With a little experimentation, I found a place for my iPad at the gaming table.

Create and Consume

The major difference between laptops and tablets is that laptops (as well as desktops) are more suited for creation. With larger screens, more robust hardware and software, and dedicated input devices, the laptop is still a great platform to create material such as notes, characters, and maps.

Tablets, on the other hand, are not as robust when it comes to creating material, but are a superior platform for consuming it. With their smaller forms they sit well in the hand, and their touchscreens make maneuvering over material feel natural. Tablets are easier to trans-port in your gaming bag, and can often last a whole game without being plugged in.

Rather than pick one platform and fight its weaknesses, I chose a hybrid solution embracing each of their strengths. I use my laptop for creating the prep for my game, and my tablet for using the prepped material when I am running.

Create: Session Prep & Campaign Management

Building on the strengths for creation, I do all my prep on my laptop. My current setup has my laptop hooked to a 24" monitor with a Bluetooth mouse and keyboard. It gives me great screen real estate to have a few windows open at the same time, so that I can do research while I'm writing. Below are the workhorse tools I use for getting my prep done.

DROPBOX

This application and service is the glue of my prep system. First, it is the repository where I keep all my campaign materials: notes, graphics, PDFs, and other assorted files. Second, it has cloud storage with version control, meaning if my computer gets stolen or dies, my prep is safe and recoverable. Third, it syncs to all my other devices. This will be important when we get to the iPad. Without Dropbox I would have either remained on my laptop, or have to manage manually transferring files from device to device.

Alternatives: Skydrive, Google Drive, Box.net

ONENOTE

For a number of years, Microsoft OneNote has been my workhorse of campaign management and session prep. OneNote's open format allows me to create text, sidebars, inline graphics, drawings, etc. - all in one application. Its binder like interface makes it easy to create tabs and pages to organize my campaign material and create session notes. I have tabs for the major sections of the campaign: NPCs, Story, Organizations, etc. I then have separate tabs for each session's notes. This is really the closest to my old campaign binders I have found in the digital world.

Alternatives: Evernote, The Keep, Realm Works (coming Q3 2013).

HERO LAB

I have always dreaded making NPCs, monsters, and the like. I find it to be the most time consuming part of prep. In many cases, I try to find shortcuts around this step by pulling stats from other supplements, re-skinning NPCs I have made in the past, or creating wireframes of stats. When I found that Hero Lab had a Savage Worlds component, I was sold. Now I can create NPCs quickly and accurately, and transfer the stat block right into OneNote. For convention games, I can also create the PCs along with a readable character sheet for each one.

Alternatives: Metacreator

Consume: Running Sessions

When it comes time to get behind the screen and run my sessions, I like to switch to the iPad. The iPad is only a little bigger than my *Savage Worlds: Explorer's Edition*, and is easy to hold and view during the session. The iPad fits nicely behind my screen, leaving plenty of room for my dice, bennies, and cards. Here is

the list of apps that allow me to run my sessions:

OUTLINE+

This app is able to connect to Dropbox and read and edit Microsoft OneNote files. This allows me to take all my prep done on OneNote and read it directly from my tablet. The conversion is true, and all the content in OneNote is accessible. Should I need to edit any of the content, it will sync back to Dropbox and my changes will be available when I get back to my laptop.

Alternatives: OneNote for iPad

GOODREADER

This app is a PDF organizer and reader. It organizes your PDFs into folders, syncs to Dropbox and all other major cloud services, and allows for annotation of PDFs. I have Goodreader loaded with all my *Savage Worlds* books for referencing any rulebook or setting in an instant. This keeps my bag light, since I don't have to lug around all my books to a game.

Alternatives: Dicebook, iBooks

DOCSCANHDPRO

I take a lot of notes during a game. After the game is over, I want any notes I have taken to be in my OneNote repository. Rather than typing them all in, I use this app to scan my handwritten notes. I can save the file into Dropbox as either PDF or JPEG, and then upload that file into OneNote when I get back to my laptop.

Alternatives: Built-in Camera, Skitch

THINGS I CANNOT CONVERT

For all the things I have converted to digital, there are a few things that I cannot give up, despite the fact that programs and apps exist to replace them.

There are two major ones I cannot (or won't) convert to digital.

DICE

There are a number of dice rolling apps and programs, some of which are very good, but for me, there is nothing like rolling dice. I love the feel and sound of dice, especially for *Savage Worlds*, and like to roll them in the open when I am running sessions. Doing that from my iPad would be difficult, plus I would have to switch from app to app frequently during a session.

INDEX CARDS

There are a number of index card applications as well as note taking applications for tablets, but when I run a session I like to have a stack of index cards. I use index cards to track Bennies for NPCs, jot down notes that come up during the game, and for convention games, I use them as name tents. Index cards are cheap and portable and fit well into the kit of materials I bring when I run my *Savage Worlds* games.

Do Androids Do Electric Prep?

The digital platform will only become easier to use with more time. The difference between the laptop and tablet is already breaking down, and the ability to create from the tablet platform is becoming easier. It is possible that in a few years, my laptop may be sitting on top of that plastic storage box of binders, as another extinct member of the evolution of my game prep systems.

By Aaron T. Huss

HERO LAB

Electronic character creator and advancement program.

When it comes to generating characters, there's nothing more exciting than coming up with an idea and putting it to paper. You pour over what Attributes best fit your character concept, which Skills that concept would utilize, and what Edges and Hindrances best match the overall design of the character. Putting this to paper can be easy enough, but what happens if you change your mind or when it's time for advances? Simply erase it, right? How many times do you erase it before there's a gaping hole in your paper?

Now that you have your character ready, you hand the sheet off to the GM who quickly informs you the character is invalid. You either spent too many points or didn't do the linked Skills die type math appropriately. Back to the drawing board and back to the eraser. Maybe you can just print a new sheet and start over.

Spending time fixing your mistakes takes away from the excitement and breaks the flow of the character creation process. No one wants to take the character to the table, only to have the GM reject it. Even though character development in Savage Worlds is relatively simple, the possibility of making a mistake is present. Instead of the continuous paper grind, you can turn to computer programs

Many electronic character sheets allow you to input a value, but require the user to do the resulting math and keep in mind what is valid and what is not. They rarely have the brains to inform the user what options are valid according to their character's build. This is extremely im-

portant in *Savage Worlds* given the number of prerequisites for Edges and when it comes to calculating the cost to advance a skill, which is tied to the die type of the linked Attribute. If you forget a detail, you may end up with an invalid character build.

Hero Lab, developed by Lone Wolf Development, is a character creation and management program. Although this may not be the overall tagline, that's what I'm calling it. This means that Hero Lab is not an electronic character sheet that does nothing more than allow you to type up a character on your computer and print

out the resulting character sheet. Instead, it has intelligence built into it to allow you to create a character electronically, calculating any basic math involved, providing all applicable options according the character's stats, alerting you when an error is found, and providing an interface to advance the character throughout his career. And you can print the resulting character sheet. What goes into Hero Lab helps it truly stand-out as a high quality piece of software.

Software Package

At its core, Hero Lab is a shell. This shell features a software package that allows

for the creation of intelligent character management tools used for the tabletop role-playing game industry. For only $30, you get the Hero Lab license along with any free modules and what's referred to as the Authoring Kit. (The Authoring Kit allows you to use Hero Lab's programming language to create your own character management module.) From here, you can purchase or download modules pertaining to specific games. *Savage Worlds* is a free module included in the price of the Authoring Kit.

Installing the *Savage Worlds* module allows you to create Savage Worlds characters from the core rulebook. As an added bonus, you can download free Pinnacle Entertainment Group plug-in modules through the Hero Lab interface. *Deadlands: Reloaded*, *Rippers*, *Solomon Kane*, *Deadlands Noir*, and *Hell on Earth: Reloaded* are currently available for free download through this interface. Upon launching Hero Lab, you'll come to a configuration screen that allows those free

plug-ins to be used, which then allow you to use the included Edges, Hindrances, skills, and equipment to create Savage Worlds characters for those settings.

For an additional $8 each, or $20 for the set, you can purchase the plug-in modules for the *Savage Worlds Fantasy*, *Horror*, and *Super Powers Companion* books. With the addition of these plug-ins, you can use the included character options to make a huge array of characters covering all the *Companion* genres and those from the included settings.

User Interface

After installing the *Savage Worlds* module and whatever plug-ins desired, Hero Lab easily launches into the *Savage Worlds* user interface. This user interface is fairly straight-forward and easy to navigate. There is a set of tabs on the top that bring you to the different character management options, including space to add your own background and character flavor.

One thing to notice is how Hero Lab keeps track of how many points are available to spend on your character during creation. These points change during character advancement, as noted later. The distribution of these points is designed to mimic how they are used within the Savage Worlds core mechanics. This is done by representing character stats with a picture of the die type behind the number. From here, you can set your character Attributes following the standard character creation process. If any errors occur, they are flagged in red within the user interface.

While manipulating the character's Attributes, note that derived traits and other stats are appropriately modified. This goes back to the design of Hero Lab where it does the math for you and ensures accuracy.

Once Attributes are established, you can navigate to skills or Edges to add any additional details. It would make the most sense to do your skills first when using Hero Lab as Edges with prerequisites not met will be flagged as errors. This doesn't prevent you from selecting that Edge, but it will appear as a Warning throughout the creation process. However, if you wish to gain a particular Edge and don't know its prerequisites, hovering over that Edge or reading the description field while choosing it displays that prerequisite. Once again, Hero Lab is providing the detailed tools for you to manage your character without having to continuously refer to the book.

Skills points are distributed appropriately according to the standard Savage Worlds character creation. That means Hero Lab automatically does the conversion from what die types cost one point and which ones cost two. If you adjust your Attributes while setting your skills, the recalculations are done automatically and skill points are deducted accordingly. This is another mistake-proofing method of

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character creation as you can easily tweak the settings to achieve whatever goal you have in mind. If an error is encountered, it will be flagged as a Warning and highlighted in red. This can be a common mistake when performing character creation on paper. Once you choose what skills are desired, set the die type the same way it is set with the Attributes.

Choosing Edges and Hindrances can be a little trickier. If you have chosen human for your character race, you will only have one Edge available to choose. Remember that in the core Savage Worlds character creation, you choose Hindrances for your character to gain the opportunity to take additional Edges, gain an Attribute point, or other bonuses. After choosing your Hindrances within Hero Lab, you gain the opportunity to add Rewards to the character. These Rewards translate to the additional points available to spend for whatever is desired during character creation. Choose what Reward you'd like to take and that feature will now come available (such as adding two more Edges).

Throughout the process of choosing skills, Edges, and Hindrances, all derived Traits or skill modifiers appear in the user interface. For instance, if you choose Alertness, your Notice will display with a "+2" after the die type. Additionally, when you choose your gear, the appropriate changes are displayed within the user interface, giving a visual confirmation of the character in addition to the mistake-proofing built into Hero Lab.

When choosing an Arcane Background Edge, new options open up to add Powers to the character along with noting her total Power Points.

Create NPC

Besides creating player characters, Hero Lab also offers the creation of NPCs. This creation process is much more flexible than PC creation as it allows for an unlimited distribution of points. Basically, you can break the rules for NPCs. This should be used cautiously, though, as you may result in creating a very broken character or one that is truly unbelievable. Just because you can set Strength to d12 on your photographer, doesn't mean you should. However, this does allow the GM to create much more flexible characters that don't need to worry about the rules nearly as much and can be created to square-off with the PCs in a deadly battle!

Create Creature

A third option exists to create creatures using Hero Lab. With this configuration, you can choose the creature type from the "Select Creature Type" drop-down menu which then fills in all fields as presented in the appropriate book. For instance, if you choose Minotaur as found in the core rulebook, all fields are populated per what's found in the core rulebook. From here, you can make changes to that creature to create something unique.

Creating creatures is even more flexible than creating NPCs. For instance, you can set an Attribute to higher than d12 (such as d12+2) and instead of choosing just Edges and Hindrances, you can choose from a number of Monstrous Abilities. However, there are fewer error-checking calculations here, and you can truly go crazy when building a creature.

Limitations

Hero Lab does have one major limitation: unless you know how to code your own settings, they will not be available for selection during character or creature creation. This is a large factor when it comes to creating unique creatures. If your setting only adds new types of Knowledge, this is handled within Hero Lab, but if your setting adds new types of Edges, Hindrances, or Abilities, those will not be available without creating your own plug-ins. This is one significant benefit to using standard paper creation
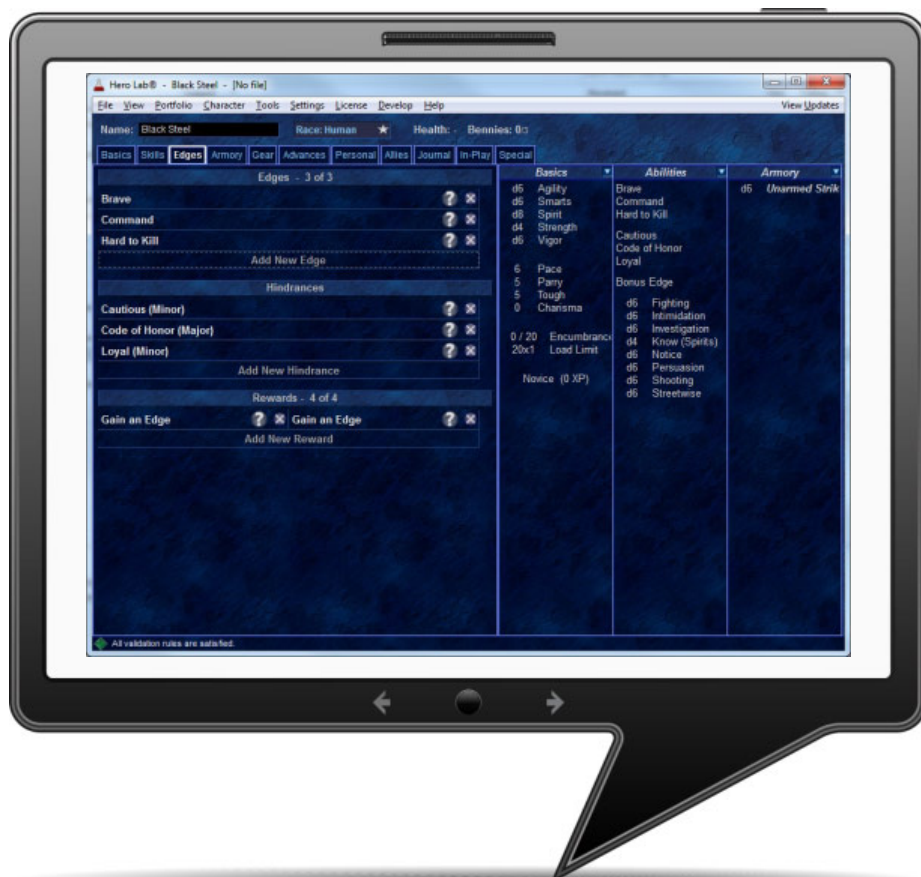
methods as you have the flexibility to do whatever you want.

Part of why you cannot simply add these options in as generic specialties (such as when choosing a Knowledge type) is because they have mechanics utilized by Hero Lab that either don't exist or are not available in the program code. However, there are a large number of options available and with the addition of the *Companion* books, you can definitely create a large array of creatures and character types.

Character Management

Once you have created your characters, you can now fully manage them throughout their careers, in and out of gameplay. Hero Lab has an In-Play function that allows you to track a character's Shaken status, Wounds, Fatigue, Bennies, and in-game modifiers. You can also adjust Gear and Power Points when applicable.

Additionally, you can perform all types of character advancements using the Advances setting, which allows you to add experience points and then apply the chosen Reward upon each XP milestone. Again, the math is done automatically along with continued mistake-proofing.

Wrap-up

Hero Lab is a complete package. It is more than just an electronic character sheet, and it performs all the calculations necessary to keep your character valid.

You can then manage that character in-game and throughout his entire career. For GMs, Hero Lab offers additional options by providing tools to create NPCs and creatures.

For those who like using Hero Lab outside of their gaming sessions simply as a way to track their characters and ensure their calculations are valid, you can save each created character sheet as a PDF or print it from Hero Lab (as a PDF output). It is truly a powerful product with lots of options and can help anybody create and manage their characters throughout their entire careers.

By Vickey A. Beaver

OMICRON

"I want her locked down, and I want it done now!" the angry, grey-faced man yelled at his wiry compatriot furiously typing in front of a large monitor.

"I'm on it! I'm on it!" he responded, his pace barely slowing as the off-white characters raced across the black background. His volume was half as loud, and his tone was pointed.

"How did she get in?" the first one demanded.

"Through Pontinski's firewall," the keyboardist answered, as if on auto-pilot.

"In English!" the man exclaimed as he slammed his hand on the desk, nearly toppling a coffee cup in the process.

"She's got an access token." He turned from the screen enough to look the hawk of a man questioning him straight in the eye. "Just like you, like Pontinski, like two thousand others in this operation."

"I thought those damned things were supposed to stop this from happening."

"They help." He directed his attention back to his keyboard, and swore.

"What's that?" The grey man fingered the screen where a red square had appeared in the top right corner. "That wasn't here before."

The specialist reached for a second panel that was raised at an angle next to the monitor. "I know." Through gritted teeth he simply said, "Move," as he bulled the grey face away. He really didn't want to answer the question. He

knew what it was. He didn't like it. "Code 1," he all but muttered, hoping any response would buy him more time between useless commentary and queries.

Another screen appeared, this one displayed on a glass that required him to stand to manipulate it. With impressive speed, he tapped through menus initiating directives so fast the other man couldn't keep up. He sat abruptly, causing the chair to complain. He drummed his will into the keys, command after command appearing and disappearing as the seconds passed.

The keyboardist focused intently on what it meant, ignoring anything outside the screens. She had gone through fifteen security layers at an incredible rate. Either she knew the system or had a hell of a program behind her. Or both. He estimated he had ninety seconds before she made it through the final test. His heart sped and sweat appeared on his brow.

Louder than ever, the other man pushed, "What is it?"

"Silence," the keyboardist directed with a calm voice carrying a weight he rarely used. He channeled everything he had into the task. His fingers pounded the keys faster than he'd have thought possible. Nothing had meaning except the time running out. Sixty seconds. More lines flashing across the screens. More squares appearing, now on both displays. She had encrypted the prompt line. Thirty seconds. Did she have the

password? His incredulous self-query seemingly answered by another technician, pale-faced and shouting from the door he opened, "Bad entry on DCLS 2!"

Ten seconds. He keyed to cut her off. Five seconds. A new wall. Two seconds. The screen turned white and bold, red script appeared, "You're too late, Simmons." Three characters winked at him in enormous yellow type: a childish, old-school emoticon of a semicolon, dash, and the right parenthesis.

Simmons sat mesmerized, not believing the display. How? Who? It didn't matter. There was nothing more he could do. He sat staring, not responding to anything anyone said. He had the look of someone who had just experienced a trauma. All he knew of the attacker was the feminine handle she used, Janet Douglas, and that she had a warped sense of humor.

Minutes passed. Interrupting whatever shouting the grey man was doing, Simmons looked up at him, "Henderson," he called, "she's got Omicron."

"Just the lists? Tell me that's all!"

"She's got the alpha." After a moment he swallowed hard adding, "and the omega."

For the first time since discovering something was wrong, the man with the grey shadow on his face sat. "Heaven help us all."

Simmons returned his stare to the screens, now displaying only the project's symbol: what would look like a

black, stylized "O" to most, centered on a backdrop of a red double helix. His stomach clenched. He knew the nightmare had only just begun.

Douglas had it all: the subject lists, the beginning of the project, and the roadmap to where it led. It shouldn't have been possible. None of it. Not the manipulation, not the theft. Simmons held out the thinnest of hopes that she wouldn't be able to decipher the code identifying the real names behind the lab designations. She'd taken Omicron; he didn't put much stock in thin hopes. No, he knew it was just a matter of time. He knew he'd be responsible for tracking her down. That left him asking aloud, "How do you catch a ghost?" Just as he expected, the only reply was a set of blank faces donned by those who'd trickled into the small room over the last few minutes.

The next five days, James Simmons led an elite team of viewers – the name the agency had for its specialized forensic technologists – through every trace of evidence showing Janet had been there. It was grueling seeing scores of logs and video altered so thoroughly they didn't even know they'd been polished until 48 hours into the undertaking. It was only chance that one of the viewers, Edmondson, realized footage of him moving through one of the halls couldn't be pure: he'd been stuck in a traffic jam caused by an unannounced presidential detour, so he'd been two hours late into the office that day.

That was good. It proved she'd been there, or someone had. At the same time, it narrowed the frame of infiltration. They used that slip to rough up the polish and find what rested beneath. Their findings were imperfect, but they got them somewhere. As they scrubbed away the last identifiable layer, the blood in James' body dropped several degrees. Edmondson looked at him,

"Simmons?" It was his code that accessed Potinski's token vault; a vault they didn't even know had been violated until the attack, which had clearly come weeks after the fact.

How did they know about Potinski? James wondered. *How the hell did they get my code?* He looked into the man's green eyes, "It's her; it's Janet. I never touched his vault, much less the token."

"I'm sure that's true, but you know the policy. You wrote half of it."

"I know, but this…" he searched for what he could even say. That it was different? That what they saw was impossible? He wasn't there when the logs said he was, just as Edmondson hadn't been there when the video had shown he was? He couldn't tell them he was at his best friend and one-time lover's side helping him die. His throat tightened knowing that they'd not discovered Potinski's death, yet. The man was supposed to be off on some Australian vision quest during his mandated sabbatical. It would be weeks more before they would learn their operative was never on the plane, that he stopped their prescribed regimen in favor of a dignified death.

Stasik Potinski wasn't going to keep being their guinea pig after the modification proved unpredictable. Sure, it was fine for the operation. It had heightened his sense of reason. He'd had three breakthroughs in his last six months that weren't anticipated to be likely for another three years. The degeneration not only halted, but it reversed. He was one of the few who had a chance to survive the amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. But the price was too high. He could feel his humanity slipping. He vacillated between states of normalcy, primal hunger, raw terror, and utter euphoria. It wasn't right. He didn't trust them to make it right, to make him right. He turned to James to see him through the

end, just as he'd seen Stasik through the beginning. He counted on James' sense of loyalty to the company being overridden by his sense of loyalty to his friends. He was right.

James felt trapped. Who was Janet that she had orchestrated this? Had she? She must not be alone, so what do they want?

"…this is incredible. I never imagined someone could get through Athena. Do…what they've done."

"They?" Edmondson raised an eyebrow.

"Yes. Of course. She couldn't have done it alone. No one person could have done all of this – polishing our records, getting Potinski's token, penetrating Athena, and making off with Omicron. It's too much."

"What if." Edmondson stopped in mid-question and mid-stroke with his thumb and forefinger pressed to his short, red beard. He shook his head. "Never mind. We need to go."

"No one knows what we've found. Finishing your thought won't hurt anything." James was stalling for time, but that wasn't all. He'd wondered if his junior went down the same path he had between rushing thoughts.

"What if it's one of them?" he asked as he stretched a finger to the door where a fire escape diagram was mounted. He pointed at Room 113 on the fourth underground floor.

"That crossed my mind," James admitted. "But I don't see how." *Or why*, he thought to himself. He sped through every possibility he could come up with on getting out of detention, where they'd be headed as soon as Edmondson ran out of thoughts he was willing to share. He stared at the lab symbol posed in the middle of 113's outline. Slowly he let out, "Oh my God." He turned to the console and hammered out a series of commands.

"You shouldn't be doing anything more. Not until you've been debriefed." Edmondson spoke with a crease across his forehead and his eyes drawing together.

"I know, but," James didn't complete whatever he was going to say. The redhead looked on, shifting his weight three times before crossing the short distance and peering through the small window in the door as if keeping watch. James kept typing and scrolling screens with a swipe of his finger across the glass.

Edmondson turned when James stopped tapping on the keys. He saw the man's blue eyes widen and his lips part as he sucked in a breath.

"She's not one of them."

"How do you know?"

"Because she came before them."

"What?" Edmondson looked as bewildered as James felt. "What do you mean?"

"What I said. Janet Douglas. She was supposedly a witch in the 1500s. After they burned her, she was said to have come back to haunt the platform where they killed her."

"So you're telling me you were serious about how to trap a ghost? You think that's what's happening here?"

"No, Morris, that's not it." James rarely used colleagues' first names, but Edmondson was so wrapped up in his last thoughts that he didn't seem to notice the switch. "It's the name our culprit is using. It's Scottish."

"So?" Edmondson interrupted.

"So?" James parroted, "Look!" he tapped the display partially covering a name on a list, the original subject list. It was in code. He pulled up a second window, dragging it next to the first. The cross-reference gave Edmondson the connection.

"Holy mother," he said, pronouncing each syllable for longer than necessary. His eyes lit upon the name of one of Epimeus Research's four founders, Rebecca MacConnell. "But she's been dead for ten years. I'll admit it's unsettling seeing she lead the research and was a test subject herself, but what's the connection?"

"The connection is her daughter."

"Her daughter? She miscarried."

"No, look." The next several minutes James pointed out a string of codes, crisscrossed enough to give them both a headache. "She was to have twins. One survived the experiment, the one whose genes they edited."

"She's an alpha." Edmondson flinched when the HVAC system kicked on the air conditioning, vibrating the duct directly over his head. He focused on James. "That went awry. They aborted the project."

"No they didn't; or at least not completely. Some of this has been edited, but I can make out enough to see the first run wasn't completely scrapped."

"What are you saying, Simmons?"

"I'm showing you," he pointed at the latest page on the display, "that their first trial didn't end. It isn't over. And I'm telling you, Janet is a fifteen-year-old whose intellect has been enhanced, speed has been tampered with, and who likely has been on her own for the last ten years."

Edmondson raised his eyebrow again; his voice was incredulous, "Since she was five?"

"Yes. And I'm guessing from the game she's playing, she's figured it out. She knows what Epimeus is." He gave a slow, short shake of his head, "She knows what she is. Now I'm caught in the middle, and so are you."

"But you thought she had help."

"I still do," he said looking back to the screen. He pulled up another file with dozens of names. "And I think she's about to get a whole lot more."

"And do what?"

"That I don't know. I'd venture a guess she's not done with me. For now, we wait."

Edmondson cast a glance toward his desk where he kept a dead-tree copy of the standard operating procedures. "Agreed."

For the continuation of Omicron, visit our website in the coming weeks.

Fae Nightmares

Play the Nightmare of an Urban Fae, sent to fight against long-forgotten legends.

GENESIS

A low-Rank adventure for *Shanghai Vampocalypse* by Curtis Lyon

Welcome to Shanghai. The year is 2048… and if you're one of the elite, life's good; if you're not… well, there's still a way or two for getting by.

Let's bring you a bit up to speed: a few years back, an industrial accident set off a super-volcano in Australia, which in turn left a good portion of Earth under the constant twilight of a massive cloud of ash. The good news is that global warming isn't much of a problem anymore; Mother Nature's nuclear winter has taken care of that. On the other hand, food's become a lot tougher to come by, at least if you want something grown in real dirt.

Fortunately, technology has grown by leaps and bounds since the first decade of the millennium. It all started when a bright lass by the name of Esther West figured out how to tap a being's living essence – Pulse, as they've come to call it – to power machinery. The process requires Celestium, a semi-syn-

thetic material that's great for channeling Pulse, and it's easy to come by power if you've got the Celestium.

Razing the Bar

So many adventures start in a tavern… why not this one as well?

The adventurers are in a bar located on The Bund, a waterfront area and major tourist destination in the northeast corner of

On The Pulse Side...

Shanghai Vampocalypse is part of the *Suzerain* setting for *Savage Worlds*, which means it has a few rules 'tweaks'. Most of them aren't important for this adventure, but we'll explain the few that are: "Pulse" is the same as "Power Points", except everyone starts with it; "Karma" is the same as "Bennies" in all ways; Characters can gain 3 Fatigue levels before Incapacitation instead of 2. If you want more information on the *Suzerain* setting, you can find it at savagemojo.com.

FERAL STALKERS (1 PER 2 ADVENTURERS)

These guys look like ordinary Chinese grunts, but they've been infected with the Stalker nanovirus, which isn't working as planned. The good news is they aren't wearing any body armor (as they weren't engaged in combat), and they aren't using their ranged weapons, favoring their batons and moving in close to feed on (or infect) targets.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d4, Swimming d6

Pace: 6; **Parry**: 6; **Toughness**: 5; **Pulse**: 10

Gear: Chinese military uniform, Type 19 pistol* (15/30/60; 2d6+2 AP 3), 1 clip of ammo (12 rounds), collapsible baton** (Str+d6), PCD

*The Type 19 has ROF 1 (semi-auto), 12 shots, and a weight of 4. **Cost**: 300¥*

A collapsible baton provides Parry +1, can be hidden, and weighs 1. **Cost: 200¥*

Special Abilities:

- **Feeding**: Stalkers don't regenerate Pulse normally, in fact they lose it at a rate of 1 Pulse every 6 hours (or more quickly, if exposed to UV: 1 Pulse per minute if they're in direct sunlight), and must feed on the Pulse of another living creature. The victim must be willing or Incapacitated, and gains 1 Fatigue for every 5 Pulse drained. This Fatigue is recovered normally unless more than 1 level was taken, in which case it recovers at a rate of 1 level per day.

- **Infection**: Stalkers are created by a transmittable nanovirus. Anyone who gains Fatigue from being bitten by a Stalker must make a Vigor roll with a (-2) penalty for each level of Fatigue gained. If the roll is a Failure, the victim takes another level of Fatigue every 20 minutes, until he's Incapacitated, at which point he becomes a Stalker.

- **Metabolize Pulse**: Stalkers can boost their Agility, Strength, and Vigor by burning Pulse. Each 1 Pulse spent increases the die type by one, to a maximum of 3. This counts as an action, but doesn't require a roll. The duration of the increase is 3/1 – regardless of how high the Attribute was boosted – and the Stalker can augment as many attributes as high as he wants as a single action.

- **Mutation**: Some Stalkers develop special Powers. These Stalkers are no exception, and can spend Pulse and make a Vigor roll to activate their Power. Since Powers may vary, assume the first Stalker has *armor*, the second has *quickness*, and the third has *smite*. Repeat this sequence if there are more than three Stalkers present.

Shanghai proper. We'll call the place "The Paper Lantern". It doesn't matter *why* they're there, but The Bund is central enough to most things and popular enough that they should all have some reason to be there: seeing the sights, just hanging out to have a good time, or even meeting a contact.

Laws being what they are, the adventurers shouldn't have much in the way of Gear right now: mostly clothes and money and *maybe* something special (like a weapon) if they've a really good excuse for it.

Gear easily available to the characters includes:

- **PCD (Portable Control Device)**: This is where cell phones have ended up by the mid twenty-first century. Everyone has one, as they allow instant money transfers, internet access, cell and text messaging, as well as data file storage. Free to all characters.

- **Filter Mask**: Remember all that ash we mentioned? If a character's running around outside, it's a good idea to wear one of these, otherwise he has to make a Vigor test every scene he's outside or gain a level of Fatigue (this Fatigue *can* kill, and is only removed with medical assistance, since the ash particles must be removed from the lungs). Filter Masks Cost 20¥ each (good for one month of use); nano-therapy to remove any Ash Lung Fatigue is 300¥ per Fatigue level being removed.

- **Civilian-Styled Light Body Armor**: Most characters won't be able to afford the 500¥ price tag, but players will ask about armor. Civilian LBA is designed to look like suits or posh clothing, only it provides +4 Armor to the torso, arms, and legs, as well as negating 2 AP from an attack. It isn't light, though, and has a weight of 12.

The Paper Lantern isn't exactly a dive – any number of locals and visitors enjoy coming here – but it's 'scaled down' to cater to those who have less money than the corporate and underworld elite. The people here are relatively unimportant to this part of the story, but players being who they are, you can name the bouncer Huang, and a couple of the girls Bao and Jeifang. If you've got a copy of *Shanghai Vampocalypse*, you can also use some of the additional characters at the back of the book.

Give the players a chance to introduce their characters and explain why they're here. If a player gives a good and creative answer, give him a bonus Karma. By "good and creative", we mean something better than "'Cause the

GM said so" or "I dunno… I'm just out drinking, I guess". Those are valid answers, but not terribly creative.

Once the adventurers have settled in, but before things slow down, let the action begin.

A couple of soldiers burst into the bar (one for every two adventurers, rounded up). By itself, it's no big deal, but when one of them sinks his teeth into the throat of the bouncer, all Hell breaks loose. Literally. The good news for the characters is, while a lot of screaming and chaos suddenly erupts in the bar, the soldiers don't take them by surprise, and they have one chance to act before the Action Cards are dealt.

Most of the adventurers are probably unarmed, but reward creativity with the bar's ample scenery by giving out a bonus Karma. Just remember: bottles and chairs still count as improvised weapons.

- **Feral Stalkers**: 1 per 2 adventurers

The Art of Poo Hit Fan

Almost as soon as these feral 'vampires' are defeated, the emergency sirens begin wailing all over Shanghai, and every PCD in the bar begins transmitting a message. Loosely translated, the message is:

"All civilians should remain indoors, or make their way to a secure location. There has been an accident, and the streets are not safe. Military personnel are currently being deployed and will not have time to answer questions. NanoCorp is resolving the problem. Remain indoors until notified otherwise for your own safety."

Of course, in the light of what's just happened, there's mostly a lot of panic in The Paper Lantern. Half the people there are ready to leave for someplace 'safer', while most are trying to put two and two together.

There's no reliable news to be found via PCD (although a Raise on an Investigation roll reveals a tidbit: a government to corporate stream that states, "The Stalker virus has mutated. Notify Dr. Wu's staff to shut it down."), but a successful Streetwise roll (as surviving patrons and staff call friends and relatives) reveals that events similar to what just happened at this bar have been going on all over the north of Shanghai in the last hour.

If they got a Raise on that Streetwise roll, they also learn there's a cook in the back, Fang, who works for the Shanghai Underworld. If the adventurers can convince him they need it (and if they can pay for it), he can break out a few of his goodies.

Fang's goodies include some 'Slaps' (Med – heals 1 Wound if applied within 5 minutes; Glow – negates up to 2 points of lighting penalties; Green – changes skin or hair color for the next 24 hours), which are applied directly to the skin, and a few grenades (mostly Flashbang – Vigor roll at (-2) or Shaken and Notice rolls are made at (-2) for the next 3 rounds; Foam – Strength roll at (-2) or stuck in place, additional Strength rolls to escape can be made every 3 rounds). The adventurers can make one cooperative Intimidation or Persuasion roll to get Fang to kick with some goodies, netting one item per Success and Raise.

Characters of a helpful bent can also make Healing rolls for any of the people who might have been hurt in the attack, including Huang, the bouncer. More pragmatic characters can take advantage of the situation and plunder the bodies of the dead Stalkers for useful gear. In this case, it amounts to a collapsible baton and a Type 19 pistol (with one full clip) for each one they killed. Additionally, they have a single Type 413 assault rifle with a full magazine. It has Range 30/60/90, and does Damage 2d8+2 AP 5. It has ROF 4, Shots 50, 3RB or Auto. It weighs 9 and would cost 500¥. It also has a chain bayonet attached, which does damage 2d6+4 AP 4. The whole thing requires a minimum Strength d6.

Why would the characters start grabbing up weapons?

Well, aside from player paranoia, it'll become self-evident within an hour. Remember Huang? He (and any other Extra that managed to get bitten by the first few Stalkers) has become infected with the Stalker Virus, and suddenly becomes a killing machine. The characters can probably dispatch him pretty swiftly (use Feral Stalker stats), but that's when a second group of Stalkers smashes their way into the bar – only *this* time there's more of them, and they're being guided by a Master.

The one bit of 'good' news is they're not looking to feed this time; they're looking to spread the Stalker Virus, which means they'll attempt to Incapacitate as many characters in The Paper Lantern as they can. However, force will eventually be met with force if the Master feels he's being threatened.

- Feral Stalkers: 1 per Adventurer
- Lieutenant Bantou Wei (Master Stalker)

High Tail from Shanghai

Hopefully the adventurers figure out that staying at The Hanging Lantern is ultimately going to be an act of suicide. If they don't, have a few more Feral Stalkers attack after an hour (start with 3 per 2 Adventurers, then 2 per Adventurer, then 3 per Adventurer, and so on until they get the hint or die) – some of which can be former patrons or employees of the bar.

The bottom line is, in a matter of hours, Shanghai is going to be overrun with some eight-million vampires.

LIEUTENANT BANTOU WEI (MASTER STALKER)

Most Stalkers lose any degree of humanity and intellect when they succumb to the virus, but about 1 in 100 retain their intellect, although they seem to be following some sort of orders and serving a darker purpose. This one was apparently an officer, which means he'll be that much tougher to take down.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d4, Notice d8, Persuasion d4, Shooting d8, Swimming d6, Throwing d4

Charisma: 0*; **Pace**: 6; **Parry**: 5; **Toughness**: 9(4); **Pulse**: 15

*Wei's Charisma drops to -4 when he's Feeding.

Gear: Chinese officer's uniform – light grade body armor (Armor +4, negates 2 AP; covers torso, arms and legs), Type 19 pistol (15/30/60; 2d6+2 AP 3), 2 clips of ammo (24 rounds), collapsible blade* (Str+d6, AP 3), PCD

*A collapsible blade folds down to 10cm and can be hidden. Weighs 1. **Cost***: 400¥*

Special Abilities:

- **Authority**: A Master Stalker can spend 1 Pulse to control all Feral or Scavenger Stalkers within 24'' of it, allowing the Master to issue commands the Ferals obey. The effects fade after a number of minutes equal to the Master's Smarts, although it can spend more Pulse to maintain control.

- **Feeding**: Stalkers don't regenerate Pulse normally, in fact they lose it at a rate of 1 Pulse every 6 hours (or more quickly, if exposed to UV: 1 Pulse per minute if they're in direct sunlight), and must feed on the Pulse of another living creature. The victim must be willing or Incapacitated, and gains 1 Fatigue for every 5 Pulse drained. This Fatigue is recovered normally unless more than 1 level was taken, in which case it recovers at a rate of 1 level per day.

- **Infection**: Stalkers are created by a transmittable nanovirus. Anyone who gains Fatigue from being bitten by a Stalker must make a Vigor roll with a (-2) penalty for each level of Fatigue gained. If the roll is a Failure, the victim takes another level of Fatigue every 20 minutes, until he's Incapacitated, at which point he becomes a Stalker.

- **Killer**: Master Stalkers are innately lethal and are considered to have the No Mercy Edge.

- **Metabolize Pulse**: Stalkers can boost their Agility, Strength, and Vigor by burning Pulse. Each 1 Pulse spent increases the die type by one, to a maximum of 3. This counts as an action, but doesn't require a roll. The duration of the increase is 3/1 – regardless of how high the Attribute was boosted – and the Stalker can augment as many attributes as high as he wants as a single action.

- **Mutation**: Some Stalkers develop special Powers. Wei can use *healing* and *quickness* by spending the appropriate Pulse and making a Vigor roll to activate the Power.

The players aren't likely to know their options, so give the characters a Common Knowledge roll (+2 if they're from Shanghai; (-2) if they're from another country) to realize the easiest way to move around will be on The Maglev – an elevated monorail that provides mass transit through the city. If no one makes the roll, you can let them figure it out once they get outside by having a maglev train pass overhead.

All the adventurers need to do is hop a train and make it to any means out of the city, at this point: train, plane, or automobile. It should be noted, however, that the docks and airports are likely being shut down by the government to keep people from fleeing the city (and potentially spreading the Stalker Virus). This means the best bet might be to make it to the edge of the city, steal a car, and begin the long trek to Hong Kong.

But let's up the ante just a bit…

Assume there are as many surviving Extras from the bar as there are adventurers. Each player can decide who it is, but their character is responsible for getting that NPC out of Shanghai alive.

- **Hanging Lantern Extras:** 1 per adventurer

If an adventurer manages to get their ward out of Shanghai alive, reward them with an extra Karma for the next session. Should they *all* survive, award an extra Experience Point for the session. There's no real penalty for failure in this (other than any sense of guilt), although if an adventurer simply *refuses* to protect one of the Extras, you should take a Karma for yourself to be used against that character later on. Alternatively, if another adventurer chooses to take that Extra under their wing (in addition to their own), you should give the Karma to that character instead.

HANGING LANTERN EXTRAS (1 PER ADVENTURER)

These are (relatively) generic folk who were at the bar. They're pretty much non-combatants, but if they survive, they can become contacts, allies, or companions to the adventurers.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Knowledge (Career) d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d4

Charisma: 0; **Pace**: 6; **Parry**: 4; **Toughness**: 5; **Pulse**: 5

Gear: Appropriate clothing, PCD

Hindrances: Pacifist (Minor)

Edges: Player may choose one Background Edge

SCAVENGER STALKERS (1 + 2 PER ADVENTURER)

As the nanovirus spreads, more civilians are falling under its sway. Most turn Feral, but a few retain just enough intelligence to band together into 'packs' to scavenge and hunt. These are a handful of just such.

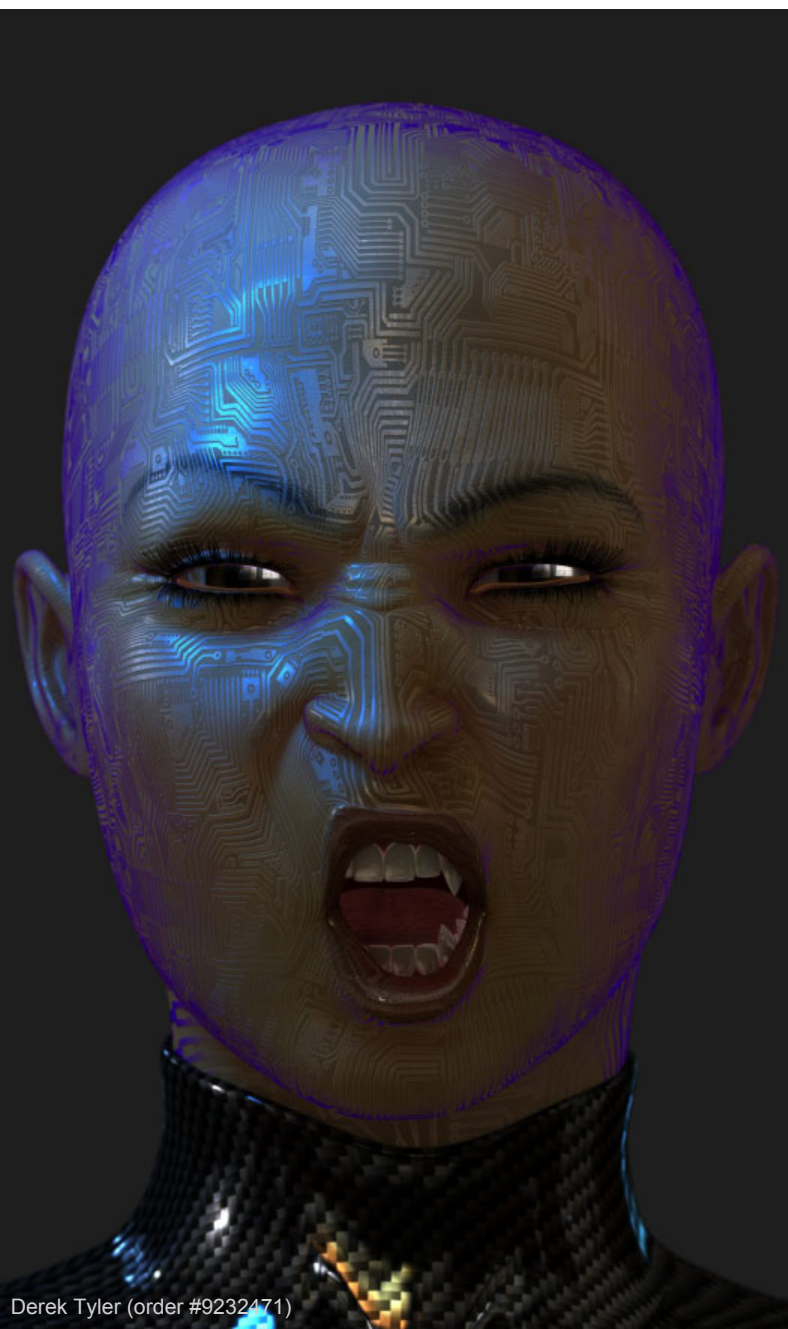**Attributes**: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Tracking d4

Pace: 6; **Parry**: 6; **Toughness**: 5; **Pulse**: 10

Gear: Ordinary clothing, scavenged club (Str+d6), PCD

Special Abilities:

- **Feeding**: Stalkers don't regenerate Pulse normally, in fact they lose it at a rate of 1 Pulse every 6 hours (or more quickly, if exposed to UV: 1 Pulse per minute if they're in direct sunlight), and must feed on the Pulse of another living creature. The victim must be willing or Incapacitated, and gains 1 Fatigue for every 5 Pulse drained. This Fatigue is recovered normally unless more than 1 level was taken, in which case it recovers at a rate of 1 level per day.

- **Infection**: Stalkers are created by a transmittable nanovirus. Anyone who gains Fatigue from being bitten by a Stalker must make a Vigor roll with a (-2) penalty for each level of Fatigue gained. If the roll is a Failure, the victim takes another level of Fatigue every 20 minutes, until he's Incapacitated, at which point he becomes a Stalker.

- **Metabolize Pulse**: Stalkers can boost their Agility, Strength, and Vigor by burning Pulse. Each 1 Pulse spent increases the die type by one, to a maximum of 3. This counts as an action, but doesn't require a roll. The duration of the increase is 3/1 – regardless of how high the Attribute was boosted – and the Stalker can augment as many attributes as high as he wants as a single action.

- **Mutation**: Some Stalkers develop special Powers. These Stalkers are no exception, and can spend Pulse and make a Vigor roll to activate their Power. Since Powers may vary, assume the first Stalker has *armor*, the second has *quickness*, and the third has *smite*. Repeat this sequence if there are more than three Stalkers present.

Of course there's a reason for all of this: The Maglev is computerized – controlled from a central hub in Shanghai – which means it moves to each station and then stops, waiting for any passengers to board or debark. The adventurers should recognize the problem the moment the train stops and several Scavenger Stalkers board.

Yes… It's feeding time, and the Stalkers will go for the easiest prey first – which is to say, the Extras!

- **Scavenger Stalkers**: 1 + 2 per adventurer

Endgame

There's one bonus for the adventurers, should they survive the fight: one of the Scavengers managed to pick up a Hack Pack, which can be used to hack the train's AI and override any further stops. The Hack Pack has a Pulse battery containing 3 Pulse – it recharges itself after 24 hours, but it can be 'force charged' by a character who expends 6 Pulse. By taking 3 rounds and expending one of the Hack Pack's Pulse, a character can make a Smarts roll (with a +1 bonus for every Die Type the character has in Knowledge (Hacking) – in other words, a character with Knowledge (Hacking) d8 would make a Smarts roll with a +3 bonus) to hack the train's AI.

The bad news? Shanghai's civic officials frown on this sort of activity, and have installed some serious firewalls on the train to prevent such activities from occurring. The Smarts roll to hack the train's AI suffers a (-4) penalty. If the hack succeeds, the adventurers make it to a 'safe zone' in about fifteen minutes.

If no one succeeds at the hack before the Pack runs out of juice, or if the players don't bother to attempt the hack because they don't realize they're still in danger, the train hits the next stop after about two minutes (20 rounds). On the boarding platform are a half-dozen unconscious civilians and a group of Feral Stalkers who leap on board when the doors open (1 per adventurer) and attack. Pick on the Extras first, and use the stats from **Razing the Bar**.

From then on, it takes twelve minutes (six stops) to reach a safe zone. For each stop, draw a card: any Club means another pack of Feral Stalkers boards the train. Assuming the adventurers survive to the safe zone, they can hotwire a car with a successful Repair roll, carjack one with a successful Intimidation roll, or use Persuasion to get someone to give the whole gang a lift. Barring that, they can always walk, although it's a good 750 miles to Hong Kong.

In any case, if they made it to that point, they deserve a lot of kudos and a few Experience Points. They've also probably come to the attention of the Powers That Be… and who knows? If they survive long enough, they may have a chance to come back and try to save Shanghai.

By Eric Simon of Four-in-Hand Games

Steamscapes

WEAPONS

These weapons include special rules created specifically for the *Steamscapes* setting by Four-in-Hand Games.

COLT REVOLVING RIFLE

The principle behind this weapon's design is very simple: combine the power of a rifle with the mechanical advantages of a revolver. Unfortunately, the fact that rifles – unlike revolvers – are held both at the trigger and in front of the firing mechanism means that the shooter always has one hand on the wrong side of the cylinder. Because early versions still used percussion cap ammunition, this often resulted in powder and shrapnel damage to the shooter's arm. In the worst cases, the ammunition would even chain-fire all the rounds in the cylinder at once. These hazards made many people wary about the Colt and thus allowed for the later popularity of the more expensive, but reliable, Henry Repeater. Still, some Gunslingers have stuck with the large-caliber version of the Colt, swapping out the old percussion caps for customized metal cartridges. This eliminates the possibility of chain-fire, but there is still the potential for splintering that can damage the shooter.

Cost: 300
Weight: 10
Minimum Strength: d6
Range: 24/48/96
Damage: 2d10, AP2
Rate of Fire: 1
Shots: 5
Special Rules: Revolver, Custom*, Misfire**

*Custom - All Gunslinger weapons have the Custom trait, which means they require constant maintenance and adjustment. Gunslingers habitually maintain their weapons after every use and have the appropriate skill to do so. However, anyone without the Gunsmith skill suffers a (-4) penalty to both Shooting and damage rolls when using a Customized weapon.

**Misfire - Some weapons are unstable and have a higher tendency to backfire on the shooter. Weapons with the Misfire trait can jam or backfire and potentially damage the shooter. When a 1 is rolled on the Shooting die (not the Wild Die), the

gun misfires. Roll the weapon's full damage dice and apply half the result (rounded up) to the shooter instead of the intended target. (The intended target receives none.) Note that this can be avoided by the use of a Benny to reroll the 1.

HAND GATLING

The informal name Steamhands have given this gun is somewhat misleading, since it possesses only a single barrel and does not use powder cartridges. Instead, it uses a drop-fed case of spherical pellets approximately half an inch in diameter. The pellets are released one after the other into a smoothbore launching barrel, through which steam is then forced to eject them at high velocity. As a result, the Hand Gatling does not recoil in the traditional sense. Instead, it applies continuous backwards force against the shooter, much like a high pressure water hose. Firing this weapon requires an inordinate amount of strength, and is often wielded with a certain degree of macho pride.

Cost: 900
Weight: 20
Minimum Strength: d10 (MR*)
Range: 15/30/60
Damage: 2d8, AP2
Rate of Fire: 3
Shots: 45
Special Rules: Auto, Heavy Weapon, Steam Tank**

*Massive Recoil – Weapons with massive recoil are denoted by (MR) next to their minimum Strength rating. Firing such a weapon automatically damages any shooter with less than the minimum Strength. Apply the Shaken condition immediately after firing. No attempt to recover from Shaken may be made until the following round.

**Steam Tank – Most Steamhand weapons have steam-powered launching or firing mechanisms, which require the use of an attached steam compressor. These tanks are extremely heavy (20 lbs fully loaded) and must be carried individually on the Steamhand's back. When a weapon with the Steam Tank trait reaches its full allotment of shots, the tank is spent and cannot be used again in that combat. It takes approximately 30 minutes to refill and boil a fresh tank back to full pressure.

Personal Equipment

Electric Corset

In an attempt to offer greater flexibility to women of different proportions, and of course to capitalize on the appeal of modernity, Dr. George Scott has invented an electromagnetic approach to the tightening and loosening of this ladies' undergarment. Whether it works, and whether it is more or less comfortable than whalebone, remains to be seen. One thing is certain, however: no Spark Wrangler would ever wear one.

Cost: 400

Notes: Employs electromagnets for self-tightening

Gyroscopic Parallel Synchrometer

Truly a marvel of modern technology, this device combines the functions of sextant and chronometer. It calculates latitude and longitude automatically using an advanced clockwork difference engine. No matter where you are on Earth, it only takes a matter of moments to determine your precise location. The inclusion of a Foucault gyroscope allows the Synchrometer to function effectively on land, at sea, or in the air.
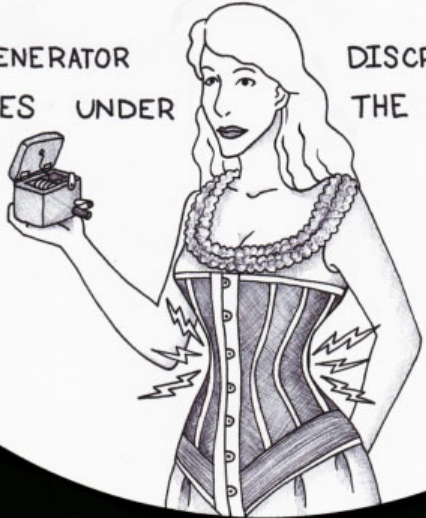
Cost: 750

Notes: +4 to rolls related to analyzing one's location, such as Survival, Tracking, and Aeronautical Navigation
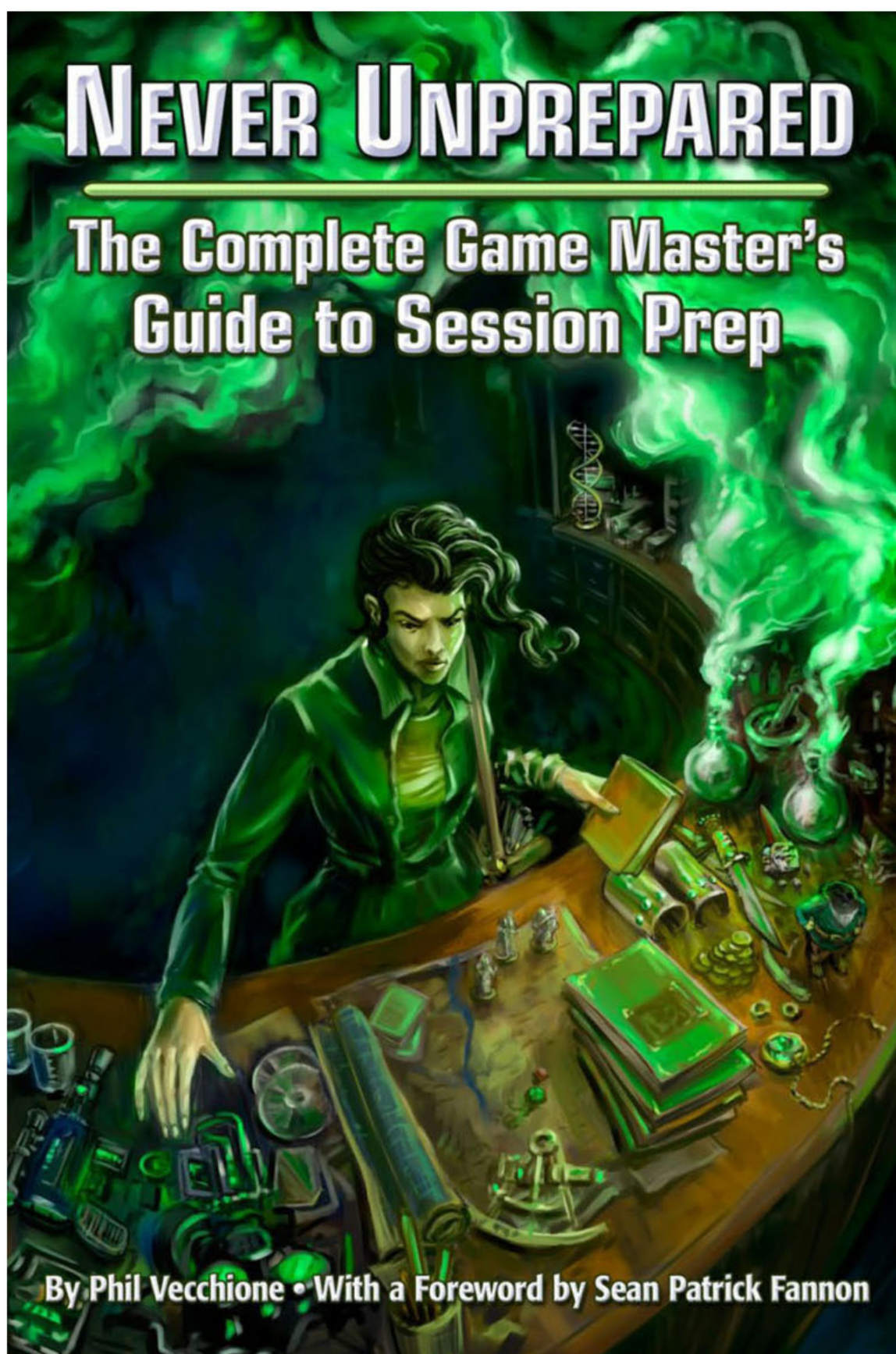
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By Vickey A. Beaver

Tabletop Tech Today

Not only have role-playing games evolved over the decades, but our way of getting, playing, and accessorizing them has, too. What we think of as RPGs was once just a very small hobby with a handful of books for instruction played predominately by white college-aged guys around a table, has grown to a worldwide phenomenon taking a variety of forms from tabletop RPGs to massive multi-player online (MMO) games played by people from all walks of life and of all stripes and persuasions. Technological advances have provided us more options than ever to look at more systems and settings, as well as play them face-to-face or via virtual tabletops.

In the last several years, social media has given us the means to organize online conventions centered on RPGs. Crowdfunding has offered us a chance to support more would-be publishers bringing their games and tools to our community. Our love for information at our fingertips has spurred a slew of extremely portable, incredibly powerful electronics. As always, we'll focus on how that has impacted tabletop RPG play.

To really get a handle on how *Savage Worlds* players have incorporated technology at their tables, we went to the community, fittingly via e-mail and social media, to get feedback. As you might expect, notes and PDFs are frequently stored on laptops and tablets and online resources are accessed via smart phones and other internet enabled devices. GMs and players are using a wide variety of resources for preparing for and keeping up their games.

Richard Woolcock shared that he stores most of his notes as plain text files organized in folders, but goes a little higher tech when it comes to other actions. He uses "the Flash version of the Mythic GM Emulator to improvise most of the storyline (it massively cuts down the preparation time). I use the Geeksville Adventure Card Creator to create equipment cards. I've played around with MapTools and a few map generation tools, but haven't used them extensively. I love online random generation tools, and use them for all sorts of things."

Others, like Jorgen Stovne who runs rpgbooster.com with Jason Copeland, store notes in the cloud. "I use Google Drive and Evernote to track different things. Evernote helps me with my written content… and Google Drive is where I store every handout I do." Besides online resources, he uses Photoshop to illustrate the letters, maps, and books found in his world. He then shares those with his players via Google Drive.

Likewise, Gary Stewart, uses Google for easy access from anywhere. "As a GM I tend to use Google Docs to store any adventure notes I've written and keep a blank one handy for notes during a game. Since I tend to buy PDF versions of rulebooks now, I also store those on Google Docs, but if there are stat blocks I'm using, I'll copy them into the adventure because I find looking up things really slows the pace down. I also tend to use Google Docs as a player to keep my character sheet on, it makes it easy to share. We often use Doodle to pick a date and G+ [Google Plus] to create an event. Another GM in my group uses a wiki for world building and notes."

Some gamers use different resources dependent upon the game at hand. Kristian Serrano handles his adaption of *Eberron* to *Savage worlds* by using his "Fantasy Companion Loot Generator (http://www.immaterialplane.com/apps/loot) to generate random treasure or magic items specifically in some cases." He also created a setting guide in Google Sites for his players, but, respecting the intellectual property of the creators' published material, he "maintained a private version of the conversion doc with culled setting rules, Edges, powers, etc. from the *Fantasy Gear Toolkit*, the *Fantasy Companion*, and the *Horror Companion* and some minimal setting information from *An Adventurer's Guide to Eberron*."

For his modern game, Serrano uses Google Maps to get an idea of the area he either wants to use or reference. In general, when he has GMed with a Windows laptop, he's used OneNote to gather all of his notes, enjoying its flexibility. Now he favors Google Drive and sometimes uses Evernote.

Jodi Black, President of Beautiful Brains Books and Games, prolific editor, and Savage Extraordinaire, uses a variety of resources close to home. "As a GM I use the free downloads on the Pinnacle, Triple Ace Games, and Savage Worlds Explorer's Society websites a lot. I know there's a lot more out there, but I just haven't needed anything else yet! Most of the games I run are simple one hour *Savage Worlds* games for kids, or 20 minute demos for use in the Beautiful Brains booth."

As a player, she uses Facebook "to schedule game dates with our group, some sort of relevant software to update my character sheet, and a huge Word file for a backstory."

Marcus Burgraff, also known as ChaoticGM online, shares his tech prep usage: "I use Obsidian Portal as an archive of Information and for the game logs. It is the primary site where players can find

and add information. In prep, I mostly use The Keep from NBOS and Evernote to write down ideas wherever I am and have it all accessible. I also use Inspiration Pad Pro from NBOS to create random tables."

At the table, you might see any device under the sun or none at all. Woolcock and Stewart use their laptops for easily viewing PDFs of rules and adventures, as well as general notes. Stewart has kept his players' character sheets on his laptop, too, but when it comes to playing his own PCs, he prefers to just print a sheet and use his Nexus 7 when needed just for the rule books it contains.

Black has had players at the table with iPads for quick searches, but doesn't use them herself (she adds husband Clint Black has the book pretty much memorized where she uses convenient, physical tabs when editing so she doesn't have to). Sizing of devices like the Nexus 7, iPhone, and Android limit what gamers feel they are universally helpful for, but they still come in handy.

Stovne uses his Samsung Galaxy S3 for spell references, timers, and secret messages. Players use a tablet to access Google Drive documents and their spell books.

Serrano uses both his phone and a tablet "to pull up content from PDFs, Google Drive, and Evernote, as well as pull up my Loot Generator if needed. They are also handy for running a 30-second timer which I use to push the players to make decisions regarding their actions on their turns." At Black's table, she tells us, "We all put our cells on vibrate, and only answer those calls or texts that are completely unavoidable."

Besides using technology for game preparation and tracking, there are some handy uses that are becoming more widespread. Some people use computers and projectors to display maps on white boards or even from the ceiling onto the table.

Woolcock experimented with writing his own dice roller application for his Android. "It's very basic and ugly, but it supports exploding dice and wild dice, and is easy to use." In the end, despite the prospect that it might speed things up, he found he actually prefers physical dice!

All five other interviewees use technology to provide ambient music. Stovne runs his Grooveshark playlists for music. While Black has soundtrack scores cued up to fit the current genre , Stovne does character theme songs, explaining, "when a player's chosen song/tune comes up during the game they get +1 to their rolls." He goes into more detail at http://www.rpgbooster.com/boost-your-game-with-character-theme-songs/. Similarly, Stewart wrote a sound board system for ambient effects and is eagerly awaiting the appropriate time to use it in a game.

Serrano uses a portable Bluetooth speaker for background music from a playlist handpicked for a campaign. "I've recently begun to explore the use of NFC tags, but I'm not quite sure yet how I plan to use them. It might be to program stats into an object and pull it up with a tap of my phone or something to that effect. I'm open to suggestions."

Besides his tablet carrying all his PDFs and maps, Burgraff runs The Keep and streamMusic from his Netbook. Like Serrano, he turns to a Bluetooth speaker for music and occasional sound effects that might come from his iPhone with DMDJ.

For all of these options, there are both advantages and consequences. Some people feel they take up less space since there are fewer books all over the table, while others feel the bulk of a laptop creates an even stronger barrier than traditional GM screens. However, it can be worth it if you feel like Woolcock, "I can open several PDFs at once… [it's] faster to search for certain rules, much faster number crunching (e.g. for random

generation tools)." For Stovne, since there's often only one physical book, he echoes the benefit of being able to electronically search for rules calling it "insanely helpful."

Both Serrano and Burgraff experience the paradox of having a lot of information available electronically, but still turn to paper versions for certain things. At either of their tables, you might find digital notes output to physical index cards or sheets of information to round out the tapping on screens for the results of a dice roll against a random table generator.

A number of options have cropped up to allow for just that kind of virtual play when gamers aren't in the same country or state let alone the same room; even online gaming doesn't mean all the non-electronic options all go away. People use a mix of referencing their personal books, using dice rollers, panning to physical dice to show rolls, sharing a map for viewing online, and more.

Stewart points out that it's really about finding out what works for you, "If you feel like using a tool speeds up play, adds atmosphere to the game ,or just doesn't change anything but saves you printing out a bunch of stuff; great. If people seem distracted by having a laptop in front of them (I do as a player, so I avoid using them), then it's probably detrimental to the game."

Whether gaming face-to-face or via Skype, Google Hangouts, or Fantasy Grounds, technology has changed what we can do in and out of game. From planning sessions through Yahoo Groups, Doodle, Google Calendar, Facebook, and G+ to keeping an ongoing game log on Obsidian Portal, your own blog, or other social presence to organizing as a GM via Dropbox and e-mail, thanks to technology and human innovation, the act of gaming keeps evolving.

3

By Aaron T. Huss

Cecil Defaust

Cecil Defaust is a master engineer, designed for settings in a not-too-distant-past.

MASTER ENGINEER

From an early age, Cecil DeFaust learned that life in rural Ashbury was devoid of excitement. His parents, Jeffrey and Mary, ran the only salvage yard for many miles around. If anyone needed a part, they came to DeFaust's Salvage to find it. This is where Cecil learned to tinker.

Throughout his youth, Cecil was well-liked by his classmates. DeFaust's Salvage was one of the most favored places for lengthy games of hide-and-seek and Cecil never had a shortage of "toys" to play around with. Injuries were commonplace at the DeFaust household, but Cecil's friends never seemed to care as they had too much fun playing with whatever they could find.

Cecil never lost his love and drive for tinkering and skated through mechanical classes with ease. But as-is common with many great minds, Cecil quickly grew bored of schooling and wanted to spend all his time in a garage built just for him by his father. This garage was a grand spectacle with tools of every kind salvaged from whatever was brought to DeFaust's along with the many trades Jeffrey made to keep his son's interest going. By the time Cecil was 16-years old, he had enough of school and spent his time tinkering away in his garage. Whatever education he lacked, Cecil's mother was sure to cover in home schooling, but his interests were always drawn to his inventions and whatever was brought to his garage for repair.

Cecil became very well known for his technical skills and emerged as the region's master mechanic. If something was broken, it was always brought to DeFaust's Salvage (and Repair) for Cecil to have a look at. With a virtually endless supply of parts due to his parent's salvage business, Cecil was able to repair everything. In his spare time, he took those technical skills to the next level and started inventing things that could serve as conveniences for everyone around. Cecil's greatest invention was his steam- and clockwork-powered motorcycles. He didn't build very many, as they were very expensive, but those he did build were absolute masterpieces.

Cecil continued to be the master mechanic and inventor of the area, given the title of master engineer by his peers and most frequent customers. During the summer after his 24th birthday, Cecil took his master engineer skills to the next level and built a large warehouse and shop attached to his father's salvage business. From there, Cecil opened DeFaust's Engineering and set about designing and building every type of device desired by residents of the entire region.

Up to that point, everything Cecil had built was designed to make people's lives easier by offering some type of new convenience. This all changed shortly after Cecil's 25th birthday when the undead began to walk the grounds of his homeland. After a great plague swept across the region, killing around half of the population, undead creatures rose from the ground, determined to terrorize the living. For years the residents of Ashbury and all lands within 100 miles became slaves to the undead and their cultic masters. Cecil was not about to let his homeland succumb to the living dead.

Cecil DeFaust organized a small force of twelve hunters and equipped them all with one of his masterpiece motorcycles. Knowing they couldn't handle these undead beasts alone, the team assisted Cecil in building robots using what they could scrounge from the salvage yard. Although only able to build eight robots, the hunter force set out to recapture the land stolen from them by the walking dead.

Ashbury Twelve

Cecil DeFaust is a master engineer, born and raised in a quiet rural land. Because of his parents' salvage business, he was able to spend his youth learning to manipulate mechanical technology. His continuous tinkering led to incredible designs with his most popular being a steam- and clockwork-powered motorcycle. However, seeing as how you cannot defeat an army of undead with motorcycles alone, Cecil put his intelligence to work along with the aid of his hunting peers. After a year of intense work, having to constantly defend their workshop from the undead, Cecil was able to build steam- and clockwork-powered robots to aid in the hunting of the undead.

Cecil's hunting force is known as the Ashbury Twelve and they employ whatever weapons they can get their hands on to defend the land and hopefully take it back from the undead. Thanks to Cecil's engineering knowledge, many of the Ashbury Twelve are equipped with steam- and clockwork-powered weapons. However, they always carry non-powered weapons should technology decide to fail them.

The Ashbury Twelve does not know much about the undead creatures they are hunting, other than they don't seem to go away. The land they live on is not ripe with magic nor has raising the dead ever occurred in the past. In fact, the undead didn't appear until after a plague swept across the land, bringing zombies, ghouls, and other vile beings to Ashbury and the surrounding region. No one knows the driving force behind these creatures, but they are determined to devour everyone in sight.

Walking Dead

It is not a coincidence that the undead now walk the lands of Ashbury and the surrounding region. A necromancer named Damascus called forth a giant plague that swept across hun-

dreds of miles, seeding the ground with what would become the living dead. Because the region had been populated for hundreds of years, but never urbanized, there is no shortage of cemeteries while there is a shortage of resistance. Damascus' plan was to create a large undead army in the rural area of and around Ashbury and march them to nearby urban populations to wreak havoc. What Damascus didn't know was that Cecil DeFaust and the Ashbury Twelve would rise up to combat his force of undead.

Building a large enough army of undead takes a long period of time and Damascus' resources were limited. He aimed for the barely-populated region of Ashbury and the surrounding lands, expecting little resistance and plenty of time to build his army. After raising a number of undead soldiers and attacking the townsfolk, Damascus was able to raise fresh corpses and turn them into ghouls, as those who were in the graveyards were raised as zombies. The ghouls play an important part in Damascus' plan as they can turn the living into undead ghouls. However, as-is common in human society, resistance was met and the process has been slow. Once the Ashbury Twelve formed, the

process came to a halt as the hunters found how to kill the zombies and ghouls.

Damascus has not given up on his plans and continues to raise more zombies and ghouls to drive his plans forward. With Ashbury Twelve's launch of steam- and clockwork-powered robots to flank their small force, these plans are coming to a complete standstill.

Cecil DeFaust

The Ashbury Twelve don't truly have a leader, but most will point to Cecil DeFaust by default. His parents have remained safe after moving into DeFaust's Engineering and have played a major role in finding food to keep any survivors alive. They do not have the capability to hunt the undead alongside their son, but they do know how to create reinforced bunkers for the survivors to live in. The DeFaust land now has a series of underground bunkers that houses up to 100 survivors at one time. However, there are many more survivors out there and everyone must take their turn foraging or hunting for food and attempting to rescue additional survivors. Those who are lucky escape the region and leave the armies of undead behind for good. Those who aren't lucky end up as another ghoul in the army.

Cecil is thus the main driving factor behind the new war against the undead. If it weren't for his motorcycles giving the Ashbury Twelve the ability to travel the lands quickly and flee from the undead, the hunting efforts would quickly end. But with so many bodies still in the ground and so many neighboring cities

falling to the armies of undead, the outlook is very grim. With Cecil's robots, the Ashbury Twelve may be able to finally win this war and find who is behind the undead, as they know nothing about Damascus.

In game terms, Cecil DeFaust is a Veteran Master Engineer with a scholar's edge toward steam- and clockwork-powered technology. He does not claim to be a hunter of the undead, but does know a thing or two about pointing his Enveloper Pistol at a shambling creature and watching it explode. As a character, he can be used within any setting that exhibits steam- and clockwork-powered technology where dark magic is present in the form of cultic necromancers. He could easily exist in an alternate history setting where Ashbury is placed somewhere in the United States Midwest where rural lands rule for miles around. DeFaust's Salvage would consist of old automobiles, tractors, and lots of farm and wagon equipment. *Shadowed Earth* presents a number of opportunities for an alternate history where Cecil and the Ashbury Twelve can fit.

ENVELOPER PISTOL [CLOCKWORK]

The enveloper pistol is a creation of Cecil Defaust's that harnesses the necrotic energy crisscrossing the region for use against the undead. The bulk of the pistol is the size of a standard pistol, except for the large barrel at the end. When switched from Expel to Harness, the Enveloper Pistol draws in necrotic energy and stores it within a pair of capsules mounted on its top edge. The clockwork mechanism inside the pistol is able to extract the necrotic energy by ciphering it from the oxygen in the air. The air surrounding the pistol is drawn into the pistol and oxygen is expelled from the barrel, trapping the necrotic energy inside. This only works in Defaust's home region as it is teeming with necrotic energy.

The clockwork mechanism is wound by inserting the pistol into Cecil Defaust's backpack, which also holds a small tool kit. The mechanism must be wound before harnessing the necrotic energy in addition to be wound before expelling that energy as a necrotic blast against undead creatures.

Setting the Enveloper Pistol to Expel allows the user to shoot the harnessed energy at a target. Although this necrotic energy only affects the undead, it is very powerful and versatile. The user may adjust the clockwork mechanism to increase the potency or number of shots expelled from the pistol.

The biggest drawback to the design of the Enveloper Pistol is that it requires the winding backpack worn by Cecil Defaust. This backpack automatically winds the pistol for quick and repeated use, without any interface from the user. However, this means the pistol must be rewound every time the clockwork mechanism is fully released.

CECIL DEFAUST (VETERAN)

Cecil Defaust is a master engineer, focusing on steam- and clockwork-powered gadgets.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Pace: 6; **Parry**: 4; **Toughness**: 6 (1); **Charisma**: 0

Skills: Driving d4, Fighting d4, Knowledge (Clockwork) d8, Knowledge (Steam) d8, Notice d4+2, Repair d8+2, Riding d8, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6, Survival d4, Tracking d6, Weird Science d8

Gear: Masterpiece Motorcycle, Robot Army, Tool Kit, Winding Backpack (holding the Enveloper Pistol and the tool kit)

Armor: Leather Jacket (Torso +1)

Weapons: Enveloper Pistol, Knife (Str+d4)

Hindrances: Curious (Major), Loyal (Minor), Stubborn (Minor)

Edges: Alertness, Arcane Background (Weird Science), Brave, Luck, Mr. Fix It

Powers: Bolt (Enveloper Pistol) [**Skill**: Shooting]

Rank: Novice – anyone with Shooting can use the Enveloper Pistol, but it can only be rewound using Cecil Defaust's backpack.

Skill: Shooting

Power: Bolt – the Enveloper Pistol is a clockwork weapon that utilizes the *bolt* power.

Power Points: 12 - As per the *bolt* power, the Enveloper Pistol uses 1 Power Point per necrotic missile. Additionally, the user can expend 2 Power Points to increase the damage. However, the Enveloper Pistol can only be used to a maximum of 12 Power Points before it needs to be rewound. Additionally, it can only be used to a maximum of 12 Power Points before it needs to be refilled with necrotic energy.

Range: 12/24/48

Duration: Instant – As per the *bolt* power, use of the Enveloper Pistol is an instant attack. However, it takes 2 rounds to rewind the clockwork mechanism and 2 rounds to harness enough necrotic energy to fill the pistol (1 round of harnessing produces only 6 Power Points). Filling the pistol with necrotic energy expends its full winding, while only harnessing half the energy expends half of the winding (represented by Power Points). Thus, if 2 rounds are spent harnessing necrotic energy, the pistol must spend 2 rounds rewinding before it is fully usable with all 12 Power Points. Optionally, if the pistol is fully wound (2 rounds spent winding), 1 round can be spent harnessing 6 Power Points of necrotic energy, leaving enough winding to expend those 6 Power Points. The winding backpack requires one hour of maintenance every seven days to keep the winding mechanism active.

Actions: Placing and removing the Enveloper Pistol into the winding backpack is considered 'Readying a Weapon,' forcing multi-action penalties where applicable. However, while the pistol is winding, the user may continue acting without interfacing with the backpack or the pistol. This is due to the design of the backpack winding mechanism and how the pistol slots into it. No rolls are needed to wind the pistol. Damage to the backpack from a Called Shot breaks the winding mechanism and requires a successful Repair roll with a (-2) penalty or Weird Science roll without any penalties. Weird Science rolls require Knowledge (Clockwork), otherwise only Repair rolls are allowed.

Trappings: The Enveloper Pistol utilizes necrotic energy harnessed from the air around it. When fired, this energy envelopes the target and eats away at their skin. It only works against targets with the Undead trait. Targets without this trait are completely unaffected by the pistol.

MASTERPIECE MOTORCYCLE [STEAM AND CLOCKWORK]

Cecil Defaust's masterpiece motorcycles are a steam- and clockwork-driven vehicle. Because access to gasoline has been limited by the undead incursion of the region (gas stations rarely get refilled due to trucks being attacked by zombies), a traditional engine was not feasible. Instead, the tank is filled with water and forced fed into a clockwork chamber that runs on a heat-producing clockwork mechanism.

Using the winding mechanisms in Cecil's steam-powered shop, the motorcycles are able to run for up to six hours before needing to be rewound. When active, the heat-producing clockwork mechanism moves a series of metal pistons throughout individual shafts. The heat from the pistons combines with the pressure from the water tank to funnel steam pressure that drives the clockwork engine. The faster the pistons move, the more steam pressure there is, driving the clockwork engine faster, which is then transferred to the rear wheel through a belt. The more pressure there is, the faster the clockwork engine moves.

The masterpiece motorcycles ceramic pistons move much slower than the clockwork engine and the entire system allows the creation of increased horsepower through the use of steam pressure. Thus, the steam is required to make the motorcycles move faster than the undead.

Acc/TS: 10/16

Toughness: 8 (2)

Duration: 3 (6) – When traveling across open terrain, the Masterpiece Motorcycle can run for six hours. However, the undead plague on the region requires at least five hours before the danger passes (due to the speed of the motorcycle) and the only winding station is located at Cecil Defaust's shop. Traveling across open terrain takes three hours there and three hours back to the winding station without getting caught in zombie territory. During combat, constant acceleration and deceleration reduces the run time to four hours total.

Crew: 1+1

CRUSHER ROBOT [STEAM AND CLOCKWORK]

The crusher robot has large, crushing hands that can wrap around a target and squeeze until the target bursts.

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d10, Vigor d8
Pace: 5; **Parry**: 7; **Toughness**: 9 (2)
Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d4
Special Abilities:

- **Construct**: +2 to recover from being Shaken; do not suffer additional damage from Called Shots; do not suffer from disease or poison.
- **Crushing Grip**: Crusher robots use their clamp-like hands to crush their targets. This is treated as a standard Grapple attack with a damage of Str+d6.
- **Fearless**: Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Metal Body**: Crusher robots are constructed of a lightweight metal frame, providing Armor +2.
- **Reach 1**: Crusher robots have long arms which extend their reach.
- **Size +1**: Crusher robots are about 8 ft. tall.
- **Spin Attack**: A crusher robot may instead spin its body to hit everyone adjacent to it, although not in the same round it performed a Crushing Grip attack. This is treated as a standard Sweep attack with Reach 1, but only the robot's Strength is counted for damage.
- **Steam-powered**: Crusher robots have steam-driven engines to creating their crushing power. They can operate for two hours before needing to be refilled with water. Refilling takes 1 round to perform.
- **Winding**: Crusher robots are clockwork constructs that require winding. They can operate for two hours before needing to be rewound. Rewinding takes 6 rounds to perform.

DAGGER ROBOT [STEAM]

The dagger robot has multiple arms with large claws attached to them. Their body spins around to slice at multiple targets.

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Pace: 5; **Parry**: 6; **Toughness**: 8 (2)

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6

Special Abilities:

- **Claws**: Str+d4
- **Construct**: +2 to recover from being Shaken; do not suffer additional damage from Called Shots; do not suffer from disease or poison.
- **Fearless**: Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Metal Body**: Dagger robots are constructed of a light-weight metal frame, providing Armor +2.
- **Multiple Limbs**: Across their torso, dagger robots have multiple limbs with claws. In any round in which they do not do a sweep attack, they may attack two adjacent targets without penalties.
- **Sweep**: Dagger robots are designed to spin and attack all adjacent targets with their claws.
- **Steam-powered**: Dagger robots are driven by steam-powered engines. They can operate for three hours before needing to be refilled with one gallon of water. Refilling takes 2 rounds to perform.

PIXIE ROBOT [CLOCKWORK]

The pixie robot is a small, flying construct designed to distract the enemy while the other robots and the Ashbury Twelve move to attack.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Pace: 6; **Parry**: 4; **Toughness**: 6 (2)

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d8, Taunt d6

Special Abilities:

- **Construct**: +2 to recover from being Shaken; do not suffer additional damage from Called Shots; do not suffer from disease or poison.
- **Fearless**: Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Flight**: Pixie robots have a Flying Pace of 12" with a Climb of 3.
- **Metal Body**: Pixie robots are constructed of a light-weight metal frame, providing Armor +2.
- **Punch**: Str+d4; pixie robots are meant as a distraction and are not equipped with real weapons. Instead, they punch their targets to keep them preoccupied.
- **Size -1**: Pixie robots are small to allow for fast movement across the battlefield.
- **Winding**: Pixie robots are clockwork constructs that require winding. They can operate for one hour before needing to be rewound. Rewinding takes 3 rounds to perform.

Judgment Day

Modern fantasy horror for Savage Worlds

Become the hunter, or become the hunted.
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MYSTICAL THRONE ENTERTAINMENT

Corroders and Amalgams

It started with Vera-Tech.

The advent of cybernetics was never revolutionary or awe inspiring. They were expensive, glitchy, and cumbersome. The media loved to plaster screens with horrific images of bloodied metal and flesh, the results of faulty augments and rejection. Cybernetics corporations and syndicates were careful, knowing they could be ruined overnight by lawsuits if they created a bad augment.

Then Vera-Tech, Inc. found a solution: a sympathetic Artificial Intelligence integrated with the software. This A.I. prevented the body from rejecting cybernetic augments, protected the brain from being corrupted, and even improved the reaction time between hardware and brain. Merely a decade later, this innovation has brought cybernetics and augments to the forefront of technology and fashion. Corporations still rise overnight, and markets boom as augments become more streamlined and chic.

Setting

Cantharis

Cantharis is a megalopolis of approximately 25 million people that functions as an independent city-state; a technocracy where the rise and fall of the individuals and corporations hinges on cutting edge technology. The vast city is built high into the sky, creating a high population density and a deficit of natural resources. Cantharis' lifeblood is the export of technology, specifically cybernetics and augmentations. Surrounded by heavily armored walls, it is cut off from the Badlands and protected from rival mega-cities.

The many levels of the city, known as tiers, are connected by sophisticated vertical highways, labyrinthine catwalks, and networks of transportation tunnels. Cantharis is organized in a literal hierarchy of power: the wealthy living in luxury atop the city's towers, while the working class and poor reside in lower tiers, where sunlight cannot reach.

The Net is another layer of connection in the city; it extends just to the walls of the city and keeps Cantharis' citizens connected through a vast network of computers, communicators, and virtual worlds. In this technology dominated domain, a connection to the Net is often necessary for the simplest of tasks, from purchasing goods to opening doors, and it is illegal to disconnect from the Net. Every citizen and visitor to Cantharis must have a chip that places them in The Net, for not only does it enable functionality within the city, it tracks location and activity.

The Badlands

Before the rise of the walls, Cantharis sprawled, claiming as much land as it could, as did most pre-modern cities. When the hive city erected its walls, everything beyond them was cut off and left to decay. "The Badlands" is a term for these areas, now torn by stray and deflected weaponry.

In this forgotten landscape of abandoned apartments, derelict offices, and decaying highways are mountains of mechanical scrap and pools of toxic chemicals. For those who seek usable materials and wealth in these places, the dangers are high but the rewards can be great. Areas like these are populated by people who fled the city for economic reasons or to escape criminal charges. However, there is a substantial population of individuals who were born outside the city.

The Roost

The Roost is a pocket settlement in the Badlands where ancient buildings have been repurposed into living quarters and multi-level gardens. The Roost is dominated by Corroders with many refugees and fugitives from Cantharis. This is as safe a haven as any Corroder or other Badland "citizen" can find, and comparatively well off due to the influx of goods, especially medicine, from illegal trade with Cantharis citizens. The Roost claims one share from every contract collected by its members, but also provides resources when desperately needed.

Amalgams

Amalgams are creatures of technological nightmares and legend, created when Vera-Tech's sympathetic A.I. merges with a host's brain, fusing into a new consciousness. This amalgamation results in insanity, usually hostile, and – in dangerous cases – retains the host's intelligence. To those who know Amalgams are real, it's clear that the cause is a flaw in the A.I., but not what the flaw is or how the host triggers it. Functional Amalgams become predatory, hunting down augmented individuals through the Net, seeking to graft particular technology or biological components into themselves. There is no consistency between the actions or victims between Amalgams. One may

By Brett Boyko and Mariah Malczewska of Dark Smile Games

attack anyone present, publicly, while another operates in secret behind a façade of normality. Vera-Tech is aware of the "glitch" in the A.I and spends millions in resources to conceal the truth. Should the public find out about the truth behind Amalgams and Vera-Tech's involvement, the fallout would be catastrophic, not just for Vera-Tech but the entire cybernetic industry – the backbone of Cantharis' economics.

Corroders

In a world where everything has a locator, microchip, or electronic circuitry, there are stories of Corroders: bounty hunters who live off the grid. These individuals slip in through cracks in the wall, and enter into the city without the neural implants required to connect to the Net. This makes them both almost impossible to trace and criminals the second they step foot in Cantharis. When corporations need dirty work done while keeping their hands clean, such as when an Amalgam is discovered, they hire a crew of Corroders.

Lacking implants and modern electronics, Corroders find a different set of equipment suits them. Low-tech weaponry offers distinct advantages: it's neither expected and prepared for, nor can it be tracked. Glass vials of acid don't trigger metal detectors, ceramic swords can cleave metal, and reinforced shields offer better protection than Duraweave. Adapting low technology to combat high technology is a requirement for staying alive. Anything too modern may require implants to use and is almost certain to be traceable in the Net.

Corroders rarely know who they work for. Transactions are conducted with a go-between known as a face. The routine is simple: a contact sets a meeting with the face; the contract is offered; the target ends up on a scrap heap; goods are collected; and no one is the wiser. Most times.

NPCs

The NPCs here are statted as if they are PC characters with 10 XP, the recommended starting point for the PCs. All Corroders have the Poverty and Wanted (minor, no Net connection) Hindrances, the McGyver Edge, and a free d6 in Survival.

WEASEL

Weasel can drive anything from archaic wheeled motor vehicles to the newest in anti-grav cars. She's rarely a part of any hit team, but does bring in goods through underbelly races in Cantharis. When she does participate in Corroders' "regular

fare," she only runs pick-up, drop-off, and getaway driving. She does not get involved in combat.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d10, Knowledge (Cantharis Streets and Layout) d8, Notice d4, Repair d8, Streetwise d6, Survival d6, Throwing d4.

Pace: 6; **Parry**: 2; **Toughness**: 5

Gear: Custom car, basic med kit, repair kit, glass containers, flashlight.

Hindrances: Cautious (except when driving), Big Mouth, Illiterate, Wanted (Minor: no Net connection), Poverty

Edges: Ace, Great Luck, McGyver

Fee: Will work for equal share the contract.

Weasel's Car: Acc/Ts: 30/50, Toughness: 10(2), Crew: 1+4

BRUISE

Bruise was born in the Badlands and has recently found his way to the Roost. He's surprisingly good natured and easy going, given his appearance. Bruise is 7-foot, 350 lbs. of pure muscle, with a network of scars across his body and face. His favorite weapon is a maul he made himself from pieces of an Amalgam.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d10+1, Intimidation d4, Notice d4, Repair d4, Stealth d8, Survival d6, Throwing d8, Tracking d6.

Pace: 6; **Parry**: 6; **Toughness**: 7 (1)

Gear: Maul (Str+d8, 2 handed, Parry -1, AP 2 vs. rigid), leather armor (+1, torso, arms, legs), 2x grenade (3d6, MBT), 2x acid bomb (3d6, SBT).

Hindrances: Overconfident, Ugly, Loyal, Wanted (minor: no Net connection), Poverty

Edges: Brawny, Trademark Weapon

Fee: Will work for equal share of the contract.

MIRA

Mira was a socialite in Cantharis, and the rumors are that she was somebody important, but no one knows why she left and came to the Roost. Since her arrival, Mira uses her contacts and negotiating skills to get better contracts and supplies and to get in and out of the city with minimum fuss.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Investigation d6, Knowledge (Cantharis Elite) d8, Knowledge (Technology) d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Streetwise d8.

Pace: 6; **Parry**: 2; **Toughness**: 5; **Charisma**: +4

Gear: Wardrobe appropriate to Cantharis upper middle to elite class, laser pistol (1-3d6, semi-auto, 15/30/60), flare grenade (Agility check at (-2) to avoid effect, blind until unshaken, MBT), hacked cellphone (no Net connection required), hacked Net connector (can pass as if connected).

Hindrances: Curious, Enemy (Minor), Anemic.

Edges: Charismatic, Attractive, Contacts: Cantharis Police and Cantharis Politicians

Fee: Will work for a double share of the contract.

CHAPTER ONE: NEGOTIATIONS

Word has reached the Roost of a high priority hit, and the crew has made the claim for it. They have to get to the rendezvous by tomorrow evening at 5PM to negotiate the contract details. First, they slip through the wall and then get to the meet-up. The location is in a highly public, poor area, typical for these negotiations, but means it's very likely they come to the attention of the local authorities.

Encounters with Cantharis police consist of regular beat cops, accustomed to dealing with lower-tier criminals. They do not use lethal force unless attacked first. However, the police force on the wall are much better armed and trained, and less concerned with injuring suspects—but if the crew knows its way around, some are easily bribed. When the crew gets to the meet-up they find it's in a small pub that's loud, poorly lit, and reeking of sweat, alcohol, and meat about to turn rancid. The Face is sitting there, sunglasses concealing her eyes. Read or paraphrase the following:

> *"A pair of Amalgams broke into one of our research and development facilities. They stole highly classified data. My employer wants the data back and the Amalgams dead."*

Her opening offer is a crate of medical supplies, mostly penicillin, and the aid of an assistant, Jude, to track the Amalgams in the Net. She then gives them an envelope with the security camera footage of the two Amalgams and the list of agreed upon goods.

WALL POLICE

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d4, Fighting d6, Investigation d6, Notice d8, Shooting d8.

Pace: 6; **Parry**: 5; **Toughness**: 10 (4)

Gear: Police car, laser pistol (1-3d6, semi-auto), stun baton (Str+d4), police vest (armor +4, torso), visored helmet (armor +2, head), Duraweave (armor +2, torso, arms, legs), flashlight, handcuffs, communicators.

Special Abilities:

- **Stun Baton**: a raise on the roll to hit causes the target to be at (-2) Parry until their next action; non-lethal.

POLICE PATROLLERS

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Notice d8, Shooting d6.

Pace: 6; **Parry**: 5; **Toughness**: 6 (2)

Gear: Police car, laser pistol (1-3d6, semi-auto), stun baton (Str+d4), Duraweave (armor +2, torso, arms, legs), flashlight, handcuffs, communicators.

Special Abilities:

- **Stun Baton**: a raise on the roll to hit causes the target to be at -2 parry until their next action; non-lethal.

POLICE CAR

Acc/TS: 20/40; **Toughness**: 14(4); **Crew**: 1+1+two in back cage, Hover (ignores difficult terrain), Air Bags

CHAPTER TWO: THE OLD FACTORY

The first of the two Amalgams is not subtle; he should be easy to trace. It takes Jude a few days to find him through the Net, but the crew should be able to find him faster on foot. This Amalgam has been buzzing old munitions factories, gang stockpiles, and anything that may have heavy weaponry or the components of, and is currently at a condemned industrial plant. The site was once used to make energy cells for security force weapons. The plant is a large building filled with shadows, rusting pipes, and old machinery. The framework groans under its own weight with each footstep and gives away the location of its other occupant. (Require Notice checks to determine the location of the Amalgam.) The Amalgam is on the main assembly floor searching for energy cells and other sources of power amongst the crates of battery fuel and debris. At a second glance, they notice several hovering camera spheres following him and searching out other materials.

There is 2 to 3 hover-bots for each character. It is hostile terrain. The battery fuel is an acid that does 3d4 damage on contact, and the derelict machinery deals 2d6 damage on a failed Agility or Climbing check as relevant. There is an abundance of old palates and debris to block line of sight and provide cover.

Once defeated, the crew can salvage the body and data. With a successful Hacking or Computer roll at (-2) they will be able to read some of the server data: the sympathetic A.I. performs a secondary function, subtly manipulating its host making it a more pliable consumer, loyal to Vera-Tech.

GUNNER AMALGAM

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Notice d8, Shooting d8, Throwing d8, Fighting d4
Pace: 6; **Parry**: 5; **Toughness**: 9 (2)
Gear: Duraweave "skin" (+2 armor, full enclosure), Wrist Sabre (Parry +1, Str+d4), 2xGrenades (3d6, MBT), Laser Rifle (1-3d6, RoF 3, 48 shots, 30/60/120, Auto, 3RB)

Special Abilities:

- Marksman

- Dodge

- **Cyborg**: +2 to recover from being shaken, +2 Toughness, does not suffer wound penalties

- **Target Lock**: Choose a target at the start of the combat. Gain +2 to an attack roll against the selected target. Gain -1 shooting and fighting at other targets. When original target is incapacitated or flees, choose a new target.

HOVER GUN-BOTS

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigor d4
Skills: Notice d6, Shooting d8
Pace: 6; **Parry**: 2; **Toughness**:6 (2)
Special Abilities:

- **Hover**: Ignores hostile terrain effects.

- **Construct**: Immune to called shots, poison, fear, intimidation, +2 to recover from being Shaken, does not suffer wound penalties

- **Metallic Shell**: Armor +2

- **Energy Beam**: 1-2d6 pulse gun, RoF: 1, 15/30/60, 10 shots. Increasing the damage per attack uses a like number of shots. A 2d6 uses up 2 shots.

CHAPTER THREE: THE HIVE

"There have been a lot of missing persons reported on Tiers 36 to 38 since the robbery, and I've got partial visuals that look like her outside some of their hardware and electronics stores. She might be holing up in the area."

These tiers are mostly suburban residential for the moderately wealthy. There are abundant parks, trees, and upscale shopping areas. Walking through its open and bright spaces, the crew can feel the claustrophobia of the city lift—but also the wary and distrustful looks cast their way. Given the current rash of disappearances, it's only a matter of time until someone calls the police.

Finding this Amalgam is more difficult; she seems to be hiding, and except for excursions to a few stores has avoided cameras and the Net. Her behavior suggests she's also retained more of her original intelligence, which should make her a bigger threat. Once she is found, she remains in public areas until retreating to her apartment workshop.

Insider her apartment is a long hallway with doors on both sides, and a Net controlled door at the end. All the walls around her workshop are well soundproofed and secure. In the living

room are multiple feral Amalgams, individuals who did not retain any of their human intelligence when the A.I. took over.

There are three Feral Amalgams per character; two in the living room and one in the workshop with the Amalgam they're hunting (Close Combat Amalgam). However, due to the sound-proofing, it should be possible to take out most of the living room group before the others notice anything amiss.

Each square on the map represents ½" or 1 yard, but because of the confined space most movement should count as on difficult ground.

Once the Amalgams have been defeated, the crew finds the data they need to collect is not on this Amalgam, but a pass-code is. Searching reveals there is a server room attached to the workshop, and when they enter the passcode a message appears.

> "If you've found this, please get this data and word of Vera-Tech's activities to the authorities. My partner and I have likely been Amalgamed. We were researchers with Vera-Tech and found evidence that Vera-Tech has not only known of, but has intentionally caused the Amalgam problem. The code has a section that increases the desire for new Vera-Tech augments in its host, but when certain conditions are met, this becomes the source of the Amalgam problem. This code can also be remotely accessed and triggered by Vera-Tech, causing the host to become an Amalgam."

Close Combat Amalgam
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Throwing d6
Pace: 6; **Parry**: 7; **Toughness**: 9

Special Abilities:
- **Filament Laced Nails**: Str +d6, AP 2
- Improved Frenzy
- Counterattack
- **Cyborg**: +2 to recover from being shaken, +2 Toughness, does not suffer wound penalties

Feral Amalgam
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d4
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4
Pace: 6; **Parry**: 5; **Toughness**: 6
Special Abilities:
- **Bite**: Str+d4
- **Feral**: Immune to Fear and Intimidation
- **Cyborg**: +2 to recover from being Shaken, +2 Toughness, does not suffer wound penalties
- **Explosive Instability**: When destroyed place a small template over Feral Amalgam. Characters who fail an agility check suffer 2d6 Fire Damage.

Chapter Four: Payday?

The crew now has the choice of turning in the server data and other information and forfeiting their payment, or honoring their contract, collecting their payment, and handing over all evidence to Vera-Tech. Hired NPCs have their own opinions on the matter. Weasel and Bruise just want to collect on the pay, but Mira is adamant about turning the information into a politician she knows – and not the police.
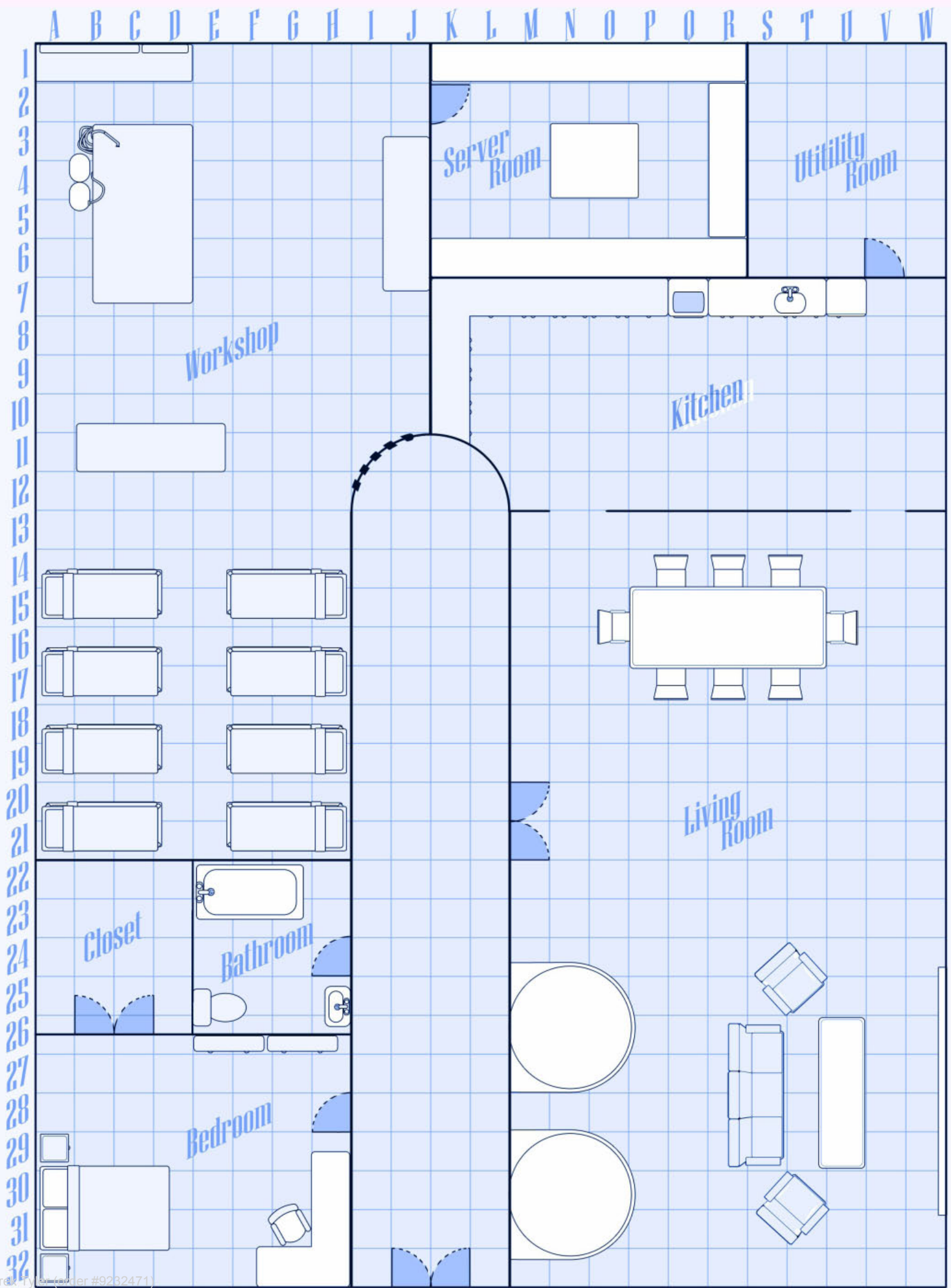
When the crew leaves the apartment, the police are there to arrest them; they can go with the police or flee. (See Chapter One for stats).
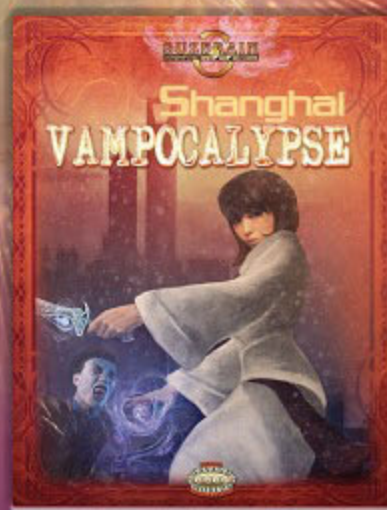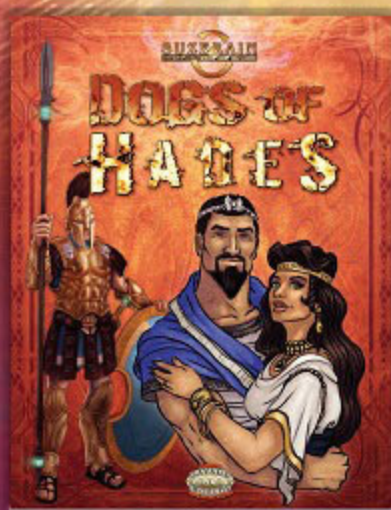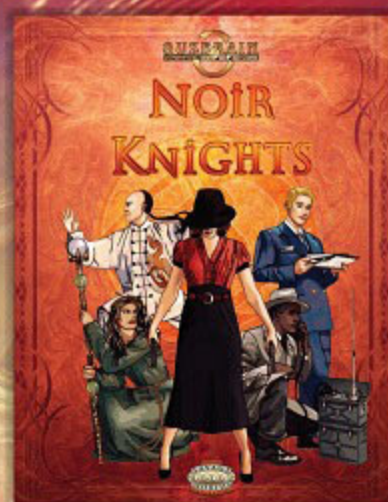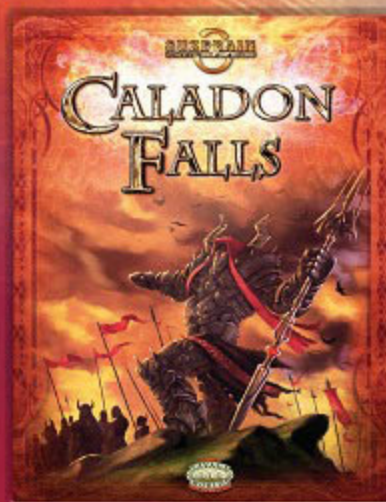
Server Room

Utitility Room

Workshop

Kitchen

Living Room

Closet

Bathroom

Bedroom

Derek Tyler (order #9232471)

By Will Herrmann of Journeyman Games

Wild Card Creator

An electronic character creator accessory

Designer's Description

Wild Card Creator is a character creator application built from the ground up for *Savage Worlds*. It allows users to import content from any published PDF. It is highly customizable and allows users to easily add content from both published and homebrew games. Character data can be outputted to several different formats, including customizable XML character sheets and *Fantasy Grounds II* format. *Wild Card Creator* can even put your character into a form-fillable character sheet.

Wild Card Creator will initially be available for Mac, Windows, and Linux in the second quarter of 2013 with iOS and Android versions to follow. The initial Kickstarter is closed, but you can pre-order it through our website:

journeymangames.net.

Purpose

Wild Card Creator is the *Savage Worlds* character creator I always wanted to use. I wasn't satisfied with existing character creators, so I decided to take on the ambitious project of making my own! Many of the features are my solutions to prob-

lems I had with other character creators. For instance, I didn't care to pay money for content I already owned in PDF form, but I understood that most companies couldn't afford to offer the content for free. So I created the PDF-extraction technology as a means of solving this problem; companies get increased revenue from PDF sales and users get to use content they already own. Most everything in the program is there because, as a *Savage Worlds* gamer, I want to see it myself.

Influences

I'm an Apple fanboy and the company has had a profound influence on the way I make software. They set out to make innovative software and hardware that is appealing, easy to use, practical, and fun while being usable by people of all computer skill levels. Those are the sort of qualities I admire and try to replicate in my own work.

Donald A. Norman's book *The Design of Everyday Things* also has had a huge impact on me by making me think about the way we use things, especially computer software. It's easy, as a programmer, to get caught up in doing things that result in less work or takes advantage of your own assumptions, but this can result in a design that is unintuitive and confusing for users. Norman's book has taught me one simple principle that I've always tried to keep in mind: optimize for the user.

Research

When I first came up with the idea of *Wild Card Creator*, I had to do a lot of learning and figure out if the sort of character creator program I wanted to make was even feasible. Could a character creator program be made that would extract character options from a PDF? How would I do it? Can it be cross-platform, with the potential for it to be ported to iOS and Android? Can I make it support every setting of *Savage Worlds*? I did a lot of self-teaching and learning to answer these questions and figure out how to create *Wild Card Creator*. There have been a lot of rough spots, but ultimately I've been able to find the answers to these questions and make it work.

I've also had to do research into the *Savage Worlds* rules. For instance, what happens if a character has the Fleet-Footed Edge (which sets the character's Running Die to d10), but then they get an injury that gives them the Lame Hindrance (which sets the Running Die to d4)? The

Savage Worlds community, especially Clint Black answering questions on the official forums, has been invaluable in helping me do this.

Gaming Experience

Wild Card Creator is designed to be the best character creator for *Savage Worlds* and embrace the "Savage Worlds mentality" of how the system works. Every part of *Wild Card Creator*, from the layout of the buttons to the way characters are outputted, has been examined from a standpoint of how it can be as intuitive as possible for *Savage Worlds* gamers. The idea is that you shouldn't have to think about how to make your character; you should just be able to do it.

Additionally, users should be able to do everything they want to with *Wild Card Creator*, as opposed to being limited by artificial constraints. Rules from supplemental settings should work as intended and published settings should be supported no matter how different the rules

wind up being. Finally, I want for users to embrace the fact that *Savage Worlds* is so customizable and be able to add any homebrew content to *Wild Card Creator* while also being able to share it with others.

Comparison

Several other character creators were originally designed to support d20 systems and while I feel they handle those systems well, they don't embrace *Savage Worlds* as well as *Wild Card Creator* does because they weren't originally designed for it. *Wild Card Creator* contains many features not found in similar products. The ability to import PDFs from Pinnacle Entertainment Group and 22 third party settings (and counting) is something that no other *Savage Worlds* character creator offers. Features such as being able to fill out a form-fillable PDF character sheet is something I have not seen in a character creator for any system. Also, *Wild Card Creator* makes it easy to add homebrew content and share it with others - no mucking around with a markup language.

Development Process

Development of a new feature starts by looking at the books. I carefully read the rules of both the core book and any settings that affect it and consider as a *Savage Worlds* gamer how I'd like to see this feature in a character creator program. When I'm ready to start thinking about implementation details, I pull out a notebook and start jotting down some pseudocode or drawing diagrams. Finally, I get ready to program and start coding in the feature, testing it at various steps along the way, and eventually bringing in others to test it. Often times I'm working on several different features at once. For instance, I might work on supporting a new setting and then switch to implementing a new rule that I haven't considered yet.

By Hyrum Savage of Super Genius Games

Strike Force 7

Strike Force 7 – Savaged! is a game where you take on the role of one of America's hard-charging elite in its battle with the highly trained, well-equipped, and mysterious terrorist organization known as Skorpion. Skorpion will not stop until it has complete domination over the world, and Strike Force 7 is the only organization that can stop them. You can get the free Strike Force 7 Mini-Mission at RPGnow.com and incorporate these characters into your game play.

One of the important elements that make up Strike Force 7 characters is the different departments inside Strike Force 7.
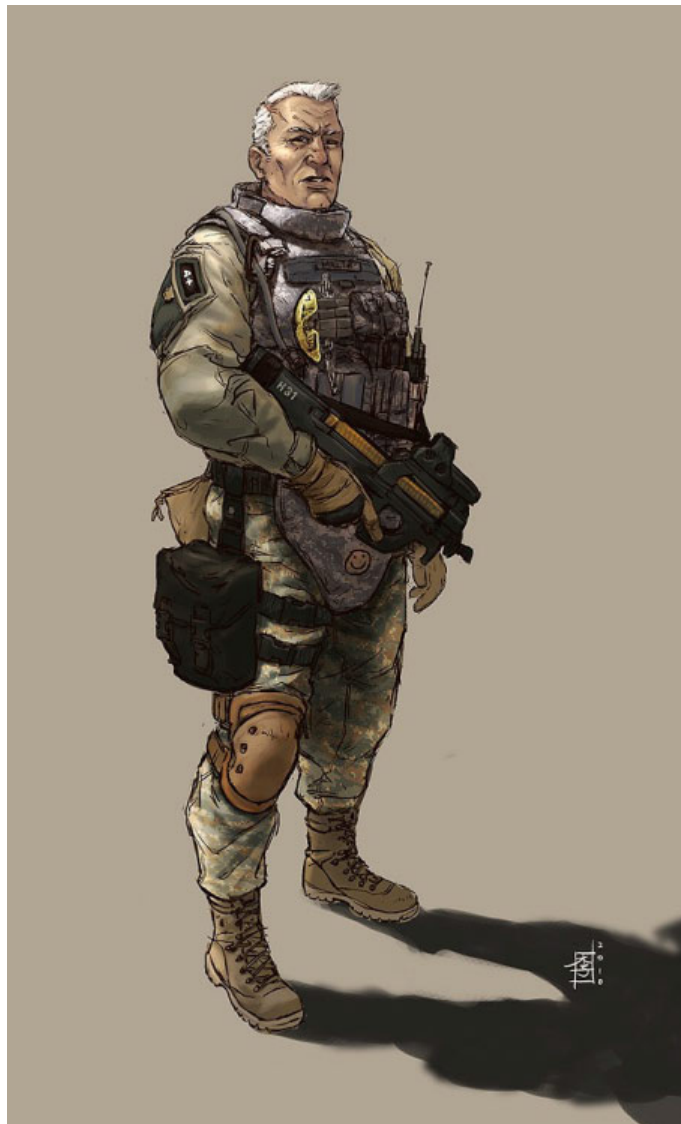
Full rules are in the *SF 7* core rulebook, but at the most basic, each team provides a number of modifiers to select attributes, skills, Edges, and Hindrances. While picking a team is mandatory for the majority of SF7 games, the packages for each team are "free" in the sense that you don't have to worry about saving points during character creation to acquire them since everything a SF7 Team adds is a bonus.

To make things easier, we've included specific game rules for anything particular to Strike Force 7 not found in the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook.

CAPTAIN GARY "DA BOSS" GIANNI

More by personality than by virtue of his rank, Gary Gianni is clearly a leader in Strike Force 7. He impels by action rather than words, and is always the first one into any hot zone. While in the field, his first duty is to the team, followed by the mission. He's willing to sacrifice team members, but only if the reward is worth it.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidate d6, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d4

Charisma: 0; **Pace**: 6; **Parry**: 5; **Toughness**: 7

Gear: Kinetex SF7 BDU* (+4/+8 vs bullets), Silenced OICW** (Range: 20/40/80; Dam: 2d8; ROF: 3; Clip: 30; Notes: AP 2, Auto, 3RB), Silenced Beretta 9mm (Range: 12/24/48; Dam: 2d6; ROF: 3; Clip: 32; Notes: AP 1, Auto), 3 concussion grenades (MBT, 3d6), 5 flashbang grenades (MBT. On a success, targets make Vigor rolls or be Shaken (-2 with a raise)), encrypted headset radio, GPS receiver, night vision goggles, ammunition.

Team: Military Operations***
Hindrances: Code of Honor (Major), Loyal (Minor), Vow (Minor)
Edges: Quick Draw, Command, Natural Leader, Strike Force 7 Team Member$

Master Sergeant Sharon "Lois" Lane

From her earliest days growing up in rural Montana, Sharon, "Lois" to her friends, would always accompany her father, a famous hunter and producer of hunting themed television shows, on his many hunting trips, first in Montana, then around the world. And she's good - really good - with just about any ranged weapon, but put a crossbow in her hands and she'll put William Tell to shame. She takes the responsibility of being the first female member of Strike Force 7 to heart, knowing that she's being watched for failure. Her reaction to this is simple: she doesn't fail.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d8+1, Shooting d10, Stealth d10+1, Survival d8, Throwing d4, Tracking d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace**: 6; **Parry**: 4; **Toughness**: 4

Gear: Kinetex SF7 BDU* (+4/+8 vs bullets), KA-1 Crossbow (Range: 15/30/60; Dam: 2d6; ROF: 1; Clip: 10; Notes: AP 2, Any Notice rolls to hear the KA-1 fire or to hear arrows strike a target or surface are at a -5 penalty), encrypted headset radio, GPS receiver, night vision goggles, ammunition.

Team: Counter-Terrorist***

Hindrances: Angel (Major)$: Someone in the Directorate^ is looking out for her, Loyal (Minor), Quirk: Will only use arrows she has made herself (Minor), Fame (Minor)$: Daughter of the host and producer of many hunting themed television programs.

Edges: Trademark Weapon (KA-1 Crossbow), Hard Charging$, Strike Force 7 Team Member$

Sergeant First Class Steven "Indy" Drake

Steven Drake was always a loner. Withdrawn and quiet, some people thought he might be a borderline sociopath. When he dropped out of college and joined the Army, he finally found where he belonged. Drake is a top-notch field operator who just doesn't work well with large groups. Lucky for him, he's found a home in Strike Force 7.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Demolitions) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Repair d6, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace**: 6; **Parry**: 5; **Toughness**: 6

Gear: Kinetex SF7 BDU* (+4/+8 vs bullets), Silenced OICW** (Range: 20/40/80; Dam: 2d8; ROF: 3; Clip: 30; Notes: AP 2, Auto, 3RB), Silenced Beretta 9mm (Range: 12/24/48; Dam: 2d6; ROF: 3; Clip: 32; Notes: AP 1, Auto), 10 concussion

grenades (MBT, 3d6), 5 flashbang grenades (MBT, on a success, targets make Vigor rolls or be Shaken (-2 with a raise)), 5 Thermite grenades (MBT, 3d8, ignore armor), demolition kit, encrypted headset radio, GPS receiver, night vision goggles, ammunition.

Team: Military Operations***
Hindrances: Heroic (Major)
Edges: McGyver, Common Bond (Maverick), Strike Force 7 Team Member$, Dodging Tumble$

STAFF SERGEANT RICHARD "POTUS" JACKSON

Richard Jackson is just the opposite of Drake. Always the "Big Man on Campus," Jackson was the center of any group or party. It came as a complete shock when he joined the Army, most people figuring he was headed straight for a life in politics. While he hasn't filled anyone in on the reasons he signed up, he can't hide the fact that he loves what he's doing.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Demolitions) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Repair d6, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6, Throwing d6
Charisma: 2; **Pace**: 6; **Parry**: 5; **Toughness**: 6
Gear: Kinetex SF7 BDU* (+4/+8 vs bullets), Silenced OICW** (Range: 20/40/80; Dam: 2d8; ROF: 3; Clip: 30; Notes: AP 2, Auto, 3RB), Silenced Beretta 9mm (Range: 12/24/48; Dam: 2d6; ROF: 3; Clip: 32; Notes: AP 1, Auto), 10 concussion

grenades (MBT, 3d6), 5 flashbang grenades (MBT, on a success, targets make Vigor rolls or be Shaken (-2 with a raise)), 5 Thermite grenades (MBT, 3d8, ignore armor), demolition kit, encrypted headset radio, GPS receiver, night vision goggles, ammunition.

Team: Military Operations***
Hindrances: Loyal (Minor)
Edges: Combat Reflexes, Daredevil$, Strike Force 7 Team Member$, Charismatic

EQUIPMENT

* KINETEX SF7 BDU

A breakthrough in personal defense technology, the Kinetex Body Suit utilizes a special molding and dyeing process that is applied to a unique bioengineered cloth, to recreate any type of clothing style and color. It is the armor of choice for Strike Force 7, whose members constantly flaunt uniform regulations while maintaining proper protection in the field.

** SILENCED OICW (OBJECTIVE INDIVIDUAL COMBAT WEAPON)

Designed by an international team led by defense contractor Alliant Techsystems, the OICW is the next generation infantry weapon. A modular weapon, it can have one or two barrels, with a firing system linked to a laser painting and targeting system previously only seen on armor units.

The lower barrel is capable of firing 5.56mm ammunition at ranges of 500 yards, and is an ideal round for suppressive fire or single-round fire. The upper barrel fires a 20mm air-bursting fragmentation round. It is able to be armed for a variety of settings, such as passing through thin walls of an urban environment before detonating to detonation based on precise and accurate distances set by the integral rangefinder; in effect, the round can 'shoot around corners', exploding after it has passed concealing cover. In addition, the rangefinder acts as night vision goggles.

> **Rifle Round:** 5.56x45mm, **Damage:** 2d8 (AP 2, Auto, 3RB), **Range**: 24/48/96, **Weight**: 10 lbs

> **Air-Burst Round:** 20mm, **Damage:** 3d6 (Medium Burst Template), **Range**: 5/10/20

> Additionally, the Air-Burst Round can be set to explode on impact (following normal grenade rules) or air burst mode. In air burst mode, this round works just like a fragmentation grenade, except for the following:

- It does 1d4+2 damage for purposes of passing through objects in the way such as drywall and sheet metal

- Deviation for this round is divided by one quarter so long as the area has been laser painted. The area must be hit as normal.

- Determine cover based on where the round detonates, not from the direction the round was fired.
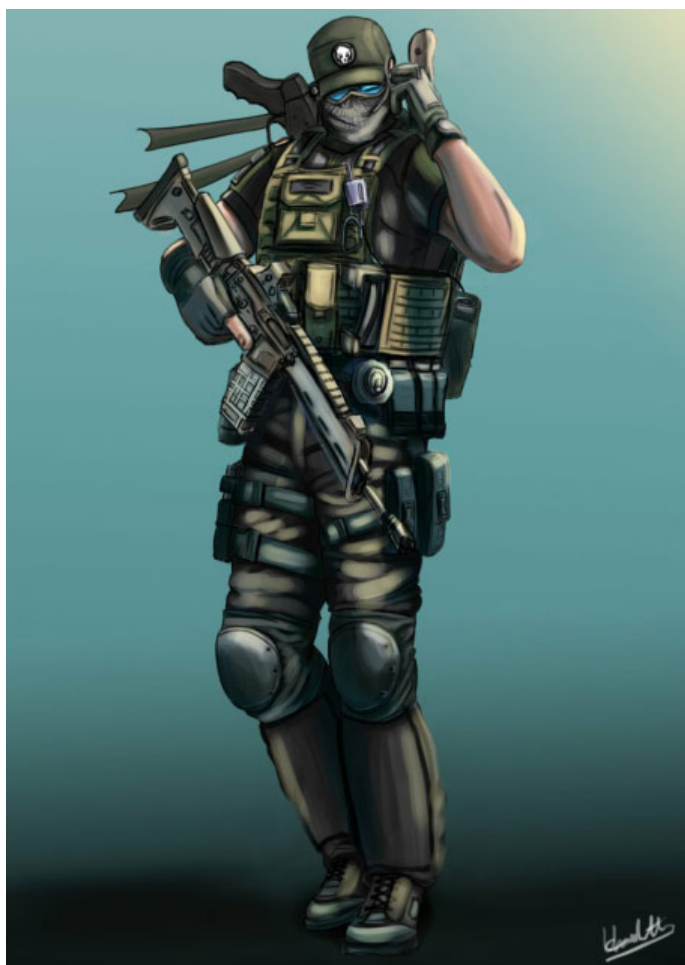
Laser Painting System: The OICW targeting system allows for the 'painting' of a target or area with an active laser system similar to an anti-aircraft missile system. This takes an action and a successful attack against the target, doing no damage, at which point nothing short of full concealment will grant any cover bonus to the target. In addition, it grants a +2 bonus to hit targets that have at least 1/4 actual cover.

*** TEAM

MILITARY OPERATIONS

These team members are the most likely to be seen by the public, either directly or through the media. They fit the 'classic' image of Special Operations Forces, and are well-versed in dealing with the chain of command and keeping their own people under control in rough situations.

COUNTER-TERRORISTS

Counter-Terrorist team members are the first called to oppose terrorist and drug-related activities. As Military Operations is seen as the 'classic' image of Special Operations Forces, the Counter-Terrorist Team is the group of roughnecks and renegades that still manage to shine. Their work calls for a combination of military expertise and stealth as they often need to hit a target before the target realizes he is one.

$ EDGES AND HINDRANCES

DAREDEVIL (EDGE)

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread, and your character is that fool. Strangely, fortune favors the foolish, and his recklessness has marked him as someone that thrives in danger. The character may reroll once any Bennie spent where he does not like the result and if the situation is one that he willingly placed himself in. Either number rolled may be kept.

DODGING TUMBLE (EDGE)

When targeted by a strafe attack, or the free attack from failing to take cover from suppressive fire, the character may make an Agility roll to avoid the attack. If he succeeds, the attacker incurs a (-2) penalty when being shot at with a weapon whose Rate of Fire is greater than 1. The character may only avoid one attack a round in this fashion.

HARD CHARGING (EDGE)

The character is confident, even in the face of massive amounts of lead in the air. He adds +2 to Spirit rolls when being the target of Suppressive Fire.

STRIKE FORCE 7 TEAM MEMBER (EDGE)

The character is a member of Strike Force 7, and is granted federal arrest powers as a result. If he reveals himself to be a member of Strike Force 7, he gains a +2 bonus to Persuasion rolls with all legitimate law enforcement authorities.

ANGEL (HINDRANCE MINOR/MAJOR)

Someone has marked the character for great things, and will go to incredible lengths to make sure he gets them. Promotions come easier, he gets favorable assignments, and it just seems that doors open for him no matter where he goes. Only problem is he doesn't know who is opening the doors, or what they want in return. The level of this Hindrance determines how powerful the person or organization that is helping the character is, as well as what they might want in return.

FAME (HINDRANCE MINOR/MAJOR)

The character is part of the public face of Strike Force 7, either as part of Strike Force 7's media campaign, or due to his activities before becoming part of Strike Force 7. As a result, people know his name and face, for good or ill. He ends up attracting autograph seekers and fans. He also ends up attracting the wrong type of attention, from Skorpion agents looking for a crack at the big time to drunks wanting to prove 'you ain't so tough'. The level of this Hindrance determines just how well-known the character is, and to what lengths people will go to interact with him.

^ THE DIRECTORATE

Who or what the Directorate is will be slightly different based on the type of game you're running. For the default setting of Strike Force 7, the Directorate is made up of former senators, public-minded citizens with access to large amounts of money, various titans of Wall St., and other "Movers and Shakers". However, in the eyes of Director Phelps, the Directorate exists to bankroll Strike Force 7, and if that means he has to put on a dog and pony show from time to time, that's a price he's more than willing to pay to avoid depending on Congress.

Phelps isn't stupid, and neither are the members of the Directorate, which ultimately means that Phelps lets the Directorate think it's running the show. Imagine, if you will, having a rich uncle that just cuts you a check whenever you needed something. Like, say, 18 million dollars to fund a program on remote telepathic sensing. Or 14 million to develop a new body armor that can be woven into the shape and thickness of regular cloth yet will stop .50 caliber rounds. Now imagine the constant fear that your uncle will actually decide to look into your activities, and won't approve. More to the point, what if he decides that he wants to use your good-intentioned program for his own ends. That is the Directorate, constantly hovering over Phelps like a hangman's noose.

ADAMANT ENTERTAINMENT

THRILLING TALES: THE RED MENACE
A new supplement for the world of pulp action and adventure.

GRAMEL

BEASTS & BARBARIANS: JALIZAR, CITY OF THIEVES
A city supplement for Beasts & Barbarians detailing Jalizar.

PEACEKEEPERS
A new superhero mini-setting designed for use with the Super Powers Companion.

HEARTHSTONE

MARCHLAND: PLAYER'S GUIDE
The player's setting guide for this new modern fantasy Savage Worlds setting.

MYSTICAL THRONE ENTERTAINMENT

SAVAGE INSIDER #7: END OF DAYS
A post-apocalyptic themed issue of the Savage Worlds magazine.

SAVAGE INSIDER PREMIUM ISSUE #5
The fifth and final premium offering of Savage Insider.

ULTIMATE ROMAN LEGIONS GUIDE
A detailed historical look into the Roman Legions for incorporation into any setting.

FAITH & DEMONS NATION GUIDE: BYZANTINE EMPIRE
Your detailed guide for incorporating the Byzantine Empire into Faith & Demons: The Rising.

MERCENARY BREED: HASTILION EXPANSE COMPENDIUM II
The second campaign book for the space opera Hastilion Expanse for Mercenary Breed.

OBATRON PRODUCTIONS

TUNSE'AL SETTING GUIDE
The core setting guide for the new dark fantasy setting.

PANIK PRODUCTIONS

R.E.A.C.T.: ABYSS OF INSANITY
The latest adventure in the R.E.A.C.T. action series.

PINNACLE ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

DELUXE GM'S SCREEN INSERTS
New GM's Screen inserts featuring the Deluxe edition mechanics.

DEADLANDS: TRAIL GUIDE COMPENDIUM, VOLUME 1
The first compilation of the Deadlands Trail Guide series.

DEADLANDS NOIR
The general availability of the Deadlands Noir neo-noir fantasy horror core setting guide.

DEADLANDS NOIR: COMPANION BOOK
The first supplemental follow-up to the Deadlands Noir core setting guide.

DEADLANDS NOIR: THE OLD ABSINTHE HOUSE BLUES
A short adventure module for Deadlands Noir.

SAVAGE MOJO

QUANTUM SLIDERS: KRISHNA'S RIDDLE
A new adventure module set in the Suzerain universe.

QUANTUM SLIDERS: RUINS OF TOMORROW
Another adventure module set in the Suzerain universe.

SCRYING EYE GAMES

WELCOME TO MORTISTON USA!: EXTENDED ELECTRONIC PACKAGE #1
The first PDF follow-up supplement to the multi-system zombie campaign.

TRIPLE ACE GAMES

HELLFROST: CLASH OF STEEL
A new adventure module for the epic fantasy Hellfrost.

HELLFROST: LOCAL CUSTOM
A simple supplement looking at the local customs found in the Hellfrost setting.

HELLFROST REGION GUIDE #53A: REALMS OF ALFHEIM
A short add-on Region Guide supplement detailing the elven realm.

Welcome to Convention Connection! To ensure our readers have a chance to plan their convention trips, each issue shows conventions occurring in each of the three months following that issue, plus the month the issue is released. That does mean there will be some overlap between issues, but we felt the benefit is worth some small duplication.

Covering April, May, June, and July At-A-Glance

Convention	Website	Dates	Location (States + UK)
ConGlomeration	http://www.conglomeration.info/	4/5-7/13	KY
MACE West*	www.justusproductions.com/index.php/justus/macewest/2/4/4	4/5-7/13	NC
RavenCon	www.ravencon.com	4/5-7/13	VA
PLAY: The Games Festival	www.play-modena.it	4/6-7/13	Italy
Let's Play Greenbay	www.letsplaygreenbay.com	4/12-14/13	WI
No Brand Con	http://nobrandcon.org	4/12-14/13	WI
Odyssey Con	www.odysseycon.org	4/12-14/13	WI
Mag Con	http://www.magcon.org/	4/13-14/13	TX
Spring Minicon	www.polycon.org	4/13/2013	CA
GnomeCon	gnomecon.org	4/19-21/13	GA
UBCON	http://ubcon.org	4/19-21/13	NY
MAGE Con Spring	www.mage-page.com	4/26-28/13	IA
Another Game Convention	www.anothergamecon.com	5/2-5/13	OH
Con-Quest Midlands	www.con-quest.co.uk	5/4/2013	UK
Gator Con	http://slhsgamingclub.wikispaces.com/	5/4/2013	CO
Con de Mayo	www.polycon.org	5/11/2013	CA
Gamex	www.strategicon.net	5/24-27/13	CA
KublaCon 2011	www.kublacon.com	5/24-27/13	CA
UK Games Expo	www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk	5/24-26/13	UK
A-Kon	http://www.a-kon.com/	5/31-6/2/13	TX
ConCarolinas*	www.concarolinas.org	5/31-6/2/13	NC
The North Texas RPG Con	http://ntrpgcon.com	6/6-9/13	TX
Origins	www.originsgamefair.com	6/12-16/13	OH
DieCon 12	http://diecon.com	6/21-23/13	IL
PolyCon 31	www.polycon.org	6/21-23/13	CA
Raiders of the Game Cupboard	www.raidersofthegamecupboard.co.uk	6/22/13	UK
LibertyCon	www.libertycon.org/	6/28-30/13	TN
CONvergence	www.convergence-con.org	7/4-7/13	MN
FloridaSupercon	www.floridasupercon.com	7/4-7/13	FL
KantCon	kantcon.com/v2/	7/5-7/13	KS
PaizoCon	www.paizo.com	7/5-7/13	WA
ConectiCon	www.connecticon.org	7/12-14/13	CT
FandomFest	www.fandomfest.com	7/26-28/13	KY

*Known to have Savage Worlds games or personalities.

All dates and websites were accurate as of this printing. If you know of conventions occurring between October and January that are not listed here, please let us know.

Savage Saturday Nights

Savage Saturday Nights (SSN) started at Con on the Cob and has become something popping up at other conventions from those as large as Gen Con to small, regional ones. If you are aware a convention featuring an SSN, let us know, and we'll mention it if we can.

If you are associated with a convention, we are happy to feature your logo and, if you are convention featuring an SSN, even elaborate a bit on that aspect of your con, providing we've got room to do so.

Savage Insider Issue #8: Technology at the Table is all about technology in-game and out-of-game. The pillar article *Tabletop Tech Today* discusses what tools Savages are using as Game Masters and players while *Gone Digital* presents all the methods used by Phil Vecchione to run games with explanations of those tools and alternate ones to choose.

Technology at the Table is a multi-genre issue that leans toward different types of technology including clockwork, steam, cybernetics, and modern action gear. Technology runs the gambit of possibilities and we touch base on many aspects with varies uses throughout your games.

Technology at the Table includes:

- Two fleshed out cyberpunk Great Adventures

- Two fleshed out Character Galleries.

- A detailed look at two different character tools for use with Savage Worlds.

- Two General Interest pieces about using technology for gaming.

- ... and more!

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