octaNe

octaNe: premium uNleaded
the psychotronic game of post-modern
trash-culture america

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Originally published online as the freeware RPG octaNe, based on the *Pulp Era* system by Jared A. Sorensen, James Carpio, and Jon Richardson.

**octaNe: premium uNleaded and the psychotronic game
of post-modern trash-culture america**

Special Thanks

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Author's Note

octaNe, like many other creations, started as something else entirely. I was researching the "road geek" phenomenon for a possible Unknown Armies school of magic (I was churning out a half dozen schools at the time) and on a whim (and as an excuse to put off the road-geek research) drew up a quickie-logo. The word "*octaNe*" sounded good, so I went with it, along with the subtitle: "Put your pedal to the metal" (the capitalized "N" just looked cool…).

I got to thinking more and more about the role of cars in modern America. Later on, that began to coalesce into something much bigger than what I had initially thought up. I've always liked the Mad Max films (as well as the low-budget cult movie *Six-String Samurai*), and I thought to myself: "I need to make a post-apocalyptic RPG." Not some grim world of desolation and survival… but a weird collection of elements from pulp sci-fi, rock n' roll, and trash culture in general. Johnny Cash, Elvis, and Dick Dale get together with Rob Zombie and Judas Priest and form a band.

Hmmm. Had potential.

What ended up happening was that I pulled two old design concerns (less-is-more and genre-blending) and spot-welded them to the frame of an existing game that I had already co-written (*Pulp Era*). The setting for *octaNe* became just a playground for weird adventures – I dismissed any thought to the reasons for the apocalypse (timelines, geopolitical climates, and all of that alternate history shit) and just went with my oft-asked question: "What would be cool?"

Kung fu monkeys, cars that talk, mutants, guitar-slinging wizards & warriors, masked wrestlers, and funky aliens.

Kinda cool.

The Former United States of America became "The West" – a mythic Oz of rust and dust where just about anything could happen. Travel all the way west, and you hit the remnants of California. Travel east, and you won't hit anything – ever. Who knows why, but everything east of the Mississippi is just plain gone … miles and miles of empty road. Hell, I designed this game, and I don't know what happened.

The system was originally the same as *Pulp Era* (with a few adjustments and some input from the people at Gaming Outpost). But looking back on that system, I became less than thrilled. It was striving too hard to be a realistic game, despite all the freewheeling excesses I had built into it. I mean, why have attributes? Does anyone really need to be told that Doc Savage has a strength rating of 8? What does that mean, anyway? Nope… you just need to be told that he's the daring and ingenious Man of Bronze and let your imagination fill in the blanks.

So I chopped up the lumbering vehicle of a game system and had the boys in the garage whip up this sleek little beauty. It's made for one thing, really – it's not great off-road, and it's not street-legal, but boy, is it fast. It's tailored for scene-based cinematic storytelling… which is what a pulp game should be (well, at least that's what I think!).

So, will you like this game? I guess that's the main question, huh?

It's weird, it's wacky, and it's over-the-top. It's completely unrealistic. It's concerned with story over everything else. It's not for everyone.

But if you wanna race your custom-built roadster across the wasteland with your only companions being a talking monkey and some guy from another planet who wears a wrestling mask… well, now's your chance.

Have fun.

- Jared, the day after the end of the 20th century

Introduction

octaNe is a roller coaster ride through the trailer parks and strip malls of a post-apocalyptic, trash-culture America. A garish B movie brought to life in living Glam-O-Vision. A funkadelic, no-holds barred steel cage match of... well, you get the picture.

octaNe shares a kinship with the B-movie action of *Feng Shui*, the PoMo gestalt of *Over the Edge*, and the weird western vibe of *Deadlands* (and its post-apocalyptic follow-up, *Hell on Earth*). But unlike some of those games, it's not a grim, cautionary tale of the apocalypse or a gritty slice of urban street life. It's a ridiculous world gone out of control, where the Mythic West meets Hollywood, where the clichés of film noir collide with the excesses of pulp comic books.

Playing in the Band

Ron Edwards (author of *Sorcerer*, *Elfs*, and *Trollbabe*), a kick-ass game designer you should be familiar with, compares playing role-playing games with playing musical instruments in a band. Everyone gets together, comes up with a cool riff (their character), the Game Moderator lays down a groove (the story's outline), and the players all jam.

Sometimes, there's a solo, sometimes there's a section of freeform improvisation, and sometimes you fall back on pure rhythm. It's all good! Just remember to work with everyone else "in the band," and you'll be busting out some slick tunes in no time flat.

The Rule of Rock n' Roll: Put your Pedal to the Metal

Before we even get started, I need to make one thing perfectly clear: the Rule of Rock n' Roll states that when playing *octaNe*, you MUST be playing rock n' roll music* of some kind. Consider it The Law, and disregard it at your own peril.

*Defined as any music that your parents wouldn't approve of, right? You can't go wrong with any of the bands mentioned in the Inspirado section:

heavy metal, surf rock, rockabilly, delta blues, honky tonk…even 70's funk and soul will get the job done. But please…no "nu-metal" or anything else made after 1990 (the year I graduated high school).

The Rule of Snacks: White Trash Picnic

An important rule, but not quite as hardcore as the Rule of Rock n' Roll, the Rule of Snacks states that everyone playing *octaNe* should bring something that everyone can snack upon while the game is being played. Junk food is optimal. Carbonated beverages are practically required. Chili-dogs, Spam, nachos, mac n' cheese, Jell-O salad, and (if you can get it) ostrich burgers are also tasty and quite in-theme. To drink? Ice tea, Coca-Cola (in glass bottles, natch!) and if y'all wanna get liquored up, tequila shots, Pabst Blue Ribbon, and a bottle of Jack Daniels. PS – Don't drink and drive. That is most assuredly not cool.

Theatrical Modes

Originally, *octaNe* was going to be a very specific kind of game – campy and weird, like a 1930s pulp movie melded with the modern sensibilities of the 1980s. But over time, the emphasis shifted from one style to another… and with so many cool kinds of stories to tell, it became too hard to pin down just one. Thus, we have several **modes of play**.

These aren't optional rules or anything like that. Instead, think of them as content guidelines. If one player in your game is craving Saturday matinee-style thrills and spills, while another wants cheap exploitation fare, and you're looking forward to grand themes and a mythic sense of scale, well, nobody is going to wind up very happy.

Each mode is based upon a distinct sub-genre of post-apocalyptic action film (or just types of sci-fi/action film in general). Each mode has several "dials" controlling the amount of realism, explicit content, and what I'll just refer to as "big ideas"
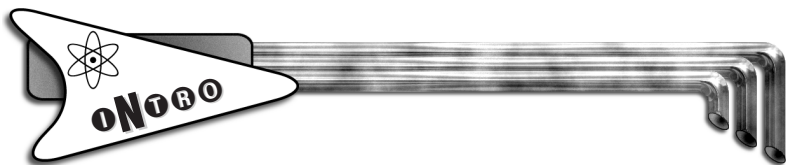
appearing in the game. At the start of your game, make sure everyone knows what mode you'll be using. And unless you're going for a disjointed effect, be sure to keep within one mode throughout the entire game session.

Psychotronic: Retro-Kool Kitsch

An online book review by John Grant (http://www.home town.aol.com/thogatthog/) of Michael J. Weldon's Psychotronic Video Guide has the following quote:

> There are some movies you watch because they're good, improving stuff, and there are some you watch because they're crap. They may be good crap (they're well made and you really enjoy them) or bad crap (they're badly made but still you may enjoy them, if not always for the reason intended by their makers). Both categories of crap seem to fit into Weldon's definition of "Psychotronic."

In an article called "'B' Movie Madness!" (found online at http://net4tv.com/voice/Story.cfm?storyID=83) Uncle Bob explains the term psychotronic:

> This is a term generally credited to Michael Weldon, who wrote The Psychotronic Encyclopedia of Film. He notes in the introduction that:
>
> Critics searching for art condemn most of these features for the very reasons that millions continue to enjoy them: violence, sex, noise, and often mindless escapism.
>
> It's a loose definition but the common traits of these films seem to be low budgets and "bad taste." They tend to cover subject matter that mainstream film makers ignore or mishandle, and they are as likely to contain serious social commentary as utter trash. And because they usually skirt the conventional corporate Hollywood methods of moviemaking, they are often

wildly original.

> Think of atomic monsters, drag racing teens, Mystery Science Theater 3000, women in prison or Mexican horror-wrestling-vampire movies and you've got the idea.

You see where we're going with this? *octaNe* is most definitely a Psychotronic game. We got drag racing robots, Mexican wrestlers, sexy bikini babes, and biker gangs. Movies like *Buckaroo Banzai*, *Repo Man*, *Wild Zero*, and *Six-String Samurai* are all awesome examples of modern Psychotronica. *Tremors* is **required** viewing, as is virtually any of the films shown on MST3K. Despite the inherent sleaziness in Psychotronic film, it's all in good fun – nothing too extreme, just lots of trashy fun.

Psychotronic Mode Rules:

☢ No character death
☢ No graphic sex or violence
☢ Games should be quick, fun and zany (2-3 hours, tops).
☢ Inspired wackiness is encouraged with Plot Point rewards
☢ The characters should work together – no "inter-party conflict"
☢ The characters should be solid, dependable and heroic
☢ Men and women are treated as equals; outré racism doesn't exist
☢ The entire setting is wide open for use and should be garish, colorful, bizarre, and all the other synonyms for "weird"
☢ Players are free to include lots of pop culture references, bad puns and the standard complement of geeky behaviors
☢ Take a gander at the RPG's Deadlands, Over the Edge, Feng Shui, and Gamma World (that old chestnut) for game-related inspiration

Grindhouse: Cheap Exploitation

Grindhouse films are full of **sex** and **violence**. Not a whole lot of plot, or budget, or talent… but gosh darn it, sex and violence aplenty. Although they started rather innocently enough with nudist pictures and lurid but ultimately cheesy "kitten with a whip" style potboilers, the Grindhouse circuit soon became jam-packed with burlesque loops, splatter films, and sleazy exploitation fare like *Mondo Cane* and *The Terror of Tiny Town* (the first and only all-midget western). We're talking Lots of blood, nudity, freaks, geeks, and nuts, sluts, and pre-verts (as my old college sociology professor used to say).

The reigning champs of Grindhouse film are people like Ed Wood, Jr. (whose '59 epic *Plan 9 from Outer Space* is regarded as the worst movie ever made), splatter-king Herschell Gordon Louis (*Blood Feast*, *10,000 Maniacs*) and breast-obsessed Russ Meyer (*Faster Pussycat*, *Kill Kill!*; *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*). *From Dusk 'til Dawn* is a great example of modern Grindhouse – an unapologetic crime caper crossed with a gory, campy vampire film… and perfect for a blood-drenched *octaNe* session. See also: *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (surprisingly effective and not nearly as gory as people make it out to be), *Dolemite* (for that Blaxploitation feel), *Roadhouse* (Patrick Swayze and Sam Elliot!), and anything by Team Troma (*Toxic Avenger*, Surf *Nazis Must Die*) or the T&E (tits and explosions) flicks of Andy Sidaris. Ooooh… and you cannot forget the Tarantino-penned *True Romance* or *Natural Born Killers*!

Because of its extreme content, Grindhouse is **not** for everyone. But if all the players are agreeable to this mode of play, it can be an awful lot of fun. Granted, you might need to take a shower afterwards…

Grindhouse Mode Rules:

- ♣ Character death can (and probably will) happen
- ♣ Lurid depictions of sex and violence are encouraged
- ♣ The games should be about sex, crime, violence and vengeance
- ☢ Female characters are objectified (tight pants, big hair, big boobs) and usually play the role of "man-hating killer lesbo" or "slutty bimbo victim"
- ♣ 70's racial sterotypes abound (the funk soul brother, the ass-kicking dragon lady, the gun-totin' redneck)
- ♣ Everyone drinks, smokes, and curses
- ♣ Characters are not necessarily the good guys, nor are they required to work together
- ♣ Heroism is not a given; it's something for which the characters will have to strive
- ♣ Bonus Plot Points can be earned by squicking the GM and other players
- ♣ *Nothing* is sacred. NOTHING. Nada. Zilch. Zero. Zip.
- ♣ The default setting can be used as written; just make everything a little grimmer and grimier
- ♣ Games to check out that capture a Grindhouse mode are few and far between. *Unknown Armies* has a seedy feel to it… and *Macho Women with Guns* is a perennial favorite (If you like the sound of that game, you'll wanna play Grindhouse octaNe. Trrrrust me.).

Do I even need to say that you can play a twisted character in Grindhouse mode without being a bad person? Well I shouldn't have to. Don't be a dumb-ass. If you act like a Grindhouse protagonist in day-to-day life, I really don't want you playing my game. In fact, I'd rather not ever meet you or get email in my Inbox from you, 'kay?

Arthouse: Mythic Storytelling

Do you want legendary heroes, surreal dream sequences, and powerful emotions straight out of El Topo, A Fistful of Dollars, or Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia? Then go with the Arthouse model. Other good sources for inspiration are

Harlan Ellison's "A Boy and his Dog" and Stephen King's *The Gunslinger*. Stories in the mode can be graphic or tame, comic or serious, realistic or fantastic. The key is that the stories are about grand, mythic themes and big ideas (rather than existing only as cheap entertainment). Play up the more bizarre, surreal qualities of the setting, and downplay the camp trashiness. The characters are much more likely to be nouveau Western heroes than schlock B-movie protagonists.

Arthouse Mode Rules:

☢ Everything Should Mean Something
☢ Characters can die, but only in intense and dramatic scenes
☢ Use big, sweeping themes, soulful gazes out across the wasteland, and tons of symbolism (read *Hero with 1,000 Faces* by Joseph Campbell)
☢ Break up the narrative with flashbacks, dream sequences, fast-forwards, and other cinematic techniques
☢ Emotions should run strong and deep; characters should have equally strong ties to other people – no man is an island, even if he "walks alone"
☢ Reward players with bonus Plot Points for cool visuals and clever lines of dialogue
☢ Steer clear of the civilized areas of the setting (or better yet, you and the players should create your own on the fly)
☢ The game should have the feel of an epic saga (albeit one in a decidedly Western setting) – see Greg Stafford's game *Hero Wars* or Ron Edwards' *Sorcerer & Sword* RPG supplement for inspiration and advice.

Cinéma Vérité: Gritty Hyper-realism

The last mode is perhaps the toughest to get right. *Cinéma Vérité* (from the French for "cinema truth") attempts to capture a gritty hyperrealism in the lens of the camera. You're not looking for low-budget entertainment, cheap thrills, or pretentious symbolism here. What you want is to feel the wind on your face, the dust in your throat, and the sun beating down upon you. These stories are about real human drama, no matter how "unrealistic" the setting. *Mad Max* is the definitive post-apocalyptic film in this style (although the second two movies in the Mad Max trilogy veer off into mythic western and futuristic sword & sorcery). Others like *Vanishing Point*, *Thelma & Louise*, and *Easy Rider* could also be used as sources of inspiration. Your stories will be those of desperate men and women living on the edge in an unforgiving landscape. We're talking terrible decisions, buried secrets, intense relationships and picking-the-bugs-out-of-your-teeth verisimilitude. Almost a southern gothic approach to it all…just transplanted from the lush, overgrown manors of the south to the tumbleweeds and dust of the American West.

Again, this mode is difficult because there are some serious limitations. You'll have to jettison much of the standard setting of *octaNe*, or modify it so the zaniness is leached out. There are some extra wrinkles in the game mechanics that make life much harder for the players and their characters (see the *Cinéma Vérité* Mode Rules below for these changes). Also, it's hard not to get bogged down in the grime and grim reality of it all because, well… let's face it, living in a post-apocalyptic wasteland would not be much fun in real life.

Cinéma Vérité Mode Rules:

☢ Characters are not immune to death and disaster just because they're PC's
☢ Radiation, disease, hunger, thirst, and exposure are all nasty realities – treat any situation where these come into play as having an automatic Hazard Rating of at least 1
☢ Character will only gain Plot Points with a Die Result of 6, and then only a number of Plot Points equal to their Style
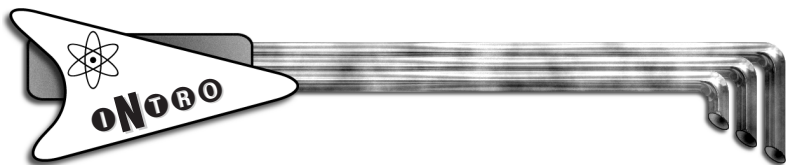
- ☢ Characters cannot have more than 1 point in any Style (this means that your character will have three Styles at +1 and one Style at 0)
- ☢ The Might and Magic Styles may not be used or chosen by players
- ☢ Characters may not hoard Plot Points – the limit is 5 (you may still spend as many at one time as you wish)

To be honest, the primary appeal of *octaNe* is its balls-out style and a system based on protagonist-enabling mechanics, simple concepts, and shared powers of control and creation. If you're interested in gritty, post-apocalyptic realism, you may want to investigate other games (like *The End* or *Aftermath*) or create your own (using a generic RPG system like *GURPS* or *FUDGE*). You'll lose a lot of what makes *octaNe* so special, but you'll gain all kinds of crunchy details like radiation damage, blood loss, hit locations, carrying capacity, and oodles of vehicle creation and combat rules.

Inspirado: How the West was Fun

There are roughly one kajillion (that's metric, by the way) sources of inspiration for *octaNe*. Your best bets are B-movies, surf rock, heavy metal, old-school punk and rockabilly albums, and weird indie games and comics. A lot of *inspirado* in this game comes from other sources as well: low-brow art, hot rod culture, and kitsch of all kinds.

I can't possibly name them all… but I'll try to name some of them for ya.

Stories

Damnation Alley, "Devil Car," "Last of the Wild Ones," and "Auto de Fe" by Roger Zelazny
  "Duel" by Richard Matheson
  "Car Sinister," edited by Robert Silverberg

"A Boy and his Dog," and "Along the Scenic Route" by Harlan Ellison
  "Killdozer" by Theodore Sturgeon
  "Trucks" by Stephen King
  …and just about anything by Howard Waldrop or Joe Lansdale

Film/TV

The Mad Max trilogy
  Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai across the 8th Dimension
  Blues Brothers
  Bubba Ho-Tep
  Deathrace 2000
  From Dusk 'Til Dawn
  Berry Gordy's The Last Dragon
  Planet of the Apes
  Pulp Fiction
  Repo Man
  Samurai Jack
  Six-String Samurai
  Son of Godzilla
  Speed Racer
  Tank Girl
  Tremors

Miscellaneous Pop Culture Insanity

Archie MacPhee
  The Art of COOP
  "Big Daddy" Roth
  Drag Racing and Kustom Kar Kulture
  Mexican Wrestling (Viva la Lucha Libre!)
  Anything with monkeys or zombies

Comics

Judge Dredd
Tank Girl
White Trash

RPGs
Over the Edge
Car Wars
Feng Shui
Macho Women with Guns

Video Games
Autoduel
Carmageddon
Full Throttle
Interstate '76
Twisted Metal

Music
Alien Sex Fiend
Aquabats
The Clash
DEVO
Dick Dale & the Deltones
Elvis Presley
Esquivel
James Brown
Johnny Cash
Judas Priest
Los Straitjackets
Man… or Astroman?
The Mermen
The Misfits
Parliament Funkadelic
The Red Elvises

Reverend Horton Heat
Sex Pistols
Social Distortion (and Mike Ness' solo work)
Southern Culture on the Skids
George Thoroughgood & the Destroyers
The Ventures
Rob Zombie (and White Zombie)

…And any other rockabilly, new wave, surf, metal, outlaw country, or punk bands that you dig which I've missed!
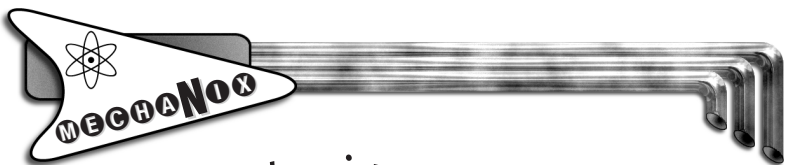
Game Mechanix

Design Goals

In writing *octaNe*, I wanted to create a game system that would do certain things *without* needing a whole lot of spackle and baling wire to hold it all together. Of course, the game had to be quick, simple, and fun, but it also had to perform other duties. The game system needed to *encourage and reward active player participation*, and it needed to not interfere with the players' desires to portray take charge, kick-ass heroes.

octaNe Lexicon: Player and Moderator

In these rules, I'm going to talk a lot about players, Players, and Game Moderators (aka the GM). Technically, y'all are playing the game, so I'll use player (lower-case P) as a general term to describe everyone involved in a game of *octaNe*. The Player (capital P) is what I call the person playing a single character. The Game Moderator is the person who sets up the game, awards Plot Points, imposes Hazard Ratings, and deals with playing the non-player characters (aka the NPC's) – in a sense, the GM is the host of the game and the Players are the guests. Life's a party.

"The Whiff Factor"

If you've ever played a role playing game before, you know how it goes: your best-of-the-best character is trying to perform some relatively easy task, you roll the dice, and you get a bad result. *Whiff* – the sound of your samurai's katana slicing through the empty air instead of through the mid-section of that evil sorcerer. Or your suave gentleman spy suddenly blurts out a corny pick-up line to the sexy torch singer.

Huh?

That one bad roll has turned your experienced, ultra-cool character into a *super chump*. Sure, the Game Moderator can fudge the roll or whatever, but the point stands: the dice made your character look like a rank amateur.

But it's not all posturing and ego-gratification here, folks; the knife cuts both ways. Let's say your meek and mild accountant is attacked in some dark alley. You roll your pitiful attack score… and get a critical hit! *THWAK*! All of a sudden, Sheldon Smiley, CPA is Sheldon Smiley, Ninja Accountant. It doesn't fit with the character. It doesn't really make sense. It doesn't work.

In *octaNe*, the game system does not generate a simple success/failure result. What it does is it places your character's fate either in your hands or the Moderators, depending on the die roll. Roll high and you get to describe what happens… and not just, "I hit 'em." We're talking resolution of the entire conflict! Say your character is trying to intimidate some petty thug. If your die roll is successful, then the thug not only cracks under the pressure, he also spills his guts – and you get to put the words into his mouth. You can also decide to have your character fail in whatever his goal was… success is not always mandatory. If you roll poorly, it doesn't mean your character becomes superchump, it just means that you only get to exercise a small amount of control, with the Moderator filling in the rest.

It all boils down to this: your characters are the stars of the show. The system treats them as stars should be treated.

Die Rolling 101

octaNe uses six-sided dice (I reckon those things have been and will be around forever). Specifically, you'll need at least **three dice**.

Die rolls in *octaNe* are called **Stunt Rolls**. Why? Because in this game, all die rolls stem from the character performing a stunt (a "stunt" being defined as "something done with style, flair or panache"). One of the key precepts of this game is this: if there's a chance that something exciting will happen, it will – regardless of the outcome, positive or negative. So don't even bother rolling unless something cool and interesting could happen *either way*.

To make a Stunt Roll, grab three six-sided dice and roll them, as you would in a board game. Now find the die with the **highest number** showing on top. This is your **Die Result**, the number you'll use to determine What Happens Next. The other dice can be ignored for the most part. It doesn't matter if you rolled a pair of sixes or just one (for the time being, anyway).

Example: Jack rolls three six-sided dice and the following numbers come up: five, three and two. The highest result is a five, so that's the Die Result that Jack is going to use for the next step.

If you have no Die Result after a roll (the result of Hazard, which we'll discuss later), then you automatically score a one… and the Moderator gets Total Control.

The Stunt Chart

There's one chart in *octaNe*, one Grandmaster Table of Information that you'll need to know cold in order to play the game in its intended frenetic pace. Lucky for you, this chart is incredibly easy to memorize.

- ☢ If the **Die Result** is 5 or 6, it means the **Player** has **total control**.
- ☢ If the **Die Result** is 4, it means the **Player** has **partial control**.
- ☢ If the **Die Result** is 3, it means the **Moderator** has **partial control**.
- ☢ If the **Die Result** is 1 or 2, it means the **Moderator** has **total control**.

So what exactly does this mean? Total control? Partial control? What gives?

If your Die Result ends up as a four or higher, it means that you can basically describe how the conflict is resolved or enhanced.

Total control (a Die Result of 5 or 6) is just that: TOTAL CON-

TROL. You knock the biker down flat with one punch, or you hotwire that '67 Mustang without alerting its owner.

Partial Control (a Die Result of 4) means that while you can say what happens, the Moderator may impose some kind of limitation or add a little something of his own. Some GM's will let you inject your own dramatic tension or uncertainty into the scene. Like, you knock the big biker dude flat, but his buddy steps in to help. Or, you hotwire the car, but the owner is alerted via some silent alarm he rigged up.

See how it works?

A Die Result of 3 means that although the Moderator gets to narrate the scene, you can add something of your own, so that it's not all bad.

If you roll under a three, the Moderator gets to take total control of the scene and describe what happens. The Moderator *could* be nice and have things go your way… but what fun is that? You might as well just *expect* to be tossed from the frying pan and into the fire. The Moderator can't mess with your character, or make him look like a chump, but things can still go mightily awry. There's even actually a rule that Moderators can utilize in this kind of situation. We'll talk about that in a later section.

Let's continue with these basic rules and dive right into the concept of the Scene.

Scenes

The scene is the standard unit of time and space in *octaNe*. It's highly abstract and mutable, following the laws of drama instead of the laws of physics. There are three basic kinds of Scene. The first is the **single-character scene** (also known as the spotlight scene). Single-character scenes play out between one Player, that Player's character, and the Moderator. The second is the **multiple-character scene**, or the ensemble scene. This is the prototypical "party" of characters, with lots of inter-

character dialogue, player discussion, and all that stuff. The third scene is the **behind-the-scenes** scene. In this type of scene, there are no player characters involved, and the Moderator is the sole narrator. Essentially, it's a peek at happenings elsewhere in the story. The characters probably have no idea what's happening, but the players can use this information to engineer ways for their characters to get involved.

I know, I know. You're probably invoking that hoary old RPG mantra of "You can't act on Out of Character information!" The thing is, your characters aren't going to act on OOC information. You are going to act on OOC information.

If a Moderator-scene is being described where the damsel in distress has escaped her captors and is now making her way along the parapet of the prison tower, well, your characters don't know this. But you can still work toward getting into that scene, right? You could have your character catch a glimpse of her flowing blonde hair, partially illuminated by a lone searchlight high above. Remember, although it's cool to get all immersed in your character, don't lose sight of the greater whole (AKA The Story).

So now you know a few types of scene. But what IS a scene, really? Well in screenwriter's lingo, a new scene happens with a change in location or time (day to night, inside to outside, the train station to the bus station, summer to fall). But a scene in *octaNe* is a little bit more than that. A scene occurs whenever something stirs your characters into ACTION. Scenes don't start with, "My character buys a Coke from the vending machine." Scenes start with, "My character dives behind the vending machine as the goons pull out their machetes." It doesn't have to be violent or physical action either. In fact, the best way to describe the scene is to start discussing Style.

Styles

Characters in RPGs are defined by *things*: traits, abilities, descriptors, attributes, talents, whatever. These things (we'll call

them "characteristics") let us know how competent the character is in a given area, such as intellect or strength.

octaNe is way different.

Characters is *octaNe* have characteristics called Styles. Styles define not *what* things the character can do but *how* the character does them. There are six Styles in the game: Daring, Ingenuity, Craft, Charm, Might and Magic. What they describe requires a bit more explanation.

Daring is the most action-oriented Style. Daring stunts are wild, dangerous, and exciting. Daring can be used to describe a high-speed road duel, a brawl in a burning building, or a series of crazy acrobatic maneuvers in the midst of a gunfight. When a daring stunt goes right, the results are spectacular. When the stunt goes wrong, the results can be disastrous.

Ingenuity is the most creative Style. Ingenious stunts are inspired acts, sometimes even a little desperate. Ingenuity can be used to describe a "so crazy it just might work" plan or a sudden brainstorm. It can also describe a character's ability to solve problems creatively. Ingenious stunts can take your breath away with their boldness, but a poorly executed plan might just blow up in your face.

Craft is the subtlest Style. Crafty stunts are clever and deliberate, requiring steady hands, keen senses, and intense focus. Tracking a foe, disarming a trap, and discerning a falsehood are all rather crafty stunts. Because it is so subtle a Style, Craft is also potentially the most damaging when it backfires, because by the time a character figures out that things went sour, it's usually much too late to do much about it.

Charm is the trickiest Style. Charming stunts are designed to manipulate other people for the character's own benefit. This could be as direct as brute-force intimidation or as subdued as a sexy outfit and the barest hint of a smile. Charming stunts are truly insidious because it can be difficult to tell who is really the victor in a game of intrigue. The after-effects could linger

for some time, and more than just life and limb are at risk if things don't go as planned.

The last two stunts are **Might** and **Magic**, the strangest Styles of all. Mighty and Magical stunts deal with weird powers and arcane mysteries. Random mutations, hi-tech devices, mystical energies, and extra-terrestrial origins are usually the sources of these Styles. When Might and Magic come into play, all bets are off on what could or couldn't happen because with these two Styles, nothing is truly impossible.

Note that I might sometimes use the words "Crafty" or "Charming" or "Magical" to describe a Stunt Roll. Don't be alarmed… I'm not changing the terms, just doing the whole proper grammar deal.

Okay. Let's get back to talking about scenes.

Scenes (continued)

So now that you know what the Styles are, I can say a scene starts whenever a conflict presents itself that corresponds to any of the six Styles. Because the Styles are the domain of the character, we can infer that the character chooses when to start a scene and then resolves that scene through the use of Style.

Whew.

Once the players have determined which Styles to use, they may each announce their intent in descending order of Style (first Daring, then Ingenuity, Craft, Charm, Might, and last, Magic). Then the Scene is played out with Stunt Rolls for all Players involved.

> *Example: Jack's bounty hunter and Scott's luchador are knocking back some tequila in a local roadhouse. All of a sudden, a fight breaks out at a card table and the bounty hunter recognizes one of the card players as his quarry. Action time! Jack announces that his character is going to step in and declare that he's bringing the*

> *card player back to LA for a trial. This is a Charm stunt (he's using his authority and a bit of intimidation). Scott says that he wants his character to hurl a table into the group to scatter them (and get their attention) with his Might. Jack's action would go first, followed by Scott's.*

Now although the actions are announced one at a time, and in a specific order, this doesn't mean that the actions occur in this order. For instance, in the above example, it's more visually interesting to have Jack's bounty hunter lay down the law after Scott's wrestler throws the table, even though Jack announced his action first.

Visualize the scene as it might appear in a great movie – dynamic and full of life.

Now, what of the players who aren't involved in the action but have characters in the scene? If the Moderator judges that a character isn't using any of the six Styles in a scene, then that character is "out" for the duration of that scene. The only way that player may perform a Stunt Roll is to spend Plot Points in order to roll dice (more on Plot Points in a later section).

> *Example: Pete's character, a grizzled old grease monkey, keeps drinking, ignoring the action for the time being. If he wants to get involved, he'll end up going last. He'll also need to spend at least one Plot Point to get in on the action (remember, Pete won't get the standard three dice for the Stunt).*

Why do it this way? Two reasons. The first is that "doing nothing" isn't exciting. It's not action-packed. It's not a stunt… it has no **STYLE** so you don't get the automatic three die roll. The second reason is to spur the players into action. If the only way you can participate in a scene is to spend Plot Points, then you're gonna run out of Plot Points pretty darn fast. Hopefully, the players will want to start earning those points back by getting involved. They'll have fun, you'll have fun, and the game will become much better.

Narration, or
"Crap. I can't think of anything cool to say."

Don't worry about it. Even the most sickeningly creative folks get stumped now and then. It's perfectly fine to go out of character for a bit and talk with the other players. They probably have some really cool ideas you can use (or ideas that will give YOU ideas). It might even be better to save up for the climactic moments in the game rather than try and cram in every neat stunt that you dream up. Keeping the über-cool moments rare will only spotlight them even more!

When Do I Roll?

In general, die rolls should be made to enhance or further the story that you and the other players are creating. If an action being performed doesn't matter in the grand scheme of things (like two characters having an arm-wrestling contest), then don't worry about it. If the arm-wrestling contest is going to decide the new leader of the desert tribe, that is important and deserves a Stunt Roll.

Remember to take into account the end result of the attempted stunt before you grab the dice. If a character is trying to fix a flat tire, what he's really trying to do (in terms of the game) is to get moving again. If he has the time, tools and skill, just let it happen. If the character is trying to change that tire in order to escape a rapidly approaching dust storm… well now you've introduced an element of danger. If the Die Result is a bad one, you could have him trapped inside the dust storm, or you could have the tire come off after he escapes the storm (which would strand him in some other inhospitable place). In this example, being trapped in a dust storm won't stop the action. Instead, it will most assuredly lead to adventure, mystery, and danger… we'll describe how in the next section.

Rolling the Bones

Now that you have a Style and a stunt in mind, roll your three six-sided dice and find out the result on the Stunt Chart. If you rolled well, you can narrate the outcome of your action. There are some other benefits to rolling well on Stunt Rolls but they're not important right now.

If the roll went badly, however; the Moderator is free to turn up the heat. This can be done using the techniques of **Introduce**, **Describe** and **Upgrade**:

- **Introduce** an external force that poses an obstacle or a threat.
- **Describe** an unforeseen event that changes the direction of the scene.
- **Upgrade** the Hazard Rating of an obstacle by one or more points.

But the Moderator can never:

- **Control** a Player's character
- **Negate** an action or stop a scene

Introduce and Describe are pretty easy to understand and Upgrade is dealt with in the Hazards section. Let's start with the no-no's right now; the prohibitions of Control and Negate.

The ban on controlling other Players' characters is a pretty basic tenet of RPGs. It's just bad form to tell a Player, "Your character does this," or "Your character doesn't do that." Granted, the GM can still say, "The blast knocks you off your feet" (because that's an effect of the blast), but he just should avoid making statements like, "The look in the mutant's eyes fills you with fear" or any statement that describes how a Player's character "feels."

The second prohibition, though… Oh boy, it's a doozy. And it's one to which all-too-few Game Moderators can plead "not guilty."

Let me know if this scenario rings a bell…

Stopping a Scene Cold, aka, The Puzzle Room Problem

The situation: the intrepid band of adventurers has encountered a puzzle room of some kind, and it's clear to them that unless they can solve the puzzle, their journey is on hold *indefinitely*. Now, if the Players are smart and/or they roll well, no problem. But what if they roll poorly or fail to outwit their Moderator?

What happens then?

Nothing.

They just wait…

…and wait…

…and wait…

…and pretty soon, half the Players are asleep, and the Moderator is looking up "Effects of Old Age" in the game rulebook. The adventure has stopped, and the Players are frozen in place.

Eventually (if the game is ever to continue), the Players keep trying until they get it right, or the Moderator makes a few concessions and guides them through that sticky situation. When all is said and done, the puzzle room turns out to be a waste of everyone's time. The classic example of a barrier is the locked door. From there, puzzles serve the same purpose (**a barrier + a challenge**) but just get more and more elaborate.

A Solution…

Rather than stop the action or "cheat" the Players through it, *octaNe* has a simple solution. Either introduce a new wrinkle, or describe an unforeseen event that changes the nature of the conflict. If the boring and frustrating "puzzle room" is designed to act as an obstacle along the way to the center of the wizard's maze, then replace that obstacle with something the players care about and are able to deal with *somehow*.

Example #1: Introduce
All of a sudden, the locked door is smashed open from the inside by some great force. The characters must now deal with a rampaging beast that had been imprisoned behind the door (the GM has added this wrinkle on the fly). The basic obstacle remains, but the nature of the obstacle has changed from a locked door to an angry creature.

Example #2: Describe
Failing to solve the puzzle opens another door, but this door leads out to a more dangerous pathway (again, an event the GM has improvised). Successfully solving the puzzle would have enabled the characters to move on through to the safer path.

Remember that the whole point of a scene is first to introduce a conflict, then deal with that conflict through the use of a Style. Does it really matter if an antagonist is defeated with fists, ideas, words, or spells? No. It just matters that he was defeated.

Case closed. Now it's time to move on to the next scene.

Oh yeah, one more thing to Moderators about scenes. Don't come up with *one* solution and expect the players to guess what you want them to do; because if they don't guess correctly, it's the puzzle room all over again. Try and plan for various Styles to diffuse the problem, and if a player wants to try something you haven't planned for, don't sweat it. The player is probably excited enough about the plan to handle all the details for you (which brings us back to one of *octaNe*'s design goals: **encourage and reward active player participation**).

These techniques aren't just the domain of the GM. Players can also use them to some degree. As for the prohibitions, it's a good idea to follow those as well. Controlling another player's character is bound to cause some unwanted tension and negating action is the king-hell-mack-daddy of sins in role-playing. Tsk tsk.

Ending a Scene

The scene ends when the conflict facing the characters has been resolved, even temporarily (the "let me catch my breath" moment). Sometimes, two or more scenes may occur – one right after the other. Other times, there's more of a "cooling down" period. Either way is okay, so long as the action isn't too exhausting or the period of non-action isn't too long and drawn out. It's all a matter of pacing.

Players and Moderators alike would benefit from watching some of the better sci-fi and action movies to get a feel for how scenes work together. What's my personal recommendation? The Mad Max films, of course! Take notes while watching George Miller's lean, mean directing style, and apply it to your games.

Flirting with Disaster

Here's a trick you can use when ending scenes: introduce more problems. Problems drive action, and action is what this game is all about. There are basically three kinds of disasters, each being a response to a question posed by the scene:

No.

A "No." ending finishes a Scene by putting up a barrier between the characters and their goal. That obstacle is a problem, and they have to deal with it before they can move on. An example of this might be that after chasing a pack of rogue smartcars to their lair, the characters find that an armored gate protects the wild cars' hideout.

The scene asks the question, "Can the characters get to the rogue smartcars?" The answer is "No, they can't." Remember not to stop the action outright… just use this barrier as a slight pause while the characters can re-group and figure out what to do.

No, and…

This is a fun one. A "No, and…" scene is one where a barrier and a totally new problem is introduced. When the characters arrive at the gate, and then a second group of smartcars launches an ambush, that would be a "No, and…" scene. The answer this time is, "No, and now the characters are trapped and under attack!"

Yes, but…

The "Yes, but…" scene is my personal favorite because it combines player success and plot complication. It establishes that the characters have ended the scene in their favor, but now a new complication has been introduced. The question is now answered, "Yes, but the smartcar that led them to the hideout was a traitor… and thanks to the traitor's warning, the bad guys escaped before the characters arrived."

The Mook Rule

One thing you're going to notice in *octaNe* is that fight scenes don't last upwards of an hour or more. There's only a couple die rolls (at most), no hit points, no dodge attempts, no lead miniatures on a hex map. In fact, it's possible to wipe out an entire gang of sweaty mutants with one roll of a 6. The keys to a good fight scene in this kind of game are descriptive narrative and shared power. If you're fighting some no-neck no-name (what we in the game industry call a "Mook"), feel free to take him out with one punch. But the more opponents you face (and the tougher those opponents are), the better it is to try out various Styles, give other characters a crack at 'em, and use your Plot Points to insert cool details that might help you later. Besides, you'll earn more Plot Points if the fight goes a couple rounds.

Lastly, it's expected that you'll plow through Mooks (the GM will probably let you defeat them without too much effort even if your Die Result is a 3 or 4). But remember that your nar-

rative power gives you the opportunity to fail as well as succeed. Think about the big picture and ask yourself, "What would be the coolest?"

Plot Points

Cars run on gasoline, *octaNe* runs on Plot Points. You can use them for cool stunts, to overpower a superior foe, or to locate equipment your character might need. This section will explain how you get them, what you can do with them, and what happens when you spend them.

Augmentation

By spending a Plot Point, you get to add one die to the number of dice used for a Stunt Roll. **You can spend as many Plot Points as you desire, but for each Plot Point you spend, you must describe how you are altering the nature of the Scene to reflect the increased number of dice rolled**. For instance, in a car chase scene occurring in a rainstorm, you could spend a Plot Point to narrate that the muddy ground is making it difficult for the bad guys to catch up with your character's car. You'd then roll an extra die (four dice) when making the Stunt Roll.

Augmentations cannot change aspects of the Scene or its characters. Instead, you're allowed to add "facts." Facts cannot contradict one another (like in the rainstorm fight scene, you couldn't narrate a cloud of dust being kicked up by your tires that obscures the bad guy's vision) and facts cannot negate other facts (you couldn't make it stop raining). Other than those guidelines, anything goes.

> *Example: A monstrous Gila monster in the middle of AridZona is chasing Chen, a Taoist monkey. Chen's Player, Zak, spends a Plot Point to make a daring escape – he narrates that Chen zips over a cactus, and the charging Gila monster smacks into it. Chen quickly*

scurries off while the Gila monster is dazed.

You can't spend Plot Points to augment another player's stunt roll, but you can spend them to introduce facts that might help your comrades. Remember: even if you fail the roll, the facts that you described after spending Plot Points are still valid.

Acquisition

Plot Points are gained in three different ways.

The first is the most basic. All new characters start the game with a single Plot Point.

The second way is the most common. Whenever you make a Stunt Roll and gain Total Control over the scene, you'll earn Plot Points. A **Die Result of five** will net your character a number of Plot Points equal to the Style used. A **Die Result of six** will net your character a number of Plot Points equal to the Style used, plus one additional Plot Point. This bonus point enables even characters with Styles of zero to earn a Plot Point. You can only gain Plot Points this way if your actions are moving the story along (trivial actions, like target practice on rusty beer cans or using a Style to search for gear won't get you any Plot Points).

You can also gain a Plot Point simply by having fun, getting involved, and contributing to the game. Moderators should reward Players with a bonus Plot Point at the end of a game session. Other Plot Points may be handed out during the game for especially cool stunts, hilarious scenes, or inspired behavior (according the Mode you're playing in).

To wit:

When in Psychotronic Mode, award bonus Plot Points to Players that add that certain "*zing*" to the game – be it with a stylish description, a wild stunt, a truly funny line of dialog, or just-plain-bizarre behavior (like the characters abruptly launching into a song n' dance number straight out of a Bollywood movie).

When in Grindhouse Mode, award bonus Plot Points for splattery and unabashedly violent fight scenes, topless Go-Go

dancing (ummm… in game or out of game, it's your call. I make no judgements), or if a real bastard of a character gets his in the end.

When in Arthouse Mode, award bonus Plot Points for the kind of stuff you'd see in a European film or a Beckett play. Big points go to bleak/black comedy, existentialist thought, post-modern references to other movies/games/books/whatever, and players who aren't afraid to delve deep into their hearts, minds, and souls. Heavy, man.

For games in the *Cinéma Vérité* Mode, don't award bonus Plot Points. Or if you do, do it sparingly and only when it pushes the story forward.

Hazards

There are no "hit points" or any kind of damage indicators in *octaNe*. Nor are there separate die rolls for your opponents. Instead, *octaNe* has Hazards.

A Hazard's rating describes the strength of the opposition to the characters as a number (usually between one and six). Enemies can have Hazard ratings, as can inclement weather, venomous reptiles, doomed romances, and ill-maintained roads. It's important to note that a Hazard is really just a plot complication (but "Hazard" sounds so much more hardcore, right?).

While talking to that nightclub singer, her boyfriend is nearby. This would be a Hazard that might make it difficult to talk to her.

Fighting a rogue smartcar that's armed to the teeth would represent a Hazard. So would trying to capture a wild smartcar without mangling it too badly.

If you're tracking a varmint through the Wasteland, that's one thing. Doing it at night is another thing *entirely*.

If you're trying to bake a cake at high altitude… oh, you get the point.

Hazards increase the likeliness that things don't turn out in the character's favor. What they do in terms of the game system is reduce the number of possible Die Results by the scene's Hazard Rating. A one-die Hazard is minor but potentially dangerous. It cancels one Die Result, meaning that if you rolled your three dice and scored a 3, 4, and 5, the Die Result of 5 would be cancelled and the next-highest Die Result would be used (in this case, the 4).

If the Hazard were upgraded to a two-die Hazard, then *two* of the Die Results would be cancelled. If a Hazard is ever greater than three, you must spend Plot Points in order to get anything done (with each spent Plot Point giving you one die to roll).

> *Example: The characters are facing a dozen blood-thirsty giant spiders. Normally, this is no problem for our brave heroes. This time, however, an especially large and nasty spider queen is leading the spiders, and she has a*
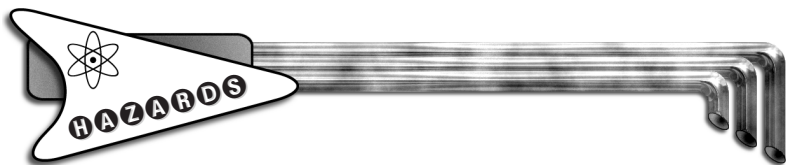
Hazard rating of 1. When dealing with her, the characters will automatically lose their first high Die Result.

Remember that not every encounter will feature a Hazard. Hazards represent complications above and beyond the standard threat – an especially fearsome or well-armed "boss" opponent, the element of surprise, treacherous conditions, or extenuating circumstances. A Hazard rating can also come into play if one of the players rolls especially poorly, and the GM introduces some new event or wrinkle to cause the group more problems.

Example: A Road Marshal is on routine patrol in the Big Empty. There's a storm brewing, and the Gila monsters are out in force. Not to mention that the road is in bad need of maintenance, and the radiation count is off the chart, and… well, it's all just a big mess. Driving on the road for a short distance might not be too hard, but for a long haul it poses a considerable challenge.

When assigning a Hazard rating, remember that a vastly superior opponent will have at least a Hazard rating of three (the character cannot triumph without spending Plot Points). An even match with the character will have a Hazard rating of 2 (the character is left with one Die Result, with a 50% chance of the result being positive).

More on Hazards

In addition to their numerical ratings, Hazards also have another aspect. Some Hazards are diminished over time. For an example, picture a gang of thugs that ambush the characters. At first, they pose a three-die Hazard (due to their numbers and the element of surprise), but after that initial attack, they're just smelly thugs. Their Hazard Rating will decrease each time one of their Hazard points cancels out a player's Die Result. Once

the points are gone, the situation isn't so dire.

On the other hand, the Big Boss enemy best embodies the other kind of Hazard. He's big, tough, well-armed, and just plain mean… these attributes won't change over time. His Hazard rating will affect *every* die roll made against him unless the players find a way to counter his numerous advantages.

The GM's job in the game is to adjudicate what encounters will have Hazard ratings, how they will affect the characters, and when the Hazard Ratings should increase, decrease, or change in some other way. Think of them almost as Moderator Plot Points. If the players roll well, the Hazard Rating could be reduced or ignored. If they roll poorly, the Moderator can up the ante by increasing the Hazard's rating.

The Moderator can also add wrinkles by allowing a Hazard rating to be reduced under certain conditions. Like the mean 'n' nasty Big Boss is a three-die Hazard at first, but it's all show; when attacked by more than one character, his Hazard rating drops to 1 for each character. With this system, there's lots of room to improvise and experiment.

Example: A space slug that attacks the characters from below gains the advantage of surprise, and its tough hide acts as armor. The ambush is going to give the slug an initial advantage, above and beyond its bullet-proof skin. The skin, on the other hand, is going to continue to protect it from attacks.

When going against the space slug, the characters will suffer three total Die Result cancellations at first because of the ambush. Then, the slug's innate Hazard rating will cancel out one Die Result for any Stunt Roll against it until it's defeated.

With all this talk about Player control and character-driven plot, it's kinda nice to see that the Moderator also has important stuff to do in this game, eh?
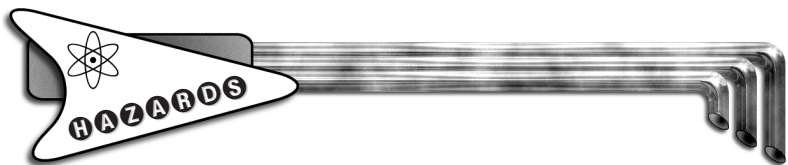
Hazards and Teamwork

When characters join forces to take down an enemy with a Hazard Rating, the rating may sometimes be split between the characters. So if four characters team up to battle an opponent with a Hazard Rating of 4, that Hazard rating would get split up into four one-die Hazards. The players may choose how to split up a Hazard rating unless the Moderator declares otherwise (such as an enemy that focuses its attacks on one of the characters and ignores the others).

Remember that Hazards don't reduce the number of dice rolled. **They reduce the number of Die Results**. So while taking on the Big Bad by yourself (and sucking up the Hazard of 3) is very noble, that will leave you with no usable dice… an automatic Die Result of one.

> *Example: Chen the Capuchin and Vandal Johnson (a New Texacan ostrich wrangler) are trying to capture an ornery dinosaur (Hazard rating of 3 because it's spittin' mad and armed with razor-sharp talons!). Chen distracts it, taking all 3 Hazard penalties to his Stunt Roll, while Vandal readies his lasso. The Moderator has Total Control now, because Chen has no Die Results left (giving him the default Die Result of one). Luckily, Vandal gets to use his highest Die Result and successfully hogties the varmint. Chen, on the other hand, gets chomped!*

When in doubt, remember that temporary Hazards (those that are reduced over time) are used to reflect obstacles that will eventually become less hazardous (a villain with a pistol and a limited amount of ammunition). Permanent Hazards retain their lethality (a villain with a razor-sharp samurai sword). If Plot Points are used in a scene with Hazards, the Players can describe changes in the situation that shift the odds in their favor (for instance, a fact can be introduced that describes the sword-wielding villain losing his weapon after a reckless swing).

No-Win Situations

If the Players have run out of Plot Points and can't deal with the Hazard, this is called a "no-win situation." There is nothing (short of Moderator intervention) that will help the characters overcome their opposition. In this event, the characters lose, and the Scene ends with their defeat.

This is only a temporary setback!

Set up the next scene (maybe the characters are captured or some other kind of complication arises), and give everyone a single Plot Point. Then continue the game as normal. Don't let a no-win situation slow down the action. Use it to shift the story into high gear!

Note that because a no-win situation is equal to a Die Result of one (Total Moderator Control), you *could* pull their bacon out of the fire by virtue of creative narration. But really, it's more fun to expand upon the adventure with more challenging obstacles rather than just helping the players out with a *deus ex machina*.

In-Fighting

Sometimes, the characters will want to start swinging at one another. This isn't a bad thing… plenty of stories begin with two rivals that end up becoming fast friends.

The question is this: "How does *octaNe*'s system deal with this?"

The answer lies in a combination of competition and compromise. The compromise is that one person must agree to be the "bad guy" in the scene. This doesn't mean that this Player has to portray an evil or villainous person. It just means that he becomes antagonistic to the "hero" of the scene.

The Player with the antagonist character spends some Plot Points to define his character's Hazard Rating. This works the same as when the GM defines a Hazard Rating during a scene. Each Plot Point increases the Hazard Rating by 1. The limitation

is that the antagonist's Hazard Rating can't be higher than whatever Style he's using in the scene (this works out to be a Hazard Rating between 0 and 3 points).

The next step is for the protagonist character (the other guy) to roll his dice and hope for the best. Plot Points may be used to augment the roll. Remember to ignore the highest Die Result for each Hazard point the antagonist has spent! Then check the Stunt Chart to determine who gets control of the scene. A Die Result 1, 2 or 3 gives control to the antagonist. The hero character has control on a 4, 5 or 6.

Easy.

Remember that pure roleplaying is often better than resorting to a Stunt Roll. Why? Well, in most cases the hero character is the person who SHOULD get his way. I mean, what kind of movie would *Mad Max II: the Road Warrior* be if the Gyro Captain's snake killed Max in the first half? It's okay to take a fall if it's going to move the story. Just be aware what side you're on when facing off against another player… revel in the role of the "bad guy," and do your best to make the hero look good… that's your job!

Might & Magic

The four primary Styles of *octaNe* (Daring, Ingenuity, Craft, and Charm) are pretty easy to figure out. The weird ones are Might and Magic and naturally, these two Styles work a *little* bit differently than the normal rules.

Case #1: Nominal Tasks

Most times, the Player simply declares his or her intended effect. Then the Moderator rules whether or not this effect is within the scope of the character's Role and calls for a Stunt Roll. You can also use Might and Magic for actions related to your Style, such as using the Magic Style to research an ancient tome or the Might Style to help some impressionable villagers raise a barn (which happens a lot, believe me). Sometimes, a Stunt Roll isn't even necessary!

Example: Big Lou is a Mutant Trucker – specifically, a bipedal horned toad dressed in denim overalls. One of Lou's mutations is his extraordinary ability to go for days without a drop of water. Lou's player doesn't have to roll to use this ability unless Lou is taxing the limits of his power. In that case, a Stunt Roll may be required…

Case #2: Story-Affecting Actions

However, the use of magical or otherwise unusual abilities to *directly affect* the story is handled a bit differently. Characters do not get the normal three dice to roll. Instead, they must spend Plot Points (at least one) to cast a spell or use their strange ability (remember that each Plot Point spent gives you a die to roll). On a 5 or 6, Plot Points are gained back as normal (yes, this does mean that you could spend more than you get back).

Example: Big Lou (Might 2) gets into a fight with a big-ass scorpion (Hazard rating of 2 because it's big and poisonous) out in the Wastelands. The scorp' lashes out
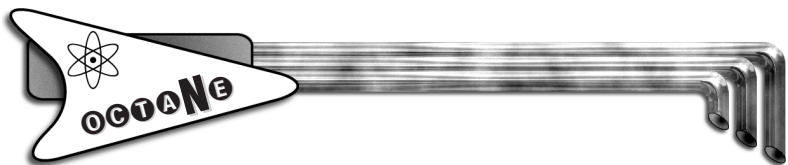
with its deadly stinger and Big Lou tries to deflect it with his scaly hide. Because this scene has potential for some story-changing events (what happens if Big Lou is tagged with the stinger?!), his player is going to need to spend some Plot Points. He spends two Plot Points and rolls two dice, hoping for a high Die Result…

Hazard ratings only affect characters performing Mighty or Magical stunts if the Hazard itself is magical, is otherwise unnatural, or is interfering with their Might or Magical ability (for instance, if the scorpion in the above example was some weird cybernetic beastie with a specialized armor-piercing tail). When this happens, the player is kinda screwed: not only does the player need to spend Plot Points to work their mojo, they also have to spend extra Plot Points to overcome the Hazard!

Luckily, there is a solution…

Case #3: Hazard Reduction

The third use of Might and Magic is to alter the Hazard rating of an opponent, obstacle, or situation. Without needing to spend Plot Points, the Player rolls his or her full complement of three dice. On a Die Result of 5 or 6, instead of gaining Plot Points, the Player gets to reduce a Hazard rating by the number of Plot Points he or she would normally have earned. Of course, the Hazard rating might only be reduced temporarily. It all depends on the situation and the actions of the characters.

Example: Scott's character, a fire-breathing wrestler (Might of 1) named Dragon Rodriguez, is going to use his flame-spitting ability to intimidate the local Hell's Angels chapter (they have a permanent Hazard rating of 1 due to their fearsome reputation as cold-blooded killers). Scott rolls his three dice and scores a Die Result of five. He's able to lower the Hells Angels' Hazard rating to zero until the end of the scene.

If you ever lower a Hazard rating to a negative number (and remember that something without a Hazard rating is equal to a Hazard rating of zero), you'll get to roll extra dice when facing that threat. Alas, these extra dice may not be used for Stunt Rolls involving Might or Magic. If Scott's character had a Might Style of 2, he could lower the bikers' Hazard rating to zero and gain a bonus die on his next action.

Re-Charging

Because mighty and magical characters fuel their weird powers with Plot Points, they'll be spending Plot Points more often than normal characters. If a Mighty or Magical character ever runs out of Plot Points, the Player may make one Stunt Roll (with three dice) and explain how the character gets back their mojo. If the Die Result is a five or six, the character receives Plot Points as normal. If the Die Result is four or less, the character receives none. A re-charge in this way, whether successful or not, may only be attempted once per game session.

Example: After the altercation with the bikers, Dragon Rodriguez is bushed. Scott decides that the luchador needs to drink mucho tequila to re-kindle his fire. Dragon downs half a bottle, and Scott makes a three-die Stunt Roll. If he rolls a five or six, he'll gain back some Plot Points. If he rolls a one, two, three or four, he doesn't (In fact, he might even get sick from the hooch on a low roll.). Either way, he won't be able to re-charge his powers until the next game.

Characters

The protagonists in *octaNe* are larger-than-life heroes living in a bizarre yet strangely familiar future. Your job as a player is to create a character and use it to tell a cool story.

But what is your character's place in the story? What is its **Role**?

Roles

Roles reflect the archetypal heroes that have established themselves in 20th century pop-culture: books, comics, films, and television shows. Some of these Roles are very weird, while others will be instantly recognizable. Think of them as character templates that you can use to start playing *octaNe* right away. Roles are also a good way to introduce yourself to the high-flying world of *octaNe* because as soon as you look through them, you'll immediately get a sense of how this game should feel – it's all about the atmosphere, baby.

Heroes

Before you continue, re-read the last section and focus your attention on the first sentence. This is a game about heroes, and unless you're playing a Grindhouse-style game, your characters should be decent people who want to do Good. This doesn't mean that you have to play Dudley Do-Right. You just have to play someone who does the right thing when it counts.

Don't Fear Change

Although a character's Role in the story is pre-defined, this doesn't mean that you should religiously adhere to that Role and not allow the character to grow or develop as a person. You could even say that the purpose of an *octaNe* game is to put the character into a position where he *must* grow and develop. If your character is defined one way, consider it the goal of the game to re-define that character in a different way.

Here's another situation that many of us have seen before.

The player sees his character as a grim, loner anti-hero type and balks at the notion that he should play that character any other way. Well, remember the band metaphor? If the story is heading in one direction, it's not "bad role-playing" to alter your character so that he or she goes along. The phrase "but that's what my character would do!" is not a viable solution to this problem. Instead, figure out how to get your "lone wolf" character to work within the story, rather than against it.

This can be done in any number of ways.

Snake Plissken (Kurt Russell's character from *Escape from New York*) isn't given a choice. He either saves the President or he dies (courtesy of a timed injection). Similarly, Hell Tanner from *Damnation Alley* is given a choice, it's just not very good (he must either drive cross-country to Boston or rot in an L.A. jail). This isn't railroading per se, it's more like catapulting the character into action (the real story is what results from this preliminary jump-start).

You can also introduce personal relationships to develop a character. Mad Max agrees to help the desert tribe in exchange for gas (a mercenary relationship). But then his car is destroyed and the gas doesn't matter quite so much. He ends up helping them anyway. Why? I think because he made a connection with the Feral Kid (a young boy that stirs memories within Max of his lost family). That's the story, my friends. In the heart, not in the head.

You might notice that these anti-heroes share a common thread: they start out as grim, selfish, loner-types and slowly change into heroes *when it counts*. And as I said before, *octaNe* is all about heroes. They might be total bastards, but when it comes down to the wire, they're good people to have around.

Support Characters

It's not necessary that every player portray a main protagonist character (i.e.: the focus of the story). A Player who portrays a "support character" is still playing an important, heroic, and

vital character… it's just that the story isn't about that particular character.

Think of Han Solo in *Star Wars*. Sure, he's a cool, heroic, and important character. But is Han the central character? Not really… his job is to spotlight the actions of Luke Skywalker.

The main job of a support character is to highlight the actions of the hero, be it as a sidekick, a rival, a love interest, or through some kind of familial bond (like a orphaned child or an aged mentor). Sometimes they start off as antagonists (like the Gyro Captain in *Mad Max 2: the Road Warrior*), but they always end up assisting or befriending the hero in some way. In later game sessions, a supporting character might become the hero. Or the hero might fall back into a supporting role. It's a give-and-take situation… not every game session is going to allow every player to portray a main character. In fact, having just one protagonist per game will cause the story to be more focused and intense.

Work together. Help one another. Okay, group hug time is over.

Creating a Character

Before you even start writing down character stuff, close your eyes and imagine your character doing something cool. Don't worry about his name or what he looks like or what his personality or history is. Just imagine the character in action. What is he doing? That's your character, man. If all else fails, and you can't think of what to do in the game, fall back to this mental picture, and figure out how to get the character into this situation.

Now look at the Roles. There are a bunch of 'em, so you might not see one that grabs you right off the bat. Take your time… and remember that mental picture of your character. If you don't see anything that gets your heart racing, or you just have your own cool idea for a unique character Role, rules for creating Custom Roles are included at the end of the character section. But I highly recommend you start with a pre-built Role, if

only because they're a great way to jump right into the game.

Think of Roles as frameworks on which you can build up your character. Each Role presents a basic character idea that fits into the world of *octaNe* (like a heavy metal wizard or a masked Mexican wrestler). You can use the Role as a starting point. It'll give you some suggested Styles, Skills, and Gear that this kind of character would possess.

> *Example: Scott thinks about it for a while and decides on a mental image of his character: a huge masked man flexing his biceps to the delight of a cheering crowd. This is so obviously a Masked Luchador that Scott doesn't even bother to check out the other Roles. The image of the posing wrestler gives Scott an immediate feel for the character. He's a strong, noble hero who looks out for the poor and the downtrodden. He's a total nice guy with a heart as big as they come… and a devastating finishing move to boot!*

Elements of a Role

Each Role is composed of several elements designed to give you a quick overview of the character. These are:

- ☢ **Profile**: a short paragraph that explains what the character is all about.
- ☢ **Stamping Grounds**: where the character is likely to be encountered.
- ☢ **Quote**: something you might hear that type of character say.
- ☢ **Mode**: a Mode for which that Role is particularly suited.
- ☢ **Gear**: items and equipment that the character may possess.
- ☢ **Style**: how the character is likely to act in a dramatic situation.
- ☢ **Skills**: what the character can do (or is known to do).

One important thing to remember is that despite the presence of Roles, no two characters will be alike. Sure, they may have stuff in common… but so do folks in the real world. Roles are just the chassis and wheels. The unique character you choose to create is the engine… and you're free to customize the character with all manner of accessories.

The Rule of Roles

There's a special rule we have around these parts: every Player must choose a different Role. If both you and your buddy want to be Grizzled Combat Drivers, flip a coin to decide who gets that Role (Or work it out some other way. In this game, you could always play your buddy's car.).

Check out the Roles and see what fits!

Rockin' Roles

Alien Naturalist	High-Plains Drifter
Ape-Man Islander	Ingenious Tinkerer
Bad-ass Mofo'	Japanese Super Hero
Capuchin Monkey	Killah Klown
Classic Smartcar	Masked Luchador
Crazed Aviator	Metallurgist
Crusty Sea Captain	Monster Smasher
Death-Rock Siren	Mutant Trucker
Desert Chieftain	Old Sawbones
Disco Robot Gigolo	Ostrich Wrangler
Drag Strip Queen	Outlaw Biker
Elvis Impersonator	Plucky Kid
Fast-Food Ninja	Punk Rawk Zombie
'Frisco Diver	Renegade Mobster
Greasemonkey	Repo-Man
Hard-Rock Caveman	Road Warrior
HellJack	Roller-Girl

Six-String Samurai	Techno-Shaman
Smartcar Rustler	Two-Fisted Padre
Speed Racer	Ultra Vixen
Straight-laced G-Man	Weird-but-Cute Pet
Stuntman Heretic	Worm Surfer
Swashbuckling Pirate	

45 Ways to Kick Ass and Take Names

Role: Alien Naturalist
Profile: You look as close to being human as your race can get, so you've decided to go out among the primitives and find out what they're really like. Human customs, rituals, and slang endlessly fascinate you. You're still trying to get the hang of most of them, but you'll keep trying!
Stamping Grounds: Shangri-L.A.
Quote: "Are we having funk yet, doggy-dogg?"
Mode: Psychotronic
Gear: Outlandish outfit, flash camera, portable tape recorder, map
Styles: Ingenuity, Charm
Skills: Languages, weird trivia, unusual abilities, hiding in plain sight

Role: Ape-Man Islander
Profile: You are a mighty warrior of the ape tribes of the southern jungles. Many years ago, men came to your lush homeland, bringing weapons of smoke and fire. Although these newcomers are strange to you, you have learned their tongue in an effort to learn more about them.
Stamping Grounds: Monster Island
Quote: "Get your filthy hands off me you damn dirty…"
Mode: Psychotronic
Gear: Primitive armor, sling, wicked-looking club or sword, totem necklace

Styles: Craft, Might
Skills: Climbing, leaping, figuring out archaic technology, hunting, intimidation

Role: Bad-ass Mofo'
Profile: You are the hippest, baddest dude around, y'all. Whether you're the brother man fighting against the other man or some slick gangsta, you got it goin' on. Style, women, cars, clothes... it ain't nothin' but a thing, baby. "Shut yo' mouth!"
Stamping Grounds: Shangri-L.A., Lost Vegas
Quote: "It's time to get down and get funky."
Mode: Grindhouse
Gear: Hip threads, sunglasses, big 'fro, .45 Magnum, big-ass rings/brass knuncles
Styles: Daring, Charm
Skills: Ladies' man, mad kung-fu skillz, gunning down suckers, pure coolness

Role: Capuchin Monkey
Profile: Raised in the serenity of your temple, you spent much of your time training in various forms of Wushu, as well as reading the great works of the masters. Now it is time for you to leave the tranquility of your island home and set off into the world to seek your fortune and spread the Tao.
Stamping Grounds: 'Frisco
Quote: "Ah, your technique is excellent… but now watch a true Master!"
Mode: Psychotronic
Gear: Robes or kung fu outfit, staff, dog-eared copy of *The Tao of Pooh*
Styles: Craft, Magic
Skills: Tai Chi, snippets of Kung-fu wisdom, climbing, fitting in small spaces

Role: Classic Smartcar
Profile: You were built in the foundries of Motown but its been many years since you were cherry. You've seen thousands of miles roll by, and dozens of owners have sat behind your rawhide-wrapped steering wheel. You're older now, but you still got some fight left in you before you head off to that racetrack in the sky.
Stamping Grounds: The Wastelands, Detroit Rock City
Quote: "Looks like nothing but empty road… mind if I stretch my legs for a bit?"
Mode: Any
Gear: Dual machine-guns, a mine dropper, and a pair of pink fuzzy dice
Styles: Daring
Skills: Stunt maneuvering, weaponry, knowing the lay of the land, sensors

Role: Crazed Aviator
Profile: Once you were just some schlub, crawling around in the dirt like everybody else. Then one day, while out on a routine foraging expedition, you found it: an abandoned fallout shelter containing an old gyrocopter. You read up on the flight manuals and, after some trial and error, managed to get the rusting contraption off the ground. Since then you've hired yourself out as a guide and scout, leaving the rest of the human race on the dusty desert floor.
Stamping Grounds: Anywhere
Quote: "Look out below! WOOOoooooohhhhoooo!"
Mode: Any
Gear: Ratchet set, eye goggles, hand-crossbow, pet snake
Styles: Daring
Skills: Flying and repairing airships, navigation, weather forecasting, crossbows

Role: Crusty Sea Captain
Profile: The ocean has always been your first love. While much of the land is blasted and lifeless, the sea still teems with life in infinite variety. True, some of the life has a tendency to eat passing ships, but what's life without a few risks, eh matey? You've done a bit of smuggling and piracy in your time, but nothing beats sailing into uncharted waters and coming back with a tall tale or two.
Stamping Grounds: Pacific Ocean
Quote: "Aye, Flint! Tell these landlubbers how you lost your leg! Ha-har!"
Mode: Any
Gear: Sailing ship, telescope, logbook, pipe
Styles: Ingenuity, Craft
Skills: Sailing, fishing, navigation, sensing storms, fisticuffs

Role: Death-Rock Siren
Profile: Raised in the death-rock clubs of Shangri-L.A., you were brought into a cabal of enchantresses at an early age and have just now blossomed into a full-fledged witch. And not some New Agey, Lorenna McKennit-listening Wiccan – we're talking one freaky creature of dark magic with an army of zombie slaves at her command. How cool is that?
Stamping Grounds: Shangri-L.A.
Quote: "I wear black on the outside because it's how I feel on the inside."
Mode: Psychotronic
Gear: Black clothing, makeup, pointy-toed boots, voodoo dolls, and clove cigarettes
Styles: Charm, Magic
Skills: Dancing, fashion sense, acting superior, witchy magic, Voodoo lore

Role: Desert Chieftain
Profile: Raiders killed your parents in an attack, and you took over your father's position as chief. Though you were young and many disapproved, you proved yourself a capable and strong leader, and the entire village prospered. Now, you keep a sharp eye out for your parents' killers… waiting for the day when you will have your revenge.
Stamping Grounds: The Wastelands
Quote: "You're welcome to fill your canteen here, stranger. But then I'm going to have to ask you to leave."
Mode: Any
Gear: Crossbow, football pad-armor, tomahawk, interesting hairstyle
Styles: Craft, Charm
Skills: Archery, hand-to-hand fighting, leadership, intimidation, desert survival

Role: Disco Robot Gigolo
Profile: You were built in the robot foundries of Detroit Rock City and shipped all the way to the discotheques of Shangri-L.A. You see, there's a dire shortage of available men who can dance in Lost Angels. So you sell your services to the lovely ladies as a dance partner. Not only are you programmed to talk the talk, you can also walk the walk – you never get tired, and you can always keep a beat. Yeah baby… oh yeah…
Stamping Grounds: Shangri-L.A.
Quote: "Baby, you know I only have optics for you…"
Mode: Psychotronic
Gear: Batteries, tight pants, gold medallion, Barry White 8-track tapes
Styles: Might, Charm
Skills: Disco dancing, bending steel bars, pick-up lines, talkin' real smooth

Role: Drag Strip Queen
Profile: You've traveled from the glitzy nightclubs of Lost Angels to the neon playground of Lost Vegas to follow your dreams of stardom. Along the way, you've met all sorts of interesting characters… part of the reason that you moved away from the small town where you grew up. Small towns equal small minds and small dreams. You have big dreams, honey. Now you're gonna show 'em what you got.
Stamping Grounds: Shangri-L.A., Lost Vegas
Quote: "Can I get some mood lighting? Thank you darling…"
Mode: Any
Gear: Sequined gown, feather boa, makeup kit, high-heeled shoes, shaving kit
Styles: Charm
Skills: Singing and entertaining, mimicry, seduction, healthy sense of irony

Role: Elvis Impersonator
Profile: You always figured there must be some royal blood in your veins because even as a child you bore a striking resemblance to the King. That resemblance was enough to get you out of that one-horse town you grew up in and take you to the bright lights of Lost Vegas. You're going to be big in this town, you just know it.
Stamping Grounds: Lost Vegas
Quote: "You got a minute for the King? Thankyouverymuch."
Mode: Any
Gear: Sequined white jumpsuit, guitar, sunglasses
Styles: Charm
Skills: Singing, dancing and playing guitar, karate, disguise, fashion sense

Role: Fast-Food Ninja
Profile: Hired for your skill with a sword and your ability at delivering hot 'za in 30 minutes or less, you have mastered the art of fast-food delivery. Now you're at the top of your field, able to get in and get out without leaving a sign that you were even there – just a cardboard box of hot food or a plastic container of maki rolls. You do not accept tips… continued service for your master is the only reward you seek.
Stamping Grounds: Shangri-L.A., Japan
Quote: "…"
Mode: Any
Gear: Grappling hook, Ninja-to sword, throwing stars, delivery bag
Styles: Daring, Craft, Magic
Skills: Stealth, make change, climb, throw ninja stars, speak Japanese, Ninja magic

Role: 'Frisco Diver
Profile: The past fascinates you. And your grandmother's stories weren't enough to satisfy you: you had to see it for yourself. So you "borrowed" some diving gear and set out to explore what remained of the city of San Francisco. Now you know the city like the back of your hand, though you always seem to come back with some new treasure every time you dive. You've had your share of close calls, but the lure of new artifacts and the chance to strike it rich is just too tempting to resist.
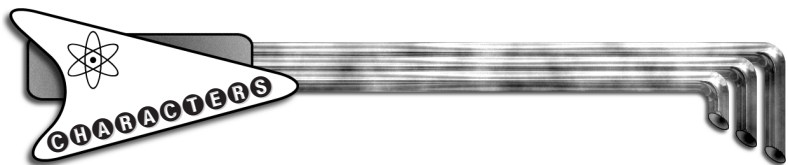**Stamping Grounds:** 'Frisco, Pacific Ocean
Quote: "You open the box and it plays music. Pretty cool, huh?"
Mode: Any
Gear: Scuba gear, speargun, Olympic Gold Medal, waterproof flashlight
Styles: Craft (or Might if you want to be a web-footed weirdo)
Skills: Swimming, holding your breath, geology, history, using a speargun

Role: Greasemonkey
Profile: The combat driver's best friend, a good Greasemonkey can spell the difference between victory and ruination… so people tend to treat you well. There's nothing you like better than working on a classic from the foundries of Detroit Rock City. Those Japanese Jetcars are flashy and all, but nothing's finer than a piece of American steel.
Stamping Grounds: Anywhere
Quote: " '57 Chevy… all original parts? Hoo-boy! You just made me a happy man."
Mode: Any
Gear: Greasy overalls, toothpick, ratchet set
Styles: Ingenuity
Skills: Fixin' and modifying old cars, fighting with improvised weapons, driving

Role: Hard-Rock Caveman
Profile: Raised in a cave out in the middle of nowhere, you grew up with your clan of unwashed heathens. Lately, you've come into contact with "normal folks," and this experience has led you into the more civilized lands. You're curious about many things and confused about even more, but your great strength and endurance make you a valuable ally and a dangerous opponent.
Stamping Grounds: The Wasteands, the Southern Jungles
Quote: "Unga bunga!"
Mode: Psychotronic
Gear: Filthy animal skins, big club, garbage-can shield, lil' dinosaur friend
Styles: Might
Skills: Banging on things, tracking big mammals, simple tool use, stink!, muscular

Role: HellJack
Profile: Born in the fires of Hell to serve the forces of Evil, you were content to live a life of treachery, deceit, and mayhem until that one fateful day when you found yourself in a strange part of the abyss, surrounded by winged creatures with glowing forms. A flash of light dazzled your senses, and when you came to in the midst of a smoking crater, you had a strange feeling welling up in your chest. Mercy? Kindness? Crazy stuff! Congratulations my smoldering friend… you've just been Hell-Jacked.
Stamping Grounds: Shangri-L.A., Monster Island
Quote: "No, really… don't let the horns and tail fool ya. I'm one of the good guys!"
Mode: Any
Gear: Tattered coat and hat, duct-taped boots, big metal gauntlet
Styles: Might, Magic
Skills: Demon lore, fighting, looking mean, weird Hell-spawned magic

Role: High-Plains Drifter
Profile: You've always wanted to make a difference, it's just that you can't stay in one place too long without getting itchy. Freedom is everything to you, and you always want to know what's down the road a ways further. When you see people stepping on good hard-working folks, it makes you mad, and you just have to do something about it. But once the dust settles, you shoulder your pack and continue on…
Stamping Grounds: The Wastelands
Quote: "Don't fall in love with me, Belle. I'm just a desert wind. I blow into town, sweep the trash off the streets, and then I'm gone again…"
Mode: Any
Gear: Travelling pack, canteen, pearl-handled six-shooter, old pocket watch
Styles: Craft

Skills: Acting mysterious, shootin' & drinkin', fast draw, charming the ladies

Role: Ingenious Tinkerer
Profile: Out in the wasteland, it is a peculiar sort of fellow who not only survives but actually prospers. Your home is built from old cars and slabs of sheet metal. Your clothes are patched from old rags. But you have clean water that you pull from a well you dug yourself, and you're using it to irrigate some vegetable gardens out back. Not to mention that the old shower you resurrected actually works!
Stamping Grounds: The Wastelands
Quote: "Don't throw that out! I'm sure I can find some use for it…"
Mode: Any
Gear: Toolbox, lead pencil, notepad, half-finished gizmo
Styles: Ingenuity
Skills: Building crazy devices, identifying and repairing old technology, inspiration

Role: Japanese Super Hero
Profile: There's only one thing you know for sure, EVERYTHING attacks Tokyo. That's why you're here, to protect your fellow countrymen from the giant radioactive lizards, flying saucers, and American megalomaniacs who would threaten them. Maybe you're a government agent at the controls of a giant robot. Maybe you're a courageous space alien who grows to giant-size and fights the monsters toe to toe. However you choose to defend your island home, no harm shall come to it. Not on YOUR watch.
Stamping Grounds: Monster Island, Japan, Shangri-L.A.
Quote: "Please raise your tentacles and step away from the oil tanker!"
Mode: Psychotronic

Gear: Picture of old flame, monster detector, box lunch, giant robot
Styles: Daring, Might
Skills: Broken English, fighting, weird powers, toughness, flight

Role: Killah Klown
Profile: You're either with a travelling circus, or you've gone off on your own as a "freelance comedy consultant." You like making people laugh almost as much as laughing at people you zing with gags and cream pies. But do you know how hard it is to find a cream pie in the Big Empty?
Stamping Grounds: Shangri-L.A., Lost Vegas
Quote: "What…? You think I'm funny? Like I'm some kinda clown or something?"
Mode: Depends… Psychotronic (zany), Grindhouse (insane) or Arthouse (surreal)
Gear: Gag items, wig and makeup kit, big pants and shoes, cigar, big hammer
Styles: Daring, Ingenuity, Charm
Skills: Clowning around, acrobatics, tumbling, animal training, disguise

Role: Masked Luchador
Profile: You have left the wrestling arenas of Mexico to fight injustice wherever you might find it. The *Americanos* might think you a strange sight, clad in your fiery red tights and sequined mask, but they shall soon know of your amazing wrestling techniques, superhuman strength, and cat-like grace. For you are the last in a long line of *mascaradas* – brave and noble *luchadors* who champion the poor and dispossessed.
Stamping Grounds: New Texaco
Quote: "So! You dare grapple with *El Disco Infierno*? Foolish man… now I shall break your back over my knee, like so!"
Mode: Psychotronic

Gear: Mask, wrestling tights and boots, *Espanol-Ingles* dictionary
Styles: Daring, Might
Skills: Wrestling, acrobatics, feats of strength, broken english, taste for spicy food

Role: Metallurgist
Profile: Before you learned the ways of heavy metal, you were just a long-haired miscreant with a bunch of bootleg tapes and an out-of tune guitar. Now you're a rock n' roll wizard with your own indie record label and a bevy of nubile young fans. Of course, fighting demons from alternate dimensions has priority… just after you sign one more autograph.
Stamping Grounds: Shangri-L.A.
Quote: "Bend before the ways of heavy meeetttaaaaallll!!!"
Mode: Psychotronic
Gear: Gibson "Flying-V" guitar, spiked leather bracelets, a big-ass amp
Styles: Charm, Magic
Skills: Heavy metal lore, spellcasting, musicianship, charisma

Role: Monster Smasher
Profile: Athletic, dashing, and brave, it's the Monster Smasher's sworn duty to protect and serve his fellow man by kicking monster ass. A throwback to the lantern-jawed hero of the old pulp magazines, the Monster Smasher has battled space slugs, Martians, and giant ants. Somehow, he always seems to get off with just a ripped shirt…
Stamping Grounds: Monster Island, Southern Step-Pyramids of the Mummy Kings
Quote: "Dangerous? Lady… you should see them when they're full-grown."
Mode: Psychotronic
Gear: Heavy crossbow, dynamite, flashlight, sturdy boots, ripped shirt, lantern-jaw

Styles: Daring, Ingenuity, Might
Skills: Monster lore, fighting, explosives, dashing, big muscles, discerning eye

Role: Mutant Trucker
Profile: It's your job to get cargo across the godforsaken Wastelands, keeping the supply lines open and the cities running. You face bandits, monsters, low fuel, bad food, lousy roads, and rotten weather on almost a daily basis. An ordinary person would quit, but you're not an ordinary person.
Stamping Grounds: The Wastelands, New Texaco
Quote: "It's gonna be a hunnert and twenty in the shade today. That's pretty rough... if you happen to be warm-blooded."
Mode: Any
Gear: John Deere cap, tire iron, road maps
Styles: Might
Skills: Strange mutations, truck drivin', fixing flat tires, staying awake

Role: Old Sawbones
Profile: You travel from town to town making house calls and giving advice to people in exchange for food and shelter. You don't charge a fee for your services, preferring a simple, quiet life to a mercenary existence. With all the hazards out in the deserts, you don't have to worry about running out of business.
Stamping Grounds: Anywhere
Quote: "I'm not gonna lie to you son. This *will* hurt."
Mode: Any
Gear: Physician's satchel, bottle of aspirin, old-fashioned bicycle
Styles: Ingenuity
Skills: Medical knowledge, ride bike, act neighborly, trustworthiness

Role: Ostrich Wrangler
Profile: A long time ago you would've been called a cowboy. Of course, now there aren't too many cows, so you've taken to wrangling those fast flightless birds called ostriches. The work is hard and dangerous (those suckers can kick the life outta you!), but you love the challenge. And at the end of the day, ain't nothing like bringing in the flock and bedding down beside a campfire.
Stamping Grounds: The Wastelands, New Texaco
Quote: "Git along lil' turkeys…"
Mode: Any
Gear: Lasso, cowboy hat, horse, six-shooter
Styles: Craft
Skills: Ridin' and ropin', cookin' chili, shootin', animal husbandry, desert survival

Role: Outlaw Biker
Profile: In your youth, you rode with the Blackhearts – the biggest, baddest crew this side of the Missed. Well, you're not as young as you used to be – older, Budweiser… that's what they say, right? You've seen a hundred thousand miles roll by under the wheels of the big, black hog you ride, and you've got enough scars and close-calls to last a lifetime. But hell if you'll ever work a real job. You need your freedom. The freedom that only the open road can provide.
Stamping Grounds: Anywhere
Quote: "Fill 'er up… and why don'tcha empty the safe while yer at it?"
Mode: Grindhouse
Gear: Vintage Harley-Davidson, riding leathers, two scatter-guns, "Born to Lose" tattoo, bandoleer of ammo, a few grenades
Styles: Craft
Skills: Riding, repairing your bike, scavenging, brawling, intimidation, survival

Role: Plucky Kid
Profile: Orphaned at a young age, you drift from town to town with the merchant caravans… usually hitching a ride or stowing yourself beneath some blankets. You're searching for someone to take care of you… but in the meantime you're satisfied with a life of fun and adventure.
Stamping Grounds: Anywhere
Quote: "Hey, Mister! You mind if me and Whiskers come along?"
Mode: Anything other than Grindhouse…
Gear: Pet, spectacles, sling shot, patched coveralls
Styles: Ingenuity
Skills: Hiding, sneaking around, being underestimated, dead-shot with a slingshot

Role: Punk Rawk Zombie
Profile: When you were alive, you had a bizarre hairstyle, ragged clothes, no respect for authority, and a penchant for loud music and hard drinking. That was before that witchy chick dug you up from your final resting-place. Now that you're dead, not much has changed. Well, lager's a bit more expensive… but that's all.
Stamping Grounds: Shangri-L.A.
Quote: "Oi! Gimme some yer *Lionel Trains*, mate!"
Mode: Psychotronic
Gear: Spiked collar, bootleg Sex Pistols tapes, plaid pants, Misfits t-shirt, piercings
Styles: Craft, Might
Skills: Surviving almost anything, scaring people, Punk lore, drinkin' & brawling

Role: Renegade Mobster
Profile: You were a kid eating out of dumpsters when Sallow Sal found you. He let you work for him because he said you

had potential, and years later you were his right hand man. But Big Tony, he don't like competition, see? You got hit early on when Tony's goons crashed that wedding reception; when you came to, the entire family was dead. You found other survivors from other families, wiseguys like you who lost everything when Big Tony made his grab for power. You're gonna make Big Tony suffer for what he did to Sallow Sal, and when you meet again, one of you ain't walkin' away.

Stamping Grounds: Lost Vegas
Quote: "You can take a message to Big Tony for me. It's right here on this bullet."
Mode: Grindhouse
Gear: Pinstripe suit, fedora, tommy gun, silver dollar
Styles: Craft, Charm
Skills: Tommy gun, criminal contacts, reputation, streetwise, stylish dresser

Role: Repo-Man
Profile: You were just a lad when The Company took you from your home and began your training to join their elite cadre of automotive exorcists. That was fifty years ago, and you are weary of this life. But if not you… then who?
Stamping Grounds: Anywhere
Quote: "Get behind me, demon-spawn! Let the power of Chrysler compel you!"
Mode: Psychotronic
Gear: Black coat, hat, satchel containing silver wrench, Blue Book, and mag-light
Styles: Magic
Skills: Re-possession, demon lore, acting scary and weird, sensing danger

Role: Road Warrior
Profile: You used to ride with the Road Marshals, but you made some bad choices and were cast out into the Wastelands. Now, you're fighting for survival in a world gone crazy, and your only companion is the tricked-out '78 Camaro you drive. Sometimes you perform odd courier jobs, other times you enter into the battle arenas for car combat matches. You've made enough to keep your ride in good shape. But sometimes that hot desert wind blows old memories of your days in the Force… and you gotta admit that you miss it.
Stamping Grounds: The Wastelands
Quote: "You wanna get to Lost Vegas in one piece? You talk to me."
Mode: Any
Gear: Leather jacket, sawed-off shotgun, hip-flask
Styles: Daring, Craft
Skills: Driving, road combat, shooting, car repairs, gunnery, intimidation

Role: Roller-Girl
Profile: You work one of the drive-in ostrich-burger joints out here on the edges of Sin City. The tips are terrible, but you meet the most interesting people. And thanks to your sharp wit and high-kick, you rarely have a problem with any of your customers. And you never know when some lucky Vegas gambler will blow in and give you the tip of your life…
Stamping Grounds: Lost Vegas
Quote: "Turkey burger with a side of fries an' a malted? Sure thing, hon'."
Mode: Any
Gear: Poodle skirt, chewing gum, roller skates
Styles: Charm
Skills: Roller-skating, acting cute, plucky, kickboxing

Role: Six-String Samurai
Profile: You're a legend of the Wastelands – the sword-slinging rock n' roller of the Apocalypse. Women want to be near you... and men want to be you. Of course, some people want to claim your title for their own: they just wanna kill you. It's a cutthroat, dog-eat-dog world out there, but you won't stop until you're the best in the world and the new King of Lost Vegas.
Stamping Grounds: The Wastelands, Lost Vegas
Quote: "Step aside, pal... I got a gig in Vegas."
Mode: Psychotronic
Gear: Vintage electric guitar, samurai sword, horn-rimmed glasses, tattered umbrella, tuxedo jacket
Styles: Daring
Skills: Swordplay, quick-draw, guitar playing, rock n' roll lore, martial arts

Role: Smartcar Rustler
Profile: You always loved tinkering with machines, but your dad wanted to "make a man out of you." So he stranded you in the desert with a canteen of water and a rifle and told you to find your own way home. You probably would have died out there if you hadn't found that damaged, wild Smartcar. You repaired it, got it to trust you, then rode it back to civilization. Instead of going home, you decided to see the world with your new friend. When you needed money, you met a guy who offered you cash if you could get him Smartcars, no questions asked. It proved to be pretty easy to do, and you're looking forward to all the adventures you and your new friend will have.
Stamping Grounds: The Wastelands, Detroit Rock City
Quote: "Take it easy, boy... I won't hurt you. That's a nasty flat you have there. Let's see if we can fix it."
Mode: Any
Gear: Tool belt, oil can, old Smartcar, rifle
Styles: Ingenuity, Craft
Skills: Talking to skittish cars, emergency repairs, stealth, hotwiring

Role: Speed Racer
Profile: The son of a famous Japanese engineer, you began to build your own racers out of plywood and scrap metal. When you were older, you became obsessed with going as fast as possible. You began to design and race your own land jets, mostly for the sheer joy of it – but your quest remains to become the fastest human alive!
Stamping Grounds: The Wastelands, Japan
Quote: "Hah! Let's see if you can catch me, ha-hah!"
Mode: Psychotronic
Gear: Helmet, flame-retardant racing suit, Jetcar, mirrorshades, scarf
Styles: Daring
Skills: Racing, celebrity status, stunt driving, lightning reflexes, car design

Role: Straight-laced G-Man
Profile: Serious, determined, and incorruptible. You're an agent of the Federal Government of the Former United States, now working the INS beat in Shangri-L.A.. It's a thankless job with lousy pay and an uncomfortable suit… but dammit, you're a G-Man, and you have to live up to the title.
Stamping Grounds: Shangri-L.A. Port Authority
Quote: "M'aam, I don't care if you're the Hive-Monarch of Rigel-7. If you want to work on Earth, you need to fill out this paperwork."
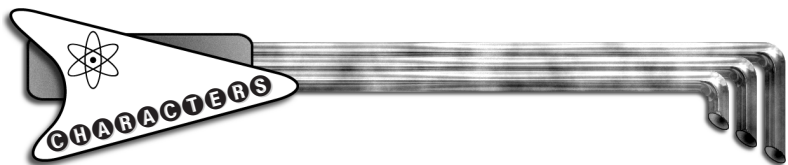**Mode:** Psychotronic
Gear: Copy of US Immigration Law, G-man suit, Ray-Bans, .38 revolver
Styles: Craft, Charm
Skills: Acting official, bureaucracy, pistol, driving, alien lore

Role: Stuntman Heretic
Profile: You used to be a true believer in the Celluloid Church, listening in awe to tales of St. Schwarzenegger's strength, St.

Stallone's courage, and St. VanDamme's martial arts abilities. Then you learned the awful truth. That the deeds attributed to the Celluloid Saints were in fact performed by men and women called "stunt doubles." You joined a secret commune and studied the ways of the stuntman under the tutelage of a mysterious old man named Jackie. One night, the commune was betrayed. You woke up to find your home swarming with the Celluloid Church's secret police, the Paparazzi. You and your stuntbrothers were branded heretics and forced to flee into the night. Now you, like your stuntman predecessors, must remain anonymous as you perform your feats of derring-do and search for your missing master.
Stamping Grounds: HolyWood, Shangri-L.A.
Quote: "Hey, buddy… have a seat!" *breaks a chair over someone's back*
Mode: Psychotronic
Gear: Second-hand clothing, running shoes, sunglasses
Styles: Daring, Might
Skills: Stunts, fisticuffs, falling from great heights, movie lore, first-aid

Role: Swashbuckling Pirate
Profile: Raised on the open sea, you soon left the boat city when you were old enough to sail your own ship. After years of wandering, you procured enough money to buy your own vessel and hire a crew. Since then it's been a life of high adventure and bountiful plunder. Despite your career, you're no murderous sea dog, and you're always careful to treat your captives with kindness and respect.
Stamping Grounds: Pacific Ocean
Quote: "Prepare for boarding!"
Mode: Any
Gear: Cutlass, pirate ship, outrageous clothing
Styles: Daring, Charm

Skills: Piracy, fencing, swinging from ropes, sailing, passable Japanese and Spanish

Role: Techno-Shaman
Profile: The Elders call you "Yellow Dividing Line." It is your task to look after the tribe and to guide them as they move from place to place. Giant scorpions, desert demons, and ghost cattle are just a few of the hazards you've faced in your role as tribal guardian and protector. By the will of the Great Spirits, you will keep your tribe alive in the most unforgiving of environments.
Stamping Grounds: The Wastelands
Quote: "I call upon the Great Spirits of Rust, Oil, Smog, and Radiation to assist me!"
Mode: Psychotronic
Gear: Gasmask, hubcap shield, rusty stop sign staff, Geiger counter
Styles: Craft, Magic
Skills: Summoning nature spirits, survival, wilderness lore, shamanism

Role: Two-Fisted Padre
Profile: Your mama always said that your great strength was a gift from God, so you felt the best way to give thanks for it was to become a priest. You are patient and gentle, but there are several sinners who have ended up on the ground when they pushed God's grace a little too far.
Stamping Grounds: Anywhere
Quote: "The Good Lord said 'Turn the other cheek,' but he didn't say anything about headbutts!"
Mode: Grindhouse
Gear: White collar, cross, the Good Book
Styles: Charm, Might, Magic
Skills: Kickin' ass for the Lord, quoting Scripture, public speaking

Role: Ultra Vixen
Profile: Some call you trailer trash, a menace to society – but you've chosen the life of a criminal for a reason. Power, baby. You're sick of just being a sex object, and it's high time that people gave you the respect that you deserve. So you hot-wired your old man's Ford Fairlane and took to the open road to find your fortune.
Stamping Grounds: Anywhere
Quote: "All right! Anyone moves, and I'll execute every last one of ya!"
Mode: Grindhouse
Gear: Hairspray, tight capri pants, stilleto-heel boots, switchblade knife
Styles: Daring, Charm
Skills: Cat fighting, va-va-voom, delinquent behavior, cosmetology, go-go dancing

Role: Weird-but-Cute Pet
Profile: A devoted and loyal pal and the best friend a kid could ever have. Pets vary in size, shape, and abilities – some are small and scaly, large and fuzzy, or covered in spikes or feathers. Some swim, some fly. Besides the usual suspects (anime pets and cute aliens), this Role also includes super-intelligent animals (like the telepathic canine, Blood, from "A Boy and his Dog").
Stamping Grounds: Anywhere, usually with a Plucky Kid
Quote: "Meeep!" (*Translation: "aren't I so cute you could just die!"*)
Mode: Psychotronic
Gear: Usually none
Styles: Craft, Might, Magic
Skills: Weird abilities, being cute, possibly hiding in small places, getting into mischief, scaring the hell out of people, passable English

Role: Worm Surfer
Profile: You used to live to surf. Surf the waves, that is. Then you picked up some dog-eared sci-fi novel and got a killer idea. The space-slugs out in the Big Empty kick up a mighty fierce wake as they plow through the desert. It's just a simple matter of hooking them and riding them across the plains, surfing along on a wave of dirt. So you packed your bags and drove your old Woody to the Wastelands where you could take a ride on the wildest waves ever. Needless to say, your idea has caught on with the more adventurous of your kind… but you were the first, man!
Stamping Grounds: Pacific Ocean, The Wastelands
Quote: "Dude… the waves are wicked gnarly this early in the morning."
Mode: Psychotronic
**Gear:** Old jalopy, shades, surfboard, Bermuda shorts, tube of zinc oxide, grapple
Styles: Daring
Skills: Surfing, Monster Lore, good reflexes, beach lingo, impressing the babes

Stamping Grounds

Where is your character from? This is a really important aspect of character creation because it gives your character a "base of operations." If a bunch of characters share the same Stamping Grounds, they have more of a reason to meet one another. If they're from radically different Stamping Grounds, then it's harder to rationalize them all getting together. Now, this isn't to say that you should make a character from the same Stamping Grounds as everyone else (after all, the "fish out of water" story is classic). Many *octaNe* stories will involve characters that might not meet more than once or twice. Don't worry about this… it's okay to "split the party."

Besides this, your character's Stamping Grounds will also
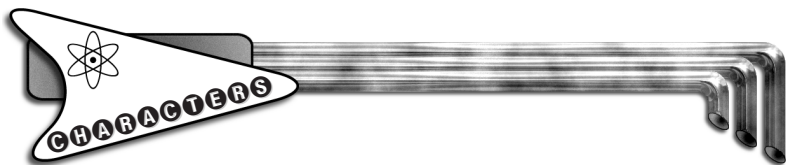
jump-start your character's background. If you're from the Wastelands, well what are you doing there? If you're from one of the refinery fortresses, how do other people there see you? Not to mention that characters from wildly different Stamping Grounds are going to have wildly different personalities, simply because they come from different cultures.

That's cool.

Your Stamping Grounds will also help to define the setting of the game. In a sense, you get to add plot elements to the game before it even starts. If your character has just escaped the clutches of a mutant biker gang, bam! You've just created some bad guys. In this game, the players create as much of the world as the GM, so be sure to put a lot of thought into this step.

Gear

octaNe is more or less a "post-apocalyptic action game," and as such, weapons, equipment, and basic essentials are often difficult to find. So rather than have equipment lists and "water dowsing" tables, there's a simpler method the game employs.

Every character starts with one important, character defining item. Examples of a "major item" would include Mad Max's V8 Interceptor, Buddy the samurai's electric guitar, and El Santo's silver wrestling mask. Think of it this way: if a character's defining item is taken from him, a whole game session could be based around getting it back (now that I think of it, *Mad Max III: Beyond Thunderdome* opens with Max going to Bartertown to retrieve a stolen vehicle).

If you wish for additional major items, you have to make a Stunt Roll – the catch is that you don't get the standard three dice to make the roll. Instead, you have to spend Plot Points and describe how you acquired the item in question. If, during the game, your character uses Craft or Ingenuity (or some other Style) to locate equipment, you do get the standard three dice, but you still need to spend at least one Plot Point to

search for the item. You can also "bond" with an item (this includes vehicles, animals, etc.) by spending at least of Plot Point (rarer, more valuable items will cost more Plot Points at the discretion of the GM). When this is done, the bonded item effectively becomes a Major Item.

"Flavor gear" (clothing and basic supplies) is free. This is the non-essential stuff that's listed just to flesh out your character. Some Roles have lots of flavor gear, some hardly have any. Because it's either not that important or its replaceable (with some effort), flavor gear may be taken away due to the demands of the story. Major items may be lost, damaged, or stolen but this is only a temporary condition (after all, you paid for them with Plot Points, right?).

Oh yeah, since all *octaNe* characters start the game with one Plot Point, you can try for that one major extra item before the game even starts.

Example: Clint's ex-Road Marshal is going to start with a turbo-charged V8. If he also wanted a sawed-off shotgun, he could spend his starting Plot Point and roll a die, hoping for four, five, or six. If he waits until the game begins, he could spend a Plot Point to barter a shotgun from a trader (using the Charm Style) and roll three dice… giving him a much better chance.

Clint's character gets a tarnished badge, dusty leathers, and a bad attitude for free.

Detailing

There's an old saying: "the Devil is in the details." Now that your character is more or less done, you can add all the chrome. I like to start with a name first (names are important). Nicknames are always a good choice, especially in the whacked-out world of *octaNe*.

When describing how your character looks, here's a trick: only write down three details. Nobody really cares about your

character's exact height and weight or the color of his eyes. C'mon, really. What you should describe are the things that really stand out:

- ☢ Wears a raggedy tuxedo and horn-rimmed glasses. Carries a white Fender guitar.
- ☢ Dresses in dusty leathers and wears a jury-rigged brace on his leg. Has a sawed-off shotgun slung on his back.
- ☢ Huge dude wearing wrestling boots and a red leather mask decorated with orange and yellow flames.
- ☢ Has a tattoo of dice on his neck that says "Born to Lose." Wears a cowboy hat and a big gold chain.
- ☢ Small monkey wearing an orange sash and carrying a small stick.
- ☢ Hot chick with spiked heels. She's wearing a tight black cat suit that's unzipped to her navel.
- ☢ Bipedal gila monster. He's wearing off-the-shoulder overalls, and he's chewing a toothpick.

So here's an official rule: You can only describe three distinct details about your character's appearance.

I know it seems a little draconian on my part, but trust me. Not only will it make your character that much more distinct, you're also giving stuff to the other players that they'll be able to grab onto. Nobody cares if your character is 5'9" and has short, black hair and blue eyes. Less is more – you already know what your character looks like. Let the other players create their own mental images (even if those images don't match up exactly). Imagination is a powerful thing.

> *"He's unshaven, he's got a wicked scar, and he's wearing a ripped denim jacket with a Motorhead patch on the back."*

The character is a scruffy, scarred thrash metal fan. What more do you need?

Now it's time to talk numbers and stuff.

Style Points

Every new character receives three Style Points. These are distributed between any three of the six Styles. You could place all three points into Daring or spread them out among three different Styles.
There are just a few rules governing how you place them:

- ☢ You must place at least one Style Point into one of the Styles listed in the Role.
- ☢ You do not need to place Style Points in Daring, Ingenuity, Craft, or Charm to perform those stunts. However, you are required to have either Might or Magic to perform Mighty or Magical stunts.
- ☢ Characters cannot have both the Might and Magic Styles. The decision to make your character Mighty or Magical (or neither) cannot be changed once the game begins.

When assigning your Style Points, remember that they're not a measure of your character's Daring or Charm or Might. A character with Daring 3 is not any better than one with Daring 0. What the number does is define how quickly the character earns Plot Points when using that Style.

> *Example: Scott is going to play a Masked Luchador. He decides that he wants his wrestler to focus on the following types of stunts: bold acrobatics, displays of charisma, and feats of phenomenal strength. So he gives his character the Styles of Daring, Charm, and Might. He could choose to place all three points into Might and still play a daring and charismatic character. He'd just acquire Plot Points at a much faster rate for doing Mighty things and not as many Plot Points for performing other kinds of stunts.*

Skills

Unlike Styles, skills don't have ratings – you either have a skill or you don't. Choose four of the skills listed in your Role, and add three additional skills (either from the Role or from your own imagination) that coincide with where you placed your Style Points.

Example: Scott decides that his Masked Luchador has the following four skills: Wrestling, Acrobatics, Feats of Strength, and Broken English. He adds three more skills based upon his character's wrestling moves: Famous Frog Leap (a daring jump over the top rope), Baby Face (a charming ploy he uses to woo the ladies), and Super-Smash-Suplex (a mighty maneuver used as a finishing move).

If you have a skill that covers what your character wants to do, you get to roll your full allotment of three dice. **Unskilled characters must spend Plot Points to roll dice during a stunt**.

What, Only Seven Skills?

All characters start with seven skills. But this doesn't mean that your character is *limited* to seven skills for the rest of his life. You can add a skill at any time by spending a single Plot Point. Yes, there is a catch. You have to justify how and why your character's Role now possesses that skill. This means that some characters won't ever have certain skills (usually combat or tech-related skills) and will always need to spend Plot Points to perform some kinds of stunts.

Characters without a point in either Might or Magic may never, ever learn or use Might or Magic-related skills.

Never.

Seriously, man.
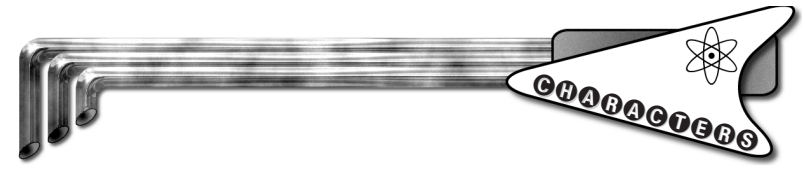
The Soundtrack

What else is there to add? Forget about personality or background for now… that stuff will come out in play (and it's probably already in the conceptual stage thanks to the Role and to your mental image). How about listing what kind of music the character likes (or at least, what kind of music would be playing on the soundtrack when your character first shows up)? Or imagine your character walking into a bar or restaurant. What does he order? Seems kinda silly, but I find that these weird little details add a lot more than pages of history or in-depth psychological profiling.

Custom Roles

Although *octaNe* comes standard with bucket seats, A/C, a leather-wrapped steering wheel, and oodles of pre-built Roles, these features don't make everyone happy. That's where the Custom Roles come into play.

Come up with the name of the Role

Role Names should be informative and evocative. "Cowboy" is informative but not terribly exciting. "Buckaroo" is evocative, but it doesn't give much in the way of information. Think of it this way: you're creating a new Role for the game. Come up with a name that would inspire another player to think, "Hmm… that sounds like a cool character!"

Example: Ron wants to create a new character Role loosely based on Christopher Walken's character in Blast from the Past*: a slightly paranoid scientist-dad from the fifties who is obsessed with Commies, bomb shelters, and survival… but still has a soft spot for Perry Como, baseball, and camping trips. Ron names the Role "Atomic Dad."*

Write a Profile

This is where you can write down more character description. It doesn't have to be very long. In fact, it shouldn't be more than a paragraph (the character will be fleshed out and made three-dimensional *during* play, not before the game even begins). Remember that this is the Role's profile and should be fairly generic – avoid using names and detailed information. You'll want to keep the profile fairly broad in case someone else wants to play the Role someday.

Example: Ron decides that the Atomic Dad is a total fifties throwback, extremely intelligent but goofy and anachronistic. You know, the guy who wears the brush cut hairdo, sandals with socks, and a white shirt and black tie. We're talking "Squaresville: Population You." Atomic Dads live underground in heavily stocked bomb shelters, reminisce about the "good old days," and have an unwavering faith in Mom, apple pie, and the USA.

Write down the Role's Stamping Grounds

Where are characters like this one found? The Wastelands? Lost Vegas? 'Frisco? You can list more than one Stamping Ground if it makes sense. You can also use the catchall term "Anywhere" if the character Role is truly independent of geography.

Example: The Atomic Dad is goofy and fun… he could fit in almost anywhere. But Ron decides that the Wasteland would be the coolest place to meet this guy, so he writes "The Wasteland" down under Stamping Grounds.

Write down between one and three Styles

These are the Role's suggested Styles. Characters don't necessarily need to have a Style Point in each, but they are required to place a point in at least one of them.

Example: Ingenuity is the be-all, end-all Style of the Atomic Dad: a tireless inventor and a brilliant engineer. Ron decides that most of this character's stunts will be Ingenious, so he places two points into Ingenuity and after some thought, one point into Craft.

Define your Skills

Write down a single skill for each of the four primary Styles (Daring, Ingenuity, Craft, and Charm). If your character Role lists Might or Magic as a suggested Style, the same rules apply. You can think of Might and Magic skills as individual powers, spells, or rituals. When a character is made using that Role, the Player will then add three more skills, as per the normal rules. If you want, you can write down a few more cool skills to suggest to a prospective Player.

Example: The Atomic Dad's four basic skills will be Fight Commies (Daring), Repair Appliance (Ingenuity), Golf (Craft), and Father-Son Chat (Charm). He doesn't get any Might or Magic skills because the Atomic Dad is neither Mighty nor Magical. Ron then adds the following additional three skills: Guestimate, Invent Contraption, and Good Sense of Direction. Ron decides that he likes these skills so much, he's going to officially add them to the Role's list of skill choices.

Add Gear

Write down a few items that this character might possess. If you want, you can make one item a major item that helps define the character Role.

Example: The Atomic Dad's defining piece of equipment is his kitschy, fifties-style home. Since this is octaNe, and Ron wants his character to be more adventurous than the normal guy, he decides that his character's home will be a posh recreational vehicle. His character also

has the standard assortment of circa-1950's paraphernalia. Maybe he can even spend a Plot Point to try for a set of those monogrammed golf clubs.

Done!

Let's check out the example Role…

Role: Atomic Dad
Profile: The Atomic Dad is a throwback to the simpler times of America's past; a devout family man, a patriot, and a man of science. Nowadays, he and his family have pulled up the stakes and set off across the desert in a posh RV (complete with aluminum siding) to rediscover the American Dream.
Quote: "Honey, come quick! The Honeymooners are on again!"
Stamping Grounds: The Wastelands
Gear: Glasses, shirt and tie, monogrammed golf clubs, RV, Perry Como albums, pipe
Styles: Ingenuity, Craft
Skills: Fight Commies, Repair Appliance, Golf, Father-Son Chat

And that's how a Role is created. Nice!

octaNe: the Setting

Picture if you will the Old West.

Rugged cowpokes, black-mustachioed banditos, plucky frontier gals, and cheroot-chawin' gunslingers. Wild mustangs, high-desert plains, and dust clouds on the horizon.

Now jump forward a hundred years and add rock n' roll music, classic cars, and the neon-lined streets of Sin City. Still not enough? Add 1980's heavy metal, cult science fiction films and B-movies, Mexican wrestlers, and post-apocalyptic fashions. Take every pulp cliché, bend it 90 degrees and set it to a blistering soundtrack. That's *octaNe*, baby.

Viva Lost Vegas.

Personally, I dislike writing big, overblown settings, and I tend to avoid games that use them. You know, those games that have detailed maps and entries for every person and place in existence. Now, there's nothing wrong with this kind of attention to detail (in fact, one of my favorite games is Talislanta, and that's all about the details). But I wanted *octaNe* to be your game… a kind of "Here are some places to play to get you started. Figure out what you like and then run with it."

The only thing I do want to make perfectly clear is that the world of *octaNe* is not our world. And by that I don't just mean that *octaNe* has aliens and talking monkeys and Aztec mummies. I mean that this world was never our own world. It has no history, no past – just a future. And it's your job to figure out what that future is.

Oh yeah. You might be a bit confused by the geography of *octaNe*'s America. Like, how can Judas Priest and Ramones albums exist when England and New York don't exist? The answer is, "Because Judas Priest and the Ramones are too cool not to exist." It's like talking about Asgard or Avalon or Tatooine. These places are too cool not to exist. Don't sweat the small stuff. The continuity police will not be breaking down your door if you let something slip.

Travel: Time & Space

In a game featuring dusty wastelands, cracked asphalt, intelligent cars, and roaming mutants, there's going to be some focus on interstate travel. There are three ways to handle this.

Compressed time

This is the easiest way to do it. Just say, "Blah blah blah, and three hours later you arrive in Lost Vegas." Use compressed time when the game centers on cities and towns, where it's important for the characters to set up camp and meet people. Don't even bother describing the trip or making specific statements about incidents on the road ("You get there in one piece, but you had to change a tire and need to replace the spare.").

Travel Time = One Statement

Road Hazards

This method focuses on the action that takes place on the road en route to a destination. Figure out how hazardous the journey will be. Take into account road conditions, weather, distance, and extraneous weirdness (monsters, gangs, an overheated radiator), and set a Hazard Rating. Keep it at 3 or less in most cases unless you really want to make the players sweat. Then have someone make a roll, and deal with the results as you (or the Players) see fit.

Travel Time = One Scene

Road Trip

Road Trips games (or segments of a game) can be great fun. In this method, the journey is the reason to play the game. The goal might be, "Get from A to B," but all kinds of little side adventures take place along the way. The characters can yak with one another about Life, the Universe, and Everything (they could talk about what cheeseburgers are called in foreign countries), meet interesting folks during pit stops (some of which may turn out to be other Players' characters!) and get

into all kinds of scrapes with biker gangs, inclement weather, and Johnny Law. The Road Trip is also perfect for a small group where one of the characters is a smartcar.

Travel Time = Anywhere from one to multiple game sessions

A Brief Word about Cars

Cars are important in this world. They kinda symbolize all that's right and wrong with America – all wrapped up a shiny, chrome-plated, smoke-belching package. But not everyone will have a car – they'll be more common in some places and almost non-existent in others. Think about how cars are seen in different parts of the country. Imagine how the roads look. Are they glossy, nearly abandoned seven-lane highways? Ripped up ribbons of asphalt littered with rusted corpses? A two-lane strip of road flanked by neon signs and palm trees, choked with cruisin' tourists?

Keep up the mystique of the Car and the Road any way you can.

Technology

The first rule: don't sweat the small stuff. There's no bean-counting in this game, so don't worry about rationing out food, water, or gasoline. When it's entertaining to run out of something, you'll run out of something. When it's exciting to have the car break down, it'll break down. Shit happens.

So what kind of tech-level does *octaNe*'s setting have? Mostly late 70's, early 80's technology in the cities (with some spit and baling wire holding some stuff together). The farther you go out, the simpler things get. Some communities are ultra-rural and rely on jury-rigged gadgets, simple machines, and livestock to get the job done. Communication is done via the "dude on horse" or shortwave radio (if that's even available). Cars are used as couriers but only between cities… they're just not available to most rural townships.

Weapons

You have some choices. Hi-tech fare is reserved for road duelists and Marshals. Most fights are gonna be fought with fists, feet, and foreheads. Deadlier stuff would be limited to revolvers, rifles and pistols, knives, and swords and clubs. But really, if you hit a guy in the face with a baseball bat, and he keeps coming at you, you got other things to worry about.

If all else fails, run him over.

Entertainment

Jukeboxes, 8-track tapes, vinyl, some radio, comic books, and movie reels… but no TV. Road dueling and wrestling are numero uno down in New Texaco, live music is king in L.A.. Lost Vegas? Dice, cards, and roulette wheels (leave the slot machines for your grandparents, bub).

Naturally, the farther you drive from civilized areas, the less civilized the entertainment gets. In the outer territories, "guys trying to kill other guys (with sticks, with knives, with thrown rocks, etc.)" is the local pastime.

Weird Science

Not everything is so normal. The cars can talk, after all. Sci-fi elements are present, but keep them in the background. Computers (if they even exist) are humongous UNIVAC-style monstrosities of scrap iron and vacuum tubes. Strange gadgets might appear from time to time courtesy of our Friends from Beyond the Stars. Robots are cool, thus they are included. All in all, though, this game is a modern western with sci-fi elements … spaceships, laser guns, and jetpacks aren't really kosher in large quantities.

And for god's sake… no cyberpunk stuff. Please.

The West

California

California lies along the western coast of the Former United States. Numerous earthquakes and other natural (and unnatural) disasters have caused most of the major cities to fall into ruin (most notably the area of Northern California around the sunken city of 'Frisco). Isolated settlements lie here and there, mostly along the mid-section of the state where farming is common. Biker gangs rule the north-south border between New Texaco and California, with the wastelands of AridZona forming a natural buffer between the two nations. To the north lie the Northwest Territories of Oregon and Washington.

The capital city (and center of the surviving federal government) is Shangri-L.A., aka Lost Angels, a five hour drive across the Big Nothing from the Kingdom of Lost Vegas.

California should be portrayed as a tripped-out wonderland of color, noise, and New Wave oddities. In places like 'Frisco this won't be a problem… but in L.A. proper, you'll have to create your own "feel" for the place. Don't forget that it's the last bastion of free civilization in the United States. Is it a grungy urban wasteland of gothic, rain-soaked streets? Is it a neon sci-fi paradise right off an Iron Maiden album cover? Is it a suburbanized metropolis with plastic flamingos on all the lawns, punk kids in the shopping malls, and big-haired starlets on the streets?

Still stumped for ideas? Just watch *Pulp Fiction*, *Night of the Comet*, *Repo-Man*, *Mullholland Drive*, and *L.A. Confidential* all in a row. California isn't just a state. It's a state of mind.

Shangri-L.A. (Los Angeles)

The City of Lost Angels is more or less the same as it ever was. Grimy, gritty urban sprawls sit beside the glitz and glamor of models, rock stars, and celebrities. The Traffic Secretary handles most of the law enforcement policies as well as trans-

portation concerns. The President of California is a former HolyWood producer, now in semi-retirement.

Shangri-L.A.'s mystique is best glimpsed in the district of HolyWood, the center of the quasi-religious movement known as the Celluloid Church. The Church recognizes movie stars and other celebrities as Saints and treats them accordingly. Ornate shrines are erected within the deceased stars' former homes in Beverly Hills and Malibu, and regular "worship" is done at film festivals and movie marathons featuring stars like Marilyn Monroe and James Dean.

Besides the Church, L.A. is also the home for many beings "not of this earth." Most of the aliens are just passing through on tourist visas. Others are illegals who have landed outside the city limits and are attempting to pass themselves off as humans in order to find work.

The music of Lost Angels is edgy and modern... from the sounds of the British Invasion (and its followers, the scooter-riding, mop-topped Mods) to surf, punk, and heavy metal. The only real bridge between the cities of Lost Vegas and Lost Angels is, and always will be, Elvis.

Keeping the Characters on Earth

Okay, okay. I'll come clean on this. I think the "aliens among us" schtick is great fun, and that's why I included it, despite its slight incongruity with the setting (but you know, *Repo-Man*, *Buckaroo Banzai* and *Liquid Sky* all had aliens, so it's not *that* weird). The problem is, with all these UFOs landing on terra firma, what's to keep our intrepid heroes on the ground when they could be zooming off to be stars in some other RPG?

Ahhhh, I dunno. I tried to come up with something, but my brain just wouldn't go there. Just… just tell them, "No" if they try and leave Earth. I'll come up with something better in a future version of *octaNe*.

'Frisco (San Francisco)

'Frisco, one of the few uncontested cities north of Shangri-L.A., was destroyed by earthquakes and is now partially submerged beneath the waters of the Pacific. Wide canals now twist through the once famous streets, and the buildings have either toppled over or have turned into strange island chains. Travel by car is difficult, due to long-neglected roads and bridges that must be traversed in order to drive anywhere.

Many of the buildings have been taken over by native wildlife and refugees from the city zoo, now long since fallen into disrepair. Sharks and sea lions patrol the waterways of the city. Pelicans and seagulls float above the bay. One group of super-evolved capuchin monkeys (presumably from an area biotech company) has shown up at Alcatraz Island and claimed it as their monastery. These simian monks seek to enlighten themselves through the study of Eastern philosophy, medicine, and martial arts. Oh, and nobody really calls it 'Frisco or San Fran in real life.
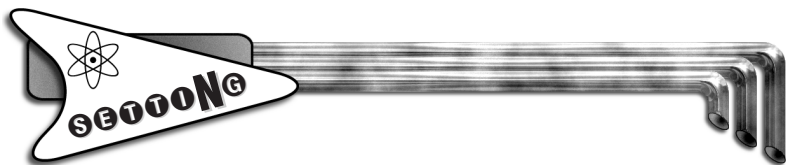
Monkey Business

Just a quick note on apes and monkeys in this game. I stand by the belief that anything could be improved with the addition of monkeys. They're cool, man. Everyone is familiar with the great apes: chimpanzees, orangutans and gorillas. Capuchin monkeys (pronounced *ka-pyoo-shin* with an accent on the *pyoo*) are small monkeys with markings on their heads that look like cowls (hence the name).

The super-intelligent capuchin monkeys of 'Frisco speak a high-pitched, chittery form of broken English. The apes don't speak. *Babe 2: Pig in the City* (one of the greatest fantasy movies of all time) contains both apes *and* monkeys!

The Kingdom of Lost Vegas (formerly Nevada)

Aside from the odd settlement or desert way station, Nevada is scarcely populated. The well-patrolled highways are in good

shape, and travel to and from California is fairly safe from hazards. But once the lights of Lost Vegas have vanished in your rear-view mirror, travel becomes difficult, if not impossible. The Wastelands of the Big Empty contain radioactive hot spots, bottomless chasms, huge mutant creatures, and devastating storms. Factor in road bandits and mutant gangs, and it all adds up to a rough ride until you hit the New Texaco border and the rest of the Free States.

Lost Vegas (Las Vegas)

The desert city of Lost Vegas remains true to its image of "Sin City." The city is spotless and well-tended by its current landlords, a city-wide criminal syndicate known as the Scopelli Mob. Before the Scopelli's moved in to take control, Lost Vegas was ruled by The King – Elvis. Since his passing, the Scopelli's have dismantled the throne and put the thumbscrews to the populace, so to speak. Still, Vegas is the place to be. It's very tourist-friendly and is surprisingly safe. The Scopelli's themselves fit the classic image of the big Italian gangsters. They all dress and speak as if it's the 1940's, and of course, Frank Sinatra rules the airwaves. In fact, big band, swing, and jazz are the major sounds heard within the neon canyons of Vegas.

Outside the city, the land and its inhabitants are a bit more rough. Roadhouses and biker gangs are frequent sights along the sides of the dusty interstates. Wrestling matches and road dueling are popular spectator sports, with matches being set up all over the place.

Oh, and for you Grindhouse fans… two words: STRIP CLUBS.

The Wastelands, aka the Big Empty (formerly Arizona, Utah, and Colorado)

Imagine miles and miles and miles and miles and miles of absolutely nothing: sun-baked salt-flats, sandy desert dunes, and scrublands as far as the eye can see. It's burning hot during the day and freezing at night. You have to watch out for pools of radioactive sludge, bizarre storms, gigantic critters, and mutant prowlers who roam the landscape in search of easy prey. Definitely one place you don't want to be caught without a gassed-up car or a capable guide.

Amidst the vast expanse of Wastelands you will find the odd jury-rigged settlement or ghost town. Most of these places are abandoned, or worse – infested by critters or bandits who use the ruins as a base camp. Old copper mines and caves offer some shelter, but these too often have antisocial owners. Rumor has it that at least one old mine leads straight down to Hell.

La Playa (Salt Lake City)

Spanish for "the Beach," La Playa is anything but a prime vacation spot. Most of the water has been boiled away by the intense heat of the sun, leaving miles of scorched plains and sulfurous craters. The area is only notable for the La Playa Drag Strip, a vast expanse of flat, hard-packed ground used for car races, auto dueling, and other vehicular diversions. An interesting tidbit: Space-Slugs abhor this area…

AridZona (Phoenix)

The Fortress City of AridZona is more "fortress" than "city," the last bastion of civilization in the midst of the Big Empty. Concrete, razor wire, and sheet metal barricades protect the priceless oil wells inside, and guards patrol the walls with crossbows, rifles, and flame-throwers. AridZona is ruled by the Gas-Man, a well-respected figure who controls the flow of gasoline and runs the operation of the oil refinery.

If you have a pass, you can drive right up past the gates and refuel. If not, you might find yourself on the receiving end of a ballista or a flame-thrower. The people who run AridZona are a pretty grim bunch, given the constant skirmishes with desert critters, rogue Smartcars, mutant gangs, and the more conventional *banditos*.

AridZona should have the feel of a frontier area beset on all sides by enemies; these folks are highly vigilant, suspicious… even a little paranoid.

New Texaco (New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Northern Mexico)

The country of New Texaco occupies much of the southern border, surrounded by the territories of AridZona and the Big Empty. Once part of the Former United States, New Texaco is a conglomeration of Mexico and the states of Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. The country is governed by a collective of oil barons who are led by *El Presidente*, a famous Mexican *luchador* who won his largely ceremonial position in a best-of-three wrestling match (picture a big dude wearing a dark blue suit and a blue and gold wrestling mask).

El Presidente is just and fair, an avowed champion of the people, but the corrupt cartel of oil barons is too powerful for him to control. Right now, there's nothing that can be done to change things, but the people continue to strive for a better life.

New Texaco is a place where BIGGER is BETTER. Monster trucks, 72 oz. dino steaks, ten-alarm chili, and honky-tonk roadhouses rule supreme. Everyone is a cowboy, a wrestler, a gambler, or a combination of all three. If you can't ride, spit, drink, shoot, and piss better than anyone else, ya ain't worth a damn. And yeah, it's perfectly okay to keep your hat on indoors. In fact, it's expected that you do.

Off-Shore

The Big Blue (Pacific Ocean)

The other major habitations along the coast are in fact huge ocean liners adrift on the water. The massive boat cities are now home to the flotsam and jetsam of the Former United

States – the largest city is a conglomeration of a decommissioned aircraft carrier and several oil tankers. There are also a few oil-drilling platforms and artificial atolls floating around – some controlled by pirates and evil warlords, others operated by free men who trade with the mainland.

Out in the Big Blue, folks travel by watercraft. Sailboats are most common, while gas-guzzling vehicles (motorboats, jet-skis, etc.) are far less common. Motorized vehicles are usually owned and operated by those who raid the floating settlements for fuel and parts.

C'mon… you've seen *Waterworld*. Admit it.

Monster Island (Hawaii)

Far off the coast of the Former United States is a volcanic island chain called Monster Island. It is a place of breathtaking blue skies, crystal clear water, cool rain, lush vegetation, and abundant food.

Paradise… except for the fact that huge, ancient beasts roam the island and its coastal waters.

Human beings can and do live on Monster Island, but they've learned to deal with their large neighbors by hiding from them in the numerous caves, valleys, and ruined buildings along the beaches. Monster Smashers and other adventurous types are known to travel to Monster Island on occasion, but people on the mainland tend to stay far away – most people aren't even aware that such an island exists.

Outsiders rarely see the natives of Monster Island (the bipedal Ape-Men). Still, an adventurous youngster will sometimes stow away on a Smasher's vessel. It happens.

Japan

Across the Pacific, Japan has kept a stranglehold on technological advancements and has leapt whole-heartedly into the digital age. Massive skyscrapers and arcologies dot the horizon,

and its citizens traverse the huge megatropolis of Neo-Tokyo using mag-lev trains, hover cars, and even powered armored suits. Trade between Japan and the West is limited to occasional shipments to the auto dealerships throughout LA and beyond. Fierce electro-magnetic storms have rendered air travel all but impossible, and the legends of mighty sea monsters have dissuaded all but the bravest of sea captains to make the journey to the US.

octaNe's Japan will be covered in a future sourcebook.

The Heartland

No'Land (the Louisiana Delta)

To the east are the bayous of No'Land, a place of sinister swamps filled with giant 'gators and voodoo cults. The port city of No'Land is a fairly civilized place: a city of stilt-houses and floating structures that is home to many merchants and traders who deal with the Former United States and New Texaco. It's a wild, frontier town where the liquor's cheap, and life is cheaper.

The Free States (Wyoming, Idaho, the Dakotas, Kansas, Nebraska)

Tight-knit communities have sprung up all over these rural areas. Some are hospitable and welcoming to travelers. Others are clannish and xenophobic. Working vehicles are less common the farther east one travels, and many villages rely on livestock such as oxen or horses for transportation. As always, the lean and hungry biker gangs are a common nuisance for travelers and townsfolk alike.

Detroit Rock City (Detroit)

A mechanized wilderness of steam engines, rust, and lumbering machines, Detroit Rock City (also called Detroit *Robot*

City) is the birthplace of the smartcar and many of the classic autos prowling the highways and byways of the West. Few humans live 'round these parts and the whole area is ruled by packs of rogue smartcars.
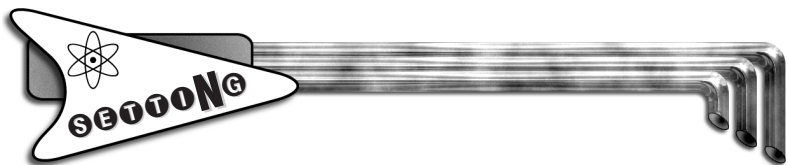
Elsewhere

The Green Lands (Oregon and Washington)

The Green Lands seem like an idyllic Northern paradise; verdant forests, lush fields, cool mist, and plenty of rain. The problem is, all the folks up there are crazy. Hippie communes, apocalypse cults, and Neo-Nazi survivalists have set up shop all across the area, and travelers are either seen as threats or potential converts to some cause of another. Sure, there are normal people as well… but how can you tell them from the nuts at a distance?

The Great White North (Canada)

The Great White North is the cold, sparsely populated area north of the Former United States border. Huge snowdrifts blanket the forests, and small, motorized sleds called "snowmobiles" are more common than cars. The waters of the mighty Missed River originate here among the massive lakes and icy streams of the North.

The Southern Jungles (Southern Mexico, Central America)

To the far south, savage tribes prowl the jungles in search of hapless, helpless, attractive females to capture for their own dark designs. Dinosaurs and other fierce beasts are hunted (and sometimes even tamed) by these tribesmen. The Aztec Empire is in full swing as you go deeper into the jungle, led by the undead Mummy Kings of the Yucatan! You see where I'm headed with this…

The Eastern Lands (Everything Else East of the Mississippi)

The border between the East and the West takes the form of a wide river called the Missed. The Missed starts somewhere up in the Great White North and winds its way all the way down to the swampy terrain of No-Land on the coast. The capital of the Former United States is rumored to be somewhere east of the Missed, but those that have dared travel that far have never returned to speak about it.

Legend has it that the journey to the East continues forever… that there is no end.

Magical Traditions in the World of octaNe

Magic is the catchall term for the weird, otherworldly powers some people possess. Most are trained in the arcane arts, while others are self-taught. Some are from our world; some are most assuredly not. There are no spell lists or specific abilities that magical characters are able to use. Magic in *octaNe* is a unique and curious beast. It's not a replacement for heavy artillery, it's not a way to bypass tricky situations with a word or a gesture. It's more like how magic was used in the old pulp novels… weird, and mysterious, and… cool. Magic should be cool. There aren't any dudes in high-collared cloaks here. Magic is more of a vibe. It's the unexplained and the unexplainable. Read on for some examples of magic and those who wield it…

Repo-Men

The grim individuals called Repo-Men are legends. There were never very many of them in the past, and time has reduced their numbers. The Repo-Men swear allegiance to The Company, a mysterious organization rumored to exist in another dimension.

Becoming a Repo-Man is a difficult process. Youngsters who show certain signs are visited by emissaries from The Company

and tested. Those who fail are left with their parents… those who succeed are spirited away to begin the long training period.

The youngsters are taught the Automotive Arts and, over time, are indoctrinated in the ways of the Blue Book. At the age of fifteen and a half, the trainee begins to learn the secret methods of the Repo-Men – this is called "getting your permit." During this time, the trainee learns to combat spectral entities, heal cars with a touch, and, ultimately, to exorcise vehicles that have been taken over by extra-dimensional beings. At the age of 18, the trainee is given his or her license (as well as the sacred instruments of their trade: the Blue Book, the Silver Flashlight, and the Golden Socket Wrench) and teamed with a more experienced Master. When the young Repo-Man is ready, he will return to The Company to become a Master himself.

The Metallurgists

Long-haired, tattooed rock gods with legions of fans, or young upstarts with used guitars and blown-out amps, the Metallurgists are Shangri-L.A.'s best defense against the forces of Evil. Most Metallurgists apprentice themselves to more experienced wizards, often acting as roadies or equipment techs. After awhile, the young spell-slinger is sent out to make his own way with his own band. Metallurgists are often on good terms with one another, taking comfort in their appreciation for head-banging and gnarly guitar soloing. A few have open rivalries, but these are usually settled peacefully through "Battles of the Bands" or guitar duels. Occasionally, an open air festival is held to celebrate All That Is Metal and Metallurgists from all over gather to play, listen, and drink lots of cheap beer.

Of course, not all Metallurgists stay on the straight and narrow. Many are seduced by the dark side of magic and become Black Metal Mages – evil and corrupt, bedecked in tattered black clothing and white corpse-paint makeup. Many even adopt faux-Scandinavian pseudonyms. Black Metal Mages

wage open war with the Metallurgists and often consort with foul demons from Beyond. Luckily, the Black Metal Mages are a relatively small, fragmented sect with their own internal strife to keep them occupied.

Other musical traditions exist, sometimes at odds with the metal wizards. But usually, these insular groups stick to their own nightspots, and rarely (if ever) do fights break out. The most vocal are the death-rock chicks who rule the after-hours punk clubs in the seedier sections of Lost Angels. DON'T MESS WITH THEM. They may be freaky cute with their big goth hair and ripped fishnets… but if they decide to get witchy on your ass – yikes.

Techno-Shaman

Enigmatic mystics, the Techno-Shamans are a weird group of nomads who haunt the desert wastes of AridZona and the Big Empty. Armed with gas masks, Geiger counters, and cast-off relics of civilization, they survive in one of the most inhospitable environments on Earth. The land is filled toxic sludge, irradiated ground, water, and the rusted hulks of decaying machines. Mutants and strange beasts make their homes here as well, and the Techno-Shaman acts as guardian, emissary, and ambassador of his people.

Techno-Shamans are experts at survival and wilderness lore and can call upon the spirits of nature and technology to aid them. They are loners by nature but will often accompany a group of travelers through the wastelands as a guide. They are somewhat feared by normal people, and even the mutants give them a wide berth.

Cars n' Critters

The world of *octaNe* is a weird place of head-banging sorcerers, masked wrestlers, cowboys, Elvis impersonators, and crazed clowns. But as noted in the Roles section, not everyone is *from*

around here and some of them aren't even human! Then there are the miscellaneous assortments of critters that roam the Wastelands…

Smartcars

In the world of *octaNe*, some cars have the power to speak, think, and drive themselves around. Why? Mostly because I really like Roger Zelazny's short stories like "Devil Car" and "Auto De'Fe." I won't bore you with the other reasons. Let's just say that in the world of *octaNe*, some cars are smart. Not all of them, mind you… just those that need to be heroes and villains. If it's just a way to get from A to B, make it a normal car. If it's going to have character, it needs to be a character, *comprende*?

Now, a bit more about smartcars…

Smartcars possess a personal name, a sense of self-identity, and either a masculine or feminine gender (usually the opposite of its driver, although same-gender matches can be ordered at the driver's request). Japanese-made smartcars tend to be a lot more reserved and polite than those made in the Former United States (though to their credit, American-made smartcars have colorful personalities and a good sense of humor).

Smartcars are able to pilot themselves, as well as operate their on-board weapons and other vehicle functions (security systems, radio transceivers, air conditioning, etc.). The smartcar can also access automated re-fueling stations and diagnostic equipment, although a human mechanic is still needed for any major repairs and overhauls. Smartcars speak Machine – a special language which enables them to talk to one another. Although smartcars can choose to make Machine transmissions audible, it is impossible for a human to learn or speak this language (to us, it just sounds like really, really loud static and clanking noises).

Smartcars are designed with the driver's safety in mind. For that reason, all smartcar "brains" are hard-coded with specific laws that they must adhere to:

☢ Never act in a way that may cause injury to your driver or his passengers.

☢ Never act in a way that may cause injury to other drivers or their passengers.

☢ Never act in a way that will cause your own destruction.

Usually, these rules are followed without question, and it is extremely difficult for them to be modified but there have been instances where less scrupulous mechanics have performed the difficult procedure. Also, some cars just go Rogue for no apparent reason. These "wild cars" are out there in the deserts and wastelands of the West, usually running in packs and always extremely dangerous. Rogue smartcars should be reported to the nearest Marshal's station. Failure to do so is a criminal offense.

Although seemingly "human" in their emotions and intelligence, smartcars are not classified as humans and follow normal property law with regards to destruction and theft or when used to commit crimes (although willful destruction of human life warrants an automatic trip to the scrapyard).

Licensed combat drivers, Road Marshals, and the aforementioned unscrupulous mechanics may fit cars with armor and weaponry – most don't. Between upkeep, legal issues, and the constant threat of road duelists, it's often far safer to arm the driver rather than the car. But road duelists do exist, and some Road Marshals do outfit their rides with machine guns and spike droppers… just in case.

Junkers

Junkers are salvaged from scrap-heaps or assembled out of odds and ends, baling wire, and chewing gum. Junkers are noisy, smelly, and extraordinarily unsubtle, but all in all, they're pretty decent forms of transport and are dirt-cheap to build and maintain. Junkers are the cars of choice for desert bandits and mutant gangs. Junkers are always normal vehicles but

often carry primitive weapons that are bolted to the frame and fired by an onboard gunner. Depending on the size of the Junker, these cars can carry as little as one or as many as eight riders (though perhaps not in comfort or style).

Jetcars

Jetcars are the hi-tech, streamlined racers from Japan. These babies are FAST, good-looking, and silent as a whisper. They're also VERY hard to maintain (if you can afford to buy one in the first place) and come standard with brains. Most folks have never even seen a Jetcar… that's how rare they are.

Jetcars are able to carry weapons and come stocked with an array of defensive devices such as smoke discharges, oil slickers, and chaff launchers. Besides their price, the other negative is their inability to carry extra passengers. Most Jetcars carry a pilot and (sometimes) a co-pilot. The rarer models can seat one additional passenger (although this is really a cramped storage area).

Classics

Classics are the workhorses of *octaNe*, automobiles made in the glory days of Detroit Rock City. Many classics are convertibles, so any weapons tend to be hidden within the body panels (a missile launcher under the hood, grenade belts along the underbody, and machine guns hidden inside the fenders). Classics are spacious – hard to park but capable of carrying four or five passengers in relative comfort.

Trucks

Trucks are used primarily for hauling goods, fuel, or (in the case of wreckers) other cars. Truckers in *octaNe* rely on one another for safety, and a tight community has sprung up in the West. The so-called "Brotherhood of the Wheel" uses CB radios to communicate with one another while on the road, with each trucker having a unique call sign. Truck stops are favored as

gathering places, and truckers often travel in small convoys for extra security. The practice of hiring armed escorts is not unheard of, allowing many combat drivers some extra pay during the off-season.

Bikes

Motorbikes are two-wheeled vehicles that are built for speed, speed, and speed. Some have off-road capabilities; others are just made to go as fast as possible. Motorbikes don't have brains, and weaponry may only be added if a special side-car is used (this sidecar carries weapons and ammunition and isn't equipped to carry a rider).

Fliers & Floaters

Flying machines are very rare… even Junker gyrocopters are an uncommon sight. Boats are much more plentiful and are the primary form of transport Off Shore. No, there are no smart-boats. That's just plain silly.

Space-Slugs

Space-slugs are large (20-30 feet long), fat, worm-like creatures that come from outer space, presumably in meteors that have broken apart after landing on Earth. The slugs travel by burrowing into solid rock, dirt, or sand. Slugs can sense their surroundings by reading vibrations traveling through the earth. They rely on this sense to hunt prey and to avoid danger (the slugs are extremely sensitive to loud noises and will temporarily flee from explosions and other such disturbances).

Each slug has tough skin, a three-sectioned maw that can swallow most prey whole, and several snake-like appendages that it ejects from its jaws to drag victims underground. Despite their ponderous size, the slugs can move extremely quickly through soft dirt and sand and leave a telltale dust trail in their wake. Burrowing through rock is much more labor-intensive.

Some people partake in a sport known as "worm surfing" – a high adrenaline sport where worms are hooked with grappling lines and then either ridden or used to tow a surfer along their wake.

Who says you can't surf in the middle of the desert?

Ostriches

The primary source of food in the West is ostrich, *Struthio camelus*, aka "turkey." Ostriches are large, flightless birds that are capable of running speeds up to 40 mph for up to 30 minutes. Dim-witted and easily angered, they're able to kick with great power and accuracy. Ostriches hiss when enraged, gurgle when fearful, and emit a short, sharp cry when warning of danger.

It's a common misconception that ostriches hide their heads in the sand when they become scared. Just as the rumors that coyotes are expert mechanical engineers and road runners say "Beep, beep!" are false, once again the cartoons have lied to you.

The #1 restaurant chain across the Former United States is a "turkey-joint" called Ozzy's ("Home of the Big Bird Burger!"). Chances are, the characters will be scarfing down ostrich burgers in between gunfights and saving the world. Ostrich leather clothing is also pretty common (as is snakeskin and the hides of more… unusual beasts).

Death

The Original Man in Black, the Grim Reaper, Top Hat, the Ace of Spades, Baron Samedi, Pluto… Death is a real, walking, talking person in the world of *octaNe*. Death can appear in many forms, depending on how you want to present him. Is he the standard dude in black robes and a scythe? A heavy metal guy in a top hat? A cute goth chick? An evil-looking clown? A crusty old dude? A slick black automobile? Remember to keep Death mysterious. If your players meet Death, make it memorable.

Here's a neat trick: have Death pop in whenever someone
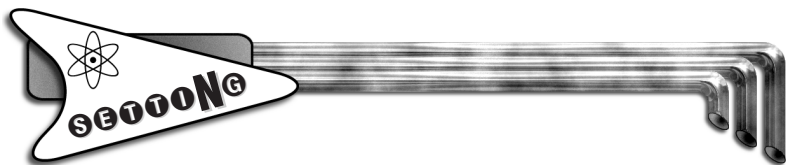
rolls three dice on a Stunt Roll and they all come up as 6's. Keep him in the background and see if anyone notices. Heh.

Races in octaNe

The world of *octaNe* is filled to the brim with colorful characters. Most of them are human… the rest? Well, read on…

Aliens

"Aliens" is the catchall name for those folks who're *not from around here*. Inter-dimensional beings, travelers from beyond the stars, Atlantean princes, and mole-people from the earth's core are all considered aliens. Most aliens *do* hail from outer space and are here on Earth as tourists. They're pretty common around Shangri-L.A. – so much that the remnants of the federal government have set up an immigration center to monitor these visits and police the alien populace. Most of these visitors are peaceful and law-abiding. *Most* of them. For the rest, Earth is a place to run amok (or a place to grab a quick bite to eat in between star systems). These individuals are quickly located and deported by the Feds.

Aliens in *octaNe* look *mostly* human. Usually they have some weird physical trait or mental quirk (four toes on each foot, pointy ears, a snake-like tongue, colorblindness, or an inability to pronounce certain sounds). There are some really freaky-looking species out there, but they're much less commonly seen.

Mutant Folks

Mutant Folks are often confused with aliens, the difference being that mutants are born on Earth and are usually found out in the Wastelands rather than in the cities. Overall, they've gotten a pretty bad rap over the years due to the increasing number of mutant gangs that prey on travelers in the Big Empty. Their unusual appearances and weird powers do make them frightening, but not all mutants are bad guys. Some mutants make their livings as truckers or mechanics; others act as guides through the Wastelands. Their abilities vary widely – some are telepathic, others look like humanoid animals, and some are just strange looking.

Visitors from Beyond

Ah, demons. Can you write an RPG without 'em showing up at least once? Probably not. In *octaNe*, there are three kinds of demons:

The Big Bads: these guys are usually involved in nefarious plots to destroy Mankind. The Devil would be the be-all, end-all of the Big Bads.

The Little Bastards: these are like little bat-winged imp dudes that exist to make life hell on earth for the players. More often they're just annoying.
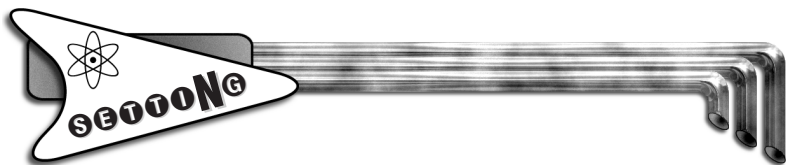
The Helljacked: a Role in *octaNe* that makes for a keen NPC as well. These guys are hoisted up from the Pit, smacked with the Stick of All that is Goodness and Light, and sent along their merry way to right wrongs and fight evil.

Robots

For all intents and purposes, robots are people too. Most of the 'bots the players will encounter are of the android variety. The hulking death machines of *Terminator 2* and *Hardware* are rarely encountered west of the Missed.

Mutant Critters

Humans aren't the only things out in the Wastelands. Weird critters, mutated by radiation or toxic sludge, are a constant threat to travelers in the Wastelands. A lot of these critters are just larger, meaner varieties of desert animals – poisonous snakes, scorpions, and tarantulas; Volkswagen-sized armadillos,

razorbacked boars, and bats with wingspans the length of a '57 Chevy. Other creatures lurking out in the Big Empty aren't even recognizable to most people. Sentient oozes, creatures made of solid rock… weird stuff.

Giant Monsters

The Wastelands aren't the only place to find big, mean critters. Off Shore, they tell tales of huge sea serpents, flying dinosaurs, and hundred-foot tall lizards that breathe fire. Luckily, they haven't migrated to the coast of the Former United States. For whatever reason, they seem to stick to Monster Island and the waters of Japan.

Who knows? Maybe they like sushi.

Ghost Cattle

Thundering across the skies of New Texaco and the Wastelands, the "Devil's Herd" appears every so often to the lonesome cowboys and wandering souls that frequent the desert wastes. A curiosity more than a threat, the appearance of the Ghost Cattle is seen by many as a dire portent of trouble on the horizon.

The Undead

Blood-slurping vampire women, werebeasts, Mummy Kings, and brain-eating zombies. The Undead are uncommon around civilized areas, less so on the open road. They seem to congregate to the step-pyramids of the far south, an area ruled by the evil Mummy Kings of the Yucatan. Feel free to spice up other areas with Undead (they're just fun monsters to throw in any old place). Punk bars in Shangri-L.A. make great venues for zombies to hang out (plus the death-rockers provide great cover), and nothing's more classic than a hick-town chock full o' vampires.

Dinosaurs

Also to the far south, these giant reptiles stalk through the primeval jungles of the Yucatan. Most are peaceful plant-eaters and won't harm you if you stay away from them. Others, such as the T-Rex, are only more than happy to have you for dinner. Other strange, prehistoric critters also make their home amidst the dense vegetation of the rain forest, such as the savage sabertooth cat and the ponderous giant ground sloth.

A Few Words on the Giant Ground Sloth

These guys are COOL. Nine feet tall, covered in dense fur (and a pebbly, armored skin!), huge claws, and a stink like you've never experienced before. Would you believe that one of these guys can take out a sabertooth with one swipe? Nice.

Everything Else

If I had a dozen splatbooks dedicated to each location in *octaNe*'s setting, I'd still not be able to fit all the cool ideas y'all are going to come up with. Like I said, all this setting material is just grist for the ol' mental mill. Discard what you don't like, and add whatever you and the other players can dream up. Go nuts.

End o' the Line

What else is there to say that hasn't been said better and more succinctly? And what have we learned?

Well, the world of *octaNe* is really just an excuse to do lots of cool stuff in cool places. The game system should help you do just that. Your stories should be Hawaiian-shirt-loud, in-your-face, and action-packed. You should be having FUN… as in a riotous good time. We're talking "neighbors pounding on the walls and calling the police to complain."

It is possible to use *octaNe* for other genres? Well, duh… yeah. But I'd stick to settings where the freewheeling nature of Player Control, Plot Points, and Hazard Ratings can be put to best use. In fact, there should be a few supplements for *octaNe* in the near future. The grand-daddy of Psychotronic film, the 1930's pulp serial, is handled in the upcoming *Against the Reich!* The *octaNe*: Japan sourcebook will give you a new setting in the *octaNe* universe while the mini-supplement *Blood and Steel* adds new rules for creating mythic heroes in sword & sorcery-themed games.

If there's anything I want you to take from this game it's this: RPG's kick ass and you can create your own… even distribute it… without spending tons of cash to do so. A website, some good ideas, and access to a printer is all you really need.

As for other indie games? Check out www.memento-mori.com where you can buy InSpectres and Squeam for some exercises in comedic horror (or is that horrific comedy?). If you dig *octaNe*, you'll dig those games as well. Search around the net and haunt local game conventions for more indie games (especially The Forge over at www.indie-rpgs.com). Indie role-playing games allow you the ultimate in creative power… don't waste the opportunity.

> *Rock over London…*
> *Rock on Chicago…*
> *Memento Mori Theatricks…*
> *…indie game design from beyond the grave!*

Slanguage

No RPG is complete without a page or two of slang to pad out the material. And not being one to disappoint you, here are some terms to help capture the dusty, kitschy, bizarro western flavor of *octaNe*. You can also spice up your games by using bits of Spanish, western slang, CB radio-speak, 80's "valley girl"-isms, 70's jive, and Australian slang (I highly recommend both Mad Max and Chopper for some great additions to your *octaNe* vocabulary). Develop your own style… because how you say something can be as important as what you say.

Alcatraz: Formerly an island prison off the coast of 'Frisco. Now a monastery for an order of super-intelligent monkeys.

AridZona: A fortress city in the remnants of Phoenix, Arizona. Said to be a very rough area.

Ballistae: Large, vehicle-mounted crossbows that fire long metal spears called "bolts." A common form of fortress defense.

Barter-Man: A respectful term for the individual who makes and accepts trades in a refinery fortress.

Big Nothing, the: The deserts of the southwestern US.

Bimbo: A very insulting word for a Rollergirl, one which is usually followed by a sharp pain to the groin area.

Breaker Force: A convoy of Road Marshals, usually on a manhunt of some kind. Also called Breaker Squads.

Bronze, the: Slang term for the Road Marshals, usually used by the unlawful. The name refers to the bronze-colored shield badges worn by the Marshals.

Brothers: Lost Angels colloquialism for one of the alien races that has settled there. Brothers are indistinguishable from normal humans save for their four-toed feet and an affinity for electromechanical devices.
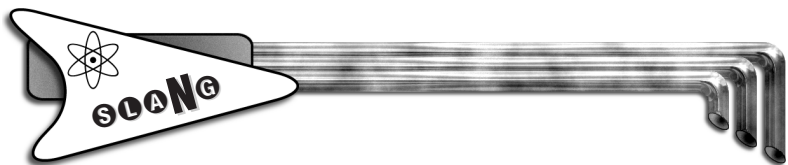
Cap, Cap'n: Slang terms for the capuchins, a race of super-intelligent monkeys from the island of Alcatraz.

Classics: Classic automobiles, either replicas or retrofitted originals (rare!)

Five Wheels, the: Poetic Road Knight term for his or her car (four tires and a steering wheel), used when taking an oath.

Frag: Common epithet, usually used to denote a kill (i.e.: "He even looks at my ride an' I'll frag him without another thought...").

'Frisco: What used to be San Francisco, now mostly underwater due to severe earthquakes in the past.

Gas-Man: A term of respect for the highest-ranking member of a refinery fortress

Greasemonkey: A mechanic, especially a *good* mechanic.

High Road, the: A code of honor rigorously followed by the Road Knights:

- ♣ Help others in need and take only food, gas, and lodging as your reward.
- ♣ Protect those weaker than yourself. Look after women and children in times of danger.
- ♣ Any oath sworn on your Five Wheels is sacred.
- ♣ Never let an insult to your car go unanswered.
- ♣ Always pass on the left.
- ♣ Never give up the open road.
- ♣ Always keep your car clean and its tank full.
- ♣ Always keep you word, never lose your cool.
- ♣ Those who fight the weaker are cowards. Those who fight the stronger are fools.

HolyWood: A section of Lost Angels where the images of old celebrities are worshipped as saints.

Junkers: Cars built from scavenged parts, usually owned and operated by mutants, bandits, and other low-lives.

King, the: Elvis Presley, the King of Rock and Roll. More recently, the de facto ruler of Lost Vegas.

Land Shark: Any dangerous individual, especially a skilled driver.

Lost Angels: Formerly Los Angeles, Lost Angels is the largest remaining city in the West. Also known as "La-la-Land" and "Shangri-L.A."

Lost Vegas: Also called "Sin City," this city is run by various criminal gangs under the auspices of the King.

Low Road, the: A code of conduct followed by some Road Knights:

- ♣ Your car is your greatest asset; keep it running.
- ♣ The more dangerous your car, the more dangerous you are; your vehicle is your face to the Outside.
- ♣ Gas is life; take it when you can.
- ♣ Never give up the open road.
- ♣ A man with a car is a long lost friend; treat him well, but never turn your back on him.
- ♣ Your honor is important, but ultimately, you are more important than your honor.
- ♣ Never betray your sworn brothers. So don't swear yourself lightly.
- ♣ An oath sworn on your car is almost sacred.

Luchadors: Professional wrestlers from Mexico who practice a sport fighting style called "Lucha Libre," or "Free Fighting." Divided into two camps: *Los Tecnicos* are the chivalrous, masked "faces." *Los Rudos* are the sneaky, often hirsute, "heels."
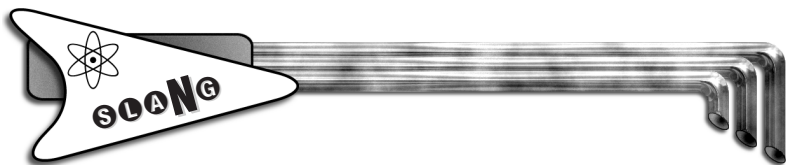
Metallurgists: Heavy-metal sorcerers from Shangri-L.A..

Mutants: Genetically altered freaks, usually created by abnormal exposure to radiation. Also, slang for any misfit or visibly strange person.

"...not from around here.": A Lost Angels euphemism used when discussing an alien (ie: "He's not from around here.").

Outside, the: A term used by drivers when talking about the world outside their car. When driving, they're on "The Inside."

Padre: A missionary or holy man; often used disparagingly. The more polite term is "Preacher."

Repo-Men: A loosely-organized and highly-feared group of vehicular exorcists.

Road Knight: Any driver who follows the code of honor called the High Road.

Roadjets: Super hi-tech automobiles; fast and streamlined. Aka Jetcars.

Road Marshals: An elite force of federally-appointed lawmen tasked with patrolling the roads of the western United States.

Rollergirls: Rollerskating 50's throwbacks who waitress at drive-thru ostrich burger joints. Most wear poodle skirts, cheerleader uniforms, or capri pants and tight-fitting sweaters.

Samurai: Usually used to describe any kind of wandering mercenary. Most Samurai are accomplished swordsmen *and* musicians. Despite their noble title, only a few actually follow *bushido*, the Way of the Warrior -- a code of honor dating back to feudal Japan.

Scrap, Slag: Common epithets (i.e.: "I wouldn't be caught dead driving that pile of scrap!").

Scrap-Collector: A merchant who find and sells scavenged parts. Not a term of respect! The term "vulture" is also used.

Six-String: A guitar -- more importantly, an authentic electric guitar from the 50's and 60's. Highly sought after and fiercely protected by their Samurai owners. Some six-strings have been known to be traded for Classics, and vice versa.

Turkeys: Ostriches, the most common form of domesticated livestock in the West. Also, extremely stupid people.

West, the: Slang term for the surviving western half of the United States.

Zip Gun: A cheap or homemade firearm, one prone to misfiring or breaking.

octaNe Cheat Sheet

The following sums up the rules of the game, including character creation.

Game Mechanics

Roll three dice when performing a Stunt. Add additional dice to this roll by spending Plot Points. If you are performing an unskilled Stunt, you do not get the default three dice to roll and must pay for dice using Plot Points. You must also pay for dice if your character isn't doing anything interesting, and you want to jump into the action.

Take the highest result (the Die Result) and compare it to this chart:

- ☢ If the **Die Result** is **5** or **6**, it means the **Player** has **total control**.
- ☢ If the **Die Result** is **4**, it means the **Player** has **partial control**.
- ☢ If the **Die Result** is **3**, it means the **Moderator** has **partial control**.
- ☢ If the **Die Result** is **1** or **2**, it means the **Moderator** has **total control**.

If the Die Result is a 5, gain a number of Plot Points equal to the Style your character is using. If the Die Result is a 6, gain a number of Plot Points equal to the Style your character is using plus an additional Plot Point.

If you're facing an opponent or obstacle with a Hazard rating of 1, ignore the highest Die Result and use the next-highest number instead. For each additional point of Hazard, ignore another Die Result. Note that a Hazard of 2 gives the Player a 50% chance of gaining control of the scene. A Hazard of 3 or more will prevent the Player from gaining control unless that player spends Plot Points to roll additional dice.

Some situations will have temporary Hazard ratings that go down as the characters are affected by them. Permanent Hazard ratings remain constant over time and will only decrease due to special circumstances (such as intervention by forces of Might or Magic).

Mighty and Magical characters must spend Plot Points (as if they were unskilled) to work their mojo. They can also reduce a Hazard rating by rolling three dice and scoring a Die Result of 5 or 6 (reducing a Hazard doesn't net the player any Plot Points).

If two players get into a scuffle, the defender may spend Plot Points to gain a Hazard Rating for that scene. The other player then makes a Stunt Roll as normal. If the Die Result is a 3, 2 or 1, the defender narrates the outcome instead of the Moderator.

There is no limit to the amount of Plot Points that may be spent at one time. Likewise, there is no limit to the amount of Plot Points that a player may possess (the exception to this rule is when playing in *Cinéma Vérité* mode).

Character Creation

1. Picture the character *doing* something… picture your character in action!
2. Choose one of these Roles or create your own (see the Custom Roles section)
3. Write down the necessary information that the Role provides
4. Distribute 3 points among the various Styles
5. Write down your character's major item and a few flavor items
6. Give yourself a Plot Point with which to start the game
7. Write down three distinct details about your character's manner or appearance
8. Come up with a cool name and a few personal details about your character

octaNe

Skills

Styles
Daring:
Ingenuity:
Craft:
Charm:
Might:
Magic:

Plot Points

Die Roll Results
5-6 Player has total control
4 Player has partial control
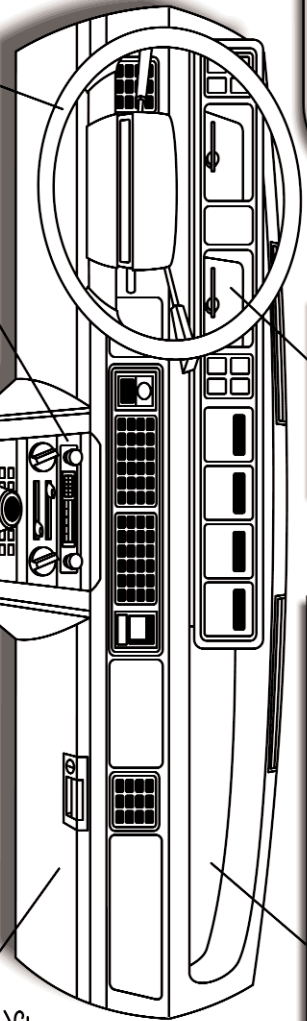3 Moderator has partial control
1-2 Moderator has total control

Nombre:
Player:
Role:
Stampin' Grounds:

Description
1.
2.
3.

Gear
Major:

Flavor:

Skills

Styles
Daring:
Ingenuity:
Craft:
Charm:
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Magic:

Plot Points

Die Roll Results
5-6 Player has total control
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