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By Kevin Siembieda



DAN SCOTT

Chi-Town 'Burbs™
Firetown™ & the Tolkeen Crisis™

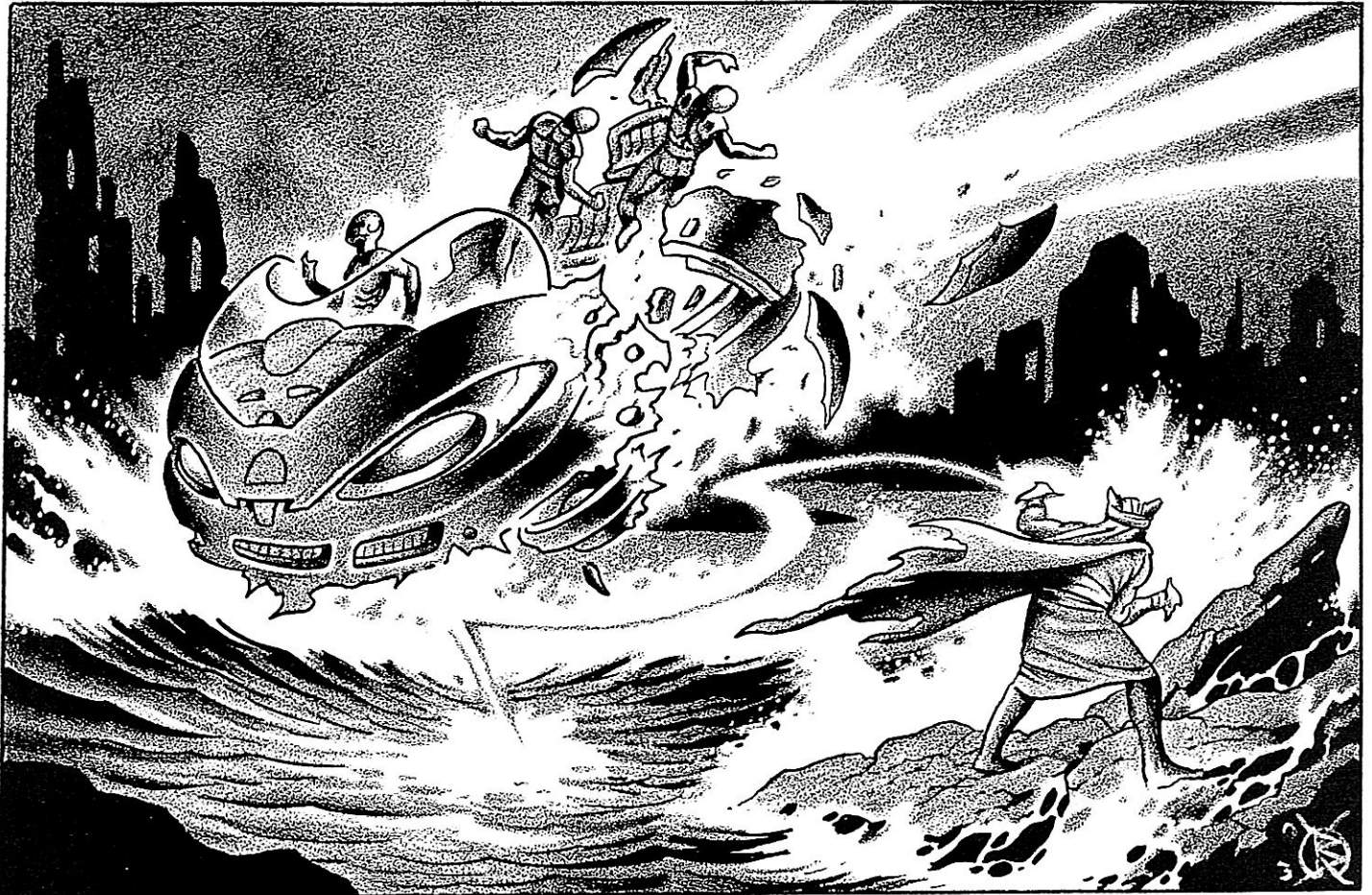
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A Rifts® Adventure Sourcebook.

The Chi-Town ‘Burb of Firetown & the Tolkeen Crisis

Dedication

To Wayne Breaux Jr., Kent Burles, Ramon Perez, Scott Johnson, Freddie Williams, Apollo Okamura, John Zeleznik, Dave Dorman and all of Palladium's unsung heroes who work in the realm of art and design. These guys pour their hearts and souls into their work and are often taken for granted by the average reader. They are the artisans who breathe visual life into the authors' words and imprint the images you, the reader, forever envision when you think of a particular character, monster or device. Without these insightful artists, the Palladium Megaverse would be a bland, even ugly, place to visit. Instead it is full of life, wonder and power.

– Kevin Siembieda, 2003

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The cover is by digital artist *Dan Scott* and depicts a pair of rebels from a Retribution Squad charging into the fray. This illustration was originally done for the second series in the *Rifts® Collectable Card Game*, but never saw print because the card manufacturer went out of business.

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Palladium Books® Presents:



Chi-Town 'Burbs™

Firetown™ & the Tolkeen Crisis™

A Rifts® Adventure Sourcebook

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– Kevin Siembieda, 2003

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A few words from the author

I'm glad to report that the idea of doing an ongoing series of small **Rifts® Adventure Sourcebooks** spotlighting specific places, people and events, accompanied by adventure hooks and fully worked out adventures, has been met with overwhelming enthusiasm. Cool, because we have ideas for a dozen right off the top of our heads, plus we'd like to get feedback from you, our fans, for subjects of future books you would like to see. You can send us your wants and ideas in letters, by e-mail (www.palladiumbooks.com) or in person whenever you track me or one of the Palladium staff down at game and comic conventions.

I'd also like to share a bit of incredibly exciting news with those of you who don't regularly visit Palladium's website or get **The Rifter®** – Palladium Books has signed a deal with

Jerry Bruckheimer Films and *Walt Disney Pictures* to develop a live action, blockbuster film based on **Rifts®**. No, you're not dreaming, it's true! And yes, that *should* lead to all kinds of dynamic new **Rifts®** products such as toys, action figures, vehicles, miniatures, electronic and computer games, and a whole lot more. **The Rifter®**, our quarterly fan-based sourcebook series and the Palladium website (www.palladiumbooks.com), will offer regular updates for those of you looking for the latest news. As you can imagine, all of us at Palladium are thrilled that the Palladium Megaverse® is about to explode into the mainstream. Ah, but you long-time fans and recent newcomers will always know that you were on the cutting edge and discovered it first.

Game on and keep those imaginations burning bright.

– Kevin Siembieda, May 2003

The Tolkeen fallout in the ‘Burbs

During its final days, the help the Kingdom of Tolkeen prayed would come in time to rescue them never materialized, leaving the embattled city in its death throes, desperately fighting a relentless Coalition Army bent on victory at all costs. When it was all but certain that the city could not withstand the Coalition’s final siege and the Kingdom would fall, many of Tolkeen’s defenders took the initiative to do for themselves.

Some decided to fight to the bitter end, going out in a blaze of glory while taking as many of their hated enemies with them as possible. Some hoped their last ditch heroics would inspire others to rally around them and, miraculously, turn the tide of the war – only that never happened and they too perished before the superior numbers and firepower of the Coalition Army.

Other defenders were unwilling to throw their lives away in a futile gesture of defiance and some were just more pragmatic. They realized that nothing they did would change the outcome of the war, but that the confusion and carnage of the final battle would provide them with their best chance to escape the doomed Kingdom.

Thousands of ordinary people from every walk of life had rallied around Tolkeen and fought or worked to defend her. When the Kingdom began to crumble around their ears they just picked up and returned to their old lives. Practitioners of magic, healers, mercenaries, and adventurers to scholars, manual laborers and farmers simply picked up and walked away from the conflict.

While it is true that the CS has posted bounties and rewards for Tolkeen’s greatest warriors, known leaders and nefarious war criminals, such individuals are comparatively few in number, representing barely one or two percent of Tolkeen’s surviving fighting force. Only the most flamboyant, ruthless, and memorable warriors and mages have earned themselves a bounty and the lasting enmity of the Coalition States. Most Tolkeenites, sorcerers and resistance fighters were *faceless cogs* in the Tolkeen military machine, enabling them to slip back into the shadows of anonymity from which they came.

Of those who laid down their arms and walked away, some would seek to build new lives in other parts of the country, away from the influence of the Coalition States. Thousands of others simply returned to their homes and resumed their old ways of life as if returning from a long trip. A good number of these people live in or near the Coalition States or CS held territory. Many have forsaken the war and returned to peaceful civilian lives, but others, a good third to half, hold a lasting grudge and seek revenge against the States, and the Coalition Army in particular.

The Price of Victory

Though the war is “officially” over, the territory that was once the Kingdom of Tolkeen (Minnesota) remains a hotbed of turmoil and conflict. Rebels, resistance fighters, and monsters continue to harass and fight the Coalition occupation force. Strange beings, demons, mysterious magic artifacts and creations of metal and magic are frequently unearthed from the de-

bris of the toppled cities or lunge out of the shadows (and lakes, and rivers, and the very earth and sky) to wreak deadly havoc or to extract murderous revenge on the troops. Thieves, bands of resistance fighters and refugees regularly attack Coalition Army supply depots, cargo trucks and patrols to steal much needed weapons, ammunition, food and supplies, or to disrupt supply lines or inflict some degree of sabotage. Likewise, lone hunters and small bands of demons, dragons, sorcerers, and shape-changers lure soldiers to their doom, waylay small squads and bushwhack individuals who wander away from their base or comrades in arms. Rampaging monsters (Elementals, Daemonix, Brodkil, Witchlings, Black Faeries, Xiticix, dragons and others) and scavengers are also a constant danger to the occupation force.

The most organized and dangerous source of danger (excluding the unknown level of danger represented by the Xiticix in the north) are the **resistance fighters** who continue to “wage war on the invaders.” They range in size from squads (6-12 fighters), platoons (40-60) and companies (160) to brigades and small armies. Squad, platoon and company-sized bands are most common, providing the rebel forces the greatest mobility and flexibility when it comes to movement and evasion. All, regardless of size, use guerilla war, hit and run tactics. Acts of sabotage, surprise attacks, ambushes, mines, traps, robbery, vandalism, and psychological warfare are all used to harass, if not destroy, the enemy. For many Tolkeen resistance fighters, harassing, confounding and obstructing the progress of the enemy is as much a victory as cutting down an entire platoon or blowing up a supply depot. **Note:** The difference between resistance fighters and plain old bandits and murderers is that the resistance fights for the purpose of hurting, stopping and ultimately driving the Coalition invaders from their land. They remain patriots and live by a military code of conduct with military objectives. Bandits, murderers and similar crooks and killers attack the CS for their own personal gain and motives, and ultimately, couldn’t care less about what might happen to the fallen Kingdom of Tolkeen or its people.

All of this conflict makes Minnesota a wild and uninhabitable no man’s zone, unsuitable for colonization by CS settlers or any peace-loving people. Though Emperor Prosek paints a rosy picture of victory and a quick and easy “mop up operation,” the region is likely to stay a savage low-scale battleground for years to come (at least the next 2-6, probably longer).

Sweet Revenge

– taking the battle to the CS

Not all expatriates are actively fighting in the woods and ruins of Tolkeen. Many have returned home or gone to the ‘Burbs of the great Coalition cities, particularly *Chi-Town*. Some lick their wounds, talk dirt about the CS, and bide their time, waiting for the next great crusade, uprising or military campaign to join. Others work in the shadows, helping or hiding Tolkeen refugees and any fugitives wanted by the Coalition States. Others engage in petty crimes and little acts of insurrection to undermine the



Coalition States – vandalism, anti-CS graffiti, supporting or helping Rogue Scholars and Scientists, verbal and physical but seldom lethal attacks on CS authorities (pelting them with garbage and eggs, or taking a few pot shots at them before running away), as well as tricks, traps and jokes leveled against CS troops, ISS patrols and authority figures. While these “acts of rebellion” make them feel good about themselves, most actually have little to no impact on the CS, its military force, or its rule, and more than two-thirds of these incidents are ignored, going completely unreported by the authorities. However, there are those driven by patriotism or revenge who have decided to continue the fight and carry the war to the Coalition States’ own doorstep. What better place to strike at the States’ than its capital and seat of power, Chi-Town – and where else to lurk, hide, plot and strike than the *Chi-Town ‘Burbs*?

The many faces of revenge. These insurrectionists, dissidents, freedom fighters and Tolkeen Retribution Squads come in all shapes and sizes. They range from humans to D-Bees, to dragons and monsters. Currently, 70% are Tolkeen expatriates hungry for revenge and driven by sorrow or hatred. Unfortunately, their ire is not limited to just the military and government leaders of the CS, but its citizens as well, leading to acts of terrorism against anyone who calls himself a citizen of the Coalition States or dares to support, endorse or do business with the States. That sometimes includes the inhabitants of the ‘Burbs where these self-styled “freedom fighters” usually establish their bases of operation. Additionally, Coalition defenders are constantly searching for dissidents and terrorists which leads to frequent clashes and gunfights that spill out into the streets of the ‘Burbs, injuring and killing innocent people caught in the conflagration.

The following are the kinds of anti-Coalition militants operating in the ‘Burbs.

Smugglers. A smuggler is a middle man who specializes in transporting magic, forbidden books, weapons, drugs and other contraband outlawed by the Coalition States from point A to point B. Only a small percentage specialize in smuggling “people” in and out of Coalition held territories, but those who do are enjoying blockbuster business in the days after the fall of Tolkeen. As one might expect, most smugglers are in business for the money. They don’t care about causes or the type of contraband or who a fugitive may be or what crimes he may have committed, they only care about the money – half paid up-front, the balance at the end of the job. An unsuccessful “delivery” means both parties lose; the smuggler only keeps the non-refundable up-front payment and probably loses his agent(s) and property (vehicle, etc.), maybe even a trade route or hideout, while the client loses the property or person(s) being smuggled. Actually, the smuggler does care, a little, about the cargo being smuggled, but only because the larger the amount or the “hotter” the cargo, the more difficult and dangerous the job and the more he can charge.

Tolkeen patriots. Though most professional smugglers don’t care about cause, country or anything other than making money and not getting caught, a number of Tolkeen expatriates have formed their own smuggling operations. They are part of the underground Tolkeen resistance force that still opposes the CS. As such, they only smuggle weapons, ammunition, magic, items and people that help their cause, and that cause is revenge against the Coalition Army and toppling the Coalition States. Consequently, they work to smuggle Tolkeen’s leaders, sorcerers, and warriors to safety, moving them from one location to another for anti-Coalition operations. The entire idea is to prevent its leaders and fighting forces from being discovered or captured by the CS, with the secondary purpose of maintaining a secret supply line to its resistance fighters. Illegal contraband sold for profit is not a consideration unless it is to help fund rebel operations and then only if it does not compromise their military operations or the underground resistance movement. This is how many assassins, snipers, and Retribution Squads get in and out of Tolkeen, the ‘Burbs and other places right under the Coalition’s nose. Those they smuggle strike at the CS, inflict as much damage as possible, and when things get too hot, they are smuggled to a safe house or another part of the country to lay low. The most organized and capable smuggling routes for the Resistance are those where retribution or freedom fighting is most intense. That includes routes in and out of the fallen Kingdom of Tolkeen (with a focus on the tri-city area), parts of Wisconsin, and the *Chi-Town ‘Burbs*. The Tolkeen smugglers *may* also choose to smuggle fugitives and criminals not affiliated with Tolkeen, but wanted by the CS in an effort to hurt, frustrate or undermine the empire.

Snipers & Assassins. Some operate as lone gunmen or in pairs of elite snipers or assassins. They are usually ex-military and skilled professionals who scout out the ‘Burbs, picking choice spots to strike and then wait for a Coalition target to shoot down from a distance and flee to avoid capture. These professional killers typically limit their targets to CS police, soldiers, city patrols, and notable Coalition leaders in politics, business and society. Collateral damage is usually non-existent, with

the sniper targeting and hitting only the chosen target(s). The most organized of these assassins and snipers are extremely well organized, methodical and prepared. They seldom do anything by random chance, preferring to scout out a particular area and observe their target(s) before launching an attack. This means they place their target under surveillance, studying their habits and movements before staking out the best location from which to strike. True pros, they also plot three or more escape routes and move on to their next job when this "hit" is finished. They are like ghosts or shadows, always on the move and always plotting some new act of revenge and murder. For them, their methodology is as much a weapon as the guns they sling. Their patience and planning making these snipers and assassins the most elusive and long-lived of the Tolkeen agents of retribution. They are also the rarest breed of Tolkeen avengers. **Note:** Half of these types of snipers are complete and total lone wolves. While they may have a favorite bar or hangout and a small network of acquaintances from whom they glean information or get the occasional favor, these assassins go out into the field *alone*. The rest of the *snipers* function in pairs, usually with one making the hit and the other watching his back or positioned to cover his escape. Seldom do these lone wolves work as a trio or as part of a larger team, since they like the independence and mobility of working alone or with one trusted ally. And, by the way, those who work as pairs are steadfast and fiercely loyal to one another.

The least professional and most unorganized Tolkeen snipers and assassins are often young and inexperienced (1-4th level). They lack the self-discipline and patience to make careful plans or to wait for the right moment to strike. Instead, they prowl the streets like hungry tigers looking for easy prey and targets of opportunity. They tend to be hot heads blinded by fanaticism or hot emotions (sometimes to the point of mental instability), consumed by grief or hatred. More often than not, their attacks are crimes of passion and opportunity. While they will scout out an area and seek a specific Coalition target, they seldom have a well laid plan or backup contingency, or have given any thought to making good their escape, let alone having two or three alternate routes. They tend to be reactionary, striking without much forethought other than to find and kill Coalition soldiers and citizens. Likewise, many are easily lured into rash action when a tempting target makes an unexpected appearance. ("Oh my god, that's Colonel Lyboc. And he's alone!") When this killer bumps into a prime Coalition target, he doesn't follow him to see where he goes or to determine a pattern of behavior to exploit at a later time, no, his knee-jerk reaction is to knife, strangle or gun down the louse right then and there, and probably before he realizes the man is accompanied by 1D6 Coalition Juicers, Cyborgs, or Commandos. Perhaps needless to say, these emotion driven loose cannons don't usually last very long unless they are exceptional at thinking on the fly and getting through life by the seat of their pants. They are also likely to create considerable amounts of "collateral damage" – i.e., wound and kill any number of innocent bystanders, destroy property, etc., especially when trying to make good an escape after an ill-considered hit. **Note:** This variety of assassin may operate as a lone assailant, but more often than not gathers in groups of 2-8 (2D4) other like-minded thugs and killers bent on revenge through murder. They can be virtually any O.C.C. though most are ex-soldiers/grunts, Military Specialists, Headhunters, Bandits, and bushwhacker types.

Tolkeen Terrorists are another breed of militant driven by sorrow and/or anger, hatred and revenge. They are among the most fanatical, cruel and ruthless, willing to kill innocent bystanders without hesitation to get at their real target. They also use tactics and attacks that impact an area rather than an individual. This means bombs and destructive magic, often with an area affect/blast radius, are their weapons of choice. After all, it is difficult for a target or a group to evade the blast radius of a hand grenade, mini-missile or other incendiary device. Any innocent people caught in the blast (and there almost always are) are considered "acceptable casualties" sacrificed (by the terrorist) for a greater cause. Terrorists frequently seek to cause massive amounts of damage and blow up bridges and mass transit systems, and set buildings on fire or topple them from their foundations. Magic is an especially useful tools for mass destruction, setting blazes and causing panic. Spells like Earthquake, River of Lava, Ten Foot Wheel of Fire, Call Lightning, fire magic of all kinds, storms, and other spells that inflict damage or affect an area are favorite weapons in the arsenal of the magic wielding terrorist. So is commanding Elementals, demons and monsters. Thus, rather than target the individual, like the sniper or assassin, the terrorist targets the establishment he enters, setting ablaze or destroying half to the entire building! Hopefully, catching the intended target (and his guards and associates) inside and killing him/them. The use of explosives, fire, magic and other extreme measures also means the assailant doesn't have to be particularly skilled, experienced or well trained, just willing to do the job at all costs. In some cases, that means sacrificing his own life to accomplish the mission. **Note:** These brigands and murderers are usually Anarchist or evil



alignments and willing to die if they think their sacrifice will inspire revolution or hurt the CS even in a small way.

Creatures of Power. Ninety-nine percent of all snipers, assassins, freedom fighters and terrorists are humans or D-Bees, with about 10-25% being some sort of practitioner of magic. The Kingdom of Tolkeen, however, appealed to a great number of creatures other than mere mortal beings, including dragons, Temporal Raiders, Witchlings, Brodkil, Gargoyles, demons and a great many others. Some of these creatures of magic or the supernatural also seek retribution against the CS.

Elementals couldn't care less, and only those under the yoke of a mortal master make an appearance in the streets of the 'Burbs.

Most demons have deserted the cause of Tolkeen. They, like Elementals, often served mortal masters or served a powerful sorcerer or leader of Tolkeen. With the Kingdom toppled and many of those they once served slain or gone missing, demons either return to the infernal realm from which they were summoned or do as they please. Only the more intelligent and mischievous seek revenge of any kind against the Coalition States, or engage in activities to stir the pot and create conflict between the CS and rebels. Likewise, intelligent shape changers with a taste for blood, mischief or revenge continue to trick and waylay Coalition forces in the wilds of Tolkeen and the streets of the 'Burbs.

The Daemonix are something of an exception. Though a form of archaic demon freed from a hellish prison by the powers-that-be in Tolkeen, they remain loyal to the fallen kingdom and regard Earth as their new home. With no place else to go, and being vengeful and evil by nature, the Daemonix seek revenge against the mere mortals who dare defy their will. The vast majority of the Daemonix (70%) remain in the Minnesota/Wisconsin area fighting along side their mortal allies or on their own using guerilla tactics, magic and brute strength to ravage the Coalition occupying force. Only about 20% have abandoned Tolkeen outright and gone out in the world to build their own kingdoms or terrorize mortals; a quarter of this number joining the Calgary Kingdom of Monsters or Federation of Magic. The remaining 10% have left the battlefield to follow mortal Tolkeenites into the Coalition States to cause havoc there. However, the giant size and aggressive nature of the Daemonix make it difficult for them to hide or stalk the streets unseen, leaving them as heavy support groups and raiders who strike at civilized communities only to vanish into the wilderness where most hide until called.

Brodkil are found both in Tolkeen and in urban environments, however, their warrior nature makes them best suited as guerilla fighters, raiders and bandits away from cities. In fact, those who have left the Tolkeen region have gone off to join the Pecos Empire and Calgary Kingdom of Monsters or created their own bands of outlaws and mercenary companies. Independent and selfish sub-demons, only a few seek revenge on the CS or stalk the streets of the 'Burbs.

Most *Gargoyles* have moved on, either returning to their infernal dimension or flown off to other parts of the world.

Black Faeries are vindictive creatures to begin with, but have no liking for civilization, so they conduct their own, independent war of retribution in the forests and ruins of Tolkeen. Nasty

and vile fiends, they seldom team up with other creatures, except for the occasional demon, Witchling or evil Faerie Folk.

Witchlings are another weird creature who generally hate humans and mortal life forms and who have no real sense of loyalty to Tolkeen nor any strong urge for revenge. However, because they dislike humans so much and hate to be bested by them, they also conduct a private war against Coalition forces in Minnesota and Wisconsin. A handful have even gone off to the 'Burbs to see what evil they can stir up there. Witchlings usually operate alone or in small groups of fellow Witchlings or equally vile beings, including evil practitioners of magic. They also love to boss and bully lesser beings and may command a small band (2-8) of thugs, cutthroats, low level spell casters and monsters willing to submit to their harsh leadership.

Neuron-Beasts, Thornhead Demons, Simvan, and most other savage beings once allied to or controlled by the lords of Tolkeen have returned to their old lifestyles, attacking Coalition soldiers only when they are attacked or threatened first (or feel mean that day).

Retribution Squads

There is one more type of Tolkeen resistance fighter that needs to be addressed, **Retribution Squads**, the most fanatical, vindictive and bloodthirsty of those sworn to bring down the Coalition States. Not only do these squads target the CS, but also those they see as having betrayed Tolkeen in its hour of need, which happens to include Lord Coake's Cyber-Knights, the Lynn-Srial, Erin Tarn, the people of Lazlo and New Lazlo, and any who declined to join the battle against the CS when the call went out.

Warlord Scard, driven to the brink of madness by failure and hate, is the man who put out the call for Tolkeen's warriors to keep fighting, not just at home against the CS occupation force, but to take the fight to the enemy's own doorstep: the 'Burbs of Chi-Town, Iron Heart and other great Coalition cities. It is Warlord Scard who referred to these fanatical avengers as "engines of retribution" that have since come to call themselves **Retribution Squads**. These bands of warriors and sorcerers have sworn to make the Coalition pay, and pay dearly, for the destruction of Tolkeen. They are composed of men, women, D-Bees, dragons and monsters who have given themselves so completely to hatred and bloodlust that they strike down man, woman and child with callous glee. Their cries for revenge go beyond an eye for an eye to demand the head of Emperor Prosek, every member of his family, and the death of ten Coalition citizens for every one of Tolkeen's own that fell in the war. They are resolute in their missions of destruction and fight with a terrifying conviction and passion.

Retribution Squads can range in size from 4-12 with a mix of O.C.C.s, but at least 20% of every squad is a practitioner or creature of magic. In the forests and ruins of Tolkeen, they attack and harass CS outposts, base camps, supply trains, patrols, and even full brigades. They use every dirty trick in the book, laying traps and ambushes, calling for demons and monsters, and sending the Coalition's own dead against them. Revenge squads fight to divide and cripple CS operations and to flat out kill as many of the enemy as possible. Prisoners are *never* taken,

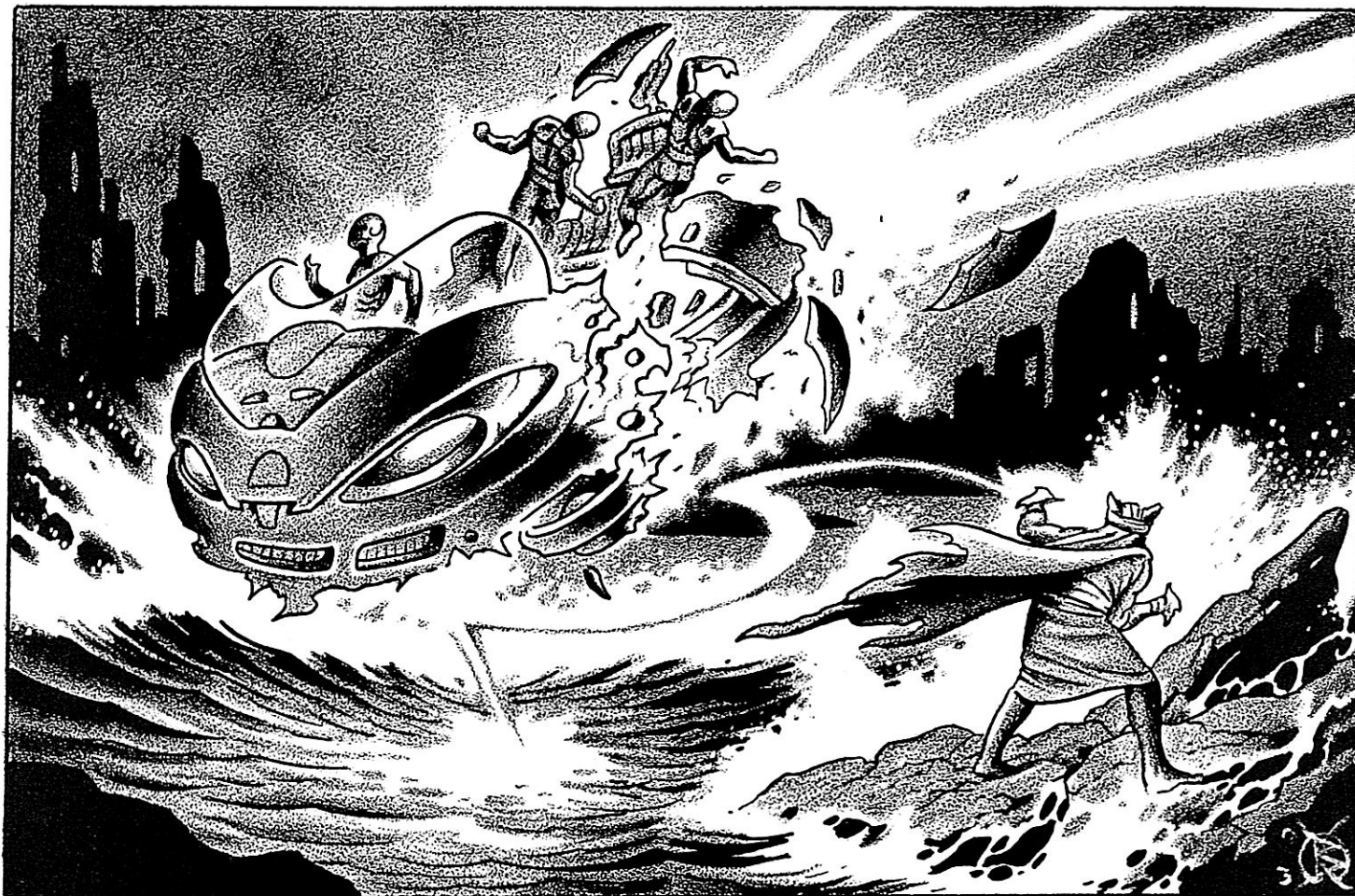
and soldiers who are wounded or surrender are slaughtered where they stand. Similar tactics are used in the 'Burbs where Coalition Army patrols, police, business people and citizens working or visiting the 'Burbs are sought out and murdered. Ambushes in alleys and from rooftops cut down soldiers and police on patrol, and Retribution Squads frequently orchestrate trouble and crime to draw CS authorities out into the open where they can be gunned down in the streets. Likewise, Retribution Squads may be the source behind all sorts of criminal activity and trouble in the 'Burbs intended to frustrate, discredit, or kill Coalition authorities or to harm CS interests or embarrass their elite fighting force, as well as draw CS agents and their allies and sympathizers into traps and ambushes. They also engage in acts of terrorism, extortion, and murder. Food storage facilities, factories, taverns, dens of iniquity, meeting places, shopping malls and countless other places where Coalition soldiers and police are likely to visit are staked out and targeted by Retribution Squads.

In addition to targeting obvious Coalition soldiers, police, Dog Boys, and spies, Retribution Squads also target informers and mercenaries employed by the CS as well as known sympathizers and the misguided multitude who come to the 'Burbs with the dream of becoming *CS citizens* or are already CS citizens hoping for a better life inside the fortress city – *traitors all*. Consequently, these cutthroats attack CS soldiers and police with indifference toward the people around them, for in their eyes, anyone living or working in the 'Burbs is probably guilty of fraternization with the enemy and *deserves* to die. Their warped way of thinking has many members of Retribution

Squads believing that when enough “innocent” people die, they will give up on the mad dream of joining the Coalition and rise up to topple the CS. The worst of these rebel fanatics deliberately attack civilians and civilian targets under the precept that they are, after all, Coalition sympathizers and wannabes whose deaths are payment in kind for the hundreds of thousands of innocent Tolkeenites who died in the war. These attacks can happen anywhere in the 'Burbs, but are generally aimed at those who openly fraternize with Coalition soldiers and police and those who live in the Old Towns and, to a lesser degree, New Towns. Those in the shanty towns are often spared the sword of retribution because this is where the new arrivals, adventurers and poorest people live.

Meanwhile, dozens of Retribution Squads search for ways inside the great fortress cities so they can strike directly at Coalition citizens and hurt or kill hundreds if not thousands of those who believe they are safe behind the city's Mega-Damage walls. So far, they have been unsuccessful, so they vent their ire on those around the city and continue to search for ways inside. They can think of no greater revenge than to strike at the heart of the CS where the Emperor and his people think they are untouchable. In fact, many of the schemes involving the assassination of Emperor Prosek, members of the Prosek family and top CS officials are the work of Retribution Squads.

There is no “typical” resistance fighter. They can be any O.C.C. or R.C.C., human or D-Bee, dragon or demon, and fight with both magic and advanced weaponry. The typical member of a Retribution Squad is second to fifth level, with the leaders and lone-wolf elite vigilantes (mages, Juicers, dragons, etc.) 4th



to 9th level. Of course, some are first and second level and some are higher level, but the majority of resistance fighters who serve as the “engines of retribution” tend to be the more skilled, unique and experienced, falling into the 1D4+1 range. The only thing Tolkeen resistance fighters and avengers share, whether a Rogue Scholar or Headhunter, farmer or spell caster, is their commitment to keep fighting and bringing hurt to the CS. A full half will fight to the death.

The ultimate goal of every Retribution Squad is to deal a devastating blow to the Coalition States in general and Chi-Town specifically. That means some sort of attack or sabotage that kills thousands, kills some top officials or the Emperor himself, or breaches CS security to inflict damage and death directly to the citizens inside the fortress city. Many plot and try their best, but, so far, none have succeeded.

Common Urban Warfare Strategies and Tactics

Note: Applies to combat in Tolkeen before and after the Kingdom’s fall, and operations in the ‘Burbs.

1. Wait for the moment. A common tactic is to watch and follow Coalition patrols, mapping out their schedules, routes and places of rest and recreation, then wait for an opening and strike when least expected. This can include picking off individuals who fall behind or take too far a lead, or attacking when the squad splits in half or when they pause for a break or foolishly remove a helmet to eat or take a gulp of water or unfiltered air.

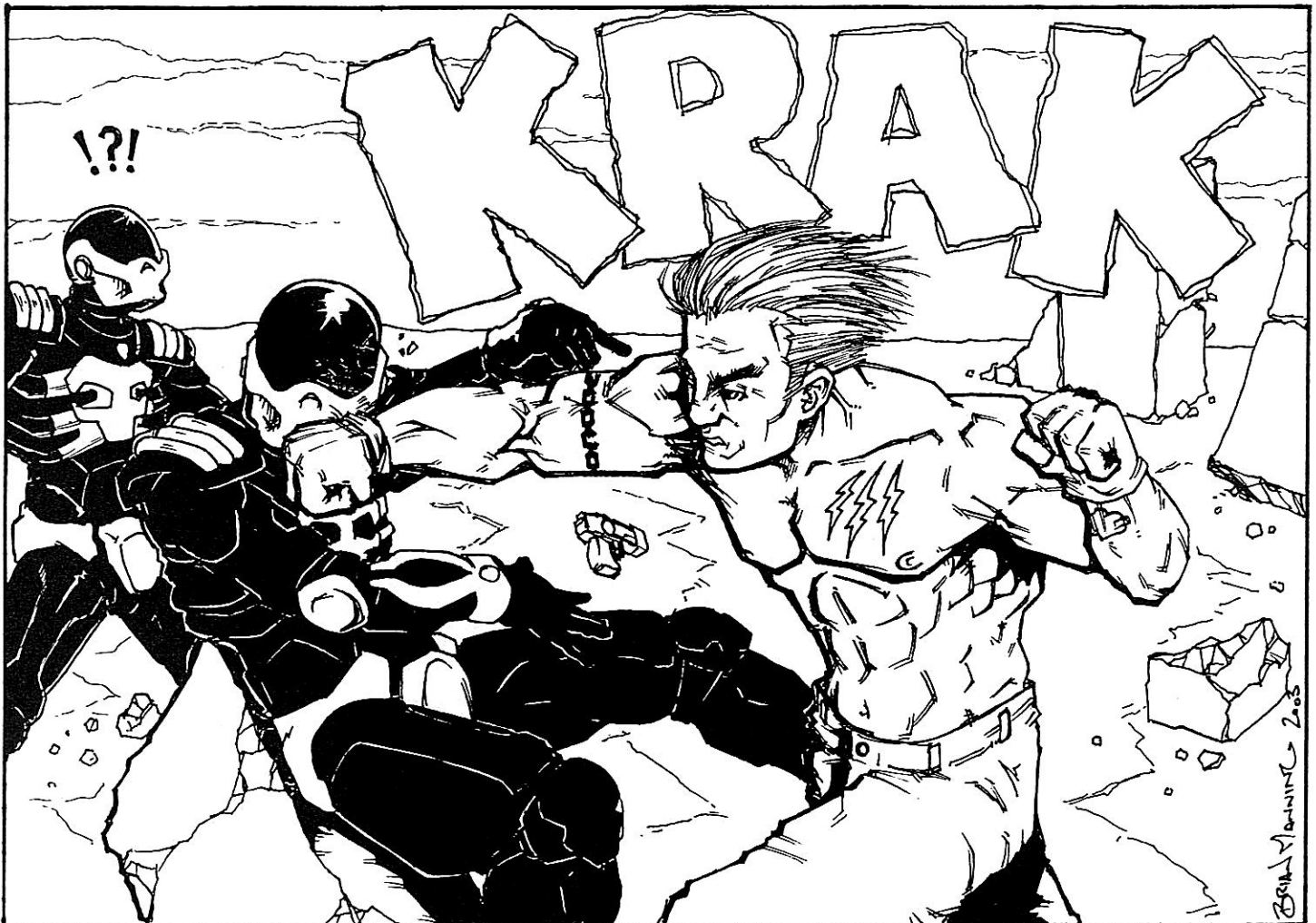
2. Shadow games. This tactic requires following the enemy closely, without being detected, and then breaking away to go somewhere else, or to follow and gather intelligence, or to avoid being found by the enemy because the rebels are right on top of them, too close to be noticed. This can be a dangerous ploy that ends in disaster if one pushes his luck.

3. Running the pattern. First, the enemy is carefully observed, with keen attention to schedules and troop movement. Human beings are creatures of habit and tend to slip into comfortable patterns and routines. Once a fundamental (sometimes precise) pattern of movement and routine is determined, Retribution Squads (resistance fighters, crooks, spies and smugglers) can “run the pattern.” This can be used one of two ways:

A) To slip through enemy defensive lines by *avoiding* patrols and taking advantage of weaknesses in the line (blind spots, coffee breaks, etc.). This tactic is used to slip in and out of *supposedly* secured areas, and avoid routine patrols.

B) To hit the enemy at intervals along a specific route or pattern because the attackers know exactly who will be where, when, how many to anticipate, and so on. The latter can make an extremely devastating attack or raid followed by a clean escape, provided the timing is just right.

4. Take away and deny. Retribution Squads watch and follow Coalition patrols, from a safe distance, but do not attack even when there is an opportunity to do so. Instead, they wait to see what it is that soldiers are looking for or trying to accomplish. Only when they are about to achieve their objective does



the Squad strike. The idea is to take away or deny the CS from getting/accomplishing what they want. This may mean rescuing crooks and rebels and otherwise interfering with Coalition operations. Take-away means just that. If the CS squad has found a magic item or weapon, the Retribution Squad attacks and tries to steal, take, or destroy it. The battle, in fact, will not be designed to kill, necessarily, but to put them in the position to get the object of the Coalition's desire. This includes people. If the Coalition squad has captured a scientist, smuggler, rebel leader, or just a refugee family, the Retribution Squad will try to rescue them. They might even help Minions of Splugorth or an old rival, rather than let them fall into the Coalition's hands.

Deny typically falls into the category of, "if we (the Retribution Squad/freedom fighters) can't get it, nobody will get it." This often applies to large items, caches of weapons, a research lab, etc., which the rebels cannot actually "take away," but they can "deny" their enemy from getting by *destroying* it, or in some cases, allowing some rival faction to get it instead (Federation of Magic, Minions of Splugorth, looters, mercenaries, etc.). As long as the Coalition Army is "denied" the Squad have done their duty. Of course, Retribution Squads being so ruthless, if the opportunity to kill Coalition troops makes itself available, the Squad will do so, even if they have already taken away or denied the enemy. In fact, they may use the item to lure Coalition forces to their doom.

5. Hide and seek, or "peekaboo" tactics. This is often a sniper's game or tag-team in which the attackers pop in and out to harass the enemy. Basically one or two attackers strike from different locations. As the enemy turns to address the attack, the rebel disappears and another one pops up to strike from a different location. This is repeated, over and over again, giving the Coalition forces no clear target or location to strike back at. The tag-team approach usually allows for the initial gunman to do what damage he can, but at some point, he stops shooting to relocate to a different position (or make good his escape). When those he had pinned down begin to move, or go to investigate the first location, or to relocate themselves, the second and/or third sniper starts shooting, or a group of avengers catch the Coalition soldiers in a crossfire or lure them into a dead end or trap. Moreover, if played out well, a small number of avengers (three or four) may fool their opponents into believing there are twice as many assailants, pinning and neutralizing a much larger enemy force. At least until the soldiers call for SAMAS or Sky Cycle air support, which is time for the "tag-team" to make good its escape or prepare to take out the air support (typically the former). This set up can be repeated time and time again, even at the same location. The hide and seek tactic can also be used to divide and conquer their enemies.

6. Prevent defense. Another common tactic is to set up an arbitrary defensive position from which to make a stand. However, other than some basic tactical advantages provided by the position, and having a fall back position and at least two escape routes planned, the defensive line has no real strategic value or purpose. It is designed to create a brief, pitched battle in which serious damage can be inflicted on a Coalition squad – ideally wiping it out or pinning it down. Should the soldiers rally or reinforcements arrive to push the Retribution Squad back, the warriors drop to their fall back position, do more damage and before other CS troops arrive, slip out through one of the escape routes and vanish to fight another day.

7. Drop and pop. This tactic involves luring Coalition patrol into an alley, basement or some kind of depression or cavity in the ground where their movement is restricted but the attacking force has the advantage. Better yet, to lure them into a "pit trap" where all or most of the Coalition troops have the ground drop out from under them and fall into a pit. While they are recovering from the fall and are confined in a small area, they are mercilessly attacked from above (attacking from rooftops can have a similar effect). If the Coalition soldiers have fallen into the pit or been caught completely by surprise, the attackers automatically get the initiative and the soldiers lose two melee attacks for the first round of combat. Obviously this gives the attackers the advantage, and not only do the CS troops have to fend off an attack but they are pinned down in a place open to attack and must expend time and energy trying to climb out and move to a defensible position. The best alley rooftop attacks and pit traps make firing on the soldiers like shooting fish in a barrel. In the alternative, Magic Net and other entangling or incapacitating magic can be used to capture or immobilize the CS squad, or to cover and contain them, or to slaughter them.

Many Retribution Squads take this tactic to a new and brutal level. Since most Tolkeen avengers have no regard for innocent bystanders, they often jump Coalition forces on busy streets, opening fire in the middle of thronging crowds, killing anybody who happens to get in the way. This gives the Retribution Squad a huge advantage, for not only are the CS troops usually caught by surprise, but most Coalition soldiers are not as cold-hearted as their opponents, hesitating to shoot when innocent *humans* are in danger (-3 on initiative, -2 to strike and dodge). Dog Boys, who are incredibly loyal and protective of humans to begin with, are even more compromised and handicapped (-4 on initiative and -4 to strike and dodge) in this sort of situation. Since the Retribution Squad considers most 'Burbies to be Coalition sympathizers or outright traitors, they don't care how many civilians are cut down and may even use heavy ordnance, and explosives, and set fire to or blast through buildings to create confusion and ground cover, obscure their escape or open an avenue of escape. Such ruthlessness makes Retribution Squads hated by most 'Burbies, heroes and good-hearted adventurers, but always gives the Tolkeen fanatics the element of surprise and means they can strike without warning from out of nowhere. Despite the fact that they are despised, there are so many new faces of refugees, visitors, adventurers and opportunists streaming into the 'Burbs, Retribution Squads and assassins find it easy to hide and lose themselves among the masses.

8. A magic mouse trap. A common ploy is to lure Coalition squads and platoons into a death trap. As a rule, magic plays a big role in this. Typically, a band of 4-8 ordinary fighters (human and D-Bees) attacks a group of Coalition soldiers. The trick is to make the fight look good, before retreating from the (seemingly) superior Coalition forces. Then, without warning the trap is sprung. A hail of lightning bolts or fire balls crash down from out of the blue (practitioners of magic hidden away). Mice scurrying past the soldiers' feet suddenly transform into dragons, or Shadow Beasts lunge from the darkness, or warriors magically made invisible or to meld with their surroundings step forward and start shooting in a crossfire, and so on. Elementals of all kinds are ideal for these situations. Suddenly, one or more Earth Elementals rise out of the debris under the soldiers' feet, or an Air Elemental swoops down from the heavens or a Fire Elemen-

tal steps out from a burning building, or a pool of water congeals into a Water Elemental, all hurling magic spells and using their natural powers. Tectonic Entities, Possessing Entities, animated dead and other supernatural creatures can be used to similar effect.

Illusions, charms, fear and immobilizing types of magic can also be deployed to stop, pin, threaten, frighten and chase away CS troops. Blasting and killing is not always the best strategy in war. Sometimes holding a position or demoralizing the enemy is just as effective and sometimes even more powerful. Soldiers expect to be shot at and killed. They become desensitized to it to some degree, but being magically dazed, terrorized, knocked down, held at bay, chased away or humiliated can demoralize, confuse, intimidate and break their spirits. Of course, while Retribution Squads love to humiliate their hated enemy, they prefer to obliterate them.

9. Deadman's bluff. This is a simple ploy in which a Necromancer animates and controls a number of corpses or skeletons to shoot (wild) and move about to make it *appear* as if there are a larger number of defenders than there really are. This bluff is used to make patrols back off and retreat or dig in, or take a different path, and so on. Animated dead can also be used to lure or mislead enemy troops into traps and as diversions, as well as to allow the living to make good an escape, reposition troops, rescue innocent civilians, and so on. To make the bluff convincing, the dead bodies are dressed in clothes or body armor with face-covering helmets so their adversaries can't tell they are dead. Animated corpses are also used in traps and ambushes.

10. Pot shot. Outnumbered and overpowered, sometimes all a resistance fighter can do is take a "pot shot," run away and hope for the best. This is exactly how it sounds and barely counts as a skirmish. Pot shots are more of an annoyance than harassment of the enemy, but it's something. Unfortunately for civilians, the Retribution Squads' idea of a pot shot is to throw explosive ordnance, missiles, plasma bolts or magical energy blasts, earthquakes and storms at the enemy, inflicting grievous damage and injury to everyone in the radius of the blast/attack.

11. Hit and run tactics. Any combat maneuver that involves a limited engagement or surprise attack in which the attackers strike, inflict as much damage as possible and move on before the enemy can rally, counter or call reinforcements. Hit and run engagements are usually very brief, but can be very devastating and lethal.

Note: These are just some of the more notable, common and unique tactics used by the Tolkeen resistance, Retribution Squads and other urban fighters.

Defilers of Tolkeen Looters & Thieves

Not everyone went home after the fall of Tolkeen. As noted previously, some continue to fight in their own way, or seek bloody revenge, but other survivors are self-serving cretins who saw opportunity in the final days of the Kingdom and seized it with both hands. They are the cutthroats, looters and thieves who plundered Tolkeen's citizens, military and secret reserves. Some just stole whatever valuables came their way, peeling rings, jewelry and wallets from dead bodies, looting homes and

businesses, and stealing anything that wasn't nailed down. For most of these lowlifes, the looting stopped only when their backpacks and pickup trucks were filled to overflowing, or when the Coalition Invasion Force came too close for comfort. As reprehensible as these vultures may have been, most of them didn't kill to get what they took, but there were those who did. The real jackals used the collapse of Tolkeen as their chance to take what they wanted, killing teammates they disliked, mugging and killing innocent citizens and fellow freedom fighters for their belongings, and taking, by force and treachery, whatever valuables, weapons and magic items they coveted. If their efforts hurt the war effort or killed some innocent people, so what, the end was near and a dog eat dog, anything goes attitude prevailed. The worst of the lot were the organized gangs who specifically turned on the very Kingdom they were defending, using force and military tactics to raid caches of magic, weapons and treasure, stealing historical artifacts, and killing anyone who stood in their way, including long-time allies and heroes of



Tolkeen. Some even targeted Tolkeen's leaders, warlords and sorcerers to get some of the most valuable, rare and powerful magic weapons, artifacts and secrets for themselves before fleeing into the night.

Only now are many of these villains trickling into communities to sell and trade their ill-gotten wares. Many are still out in the wild, working to slip past Coalition forces to get to places where they can profit from their booty. Places like *Lazlo* and *New Lazlo* in the east, the *Colorado Baronies* and *Arzno* in the west, and other law abiding and moral communities are not viable options. First, most are far away and require days or weeks of traveling through hostile wilderness and past Coalition patrols. Second, these lawful and honest communities will impound and attempt to return stolen items (especially magic items and artifacts of repute) to their rightful heirs and owners, or seize the items and turn them over to some higher civil authority for the preservation of history and/or the betterment of their own community. Third, these are places where Tolkeen's magical elite, political and military leaders, and scholars have gone to seek asylum, which means there are a large number of people who can identify stolen goods, antiquities and items from Tolkeen's ravaged archives as well as I.D. individuals and gangs known as, or suspected of being, looters, thieves, traitors, and murderers. Furthermore, the local authorities are willing to challenge claims of ownership from rogues, siding with those they know and apprehending and prosecuting offenders who looted Tolkeen in her final hours.

That makes less reputable places like the *Federation of Magic*, the *Calgary Kingdom of Monsters*, the *Pecos Empire* and towns along the Mexican border better places to liquidate stolen goods without questions or the involvement of the law. Only there are problems with these places too.

The Federation of Magic is a long way from Tolkeen and the Coalition Army is swarming along the Mississippi River, roads and routes to that part of the country. Even if one successfully evades trouble and makes it to the Magic Zone, the Federation is notorious for skullduggery and violence, making it less than ideal.

The Calgary Kingdom of Monsters is just that, a kingdom of monsters. Unless one is a demon or monster himself, getting out of town alive, let alone getting a fair deal, seems rather doubtful. Besides, the existence of this kingdom is half rumor at this point, no one knows if it really exists or not, but the area is known to be home to packs of human-hating monsters.

The Pecos Empire is as wild and lawless as a territory can be, so one is more likely to get beaten and robbed, or robbed and killed, as he is likely to get a fair deal. That having been said, people with the right connections or dumb luck can find numerous bands of mercenaries and desperadoes (not to mention agents of Bandito Arms) willing to pay fair to good prices (30-70% its real value) for quality weapons, armor, combat vehicles, equipment and magic items.

Communities in and around the Mexican Border are just as dangerous as Calgary or the Pecos Empire and are overridden with vampires! One tempts his fate trafficking goods in this part of the world, but it is an option.

Chi-Town 'Burbs, the epicenter for loot

All of this puts the **Kingdom of Kingsdale** (effectively cut off by CS patrols trying to intercept war criminals, D-Bees, Tolkeen freedom fighters and looters on the run from Tolkeen) and the **Chi-Town 'Burbs** at the top of the list for best places to unload loot. Consequently, the Chi-Town 'Burbs are being inundated with adventurers, refugees, rebel fighters, looters, and thieves looking to sell or trade items acquired during their time in Tolkeen. This includes magic items, magic components, magic weapons, pre-Rifts artifacts, illegal books, otherworldly items, works of art, and conventional weapons (including CS weapons and armor), as well as medicine, electronics, clothes, and just about anything that might have value. Only the number of individuals looking to *buy* exceeds those looking to sell, leading to fierce rivalry, bidding wars, theft, trickery and violence.

Why Chi-Town of all places? Lots of reasons.

1. As realtors are famous for saying, "location, location, location." Chi-Town is the closest hub of civilization to Tolkeen. Not only is it very close, but the 'Burbs represent a huge population center with tens of thousands of potential buyers; residents, businesses and adventurers.

2. It is a no-man's land that exists outside of Coalition law and isn't officially a part of the Coalition States, which means even though the CS has a presence in the 'Burbs, lawlessness, the criminal underground and independent buyers, collectors, adventurers, mercenaries and rebels are all present and eager to purchase contraband.

3. The 'Burbs are a mass of humanity with crowded streets, slums, and back alleys filled with independent and self-styled adventurers. Streets where buyers and sellers can easily lose themselves among the masses and interested parties don't ask too many questions.

4. It offers individuals, groups and communities with money and connections to the outside world and the ability to circumvent Coalition intervention.

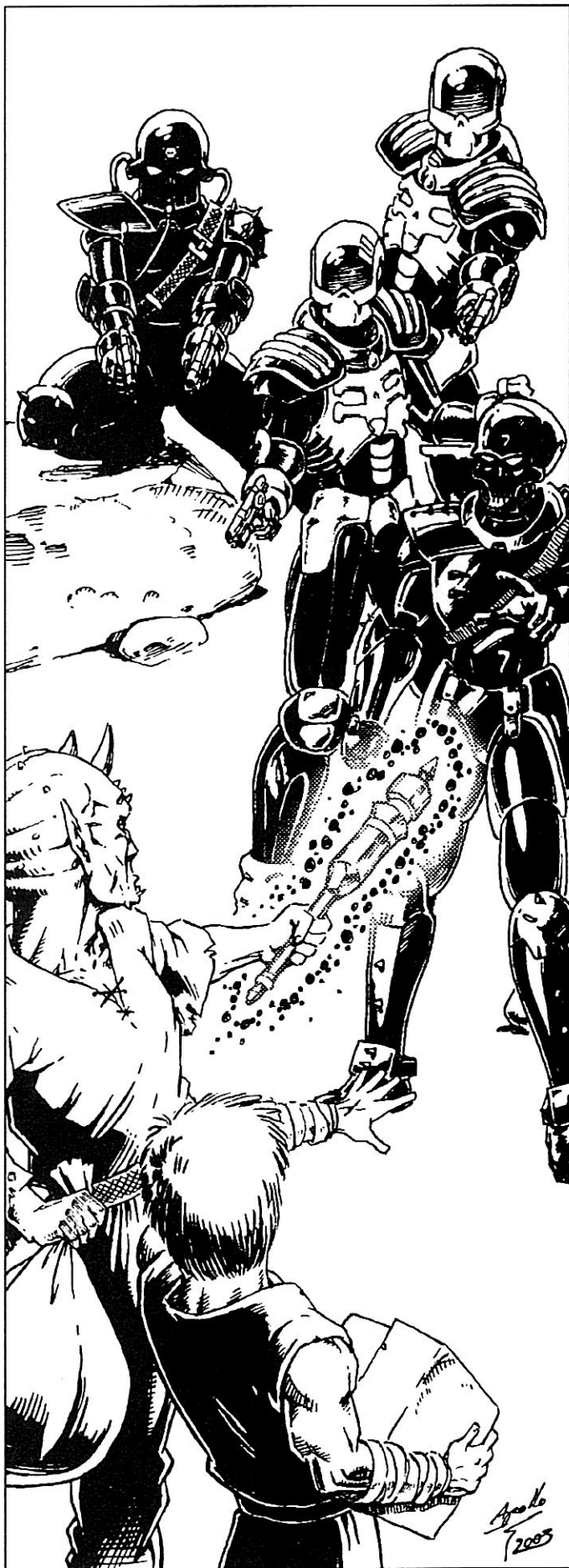
5. Communities where the Black Market and other organized crime rings have a powerful influence (some would say stranglehold).

6. Communities frequented by mercenaries, adventurers and other interested parties always in the market for weapons, magic and illegal goods.

7. Communities with independent and rebellious attitudes and which harbor scores of underground societies, cults, dissidents, groups, scholars and collectors likely to be interested in loot, magic and collectibles from Tolkeen.

8. Communities where outside powers, like the Federation of Magic, Pecos Empire, Lazlo and others (as well as powerful individuals) send agents and operatives to quietly acquire certain outlawed, stolen and mystical articles.

Even with the Coalition Army and police patrols, undercover agents, random raids and shakedowns, the Chi-Town 'Burbs are the hot spot to sell and buy Tolkeen contraband. And thousands are pouring in to do just that. This makes the 'Burbs both an extremely exciting and dangerous place to be right now. Strangers are frequently found dead in the alleys, visitors (and locals) go missing, and the sounds of arguments, gunfire and magic com-



bat ring out from time to time, day and night. Those looking for a deal or the means to power-up can have a field day and make a killing if they are careful, smart and a little lucky. A good half of the louts selling stolen items have no idea what they have or what it is really worth, especially when it comes to magic, so good deals can be had by the truckload. However, these are the types of thugs who won't take kindly to finding out they were swindled, and many looters, thieves and killers will seek out the person or group who "wronged them" to extort more money, steal the item back and, very likely, to kill the one(s) who made a fool out of them. Some will even use the scam of selling and stealing the item back over and over again.

Player Note: Player characters must remember that they are dealing with the worst scum on Earth. Cutthroats who will just as soon kill them and strip their bodies as give them the time of day, provided the villains think they can get away with it, or feel justified in extracting revenge. Furthermore, there is no honor among these thieves, so it is possible (even likely) that whatever the player character purchased was stolen from some other band of brigands who are looking to find "their" stolen goods and get it back – by any means necessary. And/or one or multiple groups or individuals are all after the stolen item and they don't care what they have to do or who they have to kill to get it for themselves. Heroes and adventurers should use extreme caution and be prepared for anything.

Treasure Seekers

Minions of Splugorth

Minions of Splugorth are a new player in the Tolkeen situation. They stayed out of the war and had no love for either side. They arrived during Tolkeen's last cataclysmic days, not to help, but to plunder. *Splugorth Slavers* capture all manner of men and beasts for sale in the Atlantean trans-dimensional slave market. They are bold enough to challenge squads and platoons (sometimes entire companies) of the Coalition Army and venture into (or send their more human looking warrior slaves into) human and D-Bee cities, including the Chi-Town 'Burbs, in search of valuable quarry, to resupply or just cause trouble.

Meanwhile, *Kittani, Overlords, Powerlords, Sunaj, Stone Masters* and other minions and slaves search for rare and valuable magic items, artifacts, weapons and secrets of magic. They not only dig through the rubble of the blasted cities, but rob and loot others who may have already acquired that which they seek, including the Coalition Army. The Minions of Splugorth are a power to be reckoned with for they understand and use both technology and magic, and seldom act foolishly or rashly. Many are well disciplined combat specialists who use cunning, subterfuge and treachery as well as brute force.

Highly intelligent and ruthless, minions such as the *Kittani, Tattooed Men, Blind Warrior Women*, and *Gargoyles*, under the command of a *Powerlord, Overlord, High Lord* or *Conservator*, are assigned the task of tracking down and recovering magic items and secrets already *removed* from Tolkeen. That means they are hunting down looters, adventurers, fugitives and refugees wherever they may have gone, including the 'Burbs. Though the occasional Minion of Splugorth, especially *Tattooed Men* and *Kittani*, have visited the 'Burbs in the past, they have

never done so in such large numbers or with a specific mission or purpose in mind. Sunaj assassins, Stone Masters, and metamorphed dragons are also counted among the Minions and independent operatives from Atlantis searching to recover mystical plunder and secrets of magic by any means necessary. When they can steal them, they do. When they can trick a person out of them or buy the item for a song, they do. But when they can't win their prize through subterfuge or trickery, they take them by force. Since the Minions are primarily concerned with obtaining items of magic, they attack and fight only to get what they seek, leaving survivors and the wounded alive without any further consideration. However, Minions of Splugorth have no qualms about killing, and will murder, endanger bystanders and raze entire towns or challenge an army to get what they want. For adventurers and thieves, the arrogance of the Minions of Splugorth can sometimes work to their advantage. For one, the Minions frequently leave survivors who can regroup and challenge the Minions at a later time in an attempt to recover what was taken or as an act of revenge. For another, the Minions of Splugorth often underestimate their opponents, and may be forced to retreat, regroup and try another tactic or return with more men, giving the heroes the chance to escape, hide, sell the items or prepare for the inevitable rematch. (G.M.s, both situations are a great opportunity for adventure.)

The fact that the Splugorth of Atlantis are so driven and so brazen as to invade and infiltrate the Coalition's own backyard (i.e., the 'Burbs and the Tolkeen territory) has many scholars, practitioners of magic and military leaders concerned that the Splugorth may be gearing up to invade and conquer North America, or at least plunder its resources (people included) with relative impunity. They certainly have shown little fear of the Coalition Army, even though the CS has successfully destroyed and repelled a number of Atlantean recovery teams, including a few large ones in Tolkeen.

Federation of Magic

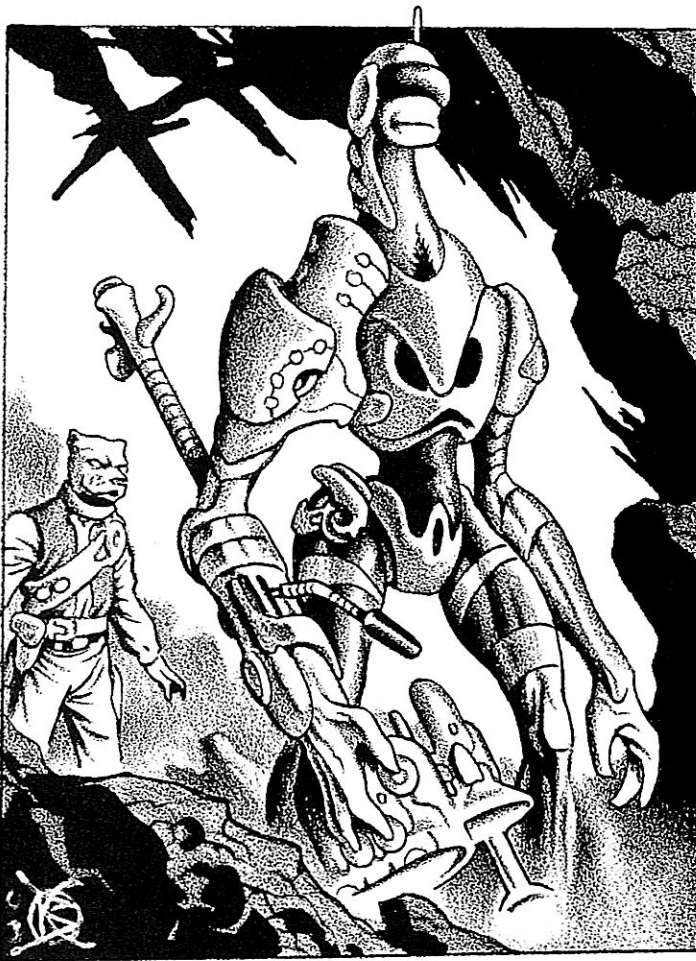
Another malevolent force that has invaded the 'Burbs in search of Tolkeen's lost treasures, magic and secrets is the Federation of Magic. Like the Splugorth they have agents arriving at the Chi-Town 'Burbs (and other communities) ever vigilant for rare artifacts, weapons, and secrets of magic. Some are non-violent, posing as interested parties looking to *purchase* magic and Tolkeen treasures. Whenever something of value is offered, the agents of the Federation try to acquire it for as little money as possible. This is easy when dealing with people who don't know what they have or are gullible adventurers and thieves who believe their lies. Others agents of the Federation, however, steal, cheat and kill to get what they want. Some operate as lone individuals, others in pairs or small groups, and a few as large scale operations with hundreds of agents scattered throughout the 'Burbs but working under one group leader.

Federation rivalry. Competition is heavy and every dirty trick in the book is being used to acquire magic and artifacts. Not only must Federation agents who serve Lord Dunscon compete with the Minions of Splugorth, the Coalition Army (out to capture and destroy magic items), independent mages, adventurer groups, mercenaries, dragons, local magic guilds, cults, independent mages, dealers in magic, and private collectors, but rival members of the Federation itself! The Federation of Magic

has been divided for generations, and though Lord Dunscon has recently unified a large number of these factions, there are hundreds (thousands really) who defy or ignore Lord Dunscon and quietly work toward their own agendas. Thus, there are easily hundreds of independent sorcerers, hired agents (adventurers, mercs and thieves), and creatures of magic from the Federation of Magic out for themselves, all outbidding and undermining Federation activity to get a particular item or secret of magic before some other member of the Federation.

Federation insurrectionists and assault teams. In addition to Federation agents seeking to recover lost treasures and magic from Tolkeen, Lord Dunscon recognizes this as a time his agents can strike at the Coalition States without incurring their wrath by posing as Tolkeen Retribution squads. Tolkeen rebels get the blame and the Federation profits from it. As a result, Federation warriors, assassins and saboteurs are loose on the streets of the 'Burbs causing trouble in the name of Tolkeen and searching for ways into the great fortress city of Chi-Town where they can wreak true havoc.





Revenge Squad Ragnarok

By Julius Rosenstein

Additional ideas and text by Kevin Siembieda

(G.M.s Note: Ragnarok is a group of adventurers who are currently in the Chi-Town 'Burbs. Depending upon who the player characters are and what they do, the players could end up either joining Ragnarok, not joining but working and/or fighting *alongside* them, fighting *against* them, or Ragnarok can simply be used as a catalyst for adventures.)

One group of adventurers who have carried the war from the fallen Kingdom of Tolkeen to the Chi-Town 'Burbs is the *Revenge Squad Ragnarok*. After fighting their way out of Tolkeen, they harried CS forces at every opportunity while gradually working their way toward Chi-Town. During their trek, someone brought up the idea of Ragnarok: The Final Battle of the world according to Norse myth. Several members liked the idea of getting to Chi-Town and bringing about a great revolution that will bring down Chi-Town. They swore a blood oath to that effect and even adopted the name of Ragnarok.

Although determined (and somewhat desperate), Revenge Squad Ragnarok knows that they are not strong enough to penetrate the defenses of the Chi-Town fortress city. So, for now, they remain in the 'Burbs, ambushing lone CS soldiers and

small CS patrols, while otherwise harassing their foes and attempting to instigate a revolution (unsuccessfully, so far). Meanwhile, they bide their time and wait for their chance to breach the walls of the great fortress city to strike deep in the heart of the capital. Their motive is simple revenge – payback for the toppling of the Kingdom of Tolkeen, and for their comrades who fell in the war.

In addition to their military and guerilla activities, Revenge Squad Ragnarok has also implemented some other tactics to establish themselves among the locals and to become better acquainted with their new surroundings. Among their most cunning deceptions is the establishment of the *Firebelly Soup Kitchen* (see Firetown #41), *Ace Protection Service* (see Firetown #40) and the *Hot Stuff Escort Service* (see Firetown #38), all of which helps to keep the Squad's ears to the ground and hooked into what's happening, as well as working to establish a number of seedy contacts, informants and pawns residing in the 'Burbs.

Ragnarok Mercenaries

The top members of Revenge Squad Ragnarok make most of their money by hiring themselves out as an elite mercenary team (though the prostitution ring through Hot Stuff Escort Service provides an impressive weekly income, most of which goes toward maintaining the Firebelly Soup Kitchen). For the right price, they will get the job done with few questions asked, and they are especially eager to take any jobs that pit them against or hurt the Coalition Army. The Black Market and some specific individuals, often mages, D-Bees, or other people who either lack the talents and expertise to accomplish their goal or who want to insure that their involvement in whatever is going down does not lead the CS authorities back to them, hire the members of Ragnarok to handle a variety of different tasks. The group has performed so well that the Black Market is becoming a regular client.

Khem decides which of these assignments to accept and which squad members (core members and/or recruits) are to handle a particular job. The nature of these jobs can vary, any or all of the Squad Ragnarok may be called upon for their individual talents.

Unlike the Soup Kitchen and Protection Service (which the Squad regards as charity work), the mercenary assignments are making a good profit and allow Squad Ragnarok to continue to maintain all of their various activities. Currently, the mercenary assignments have put 115,000 credits in Ragnarok's war chest, put aside specifically for funding their anti-Coalition missions of revenge. That amount should increase by 50% every month. Funds used for basic day to day expenses are provided by the Hot Stuff Escort Service and Protection Service and used to maintain those operations with any surplus funds used like petty cash. Large withdrawals have to be approved by either *Khem* or *Silvera* unless it's an emergency situation. If the group wasn't bent on undermining the CS they could become wealthy entrepreneurs in Firetown, then again, it's their lust for revenge that makes them so driven and successful.

Note: Perceptive gamers will notice that the individual members of Squad Ragnarok do not possess a great deal in the way of personal possessions. This might make them wonder, if these

guys have been adventuring a while, why don't they have a lot more items than what is listed? Well, they lost most of their possessions during the Siege on Tolkeen and a lot of what they now have they acquired after reaching the 'Burbs. When one is fleeing from a burning city with a hostile army after him, one is lucky to get away with his life. Anything one manages to bring along is a welcome bonus. The rest of their savings and hard work has gone into establishing their three front businesses. Of course, as their various ventures work out, they could earn and purchase much more, but all their main effort is going into their plans of insurrection and retribution.

Although some of the members of Revenge Squad Ragnarok (particularly Sigurd and Voudaryi) feel that some of the sideline activities are a waste of time and resources, the majority of the Squad are hoping that they will pay off in the long run, and each one already is. Even the soup kitchen, the most costly of their endeavors, has earned them plenty of good will and helps provide the group with rumors and recruits, as well as a secret hiding place. Furthermore, although it was unanticipated, these good-will gestures have actually caused a change in attitude among some of the members of the Squad Ragnarok itself.

The Squad's original motive for coming to the Chi-Town 'Burbs was to seek revenge on the Coalition for destroying Tolkeen. They, like so many Retribution Squads, were filled with hate and desire for revenge. The CS army and government are still hated for what they have done in Tolkeen, but the Squad has come to realize that most of the poor people of the 'Burbs (who are not even officially Coalition citizens) had nothing to do with this tragedy and simply cling to a dream of making a better life for themselves. Many struggle and live hard, desperate lives under the yoke of Coalition indifference and cruelty. For Squad members who are essentially good, like *Khem*, *Silvera*, and even *Sigurd* (to some extent), it is difficult to feel hatred for these downtrodden folks just trying to survive the best that they can. Indeed, some of the Squad members are feeling *good* that they can assist the needy of the 'Burbs, regardless of where their loyalties may ultimately lie, and want to postpone their inevitable Ragnarok "Final Battle" for as long as they can.

Complications

When Revenge Squad Ragnarok was first formed, it's main goal was a simple one: To avenge the deaths of their friends and comrades who died at Tolkeen by hurting Chi-Town deeply. In order to do this, the Squad was to destroy as much of Chi-Town as possible while going out in a blaze of glory. Since then, things are not quite so simple. A number of complications have arisen that may cause the members of Squad Ragnarok to alter their plans, and may even lead to them giving up their idea of an all consuming, suicidal battle in the name of vengeance. Among these are:

1. All of the core members of Ragnarok fought in the Sorcerers' Revenge and the final days of the Siege on Tolkeen. They (or at least some of them) are known to Coalition soldiers and may be identified as being from Tolkeen's elite fighting force. Some may even have a price put on their heads. At any-time, a veteran soldier (or turncoat mercenary or bounty hunter) might show up in the 'Burbs and identify them as enemies of the States.

2. The journey from Tolkeen to the 'Burbs also had its share of combat. Did any of the soldiers they encountered on their journey survive? And, if so, could they show up at the Chi-Town 'Burbs and blow their cover?

3. Since arriving at the 'Burbs, Revenge Squad Ragnarok has fought a number of ambushes and skirmishes, managing to kill a dozen Coalition soldiers, injuring a dozen others and foiling two ISS operations to capture fellow fugitives. The name of *Revenge Squad Ragnarok* is starting to spread and earn the currently faceless members of the group a reputation as a new and potentially formidable Tolkeen Retribution Squad. If they keep up the pressure, it is only a matter of time before the CS starts a formal investigation on the group and tries to hunt them down. When that happens it will be much more difficult to maintain their double-identities as business people by day and avenging freedom fighters by night. For that matter, are there unknown eye-witnesses already lurking around who can identify any of the group's members? Does anyone suspect them as being members of the rebel Squad Ragnarok?

4. The blood oath to form Revenge Squad Ragnarok took place at a time when those involved were emotionally drained and lost to sorrow and anger. Back then, death didn't seem so bad and vengeance meant everything. Since that time, the surviving squad members have had the opportunity to step back a bit and reconsider their position. Anger and hate have cooled and their spirits have been renewed to the point that many are thinking they could do much more good continuing their work in the 'Burbs without sacrificing their lives in the name of a fallen kingdom.

5. With all the good that they have accomplished since coming to the 'Burbs, and so quickly too, some members of the Squad are wondering if they might not make a greater difference helping people than sacrificing their lives in a great Armageddon-like battle. They would still be undermining and confounding the CS, but helping a lot of good people in the process and could do so for years. Is there truly any glory or merit in fighting to the death? Couldn't they do more lasting good as heroes rather than suicidal destroyers? And if so, what else can they do to help the people of the 'Burbs and fellow heroes and innocent fugitives?

The Warriors of Ragnarok

The *original group* were members of an idealistic mercenary company who fought for the freedom of Tolkeen. All were volunteers blinded by the ideology of the magic kingdom and fought long and hard for two and a half years. More than two-thirds of the company perished defending the city of Tolkeen in its final days. When the King of Tolkeen bid them to flee and save themselves, they obeyed. Their spirits broken, their bodies exhausted, their minds confused, they spent days avoiding CS patrols until they heard of Warlord Scard's call for "avengers." Avengers to carry righteous retribution to the very doorstep of Chi-Town and make them pay in blood. Lord Scard's words gave the group a new mission and they made their way to Chi-Town. Along the way, nine others perished at

the hands of the Coalition Army. When they arrived, only six members of the original group remained to form the core of "Revenge Squad Ragnarok." They are: *Khem Dunotah* (True Atlantean Monster Hunter), *Silvera Reedhart* (an Achilles Neo-Human), *John Grimsby* (Temporal Warrior), *Fortune* (a Wormwood Apok), *Sigurd* (Ice Dragon hatchling), and *Voudaryi* (Gargoyle).

Their need for secrecy (all it takes is one word to the Coalition authorities and they will be hunted down by every ISS Specter and Dog Boy the CS can muster) has made Squad Ragnarok very careful and deliberate in their recruitment of new members and overall operations in the 'Burbs. Even the candidates who are selected are only given whatever bits of information Khem and Silvera choose to divulge on an individual basis. Some of the recruits don't even know about Revenge Squad Ragnarok by name or its activities other than using the soup kitchen to find recruits and the protection agency to make money. Others know only that their employers are involved in shady dealings but believe them to be nothing more than crooks or opportunists trying to make a dishonest credit. Only a few are active and knowledgeable in Squad Ragnarok's ambushes and attacks against Coalition personnel, or that the group heralds from the shattered kingdom of Tolkeen; none of them are aware of Ragnarok's vow to initiate a final titanic battle that brings Chi-Town crashing to its knees.

Despite the Squad's reluctance to trust newcomers, there are over a dozen recruits who have joined the actual Revenge Squad Ragnarok in the 'Burbs. This assorted bunch includes a Body Fixer, a Burster, a former CS Commando (who was discharged for insubordination), an Operator, a former Glitter Boy pilot (who would love to get his hands on a new suit of GB armor), a Rogue Scholar, two Juicers (one is a Delphi Juicer), a Safecracker, two City Rats, and five Vagabonds. **G.M.'s Note:** All of the recruits are levels 2-6. They can run the gamut of alignments, but most are Unprincipled or Anarchist, with one or two Aberrant. Their skills are more or less intact (a few may take penalties ranging from -5% to -15% on certain skills because of the booze or drugs or whatever else put them on the skids before being rescued at the Firebelly Soup Kitchen). They are a ragtag crew, and most do not have much in the way of equipment other than what they salvaged and what Squad Ragnarok was able to scrounge up for them.

Khem

Leader of Revenge Squad Ragnarok

Khem Dunotah was born to the Atlantean Clan Skellian in the city of Manoa in South America. The clan elders soon noticed his potential to become a *Monster Hunter* and young Khem was trained for that calling. After Khem completed his training, he was assigned to a number of espionage and rescue missions, including a long stint in Atlantis where he actually infiltrated the city of Splynn for a while. After his time in Atlantis, Khem returned to South America and roamed the land aiding those who needed his help and fighting for the cause of justice. During this period, he met Silvera Reedhart and the two became friends and comrades (and lovers for a brief period).

When Lord Protector Temarkhos received reports that the Coalition States were about to go to war with Tolkeen, he decided to send a few agents to observe the conflict and Khem was one of those selected. Among the people who Khem recruited into his small group of observers was Silvera. Although originally sent merely as observers, Khem and his colleagues sympathized with the Tolkeenites and soon found themselves fighting at their side. When the city was overrun, Khem and Silvera escaped along with several other Tolkeenite defenders (by this time, all of the other companions who had accompanied Khem and Silvera from South America had perished in various skirmishes and battles). Khem Dunotah found himself in the position of leading these survivors who wanted to avenge their fallen comrades. Revenge Squad Ragnarok was formed and Khem led them to the 'Burbs of Chi-Town where they have been ever since, biding their time and awaiting their opportunity for vengeance.

True Name: Khem Dunotah.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Attributes: I.Q. 17, M.E. 21, M.A. 17, P.S. 18, P.P. 10, P.E. 22, P.B. 16, Spd. 26

M.D.C.: 260

Height: 6 feet, 4 inches (1.93 m).

Weight: 250 pounds (112 kg).

Age: 183 (looks to be in late 20's).

Species: True Atlantean.

Disposition: Khem Dunotah is basically a good guy trying to do the right thing. Unfortunately, thanks to the atrocities that he saw at Tolkeen, Khem is no longer as idealistic as he once



was. He still tries to aid others but where he once used to admire champions such as the Cyber-Knights, he now feels that they and other heroes are fighting a battle they can never win, and are wasting their time in trying to make a positive difference in the world.

Group Relations: Khem is a natural leader and the obvious choice to lead Squad Ragnarok. He cares about those who follow him and tries to protect them as best as he can. Within Squad Ragnarok, Silvera is his friend and the two would willingly sacrifice themselves for each other in a heartbeat. Khem respects Fortune for his professionalism but does not consider the aloof Apok as a friend. He thinks of Sigurd as a diamond in the rough who just needs guidance to be put on the right track. Grimsby is something of a loose cannon who takes unnecessary chances but who will ultimately do as he is ordered (generally). The main thorn in Khem's side is Voudaryi. The Gargoyle is continually rebellious and insubordinate and Khem feels it may only be a matter of time before one of them is forced to slay the other.

Horror Factor: 14 (upon discovering his true nature as a Tattooed Man).

Experience Level: 6th level Monster Hunter.

Natural Abilities: Sense vampires (1000 foot/305 m range), sense ley lines 55%, sense nexus points 65%, and sense Rifts and operate dimensional pyramids 65%. Also see Tattoos, below.

Skills of Note: Read, write, & speak Dragonese/Elf, American and Greek, all at 98%, speak Chinese and Spanish 90%, Art 60%, Climbing 65/55%, Concealment 55%, Disguise 65%, Intelligence 67%, Lore: Demons & Monsters 65%, Lore: Faerie 60%, Lore: Magic 65%, Mathematics: Basic 75%, Radio: Basic 80%, Tracking 60%, Wilderness Survival 70%, W.P. Sword, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, and W.P. Spear.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts.

Number of Attacks: Six by hand to hand or Tattoo Magic.

Bonuses (includes all bonuses): +1 on initiative, +2 to strike, +3 to parry, +3 to dodge, +3 to S.D.C. damage, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +3 to pull punch, Karate-style kick (1D8), jump kick (critical strike), entangle, critical strike on 18-20, +3 to save vs psychic attack/insanity, 45% to inspire trust/intimidation, +6 to save vs all magicks, +4 to save vs poison, +8 to save vs Horror Factor, +14% vs coma/death, considered to be a supernatural being.

Magical Knowledge: None, but see tattoos. P.P.E.: 246.

Psionic Powers: Major psionic; powers of Death Trance (1), Detect Psionics (6), Increased Healing (10), Mind Block (4), Psychic Diagnosis (4), and Sense Evil (2). I.S.P.: 62.

Magic Equipment: Other than his tattoos, the only magical item that Khem possesses is an Armor of Ithan medallion (140 M.D.C., 3 times per day; lasts two hours per activation or until M.D.C. is used up).

Weapons & Equipment: CP-40 Pulse Laser Rifle, Wilk's 320 Laser Pistol, Vibro-Sword, silver plated sword (2D6 S.D.C.), a dozen wooden stakes & mallet, first-aid kit, NG-S2 Basic Survival Pack (*Triax & NGR*, page 101), duffel bag, winter mittens, 2-man tent, field radio, lock pick, tool kit, sunglasses, shoulder purse (small), canteen, passive night-sight binoculars, belt and extra ammo: 10 E-Clips.

Description: Khem looks like a tall, powerfully built young man with an abundance of tattoos. He is given to wearing baggy clothes and long flowing robes (the better to conceal his tattoos from prying eyes). Khem has brown eyes and brown hair that he generally keeps cut short. He prefers not to wear armor since it will usually inhibit the use of many of his tattoos.

Money: 16,000 Universal Credits and 18,000 in gems and precious metals.

Tattoos: Has a total of 26 tattoos. They are:

Black Sun (Darkness Powers): Gives the user several darkness powers (see *Splynn Dimensional Market™*, page 103). P.P.E. Cost: 40. Duration: 30 minutes.

Dolphin: Gives Swim as a Fish (Superior) & Breathe Without Air, equal to the spell (see *Rifts® RPG*, pages 170 & 175). P.P.E. Cost: 20. Duration: 3 hours.

Eye with Tears: Gives Empathy equal to the psionic power & Empathic Transmission up to once per melee (see *Rifts® RPG*, pages 121 & 124). P.P.E. Cost: 15. Duration: 12 minutes.

Heart Pierced by a Wooden Stake: Renders the character invulnerable to the bite and mind control powers of vampires. P.P.E. Cost: 15. Duration: 6 hours.

Lightning Bolts: Allows the user to fire lightning bolts (5D6 M.D., 700 feet/213 m) from his hands. P.P.E. Cost: 30. Duration: 6 minutes.

Skull Engulfed in Flames: Grants several fire powers, including a fire aura with 60 M.D.C. and fire bolts (6D4 M.D., 600 feet/183 m), P.P.E. Cost: 45. Duration: 30 minutes.

Flaming Sword: Creates a magical weapon that inflicts 2D4 M.D. P.P.E. Cost: 10. Duration: 1 hour, 30 minutes.

Bow & Flaming Arrows: Fires Mega-Damage arrows (inflicts 1D6 M.D.). P.P.E. Cost: 20. Duration: 1 hour, 30 minutes.

Winged Spear: Allows spear (inflicts 1D8 S.D.C.) to be thrown triple usual effective range & automatically returns immediately afterward. P.P.E. Cost: 5. Duration: 1 hour, 30 minutes.

Monster: Devil Digger: Creates a Devil Digger with 78 M.D.C. P.P.E. Cost: 80. Duration: 3 hours.

Monster: Owl-Thing: Creates an Owl-Thing with 58 M.D.C. P.P.E. Cost: 80. Duration: 3 hours.

Shapeshift: Dragon – Thunder Lizard: Caster can shapeshift into a Thunder Lizard with 520 M.D.C. P.P.E. Cost: 200. Duration: 3 hours.

Shapeshift: Emirin: Caster can shapeshift into an Emirin. P.P.E. Cost: 60. Duration: 3 hours.

Shapeshift: Minotaur: Caster can shapeshift into a Minotaur. P.P.E. Cost: 60. Duration: 3 hours.

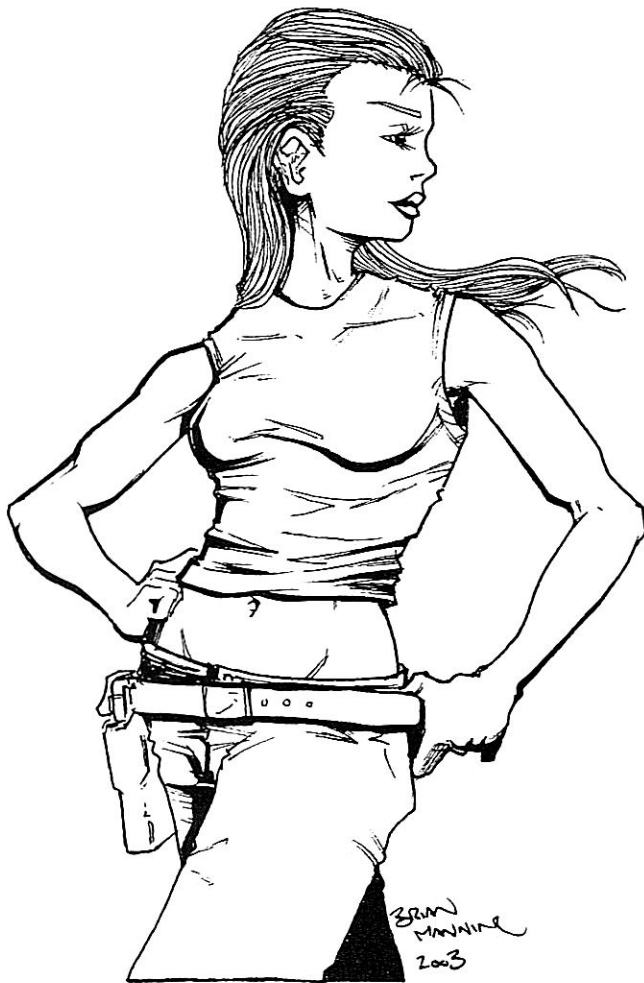
Shapeshift: Sphinx: Caster can shapeshift into a Sphinx with 360 M.D.C. P.P.E. Cost: 120. Duration: 3 hours.

Simple Weapons (Knife, Staff, Whip): Each counts as a tattoo. Creates an ordinary weapon. P.P.E. Cost: 2. Duration: 3 hours.

Simple Animals (Grizzly Bear, Boar, Eagle, Fox, Horse, Monkey, Tiger, Wolf): Creates animal-like constructs that are totally loyal to the caster. P.P.E. Cost: 15 (Eagle, Fox), 20 (Boar, Horse, Monkey, Wolf), 30 (Grizzly Bear, Tiger). Duration: 3 hours.

Notes: 1. Khem really thinks that Squad Ragnarok's good works (especially the soup kitchen) are making a positive impact on the people of the 'Burbs and will try to set something up so that it will continue even after Ragnarok is gone. Khem left Tolkeen bitter and depressed (naturally so), but upon seeing how his efforts are actually enriching the lives of people in Firetown and how young Sigurd has perked up and enjoys helping people, he is starting to return to his old idealistic ways. He still has a way to go, but at least this is a step in the right direction.

2. Unknown to anyone else in the Squad (he has not even told Silvera), Khem is trying to arrange things so that when the "Final Battle" takes place, Sigurd will not be there. Since dragons have a life span that can last millennia, Khem feels that if Sigurd were to die before having a chance to truly live, it would be a great tragedy. If there is any one comrade whose life Khem intends to save, it is that of the Ice Dragon hatchling.



Silvera

Second-in-Command

Silvera Reedhart was born and raised in the Achilles Republic in South America. As a Neo-Human mutant, Silvera was one of the upper class of citizens, though she was never comfortable in her homeland and often felt confined by her surroundings. As soon as she came of age, Silvera left Achilles to see what the

rest of the world was like. The next several decades were spent traveling and adventuring in most of South America. During this time, Silvera met an adventurer who would play an important part in her life, the Atlantean Monster Hunter, Khem Dunotah. Silvera and Khem became close friends and comrades. They were lovers briefly until Silvera's natural desire for independence caused them to break up, but they still remain very good friends who care about each other deeply.

After Silvera's journeys had brought her to the city of Manoa, Khem (who had returned to his native city) approached her with an offer. He had been assigned to go to Tolkeen in North America as an observer in a conflict that was looming between the Kingdom of Tolkeen and the Coalition States. The Monster Hunter was recruiting a few adventurers to form a small squad for the mission and wanted Silvera to be one of them. Never having been to North America, Silvera eagerly accepted the offer.

Khem's squad reached Tolkeen with little trouble, but any notions of neutrality soon vanished when they saw the brutality of the CS troops toward non-humans. Khem's squad soon joined the ranks of the Tolkeen defenders and fought creditably throughout the conflict. When Tolkeen had all but lost the war, Khem led the remnants of his squad (along with some assorted defenders they encountered along the way) in an attempt to escape from the Coalition Invasion Force. Although they lost some members of their group, the survivors (who would ultimately form Revenge Squad Ragnarok) followed Khem to the 'Burbs of Chi-Town.

Since arriving at the 'Burbs, Squad Ragnarok has been engaged ever since in setting up their base of operation as well as acts of sabotage, sedition, and everything they can do to disrupt the Coalition War Machine. Silvera is Khem's closest friend, right-hand woman, and the second-in-command of Squad Ragnarok.

Name: Silvera Reedhart.

Alignment: Unprincipled.

Attributes: I.Q. 20, M.E. 20, M.A. 15, P.S. 22, P.P. 20, P.E. 22, P.B. 20, Spd. 25

S.D.C./Hit Points: 242

Height: 6 feet, 2 inches (1.88 m).

Weight: 130 pounds (59 kg).

Age: 147 (looks to be in early 20's).

Horror Factor: 9 when her identity (as a Neo-Human) is revealed.

P.P.E.: 5

Species: Achilles Neo-Human.

Disposition: Silvera is a somewhat wild child but with a heart of gold. The main reason she left her homeland was to see the world and experience all that life has to offer. Her motto is "Life is too short"; despite her inordinately long life span. To that effect, Silvera sometimes takes risks for the chance to sample a new experience or pleasure. However, such risk taking is personal, Silvera would never knowingly put others (particularly an innocent) at risk.

Silvera does enjoy using her abilities to aid others, though she can be very sharp with someone who doesn't seem to appreciate her efforts. Many of the street people and homeless

who eat at their soup kitchen have taken to calling Silvera the “Angel of Firetown,” a title that she publicly discourages but is secretly very flattered by.

Despite her obvious beauty (when she does not deliberately make herself look frumpy), Silvera is not especially bothered by overly amorous males. This is probably because of her strong, independent, warrior attitude – or in short, she doesn’t take garbage from anyone. In addition to the respect she has engendered by her charitable actions, Silvera is more than capable of taking care of herself. After a couple of incidents where would-be ladies’ men put their hands where they did not belong and were promptly laid out flat on their backs by an outraged (but powerful) feminine fist, the word went out that the Angel of Firetown is not a person with whom to take liberties.

Group Relations: Silvera takes her position as second-in-command within Squad Ragnarok very seriously. Although she would willingly follow Khem through the gates of Hell (for a cause noble enough), she is not blindly obedient and will tell him in no uncertain terms when she thinks that his course of action is wrong or when he is making a jackass out of himself. Silvera respects Khem as a leader and friend, but considers their love affair as a thing of the past (a decision which Khem accepts).

Silvera acts somewhat like a den mother to the others. Grimsby and Fortune are the brothers she never had: Fortune is the serious one who needs to unbend a bit every now and then and Grimsby is the impulsive partner-in-crime who will follow her anywhere on a dare.

Although she knows the Temporal Warrior has a crush on her, she treats him as a platonic friend and chides him whenever he tries to get amorous with her.

As for the non-humans, Silvera often treats Sigurd like a favorite nephew (an attitude that bewildered the hatchling at first). Sigurd is now getting used to being Silvera’s surrogate child and no longer complains when he takes human form and she inspects him to make sure he is well-groomed (fingernails cleaned, washed behind the ears, etc.). Even Voudaryi the Gargoyle is accepted (more or less) at face value. Silvera does not realize the extent of the Gargoyle’s bloodlust or hatred for humanoids, however, and tries to give him the benefit of the doubt when he threatens to go out of control. On several occasions, Silvera has even acted as mediator between Voudaryi and Khem before they came to blows.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural transformation (can convert her S.D.C./Hit Points into M.D.C., Hyper-Telekinesis (2400 lbs/1080 kg, range 300 feet/91.5 m), Telekinetic Flight, Mind-Wave, Touch of Health or Death (complete description of these powers in *Rifts® South America 2*, pages 150-151).

Experience Level: 4th level.

Psionic Powers: Master Psionic with the following powers (see notes below). Super: Bio-Regeneration (super)(20), Group Mind Block (22), Hypnotic Suggestion (6), Mind Bond (10), Mind Wipe (special), Psi-Shield (30), Radiate Horror Factor (8)*; other: Detect Psionics (6), Ectoplasmic Disguise (12)*, Exorcism (10), Increased Healing (10), Mask I.S.P. & Psionics (7)*, Mind Block (4), Read Dimensional Portal (6)*, Remote Viewing (10)*, Resist Fatigue (4), See Aura (6), See

the Invisible (4), Summon Inner Strength (4), Suppress Fear (8)*, Telepathy (4); *I.S.P.*: 256. **Note:** The psionic powers listed with an asterisk are abilities found in *Rifts® World Book 12: Pyscape™* or the *Rifts® Game Master’s Guide*.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Combat: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts.

Attacks per Melee: Five by hand to hand or psychic attacks.

Bonuses: +5 to strike, +6 to parry, +6 to dodge, +7 S.D.C. damage, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +3 to pull punch, karate-style kick does 1D8, +3 vs psionics/insanity, +4 to save vs magic, +4 to save vs poison, +14% vs. coma/death, 50% to charm/impress

Skills of Note: Speak, read & write Spanish 98%, speak American 86%, speak Dragonese/Elf 76%, read & write Dragonese/Elf 56%, read & write American 48%, Disguise 56%, First Aid 71%, Intelligence 60%, Land Navigation 69%, Lore: Demons & Monsters 61%, Basic Math 86%, Radio: Basic 76%, Wilderness Survival 66%, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Energy Pistol, and W.P. Knife.

Weapons: Lightbringer Laser Rifle, .22 revolver, Triax TX-20 Laser Pistol, survival knife, Vibro-Knife; extra ammo: (.22/31 rounds, and 6 E-Clips for the laser weapons).

Body Armor: Medium body armor: 55 M.D.C. (35 M.D.C. remaining).

Magic Item: Silvera has a magic knife that is indestructible and inflicts 3D6 M.D. against mundane foes. It also can create a circle of protection, 10 feet (3 m) in radius, which will keep out supernatural creatures. In order to enter this circle, supernatural creatures must save vs magic at a penalty of -3. The knife will double its normal damage against supernatural adversaries and inflict 6D6 M.D. to such foes that manage to enter the circle.

Equipment: Air filter & gas mask, knapsack/backpack, utility belt, lighter, flashlight, canteen, pocket mirror, small silver cross necklace, hand radio, survival kit, bedroll, two weeks food rations, hooded cloak, a few sets of clothing, and some personal items.

Appearance: Silvera is a babe!! Her eyes are brown and unremarkable and, when she bundles herself up in clothes that conceal her, she can pass herself off as plain and rather frumpy (thanks to her disguise skills and abilities). However, when Silvera dolls herself up she is a knockout. Her hair is silver, almost metallic, in color and it hangs down behind her like a long glistening veil. She has a shapely, super-model body, long legs and delightful smile. When Silvera strips down to her jogging outfit (shorts, sneakers, T-shirt, and hand radio), she provides a pleasant distraction for every red-blooded humanoid male who catches a glimpse of her.

Cybernetics: None.

Money: 19,500 in Universal Credits and 7,000 in gems and jewelry, most of it earmarked for group operations should they need it.

Note: One of the reasons that Squad Ragnarok remains undetected by Dog Boy patrols is due to Silvera’s formidable psionic powers shielding the group.



Sigurd, the Dragon

Sigurd, an Ice Dragon hatchling, was born in the city of Freehold during the Coalition War on Tolkeen. He was pressed into the defense of the city and saw his first action when he was just a few weeks old. When Tolkeen's fall was imminent, Sigurd was prepared to die alongside his comrades in a last stand for his home. Instead, much to his chagrin, he was ordered by an elder dragon to flee the city and carry on the fight elsewhere. During the chaos of Tolkeen's destruction, Sigurd escaped in the company of some other Tolkeenite defenders (including Khem Dunotah and Silvera Reedhart). Realizing that he could use some allies and also realizing (grudgingly) that he required some leadership and direction, he remained with Khem's group of fighters and has been an important part of Revenge Squad Ragnarok ever since.

Although young, Sigurd is already a seasoned veteran who has seen more combat in the last year and a half than many may see in their lifetime. Sigurd tends to think of life as being a constant state of war because that is all he has ever experienced. Consequently, he has found the chaotic life of the 'Burbs to be a comparatively calm, civil and pleasant new experience. An experience he'd like to enjoy more. Sigurd is one of the Squad Ragnarok who is regularly pondering the wisdom of a suicidal action to bring about the end of Chi-Town. He is fascinated by the 'Burbs and has learned much in the short five weeks they have established their operations there.

Name: Sigurd – this is the name everybody knows him as, including his teammates.

True Name: Sigurdynn-Dyanne.

Alignment: Anarchist with strong leanings toward Unprincipled.

Attributes: I.Q. 20, M.E. 14, M.A. 15, P.S. 23 (Supernatural), P.P. 20, P.E. 13, P.B. 22, Spd. 70 (50 mph/80 km) running and flying.

M.D.C.: 200

Size: 6 feet, 2 inches (1.88 m) and 196 pounds (88 kg) in human form. 22 feet (6.7 m) tall and 46 feet (14 m) long in dragon form.

Age: 1 year, 7 months.

Species: Ice Dragon Hatchling.

Disposition: Like many dragon hatchlings, Sigurd often considers himself the center of everything he surveys. However, although Sigurd can be (and often is) a self-centered pain-in-the-butt who wants his own way, at other times he is friendly, compassionate and helpful. Despite losing a number of friends at Tolkeen (including some adult dragons), Sigurd is still surprisingly cocky and does not yet truly realize that he is not invincible. Thus, he will sometimes overestimate his abilities and get himself in over his head. On the other hand, war and loss has taught him to value life much more than most dragon hatchlings his age, making Sigurd uncommonly tolerant, compassionate, and merciful. He has a great appreciation for beauty, love and honor. Consequently, Sigurd will not attack or do things to endanger anybody he considers to be an innocent bystander, but he does have an "us versus them" mentality brought on by events he experienced at Tolkeen. This attitude applies primarily to all things Coalition and authority figures in general.

Although not particularly malicious nor vengeful by nature (for a dragon, anyway), Sigurd does feel that he owes a debt of vengeance to his deceased friends and has adopted a fatalistic philosophy that he is destined to die soon for that purpose. Although Sigurd is willing to fight (and die) for the Revenge Squad Ragnarok, the good deeds the Squad has done and gentler life and love (at least compared to the war besieged Freehold) is causing him to question that destiny and make him wonder if he and the Squad don't share a different, better destiny in living and helping others.

Group Relations: Sigurd gets along well with all his teammates in the Squad. He subconsciously regards Khem and Silvera almost as surrogate parents and, despite a strong streak of stubbornness, will try to avoid disobeying their orders or doing anything to disappoint them (at least most of the time). Sigurd considers Voudaryi a friend since the Gargoyle is the only one who seems to respect the hatchling as an equal. Grimsby is not unfriendly but has little in common with the dragon, and Fortune, though polite, usually remains aloof.

Horror Factor: 10

Experience Level: 3rd level Dragon.

Natural Abilities (Ice Dragon): Nightvision 90 feet (27.4 m), see the invisible, impervious to cold (no damage), bio-regenerate 1D4x10 M.D. points every five minutes, teleport self 28%, and metamorphosis at will for up to six hours. Usually takes on the form of a handsome, blonde human with pale complexion, but can take on any appearance.

Skills of Note: Literate in Dragonese/Elven 98%, Speak Dragonese/Elven 98%, speak American, Faerie, and Gobblely, all at 96%, Basic Math 98%, Lore: Demon & Monster 61%, Lore: Faerie 51%, and Sculpting & Whittling (ice) 61%.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Basic (equivalent).

Number of Attacks: Five physical or three physical and one breath attack, or two by magic and/or psionics. Restrained punch 4D6+8 S.D.C., full strength punch does 2D6 M.D., power punch 4D6 M.D. (counts as two attacks), kick or slashing tail attack 3D6 M.D., bite does 2D6 M.D.

Ice Breath (Special): Range 60 feet (18 m), three feet (0.9 m) wide, inflicts 5D6 M.D. and can be used only once per melee round.

Bonuses (includes all bonuses): +2 on initiative, +3 to strike, +5 to parry, +5 to dodge, +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +2 to pull punch, +4 vs Horror Factor, +2 on all other saving throws, 60% to charm/impress.

Magic Knowledge: Full understanding of magic, can intuitively use all types of Techno-Wizardry devices without instruction, can read magic, use scrolls, and recognize magic circles and enchantment. Can also sense ley lines and nexus points and other dragons; range 20 miles (32 km). **Spells:** Cloud of Smoke (2), Death Trance (1), Globe of Daylight (2), Detect Concealment (6). **P.P.E.:** 80.

Psionic Knowledge: Minor psionic; powers of Clairvoyance (4), Detect Psionics (6), Object Read (6), See Aura (6), Summon Inner Strength (4), and Telekinesis (varies). **I.S.P.:** 60.

Weapons: The only weapon that Sigurd carries is his prized possession, a magic staff (see description below) which he wields like a quarterstaff when he is in human form.

Armor: Sigurd does not wear any armor.

Miscellaneous Equipment: Sigurd prefers to travel light, so apart from his staff, his only other possessions are things that happen to catch his fancy, such as a utility belt, duffel bag, a gyro-compass, and a backgammon set.

Description: In human form, Sigurd appears as a handsome youth in his late teens or early 20's, with blond hair and blue eyes and an athletic physique. In dragon form, he is a young-looking azure blue dragon.

Money: 13,000 credits (mostly in gems & precious metals).

Notes: 1. Sigurd is the member of Ragnarok who gave the group its name. Right before the final Battle of Tolkeen, an elder dragon remarked that this was like the Day of Ragnarok. Once the elder explained to Sigurd what Ragnarok was, the hatchling liked the concept so much that he was able to apply it to the goal of the Revenge Squad.

2. Sigurd obtained his staff during one of the final battles of Tolkeen. The dragon attempted to aid a Mystic who was being overwhelmed by Coalition troops. Although Sigurd polished off the last of the enemy, he was too late to save the mage who had been mortally wounded. With his dying strength, the mage (whose name remains unknown to Sigurd) offered the staff to the dragon with the statement that it was magic but then expired before being able to explain to Sigurd what magic the staff did. Since then, Sigurd (who has sensed the magical ambiance within the staff) has kept it with the intention of someday finding out what enchantment it pos-

sesses. All the hatchling knows for now is that the staff is formidable (does 4D6 M.D.) as a blunt weapon, appears to be indestructible, and "feels right" when he uses it.



Grimsby

Temporal Warrior

John Grimsby was born in a small village in southern England. When Johnny was 11, his village was victimized by monsters from a nearby Rift. It was highly probable that Johnny's village would have been destroyed and all its inhabitants slain had it not been for the appearance of a wandering Temporal Raider and its retinue.

The Raider agreed to protect the village from the monsters in exchange for an undisclosed payment. Desperate and reeling, the villagers agreed. After driving off the monsters, one of the Raider's demands was for two of the village children to serve him. The Temporal Raider happened to notice young Johnny and sensed that the boy had untapped potential for Temporal Magic and adventuring. So Johnny Grimsby was taken on by the alien being as an indentured servant.

It was soon determined that the boy had more of an aptitude for combat than for magic, so the Temporal Raider decided young Johnny could best serve him as a *Temporal Warrior*. John took to his training well and developed into a formidable and deadly fighter and scout. Despite the dangers involved, he thrived and enjoyed his line of work, so much so that when his time of servitude had finished, he remained with his "master," now his employer and mentor, of his own free will. Eventually,

the Temporal Raider's travels brought them to the Kingdom of Tolkeen where the creature hired itself and its followers out as mercenaries. John Grimsby was part of that group and fought alongside his master against the invading Coalition forces.

Grimsby's master and comrades were slain in the final siege, but Grimsby himself managed to escape the doomed city. During his flight, he fell in with other former Tolkeen defenders, Khem Dunotah and his colleagues. Deciding that joining up with these other warriors might be his best opportunity, John Grimsby became a member of Revenge Squad Ragnarok and has been one of the core members ever since.

Name: Grimsby, just Grimsby.

True Name: John Allen Grimsby.

Alignment: Miscreant evil.

Attributes: I.Q. 10, M.E. 10, M.A. 4, P.S. 18, P.P. 11, P.E. 17, P.B. 6, Spd. 25

Hit Points: 39, **S.D.C.:** 70.

Weight: 198 pounds (89 kg).

Height: 6 feet 1 inch (1.85 m).

Age: 31

Species: Human.

P.P.E.: 170

Insanities: Long-term temporal travel can be detrimental to one's mental health. Over the course of his career, Grimsby has developed two obsessions, a desire for power and a love of danger. As a warrior-spell caster, power to him is mystical might. As a result, he wants to attain as much magical power (through knowledge and magic items) as he can attain, and he often takes needless risks that put his life and those of others around him in jeopardy. This has not endeared him to his comrades in Squad Ragnarok, particularly with Khem and Silvera. It has also made the current situation in the Chi-Town 'Burbs a distraction for him – all those magic items pouring into town, just waiting for someone like him to claim them. It has compelled him to try to make extra money on his own to purchase items as well as "take" them from low-life scum and the Coalition Army (his preferred target).

Disposition: Grimsby is a ruthless, daredevil risk-taker, especially if there is an opportunity to obtain something valuable, particularly magic items. However, his natural risk-taking can be tempered by orders to the contrary. Grimsby is not a leader. Since he was a boy, he always had someone above him to tell him what to do and has gotten accustomed to following orders. If Grimsby does not have someone in authority to direct him, the warrior often becomes uncertain and confused. Likewise, the wealth and magic Grimsby seeks to obtain are to make him all the more formidable and powerful on a personal level, he has no desire to control or rule over others (unless, of course, he has been ordered to do so).

Group Relations: Despite his obsessions, Grimsby gets along with his comrades surprisingly well. He accepts Khem as group leader and admits he is a natural at it, if a little conservative for his own tastes. He also accepts and respects Silvera as the group's worthy second-in-command, though he has fantasies of someday becoming romantically involved with the Neo-Human (yeah, right, like that's going to happen). He finds Fortune intriguing because of the Apok's supernatural nature (for all of Grimsby's travels through the Megaverse,

he has never been to Wormwood), however, the Apok continually snubs him. As for the non-humans, Sigurd and Voudaryi, Grimsby keeps them at a distance. Although dragons are powerful beings to be admired, the Temporal Warrior considers Sigurd still to be a naive child barely worth his time. Voudaryi on the other hand is something of a kindred spirit, and the two grudgingly accept and tolerate each other, but personally despise one another.

Experience Level: 6th level Temporal Warrior.

Combat: Hand to Hand: Assassin.

Attacks per Melee: Six by hand to hand or two by magic.

Bonuses (includes all Bonuses): +3 on initiative, +3 to strike, +4 to parry, +3 to dodge, automatic dodge, +7 to S.D.C. damage, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +3 to pull punch, +2 to entangle, +6 vs Horror Factor, +4 vs possession, +1 to save vs poison and magic, and +2 to save vs illusion & mind control.

Special Abilities: Automatically senses the opening, closing, & location of dimensional Rifts within a 20 mile (32 km) area, similar to a Ley Line Walker's power.

Skills of Note: Speak American 98%, read & write American 55%, speak Dragonese/Elf and Demongogian, both at 75%, Climb 75/65%, Land Navigation 66%, Basic Math 90%, Pick Locks 65%, Prowl 65%, Swim 85%, Wilderness Survival 65%, Sniper, W.P. Battle Axe, W.P. Knife, W.P. Sword, W.P. Revolver, W.P. Automatic & Semi-Auto Rifles, and W.P. Energy Rifle.

Psionic Powers: None.

Magic Knowledge: Can cast two spells per melee (counts as 3 melee actions). Temporal Magic: Attune Object (30), D-Phase (20), D-Shift Two Dimensions (25), Dimensional Envelope (60 or 380), Dimensional Pockets (20 or 140), Remote Viewing (45), See Dimensional Anomaly (30), Sense Dimensional Anomaly (30), Suspended Animation (10 or 30), S-Dep (50), T-Dep (20), Time Capsule (30), Time Warp: Age (45), Time Warp: Fast Forward (70), Time Warp: Send (25), Time Warp: Slow Motion (45+), Wink-Out (20).

Spell Magic: Armor of Ithan (10), Befuddle (3), Chameleon (6), Detect Concealment (6), Energy Disruption (12), Escape (8), Fingers of Wind (5), Fool's Gold (10), Globe of Daylight (2), Heal Wounds (10), See the Invisible (4), Sense Magic (4), Shadow Meld (10), Time Slip (20), and Tongues (12).

Weapons of Note: Silver knife (1D6 S.D.C.), Vibro-Saber (2D6 M.D.), silver short sword (2D4 S.D.C.), silver plated battleaxe (3D6+3 S.D.C.), .38 caliber revolver (3D6 S.D.C.), M16 automatic rifle (5D6 S.D.C.), TX-42 Laser Pulse Rifle, extra ammo: .38 caliber: 64 silver rounds and 120 regular, M16: 67 silver bullets and 144 regular rounds, TX-42: two extra E-Clips.

Armor: Branaghan EBA Armor (without the overcoat): black with yellow surcoat and gold cape. M.D.C.: Helmet: 40, Main Body: 75, Arms: 28 each, Legs: 38 each. Weight: 15 lbs (6.8 kg), Mobility Penalties: -10% to Climb, and -20% to Prowl.

Equipment of Note: Air filter & gas mask, mini-oxygen tank, sunglasses, knapsack, backpack, utility belt and pouches, ammo-belt, laser distancer, night-sight binoculars, multi-op-

tic system, cigarette lighter, pocket flashlight, large flashlight, small mirror, pocket knife (1D4 S.D.C.), lock picking kit, 30 feet (9.1 m) of climbing cord and a grappling hook, two cloves of garlic, small mirror, compass, a lucky charm and some personal items.

Magic Items of Note: Despite his desire and craving for magic items, Grimsby currently only has two:

1) **A Wand of Spells:** Casts the following spells: Compulsion, Energy Field, Fire Ball, or Tongues. The wand can cast a total of six spells per 24 period. All are at fourth level potency.

2) **A Flask of Endless Water:** This ceramic container is amber with black highlights. It is just a little over a pint in size but never runs out of clear, cool, fresh water. Although made of seemingly fragile ceramic, it will take a major effort involving magic and over 100 M.D.C. of damage to break this container.

Description: Grimsby is a husky but homely man with grey eyes and an unkempt scraggly beard. He generally keeps his head shaven but when he goes without shaving for a few days (which happens sometimes), his hair is a dingy brown.

Money: 30,400 Universal Credits and 20,400 in gems, all earmarked for buying magic items from Tolkeen looters and refugees.

Cybernetics: None; avoids 'em like the plague.

Notes: Grimsby is having strong second thoughts about instigating and dying in a Ragnarok-like final battle, but is afraid to say anything to his comrades who he believes to be committed to the idea. In fact, after he nets himself a dozen magic items in the Chi-Town 'Burbs, Grimsby would not mind returning to his native England or exploring South America (which he's heard a great deal about) or visiting Atlantis in search of power and thrills. As far as he is concerned, the vow doesn't necessarily mean that he is destined to die and if the Squad pulls off Ragnarok in Chi-Town, he plans to split before his moment of death arrives. After all, he already managed to escape one kingdom being laid to waste, why not another?

Fortune

The warrior known as Fortune is an Apok from the world of Wormwood. He and some comrades were fighting a group of minions of the Unholy when their battle took them through a temporary Rift leading to Rifts Earth. Although disoriented, the warriors were ultimately able to defeat their foes albeit taking a severe amount of damage themselves. The sounds of their combat attracted a nearby patrol from Tolkeen who invited the surviving warriors back to the city to recover. While resting in Tolkeen, many of the symbiotes, crystals and stones possessed by the visitors from Wormwood began to lose their powers and shrivel up. The war was going badly for Tolkeen at the time, and most of their magicks were going into the war effort. As a result, they refused to spend large amounts of vital P.P.E. to open a Rift and send the D-Bees back to Wormwood. However, they made the Apok and his teammates an offer, aid them in the defense of the city, and the Tolkeen mages would send them back home after the enemy was driven off. Furthermore, the sor-

cerers of Tolkeen would perform a ritual which, if effective, would restore the magical energies of the now defunct Wormwood magic items. The warriors of Wormwood agreed and the ritual was performed.

Overall, the ritual worked and power was restored to the Wormwood symbiotic organisms. However, the secrets of being able to do so have since been lost with the collapse of Tolkeen and there was an unexpected side effect. In order to maintain the Wormwood symbiotes, their user would have to drain P.P.E. in much the same manner as a Psi-Stalker, to keep it alive. Each required at least 50 P.P.E. per week, or the symbiote would be rendered inert. Any symbiote which remained inert for 72 hours would begin to once again shrivel up and die. If this occurred, only another ritual (or a return to Wormwood) would restore the symbiote, mystical crystal, or magic stone back to life again.

The Wormwood warriors were initially outraged and felt as if they had been tricked (which they probably were), however, as they got to know the people of Tolkeen and saw the dire straits they were in, the warriors from Wormwood became less grudging and chose to fight in the defense of the city. The Apok leader had once been told that a being's True Name was required in order to magically gain power over them, so in an effort to avoid any other sorcerers from exerting control over him, he refuses to give his true name to anyone. However, upon informing a Tolkeen sorcerer that he would still fight for them (albeit namelessly), the mage wryly remarked "Well, it seems that Fortune has smiled upon us." A Tolkeen warrior nearby heard this and misinterpreted it as the Apok's name and addressed him as Fortune. Soon, every Tolkeen warrior that encountered the Apok assumed that this was his real name (an error which the Apok has never bothered to correct).

Fortune and his comrades fought dutifully, if not enthusiastically, for the city of Tolkeen right until the final battle. When Tolkeen fell to the onslaught of the Coalition Army, Fortune battled his way to freedom, leading 200 refugees out of the city, and fled to fight another day. He soon encountered the small band of warriors led by Khem Dunotah, joined their group, and has been one of the core members of Revenge Squad Ragnarok.



Name: Fortune.

True Name: Unknown.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Attributes: I.Q. 11, M.E. 13, M.A. 15, P.S. 19, P.P. 14, P.E. 10, P.B. 13, Spd. 23

Hit Points/M.D.C.: 258

Height: 6 feet, 3 inches (1.89 m).

Weight: 190 pounds (85.5 kg).

Age: 26

P.P.E.: 59

Horror Factor: 16 when wearing the mask.

Disposition: Fortune is a self-reliant, fearless warrior. Though he will come to the aid of many a person who needs his help, he considers himself to be a champion, not a social worker. He will risk his life for total strangers, but will not waste his time with pleasantries or hand-holding. It's not that he doesn't care about people, it's just how he was trained from a young age. He sticks to doing what he does best, which is fighting, and leaves the pleasantries and politics to the rest of the group. From Fortune's point of view, some people are caregivers and nurturers, others are fighters and protectors. He is an Apok, a fighter and protector, making him merciless and ruthless in battle and brooding, cold and aloof outside of combat.

For example, Fortune feels the soup kitchen is a good thing because it feeds the poor and homeless, but he will not volunteer to work in the kitchen, because it's not a warrior's place. However, if any of these people needed his protection, he would be there in a heartbeat, fighting to the death on their behalf. That's just how he sees his place in the world.

More so than any of his comrades (except, perhaps, Voudaryi), Fortune feels his destiny is to die for Ragnarok. There is neither joy nor despair at this, just a simple acceptance to do his duty and die with honor.

If any one word were to be used to describe the Apok's fighting ability, it would probably be "focused." When Fortune fights, he does so with almost a clinical air. He fights as efficiently as possible, never toying with his opponents. If the Apok is inclined to show mercy to an adversary, he offers it before the fight begins. Once combat is joined, then Fortune will assume that his foe is ready, willing, and able to fight to the death and no further lenience is offered.

Fortune still rankles at the thought of the magic on this world, which transformed him into a P.P.E. vampire. Unfortunately, only the sorcerers who performed the ritual knew how to reverse the magic and they were all killed when Tolkeen fell. The Apok realizes that not feeding on the energy of others means his own powers will wane, so he justifies it because it serves the greater good. Even so, Fortune first attempts to get his energy from ley lines or nexus points (the sour taste that ley line energy gives to Psi-Stalkers does not affect Fortune). When those places are not present, he tries to get willing donors and takes just enough P.P.E. to satisfy his needs without harming the volunteer. Lastly, Fortune has no qualms about draining his enemies dry, and does so whenever the opportunity presents itself.

Group Relations: Fortune is the loner of the group. When he is not actively involved in a mission, he keeps to himself. This

is not due to any sort of dislike, per se, the Apok simply feels that there is little point in making friends since, in all likelihood, he or they are destined to perish soon anyway. Besides, even back on Wormwood, there was an axiom that "to be an Apok is to be alone." Fortune is willing to risk (or even lay down) his life for his comrades, he just doesn't feel the need to socialize with them.

Within the squad, Fortune respects Khem as a leader and likes both the Atlantean and Silvera. He feels that if circumstances had been different, the three of them *would be* friends. The Apok neither likes nor dislikes Sigurd, he simply does not relate to the young dragon. However, Fortune has little use for either Grimsby or Voudaryi. He has sensed the evil within these two and has nothing to do with them beyond what is necessary as comrades in arms.

Natural Abilities: Although normally strong willed and confident (as are all Apoks), Fortune's estrangement from Wormwood is causing him some uneasiness. He overcompensates for this by a single-minded intensity in whatever task he undertakes.

Experience Level: 4th level Apok.

Combat: Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks per Melee: Six by hand to hand or by magic (spells take three melee actions).

Bonuses (all): +1 on initiative, +2 to strike, +3 to parry and to dodge, +4 to damage, +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +2 to pull punch, +2 to save vs magic, +2 to save vs poison & disease, impervious to mind control, possession, and Horror Factor. Meditation is the same as a priest.

Skills of Note: Speak American, Demongogian, and Gobblely, all at 98%, read & write American 65%, Lore: Demons & Monsters 65%, Lore: Wormwood 40%, Mathematics: Basic 90%, Wilderness Survival 65%, W.P. Blunt, W.P. Sword, W.P. Spear, W.P. Grappling Hook, and W.P. Thrown Weapons.

Psionic Powers: None.

Magic Knowledge: Communion with Wormwood/Priestly magic powers: (See notes below) Close an Opening*(6,12,18), Control Temperature* (8), Create an Opening* (6,12,18), Create Shelter* (24,48), Heat Point (4), Hell Fire (3D4x10 M.D.)(30), Impervious to Symbiotes (automatic), Invisible to Magic Seeing (50), Locate Places of Evil (6), and Repel Symbiotes (14). **Note:** Fortune's priestly powers that are marked with an asterisk will only work away from Wormwood under certain conditions, and even then with difficulty. The ability requires powerful magical ambience such as a ley line nexus or a Rift, and a very strong presence of supernatural evil. Places such as Old Chicago, Old Detroit, the Devil's Gate, the Magic Zone, Atlantis, the Calgary Rift, and most of the Vampire Kingdoms of Mexico would permit the use of these specific powers. Those powers not marked with an asterisk are more inherent to Fortune himself and work anywhere on Rifts Earth. However, the P.P.E. cost for ANY power is double what it would normally cost on Wormwood (the listed P.P.E. costs reflect these increased amounts).

Equipment: Traveling clothes, extra hooded cloak, extra shirt, extra pair of boots, sleeping bag, backpack, blanket, me-

dium-size sack, 4 small pouches, 4 utility belts, 50 feet of rope (15 m; made from angel hair) with a grappling hook attached, canteen, pocket mirror, comb, and five weeks' worth of food rations.

Appearance: With the mask on, the Apok looks like a lightly armored (but formidable) humanoid wearing a demon mask. When he removes the mask, Fortune is a severe-looking, but handsome man with blue eyes and long black hair tied in braids. Note when adventuring or entering into combat, he wears a demonic, M.D.C. face-plate as is the tradition for the Apok.

Weapons: A silver cross, mallet and six wooden stakes, a silver plated dagger (1D6 S.D.C.), 4 throwing knives (1D4 S.D.C. each), silver plated saber (2D6 S.D.C.), spear (2D6 S.D.C.), and a war hammer (3D6 S.D.C. damage).

Magic Weapon: Fire Sword: The sword is indestructible, inflicts 4D6 M.D., and can cast four of the following Elemental spells per day (in any combination): Breathe Fire, Create Heat, Darkness, and See Through Smoke.

Other Magic Item: Fortune has a Spell Gem with the following two spells: Invisibility: Simple and Sense Magic. A total of two spells can be cast per 24 hours. These spells are at second level potency.

Armor: Light armor: 35 M.D.C.; mainly for show.

Money: Despite his nickname, Fortune has never truly grasped the concept of money. Since coming to Rifts Earth, he has learned enough to know to save some for various uses. However, most of what he takes in is quickly spent or given to whomever needs it as it strikes his fancy. His current savings comes to 4000 credits.

Cybernetics: None.

Note: If Fortune had his druthers, he would like to return to Wormwood and continue to fight against the minions of the Unholy. Since the only wizards Fortune knew capable of accomplishing that feat perished at Tolkeen, a return home does not seem to be a viable option.

So, fighting here on Rifts Earth against an evil empire (the Coalition States) is not a bad alternative. Still, the irony of his fighting alongside supernatural creatures in a war against humans (albeit evil ones) is not lost on Fortune.

Voudaryi, the Gargoyle

Voudaryi was a member of the Gargoyle Empire flock in Europe. He came to America when a Shifter in Tolkeen activated a circle of summoning and brought in several Gargoyles to fight in the imminent siege. Originally brought against their will, the Tolkeen wizards were generous and offered the Gargoyles plenty of food and the chance to hunt and kill as many of the accursed humans as they could. This mollified the Gargoyles and won them over to fight for Tolkeen.

Voudaryi and his brethren enjoyed fighting and killing the humans (i.e., the Coalition soldiers) and went about their assignments with great relish. Eventually, the enemy humans came in greater numbers and succeeded in overcoming the Shifters who summoned them, at which point it became every Gargoyle for himself.

Voudaryi managed to escape the final battle and, realizing that he could not long survive in a hostile, unknown land on his own, joined up with a group of accursed humans calling themselves Revenge Squad Ragnarok. The Gargoyle has accompanied the Squad ever since and has acted as scout, enforcer and air support.

Name: Voudaryi

True Name: Voudaryitoltarii.

Alignment: Diabolic evil.

Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 17, M.A. 12, P.S. 28 (Supernatural), P.P. 27, P.E. 25, P.B. 3, Spd. 20 (running)/80 (flying).

M.D.C.: 600

Height: 18 feet, 4 inches (5.59 m), wingspan 20 feet (6 m).

Weight: 1620 pounds (729 kg).

Horror Factor: 16

P.P.E.: 8

Species: Gargoyle.

Disposition: Large, strong, and agile even by Gargoyle standards, Voudaryi is essentially a bloodthirsty killer. He feels superior to humans and humanoids, unless they have the power to force him to do their bidding (such as the mages of Tolkeen). Given his current situation, he grudgingly works with the other members of the Squad for his own protection and benefit. Though he has come to kind of appreciate a few of them, Voudaryi won't hesitate to turn on them if it suits his purpose.

Voudaryi has appropriated the position of the squad's enforcer. Whenever killing is required for the safety of the team, or any other excuse Voudaryi can come up with that



Khem will accept, the Gargoyle takes it upon himself to kill the offending party(ies). The character loves to torture and kill, and delights in hurting and eating people. So far he maintains his place in the Revenge Squad Ragnarok because he has learned which humans (CS soldiers) are “acceptable” to kill. Knowing where his bread is buttered, for the moment, Voudaryi has also exhibited a surprising measure of loyalty, though neither Khem nor Fortune are fooled by the monster’s self-serving charade. They know the creature is a powder keg of anger, hate and loathing waiting to explode on them.

Having a Gargoyle in the team has its share of problems. The human members of Squad Ragnarok can fit in the ‘Burbs without much of a problem and even the dragon hatchling can assume human form for several hours each day. However, an 18 foot (5.5 m) tall Gargoyle stands out like a sore thumb and brings all sorts of unwanted attention from the Coalition authorities. Thus, for the safety of all concerned, Voudaryi is kept hidden at the Squad hideout at the soup kitchen or out at a special place in the woods a few miles away, and called upon as needed. This hiding and waiting does not sit well with the sub-demon and he is becoming increasingly disheartened by the Squad. The Gargoyle does not like to be confined or forced to sit on his hands at the best of times, and having to remain under wraps for such long periods is driving him up a wall in frustration. He is becoming more agitated with every day that passes, and is chomping at the bit for Ragnarok. If it doesn’t come soon, Voudaryi will either find new playmates (like the Federation of Magic) or start going out on his own, waylaying adventurers, travelers and farmers around Chi-Town to break the boredom and gather himself some treasure. It is an action the Squad will not take lightly.

Group Relations: Voudaryi is pretty much the least favorite member of Squad Ragnarok. Khem neither likes nor trusts the Gargoyle and tries to keep him on a short leash. Fortune considers Voudaryi a monster who is, for now, serving a useful purpose but would rather slay it than trust it for much longer. Grimsby is somewhat of a kindred spirit in that he is wild and self-serving, so he accepts most (but not all) of the Gargoyle’s actions and excuses. On the other hand, he wouldn’t shed any tears if the Gargoyle disappeared or was slain. In fact, the two dislike each other despite their oftentimes similar attitudes. Even Silvera, who frequently gives Voudaryi the benefit of the doubt, is sometimes appalled by the Gargoyle’s ruthlessness and joy in killing.

Voudaryi’s only friend in Squad Ragnarok is the gullible and trusting Sigurd. The Gargoyle respects power and has made a point of cultivating the dragon hatchling as an ally against a possible confrontation with the humans. Voudaryi believes that he and the dragon share a common bond as fellow “monsters” and that Sigurd would side with him if the others turned against him. Additionally, Voudaryi believes that since the dragon is young and callow, he can manipulate the hatchling to do his bidding. The Gargoyle is wrong on both counts.

The hatchling does regard Voudaryi as a friend, but the depth of respect, friendship, and loyalty that Sigurd feels toward the Atlantean and other members of the Squad runs much deeper than the Gargoyle realizes. Furthermore, the

dragon is not as gullible as Voudaryi thinks, and does recognize his attempts to manipulate him, which are not appreciated. If forced to choose between Khem or the others, and Voudaryi, the dragon would sorrowfully side against the Gargoyle. And if Voudaryi should ever openly turn on the group, heaven help him against the wrath of Sigurd.

Voudaryi arrogantly dismisses his human allies as weaklings and compassionate fools. Despite their special abilities and skills, he still believes they are no match for him in a fight. However, even though he will not admit it to himself, there is something about Fortune that worries him. The Gargoyle finds the Apok’s single-minded intensity in battle unnerving, and senses that this strong, silent human would like nothing more than to end his life.

Natural Abilities: Fly, superior nightvision (can see in one tenth the light needed by a human), superior, hawk-like day vision (able to see a foot/0.3 m tall target 2 miles/3.2 km away). Tail is not prehensile, but is agile and strong enough to be used like an arm to hit a target. Can leap 100 feet (30.5 m), gliding with wings and bio-regenerates 4D6 M.D. every hour.

Experience Level: 5th level Gargoyle R.C.C.

Attacks per Melee: Five.

Damage: Restrained claw attack inflicts 4D6+13 S.D.C. damage, full strength claw/punch or kick inflicts 3D6 M.D., power punch does 6D6 M.D., tail strike does 2D6 M.D., bite does 2D6 M.D., or by weapon. Can also perform a flying tackle that does 2D6 M.D. and has a 75% chance of knocking the person down (victim loses one attack and initiative), but counts as two attacks.

Bonuses (includes all): +2 on initiative, +7 to strike, +8 to parry and dodge, +10 to dodge while in flight, +2 to save vs psionic attacks, +1 to save vs insanity, +10 to save vs Horror Factor, +5 to save vs poison & magic, and +20% to save vs coma/death.

Skills of Note: Speak Gargoyle, Dragonese/Elf and Gobblely, all at 98%, speak Brodkil and Demongogian, both at 80%, Detect Ambush 60%, Detect Concealment 55%, Escape Artist 60%, Intelligence 56%, Track Humanoids 55%, Wilderness Survival 65%, First Aid 70%, Prowl 55%, Climb 70/60%, W.P. Sword, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Knife, and W.P. Whip.

Psionic Powers: Has the powers of Meditation (0), Mind Block (4), Presence Sense (4), Resist Fatigue (4), Resist Hunger (2), Resist Thirst (6), Sense Magic (3), and Telepathy (4), all at 6th level proficiency. I.S.P.: 30.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Weapons: 1. WR-100 Giant Laser Rifle; Range: 1600 feet (488 m), Weight: 20 lbs (9 kg), Targeting Bonus: +1 to strike, Damage: 3D6 M.D., Rate of Fire: Standard, Payload: 20 shots per energy clip.

2. Blaster Neural Whip; Weight: 10 lbs (4.5 kg), Damage: 2D4 M.D.

3. Giant knife (2D6 S.D.C. damage).

Body Armor: None.

Equipment: Voudaryi has very little in the way of personal equipment. Generally, if he sees something he wants, he just takes it. If the current owner is too powerful to be confronted

directly, then the Gargoyle will try a sneak attack some other time.

Appearance: Voudaryi is a large, winged Gargoyle. He has a prominent scar on his snout and a perennial snarl for an expression, except when he is killing someone or something and the snarl twists into a smile, though it is difficult to tell which is which.

Cybernetics: None.

Money: Just over 3,000 credits and the Gargoyle is none too happy about it. He wants more. A lot more.

Note: Voudaryi is trouble waiting to happen. He is likely to join forces with some other supernatural beings or powerful practitioners of magic, or go solo and become a marauding raider himself. He has even thought about starting his own team and leading them into glory against the humans. Fortunately, Khem is smart enough to keep a lot of the inner workings of the Squad from the Gargoyle, and the creature only knows about the soup kitchen where he sometimes hides.

Hook, Line, & Sinker™ Adventures for Squad Ragnarok

Some of these HLS adventures are specifically geared toward Squad Ragnarok while others are more generic. The ones designed with Squad Ragnarok can still be adapted for other uses even if the G.M. is not using the NPC group in their campaign. They can be used in any order the G.M. wants. However, the last one presented (HLS: Mutiny) is logically the final one involving the team.

The explanation for HLS adventures:

The Hook: The current situation, opening premise, location or setting.

The Line: An opportunity for adventure that presents itself to the player characters. One can think of this as the “bait” to lure a party into adventure or trouble.

The Sinker: The clincher to the line. The twist or surprise that leads to the final conflict or resolution that makes the situation a true adventure.

Note: Hook, Line, and Sinkers™ were originally created by *Jolly Blackburn*.

Hijack

Hook: A shipment of food and medical supplies has been hijacked. These supplies were intended for the indigent people of one of the local Shanty Towns.

Line: The player characters have been hired to recover them. An investigation turns up that the supplies were hijacked by a young hotshot from the Black Market who is trying to establish a reputation. This is a wildcat operation and his future in the Black Market is on the line, so he will not be easy to deal with.

Sinker: The supplies were already stolen once before. Their rightful owners are a cartel of well-to-do businessmen from the

Old Town ‘Burb of Proseville who were planning on selling them for a profit. These businessmen can afford the loss of these goods much more easily than the poor people of the Shanty Towns for whom they were originally stolen. If whoever recovers the cargo does not return it to the cartel, the original owners will contact the authorities and treat the recovery group (i.e. player characters) as thieves. If the ISS or the CS military gets involved in finding and retrieving the stolen goods, they will either return them to the Proseville cartel or impound them. Either way, the Shanty Town poor will not get the food and medical supplies that they so desperately need.

Squad Ragnarok involvement: The player characters may run into one or more of the good members of Squad Ragnarok who are also trying to recover the medicine for the Shanty Town. They may attack our heroes, mistaking them for the Black Market thieves, or join forces with the player group, or come to their aid/rescue should they need it.

Assassination

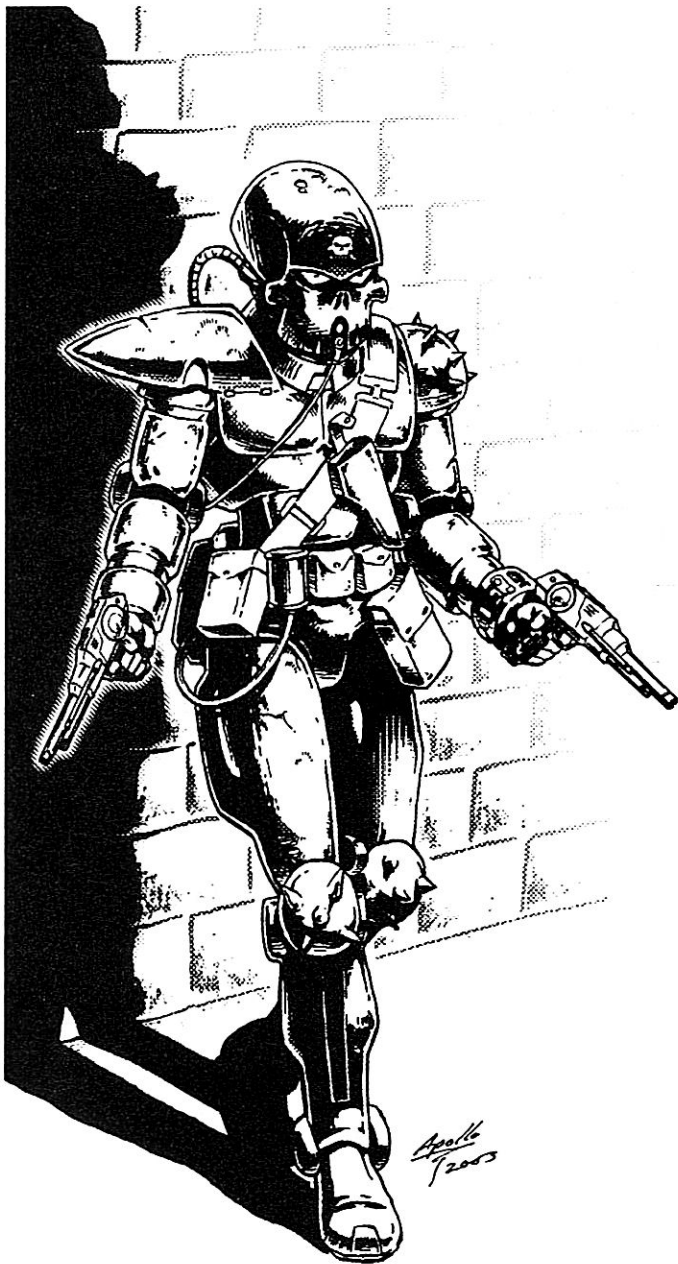
Hook: The latest round of Coalition purges is about to begin. The officer in charge is Lt. Col. Rudolph Kelso, an up and coming young officer in the CS military.

Line: Colonel Kelso is a hero from the Tolkeen campaign. He was decorated because of the “determination” (read: the *brutality*) he has shown in suppressing enemies of the States, particularly D-Bees and practitioners of magic. Many people, including some members of Squad Ragnarok, would like to see this sadistic monster’s career put to an end, or better yet, see Lt. Col. Kelso dead. Word on the street is that some old adversary (possibly a survivor from Tolkeen) plans to kill the Colonel.

Sinker: A standard purge of the ‘Burbs might entail some arrests and beatings, a few killings of D-Bees and suspected spies and practitioners of magic, and the bulldozing destruction of a couple of city blocks. Although they are never pleasant, standard purges can be survived and, given time and CS indifference, the purged area can be rebuilt within a few months, sometimes in a matter of weeks.

However, killing Lt. Col. Kelso is a different story. Though Lt. Col. Kelso is more vicious and cruel than the average run of the mill Coalition officer, this is just a routine assignment for him. He is likely to inflict more beatings, killings and damage on the neighborhood than usual but nothing exceptionally abhorrent. In addition to Kelso being a rising star in the Coalition Army, he is an Academy buddy and personal friend of *Joseph Prosek II*. If Kelso is killed while in the ‘Burbs, the CS will take one third to half of that particular town apart in retribution! (**Note:** This ‘Burb could be Firetown or one of the other New Towns or Shanty Towns.)

This is where Khem Dunotah demonstrates why he is the leader of Ragnarok. He can see the “big picture” and the ramifications of actions that his comrades miss. As much as he’d like to see Lt. Col. Kelso dead, he knows thousands will suffer and hundreds will die for it. Consequently, he will put aside his personal feelings and have Revenge Squad Ragnarok try to prevent Kelso’s assassination. That’s right, Squad Ragnarok will work behind the scenes to secretly protect and save the vicious Coalition officer.



The important questions to be answered are: 1) Who or what is the assassin? 2) How does he (or she, or it) intend to kill Col. Kelso? 3) How far will the Squad go to save this scum bag? And most importantly, what is the player characters' role in all this? The player group could be working on the same premise – having caught wind of the assassination/attack on Kelso they too have decided to save this sadist's life. That means they may be working independent of the Squad Ragnarok and the two may mistake each other as the culprit. After all, word on the street is that Ragnarok is a subversive, anti-Coalition Retribution Squad known to have already launched several attacks on CS forces in the 'Burbs. Certainly (based on reputation) a group like this *could* be involved in a plot to kill a notorious Coalition Officer. Or the player characters could join forces with Squad Ragnarok to prevent the disaster. Or the player characters (whether they are predominantly evil or unaware of the horrible ramifications Kelso's death will cause) *are* the assassins!

Another possible dramatic twist might be that Warlord Scard is personally leading an elite group of vile Retributionists from

Tolkeen (mostly evil practitioners of magic and monsters) to kill Lt. Col. Kelso. Scard and his men don't care about the repercussions any of the 'Burbs may suffer because he regards them all as fools and traitors better off dead anyway. Furthermore, he hopes the Coalition Army will respond with a massive action against the 'Burbs because it will bring more soldiers out in the open where he, his elite squad and a dozen others can engage them in open combat and, he hopes, the battle will inspire insurrection throughout the 'Burbs. If nothing else, the culmination of events will wash the streets of the 'Burbs in blood and send a clear message to Emperor Prosek that the war is far from over. Even if it means taking a stand against Warlord Scard, Revenge Squad Ragnarok will do so to save the lives of hundreds or thousands of 'Burbies. The only exception is the Gargoyle who is likely to betray the group and join Scard. Squad Ragnarok will need all the help it can get to take on Warlord Scard (i.e., the player group), but anyone who stands against the insane Warlord and his objectives will earn his lasting enmity – and Scard is a survivor, so he will escape (to be a reoccurring villain and) to extract his retribution against this new set of traitors.

The Shopping Mall

Hook: A developer in Firetown wants to build a new strip mall in the ruins of a recently purged neighborhood near where Ragnarok currently operates. The land is cheap, and (with the proper bribes and kickbacks) the licenses can be obtained from the local government at bargain rates. A mall in this location has a great profit potential being near the Factory District and low income neighborhoods.

Line: Although the developer is primarily interested in making a profit, he has pointed out that the mall will generate income for the 'Burb. In this, he is correct, a mall will actually bring a measure of prosperity, jobs and benefit to the poorer folks around it. Unfortunately, the shopping mall will also bring with it increased activity by the Coalition in the form of CS loyalists and off-duty CS soldiers looking for bargains, which, in turn, may lead to beefed-up patrols and/or Coalition spies hanging around the neighborhood. This will greatly increase the chances of Squad Ragnarok being discovered and exposed. Even considering the possible good the mall can do for the community, should Squad Ragnarok somehow prevent the mall from being built or let it go and hope for the best?

Sinker: Someone is sabotaging the mall site. Is it Squad Ragnarok or someone else? Could be a rival or enemy of the developer or some unknown third party with their own reasons? Whoever it is, the developer hires a group of adventurers to find out and put a stop to it. Is that group the player characters? Will their investigation put them in conflict (or create a friendship) with Squad Ragnarok whether the Squad is responsible for the trouble or not? Could the culprit be the bored and vindictive Gargoyle, Voudaryi? And if so, how does this compromise Squad Ragnarok? Is this the last straw between Khem and Voudaryi? Fortune and Voudaryi?

Reunion

Hook: The Fall of Tolkeen was very chaotic. The members of Squad Ragnarok assume that most of their comrades perished during the war. However, they managed to survive and reach the 'Burbs. Isn't it possible that some of their friends may have done the same?

Line: A group of adventurers has recently arrived in the 'Burbs. After hearing about Squad Ragnarok somewhere, they have been telling people that they are old friends with some of the Ragnarok squad members and have even done a convincing job of describing their "old pals." They would like to see their buddies again and are asking around. It turns out they are, indeed, former comrades in arms with Khem and Silvera.

Sinker: This is more than just a random encounter or a friendly reunion. This group has decided that blood money is thicker than water, and is after the bounty that the Coalition has placed on anyone who fought for Tolkeen during the war, particularly powerhouse leaders like Khem and Silvera. The members of Ragnarok don't know that their former friends have gone rogue. Will they find out before it's too late? The Tolkeen freedom fighters turned bounty hunters aren't stupid, so they have hired the player characters for extra muscle and a fair share of the bounty, 100,000 credits each for Khem and Silvera, 50,000 credits for the dragon, and 30,000 credits each for the rest of the Squad members. If the player group knows and likes Squad Ragnarok, they don't learn the identity of their target until they all meet.

G.M.'s note: Feel free to set up this pack of bounty hunters as you desire. They can be a group that relies on muscle and firepower or a team that uses subtlety and cunning. Either way, they should have the power to give Squad Ragnarok a run for their money, especially with the player group among their ranks.

Magic Free-for-All

Hook: The player characters learn about a small group of (3-4) evil sorcerers from Tolkeen, one may even be a Witchling or Black Faerie. They have come to town to hand over a number of (supposedly) powerful magic weapons and items taken from Tolkeen to the Federation of Magic.

Line: By chance the player characters find out where this puny but wicked group of villains are hiding. If the heroes raid the evil sorcerers they can kill two birds with one stone: a) prevent magic items from falling into the hands of the Federation who will certainly do bad things with them, and b) get the magic for themselves and do good with them. If their information is correct, the bad guys should be no match for the player group.

Sinker: The group should have no trouble finding the scoundrels and engage them in battle. Though low level (2-4th), the villains will not surrender their treasure trove and are willing to fight to the death. Just as the skirmish begins to wind to a close (presumably heading in the player characters' favor), *Grimsby* and *Voudaryi* arrive on the scene. Grimsby has also learned about the group from Tolkeen and wants to "liberate" the magic items they carry for *himself*. He's brought the Gargoyle along for backup and has won Voudaryi's support with the promise of one magic item and all other loot. If the player characters persist, they now have to fight Grimsby and the Gargoyle, neither

of which will show any hesitation in killing them to get what they want. The rest of Squad Ragnarok has no idea this incident is playing out, and should they hear of it, Grimsby will attempt to put a positive spin on it by painting the player group in a bad light.

As for the treasure, the rumors were way overblown and the Tolkeen refugees only had one impressive magic weapon (G.M.'s discretion) and two minor magic items (also left to the G.M.). Other valuables are limited to basic travel gear, 1D6x1000 credits worth of jewelry and 2D4x1000 in Universal Credits.

An alternate possibility: If the player characters manage to hold off Grimsby and Voudaryi, and snatch the three magic items, the two rogue Ragnarok members may chase after them. Moreover, if the player group backs off and Grimsby gets the three items, he will not be satisfied (believing the rumors that these Tolkeenites had several powerful magic items) and will suspect the group ran off with "the really good stuff" and pursue them. This could turn into a comedy of errors and greed.

If the group has already met Grimsby and Voudaryi, the two will join the battle without hesitation, finish off the scoundrels, probably killing them even if it wasn't necessary, and then demand the player characters hand over the two best magic items and half of the other loot (credits and gear in the possession) of the vanquished sorcerers. Refusing to do so could lead to threats and possibly combat. Certainly, anything Grimsby or Voudaryi have snatched up first they will hold onto. However, before this situation can escalate, a squad of Coalition soldiers crashes the party. You guessed it, they too heard the rumors and have come for the magic items and to execute rebels. They'll assume everyone present are members of a Tolkeen Retribution Squad or the Federation of Magic, so they shoot to kill. The CS team includes two Dog Boys, one Mind Mage from Psi-Battalion, two Coalition Juicers, two Smiling Jack SAMAS and three Grunts; all are 3rd level, with the exception of the Mind Melter who is 5th. Time to exit, stage right?

Staff Meeting

Hook: A magician has just arrived in the 'Burbs and he is looking for a certain staff. His description fits that of the one belonging to Sigurd the Ice Dragon.

Line: The magician will search for Squad Ragnarok until he finds Sigurd. He will attempt to obtain the staff by a number of methods. First, he offers to buy it. If that doesn't work (and Sigurd has only appeared in human form), he'll threaten Sigurd with dire consequences or even fight Sigurd for it. If Sigurd morphs to dragon form, the magician flees by vanishing and attempts to steal the staff later. If Sigurd appears in dragon form at any time up to the bargaining stage, the mage will not threaten or menace Sigurd, but will still attempt to steal the staff. Throughout the conversation, the magician is very evasive. At no time will he reveal who he really is, where he's from, what type of magician he is, why he wants the staff so badly, or what powers are possessed by the staff.

Sinker: When the above fails, and it should, the magician seeks to hire a group of adventurers to get the staff by any means necessary, even killing Sigurd. He is willing to pay one million credits for the staff and offers 10,000 credits up front as



Sinker: Unlike the double-crossing group from the *Reunion* scenario, this bunch is exactly what they seem to be, a group of adventurers out to make a difference or make a profit and have some fun while they are doing it. They are not sworn to vengeance or driven by a hatred to destroy the Coalition Army or States and just crave adventure and fortune. With only the best intentions, they could lure away some members of Ragnarok who are having second thoughts about their blood oath or looking for power and glory (like Grimsby and Voudaryi). Additionally, whatever this group gets involved in could lead to some other adventure or trouble for our heroes at a later time.

Mutiny

Hook: Voudaryi is leading some disgruntled, secondary members of Squad Ragnarok (recent recruits) against Khem and the others. The Gargoyle is demanding that the Monster Hunter either lead them into the Final Battle that was promised or that Khem steps down as the leader of Ragnarok.

Line: Unlike most of Voudaryi's previous rebellions (which did not progress beyond threats and shouting), this time the Gargoyle has garnered some support. He has managed to convince Sigurd as well as some of the recruits that he is in the right this time. **G.M.'s note:** If the previous HLS scenarios were run, Voudaryi may cite those incidents (depending upon how they were resolved) to support his allegations that Khem is no longer interested in the grand battle that they all swore to (which is actually true) and that someone else should take command and force a fight on the Coalition; something Khem has been trying to avoid.

Sinker: This will force the Squad to reconsider their oath and decide how they want to progress into the future. Despite his current support of Voudaryi, Sigurd, Silvera and Grimsby will go along with Khem and his decision to forsake annihilation in favor of building something and doing things to make life better, not tear it down. They still hate the CS and may work to implement change and even the destruction of the current government, but not mass destruction and certainly not in the name of revenge. Surprisingly, Fortune, though he seems hesitant and uncertain, also sides with Khem, as do half the new recruits. The rest side with Voudaryi and vow to bring havoc and death to Chi-Town and the 'Burbs. Ironically, this division and past resentment may put Squad Ragnarok and what Voudaryi is calling Ragnarok's Wings (his group) at odds. Could it be the "final battle" will be between these two Ragnarok factions over ideology and hope versus vengeance and hate? Could this be the end of Revenge Squad Ragnarok?

a gesture of good will. All that can be learned about the man is he is from the Federation of Magic, Miscreant alignment, a mid-level (6th) spell caster and represents an independent rival to Lord Dunscon. As for the staff, it must be a very powerful magic item or hold some other great significance, though what that may be is unknown. The player characters may take the job, provided they aren't friends of Squad Ragnarok, or may learn that a group of brigands have taken the contract and go to warn or protect Sigurd, or the player group could get drawn into the conflict (and meet Sigurd) when the dragon, in human guise, is outnumbered and attacked by the evil mercenaries. The heroes' sense of fair play is likely to get them to step in when a seemingly innocent or nice guy like Sigurd, minding his own business or helping some local, is attacked by superior and obviously evil brigands. **G.M.'s note:** We leave it to you to stat out the magician and the other group, and work up any other subplots around the staff and this practitioner of magic. The same holds true about the magic staff in Sigurd's possession.

Comrades

Hook: Some new adventurers are in town. They may be new to the player characters and to the members of Squad Ragnarok or they may be former comrades who fought for Tolkeen (if the scenario "Reunion" has already been run, this adventure might prove to be extremely interesting). Sooner or later, they hook up with the player characters and/or Ragnarok.

Line: These adventurers are planning to leave the 'Burbs and seek their destiny elsewhere (or, they may have a specific mission in mind). To that end, they are recruiting like-minded adventurers to join them.

FIRETOWN, PART TWO

1-19. Various Locations

These notable places and people, along with an overview and history of the Chi-Town 'Burbs, are all found in the **Rifts® Adventure Sourcebook (One): Chi-Town 'Burbs, Forbidden Knowledge** and include the two orphanages, the Karl's Revenge Tavern, Robert Street, Sebastian Shock, and the Park Gentlemen's Club, a hangout for the 'Burbs' wealthy and criminal elite.

A. Abandoned Buildings

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

Abandoned or empty warehouse buildings are typically in surprisingly good condition. Most have 1000 to 2000 square feet (93x186 m) of office area (4-10 offices with one or two of good size, or twice as many small ones). The rest of the building is typically divided into one or two huge open areas where stock is stored. If a machine shop, half is where the equipment goes and the rest is where parts/products are kept. An **empty building** may still hold some working machines and office furniture and the building should be in a good state of repair as it sits idle waiting for its next tenant. Only 15% of the buildings with an "A" are empty, most are abandoned.

An **abandoned building** will be stripped of anything of value and may be in good to terrible condition. Most are in need of paint and cleaning, have leaky roofs, 1D4x10% of the windows are broken out and half the doors have been pried or kicked open (maybe even removed completely). These buildings are also likely to be used by criminals, fugitives, refugees and vagabonds as a place to live or hide. Inside are piles of human waste, paper, food wrappers, rags and garbage cover the filthy blood and urine stained floors, and the walls of the first floor and stair wells are often covered in graffiti. In addition to the indigents who come to these places for shelter, abandoned buildings are also the meeting places for the exchange of contraband, drugs, and sex, as well as duels, gang fights, vandalism, torture and murder. Bodies are also frequently "tossed" or disposed of in and around abandoned buildings. Buildings in reasonable condition or avoided by the CS can hold 200-1000 squatters, vagabonds and homeless people, 1D4x10+15% of which will be D-Bees, though most, under normal circumstances, hold only 50-100 homeless, double that in winter. However, with the number of refugees coming out of the fallen kingdom of Tolkeen, 400-1200 could be packed into a single building. That's bad news for the people inside, because these crowded conditions make Coalition military raids, purges and roundups easy, like shooting fish in a barrel.

Abandoned apartment buildings are the worst. They are almost always squalid, rat infested, dilapidated dumps falling apart at the seams. Anywhere from 60-100% of the windows are gone, waste and garbage are everywhere, and so are the gang-bangers, crooks, slavers, weirdos, D-Bees and lunatics. Divided into 40-140 small apartments, depending on the size of the complex, there could be dozens to hundreds of families (hundreds to a thousand plus people) living inside. One never knows who or what might be in the room next door or down the hall, nor what kind of illegal, illicit, disgusting or dangerous things are going on at any given moment. Coalition authorities hate going into these buildings and doing room to room searches for exactly the reason that one never knows what waits for them behind the next door or around the next corner. Humanoid and monstrous predators both stalk these places, preying on the innocent and evil without distinction. They are Hell holes avoided by the local residents as much as possible.

The Coalition authorities tend to avoid these places, investigating and doing shakedowns only under direct command of a superior and that happens only when something serious is going down. Otherwise, these buildings and their residents are left to rot, leaving the inhabitants to suffer whatever fate might befall them. When a place becomes too much of an eyesore, or the genesis of too much trouble or suspected of something terrible, it is "purged" and razed to the ground, usually 70-90% of its inhabitants obliterated along with it.

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

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

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

They can also be the site for illegal activities like rave dances, gambling operations, boxing matches and gladiatorial games, selling or holding slaves or contraband, vehicle theft

rings and chop-shops, secret or religious ceremonies, magic rituals and human sacrifice.

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

20. Jurdot's Finé Foods

Jurdot's is an all night restaurant, open 24 hours, with pretensions to quality far greater than its actual menu or service. Most of the culinary offerings aren't bad, they just aren't anything special or worth the price. The average entree costs 18-30 credits, salads are extra at a cost of 7-10 credits, desserts 5-10 credits and alcoholic and nonalcoholic drinks 1-4 credits a glass. In fact, it's the good quality and low prices of drinks that keeps many regulars coming back. The milk shakes and selections of beer (both at two and three credits a glass) are excellent. Despite its shortcomings, the restaurant has remained open for business because of the many out of town visitors don't know better and because members of the local Black Market have made Jurdot's a favorite place to conduct business and unwind.

Paradoxically, the presence of the Black Market has made Jurdot's one of the most popular and safest eateries in town, though the owner thinks it has to do with his delicious meals. Since the Black Market has staked the restaurant out as "their" domain, the rest of Chi-Town's criminal element tend to see Jurdot and his restaurant as off limits and do business elsewhere. Likewise, no one in the know targets the establishment for robbery or blatant criminal activity.

Although there is frequent turnover, the staff at Jurdot's consist of Emil Jurdot (the diner's proprietor and namesake), and 24-32 other employees (cooks, waiters/waitresses, and dishwashers) along with two to three bouncers. Jurdot himself is a fat man of medium height and pallid complexion. Many people compare Jurdot with the food that he serves – bland and greasy.

Jurdot fancies himself to be both a great chef and an information broker. He believes that all sorts of "secret and important" deals are being transacted in his establishment and that it is because he is so highly trusted and his food is so good. The portly Jurdot keeps what he considers to be a wary but unobtrusive eye on his clientele. In actuality, subtlety is not Jurdot's forte, and the Black Marketeers that come to dine invariably spot Jurdot's clumsy efforts to eavesdrop with little difficulty. This aspect of the entrepreneur has become something of a joke with the local Black Market clients who sometimes amuse themselves by deliberately leaking false information or saying something shocking to tantalize Jurdot or make him drop a tray of dishes. That having been said, Jurdot has proven to be able to keep his mouth shut and no one in the Black Market underground worries that

he might say or do anything to hurt them. Of course not, Jurdot makes a fortune in gratuities and enjoys the respect and celebrity the Black Market underworld figures heap upon him. At least that's how Jurdot sees things, and the crooks and smugglers who frequent his place never let on otherwise (not much, anyway). Jurdot is not a smart man (I.Q. 8), but he is wise enough to stay out of Black Market business.

Adventure Hooks: 1. Unknown to Jurdot or his customers, one of the waiters, a quiet, unobtrusive man named Everett, is actually Lt. Alex Bunning of the ISS who is spying on all of them. When the Black Marketeers pull their hoaxes on Jurdot, they sometimes let down their guard more than usual at this establishment, allowing Bunning to sift fact from fiction and pass on the information to his superiors. The ISS has received an impressive amount of information on Black Market activities thanks to their undercover Specter at Jurdot's.

2. All kinds of meetings, exchanges of merchandise, money and information between Black Market operatives and other criminals take place at Jurdot's. The player characters with underworld dealings or connections to the Black Market could easily find themselves told to meet at the restaurant. Likewise, the Black Market is always looking for freelance muscle, defenders and mules (innocent looking people to carry/smuggle contraband for them), making it a likely employer of mercenaries and adventurers. Information is also exchanged here, so even heroes might meet an underworld figure to buy or trade information. Whatever the reason for stopping in, the characters run the risk of getting fingered by agent Bunning as Black Marketeers, freelance guns for the Market, rebels, fugitives or troublemakers. This could lead to the ISS investigating or tailing the individual player character or group, or using them as pawns or pieces in a bigger game against crime or rebellion. Of course, the different kinds of trouble and danger one normally associates with organized crime can also result from meeting at Jurdot's and even from innocently dropping by just to grab something to eat. This establishment could be the launch point for any number of adventures. Use it!

3. The City Rat orphans from both Camp Fireplace and the Banner Orphanage hang around the joint doing favors and running errands for Black Marketeers and ordinary visitors alike in exchange for a modest tip. Good tips, of course, engender good will, reliable work and future services. Insulting tips are likely to provoke a practical joke, vandalism or embarrassing trouble at the hands of a spiteful kid. The orphan City Rats also keep their eyes and ears peeled for valuable information, and a good quarter of the information provided to Robert Street (who rarely comes to Jurdot's himself) from the Fireplace kids comes from this location (another 20-33% from #22. Solezny's).

21. The Main Hotel

This is the inexpensive alternative to staying at the Parkview Hotel. It is a friendly looking three story hotel with 108 rooms, six suites, an exercise room, and five small conference rooms and one large. There is no onsite restaurant, but there are a few good ones nearby. A handful of small to medium-sized parking lots within walking distance (roughly the equivalent of 2-4 blocks) are available to patrons staying at the Main, or they can take their chances parking on the street. The parking structure

for the Parkview Hotel is just across the street, though it is usually full and the operator of the structure refuses admittance to visitors staying at the Main. ("Where, may I ask, are you staying?" or "Will you show me your room card key to prove you are staying at the Parkview, please."). An average room costs 45 credits a night, a high-end room 80, and a luxury suite 145 credits (can comfortably accommodate 6-8 guests sleeping over). Workers are cheerful and helpful. Its good service and low prices means the Main has no vacancies 01-77% of the time (roll percentile dice, any roll above 77 means a room is available, otherwise look elsewhere).

Adventure Hooks: Hotels can be the meeting place and source of all kinds of intrigue. The very nature of a hotel makes it an anonymous meeting place for illicit affairs, sex, prostitution, gambling, drug buys, illegal bionic augmentation, abortions, buying or selling contraband, drop-offs and exchanges of (legal and illegal) goods and services of every conceivable possibility, to parties, reunions, business meetings, contract negotiations, romantic getaways and innocent get-togethers.

Guests may include out-of-towners, vacationers, families, teenagers, priests, business people, scholars, the homeless who happened to scrounge enough cash to stay a night or two, refugees, fugitives, prostitutes, drug dealers, gamblers, smugglers, thieves, killers, weapon dealers, bounty hunters, mercenaries, adventurers, practitioners of magic, monsters, D-Bees, Coalition soldiers, CS spies, CS citizens slumming or on an adventure, and scores of others. Use these diverse people and the anonymous setting as the backdrop of numerous rendezvous, meetings, intrigue and skullduggery.



22. Solezny's

Solezny's is a hangout for mercenaries and drifters who frequent the 'Burbs often. Since these people usually have more money and more self-respect than the normal run of the 'Burb dwellers, it was inevitable that they would find a favorite watering hole to meet at, relax, drink and have fun, and Solezny's is one of those places.

Solezny himself is an absentee owner. Nobody is quite sure who Solezny is or where he might keep himself, though rumors abound. Among the most popular are that he was a Necromancer (or perhaps a Shifter) from Russia who came through a dimensional Rift in Old Chicago and made his way to the 'Burbs,

eventually starting up the saloon. Other rumors concerning his present whereabouts include: Solezny returned to his native Russia and is currently back there fighting demons, or that he infiltrated the New German Republic to assist the Gargoyle Empire, or that he is really a sorcerer from the Federation of Magic and the bar is just a cover for his seditious activities, and that he often visits his bar but in disguise. The best rumor, however, is that Solezny assassinated Emperor Prosek and has been impersonating him ever since.

No one currently on the staff has ever met the man (they are all hired by the bar manager), nor will any customer own up to having met him either. It is rumored that the staff could contact him in an emergency, but no amount of trouble ever seems to amount to an emergency situation for the bar manager. According to popular rumor, serious troublemakers at Solezny's end up dead soon afterward or just vanish, so the word has gone out, "Don't cause trouble at Solezny's." The occasional jerk who tests the rumor, coincidentally, usually turns up dead a day or two later or disappears – or so the story goes. Thus, even though the atmosphere in the bar might get loud and rowdy, it is generally a safe and peaceable saloon. Serious conflicts are taken outside and usually away from the bar.

Solezny's has weathered some tough times, but keeps on running. The staff is very efficient where the Coalition authorities are concerned, and, despite more than its fair share of CS raids and sweeps, Solezny's has come up clean every time (or managed to pay off the right people), allowing them to stay in business.

Adventure Hooks: 1. Much like Jurdot's and other places that attract unsavory clientele, warriors and criminals, Solezny's can be used as the launch point for brawls, duels, friendly competitions, gathering rumors and information, making friends and contacts, finding mercenary work, and so on.

2. The trouble with transients and men at arms. Solezny's attracts adventurers and warriors, which means many of its patrons come here with the express purpose of having fun and getting seriously drunk. Many have just gotten paid for a mercenary job or collected on a bounty or sold some loot and have money burning a hole in their pockets and booze burning a hole in their heads. That means they are boisterous, obnoxious and looking for some good, clean (or not so clean) fun roughhousing, gambling, drinking and chasing women. As a result, there seems to constantly be 3-6 card games going on, with two or three high-stakes games in the back rooms, as well as wrestling or boxing matches (there's a ring in the middle of the bar), pool games (two tables), dart or knife throwing in the back, arm wrestling, sing-alongs and other types of roughhousing, games, gambling and fun. It also attracts flirtatious women looking for fun and free drinks as well as ladies of the evening glad to sell their services under the nearest table or in the back alley, along with a few thieves, City Rats, and Bounty Hunters who might victimize a few of the patrons. And let's not forget that after eight or ten drinks, certain patrons get loose lips and reveal recent events, rumors, news and knowledge they might not otherwise divulge.

3. Coalition spies. Because the bar attracts mercenaries, adventurers and other freelancers and scoundrels, the Coalition Army constantly has one or two spies in place inside the bar. One is Lt. Lance Waterston, a drunken weasel of a man who'd

sell out his own mother if the price was right. He is a regular who was identified by the staff and regulars two years ago, so they avoid him and warn others they like or trust to keep out of earshot of him. Lt. Waterston enjoys getting wasted (a necessity, he says, to keep a convincing cover) on a CS expense account and makes a habit of blackmailing patrons (“Hey, I heard what you said, and if you don’t want CS Commandos breathing down your neck in about 30 seconds, you’ll pay me ‘X’.”). Surprisingly, the weasel lives up to his end of the bargain and has forgotten more secrets than most people have in twenty lifetimes. Those who don’t pay up or who he takes a distinct disliking to, are reported to the Coalition Army or ISS and dealt with accordingly. Waterston’s superiors are aware of some of his sloth and that his cover is blown with the regulars, but he is so entrenched and accepted at the bar, and gets enough valuable information, that they leave him there to do what business he can. Other “agents” are sent in from time to time (1D4 times a month) to sniff out stuff Waterston can’t, but unknown to them, the lieutenant can usually (86% of the time) pick them out and sells that information to his buddies at the bar (not to help anyone, but to spite his superiors for their lack of faith in his abilities).

4. Solezny’s greatest current threat seems to be from the mysterious Vanguard, a cult of practitioners of magic who wage a secret war against the enemies of the Coalition States. Though many believe the Vanguard to be nothing more than an urban myth, the folks at Solezny’s know otherwise. The Vanguard is suspicious of the bar, thinking of it as meeting place for anti-Coalition spies, rebels, and sorcerers, maybe even a secret rendezvous point for the Federation of Magic. Where they may have gotten this idea is unknown, because it isn’t true, and the vast majority of patrons are warriors, not sorcerers. Still, the Vanguard keeps an eye on the place and regularly bushwhacks practitioners of magic and suspected rebels and spies shortly after they leave the bar. Player characters who are wanted by the CS, practitioners of magic and creatures of magic have to be especially careful or they might find themselves waylaid by the Vanguard or tipped off to Coalition authorities. **Note:** To give the Vanguard’s suspicions greater weight, several members of the super secret organization have vanished without a trace after snooping around or causing trouble at the bar.

5. Child-City Rats from the Camp Fireplace orphanage (#3) hang around outside and sometimes inside, keeping their ears open for valuable information and doing favors and running errands for tips, booze or goodies.

6. Who the heck is the bar’s owner and more importantly, who or what is the hidden protector that makes troublemakers and members of the Vanguard disappear or dead?

23. Bikes ‘n More

One of the most common and least expensive modes of transportation in the ‘Burbs is the bicycle. Bikes ‘n More has 100 bikes for rent (10 credits for 8 hours use) as well as for sale and offers men’s and ladies versions of multi-gear 6, 8, 12 and 20 speed bikes for tooling around town, long-distance riding, racing, and recreation. Accessories like tires, air pumps, lubricating oil, bike chains and paint are all sold here, and so are used bicycles (50-60 credits each; new costs two and three times that amount). The shop can also do simple repairs like straightening bent rims, replacing chains, etc.

Adventure Hooks: 1. Beneath Bikes ‘n More is a secret library. Rogue Scholars and adventurers throughout Firetown have contributed to the library. Many books are mundane and unimportant, about 15% are significant or rare. Forty percent are banned by the CS, including the works of Erin Tarn, pre-Rifts comic books, magazines, and books, and other types of contraband reading material. There is a lounge area for reading and meeting with like-minded individuals, three private rooms (each with a small desk, comfortable chair and desk lamp), a lavatory and administrator’s office. Only those who have contributed to the library know about its existence and can use the facility and take books that aren’t rare or contraband out to read at home. There are currently 32 members in this innocent little secret society of Rogue Scholars and curious citizens. None are rebels nor practitioners of magic.

2. With all the loot coming in from Tolkeen, it is possible the library could get a rare and valuable book or two on pre-Rifts history, philosophy or magic. They may or may not realize what they have (probably not), and just having it could put the library and its members in mortal danger. The Coalition States will want books that offer a contrary view of history or teachings, and may go so far as to kill every person who read it. Meanwhile, a rare book on magic, especially a spell book, could have any number of human and inhuman beings searching for it and willing to do anything, including kill, to get it. Similarly, a magic book might be cursed or have the potential to unwittingly unleash a demon or other terrible force upon the world if used improperly.

24. Skinner’s

A large leather shop that buys animal furs and skins from wilderness folk (Psi-Stalkers, scouts, hunters, trappers, etc.) and turns them into gorgeous coats, jackets, capes, cloaks, arm bands, gloves, hats, belts, boots, moccasins and other articles of clothing. Prices are low, especially considering the high quality (very good to excellent) of workmanship. The shop also offers wool and cotton clothing, jewelry made from animal teeth and bone, and some mass manufactured items from the Old Town ‘Burbs, as well as bolts of fabric and sheets of hide for people who want to make their own clothes. Skinner’s outstanding line of robes, cloaks and capes attract practitioners of magic as well as Wild Psi-Stalkers, Wilderness Scouts, Trapper-Woodsmen, and other adventurers who love the buckskin line of clothing and leather goods. Special modifications can be made by workers at Skinners, or the tailor nextdoor (#25).

Adventure Hooks: 1. The business uses D-Bee laborers in its sweatshops. Coalition soldiers who patrol the ‘Burb know it, but get a 60% discount on clothing, plus other favors, so they turn a blind eye to it. The ISS knows about them too, but has deemed the shop to be harmless. The only time the police cause any trouble is when they need to talk to one of the workers or suspect a D-Bee worker of a crime. The owners are always cooperative with the CS authorities and quick to give up a sweatshop worker.

2. The fact that Skinner’s is a D-Bee sweatshop and the self-serving owners kiss the Coalition’s backside, has led some to believe the business *may* be a CS front or at least a loyalist sympathizer who rats out its neighbors and suspicious visitors wanted by the CS.

3. Trouble with the D-Bees. Maybe the workers riot and attempt to loot the place and flee, or a band of self-styled heroes tries to liberate them, or one of the D-Bees is discovered slain and in a gutter near Skinner's. Who did it? Why? The police don't care, do the player characters?

4. Skinner's is also a place where adventurers can *sell* animal skins or clothing acquired as booty. In addition, the owner is rumored to have a passion for pre-Rifts artifacts. Or is that just a cover story to sniff out dealers in contraband for the CS? Word on the street is that he sometimes hires adventurers to acquire specific items for him. Items often in the hands of D-Bees or sorcerers rather than humans, but then Skinner's connections with Psi-Stalkers and disrespect for D-Bees could explain that.

25. Firetown Tailor

A clothing tailor that is practically part of Skinner's. There's a good reason for that, it is owned and operated by Skinner's cousin. The place does good work at fair prices. They can make anything from custom-made suits and dresses to jackets and theatrical costumes. They too use D-Bees for underpaid labor.

Adventure Hooks: This is an up-front operation with nothing untoward other than the fact that the owner likes to gamble and find excitement at places like Karl's Revenge, Solezny's and the Bunker.

26. The Kennel

The Kennel is a flea bag (no pun intended) of a veterinary hospital that can take care of any type of animal, but specializes in the care and boarding of canines. Dogs are popular in the 'Burbs, so this establishment does very well for itself, not that one could tell from its ramshackle appearance.

The Kennel is a two-story, shabby-looking building of wood and brick that has seen better days. It can house up to 96 animals, has a large waiting room, six small administrative offices, three veterinary examining rooms (and two secret ones for humanoid mutant canines in a hidden basement), two operating rooms, two recovery rooms, a small kitchen, two lavatories for the human staff and a beauty parlor where ten dogs at a time can get haircuts, manicures, and be shampooed and dried. Although its rooms and decor are nothing out of the ordinary, the establishment has a warm, friendly feel to it and is known throughout the 'Burbs, not just Firetown, for its high quality of care and expertise. In addition to a capable and gentle staff of human veterinary doctors and nurses, there is a human Psi-Druid, and seven Psi-Stalkers to care for animals from six in the morning till midnight, with around the clock service in case of emergencies.

The Kennel Supply Shop is on the second floor and specializes in canine equipment and merchandise. There are dog collars (both studded and ornate), leashes, harnesses, dog whistles, feeding bowls and water dishes, and a fairly good selection of dog foods, treats and toys.

Adventure Hooks: 1. The Kennel is also the de facto, secret headquarters for a group of rogue Dog Boys and Psi-Stalkers calling themselves the *Dog Trackers*. All are former members of the CS military who have left the Coalition Army the only way a Dog Boy can, desertion. They hire themselves out to track down missing pets and people, as well as sniff out and identify

supernatural trouble, and for a hefty extra fee, deal with the removal or extermination of said supernatural pest. All are good natured, honest and experienced.

A rotund and cheerful human woman fronts for them, but the Dog Boys actually run the show. The human is *Benita Ingersol*, a retired 8th level Wilderness Scout who is tougher than she looks and who has a deep affection for dogs, both the four-legged and two-legged variety. She is completely loyal to her canine employers and considers them to be friends as well as her superiors. She does everything in her power to keep the operation under wraps and out of trouble with the Coalition by interviewing potential clients and telling them that one or more Psi-Stalkers and their "associates" (the Dog Boys) will handle the job. In fact, the runaway Dog Boys often pose as active Coalition Soldiers when on the street, because nobody questions a Dog Boy roaming the 'Burbs as out of the ordinary. Still, most try to do their work under the cover of night.

The Dog Trackers are an informal group that essentially runs itself like a Coalition military Dog Pack, except they help the people of the 'Burbs whether they are human or not. Fees for their services are very low and many happy patrons who can afford to pay it give them large tips equal to 20-60% of the original fee. The Dog Trackers provide a valuable search and recovery service for lost and missing pets, children and adults. Sometimes they also apprehend fugitives and kill monsters, usually criminals and creatures who engage in kidnapping, human sacrifice or slavery.

The leader of the Dog Trackers is a very large Dog Boy Wolfhound named *Calmoth*, whose ten levels of experience and natural tracking abilities are among the best in the group. Other notable members include *Socks*, the Border Collie (7th level, female), *Rex and King*, both 8th level Bloodhounds from the same litter (okay, genetics batch and trained together since birth, so they are like brothers), *Mad Dog* (not his CS name), a 10th level Pit Bull, *Lady*, an 8th level German Shepherd, and a 9th level Terrier called *Spike* who is an expert in reconnaissance and intelligence, his small frame and size allowing him to squeeze through small openings and hide in small places. The remaining members of the "Trackers" are *Mitzy*, a 3rd level Terrier, *Max*, a 4th level Boxer, *Rusty*, a boisterous 3rd level German Shepherd, *Clancey*, a 5th level know-it-all Cocker Spaniel, *Shalia*, a gentle 4th level Retriever, *Scarlet*, a yappy 4th level Golden Labrador, *Bandit*, a shy but smart and capable 5th level Black Labrador and *Norton*, a gentle, intelligent and resourceful 6th level Golden Retriever who is a combination Sergeant-teacher-den mother to the youngsters just listed, and often leads 2-4 of them on jobs. All get along well together, were trained as Dog Boys by the CS, and have alignments ranging from Principled and Scrupulous to Unprincipled. Norton and Bandit are best friends and always watch each other's back. Though they both compete for the affection of Shalia, nothing can damage their life-long friendship.

2. Benita and the mutants of the Dog Trackers also keep an eye out for other mutant animals and animal-like D-Bees and try to point them to safe havens and people willing to help nonhumans, but *never* take them to or tell them anything about The Kennel. (New recruits to the Dog Trackers are enlisted with the utmost care and no new members are currently sought after.) Likewise, these good natured mutant canines *may* come to the

aid of adventurers and people with a reputation for being good-hearted folk or heroes.

3. Unknown to the Dog Trackers, they have been spotted by a small number of Dog Boys still in the service of the Coalition Army. However, so far these Dog Boys have turned a blind eye and kept their existence a secret. Should these mutants decide to go AWOL themselves, they might turn to the Dog Trackers for help or wish to join their group. Likewise, there are some Dog Boys in the Army who might do things to help the Dog Trackers, provided they don't get themselves in serious trouble with their superiors. All of this is possible only because word on the street is that the Dog Trackers uphold the sanctity and safety of human life above all else and continue to conduct themselves with honor and courage even though they have abandoned the Coalition Army. Should that ever change, they would turn on the Dog Trackers in a heartbeat.



27. Mitzer's, The Cut-Rate Arms Dealers

By Julius Rosenstein & Kevin Siembieda

At first glance, the Mitzers seem like an average couple trying to make a life in the Chi-Town 'Burbs. Husband Tom works at night as a security consultant and his wife, Audra, is a homemaker who supplements the family income by taking in and repairing electrical appliances. Although the Mitzers are fairly new to the 'Burbs (they have only arrived a year ago), Audra is already active in some community affairs. Considering many of the exotic characters running around the 'Burbs, the Mitzers

seem extremely normal and pedestrian. However, appearances can be deceiving.

For most ordinary residents in Firetown, the two are known as a quiet couple who keep to themselves. To those with underground or underworld connections, they are known as a pair of small-time gun dealers with limited stock but very low prices. To the select few who have had dealings with the Mitzers (outside the scope of their public facade), they are budding crime lords. Tom Mitzer is a smuggler and arms dealer. Somehow, every now and again, he manages to obtain a shipment of Coalition weapons and armor, presumably from contacts at Tolkeen and/or the Pecos Empire or Federation of Magic. These weapons and gear are almost never new and often scuffed and dented from use in the battlefield, but they are always clean and in good working condition. Those looking for Coalition ordnance are often pointed toward the Mitzers. As for their clientele, the couple have convinced them they are pretty ordinary, if a bit eccentric, freelancers selling contraband weapons to make a little extra money on the side.

Tom Mitzer sells the weapons at cut-rate prices (40-50% below standard list prices) with especially good deals (70-80% off) on the ones that are beaten up or have problems and require some minor repairs. He'll sell to anyone with no questions asked, and claims to forget a face the moment a sale is concluded. Mitzer also offers additional discounts to buyers who are regular customers or to characters of dubious reputations (i.e. known troublemakers and people who the Coalition dislikes).

Audra Mitzer is devoted to her husband, takes care of the house and helps her hubby with sales in the evening. The shop's hours are from nine at night till five-thirty in the morning, when the Coalition patrols are light and nobody is likely to notice late night visitors to a quiet residential neighborhood. Since Audra possesses psychic powers and is not shy about using them, it is difficult to gain the upper hand or take advantage of the Mitzers. Not that anybody usually tries to do so. Furthermore, the pair are well liked among mercenaries, bandits and adventurers because they are not your typical greedy gun dealers, but seem to be genuinely sympathetic to people down and out on their luck or persecuted by the Coalition States or working to overthrow its government, giving them steep discounts on top of their already low priced stock (prices as low as 70-80% below list price for weapons in good working order).

The Real Story: Some 54 years ago, Tom Mitzer was just a farmer trying to eke out a living. His simple lifestyle came to an end after some vampires moved into the area and began stalking the local population. Tom was taken by one of the vampires and, instead of being slain outright, was subjected to the Slow Kill and turned into a vampire himself.

For the next 31 years, Tom was a member of a vampire pack that roamed the Badlands of the American Southwest, spreading terror wherever they went. Tom became more ruthless and depraved with the passage of time and was subject to the whims of his creator, who was the pack leader. This subjugation ended when the pack ran afoul of some *Justice Rangers* in Oklahoma. The Rangers were able to track the pack to its lair and then returned during the daylight and staked every vampire they could find. Most of the pack, including the Master Vampire, were destroyed. The only survivors were a few vampires (including

Mitzer) who had gone out on a raid and had not managed to make it back to the lair the previous night.

Without their master to hold them together, these vampires were free to go their separate ways. Tom Mitzer headed east and finally reached the Federation of Magic where he remained for some 20 years. When Mitzer heard about the war brewing over at Tolkeen, he saw it as an excellent opportunity to prey on war victims without raising suspicion. He remained neutral for awhile and simply feasted on whatever prey fell into his clutches. When Tolkeen began recruiting any supernatural creatures willing to fight on their behalf, Tom Mitzer joined up. Though he felt no real allegiance to Tolkeen, he enjoyed combat and the chance to cut loose and feed on humans without pretense or hiding. When he saved Warlord Scard from an assassin's blade, Tom was rewarded by a grateful Circle of Twelve for his valor and helping to foil what might have been a devastating Coalition assault. The prize he chose for his reward was a Coalition prisoner, a female psychic named Audra Cullen, captured as a CS spy.

Mitzer felt that having a human slave with the power to control energy would make an excellent assistant and protector, especially while he slept. The vampire wasted no time in using his mind control powers to break Audra's will and turn her into his slave. When the fall of Tolkeen seemed inevitable, Mr. and Mrs. Mitzer took whatever they could scrounge up and fled the city. The Chi-Town 'Burbs seemed as good a place as any to start over, offering plenty of places to hide and ample "food stock." The pair bought a small lodging and established themselves as "a normal couple." This was a year before Tolkeen fell, but the ongoing war and insurrection in the 'Burbs had already increased the presence of the Coalition Army. This would play into the vampire's hands nicely. To avoid raising suspicion among his neighbors, he chose to feed upon (and kill) primarily Coalition soldiers, police, spies and Coalition hired mercs, supplementing feeding with the occasional drunk, vagabond or no-name visitor; half of whom he knocked out first, robbed and left alive. Most (99%) never realized they had provided supper for a vampire and went on with their lives in ignorant bliss. By targeting Coalition forces, he knew Tolkeen freedom fighters and local rebels would be blamed for their misfortune. To cover signs of vampirism he would scar the bite wound, often using the arm of his victims rather than the throat and then remove or atomize the limb with an energy weapon, leading those who found the dead body to assume the individual fell prey to rebels, bandits or Cyber-Snatchers. After killing or subduing Coalition soldiers and police, he'd steal their armor, weapons and possessions. When enough guns and gear had been collected, he would offer them for sale. This (and stolen credits and valuables) is how the Mitzers really support themselves. To avoid getting caught with "the goods," he sells them cheap, turning around inventories very quickly. Since he sells Coalition weapons more than any other kind, the Mitzers' little underground operation developed a reputation for being a) anti-Coalition, b) friends of rebels and those persecuted by the CS, and c) being a buyer of used weapons and military goods, especially Coalition equipment. Thus, ever since the Sorcerers' Revenge, the couple has been inundated by scavengers, rebels and adventurers who have collected military ordnance on the field of battle in the hopes of selling it. This has enabled the Mitzers to supplement their military stock substantially, paying only 10-20% of the fair market

price and reselling it for two or three times what they paid. Plus, it has given them additional credibility as gun dealers and smugglers specializing in CS equipment. A win, win situation for everybody.

The current inventory consists of:

- Three Neural-Maces.
- Thirty Vibro-Knives.
- Four Vibro-Swords.
- Six C-18 Laser Pistols.
- Twenty-one C-20 Laser Pistols.
- Two CP-30 Laser Pulse Pistols.
- Three C-10 Light Assault Rifles.
- One C-12 Heavy Assault Laser Rifle.
- Four C-14 Fire Breather Rifles.
- Two JA-12 Laser Rifles.
- Eight CP-40 Pulse Laser Rifles.
- Three CP-50 Dragonfire Rifles.
- Two C-27 Light Plasma Cannons (rifles).
- Five C-29 Hellfire Heavy Plasma Cannons.
- One Bandit BigBore Shotgun.
- One CTT-M20 Missile Rifle.
- Two CR-1 Rocket Launchers (each comes with six rounds).
- Seventeen CS mini-missiles (7 are High Explosive, 6 are Plasma/Napalm, and 4 are Smoke missiles).
- Thirteen Fragmentation Grenades (2D6 M.D.).
- Six Plasma Grenades (5D6 M.D.).
- Twenty-four Smoke Grenades.
- Four sets of CA-3 Light Dead Boy Armor.
- Seven sets of CA-4 Standard Dead Boy Armor.
- Two sets of Old Style Dead Boy Armor (police).
- Nine sets of DPM D0 Dog Boy Riot & Police Armor.

Note: The Mitzers do NOT carry power armor, robots, or vehicles. Most of the items are Coalition issue and anyone not authorized to have them (such as the Mitzers and their customers) is subject to summary execution! As a result, the Mitzers are very wary regarding possible ISS undercover agents and are extremely careful about their customers. They figure that it is much better to lose a possible sale than to be put permanently out of business, or worse, get themselves killed.

There's a reason why even the most battered-up CS armor and weapons will not have any trace of blood on them. Tom licks the items clean of blood, until he finds every last drop. He is very obsessive-compulsive when it comes to cleaning off blood and considers this another perk of his job. However, although he is willing to sell the armor and weapons at outrageously low prices and even take a loss if he must, Tom Mitzer has no real loyalty to the memory or ideals of Tolkeen or any other cause. It's just convenient to pretend to be a Tolkeen sympathizer or anti-Coalition. If things go against him, the vampire will cut and run, leaving behind his erstwhile clients, friends, and allies. The only person he honestly cares about is his servant-wife.

Tom Mitzer Quick Stats

True Name: Thomas Nathaniel Mitzer.

Species: Secondary Vampire.

Alignment: Diabolic (originally Unprincipled but his alignment dropped over time).

Attributes: I.Q. 11, M.E. 21, M.A. 17, P.S. 22 (Supernatural), P.P. 14, P.E. 19, P.B. 10, Spd. 21

M.D.C./Hit Points: 78 but, as a vampire, he is a supernatural creature who is nearly impervious to all weapons, including Mega-Damage weapons. However, he is vulnerable to magic, silver, wood, running water, sunlight and some other things. A more detailed description of these weaknesses are found in **Rifts® World Book One: Vampire Kingdoms**, pages 26-38.

P.P.E.: 20

Height: 5 feet, 10 inches (1.78 m).

Weight: 180 pounds (81 kg).

Horror Factor: 13

Disposition: Tom Mitzer is self-centered, cruel and somewhat cowardly at heart. He wants to feed on the blood of helpless victims but does not hunt and stalk them until he has taken every precaution he can to protect himself. He regards Audra as a valued slave but is willing to sacrifice her (or anyone close to him) in order to save his own hide. The main reason that Tom Mitzer hunts alone is that he does not want the competition from other vampires and doesn't trust anyone, especially other undead. As far as he knows, he is the only vampire in Firetown, and perhaps all the Chi-Town 'Burbs, and he likes it that way.

Natural Abilities: A number of strange supernatural powers, including the ability to create additional vampires, nightvision, metamorphosis, regeneration, and M.D.C. invulnerability. A more detailed description of them are presented in **Rifts® World Book One: Vampire Kingdoms**, pages 18-26.

Psionic Powers: As a vampire, Tom is considered a Major psychic and (with his M.E. bonus) only needs a roll of 9 or higher to save vs psionic attacks. He has the following powers: Mind Control vs other Vampires (no I.S.P. expenditure needed), Alter Aura (self; 2), Deaden Pain (4), Death Trance (1), Empathy (4), Hypnotic Suggestion (6), Induce Sleep (4), Mind Block (4), Presence Sense (4), Sense Evil (2), and Super Hypnotic Suggestion (a form of mind control exclusive to vampires; 20). All of the above powers are equal to a 4th level psychic. **I.S.P.:** 90.

Attacks per Melee: Five physical or psionic attacks. Either type can be used as long as the combined attacks do not exceed five.

Combat Damage: Killing Bite: 2D6 M.D./2D6 H.P.*, Restrained Punch: 3D6+7 S.D.C./1D4+7 H.P.*, Full Strength Punch: 2D6 M.D./2D6 H.P.*, Power Punch (counts as two attacks): 4D6 M.D./4D6 H.P.* **Note:** Damages with an asterisk are inflicted direct to Hit Points when fighting another vampire.

Bonuses: +3 on initiative, +1 to strike, +1 to parry, +7 to S.D.C. damage, +3 to save vs psionic attacks, +3 to save vs insanity, +2 to save vs poison & magic, +8% to save vs coma/death. +3 to save vs Horror Factor, +3 to save vs magic or psionic mind control, +2 vs vampire mind control, 45% to inspire trust/intimidate, impervious to all forms of psionic and magic sleeps and paralysis, as well as most man-made weapons.

Experience Level: 8th level Vampire R.C.C.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Skills of Note: Speak American 98%, speak Spanish 85%, read & write American 60%, read & write Spanish 30%, Basic Mechanics 50%, Botany 60%, Disguise 25%, Find Contraband, Weapons, & Cybernetics 26%, General Repair & Maintenance 80%, Land Navigation 64%, Pick Locks 45%, Pilot Truck 68%, and Streetwise 20% (see notes below).

Weapons: Mitzer prefers using his own supernatural abilities and, as such, has never learned any weapon proficiencies. For the sake of appearances, he does keep a loaded revolver with him. The weapon does 4D6 S.D.C. damage per round.

Body Armor: None, again Mitzer prefers to rely on his own abilities.

Equipment: Other than some containers (such as coffins) for avoiding sunlight, Mitzer has very little personal need or desire for material objects. What he does possess allows him to variously track, stalk, capture, torture, or kill his prey.

He does have a supply of manacles and an assortment of traps (G.M.'s discretion as to what). The only thing of note is Mitzer's "cyber-goggles" (see below).

Appearance: Tom Mitzer is a solid-looking man who appears to be in his mid- to late 30's. He has brown hair and very pale skin which he claims (truthfully) is a result of always working at night. He often wears a set of goggles which appear to be cybernetically enhanced and which he claims are needed to compensate for some vision problems. Actually, the goggles are not cybernetic at all (the cyber-attachments are fake and just there for cosmetic value), but they allow him to hide his eyes from the people he deals with. He feels that the eyes are the mirror to the soul and by hiding his own, he hides his true nature.

Cybernetics: None. Tom's vampire nature makes cybernetics and bionics useless to him.

Money: The weapons business has been good to Tom. He has acquired some 290,000 credits which he hoards away. In addition to valuing the wealth for its own sake, the vampire is keeping this money as a war chest both for his current activities and as a resource should he suddenly have to pull up stakes (pun intended) and leave town.

Notes: 1. Being a vampire, Tom's skills are somewhat haphazard with some of his skills originating from his days as a human while others are products of his undead existence. Some of Mitzer's skills are frozen at their current levels and can never improve (despite how much he uses them).

2. The only times the vampire ever uses the *Slow Kill* to create another vampire is when the local authorities or vampire hunters are getting too close to discovering and catching "him." Then, Mitzer creates a new vampire as a decoy and directs the hunters to the pitiful creature via an anonymous tip. This way, he reasons, the authorities will have dealt with their killer and the heat will be off him. However, the experienced vampire hunters should realize that in order to make a vampire, there often has to be another one lurking nearby and they should continue their search for the undead. This has never seemed to dissuade Tom from continually pulling this (what he considers to be) brilliant tactic. Despite the automatic dominance that vampires initially obtain over other vampires they create, Tom Mitzer fears that any vampires he

might make may someday break free of his control and pose a threat to him. Consequently, Mitzer never makes a new vampire except for the reason presented here.

Adventure Hooks: 1. Tom knows the layout of Firetown, every nook and cranny, better than anybody. He has also visited and studied other 'Burbs, though he doesn't know them as well. This can make him a capable guide or advisor if he can be convinced to do so.

2. Using the power to turn into a bat, wolf and mist has enabled the vampire to get into places otherwise inaccessible to others. This has made Tom privy to information and knowledge about numerous Firetown residents and criminal operations, including the Bunker Nightclub, the Park Gentlemen's Club, Sebastian Shock, and several Black Market operations, among others. He has considered using this information to blackmail and manipulate others, or even to just break in and rob them, but lacks the stones to do so. Under the right circumstance, the vampire could make a fortune selling what he knows, but he is too cowardly.

3. Even more impressive than #2, above, Tom Mitzer has found a way into the fortress city of Chi-Town, possible only as a mist. He has explored the lower levels and has a good feel for them, and has even victimized a few citizens and ISS officers. The highest he has ever ventured is level 19, and does not know much about the city, overall. This is something of a personal triumph for the vampire, but he hasn't figured out how to profit from it yet. Nobody knows about this, not even his wife. Admittedly, he has considered mind controlling Emperor Prosek (assuming he could find him and nobody would notice the vampire bites) to make himself the de facto ruler of the Coalition States, but, again, Tom is much too cowardly to seriously consider, let alone attempt such a daring move.

If some powerful individual, group or being ever found out, they might try to force the vampire into reconnaissance and mapping of the insides of Chi-Town, engaging in assassination and surgical strikes or sabotage, opening the right doors to let others inside (like an invasion force or raiders), or killing the Emperor and/or his family, or, as the vampire has fantasized about, taking over Emperor Prosek while they pull the vampire's strings. None of this is likely, but the possibilities are out there.

Audra Mitzer Quick Stats

Audra Cullen was originally from the Chi-Town 'Burbs. Her early life was uneventful until her teens when her psionic powers manifested. After undergoing the mandatory IC registration, Audra's parents convinced her that the best thing for her was to join the Coalition Army as a psychic. This would, they imagined, move Audra and her family, up to the top of the CS Citizenship Waiting List.

Despite a number of incidents (usually involving Audra having a problem with being insubordinate), she managed to do reasonably well in the Coalition Army. Her squad was sent to Tolkeen a year before the Final Siege, and Audra was captured when her unit was overrun during the Sorcerers' Revenge. She was turned over to the vampire, Tom Mitzer as a reward for his services and she has been completely enslaved by him. Ever since then, she has been carrying on the deception of being the

man's wife and partner, while functioning as the vampire's slave and protector. She has very little will of her own and does whatever Tom commands without question, fear or hesitation. She is so completely dominated by her undead master that Audra would never consider hurting or betraying Tom in any fashion and will gladly lay down her life to save his. Sadly, her past life is a dim memory and she is little more than a dedicated slave.

Alias: Audra Mitzer.

True Name: Audra Cullen.

Alignment: Miscreant (originally Anarchist but her alignment dropped since her enslavement).

Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 20, M.A. 8, P.S. 11, P.P. 12, P.E. 14, P.B. 13, Spd. 24

Hit Points: 41, **S.D.C.:** 21.

Height: 5 feet, 8 inches (1.7 m).

Weight: 125 pounds (56 kg).

Age: 24

P.P.E.: 10

Disposition: Before her enslavement, Audra Cullen was not the easiest person in the world to get along with. She was bossy, opinionated, hot-tempered, and often a bit too quick to utilize her Electrokinetic powers, sometimes when they were neither required nor warranted. However, she was not overtly cruel or destructive. Indeed, when she got her way, she could be friendly and gracious. Since her enslavement by the vampire, Tom Mitzer, Audra exhibits her worst qualities without the gentler ones to act as a brake for her thoughts and actions.



Audra is totally under Tom Mitzer's control and will not do anything to directly oppose, hurt or defy him. However, her own strong will is *starting* to reassert itself and, with each day, she is becoming more capable of disobeying the wishes of her master. Audra cannot, herself, fight the vampire and is compelled to defend him if he directly commands her to do so. However, given the right circumstances, Audra could manipulate things so that she is not present if the vampire is attacked and cannot be ordered to defend him. Should the vampire be slain, his control over her is broken, but Audra will never be the same, and will remain a cruel, ruthless and violent individual who hates all undead, slavery and mind control.

Experience Level: 7th level Zapper psychic trained by the Coalition military.

Zapper R.C.C. Abilities: Impervious to Electricity, Sense Electricity (160 feet/48.7 m range), Electrical Aura & Radiate Electricity, and Electricity Absorption (140 feet/42 m range).

Psionic Powers: Master Psionic with the following powers. Super: Electrokinesis (double normal range, I.S.P. varies), Telekinesis (Super; 10+), Telekinetic Force Field (30); Mind-Bleeder: Brain Scan (10), Neuro-Touch (4 to 14), Neural Strike (25); Physical: Impervious to Cold (2), Mind Block (4), Telekinetic Acceleration Attack (10-20), Telekinetic Leap (8), and Telekinetic Punch (6). **I.S.P.:** 148.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Combat: Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks per Melee: Five by hand to hand or psychic attacks.

Bonuses (all): +2 on initiative, +3 to strike, +3 to parry, +3 to dodge, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +3 to pull punch, kick attack does 1D6, critical strike on 18-20, +3 vs psionics/insanity, +4 vs Horror Factor, and +1 vs possession.

Skills of Note: Speak American 98%, read and write American 30%, Basic Electronics 85%, First Aid 60%, Pilot Automobile 82%, Radio: Basic 76%, Read Sensory Equipment 70%, Streetwise 44%, Trap/Mine Detection 50%, Wilderness Survival 60%, Body Building, Climbing 75/65%, Running, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Blunt, W.P. Knife, and W.P. Paired Weapons.

Weapons: C-10 Light Assault Laser Rifle (with 6 extra E-Clips), survival knife, Vibro-Knife.

Body Armor: Light body armor: 30 M.D.C.

Equipment: Traveling clothes, language translator, air filter & gas mask, distancing binoculars, laser distancer, tinted goggles, backpack, utility belt, lighter, flashlight, hand radio, survival kit, 4 medium sacks, bedroll, one week's rations (in the advent of a quick getaway).

Appearance: Although she is not a raving beauty, Audra is an attractive, fit-looking brunette with hazel eyes. She is partial to coveralls, jumpsuits, or other clothes which allow her freedom of movement. She invariably wears a scarf or other covering to hide scars that are on the back of her neck. These scars are located exactly where a Coalition IC tattoo would be imprinted.

Cybernetics: None.

Money: None to speak of, she gets an allowance of 900 credits each week to handle ordinary day to day matters but can ask

her undead husband for more funds if something unexpected crops up.

Notes: 1. Tom considers Audra to be a valuable "commodity" and will try to protect her as long as there is not too great a threat to him. However, if the situation gets too dangerous, he will not hesitate to leave her behind or even sacrifice her in order to make his own escape. After all, he can always create a new slave.

2. Despite the resentment and resistance growing inside her against Mitzer, she cannot break the mind control that binds her to him, so it is impossible for her to resist his domination or direct commands. If the vampire commands her to kill someone, even someone who has befriended her or is trying to free her from Mitzer's thrall, she will have no choice but to do so.

3. Other than using Mitzer's last name to pretend that she is his wife, Audra's name was never altered. Even though this increases the possibility that some old friend or acquaintance may recognize her (and report her to the Coalition as a deserter), Mitzer is willing to take that chance. Likewise, Audra had an IC bar code on the back of her neck that has obviously been removed. This would prompt the CS to conduct a fingerprint or DNA scan (both are on file in her military folder), and would immediately identify her to CS authorities.

4. If Audra is ever freed of the vampire's domination, she would be forever grateful to the individual(s) responsible. However, this would not preclude her giving them a tongue-lashing if they offend her, for she remains opinionated and has a shorter fuse than ever. Furthermore, she will remain cold, evil and ruthless, and probably take up a career as a mercenary, thief, spy or assassin. She will also suffer from several insanities. One is an obsessive hatred toward undead (repulsed and angered by them and wants to see them all destroyed). Another is a similar obsessive hatred for slavery and slavers, as well as those who use mind control to manipulate or use others. She feels terribly violated by Tom Mitzer and will find it difficult to ever trust another man or be intimate with one. Lastly, she is more angry and volatile than ever, using violence and her psychic abilities to solve all her problems.

5. Audra has Coalition military training and is listed as Missing In Action (MIA) from the Tolkeen front. Ironically, if she is recognized for who she really is, or if she should return to the Coalition Army, she is likely to be considered to have been AWOL. Confessing her years of service as a mind controlled drone to a vampire who preyed upon Coalition soldiers will get her thrown out of the army, and she and her family will be blacklisted for citizenship, forever.

28. Chi-Town Citizens' Liaison Office

This is a cruel scam, a con game designed to fleece innocent newcomers and the naive out of their hard earned money, because there is no such thing as the Chi-Town Citizens' Liaison Office.

Supposedly this group will work toward their clients getting proper placement and faster attention on the *Chi-Town Citizens' Waiting List*. In truth, all these crooks do is have their customers

fill out a bunch of worthless paperwork, chat for 20 minutes and take their money, which goes straight into their pockets. The so-called agent of the CLO doesn't even keep a computer file list of his clients. When someone comes in to inquire about their progress, they get a spiel about the slow turning wheels of Chi-Town bureaucracy. "But have no fear, your CLO agent is right on it, everything is in order, and they are working for your best interest. Now go home and don't call us, we'll call you. Be patient now, ya hear?"

It's bad enough that these scum bags fleece people already on the waiting list, but those who hire them to put their name on the list in the first place are in double trouble, because these confidence artists just take their money and do nothing. That means they don't even take the time to put their "client" on the waiting list. Coalition authorities know about the scam (there's one in every New Town 'Burb), but don't care and ignore it.

Adventure Hooks: 1. This is a three-man operation: *Bernard "Pappa" Hulstead* (Miscreant alignment, age 41, 9th level con artist. I.Q. 14, M.A. 23, M.E. 11, P.S. 21, P.P. 10, P.E. 9, P.B. 10, Spd 8), *Uncle Maurice Hulstead* (Miscreant, age 52, 8th level con artist. I.Q. 11, M.A. 22, M.E. 12, P.S. 17, P.P. 9, P.E. 10, P.B. 8, Spd 10), and cousin *Randy Hulstead* (Miscreant alignment, age 25, 5th level con artist. I.Q. 12, M.A. 22, M.E. 11, P.S. 19, P.P. 10, P.E. 11, P.B. 13, Spd 12); Pappa's sons Keith and Jason (6th and 4th level, respectively) have their own CLO operation in the New Town 'Burb of Tranquility. All are fast talking, Miscreant cutthroats who don't like being accused of cheating or wrongdoing even when caught red-handed. When accused of any wrongdoing they all react very similarly, first calmly denying it and claiming there must be a misunderstanding. Then they get a bit agitated, insisting there must be a problem on the Coalition's end or a computer error. If a client persists they get indignant, rude and huffy, and beyond that, more than a little crazy and angry, culminating into incensed shouting, screaming, swearing, shoving, and the smashing of chairs and inanimate objects. ("What are you saying? Are you accusing me of not doing my job? Is that it? Huh? I cheated you!?! You son of a . . ., I bust my @\$ for people like you! I work 12, 15 hours a day and you come in here and accuse me – me – of cheating you!!! You dare call me a thief, you two bit #\$%&!! You mutha #@4%! How dare you come in here and . . . I should kick your . . .")

Of course, all the yelling and indignation is for show, designed to make people back off, and most do. The average person doesn't like or want conflict and tries to avoid it. Consequently, disgruntled clients usually calm down, apologize (yes, the wronged individual apologizes) and give the Chi-Town Citizens' Liaison Office the benefit of the doubt. The CLO agent then calms down too, *may* apologize but remains indignant and self-righteous. ("Okay, okay, I'll look into it. I just don't like it when people call me a cheat, you know?") It's all part of the scam, and a way to defuse and delay problems with their victims. A large number of people won't come back to complain ever again and most others accept one lame excuse and delay after another, stretching into months and years. Less than 3% will force the issue, seek legal representation or threaten revenge of any kind. Those who make a stink usually get one of four responses: 1) Get a full refund and told never to come back. Less than one percent, however, see such a refund.

2) Most are thrown out of the CLO and told to take their business elsewhere; no apology, no refund. 3) Those who threaten the CLO agent are roughed up and threatened right back, often with the CLO agent's threats extending to spouse, children, pets and home. Remember, as the individual's "agent," he and his associates know where the client lives and may be privy to information that can be used against that person to silence him. 4) Violence. The CLO con-men are not nice people. They are crooks and will hurt people who threaten them, personally, or who threaten to put them out of business. A visit and beating at the hands of the CLO officer and 2-6 of his largest criminal buddies is the typical "warning" delivered to clients who refuse to back off. Property damage, fires, threats and even murder may follow depending on the circumstance and individual(s) involved. This treatment may be extended to lawmen and heroes who butt in where they don't belong. Fortunately, less than half a percent of all disputes are, um, *resolved* this way. **Note:** These confidence artists are *not* part of the Black Market, but may be members of a larger criminal organization or an independent operation (like this one).

2. The lowlifes who run CLO (and similar) scam operations know a lot of people in all walks of life, and may also engage in extortion, robbing houses, kidnaping and selling information to other crooks, criminal organizations, and just about anybody willing to pay for it, including Coalition authorities. There just isn't a fair or honorable bone in their bodies.

3. A CLO agent may be looking to hire one or a group of adventurers to "rough up" someone like a disgruntled client to shut up or back off. Pay is usually cheap (50-100 credits per individual) and the job a one time gig. However, if successful, other jobs may materialize in the future.

4. A CLO agent may be looking to hire one or a group of adventurers or thugs to rob a house or mug somebody. Loot is split 60/40 with the CLO getting the 60%.

5. A CLO agent knows a lot of people and hears a lot of things. He may know about valuable contraband, magic and other valuables, who has 'em and where they can be found. May hire a group of adventurers or thugs to acquire them. The CLO gets first pick of the loot and splits the rest 60/40 with the CLO getting the 60%.

6. The player group may be the people he's heard about, compelling the CLO agent to blackmail, manipulate or rob *them*. Has probably hired some adventurer group or known thugs to do the dirty work.

Note: These crooked individuals are always looking for ways to cheat people and make a big score, so they can be the masterminds or sponsors of any number of con games, robberies or smuggling operations. They are usually clever enough not to get involved in these scams directly, hiring and directing others (often using representatives or aliases) to do the work and slipping back into the shadows when the job is done or when things go wrong. All in all, considered small-time criminals who only sometimes hit it big.

29. Jake's Farm

Jake is one of the few constants in Firetown. He is a simple fella who has given up on ever being accepted to Chi-Town. He knows he's not Coalition material, but has made a home in the

'Burbs and has managed to keep it for going on 20 years. An amazing feat when one considers that Firetown got its name from the fact that this section of the 'Burbs has burned down three times in the last 13 years. Yet Jake's has miraculously survived each fire, a dozen purges and several other incidents unscathed.

Jake is a friend of the Coalition States. He loves its ideals and thinks it is an admirable institution. "Humans wouldn't have survived at all if not fer Chi-Town." Jake is fond of telling folks. "The Prosek family is made of saints. All of dem, 'specially Emperor Karl. His boy Joseph seems a good egg too. Mighty fine men in dat family. Dah boy will make a good leader some day, I kin tell. Without any of dem Proseks an' Chi-Town, God only knows where we might all be today. Humanity would probably be extinct without dah Coalition States and dah Proseks ta lead us. A body who thinks otherwise is just a gol' dang fool is what I say. Yes sir, a dang fool."

Jake doesn't have much use for D-Bees. "If dah Emperor says dey's dangerous an' cain't be trusted den dey cain't. Don't go stinkin' my nose in dere business an' don't want no trouble with dem folks, but I ain't gonna encourage any of dem to be comin' around my place. No siree. In fact, I charge dem double when they come to dah garden, an' make dem wait till humans is all done. Point dem out to dah soldiers too. Yep, dey knows not to be comin' 'round ol' Jake's. Dey know."

It's true, D-Bees give Jake's Farm (he calls it his "garden") a wide berth. Not just because of his anti-D-Bee prejudice, but because Coalition soldiers and police frequently stop by Jake's to buy fruit and vegetables on a daily basis. Jake sells them produce for a third of what it would cost them anywhere else to show them the "respect an' 'preciation dey deserve." And because word on the street is that unwanted folks who visit "Jake's Garden," especially people who sneak into the fields at night looking for mischief or to pick a few ears of corn or snatch some tomatoes or cucumbers, disappear. In this regard, D-Bees and humans (except, maybe Coalition soldiers) are equally vulnerable. So many people are said to have never returned from Jake's Garden that word in the D-Bee community and among locals is that the farm is haunted or inhabited by monsters, and anybody who threatens the farm in any way are killed and eaten, and their bones used as fertilizer. At any rate, that's the popular urban myth about Jake's, making him something of a boogie-man and his farm cursed and haunted soil. Jake has heard the stories and experienced D-Bee children on the streets running from him screaming. All he has to say about it is, "Been livin' here for goin' past twenty odd years, an' I ain't never seen hide nor tail of any dang monsters or spooks. Dem stories is just rubbish made up by D-Bees who don't take kindly to the fact dat I'm so friendly with dah Coalition soldiers an' police is all. Like dah Emperor says, dem D-Bees are vermin dat cain't be trusted. My ruined reputation is an example of dat. Yes siree, it is at dat."

Another disturbing rumor is that buried somewhere, deep under Jake's property, is some kind of mysterious alien magic item. Jake dismisses that one too, pointing out that he's, "been tillin' and diggin' in dat soil fer goin' past twenty years, an' I ain't found a dang alien thingamajig yet."

The Coalition authorities know about these and other stories about Jake and his farm, and also dismiss them as rubbish. Jake

is known as a staunch supporter of the Coalition States, and there isn't an evil or treacherous bone in his body. The stories are just urban myths whipped up by the wild imaginations of children and superstitious residents. As for people disappearing after cutting through Jake's farm or going to steal some of his crops, the CS authorities point out that people, especially vagabonds and drifters, come and go and disappear and die on the streets of the 'Burbs every single day. Those claimed to have disappeared on Jake's farm could have been abducted, taken away, killed anywhere, or snuck off through the crop fields and kept on going. It happens all the time. Besides, Coalition soldiers visit and fly over or walk through the farm all hours of the day and night and have never seen anything unusual. As far as the authorities are concerned, Jake and the farm are A-okay and he is being ridiculed for being such a good friend to the authorities and supporter of the Coalition States.

Jake's Garden:

A) Barn for storing straw and grains. Next to it are two grain silos.

B) Barn to store equipment and such, as well as vegetables and produce for sale. Next to is a fenced-in chicken coop.

C) The farmhouse. It is a big, sturdy two-story house that was once home to Jake's wife, grown children and their families. A few died away from home, in the fires, but his wife and most of the others perished from an alien plague that ravaged the Firetown 'Burb area 11 years ago. Since then Jake lives in the "big house" with his son Joshua (left mentally retarded from the plague) and Joshua's two boys, Jimmy (23 years old, Scrupulous) and Little Jake (17 years old, Unprincipled), the only other survivors of the plague. Miss Jones (a 53 year old widow, Principled), a kindly old friend, moved into the house 10 years ago to help take care of Jake and the boys. She is the housekeeper, cook, and lady of the house. She's also secretly in love with Jake, but though he cares about her, he has never shown her the love and affection she longs for. Five men (all human) also work on the farm, and during peak seasons, additional hands *may* be hired, but all live in homes elsewhere in the 'Burbs.

Long rows of tables and tent poles line the front lawn, tarps and tent covers pitched as necessary. This is where Jake and the boys set up their farmer's market, and despite the rumors and ghost stories, the residents of Firetown, other 'Burbs and Coalition soldiers come flocking to purchase the bounty from Jake's Garden. For he offers the largest, tastiest produce in the area, and at half the prices he could get if he really wanted to, but Jake's a good man and refuses to charge people "more den's what's fair." Consequently, Jake's superior produce sells for the same low prices as inferior produce. Nobody, except Coalition soldiers, however, comes after dark.

Adventure Hooks: There is absolutely no evidence that Jake or anybody living on the farm is evil, crazy, or a secret practitioner of magic. Yet the children from the Banner Orphanage *never* go to the farm alone or at night. The more brazen orphans of Camp Fireplace see sneaking onto the farm and snatching some fruit or vegetables or taking a shortcut through its fields as a way to prove they are tougher and braver than their sissy rivals at Banner. However, while most of their excursions to Jake's are short and limited (because they are quite terrified of the place), and no orphan has vanished or died, some of

the children from Camp Fireplace claim to have heard, on occasion, the shouts and screams of people they couldn't see, but assume were being killed by . . . whatever it is that haunts Jake's Garden. Others have reported strange sounds and a few have claimed to have been chased by "something" – they don't know what, because they didn't stop or slow down to look back to see what it was.

The obvious adventure is solving the mystery of Jake's farm and the possible ramifications that might result from it.

Other adventures could involve someone getting caught or captured near the farm or while taking a shortcut through the crop fields.

Some possible answers to the mystery of Jake's Garden: Game Masters, pick one or create your own explanation.

1. Jake's answer is correct, it is all balderdash woven from years of fanciful stories, the imagination of children run wild, rumors and coincidence that have taken on a life of its own.

2. There is skullduggery, but it's not supernatural. A criminal organization in the 'Burb takes their victims out into Jake's farm, one of the few open, empty spaces in town away from prying eyes, but with plenty of cover, to torture, beat and even kill people who are holding out on them. That's where the voices, screams and strange noises come from. Likewise, the hoods chase away nosey children and sometimes have to kidnap (sell them into slavery) or kill people who accidentally stumble onto their crime and see or hear too much. In a similar vein, it could be a group of Druids secretly meeting here or Warlocks or other practitioners of magic.

3. Monsters live at the bottom of an old, dried up well. They aren't supernatural or magical (which is why no Dog Boys or psychics ever sensed their presence), but must be something from an alien dimension. Jake and his son Joshua found them laying in the field one day. The mother was weak, having just given birth to six young. Before Jake and Josh could figure out what to do, five D-Bees showed up, shouting and hollering and pointing at the mother and babies, then pulled out Vibro-Blades and pistols to kill them. Before Jake knew it, Josh charged the D-Bees with the pitchfork he had in his hands. Jake charged into the fray to help his son as much as anything else. Before Jake knew it, a blur rushed past him and leaped in front of Josh, taking a full blast from an Ion pistol. The creature then finished off three of the D-Bees, Jake and Josh taking care of the other two. When the melee was over, the five D-Bees were dead and so was the thing that saved Josh. As best as they could tell, it was the pappa of the babies. It was in that moment of silence and calm that comes after a battle that Jake and Josh could feel the mother talking to them inside their heads. They could feel her sorrow for the death of her mate, but also the warmth and happiness that he and *they* had fought to save her and her children. The she-thing thanked them and said neither she nor her children would ever forget how they risked their lives to save them. And then she asked for one more favor, to help her and her young to the well, drop them inside and to forget all about them, though she vowed they would never forget them.

Jake and Josh did as the creature asked, before reporting the battle to the Coalition authorities – leaving out the part about the young and the mother. In fact, they never told anybody, not even the missus. The Army took away the bodies, searched the fields for signs of more intruders and left satisfied Jake would see no more trouble.

Sometimes, in the years since then, Jake wonders if it was real at all, or just a dream. He can't ask Josh, because he's never been right in the head since the plague took his family and doesn't talk much either. But once in a while, Jake will find his son standing in the middle of the field or near the old well, smiling and looking happy. When he can get Josh to talk about what he's doing out by himself, all Josh says is, "visitin'" or "playin' wit me friends." Jake never saw the creatures after that day, and sometimes thinks about going to the bottom of the old well to see if he could find the remains of their bodies at the bottom, but then he thinks, what's the point? Maybe it was a dream and maybe it wasn't, what difference does it make?

"The difference" is, the creatures have grown, multiplied, and secretly live on Jake's farm! They protect Jake and his family from folks who mean him and his property harm and danger. They never go looking for trouble or wandering far from the little farm, but they are quick to deal with outsiders who come looking for trouble. Problem is, that anybody who, in Jake's own words, "don't belong" – from fugitives, mercenaries, thieves, vandals and D-Bees to moonstruck lovers looking for a quiet place to do some smooching, to kids looking for a little mischief, are targeted, killed and eaten. These creatures (perhaps as many as 2D6+12 now) aren't evil, they just don't understand humans or human nature and are overly protective of Jake and his family. They also have some sort of (psionic?) influence over plant life which they exert to make Jake's farm produce the maximum yield and superior food in size and flavor. **Note:** Exactly who and what these creatures are, we leave to the G.M. to develop (if they exist at all). Whatever they are, they must be at least minor M.D.C. beings (2D4x10 +P.E. attribute number and 2D6 M.D.C. per level of experience), semi-intelligent (smart but alien or animal thought process), well intentioned (probably good or selfish alignments), psionic (with Empathy and Telepathy, and at least 1D6+2 other powers) and exert some control over the Elements (at least Earth/Plants and Fire if they are the ones responsible for saving the farm from the Firetown blazes).

4. Faerie Folk. Like #2 above, Jake or his wife or one of his children (or all of the above) were kind to an injured Faerie person and nursed him or her back to health, or like #2, above, rescued a Faerie Folk (Brownie, Faerie, etc.) from danger. In appreciation and/or for feeling welcomed on the farm, several Faerie Folk have secretly made it their home and help protect the place and their Big Friends (i.e., Jake and those close to him, including the CS soldiers who Jake practically worships). See **Rifts® Conversion Book One** for stats and details about Faerie Folk. I'd suggest the following, but feel free to adjust or change as you see fit: 1D4+2 *Brownies*, 2D6+6 *Common* or *Green Wood Faeries*, 1D6+6 *Night-Elves* and/or the same number of *Bogies*, one or two *Grogach*, and a *Nymph* (the latter living inside one of the large, old fruit trees on the property). If you want the farm to be even more dangerous then include one or two Hairy Jacks or Pucks or Toadstools. Jake, his family and workers are not aware of their friendly (to them) Faerie Folk helpers who secretly pull weeds, kill bugs, tend to the crops and chase away, capture and kill intruders. Only the addled Joshua knows about them and he can't articulate any details about them.

5. Some other creature or Elemental being lives on or under the farm (an ancient Indian spirit, perhaps) and guards the property, Jake and his family.

6. Another possibility is that the ghost of Jake's wife and, perhaps some other family members, do indeed haunt the farm. They share Jake's view of the CS so Coalition authority figures are not molested, but others are chased away or scared to death.

Note: Whatever it is that lives on the farm (if anything), it/they like and protect Jake and the farm. Coalition authorities are left untouched because of Jake's high regard for them and the thing(s) takes its lead from Jake and his family. Thus, if Jake or his kin should ever find one (or more) chasing or attacking somebody and Jake shouts stop, it/they will listen and obey.

30. Collector's Cove

The Collector's Cove is a small curio shop owned by the Hansen family and sells all sorts of statues, knickknacks, and oddities. Though the family that runs the place have concocted all sorts of cute, wild and interesting stories about the items sold at the Cove, most are pure malarkey and half the curio items are arts and crafts creations made by Mrs. Hansen, her nine talented children, three married sisters and their eleven children. These "curios" include necklaces and charms made from animal bones and teeth (bought in bulk for pennies on the dollar from Skinner's) combined with inexpensive colored stones and beads (all very attractive with a North American Indian look and feel), real Indian jewelry and charms (taken on consignment and the sale split 50/50 with the Indian craftsmen who made them), other types of jewelry, pins and charms made from colored twine, beads, feathers and animal teeth, cute and silly statues made from clay and often adorned with feathers or bits of colorful cloth or paint, artistic wall hangings, rock paintings, wood carvings, Scrimshaw (carved teeth, bone and jewelry, again split with the artisans who consigned them), potholders, ashtrays, clay pottery, dishes, drinking mugs, driftwood, polished stones, crystal stones, Indian-style feather headdresses, scarves, mittens, socks, knit caps, T-shirts and other odds and ends all made by the Hansen family (unless otherwise stated). Many items are classic "vacation" doodads like caps, T-shirts, mugs, ashtrays and wall hangings with slogans like, "I survived the Chi-Town 'Burbs," "I luv Chi-Town," "The Coalition Forever," "Firetown is hot," and similar.

Other items include a small selection of books, all duly authorized by the Coalition States, 300 video discs (again all films and documentaries produced or authorized by the CS), and simple basic items and supplies like crayons, pencils, pens, markers, string, cigarette lighters, canteens, leather water skins, aspirin, toothpaste, toothbrushes, tinted goggles, sunglasses, air filters, candy, and honey among others.

Real curios and collectibles (all legal) include pre-Rifts bottle caps, tin cans, some old books and magazines, some music and movie disks, battered toys and knickknacks, coins and broken electronics and such. They also offer things that just look cool, odd, mysterious or alien, actually anything that looks like it "could be" alien from machine parts, circuit boards, and twisted chunks of metal to menacing or strange looking teeth, fossils, jewelry, carved stones and thingamajigs all suitable for nothing more than being exotic paperweights.

Illegal books and contraband are all turned away and may be reported to the Coalition authorities. If asked about books by Erin Tarn, pre-Rifts manuscripts or other banned articles, the

workers (all family) proudly announce that they would never sell anything the Coalition States has found to be harmful, inappropriate, or untrue, and that the customer shouldn't pollute their minds with such rubbish. And they seem quite sincere and adamant about it, too.

Rumors. The Coalition Army and ISS have investigated persistent rumors that the Collector's Cove is a secret magic shop, but they have come to the conclusion it is a rumor designed to waste their time. Every investigation has not only come up empty, but the people who run the shop have no knowledge of magic, don't collect magic and there is simply no place to hide a magic shop inside. The Coalition Army has not investigated the shop in three years, and the ISS gave it a similar clean bill of health two and a half years ago and haven't been back.

Adventure Hooks: The Cove is a front for a magic shop and a very clever one at that. The owners of the *magic shop* are a husband and wife, **Mark the Blue** (Anarchist, a 7th level Ley Line Walker, specializing in Ley Line Magic) and **Lisa Tymes** (Anarchist, 9th level Temporal Wizard, specializing in dimensional and time magic). Both look to be in their thirties but are probably in their late 40s or 50s. They are said to come from the Magic Zone, but have no affiliations with the Federation of Magic. Supposedly, after years of adventuring, they have decided to give up "the life" and become dealers in magic. The Chi-Town 'Burbs was chosen because of location and the large number of transient mercenaries, adventurers, and practitioners of magic who are constantly passing through.

They are not related to the Hansens in any way, and it was pure chance they met at all. Four years ago, Lisa and Mark rescued three of the Hansen children from a band of Brodkil and Simvan who targeted the 'Burbs for a quick hit and run raid. When a grateful Mr. and Mrs. Hansen said, "if there is anything we can ever do," the sorcerers proposed an unlikely partnership. One that has worked to the best interests of everyone involved for over three years now. The Hansens don't sell or know anything about magic, but they have let Lisa Tymes create a magical doorway to a *permanent Time Hole* in one of the back closets. It is inside the Time Hole that the magic shop is located, and because the Time Hole is in another dimension, none of the magic items or sorcerers inside radiate as magic in this world. Neither does the door, because it doesn't exist until Lisa or Mark expend P.P.E. to activate and open it! Exactly how Lisa pulled all this off is one of her best kept secrets.

At any rate, the Collector's Cove is a perfect cover, because people of all occupations come and go from the shop constantly. Furthermore, part of the deal the two sorcerers have with their clients is that each individual who visits (whether they buy something or not) *must* purchase a minimum of 50 credits worth of merchandise from the Hansens – "more" would be appreciated. Consequently, regular clients of the magic shop often spend 100-200 credits in the curio shop each visit.

The Magic Shop. Only Lisa and Mark can open the portal to the Time Hole, so they usually meet with clients away from the Collector's Cove and make appointments to meet with one or more clients to take them to visit their store. This is arranged by hanging around at a few specific places where practitioners of magic hang out, and through word of mouth connections (i.e., "I know somebody – a friend of a friend – who can get you what you need.") as well as a small network of trusted agents who ap-



Atlantis Splugorth articles: Until recently, never, but with the increased presence of the Minions of Splugorth, the couple have acquired some magic items of Atlantean manufacture. Their current stock includes 2 Jolt Guns, one Kizh TW Sensor Gauntlet, three TW Slaver's Net Guns, one Splugorth Eylor Jet Pack, one Demon Claw Blade, two Slaver Staves, one Staff of Power (a Powerlord's staff), three Faerie P.P.E. batteries, eight Living Shackles, one Mouth Wrap, and one Strength Neutralizer. **Note:** See pages 256-267 of the *Rifts® Book of Magic* for a comprehensive collection of Splugorth Bio-Wizard weapons and items, and pages 267-278 for Rune weapons and magic restraints, with prices.

Other magic items: Supply varies greatly and may include the occasional magic wand or staff, rune weapon, Indian charm or talisman, herbs, and other odds and ends. The two have been lucky acquiring items from Tolkeen for the last year, and hope to stockpile a large number of items buying them at low prices from the flood of refugees and looters coming into town. Exact items are left to the discretion of the Game Master, but there is seldom anything too rare or powerful (they keep most of those items for themselves). If the G.M. would like, he may adapt and include magic items from Palladium's Fantasy RPG line, *The Rifter®* and other Palladium products; modification from S.D.C. to M.D.C. will be required.

Adventure Hooks: 1. The couple acquires something rare and/or powerful that the player group and other, less friendly people may want. Who gets it first and whether the purchaser can keep the item in their possession (not to mention what they might do with it) is all part of the ensuing adventure.

2. The player characters are hired by the couple to track down leads on magic items. That means casing visitors to determine if they have magic items that might be for sale. No actual contact. However, this can still lead to the player characters getting into trouble by snooping around where they aren't wanted, asking the wrong questions of the wrong person, or accidentally uncovering a terrorist plot, murderous plan or dangerous villain involving a Retribution Squad, the Federation of Magic, the Splugorth, the supernatural, etc. Similarly, while following a potential "client/seller" the group might see the individual(s) get attacked by the CS, rivals, bandits, demons, etc. Do they turn away or jump in to help the one(s) being attacked? And is this person(s) a good guy or a bad guy? Another possibility is one or more of the player characters finds the opportunity to make a sweet deal for themselves, provided they break their employers' rule and make contact with the individual(s) they've been observing. This may lead to the purchase or a trade (goods or service) for a magic item or get them into trouble.

3. Someone is out to get the two sorcerers for reasons unknown to them. They may have purchased something someone wants without paying for it, or they have some item that incriminates a powerful practitioner of magic or Tolkeen leader and he/she/it wants them dead before they realize what they have, or it could be an old enemy or rival out to get them, or maybe one of the items is cursed, they are being stalked by some terrible monster, or maybe the Vanguard is finally on their tail, or some other reason. At any rate, they have hired the player group to either protect them from the mysterious assailant, or find out who it is and put a stop to it (one way or another).

proach people they know to be genuine practitioners of magic. The two mages and their agents are super-careful and have, miraculously, avoided trouble with the Vanguard. Probably because Lisa and Mark try to remain neutral, don't say or do anything to malign or hurt the CS, and generally sell low-end magic items; nothing too rare, unusual or powerful.

The Magic Shop *buys* and *sells* so the two frequently approach, and are approached by, outsiders and adventurers with items to sell, provided said individual has made contact with one of their street agents or friends. The two are out working the streets harder than ever in an attempt to purchase and trade for large amounts of magic streaming in from the fall of Tolkeen. They even hope to land a few strange, rare and unusual items. They are so excited by the potential flood of magic items that they are planning on spending three quarters of their life savings on items, that's approximately 113 million credits, and expect to make back 5-10 times that over then next 12-18 months selling it all.

Techno-Wizard items: Most basic TW items are available, including E-Clips, batteries, generators, light gear, vampire slaying TW items (water guns, rain flares, etc.) and many small weapons and items once offered by the Kingdom of Tolkeen. Most weapons produced by the *Colorado Baronies* are also in stock or can be special ordered and delivered within 2-3 weeks. No vehicles, body armor or anything very large. **Note:** See pages 312-333 of the *Rifts® Book of Magic* for a comprehensive collection of Techno-Wizard weapons and items.

Atlantis Symbiotes: Only occasionally do they have symbiotes or parasites for sale.

4. The player characters have something Lisa and Mark want to acquire for themselves or for resale in the shop. It might even be something the group doesn't realize they have. Unfortunately, a more sinister force overhears the two talking about the item or to the player group, making our heroes targets for trouble.

5. The player group jumps in to save a man and a woman from an attack by Coalition troops, evil sorcerers or a band of brigands. The pair are hopelessly outnumbered and unless somebody intercedes they are probably dead meat. After a brief skirmish, the appearance of the heroes sends the villains scurrying off (for the moment). It turns out the couple are a grateful Lisa and Mark, and they are so pleased they want to reward the characters with a few minor magic items and/or hire them as bodyguards, to make a delivery or a pick-up, or some other type of work suitable for an adventuring group. Of course, the bad guys that were chased off will strike again. How soon, when and whether or not they'll have reinforcements, depends on circumstance (and the whim of the Game Master).



31. Ed's Blacksmith & Repair Shop

This is a fairly large facility and much more diverse than the words "blacksmith" and "repair shop" might suggest. The blacksmith part of the shop is high-tech, with advanced furnaces and precision temperature control. The blacksmiths working here can make horseshoes and shoe horses, create custom-made shoes for exotic animals (takes only 24 hours, 12 for a rush job

at triple the usual price), create and repair conventional metal S.D.C. body armor, repair most types of M.D.C. body armor, and make and repair ancient-style melee weapons, including knives, swords, spears, battle axes, maces, morning stars and hammers. Traditional smith items include nails (variety of sizes), spikes (two sizes), chain (three different sizes and widths), hammers, pliers, nails, pots, pans, shovels and rakes. M.D.C. metals and items are not available, except for a few second-hand items purchased for resale from adventurers. Ed has a keen eye for quality weapons and metal works, and will pay 10-33% of the value depending on how nice or rare an item may be. He is also known to buy the occasional M.D.C. weapons including Vibro-Blades, magic items, alien artifacts (including Xiticix weaponry) and other contraband, for both his own collection and for resale under the table; pays 20-50% of what he thinks it's worth. The "blacksmith" shop can also do basic vehicular body work, rebuild and replace gears, nuts and bolts, and do spot welding. Six Dwarves and five strong D-Bees work in his shop, along with a crew of 30 humans.

Next to the blacksmith facility, which takes up two thirds of the first floor, is a small bike shop that only does repairs, and next to it is the hardware store where the smiths' products are sold.

The second floor electronics' shop has five technicians (two of them 2nd and 4th level Techno-Wizards) who can repair and rebuild most conventional (and some magical) electronics and computers.

The upstairs also has shower, lounge and lunch areas for its workers and a room with six bunks for employees to crash overnight or take a nap when working on special projects and tight deadlines.

All prices, for everything from product to repair services, are reasonable and of good to exceptional quality. Which explains why it is always buzzing with business.

Ed also buys scrap metal by the ton, paying two credits per 100 pounds (45 kg) of S.D.C. metal and 10 credits per 100 pounds (45 kg) for M.D.C. alloys. Also purchases usable electronic parts for pennies on the credit. The smith can melt down and recycle scrap metal, and spare electronics are always useful if they are cheap enough.

Adventure Hooks: 1. Ed's taste for the exotic and collection of contraband M.D.C., alien and magic weapons could get him into trouble with the CS, adventurers or practitioners of magic depending on the circumstances. For example, a thief who robbed one of the player characters might resell the stuff to Ed. Even if the wronged character can prove the item is his, Ed refuses to take a loss (after all, he didn't steal it, he paid good money for it) and insists the aggrieved character pay him 50% more than what he paid for it. This dispute may lead to a brawl or trouble. Trouble for the player character that is, as Ed's employees are very loyal to and protective of the boss.

2. Ed might hire the player group to get him a particular artifact, probably a weapon of some kind. This could be in town or an adventure away from the 'Burbs. Ed knows and meets a lot of people and hears a lot of things, including tips and clues about treasure and trouble throughout the country. He'll pay for basic provisions up to 4000 credits and will let the group keep whatever booty they come across except for exotic weapons.

Other adventures can include those similar to the ones under the Curio Shop (#30).

32. Edward Wintergreen

This is the home of Edward Wintergreen and his family, wife Ella, his three sons (Jeffrey, Michael and Junior) and two daughters. It is a large, rich, two-story manor that reflects his success and wealth as a businessman, though all his neighbors know he worked hard for every credit. The entire place is an opulent but homey residence with four fireplaces, a huge living room, an equally huge dining room, four bathrooms, six bedrooms, a playroom, hot tub and patio.

The basement is one giant workroom where Ed puts around on personal projects and work that he takes home. There is a secret room he built himself, where he keeps his collection of oddities and contraband weapons and magic items. Includes every type of Vibro-Blade and almost every type of Coalition Army weapon, a dozen Techno-Wizard weapons (four guns, the rest blades), every type of Xiticix weapon, a Splugorth Slaver's Staff and a few other oddities from god only knows where. His collection is his pride and joy, and he puts aside 3% of the company's gross earnings to spend on it.

33. Abandoned Warehouse & Home of Impala

The only notable thing about this abandoned warehouse is that it is home to a feral Dog Boy (girl, actually), named Impala. She is a mixed breed mutant canine, part Pit Bull, part Boxer, who barely made it through military training and washed out of the Coalition Army. She was supposed to be euthanized, but her handler couldn't go through with it and set it up that she could escape into the 'Burbs. For the last eight months, she has roamed the 'Burbs taking odd jobs and stealing food and basic supplies from outsiders and visiting merchants. Coalition indoctrination compels her to mainly target practitioners of magic, psychics, D-Bees and monsters. A bundle of seemingly endless energy, Impala is constantly running around the 'Burbs playing and getting into mischief – which is appropriate since she is barely an adult and acts very much like a playful puppy. Impala loves children, however, and is constantly seen running around town with the orphans of Camp Fireplace (her preferred playmates) and Banner's. This also means she has friends and connections among the City Rat community with whom the orphans are associated. Impala is skittish around strangers, males and her old Coalition comrades, but hates practitioners of magic, dragons and other creatures of magic, and, especially, supernatural beings. In fact, she was being trained to be a demon hunter and since her arrival in Firetown, Impala has slain two Witchlings, a Brodkil sub-demon, and a Shifter suspected of kidnaping and sacrificing children in rituals of black magic. This has made Impala a hero to the children of the orphanages (and all children in the area) and endears her to the locals, many of whom leave bowls of milk, water, food and bones out for her. Since scavenging for food is no longer a consideration, the half-crazed, wild mutant has more time to run around playing and watching out for the local children.

Adventure Hooks: 1. Impala's old Dog Pack knows she lives in the warehouse, as do other Coalition authorities (subtle and sneaky this dim-witted, noisy and rambunctious beast is not), but they don't care and leave her be. Why? For one thing, she leaves Coalition troops alone, and for another, she is doing everyone a service by sniffing out and single-handedly slaying demons and bad guys hiding in Firetown. Impala may be wild, but she's the equivalent of a "ratter" in a rat filled town, so why eliminate a good thing. This is all unofficial, of course.

2. The Dog Trackers have tried to bring the rogue hero into their group, but she just barks and plays then runs away. They've given up on Impala, but other groups of vigilantes, adventurers and crooks regularly try to enlist her aid or manipulate her to do things for them, typically to sic her after a practitioner of magic or suspected supernatural being. Sometimes this is done for the welfare of the community, but more often than not it's to harass a rival or cause a noisy distraction.

3. Tom Mitzer has heard about the local hero and had one close call when she cornered him after a CS kill. He escaped by turning into a mist, but didn't appreciate the interference and is considering killing Impala.

4. If there is a creature of magic, supernatural being or sorcerer in the player characters' group, he or she may catch the attention of Impala, especially if the character is treating one of "her" children poorly or making threats toward one of the City Rat orphans. The wild beast is usually satisfied with chasing the bully away, but she may also attack with the intent to kill. She will not, however, fight to the death and runs away, tail between her legs, if the opposition proves to be too powerful for her. Those who escape her jaws should not celebrate too much, because she never forgets the face or scent of an enemy who bested her, and Impala will strike again should they ever cross paths.

5. Another likely scenario between player characters and the feral Dog Girl is the player group going to investigate a commotion, probably the sounds of a fight mixed in with savage sounding growls and barking. Not a complete imbecile (she acts more wild than dumb), Impala has figured out that if she makes a lot of noise barking and howling, someone will come to investigate whether it be a CS patrol, the ISS, local authorities, curious adventurers or angry residents. Thus, when she sniffs out more trouble than she can handle, she makes noise. On the other hand, she makes just as much noise playing.

Random Impala Encounters

01-10% She's begging for food or rummaging through garbage cans. At the first sign of anger or violence, the crazy feral Dog Girl runs away. Fights only to defend herself.

11-30% Lonely and looking for a playmate, Impala charges the first adult to appear on the scene, grabs his coattails or shirt, spins him around, and stands there tempting him to chase her much like a four-legged dog might. In the alternative, she may grab a weapon, wallet, or other obvious valuable and run away with it to get the victim and/or his friends (the player group) to give chase. She paces herself so she never gets completely out of sight and lets pursuers get close before leaping out of range and putting on a burst of speed. When she is done playing, or if her playmates get too rough, Impala will drop the stolen item and run away for real. When she really wants to go, she can

weave through the streets and pour on the speed so that nobody with less than a speed of 60 has any hope of catching her, and even then she can usually lose them in under a minute.

31-50% Has a human or humanoid pinned against the wall or backed into a corner and acting like she wants to tear him apart. This individual may look human, but odds are he is one of the following: 01-20% a good aligned practitioner of magic or powerful psychic, 21-40% an evil practitioner of magic, 41-60% a dragon disguised through metamorphosis, 61-80% an evil shape changer of some kind (mortal or creature of magic or demon), 81-96% a demon/monster disguised to look ordinary., or 97-00% something else entirely (G.M.'s choice or make it one of the previous choices if you don't have any ideas; could be an alien, Archie-3 robot, alien robot or android, Golem, Angel, giant mutant insect, a truly savage, feral Coalition Mutant, etc.). The only other possibility (may substitute for any of the above) is someone who was threatening or hurting a child (the child is likely to be hiding nearby).

51-70% Has an obvious non-supernatural monster cornered or is locked in combat with one.

71-90% Has an obvious demon or other *supernatural* fiend cornered or is locked in combat with one (Splugorth Minion, Loup Garou, etc.).

91-00% She is under attack by some foul villain who she interrupted during some nefarious act (probably by accident).

Impala, Feral Dog Boy, Quick Stats

Alignment: Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q. 8, M.A. 15, M.E. 6, P.S. 28, P.P. 20, P.E. 22, P.B. 13, Spd. 64

Hit Points: 31, **S.D.C.:** 59.

Height: 5 feet, 11 inches (1.78 m).

Weight: 225 pounds (101 kg); all muscle.

Age: 3, though she looks like a full grown Dog Boy.

P.P.E.: 12

Species: Mutant humanoid canine created by the CS; ex-Coalition Dog Pack.

Disposition: Wild and undisciplined loner. Though Impala is not the brightest bulb in the pack, she acts dumber than she really is. The mutant canine is a ball of energy always on the go, but skittish and untrusting of most adults regardless of race, even those who leave her food or try to be nice and play with her. She is not likely to ever join a group, though she may tag along from a distance, join in a battle to protect them or fight a common enemy. She may also goof around and play with one or more of the player characters, but never gets too close to them and sooner or later, runs off on her own. She loves children and trusts those she gets to know, including more than four dozen from Camp Fireplace and a dozen or two from the Banner Orphanage. One of the few adults she trusts is *Robert Street (#5)*, only because he is so kind to the children and they trust him completely. Ironically, Street is leery of the big, slobbering mutt.

Experience Level: 2nd level Dog Boy.

Combat: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts.

Attacks per Melee: Five by hand to hand or psychic attacks.

Bonuses (all): +2 on initiative, +6 to strike, +7 to parry and dodge, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +3 to pull punch, +13 to S.D.C. damage (not applicable to bite attack), +1 to save vs psionics (needs a 9 or higher), and +4 to save vs magic and poison.

Skills of Note: Speak American 90%, Pilot Hovercraft 82%, Radio: Basic 65%, Read Sensory Equipment 50%, Wilderness Survival 50%, Body Building, Climbing 60/50%, Running, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Knife, and W.P. Paired Weapons.

R.C.C. Abilities: Standard for Dog Boys: A superior sense of smell, track by smell (48%), keen hearing and instinctive hunter, plus great strength and speed. **Bite Attack (Special):** Impala can substitute a hand to hand attack with a bite attack that does a whopping 4D6+4 S.D.C. damage.

Psionic Powers: The usual Dog Boy abilities to sense the supernatural, psychic and magic energies, sense supernatural beings, plus Sense Evil, Sense Magic, Sixth Sense, and Empathy (receiver only). **I.S.P.:** 56.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Weapons: Two Vibro-Knives (1D6 M.D. each; one kept in her boot, the other on a hip belt), one Vibro-Sword (2D6 M.D.), one silver plated dagger (1D6 S.D.C.), C-20 Laser Pistol (2D6 M.D., 21 shot clip) and four extra E-Clips, C-12 Heavy Laser Rifle (4D6 M.D., 20 shot clip) and two extra E-Clips, silver plated knuckle spikes (1D4 S.D.C. +P.S. damage bonus of 13), canteen, and a few odds and ends.

Body Armor: Light Dog Boy Riot Armor: 41 M.D.C. (50 new). **Note:** Someone, presumably in the Coalition Military, but possibly a local weapons dealer, regularly leaves Impala a new suit of Dog Boy armor whenever her current suit is worn out (under 10 M.D.C.).

Equipment: Traveling clothes, language translator, air filter & gas mask, distancing binoculars, laser distancer, tinted goggles, backpack, utility belt, lighter, flashlight, hand radio, survival kit, 4 medium sacks, bedroll, one week's rations (in the advent of a quick getaway).

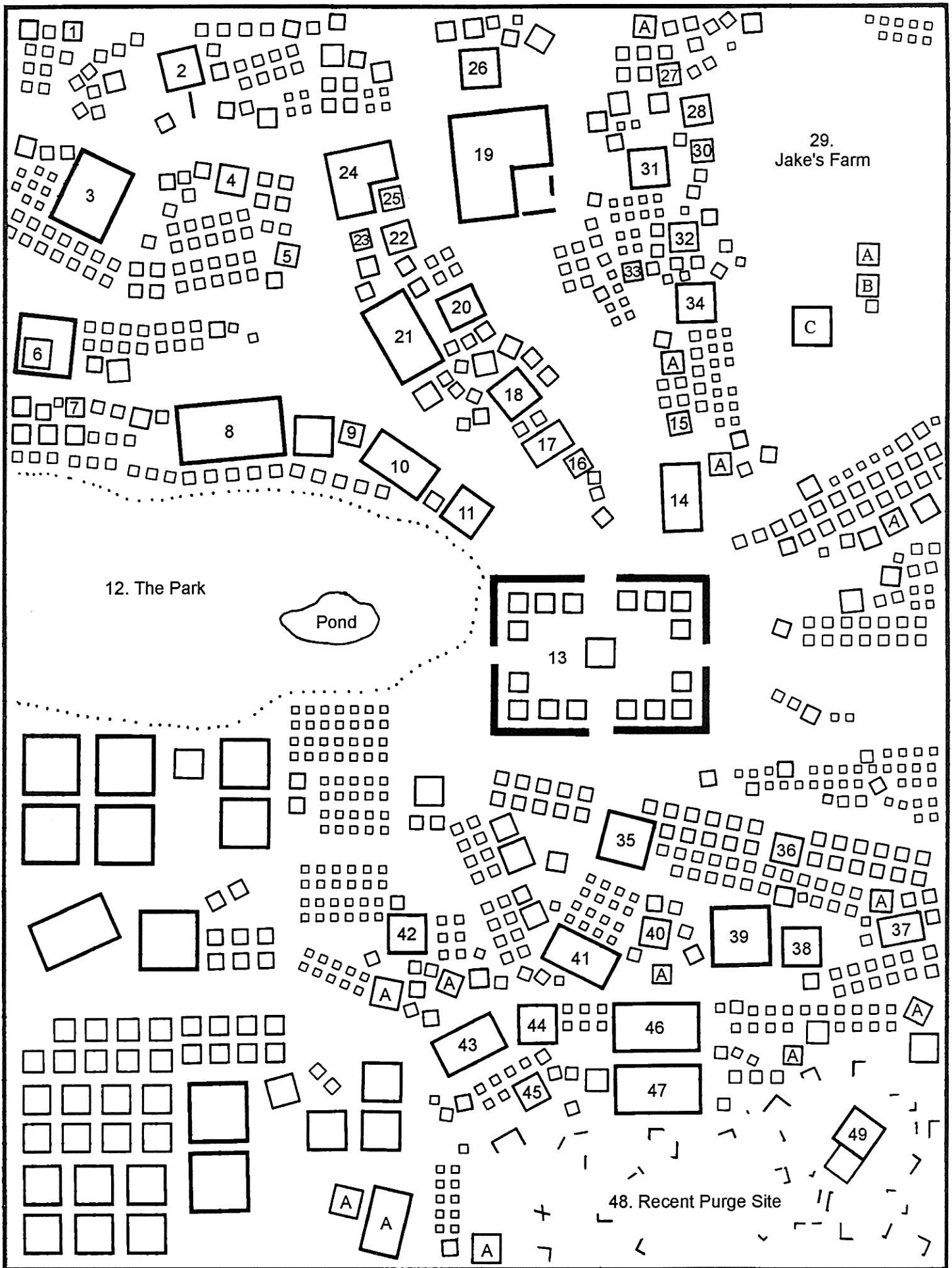
Appearance: Like a humanoid canine with the features of a Pit Bull. Impala is trained as a Dog Boy, and can talk, but she tends to growl, whimper, bark and howl as much as she speaks. When she does speak, she is typically brief and to the point.

Cybernetics: None.

Money: Minimal, 5D6x10 credits at any given time. Tends to live by her wits, stealing food and basic necessities and receiving gifts, food and favors from the locals like a stray dog liked by the neighbors.

34. Momma's Boarding House

A three story patchwork building of wood, aluminum siding, brick and Mega-Damage materials (approximately one third of the building is M.D.C.). Momma Riggatori and her family own and operate this boarding house. Her late husband was a fairly successful Headhunter adventurer and the two sunk most of his earnings into the boarding house so they'd have something when he retired. Mr. Riggatori passed away three years ago out east in a battle against a band of Kittani. All of him that sur-



vived was his bionic arm, which hangs in a place of honor above the bar.

The boarding house caters to adventurers and mercenaries who are always welcomed provided they pay in full upon signing in. The boarding house has a lively, friendly atmosphere and seldom has more than 1D6 rooms available at any given time. A room costs 50 credits a night plus 10 credits for every individual in a room beyond two – 40 credits plus 5 per extra person for adventurers and mercenaries. If there is some dispute concerning the occupation, Momma decides whether or not a patron fits that category, and she's right 99% of the time. There are no meeting rooms, luxury suites or swimming pool, but there is a well stocked bar, front lobby lounge (with fireplace, big comfy chairs and a piano), a dining hall and a kitchen. A hearty breakfast of a heaping pile of eggs or pancakes with hash brown potatoes, and a side of ham or sausage is offered at the low price of four credits, ten for a slab of steak instead of ham or sausage. Sandwiches and/or soup or stew are usually available throughout the day till midnight for 4-6 credits per meal. Drinks at the bar include a variety of beers and hard liquor at a cost of 2-4 credits a drink. Workers are cheerful and helpful.

Adventure Hooks: All the usual meetings, contraband, brawl scenarios (see #21 for some classic hotel ideas). Since Momma's caters to men at arms and adventurers, there tends to be more in the way of brawls and roughhousing (most of which is taken outside), and it is a good place to meet and make contact with mercenaries and other fighters.

35. The Firetown Theater

Live acts, mostly concerts, musicals, dance and plays of every variety, but may also include opera, comedy acts, magic shows, amateur "star search" competitions, and other forms of live entertainment. Despite the fact that it is located on the edge of what starts to become a poorer, shabbier neighborhood, it draws in people from all over town.

The price of admittance ranges from as little as 5-10 credits for amateur hour and second-rate comedy acts, to 25-50 credits for most concerts, plays and most professional quality acts.

Adventure Hooks: Meetings and handing off contraband, payoffs and similar may all take place here, though little trouble usually comes of it. More likely is a situation where a character is followed to the theater or makes a *chance* encounter with an old enemy, rival, bounty hunter, spy or the authorities. Whether a fight breaks out right then and there in the theater will depend on the characters involved, the level of animosity, and circumstance.

36. Tillie's Dance Club

Tillie's is a hugely popular watering hole and dance hall for locals and visitors alike. The first floor is mainly a large open hall with a stage in the front and a bar on the side. Patrons come to see musical acts or DJ's spinning music to dance by. There are no chairs, everyone stands, even during concerts when the house is packed and there is no room to dance except in place or in the mosh pit at the front of the stage.

The price of admittance is a 10 credit cover charge for local acts, 15-25 for "big name" performers and special events. Most

performances and DJ's are of good to outstanding quality. Amateur Night is every Tuesday. Parking is located around the building and next to Wayne's Deli.

Upstairs are the facility's offices (off limits to the public), a meeting room, V.I.P. lounge for private parties (complete with a dance floor, place to spin music and small bar), a large bar (open to folks upstairs and down) and a pair of large lavatories.

Adventure Hooks: 1. Basically the same as #35 above, though there is the additional chance of an incident on the street, such as a mugging, purse snatching or being jumped by an old enemy, bounty hunter, one or more robbers or the CS authorities.

2. Fight breaks out on the dance floor. The combination of excitement, dancing, booze, beautiful women, their jealous boyfriends, D-Bees, bullies, and punks on the dance floor can be a volatile mixture leading to fights and brawls; typically fisticuffs, but sometimes magic, psionics and knives snuck in. Given the level of strength and power 'Borgs and some D-Bees have, even bare knuckle fights can be deadly. A pair of 3rd level Crazies (Anarchist alignments) and a pair of 5th level Vanguard Brawlers (one Anarchist, the other Miscreant) led by a 7th level Quick Flex Alien Gunslinger (armed with a pair of Coalition Neural Maces and silver plated mace as well as a variety of revolvers or pistols depending on the situation; Anarchist alignment) are the "bouncers."

3. Street gangs, City Rats and Cyber-Snatchers are also known to haunt this part of town making characters who hang around after a show lets out vulnerable to a random encounter and conflict with one of them. There is also the possibility of walking out into a gangland streetfight, duel or drive-by-shooting, and once in a while, a battle between practitioners of magic and another party (any of the above).

4. Running afoul of a Retribution Squad is also a possibility since this is a popular public place and it may be targeted by terrorists and snipers, especially if Coalition soldiers, police, or notable Chi-Town figure(s) are in attendance. Likewise, a Retribution Squad or similar fanatic might target an individual or group (including the player characters) the villains have deemed to be traitors, Coalition sympathizers, or their enemy or rival. More likely than not, the bad guys will wait to strike when their intended targets step outside.

5. Wayne's All-Night Deli is across the street. It's a hole-in-the-wall eating place open 24 hours a day, and closed only on Mondays. It seats patrons in one of its six four-person booths or at one of the eight long tables where as many as 14 people can be seated, often next to strangers. The Deli makes some of the best soups, sandwiches, bagels, carrot cake and cheese cake in town. Prices range from 4-8 credits per item but every slice, bowl or sandwich is huge and delicious. Alcohol is limited to a local wine and one type of local beer. It is also the hang-out for local street punks, gang members, City Rats and Crazies living in the neighborhood, but they don't usually show up till after *midnight*.

Nextdoor to Wayne's is a tiny **Party Store** where gangbangers and City Rats buy booze, sell (and use) drugs and hang out. Various members come and go all day long, except morning hours between 6:00 a.m. and noon when most of them are sleeping.

Note: Coalition authorities rarely concern themselves with any of these three places or the violence that regularly erupts around them.



37. Gordo's Salvage

A medium-sized three story warehouse. The owner is Gordon Lapazar, a 4th level Headhunter who buys salvage and scrap. Everything from old working electronics and circuit boards to machine parts, bionics, and M.D.C. scrap metal. He typically buys scrap metal by the ton, paying 15 credits per 100 pounds (45 kg) for M.D.C. alloys, 20-30 credits for various machine parts and a box of basic electronics, and 10-15% of list value for working machines, electronic devices and bionics. He refuses to buy weapons or magic – at least publicly.

Adventure Hook: Gordo's is a front for a Black Market Weapons Dealer, and a big one at that. New customers that Gordo and his henchmen don't know are taken to the "Back Room," an ordinary storage room with a wall that slides away to reveal a rather large showroom (30x20x20/9x6x6 m) with new and used weapons. Roughly 15% are used Coalition Army weapons, 35% are Northern Gun and 50% are Black Market "knock-offs" or "used" NG and other brands. The shop *may* also be able to get other items not shown in 8-24 hours for a 10-30% cost above list. Otherwise, prices are reasonable at about 20-40% below list price for *used* and 5-10% off new. The shop will also buy used, working weapons for 10-30% of the list value depending on how powerful and how difficult the item is to come by. If this facility is found by the CS, one particular

batch of employees are set to take the fall for it, allowing Gordo and the rest of his crew (a third are actually innocent laborers) to get off free and clear.

Only people known to Gordo, his top salespeople and the Black Market get to see the real operation, and entire secret, concealed subterranean level buried 40 feet (12.2 m) below the Salvage shop and accessible by one of four tunnels. This is a 3000 square foot (278.7 sq. m) showroom complete with private office and meeting room, and 14,000 square feet (1300 sq. m) of hidden warehouse. Here one can purchase any Black Market weapon and body armor (including knock-offs of most Northern Gun weapons), illegal cybernetics and bionics, most Bandito Arms weapons and body armor, and a full line of Triax weapons (the latter sold at prices 50% higher than list). Even a few of the rare Naruni Enterprises and Kittani weapons and force field generators are available, though at a 200-500% mark up. Likewise, a few Techno-Wizard and Splugorth Bio-Wizard weapons are available from time to time, usually selling for 150-200% more than list. Of course, E-Clips and other types of ammo are also available at list price. Special deals, especially in bulk, or in trade for some special service can get a customer a substantial 20-40% discount on all common weapons and armor; 10-20% on the rare imports, alien and magic items.

This place is known for its quality, reliability and discretion. Any weapons purchased from Gordo are guaranteed to be the genuine article and in top working order. Trouble rarely happens at Gordo's, but the dealer never asks questions and regularly sells to Retribution Squads, the Federation of Magic, rebels, D-Bees, mercenaries, and known criminals. Also buys from Cyber-Snatchers.

38. The Hot Stuff Escort Service

A front for Revenge Squad Ragnarok who astutely exploits the fact that bedroom talk frequently leads to the divulgence of secrets, hints and tips that would otherwise never be revealed except through torture. That so many men get loose lips when involved with a woman, even a professional prostitute, is just one of those little facts of human (and D-Bee) nature that just can't be ignored. Some males do so because they feel relaxed and safe and may have a burden they want to share with a sympathetic person, even if they are paying for the privilege and don't really know the woman whatsoever. Others need to prove their manhood and importance and like bragging to an attractive woman. Of course, not all patrons spill their guts, even though all "the ladies" are encouraged to subtly coax information out of their Johns (the women get a bonus for every bit of useful or impressive information).

This is a cheap hotel run by a seedy old crook who turns a blind eye to anything going on in his establishment as long as the right price is paid. Revenge Squad Ragnarok meets that price so the old coot doesn't know or care about what the girls are up to. He assumes, and rightly so, that the women are prostitutes plying their trade, but he knows absolutely nothing about Revenge Squad Ragnarok or that the women secretly try to learn secrets and information that will help Ragnarok undermine or overthrow the Coalition States. In fact, he'd be shocked and horrified to find out he's in cahoots with insurrectionists from Tolkeen. That will never happen, because even the women don't

know about Ragnarok or the Squad's plans to hurt the CS, and because each woman pretty much works alone, they don't share information or draw any conclusions. The women assume their sponsors and protectors (i.e. the Squad) uses the information to blackmail and leverage clients when the opportunity presents itself. The women are just happy to be working for such kind and generous . . . um . . . businessmen. Other than setting up the prostitution ring and paying bonuses for useful information, Revenge Squad Ragnarok has no direct involvement with the women. The leaders of Ragnarok only loosely maintain the prostitution operation, with the day to day work falling to Madam Roseanna Lee, an attractive 55 year old oriental woman who looks more like 35. Eleven women work for the Hot Stuff Escort Service and with one or two exceptions, all have an average P.B. of 17-24 and/or an M.A. of 14-22; only 3 are D-Bees, the rest are human.

39. Hotel Brimstone

A ramshackle dive in a bad part of town that smells worse than it looks. This flophouse is the home to the down and out, and those looking to hide among other humanoid garbage. A room costs 20 credits plus five for each individual above three, though nobody ever checks and rooms are often packed with 4-8 people. Only 25% of the rooms have a working toilet or hot water, half have a working door lock and a clean bedspread, and all of the walls are thin and the guests noisy. The entire place, except the business wing, stinks of booze, vomit, urine and an array of other unpleasant odors. Walls look like they haven't been painted in 50 years (though the place can't possibly be older than 10 or 12 years) and floors, walls and ceilings are splattered with stains that can only be blood and other bodily fluids.

One can rent a room by the hour in the "business wing," at a price of 10 credits. These rooms are comparatively clean, all have thicker walls, working locks and M.D.C. doors (50 M.D.C.), but are reserved for hourly use by *known local* business people in the criminal underworld – i.e., prostitutes, drug dealers, gang members (for meetings with outsiders or doing drugs or dividing loot) and other criminals and criminal activities that need an hour or less (one pays more for the special use, cleanliness and extra security).

Adventure Hooks: You name the illicit or criminal activity and it probably goes down here a dozen times a day, in some cases a hundred times a day. Player characters might track someone to, or meet with, a gang member, City Rat, lady of the night, or two-bit hood at the Brimstone, as well as snitches, junkies, spies, assassins, drug dealers, fugitives, refugees and lowlifes. What happens once they get there could fall into the realm of information and intrigue, ambush and treachery, to illicit pleasures or life and death combat. This is one of the worst dens of iniquity and evil in Firetown. Only the apartment complexes across the street (#46 & #47) and some of the abandoned buildings are worse.

40. Ace Protection Service

A front for Revenge Squad Ragnarok. This service is composed of a few key members of the Squad and many of their less powerful and recent recruits. It basically hires out "bodyguards and specialists" to accompany and protect wealthy visitors and

newcomers through difficult times in their lives or as escorts through some of the rougher sections of the 'Burbs to see that they arrive home or wherever they are going, safely. Likewise, they might hire an "agent" from Ace to help mediate a business deal (i.e., muscle or a hired gun to enforce payment or make sure violence does doesn't erupt, and if it does, it comes from his hands on behalf of his employer). This operation not only generates revenue and goodwill among some of the local business people and crime lords, but it also provides Ragnarok members a reason to go into certain parts of town and helps them to gather information without looking suspicious or like snoops.

Fortune is in charge of the Ace Protection Service and sets up the schedules (Khem is too busy with other tasks to handle the day to day work required by this business). Fortune, Khem, and Grimsby represent the top bodyguards and managers, with Sigurd and Silvera helping out on occasion, and the rest of the work being done by low level members of Squad Ragnarok – levels 3-6 on average (1D4+2) and most are Men-at-Arms and Adventurer O.C.C.s recruited from the Firebelly Soup Kitchen, half after rehab. The main, founding members of Revenge Squad Ragnarok only take the most important and lucrative jobs, leaving the pedestrian ones to their underlings.

41. The Firebelly Soup Kitchen

This is a medium-sized warehouse that has recently been turned into a soup kitchen and flophouse for the indigent. Anyone down and out on their luck is welcomed at no charge, though they may be asked to help with clean-up and a few simple chores. According to word on the street, the place is said to have been established by a group of kindhearted, retired adventurers, and mercenaries and adventurers in trouble are received with open arms. As a result, there are numerous wheelchairs and crutches available for veterans who have lost limbs or suffer from chronic pain.

A gymnasium is located on the **third floor**. Actually, the gym is not much more than a huge open area with a basketball court drawn out on the concrete floor, some benches on the sidelines, a pair of hoops at either end, an attached shower room and some beat-up, old exercise equipment in the large anteroom nextdoor. Despite its meager offerings, the gym and exercise room seems to be in constant use; so is the roof.

The roof is just a flat top, tarred surface broken by a dozen heating and cooling vents and a few smokestacks. Here and there along the edge of the roof are some folding lawn chairs and a card table or crate where regulars and staff come to sit in the cool breeze to watch the city below, chat, play cards, or even sleep out in the open air. Some of the more physically healthy and private individuals come to the roof to walk or exercise, and a basketball hoop is located on one end and a volleyball net at the other. Private conversations can also be had up here, though anybody can gain access to the roof and one must be careful that no eavesdroppers are within earshot.

The second floor is one big, open floor filled with cots where the homeless, handicapped and penniless can flop for a good night's sleep. The cots aren't too lumpy and the place is chilly in the winter but a whole lot better than sleeping outdoors in the freezing cold. If one can ignore the coughing, wheezing



and snoring of the 100-600 people present at any given time, it's a good place to bed down when one is down on his luck. When this floor is filled to capacity, the third floor gymnasium and anteroom can be used as temporary sleeping quarters for the overflow (can hold another 250). A pair of lavatories and showers are located at either end.

The first floor is divided into kitchen, huge dining hall filled with long tables and benches, meeting hall, first aid clinic (a very basic service), rehabilitation clinic, a sitting room with shabby couches and easy chairs, and eight administrative offices. The administration offices are where the indigent go to sign in, paperwork is processed (what little there is) and the key members of Revenge Squad Ragnarok can rest, work or hang out. The administrators who handle the day to day duties are mostly volunteers who work for the founders of the soup kitchen (Squad Ragnarok) who come and go freely as they attend to other business and personal matters. Each of the founders have their own offices, which are locked and empty most of the time.

The dining hall is where food is served, mostly soups, stews, beans and bread, meat and potatoes, and other inexpensive meals that are filling and easy to prepare. The kitchen, of course, is where the meals are prepared and can churn out food for 500 per sitting. When the place is packed to overflowing (700+ people), only breakfast and dinner are served, with two seatings for each. When there are 600 or less people (200-400 is the norm), a breakfast (hot cereal, pancakes, bread and eggs), lunch (sandwiches or soup) and dinner (a hearty meal) are served at 7:00 a.m., noon and 7:00 p.m. respectively.

The rehabilitation clinic is attached to four private rooms and a small ward with 12 beds. Both are reserved for ex-military types suffering from drug and/or alcohol addiction or combat fatigue, also known as "shell shock" and "post-traumatic syndrome." Sadly, only a few can be helped at a time, and even sadder is the fact that the beds are seldom more than half full because most suffering from these maladies refuse help or don't think they have a problem. Among those who are helped through rehab, roughly 10% stay on as volunteers at the soup kitchen or are recruited to join or work for Revenge Squad Ragnarok in one capacity or another, from full combat members to spies, informants and stoolies.

A front for revenge. The Firebelly Soup Kitchen is really a front for a Retribution Squad calling itself the *Revenge Squad Ragnarok* (see the section on this group elsewhere in this book). The soup kitchen not only affords the Squad a legitimate cover for their seditious activities, but it also provides them with a safe place to hide or lose themselves, and allows them to make contact with the local street people and get the latest rumors about Coalition and illegal activity. Granted, this information usually comes in the form of rumors and gossip which can be unreliable (60% of the time), but there is often some a grain of truth in them to be found, and some are surprisingly accurate. The soup kitchen also lets Squad Ragnarok recruit new candidates into their network. However, this is a by-product of the soup kitchen's charity and is *not* the main purpose or a priority. Potential recruits are looked at on an individual basis with any possible security threats being eliminated from consideration. Already, several down on their luck adventurers have been rehabilitated and convinced to joined the Squad.

Although some of the local City Rats consider the soup kitchen to be a naive gesture on the part of some do-gooder, others appreciate the effort to help the locals and several City Rats have donated their time and effort to assist the operation. A few of the Rats who know a little about Ragnarok's darker side and subversive activities have even assisted them in evading the CS authorities by providing valuable information or by misdirecting the Army and ISS investigators looking into the Squad's activities. Except for those allowed into the Squad's inner circle of contacts and allies, nobody suspects the soup kitchen of being connected with them.

Silvera runs the soup kitchen assisted by a couple of short-order cooks and whomever is willing to volunteer (often some of the people who come here are drafted into helping). When in human form, *Sigurd* often helps out for a few hours. For protection (not that *Silvera* can't handle things), *Grimsby* is regularly on hand, and, occasionally, *Fortune* is there too (but rarely). *Khem* shows up every now and then, particularly if he hears about a potential recruit being at the kitchen. *Voudaryi* never comes to the kitchen (both by *Khem*'s order and personal preference).

Secret basement. Unknown to everyone but the Revenge Squad Ragnarok, there is a basement area once used to store chemicals and supplies. It is roughly 100x60 feet (30.5x18.3 m) with a 15 foot (4.6 m) ceiling. It serves as one of the Squad's secret safe houses/hideouts and supply depots. It contains comfortable housing for twelve individuals (two per private room), two showers and bathrooms, a dining/meeting room, small kitchen, supply room and secret emergency exit that leads to the alley out back as well as a first floor entrance/exit in the floor of one of the administrative offices.

Adventure Hooks: 1. Besides the obvious, one might track a fugitive, rebel or criminal to the facility. Thugs or villains might try to shakedown or trouble the facility, so might the local authorities. There could be trouble between humans and D-Bees, different occupations, etc.

2. The player characters could get involved with either Revenge Squad Ragnarok or the actual soup kitchen. As adventurers themselves, they might get mistaken for being members of the Squad, or some other Retribution Squad or troublemakers, or even be framed by Ragnarok or some other group.

3. Involvement with this soup kitchen (or another) and its patrons can lead to all kinds of adventures or clues, rumors and events that lead to adventure. Remember, these kinds of institutions are filled with people who are lost or want to be lost. Any one to dozens of the indigent, emotionally broken or mentally disturbed individuals staying at or regularly visiting the soup kitchen could have a past that is filled with intrigue. Or one (or more) could know, see or overhear something that leads to adventure. Or has found or stolen something worth millions of credits or which represents a terrible danger or will unleash a horrible monster or magic. Or one of the indigent who suffers from amnesia is really a famous villain, or war hero, or sorcerer, or rebel or even a Coalition officer or spy. Or one of the indigent or volunteers is really a fallen Cyber-Knight or hermit, or a vampire, or shape changer, or alien invader, or serial killer, or kidnapper, or evil cultist targeting his next victims or hiding from the Coalition authorities or out to find and destroy Revenge Squad Ragnarok or the player characters. Maybe a mon-

ster is feeding on, or a slaver kidnaping, members of the soup kitchen. Maybe a City Rat has given one of the indigent a disk or clue with vital information, only the Rat is killed and now that individual must be found. Or maybe a crook hides something at the soup kitchen or on one of the people staying there – maybe one with the mind of a child or a turnip, or someone evil, and this incident brings back his senses and evil ways, or he gets possessed, and so on.

The soup kitchen can be an excellent place where innocent and helpless Non-Player Characters can be introduced to create likeable characters to fall victim to a future crisis or villain. A regular NPC friend or innocents can stumble onto something that helps or endangers the player group or gives them a lead on something. It can also introduce future troublemakers, villains and monsters, as well as ongoing, reoccurring villains like gang members and bullies who victimize the residents and visitors of the soup kitchen. Plus, a relationship with the indigent here can spin into adventures elsewhere. Who would guess that Old Mack knows where someone or something important is hidden, or a secret way into Chi-Town or some other building, etc. Or Old Mack's son, daughter, nephew, old partner, etc., is in trouble and he turns to the player characters for help. Or he is arrested for a crime he could never have committed, and on and on.

As you can see, the possibilities are many. Think about them and try several.

42. Parking Structure

A large, six story, Mega-Damage parking structure primarily used by the businesses, hotels, and visitors. The neighboring Factory District has ample street level parking, often fenced in and guarded. It is half to three quarters empty after seven in the evening.

Adventure Hooks: Probably what one would expect, the occasional car theft, mugging, and act of vandalism. Dark and deserted, it can also be a place for an ambush by a bounty hunter, the authorities, rival, or an enemy. Late at night, the parking structure is sometimes used as a meeting place by gang members and street people, and sometimes as a place for gang combat and duels.

43. General Store

A general store that sells everything from hardware and clothes to toys and candy. No books though, since most of the clientele is illiterate. Average prices.

Adventure Hooks: Other than shoplifting and chance encounters, nothing much exciting happens at this store. Same possibilities for chance encounters and trouble on the street, especially at night, as #35 and #36.

44. Movie Theater

A run-down multiplex with 12 screens and seating for 500 in each. It shows only movies approved by the Coalition States.

Adventure Hooks: 1. Basically the same as the live Theater #35.

2. Unknown to the owner and manager, one of the employees has made a duplicate set of keys and opens the theater at night to Rogue Scholars for secret screenings of illegal films and documentaries. As many as sixty people show up some nights. They are always quiet and very careful to cover their trail. If the CS should catch wind of this there could be trouble. Likewise, a rival group or a villain coveting something the scholars have or know, might attack and rob or kill them, perhaps committing the crime inside or near the movie theater.

45. Katz & Jammer

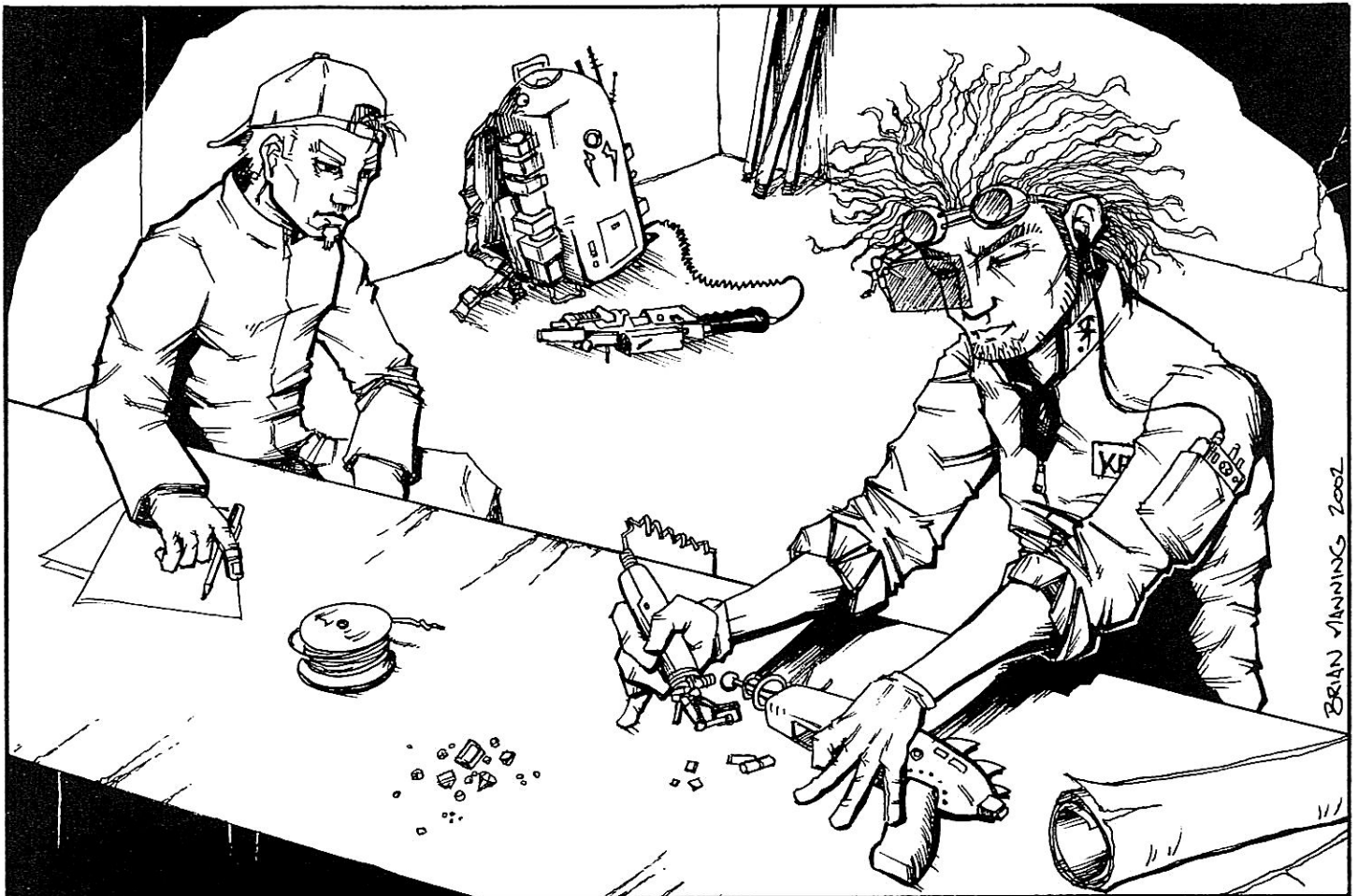
Lenny Katz and Mike "Jammer" Kinsky are a pair of young Techno-Wizard dissidents who supply Retribution Squads, sorcerers, rebels and people with a grudge against the CS with electronics and Techno-Wizard devices to use against the Empire. Katz is the weapons and TW energy source specialist while Jammer is the electronics and communications expert. They are always glad to help a fellow dissident and provide their services to repair Techno-Wizard and conventional weapons, communications and electronics, as well as help others build bombs, traps and gizmos to attack or thwart the Coalition. The two are well known in the underground rebel and magic communities in Firetown, and are increasingly outspoken against the CS and bold in their work to help overthrow the government. They have become so cocky that they eavesdrop on conversations and walk up and offer their help/services to complete strangers. It is a miracle that the CS has not caught on to these two yet. Katz and Jammer work only as a team and sell their services at the low

cost of parts and a little extra for their time. They only take enough to survive and get their reward from knowing they are either helping innocent people escape the clutches of Coalition oppression or helping rebels to undermine the Coalition government. It doesn't matter that many of their "innocent" clients are liars, thieves and cutthroats or that the rebels are using terrorist tactics and killing innocent 'Burbies while trying to undermine the CS. Nope, to these two, everything is black and white, with the Coalition States and its enforcers (soldiers, police, politicians, etc.) "evil monsters" and *anyone* who opposes them, the "good guys." Sadly, this narrow and callous outlook has made Katz and Jammer complicit in a number of criminal and terrorist actions. Should they ever get captured by the CS, they will be executed.

Katz is an Aberrant evil, 20 year old, 3rd level Techno-Wizard. He has a head of bushy red hair, a scrawny red goatee, and green eyes. He also has some cybernetic implants, namely a headjack, clock calendar, and augmented hearing. Attributes: I.Q. 18, M.A. 17, M.E. 18, P.S. 14, P.P. 15, P.E. 10, P.B. 12, Spd 21.

Jammer is an Anarchist, 18 year old, 3rd level Techno-Wizard who loves all things electronic. He is a blonde with blue eyes and a small goatee. So far, he has avoided the temptation of cybernetic augmentation, but he's considering a few communications devices. Attributes: I.Q. 21, M.A. 9, M.E. 11, P.S. 10, P.P. 17, P.E. 11, P.B. 10, Spd 18.

Both are armed with a number of common Techno-Wizard weapons and devices, most of their own manufacture. One of their own creations is the *K&J Multi-Purpose Weapon Flight*



Pack (seen laying on the floor in the picture). The energy source is a canister worn on the back like a jet pack, and an energy rifle wired to the pack. The backpack enables the wearer to Levitate (up and down) or Fly like the Eagle. The gun can fire an energy blast that Disrupts Energy (900 foot/ 274 m range, six shots; costs 15 P.P.E. to recharge) or shoots *bolts of fire* (4D6 M.D. per blast, 1200 foot/366 m range, the TW battery holds up to 60 fire blasts; costs 8 P.P.E. to recharge a single blast). Another is the Whisper Ear plug, a tiny communications device that lets them transmit any message that is *whispered*.

Adventure Hooks: There are a number of reasons why a player character might want to contact Katz and Jammer. The most obvious is to purchase TW weapons or devices. Another might be to get electronics repaired, and another might be to get information since both guys are well connected with the underworld, rebels and Retribution Squads.

1. Under the pretense to acquire TW devices (or staking out their lair), the player group might be able to use the two wizards to hunt down a Retribution Squad or other villain they are looking for. Being used won't sit well with Katz or Jammer, and the two are likely to seek revenge for it and to preserve their reputation as reliable. Similarly, associating with the two might get the player group mistakenly branded as a Retribution Squad, Tolkeen refugees, Federation of Magic troublemakers, or criminals. Likewise, the two might get the group into trouble by arranging a meeting for them with some very bad people. **Note:** Katz and Jammer have many friends in low places, and anybody who messes with or causes problems for them may find themselves hunted by one or more Retribution Squads or a band of Gutter Rats, Crazies, rebels or gangbangers.

2. Katz and/or Jammer might approach the group with an offer: "I couldn't help overhearing your conversation and maybe we can help." Or, "Any enemy of the Coalition is a friend of ours. We can repair your weapon (or communicator or whatever) and maybe show you a few other things to give you a hand." Or, "Sounds like you're in the market for some magic, maybe we can help." Where this leads we leave to you.

3. Katz and Jammer might find themselves in a bind and need to hire some protectors or spies to help them out. Or to make a delivery or to acquire some particular magic item or component.

4. The player group might find out that Katz and Jammer have been supplying villains killing innocent 'Burbies and decide it's time to put Katz and Jammer out of business. That won't be an easy task, because the two Techno-Wizards are loaded for bear with TW items and have a lot of connections, including Retribution Squads, rebels and practitioners of magic who are glad to come to their aid.

46. Prosek Towers Low Rent Apartment High-Rise

The Towers is a terrible place to live. The filth, the bugs, the squalor, the crime, the violence are all epidemic. Gangs, one for each floor, live in the nine story construct along with scores of other scurrilous bands of misanthropes and cutthroats. Drug dealers are found inside and out, while residents have to step over the junkies and drunks in the hallways. The toughest and bravest gang members claim the front stoop and lobby area, the rest roam the halls and the streets outside. Most deal in one form

of crime and contraband or another. Life here is very much a concrete jungle with the strong and cruel preying on the weak and poor. **Note:** Prosek Towers and Joseph Towers across the



way are the two largest buildings in Firetown. Both were built with the help of Chi-Town in a rare 'Burb urban development project 18 years ago. The only thing that has kept them standing is Coalition indifference and that they are built with Mega-Damage materials. Every floor has been burnt out and rebuilt at some point throughout the building's history.

Adventure Hooks: The following are just *a few* of the most notable inhabitants of Prosek Towers, any of whom could lead to or participate in adventures.

1. Any of the scenarios suggested for *abandoned apartment buildings* work at this location, only there are more people, more misery and more violence.

2. A band of Crazies calling themselves the **Dirty Boys** live and operate out of this complex. There are six total, all Crazies and all insane. Mean, too. Bullies of the highest magnitude, pushing people around, taking what they want and doing as they please. Anybody who complains is beaten or killed. They have already wiped out a rival band called *Crazy Clowns* and have an ongoing feud with the gang that controls the fifth floor where they live (the Crazies are too small a group to be considered a full-fledged street gang). The Dirty Boys could easily kill the leaders and take over the gang, and maybe half the building, but they don't want to. They're too wild, independent and intolerant of others. They regularly hire themselves as contract killers for crime syndicates (actually anyone who can afford them), sometimes chase bounties (especially difficult and high paying ones), and engage in other crimes usually for the challenge or fun of it. All are 6th to 8th level, Miscreant or Diabolic and love to intimidate, hurt and kill.

3. Three gangs of Cyber-Snatchers reside in Prosek Towers, the **Rat Catchers**, the **Electro-Killers** and the **Wired Monkeys**. All are 1D4+2 level and Diabolic, with approximately 16-32 members in each gang, though they are usually encountered in smaller groups of 1D4+6 members. When they aren't out killing people and snatching bionics, they're raising hell, warring with other gangs or getting wasted on booze and/or drugs.

4. The **D-Bee Brain Eaters** (commonly known only as the Brain Eaters) are one of the more notorious of the street gangs in the neighborhood. They are bunch of low level human supremacists who go wandering around the Firetown and the other 'Burbs, particularly Shanty Towns, beating, robbing, torturing, raping and killing D-Bees. They are proud to announce that they are responsible for keeping Prosek Towers "pure." Many of their members like to spend time at *Karl's Revenge* (#2). The majority are 1D4 level thugs, thieves, bandits or City Rats (mostly Gutter Rats or Roof Rats). Typical alignments are Miscreant and Diabolic. There are reportedly over 1,100 members in this gang throughout the 'Burbs, a third of which are said to live in Firetown, and their leaders in Prosek Towers. They control the 4th floor.

5. The **Highrise Kings** are another one of the more notorious gangs based in the Towers and control the 6th floor. They are known for being information brokers and kidnapers, holding victims for ransom and using information to blackmail others. Ten percent of the gang are Gutter Rats, 20% Roof Rats, 15% City Rats of other varieties and 4% practitioners of magic and 8% psychics. Roughly one quarter are D-Bees, though none reside in the Towers. The rest are professional crooks and killers.

300 members of this gang operate in Firetown with the Towers serving as their headquarters. Most are 1D4+3 level, Anarchist, Miscreant and Aberrant.

6. **Rex Masterson** is an underworld figure said to be rich many times over, but loves the grit and sweat of the "real world," which is why he chooses to live in the Towers, in what he calls the penthouse, of course. According to gang members and crime figures in the neighborhood, Mr. Masterson was once a professional smuggler turned hit man. Now he's semi-retired, but said to do both when the urge strikes him. He is supposedly the criminal mastermind who runs a smuggling ring known as the **Shadow Masters**, a group that is said to specialize in smuggling the most wanted and most dangerous people and merchandise in and out of the 'Burbs. He is also suspected of being the boss of the biggest street gang in Firetown, the **Shadow Soldiers**, of which many top members live on (and rule) the eighth floor of the Towers.

7. **Henry "the Reaper" Levandowski**. The residents call this new arrival "Deadman Hank" because if it really is "the Reaper" he is a 12th level Necromancer and one of the architects behind the *Sorcerers' Revenge*, and has a three million credit bounty on his head. One can rest assured the Reaper will have already gathered himself an army of animated dead, and probably has a few inhuman protectors, not that it will stop the Coalition Army. If the Army learns he is here they'll send two companies to bring him down. But why alert the Coalition authorities when one can claim the bounty for oneself? That might explain the rash of dead bounty hunters found near the Towers. Word from the Tower grapevine is that Deadman Hank was supposed to meet with an ally or partner and escape to the Federation of Magic, but something went wrong, he was betrayed, has no money and is, momentarily, stuck at the Towers where he is laying low and trying to formulate a new plan.

47. Joseph Towers Low Rent Apartment High-Rise

Fundamentally a clone of Prosek Towers, #46, above. Different names, same garbage. **The Barnstormer Retribution Squad** is said to have members and cohorts living here.

48. Recent Purge Site

Several city blocks have been leveled by a recent *purge* by the Coalition Army. Except for the walls of several buildings that remain standing (and #49), the neighborhood is gone.

Approximately 200 homeless people have taken up residence among the ruins, finding shelter from standing walls or living in tents or shacks. Hundreds of others come during the day to dig through the rubble in search of what few personal items they can recover and/or the remains of loved ones still missing. Flocks of crows and swarms of flies, rats, and other vermin infest the area, feeding on the remains of the dead. Local kids and desperate people dig for valuables.

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

1. What loot or secrets may be buried under the rubble? Who's willing to dig it up?.

2. Rumor says a magic dealer's cache is buried in the rubble somewhere.

3. A refugee from Tolkeen who died in the conflagration died clutching a powerful magic or alien artifact .

4. Ghouls and monsters that eat the dead have been sighted in the ruins.

5. Entities: A half dozen Haunting, a few dozen Poltergeist and 1D4 Tectonic infest the area.

6. Animated dead roaming the ruins and attacking, killing and robbing people in and around the ruins of the purge area. Proof, say some folks, that a treasure of magic is buried in the rubble, and a Necromancer is out to claim it for himself, killing anyone looking for it.

7. A Death Cult now operates in the ruins.

8. Coalition squads regularly stalk the ruins at night, hunting D-Bees and sorcerers for sport.

49. Purge Battered Apartment Building

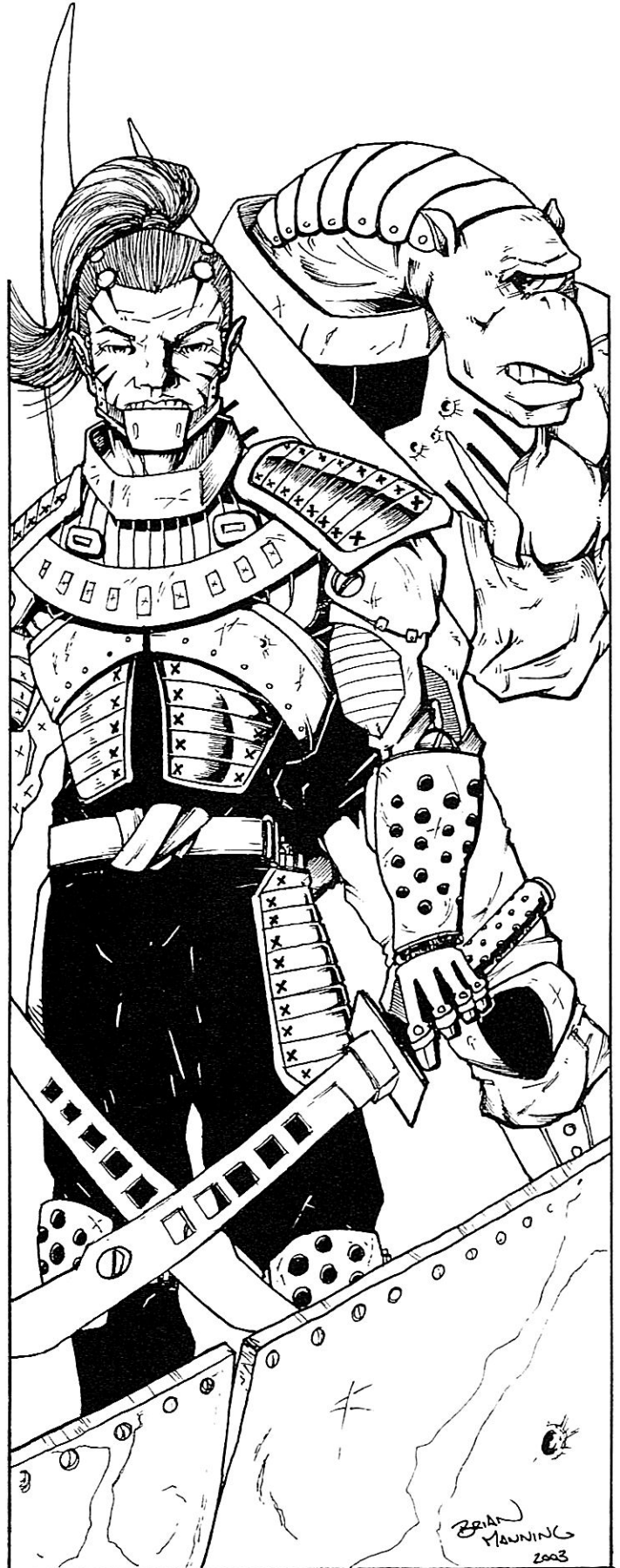
This battered apartment building is in such bad shape it should be condemned. How it survived the purge is a miracle, but since then it has become worse than ever. A lawless oasis of habitation in a sea of ruin and death. It is the equivalent of an abandoned apartment building, filled with impoverished thugs, Tolkeen refugees, D-Bees and god only knows what else that have pushed out half of the original residents. The residents who refuse to leave live in terror. The nearby neighborhood of poor isn't much better. The CS doesn't care about either.

Firetown Map Two

Space limitations and other cool ideas prevent a full breakdown and description of notable people and places in the other half of Firetown, so we'll have to save it for the **Black Vault™** Adventure Sourcebook scheduled for a June 2003 release.

The Barnstormers Retribution Squad

The Barnstormers is currently one of the more infamous Retribution Squads operating in and around Firetown. They are the epitome of the worst fanaticism and hate can breed. Though their primary targets are Coalition soldiers, spies, undercover agents, police and notorious personalities from Chi-Town, they also target Cyber-Knights, Lazloans, and others who they believe betrayed Tolkeen. Surprisingly, many 'Burbies, especially D-Bees, consider the rebels to be heroic champions fighting for Tolkeen. The Barnstormers also make a big show trying to help and protect civilians, particularly D-Bees. However, like all Retribution Squads, their methods are extreme and designed to undermine the CS with little regard for innocent lives. Thus, the secret behind the Barnstormers' success is that they often use the very people they swear they are trying to avenge and protect (i.e., D-Bees) as *bait* to lure Coalition soldiers out in the open.



In fact, they frequently leak information to Coalition authorities (military and ISS) about illegal D-Bee operations, homesteads, sweatshops and meeting places, and then stake out the D-Bees or the location to waylay the Coalition forces when they come to investigate. This secret tactic puts innocent people in danger and has cost dozens of lives, but, ironically, makes the Barnstormers appear all the more heroic, because *somehow* they always seem to arrive when D-Bees are being attacked by the Coalition to “selflessly fight to protect them.” Nobody knows the Barnstormers place D-Bee lives in jeopardy in the first place. **Note:** Though the group is based in Firetown, they can be found “waging war” in any of the Chi-Town ‘Burbs, from Shanty Towns to Old Towns. Have recently been staking out the Firetown purge ruins.

Goals: Harass and kill Coalition soldiers and Chi-Town police, kill ten CS soldiers for every Tolkeenite who perished (that’s millions) but ultimately, to strike a blow that will bring Chi-Town to its knees. Ideally, the death of Emperor Karl Prosek and/or his son, Joseph. To that end, they seek a way inside Chi-Town or to get at the Emperor and his family.

Tactics: Any and every means of combat, treachery and terrorism available to them, conventional military, magic and psionic.

Network: Loved by many D-Bees who see them as heroes, avengers and saviors. These admirers and supporters may provide the Barnstormers with information, help, hiding places, food and even weapons and money to help the cause.

Numbers: There are three Barnstormer Squads: Squad Storm, Squad Death and Strike Squad, each with roughly 9-12 members at any given time.

Notable Members of Squad Storm:

Captain Samson Blackmoore: **Team:** Squad Storm, Alpha Team; includes many of the original Barnstormer Squad from Tolkeen. **Real Name:** Rydal Tyrn. **Alignment:** Aberrant evil. **Species:** Kremin Cyborg. **Team Leader.** **Attributes:** I.Q. 13, M.A. 21, M.E. 18, P.S. 26 (Bionic), P.P. 28, P.E. 10, P.B. 10, Spd. 132 (90 mph/144 km). **R.C.C. & Experience:** Equivalent to a 9th level Coalition Cyborg Soldier. **Special Weapons:** Matched pair of indestructible, magic swords. Inflict 2D6 M.D. as blade weapons, can each unleash a fiery blast doing 5D6 M.D. (1000 ft/305 m range) or 1D6x10 if both are fired simultaneously as paired weapons at the same target. Additionally, the blades can be crossed to create a wall of Mega-Damage flame (range: 20 ft/6.1 m, duration: 1D4 minutes, and damage for any vehicle or person to pass through the wall is 1D6x10 M.D.). **Notes:** Capt. Blackmoore is the founder of the Barnstormers and is the commander in chief of the entire outfit, not just Squad Storm. See page 209 of *Coalition War Campaign* for complete stats, bonuses and abilities.

Lieutenant Stone: **Team:** Squad Storm. **Real Name:** Britlan Nagolo. **Alignment:** Aberrant evil. **Species:** Swordfist. **Attrib-**

utes: I.Q. 12, M.A. 15, M.E. 17, P.S. 31 (Supernatural), P.P. 17, P.E. 15, P.B. 3, Spd. 12. **R.C.C. & Experience:** Equivalent to an 8th level Coalition Commando/Assassin. **Special Weapons:** Supernatural P.S. and M.D.C. sword hands. Paired weapons. **Notes:** Stone has fought at Capt. Blackmoore’s side throughout the War at Tolkeen and continues to do so in the Chi-Town ‘Burbs. See page 203 of *Coalition War Campaign* for complete stats, bonuses and abilities.

The rest of Squad Storm: Zala, a 5th level Thunder Lizard dragon hatchling, Randal, a 5th level Mind Bleeder, a pair of 6th level Wild Psi-Stalkers (Lynn Wind and Sharp Tooth), and three 4th level Brodkil. All are Anarchist or Miscreant.

Black Able: **Team:** Squad Death, Beta Team. **Leader.** **Real Name:** Able Curtis Holman. **Alignment:** Diabolic evil. **Species:** Changeling (a shape changing race from the Palladium Fantasy world; see page 82 of *Rifts® Conversion Book One* for complete stats on this race). **Attributes:** I.Q. 14, M.A. 7, M.E. 17, P.S. 12, P.P. 15, P.E. 9, P.B. 8, Spd. 9. **Appearance:** Can make himself appear as any humanoid race, but usually looks like a bald, demonic human with sharp, feline fingernails, fangs and pointed teeth, and blank eyes. May also take a more demonic appearance. **R.C.C. & Experience:** 8th level Ley Line Walker. **Spell Magic:** Many spells of combat, torture and destruction. **Special Weapons:** A TW Starfire pistol and rifle, Scepter of Command, and a Splugorth Enslaver device. **Notes:** Black Able (effectively a Captain though he never uses the rank) is absolutely bloodthirsty and merciless in combat. He delights in the torture and slaughtering of Coalition soldiers and will do anything to get them. Collateral damage caused by Black Able’s operations is often horrific. He dreams of destroying the Prosek family.

The rest of Death Squad: Leads a team of two 4th level Mystics, a 5th Level Trimadore Techno-Wizard, two 3rd level Ley Line Walkers, a 5th level Zenith Moon Warper (shape changer), a 6th level Necromancer and a pair of Black Faeries. All are Miscreant or Diabolic.

Butcher Barns: **Team:** Strike Squad, Delta Team. **Real Name:** N’rrya B’ayrnn. **Alignment:** Diabolic evil. **Species:** N’mbyr Gorilla Man. **Attributes:** I.Q. 10, M.A. 8, M.E. 9, P.S. 30, P.P. 12, P.E. 21, P.B. 7, Spd. 6. **R.C.C. & Experience:** Equivalent to a CS 7th level Military Specialist; master of demolitions. **Special Weapons:** Coalition heavy weapons, Vibro-Knife and Vibro-Dagger, as well as a wide variety of grenades, mini-missiles and explosives. **Notes:** The group’s explosives expert, trap builder and ambusher. See page 202 of *Coalition War Campaign* for complete stats, bonuses and abilities for Gorilla Men.

The Rest of Strike Squad: Leads a team of seven other 5th level N’mbyr Gorilla Men (half Grunts, half bandits), one 5th level Nega-Psychic, and a 7th level Grackle Tooth Wilderness Scout. Specialize in bushwhacking and combat. All are Miscreant or Anarchist.

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Death and destruction are everywhere and never ending. Nightmarish monsters crawl out of the *Rifts* – dimensional portals to countless worlds and demonic planes of existence. Driven mad by desperation, thousands of people engage in a dog-eat-dog frenzy to survive, and in so doing, sacrifice their own humanity. Worse, there are those who listen to the evil whispers that come from the abyss. Soft words promising power, greatness and life for the small price of their eternal soul. These are the witches, necromancers and other dark sorcerers who gain power from malignant forces beyond the veil to become servants of evil and traitors to humankind.

Against all odds stand the **Apocalyptic Warriors**. These are the player characters and heroes who *are* the defiant ones. The heroes who stand against all odds to battle evil and fight not only for their own survival, but for the lives of all innocents.

This is your player character, be it man, woman or other-worldly being. Some are ex-military (Soldiers, Glitter Boy pilots, Juicers, etc.), others newborn psychics or magic-wielding sorcerers or just those unwilling to bend and break and who have the courage to pick up a weapon.

Chaos Earth™ is something different

I had originally intended to make **Chaos Earth** a separate and distinct role-playing game, however, as my vision took shape, I realized it is the origin of *Rifts Earth*. An epic story of courage and heroism against all odds in a changing nightmare world.

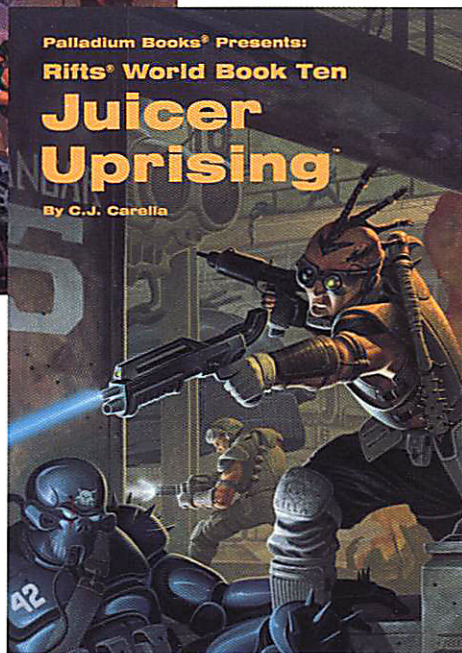
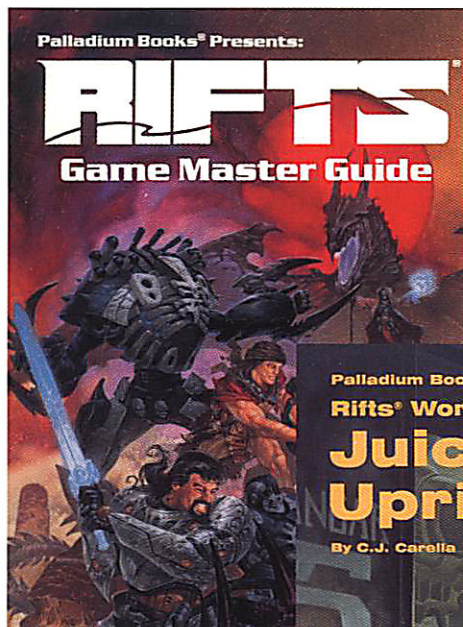
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