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MURDERTHON



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MURDERTHON!

THIS adventure gives the heroes a chance to participate in one of the most dangerous sports of all—a juicer competition which is part obstacle course, part marathon, and all mayhem! However, things are far more than they seem in the arena. The organizer of the Murderthon is using the event as a trap to lure in as many juicers as possible so he may transform them into his undead slaves! Can the heroes figure out this nefarious plan and stop the necromancer from assembling an army of murder wraiths?

This adventure is for up to six characters of Novice or Seasoned Rank. The characters are all assumed to be members of the Tomorrow Legion as part of the same patrol group.

OVERVIEW

The Warmup announces a special one-night-only Murderthon event on the outskirts of Kingsdale. A no-holds-barred Juicer sport, murderthons combine the mayhem of serious combat with a more traditional marathon and obstacle course. The organizer of this event, Destin Knowles, has promised a rich prize to the winner.

In truth, the Murderthon is a trap; “Destin Knowles” is actually an ambitious (and unhinged) necromancer named Malagant. The necromancer plans to use the event to lure more Juicers into his grasp and transform them into undead murder wraiths. In addition, Lord Duscon tasked Malagant to stir up chaos in the region. To that end, the necromancer has invited the Tomorrow Legion to take part and ensured that even the Coalition are taking notice of the event by linking it to the events of the Juicer Uprising.

The heroes arrive at the arena and Widowmaker accosts them, a cocky and brash Juicer looking to eliminate some competition early—by any means necessary. The legionnaires may either talk their way out of the confrontation or deal with Widowmaker then and there.

There are rumors floating around about the event. Some say a few contenders have gone missing under mysterious circumstances. Many blame this on cheating juicers like Widowmaker. The truth, however, is Malagant has already begun killing some of the juicers to create his murder wraiths.

In **Welcome to the Murderthon!** we get into the main event: the Murderthon! This competition is an unlimited team event, meaning the entire group participates as one against another group of juicers. The

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event, however, is really just a sideshow while Malagant prepares his ritual to create the murder wraiths using the dead juicers.

After the Murderthon, the heroes have only a few hours before midnight to investigate and discover what Malagant is really up to. Some of the other contenders with minor wounds go for treatment and are never seen again, for example. A “retired” juicer coach (a juicer who went through detox) named Carver can point the heroes in the right direction, but only if they can convince him to help.

The Murderthon takes place in the arena once more when the heroes confront Malagant just as the necromancer completes his ritual! The legionnaires have to deal with a power-mad necromancer, the murder wraiths, and more...at the climactic moment, an enormous Hangdog Daemonix burrows up from the floor of the arena to join the battle!

THE WARMUP

The legionnaires prepare to set out on a standard patrol when they meet with Dhara Hammerheart, one of the leaders of the Tomorrow Legion. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

A dwarf with fiery red hair, a sunny smile, and a warrior's heft to her broad shoulders stands before you. This is Dhara Hammerheart, one of the leaders of the Tomorrow Legion. “Greetings, legionnaires,” She hands you what looks like a flyer advertising some sort of sporting event. “Something is going on out near Kingsdale; a juicer sports competition called a murderthon, and they’ve specifically invited the Tomorrow Legion to attend.”

Dhara’s expression is thoughtful. “Juicer sports in general are bloody, savage

competitions and nothing we truly want to be involved in. However, I hear this particular murderthon is going to be more restrained."

Dhara laughs. "I have my doubts, but the fact remains that this an unprecedented opportunity for the legion to reach out and build relationships with nearby realms. Kingsdale is a very prosperous and influential city-state. We need a closer relationship with them. This region has a history with juicers ever since the Juicer Uprising."

The dwarf nods towards your group. "Therefore, your team will attend the murderthon. Keep your eyes open and remember you represent all of us. Go show them who we are."

THE JUICER UPRISING

A large group of juicers assembled in a place called Newtown (not far from Kingsdale), looking for a way to extend their lifespan offered by a company called Ultra-Tech Industries. The offer turned out to be a cruel lie, and the juicers ended up in a brutal fight with the Coalition military.

For more background on the Juicer Uprising, see the *Savage Rifts® Game Master's Handbook*.

JOURNEY TO THE SIDESHOW ARENA

Heading east towards Kingsdale is a relatively easy trip; on foot or using ground vehicles (including horses or other mounts), the journey takes only a few days. If the legionnaires have access to a flying vehicle (or other method of long-term flight), they reach the Sideshow Arena in a matter of hours. In either case, the trip is relatively uneventful. Although this is still the wilderness, the region nearest Kingsdale is well-travelled and there are few major threats along the way.

However, there is one danger the heroes must face before they reach their goal, and his name is Widowmaker. This young and ambitious juicer heard the Tomorrow Legion sent a team to take part in the contest, and he plans to thin out the other competitors early on. Widowmaker sends one of his best men — a juicer named Kasey — to set up an ambush for the legionnaires, intending to take them by surprise.

KASEY'S AMBUSH

One of the juicers working for Widowmaker, Kasey is a hard-bitten and cynical warrior. He's set up himself and two other juicers in concealment just out of sight of the arena, gambling that the Tomorrow Legion will pass through the area on their way to the murderthon.

Kasey and the other juicers are in cover amongst a group of trees surrounding a clearing. Call for a Notice check against Kasey's Stealth roll when the heroes arrive. If the legionnaires fail to spot Kasey, he and the other juicers have the Drop on the player characters. Kasey wears a very distinctive cologne; Notice checks using scent gain a bonus of +2 against him.

As the battle begins, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

A tall, broad-shouldered man with a long Mohawk steps out of hiding, training a laser rifle on your group. He wears the distinctive harness and armor of a chemically-enhanced juicer! "You're not going to make it to the murderthon, punks," He says with a sneer. "Widowmaker's gang will be the big winners... you're just a bump in the road."

He opens fire. All three of the Juicers have 2 Burn and the Last Call Hindrance. All three are willing to spend their last point of Burn during the battle, meaning live capture is extremely unlikely. If the legionnaires are particularly powerful or numerous, the Game Master may add a number of Black Market enforcers to Kasey's force. If captured, the enforcers know very little; Widowmaker hired them to act as backup.

- ☠ **Kasey:** Use juicer stats from *Rifts® Savage Foes of North America* with 2 Burn and the Last Call Hindrance.
- **Widomaker's Gang (2):** Use juicer stats from *Rifts® Savage Foes of North America* with 2 Burn and the Last Call Hindrance.

ARRIVING AT THE ARENA

When the legionnaires reach the Sideshow Arena, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The construction ahead of you is impressively large, if crudely-built. The arena appears made from several large slabs of rough stone, arranged in an irregular oval shape. The roof of the structure is another, darker type of stone — onyx or perhaps slate. Its curvature suggests a dome. A bulky humanoid figure made of the same gray rock that makes up the walls is smoothing the stone underneath its fingers — obviously some kind of earth elemental shoring up the framework.

A large neon sign buzzes and flickers over the double doors at the front of the arena. The sign pulses with vibrant pink and yellow colors, blinking out the words "Sideshow Arena!" over and over again. A large open lot lies nearby, filled with several ground and air vehicles parked for the show. The most obvious vehicle in the lot is a glossy black Mountaineer ATV with the name "Widowmaker" scrawled out in detailed blue markings across both sides.

There is only one visible entrance or exit to the arena—the front doors. The earth elemental (see *Savage Worlds* for statistics) is busy working on the arena wall and ignores the heroes, only acting to defend itself if it is deliberately attacked. Widowmaker's ATV sits locked but unattended.

THE ARENA

The immense arena itself and the stands take up most of the Sideshow Arena's floor space. Each team participating in the competition has a small locker room to prepare for the events and store their things. The interior of the arena is clearly built on some pre-Rifts ruins, most likely a college stadium

TIMING THE EVENT

If the legionnaires show up early for the murderthon, don't worry. Malagant's true purpose is to use the juicers for his ritual, so he doesn't really care about starting things off early. Thus, if the heroes show up before the murderthon's scheduled start, he's more than happy to launch it right then rather than risk giving the Tomorrow Legion more time to discover his true scheme. In short, if the player characters show up before Sunday, just run the adventure as normal; all you need to do is have Malagant (in his promoter guise) explain the schedule has changed!

from when the area was once part of West Plains, Missouri.

Detailed below are a number of additional important areas:

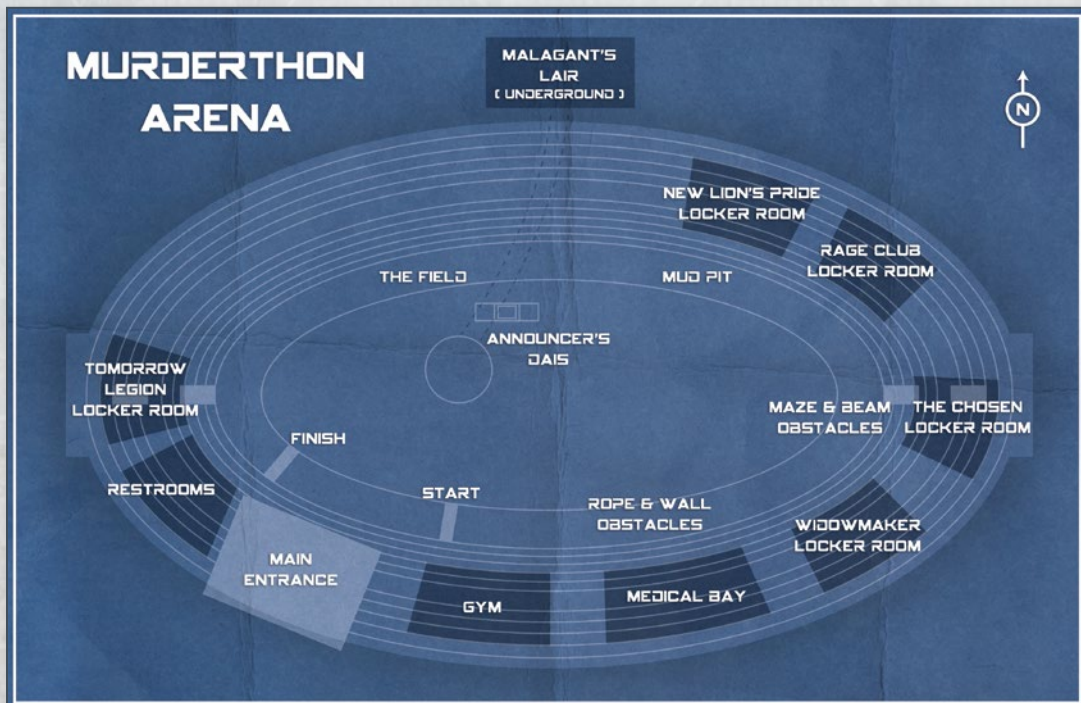
GYMNASIUM

One area has set been aside as a "gymnasium," though any true athlete can tell at a glance this is merely a token effort. The room contains only the basics—some old and rusty weights, a bench or two, a barely-functional treadmill, and a few other scavenged exercise machines. Nevertheless, the room is rarely empty, as juicers use the gym to work out, gossip, or simply show off.

MEDICAL BAY

Cheap plastic curtains divide this room into quarters. In each quarter, there is a metal operating table and some basic medical supplies. A character with the Healing skill can tell at a glance this bay is not set up for more than minor injuries at best. The medical area is mostly for show—Malagant intends to kill any injured juicers and transform them into murder wraiths during his necromantic ritual (**The Grand Finale** page 15).

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Malagant hides an entrance to the tunnels in this room behind one of the medical supply carts. The entrance is cunningly concealed; a Notice roll at -4 is necessary to find it (and someone would need to be searching for something out of the ordinary in the first place!).

THE STANDS

The stadium seats roughly 300 people (attendance for the event tops out around 150), accommodated in a ring of seats around the edges of the field. Stairs link the rows and lead down to some rudimentary restrooms. In addition, some entrepreneurs from Kingsdale have brought snacks, hot food, and other refreshments to sell at various kiosks scattered around.

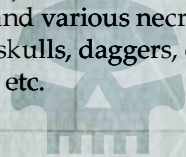
THE FIELD

A large patch of mostly open ground known as “the field” occupies most of the arena. The inner portion of the field hosts the smaller events (such as strength or agility competitions). The outer section (closest to the stands) comprises the murderthon for the main event. Orange cones mark out the track, but until the time of the event, tarps cover much of the route to conceal what challenges lie ahead for the competitors.

An announcer’s dais sits within a roped off area in the center of the field. Inside this area, Malagant has concealed his necromantic ritual circle (see **We Have a Winner** on page 15). A character with the *detect arcana* power may reveal the ritual circle. This is an opposed roll against Malagant, since he has used the *conceal arcana* power here to try and cover his tracks. If successful, the legionnaire can tell there is a concealed ritual circle here; and a raise reveals it will empower necromancy.

THE TUNNELS AND MALAGANT'S LAIR

Malagant’s elementals have burrowed out some tunnels beneath the field and through the walls of the arena. The necromancer uses these tunnels to capture and transport juicers to the site of the ritual (see page 15). The hidden entrances to the tunnels are in the medical bay and beneath the maze obstacle (see page 13). The tunnels converge on Malagant’s ritual preparation site; a dimly-lit room containing the bodies of any juicers he’s taken during the competition and various necromantic ritual gear, such as skulls, daggers, chalices full of dried organs, etc.



THE COMPETITION

The other teams taking part in the murderthon are as follows:

- **Widowmaker's Gang:** Widowmaker heads this group of ambitious juicers. Like their leader, the rest of the gang plan on cheating as much as they can get away with! Showboaters and braggarts, Widowmaker's gang constantly talks trash about the other competitors. In the murderthon, this is the largest group of juicers, consisting of five in total.
- **The Chosen:** An all-business group of mercenary juicers, the Chosen have elected Sammael as the spokesman. The bottom line—winning the grand prize—interests this group. Everything else is secondary, meaning the Chosen are willing to cheat as long as there's virtually no chance they'll get caught. In the murderthon, the Chosen compete as a team of three juicers.
- **New Lions Pride:** Led by a juicer (still in her first year after conversion) named Eckert, this team is cocky and confident. They are also fair, honorable, and play by the rules. The New Lions Pride is the team most likely to come to the heroes' aid if there's trouble. However, they are also a target for Malagant. By the time the murderthon begins, this team is down to just two members; Eckert and one other juicer named Hines.
- **The Rage Club:** This loosely-organized band of juicers answers to Enrico, an older and scarred juicer nearing last call. True to its name, the Rage Club acts as if their main purpose is just to hurt the other competitors. They have no sense of teamwork and are all unreliable gloryhounds. The team consists of four juicers in total.

THINGS TO DO IN THE ARENA

Heroes investigating the events surrounding the murderthon have a number of possible encounters detailed in this section. Depending on when the heroes arrive, they may have some free time to wander—and the Game Master can use any of the following ideas to give the legionnaires some excitement!

ROWDY FANS

A group of inebriated fans have showed up to the murderthon event and are heckling the competitors. Some of these drunken enthusiasts are also hassling other spectators, including otherwise-peaceful townsfolk from Kingsdale and other nearby settlements.

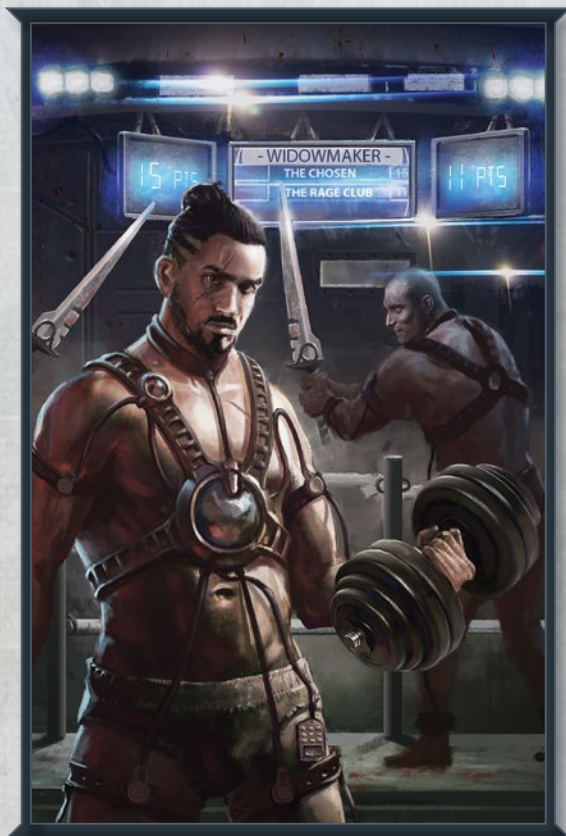
The heroes can deal with these boors in any way they choose. A successful Intimidation or Persuasion roll might make them calm down. A display of psionic powers or magic could have the same effect. These rowdy enthusiasts are full of bravado, but they're not interested in any serious fighting. If any of them are seriously attacked, they head for the exits!

- **Rowdy Fans (2 per hero) Use Bandits from *Rifts*® *Savage Foes of North America* with no gear.**

GYM ACCIDENT

Messing about with heavy weights can lead to serious problems, especially in a haphazard and dilapidated gym—just like the one inside Sideshow Arena. While the legionnaires are visiting, one of the juicers from another team (see page 7 for a listing of the other teams involved in the event) is working out with an enormous barbell. Unfortunately, the juicer gets distracted by talking to his teammate (or possibly in exchanging insults with the player characters!). The barbell slips out of his hands, and he risks serious injury as the heavy bar suddenly drops.

Another juicer or crazy has the reaction time to make a desperate grab for the heavy bar if they wish. Ask for an Agility roll—on a success, the hero can grab the bar before it lands. Next, ask for a Strength roll to successfully halt the falling weight. Otherwise, the bar drops with a nasty crunching sound, resulting in a badly hurt juicer! Characters with the Healing skill can attempt a check (the juicer has suffered one wound and a level of Fatigue). Any legionnaire with the *healing* power can also try to help.



CHARITY DONATION

A small booth has been set up to one side of the stadium seats. Labelled “The Arcadia Foundation,” the staff at the booth helpfully explain that they represent a charity that provides for the poor and indigent citizens of Kingsdale. The booth is accepting donations for the charity, and they remind any visitors that a portion of the proceeds from events at the murderthon go to help the needy.

Malagant has, in fact, promised a portion of the prize money to the charity. He has no intention of following through with this, however! The necromancer’s broken promise costs the charity deeply—they had invested a great deal of time and effort helping to set up and market the murderthon as a means to get people interested in their cause. Staffers of the charity approach any Cyber-Knights or heroes in the group with a particularly good reputation and ask for an endorsement (and a donation or two wouldn’t go wrong, either).

COMPETE!

The murderthon is the main event and what all the spectators came to see! That doesn’t mean there aren’t some other competitions planned to warm up the crowd. The Arcadia Foundation charity has sponsored several of these minor events, charging competitors 1,000 credits each. Half the money goes to charity whilst the remainder goes to the event’s winner.

The heroes can participate in any or all of these smaller events. The Game Master should use her discretion about the game’s pacing and how many of these minor events she wants to showcase before moving on to the murderthon itself. While intended for juicers, judges can make the events “unlimited” upon request. This means any character can take part (it’s for charity, after all!). Here are some of the minor events planned by the Arcadia Foundation:

- **Test Your Might:** This is a contest of raw physical strength. The competitors line up and lift increasingly heavy weights above their heads for a set time limit. Competitors must make a Strength roll, then a Vigor roll. Cull half the competition based on the Strength roll’s results, then whoever gets the highest result for the Vigor roll wins the event.
- **Bullseye:** This is a sharpshooting event. Competitors receive loaned Wilks laser rifles and must hit a target at medium range. Each competitor makes two Shooting rolls, eliminating half the competitors with the first shot. The winner has the highest of the second Shooting roll.
- **Gym-Kata:** A more free-form event, this competition focuses on athletic and acrobatic ability. Participants face tests of balance, speed, and ability to dodge various moving obstacles. Each character competing in this event must make two Agility rolls (the Acrobat Edge adds +2 in this case). Similar to above, the highest Agility roll in the second half of the competition wins.

WELCOME TO THE MURDERTHON!

When the group enters the Arena, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The interior of the Sideshow Arena is no more impressive than the outside and clearly built on top of the ruins of an older stadium. You are standing at the edge of a long, oval-shaped field roughly three hundred meters across. There is a ring of seats for spectators around the outer edge, and doors along the sides hint there are other areas built into the walls.

There is a vid-screen mounted on the wall directly opposite the main entrance. As the doors shut behind you, the screen flickers on, revealing the face of a human male with thinning hair and a broad smile. "Welcome to the Murderthon!" He says, grinning. "I'm Destin Knowles, the event organizer. And you must be the competitors from the Tomorrow Legion, am I right?"

In his guise as Destin Knowles, Malagant greets the heroes via the vid-screen as a precaution. He wouldn't want to be face-to-face with a group of Cyber-Knights, for example! This moment is a great opportunity for "Destin" to chat with the heroes, answer any of their questions, and generally try to get them excited about the upcoming competition.

A RUN-IN WITH WIDOWMAKER

When the conversation with the disguised Malagant seems to be slowing down (or at another suitably dramatic moment), read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The doors to the arena bang open once more, allowing the entrance of a group of juicers. These warriors are all dressed in glossy black armor, led by a truly herculean juicer with a tall Mohawk dyed a vibrant purple in color. The mohawked juicer sneers at your group, flicking his eyes from you to the vid-screen and back. Following the group is an older human male, his face gaunt and scarred, wearing a gray track suit.

THE ARENA AND KINGSDALE

The action in this adventure takes place outside of Kingsdale proper, but definitely within that kingdom's influence. Malagant was careful to find a site to build the Sideshow Arena far enough away that he wouldn't attract undue attention from Kingsdale's defenders, but close enough to draw in plenty of juicers from the region. As for the kingdom itself...

A prosperous city located where West Plains once stood, Kingsdale is a remarkably freedom-loving enclave of magic-users, D-bees, and normal humans living together. Citizens of Kingsdale have access to good education and excellent medical facilities. It is famous for its enhancement clinics offering conversions for juicers and crazies, including top-of-the-line cybernetics. Kingsdale has clashed on numerous occasions with the kingdom of Whykin and the Coalition states.

"What do we have here, boys? Looks like some squishies from the meat boy legion decided to show up and spoil our fun." The older man in the track suit looks like he's about to speak up, but Destin Knowles cuts him off.

"Ah, Widowmaker. Allow me to introduce you to our guests..."

The mohawked juicer shoves past the older man as his cronies enter the arena. Widowmaker stares at your group with undisguised malice. "Get this through your heads, squishies. This competition has only one winner, and that's me. Get in my way, and we'll grease you in a hot second."

Widowmaker has no interest in sticking around after delivering his threat. The juicer plans to simply follow his gang into their locker room and get ready for

the murderthon. If the legionnaires want to try and engage him in conversation, Widowmaker angrily claims he “has better things to do,” and leaves.

This scene introduces the heroes to one of the primary antagonists of the adventure without resulting in violence. Widowmaker’s too smart to start a fight inside the arena, but he’s not above trying to provoke the heroes into disqualifying themselves (see below). If the situation looks like it is going to become a fight (including if the heroes try to restrain Widowmaker or get in his way), the older man steps up between them. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

“Any fighting before the murderthon means yer disqualified!” The older man shouts. “Ya came here to compete fer a half-million credits, right? Ya gonna throw that away right here and now?”

The old man, named Carver, is a former juicer who detoxed about three years ago. Malagant hired Carver to oversee the

JUICER LEGIONNAIRES

Juicer culture surrounds the legionnaires in the Sideshow Arena. That means most people the group interact with assume any legionnaires who are juicers are the leader of the team or the group’s spokesman. Both situations are ripe for interjecting some amusement and fun into the game, especially if the juicer character(s) in question rarely get a chance to act as the group’s “face.” Similarly, this adventure is a great opportunity for juicer player characters to interact with others who share the same abilities, beliefs, and fears (especially of mortality). The Game Master should take a look at the Hindrances for any player character juicers and find a way to highlight those in the context of the adventure.

event as a referee. The former juicer isn’t joking, either; if the legionnaires choose to start a combat inside the arena before the murderthon begins, Carver will disqualify their team. If cooler heads do not prevail, the Game Master should remind the players about the purpose of their mission.

If disqualified, the legionnaires receive an escort out of the arena. The group may either leave the area or just hang around inside the arena to see who wins the murderthon. If they choose to remain, skip ahead to **We Have A Winner!** and **The Grand Finale** (see page 15) where they have one last chance to foil Malagant’s plot.

☛ **Widowmaker:** See page 19.

■ **Widowmaker’s gang (1 per hero):** Use Juicer stats from *Rifts® Savage Foes of North America*.

■ **Carver:** See page 19.

CARVER’S ADVICE

Once the situation with Widowmaker resolves, Destin Knowles excuses himself, saying he “has a lot of things to do to get ready for the main event.” The vid-screen turns off directly afterwards.

Carver formally introduces himself to the newly arrived team. He offers to show the legionnaires around the arena and explains the purpose of each of the main areas (with the exception of the tunnels—Carver is not aware of Malagant’s excavations). He also answers any questions about the murderthon and its rules. Carver is fairly helpful, although he should seem aloof and guarded if the heroes ask about his background. He carefully explains the rules of the murderthon (see page 13).

Once the group has received a brief tour (or at a similarly dramatically appropriate moment), read aloud or paraphrase the following:

A female juicer with short hair and a tattooed fleur-de-lis on her cheek approaches your group. “Carver!” She calls out angrily. “What the hell’s going on here? I got three members of my team gone missing?” There’s a palpable tension in the air as she approaches the old man.

This juicer is Eckert, leader of the New Lions Pride team. As she says, three juicers from her team have vanished since she arrived 24 hours ago. Upset, Eckert is looking for answers. A successful Persuasion roll from any of the heroes can convince her to calm down. Once the legionnaires introduce themselves to Eckert, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

"Glad to meet you. This competition needs more folks like yourselves and fewer cowardly show-offs like Widowmaker." Eckert laughs. "But keep on your toes. Something isn't right around here. I'm going to keep looking for my people, but it seems like we may have to compete in the murderthon a few men short. Good luck to you."

Once she finishes this conversation, Eckert leaves. True to her word, she spends the rest of the time between now and the murderthon looking for her lost teammates. On her own, Eckert does not succeed; Malagant has hidden his operations too well. If the legionnaires expose Malagant, Eckert offers to join them in the final battle (see page 15).

INVESTIGATING THE DISAPPEARANCES

The heroes have several options if they want to get involved in searching for the missing juicers. Malagant has taken great pains to conceal his activities, using both his cunning and his spells. In addition, many of the attending juicers, fans, and staff believe any foul play is likely to lead back to Widowmaker (thanks to his infamous reputation).

QUESTIONING ECKERT

Eckert is eager to cooperate with the Twilight Legion. Her main concern is making sure her teammates are alright; winning the murderthon is a distant second. However, she doesn't have much helpful information. The last time she saw her teammates, they had gotten into a fistfight with Widowmaker's gang; goaded into it, actually, by the other team's insults. Carver broke up the fight, but that's when Eckert left to pay the resulting fine to Destin Knowles.

QUESTIONING CARVER

Carver is gruff, grumpy, and typically at least a little drunk. He starts out with an Unfriendly reaction (see *Savage Worlds*) for any resulting Persuasion rolls. As an ex-juicer, Carver tortures himself by staying involved in the juicer culture after his detox. He's all too aware of what he gave up in order to live out a more natural lifespan, and as a result, he flip-flops between bitter anger and resigned relief.

The murderthon provided Carver with an amazing opportunity. Destin offered him enough money for managing the event to have a halfway decent retirement in Kingsdale. Thus, Carver is extremely reluctant for anything to mess up that deal—even when he knows something strange is going on. At heart, Carver is not a bad person, just one who feels like he's due for some good luck and resists anyone getting in the way of that.

If the legionnaires can improve Carver's reaction to Neutral or higher, the ex-juicer can provide the following information:

- He did escort the missing juicers to the medical bay after their fight with Widowmaker's gang. He hasn't seen them since.
- Carver suspects Destin Knowles has something more going on than just a sports event. Carver isn't sure what that is, but he's fairly certain it isn't good.
- Carver knows there are some hidden passages somewhere in the arena, but not exactly where.

When the heroes ask him about the disappearances, Carver makes sure to point out the murderthon is a big deal not just for him, but for all the juicers involved. If the heroes' investigation threatens the main event, they could have a serious riot on their hands and possibly endanger people in Kingsdale. The ex-juicer is quick to recommend they wait until after the prize presentation to make any serious moves.

QUESTIONING THE OTHER JUICERS

Widowmaker initially refuses to talk to the heroes ("I've got no time for your nonsense!"). The heroes can try and talk him into

cooperating with a successful Persuasion roll, but Widowmaker starts out with a Hostile reaction (see *Savage Worlds*) and can't get improved any higher than Neutral. If his reaction does change to Neutral, Widowmaker reluctantly confirms he is not responsible for any missing competitors and confesses that he thinks "something hinky" is going on with Destin Knowles.

None of the other juicer teams know much. However, the juicers can confirm the list of missing juicers (see **Investigation**) is genuine, but the reasons recorded for their absence are not (i.e., the juicers listed as disqualified is a surprise to the teams, and any marked "no-show" is clearly a lie).

USING SKILLS

Investigation: A successful use of the Investigation skill means the heroes have managed to find some records of the number of competitors signed up for the event. Comparing that list with the list of the missing juicers indicates a number of them have gone missing (equal to the number of murder wraiths taking part in the final battle—see page 15). The records list some of these juicers as disqualified or as no-shows.

Notice: A successful Notice check (-2) can locate the hidden entrances to the tunnels built into the arena walls (see page 6). However, the legionnaire using this skill must be within 5" of the tunnel entrance and have some idea of what he's looking for in the first place.

Streetwise: A successful Streetwise roll informs the legionnaires that Widowmaker's gang has a poor reputation as cheaters and showboats; however, they're not typically murderers. There's no real involvement with the Black Market for this murderthon, and "Destin Knowles" is a newcomer to the juicer sports scene. Altogether, these details make the entire event very suspicious.

RED HERRINGS

Widowmaker and his gang are the clear suspects in any investigation of the missing juicers. This is intentional on Malagant's part—the infamous Widowmaker makes an excellent scapegoat so the necromancer's schemes can avoid detection long enough to begin his ritual. The juicer's poor people

skills and superior attitude do nothing to allay suspicion directed his way. Only Carver and Widowmaker himself believe the disappearances have anything to do with "Destin Knowles," and both have reasons not to speak up (for Widowmaker, it's the prize money; for Carver, it's his future retirement).

Ideally, any investigation would only provide a few clues to Malagant's plan before the murderthon, allowing the legionnaires to take part in the main event before moving on to the confrontation. If the heroes seem to be moving too quickly towards foiling the necromancer's schemes, there are some ways to deal with that in **Conclusions and Pacing** (see page 16).

THE MURDERTHON

The main event begins! The heroes and the other juicer teams head down to the designated start area on the track. All of the teams (see The Competition on page 7) are participating in the murderthon. For the most part, the juicers focus on the event ahead—with one exception. There's a simmering tension between the legionnaires and Widowmaker's gang. The juicers in black glare and sneer at the heroes until the starting whistle blows.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

You have assembled on the field in the main arena next to the other teams. Eckert and the last member of the New Lions Pride give you an encouraging nod, while the rest of the teams mostly ignore the legionnaires. However, Widowmaker's gang continues to trash-talk your group as much as possible before a giant vid-screen in the center of the arena lights up, displaying Destin Knowles.

"The murderthon is about to begin!" The speakers blare with Destin's voice. "On your marks. Get set." All of the juicers hunker down and prepare for the event to start. A piercing whistle rings out, marking the official start of the event, echoed by the speakers thundering with one final word from the promoter: "GO!"

RULES OF THE MURDERTHON

The rules of the event are fairly simple:

- The first team to cross the finish line wins. This means the entire team (those who are still competing, as in the survivors who are not disqualified) must cross the finish line to count. This is why teams running the murderthon stick together as much as possible.
- Teams may attack one another on the track.
- Contestants may not use large-scale weapons (this means any weapon with a blast template or cone template).
- Competitors may use magic and psionics, but they may not use these abilities against another competitor (for example, no using the *puppet* power to cause a team to forfeit). In addition, competitors may not use magic or psionics to move along the track (meaning no use of the *burrow*, *fly*, *speed*, or *teleport* powers).
- Vehicles are not allowed. Competitors may wear power armor, but must not use any movement method other than running on the ground.
- The penalty for rule-breaking is disqualification. This penalty applies to the individual, not the entire team.

These rules are a modification of the typical juicer murderthon to allow for anyone to compete – not just juicers. In addition, Malagant has modified the rules a bit as well to ensure he has access to the juicers at the end for his necromancy.

THE TRACK

The track itself is 200 meters long (roughly 100" for combat) and broken up into five distinct portions. The murderthon's goal is to make one lap around the entire route. Navigating each portion of the track makes up one of the five rounds of the Chase (see Running the Murderthon).

PART 1: THE STARTING LINE

The first portion of the murderthon track is straight, open ground. From here, it is easy to see the rest of the track up ahead. This

part of the event is violent as the juicers simultaneously take off running and attack one another (if they have advantage over their intended targets). The Rage Club is particularly disorganized right off the bat (suffering a -4 penalty to their maneuvering roll for this part). Agility is the maneuver Trait for this round of the competition.

PART 2: ROPE AND WALL OBSTACLES

Angled rope nets and a series of wooden walls ranging in height from 1–6" block this part of the track. Getting through or past these obstacles is a test of strength and teamwork. Competitors must use either a Strength roll (at -2) or a Climbing skill roll for their maneuvering Traits to pass. There is an inherent terrain penalty of -2 to maneuver tests in this area as well.

This is where Tomorrow Legion heroes can make cooperative rolls (representing the teamwork part) to aid one another's maneuver rolls; each member electing to help another must choose Strength or Climbing to assist, and this is an Action for this round (which stacks with making attacks for Multi-Action penalties). These cooperative rolls are in addition to each character making his own maneuvering roll, so each hero must decide whether to help another before making any maneuver rolls.

PART 3: MAZE AND BEAM OBSTACLES

A labyrinth of 4" high wooden walls breaks up the third section of the murderthon. In addition, navigating some sections of the maze requires balancing on narrow, sloping beams crossing over another section of slippery mud. Cunning and coordination are necessary to successfully navigate this challenge. Competitors must use either an Agility roll (at -2) or a Smarts roll to pass. There is an inherent terrain penalty of -2 to maneuver tests in this area as well.

The Tomorrow Legion team can choose to stay together for this part, but that means everyone holding action until the lowest Action Card on the team comes up. Doing this, however, means only one character needs to actually succeed in getting an Action Card; even those who draw no Action Card will get past this part of the course if the rest of the team waits for them.

The murderthon obstacles prove to be too much for the Rage Club in this round, as the juicer team gets hopelessly scattered by the maze. Aside from hurling threats at the other teams and the promoter, the Rage Club has no further part to play in the event. This team is out of the competition.

Inside the maze is a hidden entrance to the tunnels built into the arena (see page 6). To find it, a hero must succeed at a Notice roll with a -2 penalty.

PART 4: THE MUD PIT

One of the most difficult features of the murderthon track is the mud pit. For more than fifty meters (27"), the ground is entirely composed of slick, clinging mud more than a meter deep. In a concession to safety, several ropes have been strung across the pit so struggling competitors need not fear drowning in the muck. The terrain is so poor that the maneuver rolls, which are either Agility or Strength, have a -4 penalty

applied. In addition, just moving across the track through the sludge is incredibly tiring; competitors must make a Vigor roll or suffer a Fatigue level. Attacks made in this stage are all at -2.

The Chosen unwisely select this time to insult the other teams. As long as they are still in the competition, Widowmaker's gang and the New Lions Pride combine their efforts against the Chosen, literally stomping their opponents into the mud. Outnumbered and demoralized by the obstacle, the Chosen cannot recover quickly enough to complete the murderthon. This team is out of the competition.

PART 5: THE FINISH LINE

The final part of the murderthon track is much like the beginning; flat, open ground running for the final fifty meters (27"). A red ribbon strung between two poles marks the end point. This is the last chance for any remaining competitors, so none of the juicers hold back. If Widowmaker and his gang are still in the competition, they're willing to spend Burn or openly cheat to try and win. As with the beginning, Agility is the maneuver Trait here.

RUNNING THE MURDERTHON

The event itself is a modified Chase (see *Savage Worlds*). deal in the other juicer teams as if they were a single character; they roll collectively as a Wild Card. The New Lions team begins with a -2 penalty to all maneuver rolls due to their losses. The rest of the teams are juicers, meaning they have an advantage in speed and stamina; they begin with a +2 bonus to maneuver rolls.

The individual heroes of the Tomorrow Legion team each make their own maneuver roll each round for the competition, while each of the other teams roll and move as a group. A hero or group *must* gain at least a success on the maneuver roll for that round (gaining at least one Action Card) to pass to the next part; failure means the hero or group must roll again in the same area on the next round.

Determining the winning team really comes down to the fifth and final section. Whoever makes it into that area on the fifth



round rolls to maneuver as usual, and the highest card wins. If one of the heroes of the Tomorrow Legion draws the highest card, the whole team wins. If, for some reason, no one is in the final area on the fifth round, the winner is determined when one or more characters or groups do finally reach that stage and roll against one another to maneuver.

The true competition here is between the player characters and Widowmaker's gang. The Game Master should try to keep the focus on this intense rivalry throughout the event. Involve the other teams when it is dramatically appropriate (especially if there is a pivotal moment where Eckert and the New Lions Pride can assist the heroes or hinder Widowmaker).

WE HAVE A WINNER!

When the last round of the Chase resolves, the arena erupts in cheers from the spectators. Destin Knowles steps out (in person rather than through vid-screen for the first time) with a microphone. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

"Thank you, everyone! Winning team, please come up and join me on stage. All other competitors, please assemble in the marked zone at the center of the arena." The promoter excitedly waves to the crowd then awaits the winners in the spotlight.

It doesn't take long for everyone to find their places in the designated positions. The spectators are chanting the winning team's name. The losing teams are grumbling about their performance in the event. Predictably, Widowmaker's gang (assuming they did not win) is blaming everything but themselves for their ranking.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Black whips of magic energy erupt from the ground surrounding the teams of juicers. Arcane sigils glow upon the ground around them, revealing a cunningly-concealed ritual circle. The juicers struggle and cry out, but their limbs are bound by the crackling energy until all of them have fallen and are bound hand and foot. More beings emerge from the ground, digging their way up from the dirt —

hideous, undead beings who nevertheless wear the distinctive bio-harness of a juicer. These are murder wraiths!

Destin Knowles laughs, arcane energies flowing across his body from the ritual site. "Allow me to introduce myself," he taunts. "I am Malagant, and thanks to these fools, I shall soon have my own army of murder wraiths!"

"I bid you welcome in the name of my master, Lord Dunscon." The promoter's grin grows wider and madness swirls in his eyes. His voice grows louder as he dramatically thrusts out his hands, glowing with dark magic. "Welcome... to DIE!"

WHAT IF THE HEROES LOSE?

If the heroes did not win the murderthon event, they must stand in the ritual circle with the other juicers. This is a bit of a crazy move on Malagant's part, but he wants the spotlight all to himself.

Heroes trapped in the ritual circle with the other juicers may attempt an opposed Spirit roll against Malagant. If they succeed, the heroes escape.

THE GRAND FINALE

Deal in the heroes for the final combat. There are a number of murder wraiths equal to half the number of player characters, plus Malagant himself. The necromancer has prepared for this battle by casting his *armor* and *deflection* powers. Any juicers in the ritual circle are immobile and unable to help until Malagant is dead. As for the spectators, they are struggling to get to the exits as fast as possible and do everything they can to avoid the fight in the center of the arena. Since the stadium's seats are a good distance away from the battle, it is unlikely any stray blasts cause any injuries amongst the fleeing crowd.

The murder wraiths take one action to ready their weapons and emerge from the hidden tunnel beneath the arena.



Afterwards, they engage in combat with the legionnaires, ignoring the immobilized juicers. If any of the heroes wish, they can try to blast a hole in the arena's dome to open up the area to sunlight, weakening the murder-wraiths. The roof is made of mega-damage materials, requiring a mega-damage weapon to damage it; the roof has a Toughness of 14. Once breached, the roof begins to crumble apart in large areas, exposing the arena to sunlight.

- ☛ **Malagant:** See page 18
- **Murder Wraiths (1 per 2 heroes):** See *Rifts*® *Savage Foes of North America*.

THE DAEMONIX ARRIVES

At a dramatically appropriate moment (usually when the group has triumphed over most of the murder wraiths), Malagant summons Carcoryx, his hangdog daemonix. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Malagant scowls at your group. "Foolish heroes, you have only delayed your own deaths! Carcoryx, I call thee! Aid your master!" His shout rings out, echoing

strangely from the walls. In moments, the ground begins to shudder. A huge mound of dirt forms like a pressure wave in the earth, erupting upwards as an enormous misshapen creature enters the battle. Vaguely shaped like a rhinoceros, this being has a huge head and four arms, its eyes gleaming with unholy hatred.

At this time, the Game Master should deal in the hangdog daemonix. Carcoryx focuses his attacks on the largest or most threatening-looking enemy on the field.

- **Carcoryx:** See page 18

CONCLUSIONS AND PACING

Upon Malagant's death, the necromantic ritual ends and the other juicers are free to join the battle. Most likely, this means the rest of the fight will be relatively short, as the vengeful juicers waste no time in attempting to destroy first the hangdog daemonix and then the murder wraiths. For their part, the murder wraiths attempt to escape rather than fight to the death once Malagant is gone.

The prize money for the murderthon is in a satchel located underneath the announcer's dais. If he survives, Carver suggests dividing up the money equally amongst the competitors as compensation for Malagant's treachery.

WHAT IF THE HEROES FIND MALAGANT'S LAIR?

It is possible for the heroes to shortcut right to Malgant's lair if they find the tunnel entrances in the arena, although Malagant's surveillance cameras alert him to this fact. The necromancer prepares to fight the heroes in his lair, resulting in a battle very similar to the one on page 15 (**We Have a Winner**). However, there is no possibility of bringing in sunlight thanks to the position of the necromancer's underground lair. The hangdog daemonix enters the fight by burrowing through the wall rather than the floor.

One way to handle this is for Malagant to hold the juicers hostage and insist the heroes take part in the murderthon. If the legionnaires do not compete, the hostages

die. Naturally, Malagant is lying—he has no intention of letting the juicers live. However, this tactic does give the heroes time to figure out some way to deal with the treacherous necromancer...and possibly recruit some allies amongst the other juicers!

OTHER POTENTIAL OUTCOMES

The Game Master should try and keep the adventure focused on the murderthon event. Carver's advice that any interference in the event could result in a riot is an important tool; most legionnaires recognize causing a

major disturbance at the competition could scuttle the entire mission.

A riot can certainly happen if the heroes handle the situation poorly. Juicers run rampant, incidents of violence occur between juicers and even the spectators, and Kingsdale finds many of its citizens are either injured, robbed at gunpoint, or both. Kingsdale may acknowledge the Tomorrow Legion's assistance, but it's unlikely any real friendship springs up between the kingdom and the Legion as a result.



DRAMATIS PERSONAE

MALAGANT ["DESTIN KNOWLES"]

A powerful and ambitious necromancer, Malagant is a native of the Federation of Magic and an ardent follower of Lord Dunscon. He's also slightly unhinged! Malagant came up with the murderthon plot as a means to gather several juicers together without having to battle them all at once. The necromancer has assumed the identity of "Destin Knowles," a friendly and boisterous event promoter in order to make the murderthon seem more authentic. In the end, however, Malagant desires power. An army of murder wraiths under his command is a fearsome thought, for the mad necromancer might just decide to carve out his own kingdom in southern Missouri! Malagant possesses a special amulet given to him by Lord Dunscon which allows him to use the detect/conceal arcana power. He also has the loyalty of Carcoryx, a hangdog daemonix.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Investigation d6, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Knowledge (History) d6, Notice d10, Shooting d6, Spellcasting d10, Stealth d6

Cha: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9 (4)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Overconfident, Stubborn

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Level Headed, Ley Line Phasing, Master of Magic, Rapid Recharge, Wizard

Powers: *Armor, banish, blast, bolt, darksight, deflection, dispel, entangle, quickness, speak language, teleport.* **PPE:** 25

Gear: Enchanted amulet (allows the use of the detect/conceal arcana power) TK Revolver (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+2, RoF 1, AP 1).

Special Abilities:

- **Disconnected:** Ley Line Walkers tend to be awkward with normal people and situations. They suffer -2 Charisma.
- **Expanded Awareness:** Walkers can use detect arcana at will as a free action, with no PPE cost.
- **Ley Line Walker Abilities:** Ley Line Magic Mastery, Ley Line Rejuvenation, Ley Line Sense, Ley Line Walking, and Ley Line Transmission (see Ley Line Walker in *The Tomorrow Legion Player's Guide*).

CARCORYX

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d12+7, Vigor d12+2

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Survival d4, Swimming d8, Tracking d6

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 33 (15)

Edges: Alertness, Ambidextrous, Charge, Fleet-Footed, Improved Frenzy

Gear: None. Though most Hangdogs ridden into battle have an elaborate Techno-Wizard platform cinched on, which gives the main rider dual firelinked TW cannons (Range 80/160/320, Damage 3d8+4, RoF 1, Mega Damage) and a rear “tail gunner” seat with a mounted TK Machine Gun (Range 30/60/120, Damage 2d8+4, RoF 4, AP 2).

Special Abilities:

- **Bite, Claws, or Horn:** Str+2d8, AP 12, Mega Damage.
- **Burrowing:** Hangdogs can dig through even solid rock at their Pace.
- **Demon Hide:** Hangdogs have +15 Armor and +3 Toughness.
- **Fear:** Alien and creepy, Daemonix cause Fear checks when first encountered.
- **Gore:** If the Hangdog moves at least 6" before attacking, it gains +4 to the damage total.
- **Infernal Form:** Immune to cold (including magic) and disease. Heat and fire attacks inflict half damage.
- **Large:** Hangdogs are +2 to be hit by normal-sized attackers.
- **Low Light Vision:** Hangdogs ignore Dim and Dark lighting penalties.
- **Size +6:** Hangdogs are only about 11 feet tall, but they're truly massive in build and nearly 20 feet in length.
- **Slow Regeneration:** All Daemonix gain a natural healing roll once per day.
- **Tracking Scent:** Hangdogs gain a +2 to all Tracking checks based on scent. If the target is bleeding, the bonus increases to +4.

CARVER

A former juicer himself, Carver is an older human male who acts as a coach for a team of juicers competing in the murderthon. Carver went through detox, removing his juicer abilities, and remains a shell of his former self. Still, Carver is very perceptive and has noticed hints of Malagant's true plans for the murderthon event. He can be a good resource for the player characters... if they can convince him to help!

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

Skills: Driving d4, Fighting d4, Notice d6, Shooting d4, Stealth d4, Repair d6, Survival d4, Throwing d4

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Elderly, Death Wish

Gear: Tool belt.

WIDOWMAKER

A young gloryhound juicer, Widowmaker plans to make a name for himself by dominating the murderthon. He's also deeply in debt to the Black Market! The grand prize might just be enough to buy him out of trouble with his loan shark, so Widowmaker's scheme is to ambush some of the stronger competitors before they even arrive at the Sideshow Arena. He is ruthless and shows contempt toward anyone he feels is weaker — which is nearly everyone! This juicer has already gained quite an infamous reputation by the time the adventure begins.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6, Survival d4

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 16; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 15 (6)

Hindrances: Death Wish, Overconfident

Edges: Brawny, Burn Brighter, Burn Past the Pain, Combat Reflexes, First Strike, Fleet-Footed, Improved Frenzy, Quick

Gear: Juicer Plate (+6), JA-9 Laser Rifle (Range 40/80/160, Damage 3d6+1, RoF 1, AP 3), C-18 Laser Pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), chain long sword (Str+2d8, AP 2, Mega Damage), 2 extra clips each firearm.

Special Abilities:

- **Burn (6):** Juicers can spend 1 Burn to add a d10 to any Trait or damage roll.
- **Drug-induced Euphoria/Tranquility:** Juicers do not gain the benefits of the Quick Edge or the Uncanny Reflexes ability on the first round of combat.
- **Internal Repair System:** Juicers have Slow Regeneration. As well, three times a day, they can roll a Vigor check at +2 to give themselves a healing check.
- **Super Endurance:** Juicers only need 4 hours of sleep and gain +2 on all checks against Fatigue.
- **Super Speed:** Juicers double their Pace, and have a d10 run die.
- **Uncanny Reflexes:** -2 to be hit by all attacks.

SUNDAY! SUNDAY! SUNDAY!

IN JUST FIVE DAYS, THE ALL-NEW, ALL-DEADLY MURDERTHON EVENT IS BEING HELD AT THE SIDESHOW ARENA! LOCATED THREE LEAGUES WEST OF KINGSDALE, THE SIDESHOW ARENA WELCOMES JUICERS FROM FAR AND WIDE TO COMPETE FOR THE GRAND PRIZE! 500,000 UNIVERSAL CREDITS!

IN ADDITION, THE MURDERTHON IS AN UNLIMITED TEAM EVENT! THAT'S RIGHT, EVEN NON-JUICERS ARE WELCOME TO COMPETE IN THIS ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME SPORTS EXTRAVAGANZA! BRING YOUR FRIENDS AND TEST YOUR METTLE AGAINST THE MURDERTHON!

The Tomorrow Legion is respectfully invited to visit the murderthon event and take part if you wish. We welcome the attendance of our neighbors in the spirit of cooperation and building bridges between our kingdoms. Despite the colorful name, the "murderthon" I'm hosting is toning down the violence. It is more of an obstacle course and a race, though of course I cannot guarantee anyone's safety!

-Destin Knowles, Event Organizer

MURDERTHON ARENA

