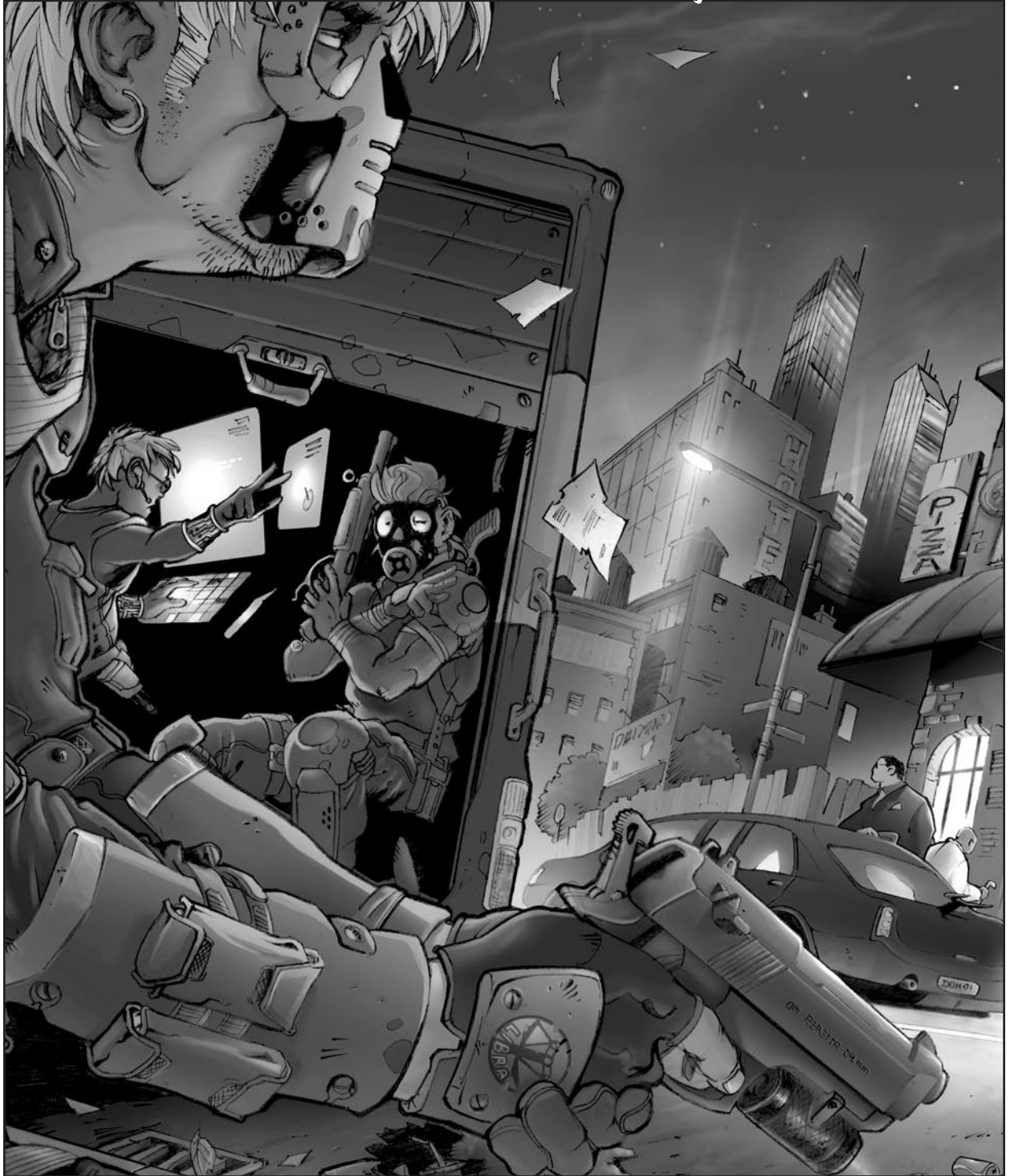


HUDSON CITY

The Urban Abyss



Steven S. Long

HUDSON CITY

The Urban Abyss

A Setting Book for *Dark Champions*

Author: Steven S. Long

Editing & Development: Allen Thomas

Layout & Graphic Design: Andy Mathews

Cover Illustration: Klaus Scherwinski

Cartography: Keith Curtis

Interior Illustration: Brett Barkley, Nate Barnes, Storn Cook, Andrew Cremeans, John Grigni, Roberto Marchesi, Eric Rademaker, Greg Smith, Chris Stevens, Derrick Thomas, Daniel Young, Dean Yuen

DEDICATION

To the players in my Hudson City: The Urban Abyss campaign, whose war on crime and injustice inspired me to new heights of creativity: Andy "Arkady Koslov" Mathews, Brad "Spencer McBryde" Barrett, John "Wiley McCoy" Losey, Gary "Prodigal" Mitchel, Tim "Marcellus Xavier" Binford, Eric "Shadowdragon" Livengood, and Dave "Nightwatch" Cunningham.

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INTRODUCTION



There are a million stories in the big city, as the saying goes.

In a small shop in Chinatown, an elderly man stays behind the counter of his butcher's shop for another hour, hoping to earn a few dollars more before going home to his family. Meanwhile...

...in a seedy hotel room just off the Strip, a thirty dollar a trick hooker takes off her clothes for the fourth time tonight and tries to look excited. Meanwhile...

...in the Huntsman's Club high atop the Murchison Building in Bankhurst, a City Councilman shakes hands with a paving contractor, and several million dollars of the city's money starts to find its way into the contractor's pocket. Meanwhile...

...in an illegal casino in an "abandoned" warehouse in Pierpoint, a man dressed like he stepped out of a pack of cards deals a hand of poker for a pot with a hundred thousand-dollar ante. Meanwhile...

...in Latin City, the cops surround a taqueria where two men with guns have taken five patrons and a cook hostage. Meanwhile...

...in a Gadsden nightclub, a DJ spins the latest hits while the crowd dances and gyrates out on the floor amid laser light and dry ice smoke. Meanwhile...

...a man wearing a black mask with a blue crescent moon stands on a rooftop, bringing crosshairs to bear on a seventeen year-old kid who's dealing twenty dollar vials of crack on a street-corner in Fayetteenam. His finger slowly begins to squeeze the trigger. Meanwhile...

...on a dirty street in Freetown, a woman walks to her third job of the day past gangstas wearing gaudy jewelry worth at least two weeks of her combined salaries. Meanwhile...

...down in Boxtown, a man who hasn't had a place to live for over a decade crawls inside an old cardboard box that once held a refrigerator and wraps himself in dirty blankets against the evening's cold. Meanwhile...

...a thirty year-old stockbroker eating dinner with his girlfriend at Roberto's on 20th fumbles nervously with a little velvet box as he starts to ask the most important question of his life. Meanwhile...

...a man born and raised in Saudi Arabia looks up at the Stailey Towers and wonders how much high explosive it would take to bring the whole building down. Meanwhile...

...most of the city sleeps, gearing up for another workday tomorrow.

Welcome to the Pearl City. We hope you enjoy it... or at least survive it.

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK

Hudson City: The Urban Abyss is your guide to the people and places, streets and parks, and highs and lows of Hudson City, one of the most fascinating areas in modern America. It's a study in contrast, like so many cities these days. Though home to many immensely wealthy people, it's also a place where grinding poverty keeps tens of thousands of people from achieving their dreams. Though it has some of the most beautiful and beloved buildings in the country, parts of it are filled with slums and tenement housing little improved over the conditions of a century ago. And though protected by one of the largest police forces in the world, it's plagued by crime of all varieties, including the sometimes bizarre schemes of flamboyant costumed criminals like Card Shark, Janus, and Charlemagne... not to mention the often-destructive activities of the vigilantes who fight them.

In short, Hudson City is the perfect setting for many types of *Dark Champions* campaigns, particularly those focusing on vigilante crimefighting, police action, and the like. Gamemasters who don't want to use the city as a whole can easily adapt its locations and people for use in their own games.

Chapter One, *The Pearl City*, discusses the history of Hudson City. From its founding in 1803, through the tumult and disasters of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, right up to the advances of the Information Age, the Pearl City has grown and prospered... or, as some would put it, festered.

Chapter Two, *The Lay Of The Land*, describes the geography, climate, and layout of the city. From the basic topography to descriptions of the major neighborhoods and how to get around the city, you'll find it all here. This chapter also has a section that reviews the city's government and major politicians.

Chapter Three, *A Day In The Life*, covers day-to-day living in Hudson City. Every city has its own rhythms and routines, and the Pearl City is no different. Here you'll find information on how Hudsonites entertain themselves, the slang they use, the media they get their daily news from, and the subcultures that call the city home.

Chapter Four, *The Long Arm Of The Law*, reviews the current state of law enforcement in Hudson City. The HCPD is a large and powerful organization that tackles a thankless task every day, and here's where you'll find out how they do it. This chapter also covers other law enforcement agencies, such as the FBI, and related institutions like the Fire Department, the court system, and the prisons.

Chapter Five, *Predators*, looks at the HCPD's opposite number: the city's infamous underworld. Hudson City has a high crime rate, and this chapter discusses its causes — everyone from traditional organized crime groups (like the Mafia and Chinese tongs) to crimelords like Shango and Speargun.

Chapter Six, *Hot Spots For Cool Heroes*, provides detailed descriptions of a few locations that might be of particular interest to you and your heroes: the Skyline Club; Collins Guns; the Avenue of the Elms; and plenty of others.

Chapter Seven discusses how to GM a *Dark Champions* campaign using Hudson City. In addition to general GMing advice and character sheets for many criminals and NPC vigilantes, it includes *the GM's Vault*, which contains information about what's *really* going on in the Pearl City — things only the GM should know.

Check your ammo and watch your back. It's time to descend into the urban abyss.

HEY, WHERE ARE ALL THE SUPERHEROES?

Hudson City is nominally a part of the Champions Universe, the Hero Games setting that includes Vibora Bay, Millennium City, and super-powered humans galore. And yet, there aren't any superhumans in the Pearl City. There are some decidedly odd people, and some occurrences you might describe as "paranormal," but no superhumans. So, the question is: where are they?

The answer: in *Champions* books. You won't ever find a superhuman from the Champions Universe mentioned in a *Dark Champions* product (much less making an active appearance in one). By the same token, you won't find Card Shark setting up illegal casinos in Vibora Bay, or the Harbinger of Justice showing up in Millennium City to deal with the Ultimates as they so richly deserve. You're more than welcome to have them do that in your own campaigns, of course... but for "official continuity" purposes that sort of intermingling won't occur.

There's no official "in-setting" explanation for why this state of affairs exists — no mystic flux, no ban laid down by the gods, no invisible energy field that hurts superhumans, nothing. It's just the way things are. If you want to create a justification for the separation in your own campaign, please do — but for "official" purposes, the explanation is "because." Think of it as an "unwritten agreement" between the Hudsonites and the rest of the Champions Universe, if you will.

But there are, of course, meta-explanations that have to do with game publishing, line management, and campaign creation. First, including superhumans in Hudson City ruins the "feel" of the setting. There's no point in having vigilantes and cops struggle to clean up the streets if the Champions can show up and take care of the problem quickly and easily. That would just turn Hudson City into an older, dirtier version of Millennium City, and there's no point in that. Second, if the two settings are presented as already intermingled, it becomes difficult for a GM who doesn't want them that way to change them — it would require reworking a lot of Hudson City, since the presence of superhumans affects a society in many profound ways. On the other hand, if you want to mix the two together, it's easy: pretty much all you have to do is say "All right, there are superhumans in Hudson City," make a few changes, and go from there. Hudson City is given a location in the Champions Universe for those of you who do, in fact, want to do that, but that's as far as Hero Games books are going to take it — the rest, as they say, is up to you.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: HUDSON CITY AND REALISM

Dark Champions is partly about more "realistic" and "gritty" adventuring than what's depicted in genres like *Champions* and *Pulp Hero*, and to that end I've tried to give Hudson City as strong an air of verisimilitude as I can without ruining its usefulness. It contains bits and pieces of the "feel" of the many major American cities I've spent time in, such as New York City, San Francisco, Atlanta, Phoenix, Washington, D.C., and Milwaukee — but it's not precisely modeled on any of them, or any other real-world city.

While I fit Hudson City into the real world by locating it on the New Jersey shore, that's about as much real-world connection as it needs or has. I haven't altered the map of Hudson City to fit it precisely into part of the New Jersey coastline; rather, in this fictional world, the coastline of that part of New Jersey has been re-arranged so that it looks exactly like what's depicted on the maps in this book. (Ahhhhh, the power!) I've added counties, rivers, and other geographical features to suit the city, too, regardless of what exists in the real world — the whole point is to make a fictional city that's fun for *Dark Champions* gaming, not to write a geography or social studies textbook. And while there are mentions of New Jersey politicians and people, those folks are all entirely fictional. I'm not trying to parody, satirize, or praise any actual living person (which is one reason I prefer to create fictional counties and cities instead of using real-world ones).

In short: Hudson City is "realistic," but it's not "real world." Enjoy it for what it is — a dark urban battleground on which to fight your war on crime and evil — and don't let "real world" considerations get in the way of having fun.

chapter one:



A HISTORY OF HUDSON CITY THE PEARL CITY

THE HISTORY OF HUDSON CITY



Having only recently celebrated its bicentennial anniversary, Hudson City has good reason to be aware of its long history — both the good and the bad.

THE EARLY YEARS

Relatively little is known of the history of the Hudson City region prior to the arrival of English colonists in what's now called New Jersey in the seventeenth century. The area was inhabited by tribes of the Unalachtigo branch of the Delaware Indians (known in their own language as *Lenni Lenape*, or “real people”), an Algonquin-speaking people. Early explorers and settlers reported encountering several small villages in the area around Hudson City, including a village named Kanahsoki near the mouth of the Stewart River. However, by the time Hudson and LeMastre surveyed the area, the Indian population had disappeared for reasons that remain unclear today. Some contemporary accounts say the Indians simply “moved on,” but the accuracy of those reports remains somewhat suspect.

Before 1803, the Hudson City area wasn't heavily settled by colonists. A few lived and farmed here and there throughout the region, but most preferred the northern and western parts of New Jersey (closer to the cities of New York and Philadelphia, respectively). The Stewart River was not, at that time, considered particularly useful for commerce, though it was fished.

The most notable event of the colonial period was the Battle of the Stewart River (1778), in which a ragtag group of Revolutionary soldiers under the command of General Richard Bankhurst defeated a larger British force, thus preventing those soldiers from joining Howe's forces at the Battle of Monmouth later that year. The battle lasted for most of a day and involved a series of skirmishes more than a true open battle. Modern historians are not sure of the exact location where all the fighting took place, though they know from the occasional finds of lead balls and other artifacts that the fiercest combat was probably in and around the southwest part of what's now LeMastre Park and down through the Stewartsboro neighborhood.

1803: THE FOUNDING OF THE CITY

The Hudson City region remained quiet and basically uninhabited until 1803. In that year two men — Emil Hudson, a wealthy merchant, and Andre LeMastre, an expatriate Frenchman drawn to the New World by the promise of the nascent American republic — spent several weeks explor-

ing and surveying the area. Hudson was seeking a place where he could establish a trading post and center of commerce. He recruited LeMastre, who had some training in architecture, to help him find the best location for the city and establish its layout. After he finished the general survey, Hudson settled on a site at the mouth of the Stewart River.

The two men returned to civilization. While Hudson purchased the land from the government, LeMastre sketched out a basic plan for the new town that featured a broad grid of streets on the northern side of the river along the coast. LeMastre also ordered building materials and recruited workers and settlers whose labor would bring his and Hudson's vision to life.

In less than a year the basics of the new town, informally christened Hudsonsburg by workers of German extraction, had taken shape. Christmas, 1803 saw the first families, including Hudson's and LeMastre's own, take up residence in the community. Some of those families, including the Bankhursts, Fraziers, and Willoughbys, remain among the most prominent in Hudson City today.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The new town grew steadily over the next decade as Hudson spent most of his own fortune to increase trade within the city and spent countless hours promoting his new home in other cities and in Europe. By the time of the War of 1812, it was regarded as important enough to merit attack by the British. Christopher Caldwell, a local carpenter, Revolutionary War veteran, and leader of the Hudsonsburg Militia, converted his house at Washington Street and 16th Avenue into a small fort where he and a band of like-minded men held off the redcoats until help arrived. His house, known as Caldwell's Stand, has been preserved in its original condition and become an important tourist attraction and historical resource.

From 1812 until the War Between the States, Hudsonsburg kept growing. It changed its name to Hudson City in 1823 less than a week before Emil Hudson's death. Not just merchants and workmen but many different types of craftsmen came to live there, and young farmers seeking good land moved into the area to provide the city with food. Most of the growth took place on the North Bank of the Stewart, but small settlements also sprang up on the South Bank.

Hudson City commerce received a boost in 1837 when a group of southern New Jersey businessmen built a canal between the upper reaches of the Stewart River and the Delaware River. This



made it possible to carry bulk goods by water all the way from Hudson City on the coast to Philadelphia or other parts of the interior. Although neither the river nor the canal could support truly large ships, it could handle smaller ones without much difficulty. That was enough to make Hudson City even more attractive as a center of trade.

The outbreak of the Civil War slowed the city's growth, but didn't stop it, and in some ways laid the foundation for things to come. While thousands of young men went off to war on behalf of the Union, manufacturers and early industrialists increased the size of their operations so they could supply the Union Army with needed goods. Some were nothing but profiteers, turning out shoddy goods at inflated prices, but others did their best to give good value for the government money they received. The Frazier Arms Company in particular was known for the quality of its product (pistols and long arms), and it's said that the company (which was bought by Remington decades ago) is the true foundation of the Frazier family's fortune.

1867: THE HUDSON CITY RIOTS

After the War's end, survivors returned home to Hudson City to rebuild their lives and take part in what they hoped would be a new period of economic prosperity. Unfortunately for them, they faced increasing competition from several groups. Immigration from Europe was increasing, with the immigrants often willing to work for cheaper wages than nativeborn Americans. This led to feelings of resentment, even hatred, which prompted many of the immigrants to live in small ethnic communities.

Even worse was the arrival of newly-freed black slaves from the South who came north looking for work. They established a shantytown, called "Freetown" by Hudsonites, a couple miles south of the Stewart and began taking jobs for even lower wages than the European immigrants. Even worse, in the eyes of many whites, Freetown was a den of drunkenness, licentiousness, sin, vice, and crime; it wasn't long before nearly every crime in the city was being blamed on "Negro invaders." It didn't take long for the resentment and frustration many Hudsonites felt to reach a boiling point.

In 1867 a group of hot-headed men who called themselves the White Riders attacked Freetown. Though sometimes referred to as members of the Ku Klux Klan, the Riders were an independent group with a similar philosophy. Led by a man named Aloysius Flint, the Riders descended on Freetown, assaulting its "citizens," starting fires, and destroying property. The blacks fought back, and the attack soon became a chaotic melee which gradually worked its way north as Flint and the rest were slowly pushed back by the force of numbers. Somehow, once they crossed back over the Stewart, several fires were started in Hudson City. The blaze soon spread out of control and burned nearly a hundred buildings to the ground. Exactly how these fires started has never been determined. Most historians believe the blacks set them in revenge for the attack, but Hudson City civil rights leaders maintain to this day that Aloysius Flint and the White Riders deliberately started them so the inhabitants of Freetown would get the blame.

**DR. SUSAN
RUSSELL**

10 STR 10 DEX
8 CON 8 BODY
10 INT 8 EGO
10 PRE 10 COM
3 PD 3 ED
2 SPD 4 REC
16 END 17 STUN

Abilities: Bureaucratics 8-, Concealment 11-, CK: Hudson City 11-, KS: World History 13-, KS: American History 13-, KS: Hudson City History 13-, Mechanics 8-, PS: Archaeologist 11-, PS: Historian 11-, SS: Anthropology 11-, SS: Archaeology 13-

Disadvantages: None

Notes: A part-time professor at HCSU and full-time member of the Hudson City Historical Society staff, Dr. Susan Russell is an historian and archaeologist specializing in the history and artifacts of Hudson City. She's conducted archaeological digs all over the city in search of bits and pieces of the Pearl City's past.

AFTER THE RIOTS

It took a while for the city to settle down after the riots — there were reprisal attacks by both sides, and more than a few inhabitants of Freetown left the area for good. But the truth was that the growing Industrial Revolution demanded workers to fill the factories that were slowly but surely arising in and around Hudson City. That meant the movers and shakers in the city were willing to accept blacks, Italians, Chinese, and just about anyone else. Many of them even built their new manufacturing facilities south of the river to make it easier for workers to get to them. In time local villages and towns like Elmview and Forsyth became virtual company towns, only to be absorbed into Hudson City proper decades later.

The rapidly-growing city and population, not to mention the technological advances of the late nineteenth century and the social changes they brought, sometimes seemed to create as many problems for Hudson City as they did opportunities. Epidemics of cholera, dysentery, and flu swept the city several times during the 1865-1890 period, mostly due to poor sanitation within the city. After they finished rebuilding the parts of the city damaged by the Riots, the city fathers planned, and partly built, a more modern sewer system that significantly reduced the occurrence of disease in the city.

Another problem was crime. The Hudson City Police Department was no more professional or well-run than any other such department of the time; it ignored many areas of the city, and corruption was rampant. As a result, many forms of crime flourished. Teenage boys and young men formed small, vicious gangs that fought for control over parts of the city, and ethnic crime, such as Italian "Black Hand" extortion rings and Chinese tongs, proved particularly difficult to stop. Many historians date the city's reputation as crime-ridden to these times.

THE INDEPENDENCE DAY FIRE OF 1895

Sewer construction and other building projects came to a screeching halt during the drought-plagued summer of 1895. Badly-manufactured fireworks lit during the Fourth of July festivities started a fire in Gadsden. Before the Fire Department could respond, dozens of buildings were ablaze, and low water supplies made it virtually impossible to fight the fires. A southerly wind carried sparks, embers, and hot ash over the river, starting fires on the Southside as well. Four days later, by the time the fires were finally brought under control (partly due to a timely thunderstorm), over 75% of the buildings in Hudson City were destroyed or significantly damaged. "The entire city has been reduced to a modern-day Hell of fire-ravaged brick and timber," wrote one New York reporter.

A lesser people would have given up and left most of the city to rot, but Hudsonites are a hardy, stubborn breed. They rolled up their sleeves and got to work, rebuilding their homes and businesses. The city fathers took the opportunity to redraw the plan of the city. They tried to eliminate narrow or winding streets, change or remove "bad" neigh-

borhoods, and start anew with the best sanitation systems engineering could build. Their plans didn't always reach fruition, but as anyone who looks at pre-1895 map can tell, the modern layout of the city owes more to the Independence Day fire and its aftermath than to Andre LeMastre's original plan (though the city fathers preserved much of LeMastre's vision).

In many cases, Hudsonites didn't bother to rebuild damaged buildings. Instead, they tore them down, covered up the remains (or sunk them into the earth), and built over them. As a result, to this day work crews digging foundations for new buildings or laying new pipes for some project often come across the remains of cellars, basements, primitive sewer systems, and other remnants of old Hudson City. (If the builders tell anyone, these sites sometimes become archaeological treasure-troves... but it's just as likely they'll cover up the discovery so the government won't bring the construction project to a screeching halt while scientists investigate the find.)

As part of the Grand Rebuilding (as it was known), Hudson City constructed its first true subway system. Interest in a subway to complement the city's network of railways had been growing for decades, ever since northern rival New York City had started working on one. A few private companies had built short pneumatic tube subways in the late 1800s, but none had received much support and all had eventually shut down for lack of money. The city formed the Hudson City Rapid Transit Company (HCRTC, with Company later changed to "Division") to oversee the project. With full public support, the HCRTC had a partial working system in place by 1913, and every year thereafter saw more and more of the city served by underground as well as aboveground commuter rail systems.

**THE EARLY
TWENTIETH CENTURY**

By the time the young men of Hudson City were called to war in the trenches and forests of France, most of the city had been rebuilt and had started to grow once more. Wartime manufacturing brought great profits to many businesses the city, particularly to the Hudson City Shipyards and various arms manufacturers.

PULP-ERA HUDSON CITY

The new prosperity carried over into the 1920s and '30s, an era that saw the debut of a phenomenon many people closely associate with Hudson City: costumed vigilante crimefighters. Prohibition, made the law of the land by the Volstead Act, allowed organized crime — mainly the Mafia — to flourish by providing bootleg liquor in addition to gambling, prostitution, and other forms of vice. Italian crime families like the Morellis and Torcones got their start during this period, and their leaders became some of the most powerful men in the city.



With smuggling, murder, and mayhem on the rise, a breed of men and women arose to oppose the gangsters and fiendish masterminds who beset the city. The first and foremost among these was the Raven, a masked man dressed in black and wearing a black cloak. He claimed to have mystic powers of foresight, but to the readers of the Hudson City papers it often seemed as if his quick trigger finger and unerring aim were the most important abilities he brought to his war on crime. Accompanied by his companion, the lovely and vivacious Velvet Phantom, his pet raven Cagliostro, and a group of helpers known as the Midnight Brigade, the Raven smashed crime syndicates, foiled the plans of murderous arch-criminals, and repeatedly saved the city from disaster despite being wanted by the police.

As the Twenties turned into the Thirties and the tide of crime (both normal and “weird,” as the papers dubbed it) rose, several other “masked mystery men” took their place beside the Raven on the front lines of crimefighting. The Golden Tiger, an American who somehow learned the secret Oriental fighting arts, brought his skills to bear in an unending war against the tongs of Chinatown. Captain James Battle and his Science Police used

their technological know-how and arsenal of gadgets to fight all manner of crime, including the insidious Dr. Fang and his Legion of Evil. The Scarlet Shadow wielded a Gas-Gun that allowed him to lay criminals low without harming them. Rawboned FBI agent Sam Spivey didn’t wear a costume, but he worked with the likes of the Raven or Jim Battle so often that he was often associated with them in the minds of the public. Together these men, and others like them, kept the good people of Hudson City from falling under an onslaught of crime.

WORLD WAR II

The outbreak of World War II brought most of the flamboyant adventuring of the Twenties and Thirties to an end. A few crimefighters, such as the Raven, remained on duty to smash Nazi spy-rings and keep the homefront safe, but even he had less to do than before (in part because the American government secretly negotiated a deal with the Mafia in Hudson City to ensure it would keep the docks functioning efficiently and prevent any longshoremen’s strikes, willingly turning a blind eye to many other Mafia activities in exchange). Others were absorbed into the war effort. Captain (soon Colonel) Battle and the Science Police fell in combat in 1944 while saving the world from a Nazi menace whose true nature has never been disclosed to the public, and the Scarlet Shadow is thought to have gone to work with the OSS, though records regarding him remain classified.

The war affected Hudson City much as earlier wars did: it brought great profit. Countless wartime government contracts went to Hudson City industrialists, service providers, and entrepreneurs. Fordham ChemTech, at the time a small firm known as Fordham Manufacturing, rose to prominence in large part because of the armaments contracts it obtained, which led to many more such contracts with the Department of Defense in the latter half of the twentieth century.



THE FIFTIES, SIXTIES, AND SEVENTIES

Post-war prosperity affected Hudson City like it did the rest of America. As a result, the Pearl City grew significantly, fully absorbing formerly outlying communities like Stewartsboro, Mint Ridge, Little Italy, and even Irishtown (which had long since lost most of its ethnic character, becoming instead a haven for many wealthy Hudsonites).

Throughout this period there were no notable costumed crimefighters or criminals active, but the Mafia and other organized crime groups remained and increased in power. The early Sixties was the height of La Cosa Nostra's strength, when it controlled most of the crime on the Northside and a not inconsiderable chunk of it on the Southside. Increased governmental scrutiny and periodic FBI crackdowns weakened the Mafia from the late 1960s through the mid-Seventies.

The Sixties, particularly the latter half, were a bad time for Hudson City. Growth stalled, and mounting city expenses meant that proposed new programs often failed to get off the ground and the city neglected some basic maintenance chores. Economic stagnation coupled with an increasing awareness of civil rights issues caused major social unrest, particularly on the Southside. A new wave of costumed crimefighters, including the first Black Whisper, the highly skilled martial artist Shatter,

and a brutal adventurer who called himself Jason Scorpion, fought against the worst of the city's evils, but often with little lasting effect. All of them were dead or retired by 1979.

The worst incident of this period occurred in the summer of 1967 during a march to celebrate civil rights progress and commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the Hudson City Riots. The celebration disintegrated into a riot itself when white bigots pelted the marchers with stones, bottles, and garbage. Blacks in Freetown and in the rest of the city retaliated, often leading to open fighting in the streets. The three-day spree of racial violence caused 21 deaths, untold injuries, and millions of dollars of damage. Many of the leaders of Hudson City's early twenty-first century black community were a part of the march and experienced the riots first-hand; their bitter memories of the incident continue to affect Hudsonite racial politics today.

Things calmed down in the 1970s, though crime continued to rise and the city couldn't shake off its economic malaise. Both the Mafia and the Chinese tongs flooded the streets with heroin, creating legions of junkies who each committed dozens of petty crimes every day to feed their habit. Muggings, burglaries, murders, and rapes all increased dramatically, as did gang activity. "White flight" to the suburbs changed the demographics of the city significantly.

THE EIGHTIES, NINETIES, AND BEYOND

If the crime situation in Hudson City was bad in the Seventies, it became even worse in the Eighties and Nineties with the arrival of cheap cocaine... and, eventually, crack (not to mention meth and various designer drugs). Many parts of the Northside were far less safe than ever before, and the public housing projects of the Southside became so dangerous that the police often refused to go near them. With the Mafia weakened by tenacious federal prosecution under RICO and other new laws, fresh waves of ethnic organized crime made their way into the Pearl City: Russian gangsters; Jamaican posses; the yakuza; and many more. Homegrown criminals, mostly in the form of black street gangs on the Southside (including the Nubians, the Warriors, and the Overlords), remained active. Costumed, “weird,” or flamboyant criminals like Card Shark, Redbeard, Jackknife, and Chiaroscuro became more common than ever before.

New costumed vigilantes arose to face this threat. The earliest of them was Black Whisper II, who first appeared in 1983 to tackle the gang problem in Freetown and Latin City. For his efforts he was shot at, labeled a racist by several organizations, and despised by far too many Freetowners, but public scorn and derision couldn’t stop him. That took a .45 bullet fired by an HCPD cop (one later dismissed from the force for taking bribes, though his shooting of Black Whisper II was, and still is, regarded as legitimate). Others included Captain X, Midnight, the Sandman, and the Scarecrow. A few of these, such as Midnight, established informal “working relationships” with the police, who often found themselves baffled or outgunned by the strange denizens of the underworld.

The most infamous of this new breed of vigilantes was the Harbinger of Justice, who made his debut in 1986 by destroying one of Card Shark’s illegal casinos and “executing” all eleven criminals running the place. More ruthless and uncompromising than even the toughest of his predecessors, the Harbinger launched a one-man crimefighting crusade that has lasted for nearly twenty years and resulted in thousands of deaths. Card Shark seems to be the “Blue Moon Killer’s” particular nemesis. The two have clashed on numerous occasions, and experts believe the current Card Shark is not the original, who was probably slain by the Harbinger sometime in the late Eighties or early Nineties. Although he’s disappeared on a few occasions for months at a stretch, the Harbinger has so far defied every attempt to kill or capture him, and seems to show no signs of slowing down.

BEYOND THE UNDERWORLD

Street crime wasn’t the only sort of criminal activity making headlines during this period. Hudson City has a not-undeserved reputation for corruption, and several scandals during the Eighties and Nineties illustrate this nicely.

In 1987, then Police Commissioner Michael Gentry fell victim to an FBI sting operation. It seemed that he, along with several colleagues lower down the command chain, had taken bribes from defense attorneys to lose or corrupt evidence against various perpetrators. The media’s investigation into the scandal uncovered other, related forms of corruption, including an old-fashioned “pad” where reporters and other people looking for police favors paid into a common till at each precinct, which was then distributed among the officers on the basis of rank. Several hundred firings and a few high-profile trials later, the Mayor’s office declared



THE BICENTENNIAL

In 2003, Hudson City celebrated its bicentennial. As part of the celebration, the city sponsored a year-long series of festivals, parades, and events throughout the city, culminating in a gigantic weekend-long “park party” in LeMastre Park. A good time was had by all, but altogether the celebration cost the city approximately \$100 million... and many of the bills are still coming due.

the HCPD “clean again” — much to the amusement of many Hudsonites.

In 1993, the *City News* reported that a development and construction firm, Boyce & Associates, had lavishly spread money around the County Planning Commission and Planner’s Office to ensure that its rezoning and permit requests were looked upon favorably. Planning administrators and employees had received cash bribes, trips to Las Vegas and Hawaii, the services of hookers, and illegal drugs, among other things. As a result of the scandal, the City Council completely revised and restructured the Planning offices at the cost of millions of taxpayer dollars.

In 2001, the *City News* again broke a major scandal story. According to the paper, some HCPD officers assigned to the North Elmview neighborhood — which includes the notorious Strip — were arresting prostitutes, then letting them go in exchange for sexual favors. The reporter’s sources even claimed some pimps had worked out an arrangement in which their girls could provide the favors in advance, thus avoiding the hassle of an arrest. Although an internal investigation could not verify the latter claim, it did discover that a “sex-for-release” ring existed. A dozen officers were fired, and four prosecuted.

HUDSON CITY TODAY

As of the early twenty-first century, Hudson City is a thriving metropolis of over six million souls. Although its crime rate remains high — one of the highest in the nation, in fact — hundreds of people migrate there every day, hoping to find a new life for themselves and their families. Despite its problems, it’s still the Pearl City, home to commerce, culture, entertainment, and all the best modern America has to offer.

Other than crime and corruption (and the related phenomenon of vigilantism), several important issues confront the city as it moves forward into the future. Foremost of these is the changing nature of the modern economy. The shift from manufacturing to service industries has left many Hudsonites, particularly Southsiders, unemployed or underemployed, and often without health insurance as well. This situation contributes to all sorts of other problems, including crime and bloated welfare rolls. The Mayor and other city leaders struggle to attract new employers to the area, but Hudson City’s reputation for crime and corruption, coupled with its high cost of living, make it a hard sell to many businesses.

Second, conflict between the city government and the unions remains a major factor in local politics. Mayor Umstead was elected despite his staunch anti-union stand, but his anti-union policies have created an enormous amount of friction. The result has been work slowdowns and even strikes that have crippled the city for days at a time. Many analysts don’t believe he can possibly win reelection in 2006... or even survive ongoing efforts to recall him before then.

Third, infrastructure maintenance has fallen behind in the wake of the economic downturn of the late Nineties/early 2000s. Hudson City desperately needs hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth of road and bridge repairs, train track maintenance, asbestos removal, and similar services, but it just can’t afford them. Despite Mayor Umstead’s efforts to squeeze out the money somehow, it’s probably going to take a major disaster before people start paying more attention to this issue.

This is a detailed street map of Hudson City, New Jersey. The map shows a grid of streets, with major thoroughfares like N. Trueman Blvd., N. Lincoln St., N. Madison St., and N. Jackson St. running north-south. East-west streets include 4th Ave., 8th Ave., 12th Ave., 16th Ave., and 20th Ave. Key landmarks and neighborhoods are labeled, including the Hudson City Convention Center, Jason Devon Memorial Coliseum, Berkely Commercial Center and Sports Metroplex, Hudson City Zoo, LeMastre Park, and the Stewart River. The map also shows the coastline with features like Puritan Bay, Owl Bay, and the Garden Cliffs. A scale bar indicates 1 Mile and 1 Km, and a compass rose shows North. Numbered circles 1 through 5 are placed around the map, corresponding to the numbered sections in the adjacent text.

THE LAY OF THE LAND

VITAL STATISTICS



HUDSON CITY
The Urban Abyss

At A Glance

The Place

Size: 80 square miles (metropolitan area) (about 10 miles [8,045"] long by 8 miles [6,436"] wide)

Altitude: 0-163 feet above sea level

Climate: Temperate; annual precipitation approximately 40-45 inches. Standard temperatures are:

Month	Avg. Temperatures
JAN.	-3°-4° C (27°-40° F)
FEB.	-2°-5° C (29°-42° F)
MAR.	2°-9° C (36°-49° F)
APR.	7°-14° C (44°-57° F)
MAY	12°-19° C (54°-66° F)
JUNE	17°-23° C (62°-74° F)
JULY	20°-27° C (68°-80° F)
AUG.	20°-27° C (68°-80° F)
SEP.	17°-23° C (62°-74° F)
OCT.	10°-18° C (51°-64° F)
NOV.	5°-13° C (42°-55° F)
DEC.	1°-8° C (33°-46° F)

Getting Around:

Bus: \$2.00 for locals, \$4.00 for express buses

Elevated Rail: \$1.75 for locals, \$3.50 express trains; one transfer allowed within an hour

Subway: \$2.00, one transfer allowed within an hour

Taxi: Basic fee of \$2.50 initial charge, plus \$0.40 per one-fifth of a mile (or fraction thereof) after that; additional fees may apply

Parking your car: Approx. \$2-6 per hour

The People

Population:

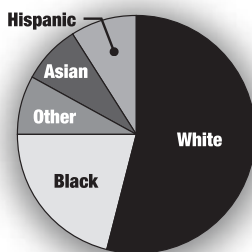
Resident, including suburbs: 5.3 million
Resident, metropolitan area: 2.5 million
Working: 6.3 million

Racial Background:

White: 54%
Black: 21%
Hispanic: 8%
Asian: 8%
Other: 9%

Religious Background:

Protestant: 37%
Catholic: 22%
Jewish: 12%
Buddhist: 10%
Muslim: 9%
Other: 10%



2004 Sports

Baseball: Heroes (70-91)

Basketball: Cougars (30-52)

Football: Thunderbolts (10-6)

Hockey: Storm (37-27-13-5)

The Society

Government: Mayor (Hon. Graydon T. Umstead [R]) plus 79-member City Council

Party Affiliation:

Republican: 42%
Democrat: 47%
Other/Unaffiliated: 11%

Motto: *Facere quam dicere* ("To do, rather than to say")

Nickname: the Pearl City

Rent

Average monthly rents for a two-bedroom apartment or like residence in 2004, assuming no rent stabilization or other outside factors:

Luxury (Bankhurst, Highlands): \$3,000 or more

Upscale (Worthington, parts of Blackbridge and Guilford): \$1,000-2,200

Average (Ardmore, Blackbridge, Crown Point, Gadsden, Guilford, Riverside Hills): \$750-1,200

Downscale (Eastwood, Elmview, Red Hill, parts of Freetown and Latin City): \$600-900

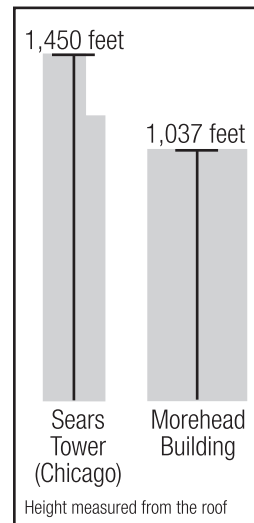
Squalid (Forsyth, Freetown, Lafayette, Latin City): \$500-600

The Landmarks

Tallest Building: Morehead Building (southeast corner of 4th Avenue and Centre Street), 103 stories (1,037 feet [158"] tall)

Highest Point: the Gadsden Cliffs (163 feet above sea level)

TALL BUILDINGS



AVERAGE SUNNY DAYS PER MONTH



	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEP.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.
	22	22	20	19	19	23	19	23	22	25	23	24



URBANOGRAPHY



PRESIDENT WHO?

The map of Hudson City confuses many travelers (not to mention most Hudson City schoolchildren) because the presidential streets are *not* named in chronological order. Major streets were named for whatever president happened to be popular at the time the street was built, paved, or renamed, so they're in *approximate* historical order (running more or less east-west). However, there are a few anomalies, such as the fact that Taft Street lies east of Roosevelt Street, even though President Taft served after President Teddy Roosevelt.

Located at the mouth of the Stewart River, which divides the city roughly in half, Hudson City originally occupied the land along the coast, but over the past two centuries has spread west along the river for a distance of about eight miles. The northern part of the city, home to the main commercial district and most of the city's attractions, is known as the Northside or North Bank; the southern part, the poorer and more run-down section of town, is called Southside or the South Bank.

TOPOGRAPHY

As a coastal city, Hudson City is low-lying. Most parts of it are within 50 feet of sea level, which sometimes makes flooding a problem. But the highest point in the city — the Gadsden Cliffs, which rise 163 feet from the ocean near 12th Avenue — is also along the coast. Other elevated parts of the city include the Highlands and Mint Ridge.

The Streets

The main way people get around Hudson City is, of course, the city streets. Most city blocks on both sides of the river are roughly one-tenth of a mile long (80.5") long on each side, though this can vary tremendously from place to place based on road patterns, the size and location of buildings, and many other factors.

NORTHSIDE STREETS

Lost? How the !\$% d'ya get lost? It's a, whadaya call it, grid — even a chimpanzee could find his way around. Read your map if you can't figger it out for yerself.*

— friendly StarMart delivery truck driver Norm Feldbaum

The Northside is laid out in a rough gridwork pattern that makes it easy to get around. Experienced natives can rattle off the names of the streets in order no matter which way you go, but even a newcomer knows that 8th Avenue is north of 12th, and so on. However, all on the Northside is not so organized as it might seem at first glance. Between the major streets lie an often chaotic welter of minor streets, ranging in size from one-way, one-lane alleys to two lanes in each direction. Some minor roads curve or bend in unusual ways.

There are also three major expressways that twist and turn as needed, since they're above the ordinary city streets: N. Truman Boulevard (I-4085, which runs from the river near LeMastre Park up to a point just east of Irishtown); Kurtland Boulevard (I-2984, which runs east through Little Italy and Ardmore before curving sharply up through Guilford to meet Truman); and the Coastal Parkway. Each of these has onramps and offramps at major streets and other locations, and provide rapid transportation across the city.

On the Northside, major roads (*i.e.*, most of the ones marked on the overall city map on page 17) are at least two lanes wide in both directions, and often more; none of the major roads is one-way, though some minor roads are. The primary north-south artery is Centre Street, which is four lanes wide in both directions and continues through the Centre Street Tunnel down to the Southside.

North-South

The roads running north-south are designated "streets." The major ones are all named after American presidents — thus, you have Monroe Street, Jefferson Street, Washington Street, and so on (see sidebar). Streets that cross the Stewart and continue into the south side are named "North" and "South," respectively; streets that are only on the North Bank have no such qualifier. (Centre Street is an exception; it has no qualifier even though it crosses the river.)

North-south streets begin their numbering at the northernmost point, with a block of 1000 numbers for each mile. Thus, an address in the second mile from the northern limit of the city will be 2000-something; one near the river (five or six miles from the northern limit) would be 5000- or 6000-something. Even numbers are always on the eastern side of the street, odd numbers on the western side. Thus, the Geraldine's Restaurant franchise on the east side of N. Washington Street a little south of Courthouse Plaza has the address 2612; Detwiler's Rare Books, on the west side of Steele Street in the Lowdown, is 6845.

East-West

North Bank streets running east-west are called "avenues." Many of them are named numerically: 12th Avenue, 23rd Avenue, and so forth. Roughly every fourth numbered avenue is a major road. Addresses run in 1000s per mile, as with the streets; they begin at their easternmost point (at the coast, for major roads), and even-numbered addresses are on the south side of the street.

SOUTHSIDE STREETS

The Southside is also laid out gridwork fashion. However, because it grew without the benefit of central planning from the beginning, it has a much more awkward and asymmetrical grid that often doesn't match the northern one. Major roads come to mysterious dead-ends, only to pick back up somewhere else, and streets can add or lose lanes at odd locations. Only a true native can negotiate the Southside with ease.

The major streets on the Southside follow the same general pattern as the northern streets when it comes to designations and addresses. Many major roads, whatever direction they run in, are named after famous figures in the history of Hudson City (and in some cases, of the civil rights movement, such as Martin Luther King Avenue).

The Southside also has three raised expressways to speed traffic across the city: Truman Boulevard (which runs from the southwest corner of the city to the Monaghan Bridge and thence onward to the Northside); the South Expressway (I-3275, which comes up from the suburbs of Windham and Southport to merge with the Truman); and the Duvall Parkway (which starts in north Southport and crosses the Southside in a north-westerly line to end at S. Roosevelt Street).

BRIDGES

The Stewart River separates the two halves of Hudson City. In the early days of the city, the only way across it was ferries. (Private companies still operates several large ferryboats from ferries at Monroe Street and the aptly-named Ferry Street; see page 26.) But modern engineering techniques have made it possible to bridge the Stewart, thus allowing tens of thousands of vehicles to cross the river quickly every day. Five traffic bridges cross the river; from east to west, they are: the Adam Street Bridge; the Monaghan Bridge; the Deerman Drawbridge (built in 1935 as a WPA project when the old bridge was damaged); the Harrison Street Bridge; and the Weston-Timpkins Bridge at Roosevelt Street. There are also two bridges, the Hite in the west and Scherwinski in the east, just for commuter railways. Additionally, the eight-lane Centre Street Tunnel runs under the river to provide another link between north and south, and there are subway-only tunnels paralleling the Centre Street Tunnel and Harrison Street Bridges.

Landmarks

In addition to its major neighborhoods (described beginning on page 27), Hudson City has a number of prominent landmarks. Some are known mostly to locals, while others enjoy worldwide renown. They include:

Caldwell's Stand (intersection of Washington Street and 16th Avenue): the preserved colonial-era house where Christopher Caldwell and his men held off the British during the War of 1812 (see page 8).

The Hudson Statue: This 35-foot-tall (5") bronze statue of Emil Hudson, the city's founder, dominates the Centre Street Circle south of the river. Erected in 1903 to celebrate the city's hundredth anniversary, it was created by famed sculptor Enrico Torrigiani.

Jason Devon Memorial Coliseum (JDMC) and the Hudson City Convention Center: Located in Blackbridge at the intersection of 8th Avenue and N. Jackson Street, this complex hosts dozens of major conventions and events every year. A skywalk over Harnett Street connects the two so convention attendees don't have to go outside, and the complex also features a variety of shops and restaurants. The Hudson City Storm, the city's NHL hockey franchise, plays at the Devon, as do the Hellions (the arena football team). See page 114.

LeMastre Park: The largest park in the city, and site of the Hudson City Zoo. See page 67.

Mural Street: Since the mid-1960s, Coleman Avenue between S. Jackson and S. Madison Streets has become renowned for the dozens of beautiful murals artists have painted on nearly every building. In some places the murals lap down onto the sidewalk. Many street artists ply their trade here, creating caricatures and sidewalk art for a small fee.

Olde Hudson City: Located next to the terminus of Ferry Street, Olde Hudson City is a preserved section of the earliest part of Hudson City. It includes Emil Hudson's original trading post and Andre LeMastre's first house. Employees in period costume conduct tours, display crafts and trades of the time, and subtly steer visitors toward the well-stocked gift shop.

Robertson House: This well-preserved early nineteenth-century mansion at the intersection of S. Madison Street and King Avenue was once a stop along the Underground Railroad. Today it not only serves as an historical attraction but the home offices for a number of small charities serving the Southside community.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church: The oldest church in Hudson City, located at 28th Avenue and Cherry Street in Pierpoint. It's known around the world for the beauty of its architecture and stained glass windows.

LITTLE T

5	STR	10	DEX
8	CON	7	BODY
10	INT	8	EGO
13	PRE	8	COM
3	PD	3	ED
2	SPD	3	REC
16	END	14	STUN

Abilities: PS: Skateboarding 12-, PS: Spray-can Artistry 13-, Stealth 11-, Streetwise 8-, Reputation (best tagger in Hudson City, among skateboarders and taggers, 14-, +2/+2d6)

Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Defiant Of Authority; Rivalry: other taggers; Social Limitation: Minor

Notes: No matter where you live or work in the city, you've seen the letters, painted on a wall or a railroad car, a bus or an overpass. Big or small, every color of the rainbow, painted with painstaking artistry or slapped on quick-and-simple, they always say the same thing: LITTLE T.

Ask kids who skate or tag, and most of 'em'll tell you the same thing: Little T's the best there is. If there's a big, blank vertical surface somewhere, he'll do his best to scrawl his distinctive moniker on it. It's even more fun if he gets to obliterate the marks of one of the piss-ant taggers who thinks he's as good as Little T. Some people call it "street art"; others call it vandalism. Little T doesn't care — he does what he wants to do, and !\$&* anyone who tries to tell him otherwise.

IN THE NEWS IN 2004:

THE CATACOMBS CLUB

July — The accidental discovery of a (literally) underground “nightclub” has shone a spotlight on Hudson City’s community of below-the-streets explorers.

Two weeks ago, Sanitation Commission workers digging a test tunnel for a new sewer line in Pierpoint discovered something they never expected: an underground room containing lights, tables covered in simple tablecloths, candlesticks with half-burned candles, a stereo, and a fully-stocked bar. The workers reported the find to the police, who sealed off the area. But before detectives could finish their investigation, someone snuck into the room and removed most of the contents, leaving behind only a note signed “the Catacombs Club” which respectfully requested that the HCPD not devote any further efforts to finding out more about the group.

“It appears to be part of the city sewer system from the nineteenth century that was closed off for use decades ago,” said Geraldine Vincennes, a spokeswoman for the Commission. “There’s a lot of things down there that no one in the city knows about.”

No one, that is, except the Catacombs Club... and people of similar disposition. According to “Gerald,” who refused to identify himself further, there’s an entire culture of “delvers” who like to go exploring in the underground. “It’s a real thrill, finding things like that room that no one’s known about for years.

COME RAIN, COME SHINE

“White Christmas? We don’t never have a white Christmas around here, pal. Just wait a few minutes after it hits the ground and it’ll turn black and sooty from all the cars and crap. Nothin’ stays white around here for long.”

— local Scrooge and street raconteur Moustache Billy

Hudson City lies within the northern half of the North American temperate zone, giving it a relatively cool climate compared to the Southeast but a much milder climate than, say, Maine or Canada. Its annual precipitation is around forty inches, with an average of a little over three inches per month.

The year begins with often-bitter cold. There are times in January and February when the average temperature barely rises above freezing for days at a time, and snow and ice are frequent. A typical snowstorm drops two to four inches of the white stuff on the city, but deeper snowfalls of two feet or more are not unknown. Most Hudsonites remember the Blizzard of ’01, when nearly four feet of snow, followed by freezing rain, virtually shut down the city for several days. Fortunately, Hudsonites have gotten good at driving on icy roads, and the city has a large fleet of trucks and vehicles to clear the streets as quickly as possible. Mounds of exhaust-grimed snow usually line the roads for most of the winter.

By late winter/early spring, the temperature warms up enough that precipitation comes in the form of rain more than snow; March brings more rain, on the average, than any other month of the year. You can tell it’s starting to warm up when homeless people emerge from the shelters and subway tunnels and start spending all day and night on the street. By May, temperatures become positively balmy, reaching into the high teens Celsius (the 60s Fahrenheit) as trees and plants start to bloom. Many people believe that New Jersey in general, and LeMastre Park in particular, are most beautiful at this time of year.

The summer months feature temperatures suitable for swimming and outdoor activities — July and August have average temperatures in the mid-to-high 20s Celsius (high 70s-low 80s Fahrenheit). Hudsonites take advantage of the pleasant weather to walk, bike, visit the parks, or just sit around on stoops and streetcorners. Tourist attractions and local “hot spots” often experience their largest number of visitors during these months.

As fall rolls around and the leaves start to change color, the average temperatures drop pretty quickly, with the daily high dipping into the low 20s and high teens Celsius (70s and 60s Fahrenheit). The first snows may fall in October, but November or December are more likely most years. At this point, most Hudsonites stop spending time outside, preferring to stay indoors where it’s warm. Museums, nightclubs, and other such attractions often do good business at this time, and shopping picks up as the year proceeds on to Christmas and New Year’s Eve.

EXTREME WEATHER

Hudson City’s got it pretty good compared to many other cities — it doesn’t suffer from earthquakes, hurricanes, or tornadoes. But extreme weather makes itself felt from time to time. The most common major weather problem is blizzards. Hudson City gets snow every year, but once every three or four years it gets socked in by a *big* snowstorm, usually with an accompanying ice storm before or after (or both). The city tries to keep the roads plowed, and the subways and railways still run, but a major storm tends to shut down much of the city for at least a day or two.

In the spring and summer, Hudson City sometimes gets hit with large, violent storms from off the Atlantic. These cause flooding in some areas, and various other minor problems, but they’re rarely any significant concern.

UNDERGROUND

Most Hudsonites, much less most visitors, don’t ever give much thought to the world beneath their feet. But the truth is that there’s often as much going on underneath the mean streets of the big city as there is on top of them.

In most parts of Hudson City, the underground is like a gigantic layered cake. On the very top lies the part most people know about: a three-inch deep strip of asphalt pavement. Underneath that is about ten inches of coarse concrete on top of soil; the soil soaks up all sorts of waste liquids and chemicals that leak down from the streets above. One to three inches below that layer of soil is more earth, and that’s where wires and cables are laid close to the curbline: telephone lines; power lines; cable television lines; burglar and fire alarm lines; streetlight power feeds. A foot below that come natural gas pipelines, three feet below them are the water mains, and two feet below the water mains come steam pipes (though many of those are no longer in use, since electrical heating has replaced steam heating in many places).

Next come the sewer pipes, whose depth varies from place to place so the engineers can angle them to direct the flow of sewage. However, in most cases, the sewer lines (both the lines now in use, such as depicted by the map on page 22, and earlier, now abandoned, lines) are above the tops of the subway tunnels, which are usually from about eight to 180 feet (1.25-28”) below the surface. Even further below, from 200-800 feet (31-123”), are the water tunnels that bring water to the city from distant reservoirs (see page 23).

The Hudson City Underground

One underground feature most Hudsonites *do* know about is the Hudson City Underground, a roughly five block by five block underground complex beneath Governmental Plaza and the intersection of 3rd Avenue and North Madison. Subway engineers discovered the area — an entire section of the city apparently buried and built over after the Independence Day Fire — when they ran the subway line underneath Governmental Center. For

years it was just a curiosity, but in the late Seventies a clever entrepreneur named Brad Quinn sold the city of the idea on turning it into an attraction.

Several years and many millions of dollars later, the Hudson City Underground opened. Featuring dozens of shops (ranging from chain stores like Barcelona Shoes to trendy, cutting-edge local stores such as Venus [a woman's clothing store] and Ashanti [African art and cultural items]), restaurants, and nightclubs, it quickly became popular with both natives and tourists. Today it's every bit as busy, and Quinn's become a wealthy man. Every week thousands of Hudsonites head "down to the Underground" to eat delicious German food at Deitrich's, grab a cup of coffee at the local Voodoo Bean, dance the night away at the Cellar or Retro-Active, or have a drink at Mako's.

THE SEWERS

"Yeah, I see 'em down here all the time — some of 'em as big as rabbits, swartaGod. Just ask some'a the other guys if you don't believe me. The big-brains down at headquarters say they'll always run from my light and I shouldn't worry about it, but don't none'a them come down here. I keep askin' permission to carry a pistol, but they won't let me.

"The rats ain't the worst, really. I've run into all kinds of things down here — snakes, snapping turtles, even a couple things I'm pretty sure were alligators. All those stories about gators in the sewers ain't just urban myths. Hell, there were some kids that pulled an adult gator out of the sewers way back sometime in the Thirties — you can look it up, it was in the papers."

—Sanitation Engineer Pete Grummond

The Hudson City Sanitation Commission maintains hundreds of miles of sewer and storm-water lines throughout the city. In addition to the standard lines that run along the streets at a depth of around eight to twelve feet (1.25-2") below the surface, larger intercepting sewer lines collect the runoff and channel it to one of the dozen sewage treatment plants located around the city. (See the map on page 17.) Some treated sewage is disposed of, some sold as fertilizer or for other purposes. Typically sewer lines are constructed so that they slope just enough for gravity to do the work of moving the liquid through them at a speed of at least two feet per second, but in a few places the city has installed pumps or other devices to keep the system working smoothly. And it does work well; despite the city's coastal location, it rarely suffers any flooding.

In addition to sewer lines currently in use, there are miles of much older, now abandoned lines hidden beneath the surface and rarely indicated on any map. Some have become residences for animals or homeless people, others serve as lairs for criminals or vigilantes, but most simply remain sealed up and ignored.

EVERYONE'S LITTLE FRIENDS

You're never alone in Hudson City. Even if you don't know anyone, the rats and roaches will keep you company.

Rats

Everyone agrees Hudson City has a serious rat problem — but no one can agree on the exact extent of that problem. Estimates of the number of rats in the city range from about 250,000 to 75 million (*i.e.*, approximately a dozen rats per person in the working population). Most experts favor numbers on the lower end of the scale; bureaucrats looking to increase their rat control budgets and reporters prefer to emphasize the larger numbers. In just one year, a female rat can produce 285 more rats, who're out on their own within a few weeks, hitting the town looking for a good time.

The typical Hudson City rat is *rattus norvegicus* — the Norway rat. Although more than a few sanitation workers and residents have reported seeing rats as large as rabbits or housecats, biologists claim the Norway rat doesn't get heavier than about a pound, and about a foot in length. This is in spite of the fact that they'll eat all sorts of things humans wouldn't consider "food," such as soap and leather. The little varmints can chew through almost anything, including masonry and concrete.

Periodically stories surface in the news of rats biting babies, small children, and even adults. However, the main danger from rats is the diseases they can carry, such as leptospirosis, hantavirus, and the plague.

In an effort to combat the rat problem, the city has budgeted a total of \$12 million for pest control for fiscal 2004. No one seems to have told the rats, who've gone right on eating and multiplying. Civil rights activist Rev. James Pick has suggested that rather than throwing the money down a rat hole, the city ought to just give every resident of the city six bucks and call it a day — at least that way folks would be getting some good out of the expenditure.

Roaches

As far as most people are concerned, the rats are downright cuddly compared to the roaches. No one's even tried to estimate how many the city contains, but one thing's for sure — a species that's remained essentially unchanged for 300 million years knows how to survive and thrive.

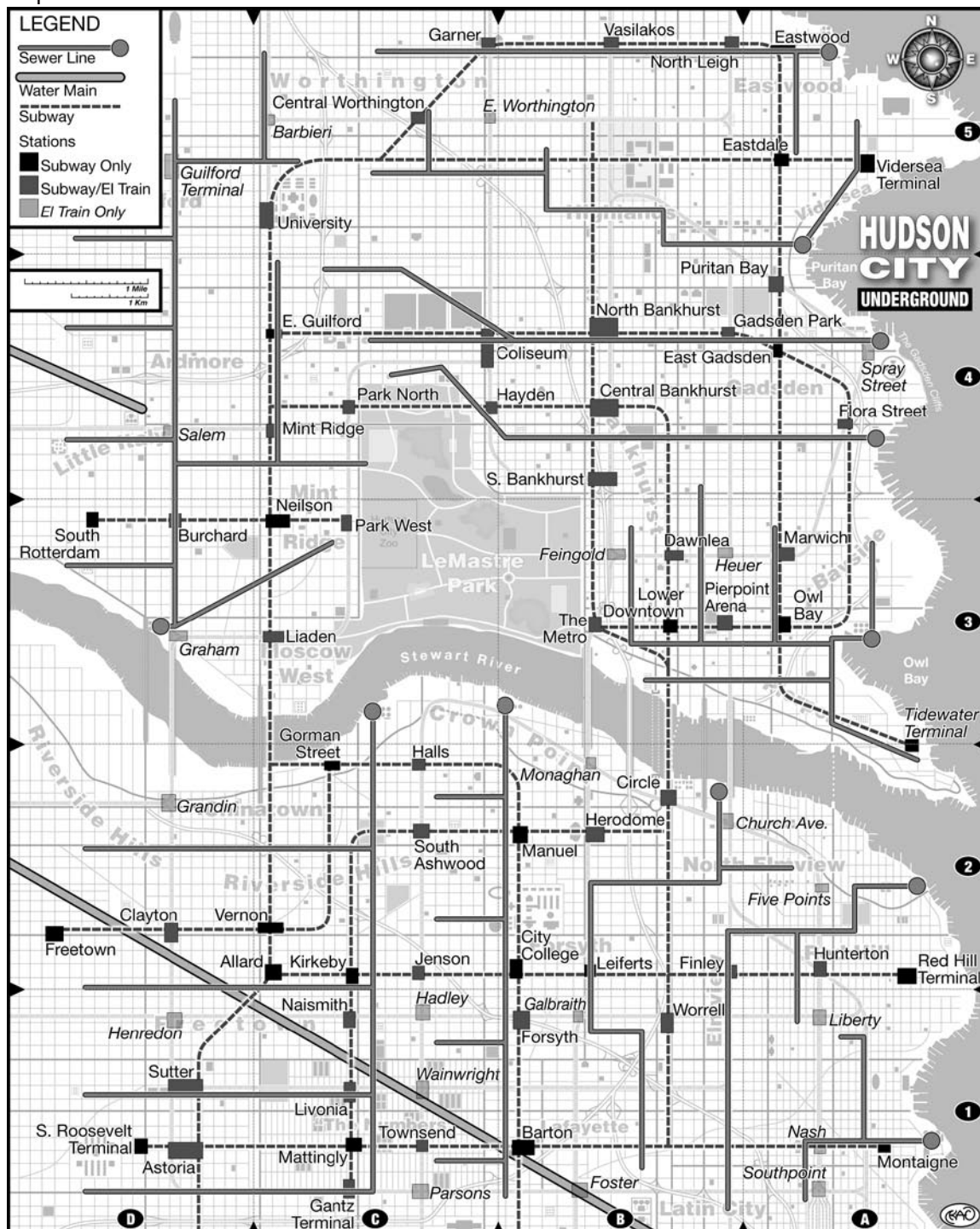
Most Hudson City roaches are German cockroaches — light brown with two distinctive stripes. At less than half an inch long, they're much smaller than the American cockroach, a reddish-brown bug up to two inches long that's rarer in the city... but not unheard of.

Roaches are surprisingly fastidious — it's their constant cleaning of themselves that allows humans to poison them (the roaches lick roach powder off their feet and legs and thus die). However, they can spread disease, trigger allergies and asthma, and cause other health problems.

Hudson City has no budget to speak of for roach control, other than various programs the Health and Human Services Division maintains to educate the public in how to get rid of the little buggers. The city leaves it up to each citizen to control his own roach problem.

Continued from last page

Down here, we all respect one another's privacy; you don't even talk to another delver if you meet him underground unless you already know each other."



UTILITIES

Utilities are another side of the city few people think about — until they break down, of course. But power and water are the lifeblood of the city, and the phone lines its voice. Without them the city would quickly grind to a halt.

PHONE SERVICE

While the rise in importance of the cellular phone over the past decade has reduced the city's dependence on old-fashioned telephone lines, they're still a significant part of city services — after all, far more calls are made on normal phone lines than with cell phones. All the major phone companies provide service to Hudson City. The largest by far is Hudson City Bell, which has its main office on South River Drive in Crown Point. It's even got its own small stop on the commuter rail system to make getting to work easier for the five thousand employees who work there. Hudson Bell's distinctive blue and gold-striped vans fan out across the city every day to install new lines, repair damaged lines, and fix problems people have with their phone service.

POWER

Hudson City's supply of electricity comes courtesy of Hudson City Light & Power, a company founded over a hundred years ago to bring the advantages of the discoveries of Edison, Steinmetz, and Stanley to Hudsonites. HCL&P owns and operates twenty main power generating stations throughout the city, and also buys power from regional nuclear and hydroelectric power sources.

HCL&P's main office in Bayside is the nerve center of the city's power grid. The computers there constantly adjust the flow of power throughout the city to ensure that everyone has the electricity he needs and power outages are kept to a minimum. The company updated much of its equipment throughout the Nineties, thus making blackouts (such as those that occurred in 1966, 1981, and 1989) and brownouts much less frequent than they used to be.

WASTE DISPOSAL

Solid waste disposal in Hudson City involves two distinct operations. The first is the Waste Removal Division of the city's Sanitation Commission (page 96). Waste Removal provides garbage pickup services for all residences within the city limits. It operates a fleet of green and grey garbage trucks; the trucks are a common sight throughout the city. It collects recyclables and non-recyclables separately in most neighborhoods.

Businesses can't take advantage of Waste Removal's services. They rely on privately contracted garbage services, such as Stewart Waste Dis-

posal, McGantry Trash Removal, and Ferghetti & Sons. The private waste removal industry is widely considered to be dominated by the Mafia (particularly the Veronese, Scatucci, and Morelli families). Several prominent prosecutions have shown just how true this is, but also seem to have done little to alleviate the problem. For example, in 1999, James Stefonelli, an Elmview entrepreneur who had started up a new waste removal company, was founded murdered and stuffed into one of his own dumpsters. The police have never made an arrest in the case, but everyone knows it was the Mafia's way of saying "back off."

The Hudson City Landfill

Both public and private waste removal companies cart non-recyclable garbage to the Hudson City Landfill, a facility located south of the suburb of Hamilton. Built in the late Seventies and popularly known as "the Dump," the Landfill covers hundreds of acres and takes in tons of new trash every day. Although currently operated according to EPA standards, for years it leaked wastewater and other pollutants into the nearby water table and was a breeding ground for rats, feral dogs, and other creatures.

WATER

In the early years of Hudson City, Hudsonites got their water directly from the Stewart River, from local streams and ponds, and from wells. (Some of these streams and small ponds remain today under the surface, having long ago been paved over.) It didn't take long before the population grew beyond those sources' ability to keep people supplied with water; additionally, advances in public health toward the end of the nineteenth century indicated that clean water was a key element in preventing outbreaks of diseases like cholera and dysentery.

With that in mind, the city launched projects to build two large reservoirs far to the west — the Kilkipsee and the Chatataqua. Large aqueducts bring the water from them toward the city into storage reservoirs. Tunnels buried as much as 800 feet below the surface run from the storage reservoirs into the city to large waterworks: the South Pumping Station and West 16th Pumping Station, both run by the Hudson City Water Department. These stations bring the water up riser shafts to water mains located about four feet beneath the surface. The mains, which range from six foot (1") wide trunk mains to pipes small enough to serve a single house or building, distribute the water to all the houses and businesses of Hudson City. Where necessary, the Water Department has additional pumping stations and stand pipes to move water to higher points in the city, maintain the pressure in the fire hydrant system, and so forth.

SIDE-LOADER GARBAGE TRUCK

6 Size	50 STR
8 DEX	20 BODY
6 DEF	2 SPD

Abilities: Ground Movement 8" (Limited Maneuverability), Extra Limb (hydraulic "arm" for picking up garbage cans).

HUDSON CITY AREA CODES

The following are the area codes for Hudson City, by region:

Area Code Region

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 221 | Irishtown, Guilford, Ardmore, Worthington |
| 377 | Eastwood, Highlands, Bankhurst, Gadsden, Bayside |
| 550 | Little Italy, Mint Ridge, Moscow West, Blackbridge |
| 655 | Chinatown, Crown Point, Riverside Hills (western third) |
| 722 | Freetown (western half), Riverside Hills (eastern two-thirds) |
| 874 | Freetown (eastern half), Lafayette, Forsyth |
| 960 | Latin City, Elmview, Red Hill, North Elmview |

Street slang often uses these numbers to refer to particular areas. For example, Freetown gangstas might talk about going into "the 655" or "the 960" to sell drugs.

GETTING AROUND



ANOTHER AIRPORT?

For years, the Hudson City Council has talked about the possibility of building another airport in the area — even with three already, it's dangerously crowded as far as air traffic goes, and the existing airports aren't exactly state of the art when it comes to air traffic control systems and facilities. The tentative plan that's been floated for years involves a major new international airport to be built outside of Benton County — but countless problems have arisen even though not so much as a spadeful of earth has been moved. Local residents have mounted a strong “not in my backyard” campaign, citing noise, pollution, and traffic issues. Allegations that developers who own land in that area have already paid kickbacks to local politicians have surfaced in some papers, particularly the *Agenda*, but so far there hasn't been so much as a grand jury convened to look into the matter.

“Spend a few hours watching the subway crowd come and go, and you'll get the truest picture I know of life in Hudson City. Everyone rides the subway: poor single mothers with their kids in tow; bankers with their overcoats and briefcases; construction workers; gang kids; shop owners; everyone. It's an amazing hodgepodge.

“I wish I still dared to ride them. I gave it up a few years ago, long after most of my friends had quit — the crime finally got to be too much, even for me. The final straw was when I was down at Manuel Station waiting for a train. These two kids, rival gang members I guess, got into a fight. One of them stabbed the other and then ran, slashing three other people in his frenzy to escape. I watched the injured boy die right there on the platform before medical help could reach him. I can still see how the blood pooled near him, then spread out through the spaces between the tiles like a scarlet grid. I've never been able to get that image out of my mind.”

— City News columnist Bryan Eagen

Hudson City is a big place — eighty square miles — and it's got upwards of six million people moving through it on any given day. Here's how they get to the city, get around in it while they're there, and if necessary depart.

Air Travel

Three primary airports serve Hudson City: Aberdeen International; Hudson City International; and Sabine County.

ABERDEEN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Located north of the city in Morgan County, James Aberdeen International Airport (ABN) is one of the world's largest and busiest airports. Covering nearly 5,000 acres of land, it sends flights to or receives them from over 100 nations around the world. It handles around 24,000 flights per month (about 800 per day), has nearly 15,000 parking spaces, and employs approximately thirty thousand people. The ABN cargo area covers over 300 acres and services over fifty cargo-only airlines and other carriers. The truly amazing thing about this vast logistical morass is that it manages to keep doing its job, day after day, with a pretty high degree of efficiency.

But that's not to say Aberdeen International doesn't have its problems. It's crowded. Its security processes could stand some beefing up. Organized crime groups, particularly the Mafia, steal from

the cargo area and nearby trucking companies on a regular basis, sometimes netting goods worth millions. Allegations of bribery and corruption relating to airport work contracts and other matters surface every year, as do accusations about organized crime's influence over various airport-related unions. While most passengers only see the bright, shiny facade, the truth is that behind the scenes there's a lot of shady stuff going on.

The Customs Service employees at Aberdeen are generally efficient and courteous. Their chief, Paul T. Wilson, runs a tight ship and doesn't tolerate corruption. Still, no system is perfect: the DEA has made several major seizures of drugs at Aberdeen, and there's a rumor that two years ago the FBI barely intercepted a massive bomb that had been planted on a flight by the PLRL.

HUDSON CITY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

In the Sixties, the City Council realized air traffic was soon going to outstrip Aberdeen International's ability to handle it (or to build more runways and terminals). To ensure the city's continued economic prosperity, they voted funds to build a second major airport. With the assistance of the federal government and other institutions, Hudson City International (HCI) was begun in 1967, and finished in 1975. It's located outside Prince William County, along the Outer Beltline.

About forty percent the size of Aberdeen, and with about forty percent of the traffic, HCI handles many types of air travel that ABN has had to forego due to its size and complexity. Private jets, charter jet services, and parachutists are all far more likely to fly out of HCI than Aberdeen, and it has more facilities for helicopter landings and consumer-owned planes as well.

SABINE COUNTY AIRPORT

The only major airport on the south side of the city, Sabine County (SCY) is to HCI as HCI is to Aberdeen. It only flies domestically, and cannot handle the larger jets.

HELICOPTERS

For better or worse, the optimistic predictions in all those 1950s magazine articles describing the helicopter as “the personal automobile of the future!” or “the taxi of tomorrow!” have not come to pass. Nevertheless, Hudson City has a significant amount of helicopter traffic. Many top-dollar executives, not to mention news stations and the police, use them to get around the city without having to put up with the bother of traffic; many of the buildings in Bankhurst, Highlands, and east Worthington have helipads on top.

Ground Vehicles

Hudson City has thousands of miles of paved roads and streets... and more traffic problems than you can shake a stick at. Despite numerous methods of mass transit, thousands of taxis, countless police officers assigned to traffic duty, approximately 2,000 traffic enforcement agents who write about six million parking tickets a year, and some of the most advanced traffic control systems in the world, slowdowns, traffic jams, and gridlock are inescapable facts of life in the Pearl City.

AUTOMOBILES

According to Transportation Commission statistics, approximately 750,000 cars, trucks, and other privately-owned motorized ground vehicles traverse the streets of Hudson City every day, covering roughly 60 million vehicle-miles. During peak times ("rush hour"), traffic often slows to a crawl of as little as 2.5 miles per hour; at other times it ranges from nine to fifteen miles per hour depending where you are in the city and which roads you use. Some radical thinkers have proposed outlawing or restricting the use of private vehicles in some or all parts of the city, but so far Hudsonites would rather put up with traffic problems than abandon their cars.

Parking Fees

The fee to park a car in Hudson City varies tremendously based on the location and quality of the parking. Hourly rates range from about \$2 to \$6 — the better the location or greater the demand for parking, the higher the fee. Daily rates are calculated from the hourly rate, but with an overall discount for "volume." Monthly parking fees start at about \$200 per month and can go up well above \$1,000 for the poshest areas and highest security.

BUSES

The Bus Division of the Transportation Commission maintains a fleet of about five thousand buses, most of which entered service within the past dozen years. As of 2004, these buses cover approximately 250 local and 40 express routes throughout the city, and carry over two million passengers every day (approximately 750 million per year). There are over 13,500 bus stops throughout the city.

It costs \$2.00 to ride a local bus, or \$4.00 for an express. The buses cannot accept paper money; passengers must pay with coins, pre-purchased tokens, or MetroPass Cards. Passengers who pay with cash or tokens may obtain a transfer pass to another bus that's good for one hour from the time of issuance.

TAXIS

Most people who live in Hudson City don't bother to own a car — it's too expensive and inconvenient when they have access to mass transportation. If necessary they can always hire one of the city's approximately 13,000 licensed taxicabs (plus several hundred more unlicensed taxis, known as "gypsy cabs"). As of 2004, the official basic rate for a taxi within the Hudson City limits is a \$2.50 initial charge, plus \$0.40 per one-fifth of a mile (or fraction thereof)

after that. If the cab's stuck in traffic, you pay \$0.40 per two minutes (or fraction thereof). Add a "night-time surcharge" of \$0.50 between the hours of 8:00 PM and 6:00 AM every day, and a "peak hour surcharge" of \$1.00 from 4:00 to 8:00 PM on weekdays. If you want to enter the city from Aberdeen International or other specific locations, there's a flat fee set by the Taxi Commission. Some taxi companies add a surcharge for going to certain parts of the city (such as the Numbers or Lafayette), but this is illegal and grounds for revocation of the operator's taxi license.

The license to operate a taxi is known as a "medallion." Wealthy individuals or taxi companies own most medallions and lease them to individual taxi drivers, but some drivers put up the money to buy their own license. As need demands, the city auctions off new medallions, usually in lots of 100 per auction. The average price of a medallion in the early twenty-first century is \$300,000-350,000.

The two largest taxicab companies in Hudson City are the Golden Cab Company (which has the usual distinctive yellow cabs) and the Irish Cab Company (whose cabs are kelly green), but there are many smaller companies: Hudson Yellow Cab; Bankhurst Cab & Limo; Sun Cab; and more.

LIMOUSINES

In Hudson City mass transit parlance, "limousine" doesn't necessarily refer to the long, luxurious vehicle of the same name — it can mean any for-hire ground vehicle other than a taxi. For example, a shuttle van service from Aberdeen International to hotels in the city could describe itself as a "limousine service." Similarly, many limousine companies provide regular length luxury cars, SUVs, civilian Humvees, and other vehicles besides stretch limos. However, if you do want to rent an actual stretch limousine for some event, or just because you're made of money and don't want to ride in a malodorous cab with a driver who can barely speak English, the rates range from about \$30 to \$300 per hour. The exact cost depends on the type of vehicle, how long you want to reserve it for, and where you want to go.

Commuter Railways

The earliest form of mass transit used in Hudson City was railways, and they remain in use today — albeit in somewhat different form than during the Age of Steam.

ELEVATED RAILWAYS

Despite the rise of subways, buses, and other ways to move lots of people around the city quickly, Hudson City maintains its network of elevated railways (ELs). They're so called because they're typically raised 15 to 20 feet (2-3") above the ground on metal trestle arches, though in some places they come down to earth for short stretches. Sometimes they run directly along a street (so that drivers on that street drive directly under the tracks); in other places they crisscross the grid of roadways. A ride on the EL typically costs \$1.75 for a local, or \$3.50 for an express; one transfer to another train is allowed within one hour of disembarkation.

THE METROPASS CARD

In the early Nineties, the Hudson City Transportation Commission introduced the MetroPass Card — a cardstock or plastic card that allows commuters to pay for multiple rides at once to save money and time. Additionally, a commuter using a MetroPass Card may transfer from any type of mass transit (bus, subway, or elevated railway) to another within one hour of his last ride for no additional charge. (Persons paying in cash or tokens can only transfer within the same type of transportation.)

MetroPass Cards are available in per-ride and "unlimited" use versions. Per-ride allows a commuter to pre-pay for \$5-100 worth of rides in advance, with each ride being deducted from his Card as he passes it through the reader at various stations or on buses. The unlimited pass involves a daily, weekly, monthly, or annual fee (ranging from \$7 to \$500, depending on duration), but during the time period for which the card is valid the user can ride as many types of mass transit as often as he likes. However, MetroPass Cards are not valid after midnight.

MetroPass Cards are available from kiosks in train and subway stations, and from various private vendors.

LOUIE FEINGOLD

10	STR	11	DEX
10	CON	8	BODY
8	INT	8	EGO
13	PRE	8	COM
3	PD	2	ED
2	SPD	4	REC
20	END	18	STUN

Abilities: +1 PER with Sight Group; +10 Presence, Only To Protect Against Presence Attacks; Combat Driving 11-; CK: Hudson City 16-; KS: Hudson City Gossip 14-; Mechanics 8-; Shadowing 11-; Streetwise 12-; Fringe Benefit: License To Operate A Taxicab

25+ Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Loves To Talk; Rivalry (Professional, with competing cabbie or cab company)

Notes: One of few native-born, native English speaking cabbies left in Hudson City, Louie Feingold is one of those taxi drivers who seems to know every person and place in town. He can take you to the most obscure addresses as easily as he can to Courthouse Plaza or the Berkely Commercial Complex. However, he'll probably talk your ear off on the way, because he just can't seem to shut up — he can yak for hours on almost any subject, even those he doesn't know anything about.

The Unified Rapid Transit System

Rather than abandon the city's EL system with the advent of electrically-powered trains in the early twentieth century, the Hudson City Transportation Commission chose a bold and daring course of action that many at the time derided as foolish, but which modern commuters bless it for. It "unified" the EL and subway systems, making both function in largely the same fashion with the same types of tracks. Thus, a subway car can operate on an EL track, and vice-versa, if necessary. At a few points in the system, a subway line even rises from below the ground to merge with an EL line, or an EL line goes underground and becomes a subway tunnel. For the most part, the Transportation Commission prefers to keep subway cars in the subways, and EL cars on the EL, but the ability of the two systems to work together has saved the city tens of millions of dollars over the decades and made commuting even easier for Hudsonites.

The map on page 22 shows the major lines of the Unified Rapid Transit System (URTS), as well as the major stations. It doesn't indicate minor lines (such as the maintenance lines), lines beyond the city limits, various maintenance yards and related facilities, or the like.

THE HUDSON CITY SUBWAY

In the early 1900s, Hudson City entered the world of modern mass transportation by building its first subway lines running from Bankhurst to Worthington. In the ensuing century, the system has expanded to include dozens of miles of track, over 600 individual subway cars, and numerous stations. It transports approximately three million passengers daily.

The Hudson City Rapid Transit Division (HCRTD) of the Transportation Commission sets the fares and establishes other regulations for the subway (and for the EL). Currently it costs \$2.00 to ride the subway; one transfer to another subway train is allowed within one hour of disembarkation. Service is "restricted" between midnight and 5:00 AM, meaning that not all lines run (or run less frequently).

Other Modes Of Transportation

Cars and mass transit aren't the only ways to get around Hudson City.

BICYCLES

A lot of Hudsonites prefer bikes to cars: they're quieter, cost less to buy and maintain, don't pollute, are easily stored in an apartment, provide a means of exercising, and can go places a car can't. During rush hour, biking through the busy areas of the city is usually quicker, too. The city provides bike paths in LeMastre Park and other parks for recreational bicycling away from city traffic.

The most avid proponents of bicycles-as-transport are the city's four thousand bike messengers. These hard-charging, often iconoclastic young people bike all around the city to deliver documents and other small objects with a speed cars can't rival. Even in this day and age, some things are better transported in person than via computer and phone lines. The city's premiere messenger service is Flash Messenger, run by crazed bodybuilder Dominic Lawrence — but it has plenty of competitors such as Mercury Delivery Service, Hudson Messengers, and Rapid Wheels.

FERRIES

During the early days of the city, ferries were the most common way to cross the Stewart River, and over a dozen ferry services existed. Today, with the advent of bridges and the Centre Street Tunnel, there are easier ways to get across, and only two ferry services — the Hudson City Ferry (which runs between Ferry Street and Centre Street) and the Monroe Street Ferry (which runs between the two halves of Monroe Street) — exist. Both are operated by private companies under a license from the city, and function more or less identically. Ferry ships leave each dock (north and south) on the hour (Hudson City Ferry) or half hour (Monroe Street Ferry). Each ship can carry up to four dozen mid-sized automobiles and takes approximately 10-15 minutes to complete the crossing. Riding either ferry costs \$10 if you have a car, and \$5 for passengers only.

Water Taxis

A few water taxis operate in Hudson City, carrying passengers from various dockside embarkation points to other places along the waterfront. The taxis resemble either large speedboats or small ferries, depending on the service used, and typically charge \$5 to \$20 per passenger. Monthly passes are available for frequent commuters.

WALKING

Walking isn't a good way to go from one side of the city to the other, but for shorter distances — such as within a given neighborhood — it's often a viable alternative to driving or taking the bus, particularly during rush hour. But on the major streets, the sidewalks sometimes seem as crowded as the roads.

The Metro

The nerve center of Hudson City's mass transit system is the Metropolitan Transportation Building, a ten-story structure located at 24th Avenue and N. Madison Street and better known simply as "the Metro." Primarily the Metro serves as the headquarters for the Transportation Commission (page 96) and its various divisions, but the lower two stories and the underground portions of the building are a vast mass transit depot. Buses, railways, and the subway all stop here, and it's the standard destination for commuter bus services coming into the city from elsewhere. As such, it's a hunting ground for "chicken hawks" — pimps and other scum looking to lure run-aways into lives of prostitution and virtual slavery.

ARDMORE



"I grew up in Ardmore, and I have to say I think it's pretty much the best damn place in the entire city. When I was growing up, it was great. Us kids could run around all over the place without our moms worrying too much, we went trick-or-treating from building to building, and the park was just a long walk away. OK, I probably wouldn't let my kids trick-or-treat there anymore, but I wouldn't let them do that anywhere in the city, except maybe Irish-town, and those guys won't even let you in. But the streets are pretty clean, there isn't much of a gang problem, and prices aren't too bad.

"The housing kinda sucks, though. All the best places have been bought up by yuppies, so a guy like me can't afford to get a place, much less a place big enough for a family."

—Michael Keene, assistant manager of electronics, Boudreau's Department Store

In the late 1950s, after Kurtland Boulevard was completed, the relatively sparsely inhabited area between Little Italy and Guilford — Ardmore, a name taken from that of an early settler who once had a cabin in the area — suddenly became popular among developers. Brownstone apartments, townhouses, condominiums, and even some detached housing sprang up in the shadow of the expressway. Where residential construction wasn't appropriate, the developers built blocks of low-rise office buildings, shops, and other commercial structures.

Ardmore quickly became popular with young professionals, families with children, and senior citizens. Though it lacked a park or major entertainment facilities of its own, it was only about a mile west of the northern tip of LeMastre Park, and a mile east of the Stewart County Stadium. Coupled with the decent reputation of the local schools, those features made Ardmore attractive to many Hudsonites.

Today, most Hudsonites define Ardmore as the neighborhood bounded by N. Roosevelt, N. Harrison, 12th Avenue, and 16th Avenue. It's regarded as one of the safer, more pleasant neighborhoods in Hudson City, partly because of its proximity to Guilford and Irishtown, and partly due to the influence of the Mafia families of nearby Little Italy (many of whom are said to provide "protection services" in this region of the city). Kurtland Boulevard provides easy access to the suburbs and some other parts of the city (though some residents complain that there's no local subway station), and the neighborhood ambience has fostered the growth of many highly-regarded small restaurants and businesses. (And people who can't find something they

like to eat have only to cross 16th to go to Little Italy, where fine restaurants abound.)

Ardmore in the Sixties and Seventies was mostly a family place, but that's changed over the past 25 years. Young professionals, taken in by the neighborhood's charm and low crime rate, have moved in and bought up buildings, sometimes renovating them so they could turn around and resell them for a hefty profit. Longtime residents don't like it, or the rash of clubs and yuppie-oriented stores that have sprung up, but there's nothing they can do about it, so they just sigh, shake their heads, and go on about their business.

SHOPPING

Hudsonites who want to spend their money at some place other than just another Durango Denim or Fast Forward Music 'n' Video might want to try these places:

Frank's News & Books (7853 16th Avenue): Bibliophiles looking for the sorts of books they won't find at chain stores like Darius Books might want to give Frank's News & Books a try. It's mostly a newsstand, with magazines and newspapers from all over the country (including more than a few "fringe" magazines and other weirdness). But the owner, Frank Wells, is a well-read man with interests as broad and deep as the Atlantic Ocean, so he also stocks unusual books that relate to one of his "subjects" (as he calls them). They're not well-shelved — you might find a book on topology next to a couple on Atlantis, a history of London, and one of Shane Velloric's macabre novels, but Frank knows where everything is. Just ask him, and he can tell you what he's got in stock, and where to find it. He's well-known around Ardmore (even ran for City Council once) and always "up" on the latest local gossip.

Hudson City Numismatics (corner of 12th Avenue and Cleveland Street): Coin collectors from around the United States, and sometimes even around the world, do business with Hudson City Numismatics. Proprietor Dean Schnabel has one of the best selections of rare, antique, and desirable coins in the country, and knowledge of the subject to match. A crusty old man who refuses to change the name of his store despite all the calls he gets from people who think it's some sort of self-help program, he carries a pocketwatch and has a habit of fiddling with his good luck charm — a \$50 krugerrand — when he's nervous or lost in thought.

Timeout Sports (2744 Oak Avenue): Need a baseball glove for your kid? A stick for a game of street hockey? A pair of rollerblades? A ball so you can get an autograph at a Heroes game? Well, Timeout

IMAGES OF ARDMORE

Kids playing soccer in the shadow of Kurtland Boulevard

An old couple in sweaters on an early spring morning, walking their dog, holding hands as they go

Beautiful people out on the town, looking for something fun to do after a hard day's work

Mothers doing their grocery shopping, kids in tow

Sports is the place for you. It's got just about any type of sporting gear you can imagine, even for obscure sports like jai-alai and petanque, though it doesn't carry exercise equipment or anything else too large to store on a shelf. Timeout also has a big bulletin board where people who want to get involved in a team sport can hook up with leagues.

OUT ON THE TOWN

If you're looking for fun in Ardmore, check out these places:

Edelweiss (corner of Maple Avenue and Fontaine Street): Leonhard Schroeder came to the United States in 1968 with the dream of opening up his own restaurant. For years he worked in other restaurants, first as a waiter, then as sous-chef or assistant chef, and finally as head chef... but the dream never died. In 1994, he scraped together his savings, called in a few favors from friends and admirers, and left his job at Phoenix (page 32) to open Edelweiss. His restaurant has been a favorite with Hudsonites who like good German food ever since. Edelweiss specializes in Bavarian cuisine, but offers dishes from all over Germany and Austria, including a sublime weiner schnitzel. The portions are large, and the menu has dozens of selections, so it's no wonder people keep coming back.

The New York Deli (4326 N. Roosevelt Street): If you need a quick sandwich and a cream soda instead of a big German meal, stop by the New York Deli. Unimaginatively named by its unimaginative

owners, Marge and Jerry Ballantine, the NYD serves thick-piled sandwiches on home-baked bread, delicious pies, and the best potato salad this side of Manhattan. It's also got deli meats, salads, and other food to go for busy people who don't have time to cook dinner.

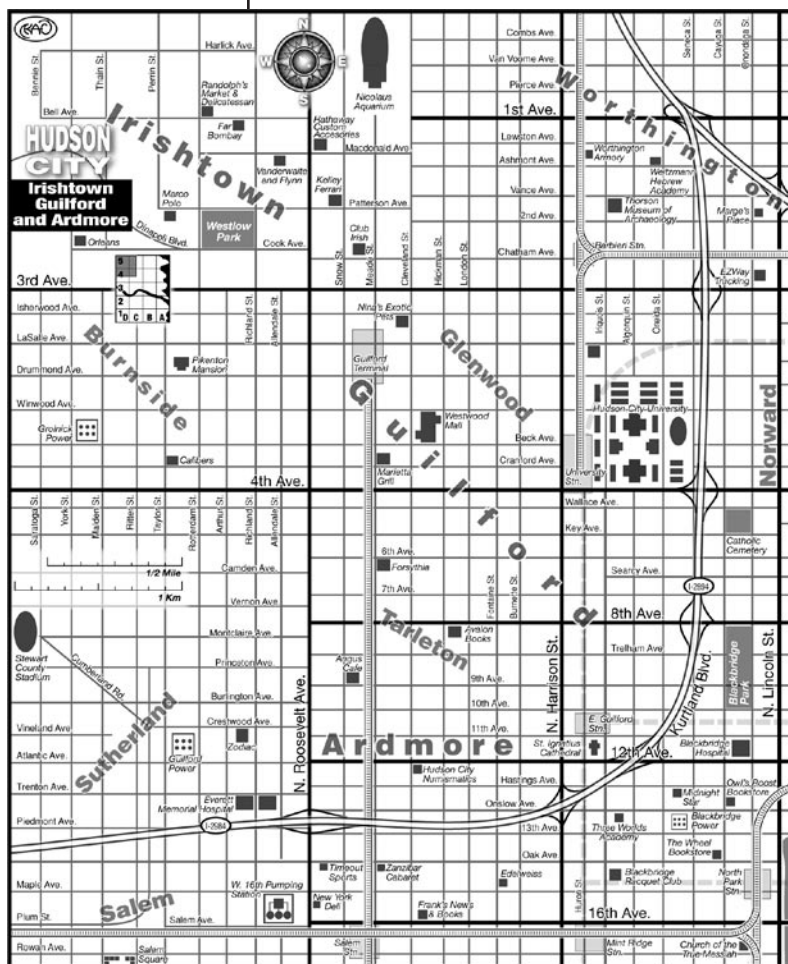
The Zanzibar Cabaret (2480 Oak Avenue): Joel Williams used to be a critically-acclaimed, but obscure, jazz musician, but the lack of fame and the rigors of the road eventually got to him. He "retired" to his hometown and opened up the Zanzibar Cabaret, a jazz club that often showcases up-and-coming new talent in the jazz world. It's the perfect place to spend an evening if you don't want to endure loud rock music or the latest Hollywood banality.

THE DAILY GRIND

Just about anywhere you go on the Northside, and even in some places on the Southside, you'll see them: distinctive dull orange and rich brown awnings, sometimes with matching chairs and small tables underneath. Above the awning is a logo sign, the three words of the store's title forming a circle around a steaming cup of coffee: THE DAILY GRIND.

Since being started in 1997 by Kansas entrepreneur and venture capitalist J. Branson Martin, the Daily Grind has rapidly expanded from an initial slate of 50 stores, mostly in the eastern Midwest and Northeast, to over 2,000 outlets nationwide. Every day tens of millions of Americans make the Daily Grind part of their routine, whether that means stopping by in the morning for a pick-me-up cup to get them through the first few hours of work, at lunch for a muffin and a cuppa, or in the afternoon for that final blast of caffeinated goodness they need to finish the day.

Hudson City has numerous Daily Grind franchises, nearly all of them owned by Ardmore businessman Randy Makepeace. A former stockbroker who decided to abandon the Dawnlea ratrace for something better, Makepeace got in on the ground floor when the Daily Grind started, and he's become one of the company's most important franchisees. On any given day, he usually spends at least an hour or two at one of his stores, watching how things go and often taking a turn behind the register for a few minutes — he's a hands-on kind of manager who wants to know what works, what doesn't, and what can be improved, not a paper-pusher who just likes to give orders.



BANKHURST



Tall, tanned, and impeccably dressed, he looked south from his office window on the sixtieth floor of the Berkely Complex — the first building he'd built with his name on it, but not the last. From this window alone he could see three other buildings he owned, and northward he'd be able to see at least as many. It's good to be the king, he thought half-jokingly to himself.

His reverie over, he turned back to his desk. It was a 200 year-old antique made from the timbers of a British ship sunk during the War of Independence, but as much as he loved it the papers on top of it held his attention more. If his sources down at Governmental Center were right, Hudson City was soon going to consider building another landfill — and the land described in these deeds was the most likely spot for it. With some detailed planning, a little bit of luck, and perhaps a few thousand dollars in bribes, he could turn a monumental profit on the property...

...assuming, of course, he could convince the old goat who owned the place to sell. That was going to take a little more effort, but he had a confidence borne of an almost unbroken string of business successes. No one said no to him for long.

— just another business day for Ben Berkely

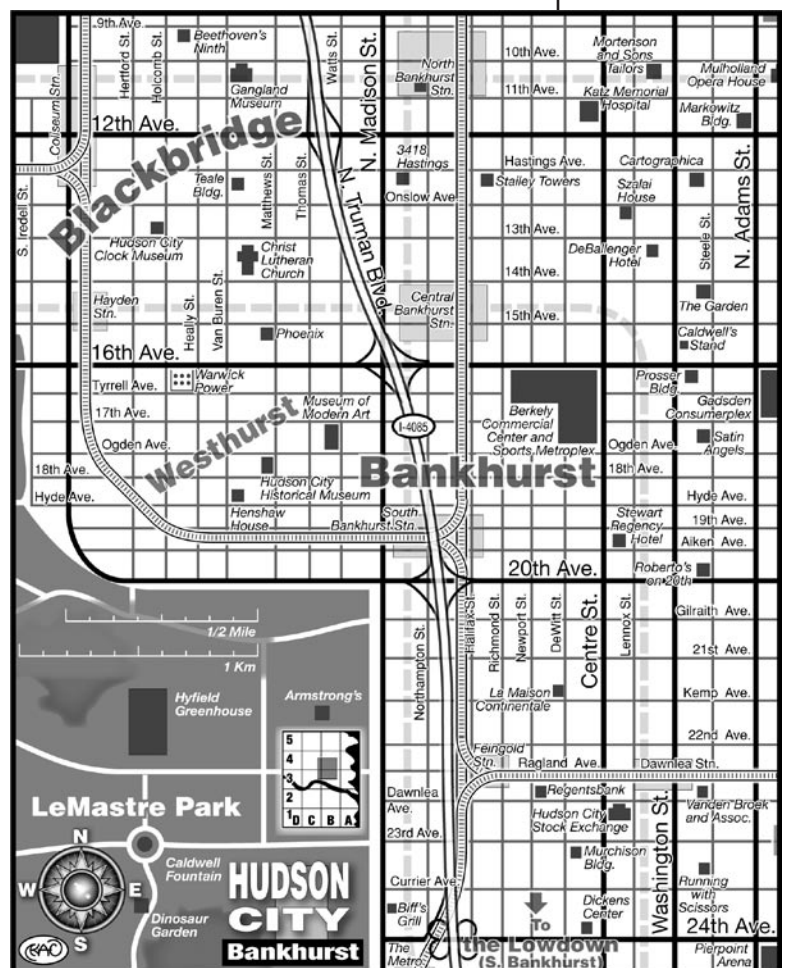
Bankhurst — the highly-developed corridor of office buildings, government offices, shops, and luxury apartments and condominiums running roughly between N. Adams Street and LeMastre Park from the river to around 9th Avenue or so — is the heart of the Northside, and one of the world's great centers of finance. Named for the Revolutionary War hero of the Battle of the Stewart River, who after the war had a farm not far from the Berkely Center, Bankhurst is a hustling, bustling place where the only thing taller than the skyscrapers are the egos of some of the people who work in them.

In the nineteenth century, Bankhurst, especially the part known as Westhurst, was as much a residential area as a place to do business. More than one tycoon or robber baron had a large urban mansion or fancy second house in Bankhurst within easy ride of his offices. Today, few of those houses survive, having been replaced by skyscrapers and office complexes as the land became more and more valuable. The most prominent of the survivors is the Crenshaw House, former home of industrialist Louis Crenshaw, which now serves as the headquarters of the Hudson City Historical Society.

Most people come to Bankhurst to work or to shop. It has relatively few residential buildings, and even the cheapest of those has rents in the many thousands of dollars per month. Only the extremely wealthy live here — and usually they're *nouveau riche* to boot, since old money prefers Irishtown. Only in Bankhurst would "rooftop helipad" be included in a real estate listing.

When Hudsonites refer to "downtown," they're talking about Bankhurst (particularly the northern part). Generally speaking, the offices, shops, and condominiums in Bankhurst tend to become bigger, more expensive, and more prestigious the further north one goes.

The enormous amount of money floating around Bankhurst means a high level of security as well; it's one of the safest parts of the city. The police are always around, and unfailingly polite — they know there's a good chance someone in Bankhurst is powerful enough to pick up the phone, call the Department, and get them fired if they're not completely professional and courteous.



DALTON BRUNNER

10	STR	12	DEX
12	CON	12	BODY
15	INT	12	EGO
15	PRE	8	COM
4	PD	3	ED
3	SPD	5	REC
28	END	25	STUN

Abilities: +1 with All Combat, Climbing 11-, Deduction 12-, KS: Berkely Center Personnel 14-, KS: Berkely Center Security Procedures 16-, Martial Arts (Jujutsu), Paramedics 12-, Security Systems 12-, Tactics 12-, WF: Small Arms, Contact (Ben Berkely), Contacts (various, in the U.S. Army), Fringe Benefit (Membership in Berkely commercial empire)

25+ Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Duty Above Everything, Social Limitation: Subject To Orders

Notes: Dalton Brunner, a twelve-year veteran of the United States Army who saw combat during Desert Storm, serves as the Head of Security for the Berkely Center. As such, he's responsible for all security matters pertaining to the Center, the Sports Metroplex, and the Berkely Grande. Responsibility like that would be too much for most people, but not "the Captain" (as his men call him) — he's always cool under pressure and looking for the quickest, easiest way to resolve the situation. He's so devoted to his duty that he's wrecked his marriage, but he views his job with the same sort of fervor he once reserved for military service.

Many police matters involving wealthy residents, like speeding or public drunkenness, get "hushed up" or dismissed with a warning instead of leading to arrests... but of course, bums and troublemakers who cause "disturbances" get arrested quicker than you can say "Fifth Amendment." Additionally, most buildings have their own security personnel, doormen, and other factotums who look out for the welfare of the locals. But even Bankhurst isn't 100% crime-free; some criminals, such as the Black Tarantula or Prospero, see the wealth-filled high-rises as tempting targets.

DAWNLEA

Bankhurst is the financial center of Hudson City, and indeed an important center of the world economy due to the trillions of dollars that flow through its banks, brokerages, and exchange houses every year. Analysts and investors who talk about this often refer to "Dawnlea" the same way they'd say "Wall Street." Dawnlea isn't a neighborhood, but an avenue that runs right through Bankhurst. Among the buildings lining it are the Hudson City Stock Exchange (see below), the Regentsbank headquarters, and the main North American offices of Vanden Broek and Associates, one of the largest investment firms in the world.

The Hudson City Stock Exchange

Located at the corner of Centre Street and Dawnlea Avenue, the Hudson City Stock Exchange (HCSE) is the center of Hudson City's financial district. Brokers, finance houses, and everyday people trade hundreds of millions of shares of stock here every day during a frenzied six-hour period (9:00 AM to 3:00 PM) of buying and selling. Anyone who wants to act as a broker on the floor of the Exchange must have a license, and the Exchange's Board of Governors strictly regulates the number of available licenses. Guided tours of the Exchange are given daily — one every two hours beginning at 10:00 in the morning.

THE LOWDOWN

"No no no, that wasn't the deal! We had an arrangement here, Sinclair, and you know it. I want those options back in the package immediately.

"Yeah? Well, !\$@ you too, you !\$@*%#@# @+@*sucker! I don't need your deal, and now I'm gonna go back to Knox Tweedham and we're going to put together a buyout that we're gonna shove so far up your ass that you'll be *%@!%#@# paper for a week!"*

— cell phone conversation overheard in the Lowdown

The southernmost part of Bankhurst (the part below Currier Avenue, roughly speaking) is known as Lower Downtown, or more commonly just "the Lowdown." Despite the poor connotations of the name, which was coined a few decades ago by snobbish residents of the "upper" part of Bankhurst, Lowdown is every bit as nice as the

rest of Bankhurst. Since it's nearer the river, it's got fewer tall office buildings and more small office complexes, shops, and even some manufacturing and industrial facilities. Though rents are high, competition for an apartment or condo here is fierce; places with a view of the river or LeMastre Park are particularly sought after.

Many people claim the best part of the Lowdown is Timothy Street, a road that was once little more than an alley. Over the past couple of decades developers have transformed it into a half-elegant, half-trendy/hip shopping area, almost like a pedestrian mall. Visit the Longino & Pierce art gallery for the latest selection from Hudson City's art community, stop by the Bagel Joint for some breakfast, or get a new suit at the local branch of Berghalter & Sneed!

WESTHURST

The westernmost part of Bankhurst — the part in the "bight" of LeMastre Park, bordered by N. Jackson Street and 20th and 16th Avenues — is usually referred to as "Westhurst." Although slightly more residential than the Lowdown or the main part of Bankhurst, with a tendency toward small, elegant brownstones painted cream or shades of tan, it's still primarily a business neighborhood. The buildings aren't quite as tall as they are to the immediate east, but they're just as filled with stockbrokers, lawyers, accountants, and businessmen of every variety.

LANDMARKS

Some of the most prominent buildings in Hudson City are in Bankhurst. They include:

The Berkely Commercial Center And Sports Metroplex

Located on the southwest corner of 16th and Centre, and dominating all of Bankhurst, is the Berkely Commercial Center and Sports Metroplex (sometimes known simply as "the BCC"). The brainchild of financier and developer Ben Berkely (page 119), and the crown jewel of his empire, the Commercial Center has some of the most prestigious (and expensive!) office space in the city. Its sixty floors contain some of Hudson City's largest and wealthiest brokerages, law firms, and real estate developers in addition to Berkely Enterprises... and his personal office takes up the entire sixtieth floor.

The Sports Metroplex portion of the complex is a 33,000-seat arena that's home to the Hudson City Cougars basketball team (page 114), of which Berkely is part owner. It also hosts conventions and other events in addition to sports matches.

The third part of the Commercial Center is the Berkely Grande Plaza Hotel, a 25-story luxury hotel where visiting basketball teams, well-heeled sports fans, and businessmen come to strike deals with the Center's residents often stay. While nowhere near as well-regarded as the Stewart Regency or the DeBaller, it's an excellent place to spend a few nights... assuming you can afford it.

The Murchison Building

Designed in the late 1920s by renowned architect Lemuel Perrault and built in the 1930s by stubborn industrialist Herbert “I’ll be damned if some stock market collapse is going to stop *me*” Murchison, the Murchison Building has a sort of “Art Deco” aesthetic to it that reminds some observers of the Chrysler Building in New York City. Murchison intended it as the headquarters for what he hoped would be his commercial empire, not knowing that both of his sons would die on the battlefields of World War II and that Murchison Industries would be broken up and sold off following his own death of a heart attack in 1947. Today it’s home to the offices of many important and powerful companies, but none bearing the name “Murchison.”

With its arch-like polished copper roof, the Murchison Building is a distinctive part of the lower Northside skyline. Nestled right underneath that roof is the Huntsman’s Club, a members-only club popular among wealthy businessmen who work in the building (or elsewhere in Bankhurst). Decorated in a “hunting lodge” theme (Murchison himself having been a skilled big game hunter), it’s often perceived as a “men’s club” even though it has plenty of female members. Membership is by invitation only, though a member can bring anyone he wants into the club as a guest.

Staley Towers

Built in the early 1980s, these two buildings have an unusual “nested” configuration. The larger (48 stories) and more northerly of them is vaguely crescent-shaped and seems almost to wrap or “embrace” the shorter (36 stories), square-shaped building (despite the fact that the two are separated by enough space that there’s no skywalk connecting them). The brainchild of architect Monroe Staley, the Towers have become associated with “trendy” up-and-coming companies, including many software firms with more money than sense. Many people think the Towers bring a touch of modern “hipness” to the otherwise stodgy Bankhurst neighborhood.

The Stewart Regency Hotel

Considered by many the most elegant hotel in Hudson City, the Stewart Regency at Centre Street and Aiken Avenue is a beautiful twenty-story edifice built nearly a hundred years ago in a classic Victorian style. Despite its age, it offers all the modern amenities one could hope for: high-speed and wireless modem connections throughout the building; in-room whirlpool baths; personal valets; and two five-star restaurants. Just a few blocks south of the Berkely Center and a few more southwest of the Gadsden Consumerplex, it’s perfectly located whether you’ve come to Hudson City on business, pleasure, or both.

SHOPPING

Got a lot of time to kill... and a *lot* of money to spend? Take a shopping trip to Bankhurst and visit some of these places:

Cartographica (2526 Hastings Avenue): Owned and operated by Melinda McKittrick, Cartographica sells maps, atlases, globes, and similar objects, both antique and modern. While most of the money comes in from hikers and other people buying the latest, most up-to-date maps available, McKittrick’s real love are the antique maps she sells, some of which are worth tens of thousands of dollars. The best of her stock adorn the walls, though they’re all for sale.

Elegancia (southeast corner of 25th Avenue and Richmond Street): Specializing in the most exclusive of designer fashions for women, Elegancia is a must-stop destination for wealthy young women, movie actresses, and others who insist on looking their absolute best no matter what the cost. Even people who can’t afford to shop at Elegancia often walk by to see its beautiful, elaborate windowfront displays.

Feinblum’s Jewelry (3957 25th Avenue): After buying a few frocks at Elegancia, a woman needs jewelry to go with them, doesn’t she? Fortunately, all she has to do is stroll half a block down the street to Feinblum’s, supplier of the finest in jewelry to discriminating clients for over 55 years. Abe Feinblum, the 90-something owner of the store, is well-known throughout the world of gems and jewelry; it’s said he can estimate the carat weight and value of a stone simply by holding it in his hand and looking at it closely.

Mortenson and Sons Tailors (southeast corner of 10th Avenue and Lennox Street): Men who refuse to buy “off the rack” — even at the most upscale of stores — turn to “Morrie” Mortenson and his four sons for the best in custom-tailored suits, tuxedos, and casual wear. A Mortenson original typically costs a minimum of three thousand dollars, but those who wear them swear it’s worth every penny. Morrie also has contacts with exclusive shoemakers in Italy and can provide footwear worthy of his suits.

OUT ON THE TOWN

Most of the nightlife in Bankhurst is stockbrokers, lawyers, and accountants unwinding after a hard day at work. Here are some of the places they go to relax:

Aces High (6863 Lennox Street): An inviting atmosphere, a festive crowd, and inexpensive drinks and appetizers bring in a crowd every night at Aces High, a nightclub in the Lowdown. It plays only soft music, making it much easier for the patrons to carry on a conversation, cut a deal over drinks, or maybe even ask someone out.

Biff’s Grill (5936 N. Madison Street): Biff’s, a Hudson City institution for nearly forty years, serves well-cooked American food in a restaurant decorated like a Fifties diner. The Biffburger has won the annual “Hudson City’s Best Hamburger” contest sponsored by the *Star-Gazette* three of the last six years.

IAN MCANDREWS

8	STR	10	DEX
10	CON	8	BODY
14	INT	12	EGO
16	PRE	12	COM
3	PD	3	ED
2	SPD	4	REC
20	END	19	STUN

Abilities: +1 Overall, Computer Programming 8-, Concealment 12-, Deduction 12-, Disguise 8-, Forgery (Documents) 8-, Gambling (Card Games) 12-, Lockpicking 8-, Security Systems 8-, Stealth 11-, Systems Operation 8-, Survival (Temperate) 8-, Contacts (40 points’ worth around the world), Fringe Benefit: Membership (the secret network of Hudson City concierges)

25+ Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Nothing Must Go Wrong!

Notes: Ian McAndrews is the head concierge at the Stewart Regency, and a fussier, more precise man you never met. He’s *determined* that every guest’s stay be trouble-free, and that anything a guest wants, a guest gets. He brooks little failure or tomfoolery among his staff, who regard him as a martinet, but to the guests he’s as friendly, pleasant, and accommodating as someone can be without becoming an ass-kisser. He’s part of a small group of concierges at elite Hudson City hotels who meet at Gadsden Park every morning to trade event tickets and find ways to help each other out.

IMAGES OF BANKHURST

Sunshine glittering
off glass and steel
skyscrapers

Well-dressed business-
men talking on their
cell phones as they walk
down the crowded
sidewalks

A constant stream
of traffic, half of it
yellow or green cabs,
heading up and down
Centre Street

A breeze whipped into
a strong wind as the
skyscraper cliffs chan-
nel it down the concrete
canyons of the streets

Stockbrokers pouring
out of the HCSE at noon
to grab some lunch

The wet concrete
smell of just-washed
streets after a rainstorm
or a streetsweeper
passes through

A cool half-million
in diamond necklaces
displayed in the show-
case window of a
jewelry store

The Garden (southwest corner of 14th Avenue and Steele Street): Fine food, lush music, and elegant decor combine to make the Garden a destination spot for those whose idea of entertainment runs more toward dining and dancing than ear-splitting rock music. Owned by Kenneth Riley, a movie buff inspired by the dance scenes in old black and white movies, the Garden harks back to the elegance of the Thirties and Forties.

Phoenix (southwest corner of 15th Avenue and Mathews Street): Phoenix is a restaurant for Hudsonites with discriminating palates and “an inclination toward gustatory experimentation,” as owner and head chef Alberto Raimundo puts it. Phoenix specializes in rare and exotic foods: elephant, scorpion, caribou, iguana, weird Asian and Oceanic vegetables, you name it — the more unusual, the better. It’s usually booked weeks in advance, but somehow the famous or influential always seem to get a table that “freed up at the last minute.”

Running With Scissors (5865 Steele Street): Up and coming rock, rhythm and blues, and soul acts dream of getting a gig at Running With Scissors, one of the most prominent music clubs on the East Coast. It’s well-known that music critics from major magazines, papers, and websites frequent the place, and more than a few bands have gone on to success and stardom after playing here. Hudsonites in the mood for some cutting-edge popular music know that this is the place to go to hear it.

Satin Angels (4787 Steele Street): “Beauty amidst elegance,” reads the gold lettering on the face of the jet-black card-key possessed by members of this exclusive adult club — and it’s a motto the club lives up to. Everything at Satin Angels is of the finest, whether it’s the furnishings, the wine, or the women up on the stage. The annual membership dues are hideously expensive, but for those unwilling to tolerate the more sordid clubs of the Strip, Satin Angels represents the ultimate in adult entertainment.

Top Of The World (top floor of 3418 Hastings Avenue): Located on the top floor of the eighty-story office building known simply as 3418 Hastings, Top of the World is one of the most exclusive and elegant nightclub/bars in Hudson City. Most people can barely afford to have one drink, much less an evening’s worth of them or a meal, at TotW, but for those with money to spend it’s one of the most popular watering holes in Bankhurst. It usually features light jazz or other non-intrusive music in the evenings.

AEGIS PERSONAL SECURITY SERVICES

In this modern world, full of uncertainties and dangers, it pays to do whatever you can to protect yourself from the likes of criminals, terrorists, kidnappers, and their ilk. When you’re a wealthy Bankhurst executive, or a corporation that employs one, you have to be even more careful; to many people in this world, you’re nothing more than the possibility of a big, fat ransom

Well-heeled and important Hudsonites looking for the ultimate in personal protection often turn to one of the most highly-regarded, and highly-specialized, security firms in the world: Aegis Personal Security Services. Based in London, APSS provides highly trained bodyguards for the rich and famous — everyone from members of various royal families, to Hollywood mega-stars, to executives and their families around the world

Aegis’s services aren’t cheap by any stretch of the imagination, but as the company’s representatives are so fond of observing, you get what you pay for. Most experts consider Aegis bodyguards to be the best trained and most competent available. All of them are military and/or law enforcement veterans, but beyond that Aegis puts them through a rigorous six-month training course of its own design that covers every aspect of bodyguarding in excruciating detail. An Aegis bodyguard also has combat driving and marksman qualifications so he can provide all-around protection. The company’s so certain of the value of its services that it offers a money-back guarantee in the event one of its protectees suffers injury or death due to error on the part of an Aegis employee

In addition to its standard bodyguard services, APSS has two specialized subsidiaries: Aegis Child Protective Services and Aegis Executive Assistant Services. ACPS is a group of trained bodyguards who are also trained child care workers. Most of them are woman, and they’re all qualified to care for children from infants to teenagers while protecting their lives. Many of them are licensed nurses as well

AEAS covers the other end of the spectrum: its personnel are, in effect, “combat butlers” who provide valet and manservants services in addition to being bodyguards. They can do everything from expertly pressing their employer’s clothing, to ironing the newspaper for him so he doesn’t get inkstains on his hands, to parachuting him to safety from a crashing airplane or preventing him from suffering injury in a firefight.

BAYSIDE



"Ahhh, it ain't so bad most'a the time. I can do a lotta stuff with it — it's pretty amazing what the docs can come up with. I still can sorta feel my hand there, though, which creeps me out, 'specially in the morning.

"I'm gonna miss the shipyard, but my cousin said he figured he could get me some kinda job at the plant where he works. At least there I won't hafta worry about that !\$&~up Sturzo droppin' sheet metal on me again.*

Hey, Bertie, gimme 'nother beer!"

—former shipyard worker Mark Munson, showing off his new prosthetic arm down at the Anchor Room tavern

North of Owl Bay, the Hudson City coastline bulges out slightly. Hudsonites refer to the neighborhood occupying that bulge as Bayside. Most of them would describe its boundaries as 20th and 24th Avenues and around Easley Street.

Given its position on the bay, Bayside has historically been a neighborhood devoted to industry and heavy commerce. Even in the earliest days of the city, large ships would pull right up to the Bayside docks to discharge their cargo and take on new goods. That trend continues today, though the ships are no longer made of wood and don't show up as frequently. In recent years, as manufacturing has declined, Bayside has taken on more of the characteristics of a residential neighborhood. It always had a few areas where the men who worked on the waterfront and their families lived, but things have improved a little. Developers have converted some old office buildings and tenements to modern apartments, and a few warehouses to lofts — but even taking that into account, Bayside remains mostly a place where people work, not where they live.

The crime rate in Bayside is moderate. In many ways it's a rough neighborhood: the longshoremen, shipbuilders, and dockworkers who form such an important part of Bayside's economy aren't genteel folk. After work they often get rowdy; fistfights and more violent encounters occur frequently, and muggers and other criminals often prey on the drunk and the unwary. There have also been some reports of prostitution, but with the Strip not too far south there's no chance for an extensive sex trade to develop in Bayside. The western parts of the neighborhood, where there are more residences and small businesses than manufacturing firms or warehouses, are generally safer and quieter, but not always by much.

It's widely believed that the Mafia — in the form of the Marcelli family — dominates a lot of the activity in Bayside, particularly the waterfront and its businesses. In the past twenty years, several organized crime figures have been convicted of racketeering charges stemming, at least in part, from their activities in Bayside. The Marcellis supposedly control Bayside union locals, extort protection money from many businesses, own several warehouses that charge exorbitant rates but nevertheless remain heavily patronized, and siphon money out of the Shipyards in many illegal ways. Marcelli lieutenant Angelo "Big Anj" Campanaro and several of his soldiers were sent to jail for life in 1997 for murdering one shipbuilding firm executive and threatening another, but no one thinks disrupting his organization means getting rid of the Mafia in Bayside. In fact, there are rumors that Campanaro continues to run his people from jail.

MARWICH

Some people consider Marwich — the neighborhood between N. Adams and Oxnard or Easley Street, running from about Gilraith Avenue down to 24th — part of Bankhurst, Gadsden, or even Pierpoint, but city statisticians generally lump this neighborhood in with Bayside for some reason. It was a lot more like Bayside in the first half of the twentieth century, but since then it's transformed into a residential and retail neighborhood that really has more in common with Bankhurst. In fact, a lot of young professionals who work in Bankhurst live in the condominium towers, apartment buildings, and brownstones of Marwich. Smaller investment and financial firms find the office space in Marwich a lot more affordable than similar buildings just a few blocks west.

With so many well-off residents, Marwich has plenty of clubs, bars, and stores that cater to them. Businessmen looking to take a load off after a long day of pushing paper around a desk can relax with a drink at Gordon's Taproom, grab a bite to eat at Bears & Bulls or the Hanover Room, and maybe go clubbing later at places like Downstairs.

LANDMARKS

There's nothing in Bayside proper to attract the average tourist... or even the average Hudsonite. But it does have a few noteworthy places:

The Hudson City Shipyards: Shipbuilding firms dominate the economy and geography of northeast Bayside. Decades ago the city designated this area "the Hudson City Shipyards" as a way of promoting the trade, but the name implies more uniformity than actually exists: it's not a single shipyards

ASSISTANT HARBORMASTER ANDY POLEVSKI

10	STR	8	DEX
10	CON	11	BODY
10	INT	8	EGO
10	PRE	8	COM
3	PD	2	ED
1	SPD	4	REC
20	END	21	STUN

Abilities: Bribery 8-, Concealment 11-, Streetwise 8-, WF: Pistols, Fringe Benefit: Assistant Harbormaster

25+ Disadvantages:
None

Notes: Andy Polevski is one of the assistant harbormasters charged with overseeing the docks in Bayside. He usually works the second shift, and tries to spend as little of his working hours actually working as possible (after all, it's a lot more fun to stay inside where it's warm and watch his portable TV than it is to walk around the docks and ships in the cold wind).

Polevski is a big, beefy guy whose stomach betrays his love of deep-dish pizza, fudge ripple ice cream, and beer. At work he's supposed to wear a shirt and tie, but as long as there aren't any supervisors around, he loosens the tie and unbuttons his collar. When he's outside he usually has on a windbreaker and a cap, both prominently marked "Harbormaster."



IMAGES OF BAYSIDE

The clang and bang of work at the Shipyards

The smell of the half-rotten old piers down along the waterfront

Bar signs at night, slashing the darkness with their neon glow

The smell of fresh bread baking at the Doughnut Hole

run by the government or any other authority, but instead a group of businesses all in the same industry. All these firms belong to a trade organization called the Hudson City Shipyard Association (HCSA), but the truth is most of them have as much to divide them as bring them together. They often compete with one another (sometimes intensely) for shipbuilding contracts, and rivalries and animosities have built up over the years. Some of the companies have disputes or grievances that stretch back decades, and there doesn't seem to be any hope of resolving them anytime soon.

The largest company in the Shipyards is the aptly-named Hudson Ships, which mainly builds big commercial vessels. Others include Owl Bay Yachts (small- to medium-length pleasure craft), McNarron Shipbuilding, and Hibernia Manufacturing.

Most of the shipbuilding that goes on at the Shipyards is commercial and civilian — everything from large tankers to small pleasure craft. The shipbuilders do little in the way of military shipbuilding, though some of them occasionally win government contracts. They're certainly not equipped to build anything as large and complex as a destroyer, battleship, aircraft carrier, or submarine.

24th Avenue Armory: Located at the corner of 24th and Easley Street, this building once housed one of the armories that held the weapons for the Hudson City Militia. Even through the 1960s, it was a National Guard armory, but eventually that use was phased out and the city bought the building. In the 1970s it was cleaned, renovated, and turned into a community center. It's a favored meeting place for Baysiders, who take classes and play sports there, and is often featured in Hudson City architectural guides due to its two distinctive towers (which have been closed to the public for nearly 30 years).

SHOPPING

Bayside really isn't the sort of place people go shopping — not unless they're looking to buy industrial equipment or bulk raw materials shipped in from overseas. But a few noteworthy retail stores have opened up in recent years in the more residential parts of the neighborhood, such as:

Makin' Tracks (southeast corner of Kemp Avenue and Silas Street): Located in the shadow of one of the city's elevated railway tracks, this small specialty business caters to model train enthusiasts. It makes most of its sales via mail order or the Web, but has a dedicated core of local railroading aficionados who come in to pick up the latest models and talk about trains. Every Wednesday night the owner, Rob O'Malley, holds a "movie night" and shows films about trains, home movies of train trips, and the like.

The Doughnut Hole (3888 Easley Street): A local favorite, this combination coffee shop/bakery/newsstand caters mainly to the breakfast and brunch crowd.

There aren't a lot of seats, but if you get there at the right time it's a great place to relax with your morning paper of choice, a cup of good black coffee, and a bagel. Most people just get their coffee and paper to go, or later in the day pick up some bread or doughnuts.

ON THE TOWN

There's not much nightlife in Bayside. Most people looking for something to do head north to Gadsden or (if they can afford it) west to Bankhurst. But as the residential character of the neighborhood has improved over the past three decades, it's brought some related businesses along with it.

Ankara (432 Dawnlea Avenue): Turkish immigrant Husmettin Nemria opened up this restaurant, which serves the cuisine and coffees of his native land, in 1996. The patronage of local residents kept it going at first, but since it was "discovered" by Bankhurst businessmen with long lunch hours it's become a definite success.

The White Event: Where the eastern terminus of Dawnlea Avenue intersects with the Coastal Parkway, there used to be a warehouse that stored goods which arrived in Hudson City by ship before they were distributed to local businesses or sent elsewhere. But in the late Eighties the owners fell on hard times, and the warehouse was bought by some entrepreneurs who wanted to open up a nightclub. Their club failed, and so did those of a couple other people who tried the same thing. Then Johnny Skevington came along. A devotee of the goth/rave scene, he had a finely-tuned appreciation for what modern clubgoers wanted. It didn't take long for his new club, the White Event, to become a success where others had failed. Since its opening in 2001, it's been a favorite nightspot for pale-skinned, late-night partygoers.

BLACKBRIDGE



"Man, this place rocks! This is like the greatest club ever! I can't believe Flog My Nixon just showed up here to do a gig. I never get to see anything like this in Missouri. This is so coool..."

— convention attendee Charlie Biddick, enjoying a night on the town at Inferno

Blackbridge takes its name from a time back in the 1800s when a large stream ran through the heart of the area (the stream still exists today, a couple feet under Harnett Street). The main bridge across the stream was built with wood from an enormous black oak tree, so it became known as Black Oak Bridge. Residents later shortened this to Blackbridge, and eventually the name came to signify the neighborhood as well as the bridge. By 1935 the stream was completely paved over and the bridge removed. Pieces of wood from the bridge were sold to raise money for charity. Many older families in the city still own a piece or two; some businesses in the city bought numerous pieces and used them to build furniture or artwork for their offices. Pieces remain available in antique stores all over the city.

Roughly speaking, Blackbridge is the area north of LeMastre Park, east of N. Madison Street (excluding Westhurst), west of Kurtland Boulevard, and south of 4th Avenue. For most of its history it was primarily a residential neighborhood, and it retains much of that character today. Middle-class families, nature-lovers who wish to be near the park, students from nearby Hudson City University, and others call Blackbridge their home. Most of the residential buildings are brownstones and high-rise apartment buildings, with only a few apartment complexes and "detached" houses (the detachment is so small as to be nearly non-existent). There are also plenty of businesses that cater to the residents — restaurants, small shops and stores, and the like. Many Hudsonites consider Blackbridge to be one of the nicest neighborhoods in the city.

However, as the city has grown, bigger business has intruded on Blackbridge. Particularly where the neighborhood nears Bankhurst and the Convention Center, office buildings have arisen — none reaching the size of skyscrapers, to be sure, but commercial buildings nevertheless. Some Blackbridgers like having office buildings in the neighborhood, since they work in them and it makes for a short commute. Others would prefer to keep the neighborhood mostly residential. Most don't have a strong opinion one way or the other.

Blackbridge is a fairly safe neighborhood, though not as safe as Bankhurst or Highlands. It's thought that the Mafia commits a lot of crimes in the area (and sometimes competes for "turf" there with the Russian Mafia, yakuza, or various independent criminals), and occasionally street punks wander north from the park looking for easy pickings. The vigilante DarkAngel seems to pay special attention to Blackbridge; some authorities speculate that she lives or works there in her civilian identity.

LANDMARKS

In addition to Jason Devon Memorial Coliseum (page 114) and the Gangland Museum (page 111), here are some of the places people associate with Blackbridge:

Blackbridge Park: Bounded by Cayuga and Onondaga Streets and 8th and 9th Avenues, this small, quiet park is a welcome haven from the hustle and bustle of city life. Although Blackbridge is close to LeMastre Park, some residents prefer the less crowded Blackbridge Park. It includes a large playground area for children.

Catholic Cemetery (northeast corner of Wallace Avenue and Onondaga Street): Years ago, when many of the city's early cemeteries were close to filling up, several local Catholic churches pooled their money and bought a large plot of land in Blackbridge for use as a cemetery. Today Catholic Cemetery itself is nearing capacity, but it's become more than just a peaceful resting place for the dead. Locals often jog or walk there, and students from nearby HCU go there when the weather's fine to sit outside and study. The cemetery's many large and fanciful tombstones and crypts sometimes attract tourists as well.

Hudson City Convention Center: Located between 8th and 11th Avenues, and Rhine and Harnett Streets, right next to the Devon Coliseum, the HCCC is the largest convention venue in the city. Capable of supporting conventions of up to 50,000 people easily, and more than that with a little difficulty, it brings hundreds of thousands of businessmen from around the world to Hudson City every year. Several large hotels cluster around it.

LeMastre Office Park (5357 13th Avenue): This group of three buildings (two six stories tall, one five) sits right across 13th Avenue from LeMastre Park, and just a couple blocks south of the Convention Center, making it a prime commercial location. Most of its tenants are what you'd expect — stock brokerages, law firms, and other professional offices — but some are a bit more unusual. Perhaps the most notable is Comrade Capitalists, a security ser-

IMAGES OF BLACKBRIDGE

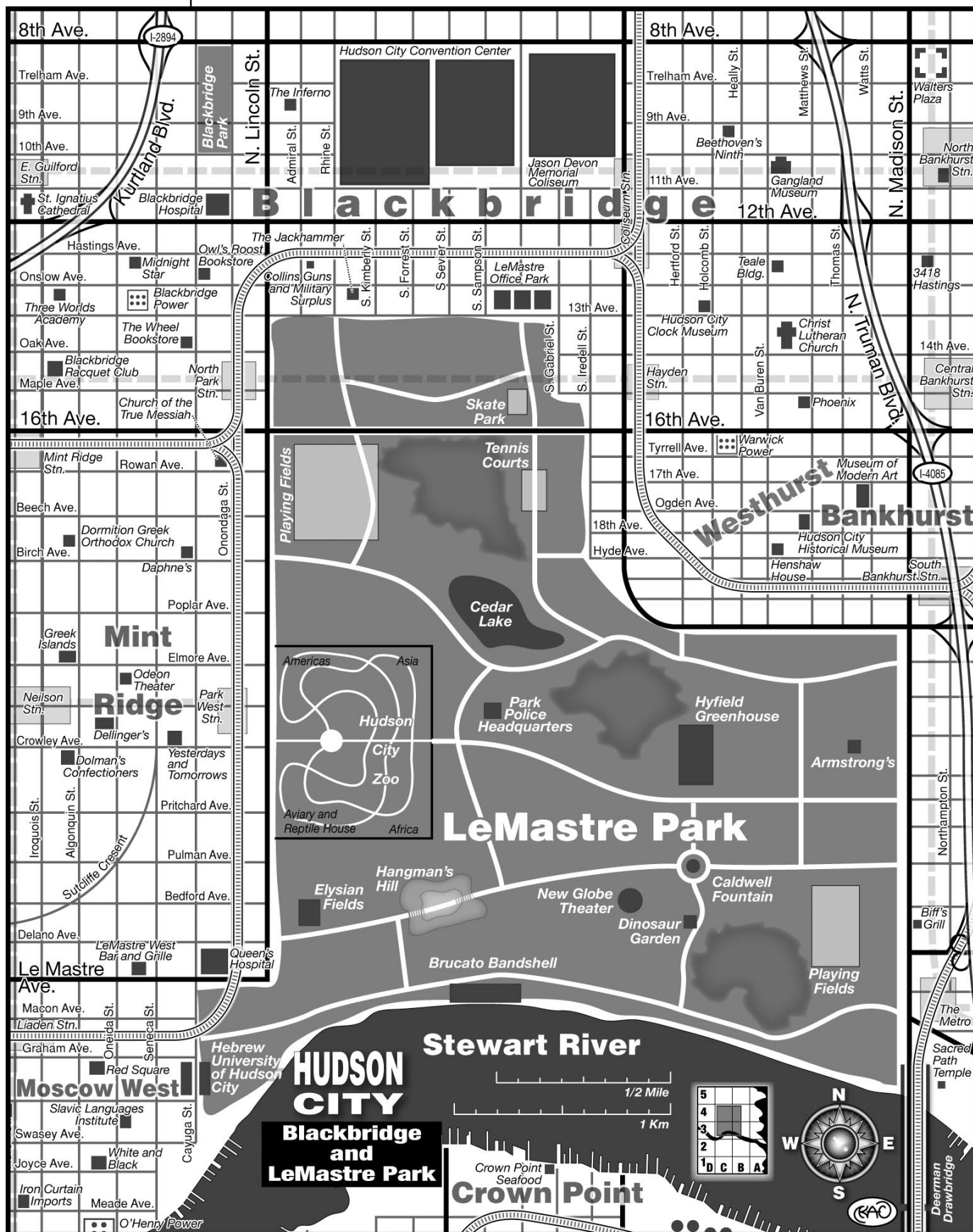
Conventioner-welcoming banners hung on the lampposts all around the Devon Coliseum and HCCC

The laughter of children playing on the playground in Blackbridge Park

The unique facade of the Teale Building

The sounds of jazz wafting out of Beethoven's Ninth on a nice night when the guy watching the front door leaves it open

The unmistakable skyline of the LeMastre Office Park



vices planning and consulting firm. Run by Arkady Koslov, a veteran KGB agent, and Spencer McBryde, a former CIA agent, Comrade Capitalists brings what one of its clients called a “unique and thorough” perspective to security issues.

Teale Building (4000 Van Buren Street): Of all the apartment buildings in Blackbridge, the Teale Building stands out. Built by famed architect Robert Teale in 1918, it has a distinctive facade with broad front steps and gargoyle-like ornamentation along the top of the building. The early residents, who had a reputation for being somewhat Bohemian, developed the habit of painting their window casements teal, a tradition that later residents maintained. Apartments in the Teale Building are in high demand, and thus expensive.

SHOPPING

Blackbridge has plenty of interesting stores just waiting to serve Hudsonites and tourists looking to spend a little money.

Edgar McCreedy's (412 Searcy Avenue): Although smoking isn't much in fashion these days, there are some who still indulge... and some who remember the elegance of the habit eighty years ago. McCreedy's is one such store: a tobacconist's that caters to the smoking connoisseur. It carries an extensive line of pipes, pipe tobacco, and fine foreign cigarettes and cigars. The cigar craze of the Nineties brought it to the attention of a whole new generation of customers.

Paper Kingdoms (northeast corner of 5th Avenue and Admiral Street): A favorite among Hudsonite geeks and pop culture fans, Paper Kingdoms carries an extensive line of comic books, roleplaying games,

COLISEUM STATION

Most subway and EL stations in Hudson City aren't anything to write home about — just poured cement floors, brick or tile walls covered with advertising posters in flat plexiglass-covered cases, flyers taped up here and there by people promoting some band or event, and that vaguely disturbing musty-sweaty smell that comes from having people stand around there waiting for trains.

Coliseum Station in Blackbridge is different. When it became apparent that many visitors to the city went through there on their way to the Jason Devon Memorial Coliseum or Hudson City Convention Center, the city decided to make it more of a showcase. It hired several noted mosaicists and mural painters to beautify the place, and moved all the advertising so it wouldn't spoil the view. Today commuters who go to Coliseum Station are treated to wall art depicting the early history of the city, sports heroes of Hudson City, famous American presidents, and more. The station still has its share of panhandlers, homeless people, and street musicians, but at least the art brings a smile to most peoples' faces for a little while.

other non-computer games, and genre fiction. The owner, Paul Kassabian, has an encyclopedic knowledge of pop culture and rock music trivia, and uses it to steer each customer toward just the right books and games for him.

The Wheel Bookstore (northwest corner of Oak Avenue and Cayuga Street): Founded in 1927 by iconoclastic artist Clarisse Lemoine, The Wheel specializes in books on left-wing political subjects. A rallying point for the city's Communists through the 1950s, radical leftists in the Sixties, and feminists and gay activists since the Seventies, it remains a quirky part of Hudson City's political landscape. It also carries an extensive selection of obscure poetry.

ON THE TOWN

Blackbridge has a lot of attractions for people looking for a fun and relaxing evening out, particularly in the area around the Convention Center and Coliseum (where you'll find a lot of bars and restaurants, mostly chains but some local places).

Beethoven's Ninth (3786 9th Avenue): A trendy jazz club just a few blocks east of the Coliseum, Beethoven's Ninth attracts an eclectic crowd: jazz musicians and record executives looking to catch the next “big thing,” college students enjoying the atmosphere, young professionals trying to impress their dates with their knowledge of “culture,” and people who are actually cultured hoping to meet others of their ilk. The owner, Marvin Walker, has a reputation for finding talented jazz musicians before they become well-known.

Inferno (3413 Admiral Street): This club usually features up-and-coming rock bands and is known for its stiff (but high-priced) drinks, including the famous Hellfire Cocktail. It's a favorite “watering hole” not only for convention attendees (many of whom come back to it, year after year) but for local businessmen looking to unwind after a hard day.

The Jackhammer (5950 Onslow Avenue): This dance club just a couple blocks north of LeMastre Park attracts both locals and conventioners. The pulsing beat of the loud music (rock, house, or techno, depending on the evening) makes it difficult to hold a decent conversation... but no one really goes there to talk anyway.

Midnight Star (6532 Hastings Avenue): One of Hudson City's most popular nightclubs, the Midnight Star is a three-story tribute to the joys of the nightlife. The first floor is mostly a bar, with music played softly enough that people can drink in peace or hold a conversation. The top two floors are a multi-level dance floor. Jessica Sung, a former stripper, owns the place; her sister Rebecca is the club's business manager, and her brother-in-law Oliver Younce, a former NFL linebacker, is the bouncer and general troubleshooter.

MIRANDA HAINES

10	STR	10	DEX
10	CON	8	BODY
10	INT	8	EGO
10	PRE	13	COM
4	PD	2	ED
2	SPD	4	REC
20	END	18	STUN

Abilities: AK: LeMastre Park 8-, CK: Hudson City's Northside 12-, KS: The Club Scene 11-, KS: The Music Scene 8-, PS: Bike Messenger 11-, PS: Play Ultimate Frisbee 11-, Streetwise 8-, TF: Two-Wheeled Muscle-Powered Ground Vehicles

Disadvantages: Dependence (Addiction to amphetamines)

Notes: It's hard to miss Miranda. With her bright pink hair and what looks like a half a pound of metal rings stuck through various parts of her face, she stands out in a crowd. And it's a good thing, too, since as a bike messenger she wants drivers and pedestrians to see her coming from a long way off — fewer accidents that way. An employee of Flash Messenger, she's one of the company's fastest, hardest-working messengers, but her talent isn't all natural. She's able to maintain her frantic pace by using uppers, and sooner or later that's going to catch up to her.

CHINATOWN



IMAGES OF CHINATOWN

Young men rushing boxes and carts of fresh vegetables and fish from the waterfront to restaurants in the early morning hours

Bright red Chinese characters painted on stark white or yellow signboards

The smell of *dim sum* cooking

Ducks hanging in a butcher's window like a line of soldiers awaiting inspection

Chinese children dressed in colorful silk jackets for Chinese New Year

Japanese teens talking animatedly about the latest Jap-pop teen heartthrob

The setting sun casting the shadow of Four Dragons Rising east like a long finger pointing toward night

The sounds of Oriental languages being spoken at a rapid-fire pace

"Dim sum? You want dim sum? Good dim sum! Also Pepsi!"

— dim sum pushcart owner "Uncle Bennie" Hwan, usually to be found somewhere on the north side of Mott Park

Like many major metropolitan areas in the United States, Hudson City has a neighborhood populated almost exclusively by persons of Asian extraction. And like those other cities, Hudson City refers to this neighborhood as Chinatown.

For most of the first century of Hudson City's existence, few "celestials" (as they were then often referred to) lived there. But after the Independence Day Fire of 1895, the need for cheap labor to rebuild the city was so great that it attracted Chinese laborers, many of whom had first come to the country to work on the railroads out west. These immigrant workers mostly settled south of the Stewart River, building a small shanty community that the rest of the city soon came to call "Chinatown." As Hudson City grew, so did Chinatown, which was eventually absorbed into the city proper. Today its boundaries are usually defined as S. Roosevelt Street, Kiser Street, Coleman Avenue, and the river.

During the Twenties and Thirties, when Chinatown was considered a den of vice, newspaper writers often referred to it as "the Yellow Crescent" due to the neighborhood's shape. Today most people consider that term crass and insulting, and Chinatown's gone from being seen as a place of depravity to one of hard work and cultural diversity. Its residents simply see it as home.

Modern Chinatown is a busy, crowded neighborhood with seemingly little in the way of central planning — residential buildings sit cheek-by-jowl with commercial ones, and often the top floors of a small store or shop serves as a residence for the store's owner and his family. Factories and other businesses that rely almost exclusively on Chinese labor cluster along the waterfront. Many of these are little more than sweatshops that hold their employees in quasi-slavery, though a rising class of Chinese entrepreneurs is doing what it can to provide better jobs and working conditions for Chinatown's residents. (Since the residents of Chinatown are notoriously reluctant to even talk to the police, much less cooperate with them, the city has repeatedly been frustrated in its efforts to correct many of the illegal practices.) Elsewhere, the shops and restaurants that outsiders think of when they hear the word "Chinatown" dominate the commercial scene.

ONE NEIGHBORHOOD, FOUR WORLDS

While most Hudsonites think of "Chinatown" as one large neighborhood, in truth it's actually four sub-neighborhoods dominated by different Asian groups. Chinatown was almost exclusively Chinese for the first half of the twentieth century. But after World War II Japanese immigration to the city increased... and the same applied to Vietnamese immigration after the fall of Saigon. Over the last thirty years, an influx of Koreans has also occurred. The result is a neighborhood more splintered than many outsiders can see.

Chinatown

Chinatown "proper" consists of those parts of the neighborhood still dominated by Chinese — which is to say, most of overall Chinatown. (The use of the same name to mean two different areas, one of which is part of the other, causes all sorts of confusion except among the Chinese themselves, who always seem to know which one they're referring to.) It occupies the western half of the neighborhood.

Koreatown

Korean residents, most of whom come from Seoul and other parts of South Korea, live mostly in the northeastern part of greater Chinatown. They keep to themselves, rarely mingling with their Chinese and Japanese neighbors. Although they encourage some tourist traffic to Korean restaurants and stores, for the most part Koreatown keeps to itself and prefers to be left alone.

Little Saigon

Wedged in between the other three neighborhoods, Little Saigon evolved in the 1970s to handle the influx of Vietnamese (and Cambodian and Laotian) immigrants after the end of the Vietnam War. Although not quite as stand-offish as the Koreans, the residents often prefer their own company (they don't even have nearly as many restaurants and other tourist attractions as the other neighborhoods).

Little Tokyo

Located in the eastern and southern parts of Chinatown, Little Tokyo is home primarily to persons of Japanese ancestry — one of the largest concentrations of ethnic Japanese outside of Japan itself, in fact. The residents are a curious mix of successful Japanese businessmen who long for native surroundings (and most of whom work in Bankhurst, Blackbridge, Highlands, or Worthington, not Chinatown) and poorer Japanese trying to get by. The architecture of the area is an eclectic blend of Japanese and American that strikes some critics as hideous, others as charming.

CHINATOWN CRIME

The crime rate in Chinatown seems quite low... and it is, at least as far as tourists and “round-eyes” are concerned. But the police and community leaders acknowledge that behind the scenes, the area has a serious crime problem — one exacerbated by the residents’ preference not to get involved with the police (or other Western institutions) at all.

In Chinatown proper, various tongs (see page 163) control the underworld. Well-funded and well-entrenched, they usually have strong links to powerful Triads back in China, from whom they buy heroin (which they often distribute in the city with the help of allies in the Mafia — the geographic proximity between Chinatown and Little Italy has made it easy to foster mutually profitable ties between the two groups). The tongs also control an extensive network of illegal gambling dens and other vice operations.

In Little Tokyo, the various clans of the yakuza dominate, each with its own carefully-delineated territory. Much more so than other Chinatown crime groups, the yakuza is involved with schemes all over the city.

Little Saigon is plagued by Vietnamese gangs, but like their Chinese neighbors the residents rarely cooperate with the police.. Even if the HCPD smashes one gang, it’s not long before a successor steps up and takes control, since the police never have enough information to really make a dent in the overall crime problem.

Koreatown also has its gangs, but they’re much more fragmented and less effective than their Vietnamese counterparts. The yakuza seems to hold some sway here as well.

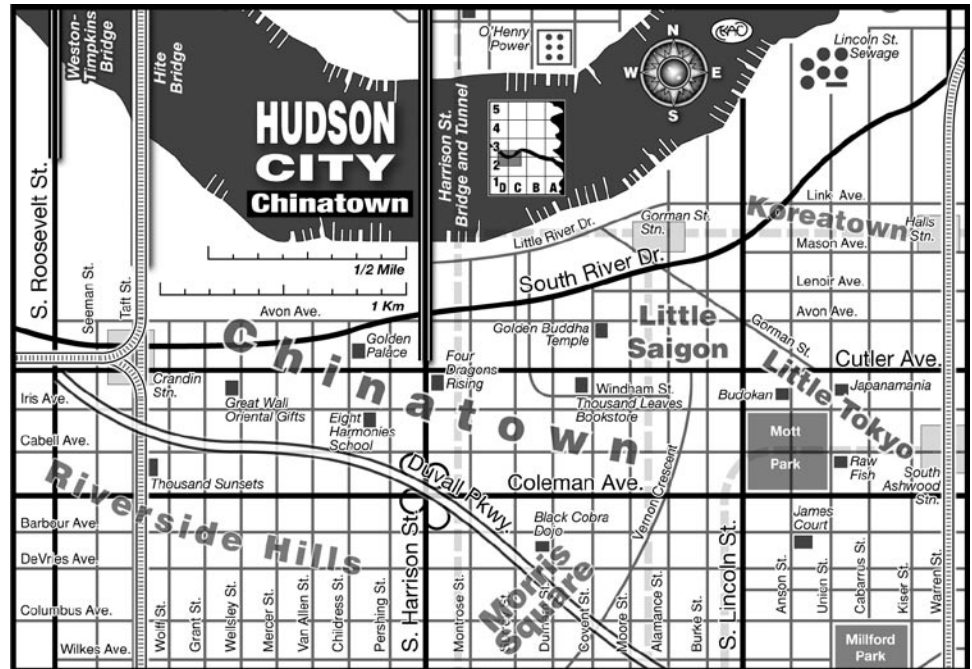
See Chapter Five for more information about the Hudson City underworld.

CHINATOWN GAMBLING

Chinese people love to gamble. A particular Chinese person might not care for it, but as a people they love games of chance. It’s something of an open secret that there’s plenty of illegal gambling going on in Chinatown’s back rooms, basements, cellars, warehouses, and attics — anywhere a few people can come together and put a few dollars down on a game without the law trying to break things up. Westerners would have a hard time finding one of these games, much less getting permission to play, but they’re going on out there nevertheless.

However, the games of chance Chinese gamblers prefer aren’t the same as those favored by Westerners. You might find some poker or craps going on, but most Chinese prefer to stick to their native gambling games, such as fan-tan and pai gow.

Fan-tan is a simple game. It requires a table with a square marked in the center, or a square



piece of metal laid on top. The sides of the square are marked 1, 2, 3, and 4. The banker (the person in charge of the game) puts a handful of tokens on the square. Typically small Chinese coins are used as the tokens, but he could use any similar item, such as pennies, poker chips, dried beans, or the like. Then the banker covers the tokens with a bowl, and the players place their bets on 1, 2, 3, or 4. When all bets are made, the banker removes the bowl and uses a small stick to remove tokens in groups of four until he gets down to the final batch of four, three, two, or one coins. That remainder indicates which number wins. Anyone who placed a bet on that number has one-fourth of his bet removed by the house, then receives winnings of five times the remaining 75%. Any bet placed on another number loses. (There’s also a card game that goes by this name, which can be played by up to eight players.)

Pai gow is a dominoes game, not to be confused with the modern casino game of “paigow poker.” The name means “make nine,” and some consider it the original form of baccarat. Each player places a bet and the bank then deals him four dominoes (or “tiles”) from the stack (the “woodpile”). From these four dominoes, he must make two hands (one called the “high hand,” the other the “low hand”). The goal is to make both hands total as close to 9 as possible. To win, a player must have a high hand that beats the bank’s high hand, and a low hand that beats the bank’s low hand. If that happens, the player wins his bet and gets paid. If the player and the bank each win one of the hands, that’s a “push”; the player gets his money back but wins nothing more. If the bank wins both hands, the player loses his bet. In the event of a tie, the low hand with the higher-ranking tile wins. The ranking of dominoes is complex and has to be learned by memory; the best possible hand is *gee joon* (“supreme pair”), 4-2 and 2-1. Other pairs have their own special names.

Other Chinese gambling games include *tien gow* (a trick-taking dominoes game for four play-

MRS. ISHIHARA

5	STR	8	DEX
7	CON	6	BODY
13	INT	8	EGO
13	PRE	8	COM
2	PD	2	ED
1	SPD	3	REC
14	END	13	STUN

Abilities: AK: China 11-, AK: Japan 11-, AK: Hudson City's Chinatown 11-, Languages: Cantonese, English, Mandarin (all idiomatic; Japanese is Native), PS: Instructor 13-, PS: Translator 11-

Disadvantages: None

Notes: If you want to learn Chinese or Japanese, the best person to see in Hudson City is Mrs. Ishihara (no one seems to know what her first name is; even her husband calls her "Mrs. Ishihara"). A 60-ish, grey-haired woman of intense demeanor, she's an expert in Cantonese, Mandarin, and her native Japanese, and also speaks English better than most Americans. But don't ask her to teach you if you're not willing to really devote yourself to the study of your chosen language; she's not one of these "learn to speak the language in six weeks!" sort of instructors. Just the opposite — she'll spend the first two weeks just teaching you the history of the language before you even start to learn basic words. But if you stick with her for a year or two, your command of the language will be perfect.

ers), *che deng* ("diagonal nails," another dominoes game), and *gwat pai* ("bone tiles," a trick-taking game very different from tien go).

LANDMARKS

As far as most tourists are concerned, *all* of Chinatown is a Hudson City landmark. But the neighborhood offers a few special attractions of its own.

Four Dragons Rising (southeast intersection of S. Harrison Street and Cutler Avenue): To mark the "entrance" to Chinatown, neighborhood movers and shakers long ago commissioned a special statue. It depicts four celestial dragons, one facing each direction, rising from a wave. The distinctive appearance of the statue as a whole, and the individual dragons, have become closely associated with Chinatown; they're often seen on souvenir t-shirts, posters announcing neighborhood events, and even some business letterheads and signs.

Mott Park (southeast intersection of S. Lincoln Street and Iris Avenue): Most of Chinatown is heavily built up, with buildings clustered densely together. The largest open space is Mott Park, where locals go to relax and walk on grass instead of concrete. Although two streets pass through the park, there's still plenty of space for kids to play games. The annual Summer Kite Festival held here in July attracts thousands of visitors to watch the elaborate Chinese kites (and kite-fighting competitions).

SHOPPING

While many Chinatown stores are ordinary businesses catering to the locals, others aim to attract the tourist crowd. It's a great neighborhood for bargain-hunters, Asian antique enthusiasts, and curio-seekers.

Great Wall Oriental Gifts (southwest corner of Cutler Avenue and Wellsley Street): A small building crammed to the gills with Chinese antiques, curios, knick-knacks, and dust-gatherers, Great Wall Gifts is a mecca for collectors of Chinese art and artifacts (including several museum curators). The owner, Chu Shou-Ming, immigrated to the United States in the early 1960s and opened his store a few years thereafter, but barely seems to have Americanized. His English is atrocious (though he has no trouble understanding his American customers), he wears Chinese clothing, and in general he seems faintly contemptuous of Western culture... though not of Western dollars. His sources for genuine Chinese art objects are extensive.

Japanamania (1676 Union Street): Established in the mid-80s to take advantage of the growing American fascination with Japanese pop culture, Japanamania sells all things trendy and Japanese: anime; manga; card games; toys; you name it. Ken Iwahara, the owner and an ardent follower of Japanese culture, travels back to Tokyo several times a year to find the latest and neatest things for his store.

The Thousand Leaves Bookstore (northwest corner of Windham Street and Covent Street): Although it mainly caters to locals by selling books written in various Chinese languages, Thousand Leaves also carries a selection of English-language books on various Asian subjects. Sinophiles often visit to look for unusual and interesting books not available in mainstream bookstores.

ON THE TOWN

Like Chinatowns across the country, Hudson City's Chinatown is renowned for its Asian restaurants. It also has a few clubs that cater to Westerners as well as Asians.

Budokan (1679 Anson Street): Opened in 2003, this club mixes traditional samurai-themed Japanese decor (suits of samurai armor, swords, medieval illustrations of Japanese warfare) with more modern touches to create an intriguing "techno-samurai" look that seems to appeal to both Japanese and Westerners. It's a favorite watering hole for local Japanese businessmen early in the evening, then becomes a dance club catering to a younger, hipper crowd after 10:00 PM.

Golden Palace (northeast corner of Cutler Avenue and Childress Street): Chinatown's most famous Chinese restaurant didn't earn its reputation just because of its food (though its food is without a doubt excellent). It's also known for a 1996 incident in which three members of the Scarlet Dragon gang came looking for their enemies, members of the Emerald Door gang. They shot up the place, killing one Emerald Door and five innocent bystanders.

Raw Fish (southeast corner of Cabell Avenue and Union Street): Established by comedian Jimmy Konishi in 2002, this upscale sushi restaurant takes its name from Konishi's famous "it's *raw fish*, people!" comedy routine. It's been a tremendous hit, with a waiting list over a month long, and he's hoping to franchise it to other cities.

CROWN POINT



"This usedta be a nice enough neighborhood. Lotsa old families that had been around a long time, lotsa community spirit. It wasn't the safest place in Hudson City, but I damn sure been in worse. I was raised here, and I turned out OK."

"Then all the Hindus started moving in. And them Muslims and Arabs and stuff. Things started to go downhill a little — you didn't know who all your neighbors were anymore, or whose kids you should let your kids play with. Some of 'em didn't even bother to learn English so's you could talk to 'em. And then came the fags. Ashwood used to be a nice place, now it's just Fruit-town. Can't even go down to Harry's to have a beer anymore — the fags bought the place and turned it into some fern bar or something."

—Crown Point resident Julia Murrow

Decades ago, Crown Point was mainly an industrial neighborhood, a place of factories, wharves, warehouses, and miscellaneous stench. Only a few poor factory workers lived there, and most of them were looking for a way out.

After World War II, when the manufacturing sector of the Hudson City economy began to decline, many of the Crown Point businesses, including most of the heavier industry, shut down one by one. People looking for cheap housing moved in, and slowly but surely developers tore down a lot of the larger factories to make way for apartments and houses. By the mid-Seventies, Crown Point was as much a residential neighborhood as a commercial one, if not more.

The trend continued into the Eighties and Nineties. In the early Eighties the city built the Museum of World Art in Crown Point, in recognition of the neighborhood's new character. And immigration began to change the face of the community a little: Indians, Pakistanis, Middle Easterners, and a few Africans and Southeast Asians moved in. But none of them staked out any specific neighborhoods as their own ethnic enclaves, creating a sort of cultural mish-mash that some Crown Pointers like, and others object to. But it seems as if the newcomers are here to stay, so most people just try to make the best of it... and take advantage of the many new restaurants.

Today, most people would describe Crown Point (including Ashwood; see below) as the area bounded by Kiser Street, Coleman Avenue, Centre Street or Ferry Street, and the river. Some people quibble over exactly where Crown Point ends, and Riverside Hills or Forsyth begins, but for most Hudsonites Coleman Avenue (particularly the part

known as "Mural Street") makes a good border. The southern part of the neighborhood (the part below Link Avenue) is mostly residences — apartment buildings (some of them refurbished tenements or warehouses) and some detached houses — and small businesses, while the northern part contains mostly light industry and waterfront businesses. Some real estate developers consider Crown Point the next likely target of "yuppification" renovations; others scoff at the thought that young professionals would ever choose to live on the Southside.

Crown Point has a significant crime problem. In addition to the gangs that wander up from Free-town and Forsyth to sell drugs and look for easy pickings, the crimelord Charlemagne claims part of Crown Point as his "turf," and his rival Speargun tussles with the Mafia and other groups for control of the Crown Point waterfront.

See page 86 for a map of Crown Point.

ASHWOOD

The southwest part of Crown Point is known as Ashwood, though no one knows exactly where the name comes from. Since roughly the early Seventies, it's been the center of Hudson City's gay community, and hence also of much of its artistic community. It's mainly a patchwork of older apartment buildings and stores, with a good many art galleries and clubs thrown in for seasoning. It's got an active nightlife that attracts the young and hip, be they straight or gay, from all over the city.

LANDMARKS

Crown Point doesn't have much in the way of landmarks — it's not really a tourist destination or anything like that. But people do come to see Mural Street (page 19), visit the Museum of World Art (page 112), or attend a game at the Herodome (page 114).

SHOPPING

Some of the places in Crown Point where Hudsonites can spend their money include:

Crown Point Seafood (2 Wilson Street): Located right on the waterfront, Crown Point Seafood mostly sells to the restaurant trade, but it's also ready and willing to deal with individual consumers. Crown Pointers with a taste for seafood come here to get the freshest fish, shellfish, and crustaceans around. Crown Point Seafood also sponsors a lot of local events and children's sports teams, making it a popular member of the business community.

The Klein Gallery (northwest corner of Avon Avenue and Edgecombe Street): Owned by Joel Klein, himself a highly-regarded artist, the Klein Gallery

IMAGES OF CROWN POINT

The smell of seafood and water along the wharves

Two young men walking hand-in-hand down an Ashwood street

Crowds streaming toward the Herodome, eager to scarf down some hot dogs, guzzle a few brews, and see the Heroes win

The murals on Mural Street, and the sidewalk artists working beneath them to earn a few bucks for the day

Paintings in the gallery windows in Ashwood

A rack of glossy magazines in a dozen languages

HONUR

The most prominent gay and lesbian activist group in Hudson City is HONUR: HOMosexuals Needing Understanding and Respect. Founded in the Eighties as the AIDS epidemic was beginning, it quickly earned a reputation for its willingness to use confrontation tactics and other methods that often did more harm than good. Over the past twelve years the group as a whole has calmed down somewhat, but has never ceased its unflagging advocacy of issues important to gays and lesbians.

As of 2004, the leaders of HONUR are Executive Director Lucy Manero and her Assistant Director, Brent McCormick. Both work for the group full-time, drawing salaries much smaller than they could make in private industry. Manero's particularly good at organizing parades, street festivals, and protest marches on short notice.

sells the latest and trendiest in modern art, both American and European. It holds frequent shows as well, where a crisply-uniformed staff serves bribe and champagne to rich clients on the lookout for the next "hip" thing in the art world.

Teotihuacan (976 Avon Avenue): This gallery specializes in Precolumbian art and artifacts — Zapotec, Aztec, Mayan, Incan, North American Indian, whatever the owner, Jorge Rodriguez, can obtain on the legal market. An expert on the Precolumbian civilizations of Mexico and Central America, Rodriguez sometimes serves as an adjunct professor or guest lecturer at Hudson City universities, and has helped the authorities capture art smugglers or forgers on several occasions.

ON THE TOWN

Crown Pointers like a beer and burger just as much as anyone else. Some of them have more refined tastes, or prefer ethnic cuisine. But they all like to have a good time.

Caribbean Karma (northwest corner of Iris Avenue and Starr Street): This reggae club, located not far from the Centre Street Circle, also serves Jamaican food at lunch and for an early dinner seating. In the past few years it's been the site of several shootings, but that doesn't seem to have done anything to lessen its popularity — if anything, the touch of danger seems to attract certain kinds of people more.

The Doghouse (northwest corner of Iris Avenue and Ingram Street): Ever had a hot dog made with lamb? How about alligator meat? This gourmet hot dog restaurant not only sells some of the best traditional beef franks in the city, it offers a wide selection of "alternative" hot dogs. It's got a satellite "Doghouse Stand" at the nearby HeroDome, where its hot dogs consistently outsell those of other vendors.

Krazy Karl's (southeast corner of Link Avenue and Moss Street): Crown Pointers who like their bars dark, smokey, and quiet come to Krazy Karl's. Run by an ex-Ranger named Karl Jorgenson, it's a place where pro sports and darts are the height of culture and beer is the drink of choice. If Karl likes you, he might even whip up one of his famous beer-battered burgers for you.

Mandala (2500 Cutler Avenue): Pravar Kambhatla, an immigrant from southern India, opened this restaurant in 1999. It's prospered thanks to its superb food and impeccable service. Most of the rest of the staff is related to Kambhatla in some way, giving the place a sort of pleasant "homey" atmosphere not usually found in elegant restaurants.

P/J (769 Naomi Street): The red-hottest, hippest club in Ashwood today, bar none. Although it caters mainly to gay men, the owners aren't particular and will gladly let in anyone who looks good and can afford to buy drinks (or convince someone else to buy drinks for them). There's usually a long line of people waiting to get in, and a big, brutish-looking bouncer who decides if someone's cool enough and pretty enough to make it through the door.

ART FORGERY AND THEFT

As the center of Hudson City's visual arts scene, Crown Point and Ashwood often have to deal with the specter of art theft. Even worse, in the eyes of some dealers and collectors, is the threat of art forgery

In the minds of most people, art theft is the bigger problem — after all it gets the bigger headlines. On more than one occasion the owner of a gallery in Ashwood have opened for business only to discover that during the night some skilled thief bypassed his elaborate security systems and made off with some valuable piece of art. The value of art in general, and of well-known pieces in particular, has increased significantly over the past decade or so, making art a tempting target for anyone with enough skill and daring to steal it

Given the level of security in the best galleries, only the most skilled thieves can hope to obtain the truly valuable prizes. Some of the most infamous thieves in the world, including the Black Tarantula, Chiaroscuro, Meteor, and Prospero have hit the local museums, Ashwood galleries, and the homes of private Hudson City collectors. While some of them, particularly the Black Tarantula, have a personal appreciation for art and sometimes steal it just to have it for themselves, most art thieves work for someone else. Typically this person is either (a) an unscrupulous private collector who wants the piece for his collection, or (b) a fence or other person who's serving as an agent for such a collector. No reputable gallery or museum would buy an item it knew to be stolen

As if the possibility of having a piece of art stolen weren't enough, galleries and collectors must beware of forged art. While modern criminalistics and investigation techniques have given experts and forgery-seekers an arsenal of new tools with which to analyze works of art and determine their authenticity, science also provides forgers with more and more ways to create believable fakes. Devilishly clever forgers can use everything from chemical baths, to rabbit skins, to ultraviolet light to create forged works of art that can pass even many elaborate scientific tests

The world of art forgery is an obscure and shadowy one; the best forgers never make it to the public eye. In Hudson City, perhaps the best-known forger is Erich Dugan, who was arrested in 1998 after it was discovered he sold several faked paintings to a local collector. He's currently serving time at Oldemyer Prison.

EASTWOOD



SUSPECT: *Look, see, it ain't that bigga deal. We got inna shoving match in the bar, see, over this girl. I mean, she weren't that much to look at, but when a guy starts givin' ya trouble, ya gotta stand up. So this guy gives me trouble, tries to hit on this girl I'm hittin' on, so I tell him to back off. We start shovin', but the bartender breaks it up and tells us to take it outside. So we do. We get back in the alley, and he starts swingin', and I fight back, see? I'm knockin' him around pretty good, 'cause he's basically a big pussy, so he picks up a brick and comes after me with that. So that's when I pulled my knife and stuck him. It was self-defense, see?*

OFFICER REILLY: *Sir, are you aware that possession of a switchblade knife is itself a crime?*

SUSPECT: *What? Gedouttahere. I've had that thing since I was a kid, see?*

— transcript of police interrogation session, 10/16/04

Occupying the northeast corner of Hudson City, just south of the oceanfront suburb of Hudson Beach, Eastwood is a neighborhood that may, at long last, be changing for the better. Early in the history of Hudson City, it began as a neighborhood where sailors and laborers lived. It was considered a squalid, often dangerous, place to live, and with good reason — even as early as the late 1800s it had problems with gangs, street crime, and prostitution. An increased police presence ameliorated the worst of these conditions by 1950, but Eastwood's remained a solidly working-class neighborhood ever since. Even its proximity to Bankhurst, Worthington, and Highlands, all of which are nice neighborhoods, hasn't done much to improve it... but it looks like that's about to change.

In recent decades, developers have been eyeing Eastwood greedily. It's a perfect location for upscale housing for business executives and their families. Beginning with the Eastdale neighborhood, gentrification and yuppification have slowly but surely set in. Many locals scoff at this, and some of the intellectual "culture experts" at the newspapers decry the loss of Eastwood's "unique community identity," but it seems likely that the old, rough-and-tumble Eastwood written about in so many novels and police reports is going to fade away. The completion

of the popular Three Lakes Mall in 1998 is considered the final nail in the coffin by many residents who'd have preferred to keep things the way they were. As of 2004, it's still not safe, and Eastwood High School retains its well-deserved reputation for violent crime... but with some old warehouses and brownstones already converted into lofts and penthouses, can Daily Grind coffee shops and Electric Zone superstores be far behind?

EASTDALE

The southwest corner of Eastwood, around the intersection of Beaufort Avenue and N. Jefferson Street but extending as far as Leigh or N. Adams Streets in some peoples' minds, is a neighborhood known as Eastdale. It got its name because it's slightly lower in elevation than the rest of the area. The yuppification that seems to be making its way into Eastwood proper got started here because of Eastdale's nearness to Highlands. The housing has been improved (in some cases simply by tearing down decrepit old tenements and replacing them with brand-new brownstones), and new, upscale businesses have moved in — mostly chain stores and franchises like Janice's Fine Foods and the Pecos Steak House. The HCPD has made a concerted effort to patrol here, which has reduced the crime rate significantly... though it's still not as safe a neighborhood as Highlands or Worthington.

NORTHPOINT

The easternmost neighborhood in Eastwood — and for that matter, the easternmost point of Hudson City — used to be a center of shipping. But the shoreline isn't as suited for the larger modern ships as points south (such as Bayside), and so time has gradually passed Northpoint by. Today it's mostly a lot of old wharves used at about half capacity, plus a lot of warehouses and similar buildings, many of which are abandoned, all of which are in some state of disrepair. It was hoped that the presence of nearby Three Lakes Mall and Eastwood Medical Center would revitalize the area, but so far that hasn't happened.

NORTHSHORE

Northshore is the center of manufacturing in Eastwood. Several small- to medium-sized factories still operate here, providing jobs for many of the area's residents.

IMAGES OF EASTWOOD

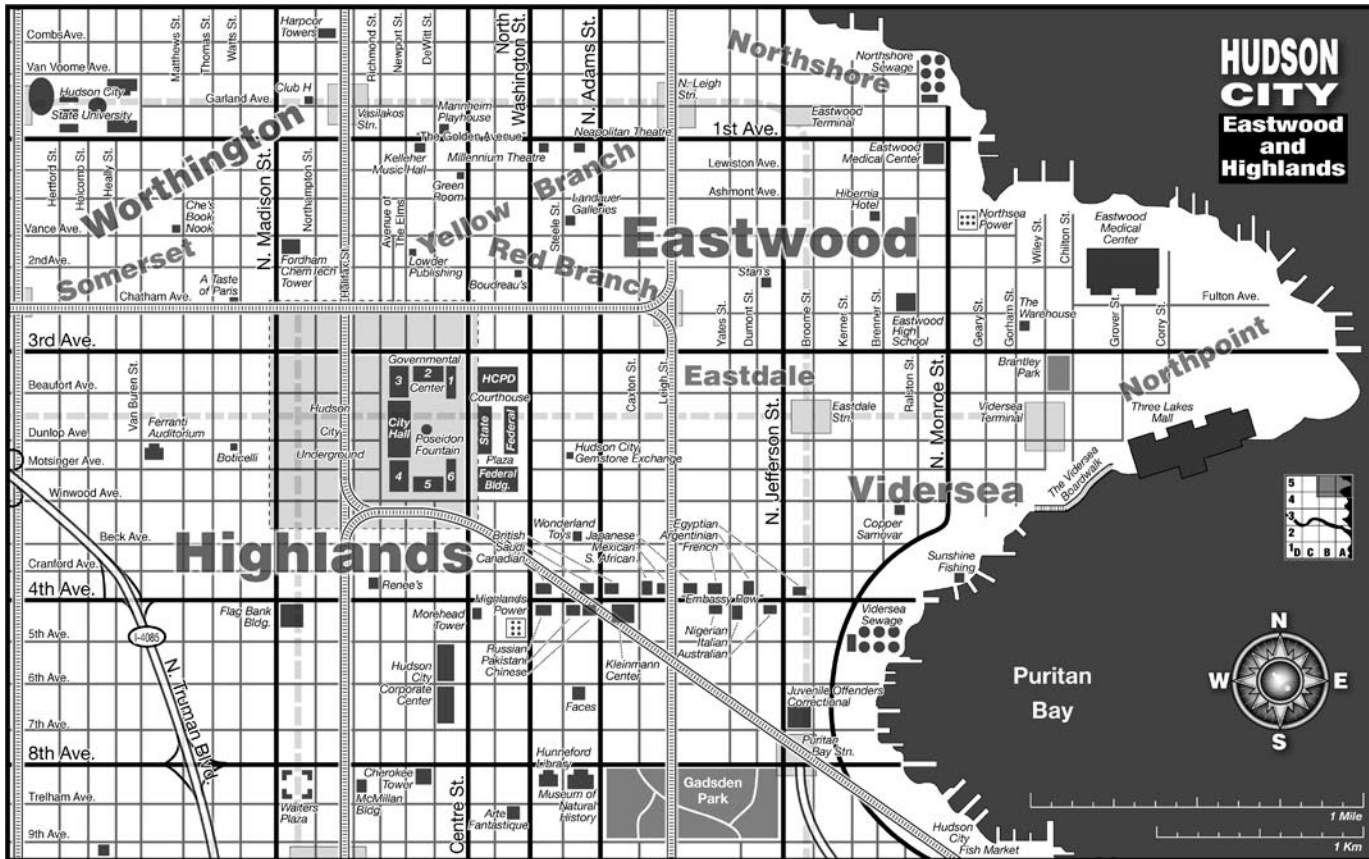
Young teens being dropped off at Three Lakes Mall by their parents

Couples walking contentedly along the Vidersea Boardwalk

A group of gang kids walking down the street dressed in leather and jeans, all bravado and swagger

Old people sitting on benches in Vidersea, conversing in Dutch, Russian, or some Baltic tongue

The mosaic tilework decorating the walls on the Beaufort Avenue entrance to Eastdale Station



VIDERSEA

*Vidersea, by the sea
Where my angel fell in love with me
And what was meant to be came true
When I fell in love with you*

— excerpt from “Vidersea, By The Sea” (1938)

“That !\$&%#@ song! I must hear it five !\$&*%#@ times a day. If I ever meet the guy who wrote it, I sweara God I’m going to beat the *%&! outta him!”*

— local curmudgeon Arthur Kresznewski

Wedge in between Gadsden, Eastwood proper, and the ocean, this primarily residential neighborhood is a bright spot in the otherwise dingy Eastwood environs. Dutch sailors, their families, and other immigrants from the Low Countries began moving into the area in the 1800s, and gradually transformed it from a rough waterfront into a prosperous community of picturesque brownstones and shops. Gradually, over the course of decades, the Dutch were mostly replaced by eastern Europeans — Poles, Romanians, people from the Baltic region — and Russians, though the Low Country element never entirely disappeared. Today Russia seems to be the largest source of immigration, and in recent years this has led to an Organizatsiya-fueled rise in the local crime rate. Nevertheless Vidersea is still popularly (and not without reason) thought of as an elegant and romantic place to live in or visit. The 1938 song, “Vidersea, By The Sea,” celebrates the neighborhood’s charms, and can still be heard in the area today.

LANDMARKS

Eastwood doesn’t have too many places that stand out — it’s mostly full of run-down housing, small manufacturing businesses, and the like. But there are a few notable locations on the map.

Brantley Park: This rather small, sad park on 3rd Avenue has definitely seen better days. It was once a pretty, green place where Eastwooders could enjoy the fresh air, but over the past thirty years or so vandalism, crime, drugs, and homelessness have robbed it of its charm. In the past few years a group of concerned citizens, aided by some funding from the owners of the Three Lakes Mall, have tried to clean up and revitalize the place, but so far they haven’t had much luck. They’re determined to keep trying, though.

Hibernia Hotel (515 Brenner Street): Actually more of a long-term rooming/short-term apartment house than a hotel, the Hibernia has become famous due to some of its former residents. In the 1930s, it was home to several artists of minor fame, but in the 1950s the renowned “Back-Beat” poet and novelist Jerrold Silverstein lived there. He wrote several of his best-known works, including *Going And Coming* and the poem “Overhang,” during his stay in room 7-B. Today the room is preserved as it was then, as a shrine to him.

The Vidersea Boardwalk: Despite seeming “old-fashioned” to young people, the Vidersea Boardwalk — a long, broad, plankwood sidewalk running along the shore for roughly a quarter of a mile — remains a popular tourist attraction. Its combination of quaint shops, cheap amusements, and an unobstructed ocean view attract all sorts

of people. Weddings are often performed there in the summertime.

SHOPPING

Eastwood doesn't have much in the way of fancy shops — it's a working-class neighborhood, not a commercial district. Its main attraction for consumers is the Three Lakes Mall, on the shoreline where Dunlop and Beaufort Avenues terminate. Though not as large as the Gadsden Consumerplex (page 55) or Stewartsville Mall (page 52), it's the largest shopping venue in the northeast section of Hudson City, and thus attracts shoppers (particularly teens and younger adults) from neighborhoods beyond Eastwood. As Hudson City's newest major mall (it opened in 2001), it's a young, aggressive business that actively promotes itself with a lot of contests, giveaways, and special events. Unlike many malls, it actively courts the younger crowd, with lots of businesses like video game arcades, fast food joints, and music stores that appeal to teens. More than one Eastwood parent effectively uses Three Lakes as a "babysitter" — they drop the kids off early in the evening with enough money for dinner and a little entertainment, then come pick them up at closing time.

ON THE TOWN

Eastwood doesn't have much of a nightlife — at least, not one that would attract outsiders. While there are a few nice places in Vidersea and Eastdale, most of its residents are happy to stick with plain old bars and burger joints.

The Copper Samovar (114 Winwood Avenue): Specializing in Russian cuisine, the Copper Samovar is the restaurant of choice for many recent immigrants from Russia and the Ukraine, as well as Hudsonites in search of culinary adventure. The furnishings and decorative art are all genuine Russian work that the owners bought cheap in Moscow and Kiev and shipped over to Hudson City. Some of the items are for sale to discriminating collectors (meaning, "anyone who can afford them").

Stan's (854 Dumont Street): If you're looking for a nice, thick burger and a good brew to wash it down, check out Stan's. Stan himself doesn't talk much, and neither do most of his patrons, but for most people that's a plus. The decor is straight out of the late Fifties/early Sixties.

Sunshine Fishing (the Vidersea waterfront, just north of 4th Avenue): If you've got a hankering to get out on the water and go after some fish, you need to talk to the people at Sunshine Fishing. They run a sport fishing charter service in the summertime (and at other times of the year for customers who book in advance), and can even arrange larger tours for groups, bachelor parties, and the like.

STREET GANGS OF EASTWOOD

While it's not as bad as it was in the 1800s and early 1900s, Eastwood rightly retains its reputation as something of a rough-and-tumble working-class neighborhood. It's still got a significant crime problem compared to surrounding neighborhoods like Worthington, Highlands, and Gadsden. Part of that problem is street gangs.

Compared to the gangs of Latin City, Freetown, or Lafayette, the Eastwood gangs don't seem like much. Mostly gang members just hang out together, occasionally commit crimes like shoplifting or joyriding, fight with other gangs, and maybe sell a little marijuana or cocaine here and there. But they're definitely not the happy-go-lucky sort of gangs you see in *West Side Story*; they're often tough and violent, even if they don't always show it the same way Freetown gangs do. Some of the best-known Eastwood gangs include:

The 3-7s: No one knows where the "7" comes from; the 3 presumably refers to 3rd Avenue, since the gang tends to congregate a lot along that street. At other times they hang out in Brantley Park, sometimes selling coke or even heroin to interested buyers. Many of them wear rings or necklaces displaying a 3 and a 7, or have those numbers as a tattoo.

The Bangers: Frequently seen hanging out in or around Three Lakes Mall — and often thrown out of there by the security guards after they make trouble or harass shoppers — the Bangers are one of the least violent local gangs. They joined together mostly to protect themselves from other gangs, and to make a little money; they're not really hard-core or interested in getting into a lot of fights. But if push comes to shove, they'll step up and throw down.

The Dumont Crew: This gang takes its name from Dumont Street, since most of the members live on or near the northern part of that road — one of the toughest areas in Eastwood. Some of the other gangs call them "the Stinkers" because they often hang out on the waterfront not far from the sewage treatment plant... and if they do it to the Crew's face, a fight's sure to break out.

The Lady Killers: Most Eastwood gangs don't allow girls to become members; at most, girls can hang around with the gang as members' girlfriends, "associates" who run errands for members, and so on. The Lady Killers is one of the few all-girl gangs in the area. When it got started, a few of the gangs figured it was easy pickings and set out to take it over... only to learn, to their sorrow, that these girls were just as tough as any group of punks with dicks. The leader of the gang is a girl who calls herself Jewel. She looks like she'd weigh about 90 pounds soaking wet, but everyone on the streets of Eastwood knows she's too mean to trifle with.

ELMVIEW



IMAGES OF ELMVIEW

Block after block of working-class apartment buildings

A group of guys relaxing outside a bar, laughing at some story one of them just told

Women sunning themselves on apartment building rooftops in the summertime

Street festivals down on Losey Square

The early morning sun shining down on a guy passed out in a gutter after a few too many the night before

"C'mon, that's bull%&!.!"*

*"No *%&!, man. I'm tellin' you, I heard it straight from the brass's mouth. I was walkin' over to the accounting office to talk to 'em about a problem with my check when I overheard these two guys talking. AmSteel's sellin' the plant to the Japanese! They're probably gonna close the whole thing down and sell it off. Or maybe they'll convert it to make computers or some such *%&! guys like you 'n' me don't know squat about. We're !\$&*ed, man — probably both be out've a job inside six months, tops."*

*"There's no !\$&*ing way, Frank. The steel market's on an upswing right now, they'd never sell the place while the price of steel remains high. We got nothin' to worry about."*

— conversation overheard at the Chez Chug-a-Lug

This large Southside neighborhood is located between Latin City, North Elmview, Forsyth, and Red Hill; most people think of its boundaries as Day Avenue, Ferry Street, and Port Avenue (though it goes a bit north of Day in the west, up to around Martin or Bost Avenues). It began in the early decades of Hudson City, when settlers led by Jonathan G. Losey sought new lands to call their own. They crossed the river and claimed the area around roughly where Losey Boulevard and Willow Street now intersect (Losey Square, as it's called). There were several large elm trees in the area, so they called their new village Elmview.

In time, other villages, founded by other settlers, sprang up around Elmview: Keyes Point, home to a strong nineteenth-century fishing and canning industry; Treymont; Hazelton; Westerbrook. But none of them flourished to the extent Elmview did, thanks to several factories and other prominent business concerns that got started there, and gradually Elmview grew to encompass them. For many decades it occupied virtually all of the eastern part of the Southside. In the Fifties and Sixties, when the northern part of the area began to go downhill, Elmview leaders persuaded the city to declare that neighborhood "North Elmview" as a way of differentiating it a little. Around the same time, as Hispanic immigration to Hudson City increased, Elmview south of Port Avenue became known as Latin City.

Today Elmview is a solid lower- to lower middle-class residential and industrial neighborhood. Most people live in tall apartment buildings (or, in the worse parts of the neighborhood, refurbished tenements dating from the late nineteenth

century); there's little detached housing (and most of that in Hazelton). Though it's unquestionably a rough neighborhood, it's a lot nicer than the nearby slums and ghettos of Latin City and Freetown (not to mention the human sewer that is North Elmview) — residents of those areas consider Elmview a "move up," and often work hard to be able to relocate there. Residents of Elmview, in turn, often try to earn the money to move to a better part of the city (such as Guilford or Gadsden), though many live their entire lives within just a few blocks of the apartment they grew up in.

The crime rate in Elmview is high — crime problems from North Elmview, Latin City, the Needle, and other surrounding areas often spill over into the neighborhood, and it has its share of native street gangs and similar problems. Fighting between the "hometown" gangs and incursions by black and Hispanic gangs has led to a lot of shootings and other violence. Additionally, the crimelord Janus claims part of Elmview, mainly the Wingate neighborhood and nearby blocks, as his "turf."

See page 82 for a map of Elmview.

LANDMARKS

Sightseers rarely come to Elmview, but there are a few places local residents consider important:

AmSteel (on the coast just north of Southridge Avenue): Elmview's single biggest employer, AmSteel has a steel factory on the coast. In recent years the company has struggled to keep the plant profitable, and the locals fear that its days are numbered. If the plant shuts down, the Elmview economy will go into a major tailspin.

Janson Field (399 Jacinto Avenue): Before they built the Herodome in 1981, the Hudson City Heroes played their games at Janson Field, an open-air stadium capable of seating about 45,000 people. After the Heroes moved west, Janson Field became city property. It's now used by a variety of community, amateur, and college sports teams for their games, and is also the site of some neighborhood festivals and events.

Losey Square (intersection of Losey Boulevard, Willow Street, Alamo Avenue, and Parmiter Street): The heart of Elmview proper, Losey Square is a traffic nightmare. Between the four roads leading into it and all the pedestrian crosswalks, it turns into a snarl of slow-moving cars during every rush hour. But Elmviewers love the burger joints, restaurants, and stores here (including Greenman's Grocery, one of the oldest continually-operated grocery stores in Hudson City), and have no interest in seeing the place changed.

Our Lady of Divine Mercy (501 Griffin Avenue):

“OLDM” is the largest church in Elmview, and one of the largest Catholic churches in the city. Built in the 1930s in a more or less gothic cathedral style, it's not just a place of worship for Elmview's Catholic residents. Over the years it's become something of a community center for all Elmviewers regardless of faith. It holds classes, sponsors children's sporting events and other competitions, and generally serves as a rallying point for the neighborhood.

SHOPPING

Almost no one comes into Elmview from outside to shop, but Elmviewers have some favorite stores and shops of their own.

Lardner's Drugstore (344 Benbow Avenue): With its full-service pharmacy as well as a lunch counter and a generous selection of other health, personal, and convenience items, Lardner's has been the drugstore of choice for many Elmviewers since it opened in 1973. Arthur Lardner still works in the pharmacy, but he's getting on in years and delegates most duties to his employees these days.

Michelle's Stop 'n' Shop (southeast corner of Binford Avenue and Dickson Street): Chain convenience stores like QuickCorner exist in Elmview, but they often take a back seat in popularity to similar local businesses. Michelle's Stop 'n' Shop is one such business. Proprietor Michelle Jemson is a well-known figure throughout the community, beloved for her generosity to local charities, top-notch coffee, and willingness to keep the Stop 'n' Shop open regardless of weather, riot, robberies, or illness. Unfortu-

THE ELMVIEW MUTUAL PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

Crime is a big concern for almost everyone in Hudson City. The residents of Elmview have even more to beware of than most: freaks and sickos wandering down from North Elmview; gangs from Latin City or Lafayette coming into the neighborhood to sell drugs; the crimelord Janus; and their own home-grown gangs. Rather than sitting around feeling scared or depending on the cops to protect them, some local folks decided to do something to protect themselves and their families. What they did was form the Elmview Mutual Protection Association.

EMPA members, who receive safety training from the HCPD, patrol the streets of Elmview, looking for problems the police need to know about. They wear distinctive red shirts and jackets, carry heavy-duty flashlights, and all have cell phones. Each member works one to two nights a week from 9:00 PM until 2:00 AM. They walk the streets in groups of three, and if they spot a crime or suspicious activity, they call it in. The police estimate that they've been responsible for stopping nearly a thousand crimes since the group began in 1997.

nately, she's starting to get on in years. None of her children seem to have an interest in taking over the business, so the Stop 'n' Shop may not be around for too many more years.

Moe's Junkyard (235 Port Avenue): Elmviewers looking for parts to repair an old car, a used appliance they can fix up, or some scrap wood for a building project come to Moe's Junkyard, an Elmview institution for decades. Now run by Moe Blomstein, Jr., the son of the business's founder, the Junkyard has been a source of amusement for generations of Elmview kids. One of the toughest “dares” in the neighborhood is to leap the fence and run across the Junkyard without getting caught by Midnight and Talon, Moe's two fierce dogs.

ON THE TOWN

Here are some of the places Elmviewers go for entertainment:

Argosy (southeast corner of Toledo Avenue and McLawhorn Street): Opened in the mid-Seventies as a disco, Argosy was a popular dance club for years, then fell into bankruptcy and disrepair when disco died. New owners bought it in 1990, repaired and refurbished it, and opened it as a modern dance club. It's become a popular nightclub for younger Elmviewers, but even with that the owners often have trouble making ends meet.

Chez Chug-a-Lug (northwest corner of Green Avenue and MacDonald Street): If you're looking for fine wine and food in pleasant surroundings, don't come here. The Chez Chug-a-Lug is a plain old neighborhood bar — a little run-down and seedy, and sometimes a bit rowdy maybe, but mostly just a place where Elmviewers go to toss down a beer or five after work. It tends to be especially crowded before, during, and after major events at Janson Field, and immediately after shift changes at AmSteel.

Hog Heaven (corner of Griffin Avenue and Barnes Street): A classic “biker bar,” Hog Heaven doesn't attract much custom from the average Elmviewer. Its patrons are bikers from elsewhere, including more than a few associated with outlaw motorcycle gangs. The HCPD has tried to get the place shut down on several occasions, but has never been able to prove that any wrongdoing actually goes on at the bar itself, or that Hog Heaven's owner, a devilishly-bearded guy named Walt Jasons, has committed any illegal acts.

Southside Rialto (379 Carter Avenue): Built in a grand style in the 1950s, this five-screen movie theater still retains much of its “golden days of Hollywood” charm. In addition to screening first-run movies every day, it shows a classic movie on one screen every Thursday night.

SLOW HAND

8 STR	10 DEX
8 CON	8 BODY
13 INT	10 EGO
13 PRE	10 COM
3 PD	2 ED
2 SPD	4 REC
16 END	16 STUN

Abilities: Bribery 8-, Conversation 11-, Gambling (Card Games, Dice Games, Sports Betting) 8-, CK: Hudson City 11-, PS: Three-Card Monte 11-, Sleight Of Hand 8-, Stealth 11-, Streetwise 12-, Survival (Urban) 11-, Trading 12-, WF: Handguns, Blades

Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Greedy; Social Limitation: Criminal Record

Notes: “Tha's it, man... watcha card, watcha card, gotta keepa eye onna lucky lady...”

Slow Hand (“they calls me that ‘cause I moves th’ cards s’slow tha eveyone c’n see th queen, man”) is into anything that’ll make him a quick buck. Usually that means setting up his three-card monte table and hauling in a few bills from suckers who missed the memo a hundred years ago that the whole damn thing is a scam. Other times you’ll find him on a street corner selling “genuine” Rolex and Gucci watches, or maybe in a crowd somewhere trying his hand at a bit of simple pickpocketing. Whatever he earns during the day, he usually spends later that evening on booze, weed, and women, or throws away on some pony.

FORSYTH



IMAGES OF FORSYTH

The sight, sound, and smell of the sea of human misery that is Boxtown

An HCC student working nights at a Quick-Corner, studying math whenever there are no customers to wait on

Gangs selling drugs from their little patches of turf near (or under) the South Expressway

An astounding variety of goods, each with its distinctive mauve tag, in the windows of Dino's Pawn

Forsyth is a cesspool. Mothers on welfare using the money to support their crack habits instead of their kids — and many of them have two or more children by different fathers. The fathers are no better: gangsters, unemployment cheats, bums.

And Boxtown! If anything symbolizes what's wrong with this city, and this society, Boxtown is it. Those people ought to be driven out or killed, not coddled and given free needles. Give me a big enough firebomb and I'll do the job myself. The millions it would cost the city to rebuild the highway afterward would be a small price to pay.

— from the journals of the “vigilante” Siddhartha

Partly a working-class neighborhood and partly a college neighborhood, Forsyth evolved from a village of the same name founded by English settlers early in Hudson City's history. It never attracted the sort of industry or attention that Elmview did and languished for many years. An influx of relatively educated and prosperous freed slaves after the Civil War — blacks who didn't have to settle for the shanties of Freetown — caused Forsyth to grow and even expanded the economy some, though many of the “natives” were less than pleased with their new neighbors. Tensions remained high for years, and even today are likely to flare during times of stress (such as the civil rights movement of the late Sixties or recent riots sparked by blacks' dislike of court verdicts in police brutality cases).

The building of Hudson City College in the 1950s revitalized the flagging neighborhood. Not only were many locals employed in the construction, and later in various positions at the College, but students looking for cheap off-campus housing often came to Forsyth. The parts of the neighborhood between the college and roughly Burns Avenue have since become a “student ghetto,” filled with small apartment buildings and detached houses rented by students... as well as the college bars and other businesses that cater to them.

Today, most people define Forsyth as the area bounded by Centre Street or Ferry Street, Day Avenue, Southridge Avenue, and S. Madison Street or Heine Street — though it's not always clear where Forsyth ends and Elmview, Riverside Hills, or Lafayette begins. Most people also consider the neighborhood directly south of Hudson City College (as far west as Carver Street and south to King Avenue) as belonging to Forsyth. The southern

and western parts of Forsyth in particular tend to resemble “Fayettenam” more than they do north Forsyth. The presence of Boxtown (see below) has really brought parts of the neighborhood down over the past twenty years.

A high crime rate plagues Forsyth. Gangs from Freetown and Lafayette come over to sell drugs and fight over turf with a few local gangs. More than a few of the inhabitants of Boxtown are desperate enough, selfish enough, or mentally disturbed enough to commit all sorts of crimes (particularly the property crimes necessary to support alcoholism or a drug habit). Anyone who lives in Forsyth and doesn't at least triple-lock his doors is a fool.

See pages 53 and 82 for a map of Forsyth.

LANDMARKS

*“Spare change? Spare change?” That's what they ask me, every day. They get me while I'm walkin' to the train, goin' to the grocery store, you name it. You figure they'd get the idea after all the times I've told 'em no — I worked hard to get what little I got, and I'm ain't givin' any of it to those bums. They should earn their own money. If I could afford a car I wouldn't haveta put up with this *&#!.”*

— Forsyth resident Dumont Jefferson

Other than Robertson House (page 19), there's not much to draw anyone to Forsyth — and plenty of reasons to stay away. The neighborhood's main feature is one most residents wish would just go away: the homeless camp called Boxtown.

Boxtown began in the mid- to late Seventies where the South Expressway merges into S. Truman Boulevard. Bums, vagrants, and homeless people congregated there, since the elevated highways created a sheltered area where rain and snow couldn't fall to the ground. Some of them brought scrap wood or cardboard boxes to create small personal shelters, and that's how the place got its name.

During the Eighties and Nineties, Boxtown grew extensively along the undersides of the highways, and in good weather even beyond their bounds. At times it's dominated several blocks around the intersection, creating significant sanitation and public safety problems. The police have tried to clean the place out several times, but civil rights activists and other protestors have made their job difficult... and even when they disperse the “residents,” it isn't long before the residents come back. At this point the police have given up trying to make Boxtown go away; instead they concentrate on trying to minimize the problems it creates.

SHOPPING

Most of the shops and stores in Forsyth are chains, like In Step shoes, Big Screen Video, and Head Games hairstylists. But some local businesses still survive, such as:

Dino's Pawn (3662 Rosemont Street): Paul "Dino" Dinetti has run this pawn shop near the intersection of Rosemont and Toledo (and not far from Boxtown) for nearly forty years. He'll buy just about anything, from old jewelry, to used VCRs, to dishware, to clothes, but he's got a well-deserved reputation as a cheapskate — he pays as little as possible, then tries to sell the item quickly for more than he paid so the former owner can't reclaim it. The police have investigated him for selling stolen goods several times (he doesn't seem very particular about where his Boxtown "customers" may have gotten the things they sell him), but he's quick to return anything they can prove was stolen and has never been implicated in any serious wrongdoing.

Forsyth Tracks (southwest corner of Benbow Avenue and Pugh Street): Catering to both the student crowd and local residents, Forsyth Tracks sells CDs and tapes, and even has a small section of used record albums for the old-timers. Mostly it just sells the latest hits, rap and hip-hop, and other contemporary music, but it also carries a few local favorites. The owner, Derrick "DJ" Jamison, isn't much of a businessman, but he's got a lot of connections in the Southside music scene.

ON THE TOWN

Most of the nightlife in Forsyth is in the northern part of the neighborhood, near the College. There's enough going on up there that people are willing to be out on the streets late. In other parts of Forsyth, once someone's in for the night, he usually stays in for safety's sake.

Club Twenty (4784 Carpenter Avenue): This dance club appeals mostly to the College crowd with its blend of modern pop, alternative rock, and techno music. Periodically it hosts raves or other events; student organizations can rent it out for a night for special parties. It has a full bar and also serves some food.

The Eagle's Nest (879 Heine Street): The HCC mascot is the eagle, and the Eagle's Nest is a home-away-from-home for fans of the team. This bar and grill's decor is wall-to-wall Eagles paraphernalia, team and player photos, and pictures of famous plays; the specials include the Eagle-Burger (a half-pound of beef, bacon, two cheeses) and Victory Rings (onion rings with special dipping sauce). The Nest even has TVs set up to receive broadcasts of Eagles games, which are filmed by the College's communications department.

Verne's Fish Shack (3910 Day Avenue): Despite its homey-sounding name, Verne's Fish Shack is actually a pretty good seafood restaurant. The food's not fancy — you won't find crab-stuffed lobster or lemon-grilled swordfish steak on the menu — but there's plenty of it, and it's all delicious. The owner, Verne Tisdale, does most of the cooking himself, but often comes out of the kitchen to greet his customers.

THE KING AVENUE
MASSACRE

Everyone who lives in Forsyth knows just how bad the neighborhood's crime problem is. But the rest of the city got a stark reminder of the situation in 2002.

One warm April evening a group of gangbangers later determined to be associated with the Warriors gang was walking down the north side of King Avenue a few blocks west of Robertson House. According to witnesses, the gang members weren't doing anything unusual or even threatening; they were apparently just walking somewhere.

A few minutes later, a car drove alongside them. In it were members of another gang, the 5 Parkfield Nubians, a rival gang to the Warriors. Without warning, the gangbangers in the car opened fire with pistols, shotguns, and at least one submachine gun. Several Warriors were killed instantly by the barrage; others, luckier or more alert, escaped unharmed or with only wounds by diving behind any cover available.

As the car sped away, the Warriors returned fire. One of them hit the car's left rear tire, and the driver lost control. With a screech of tires, the car skidded out of control, smashing into a lamppost. The wreck left the car undrivable.

Deprived of their getaway vehicle, the Nubians (all of whom were unharmed by the crash) piled out of their car and took cover themselves. They began firing back, and an entire block of King Avenue became an urban battleground. Bullets began flying back and forth between the two groups as innocent bystanders fled for their lives. One of them, an elderly man named Richard Chesson, couldn't move fast enough; he was cut down by a bullet fired by one of the Warriors.

For the next six minutes, the two groups fought on, unhindered by any efforts to stop them; two gangbangers were killed, and several injured. Then the first HCPD car arrived on the scene. Sensing a common enemy, both groups of gang members turned their guns on the cops, killing officers Raymond Tanner and Raul Perreira. Then the gun battle resumed.

Before more cops could get there, a third party entered the fray: the Headless Hangman. Apparently attracted by the sound of gunfire, he waded into the Warriors, filleting two with his sickle weapon, breaking the neck of a third, and leaving several others unconscious. Before he could turn his attention to the Nubians, several HCPD cops arrived, so he faded into the night and left the police to clean things up.

In the wake of this incident, several members of the City Council called for more stringent city firearm regulations, or more funding for body armor for police officers, but both measures died in committee.

BOBBY

6 STR	7 DEX
9 CON	8 BODY
6 INT	5 EGO
8 PRE	6 COM
1 PD	1 ED
1 SPD	3 REC
18 END	16 STUN

Abilities: Concealment 11-, PS: Panhandling 11-, PS: Scrounging 11-, Survival (Urban) 11-

25+ Disadvantages: Dependence (heroin addiction; alcoholism); Money: Destitute; Psychological Limitation: Severe Mental Disturbances; Social Limitation: Homeless Person

Notes: Bobby's been on the streets so long he doesn't even remember his own last name, or where his parents live... or even if they're still alive. He took his first hit of heroin years ago as a teenager, and he's been riding the needle ever since (not to mention drinking like a fish). He's got his own little patch of concrete at Boxtown and an old refrigerator box to sleep in, but everything else he owns he carries with him in a few plastic grocery bags. If it's raining or snowing he just stays in his box all day (unless he has to go out to get a hit, or earn/steal the money to buy one); other days he usually wanders aimlessly around Forsyth and Lafayette asking people for money. But while he may be mentally disturbed, and high half the time, he's not stupid. He sees a lot that happens on the streets, and he might be willing to talk about it if someone gave him a few bucks or bought him a meal.

IMAGES OF
FREETOWN

Crack vials crunching under your feet as you walk down the sidewalks of the Numbers in the morning

The sound of gunfire a few blocks away

An old black woman walking determinedly down the street, afraid of nothing

Gangs, dressed in gold or green, clustered on the front steps of apartment buildings, on streetcorners, outside stores

Cars pulling to the side of the street near gang kids, the driver handing money to the kids for a dime bag

Homeless people and junkies sleeping in MLK Park

The pulsing beat of music playing at a rent party, and the smell of frying fish coming from a balcony grill

“Bitch.”

Since I began work on this report, I’ve heard myself referred to by that word dozens of times — sometimes with affection, sometimes with suspicion; sometimes humorously, sometimes angrily. I grew up in your typical white middle-class suburban home where we didn’t even use that word for female dogs, so it took some getting used to. But hearing it spoken constantly as a virtual synonym for “woman” finally wore down my knee-jerk reaction.

I never did get used to “ho,” though.

—reporter Gail Donovan, from the introduction to her six-part series “Running the Numbers: Among the Gangs of Freetown” in the *Hudson City Mirror*

In the 1860s, after the end of the Civil War, a lot of freed blacks migrated north, hoping to find work and a new life. Some of them settled on the south side of the Stewart River outside of the borders of Hudson City at that time. They set up a shantytown Hudsonites called Freetown (or, more derisively, Smokeytown — because of the haze of cooking fire smoke that often hung over it, and the “smoke” smell of the inhabitants).

Life wasn’t easy for the residents of Freetown. In addition to grinding poverty, lack of food, and epidemics of cholera and dysentery, they had to endure the dislike, even hatred, of the Hudsonites (which sparked riots in 1867; see page 9). But in time the city came to accept them, and eventually Freetown grew into a prosperous black community. As Hudson City itself expanded, it eventually absorbed Freetown into the greater metropolitan area, and people came to think of it as a large neighborhood rather than a separate town.

But becoming part of Hudson City didn’t do much to lift Freetown out of poverty. It was basically a slum and a ghetto then, and it remains a slum and a ghetto right up to the present day. Most of the residents live below the poverty level — often significantly below (though a few neighborhoods, such as Greenbriar or Wister Park, enjoy better standards of living, sometimes approaching middle class). Jobs are scarce, homelessness and crime are everywhere, and for most people the dominant emotions of their lives are despair, frustration, and resentment.

Modern Freetown (generally considered the area between S. Jackson Street, Day Avenue, and the city’s western and southern borders) is mostly residential, and most of the residences are high-rise



projects or apartment buildings. There are plenty of small businesses serving the populace — grocery stores, drug stores, cell phone providers, restaurants and bars, things like that — but relatively few major employers. Here and there a factory like Sharpless Medical Supplies remains open, drawing on the wealth of relatively cheap labor to keep operating costs down. But most industrial facilities shut down long ago, victims of America’s shift away from a manufacturing economy.

FREETOWN CRIME

The crime rate in Freetown is the highest in Hudson City — there are parts of the neighborhood, such as the Numbers, where only the bravest policemen dare to go without significant backup. Two crimelords — Shango, an enormous bull of a man with appetites to match; and the mysterious

TREY-Z

10 STR	10 DEX	10 CON	8 BODY
10 INT	10 EGO	13 PRE	8 COM
3 PD	2 ED	2 SPD	4 REC
20 END	18 STUN		

Abilities: Concealment 11-, PS: Drug Dealer 11-, PS: Gangbanger 11-, PS: Play Basketball 11-, Stealth 11-, WF: Blades, Small Arms, Fringe Benefit: Membership (Wooster Park Warriors)

25+ Disadvantages: Distinctive Features: Wooster Park Warriors colors and tattoos; Psychological Limitation: Devoted To His Gang; Social Limitation: Criminal Record

Notes: Charles Zealey was born to Robert Zealey, a bricklayer and construction worker, and his wife Josephine in 1987, the third of five children. The Zealeys worried about exposing their children to life in Freetown, but they didn’t have any choice — they couldn’t afford to live anywhere else, even if they didn’t have five young mouths to feed.

They were right to worry. Despite the Zealeys’ best efforts, both their older boys got involved in gangs when they became teenagers; one died in a drive-by shooting in 1996. And when Charles was old enough, he followed in his brothers’ footsteps. Since he was the third member of the Wooster Park Warriors from the Zealey family, it didn’t take long before his homies were calling him “Trey-Z.”

As of 2004, Trey-Z is 17. He’s never held any kind of job, and he hasn’t been to school since he was 15. But he wears \$150 sneakers, \$200 sunglasses, and hundreds of dollars’ worth of bling-bling. The good life comes easy when you’re selling \$20 vials of crack like they were going out of style and not worrying about what it does to your “customers.” If you asked Trey-Z to care about anyone besides himself, his gang, and his girlfriend of the month, all you’d get would be a blank, hostile stare.

aesthete Strad — compete not only against each other, but countless other, smaller or less well-organized groups. The latter include several Jamaican posses and countless street gangs. Gang membership numbers over 12,000 boys and young men according to the HCPD's 2004 estimates. Most (but not all!) of the gangs are "sets" of one of three larger gangs: the Nubians; the Warriors; or the Overlords.

The crime problem in Freetown is so bad that most mothers won't let their children play outside, and many families sleep on the floor at night — both ways of trying to prevent badly-aimed bullets from hitting unintended victims. Most of the residents have become numb to the problem in many ways. They don't even bother to call the cops anymore to report gang activity or drug dealing; they know nothing's going to be done about it. They just go on about their business, stepping on the empty crack vials in the street and avoiding the more confrontational gangs the best they can.

THE PROJECTS

In many parts of Freetown, particularly the Numbers, most of the residences are apartments in high-rise government housing projects. These are typically ten- to twenty-story buildings, a block or half a block long, arranged in groups of three or six with all the imagination of a worker ant. Designed with the same practical functionality that gave rise to dumbbell tenements in the late 1800s, they're little more than brick boxes with row after row of windows along the sides. Few of them have been properly maintained. For example, a study by the Sociology Department of Hudson City University estimated that in the Freetown projects, there's only about an eighty percent chance of a building's elevator being in working order at any given time. Gangs have virtually taken over some of the high-rises; they hold the residents hostage and charge them money to enter or exit the building. Even in buildings where the gangs don't rule, they usually claim the roofs for their own — anyone going on a Freetown rooftop without permission is taking its life in his hands.

Some of the more prominent housing projects include:

Astoria Towers

Eden Plaza

Gracie Park

Jackson Heights

Halcyon Village (pronounced "halikon" by Freetowners)

Livonia Green

Newman Towers

Parkfield Terrace

Parsons Plaza

Southside Homes

Turlingdale

Whitehall

Wooster Park

THE NUMBERS

The heart of Freetown, and the most dangerous part of the entire neighborhood, is the Numbers — nearly two miles of streets and housing projects built as a joint project by the city, state, and federal governments in the Sixties and early Seventies. Running east-west from S. Jackson to S. Harrison Streets, and north-south from King to Miranda Avenues, it consists of five avenues (A, B, C, D, and E) plus Southridge Avenue bisecting thirty-seven numbered streets beginning with First Street in the west (the street names are spelled out, not written as numerals), thus creating roughly 240 individual blocks.

Most of the housing in the Numbers is projects, or slumlord-run tenements that aren't any better. There are no lawns to speak of, and no parks except MLK — kids play in the street or in vacant lots, heedless of the junk, the junkies, and other threats all around them. Most of the kids don't go to school beyond junior high — unless they're athletes and want the big shot at a college scholarship or pro career — and according to Department of Social Services estimates as many as 12% of the girls above age 14 are pregnant or have children already. What money there is in the neighborhood is mostly squeezed out of the residents by the drug dealers, then recycled back through stores catering to the *nouveau riche* thugs.

Life in this neighborhood is so dangerous, so beset by hopelessness, that Freetowners have a term for it: *running the Numbers*. Anyone who can run the Numbers is a street-smart guy, someone whose wits, speed, or connections help him stay alive day after day on the urban battleground.

OTHER NEIGHBORHOODS

Freetown's so big that it's divided up into a lot of little neighborhoods, some covering just a few blocks. The rest of Freetown isn't quite as bad as the Numbers, but no part of it is truly nice or safe compared to, say, Riverside Hills, Crown Point, or just about any part of the Northside. The rule of thumb is that the further west and north a neighborhood is, the better it tends to be.

Greenbriar and Wister Park — the areas north and west of Freetown Community College — are the best parts of Freetown. They have some detached housing, and the buildings generally aren't as tall or oppressive. Some small businesses thrive here, largely due to the efforts of entrepreneurial FCC graduates.

Charlesburg, which is located south of the Community College, is a little worse than Wister Park. Proximity to I-4085 makes it a desirable location for trucking firms, some small manufacturing businesses, and even a couple of biker gangs. City planners predict continued economic growth for Charlesburg.

Garlock centers around Southridge Avenue between S. Roosevelt and Pershing Streets. The buildings don't cluster quite as thick as they do in the Numbers, but they're as harsh and oppressive looking, and the people who live here don't have much more hope.

Oakdale, just east of Greenbriar, has seen better days. While it's the home of the Sharpless Medical Supplies factory, one of Freetown's largest

FLASHMAN JACKSON

10 STR	10 DEX
10 CON	10 BODY
13 INT	10 EGO
15 PRE	12 COM
3 PD	3 ED
2 SPD	4 REC
20 END	20 STUN

Abilities: Bribery 12-, Conversation 12-, AK: Freetown 14-, CK: Hudson City 11-, KS: The Freetown Community 12-, Mechanics 8-, Persuasion 12-, Sleight Of Hand 8-, Stealth 11-, Streetwise 12-, Trading 13-, Well-Connected and 20 points' worth of Contacts and Favors in Freetown and Lafayette, Vehicle (Peddler Van)

Disadvantages: None

Notes: Flashman Jackson has been an institution in Freetown for nearly twenty years. A former gangbanger who abandoned "the life" for a better one but never left the streets, he cruises around Freetown in his "Peddler Van," a custom-made oversized van with extra doors and special shelving installed in the back. Wherever he sees a crowd, he pulls over and opens for business. A miniature convenience store on wheels, the Peddler Van has all sorts of non-perishables people need: candy, t-shirts, cigarettes, condoms, discount CDs, you name it — ask the Flashman for it, and he's probably got it squirreled away in there somewhere. His prices are fair, and he's even willing to dicker a little. On top of all that, he tries to keep an eye on the neighborhood kids, making sure they stay out of trouble and giving them rides home sometimes if they need one. Everyone from hard-core gangstas to tired old ladies likes the Flashman and looks forward to seeing his gold-toothed smile.

HOOPS ON TWENTY-THIRD

Down on Twenty-Third Street, not far from the Southside Homes, there's a blacktop basketball court wedged in between three grimy brick buildings. The nets got torn down long ago, and the rims are rusty — but if you want a serious game of hoops, that's the place to go.

The guys who play on Twenty-Third play *hard* — no-holds-barred hoops where no one gets a rest break, the only talk is trash talk, and a guy who misses a shot he should've made gets jeered by teammate and opponent alike. And don't come to play if you're not prepared to bet: when the game ends, the losers fork over the green and slink off to wait for their next chance.

Not everyone likes to play at the court on Twenty-Third, but it's got nothing to do with the competition. A couple years back, there was a close game where the losers took things a little too hard. The argument got settled with lead, and by the time the paramedics got there four guys were dead. Some people claim they can still see the bloodstains on the ground, and the whole damn place just gives them the creeps. Plenty of other places to play anyway.

employers, there aren't many more jobs to be had. The housing was once fairly nice, but has become run-down through neglect. The area's nominally part of Shango's territory, but he often fights for turf with various Nubians sets.

Astoria runs in a long strip south of Parsons Avenue, expanding to the north a little once you cross Pershing Street. Businessmen from Stewartville, the suburb to the south, have recently bought several properties in Astoria with an eye toward renovating and revitalizing them... but it remains to be seen whether they'll succeed, or fail like so many before them.

Just east of Astoria is Masonville, named by the freed slaves who founded it for the Mason-Dixon Line. Despite the presence of the Stewartville Mall (see below), there's little good that can be said about Masonville, except maybe that the gang warfare isn't nearly as bad here as it is to the north — no one claims this territory right now.

Directly north of the Numbers are two neighborhoods, Camden and Hadleyville. Both are like the Numbers writ more gently: poor housing; poor people; poor prospects. They get better to the north, between Harvey and Day Streets. There the neighborhoods take after Riverside Hills as much as Freetown, and offer a little more in the way of economic and cultural opportunity than most of Freetown.

LANDMARKS

Freetown isn't exactly a tourist attraction — not unless a visitor takes a *really* wrong turn. But like any other neighborhood it has its noteworthy locations.

Freetown Community College (1043 Drexel Road):

The largest institution of higher learning in Freetown, FCC (as it's widely known in Hudson City) is the center of the somewhat nicer communities of Wister Park and Charlesburg. It's the site of many community events, and quite a few alumni remain in the area after graduation. The homecoming celebration every fall is a sight to behold, with a contest to build the most elaborate parade float and people dressing up in their best finery or most outlandish costumes (depending on inclination and social status).

For several years FCC has been lobbying city and state authorities to change its name to Freetown College (or better yet, Freetown University). Its Board of Trustees rightly feels that dropping the word "Community" would increase the institution's prestige, and make it easier for two-year students to transfer credits to other colleges. So far this effort hasn't succeeded, but most people at the college feel it's just a matter of time and perseverance.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Park (southeast corner of King Avenue and S. Harrison Street):

In 1970, city officials renamed Abercrombie Park in Freetown to honor Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Since that time the park has deteriorated so much that it's a disgrace to King's name and causes. What was once a beautiful park, suitable for families and children, has become a battleground between gangs and a haven for criminals and the homeless. Gangbangers have van-

dalized its play and sports facilities, covering them with gang graffiti. In effect, MLK Park has degenerated into a vast open-air drug market; anyone who goes there, especially after dark, is risking his life.

The park has a fairly simple arrangement: a large playground for children at the south end, basketball courts at the north end, and greenspace (or what used to be green — it's now mostly dirt) in between. Most of the playground equipment doesn't work well anymore (if it works at all). The gangs regard the basketball courts as "neutral territory," where two warring groups can meet for peace talks (or, on those rare occasions when reason prevails, to settle differences with a game of hoops instead of gunfire). Quarrels over who has the right to sell drugs elsewhere in the park have often erupted into firefights.

Mt. Zion Baptist Church (southeast corner of Benbow Avenue and S. Harrison Street):

Mount Zion was once the largest church in Freetown — and the most beautiful as well, with architecture evoking both European and African designs. Unfortunately, it burned down in June, 1996... at which time it was discovered that a church employee had been embezzling the money intended to pay for insurance. The church has been trying to rebuild ever since, but has had great difficulty raising enough money. The cause of the fire has never been finally determined; the Fire Department's tentative conclusion is faulty wiring.

SHOPPING

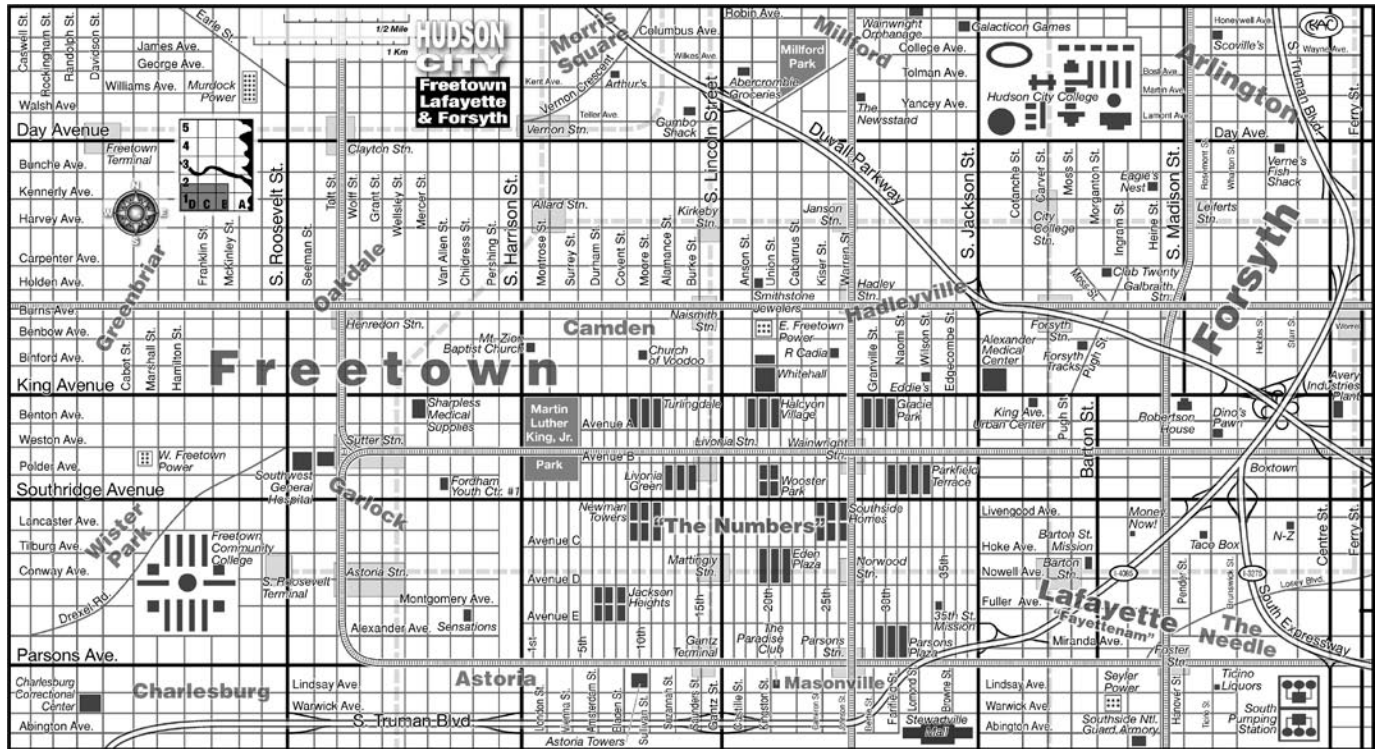
Shopping isn't the best in Freetown — most residents don't exactly have lots of bucks to blow. But for a neighborhood that has so many impoverished people, Freetown has quite a few retail businesses ready and willing to sell luxury items to wealthy drug dealers and their hangers-on.

Smithstone Jewellers (northeast corner of Anson Avenue and Holden Street):

Formerly a more or less ordinary jewelry store getting by on sales of engagement rings and expensive Christmas gifts, Smithstone became better known in the community, and more profitable, when it began designing and selling its own line of the "bling-bling" jewelry favored by gangstas, rappers, and their fans. Its original and innovative designs have caught and kept the eye of Freetown's hippest street people, and that meant — and continues to mean — big sales.

Stewartville Mall (4995 S. Jackson Street):

This large mall, completed in 1997, sits right on the edge of the city proper and the suburb of Stewartville. Most pundits predicted that it would fail within a few years, but its clever managers have confounded the experts by making the mall one of Freetown's few modern economic success stories. It caters primarily to black and Hispanic consumers, which make up about 65% of its business. Included among its wealth of chain stores (such as Downtown Music, Dynasty [clothing for women], and Miles Of Smiles [cards and gifts]) there are a few locally-owned businesses, like Bessie's Chicken (a Freetown favorite) and The Auto Motive (automobile painting, decoration, and alteration).



ON THE TOWN

People who live in Freetown enjoy a night out as much as anyone else. Here are some of the places they go to relax.

Eddie's (3427 Wilson Avenue): A dark, seedy bar in the mold of dark, seedy bars all over the world, Eddie's serves a clientele that ranges from the poorest Freetowner to the richest gangbanger. Provided the bartenders know who you are, and that you have a job, they're usually even willing to run a tab.

It's an open secret that a lot of underworld deals get made at Eddie's. On any given night, it's not unusual to find half a dozen of Freetown's most prominent gangstas there, warily eyeing their enemies and ready for anything... be it the chance for profit or an opportunity to put one over on a rival. Somehow, owner Eddie Malden keeps the peace... usually. But even if the patrons keep their cool, the bar sometimes attracts other forms of unwanted attention. More than one vigilante has gone there looking for information... and sometimes even gotten it without a major brawl.

The Paradise Club (northeast corner of Lindsay Avenue and Kingston Street): While most of the city's topless bars and sex clubs congregate over in North Elmview along the Strip, not all of them do. Freetown has its share of vice businesses, and the Paradise Club is one of them. With its red-carpeted entrance, plush decor, fully-stocked bar, and beautiful dancers, it's *the* destination spot for gangbangers with money to blow. It's said that Buckshot (page 173) is a frequent customer and even has unlimited use of one of the private back rooms... and all the women he wants.

Sensations (southwest corner of Montgomery Avenue and Childress Street): This dance club often features guest DJs from around the country spinning the latest dance favorites, and sometimes even live acts. It draws everyone from Numbers gangstas to FCC college students; occasionally tempers flare and a fistfight or a shooting occurs... but somehow the club is just as full the next night.

GADSDEN



IMAGES OF GADSDEN

Looking out to sea from the Scenic Overview, the ocean breeze ruffling your hair and picking at your clothes

The grim and overbearing walls of Longview Correctional

Men moving wheeled racks of new clothes down the streets of the Garment District

Picnickers, frisbee-players, and dog-walkers enjoying Gadsden Park

The polished marble floors, ever-moving escalators, and glittering store displays in the Gadsden Consumerplex

"Nahhhh, it ain't so bad living near the prison. Sure, it's kinda scary and imposing to look at, but all those walls and barbed wire and stuff are what keep the bad people in. You hear a lot of stories about what goes on in there, but you don't ever hear about very many escapes, do ya? Besides, if one'a them guys did manage to make it outta there, you think he's gonna wanna hang around here? No god-damn way — they wanna get as far from Longview as they can."

— Gadsden resident Roger Arnesen

Named after John Gadsden, beloved mayor of Hudson City from 1876 to 1892, Gadsden encompasses several former small residential neighborhoods (such as Willow Brook, Goshen Heights, Fulton Green, and Cranleigh, all of which frequently pop up today in the names of buildings, businesses, and social clubs) as well as various non-residential zones. Developers looking to attract people to the area, which had something of a reputation as a rough-and-tumble place, coined the name in the 1910s, and their relentless publicity campaign eventually paid off. Gadsden's boundaries are usually defined as 8th and 20th Avenues and N. Adams Street.

Today Gadsden is mostly a middle-class residential neighborhood, with a few somewhat lower-class areas. Most of the residences are brownstones or apartment buildings. Small stores and offices are sprinkled throughout the residential areas. Toward the coastline there are some industrial facilities and warehouses, but fewer than might be expected since the Gadsden Cliffs prevented a true waterfront from developing in part of the area. The neighborhood's two most notable features are Longview Correctional Center (the city's massive jail complex; see page 192) and the Gadsden Consumerplex (see below).

The crime rate in Gadsden is moderate; no one group dominates the local underworld. However, because of Gadsden's proximity to Bankhurst and Highlands, it's slowly but surely being "yupified," "upscaled," and "urban renewed" (longtime residents believe they won't be able to afford to live there in ten to fifteen years, at the latest). That may mean the crime rate will go down... or at least change somehow.

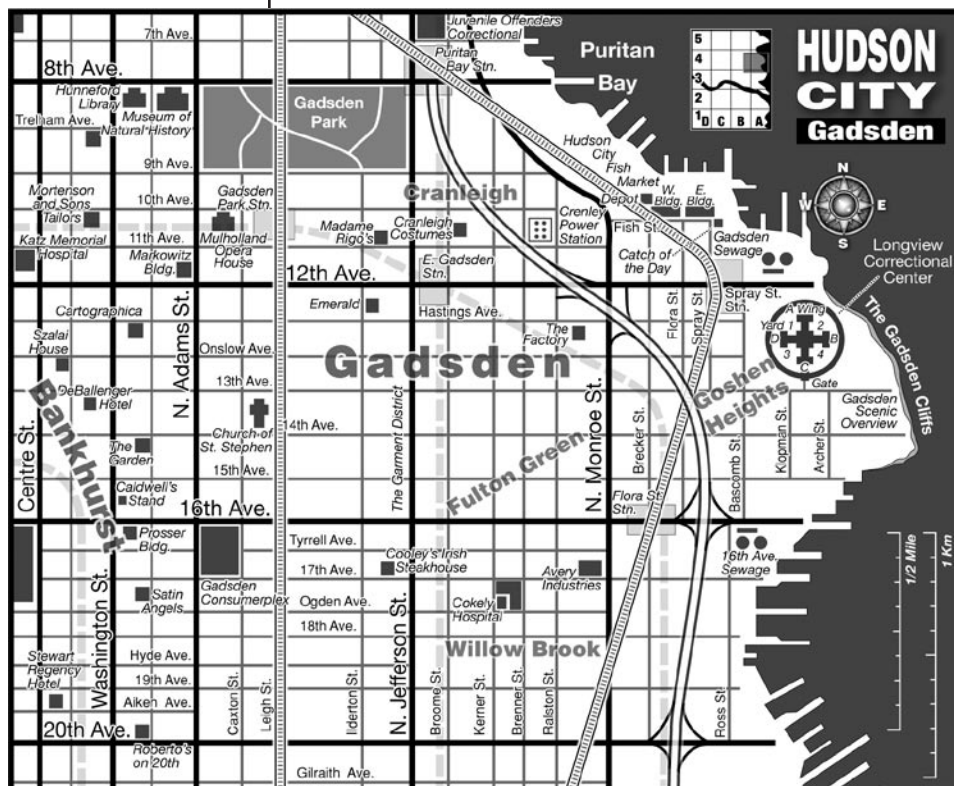
LANDMARKS

Church of St. Stephen (northeast corner of 14th Avenue and Caxton Street): Built in the late 1800s primarily

to serve a Hungarian community that lived in the area (but which has since vanished into the city's cultural tide), St. Stephen's is now the church of choice for many of Gadsden's Catholics. It's best known outside the city for its large, beautiful stained glass windows, crafted for it in the early twentieth century by the Hungarian artist Rikárd Antall.

The Gadsden Cliffs: The promontory between 12th and 16th Avenues rises sheer and steep from the Atlantic Ocean for 163 feet, creating the Gadsden Cliffs. The city built Longview Correctional Center here specifically because the Cliffs made fleeing from the city harder for any prisoner who escaped the facility. Since the Cliffs make most seaside businesses impossible, this small length of the Hudson City coastline remains only lightly developed. Sightseers can drive right up 13th or 14th Avenue to the Scenic Overview, a viewing park from which one can see miles out to sea on a clear day.

In recent years, the Cliffs have become a favorite target of rock climbers, who not only find them a chal-



lenging climb but enjoy thumbing their nose at the authorities by scaling them (since the law explicitly forbids it). Daring climbers approach the Cliffs by boat, then have to make it to the top and get away before someone notices them and calls the cops.

Gadsden Park: This 65-acre park, bounded by N. Adams Street, N. Jefferson Street, and 8th and 9th Avenues, is widely regarded as one of the city's finest. Unlike the much larger LeMastre Park, it contains a relatively sparse selection of facilities — just a baseball diamond or two. Mostly it's given over to pleasant green fields interspersed with small wooded areas and thickets. Plenty of benches are sprinkled throughout to give visitors a place to sit, and there are walking paths and similar attractions.

In the past couple of decades, Gadsden Park has developed its share of problems. Homeless people started “camping out” in some of the wooded areas, and criminals began mugging park visitors. The worst of these incidents occurred in 1999, when a young teenage couple, Roberta Andresen and Mark Finch, were murdered by assailants who have never been caught. The authorities believe the two were in the park on a date, were robbed, and were then killed by the robbers so neither of them could later identify their assailants. The police stepped up patrols of the park after the Andresen-Finch killing, but that only lasted for a few months.

Residents of Gadsden treasure the Park, and do what they can to preserve it: neighborhood watch-style patrols to try to cut down on the crime problem, trash clean-up days, and the like. For years, developers have lobbied the city to sell this incredibly valuable piece of real estate for commercial development, but every time a concerted effort by neighborhood residents, other concerned Hudsonites, and environmentalists has beaten them back.

The Garment District: Along the west edge of N. Jefferson Street in Gadsden is Hudson City's famed Garment District, one of the centers of the world fashion industry. For most of the twentieth century it was the site of countless clothing manufacturing, display, and sales businesses. In recent decades the manufacturing end of the trade has steadily shifted south to Latin City or west to Chinatown, where labor is much cheaper. The industry has taken a few publicity hits because of this, and once or twice highly-anticipated new designs have been hijacked on their way to from the sewing room to the showroom, but the garment makers save so much money doing business this way that things aren't likely to change.

The Garment District truly comes alive for two weeks in April, and a corresponding two weeks in October, when all the major fashion houses hold their spring and fall shows. Elegant showrooms like Galbraith Hall and the Swann Showplace are packed every day with fashion industry glitterati and reporters eager to say the latest offerings from major designers. Getting tickets to the hottest shows — not to mention the receptions that take place later that evening — is difficult.

The Hudson City Fish Market: One of the largest wholesale fish markets in the country. See page 188 for a full description of this fascinating place.

SHOPPING

Most Hudsonites don't really think of Gadsden as a mecca for shopping; it's still got a little too much industry and too few retail areas. But there are some places that might attract someone who's got money burning a hole in his pocket, such as:

The Gadsden Consumerplex: This ten-story monument to rampant materialism was built in 1990 by Candace Vanderburg. An enormous department store-cum-mall occupying roughly two by one entire city blocks at the southeast corner of 16th Avenue and N. Adams Street, it features a dizzying array of stores, shops, and services for the eager consumer to patronize.

In terms of physical layout, the Consumerplex is basically a big box. An atrium running the full height of the building fills the center, while stores and utility spaces line the outer part. Escalators and elevators provide easy access to every floor. The ground floor has an extensive network of fountains and water sculptures as well as an event stage where fashion shows, charity events, and concerts are held. From mid-November through Christmas, the entire floor transforms into Santa's Wonderland, a favorite attraction of young children all over the city. The tenth floor is a skylight-lit food court filled with so many restaurants that even the pickiest person can find something he likes to eat. The Consumerplex also boasts a 15-screen movie theater on the second floor.

Most of the stores in the Consumerplex are chains — Kill Zone electronic games, Emerald Buddha (Thai fast food), Night Eyes lingerie, Polar Bear ice cream, Silver Screen Productions (movie and cartoon merchandise and memorabilia), Bluebird (women's clothing), CD Alley, Kuperman Shoes, and so on — but a few are local. Examples include Aunt Ethel's Home-Made Candy, Hartzog Stationers, and Designs By Sharon.

Vanderburg is constantly on the lookout for ways to improve the Consumerplex; she wants it to be a prime “destination” not only for anyone visiting Hudson City, but for every resident. She'd like to make it bigger, but she can't (yet) afford to buy any of the land around it, and the zoning commission has twice denied her permission to add more stories. Her current goal is to persuade the city to build a rail station at Tyrrell Avenue and then build a skywalk directly to that station. So far the city fathers remain skeptical, but she's lobbying hard.

Cranleigh Costumes (3616 Broome Street): Founded as Cranleigh Custom Tailors by the Bellamy family in 1953, this business gradually developed a specialty in creating and storing costumes and costuming props for the theater and film industries, as well as for ordinary people looking for an imaginative, high-quality costume for Halloween or a theme party. In 1979 it changed its name to Cranleigh Costumes, ceasing all non-costume-oriented work. Today it has one of the largest collections of costumes and related items in the northeastern United States.

ON THE TOWN

When Gadsdenites hit the town, here are some of the places they go:

Blue (southeast corner of 11th Avenue and Leigh Street): Some of the best drinks around and a soundtrack of “timeless classics” suitable for dancing (such as Sinatra, Dean Martin, and the like) make Blue a prime destination for people whose idea of a fun evening out involves dancing but not a pulsing rock beat. The club's trademark Blue Magoo cocktail is a city favorite.

Cooley's Irish Steakhouse (2061 17th Avenue): Some of the best steaks in the city are served fresh off the grill at Cooley's, and fine Irish music accompanies the dining experience. The restaurant's owner, Angus Mulroney, often circulates among the patrons, entertaining them with stories and anecdotes told in his delightful Irish brogue.

The Factory (450 Hastings Avenue): Formerly a shoe and leather goods factory, this long-empty building was bought in 1992 by entrepreneur and restaurateur Gabriel Steubing. He refurbished it and created The Factory, a cutting-edge restaurant serving *nouvelle cuisine* and whatever else seems culinarily fresh and trendy at the moment. While no longer as crowded as it was in its first few years of business, it remains a popular nightspot and busy place.

IMAGES OF GUILFORD

The roar of the crowd from Stewart County Stadium when the Thunderbolts score a touchdown

Neighborhoods of small houses with small yards, carefully lined up in rows that run for blocks and blocks

The full moon casting an eerie glow over the Pilkenton Mansion

Diners sitting on the patio at the Marietta Grill, enjoying some good pork barbecue and hush puppies

The stained glass windows of St. Ignatius lit by the sun

GUILFORD



The pulsing beat of some insipid boy-band song began to fill the place as he stepped through the door. “Just my luck,” he thought. “Couldn’t be playing the Stones or something else that’s actually worth listening to.” But he wasn’t there for the music.

Two days ago a girl turned up dead on the HCU campus. He’d gotten a copy of the pathologist’s report, and it said she’d had an unidentified drug in her system — some designer thing, no doubt, that was so new the cops hadn’t heard about it yet.

He knew what it was. On the street they were calling it Sky. Some chemist at some underground lab somewhere in the Caribbean created it, probably. Kids like that girl wouldn’t dream of taking heroin or coke, but this sort of stuff — they thought it was “safe” just because it wasn’t illegal and didn’t leave a hangover. Idiots.

Since putting a stop to idiocy was an even more difficult task than fighting crime, he was going to stop Sky from getting to the idiots in the first place. He’d had to ask around on the streets a little, but it hadn’t taken more than a few hours... and a few broken hands and ribs... before someone told him what he wanted to know. At the Zodiac, they said. Black guy with dreadlocks, calls himself Kingston — probably where he’s from, since he’s got a Jamaican accent. “Probably a posse member,” he thought — if it were the Nubians or some other gang, there’d be a pack of them, and his informant told him this guy worked alone.

He walked across the room, stepping on the astrological symbols inlaid helter-skelter in the floor, looking for someone who fit Kingston’s description. It didn’t take long to find him; in that gold jacket, the man was about as subtle as a locomotive. He watched him for about an hour. Picking out his routine wasn’t any harder than finding him — someone would approach Kingston’s booth, sit down, and strike up a conversation. After a while some folded bills would be quickly passed to Kingston, who’d pass back a small vial in return.

That was all he needed to know. He walked over and sat down. Once he was in his seat, he quietly drew the silenced pistol from the false pocket in his pants, using the table to hide what he was doing from everyone in the room. “You Kingston?”

“Yah, mon. Who’re you?”

He didn’t bother to answer. The silencer was so effective that someone sitting in the next booth probably wouldn’t have heard the gunshots even without the loud music. Two shots was all it took. He caught Kingston as he began to fall, easing him down to the table so it looked like he was just taking a nap. Without a backward glance he got up and walked out of the club.

Guilford is a primarily residential neighborhood located in the northwest part of Hudson City. Bordered by Ardmore, Irishtown, Blackbridge, Worthington, and Little Italy, it occupies the land roughly between the city limits to the west, 12th Avenue and Kurtland Boulevard to the south, N. Lincoln Street to the east, and 3rd Avenue to the north.

Guilford began in the mid-1800s as a settlement for English and Scottish immigrants, who created a village they called Glenwood. Other communities, such as Burnside, Tarleton, Sutherland, Salem, and McCrimmon’s Grove sprang up nearby (as did solidly Irish communities to the immediate north; see *Irishtown*, below). Over time these villages became towns, and the towns grew together. It was a bureaucratic and administrative mess until the early 1950s, when Hudson City expanded its city limits and absorbed them all, rechristening the area “Guilford” in a name chosen by a plebiscite of the residents.

Many Hudsonites agree that Guilford is one of the most pleasant neighborhoods in the city. Its residential areas contain a mixture of detached houses and nice apartment buildings (though the quality of housing deteriorates a bit as you get close to Hudson City University), while its retail areas bustle with consumer traffic to many fine stores (both chains and local businesses). To the west, in the area around Stewart County Stadium and the Grolnick Power Station, there’s also some light manufacturing, office parks, and similar commercial properties.

Housing in Guilford was considered something of a bargain up until the late Seventies. At that point prices began to rise due to proximity to Irishtown and real estate speculation. Today most middle-class families can’t afford to buy a house in Guilford; it’s slowly but surely becoming a neighborhood of the *nouveau riche* and arrogant young businessmen.

The crime rate in Guilford is much lower than in most parts of the city — there’s no gang problem to speak of, for example. Most residents attribute this to the character of Guilford’s residents and

the neighborhood's nearness to Irishtown. A few policemen hint darkly that connections to nearby Little Italy have more to do with it. Regardless of the cause, Guilford's inhabitants appreciate the peace, quiet, and security.

For a map of Guilford, see page 28.

LANDMARKS

In addition to the Pilkenton Mansion (page 130), the Stewart County Stadium (page 114), and Hudson City University (page 117), Guilford's best-known location is the St. Ignatius Cathedral, at the northwest corner of 12th Avenue and Iroquois Street. The largest Catholic church in the city, it was built about a hundred years ago. Today its luster is dimmed somewhat by the noise from nearby Kurtland Boulevard, but thousands of Catholics still visit it each week to attend Mass, go to confession, or just admire the delicate woodcarving on the pews and the exquisitely-detailed stained glass windows.

SHOPPING

Guilfordans have plenty of money to spend, and plenty of stores to spend it in.

Avalon Books (southeast corner of 8th Avenue and Hickman Street): This chain of upscale bookstores was founded right here in Guilford. The "mother store" is now one of the largest, best-stocked bookstores in the city. Its managers expertly mix modern best-sellers with obscure books of note and long-time classics to create an eclectic blend of books suitable for hours of browsing.

Calibers (724 Taylor Street): Despite the relatively low crime rate in Guilford, many Guilfordans (not to mention the residents of nearby Irishtown) live in fear of crime — and with good reason, considering that places like Freetown and North Elmview are only a few miles away. Many of them visit Calibers, a gun store and shooting range near the intersection of Cranford and Taylor, to buy some "personal protection" and learn how to use it. Calibers also hosts an international shooting competition every April, awarding tens of thousands of dollars in prizes to the best shots.

Nina's Exotic Pets (southwest corner of Isherwood Avenue and Cleveland Street): Ever thought about owning a tiger? A tank of piranha? Maybe a wolf? Well, if you have, there's a place in Guilford that can make your dreams come true: Nina's Exotic Pets. Owner Nina Ruskin specializes in acquiring any animal you can imagine having as a pet... as long as it's legal, since she's an ardent environmentalist. She's also an ardent (and humorless) feminist, and deals with lewd jokes about "exotic pets" by threatening to unleash her pet ocelot on the offender.

Westwood Mall (between Beck and Winwood Avenues, Cleveland and Hickman Streets): About ten years ago, a group of entrepreneurs built this pedestrian mall in Glenwood. Mixing precisely-sculpted natural areas and broad walkways with carefully-selected high-end retail stores like Moon & Sun nature stores, Cardboard Heroes sports cards and memorabilia, Glenwood Diamonds, and Whirlies (a fancified bar and grille), they've created a consumer destination. The owners are looking to expand, but have yet to convince nearby landowners to sell to them (and even if they could, it's uncertain whether the city would grant permits for the expansion).

ON THE TOWN

When they're done shopping, here are some of the places Guilfordans go to relax:

Angus Café (northeast corner of 9th Avenue and Snow Street): Consistently voted one of the best burger joints in Hudson City by the readers of various newspapers and magazines, the Angus Café mixes modern decor and service with old-fashioned taste and quality. For many Guilfordans the day just isn't complete unless they stop at the Angus for lunch (or maybe pick up a burger to go for dinner).

The Junction (southeast corner of LaSalle Avenue and Huron Street): A college bar serving the HCU crowd (and younger Guilfordans who still want to feel like they're a part of that scene), the Junction has everything you'd want in this sort of place: lots of seats, big screen TVs, and cheap beer. It's particularly crowded whenever *Pioneers* games are broadcast on television.

Marietta Grill (northeast corner of Cranford Avenue and Meade Street): Specializing in Southern cooking at its finest, the Marietta Grill has become a local favorite since it opened in 1998. Owner Scott Carr grew up in Atlanta, and he's brought his love of fine Southern food to Hudson City. He's planning to open up another Grill in east Worthington or Bankhurst.

Zodiac (344 Crestwood Avenue): Just about everyone in Hudson City has seen one of this club's now-famous "What's Your Sign?" advertisements or t-shirts. That level of exposure, coupled with Zodiac's popularity among both the college crowd and older partiers, has made the club a profitable business for its owners, the Elliman twins. It's become a place to see and be seen, where you can't even get through the door if you don't have the right threads and the right attitude.

FELICITY MCQUADE

8 STR	8 DEX
9 CON	8 BODY
10 INT	10 EGO
13 PRE	16 COM
2 PD	2 ED
2 SPD	4 REC
18 END	17 STUN

Abilities: Acting 13-, Disguise 8-, High Society 12-, KS: Hollywood Society 11-, Mimicry 8-, PS: Actress 11-, PS: Dancing 11-, Reputation (famous actress, +2/+2d6)

Disadvantages: Hunted (Watched by the media); Rivalry (Professional, with some other Hollywood actresses); Social Limitation: Famous

Notes: Regarded by many critics and fans as one of the finest — and most beautiful — actresses of her day, Felicity McQuade has starred in nearly twenty major motion pictures and typically earns over \$15 million per film. Although still single at 31, at various times throughout her career she's been romantically linked with nearly every major male star as well as numerous wealthy bachelors from other fields. Born and raised in Guilford, she often returns to Hudson City to see friends and relax. She has an apartment in Guilford and a luxury condominium in an exclusive building in Bankhurst.

HIGHLANDS



IMAGES OF HIGHLANDS

People walking across the Governmental Center square or through Courthouse Plaza

The red brick staircases leading down to the Hudson City Underground

The Fourth of July decorations at Governmental Center

The “porthole” of Cherokee Tower

The intangible but unmistakable smell of money wafting out of the City Club

Orthodox Jewish diamond merchants walking on the streets near the Gemstone Exchange

“Look, I hate to say it, but you’re crazy. That’s never going to work.”

“I don’t agree. I tell you, we can do it — it just involves getting the right people on board and playing our cards just right.”

“Oh, sure. Anything works if everything goes just right. The odds of that happening here are ridiculously small.”

“That’s where you’re wrong. I have some connections over at Governmental Center. They can put us in touch with the people who have the say-so over this sort of thing... and given the right “persuasions,” I’m sure they’ll see things our way.”

“Hmmm. What sort of “persuasions”?”

“Blondes, brunettes, redheads... whatever. I’m told this guy’s not real particular.”

— conversation overheard in the City Club

A couple of miles west of Puritan Bay the land rises, creating a small plateau before sinking back down again as one approaches N. Truman Boulevard. Hudsonites call this neighborhood Highlands not only because of its elevation, but because this is where the movers and shakers of the city spend their time — journalists have parlayed the name into pseudo-intellectual slang terms for city politics like “gathering of the clans” or “the Highland games.” To most residents, Highlands is defined less by topography than as “the area around city hall.” On most maps the boundaries are N. Adams Street, N. Madison Street, 9th Avenue, and Chatham Avenue.

Highlands is mainly a commercial and governmental center. There are few residential buildings (mainly luxury condominium towers like the McMillan Building); most of the neighborhood is filled with skyscrapers containing the offices of rich and powerful businesses, business parks and plazas, cultural attractions, and government facilities. With Police Headquarters right on Courthouse Plaza, and the Department eager to protect the powerful men and women who work here so they’ll look favorably on police appropriations, Highlands is by most measures the safest, most crime-free area in the city.

See page 44 for a map of Highlands.

LANDMARKS

Besides such well-known institutions as the Kleinmann Center (page 111), Governmental Center (page 99), and the Museum of Natural History (page 111), Highlands has many well-known buildings and other attractions.

Cherokee Tower (southeast corner of 8th Avenue and Newport Street): Built in the late 1950s by renowned architect Jalmari Laukkonen, the Cherokee Tower, headquarters of Cherokee Bank (page 120), underwent significant renovations from 1997-2002. While retaining its distinctive profile, including the famous “porthole” window that dominates the eastern facade at the fiftieth and fifty-first floors, engineers replaced the grey granite exterior with a lighter-colored, sturdier marble and significantly re-arranged the interior space on about half of the building’s sixty floors. Today most Hudsonites find the building a more striking sight than ever before.

Flag National Bank Building (southeast corner of 4th Avenue and N. Madison Street): The headquarters of Flag National Bank (page 120), which has dozens of branches throughout the greater Hudson City area, this building also houses several law and accounting firms who work closely with the city’s banking community. The distinctively-shaped gilded radio tower on top of it can be seen from just about any place on the Northside (provided one has a clear line of sight).

Hudson City Corporate Center (along Centre Street at 7th Avenue): This cluster of six forty-story glass-and-steel skyscrapers houses some of the most important law firms, brokerages, and financiers in the city. Tower Seven is only twenty stories tall, but contains the ultra-luxurious Highlands Regency Hotel and has skywalks at the tenth floor connecting it to Towers One and Two to the north, and Three and Four to the south.

Hunneford Library (southeast corner of 8th Avenue and Washington Street): With a collection of approximately 15 million volumes, and millions more magazines, recordings, artifacts, and related information resources, the Hunneford Library is one of the largest public libraries in the United States. Begun in the early 1900s with private donations (including the princely sum of \$8 million from financier James Hunneford, for whom the building was named), over the past century it’s grown into a major institution of learning. Its distinctive arched main entrance has become symbolic of scholarship and knowledge. The main building, a twelve-story facility, houses both the Lending Collection (books anyone with a library card can borrow) and the Research Collection (reference books that don’t leave the building); the library system includes dozens of other branches throughout the city that hold part of the Lending Collection. Other features of the Library include an enormous reading room on the tenth floor, a Foucault pendulum, and one of the best Rare Book

Rooms in America. The RBR's collection includes such treasures as medieval incunabula, a Shakespeare First Folio, autographed copies of the works of many authors, several unique diaries, and rare Bibles in many languages. The Library's management has beefed up security significantly since Penny Dreadful's appearance in town.

SHOPPING

The streets of Highlands are lined with all sorts of stores and shops... but you'd better have a hefty bank account to shop in most of them.

Renee's (southwest corner of Cranford Avenue and Richmond Street): Women's clothing and furs are the goods in trade at Renee's, and the boutique stocks only the best — designer dresses and gowns from the biggest names in fashion from around the world, the most luxuriant fur coats and stoles available. It's reputed that several of the most famous actresses in Hollywood shop here.

Walters Plaza (southeast corner of 8th Avenue and N. Madison Street): A collection of small, elegant shops clustered around a delightful fountain, Walters Plaza is a must-visit shopping destination for many of Hudson City's wealthiest consumers. Women can find European cosmetics at Sevrès and the latest shoes at Difazio's while men buy custom-tailored suits and ties at Meloni & Burroughs, Haberdashers and fly-fishing gear at The Compleat Angler.

Wonderland Toys (2053 Beck Avenue): If Barbie and Hot Wheels aren't good enough for *your* children, stop by Wonderland Toys, which bills itself as "The World's Greatest Toy Store!" A better description would be "the world's greatest toy store for little rich kids," since there aren't many things for sale in Wonderland that cost less than a hundred dollars — and many of the toys range into the thousands. If you've ever wanted to buy your kid a solid mahogany racecar track with inlaid gold highlights, teddy bears made out of real Russian bear fur, or a child-sized Porsche that really works, Wonderland is the place to go.

ON THE TOWN

Highlands definitely has a night life — one several steps above the sort of thing you'd find in Bayside or Elmview. In addition to the Skyline Club (page 196), you might want to try:

The Carthage Club (near the Flag Bank Building on 4th Avenue): The renowned "adventurers' club" of the Twenties and Thirties still exists, but as a dinner and dancing club rather than a place where explorers, aviators, and crimebusters share their experiences with one another over brandy and cigars. The staff wears period outfits, and the dining room is the very definition of "elegance." The Club also boasts a large ballroom where a big band plays dance music every night from 9:00 PM to 1:00 AM.

DIPLOMATIC PARTIES

With Embassy Row as part of the neighborhood, it's not surprising that the movers and shakers of Highlands often find invitations to swank embassy parties in their mailboxes. Someone who's important enough, rich enough, or popular enough may find himself invited to diplomatic parties every week... and at some times of the year, almost every day.

A typical diplomatic party celebrates some important event in the host country: a day of independence; a religious holiday; a traditional festival. Less commonly, an embassy may host a party to celebrate the signing of a treaty or some other major event — or maybe just to show itself off, or try to build contacts within the international community.

Diplomatic parties are usually formal events at which the men wear tuxedos (or the cultural equivalent) and women wear dresses of corresponding quality. Getting in requires a physical invitation that the doormen (read: guards) can check. The attendees are usually an eclectic mix of diplomats, politicians, businessmen, and other important people. Some embassies make sure to have a generous selection of beautiful single women circulating among the crowd as well.

It's accepted as fact by many people that a lot of espionage-related activities go on at some embassy parties. Mostly this is low-level stuff, like a "diplomat" from one embassy checking out a "diplomat" representing a rival or enemy nation. Sometimes it helps an analyst to have had face-to-face contact with his opposite number — it lets him better understand what motivates that person (or at least, so spies assume). Other times more extreme activities, such as passing messages or even kidnappings and assassinations, take place; the latter are particularly good ways to embarrass the host embassy, if that's one of the goals of the operation.

The City Club: Located on the top floor of the Flag National Bank Building (see above), the City Club is an expensive, members-only lunch and dinner club. When two prominent Hudsonite businessmen decide to have a lunch meeting, as likely as not the City Club is the place where they'll agree to meet. It's said that millions of dollars' worth of deals are struck here every day. The Club is also famous for its Christmas egg nog, said to be the best in the city.

Faces (888 6th Avenue): Perhaps the poshest "gentlemen's club" in Hudson City, Faces features excellent drinks served by beautiful, topless waitresses as well as "exotic dancing" taking place on a well-lit stage. Many businessmen like to "unwind" here after a hard day at work. Most of the club is open to anyone who can pay the \$20 "one-time membership" fee and behaves himself... but those in the know say that membership in the Back Room, the private part of the club, is worth every penny of the \$1,000 annual fee.

MARILIS KETTLER

8 STR	9 DEX
8 CON	8 BODY
13 INT	12 EGO
14 PRE	12 COM
2 PD	2 ED
1 SPD	4 REC
16 END	16 STUN

Abilities: Computer Programming 8-, Deduction 11-, KS: Hunneford Library Collection 13-, KS: Layman's Arcane And Occult Lore 11-, Language: English, French, German (fluent conversation; Romanian is native), PS: Librarian 14-, SS: Anthropology 11-

25+ Disadvantages:
None

Notes: A second-generation Romanian immigrant, Marilis Kettler studied Library Sciences and Anthropology at HCU and parleyed her excellent grades into a job at the Hunneford Library. Since then she's worked her way several steps up the ladder to a position of significant responsibility: she's in charge of overseeing the Library's Research Collection as it pertains to anthropology, archaeology, and related matters (including the occult). Well-educated and highly intelligent, she can converse ably on many different subjects.

IRISHTOWN



IMAGES OF IRISHTOWN

Private security guards standing post at the gates to residential communities

Millions of dollars' worth of Italian sports-cars on the lot at Kelley Ferrari

The largest, best-manicured lawns in town

Women walking down the streets in outfits costing more than the average Freetown family earns in a month

The distinctive blue-lit windows of Far Bombay

Lots of cops cruising the streets, keeping a careful eye on things

"Excuse me, sir?"

"Yeah?"

"May I see some ID, sir?"

"You a cop?"

"No, sir, I'm a private security guard working for Blazon Security Services and hired by the residents of the North Thain Street subdivision to protect their property. I need to see some ID, sir, or I'm going to have to ask you to leave."

"I don't haveta show my ID to no rent-a-cops."

"Sir, you're on private property here, not city property. If you don't show me your ID and tell me what you're doing here, I'm going to have to ask you to leave immediately."

"And what if I don't leave?"

"Then I'll have to place you under citizen's arrest and escort you off the premises, sir — with force, if necessary."

— exchange between an Irishtown security guard and an unidentified person

When the first major waves of Irish immigrants began reaching Hudson City in the mid-1800s, they encountered significant discrimination from the primarily English-descended residents. As a result, they had trouble finding places to live in what were then the main parts of town — the Northside coast and a couple miles inland from there. Rather than fight the tide, they looked further west and established their own "ghetto" on the northwest edge of modern Hudson City (it was outside the city limits at that time). The neighborhood quickly became known as "Irishtown," though the residents themselves called it Westlow.

In the ensuing decades, as the city grew and became more crowded and polluted, the wealthy and pampered members of society decided they'd be better off living away from the center of town — a practice which advances in transportation were making more feasible than ever before. Attracted to the Irishtown area by its pleasant landscape and available land (since many of the Irish residents were technically squatters), they began moving out there.

A century later, Irishtown is the domain of the richest and most fabulous members of Hudson City society, and the slang term "Irish" has come to signify great wealth (and those who possess it) in the Hudsonite patois. Frequently compared to Beverly Hills, Irishtown features large, opulent

mansions, elaborately manicured lawns, and streets shaded by stately trees. Its inhabitants are typically "old money"; the *nouveau riche* are more likely to be found in Bankhurst, Guilford, Highlands, or east Worthington, though many yearn for the mansions of Irishtown and pay enormous sums for one that becomes available.

The borders of Irishtown are clearly delineated: 3rd Avenue, Cleveland Street, and the city limits. You can tell you've reached them because the streets become cleaner and detached houses with large lawns are the rule rather than the exception. You'll also notice a lot of cops, not to mention private security guards and gated communities. The residents fear the criminal rabble of the city (and not without justification; Irishtown children are sometimes the targets of kidnappers, for example) and spend good money to keep themselves as safe as possible. As a result, the crime rate stays extremely low... but the occasional spectacular robbery or bizarre homicide keeps the security forces on their toes, the burglar alarm companies in business, and tabloid readers titillated.

For a map of Irishtown, see page 28.

LANDMARKS

In many ways, Irishtown itself is a landmark. Hudson City tourists often come out to Irishtown to drive along the manicured streets and stare at the mansions of business magnates, film and music stars, and old money families. But even among the homes of the rich, a few places stand out.

Nicolaus Aquarium (1 Meade Street): Home to fresh and saltwater fish and aquatic animals from all over the world, the Nicolaus Aquarium is both an educational facility and a research institution. While the public comes to see such attractions as Shark Country USA, Ollie the killer whale, and the Penguin Follies show, scientists use the lab's extensive collection of sealife to conduct many types of studies and experiments. Under the leadership of director Jill Winston, the Nicolaus has increased its earnings every year for the past decade, and has now drawn up plans for a significant expansion.

Westlow Park: Every morning, nannies and *au pairs* from all over Irishtown bring their young charges to play in the fields of Westlow Park. Nearby you can see people walking or playing fetch with expensive purebred dogs, couples walking hand in hand, and birdwatchers on the prowl with their binoculars. On Thursday evenings in the summer, the Concerts in Westlow series fills the night with fine classical and jazz music. All in all, it's one of the nicest, best-maintained parks in Hudson City.

SHOPPING

If there's one thing Irishtown residents have, it's money to spend. The shopping here is among the best in the city... though you'd better have deep pockets if you plan to spend the day on MacDonald Avenue.

Hathaway Custom Accessories (499 MacDonald Avenue): Located at the corner of MacDonald and N. Roosevelt in the heart of Irishtown's world-famous shopping district, Hathaway's sells one-of-a-kind handbags, scarves, and other accessories designed by the boutique's owner, Tina Hathaway. A typical Hathaway bag costs about \$4,000, and some cost considerably more than that.

Kelley Porsche-Ferrari-Lamborghini (411 Patterson Avenue): If you're in the market for an Italian sports car, Kelley's on Patterson is the place to go. An authorized dealership for Lamborghinis, Porsches, and Ferraris, Kelley's specializes in meeting the needs of its demanding clientele. No matter what model of these sports cars someone wants, and what features, Adrian Kelley and his staff find a way to satisfy them.

Randolph's Market & Delicatessen (northeast corner of Bell Avenue and Rotterdam Street): For many Irishtowners, the typical food bought at a chain grocery store is far too common and crude. They want only the best... and Randolph's provides. Its shelves are stocked with the choicest gourmet foods available, and its Delicatessen can turn out everything from a pound of potato salad to a catered seven-course meal. This quality doesn't come cheap, of course, but for some Irishtowners it's more than worth it.

Vanderwaite & Flynn (602 MacDonald Avenue): "Jewellers to Royalty," this firm bills itself with justifiable pride. "V&F" creations have graced the heads, hands, and necks of many princes and queens in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia... not to mention the society mavens of Hudson City. If you have to ask the price, you can't afford it — but there's no mistaking a V&F original, or the prestige wearing one confers. The firm frequently loans jewelry to famous actresses for Oscar ceremonies and other special occasions.

ON THE TOWN

Irishtowners want to enjoy life, to be entertained... and they're willing to pay handsomely for it. Some of their favorite "hot spots" include:

Club Irish (6869 Chatham Avenue): If it's hip, if it's trendy, if it's cutting edge, you'll find it being played and danced to at Club Irish, the hottest after-dinner spot in Irishtown. Don't even think about trying to get in if you haven't spent a few thousand dollars on your clothes and hair... and are willing to spend hundreds more on drinks and tips.

Far Bombay (300 Bell Avenue): Taking its name from an old Sinatra tune, this upscale cocktail bar serves drinks made from the rarest, most expensive, gins, tequilas, and other exotic booze. Liquor snobs flock to this place like deer to a salt lick to show off their taste and talk with the "sommeliers" about the

latest and trendiest in alcohols. The decor mixes Rat Pack chic with modern touches of neon in a way that, surprisingly, works.

Marco Polo (990 Patterson Avenue): An intriguing culinary experiment that succeeded, Marco Polo offers a split menu: half Italian food, half Chinese food. Most critics predicted it would fail within a year, but somehow the mixture — not to mention Chef Paul Chou's excellent cooking — caught the fancy of Irishtowners. Marco Polo also boasts a fine selection of Italian wines.

Orleans (northeast corner of Cook Avenue and York Street): The house salad costs \$20, the menu is entirely in French, and the wine cellar is stocked with millions of dollars' worth of bottles of wine — even if the waiters' combination of snootiness and servility weren't a tip-off, it wouldn't be hard to tell that Orleans is a restaurant patronized only by the *very* well-to-do. Orleans consistently receives a five-star rating from all the major restaurant guides, and some argue it's the best French restaurant in America.

THE IRISHTOWN SOCIAL WHIRL

More than a few rich people enjoy showing off just how much moola they've got. Some do this by buying the fanciest sports cars, biggest houses, or most expensive jewelry they can. Another way, one favored by many Irishtown families, is to throw elaborate parties.

Over the years, an informal calendar of parties, balls, cotillions, and similar events held by Irishtowners has developed; the Irishtowners refer to it as "the social whirl." With so many wealthy families competing for time on the social schedule, it's tough for a newcomer to break into the routine and make a mark for himself, but that doesn't stop lots of people from trying.

The three rock-solid anchors of the social whirl are the Frazier "Spring Gathering" in May, the Bankhurst "cookout" in August (one of the few events that attracts large numbers of the far-flung Bankhurst clan back to Hudson City), and the Willoughby Christmas party in mid-December. The latter is particularly highly-regarded because of the skill displayed by the Willoughbys' cooks and caterers, and the lavish hands with which their bartenders pour the drinks, but anyone who's anyone makes a point of appearing at all three functions. Whether it's filet mignon burgers and gourmet Doghouse hot dogs at the Bankhurst compound, or the elegant hors d'oeuvres and pastries at the Spring Gathering, everyone has a good time.

The other parties on the social whirl aren't quite such major affairs, but they're a lot of fun nevertheless. Many Irishtowners particularly enjoy the Andrews "wine and cheese party" in September. The latest party to make it big on the social whirl is Adriene and Jake Davidson's Halloween costume party in the Mustard Mansion; the competition to win the prizes (best, scariest, sexiest, *etc.* costume) can get intense!

ALLEN STANFORD

10	STR	12	DEX
12	CON	10	BODY
13	INT	10	EGO
15	PRE	10	COM
4	PD	3	ED
3	SPD	4	REC
24	END	21	STUN

Abilities: +1 to Sight Group PER Rolls, Criminology 12-, Deduction 12-, Forensic Medicine 8-, KS: The Law Enforcement World 11-, Lockpicking 8-, Paramedics 12-, Security Systems 12-, Stealth 11-, Streetwise 12-, 20 points' worth of Contacts in the Law Enforcement World of Hudson City

50+ Disadvantages: None

Notes: A former Hudson City cop and FBI agent, Allen Stanford left public law enforcement nearly twenty years ago to form Blazon Security Services, a full-spectrum security company providing alarm systems, armed guards, armored cars, and bodyguards to customers in need of protection for themselves, their family, and their property. His business has done so well that today he not only provides security guards for many communities in Irishtown, he lives there himself with his wife Clarice and four children.

LAFAYETTE



JULIE WALKER

8	STR	8	DEX
8	CON	9	BODY
10	INT	10	EGO
10	PRE	8	COM
2	PD	2	ED
1	SPD	4	REC
16	END	17	STUN

Abilities: PS: Book-keeping 11-, Streetwise 8-, Survival (Urban) 8-, Trading 8-, WF: Pistols

25+ Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Short-Tempered

Notes: A plump black woman in her mid-twenties, Julie lives not far from the Mission in Forsyth. She works in Riverside Hills as a bookkeeper and volunteers at the Mission three to five days a week, usually at dinner-time so she can serve meals and help clean up. Although she loses her temper quickly and becomes sharp-tongued and waspish, she genuinely wants to help and is always on the lookout for additional things the shelter can do to serve the Lafayette community. She knows a lot of the area's homeless on sight.

*Down in Fayetteenam
Ya gotta have a bomb
Ya gotta have a gun
If you wanna see the sun
'Cause night comes down
Y'gonna hear th' sound
Of bucks and nines
Guns and knives
Guns and knives
All'a the time*

— from “Fuller,” by Dis Tense

Better known in city slang as “Fayetteenam” because of all the shootings that take place there, Lafayette competes with Freetown and North Elmview for the title of worst, most dangerous neighborhood in the city. Most people would consider its borders to be S. Jackson Street to the west, Ferry Street to the east, the city limits to the south, and a zig-zag pattern along Southridge Avenue, Heine Street, and King Avenue to the north — but the truth is that in most peoples’ minds it merges almost imperceptibly with the Numbers and the rest of Freetown (and to some extent with Latin City as well, as the Hispanic community has started to grow beyond the bounds of Ferry Street).

For the most part, Lafayette is a residential neighborhood: few businesses can survive in such a place, and most of them are small, one-person or one-family operations providing services the locals find indispensable (*i.e.*, small grocery and liquor stores) or desirable (such as beauty parlors and check-cashing services). The only major employer in the area is the South Pumping Station. Most of the residences are public housing projects (not nearly so large or monolithic as the ones in Freetown, but project nonetheless), tenements, and run-down apartment buildings. For most people who live in Lafayette, moving to Forsyth would be considered a step up the social ladder.

Statistics paint a grim picture about what life is like in Lafayette. According to the Department of Social Services, over 90% of Lafayette residence receive some form of public assistance (usually in addition to public housing), and the unemployment rate approaches 50% in many periods. HCPD officials claim that over half the men age 16 and up living in Lafayette have criminal records or are involved in gangs or the drug trade.

The crime picture in Lafayette is muddled, though intense. No one street gang or crimelord dominates the area, leading to frequent gang warfare and drive-by shootings. Gangstas selling crack and heroin on the street aren't the worst problem

for most residents, though; junkies who steal or rob to get enough money for their next “fix” are far more of a threat to the average Lafayette.

See page 53 for a map of Lafayette.

THE NEEDLE

The narrow, arrow-shaped strip of land between Pender Street, S. Truman Boulevard, and Parsons Avenue has been known for years as “the Needle.” By any measure it's one of the worst, if not *the* worst, neighborhoods in the city. Its tenements are survivors (barely) of firebombings, urban street warfare, and years of slumlord control. What few retail establishments exist are so shabby and so tightly barred and barricaded against crime that they offer little incentive to shop there... other than the fact that they're all there is. Crime and drug use are rampant (the neighborhood's name doesn't relate entirely to its shape). All of the inhabitants are black; any whites, Hispanics, or Asians who dare to venture into the Needle are putting their lives in serious danger. No one can remember the last time they saw a cop car there.

LANDMARKS

The closest thing Lafayette has to a “landmark” is the Barton Street Mission, located at the intersection of Hoke Avenue and Barton Street, not far from the Barton Station subway stop. Founded in 1955, the Mission has served the poor, homeless, and downtrodden of the area for five decades. It serves three hot meals a day, not turning anyone away until the food runs out. It also has a fifty-bed homeless shelter that's available on a first-come, first-serve basis each night. The Mission's board of directors would like to expand the facility, but they just don't have the money.

SHOPPING

The retail businesses in Lafayette aren't exactly the kind that attract shoppers from other neighborhoods.

Money Now! (4150 Ingram Street): For the low, low price of twenty percent of its value, Money Now! will cash your paycheck, welfare check, or tax refund check and give you cash on the barrelhead, no fuss and no waiting. Thick bulletproof windows, steel bars on the windows, an excellent alarm system, and a top-notch vault keep the place from becoming a constant target for burglars despite the large amounts of cash on the premises.

Ticino Liquor (84 Ticino Street): Offering the gamut of potent potables from beer to malt liquor, with occasional shipments of cheap wine that owner Carl Lewison happens to lay his

hands on, Ticino Liquors ranks as one of the most successful businesses in Lafayette. In fact, Lewison doesn't even live in Lafayette anymore, having earned enough by selling cheap booze to move his family to Riverside Hills.

ON THE TOWN

Most people in Lafayette have enough trouble paying their basic bills — there's not much left over for wining and dining. But there are a few popular places when someone does have a few bills to spend.

N-Z (southwest corner of Livengood Avenue and Starr Street): This club was a favorite of several of the Lafayette gangs for a while, but a few incidents of gang violence (including a shooting that left three people dead) tarnished the place's reputation. The owners have been working hard to build the crowds back up again, and they're slowly but surely starting to succeed. Rap star Dis Tense got his start performing at N-Z on amateur night, and the owners hope they can lure him back for a show sometime.

Taco Box (4187 Rosemont Street): The longtime dream of local half-black, half-Hispanic entrepreneur Derrick Rodriguez, Taco Box opened in 2003 to serve Mexican food based on Rodriguez family recipes. The name come from its signature "Box o' Tacos" meal, which includes ten beef tacos, salsa, and a bagful of tortilla chips. It's become a big hit with gangbangers looking for a late night snack and junkies who've got the munchies.

IMAGES OF LAFAYETTE

Junkies passed out on the sidewalks of the Needle

Gang kids on streetcorners at night, trying their hand at creating their own raps in between selling to crack customers

A bag lady shuffling down the street, pushing a battered shopping cart containing all her worldly possessions

Crowded, crumbling tenements

Partiers in N-Z forgetting the misery outside — at least for a few hours

Empty beer and liquor cans and bottles casually discarded on the sidewalk.



LATIN CITY



LORENZO OLMEDO

6 STR 8 DEX
8 CON 8 BODY
8 INT 7 EGO
8 PRE 9 COM
2 PD 2 ED
1 SPD 3 REC
16 END 15 STUN

Abilities: KS: Hudson City Train And Subway Systems 14-, Mechanics 11-, TF: Railed Vehicles

25+ Disadvantages: Age: 40+; Physical Limitation: Badly Nearsighted

Notes: Lorenzo Olmedo has worked for the Hudson City Rapid Transit Division, and later directly for the Transportation Commission, for nearly thirty years. He's got an extensive knowledge of how the subway and train systems work — knowledge earned the hard way by slogging it out in the tunnels day after day for years. His vision has deteriorated to the point where they won't let him actually operate the trains anymore, so they gave him a job at the Rail Yard helping to maintain and repair them. He doesn't like the job as much, but it pays a little better and it's a lot shorter commute, so he deals.

<“Yo, Carlito!”>

<“What up, man?”>

<“Git down here, man — we got work ta do!”>

<“What th' !\$&*’s goin’ on?”>

<“It’s Martin, man — they killed him!”>

<“What the !\$&*?!? Who, man?”>

<“Who d’ya think, man? It was those !\$&*%#@# EME pricks.”>

<“What the !\$&* happened? Wasn’t he with you? Why’n’t you protect him?”>

<“Man, they jumped us, a dozen of ’em, there was nothin’ we could do! They grabbed him, shoved him into a van, and drove off. We got a call later where to find him.”>

<“What’d they !\$&*%#@# do to him?”>

<“Man, they !\$&*%#@# nailed him into a big wooden box with a bunch of starving rats. By th’ time we got to him, we could hardly tell it was him no more.”>

<“!\$&*. !\$&*!!!! We are going to !\$&*%#@# kill those !\$&*ers, man. You got your nine?”>

<“I do now.”>

— late-night conversation overheard in the barrio near Corley and Stanton

Decades ago, Latin City was MacGregor Hill, a part of Elmview — just another working-class neighborhood among other working-class neighborhoods. Beginning in the late Fifties and early Sixties, immigrants from Puerto Rico began settling there in large numbers due to the cheap housing and cost of living. Increasing immigration from Puerto Rico, and later Mexico and many Central and South American countries, quickly turned the area into a full-fledged *barrio* where the only signs in English are the street signs... and sometimes not even them.

Today, Latin City fills the area south of Port Avenue and east of Ferry Street down to the southern city limits, and it’s threatening to spill over into Lafayette and south Elmview as the Hispanic population keeps increasing. It’s been called by a lot of names over the years — Little Puerto Rico, Havana North — but most people seem to have settled on “Latin City.” The main inhabitants are Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Mexicans, Nicaraguans, Colombians, and Salvadorans — but natives of every country in Central and South America can

be found there. Most of the area is fairly run-down and squalid residential neighborhoods. Here and there residents with money have tried to improve things a bit, even building some duplexes amid the sea of tenements and apartment buildings. Most Hudsonites will tell you these “upper class” Hispanics got their money dealing drugs; for their part, the residents of Latin City dismiss this as discrimination — “if he’s a drug dealer, why don’t they come and arrest him, huh?”

But the truth is that Latin City has a major crime problem — so much of one that in the Nineties, Hispanic gangs backed by the Colombian and Mexican drug cartels worked their way north up the waterfront, displacing the Scatucci family from its long-held fief there. Gangs like *Los Reyes* (the “Latin Kings”) and the Mexican Mafia often fight each other. It’s a constantly-shifting battlefield where life is short, teenagers get rich dealing coke and crack, and innocent bystanders get caught in the crossfire. Besides the drug dealing, “businesses” catering to other vices, such as the sex trade, have also sprung up.

Anglos rarely cross into Latin City; it’s obvious with every stare they receive that they’re regarded with suspicion, fear, and hatred. However, a few brave souls go there for the restaurants (many of which are undiscovered gems, with food prepared by native chefs) and the Latin nightclubs. None of the residents — known as *Latinistas* — dislike anglos so much that they’ll turn down their money.

LANDMARKS

Most of Latin City is pretty plain — street after street of apartment buildings, bodegas, taquerias, and other small businesses — but a few places stand out.

City Rail Yard (2000 Potter Avenue): The largest single employer in Latin City is the City Rail Yard, where the Hudson City Transportation Commission maintains trains, fixes broken trains, and stores trains not currently in use. It’s busy nearly 24 hours a day, full of hustle and bustle that young boys like to watch from nearby rooftops.

Hispanic Pride Community Center (southwest corner of Willow Street and Whittier Street): Every neighborhood has its heart, and for Latin City that’s the HPCC — or just the “HP,” as it’s usually called on the street. The center runs outreach programs to help improve the lives of Hispanics in Hudson City, helps find people jobs, sponsors (and often hosts!) community events, fights drug abuse and gang violence, and generally does whatever it can to have a positive effect on the community.

This is a detailed street map of the Latin City neighborhood in Chicago, Illinois. The map shows a grid of streets including King Avenue, Southridge Avenue, and various local streets like Elmview, Treymont, and Keyes Point. It also features landmarks such as the Elmhurst Hospital, the Elmhurst Power Station, and the Elmhurst Correctional Center. The map is oriented with North at the top and includes a scale bar indicating distances up to 1/2 mile and 1 km.

LeMASTRE PARK



IMAGES OF LEMASTRE PARK

The smell of fresh-cut grass

Streams rushing over rocks

People playing team sports

Signs featuring a logo with two cloud leopards, pointing the way to the Zoo

Kids running around, shouting, laughing, playing

The lights of Elysian Fields sparkling out over the southwestern park after dark

Park Police cops patrolling on horseback

HYFIELD GREENHOUSE

What the Zoo is to animals, the Hyfield Greenhouse is to plants. Featuring a rich, diverse botanical collection, including a valuable assortment of rare orchids, it's a delightful place for a refreshing, restoring walk. It also features a Butterfly Garden and a series of classrooms where the staff gives lectures on gardening, houseplants, and similar subjects.

"I think the crime problem in the park has really been blown out of proportion by the media. Sure, we've got some crime here — what part of Hudson City doesn't? But it's not like there are packs of wild-eyed murderers and rapists roaming the park at night looking for victims. Between the crowds and the Park Police, most areas are pretty safe. Just use your common sense: don't walk around by yourself after dark, don't leave your stuff unattended while you play frisbee, things like that. If you get in trouble, look for one of the blue lights; that indicates a public safety phone that connects directly to the Park Police headquarters."

— Park Police officer Roberta Stimpson

During the founding of the city, Emil Hudson's business partner Andre LeMastre realized that if Hudson's plans came to fruition, the city he (LeMastre) was drawing up plans for would soon become very large. As a huntsman and lover of fields and streams, he decided the residents of the city would need an area of preserved wilderness — a park — to restore and rejuvenate their spirits when the dreary life of the city became too much to bear. With this thought in mind, he set aside a large area of land that would, by law, remain undeveloped in any significant way: no large buildings or permanent residences, no major roads, nothing to disturb the tranquility of the place.

Early in the city's history, when much of the land around it remained uncleared and unsettled, no one gave much thought to LeMastre's park. They used the large, barren hill in the area for public executions, but otherwise left the area alone except as a hunting ground. But in time, the city grew as LeMastre had predicted, and the need for LeMastre Park — as everyone already called it — became obvious. Blessing LeMastre for his foresight, the city fathers established the Parks Commission to turn the Park into a true urban recreation area, rather than just a patch of wilderness.

Almost 2,000 acres (roughly three square miles) large, LeMastre Park is more than twice as large as Central Park in New York City and occupies approximately four percent of the land within the city limits. It includes approximately 350 wooded acres, 800 acres of lawns and fields, and 150 acres of bodies of water (Cedar Lake, various streams and ponds, and the like). It also has:

- over 90 miles of paths and walkways (some paved, some not) suitable for walking, running, biking, skating, and similar activities

- approximately 12,000 benches, many of which are "adopted" by citizens or businesses who become responsible for their maintenance

- dozens of sports fields for playing baseball, soccer, rugby, and other games, as well as a section of tennis courts

- a large skate park (added in the early Eighties to keep skateboarders off the paved pathways)

- the Brucato Bandshell, which features an extensive series of concerts and plays throughout the year (outdoor concerts are sometimes held in other parts of the park as well)

- two nice restaurants (Elysian Fields south of the Zoo near Mint Ridge; and Armstrong's, near Bankhurst) as well as numerous hamburger stands, pushcarts, and other fast food/snack vendors

For a map of LeMastre Park, see page 36.

WILDLIFE

As the least developed area in Hudson City, LeMastre Park is home to all sorts of wildlife found nowhere else in the city. It's a birdwatcher's paradise, with nearly 300 species of birds — mostly songbirds and the like, but also including some waterbirds at Cedar Lake and along the river. Ornithologists have even found hawks and falcons in the forests; apparently they live on pigeons and rats.

Besides the birds, Hudsonites can see squirrels, chipmunks, raccoons, opossums, rabbits, and many other small mammals. In recent decades the depredations of feral dogs and cats have cut into the native wildlife population somewhat, despite the efforts of the Park Police to trap or shoot the predators (most of which are former pets abandoned in the park by their owners). A charitable organization, the Vrtis Wildlife Trust, works to preserve the diversity of park species.

GETTING AROUND THE PARK

Except for 16th Avenue up in the northern "panhandle," no roads run through LeMastre Park. Visitors take the subway or train to a stop near the Park, or drive there and park in one of the many lots lining it. A stout stone wall surrounds most of the Park, allowing entrance only at designated gates.

Once someone passes through one of the gates, the only way to get around the park is on foot, by bicycle, or the like. The law forbids gasoline-powered vehicles on park grounds, except for (a) the scooters and other vehicles used by the Park Police, (b) the Park's official shuttlebuses, and (c)

other vehicles that receive short-term temporary permits (usually for the purpose of setting up special events). As a result, getting to the interior areas of LeMastre Park can be a time-consuming chore... but once you get there, it's worth it.

Crime And Homelessness

After I was done with her, I hit her in the head with a rock to shut her up, zipped up, and left. Bitch ought to know better than to go jogging after dark. God, I love the Park.

— David Greene, serial rapist

While most people who come to LeMastre Park enjoy the facilities without any difficulties, there's no denying that the park has a problem with both crime and homelessness.

Homeless people come to the park looking for a place to camp out — usually in the forested areas, where it's harder to see them. At times some of the wooded parts of the park have housed small communities of homeless people. Most homeless people come out of the woods during the day to panhandle and look for something to eat, but by the time night falls they'll be back at their chosen "campsites" (though sometimes fights break out over "ownership" of the best places). Periodically the Park Police roust the homeless out of the park, but eventually they come back.

Crime is a much more serious problem. During the day, it's mostly property crimes: purse-snatching; stealing unattended items; pick-pocketing; three-card monte dealers. But after night falls, more dangerous predators come out. Muggers looking to earn a fast buck, rapists hunting for victims, and even street gangs on "wilding" sprees infest the park, and woe to anyone they come across.

Despite constant warnings from the police and periodic horror stories in the news, people persist in visiting the park after dark: young lovers looking for a place to get intimate; joggers and walkers who figure they're safe if they stick to the lighted areas; teenagers on dares. More than a few of them end up as statistics on the police blotter... or as "guests" at the City Morgue.

THE PARK POLICE

The Park Police, a 30-member branch of the HCPD, tries to maintain order in the Park, but it's a tough job: they've got 2,000 acres, many of them nowhere near a paved pathway, to patrol (mostly on foot, though sometimes on bikes or horses). They also have to take on park ranger-like duties to preserve the wild areas, give nature tours, and so forth. Some of them loathe the job, regarding it as a step below "true" police work; others love the chance to be outdoors all day in the park.

Park Features

LeMastre Park has so much to offer that even long-time residents of the city rarely have a chance to experience it all. Some of its most prominent features include:

CALDWELL FOUNTAIN

In the eastern part of the park, just south of the Greenhouse, stands a large, elaborately marble fountain. In the middle of the fountain is a statue of Christopher Caldwell, hero of the War of 1812 and one of the early "movers and shakers" in Hudson City. The plaza and meadows around the fountain are a favorite site for picnics, sunbathing, frisbee, pick-up tag football games, and similar activities.

In addition to the Caldwell Fountain, LeMastre Park has four other ornamental fountains and approximately fifty statues and monuments, the newest being a statue of J.R.R. Tolkien surrounded by small-scale versions of the characters he created in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord Of The Rings*. According to informal polls conducted by the city's papers, most people would pick the Dinosaur Garden statues (a tyrannosaur, a triceratops, and several others) as their favorites.

HANGMAN'S HILL

The highest point in LeMastre Park is Hangman's Hill, where citizens in the early days of the city used to hang outlaws. Today it's a considerably less sinister place — people climb to the top to look at the rest of the park, or jog up and down the hill for exercise. At Halloween the Vrtis Wildlife Trust hosts a large costume party here to raise money; some Hudsonites consider it the premiere event of the year.

Where the executioner's platform once was, a large stone called Gibbett Rock now stands. For many years, a traditional prank played by Hudson City teens was to sneak into the park late at night and paint the rock. As the crime rate in the Park has increased, this stunt has become much more dangerous, and thus rarer. On at least two occasions, teens in the park to paint the Rock were assaulted or murdered. But still the tradition persists among the daring and stupid.

THE HUDSON CITY ZOO

Originally known as the Scheulman Zoological Gardens (after Jacob Scheulman, who donated a large sum of money to get the zoo started), the Hudson City Zoo adopted its current name in 1921, after it was significantly renovated and expanded. Today the Zoo receives millions of visitors a year, and is regarded as one of the premiere zoos in America.

Zoo Director John Geistdoerfer took over the leadership of the facility in 1985 and began a renovations program. He closed the Zoo from 1988 to 1992, but when it re-opened the quality and cleanliness of the new Zoo amazed and pleased city officials and Zoo visitors alike. It's best known for its Great Cats of the World and North American Small Mammals exhibits, and the Peteira Aviary. The Zoo's logo features its famed pair of cloud leopards, Tufani and Radi.

REX

5 STR	17 DEX
14 CON	12 BODY
10 INT	5 EGO
18 PRE	10 COM
6 PD	3 ED
3 SPD	5 REC
28 END	22 STUN

Abilities: HKA 1d6, Running +1" (7" total), Leaping +1" (2" total), +5 PRE (only protects against Presence Attacks), +3 PER with all Sense Groups, Tracking for Normal Smell, Ultrasonic Perception (Hearing), Lightsleep, Concealment 13- (self only), AK: LeMastre Park 8-, Stealth 13-, Fringe Benefit: Leader Of The Pack

Disadvantages: Physical Limitation: Animal Intelligence; Physical Limitation: Small; Physical Limitation: Very Limited Manipulation

Notes: Rex — or Caninus Rexicus, to give his full pedigreed name — is a purebred mastiff who escaped from his owner and has lived wild in LeMastre Park ever since. Big and broadchested, he looks more like some monstrous, slaving, deadly beast than a dog. He's the alpha male in a pack of feral dogs that live in the park: a ruler of outcasts and rebels in a land of neutered slaves.

Rex doesn't particularly like people. Anyone who gets too close to him is likely to find himself under attack by an animal who can crack heavy bones with his teeth without straining — he's a survivor and pack leader, not a pet. But like most cinematic animals, he has an instinctive sense of Right and Wrong, and can at least develop a grudging respect for true heroes... and a hatred for evildoers.

LITTLE ITALY



IMAGES OF LITTLE ITALY

Old Italian men playing checkers in Hunsecker Park, speaking Italian as often as English

The red-and-white checked tableclothes used in so many Italian restaurants

Groups of young “businessmen” hanging around outside “social clubs,” smoking and joking around

The taste of homemade pasta and sauce

The smell of garlic bread

“Whadda we gotta come out here on the street for, Nick? It’s cold, it’s raining. Let’s go back inside the club and have some linguini.”

“What are you, stupid? Don’t you know the feds have that place wired from top to bottom? We don’t discuss business in there, Joe — we don’t ever talk about anything incriminating, you get me?”

“OK, Nick, OK, I got it, no problem. What’d you wanna talk about?”

“You know that restaurant up on 4th, the French one?”

“Sure, Nick, I been there a couple times.”

“Well, it’s been doing business with one of our trash companies. But now the owner’s gotten ‘sick and tired’ of paying our ‘outrageous’ cartage fees. He says he’s gonna switch to another company. We gotta ‘persuade’ him how stupid that’d be.”

“You got it, Nick. Whatta you want me to do, smack the guy around some? Bust up the place?”

“No, moron. He can’t do any kinda business if we go after him or his place. He’s got a kid — a baseball player. Break one of the kid’s fingers. If that doesn’t straighten this guy out, then we’ll get rough.”

— conversation taking place outside the Sicilian Oyster Bar

One of the city’s largest and most active ethnic neighborhoods, Little Italy dominates the southwestern corner of the Northside. Its boundaries are the city’s western limits, the river, N. Harrison Street to the east, and 16th Avenue and Kurtland Boulevard to the north.

Hudson City’s earliest Italian inhabitants were mainly sailors and similar tradesmen, who lived in the eastern part of the city along the waterfront. Even through the period immediately after the Civil War, only a few thousand Italians lived in and around Hudson City. But from 1890 to the First World War, nearly half a million Italians — most of them *contadini*, landless farmers seeking a prosperous life in the New World instead of settling for grinding poverty in the Old — immigrated to Hudson City. Since they found the eastern parts of the city already crowded (and many long-time Hudsonites prejudiced toward them), most of them went a few miles up the Stewart River and settled on the Northside in lands which at that

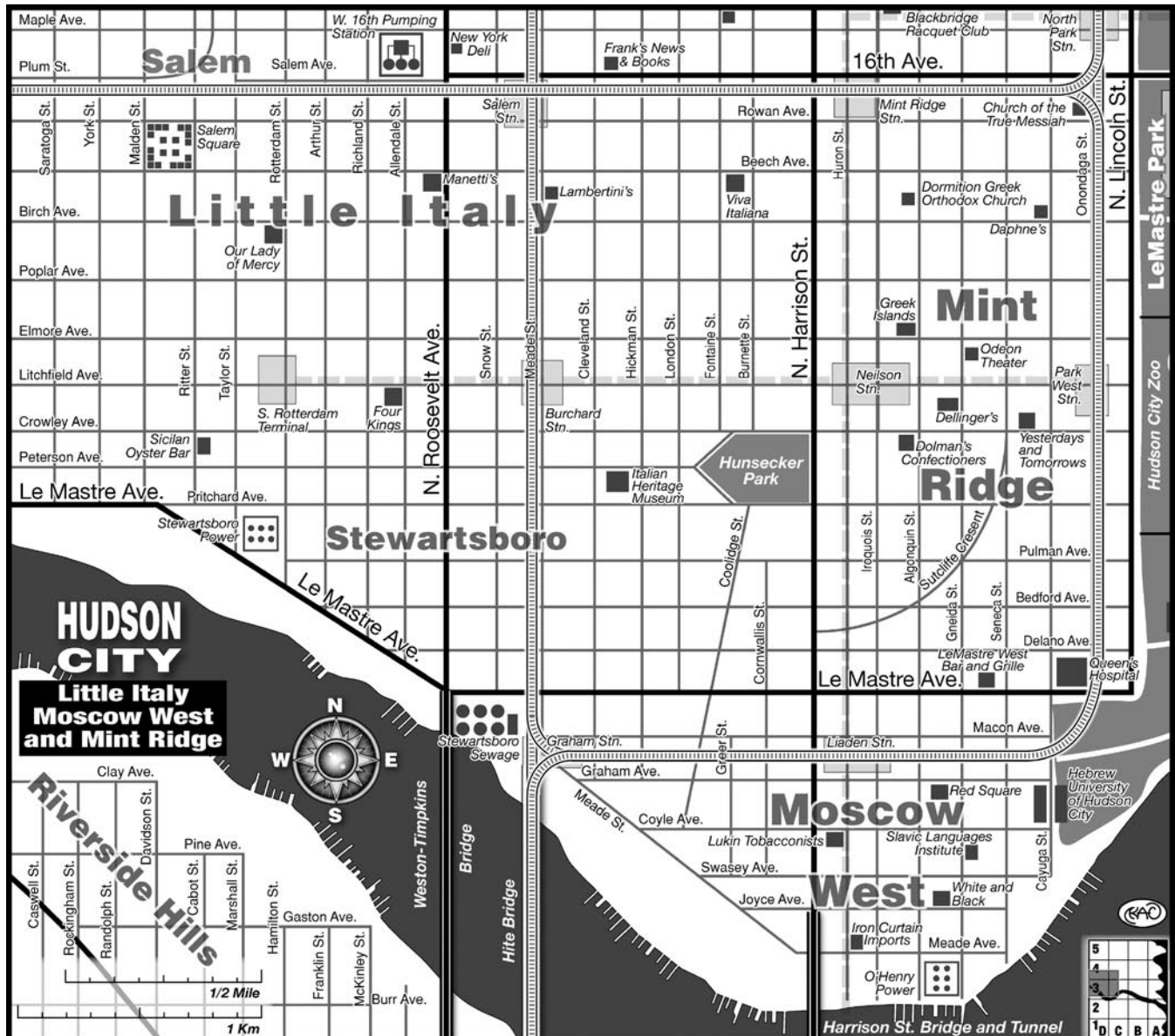
time were mostly vacant. The early arrivals tried to set up small farms, but as more and more Italians poured in, the area quickly gave way to rapid urban growth... and attendant urban squalor. By most accounts life in early Little Italy was miserable. Exploitive developers slapped up tenements as fast as they could, leading to crowded neighborhoods and frequent outbreaks of disease. The lack of jobs in the area forced the men to commute back to the eastern parts of the city to work; the need to provide ways for them to reach work in the eastern half of the city spurred the growth of commuter rails and the subway (on which thousands of Italian laborers worked) as well as the extension of 16th Avenue through and past LeMastre Park and Mint Ridge. Numerous aid societies, many established by groups of Italians who all came from the same village or region in Italy, tried to make living conditions better, but it was a long, hard struggle.

But despite segregating itself into one part of the city, the Italian community eventually thrived. Slowly but surely, Italian immigrants learned English and merged with the city’s cultural mainstream. Regardless of the negative image of Italian gangsters that arose during the Prohibition era and the 1930s, by World War II Italians were probably the most prominent and prosperous ethnic group in Hudson City. Slowly but surely, as Italians made money and entered city politics, Little Italy was transformed from little more than a wretched slum into a neighborhood of apartment buildings, brownstones, and some detached housing, intermingled with small retail and commercial districts. It remains that way today, one of the most picturesque and pleasant neighborhoods in Hudson City as far as many Hudsonites are concerned. Most long-time residents tell you they wouldn’t want to live anywhere else in the world.

THE MAFIA

Italian benevolent associations weren’t the only groups that arose in response to Italian poverty and despair — organized crime evolved to prey on Little Italy. The “Black Hand” gangs of the early 1900s transformed into the Mafia during Prohibition. From the Thirties through the Fifties, Mafiosi dominated crime not just in Little Italy, but throughout much of the Northside. Eventually the various gangs coalesced into five “families”: Marcelli, Morelli, Scatucci, Torcccone, and Verontese. Each had its own territories and activities. (For more on these groups, see page 158.)

Today, the Mafia remains a powerful part in the Hudson City underworld, though not the dominating force it once was. Its ranks weakened by federal



prosecution and conflict with the Russians and other criminal groups, it faces challenges it never even had to consider forty or fifty years ago. But despite these problems, in Little Italy and nearby neighborhoods like Ardmore and Guilford, the Mafia's power remains supreme. Street crime is largely unknown in Little Italy, since the Five Families keep the peace in ways the police cannot. After all, if they don't protect their own sheep, they won't be able to keep fleecing them. The HCPD and FBI have tried repeatedly to break this stranglehold, but the Mafia's popularity in Little Italy has thwarted most of their efforts. Many a time the release or acquittal of a "suspected Mafia figure" has led to riotous street celebrations and parties in Little Italy, much to the disgust of the city's law enforcement community.

STEWARTSBORO

The southern part of Little Italy, known as Stewartsboro, is less residential and more industrial than the rest of the neighborhood. Lying along the northern bank of the Stewart, it's always been a good location for factories, fish canneries, garment production, and similar businesses. Historically, the

tenements and other residences in Stewartsboro were the worst in all of Little Italy.

In the twenty-first century, things are a little different. While some of the industry remains, a lot of it began leaving in the Seventies. For years this put Stewartsboro in difficult economic straits, but in recent years urban renewal — in the form of old factories renovated into small business office space and loft apartment buildings — has revitalized the neighborhood. Residents hope the trend continues.

LANDMARKS

Many visitors to Hudson City come to stroll the streets of Little Italy because they consider the whole place (or at least its heart, the area around Poplar Avenue and Arthur Street) picturesque — a feeling local businessmen have gone out of their way to encourage. But aside from this sort of faux cultural tourism, Little Italy does have a few genuine attractions.

Hunsecker Park (eastern terminus of Peterson Avenue): Even though LeMastre Park was just a mile or so to the east, some early residents of Little Italy wanted their own park as part of their neigh-

CHARLES HARMON

8 STR 10 DEX
 10 CON 9 BODY
 13 INT 13 EGO
 15 PRE 9 COM
 3 PD 3 ED
 2 SPD 4 REC
 20 END 18 STUN

Abilities: Bribery 12-, Bureaucratics 12-, Conversation 12-, High Society 12-, KS: Hudson City Politics 14-, KS: The Mafia 12-, Lockpicking 8-, Persuasion 12-, Shadowing 12-, Stealth 12-, Streetwise 12-, WF: Small Arms, Well-Connected and 30 points' worth of Contacts, Money: Well Off

Disadvantages: None

Notes: Born Charles Armonetti, Harmon is a wealthy Democratic powermonger. At ease both with the very rich and the very poor, he has a knack for finding out what people are thinking and making them feel at ease no matter what their background. He's part owner of the Viva Italiana, and can often be found eating there.

A widower, Harmon lives in Forsythia, a posh seven-floor apartment building in Guilford, in Apartment 6-F. He also has a place in Pierpoint.

borhood. The city obliged by demolishing several abandoned buildings and creating Hunsecker Park. At first it wasn't much to look at, but several residents formed the Hunsecker Park Association and set out to improve the place. Today, the results of their dedication and hard work, and that of their modern descendants, are apparent to everyone: lush lawns, small copses of cultivated trees, brightly-painted play equipment for the children.

Italian Heritage Museum (340 Peterson Avenue): This cultural and learning institution is dedicated to the history of Italians in general, and in Hudson City in particular. It's a common destination for primary school field trips, and the site of an Italian Heritage Day celebration that coincides with Columbus Day. The attached Columbus Café restaurant serves surprisingly good food.

SHOPPING

Little Italy has some great places to shop, despite the inevitable flood of souvenir shops and other places catering to tourists that most people usually associate with it. Some of them include:

Lambertini's Italian Grocery and Pizzeria (4642 Meade Street): If even homemade Little Italian food is not enough — if you *have* to have genuine Italian food straight from Italy itself — then Lambertini's is the place to go. Most of the food you'll find there doesn't even have English labels, and the deli meats and cheeses just can't be beat.

If all that shopping makes you hungry, go through the door in the back to the pizzeria. The Lambertini family grows all its own vegetables, makes its own sausage and hamburger, and uses other fresh ingredients to make mind-bogglingly delicious pizzas. Lambertini's will even overnight a custom-made frozen pie to you, if you're willing to pay the price.

Salem Square (southwest corner of Rowan Avenue and Ritter Street): Salem Square is a small plaza lined with shops. The tiling and architecture roughly suggest those of Rome, but with a few modern American touches. Most of the stores sell clothing, shoes, or cosmetics for women, and the goods are often imported directly from Italy. There's also a fine men's clothing store, Rinaldi's, where Giacomo Rinaldi and his assistants create hand-tailored suits for their wealthy clientele. Mob boss Mario "the Prince" Manetti wears nothing but Rinaldi suits, and has often been seen on television in them.

ON THE TOWN

If there's one thing Italians love, it's socializing — so you'll find plenty of great places to eat, drink, and be merry in Little Italy. Non-residents frequently come to the neighborhood for the fine restaurants; sometimes it seems like every other business there is a restaurant.

Four Kings (corner of Litchfield Avenue and Alledale Street): Easily recognized from its distinctive sign depicting a hand of four kings and the ace

IL GIORNALE

The Little Italy of the early twenty-first century isn't nearly as Italian as it was even forty or fifty years ago, much less a century ago. Thanks to years of cultural integration, the modern economy, and mass media, most Little Italians grow up without ever learning Italian, and many of them don't stay in the neighborhood after they grow up — they move out to other neighborhoods, or even leave Hudson City altogether.

Despite this, there are still more than a few Little Italians who remember the old country fondly... even if only from stories their parents and grandparents told. Most of them speak English well enough, but they're also fluent in Italian, and many of them prefer the lyrical language of Rome to the Germanic strains of the Scepter'd Isle.

It is to such people that *Il Giornale* ("The Daily") appeals. Begun in the late 1800s by Italian journalists who emigrated to Hudson City, *Il Giornale* is Little Italy's neighborhood newspaper. As the name indicates, it was once a daily, but with the passing of time it lost many of its customers and eventually transformed into a weekly.

Full of local news (often written in a gossipy style), articles on subjects of interest to Little Italians, and ads from local businesses, *Il Giornale* is published in Italian. Bowing to the inevitable, the publisher introduced an English version in the late 1970s, though it's available mainly by subscription (or, these days, on the World Wide Web). If you want to know what's going on in Little Italy, pick up a copy of the latest *Giornale* — it's the next best thing to being hooked into the Mafia.

of spades, Four Kings is a cut above your typical waterfront bar... though not by much. It's the perfect place for people who just want to sit and drink: it doesn't play loud music, doesn't serve food, and isn't conducive to a lot of chit-chat. The head bartender is a pretty woman named Donna Scollari who's well-known for her ability to insultingly shoot down the variety of come-ons and lewd propositions she gets every night.

Manetti's (southwest corner of Beech Avenue and N. Roosevelt Street): This Italian restaurant is known not only for its fine food, but for its well-stocked wine cellar. It's said that Paul Manetti, Jr., the current owner and son of the restaurant's founder, is such a connoisseur of Italian wines that he can identify the vineyard and vintage of one from a single sip. Manetti's takes pride in making all of its pasta and other dishes from scratch.

Sicilian Oyster Bar (southeast corner of Crowley Avenue and Ritter Street): One of many "social clubs" scattered throughout Little Italy, the Sicilian Oyster Bar offers dinner, drinks, and dancing in a nice, but not overly formal, atmosphere. It's known as a haunt of the Marcelli crime family.

Viva Italiana (southeast corner of Beech Avenue and Fontaine Street): The brainchild of Tuscany-trained chef Maurizio Grazioli, Viva Italiana has become a major success since its opened in 1998. Situated so that it's easy to reach from both Ardmore and Mint Ridge, it attracts a lot of customers from outside Little Italy.

MINT RIDGE



"Hey, man, what's up? Wanna go to the park, toss the frisbee around?"

"No way — check this out!"

*"Holy *%&! — is that real?"*

"Yeah, you know it, man."

"Where the hell'd you get a gun?"

"You hear all that noise last night, where the cops were chasing some gang kids from the park through here?"

"Yeah, woke me up 'n' all."

"Well, I figure one'a those gang kids must've had it with him, and he tossed it while he was runnin' behind our building so the cops wouldn't catch him with it. I found it out back this morning."

*"No *%&!. Does it work?"*

*"I doubt it. It's already all rusty from the dew an' *%&! this morning."*

"Cool, lemme see it."

"Sure, here ya..." <BLAMM!> "Joey? Joey?!"

— incident on Delano Avenue

Years ago, not long after Hudson City was founded, a rich old man named Horace Oakley moved to town. He claimed to have made his money trading cotton and indigo down in South Carolina. He bought a large piece of land a few miles out of town — a hilly place where the Delaware Indians used to gather mint plants. He built an estate there that he called Mint Ridge. He lived there by himself, a recluse, attended only by a few servants. When he died alone and with no heirs, his land escheated to the state, which sold it to the city.

The city fathers briefly considered using Mint Ridge to enlarge LeMastre Park, but at the time the park was already far larger than the city needed it to be, so they did nothing with the property. In the early twentieth century, as the southwest corner of the Northside was growing due to the incoming wave of southern European immigration, developers bought the land from the city and built cheap housing there. It remained more or less an ethnic ghetto for Italians, Greeks, and Balkan immigrants until after World War II. The housing boom at that time created a demand for better living areas, and developers with vision thought Mint Ridge had potential. They bought up the land relatively cheaply, bulldozed the tenements and ramshackle

houses, and built new residential communities more suitable to the pre-baby boomer generation... and their children.

Today, Mint Ridge is a thriving residential area bounded by 16th Avenue to the north, LeMastre Avenue to the south, N. Harrison Street to the west, and LeMastre Park to the east. Being right next to the park has made it a desirable neighborhood for many families, with a resulting steady increase in property values over the past few decades (though proximity to the park creates some crime and social problems as well). Plenty of families with southern European names still live in the area, but for all intents and purposes it's become just a typical generic American middle-to-upper-class urban neighborhood.

Most of the residences in Mint Ridge are apartment buildings or brownstones, but there are a few neighborhoods of small detached houses in the southern part of the area. The central parts of the area — around Crowley and Litchfield Avenues, where Horace Oakley's mansion used to stand (though it was completely demolished nearly seventy years ago) — are the retail district. And here and there, in backyards and gardens, you can still find a mint plant or two if you look around a bit.

The crime rate in Mint Ridge is generally moderate... though that seems to be changing. Experts believe the neighborhood's proximity to Little Italy used to "protect" it from street crime to a large extent — the Mafia dominated the underworld here as it does west of N. Harrison, keeping the citizens safe from violent assaults and burglaries while exploiting them in less obvious, less immediately dangerous ways. But in recent years, the influx of vicious Russian mobsters into Moscow West (and the resulting competition between them and the Mafia) and the increase in crime in LeMastre Park have spilled over into Mint Ridge. More than a few apartment buildings have hired outside security to protect the residents, and it's not as safe to walk the streets at night as it once was. But Mint Ridge is still light-years ahead of places like Bayside and Elmview, not to mention Lafayette and Freetown, when it comes to public safety.

See page 69 for a map of Mint Ridge.

LANDMARKS

For the most part, Mint Ridge is just another residential neighborhood, but it's got a few places that attract outside attention.

Church Of The True Messiah (northwest corner of Rowan Avenue and Onondaga Street): Considered by many people a cult of the most pernicious sort, the Church of the True Messiah maintains its "World

IMAGES OF MINT RIDGE

The smell of a mint leaf crushed between the fingers

The music, costumes, dancing, and food of the Greek Festival

The trees of LeMastre Park off to the east, turning colors in early autumn

The facade of the Odeon Theater

HIGH FATHER PATRICK TALMADGE

9 STR 10 DEX
10 CON 10 BODY
10 INT 10 EGO
13 PRE 11 COM
3 PD 3 ED
2 SPD 4 REC
20 END 20 STUN

Abilities: Bureaucratics 8-, Conversation 12-, KS: Church Doctrine And Practices 12-, KS: Football 11-, Oratory 12-, Persuasion 12-, PS: Play Football 11-, PS: True Messiah Priest 11-, Contacts (10 points' worth, among Church members of importance), Fringe Benefit: Membership (High Father in Church of the True Messiah)

25+ Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Devout; Social Limitation: Subject To Orders

Notes: A former college football player who's gone soft with age, Patrick Talmadge was anointed a High Father (roughly speaking, a priest) in the Church of the True Messiah five years ago. Thanks to his talents for administration and proselytizing, in 2003 the Church leaders assigned him to the Church's headquarters and gave him a position of responsibility in the Outreach Program — the Church's term for its recruitment network. Since then he's worked hard to bring unbelievers to the light of the True Messiah.

Headquarters" in Mint Ridge in what used to be an office building. Periodically anti-cult protesters stage small rallies or demonstrations on the street outside. See page 132 for more about the Church.

Dormition Greek Orthodox Church (4765 Algonquin Street): This Greek Orthodox Church, on the other hand, is the height of respectability. Its members include some of the most influential families in Mint Ridge, but people of southern and eastern European extraction all over the city also belong to it. Every May the church holds its annual Greek Festival, which attracts all kinds of Hudsonites eager to hear the music, watch the dancing, sample the delicious food, and maybe even have a small glass of *ouzo*... or two...

Odeon Theater (southeast corner of Elmore Avenue and Oneida Street): Though it still shows movies, the Odeon is renowned as the site of the final gun battle between Hudson City's crimebusting masked mystery man, the Raven, and "Machine Gun Marko" Ghazarian, one of America's most-wanted criminals at the time. Ambushed as he exited the theater, Ghazarian and his men fought back hard. By the time the shooting was done, Ghazarian and most of his men lay dead or dying, and every car and storefront along the block was pockmarked with bullet holes. To this day objects damaged in the gunfight are sold in Hudson City antique and collectibles stores.

SHOPPING

The Mint Ridge retail district has a few stores Hudsonites all around the city know about.

Dellinger's (southwest corner of Litchfield Avenue and Oneida Street): "It's no Boudreau's," as 1960s wit Walt Finney once observed, and no one can deny it... but most people think Dellinger's is still a pretty great department store. It carries an enormous inventory of items, and its employees have a much-deserved reputation for their friendliness and service. Its wedding, china, and jewelry departments are particularly well-regarded.

Dolman's Confectioners (620 Crowley Avenue): What better place for Hudson City's best-known candy store than *Mint Ridge*? From its hand-made chocolate truffles, to its tantalizing pies and cakes,

to the so-good-they're-almost-addictive sugar cookies, Dolman's has it if it's sweet and delicious. Dolman's gift baskets are a favorite Christmas present for many Hudsonites... and they can be shipped around the world!

Yesterdays And Tomorrows (365 Crowley Avenue): Large and chaotic, this antique store is a favorite of treasure- and bargain-hunters. Amidst its labyrinthine shelves you can find everything from top-quality rare antiques to chachkis that barely rise above the level of junk. But "one's person's trash is another person's find of a lifetime," as owner (and self-described "packrat collectomaniac") Patricia Lindsay says.

ON THE TOWN

Since Mint Ridge is mostly a residential area, a lot of people who live there don't want to go back into the main parts of the city once they get home from work. If they're going to go out, they'd rather stick close to home, at places like these:

Daphne's On Birch (northwest corner of Birch Avenue and Cayuga Street): "Continental cuisine in an elegant atmosphere" is what it says on the door and the menus in gilt lettering, and Daphne's lives up to that motto. Owner and head chef Daphne Morin wants each customer's dining experience to be unique and exciting, so she pushes herself and her staff hard to stay fast, creative, and clever... and it shows.

Greek Islands (northwest corner of Elmore Avenue and Algonquin Street): If it's from Greece and you eat it, you can get it at Greek Islands: moussaka, baklava, souvlaki, keftethes, and lots more. And as if the food weren't enough, the nightly bellydancing show is not to be missed!

LeMastre West Bar And Grille (457 LeMastre Avenue): The name says it all: this is a place to sit down, relax, and get a burger or a steak, not a big, fancy meal like you could have at Daphne's. One wing of the building is a bar, so you can have a beer with your burger if you want. LeMastre West is a few cuts above your everyday burger joint, and it's a neighborhood favorite — the Maddocks, who own it, have been mainstays of the Mint Ridge community for years.

MOSCOW WEST



He didn't look like much, the little man sitting in the coffee shop. Old and worn out by life, liver spots covering the backs of his hands and his scalp where there weren't any wisps of grey hair, he looked just like any other old Russian living out his days here in Hudson City instead of the bitter cold of Moscow or St. Petersburg.

That is, he didn't seem like much until one observed him more closely. The two younger men, the hard-looking ones with the rigid posture of former KGB agents that sat nearby — they seemed to hang on his every move and gesture. The rest of the people in the coffee shop were subdued, as if the old man were a porcelain doll and the least little bit of loud noise could break him. And though the old man's face was worn with age, a fire of malice and greed still glittered in his eyes.

Before another ten minutes had passed, the old man finished his coffee. He got up and walked out, signaling to the two men to follow. He didn't bother to put any money on the table before he left.

Down the street the three men walked, and people on the sidewalk got out of their way. They went around the corner and down another half a block to the little grocery store with the sign above it that said Vanechka's. It wasn't open yet, but the old man banged on the front door.

A few seconds later, a worried-looking man hurried up and opened the door from the inside. <“Mr. Molenko, sir, how good...”> The rest of his nervous speech was cut off when the two big mafioski grabbed him and hustled him into the back room. The old man followed at his own pace.

When he got to the kitchen, he found his two bodyguards holding the grocer in a chair. He looked at the terrified man sadly and shook his head as if in sympathy. <“Vanechka, Vanechka... you disappoint me. It was to be yesterday that you repaid me, was it not?”>

<“Yes, sir. I'm very sorry, sir, but business has not been good this past month... I only have a little of what I owe you. If I could only have a little more time on the debt, I promise I can repay in full!”>

<“What, with the interest mounting day by day? I think not. No, Vanechka, you must pay us now. I have run out of patience.”>

<“But... but Mr. Molenko, I swear to you, I don't have the money! All I have is in the register out front, there is nothing more!”>

<“So... that is all, those few dollars?”>

<“Yes, yes, I swear it!”>

As the old man considered, he walked around the room, lightly touching utensils and boxes of food, running his fingers along metal tables. Then he spoke. <“It seems, then, that we shall have to find some other way to get paid.”> And with the delicate grace of an artist he turned on the meat slicing machine.

Vanechka shrieked once, hollowly, as the two bodyguards picked him up and carried him over to the machine. With surprising strength the old man grabbed the grocer's head and forced his face into the machine's meat-holding bar. Then with one quick gesture he moved the cutting blade across the underside of the bar, trimming a thin slice of flesh off Vanechka's left cheek.

<“So, you will pay us now?”> Vanechka only bawled and screamed incoherently.

Another pass, another slice. <“And now?”>

<“Yes, yes!”> Vanechka shrieked through his blubbing.

“Ahhh,” the old man sighed, letting Vanechka go. The grocer stumbled back and fell down on the floor. He clutched his cheek, blood seeping out around his fingers.

<“Since you have no money, I will have papers drawn signing half your business over to me. Fair, yes?”> Vanechka only nodded miserably. <“Good, then,”> the old man continued. <“We'll come by tomorrow for you to sign.”>

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when Italian and southern European immigrants began to enter Hudson City by the tens of thousands, the wedge of land between what are now LeMastre Avenue and N. Harrison Street was part of the large Italian ghetto. But beginning in the 1920s, other immigrants, ones coming from Russia, eastern Europe, and Armenia, began to displace them. In fact, so many Russians (many of them fleeing the chaos of the Bolshevik Revolution and its aftermath) settled there that many people began to call it “Moscow West” instead of its official name, Graham.

IMAGES OF MOSCOW WEST

Orthodox Jewish scholars in their black clothes and hats, walking down the street conversing in fluent Hebrew

Hard-eyed old Russian men and women sitting on benches, passing the time

The burning taste of vodka, chilled to just above freezing and tossed down in one swift gulp

The rumble of the subway running under Huron Street

PIOTR KUZYOMIN

10 STR 10 DEX
 10 CON 10 BODY
 13 INT 10 EGO
 15 PRE 8 COM
 4 PD 3 ED
 2 SPD 4 REC
 20 END 20 STUN

Abilities: Climbing 8-, KS: American Special Forces 11-, KS: Cold War History 11-, KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 8-, KS: Military Science 11-, KS: Russian Cold War Military Doctrine 8-, KS: Russian Special Forces 14-, PS: Play Chess 16-, Stealth 11-, Streetwise 8-, WF: Small Arms, Contacts (20 points' worth, in the Russian military and government)

Disadvantages: Age: 60+; Psychological Limitation: Just Wants To Be Left Alone To Enjoy His Retirement

Notes: If you want to take on the top dog among the chess players of Moscow West, you'll have to track down Piotr Kuzymov and get him to agree to a match. Usually you can find him at White And Black, or maybe outside one of the shops not far from LeMastre Park. Time was when he was a powerful warrior, a member of the Spetsnaz who performed all sorts of covert operations for the Russian government. But those days are long, long behind him now; most of his skills have atrophied or been forgotten altogether. Today he just wants to enjoy his retirement here in the capitalist paradise, play chess, and leave the old days behind him.

The neighborhood's population grew and changed in the years leading up to and immediately after World War II as numerous Jews fleeing Nazi and Soviet oppression made it to Hudson City and settled down there. Thanks to their bravery and hard work, Moscow West today has several lovely temples and renowned Hebrew libraries; it's also the home of the Hebrew University of Hudson City (see below).

Moscow West's population remained steady or decreased in the years leading up to the late Seventies. At that point, Russian immigration to the area took an upswing. Unfortunately, few officials in the United States realized then, but are bitterly aware now, that more than a few of the emigrants the Soviet Union released as a symbol of "cooperation" and its "commitment to global peace" were actually hardened criminals it wanted to get rid of. Moscow West's crime problems date to that time, though it was only in the Nineties, after the fall of the Soviet Union and the removal of any significant restriction on travel to and from Russia, that the problem assumed its current dimensions.

Like Little Italy, Moscow West is a mixture of residential and retail areas, with some light manufacturing or similar concerns along the waterfront. Businesses such as corner grocery stores, neighborhood bars, and ethnic restaurants predominate in the retail areas. A small tourist trade has sprung up in the past couple of decades, and some businesses cater to this as well.

Moscow West experiences relatively little street crime, but despite this criminals — the *Organizatsiya*, or Russian Mafia — dominate the neighborhood. Different groups and gangs fight for turf and power, in the process squeezing the residents for as much as they can afford... and sometimes catching them in the crossfire. The FBI and HCPD have worked hard to break the gangs' hold over the area, but so far it seems to be a losing battle — most residents won't talk to the police, both because of fear of retaliation and poor experiences with Nazi and Soviet authorities in the past. Until they learn to band together and oppose the thugs preying upon them, or someone comes along who can help them outside of "official" channels, they'll never truly be able to live in peace. (See page 166 for more information on Russian organized crime in Hudson City.)

See page 69 for a map of Moscow West.

LANDMARKS

Most of the residents of Moscow West keep to themselves, and are just as happy for outsiders to do likewise and not come into the neighborhood. But sometimes interesting places attract visitors.

Hebrew University Of Hudson City (6300 Cayuga Street): Founded in 1948 by Simon ben Eshel, a rabbi born in Germany, HUHC has grown from a small, little-known rabbinical college into a world-renowned institute for the study of Torah, Talmud, Jewish history and philosophy, and related subjects. Some of its professors are ranked among the most respected Jewish scholars in the world, and its library contains many rare and valuable texts. The HUHC's Board of Visitors is currently negotiating with the city for support and funding to expand the university.

Slavic Languages Institute (6452 Oneida Street):

Half a school and half a translation service, the SLI was founded in 1981 to study Russian, other Slavic languages, and their literature. Unfortunately, scholarly study alone didn't pay the bills, so the Institute slowly and painfully transformed itself into a paying business. In addition to teaching Westerners Russian, as a community service it teaches English as a second language to Russian immigrants.

SHOPPING

Most of the shops and stores in Moscow West are the typical small, family-run businesses you'd find in almost any big-city neighborhood. But a few stand out from the crowd.

Iron Curtain Imports (northwest corner of Meade Avenue and Huron Street):

The motto under the sign reads "Bringing the Biggest Yard Sale in World History Direct to You!", and that's a pretty accurate assessment of the situation. Owner Leon Alexandrov buys surplus Soviet military and government goods, ships them to this country, and puts them on sale as Cold War curios. Given the way the kleptocrats in Russia are selling off their country piecemeal for a quick buck, he can get just about anything if the price is right and it's legal to export and import. He also occasionally deals in genuine Russian art and antiques for selected customers. Most of his business is by mail order, but his store in Moscow West allows for plenty of walk-in shopping.

Lukin Tobacconists (southwest corner of Coyle Avenue and Huron Street):

Smoking is one of many vices that many Russians indulge in to excess — and some who've come to this country miss their favorite brands from back home. Lukin Tobacconists carries not only common American brands of cigarettes, but a wide variety of smokes from the Old Country.

ON THE TOWN

If you find yourself in Moscow West with a desire to wet your whistle or have a bite to eat, try these places.

Red Square (346 Graham Avenue): Russian cuisine isn't exactly the most popular ethnic food in Hudson City, but there are some — including many in Moscow West — who enjoy it. And the best place in town to get it is Red Square, an understated but refined restaurant opened in 1989 by Russian emigre Alyosha Chernyshev and his wife Stepanida. Decorated in a style that mixes traditional Russian motifs with modern American flair, it appeals to native and immigrant alike.

White And Black (244 Joyce Avenue): Dark and a little dank, this bar is a lot like many in Russia — and that's the whole point. It caters mainly to residents who want to drink in familiar surroundings, not to visitors or tourists. Most tables have a chess set on them in case anyone wants to play a game; some of Moscow West's old men — including, rumors say, some *mafioski* — sit here nearly all day, every day playing chess and sipping vodka.

NORTH ELMVIEW

"Herr Colonel Cross, are you ready to see German soldiers marching through the streets of your precious Hudson City? For I promise you, soon they shall."

"Your life's your own, Major — but there are parts of Hudson City that I'd advise you to stay out of even if you have the entire Wehrmacht at your back."

—Colonel Rick Cross and Major Arndt Teufelmann, from the movie *Cross's Cavaliers*

"Even on the brightest days, it's always dark as night in North Elmview."

—former Hudson City Commissioner of Police Kenneth Walshe

Page 46 describes the early history of the entire Elmview area, which once included the neighborhood now known as North Elmview (i.e., the part bounded roughly by Ferry Street, Day Avenue, and the coast). Traditionally the northern part of greater Elmview was the roughest, most industrialized part of the neighborhood. In the early days of the city it was a center for shipping, bulk storage, and manufacturing. As the technologies involved in those industries evolved, so did northern Elmview... though it remained a district of tough, brutal men working hard jobs, never becoming residential except for a few flophouses and cheap hotels catering to sailors, dockworkers, and the lower end of society.

Beginning in the 1950s, some parts of the area — particularly eastern Redwine Avenue, known today as "the Strip" — began to become a center for the city's sex trade. First topless bars and strip clubs, then in time harder-core vice businesses, congregated in the area. This, in turn, attracted pimps and prostitutes. Unable to make these problems go away entirely, the city fathers settled for segregating them into northern Elmview, an area no one important cared about that was slowly but surely sliding into an economic malaise. Leading residents of Elmview, not wanting to be associated with such a sordid mess,

worked hard to get Hudsonites to think of that area as "North Elmview," a separate neighborhood from theirs, and by the early Seventies had succeeded.

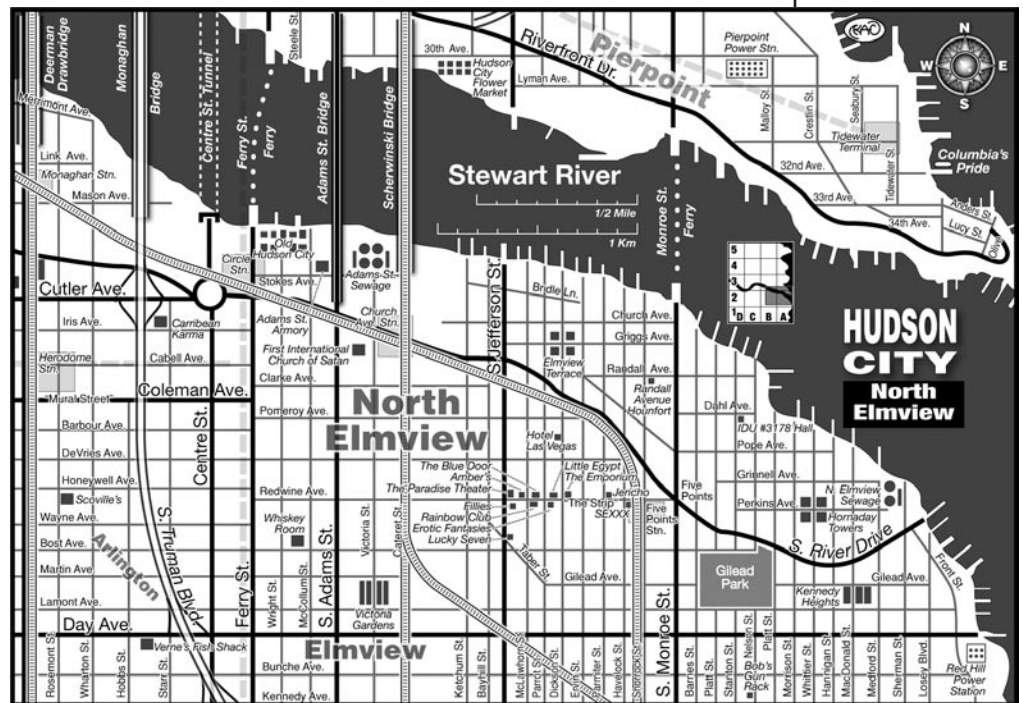
And the "neighborhood" has only gone downhill from there. The sex trade still dominates the area from the Strip, and has in some places spread beyond it... and not always publicly, since some of the "businesses" in North Elmview do things even most hardened criminals find repugnant. Along the waterfront, barely-used docks, empty or half-empty warehouses, and cheap, dirty bars are the order of the day. Elsewhere, the "residents" live in weekly rate hotels, some of the worst tenements and slums in the city, or a few dirty housing projects erected in the Sixties... or simply squat in abandoned buildings. In addition to plenty of illegal businesses, a few legal businesses eke out a living catering to the human refuse, or take advantage of the incredibly cheap rents to remain profitable, but they don't exactly do anything to improve the quality of life in the area. Unless you grew up there, in which case you probably don't function well in society, to walk the streets of most parts of North Elmview is to take your life in your own hands. But whatever sort of human evil or perversion you're looking for, you can find it there... provided you can pay the piper.

The western and southern parts of North Elmview are a little better and safer than the Strip and parts north and east of it. Thus, you find more of North Elmview's non-sex trade businesses there, along

NORTH ELMVIEW HOUSING PROJECTS

Back in the Sixties, the city and federal governments tried to "revitalize" North Elmview by building a few housing projects. It didn't work, but people too poor or troubled to go elsewhere still live in these miserable places. The largest and most prominent of them are:

Elmview Terrace
Hornaday Towers
Kennedy Heights
Victoria Gardens



APOLLO

10	STR	10	DEX
8	CON	8	BODY
10	INT	8	EGO
13	PRE	10	COM
3	PD	3	ED
2	SPD	4	REC
16	END	17	STUN

Abilities: AK: The Strip 14-, CK: North Elmview 12-, CK: Hudson City 11-, Interrogation 8-, PS: Pimp 11-, Streetwise 12-, WF: Handguns, Knives

Disadvantages: Hunted (Watched by Carl Spears); Psychological Limitation: Vain; Social Limitation: Criminal Record; Social Limitation: Subject To Orders

Notes: One of many pimps who manages a stable of Carl Spears's "bitches," Apollo's been on the street hustling tail since he was 18. He knows just the right combination of sweet talk, intimidation, and backhanding to get his girls to bring in the money... most of which he then forks over to Spears. He longs for the old days when he was his own boss, but he knows that if he tried to break away, Spears would have him killed without a second thought.

Apollo is pretty good-looking for a pimp, and he knows it. He's vain about his looks, and spends a lot of money every week getting his hair done, his skin treated, his nails manicured, and so on. Compared to many pimps, he wears relatively low-key clothing — usually to match one of his three Cadillacs, gold, green, or red — but he'd still stand out like a pile of manure in a parlor anywhere but the Strip.

with various tenements and apartment buildings that aren't quite the picture of utter, abysmal squalor.

CRIME

The crime most associated with North Elmview is prostitution, which is omnipresent along the Strip (see below). Territory along the Strip shifts constantly, though it's widely believed that four vice lords — Cleopatra, a former prostitute; Ernest "King" Cole, infamous throughout America as one of the country's chief creators and peddlers of pornographic magazines and films; the corpulent "businessman" who uses the street name Caligula; and upscale master pimp Carl Spears — control most of the flesh trade to one extent or another. However, none of them has ever been prosecuted for any major crimes. See page 181 for more information.

There's some other street crime along and around the Strip — pickpocketing, the occasional mugging, three-card monte, that sort of thing — but the merchants on the main parts of the street try to keep it to a minimum so their customers don't get scared away. Rumor has it they occasionally hire gangs of thugs to "clean out" undesirables.

Beyond the relatively bright and clean Strip, things get considerably worse. Vice acts too degenerate for public viewing — child pornography, white slavery, torture clubs, and worse — sprout like fungi in the darkness, and anyone who walks the streets is fair game for the criminals and gangsters who call them home. Among the housing complexes, the Doom Fever posse dominates the drug trade, eliminating rivals and other problems with swift, lethal violence. The Morelli family controls the Atlantic-side docks, but the ones along the river remain open territory, and Speargun (page 179) has been steadily encroaching on them from his base of power further west.

LANDMARKS

It's no Bankhurst or Worthington, but North Elmview has a few interesting places marked on the maps.

Five Points: The intersection of S. Monroe Street, South River Drive, and Redwine Avenue has traditionally been known as Five Points. Early in the neighborhood's history it was mostly a cluster of tenements beset by poverty, youth gangs, and epidemics of cholera and dysentery. Eventually businesses displaced the residences. As the Strip spread east like a virus it swallowed up Five Points, turning the run-down office buildings and stores into exotic dance clubs and peep show parlors. Today the intersection is just a tawdry neon altar where the lonely and the degenerate worship the naked female body in all their perverse ways. New York City found a way to clean up Times Square, but Hudson City's never even tried to remake Five Points.

Gilead Park: The only part of North Elmview that isn't unrelieved urban blight is Gilead Park, a little southeast of Five Points. For reasons no one can fully explain, somehow more than a little of the park's grass and trees have survived the neighborhood's long, slow slide into corruption and decay. But that's not to say it's a nice place. These days, it's mostly used by homeless people as a camp, by drug addicts as a

place to buy and shoot up, and by prostitutes as a big outdoor bedroom where they can transact business with johns too cheap to spring for an hour at a hotel.

SHOPPING

In North Elmview? Are you kidding? It's hard enough to find a place that sells groceries, much less other things...

...unless those other things are pornography, hookers, or drugs. If you're willing to get dirty enough, lucky enough to talk to the right people, and tough enough to survive, you might even be able to find stuff that even stores on the Strip won't sell. But if you stick to the Strip, you can easily find places like these:

The Emporium (537 Redwine Avenue): Your one-stop shopping place for all the pornographic magazines, adult videos, sex toys, and other erotic paraphernalia your perverted little heart could desire. The home store of Ernest "King" Cole's pornography empire, the Emporium caters to everyone from "adventurous" young couples to truly sick freaks: the deeper you go into the store, the harder-core the wares become. But none of it violates the law; Cole wouldn't endanger his various businesses by stocking anything illegal.

Erotic Fantasies (626 Redwine Avenue): Ever wanted to star in your own adult film? Well, now you can! The digital fleshmongers at Erotic Fantasies can take a few pictures of you, then insert you into one of several dozen pornographic videos via the magic of computer manipulation. Available in VHS and DVD.

ON THE TOWN

Most of the entertainment businesses in North Elmview are found along the Strip, or nearby (or at least, that's where you'll find the *legal* ones). Besides the clubs described below, other places of "interest" in North Elmview include:

Lucky Seven (303 Taber Avenue): If you've had enough of the bright lights and costume jewelry glitz of the Strip, or you're looking to drown your sorrows in another way, the Lucky Seven may be just the place you need: dark, quiet, and smokey, and the booze is cheap. Most people who come here to drink follow the Golden Rule by keeping to themselves. In the event of unpleasantness, Big Lou the bartender gets his trusty shotgun "Elizabeth" out from underneath the bar and restores order.

International Dockworkers' Union Local #3178 Hall (southeast corner of Dahl Street and Stanton Avenue): Out of a sense of perverse pride, IDU Local #3178 has never moved its union hall to a better part of town (or even a better part of North Elmview): union leaders figure their men work down there, so they might as well meet down there. But meetings are few and far between; mostly the place is used for "social events" (read: nightly drinking) as a bar with an exclusive membership.

The Whiskey Room (northwest corner of Bost Avenue and McCollom Street): A lot of bachelor parties that end up on the Strip get their start at the Whiskey

Room, a not unpleasant (but definitely not upscale) club a couple blocks east of Ferry Street. A few independent prostitutes work the club, since they consider it a safer place to meet johns than on the street (where they'd also have to submit to some pimp); they kick back a little to the club's owners and dress better than your typical streetwalker so no one raises a fuss.

The Strip

"Sure, I've been down there on some cases. Lots of cases, actually. Too many.

*"Usually it's missing persons *%&! from out of town. You know the type — some teenage kid has a fight with his parents, or breaks up with her boyfriend, or what the hell ever, so they run away to the big city. Mom and dad get in touch with me, beg me to find Junior, throw whatever money they have to at me just to get their precious baby back home safe.*

*"Had one just like that a couple months back. Girl, age 15, short blonde hair, from some place down south... Kentucky, maybe, I don't remember. Usually these cases lead nowhere — once these kids hit the Metro, nowhere to go, no money, no friends, someone gets ahold of them, and they vanish into the city, !\$&*ed for life. But this time I got lucky. A janitor at the Metro recognized the girl from a picture I showed him, told me about the guy who met her, some younger-looking guy in a leather jacket. I learned later she'd been talking to this guy online, but I didn't know that at the time. All I had to work with was that the janitor described the guy's tattoo. I knew it for a North Elmview gang tatt.*

*"I headed down there, started looking around the area where the gang was from. Got lucky again, saw the guy coming out of this *%&!heap of a building. When they got far enough away I snuck inside.*

"They'd duct-taped her to the radiator when they were finished with her. Her face looked like raw hamburger, and I don't know how many times they raped her, or how many of them. It's the usual way of breaking them down before putting them out on the street or into movies to earn money.

*"I got her out of there quick and over to Vreeland Memorial. Her parents came and got her and took her home, and that's the last I heard about her. I imagine she's in therapy or some such *%&!, but there isn't a shrink in the world that can help her get over what happened. Grow strong or go crazy, that's about her only choices."*

— private investigator and bounty hunter Eric Doyle

Beginning around where it crosses S. Jefferson Street, Redwine Avenue turns into something less than a street... and more like a sewer. It becomes the Strip, the heart of the sex trade in Hudson City.

Starting as early as the 1950s, topless dance clubs and adult bookstores began to cluster on Redwine just a little east of South Jefferson. A few people complained, but the movers and shakers in Hudson City had long ago given up on North Elmview. As far as some of them were concerned it was better to have all those sorts of businesses in one place so they wouldn't infest the rest of the city. In the ensuing decades these establishments proliferated, but the area didn't earn its nickname until around 1970, when the businesses took a harder turn. Most of the bookshops were crowded out by strip clubs, live sex clubs, peep show emporiums — anything the people who owned the land could do to make a buck off of women's bodies. Long before then the Strip had become the favored hangout of most of the city's hookers as well.

By the early Eighties, a definite pecking order had become entrenched on the Strip, with the human refuse slowly sliding downhill toward the sea. On the "upper" end of the Strip, closer to South Jefferson, there were the nicer clubs — places with actual names, like the Blue Door, Amber's, and Filles — and not too many streetwalkers. This was the end of the street frequented by Hudsonites slumming for bachelor parties and degenerates too nervous or scared to go further. As you walked east, toward Five Points, the places became more and more sordid, the names replaced by simple descriptions: 24 Hour Nude Dancers, Hot XXX Shows. By the time you reached about Havelock or Shorrock, the pimps and prostitutes were clustered so thick that a guy couldn't walk half a block without being offered every sort of "date" known to man. Beyond Five Points the Strip spread out onto South River, Perkins, and Grinnell like a toxic waste spill. This was the home turf of hookers too old or broken to make it anywhere else — the sort of place where the only way left to make any money to support their drug habits was quickie curbside work with their mouths or submitting to the lusts of men too perverted to get any action back on Redwine.

That's pretty much the way the Strip is today — it sure hasn't gotten any better. The two "anchors" of the western end of the street are Little Egypt, the club run by Cleopatra (page 190), and The Emporium, the main book and video store run by pornographic movie producer Ernest "King" Cole (see above and page 182). The dozens of other places range from large to small, tolerable to squalid, and they're supported by lots of secondary businesses on the surrounding streets: by-the-hour hotels; cheap rooming houses; secondhand clothing stores.

It's an open secret that just about any business on the Strip that puts women on stage — whether it's a fairly sedate strip joint like the Rainbow Club, a harder-core club like Jericho, or a live sex act theater such as the imaginatively-named SEXXX — is a haven for prostitution. Not everyone who visits the Strip wants to consort with the streetwalkers; some prefer to arrange their liaisons in a more pri-

CHUCK KELFER

8 STR	9 DEX
10 CON	11 BODY
8 INT	8 EGO
12 PRE	8 COM
3 PD	2 ED
1 SPD	4 REC
20 END	20 STUN

Abilities: Conversation 11-, AK: The Strip 12-, KS: The Strip 12-, Streetwise 12-, Trading 8-

25+ Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Anything For A Buck (Common, Moderate)

Notes: Chuck Kelfer is the night manager at the Hotel Las Vegas, a place near the Strip that rents rooms by the hour and half-hour. Basically his job is to sit behind the counter and collect \$20 for each hour from the johns who bring the girls in. (He also rents rooms to prostitutes by the day for much cheaper rates, often taking payment "in trade" instead of cash.) He puts on a facade of friendliness, and can even be kind of talkative sometimes, but the truth is he doesn't care about any of the people he deals with every night — he just wants their money.

Chuck knows the Strip pretty well, both its places and its people. After all, he sees a lot of the same girls, night after night, and even when he's off-duty still hangs around in the neighborhood. He'd be a good source of information if approached properly, though he hates cops and government types.

STRIP WISDOM

*“Don’t get in vans. I got in a van once, when I’d only been hooking a couple months. These guys who were hiding yanked me into the back. I didn’t get out of there ‘til the !\$&*ers dumped me out the back doors the next morning.”*

— Mindy, age 25

“Look for the guys that blush, even a little. You can usually trick ‘em into giving you more. Every dollar I make that Antonio don’t know about, good for me.”

— Kim, age 17

*“Don’t wear those real long high heels. Guys love ‘em, yeah, but they don’t gotta wear the !\$&*ing things. You’ll kill your ankles walkin’ on the street in them things. Go for somethin’ shorter n’ thicker — they look almost as good, and yer feet won’t hurt so damn much.”*

— Stephanie, age 22

“It’s all about blowjobs. That’s all most of these guys want. If their girlfriends and wives would just put out for ‘em like they want, they’d never come to me.”

— Amber, age 29

vate fashion. Some of the places even have rooms in back — that way the girls can do their business and get back out on stage quicker. Whatever you want in a woman, you can find it on the Strip... provided you can afford it.

STRIP JOINTS

Here are brief descriptions of some of the better-known places along the Strip.

The Blue Door (733 Redwine Avenue): Named for its royal blue-painted front entrance, the Blue Door is really nothing more than a strip club and topless bar. It gets its reputation from the fact that the staff is unfailingly polite and helpful, and the girls among the prettiest on the Strip. A lot of bachelor parties end up here.

Jericho (355 Redwine Avenue): Jericho is one of the sleazier “exotic dance” clubs on the Strip. It’s cheaper than the Blue Door, that’s for sure, but the staff is surly and the girls aren’t exactly fresh off the farm.

The Paradise Theater (northeast corner of Redwine Avenue and S. Jefferson Street): Unlike most places on the Strip, which will let anyone through the door who can pay the cover charge, the Paradise Theater is a members-only club. In advertisements throughout Hudson City, the management tries to bill it as “the Gentlemen’s Club of the New Millennium” and its money-green membership cards as some sort of exclusive thing, but the truth is it isn’t really any different from most places on the Strip... and anyone who can pay the membership fee can get one of those cards.

The Rainbow Club (744 Redwine Avenue): An exotic dance club that specializes in what it calls “duet dancing” — putting two girls on stage at once, usually girls of different races (or at least different hair colors).

IMAGES OF NORTH ELMVIEW

The gaudy and garish lights of the Strip

Men wearing raincoats, learing with eager eyes at everything around them; broken-down old whores wearing nothing but raincoats so they can get their tricks over with quicker

The smell of mildew and rot coming from the old, abandoned buildings near the waterfront

Girls who don’t look like they’ve even reached puberty yet selling themselves on the street

The flashy cars, and flashier clothes, of pimps

SEXXX (260 Redwine Avenue): By the 200s block of the Strip, the nude dance clubs and topless bars have given way to harder fare. SEXXX, for example, is a live sex club, where the “dancers” perform actual sex acts on stage, usually to a chorus of suggestions and requests to jump in from audience members.

STRIP PLAYAS

Where there are working girls, there are the men who put them to work: pimps. They’re the kings of the Strip (or so they like to think) — the playas who walk the walk, talk the talk, and fight like wolves over small sections of concrete or the slightest perceived insult.

The toughest group of pimps on the Strip these days are the ones working for Carl Spears (page 182), and there are others that people claim work for the likes of Cleopatra or Caligula, but plenty of pimps fend for themselves — “I don’t need no white-ass cracka to tell me howta run my bitches,” as one of them so eloquently put it. Some of the most colorful of them include:

DuLayne: With a stable of a dozen girls out peddling tail every night, DuLayne Johnson is rolling in green. He’s got a fat bankroll on him, spends thousands on clothes every week, can barely move some of his fingers thanks to the size of the rocks on his rings, and drives a sweet purple Cadillac. To make sure some rough-off artist doesn’t try to take his stuff, he’s got a couple of big legbreakers who stick near him all the time.

Jersey: Jersey isn’t far behind DuLayne when it comes to flash. His favorite color is orange, so he’s got orange clothes, a long orange jacket he wears all the time (even at the height of summer), and an orange car — “looks like a Got-damned traffic cone,” as another pimp once put it...

...though he didn’t say it within Jersey’s hearing, because Jersey’s well-known for his violent temper. If his girls don’t bring home enough money at the end of the night, they know they’re going to get a beating; if someone disses him, he’s as likely to pull out a switchblade and go to work on them as anything. He just got back on the street recently after pulling a couple years in Longview until his lawyer got a murder charge against him dismissed on a technicality.

Keeshawn Wilson: Laughing, smiling, joking, breaking into impromptu little raps — that’s what Keeshawn Wilson’s like most nights. You might get the impression he enjoys life, and you’d be right. What’s not to like? He’s got the nicest threads, the sweetest rides, and the hottest girls on the Strip, and everyone knows it — just ask him, he’ll tell you. Try to argue with him, and he’ll make a monkey out of you with his quick wits and quicker words. Keep arguing, and he might have to dish out a little punishment that’s not quite so pleasant.

PIERPOINT



"I tell ya, Benny, this neighborhood is goin' ta hell."

"How d'ya mean, Bill?"

"You remember what it was like when we started to work on the docks? It was a great place — a man's place, where we worked, and drank after work, and got things done. It was a tough neighborhood, sure, but you could be yourself, and your friends looked after you like you looked after them."

"But Christ, look what it's turnin' into! Half the docks and most of the factories have gone outta business, and God knows how long the rest of them will remain. Every day I go inta work I half expect to get my pink slip."

"And *%&!, it'll probably be some woman handing it to me. Company just hired this broad to take Tommie's place when he retired. You remember Tommie, big guy with a little scar on his chin?"

"Sure, I remember Tommie. He still comes in here sometimes. Geez, they gave his job to a chick?"

"Yeah, but not no chick you'd want to date. Big chunky broad with a major mouth on her. Probably one'a those dikes."

"Yeah."

"And that's not all! The whole damn neighborhood is changing. All them yuppies are moving in and turning the old warehouses into 'lofts' and 'luxury apartments' and crap like that. And they're replacing all the great joints like yours with that crap they think is all trendy and special. There's a !\$&*%#@ Irish Glen up on Twain Street now, do you believe it?"

"No way."

"I'm tellin' you, man, it's there. Right where that cheap little diner usedta be. Walk by there when you head for the train this morning — you'll see it."

— conversation between Benny Stankiewicz and one of his customers at Benny's Place

Located on the southeast side of the Northside, this peninsular neighborhood — roughly speaking, the area south of 24th Avenue and east of Washington Street (below 28th Avenue) and N. Adams Street (between 28th and 24th) — was once a busy port and the site of a lot of warehouses, medium to heavy industry, and the like. The docks are still there today, as well as plenty of warehouses and a few small factories, but none of them are as busy as they once were. The gradual shift in the American economy over the past century slowly but inevitably turned Pierpoint from a bustling waterfront into a not-so-bustling one.

But where the old economy failed, the new economy has come to the rescue... after a fashion. In the past few decades, newly wealthy urbanites (many of whom work in nearby Bankhurst) have moved in, renovated old warehouses and turned them into lofts, and given the area an upscale residential quality it never had before. Businesses have followed them, and thus parts of Pierpoint (mainly the areas to the west and north of the neighborhood) have become some of the most fashionable addresses in the city. However, this new residential culture clashes with the dockyard culture that still exists along the waterfront, causing resentment on the part of longtime Pierpoint workers and disgust from the newer Pierpoint residents.

The crime rate in Pierpoint is moderate. Some of the areas along the waterfront are pretty rough, and sometimes Southside criminals drift over the Adams Street Bridge looking for easy pickings among the yuppies, but violent street crime isn't

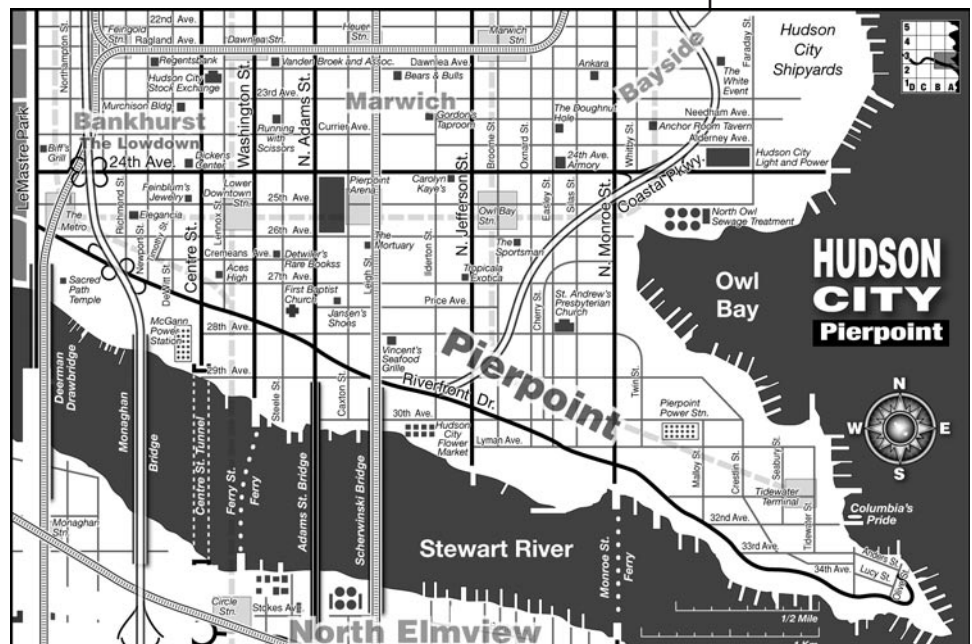
IMAGES OF PIERPOINT

The bright colors of the goods at the Flower Market contrasted against grey buildings and grey streets in the earliest moments of dawn

How the neighborhood improves as you walk uphill from the tip of the peninsula toward Bankhurst

Men shouting instructions to each other as they work on the waterfront

The ferry coming in to dock at the Ferry Street pier



MICHAEL DEANGELO

10	STR	11	DEX
12	CON	12	BODY
13	INT	10	EGO
15	PRE	9	COM
4	PD	3	ED
3	SPD	4	REC
24	END	23	STUN

Abilities: Bribery 12-, Bureaucratics 12-, Concealment 12-, AK: Hudson City 11-, KS: The Flower Business 11-, KS: Hudson City Flower Market 12-, Stealth 11-, Streetwise 13-, TF: Small Motorized Boats, Large Motorized Boats, WF: Small Arms, Contacts (10 points' worth, in the Flower Market and flower industry), Favors (from various restaurant and hotel managers he's helped out)

25+ Disadvantages: Social Limitation: Criminal Record; Social Limitation: Subject To Orders

Notes: Years ago, several of the Flower Market's wholesalers banded together to create an umbrella organization to buy flowers from their growers in larger quantities (and thus at better prices). Michael DeAngelo is the Administrator of this group, the Hudson City Flower Buyers Association. He does his best to obtain the best prices and provide the best services for his group's members, and to beat out other, competing, groups.

as common as in many other neighborhoods. For years the police have tracked a conflict between the Verontese family (which controls most of the docks in this area, as well as the associated International Dockworkers' Union locals and other unions) and Speargun, the self-styled "Ruler of Dockland" (see page 179). It's believed that Verontese influence over the Flower Market (see below) was lost to Speargun a couple years ago, but police investigations into the matter have reached dead ends... often because the undercover detectives assigned to them have been murdered.

LANDMARKS

Besides the Pierpoint Arena (page 115), some of the noteworthy places in Pierpoint include:

The Columbia's Pride (32nd Avenue Pier): Over a hundred years ago, before the development of the great steam engines, men depended on the wind to make their ships move over the waves — and no ships moved as fast as the clipper ships. With bold captains at their helms, the clippers sailed all over the world, bringing exotic goods from far lands to American cities. The *Columbia's Pride* — a fully-preserved clipper ship that people can board and tour — is a tribute to those glorious days of maritime adventure. Open 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM seven days a week, closed holidays.

Hudson City Flower Market (waterfront, west of N. Jefferson Street at the terminus of Ilderton Street): Flowers are no good for sale if they're not fresh and vibrantly-colored. Although refrigeration technology has eased the problem considerably, once flowers are cut flower growers have only a short time to get them to market, and buyers likewise have to get them to their place of sale quickly. The Hudson City Flower Market exists to make these transactions as swift and painless as possible for everyone concerned. Wholesalers set up stalls to which sellers deliver and buyers come to buy; a wholesaler's location depends upon seniority and the like. In the hours just before dawn, the place is bustling with flower shop owners, hotel and restaurant flower buyers, and other customers eager to make their purchases and get their flowers to their destination as soon as possible; by late morning it quiets down until nightfall.

SHOPPING

There wasn't much shopping to speak of in Pierpoint until the "yuppification" of the area set in. Now there are quite a few places that attract the big bucks the young and wealthy have to spend.

Carolyn Kaye's (350 24th Avenue): This women's apparel and accessories store caters mainly to female urban professionals, but has a section of lower-priced clothing for administrative assistants and the like. Some of its higher-end dresses, not to mention its fine selection of jewelry, are extremely expensive, so it has a top-notch security system.

Jansen's Shoe Sales & Repair (931 Price Avenue): What started out several decades ago as a simple cobbler's store has, through the time and hard work of owners Norman and Maria Jensen, transformed

into a top-flight shoe store that also does repair and dying work for shoes. It carries a wide variety of domestic and imported shoes, with a small stock of work boots and outdoor footwear. More than one Bankhurst stockbroker swears by Jansen's when it comes to comfortable shoes.

The Sportsman (342 26th Avenue): If you're the type of person who wants to escape the polluted air and stressful life of the city for a peaceful week or weekend in the great outdoors, the Sportsman has just what you need. It stocks a full line of fishing, hunting, and camping gear, and all of its employees are knowledgeable outdoors enthusiasts who can recommend just the right piece of gear for your trip. The Sportsman also runs a booking service for outdoor travel; it can arrange anything from a cabin in the mountains to a full-blown African safari.

ON THE TOWN

Pierpointers looking for something fun to do often visit these places:

Benny's Place (616 Riverfront Drive): A favorite after-work watering hole for many of Pierpoint's longshoremen and dockworkers, Benny's Place features good beer at reasonable prices, sports on the big screen TV, a handful of dart boards, and two pool tables. The owner, Benny Stankiewicz, used to be a dockworker himself, and still knows a lot of people all around the Pierpoint Waterfront.

The Mortuary (804 26th Avenue): Through the early Eighties, the Mortuary was just that: a funeral home. But the owner's gambling debts caused the place to fall into the hands of the Mafia, which let it sit fallow for a while before selling it to a couple of young entrepreneurs. They turned it into a club that's become one of Pierpoint's favorite nightspots. The ghoulish decor seems odd when contrasted with the hip fashions and well-tanned skins of the patrons, but somehow it works.

Tropicala Exotica (northwest corner of 27th Avenue and N. Jefferson Street): The theme of this adult nightclub is "exotic jungle splendor." It does its best to provide just that with lots of tropical greenery, tiki torches, wicker furniture, and other such decor... not to mention the topless waitresses dressed as native girls and the "umbrella drinks" the bar serves. It doesn't feature exotic dancing, but does have a stage where musicians (usually light jazz, but sometimes calypso or reggae to go with the club's theme) perform live.

Vincent's Seafood Grille (southeast corner of 28th Avenue and Leigh Street): Whether you want finely-grilled mahi-mahi with lemon sauce and capers, a big plate of superb calamari, or some surf and turf, Vincent's is the place to go. Its chefs prepare some of the best seafood in town, but it also has a generous selection of chicken and beef dishes for people who don't like fish (including an exquisite filet mignon). It's said that some members of the Verontese family like this place so much they eat here nearly every night.

RED HILL



"Thank God you SWAT boys finally got here."

"Sorry for the delay — goddamn traffic coming over the bridge. We didn't get much of a briefing; what's the situation, Hendricks?"

"We got three, maybe four guys holed up in that four-story building over there. My men have had the place surrounded for an hour now, but we just got the floodlights about fifteen minutes ago. They've been quiet since then."

"What is this place?"

"Used to be an armory, I think, but converted to office space back in the Fifties or Sixties. Been abandoned since the mid-Seventies. Squatters live there occasionally, and a couple times gangs have taken it over for a while, but mostly it just sits there empty. First time we've had a major problem with it."

"Where are they?"

"Up onna top floor, Lieutenant — or at least usually. Every one of those broken windows you see, they've shot at us from."

"Okay, what've they got?"

"The whole arsenal, I think. !\$&, look around. That heap of metal over there used to be a squad car; they blew it up with a grenade, sent one officer to the hospital. He's probably not gonna make it. From the automatic fire and the size of the holes in the rest of the cars, I'd say 5.56 or 7.62 millimeter assault rifles. But all that's your department, not mine."*

Before the lieutenant could reply, another staccato burst of fire split the night. They both hit the ground behind the car as the solo became a duet, then a trio. After ten or twenty seconds of firing, the bullets stopped flying. "Hey, pigs!" shouted a voice from the building. "You better get the !\$& outta here right now or we're gonna turn you into !\$&*@# Swiss cheese!"*

"See what I mean?" the cop said. "They haven't issued any demands or made any statements. I don't even know why they started firing at people over an hour ago."

"Who gives a !\$&. All we gotta do is stop 'em. Leave the motives for the shrinks and the D.A. Here's what I want you to do. When I give the signal, have all of the men open up on the building. Those guys won't dare stick their faces up to see anything, giving me and my men time to get to one of the doors and inside before those assholes can...."*

Before he could finish, there was a bloodcurdling shriek from inside the building. Then came more gunfire, but a few seconds after everyone instinctively ducked, they realized no one was firing at them — the shots were being fired inside the building.

"!\$&@'A — they turned on each other. Let's move, men!" The lieutenant jumped to his feet and ran for the building as fast as he could, his squad of men right behind him.*

The door they got to first wasn't locked. With military precision they opened it and entered, each man holding his submachine gun at the ready and covering the guy next to him as they moved into the building, around corners, through doors, up stairs. Second floor, no incident. Third floor, no incident. Fourth floor door.

When his men were ready, the lieutenant kicked the fourth floor door open. Instantly the squad members covered every angle, but they saw no targets and no one fired at them. With the same precision as before, they moved toward the west side of the building.

A few minutes later, Officer Hendricks got a call on his radio. "Come on up — we're clear."

When he got to the fourth floor, Hendricks saw plenty of stuff he expected to see — shell casings all over the floor, bullet holes in the wall, four dead scumbags — but also something he'd never have expected in a million years: three of the perps were pinned to the walls by arrows. The other lay on the floor, his neck obviously broken.

"What the !\$& happened, Lieutenant?"*

"Damned if I know. It was like this when we got up here. Somebody beat us to it, that's for sure."

"Yeah, but how? We've had the building surrounded for an hour. We've had floodlights on it for twenty minutes. How did someone get in here, pull the Robin Hood routine on these guys, and get the !\$& out again?"*

— from a criminal incident in Red Hill

During the early history of Hudson City, Red Hill — the area bounded by the modern streets of King Avenue, Day Avenue, and S. Monroe Street — wasn't considered a separate neighborhood so much as it was part of greater Elmview. That began to change in the late nineteenth century, when relatively large numbers of German, Austrian, and

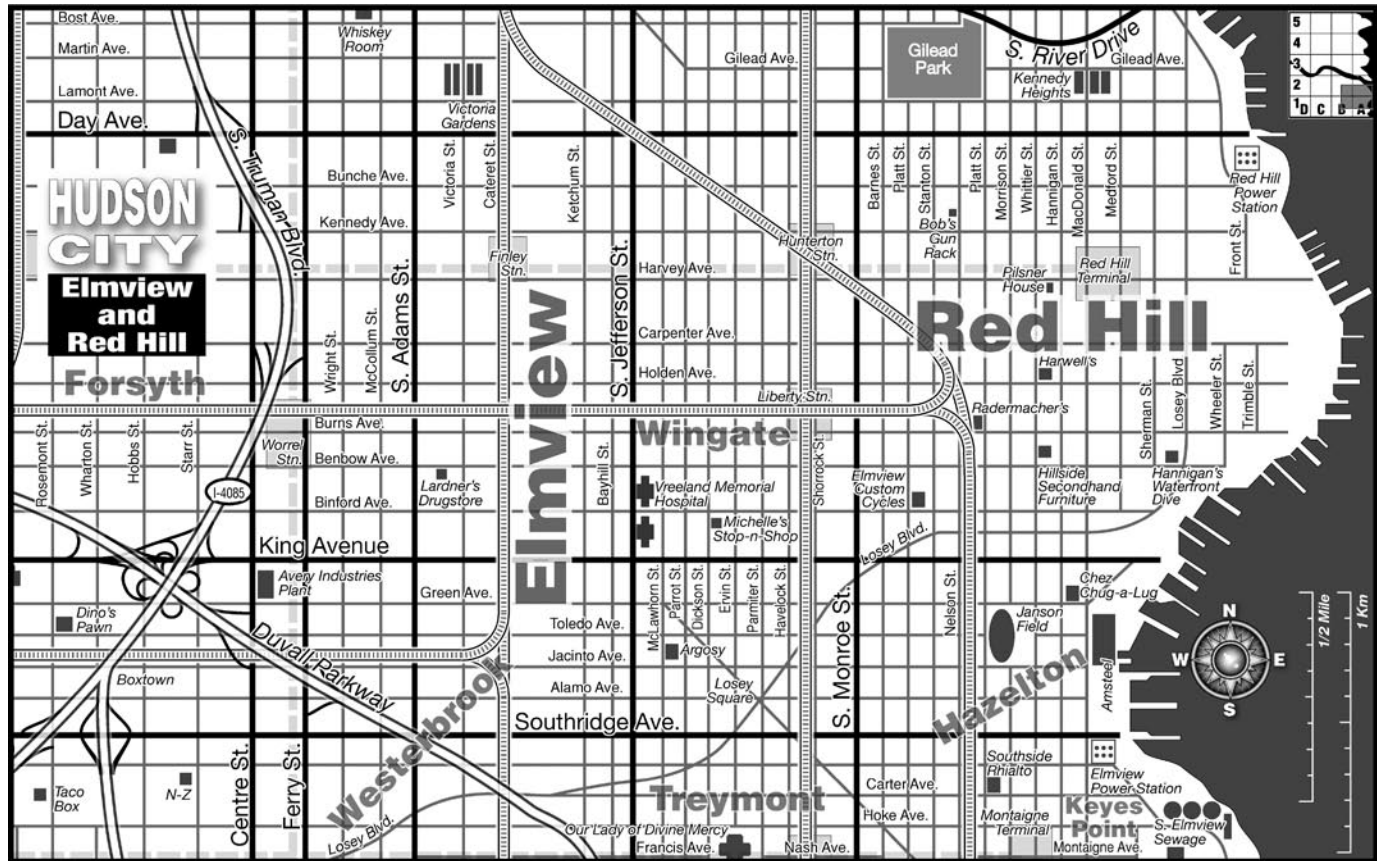
IMAGES OF RED HILL

Block after block of run-down apartment buildings, their once-reddish brick weathered to a brownish-rust shade

The smell of an evening's worth of smoke in a bar that's never heard of "no smoking" laws

People coming home after a hard day's work somewhere else walking up out of Red Hill Terminal

The sound of motorcycles as a biker gang rides to one of its favorite watering holes



Polish immigrants settled there. They soon began to leave their mark on the neighborhood, but it wasn't until the early twentieth century that Red Hill achieved a separate identity. When the United States went to war with Germany in 1917, residents in the rest of Elmview were quick to try to distance themselves from their Hunnish neighbors by referring to that part of the city as "Red Hill" instead of "eastern Elmview" (much as they'd disassociate themselves from North Elmview decades later).

The situation worsened with the rise of Nazi Germany and, eventually, the conflagration of World War II. The fact that both federal officials and masked mystery men like the Raven fought secret Bundist conspiracies, fifth columnists, and Nazi secret agents in Red Hill during the 1930s only exacerbated the problem. Red Hill withdrew into itself, its residents finding jobs in the neighborhood whenever they could, and shopping there as much as possible.

In the sixty years since World War II, Red Hill has changed. It remains basically a working-class neighborhood with small businesses, light industry, and a waterfront, though economically it's not in nearly as good shape as it was in the first half of the twentieth century. But the "German character" and insularity of the neighborhood have withered in light of the change in American-German relations, the cultural leveling affect of the modern mass media, demographic shifts, and other societal trends. Almost no one grows up in Red Hill learning German as well as English anymore, and despite the last names most families are as American as apple pie or electoral fraud.

Modern Red Hill is an odd mix of residential and commercial, with more residences — apartments and old brownstones, mostly — to the west and south of the neighborhood, and more industry and the like as one approaches the docks. A lot of people who grew up there speak longingly of it... but don't take any steps to move their own families there. Crime is a persistent problem. Between various local gangs of young punks, Hispanic gangs sometimes drifting up from Latin City to sell drugs or try to claim turf, various psychos and criminals drifting down from North Elmview, and the occasional outlaw motorcycle gang blowing into the neighborhood to drink beer and show off Nazi tattoos, it's not the safest place to live. And more than one crimelord or criminal gang has used the abandoned warehouses, crumbling piers, and decrepit old factories of Red Hill to hide himself or his loot.

LANDMARKS

For better or worse, Red Hill really doesn't have anything in the way of significant landmarks. It's got no major parks, no special cultural attractions, and no sites of general historic interest. Every now and then people with a special interest in German-American history, or the lives of the masked mystery men of the Thirties, tour the area to see where certain events took place, but otherwise there's not much for tourists to do in Red Hill.

SHOPPING

Most of the retail establishments in Red Hill are pretty ordinary. Here are a few that stand out from the pack:

Bob's Gun Rack (264 Nelson Street): While not quite as well-stocked as Collins Guns (page 186), Bob's Gun Rack nevertheless has a lot to offer the discriminating firearms shopper. Bob was a Marine sniper in Vietnam and knows a *lot* about guns — just ask him, he'll be glad to tell you what you need to know. Bob's also offers gunsmithing and gun customization services.

Elmview Custom Cycles (northwest corner of Binford Avenue and Stanton Street): Hudsonite motorcyclists from weekend hobbyists to the hardest of hard-core outlaw bikers know that if you want just the right bike, you go to Elmview Custom Cycles. Not only does ECC carry a full line of both American and foreign-made bikes (mostly top-of-the-line and "custom collectible" models), but its mechanics are fully qualified to do any sort of work a biker needs done. They can improve a motorcycle's performance, install aftermarket parts and upgrades, or even paint and accessorize the thing if that's what the customer wants.

Hillside Secondhand Furniture (2692 Whittier Street): Local residents looking for a bargain on furniture often stop by Hillside, which carries a large stock of used and remaindered furnishings. Owner Terry Cooke has a knack for distinguishing trash from treasure, so the pieces she sells are usually in pretty good shape even if they look a little shabby. Most of what she carries is strictly for the discount shopper market, but she does have a small selection of antique pieces that she sells via the Internet and her connections among furniture collectors.

Pilsner House (southwest corner of Harvey Avenue and Hannigan Street): If Budweiser, Miller, and Coors aren't quite your style, stop by the Pilsner House. In addition to a selection of modern American microbrews and specialty beers, it carries dozens of popular brands of British, German, and Austrian beers... and it can place special orders for hundreds more. Charlemagne's bodyguard and enforcer, Caber, once robbed the place just to get several cases of one of his favorite brands of beer from England.

ON THE TOWN

When the work day ends in Red Hill and people are ready to relax, here are some of the places they go to.

Hannigan's Waterfront Dive (northwest corner of Benbow Avenue and Losey Boulevard): Jake Hannigan doesn't have any illusions about what his place is like: it's a waterfront dive, pure and simple, so that's what he decided to call it. The cheap beer, pool tables, and mix of classic rock and hard-hitting country music attracts a diverse clientele: dockworkers, their bosses, local residents. A good many of the area's bikers like to drink here as well, and they don't take kindly to people who get in their way, play crappy songs on the jukebox, or drive Japanese-made motorcycles.

Harwell's (northeast corner of Holden Avenue and Whittier Street): Harwell's is in many ways a typical American restaurant. One side of the place is where you sit down and eat, choosing from a menu that covers many different types of food, from burgers, to pasta, to steaks, to a small list of vegetarian selections. The other side of the building is a bar. What sets the place apart is the small stage in the restaurant area where live performers can play light jazz or simple modern pop tunes to entertain the patrons. A lot of Red Hillers find they enjoy eating here more than they do at hundreds of similar places throughout the city because the live music adds a touch of class to the meal.

Radermacher's (northeast corner of Burns Avenue and Nelson Street): The ceiling beams are 200 year-old oak. The decorations are arms, armor, and other relics from fifteenth and sixteenth century Bavaria. The menu contains dishes inspired by the food served at the most famous hotels and inns of Germany and Austria, and the beer list includes more than 400 different beers. The current owners are the great-grandchildren of the original founders, and all of the chefs were either born in or trained in Germany. In short, if you want authentic German food served in a setting that's positively dripping with ambience, there's only one place to go in Hudson City: Radermacher's.

BOBBY WATSON

10	STR	13	DEX
10	CON	10	BODY
13	INT	10	EGO
13	PRE	8	COM
4	PD	3	ED
3	SPD	4	REC
20	END	20	STUN

Abilities: Bribery 8-, Concealment 12-, Combat Driving 12-, Deduction 12-, Gambling (Card Games, Sports Betting) 12-, KS: Pool 13-, Mechanics 8-, PS: Play Pool 15-, WF: Small Arms

Disadvantages: Distinctive Features (various scars and tattoos); Social Limitation: Criminal Record

Notes: Bobby's originally from Georgia, but he's lived in Hudson City so long he's practically a native. Although none of the business papers show it, he's the owner of a pool hall in Red Hill that does pretty good business. He's there every night from 8:00 on, playing pool and watching everyone else play. The regulars have already learned that he's pro-level good and won't play against him for money, but enough new fish come in for him to supplement his income nicely with pool winnings. He's thought about going pro in the past, but he just doesn't wanna mess with all the paperwork, travel, and other nonsense.

RIVERSIDE HILLS



MELISSA THOMASON

8	STR	8	DEX
9	CON	7	BODY
10	INT	10	EGO
12	PRE	10	COM
2	PD	2	ED
2	SPD	4	REC
18	END	16	STUN

Abilities: Bureaucrat-ics 11-, Computer Programming 8-, Lip-reading 8-, Streetwise 8-, Contacts (8 points' worth in city government and appropriate federal government offices)

25+ Disadvantages: None

Notes: Melissa Thomason is Assistant Director of the Wainwright Orphanage. Her duties involve general administration, financial management, fundraising, and assisting with the placement of children into foster and adoptive homes. Caring and compassionate, she'll go to great lengths to ensure a successful adoption or find the right adoptive parents for a particular child. She focuses much of her efforts on getting the older kids adopted, since there's always demand for babies.

"Hey, man, what's up?"

"Nothin'. Just trying to get some of this English Lit reading out of the way so I'm ready for old man Garvey's class this afternoon. What'd you get into last night?"

"Oh, man, did you miss out! I went over to Fallout with James, and Mindy, and Hank, and four or five other guys. There was this one girl sitting a couple tables over from us who just got completely bombed. She was so drunk she got up on one of the tables and began dancing around and taking her clothes off! It was like being on the Strip."

"No *%&!. What happened?"

"Nothin'. She was only halfway into it when she got sick and puked all over Mindy! Man, was she pissed. After that girl came back out from cleaning herself up in the bathroom, I got her phone number, though."

"Sweet!"

— conversation overheard on the Hudson City College campus

This narrow strip of the Southside, bounded by Day Avenue to the south, Coleman Avenue to the north, the city limits to the west, and Centre Street to the east, gets its name from its mildly hilly geography — it's got its ups and downs, though the elevation's not as high as Highlands or Mint Ridge. It evolved from a number of smaller communities, such as Millford, Allston Park, Morris Square, and Arlington, which were founded in the nineteenth century. Some of these towns were created by people fleeing the crowded Northside, others by immigrants, and still others by Freetowners who thrived and found ways to move to a better place. Eventually the whole area came to be known as Riverside Hills after an ambitious, but failed, development project in the early twentieth century.

As of the early twenty-first century, Riverside Hills is mainly a residential and retail neighborhood. It has plenty of businesses, and even some office buildings, but little in the way of manufacturing or industry. Throughout most of the area, the housing takes the form of apartment buildings and brownstones (most of them reasonably nice, if not up to the standards of Bankhurst or Worthington), but in the west, around Morris Square and even parts of Millford, there's some detached housing.

The crime rate in Riverside Hills is high, mainly due to the area's proximity to Freetown. Residents have been particularly concerned with

a growing street gang problem in recent years — Nubians and Warriors sets travel a couple miles north to cause trouble and sell drugs in fresh territories. Additionally, the crimelord Charlemagne claims parts of Millford as his territory, while his freakish competitor Diomedes asserts control over Arlington. But despite all these travails, Riverside Hills is a far better place to live than Freetown; many Freetowners "move up to the River," as they say, when they get the chance to do so.

LANDMARKS

If you're in the mood to wander around Riverside Hills, check out these places.

James Court (southwest corner of Barbour Avenue and Anson Street): This cluster of five brick apartment buildings painted white is on the National Register of Historic Places. Designed by famed early twentieth century architect T. Robert Jorgenson, the buildings display his trademark rich sense of style, without sacrificing utilitarianism for aesthetics. The waiting list to get into these apartments is usually months, even years, long.

Millford Park: A favorite haunt not only of area residents but students at Hudson City College who are willing to walk a few blocks, Millford Park squeezes in everything you'd want in a park: green areas, walking and jogging trails, and even a playing field suitable for either baseball or pickup football games. When the weather's fine, you can always find teams of players waiting to use the field. By unwritten neighborhood rule, two teams play for an hour. The winner gets to keep playing; the loser leaves the field and the next team in line takes its place. For years, the amateur football games in the fall have been dominated by a team of late twentysomethings/early thirtysomethings that calls itself the Mustangs; all the rest of the teams enjoy defeating the Mustangs most of all.

Wainwright Orphanage (northeast corner of Robin Avenue and Naomi Street): Technically now known as the "Wainwright Children's Center," most people (including its employees) still refer to this place as what it is: an orphanage. The home to sad legions of children whose parents abandoned them or who have no living relatives, it's a place where hope springs eternal but is more often than not dashed rudely to the ground to shatter. The staff does its best to make life comfortable and pleasant for the kids, but there's only so much they can do on the center's limited budget.

SHOPPING

Riverside Hills doesn't have any major malls, department stores, or anything like that, but it's got plenty of retail areas filled with everything from favorite chain stores to one-of-a-kind Hudson City shops.

Abercrombie Groceries (2555 Anson Street): In today's world of chain supermarkets and mega-sized grocery stores, some people still prefer the traditional neighborhood food store. Abercrombie Groceries appeals to just such people. Carrying a mix of about 40% mass

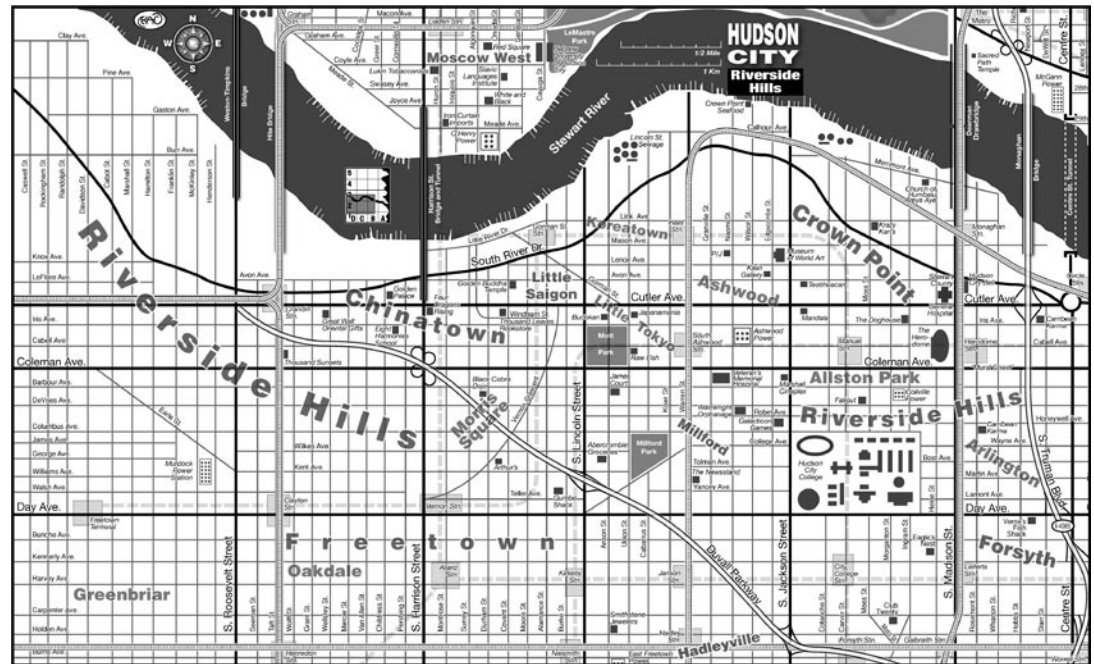
produced brand foods and 60% specialty and deli items it prepares itself, Abercrombie's (as it's known in the neighborhood) has a loyal clientele. It's even got some Victorian-style benches set up outside along the sidewalk so customers can sit down, relax, talk with each other, and maybe make a meal of whatever they just bought inside.

Galacticon Games (northeast corner of Columbus Avenue and Edgcombe Street): Whether you prefer to play your games at a computer or using a console and your TV, Galacticon Games has what you're looking for. It carries the big hits and computer gaming standards, of course, but it's also good about stocking lesser-known games and recommending them to customers. Its employees, mostly part-timers from the College, are all expert game-players with *strong* opinions about which games are good... and which aren't. The only thing they seem to like to do more than play games is argue about them.

The Newsstand (2648 Garrison Street): Just what the name says it is. This store, run by newsaholic and speedreader Bobby Donnett, carries hundreds of different magazines and newspapers, as well as a small selection of books and personal convenience items (cigarettes, bandages, snack food, that sort of thing). However, Bobby does not stock "adult" or "for men" magazines, which he considers offensive and degrading to women.

ON THE TOWN

Riverside Hills has what the *Hudson Sun* once described as a "jumping" social scene. To the east, Hudson City College dominates the nightlife with bars and clubs that cater mostly to the student crowd. In the western half of the neighborhood, things are a little more laid back, but if you're ready for a night on the town, you have lots of options.



Arthur's (864 Vernon Crescent): If a college bar like Fallout (see below) isn't really your thing, try Arthur's. It's a little more upscale, it serves more than just beer, and the music is kept to a low enough volume that the patrons can carry on conversations without making themselves hoarse.

Fallout (northwest corner of DeVries Avenue and Moss Street): With \$3 pitchers of beer every night from 9:00 to 11:00, and baskets of wings with its trademark "Fallout Sauce" for not much more, this bar is one of the most popular hangouts for Hudson City College students. Fallout's annual Darts Tournament in February is a college mini-event, attracting not only determined competitors but lots of spectators.

Marshall Cineplex (southwest corner of Coleman Avenue and S. Jackson Street): Let's go to the movies! At the Marshall Cineplex, even the pickiest person can find something he wants to watch: its 30 screens shows everything from the latest blockbuster, to obscure independent films, to the productions of Bollywood and other foreign film markets. And the popcorn's been voted best in city twice.

Scoville's (southeast corner of Honeywell Avenue and Rosemont Street): Do you like it hot? Try Scoville's, where the "mild" food is enough to make most people gulp down a gallon of water. Named for the scale that ranks the "hotness" of peppers and other food, Scoville's appeals to the macho in its patrons: can you stand the heat? More than a few of the items on its menu carry warnings about possible permanent damage to the taste buds, tongue, mouth lining, or stomach — and the heat on some is so fierce that if a diner can eat the whole thing without drinking more than one small glass of water, he gets his meal for free.

IMAGES OF RIVERSIDE HILLS

Steam rising from manhole covers and sidewalk grates on cool mornings

College kids walking around in Allston Park

The sad stone walls surrounding the grounds of the Wainwright Orphanage

Street gangs from Freetown, making forays north to sell coke and heroin where there's less competition... but the risk of encountering the cops is worse

A small crowd watching the pickup football games in Millford Park

WORTHINGTON



IMAGES OF WORTHINGTON

Trucks pulling off the highway into Norward, their drivers home at last

The darkness-dispelling lights of the Golden Avenue advertising the latest shows

The rustling leaves of the trees on the Avenue of the Elms

The office parks and corporate centers along the city's northern edge

Businessmen hurrying to work early in the morning

The beautiful facade and broad front steps of the Ferranti Auditorium

The distinctive buildings of HCSU

"Hi, honey, I'm hooooome!"

"Ha, ha. Very funny. How was your day?"

"Ehhh, not bad. Mostly paperwork, but we finally got the Myerson case settled. All we need now are the documents from Peterbaugh & Kirkpatrick, and the whole thing goes away."

"Congratulations! That's a real load off your shoulders."

"No kidding. I feel like I lost 20 pounds."

"We should celebrate!"

"Mmmm, what did you have in mind?"

"Not that, silly. Later. Let's go out to dinner."

"I know you. You have some place in mind already, don't you?"

"Let's try the Spinning Diamond. Alicia was telling me how she and Ted had an absolutely fantastic meal there a couple weeks ago."

"D'ya think we can get reservations this late?"

"Can't hurt to call and ask. You dial, I'm going to go change."

— evening conversation in a Worthington condominium

Worthington is the north-central neighborhood in Hudson City. Its boundaries are generally considered 3rd Avenue to the south, N. Adams Street to the east, N. Lincoln Street to the west, and the city limits to the north.

In the earliest days of the city, Worthington was a district of small farms. As the city grew, these gave way to light industry (such as textiles and furniture manufacturing) and some residences. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, the residential areas, such as Red Branch and Yellow Branch (named after the two branches of a large creek that used to run through the area), became extremely crowded, almost slum-like. Residents of nicer areas to the south didn't care for that, so they began pressuring the city government to do something about the situation. Over the course of several years, the Mayor and City Council altered the zoning for the area to diminish the population, forcing many people to move west into such neighborhoods as Burlington Heights and Norward. Taking advantage of the new zoning regulations, developers and wealthy businessmen

constructed office buildings and other commercial structures in Worthington. In time the commercial buildings took the place of most of the manufacturing, which moved to other parts of the city.

Today Worthington is a pleasant neighborhood, partly residential, partly commercial. In contrast to the nineteenth century, the eastern parts of the area, such as the two Branches, is mostly commercial: office buildings, some skyscrapers, business parks, and such. The western areas are more residential, and in the middle you have the neighborhood of Somerset, which mixes the two and has some retail districts as well. The presence of Hudson City State University (page 117) also affects Somerset and Burlington Heights, giving rise to student-oriented businesses and cheap student housing.

Worthington has a moderate crime rate. It's not as safe as Highlands, Guilford, or Irishtown, but definitely less dangerous than Eastwood or the Southside. Some criminals drift into the area because they consider the HCSU students easy pickings; skilled criminal crews may target Worthington banks or offices.

See also page 44 for a map of eastern Worthington.

NORWARD

Taking its name from "North Ward," back in the days when the citizens elected their officials by wards, Norward is a neighborhood in southwest Worthington. These days most people use the name to refer to the "wedge" between 4th Avenue, Kurtland Boulevard, and N. Truman Boulevard. Years ago it was almost entirely a residential neighborhood, but the building of the two highways changed things. Shipping companies like EZWay Trucking and other businesses who need easy access to the highways (or to the airport, which is only a few minutes' drive to the north of Norward via the Truman) began getting parts of the neighborhood rezoned for commercial use. Most residents, eager for more job opportunities, welcomed the newcomers, though others warned darkly of the unforeseen consequences of change and an increase in the crime rate.

Both predictions have come to pass. Norward now has one of the lowest unemployment rates of any neighborhood in the city, thanks to the influx of light industry and related firms... but as a consequence the character of the neighborhood has gone downhill a little. It's not as safe as it used to be, nor as family-friendly, but such is the price of progress.

Che's Book Nook (northwest corner of Vance Avenue and Mathews Street): This enormous bookstore sells both new books (first floor) and used books (second and third floors). Located in the heart of Somerset, it's become a haven for the city's book-lovers and literary figures. The owner, Che Andrew-

KAREN BAKER

10	STR	13	DEX
11	CON	9	BODY
10	INT	10	EGO
13	PRE	16	COM
4	PD	3	ED
3	SPD	4	REC
22	END	20	STUN

Abilities: Bureaucratics 8-, Combat Driving 8-, Combat Piloting 13-, CK: Hudson City 11-, KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 8-, KS: The U.S. Army 8-, Paramedics 11-, PS: Charter Pilot 11-, Stealth 12-, TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Helicopters, Small Planes, SCUBA, WF: Small Arms, Fringe Benefit: Licensed Helicopter Charter Pilot

Disadvantages: None

Notes: Karen Baker owns and operates Ambassador Air Service, a helicopter charter company that flies executives, diplomats, and other important, wealthy people all around Hudson City for a stiff fee. She has five employees (two other pilots, two support staff) and a small office and hangar at Hudson City International Airport. An Army veteran, she runs her company with military efficiency, and responds level-headedly to the emergencies that sometimes arise.

son, is a softspoken woman who loves to talk about books. When she's not dealing with administrative matters, you can usually find her enjoying a cup of tea in the little coffeehouse on the first floor.

Callahan Gem Importers (Floor 14-A of the Harpcor Towers building): One of the few major gem importers not to do most of its business at the Hudson City Gemstone Exchange (page 121), Callahan Gem Importers deals directly with suppliers of precious stones in Belgium, Russia, Africa, South America, and elsewhere. The firm in turn sells the stones to jewelers and other customers in this country. Due to the large amount of "stock" it has on hand at any one time, it has a strong security system and the best small vault money can buy.

ON THE TOWN

Worthington's got plenty of places where people can have a good time.

PoMo (southeast corner of Ashmont Avenue and N. Gabriel Street): The latest in trendiness, PoMo serves drinks *you've* never heard of to people who wouldn't be caught dead hanging around someone as uncool as *you*. The guys covering the door allow in only the hippest of the hip among the beautiful people; the un-hip and unbeautiful need not even apply. Those who make it through the doors earn the privilege of paying three times as much for a drink as they would anywhere else while staring at the decidedly odd decor (bubble fountains, plasma globes and sculptures, weird neon things...). But hey, it's *the* place to be seen, and for some people, that's more than enough.

Marge's Place (northeast corner of 2nd Avenue and Onondaga Street): Truckers and similar folk working over in Norward often stop off at Marge's Place to have a drink before going home... or maybe before going on duty. Marge Sweetwater, the owner, is a trucker's widow who sort of informally "adopts" many of her regulars and makes sure they're doing OK, not working too much, are eating well....

The Spinning Diamond (Floor 20-B of the Harpcor Towers building): The top floor of Tower B of the Harpcor Towers building contains the Spinning Diamond, a restaurant whose interior slowly revolves, giving most diners alternating views of the northern suburbs and the city. It's fast becoming one of the city's trendiest restaurants with its eclectic menu and impeccable service.

A Taste Of Paris (northwest corner of Chatham Avenue and Watts Street): Hudson City has many fine French restaurants, but few that rise to the level of quality shown by A Taste Of Paris. Owner Rene Bouvard, a Paris-trained master chef himself, makes sure that every last detail — from the print on the menus, to the quality of the floral centerpieces, to the amount of seasoning used in the escargot — is perfect. More than one employee who'd earn top marks at another restaurant has been fired from A Taste Of Paris for failing to live up to Bouvard's exacting standards.

LIMELIGHT DREAMS

The presence of all the major playhouses and theaters along the Golden Avenue, not to mention the many smaller or less prominent venues elsewhere in the neighborhood, has spawned an actors' culture in east Worthington. Sometimes it seems as if everyone you run into there who isn't obviously a businessman is an actor, a wannabe actor, a producer, or someone else associated with the theater business in some way, shape, or form.

The average Hudsonite is most likely to encounter the actors' culture in one of two ways (besides going to see a play, of course!). The first is by going out for something to eat in the neighborhood. Countless actors work as waiters, waitresses, coffee shop employees, cooks, you name it. Not only is it work that suits their oddball schedules, it puts them in a position to swipe a bite to eat when the boss is not looking — when you're a struggling actor with the income of a Third World bureaucrat, every free feed helps!

The second is on the street. Many actors try to scare up a few extra bucks by putting their talents to work as street performers. Technically this requires a license from the city, but most of the actors don't bother, and only the most bored, hardest-hearted cop wastes his time running someone in for performing without a license — well, anyone other than mimes, maybe.

The actors themselves tend to be a close-knit bunch, for all that they compete with one another for jobs. They help each other find work to tide them over until the next acting job, form support groups and social cliques, and sometimes even assemble acting or comedy troupes that make a name for themselves. The most famous of these is probably the Yellow Branch Company, a mostly comedy-oriented group that's spawned some of the great comic talents of this generation. More than a few of the Yellow Branch alumni have gone on to big success on television or out in Hollywood, and they often repay the favor by returning to Hudson City to teach the Company classes or help put on benefit performances. Getting into the YBC is tough; the group accepts only the most talented performers on the basis of a unanimous vote by all current members.

SUBURBS



Even as large as it is, Hudson City proper simply doesn't have the space necessary to house the millions of people who work in the city. Additionally, not everyone who works in the city wants to live in an urban area. For that reason, dozens of suburbs and bedroom communities have sprung up on all sides of the city. Most of the suburbs surrounding Hudson City are pretty much the same: they're much less built up than the city, have more detached housing and isolated neighborhoods, and so forth. They differ in the standard of living they provide, but otherwise they're all just bedroom communities for the Pearl City.

Hudson City occupies the entirety of Stewart County. Six counties ring it: Morgan; Corinth; Prince William; Benton; Franklin; and Sabine. See page 276 for a map of the area.

MORGAN COUNTY

Located north of the city along the coast, Morgan County is a pleasant, sometimes even picturesque, place. Most of the suburbs here are on the upper end of the economic and social scale; their residents tend to be the families of high-powered executives and the like. (The areas around Aberdeen International Airport, which are mostly industrial or working-class residential, are an exception.) The schools are top-notch, and in Hudson Beach and Bayside (not to be confused with the Hudson City neighborhood of the same name) the county offers Northsiders places to go down to the sea. The beaches there tend to get very crowded on summer weekends; seaside houses and condominiums are extremely expensive and highly desirable.

Morgan County townships include:

Arcadia
Bayside
Cambria (site of Aberdeen International Airport)
Hudson Beach
Mill Creek
Northdale (also in Corinth County)
Pleasanton
Swan's Quarter

Morgan County also includes Pine Island, the site of a number of small resorts frequented by Hudson City's wealthy. (Nearby Osprey Island isn't in Morgan County, but similarly has lots of resort areas.)

CORINTH COUNTY

Lying just west of Morgan County, Corinth County is best known to most Hudsonites as the location of Albion, a delightful little town with several first-class bed and breakfasts. The town fathers of Albion have adopted stringent zoning regulations and other ordinances to preserve the town's charm; getting permission to build a new house there (or renovate an existing one) is harder than pulling teeth.

Corinth County townships include:

Albion
Jordan (also in Prince William County)
Norwood
Rockwell (also in Prince William County)

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY

Irishtown borders Prince William County, and the presence of so much money can be felt in nearby suburbs like Jordan and Andrews Heights, which in many respects aren't much different from Irishtown itself. The houses and lawns are large, the streets are well-patrolled by police and sheriff's officers, and the shops and restaurants are highbrow and elegant. A little further out, such as in Willowford, things become more middle-class, but still on the upper end of the scale.

Prince William County townships include:

Andrews Heights
Bedford
Belmont
Buena Vista
Carlyle
Haines Ridge
Iroquois
Rome
Sparta
Willowford

BENTON COUNTY

Benton County sits across the Stewart River from Prince William County. Its towns are mostly middle-class and working-class places; many a Hudsonite has fond memories of having grown up on the streets of East Maple, Elk Lake, or Pineville. Maple Valley is the site of the famous Maple Valley Pottery Works, which produces pots and jugs that are often considered valuable collectibles.

**BERINGHURST
-ON-STEWART**

Upriver from Hudson City, well outside the main ring of suburbs surrounding the city but not so far out in the country that it's completely isolated, sits a charming little resort called Beringhurst-on-Stewart. This bed-and-breakfast occupies the former home of the Beringhurst family, one of the area's most prosperous farming and ranching families in the mid- to late 1800s. In addition to impeccable service and delicious food, the b-and-b offers a superb view of the Stewart River and many other amenities, including temporary fishing licenses, horseback riding, and "lawn sports" like croquet. And the B-on-S's lemonade is so good people often drive out from Hudson City just to have a glass or three along with lunch.

Benton County townships include:

- Arlington
- Blanton
- Drexel Park
- East Maple
- Elk Lake
- Harrington
- Knoxboro
- Maple Valley
- Pineville

FRANKLIN COUNTY

This county, located southwest of Hudson City proper, has only a few large towns. For the most part, they're black enclaves like Freetown, but safer, better off economically, and more spread out. On the Freetown streets, the term "Franklin" describes a black from Franklin County who's not as street-smart as the speaker thinks he ought to be.

Franklin County townships include:

- Bluefield
- Clifton
- Douglasburg
- Stewartsville

SABINE COUNTY

Located directly south of Freetown, Elmview, and Latin City, Sabine County and its towns (mainly Southport, which is along the coast) are mostly working-class residential mixed with the heavy industry and other businesses that cannot or will not function within the city limits. For example, the Hudson City Landfill is located just south of Hamilton.

The towns of Southport and Easton include land along the coast. The beaches here aren't as nice as those in Morgan, but Southsiders have just as much fun swimming and enjoying the cool ocean breezes as their Northsider counterparts.

Sabine County townships include:

- Deweyville
- Easton
- Hamilton
- Lukesburg
- Southport
- Windham

Sabine County's territory also includes Fort Butler Island, the site of Hudson City's only large defensework during the nineteenth century. The Fort Butler Historical Society gives guided tours of the fort's ruins.

OUTLYING COMMUNITIES

Beyond the immediate ring of counties and towns around Hudson City lie other, more rural communities. Hudsonites willing to make long commutes into work sometimes live in these places, where they can own lots of land. These towns include: Beckett's Landing; Burkett's Mill; Cookville; Eagle Springs; Farmingdale; Huntington; Jonesburg; Manchester; Raleigh Hills; Riverwood; Springfield; Stewartsburg (site of Stewartsburg Penitentiary); and Westridge.

THE INNER AND OUTER BELTLINES

Not everyone driving through New Jersey wants to go through Hudson City. After all, traffic on Truman Boulevard can slow down to a crawl at some times during the day... and what happens if your car breaks down in Freetown or Lafayette?

To avoid these potentially unpleasant fates, drivers can take either of two beltlines around the city: the Inner and the Outer. The Inner Beltline, I-8755, splits off from I-3275 south of Sabine County and wends its way through Franklin, Benton, Prince William, Corinth, and just a bit of Morgan Counties before merging into I-4085 a little ways south of the town of Raleigh Hills. The Outer Beltline (I-2379) arcs around all of the counties (except for one corner of Benton) and joins I-4085 a couple miles north of where the Inner Beltline does.

The Outer Beltline and I-2984 (Kurtland Boulevard) both cross the Stewart River at a town called Burkett's Mill. As a result of all the trucking traffic passing through there, Burkett's Mill has become notorious as a town of truck stops, prostitution, and illegal gambling.

LAKE CHICAROA

Roughly eighty miles west of the Hudson City limits is Lake Chicaroa, a large, deep lake whose waters are usually too cold for swimming even at the height of summer but ideal for fishing most times of the year. Fed by underground springs and rivers, Lake Chicaroa serves as a backup water supply for Hudson City in the event of a calamity with its current water sources (see page 23).

And Lake Chicaroa may hold more than just fish. From the sasquatch of the Pacific Northwest, to the yeti of the Himalayas, to the *mokele mbembe* of the West African jungle, the world is supposedly full of creatures man has not yet discovered and catalogued. One such creature is the "Chicaroa Beast," Hudson City's equivalent of the Loch Ness Monster. Colloquially known as "Chickie," and featured in cartoon form on countless t-shirts, baseball caps, billboard, and the like, Chickie is said to resemble a gigantic, long-necked lizard with some sort of "claw-flippers" along its sides. No one has ever provided definitive proof that Chickie actually exists. Several well-known "photographs" of the creature, which tend to follow the description given above, are inconclusive (and some of them have been revealed as fakes or hoaxes in recent years). Proving Chickie does (or does not) exist is an obsessive quest for many residents of the area.

CITY GOVERNMENT



The Hudson City government has two branches: the mayor's office, which performs executive duties; and the City Council, which acts as a legislative and regulatory body. Additionally, it has hundreds of "commissions" that oversee certain city functions, such as Transportation, Sanitation, or historical preservation.

THE MAYOR

Hudson City's chief executive is the Mayor. He (no women have ever held the job) is elected by the citizens at large for a four-year term. There's no legal limit on the number of terms a single person can hold as mayor. The record is four terms (John Gadsden, 1876-1892), but given the modern political scene and mass media, the odds of someone serving for more than two terms in a row are slim. The mayor's office is located at the very top of City Hall, the largest building in Governmental Plaza (see below).

The mayor's duties are broad and far-reaching. In addition to representing the city on the national stage, he handles a wide variety of executive functions, including law enforcement, city personnel and hiring, city budgeting and finance, economic development, and the like. He also interacts frequently, and on many levels, with the City Council to push his agenda for the city, resolve problems in city government, and otherwise keep the city operating as smoothly as possible. In the rare event of a tie in a Council vote, the mayor holds the tiebreaking vote.

The Honorable Graydon T. Umstead

The current mayor of Hudson City is the Honorable Graydon T. Umstead, a Republican.

Elected by a narrow margin in 2002 on a reformist, anti-union, pro-law enforcement platform, he came into office promising to trim the city's budget and bloated employee rolls, reduce the crime rate, and curb the power of local unions. His efforts to reduce city spending and employment have generally succeeded so far — but not to the degree he'd like, and with the unavoidable side effect of angering people who lost their jobs or now have more difficulty accessing city services.

Other than that, his record is neutral or mixed. His staunch support of the Hudson City Police Department has received accolades in some circles, but criticism in others, where he's called a racist and proponent of police brutality. His efforts to

control the crime rate have not accomplished much (to no one's surprise), but have earned him the city's respect.

Umstead's dogged attacks on the city's unions (especially those that include city employees) have been his biggest lightning rod for both praise and criticism. On the one hand, Hudsonites are sick and tired of union abuses (such as part-time school janitors earning \$60,000 a year, and the 2002 sanitation workers' strikes for more money for less work). On the other hand, many citizens are union members or know a union member, and they're angry about Umstead's vilification of the unions.

THE HONORABLE GRAYDON T. UMSTEAD

Mayor Of Hudson City

10 STR	10 DEX	10 CON	10 BODY
18 INT	14 EGO	20 PRE	14 COM
2 PD	2 ED	2 SPD	4 REC
20 END	20 STUN		

Abilities: Bureaucratics 13-; Conversation 13-; Deduction 13-; High Society 13-; CK: Hudson City 11-; KS: Hudson City Politics 13-; KS: Law 13-; KS: Political Science 13-; Navigation (Marine) 13-; Oratory 13-; Persuasion 13-; PS: Lawyer 13-; PS: Politician 13-; PS: Sailor 11-; Riding 11-; Seduction 13-; TF: Small Wind-Powered Boats; WF: Small Arms; Contacts (50 points' worth throughout Hudson City, state politics, and federal politics); Favors (15 points' worth from various people he's helped during his career); Fringe Benefits: Mayor of Hudson City, License To Practice Law; Money (10 points)

25+ Disadvantages: Hunted: Watched by the media and various other groups; Hunted: various political opponents who want to defeat him in the next election; Psychological Limitation: Must Do What He Feels Is Right; Psychological Limitation: Devoted Family Man; Reputation (that fascist bastard of a mayor) 11-; Rivalry (various political opponents); Social Limitation: Famous

Notes: Graydon T. Umstead

is the first Republican mayor Hudson City's had in 28 years. A handsome man in his late 40s, he's got green eyes and hair gone prematurely grey from the stress of his job. He is a committed, slightly moderate conservative

who's firmly devoted to his principles — no matter what the cost, he does what he thinks is the right thing, even if it means taking on powerful, entrenched special interest groups. He's equally devoted to his wife, Pat, and children, Graydon Jr. (age 10) and Melissa (age 8), and does his best to shield them from the ugly side of being the Mayor's family. Umstead's hobbies include horseback riding and sailing.



THE CHAIN OF COMMAND

According to city law, if the election for mayor results in a tie, the current City Council — the one that was in existence the day of the election, not the new one that may have resulted from that same election — chooses the mayor. This has never happened in city history.

Also according to city law, if the mayor and deputy mayor are both unable to serve, the Speaker of the City Council becomes mayor *pro tem* until an election can be called, which must take place at the earliest reasonable time (*i.e.*, the city does not wait until the next November). The winner serves a standard four-year term. This happened in 1950, with the long-term result being that Hudson City mayoral elections are not held in the same year as presidential elections the way they once were — they're held two years after each presidential election.

HUDSON CITY

The Urban Abyss

City Government

Mayor: Graydon T. Umstead

Deputy Mayor: Edward Wilson

Deputy Mayor (Administration): Myron Evans

- Human Resources Division

Deputy Mayor (Commerce): Kevin Ramis

- Consumer Affairs Division
- Small Business Assistance Division
- Film and Broadcasting Division
- Labor Relations Division

Deputy Mayor (Community Development): William Froward

- Economic Development Division
- Planning Division

Deputy Mayor (Legal Affairs): City Attorney Regina Hallowell

Deputy Mayor (Operations): Roberta Medrano

- Children's Services Division
- Environmental Protection Division
- Health and Human Services Division
- Information Services Division
- Taxi and Limousine Commission

The City Council (79 Councilmen elected by districts)

- **Speaker:** Tony Hyatt

City Commissions

- Parks And Recreation Commission
- Public Works Commission
- Sanitation Commission
- Schools Commission (School Board)
- Transportation Commission
- Utilities Commission
- Other Commissions

With an election coming up in 2006, Umstead is considered vulnerable in some circles. Union support of his opponent alone could turn the election against him, unless between now and then he can break the unions' power and show that his actions have had a measurable beneficial effect. Similarly, a real victory in the war on crime could land him another four years in Governmental Center... while one high-profile case of police corruption or brutality could get him tossed out on his ear.

Deputy Mayor Edward Wilson

Ranked immediately below the mayor in the city hierarchy is the deputy mayor, who runs on the same ticket with the mayor during elections. The deputy mayor assists the mayor, stands in for him when he can't be present at various functions, represents the city's government at many different events, and if necessary replaces the mayor in the event he cannot serve out his full term.

Ed Wilson, a black man about the same age as Graydon Umstead, serves with him as deputy mayor. A moderate-to-conservative Democrat and long-time friend of the Mayor's, he was chosen for Umstead's ticket to balance it out both politically and racially. He plays an important role as Umstead's link to the black community — though he's angered the NAACP and some other groups with his outspoken comments about the "poisonous nature" of modern urban black culture and how it holds black people back. He's considered a potential candidate for mayor or governor in the near future.

Other Deputy Mayors

Although press and public alike refer to Ed Wilson as *the* Deputy Mayor, in fact he's not the only one Hudson City has — Chief Deputy Mayor or Vice-Mayor would be more accurate titles, reflecting his role as the Mayor's second-in-command. The other deputy mayors handle specific divisions of the executive branch of the city government, and are always referred to by their full title (deputy mayor for so-and-so) to distinguish them from "the" Deputy Mayor. Each Deputy Mayor has one or more Deputy Assistants serving under him.

Among the ranks of the deputy mayors, the main ones (and their corresponding departments) are:

ADMINISTRATION

Often referred to as the "Administrative Services Division" (its name under an older scheme of city government organization), "Admin" is considered the most important branch of the city government by some people. It's responsible for managing all the city's personnel and financial matters. Its most important task is to draw up the annual city budget for approval by the Mayor and City Council, and its ability to suggest increased or decreased funding for particular offices or projects makes it feared throughout the city. Deputy Mayor for Administration Myron Evans is known around Governmental Center as "the Hangman" for his ability to strangle policy initiatives through lack of funding. His main assistant, Comptroller Ray Krueger, knows more about the minutia of the city budget than anyone else in the government.

One of the most important sections in this

department is the Human Resources Division, which is in charge of all city hiring, payrolls, and the like. Georgina Flynn, a large, no-nonsense black woman, has held the position of Director of Human Resources for fifteen years, through three different mayors — although her job is an appointed position, she has such extensive experience (and, some say, knowledge of which skeletons are in which closets) that each incoming mayor reappoints her. But that doesn't mean she gets along with her boss. She and Mayor Umstead have clashed on several occasions over city staffing, and she's lost each time (much to her seething resentment). She's also mostly pro-union... some say because she's in the back pocket of the Mafia.

COMMERCE

Under the steady, if uninspired, leadership of Deputy Mayor for Commerce Kevin Ramis, the Commerce Department handles a wide variety of trade- and business-related matters for the city. Its divisions include Consumer Affairs, Small Business Assistance, Film and Broadcasting, and Labor Relations. The latter is a particularly tense and touchy place these days, given Mayor Umstead's seemingly ceaseless quarrels with the unions.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

This department, one of the largest (and according to Umstead, most bloated) bureaucracies in the city, has two main sections (and thus functions). The first, and in terms of staffing the smallest, is the Economic Development Division (EDD). It's responsible for monitoring the city's economy and suggesting ways to improve it, attracting new businesses and jobs to Hudson City, and so forth. It's a thankless task that generally only attracts notice when EDD fails. The EDD often butts heads with Commerce over which department has primary authority over a given matter; Deputy Mayor for Community Development William Froward loathes Kevin Ramis, and vice-versa.

The second, and by far the larger, is the Planning Division. If you want to build a new building or subdivision, or alter an existing one, this is where you get the permit. When it's time to have plans for that building approved, these are the people who do the review and make recommendations to the City Council (which the Council follows over 85% of the time). If you want to have an area rezoned or petition for a zoning variance, this is the department you talk to. When it's time for your building to undergo an inspection for building and zoning code violations, Planning sends out the inspectors. In short, the Planning Division is both bane and boon to the city's developers, contractors, and property owners.

For decades, one story or rumor after another has claimed the Planning Division is rife with corruption, from the lowliest inspector all the way up to the top office. Like his predecessors, Director of Planning Phillip Taggart staunchly denies these allegations, though some have resulted in prosecutions whose findings of "guilty" he can't argue against. He says those "bad days" are behind the department, and that he looks forward to proving

the Planning Department's integrity to the people of Hudson City.

LEGAL AFFAIRS

The Legal Affairs Department handles legal matters for the city — in other words, it's Hudson City's lawyer, the agency that handles civil suits brought against the city, and files suit on behalf of the city when the Mayor deems it prudent to do so. It also includes divisions devoted to legal issues such as Women's Affairs, Children's Affairs, Immigration Affairs, Human Rights, and so forth.

Umstead's appointee to this post, Regina Hallowell, was formerly a partner at the high-powered law firm of MacDougal, Shorte, and Abraham, but left that job to devote her not-inconsiderable legal skills to the public good. During her tenure the city has paid out 42% less money in civil verdicts against it, and won 21% more cases, than under the past two City Attorneys.

OPERATIONS

Operations is a sort of catch-all department for offices, boards, and authorities that don't fit into any other mayoral branch. Deputy Mayor Roberta Medrano oversees such divisions as Health and Human Services, the Taxi and Limousine Commission, Information Services, Environmental Protection, Children's Services, and so forth.

THE CITY COUNCIL

The Hudson City Council (HCC) is a legislative body composed of 79 Councilmen — one for roughly every 30,000 residents (though more than a few people who work in the city illegally register to vote there even though they actually live in the suburbs). Councilmen are elected for two-year terms by *districts*. Half of the Council is up for reelection every year, ensuring that Hudson City has to suffer through a plague of election advertising on a constant basis.

The Council's function is to write, consider, and pass laws and ordinances for the city, create and make appointments to the various city commissions (see below), oversee various other aspects of city government, and generally act as a check and balance on the Mayor's power (as he does on theirs). The Mayor has veto power over the laws the HCC passes, but a two-thirds vote in the Council overrides the veto. Throughout the city's history, the Mayor has almost never exercised his veto.

Although all Councilmen enjoy equal voting privileges, every January (and occasionally at other times) the members elect one of their number to serve as *Speaker*. The Speaker nominally leads the Council, and does have a certain amount of extra prestige and pull (particularly among his own party), but for the most part the position just tacks some extra administrative duties onto the typical Councilman's responsibilities. The Speaker may appoint other Councilmen to assist him, if desired; so far the current Speaker, Tony Hyatt (see below), has made no such appointments.

The City Council is in session most days of

DANIELLE RICHARDSON

8 STR	8 DEX
9 CON	8 BODY
10 INT	10 EGO
10 PRE	10 COM
2 PD	2 ED
1 SPD	4 REC
16 END	17 STUN

Abilities: Bureaucrats 11-, CK: Hudson City 11-, KS: City Planning 11-, KS: Hudson City Zoning Code 14-, PS: City Planner 12-, Immovable (5 points)

Disadvantages: Social Limitation: Subject To Orders

Notes: Danielle Richardson is one of the city planners who works for the Planning Division of the Hudson City Department of Community Development. Day in and day out, she evaluates developers' proposed plans, requests for variances, and other paperwork related to building structures in the Pearl City. She's earned herself a reputation as a stubborn battle-axe who won't budge an inch if she feels a project's not right for the city, but also as a fierce advocate before the City Council for projects she thinks are worthwhile.



the year. Barring emergencies, it does not meet as a formal body on Thursdays and Fridays so Councilmen can spend time in their local offices helping their constituents. All Council sessions are open to public viewing (and are broadcast on local cable television), but not public participation. The Council holds a special Monday night session every two weeks at which citizens can address the council, bring complaints and grievances to its attention, and so forth.

As mentioned above, each Councilman maintains an office in his district. Depending on the Councilman's preferences, image, and finances, an office may be as simple as a two-room storefront staffed by volunteers, or as elaborate as a suite of rooms in a skyscraper with a well-paid staff of four to ten employees. Each Councilman receives the same stipend for office establishment and maintenance, but some supplement it with leftover campaign contributions, their personal fortunes, or donations from supporters specifically for this purpose.

In 2002, the City Council elections were largely influenced by Mayor Umstead's coattails, giving him the muscle he needed in the Council to achieve several of the items on his anti-union, spending-cutting agenda... but not enough to push his agenda through effortlessly, or do as he pleases. Even worse, the Council had to authorize a minor increase in city property taxes to cover certain city expenses, which left some of them vulnerable to attack. The 2004 elections were mixed, with a few

surprising changes, but didn't do much to alter the fundamental balances of power within the Council: roughly 55% Democrat, 40% Republican, and 5% other. Political consultants are already working on next year's campaigns.

NOTABLE COUNCILMEN

Here are brief descriptions of some of the best-known members of the HCC.

Max Bishop: A black Democrat from the 65th District, deep in the heart of Freetown, Bishop is regarded as a smart, hardworking legislator who's constantly trying to improve conditions in his district. Unlike racial agitator Reverend James Pick (page 132), Councilman Bishop is regarded as a positive influence in racial politics and a man to whom both sides in a racial dispute will listen. Some in the civil rights community regard Bishop as a "dream candidate" for future mayoral elections; others find him a little too moderate for their taste.

Henry Chen: Henry Chen represents the 41st District, which includes part of Chinatown. He's been on the HCC for 22 years, and most political consultants in the city consider him unbeatable — he usually runs unopposed these days. Although he normally remains quiet during Council debates, he has a lot of influence behind the scenes when Councilmen discuss issues privately. He is extremely pro-business and has done a lot to encourage economic growth in the city.

Tony Hyatt: The current Speaker of the HCC, Anthony Hyatt represents the 10th District, which covers part of Worthington. Although registered as a Republican, he's a moderate one who sides with the Democrats as often as not; his centrism made him an acceptable Speaker to both sides of the Council aisle, and most observers expect him to be re-elected to the position next year. He's particularly interested in health care issues, and has introduced several bills on that subject.

Frank Jasinkiewicz: The Assistant Speaker of the City Council is a Democrat from the 14th District. Against the tapestry of waffling, ideological pandering, and corporate ass-kissing that is Hudson City politics, Jasinkiewicz stands out for being particularly evasive; pinning him down for his opinion on an issue is like trying to catch a greased pig. The one thing he's known for is his ardent support of the city parks system.

Catherine Lewis: Recently put into office in the 2004 elections, Catherine Lewis is a political newcomer, having previously worked as a homemaker, Red Cross volunteer, and home remodeler. She ran for the 36th District seat on a fairly liberal platform, and is expected to vote solidly with the Democratic bloc in the Council. No one really takes her seriously yet, though she's already introduced a sweeping bill aimed at improving teachers' pay and benefits.

Richard Pendergrass: Pendergrass, an openly homosexual male, represents the 43rd District, which includes Ashwood and part of Crown Point. He's been elected several times, largely on the basis of the fact that he seems to know everyone in his

district on a first-name basis; as a moderate Democrat, he's actually not nearly left-wing enough to satisfy more than a few of his constituents.

Larry Pettigrew: A Democrat from the 23rd District, which includes parts of the Blackbridge and Worthington neighborhoods, Councilman Pettigrew describes himself as a “champion of the middle class,” but his actions in the Council don't necessarily support that position. For example, he's voted for property tax increases and more lenient sentences for city crimes in the past — two issues that nearly cost him his last election.

Joseph Ruggiero: If there's a Councilman more corrupt than Democrat Joseph Ruggiero, the FBI would like to hear about it. Twice convicted of taking bribes, and once of possession of illegal narcotics, he's avoided jail time by hiring the best lawyers and cleverly using his numerous connections. Despite his checkered background, his constituents in the 34th District have re-elected him several times, usually by overwhelming margins. He's known to be a personal friend of Michael “Black Mike” Calvino, don of the Verontese crime family, and most people think the Veronteses have used their clout in Little Italy to ensure that Ruggiero remains in office. The FBI and DEA suspect Ruggiero in many more cases of corruption, and believe he has some connection to Colombian and/or Mexican drug cartels, but they have no proof of this — yet.

Julia Shuman: A Republican from the 1st District (Irishtown and environs), Councilwoman Shuman is a tireless campaigner against pornography (“smut”) and anything else she views as “tearing apart the fabric of the American family.” She constantly pressures the police to crack down on “the Strip” and pushes for tighter regulation of what local cable television providers can show. But even her fiercest opponents — and they are legion — admire Councilwoman Shuman for her fundraising efforts on behalf of Habitat For Humanity and her attempts to highlight the problem of sexual harassment in the workplace.

Daphne Wong: Wong represents the 40th District, which includes part of Chinatown. Well-liked by both side of the aisle for her friendly manner and unwillingness to engage in mudslinging, this Republican serves as the HCC's parliamentarian.

William Zogby: What Joseph Ruggiero is to corruption, Republican William Zogby of the 29th District (which covers part of Bankhurst, Marwich, and Gadsden) is to hard living. His three drunk driving arrests testify to his love of good liquor, his four marriages to his fondness for beautiful women (and inability to remain faithful to just one). Despite these problems, his extensive contacts in the Hudsonite business and financial community (and his willingness to use his political clout to help them) ensure he always has the fat warchest he needs to keep getting re-elected.

CITY COMMISSIONS

In addition to standing mayoral departments like the Community Development Division, Hudson City also has numerous city commissions. Commissions are established by the Hudson City Council, but staffed by the executive via mayoral appointment and the Administrative Services Division (though the mayor is expected to, and does, consult with the Council on who it would like to have in charge of a given commission). Commissions range from ones so large, important, and longstanding that they're effectively permanent (Public Works, Transportation) to minor ones that only exist for a short time or about which the public may never learn (Artistic Restoration, City Bicentennial Celebration, Anti-Litter Campaign).

Although not specifically part of the executive branch of the city government, the commissions for the most part answer to, and take orders from, the mayor. A stubborn commissioner who refuses to go along with the mayor's “requests” can cause havoc throughout the city and Governmental Center.

Some of the better-known and more important city commissions include:

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

The Parks and Recreation Commission is in charge of building, maintaining, and promoting the city's cultural and recreational resources: everything from LeMastre Park to the smallest, most obscure museum. It also takes care of cemeteries in the city, trees and other plantings along the streets, and the Hudson City Zoo.

The Recreation Division of the Commission is responsible for the many sports facilities around the city, ranging from Devon Coliseum to local tennis and basketball courts. It runs several recreational sports leagues based on age groups (children, teenagers, adults, seniors), and sponsors advertising campaigns encouraging people to exercise.

Juanita Salcedo, a former Councilwoman and long-time Hudson City political veteran, runs Parks and Rec. It's an open secret that she's not particularly happy with the job — the best she could get after losing her last Council election — and would like to find something “better” to do.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION

Run by Clarence Ingold, who's worked for it in one capacity or another for forty years, the Public Works Commission takes care of a large number of infrastructure-related duties for the city: engineering on city buildings (and engineering inspections of other buildings); animal control; road and parking facility maintenance and repairs; and maintenance and repair of city vehicles and equipment (most people refer to Maintenance Division simply as “the Shop,” as in “OK, looks like it's broken — send it to the Shop for repairs”). In the latter capacity, the Commission works closely with the Transportation Commission, which plans the roads, conducts traffic analysis studies, and so forth — in fact, the two Commissions occupy adjoining blocks of offices in Governmental Center 3.

ALICIA BROOKES

6 STR	8 DEX
8 CON	9 BODY
10 INT	8 EGO
10 PRE	8 COM
2 PD	2 ED
1 SPD	3 REC
16 END	16 STUN

Abilities: Bureaucratics 14-, High Society 8-, KS: Hudson City Politics 11-, KS: Who's Who Around Governmental Plaza 11-, KS: Governmental Plaza Gossip 11-, PS: Secretary 14-

Disadvantages: None

Notes: For the past quarter-century, Alicia Brookes has worked as an administrative assistant to one City Councilman or another; since 2002, she's worked for Larry Pettigrew. Her knowledge of the ins and outs of city government, as well as her consummate secretarial skills, assure her of a job somewhere in Governmental Plaza as long as she's willing to work.

LUCAS ROBINSON

10	STR	8	DEX
11	CON	10	BODY
8	INT	8	EGO
8	PRE	8	COM
4	PD	3	ED
2	SPD	4	REC
22	END	21	STUN

Abilities: Climbing 11-, AK: Forsyth 11-, CK: Hudson City 11-, KS: Pro Football 8-, PS: Sanitation Engineer 11-, WF: Handguns

Disadvantages: None

Notes: Lucas Robinson — or “Luke,” to his friends — is what city officials refer to as a “sanitation engineer” and most people call a “garbageman.” Five days a week he’s out there in all kinds of weather, riding on the back of a garbage truck to pick up trash that’s too big or bulky for the normal city trashcans. He’s been doing the job for nearly ten years now, and has learned the city pretty well — he sees a lot more than most people would expect. It’s not exactly the most upscale job in the world, but it’s hard to beat the benefits.

The average Hudsonite is most likely to interact with Public Works employees from the Animal Control Division. Animal Control officers show up in their distinctive tan-colored vans to capture stray dogs and cats (or even non-stray ones labeled dangerous by a city court), remove unwanted animals from peoples’ houses, and collect the carcasses of dead animals. In addition to having to deal with potentially dangerous animals like trained pit bull terriers or rabid raccoons, Animal Control officers also have to cope with irate or distraught citizens — in 2002, an Animal Control officer was murdered by a Worthington woman when he tried to take away her illegal pet cobra.

Public Works also enforces the city’s facade law, which mandates that building owners preserve and maintain the facades of their buildings to prevent deterioration and collapse. The law also imposes special restrictions and approval requirements on changing the appearance of a building’s facade. The law was put in place after a building facade in Blackbridge collapsed, killing a mother and child. Many building owners loathe this law, and do anything they can to get around its provisions.

SANITATION COMMISSION

The Sanitation Commission has three main duties: waste pickup and removal, sewer construction and maintenance (see page 22), and street cleaning. As such it’s one of the most important agencies in city government, but also one of the least appreciated. In the autumn the Commissions also runs a leaf pickup and removal service in parks and residential neighborhoods; during wintry weather it operates the city’s sand and salt trucks to keep the roads as safe as possible.

The Sanitation Commission maintains a fleet of approximately 5,500 vehicles, ranging from large garbage trucks (see page 23) to various specialized vehicles and standard pickup trucks and cars. Its 9,000 Waste Removal Division employees (seven thousand of whom are uniformed sanitation workers of some sort) use these to collect and dispose of approximately 12,000 tons of residential and institutional waste every day (as mentioned on page 23, businesses must use private waste disposal companies).

Paul Olszewski, a small, quiet man, runs the Sanitation Commission. For a Hudsonite, he’s shy and retiring, with a nonconfrontational approach to problem solving. His main goal is to do his job so well that neither the Mayor nor anyone else ever contacts him. He wishes he’d divorced his now ex-wife *before* she egged him on to take this job, but now that he’s got it, he’s going to stick with it.

SCHOOLS COMMISSION

Known to most Hudsonites simply as “the School Board,” the Schools Commission is a lightning rod for controversy and public debate. If there’s one thing people care fiercely about, it’s their kids, and that means they have *very* strong opinions about things that affect their kids... like schools. They express those opinions to the members of the

School Commission. Shouting and swearing are often involved, and on three occasions in the past five years disturbed parents have brandished guns during the Commission’s weekly public meetings on Thursday nights.

Unlike most commissions, the School Board’s fifteen members are chosen by citywide election for three-year terms (five members are up for re-election every year), though the City Council retains the power to dissolve and remake the Commission if necessary (something it’s never done). The Commissioners elect a Chief Commissioner from among their number; he serves for a year, but can be re-elected as often as the Commission likes. As of late 2004, the Chief Commissioner (or “CC,” as he’s known in the bureaucracy) is Wanda Cranwell, a former teacher and principal. The Commission oversees the public schools bureaucracy (see page 116), approves teacher and administrator pay scales, and deals with the myriad of other issues pertaining to the city’s elementary and secondary schools.

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

The Transportation Commission oversees all aspects of travel and transportation within the city. It manages the subways, buses, and other forms of mass transit; builds, maintains, and repairs the roads; and conducts traffic analysis studies. Its major divisions include Rapid Transit (subways and railways), Bus, Ferry, Traffic Engineering (*i.e.*, road building and maintenance), and Traffic Planning.

Many Hudsonites think of Transportation Commission employees as lazy slobs. Every time a citizen drives pass a roadwork project and sees four or five big-bellied guys standing around doing nothing, he wonders what the hell Commissioner Dale Snodgrass is doing with his tax dollars. The truth is, though, that roadwork projects don’t necessarily proceed at an even pace. Even allowing for what Mayor Umstead would describe as “outrageous” concessions that roadworkers’ unions have obtained regarding work breaks and the like, most roadworkers are reasonably diligent city employees.

The Transportation Commission also has a reputation for corruption. It’s not unknown for the Commissioner or other high-ranking employees to pad their work schedules with unneeded projects and pocket the money for them, or to buy cheap asphalt and other supplies, charge the city for higher-grade stuff, and keep the difference for themselves. No substantial allegations of corruption have ever been brought against Snodgrass, his Assistant Commissioner Norman Embler, or their immediate underlings, and none of the charges that have been leveled have been proven.

UTILITIES COMMISSION

The ultimate responsibility for the city’s water, power, and phone services rests with the Utilities Commission, which oversees and regulates the providers of those utilities. Although most Hudsonites don’t even think about these things, the truth is that the Utilities Commission (or, more accurately, the equipment and personnel at its headquarters)

could paralyze the whole city by denying it water or power. Utilities works closely with the Sewers Division of the Sanitation Commission; both Commissions have their offices in Governmental Plaza 4.

In one corner of the Utility Commissioner's office there's an unusual kind of clock — one that runs by dropping tiny steel pellets down a track at precise intervals, creating an effect of constant, carefully controlled motion, and energy harnessed for a good end. This clock provides a perfect metaphor for the Commissioner himself: Patrick Carrick, a man of untiring energy and enthusiasm who's continually trying to make the city's water, electric, and telephone systems run with the same smooth efficiency as his clock. His bull-in-a-china-shop manner infuriates the many bureaucrats for whom double-talk and delay are a way of life, but there's no denying Carrick usually gets done what needs done.

CITY POLITICS

"Bayside? Why in the world would you want to build in Bayside? You'll spend half your budget paying off the Marcellis, and your people will have to rub shoulders with longshoremen and shipyard workers. Build in Eastwood. We've got a top-notch hospital, a major mall, an eager workforce, and plenty of other attractions that make it the perfect place for you."

— Eastwood booster May Crandall

Politics in Hudson City often boils down to disputes between the Democratic and Republican political machines that mobilize voters and try to sway public opinion. The Democrats are often known as *Bolton Hall*, from the name of the building where they used to assemble for meetings and rallies. The building was torn down decades ago, but the moniker remains. The Republicans are saddled with a much less flattering nickname: the *Ivory Club*. The name comes from the club where Republican leaders used to meet, which had two large elephant statues outside and was called the Ivory Club. Today the name is often used in a cruel and sarcastic way to refer to the racial composition, and allegedly racist policies, of the local Republican Party.

The other major force in city politics is *neighborhood interest*. The residents of the various neighborhoods and districts in the city each want to improve their home areas... and that often means fighting with other neighborhoods for resources and benefits. If a company wants to construct a new building or factory in the city, the neighborhood that gets it will benefit, so all the contenders fight for it like dogs quarreling over a bone. If a federal program might funnel some money into the city, every neighborhood that thinks it's entitled to a slice of the pie bellies up to the table with knife in hand — to use on each other as well as the pie.

Movers And Shakers

The Mayor's office and the City Council aren't the extent of city politics. There are plenty of other movers and shakers in the city, each pushing his own agenda or cause. Some of them include:

Manuel Berillo-Costa: A former construction worker who grew up in Latin City, Berillo-Costa is a committed Democrat and a prominent member of Bolton Hall. His main support group is the city's Hispanic community, but he also has many influential backers in the city's universities, labor unions, and working communities.

Basil Cromwell: The spokesman for the Hudson City Republican Party (*a.k.a.* the Ivory Club), Cromwell is regarded as an intelligent, clever speaker by most people, making him a frequent guest on Sunday morning political talk shows. Many Democrats, including his opposite number Mark Hathaway, think of him as a fascist apologist who represents everything that's worst about American society.

Mark Hathaway: The press secretary for the Hudson City Democratic Party (or Bolton Hall, as it's often called) is a handsome man in his late 20s with a flair for public speaking and a razor-sharp wit. His verbal confrontations with Basil Cromwell at local events and on television are the stuff of modern legend. As yet unmarried, he's often seen in the company of movie actresses and pretty young heiresses.

Bob Jasperson: A former member of the House of Representatives who lost his re-election bid several years ago, Jasperson remains heavily involved in politics on the local level. He is almost Manuel Berillo-Costa's opposite number, since he's a major Republican fundraiser and often appears on local television shows to argue the GOP position. Many people believe he's considering a run for the City Council or the U.S. Senate sometime in the near future.

Paul McClendon: McClendon, an independent, was Mayor of Hudson City over a decade ago. The media hounded him from office after allegations of connections to organized crime surfaced. Nevertheless he remains a powerful and influential man in the city. He currently runs a business consulting firm, and the extent of his political ambitions — and his contacts in the underworld — are unknown.

James Scopetta: A former City Councilman from Little Italy, Scopetta was convicted of racketeering in 1984 in connection with a construction scam. He served a short prison term and since his release has continued to wield political influence despite the fact that he's not in office. Extremely popular with the city's Italian community and labor unions, he's frequently consulted by city politicians on issues that might affect those groups.

NICOLE SULLIVAN

8 STR	8 DEX
8 CON	8 BODY
10 INT	10 EGO
13 PRE	12 COM
2 PD	2 ED
2 SPD	4 REC
16 END	16 STUN

Abilities: Bureaucratics 12-, Conversation 12-, High Society 12-, KS: Hudson City Politics 14-, Persuasion 12-, PS: Political Consultant 13-, SS: Statistics 8-, 20 points' worth of Contacts in city politics

Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Hates To Lose

Notes: Nicole Sullivan is one of the most talented political consultants in the city. She herself really lacks strong political convictions — what she's interested in is taking a candidate, grooming him, leading him through the paces, and seeing him through to victory, not flogging a particular political agenda. Democrat, Republican, independent, Libertarian, Green — she doesn't care, as long as she wins. The issues don't concern her, but she hates to lose... so much so that she might resort to underhanded tactics if she felt she had to to secure a win for her candidate.

IN THE NEWS IN 2004:

DEATH IN ASHWOOD

April — A mere two weeks after Hudson City's annual Gay and Lesbian Pride Day celebration, James "Jack" Chatworth, an openly homosexual man, was found brutally beaten and killed in an Ashwood alleyway. Preliminary investigation showed that Chatworth had been tied up and tortured with cigarette burns and razor blades, leading the police to conclude that someone had kidnapped him several days prior to the time his body was found, though none of his friends had reported him missing. At the site his head was smashed in with a brick, resulting in death due to severe cranial trauma.

Amid cries of outrage from the city's gay and civil rights communities, the HCPD conducted an intensive investigation which eventually focused on Gary Miller, a repeat offender released from Stewartsburg Penitentiary earlier in the year. A member of the white supremacist group the Aryan Brotherhood while in prison, Miller eventually confessed to the murder under intense police questioning. As of December 2004, he remains in Longview Correctional awaiting sentencing.

Current Issues In City Government

As of 2004, here are some of the most pressing political and social issues confronting Hudson City.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND JOB CREATION

The struggle to improve and grow Hudson City's economy, and provide jobs for all of her citizens who want one, is an eternal task. In Mayor Umstead's administration to date, the city's gained about 10,000 jobs — better than a loss, certainly, but a mere drop in the bucket in the eyes of many. Economic development proponents assert that the city should offer more incentives to attract new employers; fiscal conservatives believe that makes poor financial sense, and in any event most incentives depend on state action as much or more than city action.

CRIME

Hudson City's reputation as crime-ridden is well-deserved. Between violent street crime, vice, and corruption at all levels of city government, it sometimes seems as if the criminals outnumber the honest citizens. The Hudson City Police Department and other law enforcement agencies do their best to combat the problem, but as they often tell reporters, they're outmanned, outgunned, and hamstrung by the courts.

When Mayor Umstead took office, he announced a bold "Anti-Crime Initiative" whose provisions included increased funding for the HCPD so it could hire new officers, a corresponding increase in funding for building new courts and prisons (since having more cops to take more crooks off the street is meaningless if the system can't handle the increased load), a program to upgrade the Department's equipment and weapons, and a pilot program to use modern GPS technology to track all felons, probationers, and parolees. He's made a little progress on improving HCPD equipment, but the state and federal governments haven't given him the money for his "force and courts upgrade" proposal, and civil rights and privacy organizations have lobbied hard against his "tracking" idea.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Like so many other cities throughout the United States and the world, Hudson City is falling apart. Many of its roads need repaving or repairs, old buildings require extensive engineering improvements, overpasses and bridges are weakening, and sewers and waterpipes spring leaks. But once something's built, people seem to think it will last forever — it's easier to get money and approval for a new city building than funding to properly maintain and upgrade an existing structure.

This is a rare issue on which Mayor Umstead and the unions see eye-to-eye: he'd like to improve the city's infrastructure for the obvious reasons, the unions want all the extra work that a program of major repairs and maintenance would create. However, both Umstead and the City Council are reluctant to deal with this issue full-on, since raising the neces-

sary money would undoubtedly require significant tax increases. Until someone comes up with a safe solution, is willing to put his hand in the tax increase fire, or a major disaster prompts significant reform on the issue, Hudson City's probably just going to go on patching things here and there as it has to.

SCHOOLS

Never let it be said that Hudson City (or any other American city) is truly satisfied with its schools. Everyone has an idea for what's wrong with them and how to fix them, but establishing any sort of significant consensus, much less a coalition with sufficient political power to actually accomplish anything, is like herding cats.

Three main issues confront school reformers. First, Hudson City's public schools aren't safe. Many kids bring concealed weapons to school, gangs and drug abuse are rampant, and assaults on teachers a monthly (if not weekly) occurrence. Installing metal detectors and stationing police officers at every school has helped a little, but it's really only a Band-Aid slapped on a sucking chest wound.

Second, Hudson City test scores are miserable. It appears that many students learn little or nothing in class (but still get promoted from grade to grade), and illiteracy is shockingly common among secondary school students. Mayor Umstead has proposed both a standardized curricula program and a school uniform policy to address this problem, but his ideas have met with a lukewarm reception. The Democrats in the City Council favor increasing teacher salaries and school budgets, but aren't willing to take the political hit of increasing taxes to pay for them.

Third, most Hudson City schools are in miserable shape. Roofs leak, broken windows remain unrepaired, graffiti doesn't get cleaned up, stairways sag. The entire physical plant needs major upgrades and replacements, but there's no more money available for this than for increased teacher salaries.

UNIONS

The ongoing conflict between Mayor Umstead's administration and the city's unions makes headlines almost every week. Umstead put his position succinctly in a recent speech: "Unions have gone from helping downtrodden laborers regain their dignity and obtain fair working conditions to helping today's workers loot public and private treasuries for everything they can. These greedy and corrupt organizations no longer help society — they only hurt it by increasing the cost of the goods we all buy, the time it takes to finish any public works project, and the size of governmental budgets and payrolls. The time has come for the unions to recognize that they're doing more harm than good and to mend their ways... before the government has to mend them for them." Scores of union officials have fired back with similarly vitriolic statements defending the rights of workers and extolling the good works that unions do. But until one side or the other gains enough political power to force its agenda down the other's throat, the odds are it's just going to remain a war of words.

GOVERNMENTAL CENTER

The seat of Hudson City government is the Governmental Center, located at 101 Centre Street directly across the street from Courthouse Plaza. Both the subway and the elevated railway have stops at Governmental Center, and part of the Hudson City Underground (page 21) is located directly beneath it.

The Center consists of seven buildings. The largest and most impressive is City Hall, a twelve-story building done in a Greek Revival style with broad front stairs. To each side of it are three buildings, designed and arranged so that the structures create a C shape around a central plaza. In the middle of the plaza is a fountain featuring a statue of the Greek god Poseidon. When the weather's fine, Center workers often sit on the fountain's edge, or on various nearby benches, and eat their lunches.

The six smaller buildings, each eight to ten stories tall, are known as Governmental Center 1 to 6, with the numbering beginning at the "top" part of the C and proceeding counterclockwise. They house various governmental offices. Number 5 is the City Council building, where the Council Chambers are and the Councilmen and their staffs have offices.

COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Hudson City occupies the entirety of Stewart County. The city limits were long ago made the same as the county borders. Similarly, government functions that would ordinarily be part of a county rather than a city — the planning office, the county prosecutor, and so forth — were merged into the city's governmental structure. Thus, Hudson City doesn't have a separate "county government" to contend with the way most cities do, though it often has to liaise or deal with the governments of surrounding counties.

STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

As large and prominent as Hudson City is, it's part of a greater state and country — and that means Hudsonites participate in the political process at a level above City Hall.

STATE GOVERNMENT

Due to its large population, Hudson City sends several members to both the Senate and General Assembly of the New Jersey Legislature. Hudson City has also played a prominent role in the election of every recent New Jersey governor (including the current one, Democrat Patricia McCormack); gubernatorial candidates (and potential gubernatorial candidates) visit the city frequently.

In the world of Hudson City, the New Jersey Legislature has two Houses: a 45-member Senate and an 90-member General Assembly. In odd-numbered years, the citizens in 45 legislative dis-

tricts elect one Senator (for a four-year term) and two Assemblymen (each for a two-year term). To be a Senator, you must be at least 30 years old and a resident of the state for four years prior to election; to be an Assemblyman, you must be at least 21 and a resident for two years. All legislators must live in the districts they represent. Service in either House is considered a part-time job, so most legislators have other occupations.

The greater Hudson City area elects five state Senators and 10 Assemblymen. Some of the better known of them include Senator Alan Taite, Senator Louisa Merrick, and Assemblymen Gerald Roth, Henriette Cuyler, James daSilva, Christopher Kaminski, and Augustus "Gus" Andreola.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Besides federal aid, assistance, and grants — which Hudson City receives billions of dollars of every year for road maintenance, midnight basketball programs, anti-drug campaigns, business development, and many other things — the Pearl City's main connection with the federal government is through the Senators and Representatives it elects. Hudson City usually goes strongly Democratic in presidential elections.

Senators

Like every other state of the Union, New Jersey elects two senators. As the largest city in the state, Hudson City has a major influence on these elections — there are nearly as many votes to be had here as in the rest of the state put together — and that means it receives a lot of attention from the candidates come election time.

The two senators currently representing New Jersey are Braxton Waite (a white Democrat) and Alice Sheffield (a self-described "half-Hispanic" Republican). Waite, a native of Hudson City, got his start in politics on the City Council. He's a well-known figure in the city and often attends major society gatherings. Sheffield comes from northern New Jersey, but spends enough time in the Pearl City to let Hudsonites know she's looking out for their interests. Both maintain local offices in the Federal Building on Courthouse Plaza.

Representatives

In the world of Hudson City, New Jersey elects 23 Representatives to Congress: 10 from the greater Hudson City area, 13 from the rest of the state. Some of the "locals" include:

Representative Alexander Goodman: A black Democrat from the Freetown area, Goodman rode into office in 1992 on President Clinton's coattails and has won re-election ever since. Known as a fiery orator and a determined fighter for the welfare of his constituents, the poor inhabitants of Freetown, he suffers credibility problems in other circles due to his tendency to label anyone who disagrees with him a "racist," and because of his connections with the Reverend James Pick (page 132).

Representative Edward Kurtz: A Republican and long-time representative whose district includes the Irishtown area. An extremely wealthy man

THE MAPLE VALLEY STRATEGIC METALS DEPOSITORY

On the outskirts of the suburb of Maple Valley, in a secured facility set well back from the road and surrounded by a lush, landscaped lawn without any shrubbery or trees, stands a series of large, low to the ground, grey cement buildings. If they could see them from the road, passersby would probably take the place for a aesthetically bland office park, but in fact it's something far more important: a United States strategic materials depository.

The United States economy and military require certain materials which don't exist in their natural form in this country, and thus have to be purchased from other nations. These include aluminum, beryllium, chromium, cobalt, manganese, platinum, titanium, and various other metals. To prevent shortages from crippling the nation during times of crises, the government maintains stockpiles of these materials. The Maple Valley Strategic Materials Depository is just one of many facilities across the country where the government stores part of its stockpiles.

Naturally, the MVSMD is very well guarded, with high-tech security systems, Army soldiers as guards, and many other protective resources. If a thief could penetrate the facility and somehow manage to escape with a sizable quantity of the stockpile, he might make himself a tidy profit... if he could figure out who would buy the stuff, and how to sell it without getting himself killed.

LAHAB AL-BAKIYAH

10 STR 10 DEX
 10 CON 10 BODY
 14 INT 13 EGO
 16 PRE 12 COM
 3 PD 3 ED
 2 SPD 4 REC
 20 END 20 STUN

Abilities: Acting 12-, Bribery 8-, Bureaucratics 13-, Computer Programming 8-, Conversation 14-, Deduction 13-, Gambling (Card Games, Sports Betting) 12-, High Society 12-, KS: The Espionage World 13-, KS: The Hudson City Diplomatic Scene 11-, KS: World Cultures 11-, KS: World Politics 11-, Language: English (fluent conversation, Arabic is Native), Persuasion 12-, Riding 11-, Stealth 11-, Streetwise 12-, WF: Small Arms, Knives, Fringe Benefit: Diplomatic Immunity.

Disadvantages: Distinctive Features: Arab; Hunted by the FBI Counterintelligence Section 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching); Psychological Limitation: Islamic Fundamentalist; Social Limitation: Subject To Orders

Notes: Lahab al-Bakiyah, an Arabic man in his mid-forties, is one of the highest-ranking diplomats at the Iranian Embassy in Hudson City (and thus receives full diplomatic immunity). His duties include serving as cultural attaché, meaning he often arranges events to display Iranian arts and culture to other peoples, and likewise attends many cultural events. The FBI suspects him of being a spy, but it has no proof.

who made his millions as a stock-broker, Kurtz has a lot of influence in Hudson City — but he's a contemplative man who tries to make as few waves as possible, which sometimes makes it difficult for him to get things done in Congress. He has a modest reputation for his preparedness and the thoroughness of his examination of important legislation, due in part to his efficient staff.

Representative Caridad Montalván: Representing Latin City and part of Southport, this Democrat crusades tirelessly for the welfare of her constituents. She's helped so many people with so many problems that she's run unopposed for the past three elections because everyone knows there's no overcoming her popularity.

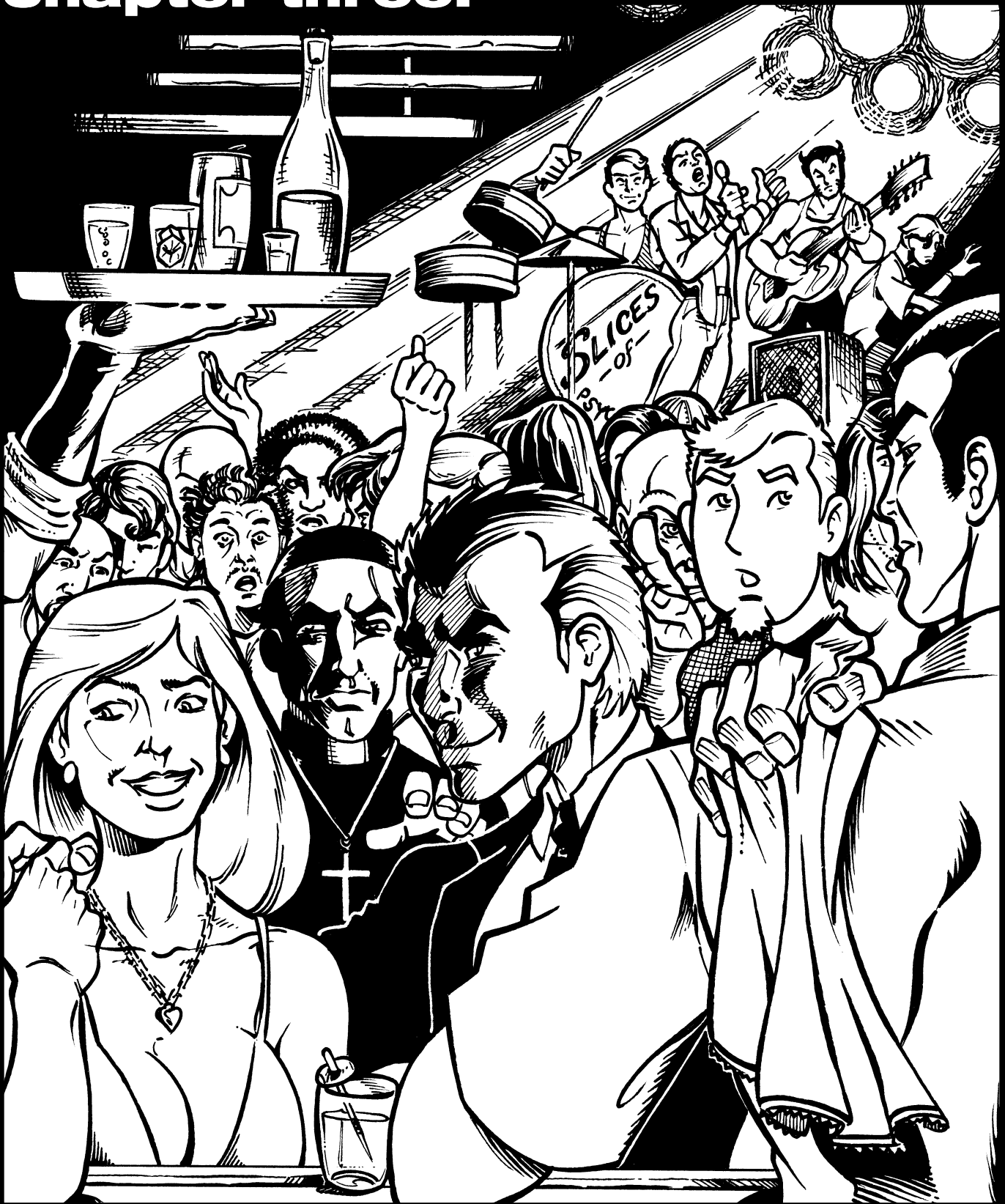
THE DIPLOMATIC SCENE

As a major center of commerce and culture, Hudson City has a thriving diplomatic community. Most major nations have embassies or consulates in the city; many of them cluster along 4th Avenue between N. Jefferson and Washington Streets, an area sometimes known as "Embassy Row." People involved with diplomatic work (trade representatives, government officials, and the like) can expect to receive an invitation to at least one diplomatic reception or party a week, each celebrating some important event or holiday in the host embassy's nation (see page 59).

Diplomats sometimes take advantage of their positions, knowledge of American culture, and diplomatic immunity to engage in spying or criminal behavior. More than a few of them drive any way they want and park wherever they choose, since their immunity protects them from traffic tickets — much to the aggravation of Hudsonites. But some go further, using their status and resources to get involved in the drug trade or the like. For example, in 1998, the son of a high-level diplomat at the Brazilian embassy committed a series of brutal rapes, but diplomatic immunity protected him from being charged with a crime — all the authorities could do was deport him.



chapter three:



A DAY IN THE LIFE

LIFE IN THE BIG CITY



CALVIN ARCHER

10 STR	13 DEX
9 CON	8 BODY
10 INT	8 EGO
10 PRE	9 COM
3 PD	2 ED
2 SPD	4 REC
18 END	18 STUN

Abilities: Bugging 13-, Bureaucratics 8-, Computer Programming 11-, Electronics 13-, SS: Electronic Engineering 11-, Mechanics 8-, PS: Small Business Owner 11-, Security Systems 12-, Shadowing 11-, Systems Operation 8-

Disadvantages: None

Notes: Calvin Archer runs Archer Electronics & Security, a Pierpoint company that sells electronic components and related services and equipment. If you want to build your own ham radio, RC car, or similar gadget, Archer can sell you the parts, tools, and instructions to do it. Archer also carries a wide selection of surveillance and security devices, which he installs for a fee.

A city isn't just neighborhoods, buildings, and roads. It's also people, and if the buildings and roads are the city's body and arteries, the people are its blood and soul — the things that give it life, and make that life worth living.

THE RHYTHM OF THE CITY

Like any other major American metropolis, Hudson City never really “sleeps” — there are things going on all around the city at every hour of the day and night. Some industries, like the hotel and trucking industries, depend as much on night-time workers as they do on daytime workers. But for the most part, the Pearl City follows a certain “rhythm” all its own.

In most parts of the city, the early risers get up around 5:00 or 5:30 AM. This gives first-shift workers time to get dressed and have some breakfast before heading to work, commuters time to travel to their offices, and workers in restaurants and coffee shops time to get ready for the morning rush. But most people get to sleep a little later, until sometime between 6:00 and 7:00 — it all depends on how long a commute to work they have, whether they have to get kids off to school, and so forth.

Morning rush hour gets started no later than 6:30, and by 7:00 it's usually in full swing. Traffic clogs the city streets, particularly in the eastern half of the Northside — even Truman, Kurtland, and the parkways slow to a crawl. Radio station helicopters take to the air to report on the latest traffic jams and wrecks as diners fill up with people who want their daily OJ and eggs.

Since the first shift begins at 7:00 in most companies, and most offices expect their employees to be at their desks by 8:00, rush hour usually ends no later than 9:00 AM... but that's not to say the streets become empty. There are still plenty of taxis, delivery trucks, bike messengers, shoppers, and people driving to appointments. In many parts of the city, there's no time during daylight hours when it becomes truly easy to make one's way along the streets.

Early eaters start to hit the restaurants for lunch beginning at 11:00, but most people don't have their midday meal until noon or 12:30 at the earliest. If the weather's fine, this is the best time to people-watch, since everyone takes to the streets to walk to a nearby lunch counter, pushcart, or restaurant (or to a park or other pleasant place to sit and eat, for those who brown-bag it). When it's rainy, you'll have more fun watching the mul-

ticolored parade of umbrellas from a skyscraper. The cold winter weather cuts down on the crowds a little, but not much — Hudsonites are tough people and can stand a little nip in the air.

Evening rush hour starts around 3:00, when the first shift's ending and the second shift's getting underway. It remains reasonably light until 4:30 or 5:00, when workers heading home jam the roads. Some companies offer flextime arrangements so people can come in earlier and leave earlier, but this hasn't done anything to ease the pain of rush hour.

After people get home, what they do usually depends on the time of year. In the spring and summer, when it remains light for an hour or three beyond 6:00 PM, many people take the time to do yardwork or chores, play sports, or participate in other activities before eating dinner. In the autumn and winter, when it gets dark early, they're more likely to stay inside and relax with some indoor activity — watching TV, working a puzzle, playing computer games.

Hudsonites tend to eat dinner late. The earliest most people consider having dinner is 7:00 PM, and it's not uncommon for people to wait until 8:00, 9:00, or even 10:00 (particularly if they want to catch a movie or a show beforehand). By 8:30 most restaurants are pretty crowded, with waits of 20 minutes or more; the really popular places may be booked solid, or expect you to wait at least 90 minutes to get a table.

And after the dinner period, the entertainment hours begin. Movies and shows tend to get started relatively early at night, with showings beginning around 7:00 and often occurring several more times throughout the evening (depending on show length). Nightclubs and the like usually open around 10:00, though they don't really get “jumping” until after 11:00 at the earliest. Most of them stay open at least until 2:00 AM, but more than a few keep the night alive until 4:00 or 5:00 AM. Among young professionals there's a subculture of partiers who stay out until the wee hours, yet somehow make it to the office by 8:00 AM and put in a full day's work before going out and doing it all again. And some people — gangsters and other criminals, for example, not to mention the vigilantes who hunt them — are more active at night than during the day.

ANNUAL EVENTS

There's also an annual rhythm to life in Hudson City, with a round of parades, celebrations, and festivals that the locals enjoy year after year. In chronological order, some of the most important or interesting of them are:

New Year's Day Parade: On January 1, elaborate floats and gigantic balloons fill the streets of Bankhurst, Highlands, and Worthington (and the air above them) as the New Year's Day Parade wends its way from the river to the city limits. A nationally televised event that attracts tens of thousands of onlookers along its route, it's also a major marketing opportunity for many companies that brings millions of dollars of revenue into Hudson City's advertising firms.

King Day Festival: On Martin Luther King Day, MLK Park and the surrounding blocks in Freetown are the scene of an enormous street festival featuring prominent speakers, concerts, games, and other events. Warring street gangs generally set aside their differences for the day, but violence has been known to break out.

Pearls Of Great Price Banquet: Held in late January, this event honors the past year's most active civic and charity organizations and workers with various awards, plaques, and certificates of recognition. It's considered a highlight of the annual social season, and many who attend go all-out to look their best.

Chinese New Year: In mid-February, Chinatown holds its own New Year's celebration, though the parade is much smaller, the secondary events sometimes a little strange to Western sensibilities, and the fireworks much more common. Many Hudsonites trek over to the neighborhood for the food and festivities.

St. Patrick's Day Parade: Hudsonites of Irish descent take this day to celebrate their heritage with a parade from Irishtown to LeMastre Park, generous helpings of corned beef and cabbage, and gallons of green-dyed beer.

Gay And Lesbian Pride Day: Hudson City's homosexual community celebrates its lifestyle with a street festival every year in Ashwood in early April. Bigots have taken to calling it "April Queer's Day."

Easter Parade and Egg Hunt: Every year the Easter Parade starts in Gadsden, progresses west through Bankhurst, then turns north through Blackbridge and Worthington to the city limits. Instead of the floats found in most other city parades, this one features mainly marching bands, civic and charitable groups walking to raise money for their causes, and so forth. Individuals dressed in their best (or weirdest) clothing often join the parade for a few blocks or miles. For the kids, there's a massive city-sponsored Easter Egg hunt in LeMastre Park around the Dinosaur Garden.

Greek Festival: In May, the Dormition Greek Orthodox Church (page 72) holds its Greek Festival to showcase Greek food and culture.

Firetree Cotillion: An annual dance held at the Firetree Country Club (page 135).

Hudson City Toy Fair: In mid-May the halls of the Convention Center are filled with more toys than even the greediest child could dream up. Toy and game manufacturers from all over the world come to display their wares to potential buyers and drum up business for the year.

Memorial Day Celebrations: Hudson City doesn't have any specific Memorial Day event (such as a parade), but every year a wide variety of speeches, solemn remembrances, and celebratory acknowledgements of America's fighting forces take place.

Yacht Club Regatta and parties: The Hudson Beach Yacht Club (page 135) holds a regatta and a series of parties every summer. The date of the Regatta varies, but it's usually in late July or early August.

Hudson City Marathon: Held in early June, this race starts in Gadsden and wends its way around the Northside to end in LeMastre Park. (See page 115 for other annual sporting events.)

HudsonCon: In mid-June, over 20,000 science fiction and gaming fans descend on Blackbridge for HudsonCon, one of the nation's premiere cons.

Hudson City Jazz Festival: Typically held in mid-late June, this musical event attracts the top musicians in jazz — as well as tens of thousands of jazz fans — to the city's concert halls and parks.

Hudson City Fourth: Every year the city sponsors an elaborate Fourth of July festival in LeMastre Park. There's usually a major concert in the afternoon, and at 9:00 PM sharp the fireworks begin.

Summer Kite Festival: Held in Mott Park every July, this Chinatown event draws thousands of people eager to watch the elaborate Chinese kites (and bet on the kite fights).

Hudson City Military Exposition: Arms and military systems manufacturers hold a trade show at the Convention Center and Coliseum in August. Admission to the show is closed to the public; only persons with valid invitations and identity badges can tour the halls to ooh and ahh at the latest in firearm, tank, and UAV technology.

Labor Day Celebrations: For two days in early September the city nearly shuts down as workers (unionized or not) take a vacation to celebrate the virtues of working. Various events take place all around the city, but the enormous street festival in Elmview and Red Hill is usually considered the best party to go to. It usually includes at least one major musical act in concert.

Halloween Celebrations: The city has no formal Halloween event, but many civic and social organizations hold costume parties, fundraisers, or trick-or-treat substitute parties for the kids. (The Vrtis Wildlife Trust's bash in LeMastre Park, page 67, is one of the best.) There's usually an impromptu "street festival" in Ashwood featuring some amazing (and often scandalous) costumes.

HELEN NEWSOME

6 STR	8 DEX
7 CON	8 BODY
8 INT	10 EGO
8 PRE	8 COM
2 PD	2 ED
1 SPD	3 REC
14 END	15 STUN

Abilities: Luck 8d6
(Only To Keep From Hurting Herself Or Others While Driving), Bureaucratics 11-, High Society 11-, KS: Hudson City Volunteerism 11-, Oratory 8-, Persuasion 11-, 20 points' worth of Contacts throughout Hudson City, Money: Well Off

Disadvantages: Age: 60+, Physical Limitation: Nearsighted (needs corrective lenses)

Notes: The recipient of the 1996 "Pearl of Great Price" award for her selfless efforts as a volunteer and coordinator of volunteers, Helen Newsome is well-known to many segments of Hudsonite society. A spry 68-year-old widow whose husband left her more than enough money to live on for the rest of her life, Newsome is perpetually optimistic and friendly, always ready to try to help those less fortunate than herself. Refusing to acknowledge that her driving skills are atrocious, she drives herself everywhere she wants to go... but somehow, despite the chaos and fender-benders she leaves in her wake, neither she nor anyone else seems to get hurt as a result.

PREACHER

8	STR	10	DEX
9	CON	9	BODY
10	INT	8	EGO
15	PRE	8	COM
2	PD	2	ED
1	SPD	4	REC
18	END	18	STUN

Abilities: Concealment 11-, Deduction 11-, KS: The Bible 11-, KS: Protestant Christian Theology 11-, Oratory 14-, Persuasion 12-, Streetwise 12-, WF: Handguns, Knives

Disadvantages: Social Limitation: Criminal Record

Notes: “Praise the Lord and follow his word!”

Hang around on the Southside long enough, and you're bound to run into Preacher. No one knows his real name, they just call him what he is. Every day he picks a streetcorner, usually one somewhere in Freetown, Forsyth, or Riverside Hills, and commences to preach the Gospel. He doesn't put out a hat or cup for money, though he won't turn down an “offering” if you'd like to make one. All day long he exhorts passersby to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior and to follow the straight and narrow path of righteousness... and then, as dusk falls, he stops talking and wanders away to who knows where, no doubt going to rest up to gather his strength for tomorrow's sermon.

Thanksgiving Day Parade: Taking place on the morning of the third Thursday of each November, the Thanksgiving Day Parade starts at LeMastre Park, moves east briefly, then turns north and keeps going until it reaches the city limits. It's much like the New Year's Day Parade in most respects, though the floats are usually built with different themes.

Christmas Parade: The last parade of the Hudson City year takes place in mid-December to celebrate Christmas. It starts near the river and heads north. Riders on many of the floats throw candy or small toys and gewgaws to the crowds.

SLANG

Hudsonites aren't known for having a special accent (they sound like most other northeasterners), but they do have a few slang terms all their own.

General Slang

Blue (n.): An HCPD cop.

Buck (n.): A shotgun.

Cokely (adj.): Crazy; nuts. Derived from Cokely Hospital (page 126), which has an extensive ward for psychologically disturbed persons. Usually used as, “he's Cokely,” or “he's gone to Cokely.”

Cool (n.): One thousand dollars. A *large cool* is ten thousand dollars.

Crucified (adj.): Incarcerated in Longview Correctional Center, which is a cruciform building. Usually used as, “been crucified.”

Ferranti style (n.): Anything made or done with a maximum of beauty, opulence, and sophisticated taste.

Franklin (n.): A black person who's not street-smart (from Franklin County).

Free of Freetown (adj.): Has gotten out of the ghetto.

G (n.): A gun. In gang subculture, also means “gangster” (a gang member).

Grease (n.): Money

Grease Machine (n.): ATM machine

Grease Market (n.): In lower case, a bank; when capitalized, the Hudson City Stock Exchange

Hudson City hardball (n.): The roughest, dirtiest way to play. “He's playin' Hudson City hardball with ya, pal — time to get down 'n' dirty yourself.”

Hudson City heartbreak (n.): A tragedy brought on one's self, usually due to one's own failings or inadequacies (especially moral or ethical). Derived from the title and subject of a lurid 1878 play.

Irish (adj.): Rich, wealthy; luxurious; especially elegant, sophisticated, or nice

Joke (adj.): Sentenced to Juvenile Offenders Correctional Hall. Often used as “getting the Joke” or “telling a Joke.”

Mask (n.): Vigilante or costumed criminal.

Moose (n.): A large man, especially a clumsy, dumb-looking one; a thug; a legbreaker

Needle Cowboy/Cowgirl (n.): A junkie, a heroin user.

Oyster (n.): A male Hudsoner (*cf.* “Pearl”).

Pearl (n.): An inhabitant of Hudson City, especially a woman. In some cruder subcultures (such as along the Strip), a “pearl” refers to a prostitute or a lesbian.

The Pearl City (n.): Hudson City.

Player (n.): A person working for or associated with Card Shark.

Punch 'n' Judy (n.): A homosexual couple (usually used derogatorily).

Ride the needle (v.): To use drugs (especially heroin) (*cf.* Needle Cowboy).

Run the Numbers (v.): To live and survive in the Numbers; going into the Numbers and coming back out alive.

Shamrocks (n.): Paper money (especially \$100 bills).

Skyline (v.): To ride the elevated railway.

Smokey (n.): A black person (hence *Smokeytown*, a derogatory term for Freetown). This term derives from the alleged distasteful odor emitted by blacks, and from the smoke from the cookfires that hung over Freetown when it was first established.

Steal candy (v.): To commit rape.

Tallie (n.): A person of Italian extraction (hence *Tallietown*, a derogatory term for Little Italy).

V (n.): A vigilante crimefighter.

On The Strip

Daddy Warbucks (n.): A wealthy individual willing to pay top dollar (either for the prettiest girls or “unusual” services).

Greek (n.): A homosexual. Usually used of men; a “Greek girl” is a lesbian.

Greek ride (n.): Anal intercourse.

Princess (n.): A prostitute, especially a high-class or expensive one.

Sweet (n.): A prostitute, especially a low-class, cheap, or broken-down one.

Tourist (n.): A person visiting North Elmview for the purposes of obtaining sex or drugs.

ON THE SCENE



"This is Daniel Petty, reporting live from Red Hill, where the police have surrounded a waterfront building. With me is Lieutenant Gina Sparks. Lieutenant Sparks, can you tell us what's going on here?"

"We received a report of shots fired from this building. We sent a patrol car to investigate, and the suspects in the building shot at it repeatedly with automatic weapons and a grenade, injuring one officer. Reinforcements arrived, we surrounded the place, and now we're waiting for the SWAT team to arrive."

"What will SWAT do when they get here?"

"I'm sorry, but we can't discuss that during an ongoing incident."

"What's the word on the wounded officer?"

"He was taken by ambulance to Vreeland Memorial. The last thing I heard was that he's going into surgery, but is expected to pull through."

"Have the police contacted DarkAngel? Do you anticipate vigilante involvement?"

"The Hudson City Police Department does not work with or contact vigilantes, who are not authorized law enforcement officers."

— crime scene interview by
Daniel Petty, WJYG

They say the media is an omnipresent fact of life in modern America, and that's certainly true in the Pearl City. Many different television and radio stations broadcast in the greater Hudson City area, and some of its newspapers are among the most highly-regarded in the nation.

TELEVISION

Like the rest of the United States, Hudson City is served by four major television networks: ABS (the American Broadcasting System); CBC (the Central Broadcasting Corporation); NBS (the National Broadcasting System); and the Adair Network. Additionally, two cable TV "superstations" that reach most of the country are based in Hudson City: Worldview News (an all-news station known for its accurate reporting) and Berkely Entertainment Television (BETV).

These networks' affiliates in the Hudson City area are:

WCNB, CHANNEL 2

Hudson City's CBC affiliate has fallen on hard times in recent years. Trailing ABS and NBS locally in the ratings, it's also lost some of its core viewership — adults 35 and up — to WEML. The station's managers are beginning to contemplate extreme solutions for regaining market share.

WCNB's best-known on-air personality is Patricia Eisenhart, the station's weekend news anchor and its full-time reporter on entertainment and fashion issues. Although extremely pretty and extremely popular, she's generally regarded as a journalistic lightweight.

WEML, CHANNEL 5

WEML is the Adair affiliate in Hudson City. The Adair Network's blend of hip, young shows for hip, young people combined with reality TV and "trash TV" has given it a solid foothold in the Hudson City market. WEML even produces a show of its own: *War Zone*, a trash TV show starring Tony Kendall that's often shot on location around the city. It focuses on "stories about the modern urban battleground" — gang warfare, police activity, vigilantes, street life, and so on. Kendall is a wisecracking, fast-talking loudmouth who spends his time looking for the juiciest dirt he can find, and then broadcasting it. He thinks "the public has a right to know!", regardless of the consequences, and cares little for the pain his shows cause as long as his ratings stay high.

WJYG, CHANNEL 7

The ABS affiliate in Hudson City occupies Channel 7 on the dial. It does pretty well with its national shows, but its news broadcast has lagged a little in recent months. The one thing WJYG news has going for it is Daniel Petty, "eyewitness action reporter" par excellence. Petty has a well-deserved reputation for going after the most dangerous stories (such as organized crime exposés) and getting right in the thick of the action (such as the time he covered a police chase of a bank robber from the passenger's seat of the police car). Tenacious and determined, he won't let a story rest once he's on it.

WPJD, CHANNEL 20

A small local station that broadcasts only within the Hudson City area, WPJD focuses on community events, local news, and the like. Its *Hudson City Focus* program of local human interest and "offbeat humor" stories has become surprisingly popular.

IN THE NEWS IN 2004:

MEDIA SHENANIGANS

September — Following an expose by the *Star-Gazette*, Phillip Sutcliffe, a reporter for the Hudson City Agenda, admitted to fabricating or plagiarizing material for over two dozen stories in the past three years. Sutcliffe, a graduate of Stanford, began working for the Agenda in 1998 and quickly became one of the liberal paper's star reporters thanks to his witty, biting prose and incisive investigative journalism. It now appears that much of Sutcliffe's "incisive" reporting was more fiction than fact.

In commenting on the scandal, Agenda publisher Robert Dawes stated, "As a newspaper, our first obligation is to the truth, and we deeply regret that oversights on our part allowed Phillip Sutcliffe to publish as factual material which was not. However, the fundamental truths behind his articles — corruption in city government and the police, the brutality of the HCPD, the back-room dealings of the Ivory Club, corporate financial chicanery — remain both true and incontrovertible."

WSLH, CHANNEL 8

Hudson City's NBS affiliate not only has a strong slate of national programming, it enjoys a strong lead in the local news competition. The latter advantage is mainly due to Frederick Tarnauer, the evening news anchor. He's held that job for over 20 years, and has become something of a Hudson City institution. Surveys consistently rank him as one of the city's most trusted public figures. However, he's nearing retirement age, and WSLH has no idea who it would get to replace him.

WSQS, CHANNEL 36

Based on the Southside, this independent station covers mostly news, events, and stories pertaining to Freetown and Lafayette. It gets enough viewers in those areas to keep going, but its strident left-wing rhetoric turns off most other people.

WTBV, CHANNEL 10

The "mother station" of Ben Berkely's BETV network, WTBV has been a Hudson City institution for over thirty years. Its programming mostly consists of syndicated shows, though it added a news broadcast in the late Nineties that has done reasonably well. Vivacious reporter Sandra Huston, who hosts the *Hudson Beat* news program every week, has attracted a lot of attention both for her no-holds-barred reporting style and her on-air charm.



RADIO STATIONS

Several dozen radio stations' broadcasts can reach the greater Hudson City area. Among those, a few stand out because they're specifically based in Hudson City or designed to appeal to Hudsonites, they're particularly popular, or the like. They include:

WCBR (105.0 FM): "Cobra-105 FM" broadcasts so-called "urban contemporary" music — rap and hip-hop with a little blend of soul, in other words. It also covers Freetown Community College sports (such as they are).

WHCX (94.3 FM): The "Hudson City Extreme" station offers a blend of classic rock and contemporary rock with an irreverent twist. Its "Chris and Kelly Morning Show" is one of the most popular in the city and often features bizarre or titillating guests such as strippers, midget entertainers, and local fringe politicians.

WJGL (98.1 FM): A Christian contemporary station, WJGL doesn't have a very large group of listeners — but the ones it does have are intensely loyal, giving it more clout with advertisers than most stations its size.

WJKF (98.5 FM): "K-98 FM" is Hudson City's main country and western station. For many years it was virtually Hudson City's *only* C&W station, but the rise in popularity of country music over the past fifteen years caused several other local stations to switch to that format. However, none of them has acquired an audience anywhere near as large as WJKF's.

WJWM (92.9 FM): Rock station "J-92 FM" is known throughout the city both for its cartoon logo (a sly-looking fox) and for a seemingly non-stop series of giveaways, promotions, and contests. If there's an event of any consequence going on somewhere in town, you can bet the J-92 prize van will be there to hand out t-shirts and similar freebies.

WNRO (99.0 FM): "Oldies-99 FM" plays rock and pop music from the Fifties, Sixties, and Seventies, with occasional forays into the early Eighties. Its "Friday Night Fifties" and "Saturday Night Seventies" programs are both local favorites.

WRGL (100.5 FM): Billing itself as broadcasting "relaxing music you can enjoy," R-100 FM is an easy listening/adult contemporary station played in many offices and stores throughout the city. It achieved some notoriety last year when one of its most popular DJs accidentally revealed his illegal drug habit to the public by having a major acid flashback at a live remote broadcast.

WTCJ (102.3 FM): If WRGL's music is still a little too much for your sensibilities, check out WTCJ instead. Its mix of "timeless classic" oldies (*i.e.*, Sinatra, Bennett, Martin, Como, and so on), light jazz, and big band music draws in a lot of older listeners and people tired of the same old rock, pop, and country songs.

WTRA (790 AM): “Talk Radio America” is the premiere talk radio and news station in the Hudson City area. Its local programming mostly consists of various call-in talk shows; otherwise it mostly broadcasts syndicated national talk and news programs.

WTWF (97.1 FM): This station claims that its call letters stand for “We’re The Weirdness Factory,” and it sets out to prove it by broadcasting an unusual blend of odd and obscure rock, pop, and jazz. Afternoon and evening drivetime DJ Stephanie “Storm” Sullivan does her best to live up to her nickname by ranting about everything under the sun. She’d make an interesting political candidate if anyone could figure out where she actually stands on the issues... or if there was such a thing as the Annoyed With Everything Party.

WVSN (640 AM): “V-Sun 640” plays classical music mixed with some news and other talk programming (such as a wine appreciation show). The soothing voice of the station’s main DJ, Bernard Lundquist, can also be heard doing voice-overs on many local television commercials.

WWRD (96.3 FM): “The Word” is WCBR’s chief competitor in the urban contemporary format. It’s attempting to draw in more listeners by adding a dose of Latin contemporary music to its playlist, but it remains to be seen whether this will work.

WZQK (93.7 FM): The “Zaqk attack!” is another competitor in the rock arena. It focuses more on contemporary rock, with only the occasional classic rock song for good measure. Morning personality Deborah “Double D” Danson has helped the station gain several points in the ratings over the last year or two with her blend of wit and wry cultural observations.

NEWSPAPERS

Television may be more popular and pay better, but *real* journalists are newspaper journalists — just ask any of them, they’ll tell you — and the *real* news can only be found in print. Hudsonites have a wide variety of papers to choose from, ranging from the intensely intellectual to the blatantly crude. Several of the outlying counties and suburban areas have their own papers that concentrate on news of local interest.

THE CITY NEWS

One of the two most popular papers in Hudson City, the *City News* is in a no-holds-barred competition with the *Star-Gazette* for the hearts and minds of millions of readers. With its blend of wire service stories and hard-hitting local reporting, presented with writing that flows easily and eye-catching graphics, the *City News* appeals to the tens of thousands of newspaper readers who want solid reporting they can digest in a minimum of time.

In the take-no-prisoners mindset of the newspaper wars, any day the *City News* can scoop the *Star-Gazette* is a great day; any day it gets scooped is an unmitigated disaster that sends Chief Editor Norman Kail into a frenzy of yelling and door-slamming. The

reporter he counts on the most to deliver in-depth stories that no one else can get is Danica Easley. Her stories about life in Freetown and the effects of poverty on the lives of its residents have won most major journalism awards, including the Pulitzer. She also teaches journalism classes at City College.

THE HUDSON CITY AGENDA

Most newspapers at least pretend to editorial balance. The *Agenda* is not one of them. It’s a left-wing paper through-and-through, and makes no bones about it. When questioned about his lack of objectivity, publisher Robert Dawes says, “We’ve got freedom of the press in this country — so you’re free to go get your own goddamn press and stop telling me how to use mine.” Conservative critics respond that it’s refreshing to see at least one member of the media have the guts to admit his bias.

The *Agenda* has been a major thorn in Mayor Umstead’s side since the day he declared his candidacy, and it has no intention of letting up. As far as most of the paper’s reporters and all of its editorial columnists are concerned, his form of fascism is only slightly more tolerable than Hitler’s, and every day he remains in office is a travesty of justice. Several of them are *convinced* he’s got some skeletons in some closets, and they’re not going to stop looking until they find them.

The *Agenda* also has a strong anti-vigilante bias. It regards vigilantes as thinly-disguised tools of Big Brother used to keep the “little people” down, and regularly alleges conspiratorial links between Mayor Umstead and the likes of Scarecrow or the Harbinger. Even when a vigilante does something good (like saving a group of kids from a fire), the *Agenda* usually spins things against the crime-fighter (for example, by alleging that he may have caused the fire in the first place).

THE HUDSON CITY DAILY STAR-GAZETTE

The *Star-Gazette* is Hudson City’s other mainstream paper. It varies from year to year who has the most subscribers and ad revenue, it or the *City News*, so there’s no time to relax or rest on its laurels — every day is another foray onto the battlefield. Leading the charge for the *Star-Gazette* are publisher Frances “Frankie” Plimmons (herself a reporter for the paper, years ago) and City Editor Stuart Tormey, who in the past few years have transformed the paper a little. They’ve made the stories shorter, emphasized graphics a little more, and expanded features such as the Lifestyles section, the comics and puzzles page, and the advice columns.

Most people would say the best reporters the *Star-Gazette* has on staff are the “Wonder Twins,” Allan Webster and Margaret “Peggy” Ellefsen. They’re not actually twins, of course, but they’ve worked together on so many award-winning stories — the “Park Police bordello” story, the Mafia in the construction industry story, the children of battered women story — that they’re thought of as a team even though each of them does at least as much work on his or her own. There’s been some talk of getting the two of them to do their own news/opinion show on TV, but nothing’s come of it.

STEWART MCDERMOTT

10 STR	10 DEX
10 CON	10 BODY
14 INT	10 EGO
15 PRE	12 COM
3 PD	3 ED
2 SPD	4 REC
20 END	20 STUN

Abilities: KS: Conspiracy Theory Stuff 11-, KS: Layman’s Arcane And Occult Lore 11-, KS: Literature 11-, KS: Myths And Legends 11-, KS: The Tarot 14-, KS: Philosophy 11-, KS: Rock And Pop Music 14-, PS: Disk Jockey 11-, PS: Tarot Reading 11-, Stealth 11-, Systems Operations 8-

Disadvantages: None

Notes: One of many unusual DJs working for WTWF radio, Stewart McDermott hosts a show on Saturdays called “72 Pickup” in which he plays Seventies music, talks about various mystic or weird topics, and muses philosophically, all of this laced with frequent references to the tarot or other matters mystical. Sometimes he takes calls from listeners. No one’s quite sure if he’s a true believer or a cynic amusing himself, but either way it makes for good entertainment.

CINDY GUTIERREZ-SOSA

8 STR 12 DEX
10 CON 10 BODY
13 INT 12 EGO
18 PRE 14 COM
2 PD 2 ED
2 SPD 4 REC
20 END 19 STUN

Abilities: Bureaucratics 14-, Bribery 8-, Combat Driving 8-, Computer Programming 8-, Concealment 12-, Conversation 13-, Deduction 13-, High Society 13-, Lock-picking 8-, Persuasion 13-, Seduction 13-, Contacts (30 points' worth, throughout Hudson City), Fringe Benefit: Press Pass

25+ Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Stops At Nothing To Get The Story; Reputation: pain in the ass reporter; Rivalry (Professional, with other reporters); Social Limitation: Subject To Orders

Notes: A 32 year-old Hispanic woman born in Latin City, Conchita "Cynthia" Gutierrez-Sosa knew from an early age that she wanted to be a reporter. She put herself through HCC working odd jobs for various newspapers, then wrangled a job as a cub reporter at the *Mirror*. She soon showed her editors that she knew what she was doing, and they began to turn her loose on bigger and bigger stories. Today she's one of the most highly respected reporters in Hudson City, one whose stories almost always get picked up by the wire services.

THE HUDSON CITY MIRROR

For readers who find both the *City News* and the *Star-Gazette* too lowbrow, there's the *Hudson City Mirror*. Founded over 120 years ago, the *Mirror* has a rock-solid reputation for the depth and quality of its reporting and news analysis. It pulls no intellectual punches, expecting its readers to be able to keep up with the details. For any given time period you care to examine, it's earned more Pulitzers and other major journalism awards than the *Star-Gazette* and the *City News* combined.

The *Mirror* is particularly well-known for its ability to ferret out and expose corruption in city government, thanks in large part to reporters like Cindy Gutierrez-Sosa. This pretty, diminutive woman strikes fear into the hearts of Hudson City politicians; she seems to have a "sixth sense" for backroom dealing and illegal collusion.

THE HUDSON SUN

In everything, a balance exists. While the *Mirror* takes the highbrow approach to reporting, it's offset by the *Hudson City Sun*, a tabloid-format paper that seems determined to find the sleaziest, most sensationalistic way to report the news. In the past, *Sun* reporters have snuck into hospital rooms to photograph accident and shooting victims, lured politicians into compromising situations with prostitutes, and generally engaged in the sort of tactics that give journalists a bad name.

Chief among the legions of *Sun* bottom-feeders is Jack Williamson. One of the most obnoxious reporters on the face of the planet, Williamson is known all over the city for his rude, abrasive manner, his willingness to uncover and publish the most embarrassing facts he can find about famous people, and his loud sports jackets and ties. Besides writing for the *Sun*, he also submits "stories" to the *National Inquisition* and other supermarket tabloids.

THE NATIONAL INQUISITION

Bat-boys! Aliens! Thousand-pound Siamese twins! Elvis's secret celery and mayonnaise diet! All this, and more, you can read about in the pages of the *National Inquisition*, one of America's most popular supermarket tabloids. Most people consider its "reporting" nothing more than entertaining fiction, but a surprising number of people actually believe the nonsense it publishes.

OTHER JOURNALISTS

Not every journalist works exclusively for one paper. Some of them freelance, digging up whatever stories they can find and selling them to whichever paper pays the best. Some of Hudson City's most noteworthy unaffiliated newshounds (and a few others who've achieved notoriety outside of the city) include:

Jack Berlin: The *City News*'s star politics reporter is a thirty-year veteran of the news game. He started pounding out stories on a manual typewriter, and even though he uses a computer today he's prone to reminiscing about the "good old days" when men dominated the newsrooms and alcoholism was practically a prerequisite for the job. He's exposed numerous cases of corruption in local, state, and national politics, making him an iconic figure to many reporters. He's written several books; many people know him better for them than for his reporting.

Sophie Duffer: When there's no photographer available... or willing... to cover dangerous assignments, newspaper editors call Sophie Duffer. She'll go anywhere — Freetown, Lafayette, Baghdad, the Sudan, City Hall — to get the top-notch pictures her employers demand. She's been threatened, beaten up, spit on, and shot at... but she always gets the pics. In addition to her newspaper work, she's published several books of photos, including one photo essay of southern Hudson City, *Southside Portraits*.

Frank Keaton: Sometimes called "Fedora" for his trademark hat, Frank Keaton is a freelance crime reporter — and a good one. He's got a well-deserved reputation for having the latest, most accurate information about the Hudson City underworld (rumor has it he even provides information to vigilantes like Renegade and DarkAngel). He's written for the *City News*, the *Mirror*, and the *Star-Gazette* at various times, and has also authored two books: *Evil Ascendant: The Coming Rise Of The Mafia* and *Eastern Evil: The Rise Of Russian Organized Crime In America*. He's said to be working on a third book, this one about Chinese organized crime. His biggest story to date was an exposé of Mexican Mafia activities in Hudson City that was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.

Carl Lundberg: Known as the "wild-mannered reporter," Lundberg has a well-deserved reputation for taking crazy risks to get his stories for the *City News* and *Star-Gazette* (he sells mainly to the latter, though he's really profited from the "bidding war" their competition has forced them into). Without a thought for his own safety he'll walk into the depths of Freetown or Latin City to interview gangbangers, ride along with the cops in some of the worst precincts in town, or barge into society functions to conduct "shock interviews." It's a good thing he comes up with such great stories, or his antics would have gotten him fired long ago.

Robert L. Stephenson: Stephenson used to work for the *City News*, but became a freelancer after a falling out with his editors there. He primarily covers the courthouse beat, and to a lesser extent police matters. He knows a *lot* of cops and judicial officials.

ON THE TOWN



"Yeah! Yeah! Go, man, go, go, go... touch-down!!!"

"!\$&*&' A, man. The Thunderbolts are goin' all the way this year!"

"I'll drink to that! *&@!, I'm outta beer. You wanna 'nother?"

"Yeah, I'll go with you. C'mon."

It wasn't much of a walk down to the beer stand, but the going was slow because of the crowds. Start of the season and the Thunderbolts were winning, so everyone wanted to be part of the action. "They oughtta have a special lane just for season ticket holders like you 'n' me, huh, Jerry?"

"No *&@!, man. This crowd sucks."

"Here we are. Christ, look at the line! By the time we get back it's gonna be fourth quarter."

"Maybe — but what fun would it be to watch the game without beer, man?"

— conversation overheard at Stewart County Stadium.

From the richest resident of Irishtown to the poorest Southside slum-dweller, every Hudsonite wants to have a good time once in a while — and some people devote their whole lives to keeping entertained. Fortunately, Hudson City offers countless opportunities for relaxation and fun.

AMUSEMENT PARKS

Lots of Hudsonites have kids, and most of those kids don't want to go to museums or the opera — they want to have *fun*! And fun often means amusement and theme parks built with the young (and young at heart) in mind.

CARNIVAL WORLD

Built largely (though not entirely) around a "circus" theme on several dozen acres of land outside Benton County, Carnival World has rides and games for all ages, a large petting zoo, and excellent popcorn. Every year in March it stages a major "Mardi Gras" promotion complete with parades, parties (both for kids and adults-only), and lots of free, gawdy fake jewelry.

DINO-LAND

Located in south Stewartville, this amusement park was designed to appeal to kids who like dinosaurs... and what kid *doesn't* like dinosaurs? All of its rides and attractions are structured around various dinosaurs or other "prehistoric" themes, with just a dash of education mixed in so the park can bill itself as a "learning center." Its chief mascot, loveable cartoon character Wally D. Dinosaur, is a red humanoid tyrannosaur often seen on tee-shirts, stadium cups, and other memorabilia.

HUDSON GARDENS

While this park's name emphasizes its large and well-stocked arboretum and bird sanctuary, what appeals most to the kids are all the rides — particularly Maximum Panic, one of the largest and fastest roller coasters in America. Located just outside Rockwell in Corinth County, Hudson Gardens remains open year-round, though not all rides operate during cold weather.

SPLASH MOUNTAIN

Located a little ways south of Burkett's Mill and easily accessible from the Outer Beltline, Splash Mountain is "the water park to end all water parks!" (or at least, that's what its commercials say). Open from Memorial Day to Labor Day, it's the perfect place to cool off during those hot summer days if you like your waves and water without the accompanying sand and seagulls.

CULTURAL EVENTS AND FINE ARTS

On the opposite end of the spectrum from amusement parks are cultural events and facilities — everything from the most high-brow opera to galleries containing the latest, weirdest post-modern art.

Dance

Hudson City has two major dance companies. The first, the Ferranti Ballet, performs year-round in the Ferranti Auditorium (see below), typically offering six shows per year in addition to performances of *The Nutcracker* every December. The second, the New City Dance Ensemble, conducts many different kinds of dance performances, from modern, to folk dances, to traditional ballet. On several occasions it has come under fire for some of its rather risqué performances set to popular music. Most of its shows take place at the Dickens Center, a smallish auditorium located on 24th Avenue near Centre Street.

IN THE NEWS IN 2004:

BLOOD AMONG THE WAVES

June — Children's laughter and shrieks of amusement turned to screams of terror when a deranged man began shooting at people visiting the Splash Mountain amusement park outside Hudson City. Two persons — one adult, one child — were killed, and three more injured, before police ended a tense standoff by shooting and killing the assailant.

The killer was Zachary Creighton, a U.S. Marine veteran trained as a sniper who saw action in the Middle East during Operation Desert Storm. In recent years Creighton had received treatment from the Veteran's Administration for increasingly severe mental problems. According to medical records released by the government following the shooting, Creighton was given to fits of paranoia, and occasionally even hallucinations. What precisely triggered the episode that led to the shooting at Splash Mountain, or why he picked that particular location to attack, remains unknown.

KRISTEN MCCULLEN

8 STR 12 DEX
 8 CON 8 BODY
 10 INT 10 EGO
 13 PRE 16 COM
 2 PD 2 ED
 1 SPD 4 REC
 16 END 16 STUN

Abilities: High Society 12-, KS: The Classical Music World 13-, PS: Play Clarinet 13-, PS: Play Oboe 16-, Sleight Of Hand 8-, Streetwise 8-

25+ Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Artistic Temperament

Notes: One of the most gifted oboists in Hudson City Symphony history, Kristen McCullen was fired from the Symphony after a bitter dispute with the conductor which she refuses to discuss. Unable to find other steady musical work, she supplements her meager income from performing at weddings and similar events by performing for tips on the street with two of her friends (a violinist and a cellist). She's become a lot more street-smart than she used to be, and may see and hear things the cops or vigilantes would find useful to know. She can be difficult to get along with, though... particularly if you interrupt one of her performances.

Opera And Symphony

Classical music is alive and well in Hudson City, from the finest auditoriums to the musicians performing on streetcorners for whatever the passing public is willing to toss into their instrument cases.

The Hudson City Symphony Orchestra, Maestro Ilario Riccobene conducting, is widely regarded as one of the best symphonies in the United States. It usually performs in the Kleinmann Center (see below), but often goes on the road to play other auditoriums both in Hudson City and around the world. It also has a "pops" series of concerts offered every summer for people interested in the lighter side of classical music.

The Hudson City Opera Company, based in the Mulholland Opera House near Gadsden Park, puts on three to five productions a year, and tours every other year. Its stars include soprano Ashley Fitzsimmons and tenor Giacomo Mastangelo. The portly Mastangelo is something of an eccentric; he's known for descending on a restaurant with an entourage of beautiful young women and various hangers-on, demanding the best tables, ordering one of everything for the group, and then eating and drinking until the management has to pour him into a cab and send him home.

Theatre

Hudson City also has two major outlets for drama. The first is the "Golden Avenue" of theaters and playhouses in Worthington (see page 87). Hudsonites with a hankering to see live plays and musicals can go to the Golden Avenue any day of the year and see a show.

The other is the Hudson City Shakespeare Company, which performs in the New Globe Theatre in LeMastre Park. It offers four to six major plays a year, plus several other smaller productions, restricting itself to Shakespeare and similar works. Its annual production of *A Christmas Carol* is a Hudson City holiday tradition that attracts thousands.

Beyond that, anything goes. There are many small playhouses and other venues for performance art, amateur plays, and various stage performances. The *avant garde* of Hudson City drama visits these places almost every night, but most Hudsonites find the performances bizarre, stupid, and even offensive. Performance artist Lydia Rubinstein, whose act involves her humorously masturbating on stage while audience members throw paint-filled balloons at her, dismisses such critics as "grey-minded yokels."

Visual Arts

Hudson City is home to a vibrant and active visual arts scene, much of it focused around two areas: the galleries and shops of Ashwood; and the auction houses and galleries of Bankhurst, Highlands, and Worthington.

GALLERIES AND AUCTION HOUSES

In addition to the art sellers described in Chapter Two, there are many galleries and auction houses displaying and selling the latest works of modern creators as well as earlier artists. Some of the best-known include:

Arte Fantastique (372 Trelham Avenue): Catering to art collectors with more money than sense (or taste), Arte Fantastique sells the latest, weirdest art it can find. The average person walking into the Arte Fantastique gallery would wonder where the art is, or at the very least why those things are called "art," but for some people these abstract paintings and objects are well worth their high pricetags.

The Landauer Galleries (744 Steele Street): Founded over 80 years ago, the Landauer Galleries specializes in paintings (particularly those of the early twentieth century), but also carries some sculptures and other items (mainly medieval and Renaissance pieces). Landauer deals mostly with private collectors, but periodically holds public auctions when it has a large number of what it considers "low-value" paintings to sell.

Llewellyn's (northwest corner of 11th Avenue and Northampton Street): Considered by many the premiere auction house in the city, Llewellyn's specializes in fine art (particularly paintings and decorative pieces), but will stage an auction of just about anything if it feels there's a market. For example, over the past half-dozen years its auctions have included "Treasures from the *Ascención*" (various artifacts recovered from a Spanish treasure ship), "Rock and Soul Memorabilia, 1966-1976," and "Medieval Ivories of the Moeller Estate." Llewellyn's staff includes experts in nearly every type of visual art.

Szalai House (southwest corner of Onslow Avenue and Lennox Street): If Llewellyn's has any competition in town, it's the Szalai House. Founded in 1971 by Hungarian artist and immigrant Viktor Szalai, and now managed principally by his son Theodore, Szalai House covers the entire gamut of the art world, including fine housewares such as expensive china and silverware collections. Compared to Llewellyn's it's technologically savvy, often conducting auctions of minor pieces online or delving into the up-and-coming world of techno-art.

ARTISTS

Some of the most popular Hudson City artists in the early twenty-first century include:

Fractal: An eccentric techno-artist who answers to no other name. Fractal made his mark on the Hudson City art world with his 1987 exhibit of computer-generated abstract art, and has remained popular ever since. His originals now command upwards of \$50,000 apiece.

J. Piero Grinyi: A sculptor from Italy, Grinyi created the statues of Blind Justice that grace the steps of Courthouse Plaza. Many of his other works, both representational and abstract, appear elsewhere in the city. Having a Grinyi in front of your offices or in your home is considered a sign of high class and taste.

Curtis Keiths: Trained primarily as a draftsman, Keiths has built a name for himself as an artist by rendering exquisite, artistically-drawn maps of peoples' homes, hometowns, favorite parks, or even fantastic locations from books.

Scot N. Rook: Known for his angular abstract human figures and for his offbeat landscapes, Scot Rook has become one of Hudson City's favorite artists. Critics sometimes compare his work to that of Edvard Munch. He's recently been experimenting with color and non-traditional media, and no doubt these forays will yield some bold and interesting works in years to come.

Gregory Smythe: A painter and drawer best known for his exquisitely-drawn pen-and-ink sketches of odd human figures. Noted for their clarity and style, his drawings have revolutionized some corners of the art world.

Auditoriums And Halls

Performers — both local companies and visiting troupes — need a place to put on their performances. Some of the audiences and performance halls in Hudson City include:

The Ferranti Auditorium (southeast corner of Dunlop Avenue and Van Buren Street): Funded by the wealthy Ferranti family around the turn of the century, this hall is noted for its luxuriousness and beauty. Frescoes, murals, paintings, and other works of art fill every available space. The city's saying "in the Ferranti style" refers to anything done or created with a maximum of beauty, opulence, and sophisticated taste.

The Kleinmann Center for the Performing and Visual Arts (southwest corner of 4th Avenue and Caxton Street): Built primarily with donations from Abel and Nancy Kleinmann and their four children, this remarkable arts complex is half a series of performance auditoriums, half an art museum. Some of the greatest performers and artists in the world have shown their work here. The Center is also known for its fabulous Fountain Gardens, a series of "water sculptures" that decorate its main courtyard.

MUSEUMS

Hudson City has dozens of museums and similar attractions, ranging from small ones established as tax shelters and devoted to obscure subjects (for example, the Hudson City Clock Museum in Blackbridge) to large, world-class institutions like the Natural History Museum. More than a few of them have been the targets of robbers, forgers, or other criminals from time to time.

THE HUDSON CITY GANGLAND MUSEUM

This museum at the corner of Van Buren and 11th in Blackbridge captures in vivid detail the life and times of the gangster era of the Twenties and Thirties. Featured displays include the car used by Albert "Al the Rhino" Torrccone during the infamous "Slaughterhouse Run"; a collection of guns from various members of the Murder Syndicate; one of Al Capone's hats; and a life-size recreation of a Scatucci speakeasy/casino.

THE HUDSON CITY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Anyone interested in the history of Hudson City should visit the Historical Museum at 18th Avenue and Mathews Street, right near the headquarters of the Historical Society (which owns and maintains the museum). Its relics and records of life in the Pearl City over the past 200 years contain all sorts of interesting tidbits of information. According to some experts, the Museum's records of pre-1895 property records and related documents are more complete than those owned by the city itself, since the city's were damaged in the Independence Day fire.

THE HUDSON CITY MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND NATURAL HISTORY

Located in an enormous building at the corner of 8th Avenue and N. Adams Street directly across from Gadsden Park, the "MANH" is devoted to the subject of Humanity and the world it lives in. Separate wings of the museum deal with different subjects (such as Insects, Paleontology, Early Man, or Snakes and Reptiles); the facility also features a small aquarium and a planetarium. Among its many valuable collections, the "Gems and Minerals of the World" exhibit stands out as a particularly tempting target for criminals. In addition to its displayed collections, its several underground levels maintain extensive research collections in various fields.

THE HUDSON CITY MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

If an object was created in the last thirty or forty years and is considered "art," there's a good chance you'll find it at the HCMMA, at the southwest corner of 17th Avenue and Watts Street. From abstract paintings, to bizarre sculptures, to "sound sculptures" that aren't even tangible, the Museum of Modern Art has it all.

FREDERICK TANNENBAUM

8	STR	10	DEX
10	CON	8	BODY
8	INT	8	EGO
10	PRE	8	COM
3	PD	3	ED
2	SPD	4	REC
20	END	17	STUN

Abilities: KS: Reptiles 13-, KS: Snakes Of The World 14-, PS: Museum Curator 11-, SS: Herpetology 12, SS: Ophidiology 14-

Disadvantages: None

Notes: Many scientists work at the Museum of Anthropology and Natural History in some capacity, and Frederick Tannenbaum is one of them. An expert on herpetology (the study of reptiles), and in particular snakes, he's one of the curators responsible for the museum's reptile collection and exhibits. A shy, retiring man, he doesn't socialize much, preferring the company of his snakes and books to that of people.



LEGALIZED GAMBLING

Given Hudson City's relative proximity to Atlantic City, some segments of the population have pushed for legalized gambling in Hudson City for years, but they've failed to make much headway. Local politicians point out that gambling really doesn't seem to have done a whole lot for Atlantic City other than increase its organized crime problem — something Hudson City really doesn't need (though it could, admittedly, use the casino jobs). For now the issue seems permanently stuck in the "ain't gonna happen" category, but you never know which way the political winds will shift....

THE KLEINMANN CENTER

Described in more detail above, the Center devotes one wing of its building to an art museum. It has an extensive and valuable collection of paintings and sculpture, including Japanese *netsuke* figurines and a large selection of the works of El Greco.

THE MUSEUM OF WORLD ART

An institution devoted to preserving forms of art from all over the world, whether they're ancient pottery, modern abstract art, or anything in between. It also has a valuable collection of medieval arms and armor (both European and Oriental).

OLDE HUDSON CITY

A "living museum" that attempts to immerse its visitors in the historical experience, Olde Hudson City is a small section of the city around Ferry Street and South River Drive that's been restored to an early 1800s state. Visitors and natives alike come here for a taste of American history. Olde Hudson City's attractions include demonstrations of various crafts (blacksmithing, weaving, and the like) and its Olde Time Ferry (which provides a charming 90-minute trip around the scenic parts of the Hudson City coastline).

THE THORSON MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY

Originally funded by Lars Thorson, an immigrant from Iceland, in the early twentieth century, the Thorson has grown into one of the biggest and most highly regarded archaeology museums in

the world. Since 1981 it's been housed in a large, intricately-designed building at the corner of Vance Avenue and Iroquois Street in Guilford.

The Thorson covers all time periods and places of human history, but its Mesoamerican, Colonial American, and Chinese collections are particularly extensive and fascinating. It also funds archaeology expeditions all over the world.

THE MUSIC SCENE

Hudson City's no Nashville, Seattle, or L.A., but it still has an active music scene. Many major record labels have offices here and are always on the lookout for new talent.

THE PERFORMERS

Hudsonites have plenty of opportunities to listen to national or international performers who perform concerts in the city, but they've also got lots of local favorites, such as:

Blended Neon: Not exactly a rock band, not exactly a jazz band, Blended Neon defies easy description, though comparisons to Steely Dan aren't unknown. It's smooth, precisely-crafted music sometimes soothes, sometimes energizes, but always pleases. Lead singer and occasional keyboardist Mickey Asbury is a particular favorite with female fans due to his roguish good looks and single status.

Flog My Nixon: Hard alternative rock and heavy metal are the order of the day at Flog My Nixon concerts, where the band's as likely to start throwing cans of beer and chocolate bars out into the audience as to finish a song. The band is well-known outside of Hudson City; it's toured the country together with other bands several times.

Hy On Lyf: The five soulful balladeers of Hy On Lyf are teens from Freetown who were "discovered" by a record exec when they sang at a rent party. Critics have savaged their boy band pop offerings, but the fans clearly do not agree.

Maximum Color: Hudson City's most famous rap group, Maximum Color was nearly wiped out when two of its members were murdered in a drive-by shooting thought to be part of the long and bitter "East Coast versus West Coast rap wars" of the Nineties. But the surviving rappers regrouped and found two new members, so Maximum Color's come back stronger than ever.

Napalm Martini: A rock band that can be found playing local clubs nearly every week, Napalm Martini plays both classic and alternative rock covers as well as a few songs of its own. It keeps hoping for a major record deal, and has come close several times, but somehow success always seems to elude it at the last minute.

Slices Of Psychosis: Despite the fact that all of its members grew up in good homes in Guilford and Ardmore and essentially wanted for nothing, Slices Of Psychosis has achieved notable success with its alternative rock songs of teen angst, disaffection, loss, and misery. One critic claimed that listening to

their albums set his therapy back two years, which the band took as high praise.

The Solitaires: A favorite doo-wop group from the Fifties and Sixties, the Solitaires still perform at local benefit concerts and other charity events. Some of the members hope for a Tony Bennett-style comeback, but so far it's not happening.

Syncopation: A critically- and commercially-acclaimed instrumental jazz band, Syncopation was led by saxophonist Jeffrey Hayes until his death at the hands of a mugger in 2002. Behind new leader Marcus Robelle, the band has continued its successful career. It has a gig almost every night at some jazz bar/nightclub or other in the city.

Woodrow Crashes The Scooter: This alternative rock band creates its distinctive sound by mixing orchestral instruments, like cellos and bassoons, into its lineup. Lead singer Ricky Curwin is a musical genius who can play nearly three dozen instruments, so he handles most of the unusual playing without the need to hire outside performers.

THE CLUBS

If you want to keep up with what's going on in the Hudson City music scene, you gotta hit the clubs. In addition to some of the ones described in Chapter Two, check out these places for the latest in tunage:

Club H (northwest corner of Garland Avenue and Northampton Street): No one knows exactly what the H stands for. Most people think it's "hot music," because that's the only type that gets played at this place. National stars and local bands alike take the stage at Club H, and the dance floor's always packed with students from nearby HCSU, young professionals trying to stay on the cutting edge of things, beautiful people looking to meet other beautiful people, and plenty of others.

Emerald (450 Ilderton Street): Jazz, blues, soul, and even a little bit of pop/rock are what you'll hear at Emerald, where the dance floor is small because most patrons prefer to remain seated and listen to the music in peace. The owner, Gil Osterman, keeps the back corner table reserved exclusively for himself and his guests.

R Cadia (3670 Kiser Street): Local music critics will tell you that R Cadia is the hottest rap and hip-hop club in Freetown, and they're right. Several acts that got their start here, like the Split Peez, went on to national fame. But most patrons don't care about that — they're just looking to hear some great music, and R Cadia's managers make sure they're not disappointed.

The Warehouse (430 Gorham Street): This place is just what it says: a former warehouse converted into a live music club. It usually books heavy metal bands, acts on the harder side of alternative rock, and the like, but every now and then a classic rock-oriented group shows up in the mix.

RESTAURANTS

Let's eat! Besides the many restaurants listed in Chapter Two, here are some others enjoyed by both Hudsonites and visitors.

Botticelli (southwest corner of Dunlop Avenue and Watts Street): Renowned for the "living painting" version of the eponymous artist's *The Birth Of Venus* that it stages every evening between 8:00 and 10:00 PM, Botticelli is one of the most elegant... and expensive... restaurants in Hudson City. Its Oysters Botticelli and Filet Botticelli are so popular that they've passed into the American gourmet recipe book — but they're always better when eaten at the place that created them.

The Green Room (southwest corner of Lewiston Avenue and Centre Street): Traditionally visited by Golden Avenue actors either before or after they go on stage for the evening, the Green Room has been described as "an elegant deli." It's not the sort of "joint" most people think of when they hear the term "deli" — diners sit at wooden tables on nice chairs, and the decor is definitely a cut above diner chic — but the food is mostly deli fare, if slightly upscaled. Many people say the pastrami and pickles at the Green Room are the best in the city.

The Gumbo Shack (northwest corner of Teller Avenue and Burke Street): Despite its rustic-sounding name, this is a nice, almost upscale restaurant. Serving the best in both traditional and modern Cajun and Creole cuisine, it's experienced a surge in business recently since renowned celebrity chef "Louisiana Lucien" Madrelle bought it. If you want the best crayfish, gumbo, or jumbalaya in the city, this is the place to go.

La Maison Continentale (northwest corner of Kemp Avenue and DeWitt Street): Among the many elegant, expensive restaurants in Hudson City, La Maison Continentale stands out. From the moment a patron pulls up in front and the uniformed valets hurry out to park his car for him while the doorman holds the door open, his every desire and need is fulfilled by the attentive staff. One critic described the food at the Maison Continentale — a mix of continental dishes and American favorites, with a slight emphasis on French food — as "beyond five-star," and the weeks- or months-long waiting list to get a table there indicates that Hudsonites agree.

RICKY SULLIVAN

9 STR	10 DEX
11 CON	9 BODY
8 INT	8 EGO
13 PRE	12 COM
3 PD	3 ED
2 SPD	4 REC
22 END	20 STUN

Abilities: KS: Comic Books 11-, KS: Hudson City Music Scene 13-, KS: Kung Fu Movies 11-, KS: Rock Music 11-, PS: Play Guitar 13-, PS: Rock Musician 12-, PS: Singing 13-, Seduction 12-, Streetwise 8-, Trading 8-

Disadvantages: Money: Poor

Notes: Ricky is the lead singer and guitarist for the rock band Tarnish, a hometown group described by the local music press as "alternative, lightly frosted with heavy metal." So far the group hasn't achieved any real degree of commercial success, and though it usually manages to find gigs at least four nights out of the week, what little money the members earn mainly goes to rent, food, and band upkeep. But despite the sometimes angst-ridden nature of the group's songs, Ricky's a pretty optimistic guy — he's certain their big break's right around the corner.

DANNY VISCONTI

10 STR 9 DEX
10 CON 10 BODY
8 INT 8 EGO
10 PRE 8 COM
3 PD 2 ED
2 SPD 4 REC
20 END 10 STUN

Abilities: Concealment 11-, AK: Stewart County Stadium 13-, CK: Little Italy, Guilford, And Ardmore 14-, CK: Hudson City 8-, PS: Security Guard 11-, Fringe Benefit: Membership (Stewart County Stadium staff)

Disadvantages: Social Limitation: Subject To Orders

Notes: Danny Visconti is one of dozens of security guards who help keep things under control at the Stewart County Stadium. He calms down rowdy fans, ejects fans who violate Stadium policy and the law, and does his best to make sure everyone who comes to an event at the Stadium is safe and has a good time. Sometimes he sneaks in friends of his who don't have tickets, and he scarfs up a lot of free hot dogs from the vendors, but that's the extent of his "corruption."

SPORTS

Hudsonites are as sports-crazy as the rest of the world — and fortunately for them, they live in a city that provides dozens of opportunities every year to watch professional and collegiate sporting events.

Pro Sports Teams

Hudson City has teams competing in all major professional sports.

BASEBALL: THE HUDSON CITY HEROES

The Hudson City Heroes belong to the National League, Eastern Division. Owned through various proxies by local sports mogul Thomas Allen, the Heroes had a 2004 record of 70-91 and failed to make the playoffs. Some observers attribute this to injuries that kept several star players, including shortstop and strong hitter Randy Williams, off the field — but most people blame the coaching. Allen apparently agrees, since he fired the former coach and hired David Curtis to take his place. Under Curtis, the Heroes and their fans hope for a better record in the seasons ahead.

The Herodome

The Heroes play in the Herodome, a domed stadium located near the intersection of Coleman Avenue and S. Madison Street (teams from nearby City College also use the Dome). It seats about 50,000 people. In addition to the Heroes, one of its biggest attractions is the HeroDog (an 18" hot dog with the works) and an accompanying cup of beer for only \$3.50.

BASKETBALL: THE HUDSON CITY COUGARS

Part of the Atlantic Division of the NBA, the Cougars were an expansion team founded in 1998. So far they haven't done very well, unfortunately: their 2003-04 record was 30-52, not good enough for the playoffs. However, they recently recruited several players from Duke University, so their future success is assured.

Clarence Harris, a former pro basketball star who played for the Lakers and the Clippers, owns the Cougars together with media mogul Ben Berkely. A flamboyant man who likes funky-looking suits and big cigars, Harris watches every game from his ultra-luxury box in the Sports Metroplex.

The Berkely Sports Metroplex

The Cougars play at the Berkely Sports Metroplex, a 33,000-seat arena attached to the Berkely Commercial Center (page 30). Featuring a state of the art scoreboard weighing nearly 50,000 pounds (22,700 kg) and a plethora of luxury boxes for well-heeled sports fans, it's also the home of the Hellions (see below) and many collegiate sports events.

FOOTBALL: THE HUDSON CITY THUNDERBOLTS

Also owned by Thomas Allen, the NFL's Hudson City Thunderbolts (NFC Eastern Division) went 10-6 in 2003-04 but lost in the playoffs. Led by quarterback Andy "Stonehand" Mawser and wide receiver Dan Petanowski, they're sure to make another run for the Super Bowl in years to come.

Stewart County Stadium

Hudson City's newest and largest stadium, the SCS seats 85,000. It was built as a joint venture between Thomas Allen and the city as a venue not only for the Thunderbolts, but for many other major events. Hudsonites have already begun to complain that its location, on the far western edge of Guilford, isn't served by either the EL or the subway. In response Allen has set up a free shuttle service between Salem Station and the stadium, and is investigating the possibility of having an EL line built.

HOCKEY: THE HUDSON CITY STORM

The Hudson City Storm plays as part of the Atlantic Division of the NHL. It had a 2003-04 record of 37-27-13-5, and lost in the first round of the playoffs. Despite its relatively poor record, the Storm remains one of the most popular of the Hudson City professional teams.

Beverly Fioretta, the widow of financier Merlin Fioretta, owns the Storm. She has no real interest in professional sports, and is simply holding onto the team out of respect for her deceased husband, who loved it. Rumor has it she's already begun shopping around to sell it.

The Jason Devon Memorial Coliseum

Built to honor Hudson City's greatest World War II hero and his fellow veterans, the JDMC seats 28,000 and is the home of the Hudson City Storm as well as many other sporting events. But it's more than just a sports arena — it hosts many conventions and trade shows in conjunction with the nearby Hudson City Convention Center (to which it's connected by both skybridges and underground tunnels). It's also a popular concert venue.

OTHER TEAMS

Hudson City's arena football team is called the Hellions, and plays at the Sports Metroplex. It had trouble drawing crowds its first few years, but it's become popular enough now that the future of the franchise seems solid. Its fans affectionately refer to it as "the Brats" due to its players' seeming attempts to live up to their team name on occasion.

Hudson City also has a soccer team, the Harriers. It plays at Stewart County Stadium.

Other Sports Venues

In addition to the stadiums and arenas described above, Hudson City has several other venues for sporting events, concerts, and similar activities.

Pierpoint Arena: This 20,000-seat arena is located in Pierpoint at the intersection of 24 Avenue and N. Adams Street. The Cougars played here before the Sports Metroplex was built. Today it's most often used for concerts and boxing. There's been some talk of tearing it down to make way for a tennis complex.

Gary Yancey Stadium: The stadium at Hudson City University, which seats 50,000. Much to the annoyance of HCSU, the annual HCU-HCSU football game always has to be played here, because the HCSU stadium has insufficient seating and parking to handle the crowd.

Annual Sporting Events

In addition to the Hudson City Marathon (page 103), the following major sporting events take place in or near Hudson City every year.

Berkely Enterprises Hudson City Open: A tennis tournament held every August at the Hudson City Country Club.

Boudreau's Hudson City Open: A golf tournament held every April at Firetree Country Club. Part of its proceeds go to the Hudson City Jaycees and other charitable organizations.

Hudson City Fighting Arts Tournament: An enormous martial arts competition staged every October at the Jason Devon Memorial Coliseum. A full-contact tournament open to any qualified martial artist (regardless of style or school) provided he passes the qualification tests, the FAT is roundly

TONY AVANZI

10 STR	10 DEX	14 CON	13 BODY
10 INT	8 EGO	14 PRE	8 COM
6 PD	3 ED	3 SPD	7 REC
35 END	30 STUN		

Abilities: Martial Arts (Boxing — Jab, Martial Block, Martial Strike, Offensive Strike), Combat Driving 8-, Gambling (Sports Betting) 12-, KS: Boxing 13-, KS: New Jersey Sports Laws 11-, Stealth 11-, Streetwise 12-, WF: Small Arms, Contacts (10 points' worth in the Mafia and the boxing world), Fringe Benefit: Athletic Control Board Employee

Disadvantages: Social Limitation: Subject To Orders

Notes: Tony Avanzi is Hudson City's chief representative of the New Jersey State Athletic Control Board — the body that regulates and licenses boxing, martial arts competitions, and other combative sports. While licensing applications and final decisions all get taken care of in Trenton, he handles matters on the local front and make recommendations to his bosses. What it comes down to is, if you want to box professionally in Hudson City, you need Avanzi's blessing. And if you're his friend, he can get you front-row seats to any bout you wanna see.

A former boxer himself, Avanzi is a real aficionado of the sport, and can talk about it for hours. Unfortunately, his love for it hasn't kept him from exploiting it. He willingly takes kickbacks and bribes to approve fights that shouldn't go forward, exploits fighters and managers for his own benefit, and bets heavily based on inside information. While not a member of the Mafia, he's a known associate of several soldiers in the Verontese and Marcelli families and often does "favors" for them.

condemned in some circles as sheer bloodsport. A related tournament for amateurs and non-contact fighters is held the week after.

Tour de Hudson: A bicycle race throughout the city, disliked by many Hudsonites because of the way it ties up traffic.

HUDSON CITY SUBCULTURES



ANGIE PENDRY

7 STR 9 DEX
8 CON 8 BODY
10 INT 10 EGO
13 PRE 8 COM
2 PD 2 ED
2 SPD 4 REC
16 END 16 STUN

Abilities: +5 PRE (only to resist Presence Attacks), Concealment 11-, Deduction 11-, KS: Civics 11-, KS: Geography 11-, KS: History 13-, KS: Social Studies 13-, PS: Teacher 13-, Fringe Benefit: Membership (teacher in Hudson City public school system)

Disadvantages: Social Limitation: Subject To Orders

Notes: Angie Pendry teaches high school history, civics, and social studies in Hudson City. Despite being only 5'3" tall, she'll stand up to the biggest, toughest gang kid or football player and back him down if he disrespects her or doesn't pay attention in class. She rides her students hard, but it's worth it to see even a few of them go on to college and escape the poverty and harsh conditions they grew up in.

It's not uncommon to refer to "Hudsonites" as if they were one big, homogenous group of people — but of course they come from a thousand different walks of life and believe in a thousand different things. There are lots of subcultures within any major urban area, and Hudson City's no exception.

THE ACADEMIC WORLD

"Mayor Umstead, Superintendent Hughes, and the Schools Commission want to assure the parents of Hudson City that they take incidents such as this one very seriously. All reasonable steps are being taken to ensure the safety of every child in the school system."

"Rob! Rob! Rob! Rob! Rob! Rob!"

"Marjorie."

"Rob, what's the status on the injured student and Principal Michaels?"

"I haven't spoken to the hospital since this press conference began, but the latest information I have is that Principal Michaels was shot in the arm. The wound is superficial and he's expected to make a full recovery. The student who was shot, Rudy Beck, is in serious condition at Veteran's Memorial Hospital; we're awaiting an update on his progress. The suspect, DeShawn Watson, was pronounced dead on arrival at VMH after being shot by the police during the encounter."

"Rob! Rob! Rob! Rob! Rob! Rob!"

"Fred, then Julia."

"Rob, what started the incident?"

"We don't know yet for sure. Both students were in gangs, but not rival gangs, and as far as we know at this point there wasn't any bad blood between them. As soon as we find anything out, we'll let you know."

"Rob, how did Watson get the gun past the school's metal detectors?"

"The metal detectors at Riverside have been offline for the past week and a half due to the City Council's failure to vote more money for school security matters."

— press conference following a shooting incident at Riverside High School

Thousands of students of all ages live in Hudson City. Here's where they do their learning.

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Hudson City operates approximately six hundred elementary and middle schools covering grades K through 8. These schools employ 70,000 teachers and other staff. By most measures, the schools are doing a poor job of educating Hudson City's children, only 40% of whom read at an acceptable level (and 20% of whom score at the lowest possible level above "illiterate" on standardized tests).

Hudson City organizes its schools into sixteen districts for administrative purposes. The chief administrator of the system (and of the city's high schools; see below) is the Superintendent of Public Schools, an appointee hired for the job by the Schools Commission, to which he answers. As the most visible school administrator in the city, the Superintendent catches a lot of parental flak that should more properly be addressed to the Commission or the City Council... but that's why he gets the big bucks.

As of 2004, Leticia Hughes, a 46-year-old black woman and mother of three, fills the Superintendent's chair. A former teacher who also has a law degree from HCU, she's a tough old bird who doesn't hesitate to voice her opinions about the subject at hand... no matter whom she happens to be talking to. She once caused a minor scandal by referring to a parent to his face as a "damn idiot" during a Schools Commission meeting, and that's not the only time her name's made the papers by any means. However, she's got an excellent record as an administrator of various schools and districts within Hudson City, so Mayor Umstead's willing to support her and give her a chance to turn the whole system around... at least for now.

HIGH SCHOOLS

Hudson City has a little over 200 high schools, with approximately 25,000 teachers and staff. Most of the schools are general educational schools, but some specialize in a particular curriculum, such as arts, sciences, business, computers, international affairs, or foreign languages.

Unfortunately, the high schools aren't doing any better a job than the elementary and middle schools. Only about 65% of students overall complete high school successfully; that number drops to 42% for black students and 38% for Hispanic students. In some school districts on the Southside, less than 30% of the students pass the city's Reading and Math exams.

School safety is also a problem — fights, shootings, arrests of students for drug dealing and other crimes, and assaults on teachers and staff occur every week (and daily, at some schools). As a general rule, Northside schools are better than those on the Southside, but each area of the city has its model schools and abject failures.

The accompanying table lists some of the major high schools in Hudson City and surrounding areas, along with their mascots and colors.

Rivalries

As in any school system, strong rivalries exist between certain schools (even though most schools don't have any particular major rival). In Hudson City, the high school rivalries include:

Central-Southern
Eastlake-Hudson Beach
Freetown-Southwestern
Gadsden-Daniels
Harrington-Western
Riverside-Jackson
Rockwell-Andrews Heights

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

In addition to about a dozen small community colleges and technical schools, Hudson City is home to four major institutions of higher learning: Freetown Community College (FCC; see page 52); Hudson City College; Hudson City State University (HCSU), and Hudson City University (HCU).

Hudson City College

Built in the 1950s, City College is located in Riverside at the intersection of Day Avenue and S. Jackson Street — right on the border with Forsyth and Freetown. The second smallest of Hudson City's four major colleges, it has an undergraduate enrollment of about 10,000. Like FCC, it's a minority institution, with about 70% of the undergraduates being black, Hispanic, or members of other minority groups. City College also offers about a dozen different courses of post-graduate study.

With its relatively low tuition, flexible class scheduling, and community outreach programs, HCC has helped many people who never would have gone to college obtain a degree and become "free of Freetown." It's well-known for its emphasis on group projects and community assistance. One excellent example of this is its acclaimed Peer Study Group program, in which freshmen and sophomores are required to belong to a regularly-scheduled study group.

City College's mascot is an eagle; its colors are royal blue and white. It's not considered much of a powerhouse at any sport, though its basketball team does fairly well within its conference most years.

Hudson City State University

Hudson City's second-largest college is HCSU, whose campus is located where N. Jackson Street terminates at 1st Avenue. It has an undergraduate enrollment of about 15,000. Its programs in Engineering and Philosophy are especially well-regarded, attracting many students

HUDSON CITY HIGH SCHOOLS

Name Of School	Mascot	Colors
Caldwell	Comets	Red and Orange
Carter	Mustangs	Dark Green and White
Central	Knights	Blue and Silver
Daniels	Wolves	Grey and White
Dwight School of the Arts	Wildcats	Gold and Grey
Eastern	Spartans	Gold and White
Eastlake	Tigers	Orange and White
Faraday Science Academy	Lightning	Gold and Light Blue
Gadsden	Mariners	Burgundy and Gold
Gibson	Grizzlies	Silver and Black
Hammerskjold School of International Studies	Blue Demons	Blue and White
Hayes	Phantoms	Grey and Blue
Jackson	Falcons	Purple and White
King	Red Raiders	Red and White
Langley	Jaguars	Gold and Black
Northeastern	Cardinals	Scarlet and White
Northern	Golden Eagles	Gold and Brown
Northwestern	Ravens	Black and White
Riverside	Buccaneers	Gold and Blue
Southeastern	Bulldogs	Dark Blue and White
Southern	Gators	Green and White
Southwestern	Apaches	Red and Gold
Upton	Warriors	Green and Black
Western	Redhawks	Red and Black

SUBURBAN HIGH SCHOOLS

Name Of School	Mascot	Colors
Andrews Heights	Kings	Blue and White
Arcadia	Panthers	Red and White
Cambria	Thunderbirds	Red and Grey
Clifton	Tornadoes	Burgundy and White
Harrington	Lions	Light Blue and White
Hudson Beach	Sharks	Light Blue and Green
Maple Valley	Minutemen	Dark Blue and White
Northdale	Eagles	Crimson and White
Rockwell	Spiders	Black and Gold
Rome	Chiefs	Red and Black
Southport	Hornets	Yellow and White
Stewartville	Giants	Purple and White
Willowford	Pirates	Gold and Purple

PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOLS

Name Of School	Mascot	Colors
Ashmont-Tate Day School	Hawks	Blue and White
Bremerton Christian Academy	Crusaders	Red and White
Hudson City Day School	Bengals	Orange and Black
New Hope Friends School	Cyclones	Blue and Red

from all over the country each year. It also has about a thousand graduate students enrolled in its business school, law school, and large selection of graduate degree programs.

HCSU's mascot is the catamount, and its colors are gold and grey. It has a strong rivalry with HCU, especially in football.

Hudson City University

With 18,000 undergraduates and about 2,000 grad students, HCU is Hudson City's largest university. It's also the city's oldest, having been founded in 1818 by Sebastian Mays, a prosperous merchant of the day. Although originally a private institution, it became a public university in the 1840s. Its undergraduate program is generally ranked in the top 50 in the country, and it has a full complement of graduate pro-



OTHER NOTEWORTHY SCHOLARS

Here are the names of a few other notable academicians.

FCC

Baruti Sukuma (history, anthropology)
Barry Sylvester (journalism, political science)

HCC

Nathan Abbott (accounting)
Gerald Fort (journalism, literature)
Joelle Zimenic (computer science)

HCSU

Norman Newell (engineering, chemistry)
Malcolm Prevett (philosophy, literature)
Kenneth Simms (oceanography)

HCU

Howard Alexander (religion)
Arthur Hobbes (criminology, criminal psychology)
Amy Saunders (engineering)

grams and schools (including the Lange School of Law, HCU School of Medicine, and DeGraff Business School).

The HCU campus is located at the intersection of 4th Avenue and N. Lincoln Street in Guilford. Extensively redesigned after the 1895 fire, most of the buildings feature a Georgian style of architecture. More recent buildings feature different styles.

HCU's mascot is the Pioneer, and its colors are scarlet and blue.

The Community College System

The Community Colleges of Hudson City (usually referred to simply as "CCHC") is Hudson City's network of community colleges. Its facilities are scattered throughout approximately three dozen separate locations, slightly over half of them on the Southside. They serve as two-year junior colleges for students who want to go on to other colleges, vocational training schools for students who want to go to work in a particular trade, and continuing adult education facilities. Their class offerings are always broad and eclectic, ranging from traditional academic subjects to odd offerings like "Star Trek and Popular Culture." In a typical year about 15,000 to 20,000 students enroll in the CCHC system.

Prominent Scholars

There are many renowned scholars living and teaching in Hudson City. They include:

Seth T. Coine: Doctor Coine teaches at HCU, lecturing both to undergraduates and business school students. He is an expert on human resources management and the health care industry, and has written extensively on both topics. His work exposes him both to Hudson City's business community and its social services agencies, so he knows a lot of people from all walks of life throughout the city. He is married and the father of three.

Alice Estes: Professor Estes is a faculty member at HCSU and at both of the city's law schools. Possessing both a Ph.D. in Criminology and a law degree, she's considered a national expert on criminology and criminal law. Unlike many purely book-learned academics, she gets some of her knowledge from time in the trenches: she's a former Assistant County Prosecutor.

Ginny Hernandez: An expert physicist who teaches at HCSU and HCU. Rumor has it she once worked on nuclear bombs and other important high-tech weapons projects for the federal government.

Robert Perrine: Doctor Perrine, a talented civil and mechanical engineer, teaches at City College. He's done freelance engineering work for the city and several major architectural firms in the region, and knows a lot about Hudson City's infrastructure.

Suhail Ravnashaputra: "Professor R," as he prefers to be called, is one of the most popular profs at HCU. He teaches psychology to undergraduates and psychiatry to medical students (he has both a Ph.D. and an M.D.). A friendly man who's always willing to try to help people, he has a reputation as one of the most likeable professors on campus. The odd thing about this is that one of his areas of special knowledge is the psychology of serial killers and rapists, police psychology, and criminal psychology in general; he's even served as a consultant for the FBI's Behavioral Sciences Unit on several serial killer cases and similar murders. Somehow the grim subjects he deals with every day don't rub off on him and spoil his cheerful disposition.

William Simmons: Better known to people as “the Roach Professor” due to several stories about his work in the media, this City College biologist has made a career out of studying urban vermin: rats, roaches, silverfish, and more. If you want to know something about Hudson City’s native “wildlife,” Bill Simmons is the man to ask.

THE BUSINESS WORLD

“So where do we stand on the McCluskey deal?”

“Good and bad, sir. The bank’s agreed to loan us the money we need to complete the transaction, so we’re good to go on financing. The seller still wants to sell. But we’ve hit a snag on the zoning end.”

“What sort of ‘snag,’ Jack?”

“Well, the Planning Department has raised some serious concerns about the ‘remodeling’ you want to do. They don’t think it’s within the parameters for the area’s zoning — in fact, they think you’re pretty much just rebuilding the building, not remodeling it.”

“They’re smarter than we gave them credit for, I guess. Who do we know in the Planning Department?”

“No one, sir — not anymore. We used to be able to get O’Riordan to ‘handle’ these things for us, but he retired a couple months ago.”

“Dammit. Well, who do we know on the City Council that could put a little pressure on Planning?”

— just another Hudson City business meeting

To paraphrase Calvin Coolidge, “the business of Hudson City is business.” Billions of dollars flow through Hudson City every year in the form of electronic money transfers, goods bought and sold, financial deals, stock purchases, and much, much more.

General Commerce And Industry

Hudson City has been a center of commerce and manufacturing from its earliest days. While the industrial sector of the economy isn’t as strong as it once was, factories and similar businesses still employ hundreds of thousands of Hudsonites — and the high-tech, service-oriented businesses of the “New Economy” are also doing their part to keep Hudsonites working hard.

AVERY INDUSTRIES

A leader in the furniture and textile industry, Avery has several manufacturing plants in the greater Hudson City area as well as many showrooms. The executive in charge of all Hudson City

operations is Claude Homer, a skilled and clever businessman. Avery Industries’s headquarters in Hudson City is located near the intersection of 16th Avenue and N. Monroe Street (not far from the Garment District), and it also has a major manufacturing facility at the intersection of Centre Street and King Avenue in Forsyth.

BARRON PHARMACEUTICALS

Barron Pharmaceuticals is one of America’s leading manufacturers of medicines and other medical supplies (and, through its subsidiary Barron MedTech, medical equipment and machines). It’s got a reputation in the business world for playing hardball when it comes to product development and marketing (in fact, a few allegations of industrial espionage have been indirectly made against it). But despite that, it has a solid public reputation due to its extensive donations to charity (including its own Barron Foundation), distribution of free cold and flu medicines to inner city neighborhoods in the winter, and other charitable acts.

Barron’s world headquarters, and one of its largest manufacturing plants, is located in the suburb of Cambria. Company president Rob Schalken is one of Hudson City’s best-known and best-liked businessmen; he and his wife Alicia are frequent guests at charitable and civic events throughout the city.

BERKELY ENTERPRISES

Media and entertainment giant Berkely Enterprises (BE) is the creation of maverick businessman Ben Berkely, one of the wealthiest men in Hudson City. He began years ago with one small television station he bought with a loan, and over three decades has parlayed it into one of the world’s largest and most influential media empires.

The linchpin of BE is Berkely Entertainment Television (BETV), which operates WTBV, a national “superstation” (page 106) that broadcasts mostly syndicated and rerun shows. Some of BE’s other holdings include the Berkely Marketing Group (a marketing and advertising firm), half ownership of the Hudson City Cougars (a professional basketball team), and long-term contracts with various sports and entertainment figures. BE also owns the Berkely Commercial Center and Sports Metroplex (usually known as “the BCC”), a single enormous complex encompassing BE’s companies’ offices, a sports arena for his basketball team, and the Berkely Grande Plaza Hotel (see page 30).

BLOUNT PHARMACEUTICALS

Although smaller and much younger than Barron and many other pharmaceuticals giants, Blount Pharmaceuticals has achieved notable success in the marketplace. Most analysts attribute this in part to the geniuses in Blount’s R&D labs, who’ve made several notable breakthroughs that proved highly profitable, and partly to the brilliant leadership of company founder and CEO Tobias Blount. Known (but not to his face!) as “the Whale of Wall Street” due to his bulk, his financial acumen, stra-

BEN BERKELY

10 STR	10 DEX
12 CON	10 BODY
18 INT	13 EGO
20 PRE	14 COM
3 PD	3 ED
2 SPD	4 REC
24 END	21 STUN

Abilities: Bureaucratics 13-, Conversation 13-, Gambling (Card Games) 13-, High Society 13-, CK: Hudson City 11-, KS: The Business World 14-, KS: The Media And Entertainment Industry 14-, KS: High Finance 11-, Oratory 13-, Persuasion 13-, Riding 11-, TF: Snow Skiing, SCUBA, Small Planes, Small Wind-Powered Boats, WF: Small Arms, Well-Connected and 60 points’ worth of Contacts throughout the Hudson City and world business and political communities, Money (15 points)

25+ Disadvantages: Hunted (Watched) by the media; Psychological Limitation: Workaholic; Reputation (cut-throat businessman) 14-; Rivalry (with other media industry giants); Social Limitation: Famous.

Notes: The business genius behind the creation of the WTBV cable TV “superstation” and numerous other media and entertainment companies is a real workaholic — a man who puts in 20-hour days that leave his aides asleep on the office couch. He’s also a brilliant self-promoter with a big ego, which has contributed to his business success. He is 45 and has a lovely wife, Charlene, who’s slowly becoming popular on the social circuit.

THE EMERALD SOCIETIES

Years ago, Irish workers and businessmen in Hudson City banded together to help one another in their respective trades. They formed social organizations/business clubs that came to be known as *emerald societies* after the name of one of the earliest ones. Each major trade or industry that had a substantial number of Irish workers or members eventually got its own emerald society. In time, as the Irish worked their way into the cultural fabric of the city and advanced in the business world, the emerald societies became an important part of the local business scene.

Today the emerald societies still exist. Most are private fraternal-style organizations that only admit descendants of former members or other persons who can prove their Irish ancestry to the society's satisfaction, but a few have opened their rolls to anyone who cares to join and can pay the dues. For many a businessman in Hudson City, the first thing he does when he needs to get something accomplished at work is contact a fellow emerald society member who can help him.

tegic planning, and ruthless tactics have brought Blount Pharmaceuticals a lot farther in a much shorter time than anyone expected when Tobias founded it.

FORDHAM CHEMTECH

Begun nearly a century ago as a chemical manufacturing company, Fordham ChemTech has weathered the economic storms of the twentieth century with its adaptability, flexibility, and smarts. It moved into electronics, computers, and other forms of high technology as they were developed, and today competes on a global scale against a variety of industrial giants.

Throughout the company's history, the Fordham family has retained a large enough chunk of stock to control the business. The current CEO, Jeffrey Fordham, is the son of the now aged and infirm Robert Fordham whose grandfather and great-grandfather founded the business. Known as a patron of the arts and something of a "party boy" besides being a captain of industry, Jeffrey is in his early 30s but has not yet married (much to his parents' perpetual chagrin). He lives in a plush Bankhurst penthouse and commutes to work via helicopter.

The company maintains its world headquarters in the Fordham ChemTech Tower in Worthington (page 87). Additionally, it has several satellite offices and manufacturing facilities throughout the greater Hudson City area. Over the past ten years Fordham's shut down a lot of its stateside factories and outsourced the work to Asia or Latin America, but seems intent on keeping the remainder open and operating.

HARPCOR

The Harper Corporation — better known as Harpcor — isn't the world's largest mega-corporation, but according to many estimates it's within the top twenty. Through an enormous pyramid of subsidiaries, it's got its hands in everything from energy, to high-tech manufacturing, to investment services, to aerospace and defense contracting, to advertising. Company CEO Daniel Manley has a lavish set of offices in the company's headquarters at Combs Avenue and Northampton Street (page 87).

RAVENSCROFT DEVELOPMENT

One of the largest real estate and commercial development firms in Hudson City, Ravenscroft Development owns part or all of many buildings throughout the city. It's also a majority owner of Tyndall Residential Realty, a real estate brokerage chain that sells houses and other residential properties. The semi-reclusive head of the company, Richard Ravenscroft, cares little for the social scene that's so important in modern deal-making; he prefers to stay focused on his work or the charitable organization he founded in 1996, the VOLT Foundation (page 136).

STARRTECH

High-tech companies are often said to be the wave of the future as well as the present. If that's the case, then riding the crest of that wave is StarrTech,

the creation of scientific and financial genius Randolph Starr. Often described as "a modern Edison," Starr not only has two dozen significant patents to his name, he's got the business acumen to know what to do with them. He used his early discoveries to finance the creation of his company, and his later creations (including the StarrSoft software suite) to turn it into a business giant.

STRAKE INDUSTRIES INTERNATIONAL

This international corporation has business interests ranging from auto manufacturing, to computers, to military defense work, to food sales. It has a reputation as being more interested in profits than in its employees or the environment, though it strongly denies any such accusations. Various government officials and whistleblowers have also alleged that SII has engaged in criminal dealings and bribery around the world, but no one's ever proven any serious wrongdoing by the company in court.

SII's founder, president, and CEO Michelangelo Strake doesn't live in Hudson City, though he frequently visits the company's local headquarters at the Hudson City Corporate Center. SII's executive City in Hudson City, Franklin Frazier, is thought to be a favorite of the higher-ups and destined for a continued rapid climb up the corporate ladder.

Finance

All that business and industry requires financing to keep it going through the lean times and to launch new projects. As one of the world's leading banking centers, Hudson City is home to many major lending and investment institutions.

CHEROKEE BANK & TRUST

Headquartered in the distinctive Cherokee Tower (page 58), Cherokee Bank & Trust (CB&T) is a multinational investment bank that got its start in Hudson City at the turn of the twentieth century. CB&T has been involved with much of the city's development and growth over the past 100 years, and has also become a significant player in the money market and financial advice industries through its various subsidiaries.

In recent years, CB&T has come under fire from political correctness mavens concerning its name (not to mention its logo, a noble Cherokee Indian in three-quarter profile). American Indian activists have demanded, loudly and repeatedly, that the company change its name. CB&T's Board of Directors has voted down resolutions suggesting this several times, but has tried to soothe hurt feelings with significant donations to Indian charities.

FLAG NATIONAL BANK

As both a business and consumer lending and investment institution, Flag National Bank (FNB) is best known to most Hudsonites from its "Flag — We're Here To Help" commercials and advertisements. Many a Hudson City resident has gone to FNB to obtain a mortgage, a loan to start a small

business, or the money to send his kid to college. FNB maintains its local headquarters in the Flag National Bank Building (page 58), but also has dozens of branches throughout the city.

INTERNATIONAL FINANCE BANK

This blandly-named institution is an investment bank with worldwide financial connections and resources. It has no direct dealings with consumers — it finances megacorporations, governments, and a variety of international organizations. Its financiers are masters at moving money around the world to put it in the safest and/or most profitable places for its clients. And it treats those clients royally — anyone who sends a lot of business IFB's way gets free trips to luxury resorts, lavish gifts (\$5,000 Rolex watches being a favorite token of IFB's esteem), and invitations to parties all over the world.

Originally established in Saudi Arabia, the IFB has offices in every major city around the world. Its Hudson City "branch" occupies fifteen floors of the Prosser Building at the corner of 16th and Washington in central Bankhurst. Anjum "Allen" al-Rashid, a distant cousin of one of the Bank's original founders, runs the office with crisp efficiency. He's known to have a thing for blondes, and rarely appears in public without one or two gorgeous ones on his arm.

FINANCIERS AND MONEY MEN

Not everyone associated with high finance is a bank or brokerage. Sometimes individuals become known for their skill as investors, earners, and lenders.

Thomas Allen

Thomas Allen started his career as, believe it or not, a sportswriter. After several years of this work, he wrote a book about corruption in professional sports that broke several major scandals and became a runaway bestseller. Using the money from the book and his speaking engagements, Allen began to dabble in the stock market, and discovered he had a talent for it. Four years and many millions of dollars later, Allen got involved in other fields, such as real estate. As a present to himself he bought Hudson City's professional baseball and football teams, the Heroes and Thunderbolts, which he still owns.

Yuri Fyodorevski

A Jewish native of the Soviet Union, Fyodorevski immigrated to the United States in the early Eighties and quickly put his intuitive mind to work making money in the stock market. Today he operates an investment firm that promises its clients it invests only in environmentally sound businesses.

Oscar Hicks

Known as "Oscar the Grouch" because of his irascible temper, Hicks is one of the "old men" of Hudson City finance. His investment brokerage firm, Hicks Brothers, was founded in the Twenties and barely made it through the Depression intact (his brother and partner committed suicide in 1931). Nevertheless Hicks persevered and eventually made

himself a fortune. Thousands of people all over the country have benefitted from his and his firm's experience in the areas of mutual funds, municipal bonds, and other forms of personal investment.

James Roman

Roman is one of the youngest of the city's financial wizards. Sometimes known as "the Markham Guffey Kid" because he works for the brokerage firm of Markham Guffey Cartwright Sacks, he's got an uncanny ability to pick stocks and find deals. Right after he got out of college he came to Hudson City and astounded seasoned professionals with his ability to consistently pick winning stocks — in fact, he's so good at it that he's already being investigated by the SEC for insider trading. He seems confident that they'll find nothing amiss.

Law

Businesses don't just need financing — they need legal advisors, legal protection, and legal warriors to fight their enemies in the courts. And plenty of Hudsonites rely on attorneys to protect their rights, obtain justice for them, and resolve legal difficulties. The Hudson City Bar Association has thousands of members, ranging from small solo practitioners to high-powered members of the largest corporate law firms. Some of the best known legal eagles in the Pearl City are described below.

LAW FIRMS

Most lawyers don't practice by themselves — they belong to law firms so they can share resources and combine their knowledge of the law, and thus offer better service to their clients. Major law firms often exert influence far beyond what most individual attorneys could muster. Some of Hudson City's most prominent firms include:

Edwards, Edwards, Kennedy & Edwards: Three brothers and their sister combined forces to create this firm. Specializing in employment discrimination, personal injury, and civil rights cases, they've become quite the thorn in the side of many local companies that they've accused of discriminatory practices.

Goldstein, Douglas, Jakubowski & Key, P.A.: High-powered corporations need high-powered legal help, and that's just what Goldstein Douglas provides. With major practice areas covering just about every aspect of business — Banking & Finance, International Trade, Energy, Mergers & Acquisitions, and many more — the firm has both the knowledge and the legal muscle to get the deals done and keep its clients protected.

Harlan, Fiske & Stone: Located in Tower A of the Harpcor Towers, the lawyers of Harlan, Fiske & Stone are renowned for their expertise in the fields of corporate law, securities law, and bankruptcy. If you're ready to get your IPO up and rolling, Harlan Fiske is the firm to talk to... and if you crash and burn, they can help you out with that problem as well.

THE HUDSON CITY GEMSTONE EXCHANGE

Located in Highlands just a few blocks east of Courthouse Plaza, the Hudson City Gemstone Exchange is the center of the diamond and gemstone trade in the Pearl City, and the heart of the city's small but lucrative "Gemstone District." A small but heavily secured building that features gemstone receiving and shipping areas, showroom/display areas where members can display gems while negotiating their sale, a state of the art vault, and advanced cutting tools for use by Exchange members are just some of the facilities and features the Exchange provides. A group called the Gemstone Exchange Authority oversees the management of the Exchange.

Membership in the Exchange is open to accredited gemstone and jewelry dealers who obtain a referral from at least two existing members and pass a background check. As in Brussels, New York City, and other locales, the gemstone trade in Hudson City is often dominated by Orthodox Jews and persons of Eastern European extraction; it's not at all unusual for Jewish Exchange members wearing distinctive dark clothing to walk around the neighborhood carrying hundreds of thousands of dollars of gems on their persons. Needless to say, the police keep a close eye on the area; robberies are, surprisingly, extremely rare.

OTHER CHAINS

Here are some other chains you might visit in Hudson City:

Buccaneer Burger (and its sister seafood chain, Cap'n Pat's Fish & Chips)

Calypso Delight ("CDs", Jamaican fast food)

The Corner Office (photocopying and shipping)

Discount City (general retail goods)

Donut Shack

Excalibur Computers (computer and software superstores)

Four-Color Afternoons (comic books and toys)

Furniture Factory (home furnishings)

Gateway Books

Grande Taco (Mexican fast food)

Holliday Homes (residential realtors — "There's no place like Holliday for a home")

Nolan's (coffeeshops)

Noramco (gas stations)

Pastimes (sporting goods)

Roundball Express (sporting goods superstore)

Szechuan Palace (Chinese fast food)

Verity Computers (computers and software)

Lefler, Gregson, Downs & Livingston: Although this firm has a general practice, it's become best known for its high-profile criminal defense and divorce cases. Its victories in actress Jessica Litchfield's child custody case and the Rudy Salvestro murder case have made it a household name among Court TV fans.

MacDonald, Peterson & Greer: Experts on intellectual property law — patents, trademarks, copyrights — contracts, and technology law, the attorneys of MP&G have represented some of the most successful entertainers, sports figures, scientists, and writers in the world. It's said that partner Rayson Greer's address book would be worth a fortune due to all the actresses' personal phone numbers it contains.

McLawhorn, Karns, Carr & Long, P.A.: You know who they are. You've watched their ads on TV, heard their commercials on the radio, seen their faces on posters on the sides of buses. McLawhorn Karns is one of Hudson City's most successful personal injury and professional malpractice firms, with a roster of clients numbering in the many thousands and million-dollar victories in more than a few cases. Other lawyers often dismiss them as ambulance chasers, but it's hard to argue with success.

Motsinger, Hatch & Fields: This corporate law firm specializes in shareholder suits and related forms of litigation, but also provides a wide variety of legal services to businesses. Its Tax department is highly regarded in some circles.

Riley, Culpepper, Shuler, Petrocelli, Montague & Fouts: Criminal defense attorneys *par excellence*, the lawyers of Riley Culpepper fiercely and gleefully challenge "the system" every day. While it's best known for its work in several high-profile murder, drug, and organized crime cases, Riley Culpepper also runs several *pro bono* legal aid clinics in Freetown and Forsyth.

Sandbeck & Associates: Who says a little guy can't beat a big guy? In the 1990s, the three-lawyer firm of Sandbeck & Associates took on the pharmaceutical industry in a massive class action lawsuit and won despite being out-lawyered by about a hundred to one. Its coffers now filled to bursting, it's on the lookout for other major cases to tackle.

LAWYERS

Among the thousands of attorneys in Hudson City, a few stand out from the crowd for one reason or another.

Bill Gregson: In his thousand dollar suits and \$25,000 diamond pinkie ring, Bill Gregson looks as much like an upscale rap star as one of the city's best divorce lawyers. But the fact that he can afford his lavish lifestyle — which includes a mansion in Belmont — just goes to show how good he is at obtaining generous settlements for his clients.

Milton Jacobi: One of Goldstein Douglas's top guns, Milt Jacobi is a threat in both the boardroom and the courtroom. His understated, clever litigating style complements his hard-nosed negotiating style,

allowing him to close deals and settlements that would elude lesser attorneys. His knowledge of the Hudson City business community (including a lot of things companies would rather keep secret) is practically unparalleled. On his rare days off, he can be found playing golf at Firetree.

Jacquelyn Lydick: A member of the Stewart County Regional Office of the Office of the City Public Defender, Jackie Lydick has been lead defense counsel for several celebrated criminal trials. Although she doesn't get paid nearly as much as she would if she were in private practice, she enjoys her job because it gives her a chance to represent people who would otherwise be ignored by "the system."

Rudolf Thomas: A talented trial lawyer who's represented several major Mafia figures, Thomas is known for his flamboyant courtroom manner as well as his extensive grounding in state and federal criminal law. People pack the room to watch his wild gesticulations and listen to him shout, cajole, and wheedle until a witness tells him what he wants to hear.

Stefan Zlowinski: A media darling who appears as a commentator on news programs and cable TV shows whenever there's a big trial going on, Zlowinski makes his money as a litigator. He likes to be in the courtroom, and he'll take any case, civil or criminal, that he thinks will get him there... especially if there's likely to be a big payoff at the end.

Retail

Chapters Two and Six describe dozens of the most interesting or prominent stores in Hudson City. In addition to those local places, Hudson City is home to the outlets or local franchises of countless national or chain stores. A few of the best-known not described elsewhere are listed below.

AUTOMOTIVE

Ready to gas up and go? Any of these places will help you fill up your car and get it ready for the road.

Eastern: Founded years ago as the retail arm of the Eastern Oil Company, the Eastern chain of gas stations was bought by the Athens Group, a consortium of wealthy investors and financiers, when Eastern Oil declared bankruptcy twenty years ago. With some new financing and an image facelift, Eastern stations have increased in earnings since then; the chain's added about 20% more stations than it had at the time of Eastern Oil's bankruptcy.

GO! The initials stand for "General Oil," the chain's parent company. With its bright orange signs and catchy jingles, GO! is one of the most recognizable, and trusted, brands in America. Some of its stations still have full-service pumps.

Monarch Gas: "Give Your Car the Royal Treatment!" was once one of the most familiar slogans in America. But then the Monarch Gasoline Company became caught up in its founder and CEO's messy divorce, a bankruptcy, and an estate dispute involving several of the major stockholders... and

the company simply ground to a halt. The multiple levels of litigation are still going on today, and will keep going on for the foreseeable future — and all the while, Monarch stations across Hudson City and the country sit unused. Many have become homes for squatters, gangs, or the homeless; most Hudsonites have learned to avoid Monarch stations like the plague.

CLOTHING AND SHOES

Haven't got a thing to wear? Stop by one of these places.

Amanda DeLaine's: Founded by the former housewife of the same name as a secondhand and consignment clothing store for women, "AD's" did well enough for her to convert into an ordinary clothing store, and then to spread across the country. Its "pink tag specials" are a great bargain for many shoppers, but the phrase has become something of a joke among the snide and irreverent.

Pumps And Pearls: Although mainly a women's shoe store, P&P also sells costume jewelry, handbags, and various other fashion accessories. A brother chain, Shirts And Slacks, carries men's suits, shoes, and fashions.

Rainfall: Rainfall sells women's clothing, usually mid-to upper-end. A spin-off, Silk Rainfall, sells lingerie.

ELECTRONICS AND MEDIA

Home entertainment and computing are big businesses these days, and several chains have risen to the challenge of keeping consumers supplied with the latest gadgets and goodies.

Electronic Alley: If you're in the market for a DVD player, CD player, digital camera, camcorder, television, or any other sort of consumer electronics, you can find it at the Electronic Alley. The Alley also carries DVDs and CDs; larger stores have computers and sometimes even a small section of electronic supplies for home tinkerers, ham radio enthusiasts, and the like.

Harlix Computer Games And Software: A software store usually found in malls and similar locations. Despite its name, it carries plenty of software other than games, and has one of the largest selections of computer programs in the city.

Rhialto Video: One of the first video rental chains, Rhialto Video sometimes seems to have one of its distinctive green-and-yellow stores on every street-corner. In recent years it's shifted away from VHS tapes to almost all DVDs, and is now getting into the DVDs-by-mail service business.

Silverton's: "Lifestyle items" for people with plenty of money and a desire for stylishness. It sells all sorts of electronic gadgets, doo-dads, and gift items, such as PDAs, oddly-shaped clock radios, desk toys, and sleek, high-tech looking stereos.

FOOD

Hungry? Hudson City has plenty of places where you can get a bite to eat.

Burger Monster: "A monster of a meal!" Built around "monster" and "sci-fi" themes, this chain of fast-food restaurants is particularly popular with kids, parents who have kids, and pop culture aficionados. Each restaurant chooses a particular motif and styles its decor around it. Most choose "Classic Sci-Fi" (aliens, flying saucers, menacing robots...) or "Classic Movie Monsters" (Frankenstein, Dracula, the Wolfman...) as their themes, but some go in for "Comic Book Heroes" (featuring the chain's own line of superheroes and villains), "Fantasy and Legend" (knights, wizards, dragons...), or other themes. But regardless of the way a Burger Monster looks, you can always get a great Monster Burger, Super Monster Burger, Captain Cosmic Ultra-shake, or Martian Fries. About 60% of the Burger Monsters in the greater Hudson City area are owned by Patrick O'Sullivan, a local entrepreneur.

Chisholm Trail Steakhouse: With its mix of delicious appetizers, steaks cooked any way you like, and enormous desserts, the Chisholm Trail chain has become a popular segment of the "casual dining" market. Where possible, these restaurants have a "Curbside Cookout" service that allows you to call ahead and they bring your order to your car when you arrive.

Lightning Burger: Don't have time to eat at Burger Monster or Buccaneer Burger? Just pull up to a Lightning Burger, shout your order into the speaker, and in just a minute or two you'll be driving away with a sackful of burgers and fries. Even by fast food standards it's not exactly healthy, but sometimes speed is of the essence.

Macho Nacho: Diners tired of burgers, chicken, and subs can get some tacos, nachos, and burritos at their local Macho Nacho. The chain lost ground against competitors like Grande Taco in the late Nineties, but its clever "cute animals in little sombreros" advertising campaign helped it pull even again.

Mars Needs Pizzas!: Hudson City's main pizza delivery chain, brought to you by the same people who dreamed up Burger Monster. Usually referred to simply as "Mars Pizza," it uses distinctive bright green delivery vehicles and deliverymen in green caps, jackets, and shirts. The company's "Zreebotz" mascot, a little green Martian, is a popular character recognized by everyone.

Sandwiches Plus: Fans of true delis wince at the idea of eating at Sandwiches Plus, which serves deli-style meals (pastrami sandwiches, potato salad, homemade chips, and so on) with fast food speed. It's not bad food, but compared to a real deli there's not much to recommend it.

OBADELE JONES

8 STR	10 DEX
9 CON	8 BODY
10 INT	8 EGO
10 PRE	8 COM
3 PD	3 ED
2 SPD	4 REC
18 END	17 STUN

Abilities: Running +2" (8" total), Bureaucratics 8-, CK: Hudson City's Eastern Northside 11-, CK: Lagos 8-, KS: Hudson City Nigerian Community 11-, Language: Yoruba (basic conversation; English is Native), PS: Pushcart Operator 11-, Streetwise 8-, WF: Handguns

Disadvantages: None

Notes: A native of Nigeria, Obadele Jilo emigrated to the United States in 1983, later changing his last name to "Jones" to better fit in with his adopted homeland. A resident of Hudson City since 1991, he runs a pushcart that sells hot dogs, sausages, chips, and sodas to hungry Hudsonites. Regardless of the weather, you can find him out on the street 365 days a year, serving his regulars, chatting with customers, and keeping an eye on things going on around him. He usually sets up his cart somewhere in north Bankhurst or Highlands, since he's found that people there tip better, but you might find him just about anywhere else on the eastern Northside (especially if there's a sporting event or other major activity he can cater to).

PHIL MARIANI

10 STR 10 DEX
 10 CON 8 BODY
 9 INT 8 EGO
 10 PRE 8 COM
 4 PD 2 ED
 2 SPD 4 REC
 20 END 18 STUN

Abilities: Bureaucratics 11-, KS: Tile 11-, KS: The Union World 11-, PS: Tilelayer 11-, PS: Union Official 11-, Streetwise 8-

Disadvantages: Dependence (Addiction to alcohol)

Notes: Phil Mariani is the Chief Steward — the boss, in other words — of the union to which most tile layers and workers in Hudson City belong. A friendly, glad-handing sort of guy, he's never been the subject of much controversy, much less any investigations for corruption or malfeasance. Cynics in the union say that's just because he's too good to get caught, and because his Mafia friends protect him.

Labor And Unions

No discussion of business and industry would be complete without a look at labor and unions. In Hudson City, the unions tend to be fairly powerful; some of the largest include the Teamsters, the International Dockworkers' Union, the Policeman's Protective Association, the Restaurant and Hotel Workers, numerous construction-oriented unions, and various unions whose ranks include city and state employees. Stories of abuse and corruption by some unions have made them unpopular (and led, in part, to Mayor Umstead's election), since they're perceived as making exorbitant demands — but others remain intensely popular, and all enjoy strong loyalty from their members. So far Mayor Umstead's policies have done relatively little to decrease unions' power.

Hudson City unions have an often well-deserved reputation for being associated with organized crime, particularly the Mafia. Several unions, including the Hotel and Restaurant Workers, Dockworkers, Teamsters, and construction workers are thought to be firmly in the grip of racketeers. Conflict over control of certain construction unions was one of the underlying causes of the current "war" between the Scatuccis and the Torccones.

Some of the leaders of the Hudson City labor movement include: Dave Cody (carpenters), Bob Lauder (Teamsters); Al Maressa (plumbing contractors); Sergeant Hector Hernandez (policemen); and Paul Segretti (hotels/restaurants).

THE ESPIONAGE WORLD

"You got the disk?"

"You got the money?"

"Yeah, it's out back."

"Then we'll go out back and check. If it's as you say, you'll get the disk."

— mysterious exchange
 overheard near Embassy Row

Hudson City isn't the hotbed of espionage that New York City, London, Moscow, or Berlin are (or at one time were), but there are still some shadowy activities playing out among the streets and high-rises. The Pearl City contains many embassies (the employees of whom are often spies), and international trading and dealmaking which may serve as a front for espionage takes place all the time. Homegrown spying in the form of corporate espionage and sabotage is common in some circles, and it's possible that other nations (such as China) engage in the same conduct in an effort to steal technological secrets from America's cutting-edge scientific companies.

THE MARTIAL WORLD

"It's not all training and strength. There's still the matter of heart. None of those Black Cobra guys has heart — that's their weakness. Rely on your own skills, don't give into fear, and your heart is the edge that you can use to win."

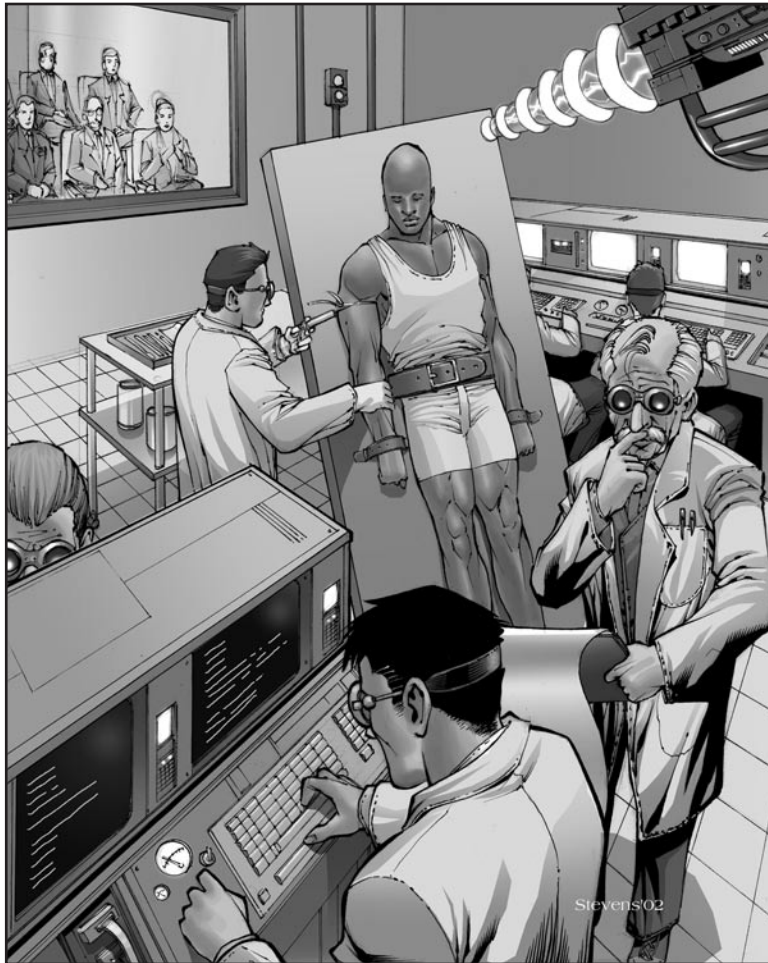
— pre-tournament pep talk

Most of the dangerous people on the streets of Hudson City are the ones carrying guns and knives, but a few of them are armed with nothing but their fists. The unarmed fighting arts are alive and well in Hudson City, which has dojos and schools teaching dozens of different styles, and numerous shows and competitions throughout the year. Whether you're interested in taking martial arts classes, or you want to size up the competition before the next tournament, these are some places you should check out.

Aikido Unlimited: By most estimates the best school for Aikido and Judo in the city, "AU" sometimes also offers classes in the less philosophical, more fighting oriented counterpart styles, Aikijutsu and Jujutsu. Its founder and main instructor, Stacey Robinson, earned her black belt in Japan.

Black Cobra Dojo: This school, located in Riverside Hills, has a reputation for turning out tough, skilled students who tend to use their martial abilities in bullying ways. The main *sifu*, Kien "Ken" Wing, supposedly has tong and Triad ties.

Eight Harmonies School: One of many schools in Chinatown that teach the fighting arts, the Eight Harmonies specializes in the traditional Chinese styles: Hsing-I, Kung Fu, Tai Ch'i Ch'uan. The pri-



mary instructor is Master Hong, an old, inscrutable Chinese man who's practically a stereotype from a martial arts movie. He expects absolute obedience from his students, but in return teaches much.

Hidden Fist Academy of Ninja Arts: "Learn the deadly arts of the ninja!" the commercials say, and a lot of people believe it. Experts on real Ninjutsu scoff, but with five "academies" opened already, the Hidden Fist seems to be doing just fine financially.

Three Worlds Martial Arts Academy: The brainchild of Karate, Jeet Kune Do, and Pentjak-Silat black belt-level practitioner Mike Vergnier, the Three Worlds Academy of Blackbridge bills itself as a sort of "community college for martial arts." It attracts teachers from many different styles and traditions, who agree to teach as personal and student interest dictate. Students sign up for the courses that intrigue them. Most students, who come to Three Worlds after first studying the martial arts somewhere else, end up learning an eclectic hodgepodge of techniques rather than progressing toward "black belt" in any one... but the school prefers to emphasize personal growth and enjoyment anyway.

THE MEDICAL WORLD

"Code blue! Code blue!"

"OK, OK, what've we got? Talk to me, people!"

"Hispanic male, late teens early twenties, gunshot wounds to the left chest and left leg. I think the first bullet may've ended up in his lung."

"OK, we're gonna lift him onto the table — one, two three! Now we've gotta stabilize him and get him into surgery. You, go tell them to get OR 3 cleared for us. You, 10 ccs of adrenalin, stat! You..."

"I'm not getting a pulse!"

"Dammit, I am not going to lose this boy. Where's that adrenalin? OK, inject him; I'm going to work the heart."

Two seconds of furious action. Five. Ten.

"Still no pulse, doctor."

Shoulders slump with the weight of the inevitable. "OK, he's gone. Dammit. I make time of death at 2335 hours."

— another night at the Vreeland Memorial ER

Since vigilantes and other adventurers have a tendency to get shot, stabbed, set on fire, run over, smashed in the head with rifle butts, burned with cigarettes, and otherwise mangled, it's helpful to know where to find medical assistance in the Hudson City metropolitan area.

Hospitals

Hudson City has approximately sixty major hospitals with about 30,000 beds (plus roughly another hundred smaller or specialized medical facilities). Here are descriptions of some of the best... or at least most interesting.

ALEXANDER MEDICAL CENTER

Location: Freetown, northeast corner of King Avenue and S. Jackson Street

Status: Public

Specialties: Trauma medicine, endocrinology

Description: Located across the intersection from the northeast corner of the Numbers, Alexander Medical Center is on the front lines of the urban battlefield.

KING OF THE HILL

So, who's the best fighter in Hudson City? No one can say for sure, but there are plenty of opinions.

Some "experts" look to the Hudson City Fighting Arts Tournament (page 115) to provide an answer. The way they figure it, whoever can come out on top in a full-contact tournament is the best all-around fighter. Unfortunately, no one person has ever won the Grand Prize more than once... and everyone who's won in a given year has lost in several other years.

Proponents of the "hard" fighting arts often give the nod to John "Johnny K" Kuí, a Chinese-American man with black belts in both Shaolin Kung Fu and Isshin-Ryu Karate who's won the Fighting Arts Tournament once and placed second another time. Others favor Malcolm Livitnov, a big, heavily-muscled ex-Israeli Defense Forces commando who sometimes teaches Krav Maga at Three Worlds Academy.

"Soft" or "circular" stylists argue that their techniques can prevail even over the strength and force of the likes of Karate. Among other things, they point out that most real fights end up with both fighters on the ground, and the techniques of the hard styles usually don't work well in ground-fighting. These "experts" claim that Roberto "Bobby" de Queiroz, a master of Brazilian-style Jujutsu, can take anyone in the city.

ELIZA BERKLEY

10 STR 13 DEX
 10 CON 8 BODY
 13 INT 11 EGO
 15 PRE 16 COM
 2 PD 2 ED
 2 SPD 4 REC
 20 END 18 STUN

Abilities: KS: The Hudson City Medical Community 11-, Languages: French, Spanish (both basic conversation), Paramedics 14-, SS: Medicine 14-, SS: Neurology 14-, SS: Surgery 13-, Fringe Benefit: License To Practice Medicine

Disadvantages: None.

Notes: Eliza Berkley is one of the many dedicated doctors working at Alexander Medical Center. A neurosurgeon, she often handles incredibly delicate operations; her surgical technique and bedside manner are both respected by her colleagues. Despite being overworked and in her early thirties, she's every bit as beautiful as she was when she was Homecoming Queen at Northwestern High.

Its emergency room doctors and nurses long ago became experts at trauma and combat medicine, since they deal with gunshot wounds, stabbings, deliberately inflicted burnings, and car crash victims practically every day... not to mention the overdose patients. But AMC does a lot of general medicine that most people never hear of — everything from diabetes management, to sickle cell anemia studies, to a fairly advanced Pediatrics department on Floor 8.

BLACKBRIDGE HOSPITAL

Location: Blackbridge, northwest corner of 12th Avenue and Onondaga Street

Status: Public

Specialties: Neurology, oncology, nephrology

Description: Originally founded by the Methodist Church, and still closely associated with it in many ways, Blackbridge Hospital is a general medical care facility. Seven stories tall and with about 2,000 beds, it provides most of the major medical services for Blackbridge, and often receives patients from nearby neighborhoods as well.

COKELY HOSPITAL

Location: Gadsden, at the intersection of 17th Avenue and Oxnard Street

Status: Public

Specialties: Psychology/psychiatry, neurology

Description: Although it serves as a normal hospital, Cokely is best known for its extensive psychology ward/asylum. The HCPD typically brings people here for commitment or for mental testing. Hence the slang terms, “gone to Cokely” or “he’s Cokely” (both basically signifying “that guy’s nuts”).

EASTWOOD MEDICAL CENTER

Location: Eastwood, at the intersection of 1st Avenue and N. Madison Street

Status: Public

Specialties: Physical therapy, otorhinolaryngology, pediatrics

Description: Located, rather unenviably, not far from both the Northshore Sewage Treatment Plant and the Northsea power station, Eastwood Medical Center was built in the 1960s in response to a growing need for a major hospital in the area. It's beginning to show its age, but there's no money available for the general course of physical plant upgrades it needs.

EVERETT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Location: Guilford, at the intersection of Trenton Avenue and Richland Street

Status: Private

Specialties: Cardiology, pediatrics, plastic surgery

Description: Built primarily with donations from the Everett family, and so named after them, this hospital serves the people of Guilford, Irishtown, and Little Italy. It's considered an excellent facility, with state-of-the-art equipment and some of the best doctors in the city, and so tends to charge higher prices than many other hospitals.

HCU HOSPITAL

Location: Guilford, on the HCU campus

Status: Public, university-affiliated

Specialties: Thoracic surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, oncology, psychiatry

Description: This is a teaching hospital attached to the HCU School of Medicine. It conducts groundbreaking research in a variety of fields, and is considered a Top 50 national hospital.

PLAYING DOCTOR

Hudson City is home to many well-known physicians. Some of them include:

Melinda Farwell: An HCU- and Johns Hopkins-trained oncologist, Dr. Farwell researches how cancer spreads throughout the body. She's part of a world-wide team of doctors, informally dubbed the “Cancer Hunters,” who are trying to wipe out this deadly disease.

Reginald Green: Doctor Green is one of the city's most prominent cardiologists. Over the course of his career he's made several major advances in the treatment of heart disease. According to some reports, he's close to patenting a revolutionary new form of artificial heart; the speculation has increased the price of shares of stock in his company, CardiOhm, significantly.

Alicia Manzanetti: A general practitioner on the staff at Southwest General, Dr. Manzanetti is an expert on the effects (both physical and psychological) of rape and child abuse, and is frequently asked to testify in trials of these crimes as an expert witness.

Howard Paulson: A personal friend of Thomas Allen's, Dr. Paulson is specialist in orthopedics and sports medicine who works as a consultant to the Hudson City Heroes and Thunderbolts. As “doctor to the sports stars” and a youngish, handsome man himself, he's become a sort of minor celebrity.

Kyle Reichart: A renowned and respected neurosurgeon with a master's degree in biophysics in addition to his M.D., Dr. Reichart has spent much of his career working on procedures and devices to help paraplegics and quadriplegics walk again. He hasn't succeeded yet, but as an eternal optimist he's convinced there's a breakthrough right around the corner.

KATZ MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Location: Bankhurst, at the intersection of 12th Avenue and Centre Street
Status: Private
Specialties: Cardiology, neurology, vascular surgery
Description: Often used by Hudson City politicians and businessmen due to its proximity to downtown, Katz Memorial is generally considered a top-notch hospital. It lost a major medical malpractice lawsuit in 2002, as part of the resolution of which it recently installed a revolutionary new Patient Status Monitoring Computer. Hospital administrators around the country are observing Katz to see how the PSMC works out; if it does well, medical centers around the country will undoubtedly adopt it.

QUEEN'S HOSPITAL

Location: Mint Ridge, at the intersection of LeMastre Avenue and Onondaga Street
Status: Public
Specialties: Gerontology, internal medicine, virology
Description: One of the oldest major hospitals in the city, Queen's Hospital takes its name from Queen Victoria of England, who made a generous donation to the charitable society that built it. Its doctors treats many residents of Little Italy, Moscow West, and Chinatown in addition to Mint Ridge residents and people who suffer injuries while in LeMastre Park.

SOUTHWEST GENERAL HOSPITAL

Location: Freetown, 975 Polder Avenue
Status: Public
Specialties: Trauma medicine, pediatrics, gerontology, addiction treatment

Description: A huge, sprawling, ancient medical complex that's the main provider of medical services to much of Freetown. Approximately 85% of its revenues are from public assistance programs such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

STEWART COUNTY GENERAL HOSPITAL

Location: Crown Point, at the intersection of Cutler Avenue and S. Madison Street
Status: Public
Specialties: Endocrinology, thoracic surgery, neurology

Description: Formerly one of the smallest of Hudson City's major hospitals, Stewart County General ascended in the rankings with the opening of the Richard and Maria Fordham Wing in 2002. Featuring the latest in medical technology and patient care systems, the Fordham Wing doubled the hospital's bed capacity and did wonders for its overall reputation.

VETERAN'S MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Location: Riverside Hills, 500 Cutler Avenue
Status: Public
Specialties: None

Description: Built in the late Teens and early Twenties and named in honor of the veterans of the Great War, Veteran's Memorial has served generations of residents of Riverside Hills, Crown Point, and Chinatown. To accommodate patients from the latter neighborhood, the hospital makes a special effort to hire nurses and doctors who speak Asian languages (particularly Mandarin and Cantonese). In recent years the hospital has also treated many veterans of the Gulf War, Iraq War, and Balkans peacekeeping missions.

VREELAND MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Location: Elmview, at the intersection of King Avenue and S. Jefferson Street
Status: Public
Specialties: Neurology, cardiology, radiology
Description: The main hospital in Elmview, Vreeland Memorial also serves residents of Red Hill and North Elmview. Its emergency room has become accustomed to handling overdose and stabbing victims from the areas around the Strip. Vreeland also maintains a "North Elmview Outreach Program" that attempts to monitor the health of the Strip's prostitutes, and to provide them medical care if possible.

Health Clinics

With the assistance of various state and federal agencies, the city's Health and Human Services Division operates a series of health clinics throughout Hudson City; several charitable organizations maintain similar facilities. Usually known as "free clinics" because they provide low-cost or no-cost health care services to the poor, they're mostly located on the Southside. A typical clinic has 3-10 doctors and about twice as many nurses and physician's assistants, and can provide most basic medical services (though they can't handle major traumas like gunshot wounds, nor perform surgery). If a clinic encounters a medical condition it's not equipped for, it refers the patient to the nearest hospital. Because health clinics maintain stocks of drugs and other medical supplies, they're usually heavily secured against theft.

KEVIN WATTERS, M.D., PH.D

8 STR	9 DEX
9 CON	9 BODY
14 INT	11 EGO
15 PRE	10 COM
3 PD	2 ED
2 SPD	4 REC
18 END	18 STUN

Abilities: Conversation 14-, Deduction 12-, High Society 12-, KS: The Hudson City Psychiatric Community 13-, KS: Serial Killers And Serial Killing 13-, Paramedics 12-, Persuasion 13-, SS: Abnormal Psychology 14-, SS: Medicine 12-, SS: Psychology 14-, WF: Handguns, 10 points' worth of Contacts in the HCPD and FBI

Disadvantages: None.

Notes: A psychologist in private practice in Hudson City and who also teaches at the HCU School of Medicine, Dr. Watters is a nationally-recognized expert in the psychology of violent crime. He's worked with the HCPD and FBI on several occasions to help develop profiles of serial killers and other repeat offenders, and has also served as a consultant to TV shows and movies dealing with those subjects.

THE MILITARY WORLD

"Terms?"

"A thousand per week per man for soldiers, twice that for officers and any personnel you deem 'essential,' though that number can't exceed twenty percent of your force. Estimate a two-week mission, possibly three."

"Equipment?"

"You supply your own personal weapons and what you estimate as one week's worth of ammo. We supply a second week's ammo, and that's yours to keep after the mission. Other personal gear you want and don't already have, get me a list and we can negotiate it. We'll provide transport to the mission zone, and vehicles there, but those must be returned at the end of the mission, as undamaged as possible."

"Extraction?"

"By air, same way you'll go in. I can't tell you more until you agree to the job. Then I can reveal specifics."

"Okay, we're in. What's the job?"

"Ever hear of a place called Zarafshon?"



"No."

"It's in central Uzbekistan. An oil company exec there to cut a deal went and got himself kidnapped by some particularly nasty bandits. Your job is to get him out... without involving the Uzbeki government in any way."

— conversation between two unidentified individuals

While there are no large military facilities in the immediate vicinity of Hudson City, the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines all impact the city in various ways.

MILITARY BASES

The closest major military bases to Hudson City are Fort Houke (an Army base about thirty or forty miles northwest) and Wendover Air Force Base (about fifty miles west). There are no naval bases nearby, but U.S. Navy ships sometimes dock at Hudson City for repairs, shore leave, or the like. Local businesses are happy to cater to military personnel, who often come to the city on leave.

MILITARY PROJECTS

The military does more than just build and maintain bases. It also needs weapons, vehicles, and other equipment to get its job done — and that means it has to get involved in research and contracting. Many Hudson City companies, such as Fordham ChemTech and StarrTech, are involved in research projects (be they standard, classified, or top secret) for some branch of the military, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the CIA, or some other governmental agency. Fordham, for example, is said to be working on a new, lighter type of body armor for the Army.

THE NATIONAL GUARD AND ARMED FORCES RESERVES

Hudson City is home to units of the Reserves of the various armed forces. These Reserves are sometimes called out to assist the National Guard in times of crisis, such as natural disasters or riots. As of 2004, many of them are serving, in whole or in part, in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Hudson City has three armories for use by the National Guard and Reserves. The first is located near the South Pumping Station (Parsons Avenue and Centre Street). The second is on the southern river-front near the Adams Street Bridge. The third and smallest one is in west Worthington area. All three are heavily secured and guarded around the clock.

THE MERCENARY WORLD

In addition to legitimate military personnel, Hudson City has to deal with its share of mercenaries. Public mercenary companies like Military Solutions and Executive Resolution Services have offices in the city where they meet with prospective clients and do a small amount of recruiting. It's also said that various bars and clubs around the city are meeting places for less aboveboard mercenary transactions.

THE MYSTIC WORLD

"I'm Detective Lancaster — you wanted to see me?"

"Yes. Thank you very much for agreeing to speak with me."

"That's quite all right, Mrs....?"

"Rigo. Madame Rigo, if you prefer, though few call me that outside my place of work."

"And that is....?"

"I am what you would call a "fortuneteller," Detective."

"And what would you call it?"

"I am a seer. I see things, and those things in time come to pass — not always exactly as they have been revealed to me, but close enough."

"O-kay. Look, Madame Rigo, I'm pretty busy right now...."

"I know. With the Suzanne Matheson case, yes?"

"How did you know about that? That hasn't been released to the press. You a friend of her family or something? Do you know where she is?"

"As I said, Detective, I can see things unknown to others."

"Sure. Why are you so interested in this case, then?"

"Because I have seen more of it than simply her name. I have seen a large man, dark, strong, drag her from her house. And I know that he has killed her."

"Where and how?"

"That, I am sad to say, I have not seen. But this much I can tell you: you will find her to the north, in a green place, beneath a blanket of red, yellow, and brown. That is why I came here — to tell you this, that you might find her soon and bring some comfort to her grieving family."

— conversation at the 98th precinct house

To most people, Hudson City is a mundane and worldly place — in fact, many would say it's *too* worldly, too dirty and corrupt and materialistic. But lurking in the shadows is another Hudson City: one of mystics and occultists, tarot card readers and fortunetellers, New Agers and people of beliefs far more unusual. Ever since the Thirties, when the renowned crimefighter the Raven reputedly used occult powers in his war on the underworld, Hudson City has had a reputation as a place where mystics gather.

MYSTICS

While lots of Hudsonites claim to believe in the mystic, and even to know a thing or three about the occult, a few true experts stand out from the pack of dabblers.

"Father Miguel" Bressard: Unlike the leaders of the Church of Humbalu Areya Aye (page 131), Michael "Father Miguel" Bressard, who runs the Randall Avenue Hounfort in North Elmview, openly claims to have magical powers... and a willingness to use them. From his dingy little hounfort — really as much of a shop as a place of religious gathering, despite its name — the self-styled Father Miguel sells his services in the form of curses, finding-charms, love bath potions, fortunetelling, and protection from malign spirits. Business isn't exactly booming, but somehow the place manages to stay open.

Amanda Gallagher: Some of Hudson City's wealthier and more influential citizens believe in various mystic doctrines — but they wouldn't be caught dead visiting a shop like Madame Rigo's (see below) for a wide variety of reasons. Instead, they have an occultist come to them. With her youthful good looks, vivacious personality, and absolute discretion, Amanda Gallagher brings visions of the future directly to her clients' homes. She mainly relies on tarot cards, but also does some of what she calls "psychic aura readings" and even channeling. She's also a big proponent of crystal therapy, often selling her clients one or more crystals which she "specially psychically attunes" to them and their problems.

Professor Adolph Gottlieb: A professor of anthropology and folklore at Hudson City University, Adolph Gottlieb has earned an international reputation as a scholar of the occult. Among his other accomplishments are the translation into English of several German and Hindu grimoires, the publication of numerous scholarly articles on subjects ranging from "Demonic Beings of the Japanese Islands" to "The Influence of the *Lemegeton* on Golden Dawn Occult Theory," and testifying as an expert witness at three trials involving accounts of "demonic possession" and "Satanic cults." On top of all that, he speaks twelve languages fluently, is an expert on European wines, and plays a mean game of racquetball.

Madame Keja Rigo: From a tiny shop in Gadsden, Madame Rigo — "Fortuneteller, Astrologer, and Palm Reader," according to the sign out front — dispenses "advice," as she calls it, about any subject her clients need to know about. A full-spectrum occult services provider, she can read tarot cards, gaze into crystal balls, read palms, and cast horoscopes. She claims to have developed the power to foresee the future as a little girl in Romania, and that these various "devices" merely enhance her natural abilities. A kindhearted soul, she's tried on several occasions to offer her services to the HCPD, but they've snubbed her.

"I HEARD THERE WUZ ALLIGATORS IN THE SEWERS..."

Urban legends exert a strange hold on the modern American mind. Despite their often manifest absurdity, somehow they remain alive long after they've been debunked. There are plenty of them floating around the streets of Hudson City, too:

Fireball: In the spring of 2004, the story circulated throughout Hudson City, largely by e-mail, that Freetown gangs had come up with a new form of entertainment: pulling up alongside cars stopped in traffic and lobbing Molotov cocktails into them. The HCPD insists it's never received any reports about this, but more than a few people keep their windows rolled up tightly even in the hottest weather... just in case.

In a related story, it's been reported that some Hudson City gangs like to drive around at night without their headlights on. When someone flashes his headlights at their car to alert them to this, they shoot him.

First Hit's Free, Baby: According to what "they" say, some Freetown gangs hand out drug-laced lollipops to kids as a way of getting 'em hooked young.

Dust In The Wind: Didja hear about the burglars who thought the ash in an urn was cocaine?

Nature Gone Wild: The old chestnut about alligators in the sewers has been around for decades now, but it's not the only rumor featuring dangerous animals. The *Hudson Sun* has published several stories

Continued from last page

about packs of feral dogs “allegedly” attacking people in LeMastre Park, though the HCPD says no one’s ever reported any such attack to it. There are also tales of a pack of “carnivorous rats” that roam various parts of the city attacking babies in their cribs and small children left unattended.

Slightly Used Auto...

Cheap!: Another favorite that’s made the rounds for years is about a woman who sells her husband’s incredibly expensive sports car — usually a Porsche, but it changes from year to year and teller to teller — for next to nothing (usually \$50 or \$100) either because (a) he cheated on her, or (b) he died and she didn’t know the car’s value (in this version of the story, it’s a “classic” car of some sort). Ask around long enough and you’ll find someone who claims that “a friend of his” “knows a guy” who took advantage of this deal.

Svelte: You know all those ultra-thin models and actresses you see on TV and in magazines? Well, they’ve had ribs removed to keep their hourglass figures perfect. And guess what!? There are some underground clinics in Hudson City who’ll perform this service for non-famous women for a nominal fee....

In a related story, gangs of organleggers have been striking around Hudson City. They kidnap healthy-looking people off the streets. The victim wakes up in the bathtub in a hotel in the suburbs to find that one of his kidneys has been removed for sale on the black market.

MYSTIC PLACES

The Mystic World includes places of arcane import as well as knowledgeable people. Some of the mystic locations in Hudson City include:

The Belltower Of St. Ignatius: The belltower of the St. Ignatius Cathedral (page 57) was the site of a mutual suicide pact between two lovers in 1875 who, despairing that their families would never agree to let them marry, killed themselves. Mediums claim their anguished thoughts and passions have charged the tower with mystic energy that has attracted various spirits, thus making the tower one of Hudson City’s best-known haunted sites.

Chinatown: The people of Chinatown tend to be more superstitious, and more willing to accept and work with people who claim to have mystic powers (such as *feng shui* specialists), than the average Hudsonite. Some Chinatowners claim that various places in and beneath Chinatown are loci of lines of mystic force, or otherwise possess arcane power.

Hangman’s Hill: According to “sensitives,” the spirits of the many people who were executed on Hangman’s Hill in the early years of the city still linger there, full of malice, anger, regret, and lust for vengeance. Once or twice park visitors have reported seeing “strange lights” there.

The Owl’s Roost Bookstore (northeast corner of Onslow Avenue and Cayuga Street): Stuffed to the brim with used books of every shape, size, and subject, the Owl’s Roost is particularly well-known for its collection on the occult. The owners, Jim and Margaret Schoen, know a thing or two about matters arcane (strictly as dilettante scholars, though; they’ve never taught), and have made an effort to acquire books on the subject for their store. They keep the rarest books in their collection under lock and key in special temperature-controlled bookcases, and show them only on appointment.

The Pilkenton Mansion (380 Taylor Street): This abandoned home, located in the Burnside neighborhood of Guilford, was the scene of a gruesome triple murder in 1936 — Abraham Pilkenton, his wife Alice, and their teenage daughter Florence all lost their lives at the hands of a killer. No one has ever uncovered the reasons for the killing or the murderer’s identity — as near as anyone can tell, it was a simple burglary gone wrong, since the family jewels and other easily-carried valuables were missing. But many people have reported seeing the ghosts of one or all of the Pilkentons in the house, and “sensitives” feel something deeply “wrong” about the place. The ghosts are most likely to appear to people interested in buying the house, but have also made themselves visible to historic tours and various intruders. The Hudson City Historical Society owns, maintains, and offers tours of the Mansion.

RELICS AND ARTIFACTS

Sometimes special items can become charged with great magical power... or so some mystics claim. Here are a few items from Hudson City history that might meet that description:

The Pendant of Patricia Arkwright: In the early, early days of the city, a mysterious old woman named Patricia Arkwright was hung for killing four children. She claimed it was for purposes of “witchcraft,” and though most people were skeptical of that, there was no question of her guilt for the murders. For reasons lost to history, the hanging took place on a tiny island in the Stewart River that no longer exists (in the 1880s, it was removed as a hazard to navigation); it was near the present-day Centre Street Tunnel. While helping to construct the Tunnel, an Italian laborer found an antique pendant which he turned over to the Hudson City Historical Society. Experts date it to the mid-1700s or early 1800s, and some people believe it was Arkwright’s personal “talisman.” The Historical Society placed it in the Hudson City Historical Museum, where it remains on display to this day.

The Raven’s Tarot: When the famed crimebuster known only as the Raven fought the underworld in the Twenties and Thirties, it was rumored he had mystic powers that helped him with his war on crime. Chief among these powers was the Raven’s Tarot, a special deck of tarot cards supposedly designed by the Raven himself and possessing even greater oracular authority than normal tarot cards. While the Raven is surely dead by now, no one has ever found his Tarot... if it exists at all.

The Scarlatti Mirror: At the Hudson City Historical Museum (page 111) there’s a large, ornately-framed mirror that’s over 200 years old. An heirloom of the Scarlatti family, the mirror was in the room where Gina Scarlatti murdered her parents, brother, and baby sister with a butcher’s knife in 1886. It’s said that in the right light, at the right time of day, during the right seasons of the year, you can sometimes see the entire murder re-enacted in the mirror by apparitions. “Sensitives” claim to find the mirror disturbing.

The Zodiac Book: In the Rare Book Room at the Hunneford Library (pages 58-59) there’s a large incunabula bound in featureless black leather. Experts believe it was printed in Germany or Switzerland sometime in the late 1400s, but when you get right down to it no one has any firm information about where and when it originated, much less who wrote and printed it. It consists of 144 densely-printed pages, twelve for each of the signs of the Zodiac. Occultists say that hidden among its mundane astrological lore and diagrams are true secrets of high magic that would allow an adept to foretell the future... but since the Library won’t lend the book out or allow anyone to copy it, they can’t test their theories.

Continued on next page

THE RELIGIOUS WORLD

"Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It's been six months since my last confession."

"And what sins have you committed since then, my son?"

"Well... quite a lot, actually. Smoking, drinking, consorting with women of low morals. But most recently I killed five men."

"What? What did you say, my son?"

"I said I killed five men. Five men."

"Why, my son?"

"Because they had it comin'. Not everyone deserves to live, Father."

"My son, no man can take that power unto himself. The power of life and death is God's alone."

"Oh, boy, is that wrong. Anyone who can afford a gun can take that power unto himself. And this isn't going to be the last time, either, I can promise you that."

"My son, what is it you want of me? I cannot offer absolution unless you repent of your sins... and cease them."

"That's not what I'm after, Father. I don't need forgiveness — I told you, they had it comin'. What I want is a witness. When you read about this in the paper tomorrow... and you will, Father, trust me on that... I want you to come forward and explain to people that I'm not crazy. I have a purpose. My acts have meaning. And I need you to tell them that."

— a rather unusual confession

As the vital statistics on page 16 indicate, Hudsonites belong to many different religions. The original founders of the city were Protestants, but since that time many different waves of immigration have brought new religions from all over the world into the picture.

CHURCHES AND TEMPLES

The neighborhood descriptions in Chapter Two include several of the prominent religious buildings in Hudson City, including St. Andrew's (page 19) and St. Ignatius Cathedral (page 57). Some of the others include:

Beth Israel Temple (655 5th Avenue): One of the oldest Jewish houses of worship in Hudson City, Beth Israel has established an enviable record for community service. But it's also attracted some controversy as the home temple of Rabbi Solomon Stern (see below) and a prominent sponsor of the Star Project, an organization that hunts Nazi war criminals and neo-Nazi "terrorists."

Christ Lutheran Church (northeast corner of 14th Avenue and Van Buren Street): Some aesthetes argue that this Lutheran church in Blackbridge is the most beautiful building in the city. Constructed in a sort of "modern Gothic" style with the finest grey-green marble, its soaring towers and steeple echo the skyscrapers of the surrounding city in a way that both uplifts and humbles.

Church Of Humbalu Areya Aye (434 Bayle Street): Dismissed by some people as a "Voodoo cult," Hudson City's most prominent Santería congregation meets here to worship the *orishas* and engage in social activities. An attached *botanica* sells icons, herbs, and other Santería supplies.

First Baptist Church (6902 Steele Street): Standing strong and proud amidst the rampant commerce and materialism of the Lowdown and Pierpoint, First Baptist Church has been a part of the Hudson City community for nearly 200 years. It has a small museum inside featuring artifacts from the original church, which was destroyed in the 1895 fire.

Golden Buddha Temple (southeast corner of Avon Avenue and Covent Street): This Chinese temple is a mainstay of life in Chinatown. Despite its name, it allows Taoist worship as well as Buddhist, and promotes the social tenets of Confucianism as well.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church (southwest corner of Birch Avenue and Rotterdam Street): After St. Ignatius, Our Lady of Mercy, in Little Italy, is probably the largest Catholic church in Hudson City. The recipient of several extremely generous donations over the past four decades, it's used the money not only to expand and update its facilities, but to establish outreach, missionary, and charity programs throughout the city and the world.

Sacred Path Temple (near the intersection of Riverfront Drive and N. Madison Street): This Indian Buddhist temple is less than 20 years old, but has already become a focal point of Hudson City's Indian immigrant community, Buddhists, Hindus, and Sikhs alike. The latter two groups both have their own temples elsewhere in the city, but major events, such as celebrations of Indian holidays, always seem to take place at Sacred Path.

Weitzmann Synagogue (northwest corner of Ashmont Avenue and Oneida Street): Founded in 1993, this temple is part of the Weitzmann Hebrew Academy, a private preparatory school for young Jewish men.

MEN OF THE CLOTH

Religions are about more than special buildings and books. Men and women of faith often do more to help worshippers than all the holy writ in the world.

Thomas Cardinal Alessi: The Archbishop of the Catholic see that includes Hudson City maintains his offices at St. Ignatius Cathedral. Appointed to his office by his good friend Pope John Paul II, he's considered by some a potential candidate to become the next pope upon John Paul II's death. Veteran Vatican-watchers think the selection of an American candidate unlikely, but stranger things have happened in the annals of the Church.

Continued from last page

That's Mighty White Of You: More than once, the story has spread throughout Hudson City that a particular company — usually a national one, but sometimes a major local business like Boudreau's Department Store — is owned by the Ku Klux Klan, or some similar organization. No proof is ever forthcoming, but it inevitably results in a loss of business for the company in question.

That Wasn't In The Recipe...: The list of things supposedly mixed into, or found in, food served in Hudson City would just about fill a book itself: roaches (or roach eggs); semen; blood; various body parts (particularly fingers); used condoms; medical waste... the list goes revoltingly on. True, verifiable accounts of persons who've successfully sued restaurants over contaminated or spoiled food have only fueled this particular fire. Sometimes the story has a gruesome ending, such as the version in which insect eggs consumed in a burger/taco/hot dog/knish lodge in the eater's throat or stomach and hatch....

One of the most horrific of these rumors started in 2001, when "they" claimed that the radical gay activist group HONUR (page 42) was putting HIV-laced blood in ketchup dispensers so that victims would "feel our pain." Nothing was ever proven, and HONUR even won a libel suit over the matter, but the use of ketchup in city restaurants plummeted for months.

This Is Your Brain On Drugs: Various stories, including some reported in the *Sun* or other

Continued on next page

Continued from last page

papers more concerned with sensationalism than fact-checking, claim people have done all sorts of horrific things while high. Examples include the babysitter who cooks the baby in the oven, the acid trip that causes a man to slice off bits of his flesh, the kids who stared at the sun until they went blind, and many “creative” forms of suicide.

You're Gonna Be A Star: Verified stories about women (from one country or another, including the U.S.) being lured into the sex trade in some other country have been around for years. “They” say that the latest twist on this in Hudson City is “film crews” luring women away from crowded areas with promises to put them in commercials, then kidnapping and raping them.

Reverend James Pick: This hot-tempered and antagonistic black Baptist preacher is a leader in the Hudson City civil rights community and one of the most controversial figures in the city. Known for his loud, belligerent speeches, he frequently denounces the white citizens of Hudson City (especially those who disagree with him) as racists, bigots, and Nazis. His enemies describe him as a race-baiter and a bigot himself. His 1995 championing of two black youths who claimed white police officers beat them but who turned out to be total liars has lent credence to his enemies’ charges against him but done little to damage his standing in the black community.

Rabbi Solomon Stern: An influential figure in the city’s Jewish community, Rabbi Stern has achieved some notoriety with his outspoken denunciation of several organized crime groups, such as outlaw motorcycle gangs that include Nazi symbols as part of their outfits or “colors.”

FRINGE RELIGIONS AND CULTS

Not every religious group in Hudson City enjoys the legitimacy accorded to faiths like Catholicism, Buddhism, or the Baptist Church. Several are more commonly labeled “cults” or fringe religions. They include:

The Church Of Holy Unity: This cult preaches a doctrine that Man himself is the one true god. The Church’s leader, Dr. Ken Fowler, describes all other organized religions as “evil” and “deceptive.” Followers of the Holy Unity must surrender all of their worldly possessions to the Church and live in one of its large farming compounds. There is one such compound to the west of Pineville and Blanton, and the Church’s blue-robed “acolytes” do a lot of proselytizing and fundraising in Hudson City.

The Church Of The True Messiah: With its world headquarters in Mint Ridge (page 71), the Church of the True Messiah presents itself as the “correct” form of Christianity, one that worships the true Messiah — the Church’s founder, Jonathan James Ross. Most people would simply call it a cult that bilks weak-willed people seeking acceptance out of their life’s savings. The authorities have investigated the Church several times, but have never prosecuted it.

Ross, a recluse now in his seventies who’s believed to live in Hudson City, leads the Church as its “Holy Eminence.” Serving him are a corps of “Holy Fathers” and “High Fathers” (roughly, bishops and priests) who minister to the faithful in his name. The Church expects worshippers to donate generously to it and its causes.

The First International Church Of Satan: Urban legends of baby-sacrificing Satanic cults aside, Hudson City is home to an organization that calls itself the First International Church of Satan. It rents an old warehouse on South River Drive in Elmview for use as a church, where its High Priest and Priestess, a couple named Alasdair and Sophia Lovasz, conduct “Black Masses” and other rituals to “honor our lord and master, Lucifer.” Legitimate religious figures in the city have noted an alarming increase in

the number of “converts” to the church, especially among young people.

Voodoo: Besides the Church Of Humbalu Areya Aye (see above), several Voodoo groups (not to mention a few voodoo posses) exist in Hudson City. The best known of them is the aptly-named Church of Voodoo (3217 Moore Street in Freetown).

THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WORLD

“Hey, Jim, come check this out.”

“Whaddaya got?”

“Just take a look at it. See the micro-gear there on the right?”

“Holy crap! It worked! I can’t believe it finally worked!”

“Now all we gotta do is figure out a way to make money off of it.”

— a recent conversation at
Nanoverse Enterprises R&D

Hudson City isn’t Silicon Valley, but nevertheless it’s the scene of a lot of pioneering technological development and experimentation. Most of this work takes place at the three local universities or at major companies in the area, but there are plenty of smaller tech start-up firms and backroom tinkerers hoping for a big discovery that will make them rich.

LABORATORIES AND TECH COMPANIES

Besides Fordham ChemTech, StarrTech, and Strake Industries International, all described in the *Business World* section beginning on page 119, here are some of the leading lights of the Hudson City technological firmament.

Albemarle Laboratories: Based in the suburb of Bedford, Albemarle Labs is on the cutting edge of bio-engineering and genetics research and development. It also has cryonics and agricultural sciences divisions. Company founder and CEO Bennett Moran is something of a maverick in the scientific world thanks to his blatant commercialism and willingness to insult other scientists.

Nanoverse Enterprises: Nanotechnology is all the rage these days, and Nanoverse was founded to exploit that interest and push back the boundaries of the scientific frontier. From their Corinth County facility, the scientists of Nanoverse have already made several significant breakthroughs, and more are expected soon.

Sewell Computing Laboratories (northeast corner of Pierce Avenue and N. Kimberly Street): Started by computer programmer Martin Sewell in his parents’ basement in the early Eighties, Sewell Computing has risen to become one of the most profitable and successful companies in the computing industry. While much smaller than many of its fellows, it concentrates on subjects it excels in — producing minor but defi-

nite improvement to computer chips and other tech, and certain specialized programming tasks — and produces results on deadline.

SCIENTISTS AND INVENTORS

Tech companies provide the funding for research and development — but it's people that do the work and make the discoveries. Some of Hudson City's best-known researchers and inventors include:

Doctor Li "Lee" Baoxian: An escapee from Communist China and a professor at HCSU, Dr. Baoxian is an expert on laser physics and the industrial use of lasers. In appreciation for the millions of dollars he's brought in through grants and patents, the university built him a special lab just for his own experiments at one of its satellite campuses.

Doctor Robert Keenan: Head of the R&D lab at Strake Industries International, Dr. Keenan oversees a variety of projects involving military and industrial applications. Despite being relegated to a mostly administrative role these days, he's a brilliant scientist with advanced degrees in physics, materials science, and business. He donates a lot of money to charities in Freetown, where he grew up.

Doctor Bryce Krueger: Often described as "eccentric" ("bizarre" and "chronically late" would be more accurate), the young Dr. Krueger ("Call me Freddie!") earned his Ph.D in computer science at the tender age of 18. He specializes in advanced computer design and supposedly teaches at HCU, though whenever possible he foists his teaching duties off on grad students so he can go on working.

Doctor Janet Shane: An employee of Fordham ChemTech, Dr. Shane designs computer guidance systems and related parts for missiles and similar military devices. According to one report, her work has improved the efficiency of Army missiles by 11%.

DOCTOR JANICE SELLERS

8 STR	10 DEX	10 CON	10 BODY
10 INT	10 EGO	13 PRE	12 COM
3 PD	3 ED	1 SPD	4 REC
20 END	19 STUN		

Abilities: Animal Handler (Birds, Canines, Felines) 12-, KS: The Academic World 11-, KS: The Hudson City Geological Profile 13-, KS: The Hudson City Underground Environment 8-, SS: Chemistry 8-, SS: Forensic Geology 11-, SS: Geology 14-, SS: Geophysics 11-, SS: Physics 8-

Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Animal Lover

Notes: A tenured professor at HCSU, Janice Sellers is one of the country's foremost geologists. She's conducted numerous studies of the geology of Stewart County and southern New Jersey, and has become such an expert on the soils of the region that the police often call her in as a consultant and expert witness regarding soil evidence.

Doctor Sellers spends most of her free time tending to her menagerie of pets — an unabashed animal lover, she can't say "no" when she sees an abandoned animal or hears of a friend who has a pet looking for a home. So far she's got a dog, three cats, a guinea pig, and a macaw... and heaven only knows what she'll bring home next.

THE SOCIAL WORLD

"Spare change? Got any spare change, mister?"

— heard on streets all around Hudson City

Beyond business, beyond law, beyond religion and learning and everything else, people simply have to live with one another. The Social World of Hudson City is one of contrasts — great highs matched by great lows.

The World Of The Wealthy

Fancy cars, opulent mansions, glittering jewels, and the best of everything — such are the realities of life for the rich and fabulously rich of Hudson City.

THE WEALTHIEST PEOPLE

In addition to Ben Berkely (pages 30, 119), Thomas Allen (page 121), Brad Quinn (page 21), Candace Vanderburg (page 55), and Jeffrey Fordham (page 87), a few more of Hudson City's richest individuals are listed below. According to most rankings, the three wealthiest Hudsonites are Berkely, Fordham, and Allen, in that order.

Jacques Boudreau: Scion of the Boudreau family that founded the famous department store, Jacques Boudreau does relatively little with the family business except to show up at major board meetings and lend his name to various charity drives and promotional campaigns. He prefers to use his money to travel around the world in search of new thrills, take up exotic hobbies, and seemingly try to date every good-looking single woman on the planet. His latest craze is building and flying replicas of Twenties and Thirties airplanes.

Jennifer Constanza: Jennifer Constanza was born in Latin City. She started her show business career at 16 as a model and quickly graduated to "super-model" status. After that, she got into acting, then fashion design... and at every step she made even more money, always investing it wisely. Despite the 2002 discovery that her former business manager had siphoned off millions from her empire (a matter currently in litigation), she still has several hundred million dollars to her name... and she's only 31.

Andy "Stonehand" Mawser: The star quarterback for the Hudson City Thunderbolts is one of the most photogenic and personable athletes in the NFL... and that translates into major endorsement deals. He earns \$8 million a year on the field, but his promotional deals and clever investments have brought him hundreds of millions beyond that. Other men sometimes buy their wives flowers; Mawser sends his beloved Lyn weekly gifts such as furs, jewelry, and \$10,000 an ounce perfume.

ARIZONA DUPREE

12 STR	14 DEX
14 CON	12 BODY
13 INT	11 EGO
15 PRE	16 COM
4 PD	4 ED
3 SPD	6 REC
30 END	25 STUN

Abilities: Martial Arts (20 points' worth of Kung Fu), Combat Driving 12-, KS: Modern Pop Culture 11-, KS: Rock And Pop Music 11-, PS: Singing 13-, SS: Biology 11-, SS: Chemistry 11-, SS: Physics 13-, TF: Basic Parachuting, Advanced Parachuting, SCUBA, Snow Skiing, WF: Small Arms, Money: Filthy Rich

Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Thrillseeker; Psychological Limitation: Noblesse Oblige; Social Limitation: Famous

Notes: When she's not competing on the semi-pro racing circuit, participating in team sky-diving tournaments, assisting her friends at HCU with particle physics experiments, attending a Hollywood premiere, or helping a friend of the family with some sort of charity event, you'll usually find Arizona Dupree fronting her band, Anxiety Fountain, as lead singer. Sole heir to the enormous Dupree dry cleaning fortune, she's used her money, good looks, and plethora of natural talents to build a one-woman nonprofit business empire around her "career" as a "thrillseeking adventurer." Her fans think she's the greatest thing ever. Her relatives think she's a little disturbed... but most of them figure her ways of relieving boredom are better than taking drugs and sleeping around. Arizona doesn't care what any of them think; she's just having a ball being herself and occasionally making the world a better place.

THE WEALTHIEST FAMILIES

Sometimes known as “the dynasties” because of their long-lasting wealth and influence on Hudson City society and politics, these families possess vast resources of many kinds. Their children want for nothing, and they’ve all had members prominent not only in business, but in local, state, and national politics.

The Bankhursts: The descendants of Revolutionary War hero General Richard Bankhurst parlayed his name and hard work into an even more prosperous farming and ranching business than his own... then into industry and publishing... and eventually into the high-tech sector of the modern global economy. Bankhurst Holdings, the family’s partnership, has assets valued at over \$100 billion. The clan remains relatively small, but most of them don’t live in Hudson City full-time anymore; only Eugene and Renee Bankhurst, renowned as patrons of the arts, stay in the city year-round.

The Fraziers: Jeremiah Frazier was a friend of Emil Hudson’s who accepted Hudson’s invitation to move to his “new Eden in the Americas.” He didn’t regret it. At first he raised horses, but he and his sons later became involved in fur trapping and trading. In time they moved beyond supply to manufacturing, creating clothes and other goods. By the Jazz Age they were among America’s most prominent industrialists, but after World War II they wisely diversified into the finance and services industries. Today the main part

of the family consists only of Jeremiah “Jem” Frazier IV, his wife Audrey, and their four children (ages 6 to 14), but there are any number of cousins and other distant relatives who feed, to one degree or another, at the Frazier trough.

The Willoughbys: In contrast to both the Bankhursts and the Fraziers, the Willoughbys are numerous throughout the greater Hudson City area. Their patriarch, William Willoughby, was a staunch Catholic, and bred his beliefs, including a desire for large families, into his heirs. As a family they’ve got their hands in every economic pie you could imagine, from manufacturing, to publishing, to high tech, to entertainment, to oil, and far beyond.

MAVENS OF SOCIETY

Among the wealthy in any society, certain people stand out. They may be more flamboyant, more extravagant, better entertainers, or simply more personable, but something about them attracts other well-to-do people (and hangers-on) like moths to a flame. In Hudson City, the ranks of such people include:

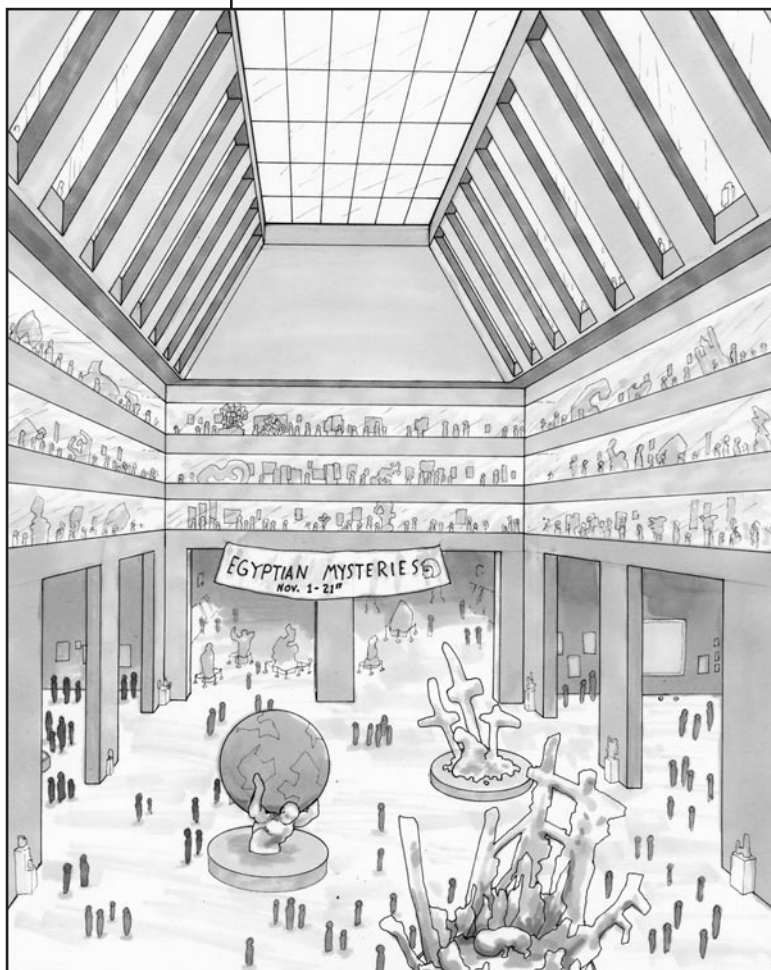
Philip and Martha Andrews: Philip is a top executive at the Hudson City branch of Avery Industries; his wife, Martha, retired from the publishing industry in 1998. Martha is an incurable gossip, making her a good source of interesting information about Hudson City’s social set if you can get close to her.

Adriene and Jake Davidson: This young couple is a darling of the Hudson City social scene. Though it’s not clear where their money comes from (software engineering? art treasures looted from the Nazis? lottery winnings? stock market? inheritance?), two things are for sure — they’ve got plenty of it, and they enjoy spending it. They live in a turn-of-the-century house in Irishtown (known as the “Mustard Mansion” for its distinctive yellow-brown color) with two Maltese dogs, three Abyssinian cats, and a parrot named Mr. Feathers who curses friend and foe alike in fluent Latin. They frequently throw parties or entertain houseguests.

Leon and Rachel Edwards: Leon Edwards is one of the most successful attorneys in Hudson City history. Although he’s now retired from the practice of law, the millions of dollars he brought in, and his wife’s clever investing, have left them extremely well-off. They now spend much of their time running a small charitable organization, the Edwards Foundation, and making grants to area universities. The recently-completed Edwards Computer and Video Center at City College is just one of the couple’s many fine works.

Brad L. Patrick: Heir to the Patrick candy fortune, Brad Patrick is a handsome young man whom many people consider Hudson City’s most charming and eligible bachelor. So far he seems content to lead a life of aimless luxury, often in the company of his friend Jacques Boudreau (see above).

Marion Stuart: A wealthy widow, “Stu” Stuart is nonetheless relatively young and in big demand on the Hudson City social circuit. Her renown as a hostess means that receiving an invitation to one



of her parties is a major social coup. The guest lists typically read like a “who’s who” of Hudson City society, and all sorts of networking and dealmaking go on at them.

LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS

Besides the City Club (page 59) and similar places described in Chapter Two, not to mention the Skyline Club (page 196) here’s a list of a few of the exclusive “hangouts” and playgrounds of the wealthy citizens of the greater Hudson City area.

Blackbridge Racquet Club (4330 Iroquois Street):

A sports and health club for the wealthy, located in the eastern part of Blackbridge. It features an indoor basketball court, racquetball and handball courts, a well-equipped weight room and fitness center, private masseuses, gold-plated fixtures in the bathrooms, a large sauna, an equally large jacuzzi, and many similar amenities. Many high-powered business deals take place here.

Cambria Country Club: CCC is a small club in the suburb of Cambria. Its golf course is not particularly noteworthy, but its dinner facilities are some of the best around.

Firetree Country Club: Located in the suburb of Andrews Heights only a few minutes’ drive west of the city proper, this club (the most expensive one in the area) has a dozen tennis courts, two Olympic-sized pools (plus several smaller pools for exercisers and young children), an award-winning 18-hole golf course, and excellent dining facilities. The annual Firetree Cotillion, held in May, is one of the biggest social events of the season.

Hudson City Country Club: The HCCC is in Rome, right on the border of the main part of the city. It’s the least expensive of the area’s country clubs, and membership is considered the “first step” on a person’s climb up the city’s social ladder.

Hudson Beach Yacht Club: A club for people interested in sailing and/or attending seaside parties. The biggest yacht in the place is Ben Berkely’s *Sea Queen*, a 200-foot ship with the most luxurious accommodations available. The club’s annual Regatta and its “summer circuit” of fabulous parties are big events in the city’s social calendar.

Stone Ridge Country Club: A large club located in Northdale. In addition to its golf course and baseball diamond, Stone Ridge has acres of meadows, fields, and woods suitable for picnics, volleyball, hiking, school field trips, and other activities.



The World Of The Poor

There’s a flip side to everything — including wealth. Some people have far more of it than average, but some people barely have enough to live on. Unfortunately, like all major American cities, Hudson City has a substantial number of citizens living below the poverty line, and some of them don’t have any place to call home other than the streets. Most of the poor live on the Southside; in some neighborhoods, such as Freetown, Lafayette, and North Elmview, it often seems like the only people with any money are drug dealers and other criminal scum.

HOMELESSNESS

According to the best estimates, Hudson City has a homeless population of around 45,000. As of late 2004, average occupancy of the city’s homeless shelters totaled approximately 38,000 (15,000 children, 23,000 adults), but experts believe several thousand more live on the city’s streets, park benches, and subway trains/tunnels. Approximately 80% of them suffer from severe mental illnesses and are afraid of the authorities in general, and homeless shelters in particular. The largest congregation of them is in Boxtown (page 48), but other gathering places crop up here and there throughout the city.

The homeless are regarded in some circles as a nuisance, or even dangerous. While most

CRAZY LENNY

6 STR	8 DEX
9 CON	7 BODY
10 INT	8 EGO
10 PRE	7 COM
3 PD	2 ED
2 SPD	3 REC
18 END	15 STUN

Abilities: Bribery 8-, CK: Hudson City 11-, Language: Vietnamese (basic conversation), Shadowing 11-, Stealth 11-, Survival (Urban) 11-, TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, WF: Small Arms

Disadvantages: Money: Destitute; Psychological Limitation: Alcoholic; Social Limitation: Homeless Person

Notes: Crazy Lenny is just one of the thousands of homeless people roaming the Hudson City streets. He gets his nickname because he tends to talk to himself a lot, and sometimes stops whatever he's doing to swat at imaginary flies buzzing all around his head — he's not dangerous, just a little disturbed. Despite that, he's smarter and more observant than most people give him credit for. He still remembers the snippets of Vietnamese he picked up during the war, as well as traces of other military skills... and he keeps his wits (such as they are) about him as he walks the paths of the decidedly different jungle he now lives in.

just want to survive and get by, there's no denying that the more desperate, deeply disturbed, or drug addicted ones can pose a threat to other people. They steal and rob to support themselves, and sometimes attack people whom they regard as threats or easy marks.

CHARITIES AND SHELTERS

Many different charitable institutions help the needy citizens of Hudson City in one way or another. Besides the Barton Street Mission (page 62) and others described in Chapter Two, here are a few more:

Barron Foundation: A charitable organization founded by Barron Pharmaceuticals as part of the settlement of a large class action lawsuit. Its main projects include drug and alcohol abuse treatment programs, drug awareness education, and the like, but it also maintains a scholarship fund for pharmacology students.

Richard and Maria Fordham

Foundation: Started by Fordham ChemTech head Jeffrey Fordham, this foundation is responsible for a wide variety of charitable works. One of its main projects is a series of Fordham Youth Centers on the Southside to provide activities for children and teens to keep them off the street. So far the Foundation's only built one (at the intersection of Polder Avenue and Van Allen Street), but half a dozen more are planned so far.

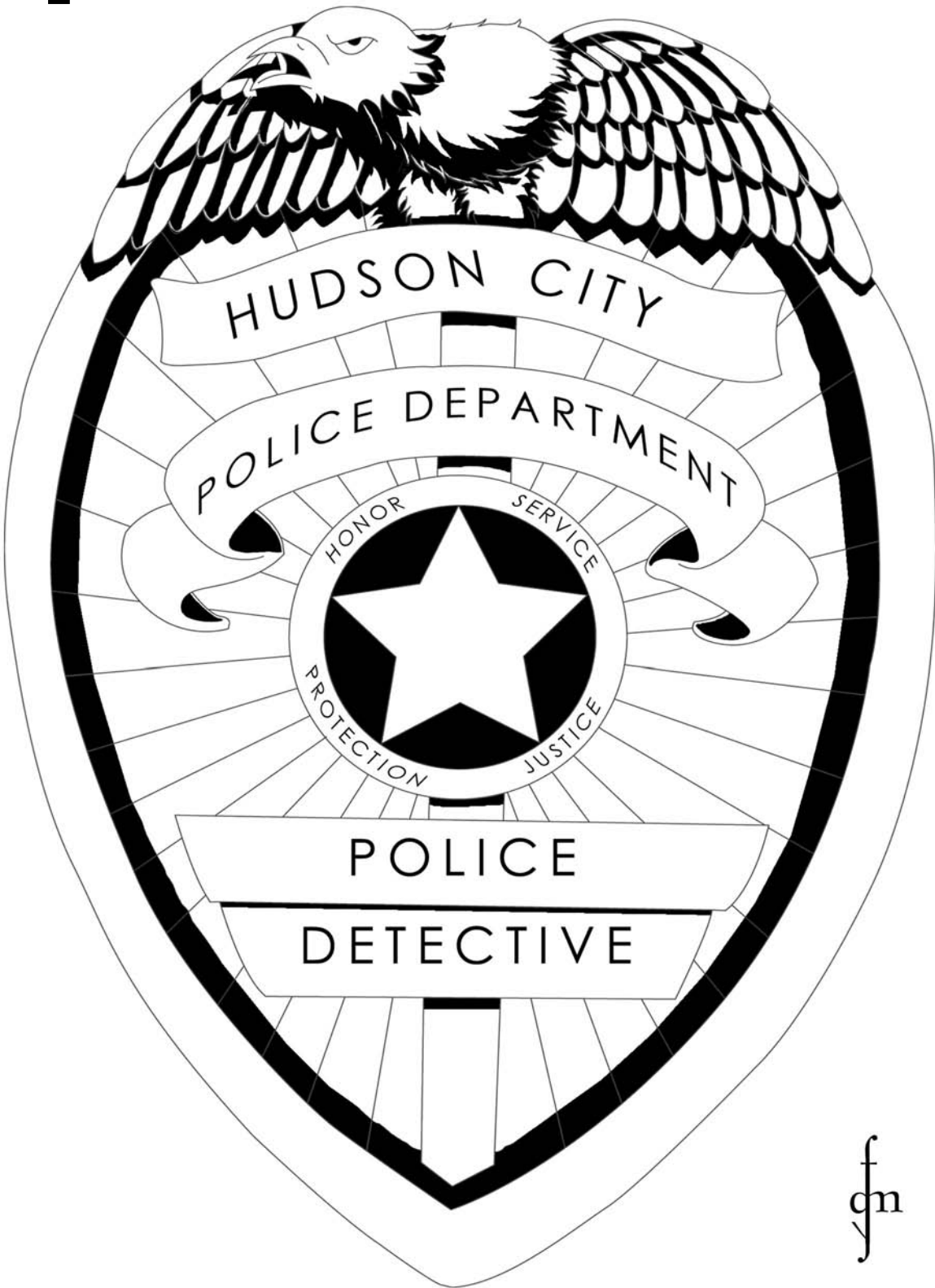
Thirty-Fifth Street Mission: A shelter and soup kitchen on Thirty-Fifth Street in the Numbers in Freetown. It has about a hundred beds, most of them occupied by homeless mothers and their children at any given time. A coalition of several churches operates it, though most of the staff are part-time volunteers.



King Avenue Urban Center: A large soup kitchen and shelter on King Avenue in Lafayette. Due to the large population of nearby Boxtown, it sees heavy traffic at mealtimes, though its shelter is sometimes underused (particularly in the summertime).

The VOLT Foundation: Created by real estate magnate Richard Ravenscroft, the Victims Of Lawlessness and Terror (VOLT) Foundation is a two-pronged organization. One half of it is a think tank devoted to issues of criminology, public safety, and national security; this branch also lobbies for tougher anti-crime laws. The other half is a community outreach program with two purposes. The first is to "help people help themselves," as VOLT literature puts it. This means assisting with the development of "Neighborhood Watch"-style safety programs, conducting personal safety seminars, and the like. The second is to compensate the victims of violent crime who need immediate assistance due to their victimization. For example, the Foundation will pay for a short hotel stay for a family that can't remain in its home due to damage suffered during a break-in. The Foundation also maintains several battered women's shelters (page 146).

chapter four:



LAW ENFORCEMENT IN HUDSON CITY
THE LONG ARM OF THE LAW

THE HUDSON CITY POLICE



"Hey, Dillon, how ya doin'? First week going OK?"

"Yeah, I guess. Nothing too heavy — talking to rowdy neighbors and a couple of street busts and stuff."

"Good, just keep alert out there — the bad people aren't going to take it any easier on ya 'cause you're a rookie. Here, this is for you." He handed Dillon a couple of rolled-up bills.

"Twenty-five bucks? What's this?"

"Your share of the pad, kid," he said, speaking more softly now. "It's not much 'cause you're new, but give it time."

"I don't get it."

He leaned in closely, whispered fiercely. "Look, rookie, take it. People in the precinct pay us to keep more of an eye on their places... or maybe not to look so closely at some things. It's the way things are. If you don't want it, fine — more for me. But keep your trap shut, got it?"

"...No... no, I'll keep it. Thanks, Sarge."

"No sweat, kid. All part of learnin' the ropes. See ya 'round."

— conversation in the locker room of the 12th Precinct

Law enforcement in Hudson City first and foremost means the Hudson City Police Department (HCPD), a force of approximately 32,000 officers plus another 9,000 clerical workers — far too few of both to handle the city's enormous crime problem.

ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

The HCPD organizes itself in three ways: first, by rank; second, geographically; third, by function.

Ranks

The HCPD has a five-tier rank structure. At the very top of force is the Police Commissioner, who's appointed to his job by the mayor. The current Commissioner is Alexander Ringwald, whom Mayor Umstead appointed upon taking office (see text box).

Immediately below the Commissioner are two ranks. First are the several *Deputy Commissioners*, each commanding one of the main bureaus of the Department (see below). Second are the *Commanders*, each in charge of one of the twelve Districts the HCPD divides the city into (see below). The "leader" of the officers at this level is the First Deputy Commissioner, who serves as special assistant to the Commissioner. If the Commissioner cannot perform his duties, the First Deputy becomes Commissioner *Pro Tem* until the mayor appoints a new Commissioner. Commissioner Ringwald's First Deputy is Ronald Garrone, a big, hearty fellow who reminds some people of a hard-nosed Sidney Greenstreet.

The third tier in the rank system is *Captain*. A captain commands a precinct (see below) and answers to the commander in charge of his area. Serving beneath captains are *Lieutenants*. Each precinct has several lieutenants to see that the station runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Many of the men in the various detective squads (such as Homicide or Burglary & Robbery) are also lieutenants.

Sergeant is the last level of command, the one that takes care of things on the street and handles many of the day-to-day major chores in the precinct houses. Theoretically, police regulations call for at least one sergeant to respond to every major call for assistance, but in practice there aren't nearly enough sergeants to go around.

Below the sergeants are the *patrol officers*, in two ranks: P1 and P2. To become a P2, an officer must have at least two years' experience as a P1 and pass an exam. An officer cannot advance further in the ranks (for example, become a sergeant or a detective) without first serving as a P2 for at least six months. HCPD patrol officers generally ride in squad cars in groups of two.

In some situations, rank matters less than one might expect. For example, police regulations spec-

HUDSON CITY CRIME STATISTICS

According to the data in the FBI's Uniform Crime Report, here's how many crimes were committed in Hudson City standard metropolitan statistical area in 2003:

Violent Crimes	Number
Murder and non-negligent manslaughter	1,038
Forcible rape	2,512
Robbery	30,112
Aggravated assault	36,758

Property Crimes	Number
Burglary	32,991
Larceny	168,730
Motor vehicle theft	26,554

POLICE COMMISSIONER ALEXANDER RINGWALD

10 STR	11 DEX	12 CON	11 BODY
13 INT	12 EGO	20 PRE	10 COM
3 PD	2 ED	3 SPD	4 REC
24 END	22 STUN		

Abilities: +2 PER with Sight Group, Martial Arts (Police Self-Defense [Commando Training], Use Art with Tonfa), Acting 8-, Bureaucratics 13-, Combat Driving 11-, Criminology 13-, Deduction 12-, Gambling (Cards) 8-, KS: Criminal Law And Procedure 11-, KS: The Law Enforcement World 14-, KS: Hudson City Underworld 12-, KS: Hudson City Government 11-, Lockpicking 8-, Security Systems 8-, Shadowing 12-, Stealth 11-, Streetwise 13-, WF: Small Arms, Tonfa, SS: Forensic Pathology 8-, Fringe Benefits: Law Enforcement Rank, Local Police Powers, Weapon Permit, Well-Connected and 20 points' worth of Contacts in city government, other law enforcement agencies, and the street.

25+ Disadvantages: Hunted: various organized crime groups 8- (As Pow, NCI, Kill); Hunted by the media 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching); Psychological Limitation: Perpetually Suspicious.

Notes: Police Commissioner Alexander Ringwald is a bold, confident man in his mid-40s. He started working with the HCPD right out of high school as a beat patrolman. His quick wits and sharp eye soon earned him promotions, and after seven years he found himself where he had wanted to be all along — the Homicide Squad. As a homicide detective, Ringwald worked some of the most horrifying cases in the city's history, and even had to go undercover a time or two to locate particularly dangerous killers, but he handled every job with skill and aplomb. The enemies he made with his driven, no-nonsense working style were far outweighed by the cops and citizens who admired his hard work and the results he achieved.

After five years on the Homicide Squad, Lieutenant Ringwald was tapped for a promotion to Captain of the 94th Precinct, in one of the worst sections of the city. He continued to perform at his usual level, and after his sensitive handling of what could have become a nasty racial riot he was promoted to commander of the South Central District. This position brought him to the attention of then-Councilman Graydon Umstead, who frequently consulted the hard-nosed career cop on police issues. When Umstead won the mayor's seat, he chose to get rid of the current commissioner, a reputedly corrupt man named Keith Green, and put Ringwald in his place.

As Commissioner, Ringwald is a tough but fair chief cop. He absolutely will not tolerate corruption, and earned some enmity in the department during his first few months by ruthlessly pursuing a number of officers he knew to be "on the take" until he got them convicted of accepting bribes. However, unlike many commissioners, results matter more to Ringwald than appearances or "going by the book." This attitude has made him more tolerant of some vigilantes than is good for him politically; some groups have accused him of being "soft on people who take the law into their own hands." However, he has expressly instructed his people not to enter into any sort of "arrangement" with any vigilantes. It's one thing to focus police efforts on fighting real criminals instead of costumed adventurers; it's another thing entirely to rely on outsiders to do the jobs the cops should do themselves.

ify that the officer who first investigates a crime is in charge of the crime scene, regardless of his rank, until a lieutenant or captain arrives. Thus, it's possible for a lowly P1 to end up in charge of a situation even if P2s and sergeants are around. Similarly, cops quickly learn what they and their "brothers in blue" are good at, so it's not uncommon for higher-ranking cops to defer to lower-ranking ones who are particularly skilled in the task at hand (such as interrogation, crime scene analysis, or the like).

Geographic Organization

Geographically, the HCPD organizes itself into twelve *Districts* (see accompanying text box), each commanded by a Commander who reports to the Commissioner. Every commander designates one of the precinct houses in his district as his District Headquarters and keeps his personal offices there.

Within each district are several *precincts*, each responsible for patrol and investigation duties within a given neighborhood or area within the district. As of 2004, there are 120 precincts in the city, for an average of ten per district, but the number varies wildly. For instance, there are more precincts in the Southwest, South Central, and Riverside Southeast districts, all of which have very high crime rates, than in the quieter North Central and Riverside Northeast districts. A Captain commands each precinct. Most precincts have 200-300 officers and around 75 support personnel, but again the numbers tend to vary based on the crime rate within the precinct.

Bureaus And Squads

Lastly, the HCPD organizes itself by function. It refers to its functional branches as *bureaus*; within each bureau are *divisions*, *squads*, and other specialized groupings (and sometimes geographical subgroupings that don't necessarily match the overall Department's geographical scheme).

COUNTERTERRORISM BUREAU

Formed in early 2002, the Counterterrorism Bureau's mission is to investigate alleged terrorists and related suspicious activity with the intent to prevent terrorist incidents from occurring in or

COP GEAR

A typical Hudson City patrol cop is issued the following standard gear before he hits the streets:

Uniform and hat

Glock 21 .45 ACP handgun

Two extra ammo clips

Body armor (Level II [DEF 7], Activation Roll 11-)

1 set handcuffs

Baton flashlight

Tonfa

Pepper spray

Many officers, particularly detectives who spend most of their time on the street, carry one or two extra guns ("hold-out pieces"). Patrol cops often have shotguns, first aid kits, and other gear in their cars.

HCPD DISTRICTS

District	Region
Northwest (NW)	Irishtown, Guilford
North Central (NC)	Central Worthington, Blackbridge
Northeast (NE)	Eastwood, Highlands, east Worthington
Riverside Northwest (RNW)	Little Italy, Ardmore, Mint Ridge, Moscow West
Riverside North Central (RNC)	Blackbridge, LeMastre Park
Riverside Northeast (RNE)	Bankhurst, Gadsden, Bayside, Pierpoint
Riverside Southwest (RSW)	Chinatown, Riverside Hills
Riverside South Central (RSC)	Crown Point, Ashwood, Riverside Hills
Riverside Southeast (RSE)	North Elmview, northern Elmview, Red Hill
Southwest (SW)	Freetown
South Central (SC)	Forsyth, Lafayette
Southeast (SE)	Elmview, Latin City

THE PERSONNEL AND TRAINING BUREAUS

Among the many other bureaus in the HCPD, two of the most important to the average cop are Personnel and Training.

The Personnel Bureau is responsible for all administrative matters relating to the HCPD's employees: paychecks and pay schedules; vacation time; and a thousand other little things. Most cops get to know their precinct's Personnel staff pretty darn well.

The Training Bureau handles all matters relating to the training and continuing education of Hudson City cops. It maintains the bureau's Police Academy to the north of the city, where it teaches new hires all about how to be a cop and offers a series of courses to help veteran cops keep their edge on the streets.



affecting Hudson City. It works closely with many federal organizations — the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, NEST, the INS, Customs, and so forth — and often relies on them for information and assistance, since it's woefully understaffed.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE BUREAU

The Criminal Justice Bureau should actually be called the "Law Enforcement Liaison Bureau" or something similar. Its primary responsibility is to work with other state and federal law enforcement agencies to mount collaborative investigations and operations — a thankless task pretty much every day of the week, given the territoriality and touchiness of most cops.

CRIMINALISTICS BUREAU

The Criminalistics Bureau provides scientific investigative services. Its three main divisions are: the Crime Scene Technician Division, which sends trained officers to crime scenes to gather forensic evidence; the HCPD Crime Laboratory, which analyzes the evidence the CSTs gather, analyzes fingerprints, runs DNA tests, and so forth (see below); and the Bomb Squad. Criminalistics also liaises with the medical examiner (page 145) to obtain autopsy results and work together to solve crimes.

Deputy Commissioner Rita Clemente runs the Criminalistics Bureau. A former Crime Lab researcher and administrator, and later an assistant medical examiner, she knows the ins and outs of how Hudson City gathers and analyzes physical evidence

better than just about anyone in the Department. Years of looking at the most gruesome crime scenes and bodies have left her somber and humorless.

DETECTIVE BUREAU

According to the award-winning TV show *HCPD* 72, the life of a Hudson City detective is one of drama, adventure, tension, insight, the occasional sexual interlude with a grateful citizen, and bringing hardened criminals to justice by the end of the day. Real life may not be that glamorous, but there's no denying that many cops' main ambition is to get out of Patrol and become detectives. Officers in the Detective Bureau not only have high rank (Detective One, Two, or Three [all roughly equivalent to Sergeant], Lieutenant, or Captain), but better pay, more prestige, more responsibility, and more authority.

Not all detectives in the Department belong to the Detective Bureau. Some other bureaus, such as Organized Crime and Internal Affairs,

field their own investigators.

The bureau assigns most detectives to specific precincts; they work in teams of two and wear ordinary clothes. Other detectives are organized into divisions based on specific function. These specialized detectives usually operate within an entire district, but sometimes they have jurisdiction throughout Hudson City. Some of the divisions include:

Citywide Task Force

The CTF is an "elite" squad of cops with citywide jurisdiction — they can go anywhere (or be called anywhere) at any time, and can follow the threads of an investigation across the city without having to check in with different precinct captains. Many of their investigations involve narcotics or organized crime.

Detectives regard appointment to the CTF as a real "plum" not only because of the extra power (including the right to carry concealed weapons) but also because of the increase in pay and prestige. However, there are more than a few rumors about some of the Force's unorthodox practices, including everything from vigilante-style beatings of criminals to taking bribes or conspiring with criminals.

CTF detectives generally work in three- or four-man teams called *squads* and designated by alphabet codewords — Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta, Echo, and so forth. Perhaps the most notorious of them is Bravo Squad, led by Lt. Roger "Ro" Stokes. Stokes and his men have a case clearance rate 30% higher

than most other squads, though rumors say they get those results by cutting a few procedural corners and ignoring the occasional constitutional right.

Homicide

Although not as prestigious or powerful as the CTF, Homicide Division is considered a desirable assignment because it puts detectives right in the middle of exciting, high-stakes, high-profile murder cases. More than one Homicide cop has gone on to greater things when he broke a big case and made a name for himself in the papers. Some of the best-known Homicide detectives include: D-3 Stewart Long, an expert on serial killers and cult murders; Lieutenant Theresa O'Sullivan, who heroically rescued three elementary school students from a deranged hostage-taker in April 1999; Lieutenants Blake and Christopher Squires, twin brothers known for their reckless style of investigation; and Sergeant Nick Konstantinides, who captured the infamous murderer Vincent Scoria.

SERGEANT FAITH PADRUSKI

12 STR	14 DEX	14 CON	10 BODY
13 INT	12 EGO	15 PRE	13 COM
5 PD	4 ED	3 SPD	7 REC
35 END	25 STUN		

Abilities: +1 with Sight Group PER Rolls, Running +2", Martial Arts (Karate, Use Art with Tonfa, +2 DCs), Bureaucratics 8-, Combat Driving 12-, Concealment 12-, Criminology 13-, Deduction 12-, Forgery (Documents) 8-, Interrogation 12-, CK: Hudson City 11-, KS: The Law Enforcement World 12-, KS: Hudson City Underworld 12-, Shadowing 11-, Stealth 13-, Streetwise 14-, WF: Small Arms, +3 with Karate, +2 with Glock 21, Contacts (12 points' worth on the streets), Fringe Benefits: Local Police Powers, Weapon Permit

Disadvantages: Hunted: Doom Fever posse 8-; Psychological Limitation: Loyalty To CTF Comrades; Reputation: renegade cop with a penchant for "curbstone justice" 11- (among the CTF); Social Limitation: Subject To Orders

Notes: Sergeant Faith Padruski, a member of the CTF, was the HCPD's citywide female martial arts champion of 1999. She does her job well — so well, in fact, that the Doom Fever posse wants to kill her because she busted one of its biggest cocaine rings a while back. However, Sgt. Padruski isn't all sweetness and light — she has a reputation among the CTF as a "renegade" cop who likes to dish out a little curbstone justice when she feels the situation calls for it. After all, it saves the city a few bucks and probably does more to teach the punk a lesson than a joyride through the court system. Her partners don't really mind this attitude, but some corrupt CTF cops may use it against her if they ever come into conflict.

Sgt. Padruski is divorced; she raises her young daughter with the help of her mother. Despite her good looks, she has trouble attracting men because she's a little too aggressive and "masculine" for them.

Major Crimes

Before Robbery-Homicide was spun off as a separate division, the Major Crimes Division (MCD) mostly handled such cases. Since then, it's redefined itself to focus largely on crimes committed by so-called "costumed" or "weird" criminals, such as Card Shark, Diomedes, or the Kyphotic Man. Regardless of the crime involved, if that type of criminal's committing it, the MCD gets the call.

Narcotics

The drug trade is a major problem in Hudson City, and the detectives of Narcotics Division are on the front line fighting it. They often work closely with officers from the Organized Crime Bureau, since so many major drug operations involve organized crime to some degree.

Because anti-drug operations often focus on ethnic criminals, Narcotics Division contains a higher than normal percentage of officers who speak fluent Spanish or Chinese. For example, Ray Meléndez and his team in Latin City have had such success there because most of them speak the language, and Detective Harry Lo can gain access to places in Chinatown that would never admit a "round-eyes."

Robbery and Burglary

Major property crimes, such as jewelry store robberies or the depredations of car theft rings, fall to the "R&B" division. As a general rule, R&B gets the case if the take from the robbery is \$30,000 or more, or if there are unusual circumstances surrounding the crime. One type of case that they do not investigate extensively is bank robbery, which is the province of the FBI.

Robbery-Homicide

When a robbery goes bad and someone gets killed, or a skilled robbery crew takes out the target with lethal force, Robbery-Homicide investigates the case. Like Homicide, it's considered a plum assignment because of the higher pay and higher-profile cases.

Vice

The Vice Division covers the whole gamut of human degeneracy, outside of drugs: prostitution; gambling; child pornography; sexual slavery. Many of its detectives, particularly those involved in child pornography and related investigations, are dedicated crusaders who go the extra mile to protect the people of Hudson City. Others are burned out by everything they've seen and heard during their careers, and just coast along half-heartedly enforcing the laws as long as no one's getting hurt.

KURT DENNAHY

8 STR	10 DEX
10 CON	8 BODY
10 INT	10 EGO
15 PRE	12 COM
3 PD	3 ED
2 SPD	4 REC
20 END	19 STUN

Abilities: Combat Driving 8-, Concealment 11-, Criminology 13-, Forensic Medicine 8-, KS: Criminal Law And Procedure 11-, KS: The Law Enforcement World 11-, Paramedics 11-, Stealth 11-, Streetwise 12-, WF: Small Arms, Tonfa, Contacts (6 points' worth), Fringe Benefits: Law Enforcement Rank, Local Police Powers, Weapon Permit

25+ Disadvantages: Distinctive Features (uniform); Hunted (Watched by HCPD); Social Limitation: Subject To Orders

Notes: Kurt Denny is one of the Criminalistics Bureau's many Crime Scene Technicians (CSTs). When a call comes into his precinct for someone to gather physical evidence, he hops into his CST vehicle (a sort of mini-van with all sorts of equipment and containers in the back for collecting and storing evidence). He frequently testifies in court, and knows the ins and outs of the Hudson City justice system pretty well.



Deputy Commissioner Larry Graves

Also known simply as Chief of Detectives, Deputy Commissioner Larry Graves leads the Detective Bureau. He spent nearly thirty years in the trenches as a Narcotics, Vice, and Homicide detective before the Commissioner tapped him to ascend to the lofty rank of Deputy Commissioner. He's been on the job nearly eight years now, and some people whisper that he's thinking about retirement. An old-school cop, he's mostly been content to keep things on an even keel. He only initiates "reform programs" or "internal investigations" when he has no other choice.

HOUSING BUREAU

Housing Bureau cops provide police services for the dozens of public housing projects and hundreds of thousands of project residents in Hudson City. It's a dangerous task that takes cops into some of the worst, most crime-ridden neighborhoods in the Pearl City — places where the only citizens who support them are too scared of the gangs and drug dealers to offer so much as the slightest word of encouragement or thanks. Housing cops usually work in teams of two or four. They often engage in foot patrols as part of the bureau's "Community-Friendly Policing" project (which aims to acquaint local civilians with their "neighborhood cop" so they'll be more inclined to help him).

INTERNAL AFFAIRS BUREAU

The cops all the other cops love to hate. "IA" investigates departmental corruption and wrongdoing, holds officers accountable for the mistakes (or perceived mistakes) they make, and otherwise watches the watchmen. It also investigates any

incidents in which a policeman shoots someone and either clears the incident as a "justified shooting" or refers the matter to the County Prosecutor's office.

ORGANIZED CRIME BUREAU

Since Hudson City has a major organized crime problem, the Department has a special bureau of officers devoted to combating it. Experts on the nature of organized crime, the local members of various "families" and cartels, and organized crime methodology, they investigate organized crime activities using every legal method at their disposal. In addition to wiretapping and bugging, they often use undercover agents to try to get inside and bring a whole group down at once. The OCB often works jointly with the local FBI office's Organized Crime Section.

PATROL BUREAU

The largest bureau in the Department, the Patrol Bureau includes nearly all of the cops who hit the streets every day to keep the peace and preserve public safety. Most of its divisions are geographical ones that match the precincts (though some large precincts

have multiple Patrol divisions), but it also has a few special ones, such as the Park Police (page 67).

Thomas "Boston Tommie" Black commands the Patrol Bureau. His accent tells you that he was born and raised in Massachusetts, but he's been a Hudson City cop for over three decades, and the Pearl City is definitely his true hometown. Extremely popular with his men, he's been known to go to extraordinary lengths to help them, up to and including shouting matches with the Commissioner to get the funding or other resources he wants.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS BUREAU

It's important that the people of Hudson City know how good a job their cops are doing, and that they can get information about the HCPD when they need it. That's the job of Public Information and Community Affairs, which also runs many other public relations programs (such as sending cops to schools to talk to students).

SPECIAL OPERATIONS BUREAU

The Special Operations Bureau handles all sorts of non-standard assignments calling for special training or resources. It most prominently includes SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics), the HCPD's heavy-weapons "commando" team for terrorist and hostage situations. Team members are all highly-trained combatants, ready to lay down their lives for the people of Hudson City... though they prefer to make the other guy lay down his before he hurts anyone.

Other SOB divisions include Hostage Negotiation, Aviation, and Canine.

SUPPORT BUREAU

“Support Bureau” is another way of saying “clerical support section.” It includes all the police record clerks, property and evidence clerks, fleet and weapon maintenance technicians, and other cop jobs that can’t be entrusted to civilians but which don’t involve patrolling the streets or directly solving crimes. It’s not the most glamorous of bureaus by any stretch of the imagination, but it’s arguably the linchpin that holds the whole Department together: without information and equipment, the cops would be crippled.

TRANSPORTATION BUREAU

What the Housing Bureau is to public housing projects, the Transportation Bureau is to public transit. Transportation cops ride the railways and subways to keep on the lookout for fare jumpers, muggers, and other troublemakers. Most people call them “transit cops.”

TASK FORCES

The HCPD periodically creates a “task force” of officers from various bureaus to tackle special problems. Examples include the Youth Crime Task Force (which focuses on certain street gangs), the

Vigilantism Task Force (which pursues vigilantes deemed a danger to society, such as Renegade or the Harbinger of Justice), and the Aberdeen Anti-Robbery Task Force (which tries to curtail crime at Aberdeen International’s facilities). Some of these task forces are short-term groups that disband after completing a specific task; others are high-permanent groups that effectively become highly specialized mini-bureaus.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

“Whaddaya got for me today, Roj?”

“Oh, you’re not gonna believe this — 20 kilos of coke and two machine guns.”

*“Holy *&!! Where’d you find that stuff?”*

*“I ain’t even sure I believe it myself, but here’s what happened. We were workin’ with some Vice guys trying to find some kidnapped kids they thought might be used for child porn or some other sick *&!! I get this tip from one of my CIs that he’s seen some guys in — where else — North Elmview with a couple of kids he knows ain’t theirs. So we head over there and kick in the front door. These scumbags run like rabbits. Faith’s chasing one of ’em and steps on the wrong floorboard in the hallway. The board breaks, her leg goes through and hits a kilo of coke. They had it all stashed there in a hidey-hole, gonna move it soon to some gang in Free-town, they said.”*

“&!!, man, you get all the lucky breaks. Time for another medal, huh?”*

“Hope so. Ain’t had my picture in the paper in a while.”

“How’s Faith — she hurt herself?”

“Twisted her ankle. Gary took her over to Katz Memorial to get it taped up.”

— conversation at the Evidence
Depository intake window

When you’re a Hudson City cop, you end up spending a lot of time in certain places.

POLICE HEADQUARTERS

Hudson City Police Headquarters is a ten-story building (plus a basement and three subbasements) on the north side of Courthouse Plaza. It includes the Commissioner’s office, other administrative offices, a press room, and various other facilities. The “basement” level is mostly a parking deck but also includes some storage areas, a shooting range, and a gym.

Evidence Depository And Armory

The second subbasement floor of Police Headquarters contains the HCPD’s Evidence Depository, where the Department carefully takes in, catalogs, and stores evidence pending trial — everything from dozens of kilos of drugs, to pow-

OFFICER TODD FRENCH

10 STR	11 DEX
12 CON	10 BODY
13 INT	8 EGO
10 PRE	10 COM
4 PD	3 ED
2 SPD	5 REC
24 END	21 STUN

Abilities: +1 PER with Sight Group, Combat Driving 8-, Criminology 12-, Forensic Medicine 8-, AK: Hudson City Waters 11-, CK: Hudson City 11-, KS: Criminal Law And Procedure 11-, KS: The Law Enforcement World 11-, PS: Police Officer 11-, PS: Underwater Criminal Investigations Procedures 11-, Streetwise 11-, TF: SCUBA, WF: Small Arms, Contacts (4 points’ worth on the streets), Fringe Benefits: Local Police Powers, Law Enforcement Rank, Weapon Permit

Disadvantages: Distinctive Features: Uniform and/or Badge; Hunted (Watched by HCPD); Social Limitation: Subject To Orders

Notes: When a crime or disaster scene involves the river, the ocean, or one of the ponds in LeMastre Park, the HCPD often has to call in its Underwater Criminal Investigation (UCI) team to gather evidence, collect bodies, and so forth. Todd French is one of the officers assigned to UCI. A five-year vet who’s spent uncounted thousands of hours in the water performing some messy tasks, he likes to think he’s seen it all... but somehow every month brings new and disgusting surprises.

LIEUTENANT FRANK GUERRINI

12 STR	15 DEX	14 CON	12 BODY
14 INT	11 EGO	18 PRE	10 COM
5 PD	4 ED	3 SPD	6 REC
30 END	25 STUN		

Abilities: +1 with Colt M1911A, +3 versus Range Modifier with Rifles, Running +1”, Leaping +1”, Swimming +1”, Martial Arts (Commando Training, +2 DCs), Climbing 12-, Interrogation 13-, CK: Hudson City 12-, KS: The Law Enforcement World 12-, KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 12-, Languages: Italian, Vietnamese (basic conversation, English is native), Mechanics 12-, Security Systems 8-, Shadowing 12-, Stealth 13-, Streetwise 13-, Survival (Temperate/Subtropical, Tropical) 12-, Tactics 12-, Tracking 12-, TF: Small Motorized Boats, Two-Wheeled Motorized Ground Vehicles, Basic and Advanced Parachuting, WF: Small Arms, Knives, Grenade Launchers, Heavy Machine Guns, Shoulder-Launched Missiles, Fringe Benefits: Law Enforcement Rank, Local Police Powers, Concealed Weapon Permit

50+ Disadvantages: Distinctive Features (uniform); Hunted (Watched by HCPD); Hunted (Watched by the media); Reputation (uses excessive force) 11-, Social Limitation: Subject To Orders

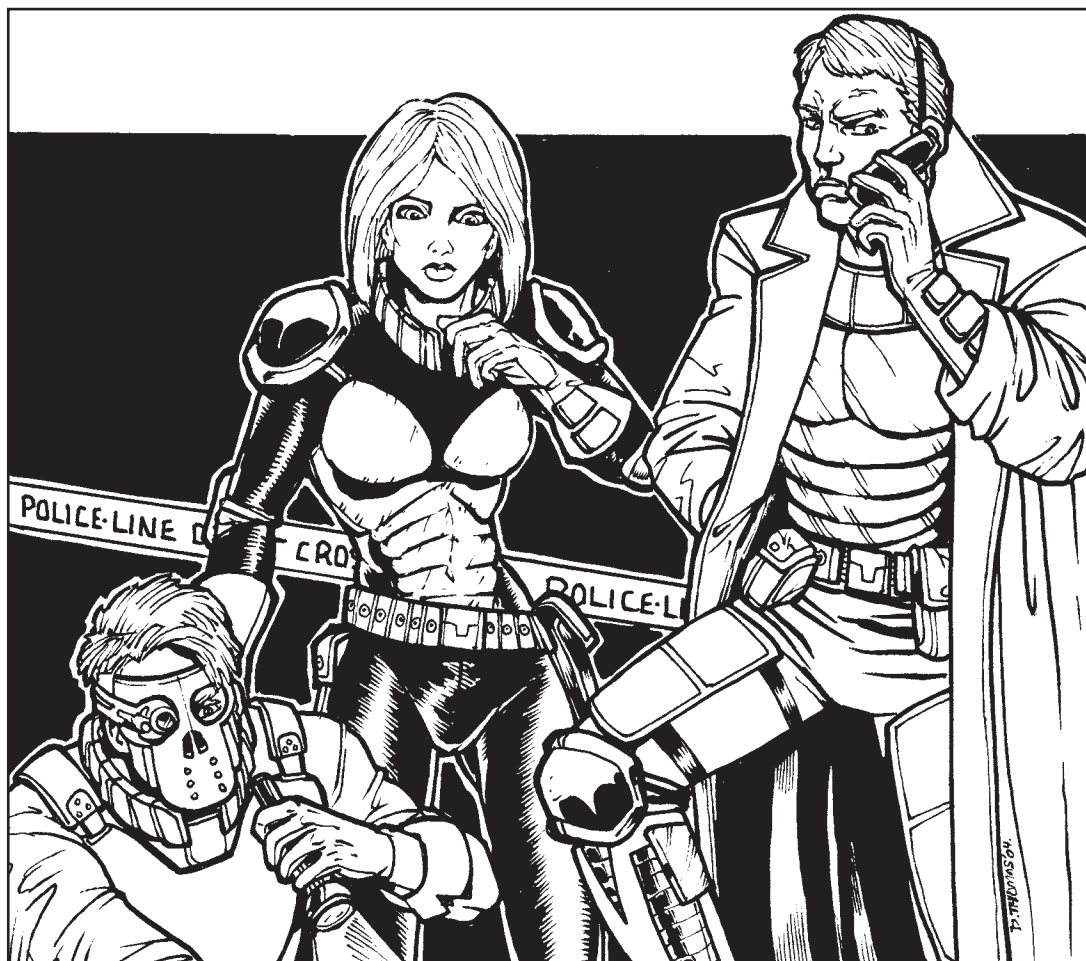
Notes: Lieutenant Frank Guerrini commands the HCPD SWAT team. A tough, no-nonsense cop straight out of central casting, he speaks in blunt, clipped phrases that do little to endear him to those who value tact and diplomacy but which earn him a lot of respect and loyalty from his men. A former Marine sniper who served in Vietnam with distinction, he tends to favor a fast-paced, hard-hitting approach to resolving the situations he’s called in to deal with — his most frequent recommendation in most SWAT cases is to shoot the perpetrators. This use-of-force “policy” has gotten him in trouble many times and leads both the brass and the media to keep a close eye on him.

POLICE CORRUPTION

Like any major city, Hudson City has its share of police corruption — actually, more than its share, truth be told. Compared to past times, the modern HCPD is much “cleaner,” but there are still more than a few officers who take bribes from criminals to look the other way or to go after their rivals. In many areas this bribery takes the form of a “pad,” where the money is collected monthly and split among all the officers in a squad or precinct proportionately to rank (*i.e.*, a P1 patrol officer gets one share, a P2 two shares, and so forth). Of course, this requires the cooperation of the entire precinct (or at least a substantial part of it).

A more common form of corruption occurs when a suspect bribes the small group of officers who are about to arrest him to let him go. Some officers actively solicit such bribes (“shakedowns”). Narcotics cops are especially susceptible to this form of bribe because of the enormous amounts of cash involved in the drug trade (“Look, that suitcase over there is full’a cash. Lemme go and you c’n keep it”). Cops in Chinatown and Little Italy are also likely to receive more bribe offers than normal.

Federal law enforcement is subject to corrupting influences just like the HCPD — FBI and DEA agents can easily take money to look the other way (or protect a particular gang), pass classified information to enemy agents, or steal evidence. The 1998 Venturini case, in which an FBI agent was found to have essen-



erful weapons, to scraps of cloth from a homicide scene. Officers carry small items down to the Depository; things too large to get down the stairs easily can be brought in by special subway car on the line that runs underneath Courthouse Plaza and carted in via a special corridor. Much of what's held in the Depository (under *very* tight security) is extremely valuable on the street; from time to time allegations arise of cops stealing stored objects and selling them (or disposing of them to protect an accused criminal).

Immediately below the Depository, on the third and lowest subbasement floor, is the HCPD's Armory. This is where it stores weapons and ammunition, tests new weapons, and so forth. Again, security is extremely tight.

THE HCPD ACADEMY

The HCPD's Police Academy is in the suburb of Arlington. New recruits spend months there learning the basics of their job — advanced driving skills, conflict resolution and basic negotiation, firearms, unarmed combat, and more. But graduation isn't the end of their relationship to the Academy. Even experienced officers periodically return there for additional training, re-training, police skills competitions, and more. The “headmaster” of the school, Walter Russo, holds the rank of Commander even though he's not really in the main chain of command.

THE HCPD CRIME LABORATORY

The first subbasement floor of Police HQ contains the Crime Laboratory and the offices of the Medical Examiner (see below). The Crime Laboratory is one of the most sophisticated such facilities in the state (+2 to Criminology rolls involving the examination of physical evidence), but it's not big enough to handle all the work the HCPD needs done. Some is jobbed out to other labs around the state, or to the even more advanced FBI labs in Washington, D.C.

Doctor Samantha Ferrell-Taft, a highly respected criminalistics expert who's published three books and countless journal articles in her field, heads the Crime Laboratory. Her staff thinks she must be some sort of robot; she's almost always the first person to arrive in the morning, and often the last one to leave at night.

JULIANO'S

There are several “cop bars” around the city — places where police officers gather to drink to the good times and commiserate over the loss of fallen comrades. But if you asked most cops to name *the* cop bar in Hudson City, they'd answer “Juliano's” without even having to think about it.

Located at the intersection of Kemp Avenue and Oxnard Street in Bayside, Juliano's was founded back in the 1950s by Tony Juliano, a cop who had to retire due to injury. Most of his kids became cops, but one of them preferred to run the bar. He's still running it today, and one of his sons will take over after him.

The customers at Juliano's are almost all cops (or people who like to hang around with cops). Police officers come from around the city just to have a beer there, and Department legend has it that a rookie's not really a cop until he's bought a round at Juliano's. Having all those cops around makes it the safest bar in the city. The only time anyone ever made trouble there was back in 1997, when some out of town schmuck who didn't know any better tried to rob the place. He had so many guns pulled on him that he fainted dead away.

STARS OF THE FORCE

The HCPD contains literally tens of thousands of brave men and women who put their lives on the line every day to help keep Hudson City as safe as possible. But even among their number, a few cops stand out for their valor, self-sacrifice, or exploits.

Lt. William "Wild Bill" Daniels: A detective in Robbery-Homicide, "Wild Bill" Daniels has a well-deserved reputation for doing whatever it takes to catch his man. Captains and commanders dread to hear the words "Lt. Daniels is in pursuit" come over the radio, because they know that's going to mean wrecked cars, pedestrians jumping wildly off of sidewalks to avoid speeding automobiles, smashed-up scenery, and lawsuits by the dozen. But they also know that if Daniels is chasing someone, that person's as good as caught... which is the only reason he hasn't been given the boot already.

D-3 Andrew Lau: The HCPD doesn't have many officers who can speak Chinese and know enough about Asian culture to make much headway stopping crime in Chinatown. Andy Lau is one of the exceptions. Born in China but raised in Hudson City's Chinatown from age six, he speaks Mandarin, Cantonese, and Vietnamese, and his partners in Narcotics swear that half the people in Chinatown either know him, are related to him, or owe him favors. Over the past five years, he's almost singlehandedly made it possible for the County Prosecutor to charge and convict several Chinese gangsters. Lau now carries a heavy price on his head from the tongs, who want more than anything to get rid of him.

D-2 Joe Nardini: Almost no one outside of the HCPD's heard of Joe Nardini — but within the department he's treated with the same regard physicists reserve for Einstein, Fermi, and Hawking. A brilliant undercover investigator, he's helped to bring down numerous Mafia and Russian Mafia crews. The FBI's tried to hire him away from the Organized Crime Bureau many times, but he likes it just fine in his hometown.

Lt. Julia Sandoval: A 2002 recipient of the "Pearls of Great Price" award for her work with various battered women's shelters and children's charities, Lt. Sandoval spends her days (and more than a few of her nights) investigating murders as a detective in the Homicide Division. Her capture of the Tallyman in early 2004 made national headlines.

RESPONSE TIMES

All the cops in the world don't do any good if they can't get to a crime in progress in time to stop it. The average HCPD response time to calls for police help varies from district to district and ranges from very good to abysmal. The following table lists the average response time to the highest-priority calls by neighborhood (see the HCPD Districts table for the full names of the districts).

Neighborhood	District	Average Response Time
Ardmore	RNW	5 minutes, 20 seconds
Bankhurst	RNE	4 minutes, 40 seconds
Bayside	RNE	7 minutes, 43 seconds
Blackbridge	RNC, NC	5 minutes, 51 seconds
Chinatown	RSW	6 minutes, 44 seconds
Crown Point	RSC	7 minutes, 31 seconds
Eastwood	NE	7 minutes, 35 seconds
Elmview	RSE, SE	6 minutes, 42 seconds
Forsyth	SC	7 minutes, 53 seconds
Freetown	SW	9 minutes, 37 seconds
Gadsden	RNE	6 minutes, 3 seconds
Guilford	NW	5 minutes, 24 seconds
Highlands	NE	3 minutes, 30 seconds
Irishtown	NW	3 minutes, 14 seconds
Lafayette	SC	9 minutes, 32 seconds
Latin City	SE	7 minutes, 11 seconds
Little Italy	RNW	5 minutes, 39 seconds
Mint Ridge	RNW	5 minutes, 20 seconds
Moscow West	RNW	6 minutes, 24 seconds
North Elmview	RSE	8 minutes, 32 seconds
Pierpoint	RNE	6 minutes, 36 seconds
Red Hill	RSE	7 minutes, 8 seconds
Riverside Hills	RSC, RSW	7 minutes, 5 seconds
Worthington	NC, NE	6 minutes, 18 seconds

OTHER LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

The fight to prevent crime and preserve public safety is a difficult one. Fortunately, the HCPD has allies it can call on.

THE HUDSON CITY MEDICAL EXAMINER

The Medical Examiner's office is responsible for performing autopsies on all bodies involved in mysterious, unexpected, or sudden deaths — murders, automobile wrecks, and the like. From its operating rooms, morgue, and laboratories on the first subbasement floor of Police Headquarters, it can perform all sorts of tests to determine the time of death, cause of death, and other relevant information.

The ME's office has a simple structure for maximum flexibility (and thus, its administrators feel, efficiency). The Chief Medical Examiner (CME), Dr. Gunther Buncombe, is in charge overall. He works closely with both the County Prosecutor's office and the HCPD, but answers to no one except the mayor to preserve his office's impartiality. Working beneath him is a corps of Assistant Medical Examiners (AMEs), medical technicians, and clerical personnel — death is sometimes a messy (and paperwork-intensive) affair.

Continued from last page

tially gone into business with one of his Mafia "informants," is a perfect example of how far a fed can fall. But corruption tends to be less of a problem in federal law enforcement, for several reasons. First, many federal agents did not grow up in Hudson City, and as newcomers are less likely to have "friends" on the "other side of the law." Second, federal agencies can transfer agents to other offices to discourage or prevent corruption.



BATTERED WOMEN'S SHELTERS

Domestic violence is as big a problem in Hudson City as it is throughout the country. To help women escape abusive relationships, various private charitable organizations maintain battered women's shelters. Most of these shelters are more or less ordinary houses and apartment buildings converted to this special use.

When a woman contacts the shelter to request assistance, the shelter's staff arranges to pick her up at her home or at a neutral location. If an encounter with the alleged abuser could occur, the shelter workers obtain a police escort. When the shelter workers pick the woman up, they take her to a hospital if she needs immediate medical attention. Otherwise they drive around at random for a long time to throw off any pursuit and make it difficult (at best) for the woman to know where she is. (Otherwise, the possibility exists that she will "change her mind" and tell her abuser where the shelter is, thus destroying its effectiveness.) In extreme cases they may blindfold her for a short period. When the shelter workers feel everything is safe, they take the woman to the shelter.

Domestic abuse victims remain at the shelter as long as they need to, provided the shelter has the resources to support them and the shelter workers genuinely feel a victim is trying to improve herself and her life. Eventually, when the victim is ready, the shelter assists her with establishing a new home (often in another city, or a different part of Hudson City than where she used to live) and sends her on her way.

THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION BUREAU

Headquartered in Trenton, the New Jersey State Police are responsible for various criminal matters through their Criminal Investigation Bureau. The CIB maintains an office in Police Headquarters in Hudson City. Whenever the HCPD feels it needs some extra investigative resources, or a criminal flees beyond its jurisdiction, it contacts the CIB for help.

INSPECTORS

Various departments and branches of the Hudson City government have groups of inspectors attached to them. For example, the Health and Human Services Division conducts health inspections of restaurants and similar facilities. These inspectors aren't police officers, but they are empowered to make note of and issue citations for violations of the relevant regulations. As such they have a limited police-like authority, and many people think of them as being a type of cop.

FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT



"You gettin' all this, Harv?"

"Yeah, yeah, I'm gettin' it, the pickup's fine. The bugs are working fine. Gimme one'a those sandwiches."

"What's he sayin' now?"

"They're talkin' about Perotti... some hotel services kickback scheme... they're not happy with how it's going. He's yelling now..."

"Holy *%&! — what was that?!?!"

"I don't... I think he shot him!"

"Jesus Christ, are you sure?"

"Pretty sure..."

"!\$&*! So much for waiting for him to lead us to bigger fish. Blue Team, shots have been fired. The mission is a go. Repeat, go, go, go!"

— another day in the trenches for the FBI

The United States government also has a strong law enforcement presence in Hudson City. All major enforcement branches of the Departments of Justice and the Treasury have large offices in the city, located in the Federal Building right next to the federal courthouse on Courthouse Plaza. The Federal Building, a large fifteen-story structure, also includes the offices of many other federal agencies (such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Internal Revenue Service, and the Social Security Office).

The FBI

By far the largest federal law enforcement agency in Hudson City is the FBI, which has several hundred agents stationed in the area. Its Organized Crime Section stays particularly busy, and often works cases jointly with the Organized Crime Bureau of the HCPD. Other branches of the FBI handle bank robbery cases, perform background checks on prospective federal employees, conduct counterterrorism operations, and assist the HCPD with investigations of violent serial criminals.

The head of the Hudson City FBI office is Special Agent in Charge (SAC) Cameron Cozort. A fifteen-year veteran of the Bureau, she brought herself to the Director's attention with an unblemished record of solid investigation work, professional raids and captures, and convictions obtained as the result of her efforts. An efficient, by-the-book administrator, she expects her underlings to run the office and their investigations like clockwork, and often gets upset

over relatively minor blunders or missed opportunities (not to mention major ones). In a crisis she issues rapid-fire orders in a clipped voice, seemingly unperturbed by the pressure. She's particularly sensitive to implications that she got her job just because she's a woman, or can't do her job as well as a man; she once decked an HCPD detective who made some snide remarks about "that FBI broad's" abilities.

The DEA

The Drug Enforcement Administration also has a lot of agents in its Hudson City office. Many of them are trained undercover agents who try to infiltrate drug rings and make "controlled purchases" of illegal drugs, thus giving them the means to build a solid case against an entire drug conspiracy. They usually go after large drug-dealing operations because federal law only punishes drug distribution or possession with intent to distribute, not simple possession.

The local DEA office has a special squad of about half a dozen Asian agents who work specifically in Chinatown trying to stop the tongs' heroin trade. The brass occasionally "loans out" these agents, sometimes nicknamed "the Gang of Four" even though there are more than four of them, to the FBI or HCPD if they need help making a case in the Asian underworld.

Special Agent Walter Kowalski runs the Hudson City DEA operations. He's only been in charge for a couple of years, and he's already regretting his decision to take a desk job. He'd rather be back out in the field, making cases and chasing down perps, and he takes any opportunity that comes along to get directly involved in an investigation. But he's not as young and spry as he once was....

The BATF

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms has a smaller presence in Hudson City than the FBI or DEA, but it's still a large field office compared to others around the country. Most BATF special agents spend their time investigating illegal arms dealers or alleged liquor law violations, or trying to stop gangs that smuggle cigarettes up from North Carolina and sell them on the black market.

In the summer of 2004, the local BATF office was rocked by the death of two of its special agents, who were gunned down by members of the Overlords street gang whom they were trying to arrest for arms dealing. With assistance from the FBI, the BATF has begun an intensive crackdown on the Overlords that may significantly upset the balance of power in Free-town and knock Buckshot's plans into a cocked hat (see page 173).

SPECIAL AGENT DALE MURDOCK

10	STR	12	DEX
11	CON	10	BODY
13	INT	10	EGO
15	PRE	10	COM
4	PD	4	ED
3	SPD	4	REC
22	END	25	STUN

Abilities: +1 PER with all Sense Groups, Bug-ging 8-, Criminology 12-, Deduction 12-, Forensic Medicine 8-, Interrogation 12-, KS: Federal Criminal Law And Procedure 11-, KS: The Law Enforcement World 11-, KS: Orga-nized Crime 11-, PS: FBI Agent 11-, Shadowing 12-, Stealth 11-, Street-wise 12-, WF: Small Arms, 8 points' worth of Contacts on the Hudson City streets, Fringe Ben-efits: Federal/National Police Powers, Law Enforcement Rank, Weapon Permit

Disadvantages: Distinc-tive Features: Uniform and/or Badge; Hunted (Watched by the FBI); Social Limitation: Sub-ject To Orders

Notes: Dale Murdock is just one of hundreds of FBI agents assigned to Hudson City on a more or less permanent basis. He's had several Bureau assignments over the years, and has learned a lot from each of them. Currently he's tasked to the Organized Crime section. He spends his days conducting surveil-lance on, and putting together cases against, Mafia and Organizatsiya figures in the Pearl City. Sometimes it's a boring job, and sometimes dan-gerous, but he genuinely enjoys the chance to make society a better place.

COURTS AND CORRECTIONS



DETECTIVE BILL ATWATER

10 STR 10 DEX
10 CON 10 BODY
10 INT 10 EGO
10 PRE 10 COM
3 PD 3 ED
2 SPD 4 REC
20 END 20 STUN

Abilities: +1 PER with Sight Group, Combat Driving 8-, Computer Programming 12-, Concealment 11-, Criminology 11-, Electronics 8-, CK: Hudson City 11-, KS: Criminal Law And Procedure 11-, KS: The Law Enforcement World 11-, PS: Police Officer 11-, Security Systems 11-, Streetwise 11-, WF: Small Arms, Contacts (10 points' worth, in the online community), Fringe Benefits: Local Police Powers, Law Enforcement Rank, Weapon Permit

Disadvantages: Hunted (Watched by HCPD); Social Limitation: Subject To Orders

Notes: Bill Atwater is a detective in the HCPD's small Computer Crimes bureau. He spends his days trolling online for child abusers, child pornographers, hackers, and other people who use computers to commit crimes. He's grown to hate these sorts of people with a passion, and goes after them with tenacity and a fierce glee. Other detectives sometimes call him in when they need to hack through computer security to get at the files in a suspect's computer.

Catching criminals isn't all there is to the justice system. After the HCPD or FBI nabs someone, he's entitled to his day in court... and to a nice, cozy cell if convicted.

THE COURT SYSTEM

"All right, counsel, let's hear your argument."

"It's fruit of the poisoned tree, your Honor. The search of my client's apartment was invalid, therefore the guns, drugs, and other items the police seized are inadmissible in court. Without them, the state has no basis on which to charge Mr. Ramirez."

"Why was the search invalid?"

"The search warrant, your Honor. It's in error."

"How so?"

"My client's address is 124 Pender Street. The warrant names 412 Pender Street as the location to be searched. It's invalid, your Honor."

"Ms. Shippman?"

"Your Honor, this is another one of Mr. Leibowitz's 'creative' arguments. We all know that good faith errors aren't grounds for invalidating a warrant. This was just a typographical error. There isn't even any such address as 412 Pender."

"Your Honor, the state has to be held accountable! The power to search and to arrest is an awesome one that has to be exercised with the most scrupulous attention to detail. The warrant has to properly specify the location to be searched, as Ms. Shippman is well aware, and this one doesn't. It's open and shut."

"Sorry, Mr. Leibowitz, but I have to agree with the assistant CP. This looks like nothing more than a typo to me, and that's not sufficient grounds to invalidate. Your client's trial will go forward as scheduled."

— a pretrial motion in the case of Alphonso Ramirez

Like law enforcement, the criminal court system is divided into two parts: the state courts and the federal courts.

State Courts

The New Jersey state court system has four main levels. At the lowest level are the *municipal courts*, which are local courts of limited jurisdiction. They handle traffic cases, various ordinance and penalty enforcement actions, some minor quasi-criminal offenses (such as disorderly conduct), and the like.

The next level is the *trial courts*, which handle most criminal, civil, and family law trials. The trial courts have several divisions dedicated to specific types of cases, such as Family Division and the General Equity Division. When a cop, or a player character, has to go to court to testify, he'll be in a trial courtroom.

If someone's not satisfied with the outcome of his case and believes prejudicial legal error occurred, he can appeal to the next level up: the *Appellate Division* of the courts. Appellate Division chambers (courtrooms) are located in several cities throughout the state, including Hudson City. At this level, three-judge panels hear legal arguments about the outcome of trial court cases; they don't reconsider the evidence, take testimony from witnesses, or anything like that. A party who loses at this level can appeal to the highest court in the state: the New Jersey Supreme Court, which sits in Trenton. The Court's justices hear only a few hundred cases each year, most of them of major importance.

THE STATE COURTS IN HUDSON CITY

Courthouse Square, at 1000 Centre Street, contains the city's courts (as well as HCPD headquarters and the Federal Building). The largest structure on Courthouse Square is the fifteen-story State Courts Building, which houses the local machinery of Justice. Flanking the majestic steps leading up to the first floor are two magnificent statues of Blind Justice by famed Italian sculptor J. Piero Grinyi.

Hudson City has the largest, most convoluted, and by some accounts most corrupt municipal court system in the state. Every day hundreds of citizens clutching traffic tickets, penalty citations, or other legal documents trudge through municipal courtroom doors and sit (im)patiently until their case is called. Smartly-dressed lawyers zip in and out, taking advantage of their knowledge of the system and friendships with the courtroom workers to bypass the long lines and seemingly interminable delays.

The floors above the municipal courts contain trial courts, where trials and motion hearings take place almost every day. These floors also include jury waiting rooms where people report for jury

duty, and holding rooms where prisoners brought in from Longview or other facilities for their hearings are kept shackled until their cases are called.

One floor above the trial courts are the Appellate Division courtrooms for Hudson City. Compared to the courts below, where all sorts of people mix and mingle and the halls bear the smell of decades of human sweat, anxiety, and anticipation, the Appellate Division floor are quiet — an oasis of calm where only lawyers and other professionals walk the corridors. The courtrooms themselves are much nicer, even luxurious by some standards.

The remaining floors of the building contain offices — of judges, of the Prosecutor and his staff, the Public Defender and his staff, and numerous other courthouse employees. You'll also find courthouse facilities in the two subbasements, which include the Clerk of Court's office, the Register of Deeds, records storage, and the like.

THE COUNTY PROSECUTOR

In New Jersey counties, including Stewart County (*i.e.*, Hudson City), in criminal cases an official called the *County Prosecutor* represents the people. (In many other jurisdictions, the title "District Attorney" is used.) In other words, the County Prosecutor tries cases against accused criminals. A group of Assistant Prosecutors and other support staff help the County Prosecutor get his job done. The County Prosecutor is appointed by the governor and is responsible to the state's Attorney General; the Assistant Prosecutors are hired by the County Prosecutor.

The Stewart County Prosecutory, Alvin Kimbrell, is a hard-nosed, opinionated man who's held his job for nearly twenty years. He knows exactly how he wants things done, and he expects his staff — which includes slightly over 500 Assistant Prosecutors — to process the 130,000 cases they handle annually with efficiency and a proper appreciation for the nature of their job. As he's fond of saying, "Remember, people, when we screw up, Justice loses."

Most observers believe Kimbrell and his staff do a good job at their appointed duties, though as with any prosecutor's office occasional charges of malfeasance, misfeasance, or nonfeasance sometimes arise. The worst of these occurred in 1995, when a story in the *Mirror* revealed that Assistant Prosecutor Allison Gish had taken bribes from several major organized crime figures to recommend favorable pleas or bungle the cases against them.

Divisions

The Stewart County District Attorney's office is organized into many different divisions, each responsible for a particular function or type of case. Some of the major divisions include:

Appeals: The Appeals Division handles any appellate work involving the office in either state or federal court. Most of the attorneys working in Appeals are highly experienced, long-time employees of the County Prosecutor's office who have decided, for whatever reason, to get out of regular trial work and into the more cerebral world of appellate argument.

Crime-Specific: The Stewart County Prosecutor maintains several divisions devoted to specific types of crime: Crimes Against Children; Domestic Violence; Gangs Crime; Narcotics; and so on. The attorneys assigned to these divisions are experts at a specific area of criminal law and how to try cases relating to it.

Investigation: Attorneys in the Investigation Division work with law enforcement officers, forensic accountants, analysts, and other experts to help build the best possible cases against major criminals and criminal conspiracies. Their targets are usually organized crime groups, white collar criminal conspiracies, official corruption, and like matters that require delicate handling. They advise and work with the team assigned to a particular case to ensure that the investigation proceeds in the way most likely to result in a conviction of a guilty felon.

Major Crimes: The most experienced trial attorneys in the office work in the Major Crimes Division, which handles cases so large, complex, or (in)famous that they require special attention, a clever mind, and a steady hand. Major Crimes attorneys typically work in teams of two or more, depending on the nature of the case. For example, the 1998 trial of infamous serial killer Vincent Scoria was tried by the team of Corrin Lowell and Allen Hubbard, two of the stars of the MCD.

Trial: The largest division of the Stewart County Prosecutor's office is just called "Trial" — meaning lawyers who try cases that don't fall within another division's purview, or who otherwise appear in court.

Trial Zones

To foster good relations between specific police precincts and specific Assistant Prosecutors, the Stewart County Prosecutor has established a "trial zones" program. Basically this means that most attorneys are assigned to specific geographic areas (as defined by HCPD precincts). This allows them to become familiar with the area, develop strong working relationships with the cops in that area, and tailor their prosecution efforts to best serve that community.

THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

All persons accused of a crime are entitled to effective assistance of counsel to defend themselves... but not everyone can afford an attorney. To help people too poor to hire their own counsel, the State of New Jersey maintains the Office of the Public Defender (OPD). The New Jersey Public Defender is appointed for a five-year term by the governor, and oversees a staff of attorneys who try cases throughout the state (these include the Deputy Public Defenders who run the various regional offices of the OPD). The OPD's staff also includes investigators, appellate attorneys, and support personnel, but has only about half as many lawyers as the number of prosecutors in the state.

Hudson City falls within the Stewart County Regional Office of the OPD. Deputy Public Defender Willem Bryce heads a corps of roughly

NATHAN JACOBSON

8 STR	8 DEX
9 CON	9 BODY
10 INT	8 EGO
10 PRE	8 COM
2 PD	2 ED
1 SPD	4 REC
18 END	18 STUN

Abilities: Bureaucratics 11-, Deduction 11-, KS: Civil Law And Procedure 11-, KS: The Court-house World 11-, KS: Criminal Law And Procedure 11-, KS: Family Law 11-, KS: The Law Enforcement World 8-, Streetwise 8-, Contacts (30 points' worth in the Hudson City judicial system and bureaucracy), Fringe Benefit: License To Practice Law

Disadvantages: None

Notes: Nathan Jacobson isn't exactly the best lawyer in Hudson City — at most he could be described as average. What gets him by is his extensive knowledge of the city court system. He's been practicing for nearly twenty years now, and he's spent most of his days (and not a few nights) trolling around the courthouse, working angles on cases for clients who've already hired him and trying to pick up a few more clients from the hordes of the desperate that haunt the halls before their cases are called. He knows just about everyone there is to know in the court system, and between his experience and his contacts, he can often get things done that other attorneys couldn't.

JUDICIAL CORRUPTION

Hudson City is no stranger to judicial corruption. Among the dozens of state judges working in the city, several are rumored to be “for sale” or otherwise willing to compromise their position. A few of these judges supposedly work hand-in-hand with certain corrupt cops in the interest of mutual profit.

Far fewer rumors of corruption swirl around the federal judges of Hudson City. Periodically whispered stories about some judge taking massive amounts of drug money to dispose of a case make their way around the underworld, but no local federal judge has been seriously investigated for corruption, much less been indicted, for over a decade.

250 public defenders who represent indigent clients throughout the state courts in Stewart County (nearby counties, such as Corinth and Prince William, belong to other regional offices). Bryce went to law school in the early 1970s after spending most of the late Sixties as a Vietnam War protester, and went to work for various public defenders’ offices as soon as he graduated. After a brief stint teaching law school in the early Nineties, he returned to the public sector, and took his present job in 1997. A passionate and tenacious defender of the rights of the accused and downtrodden, he’s been mentioned as a possible Democratic mayoral or gubernatorial candidate on several occasions.

HUDSON CITY JUDGES

Dozens of state court judges have their chambers in Hudson City (and the state can bring in more from other counties to handle periods of heavy caseload if necessary). Some of the most notable or colorful include:

Judge Celeste Austin (Trial Court, Family Division):

Judge Austin was once a state legislator, and in that role was responsible for several laws that strengthened and expanded the role of the Family Division of the trial courts. After she tired of state politics, she ran for and won a judgeship in Stewart County. She’s well-known for the severe sentences she hands down to men convicted of domestic abuse and parents found to have neglected or abused their children. In fact, her sentences are sometimes so severe that defense attorneys have questioned her objectivity and tried (sometimes successfully) to have her removed from such cases.

Judge Randolph Halsey (Municipal Court):

Judge Halsey’s been on the Municipal Court bench so long that most courthouse employees claim they can’t remember when he first donned the black robes. A workaholic, he’s usually in the office no later than 6:00 AM, works until around 6:00 PM, and in the process hears more cases than any other municipal court judge.

Judge Sterling Keller (Trial Court): Judge Keller is known as one of the most liberal local judges; defense attorneys do a little jig when his name gets drawn for their cases. He’s harsh on cops and prosecutors, loathes vigilantes (whom he considers “conspirators” with the HCPD despite the Department’s constant disavowal of them), and tends to hand down light sentences.

Judge Rennie Purcell (Trial Court): Judge Purcell is the oldest and most experienced judge in the Hudson City courthouse. Although he hears fewer cases these days than the other judges do, he more than makes up for it with the advice and assistance he provides to other judges. His knowledge of the Hudson City legal community and the Hudson City underworld are both legendary.

Judge Paul Trevor (Trial Court): Judge Trevor has a reputation as a brilliant legal scholar and a firm but fair jurist. With the help of his secretary, Eve, he has also become known as one of the most prepared and well-read judges on the court. He is talented enough that he should probably be a judge on the Appellate Court or Supreme Court, but political enemies have kept him away from them.

Federal Courts

In the federal district court system, Hudson City falls within the Southern District of New Jersey — in fact, all the courtrooms for the Southern District are in the eight-story Federal Courts Building on Courthouse Square. Twelve District Court judges have chambers there: Chief Judge Allen Bates; Judges Conrad D’Angelis, Margaret Gold, Garrett Andretti, Albert Knox, Melinda Foster, John Burbage, Calvin Blalock, and Edward Pepper; and Senior (semi-retired) Judges Roberta Dawes, Lyle Warriner, and Harlan Younce. There are also four Magistrate Judges, who handle civil motions and other “minor” matters to assist District Judges: Bruce Gathers, Lloyd Stern, Andrea Zodie, and George Fletcher.

New Jersey is part of the Third Circuit.

Appeals from the Southern District of New Jersey courts are heard in the appeals courtrooms in the Federal Courts Building in Hudson City. Six appellate judges hear appeals in panels of three.

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

The United States Attorney for the Southern District of New Jersey serves the same role as the county prosecutor in state court: he represents the state (in this case, the federal government) and attempts to get accused criminals convicted and punished. Much of the federal criminal caseload involves major drug or organized crime cases, but the US Attorney also handles bank robbery cases, mail and wire fraud cases, and violations of other federal laws.

As of 2004, Adrian Mazurek serves as USA for the Southern District. During her twelve-year career as an Assistant USA, she compiled a record of wins that no one else in the office could match. Upon the untimely death of her predecessor in 2002, President George W. Bush appointed her to her current post. She’s been particularly aggressive in pushing cases against organized crime, and has developed a good working relationship with SAC Cameron Cozort of the FBI.

THE FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER

The Southern District of New Jersey also has a federal public defender’s office, based in Hudson City. Richard Waggoner oversees a staff of several dozen attorneys who work to protect the rights of indigent federal defendants (well over half of whom are black gang members from Freetown accused of major drug crimes).

CORRECTIONS

I got to where I could tolerate the rapes. The first couple of times, right after I got in, I tried to fight back. But what good's that gonna do me? I'm just an accountant. Some of these steroid queens could snap me in half if they wanted to — and that's what they did. All I got for my troubles was a broken arm and a couple of broken ribs. And it wasn't as if being in the infirmary stopped them — some of those guys worked as attendants. My being laid up just meant a softer bed where they could pound my ass when none of the docs were around.

If you can't protect yourself in prison, you have to find someone who can... and pay for it. No way I could hook up with the Brotherhood, not with a last name like Goldman, and I figured being one guy's bitch was better than being the whole prison's. So I cut a deal with the biggest bull fag in the place — Jefferson. I still dread lights-out, but not as much as I did before. Prison's all about getting by, and that's what I'm doing: getting by.

— from the memoirs-in-progress of Aaron Goldman, former mob accountant

Like the judicial system, the penal system in Hudson City is split between the state and federal systems.

State Corrections

Besides the Longview Correctional Center (page 192), there are four primary jails or prisons in or around Hudson City (as well as many other minor facilities). The total inmate population of the facilities in or near Hudson City (excluding Stewartsburg Penitentiary) is approximately 25,000.

JUVENILE OFFENDERS CORRECTIONAL HALL (JOC)

Usually known simply as Juvenile Hall or “the Joke” (from its initials), Juvenile Offenders Correctional is a facility for the incarceration of offenders under 18 who are not tried as adults. Most juveniles sentenced to the JOC serve less than a year there, and by law a juvenile cannot be confined here past his eighteenth birthday — in other words, no matter what he did, the day he turns 18 the state must release him. This is why particularly vicious juvenile criminals are tried as adults and, if convicted, sentenced to an adult prison.

The JOC occupies a large building at the northeast corner of 7th Avenue and N. Jefferson Street. It has sufficient cells and dormitories to hold as many as three thousand detainees, though at several times during the past decade it's experienced significant overcrowding. The warden, Elliott Rosenzweig, leads a staff of dozens of jailers, guards, nurses, and clerical support personnel who attempt to keep order in the face of thousands of adolescents for whom the concepts of “morality,” “responsibility,” and “respect for authority” are as alien as the planet Saturn.

OLDEMYER PRISON

This state prison, located several miles from Hudson City in Franklin County, houses minimum and medium custody prisoners. It can hold 2,250 prisoners. Warden Marshall Bannock runs the facility.

STEWARTSBURG PENITENTIARY

Located a few miles north and east of the town of Stewartsburg, “the Stew” is the maximum-custody prison nearest Hudson City. Most of the city's worst criminals spend time as part of its inmate population of approximately three thousand at some point during their careers.

Stewartsburg Penitentiary consists of one main six-story building in a rough H shape, its four wings designated A through D. The administrative offices, including those of Warden David Grace and his main staff, and other major facilities are located in the central area, while various outlying buildings contain the motor pool, storage areas, and so forth. Enormous walls with numerous guard towers, as well as many other intense security measures, keep the inmates from escaping. There hasn't been a successful jailbreak from the Stew since 1989.

TODDBERRY ASYLUM

Named after a famous nineteenth century psychiatrist, Toddberry Asylum (or, more correctly, the Toddberry Hospital for the Criminally Insane) is a facility where the state incarcerates criminals with severe psychological problems that render them a significant danger to themselves or to others. The inmates include numerous sex offenders, felons experiencing various psychoses, and the like; over 75% of them were charged with murder, rape, or other violent offenses before being found unfit to stand trial.

Some of the most infamous inmates kept in Toddberry under the supervision of Warden Dr. Adam Sarkesian and his staff include: arsonist Frank Cornell; Jackson DeVere, the lawyer turned serial killer who nearly won his own acquittal at trial; Raymond “Eyekiller” Dunnagan, who assaulted people and drained the fluid from their eyes with a syringe; Vincent Scoria, the serial killer who killed nearly two dozen Hudsonite women (mostly prostitutes) from 1992 to 1996; and the cannibalistic Hale twins, Karen and Jerry.

Toddberry Asylum occupies a large, well-guarded estate several miles west of Hudson City on the outskirts of the suburb of Rockwell. It was once the mansion of a wealthy physician, who left it to the city for use in the care of the mentally ill.

Federal Corrections

There's only one federal prison near Hudson City: the Federal Correctional Institution at Farmingdale, about forty miles south of the city. It's a maximum-security facility housing dangerous, hardened criminals from around the country. The federal Department of Corrections transfers inmates frequently, so someone sent to Farmingdale might only spend a few weeks or months there before being sent to FCI: Milan, Michigan, FCI: Atlanta, or any one of many other federal prisons throughout the country.

OTHER JAILS

Longview Correctional takes care of most of the city's jail needs... most, but not all. Even a facility as large as Longview can't hold the city's entire short-term criminal population. The city maintains several other small jail facilities. Many are attached to specific police precincts, and mainly serve those precincts (and the surrounding areas), but two are independent facilities: Elmview Correctional Center on Booth Boulevard, which has space for roughly 750 detainees; and the Charlesburg Correctional Center, a 500-bed facility in the shadow of S. Truman Boulevard in southwest Freetown.

THE HUDSON CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT



JOE STOKOWSKI

13 STR 12 DEX
15 CON 12 BODY
13 INT 10 EGO
13 PRE 10 COM
4 PD 5 ED
3 SPD 6 REC
30 END 27 STUN

Abilities: Climbing 8-, Combat Driving 8-, CK: Hudson City 11-, KS: Fires 12-, KS: Magic Tricks 11-, KS: Pro Sports 11-, PS: Barbecuing 11-, PS: Firefighter 13-, PS: Stage Magician 8-, Sleight Of Hand 11-, TF: Fire Trucks, WF: Handguns, Fringe Benefit: Membership (Firefighter in HCFD)

Disadvantages: Social Limitation: Subject To Orders

Notes: Joe Stokowski is one of the thousands of firefighters who work hard and risk their lives every day to keep Hudson City safe from fire and other disasters. He's on the usual two days on, one day off schedule that HCFD firefighters have; he has a studio apartment in Blackbridge for his days off. In his spare time he sometimes makes a few extra bucks as a magician at kids' birthday parties, though as often as not the kid is one of his countless little cousins such-and-such times removed and he does it for the price of a piece of birthday cake. Most women consider him handsome; he's been an "item" in several charity bachelor auctions around the city.

"What a mess. I didn't think there were this many stuffed animals in the world."

"Were there a lot of kids here or something?"

Hartsell flipped through the pages of the preliminary report. "No, no kids — they only found one body, of a middle-aged woman. Must've had a stuffed animal collection or something."

"Jesus. Looks like they make really good tinder."

Hartsell knelt down, sniffed carefully. "They sure do, when they're soaked in that much gasoline. Can't you smell it?"

Fredricks took a deep breath. "Yeah. He must've used a lot of it, to leave a smell this strong after a fire that intense."

"OK, so who do we know that would start a fire this way?"

"A dozen guys, at least, though I think most of 'em are locked up right now. But I don't think this was a pro job. A pro could've gotten it done more easily and efficiently."

"Unless someone's trying to send some sort of message...."

— conversation between Deputy Fire Marshalls Frank Hartsell and Craig Fredricks

From the days of the earliest cities, one threat has caused more anxiety than any other: fire. To protect the citizens of Hudson City from this danger, the city established the Hudson City Fire Department (HCFD) over a century ago. Prior to that time, fires were fought mainly by neighborhood "fire companies" which were often little more than social clubs, or which competed with each other by sabotaging equipment and doing other things that just made the overall job of fighting fires more difficult. These conditions contributed, in part, to the burning of the city in 1895, prompting a call for reform that eventually led to the creation of the HCFD.

Structure And Organization

The HCFD has a five-tier structure. Commanding the Department is the *Fire Commissioner*, who's appointed to his position by the Mayor. Since Mayor Umstead was elected, Robert "Bert" McGee has served as his Fire Commissioner. A friendly, telegenic man who's popular with the people in the Department (in part because he was once a rank-and-file fireman himself), McGee could easily hold onto his job even after Umstead eventually leaves office. During his tenure he's fought for (and won) increased funding not only for actual firefighting equipment and personnel, but for fire prevention and education programs. The HCFD's well-known cartoon mascot, Dalmatian Dan, was his creation.

Below the Commissioner are numerous *Deputy Commissioners*, each responsible for a specific branch of the Department (such as Public Relations, Administration, Legal Affairs, Technology, and Budget). The two most important Deputy Commissioner-level officials have special titles: the Fire Marshal (see below) and the Chief of Department. "The Chief," as he's known, commands the Fire Operations Division that's responsible for actually fighting fires and performing similar tasks (such as the Emergency Medical Technicians [EMTs]).

The HCFD divides Hudson City into twelve *fire districts*, identified by letter (A-L), each under the authority of a *District Commander* who answers directly to the Chief of Department. District commanders work closely with the *captains* in their districts. A captain commands one of Hudson City's dozens of fire stations, each with its complement of personnel ranked Lieutenant, Sergeant, or Firefighter. To become a firefighter, an applicant must have EMT or Paramedic training (or equivalent) and pass rigorous physical and written tests.

The HCFD has a total of approximately 18,000 employees: 11,000 firefighters and 7,000 civilian support personnel.

THE FIRE MARSHAL

The Fire Marshal and his office investigate fires to determine their causes. Usually the source of a fire isn't particularly mysterious, but in some cases it's important to establish the exact cause for insurance purposes and determine whether arson was involved. The Fire Marshal and his Deputy Fire Marshals are sworn law enforcement officers who carry badges and guns and can make arrests. Hudson City has approximately 100 Deputy Fire Marshals; they work in teams of two; as a unit they investigate around three to four thousand "suspicious" fires a year.

As of late 2004, Lawrence "Larry" Petrocelli serves as the Hudson City Fire Marshal. A large, broad-shouldered man with extensive burn scars on his partially-crippled left arm (caused by a collapsing roof that caught him when he was a firefighter), he comes across as gruff and brusque at first, but warms to friendliness with people who earn his trust and respect. He seems to have a special hatred for arsonists, as if by setting fires they were attacking him personally.

Fire Statistics

In a typical year, the HCFD responds to over 45,000 fires (structural and non-structural), over 300,000 non-fire events (medical emergencies, utilities emergencies, and the like), and nearly 40,000 false alarms. Of the fires it responds to, it classifies over 3,000 of them as "serious" (meaning they are "all hands" fires, with a minimum of four fully-engaged fire units, or the even worse 2-, 3-, 4-, or 5- or more alarm fires). The department's average response time to any of these incidents, city-wide, is approximately five minutes.

GREAT FIRES IN HUDSON CITY HISTORY

Since the 1895 fire, Hudson City has been victimized by numerous major fires, though none anywhere near as deadly and devastating as that one. Some of the more recent ones include:

September 17, 1975: A fire broke out in a warehouse in Bayside and eventually spread to several nearby warehouses. Unbeknownst to the HCFD, hazardous materials were illegally stored in one of the burning buildings. The fire and toxic materials caused an explosion that killed three firefighters.

March 29, 1983: An arsonist set a building in Elmview on fire as part of what was later determined to be an insurance scam. One adult and two children died of smoke inhalation, and the building was so badly damaged it had to be demolished.

June 21, 1996: The Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Freetown (page 52) burned down, killing two persons. The Fire Marshal's tentative conclusion was that faulty wiring caused the fire, but some Freetowners remain convinced it was arson.

August 6, 1997: While patrons danced the night away, the psychotic arsonist Firebug locked the doors of the Black Jade dance club in Riverside Hills, then triggered firebombs he'd previously planted. Nearly 100 people died from fire, smoke inhalation, or being trampled before the HCFD rescued the remaining clubgoers.

December 16, 2002: A badly-maintained Christmas tree in a Guilford apartment caught fire, eventually setting the whole building aflame. Sparks spread to several nearby buildings, igniting them as well. No lives were lost, but tens millions of dollars of damage were done. The city considered an ordinance banning live Christmas trees in residences, but backed down in the face of massive public opposition.

FRANK HARTSELL

10	STR	10	DEX
10	CON	10	BODY
10	INT	10	EGO
13	PRE	10	COM
4	PD	3	ED
3	SPD	4	REC
20	END	20	STUN

Abilities: Bureaucrats 8-, Conversation 11-, Criminalistics 13-, Forensic Medicine 8-, KS: Known Hudson City Arsonists 11-, KS: The Law Enforcement World 11-, SS: Arson/Explosion Investigation 14-, Street-wise 11-, WF: Small Arms, Fringe Benefit: Law Enforcement Rank, Weapon Permit

Disadvantages: Distinctive Features: Badge; Social Limitation: Subject To Orders

Notes: Frank Hartsell is one of Hudson City's deputy fire marshals. Together with his partner Craig Fredricks, he investigates dozens of fires every year, sifting through ash and rubble to try to determine the cause of a particular blaze. He affects a sort of air of detached objectivity, even cynicism, but he actually cares deeply about people and feels a cold fury at the destruction and death that arsonists cause.



VIGILANTES



PATRICIA LLEWELLYN

8 STR 10 DEX
8 CON 8 BODY
9 INT 8 EGO
10 PRE 10 COM
2 PD 2 ED
2 SPD 4 REC
16 END 16 STUN

Abilities: Bureaucratics 11-, Conversation 11-, High Society 8-, CK: Hudson City 11-, KS: Hudson City Vigilantes 14-, PS: Photography 8-, PS: Reporter 11-, PS: Writer 11-, Stealth 11-, Streetwise 8-, WF: Handguns

Disadvantages: None

Notes: A former reporter for the *Star-Gazette*, Patricia Llewellyn left journalism in 2000 to launch a career as a true crime writer. Her first book, *Masks Of Justice: The Vigilantes Of Hudson City*, debuted in 2003 and quickly became a bestseller not only in the city, but nationwide. Since then she's been in high demand as a speaker. She's said to be working on another book, one focusing on the vigilante DarkAngel and her chief nemeses. She owns an extensive collection of vigilante paraphernalia, including a shell casing from one of the late Captain X's assault rifles, one of the Harbinger's blue moon "calling cards," and a piece of cloth torn from the Headless Hangman's cloak.

The cops and the feds aren't the only ones fighting crime in Hudson City. The crime problem is so severe that a few private citizens have chosen to take the law into their own hands and combat the underworld as vigilantes. Hudson City's tradition of masked crime-fighters dates back to the Raven in the 1920s, but it's never been as prominent as in the past twenty years or so.

Whatever their private feelings on the subject might be, Mayor Umstead, Police Commissioner Ringwald, and all other major city officials publicly condemn vigilantes and vigilantism and insist that private citizens leave enforcing the law to the police. Police officers who observe vigilantes in action must attempt to apprehend them, and detectives often investigate matters pertaining to vigilantes. However, not all HCPD officers are quite as diligent in their pursuit of vigilantes as they might be. If cops understand anything, it's just how widespread and dangerous crime is in Hudson City: they're fighting a losing battle, and they know it. If someone wants to help them — particularly with the costumed or "weird" criminals who've cropped up in recent years — some cops don't object all that much.

As of late 2004, the major crimefighters active in Hudson City include:

HCVIGILANTE.NET

Vigilantes have their fans just like anyone else who gets enough media coverage. In Hudson City, one of the major outlets for the fascination with crimefighters (costumed or otherwise) is HCVigilante.Net, a website maintained by a twentysomething computer programmer and self-described "crime buff" Kevin Ramini. HCVigilante.Net has FAQs and information files about known vigilantes (including "Kill Counters" showing confirmed or suspected victim numbers for individual vigilantes), an essay on the history of vigilantism in Hudson City, links to related sites, and an extensive "news" section where it tracks vigilante activity (real or supposed) in the city. More than one reporter has relied on HCVigilante.Net for information relating to a story; the site has a well-deserved reputation for thoroughness, accuracy, and indicating when information is based on supposition.

The most active part of HCVigilante.Net is its message boards, where vigilante fans from Hudson City and around the world debate the merits of vigilantism and the activities of specific vigilantes. Fair warning to newcomers: the conversations often turn vitriolic.

DARKANGEL

The only woman among the ranks of the prominent vigilantes, DarkAngel is also the only one to achieve any level of popular acceptance or support. Unlike her "colleagues," DarkAngel doesn't routinely use deadly force. While some of her weapons — such as her sword-shaped throwing blades — are unquestionably dangerous, she uses them to wound rather than to kill. When she's done at the scene of a crime, the cops don't find corpses, they find a bunch of unconscious crooks tied up with her trademark golden-hued rope.

DarkAngel is most active on the Northside, particularly in Blackbridge and LeMastre Park, and to a lesser extent in Bankhurst, Highlands, Worthington, and Guilford. But she's struck at crimelords and conspiracies all over the city, making herself many enemies in the underworld... and more than a few silent admirers on the force. (See the *Dark Champions: The Animated Series* sourcebook for more information about DarkAngel.)

DarkAngel is known to have (reluctantly) worked with Renegade on a few occasions, and to have teamed up with LIBRA once or twice since that group's debut, but otherwise seems to keep to herself.

THE HARBINGER OF JUSTICE

The modern era of vigilantism in Hudson City began with the March, 1986 appearance of the Harbinger of Justice, by far the deadliest and most tenacious crimefighter in the city's history. During a nearly twenty-year career, he's killed, by most estimates, somewhere between three and five thousand persons — exact numbers aren't available, since there's no uniform forensic evidence, he doesn't necessarily claim credit for every kill, the fact that "copycats" may commit crimes like his, and many similar factors. Most of his victims had extensive records (often for violent crimes), but approximately fifteen percent of them are not known to have been involved in any criminal activity. This chronicle of slaughter has earned the Harbinger the dubious distinction of being the currently-active vigilante on whom the Vigilantism Task Force (page 143) focuses the majority of its efforts.

Even other vigilantes don't particularly like the Harbinger; he's inflexible, judgmental, and condescending. But he seems to know more about the Hudson City underworld than anyone else, so sometimes he's the only person another vigilante can turn to for help... assuming you can find him.



THE HEADLESS HANGMAN

With his tattered, hooded black cloak, razor-sharp sickle, and rope-and-noose, the Headless Hangman presents a terrifying picture to underworld denizens and innocent citizens alike. A ruthless foe of the Mafia in particular, he seems willing to endanger ordinary people in his quest to see Justice served. For example, in 2002 he crashed a car, killing three Mafiosi but also killing two bystanders and injuring four more. Both the police and the mob would happily see him behind bars... or dead. He's clashed with several vigilantes who tried to bring him in, but escaped from all of these encounters; he's thought to be responsible for ending the short-lived career of the costumed crime-fighter Prodigal, who vanished in 2000.

LIBRA

The most recent vigilante to hit the streets of the Pearl City is actually a team of vigilantes that calls itself LIBRA. The authorities are unaware of the exact size of this private army, though they have identified at least six separate individuals, and possibly as many as ten, associated with the group. LIBRA members wear similar uniforms and have clearly practiced paramilitary assaults and urban combat together, but it's not known where they train or who supplies their funding. (See Chapter Nine of *Dark Champions* for more details on LIBRA.)

RENEGADE

Most people would describe Renegade as Hudson City's most destructive vigilante. He seems to have a penchant for crashing cars, accidentally or purposely blowing things up, and using other

methods of fighting crime that involve reducing his surroundings to rubble. He favors high-powered weapons — USAS-12 combat shotguns, high-caliber handguns, grenades, and the like. He doesn't seem to have any defined "territory," and rarely works with other vigilantes.

THE SCARECROW

The Harbinger of Justice may have killed more criminals, but the mysterious Scarecrow ranks as the most brutal of Hudson City's vigilantes. The corpses of his victims are marked by burns, cuts, missing digits (or other parts...), flayed flesh, broken bones, and various other mutilations. The Scarecrow seems to eschew the Harbinger's advanced weaponry, DarkAngel's and the Headless Hangman's fancy gadgets, and Renegade's over-the-top methodology in favor of a grim, low-key approach — he relies on simple gear like brass knuckles, .45 pistols, knives, and spike-studded leather armor to get the job done.

SIDDHARTHA

The murderer who identifies himself as Siddhartha is a "vigilante" only in the loosest sense of the term; other crimefighters hate him as much as the public does. The "criminals" Siddhartha fights are mostly victims of social ills such as homelessness and welfare. He occasionally lashes out at drug dealers or other obvious lawbreakers, but seems to prefer to "clean up" the streets by shooting homeless people, blowing up welfare clinics, and the like. He's considered responsible for well over 300 deaths, and few people in Hudson City would be sorry to see him captured or killed.



chapter five:



THE HUDSON CITY UNDERWORLD PREDATORS

ORGANIZED CRIME



NICK VILLANI

8 STR	8 DEX
7 CON	7 BODY
8 INT	8 EGO
10 PRE	9 COM
3 PD	2 ED
2 SPD	4 REC
14 END	15 STUN

Abilities: AK: Little Italy 11-, KS: The Hudson City Mafia 8-, Streetwise 8-

Disadvantages: Social Limitation: Juvenile Criminal Record; Social Limitation: Teenager

Notes: Nick Villani is a street-smart kid from Little Italy. He's only 14, but he's already got a juvie record for shoplifting and petty theft. These days he spends most of his time running errands for members of the Marcelli family and their associates. If someone doesn't do something soon, he'll end up as a gangster himself within a few years and throw away whatever legitimate future he might have.

Hudson City has long been infamous for the extent of its crime problem and the size of its underworld. From the powerful Mafia families who skim millions of dollars a year out of society through threats, violence, and conspiracy, to the street punks who make life in Freetown and Lafayette so dangerous, to the so-called "costumed criminals" that have sprung up like fungus after a rainstorm in the past twenty years, there seems to be no end to the depth and variety of evil that men in Hudson City are capable of.

Two accompanying graphics illustrate the current state of the Hudson City underworld. First, the maps on pages 159 and 162 mark the territories of the major organized crime groups and powerful criminals as of late 2004. Some of these territories (such as the Mafia's domination in Little Italy, or the tongs in Chinatown) are more or less permanent, though even within a given territory which family, clan, or gang controls what streets and businesses can change quickly. In other cases, such as the patchwork of gang turf that is Freetown, the situation remains perpetually fluid, subject to change on an almost weekly basis. Areas not marked as being the territory of a specific group or gang (such as most of the Northside) are generally "open territory," where anyone can commit a crime without incurring any obligation or special desire for vengeance.

Second, the diagram on page 278 provides a basic "map" of the relationships among the Hudson City underworld: double arrows indicate antagonism, even if it's only mutual mistrust and loathing (this is the default state of affairs between the families or gangs within a particular type of organized crime, such as all Russian Mafia gangs); a single arrow indicates a friendly or allied relationship (with the arrow pointing to the dominant group); and a dashed line indicates a drug supplier relationship (with the arrow pointing toward the buyer). However, this diagram can't represent the subtleties of how many of these groups interact. Nor can it show the presence of the many smaller, less powerful, gangs and groups in the city, or all the relationships involving various costumed crimelords (whom can generally be considered as hostile to everyone else, including each other, though temporary alliances between two or more aren't unheard of). As always, see the text for the complete information.

This chapter only covers the current state of the Hudson City underworld as of late 2004, including brief descriptions of some of the major underworld players. For general information about criminal groups and activities, see *The Underworld Sourcebook* or Chapter Seven of *Dark Champions*. Additionally, you can find character sheets for, or additional information about, some of the people mentioned in this chapter in Chapter Seven of this book (the GM's Vault).

THE MAFIA

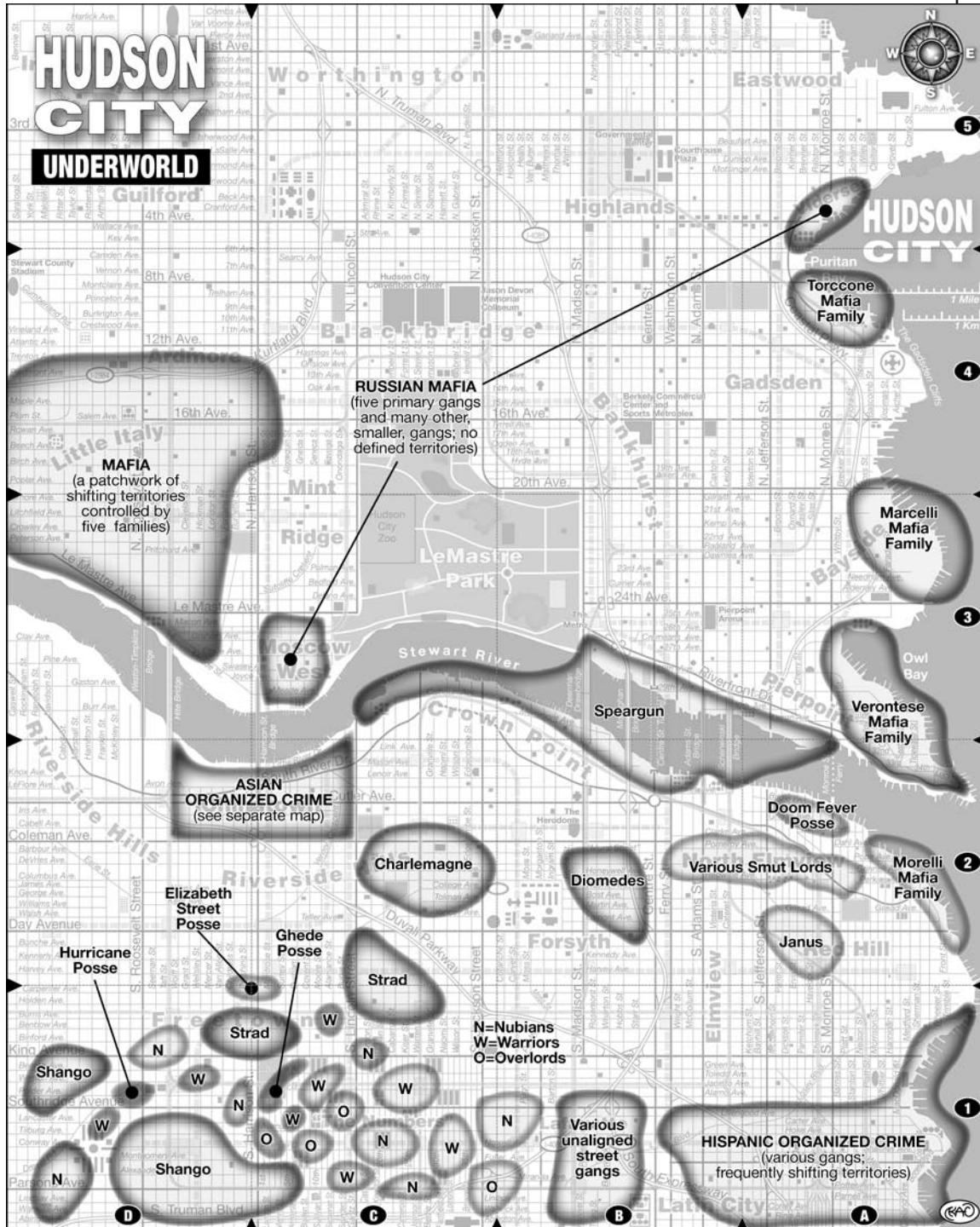
Vito Falcone, caporegima in the Torcone family, got up at 6:30 in the morning, as always. He did some stretching exercises quietly, so he wouldn't wake Rosa, then took a shower and shaved. After he finished, he put on a flannel robe and went downstairs. He put two slice of bread in the toaster, poured himself a glass of orange juice, and then went to the front door to get the paper.

He opened the door and bent down to pick up his morning copy of the Star-Gazette. As he stood back up, he saw a man in a suit get out of a parked car and walk toward him. It's too late, he thought to himself. Nothing I can do now. Goodbye, Rosa.

The man in the suit pulled a .45 from underneath his jacket as another car came speeding around the corner. "Don Carlo sends his regards, fat man," he snarled. Three quick shots broke the morning stillness; Vito fell back inside his house with three holes in his chest. The car picked the hitman up and sped away with a screech of tires.

—another battle in the Scatucci-Torcone War

The longest-lived and most powerful organized crime group in Hudson City is unquestionably the Mafia. Though rigorous state and federal prosecution, combined with the aging of the Mafia's formidable leadership structure, has weakened the Mafia over the past two decades, and newcomers like the Organizatsiya are always nipping at its heels, it remains entrenched and powerful. Some experts believe the Mafia in Hudson City is due for a resurgence, with a new crop of younger, hipper, more violent *mafiosi* soon to hit the streets.



MARTY

10 STR	10 DEX
10 CON	8 BODY
10 INT	8 EGO
10 PRE	8 COM
2 PD	2 ED
2 SPD	4 REC
20 END	18 STUN

Abilities: Concealment 11-, Gambling (Card Games, Sports Betting) 14-, KS: The Vice World 11-, Persuasion 11-, Stealth 11-, Streetwise 11-, WF: Handguns

Disadvantages: Rivalry (Professional, with other bookies); Social Limitation: Criminal Record

Notes: Marty (no one seems to know his last name) is one of the many bookies working in the Hudson City shadows. From a disreputable-looking office in south Arlington he takes bets, lays off bets when the action gets too hot, accepts payment on losses, and pays out winnings. He's got an office girl named Judy to help with the details, and a big black guy known as "Dolph" who collects from gamblers who are, one might say, less than cooperative when they lose. To keep Card Shark off his back, he pays protection money to the Mafia. He only accepts new "clients" if they come with a recommendation from an existing client or someone else he can trust.

Territory

The Mafia got its start in Hudson City in Little Italy over a century ago, and Little Italy remains its base of power today. The five families (see below) usually maintain a more-or-less stable truce, with territories clearly understood based on decades of interaction and a slow shifting of strengths and advantages — though more intense conflicts, such as the current Scatucci-Torcone "war," still flare up from time to time.

But the Mafia's tentacles reach far beyond Little Italy. The Mafia dominates much of the city's underworld, particularly on the Northside. Its scams and conspiracies, control of various unions, hijacking rings, loansharking operations, illegal gambling outfits, and heroin distribution networks affect virtually everyone in the city, even if only indirectly. All the families but the Scatuccis control significant sections of the waterfront as well. The only areas where the Mafia's influence is muted are ethnic enclaves where other groups hold sway. For example, the Mafia has relatively little penetration in Moscow West, Chinatown, Freetown, or Latin City.

Over the course of the twentieth century, five *borgatas*, or Mafia "families," have evolved in Hudson City. Some got their start back in the Twenties and have remained on the top of the heap ever since; others grew out of now-defunct families, or arose when two small families "merged" through marriage or business partnerships. The so-called "five families" are:

MARCELLI

Begun in the Twenties by mob genius Juliano "Mac" Marcelli, the Marcelli family has always been one of the most stable and prosperous Mafia *borgatas* in Hudson City. But in recent years it's experienced something of a fall from its previous lofty heights. Guiseppe "Joe Guns" Tauriello, who took over leadership of the family in 1978, finally ran afoul of the law and was sent to prison for life in 2001. The family floundered, essentially leaderless, until mid-2003, when Mario "the Prince" Maneti, a *caporegima* under Tauriello, eliminated his chief rival and emerged as the pre-eminent member of the family. He's spent the past eighteen months consolidating his power, and now seems ready to move forward with the full support of the family behind him.

The Marcellis have their fingers in a wide variety of criminal pies. In addition to their "holdings" in Little Italy, they dominate the underworld in Bayside, including the Hudson City Shipyards. They maintain ties to the Qi On tong in the city, and the Yung Sat tong in Canada, obtaining heroin from both for distribution in the Pearl City and elsewhere along the eastern seaboard.

Mario Maneti's underboss is his brother-in-law Gregorio "Wheels" Spagnola, a fast-driving, hard-living guy who can drink more whiskey than any other three men put together. His *consiglieri*, Anthony "Tony D" Diodati, is just the opposite — a quiet, reflective, cautious man who tries to minimize every risk. Between the two of them, they keep Maneti on a

pretty even keel. The family's captains include Alberdo "Chips" Marcelli (owner of a snack food distribution business), Peter "Maestro" Carelli, Guido "Hambone" Vachelle, Art "Ladder Man" Benetti (a former burglar), and Joseph "Jonny Blue" Galbone. Other prominent Marcellis include Anastasio "Stoss The Sword" Rocca (a well-known hitman), Paolo "Pally" Sallucio, James "DH" Arrese, and Sonny "Sunshine" Lambesti. Total family membership is about 300 men.

MORELLI

The Morelli family takes its name from Antonio "Crash" Morelli, a bootlegger who took control of a semi-confederation of other bootleggers in the Twenties and Thirties and forged them into a unit. Unfortunately, given that background, the Morelli family has always suffered from a lot of infighting, factionalism, and backbiting — even today, lots of different Morellis figure they have as much claim to positions of power and wealth as anyone else in the family. Prosecution and misfortune nearly ended the Morellis in the early Seventies, but the family survived because Alphonse "The Brain" Malerno got it heavily involved in the heroin trade. That in turn brought unwanted DEA attention, and in the early Eighties Malerno fell victim to a joint FBI/DEA/HCPD operation and went up for life on multiple RICO counts. The family drifted through a series of largely powerless leaders until Robert "Bobby Bucks" Bellini took over the top spot in 1996 by shotgunning his predecessor to death. Bellini has a lot more authority within the family than anyone since Malerno, but many of his captains remain powerful enough to set their own course most of the time.

The Morellis control part of the North Elmview waterfront. This puts them in a position to exert some influence over other North Elmview activities, though it's been decades since the Mafia had any real power over the Strip. They remain deeply involved in the heroin trade as well. In the past fifteen years they've partly drifted away from getting their heroin from the tongs, instead buying from Armenian, Balkan, and Turkish gangsters who transship Golden Crescent heroin into the States. Their other major activities include union racketeering (particularly in the waste removal and restaurant industries) and illegal gambling — they control many numbers operations and illicit casinos. This frequently brings them into conflict with Card Shark. Furthermore, many captains and soldiers feel obliged to "show respect" not only to Bellini but to each of the powerful captains who might one day take his place, which reduces their profits and causes some discontent.

The Morelli *sottocapo* is Jimmy "the Rose" Rosellino, a longtime friend of Bobby Bellini's. The family's *consiglieri* is Bobby's attorney, John Giatta (who took the place of another man, Anthony "Tony A" Albangetti, whom the Headless Hangman killed in 2002). Richard "Lucky Ricky" DeLuca (who loves to gamble), Mickey "Numbers" Tosconi, Albert "the Hawk" Manneri, John "Fireball" Sanelo, Mario "the Milkman" Santonelli, and Jack "Jackie Fingers" Poroni are the most powerful Morelli captains. The family numbers about 260 made men.



SCATUCCI

The Scatucci family rose to prominence during World War II, when the government persuaded Charles “Pretzels” Scatucci to use his influence over the Southside docks to keep the waterfront open in support of the war effort. Scatucci’s men ruthlessly suppressed any labor agitation that threatened shipping. By the war’s end, so many powerful men owed Charles Scatucci so many favors that his fortune was made. His successor, Donnie “Chopper” Colleti, strengthened Scatucci ties to corrupt politicians and labor figures.

When Colleti died in 1960, Charles’s young son Carlo “Charlie Snake-Eyes” Scatucci took over. Despite being only 33, he firmly took hold of the reins and steered the family where he wanted it to go. He defused a brief war that had sprung up with the Torccones (thus earning the respect of the Commission) and increased the family’s profits. He’s still *capo* today, but he’s nearing 80 and has weakened considerably in the past few years. His weakness infected the family, allowing various gangs from Latin City to push the Scatuccis out of the Southside waterfront (at least for the time being...). Even worse, the Scatuccis’ old rivals, the Torccones, sensed the weakness coming a couple years ago and started a second Scatucci-Torccone War. It may fall to “Don Carlo’s” successor to stop this one; he no longer has the fire.

According to the best FBI analyses, the Scatuccis are the main family behind Mafia control of the waste disposal, janitorial, and deliverymen’s unions. One of the underlying causes of the War is the Scatuccis’ competition with the Torccones for control

of the city’s construction unions. Additionally, they do a lot of loansharking and hijacking.

The Scatucci underboss, Piero “Leonardo” Scarlotti, is considered Carlo’s likely successor; the old don has no sons to whom he’d wish to pass on his legacy. Scarlotti, on the other hand, is clever, creative, and quick-witted (hence his nickname), and will make a fine leader. The family *consiglieri*, Stefano “Whitey” Vasio, is a skilled lawyer who often gets Scatucci men off the hook when they’re arrested. The Scatucci captains include Joseph “Thin Man” Adrissi, Joseph “Big Joey” Bonavolente, Ricardo “The Penguin” Rosconi, and Anthony “Drummer Boy” Lambesti. The family’s biggest earner right now is probably Alfredo “Shades” Giordano, a skilled smuggler and hijacker. Before the War, the Scatuccis

numbered 320 or so, but their current numbers have reportedly dropped to around 280.

TORCCONE

Most underworld observers consider the Torccones a family on the rise. Having not evolved until after World War II, for many years they were a sort of “second fiddle” to more powerful families. Their profile dropped even lower when their late Fifties capo, Thomas “Jacques” Antonelli, tried to make himself *capo di tutti capi* and was gunned down on the orders of the Commission. The first Scatucci-Torccone War in the early Sixties didn’t help matters... but after that, things took a turn for the better. Under the deft leadership of Theodore “Teddy Undertow” Landano, the Torccones outmaneuvered the other families to establish firm control over the docks between 8th and 12th Avenues, including the highly profitable Hudson City Fish Market (page 188). After Teddy’s death of cancer in 1978, the family went through a period of uncertainty and directionlessness, during which the FBI and HCPD hit it hard. That ended in 1992, when Albert “Hacksaw Al” Ciasca took over. He’s led the family ever since, even starting a war with the Scatuccis in an effort to take territory and influence from them.

The Torccones have never “specialized” in any particular type of crime; they spread themselves out well, and command a power base both deep and broad. Their profits mainly come from gambling, drug sales, loansharking, kickbacks, and extortion. The Torccones are the only family with any connections in Freetown; they supply heroin to some gangs there, including the crimelord Strad.

HEROIN IN HUDSON CITY

As of late 2004, the “wholesale” price of a kilo of heroin in Hudson City varies between about \$13,000 (for the cheapest, lowest-grade Mexican heroin) to around \$200,000 (for the best South American, Golden Triangle, and Golden Crescent heroin), depending on purity, who it’s bought from, amount purchased, and many other variables. The wider variation in price compared to cocaine (see page 165) reflects the multiple sources of supply, the many different groups involved in producing and distributing heroin, the current political and military state of affairs in South-east and Southwest Asia, and similar factors.

After “stepping on” (diluting) the pure heroin, a street dealer usually sells it on the street for about \$85-600 per gram, or \$4,000 to \$7,000 per ounce — though many sales are in small amounts, such as \$5 “nickel bags” or \$10 “dime bags,” not whole grams/ounces.

They've long competed with the Scatuccis for control of various lucrative construction unions.

Hacksaw Al remains firmly in charge, thanks in part to the help of his loyal underboss, Vito "the Watchmaker" Jesselli and his half-brother and *consiglieri* Robert "Bobby Red" Finelli. The family's captains include Umberto "Uzi" DePastori (whom most people consider to be more than a little deranged, and give a wide berth to), James "Torchie" Torrccone (Al's favorite cousin), Ignazio "Iggy" Scafoddi, and Frank "Cooler" Tarantelli. Since the beginning of the Scatucci-Torrccone War, a large number of hitmen, such as Vincent "Two-Spot" Pigello (who likes to shoot his victims twice) and Salvatore "Happy Sal" Lanza-nore, have become associated with the Torrccones. The Torrccone ranks include about 240 men, though before the War that number was considerably higher.

VERONTESE

If you asked most experts on the Hudson City underworld who the most dangerous *mafioso* in town was, they'd answer "Black Mike" — Michael Calvino, the Verontese *capo*. In 2000 he took over a family that got its start back in the Fifties when Frederick "Stinger" Verontese took over the Pol-loni family and eliminated virtually all of the old Polloni loyalists. Black Mike himself took control when his predecessor, Verontese's son-in-law Nick "Nails" Travanti, was sentenced to life in prison.

The Verontese family is more heavily involved in the drug trade than any other family. They obtain heroin from both the Chinese and the Golden Crescent; some rumors claim they're negotiating with the Colombian and Mexican cartels for cocaine, or that they've set up labs to develop and produce designer drugs. The Veronteses also have plenty of gambling and hijacking operations, sig-

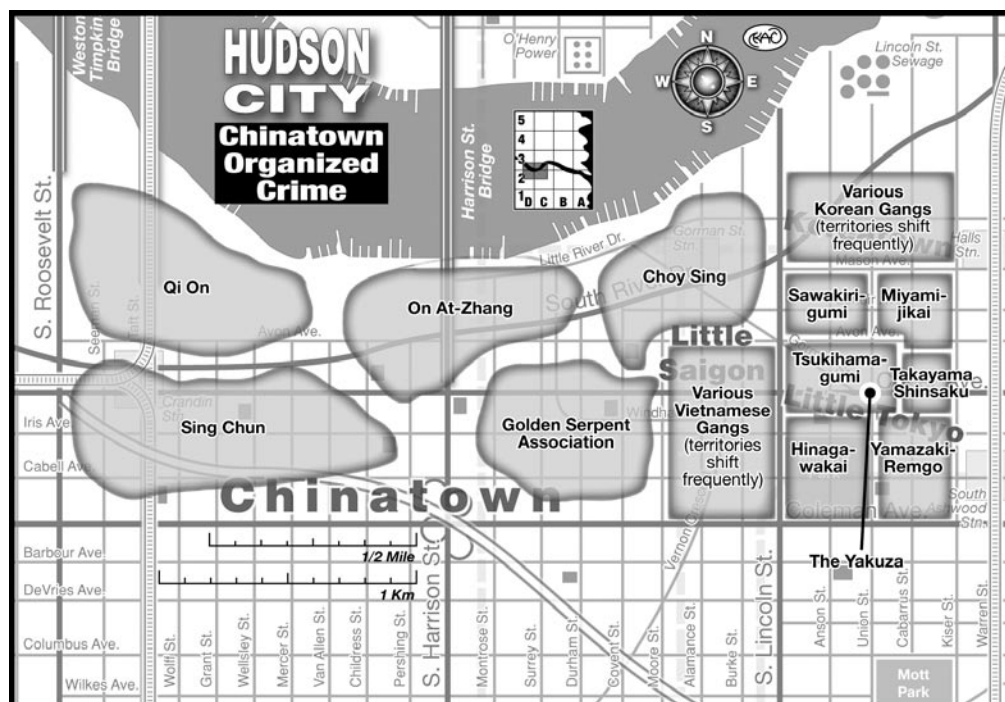
nificant influence over the waste removal industry and the hotel workers' unions, and control of the Pierpoint waterfront (though they've been fighting with Speargun over the latter, and seem to have lost the Flower Market to him; see pages 179, 208).

Black Mike's underboss and *consiglieri* are Thomas "Slugger" Carrera and Frank "the Wizard" Madonari (so called because of his ability to juggle the family's finances). The Verontese captains include Charles "Charlie Spats" Gambini, William "Willy the Pick" Scapetta (a feared hitman, known for his sadism and viciousness), George "Aces" Del-larubia, and Paul "Smiley" Baldesti. The family has around 250 made men.

Underworld Relationships

As the "top dog" in the underworld, the Mafia constantly comes under attack from outside groups that want to take over (or suffers internal conflicts of its own for much the same reason). The Russian mobs, Card Shark, and the yakuza all struggle with the Mafia (or, more accurately, various Mafia families) for power, profits, and turf. The crimelord Speargun has been eating away at the mob's control of Hudson City's waterfronts for years now, and all-out war may soon result.

But the Mafia has its allies as well. Geographic proximity to Chinatown, and mutual interest with the Chinese tongs, has led to some profitable working relationships — the tongs smuggle heroin into the country, then sell it to the Mafia for distribution. This sometimes creates tensions with the Mexican and Colombian cartels, but those groups usually restrict themselves to Latin City and Free-town, so actual disputes are rare.



CHINESE TONGS

This part of the tong hall was magnificently decorated: beautiful Chinese paintings set off against the opulent red and gold tracery of the silk wallpaper; Ming vases and ancient statuary on delicately carved tables and stands. Cheng Yi-Fe always felt nervous coming into his master's domain — a nervousness which was only increased by the fear he felt for the master himself.

Cheng walked into the anteroom of the Dragon Head's office. His master's secretary opened the large double doors into the main office without a word, then stood aside to let Cheng pass through, closing the doors quietly behind him. The Dragon Head's office was, if anything, even more lavishly appointed than the rest of the hall, for it was here that he kept his favorite pieces of art and his photos and mementoes of past days. "I am here to report," Cheng said, barely keeping a quaver out of his voice.

"Good," said Kun Feng, Dragon Head of the Sing Chun. "I hope for your sake that you were successful."

"We were. My Scarlet Dragons gunned down Kwan Yu as he left the Thousand Sunsets restaurant. No longer will he tell his tales to vigilantes. Three others who got in our way were also killed."

"And the heroin?"

"The rest of the Scarlet Dragons broke into his house while he was at the restaurant. They found it hidden underneath the floorboards of his kitchen. Because his wife showed them where it was immediately, they spared her life and the lives of her children."

Kun Feng sat and thought in silence for a few moments. "Very well," he said when he finally spoke. "You have performed adequately, and I shall remember. Return to your usual duties; I shall summon you when we need speak once more."

"Yes, great leader," said Cheng Yi-Fe, bowing as he exited the room.

— after-action report at
Sing Chun tong headquarters

Descendants of criminal organizations dating back centuries and which still exist in China today, the tongs of Hudson City are the greatest power in the Chinatown underworld. Known in the Twenties and Thirties as purveyors of every sin mankind could dream up, they still specialize in the vice trade in all its depraved forms.

Territory

The five major tongs, various minor tongs that exist in their shadows, and their associated street gangs restrict themselves to Chinatown exclusively, except to the extent that they might prey on Chinese people living elsewhere in the city. They may ally with other groups if they want to expand their reach — for example, they sell heroin to the Mafia.

All the tongs participate in the same sorts of criminal activities: illegal gambling (not even Card Shark can break their control over Chinatown gambling); drug smuggling and distribution; the Chinatown sex trade; and even some street crimes like robbery. The tongs differentiate themselves by territory and attitude rather than activities; the map on page 162 shows which parts of Chinatown each tong controls. Areas not controlled by a particular tong are "open territory" or "up for grabs" (depending on one's viewpoint).

CHOY SING

The smallest of the Hudson City tongs with fewer than 200 members (at least according to FBI estimates, which aren't nearly as accurate as they are for the Mafia due to the difficulty of infiltrating Chinese organizations), the Choy Sing controls the northeast corner of Chinatown proper — the area along the waterfront immediately west of S. Lincoln Street. Its street gang, the Emerald Doors, takes its name from the prominent green doors that lead into the tong's hall.

Charles Zhou, who was born in China but emigrated to this country with his family as a very young boy, is the Dragon Head of the Choy Sing (and, in the tong's role as a simple "benevolent association," its president as well). Now in his early 70s, he lacks the "fire" that some of his younger followers have, but more than makes up for it with his experience, insight, and contacts. His vice-chairman is Lan Hou, his English secretary Yip Tao, his street secretary Han Fei. Phillip "Jackie Duck" Hsiao leads the three dozen members of the Emerald Doors — the gang used to have closer to four dozen members, but a group of them had an unfortunate "encounter" with the Harbinger of Justice.

GOLDEN SERPENT ASSOCIATION

The youngest and least traditional of the Hudson City tongs, the Golden Serpent Association makes no pretense of being a "benevolent association," "merchant's confederation," or the like. It's a gang, pure and simple — but a tough, violent gang, one that's already made a mark for itself in the five years since it appeared. It took bits of territory from the Choy Sing and On At-Zhang to create its "turf," thus earning the special enmity of both tongs.

Members of the Golden Serpents wear distinctive gold armbands, sashes, or clothes when they want to identify themselves publicly (which isn't often). Their sons often belong as well, creating a "street gang" of sorts for the tong (though it isn't considered quite as separate as most tongs' gangs are).

The authorities have never identified the leader (and presumably founder) of the tong, a man

HUANG ZHU

5 STR	8 DEX
8 CON	8 BODY
13 INT	13 EGO
13 PRE	7 COM
2 PD	2 ED
1 SPD	3 REC
16 END	15 STUN

Abilities: Bribery 12-, Bureaucratics 12-, Conversation 12-, High Society 12-, AK: Chinatown 14-, KS: Chinese Organized Crime 14-, Martial Arts (28 points' worth of Hsing-I and Kung Fu maneuvers), Persuasion 14-, Streetwise 8-, Trading 14-, WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Martial Arts Weapons, Contacts (40 points' worth, throughout Chinatown), Reputation (influential and revered arbitrator, in Chinatown, 14-, +3/+3d6)

Disadvantages: Age: 60+

Notes: In Chinatown, criminal and civilian alike know that if you have a dispute that can't be settled any other way, you don't take it to the round-eyes' courts — you go see Huang Zhu. One of the most revered men in all of Chinatown, Huang Zhu has offered his "services" as an arbitrator for as long as anyone can remember. They say he used to be a big-time Triad boss back in China, but retired to Hudson City for some peace and quiet... and fell into the role of arbitrator when people began asking him for advice. Of course, he's been in Hudson City for at least 30 years, so if he "retired" here he must be well over 100 by now.

By some unwritten law, everyone in Chinatown defers to Huang Zhu's pronouncements. Every tong upholds his word as law, even if it goes against one of them... because without this court of law resort, even trivial disagreements might result in bloodshed. Anyone who harms, or even threatens, him immediately makes dozens of enemies.

KOREAN GANGS

The part of Hudson City's Chinatown known as Koreatown (or sometimes Little Seoul) is claimed as "turf" by various gangs of Korean adolescent boys and young men. These gangs generally don't have names, and usually coalesce around one or two particularly powerful or charismatic individuals. Like Vietnamese gangs, the Korean gangs often lack rigid structures or firm loyalties — members drift in and out as they please, gangs break up and form quickly, and quarrels between gangs or gangsters are settled with intense violence. The only constant is that the people of Koreatown suffer.

known simply as the Golden One. He definitely seems to command from the rear, sending out his lieutenants (known as *hongji*, or Red Thorns) and soldiers (*huanghu*, Golden Tigers) to shake down local merchants for "tea money," sell drugs, and fight other tongs for money and influence.

In addition to the usual tong activities, the Golden Serpent Association has supposedly become involved in the international black market for art and antiquities. The DEA recently intercepted a smuggled drug shipment that also included some rare, and very valuable, Chinese and Southeast Asian artworks the authorities believe were destined for private collections in the United States.

ON AT-ZHANG

With an estimated 220 members, the On At-Zhang isn't much larger than the Choy Sing, but enjoys greater respect due to its longevity, skill, and ruthlessness. The tong controls the area around the intersection of South River Drive and S. Harrison Street — a valuable piece of turf indeed.

The On At-Zhang tong has adopted a Triad-like structure. The 489 or Dragon Head is Wu Kien. His chief lieutenants are Hsaio Loo (a 432) and the tong's recruiter, Chang Peng (a 438). The tong's Red Pole, or enforcer, is William Haifeng (a 426). A 415, Lai Yuwei, administers the tong and oversees its finances. At age 37, Wu Kien is a relatively young tong leader; he rose rapidly in the tong due to his shrewd mind and intense willpower — he balks at nothing to get what he wants. He has not-so-subtly "eliminated" some rivals who threatened his position, and is thought to have done the same to two DEA officers who haven't been seen since summer, 2004.

Like most other tongs, the On-At Zhang provides a variety of community services in the guise of being a protective and helpful organization for Chinese persons in America. It's well-known for the elaborate street party it throws to celebrate Chinese New Year (in February). The tongs usually mutually agree to suspend all violence during this festival, but no one knows when one of them will change its mind....

When the On At-Zhang needs someone to watch its gambling halls or do its dirty work, it turns to the thirty-odd members of the Dark Fist gang, which takes its name from the Chinese ideograms for bravery, loyalty, and superiority that every member has tattooed on the backs of his hands (a Distinctive Feature). The gang's leader is Xu Te-Wu, a vicious fighter highly skilled at Shao-Lin Tiger Kung Fu.

QI ON

The Qi On controls the northwestern corner of Chinatown proper. That's not a very good territory compared to some, but the tong's approximately 300 members give it enough fighting force and prestige to hold its own in the Asian underworld.

The chairman of the Qi On is the venerable Mah Sze, a 64-year-old veteran of tong life. Mah Sze is known throughout Hudson City as an art collector and a connoisseur; some experts believe his collection of Chinese art is one of the greatest in the world. He goes to great lengths to protect his collection and acquire new pieces. His vice-chairman is Chang Shi-Ping, his English secretary is Shiu Ning, and his street secretary is Lan Lieh.

The Qi On delegates many of its less pleasant duties to the Amber Moon gang, which has around 40-50 members and is led by Johnny Fang. Having properly served the tong for many years, the Amber Moons were recently allowed to start a high-stakes floating dice game that's already become a favorite of many Chinese gamblers.

For the past several years, the Qi On has been involved in a minor turf war with the Sing Chun. For the most part the two tongs' gangs carry out any actual fighting that's required — in fact, they have a "shoot on sight" policy toward each other that's starting to worry leaders in both tongs.

SING CHUN

The largest tong in Chinatown with approximately 400 members, the Sing Chun controls all of southwest Chinatown, including the businesses and neighborhoods near Duvall Parkway. Its leaders would like to expand east into the unclaimed territory around S. Harrison Street, but the tong's current conflict with the Qi On (see above) makes that impractical at this time.

The Dragon Head of the Sing Chun is Kun Feng, a cold, calculating individual who only looks at others with an eye to how much profit or trouble they can bring him. His vice-chairman is Qui Yixiao. His English secretary is Jewi Meizhu; his street secretary Sun Kuang. A clever, brutal young man named Cheng Yi-Fe leads the forty-odd members of the Scarlet Dragon gang that serves the Sing Chun.

Underworld Relationships

The tongs quarrel and fight with other Chinatown groups — the yakuza, the Korean and Vietnamese gangs — for more power and profits within Chinatown as a whole. Outside of Chinatown, the tongs sell heroin to the Mafia (and sometimes other buyers as well), but for the most part they prefer to keep to themselves, and have others stay out of their business.

HISPANIC ORGANIZED CRIME

Jaime really started to sweat when he saw the chainsaw.

<“Look, man, whaddya want, man? I swear, whatever it is, you got it! You want us to stop doing something, that’s cool, we’ll stop!”>

<“You know what I want,”> said the big, ugly-looking Mexican with the bull’s head tattooed on his right bicep. <“I want to know where La EME’s bringing in its next shipment of cocaine, niño.”>

<“Awww, man, if I tell you, they’ll kill me, man. C’m on, please!”>

<“At least then you’d’ve lived a few hours longer,”> the big man said. Jaime screamed when the big man bent down to start the chainsaw. For the next few minutes, the rest of Jaime’s screams were drowned out by the saw.

When he was done, the big man wiped the blood and bits of flesh from his face. Then he turned to Jaime’s friend Armado, who was puking up his guts nearby. <“Now, do you wanna tell me where the shipment’s coming in... or do I haveta go to work again?”>

— part of the Los Toros hostile takeover strategy

Three large gangs dominate the underworld in Latin City (and, to a lesser extent, southern Elmview and the Southside waterfront). Each of them has alliances with one or more Colombian or Mexican cartels, and makes most of its money selling heroin, crack, and cocaine. They use their profits to buy guns, cars, and businesses, and they fight each other using some of the most vicious, brutal methods imaginable. A variety of smaller gangs round out the Hudson City Hispanic underworld.

THE MEXICAN MAFIA

The biggest gang in Latin City is the Mexican Mafia, or “La EME,” which controls roughly half of the turf. With the help of its connections to the Reynosa and Coahuila cartels in Mexico, and the Montalvo cartel in Colombia, it can get all the heroin and coke it needs. While its base of power remains in Latin City, EME gangs now range further afield into Elmview, North Elmview, Red Hill, and sometimes even Forsyth and Lafayette to sell their product.

Three brothers — Juan, Leandro, and Simón Castares — hold sway over most of the EME gangs in Hudson City. They’re not absolute rulers by any means, but they’re clearly the most powerful of the Mexican Mafia leaders in this area. Anyone who doesn’t do what they say had better have a damn good reason.

LOS REYES

Los Reyes — the Latin Kings — got its start a few years ago when Félix Carrezo-Madrazo, a survivor of the destruction of one of the Cali cocaine families in Colombia, came to Hudson City to set up shop for himself. With the help of several partners he took over a few of smaller street gangs and led them on a bloody crusade that caught both La EME and the cops off-guard. Today Los Reyes controls about a third of the crime in Latin City. If someone defies the orders of Los Reyes or disrespects one of its members, the gang kidnaps the offender, takes him to an isolated locale, and brands its symbol — a stylized crown — into him with a coathanger bent into shape and then heated red-hot in a fire.

LOS TOROS

Marked by their distinctive bull’s-head tattoos, the members of Los Toros are the newest players on the Latin City streets. They’re known to have the backing of one of the most ruthless and blood-thirsty of the latest crop of Mexican druglords, a man from Tamaulipas who calls himself simply *El Azteca* (“the Aztec”). Not content with his chunk of the massive Mexican drug trade, he apparently financed Los Toros by backing a couple of smaller gangs and giving them the money, muscle, and pipeline necessary to become a major force on the streets. As of late 2004, the Toros have about a quarter of the drug market in Latin City... but they’re clearly not ready to settle for just that.

The leader of the Toros is a big, ugly Mexican known only as “Chuco” whose face and body bear the scars of numerous knife-fights. Chuco is as violent as *El Azteca* himself is rumored to be. Not content simply to shoot or stab anyone who stands in his way, Chuco prefers to set his enemies on fire, cut them into pieces with a chainsaw, or hack them to bits with a machete. His own people are absolutely terrified of him... but that makes them incredibly loyal.

COCAINE IN HUDSON CITY

As of late 2004, the “wholesale” price of a kilo of cocaine in Hudson City varies between about \$15,000 and \$20,000, depending on purity, who it’s bought from, amount purchased, and many other factors. That kilo yields about 70 ounces of cocaine once it’s “stepped on” (diluted with baby powder or similar substances). That translates into close to 2,000 grams of coke. Each gram retails on the street for about \$100, yielding a street value of about \$189,000 per kilo of cocaine.

Powder cocaine can be cooked into crack, or rock, cocaine. A “hit” of crack weighs about .2 grams and costs around \$10. That’s only about half the absolute value of powder coke, but because addicts can buy it in such tiny amounts and it gives such an intense, short-lasting high (meaning lots of repeat purchases), a dealer can move a lot more crack than he can coke, making it more profitable than powder for most dealers. (It’s also easier to carry and hide.)

JESUS GARRIDO

10	STR	11	DEX
11	CON	8	BODY
8	INT	8	EGO
10	PRE	8	COM
3	PD	2	ED
3	SPD	4	REC
22	END	19	STUN

Abilities: AK: Latin City 11-, KS: Latinista Gangs And Gangsters 11-, Language: English (fluent conversation; Spanish is Native), Stealth 11-, Streetwise 11-, WF: Small Arms, Knives, Fringe Benefit: Membership (Los Reyes)

Disadvantages: Social Limitation: Criminal Record

Notes: Jesus Garrido is a typical member of Los Reyes — the Latin Kings, one of the major gangs in Latin City. He spends his days hanging around on the street, selling coke and crack, committing crimes, drinking cerveza and getting high. If it weren’t for his selfishness, willingness to ruin others’ lives for his own personal gain, and intolerance for societal authority, he wouldn’t be much more than just another burnout teenager; as it is, he and his compadres are a major menace to society.

COLOMBIAN AND MEXICAN CARTELS

The cartel scene in both Colombia and Mexico shifts frequently in light of rivalries between and within groups, underworld wars, the efforts of law enforcement, and in Colombia the activities of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary armies who are now major players in the cocaine trade. As of late 2004, here are some of the major Colombian and Mexican drug cartels supplying narcotics to Hudson City:

Colombian cartels

Acosta-Cazares
Carillo-Mendoza
de Fonseca
Montalvo
Gallegos-Madera

Mexican cartels

El Azteca
Coahuila
Caborca
Reynosa
Romanos-Salcedo

Underworld Relationships

For the most part, the gangs of Latin City remain in Latin City, though they sometimes spread out to nearby neighborhoods that aren't dominated by some other gang. By keeping to themselves they minimize conflicts with other groups. Technically, they compete with the posses and street gangs for cocaine sales, and with the tongs for heroin sales, but rarely has that competition flared into open conflict — each side seems content with its turf. On the other hand, efforts by Mexican gangs to make and sell PCP and designer drugs have put them at odds with various outlaw motorcycle gangs, and those “arguments” are fought with guns and bombs. In some parts of Latin City, the sound of multiple motorcycles in the distance is enough to make innocent people scurry for cover.

RUSSIAN ORGANIZED CRIME

The hard-eyed man in the dingy-looking overcoat sat on a bench smoking a cigarette. He looked like he was waiting for the bus, but when the bus pulled up, he didn't get on. The puzzled driver had to close the doors and keep the bus on schedule.

He had to wait nearly another hour before the man he was looking for appeared. The man looked more like a young laborer than anything, but everyone who knew the street knew he was a mafioski. What they didn't know was that the young pup had agreed to pay Endgame ten percent of what he earned... and had reneged on the deal.

The hard-eyed man snubbed out his cigarette and crossed the street. It was child's play to get close to the cocky young mafioski without being seen; he'd done it easily enough with CIA agents, back in the day. He waited for just the right moment, then stepped up beside the gangster and pushed him into an alley.

<“Hey! What's going on?”> the young man shouted... then quieted down when he saw the silenced pistol the hard-eyed man had pulled out from beneath his overcoat. <“Wait, there's no need to...”>

The hard-eyed man fired once, hitting the mafioski square in the chest. The mafioski fell backward into a pile trash, gurgling helplessly as his damaged heart and lungs tried to function properly. The hard-eyed man took another step forward and shot twice more, once in each of the mafioski's eyes. Almost immediately the gurgling stopped and the twitching began.

Looking around quickly to make sure no one had noticed anything unusual, the hard-eyed man tossed his pistol down beside the corpse and hurried back out to the street, where he caught

the first cab he saw. “Aberdeen International,” he said with a sigh. In another two hours he'd be in the air and on his way back to Moscow, where there was good vodka to be had.

— dealing with deadbeat debtors, Organizatsiya style

Russian organized crime — usually referred to by Hudson City cops as “the Organizatsiya,” the “Russian Mafia,” or “the Mafioski” — is one of the youngest, and smallest, organized crime groups in Hudson City, but it has made up for its late start with a viciousness and ruthlessness that has surprised even experienced law enforcement officers. The Russian Mafia does not hesitate to murder, maim, or torture those who stand in its way.

While the authorities often refer to “Russian organized crime” as if it were a monolithic organization, the truth is it's one of the least organized forms of organized crime in the city. The gangs adopt an “every gang for itself” approach that shows far less cultural or neighborhood loyalty than, say, the Mafia or the yakuza. No single Russian criminal has ever arisen who could even have made a serious attempt to “unite” the local Organizatsiya gangs, much less succeeded. If the Russia Mafia were ever truly organized, it would likely become even more powerful, wealthy, and violent than it is now.

Organizatsiya activities in Hudson City mostly take place in the Moscow West and Vidersea areas (both of which have fairly large Russian and Eastern European immigrant populations), but over the past several years Mafioski gangs have slowly but surely expanded into other parts of the city (mainly on the Northside). They're quick to take advantage of “power vacuums” left by the arrest or death of members of more traditional crime groups, or to start city-wide schemes that aren't limited to particular neighborhoods. Their preferred crimes include protection rackets, fraud, theft, counterfeiting, smuggling, weapons trafficking, and contract murder.

The principal Organizatsiya figures in Hudson City include:

ENDGAME

The largest gang of mafioski in the city is led by a man known only as “Endgame” for his love of chess. His real name is unknown, though the FBI's files supposedly contain several guesses. Experts believe his gang is extensively involved in weapons smuggling, protection rackets, fraud, and contract murder.

ANATOLII KASARAVICH

A former GRU agent, Kasaravich is a sadistic butcher who employs many former Soviet military and espionage personnel in his gang. Well-armed and highly feared in Moscow West, the gang's main criminal activities include protection rackets, weapons smuggling, theft, and contract murder.

GAVRIL KOSTANZY

Kostanzy is a slick, skilled, thief who pulled jobs and scams throughout the Soviet Union and never got caught. When the heat got to be too much near the end of the Eighties, he fled to the United

States and set up shop in Hudson City. His gang is involved in theft, fraud, counterfeiting, smuggling, and similar crimes. He has an extensive network of “comrades” in Russia.

VIKTOR MOLENKO

The oldest *pakhany* in Hudson City, Molenko came to the United States in the early Eighties during one of the times when the KGB exploited easing emigration restrictions to cleanse Soviet prisons. For several years he was unquestionably the most powerful mafioski in the city, but the passing of time has dimmed his fires somewhat (though not his propensity for violence or his touchiness about being “insulted”). His gang’s principal activities include protection rackets, theft, fraud, and counterfeiting.

Underworld Relations

The Russian mobs don’t play well with others. As far as they’re concerned, the whole city is up for grabs, and anyone who thinks he has a prior claim is just another target. This attitude has led to frequent clashes with the Mafia (though some gangs have more wisely found ways to work with the Italians to everyone’s mutual benefit). They also quarrel with the yakuza insofar as the Japanese gangsters operate outside Chinatown; the Russians seem content to leave Chinatown proper to the Asians.

VIETNAMESE GANGS

“It’s not the money — it’s about respect. We have the power on these streets, and people have to respect that. They show their respect by paying us to keep them safe and leave them alone. That’s how we live. We provide a service in exchange for money, just like a lawyer or a doctor — pay us and stay safe. If you don’t, it’s your fault, not ours. If you don’t respect us, we have to make things right.”

— excerpt from an interview with Vietnamese gangster Little N.G. as part of a story on Chinatown crime in the *Hudson City Star-Gazette*

The Little Saigon section of Hudson City’s Chinatown has its own particular breed of native criminal. However, unlike the Chinese tongs, Vietnamese gangs don’t usually restrict themselves just to Little Saigon. Some of them prey upon Chinatown residents of other ethnic backgrounds, or strike out into the rest of the city, committing crimes as the mood takes them. Also unlike the tongs, Vietnamese gangs tend to be “loose” — they form, break up, and gain and lose members frequently and without any particular repercussions for anyone involved.

As of late 2004, the major factions in the Vietnamese underworld are:

DUC LIEU THO

Several years ago, there was a gang in Little Saigon known as the Purple Eagles. They were doing pretty well... until the leader and most of the members got their brains splattered against an alley wall by the vigilante Renegade. One of the few survivors of that attack was a young gangster named Duc Lieu Tho, and he decided to pick up for himself where the Purple Eagles left off. By keeping a lower profile than his former comrades, he’s formed a gang and made pretty good money without attracting Renegade’s attention again. But these days his name is pretty well known on the streets of Chinatown, so it may not be long before some rival or vigilante comes gunning for him.

NGUYEN NOC TRANH

Nguyen Noc Tranh was one of the most vicious and sadistic officers in the South Vietnamese army. When Saigon fell, he fled to America. Lacking any better thing to do with his skills, he soon established a criminal gang by banding together members of his old unit. For nearly thirty years now, Tranh and his men have terrorized Little Saigon, using their military skill and discipline to retain power and influence while lesser gangs came and went. Anyone who dared to defy General Tranh soon learned just how sadistic and cruel he can be.

But thirty years can change a man. Tranh is now old and weak, a shell of the man he used to be. Several of his “junior officers” have already begun jockeying for position, each hoping to take over the gang when “the Old Man” dies. It seems unlikely that Tranh’s power shall survive his passing... much to the relief of the residents of Little Saigon.

SHADOW TIGERS

The Shadow Tigers aren’t really of Little Saigon so much as they like to *visit* it. They have no particular home; Asian crime experts believe the gang actually formed in Philadelphia in the late Nineties. Like many Vietnamese youth gangs, the Shadow Tigers are nomadic: they breeze into town, often driving the souped-up “classic cars” they like so much, do whatever they feel like doing (home invasions, buying and selling drugs, shakedowns, robbery...), then get out before the cops can draw a bead on them. The apparent leader, a sunglasses-wearing, slick-haired punk who goes by the name “Fast Louie,” has a penchant for kidnapping teenage girls, doing as he pleases with them, then dropping them by the side of the road several states away.

TU’ONG SON COY

A few years ago, Tu’ong Son Coy was a second-stringer in a Viet Ching gang — a group of Vietnamese-Chinese youth working for one of the tongs (in this case the Choy Sing). But then he got his growth, and suddenly the scrawny kid from Little Saigon had the brawn to match his brains. He returned to his home turf, determined to make a name for himself... and that’s just what he’s done. Through a mix of intimidation, cleverness, and generous “rewards” for loyalty, he’s assembled a gang

RASPUTIN

The FBI and HCPD only know about the four powerful *pakhany* in Hudson City (as well as several others of lesser power). However, on the streets of Moscow West and Vidersea muted voices have begun to whisper about a man known only as “Rasputin.” Whether he’s a gang leader, an assassin, or something else, no one seems willing to say... but everyone, even the four *pakhany*, seems fearful of him.

that's wreaked havoc throughout the Southside with its home invasions, drive by-shootings-and-robberies of drug dealers, protection rackets, and pimping. But he's made a lot of enemies in the process, and it's probably only a matter of time before someone takes him out hard and bloody.

Underworld Relations

The Vietnamese gangs don't even get along with each other, much less anyone else. They sometimes work for or with the tongs, but usually they're out for anything they can take, regardless of who asserts a prior claim.

THE YAKUZA

Calm, confident, and wearing a suit that cost thousands, Nakamura Hideo walked into the boardroom. Every seat around the table was already filled, as he knew they would be. None of his kobun would dare to come late to one of his weekly meetings.

As he took his seat at the head of the table, a pretty young woman wearing traditional garb served him tea and food, but he ignored them just as he ignored her. "Report," he said in a flat voice.

One by one his underlings stood and reported on the current status of their "business affairs." Nothing he heard surprised him, for he made a point of keeping tabs on everything that happened in his organization. But there was still value in having these meetings, as he was about to demonstrate. "Nishi Noboyuki, your report, please."

Nishi shifted nervously and began his report. "My men were successful in obtaining the guns you asked us to steal, oyabun. Unfortunately one of them was pulled over while driving one of the trucks carrying the guns. The police found the guns."

"Is it not part of your job to be certain that your kobun can perform their assigned duties adequately?"

"Y-yes," stammered Nishi.

"Nishi Noboyuki, you have failed me, and you have failed the Sawakiri-gumi. You know what price you must pay if you wish to atone for your failure."

At those words, a servant who had been standing silently in the corner walked over to Nishi. He carried a tray, and on that tray was a small silver knife, a piece of fine cloth, and some cloth bandages. He placed the tray before Nishi. With trembling hands Nishi picked up the silver



knife, which he placed blade-up on the table. He set his right pinky against the blade, and began to lean forward. He stifled a cry of pain as the blade bit though his finger and sheared off the top joint of his pinky. The others watched wordlessly, no trace of emotion on their faces, a few rubbing their own hands thoughtfully. Pale and bleeding, Nishi wrapped the severed joint in the cloth and placed it on the tray. As he slumped into his chair and began to bandage his finger with some help from his neighbors, the servant brought the tray and severed finger over to Nakamura Hideo.

"Very good," said Nakamura, picking up the cloth and putting it on the table next to him. "Hiyata Miseo, I believe that you are the next to speak."

— business as usual for the Sawakiri-gumi

Until the mid-Seventies, there was very little Japanese organized crime presence in Hudson City. As the Japanese became more and more of a global economic powerhouse, they and their corporations inevitably migrated to the seats of economic and political power around the world, such as Hudson City... and where Japanese business goes, the yakuza follows like a malevolent shadow.

By late 2004, of the dozen or so major yakuza gangs in Japan, five have established a significant presence in Hudson City. In addition to exploiting the citizens of Little Tokyo through protection rackets, illegal gambling, and similar schemes, they smuggle Western goods, guns, and sometimes women back to Japan, and prey on Japanese corporations throughout the city. Slowly but surely they have been expanding the scope of their operations beyond Chinatown, bringing them into conflict with the Mafia, Card Shark, and other organized crime groups. In recent years they've clashed most intensely with various outlaw biker gangs over the right to sell methamphetamines, PCP, and designer drugs in various parts of the city.

Through the delicate diplomacy and negotiation that so often mark their dealings, the five yakuza clans have carefully delineated their respective territories within Little Tokyo. That's not to say they don't fight over territory or power — they do. They just want to make sure everyone knows where the front lines of the battles begin.

THE HINAGAWA-KAI

Although it's arguably the largest and most powerful yakuza clan in the world, the Hinagawa-kai is generally considered the weakest yakuza clan in Hudson City. In the yakuza's scramble over the past two decades or so to establish a presence in the city, it ended up with a territory that includes Mott Park, which holds little appeal for gangsters. (And more than a few members of the clan sacrificed fingers to atone for that particular shame.) Still, the FBI estimates that it may have as many as 200 members in Hudson City, or nearly as many made men in any of the Mafia families. A "businessman" named Ohara Takashi is thought to be the leading *oyabun* in the Pearl City.

THE MIYAMIJI-KAI

The Miyamiji-kai has an average-size presence in Hudson City, with about 100 members. Miyamiji Junzo is the *oyabun* of the gang (like all of the chief bosses of the Miyamiji-kai, he changed his family name to that of the gang). His chief lieutenant is Tsurimi Eiji, and just below him are three other powerful bosses: Nakatoni Kenji, Morita Yoshio, and Sasaki Akio. Each of these three men have responsibility for eight *wakashu*, and each *wakashu* has command of two or more street-level operatives.

Miyamiji-kai activities in Hudson City aren't particularly unusual, though they have more *sokaiya* (financial blackmailers) in the city than most clans. The FBI also suspects the clan of involvement in the white slave trade, but has not yet been able to prove it.

THE SAWAKIRI-GUMI

Large and strong, the Sawakiri-gumi was one of the first clans to come to Hudson City. Today it has somewhere between 175 and 250 men in the city. The ruthless Nakamura Hideo is the unquestioned chief *oyabun* of the Sawakiri-gumi in the city. His chief *kobun* are Kajitani Shun, Ono Kiyoshi, Sakiyuri Akira, Hayata Miseo, Takemoto Hisato, and Shirai Seiki. Each of these men is a minor *oyabun* in his own right, with numerous men under his command.

As of late 2004, experts describe the Sawakiri-gumi as the most powerful clan in Hudson City. Nakamura Hideo is immensely wealthy and controls many men; he seems intent on seizing as much Tsukihama-gumi territory as he can. If any other clan shows weakness, he'll try to take advantage of that, too.

THE TSUKIHAMA-GUMI

The Tsukihama-gumi, formerly the yakuza clan with the largest presence in Hudson City, has experienced disaster in recent years. In 2001, a valuable *sokaiya* ring was exposed and smashed by DarkAngel, and in early 2004 an unknown vigilante traced many of the gangs' leaders by monitoring junior members' incautious use of cell phones and slaughtered them one by one. Nomura Isao, the chief *oyabun* in distant Nippon, sent one of his most favored and trusted *kobun*, a powerful, sharp-witted man named Hamada Yoshinaga, to hold on to the clan's territory in the Pearl City. So far "Yoshi" (as his men affectionately call him) has done so — barely — but the other yakuza clans (not to mention Takayama Shinsaku) know the Tsukihama-gumi remains weak and continue to press their attacks.

THE YAMAZAKI-RENGO

The Yamazaki-rengo is a confederation of twenty-two gangs, some large, some small. By agreement of the six most powerful *oyabuns*, who act as a "governing council" for the rengo, a deputation of fifty gangsters from various of the gangs came to Hudson City in the early Eighties to establish the gang's presence there. Since then

IN THE NEWS IN 2004:

FINANCIAL GANGSTERS

March — A type of crime that's well-known in Japan seems to have made its way to the skyscrapers and boardrooms of Hudson City.

In Japan, the *sokaiya*, or financial gangsters, are well known. They extort money from corporations by threatening to cause trouble at shareholders' meetings, put poison in company products, or the like. Historically, Japanese companies responded by paying these men off — bribing them, in effect, to leave the company alone. In recent years some companies have fought back, but even today the *sokaiya* are often feared and powerful.

The HCPD, in a joint operation with the FBI, reported the arrest of three Japanese men on extortion and several related charges stemming from what appear to be *sokaiya* activity. The men allegedly threatened to disrupt an annual meeting of the Cherokee Bank shareholders unless the company paid them \$10,000. It remains unknown whether other companies have been approached by these men, or similar criminals.

**JAMES “JIMMY”
GUERIN**

12 STR 13 DEX
12 CON 10 BODY
10 INT 8 EGO
10 PRE 10 COM
5 PD 4 ED
3 SPD 5 REC
24 END 25 STUN

Abilities: Martial Arts (Dirty Infighting), Bribery 8-, Combat Driving 13-, Electronics 8-, Fast Draw (Small Arms) 12-, Mechanics 8-, PS: Designer Drug Manufacturing 11-, SS: Chemistry 8-, Stealth 12-, Streetwise 11-, TF: Two-Wheeled Motorized Ground Vehicles, WF: Small Arms

Disadvantages: Distinctive Features: Forbidden's colors; Social Limitation: Criminal Record

Notes: One of the biggest, baddest, roughest, toughest members of the Forbidden in Hudson City, James Guerin — often called “Jimmy” by his buddies — has been an outlaw biker since he was a teenager. He ran away from home when he was fifteen, and hooked up with the Forbidden a couple years later while he was pulling a stretch in Longview on a robbery charge. Always ready for trouble, he usually carries a .45 automatic and a sawed-off shotgun with him wherever he goes.

their ranks have swollen to around 100; the exact number in the city at any given time depends partly on internal rengo politics and what else the gang has going on around the world. Disputes and personality conflicts between some of the local rengo leaders — such as Fujikawa Konyo, Arakida Oyori, Miura Akiuji, and Yosida Ichiro — keep the Yamazaki-rengo from being as powerful in Little Tokyo as it might be.

Underworld Relations

Most yakuza activities focus on the Japanese community, and so don't bring the clans into conflict with other organized crime groups (other than Takayama Shinsaku, see below). To the extent the yakuza wants unquestioned authority in Chinatown, it fights with the tongs, Vietnamese, and Koreans, but these clashes rarely amount to anything. As the yakuza has expanded its operations into the rest of Hudson City, it's come into conflict with the Mafia, the Russians, Card Shark, and various outlaw biker gangs.

Takayama Shinsaku

Hudson City's Japanese residents also suffer from the attentions of a crimelord who's not part of the yakuza — in fact, he seems to be the yakuza's sworn enemy. His name is Takayama Shinsaku, and he calls himself “the Shogun of Little Tokyo.” Public records show that he worked in Hudson City for years as a high-ranking employee of the Japanese corporation Nimaki. A little less than ten years ago he quit his job and began his quest to take over the Chinatown underworld. Most observers expected he'd be killed within a few months, but he survived three assassination attempts and managed, through skill and ruthlessness, to carve himself a niche. He stands alone, having antagonized not only the yakuza (which he seems to consider a personal enemy) but several Chinese tongs as well... but he seems unwilling to bend or break despite the odds against him.

OUTLAW BIKER GANGS

“Okay, is everyone in for the night?”

“Yeah, Jack — Deek and the boys just got back from Hog Heaven.”

*“Good. Lock the place down; we don't wanna get caught with our pants down around our ankles and get butt-!\$&*ed like the Skulls did.”*

“You got it.”

An hour passed, then two. The compound quieted down as bikers one by one passed out or went to sleep; only here and there could lights be seen and laughter heard. The guys in the guardroom tried to remain alert, but what did it matter? With the dogs out in the yard, no one was getting in.

Then one of the guards was awakened by someone pounding on the gate. “Hey, Hoss, wake up!” he said, shaking his partner awake. “Who's that out there?”

*“Looks like... *%&!, it's Sam, he was on patrol. He's been shot!”*

Hoss smacked the gate control and the doors to the compound opened. Sam rode in, slowly, carefully, as groggy, half-dressed bikers came running up from all over the place to see what was going on.

“Killers!” Sam gasped, falling off his motorcycle and into someone's arms. And then they all heard it — the ominous thunder of motorcycles... lots of motorcycles... approaching from the south.

“!\$&!” Jack Maxwell shouted. “Everyone get your guns and get ready!”*

— just another night at the Forbidden compound

Hudson City isn't home to a “mother chapter” for any outlaw motorcycle gangs, and in fact only a few maintain any sort of permanent base in the area. But several of the major biker gangs visit the city on a semi-regular basis, either for relaxation, to sell drugs (mainly methamphetamines, PCP, and heroin), or to do dirty deeds for the Mafia (with whom some of them have a solid “working relationship”).

Whether they stay in Hudson City full-time or only visit, most biker gangs stick to the southeast part of the city — the more run-down parts of Elmview, primarily — or stay in the industrialized suburbs and outlying areas south of the city limits. That gives them some freedom of movement without attracting too much police attention. Although they don't necessarily seek out confrontations with their competitors (the yakuza and some street gangs, primarily), they don't avoid them, either... and it's not unknown for two rival biker gangs to bring their feud to the streets of Hudson City.

Some of the most prominent biker gangs in the Hudson City area include:

THE FORBIDDEN

The Forbidden (whose name signifies that the members feel they've been "forbidden" to be part of normal society, though some people mistakenly believe it has occult significance) have a large chapter in the Hudson City area — nearly 150 total members. The gang's headquarters is an old industrial building in Sabine County, not too far from the landfill. The gang has heavily fortified and secured the building: electric fence; closed-circuit surveillance cameras; patrols; guard dogs; steel doors; and so forth. The gang's colors are black with a pattern of red blood dripping down from the shoulders.

The leader of the "HC" chapter of the Forbidden is "Slammin' Jack" Maxwell, a seemingly friendly, live-and-let-live kind of guy who's actually a vicious bastard. He has a thinly-disguised hatred of "slants" (Asians, particularly the Japanese gangsters with whom his club sometimes fights) and "spics," but most of all for the Killers, his club's biggest enemy. He likes nothing better than to get wasted on PCP and lead his gang on a "raid" against any group of Killers they can find.

THE HIGHWAY MOBSTERS

Primarily based in the Southeast and Midwest, the Highway Mobsters sometimes come to Hudson City to party — or to fight with the local chapter of its rival, the Satanic Skulls. The Mobsters' national president, Brian Kelly, spent some time in the Pearl City as a kid and often accompanies his men on these trips. When the Mobsters blow into town, they're usually looking for a good time, and woe unto anyone who gets in their way. The last time someone tried to "calm them down," the result was a running gun battle with the HCPD. The gang's colors feature a snake and a rose.

THE KILLERS

The Killers gang got its start in the Northeast in the late Seventies, and has had a chapter in Hudson City almost since its inception. When many Hudsonites think of "biker gangs," the first thing that comes to mind is the Killers' colors, which feature a knife and a pistol crossed heraldic style. The gang doesn't have any one national leader; the leaders of local chapters meet periodically to set "club policy." A big, bald, ZZ Top-bearded fellow called "Cueball" Patterson runs the Hudson City chapter.

Although it's definitely still a biker gang — as its occasional battles with the Forbidden demonstrate — over the past few years the Killers have "upscaled" themselves a bit. The gang has often worked closely with various Mafia families, and their money and (relative) sophistication has worn off on the bikers. Some of them have shifted from the in-your-face biker gang style to wearing suits and driving expensive cars: brutal thugs all spruced up for the big dance.

THE SATANIC SKULLS

The Satanic Skulls is a major national biker gang with dozens of chapters. The Hudson City chapter, which has its headquarters in a compound a little south of the Inner Beltline, was once one of the largest and most influential chapters. An unfortunate (for the gang) run-in with LIBRA left several dozen members dead and the chapter a shadow of its former self. In recent months that gang has devoted most of its efforts to fending off rivals and building itself back up.

The aptly-named "Big Eddie" Malinowski, a loud, obnoxious, brutal man given to alternating moods of anger and hedonism, survived that attack and now leads the Skulls. He proudly wears his gang's colors, a flaming demon's skull insignia, at all times, and almost always carries a big-bore revolver.

Underworld Relations

Biker gangs aren't exactly shy and retiring — if they want something, they go after it, and that can bring them into conflict with other groups. In Hudson City, they fight with the yakuza (which also sells meth, PCP, and designer drugs), some Latin City and Freetown gangs (with whom they compete for the heroin trade), and even Card Shark (who's insulted them and tried to horn in on their "turf" plenty of times). On the other hand, some of them have a powerful ally in the Mafia. If the Italians need a job done and don't want to get their own hands dirty, a quick payoff to a biker gang takes care of the matter.



DERRICK WEBB

10 STR 10 DEX
 9 CON 9 BODY
 9 INT 8 EGO
 10 PRE 9 COM
 3 PD 3 ED
 2 SPD 4 REC
 18 END 19 STUN

Abilities: Bureaucratics 8-, Conversation 11-, KS: Hudson City Street Gangs 13-, Persuasion 11-, PS: Social Worker 11-, Streetwise 11-, WF: Handguns, Knives

Disadvantages: Social Limitation: Subject To Orders; Social Limitation: Criminal Record

Notes: Time was, Derrick Webb was out on the street, running with the Nubians, selling drugs and getting into major trouble. But an encounter with an understanding priest during his last term in Longview put him on a better path. He earned his GED, went to college, and got a degree in social work. Now he works for the Hudson City Department of Health and Human Services as part of its gang outreach program, trying to do the same thing for gang kids that someone once did for him: save them from the streets. It's a thankless task, one that often gets him sneered at by gangstas and cops alike, but that just makes every little victory all the sweeter.

STREET GANGS AND POSSES

"No !\$&%@" way, man. Nowell Street don't bow t' no one, 'specially not some oreo in a fancy suit."*

The man in the suit was sitting in a booth far enough away from the speakers that he could talk without having to shout. "You sure you don't want to think that over a little more, LDog? One gang doesn't have the juice to stand up to Shango or Buckshot. Once they decide they want your turf, they'll just kill you and take it. I'm offering you a chance to be a part of something bigger than yourself... and keep your life."

LDog looked around nervously, aware Strad's bodyguard had him surrounded even though they weren't standing close by. Strad didn't seem scared of him at all. "OK, say we down w' you, G. Wha's in it f' LDog?"

"You work for me. Your people work for me. You don't do what you're told, you'll be eliminated — I've squashed roaches like you before, and I'll do it again if I have to. But if you play right, I'll double your drug sales and keep Shango, Buckshot, and everyone else off your back."

*"Even that two-headed !\$&*er? He's been makin' noises 'round F'syth."*

"Yes, I'll handle Diomedes. You won't have to worry about it — you'll just answer to me."

LDog thought it over a few minutes more. "K, we solid," he finally said. "Nowell Street yours. But you better come across like you promised, or we walk." He turned and walked out of the club.

Strad waited until LDog was gone, then retrieved the pistol he'd been hiding under the table. "I think that went well, don't you, gentlemen?" he asked his guards.

— business is war in Freetown

The underworld in Freetown and Lafayette is fractured, chaotic, and extremely dangerous even to those who know it well. Two crimelords, three large gangs, several posses, and dozens of smaller gangs all compete for turf, profits, power, and respect. The HCPD estimates that over 80,000 children, teenagers, and young adults belong to some type of gang.

Territory

Territory is a touchy subject on the Southside. Throughout Freetown and Lafayette, dozens of gangs — many owing allegiance to some leader or larger group — claim a streetcorner or block as their own and fight to the death to defend it. All of the major players control a pretty significant chunk of the neighborhoods, but rarely in unified geographical area. Instead, each one has a pocket of control here, a group of loyal sets there. When drawn on a map (see page 159), the territories look like puddles of oil pooling on dirty water.

The major "playas" in the struggle for control of the neighborhoods are:

SHANGO

In 2001, a big Nubian gangsta named Everett Robinson, known on the streets as ER (mainly because he'd sent so many people to one, not because of his initials), decided he could do better for himself. He broke away from the gang, taking several sets with him, and set out to prove he knew how to handle the streets better than anyone else.

Turns out, he did. Christening himself "Shango" (a name he learned studying African history and legends), he built a small criminal empire by crushing some of his enemies and cleverly manipulating others. Today he controls a large chunk of southern and western Freetown, and he's always scheming to get more. Most observers think he and Strad are going to be the ones to fight for all the marbles, since they've got organization and smarts the Nubians and Warriors lack, but Shango isn't stupid enough to count the large gangs out of the picture.

STRAD

Everything Shango is, Strad is not. Shango came up from the streets; Strad just appeared one day and began taking over the territory he now controls. Shango is big, loud, and strong; Strad thin, quiet, culturally sophisticated. Shango blusters and yells; Strad never seems to lose his temper. In short, Strad looks like a weakling and an also-ran compared to Shango... but everyone on the streets has learned that crossing Strad means a one-way trip to the morgue.

As of late 2004, Strad doesn't control quite as much of Freetown as Shango; his bases of power are in the northeast and north central parts of the neighborhood. He also seems to have fewer men, but his are better trained and equipped than Shango's (who are essentially just gang kids with a little more discipline and organization). But he's holding his own in the struggle for Freetown, and some people think his combination of brains, willpower, and ruthlessness will make him the winner.

THE NUBIANS

The Nubians gang was founded in 1986 by Roosevelt Graves, then a high school student. Because school rules forbade students to wear "gang colors," the members identified themselves by wearing large gold chains, and gold eventually

became the group's color when they dropped out of school and were free to wear what they chose. They were so successful as a gang that other gangs started adopting their "style" and allied with them; all of the original members eventually founded sets (gangs) of their own. Graves was killed in a drive-by shooting in 1997, but long before then the Nubians had taken on a life of its own.

Most Nubians wear one or more large gold chains. They mark their territory with yellow or gold graffiti.

Currently, the HCPD's Youth Crime Task Force estimates that at least thirty to forty sets associate themselves with the Nubians. Some of them include the Lancaster Nubians, True Nubians, Oakdale Nubians, and Blood Nubians. When they're not selling crack, pimping, or getting high, they fight with their main rivals, the Warriors and the Overlords; some weeks not a day passes without a drive-by shooting or two.

THE OVERLORDS

The Overlords got its start in the early Nineties when several gangs banded together for protection against the Warriors. It didn't look like that was going to be enough — the Overlords were about to be wiped out — until the criminal mercenary Buckshot showed up and took over. With his skill, firepower, and will to back them up, the Overlords fought off the Warriors and not only held onto their turf, but expanded it.

Buckshot could leave the Overlords behind and make better money for himself as a mercenary

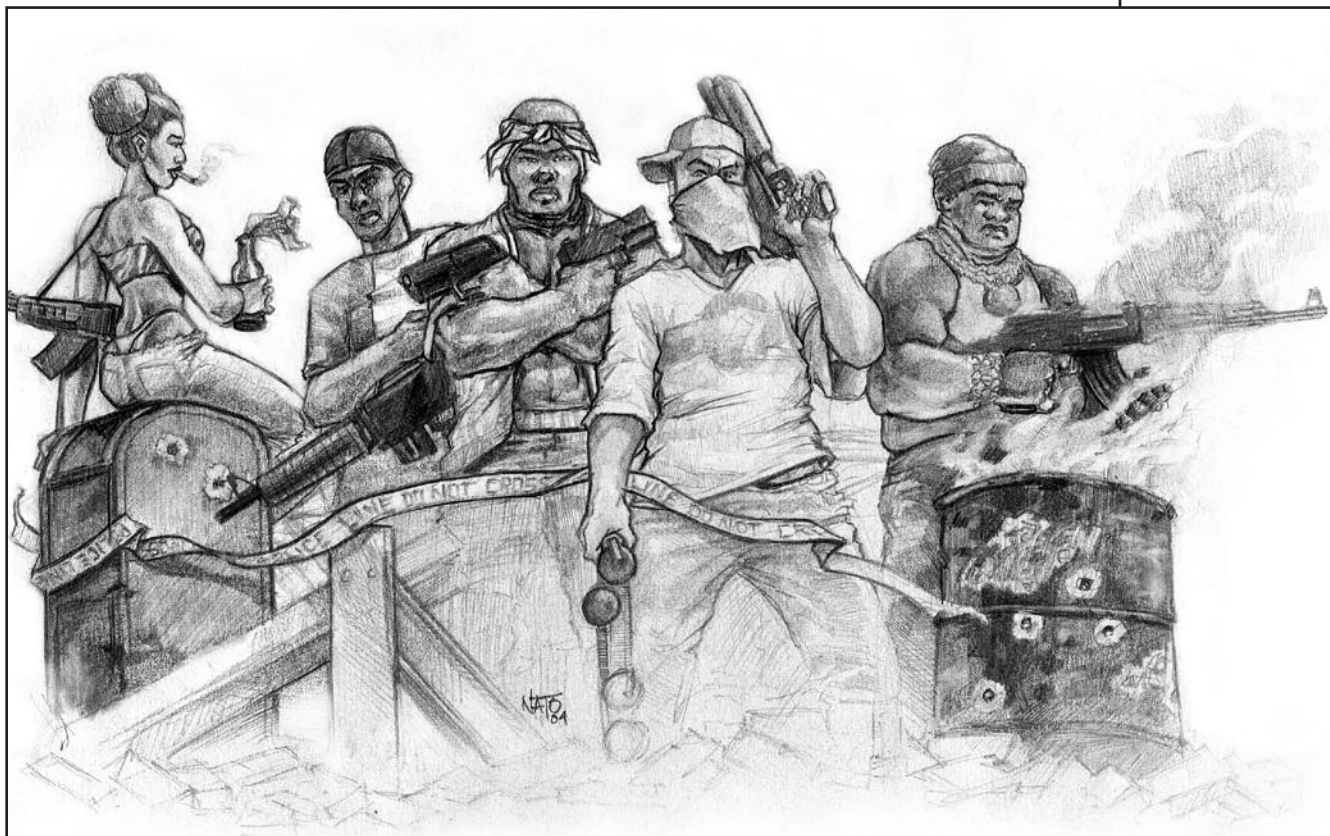
or freelance criminal, but he has bigger goals in sight than just money: he wants power, and he senses he can achieve that power by taking control of the independent gangs in the city. With not only the Overlords, but the independents, and eventually the Nubians and the Warriors, under his thumb, he can get rid of Shango (whom he bitterly hates) and Strad (whom he doesn't quite understand... yet) and take over the whole Southside. He thinks the black gangs of Freetown could be, and should be, as powerful a force in the Hudson City underworld as the Mafia or yakuza.

THE WARRIORS

The Warriors formed in 1988 at Upton High School. The gang takes its color (green) and name from the UHS mascot and color. No one knows exactly who started the gang, but experts believed it formed to protect its members from being pressured into joining the Nubians. The gang expanded fairly rapidly, and as of late 2004 has about 25-30 sets, such as the Black Warriors, Two-O Street Warriors, and Halcyon Village Warriors.

OTHER GANGS

Not every gang in Freetown and Lafayette belongs to one of the major sets — there are plenty of "independents" eking out a living on the streets and alleys they can claim and hold. In fact, independent gangs control most of "Fayettenam," and all of the major playas in Freetown look on that area as a place to expand into.



OTHER POSSES

Some other posses active in Hudson City from time to time include:

Kingston Boys
Radiance
Spaldings
Whitfield

Posses

Since the late Eighties, Hudson City has also seen an influx of criminal gangs from Jamaica — posses. The early posses, like the Calypso Dreamers and the Trenchtown Rumblers, hit the scene hard, causing one DEA agent to predict that they'd take over crime in Freetown within five years. Instead, what happened is that they ran out of steam and either merged with existing gangs or got killed off.

Beginning in the late Nineties, a second wave of Jamaican crime hit Hudson City, often in conjunction with Dominican gangs. Some of these were so-called “voodoo posses,” which mixed their bizarre religion with crime. These posses learned from their predecessors and found ways to take and control turf without being obliterated or absorbed by the local gangs. Instead, they've done the obliterating whenever they had to.

As of 2004, four posses control significant territories on the Southside:

DOOM FEVER

This voodoo posse carved out its turf among the housing projects and squalor of North Elmview by killing off several local gangs and taking their business. The posse's name comes from the members' saying that anyone who opposes them has “the doom fever” upon him and will surely die — if not at their hands, then because of the evil powers of the *loas* and spirits their leader, Therrence “Red Hand” Upchurch, commands. Their loyalty to Upchurch and his foul gods gives them a loyalty and bravery that few other posses can match... and that makes them even more dangerous than normal.

ELIZABETH STREET

The original members of this posse used to live on Elizabeth Street in Tivoli Gardens, a poor section of Kingston, Jamaica. They maintain strong ties to Jamaica and to the de Fonseca cartel in Colombia that supplies them with the cocaine they sell.

Elizabeth Street's leader, Edward St. John Smythe, was once heavily involved in Jamaican politics as a major supporter of the Jamaican Nationalist Party (JNP). But he fell from favor with the party's leaders and moved to the United States to avoid any possible “repercussions” (*i.e.*, death squads). Secretive and paranoid, he's said never to go out of doors in the daytime.

GHEDE

Taking its name from a powerful Voodoo *loa*, the Ghede posse has a reputation for violence, brutality, and killing that eclipses that of other posses. Under the leadership of the sociopathic houngan Brother Namaan, the posse kills anyone who stands in its way, tortures captured enemies for information, and uses other terror tactics to intimidate potential opponents. The last group to fight Ghede, the Radiance posse, backed off after a car bomb killed half of its members.

HURRICANE

This posse's name comes from the fact that when they fight their enemies, “it's like a hurricane of bullets,” according to one gangsta. Under the leadership of Alfred “Alfie” Page, Hurricane has developed its crack distribution network together with some groups of prostitutes it controls. The girls refer their johns to Hurricane's crackhouse for their drugs, and sometimes give a hit or two away as a “free sample” to bring in new business. They also act as couriers from stash house to crackhouse and from city to city.

Underworld Relations

The posses don't get along with anyone — not even each other. They're not interested in negotiating with other gangs, maintaining the peace, or anything other than making money and having good times. If that means they have to go after some rival gang and gun down every one of its members, so be it.

COSTUMED CRIMINALS



Beginning in the mid-Eighties, Hudson City experienced an influx of what people quickly came to call “costumed” or “weird” criminals: nontraditional crimelords who attempted to make their mark on the underworld through a combination of wits, brutality, and style. The latter often took the form of strange costumes or *modus operandi*, such as the playing card-influenced uniforms of Card Shark and his men or Anagram’s habit of leaving clue-filled puzzles for the police at the scene of her crimes. Since then these strange killers and crooks have become a permanent part of the Hudsonite underworld, though more than a few have fallen to the bullets of vigilantes or been arrested by the HCPD.

Describing the costumed criminals as a category is difficult, since they’re a diverse group. They range from professional criminals like Card Shark and Janus (who commit crimes with precision and react ruthlessly to any opposition) to psychotic or deeply disturbed individuals like Diomedes, the Astrologer, and Penny Dreadful (who seem to thrive as much on the fear and chaos they cause as on the profits from their criminal activities). Some of them are semi-permanent residents at Toddberry Asylum, while others could never qualify for the insanity defense. Some want money, others desire bloodshed, some have a fixation on a particular subject or goal. The only thing experts can say for certain about them is that they’re all dangerous.

CARD SHARK

“Freeze!” the six cops shouted almost simultaneously.

The man they were pointing their guns at looked like something that stepped off a playing card: red v-neck tunic, white ascot, blue pants and boots, gold sash, white mask with a spade symbol over the left eye. A casual onlooker would assume he was unarmed... but the cops weren’t that stupid.

Card Shark turned slowly from the jewelry case he’d been working on. He knew he hadn’t tripped any alarm, so some cop on the street must have seen him coming in or something. Usually his luck was a lot better than that... but he still had plenty of aces up his sleeves.

“Are you sure you want to do that, gentlemen? Let me make a suggestion: put down your guns and walk out of here and I’ll let you live. You have three seconds to decide.”

“Bull%&!,” one of the cops said matter-of-factly. “Lay down on the ground and put your hands on the back of your head, or we will open fire! Now!”*

Card Shark shrugged. “Your funeral,” he said. Before any of the cops could even squeeze their triggers, he plucked two cards from inside his sash, then threw them as he dove to the side behind another jewelry case. The cop who spoke and the guy next to him got hit — one in the throat and one in the eye — and both went down screaming, their blood spurting all around them.

The four surviving cops opened fire, but Card Shark wasn’t behind that case anymore — all they killed was glass and jewelry. Without warning he stood up behind a case several meters away and flung another card. This one exploded with a flash of light so bright that all four of the cops were blinded. One slipped in the blood on the floor and went down; the others started firing wildly. It was a simple matter to get behind them and slit their throats, one by one.

— a jewelry heist in Bankhurst

Hudson City’s most notorious costumed criminal is also one of its longest-lived. Card Shark first appeared on the scene in 1986, and over the past two decades has grown from being a one-man crime wave to the leader of the most unusual organized crime groups in the city — one powerful enough to challenge the likes of the Mafia and the yakuza for underworld supremacy.

Organization And Structure

When Card Shark started his career, he worked by himself, or at best with temporary gangs. He soon realized the folly of that approach and began building himself an organization from the best criminals, mercenaries, and killers he could find.

Card Shark’s organization has four levels. He’s at the top: the sole, unquestioned leader who plans the group’s strategies and major crimes. But he’s no lead-from-the-rear general. Quick, strong, smart, clever, confident, and cruel, he still likes to get out “into the field” as much as he ever did. He’s been known to go along and lead his men on jobs, and sometimes pulls off solo crimes as a way of keeping in practice. He frequently visits his illegal gambling dens, mixing with the big spenders to add a dangerous thrill to their night (and get his own

PAUL ROGERS

10	STR	8	DEX
8	CON	8	BODY
13	INT	10	EGO
10	PRE	8	COM
2	PD	2	ED
2	SPD	4	REC
16	END	20	STUN

Abilities: +1 PER with all Sense Groups, Martial Arts (Aikido — arm-based Maneuvers only), Combat Driving 8-, Criminology 12-, Deduction 12-, CK: Hudson City 11-, KS: Card Shark 14-, KS: Criminal Law And Procedure 11-, KS: Hudson City Costumed Criminals 11-, KS: The Law Enforcement World 11-, PS: Police Officer 11-, Streetwise 11-, WF: Small Arms, Fringe Benefit: Weapon Permit

Disadvantages: Physical Limitation: Paraplegic (0” Running)

Notes: Paul Rogers used to be an HCPD cop. Then he had an unfortunate encounter with a group of Card Shark agents being led by Blackjack on a heist. Blackjack beat him nearly to death, breaking his spine and leaving Rogers a paraplegic. Now retired from the force on a full disability pension, he spends his time researching Card Shark and bugging the crap out of his former colleagues with elaborate “reports” about the masked mastermind’s activities. He knows a lot about Card Shark, and his reports are often useful, but his constant insistence on “immediate” police action often annoys people.



ego stroked). Cops or vigilantes who think he just sits back and gives orders will quickly learn to their sorrow what a deadly adversary he can be, both personally and as a leader.

The second level of Card Shark's organization are his trusted lieutenants (see below). "Trusted" may actually be too strong a word, since it's doubtful Card Shark truly trusts anyone, but he seems willing to let these men take charge of major crimes and command large groups of his followers.

The bottom two levels of the group are Card Shark's rank-and-file "soldiers": the "Face Card" agents, who serve as field commanders and leaders of specific criminal gangs or operations (such as a particular illegal casino); and the "Deck" agents, who take the orders and do the dirty work. Both types of agents wear uniforms patterned after Card Shark's costume unless circumstances dictate otherwise.

Card Shark also divides his organization into four "suits" based on function: Spades (assassination, enforcement, and counterintelligence); Diamonds (burglary, theft, smuggling); Clubs (gambling); and Hearts (information acquisition, interrogation, money laundering). It's unclear to the authorities whether a given agent is permanently assigned to a "suit," and what other functions the suits arrangement might serve.

CARD SHARK'S LIEUTENANTS

Card Shark relies on five lieutenants to help him run his organization:

Blackjack: A huge, hulking man dressed in black with a black hood-like mask. Although not especially bright, Blackjack can hit like a Mack truck and is said to be capable of tearing a man in two with his bare hands.

Deadman's Hand: This sadistic killer wears special gloves that deliver electric shocks of varying strengths. If he gets his hands on someone, that person's as good as dead.

Jack o' Diamonds: A lithe, agile fighter who wears a costume patterned after his namesake card. Jack is deadly accurate with his trademark diamond-shaped throwing blades.

One-Eyed Jack: Card Shark's longest-serving and most trusted lieutenant. He wears a full face mask (black on the left side, red on the right, with no eye-hole in the black) and a finely-tailored man's suit. He's slightly lame and uses a walking stick which has weapons concealed inside it.

Pokerface: A brutish and sadistic enforcer and assassin whose face never betrays any emotion whatsoever and who seems oddly resistant to pain. In many situations he serves as Card Shark's body-guard or field commander.

It's possible Card Shark would expand the ranks of his elite operatives if he found anyone he thought both worthy and capable of living up to a card-based nickname. For example, he once had a bodyguard named Wildcard (a man highly skilled with nearly any weapon one could name), who was killed during one of Card Shark's frequent run-ins with the Harbinger of Justice.

Activities

Card Shark's organization specializes in crimes relating to gambling, smuggling, burglary and theft, assassination, and the provision of "high-tech services" to the underworld. While the spectacular thefts and murders the group pulls off earn the biggest headlines, gambling is Card Shark's staple — approximately half of the organization's income comes from its extensive network of hidden casinos, high-stakes poker games, and other such establishments. The HCPD believes that he controls illegal gambling in most of Hudson City. The only areas where he's not in charge are Chinatown (where the tongs run things), Little Italy (where Card Shark competes with the Mafia); and Free-town (where he competes with illegal numbers operations run by black organized crime groups). The authorities have no record of Card Shark being involved with drug trafficking or the sex trade.

Underworld Relations

Through arrogance or necessity (some say both), Card Shark stands alone: he regards the Mafia, the yakuza, and every other criminal group in the city as an enemy — a threat to his goal of increasing his power, wealth, and influence. He covets some of their resources (particularly the Mafia's deep penetration of city government and industry), and would gladly seize them if he could. If he allies with a group (especially another costumed crimelord), it's a temporary thing that's likely to end with Card Shark betraying his erstwhile comrade.

CHARLEMAGNE

"Really, my good man, did you think you could scare me with that show of bravado? I've faced down many others like you, and their graves are hidden all around this city. Now please, let's be reasonable — pay the twenty percent you owe me for the right to steal in my dominion, or I'll have to let my man Caber here take the price out on your bones."

— Charlemagne's business technique

He names himself after a Dark Ages king, and he dresses like some sort of eighteenth-century dandy. But those who underestimate Charlemagne because of his appearance make a grave mistake: the sleeves of his silk shirts hold strongly-armed muscles, and behind his handsome face there's a brain both devious and daring. An expert shooter, fencer, and boxer, he's got a certain "macho" quality to him and enjoys challenging his enemies to duels and one-on-one battles... confrontations that invariably end badly for his foes. And if Charlemagne himself weren't bad enough, his bodyguard Caber (see the sidebar, or *The Ultimate Brick*, page 126) is tough enough to beat hardened mercenaries to a bloody pulp.

Charlemagne claims a territory in part of Riverside Hills and Crown Point where he runs protection rackets, commits robberies, sells drugs, and involves himself in any other activity he thinks he can safely make money at. (He'd like to get more involved in illegal gambling, but can't break Card Shark's stranglehold on that particular side of the underworld, and perhaps in high-class prostitution.) He insists, forcefully if necessary, that anyone committing a crime there pay him a one-fifth "tribute." Drug dealers and burglars who choose to ignore this "tax" wind up very, very dead. His own gang of thugs and thieves keeps an eye on the neighborhood for him so he doesn't have to soil his hands on the streets every day.

CABER

25	STR	14	DEX
22	CON	17	BODY
10	INT	10	EGO
20	PRE	10	COM
10	PD	8	ED
4	SPD	9	REC
44	END	41	STUN

Abilities: Martial Arts (Dirty Infighting), HA +2d6 (Requires A Brick Tricks Roll), Physical Damage Reduction 25%, Resistant (Requires A Brick Tricks Roll), Gambling (Card Games) 11-, Interrogation 14-, Power: Brick Tricks 14-, Stealth 12-, Streetwise 13-, WF: Small Arms, Blades

Disadvantages: Distinctive Features (Scottish accent); Hunted: HCPD 8-; Psychological Limitation: Enjoys Hurting People; Psychological Limitation: Greedy And Self-Centered

Notes: For a full description of Caber, as well as a complete character sheet, see page 126 of *The Ultimate Brick*.

GEORGE “LEFTY” BISSELL

10 STR 12 DEX
 12 CON 10 BODY
 8 INT 8 EGO
 10 PRE 8 COM
 4 PD 3 ED
 3 SPD 4 REC
 24 END 21 STUN

Abilities: Brawling (HA +1d6), Bribery 8-, Concealment 11-, KS: Hudson City Costumed Criminals 11-, KS: Hudson City Vigilantes 11-, Lockpicking 8-, Security Systems 8-, Stealth 11-, Streetwise 11-, WF: Small Arms

Disadvantages: Social Limitation: Criminal Record; Unluck 1d6

Notes: “Lefty” Bissell is just one of the legions of half-rate crooks and losers with delusions of grandeur who earn most of their money as thugs, legbreakers, and flunkies working for costumed or “weird” criminals like Charlemagne, Janus, Anagram, or the Astrologer. Not skilled or talented enough to join up with Card Shark or to make it on his own, he turns to the more bizarre criminals of Hudson City to give him a job and little self-identity.

DIOMEDES

“Jesus, that guy. I don’t never get used to being around that guy. Two sets of cold eyes staring at you, one head’s voice finishing the sentences the other begins... it’s just !\$@%#@# creepy.”*

— professional thug George “Lefty” Bissell, on working for Diomedes

The strangest crimelord in Hudson City is undoubtedly Diomedes, a dicephalic (two-headed) mastermind with mental abnormalities to match his physical ones. Born Phillip and Reginald Anders in 1975, he drifted into crime after emancipating himself from his parents in his late teens.

Diomedes has two heads (each containing an insidiously clever brain), two spines, two hearts, and two stomachs. His spines join at his hips, but his upper bodies merge just below the neck, so that he only has two arms. Each of his heads sleeps separately (effectively allowing him to remain functional almost 24 hours a day), thinks separately, and can talk and eat separately. Because each part of him has a separate nervous system, one side doesn’t necessarily feel pain the other does... but since his body is all one system, a drug administered to one part of him affects “both” of him equally. He only has one set of legs, and each part of him controls the leg on that side, but through long practice he can walk, run, and jump with as much grace as any other athletic man of about age 30.

Diomedes’s monstrously evil psyche mirrors his monstrous appearance. His quick wits and intelligence become obvious to anyone who speaks with him for even a short period of time... but so does his cruelty. Cut off from people by the deformity of his body, he seems to think no more of humanity than he thinks of ants or rats. They’re just things to be crushed, manipulated, and exploited as he sees fit. He’s quick to take offense and quick to kill; he sometimes has trouble recruiting criminals to help him because of his reputation as a psychotic killer.

JANUS

“God, I don’t ever wanna go through that again. We was just getting ready to close, gathering up the jewelry trays and carrying them back to the safe in the back room, when this car drove right through the front window! Janie got cut bad by all the flying glass, but before we could help her, all these guys piled out of the car.

“Most of ’em were guys in jumpsuits wearing ski masks, but the guy in charge — Janus, I think that other reporter said his name was — was different. He had on this brown suit, with a hat and a black mask. All the other guys had guns, but he just had this walking stick with a funny-looking knob on top. His guys herded us all into one corner at gunpoint while he went around smashing all the jewelry cases with his cane. About half of his men gathered up all the jewelry they could carry in these bags they brought while the others watched us. Mister Drummond tried to say something, to plead with them, but that Janus guy hit him so hard with his cane that he fell over unconscious with a big cut in his forehead.

“When they had all the jewelry they wanted, they got back in the car quick and backed outta there. We didn’t even hear the first siren until after they’d gone.

“I sure hope Janie’s OK — we haven’t heard anything from the hospital yet.”

— interview with robbery victim Abby Mersinger

Unlike Diomedes, who actually has two heads, Janus simply named himself after a god with two faces. As far as the police know, this mysterious figure is just a crime boss with a flare for drama. The “Janus Gang” has been striking around Elmview and North Elmview for nearly two years, racking up an impressive record of robberies, shakedowns, extortion, and murder. That Janus — assuming he’s just one person and not a group — is clever and cautious shows in his planning, which usually allows the gang’s jobs to come off without a hitch long before the cops can arrive.

Janus and his gang have avoided contact with police and vigilantes to date because they don’t commit crimes that would require them to maintain an open presence on the street. Janus doesn’t sell drugs, pimp, or anything similar; he and his gang steal things, mostly, and fight other gangs that encroach on their hunting grounds. Attempts to trace him through the fences he uses have so far failed, leading some to believe he sells his goods through contacts in other cities.

THE KYPHOTIC MAN

"Ya gotta help me, doc — I'm cut bad."

"Let me take a quick look. Move your hand, you idiot. Do you think I can see through it?" The hunchbacked physician examined the wound carefully for a few moment. "Yes, that's bad, all right. The blow nicked an artery. You're going to bleed to death if you don't get some help."

"So, help me!"

"Even you can't be stupid enough to think I work for free. If you want me to take care of this, it will cost you ten thousand dollars, payable now."

"A large cool? But I don't have that kind of money, doc!"

The hunchback sighed deeply. "All right, what do you have?"

"I can give ya a cool now, and another in the morning. Please, doc!"

"All right, all right. Give me the money. But if you're not here with the other thousand by 9:00 AM tomorrow, my men are going to find you and I'll personally rip your stitches out myself."

— the Kyphotic Man's bedside manner

Since doctors must, by law, report gunshot wounds and stabbings to the police, the denizens of the underworld are always on the lookout for a doc who can do good work fast and keep his mouth shut. For the past few years, the best man on the street for this sort of thing is a twisted little hunchback who calls himself "the Kyphotic Man." Everyone else calls him "Quasimodo" or "the Hunchback."

Over the past several months, the Kyphotic Man's priorities have shifted. Apparently no longer content to be an underworld doctor, he's set out to make himself a power in the underworld. With a gang of hired guns at his back, he's pulled robberies, hijacked trucks, shaken down businesses, and killed people. Rumor on the street has it that he got one of his patients to spill his guts about some big secrets, and is now using those secrets to make himself a crimelord.

Experts believe the Kyphotic Man is a sociopath; he seems to have no feelings of guilt or shame, no regard for consequences, no compunctions about killing and maiming. His most noticeable trait is his intellectual arrogance, which oozes through every conversation he has. He regards everyone else as his intellectual inferior, and freely says so.

So far the Kyphotic Man hasn't staked out a territory or developed any particular pattern or *modus operandi* — he just commits crimes at random for reasons all his own. The police worry that if he ever settles down, his intellect will make him one of the most effective crimelords the city has ever seen... and his psychosis one of the most deadly.

SPEARGUN

"Hold his arm down," said the dark-haired man holding the speargun.

The two men with him, both dressed in wetsuits like he was, grabbed the man he was referring to — the guy in the suit, who obviously didn't much like being out on the river, at night, in a speedboat. They carefully held his arm against one of the boat's chairs. "Please, no, you don't gotta..." he said.

The man with the speargun took careful aim, steadying himself against the rocking of the boat. Before the man in the suit could finish speaking, he fired. The man in the suit screamed, his shrieks carrying a long way over the water.

"Throw him over," the man said. His two helpers wrenched the spear out of the chair, being careful to leave it in the victim's arm, then tied the rope attached to its end to a ring at the back of the boat. They tossed him overboard as he moaned and cried, holding his arm so the spear would move as little as possible.

The dark-haired man moved forward to the pilot's chair, sat down, and pressed the accelerator to the floor. The man in the suit was soon dragging behind them at forty miles an hour, desperately trying to keep enough slack in the rope to spare his arm.

After a minute of this, the dark-haired man slowed down to a crawl, then swung back around to pick the injured man up. He reached down and heaved the man out of the water with one hand. "I'll ask you again, Turetti — who controls the waterfront in Pierpoint?"

"You do, Speargun! You do!"

— Speargun's idea of a pleasant trip out on the water

Two years ago a new crimelord arose to challenge the Mafia's control of most of the Hudson City waterfronts. Calling himself "Speargun" from his trademark weapon, he declared himself "Ruler of Dockland" and put out the word that waterfront businesses and unions had better start doing business with him, not the Mafia, or suffer the consequences. No one, not even the cops, took him seriously — until mafiosi and union officials began turning up dead every week.

Speargun moved quickly, first establishing his authority over the Stewart River docks where the Mafia's hold was weaker. Then he went after the rest of North Elmview and Pierpoint, and at that point his march stalled. The Morellis and Veronteses now knew just how serious he was, so they marshaled their resources to stop him. Since then, it's been a bloody battle along the docks, with no end in sight.

The FBI and HCPD believe that Speargun must have some sort of military training, probably as a SEAL or UDT specialist, given the military precision of his attacks and the tactics he uses. However, an examination of the relevant military records has turned up no possible suspects. Until someone captures him, his identity and background will remain a mystery.

INDEPENDENT COSTUMED CRIMINALS

Not every costumed or weird criminal is a crimelord with a permanent gang. A lot of them are "independents" who work for themselves — or, at most, with gangs of crooks hired for a specific caper or purpose. Many of them are too loony, or obsessed, to run a real gang for any length of time. They include:

Anagram: Most criminals are content to get away with the goods. Not Anagram. She has to prove how much more clever she is than the police, and she does it by leaving puzzles, riddles, and games containing clues to where the cops can find her. They rarely do... but the vigilante DarkAngel has figured out Anagram's twisted logic and brought her to justice many times.

The Astrologer: If it's in the stars, the Astrologer will steal it. Using a "Star-Staff" that fires pyrotechnic blasts, he steals objects associated with the stars or outer space, or which his astrological predictions "tell" him to.

Penny Dreadful: Most people who have a love of literature just get a library card. Penny Dreadful takes things a few steps further — she steals first editions, kidnaps authors, and plans crime sprees around the events of specific books and poems.

Raptor: Some commentators have called Raptor an "evil twin" of DarkAngel's. He uses similar weapons, gadgets, and methods, but for crime rather than crimefighting. His schemes or targets may involve birds in some fashion, but not always.

OTHER CRIME



OTHER ARMS DEALERS

There are plenty of men throughout the world willing to profit from the blood and misery of the arms market, but who don't necessarily interact with Hudson City. They include:

Chen Yan-Fat: Yan-Fat, of southern Chinese descent, lives in Singapore, Thailand, or someplace nearby; no one has been able to ascertain his exact location. CIA analysts believe he has some military experience, but the details, if any, remain unknown. He dominates the illegal arms markets of the South China Sea, China, and Korea. United States authorities have never been able to pinpoint his exact location, his suppliers, or what he does with his money, indicating that he must be a very cautious and clever planner.

Artur Baltasar Morencelos: Morencelos, a formerly a high-ranking officer in the Brazilian military, presently lives on an enormous estate just outside Rio de Janeiro. From there, he controls an organization that supplies arms to groups throughout South and Central America, and the world. He is said to be an extremely greedy man, willing to sell anything for a dollar, no matter how much suffering it brings.

The Hudson city underworld is a large and varied thing. Not every crime and criminal is part of organized crime or some weird criminal's gang — some parts of the underworld are practically islands unto themselves amid the sea of wrongdoing.

ARMS TRAFFICKING

I met the mafioski Ludyanov in Room 2884 of the Hudson Plaza Hotel.

"Zdorovat'sya," he said in a deep voice, at once friendly and menacing. I looked at him blankly, pretending not to understand Russian.

"Hello," he said again, in thickly accented English. "You are ready to deal with me, no?"

"Yes," I replied, "I'm here to deal with you." I took out a pack of cigarettes and put one in my mouth. He asked for one and I held out the pack to let him take one.

"Ah," he said gruffly, after I gave him a light, "American cigarettes — much better than cheap Soviet leftovers I get in Moscow. Now business. You were interested in the rifles, no?"

"And the rockets," I said. "Don't forget the rockets; my client is very... anxious to obtain them."

"Da, da, the rockets. SA-7 Grail missiles, a case of twenty, a bargain to you for only..."

That was as far as he got before the tranquilizer in the cigarettes knocked him out; the antidote I'd taken beforehand protected me. By the time he awoke, I'd taken him far away from the Plaza — and from anyone who might hear him screaming. Within an hour I knew how many weapons Zelevsky was trying to move through the city, where his men were keeping them, and how heavily they were guarded. I left a calling card with Ludyanov's corpse and went to execute his comrades. With luck, the trail might lead me right back to Zelevsky himself.

— an excerpt from the journals of the Harbinger of Justice

The international black market for weapons, weapon systems, and military hardware is enormous... and profitable, for those clever and connected enough to work the angles. Hudson City isn't a major center of the arms trade the way

Beirut, Rome, and a few other cities are, but it sees its fair share of illegal weapons. Some of the major arms smugglers who run weapons to or through Hudson City include:

MARZUQ AL-FASHTRI

A Pakistani, formerly an official in that nation's government and a highly-placed executive of the Pakistani International Commerce Bank (which the CIA has accused of financing terrorists on several occasions). Apparently he got tired of simply loaning money to terrorists, arms merchants, and drug dealers and became one himself. Today he and his organization, headquartered at his palatial estate near Shikarpur, control an extensive international network that sells weapons and heroin to all buyers (including several Hudson City gangs). Because of his influence, the Pakistani government has made no move to stop him, despite pressure from the United States to do so.

Since the death of Romanian arms dealer Nico Enesco in 1988, al-Fashtri's organization has become the chief supplier of arms to both Iran and Iraq. A fervent Muslim, al-Fashtri prefers to sell to fellow Muslims... but when it comes right down to it, money speaks louder than religious affiliation.

CARD SHARK

Card Shark sometimes sells high-tech weapons systems to buyers all over the world. Typically his organization steals these systems from the government or defense contractors, but some experts believe he has a corps of scientists who develop weapons for him.

VINCENT DUBOIS

A registered international arms dealer with offices in Madrid, New York, Hudson City, San Francisco, Hong Kong, Budapest, Belgrade, and Stockholm, Dubois has allegedly been involved in various illegal weapon smuggling operations. However, he's never been arrested, much less prosecuted, for any such activities, and continues to protest his innocence.

MILOS JANOVICZ

A former general in the Bulgarian army, Janovicz got his start in the Enesco smuggling organization, and took over the remnants of it after Enesco's death in 1988. Although currently based in the Balkans, it's thought he frequently travels to Hudson City, masquerading as an innocent businessman, to close deals. Janovicz is not likely to remain a problem much longer; rumors say he has a fatal kidney disease and doesn't have long to live.

VADIM ZELEVSKY

A former member of the KGB's Third Directorate, Zelevsky is the dominant figure in the vast and chaotic Russian black market for arms. He has strong ties to Russian organized crime and to many terrorist organizations. FBI officials fear he will soon succeed in smuggling fissionable nuclear material out of Russia — if he hasn't already.

GAMBLING

Illegal gambling — mostly in secret “underground” casinos — is a major part of the Hudson City underworld. At first glance this seems strange, given how little time it would take someone to get from Hudson City to Atlantic City, where gambling is legal. But illegal gambling thrives for several reasons. First, not everyone likes to travel, even if it's only an hour or two's drive. Second, there's a “thrill” to breaking the law that appeals to even the most jaded gambler, and you can't get that in Atlantic City. Third and most importantly, the payoffs in illegal gambling games are much higher... and the winner doesn't have to report them or pay taxes.

The major player in illegal gambling in the city is Card Shark, who's said to control an entire network of secret casinos, floating poker and craps games, sports book, and other forms of wagering. The Mafia also has a heavy hand in sports betting, numbers running, and similar pursuits, and the tongs control the frenetic Chinatown illegal gambling scene.



THE SEX TRADE

“That’s it baby... just like that... a little lower... a little harder... oh, God...”

I couldn’t believe what a great angle I had. I don’t wanna think about what Worm uses this peephole for normally, but it’s perfect for using my videocam. Looks like the Councilman’s wife was right about him running around on her... but I bet some of his enemies on the City Council would pay me a lot more for this film than she was gonna.

— a good day at work for private detective Angela Bianchi

While it lacks the grotesque profitability of drug trafficking, the sex trade is one of the most money-intensive segments of the Hudson City underworld. Not only are parts of it legal (or nearly legal), and thus at least borderline respectable, most cops consider this stuff a pretty minor crime compared to the killers and muggers, so they don't interfere with business too much. As long as things don't verge anywhere close to kiddie porn — a crime that even many hardened criminals won't sit still for — or sexual slavery, the HCPD usually finds other things to worry about than what's going on on the Strip.

BEYOND THE STRIP

The infamous Strip isn't the only place you can find sex for sale in Hudson City.

Bayside: Hookers often gather down on the very tail end of 23rd and Needham Avenues. Most of them are old — late 20s, early 30s, but they look like they're going on 50 — and broken-down from years of the trade, drug abuse, and alcoholism. But they work cheap and quick, and for some guys that's all that matters.

Eastwood: Businessmen from Bankhurst and Highlands who don't have time to go all the way down to the Strip for a lunchtime quickie sometimes head over to Northshore, to the area around the sewage plant, power station, and medical center. The working girls there are a little bit better than the ones in Bayside, but not by much.

Chinatown: Chinatown doesn't have streetwalkers or anything else so crude and obvious. The sex trade here takes the form of brothels, all carefully kept secret and protected by the tong or gang who runs them. The girls are illegal immigrants from China, most working off a debt to the snakehead who smuggled them into America.

Latin City: The men of Latin City — and occasionally a "tourist" looking for a cheap Latina thrill — often use their home-grown fleshpots instead of going north to the Strip. A motley group of pimps, gangstas, and other street folk run the hookers, and there are a few dirty little brothels. Most of this trade congregates on the south/east ends of Willow Street and Ring Avenue. Some of the girls were kidnapped by gangs who wanted ransoms from their families, then raped, beaten into submission, and forced to work the street when no ransom was paid.

Pages 77-78 describe the Strip and the surrounding neighborhood in detail. Here's the rest of the story — the people who keep the whole sordid area running like a well-lubricated machine.

CALIGULA

This immensely fat vicelord (real name: Calvin Gilbertson) owns a series of strip clubs and live sex show theaters up and down the Strip. All of his registered businesses are legal — if disgusting — but the police suspect that he uses them as a front for prostitution. HCPD detectives believe he took over the stable of a pimp named Glitter several years ago and parlayed it into an underground empire that mirrors his aboveboard one. Some cops even think he's gotten into more serious crimes, such as white slavery, child prostitution, child pornography, and even drug trafficking, but they lack the proof necessary to bring formal charges. Unfortunately, Caligula's businesses have made him extremely wealthy, and his battalion of high-priced attorneys works night and day to keep the police at bay. After he successfully sued the Department for harassment in 2002, the Commissioner gave instructions to leave him alone until there's enough proof to justify a thorough investigation beyond a shadow of a doubt.

North Elmview can be a dangerous place, and Caligula's in no shape to defend himself against anyone, so he long ago hired a full-time bodyguard named Hotspur. An expert martial artist, Hotspur keeps everyone from bums, to noisy reporters, to vigilantes from getting close to Caligula.

CLEOPATRA

Despite the fact that most sex trade workers are female, women rarely have any power in the Vice World — they do their work on their backs or on their knees. The biggest exception in Hudson City is the woman everyone calls Cleopatra. Once a prostitute, exotic dancer, and pornography actress herself, she used her brain, took advantage of a few opportunities that fell her way, and set herself up as a strip club owner. Her picturesque club, Little Egypt (page 190), was so successful that she launched a line of "Little Egypt Studios" adult films that's become an even more profitable enterprise. Compared to most of the other vicelords on the Strip, she's pretty tame, but as long as the money keeps rolling in she doesn't care what comparisons people make.

ERNEST "KING" COLE

Cleopatra has a large pornography publishing empire, but it pales in comparison to "King" Cole's magazine titles, film studios, and websites. Starting with one store on the Strip (the Emporium, page 77), Cole built what one industry expert has described as "the Microsoft of porn." He no longer lives in the city, preferring his enormous mansion with even more enormous grounds in Arcadia.

To look at him, you'd never think Ernest Cole was one of America's premiere smutmongers. A handsome late 50-ish man with dark hair, he's married to a beautiful woman named Monique and has three children, all in their teens. Anyone who doesn't know better mistakes him for some kind of executive... especially since he gives lavishly to charity and shows up at many social functions despite the obvious distaste some people show for him. He enjoys his life immensely and could give a damn what anyone thinks of him. Besides which, he knows that all those highbrows who look down their noses at him secretly order his movies by mail and visit his websites every day.

CARL SPEARS

The most recent power to arise on the Strip is a man named Carl Spears. White but of indeterminate ancestry, handsome, in his thirties, he looks and dresses more like a businessman or a lawyer than your typical pimp... but then again, he'd point out that he's *not* a typical pimp. As near as the cops can figure out, he "persuaded" a few more traditional procurers to "hand over" their business to him, then recruited still more women.

As of late 2004, Spears's "organization" has two levels. The first are the girls on the street. He runs them with the help of a group of more traditional pimps who joined ranks with him rather than find themselves dispensed with in a most permanent fashion — men with street names like Apollo, Paulie, Shaft, and Teddy J. The second level, where Spears himself devotes most of his attention and efforts, takes the form of brothels and call girls, both of which allow him to keep better girls and charge more for their services.

Like Caligula, Spears is no fighter — after all, he might ruin his manicure or scuff his \$500 Italian shoes. If it looks like push is about to come to shove, he whistles for his bodyguards, Paul "Mr. Red" Provenzano and Gabriel "Mr. Black" Salvucci (who look nearly identical except for their ties, which match their nicknames). The two of them can handle just about anything long enough for him to get away.

chapter six:



HOT SPOTS FOR COOL HEROES

AVENUE OF THE ELMS



HOT SPOTS

This chapter provides detailed descriptions of eight interesting locations that might play a part in any campaign set in Hudson City. Players can make these locales part of a PC's origin or daily life; GMs can use them as battlefields, sites where the PCs need to conduct investigations, or inspiration for plots by themselves. See page 220 for campaign use suggestions and plot seeds.

"So I said to her, 'Look, you've got two choices: go on living with the bastard, suck up the pain, and hope he doesn't keep doing it; or divorce him and nail his balls to the wall.' I mean, that's all there is to it, y'know?"

"So wha'd she 'cide to do?"

*"Hasn't made up her mind yet. If it was me, there wouldn't be any question — I'd be at my lawyer's right now ironing out the strategy. No one !\$&*s around on me and gets away with it. But I don't think Suzi's learned yet that once a cheating bastard, always a cheating bastard — she still thinks she can 'make it work,' the poor little fool."*

— idle gossip exchanged over tea and cakes at the Shade Tree Café

Beginning in the 1930s, elm trees in the United States came under attack from an insidious fungal infection known as Dutch elm disease. The northern half of the country was particularly hard-hit, with over half of the elm trees in the area destroyed. Many urban areas, including Hudson City, suffered the loss of nearly all of their elm trees. Streets once shaded by the branches and leaves of majestic elms were laid bare to the sun. Today, there are virtually no elm trees in or around Hudson City at all.

By some small miracle, one tiny patch of Hudsonite elms was spared. Along Blanchard Street, a short stretch of road in Worthington, the elm trees survived, their tall boughs creating an almost cathedral-like vault above the street. In appreciation of this beautiful site, the city renamed the street "Avenue of the Elms" and dedicated park moneys to ensure that the trees would remain well-tended and healthy.

Blanchard Street was a residential area, but businessmen quickly recognized the commercial potential of Avenue of the Elms, which became a minor tourist attraction. Beginning in the 1960s, they bought up the brownstones along the street and converted them into shops and stores. Today, the Avenue of the Elms is one of the city's premiere shopping areas, frequented by native and tourist, rich and nearly-rich alike.

The Avenue of the Elms runs from Vance Avenue to Chatham Avenue between Richmond and Newport Streets in west Worthington, just north of Highlands and the Governmental Center. Closed to traffic on both ends, it's a pedestrian mall that remains remarkably cool and refreshing in the summertime thanks to all the shade.

The Shops

The Avenue of the Elms isn't the sort of place you'd find a Daily Grind or Durango Denim — every shop along the street is a one-of-a-kind, lovingly crafted to fit the local ambience and thus rake in maximum profit. They include:

CHRISTINE TYLER CUSTOM

Some of the most elegant gowns and dresses available in the city are designed by fashion maven Christine Tyler right here on Avenue of the Elms. While she's got a few "stock" designs available at all times, most of her work is specially commissioned, and there's a five-month waiting list for most customers — better get your order in now!

DESIRE UNDER THE ELMS

Many restaurateurs take advantage of the Avenue's atmosphere by establishing sidewalk cafés outside their establishments. Desire Under The Elms is one such place. Inside you'll find elegant decor, silk-covered chairs, perfect lighting, and the delectable creations of chef and part owner Andreana DeSimone. Outside you can have the same delectable creations, but by the light of sun or candle in the fine fresh air.

Those who appreciate fine food enjoy Desire Under (as it's often called) generally, but especially for its desserts. With the assistance of dessert chef René Gauvin, DeSimone works wonders with sugar and pastry. The Desire Cheesecake is rich enough to put a Bankhurst to shame, and the raspberry tort ehas won both city and national awards.

FORGOTTEN TREASURES

Estate jewelry, precious antique glassware, decorative items from the houses of European royalty — all this and more you can find in Forgotten Treasures, an antique and collectibles store for people with a taste for quality and the unusual. If you've got money to spend, it's the perfect place to find a gift for that special someone or just the right piece to fill that "empty spot" in your living room.

HARRELSON'S SPIRITS

"For the Connoisseur" reads the tagline beneath the sign, and Harrelson's lives up to that motto. Carrying an enormous selection of wines, liqueurs, and other expensive spiritous beverages for so small a shop, it's not the sort of place where the faint of heart should tread. The clerks are as snooty as Frenchmen — if you have to *ask* about something in Harrelson's, you clearly don't know enough to appreciate it, so be off with you! The one concession made to the *hoi polloi* are weekly wine

and spirit tastings condescendingly conducted by the store's owner, Arthur Harrelson, as he attempts to educate people to the proper level needed to enjoy his fine wares.

THE HERMITAGE

If, for some bizarre reason, the desserts at Desire Under aren't quite your thing, stop by the Hermitage coffee shop instead. It serves a lot more than just the best coffee for miles around — it also has teas, finger foods, pastries, and especially desserts. After all, what's a cup of coffee without a scone or piece of pie to go with?

PRINTER'S DEVIL RARE BOOKS AND CURIOS

Among the city's rare and collectible book stores, Printer's Devil stands out. For one thing, unlike most rare book stores, it's not meticulously organized. It's more of a jumble, like some used bookstores — you probably have to ask the proprietor, Rhona Wainwright, if she's got the book you're looking for. And there's a good chance she *will* have it; among the Devil's eclectic stock lurk all sorts of surprising and interesting books. Second, the Devil doesn't just sell books, it also sells other intriguing curios, antiques, and oddities (often ones related to books or reading somehow). For example, tucked away here and there amidst the books you might find a tiny medieval ivory depicting a monk working in a scriptorium, a captain's chronometer from a clipper ship, or a signed photo of F. Scott Fitzgerald.

THE SHADE TREE CAFÉ

Yet another of the sidewalk café establishments along the Avenue, the Shade Tree takes a more relaxed approach to things than Desire Under. Although it's by no means a cheap place to eat, it's not nearly as expensive or time-consuming as most other Avenue restaurants. If you want, you can stop by for a quick sandwich and a cream soda — a sandwich that'll cost you at least \$15, admittedly, but still a sandwich. The Shade Tree also has a small deli area where patrons can buy delicious pies, containers of salad, and other goodies to go.

STRING AND REED

In the spring and summertime, the delightful strains of classical music waft out over the Avenue from the ever-open door of String and Reed, where the finest in musical instruments and musicians' accessories are sold. Owner Marlon Tischman was first chair violin for the Hudson City Symphony Orchestra ten years ago, and sometimes gives his customers a treat by retrieving his Stradivarius from its climate-controlled safe and playing a few melodies.

The People

The Avenue of the Elms is more than just shops and stores — people are a big part of it, too. If you go to the Avenue often enough, you'll encounter certain "regulars" most of the time... and maybe even become something of a regular yourself.

ELECTRO

No one knows Electro's real name — they call him that because his hair often looks like he just stuck his fingers in a light socket. He makes his living drawing caricatures for Avenue shoppers; when not busy with a caricature, he usually amuses himself (and others) drawing sidewalk art with colored chalk.

THE ELM STREET CHESS CLUB

In the middle of the Avenue, the city built several permanent chessboard tables, much like the ones in LeMastre Park. Every morning, and some afternoons, you'll find a group of old men there playing chess and talking about everything under the sun. They call themselves the Elm Street Chess Club, and they're as much a part of the street as any merchant or shopper. They gladly welcome others of any age or gender, as long as their temperaments are mild and chess skills decent. The Club members love to gossip about the people on the Avenue, and often consider it their duty to "keep an eye" on the place.

JARRED RUSSELL

Owner and operator of the Olde Fashioned Candy Store, Jarred Russell is also the head of the Avenue of the Elms Merchant Association — the perfect job for him, since he's a nitpicky fussbudget and petty tyrant *par excellence*. If another merchant moves a display out just an inch too far into the sidewalk, Russell's there to make him move it back; if someone causes a disturbance on the street, he calls the cops right away (he's got 911 on speed dial). As much as the other merchants complain about his heavy-handedness at times, the truth is no one else really wants the job.

IN THE NEWS IN 2004:

ELMS CHARITY DRIVE

October — The merchants of Avenue of the Elms were pleased to announce that their annual Elms Charity Drive, which starts in July and runs through the end of September, netted nearly \$100,000 in monetary donations and almost a ton of canned food. According to Jarred Russell, head of the Avenue Merchants Association, that constitutes a record for the Charity Drive, which has been held every year since 1990.

"We're always pleased to be able to help the community this way," said Russell. "But we couldn't do it without the help of our loyal customers. They're the ones who bring in the canned food and make the donations — we just handle the administrative end of things. It just goes to show that Avenue of the Elms customers are the best!"

Donations made to the Charity Drive are given by the Merchants Association to various charities and food banks around Hudson City.



COLLINS GUNS AND SURPLUS



"So there I am, stuck in the middle of nowhere, behind enemy lines, and my goddamn M-16 jams on me."

"Sonuvabitch. Piece of crap guns. Do those things ever not jam?"

*"No kidding. Not like a Kalashnikov. You can drag an AK through the mud all day and it'll still fire like new. But that's what you get when you let the !\$&*ers give the job to the lowest bidder. Anyhow, the damn thing jams — and I ain't got my kit with me. It didn't matter that it was night; I coulda taken that thing apart and put it back together, I'd done it plenty'a times blindfolded just to be sure. But I sure as *%&! couldn't do it without tools. So I slung it on my pack and drew my Armbruster 4500D."*

"The D? What're you, kidding? You'd never use a D; they suck. Crappy sights, feed problems, low capacity clip — why'n't you have a J?"

"This was 1969, smartass. They didn't make the J yet. The D was almost the latest thing. Yeah, it sucked, but it didn't suck any more than any other semi-auto at the time. Now, as I was sayin' before I was so rudely interrupted, I was stuck behind enemy lines with nothin' but this Armbruster 4500D. Charlie's all around, see? I found out my rifle was jammed when I tried to pick one'a the gooks off, but fortunately he di'nt see me. So I draw

*the Armbruster and start creeping forward for a better shot. Then I see some other gooks off in the distance and I know I'm !\$&*ed — even if I get close enough for a good shot, the others'll hear.*

"Only solution is to get really close. So I keep movin', knowing every step could be my last. I'm waitin' thirty, forty seconds between steps so there's no chance they'll hear a pattern of movement. Finally I'm in position — I'm right behind this gook and he don't even know I'm there. Before he can figure it out, I grab his head, putting my hand over his mouth so he can't shout. Then I jam the Armbruster into his side as hard as it'll go and fire, using his body as a natural silencer. I held him until he stopped twitching, got his map and his rifle, and snuck back out the way I'd come."

"Why'n't you shoot the others now that you had a rifle, Eddie?"

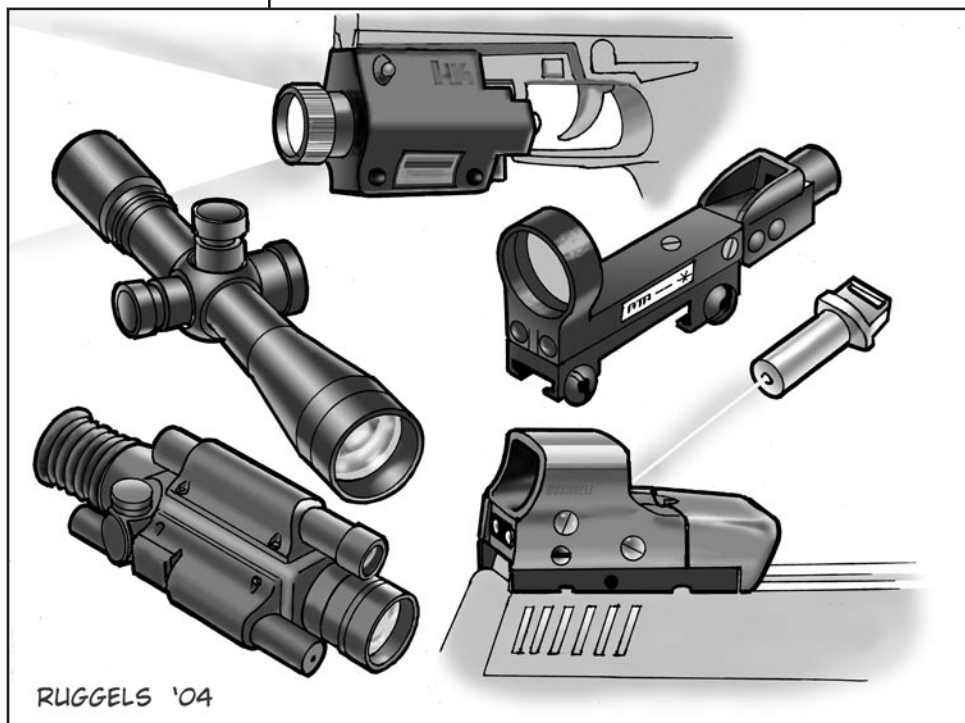
"Are you nuts? One guy with a Kalashnikov against a whole squad of gooks? I may be crazy, but I ain't suicidal."

— reminiscing down at Collins Guns

As Second Amendment advocates often say, criminals can get all the guns they want, so it's important that law-abiding citizens be able to do the same. In Hudson City, when a law-abiding citizen decides it's time to arm himself, one of the places he's most likely to go to buy his piece is Collins Guns and Military Surplus.

Located at the southeast corner of Hastings Avenue and Admiral Street in Blackbridge, right next to an EL track, Collins Guns (as most people call it) occupies a large, old brick building that looks like it was accidentally passed over during the last round of urban renewal. There's a reasonably large parking lot with faded lines painted on it and grass growing up between the cracks in the asphalt, and a set of cinderblock stairs that lead up to the front door, which is made of solid wood and looks newer than the walls (Eddie installed it himself some years ago; the back door matches it).

Inside, things pick up a bit. The floor is ordinary poured cement, but Eddie and his staff keep it swept clean and nicely polished. To the right there's the main counter area, and in front of you some long racks hold-



RUGGELS '04

ing surplus military clothing. While Collins Guns makes most of its money selling firearms, the military surplus end of the business can hold its own, and clothing is a big part of that. Fatigues and fatigue jackets in every pattern available, caps and old helmets, all kinds of boots and shoes — you name it, you can probably find it here somewhere if you look long enough. Toward the back end of one rack there's a section with a hand-lettered sign reading "The Bastards Lost — Now Buy Their Stuff". This is where he keeps a small selection of surplus Soviet clothing, mainly officers' greatcoats (the most expensive clothing item in the store).

For a map of Collins Guns, see page 277.

A LITTLE LIGHT READING

The entire back wall of Collins Guns is taken up by a long rack holding magazines, books, and other military literature. Ranging from lurid issues of *Mercenary Weekly*, to serious studies of the great battles of the past, to books on how to build silencers in your home workshop, to turgid texts discussing the Big Brother Government Conspiracy To Watch Every Move You Make And Take All Your Guns, it's a thorough library if not a broad one. If it's got to do with military matters, firearms, personal survival and security, or related subjects, you can find it here.

If for some reason you want to read your new book in the field at night, walk over to the right side of the store. There you'll find a wide selection of surplus military optics — binoculars, mini-scopes, Gen-1 and -2 nightvision devices, and so on. None of it's cheap, but it's mostly in pretty good condition.

GUNS, GUNS, GUNS!

The southeast corner of the store is walled off from the rest of the place, with its own steel door. This is where the guns are kept and sold. There are always at least two employees in this room, and one of them remains behind the counter at all times. There are display cases of long arms, handguns, and gun accessories for easy viewing by the customers, but the most valuable firearms and gear are kept in the gun vault, or behind the counter in special locked display cases. Both the employees in the room have keys to open all the display cases.

When the store is closed, all guns and related items are kept in the store's walk-in gun vault. Only Eddie himself knows the combination to the safe, and he only opens it when no one else is in the room.

Collins Guns prides itself on having everything a gun enthusiast wants — or at least being able to order it, given a few days' notice. The display cases are arranged for maximum efficiency so they can hold as much as possible. If a customer buys a gun, the staff is quick to fill the empty space in the case so things continue to look orderly and precise.

SECURITY BLANKET

Some people would call Eddie Collins paranoid. He prefers to think of himself as "prepared for any eventuality." If Vietnam taught him anything, it's to get ready for the worst. Accordingly, he acts like he expects someone to try to

HUDSON CITY GUN LAWS

In Hudson City, it's legal to purchase rifles and shotguns without a permit, and to buy handguns with a permit (which is obtained from the HCPD and requires the submission of name, address, and other identifying information, which become public records). The seller must perform a national instant background check at the time of sale, and all guns must be sold with a locking safety device. All federal laws pertaining to gun sales must also be obeyed.

Possessing a rifle or shotgun does not require a license. Possessing a handgun requires a license separate from the license to purchase; obtaining the license involves a similar procedure to obtaining the purchase license. The possession license lasts for three years, but can be renewed for successive three-year periods.

The right to possess a gun does *not* give the right to carry it within the Hudson City limits (though it does grant the right to carry it elsewhere in the state unless specific laws indicate otherwise). Carrying a gun in Hudson City requires a special permit from the HCPD based on "proper cause" (*i.e.*, a damn good reason for needing to carry a gun). The HCPD rarely grants this permit, though some reporters have cynically noted that rich and famous people seem to be a lot more likely to get one than average joes.

A person must be 21 or older to purchase or possess a handgun, but persons 14 and older may possess and use rifles and shotguns for hunting purposes when accompanied by an adult.

rob him every single day. Since he has, in fact, been robbed on several occasions, it's hard not to think of his approach as justified.

The security systems at Collins Guns begin with the doors, which are sturdy and solidly-built (BODY 5, DEF 4 for the two wooden ones, BODY 6, DEF 6 for the steel door to the gun room). Each one has an electronic combination lock with a key pad (-6 to Lockpicking rolls to bypass); Eddie and all of his employees know the combination for each of the three doors (front, back, gun room).

Once a prospective thief gets inside, he should smile — because he'll be on camera the entire time. Eddie has positioned cameras so he can watch every inch of the store. The cameras feed to monitors and recorders kept behind the counter in the gun room, and also to an offsite computer that stores the images digitally. That way if anyone does rob Eddie, he can damn sure let the police know what the guy looked like.

The last line of defense in the store is the gun vault (BODY 14, DEF 14; -8 to Lockpicking rolls to bypass). During a daytime robbery, the first thing Eddie does (if he can) is to slam the vault's door shut, thus protecting his most valuable stock.

All of the alarm systems at Collins Guns have direct links both to the HCPD and to Sureway Security (the firm that installed and maintains them). There are also alarm buttons underneath all the counters that the employees can press if there's an emergency.

EDDIE COLLINS

10 STR	10 DEX
12 CON	12 BODY
10 INT	10 EGO
13 PRE	8 COM
4 PD	3 ED
3 SPD	4 REC
24 END	23 STUN

Abilities: +1 with Firearms, +2 versus Range with Firearms, AK: Vietnam 8-, CK: Hudson City 11-, KS: Guns 14-, KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 8-, KS: Military Science 13-, Language: Vietnamese (basic conversation), Mechanics 8-, PS: Gun Dealer 11-, Security Systems 8-, Tactics 11-, Tracking 8-, Weaponsmith (Firearms) 8-, Fringe Benefit: License To Sell Firearms, Weapon Permit

50+ Disadvantages:

Psychological Limitation: Loves To Show Off What He Knows; Psychological Limitation: Security-Conscious

Notes: Eddie Collins owns Collins Guns, which he founded back in the early Eighties. He's friendly and easy to get along with, though he has a tendency to talk too much and can't resist showing off how much he knows about guns and militaria (or, really, anything else). And he knows a *lot* about guns, there's no question about that — he's fired hundreds of different types, and those he hasn't fired he's read about extensively.

Eddie is a Vietnam veteran, and claims to have killed over a dozen Viet Cong personally while on "special missions." His skills aren't what they once were, but he can still hold his own in a crisis situation.

HUDSON CITY FISH MARKET



RUDY KALANOWSKI

10 STR 10 DEX
10 CON 10 BODY
8 INT 8 EGO
8 PRE 8 COM
4 PD 3 ED
2 SPD 4 REC
20 END 20 STUN

Abilities: Combat Driving 8-, KS: Opera 11-, CK: Hudson City 11-, TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Two-Wheeled Motorized Ground Vehicles, Fringe Benefits: Licensed Truck Driver, Opera Season Tickets

Disadvantages: None

Notes: Rudy Kalanowski is a truck driver for the Cardinale Seafood Sales Company. He delivers orders of seafood to restaurants and other buyers around the city every morning. A big fan of opera, he sings arias badly while he drives, much to the amusement of other people on the road.

"C'mon, what're you talkin' about? This is top-notch stuff!"

"It stinks, Paulie — it stinks to high heaven," Roberto said in his strange accent. "How long's it been outta the water — a day, two days?"

"Two hours, smart guy — it just came in offa Al Mussachia's boat this mornin'! I was here when it was delivered. It's top-notch, I tell ya!"

Roberto considered. He definitely needed the fish — the Trocadero did heavy business every day! But he would only serve the best... unless there was a way he could make a good deal. "OK, Paulie, I tell you what. I'll take the fish if you throw in a basket a'them crabs there... and send a couple'a them lobsters over to my house for me and Maggie tonight."

"You want crabs and lobster? Whadda I look like, King'a the Sea? I gotta lotta bills to pay, I can't give away the store. I'll throw in the crabs, but not the lobsters."

"No deal, Paulie — all or nothin'."

Paulie sighed... but it was a fake, he was making out all right. "OK, you got it. Stevie'll box up the stuff and bring it over to the Trocadero and your house no later than eight, OK?"

— dickering on the dock at the Hudson City Fish Market

Located on the Gadsden waterfront where Spray Street and Fish Street intersect, just west and north of where the Gadsden Cliffs start to rise, the Hudson City Fish Market is one of the largest wholesale fresh seafood markets in the United States. It got started in the mid-1800s, when fishing boats would sail right up to the docks there, unload their catches, and then sell them as quick as they could so the fish wouldn't spoil. Eventually a group of middlemen — fish sellers — started buying the catches in bulk and then selling them retail, thus freeing the fishermen to go back out to catch more fish, tend to their boats, or take care of other tasks.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the Fish Market had become such an established thing that a group of the most successful fish merchants banded together to form the Hudson City Fish Sellers' Association for the purpose of building two permanent structures to house their businesses. As the fish selling industry continued to grow — thanks in large part to advances in railroading and refrigeration that made it possible to bring

fresh fish to Hudson City from all over the country — more sellers moved in, renting the stall space the older merchants had vacated.

Today the Fish Market moves thousands of tons of fish, shellfish, and other bounty of the sea every day. Buyers come from all over Hudson City and the surrounding area to purchase seafood for restaurants, grocery stores, and other retailers (few dealers will sell to individual customers, and in any event there aren't many shoppers who want to get up at 4:00 AM to buy fish). Many of the fish dealers — Eastside Fish, Cannatella Fisheries, Spray Street Fish Company, and more — have been in business for decades (some since the 1800s), creating a real feeling of community.

THE DAILY ROUTINE

The Fish Market's "day" gets started at around midnight, when the deliveries start. Most of the fish doesn't reach the Market by sea anymore; it comes in on trucks or trains (certain railroad companies have a special arrangement with the Transportation Department that lets them run refrigerated cars carrying fish on the commuter tracks to the depot at the Fish Market). Workers at the various stalls sort the fish into ice-filled containers, cut up fish that aren't sold whole, and make any other preparations necessary for the arrival of the customers. Since there's no heat, the Market becomes bitterly cold in winter.

Around 4:00 AM, buyers arrive. Most work for seafood wholesalers, restaurants, and similar businesses, and come to buy in bulk. They often have favorite dealers they buy from using credit terms negotiated long ago, but that doesn't mean they don't shop around every morning looking for good deals or the nicest fish. Other customers — various restaurateurs, owners of gourmet grocery stores, and the like — come to buy in smaller amounts and always comparison shop very carefully to get the best fish for their money. They buy in cash, so on any given morning there's a lot of money floating around the Market in the hands of the sellers.

After the buying and selling's done, the sellers have to pack up the fish and ship it out with the help of various local trucking companies. All this gets taken care of by around 9:00 AM. Then there's a couple hours of cleanup, and the Market quiets down until it's time to start the routine all over again the next evening.



TOP DOGS

While it may seem at first blush that every seller at the Fish Market has an equal chance to snag customers' dollars, in truth there are definite levels of status among them. First, seniority counts — the longer a seller's been around, the more respected he tends to be. If a newcomer tries to "poach" a customer from an established firm, that's regarded as a serious breach of etiquette which may result in some not-so-subtle "punishment" being dealt out to the offender in the form of vandalism or a beating.

Second, being in one of the two buildings — East Building and West Building — is more "prestigious" than having a stall outside. Even among the sellers in the buildings, East Building is considered "better."

Selling space at the Fish Market is strictly regulated by the Hudson City Fish Sellers' Association, which owns the land. Anyone who wants to sell fish has to become a member of the Association and "buy" a stall for prices beginning at around fifty thousand dollars (better locations, larger stalls, and stalls in the buildings cost more, up to around a hundred thousand). Thereafter he has to pay a monthly lease based on location, seniority, sales volume, and other factors. All sellers must display a distinctive brass "badge" (actually more like a plaque) featuring the Fish Market's three-fish logo.

THE CATCH OF THE DAY RESTAURANT

Fish sellers and buyers get hungry just like everyone else — and what else are they going to want to eat but seafood? If you're looking for the absolute freshest fish in Hudson City, you should go where they do: the Catch Of The Day restaurant, right on the edge of the Fish Market. It's not exactly

the most elegant restaurant in the city, but the chefs there can prepare seafood any way you want it, and the portions are enormous. Catch Of The Day is open 24 hours a day.

THE MEN IN CHARGE

As mentioned above, the Hudson City Fish Sellers' Association owns the Market's land and buildings and controls who can sell fish there. Every two years the Association elects a president, who in turn appoints an Executive Board (vice-president, secretary, treasurer) that's subject to the approval of the Association's Board of Directors.

For the past eighteen years, only one man has run for president: Aldo Cardinale. The popular owner of the Cardinale Seafood Sales Company, he's won every election he's run in by a nearly unanimous vote. Cardinale knows virtually everyone associated with the Fish Market on a first-name basis, and usually well enough to ask after their wives and kids. But he's also hard-nosed and fair when it comes to settling the countless minor disputes that arise between sellers. Once Aldo makes a decision, that's the end of the matter, and anyone who keeps arguing about it is likely to find his Association membership "up for review."

For the past decade, Cardinale has preferred to keep the Executive Board "all in the family," so to speak. His vice-president is Mike Rubino, one of his brothers-in-law; his treasurer is another brother-in-law, Nunzio "Nick" Viscio (it's a good thing Cardinale had so many sisters!). Not everyone in the Association is entirely comfortable with having the leadership so tightly bound together, but it's hard to argue with results — since Cardinale took the presidency, Fish Market revenues have climbed nearly forty percent.

LITTLE EGYPT



There was a quick knock on her door, then Marcelina opened it up and stepped inside.

"Ma'am, there's a gentleman down on the floor who's been asking to see you personally. His name's Chuck Ingold, or at least that's what he says."

"Doesn't sound like he's lying — Ingold's not the sort of name a guy makes up. What does he want?"

"He wouldn't say, ma'am — wants to talk about it with you only. All he said was that he was interested in some "special services." His words."

"Well, either that's what it usually means, or he's some rich guy who wants to have a really big bachelor party. Has he been here all night?"

"Since about nine, ma'am."

"What's he been doing?"

"Mostly sitting near the stage, spending big on the girls and getting lots of lap dances. He went to one of the private rooms for a "Pharaoh's Gold" special, too."

"Good. He's legit, then — there's no way he could be a cop with a wire, not if he's had that many girls all over him. Go ahead and send him on up."

"Yes, ma'am." She left quickly. Five minutes later there was a knock on the door and Marcelina entered again with a man in tow — thirtyish, dirty blond, casual clothes, businessman sort of look to him. "Ma'am, this is Mr. Ingold." She left again as quickly as she had the first time, leaving the two of them alone.

"How do you do, Mr. Ingold?"

"Fine. I'm fine, Miss....?"

"Cleopatra will do."

"Cleopatra. I'm fine. I really like your place, come here a lot."

"Thank you; we appreciate our regulars. Marcelina said you had some question about "special services?"

Ingold shifted uncomfortably in his chair. "Well, yeah. I'm... not quite sure how to ask about this."

"Just come right out with it, Mr. Ingold. I assure you, nothing you can say will shock me."

"I... hear that you can get more here than just exotic dancing, if you know what I mean."

"I do. Are you a cop, Mr. Ingold? A police officer, a fed?"

"What? N-no, no, I'm a financial analyst."

"Then I believe we can accommodate you. How much were you thinking of spending?"

"Ummm... th-three hundred?"

"That should be satisfactory for some of our girls." She wrote something on a piece of paper, then rang a small bell on her desk. In a moment Marcelina entered.

"Marcelina, please take Mr. Ingold and this note to Aurora."

"Yes, ma'am."

— just another night at Little Egypt

Located in a prime position on the Strip — the northeast corner of Redwine Avenue and Parrot Street — Little Egypt is the most striking, and definitely the most famous, "gentlemen's club" in Hudson City's notorious vice district. The outside of the building has been resurfaced with a dusty red sandstone designed to make it look like an Egyptian ruin restored to glorious life. Two large statues of cat-headed women flank the steps leading up to the front door.

When a customer approaches, two tuxedoed men open the doors for him from the inside. Though obviously bouncers from their size, they're unfailingly polite and friendly... until a "guest" starts to cause problems, in which case they become decidedly unpleasant.

After passing through the purple-painted "entrance chamber," guests walk through two leather-covered swinging doors into the "main chamber." The walls are painted blue, with a motif of gold stars on the ceiling. Touches of Egyptian decor appear — gold lamps shaped like Egyptian cat statues on private tables, tomb painting-like murals in a couple places, hieroglyphic designs and cartouches here and there — but it's not overdone. The point of the place isn't to teach the customers about ancient Egyptian culture, after all.

To the right of the doors runs a long bar stocked with all the best liquor. All the bartenders are women. They're heavily dressed compared to most of the other women in the place, but couldn't wear their skimpy tuxedo-inspired "uniforms" in public.

The bar pales in comparison to the T-shaped stage that dominates the room. Usually two

“exotic dancers” work the stage at any given time, but sometimes four or more crowd the stage to put on a special show. Cleopatra’s pays well and hires only the best; all the dancers are pretty and talented. A row of comfortable chairs and small tables lines the stage so guests who want to can get close to the dancers; larger tables and booths fill most of the rest of the main floor. Dancers who aren’t on “stage rotation” circulate among the tables, talking to the guests and selling lap dances. One or two “floor managers” keep watch at all times to make sure everyone behaves himself. Loudmouths, troublemakers, and guests who are a little too free with their hands are unceremoniously tossed out of the place.

The areas behind the stage, as well as the second floor of the club, are generally off-limits to guests. Mostly it’s just dressing rooms for the girls, but there’s also a series of “private rooms” that

TAWNY

8 STR	10 DEX	11 CON	10 BODY
8 INT	8 EGO	10 PRE	13 COM
2 PD	2 ED	2 SPD	4 REC
22 END	20 STUN		

Abilities: Acrobatics 8-, Contortionist 8-, PS: Exotic Dancer 13-, Streetwise 11-

25+ Disadvantages: None

Notes: “Tawny” (real name: Antonia Jean Ricardi) married her high school sweetheart right after graduation and soon had two kids. Unfortunately, a romance that seemed perfect in high school didn’t hold up well in the face of real-world pressures like jobs, kids, and unpaid bills. When her first daughter was 20 months old, her husband walked out on her and never came back.

Antonia had her high school diploma, but she knew there was no way she could get a college degree — and no ordinary jobs she could get would support her and her daughters. But she had something better than a diploma: a drop-dead gorgeous body. Her face wasn’t much to look at, she thought, but she didn’t figure on becoming a model.

It took a little asking around and persistence, but she finally got a job at Little Egypt as an exotic dancer. It’s not exactly what she pictured for herself when she was little, but it’s not the worst job in the world either. It pays better than she could make in some factory or office job (especially with the tips!), and her mother can look after the girls at night. Every time her circumstances start to get her down, she grits her teeth, thinks of her daughters, and signs up for some overtime.

guests who’re willing to spend a little extra can rent for parties or private dances. This is the only place where the girls perform any of the club’s special “signature dances,” including the Pharaoh’s Gold, which promises “more skin-on-skin contact than any exotic dance in Hudson City!”

Personnel

The queen bee of this hive of debauchery is Cleopatra herself. She keeps her real name secret, preferring her more exotic “trade name.” Probably in her forties, she remains strikingly beautiful, with long, dark hair, a perfect complexion, and a figure most women would kill for. Contrary to many guests’ expectations, she doesn’t wear Egyptian-styled garb — she dresses in well-tailored but practical business attire most of the time, though often with pieces of Egypt-inspired jewelry.

Cleopatra spends most of her evenings in her office on the second story of the club, from where she can watch what’s going on on the floor via closed-circuit TV. Her office has more of an Egyptian theme to the decor, including a few genuine artifacts she’s purchased on trips to the land of the pharaohs. She also maintains lavish living quarters on the second floor. Periodically — maybe once or twice a week — she’ll come down to the floor herself to get a taste for what’s going on.

Since she can’t be everywhere at once, and doesn’t care to deal with certain matters in any event, Cleopatra has a staff of employees who help her run the place and maintain its reputation for excellent service. Her right-hand man, Burt Zeplowski, is head floor manager — a polite way of saying he’s chief bouncer and troubleshooter. A former college football player, Burt has the beefy-but-quick look of a guy who’s been in a lot of fights and won most of them. Rumors around the club say he’s also Cleopatra’s lover, but he never seems to conduct himself with anything less than the utmost discretion and professionalism.

Behind the bar, Ginny Marlowe is in charge. She doesn’t have quite the body that the girls on stage do (or most of the other bartenders, for that matter), but with her friendly demeanor and quick-witted replies to the guests she gets tips that are almost as good. She doesn’t plan to work here forever — she goes to business school during the day — but she kind of enjoys it, much to her surprise.

DENNY “ANIMAL” MAXWELL

15 STR	12 DEX
15 CON	12 BODY
10 INT	8 EGO
15 PRE	8 COM
6 PD	3 ED
3 SPD	6 REC
30 END	28 STUN

Abilities: Martial Arts (Dirty Infighting, plus a couple of Karate and Jujutsu maneuvers), +10 PRE (Only For Fear-/Intimidation-Based Presence Attacks), KS: Mixed Drinks 8-, KS: Professional Sports 8-, PS: Bouncer 11-, PS: Bartender 8-, Stealth 11-, Streetwise 8-, WF: Small Arms, Knives

Disadvantages: Social Limitation: Criminal Record

Notes: Denny Maxwell, better known by his nickname “Animal” because of his long, shaggy hair and rowdy past, is one of the bouncers at Little Egypt. Looking distinctly uncomfortable in his tux, he keeps a close eye on the club’s patrons to make sure no one takes any liberties with the girls or causes trouble. In his nearly ten years as a bouncer he’s gotten pretty good at calming down potentially explosive situations and “escorting” troublemakers out the door with a minimum of fuss.

LONGVIEW CORRECTIONAL CENTER



AMY CREIGHTON, R.N.

10 STR 8 DEX
9 CON 8 BODY
10 INT 8 EGO
10 PRE 10 COM
3 PD 2 ED
2 SPD 4 REC
18 END 18 STUN

Abilities: +10 PRE (Only To Resist Presence Attacks), Bureaucrat-ics 8-, Deduction 11-, Forensic Medicine 8-, Paramedics 14-, PS: Nurse 13-, SS: Medicine 8-, Contacts (10 points' worth, with now-released prisoners grateful for her medical help while they were inside), Fringe Benefit: Licensed Nurse

Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Devoted To Helping And Caring For Others

Notes: Amy Creighton is one of the nurses who works in the medical facility at LCC. A caring and compassionate woman, she does her best to administer quality medical care to all of the prisoners who need it, no matter how vile or depraved they may be... though she doesn't take any guff from any of them, and is quick to report them to the guards if they don't behave themselves. On her own time, she likes to read trashy romance novels, paint, and take her dog Max for long walks.

"It all went down one day out on the rec yard, just like we all figured it would. Calvin'd been makin' a lot of noise ever since he got in, talkin' about how he was gonna be top man and 'kick that punk-ass Hanshaw to the curb... after he be my bitch for a while.' We all thought it was just loudmouth talk at first, but he was serious. The first time a couple'a Hanshaw's boys turned up dead in the shower and Calvin took their turf, we knew what was gonna have to happen.

"What we couldn't figure was what was takin' Hanshaw so long. The last time someone tried to push him around was Purnell a few months back — and they're still feedin' Purnell through a tube down in the infirmary. But Hanshaw let it slide for a few days. What we didn't know then was that he was just greasin' the skids so he could take care of things himself and get out clear. It takes a long time to spread that much scratch around the guards.

*"Then all Hanshaw needed was some time alone with Calvin. In this case 'alone' meant 'in the middle of a few hundred other cons' and 'with two of Hanshaw's boys along for the discussion,' but whatever. Calvin was talkin' *%&! out on the yard with a couple of his own boys when they saw Hanshaw comin' through the crowd. I could see the looks on their faces — they didn't dare say nothin', 'cause if they did Hanshaw'd kill them, too — but Calvin was too stupid and full of himself to figure it out.*

*"It was over almost before it began. Hanshaw's boys grabbed Calvin's arms. He started to struggle, but Hanshaw stepped around and shanked him four or five times in the gut. That's a *%&!ty way to die, bleeding out slow, but Hanshaw had a point to make.*

"Of course, none'a the guards saw anything — not even the ones in the towers."

— a lesson in why you should keep your mouth shut, as told by LCC inmate Darryl Wilkins

Every city needs an institution to house suspects awaiting trial and criminals given short-term sentences. In Hudson City, that place is the Longview Correctional Center. An ominous, towering structure built of rust-red brick and grey stone, it looms large in the minds of Hudson City's underworld, whose members know all too well how disturbing and dangerous a place it can be.

Longview is a jail, not a prison — it houses arrestees who couldn't make bail (or weren't given the option to bail themselves out) and prisoners serving sentences of one year or less for various minor offenses. Convicted felons sentenced to longer prison terms serve their time in Oldemyer, Stewartsburg Penitentiary, or some other facility (see page 151). Longview has relatively few true prisoners, though — anything trivial enough to get someone a sentence of less than a year usually results in immediate parole, since Longview needs all the space it can get just to hold Hudson City's large population of pretrial detainees (see below).

The Facility

Named for a famous nineteenth-century prison reformer, Longview Correctional (or "LCC," as it's often called) occupies a large area just south of the terminus of 12th Avenue at the Gadsden Cliffs. Presently ten stories tall and with two basement levels, it has the shape of a square cross (hence, people on the street refer to getting sent to Longview as "being crucified").

Each of the four wings of the prison (starting in the north and going clockwise, A, B, C, and D) is over 600 feet long and has approximately 50 cells per side per story. Stories four and seven have full floors; the other floors have only walkways running along the edges, creating an "atrium" effect three or four stories tall. During the day these atria are often noisy, with prisoners shouting across the way to friends on their floor, or at prisoners on the floors above and below them. Each wing is divided into four "blocks" per atrium, with a full stairway at the intersection of each block. Blocks have numerical designations. Thus, in A Wing, the blocks for the atrium that covers the first through fourth floors are A1, A2, A3, and A4 (with A1 being closest to the prison center and A4 the furthest away). The blocks for the second and third atria are A5 through A8 and A9 through A12, respectively.

The prison administration uses each wing for a specific purpose. A Wing is the maximum security wing, where it keeps the most dangerous pretrial detainees. B Wing, and part of C Wing, are used for other detainees and for prisoners serving a sentence. Prisoners are kept segregated from detainees in specific blocks. D Wing is the women's part of the prison, housing both detainees and prisoners.

Longview has its own generators, located in the basement areas below Prison Center.

PRISON CENTER

The central “hub” between the four wings is known as Prison Center (despite the fact that LCC isn’t a prison). It’s the heart of LCC, where Warden Drayton and his staff have their offices, the guards their locker rooms, and the facility support staff their storage and records rooms.

The first floor of Prison Center contains both a lobby where visitors to the prison enter, and an intake facility where prisoners come into the system. From the lobby one can walk to the Visitor’s Center (where loved ones and friends can come to talk with a prisoner during visitors’ hours) or various meeting rooms and other places where the public might need to go.

The jail’s dining hall and kitchens fill most of the second floor; this is where prisoners go every day to eat their meals. The jail store (where prisoners can buy small personal items, magazines, snack foods, and the like using their jail accounts) fills an all-too-small space next to the dining hall. On the third floor are the prison laundry and other support facilities where many low-risk prisoners work during the day to earn a small amount of money. The fourth floor includes the jail’s medical facilities. Most of the rest of the floors contain administrative offices, storerooms, and the like.

The roof of Prison Center is flat and has a helipad.

THE YARDS

Between the four wings are the yards, where most prisoners get to exercise in the fresh air for an hour a day. The yards contain some exercise and sports facilities (a weightlifting area, some basketball courts) but are mostly just open ground with some benches here and there. Some of the yard areas also contain additional buildings along the walls — the prison garage, additional storage space, and so forth. Prisoners aren’t allowed to approach these buildings without special permission.

THE WALLS

Longview has two walls. The inner wall is a 25-foot (4”) tall brick wall topped with concertina wire. It has guard towers roughly every 100 feet along its entire length; two guards armed with high-powered rifles man each tower 24 hours a day. The outer wall is a 15-foot (2.5”) tall sturdy cyclone fence, also topped by concertina wire. Between the two walls is a space 32 feet (5”) wide, stripped of all vegetation or other features and filled with roll after roll of concertina wire. To get over the first wall, through the no-man’s-land, and over the second wall without getting cut to ribbons by all the wire, a prisoner would probably have to wear plate armor.

SECURITY

The walls and guards aren’t the only security features at LCC. The place is a potential powderkeg filled with some of the most dangerous people in Hudson City, so the authorities go to great lengths to make sure no one can get out unless they let him out.

First, there are cameras in virtually every public area of the jail, including every fifty feet

(8”) along both walls. Guards in the “camera room” in Prison Center can pan any camera through roughly a 150-degree angle, and have limited zoom features as well.

Second, there are locks — everywhere, locks. Every cell door and other door in the wings is locked electronically from a room at the entrance to the wing. If a guard wants one open, he has to call down to the “lock room” via a closed-circuit TV system with terminals located at every stairwell and floor along the wing. The same applies to all of the important doors in Prison Center, where the CCTV system connects to the camera room. The jail’s architects designed the prison so that shutting and locking the key doors throughout Prison Center would cut off prisoners’ abilities to move freely throughout the prison in the event of a riot or major jailbreak.

Personnel

Longview employs several thousand people who do everything from guarding the prisoners, to preparing food, to keeping the place clean. Low-risk prisoners can also have jobs around the facility to earn a small amount of money and get good marks on their records.

WARDEN DANIEL DRAYTON

The warden of Longview Correctional, and thus effectively the most important person in the Hudson City Department of Corrections, is Daniel Drayton, a slightly paunchy man in his early fifties. Drayton got his start decades ago as a guard at Juvenile Offenders Correctional. After achieving the rank of sergeant there, he transferred to administration and spent nearly twenty years working as a prison admin or DOC bureaucrat. In 1997 he took the Warden’s position at Longview.

Although not exactly the most imaginative or adaptable person in the world — he *is* a career bureaucrat, after all — Warden Drayton does his job well because he’s been down in the trenches and knows what it’s like to work at the lowest level of a jail. Like most wardens, he’s deeply concerned about the safety of his facility and his employees; he constantly badgers the DOC and City Council for more money for security systems, safety equipment, and so forth — and, of course, getting turned down due to budgetary restrictions. With overcrowding at an all-time high, he’s terrified that a riot or similar incident could result... and he really doesn’t have any way to defuse the situation.

COMMANDER JERRY COLEMAN

Warden Drayton’s right-hand man is Jerry Coleman, the commander of the jail’s guards. Where Drayton is a cautious thinker who proceeds slowly, Coleman, a military veteran, is a man of decisive action. In his view, the world only works right if you *make* it work right, and that means riding the prisoners with an iron hand whenever they so much as look at a guard the wrong way. He doesn’t abuse them, or tolerate his guards abusing them, but he’s quick to slap an inmate down with solitary confinement or other

A NEW PRISON?

Noting the overcrowding in LCC, some city officials have called for the building of a new jail. However, not only can they not say how Hudson City would afford to build this new facility, they have no idea where to put it. There aren’t any good locations for one inside the city limits. North of the city would work, but the powerful and often wealthy residents of the northern suburbs have already indicated their opposition to any such arrangement in the most stark terms. It would be easier to drum up support for a location south of the city, but that would require the jail to transport prisoners as far as a dozen miles to get to court every day, which poses logistical and security problems. For now, the idea remains one that everyone seems to favor, but no one’s willing to do anything about.

RIOT!

The last major riot experienced at LCC took place in 1996, when prisoners broke free, took nearly three dozen guards hostage, and held the authorities at bay for nearly a week. In the end, almost fifty inmates and five guards were murdered, and the jail was retaken without granting any of the prisoners’ demands. Security was beefed up afterward, but it’s still not enough. It would take just the right set of circumstances to spark another riot... but if those circumstances arise, God help anyone inside the prison when the inmates take over.

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER LARRY CHURCH

10 STR 10 DEX
11 CON 11 BODY
8 INT 8 EGO
10 PRE 8 COM
4 PD 2 ED
3 SPD 4 REC
22 END 22 STUN

Abilities: Guard Training (Choke Hold, Martial Disarm, Martial Grab, Martial Strike, Takedown), +10 Presence Only To Resist Presence Attacks, Bureaucratics 8-, Criminology 8-, AK: Longview Correctional Center 14-, KS: The Law Enforcement World 8-, KS: The LCC Community 11-, PS: Prison Guard 11-, Streetwise 11-, WF: Small Arms, Fringe Benefit: Sergeant

25+ Disadvantages: Hunted: prisoner who wants to kill him if given the chance; Social Limitation: Subject To Orders

Notes: Larry Church has been a guard at LCC for thirteen years; he attained the rank of sergeant three years ago. His usual assignment is Block A7, one of the roughest and most dangerous in the jail. In his time he's been beaten up (and dished out more than a few beatings in the process of restraining unruly inmates), stabbed twice, spit on repeatedly, had flaming rolls of toilet paper thrown at him, been sexually propositioned by more inmates than he can remember, and talked two potential suicides out of killing themselves. Sometimes he wonders why he comes in to work every day. But hey, there's the crappy pay, and all the half-stale doughnuts he can eat in the guards' canteen — who could pass that up?

punishments if he thinks the inmate deserves it. As a result, he's probably the most hated man in LCC, and if there's ever any sort of riot the inmates will make sure he dies slow.

Coleman is a three-times-divorced bachelor with two grown kids and a small apartment in Bayside. A workaholic, he spends most of his time at Longview.

The Guards

Commander Coleman has a staff of several hundred guards, both men and women (though women serve only in D Wing, where male guards generally don't work). Guards undergo a training course and must pass qualifications tests, but it's not exactly a job that attracts a lot of intelligent, thoughtful people — it's more the sort of thing that attracts people who couldn't make it into the military or HCPD but don't have any other real prospects, or who enjoy bullying others. Working at LCC takes a hard mind, a tough body, and a strong stomach, not brilliance or creativity.

The rank structure below Coleman is fairly simple. He has about two dozen Lieutenants who answer to him directly; one of them is in command of the guard staff whenever he's not on the premises or otherwise unavailable. The lieutenants command Sergeants (who are in charge of the cell blocks in shifts) and Correctional Officers (*i.e.*, ordinary guards). The jail also has a twenty-man Crisis Response Team, a SWAT-like group of guards trained to handle heavier weapons and react to hostage taking, riots, and other extreme situations.

Longview's guards don't carry firearms — they can't take the chance that an inmate would get a guard's gun and use it against him and other inmates. They don't even have nightsticks. They go up against some of the most dangerous scum in Hudson City every day armed with nothing but touch tasers and handcuffs. In the event of a riot or other emergency, Commander Coleman can issue the guards pistols, shotguns, tear gas, body armor, riot helmets and shields, and similar gear.

The Daily Routine

For the inmates and most staff, the LCC day begins at 6:00 AM with lights on. Inmates get sent to the cafeteria in groups every fifteen minutes. If someone needs medical attention, he tells the guard and gets put on the list to be taken to the hospital in order of priority (the sicker or more hurt he genuinely seems to be, the sooner two guards come to escort him to the docs; if the guard the inmate reports to thinks he's faking, he automatically goes to the bottom of the list).

If a prisoner is due in court that day, he has to go to (or be escorted to) 2 Yard to board one of the buses going to Courthouse Square. The buses run every half an hour beginning at 8:00 AM for most of the morning, and again on the same schedule in the latter half of the afternoon to bring prisoners back. Each bus carries two guards in addition to the driver, and inmates remain shackled during the trip.

Inmates who don't have to go to court spend the day working (if they have jobs) or sitting around in their cells and the common areas (if not). The less danger an inmate poses, the more freedom he's allowed; the maximum security inmates must remain in their cells most of the day. In addition to lunch (served from 11:00 AM until about 1:00 PM), each inmate who's not in lockdown as a punishment is entitled to one hour's recreation time in the yard per day. Given the large LCC population, rec hours run throughout the day in shifts — each hour a certain number of inmates are brought back in, and others allowed out. This constant motion of inmates allows for more prisoner interaction than the administration likes, with the attendant risks of fights, murders, rapes, and other problems, but there's no way around it since state law mandates the rec hour.

Prison visiting hours are from 10:00 AM until 4:00 PM most days, with longer hours on major holidays. All visitors have to pass through a metal detector and are subject to a full search if the guards deem it necessary. If a prisoner has a visitor, he gets a call and goes down (or is escorted down) to the Visitor's Center. Depending on his classification, he may have to talk to his visitor through bulletproof glass via a direct phone system, or may be allowed to sit at a table with them and talk privately. Visitors can bring inmates gifts, but all gifts are thoroughly searched, even x-rayed if necessary.

The dining hall serves dinner from 6:00 PM until about 8:00 PM. From after dinner until lights out at 11:00 PM, prisoners' time is generally their own; the prison often shows movies or has other special events in the common areas to keep them occupied. Despite this, fights and other problems are common; the guards dread this time of day, and may react to minor difficulties quickly and harshly to keep them from getting worse. By 11:00 PM, all inmates must be in their cells for lights out.

Life Inside

Longview Correctional is built to hold about eight thousand inmates. As of late 2004, at most times it actually contains ten to twelve thousand, resulting in a horrendous overcrowding problem that only makes life more difficult and dangerous for everyone inside.

Most inmates are predators of one type or another, and they regard other inmates as prey. An inmate who doesn't want to be everyone's victim has three basic choices. First, he can join a gang (see below) so his "brothers" have his back. Second, he can become the bitch of some inmate with enough power and influence to protect him. Some inmates get forced into that sort of "relationship" before they can join a gang, or because they get into debt to their victimizer — but however it happens, it's not pleasant for the bitch. Third, he can snitch out to the guards and spend the rest of his stay in protective custody. In short, he's screwed no matter what he tries.



GANGS

Most inmates protect themselves in prison by joining a gang. (If they already belong to some organized crime group, like the Mafia, the Nubians, or a tong, they usually join up with their fellow members instead of joining a different gang.) It's not exactly the easiest life — junior gang members, particularly newcomers, are expected to do what the more senior members tell them, from providing sexual favors, to forking over their dessert, to fetching cigarettes — but for most it's the lesser of the evils available. Longview Correctional has numerous gangs, all racially based.

White Gangs

A white prisoner joins the Aryan Brotherhood. Despite the name, not every member is some sort of Nazi or white supremacist — more than a few are, and members often have tattoos featuring Nazi symbols and the like, but most just want protection from the Hispanics and blacks. The Brotherhood loosely allies itself with the Mexican Mafia — they don't really like one another, but they have common enemies.

The only other white “gang” in LCC is a group of prisoners who follow “Big Bill” Barnett, one of the meanest, toughest prisoners in the entire place. Barnett bucked the trend by killing two men who tried to make him their bitch and refusing to join the Aryans. Instead, he ended up attracting his own gang, though he doesn't really think of himself as a gang leader *per se*. He doesn't let just anyone hang around him — a prospective “member” has to impress him somehow, or have something Bill needs or wants.

Black Gangs

The black gangs at Longview are the most powerful, since over half the inmates in the jail are black. The biggest is the Black Guerrilla Family, which espouses far left-wing political ideals (including the overthrow of the U.S. government) and an end to racism — but it's really just another gang, interested only in itself. BGF members tend to be very anti-authority, and thus prone to disruptiveness, so the guards keep a close eye on them. The gang is

allied with La Nuestra Familia, and thus opposed to La EME (not to mention the Aryan Brotherhood; the two hate one another).

The other major black gang within LCC is the Islamic Brotherhood, whose members are all devout Muslims. They preach a message of peace, understanding, and not using alcohol or drugs. Most other gangs regard them as punks and sissies, but despite their preference for peace they can fight just as well as any other gang.

Hispanic Gangs

Two Hispanic gangs compete in LCC for power and profits. The largest and most violent is the Mexican Mafia, or La EME, which has long since become a power outside the prison as well as in. Another gang, La Nuestra Familia, formed in opposition to La EME, but has never achieved that group's size or prominence. LNF allies with the Black Guerrilla Family to enhance its stature and provide further protection.

ROBERT HANSHAW

13 STR	14 DEX
13 CON	11 BODY
11 INT	10 EGO
16 PRE	8 COM
5 PD	4 ED
3 SPD	6 REC
26 END	25 STUN

Abilities: Martial Arts (Dirty Infighting; Knife-fighting), Bribery 12-, Concealment 13-, AK: Longview Correctional Center 11-, KS: Free-town Street Gangs 11-, PS: Drug Dealing 11-, Stealth 12-, Streetwise 13-, WF: Small Arms, Knives, Fringe Benefit: Membership (Nubians)

Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Viciously Self-Centered; Social Limitation: Criminal Record

Notes: Hanshaw (almost no one remembers his first name, much less uses it) has spent so much time inside LCC that he's practically a permanent resident. A member of the Nubians since he was 13, he's got a record for drug dealing, assault, and other crimes as long as your arm. His time inside LCC and Stewartsburg has hardened him, making him a cruel, vicious man who'll kill anyone who crosses him. But he knows how to work prison the right way, get things done without getting caught. He's killed five men inside so far without so much as being investigated. Right now he's one of the most powerful crucified Nubians, and makes a lot of money dealing drugs to other prisoners.

THE SKYLINE CLUB



PAULA BONTINE

8 STR 8 DEX
8 CON 9 BODY
10 INT 8 EGO
10 PRE 12 COM
2 PD 2 ED
1 SPD 4 REC
16 END 17 STUN

Abilities: Bureaucratics 8-, Conversation 11-, Deduction 11-, High Society 11-, KS: High Finance 14-, Persuasion 11-, PS: Stockbroker 14-, Fringe Benefit: Licensed Stockbroker

Disadvantages: Reputation: a business failure 8- (in the Business World)

Notes: A couple years ago, Paula Bontine was flying high. After an incredible run as a stockbroker, she started her own brokerage and was really raking in the dough. Then she made a few bad decisions... and one of her employees was investigated by the SEC for insider trading... and her divorce cost her a bundle and played havoc with her emotionally. Before she knew it, she was out of business and living on her savings. One of the few assets she has left is her membership in the Skyline Club — her brokerage paid for several years' worth in advance. Today she spends a lot of time at the club, trying to make connections and find a new job.

"Evening, Mr. Gilbertson. What'll it be tonight?"

"Just the usual, Gloria, thanks."

"One Bombay Sapphire martini, two olives, coming up."

She returned in a couple minutes with the drink, and Gilbertson settled back into his seat to enjoy it. He needed a few minutes to collect his thoughts before the meeting.

The few minutes ran out all too quickly. He saw the elevator doors open and Mardosian step out. He took off his thousand-dollar overcoat and handed it to the girl at the coatcheck counter — that hot redhead Bob Keiser'd told him sleeps around with a lot of the club's members — and walked right over to him. Didn't even have to look around, he seemed to know exactly where Gilbertson was sitting.

"Good evening, Howard," he said smoothly, with his usual easy, disarming manner. "How are you tonight?"

"Fine, just fine! Havin' a little drinkski. You want one? I was just about to order another."

"No, that's all right. Let's not drink just now. We have other things to discuss," Mardosian replied, waving Gloria away before she could respond to Gilbertson's upraised hand.

"Sure, sure."

"Let me get right to the point. You owe me money, Howard... a lot of money."

"I know, I know, and I'm going to pay you back, with interest, I told you I would. It's just that business has been a little slow these past couple months — I need the Christmas season to get me back on top."

"It's too late for that, Howard — I've been patient and waited more than long enough. I'm calling in the marker, right here and now."

"N-now? But I don't have it, I can't pay you."

"Then you'll have to give me something of equal value."

"Uhhh... what'd you have in mind?"

"Effective immediately, I own half your business."

"What?!?! But that wasn't what we agree..."

Mardosian leaned in close before Gilbertson could finish talking, spoke softly. "No protests,

Howard. This is going to happen, so you might as well accept it. Cause trouble for me now, and you're going to regret it. So will your family. How's your daughter doing these days?"

Gilbertson paled. "She's... uhhh, she's fine. Boarding school and all."

"I'm glad to hear it. I hope she remains 'fine,' if you understand what I mean."

Gilbertson's shoulders slumped in defeat. "Okay, okay, I got it. Send the papers over tomorrow and I'll sign them... partner."

"I'm glad we understand one another. See you tomorrow, Howard." Without a backward glance, Mardosian got up, collected his coat, and left.

Gilbertson raised his hand wearily. Now he really needed a drink.

— doing deals up at the Skyline Club.

There are plenty of places all over Hudson City where the rich and powerful can go to relax, have a drink, enjoy pleasant music and conversation, or simply have a good time: the City Club; Top Of The World; the Carthage Club; the Garden. But if you ask some people, all of those pale in comparison to the world-famous Skyline Club.

So called because it looks south from the top of the Cherokee Tower at 8th Avenue and Newport Street toward the most striking part of the Hudson City skyline, the Skyline Club is a members-only facility. The annual dues as of late 2004 are \$20,000 per year, making the Club inaccessible to all but the wealthiest people in Hudson City society. And as if the dues weren't enough, the Steering Committee of the Club has to approve all prospective new members, and their standards are often excruciatingly proper. In the past they've denied membership to people with even a whiff of scandal about them... but the Steering Committee's radar for such things does seem to depend on just how rich and influential a prospective member is.

AMENITIES

For his twenty cool a year, a member of the Skyline Club receives:

- access to the Club's bar, the Cutty Sark, which carries every type and brand of liquor you can possibly think of, and has some of the most skilled bartenders in the city
- access to the Club's restaurant, the Bon Homme Richard, for parties of up to eight at any time,



and larger parties with a reservation. The service at the Richard is impeccable, and its chefs consistently rank among the best in Hudson City in food critics' surveys.

- access to the Club's smoking room, the Golden Hind, which also features pool tables, chess tables, and similar amusements.

- the utter servility of the Club's staff and management.

Most importantly, a member has the ability to mingle with and meet other members. There's no one in the Club who isn't rich, successful, powerful, influential, an expert in his field, or all of the above. The contacts a member can make, the networking he can do, and the deals he can make over brandy and cigars more than justify the membership cost for many.

LAYOUT AND FACILITIES

The Club keeps its layout fairly simple, arranging things to allow the members to enjoy the spectacular view as much as possible. The elevator up requires a card key to access the Club's floor. The elevator doors open onto a small lobby area where members can check their coats and hats. The lobby leads directly into the Cutty Sark, with the long bar over to the left. From their tables and chairs, or small conversation pits made of elegant sofas and endseats, members can look out the window at the city below.

Members who want to eat at the Bon Homme Richard continue on through to the west wall of the bar and go through the restaurant's front door. The most desirable seats are near the window, but from any table in the place a patron can take in the view.

The Golden Hind doesn't share the view — it's off to the left as one enters the Club, through a leather-covered door just to the left of the bar. The rest of the Club contains the kitchens, storage areas,

and other practical things the members don't want to see or think about.

PERSONNEL

One of the reasons the Skyline Club hums along so efficiently is its employees, who all have two things in common: first, they're very, very good at whatever they do; second, they're willing to cater to a Club member's every whim in exchange for the large salary and tips they receive.

Armand Pelletier, a short man with a ferocious temper toward his employees but a voice of silken sweetness for his employers, oversees the Club as its General Manager. He's there every day from when the Club opens at 11:00 AM until it closes at 2:00 AM the next morning, and never once can anyone claim to have seen him looking tired, harried, or stressed. Based on the way Armand behaves, you'd think that everything was always all right with the world... even if the world were plunging into sheer chaos all around you. He speaks with an accent that seems a little French, a little Spanish, and all haughty.

After Armand, the Club employee most members know best is Giles Rossiter, the *maitre'd* at the Bon Homme Richard. Forced to cope with a Club charter that *promises* members a table for up to eight at any time without a reservation, he sometimes has to juggle table space and wait staff schedules like mad, but somehow he always gets the job done.

The fine food at the Bon Homme Richard is the responsibility of a head chef known as Head Chef. No one can pronounce his real name — "it's some Romanian thing, all consonants," according to Rossiter, one of the few people who can even remember it — so they just refer to him by title. And it's a title he richly deserves; there's not a dish, soup, or dessert yet created that he can't prepare to perfection. If anyone questions his talents or his instructions, he's prone to throwing cookware.

CAROL COLLINSON

8 STR	9 DEX
8 CON	8 BODY
10 INT	8 EGO
13 PRE	16 COM
2 PD	2 ED
1 SPD	4 REC
16 END	16 STUN

Abilities: Conversation 12-, Gambling (Card Games) 8-, High Society 8-, KS: Skyline Club Members 11-, KS: Soap Operas 11-, PS: Coat-check Girl 11-, Seduction 12-, Trading 8-

25+ Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Greedy

Notes: Carol likes money and nice things. Carol meets men who have a *lot* of money and nice things through her job at the coatcheck counter at the Skyline Club. Carol has a pretty face, a sexy figure, and an active imagination. Put two and two together and you can figure out how Carol spends most of her evenings after work.

It's an open secret around the club that Carol's "easy," at least with men who don't look too bad and/or are *really* generous. What's not so well-known is that Carol is smarter than she seems, and a pretty good listener. She picks up all sorts of interesting snippets of information while on the job or lounging between the sheets with one of her "friends"... information they might not always want her to have. Given the right opportunity, Carol could turn that information into a chance to build a better life for herself — if she'd dare to take it.

VAJRAMANI KALANADHABHATALA

8 STR 8 DEX
 9 CON 9 BODY
 10 INT 8 EGO
 10 PRE 8 COM
 2 PD 2 ED
 1 SPD 4 REC
 18 END 18 STUN

Abilities: AK: India 8-, CK: Bombay 8-, CK: Hudson City 8-, KS: The HCC Community 11-, PS: Convenience Store Clerk 11-, PS: Student 11-, SS: Biology 11-

25+ Disadvantages:
 None

Notes: Vajramani Kalanadhabhatala came to this country from his native India nearly ten years ago — though you might guess he just stepped off the boat from the thickness of his accent. (Despite that, he speaks very good English.) He's studying biology at Hudson City College, with the hope of going on to medical school and becoming a doctor. Since he has to hold down two jobs to support his wife and three young children, it's been slow going; he's gotten to know the HCC community well, even though he doesn't have much time to socialize.

Vajramani is a smart guy who takes his work seriously. He doesn't regard it as a dead-end job, but as an opportunity he needs to make the most of. He's unfailingly polite to the customers (even the many who are rude to him), finds things to do during the downtime, and runs the place efficiently. He's also pretty observant; not much that goes on in or around the store escapes his notice. The store's owner wishes he had half a dozen more like Vajramani.

QUICKCORNER



"Officer, I must insist that you arrest those two young men and take them away from my store. They are selling drugs."

"I'm sorry, Mr.... how do you pronounce your last name again, sir?"

"Kalanadhabhatala. My name is Vajramani Kalanadhabhatala."

"As I was saying, Mr. Candlebattle, I've got nothing to arrest them for. I searched them; they don't have any drugs on them."

"They are loitering!"

"Loitering? Oh, come on. With all the stuff going on down at the police station, you think I'm going to run someone in for loitering?"

"They are driving away my business! You must stop them."

"I'm sorry, sir, the HCPD doesn't get involved in economic matters. If those boys commit an actual crime, call us again and we'll come arrest them. But as long as they're not causing any public disturbance, we're going to leave them alone, and I suggest you do the same. Good evening."

The officer walked out the front door and toward his squad car. Glancing back over his shoulder to make sure the guy wasn't watching, he stepped over to where the two boys were standing. "Hey, you take care of it, man?" one of them asked.

"No problem, cough it up." One handshake later and fifty bucks changed hands with no one else the wiser. The officer turned around and went back to his car.

The older boy looked inside and gave the clerk the finger. "G'wan back home, Hindu bitch," he said to no one in particular.

— the racial politics of QuickCorner

You can see them all over the city, squatting on streetcorners from the depths of Freetown to the heights of Highlands: bright orange and blue signs, lots of gaudy posters in the windows, sometimes two gas pumps out front. The QuickCorner — yet another of America's answers to the question, "how can I get things done quicker?"

Better known in some circles as the "Stop 'n' Rob," QuickCorner provides all the basics someone needs to get through the day: magazines and newspapers; coffee; soft drinks; condoms; snacks; prepackaged sandwiches; beer; beef jerky; lottery tickets; smokes. The fact that QuickCorners have public restrooms makes them a godsend to the city's homeless community.

The exact layout of a QuickCorner depends on the shape of the building, but most of them follow more or less the same floorplan, as shown by the map on page 277. The front counter, where you'll find the clerk, cash register, and closed-circuit televisions used to monitor the premises (if any), is located just to the left as you enter. Right next to it is one of the magazine racks; this usually contains the higher-priced magazines, including any "adult" magazines the store carries.

Along the front wall of the store is a larger magazine rack holding a wide selection of magazines: sports weeklies; diet and beauty magazines; hot rod picture mags; you name it. Right next to that rack is a larger one containing miscellaneous toiletries and other goods — everything from kitchen cleanser, to diapers, to motor oil.

Behind the toiletries rack are two racks of food. Most of this is snack or fast food — bags of chips and pretzels, all sorts of candy, individually packaged toaster pastries, and so on. To wash all that down, go to the refrigerated drink container on the back wall and grab yourself a soda, iced tea, or bottled water.

If you'd prefer something hot to drink, try the coffee station near the front counter; it's got both caf and decaf. Next to it is a long row of toys and other such knickknacks. Older kids seeking amusement try the video game machines in the front corner — though in a lot of QuickCorners those things don't draw much business anymore, not since the advent of Nintendo and Xboxes.

The far back corner has two bathrooms. Most QuickCorners keep them reasonably clean, though a few have given up on that losing battle. If the condoms out front aren't quite your speed, the machines in the bathrooms might have what you're looking for.

The back quarter of a QuickCorner serves as a storeroom for pallets of product that hasn't sold yet. If the store has a back door (not all of them do), you'll find it here.

chapter seven:



GAMEMASTERING HUDSON CITY

HUDSON CITY CAMPAIGNING



SOME CAMPAIGNS

Here are a few more suggestions for types of campaigns you could run in Hudson City other than the typical Urban Abyss crimefighting or law enforcement game:

Hudson City: Fallen Angels:

The PCs are cops who got caught on the take. Given a second chance because of their otherwise stellar records, they're now back on the streets, trying to do the right thing and not give in to the temptations around them... and yet still get their jobs done.

Hudson City: La Vida Loca:

The PCs are part of one of the lesser Latinista gangs, trying to survive and make a name for themselves on the hard streets of Latin City.

Hudson City: Rat Bastards:

The PCs are criminals — typically a robbery crew or nascent gang of some sort — trying to make their mark on the Hudson City underworld and avoid the unpleasant attentions of cops, rivals, and vigilantes.

Hudson City: Wolf In The Fold:

The PCs (typically a small group, no more than three) are undercover cops infiltrating the mob. Can they do their job, week after week, without exposing themselves... or getting too friendly with the enemy?

Ready to run a game set in the Pearl City? Here are a few suggestions to help you get started, plan your game, and make the experience as fun as possible for you and your players.

CAMPAIGN TYPES

As it's presented in this book, Hudson City is primarily intended for Vigilante Crimefighting and Law Enforcement campaigns — it's a gritty modern city with a major crime problem that needs solving. For the most part things remain as "realistic" as they can get in an adventure gaming context, though a few characters have unusual, "weird," or paranormal abilities that don't break the setting's paradigm or "feel." But all this is not to say you can't use it for other types of *Dark Champions* campaigns; it works well for many of them.

CAPER

Since Capers Hero campaigns tend to involve a lot of travel — after all, targets for daring, high-profit robberies are few and far between — setting an entire Capers campaign in Hudson City might be implausible. But it's definitely possible for Capers Hero characters to visit Hudson City once, or over the course of a campaign several times, to pull off a robbery.

Here are three Capers Hero plot seeds involving Hudson City:

Home Run: Hudson City businessman Warren Stadt has one of the world's most valuable collections of baseball cards, the rarest of which he displays in museum-quality cases in one wing of his home in Irishtown. Plenty of private collectors would pay big money for the cards if the characters can get them....

The Caspian Star: A few years ago, Russian diamond miners dug up from the ground one of the largest uncut diamonds ever seen — over 220 carats. Christened the Caspian Star, it was eventually sold to a diamond merchant in Hudson City, who's already begun the process of cutting it into several large, brilliantly-faceted stones. Now's the time to steal it... but naturally, the security surrounding the dealer's business is intense. To complicate matters, the HCPD detective assigned to investigate the group's activities is distractingly attractive and sexy....

Turning Japanese: The Kleinmann Center's collection of *netsuke* figurines is a tempting target: they're small, easily carried, currently trendy, and

very valuable. But the Kleinmann Center is a tough nut to crack, not only because of its security but because there are so many people in it for so much of the day. Can the characters pull off the job?

DARK CHAMPIONS: THE ANIMATED SERIES

Hudson City works excellently as a setting for *Dark Champions: The Animated Series* campaigns — all you have to do is tone down the grittiness and lethality a bit, and perhaps inject a little more "weirdness" and comic book-style technology. See the *Dark Champions: The Animated Series* sub-genre book for a complete discussion of the subject, including sample campaigns and many plot seeds.

ESPIONAGE

Hudson City isn't exactly Berlin, London, Beirut, or Moscow, but there's more than enough political intrigue (not to mention industrial espionage) to make it a worthwhile destination or home for Espionage characters. Between the diplomats on Embassy Row, the technology companies and defense contractors working on military hardware, the threat of terrorism, and the large immigrant population, there's a lot of spying going on that PCs can get involved with.

Here are three Espionage plot seeds involving Hudson City:

Business Is War: A friend of one of the PCs owns a small tech company. He confides in the PC that his company has suffered some mysterious data losses and other difficulties lately — and what makes this all the more distressing is that it's interfering with the company's ability to complete a major defense contract by deadline. Suspecting espionage of some sort, the PCs have to investigate and resolve the situation... hopefully without getting the authorities involved and thus imperiling the company's ability to win future defense contracts.

The Enemy Of My Friend: The British prime minister is coming to the States, and his visit includes a stop in Hudson City. The PCs' agency has information suggesting that Islamic terrorists might try to kill the P.M. in revenge for his support of American activities in the Middle East... and it assigns the PCs to make sure no harm comes to the man.

Yellow And Red: The agency the PCs work for suspects that a diplomat at the Chinese embassy is a spymaster running a network of spies in the north-eastern U.S. They assign the PCs to follow him, investigate the situation in general, and take appropriate steps to protect American interests.

MONSTER HUNTER AND WEIRD CONSPIRACY

On the surface, Hudson City might not look like a good location for campaigns involving weirdness, the paranormal, or similar phenomena — it's a bit too "normal," so to speak. But weirdness isn't very weird without normalcy to contrast it against, is it? By tailoring Hudson City to the type of campaign you have in mind, it becomes an excellent venue for tracking down monstrous beings, strange aliens, people with unexplainable "powers," and other Things Man Was Not Meant To Know. For example, if you want to run a Monster Hunter campaign which pits the PCs against a secret worldwide culture of vampires and werewolves who prey on mankind, all you have to do is decide that many of the organized crime groups in Hudson City are actually fronts for the bloodsuckers or lycanthropes, and then turn the PCs loose to protect the city from them.

Here are three Monster Hunter/Weird Conspiracy plot seeds involving Hudson City:

Angles Of Attack: A series of grisly murders strikes Hudson City. The cops think there's a new serial killer on the loose, but the PCs suspect it's something else: a particular type of extra-dimensional horror that can "extrude" itself into this dimension through certain types of angles in architectural structures. They have to track it down (and, possibly, the cult that's helping it manifest in this world) and stop its depredations.

Pyromania: Several mysterious fires burn down buildings in Hudson City over the course of a month. The Fire Marshal suspects arson, but there's absolutely no proof of it. Could there be some sort of pyrokinetic on the loose?

Up In The Sky: A rash of UFO sightings occurs throughout Hudson City. UFOs are weird enough in themselves, but it's *very* odd to have sightings in a major urban area. Time for the PCs to figure out what's going on!

OTHER GENRES

Even though it's primarily intended for Dark Champions campaigns, you can adapt Hudson City as a setting for other genres and styles of play without too much trouble.

CHAMPIONS

As a modern-day city, Hudson City is an excellent setting for *Champions* campaigns. All you have to do is decide that true superpowers *do* exist in the city, and some people have them. Then adapt the city to cope with these strange beings in its midst. For example, you'll probably want to add a MARS (Metahuman Activities Response Squad) team to the HCPD, and may even need to define the city's policy toward superheroes — do they have "official relationships" with any of them, are they all outlaws, or something in between?

Assuming you want to maintain the grittiness and "realism" of Hudson City, your best bet for a "Pearl City Champions" campaign is probably either a street-level supers game or an Iron Age Champions game. See *Dark Champions*, pages 19-21, for more information.

CYBER HERO

Advance the Hudson City timeline fifty or sixty years and introduce cyberware, the Cybernet, and the cyberpunk aesthetic, and you've got the perfect setting for a *Cyber Hero* campaign. The Hudson City of Cyber Hero probably has a much less effective government; it exists, but it's toothless in the face of mega-corporations. Organized crime still exists, but the Mafia, the Russians, and just about everyone else have been eclipsed by the yakuza and the tongs, who struggle for supremacy on many battlefields.

FANTASY HERO

At first glance, Hudson City doesn't look like much of a place to run a Fantasy campaign. But looks can be deceiving.

First, if you're willing to do a little work, you can transform Hudson City into a typical Fantasy campaign city. The cars become horses and wagons, the skyscrapers towers, the mayor a king, the HCPD the City Guard, and organized crime various gangs and guilds seeking to dominate the city's underworld. In short, keep the landscape, but change everything into its Fantasy equivalent.

Second, if you want to stick to the modern day, Hudson City can become the canvas on which you paint an Urban Fantasy campaign. You may want to damp down on the grittiness, cruelty, corruption, and selfishness that seems to mark so much of what goes on in Hudson City (since too much of that ruins the "sense of wonder" that's so often important to Urban Fantasy), but otherwise you can keep things the same. In this sort of game, the Mystic World — ranging from fortunetellers, to minor mages who run occult bookshops, to faerie-folk and other magical beings lurking in the shadows — becomes the most important aspect of the city, eclipsing (but not obliterating) the usual concern

RAINART EISENBACH

6	STR	8	DEX
7	CON	8	BODY
18	INT	15	EGO
15	PRE	7	COM
2	PD	2	ED
1	SPD	2	REC
14	END	15	STUN

Abilities: Bribery 8-, Bureaucratics 12-, Concealment 13-, Deduction 15-, KS: Art History 11-, KS: Nazi Germany 14-, Language: English (fluent conversation; German is native); Stealth 11-, WF: Small Arms, 20 points' worth of Contacts, Money: Wealthy

Disadvantages: Age: 60+ (83); Hunted (various Nazi-hunting organizations); Psychological Limitation: Desperately Seeking Absolution; Social Limitation: Harmful Secret

Notes: A member of the partnership that owns the Moskowitz Building and other properties, Rainart Eisenbach gives the appearance of being a prosperous, if aged, businessman. He is that... but he's much more. Sixty years ago his name was Manfred Theissen, and he was commandant of the concentration camp at Ravensbruck. Under his command tens of thousands of Jews were herded into cages like animals, and eventually herded back out again and sent to the extermination camps at places like Sobibor and Auschwitz-Birkenau. Theissen escaped the fall of Nazi Germany via the Odessa route. In time he changed his name to "Rainart Eisenbach" and made his way to America, where he became a successful investor and financier. So well did he hide his secrets that not even his American wife knows of his past. But as he grew older, guilt gnawed at him like a cancer. He came to see that the Nazis were wrong.

Continued on next page

Continued from last page

and that he himself, as one of them, had to atone for the countless evils he had done.

Desperate to find some way to mitigate his sins, Eisenbach began performing all the good deeds he could set his hands to. But still he sees so much evil in the world around him, and wishes to find some way to end it as he believes his should have been ended so long ago. To that end, he might become the patron or sponsor of a group of high-minded crime-fighters....

with crime. You might even go so far as to replace street criminals with malign Unseelie faeries, ghosts and poltergeists, vampires, werewolves, and other, more subtle, adversaries.

NINJA HERO

A Ninja Hero campaign set in Hudson City would probably have to be of limited scope — the characters restrict themselves to Chinatown, using their fighting skills, Oriental magic, and other abilities to keep the streets safe and make life better for everyday folk. Even though Chinatown's only a small part of the overall city, there are lots of people living there and lots of strange things going on that might tempt PCs to get involved.

POST-APOCALYPTIC HERO

After society collapses, an urban area like Hudson City could become a mostly-abandoned wasteland where tribes of scavengers prowl through concrete canyons in search of "treasures"

that have survived while trying to avoid enemy tribes or mutant monsters. In short, it's an ideal setting for an urban post-apocalypse campaign — instead of organized crime, corrupt cops, and vigilantes, the PCs cope with hostile tribesmen, warlords who want to rule the entire city, and of course mutants. All you have to decide is how society fell: if it was a nuclear war, Hudson City might be a "rad zone" where no one can survive; if it was a plague, the entire city might be virtually intact.

PULP HERO

Hudson City was definitely around in the Twenties and Thirties, and even had its own masked mystery-man keeping the streets safe: the Raven (see page 11). If you want to base a Pulp Hero campaign around crimebusting in a specific city (as opposed to a "globetrotting adventure" campaign inspired by the likes of Doc Savage and Indiana Jones), Hudson City works perfectly — it provides the detail you need for verisimilitude, but doesn't tie you to a city like New York or London that might require a lot of research to use properly. Pull the city limits in a mile or two on all edges and make other changes appropriate to the period, and you're set — time for some two-fisted adventure!

STAR HERO

To use Hudson City in a Star Hero campaign, you'll probably have to transplant it to another planet, or even transform it into a gigantic space station or orbital mega-structure — most Science Fiction games don't limit themselves to a single city on Earth. Other than that, the changes are mainly cosmetic. Traditional organized crime groups become gangs and "families" of criminals from specific alien species, the HCPD becomes Station Security or the Galactic Police Patrol, and so forth. Plenty of Science Fiction stories focus more on crime and other "gritty" goings-on than on starship battles or exploring alien worlds, and your campaign will do the same.

VICTORIAN HERO

Since most city-based Victorian Hero campaigns take place in London, Hudson City might not make a good location for one. However, it can provide you with plenty of ideas and inspiration. You can transplant locations and people (with appropriate changes, of course) to the Greatest City In The World and make just as much use of them there as you could leaving them in their native turf.



THE GM'S VAULT



This section contains additional and/or secret information about Hudson City that's for the GM's eyes alone. *If you're playing in, or plan to play in, a campaign based on the Hudson City setting, do not read this section!!*

The GM's Vault is organized by chapter and page number. If the Vault doesn't comment on some part of the main text, it's usually safe to take what's written there as accurate (or as left for each GM's individual interpretation). As always, you're free to change anything in this book to suit your own preferences or campaign.

CHAPTER ONE

PAGE 8 — THE DELAWARE INDIANS

The local Indian tribes left the Hudson City region due to concern about European settlers. They could read the writing on the wall and see that the influx of "white-skinned men" wasn't going to end, so they packed up and moved to new lands west of the Delaware River...

...unless, of course, you prefer a more sinister explanation. For campaigns emphasizing horror, maybe a group of colonists slaughtered the Indians, leaving a host of phantoms that still haunts the area today. For mystic-oriented games, maybe a curse or a foretelling prompted the Indians to leave, and that curse or foretelling is about to come home to roost.

And of course, even if the Delaware left peacefully, there's always the possibility that an ancient Indian burial ground or two exists in the area....

PAGE 9 — THE HUDSON CITY RIOTS

Flint and the White Riders didn't start the fires in Hudson City. The standard historical view — that blacks involved in the riots set them — is correct.

PAGE 11 — THE FATE OF THE GREAT PULP HEROES

Captain Battle and the Science Police were killed by the Nazi mastermind Dr. Gerhardt Sprengen, who had developed a new, incredibly powerful germ warfare weapon that could easily have won the war for Germany. Battle and his men destroyed the weapon, and nearly killed Sprengen, but died in the resulting explosion.

The Scarlet Shadow did go to work for the Office of Strategic Services. He survived the war (though not without injuries), and retired from adventuring to become an industrial chemist after the war.

PAGE 13 — BLACK WHISPER II

Hudson City Police Department files describe the killing of Black Whisper II as a justified shooting. According to several witnesses, including another cop, the Whisper attacked Officer Ronald Jefferson when Jefferson attempted to apprehend him. There's no evidence to indicate that the shooting was, in fact, a murder. Jefferson and his partner took money from several street gangs to "remove" the Black Whisper. Jefferson's partner and all of the gangstas involved are now dead; the only one who knows the truth is Jefferson himself, who has worked as a construction manager since being convicted of taking bribes.

CHAPTER TWO

PAGE 21 — BENEATH THE CITY

The ground beneath Hudson City holds plenty of other surprises for the explorer (including kids looking for a thrill, vigilantes and criminals seeking new hideouts or secret bases, and engineers in search of leaks or other problems). A network of old pneumatic tubes dating from the late Teens still exists, though it hasn't seen much use since World War II days. Some of the turn-of-the-century experimental pneumatic subway tunnels still exist on the Northside, though they're not marked on any official map. Here and there are subway stations, abandoned and sealed off because they were too small for the newer, larger subway cars. And over in east Blackbridge, a little south of 12th Avenue, there are a few blocks of a six-lane underground highway system that a private firm started building back in the late Fifties and early Sixties, but eventually abandoned when the company went bankrupt.

PAGE 23 — JAMES STEFONELLI

Stefonelli was murdered by Paul "Paulie G" Giametti, a Verontese soldier with interests in a Verontese-controlled waste removal company. The public suspicion — that the killing was a way of protecting Mafia "turf" — is absolutely correct. Anyone else who tries to break La Cosa Nostra's stranglehold on private waste disposal will get the same treatment.

PAGE 23 — THE HUDSON CITY LANDFILL

To say that the Landfill now meets EPA standards is not entirely correct. It's operated in a safer fashion than before, but officials in charge of the facility bribe EPA inspectors so they don't have to spend the tens of millions of dollars needed to

ALBERT KREBS

10	STR	15	DEX
12	CON	10	BODY
16	INT	10	EGO
15	PRE	8	COM
4	PD	3	ED
3	SPD	4	REC
24	END	21	STUN

Abilities: Combat Driving 8-, Concealment 12-, Demolitions 12-, Electronics 8-, KS: Fences 12-, KS: Thieves And Thieving 11-, Lock-picking 12-, Mechanics 8-, Security Systems 12-, Stealth 12-, Streetwise 12-, WF: Small Arms

Disadvantages: Social Limitation: Criminal Record

Notes: Albert Krebs used to lead a crew of hard-core robbers and hijackers who worked all up and down the Eastern Seaboard, including frequent hits in Hudson City. But six years ago the feds caught up to them after a bank job in Massachusetts went sour, and how he's pulling a 10-to-life stretch in federal prison. He's currently incarcerated in FCI: Farmingdale, about 40 miles from Hudson City. If the cops need a little advice about a job or a crew, he might be willing to cooperate, provided he gets a significant sentence reduction and no one learns he's a rat.

TOM SIMMS

9 STR	13 DEX
10 CON	8 BODY
11 INT	10 EGO
13 PRE	10 COM
2 PD	2 ED
2 SPD	4 REC
20 END	18 STUN

Abilities: Combat Driving 8-, Computer Programming 8-, Forgery (Documents) 14-, Gambling (Sports Betting) 11-, PS: Paper Artist 14-, PS: Printing 11-, Seduction 8-, Streetwise 12-, 10 Deep Covers, Fringe Benefits: Press Pass, International Driver's License, Passport

Disadvantages: Social Limitation: Criminal Record

Notes: Tom Simms is a "paper artist" — a forger who specializes in creating false documentation. Whatever you need, from a phony driver's license to a passport good enough to fool any Customs agent in the world, Simms can make it for you... if you can meet his price. He only works for people he trusts, and that usually means getting a rock-solid referral from an existing customer (which is about the only way someone could find him anyway). A somewhat paranoid individual, he's used his skills to set up ten elaborate false identities for himself, any one of which he can vanish into with just a few minutes' preparation.

upgrade the Landfill — or worse, the hundreds of millions required to build a new one. The Landfill continues to pollute the nearby area, though at a slower pace than before.

PAGE 24 — PAUL WILSON

The reports of Wilson's honesty are well-founded: he's virtually unbribeable. He tries to instill the same spirit in his underlings, but some of them are happy to take money on the side to let drugs or other things "slip through" onto a plane. The PLRL bomb (which did exist) wasn't one of these, though — not even the most callow Customs agent would knowingly allow something like that on a plane for any amount of money. It was snuck on board without Customs's knowledge.

PAGE 30 — THE HUDSON CITY STOCK EXCHANGE

A license to be a broker on the HCSE floor is a 1-point Fringe Benefit, but characters can't get it simply by forking over a Character Point — they have to justify it during character creation or game play, since the number of licenses is limited and they're in *very* high demand. A character has to have a lot of influence, or work for a company that does, to get one of the coveted licenses.

A skilled computer operator with some knowledge of high finance who could gain access to the HCSE's sophisticated financial transfer computers could steal billions of electronic dollars in a matter of minutes. However, the computers are *heavily* secured (minimum of -10 to the Computer Programming roll... and of course the computer has Computer Programming and Security Systems with which to protect itself).

PAGE 31 — IAN MCANDREWS

Ian McAndrews is not the simple servant he seems to be. In the Sixties and Seventies he was an agent for British intelligence... and a double agent for the KGB. He escaped from the UK just days before his superiors discovered his treachery. After hiding out in South America for several years, he moved to Hudson City and became a concierge at the Stewart Regency, eventually working his way up to head. He considers this "hiding in plain sight," since though it's a rather public job he's changed his hair and facial hair so that he doesn't look much like he used to. He has the Disadvantage *Social Limitation: Harmful Secret* in addition to his Psychological Limitation.

PAGE 31 — ACES HIGH

Aces High has a "silent partner" who owns most of the business through various front companies: Card Shark. There's a secret room in the basement, its door cleverly concealed behind some "boxes of bottles of whiskey." Luxuriously furnished, the room is an illegal casino where Card Shark's flunkies deal out the cards and rake in the profits from well-heeled gamblers. Scantly-clad "waitresses" keep the gamblers' drinks full and their minds on things other than their cards.

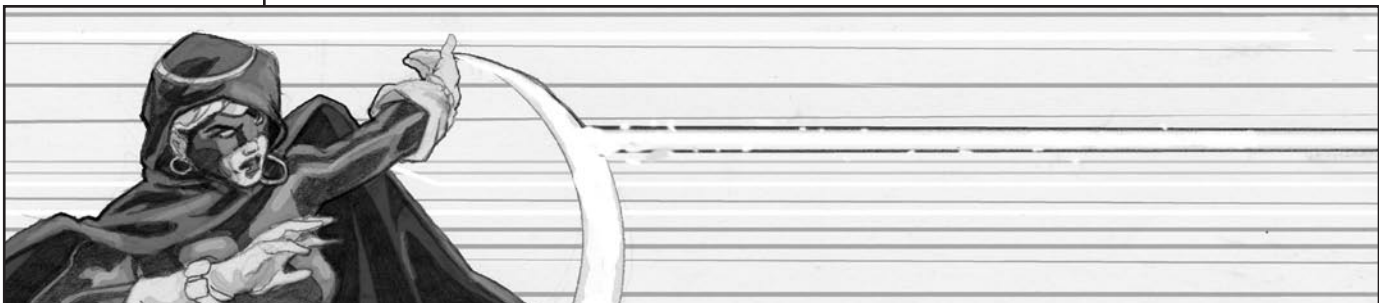
PAGE 32 — SATIN ANGELS

For most members — those with black card-keys — Satin Angels is just what it seems: an upscale adult club with beautiful employees. To "special" members with a *gold* card-key, it's something more: a high-class brothel. Gold members can have their pick of the girls for the evening. Though the prices are extremely high (far higher than most places on the Strip, since after all Satin Angels is both more elegant and safer), the management is quite willing to accommodate "unusual" requests such as threesomes, foursomes, B&D, S&M, and just about anything else a client can think of that won't permanently hurt the girls.

PAGE 33 — ANGELO CAMPANARO

The rumors that Campanaro still runs his crew from jail are true — between phone calls and frequent visits from relatives and associates, it's not that hard to stay on top of things, even from Stewartsburg Penitentiary. Plus, he has the help of his wife Maria, who keeps a close eye on things in his absence... much to the annoyance of some of his more traditional-minded colleagues, who don't like having a woman involved in their business in any way.

The Marcelli schemes in the area are mostly garden-variety Mafia activities: domination and exploitation of unions; stealing from ships and warehouses; control of service industries related to local businesses. But its scheme in the Shipyards is both more creative and highly profitable. A decade or so ago, a couple of the smaller shipbuilding firms got into financial trouble and borrowed money from Marcelli loansharks. That was all the in the Marcellis needed, and soon they were running both firms. Through their union connections, the Marcellis were able to grow their own shipbuild-



ing businesses at the expense of their rivals. Once they were in a position to compete fairly, they made it known that they'd deeply undercut their rivals... unless each rival was willing to pony up a hefty annual "fee" to keep things fair. Sensing the inevitable, the other shipbuilders went along with the arrangement — especially after the Marcellis killed one of them, a man named Bill Price, who stubbornly refused to give in. The shipbuilders have been paying through the nose ever since... but it's cheaper than cutting prices.

PAGE 33 — ANDY POLEVSKI

While he's not openly or greedily corrupt, Assistant Harbormaster Plevski is definitely amenable to a bribe in the right circumstances. He's got a solid working relationship with several Marcelli soldiers and associates — they pay him to turn a blind eye to some of their activities (and, if necessary, mislead the cops). He's hoping he can use his "connections" to make a play for the Harbormaster's job in a few years... though the truth is he'd have to become a lot more helpful to the Marcellis to deserve that kind of help.

PAGE 33 — THE SHIPYARDS

Although there's no *overt* military shipbuilding going on at the Shipyards, if you're running a campaign that involves military, espionage, or government matters you can easily have some of the businesses there working on secret, small-scale naval projects.

PAGE 35 — DARKANGEL

The speculation is correct: in her secret identity, Stacy Hunter, DarkAngel does live in Blackbridge. That's why she works so hard to keep the neighborhood safe. See the *Dark Champions: The Animated Series* subgenre book for more about DarkAngel.

PAGE 37 — COMRADE CAPITALISTS

Koslov and McBryde sometimes work as vigilantes, though it's not their preferred *modus operandi*. They've clashed with the Russian Mafia (which Koslov has some connections to) on several occasions, and gotten involved in various other matters that affected them or their clients. A rather cautious pair, they've taken advantage of renovations to their building (#3, the six-story building to the east) to make the place a little more secure without the building's owners being any the wiser. For example, the large planters in front of the building are now made of reinforced concrete so they function as a vehicle barrier.

PAGE 37 — THE JACKHAMMER

No one knows how, but the Jackhammer long ago became a favorite meeting place for mercenaries seeking work in Hudson City (see page 212 for more on mercenaries). Maybe it's because the Jackhammer is the last sort of place anyone would look for mercs and recruiters, or maybe some important recruiter really liked the place — but regardless, most weekends a merc or two is hanging around, hoping to make a business connection.

PAGE 37 — THE MIDNIGHT STAR

Oliver Younce runs a high-stakes poker game in the club's back room on Wednesday and Friday nights. Most of the players are regulars who kid around a lot more than most hard-core poker players do, but every game features a few new faces. Just about anyone can play, provided he has the money to buy in and Younce doesn't think he'll cause trouble.

PAGE 38 — CHINATOWN

Chinatown's reputation as a vice den back in the Twenties and Thirties was entirely deserved. What most Hudsonites don't know is that it's *still* deserved. While the main vice in Chinatown is gambling, there are more than a few carefully-hidden houses of prostitution — most of them staffed by girls from China who "indentured" themselves to the tongs in exchange for the money to leave their homeland, but now find themselves pressed into a career very different from the ones they were promised. Some of the brothels in Chinatown rival the most depraved places on the Strip... and more than one young girl's body has been quietly dumped into the Stewart River after an "enthusiastic" client took things a little too far.

PAGE 40 — GREAT WALL ORIENTAL GIFTS

Chu Shou-Ming's art and antique business isn't entirely aboveboard. Most of his pieces are legitimate objects legitimately obtained, but he occasionally deals with art thieves and smugglers when offered a particularly desirable piece. His friends in the tongs help him forge certificates of authenticity for the items.

PAGE 40 — BUDOKAN

Budokan is a *mizu shobai* ("water business," or front/money laundering operation) for a group of Japanese "businessmen" belonging to the Sawakirigumi yakuza gang (page 169). Many of the gang's local top leaders meet here frequently to socialize (and sometimes conduct business).

PAGE 42 — CARIBBEAN KARMA

Caribbean Karma is actually owned by the surviving remnants of the Calypso Dreamers posse (page 174) through a series of front corporations. They mostly try to keep it separate from their criminal dealings, but they do sell cocaine, crack, and other drugs there. The shootings were committed by rival gangs... and it's likely there'll be more such incidents in the future.

PAGE 42 — KRAZY KARL'S

Karl Jorgenson wasn't in the Rangers... that's just what he *tells* people. He served in the Army for a couple years, then got dishonorably discharged for selling Army weapons on the black market (his superiors hushed it up and didn't hold a court-martial for fear of the bad publicity). He drifted into the Mercenary World and spent nearly 20 years as a soldier of fortune. His contacts in the Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World and the Espionage World are extensive, and his bar is a place where mercs looking for work come to meet recruiters — and of course Karl gets a "finder's fee" from each hire.

SING HO

10	STR	8	DEX
10	CON	8	BODY
10	INT	8	EGO
13	PRE	8	COM
4	PD	2	ED
3	SPD	5	REC
20	END	20	STUN

Abilities: Martial Arts (Kung Fu — Martial Block, Martial Dodge, Martial Grab, Martial Strike), Bribery 12-, Bureaucratics 8-, Gambling (Dice Games) 11-, KS: Hudson City Tongs 13-, Language: English (fluent conversation; Cantonese is Native), PS: Grocer 11-, Streetwise 12-, WF: Common Martial Arts Weapons, Small Arms, Money: Well Off

Disadvantages: Hunted (Watched by HCPD Organized Crime Bureau); Social Limitation: Subject To Orders

Notes: Sing Ho owns and operates a small but profitable grocery store in Chinatown. He carries mostly Asian foodstuffs, but with a reasonable selection of American foods that his customers like. To all intents and purposes, he seems like an ordinary member of the Chinatown community — friendly, hardworking, always looking for another way to make a buck. But he's a member of the On At-Zhang tong, which gives him an edge both socially and in business. His activities for the tong include storing some drugs and other contraband in concealed areas in his storeroom, and helping with some gambling rackets.

Sing Ho's family — his wife and four children — all help him run the store. Together with his mother and aunt, they live in some rooms above the store.



PAGE 45 — THE COPPER SAMOVAR

The owner of the Samovar, a shadowy Russian emigre named Dominik Gromov, has connections to Endgame's Organizatsiya gang. He sometimes uses his shipments of authentic Russian furnishings and art to smuggle over drugs or women from Russia.

PAGE 47 — LARDNER'S DRUGSTORE

Arthur Lardner has been padding his retirement account by selling prescription drugs illegally to drug abusers and unscrupulous doctors. When he's got a big enough nest egg, he plans to sell the pharmacy and move to Florida.

PAGE 47 — HOG HEAVEN

Despite the Police Department's suspicions, there's nothing going on at Hog Heaven. The patrons may plot their own schemes in the darkened booths or over a game of pool, but the bar itself remains strictly neutral in the conflicts and crimes committed by the area's outlaw biker gangs. Walt Jasons is a gun aficionado and amateur philosopher, but he's no criminal.

PAGE 49 — CLUB TWENTY

The owners of Club Twenty — a married couple named Gary and Janice Halman — do more than just provide a place for the college kids to dance. They also supply Ecstasy and other designer drugs to students, and have been known to bring hookers down from the Strip for fraternity parties. Their own sexual proclivities are somewhat unusual, and a time or two they've plied a college girl with "date rape" drugs so they could have their way with her.

PAGE 52 — MT. ZION BAPTIST CHURCH

The exact cause of the 1996 fire is left to your fiendish imagination. It's entirely possible that it was just faulty wiring... but if you have a scenario idea in mind, nearly anyone (or anything) could be to blame.

PAGE 53 — THE PARADISE CLUB

Buckshot is more than just a favored customer at the Club — he's secretly part owner. He's using it to size up some of his gang rivals, gathering information about them and sometimes even trying to get one of his women close to them. And the usual perks of owning a sex club certainly aren't lost on him.

PAGE 56 — GUILFORD

It's true that Guilford has little in the way of street crime — but it's not crime-free. The Mafia has its greedy fingers in quite a few Guilford pies, such as trucking firms near Kurtland Boulevard, concessions and other businesses connected with the Stadium, and various companies to which it's loaned money or established other ties. Many Guilford residents would be shocked to discover just how much is really going on in their neighborhood behind the scenes.

PAGE 57 — THE JUNCTION

Gino "the Stick" Carbelli, a soldier in the Scattucci family, secretly has a controlling interest in the Junction. He uses the place both to launder money and to sell small quantities of drugs to HCU students. If he ever thinks the cops are getting too close to him, he plans to run up huge beer and food orders from his distributors, sell what he gets cheap on the black market, torch the place for the insurance money, and disappear before the distributors can catch up to him.

PAGE 58 — CHEROKEE TOWER

Though it's only been hinted at in a few newspaper stories, the corruption and fraud related to the Cherokee Tower renovations is staggering. Not only was money lavishly spread around to get the permits for the work without any fuss, but the Mafia-dominated construction firms that did most of the work skimmed off a lot of money during the project. If the situation became public, it would embarrass Cherokee Bank and lead to indictments against several city officials.

PAGE 58 — FLAG NATIONAL BANK BUILDING

As the headquarters of a bank that does a lot of consumer business, the Flag Building stockpiles cash every Friday for shipment to its local branches to cover paychecks. Given that there's a subway line running right underneath the building, a gang of clever thieves who timed things just right might be able to steal millions of dollars and get away without having to take to the streets.

PAGE 59 — FACES

Unbeknownst to even the Back Room members, Faces is largely owned by the mysterious international assassin Timothy G. Gersh. It's a good way for him to launder some of his earnings, and the Back Room gives him a secure place to meet prospective "clients" on his home turf.

PAGE 61 — CLUB IRISH

The bartenders at Club Irish are more than happy to supply a little Ecstasy or other designer drugs to the club's patrons... for the right fee, of course. They're used to accommodating "unusual" requests from spoiled rich kids, since that means big tips.

PAGE 65 — CLUB AZTEC

Club Aztec is a legitimate business, but it's also a front for less scrupulous doings. A flamboyant Mexican cartel leader who calls himself El Azteca ("the Aztec," see page 165) built it both as a way to launder drug profits and as his toehold in the Hudson City market. The Los Toros, who work for/with him, spend a lot of time here.

PAGE 70 — VIVA ITALIANA

Unbeknownst to the authorities, Mickey "Numbers" Tosconi, an influential *caporegima* in the Morelli crime family, owns half of this restaurant. He eats there frequently at a dark table in the back where most of the patrons can't see him.

Charles Harmon owns the other half of the restaurant. His rumored connections to the Mafia aren't just rumors; he's been associated with the Morellis for decades. He has the Social Limitation *Harmful Secret*.

PAGE 71 — HORACE OAKLEY

The text notes that Oakley "claimed to" have made his money selling cotton and indigo. That's probably true... but if you prefer, he might actually have earned it in some less ordinary, more scenario-inspiring way. In a mystic-oriented campaign, maybe he was a cruel slave-trader, and the evil of his deeds has left a taint and curse on his former property in Hudson City. Or maybe he was a pirate whose wealth came from plundered gold, and the remains of his treasure lay buried somewhere beneath Mint Ridge!

PAGE 72 — DOLMAN'S CONFECTIONERS

One of Dolman's managers, Fred Warnecke, is a serial child abuser who uses the store as the linchpin of his crimes. He spots little girls he finds "appealing" when they come into Dolman's,

gets their addresses from their mothers' credit card slips and such, and then finds ways to kidnap them. If necessary he uses free candy to lure the girls into situations where he can prey upon them. He's also killed two of them who accidentally got too good a look at his face. If he keeps it up, it's only a matter of time before the police make the connection and catch him... but so far he's been pretty cautious and clever.

PAGE 74 — IRON CURTAIN IMPORTS

Alexandrov occasionally uses his contacts back home to buy Soviet weapons — up to and including things like tanks — on the black market. He then resells them to "special customers" (mercenary units, organized crime families, and the like) for a stiff markup (but still far less than they'd pay if they tried to buy direct on their own). He won't import any illegal goods into Hudson City, or transport them to his store, unless there's no other way to get them to the buyer.

PAGE 74 — LUKIN TOBACCONISTS

Selivan Lukin also smuggles in cigars from Cuba for a few of his wealthier clients. As Hudson City crimes go, it's pretty pedestrian, but you never know when the BATF may stumble onto his doings and take offense.

PAGE 77 — CRIME ON THE STRIP

The rumors about occasionally "cleaning up" the main parts of the Strip are true. The people who own businesses along that part of the street have an informal organization they call the Redwine Avenue Protection Association. When they think it's necessary, they pool their money and pay the Morelli family to get rid of anyone who's causing problems: greedy thieves; anyone who uses violence on a "tourist" (as the locals call anyone who comes in to patronize the Strip); the homeless; too-persistent panhandlers; and the like. Usually a gang of Morelli thugs is enough to scare most of these people away, but more than one body of someone too disturbed, greedy, or desperate to heed the warnings has been dumped into the river off a North Elmview pier.

The Doom Fever posse has worked out an "arrangement" with the Redwine Avenue Protection Association to sell drugs along the Strip. The deal is that the posse keeps it low-key and inobvious — no clothes or cars that would look out of place, specific areas where they can sell — and the merchants in turn take a tiny cut and refer customers to them. So far it's worked to everyone's advantage.

PAGE 77 — FUNGI IN THE DARKNESS

In case you want to run adventures in the darker, more degenerate parts of North Elmview, here are descriptions of a few of the underground businesses there. They're not marked on the map so players can't learn about them and you can put them wherever you want. None of them advertise; they attract customers through word of mouth among the dregs of society, and often "vet" prospective customers carefully.

FISKE

15	STR	15	DEX
16	CON	13	BODY
15	INT	13	EGO
20	PRE	8	COM
6	PD	5	ED
3	SPD	6	REC
32	END	35	STUN

Abilities: Running +2" (8" total), Martial Arts (Shotokan Karate, +2 DCs), +1 with All Combat, +1 HTH, Breakfall 12-, Combat Driving 12-, Deduction 12-, CK: Hudson City 14-, Shadowing 13-, Stealth 13-, Streetwise 14-, WF: Small Arms, Common Martial Arts Weapons, 30 points' worth of Contacts in the Hudson City underworld, Reputation (bad-ass underworld courier, among the Hudson City underworld, +3/+3d6)

Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Gotta Make The Delivery; Social Limitation: Criminal Record

Notes: Sometimes people in the underworld need to make deliveries of stuff — money, important papers, that sort of thing — and they either can't or won't do it themselves. They've got to have a third party they can trust. In that situation, they usually turn to a proven underworld courier like Fiske.

Fiske works for anyone; he doesn't play favorites. He gets a commission of 25% of the value of whatever he's carrying, paid in advance. Once he accepts a contract, the goods will get through — on that you have his personal guarantee. And he's got a well-deserved rep in the underworld for living up to that guarantee.

JEFF MACILROY

9 STR 10 DEX
10 CON 8 BODY
9 INT 8 EGO
12 PRE 10 COM
3 PD 2 ED
2 SPD 4 REC
20 END 18 STUN

Abilities: Bribery 8-, Concealment 12-, Deduction 11-, KS: The Kiddie Porn World 13-, KS: The Vice World 13-, PS: Photography 11-, PS: Stockbroker 11-, Street-wise 8-, WF: Handguns, Money: Well Off

Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Child Abuser; Social Limitation: Harmful Secret

Notes: Jeff Macilroy and his wife Marcia look like an ordinary upper middle class suburban DINK couple: big detached home in Swan's Quarter, an SUV and a nice car in the garage, widescreen plasma TV in the living room, lots of weekend getaway trips to nearby resorts. Their neighbors would be shocked to discover that they don't use their basement to store things. Instead, they've got part of it tricked out to look like a child's playroom. They lure kids — never kids from the neighborhood, mind you — back to their house and down to the room, where they abuse them sexually and take pornographic pictures of them. The rest of the basement includes a darkroom for developing the film and a large walk-in safe where they store their pictures, videos, and other illegal pornographic material. Each picture or film is original; they don't make copies. Sometimes they get together with other couples like them and trade or sell pictures.

Cherry Pie: A live sex club in which young girls, mostly Thai or Russian and supposedly virgins, are raped onstage for the audience's amusement. Tapes of the evening's "performance" are available for a stiff fee.

Hotel: That's all the sign out front says. From the front, it looks like just another North Elmview hotel used by prostitutes and their johns. But in the back part, where the public doesn't go, there are rooms and studios set up for filming rape films, snuff films, and other illegal pornography. It also includes some locked, soundproofed rooms where the unwilling participants in these films are kept before the cameras start rolling.

The Marketplace: Not actually known by any particular name, "the Marketplace" is a group of pornography merchants who sell the sickest of the sick: snuff films, kiddie porno, rape videos, and more. It moves around from one abandoned building or unused backroom to another from month to month so the authorities can't find it. Locating it should take a few hours and a Street-wise roll at -5 or better; KS: The Vice World or the like is Complementary.

The Showroom: Run by a group of hardened Bosnian criminals who are veterans of Balkans warfare, the Showroom kidnaps beautiful young American women, dopes them up with drugs, and then sells them to wealthy foreigners for their "amusement." The Showroom is where the customers come to pick out their purchases.

PAGE 77 — THE EMPORIUM

The main text should more properly read "Cole wouldn't endanger his various businesses by stocking anything illegal in *the Emporium*." As discussed on page 219, an underground empire of child pornography and the like mirrors Cole's aboveground empire of smut. He's just very, very careful not to associate it with his legitimate operations any more than he has to.

PAGE 78 — THE BLUE DOOR

Instead of just having places in back where the girls can quickly prostitute themselves, the Blue Door is actually a full-blown brothel. The owners secretly converted the extensive basement, and a few rooms upstairs above the club floor, into rooms for the girls and their customers... and more than a few of those rooms are filled every night of the week.

PAGE 78 — JERICHO

HCPD detectives, and some private eyes, consider Jericho a good place to pick up information — several of the bartenders and other employees are more than willing to "snitch" in exchange for a few bills.

PAGE 80 — THE HUDSON CITY FLOWER MARKET

For a place that sells such beautiful wares, the Hudson City Flower Market seethes with underground animosity. Because time is of the essence,

the Flower Market's always been vulnerable to disruption, and the Verontese family took advantage of that to sell its "services" to the wholesalers. For a "small monthly emolument," the Veronteses ensure that nothing delays a wholesaler's shipments, his stall isn't vandalized or torched, and his customers aren't "persuaded" to buy elsewhere.

A few years ago, Speargun (page 179) upset the flower cart. Determined to fulfill his promise to take control of Hudson City's docklands, he made his move on the Flower Market. A few bloody months of fighting were all it took to drive the Verontese family out and take their place. The Veronteses want the Flower Market back (they still retain control of the rest of the Pierpoint waterfront), but so far Speargun's held on to what he took.

Michael "Tulips" DeAngelo is a soldier in the Verontese family. He should also have KS: Verontese Family 13-, KS: Mafia 11-, 12 more points' worth of Contacts in the Hudson City underworld, and Psychological Limitation: Brutal And Greedy.

PAGE 83 — BOB'S GUN RACK

Bob was a Marine sniper to about the same extent that FDR was a Republican. He's never been in the military — he's just a high-grade military history geek and gun nut who can recite enough facts, figures, and trivia about military hardware to choke an Army firearms maintenance officer. He's a pretty good shot on the targeting range, but whether that would carry over to a combat situation is another thing altogether. His big dream is to parlay his knowledge and stock of firearms (including a large personal collection with dozens of weapons, including many from the 1845-1945 period) into a job as a gun consultant on Hollywood movies.

PAGE 83 — HANNIGAN'S WATERFRONT DIVE

People who want to drink beer aren't the only sorts of customers Jake Hannigan has. Through no particular effort or connections of his own, the Waterfront Dive has become a meeting place for mercs looking for work, or who want to put together a team to tackle a particular job. Hannigan himself doesn't get anything out of it — in fact, he's barely aware of it — but the mercs drink plenty of beer, so he's content to let sleeping dogs lie.

PAGE 84 — MELISSA THOMASON

Melissa Thomason has the Disadvantages *Psychological Limitation: Compulsive Gambler* and *Social Limitation: Harmful Secret*, because she's not entirely the sweet and helpful lady she's described as being. She likes to play the ponies and the slots, and years ago she got in way over her head with Card Shark. He didn't really have much use for her, so he traded her to the yakuza in exchange for a future favor.

The yakuza knew *exactly* what to do with Melissa. She has access to a large number of girls with no societal connections... and the yakuza can use young Western women. When the orphanage

is ready to release a woman who's turning 18, sometimes Melissa alerts the yakuza, and they kidnap the girl. No one misses her — she's got no relatives and no job, and it's not exactly uncommon for former wards of the orphanage to disappear into the city and never be heard from again — and she soon enough ends up somewhere in Asia, the victim of a well-developed white slavery ring.

PAGE 92 — DEPUTY MAYOR EDWARD WILSON

As the text notes, Wilson is Mayor Umstead's long-time friend... but he's also a politician. If he saw a real chance to gain a major electoral office for himself — mayor, governor, senator, or the like — by turning on Umstead, there's a good chance he'd stab his friend in the back and go for the brass ring. But he might have a hard time rehabilitating himself in the eyes of many black power-brokers in the city, who dislike him a *lot* more than they've ever let on publicly.

PAGE 93 — HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR GEORGINA FLYNN

The rumors about Flynn being corrupt are completely untrue — and she'll sue anyone who repeats them publicly. She's pro-union because she thinks unions are a good thing.

PAGE 93 — DEPUTY MAYOR FOR COMMERCE KEVIN RAMIS

Ramis himself isn't corrupt — but his Deputy Assistant, George Mikowski, is. Mikowski gladly lines his pockets any way he can (provided he thinks he can get away with it), and often exaggerates the extent of his influence over Ramis and the Mayor to make himself look more important.

PAGE 93 — DEPUTY MAYOR FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WILLIAM FROWARD

Like George Mikowski, Froward is plenty corrupt. The two of them have “worked together” on a few schemes that brought them both plenty of moola, and Froward's considering ways to manipulate city politics to oust Kevin Ramis and let Mikowski take his job.

PAGE 93 — DIRECTOR OF PLANNING PHILIP TAGGART

Taggart's lying through his teeth. While he himself isn't particularly corrupt — he made his pile as a developer years ago and isn't willing to risk his public profile just to get more money — he knows full well that plenty of people in his depart-



ment are. Inspectors “overlook” code violations for a bribe... or threaten to note non-existent violations if not paid off. More than one planner has taken money from a contractor or developer to approve building plans that aren't as safe, efficient, or good for the city as they could reasonably be. Some long-time employees of the Planning Division have done quite well for themselves under the table, and no one in the system has anything to gain by rocking the boat. If Mayor Umstead found out about this, he'd blow a gasket — but the odds are he wouldn't be able to do much about it unless he were willing to gut the department and start over, which really isn't feasible in a city with as much development and construction going on as Hudson City.

PAGE 95 — COUNCILMAN JOSEPH RUGGIERO

The feds' suspicions about Ruggiero are correct: he takes just about any bribes he can, and he's “mobbed up” with the Colombians as well as the Mafia. Only the constituents for whom he's shoveled up so much porkbarrel money could possibly like this repellent man.

PAGE 95 — COUNCILMAN WILLIAM ZOGBY

Although he's currently married, Zogby keeps a mistress in a nice Westhurst apartment, and also is a “regular” with several of the prettier and less inhibited girls on the Strip. It's only a matter of time before he does something so scandalous, or so deadly, that it ruins his career.

JUNGLE DOG

10 STR	12 DEX
10 CON	8 BODY
10 INT	10 EGO
13 PRE	10 COM
4 PD	3 ED
2 SPD	4 REC
20 END	18 STUN

Abilities: Bribery 8-, Combat Driving 11-, Electronics 8-, Forgery (Automotive Documentation) 11-, KS: Automobiles 14-, Lockpicking 11-, Mechanics 13-, PS: Auto Mechanic 13-, PS: Car Thief 13-, Streetwise 12-, Fringe Benefit: Membership (Strad's gang)

Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Loves Fine Cars; Social Limitation: Criminal Record

Notes: Jungle Dog (real name: Joaquim Harris) belongs to Strad's organization. He runs a chop shop for Strad where he cuts up cars for parts, repaints stolen cars for resale, and forges automobile documentation. He does the same sort of work "on the side" for friends, provided they're not enemies of Strad's. His knowledge of automobiles is encyclopedic, his appreciation for a fine automotive machine deep and true.

PAGE 96 — TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

The Commission's reputation for corruption is well-deserved, though Commissioner Snodgrass himself is not corrupt (or at least, not yet). In addition to the illegal acts described in the main text, the Mafia exerts a lot of control over various roadworkers' unions and uses that influence to skim money from roadwork projects. As a result, getting even the smallest new road built in Hudson City is an enormously expensive proposition; the odds of the city ever building something like Kurtland Boulevard or the Coastal Parkway again are virtually nil.

PAGE 97 — PAUL MCCLENDON

McClendon remains very much in the Mafia's pocket. He often uses his influence behind the scenes on behalf of various mobsters, and most of his "business consulting" work is for firms owned or dominated by La Cosa Nostra. He'd like to run for office again, but overcoming his negative reputation would be difficult at best.

PAGE 100 — CARIDAD MONTALVÁN

There's no denying Montalván's devotion to her constituents, or her genuine desire to help them and look out for their interests. However, her judgment in other matters is questionable. She's friends with several prominent Latin City residents whose money allegedly comes from the cocaine trade, and has had an on-again-off-again relationship with a local man who's now serving prison time for drug possession. There have been no allegations that she's involved in the drug trade personally, but she has pulled strings to help some of these "prominent" voters out with various matters.

PAGE 100 — LAHAB AL-BAKIYAH

Al-Bakiyah is an Iranian spy; he should also have the Disadvantage *Social Limitation: Secret Identity* to reflect this. Since 9/11, he's had to curtail his activities to avoid making the FBI even more suspicious of him than it already is, but he hopes that will change soon.

CHAPTER THREE**PAGE 105 — PATRICIA EISENHART**

Patricia Eisenhart is much more intelligent than the average Hudsonite or station manager realizes. She's tired of her current job and wants to become the full-time anchor — a move which could definitely improve the station's standing, if only the managers could see past their dismissal of her. She might be tempted to try something risky or unusual to get their attention.

PAGE 108 — FRANK KEATON

The rumors that Keaton provides information to vigilantes are absolutely correct. But he only does so on a *quid pro quo* basis — he expects information from them in return, and possibly an exclusive on what they do with the information he provides (if he thinks the outcome will be particularly newsworthy). He makes a great Contact for PCs; he costs +2 points for "very useful Skills or resources" and +1 point for "significant Contacts of his own" (total +3 Character Points).

PAGE 109 — AMUSEMENT PARKS

Wicked GMs should remember that amusement parks and similar places are good locations for terrorist attacks, kidnappings, bombings, and the like: they're filled with crowds of people in search of innocent American fun (making them a tempting target for anti-American fanatics) and generally have lax security. You can find a map for an entire amusement park in Chapter Three of *Champions Battlegrounds*, though you may want to change the names and themes of some of the rides to better suit the world of Dark Champions.

PAGE 109 — CARNIVAL WORLD

Park officials have gone to great lengths to conceal this problem, but in recent years Carnival World has suffered a rash of kidnappings. One or two clearly seem to relate to child custody disputes between divorced parents, but the rest are unexplained, and none have been solved by the police. Most are committed by people who want to use the children for child pornography and prostitution; a few kids were taken by psychotic individuals who wanted a child to raise "of their very own."

PAGE 110 — KRISTEN MCCULLEN

McCullen's falling-out with the Symphony had to do with her mild drug habit — mainly marijuana, very occasionally heroin. She's not addicted yet, but it's only a matter of time. It's possible that the right person could turn her back to the light, but getting close to her is going to be tough due to her sometimes waspish temper.

PAGE 110 — THE LANDAUER GALLERIES

Herman Landauer IV, the reclusive, secretive owner of the Landauer Galleries, is himself an accomplished painter... and smuggler, and forger. Most of his company's business is entirely aboveboard, but sometimes he does "favors" for his wealthier clients that involve illegal activity. He knows the art *demimonde* very well, and has even advised the FBI or other law enforcement organizations in the past.

PAGE 112 — LEGALIZED GAMBLING

The *real* reason the idea of legalized gambling never makes any headway is that the people with a major interest in illegal gambling — Card Shark, the Mafia, the tongs, and others — pay hefty bribes to city officials to keep the issue dead. Legal gambling in the area would cut their profits significantly, and they can't allow that. Even if the idea made it past the "maybe" stage, the Mafia would use its control over the unions to make any actual construction work grind to a halt.

PAGE 113 — EMERALD

Gil Osterman does a little drug dealing from his back corner table — nothing heavy, just a little coke here and there to people he trusts. His real dream is to become a music promoter and producer, and he's always on the lookout for the one group that he thinks could catapult him into the big leagues.

PAGE 114 — BEVERLY FIORETTA

Fioretta definitely wants to sell the Storm — she honors the memory of her husband, but not enough to keep the team, given her general disinterest in sports. She'll let it go for a pretty reasonable price, but not cheaply.

PAGE 118 — DR. GINNY HERNANDEZ

The rumors about Dr. Hernandez are true: she did once work on nukes for the United States government. She's been out of that line of work for about ten years, so her knowledge is a little outdated, but that probably wouldn't matter to a terrorist or criminal who targeted her for kidnapping and interrogation.

PAGE 119 — BLOUNT PHARMACEUTICALS

Though there's no denying that Tobias Blount is a brilliant businessman, his success has as much to do with his criminal tendencies as his leadership. Embracing the Japanese saying "business is war" and the Eighties mantra "greed is good," Blount does whatever he must to make sure his company succeeds. If that means corporate espionage, his spies go out to steal competitors' secrets and sabotage their factories. If it means cutting deals with Colombian and Mexican cartels, and creating new "designer drugs," to get into a different end of the "pharmaceuticals" business, so be it. And if it means a particularly bothersome adversary has to be "eliminated," the Whale of Wall Street gives the order.

PAGE 120 — RANDOLPH STARR

Starr is no more likeable or honest than Tobias Blount. Although he's unquestionably a brilliant inventor, a lot of "his" discoveries are technologies he stole from other scientists through deception, blackmail, strong-arm tactics, or corporate espionage. To protect him from the many enemies he's made, he has two lines of defense: first, a corps of lawyers that make pit bulls look warm and cuddly; and two female bodyguards, nicknamed StarrLight and Starr-Bright, who accompany him everywhere he goes.

PAGE 120 — STRAKE INDUSTRIES INTERNATIONAL

The general allegations regarding SII are true. Michelangelo Strake really only cares about profit, and if obtaining profit means he has to pollute the environment, expose some of his employees to dangerous working conditions, or pay his workers in Third World countries substandard wages, so be it. Company publicists and attorneys can deal with the fallout while he's counting the money.

PAGE 121 — INTERNATIONAL FINANCE BANK

While it presents an innocent front to the world (and in fact the vast majority of its business is legal), the IFB is deeply involved with backing and laundering money for certain criminal organizations (such as Colombian cartels) and terrorist groups (including the PLRL). Its main concern is making money — *lots* of money — not where its clients get their money or what they do with it.

PAGE 121 — JAMES ROMAN

James Roman isn't an insider trader. He's just very skilled at picking stocks.

PAGE 122 — RUDOLPH THOMAS

Thomas is a skilled attorney, of that there's no doubt — but he's also a cheat. He's more interested in getting his clients off the hook than he is in conducting himself ethically — he'll cut corners, or even break the law, to help his clients if he has to. As far as he's concerned, the whole system is corrupt and oppressive, and it's his job to see that the tables are turned on the government every once in a while. He keeps a detailed diary of his work with the Mafia that he hides in his safe deposit box; its contents could break a bunch of Mafia operations wide open.

PAGE 123 — RHIALTO VIDEO

A few of the Rhialto Video outlets in Hudson City secretly deal in pornographic videos and other products they're not supposed to — in a few cases, even child porn. The employees sell this stuff out of the back after hours, and sometimes even hold "screening parties" in the store to drum up sales.

PAGE 124 — THE ESPIONAGE WORLD

There's more espionage going on in Hudson City than the main text alludes to — any city with so many people, companies, and money is bound to attract spies of one sort or another. In short, feel free to set any espionage-oriented adventure or *Danger International* campaign that you'd like in Hudson City. The accompanying sidebar has an example spy you can use.

PAGE 124 — THE MARTIAL WORLD

You can easily make just about any of the people or schools mentioned in this section an ally (or pawn) of organized crime, the focus of a fighting tournament storyline, or the source for all those pesky ninja that keep attacking the PCs. The text hints at this a bit here and there, and you can take those hints as truth if you prefer.

SAYYID EL-GHAZALI

10	STR	14	DEX
13	CON	13	BODY
18	INT	14	EGO
15	PRE	10	COM
5	PD	4	ED
3	SPD	5	REC
26	END	25	STUN

Abilities: Acting 12-, Bribery 8-, Bugging 8-, Bureaucrats 13-, Computer Programming 13-, Conversation 14-, Deduction 13-, Demolitions 13-, Forgery (Documents) 8-, High Society 12-, KS: The Espionage World 13-, KS: The Hudson City Diplomatic Scene 11-, KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 8-, KS: World Politics 11-, Language: English (fluent conversation, Arabic is Native), Persuasion 12-, Stealth 12-, Streetwise 12-, WF: Small Arms, Knives, PS: Spy 11-, Well-Connected and Contacts (20 points' worth in the Espionage and Political Worlds), Fringe Benefit: Diplomatic Immunity

75+ Disadvantages:

Distinctive Features: Arabic; Hunted (FBI Counter-Intelligence 8-), Psychological Limitation: Islamic Fundamentalist; Psychological Limitation: Hates America And The West; Social Limitation: Secret Identity (is a spy); Social Limitation: Subject To Orders

Notes: Sayyid el-Ghazali, an Arabic man in his early thirties, works in a high administrative position at the Syrian Embassy in Hudson City (and as such has full diplomatic immunity). Secretly he spies for the Syrian government. In his cover identity he is affable and politely talkative — the perfect diplomat — but secretly he hates all Westerners, particularly Americans, and loves the fact that he's working to bring about their downfall.

MASTER JAMES

7 STR	9 DEX
9 CON	14 BODY
10 INT	8 EGO
8 PRE	7 COM
2 PD	2 ED
1 SPD	3 REC
16 END	23 STUN

Abilities: Conversation 11-, KS: Astrology 11-, KS: Layman's Arcane And Occult Lore 13-, KS: The Tarot 11-, KS: World Religion And Mythology 11-, PS: Occultist 11-, PS: Tarot Reading 11-, Fringe Benefit: Membership (leader of mystic group/cult)

Disadvantages: Physical Limitation: Morbidly Obese; Social Limitation: Game Designers Have An Easier Time Getting A Date Than This Guy (-2 to all Interaction Skill rolls involving women)

Notes: "Master James" (real name: James Jessup) fancies himself a latter-day Aleister Crowley. Unfortunately for him, he's got too little brains, too little learning, way too little charisma, and about 250 too many pounds to qualify for the position. The best he's been able to do is to wheedle and bully his way to a position of leadership in a group of similar social rejects with a penchant for the occult. As "Arch-Magister" of the Circle of Esoteric Wisdom, he's entitled to command the group as it conducts its magical rituals and "seeks the true Lore of the Ages." The group is just cult-like enough that he can force the other members to do things for him, like "loan" him small amounts of money or occasionally sleep with him. In the right circumstances, it might become even worse, leading to Master James developing delusions of grandeur with possible tragic consequences.

PAGE 128 — MILITARY BASES

All of the military bases listed in the main text are fictional, for ease of game play. The GM is welcome to use nearby real-world bases, such as Fort Dix and Dover Air Force Base, if he prefers.

PAGE 128 — NATIONAL GUARD ARMORIES

To say that the armories are "guarded around the clock" is something of an exaggeration. They're usually guarded... but sometimes the guards take a little nap, or go for a bite to eat. After all, the place is locked up tighter than a drum, and everything in it is heavy and bulky — who could steal any of this stuff in the time it takes to grab a sandwich?

One of the guards at the Adams Street Armory has a little scam going. When he gets the chance he "borrows" a couple of guns, or some ammo — anything he can carry easily — and sells the stuff on the black market. When it comes time to take inventory, he just makes sure he's in charge of checking those sections, and he notes that everything's in place.

PAGE 128 — THE MERCENARY WORLD

As the text hints, mercs gather in Hudson City to hook up with prospective employers, form squads and teams, exchange information, and interact with others of their kind. Some of the favored locations for this are clubs and bars like Hannigan's (page 83), Krazy Karl's (page 42), Faces (page 59), and the Jackhammer (page 37).

A lot of mercenaries like to meet their employers at Devon Coliseum, which they consider "safe" because of the crowds and numerous avenues for escape. Usually the meetings and negotiations take place in corridors or other secluded areas, not in the arena itself, but it depends on personal preference: the mercenaries most likely to use this place are those with such a reputation for skill and professionalism that they can dictate the location of the meeting to prospective employers.

The House Of Cards, a brothel and underground casino in an "abandoned" warehouse in Eastwood run by Card Shark, is another popular meeting place. Since Card Shark often hires mercenaries himself, he finds it convenient to use one of his businesses as a mercenary market. Employers making deals there pay Card Shark a 2% commission, but are assured of complete security and the use of the House's "services."

PAGE 129 — THE MYSTIC WORLD

The extent, prevalence, power, and nature of the Mystic World in Hudson City depends on the type of campaign you're running. If it's a completely mundane game with nothing unusual or paranormal involved — such as many Vigilante Crimefighting and Law Enforcement campaigns — then the

Mystic World is nothing but crackpots, fakers, and delusional people. There are no such thing as true mystic powers, ghosts, or the like. On the other hand, some campaigns (such as Monster Hunter games, and many Weird Conspiracy games) presuppose that mystic people and beings *do* exist, or at least could. In that case you'll probably want to develop the Mystic World of Hudson City even further.

PAGE 129 — FATHER MIGUEL BRESSARD

Whether "Father Miguel" actually has Voodoo powers is up to the GM (see *The Ultimate Mystic*, pages 116-20, for more on Voodoo, including sample spells). His real name is Michel Brillard, and he was once one of the feared Tonton Macoute enforcers of the Duvalier regime in Haiti. When Baby Doc Duvalier fell, Brillard fled the country, finally ending up in Hudson City with a generous chunk of the Haitian national treasury to finance his new life. Figuring it was easier than working, he set himself up as a Voodoo priest (since he'd been one in Haiti previously).

PAGE 130 — THE RAVEN'S TAROT

The Raven did, in fact, use a special tarot deck of his own design possessing unique symbolism whose origin he never revealed. Upon his death, it passed into the hands of his widow — Irene Dubois, who fought crime at his side in the guise of the Velvet Phantom. She's still alive, though as of 2004 she's 91 years old (albeit a rather spry and feisty 91), and still has the Tarot. She lives by herself in a nice (almost luxurious) condominium in Worthington, and no one has any idea she was once a famous crimefighter.

PAGE 131 — WEITZMANN SYNAGOGUE

Some faculty members of the Weitzmann Hebrew Academy secretly raise money for, and provide other support to, Jewish terrorist organizations in the Middle East.

PAGE 132 — FIRST INTERNATIONAL CHURCH OF SATAN

The truth behind the Church of Satan depends on the type of campaign you're running. In games with no mystic or paranormal element, it's just another oddball religion, possibly one with some criminal connections. In Monster Hunter, Weird Conspiracy, and other games that could involve magical phenomena, you can make it a full-fledged agent of Evil that performs regular Black Masses involving all sorts of criminal activity.

PAGE 133 — DOCTOR ROBERT KEENAN

Despite his charity work, Dr. Keenan is nearly as unethical and greedy as his boss, Michelangelo Strake (pages 120, 211). He won't take unnecessary risks, but he gladly cuts corners when he feels he can get away with it and it won't affect the results of his work.

CHAPTER FOUR

PAGE 140 — CITYWIDE TASK FORCE

The rumors have more than a little truth to them — a lot of CTF cops are crooked. They use their relative freedom and authority to conspire with criminals, run criminal groups of their own, or skim money and drugs from busts for their own use. Allegations of CTF brutality also have grains of truth to them. But not *all* CTF detectives are bad seeds; most are damn good cops doing a damn good job.

PAGE 141 — KURT DENNAHY

Kurt Dennahy should also have *Social Limitation: Harmful Secret*, since he's corrupt. He takes money to lose or contaminate evidence, or sometimes to spoil an evidence test so it gives wrong or conclusive results. He also sells contraband from police property when he gets the chance.

PAGE 141 — NARCOTICS DIVISION

Narcotics detectives are notoriously corrupt. With all that money floating around the drug trade, it's no wonder so many of them choose to enrich themselves by taking bribes, stealing from dealers, working with a particular drug dealer in exchange for a cut of his profits, or the like. Not all Narcotics cops are on the take, but many people assume they all are.

PAGE 143 — THE ARMORY

Unbeknownst to even longtime Armory cops, there's a second entrance — from the sewers. When the subbasement was built long ago, the engineers encountered an old, disused sewer tunnel. Rather than make major changes to their plans, they simply bricked up the "entrance" and then plastered over the bricks.

PAGE 150 — JUDGE RANDOLPH HALSEY

Judge Halsey has developed a nice little "side business" taking money from defense attorneys to reduce their clients' traffic tickets and other minor offenses. For even more money he's willing to try to "throw his weight around" in other ways, but he doesn't promise any results.

PAGE 150 — JUDGE STERLING KELLER

If ever there was a man who didn't live up to his name, that man is Judge Sterling Keller. He's not only tilted way too far toward the defendants, he's about as dirty and corrupt as they come. Only luck and the assistance of powerful "friends" in the Mafia have allowed him to avoid impeachment and prosecution... so far. In the past he's consorted with organized crime figures, taken bribes to throw cases, and committed similar breaches of judicial ethics and the law.

PAGE 150 — ADRIAN MAZUREK

Some people in the Hudson City law enforcement and judicial community whisper that AUSA Mazurek and SAC Cozort have more than just a "working" relationship, "if you know what I mean." This is complete nonsense (they're both happily married), but in the male-dominated world of cops

and courts, two women working so closely together are bound to generate cruel rumors.

PAGE 154 — OPINIONS ON VIGILANTES

As the main text notes, the city's official position is anti-vigilante. Both Mayor Umstead and Commissioner Ringwald have a sneaking admiration for "heroic" vigilantes like DarkAngel, and wish they could support them publicly. But while they may not exactly quibble with the deaths of a bunch of hardened criminals, they regard the "lethal" vigilantes as a threat to the fabric of society and an evil almost as bad as the ones they fight.

Publicly, all high police officials support this position. However, plenty of them privately favor the "lethal" vigilantes a lot more than they let on. Some have developed informal working relationships with the crimefighters, exchanging information from time to time in their mutual interest.

PAGE 155 — LIBRA

As explained in Chapter Nine of *Dark Champions*, LIBRA is actually working with/for the Harbinger — though not quite as he might want it to. See that book for more information.

CHAPTER FIVE

PAGE 162 — THE VERONTESE FAMILY

Nick Travanti is *not* happy that Black Mike Calvino replaced him as Verontese *capo*. He planned to run the family from prison by proxy, only to have his hopes dashed by the ambitious and clever Calvino. Travanti's now scheming to try to get rid of Black Mike and take back over, and his machinations might lead to a civil war within the family, or open it up to further attack by the FBI.

The rumors about the Veronteses expanding their role in the drug market are true. Working with outlaw biker gangs they control, they're trying to create new designer drugs and other products they can market instead of just relying on the "old standbys."

Most of the Verontese family is behind Black Mike — he's a large, friendly man who inspires loyalty and enthusiasm. However, some of the men feel he's too laid back, and that the family should be more aggressive in expanding its territory (particularly now, while the Scatuccis and Torcones are fighting). The leader of the dissatisfied men is Harold "the Shark" Ruggiero, a family captain. If he sees an opportunity, Ruggiero may try to take over as the Verontese boss.

PAGE 163 — THE CHOY SING TONG

Han Fei, the tong's street secretary, thinks Charles Zhou is a poor Dragon Head — too cautious, too lacking in ambition. He believes the Choy Sing will come to ruin if it does not throw Zhou out and make himself chairman. He has tried to recruit followers to support a bid for power, but has had only moderate success so far.

JAKOB PONZI

6 STR	8 DEX
7 CON	8 BODY
13 INT	10 EGO
6 PRE	8 COM
2 PD	2 ED
1 SPD	3 REC
14 END	15 STUN

Abilities: Luck 2d6, Bribery 10-, Bureau-cratics 10-, Cramming, High Society 10-, KS: High Finance 14-, KS: Business And Financial Chicanery 14-, KS: Business Law 11-, KS: Tax Law 11-, KS: Mafia 11-, KS: Verontese Family Finances 14-, PS: Accounting 16-, PS: Play Violin 11-, Streetwise 8-, Fringe Benefits: License To Practice Accounting, Membership (Verontese family), Money: Well Off, Eidetic Memory, Lightning Calculator, Perfect Pitch

Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Abject Coward; Social Limitation: Subject To Orders

Notes: Jakob Ponzi is a mathematical genius and one of the country's most skillful under-world accountants. He knows just about all there is to know about "voodoo accounting," and has mental records of many Verontese family business crimes.

Ponzi is an utter coward, totally unwilling to fight or place himself in danger; if captured, he'll fold at the first threat. As a Jew, he can't be made, but still commands great respect in Mafia circles.



PAGE 163 — THE GOLDEN SERPENT ASSOCIATION

Who or what is the Golden One? That's a mystery left for you to resolve for your own campaign. "He" could be a woman, hiding her gender behind an enigmatic disguise because women aren't permitted in tongs. Or he could be a member of another tong secretly establishing a power base for himself, an infiltrator from another organized crime group, or the like.

The authorities' suspicions that the Golden Serpents are involved in art smuggling is correct. For this reason, the Golden Serpent Association often works with the Qi On tong, because its chairman, Mah Sze, uses them to help improve his art collection.

PAGE 166 — ENDGAME

Endgame's real name is Nikolai Rodion Kosturin. He was once a high-ranking field agent and assassin for the KGB... and a valuable double agent working for the CIA and FBI. He was no idealist — he sold his country out for money, not something as ephemeral and stupid as "democracy" or "liberty" — and his involvement with the American espionage effort was extensive and quite valuable. So far the FBI has treated him with kid gloves because it's concerned what might be revealed if Kosturin were subject to official investigation or media scrutiny.

PAGE 167 — RASPUTIN

Rasputin (real name: Dominik Vladimir Igo-rovich) is a powerful *vor v zakone* in Russia. Having become tired of the chaos that is modern Russia, he's decided to move to Hudson City. He already has people in place to prepare for his arrival, and part of that is to alert the underworld. The existing *pakhany* justifiably fear him; he's reputed to have killed more than a dozen men with his bare hands, and his power and wealth in Russia have been legendary for nearly two decades.

PAGE 169 — THE MIYAMIJI-KAI

The FBI is right. Eager for the profits the white slave trade brings, the Miyamiji-kai has set up several talent agencies and temporary-employment agencies in Hudson City to lure in unsuspecting Western women. The clan then either (a) keeps the women in Hudson City for use in illegal sex clubs it maintains in Little Tokyo, or (b) tricks the women into going to Japan, where they find themselves held captive and exploited in various unpleasant ways. The Miyamiji-kai has spent a lot of time, effort, and money to set up these organizations, and will go to great lengths to protect them.

Not all members of the Miyamiji-kai are pleased with the clan's operations beyond Japan. This "isolationist" faction would prefer to restrict gang activities to Japan and Southeast Asia. As yet, their resentment is not very strong, but a significant setback in American could fan the flames of their anger to the point where they would rebel.

PAGE 169 — THE SAWAKIRI-GUMI

Nakamura Hideo is interested in power, both criminal and political. He agreed to come to the United States for two reasons: first, his rivals are there, so he must be as well; second, the profits he can earn there will help him in Japan — ultimately he wants to return home and become the chief oyabun of the entire gumi. For these reasons, the Sawakiri-gumi in Hudson City avoids high-profile activities like white slavery and contract murder, concentrating instead on sure money-earners like gambling and gun smuggling.

PAGE 171 — THE SATANIC SKULLS

The Hudson City chapter of the Skulls recently achieved a real coup: two of its "women" have gotten jobs in the HCPD as Records Clerks. This gives the gang a way to check on prospective new members (and maybe even tamper with evidence if the circumstances are right).

PAGE 172 — SHANGO

See page 264 for more information on, and a character sheet for, Shango. While his first inclination is to fight his enemies, Shango realizes that might not be the best approach right now — he's got too many of them. He's trying to figure out a way to get one of the major gangs to join up with him. He thinks the Overlords would be ideal, assuming he could convince Buckshot to put his own ambitions on hold and become second fiddle to Shango himself...



PAGE 172 — STRAD

Strad — or Daniel Strademyer, to give his real name — was born in Georgia, not Hudson City. He got his start in the underworld after joining the Army; he set up a smuggling ring that stole weapons and military supplies and sold them on the black market. When the Army found out, he fled the base just seconds ahead of the MPs; the Army hushed up the whole incident for fear of bad publicity. Strademyer spent several years as a mercenary and adventurer, but after stumbling across a cache of conflict diamonds in central Africa, decided it was time to return to his homeland. But he didn't want to go back to rural Georgia. He was going to set himself up in style and become the power he always wanted to be. With his background, politics and business were out — the only thing suitable to his temperament was the underworld. With the help of a couple of merc buddies, he established himself as the Pearl City's newest crimelord... and the money's been rolling in ever since.

PAGE 175 — CARD SHARK

See pages 236-53 for complete details on Card Shark and his organization.

PAGE 178 — JANUS

The police want various members of Janus's gang for crimes ranging from murder and assault to theft and forgery. Janus himself has carefully avoided any sort of exposure that would give the police the means to identify him, so as yet the HCPD only knows that someone very intelligent is running "the Janus Gang"; they don't know who that person is or what crimes he has committed personally, only that he calls himself Janus.

PAGE 179 — THE KYPHOTIC MAN

THE KYPHOTIC MAN					
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes	
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [2]	
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5	
16	CON	12	12-		
10	BODY	0	11-		
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-	
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4	
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6	
6	COM	-2	10-		
5	PD	3		Total: 5 PD (0 rPD)	
4	ED	1		Total: 3 ED (0 rED)	
3	SPD	6		Phases: 4, 8, 12	
5	REC	0			
32	END	0			
23	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 53	

Movement: Running: 4"/8"

Cost Powers **END**

-4 *Has Difficulty Walking:* Running -2" (4" total)

Perks

- 1 Fringe Benefit: License To Practice Medicine
- 5 Money: Well Off
- 2 Reputation: underworld doctor and crimelord (in the Hudson City underworld) 14-, +2/+2d6

Talents

- 5 Eidetic Memory

Skills

- 3 Bribery 12-
- 3 Computer Programming 13-
- 3 Electronics 13-
- 3 High Society 12-
- 3 Inventor 13-
- 3 Mechanics 13-
- 3 Paramedics 13-
- 3 PS: Doctor 13-
- 3 Stealth 12-
- 3 Streetwise 12-
- 2 WF: Small Arms
- 3 Scholar
- 2 1) KS: Art History 13-
- 2 2) KS: History 13-
- 2 3) KS: Literature 13-
- 2 4) KS: Serial Killers 13-
- 3 Scientist
- 2 1) SS: Biology 13-
- 2 2) SS: Chemistry 13-
- 2 3) SS: Human Anatomy 13-
- 2 4) SS: Medicine 13-
- 2 5) SS: Physics 13-
- 2 6) SS: Psychology 13-

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Colt Detective	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	6	9	
Scalpel	+0	—	1 point	0	—	3	Can Be Thrown

Armor: None

Gear: Doctor's bag, including a selection of useful drugs

Clothing: Nice men's clothes, tailored for his unusual frame

Resource Points

- 0 Equipment Points: 60
- 10 Vehicle/Base Points: 30
- 10 Follower/Contact Points: 25
- 0 Miscellaneous Points: 0

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 87

Total Cost: 140

100+ Disadvantages

- 15 Distinctive Features: hunchback (Not Concealable; Noticed And Recognizable)
- 20 Hunted: HCPD 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Antisocial Personality Disorder (Very Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Intellectual Arrogance (Common, Strong)
- 5 Rivalry: Professional, with other Hudson City crimelords

Total Disadvantage Points: 175

Background/History: Edgar stubbed out his cigarette in the ashtray next to him. There were four other butts in there already, and he'd only been in the waiting room an hour. Having to sit and stew was unbearable.

It still didn't seem quite real — him and Elise, about to be parents. It hadn't really hit him until about an hour and a half ago, when the hospital called to say she'd gone into labor and been rushed to the ER. He cursed himself for not being there to take her, but there'd been so much to do at the office, he didn't dare take the time off. Now more than ever, he had to keep in Mr. Bostick's good graces.

He reached into his jacket pocket for another cigarette and realized the pack was empty. He got up and went to look for a cigarette machine to buy another pack. He spent fifteen minutes walking nervously up and down the hospital corridors, looking for one, until he realized the hospital probably didn't have them, what with that Surgeon General's warning and all. Dejectedly, he returned to the waiting room.

There was a nurse waiting for him there — an old battleaxe looking kind of nurse, a chunky woman in white with a sour look on her face. It wasn't exactly how he'd envisioned getting the news, but what the hell — any port in a storm. "Boy or girl?" he asked eagerly.

"It's a boy, Mr. Williams...."

Before she could continue, he threw his fist in the air and did a little dance, like he'd just scored the winning basket. A boy! Baseball, football, fishing!

"Mr. Williams, please restrain yourself. I need you to come with me, please."

He stopped celebrating. "Huh? Is there some problem? It's not Elise, is it? She's okay?"

"Your wife is fine, sir. Please follow me, Dr. Carver would like to talk to you."

Unsure why she was being so serious, Edgar followed her.

Doctor Carver was a younger doctor, with a short-trimmed black beard. When Edgar was

escorted into his office, he rose from his chair and extended his hand. "Good evening, Mr. Williams. I'm Dr. Carver," he said pleasantly.

"Edgar Williams," Edgar said, shaking it.

"What's going on? Is there something wrong with my son? The nurse wouldn't tell me anything."

"Please have a seat, Mr. Williams," the doctor said. Edgar sat down, feeling a little numb.

"Mr. Williams, your son's health is fine, but I'm afraid there are some... physical complications."

"What sort of 'complications'?"

"Well, there really isn't any gentle way to put this, Mr. Williams. Your son was born with certain deformities to his thoracic and cervical spine."

"In English?" Edgar said weakly.

"In layman's terms, Mr. Williams, your son is a hunchback."

Edgar felt dizzy all of a sudden. Little black spots appeared in front of his eyes. The doctor went on as if he didn't notice.

"As I said, there aren't any health problems — he doesn't have any sort of disease. It's just a physical deformity. It will affect his appearance, and maybe his ability to walk, run, or lie down, but that's all. Do you understand?"

Edgar nodded, unable to say anything.

"All right. If you like, I can take you to see your son now."

Edgar just shook his head. It was too much to take in. He couldn't look at him right now.

"Edgar! Guess what!" Elise's voice was ecstatic.

"What, honey?"

"Little Edgar's reading!"

"What? Elise, he's only three."

"I know, I know, but he's *reading*!"

"What did he read?"

"TV logos — 'The Merv Griffin Show,' things like that. Then I gave him a Dr. Seuss, and he read a couple of words in that, too."

"Okay, okay, he's reading then! Give him a copy of *War And Peace* next; maybe he can explain it to me when he's done, I never did understand it."

"Very funny. Listen, pick up a half-gallon of milk on your way home, okay?"

"Okay. See you about 5:45, then."

"Bye, honey."

"Bye."

Edgar first realized his son's mind wasn't quite right when the boy was eight years old. He saw Little Edgar sitting on the ground in the backyard, playing contentedly with something. He walked over to get a closer look. "What are you playing with, son?"

"Squirrel," Little Edgar said, not looking up.

Two steps later, Edgar was close enough to see what he was talking about, and it nearly made him vomit. It was a squirrel, all right — or it used to be. The skin across its stomach had been cut open and peeled back and pegged to the ground with sharpened twigs. Little Edgar's hands and the kitchen knife he had were red with blood.

"See, Daddy? That's the heart! And that's his stomach."

Too angry and frightened to speak, Edgar picked his son up roughly, grabbed the knife away from him, and marched him into the house and sent him up to his room. Little Edgar, confused and scared at the way his father was acting, burst into tears.

After he had buried the remains of the squirrel and washed off the knife so Elise wouldn't see it, Edgar threw up in the sink. He stood there with his head resting against the cool chrome of the faucet for a long, long time.

"You wanted to see us, Mr. Matthewson?"

"Ah, good afternoon, Mr. and Mrs. Williams. Please have a seat."

"Is Edgar in some kind of trouble again?" Elise asked worriedly.

"Well, yes, ma'am, he is."

"What happened this time?"

"Well, as I'm sure you know, the other children pick on Edgar a lot — with his back problem he's a natural target for that kind of abuse, unfortunately."

"We know," said Edgar.

"Well, today they were doing it again, out on the recess field. I don't know why, but this time something happened — Edgar fought back. He began beating one of the boys with a baseball bat."

Elise drew her breath in sharply.

"Was he hurt?" Edgar asked.

"The other boy, Billy Lowell, was taken to the hospital; he's got some broken ribs and contusions. Some of the other children jumped on Edgar, but

THE KYPHOTIC MAN PLOT SEEDS

A lot of wanted criminals have "disappeared" lately. The PCs get a tip that they've simply "gone underground" with the help of a little plastic surgery from the Kyphotic Man. They need to track the hunchbacked crimelord down and find out what's going on.

A strange epidemic strikes Hudson City. The PCs need to find the Kyphotic Man and get him to help cure the disease — and who knows, maybe he's the one who unleashed it on the city in the first place.

The Kyphotic Man captures the PCs and performs plastic surgery on them to give them all hunchbacks. He says that if they do what he wants them to, he'll reverse the process — otherwise they're stuck with them.



a teacher got to the scene before he suffered more than a few bruises. He's down in Detention Hall now."

Edgar stood up. "We'll take him home with us, Mr. Matthewson. I promise you he'll be severely punished for this. It won't happen again."

The principal looked a little nervous at the vehemence in Edgar's voice. "Well, Mr. Williams, do as you think best, but I believe the best thing for Edgar right now might be some counseling."

Edgar Williams, Jr. smiled. College had been ludicrously easy, and med school only marginally less so. Those frat-boys and their blonde girlfriends might laugh at him behind his back, his hunched-up back, but they were dolts, all of them. Let them have their beer and their cheap sex, he had something greater — knowledge. You could take everything all of them knew and add it all together, and it would only equal a fraction of the information in his finely-tuned brain. Now that he was done with medical school, he was going to get a job at a research hospital. While they went on about their boring, petty little lives, he was going to be *saving* lives, developing cures and new techniques. They'd read about him in the paper one day, and be sorry they laughed.

Or so Edgar thought. He was unable to find a job in a research hospital... or any hospital for that matter. What few administrators his appearance didn't put off, his arrogance did. Swallowing his pride, he began looking for lesser jobs, but no one he interviewed with would hire him. Defiantly, he opened his own practice in a tiny, run-down building in Hudson City. He was sure that once word of his skill got out, he'd have plenty of patients.

It didn't quite work out that way. In fact, he couldn't attract many patients at all. Edgar was close to despair, knowing financial ruin was near, when one night a man stumbled into his "clinic." He'd been shot in the shoulder. Expertly, Edgar removed the bullet and stitched up the wound. He knew the law required him to report any bullet wounds, but the man offered to pay him a cool if he kept his mouth shut. Edgar didn't even have to think about it.

After that, the word got around about the "doc who keeps quiet." Soon he had a patient or two every evening, all of them willing to pay him handsomely to fix their injuries and not tell the cops. He learned how to dispose of bodies without anyone finding out about it. He bought new medical equipment and began to turn a nice profit.

Opportunity walked into his office one night in the form of Vinnie Poletti, a Mafia hanger-on who figured he could set up his own gang. The Mafia got wise and sent someone to have a "talk" with Vinnie. Two of Vinnie's men brought him in; he was bleeding from major wounds in his stomach that would certainly prove fatal if not operated on. Edgar had the men bring Poletti into his little operating room and then told them to wait outside.

Instead of operating immediately, Edgar put on his surgical gown and sat back and waited a few

minutes while Poletti lay there and moaned in pain. Then he opened the door slightly, said he needed some help, and beckoned one of the men inside. Nervously the man came in, expecting to be asked to assist in the operation. Edgar grabbed him from behind and slit his throat with a scalpel before he could cry out. The warm, red blood sprayed all over the operating table and Vinnie Poletti, mixing with his own blood.

Edgar reached into the thug's jacket and pulled out his gun — and his silencer. Opening the door again, he shot the other gunman twice in the chest, then dragged his body inside where no one on the street might see it.

Edgar injected Poletti with a stimulant to keep him awake, then began interrogating him. After a couple of hours, Poletti was dead, and Edgar knew everything he'd known about the underworld. Using this information, Edgar took over what was left of Poletti's gang, recruited new men, and set himself up as a crimelord. Now *this* was something worth doing. Christening himself "the Kyphotic Man," Edgar fell into his new role with relish. After avoiding a few pitfalls, the Kyphotic Man has become a minor, but increasingly important, figure in the Hudson City underworld.

Personality/Motivation: Although intellectually gifted, the Kyphotic Man suffers from certain neurological abnormalities. These, combined with being raised by a father who could barely stand to look at him and a mother who pampered him out of subconscious guilt, have made his morals as twisted as his spine. He is a sociopath, but an unusual one in that he can clamp down on his anti-social tendencies just enough to function — at least a little — within mainstream society. Thus, he completed medical school, even though most sociopaths drift from one meaningless job to another. He can act quite cultured and urbane if necessary — though he can only keep the act up for so long before someone annoys him with their "stupidity."

The Kyphotic Man is evil and cruel, capable of engaging in the worst sorts of excesses to satisfy his cravings for power and knowledge. He has almost no interest in sex (what little exists he satisfies with the occasional prostitute or rape); rather, his mind is bent towards acquiring information and power. He'll take any steps he can to increase his power in the underworld, regardless of who he hurts or what he has to do, provided he can avoid putting himself in too much danger. He uses his knowledge of medicine and anatomy to commit the cruelest sorts of tortures upon those who offend him (or who simply attract his malefic attention), and his background in psychology to pick apart someone's psyche and find out what bothers him the most... and then refer to it again and again in conversation.

The Kyphotic Man's most noticeable trait is his towering intellectual vanity, which is apparent in even the most casual conversation. He thinks no one knows as much as he does, and that anyone who disagrees with him or cannot match him intellectually is a dolt. He uses his knowledge as a club to beat people down and make them feel inferior. He's quick to point out the errors in anything anyone says to him, and is quite

free with harsh, bitter insults. His vanity is even apparent in his *nom du crime*: any other crimelord would have called himself “the Hunchback,” or “Quasimodo” (in fact, his men *do* call him that), but not Williams — he had to pick something that sounded scientific, a name most people have to look up in the dictionary.

Quote: “No, no! You’re just too stupid to live; I’m surprised your parents didn’t have the sense to kill you when you were little — but then again, if they’re the ones that gave you your genes, they weren’t all that bright, either. [To henchman] Here, you! make yourself useful for once. Shoot him.”

Powers/Tactics: The Kyphotic Man fills several roles in the Hudson City underworld. First and foremost, he’s a crimelord — a minor one, perhaps, but a crimelord nonetheless. He competes with the likes of Charlemagne and Janus, and sometimes with organized criminal groups such as the Mafia. Second, he still performs services as an underworld doctor if the price is right (and it usually is; he’s as good as he claims to be). Third, he’s developed a sideline as a “professional crime planner” and/or gadget designer for other gangs for about 50% of the profits.

Despite his deformity, the Kyphotic Man is not wholly incapable of combat. He can shoot reasonably well, and is stronger than he looks. But he prefers to run rather than to fight if possible.

When appropriate, the Kyphotic Man usually has at least half a dozen thugs with him. Most of his thugs are at least competent, but sometimes he deliberately hires men who are stupid so he can insult them with big words and they won’t know what’s going on.

The Kyphotic Man often allies himself with Diomedes, another minor crimelord. The two of them quarrel incessantly, but nevertheless seem to work pretty well together.

Campaign Use: The Kyphotic Man is a crimelord with a bit of a twist. If you don’t need another crimelord in your game at the moment, fall back on his roles as underworld doctor, inventor, and planner. When the time is right, he can make his play for power and step into your underworld’s upper ranks.

To make the Kyphotic Man tougher, enhance his physical abilities to match his mental ones: increase his STR and SPD to represent maniacal fury; his PD and ED to represent the tolerance for pain he’s developed over the years. He generally doesn’t need weakening, since he’s not a combatant, but you can always decrease his Characteristics a bit.

The Kyphotic Man is a malevolent and imaginative Hunter. He rarely goes after his foe directly, preferring to use his intelligence and knowledge of psychology to play with his quarry’s mind and ruin his life before lowering the boom. It may take him a long time to get his revenge, but he never forgets a wrong done him.

Edgar Williams, Jr. has no criminal record. The police have not, as yet, connected him with the Kyphotic Man, of whom they’ve heard.

Appearance: The Kyphotic Man is an ugly little man in his early 30s. His hair is dirty blonde and

wispy. Due to his hunchback, he only stands a little over five feet tall; however, he can walk and run pretty well despite this, and does not need a cane. He usually dresses in typical men’s suits or (when performing illegal surgeries and such) doctor’s uniforms.

PAGE 179 — SPEARGUN

Speargun is Titos Spargiros, a former Navy SEAL who got his nickname when his commanders couldn’t pronounce his real surname properly. One of the most highly-skilled men the SEALs ever trained, he performed missions so secret that their existence, and his, was removed from military files. After receiving several reports of his increasing brutality and sadism, the Navy took him off front-line duty and assigned him a desk job.

Spargiros wasn’t about to put up with a desk job, so he went AWOL. That was when the Hudson City crimelord Card Shark contacted him and asked: how’d you like to put your skills to work making some *real* money? Spargiros bit, and the rest is as described in the main text.

Card Shark keeps the links between himself and Speargun *very* secret; not even his own lieutenants know what’s really going on. He wants Speargun to take over the Mafia’s lucrative “monopolies” along the waterfront and run the docks for his (Card Shark’s) own purposes — and if Speargun’s not cooperative enough, Card Shark can simply eliminate him when the time’s right.

PAGE 180 — VINCENT DUBOIS

Dubois is involved in a few somewhat shady arms deals, but nothing blatantly illegal (like knowingly selling military-grade weapons to street gangs). He might even be willing to provide vigilante PCs with some behind-the-scenes information about the arms trade to “clear his name” or harm one of his competitors.

PAGE 182 — CALIGULA

Caligula is deeply involved in all the crimes the police suspect him of. He goes to great lengths (and great expense) to keep that side of his business protected and secret, because he has no desire to go to prison. If anyone — cops, vigilantes, reporters — gets too close to his secrets, he won’t hesitate to take whatever steps are necessary to get rid of them.

PAGE 182 — CLEOPATRA

See page 221 for more information about Little Egypt, including Cleopatra’s character sheet.

PAGE 182 — ERNEST “KING” COLE

Cole’s front as some sort of post-modern Hugh Hefner conceals all sorts of rancid secrets, not the least of which is that he used to force his wife to act in pornographic videos. Although not a consumer of it, he trafficks in kiddie porn, not particularly caring about the lives he ruins in the process. He has a second mansion, in Thailand, where he keeps dozens of women in what amounts to sexual slavery for his own personal gratification (and sometimes that of his best clients). He comes

THE COLONEL

10	STR	14	DEX
12	CON	12	BODY
15	INT	11	EGO
16	PRE	8	COM
5	PD	4	ED
3	SPD	4	REC
24	END	23	STUN

Abilities: Martial Arts (Commando Training), Climbing 12-, Concealment 12-, AK: Africa 13-, AK: Central And South America 11-, CK: Hudson City 8-, KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 14-, KS: Military Science 11-, Paramedics 12-, PS: Mercenary 13-, PS: Merc Recruiter 11-, PS: Play Chess 11-, Streetwise 12-, Systems Operation 8-, Tactics 13-, WF: Small Arms, Grenade Launchers, Shoulder-Fired Weapons, Contacts (30 points’ worth, in the Mercenary World), Fringe Benefit: Concealed Weapon Permit

Disadvantages: Rivalry (Professional, with other mercenary recruiters)

Notes: If you’ve got an ear on the streets, you might hear about the Colonel. No one knows his name; they just call him by his rank. They say that back in the day, he was wherever the action was — Africa, mostly, but a few missions in Central America as well. But he’s older now, slower and weaker, so he’s taken to serving as a recruiter for mercs instead of a merc himself. You can sometimes find him in LeMastre Park, playing chess or checkers at those cement tables the city set up. He’s usually got his dog Dog with him. He won’t talk to just anybody, but if you can convince him you’re for real, that you won’t bring any heat down on him, and that he can make money off you, you’ll get his attention.

CHAPTER SIX

PAGE 184 — AVENUE OF THE ELMS

Electro's real name is Gerald McBradden. He's a distant cousin of the Bankhurst family and actually very wealthy — he just doesn't show it. Money means nothing to him; he gets more satisfaction out of life amusing himself and others with his art skills.

Here are three plot seeds for Avenue of the Elms:

The Devil's In The Details: Penny Dreadful has just robbed the Printer's Devil! The store isn't yet sure what she took, but desperately wants to get its valuable property back. A reward has even been offered. Can the PCs track down the larcenous literary lady and get the goods without destroying them in the process?

Pentacatta: Someone's stolen Marlon Tischman's Stradivarius violin. There are no signs of a break-in, no fingerprints, no damage to the safe, nothing. Who took it, and why?

There's A Fungus Among Us: An unidentified criminal sends a letter to the city, and all the Avenue merchants, threatening to unleash Dutch elm disease on the Avenue unless he's paid a million dollars. The PCs hear about the situation and have to resolve it before one of the city's most beloved landmarks is dead.

PAGE 186 — COLLINS GUNS

Eddie Collins is a Vietnam veteran, but he didn't go on any "special missions" to speak of. He just got a lot of in-the-field experience — enough to give him fodder for a lifetime of half-real, half-embellished/made up stories. Despite the fact that it's illegal, Eddie usually carries an unlicensed concealed handgun with him at all times... and of course his store has loaded guns hidden behind the counters as a further security precaution.

One of Collins's employees, a slightly scruffy-looking guy named Pete Waters, is crooked. He sometimes sells guns out the back door to gang kids and the like, then doctors the books so no one can tell. He can't do this often, since it would be too obvious, but he does it when he thinks he can get away with it.

Here are three plot seeds for Collins Guns:

The Armorer: One of the PCs develops Eddie Collins as a Contact (maybe he saves Collins's life or something). Eddie gets in touch and offers to keep the PC in guns and ammo for next to nothing as his way of "contributing to the war on crime." Is the offer legit, or part of some sting operation that Eddie's helping the police with?

Documentation: Eddie orders a batch of surplus training manuals from the Army. When they arrive, there's something else in the box — plans for some sort of new weapon system or something. He takes them home to study them... and the next day he's dead, shot twice in the head. The documents are nowhere to be found (assuming he bothered to



across as a liberated defender of First Amendment rights and a champion of innocent hedonism, but he's got more in common with the scum you scrub out of a toilet.

PAGE 182 — CARL SPEARS

Born Carlo Spirretti, Spears looked like he was destined for the Mafia from an early age — he got involved with running numbers, and taking care of errands for gangsters, and all the other stuff that Mafia "apprentices" do. But one of his uncles recognized how smart he was and steered him first to college, then business school.

That wasn't enough to rescue him, though. The idea of slaving away for some corporation for years just to get a corner office and a gold watch when he retired disgusted him. Instead, he figured: why not take the best of both worlds? Since it was too late for him to go into the Mafia, he decided to try applying his business school acumen to the Strip. So far he's been very pleased with the results on every level. He's even beginning to wonder if he might pull off a merger with a bigger organization, or let someone buy him out, and make even more money....

tell anyone he had them so they know to look for them). Who killed him, and what's going on with the documents?

Supply Side: The police have evidence that guns used in several recent murders (none of them related to the others) were obtained from Collins Guns — yet Eddie has no record of their being sold! What's going on?

PAGE 188 — THE HUDSON CITY FISH MARKET

The Fish Market stinks — and not because of all the fish. It's been a Torccone family cash cow for decades, and nothing goes on there that they don't know about or approve. Aldo “the Fish” Cardinale is a high-ranking family *caporegima*, and his brothers-in-law soldiers.

The Torccones skim hundreds of thousands of dollars out of the Fish Market every year in numerous ways:

- the “buy-in” fees for stalls, and the monthly stall “lease fees,” are grossly excessive in light of demand and the Association's operating costs. The overage goes into the Torccones' pockets.
- Hudson City Fish Sellers' Association dues and fees are likewise excessive.
- fish sellers have to pay a monthly “badge leasing fee” to the Association for the plaques they have to display at their stalls. It's not much, but it's essentially free money for the Torccones (who got the plaques made cheap years ago).
- anyone who wants to move fish through or from the Fish Market has to pay a “cartage fee” to the Association.
- the Torccones control the unions associated with the Fish Market, and the owner of the Catch Of The Day restaurant is a family member as well.

If anyone protests any of these arrangements, is slow to pay what he owes, or — God forbid — threatens to go to the cops, Cardinale and his boys “take care” of the matter. A beating is the least a troublemaker can expect; the Torccones might also vandalize or burn down his stall, bring his membership or stall rights “up for review” by the Association, scare customers away from him, or the like. If necessary, they'll simply have him killed. The FBI and HCPD have both investigated the Fish Market in the past, but to no avail — it's mostly a closed world that undercover agents have trouble penetrating, and several such officers have disappeared mysteriously.

Here are three plot seeds for the Fish Market:

A Little Help: The FBI's been trying to investigate the Fish Market again... and another of its agents has failed to make contact after going undercover. Through “back channels,” the feds ask the PCs to help find their man... and find out the real story behind the Fish Market.

Some Heroin With Your Salmon, Ma'am?: The Torccones begin using deliveries to the Fish Market to smuggle drugs into Hudson City. The PCs have to

locate the new source of high-quality H hitting the streets and shut down the pipeline.

A Whale Of A Tale: A well-liked seafood restaurateur is found dead in his home, brutally beaten and shot twice in the chest. The PCs must investigate to uncover the cause of the murder and bring the killers to justice. If they dig deep enough, they'll discover the restaurateur heard something he shouldn't have when visiting the Fish Market and was “rubbed out” to keep him from talking.

PAGE 190 — LITTLE EGYPT

There's more to Little Egypt than meets the eye. For the most part, the place is just as described: an upscale strip club that's kind of on the tame side for the Strip. But most guests don't know anything about the brothel right beneath their feet. Behind the stage, near the stairs going up to Cleopatra's office, there's a locked door. Go through that door and down the plushly-carpeted stairs behind it and you'll come to the second part of the club — the elegantly-appointed “parlor” with several hallways of rooms leading off it. Most of those rooms are bedrooms where Cleopatra's string of prostitutes provide “services” that make the Pharaoh's Gold dance look PG. A few other rooms contain jacuzzis, massage tables, or other amenities; most of these have Egyptian-themed decor, though the bedrooms and parlor usually don't.

Cleopatra keeps this side of her business as secret as possible. She only allows a “client” access to the brothel after she's personally met him, or if he has a strong recommendation from someone she trusts. She doesn't mind if knowledge of her brothel is an “open secret” in some parts of the Strip — as long as it doesn't become open knowledge to the cops... or at least not those she hasn't bribed.

Here are three plot seeds for Little Egypt:

Disappearing Act: One of Little Egypt's dancers hasn't shown up for work two nights in a row, and no one can get in touch with her. Someone who works at the club (maybe even Cleopatra herself, if she's had amicable contact with the PCs) asks the heroes to look into it, since they can't call the HCPD — naturally, no one at the club wants to get regular cops too mixed up in Little Egypt's affairs.

For The Children: The County Prosecutor brings a child pornography case against Cleopatra — and it looks like a strong one. But she knows it's a set-up. Desperate to clear her name, she calls in a favor from the PCs (or promises one) and asks them to find out what's going on and who's doing this to her.

An Offer You Can't(?) Refuse: Cleopatra runs into financial woes and approaches a wealthy PC about investing in her businesses. Is the PC willing to become a smut king in exchange for potentially enormous profits?

Cleopatra

There's nothing going on between Cleopatra and Burt Zeplowski. She has lovers aplenty, but he's not one of them — she doesn't fool around with her employees, it's not good for morale.

RUSSELL NEWKIRK

8 STR	8 DEX
9 CON	8 BODY
8 INT	8 EGO
10 PRE	8 COM
3 PD	3 ED
2 SPD	4 REC
16 END	17 STUN

Abilities: Bureaucratics 8-, AK: The Strip 11-, KS: History 13-, KS: Social Studies 11-, PS: Teacher 11-

Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Sex Addict; Social Limitation: Harmful Secret

Notes: To look at Russ Newkirk, you'd think he was pretty much a normal guy — junior high history and social studies teacher, husband, father of two, bicyclist, weekend garage tinkerer. What you wouldn't see is that Russ is a sex addict who visits the Strip three or four times a week because his wife won't satisfy his frequent, and sometimes odd, demands. If anyone found out about it he'd lose his job, so he does everything he can to keep his secret.

CLEOPATRA PLOT SEEDS

One of Cleopatra's girls doesn't come into work. The cops won't take the case seriously, so she turns to the PCs for help in finding the girl.

Caligula begins moving against Cleopatra — hard. Her own people aren't up to the task of stopping him, so she appeals to the PCs for help, pointing out that he'd be a lot worse to have around than her.

Cleopatra's mother claims that her *real* father is now a prominent Hudson City politician. Cleopatra asks the PCs to help her look into the matter without raising any suspicions.

CLEOPATRA

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [2]
12	DEX	6	11-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
12	CON	4	11-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
14	INT	4	12-	PER Roll 12-
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
16	COM	3	12-	
3	PD	1		Total: 3 PD (0 rPD)
3	ED	1		Total: 3 ED (0 rED)
2	SPD	0		Phases: 6, 12
4	REC	0		
24	END	0		
21	STUN	0		
Total Characteristics Cost: 33				

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost	Powers	END
10	<i>Lucky Lady:</i> Luck 2d6	0

Perks

20	Contacts: 20 points' worth, around the Strip and throughout Hudson City
8	Favors: various, from clients whom she's helped
10	Money: Wealthy

Skills

3	Acting 13-
3	Bribery 13-
1	Bureaucratics 8-
3	Conversation 13-
2	Gambling (Card Games) 12-
3	High Society 13-
2	AK: The Strip 11-
1	KS: Egyptology 8-
2	KS: Movies 11-
3	KS: The Pornography Industry 12-
5	KS: The Vice World 14-
3	Persuasion 13-
2	PS: Exotic Dancer 11-
2	PS: Pornographer 11-
2	PS: Prostitute 11-
3	Seduction 13-
3	Streetwise 13-

Resource Points

0	Equipment Points: 60
0	Vehicle/Base Points: 10
5	Follower/Contact Points: 15
0	Miscellaneous Points: 0

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 96

Total Cost: 129

100+ Disadvantages

10	Hunted: HCPD 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
10	Psychological Limitation: Vain (Common, Moderate)
10	Reputation: vice queen of Hudson City, 11-
10	Social Limitation: Criminal Record (Occasionally, Major)

Total Disadvantage Points: 140

Background/History: "No, Daddy... don't!..."

So began far too many of Juanita Best's childhood nights. The daughter of a prostitute and her pimp, both black, Juanita had a much lighter complexion than either of her parents — she could almost pass for white or Latina. Her father figured that meant her mother'd been cheating on him and she wasn't his... which meant he despised Juanita and looked on her as something to be used, the same way he looked at most women. At first he simply ignored her, but as she grew older he began to abuse her, both physically and sexually. Her mother, terrified of the man and grateful that he wasn't attacking her so much anymore, did nothing to stop him. Juanita can count herself fortunate that she made it out of childhood without any scars... at least, not any physical ones.

Juanita's only escape from this horrible existence was through movies and books. Her favorite was *Anthony and Cleopatra* — what elegance, what beautiful costumes! When no one was looking, she played Cleopatra, pretending that fawning admirers and men who would kill to do her bidding waited on her every word.

Not long after she hit adolescence, Juanita's father put her out on the street to turn tricks. She put up with that only until she looked close enough to 18 that she figured she could find work in porn.

She ditched him and headed for California. It took a few months and a lot of sleeping around, but she finally hooked up with someone — porno actor/producer Rod Spectacular — and convinced him she was really 18. He quickly put her to work, giving her the stage name "Cleopatra" at her request, and began to make big money off of her.

But Juanita didn't intend to keep on making films until her breasts sagged

— probably about the time

she turned 25, she figured — and Rod dumped her for some newer, hotter girl. She had far grander plans, schemes worthy of Cleopatra herself. When she turned 18, she secretly informed on Rod and had him arrested for producing and distributing pornographic films with models under 18 years of age — and then she took over his organization. One or two people tried to fight her for it, but she had a few friends from the street help her out by murdering them, and after that no one gave her any trouble.

With her first-hand experience in the industry and eye for talent, it didn't take long for Juanita — who now referred to herself exclusively by



her stage name — to build a real empire of sleaze, with a pornographic film “studio” that’s one of the largest in the country. But just being in the film biz wasn’t enough for her. She returned home to Hudson City and founded Little Egypt as a dance club, then expanded into true pimping by having a couple of friends murder her father so she could take over his stable. Through a combination of smarts, treating her girls far better than most pimps do, and money, she’s made herself into a true queen of vice. Like the Hollywood image of her namesake, Cleopatra rules over an empire of sin, ignoring the fact that she destroys many young lives just as hers was destroyed.

Personality/Motivation: The constant abuse Cleopatra suffered as a child and adolescent has left her with a raging case of low self-esteem that she covers with her glamorous street personality and extreme vanity. Despite all she’s accomplished, her feelings of self-worth are just a surface thing; deep down inside she knows how loathsome her life is. If confronted with adversity she can’t handle with her usual wiles, her facade breaks down and she becomes eager to please, willing to do anything to keep the suffering from starting again.

Although outwardly she seems friendly and warm, Cleopatra’s experienced a lot of suffering in her life and has become a hard, cold person because of it. She has no qualms about killing people who bother her or interfere with her businesses, but she doesn’t do the work personally — she delegates.

Quote: “I would advise you not to interfere in my activities, little man — and I do mean *little*.”

Powers/Tactics: Cleopatra is a businesswoman, not a combatant. Her “tactics” are to call her bouncers and flunkies to help her out. If that doesn’t work, she’ll resort to lawyers and underhanded methods like siccing the IRS on someone. Her chief concern is expanding her empire of sin and depravity, not fighting her way to the top. She’ll use her seductiveness as a weapon if she must, but prefers to leave such things to the girls on her payroll — she’s beyond that now.

Campaign Use: Cleopatra is one of four major “players” in the Hudson City vice world, and despite her many problems probably the most likeable — she doesn’t exploit children the way Caligula and Cole do, nor abuse and degrade her girls as Carl Spears does his. The PCs might see her as an ally, albeit a temporary one, in their quest to clean up worse messes on the Strip. She’d be willing to “sell” information to them in exchange for them leaving her alone (or even providing “protection,” should she need it).

Don’t try to make Cleopatra significantly tougher; she’s not intended to be a fighter. At the most, give her a concealed poisoned knife, or perhaps a pet asp. To weaken her, reduce her wealth, Contacts, and Favors.

Cleopatra generally doesn’t Hunt anyone; it’s not good business. If someone does her wrong, she’ll remember it, and she’ll take advantage of any opportunities for revenge that come her way, but she won’t go out of her way to track an enemy down.

Cleopatra has a criminal record as a prostitute from years ago, and the authorities certainly suspect her of pimping, but her more serious crimes (murder, occasional drug-dealing, ventures into blackmail) have not yet been linked to her.

Appearance: See page 191. Cleopatra stands 5’8” and weighs about 120.

PAGE 192 — LONGVIEW CORRECTIONAL CENTER

Longview Correctional is a harsh, depressing place no matter how you slice it. Life is cheap, the inmates regularly abuse and degrade each other in ways normal people can’t even imagine, and crime — drug dealing, robbery, rape — is even more common inside than outside.

While many LCC guards just want to do their job well and make it home safely at the end of the day, more than a few of them are on the take. They accept bribes from inmates to smuggle things into the prison (drugs, weapons, food, you name it), to provide a prisoner with access to his wife or girlfriend for a quick “conjugal visit,” or to overlook criminal activity. Some guards make almost as much as their salary in bribes.

And some guards are brutal bullies as well. They answer backtalk with a punch to the offender’s ribs or a knee in his groin; for them, “restraining” a prisoner usually means administering a severe beating. This type often carries “holdout” weapons — small pistols and knives — in blatant violation of jail policy.

Here are three plot seeds for Longview Correctional:

Breakin: The PCs desperately need to talk to an LCC inmate — he’s got information they have to have right away and can’t get anywhere else. They have to break *in* to Longview Correctional to “interview” him.

Riot!: A riot breaks out! The PCs have to do what they can to resolve the situation with minimum loss of life... or take advantage of the chaos to dispose of a few old enemies.

Something’s Rotten...: If the PCs are cops or have other “official” standing of some sort, the HCPD or Department of Corrections might recruit them to go undercover to investigate allegations of guard corruption and brutality. Once inside, the PCs will find themselves on a battlefield unlike any other they’ve fought on before.

PAGE 196 — THE SKYLINE CLUB

One thing the main text doesn’t discuss is that the Skyline Club used to have something of a reputation as a haven for wealthy drug users — cocaine and designer drugs, mostly, but anything they could get away with using discreetly would do. Over the past ten years the drug use here has dropped considerably, but it’s never gone away altogether. After all, the one thing the Club’s members have in common is that they’re used to getting *everything* they want... and if what they want today is to get high, that’s what they’ll do.

KANAN “KEN” CHANDRASHAKAR

10 STR	10 DEX
8 CON	8 BODY
15 INT	8 EGO
10 PRE	8 COM
3 PD	2 ED
2 SPD	4 REC
16 END	17 STUN

Abilities: Computer Programming 13-, Electronics 12-, KS: The High-Tech World 11-, PS: Small Business Owner 11-, SS: Computer Science 13-, SS: Electronic Engineering 11-, Money: Well Off

Disadvantages: Rivalry (Professional, with various other programmers/inventors)

Notes: With a B.S. and a Masters in Computer Science from Stanford, a Ph.D. from HCU, and a headful of ideas, Ken Chandrashakar set out several years ago to take the high-tech world by storm. He didn’t exactly become the next Steve Jobs, but he did well enough with the patents he already had, and a few more he acquired, to keep his company Chandronics going strong. Today it has offices in the Stailey Towers, a dozen or more projects going on at any one time, and a solid reputation as a firm of high-tech innovators.

**DEWAYNE
SIMMONS**

8 STR	10 DEX
8 CON	8 BODY
10 INT	8 EGO
10 PRE	8 COM
2 PD	2 ED
2 SPD	4 REC
16 END	16 STUN

Abilities: Computer Programming 11-, Electronics 13-, Inventor 11-, AK: Freetown 11-, KS: Freetown Gangs 11-, Stealth 11-, Streetwise 11-, Systems Operation 8-, WF: Handguns

Disadvantages: Social Limitation: Criminal Record

Notes: Although only 14 years old, DeWayne Simmons is a budding electronics genius. He started taking his family's stereo and other electronic items apart and putting them back together when he was only 8. These days he can not only fix just about about any piece of electronics someone brings him (and make pretty decent money doing it), he's building his own creations. He figures it's only a matter of time before he comes up with an invention so valuable that he can patent it, sell it, and use the money to get himself, his mother, and his brothers and sisters the hell out of Freetown for good.

Here are three plot seeds for the Skyline Club:

I Know What You Did Last Summer: Two dozen or more Club members receive blackmail notes — *serious* blackmail notes, revealing intimate knowledge of all sorts of indiscretions and secrets they don't want to get out. A few of them have learned a little something of the scope of the problem because they're good enough friends to confide their problems to each other, but no one knows the full extent of what's going on... except, of course, the blackmailer. One of the victims turns to the PCs for help in resolving the problem without causing a scandal — or dozens of scandals.

The Maltese Giraffe: Periodically the Club brings in new decorative art, or temporarily exhibits art belonging to the members. Recently they displayed African art from one member's collection of African artifacts, including a valuable gem-encrusted statuette of a giraffe. Now the whole exhibit's been stolen! The PCs get involved somehow, and must trace the theft and recover the goods.

Was It The Soup?: A prominent foreign diplomat comes to the Skyline Club as a guest of one of the members... and drops dead in the middle of dinner! Preliminary forensics tend to indicate he was poisoned. Head Chef, furious, threatens to quit if his name isn't cleared post-haste. The Club's management or Steering Committee turns to the PCs (through back channels, of course) to investigate and solve the mystery.

PAGE 198 — QUICKCORNER

Here are three plot seeds for use with QuickCorner stores:

Epidemic Of Convenience: Over a dozen people in Hudson City have gotten seriously ill with a rare and deadly disease over the past week or so; two have already died. The only common thread the investigators can find is that they all visited QuickCorner stores (or, if you prefer, a single QuickCorner) in the previous week. Is someone adulterating QuickCorner products... and if so, why?

And I Want A Car... A Big One That Gets Crappy Gas Mileage!: A "disturbed" individual decided to rob a QuickCorner. The clerk, being an edgy sort of guy, pulled a concealed pistol, and the robber shot him in the shoulder. The robber then took everyone in the store hostage. The cops now have the place surrounded, but they're not making much headway dealing with the robber, who's issued some pretty odd demands. The PCs have to resolve the situation... hopefully without any more bloodshed (or at least, innocent bloodshed).

Pack 'a Smokes, Man: An enterprising QuickCorner clerk has hit on a great way to supplement his income: sell drugs on the side. All someone has to do is come in and request "Gold Bar 999s, unfiltered" (there is no such brand — all 999s have filters) and he'll get a nickel bag of H along with his cancer sticks. The PCs have to track down the source of the heroin flooding the streets... and then trace the chain from the clerk, to his supplier, and beyond.

ALLIES



Life on the streets can be tough... and dangerous. Sometimes your heroes may need a little help in their war on crime and injustice — and other times they may find themselves butting heads with characters who approach situations differently than they do.

THE HARBINGER OF JUSTICE

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [3]
23	DEX	48	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
20	CON	20	13-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
30	INT	30	15-	PER Roll 15-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
40	PRE	50	17-	Presence Attack: 8d6
10	COM	0	11-	
8	PD	5		Total: 11 PD (3 rPD)
6	ED	2		Total: 9 ED (3 rED)
5	SPD	27		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
10	REC	6		
40	END	0		
33	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 213

Movement: Running: 9"/18"
Leaping: 5"/10"
Swimming: 4"/8"

Cost Powers **END**
80 *Super-Skills:* Variable Power Pool, 40 pool + 20 control cost, Cosmic (+2); Only For Super-Skills And Like Abilities (-½) var

Martial Arts: Various Styles

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage/Effect
4 Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4 Choke	-2	+0	Grab One Limb, 4½d6 NND (2)
4 Dodge	—	+5	Dodge all attacks, Abort
4 Escape	+0	+0	55 STR versus Grabs
3 Hold	-1	-1	Grab Two Limbs, 50 STR to hold on
5 Joint Break	-2	-2	Grab One Limb, HKA 1d6+1 (2d6+1 with STR), Disable, Target Falls
4 Joint Lock/Throw	+1	+0	Grab One Limb, 3½d6 NND (7), Target Falls
5 Kick	-2	+1	12d6 Strike

4	Knifehand Strike	-2	+0	HKA 1d6+1 (2d6+1 with STR)
4	Nerve Strike	-1	+1	4½d6 NND (1)
4	Punch/Elbow Strike	+0	+2	10d6 Strike
5	Takeaway Throw	+0	+0	Grab Weapon, 45 STR; Target Falls
3	Throw	+0	+1	8d6 Strike + vel/5, Target Falls
20	+5 Damage Classes (already added in)			
2	Use Arts with Blades, Clubs			

Martial Arts: Zen Riflery

Maneuver	OCV/DCV	Rng	Damage/Effect
4 Accurate Shot	+2/+0	+0	Weapon +4 DC
4 Defensive Shot	+0/+2	+0	Weapon +4 DC
3 Diving Shot	+0/+2	+1	Weapon +4 DC, Half Move Required, You Fall
5 Far Shot	+1/-1	+4	Weapon +4 DC
3 Leg Shot	+0/-1	+0	Weapon +4 DC, Throw
4 Offensive Shot	-1/-1	+0	Weapon +8 DC
4 Trained Shot	+0/+0	+2	Weapon +6 DC
16	+4 Damage Classes (already added in)		
65	<i>Quick Fire:</i> Autofire (5 shots; +½) for any non-Autofire firearm built on up to 130 Active Points, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1); OIF (firearms of opportunity; -½), Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (no Active Point penalty; -0), Not While Targeting (-½)		
3	<i>Gun Muscle:</i> +10 STR; Only To Meet STR Modifier For Using Firearms (-2)		
30	<i>Shrug It Off:</i> Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%; Requires A CON Roll (no Active Point penalty; -¼), STUN Only (-½), Must Be Aware Of Attack (-¼)		
6	<i>Swift:</i> Running +3" (9" total)		
9	<i>Combat Running:</i> Running +9"; Only To Make Half Moves In Combat (-1)		
2	<i>Strong Leaper:</i> Leaping +2" (5" forward, 3" upward)		
2	<i>Combat Leaping:</i> Leaping +5"; Only To Make Half Moves In Combat (-1)		
2	<i>Strong Swimmer:</i> Swimming +2" (4" total)		
6	<i>Disappearing Act:</i> Teleportation 9"; Can Only Teleport To Places Harbinger Could Normally Go (-½), Must Cross		

	Intervening Space (-¼), No Noncombat Multiple (-¼), Only To “Vanish” When No One Is Looking (-½), Requires A Stealth Roll (-½)	2		3	Mimicry 15-
1	<i>Relaxation Techniques: Life Support</i> (Diminished Sleep: only needs about an hour of sleep per night)	0		3	Paramedics 15-
	Perks			5	Rapid Attack (Ranged)
6	3 Deep Covers (see sidebar)			5	Rapid Autofire
10	Improved Equipment Availability: Advanced Military Equipment			3	Security Systems 15-
15	Money: Filthy Rich			3	Shadowing 15-
15	Reputation: ruthless vigilante (throughout the US and the underworld) 14-, +5/+5d6			25	Shooting Tricks 25-
	Talents			5	Skipover Sprayfire
6	Combat Luck (3 PD/3 ED)			3	Sleight Of Hand 14-
15	Combat Sense 15-			5	Stealth 15-
20	Deadly Blow: HKA +2d6 with All HTH Attacks			3	Streetwise 17-
20	Deadly Blow: RKA +2d6 with All Ranged Attacks			3	Systems Operation 15-
5	Eidetic Memory			3	Tactics 15-
3	Resistance (3 points)			12	Transport Familiarity: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Two-Wheeled Motorized Ground Vehicles, Tracked Military Vehicles, Small Planes, Large Planes, Fighter Planes, Helicopters, Small Motorized Boats, Parachuting (Basic & Advanced), SCUBA
	Skills			10	Two-Weapon Fighting (HTH)
40	+5 with All Combat			10	Two-Weapon Fighting (Ranged)
24	Range Skill Levels: +8 versus Range Modifier with all attacks			12	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Common Martial Arts Weapons, Small Arms, Flamethrowers, Grenade Launchers, General Purpose/Heavy Machine Guns, Shoulder-Fired Weapons
24	Targeting Skill Levels: +8 versus Hit Location modifiers with all attacks			8	Weaponsmith (Muscle-Powered HTH, Muscle-Powered Ranged, Firearms, Missiles & Rockets, Chemical Weapons, Biological Weapons, Incendiary Weapons) 15-
5	Accurate Sprayfire			3	Linguist
3	Acrobatics 14-			1	1) Arabic (fluent conversation; English is Native)
3	Acting 17-			1	2) Cantonese Chinese (fluent conversation)
3	Analyze Style 15-			1	3) French (completely fluent)
3	Analyze Combat Technique 15-			1	4) German (completely fluent)
3	Breakfall 14-			1	5) Italian (completely fluent)
3	Bugging 15-			2	6) Japanese (completely fluent)
3	Combat Driving 14-			1	7) Mandarin Chinese (completely fluent)
3	Combat Piloting 14-			1	8) Russian (fluent conversation)
3	Computer Programming 15-			2	9) Spanish (completely fluent)
3	Concealment 15-			3	Scholar
5	Concentrated Sprayfire			2	1) KS: Arcane And Occult Knowledge 15-
3	Contortionist 14-			4	2) KS: Card Shark And His Organization 17-
3	Criminology 15-			2	3) KS: Chinese Organized Crime 15-
3	Cryptography 15-			2	4) KS: Drug Cartels And Drug Trafficking 15-
3	Deduction 15-			2	5) KS: The Espionage World 15-
10	Defense Maneuver IV			1	6) KS: High Finance 11-
3	Demolitions 15-			2	7) KS: Hudson City Telephone And Utility Systems 15-
3	Disguise 15-			2	8) KS: The Hudson City Underworld 15-
3	Electronics 15-			2	9) KS: The Law Enforcement World 15-
3	Fast Draw (Common Melee Weapons, Small Arms) 14-			2	10) KS: The Mafia 15-
3	Forensic Medicine 15-			2	11) KS: The Martial World 15-
4	Forgery (Documents, Money) 15-			1	12) KS: Mental Health Professionals 11-
4	Gambling (Card Games, Dice Games) 15-			2	13) KS: Mexican Organized Crime 15-
3	High Society 17-			2	14) KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 15-
3	Interrogation 17-			2	15) KS: Military Science 15-
3	Inventor 15-			2	16) KS: Serial Killers And Serial Killing 15-
3	CK: Hudson City 15-			2	17) KS: Street Gangs And Posses 15-
2	CK: Fell's Point 11-			2	18) KS: The Vice World 15-
2	AK: Hudson City Underground Systems 11-			2	19) KS: World Criminals 15-
3	Lipreading 15-			1	20) KS: World Literature 11-
3	Lockpicking 14-				
3	Mechanics 15-				

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Mark I Handgun	+3	+0	3d6+2	1d6+1	12	12	8 clips, +1 Fast Draw
MAWS	+4	+1	2d6+1	1d6	125	14	+3 OCV and +10 RMod, all OBS
Mark I Tranq							
Pistol	+3	+0	8d6 NND	—	12	8	+1 Fast Draw
Combat Knife	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	—	8	Can Be Thrown

Armor

DefTex Body Armor (DEF 10, Activation Roll 15-, anti-IR coating)

DefTex Armored Clothing (DEF 2)

DefTex Trenchcoat (DEF 2, Activation Roll 11-)

Polarized Mask Lenses: Sight Group Flash Defense (8 points)

Wolf's Ears: Hearing Group Flash Defense (8 points)

Gear: Harbinger often carries other equipment when fighting crime, but his exact kit depends on the mission he's performing. In combat situations, he usually uses a variety of communications and sensory devices built into his mask, and carries the equivalent of a Utility Belt (*Dark Champions*, page 283, about 20 gadgets) in the pockets and pouches on his uniform.

Clothing: See Appearance for his uniform, which he wears on most combat missions; when in disguise, he could wear just about anything.

- 2 21) KS: The Yakuza 15-
- 3 Scientist
- 2 1) SS: Accounting 15-
- 2 2) SS: Bloodstain Interpretation 15-
- 2 3) SS: Chemistry 15-
- 2 4) SS: Criminology 15-
- 2 5) SS: Entomology/Forensic Entomology 15-
- 2 6) SS: Fingerprint Analysis 15-
- 2 7) SS: Hair And Fiber Analysis 15-
- 2 8) SS: Human Biology 15-
- 1 9) SS: Materials Science 11-
- 1 10) SS: Metallurgy 11-
- 2 11) SS: Pharmacology/Toxicology 15-
- 1 12) SS: Physics 11-
- 2 13) SS: Psychology/Criminal Psychology 15-
- 2 14) SS: Serology 15-

Resource Points

- 88 Equipment Points: 500
- 95 Vehicle/Base Points: 200
- 50 Follower/Contact Points: 105
- 0 Miscellaneous Points: 0

Total Powers & Skill Cost: 1,057

Total Cost: 1,289

100+ Disadvantages

- 25 Hunted: organized crime group of GM's choice 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
- 15 Hunted: Card Shark 8- (As Pow, NCI, Kill)
- 25 Hunted: HCPD 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Vigilante Mentality (Very Common, Total)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Obsessed With Crimefighting (Very Common, Total)
- 20 Reputation: Murderous vigilante, 14- (Extreme)
- 20 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Frequently, Severe)
- 1,034 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 1,289

Harbinger uses a wide variety of weapons in his never-ending war on crime. Most are of his own design and incorporate the latest advances in weapons technology. Here are a few of his favorites.

Mark I Handgun: This is a .50 AE handgun with a 12-round magazine typically loaded with Hybrid Frangible/HP ammunition with improved propellant, and personalized to Harbinger so no one else can fire it. He typically carries two of them in fast-draw shoulder holsters.

Cost Power

- 35 *Mark I Handgun with Polygonal Rifling firing Improved Propellant Hybrid Frangible/HP Ammunition:* RKA 3d6+2, +2 Increased STUN Multiplier (+½), Penetrating (+½), 8 clips of 12 Charges each (+¼) (124 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (12, STR Minimum Doesn't Add/Subtract Damage; -1), Beam (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼)
- 3 *Silencer:* -3 to PER Rolls; see *Dark Champions*, page 237
- 7 *Features:* AccuTech Barrel Coating; AccuTech Cryotreatment; Fine Tuning II; Improved Firing Pin; Improved Trigger; Personalization; Streamlining
- 5 x2 Mark I Handguns
- 1 One clip of Standard ammunition (RKA 2½d6+1)
- 1 One clip of AP ammunition (RKA 2d6+2, Armor Piercing)
- 1 One clip of Reversed Ogive ammunition (RKA 3d6+2, Armor Piercing, +1 Increased STUN Multiplier)

Total cost: 53 points.

Final Gun: RKA 3d6+2, +2 Increased STUN Multiplier, Penetrating, 8 clips of 12 Charges each, +3 OCV, +1 Fast Draw

MAWS: The Multiple Assault Weapon System (MAWS, or "Mouse") is Harbinger's advanced assault rifle. It fires 5.56x45mm rounds from a helical 125-round magazine. In addition to standard assault rifle mode, it converts into a sniper rifle

HARBINGER'S DEEP COVERS

Harbinger maintains three Deep Covers, each described briefly elsewhere in this book: freelance crime reporter Frank Keaton (page 108); homeless person Crazy Lenny (page 136); and Free-town peddler Flashman Jackson (page 51). (If Harbinger doesn't actually have a Skill or Disadvantage that's listed on their character sheets, it's noted there as a way of preserving the illusion for the players; just substitute the closest available Skill he does have, if necessary.) In any of these guises he might pass on information, or provide other assistance, to PCs without their knowing it... or spy on them.

with a barrel attachment, and also has an underslung integral automatic-fire grenade launcher that fires Harbinger's advanced CCD 20mm grenades. The Multipower below assumes fragmentation grenades, but many other types could be loaded.

In addition to Harbinger's standard polygonal rifling and Accutech treatments, the MAWS comes equipped with an advanced targeting computer, sights, a camera, and related devices. These devices link to the electronics in Harbinger's mask, if appropriate, making aiming even easier.

Cost Power

- 23 MAWS: Multipower, 87-point reserve; all OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), STR Minimum (14, STR Minimum Doesn't Add/Subtract Damage; -1), Two-Handed (-½)
- 2u 1) *Assault Rifle*: RKA 2d6+1, Autofire (5 shots; +½), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼), 125 Charges (+¾) (87 Active Points); OAF (-1), Beam (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼), STR Minimum (14, STR Minimum Doesn't Add/Subtract Damage; -1), Two-Handed (-½)
- 1u 2) *Sniper Rifle*: RKA 2d6+1, +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼), No Range Modifier (+½) (61 Active Points); OAF (-1), Beam (-¼), Extra Time (Full Phase to prepare before use; -¼), Real Weapon (-¼), STR Minimum (14, STR Minimum Doesn't Add/Subtract Damage; -1), Two-Handed (-½), Uses Same Charges Pool As Slot #1 (-0)
- 2u 3) *Underslung 20mm CCD Grenade Launcher*: RKA 2d6, Explosion (+½), Autofire (3 shots; +¼) (82 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), STR Minimum (14, STR Minimum Doesn't Add/Subtract Damage; -1), Two-Handed (-½), 12 Charges (-¼)
- 11 *Features*: Inherent Accuracy (+1 OCV, +1 RMod); AccuTech Barrel Coating; AccuTech Cryotreatment; Fine Tuning II; Improved Firing Pin; Improved Trigger; Personalization
- 20 *Targeting Computer*: see *Dark Champions*, page 237
- 10 *Camera*: see *Dark Champions*, page 232
- 1 *Thermal Sight*: see *Dark Champions*, page 236
- 10 *Flash Suppressor*: see *Dark Champions*, page 232
- 1 *Rangefinder*: see *Dark Champions*, page 232
- 5 *GPS Tracker*: Detect Exact Position On Earth 15- (Radio Group) (10 Active Points); OAF (-1)
- 1 *Compass*: Bump Of Direction (3 Active Points); OAF (-1)

Total cost: 88 points.

Mark I Tranq Pistol: For situations in which Harbinger doesn't want to use lethal force, he carries this small but handy gun. It has two barrels in an over-under configuration, one firing tranquilizer darts in sabots, the other break-on-contact pellets containing knockout gas.

Cost Power

- 32 *Mark I Tranq Pistol*: Multipower, 105-point base; all OAF (-1), STR Minimum (8, STR Minimum Doesn't Add/Subtract Damage; -1), Real Weapon (-¼)
- 2u 1) *Tranquilizer Darts*: Energy Blast 8d6, NND (defense is Life Support [Self-Contained Breathing or appropriate Immunity]; +1) (80 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (8, STR Minimum Doesn't Add/Subtract Damage; -1), Limited Range (50"; -¼), Real Weapon (-¼), 12 Charges (-¼)
- 3u 2) *Tranquilizer Gas Pellets*: Energy Blast 6d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½), Continuous (+1), NND (defense is Life Support [Self-Contained Breathing or appropriate Immunity]; +1) (105 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (8, STR Minimum Doesn't Add/Subtract Damage; -1), Limited Range (20"; -¼), Real Weapon (-¼), 8 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Extra Phase each (-¼)
- 7 *Features*: AccuTech Barrel Coating; AccuTech Cryotreatment; Fine Tuning II; Improved Firing Pin; Improved Trigger; Personalization; Streamlining

Total cost: 44 points

Other weapons Harbinger often carries include the Mark I "Firestorm" SMG (RKA 3d6+2, AF5, 125 Charges), the Mark I Automatic Combat Shotgun (RKA 2½d6, AF5, 12 Charges each of shot and slugs), the Mark VI Handgun (RKA 2d6+1, 8 Charges, a "holdout" pistol carried in a springsleeve holster), the Mark II "Silent Thunderbolt" Handgun (RKA 2d6+1, a plastic gun with maximum silencing and concealability features), Shock Gloves (gloves with a taser-like weapon built into them), and various CCD grenades.

Background/History: Page 154 describes most of what's definitively known about the mysterious, ruthless vigilante who calls himself the Harbinger of Justice. (He's often referred to by the public as "the Blue Moon Killer" because of the distinctive calling cards he sometimes leaves on his victims — solid black with a royal blue crescent moon.) The Vigilantism Task Force of the HCPD, which has a section that works with the FBI in an effort to track the Harbinger down, believes the following deductions or suppositions about him are largely or entirely accurate:

- he has formal military training, probably as part of a special forces or elite unit of some sort.
- he may also have received formal espionage training
- he is fabulously wealthy, though the source of his wealth is unknown (most people on the VTF think he started out with a nest egg obtained in some legitimate manner, but now supplements that with millions stolen from criminals he kills)
- besides his obvious combat skills, he's mastered numerous other disciplines, including many sciences. In particular, he's shown phenomenal skill at disguises and impersonation, forensics and criminalistics, stealthy movement, covert entry, and skills related to manufacturing and using firearms and other weapons
- he has an extensive network of contacts, informants, and informal "assistants" who knowingly or unknowingly help him prosecute his war on crime

Beyond that, the authorities know very little with any certainty.

Personality/Motivation: Harbinger is motivated by one thing, and one thing only: the desire to destroy crime and those who commit it. So far as anyone knows, he has no family, no desire for romance, and no real friends. His entire life and being are devoted to crimefighting and the upholding of Justice as he believes it to be. He is a textbook example of extreme monomania.

Harbinger will stop at nothing to kill ("execute," as he insists) those he feels deserve killing, though he's never stated publicly exactly who qualifies for "execution" — he seems to prefer to let his actions speak for themselves. Violent criminals — murderers, rapists, robbers, and the like — clearly qualify, as do drug dealers, most members of organized crime groups, and anyone else who contributes significantly to the crime problem. On the other hand, while he's often gone after pimps, child pornographers, and the like, he usually leaves prostitutes alone.

Based on the few statements he's made to witnesses, Harbinger seems to follow a straightforward philosophy: everyone is free-willed and has the capacity to act within the bounds of Justice. At a minimum, people must leave one another in peace and not hurt each other. Those who violate this "rule" in minor ways deserve one chance to correct their behavior and act as they should. If they fail to act properly thereafter, he "executes" them as threats to society. Other forms of behavior — murder or

rape, for example — are such extreme violations of Harbinger's code of Justice that they merit immediate execution.

Harbinger seems to prefer to work alone, since he finds other crimefighters too "soft-hearted," "afflicted with moral cowardice," or "inefficient" (his words) to do their jobs properly. He tends to act with ruthless efficiency, doing whatever he must (short of harming innocent persons) to achieve his goals. Since he doesn't trust other crimefighters (not surprisingly, given how many of them have tried to capture him in the past), he goes to great lengths to keep his secrets.

Quote: "The innocent know me as a Harbinger of Justice. But criminals know me as a Harbinger of doom."

Powers/Tactics: Harbinger is a master combatant — a man who can take on large numbers of opponents and kill them quickly and cleanly without suffering any injuries himself. He seems to have mastered not only the use of firearms and weapons, but a variety of unarmed combat styles and techniques. If he knows in advance what sort of opposition to expect, he'll come prepared with the best weapon load he can arrange given the circumstances; if not, he'll carry a standard multi-purpose "kit."

When possible, Harbinger prefers to operate from secrecy and cover. Instead of charging into a dangerous situation, he uses his disguise and covert entry skills to infiltrate and gather as much information as he can. To his way of thinking, things go best when his target has absolutely no idea he's being stalked... until that last few seconds of life when Harbinger destroys him and his operation. To minimize possible casualties to innocent bystanders, and preserve evidence he can use to track down other criminals, he uses poisons, gases, and other "non-violent" weapons when it's feasible to do so.

If forced into open combat, the Harbinger relies on cover and fast movement. Unless he's got a lot of cover and plenty of targets, he rarely stays put in one place for more than a few seconds, preferring to keep moving so his enemies can't draw a bead on him. In these situations, his only concerns are protecting innocents and winning the battle. He'll "cheat," break his word, or fight "dishonorably" to achieve this aim if he must; to his way of thinking, this is no-holds-barred a war, not some duel in a Hollywood movie.

The Harbinger prefers to take his enemies captive whenever possible. After the battle, he takes his captives somewhere private, interrogates them extensively, and *then* "executes" them after he's gathered all the information he can. He has no qualms about using torture or other "extreme" interrogation methods if he must, but he doesn't inflict pain for pleasure — that would reduce him to the level of the scum he fights.

Harbinger relies on his reputation and overwhelming personal presence whenever possible. There's no need to fight or cause harm when he can terrify a criminal into submission.

HARBINGER PLOT SEEDS

A person dressed like Harbinger has recently murdered several prominent individuals around Hudson City. None of the victims had a criminal record. Was it *really* the Harbinger — and if so, were the victims secretly involved in the underworld somehow? Or is someone trying to pin a few more murders on him, figuring no one will even question that he'd do it... and if so, what's really going on?

The PCs desperately need some information — and the Harbinger's the only person likely to have it. Do they dare ask him to help? If so, how do they find him? And what do they do if he only agrees to tell them what they need to know if he can help them complete their mission?

The Harbinger contacts the PCs. He says he needs some information they have... and if he doesn't get it right away, thousands of people could die. Can they trust him? Are they willing to work with him to prevent this supposed tragedy?



Campaign Use: The Harbinger's vast capabilities and consummate skills make him a force to be reckoned with. When running him, remember that he's a genius, one extensively trained in many fields and with nearly two decades' experience fighting crime in Hudson City. He does not fight or act stupidly, prepares intelligently for every contingency or emergency he can think of, and acts as efficiently and ruthlessly as he has to.

At first glance, it may seem that the Harbinger is so powerful that Hudson City doesn't need any other crimefighters. But that's demonstrably untrue; he's been on the job for nearly twenty years, and Hudson City still has a significant crime problem (though some experts do attribute a drop in the crime rate to his actions and those of other vigilantes). The truth is that he's only one man, and thus can only do so much. Even allowing for the fact that he only needs to sleep about an hour a night, there's a limit to what he can accomplish. The vast majority of his time is spent gathering and analyzing information, maintaining Deep Covers, performing the maintenance and administrative tasks necessary to support his war on crime, and so forth — it's not as if he's out on the streets 24 hours a day gunning down criminals. If he ever had the "support staff" necessary to let him do that, everyone in Hudson City would know it from the flood of corpses.

As an NPC, the Harbinger can interact with your PCs in several ways. The first is as an antagonist. Few, if any, crimefighters share the Harbinger's extreme views, and many of them have tried to stop him (though none have succeeded for long). Harbinger would never use lethal force on another

crimefighter — any true crimefighter, no matter how much of a "moral coward" he is, is worth keeping on the streets — but he'll use nonlethal weapons and inflict nonlethal injuries to keep them from stopping him. But the PCs should realize that if they *do* stop the Harbinger and the word gets out, the Hudson City underworld is going to run riot — whether the PCs like it or not, he does keep crime in the Pearl City in check to some degree.

Second, he could be an ally (though admittedly a difficult one to get along with at times). He won't fight the PCs' battles for them in most cases — he's got plenty of his own to take care of — but if he respects another crimefighter he'll willingly exchange information, offer advice, or provide other assistance that seems reasonable to him. Third, Harbinger could serve as a mentor or patron for the PCs, much as he's doing with LIBRA (see *Dark Champions*).

You shouldn't need to make Harbinger any tougher; he's already pushing the upper end of how most campaigns define "Dark Champions characters." To weaken him, get rid of (or substantially reduce) his Variable Power Pool, decrease his Characteristics, and/or get rid of some of his Skills.

As a Hunter, the Harbinger is an incredibly dangerous opponent. He'll use his Skills to gather all the information he needs, then strike at the target at the best opportunity, usually using a sniper rifle or poison. The odds are the target will never see him.

Harbinger is wanted by all local and national law enforcement organizations for several thousand murders and uncounted acts of assault and kidnapping. However, convincing a jury beyond a reasonable doubt that a particular person committed many, if not all, of them would be difficult due to the evidentiary problems noted on page 154 — the Harbinger isn't stupid enough to use the same gun for long periods of time. Periodically he melts gun parts down and recycles the metal into other guns, or discards the metal if it's no longer useful. The total reward money offered for him, dead or alive, from both law enforcement and criminal organizations exceeds five million dollars.

Appearance: Harbinger is 6'0" tall, with a build like a martial artist — muscular-looking, but not overly so. When on patrol or performing a combat mission, he wears a black, skintight, full-face mask with a royal blue crescent moon over the left eye. Atop the mask Harbinger wears a black men's fedora, though this often gets lost in the heat of battle.

Harbinger wears one of two uniforms. On standard surveillance missions, patrols, and other operations where he doesn't expect to engage in heavy combat, he dresses "formally" — an all-black men's suit, shirt, tie, shoes, trenchcoat, and gloves. Underneath his clothes he wears a light armored bodysuit. If he's expecting combat or trouble, his uniform is more like combat fatigues, with steel-toed boots, lots of pockets, weapons slung/holstered/attached here and there (plus other, hidden, weapons), much heavier body armor, and an open trenchcoat.

RENEGADE

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
18	STR	8	13-	Lift 300 kg; 3½d6 [4]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
18	CON	16	13-	
13	BODY	6	12-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
12	EGO	4	11-	ECV: 4
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
11	COM	1	11-	
8	PD	4		Total: 8 PD (0 rPD)
8	ED	4		Total: 8 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
8	REC	0		
36	END	0		
35	STUN	4		Total Characteristics Cost: 98

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost Powers**END**

Martial Arts: Dirty Infighting

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage/Effect
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, 28 STR to Disarm roll
4	Eye Gouge	-1	-1	Sight Group Flash 4d6
4	Kidney Blow	-2	+0	HKA ½d6 (1d6+1 with STR)
4	Low Blow	-1	+1	2d6 NND(3)
4	Punch/Backhand	+0	+2	5½d6 Strike
5	Roundhouse/Two-Fisted Smash	-2	+1	7½d6 Strike
3	Tackle	+0	-1	3½d6 +v/5 Strike; You Fall, Target Falls
5	<i>Lucky Guy:</i> Luck 1d6			0

Perks

5 Improved Equipment Availability: Military Equipment

Talents

3 Lightsleep

Skills

10 +1 Overall
 8 +1 with All Combat
 9 +3 with USAS-12, Spectre M4, and Desert Eagle
 3 Combat Driving 13-
 3 Concealment 12-
 1 Criminology 8-
 3 Deduction 12-
 3 Interrogation 13-
 3 Mechanics 12-
 3 Stealth 13-
 3 Streetwise 13-
 3 WF: Small Arms, Knives

Resource Points

12 Equipment Points: 120
 10 Vehicle/Base Points: 30
 5 Follower/Contact Points: 15
 0 Miscellaneous Points: 0

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 125

Total Cost: 223

100+ Disadvantages

5 Distinctive Features: various tattoos (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)
 20 Hunted: HCPD 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)
 20 Hunted: the Mafia 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
 20 Psychological Limitation: Vigilante Mentality (Very Common, Strong)
 15 Psychological Limitation: Devout Catholic (Common, Strong)
 15 Reputation: Murderous vigilante, 11- (Extreme)
 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Frank Scarpetta) (Frequently, Major)
 10 Social Limitation: Criminal Record (Occasionally, Major)
 3 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 223

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
USAS-12	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	28	13	AF5
Spectre M4	+1	+1	1d6+1	1d6-1	50	13	AF5, 4 clips
Desert Eagle	+1	+0	2d6+1	1d6	9	13	4 clips
Combat Knife	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	—	8	Can Be Thrown

Armor

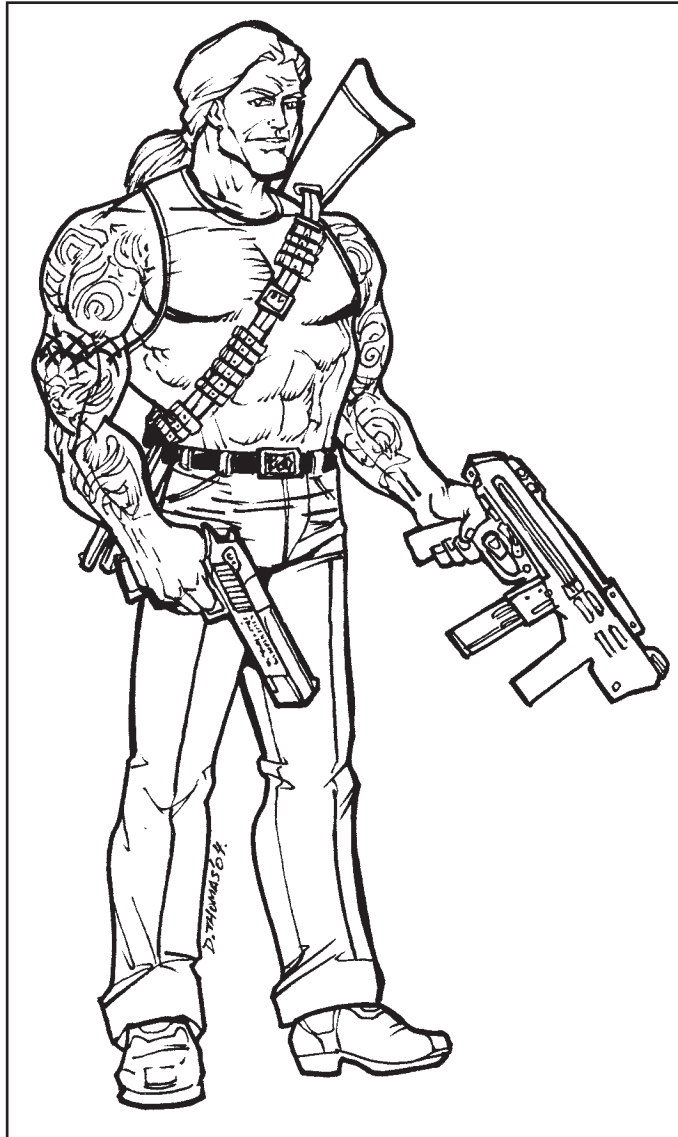
Level II-A body armor (DEF 6, Activation Roll 14-)

Armored Duster (DEF 2, Activation Roll 11-)

Sunglasses (Sight Group Flash Defense [5 points])

Gear: Radio headset (Radio Listen and Transmit), motorcycle

Clothing: See *Appearance*.



Background/History: Think of every bad kid you've ever known and roll them all into one, and you'd have Frank Scarpetta. From the time he was old enough to know what "crime" was, Frank was involved in it. He started out bullying other kids and taking money from them, then began shoplifting, and graduated to auto theft as soon as his legs were long enough to reach the pedals. He spent far more time with his street gang than he ever did with his family, and before too long he just stopped going home altogether.

By the time most kids his age were graduating from high school, Frank was a hardened criminal who'd killed more than once. His affinity for his work did not escape the attention of the local Mafia *caporegima*, who approached Frank with an offer to bring him into his group of "soldiers." This was the sort of break Frank had been waiting for, so he jumped at the chance. Despite his undisciplined youth, he fit in well and became a valuable part of the crew... and, eventually, his boss's right-hand man.

This was the best job that Frank had ever had, and he loved every minute of it. It was a perfect combination of luxurious surroundings and

the opportunity to exercise his violent tendencies. However, his opinion of his boss and his job changed when he finally met the boss's daughter, Angela, a woman with a sad, pale sort of beauty. A childhood illness had left her crippled, confined to a wheelchair for life. Unlike the boss and his compatriots, who treated Frank as a sort of hired hand or attack dog, Angela actually seemed to see some good in him and treated him with a kindness that was completely foreign to him.

Soon Frank was seeking excuses to be near her, because she was the only person in the world he really liked. He even listened to her when she, a devout Catholic, tried to bring religion into his life. It sounded like nonsense to him at first, but the more time he spent with her and the more he listened, the more he came to believe. Soon he was accompanying her to church on the pretext of "guarding" her, and before too long he'd converted to Catholicism and even been baptized.

As Frank's piety increased, his desire to do his job decreased. After his baptism he decided he'd had enough of the violence and bloodshed. He asked Angela to marry him, and after she said yes the two of them went to her father to tell him that Frank was calling it quits and they were leaving. But the boss had other ideas. He told Frank that no daughter of his, crippled or otherwise, was marrying a thug like him, and that the only way he was going to leave "the family" was in a pine box.

That was when the shooting started, as Frank's former comrades in arms tried to gun him down and he tried to shoot a way to safety for himself and Angela. Three dead bodyguards and a lot of bullets later they'd almost made it out of the house when Angela saw that another one of her father's guards was about to shoot Frank in the back with a shotgun. Screaming for him to run, she threw herself in the way of the blast.

Something in Frank snapped. The only person he'd ever cared about was dead, killed by murderous criminal scum like he'd once been. He looked up from her body at the boss and his men with a murderous glint in his eyes even more savage than the one that had been there so many times before. When Frank walked out of the house the boss and every single one of his men were dead, each shot cleanly through the head.

Frank realized God had sent him a message. He wasn't destined to fall in love and be happy in the way normal men are — he was to be an instrument of righteous vengeance, removing evil men from this life to face judgment in the next. After equipping himself to fight this "holy war" and christening himself "Renegade," he began patrolling the streets of the city, doing "God's work" with a fury that most people would never associate with the divine.

Personality/Motivation: Renegade is an unusual mix of piety and violence. Ever since he was a child he's been a ruthless and brutal person, and even his religious conversion hasn't purged him of these tendencies. However, his new-found faith has influenced who he uses force on. Where once he'd fight or kill anyone he was ordered to, he now reserves

his violent tendencies solely for criminals, “the greatest sinners of all.” In a sense, he sees himself as “God’s weapon on Earth,” though he’d never express that sentiment out loud.

Deep in his heart, Renegade knows the path of violence isn’t a truly Christian way to live — but violence has been a part of his life for so long he finds it impossible to become a truly peaceful person without Angela by his side to help him. Subconsciously he feels a great deal of guilt because of both his past and present life. When he has no immediate goal to focus on, the guilt begins to haunt him, making him worry that someone like him could never be admitted to the kingdom of Heaven. So, fatalistically, he goes right on with his vigilante crusade, willingly sacrificing his own salvation to bring some safety and comfort to a few people on Earth. And when the guilt just gets to be too much to bear, he drinks it away.

Anytime Renegade takes money from drug dealers and other criminals, he anonymously donates everything but what he needs for basic upkeep and survival to the Church or various Church-affiliated charities.

Quote: “A little time in Purgatory is just what you need.”

Powers/Tactics: Renegade is an experienced street-fighter, crimefighter, and gunman, but his sense of tactics isn’t all that well developed. It consists mainly of an “I’m making this up as I go along” approach that involves a lot of violence, smashing things, and car crashes. For example, his version of lockpicking is kicking or blasting the door in. Although he can be stealthy when he wants to, subtlety is not his strong suit, and the sort of disguise-based infiltration mission favored by the Harbinger of Justice is the farthest thing from his mind. Usually he locates an appropriate target, gathers as much information about it as he can through direct observation and asking questions on the street, and then attacks, counting on his extremely violent methods and powerful weapons to shock the enemy into confusion and defeat.

Campaign Use: Renegade makes an excellent ally for the PCs. He’s a little more experienced than a starting PC, but his bull-in-a-china-shop approach and personal demons should keep him from making the PCs look weak or incompetent. In truth, he needs their help as much as they probably need his.

To make Renegade tougher, round out his Skills and decrease the strength of his Psychological Limitations, making him a more experienced, well-rounded, well-adjusted person. To weaken him, remove his Overall and All Combat Levels and/or reduce his SPD to 3.

As a Hunter, Renegade isn’t subtle — he locates the target and goes charging in. If that doesn’t work, he’ll retreat, spend more time in observation, and then charge right back in when he feels he’s got a better grip on the situation.

Renegade is wanted by the Hudson City Police for twenty confirmed murders and several dozen acts of assault. He’s a suspect in many more murders. The police are especially eager to catch him because one of his victims was Officer George Hurley, a cop accused of using excessive force against black suspects.

Appearance: Renegade is a white male. He doesn’t wear a costume *per se*, just jeans, a t-shirt of some sort, combat boots, body armor, and a dark brown duster with armored panels sewn into it. He stands about 6’2” tall, weighs about 225, and has a solid, muscular build. He ties his shoulder-length brown hair back in a ponytail, and hides his eyes behind a pair of sunglasses. Tattoos cover his arms and chest, though the tats can’t be seen when he’s wearing long sleeves. He usually carries his Desert Eagle handgun and Spectre SMG in shoulder holsters underneath his jacket and his USAS-12 combat shotgun on his back.

RENEGADE PLOT SEEDS

Renegade contacts the PCs for some help. He’s stumbled onto what he thinks is a major criminal conspiracy involving smuggling, but he doesn’t have the skills to uncover the full extent of the thing. Want to team up and kick some ass?

Renegade disappears — no one’s seen him on the street in weeks. Then the PCs catch some gang punks using what appears to be his USAS-12. What’s going on?

Renegade gathers some information on the street that suggests one of the PCs is actually working for the Mafia, not against it. Can the PCs find out what’s going on and stop Renegade before he kills their friend?

**SCARECROW
PLOT SEEDS**

It looks like the Scarecrow's finally gone over the edge — he starts shooting jaywalkers and brutally torturing even the pettiest of criminals for no particular reason. The PCs need to find him and bring him in... but when they catch up to him, they discover he's been drugged or brainwashed. Who did it to him, and why?

The Scarecrow comes to the PCs and asks them to help him. He thinks he's uncovered a conspiracy of corruption within the County Prosecutor's office, and needs their help to take it down. At the same time, he has to be careful not to expose his Clauson identity....

One of the PCs wakes up one morning to find himself wearing the Scarecrow's armor and uniform. Is it possible *he's* the Scarecrow, and that he's suffering from multiple personality disorder or something? What's going on?

SCARECROW				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	Lift 150 kg; 2½d6 [3]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
15	CON	10	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
6	PD	3		Total: 6 PD (0 rPD)
3	ED	0		Total: 3 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	5		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
30	END	0		
25	STUN	0	Total Characteristics Cost: 48	
Movement:		Running: 6"/12"		
Cost	Powers			END
13	Brawler: HA +4d6; Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)			0
2	Observant: +1 PER with Sight Group			
Perks				
1	Fringe Benefit: License To Practice Law			
3	Fringe Benefit: Membership (in the County Prosecutor's office)			
1	Fringe Benefit: Weapon Permit			
4	Reputation: psychotic vigilante (throughout Hudson City) 14-, +2/+2d6			
Skills				
8	+1 with All Combat			
3	+1 with Favored Weapons (see Suggested Equipment Table)			
1	Combat Driving 8-			
1	Computer Programming 8-			
3	Criminology 12-			
3	Deduction 12-			
3	Interrogation 13-			
5	CK: Hudson City 14-			
3	KS: The Hudson City Underworld 12-			
2	KS: Law 11-			
2	KS: The Law Enforcement World 11-			
1	Lockpicking 8-			
1	Mechanics 8-			
2	PS: Assistant County Prosecutor 11-			
2	PS: Police Officer 11-			
3	Shadowing 12-			
3	Stealth 12-			
3	Streetwise 13-			
2	WF: Small Arms			
Resource Points				
12	Equipment Points: 120			
5	Vehicle/Base Points: 20			
10	Follower/Contact Points: 25			
0	Miscellaneous Points: 0			

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 102
Total Cost: 150

75+ Disadvantages

- 20 Hunted: HCPD 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Vigilante Mentality (Very Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Addicted To Spending Time In Alternate Identity (Common, Moderate)
- 10 Reputation: Murderous vigilante, 8- (Extreme)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Jack Clauson) (Frequently, Major)

Total Disadvantage Points: 150

Background/History: Jack Clauson was born and raised in Elmview and Red Hill, with drugs and crime all around him. But his family was loving and devoted, and he and his brothers and sisters usually avoided the perils of inner-city life. Jack's father was a security guard, and this inspired Jack to become a policeman.

Jack worked on the force for many years. During that time, he was shot, stabbed, assaulted, spit upon, harassed, and saw too many of the scum he arrested released too soon by courts and prison officials who didn't seem to understand the crime situation on the streets. Finally, this disgusted him so much that he decided to do something about it: he went to law school, became an attorney, and went to work in the county prosecutor's office. He hoped he could make a difference, but his hopes were soon dashed. He found he was now part of a monolithic bureaucracy that was more interested in processing criminals and getting them out of the system than in making sure they got the punishment they deserved.

The last straw was the day he was viciously assaulted and almost killed by a burglar/rapist he had convicted only three months before who was already out on parole. As he recovered in the hospital, Jack decided the time had come to abandon "the system," which wasn't working, and try an unorthodox approach to cleaning up the streets. He began to train himself, augmenting his policeman's training with criminology skills, burgling skills, and the like. After designing himself a suit of armor and picking out the right weapons for the job, Jack began to spend his nights stalking the streets as "the Scarecrow," a name he was given because of the tattered overcoat he wore. During the day, he works as an assistant county prosecutor; at night, his brutal, vicious style of crimefighting evokes fear and hatred in the underworld.

Personality/Motivation: The Scarecrow is extremely devoted to his war on crime, but sees himself almost as two different men: Clauson, who works within the system; and the Scarecrow, who deals with criminals in the "proper" way. As time has passed, this attitude has become so pronounced that Jack is nearly a split personality. He refers to his two identities as separate persons, and has in effect become addicted to spending time as Scarecrow. The longer he has to remain in his "civilian" identity, the more bizarre his behavior becomes until he loses hold on Clauson's polished exterior.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Colt M1911A	+1	+0	2d6-1	1d6	7	9	Carries two, and 6 clips
Combat Knife	+0	—	1d6	1d6-1	—	8	Can Be Thrown, carries 2
Brass Knuckles	+0	—	2d6 N	—	—	5	
Touch Taser	+0	—	8d6 NND	—	8	—	
Smoke Grenade	+0	+0	CE	—	2	RBS	-3 Sight PER in 4" radius, lasts 3 Turns

Armor

Spiked leather-and-chain armor (DEF 4; spikes are an HKA ½d6 Damage Shield, Activation Roll 12-)

Sports Glasses (Sight Group Flash Defense [3 points])

Gear: Whatever he happens to find useful that he acquires during his adventures

Clothing: See *Appearance*.

At some point in the future, he will completely snap and spend all of his time as Scarecrow... but right now, he's far from reaching this point.

The Scarecrow side of his personality is much more extreme than the Clauson side. Clauson is certainly hard on crime, and punishes criminals to the full extent of the law, but the Scarecrow goes far beyond this. Scarecrow's approach to crimefighting involves torture, mutilation, and murder. He has no compunctions about treating criminals this way, for he considers them to be subhuman, bestial things. The Scarecrow's very name is enough to make hardened criminals speak in hushed whispers, for they know that any criminal who attracts his attention is bound to regret it.

Quote: "You still have one knee left. I still have a sledgehammer. Where can I find Roberto Jimenez?"

Powers/Tactics: Scarecrow's approach to fighting crime depends mainly on his elaborate information network, which not only includes his contacts in the HCPD and the criminal justice system, but his skill at finding information on the street. He often supplements this by torturing information out of captured criminals; he has a keen eye for knowing who he can shoot right away and who he needs to take prisoner. He knows he can't tackle large numbers of opponents and win, so he uses his reputation and dirty tricks to make up the difference. He hates to be drawn into open combat, preferring instead to attack his enemies from ambush.

Scarecrow's armor is a combination of leather, chain mail, and Kevlar; it offers protection from both bullets and knives. The armor is studded with sharp, tiny spikes in strategic locations. His helmet not only offers him head protection, but is built to keep him from being injured in the face and neck (which would be difficult to explain to his co-workers).

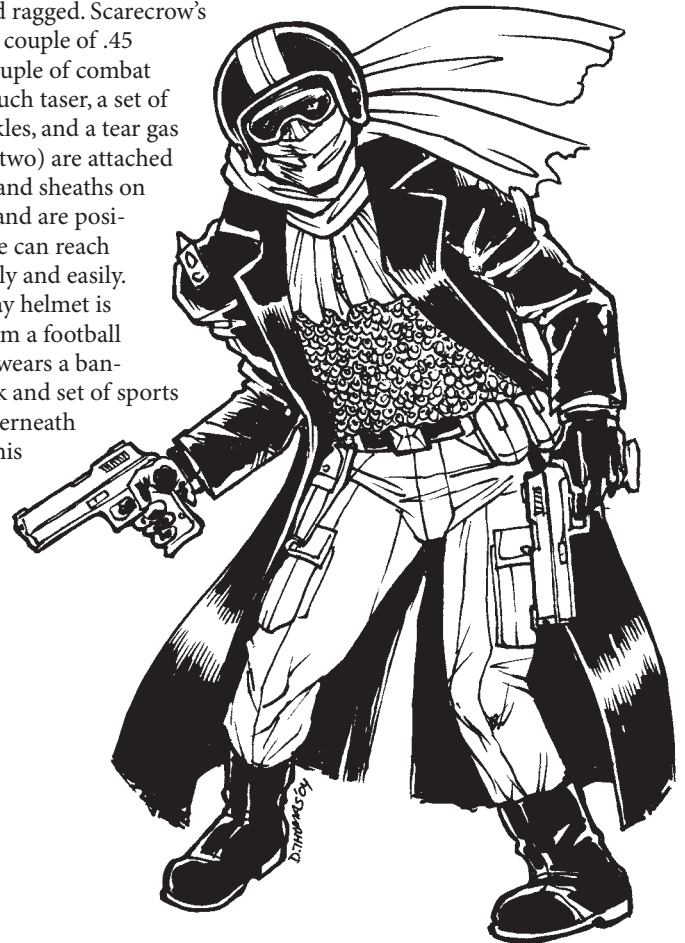
Campaign Use: The Scarecrow represents someone who's a little lower-powered than most PCs — he's only built as a Standard Heroic character — and also a good bit closer to going "over the edge." His methods should make the PCs blanch, then wonder what they can do to turn him into a more level-headed crimefighter.

To make the Scarecrow tougher, upgrade him to full Powerful Heroic status and spend the extra 50 points to boost his Characteristics and add a few Skills. To weaken him, get rid of his *Brawler* ability and/or decrease his Characteristics a bit.

The Scarecrow doesn't usually Hunt anyone for a long period; he doesn't have the time, since he can only afford to spend so many hours per night on the street. He focuses primarily on the current target of his investigation until he gets the guy, then moves on to the next guy. When pursuing someone, he watches them carefully, waiting for an opportunity when his target is unprotected enough for him to handle the situation. Then he moves in, fast and brutal.

The HCPD wants the Scarecrow for questioning regarding numerous acts of torture, aggravated assault, and murder.

Appearance: Scarecrow is a white male 5'10" tall, 190 pounds, with an athletic (but not overly muscular) build. He covers his dark brown leather-and-chain armor with an old tan overcoat; the spikes on the armor have made the overcoat tattered and ragged. Scarecrow's weapons (a couple of .45 pistols, a couple of combat knives, a touch taser, a set of brass knuckles, and a tear gas grenade or two) are attached to holsters and sheaths on the armor, and are positioned so he can reach them quickly and easily. His dull gray helmet is adapted from a football helmet; he wears a bandanna mask and set of sports glasses underneath to conceal his identity and protect his eyes.



CARD SHARK



ANNA-MARIE DREWRY

13 STR 14 DEX
13 CON 11 BODY
13 INT 10 EGO
15 PRE 15 COM
4 PD 4 ED
3 SPD 6 REC
26 END 25 STUN

Abilities: Martial Arts (Commando Training; Aikido Throw, Boxing Cross, Choke, Kung Fu Block), Concealment 12-, Conversation 12-, Gambling (Card Games) 13-, KS: The Hudson City Underworld 8-, Persuasion 12-, PS: Card Shark Agent 12-, Seduction 12-, Shadowing 12-, Sleight Of Hand 12-, Stealth 12-, Streetwise 12-, WF: Small Arms, Knives, Fringe Benefit; Membership (Deck agent in Card Shark organization)

Disadvantages: Distinctive Features (Card Shark uniform); Hunted (Watched by Card Shark); Psychological Limitation: Amoral And Greedy; Social Limitation: Subject To Orders

Notes: Anna-Marie Drewry is one of Card Shark's Deck agents. She's in charge of one of his illegal casinos in Crown Point, though at first glance you'd have a hard time telling it. She spends most of her time there as a poker dealer and makes one of her underlings pretend to be her. When necessary, she gives orders to her doppelganger with various covert, subtle hand and body signals. Card Shark's aware of how well she's running things, and has his eye on her for promotion when the time is right.

Membership: Card Shark, Blackjack, Deadman's Hand, Jack o' Diamonds, One-Eyed Jack, Pokerface, and various agents

Background/History: Emil Lagerfeld's father was a gambler, a hustler, and a second-rate second-story man... and Emil adored him. By age six, he was helping his father burgle businesses — a little boy could easily fit through windows and ventilation ducts too small for a grown man. By eight, he could count cards flawlessly. By ten, he could shuffle like a pro; by twelve, he could deal off the bottom of the deck smoothly enough to fool most seasoned gamblers; by fourteen, he'd mastered the much more difficult center-deck deal and was pretty much supporting himself and his family playing cards.

By the time he was eighteen, Emil had realized what a loser his father really was. He wasn't the slick criminal his young son had envisioned him as being, just a jerk who'd never really amounted to anything in life. Emil decided he wasn't going to fall into that trap — he would make a name for himself, and a pile of money in the process. But first, he wanted to see the world, so he joined the Navy.

And hated every minute of it. Sure, he made pretty good money playing cards, developed some contacts that would help him later on, set up some profitable black market schemes, and did, in fact, see the world — but he had to do it on someone else's schedule. He found out he couldn't stand taking orders, and hated those who bossed him around. Twice during his tour of duty officers he particularly loathed went "missing" in mid-sea and were never found again... but no one ever suspected Emil had anything to do with it.

When his hitch was up, he got the hell out and returned home to Hudson City. He figured it was time to go back to his roots and start his climb to the top of the underworld — but how? The big powers in Hudson City were organized crime: the Mafia, the yaks, you name it. The best he could hope for with those groups was to be a hanger-on; he didn't have the right blood to become a full member. And that was no good; he intended to be in charge, not a flunkie for the rest of his life.

He finally realized he needed to start his *own* gang. He had the smarts and the ambition, so it was only sensible to try to make a go of it on his own, instead of as part of someone else's stable. But he needed a gimmick, something to attract attention and give him a profile in an underworld crowded with nobodies. The "weird" and costumed criminal phenomenon gave him the key he needed — with a costume and a flashy motif, he'd make a name for himself a lot faster than as Emil Lagerfeld. Drawing on his love of gambling, his skill with his hands,

and the criminal talents he'd mastered as a child, he created the identity of Card Shark.

Card Shark debuted in 1982 and quickly gained a reputation as a top-notch burglar and assassin. Slowly but surely, he attracted other criminals, forming the nucleus of what would one day be his large, powerful organization. As the Eighties progressed, Card Shark became a major force in the Hudson City underworld... and a very wealthy man.

The one stumbling block in Card Shark's path to glory was vigilantes. Time and again, these "crimefighters" thwarted his efforts and exposed his schemes, costing him uncounted millions. He killed two of them — a caped, acrobatic buffoon known as Nighthaunt, and a gun-toting muscle-brain who called himself Captain X — but that was a cold satisfaction compared to the humiliation and losses they and their ilk inflicted on him.

The worst of the breed was a homicidal maniac with the arrogance to title himself "the Harbinger of Justice." From the Harbinger's first appearance in 1986, he and Card Shark became each other's arch-nemeses. Time and again they clashed, each narrowly avoiding death at the other's hands several times... but with the Harbinger inflicting such damage on the organization every time that he became intolerable. Finally, in 1992, in a desperate attempt to swat this gadfly, Card Shark stuck his neck out a *little* too far — and got it broken.

Lagerfeld's death tumbled the organization into disarray. The Harbinger took advantage of the chaos to destroy a lot of its resources and kill a lot of Card Shark's people, but the core of the organization — Card Shark's lieutenants — survived, retreated, and regrouped. For several years the organization stumbled along, not much better than a street gang, reaping what profits it could and trying to rebuild. But it wasn't working; what the group needed was another leader — another Card Shark.

Enter Ryan DeLaney. He'd served as the first Card Shark's second Jack o' Diamonds, replacing a man killed by the Harbinger. Sensing an opportunity to take the helm of the organization, he spent years training himself to develop the criminal skills he didn't already have, and when the time was right presented himself to the others as the new Card Shark. Not all of them approved — some had ambitions of their own, after all — but no one could deny that the group needed a leader, and DeLaney had the right skills and attitude for the job. In 1998, they agreed to follow his lead.

In the years since then, the new Card Shark has rebuilt the organization to the position of prominence, power, and profitability it enjoyed in

1992. He strikes where he will throughout the city, ignoring claims of turf or authority and answering to no one but himself. Vigilantes, including the Harbinger, remain a major problem, but the organization has learned from its mistakes and plans to be around and in business long after all those idiotic do-gooders are dead and buried.

Organization And Structure: The Card Shark organization has a simple hierarchical structure, described on page 175. As noted there, Card Shark's agents are grouped into "suits" based on function, but for the most part only a few receive a permanent assignment to a suit — Card Shark allocates agents to specific jobs and duties based on their particular talents, not some predetermined table of organization.

At any given time, Card Shark's organization has about 400-500 agents, and in some cases a given agent might have a small group of associates or hangers-on who do his bidding but don't actually belong to the organization or wear the uniform. Card Shark's profile in the underworld is such that he rarely has difficulty recruiting new agents when he needs them.

Group Relations: Card Shark is no fool — he knows a large organization needs discipline and efficiency to function effectively. He expects three things of his men, from his lieutenants down to the lowliest Deck agent: obey his orders without question; obey the orders of your superiors in the organization; and don't quarrel or fight with other members. If he finds that an agent has attacked, stolen from, or otherwise caused problems for another agent, or has caused other problems he feels are harmful to the organization as a whole, he simply kills the offending agent out of hand.

Card Shark's lieutenants are an exception to this rule; they're too important and powerful for him to dispose of casually. He tolerates some friction between them as long as it doesn't interfere with their work. For example, Blackjack doesn't much care for Jack o' Diamonds or One-Eyed Jack (both are too "slick" and "uppity" for his tastes), nor for Pokerface (who's beaten him into line a time or three). One-Eyed Jack finds all the others but Jack o' Diamonds a little too crude and thugish for his tastes, and Jack o' Diamonds seems to agree. Pokerface never expresses an opinion about anyone; Deadman's Hand seems to get along well with everyone.

Tactics: Card Shark doesn't regard his agents as combat troops — he has a gang, not a private army. Whenever possible, he prefers for his men to avoid armed conflict, relying instead on ambush, blackmail, and assassination to get things done. But in a world where crimefighters and rival gangs are a constant threat, he and his men have to be ready to fight at all times. He has Pokerface and other personnel train all of his agents in basic tactics and combat procedures.

Card Shark's combat strategy usually depends on how much he knows about his enemy and how much time he has to plan. If possible, he and his men come equipped with weapons and gear specif-

CARD SHARK CODES

Card Shark transmits messages and orders to his men by means of a "playing cards code," detailed below. The codes may change a little from time to time, but for the most part they stay the same. In most cases, a note or encrypted CD accompanies the note to explain the specifics of the job. Cards not listed usually refer to specific Card Shark facilities or operations; these change much more frequently.

Spades

Ace: Kill X

King: Destroy a particular object, building, or the like

Queen: Collect a debt from X and leave a "warning"

Jack: Assault X; provide X a "warning"

Diamonds

Ace: Kidnap X

King: Steal X object; smuggle X object from point A to point B

Queen: Blackmail X

Jack: The organization will provide special help (such as high-tech equipment) for this mission

Clubs

Ace: Harass X or X group

King: Watch (and/or follow) X (or X location)

Queen: Have X or X group seduced, subverted, infiltrated, or corrupted; obtain potential blackmail information on X

Jack: Guard X or X location

Hearts

Ace: Attend a meeting at X location with Y person(s).

King: X is wanted, a reward of \$X is offered for him.

Queen: Report to X location to take part in a mission.

Jack: Obtain this information

Other Cards

Card Shark: an Ace of Spades with all four corners folded

Blackjack: any two cards totaling 21 in blackjack bent in half together

Deadman's Hand: an Ace and an Eight bent in half together

Jack o' Diamonds: the Jack of Diamonds with one corner bent

One-Eyed Jack: a one-eyed jack with one corner bent

Pokerface: a blank card

Face Card agent: that particular face card with two corners bent

ically designed for use against their enemy. Lacking any more specific plan, the usual procedure is "hit hard, and keep hitting until we win or the battle turns against us; in the latter case, everyone do his best to escape." Card Shark's men use lethal force in most situations, although Card Shark is not averse to taking heroes prisoner if he can. In battle, Pokerface has overall tactical command of the entire

CARD SHARK PLOT SEEDS

Card Shark decides to commit a series of crimes based on the ascending hands in poker (two of a kind, jacks, two pair, three of a kind...). The PCs have to figure out what's going on, anticipate what the next crime will be, and put a stop to this odd crimewave.

Card Shark contracts with a dangerous Third World nation to provide it with certain weapons and other types of military technology. Getting what he needs involves various crimes — thefts, kidnappings of eminent scientists, blackmail, smuggling — and if the PCs don't discover what's going on in time, one of America's most fanatic enemies will suddenly be *much* more powerful.

A veritable horde of hired assassins, killers, mercs, and thugs begin gunning for the PCs for no apparent reason. Unbeknownst to them, Card Shark is staging a "criminal scavenger hunt" in which anyone who kills a hero gets a big reward... and Card Shark's "customers" bet extravagantly on who'll get killed first.

organization, except for Card Shark himself.

If one of Card Shark's men is captured, he knows to keep his mouth shut. Every agent learns early on that loyalty to Card Shark is *richly* rewarded — if Card Shark can recover the agent, or otherwise help him, he'll do so; if not, he makes sure the agent's family (if any) is well looked after during his incarceration, and sets the agent up with a generous bonus upon his release. On the other hand, anyone who squeals — even a little — has just bought himself a ticket to the morgue. As a result, getting any information out of Card Shark's people is like pulling teeth.

Campaign Use: The Card Shark organization represents an alternative to traditional organized crime groups — one that draws its influence as much from comic books as crime literature. The costumes and gimmicky weapons set it apart, “brand” it in ways that make it distinctive and attention-grabbing. They also make it easy to adapt the group to Dark Champions: The Animated Series games, Champions games, and the like — just tone down the group's lethality a bit.

When you use the Card Shark organization, portray it as smart, clever, and ruthless. Card Shark and his men didn't struggle their way up from the bottom of the underworld — twice — by making stupid mistakes or taking unnecessary risks. Just because they look “comic book” doesn't mean they act like it. For example, if Card Shark has an enemy on the ropes, he usually polishes him off — he doesn't capture him, put him in a deathtrap, then walk away.

To make the Card Shark organization tougher, give it more lieutenant-level members with code-names and unique abilities. Sticking with the “card” theme, you might create new lieutenants with names like Wildcard, Deuce, Ladybird, Solitaire, Gambit, or Ace. If you want to expand it to cover gambling in general, you could also consider Snake-Eyes, Jackpot, Roulette, and so forth. Naturally, the character's abilities and temperament probably fit his name; for example, Deuce might be a two-gun fighter.

The best way to make the Card Shark organization weaker is to decrease the general competence and abilities of its members. If you need a quicker solution, remove some of the lieutenants and decrease the size of the organization to no more than about 100 agents.

The Card Shark organization doesn't usually Hunt characters — vendettas involve too little profit, too much risk — but will go after people that cause it enough problems. It Hunts cautiously and cleverly, using its resources to gather as much information as it can about the target before lowering the boom. If he thinks he's in the catbird's seat, Card Shark's not above toying with an enemy (for example, by threatening or killing his loved ones first), but he usually goes straight for the kill.

CARD SHARK

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [3]
23	DEX	48	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
20	CON	20	13-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
12	EGO	4	11-	ECV: 4
25	PRE	20	14-	PRE Attack: 5d6
16	COM	3	12-	
8	PD	5		Total: 14 PD (6 rPD)
8	ED	4		Total: 14 ED (6 rED)
4	SPD	7		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
8	REC	2		
40	END	0		
40	STUN	10		Total Characteristics Cost: 142

Movement: Running: 9”/18”
Leaping: 6”/12”

Cost Powers END

40	<i>Deadly Cards:</i>	Multipower, 60-point reserve; all OIF (multiple OIFs stored in sash; -½)	
1u	1) <i>Razor Card:</i>	RKA 1d6, Armor Piercing (+½), 12 Recoverable Charges (+¼); OIF (-½), Range Based On STR (-¼)	[12rc]
3u	2) <i>Flare Card:</i>	Sight Group Flash 8d6, Explosion (+½); OIF (-½), 8 Charges (-½)	[8]
3u	3) <i>Blast Card:</i>	RKA 2½d6, Explosion (+½); OIF (-½), 6 Charges (-¾)	[6]

Martial Arts: Kung Fu

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, 45 STR
4	Dodge	+0	+5	Dodge all attacks, Abort
4	Escape	+0	+0	50 STR vs. Grabs
3	Joint Lock/Grab	-1	-1	Grab, 45 STR
5	Kick	-2	+1	11d6 Strike
4	Knife Hand	-2	+0	HKA 1d6+1 (2d6+1 with STR)
3	Legsweep	+2	-1	8d6, Target Falls
4	Punch	+0	+2	9d6 Strike
3	Throw	+0	+1	7d6 +v/5, Target Falls
4	<i>Tien-hsueh Strike</i>	-1	+1	4d6 NND (1)
20	+4 Damage Classes (already added in)			
6	<i>Fast:</i>	Running +3” (9” total)		1
3	<i>Strong Leaper:</i>	Leaping +3” (6” forward, 3” upward)		1
20	<i>Lucky Bastard:</i>	Luck 4d6		0

Perks

5	Fringe Benefit: Membership (leader of Card Shark organization)
10	Improved Equipment Availability: Advanced Military Equipment
15	Money: Filthy Rich

Talents

12	Combat Luck (6 PD/6 ED)
15	Combat Sense 13-

- 8 Deadly Blow: HKA +2d6 with Razor Card
- 18 Evasive
- 6 Lightning Reflexes: +4 DEX to go first with All Attacks

Skills

- 16 +2 with All Combat
- 12 +4 with Deadly Cards
- 12 Targeting Skill Levels: +4 versus Hit Location modifiers with all attacks
- 3 Acrobatics 14-
- 3 Breakfall 14-
- 3 Bribery 14-
- 3 Bureaucratics 14-
- 3 Climbing 14-
- 3 Combat Driving 14-
- 3 Concealment 13-
- 3 Contortionist 14-
- 3 Conversation 14-
- 3 Computer Programming 13-
- 3 Deduction 13-
- 10 Defense Maneuver IV
- 3 Electronics 13-
- 3 Fast Draw (Deadly Cards) 14-
- 16 Gambling (Board Games, Card Games, Dice Games, Roulette, Sports Betting) 16-
- 3 High Society 14-
- 3 Interrogation 14-
- 3 CK: Hudson City 13-
- 5 KS: Gambling 15-
- 5 KS: The Hudson City Underworld 15-
- 3 KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 13-
- 3 KS: The Vice World 13-
- 3 Lockpicking 14-
- 3 Persuasion 14-
- 3 PS: Gambler 13-
- 3 Security Systems 13-
- 3 Seduction 14-
- 7 Sleight Of Hand 16-
- 5 Stealth 15-
- 5 Streetwise 15-
- 3 Tactics 13-
- 7 TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Basic Parachuting, Helicopters, SCUBA, Snow Skiing, Two-Wheeled Motorized Ground Vehicles
- 6 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Small Arms

Resource Points

- 48 Equipment Points: 300
- 45 Vehicle/Base Points: 100
- 60 Follower/Contact Points: 125
- 3 Miscellaneous Points: 3

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 561**Total Cost: 703****100+ Disadvantages**

- 10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable; Noticed And Recognizable by Large Group)
- 20 Hunted: HCPD 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)
- 10 Hunted: Harbinger Of Justice 8- (As Pow, Kill)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Vain, Arrogant, And Overconfident (Very Common, Strong)

- 10 Psychological Limitation: Can't Resist A Wager Or Gambling Challenge (Common, Moderate)
- 20 Reputation: Hudson City crimelord, 14- (Extreme)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Ryan DeLaney) (Frequently, Major)
- 498 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 703

Background/History: Ryan DeLaney was a bad seed, and everyone could tell almost from the moment he was born. He picked on the other kids, stole things, and caused trouble constantly. Although tests showed him to be extremely intelligent, he got rotten grades in school because he wouldn't pay attention and didn't give a damn what his teachers thought or did.

As he got older, Ryan developed two hobbies: computer hacking and gambling. He was never more than a second-tier hacker at best, but he really excelled at gambling — he had good hands, a good head for odds, and a natural lucky streak. When he was old enough, he headed off to Vegas to make his fortune.

Things didn't quite work out: he ended up in debt to the Mafia for tens of thousands of dollars. Lacking any other way to pay them off, he did some computer hacking jobs for them, succeeding so well that he became a valued Mafia associate. He wasn't really happy with the situation — it seemed like a dead end to him, no matter how much money he was making — but he didn't have any alternatives.

Then Card Shark offered him one. He'd learned of the young man through his underworld contacts, and he seemed like a perfect fit for the Card Shark organization. "Work for me, and you'll be a full member of the team, able to go as high as your talents will take you," he said. That was just what Ryan was looking for. He jumped ship and never looked back.

After a couple years as a Deck agent, Ryan advanced up the ranks to Face Card, becoming the Jack of Clubs. When the first Jack o' Diamonds was killed, Card Shark tapped him to take the man's place... and when Card Shark was killed, Ryan saw the opportunity he'd been waiting for. A few years later, he'd maneuvered himself into the organization's top position and become a major figure in the Hudson City underworld. Now he looks around him and sees an entire city for the taking... if he's strong and smart enough to take it.

CARD SHARK PLOT SEEDS

Card Shark needs to get himself a stake to enter a *major* underworld poker tournament. As a point of pride, he wants to obtain the money himself, not get it from one of his bank accounts or with the help of his men. If the PCs can figure out what he's doing and anticipate his next theft, they'll have a chance to take down one of the top dogs of the underworld in a team-on-one fight.

The PCs get a message from Card Shark challenging them to a game of Texas hold-'em. If they win, he'll give them some *very* valuable information about current underworld doings; if he wins, they have to leave him and his operations alone for three full months. Do they dare to play cards against one of the world's greatest gamblers?

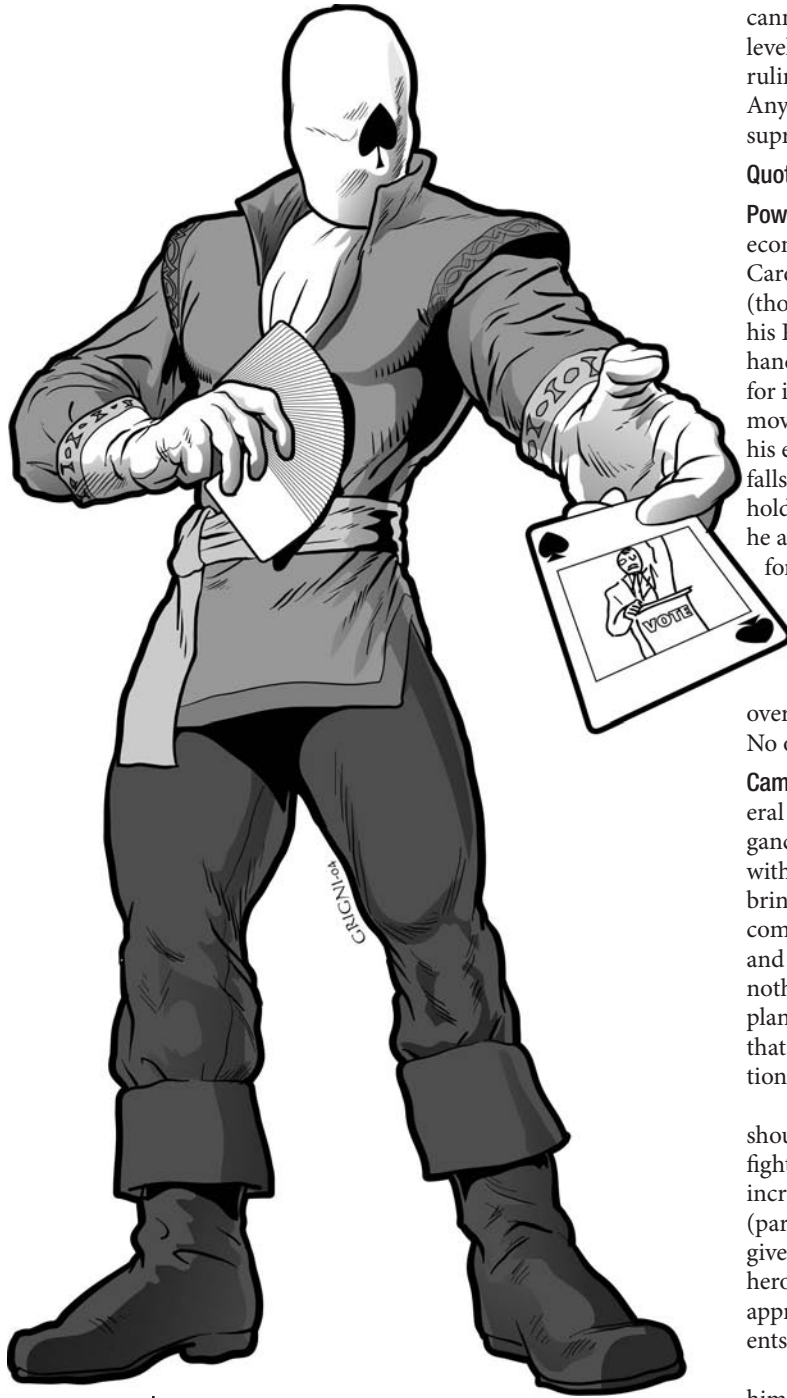
Card Shark gets some information that suggest Emil Lagerfeld may not *really* be dead — he just faked his death to hide from the Harbinger, and now runs the Card Shark organization from behind the scenes. Naturally, as the current leader of said organization, Card Shark doesn't like this possibility one bit. He decides to tip off the PCs to investigate it... and, if it turns out to be true, eliminate Lagerfeld for him.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT**Armor**

Ballistic cloth costume (DEF 2, Activation Roll 15-)

Gear: Generally speaking, Card Shark can obtain any sort of gear he needs, given reasonable notice; his organization not only maintains stockpiles of equipment, it has extensive black market contacts

Clothing: See *Appearance*.



Personality/Motivation: Card Shark's life has been one success after another, culminating in his current "job." He's never failed to get what he wanted, and as a result he's come to expect that he can do anything he pleases. His arrogance and overconfidence, compounded by his vanity and self-absorption, is his biggest Achilles heel. Running a close second is his love of gambling and wagering. He's not a compulsive gambler — he can back away when he really wants to — but he loves the thrill of placing a bet on cards, dice, or anything else he can participate in.

Card Shark has just the temperament needed to make him an excellent crimelord. He's daring enough to take the risks that big-time crime entails,

canny enough not to overextend himself, and level-headed enough to keep passion from overruling sound judgment (most of the time, anyway). Any group of PCs should find him a difficult and supremely dangerous foe to tackle.

Quote: "Now I'll deal you a real dead man's hand!"

Powers/Tactics: In combat, Card Shark fights with economy and ruthlessness, relying on his Deadly Cards weapons to see him through to victory (though he can use others if need be). He favors his Razor Card, but will use his other weapons or hand-to-hand combat skills if the situation calls for it. If he's alone, he throws himself into the fray, moving quickly and dodging while focusing all of his efforts on a single foe at a time until that foe falls. If he's with a group of his men, he usually holds back, allowing his men to do the work while he analyzes the opposition. When he feels it's time for him to get involved, out come the Deadly Cards.

If beaten or thwarted in some way, Card Shark regroupes and spends time with his most trusted bodyguards and advisors going over the mistake and figuring out ways to correct it. No one ever beats him the same way twice.

Campaign Use: See the introductory text for general information. Except when his pride and arrogance get the better of him, Card Shark doesn't act without purpose. His every move is calculated to bring him some sort of gain. His plans are usually complex, multi-layered affairs, with double-blinds and decoys masking his true purpose. He thinks nothing of spending weeks or months carefully planning and practicing a crime, because he knows that such efficiency is the cornerstone of his reputation and skills.

Card Shark's already pretty tough, so you shouldn't need to strengthen him to give him a fighting chance against the PCs — at most, maybe increase his SPD to 5 and/or add some super-skills (particularly one involving Damage Reduction) to give him a better chance against a whole group of heroes. To weaken him, reduce his Characteristics appropriately and start shaving away Skills and Talents until he's not quite so deadly and competent.

Card Shark generally doesn't Hunt anyone himself; see above for information about how the group as a whole Hunts its foes.

The police want Card Shark in connection with an enormous number of crimes, ranging from murder to relatively petty gambling offenses. As Ryan DeLaney he had a juvie record, but it's been destroyed pursuant to the unrecorded orders of a judge he controlled... and then killed.

Appearance: Card Shark is a white male 6'2" tall, about 200 pounds, with an athletic (but not overly muscular) build. He wears a red tunic, v-neck with puffed sleeves, a gold belt sash in which he keeps his weapon-cards, and blue pants and boots. His gloves are white. He wears a white ascot around his neck, and a white full face mask with a "spade" symbol over the left eye.

BLACKJACK

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
25	STR	20	14-	Lift 800 kg; 5d6 [5]
16	DEX	18	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
20	CON	20	13-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
10	PD	7		Total: 10 PD (0 rPD)
8	ED	4		Total: 8 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	4		Phases: 4, 8, 12
10	REC	2		
40	END	0		
50	STUN	7		
				Total Characteristics Cost: 111

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost	Powers	END
10	<i>Blackjack</i> : HA +4d6; OIF (-½), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)	2
25	<i>Bonebreaking</i> : HKA 1½d6 (2½d6 with STR), Penetrating (+½); Must Follow Grab (-½)	4
34	<i>Shrug It Off</i> : Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%; Requires A CON Roll (no Active Point penalty; -¼), STUN Only (-½)	0
8	<i>Mask Lenses</i> : Sight Group Flash Defense (10 points); IIF (-¼)	0
Perks		
4	Fringe Benefit: Membership (lieutenant in Card Shark organization)	
Talents		
3	Resistance (3 points)	
Skills		
20	+4 HTH	
4	+2 OCV with Blackjack	
1	Gambling (Card Games) 8-	
3	Interrogation 13-	
2	CK: Hudson City 11-	
2	KS: The Hudson City Underworld 11-	
1	KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 8-	
1	KS: The Vice World 8-	
3	Stealth 12-	
3	Streetwise 13-	
4	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Small Arms	
Resource Points		
6	Equipment Points: 90	
5	Vehicle/Base Points: 20	
2	Follower/Contact Points: 9	
0	Miscellaneous Points: 0	

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 141

Total Cost: 252

100+ Disadvantages

20 Enraged: if taunted, mocked, or belittled
(Common), go 11-, recover 11-
10 Hunted: Card Shark 8- (Mo Pow, NCI,
Watching)
15 Hunted: Harbinger Of Justice 8- (Mo Pow,
Kill)

15 Psychological Limitation: Loves To Fight
(Common, Strong)
20 Reputation: Card Shark's chief legbreaker,
14- (Extreme)
10 Social Limitation: Criminal Record (Occa-
sionally, Major)
62 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 252

Background/History: Desmond Thompson, an obnoxious and brutal individual, was a bully and a thug from the moment he could make a fist. As soon as he was big and strong enough to make it on his own, he quit school and became a part of the underworld, where his size, muscles, and intimidating manner gave him an edge. After Ryan DeLaney became the new Card Shark, he heard about Desmond, and decided to bring him into the ranks under the name “Blackjack.” Desmond was grateful for the break, and has worked loyally for the organization ever since, though he can be a nuisance at times (Pokerface has had to dress him down a time or two when he got particularly rude).

Personality/Motivation: Blackjack is a classic bully who thinks he can solve any problem with violence. He loves to beat on people, break things, and be obnoxious when he has the upper hand; but he often turns tail and runs if things go badly for him. Still, he's loyal to Card Shark and most of his comrades (in his own bull-in-a-china-shop sort of way), and won't abandon them. Well, OK, he might abandon Jack o' Diamonds or One-Eyed Jack, whom he regards as "sissies," and Pokerface, whom he hates — but he'll stick around to help Deadman's Hand or Card Shark for sure.

Quote: “One hellacious beating, coming up!”

Powers/Tactics: Blackjack isn't exactly a subtle or sophisticated fighter. He uses an enormous blackjack as his weapon, and he loves to hit and smash things. In combat, he takes a simple, straightforward approach: hit it until it's busted into little bitty pieces, and then stomp on the pieces. This predictability is his one major weakness.

Campaign Use: See the introductory text for general information. Blackjack is a thug, pure and simple (albeit a really tough one), and shouldn't pose any sort of threat to the PCs on his own. As part of a group, though, he could really put a hurting on them.

To make Blackjack tougher, you have two options. First, you could emphasize his “brick-ness,” perhaps giving him some appropriate strength- and

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Combat Knife	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	—	8	Can Be Thrown

Armor

Ballistic cloth uniform (DEF 3, Activation Roll 15-)

Gear: Blackjack rarely carries other gear, but if he needs some can usually get whatever he needs from the organization.

Clothing: See *Appearance*.

BLACKJACK PLOT SEEDS

The PCs spot an incredibly big, beefy, broad-shouldered black man in an underworld bar. Could this be Blackjack slumming it in his civilian identity? Could be; mighty hard to tell in this light. Maybe they'd better follow him and see what happens....

One of the few things that scares Blackjack is suffering an injury so bad that he'd be confined to a wheelchair — maybe a spinal injury or something. He hears about a new, experimental exo-skeleton-like device that allows crippled people to walk, so he steals it to keep as “insurance” in case he ever gets hurt. But the company that invented it needs that prototype to continue work on the project. The PCs have to track him down and get the device back.

The cops find the body of an incredibly big, beefy, broad-shouldered black man lying in a Southside alley. Is this Blackjack, and if so, what happened to him?... and what will Card Shark do when he finds out someone iced one of his men?



toughness-related abilities from *The Ultimate Brick* or the super-skills section of *Dark Champions*. Second, you could expand his range of abilities, giving him additional Skills and weapons so he's not so much of a one-trick pony. To weaken him, just reduce his Characteristics until he's at the right level for your campaign.

Blackjack doesn't Hunt people unless ordered to by Card Shark, in which case he follows his orders.

Desmond has been captured before as Blackjack, so the police know his identity even though the public at large does not. He has never committed a murder (though not for lack of trying), but he's wanted on dozens of charges of aggravated assault, kidnapping, and rape.

Appearance: Blackjack is a black male. He's a huge brute, 6'6" tall and extremely well-muscled (yet not so much so that it would slow him down). He wears a full black bodysuit of rough, leathery weave, with a full black face mask that has a sort of peaked hood (sort of like an executioner's hood). He wraps his hands in leather thongs to help him keep a grip his blackjack.

DEADMAN'S HAND

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [2]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
15	CON	10	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
10	COM	0	11-	
6	PD	4		Total: 6 PD (0 rPD)
6	ED	3		Total: 6 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	16		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
5	REC	0		
30	END	0		
25	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 54

Movement: Running: 7"/14"

Cost	Powers	END
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37	<i>Electrified Gloves:</i> Multipower, 60-point reserve, 30 Charges for entire reserve (+¼); all OIF (-½), No Range (-½)	
3u	1) <i>Taser Touch I:</i> Energy Blast 6d6, NND (defense is insulated rED; +1); OIF (-½), No Range (-½)	
2u	2) <i>Taser Touch II:</i> Energy Blast 4d6, NND (defense is insulated rED; +1), Continuous (+1); OIF (-½), Lockout (can't use other Multipower slots while maintaining this slot; -½), No Range (-½), Must Maintain Touch To Maintain Effect (-¼), Costs 1 Charge Per Phase To Maintain (-¼)	
2u	3) <i>Paralytic Grip:</i> Entangle 4d6, 4 DEF, Takes No Damage From Attacks (+½); OIF (-½), No Range (-½), Lockout (can't use other Multipower slots while maintaining this slot; -½), Must Maintain Touch To Maintain Effect (-¼), Costs 1 Charge Per Phase To Maintain (-¼)	
3u	4) <i>Deadly Touch I:</i> RKA 4d6; OIF (-½), No Range (-½), Requires 2 Charges Per Use (-¼)	
2u	5) <i>Deadly Touch II:</i> RKA 2d6, Continuous (+1); OIF (-½), No Range (-½), Requires 2 Charges Per Use, And 1 Charge Per Phase To Maintain (-½), Lockout (can't use other Multipower slots while maintaining this slot; -½), Must Maintain Touch To Maintain Effect (-¼)	
4	<i>Used To The Jolt:</i> Armor (6 ED); Only Works Against Limited Type Of Attack (electricity; -1)	0
2	<i>Fast Runner:</i> Running +1" (7" total)	1

Perks

4	Fringe Benefit: Membership (lieutenant in Card Shark organization)
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Talents

6	Lightning Reflexes: +6 DEX to act first with Electrified Gloves Multipower
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Skills

15	+5 with Electrified Gloves Multipower
2	Gambling (Card Games) 11-
2	CK: Hudson City 11-
2	KS: The Hudson City Underworld 11-
3	Stealth 12-
3	Streetwise 12-
3	WF: Small Arms, Knives

Resource Points

6	Equipment Points: 90
5	Vehicle/Base Points: 20
0	Follower/Contact Points: 5
0	Miscellaneous Points: 0

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 106

Total Cost: 160

100+ Disadvantages

10	Hunted: Card Shark 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
15	Hunted: Harbinger Of Justice 8- (Mo Pow, Kill)
20	Psychological Limitation: Casual Killer (Very Common, Strong)
10	Social Limitation: Criminal Record (Occasionally, Major)
5	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 160

Background/History: Patrick Carlton was raised in the Elmview and Riverside Hills sections of Hudson City. He first got in trouble with the law in his early teens for petty theft and truancy. Thereafter he became involved in gang activities (primarily with a gang known as the Vultures), developing an impressive criminal record that begins with vandalism and theft and continued on into drug dealing, grand theft auto, arson, burglary, and attempted murder. While serving time at Stewartsburg Penitentiary in the mid-Nineties, he met a member of the Card Shark organization. Intrigued, he joined up after he was released, becoming a Deck agent. After he saved Card Shark's life during a police raid on one of the organization's illegal gambling dens, he became one of the boss's favorites. When one of Card Shark's pet scientists invented the Electrified Gloves, Card Shark figured Patrick was the perfect person to give them to... and Deadman's Hand was born.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT**Armor**

Ballistic cloth and kevlar uniform (DEF 5 [8 against electricity], Activation Roll 14-)
Ballistic cloth and kevlar vest (DEF +3, Activation Roll 11-)

Gear: Deadman's Hand rarely carries other gear, but if he needs some can usually get whatever he needs from the organization.

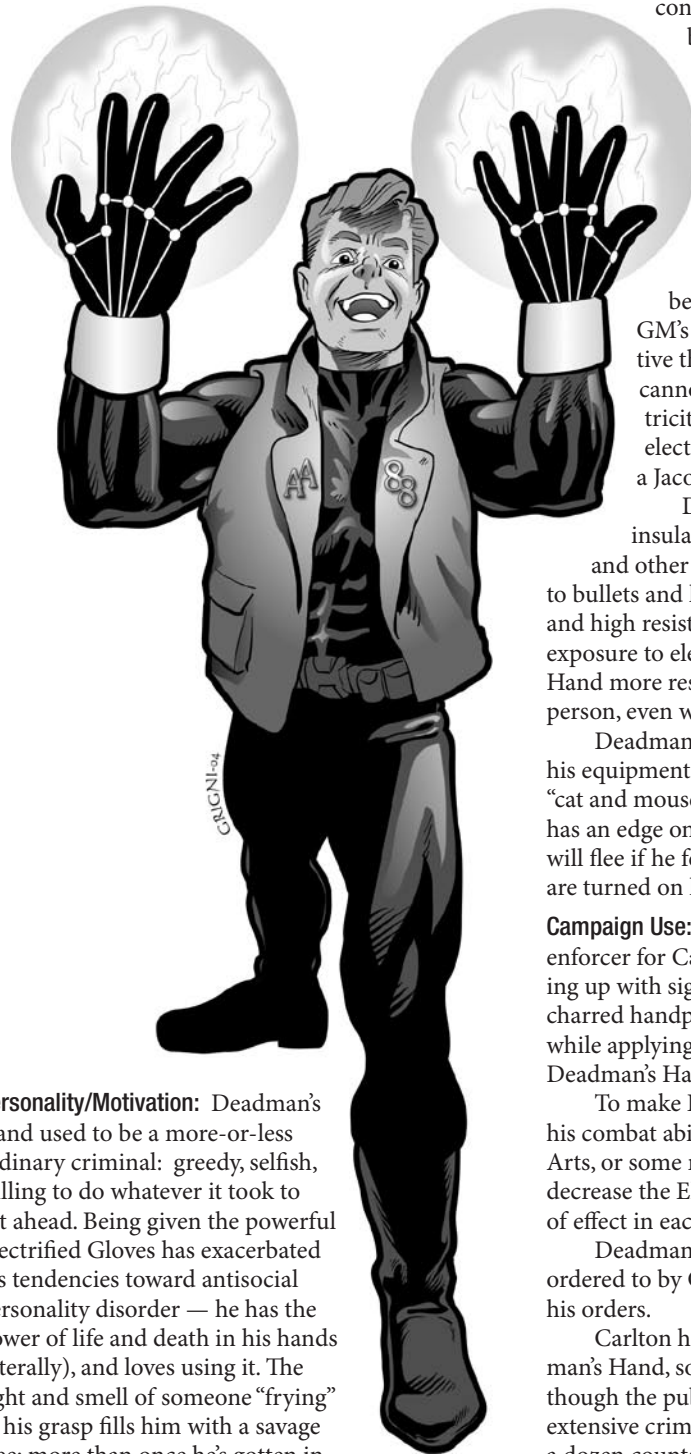
Clothing: See *Appearance*.

**DEADMAN'S HAND
PLOT SEEDS**

There's been a rash of murders by electrocution. When the PCs catch up to Deadman's Hand, he swears he didn't do it... though it looks exactly like his m.o. Is he on the level — is someone impersonating him, and if so, why? Or is it all some sort of scheme Card Shark's cooked up?

One of the PCs' street contacts tells them he used to run with Patrick Carlton and knows where they can find him now... for a hefty fee, of course. Is it a legit offer, a scam, or part of a trap set up by the Card Shark organization?

Deadman's Hand gets a better offer from the yakuza and abandons Card Shark to work for it. Not wanting to spark an underworld war by taking care of the problem himself, Card Shark decides to trick the PCs into doing it for him.



Personality/Motivation: Deadman's Hand used to be a more-or-less ordinary criminal: greedy, selfish, willing to do whatever it took to get ahead. Being given the powerful Electrified Gloves has exacerbated his tendencies toward antisocial personality disorder — he has the power of life and death in his hands (literally), and loves using it. The sight and smell of someone “frying” in his grasp fills him with a savage glee; more than once he's gotten in trouble with Card Shark for killing someone the organization needed to keep alive. If he keeps messing up, having once saved Card Shark's life won't be enough to save him.

Psychological testing performed during his periods of incarceration indicates that Deadman's Hand has a low threshold for frustration and inaction. If he sees something he wants, he takes it, or figures out a way to get it. He's temperamental, prone to fits of anger when thwarted or annoyed.

Quote: “Just wait 'til I get my hands on you...”

Powers/Tactics: Deadman's Hand relies almost entirely on a unique technological item: his Electrified Gloves, a pair of specially insulated gloves

connected to batteries in his vest, small backpack, and small “fanny pack” by wires woven into his uniform. The Gloves are controlled by switches built into them. Using the Gloves, Carlton can shock a target into unconsciousness (similar to a taser), paralyze him by causing its muscles to lock up, or simply electrocute him. However, he must be able to touch his target (or, at the GM's option, touch something conductive that his target is also touching) — he cannot “throw” or project bolts of electricity. When he uses the Gloves, arcs of electricity run up between his fingers like a Jacob's ladder.

Deadman's Hand wears a specially insulated uniform made of Kevlar, Nomex, and other materials. It provides mild resistance to bullets and knives, moderate resistance to fire, and high resistance to electrical shock (frequent exposure to electricity has also made Deadman's Hand more resistant to electricity than the average person, even without his uniform).

Deadman's Hand has a tendency to show off his equipment and combat skills. He enjoys playing “cat and mouse” with his opponents if he feels he has an edge on them. However, he's not stupid, and will flee if he feels he's outnumbered or if the tables are turned on him.

Campaign Use: Deadman's Hand is an assassin and enforcer for Card Shark. When bodies start showing up with signs of death by electrification and charred handprints where someone gripped them while applying the juice, the PCs can be certain it's Deadman's Hand's doing.

To make Deadman's Hand tougher, broaden his combat abilities — give him some Martial Arts, or some mundane weapons. To weaken him, decrease the Electrified Gloves to 45 Active Points' of effect in each slot.

Deadman's Hand doesn't Hunt people unless ordered to by Card Shark, in which case he follows his orders.

Carlton has been captured before as Deadman's Hand, so the police know his identity even though the public at large does not. He has an extensive criminal record including approximately a dozen counts of murder, many more counts of aggravated assault, and numerous lesser crimes.

Appearance: Deadman's Hand is a white man. He 5'10" and weighs about 170 pounds — he's thin, but athletic and even a touch muscular. He wears Electrified Gloves, a pair of specially insulated gloves connected to batteries in his vest, small backpack, and small “fanny pack” by wires woven into his uniform. He wears an insulated black uniform with a red vest (which provides extra protection of the torso region, though it doesn't look quite as bulky as most combat vests). On the lapels of the vest in gold are two “A"s and two “8"s, symbolic of his *nom du crime*.

JACK O' DIAMONDS				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [3]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
16	CON	12	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
14	INT	4	12-	PER Roll 12-
11	EGO	2	11-	ECV: 4
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
12	COM	1	11-	
8	PD	5		Total: 11 PD (3 rPD)
5	ED	2		Total: 8 ED (3 rED)
4	SPD	10		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
6	REC	0		
32	END	0		
26	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 76
Movement:		Running: 9"/18" Leaping: 6"/12" Swinging: 10"/20"		
Cost	Powers	END		
10	<i>Throwing Diamonds</i> : HKA ½d6 (1d6 with STR), Autofire (5 shots; +½), Ranged (+½), 30 Charges (+¼); OAF (-1), Range Based On STR (-¼)	[30]		
20	<i>Deadly Accuracy</i> : Find Weakness 13- with Throwing Diamonds <i>Martial Arts: Diamond Throwing</i> (Throwing Diamonds is default)			
	Maneuver	OCV/DCV	Rng	Damage/Effect
4	Accurate Shot	+2/-2	+0	Weapon +2 DC
3	Defensive Shot	-1/+2	+0	Weapon +2 DC
5	Far Shot	+1/-1	+4	Weapon +2 DC
3	Leg Shot	+0/-1	+0	Weapon +4 DC, Throw
4	Offensive Shot	-1/-1	+0	Weapon +4 DC
8	+2 Damage Classes (already added in)			
	<i>Martial Arts: Kung Fu</i>			
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, 25 STR
4	Dodge	+0	+5	Dodge all attacks, Abort
5	Kick	-2	+1	7d6 Strike
4	Punch	+0	+2	6d6 Strike
3	Throw	+0	+1	3d6 +v/5, Target Falls
4	<i>Tien-hsueh Strike</i> -1	+1		2d6 NND (1)
8	<i>Mask Lenses</i> : Sight Group Flash Defense (10 points); IIF (-¼)			0
5	<i>Swingline</i> : Swinging 10"; OAF (-1)			0
6	<i>Fast Runner</i> : Running +3" (9" total)			1
3	<i>Strong Leaper</i> : Leaping +3" (6" forward, 3" upward)			1

Perks

4 Fringe Benefit: Membership (lieutenant in Card Shark organization)

Talents

6 Combat Luck (3 PD/3 ED)

Skills

9 Range Skill Levels: +6 OCV versus Range Modifier with Throwing Diamonds
9 Targeting Skill Levels: +6 OCV versus Hit Location penalties with Throwing Diamonds
10 *Agile Combatant*: +3 DCV; Requires An Acrobatics Roll (-½)
3 Acrobatics 13-
3 Breakfall 13-
3 Climbing 13-
1 Computer Programming 8-
3 Contortionist 13-
3 Conversation 12-
2 Gambling (Card Games) 12-
2 KS: The Hudson City Underworld 11-
3 Lockpicking 13-
3 Persuasion 12-
3 Security Systems 12-
3 Seduction 12-
3 Shadowing 12-
3 Stealth 13-
3 Streetwise 12-
3 Tactics 12-
3 WF: Small Arms, Knives

Resource Points

6 Equipment Points: 90
5 Vehicle/Base Points: 20
10 Follower/Contact Points: 25
0 Miscellaneous Points: 0

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 213

Total Cost: 289

100+ Disadvantages

10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable; Noticed And Recognizable by Large Group)
10 Hunted: Card Shark 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
15 Hunted: Harbinger Of Justice 8- (Mo Pow, Kill)
15 Psychological Limitation: Greedy (Common, Strong)
10 Psychological Limitation: Skirtchaser (Common, Moderate)
15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Tom Lively) (Frequently, Major)
10 Social Limitation: Criminal Record (Occasionally, Major)
104 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 289

JACK O' DIAMONDS PLOT SEEDS

Jack decides he wants to be the next Card Shark... and he's not willing to wait around until the current one vacates the position. He begins secretly feeding information to the PCs, hoping they'll track Card Shark down and take him out, but not damage the organization too much.

In his civilian identity, Jack meets a female PC in her civilian identity (or a prominent female DNPC). They become friendly and start dating. What happens when they discover each other's "extracurricular activities"?

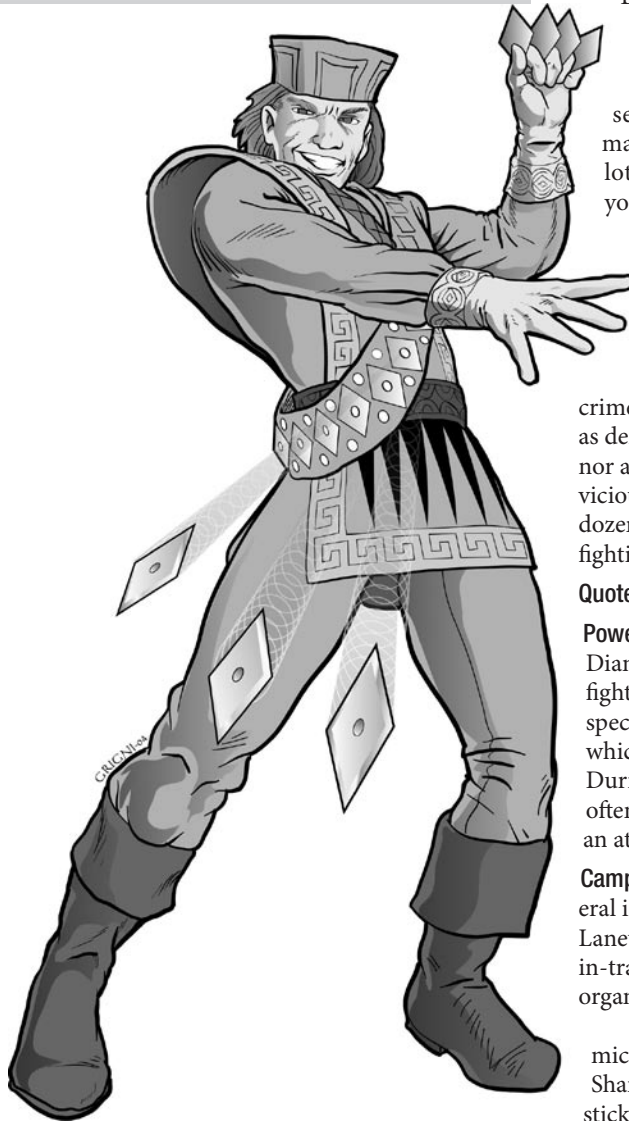
Jack o' Diamonds is in charge of one of Card Shark's ring of hijackers. During one recent theft, they stole a shipment that, unbeknownst to them, contains some potentially dangerous materials that are part of a secret government experiment. The government appeals to the PCs to recover the materials without causing a ruckus or getting the media involved.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT**Armor**

Ballistic cloth uniform (DEF 4, Activation Roll 15-)

Gear: Jack rarely carries other gear, but if he needs some can usually get whatever he needs from the organization.

Clothing: See *Appearance*.



Background/History: After Ryan DeLaney abandoned the Jack o' Diamonds identity to step into his new role as Card Shark, he needed someone to take his place. Examining the roster of his organization, he took an interest in Tom Lively, a man who'd been with Card Shark for many years after compiling an impressive criminal record for robbery, burglary, and hijacking on his own. More importantly, Lively had been a gymnast and track runner in high school, and had kept in shape.

Lively got the order to report to the boss's office and did so immediately. He spent the next year in intensive training, learning not only how to fight like Jack o' Diamonds, but how to walk, talk, and live the part of someone who was an important part of a major criminal organization. It was a grueling regimen, but Lively came through with flying colors and assumed the mantle of one of Card

Shark's lieutenants. Since then he's proven his worth time and again, earning Card Shark's trust (as much as anyone can) for his loyalty and ability to make money for the organization.

Personality/Motivation: Compared to the somewhat more complex psychological profiles of the likes of Deadman's Hand or Pokerface, Jack o' Diamonds is a pretty simple guy. He wants money, luxuries, influence, and women — not necessarily in that order. In many ways he's your typical selfish criminal; what sets him apart is that he's got the discipline to make something of his potential and become a lot more skilled, dangerous, and powerful than your average thief or killer.

Jack's a surprisingly sensitive soul for a Card Shark employee. Although he had little formal education when he was growing up, he enjoys classical music, fine foods, and quality literature (Greek drama is a particular favorite). He dislikes "extreme" crimes such as torture and rape, which he regards as demeaning and pointless. But he's neither a fop nor a coward — he's administered more than one vicious beating in his life, and killed well over a dozen men. He just prefers to give his victims a fighting chance before he kills them.

Quote: "A Diamond is a girl's best friend."

Powers/Tactics: Through intense training, Jack o' Diamonds has become an expert hand-to-hand fighter and acrobat. His weapons of choice are specially-crafted diamond-shaped throwing blades which he throw singly or in groups of up to five. During combat he dodges and moves around a lot, often acting as a "decoy" to set an opponent up for an attack by one of his allies.

Campaign Use: See the introductory text for general information. Like his predecessor Ryan DeLaney, Jack o' Diamonds makes a good Card Shark-in-training in case your PCs kill DeLaney and the organization needs someone to take his place.

To make Jack tougher, give him some gimmicked throwing diamonds similar to Card Shark's cards: flare diamonds; acid diamonds; stickyfoam diamonds; and so forth. To weaken him, remove some or all of his Martial Maneuvers and/or his Find Weakness, and/or reduce his Characteristics a little.

Jack o' Diamonds doesn't Hunt people unless ordered to by Card Shark, in which case he follows his orders.

Tom Lively has a criminal record of staggering variety and length. He has committed thefts, robberies, hijackings, assaults, and scores of petty crimes. Jack o' Diamonds is wanted for a number of robberies and two murders, but no one in the law enforcement community has yet connected Lively with the Jack o' Diamonds identity.

Appearance: Jack is a white man, 5'9" tall and about 175 pounds, with an athletic, muscular build. He wears a rather gaudy costume styled after the Jacks in a deck of playing cards.

ONE-EYED JACK

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [2]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
13	CON	6	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
14	COM	2	12-	
6	PD	4		Total: 6 PD (0 rPD)
6	ED	3		Total: 6 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	2		Phases: 4, 8, 12
5	REC	0		
26	END	0		
22	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 67
Movement: Running: 4"/8" Leaping: 1"/2"				
Cost	Powers		END	
7	<i>Gimmicked Walking Stick (Weighted):</i> HA +3d6; IAF (-½), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)		1	
8	<i>Gimmicked Walking Stick (Concealed Dagger):</i> HKA 1d6-1 (1d6+1 with STR); IAF (-½)		1	
11	<i>Gimmicked Walking Stick (Concealed Gun):</i> RKA 1½d6, Armor Piercing (+½); IAF (-½), STR Minimum (7; STR Doesn't Add/Subtract Damage; -1), Beam (-¼), 8 Charges (-½)		[8]	
8	<i>Mask Lenses:</i> Sight Group Flash Defense (10 points); IIF (-¼)		0	
-4	<i>Slightly Lame:</i> Running -2" (4" total)			
-1	<i>Slightly Lame:</i> Leaping -1" (1" total)			
10	<i>Lucky Bastard:</i> Luck 2d6		0	
Perks				
4	Fringe Benefit: Membership (lieutenant in Card Shark organization)			
Talents				
5	Eidetic Memory			
3	Lightning Calculator			
Skills				
3	Acting 13-			
3	Bribery 13-			
3	Bureaucratics 13-			
3	Concealment 13-			
3	Conversation 13-			
6	Gambling (Card Games, Dice Games, Sports Betting) 13-			
3	Fast Draw (Gimmicked Walking Stick Weapons) 13-			
2	Forgery (Documents) 13-			
3	High Society 13-			
1	KS: Criminal Law 8-			
2	KS: The Espionage World 11-			
3	KS: The Hudson City Underworld 13-			
2	KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-			
1	KS: The U.S. Navy 8-			
3	Persuasion 13-			
3	Seduction 13-			
5	Sleight Of Hand 14-			
3	Stealth 13-			
3	Streetwise 13-			

3 WF: Small Arms, Knives

Resource Points

6 Equipment Points: 90
 10 Vehicle/Base Points: 30
 15 Follower/Contact Points: 35
 1 Miscellaneous Points: 1

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 141**Total Cost: 208****100+ Disadvantages**

10 Hunted: Card Shark 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
 15 Hunted: Harbinger Of Justice 8- (Mo Pow, Kill)
 5 Physical Limitation: missing left eye (-1 OCV at Range) (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
 15 Psychological Limitation: Greedy; Loves Luxurious Things (Common, Strong)
 10 Psychological Limitation: Compulsive Gambler (Common, Moderate)
 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Errol Belmont) (Frequently, Major)
 38 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 208

Background/History: The first Card Shark, Emil Lagerfeld, met Errol Belmont in the Navy. The two became fast friends over a three-day marathon game of poker that Lagerfeld won by a mere two dollars. It wasn't long before Belmont was helping Lagerfeld out with his various scams and escapades. During one of their adventures, Belmont had the misfortune to suffer an injury to his left eye that left it permanently blinded. Lagerfeld soon nicknamed his friend "One-Eyed Jack."

Lagerfeld and Belmont got out of the Navy at about the same time. After Lagerfeld became Card Shark and began building his criminal empire, he got in touch with Belmont and offered to let him in on the ground floor. Belmont jumped at the chance, taking his nickname as his *nom du crime* and becoming the first of Card Shark's lieutenants. It was a perfect fit. Belmont had a head for organizational matters that made him valuable to Card Shark, who didn't care so much about the details of running a major criminal gang.

When Lagerfeld was killed, One-Eyed Jack survived... barely... and led the lieutenants as they tried to recover and rebuild. He briefly thought about trying to become the new Card Shark, but knew he lacked the physical abilities and ruthless

ONE-EYED JACK PLOT SEEDS

One-Eyed Jack goes missing. Card Shark begins tearing the town apart looking for him. The PCs have to try to stop him... and if possible, get to Jack first!

One-Eyed Jack contacts the PCs and offers to turn state's evidence, or tell them everything they want to know about Card Shark (their choice) if they'll just pick him up *tonight* and get him to safety. What's got him so spooked? Is he telling the truth, or is it a trap?

The PCs hear reports of a one-eyed man making the rounds of illegal gambling dens not associated with Card Shark. Is it One-Eyed Jack, and if so, what's he up to?

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Glock 17L	+1	+1	1d6+2	1d6-1	19	9	

Armor

Ballistic cloth suit (DEF 4, Activation Roll 15-)
 Ballistic cloth vest (DEF 1, Activation Roll 11-)

Gear: One-Eyed Jack rarely carries other gear, but if he needs some can usually get whatever he needs from the organization.

Clothing: See *Appearance*.



temperament necessary. When Ryan DeLaney put himself forward as a candidate, One-Eyed Jack recognized the wisdom of choosing him and helped persuade the others to agree. As a result, he secured himself a position in the new Card Shark's regime, since DeLaney has a habit of rewarding those who remain loyal and helpful to him.

Personality/Motivation: Like Jack o' Diamonds, One-Eyed Jack is a pretty simple soul. He's a sybarite who wants money, luxuries, all the finer things in life... and is willing to commit heinous crimes to get them. Selfish to an extreme, he usually doesn't care what happens to other people as long as he's not bothered.

One-Eyed Jack has a compulsive gambling problem, though he's usually able to keep it under control. Unlike Card Shark, normally he can resist "challenges," recognizing them for the traps they are.

Quote: "Profits are up across the board in our casinos, but we've lost three big places this year to vigilantes. It's time to stop fooling around and kill those sons of bitches."

Powers/Tactics: One-Eyed Jack is no combatant, and he knows it. His omnipresent walking stick contains several weapons (an eight-shot gun, a knife, and a weighted club), but he only uses it as a last resort. He'd rather talk his way out of a sticky situation, or run, than fight.

Campaign Use: As Card Shark's right-hand man, One-Eyed Jack may make a tempting target for the PCs. All the knowledge of Card Shark's activities locked into his brain means interrogating him could provide the information to break the organization once and for all.

If you want to make One-Eyed Jack tougher, more of a combatant, give him some Combat Skill Levels with his weapons and increase his Characteristics a little. To weaken him, get rid of his Walking Stick gun.

One-Eyed Jack doesn't Hunt people unless ordered to by Card Shark, in which case he follows his orders.

One-Eyed Jack has no criminal record. The police want him for many Card Shark-related activities, but he's never been arrested.

Appearance: One-Eyed Jack is a white male, 5'10" tall, about 180 pounds. He usually wears expensive hand-tailored men's suits. His full-face mask is completely black on the left side (where his useless eye is), and red on the right side. He covers his hands with black gloves, also finely tailored. He normally has a flower in his buttonhole, and always carries a fancy walking stick.

POKERFACE

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 [4]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
25	CON	40	14-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
12	PD	12		Total: 18 PD (6 rPD)
10	ED	7		Total: 16 ED (6 rED)
4	SPD	10		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
15	REC	22		
50	END	0		
50	STUN	7		Total Characteristics Cost: 180

Movement: Running: 7"/14"

Cost	Powers	END
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28	<i>Necksnapper:</i> HKA 2d6, NND (defense is rigid rPD on the neck, or anything else that prevents the neck/head from being turned and twisted the right way; +1), Does BODY (+1); Must Follow Grab (-½), Must Target The Head (-1), No STR Bonus (-½), Requires A STR Roll (no Active Point penalty; -¼)			9
	<i>Martial Arts: Commando Training, Dirty Infighting</i>			
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
3	Aikido Throw	+0	+1	6d6 + v/5, Target Falls
4	Boxing Cross	+0	+2	8d6
4	Choke	-2	+0	Grab One Limb, 3d6 NND (2)
4	Escape	+0	+0	45 STR vs. Grabs
4	Eye Gouge	-1	-1	Sight Group Flash 6d6
4	Hold	-1	-1	Grab Three Limbs, 40 STR
4	Judo Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, 40 STR
4	Karate "Chop"	-2	+0	HKA 1d6 (2d6 with STR)
4	Kung Fu Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Low Blow	-1	+1	3d6 NND(3)
5	Roundhouse	-2	+1	10d6 Strike
3	Tackle	+0	-1	6d6 +v/5 Strike; You Fall, Target Falls
8	+2 Damage Classes (already added in)			
34	<i>Deadened Nerves:</i> Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%; Requires A CON Roll (no Active Point penalty; -¼), STUN Only (-½)			0
12	<i>Unimpressed:</i> +25 PRE; Only To Resist Presence Attacks (-1)			0
10	<i>Unimpressed:</i> Power Defense (30 points); Only Works Against Limited Type Of Attack (Drains or other reductions of PRE; -2)			0
2	<i>Fast:</i> Running +1" (7" total)			1
1	<i>Long-Lived:</i> Life Support (Longevity: ages at half normal rate)			0

Perks

4 Fringe Benefit: Membership (lieutenant in Card Shark organization)

Talents

12 Combat Luck (6 PD/6 ED)
5 Rapid Healing
10 Resistance (10 points)

Skills

16 +2 with All Combat
6 +2 with Firearms
3 Combat Driving 13-
3 Concealment 12-
3 Fast Draw (Small Arms) 13-
2 Gambling (Card Games) 12-
5 Interrogation 14-
2 CK: Hudson City 11-
3 KS: The Hudson City Underworld 12-
3 KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 12-
2 KS: The Vice World 11-
3 Lockpicking 13-
1 Mechanics 8-
3 Paramedics 12-
3 Security Systems 12-
3 Shadowing 12-
3 Stealth 13-
5 Streetwise 14-
3 Tactics 12-
1 Tracking 8-
5 TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Basic Parachuting, SCUBA, Two-Wheeled Motorized Ground Vehicles
7 WF: Small Arms, Blades, Flamethrowers, General Purpose Machine Guns, Grenade Launchers, Shoulder-Fired Weapons

Resource Points

18 Equipment Points: 150
10 Vehicle/Base Points: 30
10 Follower/Contact Points: 25
0 Miscellaneous Points: 0

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 296

Total Cost: 476

100+ Disadvantages

10 Distinctive Features: no facial expression (Concealable With Effort; Noticed And Recognizable)
10 Hunted: Card Shark 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
15 Hunted: Harbinger Of Justice 8- (Mo Pow, Kill)
5 Physical Limitation: impaired sense of touch (-1 on DEX-based Skills and relevant DEX Rolls) (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
20 Psychological Limitation: Casual Killer (Very Common, Strong)
15 Psychological Limitation: Sadist (Common, Strong)
15 Psychological Limitation: Misogynist (Common, Strong)
20 Reputation: Card Shark's sadistic enforcer, 14- (Extreme)
15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Mark Knight) (Frequently, Major)

POKERFACE
PLOT SEEDS

A gang of thugs displaying unusual resilience begins terrorizing Hudson City. Suspecting some connection to Project: Durable, Pokerface manipulates the PCs into checking things out so he can follow their trail and find out what's going on.

A government contact reveals to the PCs that Pokerface "may" have gotten his powers as the result of a government experiment — and offers to provide them with a special drug that may counteract his abilities, at least temporarily. But in exchange, he wants the PCs to do something they'd really rather not do. Are they willing to compromise their ethics and/or endanger themselves to get the drug?

Card Shark decides to see if he can re-create the effects of Project: Durable... and he thinks the PCs would make perfect guinea pigs.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

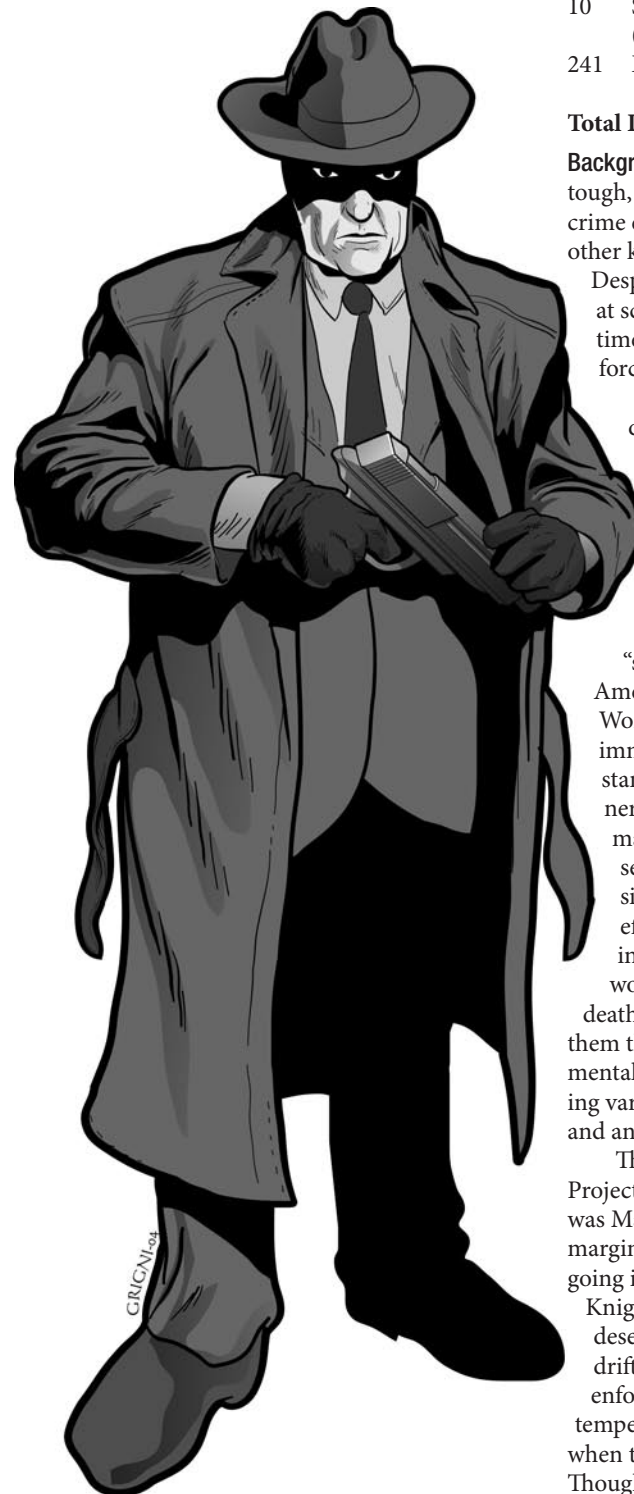
Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
S&W 4506	+1	+0	2d6-1	1d6	8	8	Carries 2, 3 clips each
Ruger P94	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	8	Carries 2, 2 clips each
Touch Taser	+0	—	8d6 NND	—	8	—	
Combat Knife	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	—	8	Can Be Thrown
Brass Knuckles	+0	—	2d6 N	—	—	5	

Armor

Usually none, but may add some light body armor (3-6 DEF) in appropriate circumstances

Gear: Pokerface rarely carries other gear, but if he needs some can usually get whatever he needs from the organization.

Clothing: See Appearance.



- 10 Social Limitation: Criminal Record (Occasionally, Major)
- 241 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 476

Background/History: Mark Knight grew up strong, tough, and a bully. He got mixed up in petty street crime early — everything from shaking down other kids for their lunch money to joyriding.

Despite being fairly intelligent, he made no effort at schoolwork, and nearly flunked out several times. When he graduated, he joined the armed forces rather than going to college.

He was soon sent to Vietnam, where he distinguished himself with his total disregard for the value of human life. He did so well that the government decided he might make an excellent “volunteer” for a project it had in mind. When his medical profile fit the project’s needs, Mark “volunteered.”

Project: Durable was one of many “super-soldier” projects instituted by the American armed forces since the beginning of World War II. Its goal was to render soldiers immune to pain and fatigue by blocking substantial parts of their nerve endings. Certain nerves, such as those in the hands, were left mainly intact. The project was scrapped after several years due to numerous unanticipated side effects that compromised the subjects’ efficiency and could not be corrected. These included a leprosy-like inability to detect wounds and infections, soldiers starving to death because their nervous systems didn’t tell them they were hungry, and most commonly mental instability caused by the treatments (including various manifestations of violent hyperactivity and antisocial personality disorder).

The only “volunteer” who came through Project: Durable physically and mentally intact was Mark Knight — or at least, he emerged only marginally more mentally unstable than he’d been going in. Rather than stay in the armed forces, Knight decided to make some real money. He deserted and returned to the States, where he drifted into the underworld as an assassin and enforcer. His unique facial characteristics and temperament made him a natural as “Pokerface” when the first Card Shark began recruiting help. Though not normally a very social guy, Pokerface

fit in well with the Card Shark organization and has remained with it ever since.

Personality/Motivation: Pokerface has all the personality (and facial expression) of a killer shark. He maims or kills anyone who bothers him... or even people who just happen to catch his eye, since he enjoys inflicting pain in and of itself. He particularly likes to hurt women, and often displays considerable imagination in finding ways to do so. There's nothing likable about him from the sane person's point of view.

Quote: None. Pokerface does not usually speak, because the weakness of his throat and facial muscles gives him a harsh, unappealing voice which is difficult to understand.

Powers/Tactics: Pokerface's abilities — his strength, swiftness of reaction, resistance to pain, and retarded aging — result primarily from the "super-soldier" treatments he underwent as part of Project: Durable in 1970. On top of these abilities, Pokerface is a highly trained and clever soldier, with a lot of combat and tactical skills. He can stand up to interrogation easily, so he often sacrifices himself to let his comrades escape. They repay the favor by breaking him out of jail as soon as they get the chance, though he can do hard time without any problems. He's also good at "playing possum," since most people don't realize how quickly he wakes up after being knocked out (*i.e.*, how phenomenally high his REC is).

The treatments that deadened Pokerface's nerves had a number of side effects. His sense of touch is impaired (though not too badly, and he's trained himself to overcome the worst of these effects). Like a leper, he's susceptible to infection, gangrene, and other problems because he doesn't know he's hurt. He's permanently impotent (a condition that hasn't exactly done anything to improve his attitude toward women). He can't speak clearly

or swallow easily because the muscles in his neck and throat don't work quite as well as they should. He has to force himself to eat at regular intervals because he doesn't feel hunger. All in all, it's a high price to pay for the ability to not feel pain — but he hasn't regretted paying it for so much as a minute.

Campaign Use: See the introductory text for general information. In addition to being an enforcer and assassin for Card Shark's organization, Pokerface is often a "wild card" in combat because he's so hard to put down and keep down. Just when the PCs think he's out for the count, he's likely to wake up and shoot them in the back.

To make Pokerface tougher, give him some more super-skills and Talents, or even increase his SPD to 5. To weaken him, tone down his defensive and recuperative abilities a little — don't get rid of them, because they're his "schtick," but make them less effective.

Pokerface doesn't Hunt people unless ordered to by Card Shark, in which case he follows his orders.

Pokerface is wanted on twelve counts of murder, 27 counts of aggravated assault, and eight counts of kidnapping. He has an extensive criminal record from his pre-Army days, but thanks to Card Shark's influence and bribes all those records have been removed from the system and destroyed — so the cops don't know who he is. His Army records still exist, but are sealed and designated Top Secret, since the government doesn't want Project: Durable to become public knowledge.

Appearance: Pokerface is a white male, 6'2" tall, 215 pounds, with a build indicating toughness and the skill to use the strength his muscles provide. He has *no* facial expression; his face is always as blank as a refrigerator door. He wears a dark suit, a tan overcoat, and a fedora. He conceals his guns under his coat.

DECK AGENT

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	Lift 150 kg; 2½d6 [3]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
13	CON	6	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
13	PRE	3	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6
10	COM	0	11-	
4	PD	1		Total: 4 PD (0 rPD)
3	ED	0		Total: 3 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	6		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
26	END	0		
24	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 31

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost Powers **END**

	<i>Martial Arts: Commando Training</i>			
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
3	Aikido Throw	+0	+1	2½d6 + v/5, Target Falls
4	Boxing Cross	+0	+2	4½d6
4	Choke	-2	+0	Grab One Limb, 2d6 NND (2)
4	Kung Fu Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort

Perks

- 1 Fringe Benefit: Membership (Card Shark organization)

Skills

- 3 Concealment 11-
- 1 KS: The Hudson City Underworld 8-
- 2 PS: Card Shark Agent 11-
- 3 Stealth 12-
- 3 Streetwise 12-
- 3 WF: Small Arms, Knives
- 9 Choose 9 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Acting, Breakfall, Bribery, Bureaucratics, Bugging, Combat Driving, Combat Skill Levels, Computer Programming, Conversation, Deduction, Demolitions, Electronics, Fast Draw, Forgery, Gambling, Interrogation, Lockpicking, Martial Arts, Mechanics, Paramedics, Persuasion, Security Systems, Shadowing, Sleight Of Hand, Systems Operation, Tactics, Teamwork, Weapon Familiarity, any Background Skill

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
9mm Pistol	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	12	8	Carries 2 clips
.45 Pistol	+0	+0	2d6-1	1d6	8	10	Carries 2 clips
Combat Knife	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	—	8	Can Be Thrown
Brass Knuckles	+0	—	2d6 N	—	—	5	

Armor

Ballistic cloth uniform (DEF 3; Activation Roll 15-)

Gear: As appropriate for mission, but an agent almost always has a cell phone, walkie-talkie, radio headset, or other appropriate means of communicating with other agents and his commander.

Clothing: See *Appearance*.

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 40

Total Cost: 71

50+ Disadvantages

- 5 Distinctive Features: Card Shark uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)
- 10 Hunted: Card Shark 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Amoral And Greedy (or a similar criminal motivation) (Common, Strong)
- 20 Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)
- 10 Social Limitation: Criminal Record (Occasionally, Major)

Total Disadvantage Points: 110

Description: This character sheet represents a typical Deck agent — the rank-and-file members of Card Shark's organization. Referring to them as "agents" is a touch of bravado on Card Shark's part, since they're nothing more than trained street thugs with special uniforms, but it improves morale.

The Deck agent has 29 points' worth of Disadvantages unspent, if you'd like to improve any of his abilities or give him more Skills to represent his pre-Card Shark criminal career. In some cases, you may want to remove the *Criminal Record* Disadvantage — while the vast majority of Deck agents have criminal records, they don't all have to.

Appearance: Deck agents typically dress like normal men and women on a day-to-day basis, as befits whatever job they actually do. If given time



to prepare, they wear dark blue jumpsuits with dull red combat vests; the jumpsuits have identification patches on the upper arm. The agents carry a variety of pistols, submachine guns, and assault rifles, depending on the situation.

FACE CARD AGENT

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [3]
16	DEX	18	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
15	CON	10	12-	
11	BODY	2	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
10	COM	0	11-	
5	PD	2		Total: 5 PD (0 rPD)
4	ED	1		Total: 4 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	4		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
30	END	0		
27	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 50

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost Powers

Martial Arts: Commando Training

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
3	Aikido Throw	+0	+1	3d6 + v/5, Target Falls
4	Boxing Cross	+0	+2	5d6 Strike
4	Choke	-2	+0	Grab One Limb, 2d6 NND (2)
4	Escape	+0	+0	30 STR vs. Grabs
4	Hold	-1	-1	Grab Three Limbs, 25 STR
4	Judo Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, 25 STR
4	Kung Fu Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort

Perks

- 3 Fringe Benefit: Membership (Card Shark organization)

Skills

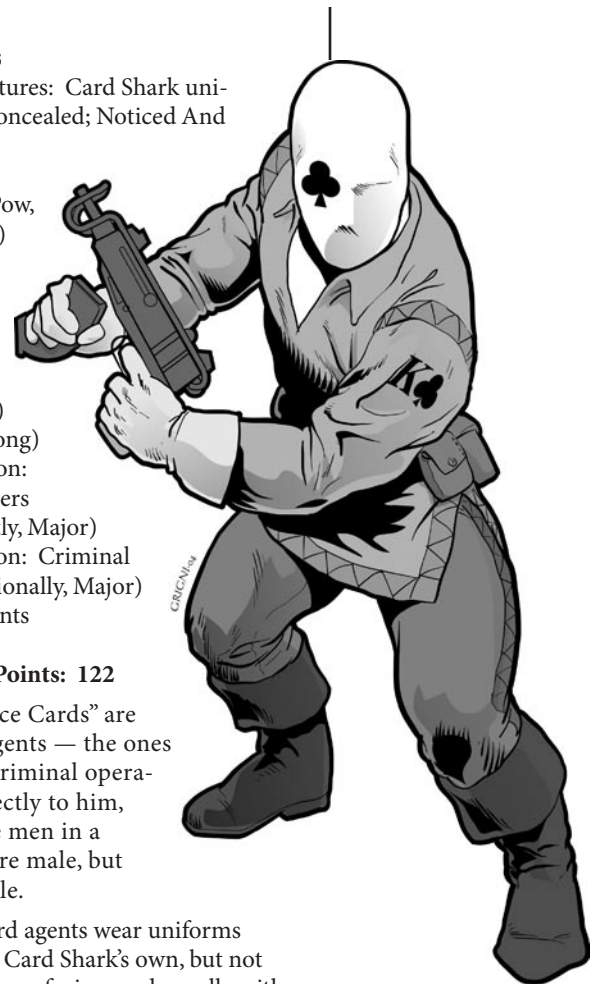
- 8 +1 with All Combat
- 3 Bribery 12-
- 3 Concealment 12-
- 2 KS: The Hudson City Underworld 11-
- 2 PS: Card Shark Agent 11-
- 3 Stealth 12-
- 3 Streetwise 12-
- 3 WF: Small Arms, Knives
- 15 Choose 15 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Acting, Breakfall, Bureaucrat-ics, Bugging, Combat Driving, Combat Skill Levels, Computer Programming, Conversation, Cryptography, Deduction, Demolitions, Electronics, Fast Draw, Forgery, Gambling, Interrogation, Lockpicking, Martial Arts, Mechanics, Mimicry, Paramedics, Persuasion, Security Systems, Seduction, Shadowing, Sleight Of Hand, Systems Operation, Tactics, Teamwork, Weapon Familiarity, any Background Skill

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 72

Total Cost: 122

50+ Disadvantages

- 5 Distinctive Features: Card Shark uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)
- 10 Hunted: Card Shark 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Amoral And Greedy (or a similar criminal motivation) (Common, Strong)
- 20 Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)
- 10 Social Limitation: Criminal Record (Occasionally, Major)
- 12 Experience Points



Total Disadvantage Points: 122

Description: The "Face Cards" are Card Shark's chief agents — the ones who run the major criminal operations and report directly to him, sort of like the made men in a Mafia family. Most are male, but the Queens are female.

Appearance: Face Card agents wear uniforms styled something like Card Shark's own, but not enough so as to cause confusion, and usually with a few flourishes or other touches reminiscent of the face card that designates them. The Queens wear domino masks in the color of their suits, the others wear white full face masks with their suit symbol over the right eye.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
9mm Pistol	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	12	8	Carries 2 clips
.45 Pistol	+0	+0	2d6-1	1d6	8	10	Carries 2 clips
SMG	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	32	12	AF5
Combat Knife	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	—	8	Can Be Thrown
Brass Knuckles	+0	—	2d6 N	—	—	5	

Armor

Ballistic cloth and kevlar uniform (DEF 4; Activation Roll 15-)

Gear: As appropriate for mission, but an agent almost always has a cell phone, walkie-talkie, radio headset, or other appropriate means of communicating with other agents and his commander.

Clothing: See *Appearance*.

OTHER VILLAINS



THE CAINITE

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [3]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
20	CON	20	13-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
30	PRE	30	15-	PRE Attack: 6d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
6	PD	3		Total: 9 PD (3 rPD)
6	ED	2		Total: 9 ED (3 rED)
5	SPD	30		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
10	REC	6		
40	END	0		
33	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 165

Movement: Running: 9"/18"

Cost Powers **END**

28	<i>Necksnapper:</i> HKA 2d6, NND (defense is rigid rPD on the neck, or anything else that prevents the neck/head from being turned and twisted the right way; +1), Does BODY (+1); Must Follow Grab (-½), Must Target The Head (-1), No STR Bonus (-½), Requires A STR Roll (no Active Point penalty; -¼)	9
15	<i>He's Got A Strong Punch For Such A Skinny Guy:</i> HA +3d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)	0
33	<i>Nerve Strikes And Touches:</i> Energy Blast 4d6, NND (defense is rPD over vital spots; +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); No Range (-½)	0
15	<i>The Picture Of Sheer Terror:</i> Drain PRE ½d6, Area Of Effect (8" Radius; +1¾), Penetrating (+½), Personal Immunity (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Always On (-½)	0
7	<i>Quickly-Building Terror:</i> +2 SPD; Only To Use Picture Of Sheer Terror (in Segments 4 and 11; -2)	0
36	<i>Doesn't Feel Much Pain:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, 50%, Resistant; Requires A CON Roll (no Active Point penalty; -¼) plus Physical Damage Reduction, 25%, Resistant; Requires A CON Roll (no Active Point penalty; -¼)	0
6	<i>Swift:</i> Running +3" (9" total)	1
6	<i>Contortionist's Feet:</i> Extra Limbs (feet usable as hands), Inherent (+¼)	0

5 *Perching:* Clinging (normal STR); Requires A Climbing Roll (-½), Only To "Perch" (-½) 0

Talents

8 Deadly Blow: HKA +2d6 with Knives 2
6 Combat Luck (3 PD/3 ED)
4 Double-Jointed

Skills

16 +2 with All Combat
3 Acrobatics 13-
3 Breakfall 13-
3 Climbing 13-
3 Computer Programming 13-
9 Contortionist 16-
3 Deduction 13-
3 Demolitions 13-
3 Interrogation 15-
3 KS: Layman's Arcane And Occult Lore 13-
6 KS: General Knowledge And Trivia 16-
3 Lipreading 13-
2 SS: Human Anatomy 11-
9 Stealth 16-
10 Two-Weapon Fighting (HTH)
6 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Small Arms

Resource Points

0 Equipment Points: 60
0 Vehicle/Base Points: 10
0 Follower/Contact Points: 5
0 Miscellaneous Points: 0

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 252

Total Cost: 417

100+ Disadvantages

20 Enraged: for pretty much any reason that takes his fancy (Very Common), go 11-, recover 14-
20 Hunted: FBI 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture/Kill)
20 Hunted: HCPD 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture/Kill)
15 Physical Limitation: Mute (Frequently; Greatly Impairing)
25 Psychological Limitation: Homicidal Maniac (Very Common, Total)
20 Reputation: insane serial killer, 14- (Extreme)
10 Social Limitation: Criminal Record (Occasionally, Major)
187 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 417

Background/History: In 1976 a small boy, no more than two-and-a-half years old, was left on the steps of the Wainwright Orphanage. There was no note or explanation, and the boy seemed unable to speak, so the Orphanage took him in and named him “Norman Smith.”

Smith grew up in the Orphanage, but never truly fit in there. He was a constant discipline problem, never obeying his teachers or the Orphanage staff if he could find a way not to. The only thing he cared about was playing malicious pranks on anyone, child or adult, who seemed a worthwhile target. A series of social workers and psychologists treated him, but none of them could get at the root of his difficulties... or even really find any way to relate to him at all. He was as strange and distant as an insect.

In the summer of 1992, a psychologist named Kevin Yancy began treating Smith. On August 18, Orphanage personnel heard a high-pitched, ululating scream come from Dr. Yancy’s office. They burst in to find Smith sitting naked against the wall. He was covered in blood, and strange, bloody symbols adorned most of the walls. Doctor Yancy’s raped, mutilated body was stuffed under his desk, and the penknife used to kill him lay on the floor nearby. When the authorities arrived and addressed Smith by name, he screamed, “That’s not my name!” He never again answered to the name “Norman Smith,” and refused to tell anyone what his name “really” was. No one understood what the symbols on the wall meant, and they remain undeciphered to this day.

“Smith” stood mute at trial. The court judged him insane and sentenced him to Toddberry Asylum, where he was carefully watched. He never caused any problems unless brought within arm’s reach of another inmate, in which case he attacked with unmitigated fury. He killed two of them before the Asylum staff began keeping him completely isolated.

In 1998, “Smith” was assigned to the care of Dr. Raphael Berlozzi, a psychiatrist. Doctor Berlozzi treated him for several months, seeking to discover and address the root causes of his psychosis. On October 31 of that year, shortly after midnight, he sedated his patient and had him taken to the asylum’s operating theater. In a brief procedure, he surgically removed “Smith’s” tongue, then turned the scalpel on himself, slitting his own jugular vein. An examination of his notes by the authorities revealed that beginning in August they were written in an unknown language, possibly related to Etruscan, which has so far defied all attempts at translation.

In the resulting confusion, “Smith” escaped from the Asylum, killing a guard in the process. He disappeared into the Hudson City underworld and has remained at liberty ever since, occasionally surfacing to commit some bizarre murder or other crime. During encounters with law enforcement — once an HCPD cop named Angela Brindisi, once with the Headless Hangman — he identified himself as “the Cainite,” and the press has used that name for him ever since. His present whereabouts and intentions are unknown... though undoubtedly they won’t remain that way for long.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Scalpel	+0	—	1 point	0	—	3	Can Be Thrown
Armor							
None							

Gear: Usually none, but whatever he thinks he needs for the situation at hand

Clothing: Whatever strikes his fancy (often including clothes taken from his murder victims)



Personality/Motivation: Prior to the removal of his tongue, the Cainite accused one of his doctors of “elevating the Machine-God above the Levitanan Urge” — his way of saying they relied on science (psychology) instead of moral judgment. Many who have studied him have taken this statement to indicate that the Cainite sees himself as some sort of embodiment of Evil, though others have observed that that analysis seems rather straightforward and simpleminded for so psychologically complex a person.

Whatever his true history or motivations, the Cainite’s actions speak for themselves. He revels in acts of depravity, chaos, and destruction, often going so far as to mutilate or violate the corpses of his victims. At times he lashes out for no reason,

THE CAINITE PLOT SEEDS

Someone's killing prostitutes down near the Strip. The murders are all done the same way, with a series of small knife cuts that indicate torture. Is this the Cainite's work, or that of someone else?

A player character begins receiving letters and e-mails from someone who claims to be the Cainite. Each one counts down another day to the hero's supposed death. Is this a real threat, or someone's sick joke?

The Cainite begins killing people he feels embody the Seven Cardinal Virtues (Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance, Faith, Hope, and Love [Charity]). The heroes have to figure out who his next victim will be and stop him... preferably without getting killed themselves.

then quickly lapses back to a state of calm when his violence has achieved its end. (His "Enraged" represents this tendency.) He seems to have a body of symbolism whose true meaning is known only to himself (though experts have written thousands of pages of analysis trying to "read" his "writing"). By any criteria, he is both deeply disturbed and very, very dangerous.

Quote: None. The Cainite has no tongue and cannot speak, though he can make some sounds (such as chilling howls or a cackling quasi-laughter).

Powers/Tactics: The Cainite has a swiftness and strength born of insanity (or, perhaps, Evil...), and he makes fiendishly clever use of them on his victims. He prefers to approach from stealth, often using his "perching" ability to lurk above an unsuspecting foe, then drop down on him. His favored weapons are blades, particularly surgical scalpels, with which he inflicts precise, lethal wounds. The economy of his attacks suggests to some a ballet dancer or gymnast more than a serial killer.

The Cainite has such a *wrongness* about him that his mere presence can terrify even the bravest men. In game terms, this is represented with his *The Picture Of Sheer Terror* power, which reduces the PRE of everyone around him by 1-3 points on every one of his Phases (and don't forget the +2 SPD he has with the ability). Once a victim's PRE drops to low enough levels, you can consider the Cainite's mere proximity as a fear-based Presence Attack that causes the victim to panic and/or flee.

In addition to his attack skills, the Cainite is a superbly-skilled contortionist, climber, and acrobat. Although he cannot ask questions, being near him for a long period of time is so terrifying that most people can't help but blurt out informa-

tion he wants to know (this, together with various threatening gestures and actions, is how he uses his *Interrogation Skill*). He can withstand significantly more injury than the average human before feeling the effects of pain.

Campaign Use: The Cainite should be a figure of terror in your campaign. He represents a pure and unbridled sort of human depravity, one that offers no justification and accepts no explanation beyond the bounds of Good and Evil. The mere mention of his name should be enough to put your players in a somber, serious mood, and you should adjust his abilities to make him frightening enough to do this. For example, to make him more of a threat to a group of PC vigilantes or cops, you might increase his Damage Reduction or SPD; if he's already too tough, reduce his SPD to 4 and get rid of one or two of his attack abilities.

Few characters should frighten a PC more as a Hunted than the Cainite. He's got the patience of Job and the cleverness of Satan, and he'll use both to pick the most opportune moment to attack his foe. His attack will not be swift; he prefers to enjoy his enemies' suffering before their end. And if a hero presents too great a challenge, well, his loved ones are probably easier prey...

The Cainite is wanted by the HCPD and the FBI for nearly two dozen murders they can definitely connect him to, and is a suspect in almost fifteen more.

Appearance: The Cainite is a white male, 5'11" tall and noticeably slender and lanky. He has unruly black hair but no facial hair. His eyes are likewise dark. He has no tongue. He wears whatever clothing he feels like — often garments taken from his victims.

EL CONDENADO

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [3]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
20	CON	20	13-	
14	BODY	8	12-	
14	INT	4	12-	PER Roll 12-
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
11	COM	1	11-	
6	PD	3		Total: 9 PD (3 rPD)
6	ED	2		Total: 9 ED (3 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
10	REC	6		
40	END	0		
32	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 99

Movement: Running: 7"/14"

Cost Powers **END**

Martial Arts: Knife-fighting

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage/Effect
4 Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4 Dodge	—	+5	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
4 Foist	+2	+0	Weapon +2 DC Strike
3 Grab	+0	-1	Grab One Limb, +10 to STR for holding on
4 Slashes	+0	+2	Weapon +2 DC Strike
5 Stabs	-2	+1	Weapon +4 DC Strike
5 Thrusts	+1	+3	Weapon Strike
2 <i>Quick On His Feet:</i>	Running +1" (7" total) 1		

Talents

6 Combat Luck (3 PD/3 ED)

Skills

8	+1 with All Combat
10	+2 with Ranged Combat
16	+8 versus Range Modifier with Firearms
3	Climbing 13-
3	Combat Driving 13-
1	Demolitions 8-
1	Lockpicking 8-
1	Security Systems 8-
7	Shadowing 14-
3	Stealth 13-
4	Survival (Desert, Temperate/Subtropical) 12-
3	Tactics 12-

- 4 TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Equines, Two-Wheeled Motorized Ground Vehicles
- 4 WF: Small Arms, Knives, Off Hand
- 3 Weaponsmith (Firearms, Muscle-Powered HTH) 12-

Resource Points

- 28 Equipment Points: 200
- 10 Vehicle/Base Points: 30
- 5 Follower/Contact Points: 15
- 0 Miscellaneous Points: 0

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 151

Total Cost: 250

100+ Disadvantages

- 20 Hunted: FBI 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)
- 20 Hunted: drug cartel (GM's choice) 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Casual Killer (Very Common, Strong)
- 10 Social Limitation: Criminal Record (Occasionally, Major)
- 80 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 250

Background/History: And so it all came down to this... his first big hit.

It started so long ago, when he was just a boy, with his grandfather teaching him to hunt. The cartel men, they saw how quick and clever he was... and how good a shot. Soon they began giving him jobs to do: drugs to carry, *federales* to look out for, things like that. As he got older, he drove for them, took care of other responsibilities.

Then they asked him to kill a man.

One of their people had betrayed them, they said, and a lesson had to be sent. He shrugged his shoulders and agreed; obedience was the route to prosperity and power. He did the job cleanly, with one shot, and they paid him well. Twice after that, they called upon his special talents.

There came a day when the group of them, the leaders of the cartel, turned on one of their own. Galíndez had betrayed them, they said — taken money for himself that belonged to them all. In such a society, only trust held men together, and when one of them turned his back on that trust, there could be only one response.

So now he was here, on the hillside above the Galíndez *hacienda*, hoping to finish the job and escape before the rain set in. The man was clearly

**EL CONDENADO
PLOT SEEDS**

The PCs get word that someone's hired El Condenado to take them (or one of them) down. Who put out the contract on them, and how can they deal with the problem without ruining whatever investigation or mission they're already on?

El Condenado challenges the PC who's most like him (the best shot, and/or the one with sniper-type skills) to a "match." He'll pick a target, and the PC has to find him and shoot him before he gets off his own shot. The name of the first victim is appended to the letter announcing the "contest."

An "unnamed" intelligence agency approaches the PCs. It needs a top-notch, totally deniable sniper for a job. It wants El Condenado, and it wants the PCs to get him for it.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

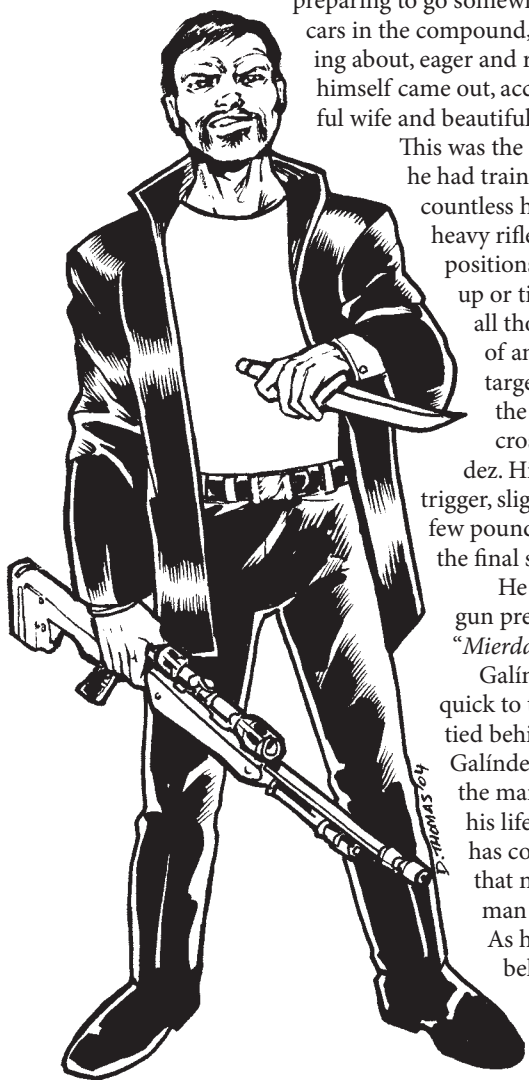
Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Barrett 82A1	+2	+10	3d6	1d6	1	15	x4 Telescopic Sight
H&K MP5	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	12	AF5
H&K P7M13	+1	+0	1d6+2	1d6-1	13	9	
Combat Knife	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	—	8	Can Be Thrown, carries 2-3

Armor

Level II-A (DEF 6), Activation Roll 11-

Gear: As needed for mission or expected opposition

Clothing: Paramilitary garb (fatigues and such)



preparing to go somewhere; there were several cars in the compound, and his men were milling about, eager and restless. Then Galíndez himself came out, accompanied by his beautiful wife and beautiful young daughter.

This was the moment! This was what he had trained for so long, all those countless hours spent holding a heavy rifle in a dozen different positions so he wouldn't cramp up or tire at the worst moment, all those thousands of rounds of ammunition fired at the targets he set up far out in the desert. He brought the crosshairs to bear on Galíndez. His finger tightened on the trigger, slightly, smoothly, that first few pounds of pressure to make the final squeeze easier....

He felt the muzzle of a gun pressed against his head. "Mierda," he swore softly.

Galíndez's men marched him quick to the compound, his hands tied behind him with rough rope. Galíndez smiled when he saw the man who would have ended his life. "So, then, the cartel has condemned me. It seems that now I shall condemn the man they sent against me."

As he said it he laughed, and behind him dark thunderclouds roiled the sky.

They marched him again, this time out to a tree not far from the compound. He

saw them throw the rope over the branch before they yanked a burlap sack over his head. He felt the noose tightened around his neck. And then the pressure, the terrible terrible pressure, as they lifted him into the air. His scream came out as a gurgle. His body twitched helplessly.

And then — *el milagro!* There was a bright light, so bright he could see some of it even through the sack, and a thunderclap louder than any he had ever heard... and the pressure ended. He landed hard, twisting his ankle, as he gasped for breath. The already-loose ropes came off his hands quickly, and he tore off the sack. He saw Galíndez's men, blinded and deafened by the thunderbolt, stumbling around in the driving rain. And he saw the pistol one of them had dropped.

A few moments later, he crept up to the compound, gun in hand, the storm masking the sounds of his approach. Galíndez was a fool; he had sent too many men out to kill his killer, and the rest had taken shelter in their barracks. Only Galíndez and his family were in the house.

It was the work of but a minute to find Galíndez and put two bullets in his brain. When he was done with the wife and the daughter, he shot them too. Then he stole an SUV and fled, into the storm,

into the night, having taken the first true step on the path that would be his life. He had earned himself a new name: *El Condenado*, the Condemned, the man who survived the death his enemies brought against him and killed them instead.

Personality/Motivation: El Condenado is a stone-cold killer. At most times he seems like a fairly ordinary guy — laughing, fun-loving, ready to go for a cerveza and chase girls. But there's a frost that never leaves his eyes, and it doesn't take much time around him to learn that he sizes up everyone he meets as a potential victim. Anyone who annoys El Condenado is lucky to escape the assassin's presence with his life.

Quote: "Adios, puerco."

Powers/Tactics: El Condenado is an assassin, skilled at dispatching his victims in many ways. His preferred method of killing is sniping — it's quick, it's clean, and it gives him time to get away after the shot. He's trained himself to have a sniper's patience and fortitude; time and again he's had the stamina and guts to wait for the shot in situations when a lesser assassin would have cut and run.

When rifle shots aren't feasible, El Condenado is also skilled with pistols and knives; he's rarely without at least one of both (though usually they remain hidden when he's not "working"). He favors a two-knife fighting style (to gain the +1 DCV from his WF: Off Hand); he'll start slow, with Thrusts and Slashes, working his way up to Foists and Stabs when he feels he's got a good angle of attack.

El Condenado still carries in his pocket a tiny knotwork charm made from a bit of the rope Galíndez's men used to try to hang him. He believes it brings him luck.

Campaign Use: As an assassin skilled with long arms, El Condenado presents lots of possible uses in the campaign. The simplest is to send him after the PCs, but that may be too predictable. He might work better as backup or fire support for other criminals instead of as a straightforward attacker.

As a Hunter, El Condenado is patient and tenacious. He'll keep a careful watch on his quarry until he figures out a routine or a weak point in his conduct, then set up for the shot and wait. He'll wait as long as it takes.

To make El Condenado tougher, improve some of his Familiarities to full Skills, or give him additional Skills (and perhaps some more All Combat CSLs). To weaken him, reduce his Range Skill Levels and get rid of a couple of his Martial Maneuvers.

El Condenado is wanted by both the American and Mexican authorities for numerous counts of murder and related crimes.

Appearance: El Condenado is a Hispanic male. He's around 30, with an athletic build, black hair kept short, and a black moustache. He doesn't wear a uniform of any sort; he favors casual wear and leather jackets when not on the job, and paramilitary garb when stalking a target.

THE KALEIDOSCOPE MAN

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [3]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
17	CON	14	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
10	COM	0	11-	
8	PD	5		Total: 5 PD (0 rPD)
6	ED	3		Total: 6 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
8	REC	4		
34	END	0		
40	STUN	11		Total Characteristics Cost: 110

Movement: Running: 9"/18"

Cost Powers END

4	<i>Psychomorphing: Shape Shift</i> (Mental Group, Limited Group of personalities), Costs Endurance Only To Activate (+¼); Extra Time (1 Hour or more; -3), Requires An EGO Roll (-¾)			1
	<i>Martial Arts: Commando Training</i>			
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
3	Aikido Throw	+0	+1	5d6 + v/5, Target Falls
4	Boxing Cross	+0	+2	7d6 Strike
4	Choke	-2	+0	Grab One Limb, 3d6 NND (2)
4	Judo Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, 35 STR
4	Karate “Chop”	-2	+0	HKA 1d6 (2d6 with STR)
4	Kung Fu Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
8	+2 Damage Classes (already added in)			
7	<i>A Welter Of Personalities: Mental Defense</i> (10 points total)			0
6	<i>Fast: Running +3”</i> (9” total)			1
6	<i>Observant: +2 PER</i> with all Sense Groups			0
10	<i>Lucky: Luck 2d6</i>			0

Perks

5	Improved Equipment Availability: Military Equipment
10	Money: Wealthy
23	Well-Connected and Contacts (20 points' worth, most limited to a particular personality)

Talents

3	Lightsleep
3	Resistance (3 points)

Skills

16	+2 with All Combat
3	Deduction 13-
3	Disguise 13-
3	Forgery (Documents) 13-
3	KS: The Espionage World 13-
2	KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-
3	Paramedics 13-
3	Stealth 13-
8	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Small Arms, Grenade Launchers, Shoulder-Fired Weapons
2	Weaponsmith (Firearms) 13-

15	<i>Skills By Personality</i> : Variable Power Pool (Skill Pool), 12 base + 6 control cost; No Conscious Control (changes with personality change, see text; -1)	0
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Resource Points

48	Equipment Points: 300
15	Vehicle/Base Points: 40
8	Follower/Contact Points: 21
3	Miscellaneous Points: 3

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 243

Total Cost: 353

100+ Disadvantages

10	Accidental Change: from one personality to another, under appropriate circumstances as determined by GM (Uncommon), 11-
20	Hunted: CIA 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
15	Floating Hunted (see text)
20	Floating Psychological Limitation (see text)
15	Floating Psychological Limitation (see text)
15	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Leon) (Frequently, Major)
158	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 353

Background/History: Seward's dress shoes went *clop, clop* as he walked down the tiled hallway at Langley. Each *clop* was crisp and sharp, like the pleats in his pants and the look on his face. And the contents of the file he held in his hand. Yes, it was a sharp file, too sharp indeed, and now it was cutting him to pieces.

When he finally got to the unmarked door he wanted — they were all unmarked, but he'd been here often enough to know exactly which one to use — he pressed the intercom button and waited until the secretary buzzed him inside.

"Is he waiting for me?" he asked her, quietly.

"Yes," she said. She didn't look straight at him.

Seward walked across the reception room to the sturdy wooden door on the other side. He knocked lightly and then went in, knowing he was expected.

The furniture in the room was finely made — nothing but the best for the government's top employees — and the walls were decorated with military prints and photographs: Mr. Grey graduating from West Point, Mr. Grey with his unit in World War II, Mr. Grey on the deck of the *Missouri*, Mr. Grey in Korea, Mr. Grey in Vietnam, Mr. Grey at his son's graduation from West Point.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Colt M1911A	+1	+0	2d6-1	1d6	7	9	
H&K MP5	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	12	AF5
Combat Knife	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	—	8	Can Be Thrown

Armor

Varies, based on personality and mission

Gear: Varies, based on personality and mission

Clothing: Varies, based on personality and mission

SKILLS BY PERSONALITY

Each of the Kaleidoscope Man's personalities has up to 12 points' worth of Skills it obtains through his Power Pool. Here are the Skills each personality possesses:

Aquarius: Cryptography 13-, Navigation (Marine) 13-, TFs (all Wind-Powered, Motorized, and Military watercraft, and Submarines)

Buckingham: Gambling (Cards) 13-, High Society 13-, Seduction 13-, TFs (Basic Parachuting, Hanggliding, SCUBA, Skiing)

The Captain: Combat Driving 13-, Cryptography 13-, Systems Operation 13-, Tactics 13-

César: Combat Driving 13-, Demolitions 13-, Language: Spanish (completely fluent), Mechanics 13-

Ernie: CK: Hudson City 13-, Streetwise 13-, Survival (Urban) 13-

Judas: Bureaucratics 13-, Gambling (Cards) 13-, KS: World Arms Industry 11-, Language: Spanish (fluent conversation), Persuasion 13-

Kennedy: Conversation 13-, High Society 13-, Persuasion 13-, Seduction 13-

Mercury: Combat Driving 13-, Streetwise 13-, Systems Operation 13-, Tactics 13-

Mr. Hyde: Climbing 13-, Combat Driving 13-, Demolitions 13-, Gambling (Cards) 13-

Omega: Climbing 13-, Electronics 13-, Lockpicking 13-, Security Systems 13-

Pavlov: KS: The Academic World 11-, SS: Psychology 13-

Vendetta: Combat Driving 13-, Computer Programming 13-, Lockpicking 13-, Streetwise 13-

The man himself sat behind the desk at the far end of the room, older than he appeared in most of the photographs, but still obviously the same man. He was reclined in his chair, reading a report of some sort. As Seward walked up to the desk and sat down opposite him, he sat up, put down the report, and said, "Morning, Seward, how are you?" It was a friendly question, but the cold look on his face belied the friendliness.

"Just fine, sir," Seward answered.

"Good. Then do you mind telling me just what the Hell is going on with Project: Leon?"

"Yes, sir. There have been unforeseen... complications."

"Damn right there have. According to this report, we've lost how many people so far? Five?"

"Yes, sir — the director of the Project and the four scientists who assisted him. Three of them were shot, one poisoned with strychnine, one strangled. Each was killed in his home or his car."

"And you're telling me it's the *subject* of the Project that's done all this?" Mr. Grey waved the report at Seward to emphasize his point.

"That's what we suspect, sir. No one else has the knowledge to do it, except me — and I've got alibis," he added hastily.

"So what happened? What went wrong?"

Seward smiled thinly, grateful for the chance to descend into technical explanations. "Well, as you know, sir, Project: Leon was an attempt to create a "multi-taskable" intelligence agent. Following the success of the American Flag project..."

"I've seen the reports on that, Seward — and the newspaper clippings. I don't know if you can call that one a complete success."

"Errr, no, sir — what I meant was that he performed adequately in the field. We decided to attempt a slightly different task, programming a human with a dozen different personalities and careers, giving us an agent who could fit into a wide variety of environments and perform many different types of operations. The personalities selected, and the "donors" who provided the necessary information and life histories, are described in the report."

"The subject of the Project was a 13-year-old autistic boy named Leon. Using sophisticated "brainwashing" techniques and data implantation methods first developed for the American Flag project, we "erased" what little personality he had and began substituting the ones we had constructed, bits at a time. As he gained sufficient knowledge of a particular subject, we would test him, train him, and educate him further to assure that he was properly assimilating the data.

"After almost a dozen years of work, the twelve personalities had all been successfully implanted. We'd taken a thirteen-year-old mental cripple and turned him into the perfect espionage agent, a man who could effortlessly assume any one of a dozen cover identities and portray them flawlessly — because they *weren't* covers, they *were* his *actual identities*!" Seward couldn't keep the excitement out of his voice, though he knew he wasn't here to gloat — even after what had happened, he was still proud of his "pupil."

"We sent Leon into the field immediately, employing his "Omega" identity to obtain the plans for certain microchips whose capabilities interested the Agency. For several years after that, we employed Leon extensively; all of his identities saw repeated use."

"But your psychologists told you something was wrong with him, didn't they?" Mr. Grey accused.

"Not exactly, sir. They indicated he had occasional "lapses" when he accidentally switched personalities or forgot who he was. We checked him extensively, but we were never able to determine the exact cause of this phenomenon. It never endangered any of his missions."

"Until the last one." It was a statement, not a question.

"Yes, sir," Seward said sourly. "We had switched him over to his "Aquarius" personality to get him to smuggle some data into Estonia. He kept his first two check-in times, but after that — nothing. He just vanished. We assumed his mission had been uncovered and he'd been killed by Russian agents. But several months ago people associated with the project were murdered, one by one, and we now must assume that he is alive."

"So, what *happened* to him?" Mr. Grey asked exasperatedly.

"We're not sure, sir. I've had some of the Agency psychologists — top men, sir — evaluate the case, and I even called in some of the FBI's men on a pretense. Their best estimate, based on a study of his creation and the slight "deterioration" in the separation of his personalities, is that somehow the "barriers" we constructed to keep his personalities distinct have weakened, or possibly even collapsed entirely. As a result, not only is he going to fluctuate uncontrollably between one personality and another, but all of them are likely to become much more violent — possibly even sociopathic. A couple of the experts also speculated that he may have developed one or more *additional* personalities besides the ones we programmed into him. God knows what they might be, but one thing's certain — they won't be pleasant."

"Jesus," Mr. Grey said, astonished in spite of himself at the things the Agency could do — and how badly they could screw them up. "So, Seward, what do you intend to *do* about your baby?"

"We're doing our best to find him, sir, I promise you that. We've got agents on alert for him all over the world. We'll find him."

"You'd better, Seward. I can only keep this from the President for so long. If you don't find him, it's going to mean your job — and a helluva lot of lives. Get out of here and get him back."

"Yes, sir!" Seward said, then rose and turned to go.

Personality/Motivation: The Kaleidoscope Man has no set personality to speak of. Instead, he has thirteen different personalities he switches between: the twelve the CIA programmed into him, and another one, which calls itself "the Kaleidoscope Man," that arose because of the breakdown of the barriers between the other twelve and the mingling

of bits and pieces of other personalities and the programmed instructions the CIA placed in him. Although most of his personalities used to be relatively stable, now they are all violently psychotic, some moreso than others, and the Kaleidoscope Man most of all.

In game terms, the shifting of the Kaleidoscope Man's personae is represented as (a) Mental Sense Group Shape Shift, (b) floating Hunteds and Psychological Limitations, and (c) a Variable Power Pool representing Skills each personality has (in addition to ones they all have, which are bought normally). (For the Kaleidoscope Man personality, the GM should randomly choose 12 points' worth of Skills from the various personalities.) He uses Disguise to make appropriate alterations to his appearance for each personality, so it's possible for a Hunter to pursue "one of him" without knowing the other personalities are actually the same person.

Leon's personalities are:

Aquarius: A former United States Navy officer with an extensive background in ship operations and related subjects. This personality was intended for use in smuggling, investigation of enemy naval activities, and similar missions.

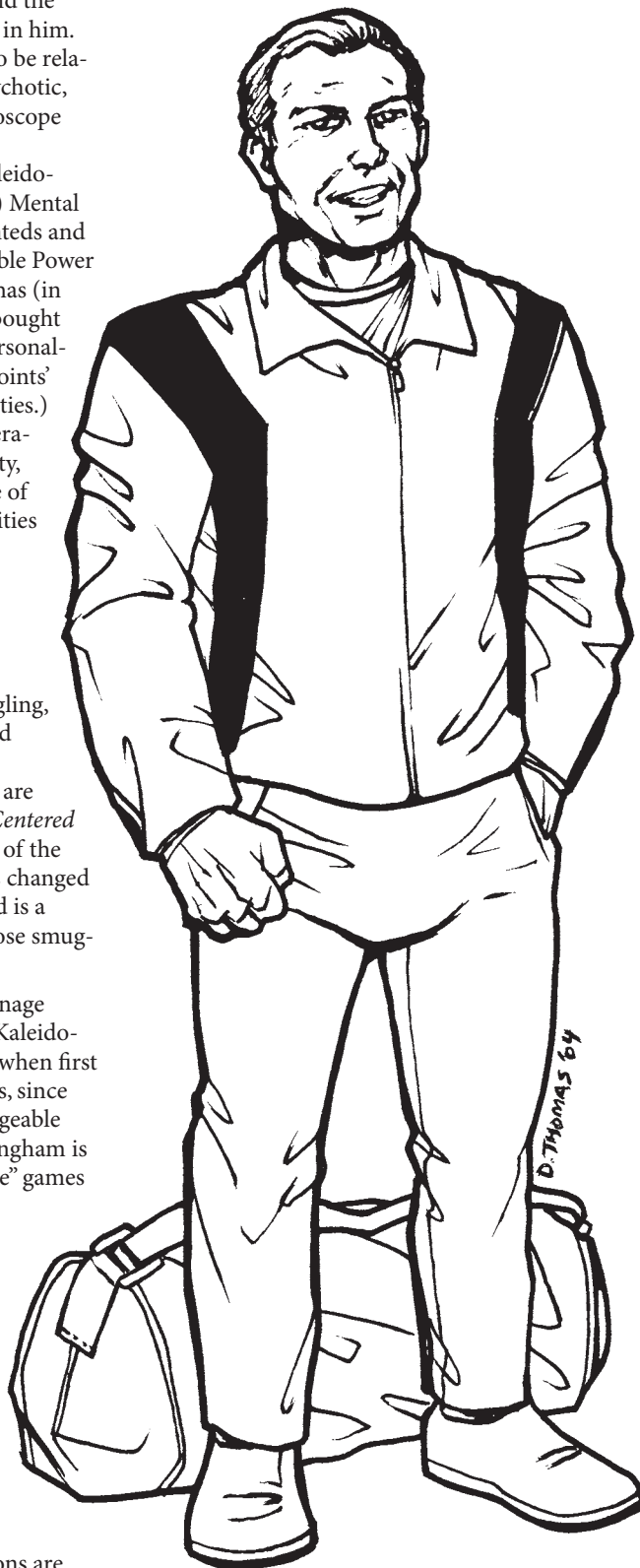
Aquarius's Psychological Limitations are *Hatred Of Russians* and *Greedy And Self-Centered* (formerly *American Patriot*, but like most of the "good" aspects of Leon's personalities, this changed as he suffered his breakdown). His Hunted is a Colombian drug cartel (GM's choice) whose smuggling operations he once exposed.

Buckingham: A suave, sophisticated espionage agent along the lines of James Bond. The Kaleidoscope Man prefers to use this personality when first meeting with many prospective employers, since Buckingham presents himself as knowledgeable and competent. Behind this facade, Buckingham is a vicious killer who enjoys "cat-and-mouse" games with his enemies.

Buckingham's Psychological Limitations are *Casual Killer* and *Sadist*. His Hunted is the British secret service, since he often pretends to be a member (or former member) of that organization.

The Captain: A former Army officer, the Captain was designed to be Leon's identity for defense intelligence and military installation infiltration missions. He serves a similar function for the Kaleidoscope Man.

The Captain's Psychological Limitations are *Ruthless* and *American Patriot* (the only personality to retain this Limitation; for this reason, the Kaleidoscope Man has to be careful not to use the Captain on missions which are not in the interests of the United States). His Hunted is the PLRL.



César: César is a radical left-wing revolutionary and terrorist. This personality was designed so that the CIA could infiltrate such groups and bring them down from within. They did their job too well; César now espouses left-wing radicalism wholeheartedly, which causes the Kaleidoscope Man no end of problems.

César's Psychological Limitations are *Casual Killer* and *Left-Wing Radical*. His Hunted is vari-

KALEIDOSCOPE MAN PLOT SEEDS

Enemies of one of the PCs hire Mercury (or Mr. Hyde) to kill that PC. Halfway through the mission, a second personality takes over, leaving the PC baffled as to his hunter's sudden change of tactics.

The Vendetta personality becomes dominant for a period of several weeks and works a few missions with the PCs. Then it's replaced by Mr. Hyde or one of the other particularly nasty personalities, and the PCs have to figure out why the person whose picture was taken by a security camera while he was killing an electronics company executive is their former ally.

The CIA gets a line on the Kaleidoscope Man, but doesn't dare go after him directly. It decides to manipulate the PCs into bringing him in... or killing him.

ous South and Central American law enforcement agencies and military groups.

Ernie: Ernie is a street person, no different from most homeless men... except that he habitually carries a couple of knives and a loaded pistol and isn't afraid to use them if you bother him. Ernie was originally designed as a "disguise" for Leon, allowing him to get close to any urban target without exciting suspicion. He serves that same function for the Kaleidoscope Man.

Ernie's Psychological Limitations are *Casual Killer* and *Must Attack From Surprise* (i.e., he doesn't openly assault targets, he always tries an ambush; if the ambush fails, he flees). His Hunted is the Hudson City Police Department, who wants him for questioning regarding a murder-for-hire he committed last year.

Judas: Judas is a dealer in illegal arms and illicit information. Whatever you want, he can get it for you, or find it out — but be careful, he has a well-deserved reputation for treachery (such as selling his clients out to a higher bidder).

Judas's Psychological Limitations are *Casual Killer* and *Greedy Backstabber*. His Hunted is various Organizatsiya gangs he's double-crossed.

Kennedy: A clever dilettante whose debonair attitude and personal élan grant him access to the homes of the rich and famous, where he can usually dig up all sorts of useful dirt on the defense industry, offshore investments, and even the drug trade.

Kennedy's Psychological Limitations are *Bored Dilettante* and *Sadist* (something that a few women who thought Kennedy was a good "catch" found out about, to their sorrow, in his bedroom). His Hunted is a private detective agency hired by the father of one such woman; this agency is less than concerned about any harm that might befall Kennedy while they try to apprehend him or after they turn him over to their employer.

Mercury: A heartless mercenary, a man who'll do anything for money. The CIA intended this personality for use in infiltrating the mercenary underground; the Kaleidoscope Man has found it to be one of his most useful personae.

Mercury's Psychological Limitations are *Casual Killer* and *Anything For Money*. His Hunted is various merc teams he's betrayed.

Mr. Hyde: Mr. Hyde was the CIA's name for Leon's assassin personality. Now that several of the Kaleidoscope Man's personalities have assassin-like tendencies, Mr. Hyde has become even worse: he is a savage, bestial killer, one who likes to beat or strangle his victims to death. Mr. Hyde has the least morality and self-control of any of the Kaleidoscope Man's personalities. It's a rare thing for Mr. Hyde to walk away from a mission not covered in blood... and reveling in that state.

Mr. Hyde's Psychological Limitations are *Casual Killer* and *Brutal And Sadistic*. His Hunted is the Hudson City Police Department.

Omega: Omega is a cat burglar. The CIA used him more than any other personality, for he was very good at obtaining data and other things the CIA wanted. The Kaleidoscope Man uses him similarly, but for his own benefit.

Omega's Psychological Limitations are *Thrill-seeker* and *Greedy*. His Hunted is the National Security Administration, from whom he recently stole some extremely valuable computer components.

Pavlov: Pavlov, a psychiatrist, was the CIA's link to the world of psychology, where they hoped to pick up information on recruits and other "potential assets." Pavlov was also to serve as a therapist for other agents. The Kaleidoscope Man uses this personality the least of all.

Pavlov's Psychological Limitations are *Fascination With Psychology* and *Obeys The Hippocratic Oath*. His Hunted is the American Medical Association, which has a few questions for him concerning his license to practice medicine and his "unorthodox" therapy methods.

Vendetta: Vendetta is a vigilante crimefighter the CIA hoped to use to gather information on other such crimefighters. Vendetta's programming is still relatively intact, for some reason, and the Kaleidoscope Man avoids using the personality unless he absolutely has to.

Vendetta's Psychological Limitations are *Devotion To Justice* and *Vigilante Mentality*. His Hunted is the Mafia.

The Kaleidoscope Man, Leon's thirteenth personality, dominates "the Others" (as he refers to his additional twelve personalities), and is more ruthless and antisocial than any of them. He cares only for himself, will do just about anything (no matter how evil) for money or some other benefit (even just for fun), and has absolutely no qualms about killing. He revels in bloodshed and chaos, and tries to influence the other personalities to do likewise. He would love to expunge the Others and keep Leon's body for himself, but as yet has found no way to do this.

The Kaleidoscope Man's control over the Others is not complete, however. When in "his" personality, he can switch to another personality by meditating and concentrating for an hour or more, then succeeding with an EGO Roll. After that, it may be days, weeks, or even months before he can reassert control; in the meantime, Leon may have experienced dozens of personality shifts.

None of Leon's personalities is stable; all of them are subject to sudden bouts of forgetfulness or complete changes. These changes (represented by his *Accidental Change Disadvantage*) are most likely to occur when he's bored or directionless. They almost never happen in stressful situations (such as when he's in the middle of stealing something or involved in a firefight), but this has occurred once or twice in the past, when Leon was badly wounded but not knocked unconscious. The GM should determine randomly which personality emerges when Leon involuntarily psychomorphs.

The Others are dimly aware that they're not entirely "whole," but most ignore or rationalize this and come up with odd explanations for what happened to them during the "blank periods" in which other personalities were dominant. Thanks to the CIA's indoctrination, each personality usually has no trouble believing these self-made explanations and adopting them as the total truth. Important facts (such as the nature and goals of the current mission) often "carry over" from one personality to another when a switch takes place.

The Kaleidoscope Man personality is somewhat aware of what happens when he's possessed by one of the other personalities; what occurs when they are dominant seems to him like a fuzzy, half-forgotten dream. Fortunately for him, several of them (Aquarius, Buckingham, César, Judas, and Vendetta) keep journals or elaborate records, enabling him to find out what some of his "other selves" have been up to.

Quote: None.

Powers/Tactics: The Kaleidoscope Man possesses a variety of combat- and mission-oriented Skills (in addition to the Skills each separate personality has). In any personality, he fights cleverly, efficiently, and ruthlessly; for most of them, their goals in combat are (1) ensure that they can escape safely, and (2) inflict as much damage upon the enemy as possible. The Kaleidoscope Man's psychotic brutality often blends into the other personalities in combat, pushing them to do things that they might not consider otherwise (for example, Vendetta will kill innocents to get at a criminal, Omega will kill an unsuspecting guard when he could simply escape unseen).

Each personality equips itself out of the Equipment Points as appropriate to the mission and its temperament. For example, Omega usually takes gadgets designed to help him sneak into places and steal things; Mr. Hyde takes heavy weapons and explosives.

Campaign Use: The Kaleidoscope Man is a strange opponent — one the PCs might encounter a dozen times before realizing the scope of what he is and what he can do. He's an extremely dangerous Hunter, since if he can't get at his target one way, he'll shift personalities and try another approach... and once he fixates on someone, he never, ever stops pursuing them until he kills them.

To make the Kaleidoscope Man tougher, give him more Skills that he can use in all his personalities, and perhaps a *Deadly Blow* Talent or some Combat Luck. To weaken him, reduce his Variable Power Pool slightly, trim his Characteristics down a bit, and get rid of his Extra Damage Classes.

Most of the Kaleidoscope Man's personalities have a criminal record; some of them have even spent time in jail. It is only a matter of time before a records check reveals that several criminals have the exact same fingerprints; from there, a clever and determined investigator may be able to unravel the Kaleidoscope Man's story.

Appearance: The Kaleidoscope Man is a trim, well-developed man in his early thirties with blond hair, blue eyes, and a handsome face to go with them. He is six feet tall and weighs 175 pounds. He dresses (and disguises himself) appropriately for his personality and its mission.

**SHANGO
PLOT SEEDS**

Shango's cut a deal with one of the Colombian cartels to get in a *big* shipment of cocaine that may allow him to corner the Freetown market by undercutting his competition. It would help if the competition was feeling the heat at the same time, so he manipulates the PCs into attacking them while he rolls out the discount crack.

Shango decides he's had enough of Strad and starts an all-out war in the streets. Before more innocent people get hurt, the PCs have to find a way to broker a peace agreement between these two arch-enemies.

A prominent anti-Afro-centrist scholar goes "missing" while visiting Hudson City for a series of lectures. It's a good bet Shango kidnapped him and is "educating" him on the "truth" of things. The PCs need to find the prof and get him back before Shango loses his temper and beats the man to death.

SHANGO				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 [4]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
20	CON	20	13-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
8	PD	4		Total: 8 PD (0 rPD)
6	ED	2		Total: 6 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	6		Phases: 4, 8, 12
10	REC	4		
40	END	0		
50	STUN	10		Total Characteristics Cost: 101
Movement: Running: 6"/12"				
Cost	Powers	END		
13	<i>Brawler:</i> HA +4d6; Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)			2
20	<i>Can Take A Punch:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%; Requires A CON Roll (no Active Point penalty; -¼), Character Must Be Aware Of Attack (-¼)			0
Perks				
5	Fringe Benefit: Membership (leader of his own gang)			
3	Improved Equipment Availability: Street-Level			
5	Money: Well Off			
12	Vehicle: customized civilian Humvee			
Talents				
5	Rapid Healing			
Skills				
10	+2 HTH			
3	Bribery 13-			
3	Concealment 12-			
6	Gambling (Card Games, Dice Games, Sports Betting) 12-			
3	Interrogation 13-			
5	CK: Freetown 14-			
2	KS: African History And Cultures 11-			
2	KS: African Myths And Legends 11-			
5	KS: Freetown Gang World 14-			
2	KS: Professional Sports 11-			
3	Oratory 13-			
2	PS: Drug Dealing 11-			
2	PS: Play Football 11-			
3	Stealth 12-			

- 3 Streetwise 13-
- 3 WF: Small Arms, Knives

Resource Points

- 8 Equipment Points: 100
- 10 Vehicle/Base Points: 30
- 15 Follower/Contact Points: 35
- 0 Miscellaneous Points: 0

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 153

Total Cost: 254

100+ Disadvantages

- 20 Hunted: HCPD 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)
- 15 Hunted: Buckshot 11- (As Pow, Kill)
- 15 Hunted: Strad 11- (As Pow, Kill)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Casual Killer (Very Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Hunting Buckshot And Strad (Common, Strong)
- 10 Social Limitation: Criminal Record (Occasionally, Major)
- 59 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 254

Background/History: Everett Robinson's story differs little from that of many other Freetown boys: neither the love nor tears of his mother and grandmother could drown out the siren song of the streets. Before he was ten, he was running around with gangs; by his mid-teens, he was a major player in the Nubians.

He killed for the first time when he was only thirteen. On the streets, it's all about respect. An older boy from another gang dissed him in public, in front of dozens of people, and that couldn't go unanswered. The fight didn't last long. Ignoring the switchblade the other guy stuck into his arm, Everett beat him to death with his bare hands. As he stood over the corpse, blood dripping from his fists and the knife still sticking out of his bicep, his reputation was assured. No one ever dared to dis him again.

But Everett had something most other gang-bangers didn't: the intelligence to see beyond his circumstances. By his late teens, he realized gang life wasn't going to take him anywhere. Sure, he was making good money, but that couldn't last. Sooner or later he'd age out, or get killed or crippled, and that was it. He wouldn't accept that. He wanted *more* — power, money, fame, respect.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Casull Fieldgrade	+1	+0	2d6+1	1d6	5	12	
Baretta 92	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	9	
Baretta 93R	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	11	AF3, RC1
Sawed-off 12 gauge	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	2	12	AEC, AF2, RR, RP
Combat Knife	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	—	8	Can Be Thrown

Armor

Usually none, but he may put on Level II or III body armor if he knows he's about to get into a gun battle

Gear: Shango has enough money and connections to obtain whatever he wants, within reason.

Clothing: A dashiki or like garb, lots of gaudy jewelry

He finally realized that the only way he'd get that would be to break away from the gangs and start one of his own — become a crimelord, in other words. In 2001 he put his plan into motion, walking away from the Nubians with several sets loyal to him. War in the streets followed; the Nubians weren't willing to give up the turf, and the Warriors saw weakness they could exploit. But Everett, now calling himself "Shango" from the Yoruban god of thunder, had the discipline to fight for and keep what he'd taken, and the cleverness to manipulate some of his enemies into fighting each other or accepting a truce with him on his terms. In the years since then, he's become one of the most powerful, if not *the* most powerful, criminal in Freetown. He's gotten everything he wanted... and now he wants more of it.

Personality/Motivation: Shango is just a gangbanger writ large. He's got the intellect and self-control to run a criminal empire, but he still thinks in gang terms: us versus them; respect versus being dissed; violence as a solution to almost any problem; bling-bling, cool guns, fancy cars. He kills without hesitation, sometimes even when it would be better for him to leave someone alive. He spends lavishly in support of his organization; this ensures loyalty (and keeps a lot of police heat off him), but leaves him with much less money than one would expect from the volume of drugs he moves.

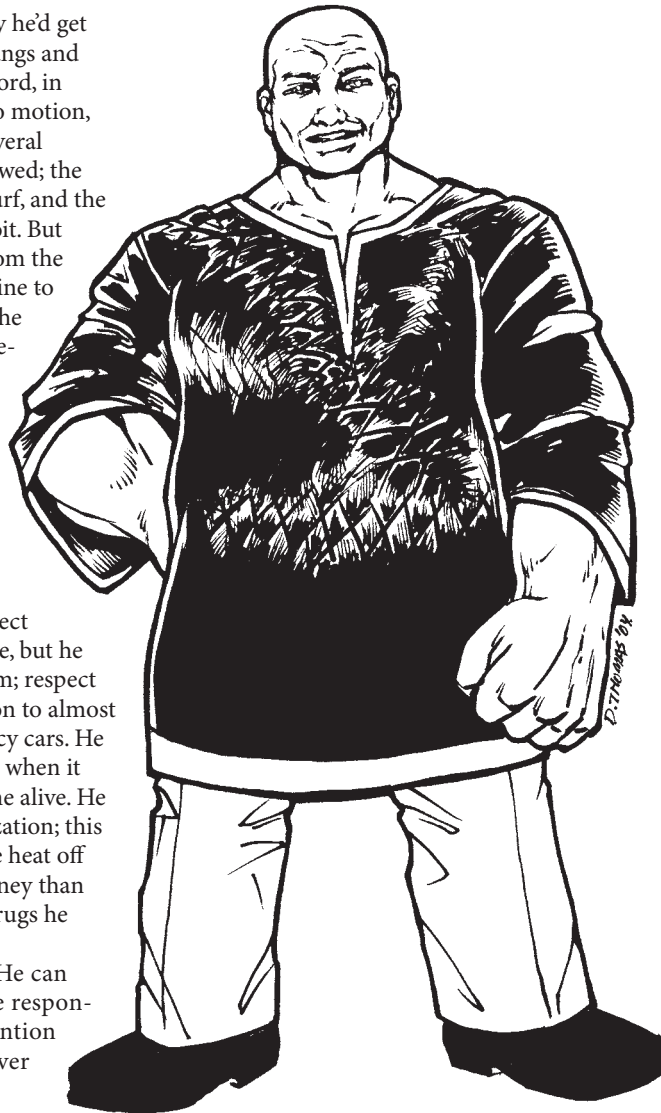
Shango's a die-hard Afrocentrist. He can show you how African civilizations are responsible for pretty much every major invention and cultural advance that mankind's ever devised — just ask him.

Quote: "We are all brothers together... but brothers under the command of one leader!"

Powers/Tactics: Shango doesn't do much fighting anymore — he's got people to do that for him. But he still carries at least one gun with him everywhere he goes, just in case. Despite that, he favors hand-to-hand combat over shooting; nothing's better than pummeling an enemy into submission (or death) with his fists.

Campaign Use: Shango is one of several crimelords or factions competing for bigger pieces of the Freetown pie. As such he might see the PCs as a threat to be eliminated, a potential ally (if he can convince them he's a lesser evil they should support), or a tool he could manipulate into attacking his enemies. He's more than just someone for them to fight; he's a clever, street-smart opponent who's survived in Freetown longer than many of them have been alive. Taking him down should be anything but a simple matter.

If you want to make Shango tougher, give him some Martial Arts (Dirty Infighting and/or Wrestling, probably), increase his SPD to 4, or give him more super-skills or Combat Skill Levels. To weaken him, reduce his Characteristics (thus emphasizing that he's gotten more "soft" as he's



aged) or remove his Levels with HTH Combat.

If there's one thing life on the streets has taught Shango, it's the importance of maintaining "face" and getting revenge on anyone who wrongs you. This makes him a determined and patient Hunter... but not a stupid one. He knows that rushing out to seek vengeance at the first opportunity has gotten a lot of people dead, so he watches and waits for the best chance at his foe.

Shango has an extensive criminal record for drug dealing, theft, assault, attempted murder, and a host of other crimes. The police currently want him in connection with many more charges, including several murders, but can't find him or get close to him (in part because of the bribes he spreads around parts of the Department).

Appearance: Shango is a black male in his late 30s or early 40s. He's a big bull of a man, standing 6'4" tall and weighing nearly 300 pounds. His broad shoulders and still-somewhat-muscular arms show how immensely strong he once was, but as time has passed he's become overweight, even corpulent. His face betrays both his cleverness and his cruelty. He usually wears African-style clothing such as dashikis.

society, and all people could talk about was how “unfortunate” they were. Something ought to be done, he thought.

Matters came to a head when he was 22. His limousine was late picking him up, so he walked down the street to a place where he could hail a cab. He didn’t like cabs — they smelled, and the drivers barely spoke English — but it was better than waiting. An aggressive homeless person accosted him, looking for a handout. Roderick tried to give him the brushoff, but the man kept following him, shouting and gesticulating, hurling all sorts of filthy insults. Finally, Roderick lost his temper. Pulling the concealed pistol he carried with him whenever he had to go into the city, he spun around and shot the man five times. Shocked by what he’d done, he ran for his life, eventually finding a hiding place in an alley.

He lurked in the alley for two hours, but no one found him. Eventually fear turned to amazement, then exultation. He’d gotten away with it! More importantly, he’d done something to clean up the streets — one less poor person made society better. Maybe he could do it again....

From that point, it didn’t take long for Roderick to launch his “vigilante” crusade. Mentally christening himself “Siddhartha” as a way of psychologically separating himself from his actions, he began a one-man campaign against welfare mothers, homeless people, and the poor and underprivileged in general. For several years now he’s used guns, bombs, arson, and other methods to lash out at those he feels are destroying society.

Personality/Motivation: Siddhartha (the name comes from Thorpe’s gross misunderstanding of Buddhist history and legend) thinks of himself as a vigilante, but he’s wrong. A vigilante pursues people who’ve committed crimes. Siddhartha hunts and kills people he regards as not worthy to live — the poor, people on welfare, the homeless, and so on — regardless of whether they’re upstanding citizens or hardened criminals. At best he’s a warped, twisted picture of a vigilante, one who elevates the concept of social Darwinism to a hunting license.

Many people think Siddhartha’s a racist, since most of his targets are blacks or Hispanics. This is completely wrong — he hates poor people and those he regards as a “drain on” or “poisonous to” society, regardless of race. It just happens that most of the people who fit his definitions are black or Hispanic.

Quote: “With people like you out of the way, society will be a better place.”

Powers/Tactics: Siddhartha has no formal combat training, though he’s gained a good bit of practical experience using his weapons to kill. He strikes from surprise against more or less helpless targets. If confronted with significant opposition or the threat of capture, he’ll flee (and he always tries to have at least two escape routes ready). There are plenty of targets out there, and plenty of opportunity to take them.

Siddhartha isn’t an experienced field op, but he’s used his money and connections to make up for the lack. He doesn’t maintain any connection between his “vigilante” career and his normal life as ultra-wealthy dilettante Roderick Thorpe. He has separate vehicles, facilities, and clothes that he only uses as Siddhartha (all bought and registered with phony papers to keep anyone from tracing them back to him), and he takes a lot of steps to make sure no one’s following him.

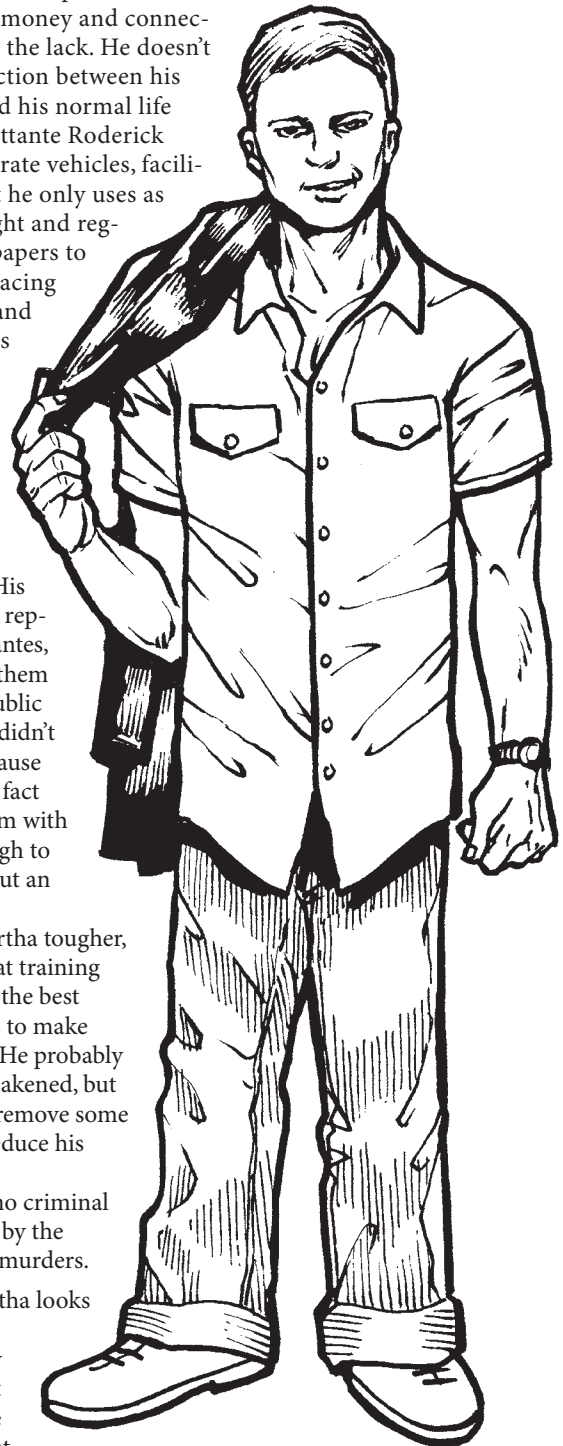
Campaign Use: Siddhartha represents a moral and ethical enemy rather than a combat opponent for most characters. His crusade tarnishes the reputation of all vigilantes, making it harder for them to obtain and keep public support. Even if PCs didn’t want to stop him because he’s a serial killer, the fact that people equate him with them should be enough to make them want to put an end to him.

To make Siddhartha tougher, give him more combat training — perhaps he’s hired the best mercs in the business to make him a better warrior. He probably doesn’t need to be weakened, but if necessary you can remove some of his Skills and/or reduce his Characteristics.

Siddhartha has no criminal record, but is wanted by the HCPD for dozens of murders.

Appearance: Siddhartha looks like an average white male. He’s in his early 30s and weighs about 180. He’s trim, and he works out, but he’s not muscular or even toned.

He wears ordinary clothes suited for quick action: jeans, sneakers, leather jackets, military fatigues, that sort of thing.



TAKAYAMA SHINSAKU

Shogun of Little Tokyo

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [3]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
13	CON	6	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
14	INT	4	12-	PER Roll 12-
12	EGO	4	11-	ECV: 4
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
12	COM	1	11-	
6	PD	3		Total: 6 PD (0 rPD)
5	ED	2		Total: 5 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	16		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
6	REC	0		
26	END	0		
25	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 61

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Leaping: 3"/6"

Cost Powers **END**

<i>Martial Arts: Kenjutsu</i> (Swords Group is default)				
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage/Effect
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, 35 STR
4	Evade	—	+5	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort

4	Lightning Stroke	+2	+0	Weapon +4 DC Strike
5	Running Stroke	+1	+0	Weapon +2 DC +v/5; FMove

8 +2 Damage Classes (already added in)
1 Use Art Barehanded (Block, Disarm, Evade only)

<i>Martial Arts: Karate</i>				
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Atemi Strike	-1	+1	3d6 NND (1)
3	Legsweep	+2	-1	6d6 Strike, Target Falls
4	Punch/Snap Kick	+0	+2	7d6 Strike
5	Side/Spin Kick	-2	+1	9d6 Strike
1	Strong-Limbed: Leaping +1"			(3" forward, 1½" upward)

Perks				
5	Fringe Benefit: Membership (leader of his own gang)			
5	Improved Equipment Availability: Military			
10	Money: Wealthy			

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Katana	+1	—	1½d6	1d6-1	—	12	
Beretta M92	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	9	

Armor
Usually none, possibly samurai armor (DEF 6) if involved in a formal duel

Gear: Whatever he needs or wants, within reason

Clothing: Fine men's tailored suits, or formal Japanese men's garb

Skills

5	+1 HTH
3	Combat Driving 12-
1	Computer Programming 8-
2	Gambling (Cards) 12-
3	High Society 13-
3	Interrogation 13-
2	KS: Kenjutsu 11-
2	KS: Karate 11-
3	KS: High Finance 12-
5	KS: Japanese History And Culture 14-
3	Language: English (completely fluent; Japanese is native)
3	Oratory 13-
3	Persuasion 13-
3	Stealth 12-
6	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Martial Arts Weapons, Small Arms
2	Weaponsmith (Muscle-Powered HTH) 12-

Resource Points

8	Equipment Points: 100
5	Vehicle/Base Points: 20
10	Follower/Contact Points: 25
0	Miscellaneous Points: 0

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 139

Total Cost: 200

100+ Disadvantages

10	Distinctive Features: Style Disadvantage (Not Concealable, Always Noticed And Recognizable, Detectable Only By Large Group)
20	Hunted: Yakuza 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
10	Hunted: HCPD 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
15	Psychological Limitation: Overconfidence (Very Common, Moderate)
15	Psychological Limitation: Hatred Of Westerners And America (Common, Strong)
30	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 200

Background/History: The wait at Immigration after he got off the plane had seemed interminable, but at last they were done with him. Takayama Shinsaku walked out of the terminal and into the sunshine of Hudson City. At last, he thought. At last. Here I shall humble the people who humbled my homeland.

He let his thoughts drift into the past — to the times when, as a boy, he picked through the ruins of Hiroshima, looking for scraps of food to keep his family alive. His father had been a *kamikaze*, so there was only Shinsaku to look after his mother and sisters.

While everyone around him seemed to think only of survival from one day to the next, other thoughts occupied Shinsaku. He burned with hatred for the Americans who had killed his father and ruined his home, but at the same time he could not help but feel a grudging respect for them as warriors. He decided that somehow, no matter how long it took, or how great a sacrifice, he would one day triumph over them and redeem Japan's honor.

As he grew older Shinsaku studied the history

and culture of his country, absorbing the elements that had made his one of the great civilizations. He delved into Japan's martial traditions, and even learned the rudiments of Kenjutsu from one of the few surviving masters of the art. He also studied Western culture, albeit grudgingly, for one can only learn victory from victors.

Not content with the time that it would take to achieve power in Japan legitimately, he turned to the yakuza in the hopes of achieving it illegitimately. But the yakuza gangs spurned him, wary of someone who seemed so intense and unpredictable. Takayama was forced into minor criminal enterprises with little or no yakuza association.

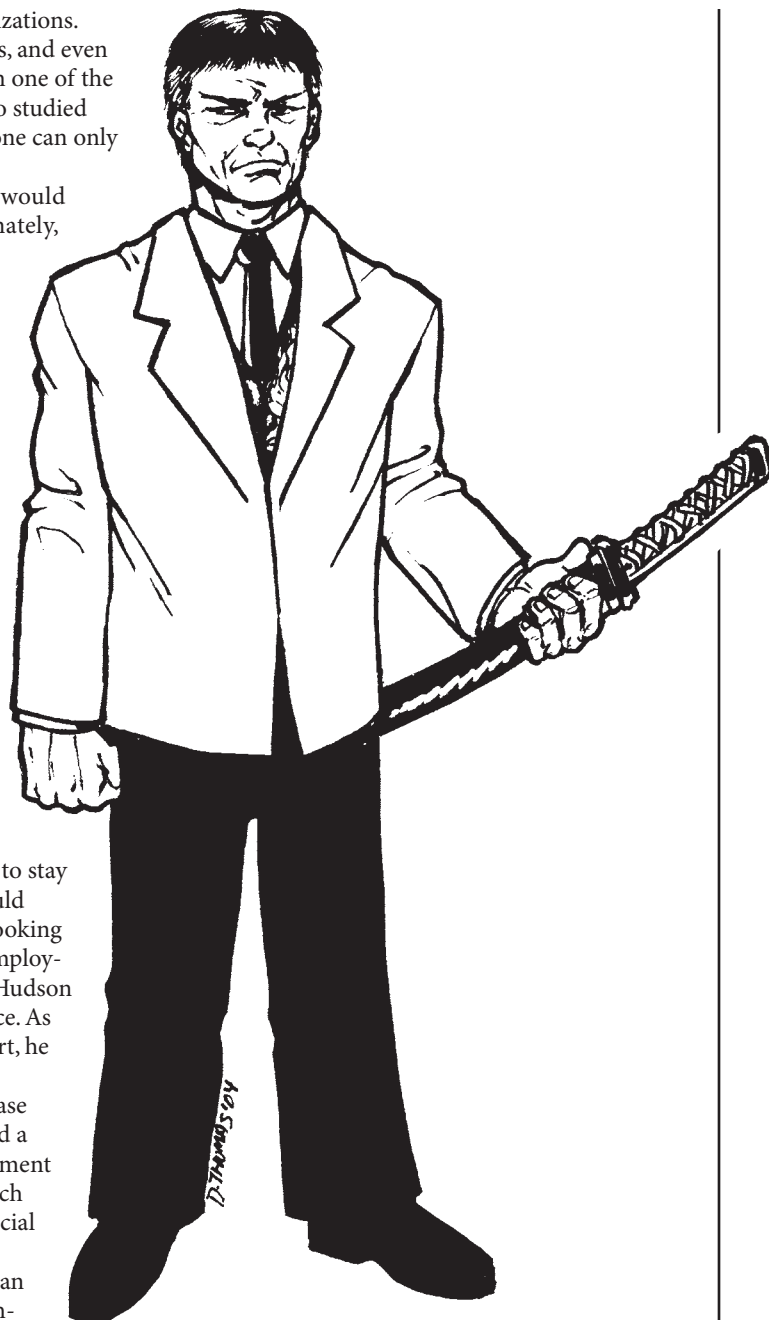
He soon realized he was accomplishing nothing. If he had to exist in the yakuza's shadow, he was doomed to fail from the start. Better to form his *own* criminal empire — but that was impossible in Japan, where the yakuza held things in an iron grip. he turned his thoughts to the land of his enemies — America. *Where better to gain first-hand knowledge of them and begin their destruction?*, he decided.

And so it was that he found himself outside Aberdeen International Airport hailing a taxi. He had arranged to stay with friends in Little Tokyo until he could establish himself, so he quickly began looking for gainful — or at least profitable — employment. The yakuza had not yet come to Hudson City at that time, so here he had a chance. As the taxi drove him away from the airport, he smiled confidently.

But first he needed money and a base of power. With this in mind, he obtained a position with Nimaki, a Japanese investment corporation that had established a branch in Hudson City. He worked in the financial world for years, dealing mainly in commodities and investments involving Japan and her interests. His dream of establishing a criminal empire with which to attack America from within continued to grow, as did his personal fortune.

At last he felt that he was ready. He quit his job and began establishing ties with the Asian underworld. Unfortunately, he found that the yakuza had beaten him once again — by now they were in Hudson City in full force, cutting off his avenue to power. *So be it*, he thought. *I will fight them, too.*

Never one to do things in a small way, Takayama declared himself "Shogun of Little Tokyo" and recruited a gang of toughs with which to establish his own niche in the underworld of Chinatown. It was a difficult start — he survived three assassination attempts and watched most of his original cadre of followers die, one by one, at the hands of the yakuza gangs. However, his ability to survive these attacks built his reputation and attracted more follow-



ers to his side. His only true failure during this period was the loss of his son Seiki. Infected by an American lack of discipline and respect, Seiki abandoned Takayama and his goals. The Shogun of Little Tokyo has sworn to kill his son for the "disgrace" he brought upon the family's honor.

Today Takayama Shinsaku, Shogun of Little Tokyo, walks a razor's edge between triumph and death. He has carved a small criminal empire out of the yakuza's territory, something the yakuza will never forget or forgive. He has antagonized the Chinese tongs as well. But through it all he has held on to his dream of one day becoming truly powerful and using that power to strike back at the nation that took his father from him. For now he has to be content with corrupting the Americans with drugs and vice, but the day will come when he will do far worse things to them than that.

TAKAYAMA SHINSAKU PLOT SEEDS

Word gets back to Takayama that one of the PCs has been making anti-Asian slurs. Whether it's true or not, he takes it as true and sets out to teach the PC a lesson in Japanese superiority.

The PCs rescue a young Japanese man from a mugging. The would-be victim turns out to be Takayama Seiki! In gratitude, and to get revenge on his father, he offers to help the PCs take down Shinsaku's organization.

Several low-level yakuza *oyabuns* approach the PCs with an offer: we'll help you get rid of Takayama if you leave us alone for one year. Are the heroes willing to deal with one devil to get rid of another?

Personality/Motivation: It wouldn't be entirely correct to label Takayama Shinsaku an obsessive... but it wouldn't be entirely wrong, either. For many, many years he has held in his mind the idea that America needs to be destroyed and cast down, as it cast down Japan and his father. He's directed most of his efforts toward that goal, though temperament and misfortune have forced him to take the left-hand path — to gain power through criminal rather than political means. Still, power is power, and he hopes to use his power one day soon to “avenge” Japan.

But the truth is, his time in America has not left him unsullied. He was vicious, hot-tempered, greedy, and (despite all of his talk of “discipline”) impulsive when he arrived in Hudson City, and his time in America has only made him more materialistic and violent. By this point he is as much a child of America as of Japan, though he would kill anyone who dared to say that to his face.

Takayama is a despot of a leader, one who brooks no disrespect or disobedience — much like his father was to him, and much like he was to Seiki, before that attitude drove Seiki away. He attracts to himself Japanese criminals for whom these values, and his radical right-wing Japanese political beliefs, hold such appeal that they'd lay down their lives for them. He has allocated to himself the privilege of *kirisutogomen*, the right to kill outright any of his followers who so much as displease him.

As his fanciful title indicates, Takayama thinks of himself as a “reincarnation” of the samurai of old. He knows something of Kenjutsu, the samurai's sword art, but has had little formal training; he would give much to gain such knowledge. In samurai tradition, he tries to act honorably, but inevitably greed, ambition, and rage get the better of him and make him act in dishonorable ways (attacking enemies from behind, betraying allies, and the like). He rationalizes these acts by convincing himself that they're “for the ultimate good of my people.” Some criminal psychologists suspect that Takayama's “Shogun of Little Tokyo” posturing indicates a deep-seated psychological delusion. This is not true; Takayama knows he's not a “shogun.” The title is simply a symbolic one he enjoys using.

Quote: “Bow down to me or be slain. These are your only choices. The Shogun of Little Tokyo tolerates no disrespect.”

Powers/Tactics: Takayama thinks of himself as a skilled swordsman, so he won't hesitate to challenge others to duels. In truth, his Kenjutsu skills are passable, but not spectacular, and he would be willing to learn more if he could find someone qualified to teach him.

Outside of such personal challenges, Takayama prefers to let his followers do his fighting for him. For the most part his “samurai” are ordinary Japanese street toughs, though a few have military experience or other combat training. All of them know at least a little Karate (several are black belts), and most of them have received some Kenjutsu training from Takayama.

Campaign Use: Takayama Shinsaku is a sort of low-level master villain — he's tougher than a typical gang leader, but doesn't have as much power or as many followers as a major yakuza oyabun or Mafia capo. He's also got a slightly different perspective than other crimelords, which may make him a more interesting foe than just another gang boss.

To make Takayama more powerful, make him a master swordsman — give him all the Kenjutsu maneuvers, some Combat Skill Levels with Kenjutsu, the *Defense Maneuver* Skill, and so forth — and boost his Characteristics a bit. To weaken him, get rid of his Karate and/or decrease his Characteristics (especially DEX and SPD) a little.

As a Hunter, the Shogun of Little Tokyo is clever and cautious. He hasn't survived all these years by sticking his neck out or acting too rashly. He'll proceed calmly and carefully, taking the time to evaluate his target at length before choosing the best time to strike.

Takayama Shinsaku has no criminal record. The police suspect his involvement in crime, but haven't been able to prove anything yet.

Appearance: Takayama is a Japanese male in his early 70s (though he looks young for his age), with black hair conservatively cut and a trim build. He wears expensive men's suits. He doesn't carry weapons in most situations, but frequently has at least one sheathed samurai sword nearby.

STREET FINDER



Having trouble finding that street you're looking for? Well, search in vain no more! With this handy reference table you can find any of the major streets depicted on the maps in Chapter Two. It uses the 1-5, A-D grid system from the map on page 17 as a reference.

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2 nd Avenue.....	5-A, B, C, D
3 rd Avenue.....	5-A, B, C, D
4 th Avenue.....	5-A, B, C, D
5 th Avenue.....	5-A, B, C
6 th Avenue.....	4-A, B, C, D
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11 th Avenue.....	4-A, B, C, D
12 th Avenue.....	4-A, B, C, D
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16 th Avenue.....	4-A, B, C, D
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