

The Shadowrun Supplemental Issue #6



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Editors Notes

Welcome to issues #6 of The Shadowrun Supplemental! This is the on-again off-again Rigger/Vehicle issue, which as you can see, is on-again!

I sincerely apologize for the lateness of this issue. The reasons were multiple, a lot of it doing with the winter break for most college and university students. Then, my internet provider canceling my dial-up account without fore-warning me delayed it a few more days.

You will note that this is only one piece of the issue, as there are separate files for the Rigger Black Book 1 style vehicles and the Rigger 2 vehicles. Although as I write this neither are completely finished, they should be out soon after you read this.

The reasoning behind splitting the issue up was two-fold, number one to keep the file size down, and two, because some people prefer RBB1 or Rigger 2 for various reasons, and only want the vehicles that will work with their statistics.

Keeping with the Rigger focus on this issue, we snagged an interview with Rigger 2 author Jon Szeto, as well as a piece of his unpublished work.

Not only do we bring you a ton of great stuff to enhance and expand on Rigger2, but for those of you that enjoy miniatures, or want to start, we've cut a deal with Ral Partha, check out the bargain prices on vehicle related mini's!

None of this issue is meant to be a challenge to FASA or to Jon Szeto. Instead, it's meant to push the rigger spectrum of Shadowrun even further than FASA hoped.

Hellos and Thanks

Jon Szeto, for taking his time to do some unpaid work.. :)

The usual lot of my friends and supporters: Gurth, Elle, Dvixen, Adam, Skye, Pete, Dawn, Sunette, Dawn (A different one), Ashloke Rick, Wes and Apryl (Good luck you two!), Karen, and as usual, everyone I forgot..

The Shadowrun Supplemental Issue #6

Published Febuary, 1998

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I have this really horrible feeling that I forgot someone.

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An up to date list of ways to contact me should always be on my web page.

The TSS Productions web page at <http://shadowrun.home.ml.org> contains all the back issues, submission guidelines, and a few other things you may need to know. If you can't find what you're looking for, please do not hesitate to contact me. The TSS Productions site at Geocities is no more. It will either give you an error, or redirect you to the new(ish) web-site at <http://www.interware.it/users/adamj>

This site will become an american mirror for Pocket Secretary '97 when the final version becomes available.

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The Man-Machine Interface

Jon Szeto <JonSzeto@aol.com>

The Man Machine Interface

By WOTAN

☛With some of the recent developments in rigger technology, it's been brought to my attention that our technical files have fallen somewhat out of date. So I thought it was time that to do an update of the technical directory. I asked a couple of street docs I know, and WOTAN (who specializes in neurocybernetics) was more than happy to comply.

As always, keep your posts relevant, on-topic, and possessing at least a modicum of politeness. Those who break the rules will be nuked mercilessly.

☛Captain Chaos

Transmitted on 18 May 2058, at 00:43:39 (EST)

Since the beginning of the Cold War in the previous century, as vehicles of all types - air, land, sea, and space - advanced further and further in sophistication, so too did they grow more complex and difficult to maneuver. By the turn of the millenium, it was impossible to pilot any type of aerial craft without at least three years of training. Engineers and technicians sought to design computers capable of regulating most automatic functions and thus simplifying the task of piloting; nevertheless, computer technology could not keep pace with the growing complexity of vehicle technology.

Initially engineers investigated in the use of early virtual reality technology to reduce the complexity of the system. Doing away with mechanical controls and instruments, engineers began using an enclosed helmet and digitized gauntlet, which allowed the wearer to manipulate virtual controls and call up system reports by opening display windows and manipulating system icons. Later developers replaced the bulky helmet and gauntlet controls with the datajack in the 2020's following the development of simsense in 2018. While this helped to flatten the learning curve and make it easier to control a vehicle, it did not prove more of an edge in terms of performance.

☛This system, the virtual console, is still around. Mostly it's designed for the casual driver by allowing him/her to "customize" the dashboard to their preference, by allowing them to rearrange meters, buttons, and switches. Also, it allows us riggers a slight degree of bodily control we can't normally get in the full VX.

☛Josie Cruise

☛ VX? What the frag is VX?

☛ Jaxon

☛ Virtual experience. The actual simsense output of any ASIST system.

☛ The Micro Kid

The first real vehicle control rig, though, would not occur until several years after the unveiling of simsense. While conducting research into the development of ASIST technology in the 2010's, Dr. Hikita's research team delved deeply into the processes of the human brain. Their goals naturally caused them to study the functions of the middle brain.

They soon realized that the coordination of sensory and motor impulses was an intricately complex process; even an action so simple as walking called into play hundreds of different stimuli and even more responses, which would overwhelm all but the most sophisticated supercomputers. Nevertheless, the brain, or more

specifically, the midbrain and cerebellum, handled all of this without sending a single conscious thought to the higher intelligence centers. Here lay an answer to the problem of increasing vehicle complexity: connect the human brain directly to the vehicle itself. Merely translate the various instrumentation readings into stimuli the brain could understand, and the middle brain would take care of the rest.

In 2022, Northrop-Marietta introduced the first vehicle control rig with the unveiling of the XF-106 Advanced Performance Fighter; the simsense system later became the basis for developing the standard vehicle control rig of today. A few years later Ares Macrotechnology announced its patent of the first vehicle control rig cyberware, which enhanced the middle brain reaction to ASIST signals.

The Metahuman Brain

Talking about the vehicle control rig means starting at the very center of it all: the human brain. Everything we all do, whether rigging, decking, thaumaturgy, or just simply eating and sleeping, involves this quintessential organ.

❖ Oh, please. What does a biology lesson have to do with vehicles?

❖ Jaxon

❖ For once, why don't you just shut up and read? Maybe, just maybe, you might actually learn something useful.

❖ Gromit

There are approximately a dozen distinct regions of the brain, each serving a special function. However, in general, one can generalize them into three primary regions: the prosencephalon or forebrain (in which all higher intelligence functions take place), the mesencephalon or midbrain (which monitors most autonomic and unconscious bodily functions, such as heartbeat and breathing), and the rhombencephalon or hind brain. It is primarily the hindbrain which we are concerned about (although parts of the mid- and forebrain also come into play), for the hindbrain provides coordination between sensory inputs and muscular movement.

What follows below are the areas of the brain most relevant to rigging:

- ◆ **Cerebrum:** This wrinkled mass of gray matter at the top of your brain is the focus of higher intelligence and functions, as well as the nervous system's central memory storage.
- ◆ **Cerebellum:** Located at the rear and the bottom of the brain, near the brain stem, this distinct area of white matter is the primary control center for coordinating balance and movement. Augmentation by the vehicle control rig (VCR) cyberware is most extensive in this area, with neuro-enhancers and artificial neurotransmitter boosters installed to speed up reaction time and processing capability.
- ◆ **Mesencephalon:** Commonly known as the mid-brain, this region, known in medicine as the "bottleneck of the brain," interfaces between the cerebellum and the midbrain and provides secondary balance and movement coordination. Like the cerebellum, it too undergoes extensive augmentation by the VCR cyberware.
- ◆ **Pons:** Taken from the Latin from "bridge," this lump of brain tissue jutting out from the medulla oblongata has been shown to play a role in the coordination of highly complex motor/sensory functions, such as playing a musical instrument, dance, and piloting a regular vehicle. Though not as extensively as with wired or boosted reflexes, this area receives some augmentation from rig cyberware, primarily in providing direct interface with the datajack, rather than indirectly through other parts of the brain, as is typical in the standard datajack..

- ◆ **Thalamus:** Located near the brain's center of mass, the thalamus plays a central role in the vehicle control rig, for the thalamus regulates the flow of neural traffic, routing sensory stimuli to the relevant centers of the brain and directing output responses to the relevant parts of the body. In the structure of the vehicle control rig, the thalamus is the CPU of the VCR system, automatically monitoring and adjusting the different controls in a vehicle in response to the situation, all without a conscious blink from the higher intelligence in the cerebrum.
- ◆ **Medulla Oblongata, Hypothalamus, and Reticular Formation:** These areas of the brain control the autonomic systems of the body and regulate unconscious functions, ranging from heartbeat and breathing, to body temperature, to the very basics of emotions. Although these areas play no part in the vehicle control rig, their intertwined connection to those areas that do mean that the VCR cyberware must take these areas into account, lest the body atrophy while the mind is jacked into the vehicle.

Principles Of Operation

The basic operating principles of the vehicle control rig are relatively straightforward. the VCR interfaces with the lower part of the brain, specifically the thalamus, cerebellum, pons, and parts of the medulla oblongata. These regions of the brain are the balance, sensory, and motor coordination centers of the brain. Working together, these parts of the middle and lower brain work together to coordinate hundreds, possibly thousands, of individual neural stimuli and matching muscular responses.

When the rigger attempts to access the rigged system, she interfaces with a reinforced container in the engine compartment housing a sophisticated computer; riggers refer to this in common jargon as the "black box." The computer performs only two functions: first, it acts as a compiler, translating inputs from vehicle systems into simsense signals mimicking bodily and sensory stimuli. In the opposite direction, it converts motor responses into vehicle commands. Although the black box does most of the work of translating the signals, the cyberware in the midbrain and cerebellum also share in the work by compiling the vehicle input into biochemical neurotransmitter ions.

◆ This is the reason normal datajacks don't work in a vehicle control rig system; they lack the biochemical injectors necessary to translate the electrical signals into the appropriate neurotransmitter biochemical ions for the lower brain. Datjack cyberware only induces a current in the brain, which the cerebrum translates as neural impulses. To maximize the data-handling capabilities of the cerebellum and thalamus, it is necessary to provide the precise neurochemicals for transmitting either a sensory or a motor stimulus. Anything else the thalamus interprets as merely interference.

◆ The Smiling Bandit
Striking Again!
Ha! Ha! Ha!

◆ Well, what about wired and boosted reflexes? Doesn't the cyberware for those systems also affect the lower brain?

◆ SimmR3@xsys.di.txnet.com

◆ Yes they do, but you're forgetting the other part of the equation: the datajack. Wired and boosted reflexes enhance the information flow between the midbrain/cerebellum and the spinal cord ONLY. Rigging works through a datajack, which is extraneous to the wired/boosted reflex system; wired/boosted reflexes do nothing to enhance the datajack connection.

◆ Project A.P.

◆ So why bother with all that? My reflexes make me the fastest razor with a gun, so I should be the fastest driver behind the wheel.

◆ Colby

❖ Haven't you been listening to a word I've said? When you're driving without a jack, your response time takes the slowest route possible. It goes from eye to cerebrum to spinal cord to arm, all through neural pathways.

In contrast, in a rigged system, when the Sensors detect the car, the signal goes straight to the computer, through the jack into the thalamus, which automatically processes it and shoots it back down to the computer. All of this travels along fiber-optic cable and electrical wiring, which is pretty much near the fragging speed of light. NO wired reflex system is so responsive as to approach the speed of light.

❖ The Smiling Bandit
Striking Again!
Ha! Ha! Ha!

The other primary function of the computer is to isolate the brain from the rest of the body. It includes a reticular-activation system (RAS) override, which suppresses sensory signals from the spinal cord into the brain. Additionally, the box contains an autonomic regulator, which transmits a stasis signal into the medulla oblongata and lower brain. This stasis signal interfaces with the autonomous system, which regulates involuntary functions and consciousness, and reassures the system that the brain is still on-line by sending input which would normally come from the brain. This ensures the continued rhythm of breathing and sleeping, while lowering the body's metabolic cycle. In short, it puts the body to sleep.

❖ Why does it do that?
❖ Blake 6

❖ Sleep enhances the body's regenerative capabilities. During slow-wave sleep the body produces essential hormones, and body repair takes place. After all, since the body isn't actively doing anything, it might as well take this opportunity to make itself useful.

❖ Project A.P.

❖ Riggers need to treat this box with the utmost respect. Wannabes think that there's no danger of a brainburn, like there is for a decker who has the misfortune of encountering Black IC. They couldn't be any more wrong. Because the autonomic regulator ensures the continued functioning of your vital signs, any sort of electrical disruption can result in nasty biofeedback. I once knew a guy who developed a heart attack, due to a fused circuit caused by Ram spell. The worst case, though, is a raw high-voltage discharge, from a zapper warhead; this will literally fry you from the inside out.

❖ Josie Cruise

The second part of the system, the cyberware, is necessary to make full optimal use of the control rig system. In a normal datajack, the jack connects with the cerebral cortex in the frontal lobe, which regulates consciousness and intelligence. A control rig system, however, makes use of the lower brain, not the cerebrum; therefore, the jack must be rewired to provide direct linkage with the lower brain, specifically the thalamus, midbrain, and cerebellum. You can always tell a rigger from a decker; because of the direct linkage with the middle brain, riggers generally install their datajacks underneath and behind their ear, instead of at the top of the temple.

❖ It also makes it easier to jack in and out when you're wearing a flight helmet, too.
❖ Josie Cruise

Once the rigger has jacked into the control rig, it switches all control from the vehicle to the rigger. From this point on the thalamus, cerebellum, and midbrain are no longer in control of the human body; all their efforts are directed towards controlling the machine, until the jack is removed.

Enhancements provided by the rig cyberware work to enhance the performance of the lower and middle brain areas. These consist of artificial neurotransmitter boosters and axon/dendrite enhancers, as well as localized adrenal injectors designed to stimulate specifically the lower and middle brain areas.

Rigging Vs. Decking

A number of both riggers and deckers have asked me why a vehicle control rig doesn't function inside the Matrix. "After all," asked one, "in both systems you're using your brain to directly interact with a simsense simulation of reality, right?"

Wrong.

What you have to understand is this: rigging and decking may share some strong similarities, in that both work with an ASIST virtual simulation, and both rely on pure mental brain power to do the job. That, however, is where the similarities end.

Decking the Matrix uses virtual reality in a way to interpret visually complex computation and mathematical problems. It transforms a stream of numbers and code into a three-dimensional model the decker can see and understand better. In the former mode (numbers and code), much of the brain's work centers on the frontal lobe, where calculation, reasoning, and analysis take place. In the latter, (visual model) part of the work transfers to the transverse and occipital lobes, the centers for audio/visual recognition. More of the brain is at work, so it arrives at a solution faster.

Note that in all of the example above, all the brain's work centers solely on the cerebrum, the center of higher intelligence. If you'll remember what I said in the previous section, the cyberware enhancement of the vehicle control rig focuses almost exclusively on the middle and hind brain, the traffic control center of neural activity. Rigging a vehicle is much more reflexive and instinctive than decking. In a way, it's almost like a simsense or trideo game, in that the majority of mental activity takes place in the lower brain.

Consequently, because of this difference, deckers tend to be slow and clumsy riggers, as they lack the neural enhancement in the proper areas. (Never mind the fact they lack the burned-in firmware to interface with a vehicle control rig's ASIST protocols.) Conversely, riggers tend to be very sloppy deckers, as their enhanced thalami encourage knee-jerk reactions, versus the intense cerebral concentration necessary for surfing the Matrix.

Vehicle Damage Rules for Shadowrun

By David Buehrer <dbuehrer@denver.carl.org>

This article is a modification of the optional vehicle damage rules presented in Rigger 2 by Jon Szeto. I would like to thank Mr. Szeto for his inspiration.

The purpose of this article is to replace the existing vehicle damage rules and provide a more detailed account of vehicle damage. This article assume you are using the vehicle rules from Rigger 2. As with any set of rules, please feel free to modify these to suit the needs of you and your game. If you find a discrepancy please notify me at dbuehrer@denver.carl.org. I'm also willing to accept suggestions, comments, and criticisms <grin>.

Instead of using a damage track to determine the level of damage a vehicle has sustained these rules apply damage to a vehicle's subsystems.

The outcome of an attack/crash, and how the vehicle was damaged, determines how many subsystems have been damaged.

If the vehicle was attacked by a heavy weapon (heavy weapon, missile, rocket, explosive, etc), or damaged by a crash, consult the following table:

Heavy Weapon Attack/Crash	
<u>Damage Suffered</u>	<u>Number of Subsystems Affected</u>
Light	2
Moderate	3
Serious	4
Deadly	5

Note: if a heavy weapon attack is armor piercing and the vehicle is unarmored, reduce the number of subsystems affected by 1d6. Armor piercing heavy weapons rely on their reaction with vehicle armor to damage a vehicle.

Also, if the vehicle is damaged as the result of a crash, or impact, the passengers may be affected. Use the rules on p. 50 of Rigger 2 to determine damage to passengers.

If the vehicle was attacked by a standard weapon consult the following table:

Standard Weapon Attack	
<u>Damage Suffered</u>	<u>Number of Subsystems Affected</u>
Light	0
Moderate	1
Serious	1
Deadly	2

Physically damaging hand-to-hand and melee weapon attacks will not affect a vehicle unless the power of the attack is greater than the vehicle's Body plus Armor multiplied by 2, in which case they are treated as a standard weapon attack.

For each subsystem affected roll on the following tables. If this results in a subsystem which is not present roll again. If the results is a subsystem which has already been damaged, stage the damage to the subsystem (see Table 8). If the result is a subsystem which is already destroyed then treat it as no effect.

TABLE 1: MAJOR SYSTEM CATEGORIES (ROLL 2D6)

Result	Corresponding Table	Category
2	Table 7	Accessories
3	Table 6	Weapon Systems
4	Table 5	Vehicle Electronics
5	Table 4	Vehicle Controls
6	Table 3	Chassis
7	Table 2	Engine
8	Table 3	Chassis
9	Table 4	Vehicle Controls
10	Table 5	Vehicle Electronics
11	Table 6	Weapon Systems
12	Table 7	Accessories

Note, a specific subsystem may be targeted with a +4 modifier to the attacker's target number if the attacker is familiar with the vehicle he is attacking (the GM may adjust this modifier as necessary based on the size of the subsystem).

TABLE 2: ENGINE (ROLL 1D6)

- 1 Gridlink
- 2 Turbocharger or Superconductive Drive
- 3 Engine Hit
- 4 Engine Customization
- 5 Nitrous Injector
- 6 SunCell

TABLE 3: CHASSIS (ROLL 1D6)

- 1 Fuel System
- 2-3 Passenger Compartment
- 4 Aggravated Body Damage (Heavy Weapon or Crash Only)
- 5 Armor Defeating Hit (Heavy Weapon or Crash Only)
- 6 Roll on Table 4: Vehicle Controls

TABLE 4: VEHICLE CONTROLS (ROLL 1D6)

- 1 Rigger Control Box
- 2 Autonav
- 3-4 Handling
- 5 Remote Control Linkup
- 6 Drive-by-Wire System

TABLE 5: VEHICLE ELECTRONICS (ROLL 1D6)

- 1 ECM
- 2 ECCM
- 3-4 Sensor Systems
- 5 ED
- 6 ECD

TABLE 6: WEAPON SYSTEMS (ROLL 1D6)

- 1-2 Turret
- 3-4 Vehicle Weapon
- 5-6 Target Acquisition System

TABLE 7: ACCESSORIES (ROLL 2D6)

- 2 Roll on Table 2: Engine
- 3 APPS System
- 4 Amphibious System
- 5 Anti-Theft System
- 6 Communications Gear
- 7 Drone Rack
- 8 EnviroSeal
- 9 External Cargo Mount
- 10 Life Support
- 11 Spotlight
- 12 Roll on Table 4: Vehicle Controls

Damage Severity

Light Damage: The subsystem operates at reduced efficiency. Reduce by 1 any bonuses or extra dice provided by modifications or accessories. (If the subsystem has no such bonuses or extra dice, apply a +1 target modifier to Success Tests made with the damaged device/system.)

Moderate Damage: The subsystem suffers a serious malfunction. Reduce by half the original value of any bonuses or extra dice provided by modifications or accessories. (If the subsystem has no such bonuses or extra dice, apply a +3 target modifier to Success Tests made with the damaged device/system.)

Serious Damage: The subsystem is inoperative but repairable.

Deadly Damage: The subsystem is destroyed beyond repair, and must be replaced completely.

Do not use damage tracks for vehicle subsystems. Keep track of the damage level only (Light, Serious, Moderate, Deadly). If an already damaged subsystem is damaged again, stage the damage as follows. If a damaged subsystem receives Light damage, increase the existing damage level by one level (Light to Moderate, Moderate to Serious, Serious to Deadly). If a damaged subsystem receives Moderate damage, increase the existing damage level by two levels (Light to Serious, Moderate to Deadly, Serious to Deadly). If a damaged subsystem receives Serious damage, increase the existing damage level to Deadly.

Subsystem Damage Notes

Rigger Control Box: The attack disrupts the rigger control hardware installed in the vehicle and triggers an ASIST backlash. The rigger must make a Damage Resistance Test against physical damage. The damage Power Level is equal to the Power of the attack (after Armor reductions), and the Damage Level is equal to the Damage Level of the attack.

Handling: The attack damages the primary vehicle control mechanisms. Increase the Handling of the vehicle by 1 for Light damage, 2 for Moderate damage and 3 for Serious damage. If the Handling sustains Deadly damage, the vehicle automatically crashes.

Turret: The attack damages the servo-mechanism controlling the vehicle turret (if the vehicle has more than one turret, the GM determines which one is damaged). Weapons fired from that turret suffer a Damage Modifier based on the damage of the Hit (see Table 8: Damage Severity). If the turret suffers Deadly damage, it is rendered inoperative and frozen in place (the direction it is pointing is determined by the GM).

Target Acquisition System: The attack damages key sensor or electronic components relating to target-acquisition functions. Missiles, sensor-enhanced weapons and other smart weapons suffer a Damage Modifier (see Table 8: Damage Severity). If the target-acquisition system suffers Deadly damage, the vehicle cannot lock onto a target and is unable to fire smart weapons. "Dumb" weapons, such as rockets, cannons and firearms, are not affected.

Engine Hit: The attack damages the engine, which in turn reduces the vehicle's Acceleration, Speed and Load Ratings. For Light damage, multiply all Ratings by .9, rounding down. For Moderate damage, multiply all Ratings by .7, rounding down. For Serious damage multiply all Ratings by .4, rounding down. If the engine suffers Deadly damage, the vehicle loses power and decelerates at a rate equal to twice the Acceleration, and the driver must make a Crash Test (p. 51, Rigger 2).

Fuel System: The attack causes a leak (if the engine is IC) or a short (if the engine is electric) in the vehicle's fuel/power system. For light damage, calculate the loss rate by multiplying the maximum fuel/power by .01. The result is the amount of fuel/power that is lost each turn. For Moderate damage, multiply the fuel/power by .05. For Serious damage, multiply the fuel/power by .1. If the fuel/power system sustains Deadly damage, it ruptures and the driver must make a Crash Test (p. 51, Rigger 2). (Pyromaniac GMs may also check to see if the destruction of the fuel system results in an electrical fire or fuel explosion).

If a vehicle has extra fuel tanks or groups of battery cells only one tank/cell group is affected (determined by the GM).

Passenger Compartment: If this subsystem is hit by a heavy weapon the attack generates shrapnel in the passenger compartment. Passengers must make a Damage Resistance Test against physical damage. The Power is equal to the Power of the attack against the vehicle (after armor reductions), and the Damage Code is equal to the Damage Code of the attack.

If a non-explosive armor piercing heavy weapon hits this subsystem, and the vehicle is not armored, one passenger is hit (determined by the GM). The passenger must make a Damage Resistance Test using the rules in the preceding paragraph.

If this subsystem is hit by a standard weapon one passenger is hit (determined by the GM). The passenger must make a Damage Resistance Test against physical damage. The Power is equal to half the Power of the

attack against the vehicle (after armor reductions), and the Damage Code is equal to the Damage Code of the attack.

In the event of a crash, or impact, use the rules on p. 50 of Rigger 2 to determine damage to passengers.

Aggravated Body Damage (if the attack is not from heavy weapon or crash ignore this result and roll again): If the vehicle has a Body of 1 or less, it and all of its subsystems are destroyed and it automatically crashes.

If the vehicle has a Body of 2 or more the attack seriously weakens the infrastructure of the vehicle. For a Light damage, reduce the vehicle's Body by 1. For Moderate damage, reduce the vehicle's Body to one-half its value, rounded up. For Serious damage, reduce the vehicle's Body to one-third of its original value, rounded up. Deadly damage to the vehicle's Body destroys the vehicle and all of its subsystems, and it automatically crashes.

Armor-Defeating Hit (if the attack is not from a heavy weapon ignore this result and roll again): The attack reduces the effectiveness of the vehicle's armor. Light damage reduces the Armor Rating by 1, Moderate damage reduces the Armor by 3, Serious damage reduces the Armor by 6, and Deadly damage reduces the Armor Rating by 10. Armor points lost in this manner are gone for good and can only be recovered by replacing the armor.

Note that this rule is separate from the Armor Degradation rules (p. 75, Fields of Fire).

Example 1:

Fred is driving along in his Ford Americar when Crazy Eddie fires an anti-vehicle rocket at him from the roof of a nearby building. After resolving the attack and damage resistance rolls Fred's car suffers Serious damage. Because the attack is from a heavy weapon 4 subsystems are affected. However, because the anti-vehicle rocket is armor piercing and Fred's car is unarmored the number of systems affected is reduced by 1d6. The GM rolls a 2 on 1d6, reducing the number of subsystems affected to 2.

The GM then rolls 2d6 on Table 1 to determine the category for the first subsystem and gets an 8 (Chassis). The GM then rolls 1d6 on Table 3 and gets a 1. The fuel system of Fred's car suffers Serious damage, which (assuming he had a full tank of gas) is now leaking fuel at a rate of 6 liters per turn.

The GM rolls again for the second affected subsystem and the final result is drive-by-wire. Since Fred's car is not equipped with a drive-by-wire system the GM rolls again. After re-rolling the chassis is hit again and the car suffers aggravated body damage, which reduces its Body to one third of its original value (3) to 1.

Crazy Eddie fires another rocket at Fred and his car suffers Moderate damage. This time only one subsystem is affected. After rolling on the tables the fuel system is hit again. Since the fuel system had already suffered Serious damage the Moderate attack increases the damage to Deadly, destroying the fuel system and forcing Fred to make a crash test. The GM is in a rather evil mood and rules that the engine of Fred's car catches fire and a cloud of smoke belches from under the hood.

Example 2:

Later that week Crazy Eddie fires his Ares Predator at a CAS main battle tank. Eddie gets lucky beyond his wildest expectations and the tank suffers Light damage from the attack. However, because he is using a standard weapon against a vehicle none of the tank's subsystems suffer damage and the tank is unaffected by the attack.

Target: Jon Szeto

Interviewer: Bull <chaos@ncweb.com>

1. First, the important question. How did you get involved with FASA?

Well, the short answer would be, Steve got me into this. <g>

Two years ago, back in 1996, FASA announced at GenCon their intention to publish the Rigger 2 book. (Actually, they had planned to publish it as early as 1994, but at that time Tom Dowd stepped down as Shadowrun line developer, and Shadowrun languished for a couple of years until Mike Mulvihill took over as product developer.) By then Steve Kenson had well established himself as a FASA freelance writer. I knew Steve since high school, and he encouraged me to submit a proposal, since he knew riggers were my pet interest. Between all the writing I had done for the Scrawls from the Sprawls APA (see later), and a good word from Steve, I got to write the Rigger 2 book, and the rest is, as they say, history.

2. How long have you been Playing Shadowrun?

Off and on since it came out in 1989. Whenever I came home from college for Christmas and the summer, I played Shadowrun with Steve and our gaming group. However, when I went into the Army, I couldn't find any soldiers who played Shadowrun, but I joined Compuserve and played several on-line message-based games with other users in the United States and Europe.

I haven't been playing lately since the last online group folded, due to the time I've spent writing, but I'm looking to get back to gaming, either online or in a face-to-face game.

3. Tell us a little about yourself, if you would. Where do you live, how old you are, that sort of thing.

I'm 27, and my life up to this point has been something of a nomadic experience. Originally I grew up in Merrimack, New Hampshire, where Steve and I went to the same high school. After high school I went to college at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), in upstate New York. I graduated with a B.S. in Engineering Physics and was commissioned as a lieutenant in the United States Army.

For the next four years I served as a chemical officer in the Army. My duties focused primarily around protecting our troops from chemical and biological weapons attacks. I spent two years in Germany (at a little post just south of Frankfurt) and a year and a half at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. I've also spent several months on training exercises and courses at other bases as well, namely Fort McClellan, Alabama; Fort Knox, Kentucky; and Fort Lewis, Washington (yes, the same Fort Lewis that's part of the Seattle Metroplex). I've also gone with the Army to the Mojave Desert, California, at Fort Irwin, as well as a joint exercise with the Marine Corps at Twentynine Palms (Both of which are mentioned in the California Free State Sourcebook). I've never been to Bosnia or the Persian Gulf, though — just missed getting the call to go to either place.

I got out of the Army at the end of 1996 and came to Lexington, Kentucky to work as an engineer. I'm still in Lexington right now, but I'm looking for another job in engineering at the moment. It'd be nice for me to stay in Lexington for another couple of years, but if the job's right, I might move again.

5. *I've read your work in the Scrawls from the Sprawls, the Shadowrun APA you are involved with. How did you get involved with that, and how long have you been a part of the APA?*

Not to sound like a broken record, but again, Steve got me into it.

Anyway, when I was home for the holidays in 1991/92, Steve mentioned the APA to our gaming group and encouraged some of us to write for it. After seeing Steve's copy of the APA, I wrote to Niko Wieleba, the APA coordinator, about joining and started writing.

I've been writing regularly for the APA since then, six years as of March, and have every intention of continuing.

Steve Kensons APA Description:

For those who don't know, an APA is an Amateur Press Association: a bunch of people who write material on a single topic (in this case Shadowrun), copy it and mail it to a coordinator, who puts all of the submissions together into a "fanzine" that gets mailed out to all of the members of the group.

I've enjoyed writing for Scrawls from the Sprawls, because being part of an APA let me practice my writing skills and gave me valuable feedback from other writers. Like Steve, I've used the APA to experiment with many Shadowrun ideas, many of which later made their way into Rigger 2, CyberPirates, and some other ongoing projects.

Actually, writing for the APA was one of the reasons FASA was willing to go out on a limb and let me (then a relative unknown) to write a major sourcebook like Rigger 2. FASA regularly receives a copy of the APA, just to "show'em what we're doing," so my material reassured them that I was a decent and prolific writer.

7. I know from the APA and Rigger 2 that Josie Cruz is one of your old Shadowrun Characters, or at least a character often used in your work. Can you tell us a little about her?

First of all, that's Josie Cruise. C-R-U-I-S-E. Get it right, or she'll send an Outlaw Block II missile up your tailpipe.

☛ Trust me, he's speaking from experience.

Um, yeah, so as you can see, JC's a real character. (So to speak.) She was my first Shadowrun character when Steve and I started playing Shadowrun in 1989. At first Josie wasn't much more than the Rigger archetype out of the book, but as time went by, I continued to flesh out more and more of her background, personality, and motivations. Over the years I've kind of grown attached to her (though I have no idea why....)

☛ And neither do I....

I used her in the campaign I played with Steve and our group, as well as two of the on-line games I've played. She's now become something of an NPC and a "prime runner" (I've given her way too many plot devices to make her a viable player character, anyway.)

☛ Hey, it's only fair. After all, you always seem to let me get fragged me over every other opportunity....

Josie is an ex-Army rigger from the Confederacy. She used to be a Southern belle, but now she's a grade-A smartass. One significant thing about her background is that she came from a stable family and a happy marriage, but several things happened, and now she's on the run as a "blank." I was getting tired of the

overwrought stereotype of shadowrunners as antisocial punks from a dysfunctional family background, so I wanted Josie to be different, by making her well-adjusted and "normal."

8. What is your favorite type of character to play?

I'm a technogeek at heart, so I like to play technologically-oriented characters, such as riggers, the most. But I've played other character archetypes as well, such as street shamans, physical adepts, mercs, and deckers. Anything I can develop a good "schtick" for. Strangely enough, the characters I least like playing are street samurai. They just seem too combat-oriented and flat for me to develop a good schtick for.

9. Do you still play SR on a regular basis?

<sigh> I'd sure love to, but amongst writing, having a "day job," and maintaining some semblance of a life, I usually find that I just don't have the time, energy, or motivation to keep up with a regular campaign. Also, being on the move, it's been difficult for me to find and stay with a gaming group to play with.

10. Do you GM SR? If so, do you prefer being a GM or a Player?

Heh. Before Shadowrun came out, I tried my hand at running a few other role-playing games. I immediately decided that I much more preferred being a player than a gamemaster. (Sorry, Steve.)

That being said, there is one particular aspect of gamemastering that I do particularly enjoy: world-building. I like creating the NPCs that populate a game world, the interesting places that provide the background, the histories and political machinations that are going on. You should ask Steve about the superheroes campaign we played for several years. He often jokes that I created about a third of people, places and things that went on in that campaign, almost none of which had anything to do with the character(s) I played (and Steve created another third, and the last third sprang from the subplots of one character run by another member of our gaming group).

11. Do you write much fiction, Shadowrun or Otherwise?

I've written several stories in the APA that have revolved around Josie Cruise. Parts of them were used as the basis for the fiction pieces (written by FASA Editorial) that appeared in Rigger 2. (At that time, things were getting down to the wire, so FASA decided to do the fiction writing in-house to help make sure the book got out on time.)

I've also written some other stories as well for the APA. Some revolve around other characters of mine, but a few of them are "alternate universe" Shadowrun stories, set in different genres. For example, I once wrote a steampunk Shadowrun story that was set in late 19th-century North America. Right now I'm working in the APA on a sequel to that story, set during the time of World War I. Another story that I've started (but not yet finished) is set in the 41st century Shadowrun world (4050), right at or near the peak of the mana cycle.

12. Would you consider writing a Shadowrun Novel, if given the opportunity?

Yeah, that certainly would be nice. But honestly, right now the thing holding me back is trying to think of a story line that will last through an entire novel. There've been some disjointed scenes and scenarios that have run through my head now and again, but no unifying thread to tie them together into a novel-sized plot.

13. What is your opinion of Immortal Elves, Horrors, and all the really big, oddball stuff that has crept into SR over the years?

As I understand it, the Immortal Elves, Horrors (and the 4th World) were part of the "back story" of Shadowrun. Small, tempting bits were hinted here and there in some of the earlier products, such as Bottled Demon and Harlequin. Since I wasn't writing for FASA then, it was neat wondering what was really going on behind the scenes and trying to figure out the Big Secret.

However, for me at least, the coolness factor soured when FASA finally let the cat out of the bag in '93/'94. During that time, Earthdawn was coming out, as well as the two Tir books. What soured me to the whole Horror/Immortal Elf thing was the way the two Tir sourcebooks were written. The countries were simply ridiculous and unbelievable, and the overall tone of both books seemed to say: "Our locations and NPC are so much cooler than anything you puny shadowrunners can think of."

From that point on, up until Mike Mulvihill took over as line developer, Shadowrun started to become something of a one-note song, focusing more on the Horrors, Immortal Elves, bugs, and toxic spirits. So the Horror/IE stuff got real old, real fast.

However, since Mike Mulvihill took over, I've liked the direction Shadowrun has taken in focusing on other aspects of the Shadowrun world (particularly with the UCAS election, CyberPirates, and the upcoming storyline in 1998 involving the megacorps.) By putting a fresh new look at the Shadowrun world, I think Mike has made the Shadowrun world a lot more interesting.

Now don't get me wrong: I liked some bits of the Horror/IE subplot and wouldn't mind revisiting it *briefly* in future products. But I definitely would NOT wish to see it become the dominant theme of Shadowrun, as it was almost threatening to. The Shadowrun world is too diverse to be dominated by any one storyline, and a one-note song like this gets very old, very fast.

14. What do you like to do to relax?

I spend quite a bit of time keeping physically fit (bad habit I got from the military :) and work out each day, either running (4-6 miles/day), lifting weights, or swimming. I also like to read; my favorite topics are military studies and European history (I used to read a lot of science fiction when I was in college, but I don't read as much now). And I spend a considerable amount of time on the computer, either surfing the net or playing computer games.

15. What was the last good movie you saw?

This past weekend I saw the latest Bond movie, Tomorrow Never Dies. Very cool action movie: plenty of style, lots of hi-tech gizmos (check out the remote-controlled BMW!), just enough detail to be mostly believable, yet plenty of over-the-top stuff to be fun. Michelle Keoh as the Bond babe also adds a nice twist of Hong Kong action movie martial arts, too.

16. What other Role Playing Games, if any, do you play?

None at the moment, I'm afraid. While I was gaming with Steve, I used to play Earthdawn, TORG, and our long-term superheroes campaign (which at different times was run using Champions, Marvel Super Heroes, DC Heroes, and I think GURPS Superheroes).

Recently I've been playing BattleTech in local tournaments, trying to get back into the game on the odd chance that I might write for it. Also, if I can find the time and local interest, I wouldn't mind trying out Deadlands and IN NOMINE (purely out of interest, not for any writing purposes, that is).

17. What is one thing you would like to accomplish some day?

I want to continue in engineering; eventually I'd like to move into work with RF or laser technology. I'd also like to get a master's degree in engineering in the process, but since I've been out of school for five years now, I don't know how easy (or hard) that will be.

18. What is one thing about you that we never needed to know?

In the past ten years, I have had a mailing address in seven states and one foreign country, visited seven other countries, and learned two foreign languages, plus little bits of others. I've accumulated enough air miles to circle the globe at least five times and driven enough ground miles to cross the continental United States.

19. The obvious question, since you surf the net, what do you think of the quality and quantity of Shadowrun material on the net?

The amount of Shadowrun material (as well as other role-playing games) is quite impressive, to say the least. It's interesting to look at other people's perspectives of Shadowrun and take a peek at their own ongoing campaigns and homebrew rules.

However, to be honest, I have some rather... mixed feelings about the quality of stuff out there. Some sites (such as Paolo Marcucci's Shadowrun Archive, Blackjack's Corner, and the Shadowrun Webring) are very good and have a wealth of helpful hints for new players and gamemasters. Other sites, on the other hand (names have been omitted to protect the guilty), I wouldn't touch with a ten-foot pole, because they're awful, uninformative, outdated, or just plain weird. But then again, that's typical of cyberspace: quality varies widely from one extreme to the other.

20. Any plans for your own web site?

Well, I don't know. It's all a matter of having the time and energy to set it up, update it on a fairly regular basis, and do a decent job overall. Right now I already have a lot of stuff on my plate as it is (from being an engineer and freelance writer), and I don't know if I can fit a web site on top of all of that, without at least one thing suffering in quantity.

21. Have you seen The Shop, by James Ojaste? What are your impressions of it, and what do you think about using software to ease common GM tasks?

Yes, I've seen it, downloaded it, and tried it out. I think it does a fairly decent job of adding up the numbers and putting together the options, as detailed under the Vehicle Construction System in Rigger 2. I think there are a few changes that could be recommended (like the ability to print the final stats out, either on a printer or into a .TXT file, unlocking some of the text boxes so that the user could change the entries, and so on). The user interface is also a bit cryptic in some places (a help file would be nice), and I think it could stand for some cosmetic changes (but then again, it's freeware, so I shouldn't grumble too loudly). But overall, it's a good first step.

- James Ojaste recently released Version 1.20 of The Shop, and it contains most of the features that Jon suggested. It can be downloaded at <http://www.csclub.uwaterloo.ca/~jojaste/SRII/>
- Adam

As far as the issue of software aids, I'm all for anything that will help a gamemaster in running a game. Especially since a growing number of campaigns and games are being run via e-mail, BBS messaging, or IRC, software aids can be a very valuable tool.

22. Back to Rigger 2, how much real life research did you do while putting it together?

There was actually quite a bit of research done on Rigger 2, coming from a wide variety of sources. Some material (such as the Indirect Fire rules) was based off of my military experience in the Army and things I was exposed to from being in the service. Also, while I was in the Army, I had access to a weekly newspaper called the Army Times, an independent publication covering issues relevant to service members. Occasionally they publish a few articles covering technological developments and defense trends. (The Smart Armor System and Smart Materials were two things based off of articles from the Army Times.)

A few things were based off of articles I read in magazines and newspapers (both US and European), and US government publications. During GenCon '96, I spent some time visiting the US Government bookstore in Milwaukee and picked up several publications that helped to form some of the rules I developed for drones and electronic warfare.

Some information came from books, particularly the nonfiction books Tom Clancy wrote about the military services, like Submarine, Armored Cav, and Fighter Wing. (Some critics point out that Clancy has a pro-American bias, but he's still good enough for getting specs and numbers that are at least "close enough.")

Last but not least, some information came straight off the Internet. I spent a considerable amount of time lurking on newsgroups. Some automotive information I obtained from Popular Mechanics' web site. For the Cyberpirates sourcebook, some ship data I obtained from web sites run by shipping companies, such as Maersk and Kvaerner, as well as the home pages for the US and British Royal Navies.

23. Was there anything you wanted to include that didn't make the cut?

The few things that were cut were some fiction pieces that were written in-house, because time was running short. One of them was supposed to talk about how some of the technology worked, so as to give players and gamemaster a better "feel" for running rigger characters and gear. (The "Man-Machine Interface" article I wrote for this issue of TSS was part of that). Another was a short story that portrayed a run from a rigger's point-of-view. The fiction pieces that the FASA staff wrote for Rigger 2 were based from parts of this story and another story. However, I've submitted the original story to Shadowland magazine, and it should be appearing in issues 7 and 8.

Rigger 2 Addition: Multiple Power Plants

Adam Jury <fro@lis.ab.ca>

When attempting to produce a vehicle with two power plants, you notice an obvious problem with the rules: there aren't any.

This article is dedicated to the following combinations of engines:

Electric and Gasoline

Electric and Diesel

Electric and Methane

Comments and criticisms are more than welcome, as these rules haven't been play-tested, nor do I know that much about real life vehicles. Thanks to the ShadowRN mailing list members and to Gurth, who helped me work this one out.

Obviously, some types of vehicles do just not make sense as having two power plants, but some can certainly benefit. Since this technology has already been developed, I see no reason why it wouldn't be continued into 205x and beyond.

If there is no Electric Power Plant available for the chassis you have chosen (Pages 167-171, R2), this cannot be done. However, vehicles can use a power plant it could not ordinarily use, if combined with an electric engine to power the wheels. For example, a motorcycle powered by Diesel and Electric is feasible, while a purely Diesel powered motorcycle is not.

You can also use a Power Plant not normally available for the Chassis -- you could have another vehicles Gasoline Power Plant running a Motorcycles electric engine.

Step 1: Choose Chassis

Select a chassis like normal.

Step 2: Determine Design Points

Add chosen power plants design cost together and multiply by 1.5
Dual Power Plant vehicles have a markup factor of +.5

Step 3: Speed

Since the Electric Power Plant actually powers the vehicle, use the speed ratings for the Electric Power Plant.

Step 4: Acceleration

Exact same as with Speed -- Since the electric engine actually powers the vehicle, use the speed ratings for the Electric Power Plant.

Step 5: Load Rating

Once again, use only the ratings of the Electric Power Plant.

Step 6: Signature

Use the Lowest Signature of the two power plants.

Step 7: Economy

The internal combustion engine always runs at maximum efficiency, producing 10% of it's speed rating in PF (do not round off), which is either passed to the Electric engine or stored in batteries.

In the case of the IC engine running out of fuel, the vehicle can still operate on any stored electrical energy, or any electrical energy it can generate with Gridlink or SunCell power.

Step 8: Starting Fuel Size

Starting Fuel Size is as standard for the Power Plants.

Step 9: Complete vehicle as normal**Example:**

TSSP Citymover

Chassis: Subcompact/Commuter DP: 30
Power Plants: Electric and Methane DP: 45

Design Options:

Rating 2 Autonav DP: 10
APPS DP: 30
Anti-theft system (4-automated call) DP: 16

Total Design Point Cost DP: 131

Design Point times Markup Value DP: 196.5

Times 100 19,650 ¥

Throw in a 3 disc CD changer, and it's an even 20K ¥



	Handling	Speed	Accel	Body/Armor	Signature	Autonav	Sensor	Cost
Citymover	4/8	75	4	3/0	5	2	-	20,000 ¥
Seating	One bucket			Entry	1 door			
Economy	Electric engine uses .5 PF per kilometer			Fuel	Dual Power Plant. Electric (150PF Capacity) and Methane (450 Bars)			
Storage	1 CF Underseat			Load	40			
Accessories	Rating 2 Autonav, APPS, Anti-theft system (4-automated call)							
Point Value	131 x 1.5 Markup			Template	Subcompact			

New Edges and Flaws

Steven Ratkovich and Adam Jury <chaos@ncweb.com> <fro@lis.ab.ca>

These are mainly more specific versions of flaws from The Shadowrun Companion, which are more focused towards decker and rigger type characters.

Flaw: Focused Obliviousness

Value: -2

A character with Focused Obliviousness is someone who gets so wrapped up in his work, especially work that requires concentration, that he loses touch with reality to some extent. They easily lose track of time, and won't notice if someone is talking to them unless shouted at or hit with something. The most common characters to have this flaw are mechanics or programmers.

In Shadowrun, any character with a Programming, B/R, or Magical Theory skill can have this flaw. These characters, while using one of the above mentioned skills, whether it's researching a spell, modifying their car, or designing a new combat program, will tend to lose touch with reality, suffering a -3 to any perception tests to notice things that are going on around them. Loud noises or shouts lower the modifier to a -2, and getting hit with an object such as a paper ball or monkey wrench lowers the target number to a -1.

Flaw: Clumsy

Value: -1

A character with the Clumsy flaw isn't physically clumsy, although he could be. More likely, he ends up making silly mistakes that occasionally cost time and money. These mistakes can be simple, such as forgetting to tighten the bolts when putting a tire on a car, or putting the wrong chip in a slot on his cyberdeck. More seriously, the character could forget to do something he promised, or forget a key step to something — riting an entire program without backing it up, then accidentally deleting it all.

Any character may take this flaw, although it usually only shows up when a character is using a B/R skill. Anytime a character rolls a 1 in any of these tests, some little mistake is likely to happen. These rarely are extremely significant, but can inject a touch of reality or humour into the game.

Edge: Attentive

Value: 1

This is nearly the opposite of the Clumsy flaw. A character with this flaw never makes silly mistakes, rarely makes typos in a document, can remember the exact page number of a book he's reading, always brings the right tools to work on his car, and things like that.

Any character may take this flaw, although it usually only shows up when a character is using a B/R skill. You could be really generous and lower target numbers by 1 for B/R tests made by a character with this edge although it depends on what they are trying to do. In general, characters with the Attentive edge rarely overlook something small, when trying to get to the 'big picture'. This edge grants no benefits in combat.

The Cluttered Datastore

Various Contributors

☛ Well folks, you may be saying “Gee, the datastore looks a bit slim today.”. Well, I have good news for you — we dug up an old vehicle catalog from the matrix, and converted the statistics to those new wacky formats they’re using now. Look for this file (And the original, with those old and also wacky formats.) at the same place you found this.

Of course, we do have a dose of the usual stuff, too.

☛ Nudawn

Vehement Anti-Vehicular Rifle

Anti-vehicular weapon in a compact, Assault Rifle-sized package!

This weapon fires Medium Machine Gun ammo, but uses Assault Rifle ranges. Very popular among riggers for use in micro pop-up turrets.

Vehement's damage is not reduced when firing against vehicles. Uses Gunnery skill and Heavy Weapons recoil rules.

Type	Conceal	Ammo	Mode	Damage	Weight	Availability	Cost	Street Index
Assault	2	8 (c)	SA/BF*	8S	6	12/7 days	8,000¥	3

*Also available in FA-capable version, for +500¥. This is only practical for vehicle-mounted versions, or for trolls with gyromounts (double all recoil when firing in FA).

☛ It's been said before, and I'll say it again. Grade A Bang-Bang!

☛ Peto

☛ Nice weapon, if you have the cash for it, and if you have a weapon to mount it in. I'm a big ork, and even with a gyromount, this baby isn't comfortable to fire.

☛ Grisham

The Monitor — Car Protection System

Tired of finally paying that last payment on your much sought after and much envied automobile and come to find that while you were getting a bite to eat at *Wong Tong's* Chinese Resturaunt, your car was thoroughly vandalized. So much good that expensive car alarm system did, the alarms never raise anyone's attention, and you couldn't hear it yourself. So there you are with a top of the line car alarm, but no more car to protect. If you don't want this to happen, perhaps you should consider *The Monitor* Car Protection System.

The Monitor Car Protection System is unique, in the fact that it doesn't bother with the blaring horns, and flashing lights of most conventional car alarms, it has the elegant yet simple electrical shock system that you have come to expect from other high quality alarms, but also every Monitor package comes complete with several innovations, including: Keyless ignition, Electrical shock systems, High grade 'Last Resort' system, along with something that lets you decide if you want to loose the car to just theft...

'Last Resort' is the name given to the keyless ignition system, and its related components. In Laymans terms Last Resort acts as a theft deterrent system, a theft-shock system, and an active warning system by means of the keyless ignition unit that goes along with your keys, and alerts you when the alarm is triggered, and gives you the simple choices of: **Detonate**, **Shock**, **Deactivate**, and for some odd reason, **Ignore**. The options are more than obvious by the names assigned to each of them. **Detonate**, this activates a spark in the gas tank, and also a series of charges

through the car (if you choose to put them in), sending your car, and its contents into a fiery inferno. **Shock**, also obvious, issues the standard electrical shock incapacitating the failed thief. **Deactivate**, this choice deactivates all electrical systems in the car by removing the cars ability to start. **Ignore**, this choice does nothing, it just lets the thief get away with your car, or it keeps you in one piece if you set it off by accident.

Design Specifications

Design Cost: 40 Points

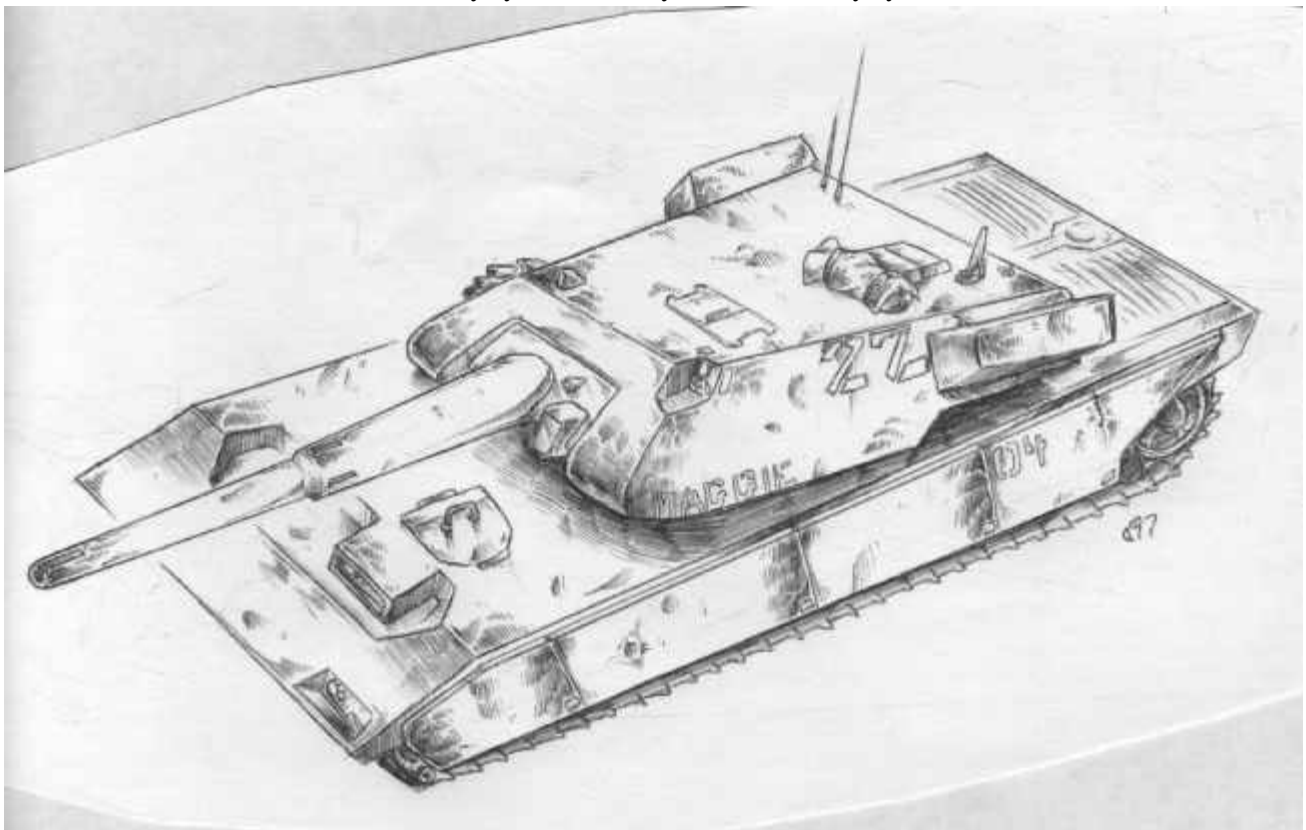
Customization Specifications

Parts Cost: 4500 ¥

All else as per the Rigger 2 rules (Page 141).

Treat *The Monitor* as a rating 5 system for the purposes of all tests.

Some vehicles don't need a security system — they **are** the security system.



SwiftOne Speaks

by SwiftOne <swiftone@bigfoot.com>

Covered this Month: Cyberpirates (sourcebook), Bloodsport (novel), Shadowland (magazine), and Beyond the Pale (novel)

My reviews will try to cover the points of a work that are of interest to players and GMs, while not revealing any surprises. I'll also offer a summary and a rating on a 10 point scale of everything I review. I tend to be a cynic, so don't expect to see many 10's. On the other hand, any 10's you see must deserve it.

My 10 Point Scale

- 0 = I pity the tree that died for this
- 1 = Ignorance is bliss
- 3 = Pretty Bad
- 5 = Borrow someone else's
- 7 = A good read
- 9 = Practically Mandatory for all good SR players
- 10 = Gibson and Tolkien in one

I will gladly accept any feedback from the readers. The email address swiftone@bigfoot.com should be good for several years. If not, simply search for SwiftOne. Please, however, make sure I can understand that you are writing regarding my SwiftOne Speaks column. I get lots of other mail and I might not realize what you are referring to.

These mundane details completed, lets get on with the reviews

<h3><u>Cyberpirates</u></h3>	<h3><u>Sourcebook</u></h3>
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Author: Jennifer Brandes and Chris Hepler

Rating: 7

Pros: Quality, Diverse Material. Something for everybody. Very complete coverage.

Cons: You may only end up using 10% of the book, as the breadth of the material is likely outside your campaign.

I have a confession to make. I was not looking forward to Cyberpirates. Not one little bit.

Perhaps it was the disaster that was Shadowboxer. Perhaps it was that I thought trying to tie Shadowrunners and Swashbuckling together was ridiculous. Perhaps it was that I had little interest in a book that nothing more than a new place book combined with ship rules that I'd never use. Certainly it wasn't the Japan Sourcebook that I still vainly wait for. To me, it seemed the biggest waste of a SR publishing since the Art of Shadowrun.

But I was brought around.

The book itself is 182 pages of material, continuing the recent trend towards larger sourcebooks (ala VR 2.0 and Rigger 2). Basically the book breaks down into three parts: Shadowrunning, Smuggling, and Piracy, a place book for the Caribbean League, the Phillipines, and the Gold and Ivory Coasts, and Game Rules, which include ship based combat, new toys, new paranormal critters, new totems, and even a new variation of Shamanism: ancestor worship.

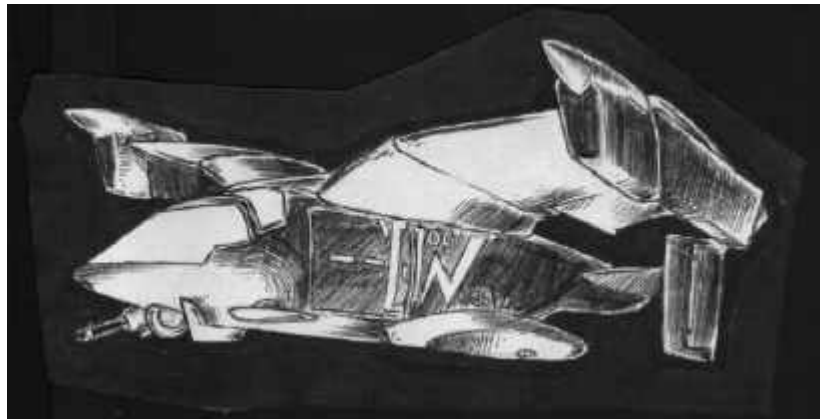
So why did I change my tune about this book? Certainly it is still about smugglers. Certainly it contains a lot of place book material about places I wasn't overly interested in. Certainly Shadowboxer was still a horrible book.

The writers did a very good job of keeping things complete without overloading you. First, they talked about the various connections shadowrunners could have to this book: They could become smugglers, they could have dealings with smugglers, or they just might have a once-in-a-lifetime situation they need to deal with. This set the tone of the rest of the book: A ton of useful information that you can use IF YOU WANT/NEED TO, easily. This avoided the "information-overload" that VR 2.0 and Rigger 2 suffered from, while also avoiding the "tedious detail that I'll never use" common to many of the place books.

Speaking of the places, let's give the detail: covered is the Caribbean league, which covers Cuba and most of the islands in that area down to Trinidad, which is just north of the Amazonian coast, not to mention the Southern tip of Florida (that was news to me). Also included are the Philippines, which are in the middle of a resistance battle against Imperial Japan, and the Gold and Ivory Coasts, which have the diversity and disaster that have been African history throughout our century. The book gives a basic rundown on the political situation, the local culture, and major players in the area. This level of coverage gives GM's a great deal to work with without going into painful block-by-block detail. Madagascar makes an appearance as the ultimate mystery island, with 5 or 6 totally contradictory "conspiracies" being mentioned, but set in such a way that any or none of them could be correct.

Finally, the rules sections offers new weapons, (most based for ship combat, but...), new cyberware (ditto), new totems (mostly African, but adaptable), rules for Ancestor Worship (I'm always in favor of muddying the magical waters), new vehicles, ship building rules (based on Rigger 2, and written by Jon Setzo himself, so I'm hoping they're compatible) and rules for diving and various forms of water combat. The authors deserve a bonus here for the foresight they showed in keeping the included rules complete. For example, rules for astral projection in/through water are included. Unlike many sourcebooks, enough rules concerning the matters discussed in the Shadowtalk are included.

Overall, I recommend this book for GM's. Players will find it a great resource for matters their characters will likely never deal with. For those of you that do enjoy this book, Smuggler's Haven is due to come out in a few months, which will be a combination placebook/adventure collection. For those of you who did not like the "tracked" format of Mob War!, Smuggler's Haven is reportedly NOT a tracked collection, while Predator and Prey is due to be.



Blood Sport**Novel****Author:** Lisa Smedman**Rating:** 5**Pros:** Clear writing style and good characterization.**Cons:** Poor suspense, Overuse of Deus ex Machina

A secret Atzlan plot to destroy the world, with ancient gods, scheming dragons, great prophecies, resistance fighters, and dark blood rituals. Sounds suspenseful right? So one would think.

I was looking forward to Lisa Smedman's latest novel, having enjoyed the characters of her last novel (The Lucifer Deck) greatly (if not the necessarily the plot). Blood Sport continues her exceptional characterization skills, but seriously misses the beat when it comes to a convincing plot line.

The central premise isn't bad: An ex-Lone Star officer turned Private Investigator is rudely thrust into the chaotic plots of Atzlan's blood priests as they seek to fulfill an ancient ritual for total global destruction. The sub-plots that develop aren't bad either: A dragon is involved...what is he truly working for. Resistance fighters...are they as dangerous as the Atzlan government? Internal Atzlan politics...who is the real enemy? There is even a potential relationship between the main characters that is handled quite well, far better than some others I could point out in SR novels (Cough, Headhunters, Cough).

If the basic premises aren't bad, the characterizations are wonderful. The characters are complex and non-linear, with a subtle expression of this multi-dimensional. It was nice to read a book where the characters not only weren't flat, but they didn't ram that fact down your throat either. I would place characters as Lisa Smedman's greatest strength and talent as a writer.

While these parts of the novel were good, by far the biggest let down was on the execution of the plot. The suspense was missing. In a plot that should have had me flipping through the pages hoping I'd reach a point where I could relax, I was instead turning the pages hoping for somewhere I would eventually be anything EXCEPT relaxed. The Lucifer Deck had more investigation and discovery by the main character, while Blood Sport had events and information spoon fed to you and the main character.

Certainly an element of the lack of suspense was the setting. Somehow the threatening aspect of Atzlan failed to come out. Even the alienness of a culture that kills the winner of their equivalent of the Super Bowl to appease their Gods didn't truly come out. The words were there, but the emotions simply were not invoked.

If you love mysteries or suspense novels, better wait until a rainy day to read this one. If, on the other hand, you like to devour anything with good points (like yours truly) this isn't a waste of time.

Beyond The Pale**Novel****Author:** Jak Koke**Rating:** 6**Pros:** Packed with action, constant suspense, lots of Earthdawn crossover.**Cons:** Mostly action, little innovative since last novel, lots of Earthdawn crossover.

Beyond the Pale, the long awaited conclusion to the Dragon Heart saga. As promised, it concludes the trilogy, decides the fate of the Sixth World, and reveals the truth about Dunklezahn's murder and fate.

The ending of Clockwork Asylum left me eager for more. Clockwork had developed the characters and plot a great deal beyond the early stages found in Stranger Souls. Unfortunately, this development does not continue into

the third book. Where Clockwork had left me hanging, Beyond the Pale picks up and resolves the fate of everyone and neatly ties up the storyline. This happens through a series of fights. Do this, fight here, and when that didn't work, quickly go somewhere else and repeat.

Beyond the Pale does offer the solutions promised, however, as well as a moderate amount of humor (the characters in the story note the similarity between mages with their group and the red-shirted ensigns of Star Trek, just as most readers of the trilogy have) and a lot of suspenseful moments. I read the entire 260 page novel in one sitting, because there was no question of stopping. The suspense was constant.

I recommend Beyond the Pale to those of you who have read the beginnings of the trilogy, but warn you: consider it as a long Epilogue rather than a third novel and you'll be much happier with what you get.

One last note: I happen to enjoy a bit of Earthdawn crossover material, but there is a fair amount of it in the novel. As I know some parties that are not as ... interested in crossover material as I am, I give you warning now.

Shadowland Magazine Issue #7 Fanzine

Editor: Christopher Hussey <hussfolk@discover-net.net>

Rating: 5

Pros: SR resources from not just the net.folks, hardecopy, possible cash for submissions

Cons: Huge fonts, too much (bad) fiction, questionable reliability.

For those of you who are unaware of the Shadowrun fanzine history, here's a quick unofficial recap:

The first fanzine was Ka-Ge (pronounced Kaw-Gay, Japanese for "shadow"), produced by AWOL productions. This ran for about a dozen issues (exact number unknown) before the AWOL

people headed for the hills. Sadly, due to many remaining ads lying about in various places, many people sent money for subscriptions, and never had the magazine or the money return. Recently, FASA licensed SOK publications to run Shadowland, a fan-supported magazine just as Ka-Ge was.

Shadowland has had a rocky history. I picked up issue #4 in my local gaming store, decided that I could not be without such an obvious SR product, and ordered a subscription (\$18 North America, \$22 Overseas Surface, \$30 Overseas Air. US Funds, Visa/MC accepted). Since back issues were at newsstand price, I also order a copy of each of the issues I had missed.

Good News: My back issues arrived promptly.

Bad News: I didn't get Issue #5 when everyone else did.

I emailed the then-editor about it. It seemed somewhere my order hadn't gotten on the list. However, the trouble was corrected without further hassle. I received my issue and life was happy. The next issue came out on time, and things looked to be okay in that department. Then no one had heard of Issue #7 when it was due to come out (the magazine is published quarterly...supposedly). The time for Issue #8 arrived, and went. I emailed the then-editor and was told that a new editor had been found, and that he was getting the swing of things. Issue #7 is now out (albeit 6-8 months late). Whether the new editor will keep a timely schedule remains to be seen.

As for the content itself, well...I don't want it to seem like I'm ripping on "the competition" (after all, TSS is free, so we aren't competing for your dollars, and we are all doing for the love of the game, right?) but Shadowland has a few weaknesses.

- Well, I know I'm doing it for the love of the game..
- Adam

By far the largest weakness is the one that it can't control. As all of the material is reader-submitted, quality is no better than what they are given. Flipping through any issue is guaranteed to give you a few bad fiction articles, a collection of guns that almost always fire fewer, bigger bullets, a few spells with no breakdown of the drain given, and usually a few totems that may or may not be balanced.

Not that the whole of it is bad. For example, in Issue #7, there is a preview of Technobable, the upcoming novel by Steve Kenson. Also included is a decent fiction piece by Jon Szeto. Every now and then a reader turns in a really good piece of fiction or a great new concept that works well in the game. Unfortunately, it's mostly hit-or-miss. Too often miss.

As with most starting fanzines, the font is too large to make up for the lack of material, and the editing is questionable (Szeto's fiction piece begins on page 45, but is continued on page 30?!?). The new editor mentioned that he is short on everything except fiction submissions. (Judging by the quality of the fiction published, he's seriously short of good fiction too.)

Quite a bit of the magazine is not of much use to the net-savvy. For example, this issue included a preview of Cyberpirates and Technobable, as well as a SR CCG listing. Except for Technobable, all of this is available off of the FASA Web page, and I'd expect Technobable to show up within two weeks.

Here's a quick rundown on the contents of Issue #7:

Title:	Type:	Comment:
Expect the Unexpected	Fiction	Not so hot
Getting Physical	Phys Ad info	Passable
Friendship and Honor	Fiction	Ho-hum
Gen-Con Summary	Duh	Waste of space
Technobable	Preview	Didn't read, I'm saving the suspense
Cyberpirates	Preview	Decent, Same as FASA Web site
Knight Shift	NPCs	Munchie
New Tools of Anti-Social Behavior	Guns	Balanced, but don't add much to game
Gotcha! (hit location system)	Rules	Decent
Nature's Shadows	Totems +	Interesting
Nothing Personal-Just Business	Fiction	Decent
SR CCG card list	Duh	Decent, Same as FASA Web site
High Noon	Fiction	Bad
Way of the Hunter	Phys Ad info	Decent
The Hermetic Lodge	Spells	Decent, no drain breakdown

(Authors of above, feel free to write to me to complain)

Overall, I'd say it's better to buy the occasional issue with stuff that interests you from the local gaming store. Perhaps when more content appears, it will be worth subscribing. [Note that I will be maintaining my subscription anyway, so...] Anyone interested in more info or submitting articles should email the editor. While actually delivery of the magazine and content isn't always the best, I have never had troubles with email responses from them. I'd say Shadowland is a magazine with potential, but that has yet to be realized. As with all fanzines, however, the readers who submit (and those that don't) are responsible for the quality of the final product.

Official Shadowrun Miniatures

Ral Partha, in co-operation with TSS Productions, is making this special offer available only through the The Shadowrun Supplemental. In keeping with the theme of the issue, the following Ral Partha Official Shadowrun Miniatures are being offered at a 20% discount for a limited time. For the full line of Shadowrun miniatures, visit the Ral Partha web site at www.ralpartha.com.



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