MODERNIZED

GAMING IN THE MODERN WORLD

first—
—Issue

Charles Rice *SPEAKS!*

Lets go shopping!

A Modern Location

TORTURE

break your players

MISSION STATEMENT

MODERNIZED is a publication designed to promote and support gaming in the Modern setting. It strives to increase awareness of the various products available for d20 Modern and other Modern gaming. It endeavors to provide readers with material that will enhance their Modern gaming experience. It serves to showcase the various talents of the writers and artists whose volunteer contributions make **MODERNIZED** a success.

PUB'S SCRAWL — MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, gamers from all over, welcome to **MODERNIZED.**

Since July, people have had many questions concerning this new endeavour. Most of them will find answers soon in the **MODERNIZED** FAQ, but there are two key questions that I want to address here. The first is "how did **MODERNIZED** begin?" The second is "why create a free PDF?" If I may be indulged some space...

The **MODERNIZED** concept is an old one, and not one I can lay claim to. The catalyst of this production came when Paizo Publishing announced they would no longer continue to publish Polyhedron Magazine. Polyhedron was considered by many as the closest thing to a Modern magazine on the market, and its demise disappointed many in the Modern community. However, others saw opportunity in this loss. There are those who feel that Modern gaming doesn't receive half the support it should. Their consensus was that a Modern magazine could help bring to Modern gaming the attention and support it deserved. It was from the brainstorm sessions with these visionaries that **MODERNIZED** emerged.

So, why free? Surprisingly, that question has a rather simple answer. People like free better than something they have to pay for. More people will download something for free compared to those who are willing to pay for it. The point of **MODERNIZED** is, after all, to promote Modern gaming. A free product does this in ways a for-pay magazine never can. With a free PDF, people who may not even have an interest in Modern may download **MODERNIZED** to check it out. Who knows? We may end up bringing more players over to Modern. Also, **MODERNIZED** can better promote other Modern products, helping spread awareness of what publishers have created for Modern and further enriching the industry.

Well, I suppose it's time to quit before I get any more long-winded. I've included a quote at the bottom that I feel is appropriate: it is my hope that the "hell" to follow is actually a Modern gaming "heaven." I sincerely hope you enjoy this publication. If you do, or if you don't, e-mail me at modernized@intrepidheroes.com. Oh, and the first person to tell us where that quote is from - we'll try and swing you some free swag.

— David S. Gallant

YOU CAN TELL THEM I'M COMING, AND HELL'S COMING WITH ME

MODERNIZATION

So you've thumbed through the d20 Modern core rules and you "don't get it." What's a "Strong Hero"? Why would I want to play a "blue-collar worker"? What the hell is an "Advanced Class"? Where are the 20 level character progressions? It still says d20 on the cover, doesn't it? It should be exactly the same, right? Well, yes and no. Is it just as fun? Definitely! Is it hard to pick up? Not at all. Here are some quick answers and tips to help make your adjustment to Modern a little easier.

On Multi-classing: Before we even begin to talk about all the classes, let's talk about multi-classing. D20 Modern expects players to multi-class. It's harder not to multi-class. This isn't bad gaming or power gaming; it's an intentional tool to help you make unique characters, allowing your character choices to cover the entire spectrum of "action heroes". So remember, if a particular class doesn't appear to offer more than one or two "cool" features, you aren't required to take 10 levels in it and there are no penalties for multi-classing. Branch out!

On Basic Classes: Think of the basic classes as "pre-levels" to D&D. The idea is to reach even farther back in to a beginning character's life and define what the hero was talented at that helped influence them to enter their "real" class. In D&D terms, the Fighter character was probably a tough, scrappy sort of kid before he became a trained warrior. The "Strong Hero" basic class is an example of that tough, scrappy kid. There are six basic classes that represent each of the six Ability scores and each class helps define a natural "talent" that the character possesses. After about 3 or 4 basic levels you can pick a more defined role in an Advanced Class.

Don't get locked in to the mentality that you

have to start at 1st level. If you (and your GM) aren't interested in the life of a tough, scrappy kid, just pick out enough basic levels to get your PC to the first level of an Advanced Class you're interested in. Crunch some characters. If they don't work out, make some more.

On Advanced Classes: These classes are more on par with the D&D basic classes. They have lots of class abilities and fill a "role". You'll probably put more levels in Advanced Classes than anywhere else. These classes favor characters built with the appropriate basic classes. For example, the quickest route to the

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SO YOU'VE THUMBED THROUGH THE D20 MODERN CORE RULES AND YOU "DON'T GET IT."

Soldier AdvC is three levels of Strong Hero; the quickest route to the Techie AdvC is three levels of Smart Hero. However, Modern does allow for some interesting character combinations: for example, building a "smart soldier" with three levels of Strong Hero, one level of Smart Hero, and then levels in Soldier. Now you have a more colorful character that has more abilities beyond simply shooting things.

These classes are designed to fit in to the modern world. While some of their abilities seem odd at first glance, they work out well in a campaign that isn't quite as combat oriented as D&D typically is.

On Occupations: Occupations are simply another way to add variety to the character build. It does not have any impact on your class or how you play (at least, it doesn't force you to). The starting occupation represents what

basic skill set you may have acquired as a young adult. Your character doesn't need to actually have this job or roleplay being at a job. It's tossed in the background and can be used or ignored based on what your GM thinks is more entertaining.

On Wealth: Wealth, money, and the acquisition of goods & services is handled very differently in d20 Modern. The system deserves an article unto itself. Very briefly, the abstract Wealth system works well and nicely smoothes over the complex reality of 21st century finances. It does take some getting used to, but I encourage you to at least try it before condemning it as too different.

On FX: In d20 Modern, your campaign might be magically fantastic or completely mundane. This is called "FX" in d20 Modern. FX is a catch-all term for magic, spells, psionics and other supernatural abilities. Throughout most d20 Modern materials you'll see options based on what level of FX is apparent in a given campaign.

Other differences of note: The d20 Modern rules are bit of a blend between 3.0 and 3.5 D&D rules. Key differences to note in Modern vs. the 3.5 D&D rules are: Tumble skill, non-lethal damage, languages, Treat Injury (replaces Healing), Disable Device skill (uses Int instead of Dex), Knowledge skills and Massive Damage. Consult the D&D SRD or the D&D Core books and compare these elements to their d20 Modern versions. Other differences exist, but these are the major flips for players.

Speaking as a D&D veteran (20 years so far), I can say that d20 Modern is an excellent RPG worthy of the small amount of time required to get used to the new concepts. The first time you get to blow away zombies with an M-60, you'll be hooked!

PLAYING BY POST

COMMANDMENTS TO FOLLOW
By Jason Crutchley

Role-playing has expanded since its humble beginnings some thirty or more years ago. With the advent of the Internet it has become even easier to partake in the hobby, as Role-Playing online or "Play By Post" RP becomes more popular. The Internet is an ideal place for the humble beginnings of the mighty Jim "Jimbo" Jim-Bob, or whatever other daring adventurer you choose to play. In your local community, role players might be rather scarce. However, there are a plethora of willing comrades online, ready to take up any challenge that may be thrown down.

There are plenty of sites out there that allow you to play d20 System games, White Wolf games or even free style games, where there are no specified rules. Campaigns are just one giant story, with each post portraying one small part through the eyes of each character. It is so much easier to get into character online, from the privacy of your own cyber hidey-hole, than acting in character with others in a physical gaming session. Play-by-Post gaming has been around for years; I first discovered it in 2001. As role-playing and story weaving becomes less "nerdy" and more "cool," it is likely to expand, with fresh new ideas and characters.

The premise behind play by post is simple: instead of taking turns to speak round the table, each character's action are posted by that player on a message board, usually in a dedicated forum. The next person then posts their reactions, and so on. In rules-based games, the GamesMaster also posts to keep the plot going, to keep characters up to date and to specify die rolls (which can also be done online thanks to programs called "dice bots"). As the action continues, the players often find themselves typing extremely long posts, fleshing out their characters, slowly giving them expanded histories, strengths and frailties, eventually creating a believable hero in the game world.

Have I whetted your appetite? Are you chomping at the bit to start your online gaming life? Are characters ideas already bouncing 'round your mind, ready to swing their sword, or blast away evil with machine guns? Well hold on there KE-MO SAH-BEE; sheathe your sword, and holster those guns. There are some basic guidelines here that you really need to take note of if you wish to adventure online.

The Ten Commandments of Play-by-Post Gaming

Thou shalt not play God

You know the type: the ones that can fly, are invincible, can throw fireballs, are invincible, amazing with a gun, jumping around like they are in some kind of John Woo movie, are invincible, are a big shot, are invincible, loved by all the ladies, are invincible, and all the World Leaders bow at his feet. Oh, and did I mention he's invincible?

God characters suck. They offer no challenge, no adventure, nothing beyond the chance to say "I won." We all know this isn't a game to win or lose.

Thou shalt not solve all the problems of the universe by thyself.

Your character is not the be-all and end-all of the universe. Say you need to hack into the computer systems of Insane Crazed Megalomaniacs IncTM, who are about to launch thousands of nukes to all corners of the Earth. You, being a thug, an expert in knocking heads together, who thinks that RAM is a male sheep, and a megabyte is something to be had at your local fast food restaurant... you aren't suddenly going to become master hacker. You'll obviously need help.

Playing by Post

Thou shalt embellish thine writings to keep from the "road of tedium".

Put some life into your writing! You have a whole language at your disposal; if you need to use a dictionary or a thesaurus to make it interesting, do so! For example, instead of "*Jim-Bob walked up to the goblin and stabbed him,*" try "*Jim 'Jimbo' Jim-Bob, a man feared by many on the streets on New York, charged the short ugly goblin, a foul creature of Shadow. Screaming fiercely, the muzzles of his handguns exploded, hailing ammunition upon it, rending the previous silence on the deserted street asunder as bullets tore through the greenskin's flesh.*" Which one is more interesting? Those who think the first is more interesting, please leave the room right now.

Thou shalt be true to the character of thy character.

If your character is a 70-year-old cripple, who practically lives in a wheelchair, sucking oxygen from a tube, he isn't suddenly going to perform a commando raid on a Government building. Think about what you would do in the situation if you were that character. Keep in mind your character's limitation as well as her abilities.

Thou shalt make sense.

Make it clear what your character is doing. If there are fifteen people in a room and you say, "Jim-Bob entered the pub and walked up to the bloke in the corner" your fellow players aren't going to have a clue who Jim-Bob is going up to. Instead, try something more like this: "Jim-Bob walked up to the large half Orc bouncer, who stood brooding in the corner of the nightclub, watching for any signs of trouble." From that description it's fairly obvious who you are going to (unless it happens to be coincidental that all fifteen of the guys are Orc Bouncers.) If you still think extra clarification may be needed append your posts with an OOC (Out Of Character) comment, either by putting your text in brackets or a different colour.

Thou shalt not kill other characters or decide what damage they suffer.

You cannot decide what happens to another character ever! This applies especially to combat. If engaged in a straightforward fight, your opponents may dodge. If you are sneaking up behind someone, leave your post hanging at your attack rather than assuming the outcome. After all, they might hear you or otherwise detect the sneak attack. Even if it's something that they would never dodge in a million years, still leave it hanging; good role-players will pick it up and take the licks they ought to take. For various exceptions to the rule, see "Thou shalt not decide thy neighbour's actions, or his wife's actions, or his oxen's actions, or...." later.

Playing by Post

CONTINUED...

Thou shalt be patient in waiting for thy fellow characters to post.

Nothing is more irritating than someone asking repeatedly for you to post. Remember, people have lives! (No really - stop laughing - people do have lives!) They may have work to do or family to be with. Just be patient. If they haven't posted in say a week, politely get in touch with them somehow and remind them of the game. Be polite and don't be too pushy. Manners costeth nothing. Never forget, though, that the nature of play-by-post allows it to be played at a slower and more leisurely pace than a tabletop game. Don't expect white-knuckle, breakneck speed from a play-by-post game.

THOU SHALT NOT WRITE IN ALL CAPS AS IT IS HIGHLY ANNOYING.

NEED I SAY MORE?

Tho shlt nut oos fals spillin n gremmmer.

Learn to spell, damnit! N dnt use txt spk as tht is hily annoyin! It makes reading posts that much more difficult if you have to decipher wht sum1 hs sed cuz u cnt reed it. Remember, you don't have a limit of 150 characters on your average message board. If you are unsure of a word's spelling or proper usage, you have a few options. Microsoft Word works well enough for checking spelling and grammar. There are also a multitude of online dictionaries one may consult.

Thou shalt not decide thy neighbour's actions, or his wife's actions, or his oxen's actions, or....

Listen carefully, as I will say this once, and only once. NEVER control another person's character. It is The Most Annoying Thing Ever to have your character's actions dictated by someone who doesn't know your character. Especially when they are playing a weedy pizza delivery boy, and you are a powerful Drugs Baron, and they write it so that the pizza delivery boy comes off with more menace than your Baron. Above all, this commandment is most important. Follow these and your online travails will be most rewarding!

Welcome to Sunset View Shopping Centre

The Sunset View Shopping Center first opened its doors in 1965. It has undergone several renovations since that time and has drawn a large number of businesses into the area. The shopping center is currently owned by a private sector organization known as the Sunset View Commission.

Normal Hours:

Monday-Thursday *10:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.*

Friday *10:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.*

Saturday *9:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.*

Sunday *10:30 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.*

Holiday Hours:

Monday – Friday *8:00 a.m. – 10:30 p.m.*

Saturday *7:30 a.m. – 11:00 p.m.*

Sunday *8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.*

Closed New Year's Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day & Christmas Day

Special Events

The Perfect Match Super Sale: February 13th through 15th, shoppers are offered special savings on gifts and apparel at participating stores.

Sunset View Shopping Center Spring Cleaning Extravaganza: Every spring, Sunset View merchants clean out their closets and storage areas and offer their merchandise at extraordinary savings.

Joke – The Ultimate Sale: April Fool's Day is your chance to prove them all wrong. Selected stores offer savings that can only be a joke – but the real joke is on the shoppers that don't make it to this one-day event.

Just For Mom: The week before Mother's Day, merchants offer spectacular savings on gifts for mom. The event ends on Mother's Day.

The Not-Another-Tie Sale: The week before Father's Day, great gifts for dad are on sale at prices that are too good to pass up. The event ends on Father's Day.

Sober Grad!: Hosted by Sunset View Shopping Center, this annual event is held to celebrate the success of recent high school graduates. Hours vary due to this event.

Christmas In July: If you're usually early or just love Christmastime, here's your chance to get your yule-fix early. Decorations, cards, and gifts are discounted and displayed for a limited time.

Fall Into Fashion: Sunset View's annual fashion extravaganza. The newest fashions and accessories are available at extraordinary savings.

Blackbird Lane Halloween Carnival: The entertainment area is transformed into a haunted hillside for this one-night event. Treats areavailable for children to trick-or-treat throughout the mall.

Santa's Winter Wonderland: After Santa arrives after Thanksgiving, he is available for photos until Christmas Eve.

Stores

Carrington's: General merchandise. Typical department store.

L. A. Cramer: General merchandise. Typical department store.

MacKenzie's: General merchandise and assorted imports. Typical department store.

First Floor

1) **Personal Treasures:** Personalized gifts & engraving services

2) **Cowen Booksellers:** Library-feel book store

3) **Custom Installation:** Software and game station items

4) **DJ's Comics & Cards:** Comics, sports cards, autographs, toys

5) **Locker Room:** Overpriced, name-brand athletic shoes

6) **Just 4 Kids:** Toys for all age levels

7) **The Bug's Ear:** Children's fashion

8) **Pick A Card:** Greeting cards and Sanrio

9) **Shakers:** Trendy Teens & Juniors apparel

10) **Working Assets:** Professional clothing and accessories

11) **Spin Doctors:** Music

12) **Logo:** Team apparel and accessories

13) **Signs By Matt:** Carved wood signs

14) **Bearly Surviving:** Bears of all kinds, fashion & collector dolls, beanie babies

15) **Wildflower Boutique:** Women's romantic fashion

16) **Etcetera:** Jewelry and accessories

17) **Valerie's Watermark:** Cards, small gifts, wrapping paper, small novelties

18) **A Backward Glance:** Home fashions with a retro/antique feel

19) **Wired:** Everything electronic

20) **Sunset Smiles:** Reasonably priced portrait studio – walk-ins and appointments

21) **dotCom Café:** Internet access by the hour – battlenet-type servers (local & net based)

22) **Sunset View Rx And More:** Mid-grade general merchandise w/pharmacy

23) **Cover Up:** Ball caps, fashion, and utility headwear

24) **Double Header:** Sporting goods. Equipment, some shoes & apparel.

The Food Court
- **Buy The Slice Pizzeria**
- **The Daily Special Sandwich Shoppe**
- **Fernando's Mexican Cuisine**
- **Papa Jack's Grill**
- **Midway Doghouse**
- **The Snowstore**
- **Great Wall Chinese**
- **Twister Pretzel Experts**

Permanent Kiosks

Picture This: Automated while-you-wait photos

Silver City: Sterling silver jewelry

MCS (Mobile Communications Specialties): Cellular phones & service, pagers, PDAs

Cool Shades: Designer sunglasses

Escentials: Custom perfume & incense

Mirror Mirror: Novelty mirrors

A Hint of Distinction: Jewelry and accessories

Expressions: Bumper stickers, window decals

Sunset View Shopping Center Ground Level
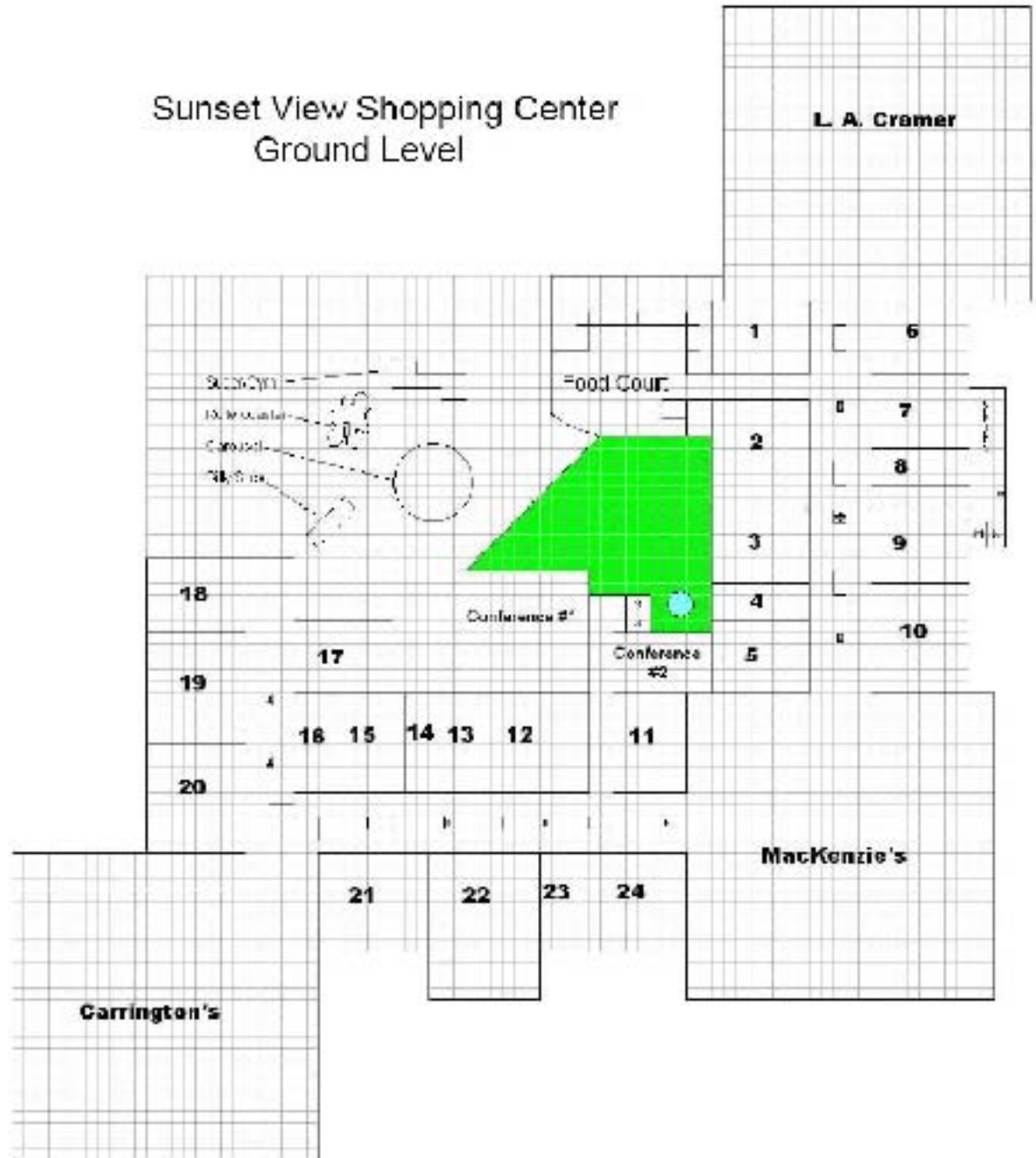
Sunset View Shopping Center
Second Floor

L. A. Cramer

Carrington's

MacKenzie's
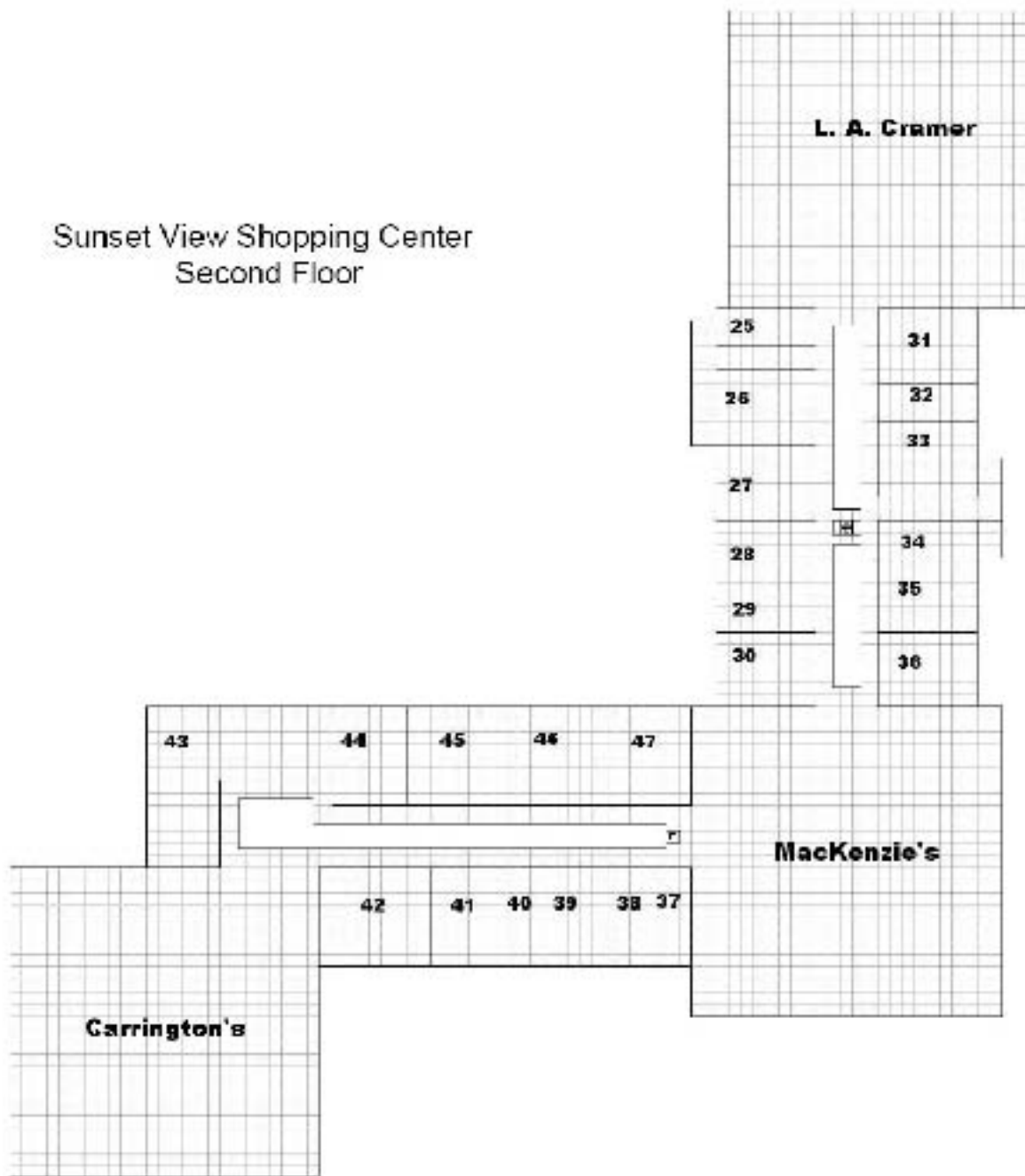
Customer service windows and administrative offices are located in the north wing, down the hallway between Shakers & Pick A Card. The two large conference rooms are available for rent through Administrative Services. The outdoor entertainment area is open to all customers (weather permitting). The food court's enclosed glass dining area looks out over the entertainment area and the picnic lawn. Telephones and drinking fountains are located near every restroom. Anytime ATMs are located on both floors near the escalator.

Second Floor

25) **Meerschaum & Briar:** Tobacco shop

26) **Comfort Zone:** Good quality, fair priced family shoes

27) **Fun Factory:** Toys, specializing in infants, preschool, and school age categories

28) **Shock Treatment:** "Underground fashion" – popular "alternative" culture clothing and accessories

29) **A Rose Is…:** Porcelain & silk flower creations

30) **Beachfront:** Teen & Juniors trendy apparel

31) **The Ashton Collection:** Leather & suede coats, clothes, accessories

32) **Pandora's Box:** Eclectic gift shop geared toward adults

33) **The Beat:** Music, video/DVD, limited software

34) vacant

35) **J.L. Cook:** Men's fashion

36) **Prima:** Women's fashion

37) **The Drawing Room:** Figurines, plates, statues, wind chimes, wall hangings, etc

38) **Revitalize:** Bath salts, soaps, etc.

39) **Matheson's:** Knife shop

40) **Glass House:** Blown glass gifts

41) **Timewarp:** Retro fashion for women

42) **Shelby's:** Family fashion

43) **Gameworld:** Video/pinball/skeeball/air hockey

44) **Sweet Sensation:** Large scale candy store

45) **Innovation:** High-tech, high-end toys & gadgets

46) **Dynasty Jewelers:** Fine jewelry

47) **Imagination:** Books: High-tech-ish book store

The Meerschaum & Briar patio is located directly down the hall next to the shop. The patio is covered and furnished for the comfort of Meerschaum & Briar's customers. Restrooms, telephones & drinking fountains are located near The Beat. Anytime tellers are located on both floors near the escalator.

Stella Vartikian, Charismatic Ordinary 2 / Punk 1 / Salesperson 1; CR 3; Medium Size Humanoid; HD 2d6+1d6+1d4+4; HP 15; Mas 14; Init -1; Spd 30 ft; Defense 10, touch 10, flatfooted 11 (-1 Dex, +1 class); BAB +1; Grap +3; Atk +4 melee (1d6+2 nonlethal, unarmed); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; AL alternative subcultures, punks; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +2; Str 15, Dex 9, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Occupation: Creative (Bluff, Computer Use, Disguise)

Skills: Bluff +10, Computer Use +6, Craft (writing) +6, Disguise +8, Gather Information +7, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (Streetwise) +6, Profession (Salesperson) +6

Feats: Brawl, Deceptive, Low Profile

Talents (Punk): "This ain't your @#$%ing industry" 1

Talents (Salesperson): Salesmanship 1

Possessions: Wealth +7

When Shock Treatment opened, it was like a dream come true for Stella Vartikian. After spending her adolescence wishing for a store where her somewhat unique fashion sense could be indulged, she applied for a position at the store as soon as it opened.

Stella has proved an excellent employee and has excelled in all duties she's been assigned. She holds a grudge against many of the businesses in town for their intolerance of her personal appearance.

Stella has an intimate relationship with the less palatable subcultures in the area and would be an excellent source of information regarding them if she weren't so determined to allow them to "enjoy their freedom without outsiders getting in the way."

Melody McCarver, Charismatic Ordinary 3; CR 2; Medium Size Humanoid; HD 3d6+3; HP 14; Mas 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense 13, touch 13, flatfooted 11 (+2 Dex, +1 class); BAB +1; Grap +0; Atk +0 melee (1d3-1 nonlethal, unarmed); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; AL none; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +1; AP 0; Rep +5; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 15.

Occupation: Student (Knowledge [Current Events], Knowledge [Popular Culture], Perform [Act])

Skills: Bluff +8, Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (Current Events) +7, Knowledge (Popular Culture) +7, Perform (Act) +10, Perform (Dance) +8, Perform (Sing) +10.

Feats: Creative (Perform [Act, Sing]), Renown, Windfall

Possessions: Wealth +9

Teen beauty queen Melody McCarver is a near constant fixture at the Sunset View Shopping Center. She is usually found in the company of three or more of her friends – shopping, enjoying the park, or drinking sodas in the food court.

Melody's winning speeches always include a desire to do something for the world, but in reality, all Melody has ever worried about is doing things for Melody. She is selfish, rude, and generally unlikable. The only explanation anyone can formulate for her apparent legions of friends is that they are attracted to her budding stardom.

Melody is an excellent source for local, current events knowledge – assuming the PCs can get through her snobbishness.

Kyle Reynolds, Smart Hero 2 / Punk 6; CR 7; Medium Size Humanoid; HD 2d6+6d6+0; HP 27; Mas 10; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense 13, touch 13, flatfooted 12 (+1 Dex, +2 class); BAB +4; Grap +6; Atk +6 melee (1d6+1, baseball bat); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL ; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +6; AP 0; Rep +4; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 8, Cha 15.

Occupation: Student (Knowledge [Civics], Knowledge [History], Knowledge [Theology and Philosophy])

Skills: Computer Use +7, Craft (writing) +13, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +7, Knowledge (Business) +13, Knowledge (Civics) +13, Knowledge (Current Events) +13, Knowledge (History) +13, Knowledge (Popular Culture) +7, Knowledge (Streetwise) +7, Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy) +13

Feats: Brawl, Educated (Knowledge [Business], Knowledge [Civics], Knowledge [History], Knowledge [Theology and Philosophy]), Streetfighting.

Talents (Punk): "This ain't your @#$%ing industry" 2, Antipathy (Authority figures, Corporations) +1, "Screw you!", "@#$%ing Fascist!"

Possessions: Wealth +6

Constantly angry at the world and all its controlling forces, Kyle Reynolds has become an ever-present thorn in the side of the Sunset View administration. He has only two reasons to ever be at the Sunset View Shopping Center, and only one of them is considered tolerable by the management – to visit with his fellow-delinquent Stella Vartikian and to wreak havoc on the mall and its customers.

Kyle is extremely intelligent, however, and has a great deal of knowledge about the inner-workings of local administrations of every level. He is also chronically unfriendly and a habitually unpleasant and uncooperative individual.

Michael Preston, Dedicated Ordinary 2 / Salesperson 5; CR 6; Medium Size Humanoid; HD 2d6+5d4-7; HP 15; Mas 8; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense 15, touch 15, flatfooted 14 (+1 Dex, +4 class); BAB +3; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d3+1 nonlethal, unarmed); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; AL none; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +10; AP 0; Rep +4; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 15.

Occupation: Entrepreneur (Diplomacy, Knowledge [Business])

Skills: Diplomacy +16, Gather Information +11, Knowledge (Business) +7, Knowledge (Popular Culture) +7, Listen +4, Profession (Salesperson) +7, Spot +14

Feats: Alertness, Educated (Knowledge [Business], Iron Will, Knowledge [Popular Culture]), Trustworthy

Talents (Salesperson): Honest Face, Salesmanship 3, Tailor the Sale

Possessions: Wealth +9

One of the few constants at Sunset View, Mike Preston has managed Pandora's Box since the store opened. He is always friendly and is considered one of the better people to work with at Sunset View.

He is a strong supporter of the mall's social events and is especially concerned with youth-centered activities, contributing a large amount of his own money to the Sober Grad! event every year.

Preston is an excellent source of knowledge about people and stores in the mall, and is easily approachable – although usually very busy.

Nichelle Delles, Dedicated Ordinary 3; CR 3; Medium Size Humanoid; HD 3d6+3; HP 14; Mas 13; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense 13, touch 13, flatfooted 12 (+1 Dex, +2 class); BAB +2; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d3+0 nonlethal, unarmed); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; AL none; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +4; AP 1; Rep +2; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 8.

Occupation: Entrepreneur (Diplomacy, Knowledge [Business])

Skills: Craft (pharmaceutical) +8, Craft (visual art) +10, Craft (writing) +4, Diplomacy +5, Investigate +4, Knowledge (Business) +8, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +8, Listen +10, Sense Motive +10, Spot +4

Feats: Alertness, Attentive, Creative (Craft [visual art], Craft [writing])

Possessions: Wealth +9

Quiet and unassuming, Nichelle Delles refers to herself as a woman men don't even see until she's gone. Refusing to become involved with any of her many male companions, the owner of Revitalize has learned to be comfortable with her small store and her loyal customers.

Nichelle is a good listener and, as a result, ends up hearing much more than she could ever possibly desire to hear. While she doesn't go out and actively gossip, she is easily persuaded into sharing what she's heard, if for no other reason than to get it off her shoulders.

ESCAPE TO ALCATRAZ

by Roger Carbol

"Alcatraz was never no good for nobody."
-Frank Weatherman, the last prisoner to leave Alcatraz (March 21, 1963)

The Rock. No other prison, past or present, as achieved quite the same level of notoriety as Alcatraz. From an uninhabited barren rock to a military fortress, a military prison, a civilian prison, and finally a family tourist attraction, Alcatraz has undergone drastic changes since it was first charted in 1775. Amazingly, every single phase of its development can be useful as a role-playing setting.

Although presented here for the d20 Modern system, it's easy to adapt Alcatraz to almost any genre of role-playing game. With a few cosmetic changes, it can become the headquarters of evil orcish slave traders, or a re-education camp of Big Brother, or even an asteroid prison in deep space.

Timeline

1775: Spanish explorer Don Juan Manuel de Ayala arrives in his frigate, the San Carlos, while charting San Francisco Bay. He names the island "Isla de los Alcatraces" -- Island of the Pelicans.

1848: California (including Alcatraz) becomes part of the USA due to the Mexican-American War.

1854: The first lighthouse to be built on the Pacific coast becomes operational on Alcatraz Island.

1859: Eighty-six members of Company H, Third Artillery become the first U.S. military personnel to be stationed on the island at Fort Alcatraz.

1861: The American Civil War begins, and with it the use of Alcatraz as a military prison.

1907: Alcatraz is designated as the "Pacific Branch, U.S. Military Prison".

1915: Alcatraz is renamed the "United States, Disciplinary Barracks".

1933: Alcatraz is transferred to the U.S. Department of Justice for use by the Federal Bureau of Prisons and becomes U.S. Penitentiary (USP) Alcatraz.

August 1934: Al "Scarface" Capone is transferred to Alcatraz. He is transferred out five years later for medical reasons.

ESCAPE TO ALCATRAZ

Continued…

Plot Hooks:

September 1934: George "Machine Gun" Kelly arrives in Alcatraz, where he spends the next 17 years, before transferring for medical reasons.

1942: Robert Stroud, the "Birdman of Alcatraz", is transferred from Leavenworth to Alcatraz, where he lives 17 years, until he is transferred for medical reasons.

May 2-4, 1946: "The Battle of Alcatraz" -- six prisoners take control of the cellhouse in an effort to escape. They are thwarted, but not before they kill two guards.

June 11, 1962: Frank Morris and brothers John and Clarence Anglin attempt to "Escape from Alcatraz." They are never seen again.

1962: "The Birdman of Alcatraz" movie is released, with Burt Lancaster as the title character. He is nominated for an Oscar for the performance.

March 21, 1963: USP Alcatraz is closed after 29 years of operation.

November 9, 1969: "Indians of All Tribes" occupy the island as a protest movement. Federal Marshals removed the remaining Native Americans from the island by June, 1971.

1973: Alcatraz Island opens to the public as part of the new Golden Gate National Recreation Area. It currently receives over 1.3 million visitors annually.

1979: "Escape from Alcatraz" movie is released, with Clint Eastwood and Patrick McGoohan, based on the June 11, 1962 attempt. If you only see one Alcatraz movie, see this one.

1996: "The Rock" movie is released, with Sean Connery, Nicolas Cage, and Ed Harris. The Alcatraz movie that most players are probably most familiar with. A gripping, fast-paced adventure.

*The indigenous humans, elves, goblins, aliens (your pick) avoid the mysterious uninhabited island for reasons that they refuse to explain. The heroes, out of curiosity or some other motivation, decide to explore it.

*As part of a larger expeditionary force, the characters are tasked to go off alone and investigate the small, seemingly-empty island just offshore.
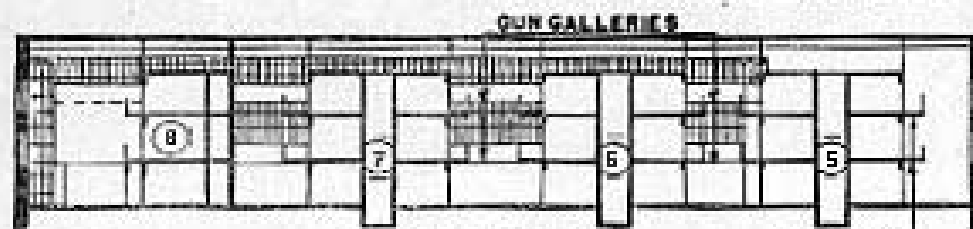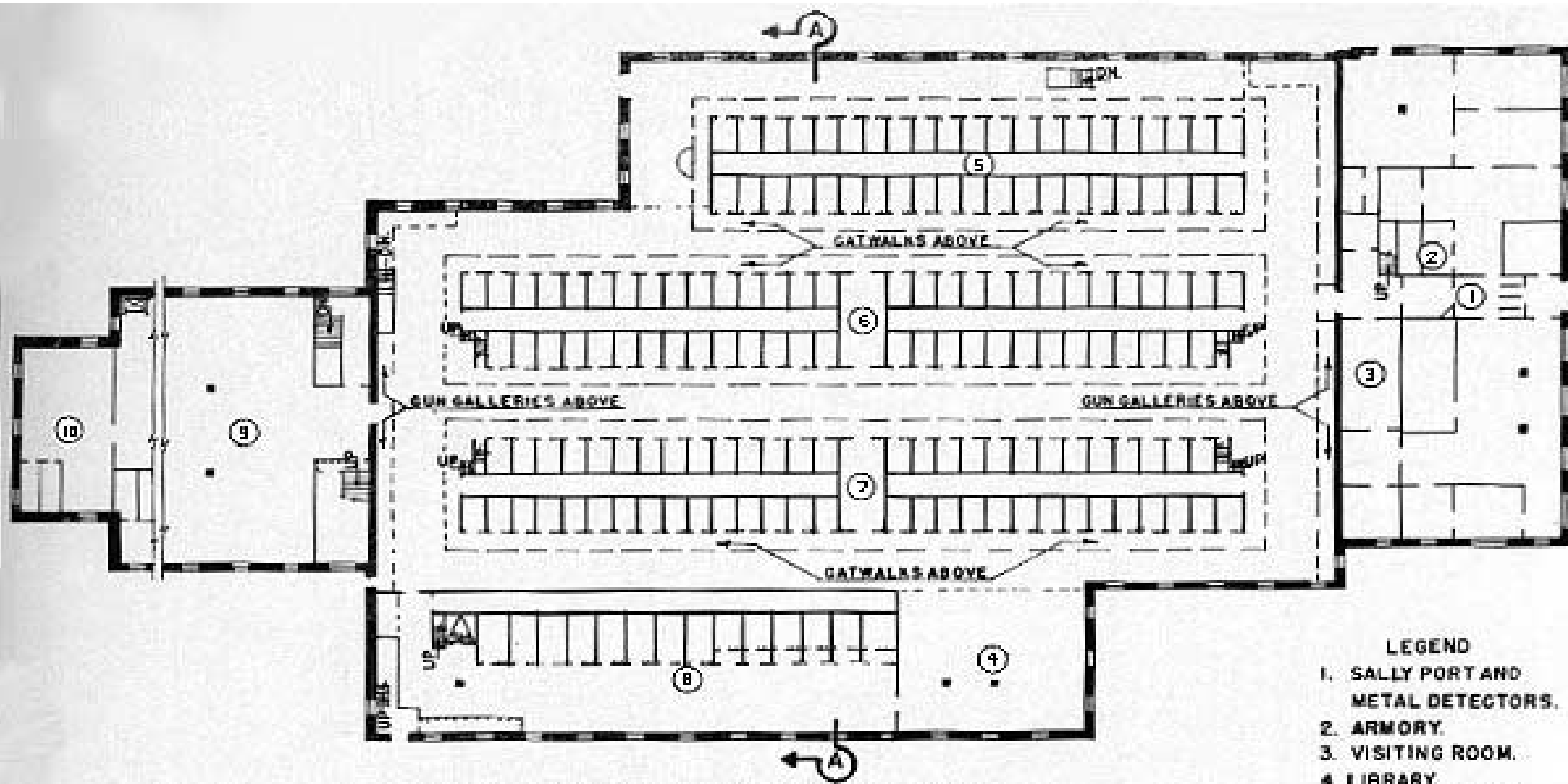
*Pirates have fortified an island into a nigh-impregnable stronghold. A rich reward awaits those who could vanquish them.

*The characters are unjustly incarcerated. Escape from the prison may not be terribly difficult, but do they dare brave the ocean currents?

*The characters, as prison guards, are concerned about rumours of an upcoming escape attempt, especially with the recent transfer of an infamous criminal mastermind.

*Tourists keep reporting strange phenomena at the old prison. Is it haunted, or merely a hoax? The players are hired to find out.

ADMINISTRATION BLDG. AND MAIN CELL HOUSE
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

SECTION "A-A"

GUN GALLERIES

CATWALKS

U.S. PENITENTIARY
ALCATRAZ ISLAND, CALIFORNIA

LEGEND
1. SALLY PORT AND
   METAL DETECTORS.
2. ARMORY.
3. VISITING ROOM.
4. LIBRARY.
5. CELL BLOCK "A".
6. CELL BLOCK "B".
7. CELL BLOCK "C".
8. CELL BLOCK "D".
9. MESS HALL.
10. KITCHEN.

CATWALKS ABOVE

GUN GALLERIES ABOVE

GUN GALLERIES ABOVE

CATWALKS ABOVE

An Interview With... Charles Rice

by David S. Gallant, Charles Baize, and Alan Dyke

RPGObjects is fast becoming one of the most prolific publishers for d20 Modern. Their "Blood and ____" series of PDF books are widely successful and well received by critics and player. The man behind many of them is one Charles Rice, whom we at MODERNIZED had the good fortune of running into recently.

MODERNIZED: *For the benefit of those who don't know... who are you, exactly?*

CHARLES RICE: My name is Charles Rice. I'm a proud graduate of the University of South Florida (BA English Lit) who left behind a well-paying but boring job three years ago to try my hand at writing. I have since written for Vigilance Press (my own label), Mystic Eye Games, RPGObjects, Louis J Porter Designs, and Mongoose.

MOD: *What gaming works might we have recognized you from?*

CR: My first works were the self-published Vigilance and its supplement, Darkness and Light. Then I did Vigilance: Absolute Power and Raw Recruits (a Dragonstar adventure) for Mystic Eye. For RPGObjects I have done Blood and Space, Blood and Relics, Blood and Fists, Blood and Guts: Modern Military, Blood and Guts: War on Terror, Blood and Guts: Inside Vossburg Supermax, Blood and Vigilance, Legends of Excalibur, and the recently released Blood and Fists: Hong Kong Knights.

MOD: *Wow, that's plenty.*

CR: I also recently took a couple of outside projects, doing the Haven d20 conversion for Louis Porter and an as-yet unpublished article of Conan PrCs for Mongoose's Signs and Portents magazine.

MOD: *That's an impressive amount of work.*

CR: In addition, I do editing and development for RPGObjects... including Blood and Guts: In Her Majesty's Service and Blood and Brains, as well as editing Metal Gods and Terrors of the Twisted Earth for the Darwin's World line.

MOD: *Even more still?*

CR: ... and I wrote the occupations in the d20 Modern Darwin's World 2 hardcover. I also served as the developer on couple of RPGObject books: a zombie book written by Michael Tresca called Blood and Brains, and a look at the British Military written by Fraser Ronald called Blood and Guts: In Her Majesty's Service.

MOD: *Is that all?*

CR: There, I think I'm done.

MOD: *So tell us, Chuck: what got you started into gaming in the first place?*

CR: Playing or writing?

MOD: *Let's start with playing.*

CR: I started playing back in the days of the old blue box for basic D&D. I got a gift certificate from my grandmother to Walden's because I was a big reader and got the game on a lark. I was hooked almost immediately, and started GMing myself in a couple of days. The first game I ran was for my mother and father who had read about the game leading kids to suicide and wanted to see for themselves what it was about. They immediately decided it was harmless.

MOD: *Nice parents. Did they keep gaming with you?*

CR: No, it was a one time thing. They thought the game was silly, but harmless. They had just read a lot of dire scare-tactics 80's articles about what the game was and decided to see for themselves what it was. I always thought that was cool of them. I had friends who's parents would throw their books away because of the tone at that time. There was even a Tom Hanks TV movie where he plays D&D and ends up becoming a serial killer... it was an odd time.

MOD: *Ever think Modern might become the new "corruptor"?*

CR: I am surprised it hasn't happened yet, but mostly I think those days are gone. It used to be comic books back in the 50's, then it was RPGs, then it was Heavy metal music; now I think the internet and games like Grand Theft Auto are everyone's boogymen of choice.

MOD: *So how did you get yourself into writing gaming material?*

CR: I decided to get into writing because I thought I could do better than the so-called professionals. I thought a d20 Superhero game would be easy and fun, and wrote one for my group. They suggested I put it out on RPGNow. It entered the top 100 all time at RPGNow within a month where it remains to this day.

MOD: *And that was Vigilance?*

CR: Right, and it opened a lot of doors for me. I had been seeking freelance work, but when I could point to Vigilance and say "this is what I can do," I seemed to get much more meaningful conversations from editors and publishers. Prior to Vigilance, I had been rejected by Bastion, Mongoose and RPGObjects.

MOD: *Do you get in much gaming these days, when you're not writing? If you do, what are you playing?*

CR: I run games as often as I can. I think all writers of gaming material need to run adventures because it builds your chops. It helps remind you of the kind of oddball things players are going to want to do. Obviously I end up running a lot of my own material for playtesting. Currently I have two games going: Legends of Excalibur, my Arthurian fantasy game for D&D 3.5e, and the USHER Dossiers, my d20 Modern campaign, which should see life as a PDF sometime in the future.

MOD: *Ever get recognized in public as the celebrity you are?*

CR: Sometimes at my friendly local game store someone will pick up one of my books, and the owner will point out to them that the author is in the building. I have also run the occasional pick-up game at said FLGS to increase interest in d20 Modern. But other than that, I think the number of d20 writers the average reader could even name, much less recognize, is very small.

MOD: *Hopefully something this interview rectifies.*

CR: I dont think I'm going to be the next Monte Cook. There has been one "star" for each edition of the game and he's it for this one.

MOD: *How did the trend of the "Blood and ____" names for RPGObjects' Modern products begin?*

CR: When we did the first book, Blood and Space, it was just a cool title that Chris (the owner of RPGObjects) and I both liked. We bounced it around for a couple of weeks and experimented with

An Interview With... continued

Space and Blood or Blood and Space. Now, when I was writing my first actual d20 Modern book, the original name for it was Modern Knights. I was done with the book, it was laid out and edited, and the art was done, we were hours away from release... and then a company released a superhero PDF game called "Modern Knight." So about four hours away from the release we decided to call it "Blood and Relics." When that book became a success as well, we had a conversation about doing a whole range of Modern products. My experience in retail had taught me how important Branding is to both companies and lines; so we decided to call the next book "Blood and Fists," and just continued from there.

MOD: *That takes us to Blood and Guts. If you can quantify it, how many hours of research did it take to get all the various details "just right" for Modern Military?*

CR: Well, many would be quick to tell you that Blood & Guts: Modern Military was not "just right." There are many small errors in the book that people can and have pointed out. However, for every book in the Blood series, I do quite a bit of research to try and capture the feel of

the subject. Blood and Guts probably involved about 100 hours of research at various military sites, including correspondence via e-mail with active duty armed forces personnel.

MOD: *How would you compare a project like Modern Military to your latest release, Blood and Fist II: Hong Kong Knights?*

CR: Blood and Fists II was easier in a lot of ways, because the rules territory was charted. When you write a book you have a lot of big decisions to make at the most basic levels about how to handle the mechanics. Blood and Fists used a modular approach, where with only two martial artist classes and the styles, you could make hundreds of unique characters. Blood and Guts took an almost opposite approach, using lots of specialized classes. There's pros and cons to each approach and you sort of agonize over it (or at least I do). But when you are doing a "part two" of something, you have made all those choices, and now you're just adding new material. So there was more research, but fewer design choices. I honestly did not expect Blood and Fists to do as well as it did.

MOD: *Since it's doing so well, what are*

you working on now?

CR: At the moment, I am turning back to some older material. When I did Blood and Relics it was almost viewed as an experiment. For awhile we thought that the non-FX brand of d20 Modern needed more attention than it was getting, thus the approach of Blood and Fists and Blood and Guts. But as we looked at the marketplace, we decided it was time to return to the supernatural and give folks another campaign model option. So I took Blood and Relics (which had never received a full print run) and expanded it, doubling it in size for a full print run.

MOD: *In an ideal situation, what would you REALLY like to do for Modern?*

CR: The USHER Dossiers is sort of a dream project of mine. It's a hard sell in some ways from a business angle because it would incorporate elements from the entire Blood and Fists and Blood and Guts lines, which makes it a product that might only appeal to our most "hardcore" customer base. However, I am in a really great situation. Every book I have done for RPGObjects has been my idea. Most writers get handed projects, but I get to set my own table. So if you had asked

An Interview With ... continued

me this question last year I would have answered "a d20 Modern book about martial arts built around real world styles".

MOD: *... and we've already seen that dreamed lived.*

CR: Right. As long as I can convince Chris that the book will sell (and I am aided in that by my proven ability to make money for RPGObjects), then the book can happen.

MOD: *All right. Time for some out-there questions. Were you worried at all that Blood & Guts: War on Terror would cause a backlash?*

CR: I expected more backlash, and we took steps to minimize it. For instance, in War on Terror, there are terrorist groups modeled from many different parts of the world and ethnic groups. We did that on purpose. I certainly was not looking to slam followers of Islam. The fact that there wasn't any backlash at all, I guess, serves to show that we did it respectfully and tastefully.

MOD: *I noticed that it didn't paint any one group as the "bad guys."*

CR: Unfortunately that's the reality. For example, the IRA was one of the bloodier groups in modern times.

MOD: *I'm sure even American celebrity criminals, like Charles Manson or the Unibomber, could have been modeled with the classes in War on Terror. It was remarkably versatile.*

CR: Thanks. That's another book I might return to in the future.

MOD: *If you had any book to do over again because you feel you might have missed something, which would it be and why?*

CR: I would say that, of the three books in that category, two have already been done. I had wanted to redo Blood and Relics because my grasp of the d20 Modern rules is much more advanced now than it was then. I've just recently wrapped that up. I also wanted to redo Vigilance into a d20 Modern format, which we did awhile back with Blood and Vigilance. So the lone remaining book on the list is Blood and Space, which I would like to redo in a d20 Modern/d20 Future format. Once I get a look at d20 Future, I think I'll do just that.

MOD: *Would you mind commenting on the whole DriveThruRPG/DRM issue, or would you prefer to leave that particular can of worms alone?*

CR: I think the whole DTRPG controversy is a serious topic. I think they made some mistakes in how they handled things, but I think the current wave of print publishers releasing PDFs is proof that the business model of companies like Malhavoc and RPGObjects is sound. Now, since I get a hefty chunk of change every month from a website that directly competes with DriveThruRPG, I think anything else I say would be suspect.

MOD: *Well, I think that nearly wraps it up. Any final message for our readers?*

CR: I'd like to thank everyone who's put down money on something I wrote. We have a lot of customers who buy book after book in our lines, and we're proud of that. It's a sign that our books are fun and (I hope) actually see use in people's Modern games.

MOD: *Thanks a lot for your time, Chuck.*

CR: Thanks for asking me.

Interested in some of the products mentioned in this article?

www.rpgobjects.com

Advanced Classes for Ordinaries

by David S. Gallant

Some of you may already be wondering about the title of this article. "Advanced Classes?" you might ask, "For Ordinaries? I thought Ordinaries couldn't take levels in Advanced Classes!" That's absolutely right. The Modern System Reference Document (MSRD) states that "although ordinaries can multiclass freely between the six basic classes, they cannot take levels in any advanced class. Ordinaries are limited to the six basic classes." Given the current Advanced Classes for d20 Modern, this makes sense; after all, Ordinaries are supposed to be less powerful than Hero characters of the same level, and their lack of abilities makes them easier for GMs to write up. However, should Ordinaries be allowed into Advanced Classes under certain circumstances? Consider the following: the MSRD states that "An advanced class represents a focus and a calling for the experienced adventurer. It provides a specialization and a range of power and ability to give a character that something extra to set him or her apart." While Ordinaries are quite rarely adventurers, I feel that there are plenty of ordinary people who take on a singular focus in life and excel in some utterly mundane area. In short, I think that Ordinaries need their own set of Advanced Classes; something to model those singular, mundane foci that the less heroic segments of the population concern their lives with. That is the reason I felt it necessary to create

these Advanced Classes for Ordinaries. These two classes model two lifestyles that I myself have lived. They are the first in a series of Advanced Classes, designed to give GMs the tools to create more interesting NPCs. Keep in mind that Heroes may still take levels in these Advanced Classes should they meet the prerequisites.

Punk

You've probably seen one before: the spiked, mohawked, or coloured hair, the odd piercings, the metal chains, the studded leather jackets, and the attitude that denotes the typical punk. They fall under a number of types and titles, like "street punks," "mall punks," "bubblegum punks," "skater punks," "punk rockers," "skinheads," "oi's," "old-schoolers," and "skankers," to name a few. Though diverse, all punks share a level of non-conformity and opposition to some established norm or institution. They also tend to by linked by musical tastes, from guitar-heavy punk rock to reggae-like ska music.

Punks are typically Charismatic or Smart Ordinaries, though Strong and Tough Punks are also common.

Requirements

Base Attack Bonus: +1

Special: most Punks take their first levels in this class while they are between the ages of 13 to 19. Punks rarely start on this path before or after this period in their lives, and fewer continue with it .

Hit Die: d6

Class Skills

Bluff (Cha), Craft (visual arts, writing) (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (art, business, civics, current events, history, popular culture, streetwise, theology & philosophy) (Int), and Perform (keyboards, percussion instruments, sing, stringed instruments, wind instruments) (Cha).

Skill points per level: 4 + Int modifier.

Punk Class Features

"This ain't your @#$%ing industry"

The Punk typically dresses to embody his or her non-conformist attitude, including radical hairstyles, piercings, tattoos, and more. The total effect of such an outfit is typically off-putting to most people, while also instantly making Punks recognizable to each other. When so attired, the Punk gains the listed number as a bonus to all Charisma-based skill checks (except Intimidate) when dealing with other Punks. He or she also gains the listed number as a penalty on all Charisma-based skill checks (except Intimidate) when dealing with non-Punks. Intimidate is a special case: Punks only gain the listed number as a bonus to Intimidate checks when dealing with non-Punks. The GM should use discretion when determining whether an ordinary or a hero is considered a "non-Punk"; people have been known to be sympathetic or ambivalent towards

Punks without being Punks themselves. Such people would, therefore, afford Punks no benefit from this ability.

Antipathy

All Punks share an emnity against some cause, ideal, institution, or group that is anathema to their personal values. The Punk may select one of the Antipathy groups from the following table. The Punk must have at least 1 rank per Punk level in one of that group's associated knowledge skills to gain the benefit of this ability. At 2nd level, the Punk gains a +1 morale bonus against those he or she perceives to embody or be associated with his or her Antipathy. At 5th and 8th level, the Punk may choose an additional Antipathy or increase an existing Antipathy morale bonus by +1. Keep in mind, morale is a named bonus and does not stack; therefore, if a Punk attacks a person whom he or she perceives embodies more than one of his or her Antipathies, he or she only gains the benefit of the highest morale bonus.

Antipathy	Knowledge skill
Authority figures	civics, history, or theology & philosophy
Corporations	business or civics
Government	civics or history
Musical style	current events or popular culture
Racists	history or streetwise
Religion	history or theology & philosophy

"Screw you!"

Punks stand out against authority; that usually means anyone who tries to tell them what to do. The Punk gains his Punk levels as a bonus to all level checks to resist Intimidation (reminder: a level check is 1d20 + the character's level or Hit Die).

Table: The Punk

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Def	Rep
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	"This ain't your @#$%ing industry" 1	+0	+2
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Antipathy	+1	+2
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	"Screw you!"	+1	+2
4th	+3	+1	+1	+4	"This ain't your @#$%ing industry" 2	+1	+3
5th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Antipathy	+2	+3
6th	+4	+2	+2	+5	"@#$%ing Fascist!"	+2	+3
7th	+5	+2	+2	+5	"This ain't your @#$%ing industry" 3	+2	+4
8th	+6	+2	+2	+6	Antipathy	+3	+4
9th	+6	+3	+3	+6	"Nazi Mother@#$%er!"	+3	+4
10th	+7	+3	+3	+7	"This ain't your @#$%ing industry" 4	+3	+5

"@#$%ing Fascist!"

Defiance is something that grows with practice. The Punk gains his "This ain't your @#$%ing industry" modifier as a bonus to all level checks to resist Intimidation.

"Nazi Mother@#$%er!"

The Punk's very presence radiates with opposition to authority. The Punk gains his Reputation modifier to all level checks to resist Intimidation.

Salesperson

There are many people stuck with the unsavory task of attempting to sell goods and services to other people. Some run with it and turn selling into a career. This class is meant to model any Ordinary who takes the profession of salesperson seriously and works to be good at making the sale. Salespeople are actually quite common, as many large franchise retail stores actively train their employees in customer service and salesmanship.

Mostly, Salespeople are Charismatic Ordinaries.

However, Salespeople are so common that nearly every type of Ordinary are known to become Salespeople.

Requirements

Charisma: 13+

Profession (salesperson): 4 ranks

Feats: Deceptive or Trustworthy

Hit Die: d4

Class Skills

Bluff (Cha), Computer Use (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Listen (Wis), Profession (salesperson) (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spot (Wis).

Skill points per level: 3 + Int modifier

Salesperson Class Features

Salesmanship

Due to their constant focus on selling, Salespeople are better skilled at selling things than the average person. The Salesperson gains the listed number as a bonus to all Sales checks.

THE SALES CHECK

Salespeople of all kind exist to convince you to buy the products and services they have to offer. In d20 terms, this is accomplished by using the Sales check. Salespeople can be either honest or shifty; thus a Sales check is either a Diplomacy or a Bluff check. The DC for a Sales check is determined by adding the Purchase DC of the product or service to the target customer's Will save modifier. This DC is further modified by Table x-x. Success on a Sales check raises the target customer's attitude towards the product or service by one step (most customers are assumed to begin at Indifferent towards any given product or service). For every 5 points above the DC, the customer's attitude improves by an additional step, up to "Helpful," which means the customer is enthusiastic and quite willing to buy the product. Failing the check fails to adjust the customer's attitude towards the product. Rolling a critical failure (1) results in actually lowering the customer's opinion of the product or service by one step. Note that a Sales check is different than making a Diplomacy check to raise a character's attitude towards another character.

Using the Bluff skill to make a Sales check has its risks. Like any Bluff attempt, the customer is allowed to make an Sense Motive check (against the Sales check) to detect the dishonesty. The consequences of a successful Sense Motive check are up to the GM, but typically, the customer will gain a negative opinion of the Salesperson that renders any Sales checks useless.

One's attitude towards a product or service is not a guarantee that one will purchase it. Thus, even the best Sales check doesn't always result in a sale. Despite the seeming futility of salesmanship, some still strive to excel at it.

Salesperson Talents

At every other level, the Salesperson gains a talent from the following trees. The Salesperson may choose any of these talents provided he or she meets the prerequisites.

Selling Skills Talent Tree

Honest Face: the benefits from the Trustworthy feat improve, granting the Salesperson a +4 bonus to Diplomacy and Gather Information. This bonus replaces (does not stack with) the bonus from the Trustworthy feat.

Prerequisite: Trustworthy

Knowledgeable: Choose a Knowledge skill that the Salesperson has at least 5 ranks in and is applicable to a product or service the Salesperson sells. He or she receives a +2 synergy bonus on all Sales checks when selling products or services applicable to that Knowledge skill. This bonus only applies to Sales checks made using Diplomacy.

Special: This talent may be taken multiple times. Each time it applies to a new Knowledge skill.

Tailor the Sale: By engaging in a brief bit of conversation, the Salesperson can find out a bit of information about the target customer. Engaging in at least 1 minute of conversation and succeeding at a Gather Information check (DC 15) yields some very basic information about the customer: their interests, their lifestyle, and a general idea of their Wealth. Such information earns the Salesperson a +1 insight bonus to Sales checks against that customer. The Salesperson can opt to continue this information-gathering conversation; for each additional minute spent talking, the insight bonus for the successful

Gather Information check increases by 1. This bonus can increase no higher than the Salesperson's current Salesmanship score.

Size up the Sale: The Salesperson is so adept at reading a customer that he or she can determine some very basic information about them at a mere glance. By making a successful Spot check as a full-round action (DC 15), the Salesperson gains an insight bonus to Sales checks against that customer equal to the Salesperson's Salesmanship score.

Prerequisite: Tailor the Sale

Customer Service Training: The end result of numerous customer service training programs leads to a Salesperson who is friendlier and more helpful. Once per day, the Salesperson may use this ability to gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Charisma. This ability lasts for 2d6 hours each day.

Prerequisites: Tailor the Sale, Knowledgeable, Honest Face.

Shifty Salesmanship Talent Tree

Aggrandizement: The Salesperson may attempt to make a product or service seem better than it actually is. Engaging in at least 1 minute of conversation with a customer and making a successful Bluff check grants the Salesperson a +1 circumstance bonus on Sales checks against that customer for a particular product or service. The Salesperson may use this ability several times in succession, each time increasing the circumstance bonus by 1, but never higher than his or her current Salesmanship score.

Looks Are Deceiving: the benefits from the Deceptive feat improve, granting the Salesperson a +4 bonus to Bluff and Disguise. This bonus

replaces (does not stack with) the bonus from the Deceptive feat.

Prerequisite: Deceptive

Price Flubbing: The Salesperson is experienced with making prices seem lower than they actually are. When the Salesperson uses Bluff to make a Sales check, he or she may lower the Purchase DC by an amount no greater than his or her Salesmanship score (this in turn lowers the Sales DC). On a successful Sales check, the customer is thus mislead about the price of the product or service. Using this ability has its risks; while it may make Sales checks easier, the customer might be very surprised when confronted with the actual price.

Sneak Sale: A Salesperson may attempt to weave a sale into seemingly normal conversation. To do so, the Salesperson must engage in at least 1 minute of conversation a customer who is not expecting a Sales attempt use Bluff to make a Sales check against. The DC for this Sales check is just the Purchase DC of the product or service; the customer does not apply his or her Will save modifier to the DC because they are caught "flat-footed," so to speak, against the Sale attempt. Like any Bluff-based Sales check, the customer may make Sense Motive check in opposition. Success reveals to the customer that the Salesperson is indeed attempting to make a sale.

Prerequisites: Aggrandizement or Price Flubbing

Table: The Salesperson

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Def	Rep
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Salesmanship 1	+0	+1
2nd	+0	+0	+0	+3	Talent	+1	+1
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Salesmanship 2	+1	+1
4th	+1	+1	+1	+4	Talent	+1	+2
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Salesmanship 3	+2	+2
6th	+2	+2	+2	+5	Talent	+2	+2
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Salesmanship 4	+2	+3
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Talent	+3	+3
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Salesmanship 5	+3	+3
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Talent	+3	+4

	Factors	DC mod
Customer's attitude to product	for each attitude level better than Indifferent	-2
	for each attitude level worse than Indifferent	+2
Customer's attitude to seller	for each attitude level better than Indifferent	-2
	for each attitude level worse than Indifferent	+2
Customer's Wealth bonus is…	higher than Purchase DC	-2
	1 to 10 points lower than the Purchase DC	+2
	11 to 15 points lower than the Purchase DC	+4
	16+ points lower than the Purchase DC	+6
Customer cannot afford product/service even if he or she took 20 on Wealth check		+8
Customer has an urgent need for the product or service (GM's discretion)		-2 to -8

If you feel inspired to write your own Advanced Class for Ordinaries (AdvCfO), keep a few things in mind. First, Ordinaries are meant to be underpowered. Since Advanced Classes grant characters new abilities, an AdvCfO ought to be statistically inferior to a typical Advanced Class in exchange for new abilities. There is an exception to this rule, however – by making the granted abilities increasingly specialized, or applicable only in certain situations, you may gain some leeway for your AdvCfO to have better-than-mediocre stats. Second, AdvCfOs should be accessible to characters at 2nd level. Most regular Advanced Classes are typically accessible by 4th level, but an Advanced Class for Ordinaries has to be accessible to NPCs and characters who usually have few levels to begin with. Since AdvCfOs are meant to be underpowered, it does not affect game balance to allow such early access to them.

There are numerous examples of Ordinary advanced classes in everyday life. Observe the people around you. See what they do for a living, what they excel at. Let them be your inspiration for your own Advanced Classes for Ordinaries.

THE SOUL LANCET
HUNTER OF THE DEAD AND DAMNED

OGC

BY CURTIS OWINGS

For as long as there have been vampires, there have been those dedicated to destroying them. The Soul Lancet is one kind of such a vampire hunter. Though these mortal warriors possess none of the strengths of the night, they face vampires wherever they may hide. Overconfident immortals typically laugh at the "threat" of humans, but the few vampires who have survived Lancets attacks know better. Soul Lancets are highly trained to resist common vampiric tricks and exploit vampiric weaknesses to their own advantage.

Requirements:

Base Attack Bonus: +2

Knowledge (arcane lore): 6 ranks

Feats: Vampiric Knowledge, Archaic Weapons Proficiency

Class Skills: Bluff (Cha), Computer Use (Int), Craft (Pharmaceutical)(Int), Decipher Script (Int), Disable Device (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Gamble (Wis), Gather Information (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (Arcane Lore, Earth and Life Sciences, Streetwise, Theology & Philosophy)(Int), Research (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Survival (Wis), Treat Injury (Int).

Skill points per Level: 6 + Int modifier

Hit Dice: d6

Action Points: 6 + half character level (rounded down)

Class Features:

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Soul Lancets are proficient with Light Armor.

Improved Vampiric Knowledge: Due to their exposure and study of vampires, Soul Lancets gain an improved version of the Vampiric Knowledge feat, adding her Soul Lancet level to the follow skill checks when concerning vampires: Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Investigate, Sense Motive and Survival. This bonus replaces the bonus granted by Vampiric Knowledge (does not stack). All other aspects of the feat work as described in Vampire Feats.

Resist Drain: The Soul Lancet gains the Resist Drain feat as a bonus feat, even if she does not meet the prerequisites

(the feat is described later in the article)

Track: As the feat of the same name, except only applicable to tracking Vampires and Undead.

Force of Will: Soul Lancets learn tricks to avoid some of the vampire's mental abilities. The hero gains +4 to all saves against mind-affecting abilities used by vampires.

Viral Sense: At 7th level the Soul Lancet becomes so tuned to the virus that causes vampirism that they can sense its presence in a host. A Lancet can identify vampires within 60 feet. This ability does not grant the ability to know of a vampire's presence; thus, the hero must be able to see the vampire first. A vampire with total concealment cannot be spotted with this ability. Viral Sense negates Disguise attempts for purposes of detecting a vampire – meaning even a vampire using the Disguise skill to mask its true nature cannot fool a Lancet of this level.

Lancet: Soul Lancets learn so much about vampire anatomy that they can bypass vampire Damage Reduction with any weapon. The hero can permanently modify weapons to bypass vampire Damage Reduction by making

a successful Craft (Mechanical) check DC 25 (The GM may rule that another Craft skill, such as Craft [blacksmith], applies to certain weapon types instead). This process takes 1 day. Also, by spending one Action Point and making a successful Craft check (DC 20), a Soul Lancet can jury-rig any weapon to bypass vampire Damage Reduction for 24 hours. Using the Lancet ability this way takes 10 minutes. If an attack by a Lancet deals enough damage to kill a vampire, it is considered slain as if by a stake to the heart.

Blood Toxin: Through careful study of medical and occult sources dealing with vampires, the Soul Lancet discovers arcane secrets that make his or her own blood toxic to vampires. If a vampire attempts to drain Constitution from a Soul Lancet, the vampire takes 3d6 points of damage per Constitution point drained. This ability bypasses any immunity to poisons possessed by the vampire. The Soul Lancet still loses the normal amount of Constitution from the vampire attack. Other humanoids can be inoculated with a vaccine created from the lancet's own blood. One dose can be created in 24 with a successful Craft (Pharmaceutical) check of 20. This vaccination requires raw materials costing a total Purchase DC of 15. This vaccination must be professionally administered by the Soul Lancet that created the blood toxin. The Soul Lancet benefits from this ability all the time, but each dose given to others only lasts for 24 hours.

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th and 9th level the Soul Lancet may select a bonus feat from the following list. The hero must meet all prerequisites of the feat: Deceptive, Cautious, Trustworthy, Confident, Dodge, Attentive, Defensive Combat Martial Arts, Combat Throw, Educated, Nimble, Mobility, Iron Will, Run, and Surgery.

Table: Soul Lancet

Class Level	BAB	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Class Features	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	1	0	1	Improved Knowledge	1	1
2nd	+1	2	0	2	Resist Drain	2	1
3rd	+2	2	1	2	bonus feat	2	1
4th	+3	2	1	2	Tracking	3	2
5th	+3	3	1	3	Force of Will	3	2
6th	+4	3	2	3	bonus feat	3	2
7th	+5	4	2	4	Viral Sense	4	3
8th	+6	4	2	4	Lancet	4	3
9th	+6	4	3	4	bonus feat	5	3
10th	+7	5	3	5	Blood Toxin	5	4

SAMPLE SOUL LANCET

Nefertiti "Nef" is the only daughter of Dr. Omar El-Khashab, a well known scientist from Cairo. Omar spent his life working on the secrets of Egypt while dragging Nefertiti along. Her father provided the best education he could give; this included a lot of studies most young girls never receive. Nefertiti learned volumes of information about the occult and the arcane specifically pertaining to the undead. Omar strived for his whole life to prove they existed, but eventually was discredited. Nef learned to live with the ridicule and constant field excursions.

Omar made an amazing discovery at a dig when Nefertiti was 18. It was a great tomb that appeared to be much older than those excavated around it. Omar hypothesized it might have pre-dated Egyptian culture. Inside the archaeologist and his daughter discovered hundreds of ancient scroll speaking of immortal creatures that fed on blood. Vampire mythology was thought to have begun with legends in the dark ages; proof of vampires from thousands of years earlier was just what Omar needed to restore his position in the scientific community. Nefertiti's father wanted to leave no chance for disputing the find and began documenting the site in secret, with his daughter's help. The pair studied and translated materials for weeks.

They never expected what was to come.

In one night of chaos the site was looted and destroyed by men who possessed incredible speed and strength. Omar and Nefertiti barely escaped with their lives. Omar couldn't face failure again and retired, but Nef had learned volumes about vampires. It wasn't long before she began to realize that vampires were real and living well in Cairo. Armed with knowledge, fate seemed to draw her in to the vampire world. If she wasn't actively fighting off attacks on her father, she was tracking lost loved ones that had been taken by the vampires. Eventually, she was contacted by the night creatures directly; even vampires needed assassins and Nef wasn't limited by life only lived at night.

Nefertiti is a typical Mediterranean woman in appearance with dark skin, eyes and hair. She is an expert vampire slayer and is quite willing to work for either side for the right price. She is well known by vampire families in Cairo who keep their distance and always come with plenty of money to negotiate services.

Nefertiti El-Khashab: Female Human Dedicated Hero 3/Soul Lancet 8; CR 11; Medium Humanoid; HD 11d6+11; hp 48; Mas 12; Init (+3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Def 22(24 w/ Dodge and Defensive Martial Arts), touch 13(15), flat-footed 19 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +0 size, +6 class); BAB +8 (+2 Dedicated Hero, +6 Soul Lancet); Grp +11; Atk +11 melee (1d10+5 plus 1d6 Fire, Bastard Sword, Flaming +2) (+8 BAB, +2 Str, +0 size, +2 weapon quality) or +12 ranged (3d6+1, Glock 17 9mm w/ Laser Sight, Silver Bullets) (+8 BAB, +3 Dex, +0 size, +2 weapon quality +1 Point Blank Shot, -2 Double Tap); Full Atk: +12 melee (1d10+5 plus 1d6 Fire, Bastard Sword, Flaming +2) (+8 BAB, +2 Str, +0 size, +2 weapon quality) +7 melee (1d10+5 plus 1d6 Fire, Bastard Sword, Flaming +2) (+8 BAB, +2 Str, +0 size, +2 weapon quality) or +12 ranged (2d6+1, Glock 17 9mm w/ Laser Sight, Silver Bullets) (+8 BAB, +3 Dex, +0 size, +2 weapon quality +1 Point Blank Shot, -2 Double Tap) +7 ranged (2d6+1, Glock 17 9mm w/ Laser Sight, Silver Bullets) (+8 BAB, +3 Dex, +0 size, +2 weapon quality +1 Point Blank Shot, -2 Double Tap); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Attacks bypass vampire Damage Reduction; SQ Detect vampirism by sight w/in 60', +2 to Fortitude saves to recover negative energy levels, +2 Defense vs. Vampire touch attacks, +4 to Will saves vs. Mind Affect from Vampires and Undead; AL None; AP 6; Rep 4 (+1 Dedicated Hero, +3 Soul Lancet); SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +9 (Dedicated Hero F+1, R+1, W+2; Soul Lancet F+4, R+2, W+4; Con +1, Dex +3, Wis +3); Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 10.

Starting Occupation: Adventurer

Skills and Feats: Craft (Pharmaceutical) (Int) +15, Escape Artist (Dex) +17, Investigate (Int) +11, Knowledge (Arcane Lore) (Int) +11, Read/Write Lang (N/A), Search (Int) +11, Sense Motive (Wis) +15, Speak Lang (N/A), Spot (Wis) +16, Survival (Wis) +15; Archaic Weapons, Attentive, Combat Throw, Defensive Martial Arts, Dodge, Double Tap, Personal Firearms, Point Blank Shot, Vampiric Knowledge, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Armor (Light).

Talents (Dedicated Hero): Empathy, Intuition

Class Abilities (Soul Lancet): Force of Will, Improved Vampiric Knowledge, Lancet, Resist Drain, Tracking, Viral Sense

Possessions: undercover vest, Glock 17 with laser sight, 3 box(15) with silver bullets, 3 white phosphorous grenades, 3 fragmentation grenades, flaming bastard sword +2, cell phone, professional walkie-talkie, covert ear piece, night-vision goggles, metal baton, knife, 5 wooden stakes.

New Feats:

RESIST DRAIN
You are adept at avoiding negative energy attacks from vampires.
Prerequisite: Must be a non-vampiric creature, Vampiric Knowledge.
Benefit: Your Defense is improved by a +2 Circumstance bonus while defending against melee touch attack from vampires (and only vampires). You also receive a +2 bonus to saves to recover negative energy levels and Constitution points lost due to vampires.

VAMPIRIC KNOWLEDGE
You have studied vampires extensively.
Prerequisite: Must be a non-vampiric creature.
Benefit: You can always "take 20" when making Knowledge Checks regarding vampires. This excludes knowledge about specific vampires below 20th level. You may use Treat Injury on vampires without penalty. You gain +1 on attack rolls while fighting vampires. You gain +1 to Bluff, Diplomacy and Sense Motive while interacting with Vampires. Use of the Investigation skill receives a +1 bonus when vampires are involved. You add +10 to your Spot check for recognizing vampires.

TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY
FRASER RONALD

With all the hotspots in the world, all the places he could have been, Lieutenant Cameron Sykes couldn't quite work why he led Alpha Team. While his mates in the Regiment--the 22nd Regiment Special Air Service--risked their lives in Afghanistan and Iraq, he found himself in the former Soviet Republic of Albenistan. Specifically, Alpha Team maintained watch on the village of Harat in the province of Khujkhon. In a mountainous and lawless area that bordered Afghanistan, the Special Intelligence Service had marked Harat as a base of operations for Mahmed al-Yousif, an Afghani drug smuggler. Someone was moving opium through Khujkhon, likely through Harat, and the money was returning by the same route.

Warrant Officer 2nd Class Joel Dacks lowered his binoculars and shook his head. The Increment had seconded Dacks from the Detachment--14 Intelligence Company. He acted as Alpha Team's intelligence specialist. Thick-set with dark hair and eyes, Dacks' muscular frame belied his shrewd mind. They hadn't worked long together, but Cameron already liked and respected the WO2.

"We can't wait." Dacks handed the binoculars to Cameron. "Shomurod is in there. The driver is still in the vehicle. There's luggage, what looks like food and water, everything for a nice long trip. I'd say we have 30 minutes, tops, for them to finish their niceties, get into the vehicle and disappear forever."

Cameron considered the village through the binoculars. A collection of twelve decidedly rough looking buildings made up Harat. Pock-marks and chips marred the plaster covering the worn bricks. He noted that about ten of the villagers had elected to sleep on their flat roofs. On the top of the building Shomurod had entered, two guards sat, backs against the parapet, AKMs resting on their shoulders.

The SIS would be happy to speak to Shomurod. Listed as a target of opportunity, if the SIS couldn't speak with him, they'd be just as happy to see dead. A known drug smuggler, Shomurod had branched out into weapons and people, buying up young Afghani girls and selling them in Uzbekistan or Russia where he bought weapons to trade for girls, or so it went. He must have had connections in Albenistan because its government wasn't interested in chasing him. Al-Yousif was a different matter. The government had no objections to an Increment team killing Afghani smugglers. Of course, the Albenistani government really had no power in the border region. Cameron couldn't call it a civil war, as no one seemed interested in fighting. Warlords ruled in desolate, mountainous border region and the government ruled the cities.

Cameron glanced at Color Sergeant Stephen Azari. "Do you think you could take the guards from here without alerting the occupants?"

A Special Boat Service operator, Color Sergeant Azari, born in Iran but raised in Liverpool, was both medic and marksman. An odd mix of interests, but skill with both seemed natural for him. He stood taller than any other on the team, had a dark brown brush cut and a closely trimmed beard. He raised his L115A1--the military version of the Accuracy International Arctic Warfare Magnum rifle. Cameron assumed he sighted on the roof, and the lieutenant considered the two targets through the binoculars.

"I could hit them easy, but I wouldn't want to risk using a suppressor, so no promises about not waking the neighborhood," Azari said. "Still, this early in the morning? I'd bet fifty quid no one would notice."

"Two shots, right quick?" Dacks asked.

Azari lowered his rifle. "Yeah, I could do it. You want me here, though? Not coming in with you?"

"He has a point," said Staff Sergeant Jerry Barlowe.

Cameron looked over his left shoulder at the sergeant. Barlowe was from the Regiment as well, and when the Increment had come calling, Cameron had insisted Barlowe be included in the team. A demolitions man by inclination, Barlowe had proved cool under fire and a steady hand at the wheel.

When the SIS required direct or special actions, they used the Increment, the secretive, all but invisible branch of Her Majesty's Secret Service that seconded operators from Great Britain's Special Forces Group to complete such missions. Covered under the Intelligence Services Act, an Increment team could not be charged or tried in Great Britain for anything done outside of the country. While operating in Albenistan, Alpha Team had a figurative license to kill. Cameron expected they would be using it.

"Three of us going in with only one man out here for support?" Powerfully built, with intent, dark eyes, Barlowe scratched at his week's growth of stubble. "Azari sitting out here without a spotter? Without someone to watch his back?"

"Whatever we do, I have a feeling it's not going to turn out well," Cameron said. "We tracked Al-Yousif here. We'll follow him wherever he goes."

Dacks shook his head. "From here they'll cross the border into Afghanistan. From there, I'd say they'll head straight to Pakistan. Maybe Tajikistan. If we can keep up with them, if we aren't spotted, if they decide to stop somewhere secluded, somewhere far away from support, if we can catch them by surprise--if all that happens, then we might have a chance."

"Four shooters, Dacks," Cameron said. "No support."

"We ambush the vehicle as it heads out of the village." Azari pointed to the south, where the gravel track which the locals called a road disappeared into the surrounding hills. "I set up right there, below the scrub tree, I could take the driver and any bodyguards before anyone got out of the car."

"Barlowe spots for Azari?" Cameron gestured to Dacks. "You and I go in close?"

Dacks pursed his lips as he considered the building. "I'd love to see what's in that house."

"It's an ambush or I'm going to call in for support," Cameron said. "We both know how long it'll take Bravo or Charlie Teams to make it here. Al-Yousif will be gone. I have no problem with that, but if you're worried we'll lose him, you'll want to chance the ambush."

Taking his binoculars from Cameron and putting them away, Dacks picked up his C7 assault rifle. "Ambush it is."

"I WANT ROUNDS PUT INTO THE ENGINE. KILL THE VEHICLE."

Cameron shouldered his tricked-out C8 carbine. "We go with the ambush. Azari, I want rounds put into the engine. Kill the vehicle. Barlowe, you take the driver and front passenger. Good enough?" Barlowe and Azari nodded. Cameron turned to Dacks. "We move from the rear driver's side. I'll take lead. We don't take any chances. It won't be pretty humping wounded out of here, not with an angry village set to descend on us."

Barlowe cradled his C7, with its underslung M203 grenade launcher. "Won't be any fun humping out prisoners either."

Dacks patted his weapon. "We have inducements for them to perform well."

The four moved down behind the cover of the hill. Keeping the hills between them and the village,

they moved to the scrub tree. Azari and Barlowe crawled into position as Cameron and Dacks continued through the depressions, keeping out of sight as best they could. Poking his head up over a hill, Cameron saw there were only a few meters from their planned location. They crawled down the hill and lay in a ditch beside the road, covered in tall grass and weeds. They waited, silent. They trusted Azari and Barlowe would alert them, send them into action.

"This better be worth it," Cameron said, his voice barely a whisper.

Dacks allowed a slight grin to crease his lips. "The building would have been better."

Before Cameron could retort, Azari's voice came over the tactical radio. "They're in the vehicle and moving. Get ready."

Cameron could hear the truck. It had a grinding roar. Someone wasn't keeping up with the maintenance. It approached. Slowly. Had they noted the team? Were they moving hesitantly, preparing for the ambush?

Barlowe spoke over the tac radio. "Azari's going to take the shot in five, four, three …"

Silence for a heartbeat, a mental two count.

Two single shots rang out. Considering the L115A1 was bolt action, Cameron had to admit he was impressed by the speed with which Azari could cycle it. Two more shots rang out, the distinctive sound of the C7. Cameron and Dacks were moving as they heard glass shatter, the grunt and howl of dying men. They reached the top of the embankment. The rear, driver-side door opened. Al-Yousif stepped out. He had a Makarov in hand. He turned toward Cameron.

Two in the chest put him down.

Cameron froze, crouched, aware of Dacks behind him. He saw no movement. His heart thudded. His eyes moved over the vehicle. Smoke came from beneath the hood and blood covered the cracked front windscreen. Al-Yousif lay splayed at the side of the truck, his head resting against the open door, his eyes open and unblinking. A breath shuddered out of him.

Bullets slammed into the back of the truck. Dirt flew up from the road. Something sharp cracked past Cameron's ear. He felt a sting on his cheek. He turned to face the incoming fire.

"The guards," Dacks said, already down on one knee and taking aim at the two guards on Al-Yousif's roof.

Movement caught Cameron's eye. Shomurod wiggled along the back seat, an AKM under him. His eyes met Cameron's. Cameron brought up his C8. The laser pointer made a red dot on Shomurod's forehead. The bullets continued to strike all around Cameron. It was as though he carried some unearthly shield. Bullets struck near him but never hit him. He heard Dacks fire three short bursts from his C7. He heard the crack of Azari's L115A1 and three shots from Barlowe's rifle.

"You're mine," Cameron said to Shomurod in Tajik, the language used in Albenistan.

Shomurod's mouth hung open. Cameron winked at him, pivoted and fired off a burst of suppressive fire at the guards on the roof. He turned back to Shomurod.

"You're coming with us."

Eyes wide, Shomurod tried to back away, crawling along the back seat. He got tangled with his AKM. It went off. He blew out a fair chunk of his own head.

The shooting had stopped. Cameron glanced at the village. No one remained on Al-Yousif's roof. He looked back at the car. Al-Yousif's body had collapsed, his labored breathing stopped.

"We've got movement in the village," Azari said over the tac radio. "Time to go."

"Shomurod is dead," Cameron said. "We need to search the vehicle."

Dacks unceremoniously dragged Shomurod's body out of the truck. Azari and Barlowe approached the vehicle. Cameron kept his eyes on the village.

"Speed it up, Dacks," Cameron said.

DACKS EXITED THE VEHICLE, BLOOD SMEARED ON HIS BDUS, AN ATTACHÉ CASE IN HIS LEFT HAND. "FREAKIN' BINGO."

"We've got some opium." Dacks tossed out two cubes wrapped in black plastic. "A few guns. Some brains. Wait a minute."

With a smile on his face and bright eyes beaming, Dacks exited the vehicle, blood smeared on his BDUs, an attaché case in his left hand. "Freakin' bingo."

The sound of questioning and commanding came from the village. Cameron glanced into the truck. What more could they find there? He tossed the opium bundles back into it.

"Jerry," Cameron gestured at the truck with his chin, "do the honors."

Barlowe winked, pulled out a thermite charge and dropped it in the truck. The four hustled over the hill before it detonated. Cameron didn't need to look back to know the truck was a flaming wreck. None of its contents would have survived. The four didn't break stride or lessen pace for the hour it took to reach the hidden Land Rover. Once there, they collapsed for a breather before loading up and hauling out. While the others inundated their bodies, inside and out, with water, Dacks looked over the papers in the case. Cameron saw the smile of triumph.

"What did you find?" Cameron asked, applying a dressing to the cut on his cheek--maybe the mark of a ricochet, maybe a pebble kicked up by a bullet, maybe something else.

"I think we've cracked the drug pipeline." Dacks held up a small map. It showed the border region with Afghanistan. It had some lines and red circles. "You ever heard of a place called Ashkashem?"

ALTERNATIVE NONLETHAL DAMAGE RULES

by Curtis Owings

How often has a situation like this occurred in your game?

Player: *"I swing my fist, trying to punch the prison guard out."*

GM: "Okay, roll your attack… by the way, what's your Strength modifier?"

Player: *"I have an 18, so +4 damage on the attack. I hit on Defense 22, is that good enough?"*

GM: "A handy hit, and the guard misses his Attack of Opportunity. Do you have Brawl or something to increase your 1d3 unarmed strike by more than +4?"

Player: *"Uh… no."*

GM: "Well then, no effect! He steps back 5 feet and shoots at you."

Player: *"But I didn't even roll damage!"*

GM: "You can't hurt him. Now… 2d8 plus 1d8 from Double Tap, plus…."

Player: *"Arrrrrghhh…"*

Yet again, a player is vexed by the quirky nonlethal damage rules in d20 Modern. I can see, however, what the game designers were trying to portray: the endless bar fight scene where the heroes beat on the bad guys for twenty minutes and then walk away without a scratch. It's called "cinematic" action and a lot of folks like it. Some don't. Like me. Personally, I preferred the subdual damage rules of Dungeons and Dragons. But, I also like the instant knockout rules of d20 Modern. Why not have a little of both?

With a little rule splicing, we can use the subdual damage system of D&D and the knockout threshold of d20 Modern. It works like this:

A d20 Modern hero takes nonlethal damage from non-lethal attacks. If the amount of nonlethal damage inflicted on a character ever equals her current hit points total, she is staggered. If the amount of nonlethal damage exceeds her current hit points total, she falls unconscious until the damage is healed. However, if a single attack deals more nonlethal damage than her current Massive Damage Threshold, she must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or be knocked out for 1d4 +1 rounds (or until healed). Nonlethal damage naturally heals at the rate of 1 point per hour. Magical healing or healing from Treat Injury also heals an equal amount of nonlethal damage. Now your heroes can really get beat up, and situations like the annoying scenario above won't happen. What we have now is this:

NONLETHAL DAMAGE (From DnD SRD adding in Massive Damage from Modern)

Dealing Nonlethal Damage: Certain attacks deal nonlethal damage. Other effects, such as heat or being exhausted, also deal nonlethal damage. When you take nonlethal damage, keep a running total of how much you've accumulated. Do not deduct the nonlethal damage number from your current hit points. It is not "real" damage. Instead, when your nonlethal damage equals your current hit points, you're staggered, and when it exceeds your current hit points, you fall unconscious. It does not matter whether the nonlethal damage equals or exceeds your current hit points because the nonlethal damage has gone up or your current hit points have gone down.

Nonlethal Damage with a Weapon that Deals Lethal Damage: You can use a melee weapon that deals lethal damage to deal nonlethal damage instead, but you take a –4 penalty on your attack roll.

Lethal Damage with a Weapon that Deals Nonlethal Damage: You can use a weapon that deals nonlethal damage, including an unarmed strike, to deal lethal damage instead, but you take a –4 penalty on your attack roll.

Staggered and Unconscious: When your nonlethal damage equals your current hit points, you're staggered. You can only take a standard action or a move action in each round. You cease being staggered when your current hit points once again exceed your nonlethal damage. When your nonlethal damage exceeds your current hit points, you fall unconscious. While unconscious, you are helpless. Spellcasters who fall unconscious retain any spellcasting ability they had before going unconscious.

Healing Nonlethal Damage: You heal nonlethal damage at the rate of 1 hit point per hour per character level. When a spell or a magical power cures hit point damage, it also removes an equal amount of nonlethal damage.

Massive Nonlethal Damage: If the amount of nonlethal damage from a single attack equals or exceeds your Massive Damage Threshold, you must make a Fortitude save (DC 15). If you succeed on the save, you are dazed for 1 round. If you fail, you are knocked unconscious for 1d4+1 rounds.

TORTURE
Painful new rules to inflict upon d2o Modern
by Frankto Vinneti; story by Aaross

A knock at the door marked an end to the silence of the evening. The judge, the man in charge of the biggest case in the state, walked to the door of his hotel room and checked the peep hole. He looked out the door but saw only the room service boy, who was holding a tray. His hat was pushed too far over his eyes to present any eye contact, but his smile was clearly evident. The judge opened the door. "What?" he began in annoyance. "I didn't order any room service. Please go away, I am very busy."

The judge began to shut the door, but the doorman's foot intervened.

"Excuse me, sir," the bellman said in an almost happy voice "but this is a special gift, sent by a long time friend of yours."

"Oh yeah?" the judge said, letting his grip loosen on the door. "And who might that be?"

The bellman paused; it seems that he had been waiting to say this all day.

"Fate."

A swift kick sent the judge flying backwards, landing backwards on his hotel bed. Looking up, the judge saw his attacker had a crazed look in his eyes and was opening the covered tray; atop of it laid various gruesome-looking instruments of torture. Before the judge could scream, he felt a sharp pain in side. Suddenly, he didn't care anymore, and began falling into darkness, into unconsciousness.

When he awoke, he noticed things were different. He was upside down, and he felt wet and cold. He looked up and saw the most horrifying image... there was blood everywhere, covering his body, and a note pinned upside down on his chest so he could read it. It said "As soon as the morphine wears off, this is going to hurt. A lot." A smiley face marked the end of the letter. The judge tried to scream, but only pain was there. He couldn't even cry as the morphine wore off, as the excruciating pain overtook his senses.

The coroner's report read "Body unidentifiable, died 6 hours after consciousness".

Torture is a tried and true method of information gathering used on prisoners of war, spies that were caught by the enemy, or even for amusement purpose in certain twisted underground societies. While there are many forms of torture, this article will cover only physical torture, which includes whipping, caning, electrocution and more sophisticated forms using various specialized instruments.

The Skill

The rules for torture are, in fact, quite simple. For every successful hour of torture, the victim suffers a determined amount of temporary constitution damage and must make a successful a Will save. If the victim fails a Will save a certain number of times in a row, he or she becomes "helpful" toward the torturer; effectively, broken of the will to resist and freely volunteering information and services. Since most tortures deal temporary Constitution damage, there is always the risk that torture will result in the victim's death.

For the first hour of torture, the Will save DC is 5 + the torturer's Torture skill modifier, up to the maximum base Will save DC for the listed torture. Each hour of successful torture adds +1 to the Will save DC, even beyond the maximum base Will save DC for the torture. For example: if the torturer has a +9 Torture modifier and successfully whips his victim for an hour, the victim must succeed at a Will save versus DC 14. If he whips his victim for two more hours, the following Will save DCs would be 15 and 16, respectively. Changing torture methods does not affect the hourly increase of the Will save DC, though it does change the maximum base Will save DC.

If a victim is exposed to prolonged torture, he or she will tire and eventually fall unconscious. After 1d2 hours of torture, the victim becomes Fatigued. In the following 1d4 hours of torture, the victim becomes Exhausted within the next 1d4 hour. Once the the victim is Exhausted, he or she must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) every hour or fall unconscious and no longer be subject to torture.

Torture (Int)

Trained Only*; Smart Hero, Soldier and Infiltrator class skill. Military, Criminal, and Law Enforcement bonus skill.

Check: Make a check when you attempt to torture someone for information or submission.

While sophisticated torture requires more skill and effort, its effectiveness is greatly increased. The Will save to resist the torture increases by 1 per hour. Once success is achieved, the victim becomes "helpful" toward his or her torturer for 1d4 hours. The specifics are shown in the table below.

Torture DC: Is the minimum result required on a Torture check for the torture to succeed.

Maximum Will Save: When a character is subject to a successful hour of torture, he or she must make a Will save (DC 5 + torturer's Torture modifier, up to the maximum Will Save for the torture). The Will save DC increases by one for every hour of successful torture. A failed check neither increases nor decreases this DC.

Torture (Example)	Torture DC	Max. Base Will Save
Whipping, canning, flogging and other simple torture*	10	15
Skinning, removal of flesh or other such methods	15	20
Quartering, electrocution, suffocation and similar methods	20	25
Bare flesh exposed to acidic substances in small quantities or related tortures	25	30
Extension of tendons with delicate instruments, poking sensitive body parts with a needle or related methods	35	35

TORTURE
Painful new rules to inflict upon d20 Modern

Whipping, canning, flogging: A basic form of torture that can be used by just about anyone. Performing this torture requires a whip, cane, cat-o-nine-tails, or any other basic hitting instrument. This torture deals 1d3 points of temporary constitution damage. A victim is successfully broken once he or she fails three consecutive Will saves.

 * *Though the Torture skill is trained only, this torture may be used untrained (an untrained Torture check is simply an Intelligence check)*

Skinning, removal of flesh: A method of torture that requires a little experience but is efficient nonetheless. Performing this torture requires a knife or other bladed object. This torture deals 1d4 points of temporary constitution damage. A victim is successfully broken once he or she fails two consecutive Will saves.

Quartering, electrocution, suffocation: An intermediate torture that requires both timing and experience. It is very efficient if used correctly. Performing this torture can require no equipment in the case of strangulation (as that can be done with one's hands), or with special equipment (particularly electrocution). This torture deals 1d6 points of temporary constitution damage. A victim is successfully broken once he or she fails two consecutive Will saves.

Bare flesh exposed to acidic substances in small quantities: This advanced technique is very painful. Performing this torture requires a small quantity of acidic liquid or similar substances. This torture deals 1d4 points of temporary constitution damage. A victim is successfully broken once he or she fails two consecutive Will saves.

Extension of tendons with delicate instruments, poking sensitive body parts with a needle: An extremely painful method of torture with a low death rate; proficiency with it is a rare gift among torturers. Successfully performing this torture requires specialized tools. This torture deals 1d2 points of temporary constitution damage. A victim is successfully broken once he or she fails a singe Will save.

Torture cannot be performed on a creature with no discernable anatomy, immune to critical hits or non-living creatures.

Try Again?: After one hour, a second Torture check may be attempted.

Special: An untrained Torture check is simply an Intelligence check. Without actual training or experience in torture, one cannot succeed in a torture method with a DC higher than 10.

On some methods, mastercraft tools may be used.

A character can't take 10 or take 20 using the torture skill.

A character with the Master Torturer feat may make a Torture check (DC 25) every hour to prevent a victim from falling unconscious.

A character with 5 ranks in Knowledge (Earth and Life science) gains a +2 synergy bonus to all Torture checks.

A character who wants to perform a Torture with a DC 20 or higher without a proper Torture Kit suffers a -4 penalty on his Torture checks.

Time: A Torture check, successful or not, takes an hour to complete.

New Feats

Keeper of Secrets
Tough Hero and Soldier bonus feat.
You are proficient at resisting torture, thus not revealing your secrets to the enemy.
Benefits: You gain a +2 bonus to Will save to resist torture and mind-affecting spells, such as Suggestion.

Master Tormenter
Smart Hero and Field Medic bonus feat.
Prerequisite: Knowledge (earth and life science) 5 ranks, Torture 10 ranks
Benefits: You are adept at torture and know the sensitive parts of the human anatomy very well. This allows you to prevent a victim from falling unconscious during torture by succeeding a Torture check (DC 25) every hour the victim would normally fall unconscious.

Apt
Benefits: A character that has chosen this feat gains a +2 competence bonus to Torture and any one of the following: Intimidate, Knowledge (earth and life science), Treat Injury.

New Equipment

Torture Kit
This Torture Kit is essential in the use of most form of torture. It contains a variety of wicked looking tools, scalpel, nails and even a whip.
Basic: This kit allows a character to make a Torture check whose DC is 20 or higher without penalty.
Deluxe: This kit contains more specific tools, such as chemicals, a small electrocution device, and everything a Basic kit contains.
Purchase DC for this item is 21, and its restriction is Illegal (+4). It is Medium-sized and weight 15 pounds.

TORTURE Painful new rules to inflict upon d2o Modern

These three example NPC Ordinaries may be used as example characters and tormentors.

Alex Marshall (Smart Ordinary 2): CR 1; Medium-size human, HD 2d6; hp 11; Mas 10; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Defense 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +1 Class, +3 Armor); BAB +1; Grab +0; Atk +0 melee (1d3-1 non-lethal, unarmed), +2 ranged (2d6 lethal, Glock 17); Full Atk +2 ranged (2d6 lethal, Glock 17); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL any; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +3, AP 0; Rep +1; Wealth +8; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Occupation: Law Enforcement (Knowledge (earth and life science), Torture; Personal Firearm Proficiency)

Skills: Computer Use +7 (5), Intimidate +6 (2), Investigate +9 (5), Knowledge (business) +4 (2), Knowledge (civics) +7 (5), Knowledge (current events) +7 (5), Knowledge (earth and life science) +7 (5), Knowledge (streetwise) +6 (5), Knowledge (technology) +7 (5), Research +7 (5), Sense Motive +5 (2), Torture +10 (5)

Feats: Attentive, Confident, Personal Firearm Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Possessions: Glock 17, 1 spare 9mm clip, Undercover Vest, Various personal gear.

Background: Alex Marshall is an ex-US Military Police that now works for a third-party counter-intelligence agency. He is in charge of "information gathering", which is a formal term for torture of prisoners.

Bryon Perman (Dedicated 5/Charismatic Ordinary 1): CR 5; Medium-size human, HD 5d8 plus 1d6; hp ; Mas 10; Init -1 (-1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Defense 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (-1 Dex, +2 Class, +2 Armor); BAB +2; Grab +; Atk +4 melee (1d4+2 lethal, combat knife), +1 ranged (2d8 lethal, Desert Eagle); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4+2 lethal, combat knife), or +1 ranged (2d8 lethal, desert eagle); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL any; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +1, AP 0; Rep +2; Str 14, Dex 8, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Occupation: Criminal (Disguise, Torture; Brawl)

Skills: Bluff +6 (4), Craft (visual arts) +10 (9), Craft (pharmaceutical) +10 (9), Disguise +11 (9), Intimidate +6 (4), Knowledge (earth and life science) +6 (5), Knowledge (streetwise) +5 (4), Sense Motive +13 (9), Torture +10 (9).

Feats: Attentive, Brawl, Frightful Presence, Personal Firearm Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency

Possessions: Combat Knife, Desert Eagle, 1 .50AE spare clip, Light Undercover Vest, Various personal gear.

Background: Also known as "The Jester", Bryon is a hitman in the field of "unorthodox execution". He specializes in getting things done in a gruesome and cruel fashion, he sees himself as an artist, but to others, he is a torturer of anything that anyone will pay for. Nothing is off limits to this man, and though no one knows his real name (the one presented is an alias), he has had a great deal of publicity in underground markets and criminal organizations. Just about the only thing he won't do, is rape.

Julio Talerico (Fast 1/Smart 8/Dedicated Ordinary 1): CR 9; Medium-size human, HD 1d8+1 plus 8d6+8 plus 1d8+1; hp 42; Mas 12; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Defense 19, touch 19, flat-footed 17 (+2 Dex, +7 Class); BAB +6; Grab +6; Atk +6 melee (1d3 non-lethal, unarmed), +8 ranged (2d6 lethal, Beretta 92); Full Atk +6/+1 melee (1d3 non-lethal, unarmed), or +8/+3 ranged (2d6 lethal, Beretta 92); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL any; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +7, AP 0; Rep +4; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Occupation: Military (Intimidate, Torture; Combat Martial Arts)

Skills: Balance +6 (4), Computer Use +13 (10), Craft (chemical) +13 (10), Drive +6 (4), Demolitions +12 (9), Escape Artist +6 (4), Hide +10 (6), Intimidate +10 (11), Investigate +10 (7), Knowledge (earth and life science) +15 (10), Knowledge (streetwise) +13 (10), Move Silently +10 (6), Read/Write English, Read/Write Russian, Read/Write Spanish, Repair +9 (6), Research +7 (4), Sense Motive +10 (8), Sleight of Hand +6 (4), Speak English, Speak Russian, Speak Spanish, Torture +18 (12), Tumble +6 (4).

Feats: Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Apt (knowledge [earth and life science], torture), Combat Martial Arts, Master Tormentor, Personal Firearm Proficiency, Stealthy.

Possessions: Beretta 92FS, Casual Clothes, Fatigue Clothes, Mesh Vest, various personal gear.

Background: Julio is an ex-Spanish Spec Op that has been imprisoned and excommunicated for treason and various other crimes, such as murder and arson. He is adept at both mental and physical torture, and he carries with him an unquenchable thirst for blood.