

ON THE ROCKS

By Dr. Matthew DeForrest



"Making the Twenties Roar"



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Editing & Additional Material: Shane Hensley, Simon Lucas, Brent Wolke,
Randy Mosiondz, & Piotr Korys

Interior Art: Brad McDevitt

Maps: Niklas Brandt

Cover: Brad McDevitt

Cover Design: Cheyenne Wright

Figure Flats: Brad McDevitt

Layout: Joel Kinstle and Shane Hensley

Dedication: For Edain.

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Welcome to Takanak City—a Roaring Twenties pulp setting for *Savage Worlds* rules! *On the Rocks* is designed to let you try your hand at adventuring in Takanak City—to test the waters, as it were. Just remember to say hi to the boys sleeping with the fishes while you're in the neighborhood.

This *Savage Tale* has tommy guns, gangsters, gun molls, pulp-action, and a touch of the weird as well. So pour yourself a tall drink of hooch and settle in for a little taste of Takanak.

Mugs

We've provided a collection of pregenerated characters to use for their first romp through Takanak City. Player characters in this setting are called Mugs (as in, "Hey, youz mugs! Watcha think you's doin'?"). We've made sure the basics of the setting are here so that you can begin play. There should be enough info here to let you play gangsters and molls, G-men and gumshoes, jazz musicians and flappers, ace reporters for newspapers and Movietone News, and the odd archaeologist, paleontologist, and occult investigator or two!

So put on some ragtime music, take a swig of bathtub gin, and pass out the provided pregenerated characters and have a wicked, *savage* time.

Welcome to Takanak City, 1925

Takanak City is a big, proud, muscular city with a diversified economy (most of it legal) situated on one of the Great Lakes. Nohapawa Bay makes an ideal harbor for exporting the products of the Takanak Tourer Automobile Company and quietly importing illegal liquor from Canada.

Like most of urban America, it has taken to the Jazz Age with all its inherent contradictions. G-Men and Revenuers attempt to control the growing scourge of racketeers, rum-runners, and bank robbers. While the public lauds them for their attempts to reign in crime, they idolize anyone who appears to be a modern-day Robin Hood and drinks to their health in the city's speakeasies and private clubs.

It's an open secret that Mayor "Smiling Pat" Shanahan, a Democrat at the head of a powerful political machine made up of the working class and recent immigrants, has little interest in enforcing prohibition so long as the local mobsters keep the citizenry out of the line of fire.

District Attorney Jack B. Winters, a Republican politician with his sights on a Senate seat, has made it his goal to help bring down the gangs and crime lords. Although he hits the Irish and Jewish mobs just as hard, number one on Winters' "to-prosecute" list is Vincenzo "Big Vinnie" Badafucci, Takanak

City's answer to Al Capone. The Republican-leaning *Takanak City Times*, the Democratic-leaning *Takanak Post*, and the relatively unbiased *Takanak Guardian* (the least widely read of the three) reports on the political posturing and exploits of Federal Agents, Police, and mobsters with relish.

Tut-Isn

Following the unearthing of King Tut's tomb, Egyptian deco has become all the rage. Takanak City has embraced this fad more than any other place in America. Takanak University has a world-respected Egyptology Department while the W. G. Gordon Museum houses an extensive collection of artifacts. The most obvious nod to Egyptian style is the brand new 40-story Pharos Building, modeled on the famous Lighthouse of Alexandria.

The Osiris Club, one of the most exclusive venues in town, is situated on the 30th floor, overlooking the lake. The best national jazz acts play here, and unlike much of America, the club's acts are desegregated. The clientele, however, remains predominantly white, although this is a function of local economics and the high cost of entry rather than discrimination.

Raoul Le Blanc, the club's maitre d', knows the Osiris Club's reputation is partly based on its being simultaneously fashionable and daring. When the buzz isn't about when Bessie Smith's next appearance will be, it's the identity of



the Osiris Club's owner. Although reclusive millionaire Hugh Howards, Big Vinnie, and Mayor Shanahan—who has a standing reservation center floor—have all been mentioned as possible stakeholders, no one has been able to find out for sure. The one man who might know isn't talking. Raoul is, if anything, discrete.

Tuning In

The city's three radio stations (KTCR, WWJD, and WAHK) provide a soundtrack to events for those wealthy enough to own a radio—broadcasting live concerts and variety programming. Every Wednesday, WJD broadcasts Sister Lena Tagells' inspirational sermons to a large audience.

On Fridays, AHK broadcasts the most popular music show live from the Osiris Club.

Every Thursday at 7:30, people tune in to KTCR to hear *Takanak City Tales*, a radio show that follows the adventures of millionaire Will Dare, a two-fisted hero who fights for justice just outside the law. You know the type—a do-gooder who battles pirates, white slavers, mobsters, maniacs, cults bent on world domination, and occult menaces—the kind of thing that would never actually happen in Takanak City.

New Hindrances

War Weary (Minor)

Your Mug experienced some of the suffering that swept through the world during the Great War and it hardened him somewhat. When fear takes hold, however, it does so with bottomless dread.

You may ignore up to a -2 penalty to a Guts roll for Fear/Nausea (not Terror), but if you fail the roll, you suffer a -2 penalty to the follow up Vigor roll to avoid the severe nausea/mental shock.

Shell Shocked (Major)

Shell Shocked Mugs have faced the full horror of the era.

Whether he was one of the Anzacs fighting in Gallipoli, a member of the Lost Battalion, a nurse in the influenza and gas wards, or a refugee from Belgium, he has seen too much.

There's no way of knowing when the pressure will get to be too much and the hero's psyche will snap like a twig.

This character treats all Guts rolls as for Terror (a failure requires rolling on the Fear Table). In addition, all rolls on the Fear Table have a +2 bonus. A character may not have both this Hindrance and War Weary.

Common Knowledge

Unless you've taken the Young or Clueless Hindrance, you can assume a Mug has at least a middle school education—high school if he wants it. This means he knows the basics—reading, writing, and arithmetic; some basic geography and history; and a little science (as it is understood in the 1920s). He can assume some familiarity with the Bible (or other appropriate religious text). Roman Catholic Mugs will know a few words of Latin from the Mass—enough to recognize the language but not to translate it. He also gets age-appropriate knowledge. Teens will know the latest dances while adults will have some job-related experience.

Fads

If you want, your character can also have a "fad." The 1920s were a great time for fads. Marathon dance contests, game competitions, pole sitting, knowing every baseball player's stats—you name it and someone in the 20s did it.

To capture the feeling of this fascination with the trivial, you can add a fad to your hero's Common Knowledge. He gets a +2 modifier to his Common Knowledge rolls when it applies directly to his area of interest.

Example: *Jake Green is a great fan of the "Takanak City Tales" radio program. When confronted with a puzzle that an evil-doer based on one of the programs, he receives a +2 modifier (or actual clue) to help him solve the puzzle.*

The Fad must be specific, as the modifier doesn't apply to similar situations. A fan of *Takanak City Tales* doesn't get a bonus to remember what Sister Lena Tagells preached on her radio ministry the night before, for example. Similarly, Isabel Higgenbotham's love of Parcheesi doesn't improve her chances in chess.

Likewise, the Mug's fad should not be the same as a skill or edge. Although someone might know everyone's baseball stats, that doesn't mean he can hit homers like the Babe. Similarly, knowing the latest makes and models released by a car company cannot help you drive, although it might help you choose the best getaway car.

Sample Fads: Brewing (+2 to the creation of Bathtub Gin, Dandelion Wine, or similar illegal intoxicants), Marathon Dancing (+2 bonus to know the most popular dances and to Vigor rolls to keep dancing), Bridge or some other game (+2 to play that game and know its best players), Egyptology (+2 to know general information reported in the popular press and some specific, but not expert, knowledge—essentially the ability to identify an object as being Egyptian, although not its age), Wing Walking (+2 to recognize types of aircraft and maneuvers), Pole Sitting (+2 to Vigor while trying to sit on a pole for a long time).

New Powers

Senseless

Power Points: 2

Range: Spirit

Duration: 3 (1/round per victim)

Rank: Novice

Trappings: Globes of darkness, a white film covering the target's eyes, glowing ankhs floating in the pupil, a cloud of insects buzzing around the target's head

With this power, the caster temporarily deprives an opponent of one of his senses—most commonly sight or hearing. This is an opposed roll of the caster's arcane skill versus the defender's Vigor.

If successful, the victim suffers a -6 penalty to all trait rolls that rely heavily on that sense, -4 to those which rely somewhat on the affected sense, and -2 to tasks which are mildly dependent upon the missing sense (GM's call).

The caster may also affect multiple targets. For each additional target, the caster spends an additional point and receives a -2 penalty on his arcane skill roll.



Weapons and Ammo List

Ranged Weapon	Range	Damage	RoF	Ammo	Rounds	Wt	Cost	Notes
.25 Derringer	5/10/20	2d4+1	1	.25	2	1	\$12	
.22 Colt Automatic	3/5/15	2d4	1	.22	6	1	\$25	
Super .38	10/20/40	2d6-1	1	.38	6	4	\$30	Revolver, AP 2
Colt 1911 Automatic	12/24/48	2d6+1	1	.45	7	4	\$40	AP 1
Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR)	24/48/96	2d8	3	.30-06	20 round clip	19	n.a.	AP 2
"Whippit" Gun*	5/10/20	1-3d6	1	8	Slugs or shot	6	\$50	+2 to Shooting, if firing shot, no bonus if firing slugs; Slugs cause 2d10 damage
Thompson SMG	12/24/48	2d6+1	3	.45	50 round drum	11	\$225	\$1,000-\$2,000 on the black market, where serial numbers are removed

*Sawed Off Remington Single Barrel Shotgun. The Whipit Gun was supposedly named by Clyde Barrow because you could whip it out in a hurry.

Hand Weapon	Damage	Weight	Cost	Notes
Brass Knuckles	STR+d4	1	\$2	A hero wearing brass knuckles is an Unarmed Attacker
Bayonet	STR+d4	1	Military	On rifle: Str+d6, Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands
Cleaver	STR+d6	3	\$2.50	
Straight Razor	STR+d4	.5	\$2	-1 to hit
Hunting Knife	STR+d4	1	\$2	
Pool Cue	STR+d4	2	\$5	Breaks on 1 on Fighting die
Grenade	Range	Damage	Cost	Notes
Mk 67 "Pineapple"	5/10/20	3d6	Military	Use Medium Burst Template; Some mobsters have managed to lay their hands on these weapons.

Ammunition:

Bullets, Small: \$1 per 100

Bullets, Medium: \$10 per 100

Shotgun Shells: \$3 per 100

Common Items

Electronics and Technology

Camera, Still Photos: \$1 to \$25
 Film: \$.25
 Camera, Movie: \$90
 Film: \$4
 Flashlight: \$1 to \$2
 Flashlight Battery: \$.30
 Phonograph: \$20 to \$100
 Records: \$.39 each
 Radios: \$40 to \$100
 Typewriter (Portable): \$50

General

Bag, Doctor's: \$12
 Blanket: \$2 to \$3
 Bible: \$3.30 to \$5
 Books: \$.25 to \$1 each
 Fountain Pen or Mechanical Pencil: \$1 to \$2
 Lantern: \$6
 Newspaper: \$.02
 Pencil: \$.75 per dozen
 Pad of Paper: \$.40
 Tool Set (Wrenches, Sockets, Screwdrivers, Hammer): \$25

Goods and Services

Cup of Coffee: \$.10
 Meal, Inexpensive: \$3.50 per person
 Meal, Expensive \$5.50 per person
 Beer, glass: \$.20
 Cocktail: \$.50
 Gin: \$2.50 for a fifth bottle
 Whiskey \$.60 a shot,
 White Lightning: \$20 per gallon
 Wine, "Dago Red" (homemade, often by Italians): \$1 per gallon
 Cola: \$.05
 Plain Seltzer: \$.02
 Malt: \$.10
 Candy: \$.05 per bar
 Medicines: \$.50 per bottle

On the Rocks

This adventure is designed to introduce your players to Takanak City. It does more than that, however. In the course of this adventure, your players will indirectly cross swords with two of the organizations vying for power in Takanak City. Although they are unlikely to draw the attention (and, more importantly, the ire) of either group, they will get a chance to know the opposition. They also have the chance to make an important contact with one of Takanak City's major players—millionaire recluse Hugh Howards.

Just a Quick, Simple Job....

Hugh Howards, one of Takanak City's millionaires, is an avid collector of Egyptian antiquities, a passion he shares with schoolteacher Isabel Augusta Higgenbotham. For reasons he doesn't care to discuss, however, Howards hates to leave his apartment. Higgenbotham, in order to assist her friend, often uses her expertise to oversee the purchasing and delivery of artifacts for Howards.

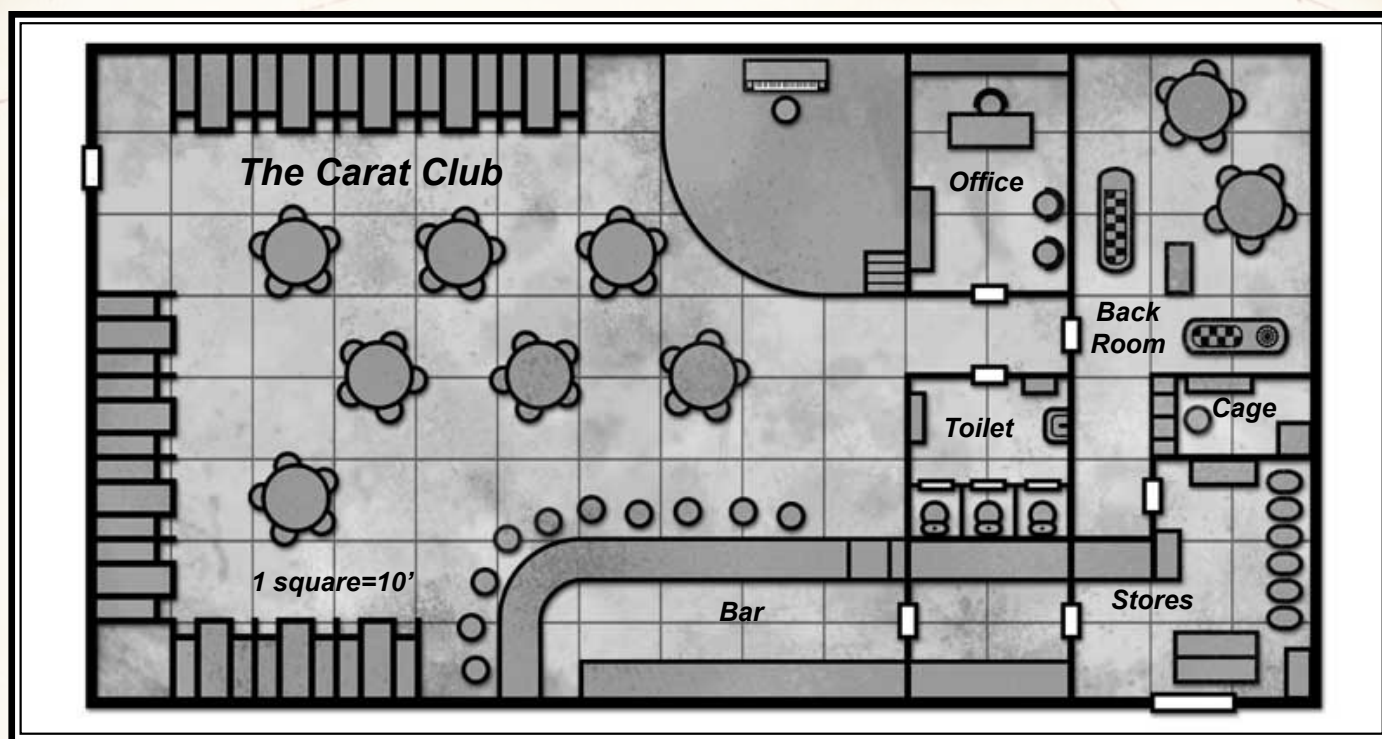
This time, Howards has purchased a gold sphinx statuette from Henderson and Upward's Antiquities and asked Higgenbotham to pick up the statuette. Because of the statuette's value, Howards recommended she hire some security to protect her while she drives the object across town. Higgenbotham decided to call on one of her former students, Rick Randolph, Private Eye, to handle the security. In turn, he called on two of his war buddies, "Bluesy" Bell, a saxophonist, and Jake Green, a taxi driver. The three served together in the war, and after returning to Takanak City, continued to look out for one another. The three have been promised \$20 each to provide protection.

Everything was supposed to be a sedate, quiet event and would have been if Howards hadn't told another friend about the purchase. Kendra Lust is a silent film star and the daughter of one of Howards' buddies from the Spanish-American War. With a canine appetite for publicity, she called Kate O'Brien, a reporter for the *Takanak Guardian* and asked her to generate some free publicity by reporting on her picking up the statuette.

After some pleading and persuading, Howards agreed to let the two tag along. O'Brien leapt at the chance to get a photo and perhaps even an interview with the reclusive Howards.

Just One Problem

Have the six characters meet anywhere they want, then pile into Green's taxi (or whatever form of transportation they use) and head over to Henderson and Upward's Antiquities. This is a good time for them to begin to get the feel for their character so give them a moment or two to indulge in some role-playing if the mood hits them. Don't dally too long, though—they'll have plenty of time to grow into their roles as the adventure develops.



Henderson and Upward's Antiquities occupies a small storefront in the historic shopping district on the north side of the city. The characters can easily find street parking nearby. The front door is unlocked and a bell announces their entry. The front of the antiquities shop is the display area, where customers may browse display cases and make purchases. Along the left and right walls stand eight foot tall glass-doored cabinets. A waist-high U-shaped display cabinet dominates the center of the room. These cases connect to the cabinets that divide the customer area from the employee area. The display cases are filled with ancient objects from all over the world—animal mummies from Egypt, pots from Central America, arms and armor from Europe, and porcelain from the Far East. In all ways, the store seems normal to our heroes except for one thing: there is no one here to greet them.

A brief search of the store quickly uncovers the proprietor, Abel Upward, lying on the floor below the open and partially-emptied cash register. He is half-conscious and can be brought around with a Healing roll. Success also reveals he has been pistol-whipped from the front before being struck from behind. Mugs investigating the cash register who make a Notice roll at -2 see that not only did the thief leave fresh, bundled bills (which could be traced by their serial numbers) but many of the unwrapped larger bills. A bill flap left up in the \$100 tray indicates that at least one C-Note was taken.

Upward is Down

When Upward comes around, he recognizes Higgenbotham from prior purchases. "It's gone, Isabel. The thief took the statuette and two other items." A brief

discussion reveals the thief stole three packages—the gold statuette, a Japanese scroll, and an Egyptian Pharonic Period cup. All had already been sold. Although his insurance will cover the cost of refunding his clients' money, he is well aware that replacing these one of a kind items will be impossible—unless the Mugs can track down the thief and return the pieces. He offers the heroes a reward of \$100 each (\$33 per object) if they can return them.

Upward can't tell the characters much about his single assailant. He knows he was a short ugly man with dirty brown hair and armed with a revolver. He smoked a cigar—he remembers him lighting it at the corner of the display case when he first arrived. Ask the Mugs for a Notice Roll at -4. On a success, a perceptive hero detects the lingering scent of smoke in the air—the nasty smell of a cheap "Takanak Tom" brand cigar. Anyone examining the area near the case pointed out by Upward finds a matchbook from the Carat Club (if the Mugs miss it, have Upward notice it.). The only thing about his assailant that Upward can remember clearly is that his left eye was red, as if he had burst a vessel or in some other way damaged it.

Once the investigators have had the opportunity to get this information, have Upward ask them to call the police if they have not already done so.

The Carat Club

Although the characters don't have much to go on, they have enough to begin their investigation: a description of the thief and the matchbox. Unfortunately, the Carat Club is about to become the front line of the Takanak City gang wars.



Have you Seen This Man?

If the Mugs attempt to track down the thief based on his description, they can find out the following information from successful Streetwise rolls. Role-play these encounters to add depth to your gaming experience, or sum them up quickly if you want to get straight to the action. Kate O'Brien, for example, might ask the boys at the crime desk for information about the thief while Jake Green quizzes some of the guys at the garage.

In general, the results of the Streetwise roll (or conversation) goes something like this:

Failure: "Yea, I've seen a tough like that. Nasty guy. I saw him knock down an old lady. Don't know his name though."

Success: "Him? Yea, I know the mug. Goes by the name Eddie Roche. Nasty guy. Worked for the mob, from what I heard, but he was too mean for them. No control. Last I heard he was getting by with contract jobs. Protecting, um, shipments of prune juice and the like. Yeah, that's it."

Raise: "The guy you're describing is Eddie Roche. Used to be a heavy for the Irish mob. Nasty guy with no sense and

less control. He got cut loose when he shot some kid while protecting a shipment from Canada. He's a contract guy now—picking up odd jobs and doing petty crime. I hear he's doing some work down at the Carat Club, providing protection for incoming shipments."

Mugs using a library or newspaper morgue can match the name Eddie Roche to the description they have with a newspaper article on an Investigation roll at -2.

Open Sez Who?

There are only two things preventing the Mugs from getting into the Carat Club: not knowing its location and not knowing the password.

Getting the location requires a Streetwise roll at -2. A raise nets the password as well.

A second Streetwise roll at -2 reveals there is a casino in the Carat Club, called the "On the Rocks" room. The Mugs must dig deep for this information, so don't volunteer anything. Getting the passphrase requires a Streetwise roll at -4 to discover that it takes one of two things: showing a C-Note (the minimum bankroll you must bring in, although you are allowed to bet far less); or whispering the phrase "I'm here to see Ben" (which signals that you have a C-note deposited with the

teller).

The other way for the Mugs to gain entrance to the club is to fall in with some partygoers who are going into the Carat Club for a drink, or to get in through some other contact. "Bluesy" Bell, for example, might be able to get in through the back door by auditioning as a musician.

The *Carat Club* gets its name from its location—it's right under Erichmann Jewelers, a few blocks towards the lake from Henderson and Uppward's Antiquities. The basement entrance is in a step-down to the left of Erichmann's front door. If the team stakes out the establishment, they can easily identify the clientele as members of the low end of the middle class. Those who make a successful Streetwise roll can tell that most of the clientele is from the predominantly Jewish Jerusalem Hill neighborhood. The doorway is set under an overhang. Sitting in the shadows are two bouncers who wait for the Mugs to give them the password for the club (not the casino in the back): "In the rough."

“We’re In!”

Once the heroes enter, they find themselves in the festive atmosphere of the speakeasy. The front room is about the size of a store front, with a bar on the right, booths along the left wall, circular tables scattered across the floor, and a small stage in the rear left corner. The bar is dark wood paneled with a hinged, galvanized tin top, allowing the bartender to dump the bottles and glasses into a subbasement at the first sign of a raid. Behind the bar is an assortment of bottled mineral water, sodas, teas, and coffee.

On the stage, a young black man is playing ragtime on an upright piano, accompanied by a trumpeter and slide trombonist. Along the back wall is a door, guarded by another bouncer. A Streetwise roll identifies this as the entrance to the back room casino. It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to realize that the some of the patrons and staff view the Mugs with suspicion. After all, who wants their local gin-joint raided because of some stranger’s loose talk or because they inadvertently let in a G-man?

The Mugs have several options here. A “face” character is definitely going to get a work-out if the investigators want to discover the way into the back. Here are some of the ways they might accomplish that feat.

First, there is a table available near the doorway into the casino. From here, they can eventually overhear the password into the back. If the team came in with a group of party-going flappers, a Persuasion roll at –2 gets them the password. The roll is unmodified if they buy a round for the young socialites. A Streetwise roll or other appropriate social interaction with the customers or staff reveals that Eddie Roche is currently in the casino. If the roll is with a raise, Mug also discovers that Eddie is due on the loading dock in a half an hour to help oversee an arriving shipment. A shipment of booze, of course, if anyone asks.

Place Your Bets and Take Your Chances

The casino is a small, crowded, smoky room with a roulette table, craps table, and three card tables (one for blackjack and two for poker). In the right corner of the room is the cage, guarded by two of the room’s three bouncers, where patrons can exchange their cash for chips. Regulars can deposit a C-Note with the cage, guaranteeing them a line of credit at the tables.

It only requires a Notice roll to pick Eddie Roche out of the crowd. He is currently having a run of good luck at the craps table if the pile of chips in front of him is any indication. How the Mugs deal with Roche at this point determines the course of events. If the heroes choose to observe Roche for a while before making a move, he remains at the gambling table until it’s time for him to go to the loading dock. It’s obvious Eddie doesn’t have anything with him that is large enough to carry the stolen antiquities. Although it takes some doing (an opposed Stealth roll versus a d6 Notice) the investigators

can follow Roche out into the storage area when he leaves to go to the loading dock.

The Mugs might try to isolate Roche in traditional, 20s gangster style—a gun in the back. To do this successfully requires a successful Test of Wills (Intimidation) roll and an opposed Stealth roll against the bouncers’ Notice. If both are successful, Roche moves away from the table. Partway to the Cage, however, Big Vinnie’s boys arrive (see below). If the Intimidation roll succeeds but the Stealth roll fails, the Mugs find themselves surrounded by bouncers. If the Stealth roll succeeds but the Intimidation roll fails, Roche tells the heroes to buzz off while trying to attract the attention of the bouncers.

If the Mugs try to get the location of the objects out of Roche through Intimidation, bluffing him into thinking he upset someone very important (a Smarts trick), or offering to buy the objects back, he shrugs and tells them he stashed the artifacts with the band. He won’t be upset about turning the artifacts over to the investigators so long as they aren’t interested in arresting him or trying to get back the money he stole. Once he unwrapped the packages, he knew they would be very difficult to fence. As he begins to lead the Mugs towards the objects, Big Vinnie’s men hit the place.

If the heroes move to openly confront Eddy Roche at the table, they quickly discover themselves in an awkward position. After all, a gambling den in the back of a speakeasy is not the place to get heavy-handed about law and order. In addition, the three bouncers are here to keep things peaceful and profitable—something that confronting a patron discourages. Finally, three of Roche’s fellow thugs, hired to help protect the incoming liquor shipment, are here trying to increase their earnings. Although they don’t like Roche, they aren’t about to see one of their own get pushed around by outsiders.

No matter where and when the Mugs confront Roche, their triumph is cut short by the sudden arrival of Big Vinnie’s men.

Eddie Roche

Eddie is a small time hood whose temper has made him too hot to handle.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Gambling d6, Guts d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d10, Streetwise d6

Charisma: –8; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Mean, Ugly

Edges: Dodge, Quick Draw, Two-Fisted

Gear: Two .45 automatic pistols (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, AP 2), Brass Knuckles (STR+d4, see notes), Takanak Tom Cigars, \$327—most of it stolen from Henderson and Upward.

Hired Guns (3)

These are the extra protection hired to oversee shipments into the Carat Club. One of the hired guns carries a sawed off shotgun in a kit bag.

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

Skills: Driving d4, Fighting d8, Gambling d4, Guts d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Streetwise d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Vow (Mob Code of Silence), Mean

Edges: Combat Reflexes;

Gear: .45 automatic pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, AP 2); Whippit Gun (Range 5/10/20, Damage 1-3d6).

Bouncers (7)

These are the toughs hired to keep the crowd relatively controlled at the Carat Club. There are three in the Casino, two in the bar, and two at the front door)

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Gambling d4, Guts d4, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Loyal, Mean

Edges: Block

Gear: .38 pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, AP 1), Brass Knuckles (STR+d4, See notes).

With a Bang!

"Big Vinnie" Badafucci has decided he wants a piece of the action of the historic shopping area, traditionally controlled by the Jewish mob. In an attempt to muscle in, he has decided to start demanding protection money from the speakeasies, beginning with the one closest to his territory—the Carat Club. Wolfram Ecklemann, the owner of the Carat Club, has refused to pay, counting on the Jewish mob and extra muscle to keep himself and his clients safe.

Big Vinnie has decided he wants to make his point abundantly clear to all parties involved and has sent in a substantial party of enforcers. The good news for the heroes is that these enforcers are under strict orders not to injure any civilians. The bad news is that they are in the line of fire—and accidents happen.

Open Sez Me!

The first indication of Big Vinnie's men's arrival is a grenade exploding at the speakeasy's loading dock, blowing open the back doors. Twelve of Vinnie's men then move into the supply room, breaking bottles, hacking open beer kegs, and generally tearing up the place with a gusto that would make a revenuer proud. They don't open fire until they see someone enter the back room with a drawn gun.

Three tough guys follow "The Big Meatball" Polpettone towards the cage, attempting to make off with the bank. It is this group the heroes are most likely to encounter. If O'Brien or Randolph see Polpettone, they can attempt to recognize who he is with a Smarts roll. Polpettone gets a Smarts roll at -2 to recognize Randolph.

Roche and his fellow heavies have every intention of fulfilling their contracts and grab their guns while the gamblers grab their winnings. They only have two rounds to do so before Polpettone's Tommy Gunner appears in the doorway and the Carat Club's hired guns flip over the tables to give themselves some cover. In the front of the speakeasy, the bouncers also go for their guns and the bartender dumps the bar while the clientele and musicians begin to panic and move for the door.

The Big Fight

Divide up the bouncers and hired guns between your players and let the lead fly. The heavy gambling tables and bar provide medium cover (-2) while the tables in the speakeasy provide light cover (-1) against Shooting rolls. They both act as Armor +3 when using them as obstacles, if anyone wants to shoot directly through them.



Rafael "The Big Meatball" Polpettone

Rafael has always had something of a weight problem—hence his nickname. Not too many people bother him about it any more though. He heads up gambling for Big Vinnie, although he doesn't gamble himself (he got caught gambling by the nuns when in the 6th grade and has never done so again). Vicious as he is, Polpettone has a lovely singing voice.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d4, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Gambling) d6, Knowledge (Latin) d8, Knowledge (Singing) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d4, Shooting d6, Streetwise d8, Stealth d4

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Hindrances: Loyal, Obese, Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Alertness, Command, Connections (Big Vinnie's Mob), Frenzy, Level Headed;

Gear: .45 automatic pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, AP 2).

Mob Guns (12)

These are the muscle of Big Vinnie's Badafucci's Gang. They are not so much fanatically loyal as they are more afraid of Big Vinnie than of other gangs and the police. One of these Mobsters, who usually remains with Polpettone, is armed with a Tommy Gun with a 30 round clip in the gun and a spare in his coat pocket. Three carry axes to break open the

beer barrels. These do STR+2 damage but are at -1 to hit because they are not designed for combat.

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

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6, Stealth d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Vow (Mob Code of Silence), Mean

Edges: Combat Reflexes;

Gear: .45 automatic pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, AP 2); one thug has a Tommy Gun (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, AP 2, RoF 3).

Then Things Really Hit the Fan

In case you haven't noticed, the investigators and Carat Club heavies are outgunned. It won't take long for Roche to notice it either. Once half of the Carat Club's defenders are out of commission, Roche bolts. If the Mugs follow, Big Vinnie's men let them go without any hassle. If the characters are hot and take out four of Big Vinnie's men, Roche gets nervous, viewing them as a little too professional for his comfort. If this happens, Big Vinnie's men still let them go unless they put down Polpettone. If they do, they have made an enemy of him. (Of course, if they take out Polpettone, they have attracted Big Vinnie's attention—not necessarily a good thing either.).

In either case, Roche bolts through the door. A moment later, there is the terrifyingly loud sound of another automatic weapon cutting loose. Ask the Mugs with military or police experience for a Common Knowledge roll. On a success, they can identify the unholy racket as the unmistakable sound of a Browning Automatic Rifle on full automatic.

Now Who?

During the firefight in the back of the Carat Club, agents for one of the two other purchasers arrive. Any Mugs in the main room see three Middle Eastern men wearing trench coats and Fezzes arrive. One of them looks into the palm of his hand and gives a quick nod, slipping something into his coat. Character looking at those men glimpses a glowing piece of jewelry—a glow that is at its most intense when pointed at the stage. With a Notice roll at -2, the investigators see it well enough to identify it as Egyptian in style. With a raise they glimpse the fading image of Roche in the central jewel.

When Roche bursts out of the casino, the leader of the gunmen says "Him!" and his two compatriots pull BARs out from under their

coats. As they level the guns and fire, Roche dives for the protective cover of the bar. They spray the speakeasy with suppressive fire in order to keep everyone's heads down. If anyone else attempts to come through the door, they fire above their heads or in front of them in an attempt to discourage them from acting.

While these two provide protective cover, the third goes to the stage, chooses one of the artifacts, and prepares to leave. Before he goes, he slides a tan stone about the size of his palm along the floor towards where Roche is huddling behind the bar. Mugs watching the stone's slide see it spin oddly and arc behind the bar. Once the man reaches the door, the three leave.

This May Sting a Bit

The strangeness has just begun. Just after the stone slides behind the bar, a Notice roll allows the Mugs to hear Roche say "What the...?" Then screams as he unloads his .45s as fast as he can pull their triggers.

Unless the Mugs are already behind the bar, they don't see the stone transform into a scorpion and sting Roche on the leg. By the time they reach him, the scorpion has



returned to its stone form. So long as they don't see the transformation, the Mugs have only a few moments to determine what happened. Anyone examining the area can tell Roche was shooting at something nearby based on the bullet holes in the floor. Roche is now drooling and curled up in a fetal position.

A Notice roll reveals swelling on his lower leg. A Healing or appropriate Knowledge roll reveals the swelling to be three stings. Higgenbotham can, on a Common Knowledge roll at -2, identify the sting as being from a scorpion. The only visible source for the sting lies less than a foot from Roche's leg—a scorpion carved out of sandstone. Roche lingers agonizingly in this condition for an hour and a half before he dies.



Captain Ramesses Dryer

The child of an Egyptian mother and German father, Ramesses Dryer served in the Ottoman army during the Great War, fighting with distinction at Gallipoli. Following the war and the shattering of the Ottoman Empire, Dryer found a new master to serve and has risen to the rank of chief lieutenant.

Dryer is a practical man, and as such, finds little to complain about. He and his men are paid well and are rarely asked to do the impossible. If he is sometimes given strange devices to accomplish his missions, it isn't his concern if they are magical or technological.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Arabic) d10, Knowledge (English) d8, Knowledge (Egyptology) d4, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Streetwise d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Curious, Outsider, Vow (to his cause)

Edges: Attractive, Command, Danger Sense, Hard to Kill;

Gear: .45 automatic pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, AP 2), Browning Automatic Rifle (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8, AP 2, RoF 3), and an extra 2 clips of ammunition for each gun.

Egyptian Gunmen (2)

These two men served under Dryer during the Great War and followed him when he pledged his loyalty to a new master.

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

Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d8, Intimidation d4, Knowledge (English) d4, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Streetwise d4, Survival d6, Stealth d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Outsider, Vow (Loyal to the Master)

Edges: Quick Draw, Rock and Roll!

Gear: .45 automatic pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, AP 2), Browning Automatic Rifle (Range 24/48/96,

Damage 2d8, AP 2, RoF 3), and an extra 2 clips of ammunition for each gun.



Stone Scorpion

These statistics are provided in case one of the Mugs happens to be near Roche when the stone scorpion transforms. For those interested in such things, the scorpion is an *androctonus australis*—a Southern Man Killer, native to Egypt.

Anyone with an Arcane Background who holds the Scorpion in its stone form can feel the thing wiggle ever so slightly in his hand.

With a Spirit roll, the scorpion may be imprinted with a target. Once the scorpion is brought within a yard of the imprinted target, it attacks. Changing or cancelling the creature's target before it can complete its attack requires a separate Spirit roll at -2.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Strength d4, Spirit d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climb d10, Fighting d10, Intimidation d4, Stealth d8

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7 (2)

Special Abilities:

♦ **Armor (+2):** It is made of stone, after all.

♦ **Immobility:** The scorpion is immobile until it is within a yard of its victim, when it transforms into a living scorpion. If it is killed while alive, it shatters, its pieces returning to stone. Under ultraviolet light, the scorpion glows—even in its stone form.

♦ **Immunity:** The "living statue" is immune to heat, cold, poison, and other hazards that affect the living.

♦ **Poison (-4):** The scorpion's sting causes one wound every 15 minutes for the following two hours.

♦ **Size (-4):** The scorpion is about the size of a large grapefruit. This does not subtract from its Toughness, however, as it is solid stone.

♦ **Sting:** Str+d6.



Aftermath

As the Egyptians leave, the heroes hear police sirens approaching. A Common Knowledge tells the party they have about three minutes before the police come pouring in the front door. This gives them just enough time to grab the remaining two artifacts and bolt for the back door. They don't meet any opposition as they leave. The mobsters, hired guns, and staff are on their way out as well. The investigators should have little difficulty merging into the crowd that has begun to gather outside the speakeasy. O'Brien may wish to move around to the front of the building to get some information for a story—after all, the opening shots of a new gang war is big news and a great scoop. Although the police are somewhat wary of a reporter on the scene so quickly, they have their hands full enough with the carnage left that they don't push things too far.

Greedy characters can grab an unbroken bottle of liquor or two from the storeroom. Getting money from the till and cage is impossible as both were taken by the bartender and banker, who left via a secret tunnel. Mugs looking for the entrance to the secret passage behind the bar can make a Notice roll at -6 to try to find it. Should they do so, the passage leads across the street and opens into an alleyway.

Once the party makes their way back to Henderson and Upward's Antiquities, they find Upward has recovered. When the heroes arrive, he asks them if they have succeeded already. When they present him with the objects, he asks if the Egyptians obtained their object as well. If they tell him they did, he happily pays them \$100 each, explaining that when the three Egyptians came in to pick up the cup, he told them what had happened. They insisted that he reward the investigators as if they had recovered all three, should they obtain the cup.

"They also asked me, on their behalf, to ask if you happened to bring the scorpion with you. If you have it, they have empowered me to offer a \$50 reward for its return. All they ask in return is your discretion. Like you, they work for a secret buyer who wants to remain anonymous and fears that this incident might attract unwanted attention. They seemed to believe that you might have come across it in your search." If the Mugs choose to keep the Stone Scorpion, it animates and leaves in two days, returning to its secret master.

Howards is impressed that the team was resourceful enough to recover his artifacts and indicate that he will keep them in mind for later purchases and other endeavors.



Pregenerated Characters

Xavier “Bluesy” Bell



“Bluesy” Bell has always loved music. When he was young, he discovered his grandfather’s saxophone in the basement and began teaching himself to play. He turned out to be a great musician and began to make a name for himself with some local bands before heading over to France to fight in the Great War. He became fast friends with two other boys from Takanak City during fighting in the Argonne Forest, where he was wounded in the left leg. Since returning, he has found steady work playing in the speakeasies and nightclubs, although he sometimes makes some extra money lending his friend Rick Randolph a hand with cases.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Gambling d6, Guts d6, Knowledge (Saxophone) d8, Notice d6, Shooting d4, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6, Taunt d4

Charisma: -1; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness** 6

Edges: Luck

Hindrances: Minor Habit (Chain Smoker—he smokes when he isn’t playing sax), War Worn, Lame

Fad: Baseball Stats.

Gear: Saxophone, .22 Automatic (Range 6/12/24, Damage 2d4-1, AP 1)

Jake Green

Jake Green drives one of Takanak City’s hundreds of taxicabs. He is slow witted, quick with his fists, and possessed of a heart of gold. These traits have landed him in trouble more than once. At the same time, they make him very endearing to his friends—especially his wartime buddies “Bluesy” Bell and Rick Randolph. He willingly gives them lifts and occasionally helps Randolph with cases.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Guts d4, Repair d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6, Taunt d4

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness** 6

Edges: Brawny, Two Fisted

Hindrances: Heroic, Shell Shocked, Minor Habit (Never misses Takanak City Tales)

Fad: Takanak City Tales Radio Show (broadcast KTCR, Thursdays at 7:30PM).

Gear: Super .38 pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6-1, AP 1), taxi, \$16.



Taxi

Acc/Top Speed 5/20, Toughness 10 (4)*, Crew 1, Cost \$400.

**Cars in this era are actually a little tougher than more modern cars as they’re built from iron and steel rather than plastic and aluminum.*

Isabel Augusta Higgenbotham

Isabel Augusta Higgenbotham teaches history at Takanak PS-1, where she is infamous for her love of Ancient Egypt. Her uncle was an archaeologist (His digs were financed by a young Hugh Howards) and she inherited his collection. It was in one of his papyri, the Nefertiti Scroll, that she discovered how to wield Atan's light. She has never married but takes an interest in her niece, Augusta, who is a flapper. She lives alone in an old house with her 40-pound cat, Xerxes.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Guts d4, Intimidation d4, Investigation d6, Knowledge (Egyptology) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Piloting d4, Spellcasting d8, Throwing d4

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Bad Eyes (Minor), Curious, Stubborn

Edges: Arcane Background (Egyptian Magic), Soul Drain

Fad: Parcheesi.

Gear: Extra Spectacles, notepad and pencil, gold ankh, silver scarab necklace, 8 throwing knives (Str+d4).

Powers (10 Power Points)

Light: Isabel knows this as "Atan's Light." It creates a glowing ankh that hovers about her right shoulder and provides light.

Senseless: Isabel calls this "The Blinding Light of Atan." It creates glowing ankhs in the subject's eyes. Isabel can only use this power to blind (she cannot target the other senses).

Stun: Isabel calls this "Atan's Word." When used, the victim is stunned by a sonic "boom" that only he can hear.



Kendra Lust (That's pronounced LOOST)

Kendra Lust, an old family friend of Hugh Howards, is a minor silent movie star attempting to make the awkward transition to "talkies." She always wears an opulently elegant, eye-catching outfit of the latest fashion and, as a result, is usually overdressed. She is somewhat detached from reality, seeing the world as a perpetual photo opportunity for her hordes of adoring fans.

She takes her purebred peekapoo Rudy ("I named him for my dear friend Rudy Valentino...") everywhere with her.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Guts d4, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Acting) d8, Knowledge (Egyptology) d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Taunt d6, Shooting d4, Throwing d4

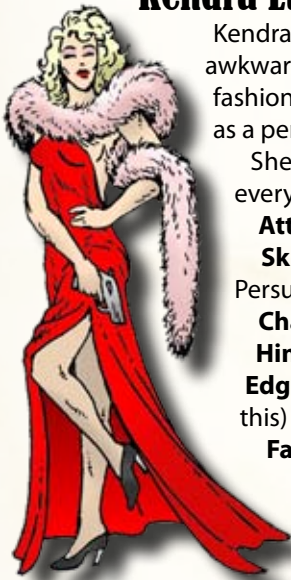
Charisma: +4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Overconfident, Delusional, Quirk (Fame Hound)

Edges: Attractive, Noble (She is famous and has all the benefits and difficulties associated with this) Rich,

Fad: The Charleston.

Gear: .25 derringer (Range 6/12/24, Damage 2d4, AP 1), 2 throwing knives (Str+d4), Rudy (use stats for small dog).





Kate O'Brien

Kate O'Brien is one of the new breed of emancipated, working women. As a young, idealistic reporter for the Takanak Guardian, she believes strongly in journalistic integrity. As a result, she is disgusted by the rampant bias and yellow journalism printed by the two rivals papers and indignant that the public reads them more than they do the Guardian. Although everyone respects her hard-hitting journalism, her rival (male) reporters find her somewhat abrasive. They have learned not to call her a pushy dame within earshot unless they want an earful.

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

Skills: Guts d4, Intimidation d6, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Takanak City) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d4, Stealth d4, Streetwise d6, Taunt d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Curious, Overconfident

Edges: Connections (Takanak City's journalists and various informants), Strong Willed

Fad: Political Science.

Gear: .22 Automatic (Range 6/12/24, Damage 2d4-1, AP 1), pad and pen, camera, flashlight, matches.

Rick Randolph, Private Eye

Rick Randolph is lucky to still be alive. In France, he and his friends "Bluesy" Bell and Jake Green were part of the Lost Battalion. Once back in Takanak City, he became a private eye and has just managed to scrape by. In one of his recent cases, he was hired to find a kidnapped child. He found the kid and brought the kidnapper to justice. Unfortunately, the kidnapper was a number runner for "Big Vinnie" Badafucci. Big Vinnie was furious about the kidnapping (and had the man killed in jail). He was also less than impressed that one of his numbers rings was taken down—accidentally or not. Randolph knows that his life is currently hanging by a thread.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d4, Investigation d4, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6, Taunt d4

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Enemy (Major; Big Vinnie Badafucci), Poverty, Shell Shocked.

Edges: Alertness, Connections (Street Scum and low-level police)

Fad: Dime Novels/Pulps.

Gear: .45 automatic pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, AP 2), pad and pen.



			Bluesy Bell
			Jake Green
			Isabel Higgenbotham
			Karen O'Brien
			Kendra Lust
			Rick Randolph

			Club Bouncer
			Club Bouncer
			Club Bouncer
			Club Bouncer
			Club Bouncer
			Club Bouncer
			Club Bouncer

			Captain Dyer
			Egyptian Gunman
			Egyptian Gunman
			Eddie Roche
			Club Gunman
			Club Gunman
			Club Gunman

			"The Meatball"
			Gangster
			Gangster
			Gangster
			Gangster
			Gangster
			Gangster