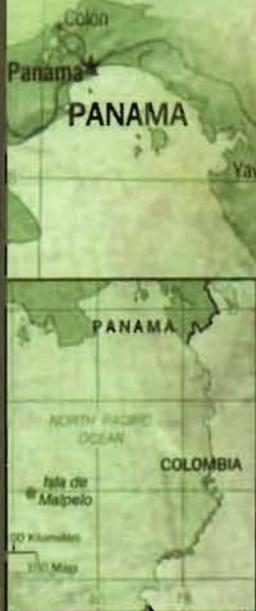


Colombia: MODERN



Colombia: d20

Guerilla Warfare



by Tom Ricks and Ken Lightner

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Colombia: d20

Guerilla Warfare

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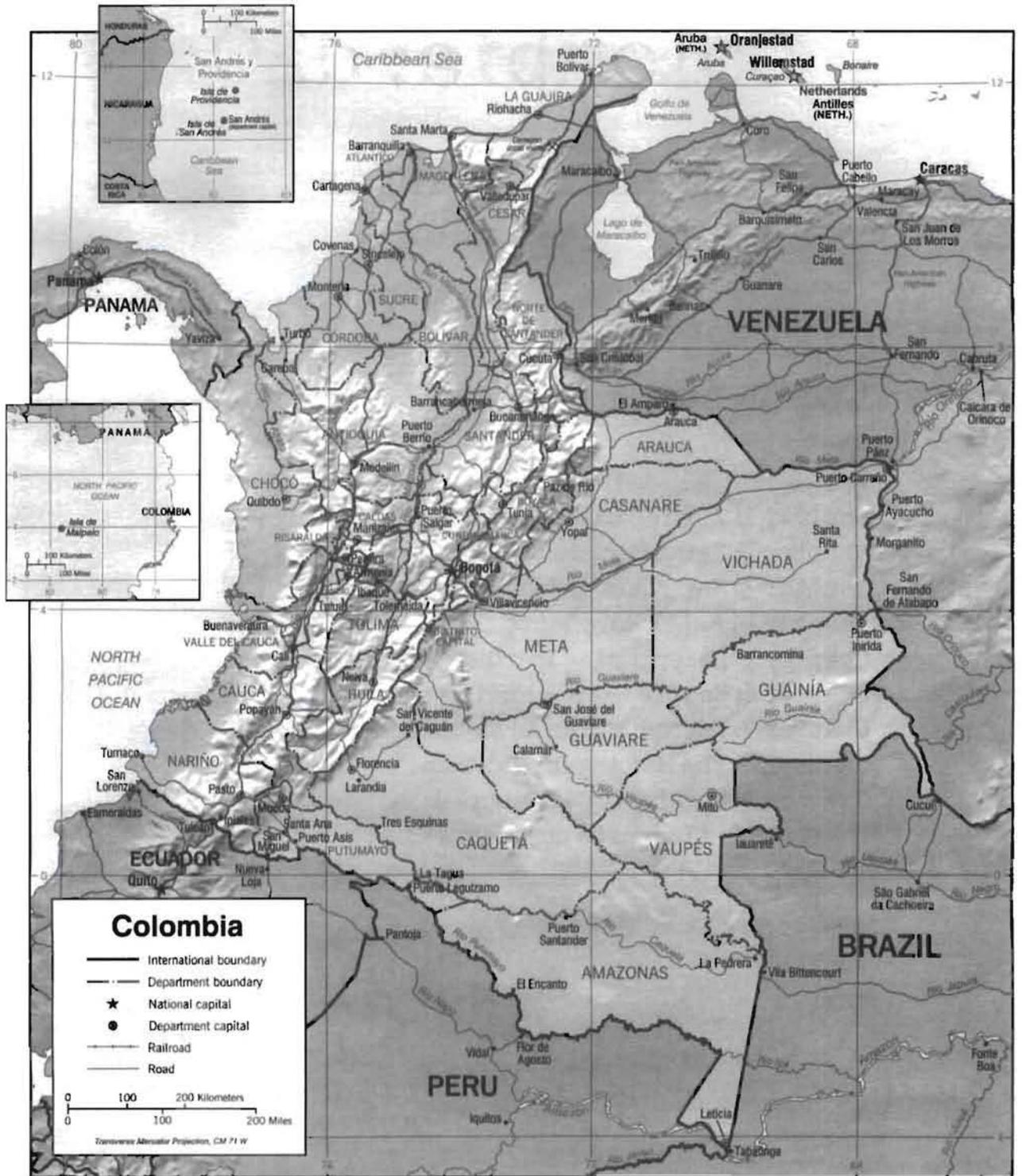
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Prologue

Colombian drug traffickers are responsible for most of the world's cocaine base production, cocaine hydrochloride (HCl) production, and wholesale cocaine HCl distribution. ... As a result of substantial increases in the size of Colombia's domestic coca crop, Colombia is now the source of nearly 74 percent of the world's cocaine base.

— "The Drug Trade in Colombia: A Threat Assessment," U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, March 2002, <http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/pubs/intel/02006/index.html>

Andean Mountains, Colombia, May 12, 2002

My foot sinks deep in the muck of the jungle floor as we trudge along the faint path. My dry socks lasted about five minutes this morning, before sweat and muddy ooze filled my boot. The jungle and the heat leave all our clothes soaked, but as a soldier, I at least want dry socks. The eight pairs in my backpack usually keep my morale high in the worst situations. Today is definitely an exception.

We'd agreed to escort a geologist team on a survey of the area. They are taking a few soil samples here and there, trying to find more oil. It seems pointless to me. We are deep in FARC territory, and no oil pipeline out here will last a month.

The FARC, or the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, at one time was a legitimate Marxist guerilla movement. Sure, guys like me killed people like that for a living, but even if you violently disagreed with their politics, at least you could respect them for trying to improve their country. Today, the FARC amounts to nothing more than a band of organized bandits. They profit from drug trade, hostage taking and blackmail. They also regularly bombed any oil pipeline in their territory.

About the only thing worse are the paramilitaries who eventually organized themselves to get rid of the FARC and others like them. It's damn hard not to blame the FARC for these guys as well. According to famous Marxist guerilla fighters like Che Guevara, the point of a guerilla movement is to force the government into repressive counter measures, which then brings the feelings of the people against the government. So, by extension, the brutal atrocities the paramilitaries commit are one of the goals of the FARC.

OK, so I'm a well-read, grunt. Sue me. I like to know my enemy.

Generally, my team and I prefer more humanitarian work. We like hostage rescues and providing security for aid groups. If you're out risking your life, you want to know it's for a good reason. Unfortunately, that work wasn't paying too well, and we had to take this job for some cash. Risking our lives for cheaper gasoline prices in the States wasn't our favorite activity. However, oil companies do pay nicely, and my Ford Excursion was getting expensive to fill up. Besides, the signing bonus for this job bought a brand new \$6,000 Barrett .50 caliber sniper rifle for Sams. I'd definitely risk my life for that weapon!



The team consists of Sams, our sniper, Seamus, our medic, Derrick, and myself. My name is John F. Gunn. Normally, we like to be discreet about our weapons. However, on this trip, we decided an obvious show of force might keep trouble away. Even Seamus decided to carry his brand new Saiga-12 semi-automatic shotgun instead of his normal handgun.

We hooked up with a dealer selling arms straight from Russia when we did a little humanitarian gig in Kosovo last year. Originally, Seamus bought the shotgun just for his collection. After all, the thing was dirt-cheap. However, it also looks real mean. It's basically a 12-gauge AK-47, so it provides the perfect visual for this trip.

Derrick bought an AK-101 from the same dealer, and he's carrying both it and his Colt this trip to give the new AK a field test. It doesn't add much weight since this new Russian weapon is chambered for the same NATO 5.56mm rounds the Colt uses. Hell, both of Derrick's rifles together still only weigh about half what Sams' Barrett does.

I bought an AN-94 from the same dealer, but I left it at home. This didn't seem like the time to try out new weapons to me. Today, I have an old Colt M203 assault rifle and grenade launcher. I'm also carrying an M9 (Beretta 92FS to you civilians) in a military holster at my side and a tiny Smith & Wesson automatic in my back under my clothes.

Finally, we break out of the trees into a hillside farm. Well, I guess it used to be a farm. Right now, it's just a field full of dead plants. It looks like corn stalks, except none of them are over three feet high.

"Must be from the D.E.A. drug eradication spraying," says Seamus. "There's probably a coca field nearby. The locals usually grow their food crops right next to the coca, and they often lose both when D.E.A. planes find them."

"Is it safe for us?" I ask.

"They use the same stuff I use on my garden. We should be fine," replies Seamus.

I take my binoculars and scan the horizon. Up ahead, I see a small house and further on I see the farm fields change from short, dead stalks to dead bushes. The bushes go on around the curve of the mountain and out of sight. That would be the coca.

"There's a house up ahead; let's take a break there," I shout.

I'm thinking about fresh socks now that I'm out from under the trees, but just as my morale starts to improve, I spot two men with AK-47's outside the house. They must have heard me shout, because they stand up and look in this direction. I decide hiding isn't an option with our two geologists,

so I wave my arms and motion them over. Meanwhile, Sams ducks back into the tree line and sets up the Barrett.

The two men take about three steps towards us when one of them stops and starts motioning to the other. A couple seconds go by and they run. I have a tough call now. I could motion to Sams to take them out or I could let them go. If I kill them, they won't report our position. Of course, if they go missing long, someone might come looking and they might not be too friendly when they find their dead friends. I'm leaning toward the good will angle, when one of my clients suddenly decides things for me.

He starts shooting a snub nose revolver at these guys from like a 100 yards away. Friggin' idiot! It'd take a miracle for any of those bullets to hit, but they definitely blew the whole good will angle. I motion for Sams and Derrick to take 'em out. Derrick shoulders the AK-101 and lets off a short burst at the one on the left. One shot from the Barrett takes out the other one. Seamus then moves in to check on the results. Derrick follows about 20 feet behind.

I turn around and scream, "What were you thinking? I give the orders to fire around here, and I don't remember telling you squat."

"Sorry, they recognized me," says the geologist with the revolver.

"What did you say?" I ask.

"They recognized me. They would've brought back reinforcements for sure," he replies.

"Why would those two goons know you?" I ask, but as soon as the sentence leaves my lips, I know the answer. "You're not oil guys. You're D.E.A."

"Uh, yeah. My real name is Paul Dumas. He's Phil Green. We really are just out taking samples though. We're just monitoring the effects of the spraying operation. Making sure we hit the right targets and that we're staying clear of the water supplies. We only hired you guys because of the congressional man power limits we gotta work under."

"But you lied to us," I say.

"Well, yeah, but I knew you guys weren't keen on working with the D.E.A. We, uh, already tried hiring you once before."

"Hey, John, up here, quick!" yells Seamus from across the field.

I say, "We're not finished," and turn to jog across the field to Seamus.

It's true, we don't work for the D.E.A. Our reasons are personal. I got friends that work there and many of them are



great guys. However, I just can't see risking my life on this particular issue. I believe in personal responsibility, and I guess I feel that when someone decides to use drugs it's their own problem. Why should I risk my neck trying to keep the drugs away from them? Yeah, I know, kids are a major hole in that philosophy, but that's still where I stand. It didn't seem to me that we'd get hired to clean up a schoolyard anyway. The others have slightly different reasons. Seamus knows a few old high school buddies who smoke a little weed on the weekends. He said he'd never want to be in a position where he had to arrest his friends. Sams had bad experiences working as a L.A. policeman after the Marines and before I found him. After that, he just wanted to stay away from the whole issue. Derrick felt a little different. He had a cousin in a drug rehab program and really hated the drug culture as a result. Of course, he knew the D.E.A. might well have put his cousin in jail, so as long as we could find other work, he could avoid working with them as well. Now we could add this cornfield to our reasons.

While we jog across the field, Seamus and Derrick move one of the armed men into the house. The other one looks real dead. He's face down with a .50 caliber hole in the back of his head.

We enter the house and find Derrick talking quickly in Spanish to the surviving gunman. There is a puddle of blood around him. He doesn't have long. When we arrive, he starts cursing at Dumas, the D.E.A. agent. The cursing pushes him too hard and he passes out.

"How's he doing?" I ask Seamus.

"He's lost a lot of blood, but if we could evac him now, he might make it."

I say, "OK, Dumas, call for a chopper."

Dumas says, "No, leave him. I got bigger problems right now."

"What!? This guy is dying. Doesn't that bother you?" shouts Seamus.

Phil Green steps forward and says, "Tell them the truth. We're never gonna find him without their help."

Dumas just stares at Green for a moment and finally says, "You tell them." He walks over to a corner, sits down, and buries his head in his hands.

Everyone turns to Green as he says, "OK, the pilot who sprayed this field got shot down yesterday. We kept in radio contact for about two hours after the crash. He indicated he found a house near a field he'd sprayed last week. We picked up the wreckage on satellite and it should be just ahead. We hoped this was the house and the pilot would be waiting here.



"Unfortunately, it looks like these guys found him first. He's probably a hostage by now. He's got a wife and two beautiful kids. We gotta find him before they kill him."

Right, so now we finally know what's going on and things aren't looking good. They were right; calling in a chopper in broad daylight is too dangerous. The locals already downed a fixed wing. The chopper would be easy prey comparatively. Meanwhile, we had limited time before someone came to check on these two guards. Once they knew we killed their

friends, they could quickly send 50-100 rebel soldiers down here for retribution.

Meanwhile, we had a mission to find a downed pilot, and we probably wouldn't get paid until that we resolved that. Of course, we liked this kind of mission. Even if it was for the D.E.A.

Now, I just have to figure out where to start looking....

Introduction

Roleplaying in Contemporary Colombia

Colombia is perhaps one of the most dangerous places in the world right now. The forces of the Cold War and the Drug War have combined in unusual relationships to create a country on the edge of survival. There are two major rebel groups, both descendants of Marxist revolutionaries. There are paramilitary militia groups that formed originally to protect the powerful drug cartels from the rebels, but now have taken on their own identity. There are still billions of dollars in drug money flowing, oddly, to support both these groups. There are oil companies and coffee plantations. Lastly, and seemingly least relevant sometimes, is the legitimately elected government.

The struggles in Colombia are somewhat representative of some of the troubles throughout Latin America. The Cold War and the effects of the Industrial Revolution seemed to hit this area simultaneously with a vengeance. Big capital from Europe and the United States went in to exploit and develop the area at the same time Russia and China exported their forms of Marxist revolution. The two collided like great steam trains, but the simple farmer paid the price. While most of the rest of Latin America heads away from those problems, the remnants still remain in Colombia.

These struggles saw their way into our own movies as well. During the Cold War, the Marxist guerilla fighter made nearly as good a bad guy as the Islamic terrorist. Movies on

this subject include *Predator*, which used the conflict as an interesting backdrop to an alien encounter, *Clear and Present Danger*, which highlighted the drug cartels, and *Proof of Life*, which revealed the despicable kidnapping industry in the area.

Hollywood realizes that dangerous places with dangerous people make great settings for stories. And, that is the intention of this book as well. Colombia makes a great backdrop for high adventure. With the material in this book you could have your characters rescue important hostages, capture drug leaders, or fight Marxist guerillas.

Yes, along the way, you might learn real facts about the world you live in, but you learn dozens of facts about imaginary creatures and fictional politics when you play a fantasy game. Our Real Life Roleplaying settings just happens to actually exist!

To this end, this book contains five important broad sections for your use. First off, the book presents a brief historical background on Colombia. Next, we include new classes, feats, equipment, and rules for enhancing the realism of your game. Thirdly, the book details a number of rebel movements in the region and how to use these groups in a roleplaying game. Next up is a semi-real, semi-fictional city where your characters can operate from, and lastly, for the referee, we include two adventures, a campaign, and some ideas for alternate settings.

In **Colombia: d20**, your adventures may not lead to hordes of gold and magic goodies, but they can lead to more important results, like rescuing dignitaries, preventing terrorism, or slowing the flow of dangerous drugs. Like the other settings, Colombia provides a perfect place for adventure-sized groups to operate. In fact, the U.S. congress, conscious of the possibility of slowly expanding operations in Colombia, passed a 400 military and 400 civilian personnel deployment limit into a recent funding law for Colombia. So, by law, at least U.S. operations in the country have been kept on a small scale.



In the fictional games we run, we can explore the possibilities of what might be. Characters might assume the roles of government advisors trying to strengthen the legitimate government, push back the rebels, and remove the paramilitary scourge. They might infiltrate one of these organizations in an attempt to arrest the leaders, or they might just take on the role of mercenaries for hire, fighting one battle at a time.

In the end, we hope you learn a bit more about the world around you and have fun at the same time. It may even help you form educated opinions on the future of western involvement in that area.

A Few Things to Avoid

Armored vehicles and helicopters: Allowing too much access to expensive equipment can ruin your game just as easily as letting a character play an ancient dragon in a fantasy setting. In Colombia, the jungle makes most heavy vehicles useless anyway. However, a helicopter can still give the characters an undue advantage. It causes two significant problems. First, it puts all the eggs in one basket. It's too easy for the

entire party to get wiped out. Second, it removes conflict from your story.

Once you place all your characters aboard an expensive vehicle, like a tank or a helicopter, you place the future of your campaign on the whim of dice rolls. Should someone attack them while they occupy the vehicle, one good roll could easily kill them all. We recommend never allowing the characters to control these sorts of vehicles, and, when you need them to transport the characters, you use them as a story lead in and not as a game mechanic.

For example, the introductory background to an adventure might include a description of the inbound flight. Alternatively, the story line might include the helicopter getting shot down. You might use this to place the characters in a certain remote area where the game begins. Obviously, you need to pre-plan the results in this case. Otherwise, they could end up anywhere.

In the movie *Predator*, the characters get stuck in the jungle because their clients cannot risk flying back into unfriendly territory against alerted rebels. If that key plot point had not forced the characters into a confrontation with the alien, there would be no movie. Similarly, in your games, if



the characters can always bail out of a bad situation via an air pickup, then you have eliminated the tension mounting up to the climatic battle of your story.

On the other hand, a vehicle sometimes makes a challenging “boss” encounter for the climatic battle of an adventure. In this case, the party normally destroys the vehicle, and even if they capture it, you can find some way to pry it from them before the start of the next session.

Large Engagements: Similarly, avoid placing too large a force under the command of player characters. Roleplaying games work well with small-unit encounters but do not scale up well. There are a number of good miniature rule systems and wargames available for this type of game. On the other hand, placing an adventure within the context of a larger operation can sometimes enhance the game quite a bit. However, as with tanks, we recommend the referee basically pre-script the results of the larger operation ahead of time. Specific tasks the players accomplish should affect the results of the battle, but the referee should otherwise know how things will resolve themselves. Making attack roles for even a hundred men engaged in combat will stall a game.

For example, the referee wants to assign the players the task of rescuing some American aid workers in the midst of some rebel fighting. Ahead of time, the referee prepares a general map of the area for the players. On another copy of that map, she makes the typical general notes about what static forces the players might encounter along the way. She also decides on a general timetable for events in the larger battle. She decides where the battle lines are and how they will shift during the adventure. Realistically, these events should happen along a timeline. However, using the progress of the adventuring party to control the progress of the battle may turn out to be much more fun for everyone. In our example, the referee would like the larger operation to move through the area within which the players need to act. Instead of having the battle lines move to the aid station at noon on a particular day, the referee decides the battle should advance to that point at the moment the players enter the building. In other words, the larger operation is in the game purely to add to the drama of the game action. It best serves this purpose by being subordinate to the game.

Unrestricted killing: If events around the world have taught Americans anything, it's the level of commitment a people can reach when they feel attacked by a foreign power. Take Somalia, for example. Things were very bad there. Hu-

man life appeared to have little value to those in power. The local warlords killed and starved hundreds of thousands. The United Nations came to try and help. However, amidst all this, somehow a large portion of the population — including women and children — rose up to fight against the United Nations. A few of the U. N.'s actions might have justified this response, but in the context of everything else, those actions seem insignificant. Obviously, however, those actions seemed very significant to the Somali people.

A game like this can easily descend into a killing spree. Without even realizing it, a gaming group might start to treat peasants on the guerilla side exactly like they treat goblins in a fantasy campaign, killing people with little thought about the consequences. Perhaps the appeal of a fantasy setting is its lack of moral ambiguity. Goblins are evil. Players can always kill one without threatening their alignment. Real life settings are not so simple. People, in general, are not evil. One advantage of this setting is the ability to explore the consequences of violence.

Of course, in the spirit of the game, a referee may present many of the people the player characters encounter doing obviously bad things. For example, most player characters, regardless of moral virtue, feel free to kill anyone who shoots at them first. However, if your group is up to the challenge, a referee may also introduce more ambiguous figures into his campaign. As in the introductory fiction, the players may need one of those gunmen for information, and as in the introductory fiction, dead men tell no tales.

How to Use These Rules

We designed the rules and settings included here for use with the Modern d20 rules system. The rules and setting information contained here should work well by themselves or in conjunction with the other books in the Real Life Roleplaying series. We wrote the *Somalia: d20* book for Modern d20 as well, so the equipment, advanced classes, feats, and other rules in that book are perfectly complimentary to the ones here. If you prefer the original d20 rules, we recommend you use the *Afghanistan: d20* book, published by Holistic Design, for additional equipment, basic character classes and rules.



Chapter 1: A Brief History of Colombia

La Gloria es ser gran y ser útil. (Glory is being great and being useful.)

— Simon Bolivar

Colombia at a Glance

Land Area: 1,038,700 sq km

Land Use: 2% arable land, 2% permanent crops, 96% other

Population: Approximately 41 million (1.6% growth rate)

Life Expectancy: 70.85 years

Literacy: 91.3%

GDP: \$255 billion (19% agriculture, 26% industry, 55% services)

Population Below Poverty Line: 55%

Unemployment: 17%

Introduction

Once upon a time, a nation, now lost in the minds and hearts of all but a few, blossomed into a self-built empire, sprawling from the Atlantic to the Pacific. This nation then shattered into a thousand pieces due to the greed of individuals who desired power for themselves over the good of those they served. This nation proclaimed itself Gran Colombia, with New Granada as its backbone. New Grenada became Colombia, the only remaining nation of the former grand republic. Ever since, it has dealt with dictators, natural disasters and rampant civil war. In all this, the United States can hardly claim an altruistic innocence, often acting as if Colombia belonged to its own sphere of influence rather than a sovereign nation state in its own right. Only in the last few

decades has democracy returned to Colombia, and many times the interests of peace and prosperity have died under intense pressure for a drug war fought by proxy.

The Land and Its People

The Andes Mountains largely define Colombian geography. The Andes consist of three ranges that run parallel each other: Eastern, Western, and Middle. Two primary river valleys, the Cuaca and the Magdalena, run between these main ranges. Colombia belongs to a small handful of nations that has coasts along two entirely separate oceans. The combination of these factors creates an extremely varied landscape, which includes Caribbean shorelines, marshlands, rain forest, deserts, mountains and grasslands.

An amazing variety of animals make their home in these disparate climes. Among them, the pink river dolphin that dwells in the Amazon River (in the extreme southern end of Colombia) remains one of the most amazing. Colombia also has monkeys, caiman, reptiles and more birds and insects than one can imagine. More species emerge from obscurity every year. This variety has proven a tempting target for those who would exploit it. A thriving trade for illegal animals — for purposes of collection, zoos, exotic pets, and obscure Asian medicinal uses — has created an entire subculture of smuggling, drowned out by the attention paid to the drug trade. The magnitude of this effort cannot be underestimated. For example, in 1994 alone over 600,000 animals were smuggled from the country. This has had an extremely damaging effect



Chapter 1: A Brief History of Colombia



on the Colombian eco-structure. While the government has made efforts to slow the damage, it has great difficulty doing so given all the other issues that it has to deal with. Thus, the environment in Colombia becomes one more casualty of the extreme chaos that avails it.

While cataloging all of the hundreds of species that grace the country would take up more space than that allotted here, a few bear mentioning to provide an idea of the diversity. The boa constrictor lives in the rain forests of the area. Several varieties of tamarin (a type of primate) also range throughout the area. The impressive ecosystem also includes the Pygmy Marmoset, the Red Howler Monkey, the Woolly Monkey, the Tapir (Brazilian, Baird and Mountain), the Paca, the Funnel-Eared Bat, the Capuchin (Brown and White-Faced), the Hoatzin and the Giant Armadillo.

The vast majority of the country lies in the plains. It remains the country's most sparsely populated region, ill suited for agriculture. It functions as a massive foraging ground for herd animals and also has the distinction of being the area with the largest concentration of petroleum deposits, some of which remain in dispute with its neighbor, Venezuela.

Cartegena has remarkably pristine beaches as well as reefs. The locals often make their living off of these fish filled areas, trading the products they do not use for cash at nearby fish markets.

Colombia enjoys some of the most untouched rain forests in South America. In the last few years, eco tourism (locally called "Ayahuasca tourism") has caused an increased interest in the local traditional life style. Pharmaceutical companies have also taken an increased amount of interest in the region for its potential medicines. Many of the most interesting discoveries in medicine of the last few years have come from this or other rain forests. Still, Colombia has also had problems with the environment due to slash and burn farming, which often ruins the soil. The extreme poverty of the natives (especially in the Amazonian region) often leaves them little or no alternative. These primitive methods allow anyone with a torch and machete to clear their own patch of land. Moreover, it is this poverty that has (in part) fueled the drug war, which has brought so much violence in the last few years.

Bogotá is Colombia's capital. It has a curious mix of ultramodern skyscrapers and colonial remnants. It remains Colombia's most modern city, with a vibrant underground and rampant crime. The government has its stronghold here, though sometimes violence still penetrates. Nevertheless, it

remains one of the few islands of relative sanity in the nation. Bogotá acts as an intellectual capital as well, with universities, government offices, and economic centers of commerce. Many of the inhabitants view themselves as more sophisticated than their country cousins, often thinking less of those in other parts of the nation due to their "uncultured" ways.

Colombia has a high literacy rate for a developing nation. The majority of children attend school and numerous cities boast universities. It also has a moderately impressive medical system in place. In other words, despite the stereotypes shown in most Hollywood movies, Colombia has a lot more to it than vast untamed fields of jungle interlaced with coca plantations.

Dozens of cities dot the map. Bogotá itself houses more than five million people alone. With the chaos that has so recently permeated the nation, more and more people flee to the cities, causing the already well-established populations to continue to swell.

Colombians exist in a wide variety of ethnic groups. Most of the population consists of mestizos, those with a mix of native and Caucasian heritage. The second largest group contains Caucasian stock, primarily descended from the colonial power, Spain (creole). Additionally, mulatto (African and Caucasian) and zambo (African and native) make up a significant portion of the population. The rarest of all the ethnic groups consists of the few remaining native peoples, who make up less than one percent of the current population.

The Catholic Church acts as one of the unifying forces. For many, the rites of the Church exist more as a form of tradition than any true religious devotion. On the other hand, Colombia enjoys the reputation as one of the most devout of all Catholic nations, its bishops known as conservative and insightful theological thinkers. Many areas of the country mix native culture with orthodox catholic beliefs to form their own traditions.

Colombians have large, extended families. One catholic custom, that of the godparent, involves the selection of a close friend or family member who looks after the child's devotion to the Church. As a result, most children have a wide range of adults that they follow for example and emotional support. Colombian families, by and large, remain very patriarchal. The father makes the decisions, and the mother raises the children and runs the house (sometimes with help).

People in cities live a very cosmopolitan lifestyle. Unfortunately, unemployment often runs rampant, forcing either begging or extremely innovative methods of earning a living.

A Brief Glance at Roman Catholic Tradition

Over 95% of the population identifies itself as Roman Catholic. A complete study of the Colombian culture is impossible without describing a bit more about the Catholic Church.

Basic Vocabulary

Cura (Priest): An individual (male) who has sworn vows of chastity and often has watch over a specific congregation of individuals. Urban areas can be as small as a few blocks, whereas a rural parish could cover hundreds of square miles, if remote enough.

Obispo (Bishop): The next highest rank in the hierarchy, a bishop oversees several parishes.

Cardinal: The highest ranking ecclesiastical office in a given region.

Catecismo (Catechumen): A group of young children enrolled in the basic classes of instruction in the Church.

Monje/Monja (Monk/Nun): These individuals swear themselves to a life of chastity, poverty and dedication to the Church. There are dozens of different orders, but they all enjoy a great deal of respect from the population at large, especially at a time when many of the populace have begun question the authority of the Church in general.

The Seven Catholic Sacraments

These seven rituals represent the cornerstones of the Catholic faith. They represent how the Church interacts with an individual from cradle to grave in all aspects of his faith.

Bautismo (Baptism/Christening): This takes place at youth by a priest christening a child with a droplet of water.

La penitencia (Penance/Reconciliation): From time to time, Catholics must confess their sins to their priest in a sealed confessional. All information disclosed in this confessional, by tradition, should remain with the priest, who then assigns a proper penance for the individual involved, often in the form of reciting a prayer a specific number of times.

La confirmación (Confirmation): This takes place at a later age when an individual formally chooses to continue in the path of the Catholic Church; usually at a fairly young age, but not that of infancy.

Matrimonio (Matrimony): A formal religious ceremony. Many in Latin American countries have a religious marriage without a state license due to the cost involved.

La ordenación (Holy Orders/Ordination): The specific rite that sets a priest apart as someone who watches over the flock.

Últimos ritos (Extreme Unction): A rite given just before death in which the individual receives preparation for the afterlife.

Many people run stores right out of their own homes, called *bodegas*, which sell a wide variety of items from food, cigarettes, beer and other common necessities. The population has risen so fast in some areas that the local governments have had difficulty creating a sufficient supporting infrastructure. As a result, large "suburbs" of houses made out of aluminum siding or cement blocks dot the landscape. A homeowner in one of these areas must act as a jack-of-all-trades, learning to mix cement, string together electrical wire, and put together pumping water just to keep his family in even marginal comfort.

One popular article of clothing, called the *ruana*, actually enjoys considerable use in the countryside. This multi-purpose, waterproof garment acts as both a source of warmth in colder moments and sometimes as a blanket or pillow. It consists of a flexible poncho that flows down to just above

the ankles. At the same time, the vast majority of Colombians wear Western style clothing, including jeans, t-shirts, jackets, shoes, socks etc.

Colombia has produced many potent artists. The best-known colonial artist, Ramon Torres Mendez, gained a reputation similar to that of Norman Rockwell in his era. He painted "windows" into the behavior of the time, including religion, people and Colombian customs. Garcia Marquez won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1982 for his melancholy tale, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. This novel is a potent mix of numerous literary themes, creating a painting of the spirit of Colombian life. Marquez wrote and published the novel in the turbulent 1960s. It shows a sense of nostalgia, tradition, mysticism and the everyday in a pastel of seemingly ordinary events that end up having profound depths beyond what one initially perceives. In short, the novel perfectly reflects the



Holidays

New Year's Day — 1 January
Epiphany — 6 January
Legislative Elections — Varies by governmental decree
San Jose — Varies by year (generally March)
Maundy Thursday — Varies by year (generally April)
Good Friday — Varies by year (generally April)
Labor Day/May Day — 1 May
Ascension — 2 May
Presidential Elections — Varies by governmental decree
Corpus Christi — Varies by year (June)
Sacred Heart — Varies by year (June)
Independence Day — 20 July
Spanishness Day — 13 October
Christmas Day — 25 December

people of Colombia: complex, with many layers of bright and vibrant color.

Native Peoples at a Glance

The Chibchas

A theorized migratory group that most archeologists date around 1200 BC, believed to arrive in a series of waves, including 1200 BC, 500 BC, and a final retreating wave in which they moved to the more mountainous regions to avoid conflict with the Caribs. They supposedly then split into two groups, known as the Muisca and the Tairona. One reason for the believed similarity involved their penchant for creating masterfully crafted buildings interconnected with well laid roads.

Muisca

Like their cousins the Tairona, the Muisca possessed the skills of master goldsmiths. At its height, this civilization boasted more than a million citizens. They lived in the eastern half of the nation, though they divided rule amongst two powerful figures known as Zipa and Zaque.

Gold meant a great deal to their culture, and they created exquisite works that they placed in their religious temples. They had no tin, and thus could not manufacture bronze, but they did produce a mixture of gold and copper, which yielded stunning results. They also used it heavily for trading purposes.

In addition to their skills at smithwork, they worked the land with knowledge from dozens of generations. Their advanced economy allowed for a vibrant market trade, combined with roads that linked their larger settlements. Finally, they also used salt to preserve their meat and to give them an even greater upper hand in trading with their neighbors.

Originally, the priests and chiefs formed a distinct upper class of society. The tribes formed a local confederation, and had an impressive system of tax and tribute, much of which we still do not understand today. With the arrival of the Spanish, their population slowly dissolved through assimilation, conversion or death under the yoke of slavery.

Sinu

An ancient civilization, predating the Tairona and Muisca, also known for their skills as goldsmiths. They began to decline around 1000 AD. None remained by the time of the European conquest. Today the legacy of the name Sinu remains as one of the larger rivers in the tropics.

Quimbaya

This tribe also lived from around 100 to 1000 AD. Well known for the creation of gold sculptures of exceedingly detailed plants, they mastered a technique using beeswax that was lost for centuries. This mastery of wax also allowed them to create intricate layered candles. Because of this lost technique, the Quimbaya took on a bit of a mythical aura among the tribes that succeeded them, which no doubt helped contribute to the Spanish perception of the legendary El Dorado. They had a council of ancients whom they elected from their number, and mainly lived as pacifists.

The Tairona

As near as archeologists can pinpoint, this civilization sprang into being roughly around 400 AD. These skilled goldsmiths helped wet the Spanish thirst for gold in the new world when the two cultures first encountered each other in 1503. The arrival of the Spanish completely decimated their culture. Of course, this process took time. Initially the Spanish traded reasonably peacefully, simply placing governors above them and sending some missionaries to convert them. However, the Spanish desire for gold eventually overcame all reason, and they drove the Tairona high into the mountains. The fleeing natives literally dropped their gold behind them as the Spanish hoards picked it up, giving them time to get away. Once the Spanish had obtained these things, they broke off pursuit, which left the Tairona free to piece together the

The Impact of Christopher Columbus

The name "Colombia" comes from the famous explorer Christobal Colón (or Christopher Columbus, as pronounced in English). Columbus remains one of the most divisive historical figures in modern times, and has always had a powerful impact on any outlook for the last five centuries. To those who praise him, he was an explorer who changed the world by mounting an impossible exploratory expedition against all odds. Those who condemn him see him as the herald of the greatest genocide (over time) that the world has ever known, followed by the virtual enslavement and defeat of nearly every people indigenous to the North and South American continent. Many regard him as exceedingly arrogant, and none can question that he demanded his share of titles, including "Admiral of the Western Sea." Yet, regardless of whether one hates or loves the man who opened the Americas to Europe, none deny his impact on history.

The nation of Colombia shares its name with countless cities or other institutions throughout North America. One of the territories of Canada (British Columbia), and several rivers share the name as well. Indeed, the tragic recent destruction of the NASA space shuttle Columbia bore the name of the same man.

The legend shares a rhyme remembered by even the smallest of school children: "In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue." Ultimately, the ripples on the pond of history cast by this act of defiance against ignorance reaches a proportion that transcends measurement. Much good and much evil has resulted from these actions. Ultimately, the legacy of Christopher Columbus lies more in a man who strove for greatness, achieved his goal, but did not perhaps realize the consequences of what his vision entailed.

shattered remnants of their people. One group, descended from this initial flight, still survives today. Calling themselves the Kogi, they live in one of the most isolated areas of the Sierra Nevada.

History Colombia as a Colony

The first European interaction came in the form of Alonso de Ojeda in 1499, followed by Rodrigo de Bastidas in 1500. The first few settlements to exist involved Acandí (then called Santa María la Antigua de Darién) in 1510, Santa Marta (1525) and Cartagena (1533). The initial colonies served as footholds to throw off attacks by the natives, and primarily served as ports to facilitate ships traveling nearby.

Columbus reached the Isthmus of Panama on his fourth and final voyage in 1504. At the time, the explorer still had no idea of the extent of his discoveries. Columbus himself did not stay and quickly returned to Spain, where he faced eventual imprisonment and castigation.

The early inhabitants established the city of Bogotá (called Santa Fe de Bogotá at the time) in 1538. Various Spanish explorers created several minor cities along the route between Peru and the main sea. The initial conquistadors enjoyed considerable autonomy and divided up the territory of their conquests amongst themselves. The high mountain valleys that made up Colombia's geography helped establish many of the largest population centers in areas that caused the colony to slowly isolate itself from the rest of the Spanish empire. This remoteness became a determining factor in the war of independence in centuries to come.

Right from the start, the Spanish empire used a strict hierarchical society based on the supremacy of descendants from the Spanish mainland. Specifically, Peninsulares, the highest caste of the colony, automatically took precedence over Creoles (the descendants of Spanish Europeans). Mestizos made up the next portion of the colonial tier, who had mixed Creole and Indian heritage. The model served so successfully at integrating the native population, that only one percent of Colombians today regard themselves as pure-blooded Indian. Los Zambos, or those of African descent (or mixed African and native) lived for no other purpose (in the minds of the colonial administrators) than strict manual labor.

The colonial government reflected this strict caste-based structure. The viceroy (under an executive council appointed to the king) held the highest authority. Beneath him, he appointed regional authorities that divided their territories into governorships and then cities. As with their North American counterparts, the initial city councils had a decidedly demo-



Simon Bolivar (1783-1830)

Many men have claimed the title “liberator” or “patriot” over the centuries, but few of them can lay claim to having a direct hand in the establishment of six democratic countries. Hailed by many as the “George Washington of South America” he served as statesman, diplomat, general and peacemaker, only to have his country turn its back on him in his last days. He died in quasi exile and poverty. History has redeemed him however, and multiple towns throughout South America maintain a Plaza Bolivar.

At the height of his career, while he served as president of Gran Colombia, the territory of the fledgling nation that he helped liberate consisted of the modern nations of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Panama, with sister republics in Peru and Bolivia.

Venezuela claims him as their native son, though many dispute the actual birthplace. Historians do know that his early years involved a ranch just outside of Caracas. At a fairly young age, he traveled to Europe, which heavily influenced his thinking. He established an early friendship with a hitherto unsuccessful liberator, Miranda, and slowly began to forge democratic ideals in his mind.

His initial efforts met with dismal failure. In 1810, he served as subordinate to commanders with good intentions but less-than-admirable political skills; the Spanish promptly crushed this rebellion. He tried again in 1814, this time leading the force himself, only to retreat into exile yet again. Finally, in 1816 he made an alliance with Paez, and set up the first spark of lasting liberty. For the next nine years he slowly expanded that spark until all of the territory that would encompass Gran Colombia united under its banner, expanding that to Peru and Bolivia.

He attempted to unite all of these former colonies under one banner, but the factionalism of the individual generals and local politicians grew too intense. Desperate to stem the tide of factionalism, he began to take a stronger and stronger hand in domestic affairs, almost to the point of dictatorship. Eventually, he stepped down from power in the hopes that by removing himself as a divisive figure the nation could grow on its own. His plan backfired, and a short while later Ecuador and Venezuela declared their independence.

He died alone in poverty on December 17, 1830. A short while later, his former allies turned rivals realized the damage of what they had done and arranged state honors. The legacy of liberty that he left took several generations to become fully realized; to this day the former nations of Gran Colombia are more divisive than united. Despite these disagreements, however, all of these former nations honor Bolivar as a national hero.

cratic bent; eventually, however, the monarchy used this as a source of income, selling these positions to the highest bidder.

On the other hand, these same councils later led to an increased inclusion of Creoles in the power structure. They served as an important check against the near unlimited authority of the Vice-Royalty. This, combined with the courts, created a limited balance of power that helped make the colony run smoothly.

The colonial economy took a form similar to that of the English administration of the North American colonies. Spain ensured that it maintained tight control over its interests, regulating trade by controlling the partners with whom the colony could trade. By licensing merchants, they helped determine who could trade and where they could ply their goods. At first, the colony relied on Spain for most of its food and vital

supplies, but gradually became more self-sufficient. Tobacco grew to prominence, along with sugar, as the primary export to Spain. Large plantation systems took root in the countryside, with a feudal style system of tribute and peasantry. The Indians devoted a certain amount of their time each year to serving on the local lord's land instead of their own.

The Church served an interesting dichotomy in this time, both as the tool of the oppressor and the oft times singular shield of the oppressed. Numerous monasteries sprang up all about the colony, serving a number of different roles, from judge, supplier of priests, to educator. Knowledge carried a premier importance, and the crown put restrictions on the ownership of books, limiting printing presses. The Church attempted to limit learning to their own precepts, though these often conflicted with some of the newer ideals of the enlightenment among secular authorities.





A New Nation

Around 1700, the Crown began to exercise a more direct control over the administration of the colonies. It eliminated the institutions that the colonists had created to govern themselves and instead created more direct regional Vice-Royalities. Again, like their North American counterparts, much of the discontent among the ruling class came from excessive taxes levied by the Crown to fund its periodic European wars. This came to such a point that minor rebellions began to surface in the colonies, which the Crown quickly crushed.

Furthermore, the success of the revolution in the United States, later followed by France, served to embolden those who would throw off the yoke of Spanish rule. The Comunero revolt in 1781 ended when the local governors agreed to a more reasonable tax burden. However, these same leaders later ignored the deal and claimed that they had only agreed at gunpoint. This action incensed and emboldened the colonies further, as well as creating more of a sense of local identity as “Colombia” rather than merely an extension of the Spanish Empire.

When Napoleon invaded Spain in 1807, he recognized the legitimacy of the colonies by placing them as equals with

their European counterparts. Though Spain attempted some token reforms, the locals took this opportunity to reestablish the native institutions that the Crown had previously banned, among them a council based solely on Creole rule in Bogotá in July of 1810. For the next few years, several provinces declared their independence from Spain, but did so piecemeal. As a result, their efforts met with little success until Simon Bolivar (native of Venezuela) arrived on the scene.

Simon Bolivar first entered Colombia in 1812 after suffering a defeat in his attempts to free Venezuela. Through a series of daring military maneuvers, he managed to liberate several Colombian provinces. The problem came in maintaining hold of his victories. The failure of the Colombian congress to unite to a single cause ultimately forced him to leave again in 1815 to Jamaica.

By this time, Napoleon had lost his grip on Spain, leaving an opportunity for the Spanish Crown to regain its hold on its empire. That opportunity came in the form of Pablo Morillo. He proceeded to re-conquer Colombia using a variety of tactics, from military victory to mass decrees of freedom to the enslaved. Once he had retaken the territory, Morillo switched from carrot to stick, instituting harsh re-cremations against those who opposed his rule. He worked



The Panama Incident

The nation of Panama existed for nearly a hundred years as the Department of Panama in Colombia. Before this, the Spanish used it as a land route to transfer gold shipments from the Pacific. However, after a series of increasingly devastating raids by pirates (the famous Francis Drake among them), the Spanish began to ship their treasure the long way around the Cape of Good Hope, far to the south. Interest in the isthmus increased again as a result of the California Gold rush of 1840s, in which the United States built a railroad to speed the shipments as much as possible. With the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869, its traffic greatly declined.

In 1879, Ferdinand de Lesseps, creator of the incredibly successful Suez Canal, created a new enterprise with the vision of creating a canal through the Isthmus. Right from the start, the work met disaster. For the first six years of its existence, the company attempted to use a straight channel, rather than locks. Progress moved incredibly slow.

Furthermore, because of the Monroe Doctrine, the United States blocked any attempt by the French government to formally back the canal. Not to be outdone, Lesseps appealed directly to the French people. Impressed with his record, they responded and work began on a lock canal in 1888. Efforts continued, but at an agonizingly slow pace, and then came to a head in 1889 with one of the greatest political scandals in French history. The company had proceeded to bribe any politician, company or newspaper that opposed it in order to get good press. Massive kickbacks and corruption had siphoned off funds that might have gone to the construction of the canal. But even still, the combination of disease and temperature made the effort nigh impossible.

On the other hand, the French left a firm foundation upon which the United States later built. They had still managed to complete a large portion of the canal, and left an infrastructure that made it much easier for later efforts. That date came in 1903 when President Theodore Roosevelt came to power. He had a vision of the United States becoming a great power, and felt a canal necessary to do it. He balked at the price the Colombian's asked for the canal. For several months, things simmered at an impasse.

Realizing an opportunity when he saw one, Philippe Bunau-Varilla (a lawyer for the now defaulted Lessep company), joined together with the elite of Panama to plan a junta. The elite of the country had chafed for a great deal of time under Colombian management, specifically due to the harsh toll its frequent civil wars had wrought upon its populace. They reached a quiet deal with President Roosevelt and thus the revolution began.

In October of 1903, a largely bloodless coup put the new families in power. With the United States navy blockading any attempt at retaliation, Colombian efforts proved largely futile. At this point Bunau-Varilla backstabbed his fellow conspirators by writing up an incredibly favorable treaty with the United States for the canal, giving perpetual sovereignty of the entire Canal Zone to the United States. Under the guns of the U.S. naval presence, the Panamanians decided to sign it.

The completion of the canal proved difficult for the United States as well, but due to the medical brilliance of Col. William Gorgas and the railroading expertise of Col. George W. Goethals, the canal was finished by 1914. Panama remains independent of Colombia, and currently enjoys a democratic regime due to another United States intervention, this time against Manuel Noriega in 1989. Eventually, on December 31, 1999 the Panamanian government formally took over administration of the entire Canal Zone. A private company currently administers the Canal Zone, in which no major incident has occurred to the present day.

with the Church to eliminate any opposition from local priests, and confiscated property in the name of the Crown from anyone suspected of working with the rebels. This harsh rule did not meet well with the independent-spirited people of Colombia.

Building on the anger from Spain's broken agreements,

Simon Bolivar tried a new tactic. Not only with popular support but in a joint strike at both Venezuela and Colombia. He thus obtained sufficient numbers to overcome Spanish opposition. By uniting several rebel movements under his banner, including Paez, Santander, Sucre and others, he created a unified force that had previously always known defeat. In a



Facts from Various Sources about the "Drug War"

From the DEA Website (<http://www.dea.gov/demand/speakout/index.html>)

- Drug use has declined 30 percent in the last twenty years. Cocaine use has dropped 70 percent in that same period of time. 95% of Americans do not use drugs.
- CDC reported 15,852 drug induced deaths and 18,539 alcohol related deaths (alcohol is used seven times more than other forms of drug).
- 123,000 uses heroin at least once a month, 1.7 million use cocaine at least once a month.
- The American taxpayer shelled out \$160 billion for "the destruction of lives, the damage of addiction, fatalities from car accidents, illness and lost opportunities and dreams."
- 600,000-hospital emergency department drug incidents in 2000 alone. Health care costs rose to around the \$15 billion dollar level.
- Americans spent \$67 billion on illegal drugs in 2000.
- Six times as many homicides are committed by people under the influence of drugs as compared to those who merely seek to find money to pay for it.
- Only 5% of federal inmates and 27% of state inmates reside in prison solely for criminal possession of illegal substances.

From various websites opposed to the "Drug War"

- Drug offenses constitute 57% of all federal inmates in the year 2000. 21% of state inmates consisted of drug law violators. (1)
- The United States has the highest prison population rate in the world. 2.9% of the adult population, 1 in every 34, exists in a state of incarceration or parole. (2)
- If the current rates of imprisonment continues as estimated, 5% of the population shall serve in prison at some point during their life; 28.5% of African American males. (3)
- In 1999, the United States spent \$32.5 billion on corrections in 1999. (4)
- "In 1999, 1,350 wiretaps were authorized by state and federal courts. Of these, 978 (a total of 72.4%) were for drug investigations, 139 (10%) were for racketeering, 60 (4.4%) were for gambling, 62 (4.6%) were for homicide or assault, and only 7 — about half a percent — were for kidnapping." (5)
- "According to the United Nations, drug trafficking is a \$400 billion per year industry, equaling 8% of the world's trade. This is greater than the exports of the automobile industry, worldwide." (6)
- "It costs \$8.6 billion a year to keep drug law violators behind bars." (7)
- The civil war in Colombia has caused over 200,000 deaths, much of it fueled by the drug trade, protection of the drug trade, suppression of the drug trade, or elimination of the drug trade.

Notes

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5. Administrative Office of the United States Courts, 1999 Wiretap Report (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 2000), p. 17.
6. Associated Press, "U.N. Estimates Drug Business Equal to 8 Percent of World Trade," (1997, June 26).
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relatively short amount of time, he had successfully liberated all of Colombia, as well as Venezuela.

Simon Bolivar realized that strength lay in numbers, that only if the entire South American continent had its freedom could Gran Colombia ever truly have a lasting degree of success. As such, he tasked Jose Antonio de Sucre to take a part of the army and march it into Peru while he worked to create a national federal government back in Bogotá.

Colombia enjoyed a considerable advantage over its neighbors in the early stages of democratic development. Because the military governors of Ecuador and Venezuela seized power when they succeeded from Gran Colombia, for nearly a century they both had a long series of dictatorships without a long period of democracy. Conversely, with the constitution still in place, the Colombians enjoyed an extremely strong tradition of democracy, with shorter periods in which they did not have a democratically elected government. On the other hand, extreme factionalism in Colombia started nearly from the beginning.

After Simon Bolivar died, the nation resumed the original colonial name of New Grenada. For a brief eight months, a military dictatorship took control. Intense pressure from elite of the country forced the dictator from power and installed the democratically elected Caicedo. The new president inherited an economy in shambles, which he tried to rectify in part with a new constitution. However, the same spirit that had prevented Colombia from obtaining liberty until Simon Bolivar came along remained quite strong. The individual departments insisted upon retaining power at the expense of the central government. This interesting parallel to the Articles of Confederation vs. the Constitution in the United States followed the same natural course in Colombia. Namely, after a brief civil war in 1840 in which various individual departments attempted to usurp the control of the central government, a new constitution gave much stronger powers to the central government.

A series of progressive presidents slowly restored the rights of the individual that had existed under the old constitution of Gran Colombia. Land reforms and privatization efforts began to increase the well being of the individual members of the peasantry. Two schools of thought emerged in the form of the Partido Liberal (PL), representing enlightenment thinkers, secularists and businessmen, and the Partido Conservador (PC), which consisted of the former elite and colonial landowners.

Tensions between these two factions began right away, and the conservatives led a coup that placed a military dictator in charge. Yet again, the strong democratic principles of Colombia prevailed and that same military dictator left power after only eight months. A new constitution, and a new name (Grenadine Confederation) did little to stifle the strong passionate feelings on all sides. Yet another civil war and another constitution caused Church lands to briefly fall into government hands. Eventually, the PL split into a radical and a moderate wing, with the moderate wing winning eventual dominance in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Around this time, Tobacco slowly lost its importance to the economy, only to find its replacement in the (now famous) Colombian coffee plantation.

Political shifting and changing continued, until eventually, Colombia established a lasting constitution in 1886 that would last for nearly a hundred years, formally renaming the nation the Republic of Colombia. This new constitution gave strong power to the central government, while also recognizing the autonomy of the Church. However, the Church still retained strong ties to Rome, with a stipulation that all children receive a basic education of Catholicism as well as making marriages only valid if recognized by the Church.

In 1898, the president of the nation fell ill, forcing the vice president to run the day-to-day affairs of the nation. When the international demand for coffee receded, the national currency collapsed. Discontent, which had festered in on-again off-again periods of violence for twelve years, finally reached a boiling point.

The radical elements of the PL attempted a revolution. The moderate wing (Nationalists) allied themselves with the former members of the PC. Civil war erupted yet again. Rather than a short violent streak, as had happened in decades previous, this conflict became known as the "Thousand Days War." Due to the split among their ranks, the PL lost, but unlike the aftermath of their previous conflicts, they refused to give up. The radical members of the PL took to the rural areas of the country and began Colombia's first prolonged guerilla civil war. The conflict continued until 1902, with the surrender of the PL army. It left Colombia devastated.

The Road of Ascension

Once the dust settled, both sides realized that they had allowed their more radical elements to drive them to the brink of destruction. As a result, the moderates forced the fringe elements from power and began building bridges of good will.

Caribbean
Barranc
TLANTIC
Med
FLOREN
arand
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They agreed to work together for the good of the nation at the expense of a monopoly on power.

The people of Colombia chose General Rafeal Reyes to implement this new thinking. While officially a conservative, he made certain that elements of his cabinet included members of the Liberal party. He implemented a temporary trade barrier, forcing the local business leaders to develop infrastructure within the country, rather than relying on cheaper imports. As a result, the country made great strides economically.

He also instituted radical reforms in government. Though he did not alter the constitution, he dissolved congress and created an entirely separate legislative branch called the "National Assembly," creating a mix composed of the PC and the PL. For the next six years, his enlightened policies caused the economy to flourish, much to the annoyance of the more radical elements. His successor maintained his policy of political balance in his administration, while slowly restoring the legislature to its natural constitutional state.

It took almost two decades for relations to cool with the United States after the Panama incident, but the discovery of oil helped salve political wounds. Major investments by U.S. companies began to pour huge amounts of wealth into Colombia's already thriving economy. Combined with the revenue from coffee exports, the nation showed great promise. However, this promise had left a large segment of the population behind. As a result, many workers began to unionize.

The harsh response by the PC governments caused public faith in them to slowly falter, bringing an eventual overturn that launched the PL into power. Colombian society had used patronage in one form or another since colonial times, but now that partisanship had reared its ugly head again this system showed its weaknesses. Whenever one party controlled the presidency, they stacked the lower echelons of government with their followers, who in turn bent the laws to lessen the power of the opposing faction.

Now that the Liberals had gained power, they altered the constitution to ensure protection of the unions. They also initiated a number of other reforms, including the elimination of ties to the Catholic Church. Coffee became an important factor in the daily lives of Colombians, influencing not only politics, but the income of the average worker as well. When coffee went up, the economy did well. When coffee went down, the working class suffered the most.

During WWII, Colombia worked closely with the United States against the Axis powers. It deposed German interests

in locally controlled companies, helped to guard the Panama Canal, and formally declared war in 1943. Finally, in 1944 a brief coup nearly caused the government to collapse. This only lasted a few days, but it forced the current president to resign. The new regime kept many of the economic reforms, but eliminated most of the social reforms.

The turbulent election of 1946 saw the election of a PC candidate in a closely contested three way split. One month later, a massive riot began. In the chaos, the president was assassinated. At one point, over 2000 people died, with Bogotá in ruins. This match lit a fire that lasted for almost six decades and that claimed the lives of over 200,000 people. Disconnection by successive governments from the general will of the public caused the social fabric to fray at the ends. *La violencia*, the popular name for this epic, saw the rural areas dissolve into chaos as the government proved unable to enforce its will in a sustained fashion.

Both sides marginalized the other, forcing them from power. With the election of a radical PC president, civil liberties disappeared. Unsatisfied with his gains, the president began to turn on more moderate elements of his own party until eventually they forced him from power.

The seeds of this long conflict sowed the state of perpetual civil war later to come. Though the country enjoyed brief islands of stability, it never again enjoyed total peace for a sustained duration of time. *La violencia* created a siege mentality in the minds of many in the rural areas, convincing them that the government could not function in its current form, and that only through force of arms could they hope to achieve social justice.

Never Ending Conflict

Reaction by the elite against the chaos of the weak governments in the post WWII era took the form of their support for the dictatorship of Rojas Pinilla. For the first time in Colombia's history, all sides of the political spectrum gave at least some support to the dictatorship. As a result it stands out among the other portions of Colombia's history.

After taking power in 1953, Pinilla took immediate steps to restore order. He began by offering a pardon and compensation package to any who would disarm. Initially, this worked quite well, causing an end to the sporadic violence that plagued the country. He took other steps to rectify the situation, including spending large sums of government money on infrastructure through public works. This reduced unemployment and helped stimulate the economy. However, since these pro-



grams did not answer directly to the public, those administering them had little motive to do so effectively, ultimately short-circuiting any gain that they created.

Realizing that he served largely at the whim of those who had appointed him to power in the first place, Pinilla attempted to empower the masses and gain widespread popular support. The peasants, who had seen this sort of thing from the government before, largely ignored it. Civil war started up again after only a year. The dictator responded to this by repealing freedoms and cracking down harshly on anyone who opposed his regime.

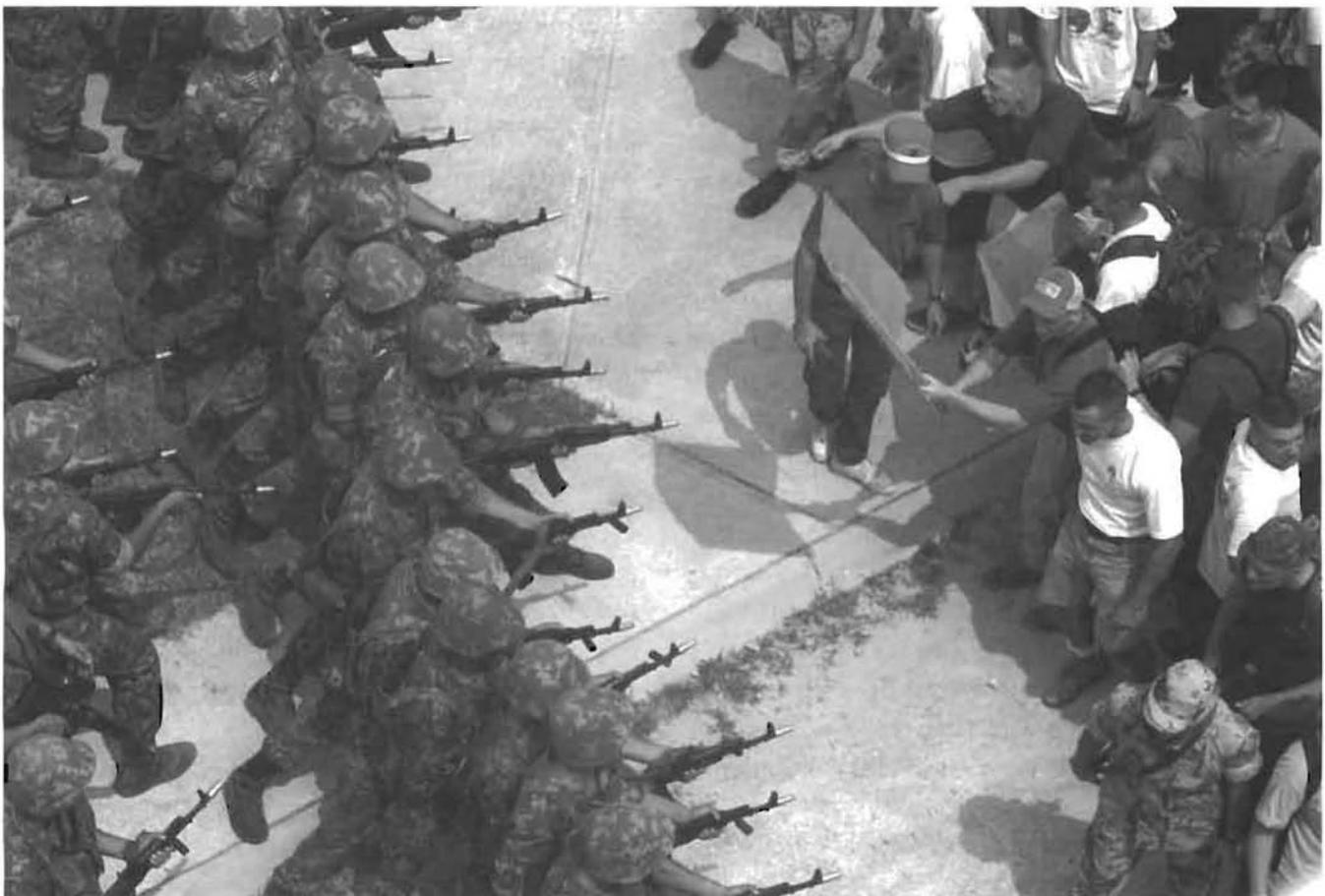
In 1954 he created yet another constitution, in which the legislators “elected” him as president. Meanwhile, a government in exile, also made up of members of the PC and PL, worked together to create a compromise that would allow them to oust Panilla. In 1957, they arranged for yet another coup and forced him to step down from power. They reinstated the constitution of 1886 with heavy amendments. The PC and PL agreed upon a rotating power sharing plan with each taking turns in power.

By this point, many in the peasant class had largely grown disaffected with any side of the political spectrum, believing

that none of them could meet their interests. A loose coalition of smaller rebel bands grew together and formed an alliance with communists in order to form the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). Right away, seeing the threat of communist forces in the western hemisphere, the United States began offering aid in the form of military training to the Colombian government. Early efforts at peace talks ended up with a temporary cease-fire (though the rebels kept their arms). Unfortunately, the government did not take the offer seriously, and incarcerated or executed a significant portion of those who surrendered peacefully.

The union between the PC and the PL largely succeeded in stemming the violence that plagued the countryside. It took time for these gains to appear in a noticeable fashion. Many times a leader gained power because their turn had come up in rotation, rather than the fact that the majority of the populace wanted that particular candidate. As a result, the populace at large slowly lost any belief or confidence in the system that governed them.

Still, at the expense of greater public participation, the government largely succeeded in maintaining the peace. Many viewed this time period as only a transitional state, a tempo-



rary government that could help guide the populace towards an acceptance of a full constitutional process.

In the mid-sixties, when the economy began to falter, Colombia started taking foreign loans to prop up the economy. The populace, largely discontent with what they perceived as total inaction, grew sometimes violent. Kidnapping for ransom slowly started as a method of income for the criminally inclined. The government began to crack down on dissent.

The United States agreed to secure further funds to aid Colombia, but with several strings attached. They did this on the condition that the government shape its economic policy according to views the United States government found more acceptable. The governmental reforms worked, and the situation stabilized for a time.

A series of guerilla movements began to form in the rural areas, including a resurgence of the FARC, along with at least two other organizations, the ELN (made up largely of disgruntled students), and the EPL (Maoist forces friendly to China). These new movements had a new ideological basis that previous party movements had heretofore lacked. The government picked up the pace of the reforms and the economy slowly began to recover.

The election of 1970 showed an end to the period of public patience with the National Front. When presented with a choice between the former dictator Pinilla and the NLF candidate (Misael Pastrana), almost half the people voted against the National Front. Many questioned the validity of the election to the point that public faith in the previous parties receded even further.

New parties began to enter the political process on the local level, though they had little effect for several years. An entirely new guerilla movement, calling itself M-19 (for Movimiento 19 de Abril or "The Movement of April 19th") came into play as what they saw as theft of the national elections that had placed Pastrana in power.

The remnants of the PL and PC continued to rule well into the seventies, though public discontentment continued to rise. A national strike on September 14, 1977 reflected an increasing dissatisfaction with the entire process. The government ignored this in 1978, passing the infamous "Public Safety Statute" that gave the government sweeping powers to stifle any opposition. Disappearances, assassination, and extreme (often notorious) human rights abuses began to occur during this time.

As a result of mass popular dissatisfaction with the gov-

ernment, guerilla forces, along with criminal organizations, moved to fill the political vacuum. Demand for drugs in the United States began to fuel an entire underground economy in Colombia, which in turn fueled the underground governments. This drug money existed beyond taxes, beyond regulation or any power of the government, causing a situation of brutality and chaos in the shadows. The United States began to put increasing pressure on the Colombian government to fight narco-traffickers.

M-19 and other Guerilla organizations grew in strength and daring. Public assassinations of major governmental ministers began to occur on a routine basis, greatly destabilizing the population. M-19 began to forge ties with the other major rebellious organizations in the country at the same time the United States began to increase its enforcement of anti-drug laws.

In the early eighties a peace treaty negotiated by the current president, Belisario Betancur, caused a brief window of peace. At the same time, numerous paramilitaries began to appear, partially funded by wealthy landowners out of fear of the repeated kidnappings, and partially by drug lords who desired to prevent the guerilla movements from usurping their territory. These paramilitaries caused the cease-fire to fall apart.

M-19 became more and more brazen in their attempts to gain international exposure and force conciliatory terms from the government, until they stormed the Supreme Court building in 1985. The government refused to negotiate and hundreds died. The drug lords and the military entered into a quiet alliance to fight the guerillas by proxy. They funneled the vast profits from illegal drug money into funding their operations with better weapons and training. The paramilitaries extended their efforts to take out anyone they deemed socially undesirable (prostitutes, criminals, homosexuals, the homeless, anyone accused of tacitly supporting the guerillas, union members and street children).

The guerilla movements began to consolidate their efforts once again, and this time began to focus on the electoral process rather than military efforts. Despite numerous assassinations, they begin to succeed and take a few locally elected offices. The exception to this, the FARC, engaged in a military campaign against the government and resumed large scale kidnapping.

The paramilitaries became more and more powerful, coupled with the power of the drug lords. This reached a head in 1989 when they assassinated the PL presidential candi-



date. As a result (and at the behest of the United States), the government declared all out war against the drug lords and began to dismantle the cartels bit by bit. The government successfully convinced the head of one of the most powerful cartels, Pablo Escobar, to surrender in 1992, with the promise that he would not face extradition to the US.

Recent History

Two major peace initiatives have since risen and ultimately failed.

The first occurred around 1990, but did not succeed due to extreme violence by the paramilitaries. M-19 continued its efforts to reform the system politically (in large part due to the collapse of the communist system in numerous countries around the world). Large numbers of their politicians fell victim to assassination and ultimately the cohesion of their organization shattered.

With the final collapse of the large-scale cartels, the paramilitaries and the guerilla groups (particularly the FARC) vied for control of the cocoa producing regions as a source of funding. The number of kidnappings gradually increased until it became a major source of funding for the illegal movements. They also extracted bribes from the local oil companies in order to prevent their executives from falling victim.

The second major peace initiative took place under the leadership of Andres Pastrana. For more than three years, intense negotiations took place between the FARC and the government. Both sides accused each other of violating the agreements laid out under the accords. In an unprecedented show of generosity, the government conceded an area the size of Switzerland to the FARC in order to encourage peace. Instead, the FARC used this as a base to stage numerous and increasingly brazen kidnappings. In a fit of one-upmanship, the smaller and less well-known ELN hijacked an airliner, hoping to get a similar deal. The rebels then began to target human rights activities, aid workers and any foreigner that they thought could earn them enough cash to buy more weapons in their conflict from the government. The guerilla movements had officially left the realm of advocates for the oppressed and had now devolved into little more than highly organized bands of thugs hoping to gain as much cash as possible before the inevitable storm.

That storm took place in part in September 1999 when the U.S. congress tasked over one billion dollars in military aid to "Plan Colombia." A year later, the Clinton administration tasked another 1.6 billion. Much of this money got held up in committee due to reservations about ties between the government and paramilitaries.

Advocates for peace, despite numerous kidnapping attempts, desperately attempted to salvage the situation. Several European nations met with the FARC in attempt to educate them about the new nature of modern economies. Some progress emerged when the paramilitaries publicly acknowledged the atrocities that they had committed. They began to work to forward the peace talks.

The FARC began launching raids into various areas surrounding their enclave, killing large numbers of civilians. These acts, combined with many others finally ended the deadlock in congress, funneling large amounts of money to the government to combat the guerilla movements. Many in the U.S. criticized this, stating that they feared the Colombian government had not gone far enough to separate itself from the paramilitaries.

The increased amounts of violence by the guerilla groups ultimately caused the peace talks to collapse. Public opinion in Colombia turned once and for all against them; as a result, the people elected Alvaro Uribe in May 26, 2002. The presidential inauguration took place under incredibly tight security. In an attempt to destabilize the government, the FARC later threatened to attack all mayors and other elected officials unless they resigned. Uribe has since enacted a large series of reforms, including strengthening the military and actively encouraging public participation with the intelligence services. Thus far, he has made strides in distancing the current government from the paramilitaries, though many human rights advocates remain extremely skeptical.

The United States sent 600 Special Forces to help train local government troops to act against the guerillas. Many question the motivations behind this, however, since a significant portion of the training has involved the protection of a major oil pipeline in the northeast corner of the country.



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Chapter 2:

New Advanced Classes

Hasta la victoria siempre. (Ever till the victory.)
— Che Guevara

Combat Journalist

War coverage generates great ratings, and the combat journalist risks life and limb to bring the story back in real time. The combat journalist goes the extra distance to travel with the newsmakers and be on scene when the trouble starts. This class could represent the embedded journalist traveling with a military unit in times of war, a hardened investigative reporter working to expose organized crime, an animal safari television commentator, or a reality television reporter looking for dangerous new film footage. The combat journalist learns to make friends and contacts, to survive without a shower for months, and to duck, get out of the way, and start filming when the action starts.

In order to get his job done; the combat journalist must remain independent and objective. He must gain the trust of those he may not agree with. He uses his access to media to entice others to reveal their story and their message to him. He must cultivate his reputation to gain access to more and more influential figures.

However, journalism today has a dark side as well. News today is a product that media companies sell to their subscribers. The objective truth is not always enough. People want entertainment as well. Some producers create their product primarily for the sales and ratings it generates. Some use their media power as a pulpit to advance their political beliefs. Others believe strongly that the free press has an obligation to balance against the abuses of government. In the end, only a well-informed public can resist manipulations by outside powers.

Requirements

To qualify as a combat journalist, a character must meet the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +2

Skills: Craft (writing) 3 ranks, Knowledge (current events) 3 ranks, Knowledge (popular culture) 3 ranks.

Feats: Dodge.

Class Information

Abilities: The combat journalist needs Dexterity to avoid trouble, Charisma to make the necessary friends and contacts, and Intelligence to write it all down.

Hit Die: 1d8.

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, at each new level.

Class Skills: The combat journalist's class skills and their key abilities are Bluff (Cha), Computer Use (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (writing) (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Drive (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Int), Hide (Dex), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (any) (Int), Listen (Wis), Navigate (Int), Perform (any) (Cha), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Research (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (None), and Survival (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 7 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following are class features of the combat journalist.

Outside Link

A reporter always keeps a connection to his editor, producer or publisher. The character may pick one or two expen-



Table 2-1: The Combat Journalist

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Defense Bonus | Reputation Bonus | Special Features |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|---------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 1st | +0 | +1 | +0 | +1 | +1 | +2 | Outside Link |
| 2nd | +1 | +2 | +0 | +2 | +2 | +2 | Bonus Social Feat |
| 3rd | +1 | +2 | +1 | +2 | +2 | +2 | Access |
| 4th | +2 | +2 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +3 | Bonus Social Feat |
| 5th | +2 | +3 | +1 | +3 | +4 | +3 | Smile for the Camera |
| 6th | +3 | +3 | +2 | +3 | +4 | +3 | Bonus Social Feat |
| 7th | +3 | +4 | +2 | +4 | +5 | +4 | Discern Lies |
| 8th | +4 | +4 | +2 | +4 | +6 | +4 | Bonus Social Feat |
| 9th | +4 | +4 | +3 | +4 | +6 | +4 | Jack of All Trades |
| 10th | +5 | +5 | +3 | +5 | +7 | +5 | Bonus Social Feat |

sive items to facilitate this connection and receives them without making a Wealth Check or reducing her Wealth Bonus. Example items include a satellite phone, a laptop and modem, a nice 35mm or digital camera, a digital audio recorder, or a GPS. The referee should allow items appropriate for the service the combat journalist provides. In addition, the combat journalist may ship information like film, computer data, or audio tape back and forth to his editor, producer or publisher from nearly anywhere in the world without charge. For example, a reporter might mail off a film canister and ask his editor to fax back the prints. His editor picks up the cost.

Bonus Social Feats

A combat journalist receives a bonus social feat at 2nd level and every two levels after that. These feats can be chosen only from the social feat group. (Note: The combat journalist character receives these bonus feats in addition to the feats every class gets every three levels; a combat journalist is not limited to social feats when choosing those feats.)

Access

A combat journalist can get in where most are turned away. A reporter's press pass might get the character back stage at a concert, attached to a military unit heading into battle, into a crowded court room, or even onto the scene of a crime. The referee makes the final decision, but should allow the character access to anywhere a good reporter might go.

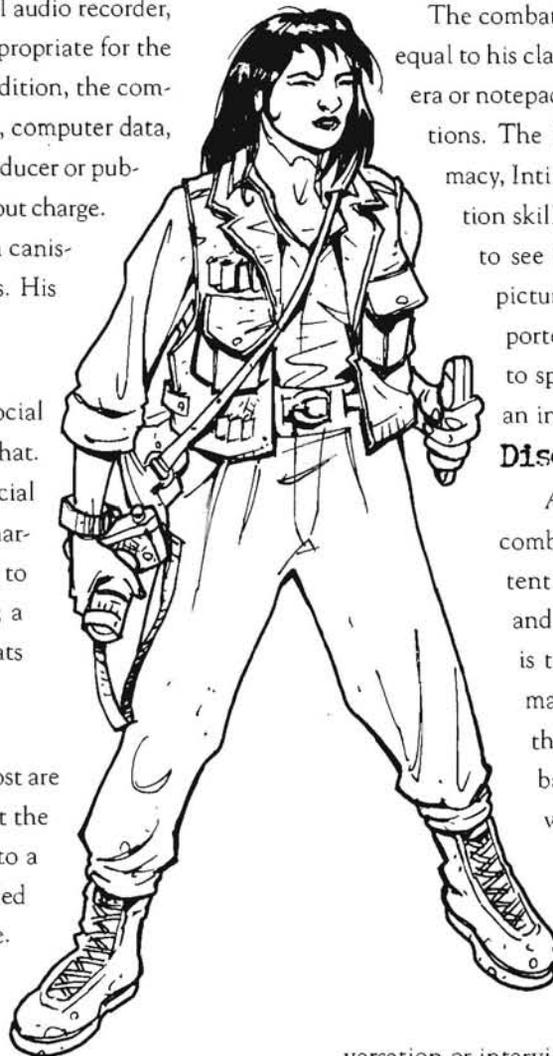
Of course, a press pass does not allow a reporter into a classified meeting or give him access to classified knowledge.

Smile for the Camera

The combat journalist gains a skill bonus equal to his class level when pointing a camera or notepad at someone and asking questions. The bonus could apply to Diplomacy, Intimidation, or Gather Information skill checks. Most everyone likes to see themselves written about or pictured on television, and the reporter uses this desire to get them to spill their innermost secrets in an interview.

Discern Lies

At 7th level, once per day, the combat journalist can focus her attention completely on a subject and immediately determine if he is telling the truth. The subject may make a Will save to negate this ability. Otherwise, the combat journalist's innate interviewing talents allow her to pick up on a variety of body language cues and tell whether the subject speaks truthfully. The effect lasts for the duration of the conversation or interview with the subject.



Jack of All Trades

At 9th level, after watching and reporting on people doing just about everything and anything, the combat journalist can use any skill regardless of whether it normally requires training. If the combat journalist is untrained in a skill requiring training, he makes the check with a -2 penalty. For example, a combat journalist wishes to attempt a repair on her car. Repair is not an untrained skill and the journalist has no skill points in it. However, the repair required is simple and the DC is only 10. The 9th level journalist may attempt the repair, but only with the -2 penalty. She rolls a 9 and adds her Intelligence modifier of +3 together with the -2 penalty to get a 10. The repair is successful! (A little duck tape manages to seal a leaky radiator hose.)

Guerilla Fighter

The idea of guerilla fighting has existed for centuries. However, the Cold War introduced a near plague of guerilla movements around the globe. Guerilla movements seek to overthrow a government using limited resources. The guerilla avoids direct conflict with the national armed forces. She hides in the remote mountains or jungles, strikes without warning, and fades back into the land before the government can respond.

The guerilla operates along a fine line to achieve his goals. He engages in terrorist actions to alert the people and encourage government reprisals. He must incite the population to action without alienating them to his cause. His tactics include strikes on government and civilian infrastructure and military targets. Successful guerilla movements avoid excessive civilian collateral damage, while hoping government reprisals sway the people to their cause.

The successful guerilla fighter must rely on the local population for food and supplies. He must take from the government what he cannot obtain from a sympathetic local population.

Unfortunately, many of the guerilla movements in Colombia have found other, less respectable means of raising money and supplies. They use cocaine sales, hostage taking, and extortion to raise funds.

See *Chapter 4: Rebel Movements* for more background on this class.

Requirements

To qualify as a guerilla fighter, a character must meet the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +2

Skills: Hide 4 ranks, Move Silently 3 ranks, and Survival 6 ranks

Feats: Personal Firearms Proficiency, Advanced Firearms Proficiency.

Game Rule Information

Abilities: The guerilla fighter needs Dexterity and Constitution to survive in combat and against the elements.

Hit Die: d8

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, at each new level.

Class Skills: The guerilla fighter's class skills and their key abilities are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Demolitions (Int), Disable Device (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Handle Animal (Int), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Navigate (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), and Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following are class features of the guerilla fighter.

Handmade Explosives

At 1st level, the guerilla fighter learns to make explosives devices from whatever is at hand. The guerilla fighter may make a Craft (chemical) check to create explosives with a +4 bonus. The guerilla fighter may make this check "untrained" if she has no skill points assigned to Craft (chemical).

Pass without a Trace

At 2nd level, the guerilla fighter leaves minimal evidence of his passing. He learns to step lightly, avoid leaving tell tale signs, and cover his tracks. Anyone using the feat Track against the guerilla fighter must roll a Survival skill check with a -8 penalty.

Evasion

At 4th level, whenever the guerilla fighter must make a saving throw against some area effect to reduce the damage to half, the guerilla fighter takes no damage if she successfully saves.



Cautious

At 5th level, the guerilla fighter gains the Cautious feat as described in the modern core rulebook.

Uncanny Dodge

At 7th level, the guerilla fighter's sense of danger becomes honed for survival. The guerilla fighter always retains his Dexterity bonus to AC when surprised or otherwise caught flat-footed. Additionally, Sneak Attacks no longer have any additional effects on him.

Local Acquisition

At 8th level, the guerilla fighter gains affinity with the local population, and can use them for needed supplies.

What defines the local population is ultimately up to the referee. However, the referee should allow the character to choose one group with residents near his base of operations and with some level of dissatisfaction with the current government. Examples include rural farmers, urban factory workers, or even students at a local university. The group should have reason to dislike the current government. Reasons may be as simple as economic hardship or as devastating as farmers displaced from their land.

By using this ability, the guerilla fighter can acquire whatever supplies the chosen group might easily obtain. Farmers could provide food and other farm related



raw materials like leather, but not radios. Students might provide printing capabilities, radios, or medical supplies, but not large quantities of food. The referee ultimately decides what is available, but the supplies should cover basic needs and simple devices. The guerilla fighter should still make Wealth checks for anything rare or expensive. However, the local group may do the actual purchasing for him.

Local Terrain

At 10th level, the guerilla fighter perfectly adapts to the area of her operations. She learns the terrain by heart, how to survive in it, and where best to hide. As a result, the guerilla fighter gains +2 to all Hide, Navigate, Move Silently, and Survival checks when operating within similar terrain to her normal base of operations. Player should choose one of the following: Arctic, Desert, Mountain, Jungle, Plains or Urban. However, the choice should be compatible with the local group chosen for the Local Acquisition ability listed above. This bonus also applies to saving throws to resist bad weather or deprivation due to the lack of food or water while in the region.

Table 2-2: The Guerilla Fighter

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Defense Bonus | Reputation Bonus | Special Features |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|---------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 1st | +0 | +2 | +0 | +0 | +1 | +1 | Handmade Explosives |
| 2nd | +1 | +3 | +0 | +0 | +2 | +1 | Pass without a Trace |
| 3rd | +2 | +3 | +1 | +1 | +2 | +1 | Bonus Feat |
| 4th | +3 | +4 | +1 | +1 | +3 | +2 | Evasion |
| 5th | +3 | +4 | +1 | +1 | +4 | +2 | Cautious |
| 6th | +4 | +5 | +2 | +2 | +4 | +2 | Bonus Feat |
| 7th | +5 | +5 | +2 | +2 | +5 | +3 | Uncanny Dodge |
| 8th | +6 | +6 | +2 | +2 | +6 | +3 | Local Acquisition |
| 9th | +6 | +6 | +3 | +3 | +6 | +3 | Bonus Feat |
| 10th | +7 | +7 | +3 | +3 | +7 | +4 | Local Terrain |

The Hitman

The drug lords deal their own justice and the hitman enforces their edicts. The hitman (who can be male or female) is skilled, relentless, and without remorse. For a flat rate, a drug lord can contract a hitman to find and kill anyone he thinks deserves it. Some hitman operate solely within a single organization or cartel, but others freelance and may work for multiple cartels or other organizations like the AUC or the U.S. CIA. Of course, the hitman must be reliable and trustworthy to those in the organization. Otherwise, he may find himself the target of a contract.

Hitman learn to kill and torture in various ways. Sometimes they deal a quiet death. Sometimes the victim simply disappears. Other times they convey a message to others in their manner of killing. They may send a body part as a message or viciously beat the victim and leave the corpse in an obvious location so everyone will know what happened and why.

The hitman also knows how to find anyone. Many of their victims are on the lam, hiding from the cartels, the law, and anyone else who might tip off either faction. The hitman must find victims even when the law cannot.



Requirements

To qualify as a hitman, a character must meet the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +2

Skills: Investigate 6 ranks, Knowledge (streetwise) 4 ranks, Listen 6 ranks, Sense Motive 6 ranks.

Feats: Personal Firearms Proficiency, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus.

Game Rule Information

Abilities: The hitman needs Intelligence to develop her skills, Wisdom to discern the motives of others, and Dexterity to make the shot accurately.

Hit Die: d8

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, at each new level.

Class Skills: The hitman's class skills and their key abilities are Bluff (Cha), Demolitions (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Drive (Dex), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gamble (Wis), Gather Information (Int), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (streetwise) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Research (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier.

Table 2-3: The Hitman

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Defensive Reputation Bonus | Bonus | Special Features |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------------------------|-------|------------------------|
| 1st | +0 | +0 | +2 | +0 | +1 | +1 | Contacts |
| 2nd | +1 | +0 | +3 | +0 | +2 | +1 | Improved Critical |
| 3rd | +2 | +1 | +3 | +1 | +2 | +1 | Bonus Feat |
| 4th | +3 | +1 | +4 | +1 | +3 | +2 | Concealed Piece |
| 5th | +3 | +1 | +4 | +1 | +4 | +2 | Police Connection |
| 6th | +4 | +2 | +5 | +2 | +4 | +2 | Bonus Feat |
| 7th | +5 | +2 | +5 | +2 | +5 | +3 | Safe House |
| 8th | +6 | +2 | +6 | +2 | +6 | +3 | Critical Shot |
| 9th | +6 | +3 | +6 | +3 | +6 | +3 | Bonus Feat |
| 10th | +7 | +3 | +7 | +3 | +7 | +4 | Friends in High Places |



Class Features

The following are class features of the hitman.

Contacts

The hitman needs to make friends quickly. By making a successful Diplomacy skill check, he can make an otherwise neutral NPC into a contact. He may only do this once per month (or at the referee's discretion, once per adventure). The referee should set the DC appropriate to the importance of the NPC. Examples include:

| Potential Contact | DC |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Street dealer | 5 |
| Local security chief | 10 |
| Local government official | 15 |
| Hitman in rival organization | 20 |
| Local drug lord or rebel leader | 25 |

The hitman may attempt this ability on anyone he meets who is not unfavorably disposed to the hitman already. However, the hitman may only use the new contact once he has done some sort of favor for her. In other words, in order for the hitman to get a favor, he must give one. In addition, the contact will only return a favor of similar value. For example, the hitman meets the local drug lord and makes a contact. He wants to get his friend (another PC) pardoned from a violent crime. The referee decides the pardon is essentially worth a human life to the lord, and she is unlikely to grant the favor unless the hitman does some important job for him involving a killing. Ultimately the referee has the final decision when using this ability.

Improved Critical

Starting at 2nd level, whenever a hitman uses a firearm with which he has the feat Weapon Focus, he may increase the weapon's critical threat range by one. For example, the Beretta 92F threatens a critical on an unmodified roll of a 20. With Improved Critical, it threatens on a 19 or 20.

Concealed Piece

This ability, gained at 4th level, allows the hitman to automatically hide a tiny or small-sized pistol on his person. The weapon becomes nearly undetectable. If the hitman must pass through a metal detector, submit to a pat down, or some other active search against his person, then the searching character must roll against a DC of 20 plus the Disguise skill of the hitman to find the weapon.

Police Connection

At 5th level and beyond, the hitman arranges for a close

contact in the police force. This contact can use the data resources of the local police to help the hitman locate targets. For example, the connection might run license plate numbers for the hitman or lookup the criminal record of a target.

Safe House

At 7th level and beyond, the hitman acquires a secret safe house somewhere in his home city. The hitman can safely stow a little cash, some weapons, and a few personal items. The items remain safe so long as no one actively searches for that particular safe house. If someone does, they must roll a DC 35 Investigate check to even get a clue to its whereabouts.

Critical Shot

Starting at 8th level, whenever a hitman uses a pistol with which he has the feat Weapon Focus, he does not need to re-roll to confirm a threatened critical hit. Any threatened critical automatically confirms.

Friends in High Places

Since the top-level men in the drug cartels often hire the hitman, he often maintains contact with them and can occasionally call in a favor. With a successful Diplomacy skill check, he can, once per adventure, get something highly unusual from his friends in charge. The referee makes the final decision on the availability and DC involved, but some suggested DC's are:

| Task or favor requested | DC |
|--|----|
| Get a street dealer to gather some information | 20 |
| Use cartel connections to get a friend out of jail | 25 |
| Have a local business busted up | 25 |
| Get a local low-level cartel member killed | 30 |
| Get a friend excused from a death contract | 35 |

Political Zealot

In order for a guerilla movement to succeed, it must convince enough people to join in its cause. Usually the cause involves a radical shift in political thought. In Latin America, many guerilla movements attempted to shift from unrestrained capitalism to Marxist or even Maoist communism. The few countries that succeeded then had to endure guerilla attempts to shift the politics back again.

The political zealot may instigate such movements or may work with such movements to "educate" or indoctrinate the

Table 2-4: The Political Zealot

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Defensive Bonus | Reputation Bonus | Special Features |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1st | +0 | +1 | +0 | +1 | +0 | +2 | Detect Dissident |
| 2nd | +1 | +2 | +0 | +2 | +1 | +2 | Fund Raising |
| 3rd | +1 | +2 | +1 | +2 | +1 | +2 | Bonus Social Feat |
| 4th | +2 | +2 | +1 | +2 | +1 | +3 | Fiery Speech +1 |
| 5th | +2 | +3 | +1 | +3 | +2 | +3 | Bonus Social Feat |
| 6th | +3 | +3 | +2 | +3 | +2 | +3 | Watchful Eyes |
| 7th | +3 | +4 | +2 | +4 | +2 | +4 | Bonus Social Feat |
| 8th | +4 | +4 | +2 | +4 | +3 | +4 | Fiery Speech +2 |
| 9th | +4 | +4 | +3 | +4 | +3 | +4 | Bonus Social Feat |
| 10th | +5 | +5 | +3 | +5 | +3 | +5 | Conversion |

local population in the “correct” political thought. Some political zealots believe their message has a power of its own. Some feel the need to force their message on anyone who resists — often using barbaric methods. The political zealot often takes the position of a political officer in a military or guerilla unit. He educates his comrades and looks out for anyone who might betray the unit. On a more common level, the political zealot is the one reminding everyone to say “visually impaired” instead of “blind.”

Requirements

To qualify as a political zealot, a character must meet the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +1

Skills: Diplomacy 6 ranks, Sense Motive 3 ranks.

Feats: Trustworthy.

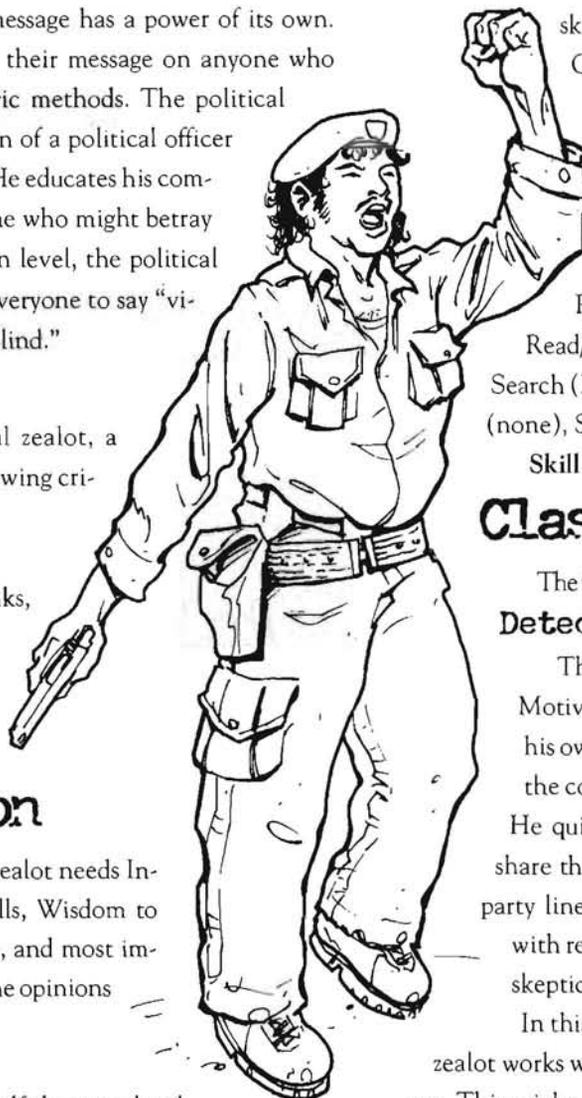
Game Rule

Information

Abilities: The political zealot needs Intelligence to develop his skills, Wisdom to discern the motives of others, and most importantly, Charisma to sway the opinions of others in their favor.

Hit Die: d6

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, at each new level.



Class Skills: The political zealot’s class skills and their key abilities are Bluff (Cha), Computer Use (Int), Craft (writing) (Int), Demolitions (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Drive (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Int), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (any) (Int), Listen (Wis), Navigate (Int), Perform, Act (Cha), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Research (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 7 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following are class features of the political zealot.

Detect Dissident

The political zealot receives a +4 to Sense Motive and Spot checks aimed at members of his own group. The zealot concerns himself with the correct thinking of everyone he works with. He quickly recognizes when someone does not share the same core beliefs or seems to parrot the party line too quickly. Therefore, he remains alert with respect to those persons and keeps a healthy skepticism about their statements.

In this case, the term “group” means anyone the zealot works with and sees at least once a week, on average. This might mean anyone in the zealot’s guerilla camp or anyone working on the same floor of a factory.



Fund Raising

At 2nd level, the political zealot establishes a fund raising network that gives him +3 to her Wealth bonus and +1 to Profession checks. This ability is identical to the Windfall feat in the modern core rules.

Bonus Social Feats

A political zealot receives a bonus social feat at 3rd level and every two levels after that. These feats can be chosen only from the social feat group. (Note: The political zealot character receives these bonus feats in addition to the feats every class gets every three levels; a political zealot is not limited to social feats when choosing those feats.)

Fiery Speech

At 4th level, the political zealot can inspire confidence in others. Once per day, the zealot can deliver a one-minute speech that adds a +1 bonus to any skill or combat roll to all those who listen for the next hour.

The political nature of the speech means it would not affect anyone with a strongly differing political point of view.

At 8th level, the zealot adds a +2 bonus and may deliver the speech twice per day. He may not affect any one person by more than +2, however.

Watchful Eyes

At 6th level, the political zealot creates a tight web of informants among all those she has dealings with. These informants look out for spies, dissidents, and even the occasional betrayal. Whenever anything suspicious happens within sight or knowledge of someone working with or dealing with the political zealot, she has a chance to find out about the event. The political zealot must succeed in an opposed skill check against whomever led the suspicious activity. The political zealot always uses her Diplomacy skill. However, the interloper might use Bluff, Hide, Sleight of Hand, Computer Use, or any other appropriate skill to hide his activities. The referee should only reveal the nature of the roll to the zealot if his check succeeds. The referee should not inform the interloper of the nature of the roll.

Conversion

This ability, gained at 10th level, allows the political zealot to use his ideology to convert others to his way of thinking. It basically acts as a +8 to Diplomacy checks whenever the character can work politics into the argument. Since the political zealot generally has a high Diplomacy skill rating and Charisma ability modifier, this ability means the 45 DC for swaying a *hostile* attitude towards *helpful* is within reach. While

this ability is unlikely to help get a character past a bouncer, it may well help him befriend a prison guard.

This ability has no effect on player characters.

Treasure Hunter

This class represents the extraordinary entrepreneur, a person willing to risk everything on the small chance of finding a rare treasure. She might hope to find a sunken Spanish galleon, a lost Mayan temple, new evidence of an Atlantean civilization, or some strange new specie of plant that holds the cure to cancer. The treasure hunter travels to wild and remote locations around the world. She interviews locals for lost knowledge and clues, and even when she fails to find the elusive treasure, she may still create a bridge between ancient folk traditions and the modern world. She knows how to separate truth from legend and sees through the forged relics and fraudulent tales spun for the tourists.

The treasure hunter learns to survive in dangerous environments. She learns to befriend local natives, brigands, revolutionaries, and government officials. She acquires the skills to live off the land, to travel where no roads lead, and to avoid natural dangers around her. Most treasure hunters have a deep respect for the history and ecological importance of the areas to which they travel, though a few seek only profit.

Requirements

To qualify as a treasure hunter, a character must meet the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +2.

Skills: Knowledge (history) 2 ranks, Navigate 2 ranks, Speak Language (at least two additional languages).

Feats: Studious.

Game Rule

Information

Abilities: The treasure hunter needs Dexterity to avoid traps and bullets, and Charisma to make the necessary friends and contacts.

Hit Die: d8.

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, at each new level.

Class Skills: The treasure hunter's class skills and their key abilities are Bluff (Cha), Computer Use (Int), Craft (writing) (Int), Demolitions (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Drive (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Int), Hide (Dex), Investigate (Int), Knowl-

Table 2-5: The Treasure Hunter

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Defensive Reputation Bonus | Bonus | Special Features |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------------------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1st | +0 | +1 | +1 | +0 | +1 | +2 | Native Lore |
| 2nd | +1 | +2 | +2 | +0 | +2 | +2 | Bonus Social Feat |
| 3rd | +1 | +2 | +2 | +1 | +2 | +2 | Bonus Feat |
| 4th | +2 | +2 | +2 | +1 | +3 | +3 | Action Boost |
| 5th | +2 | +3 | +3 | +1 | +4 | +3 | Bonus Social Feat |
| 6th | +3 | +3 | +3 | +2 | +4 | +3 | Bonus Feat |
| 7th | +3 | +4 | +4 | +2 | +5 | +4 | Improved Evasion |
| 8th | +4 | +4 | +4 | +2 | +6 | +4 | Bonus Social Feat |
| 9th | +4 | +4 | +4 | +3 | +6 | +4 | Bonus Feat |
| 10th | +5 | +5 | +5 | +3 | +7 | +5 | Cliffhanger |

edge (any) (Int), Listen (Wis), Navigate (Int), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Research (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 7 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following are class features of the treasure hunter.

Native Lore

A treasure hunter needs the ability to sort fact from fiction and learns quickly to recognize the local con man selling fake relics, the actor who spices up historical performances with made up legends, and the tour guides who embellish the real legends simply to attract more guests. In these and similar cases, the treasure hunter receives a +6 bonus to Sense Motive checks when evaluating a story, local legend or artifact for authenticity.

Bonus Social Feats

A treasure hunter receives a bonus social feat at 2nd level and every three levels after that. These feats can be chosen only from the social feat group. (Note: The treasure hunter character receives these bonus feats in addition to the feats every class

gets every three levels; a treasure hunter is not limited to social feats when choosing those feats.)

Bonus Feats

A treasure hunter receives a bonus feat at 3rd level and every three levels after that. He must select this feat from the following list:

Any Social Feat, Acrobatic, Aircraft Operation, Animal Affinity, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Athletic, Attentive, Educated, Guide, Herbal Healing, Improved Initiative, Nimble, Quick Draw, Quick Reload, Renown, Run, Track.

Action Boost

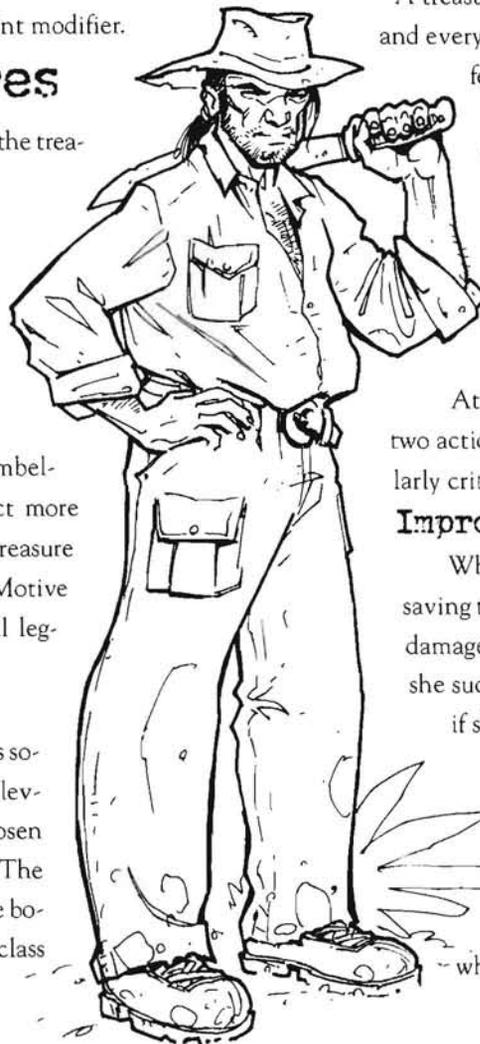
At 4th level, the treasure hunter may spend two action points in a round to influence a particularly critical event.

Improved Evasion

Whenever the treasure hunter must make a saving throw against some area effect to reduce the damage to half, the smuggler takes no damage if she successfully saves and takes only half damage if she fails the save.

Cliffhanger

The business of the treasure hunter leads them into dangerous and often deadly circumstances. The Cliff Hanger ability allows her some hope of escape when all other means have failed. The char-



Chapter 3:

New Feats and Equipment

Table 3—1: Feats

| General Feats | Prerequisites |
|---------------------------|--|
| Herbal Healing | Knowledge (earth and life sciences) 4 ranks |
| Social Feats | Prerequisites |
| Empathic | Cha 15+ |
| Harmless | Disguise 4 ranks |
| Military Contact* | — |
| Native Guide* | — |
| Politically Correct Speak | — |
| Propaganda | Bluff 4 ranks |
| Remorseless | Intimidate 4 ranks |
| Techno-babble | Knowledge skill related to topic 6 ranks or Computer Use 6 ranks |
| Tribe Member* | — |

* This feat can be gained multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each additional feat is applied to a new topic.

New Feats

We designed the feats detailed here especially for the new character classes introduced in the previous chapter and for the Colombia setting. However, they could have general use in any setting. We tend to focus on what we call “social feats” because these encourage players to roleplay more and fight small miniature battles less; characters like the combat journalist need these kind of social abilities to make up for their lack of combat ability.

Our *Somalia: d20* book contains additional general and social feats useful in this setting as well.

Social Feats

Social feats are much like normal feats except that their effects tend to be limited to either particular situations or to roleplaying effects. Also, some character classes receive social feats more often than normal feats. A character is free to choose a social feat in place of a normal feat, but not *vice versa*.

Social feats represent special abilities or social connections you acquired during your upbringing, training and/or early career. Unless stated otherwise in a social feat description, bonuses from different feats do stack.

Your referee may allow players to take as social feats any of the feats in the core modern d20 rules that just give skill bonuses. For example, they could select feats like Nimble or Meticulous but not Dodge or Endurance. This is at the discretion of the referee and is not necessary except to broaden the scope of the characters.

Empathic (Social)

You have the ability to discern the desires and needs of others.

Prerequisites: Cha 15+.

Benefits: You are abnormally sensitive to the plight of others. People often have no problem telling you what they need, but sometimes they have reason to hide things. For example, someone in an oppressed region may not willingly admit that someone coerced him to avoid the player characters even though he desperately wants their help. Similarly, a woman finding the perfect car at a local dealership is unlikely to admit that to the salesperson.



By making a successful Sense Motive skill check at DC 15, you can quickly determine the basic desires, wants, and problems of any group you may encounter. The referee may increase the DC based on the situation at her discretion, but should generally keep the DC at or below 25.

Harmless (Social)

Your appearance dispels fear and puts others at ease.

Prerequisites: Disguise 4 ranks.

Benefits: Your appearance lulls your enemies into a (possibly false) sense of security. If you are not carrying a weapon, or have successfully concealed the weapon, you gain a +4 bonus to Bluff and Diplomacy rolls relating to your threat level to your target. (See Concealed Weapons in the modern core rules.)

This bonus applies only in specific circumstances where the main resistance to the character comes from the level of threat others perceive in him. For example, a reporter trying to interview an outlaw or a hostage negotiator trying to meet a kidnapper both want to appear harmless. Alternatively, a bounty hunter disguised as a reporter trying to interview an outlaw needs the same benefit for entirely different reasons..

In addition, during combat, the referee should avoid targeting the harmless character while she remains visibly unarmed. Generally, anyone deciding to injure a harmless character will do so in a more formal setting, like the torture chamber or the firing squad. The referee might target a harmless character running away with valuables or even valuable information, but even then the intention should be to stop the character and not to kill him.

If someone spots a weapon of any kind on the character, he loses the bonus.

Herbal Healing (General)

Your extensive knowledge and understanding of herbal remedies allow you to substitute local plant life for a first aid kit or a medical kit.

Prerequisites: Knowledge (earth and life sciences) 4 ranks.

Benefits: You may use the local flora in place of a first aid kit or medical kit. However, the character must first locate the correct plants in the immediate vicinity. This becomes harder the more developed the area is. The character must take a full-round action and make a successful Knowledge (earth and life sciences) check to find the correct plants. These collected plants only work for specific ailments, and then only for that day.

| Location | DC |
|------------|----|
| Wilderness | 15 |
| Rural | 20 |
| Suburb | 25 |
| Urban | 30 |

A character with this ability may prepare a general assortment of dried herbs ahead of time. However, the resulting kit would be no different in game terms from a normal medical kit. Alternately, he could prepare for a specific ailment like "gunshot wound." Each preparation of this type weighs half a pound.

Normal: Characters without this feat suffer a -4 penalty to certain Treat Injury checks and may not attempt to stabilize a dying character without a medical kit.

Local Guide (Social)

You have a devoted friend and business associate available for hire whenever you enter his region of the world.

Benefits: The guide may be a local Indian who knows the jungle, a taxi driver in the big city who knows how to get around and where to find things, or even a local businessman who can buy, sell, import, or export anything the characters need. The referee should allow the character to choose the local guide's background and location, so long as it is reasonable.

Your guide starts as a 1st-level character trained however best suits you. He goes up one level for every two levels you rise. This happens regardless of whether he is in your hire at the time or not. He has whatever equipment he needs for his work, which may include vehicles or weapons. However, the player must buy anything unusual for him, even though the player may need the guide to find such items.

The local guide still requires pay for his services. The referee should determine the Purchase DC based on what those services are. However, unlike regular hired help acquired during the game, the guide is fiercely loyal. He is always available to work for the character, will never betray the character, and will even work without pay for a limited time.

A character may take this feat more than once to have guides in more than one location.

Military Contact (Social)

You have a close friend in the military who keeps you informed on the status of hot spots around the world.

Benefits: You may call on your military contact to learn the status of hot spots around the world. Your contact may provide additional information if his country has actually de-



ployed armed forces in the location involved. Information includes details on any recent battles, any recently captured enemy, any known dangerous locations or minefields, and known deployments of enemy forces. With a Diplomacy check at DC 15 (or higher, at the referee's discretion), the contact might provide classified information about friendly force deployments, future operations or secret prisoners. However, if for whatever reason the contact suspects the character may have passed on this information to anyone else, the DC for future classified information increases by 10.

A character may take this feat more than once to have contacts in more than one country.

| Sample Information Type | DC |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Location of friendly unit | 15 |
| Satellite photos | 20 |
| Profile on enemy agents | 20 |
| Location of a covert military unit | 25 |
| Future operational plans | 25 |
| Location of intelligence contact | 30 |
| Future covert operational plans | 35 |

Politically Correct Speak (Social)

You have an annoying ability to always know the politically correct way to say things.

Benefits: While this ability may make the character seem slightly more sensitive to those less fortunate, its main game advantage lies in discrediting the statements of others. When attempting to sway the opinion of another, the character may use this ability to discredit the statements of anyone arguing against her. By making a successful Intimidate skill check at DC 20, the character gains a +4 to any further Diplomacy or Bluff attempts in support of her opinions for the rest of the day.

Referee should note that few people are immune to this tactic. The character may affect anyone who has at least some basic set of values. For example, a mobster is unlikely to care whether someone else treats the handicapped poorly. However, if the character could question another's loyalty to an immediate family member, then she may still gain the same bonus.

For example, a player character wants to convince the local rebel leader to allow her to interview a hostage. The soldiers holding the hostage do not want to allow the interview because they fear the hostage may get a message out indicating his whereabouts. The character decides to use her Politically Correct Speak ability and claims the soldiers have lost the focus of the movement. She further suggests the

struggle needs to get out the message and bring others to the cause. She succeeds in an Intimidate check and fortunately, since the leader is not just out for the money, she gains the +4 bonus to her final Diplomacy check to gain access for her interview.

Propaganda (Social)

You easily bend the truth to fit your version of reality and can more easily bluff people.

Prerequisites: Bluff 4 ranks.

Benefits: When your character needs to lie or bend a subjective point of view to his will, the Propaganda feat provides a +4 bonus to Diplomacy or Bluff checks. Generally, the referee should limit this ability to political situations.

For example, this ability is no help in convincing a guard to let you pass a checkpoint. However, it might help convince a communist rebel leader that one of his lieutenants is a spy. The character might weave a story about one of the lieutenant's recent exploits and change a few critical points so that the lieutenant seems to be working for the other side. "Ah yes, I remember when Lt. Juan blew up the oil pipeline. Wasn't that the day after the big stink about the American oil company trying to get a bigger percentage of the profits? They said they'd stop repairing the pipe if they didn't get their way and then no one would make any money. Yes, and, after Lt. Juan's attack, the government did give in. I wonder...."

Remorseless (Social)

You have a fearful reputation for remorselessness.

Prerequisites: Intimidate 4 ranks.

Benefits: Your reputation precedes you in most encounters and gains you a +4 to all Intimidate skill checks.

At lower levels, the character's reputation likely includes an association with some group with a much higher visibility than the character himself possesses. For example, Joe Dunn, riding a Harley Davidson motorcycle, may look a little unkempt, but only those who know him really know what kind of person he is. However, just about everyone knows what his Hell's Angels jacket represents. A character might choose a club for this affiliation or a specific military unit, if appropriate. Alternatively, she might just choose to show some visible idolization of a popular brutal figure or group, like a tattoo of Joseph Stalin or a Nazi swastika on an armband.

This bonus does not work all the time, however. If the target has never heard of the character or her affiliation, if the target is a member of the same club, or if the target might have little reason to fear the character or her affiliation, then



the referee may ignore the bonus. When in doubt, referee may use a Reputation check with a +10 modifier to see if a target recognizes the character or her affiliation.

Techno-babble (Social)

You know just enough in certain areas to impress others with your knowledge.

Prerequisites: Knowledge skill related to topic 6 ranks or Computer Use 6 ranks.

Benefits: Your use of industry jargon, acronyms, and abbreviations is completely unintelligible to the rest of the world, but sounds impressive and inspires confidence.

By making a successful opposed skill check in a specific area of knowledge, you can convince others of your competence in that area or enhance a bluff attempt relating to that knowledge or a device based on that knowledge. In these circumstances, you gain a +6 bonus to any Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, or Forgery skill check.

For example, you might convince a guard that your Geiger counter showed dangerous levels of radiation [Knowledge (physical sciences)]. You might convince a business to hire you to “optimize” their computer network [Computer Use or

Knowledge (technology)]. You might also use this to convince a lab worker that your forged passkey just has some technical problem and that they should let you in [Computer Use]

Tribe Member (Social)

You have a blood link to or are an honorary membership of a Native Indian tribe.

Benefits: The link might be through a distant grandparent, or you may have honorary status because of some favor or extended time spent living with the tribe. The result is that other members of the tribe treat you with a great deal more respect. When making Diplomacy checks with other tribe members, the referee should generally treat them as friendly or helpful to start with.

Of course, there might still be individual exceptions within the tribe. For example, the character worked as volunteer at the health clinic near the tribe. The village chief honored her with tribal membership as a reward for her hard work and dedication. As a result, most members of the tribe do treat her very well. However, the local medicine man still harbors a jealous attitude towards the character.

A character may take this feat more than once to gain

membership in more than one tribe. However, the referee should not allow simultaneous membership in two feuding tribes.

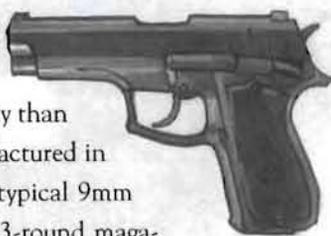
New Equipment

The **d20 Modern** core rulebook details many of the more common weapons in use today. HDI's **Somalia: d20** book contains more arms and concentrates on military weapons used by the elite forces of the world. The weapons detailed here are therefore a bit on the eclectic side. We selected these for their unique features or their possible availability to rebel and terrorist groups around the world.

Pistols

Daewoo DP51

This affordable pistol is actually of a much higher quality than its price might indicate. Manufactured in Korea starting in 1993, it is a typical 9mm semi-automatic pistol with a 13-round magazine. Civilian versions are more common outside of Korea, and these will have 10-round magazines, until the U.S. assault weapon ban expires.



Heckler & Koch P7M8



The Heckler & Koch (H&K) P7M8 debuted in 1981 in response to German police units looking for a very safe weapon. Just why this unique weapon excels in this area requires a lengthy explanation:

Most handguns require a "double action" trigger pull on the first shot. Double action means pulling the trigger both cocks the weapon and fires it. Revolvers normally fire this way unless the shooter manually thumb cocks it before firing. Semi-automatic pistols cock the weapon as part of the slide action that loads the next round from the magazine, so on subsequent shots they fire "single action." Single action means the trigger pull only fires the weapon. Generally speaking, a single action shot is more accurate. The hard pull required to cock the gun in a double action shot is difficult to do while keeping the gun steady. However, to get a single action shot from a pistol on the first shot, the shooter must carry the gun

cocked and ready or have time to cock the weapon before shooting.

This results in three general styles of carry. The safest technique with regard to accidental firing is to leave the chamber empty and pull the slide back as part of drawing the weapon. Pulling the slide back both cocks the weapon and chambers the first round. However, it has two drawbacks. First, it takes precious time to do this, which you may not have in an emergency situation. Second, there is one less bullet in the gun. The most common technique is to carry the pistol with a round chambered, but decocked and with the safety on. It is easy to flick the safety off as you draw, so the double action trigger pull on the first shot is the only drawback. On the other hand, some people prefer to buy a quality gun and keep it cocked and ready. For many guns, this means leaving the safety off as well. Unfortunately, not all weapons are safe to carry cocked and ready, and even fewer people like to carry them in this manner; the chance of an accidental firing is too high.

The P7 provides the best carry solution by integrating a cocking lever into the handgrip. The owner carries the weapon decocked. As the owner draws the P7, she squeezes the handgrip and cocks the weapon. She can then fire single action. In addition, when she holsters the weapon, she releases the handgrip lever and decocks the gun. Since the gun cannot fire without the handgrip properly depressed, there is no need for a safety lever.

The gun carries an eight-round magazine of 9mm Parabellum ammunition.

Rules: The H&K P7 qualifies as a mastercraft weapon and receives the +1 bonus to attack rolls.

PSM

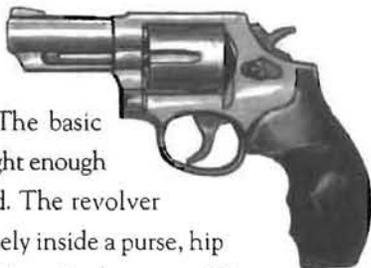
The Soviets developed this small pistol sometime prior to 1980 apparently for security forces and pilots to carry. It uses the soviet 5.45mm pistol round and has little stopping power. However, it is easy to conceal and this makes it a popular black market pistol around the world. The PSM magazine holds eight rounds.





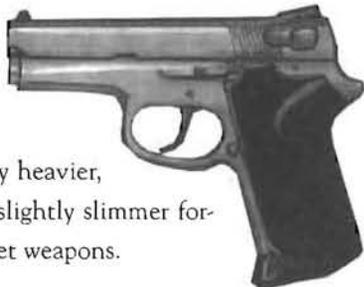
Smith & Wesson "LadySmith" .38 Special Revolver

Smith & Wesson makes various models of this basic idea, including the 36LS and the 642LS. The basic idea is a revolver small and light enough for a lady to carry concealed. The revolver holds five rounds and fits nicely inside a purse, hip bag, ankle holster, or tucked inside the pants. The short 1 7/8-inch barrel allows it to hide where many other pistols could not.



Smith & Wesson "LadySmith" 9mm Semi-Automatic

The Model 3913 LadySmith is basically a semi-automatic version of the LadySmith revolver described above. It is slightly heavier, but holds eight rounds in a slightly slimmer format. Both make solid, discreet weapons.



Longarms AK-101



This is the basic AK-47 (or more correctly, the AK-74M) design updated and adapted to the NATO 5.56mm round. Designed by the IZHMAH Russian State Arms company in order to expand their international markets, the AK-101 is just one of a series of new rifles available in various configurations to fit various markets around the world. Like the AK-74, it fires single or full automatic and uses a 30 round magazine. (See *Somalia: d20* for a description of the AK-74.)

AN-94 (Abakan)



Apparently the Russians developed this new assault rifle for their army. However, it does not seem to be in wide use yet. First reports of it in the West came in May 1993. The weapon draws from the AK-47, AK-74 lineage of Soviet weapons. However, this weapon has a rather unique burst fire mode in which it fires two rounds at a cyclic rate of 1800 rounds per minute, the idea being that the second shot fires before the recoil of the first round can affect the aim. It can also fire full auto, where it fires the first two rounds at the 1800 rounds per minute rate and then slows to a more standard 600 rounds per minute afterward. (Modern weapons usually have intentionally slower cyclic rates of around 500-600 rounds per minute to control ammunition expenditure.) The weapon can also fire single fire and uses a 30-round magazine.

Rumors place a number of these weapons in the hands of the Irish Republican Army.

Rules: The AN-94 qualifies as a mastercraft weapon and receives the +1 bonus to attack rolls. In addition, the unique two-round burst mode allows players to use the Double-Tap feat without the -2 attack modifier.

Calico Submachine Gun M-960A



The high capacity helical feed magazine makes the Calico unique. It fires the standard 9mm Parabellum of many submachine guns, but holds 50 or even 100 rounds in one magazine. It has a folding stock and an extra front pistol grip. It fires single or automatic.

Saiga-12



The IZHMAH Russian State Arms company began production of this semi-automatic shotgun in the early 1990s. It is basically nothing more than an AK-47 adapted for 12-gauge shotgun shells. It fires semi-auto only and is available to civil-

ians as well as law enforcement for a very low price. It comes in short barrel versions and with an optional folding stock. Magazines come in two-, five-, and eight-shot variants. (Sportsmen need the two-shot magazines to comply with hunting regulations.) The magazine's design accommodates a small variety of 12-gauge ammunition.

Heavy Weapons

PKM



This Russian weapon came into production in the early '60s as the PK. The "modernized" PKM version shed two pounds and came out in 1969. It is another great Kalashnikov design. The Russians exported this basic 7.62mm machine gun all over the world. In addition, as with many of the Kalashnikov family of weapons, China and many of the Warsaw Pact countries manufactured their own versions. In basic operation, it is basically the same as the equivalent United States' M60 machine gun. It fires belted 7.62 x 54R rounds.

Optional Rules for Added Realism

Many players may find that the following rules add a little more realism to their games. The referee and players should agree whether or not to use these before playing.

Optional Armor Rule

Modern firearms made medieval armor completely obsolete. We recommend ignoring armor bonuses from archaic or impromptu armor when resolving attacks from any modern firearm with ballistic ammunition.

Optional Modern Armor Rule

In addition, even small caliber rifle rounds easily penetrate most modern personal armor. We recommend ignoring all equipment armor bonuses except those from heavy tactical armor against small caliber rifles and ignoring all equip-

ment armor bonuses for machineguns or rifles of at least .30 caliber (or 7.62mm).

Optional Armor-Piercing Ammo Rule

For most weapons which might normally have trouble penetrating personal armor, manufacturers stock specialty ammo made of a tungsten or steel core that easily penetrates any wearable personal armor.

In an unusually Orwellian move, the media labeled these "cop killer bullets," but in fact, manufacturers only sell them direct to the police or military. Manufacturers designed them for police who needed the ability to penetrate car doors and other light obstacles. No policeman has ever been killed by one. For the average civilian, most hunting rifles work just as well against an ordinary bulletproof vest. (See the above Optional Modern Armor Rule.) Ironically, it might have been more accurate to call them "killer cop bullets!"

The term "Teflon bullet" came from the practice of coating these rounds with Teflon to protect the gun barrel from the abrasiveness of the hard projectile. The Teflon does not significantly aid in target penetration.

In game, these rounds ignore all equipment armor bonuses. However, they tend to pass right through a victim without significant expansion and, on average, do less damage. When using armor-piercing ammunition, drop the damage dice down one category. Damage of d12 drops to d10, d10 drops to d8, d8 drops to d6, and d6 drops to d4. No specialty ammo exists for weapons using only a d4 for damage. For example, the Beretta 92F (or 92FS) does 2d6 damage normally. With armor-piercing rounds loaded, it would do 2d4 damage.

Delta Force reportedly used ammunition like this in Somalia. However, since few Somalis wore armor, the new ammunition gave a poor showing. Force members complained about enemy combatants taking hits and not even noticing!

Additional Notes on Firearm Penetration and Optional Cover Rules

Police and Military routinely test firearm ammunition versus a variety of typical obstacles like plywood, wallboard,



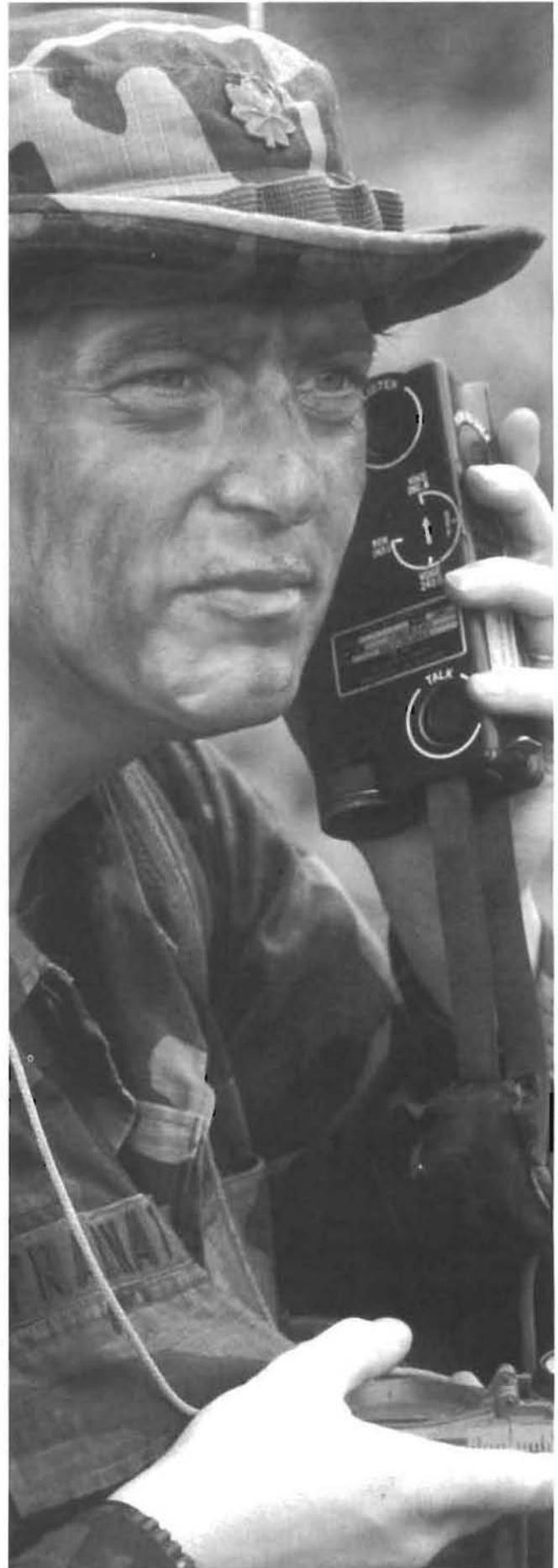
automobile steel, windshields, and fabrics. Tests measure how much flesh-like gelatin a bullet penetrates after passing through these various obstacles. They also measure the bullet's expansion and weight loss. The results indicate that none of these obstacles have much chance of saving a life and most barely slow a bullet down at all. Of course, results depend on the specific round in question, but generally automobile glass is by far the most effective of these — probably because of its energy dispersing design. In other words, hiding behind a wall provides less cover than the windshield of your car.

Most residential and commercial walls consist of two sheets of wallboard over a sparse wood or steel frame. Most interior doors are little more than two very thin sheets of plywood separated by a little cardboard. Neither of these have much chance of stopping a bullet. Even an exterior wall with wood or vinyl siding has little stopping power. In a game, hiding behind an interior wall may provide concealment, but does not realistically provide any cover. The referee should make the final decision, but should only provide concealment if the shooter could not easily guess the position of the target's body.

For example, if someone shoots from behind an interior door or wall, they have their head, shoulder and arms visible. Anyone shooting back could reasonably guess where the rest of the body was and should not have any cover or concealment penalties on his shot. However, if the person ducked completely behind the wall and moved away from the corner, then a shooter on the other side of the wall would have to guess at the target's location and should have a 50% concealment miss chance.

The referee should make similar determinations on various furniture and fixture items the characters may hide behind in a firefight. It is unlikely that much of anything inside a typical home has any significant stopping power. Even a modern mattress is just a hollow core of springs covered by a thin layer of padding.

On the other hand, remember that it may make a more enjoyable game if you ignore these notes and encourage your players to maneuver around during combat to take advantage of whatever cover they can.



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Table 3—2: Weapons**Handguns (requires the Personal Firearms Proficiency feat)**

| Weapon | Damage | Critical | Damage Type | Range Increment | Rate of Fire | Magazine | Size | Weight | Purchase | |
|--|--------|----------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|----------|-------|--------|----------|-------------|
| | | | | | | | | | DC | Restriction |
| Daewoo DP51 (9mm autoloader) | 2d6 | 20 | Ballistic | 30 ft. | S | 13 box | Small | 2 lb. | 13 | Lic (+1) |
| Heckler & Koch P7M8 (9mm autoloader) | 2d6 | 20 | Ballistic | 30 ft. | S | 8 box | Small | 2 lb. | 17 | Lic (+1) |
| PSM (.45mm autoloader) | 2d4 | 20 | Ballistic | 30 ft. | S | 8 box | Tiny | 1 lb. | 15 | Lic (+1) |
| Smith & Wesson LadySmith (.38 special revolver) | 2d6 | 20 | Ballistic | 20 ft. | S | 5 cyl. | Small | 1 lb. | 15 | Lic (+1) |
| (9mm autoloader) | 2d6 | 20 | Ballistic | 20 ft. | S | 8 box | Tiny | 2 lb. | 16 | Lic (+1) |

Longarms (requires the Personal Firearms Proficiency feat)

| Weapon | Damage | Critical | Damage Type | Range Increment | Rate of Fire | Magazine | Size | Weight | Purchase | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|----------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|----------|-------|--------|----------|-------------|
| | | | | | | | | | DC | Restriction |
| AK-101 (5.56mm assault rifle) | 2d8 | 20 | Ballistic | 70 ft. | S, A | 30 box | Large | 8 lb. | 16 | Res (+2) |
| AN-94 (5.45mm assault rifle) | 2d8 | 20 | Ballistic | 80 ft. | S, A | 30 box | Large | 8 lb. | 20 | Res (+2) |
| Calico M-960A (9mm submachine gun) | 2d6 | 20 | Ballistic | 40 ft. | S, A | 100 box | Med | 4 lb. | 17 | Res (+2) |
| Saiga-12 (12-gauge shotgun) | 2d8 | 20 | Ballistic | 20 ft. | S | 8 box | Large | 8 lb. | 13 | Lic (+1) |

Heavy Weapons (each requires a specific Exotic Firearms Proficiency feat)

| Weapon | Damage | Critical | Damage Type | Range Increment | Rate of Fire | Magazine | Size | Weight | Purchase | |
|--------------------------|--------|----------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|----------|------|--------|----------|-------------|
| | | | | | | | | | DC | Restriction |
| PKM (medium machine gun) | 2d8 | 20 | Ballistic | 100 ft. | A | Linked | Huge | 18 lb. | 18 | Mil (+3) |

Websites with Additional Information

Weapons<http://world.guns.ru><http://club.guns.ru/eng/><http://www.fas.org><http://www.izhmash.ru/eng/product/weapon.shtml><http://www.saiga-12.com/>**Ammunition Testing**http://www.winchester.com/law/testing/testing_pg.ey<http://greent.com/40Page/general/fbitest.htm>



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Chapter 4:

Rebel Movements

One of the cornerstones of Guevara's revolutionary philosophy was the *foco* ("focus" or "nucleus") theory, which posited that since objective conditions for revolution already existed in most Latin American countries, it was possible for a small *foco* of armed individuals to begin a guerilla war and, acting as a core, build a popular revolutionary struggle that would culminate in victory for the rebels.

— Daniel Castro (editor), *Revolution and Revolutionaries: Guerilla Movements in Latin America*, 1999, Jaguar Books, p. 87.

Introduction

Most people living in the western world have a hard time understanding why there is so much guerilla violence in Latin America. It seems to have hit the area like a plague in the mid-20th century. Bolivia, Venezuela, Peru, Colombia, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Cuba, and even Mexico have or have had guerilla problems. For the most part, the combining factors were the attempt by western countries to export capitalism and industrialism into the area at the same time Russia, China, and later Cuba, started exporting communist revolution.

Of course, the United States broke its colonial yoke with basically the same guerilla method. The main difference is that the United States won — both times (1776 and 1812) and managed to set up a stable government. Like most of the Latin American struggles, the U.S. dealt with foreign intervention. The British sent Hessian mercenaries to quell the uprising, while the intervention of the French fleet may have been the key to the eventual victory at Yorktown. However, one should not overlook the importance of the creation of a stable government after the U.S. revolution. Not only did

the government create a lasting constitution (admittedly only on the second try), the first president stepped down after only two terms in office. Imagine how different Cuba might be today had Fidel Castro only served eight years and then handed control over to an elected successor.

Of course, here and now, we believe conditions have changed since 1776. European nations no longer assert direct imperial power over the colonies. We do not acknowledge that imperialism even exists anymore. Of course, in some less direct ways, it does still exist. Those who feel oppressed by it certainly recognize it when they see it. Third world countries today experience a form of economic imperialism. As with the real imperialism of two centuries ago, economic imperialism has its positives and negatives.

Take southern Mexico at the turn of the century, around 1910. The industrial revolution had not had much effect on the agrarian culture there and people eked out happy subsistence lives on small farms. However, they occupied land that was ideal for large-scale sugar farming. With just a little capital investment, the land could have yielded much more. Fortunately (or unfortunately), there was plenty of European and North American cash ready to invest in the future of these farms. Westerners moved in, bought up land in some cases, used local political persuasion in others, and set up large haciendas to grow and process sugar. They bought refineries, tractors and whatever other machines they needed to deliver that sugar as cheap as possible to overseas buyers.

Predictably, the land started producing much greater wealth. But for whom? The hacienda now needed far fewer of the original inhabitants to work the land. Those few worked for good wages compared to how they lived before, though





not necessarily compared to what they could be paid. However, the rest became landless and dispossessed. Historically, in other developing nations, these people typically moved into the cities and took factory jobs. Of course, in those Western nations, the factories had to exist first. However, in Mexico at this time, there were not enough new factories to employ them. There was still no particular reason for foreign investors to build factories there. (Labor is still cheaply available in Western countries.) Meanwhile, these poor ex-farmers had no particular skills useful in an industrial age. Many could not read. The more educated of the lot did get industrial jobs and, while they did not get paid much, they were not used to having much money anyway. They heard about their cousins and neighbors back in the rural countryside. By now, most of them had no work. They all felt cheated out of their land, whether they were paid for it or not. (Many did not own their land before, but rented it from wealthy upper class landowners.) Where food was once grown, the land now produced sugar that the owners sold overseas. Some of the money went overseas as well, while most of rest stayed with a relatively small group of hacienda owners.

Emiliano Zapata realized he must do something. Someone had to take charge, kick all the Western imperialists out and give the land back to the people so things could return to how they were. He was one of those few who found work in the city, so he could save up a tidy sum of money. He came back to his homeland, bought some weapons, gathered up some friends and sympathizers, and started fighting.

The logic of this eludes the typical “evil” Western investor. He knew about the green revolution in his country and how it helped his country become strong. He thinks a similar change could help Mexico as well, and ought to generate a good profit as well. So, he made the investment. When he visits, he saw people living in luxury where before there were only subsistence farmers. He probably felt proud of his accomplishments. As a result of his investment, the government now had money for roads and other improvements. Children had new schools where there were none before. Sure, the cities were overcrowded, but soon the sugar money would flow up there as well and set up factories. However, before long, a populist uprising starts. Roving bandits strike at the refineries and try to steal the land. Why? What did the investor do wrong?

Who was right and who was wrong? Depending on your politics, you may have some pretty strong opinions about this.

However, despite what you think, both sides are generally trying to do the right thing. (Yes, there are exceptions on both sides.) The problem is arguably a side effect of the drastically accelerated economic and social change from agrarian to capitalist industry. People get hurt when things change too fast and sometimes they decide to fight back. Unfortunately, no other economic system to date has proven anywhere near as efficient at producing wealth and technology. Although certain theoretical systems have never yet been tried on a large scale, the risk of experimenting with alternate economic systems in the modern era is that a nation will soon slip dangerously behind the industrial military power of its neighbors.

Guerilla Campaigns in Latin America

The following sections detail some of the specific guerilla movements in Latin America. We chose these selections based primarily on our own memory of newsmaking events over the last two decades. No doubt, we left out some important groups. However, we believe that the groups presented here provide a good cross section of the different types of groups, their different approaches, and the resulting successes or failures of those approaches.

Peru

Peru has long suffered from friction between the Inca natives, the native-born but Spanish creole, and the Spanish conquerors. The first serious trouble started in 1780 with the Inca rebellion led by Tupac Amaru. The Spanish authorities executed Tupac Amaru shortly after the uprising in 1781, but the quelled revolt had the lasting effect of militarizing the region and increasing the harsh repression of the native people.

The contemporary history of Peru begins in 1980 with a return to democratic government after years of military rule. Unfortunately, the early years saw the introduction of two guerilla movements against the new government. Neither movement was particularly popular with the people of Peru and their terror campaign led to the election of Alberto Fujimori in 1990. Fujimori waged a brutal but successful campaign against the terrorists and assumed dictatorial control of the country in 1992. Fujimori finally resigned in 2000 under



pressure from numerous scandals and international pressure. Wanted in Peru for corruption and human rights violations, he fled to Japan where he is, for now, safe from extradition.

The Shining Path or Sendero Luminoso (SL)

Former university professor Abimael Guzman began the Shining Path movement in the late 1960s. This Maoist group took up arms in May of 1980 as the country attempted its first democratic election in years. It struggled somewhat successfully to control the countryside until 1992, when the Fujimori government succeeded in capturing Guzman and sentencing him to life imprisonment. The group still operates today in the jungles of Peru, but probably only consists of a few hundred members.

There is little doubt that the Shining Path was one of the world's most ruthless and violent guerilla movements. Their attacks included indiscriminate bombings, attacks on foreign embassies, assassinations, village raids, and even hacking victims to death with machetes. The terrible violence turned the civilian population against the movement, and in 1982, local peasants formed self-defense brigades, or Rondas Campesinas, to fight against the guerillas. By 1992, the enlistment in the Rondas hit 300,000.

Today, the Shining Path receives funding from the illegal drug trade and has most likely lost any political motivation. Peru is the second largest producer of cocaine, second only to Colombia. Like the FARC, the Shining Path has descended into base criminal activity.

The Shining Path struggle left 25,000 dead and hundreds of possibly innocent people in jail from the harsh measures the Fujimori government implemented to stop them.

Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA)

This revolutionary Marxist movement named after the Inca rebel of 1780 took up arms in 1984. Victor Polay led this smaller and less violent movement to free Peru of all imperialist elements. It is most famous for the Canto Grande prison break and the four-month long commando occupation of the Japanese ambassador's residence in 1996. A raid launched in April 1997 killed all 14 commandos, including most of the group's leadership. Freed hostages included President Fujimori's brother.

On July 1990, Victor Polay and 46 other inmates escaped the Canto Grande prison in a tunnel dug from the outside

Tupac Amaru Shakur

The infamous rapper was born in 1971 to Afeni Shakur, a New York Black Panther. His mother gave him the name Tupac Amaru after the Inca revolutionary and Shakur for the Arabic word for "thankful to God." Tupac lived a difficult childhood, moving about frequently, living in shelters, and being exposed to the worst of the drug culture. Like the revolutionary for whom he was named, Tupac lived a violent and public life that ended in execution. Like the revolutionary, his music and his unfortunately short life served as the inspiration for others to express their frustrations with violence.

His death remains a mystery and many today believe he may have faked it. Unknown assailants gunned down Tupac after he left a Mike Tyson boxing match in Las Vegas. He died on Friday, September 13, 1996.

During his life, he made important contributions in his music, including number-one hits and platinum albums. He was an actor, a poet, and a musician, despite a life struggling with poverty, drugs, the law and prison.

over a three-year period by fellow MRTA members. Polay was arrested again in 1992.

However, MRTA attempted to free their imprisoned membership again with the 1996 occupation of the Japanese ambassador's residence. With the failure of this occupation, guerilla movements in Peru died out, and freed the people of Peru to concentrate on the problems and excesses of the Fujimori government.

Today, the MRTA numbers no more than 100 members.

President Alberto Fujimori

Elected in 1990, President Alberto Fujimori, the son of Japanese immigrants, stands accused of atrocious human rights violations and rampant government corruption. However, Fujimori also managed to end one of the most brutal reigns of guerilla terror in Latin America. In 1992, he assumed dictatorial powers in an emergency move to combat these terrorist movements. Given the nature and unpopularity of the Peruvian guerillas, its not hard to understand why the people chose to re-elect Fujimori in 1995 despite his abuses.

Fujimori stands accused of a wide spectrum of crimes, including corruption, drug-trafficking, the formation of death



squads, and other human rights abuses. One example is the creation of *Grupo Colina*, an army death squad set up to secretly eliminate terrorist suspects without trial. It is responsible for the Barrios Altos massacre, which resulted in the death of 15 people, including some children, and the La Cantuta disappearances, which left nine students and one professor dead. This same group harassed and intimidated journalists and opposition politicians; 10 former members remain under arrest or in detention.

In addition, Fujimori himself admits that the aggressive nature of his anti-terrorist campaign probably placed hundreds of innocent people in jail. However, Fujimori abolished the speedy courts responsible for this in 1997. Many of these people obtained presidential pardons or release since Fujimori left office in 2000.

Cuba

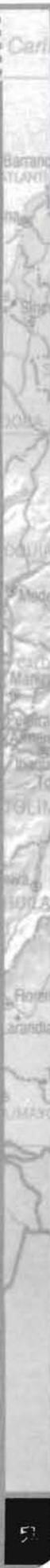
Starting as early as 1868, Cubans began the armed struggle to free themselves from Spanish imperialism. After 30 years, the trouble on this island may have instigated the Spanish-American War of 1898 when the U.S. naval ship *Maine* blew up in Havana harbor. While the cause of the explosion was most likely accidental, newspapers in the U.S. used the inci-

dent to promote the war. As a result, by 1902 the Cubans had completely rid themselves of the Spanish and theoretically freed themselves of U.S. troops, with the exception of the leased U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay. They even had a new constitution modeled on the U.S. government's. However, corrupt government leaders plagued the Cuban people and the U.S. continued to send troops now and then to quell internal uprisings.

The U.S. backed leadership in Cuba had severe trouble. Communist and worker parties formed to struggle against the harshly pro-business government. President Gerardo Machado (1925-1933) limited strikes, assassinated opposition, and generally repressed these movements. However, under the combined pressure of the U.S. ambassador and a general country-wide strike, Machado fled the country. His replacement did not last long.

In 1933, Sergeant Fulgencio Batista led the "Sergeants' Revolt" to overthrow the new U.S. backed Cuban president. Batista, a strongman with communist leanings, elevated himself to colonel, then general and then, eventually, president of the country. By 1952, he suspended the Cuban constitution and became dictator of the country.

In 1956, Fidel Castro, released from prison the previous



year, re-entered the country. Initial fighting killed most of his fellow revolutionaries, but Castro, his brother, and Ernesto Che Guevara established a guerilla base in the Sierra Maestra Mountains. With the Batista government under siege from the guerilla movement, their repressive government became too much for even the Cold War era U.S. government to support, and by 1959, Castro took Havana and Batista fled the country.

Fidel Castro immediately began instituting basic communist reforms, like nationalizing major businesses and appropriating vast amounts of farmland, including thousands of acres of sugar and fruit farmland owned by U.S. companies. By 1960, the U.S. had embargoed Cuba and Cuba had nationalized all U.S.-owned businesses in the country.

In 1961, the U.S. C.I.A. backed a small group of ex-Batista supporters and ex-land owners in the aborted Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. Within three days, the Cuban government defeated the invasion and captured or killed everyone involved. Cuba later executed some of the captured fighters for crimes committed under Batista. Most of the others eventually returned to the U.S.

In 1962, President Kennedy reigned over the five day Cuban Missile Crisis. Kennedy accused the Soviet government of deploying nuclear missiles in Cuba and proved the accusation by showing photos of the missiles at the United Nations. Many still believe this crisis is the closest the world ever came to an all out nuclear conflict. However, Russia agreed to remove the missiles and Cuba became its staunch ally for the next 30 years. Perhaps coincidentally, Kennedy was assassinated only one year later.

In 1991, the Soviet Union dissolved and withdrew its four billion dollars of annual Cuban foreign aid. Under communist rule, with no support from Russia, and under embargo from the United States, the Cuban economy went to shambles. Since 1995, the vast majority of the United Nation member states have urged the U.S. to drop the embargo. However, it is unlikely politicians in Washington will do that until Castro leaves power.

During the 40 plus years of Castro's rule, hundreds of thousands fled to U.S. shores. Like any other centrally controlled government in the world, the truth about conditions inside Cuba is difficult to determine for certain. However, most of those fleeing the country left to escape poverty and political repression. While supporters of Castro's government point out that a similar exodus occurs on the Mexican-U.S. border, the difference is that many of the Mexican immigrants make a little money and then return to their families. Few Cubans

desire to return until Castro's government falls, and the true feelings of the Cuban residents themselves are unknown with any certainty.

Ernesto Che Guevara

In addition to successfully creating a socialist or Marxist government in Cuba (at least in name; it's questionable whether a totalitarian government is truly socialist or Marxist), Castro and friends served as an example to other communists all around Latin America. Castro provided training facilities and support to numerous other movements in Latin America. However, the writings of fellow guerilla fighter Ernesto Che Guevara were perhaps even more influential. Guevara also traveled across Latin America to physically aid revolutionary movements. The Bolivian government eventually captured and executed him in 1967 as he fought with the National Liberation Army, another failed communist guerilla movement.

Ernesto Che Guevara wrote about a new revolutionary theory known as the *foco* ("nucleus") theory. Guevara believed that conditions for communist revolution existed across most Latin American countries and that it only required a small group of armed individuals, or *foco*, to start the revolution. Once started, it would easily build popular support and culminate in victory. The Cuban revolution became the model for this theory. Unfortunately, his theory also provided the rationale for many small groups to embark on campaigns of violence and terror where little or no popular support actually existed. The Shining Path of Peru remains the worst example of this.

Of course, the conditions for revolution did exist in many Latin American countries of the time — including Peru. However, an important obstacle rose up during the Castro era. During the Cold War, many Western capitalist countries believed in the "Domino theory," which stated that each country that fell to communist revolution increased the chance of more countries falling, especially in nearby countries. Under this logic, Western countries decided to fight everywhere communism reared up in order to prevent a much larger catastrophe. In practice, it meant the United States would send aid and military support to any government, often even repressive dictatorships, that faced communist insurgency.

The U.S. response to communist insurgency in Latin America included the creation of the School of the Americas to train Latin America military forces in counterinsurgency techniques. Many of the most repressive thugs and dictators



in recent Latin American history graduated from this school. However, it did develop methods and training that helped defeat a number of guerilla movements.

Meanwhile, to many communist supporters, Guevara became a martyr to the cause, and his book, *General Principles of Guerilla Warfare*, became required reading on both sides of the political fence.

Nicaragua

Nicaragua's struggle's with the United States began in the 1850s when Nicaraguan politicians called on the U.S. to help oust William Walker. Walker, a soldier of fortune from the United States, had arrived with 60 followers during a Nicaraguan revolution and before long managed to end up in control of the small country. The U.S. intervened again in 1909 to help oust José Santos Zelaya, another ruthless dictator. However, this time the U.S. stayed. After the success in the Spanish-American war of 1898, the U.S. mood swung towards intervention. That mood lasted until after World War I, when the citizens began calling for the troops to come home.

Officials created the National Guard in Nicaragua and the U.S. Marines left in 1925. However, the government dissolved into chaos and the marines came right back to help the National Guard stop the fighting. Unfortunately, by this time, certain elements in Nicaragua had enough of foreign intervention; while everyone else signed a truce, Augusto César Sandino moved out into the country and kept fighting.

Sandino hid in the rural mountains and staged numerous guerilla raids on U.S. marines and U.S. Marine-controlled towns. He had simple objectives that would later find their way into the writings of Che Guevara. They were to cause casualties, conserve ammunition, capture weapons and ammunition, and withdraw to survive another day. Even in 1927, the guerillas feared the U.S. air power, but Sandino's men managed to shoot down a U.S. Marine aircraft in 1927 and begin their war for the minds of the U.S. public. When later that year, U.S. aircraft located and bombarded his remote mountain headquarters, Sandino simply moved on. U.S. Marines arrived later to find stuffed grass soldiers and a deserted compound. As U.S. casualties mounted, more and more of the public demanded the return of U.S. troops from foreign, unfriendly soil. U.S. fruit companies lobbied strongly for continued military presence. Their businesses were often the target of Sandino.

The U.S. Marines would finally leave in 1933, but before they left, another important figure, Anastasio Somoza García,

became the head of the Nicaraguan National Guard. Unfortunately for Nicaragua, what the National Guard had learned fighting Sandino was not conducive to democracy. The post Somoza García now held became the perfect stepping stone to fill the power vacuum left by the departing U.S. troops. With the U.S. out, Sandino began discussing peace with the current president, Somoza García's uncle. However, with Sandino no longer hiding, Somoza García assassinated him in 1934. He then forced his uncle to resign in 1936 and instructed the Nicaraguan Congress to name him the new president.

Somoza García ruled directly or indirectly until assassinated in 1956. He maintained control by cleverly shifting alliances and positions. He allowed the facade of democracy, but used incarceration, torture, exile, and assassination to prevent any real opposition. His leadership saw unprecedented economic growth in the country, but he managed to keep most of the benefits for himself. His dynasty continued after his death with his two sons, Luis Somoza Debayle and Anastasio Somoza Debayle (a West Point graduate), taking the respective posts of president and director of the National Guard.

Luis Somoza Debayle died of a heart attack in 1967, and his younger brother Anastasio Somoza Debayle, lacking the craftiness of his father, resorted to harsher and harsher repression to retain control.

The United States has a mixed past supporting and opposing the Somoza dynasty. While the Somoza family remained ardent allies in the Cold War, their repressive rule occasionally brought on the ire of the U.S. government. However, in 1972, when international relief destined for Managua earthquake victims fell mostly into the hands of the Somoza family and the National Guard, U.S. and international opinion turned irrevocably away.

In 1962, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional — FSLN) took the name of Sandino and formed into a small Marxist revolutionary movement. Initially started by university students, the Sandinistas worked slowly against the Somoza dynasty, helped by the foreign aid from the Cold War struggle between Marxism and capitalism. However, it was not until 1974 that the group had enough peasant support to launch a military guerilla campaign. A successful kidnap and ransom increased their prestige enough for the government to begin harsh reactions in 1975. Under this repression, the FSLN fragmented and a group named the Third Way, led by Daniel José Ortega Saavedra, eventually led the pack.



Under siege from the Sandinistas, the government resorted to harsher measures. By 1977, U.S. President Carter demanded human rights improvements before providing further military aid. In 1978, the blame for the assassination of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro Cardenal, editor of the newspaper *La Prensa*, fell on the Somoza government, and shortly thereafter the U.S. withdrew all remaining military aid. Meanwhile, the Sandinistas gained widespread popularity and, with the help of Cuban mediation, the FSLN factions re-united. Anastasio Somoza Debayle went into exile in 1979.

However, the new government inherited a country in ruins with an estimated 50,000 dead, 120,000 exiled, and 600,000 homeless. In the United States, the Carter administration tried to work with the new Marxist regime. The FSLN avoided any overt signs of Marxism though, by mostly only nationalizing the Somoza family holdings. (Of course, these were vast. For example, the farmland accounted for 20% of the cultivatable land in the country.)

However, when Ronald Reagan took office in 1981, the U.S. position reversed. Reagan claimed the Sandinistas were working with Cuba and the Soviet Union to funnel arms to the guerillas in neighboring El Salvador. (See below.) The

U.S. organized the Contrarevolutionaries, or Contras, in Honduras to start yet another guerilla movement in Nicaragua against the Sandinista government. The Contras initially consisted of ex-National Guard members and was not popular with most Nicaraguans. However, the Sandinista government had managed to alienate some northern peasants and ethnic groups on the Caribbean coast, who joined with the Contras.

While the threat of constant Contra raids from Honduras put the Sandinista government on the defensive, Daniel Ortega managed to win the 1984 elections with 67% of the vote. However, recent laws enacted to quell political opposition soured an otherwise fair election.

The U.S. congress hotly debated further military aid to the Contras, but in 1986, when the Iran-Contra scandal broke, congress quickly cut any further aid. The Iran-Contra affair involved an illegal operation by the Reagan staff to divert funds raised from covert Iranian arms sales to the Contras during a period in which congress had specifically prohibited any such funding.

Foreign aid to the Sandinista government was also drying up as the Soviet Union headed into history. These two





facts led the Sandinista government to come to a peaceful agreement with the Contras and other opposition groups to hold new elections, to increase the political freedoms of opposition groups and the press, and to allow foreign monitoring of the elections. As a result, Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, the *La Prensa* widow of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro Cardenal, won the election and assumed power.

Since then, Nicaragua has slowly rebuilt its economy and continued to hold democratic elections.

El Salvador

The history of El Salvador prior to 1979 was typical of many small countries in the region. There were “elections,” but few were fair. A small minority owned most of the land and rented it out to the peasant class. The economic situation rested far too heavily on the current coffee crops. The president usually came from the military and when he did not, the military would occasionally throw election results out. The elections of 1972 and 1977 were particularly troublesome and became the leading stimulus for popular discontent.

Meaningful Marxist groups began forming as early as 1970 and included such groups as the People’s Revolutionary Army (Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo — ERP), the Revolutionary Democratic Front (Frente Democrático Revolucionario — FDR), the Armed Forces of National Resistance (Fuerzas Armadas de Resistencia Nacional — FARN), and the Armed Forces of Liberation (Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación — FAL). These groups operated throughout the 1970s engaging in general terrorism, bombing, assassinations, and kidnappings. However, in 1979, the guerillas in neighboring Nicaragua succeeded in ousting the Somoza regime. Now there was a positive example and available help from both Nicaragua and Cuba.

In 1980, the disparate groups met in Havana to unify. The result was the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional-Frente Democrático Revolucionario — FMLN-FDR). The FMLN became the umbrella organization to direct guerilla attacks against the government. It used economic sabotage and attrition to promote its goals and the political violence in El Salvador dramatically increased. However, when this group made a final push in 1981, it found it had vastly overestimated its popular support. Although U.S. aid to the current government was cut off, government forces beat back the 1981 offense in about 10 days.

Venezuela

Venezuelans elected current President Hugo Chavez in 1998. He first appeared on the national scene after a failed coup attempt in 1992, for which he served two years in jail. Chavez does not hide his pro-Castro, leftist politics. In his recent years in office he has made sweeping reforms in favor of the poor of his country. However, his policies strike fear in middle and upper class people of the country, especially with the oil workers. These groups worry that Chavez will ruin the economy. They got together in April 2002 to attempt a coup, which failed when Chavez supporters flooded the streets in his support. More recently, business groups have staged strikes, or more accurately, lockouts. Oil production almost stopped, costing the country nearly 50-70 million dollars a day.

The poverty level in Venezuela is high, but not unusually high for that area of the world. In fact, up to now, Venezuela had one of the most stable democracies in the region. Large oil exports kept the economy healthy. Chavez campaigned in 1998 to change things. He has increased government spending on health care, housing, and a host of other programs to assist the poor in his country.

However, Chavez also rewrote the constitution to give himself more power and a longer term. Critics claim he has become a tyrant. In response, Chavez blames the wealthy of the country for any and all the problems. His words incite class hatred and anger many hard-working middle class citizens.

Meanwhile, in 1979, a moderate group called the Popular Forum (Foro Popular) convinced enough young military officers of the need for a change. They ousted current President Romero in 1979 and proclaimed against violence and corruption. They ruled via a military and civilian junta, and began to slowly implement land reforms aimed primarily at increasing political stability. However, the military continued its overt repression of dissenters.

The military junta finally managed new elections again in 1982. Moderates won a mere plurality of the vote. Landowners formed the Nationalist Republican Alliance (Alianza Republicana Nacionalista — ARENA) and participated in the elections as well.

The military and wealthy landowners began to form

“death squads” in the late 1970s to combat the left-wing extremist organizations then operating in the country. Groups like the White Hand (Mano Blanca) and the White Warriors Union (Union de Guerreros Blancos — UGB) quietly eliminated left-wing sympathizers with what many believe was the complicity of senior members of the active military. These groups did do serious harm to the FMLN, but their suspected ties to the legitimate government caused serious problems for U.S. politicians trying to avoid another communist take-over. Victims included religious figures. They shot Archbishop Romero while he said mass, and after the murder of four U.S. churchwomen in 1980, the U.S. cut off all aid. However, in 1983, President Ronald Reagan made another offer: \$100 million in aid if the El Salvadoran government would finally take action against the death squads. While political murders did not completely stop, their frequency fell sharply after this.

In 1984, the U.S. military aid started to flow in again, and the FMLN went back on the defensive. The extent to which foreign aid prolonged this conflict should not be overlooked. Certainly, El Salvador needed change in government, and one could argue the increased level of violence from both left- and right-wing extremists forced moderate groups to find a solution. However, the start and the duration of the conflict seems directly related to outside forces. One can only wonder how many might still be alive today had Cuba, Nicaragua, the Soviet Union, and the United States left El Salvador to work out its own problems.

Finally, peace talks between the government and the FMLN began seriously in 1989 and a formal cease-fire started in 1992. Since then the ARENA party has dominated the presidential elections. However, the now legitimate FMLN party participates as well and holds a large share of legislative seats (31 out of 84 as of the March 2003 election), despite their complaints against the election process.

Guatemala

The recent history of Guatemala begins in 1944 when the people overthrew their current right-wing dictator, Jorge Ubico, and held their first elections. They elected Dr. Juan Jose Arevalo Bermej and drew up a new constitution based on the U.S. version. The government was socialist. Arevalo and his successor, Jacobo Arbenz, built new schools, improved health care, and began some limited land reform to redistribute unused land previously owned by the country's wealthy elite. In fact, the government paid for the land confiscated, but only at the greatly understated values found on the recent tax returns of the past owners.

U.S. owned United Fruit Company (UFCO) was one of the owners losing their land, and they took their case to the U.S. government. In 1954, during the McCarthy era, the U.S. government viewed this kind of land reform as communist inspired. It helped that UFCO had an ex-board of trustee member who was now head of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Allen Dulles, and whose brother was the current Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles.

The CIA organized a group of 150 men under the command of Castillo Armas and sent them in to overthrow the legitimately elected Guatemalan government. The CIA aided the attack with air bombardments and radio jamming. Armas' men undertook a violent coup and forced Arbenz out of the country. They established a military dictatorship that lasted 31 years until the 1986 election of President Venizio Cerezo. Their brutal rule affected the early years of Ernesto Che Guevara, who lived there at the time. He fled to Cuba to fight “imperialism” with Fidel Castro.

During the 1970s, groups finally started to form to fight against what became the epitome of the “Banana Republic” — a country essentially controlled by U.S. fruit companies. Three such groups formed into the National Guatemalan Revolutionary Unit (Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca — URNG) in 1981. The brutal repression carried out by the military government during this period gave the URNG plenty of new recruits. The repression campaign left hundreds of thousands dead and completely destroyed hundreds of Mayan villages. The military captured and severely tortured many more.

Finally, in 1985, the military ousted General Efraín Ríos Montt and began a period of reform. Civilian leaders took control of the government starting with Cerezo in 1986 and began the slow change to a more open democracy. In 1994, the United Nations (U.N.) sponsored the Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH) as part of an initial peace process for the country. In 1996, the URNG finally signed a peace agreement, and in 1999, the U.N. presented their findings. Of the known human rights violations, the military government bore responsibility for 93% of the total crimes. The URNG weighed in with 3%. The U.N. also uncovered the United States involvement in the 1954 coup, linkage between U.S. School of the Americas trainees and human rights violations, U.S. collaboration with military intelligence units also operating as death squads, and a CIA hit list prepared before the 1954 coup with potential political and intellectual targets.



Del Monte currently operates the lands previously owned by United Fruit Company and it no longer engages in political engineering. Guatemala continues as a democracy under a new constitution created in 1985. President Alfonso Antonio Portillo Cabrera serves until the next election in November 2003.

Colombia

For a detailed look at the history of Colombia, please refer to Chapter 1. This section provides a detailed look at the three largest non-governmental groups vying for power.

As this chapter has shown, the idea of a true communist insurgency died with the break up of the Soviet Union. Most every other Latin American country has come to peaceful terms with any insurgent groups operating prior to the fall of the Soviet Union. Of those that did not, the insurgent groups either died out or turned to criminal activities to survive. The reasons are many-fold.

First, major funding from the Soviets, both directly and indirectly via Cuba, stopped. Second, recent history has shown centralized communist governments simply do not work. One only has to compare North Korea and South Korea to see how badly these governments fail. While examples certainly exist of poorly run capitalist societies where democracy is a mere sham, there exists no good example of communism working at all on a national level. (On the other hand, most historical examples of successful Marxist communist-based revolutions evolved into centralized dictatorships. It is arguable whether they are thus truly “communist” at all. The poorly run capitalist societies could also be said to have more centralized, authoritarian political control, begging the question of the greater evil.)

Next, the United States, even under ultra-conservative President Ronald Reagan, began demanding increasingly responsible behavior from their sometimes over-zealous right-wing allies. No longer would Western powers support repressive dictatorships just to avoid further communist expansion. The stated goals became fair and open democratic elections. While reality may not yet live up to the goals, certainly the area has shown rapid improvement over the last two decades.

Finally, with the cold war over, many Latin American countries turned to limited socialism and limited land reform (or re-distribution) as a compromise. Few Western leaders see this as the creeping communist threat they once did.

So why are two Marxist groups still fighting in Colombia? The answer is the U.S.-led war on drugs. These groups

do not survive on the mobilization of a disaffected population in the way a true guerilla movement should. They survive on the huge financial windfall the sale of illegal drugs generates for them. The same is true for the right-wing groups struggling against them. All three finance themselves, at least partially, on drug money.

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia — FARC)

The roots of the FARC lie in the bands organized for self-protection during *La Violencia*. Manuel “Tiro Fijo (Sureshot)” Marulanda led one such band and formed it into the FARC around 1966. Marulanda still heads the FARC today.

The FARC exist in areas east of the mountains where only a small percentage of the population lives. The Colombian government found it convenient to simply ignore them for the most part. They initially grew slowly, drawing from the local rural populations, their message largely rejected by the majority of Colombians living on the other side of the mountains.

Sometime between 1982 and 1990, the FARC decided to give up the moral high ground and started their involvement in the drug trade. By taxing each stage of the business in areas they controlled, they make hundreds of millions of dollars a year. They are most likely the richest insurgent group in the world. Their involvement includes taxes collected on coca and opium crops all the way to fees collected at their airstrips where the drugs are flown out. In addition, they add kidnapping and extortion to their income.

In their defense, during this same period, the FARC experimented with establishing a legitimate political party, the Patriotic Union (UP), to participate in the democratic elections. Right-wing death squads assassinated thousands of UP members, including their presidential candidate.

By 1996, they were ready to strike back at the government. Their membership had increased drastically from a couple thousand to as many as 20,000 combatants. Meanwhile, the government in Colombia had lost its U.S. backing due to allegations of abusive human rights violations and then Colombian President Ernesto Samper’s alleged ties to the drug cartels. (Colombian courts did send his defense minister to jail over campaign donations from the Cali cartel.)





The FARC attacked the Colombian military with the goal of taking and holding new towns and regions. For example, in February 1998 they ambushed an under-strength Colombian counter-guerrilla battalion (52 BCG) and decimated the 154 man contingent at El Billar, Caqueta.

However, with the election of a new president, Andres Pastrana, later in 1998, the U.S. began to reenter Colombia with "Plan Colombia." This new initiative dedicated billions of U.S. dollars to help the Colombian government fight the war on drugs. Money started to flow immediately and President Clinton signed Plan Colombia into law in 2000. Later, President Bush would expand this money under the Andean Counter-drug Initiative (ACI) to include combating terrorist groups like the FARC and the AUC and to protect U.S. interests — most notably the Caño Limón Oil Pipeline.

The new president tried to engage the country's insurgent groups in a peace process and granted the FARC a huge portion of the country as a safe haven in order to get them to the talks. However, despite these talks, the FARC continued to pursue their military strategies. In February 2002, President Pastrana ended the peace talks and ordered the military back into the safe haven. In response to the failed talks, Co-

lombians overwhelming elected President Alvaro Uribe Velez later in 2002. His stated platform is to get tough with the guerrilla organizations. An understandable goal considering that the FARC gunned down his father at the family ranch in 1983. The FARC have responded with numerous assassination attempts against President Uribe.

Meanwhile, the FARC continues a campaign of terror. They and the ELN commit most of the thousands of random kidnappings that occur in Colombia every year. They attack infrastructure, including the local electrical grid. Some examples include: Murdering three American missionaries in 1999, kidnapping and then assassinating a former Colombian minister of culture in 2001, kidnapping presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt in 2002, kidnapping a Colombian senator while onboard a commercial airline flight in 2002, and a mass kidnapping of 12 state lawmakers in 2002.

National Liberation Army (Ejercito de Liberación Nacional — ELN)

Fabio Vásquez Castaño, a well educated man whose liberal father died at the hands of the conservative party militia,



started the ELN around 1965 after receiving insurgent training in Havana, Cuba. The ELN, the second largest guerilla organization in Colombia today, numbers around 3,500 fighters. The movement initially had a much more ideological flavor, and it attracted a number of leftist priests looking to improve the lives of the poor population of Colombia. Amongst these were Father Camilo Torres, who died in his first fight, and defrocked Spanish priest Manuel Perez, who led the group from the 1970s until his death in 1998.

Nicolas "Gabino" Rodriguez next took over the reins of leadership. Rodriguez joined the ELN at its inception as a young 14-year old soldier.

Because of the religious leadership of the group, it initially did not take funding from the illegal drug trade. It initially relied on support from other leftist countries like Cuba and the Soviet Union. However, as that aid dried up in the late 1980s the ELN switched to kidnapping and extortion for funding. However, under Rodriguez, it is believed the group is now raising some money from the drug trade as well.

The ELN participated in the peace talks in 1998 and continued talks after negotiations with the FARC had ended. However, the government eventually terminated those talks as well in 2002, and under President Uribe they are unlikely to resume.

Operationally, the ELN is much like the FARC. They specialize in attacks against economic infrastructure, especially the oil companies and the electrical grid. They threaten politicians, union leaders, and ranchers. During the peace talks in 1999, the ELN conducted a massive kidnapping campaign to insure the Pastrana administration took it as seriously as it did the FARC.

United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia — AUC)

The roots of the AUC began in the 1950s when wealthy landowners created local militias for self-defense. Sparse government protection in these rural areas created a definite need for these groups to protect property from bandits and early leftist groups. During the 1980s, these groups grew drastically from the support and requirements of the drug cartels. The Medellin and Cali cartels funded these groups especially to defend them from the guerilla groups already trying to tax the workers on their coca farms.

Fidel Castaño ran a narcotics ring associated with the Medellin cartel. With his brother Carlos, he founded the

Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Uruba (ACCU) to avenge the death of their father and family, killed by FARC guerillas.

The group MAS (Death to Kidnappers) originated to avenge the kidnapping of the sister of the Ochoa brothers, then the leaders of the Medellin cartel. This group operated primarily in urban environments and targeted guerillas and leftist politicians. They likely made many of the hits on the FARC's short-lived attempt at legitimate politics. MAS worked closely with the ACCU.

In the 1990s, Carlos Castaño inherited the leadership position of the ACCU after the death of his brother in a 1994 guerilla ambush. In 1996, he transformed the organization into the national body known as the AUC. The AUC became an umbrella organization for all paramilitary groups operating against the leftist guerillas. Castaño admits to receiving taxes from coca farms, but denies any direct association with drug traffickers. However, U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft indicted him on drug charges in 2002 and seeks his extradition.

Meanwhile, many Colombians, sick of war, support the AUC's aggressive tactics against the guerillas. The AUC has a mounting list of successes against the guerillas. As a result, the AUC is the fastest growing militant group in Colombia, numbering over 15,000 soldiers. Unfortunately, the central government forces have far too much territory to cover and many of the rural areas of Colombia need the protection of some kind of militia.

However, the AUC, officially listed as a terrorist organization by the U.S., definitely has a darker side. The national police hold them responsible for hundreds of assassinations, kidnappings, and even massacres. Their human rights abuses top even the FARC. The Colombian Justice Department reports that at least 1,000 people ousted from government police or military jobs for human rights abuses went on to join the AUC. Worse, many suspect that the military and police maintain ties with the AUC in order to accomplish their mission against the guerillas. Locals have started using the phrase "Sixth Division" to refer to the AUC. (The Colombian army only has five divisions.)

Typical AUC operations involve arriving in a new village with a list of suspected leftist sympathizers. They then kill anyone they find on the list, usually in a brutal fashion in front of family members. Their actions create a brutal but effective message to any remaining supporters of the guerillas.

Human Rights Watch attributes numerous violent, criminal attacks to the AUC. In 2001, the AUC murdered Carlos



Arturo Pinto, a prosecutor investigating a paramilitary group in the city of Cúcuta, Norte de Santander. He replaced Maria del Rosario Rojas Silva, who was killed just four months earlier. The paramilitaries openly threaten and assassinate law enforcement agents, prosecutors, and witnesses who work cases implicating their members. The paramilitaries reportedly account for about 70% of the political assassinations in the country, making Colombia's murder rate the highest in Latin America. In addition, the AUC targets other "undesirable" groups like homosexuals and prostitutes.

To understand the popularity of such a barbaric group, the reader must remember that the average rural Colombian has seen this same behavior from the guerillas for 40 years. During that entire time, the national government has proven itself largely incapable of dealing with the threat. Locals, including members of the army and police, recognize that the country may need the harsh techniques of the AUC to eliminate the guerilla problem. While the AUC definitely has historic ties to the drug cartels, it would certainly survive without any drug money. It fills too critical a need right now. It is also unlikely that the government will ever completely separate its organizations from collusion with the AUC. It simply cannot do the job itself. It does not have the resources necessary, and therefore, for many remotely deployed units, it would be near suicidal not to work with the AUC units.

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Chapter 5: Roleplaying in a Guerilla Army

Sabotage has nothing to do with terrorism; terrorism and personal assaults are entirely different tactics. We sincerely believe that terrorism is of negative value, that it by no means produces the desired effects, that it can turn a people against a revolutionary movement, and that it can bring a loss of lives to its agents out of proportion to what it produces.

— Ernesto Che Guevara, *Guerilla Warfare* (1961)

Introduction

If your group decides to roleplay a revolutionary group, there are a few important issues to consider. First off, what is the purpose of the revolution? Related to that, what does the current government do wrong, and with what political system do you propose to replace it? Also, how will the party go about drawing attention to their cause and winning the hearts and minds of the people? Where will the party operate? How will they keep themselves undiscovered? Finally, how will the party supply themselves? These questions apply as well to a referee who runs a guerilla group as the players' opponents.

The first question rises above all other considerations. The revolution must have a purpose and a political goal. It also needs to identify significant problems in the current government. Consider that few guerilla movements have moderate political goals. They usually have either radical communist leftist intent or far right-wing goals. Generally speaking, these movements do not improve life for the average citizen. They encourage harsh government repression of human rights. They often engage in terrorist operations themselves. The population pays a high price in lives and economic devastation during such a conflict. The revolutionary goals should be worth the sacrifice.

If the players decide to run a revolutionary group, they should set some morally acceptable goals before starting. Good left-wing examples include land reform, as in the case in Guatemala, where wealthy landowners kept land fallow rather than let desperate farmers work it. Right-wing rebels might instead strive to prevent the nationalization of important businesses. The over-nationalization of business and land in Cuba might well have led to that nation's current economic weakness. General goals for both sides might involve the removal of a repressive dictator or the elimination of military death squads. The players should also have a political system in mind for if and when their struggle succeeds. Too often, the revolution succeeds only to place another dictator in power.

The referee should track the actions of the group to determine their popularity with the people. The Shining Path in Peru had a nasty habit of turning up at a village and killing anyone who disagreed with them. (Sound like any fantasy roleplaying games you remember playing?) In response, the local population organized against them! While groups like the Shining Path make great bad guys for a campaign, a referee should guard against the players descending to such depths of depravity. Guerilla warfare sometimes calls for brutal actions. However, the referee and the players need to keep in mind how their actions affect the population. Che Guevara recommended attacking communication and military targets. He notes that an attack on a factory primarily leaves a large number of factory workers unemployed. Remember that someone working in a factory with atrocious conditions, minimal pay, and serious health risks still prefers to have a job.

For another example, in Colombia, the leftist rebels decided to target the oil pipeline because they saw it as repre-





sentative of the problem. However, these attacks created two massive problems that generally hurt their popularity among the locals. First, the attacks created extensive oil spills that ruined nearby farmland and displace the occupants. Second, 85% of the revenue from that pipeline goes to the Colombian government. Only 15% makes it into the pockets of the so-called wealthy elite. That government money pays for schools, roads, healthcare, and infrastructure that help every citizen. (Yes, it pays for the military as well, but Colombia gets substantial help in that area from the United States.)

Starting a Guerilla Movement

Characters starting a guerilla movement should begin with a significant but limited budget and a region of the country friendly to their cause. More often than not, the people who start guerilla movements, even leftist movements, have significant resources and education. They need the resources to make an initial purchase of weapons and supplies. Without some initial equipment, the movement could go nowhere. Their education also helps them to plan and organize their

operations and, often more importantly, their logistics. The referee should limit initially available supplies as well. Guerilla armies must usually strike military supply depots first to supplement their initial cache.

A new guerilla movement also needs an ideal starting region. It should be remote enough to keep the base of operations out of site and yet populated enough to give the rebels a local source of supplies and recruits. Some movements start in urban environments, but generally speaking, the density of people in an urban environment makes clandestine operations impossible. The referee might allow the players to choose a real location on the map of the country in use. (Whether the country is real or fictitious, the referee should provide a map.) From there, the referee can populate the local area with valid targets for the rebellion, nearby population centers, non-player characters both friendly to the rebellion and friendly to the national government. In other words, the referee should make sure the nearby area provides plenty to do in the game. The average people near a new rebellion should have ample reason to hate the current government. However, they might remain suspicious of the guerilla movement until they have seen the group's intentions and dedication.



The referee might also add a few other organizations to make the story more interesting. When things get bad enough for revolution, often more than one group starts up. The referee might add other revolutionary guerilla movements with slightly different goals and methods. The referee might also add some sort of non-government militia trying to defend the people from the violence of the guerillas. These might be grass roots groups, like the Campesinas in Peru, or they might be an organized and unscrupulous militia, like the paramilitaries in Colombia. Or they might be army groups working in a less-than-official capacity — like the death squads in El Salvador. The referee should tailor these groups to how well the guerillas maintain their image and popularity with the locals.

Attracting Initial Followers

Guerilla movements need two basic types of followers to succeed. They need sources for basic supply and they need fighters. Sources of supply might mean local farmers and artisans willing to contribute a share of their production to the cause. (In a more formal arrangement, the guerillas would call this a “tax.”) It also includes anyone working directly within the movement on non-military tasks. For example, Guevara strongly recommends setting up a leather industry within the movement to produce shoes, backpacks, ammo pouches, and other useful tannery goods. The referee should make just enough of these people available to keep the players worried about supplies but not constantly counting things.

A guerilla movement also needs new fighters. However, in the interest of keeping the actions on a “roleplaying” scale, the referee should only provide two types of military followers. The first category includes local guides and otherwise temporary helpers. The referee can use these characters to help the party along. However, the referee should take care to avoid letting these “helper” characters over-shadowing the players. Raw recruits make up the second category. The referee can use a raw recruit’s death or serious injury to remind the players about the risks inherit in their operations. However, again, the referee should not allow the numbers to increase beyond the number of player characters. Too many recruits turn the game into more of a wargame than a roleplaying experience. The referee has two easy options available to limit this category. The referee can kill or wound fighters during combat, or the referee could have a few recruits break-off, move to a new location, and set up a new cell of operations.

The referee can also use the number of available recruits to provide feedback to the players on the popularity of their movement and their recent operations. While certain operations might increase their countrywide popularity or notoriety, the referee, when determining new recruits, should focus on how their actions affect the nearby local population around their base of operations. For example, attacking the electrical grid might increase their notoriety, increase their popularity with poor, rural groups, but decrease their popularity with middle class and urban groups. The poor, rural population might remain unaffected by the attacks and simply respond to the notoriety they bring. However, the middle class might suffer from the inconveniences caused, and urban groups might find themselves displaced from jobs as a direct result. Direct attacks on the military usually generate positive results from all groups not directly benefiting from the government, but these attacks involve the most risk as well. A purely terrorist attack, like the assassination of an opposition leader, generally creates ill will among all groups unless the target had a particularly bad reputation. For example, killing a vocal opponent of the guerillas strikes fear in everyone, but killing a leader of an opposition death squad might improve the guerillas’ popularity.

The referee might also present the players another challenge in this area by providing a few recruits of the “wrong sort.” Extremist movements seem to attract these kind of people, and the leadership often has a difficult time controlling them or distancing themselves from the their actions. The referee can test the characters’ resolve by introducing a non-player character or groups like this. A couple of examples include: A new recruit who seems to enjoy killing a bit too much, an advisor who encourages the party to make poor decisions, or even a recently detached cell that starts engaging in rampant terrorist operations. All of these, if not appropriately dealt with by the player characters, should bring down their popularity. Often the only workable solution to such problems involves a military tribunal and the firing squad.

Locating a Base of Operations

The modern age of infrared sensors and high-resolution digital satellite photographs leaves few remaining safe hiding places for non-government forces. In the aftermath of the Cold War, those areas might drastically increase if the United States quietly supports the movement. However, unless the goals of



the guerilla movement have worldwide popularity (a near impossible feat), then some European or ex-Soviet state may still sell the government some satellite time or sophisticated detection equipment.

The players need to choose an appropriate location with these factors in mind. In Afghanistan, they created an underground network to avoid aerial detection. In Colombia, the sheer remoteness of the region protects them. The guerilla fighters live out in areas where a few infrared hotspots (human bodies) are not unusual, and by the time it takes the government forces to react, they could easily move on. If the United States government could not find Eric Rudolph (the suspected abortion clinic bomber) in the low mountains of North Carolina, imagine the difficulty of finding FARC guerillas in the mountains of Colombia.

On the other hand, the guerilla base also needs to have legitimate targets within striking distance. The Colombian guerillas have oil pipelines snaking into their regions and the accompanying support personnel. The players will have to decide on a location that provides them similar targets. When making this decision, remember that guerilla operations often proceed on foot, sometimes have ground vehicles, and really never have any air transport. (Having the United States CIA on your side might provide some initial air support, but even then, this support rarely lasts long.) Guevara recommended heavy use of what he called “four-legged soldiers,” or pack animals. Of course, Guevara operated decades ago, so this may depend on the specific time setting of your campaign.

Urban operations have special considerations as well. While these areas provide plenty of places to hide and many targets of opportunity, they also present some significant challenges. Unlike in rural areas, an urban operation has to assume that unfriendly forces live within eyesight. The population density means the odds of a government agent or sympathizer living nearby reaches nearly 100 percent. This means everything the group does may be watched. The group must learn to conceal weapons carried, to avoid creating strange fumes if producing explosives or drugs, and to generally look like a normal business or home. Urban environments also present different supply problems. While a guerilla group can steal a new car easily, food is more challenging. In a rural environment, the local peasants, if friendly, can easily supply food. In an urban area, you must purchase food. This means the operation must have a constant source of income and the means to collect it without attracting notice.

Logistics

Generally, roleplaying the logistics of an operation keeps the players' interest about as well as watching paint dry. (Obviously, each group is different, and some may enjoy this element.) We discourage tracking food and water supplies in games, no matter what the setting. However, there are cases where a story hinges on at least a loose abstraction of the problem. For example, the characters find themselves lost in a vast desert or stranded at sea. In these cases, tell the characters how many days they have before the food runs out. A guerilla movement falls into this category where some abstraction of the problem is usually necessary to tell the story.

For one, the characters face the problem of even finding sources for many of their supplies. This is especially true in rural environments. A referee should encourage the players to at least establish contacts with sources for various items at the beginning of the operation, and perhaps to widen those contacts as the movement grows in size. (For a referee-run guerilla group, these suppliers are often the weak link the players need to bring the guerillas down.) For example, do not track food, but do make the players find a regular source of food. They do not need to know if they have exactly 365 days worth of meals, but they should know that their food comes off a light “tax” collected on nearby, friendly farmers. (The referee could then begin an evening adventure with, “while Ernesto collected rations from some of the farms east of your operation, he learned that...”)

For other types of supplies, the characters might need to roleplay a bit to find the right contacts. A guerilla movement needs a source of arms to fight with. Leftist guerillas might still use Cuba as an intermediary. Right-wing guerillas may have a harder time these days. Apparently, some ex-Irish Republican Army members have entered the supplier market. Also, the drug culture may provide a source for illegal items. Lastly, the United States may supply the guerillas if their government is sufficiently reprehensible. (The definition of reprehensible depends greatly on whom is in the White House!) However, the United States might also expect a certain level of respect for human rights. That might involve the occasional mission to arrest someone who is friendly to your cause but who works outside of any moral restrictions. Accusations of this type are not always accurate either. U.S. agents may ask for an innocent patsy. Maybe they know something you do not? Maybe they are just plain wrong?

For other types of supplies, like shoes, clothing, and even





mines and explosives, the players may need to set up local production. This may involve hiring or assigning personnel to the task. Players will need a source of raw materials for this, but they may already have access if they have farm connections. For specifics on crafting these items, refer to the modern core rulebook.

Finally, the guerilla army must make sure it has a ready supply of medical supplies.

Operations

The guerilla band has a number of useful operations they can take to further their cause. They can attack military outposts, ambush military convoys or patrols, attack infrastructure — power lines and power plants — or attack businesses themselves if they contribute to the country's problems. Each of these helps or hinders the movement in different ways.

First, in the beginning, the guerillas will need to plan attacks in which they increase their safety and replenish their ammunition. Attacks on nearby military outposts (if small enough) and ambushing military supply convoys and patrols make the best options for these goals. These will alert government forces to the guerillas but also hinder their operations in the region. Guerillas need to carefully limit ammunition expenditure, retrieve ammunition and weapons from defeated forces, and retreat before any counter attack forms. These types of operations require extensive scouting and good intelligence. However, the referee may want to abstract or simplify some of the preparation work to keep the pace of the game interesting. A contact may provide known routes of

military patrols or might provide a detailed report on the defenses at an outpost. (Of course, these reports are rarely accurate!)

Once the nearby military is on the defensive, the guerillas may move on to more strategic targets, like infrastructure, government assassinations, or other sabotage. A guerilla movement undertakes these operations to disrupt the normal activity of the country. They must make themselves known and must intrude on the lives of everyone in the country. Again, they should identify potential sources of problems in the country and attack those institutions. If a foreign fruit company owns too much land and interferes in local politics, then the guerillas should attack the infrastructure of that particular company. If the government has become too centralized and harshly limits free speech, then any attack that gets a message out might help. For example, the guerillas might take over a state run radio broadcast for a short time. Alternately, they might embark on a graffiti campaign. Senseless acts of sabotage or terrorism work against ultimate success. Attacks should have meaning to the population of the country.

By their nature, assassinations are terrorist attacks. (Sabotage aims to destroy equipment, terrorism aims to instill fear in the people — usually by random killings.) However, when the targets are sufficiently unpopular, assassination can help a revolution. For example, in Colombia, the AUC routinely assassinates unfriendly prosecutors and law enforcement agents. The people no longer see these as the agents of oppression, so those attacks strike fear and do serious harm to the AUC cause. On the other hand, if the police routinely



rounded up “undesirables” and tortured or massacred them (like the AUC does!), then the people might feel relief when someone finally fought back. Of course, those fighting back must maintain their reputation for this to work. In Colombia, the FARC may fight back, but their reputation is really no better than the AUC. As a result, most people fear both groups.

Non-Player or Antagonist Guerillas

When playing guerilla groups as the antagonists in a campaign, all the above information remains useful for context. However, the referee should not limit himself to doing the right thing. In fact, many of these movements eventually fall into near brigandry and help no one. Many movements, like the FARC and the Shining Path, eventually brought on the ire of the people they ideally meant to free from oppression. These groups often indulged in the most violent and brutal acts of terrorism. And while they slowly alienated themselves from the population, the governments they fought finally drifted back into representative democracy on their own as the Cold War wound down. These are the best groups to use as antagonists. Fighting communists is one thing and may satisfy some readers, but fighting despicable communists (and we use the term communist very loosely here) provides greater moral clarity.

Extremist groups often attract extremist personalities as well. Extremists rarely think objectively. They often misinterpret the motivations of others. They can escalate a situation to violence far too quickly. And, most importantly, all these things lead to very poor judgment. This is true of both ends of the political spectrum. Intelligent player characters and referees viewing a revolution through hindsight might not believe the mistakes this or that group made. The point is: your antagonist guerillas’ leaders may often do dumb and evil things. This does not necessarily make them one-dimensional characters. They may have complex reasons for their behavior. You can run an interesting character that the world still needs to rid itself of.

Finally, do not underestimate how harshly the government may react to these kinds of threats. The government probably already had problems or the guerilla group would never have materialized. The country may have a heavily concentrated distribution of wealth with a few powerful po-

litical players and millions of near starving peasants. The government probably already leans toward totalitarianism. Both right and left governments under siege may start strict controls on free speech. They may round up suspicious persons and hold them without trial. They may send out death squads to quietly eliminate opposition. These governments spend most of their energy staying in power no matter what the cost. They believe that where popularity does not work, fear might. Worst of all, if the people fear the guerillas more, they might not only ignore the problems with government for a while, they might even demand this treatment. When things get truly out of hand, many people choose safety over freedom.

Final Notes

This is a tricky space to game in. It’s often easy in a game to lose one’s morale compass. After all, simulated actions only have simulated repercussions. How often has a fantasy game dissolved into a massive bar fight where dozens of otherwise innocent town dwellers end up maimed or dead because of bruised egos in the pub? Referees struggle to find ways to limit the behavior of game characters to socially acceptable norms when none of the normal social controls exist. Their one obvious power to kill the characters only destroys the game.

Guerilla movements start at a place where the people involved believe the social controls no longer apply. However, history has repeatedly shown that guerilla movements out of touch with the needs of the people fail. For example, the people of Colombia might like to see a more even distribution of wealth. It would improve the political stability for sure. However, most do not believe every person of wealth deserves to be kidnapped by the FARC. As a result, the FARC cannot ultimately succeed. Nor for that matter, could the Somoza’s succeed in Nicaragua.

As a referee, your challenge is to simulate within your game the feedback that real life social controls impose. This is even more important if you roleplay in real life settings. However, referees do have tools at their disposal that players do respond to. How you award experience to the group and how available resources become as the story progresses should reflect the character’s quality of play and not just the quantity of dice rolling. In the end, a game with consequences provides more memories and more enjoyment. After all, how much fun would *Space Invaders* be if the aliens never shot back?

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Chapter 6:

Sample City — Medilaca

Note: This city represents an amalgamation of several locations in Colombia. In an effort to avoid putting the location in a specific area, several of the more interesting elements of each region find themselves in this quasi-fictional town. Nevertheless, the heaviest influence on the city mirrors the contested real-life town of Barraca, which has recently appeared in the news as a heavy battleground between the paramilitaries, the government and the guerillas.

Facts in Brief

Medilaca has a population of 20,000 people in a highly isolated area, near the inner edge of the oil pipeline. Several factions currently vie for control, living largely out of range of heavy government influence for the last 30 years. Each occupying force has only nominally controlled the region, with one notable exception.

For the last 25 years, a local warlord named Bocero has established his own Switzerland of sorts, playing one side off of another by allowing larger coalitions controlling interest in the city at various times. Due to Bocero's cunning, he has managed to maintain a quiet grip on the region in spite of numerous chaotic attempts to wrest it from him. The locals live in utter fear of him but don't dare do anything about it. They fear for their lives but have sold their souls to have some quiet peace.

The town has a moderate refinery that services the entire region. Due to the relative stability, the corporation has seen fit to put some of their corporate offices here. It manages the refinery and the upper end of the pipeline.

Life in Medilaca

Economy

As one might imagine, the entire economy in Medilaca revolves around oil. Over 30% of the town's population works at the local refinery. Very little of the money from the pipeline goes directly to benefit the populace. As a result, many locals have staged protests. On the other hand, a sizable portion of the money goes toward protection money paid to Bocero, who spends most of it in the town. Another major source of income for the city comes from the money spent by foreign oil workers. Additionally, the construction industry (such as it is for a town the size of Medilaca) has plenty of work due to the destruction caused by the frequent guerilla/paramilitary conflicts.

The town serves as a regional nexus for produce and farm goods, both legal and illegal. Several drug refinement centers exist out in El Campo. Most of the local inhabitants supplement their incomes however they can, with either a corner store run out of the side of their house, or raising a few extra chickens to sell to the butcher. On the whole, the people of the city show a remarkable sense of ingenuity when it comes to getting by. They have to, because no one else can do it for them.

Transportation

Due to the size of the town, one can reach most anywhere by foot, but some of the longer routes have other methods transportation. A single large bus depot in La Plaza Bolivar has space for five bus routes to neighboring towns, and two small, periodic microbus routes to El Campo and Puerto Oriz. In addition to this, dozens of taxis exist, though almost all of





these are actually cars serving as small buses for four or five people at a time rather than conventional taxis that take passengers wherever they wish to go. Of course, for enough money, they will take anyone wherever they want to go. Indeed, for even *more* money, they will gladly take their patron to a nice dark prison cell where either the paramilitary or the FARC can ransom them.

Crime

Crime is fairly rampant in the city, though it varies from neighborhood to neighborhood. The local government maintains a token police force, but it answers directly to Bocero and only patrols La Plaza Bolivar during the day. Its primary function involves taking the complaints of storeowners when someone robs them or to occasionally bust up protests or riots.

The locals generally assume that anyone from out of town has wealth. They definitely think this if the visitor speaks English predominantly. Word gets out rather quickly if someone starts spreading large amounts of money around. Many of the locals will attempt to shield the visitors, keeping on the lookout for cutpurses and thieves. Many times, these so-called-protectors are actually the very people that they claim to shield visitors against; this is usually noticed much too late by the hapless victim. Due to the lack of law enforcement, nearly every building has thick, welded iron bars on the doors and windows.

Entertainment

Television rarely gets through the extensive mountain passes, though the town does maintain a single poorly broadcast television station that serves the entire region. Most of the locals get their news by radio, though the few that can afford satellite reception possess it. A single, moderate sized theater serves as a source of live entertainment and a showplace for the weekly imported movie. The movie usually arrives seven to eight months after its release in the United States, and has a very grainy quality due to its recycling at several other locations in Latin America. Dancing enjoys great popularity, and the locals also celebrate a wider range of saint-based holidays than most regions of Colombia. The biggest celebrations of the year occur during Carnival, Christmas and Independence Day. Indeed, during Carnival the entire city shuts down and an unwritten code among the locals states that hostilities between the factions cease. The few times either the paramilitaries or the guerillas have violated this has caused them to lose enormous popularity with the locals.

Politics

Bocero tallies and sells any votes for federal office to the highest bidder at the department capital, though the authorities have yet to discover this particular scheme. The town actually votes for its mayor, who acts as an official intermediary between Bocero and the townsfolk. It also allows the crime lord to maintain a veil of legitimacy in the town.

Major Factions in the City

FARC base camp

A significant chunk of FARC's forces broke away to this region when the "Switzerland" area broke down. They set up a major camp and began a series of high-end kidnappings in order to fund their operations. Bocero initially bought them off, so they primarily focused on WESTERN corp. employees. Recent government crackdowns elsewhere in the country have forced a high demand for cash. As a result, a great deal of tension exists between the local FARC enclave and the paramilitary, with an increasing war of kidnapping. The FARC kidnaps anyone who supplies protection money to the Popótamo, while the paramilitary has retaliated by kidnapping anyone and everyone who they suspect of collaborating with the rebels.

ELN

Fifteen years ago, the ELN held almost the entire region under its thumb. The FARC drove them out of the area several years ago, and they have only now started to attempt a comeback. They have a few isolated bands that enter the area from time to time in an effort to recruit or forage what they can, but they tread extremely carefully. They largely remain an outside influence.

Popótamo

Paramilitary Group

Michael Jesus Bollero Bocero-Jardin started out a peasant and eventually became an underling for the drug lords. He rapidly gained a reputation as the man who could get things done. Bocero served as an under boss, but carefully limited his activities to merely providing logistical support for operations and creating a zone of stability in the region. Unlike

paramilitaries in other areas of the country, Bocero carefully targeted his acts of violence. Rather than create a perpetual sense of fear amongst the populace for betrayal, he has initiated a steady mix of bribery and philanthropy, punctuated with stark, incredibly brutal acts of terror that make most of the other paramilitaries pale in comparison. He has ruled with a quiet, invisible iron fist and finds himself finally with a foe he cannot buy off or intimidate away. He has found dealing with the highly radical FARC much more difficult than he did the ELN.

WESTERN Oil

Some cynics have nicknamed this somewhat dubious company "Halibut" oil, due to its ties with extremely powerful United States politicians. A U.S. journalist coined the term when he "smelled something fishy" about government contracts and the private corporation. All corporate documents refer to the company as WESTERN, but the locals almost always use its nickname, much to the annoyance of corporate officials. They moved in during the last several months, having bought out the interests of the local Dyncorp pipeline, and have hired a significant amount of mercenaries to ensure that the pipeline remains properly protected.

The Colombian Government

In theory, the government now has control of the town. However, in practice they have very little influence over the area. A few official services work, such some schools and mail delivery, but even these basic services pay homage to Bocero. The local government officials take no major action without his approval, although a few daring souls have tried to get backup from the government to do otherwise. Most of them ended up dead. However, recent disruptions in the oil pipeline by the FARC has caused the government to begin to take a much greater interest in the region due to the amount of money it brings as a source of revenue. Thus far, they have withheld undertaking a major offensive due to the assurances of the local officials that they can handle the situation, and the preference by WESTERN to control their own affairs without interference by the Colombian government. However, if too major a disruption of the pipeline occurs, then the government may act with a much heavier hand.

JUSTICIA

A human rights group, JUSTICIA, has worked fervently to bring the intervention of the Colombian government to the region. They often suffer as a prime target for ransom by both the paramilitaries *and* the FARC. Despite the reduction in their numbers, however, they continue to work in the area. Numerous civilian works, funded by private charities, have embarrassed local officials, who appeared unable to perform some of these basic tasks themselves. In recent months, due to these public works projects, JUSTICIA has begun gaining popularity with the local populace. As such, Bocero and the FARC have slowed the kidnappings down, but both suspect the organization of working for the other side and still threaten its members a great deal. Wisely thus far, JUSTICIA has stayed well clear of any conflicts involving the refinery or the oil pipeline. However, the previous local leader has now retired, and a fiery new passionate leader by the name of Josephina Brillar has other ideas. She has yet to make a move, but waits and watches for a chance to do so.

Outside the City

Los Jataro

Los Jataro is a small native tribe protected by a local mission. The natives have nothing of value whatsoever, but in recent months several biopharmacologists have begun investigating several highly interesting plants in the area for their promising medical properties. They have also had strong reservations about the damage that the oil pipeline and refinery have done to the region and have lodged protests against some of the previous oil companies that tried to occupy the region and expand the oil base. These protests have successfully stopped the expansion. Unfortunately, the local WESTERN boss is getting ideas from some of his predecessors. Unbeknownst to the main corporate office, he has begun dumping at the same site into order to cut costs. He was hired based on his ability to handle the FARC situation, and has thus far been unable to do so. As a result, costs are skyrocketing, and he has to hide them somewhere. Waste management was his first pick.

LLESDM (La Leche Engulliendo Ladrones de Mono)

LLESDM is a second paramilitary, much smaller, concerned only with smuggling large amounts of animals out of



the country. Its members do not get along with the Jataro or los Popótamo.

City Section

Brief Explanation Key

Description: This is a brief amount of block text that the referee can read to the party to describe the neighborhood.

Streetwise: This reflects the information that someone would learn by making a successful Streetwise roll (DC 10) and spending a few hours in the area.

Secrets: This contains information that the referee can use for an extended session or that a player could find out with extended research.

Plot Hooks: Suggested plot hooks for using aspects of the area for roleplaying.

Neighborhoods

Aliado Oscuro

Description: Set high on a hill overlooking the city, it essentially consists of one very long street with concrete block-

houses along either side of it. Spiraling out on either end, behind the permanent houses, numerous dwellings made solely of aluminum siding (often occupied by poorer family members who have not yet inherited the more permanent house on the street) look down into the trees or the city below. The street itself winds in a serpentine like fashion with numerous cul-de-sacs, leaving many opportunities for ambushes.

Streetwise: This area of town only has two entrances and exits. Because of the limited access, both the paramilitaries and the FARC have problems entering this area. On the surface, it looks a lot like a typical lower class Colombian neighborhood, but closer inspection reveals it to be one of the more densely packed areas of the city. Anyone who does not fit Bocero's narrow definition of what constitutes "proper" behavior has fled to this area. The inhabitants of this neighborhood protect their own, and do not hesitate to use violence upon anyone threatening them.

Secrets: Two bordellos make their home here. The city does not tolerate prostitutes to ply their trade anywhere else. Each of the small houses has a garden, among which one can find cocoa plants and a few poppies. The locals use most of this themselves, but they sell some of it to the farmers in rural



areas who pass it off to the drug lords. Both the paramilitaries and the FARC have small cells of people hiding undercover in this neighborhood to provide safe houses, but pretty much everyone in the entire neighborhood knows about them. The inhabitants do not really interact with them. Anyone who manages to get on the good side of the locals will find them quite willing to provide information on these two places, especially if they think that the people asking will remove them from the neighborhood.

Plot Hooks:

- A local thief has stolen an object very valuable to one of the characters, so the party must enter the neighborhood to get it back.
- The characters buy a safe house of their own, thinking this the safest area of town, only to get robbed by the locals for failing to pay them off.

Sobaco

Description: This potpourri of concrete blockhouses, aluminum siding shacks, and wooden dwellings represents the poorest of the poor among the inhabitants of the city. It sprawls over the entire southern half of the city, with a twisting maze of unpaved streets that boggle the mind when trying to navigate it. The locals use whatever numbers they want on the houses, so finding any kind of an address without asking numerous people is a challenge.

Streetwise: Most of the people living here have come in the last few years. A few have done quite well for themselves managing shops, running drugs or taking whatever job they can find, and have thus begun expanding their dwellings bit by bit. Numerous garage-style restaurants dot the landscape. Still, the complete lack of any infrastructure (water, electricity) has left often-dangerous arrangements with frayed and spliced electrical cables moving across numerous wooden poles. Crime in the area fluctuates greatly, but only happens in quick random bursts. Organized groups that are not run by Bocero find themselves crushed rather quickly.

Secrets: Bocero maintains his official embassy in the city in this neighborhood. He has staked out a large area in the abandoned high school to house several weapons, drugs, cash and other items that he wants held in a secure area close to the city itself. A few of the locals have built a tunnel network for smuggling things in and out of the city in order to get past the check points in the road.

Plot Hooks:

- The characters find out that Bocero has just installed a

very new and expensive printing press to start making counterfeit money inside of the former high school. Government officials want to hire the party to take it out.

- The characters accidentally stumble across Bocero's favorite restaurant and offend the owner, who then puts out a contract on them.

Los Bloques

Description: These large, seemingly endless rows of identical concrete apartment buildings hold nearly a quarter of the city's population. They each have very thick blue paint, which makes them contrast harshly with the green canopy that surrounds the city. Thick iron bars surround the windows and the entrances, and only the residents hold the keys. Each building has a large, brightly painted red number on both corners of the building. Dying grass fills the spaces between each of the buildings.

Streetwise: The limited middle class in the city makes their home here, as well as the more fortunate inhabitants of the city. Bocero keeps this area free of crime and other undesirable. The people of this area remain open and friendly despite the chaos that surrounds them. Numerous competitions rise up among the different apartment buildings, and a small soccer league has matches all year on a wide field near the area. If any of the characters join the League, they find themselves endeared to the local populace rather quickly. The locals take their soccer very seriously.

Secrets: The Colombian secret police maintain a small outpost here. The inhabitants of the apartment do not interact with anyone else, and primarily just report the happenings of the city to the central government. They also act as official liaisons between the government and Bocero when the need arises, though they have lately downplayed violence committed by the paramilitaries and highlighting abuses by the guerillas in an effort to keep Bocero in power.

Plot Hooks:

- The characters must get an intelligence report from the local officials while maintaining a low profile.
- The Colombian government suspects that their agents have turned, and asks the characters to raid the office and gather proof of the affair.

La Plaza Bolivar

Description: This section contains the oldest area of the city. Several of the buildings go back more than four centuries, including the government building and the city cathedral. At the center of the large square, a tall bronze statue,



commissioned by the mayor 70 years ago, depicts Simon Bolivar astride a giant stallion. This hilly area has several houses from numerous time periods with distinctly European stamps to them. It also contains the commercial heart of the town, with numerous open-air markets where vendors sell produce and sundry, small imported goods (kitchenware, plastic toys, etc.).

Streetwise: At night, this area of the city virtually shuts down. A few nightclubs remain open for business, but anyone actually living in this section of the city retreats to their homes. Most of the kidnappings occur in this section of town, either hapless tourists or uninformed corporate workers from out of town. Each of the businesses has very secure iron bars on it to prevent theft, and this remains the only area of town that the police actually protect. A thriving underground market exists here as well, and anyone wanting to buy something legal or illegal — weapons, drugs, body armor, cash, etc. — can find it by paying the right price. Whatever the sellers don't have, they can get in a relatively short period of time.

Secrets: The three nightclubs in town each cater to one of the major factions in the area. La Amistad remains one of Bocero's favorite nightspots, and the place where he entertains prospective clients. It also serves as the contact point for any of his negotiations. Once someone has properly cleared his filters, he gets forwarded to the restaurant in Sobaco. The second club, Miguel's, serves as a scouting point for the FARC. The owner has grown tired of Bocero's high protection taxes, so he has begun working to get the FARC into the town. He works for them by getting potential kidnap victims drunk or drugged and then signals the guerillas to pick them up. Rayas del Sol, the third club, is the smallest and newest and has sympathies with the government. Its owner served for 20 years in Colombia's military and believes the paras and the guerillas are ruining the country. He has slowly been working old contacts to increase the government's presence in the area, without much success.

Plot Hooks:

- One of the characters has one drink too many and must fend off a kidnap attempt by the guerillas.
- One of the paramilitary groups thinks that the characters sympathize a little bit too much with the guerillas and arranges to have them kidnapped.

Puerto Oriz

Description: This small neighborhood sticks out like a sore thumb in comparison to the rest of the city. It has well-

paved, orderly streets which remain free of litter or trash of any kind. The entire area has a large, 12-foot iron fence with barbed wire strung along the top to prevent anyone from sneaking over it. Numerous, well-lit floodlights sweep the area in search of potential intruders. Three entrance checkpoints stop and search any cars entering the area. The houses all have a very heavy United States influence, almost appearing like a transplanted suburb. However, each of them also has a distinct 1950s flavor as well, due to the era of their construction.

Streetwise: WESTERN provides the security in this area. They make several day and night patrols around the region to keep any unwanted trespassers out. Most of the corporate workers as well as the richer inhabitants of the city live here. Bocero keeps several houses here for members of his extended family (sisters, brothers, cousins and parents). Unlike other areas of the city, the only stores in here have congregated around a single small business district, consisting of an American style café, a general store (a mini Wal-Mart knockoff), and a clothing store containing American style clothing. Sometimes, by bribing the guards, inhabitants from other areas of the city can gain a temporary pass to shop in these upper-class stores.

Secrets: The current local manager of WESTERN has decided to take no chances. Through a carefully arranged set of security sweeps he has bugged each and every house in the entire area. A command center, buried under the local corporate headquarters, keeps close tabs on everything that happens inside or outside of the area. He has begun a series of kidnappings of his own, apprehending anyone climbing over the wall who does not belong. He has hoped to initiate an exchange for kidnapped WESTERN employees, but thus far has met with little success. He keeps his hostages locked in a room adjoining the buried command center.

Plot Hooks:

- One of the character's gets identified as a sympathizer for the guerillas and gets locked in the command center by the WESTERN guards.
- The characters learn that Bocero's mistress lives in one of the posh houses here and must go to collect information on his activities.

El Campo

Description: At the northern end of the city, the numerous houses slowly begin to make way for farms. While technically a part of the city proper, these homesteads each



have copious amounts of livestock in the form of chickens, goats, ducks, rabbits and dogs. Two well-paved roads weave around in a large figure-eight style loop through the area, but numerous unpaved roads branch off into other areas. Each of the houses has its own concrete fence topped with upside-down broken bottles to prevent anyone from coming over them. During heavy storms, the water from the hills comes rushing down the main streets of and into the river, leaving behind numerous gullies and ridges.

Streetwise: The inhabitants of this area pretty much keep to themselves. They have strong sympathies with the guerillas, whom they will often keep hidden from paramilitary incursions. Bocero knows about this and thus publicly kidnaps one or two male heads of the farms from time to time and holds them for several days before releasing them. As such, the people of this area make sure to pay a significant portion of their income to both the guerillas and Bocero, leaving them the most vulnerable faction of the city's population.

Secrets: The guerillas have slowly started stashing large quantities of weapons with the more sympathetic members of the neighborhood in anticipation of retaking the city. Sometimes they will also stash a kidnap victim from another city here to avoid having a rescue party find him.

Plot Hooks:

- The characters must rescue someone, only to find out that they have saved the wrong person.
- The characters must buy a cow for someone and arrange to move it to another area of the city — without a vehicle.

Other Locations

The Refinery

Description: Each day a dozen specially commissioned air-conditioned busses drive out of the heavily fortified concrete gates of the Refinery to pick up workers lined up at the bus station in La Plaza Bolivar. The busses make five trips both ways, each with two armed guards with automatic rifles. From a distance, the refinery displays yard after yard of twisting metal pipes interlaced with spherical distilling tanks. The pungent smell permeates the entire valley, creating a perpetually thick haze of smoke as the utterly unregulated smokestacks pump toxic chemicals into the air.

Streetwise: Life in the refinery is harsh. Those who do not do their work properly and to the sufficient demand of the management team get fired — and quickly. Still, unlike other plants in the nation, the WESTERN management re-





alizes that it must take care with its disciplinary measures. It tests its workers with a rigorous series of advanced psychological exams and lie detector tests, to avoid any kind of infiltration by the guerillas or other hostile groups. Occasionally, a hostile gets through these tests, which explains the hired mercenary gunmen in the watchtowers ready to fire at anyone attempting to sabotage the plant's activities.

Still, by the standards of the region, the workers do get paid incredibly well. They have a curious sense of loyalty to the company, pride in their work, and disgust at their almost complete lack of freedom. In the end, if the oil keeps flowing, they get paid. When they get paid, they can feed their families, so they keep doing the work. At least 70 armed men patrol the Medilaca section of the pipeline during the day. If they run into heavy opposition or ambush, they send a radio call to the new rapid reaction force in the Colombian military. Even with their Blackhawk helicopters, reinforcements often arrive too late.

A thick concrete wall surrounds the refinery, laced with razor sharp barbed wire. Until recently, much of the refinery's waste products got dumped into a nearby river. Fear of international exposure (in large part brought by JUSTICIA) has caused the company to begin shipping them to an off-site disposal area.

Secrets: The company hasn't actually stopped dumping waste in the river. Unknown even to the senior management, the local manager fills several barrels with kerosene and has them burnt at a furnace, while burying the more toxic chemicals in a secret landfill. The exceptionally poor construction of the landfill has caused leakage, slowly poisoning the water and everyone who drinks it. A group of scientists from the Colombian government started to investigate this a few months ago, but the local manager told Bocero. Bocero had them "disappeared" and at the moment has not decided whether he shall simply kill them or get ransom money from the government for them.

Plot Hooks:

- Guns and incredible amounts of highly explosive material. Need we say more?
- The characters get sent by the Colombian government to test the water and identify the source of its contamination.

Bocero's Headquarters

Description: A large manor house with a number of surrounding buildings. It has a chain link fence with barbed wire around it, painted bright green in order to blend in with the scenery as much as possible. Anyone waiting for about five

minutes will notice a heavily armed patrol skirt the perimeter in order to make sure no one enters the compound unwanted. The house maintains the only airstrip in the entire valley and also has a small air tower to receive the planes as they land.

Streetwise: The name of the paramilitary (Popótamo) comes from a shortened version of the word Hipopótamo (Hipopotamus), of which there are several hiding in the back pool of the complex. Bocero has taken over the compound, one of many belonging to former drug dealer Pablo Escobar. He has made a few changes, including several hidden watchtowers with mounted miniguns that fire at anyone approaching the area without the proper signal.

Bocero lives a surprisingly moderate lifestyle, but has indulged himself in one area: he has one of the largest private libraries in South America. He spreads most of his wealth around the world in numerous hidden bank accounts, although he also has a thriving business of money laundering for others. He sinks vast amounts of wealth into the town, where he feels that it will remain safe for his family to claim should the authorities ever successfully abscond him. Still, he does not really need to spend that much money, since the estate came with all the luxuries a man could ask for.

Secrets: Bocero has acquired a rather thick dossier on several Colombian and international business figures. His dealings over the last 25 years have allowed him to establish numerous international connections, some which he has obtained through blackmail. Indeed, the people he has offended now outnumber those he counts as allies, but by and large they still leave him alone for fear of having their secrets exposed.

FARC Compound

Description: The FARC have hidden themselves in plain sight. Specifically, they have moved their entire group into the sympathetic village of Corazon Sagrado, and joined themselves with the population. During the vast majority of the time, the guerilla unit walks around in normal civilian clothing and helps with the farming. The village itself remains mainly nondescript. It has wide cocoa plantations, with a scattering of other crops to help maintain the village lifestyle.

A moderate sized chapel lies in the southwest corner, followed by a single dirt track that runs through the entire area. Thick brush and foliage surrounds the village, with the cacophonous sounds of the planes making speech difficult at times during the day. The lights of the city do not shine here at night, making the stars quite visible and brilliant.

Streetwise: Kin visiting from distant villages do not speak in great detail about what happens in Corazon Sagrado. Anyone asking a person who has relatives in Corazon Sagrado (Streetwise DC 14), will get a simple answer of "It is a simple and peaceful village." If the character has successfully managed to get on the good side of the person, he warns the character to stay away. When pressed for information, he simply shrugs and says, "People who stick their noses into business out there that doesn't pertain to them often end up dead."

Secrets: This area holds three companies of FARC guerrillas. At any given time, two go out on patrol, with one serving as a reserve in the village. The villagers all work very closely with the FARC and remain quite sympathetic to their cause. The paras kidnapped a large number of their men a few years ago and the government did nothing to stop them. Indeed, a significant number of FARC recruits came from the village.

An extensive network of tunnels exists underneath the complex, almost like something out of the sitcom "Hogan's Heroes," though with far more lethal intent. Anyone assaulting the village will find dozens of FARC soldiers ready to come at them from all sides. The FARC knows the terrain incredibly well and has rigged the tunnels with explosives to further confound unwanted intruders.

An impromptu prison lies under the chapel, whose priest also belongs to the FARC. Numerous cells hold ransomed prisoners who have absolutely no idea where they are. Each of the cells has plastic explosive rigged to it that the FARC can detonate in case someone attempts a rescue without paying the appropriate ransom. They have hidden five anti-personnel heavy machine guns in well-hidden bunkers around the perimeter of the village. They also have six motorcycles and a jeep locked in one of the barns.

Plot Hooks:

- The characters must mount a full assault on the FARC compound, which should prove exceedingly difficult.
- The characters must infiltrate and leave using stealth, also a prospect that could prove very hazardous.

Village

Description: The natives who live here have done so since the time of the conquistadors. They have maintained a careful balance of trade and caution when dealing with the outside world. Still, their well crafted goods, limited gold- and silversmithing, finely woven shirts, woodcraft and other small items fetch a very nice price at Medellana and beyond. They tend to keep to themselves, though sometimes they do come

into the city. When they do, they come in numbers of at least 10 to 14, and have a reputation of unleashing their fury on any who offends one of them.

Neither the guerillas nor the paras ever kidnap them anymore, though whether this comes from respect, fear, or something else no one knows. The village itself contains an evangelical Christian mission run by the Reverend Hallejuah Smithers. He has worked among them for 40 years, trying to gain converts. The natives generally follow an animist religion, but have readily mixed a combination of Christian and native mythology into something unique to themselves. Their houses generally follow the mainstream Colombian tradition of aluminum, though they also have a heavy mix of woven grass walls.

Streetwise: In the last few months, a group of biologists have set up a minor base camp with the villagers. They have a significant amount of interest in a local plant, which they repute to have remarkable healing properties.

The villagers actually have multiple villages deep in the wilderness, which they tell few people about.

Bocero uses a large number of native servants in his compound, primarily due to their skill in the day-to-day tasks, but also because they offer him what he believes an appropriate amount of respect. While they show this same generosity to anyone visiting their village, they also have a code of justice that demands revenge on anyone harming one of their number. They consider themselves a large extended family and respect their elders a great deal.

Secrets: The natives occasionally offer the paramilitaries or the guerillas sanctuary and healing, though neither side has learned yet that they play both sides against the other. They do have more interaction with the FARC due to their remote location, but they also have placed their primary trading village as close to Bocero's compound as they could. The primary reason for this stems from the fact that Bocero has an intense dislike for the smell caused by the Refinery, and thus demanded that the oil companies place it where the stench of the fumes would not affect him. The Janopan believe the refinery to have caused a spiritual stain upon the land, and if asked can demonstrate numerous instances of animals or plants that have died or become sick as a result. They also know about the secret dumping done by the refinery, and will show it to anyone they believe trustworthy. Earning their trust on this level takes considerable time and patience.

Plot Hooks:

- The characters get a tip on a particular artist whose art



has a great deal of demand in the United States, and can negotiate an exclusive contract with an importer for an increase to their wealth.

- The characters learn that one of the natives has knowledge of an abduction, having witnessed it, and must go to find details on the kidnapping.

Road Blocks

Description: At any given time, all three of the roads into Medicalla have a roadblock. Sometimes the paras occupy them, sometimes the FARC occupies them, or sometimes an independent group of bandits does so. Most people going from one area to another simply pay the fee and move on, but of late the FARC and the Popotámo have begun a series of ambushes on each other to try and get a stronger hand on the territory. Occasionally, government troops will disguise a normal bus and ambush either side. These roadblocks have no permanent location but move from day to day. They typically have a scout at each end of the road with a radio to report any traffic or an approaching opposing force, at which point the local commander makes the decision to disband the roadblock or hold the ground and fight. Both sides always take down their roadblocks when they spot government troops in a convoy.

Streetwise: WESTERN Oil generally does not care about these roadblocks, and has their people pay the toll. However, they have learned from long and painful experience never to permit corporate personnel on the trucks, but instead use independent contractors, lest they get kidnapped. Indeed, they have paid the Popotámo to disrupt attempts in nearby towns to organize a union among the truck drivers, who have grown tired of refusals by WESTERN Oil to pay their ransom. To date, the truck drivers have met with little success.

Secrets: The FARC tacitly supports the efforts of the truck drivers to unionize. They realize that if they can get the WESTERN Oil Corporation to pay for the ransoms of kidnapped people, they can greatly increase the amount demanded. Things have begun to come to a head as FARC commandos have begun driving the trucks, both to quietly encourage the union, but also to use the trucks as a weapon. If the Popotámo attempt to stop a truck with a FARC driver, he activates a carefully placed explosive device, which causes the entire thing to explode in a massive fireball. After two attempts at this, WESTERN Oil has begun to choose its contractors more carefully, but since they will not directly hire them, this has proven difficult. As such, they have begun to

consider slipping their own agents in among the truck drivers, to the point where few of the remaining truck drivers actually consist of independents. 90% of those who drive the trucks work for one side or the other and spend large amounts of time making friends with those that they don't know in order to learn more about them.

Plot Hooks:

- The characters get escort duty to take three trucks from the refinery to the department capital of Barita. Both the paras and the FARC have agents as the drivers and plan to ambush the convoy at roughly the same time, leaving the characters caught in the middle.

The Monastery of San Oreola

Description: This high, stone monastery rests upon a sheer cliff at the zenith of one of the highest mountains in the entire region. It overlooks the city, and on a rare clear day, one can spot it from the middle of La Plaza Bolivar. A single winding footpath runs from the base of the mountain all the way to the top. Occasionally, a convoy of monks comes into town in order to sell the wines they make at the top. The locals, who have an incredible thirst for it, consume almost the entirety of the rare vintage. The convoy makes the journey only five times a year, and always receives a popular reception when they come.

Streetwise: The monks make a prime target for the FARC, which does not enjoy very good relations with the Catholic Church. On the other hand, of the six times in recent years that the FARC have attacked the convoy, the monks have neither retaliated nor attempted to run away. Attempts at ransom have never been paid. The FARC has killed at least seven monks, sometimes sending small pieces of the bodies to the monastery to prove that they mean business, but the monks have simply refused to acknowledge these demands and resumed their activities as normal. Furthermore, the disruptions of the caravans severely diminished the locals' opinion of the guerillas, and they began to actively work with the paramilitaries in hunting them down. At this point, the FARC still occasionally kidnap one of them, but they always do so after the monks have delivered their wines, and generally end up letting the monk go after a few months of unsuccessful negotiations. The monks almost never buy anything from the outside world, and no one knows how they spend the money they get from the wine. Rumors abound that they have a secret treasure buried inside of a vault underneath the mountain.



Anyone making a successful Knowledge (theology) roll (DC 25) quickly realizes that no such saint as San Oreola exists in Catholic theology, or in any other theology that they have heard of. Should one of the characters inquire about this to one of the monks, the monk replies (one of the few occasions in which they do speak) that the application remains in process. Inquiries with the Catholic Church reveal little, unless someone successfully makes a research (DC 35) roll, in which they learn of an obscure application for sainthood made and rejected around 1600 AD for one of the pack holders in the early conquistador expeditions who had held very pious views.

Secrets: The monks lace the wine with incredibly small amounts of their own homebrewed version of LSD. The monastery actually belonged to a group of Jesuit monks who died out in the early 18th century. In the early 1960s, a group of explorers found the area and slowly began recruiting members abroad. Since then, they have formed a cult that has begun heavily exploring mind-altering substances of every kind and description, believing that they can open a doorway to another reality by channeling the energies of their minds. Ironically, they do indeed have a vast treasure hoard located in one of the vaults, which they plan to use to establish an outpost in the worlds they visit. Of late, many of them have grown discouraged, but their leader, Jose Varilla, has locked them in the basement and used them as test subjects for some of his more radical experiments. The monastery can largely meet its own food needs from well-stocked gardens.

Plot Hooks:

- The Catholic Church finds out about a rare lost religious artifact at the monastery and sends the characters to retrieve it.
- The monks really *do* succeed at their experiment, opening the doorway into a new reality....
- The monks attempt to enlighten the rest of the population of Mediaca and dump large quantities of LSD into the water supply.

The Red Cave

Description: Not far from the monastery, an ancient cave lies untended. Occasionally people from Mediaca will examine it, but generally they pay little attention. The massive

ceiling allows for a strong draft to pass through. No one has mapped out the entirety of the complex, though branches of it run up and down the entire length of the mountain range. The largest entrance, known as “La cabienra roja,” contains several large deposits of clay and red quartz that catch the light around the late evening. The unnerving effect causes anyone standing inside to feel as if they had entered a giant blood vessel, with a red glow emitted from the walls.

Streetwise: The FARC regularly use the caves as a method of navigating around the region. The paras have grown wise to this fact and systematically dynamite several of the entrances shut. The FARC just ignores this and digs out a new entrance, but JUSTICIA, in an attempt to stop all of this, has joined forces with an obscure European environmental group that claims the caves have a unique environmental ecostructure.

Many of the locals firmly believe the caves contain vast quantities of gold as yet untapped, though no one has found any in quite some time. Legend also speaks of a cave with unusual writing that does not match any of the previously known cultures of the area.

Secrets: The environmental group consists of 50% adventures and 50% of those who could actually claim the term “environmentalist.” The adventurers believe that the Spanish hid a large amount of gold inside the caves, so they plan to map out the entire complex in search of it. The environmentalists have grown interested in a unique species of lice on the bats in the caves (which are also quite rare but not unique to these caves). The lice hold no (as yet discovered) medicinal qualities, but the group desperately wants to save them. Thus far, the government and Bocero have taken little interest in the matter, though JUSTICIA supports them in principal, if not directly in practice.

Plot Hooks:

- The cave with the ancient writing actually exists and contains pre-Tairona writings. Such a find would prove invaluable to Colombian archeologists seeking to understand Colombia’s ancient past.
- The group hires the characters to protect them from the FARC. The Popotámo and the FARC express their displeasure with the party’s incursion into the caves in the form of bullets.



Chapter 7: Introductory Adventure — The Caño Limnón Pipeline '96

(Suitable for 4-6 characters of 3-5th level)

Igitur qui desiderat pacem, praeparet bellum. (If you want peace, prepare for war)

— Vegetius, *Epitoma Rei Militaris*

In addition to this counterdrug effort, we are requesting \$98 million in FMF to help the Colombian Government protect the vital Caño Limnón-Covenas oil pipeline from the same foreign terrorist organizations involved in illicit drugs, the FARC and the ELN. Their attacks on the pipelines shut it down 240 days in 2001, costing Colombia revenue, causing serious environmental damage, and depriving us of a source of petroleum. This money will help train and equip two brigades of the Colombian armed forces to protect the pipeline.

— Secretary Colin L. Powell, Statement on President Bush's Budget Request for FY 2003, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs, Washington, DC, February 13, 2002

Background

(We provide this background material as a context to the adventure. You may find it useful to provide this to the players before starting. Alternately, you may withhold the information until one of the players asks for it.)

The 483-mile Caño Limnón Pipeline is a joint venture between Occidental Petroleum, a California corporation, and Ecopetrol, the Colombian state oil company. It stretches from the Caño Limnón oil fields near Arauca to the port town of Covenas. Ecopetrol receives 85% of the net revenues from the pipeline and is a major source of revenue for the Colombian government. Currently, output from the pipeline is on a gradual decline as the 1.3 billion-barrel field of oil discovered in 1983 slowly taps out. To date, it has transported 910 million barrels.

Since its creation, rebel groups have attacked the pipeline more than 900 times. The attacks peaked in 2001, during which 170 successful bombing attacks shut the pipeline down for a total of 240 days and cost the Colombian government an estimated 500 million dollars in revenue. Ecopetrol represents about 20% of the government revenues. Hence, the attacks on the pipeline are of major concern to the government. The attacks are also troublesome to Occidental Petroleum. Though the pipeline operations represent less than 1% of the company's assets, the lost revenues are significant enough to warrant their political lobbying for increased U.S. involvement in the area. Colombia is now the third largest recipient of foreign aid from the United States.

In addition to the financial cost, the pipeline attacks are a major environmental disaster. Occidental estimates that the attacks spilled two million barrels of oil across the countryside. The spilt oil has ruined nearby farmlands and tainted nearby water supplies. Whether the fault for this damage lies with the rebels or with the companies who built the pipeline in a war zone depends primarily on your political orientation. However, the locals pay the price in death and displacement.

Referee's Abstract

Initially, the player's primary task involves escorting a reporter to the site of a recent attack on the pipeline. However, the reporter is actually the wife of a kidnapped local contracting pipeline engineer. Rebels kidnapped her husband months ago and she traced the kidnappers using paramilitary contacts to this pipeline attack. The paramilitaries would like to eliminate the rebel cell. However, the reporter wants her husband back safely. She has hired the characters to keep the paramilitaries from storming in and getting her husband killed.





Once on the ground, she will pick up sufficient clues to find the rebel base. At this point, she will dump the player characters and try to negotiate for her husband. However, the rebels know she has paramilitary connections and take her hostage as well. The characters, hopefully, can save her and her husband before the paramilitaries show up.

The Note

We must make a distinction at this point between the fictional WESTERN Oil, the company running the pipeline near Medicala (see Chapter 6), and the very real Occidental Oil. One exists, the other does not. Any similarities between the two companies exist solely in the mind of the individual.

Read the following to the characters:

“You receive a note in the mail. It’s in a very formal handwritten script, in a rather expensive envelope — definitely not the kind of thing you normally expect to find among your routine correspondence. It looks more like an invitation to a formal ball than any sort of offer for work; but there it is. It reads...”

Your presence is cordially requested in Arauca, Colombia in 24 hours. A \$2000 retainer, accompanied by these tickets, will be provided to ensure your maximum comfort and convenience. Please bring any necessary equipment with respect to the implementation of your chosen profession.

*Emelda Castillo,
Colombia Enquirer*

At this point, the characters have 24 hours to perform some research on Ms. Castillo, should they so desire. A successful Gather Information skill check at DC 20 yields that the Colombia Enquirer does not exist, nor do any reporters of that name. A more detailed and careful analysis (DC 25) reveals that a recent kidnapping occurred for a pipeline contractor, and that thus far the ransom has not changed hands.

Emelda Castillo

Emelda is a beautiful, bilingual women apparently visiting the United States with the purpose of hiring mercenaries for physical security. She shows credentials that indicate she works for a major U.S. news organization. If asked, she states she prefers to hire North Americans because they generally have higher ethics. Unless the characters have researched her identity beforehand, Emelda sticks closely to her story that she wants to report on the pipeline.

If one of the characters directly confronts her about her identity, she does not so readily give up the deception, ex-

plaining that a rich venture capitalist has attempted to start an English-based newspaper in Colombia, and an exclusive on the pipeline should generate sufficient interest to put it on the map. If it appears that the characters know who she really is, and absolutely refuse to help her, then she will explain the truth behind her husband’s kidnapping and the imminent attack by the paramilitaries on the rebel compound. Of course, she plans on telling them this information anyway, but not her true reason behind it.

She wants time to move around in the town and gather clues about the rebel compound so she can negotiate with them in person and get out. The characters just need to buy her some time.

She has rented a helicopter to fly them out to the small town of San Felina, 20 miles north of Bocero and 30 miles south of Arauca. It has a population of about a thousand people and government reports indicate that it has close ties with the rebels or the paras, though these reports conflict.

The helicopter lands and the characters get out. They must first drive to the town from the helipad, though the only transportation consists of an extremely old jeep.

As the characters drive down the road, they should make skill checks (Spot DC 22) to notice a partially unearthed mine. A close examination (Search 15) reveals that a large minefield lies between the helipad and the town. Emelda has little idea what to do at this point. If asked, she says, “That is what I hired you for.” She will say that she has no desire to try and spend a lot of time in the wilderness around the town; both the local paramilitary and the guerillas have had intense firefights here of late and anyone unknown could get shot in the crossfire.

If the characters attempt to bypass the minefield (which stretches over a rather large area), they run into either a FARC patrol (if they go east) or a paramilitary patrol (if they go west). Either way, the patrol consists of four armed men (see below).

If the characters choose to go through the minefield, it takes time but is the safest alternative. Moderately difficult searches (DC 15) reveal that the mines are very old and poorly hidden. Any minor effort to disarm them (DC 10) allows safe passage. Still, it slows the pace of anyone on foot to about five hours, or anyone still daring to use the vehicle to 13 hours. Feel free to have sounds of mortar fire far in the distance to frighten the party into moving a little faster.



Patrol (FARC or Paramilitary)

Fast Hero 3: CR 3; hp 19; Mas 12; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; Defense 17, touch 17, flat-footed 14; BAB +2; Melee +3; Ranged +5; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1, AP 8; Rep +0; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Wis 10, Int 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Escape Artist +9, Hide +9, Move Silently +9, Spot +3, Listen +3, Tumble +9

Feats: Personal Firearms Proficiency, Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Strafe.

Talents (Fast Hero): Increased Speed, Improved Increased Speed.

Possessions: Clothing, AK-47 assault rifle, two magazines of ammo.

The Ruined Land

As the characters move slowly through the minefield, the referee can choose to read the following description of the area to them, to give them an understanding of what has happened to the region:

“As you slowly make your way to the town, you spot several abandoned farms, some obviously empty for a long time but others seem to have been occupied more recently, even a short while ago. A thick, acrid chemical smell permeates the air, much like a newly paved asphalt road, but more intense and far more bitter.

“As you continue on your journey toward the town, you notice a section of the exposed pipeline, weaving its way in and out of an extremely rocky inclination. This section of the pipeline has a number of welds, probably to prevent further damage and to repair previous attacks, but some of the repairs have started to leak, causing a steady drip of petroleum that forms a tiny lake oozing its way down the hill.

“As the dirt road turns a bend, you see the side of a large, grass-covered hill slicked with a layer of black slime. A mixture of dead plant life, opportunistic fungi and acrid chemical corruption penetrates the air. Down farther into the vale, you see a tiny church, with a graveyard packed with stones. A funeral has just disbanded and the local residents have started to return to their homes.”

If any of the characters asks about who got killed, they find the villagers somewhat reluctant to talk. Eventually they explain that the paras shot a local youth, Julio, in a routine raid a short while ago.

At this stage, Esmerelda parts company with the characters at the first opportunity she gets, blending in with those

departing the funeral so that she can move around the town asking questions about how to find her husband.

Las Familias

The town has a dark past and a dark secret to go with it. 20 years ago, the two largest families in the town, Caprieta and Osreala, began a feud over a star-crossed love affair between two of their children that resulted in their untimely demise. Since that time, the two families have quietly fought in the shadows, though never using outright violence. Each family has associated itself with a local faction; the Caprieta with the FARC and the Osreala with the local paramilitary (Al Redador — affiliated with the AUC). They have provided information to these two groups to fight their feud by proxy, but the unfortunate side effect has caused an escalation of violence over time. As a result of the frequent tips and conflicts, this section of the pipeline has turned into a symbol of pride rather than anything of strategic importance. Neither the FARC nor Al Redador want to give in to the other for fear of looking weak to the rest of their organizations.

Lately, however, the head of Al Redador has read the handwriting on the wall with regard to national politics and is aware of the sharp increase of government activity in Arauca. He has come to understand that sooner or later the government will come to take back the town; the only chance his group of soldiers has to maintain any kind of longterm future in the area comes from becoming a useful tool to the military and the larger regime. As such, he has decided to eliminate the local FARC opposition once and for all, not only by assaulting their compound, but by killing any sympathizers in the town. The simplest solution to this problem involves destroying the town. One can always rebuild a town.

Investigations

Emelda has a contact in town, a retired priest by the name of Alvin Monstrada, and she has gone to talk with him. If the characters notice her missing and go to investigate, they should find her just in time to see a large truck driving away with her inside, screaming. No one in the town does anything to stop them. If the characters noticed her leaving and followed her extremely closely, then they have a fight on their hands, though the patrol attempts to leave as quickly as possible. They do not want a fight here. There are four soldiers in the patrol (see below).

If the characters manage to somehow stop Emelda's kidnapping, having one of ambushers still barely alive gives the



characters a chance to find the location of the hidden rebel base. On the other hand, if the characters simply kill everything that moves, none of the locals has any real desire to talk to them. They should have to make several Intimidation or Diplomacy skill checks to get information from the locals on where the patrol may have taken her husband. Regardless, the characters should ultimately discover its location. However, if they wisely managed to talk to the locals in a polite and controlled fashion, then the locals provide valuable insight about the guerilla inhabitants of the base.

Truck Patrol

Fast Hero 3: CR 3; hp 19; Mas 12; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; Defense 17, touch 17, flat-footed 14; BAB +2; Melee +3; Ranged +5; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1, AP 8; Rep +0; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Wis 10, Int 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Escape Artist +9, Hide +9, Listen +3, Move Silently +9, Spot +3, Tumble +9

Feats: Simple Weapons Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Double Tap.

Talents (Fast Hero): Increased Speed, Improved Increased Speed.

Possessions: Clothing, MAC Ingram M10, two magazines of ammo.

The Hidden Rebel Base

The rebels have occupied the dream home of a former U.S. Marine who decided to retire here 10 years ago. However, the marine died of natural causes, and the FARC decided to take advantage of the location to set up a base. The house sits on top of a hill, well concealed by the surrounding vegetation. The natural geography of the place gives them a bird's eye view on anyone trying to attack it. The house's natural water supply and pumps, along with its large stores of food, allow the rebels to (if needed) work for months at a time with no interference from the outside world.

The compound has a total of 12 soldiers. Three of them have very recently joined up and thus have very little experience. The rest have seen numerous years on the campaign trail and have no hesitation to fight to their last breath. They know that if the government or the paramilitaries ever catch them, they will likely face torture (at least, their indoctrination tells them so).

The rebel cell leader firmly believes in FARC dogma. He has numerous books on their ideology scattered around the



house and makes his men read them for at least an hour every morning before they do anything else. He maintains a tight watch on the area, with three pairs of two guards each patrolling the outskirts at any given time. They make a careful patrol once an hour, circling out in a spiral pattern up to about a hundred yards from the base and then spiral back in. They maintain radio contact at all times.

Around the house, 17 conscripted peasants work about seven acres worth of cocoa fields. While they feel sympathetic to the FARC cause, they have no desire to take up arms and will not do so when the compound gets attacked.

The former owner of the house had a rather large weapons collection. The rebel commander has taken advantage of this fact and has confiscated some of the better weapons for himself and his most competent men. He even has a .50 caliber machine gun mounted above the house in a hidden nest (formerly a tree house for a nephew that never ended up using it).

Inside the house, four of the men either sleep or play cards, depending on the time of day. One of the closets has a large amount of money stashed in green and red bags. Each of the bags has hundreds of 50-dollar bills inside. The red bags have cash paid by delivery from the United States, some of which the FARC has deposited here for safekeeping. The green bags have counterfeit money, printed at one of the FARC's many counterfeiting operations. Anyone making the appropriate skill roll (Forgery DC 25, Search DC 32) notices the very subtle differences, such as the texture of the paper and the style of the inks. If the characters keep all the money, it gives them a group wealth "bonus" of +10. However, if they fail to distinguish between the counterfeit and real money, they will make a great many enemies. If they use only the real money, they have enough to give them a +6 rating.

The cell leader has five chained captives in the basement, including Emelda and her husband, Mark. Under normal circumstances, the cell does not have the manpower to watch the captives 24 hours a day, so they compensate for this by initiating a clever series of truths, half truths, drug-induced hallucinations and sleep deprivation to condition their captives into a state of helplessness. The FARC has had over 20 years to perfect these techniques, and have become quite good at it. The effects vary from captive to captive but sometimes they can totally alter a person's method of thinking.

Mark Castle, Emelda's North American husband, has totally succumbed to the brainwashing techniques of his captors. He believes in the armed struggle against the capitalist

oppressors of the working class. He knows that the forces of the Revolution must use any means necessary to achieve these ends. He has tried to convince his captors of this, though they do not yet believe him. He substantially improved their belief in his claim when he shouted out to one of the guards when one of the prisoners nearly escaped.

He has spent the last several hours trying to convert his wife, explaining that they have foolishly followed the wrong system of society their entire lives, and that they must now join the fight against the oppressors. The powerful opiates given to Emelda have made her vulnerable to these assaults, though nothing has yet had any chance to sink in. However, should the characters attempt to rescue the prisoners, they find Mark completely hostile toward their actions and Emelda in a drugged stupor.

The other three prisoners come from various parts of Colombia's more urban areas. The FARC has temporarily deposited them here to prevent a rescue. They often move captives from place to place, so the prisoners have no idea where to go for help even if they do manage to escape.

The rebel cell leader knows his area well and has his men drill at least once a day. Should the characters attack, he has three primary failsafe plans in place. First, in the event of an explosion, an anomalous cry for help, or a strange or unusual fire (particularly in the cocoa plants), the cell leader does not have his men go investigate it. Instead, he calls two or three of the unarmed peasants, gives them a radio and has them go to the area and check it out. Much to the annoyance of his men, he has deliberately set four or five fires in the last few months, just to test them and make sure they don't do something stupid. While the peasants check out the explosion, all of his men fall back to defensive positions around the house.

Second, he has the patrolling pairs check up on each other every five minutes. He has the two-man pairs check up on each other every 10 minutes. If for some reason this periodic radio check gets interrupted, he has the men again immediately fall back into defensive positions around the house. Anyone paying close attention to the radio broadcasts could probably fake the voice on the static filled radio enough to fool them two or three times (DC 13).

Finally, if Mark sounds the alarm below that someone has entered the basement without authorization, the rebel cell leader has a small button in his office. The marine installed a panic room in the basement, which automatically puts heavily armored plates and a thick metal door around the entire floor, making it very difficult to get in. For this



reason, he has deliberately left one of the lower basement windows slightly loose, relatively confident that Mark has converted fully to his way of thinking at this point.

The rebels also have managed to discover the fact that Emelda hired mercenaries, so they know that the characters want to find them. They do not know if the characters can find their base, but they plan to take no chances.

Rebel Leader

Charismatic 3 / Political Zealot 3: CR 6; hp 24; Mas 10; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 12, touch 12, flat-footed 12; BAB +2; Melee +3; Ranged +2; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1, AP 5; Rep +4; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 10, Wis 8, Int 12, Cha 16.

Skills: Bluff +9, Craft: Writing +7, Diplomacy +11, Disguise +9, Gather Information +11, Handle Animal +9, Intimidate +9, Navigate +9, Sense Motive +6, Spot +7, Treat Injury +7

Feats: Simple Weapons Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Strafe, Burst Fire, Remorseless.

Talents (Charismatic Hero): Fast Talk, Coordinate.

Class Abilities (Political Zealot): Detect Dissident, Fund Raising.

Possessions: Clothing, Saiga-12, 4 x 8 round magazines, six fragmentation grenades.

Guerillas

Fast Hero 1: CR 1; hp 9; Mas 12; Init +3; Spd 35 ft.; Defense 16, touch 16, flat-footed 13; BAB +0; Melee +1; Ranged +3; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +0, AP 1; Rep +0; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Wis 10, Int 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Escape Artist +7, Hide +7, Listen +2, Move Silently +7, Spot +2

Feats: Simple Weapons Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Advanced Firearms Proficiency.

Talents (Fast Hero): Increased Speed.

Possessions: Clothing, AK-47 assault rifle, two magazines of ammo.

Race Against Time

Assuming the characters successfully get Emelda and her husband out of the area, they overhear on the FARC radio inside the house (which the cell leader tuned to the paramilitary's frequency) that the paramilitary plans to do a major assault on the town. If at all possible, Emelda should hear this, because she will feel responsible for it and ask the characters to help defend the town. While she has no actual responsibility for the matter, the drug-induced conditioning

If you use this module as an introduction to the strategic campaign mentioned in Chapter 9, the following actions affect the starting axioms. Because of the distance involved between the two areas, the characters' impact does not have as significant an effect as it would if they operated directly in Medilaca. These effects do, however, stack, in addition to the starting axioms mentioned at the beginning of that chapter.

- If the characters successfully destroy the FARC compound: -1 Guerilla.
- If the characters attempt to purchase items with the counterfeit money in Colombia: -1 Local, -1 Government, -1 Corporate.
- If the characters kill any paramilitary that tries to surrender: -2 Paramilitary.
- If the characters take the money: -5 Guerilla.
- If the characters successfully save the village: +2 Local, +2 Government.

has caused her to feel worthless and ashamed of herself.

Of course, the fact that the local paramilitary is about to wipe out a town of over 500 people should hopefully include enough motivation to get the characters to act on their own. If the characters simply want to return to the helipad and go on their merry way without stopping to help defend the village against the assault, nothing will stop them. On the other hand, Emelda got her press credentials and visa from an actual journalist, a former roommate in college. Should the characters callously refuse to help defend the village, Emelda has the connections to make sure that the world knows about it.

Another solution the characters might think of involves the government, but the military cannot supply reinforcements to the area until 48 hours have passed. The FARC has begun a major assault in three other areas of the country, including one farther down the pipeline nearer to Caño Limnón.

If the characters do a thorough search of the house, they find a wide range of useful equipment, including the .50 caliber machine gun (assuming that they didn't destroy it):

- M2HB .50 caliber machine gun
- 10 AK-47 assault rifles
- 10 MAC Ingram M10 machine pistols
- 2,000 rounds of NATO .50 caliber ammo
- 1,000 rounds of Warsaw Pact 7.62mm ammo
- 1,000 rounds of .45 caliber pistol ammo
- 12 fragmentation grenades



20 pounds of C4 explosive
 15 detonators
 30 machete knives
 Demolitions kit
 Bolt cutters
 Sack of caltrops
 5 forged passports (low quality)
 Lockpick set
 15 leather backpacks
 ...and any other detailed items the referee sees fit to add.

Saving the Village

If the characters continue to listen to the paramilitary radio chatter, they can make a Gather Information check at DC 15 to learn the approximate numbers and time of the invasion. They have 12 hours to prepare the village for the assault.

If the characters talk to the villagers and explain the situation, they gladly help out. They have relatively few members who have competent weaponry but they hope to do what they can to help. Those villagers who have been sympathetic

toward the paramilitary renounce them once they learn of the paras' treachery, and inform the characters of any quirks or particulars that they feel the characters might want to know.

Villager

Tough Hero 1: CR 1; hp 13; Mas 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11; BAB +0; Melee +1; Ranged +2; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will -1, AP 1; Rep +0; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Wis 8, Int 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +5, Drive +4, Intimidate +4, Spot +3, Survival +1

Feats: Simple Weapons Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot.

Talents (Tough Hero): Robust.

Possessions: Clothing, AK-47, one clip of ammunition.

When the paramilitary comes, unlike the FARC, their assault lacks any subtlety whatsoever. They expect no real resistance, so they simply charge in, lobbing Molotov cocktails at the buildings in order to burn them to the ground. If the village exhibits serious resistance, the paramilitary will fight for 10 rounds before retreating and forming a ring around the area. They simply plan to lay siege to the town. Seven





hours after the assault starts, the Colombian military sends a rapid deployment force to deal with the paramilitary and lift the siege.

Military or Paramilitary Forces

Tough Hero 3: CR 3; hp 32; Mas 16; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 17, touch 12, flat-footed 16; BAB +2; Melee +3; Ranged +3; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0, AP 3; Rep +1; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 16, Wis 8, Int 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +7, Drive +3, Intimidate +2, Jump +3, Spot +3, Survival +5

Feats: Simple Weapons Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Light Armor Proficiency, Medium Armor Proficiency.

Talents (Tough Hero): Robust, Damage Reduction 1/—.

Possessions: Light duty vest, M4 Carbine, six magazines of ammo.

Resolution

Emelda pays the characters for their actions as promised by the amount she negotiated before. She then checks her husband into a psychiatric facility where they eventually manage to deprogram him from the psychological conditioning he suffered as a hostage to the FARC. If the characters decided to help defend the villagers, they are thanked profusely and offered a rather small sum composed of the savings the villagers gathered together. A few of the arts and crafts pieces offered along with the money might actually have considerable value if sold on the right market in the United States.

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Chapter 8: The Missing Doctor Veranda

(Suitable for 4–6 characters of 6–8th level)

Unfortunately, if a member of your family or an executive of your firm is kidnapped, you may have insurance, but your company probably doesn't have a contact in a company they can trust and who can negotiate first in order to get the victim back safe and, more importantly, "Alive." Secure Transport International, Inc.'s negotiators are trained to work with Insurance Companies, Police, Government agencies and Embassy's to facilitate a safe conclusion to any crisis.

— Secure Transport International, Inc. website
(http://www.securetransint.com/kidnapping%20Negotiations_and_hostage%20rescue.htm)

Introduction

In this adventure, the insurance company of a bio-pharmaceutical corporation approaches the characters with a mission. One of their field scientists has gone missing. After two weeks, no ransom note arrived. They need help. The insurance company does significant business with this client and truly wants to get the researcher back alive.

The characters hired could come from nearly any walk of life. They could be government agents, mercenaries, adventurers, or even guerilla fighters themselves. They only need to like money to take on this job. However, good intentions help here and the insurance company will feel more comfortable if the characters have a history of helping those in need.

The referee should feel free to work this adventure in as a modular unit in the strategic campaign presented in the next chapter. Faction modifiers are listed at the end of the chapter.

Depending on the nature of the party and perhaps the location their previous adventure left them at, the referee may have to use some creativity to connect the insurance repre-

sentative with the party. Ideas for making this connection include: a newspaper or magazine ad (is Soldier of Fortune a professional magazine?), a chance meeting at the airport, a recommendation from the Colombian government, one of the player characters' contacts, or even a cold phone call to the party. Whatever the method, the insurance representative will want to fly into Colombia and meet the party there.

The action happens inside and around the fictional town presented in Chapter 6. The referee should at least skim that section before starting the adventure, since the party may go some place not relevant to the adventure and therefore not covered here. The insurance rep arranges any necessary flights and puts the characters up in a nice hotel in the Puerto Oriz area of town. (Where the oil executives live.) The initial face-to-face meeting occurs in the hotel bar.

The Player's Introduction

In the bar area, a number of executive types sit around, trying to relax. Most all wear nice suits and carry slim laptops. Each is clean shaven with a neatly trimmed haircut. Everyone here is used to power, its mental cost, and its material benefits. One of the suits walks over to the characters' table.

"Is one of you [insert party leader's name]? Yes? Good, I'm John Sanchez with Human Insurance Corp. I believe we've spoke on the phone before? It's a pleasure to finally meet you in person. How was your flight in?"

Pause to allow the characters to respond.

"Hmm, well my flight was a real nightmare. We had turbulence you wouldn't believe. My lunch bounced all over the





tray, and I just could not eat. Are you hungry? Can I buy you dinner?”

Note: if the characters have a military background, then they’ve likely experienced far worse flight conditions than a civilian aircraft would ever encounter.

John leads the group over to the hotel restaurant and tells them to order whatever they like. He then begins to tell them about the missing person.

“This is Doctor Fred Veranda.”

John hands someone a picture of the doctor.

“He works for Bio-Aid. Bio-Aid is actually a division of a much larger pharmaceutical company. It specializes in research and development, specifically related to finding new plants and uncovering ancient methods of the indigenous populations around the world. Dr. Veranda worked the jungles around this town looking for new plant specimens.

“Two weeks ago, he failed to turn in his regular progress report. We made inquiries and nothing came up. As far as anyone we could contact knew, he was still out in the jungle working. We contacted the local authorities, but they told us they didn’t have the resources to go check on Americans out in the jungle. A week went by and he still did not report in. At this point, HIC assigned me to the case. I immediately began looking for a small, armed group to assist me in locating the doctor onsite. Since no ransom note has arrived, we believe some jungle animal or disease may have killed or incapacitated the doctor. However, we need to know for sure.

“I have collected two useful bits of information to get you started. First off, I’d like you to see my ELN contact here in town. I haven’t told him anything about the case yet, but he’s a good place to start because the next most likely scenario is still a kidnapping. The other bits of information we have are these expense invoices for his local supplies. I’m afraid we don’t even know where he operated from in the jungle. However, Bio-Aid is very interested in at least retrieving his research notes, so we’ll need to find out if he had any remote outposts as well.

“So, you guys are the experts. Where do we go from here?”

John Sanchez

John Sanchez is the typical bureaucrat with a slight taste for adventure. He is useless in a fight. In fact, if the characters fail to convince him to stay in town, Mr. Sanchez will probably take the first bullet fired at the party (HP 4). If he manages to get himself killed, the players may have some difficulty getting paid at the end of the adventure.

Sanchez knows nothing more about the case than what he presented in his introduction. The only other information the players might extract is their fee. Sanchez will initially offer \$10,000, but if pressed he will go much higher, perhaps as much as \$40,000. (For details on converting cash awards to Wealth Bonus, see the Gamemastering section of the modern core rules.)

Sanchez demands to accompany them on the first trip to meet the ELN contact. In case of a ransom payment, Sanchez needs to approve any cash payments anyway. However, the players could convince him to stay behind on any of the other trips. Basically, other than the ELN contact, he will tag along until told otherwise.

The ELN Contact

After dinner and any remaining questions the players have, Sanchez moves back up to his room to call his contact with the ELN. Sanchez speaks Spanish while talking, but anyone understanding the language would only hear Sanchez plea for a meeting. Finally, after a long heated debate, Sanchez hangs up and announces they have a meeting the next morning in at a sidewalk café in La Plaza Bolivar. At this point, the time of day is about 9:00 or 10:00 PM, depending on how thoroughly the characters grilled Sanchez over dinner. Sanchez decides to sleep and politely asks the characters to leave and meet him in the lobby at 10:00 AM tomorrow morning.

At this point, the party is free to sleep as well or explore the town. Use the reference material in Chapter 6 to resolve any actions in town at this point. The characters should not randomly encounter any of the locations below, and most places have closed for the night anyway. If they like, they could contact the local authorities. See the Local Law Enforcement below for details on this encounter. Also, see the Local Thugs section below for another possible encounter.

The next morning, Sanchez goes down to the lobby at around 9:00 AM to scarf a complimentary continental breakfast served by the hotel. If the party arrives on time, they find him quietly reading a local newspaper, slowly chewing on a bagel, and sipping slightly stale coffee. Once he notices the party, he immediately gets up and starts guiding the group to the door. At this point, Sanchez seems nervous or agitated, but in a cheerful mood.

Once outside, Sanchez asks the party if they mind sending only one person to this meeting. His contact is extremely jumpy and might panic if he saw the whole party. However, the party can easily talk him out of this if they like and could



all attend the meeting. Whatever the outcome, Sanchez will arrange a taxicab for those going to the meeting, unless the party has their own vehicle with enough space for Sanchez. If the party vehicle is on the conspicuous side, like a HumVee, then Sanchez may prefer the taxicab anyway.

The First ELN Meeting

Sanchez leads the party into a pedestrian area of the plaza and takes a table at "La Bistro," apparently the sidewalk café where Sanchez planned the meeting. Various middle- and lower-class locals occupy many of the other tables. A waiter brings out water for everyone and asks, in accented English, "Are you the American's looking for a missing person?"

Sanchez replies, "Yes, yes, we are."

If the entire party showed up, then the waiter explains that he will allow only two persons into the meeting.

Otherwise, the waiter explains, "One at a time, after I leave, please go to the back of the restaurant to use the bathroom. I will give you further instructions there."

If the party does not agree to the terms, the waiter can only cancel the meeting. In this case, a day goes by with no

progress. Sanchez will spend all day trying to heal hurt pride and arrange another meeting. The players may pursue other ideas at this point. They should still have the invoices to follow up on. Sanchez eventually manages to arrange another meeting the next day with the same conditions. If the party still does not agree to the conditions, then this lead becomes closed to the players. Sanchez will stop "hanging" around the characters and arranges a third meeting without them. Sanchez will then spend the remainder of the mission dealing with this contact and negotiating a "ransom." (See below.)

If the players agree to the terms, the waiter meets the designated representatives just outside the bathroom. He leads them through the kitchen area, where an armed guard pats them down and asks to hold their weapons during the meeting. If the characters agree, the guard motions them down some stairs and into a basement food storage area. In the center of the room, a man sits at a card table. The man is middle-aged, and dressed in an old, cheaply made suit. He is slightly overweight and has a three-day growth of hair on his face. He stands as the characters enter and introduces himself.

"I am Enrique Camillo. I knew your Dr. Veranda. We did some business together. Perhaps you know of this?"

Actually, Camillo exported rare animals out of Colom-





bia with Dr. Veranda's help. With his last comment, he is fishing to see if the characters know of the situation. Camillo has a shipment ready and with Dr. Veranda missing, he has nowhere to sell it. If the characters play along well enough, Camillo will tell them all about the export business and Dr. Veranda's involvement. He will also tell the party that he knows nothing about the disappearance, but he suspects the paramilitaries may have picked him up.

Camillo suspects one of the local paramilitary groups, the LLESDM, because they normally control the local illegal trade in exotic animals. He believes they eliminated Dr. Veranda to cut out the competition. He also believes the LLESDM is actively looking for him as well. His ELN connections are dangerous enough in a town controlled by the AUC, but his particular business could easily attract "special" attention by both AUC groups in town.

If pressed, Camillo can provide the characters with the name of Dr. Veranda's local supplier. (Of course, they already have this information on the invoices that Sanchez provided at the start of the adventure.) If pressed further, Camillo mentions that he believes Dr. Veranda had met someone from the local native tribe, but he does not know much about them. Camillo knows nothing else, and if the characters continue to question him, or if they intimidate him repeatedly, he eventually starts making up stories about the LLESDM. He especially dislikes this group and will do whatever he can to discredit them.

However, should the characters act in an obviously ignorant manner, Camillo will mention nothing more about the side business. In fact, once he determines whom the party represents, he "admits" that the ELN did take the doctor, and were waiting on the party to contact them. Actually, as mentioned above, Camillo knows nothing about the disappearance. However, he will immediately start talking about a "ransom" fee. He opens at 10 million dollars, but might negotiate down to five million. However, since he does not have the doctor anyway, he may well take whatever he feels he can get. If the characters ask for proof of life (evidence that the doctor is still alive), he becomes evasive and tries to change the subject. If they demand this point, Camillo will agree and set a meeting tomorrow where he can provide the proof. At this point, the characters called the bluff and Camillo will disappear completely. (He moves on to another city.) Otherwise, if Camillo can arrange a meeting the next day to collect money, he will.

Alternatively, the characters might take Camillo to the authorities or even arrest him themselves. They might even threaten to turn him into one of the paramilitary groups. In order to do this, they would have to rush the restaurant during one of the meetings. The characters who meet Camillo should be disarmed unless they somehow managed to sneak a weapon past the guard. If Camillo senses any danger, he will yell for the guard and attempt to flee. The guard and the waiter will attempt to fight off the party while he does so. If he succeeds, this thread is over for the players. However, the rest of the party might covertly attempt to follow their companion into the back of the restaurant and quietly disable the guard. If so, they could easily capture Camillo.

If captured, Camillo will try to make a deal. He will reveal the location of a nearby ELN outpost in exchange for freedom (or even a lesser punishment). See *ELN Encampment*, below.

Enrique Camillo

Charismatic Hero 5: CR 5; hp 16; Mas 9; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 13, touch 13, flat-footed 13; BAB +3; Melee +3; Ranged +3; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +4, AP 6; Rep +2; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 9, Wis 12, Int 12, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +12, Computer Use +4, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +10, Drive +3, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +10, Investigate +7, Sense Motive +7, Speak/Read/Write English

Feats: Simple Weapons Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Deceptive, Trustworthy, Attentive, Dodge.

Talents (Charismatic Hero): Charm (female), Favor, Captivate.

Possessions: Suit, Smith & Wesson LadySmith 9mm automatic, two clips of ammunition.

Café Waiter

Tough Hero 3: CR 3; hp 13; Mas 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 13, touch 13, flat-footed 12; BAB +2; Melee +3; Ranged +3; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0, AP 1; Rep +1; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 14, Wis 8, Int 8, Cha 12.

Skills: Listen +1, Sense Motive +1, Spot +3

Feats: Simple Weapons Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Toughness, Strafe.

Talents (Tough Hero): Remain Conscious, Damage Reduction 1/—.

Possessions: Clothing, Daewoo DP51 9mm automatic, two clips of ammunition.

Café Guard

Fast Hero 7: CR 7; hp 42; Mas 12; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 19, touch 19, flat-footed 16; BAB +5; Melee +6; Ranged +8; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +1, AP 2; Rep +2; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 12, Wis 8, Int 6, Cha 10.

Skills: Drive +9, Intimidate +3, Listen +2, Sense Motive +2, Spot +2

Feats: Simple Weapons Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Double Tap, Weapon Finesse, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Quick Reload.

Talents (Fast Hero): Evasion, Uncanny Dodge 1.

Possessions: Clothing, AK-47 assault rifle, four clips of ammunition.

Dr. Veranda's Supplier

The characters may find the location of Dr. Veranda's supplier either by checking the address on the invoices Sanchez gave them or by interviewing Camillo. His name is Ernesto Cameron and he operates a small stall in the open market area of La Plaza Bolivar. The characters can take a taxicab there or use any local tourist map to find the location.

Cameron is an older man, perhaps 50 or 60 years of age. His face is worn and weathered by time. He wears white, comfortable, locally made clothes and walks on a worn pair of leather sandals. He does not speak English, so the characters can either converse in Spanish if they know it, or bring Sanchez along to interpret.

His shop carries a little of everything, leather items (belts, shoes, packs), hemp rope, canvas tents, handmade soap, sacks of corn flour, clothing, and many other similar rudimentary supplies. Many of the items line a massive system of shelves behind the counter. The shop smells pleasantly of leather, canvas and the outdoor life.

Cameron waits patiently behind the counter as the party approaches and says nothing until the party starts the conversation. He will readily admit to knowing Dr. Veranda and helps the party with any question they ask. He expresses concern for the doctor, as any casual business acquaintance might. However, he knows very little about what the doctor does. He does share one bit of important information: the location of the doctor's jungle research outpost. He tells the party he made regular deliveries of food up until about two weeks ago, when he found the outpost deserted. If the party can wait till the siesta, Cameron will gladly drive them out to the location of the outpost for a modest fee. (\$50 or Purchase DC of 7.)

Jungle Research Outpost

Ernesto Cameron drives a beat-up Mercedes six-wheel cargo truck. The back cargo door consists of a hemp net strung between the sides of the truck. The player characters can either ride there or follow along in their own vehicle, although the road is fairly rugged. Anything without a fairly good ground clearance will definitely not make the trip; Cameron will tell the characters this before they leave. Anything like a pickup, an SUV, or a HumVee will work fine. The trip takes about 90 minutes at an average speed of about 30 miles per hour. By the end of the trip, the road is nothing more than a slightly clearer track in the jungle where the vines are matted down. The outpost is nothing more than one large canvas tent and one smaller one. The larger tent is rectangular, about 25 feet long by about 15 feet wide. The smaller one is circular and about 10 feet in diameter.

Inside the larger tent, the doctor has a small laboratory set up, complete with a generator, a computer, microscopes, and other various equipment for analyzing the plants he finds. On one side of the tent there sits a stack of cages, each con-

RPG-7 Rocket Launcher

| Weapon | Damage | Critical | Damage Type | Range Increment | Rate of Fire | Magazine | Size | Weight | Purchase DC | Restriction |
|--------|--------|----------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|----------|-------|--------|-------------|-------------|
| RPG-7 | 10d6 | — | — | 125 ft. | Single | 1 int. | Large | 18 lb. | 17 | Mil (+3) |

Weight listed for the launcher does not include ammunition.

Additional Heavy Weapon Data

| Weapon | Penetration | Weight | Radius | Ignored Hardness |
|--------|-------------|--------|---------|------------------|
| RPG-7 | 12" | 5 lb. | 10 feet | 10 |



taining a thin dead rat. Next to the cages, rests an empty bag of animal feed. The rats obviously died of starvation or thirst when no one fed them for the last two weeks. Next to the computer rests a stack of plain CD's, each hand labeled in a barely legible script. If examined, the CD's contain the doctor's work notes.

The computer itself contains a wealth of scientific information. If the characters spend at least an hour reviewing all the various data files and make a Computer Use, DC 15 check, they find spreadsheets covering the doctor's side business in exotic animals and a daily log or diary. The log entries stop 16 days ago with no clues as to what might have happened to the doctor. They also discover transcribed notes of an interview with a local tribal elder concerning native medical practices. The doctor called the tribe "Los Jatara." He also included the GPS coordinates of the tribe's village. However, if asked, Cameron will tell the party they will need more than GPS coordinates to get to that location. There are no roads at all in that area, so they will either need a very experienced guide or a helicopter. Either way, the party will need to return to town. If asked, Cameron can connect the players with a guide, but knows no one with a helicopter.

The small tent contains a private sleeping area with an aluminum and canvas cot, a small writing desk, and a few more larger cages. The cages in this tent are all empty though, and judging from the remaining contents, these cages probably held a wide variety of animals. A few have bird feeders in them, and some are more like dry fish tanks. If the characters search the cages specifically, DC 15, they find the shed skin of a python. A short time after the party opens the flaps to the small tent a brightly colored parrot flies into one of the open cages and starts nipping at a bird's water bottle.

Paramilitary Check Point

On the first return trip back into town, the characters run into a hastily erected check point manned by guards wearing AUC armbands. The AUC guards will wave the characters on unless, for some reason, either Camillo or any Los Jatara tribe members are with them. In that case, the AUC guards pull those persons out of the car and immediately shoot them in the head. If anyone resists the AUC guards, they open fire on the person who resisted. (Sanchez will resist if with the party and the guards attempt to take anyone.)

If the party avoids violence, they may attempt to ques-

tion the AUC guards. The guards will gladly inform them that they are looking for any guerillas and discouraging any natives from entering the town. If the characters try intimidation on the guards, the guards will brandish their weapons and order them to move on. If the characters do not follow orders, the guards open fire.

If the characters know about the missing native runner, they could ask the AUC guards about him. The AUC guards will readily admit that they had to kill a native teenager about a week back on this road. (See *Native Village* for details on the runner.)

AUC Guards

Fast Hero 3 / Gunslinger 2: CR 5; hp 35; Mas 12; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 17, touch 17, flat-footed 15; BAB +3; Melee +5; Ranged +5; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +2, AP 2; Rep +1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 12, Wis 8, Int 6, Cha 10.

Skills: Intimidate +2, Sleight of Hand +8, Spot +1, Survival +1, Tumble +8

Feats: Simple Weapons Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Double Tap, Advanced Firearms Proficiency.

Talents (Fast Hero): Evasion, Opportunist.

Class Abilities (Gunslinger): Close Combat Shot, Weapon Focus (AK-47).

Possessions: Clothing, AK-47 assault rifle, four clips of ammunition, four fragmentation grenades.

One guard also carries an RPG-7 rocket launcher with three rockets. (See *Somalia: d20* for complete description. Basic statistics listed in the sidebar.)

Native Village

Most likely, the characters arrive here after a grueling eight-hour drive through the jungle with the help of a guide Cameron provided. (Cost is \$200 or purchase DC of 12.) More resourceful characters may ride out on a rented helicopter. If so, the helicopter will find no place to land and the characters will need to rappel into the village. The helicopter ride only takes about an hour, but it cannot circle long and still make it back to town. The characters may need to arrange a pickup sometime in the future. Each trip will cost the characters \$650 or purchase DC of 16.

The village consists of about 15 adobe huts spread under the jungle canopy. About 50 natives live here. Characters may notice that four or five of them carry modern weapons (AK-47), but most have no weapons at all. When they arrive, a village elder comes out to meet the players. He intro-

duces himself as Taro, and offers the player food.

The elder loves to hear stories from the outside world and will immediately ask questions about how the Colombian's are doing. He asks about the FARC, the ELN, and the AUC and about world events in general. He may even ask about those new satellite phones he heard about and whether the party could get him one. Until he gets to know the party, he will simply ignore any question about Dr. Veranda. If the characters indulge him long enough, he eventually asks how they feel about the illegal export of the local animals. The elder needs to know whether the party can help him stop this business or whether they might be involved in it. He will ask the question a number of different ways including, "If I could bring you some of these snakes, could you get me a satellite phone in exchange?" and "Do you think it is OK to remove these animals from their habitat?"

If the elder hears what he wants on this issue and feels comfortable that the characters would not trade in rare animals, he proceeds to tell them about a runner they sent to the city two weeks ago. The runner can usually make the round trip in about eight or nine days, so the elder is beginning to worry that something may have happened to him. The elder needs help to resolve the issue and will quickly accept any offer the characters might make in that direction. He cannot offer any money, but tells the characters the gods will smile upon them if they help.

In actuality, the tribe found Dr. Veranda trapping these animals about two weeks back. They took him into their custody and sent a teenage runner into town to fetch the local police. They still have Dr. Veranda under guard in a nearby cave. However, the elder is very nervous about revealing this to the party. He fears they may exact some kind of retribution. However, if the party keeps cool and helps the elder discover the whereabouts of his runner, he will turn the doctor over to them. Unfortunately, the same AUC guards the characters met earlier killed the runner on his way into town. (The party should encounter them again if they return to town.)

The elder requires little proof that the AUC committed the crime. He has encountered them before and knows how they operate. However, he does want to know with some certainty that characters did something in the way of justice, that they punished the perpetrators. Acceptable proof for him might include court records, pictures, bodies, pictures of bodies, or even pieces of the bodies. If the characters have no proof, then they will have to convince him with a Diplomacy

check at DC 20. If the elder becomes satisfied, he releases the doctor to the party.

Alternatively, the characters might try a more forceful approach to the situation. They could arrive at the village brandishing weapons and generally intimidate the people. If they do so, five armed members of the village fight back. Also, they covertly send out a runner to a nearby ELN outpost. (See details below.) The ELN will send their people to aid the villagers as soon as they can, but in this environment, it still takes about three hours between when the runner leaves and when the ELN arrive. (Referee might compress this slightly to make sure the event happens, but if the players move quickly, they should avoid that encounter.)

The elder primarily wants to keep the people of his village safe. He will want to negotiate with the characters any deal in which he believes the players will leave his village and not return. However, he will be extremely distrustful after an armed attack. The players need to convince him that they would honor any agreement reached. (Diplomacy DC 25) The elder has experience detecting the honesty and motives of others and if the party has other plans, he may well pick up on them. (The elder has +10 Sense Motive skill.) If the party manages to convince him of their fairness, he will then lead them to and release the doctor.

If, for some reason, the firefight results in the death of the elder (HP 8), the villagers will kill the doctor and flee into the jungle. However, the elder does not actively participate or carry a firearm, so this would only happen if the characters started carelessly throwing area-effect weapons around or simply started massacring the villagers.

Native Fighters

Tough Hero 5: CR 5; hp 50; Mas 16; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 14, touch 14, flat-footed 13; BAB +3; Melee +4; Ranged +4; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +0, AP 3; Rep +1; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 16, Wis 8, Int 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +9, Intimidate +4, Jump +3, Ride +3, Spot +5, Survival +7

Feats: Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Strafe.

Talents (Tough Hero): Robust, Damage Reduction 1/—, Second Wind.

Possessions: Clothing, AK-47 assault rifle, two clips of ammunition, one fragmentation grenade.



ELN Outpost

The ELN base is actually very closely located to the native village. (If the characters find this location by intimidating Camillo, they may still not know of the native village.) From the native village, the ELN post is 12 miles due north toward the town itself. Like the village, it remains well hidden from the air or ground by the dense jungle growth in the area. The outpost itself consists of 11 guerilla soldiers, seven men and four women. They live in two large tents, one for the men and one for the women, set up under the jungle canopy.

The guerillas keep a constant look out posted on the trail leading up to the base. Unless the party takes great care, they will not surprise the ELN fighters. (If the party tries to sneak up, note that the guerillas' Listen skill checks are at -2, due to their low Wisdom scores; see stats below.) If the party does manage to surprise the guerillas, then half remain in their tents asleep. Otherwise, all 11 guerillas wait in prepared foxholes for the party. (Foxholes give them 90% cover.) There are about 20 foxholes in a ring around the tent areas. The guerillas can man foxholes in a rough half-circle facing the direction from which the party attacks. If the party attempts

to shift around, the guerillas can hop up and rotate around as well. Because of their excellent cover, the guerillas open fire as soon as the party enters their second range increment. Note that two of the guerillas have RPG-7s and will use them on the party. They target the largest clumps of party members they can.

If the characters fail to defeat the ELN forces, the ELN will attempt to capture them and possibly ransom them back to Human Insurance Corp.

If the characters succeed in defeating the ELN forces, they can search the area. In the mens' tent, a small Hispanic man sits in a cleared-out area. His hands are tied behind his back. His feet are bare. His beard shows months of growth, and his clothes reveal heavy wear. He introduces himself as Dr. Carlos Zapata, a Mexican business executive that the ELN kidnapped nearly three months ago.

Zapata explains that he came out here to sell oil well parts to the local businesses. The ELN kidnapped him out of La Plaza Bolivar, but his company had no insurance and little money to pay a ransom. The ELN held him while waiting for his parent company to respond to negotiations, but the last he heard his company still could not meet their demands. He does tell the party that his company should pay at least a small



reward for his return. He then profusely thanks the party for his rescue.

The party also finds a number of quite ancient weapons lying around, like a few rusted AK-47s and a number of homemade mines. They also find a number of large and beautiful parrots hanging around both tents. They find absolutely no documentation and no further clues to Dr. Veranda's disappearance. In fact, as noted above, the ELN had nothing to do with Dr. Veranda's disappearance and were actually working with him to raise money by illegally exporting animals.

If the party manages to capture one of the guerillas, he resists interrogation. However, with sufficient time and successful opposed Intimidation checks, the party can still get some information. The guerilla remembers Dr. Veranda. As the party may know by now, the ELN used him to illegally export various exotic animals out of country. He verifies the doctor's disappearance at about two weeks ago. He also mentions possible tension or threats from the LLESMD paramilitary group. If pressed, his best guess at the most likely group to blame is the LLESMD. They met Dr. Veranda through Camillo, so they really know even less than Camillo did. As to Carlos Zapata, they claim his kidnapping was random, and, in fact, has not turned out well. His company and family do not seem to have much money.

If the party asks about Los Jataro or about the local native people, the ELN, if successfully intimidated, will reveal the location of the Los Jataro village detailed above. The guerillas know of no connection between the Dr. Veranda and the natives. Ironically, the natives do not know of the ELN involvement in the exotic animal trade.

ELN Guerillas

Fast Hero 3 / Guerilla 2: CR 5; hp 27; Mas 10; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 18, touch 18, flat-footed 16; BAB +3; Melee +5; Ranged +5; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will -1, AP 2; Rep +2; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 10, Wis 6, Int 8, Cha 10.

Skills: Demolitions +3, Disable Device +3, Hide +6, Move Silent +6, Spot +0, Survival +4

Feats: Simple Weapons Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Double Tap, Advanced Firearms Proficiency.

Talents (Fast Hero): Evasion, Opportunist.

Class Abilities (Guerilla): Handmade Explosives, Pass without a Trace.

Possessions: Clothing, AN-94 assault rifle, four clips of ammunition, four fragmentation grenades.

Two rebels carry RPG-7 rocket launchers with three rockets each. (Basic statistics listed above; see *AUC Guards*.)

The ELN Response to an Attack on the Village

If the party attacks the native village, the ELN group sends 10 of their fighters to help out. If the party previously attacked the outpost, then this does not happen. Even if the party let some of the ELN free, the surviving guerillas would move onto to a new location and the natives would probably, at least temporarily, lose contact with the ELN.

Local Law Enforcement

At some point, the characters might contact either the Colombian government or the local law enforcement in Medilaca. Either organization refers them to a police lieutenant in Medilaca. His name is Lt. Manny Hernandez.

The job of the police in Medilaca is near hopeless, and they have far too few resources to accomplish their mission. Many of the police on the force unofficially work with the AUC to keep things under control. Unfortunately, the AUC create a large part of the problem. Lt. Hernandez avoids dealings with the AUC personally, but certainly looks the other way. (He knows he would quickly end up dead if he tried to confront the issue.) On the other hand, the police are making some difference. They do go a long way toward reducing the common thievery on the streets and have much to be proud of.

Lt. Hernandez is in his 40s. He wears a white shirt, a tie, and a shoulder-harnessed service revolver. He has a slight paunch in the waist, but otherwise keeps in good shape physically. However, his outlook has turned pessimistic over the years. The murder rate in Medilaca is outrageously high and Lt. Hernandez knows he can do little about it. He is not able to solve many of the murder or kidnapping cases that cross his desk, and he knows the AUC bears responsibility for many of those unsolved cases.

If the party requests, Lt. Hernandez will meet with them in his office at police headquarters. He will listen intently to the player characters and take copious notes. Afterward, he explains the situation as follows:

"The most likely scenario is that the FARC, or possibly the ELN, took your doctor for a ransom payment. I have to



say, I think probably not the FARC, because with their organization you would have received a ransom note by now. The ELN are on the run from everyone else in town right now, so it is possible that they have him and have not been able to make contact yet.

"There are also a number of AUC affiliated organizations in town, and if they believed your doctor had questionable politics, they would not hesitate to kill him.

"I have some informants closer to the FARC and ELN, so I can check and see if either of those groups have the doctor. Unfortunately, the Colombian government has strictly forbidden the payment of ransom to these groups, so even if I found something, I could not help you arrange a payment. However, if this is the case, I may know someone who could help you with an armed rescue attempt for the right price.

"I can also ask around a bit with regard to the AUC. Perhaps Dr. Veranda got on some hit list. However, even if I find nothing there, some small AUC group might still have killed him. In this case, we may never even find the body.

"Lastly, there remains a significant chance that the doctor fell victim to some less organized criminal activity. Medilaca is home to a number of desperately poor people who may have robbed and killed the doctor. Again, in this case, we may never discover the truth."

If the players ask Lt. Hernandez to check on the FARC and ELN, he asks for their number at the hotel (or some other means of reaching them). He calls the next day to tell them he met with his informants and no one knows of any recent kidnappings matching the doctor's description. He tells them this most certainly means that they do not have the doctor. He also tells them to use care if they ask around themselves. Many unscrupulous people may claim to have this person just to get the money. Lastly, he reminds them that he will arrest them if he finds out they paid off a ransom.

If the players ask for more information on the AUC, the Lt. will tell them that they sometimes patrol or set up checkpoints on the roads out of town. If they want to contact the AUC, he suggests they look for one of those patrols or checkpoints.

If the players ask about the criminal angle, Lt. Hernandez informs them in that case, his department may find the perpetrator and he will keep them informed.

If Lt. Hernandez somehow gets wind that Sanchez or the players may want to pay the ransom, he will check into things further. If he somehow finds out about a specific payoff, he will try and arrest everyone involved. Of course, he would

You may use this module as a side adventure in the strategic campaign detailed in Chapter 9. Use the following list to adjust the axiom values:

- If the characters destroy the ELN outpost: -1 Guerrilla.
- Rescue Dr. Carlos Zapata: +1 Corporate.
- If the characters retrieve and return the research notes: +1 Corporate.
- If the characters manage to rescue Dr. Veranda: +2 Corporate.
- John Sanchez dies: -1 Corporate.
- If the characters work closely with Lt. Hernandez: +1 Government.
- If the characters harm the paramilitaries that killed the native runner: -3 Paramilitaries.

only find this out if the players told him or if the players told someone in the AUC. In no case will Lt. Hernandez actually shoot at anyone during this arrest. If anyone points a gun at him, he immediately holsters his weapon and leaves. He does not entirely agree with this law and certainly would not risk his life to enforce it.

Finally, once contacted, Lt. Hernandez checks in with the group once or twice a day to see what they have turned up. He constantly reminds them not to pay off any ransom requests and may get frustrated if he feels the players are holding any information back. If he gets frustrated with the characters, he may start following them around town. Again, if threatened, he will immediately back down and leave.

Local Thugs

Colombia is a very dangerous place even without the problems with the AUC, the FARC, and the ELN. People still grow illegal drugs and there is a very uneven distribution of wealth. Both of these contribute to a desperate population with minimal respect for the law. The country suffers from a very high crime rate and 75% of this has nothing to do with politics. Because of this, the referee should add one or two encounters with common thieves. This section details a few typical encounters. Referee should pick one or two based on what the characters do or where they go.

Taxicab Rip-off

Most cab drivers the world over are honest. However, in every country there exist drivers who use deceptive practices to increase the fares. One common tactic is to take a long





indirect route to the destination. The characters might climb inside a cab for a quick two-mile trip and find it took nearly 20 minutes to get to their destination and the fare is three or four times as high as it should be. If the cab driver suspects his passengers are on to him during the trip, he will simply claim he got a bit lost and not charge them any extra. However, should the players wait until they hear the cost to complain, the driver may threaten to call the police.

This is a light encounter and the referee should not dwell on it. Let the players extract themselves as quickly as possible. Use it to remind them of the difficulties one can encounter in places like Medilaca.

Drug Solicitations

A drug pusher makes for an interesting side encounter. The pusher could be a waiter, a cab driver, a bartender, or just someone standing on a street corner. In any event, the pusher approaches one of the players and asks if he wants drugs. The pusher usually asks the question indirectly, but the intentions should be clear to anyone with a clue.

The characters may choose to buy. If so, the referee might catch them with a customs search when they return to the States (or wherever they're from). However, any other side

effects during the adventure would probably only slow the game down.

The characters may choose to turn the pusher in to the police. In this case, the police will arrive and arrest the person. However, because of the AUC influence, the police will likely release the pusher within a day, and he may find some AUC thugs to extract revenge on the player characters. If he does, the referee should use the same AUC guards from the checkpoint encounter.

Street Punks

If the party strays far from the public areas of the town, they will likely encounter a more dangerous criminal element. In this case, a gang of teenagers sees them and assumes they have money. The gang waits until the party enters a dark road, a narrow alley, or, if they have a car, drives down the wrong street. They try to sneak up and surprise the group. (Make one Move Silently skill check for the gang and use the result as the Listen DC for the party to notice them.) If successful, they use their surprise round to jump out, point their guns at the party and demand their cash. If the party hesitates, or otherwise fails to comply immediately, the gang starts shooting.

If the party starts to lose this fight, the referee might have



a few police intervene.

If the party wins, they can hide the bodies or report the incident to the police. The police do not hassle them too much so long as the characters have not annoyed Lt. Hernandez. If they have not been to see Lt. Hernandez, the referee might insert that encounter here.

If the party manages to capture one of the thugs to interrogate, he will claim to know of someone who may have killed the doctor. If the characters decide to follow him to find the person, they run into another two gang members who ambush them in an attempt to free their buddy. Any further interrogation will reveal the thug lied at first and really knows nothing about the doctor.

Street Gang

Tough Hero 5: CR 5; hp 32; Mas 10; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 14, touch 14, flat-footed 13; BAB +3; Melee +4; Ranged +4; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +0, AP 3; Rep +1; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 10, Wis 8, Int 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +9, Intimidate +4, Jump +3, Move Silently +1, Ride +3, Spot +5, Survival +7

Feats: Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Strafe.

Talents (Tough Hero): Robust, Damage Reduction 1/—, Second Wind.

Possessions: Clothing, PSM automatic pistol, two clips of ammunition.

Attempted Kidnapping by the FARC

The characters may find that the FARC is out to get them. The attempted kidnapping could take place in a variety of places. If the characters stay too late in La Plaza Bolivar, the FARC might attack them there. If they travel outside the city, they might encounter a FARC ambush, or especially if they split up in town, the FARC should attack the smallest group.

The kidnapping attack happens much like the robbery above. Make one Move Silently roll for the FARC guerillas and use the result as the Listen DC for the party. If the party fails, the FARC gain a surprise round. They use their first actions to jump out, level their weapons at the party, and demand they lay down on the ground face down with their hands behind their backs. If the party hesitates or otherwise fails to follow the instructions, the FARC open fire.

If the whole party encounters the FARC and starts to lose, the referee might use the guards from the paramilitary checkpoint to intervene. If so, the referee could follow up this encounter with the checkpoint encounter.

If the FARC attack a split-off party member, then the referee might use this encounter to create yet another side adventure.

If the party defeats the encounter, they could hide the bodies or report the incident to the police. The police only congratulate the party if they are notified, but take no other action. If they have not been to see Lt. Hernandez, the referee might insert that encounter here.

If the party manages to capture one or more of the FARC guerillas for interrogation, they learn the FARC are definitely not involved. They will absolutely not reveal the location of their local base. If pressed on the doctor's disappearance, they might reveal the ELN base location.

Use the same basic character statistics as the ELN Guerillas for this encounter.



Chapter 9:

Strategic Campaign

You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time.

— Phineas T. Barnum

Colombians! My last wishes are for the happiness of our native land. If my death will help to end party strife and to promote national unity, I shall go to my grave in peace.

— Simon Bolivar (1830)

General Notes

Due to space constraints, this section gives a detailed outline of a longterm campaign, but it does not provide stats, maps other items found in a single module. However, this book has two other full-length modules, which the referee can easily tie into the rest of the campaign. This chapter focuses on easing the path of any referee who desires to expand the storyline of his campaign.

The term “strategic” stems from the fact that the characters will have the opportunity to make an impact upon the larger (albeit in this case, fictionally mirrored) world around them. Historians have long argued about the validity of the “Great Forces” theory (in which large scale political ideas and economic forces shape history) vs. the “Great Man” theory (in which the empowered individual shapes the world according to his world view, and it has a rippling effect on those around him). This campaign takes both theories into account.

Suggested Hook

The characters need a reason to work together. The method given here reflects opportunities for both private freelance mercenaries and government personnel, such as soldiers, covert agents, and specialists, to take part in the mis-

sion. This allows the characters the widest possible range of character types, while still giving them a goal and reason to work together.

The method, in this case, entails Valiant Corp. Under the auspices of Interpol, the International Court of Justice, and the UN, Valiant has received an experimental new contract to hire private mercenaries to bring war criminals to justice. Due to the potential political fallout of this event, they have issued strict instructions to keep the entire thing very quiet. The characters will receive little or no direct support from their patron organizations. Still, in order to appease several member states who have had severe doubts about the nature of the project, members of the Security Council have insisted upon government monitors to accompany the mercenaries to ensure that they comply with international law. A keen observer might note that the United States does not subscribe to the IJC, although they do belong to both the U.N. and Interpol, thus allowing U.S. government characters to take part in the scenario.

The corporation’s first assignment lies in the abduction of Miguel Bocero, a notorious arms dealer, drug runner and warlord located in Colombia. The party’s assignment involves covertly entering the area, gaining Bocero’s trust, and taking the opportunity to extract him. Governmental attempts thus far have failed miserably due to the extremely paranoid security measures and bribes that Bocero has spread over the entire region. The powers that be have decided to try something more efficient and grab him with stealth instead of brute force. Should the characters succeed, they have promises of rich rewards or promotions.





Framework and Axioms

The campaign consists of three linear encounters and five modular ones. The linear encounters happen in chronological order, while the five modular encounters exist at the soul discretion of the referee, though they also include suggested triggers in the form of numeric axioms. These axioms represent an abstract level of friendliness or hostility a particular faction feels towards the characters.

Government: This axiom represents the government of Colombia. The government has a limited degree of direct control over the area, though it pretends otherwise. This axiom also represents the indirect foreign governments that the characters work for. Severe violations of the law or politically disastrous events such as gratuitous civilian casualties cause this value to plummet. This value starts at 1, representing a general positive attitude of the respective governments towards the characters, mixed with a healthy “wait and see” attitude.

Paramilitaries: This represents Bocero’s general attitude towards the characters, as well as the Popotámo and other smaller paramilitaries in the region. Since the Paramilitaries start out as the strongest power in the region, a high score in this area could have unexpected benefits, such as lowering the price of illegal goods the characters purchase. This axiom starts at 0. Generally, Bocero does not care one way or another about the characters, unless they cost or make him money.

Guerillas: This axiom represents both the FARC and the smaller guerilla fringes in the area, such as the ELN. The more negative this axiom gets, the more the guerillas take action against the characters directly. This axiom almost always directly opposes that of the paramilitaries. If the guerillas suspect that the characters work with them, then the guerillas attempt to kidnap, kill or scare the characters away. This axiom starts at -1 unless all the characters come from Latin America, in which case the axiom starts at 0. One should also note that the guerillas do not hesitate to take a good chance at a kidnapping, regardless of where the axiom lies, if they think that they can get money for it.

Corporate: This axiom represents the characters’ relations with the local corporations, specifically WESTERN Oil. On the surface, they pretend to act indifferent, since the characters should nominally come in undercover. However, WESTERN Oil knows about the characters’ mission, due to their loss in a bidding war with Valiant for the contract on Bocero. As such, this axiom starts at -2. Should it get too low,

WESTERN Oil sends in some very heavy hitters to deal with the characters.

Locals: The locals really do not have loyalty to any of the other factions, though they pay lip service to each. Because of past transgressions, extreme brutality and oppression, the people stand at the brink. Heroic actions by the characters could turn the tide of the entire conflict in this region. This axiom primarily involves winning the loyalty and respect of the local population, and begins at 0.

Linear Encounter

#1 — On the Job

Brief Summary

In this encounter, the characters meet up, get the details of their assignments, and then proceed to integrate themselves into the Medilaca population. They get their first chance to impress the locals when they spot a kidnapping attempt by the FARC late at night in La Plaza Bolivar. Mass chaos ensues.

What the Characters Know

This encounter begins after the events in Chapter 8. Valiant hires each of them to take on Bocero. Their contact, Cindy Vasilar, meets with them on the plane to give them the details of their assignment.

“Miguel Bocero is a man who has done bad things. That much is obvious or we wouldn’t have hired you. What you don’t know is that we’ve tried it before, and failed. This time we’re going to try a more subtle approach. Your task is to get in and gain the trust of Bocero, and then hope for an opportunity to nab him. The cover story we’ve established for you is that you are mercenaries hoping to work for WESTERN Oil, and that you will perform a few local jobs in order to gain their attention. The idea here, of course, is that you gain Bocero’s attention first, and hopefully get into his inner circle. This will be a delicate assignment.

“While we realize that some... unsavory things might occur, we need to remind you of the rules of the Geneva Convention and the individual laws of Colombia. Do what you must, but any violations that exceed reasonability will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. The final solution to



this problem involves a massive move by the military into this region, and given how ineffective that has been in the past, intelligence indicates several officials are considering simply carpet bombing the entire area to get rid of both the guerillas and the paras. Needless to say, this is not a desired outcome. This area is one of the hottest zones in the entire Colombian region, so watch your step. Here is a dossier of information on the area and your quarry.”

The dossiers contain much of the information in Chapter 6. The referee should determine what information in this chapter he does or does not want them to know. Anything in the Streetwise sections could reasonably find its way into an intelligence report, but the referee should feel free to omit anything that you don't think they should know at this time.

The plane lands at the department capital, at which point they must obtain transportation to Medilaca. There might be a combat at the roadblock, but at this particular time, the paras have manned them and only scan for people that they don't want to enter the area. As long as one of the characters presents the papers given them by Valiant, they will have no problem getting into the city proper.

The local contact for the characters, Epe, works as a waiter in Rayas del Sol. The plan involves linking up with him to begin receiving work. The initial meeting should take place sometime around 9:00 PM local time. While the characters wait in the area, or on their way, the following description should be read to them:

“The town is eerily quiet. Occasional pockets of music and celebration can be heard if you strain your ears, but for the most part people keep off the streets. As you move down the cobblestone steps from your lodgings, you notice a man walking back and forth in a drunken stupor. He is a Caucasian male in his late 40s. A closer look reveals that he positively reeks of alcohol.

“In a flash, two large black motorcycles rush by him and then turn around. The riders' faces lay obscured behind thick black glass. They wield AK-47s. Right behind him, a large black SUV with tinted windows pulls up and the doors open. Three men get out and grab the man, locking his arms and legs, moving to take him towards the SUV.”

What is Really Going On

The man about to get kidnapped works for WESTERN Oil. Michael Denton (the victim) discovered the secret de-

tention facility under the local corporate HQ earlier in the morning. The shock and guilt of what the company had done overwhelmed him, causing him to leave early and go to one of the local taverns. He has spent the last several hours drinking until barely able to think straight, and finally then wandered out into the night when the bartender threw him out. The bartender then placed a call to the FARC, citing a prime opportunity for a ransom from WESTERN Oil.

The FARC team consists of half new recruits and half hardened veterans. Neither came to this ambush expecting a heavy fight. Should the characters intervene in a serious manner, the FARC team retreats. Should a protracted firefight break out, the paras show up in about 10 minutes.

Epe shows up long after the combat has finished. He has no real useful information to give the characters (save whatever details from Chapter 6 the referee wishes him to reveal). When he gets word of work, he passes it along to the party.

Resolution

If the characters manage to rescue Denton without involving the paras and interrogate him, he will gladly tell him everything he knows about the WESTERN Oil detention center. If they sober him up and reveal who they really work for, Denton will gladly work for them as an “inside man” to get them any information they need to know. Denton has access to most of the company's most secret files and could prove a valuable asset. If the characters merely rescue him, but do not reveal who they really work for, they still get thanked by WESTERN Oil. Denton returns to WESTERN Oil one way or another, in a pine box (if he ends up getting killed), as an insider (if he works for the characters), or as a prisoner (when he spills the beans to the company about what he knows and sends empty hollow threats against them.)

Award experience points for successfully linking up with Epe, for rescuing Denton, and especially for finding out what he knows. Award less experience points if the characters do anything that could jeopardize their cover (except Denton).

- Acts of extreme heroism/bravery: Local +1 to +10, Para +1 to +3.
- Acts of extreme cowardice or stupidity: Local -1 to -10, Para -1 to -4, Government -1 to -5.
- The characters frighten off the FARC, but do not engage in any direct (heavy) combat: Local +1, Guerilla -1, Para +1.
- The characters engage in light combat with the FARC, one or two of them die: Local +1 Guerilla -3, Para +1.



- The characters engage in a heavy firefight and kill all, or nearly all, of the FARC team: Guerilla -7, Para +4, Corporate +1.
- The characters rescue Denton: Corporate +2, Local +1, Para +1.
- The characters interrogate Denton and learn about WESTERN Oil: Government +3 (assuming they pass this info along).

Linear Encounter **#2 — Corporate** **Downsizing** **Brief Summary**

The characters get hired to help defend the refinery against a major FARC attack. In the process, they gain the opportunity to gain valuable information on WESTERN Oil's activities, and gather evidence against Bocero and the executives of WESTERN Oil.

What the Characters Know

If either the paramilitary axiom or the corporate axiom remains positive, the referee should read the characters the following:

“While you sit in the tavern, talking about local occurrences with Epe, a large, North American man walks in, wearing camo-style pants, sunglasses, and a leather jacket. He has an extremely well polished AK-47 slung across his back. Three WESTERN Oil mercenaries stand at the door, looking nervously out at the street. The man approaches the party and says:

“We’ve heard good things about you folks. The fact of the matter, we’re impressed. We’ve made an arrangement with the local powers that be, and we’d like to try hiring you on a temporary basis. We’ve got word on the grapevine that the FARC are planning a major raid against the refinery. Something big, bigger than anything they’ve tried in a couple of months, which means that we can use all the help we can get. We’re prepared to pay quite handsomely.”

Vincent Laramie, head of local WESTERN Oil security knows how to negotiate well, and like any good corporate employee, he talks the characters down as much as he thinks he can get away with. He knows he needs them, however, and will pay a reasonable amount. At any point during the conversation, feel free to have hints dropped that Bocero has also grown impressed with them and that this could reflect the opportunity that they need to get in to see him.

If the characters take the job, Laramie takes them to the refinery. In order to protect his own hide as much as possible, he has increased the guards around his office first and foremost. He supplies the party with heavier weapons (if they do not currently possess them), but only for use during this conflict. Any specialists, such as medics, will also act on standby in case he needs them during an assault.

What is Really Going On

The local FARC unit has a new commander. Jorge Uiojulio hates WESTERN Oil and everything that it stands for. He has managed to get an agent on the inside of the refinery perimeter but that agent needs a distraction in order to place three explosive charges. As a result, Uiojulio has planned an all-out assault. To ensure that the plan works, he has allowed word to spread of the assault. The FARC plans to load three trucks with fertilizer, launch them at the wall with timed explosives and perform what looks like a mass assault. They will engage in intense fire for 10 minutes, and then withdraw, fully expecting the corporate mercenaries and paramilitary troops to follow.

Once the fighting starts, give the characters each a roll to notice a suspicious fellow carrying an awfully heavy package of relief ammo for the soldiers on the wall. A careful examination of the package reveals the explosives, making it relatively easy for the party to stop the assault if they pay attention. However, at this point, Laramie decides to call a personal retreat. He wants to move in case the FARC does manage to take over the refinery, and delegates command to one of the local commanders. He has the characters personally escort him, along with some of his other troops, back to the corporate HQ in Puerto Oriz.

He will then begin to take out large sums of money from the vault as part of his personal getaway plan. The troops that he has taken with him have mixed loyalties, and will ensure

that the characters have a few moments to take advantage of the chaos as a fight erupts between forces loyal to Laramie and those loyal to WESTERN Oil.

If the characters have managed to get Denton as an agent on the inside, they should have all the information they need to go into the corporate headquarters at this point and obtain the company's most closely guarded secrets, as well as potentially freeing any prisoners in their detention area (potentially including Denton).

Resolution

The campaign can go a lot of different ways from this point, depending on the characters' actions. If they manage to maintain their cover, they have the perfect opportunity to get in very tightly with Bocero and WESTERN Oil. Laramie will ultimately lose the fight (unless the characters take specific actions to help him).

Award experience based upon moving closer toward the goal of infiltrating Bocero's circle, getting info or evidence on WESTERN Oil, and freeing prisoners in the detention area. Some of them should be innocent Colombians, while others will be guerilla sympathizers. The characters probably won't have much time to interrogate them before the other WESTERN mercenaries show up from the refinery.

- Acts of extreme heroism/bravery: Local +1 to +10.
- Acts of extreme stupidity or cowardice: Local -1 to -10.
- If the characters catch the gentleman attempting to blow up the refinery: Corporate +5, Government +4, Para +4, Local +2.
- If the characters directly help fend off the FARC attack at the base: Local +1, Corporate +1, Guerilla -2, Para +1.
- If the characters follow Laramie, but then end up fighting with the forces loyal to WESTERN Oil: Corporate +3, Para +3.
- If the characters find a way to free the prisoners in the detention area: Corporate -2 (if they find out who did it), Local +4, Guerilla +2.
- If the characters take the money that Laramie tries to steal and head off with it themselves: Local -1, Government -6, Corporate -4.



Linear Encounter

#3 — The Grand Finale

Brief Description

The characters get invited into Bocero's compound and get a chance to kidnap him. They must come up with a plan to neutralize his defenses, take Bocero alive and still manage an escape. Complications ensue, including live animals, electric wires and governmental misinformation.

What the Characters Know

The conditions of this final encounter depend in large part upon the axioms that the characters have established. If they have successfully managed to get the paramilitary axiom to at least 5, the referee can read them the following:

"A large heavysset man with a gaunt face and huge hulking arms comes into the room. He has the eyes of a killer, someone who deals in death, blood and torture every day of his life. He speaks to the party and says:

"My name is Septiembre Yosombra. I am the head of security for Miguel Bocero, a local businessman. Perhaps you've heard of him?"

"This last comment causes everyone in the bar to snicker.

"His niece plans to get married, and we are going to need extra security in three days. I understand that your contact [*he looks and nods at Epe*] has been putting out word that you are looking for work. Are you interested?"

At this point, the characters can negotiate for a fee. Indeed, if they fail to negotiate at all, have the character doing the negotiations make a Bluff roll against Yosombra's Sense Motive skill. If Yosombra thinks something is unusual, he says nothing but makes a note of it for later. Assuming the characters accept, he leaves after giving them a pass to enter the area.

If for some reason the characters have failed to get the axiom for the paramilitaries high enough, they must go about getting Bocero out the old fashioned way. Epe informs them that their time has run out. The military plans to carpet bomb the entire area rather than deal with Bocero's constant hit

and run tactics. Yes, it will result in civilian casualties, but they will simply make it appear as just another raid on the numerous cocoa plantations that ring the area. They need to make the extraction on Saturday, which gives the characters four days to plan the assault.

A successful streetwise roll (DC 25) allows them to obtain an idea of the basic layout of the place, and if the characters have managed to maintain good relations with the government (2+), they can obtain spy satellite images. Regardless of whether they end up having to plan a full frontal assault or they successfully get brought in as security, there is a limited amount of information they can obtain simply by asking people. A scouting mission on the area also proves difficult and reveals that Bocero has extra-tight security. If the characters plan an assault, they must perform some out-of-the-box thinking or get completely overwhelmed by sheer firepower.

What is Really Going On

At this point, the local axiom becomes the most important to the plot. If this axiom is negative, Epe sells the characters out to the faction that wants them the most (represented by the most negative score). If the characters have successfully annoyed the guerillas enough, the FARC plans an ambush at the same time they attempt to take Bocero out alive (they don't like him either, but they'd rather see him dead than extracted for outside "justice"). If the government or paramilitary has fallen into the negative, Epe sells their information to Bocero. If the corporate axiom is negative, WESTERN happily has its mercenaries on hand, ready to help Bocero and hinder the characters. On the other hand, WESTERN does this without telling him why they're offering the free back up, which causes no end of suspicion on Bocero's part.

The amount of security in the compound thus obviously varies according to what the characters have done up to this point. If they have successfully won over the locals (3 or higher), they get all the information they need 24 hours before the event occurs. Bocero has put a great deal of careful planning into this occasion and puts the party at the rear of the compound as a first round of defense against an ambush.



Resolution

Regardless of how the characters handle the situation, the most important thing in terms of awarding experience remains whether or not the characters get Bocero out alive. Valiant neglected to tell the characters that they need Bocero as an informant in a larger worldwide smuggling operation. If they successfully get the man out of the compound, Interpol grants him immunity in exchange for his testimony and cooperation. This leaves the door wide open for further actions by the party chasing down the rest of the arms smuggling operation.

A week later...

If the local axiom is negative, the referee can read the players the following:

"While listening to the news, you hear the following announcement: 'The local peasants in the region of Medilaca have joined with the guerrillas. A spark has lit, and government troops have begun to find it increasingly difficult to deal with the swelling ranks of the local bands of the FARC. 12 hours ago, a massacre of a squadron of U.S. Special Forces sent there to train the local troops have many in congress talking about a full blown declaration of war. Others are calling for a total withdrawal from Colombia and a total end to the Drug War. Numerous terrorist acts have occurred around the country, including an increased amount of kidnappings, bombings and threats on government officials. Dark days lie ahead for Colombia.'"

If the local axiom remains positive, the referee can instead read the following:

"The news comes on while you wait in the airport. Most of it consists of pretty day-to-day stuff, but one thing in particular catches your ear. As you listen, it sounds rather familiar. In fact, very familiar. '...And in other news today, government forces moved in force to counter the FARC forces in the oil rich region of Medilaca. Numerous tips from the local inhabitants allowed the government to completely eradicate them from the region. The FARC has offered to come to the peace table again, but due to repeated falsifications the government has demanded that they lay down their arms before any further negotiations take place. In other news, the federal government has launched a major investigation into the dealings of WESTERN Oil. Civil rights activists insist that the corporation illegally detained prisoners on its property, though the accusations remain largely unsubstantiated... still,

news of possible lawsuits by the families of two illegally held United States citizens sent the company stock price plummeting."

If the characters somehow manage to leave the local axiom at exactly zero, then the situation stays exactly as they left it, with someone else taking Bocero's place.

If the referee does not want to use the opportunity to have Bocero lead to a longterm international campaign, he may wish to read the players the following:

"After your debriefing, in which you learn that Bocero will get off free in exchange for some testimony and cooperation, something interesting happens. Your contact at Valiant tells you, very quietly, that apparently Bocero had some rather extensive unpaid gambling debts. Federal agents found him dead the next morning when he arrived in the United States. No one knows who did it, but no one blames any of you. Bocero had a lot of enemies."

Of course, the final option would entail allowing the characters to do the job, though they would have to take care to avoid letting anyone know they did it. As long as the government gets the information it needs, they can proceed to launch their efforts against the smuggling ring. If the characters *persuade* Bocero to give this information up (though this would be difficult, since they don't know the real reason why Interpol wants him until after they drop him off), the government offers to hire them to work against the smuggling ring.

Regardless, unless Bocero dies or horrific damage takes place (i.e. as long as the government axiom remains 1 or higher), Valiant remains a significant longterm entity that can hire the characters for future missions.

Modular

Encounters

Modular Encounter #1

— The Drug Shipment

Brief Summary

This encounter can take place if the para axiom goes above 2. Bocero hires the characters to take out a drug smuggler that has failed to pay his protection money and relied on the FARC for protection instead. A fairly straightforward encounter. Mostly.



What the Characters Know

Epe learns from one of Bocero's men that a local drug smuggler by the name of Orotó has a price on his head from Bocero. He puts the word out to the party, and gives them some basic information so that they can begin to make inquiries among the locals. Epe himself only knows that Orotó usually hires three guards and drives a small bus to and from the department capital, delivering supplies to a smuggler who then sends the drugs to the United States. He also spends a great deal of time with a local prostitute named Jimera.

Should the characters go to find Jimera, they should have only moderate difficulty finding her. For relatively little cash, Jimera provides them with details about the schedule that Orotó keeps; she does not really hold much loyalty to him and she doesn't really care about what happens to him.

The information she provides tells them that Orotó will pick up the three guards outside of town and then drive them back to a processing area hidden in the rural area outside of town. She provides them each of the three main routes he takes out of town for each of the next three days. That amounts to all she knows of Orotó's affairs.

What is Really Going On

Should the characters stake out Jimera's residence, Orotó shows up after about three hours, allowing the characters to trail him if they wish. Of course, since the task only involves them shooting Orotó, they might get tempted to take care of the job right then and there, but anyone with any knowledge of the neighborhood that they have entered (Knowledge (streetwise) DC 15), knows that the locals will attack anyone bothering one of their own; they will have to deal with attacks from everyone in the entire neighborhood. In addition, Orotó can escape at any opportunity, or recover later. On the other hand, if they tail him out of the neighborhood, he meets up with his three mercenaries right away and proceeds to the processing plant. Once he leaves town, they could attack him there.

The ideal scenario would involve some sort of an ambush along one of the three routes, though the characters need to avoid a FARC roadblock. Orotó has a contact in the Popotámo, so he knows when the para's will next set one up; he chooses his routes to avoid them. If the characters initiate their attack near one of the FARC roadblocks, the FARC squad there will come to reinforce Orotó.

Finally, should the characters successfully kill or otherwise deal with Orotó and his band, if they do so while he has

the drugs, they need to decide what to do with over 300 lbs of processed cocaine.

Resolution

Award experience for successfully finding Orotó, taking out his mercenary bodyguards, and avoiding the temptation of trying to keep the loot. Aside from the fact that it violates their contract with Valiant, it really becomes a campaign of drug dealers at this point, though if the referee desires to follow this angle, that remains up to them. Some complications to note, however: Bocero and the FARC have a tight lock on the drug trade, so any attempt to sell the drugs locally will alert them. Any attempt to sell it anywhere else has a significant chance of alerting the Colombian authorities. Still, should the characters succumb to the temptation, they will have a great deal of cash on hand (+10 wealth reward).

- If the characters end up fighting the entire neighborhood to take on Orotó: Local -5, Para -2.
- If the characters kill FARC road block: Guerilla -2, Para +1.
- If the characters kill Orotó: Para +1.
- If the characters spare the lives of the mercenaries guarding Orotó: Local +1.
- If the characters attempt to sell the drugs and get caught: Para -6, Corporate -3, Guerilla -6, Local -1, Government -10.
- If the party gives the drugs to a faction: +4 to that faction (only +2 Local), -1 to all other factions (-4 Government).

Modular Encounter

#2 — The Hit Squad

Brief Summary

If the corporate axiom goes to -4, you might consider using this encounter. WESTERN Oil decides that the party presents too much of a threat to its interests and hires some heavy hitters of its own to deal with the problem.

What the Characters Know

Very little. This encounter takes place when they do not expect it. Indeed, if possible, the referee can mix it into the main storyline and use it as a foil against the characters' efforts. Primarily, however, the mission is twofold: first, persuade the characters to leave by offering them a higher pay than Valiant; failing that, arrange for an unpleasant surprise for them.



What is Really Going On

The B-Team consists of five specialists. Dorian, the leader has training as a special ops soldier and a sniper. He knows his business and tolerates little or no nonsense. Mouth, the face-man of the team, serves point and acts as the group spy. He also initiates any contact with the characters. Dritz, their mechanic, also knows a great deal about martial arts; she won't hesitate to use her looks as a weapon if she must. Talia, their weapons specialist, has a penchant for well-placed demolitions charges and a degree in psychology to help her decide exactly where to place them. Finally, Sacarab, their heavy lifter, typically wields a PKM medium machine gun (see Chapter 3).

The negotiations ideally take place when the characters find themselves distracted by something else. One possibility might come from using one of the plot hooks found in Chapter 6. Regardless, they receive a cordial note asking them to meet for a drink at their favorite tavern that afternoon. They arrive to find Epe tied up in the back with Sacarab watching over him and Mouth there to deliver an ultimatum. Either they take the offer and leave or they face the consequences.

Should they attack, Sacarab moves to kill Epe, though he only actually knocks him unconscious. If the characters

merely refuse the offer, the two carefully leave through the back. If the characters give chase, they fall into a well-planned ambush. If they wait, or attempt to investigate, the group patiently waits until the characters have found a vulnerable moment and then uses the corporation's considerable assets to track them, attacking at the worst moment possible.

Resolution

This encounter really has little complexity to it. The B-team can conceivably get counter-bribed or negotiated if the party can prove that they pose a significant enough threat to them. On the other hand, should the party simply wipe them out, very few of the locals factions will care.

- Blatant acts of stupidity and or cowardice: Local -1 to -10.
- Acts of heroism/bravery: Local +1 to +10.
- If Epe gets killed or hurt: Local -2.
- If the characters successfully counter-bribe the B-team: Corporation +1.
- If the characters destroy the B-Team: Corporation -2.





Modular Encounter #3 — The Festival of San Obol

Brief Summary

The town has a festival to celebrate the miracle of a local saint, but complications arise during the ceremonies. Suggested usage: If the local axiom gets above 4.

What the Characters Know

One morning, without any warning whatsoever (assuming the characters have no close ties to the locals), the entire town of Medilaca transforms seemingly overnight. Bright festive banners stream from all of the local buildings and large numbers of people move about the streets in anticipation of the festival to come. Scents of rich, spicy food waft from the plaza below and children have begun filling water balloons in anticipation of the water wars to occur later that afternoon. The characters have a chance to participate in the local festival. One of their neighbors, staying in a room next to their own, invites them to take part in the recreation of the Martyrdom of San Obol, which always takes place just before noon.

Should the characters accept the offer, they will play the parts of the bandits who slew the priest 200 years ago. Their job simply entails firing some pretend guns with fireworks into the air and then pointing them at the individual pretending to be San Obol. What could go wrong?

What is Really Going On

If the characters choose to sit out the festival, they hear the celebrations from above but get less of a chance to affect the outcome of the events that happen later. On the other hand, should they accept, they receive brightly colored uniforms and pretend rifles. Careful inspection reveals that no one has tampered with them.

Once the ceremony starts, the town mayor signals that the characters should move toward their place. If the characters have driven the FARC axiom below seven at this point, an extremely attractive woman offers them some refreshment before they start. Anyone drinking this will find themselves asleep in a matter of minutes (Fort 25). The FARC will attempt to kidnap anyone so drugged with a couple of well-placed men from a crowd of children they set upon the party. Should the characters avoid this successfully, the ceremony

goes on with out incident.

Once the ceremony begins, with several extremely boring speeches about the heritage of the town, followed by a wide range of badly played to truly inspired music, slowly weaving out the tale of San Obol, the characters get their queue.

At this point, the characters get the chance to recognize one of Bocero's chief lieutenants suffering the same fate they avoided earlier, slowly being dragged away by two FARC agents. The characters have a choice — finish their part in the ceremony or go after the kidnapped lieutenant. If they follow the two agents, they will prove only moderately difficult to catch, but the locals get quite annoyed that the characters disrupted the ceremony, unless they think to expose the two kidnapers for who they really are. It requires a successful use of Diplomacy (DC 25) to navigate the problem.

On the other hand, if they simply let the FARC kidnap him, they could get a chance to rescue him later, though Bocero won't like hearing about it

Resolution -

Give experience to the characters if they take part in the festival, successfully avoid the trap laid by the FARC (if applicable), finish the ceremony and/or save Bocero's officer (especially if they manage to do all four.)

- Acts of extreme stupidity or cowardice: Local -1 to -10.
- Acts of extreme bravery or kindness: Local +1 to +10.
- If the characters kill the two kidnapers: Guerilla -1.
- If the characters leave the ceremony in the middle: Local -5.
- If the characters save Bocero's lieutenant: Para +2, Government +1.
- If the characters do a particularly good job performing in the ceremony: Local +3.

Modular Encounter #4 — The Great Escape

Brief Summary

If the local axiom reaches 6+, this encounter should be considered. The local populace has grown tired of the current kidnapping situation and looks to the characters for a solution. They pay the party to mount a rescue on the local FARC compound and free the hostages.



What the Characters Know

Epe comes to the characters, quite shocked. Apparently, the mayor and a large number of the town council have pooled together a significant fund to hire the characters to go and take on the FARC, freeing their prisoners. Epe explains that he does not know what caused this sudden shift in their thinking, or what the characters should do, but he will help them if they decide to take the job.

If the characters take the mission, they get extremely detailed information about the FARC compound, where to find it, and who they have locked inside. The paid reward works in direct proportion to the number of FARC soldiers that they kill and the number of prisoners that they free.

What is Really Going On

The population of Medilaca has lost faith in Bocero. They have grown wise to the fact that Bocero has deliberately allowed the FARC limited influence in the region in order to increase the town's dependence on him. They hope to do something about it by hiring the characters to free their prisoners. The ironic thing comes from the fact that by performing an act of heroism, the characters could in fact upset their mission and annoy Bocero. On the other hand, if they refuse the assignment, the locals will lose a significant degree of faith in them. Should the characters come up with a clever solution, such as freeing the prisoners, and giving the credit to Bocero, they could find a way around this dilemma.

The FARC compound remains heavily guarded at all times, though the lightest guard comes when the two road-block crews leave during the day. On the other hand, the remaining guards go on their highest state of alert. Should the characters attempt a midnight ambush, they will catch the inexperienced guards mostly unaware, though they will only have an exceedingly short period of time before the more experienced fighters awake and return fire.

Resolution

Award experience for finding a way to gain favor with the locals, free the prisoners, keep a low profile and avoid annoying Bocero for making him look bad.

- If the characters refuse the job: Local -3, Para +1, Corporate -1, Government +1.
- If the characters successfully rescue a few hostages: Local +3, Para-2, Guerilla -5, Government +3.

- If the characters successfully rescue nearly all the hostages: Local +5, Para -7, Guerilla -7, Government +7.
- If the characters perform the job for free: Local +2.
- If the characters give Bocero the credit for act (or something similar): Para +5.

Modular Encounter #5 — The Little Guy Brief Summary

This encounter should be used to morally challenge the assignment the characters have taken. Bocero hires them to take care of some secondhand dirty work that he does not want to deal with; the characters must make a choice—follow their assignment or do the right thing.

What the Characters Know

Bocero rules the city with an invisible iron fist — the operative word being “invisible.” He almost never appears in town, and yet everyone knows he has eyes and ears everywhere. The warlord charges a tax on everyone in the city to keep them “safe” from kidnapping, which works a significant portion of the time. However, in addition to this, he also charges a tax on local businesses in order to stay open.

Recently, the owner of Rayas del Sol, where the characters have conducted most of their business through Epe up to this point, has decided the time has come to draw the line. He has refused to pay Bocero's taxes any more and demanded that the local police and mayor help him do so. He has put up several hidden digital cameras and threatens to broadcast to the world what Bocero's actions have done and to shame the Colombian authorities for permitting it to continue.

Bocero, somewhat wise to the ways of the world, realizes that the delicate balance of power that he has set up to allow him to continue operations could fall apart if he suddenly offered a more tempting target than many of the other guerilla or paramilitary groups scattered about Colombia. While he has steadily increased his businesses over the years, he has also done his best to maintain a very low profile. His secret to survival lies in this fact. Rather than deal with the owner directly, he decides to test the stuff of the local freelance mercenaries and hires the party to collect the payment from the owner.



What's Really Going On

The most obvious solution lies in simply telling the owner (Pedro Tocalla), the truth about their purpose here, collect the fine from some other funding and then hand it to Bocero. However, the more people they tell their secret to, the greater the risk of them getting caught or killed. Worse, they risk Bocero finding out about it and running away or increasing his security. Another important consideration lies in the fact that the characters must make the affair convincing to Bocero. The warlord knows Tocalla as an incredibly stubborn man.

Tocalla has indeed hidden 10 different cameras around his establishment and on the other buildings outside. Any action taking place in the area around the club gets broadcast to a nearby tape he has put in the basement of the bakery next door. Anyone attempting to remove them must locate each camera one by one, and perform a thorough search of the building and its surrounding environs (Search DC 22, 10 different checks.) One person working at a reasonable pace could find one of the cameras in about an hour. Tocalla also checks the tape and the cameras at least once every six hours. Should he fail to press the button on a manual release switch, the tape broadcasts its entire archive to a satellite broadcast that Tocalla hacked into (from the Puerto Oriz oil station).

Worst of all, the broadcasts contains archives of the characters' meetings and dealings inside of the tavern, including any conversations that they had when no one else watched. Tocalla has not had time to check the entire archive, so even if the characters mentioned things that might mean they have

come to get Bocero outside of anyone else's presence, he won't know about it unless they tell him directly.

If the characters learn of the set up, and find a way to jam it before acting, they still need to deal with the fact that Tocalla's nephew checks the tapes every 12 hours as well, and initiates the broadcast through an alternate route. In short, the characters need to find a way to deal with Tocalla's elaborate set up or simply stall him as long as possible.

Resolution

Give experience if the characters find a way to deal with the problem and still make Bocero happy. Give more experience if they manage to keep their cover in doing so.

- Acts of extreme stupidity or cowardice: Local -1 to -10.
- Acts of extreme bravery, kindness or heroism: Local +1 to +10.
- If the characters kill Tocalla: Government -9, Para -1, Local -10.
- If the characters report the hack to WESTERN Oil: Corporate +3, Government +1.
- If the characters manage to get the money to Bocero: Para +1.
- If the tape gets broadcast: Local -4, Government -4, Para -19.
- If the characters somehow convince Tocalla in a way that lets him retain his honor: Local +1.
- If the characters act like Bocero's thugs in public: Local -2, Para +1, Guerilla -2.



Chapter 10: Alternate Campaigns

Changing Destiny

*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —
I took the one less traveled by.
And that has made all the difference.*
— Robert Frost (1874 – 1963)

Introduction

This campaign gives the characters a chance to see “what if” as they open the doorway to another world. The campaign outlines the colonial era of South America and the Colombian war for independence. If the characters exercise caution, they have a chance to change a world. If they do not, they may lose their own (as they know it).

An Invitation

The characters get an invitation asking them to come to a prestigious law office in Bogotá. They meet Iago Josephin, who tells them that he manages the estate of an ex-patriot American by the name of Jonathan Frestar. An eccentric billionaire, he made a fortune on defense department contracts but left the country in order to avoid an attempt by his younger heirs to force him into a mental institution. Josephin explains that he rarely interacted directly with the man, mainly running the occasional errand for him, but all that changed when he vanished six months ago. Although Frestar would normally vanish for months at a time, this time he left specific instructions about what to do if he did not report by now. Meanwhile, his disappearance led his heirs to appeal to the Colombian government for permission to divide the estate.

Iago explains that these highly unusual circumstances

demanded specialists with... a touch of understanding and a habit for the unusual — hence the characters. He expects them to exercise discretion about everything that they see and hear. He then takes them to Frestar’s mansion and takes them into the basement. There, amidst huge amounts of computers, machinery and glowing display terminals, they see an eerie blue doorway which hovers in the middle of the air like an optical illusion at a theme park.

Then he points to the diary entries left by his former employer.

From the Diary of Frestar the “Mad”

— What can I say? I’m mad as hell and I’m not going to take it anymore! No — not that kind of mad; you know, mad scientist mad. I’ve got this idea stuck in my head and I must get it out, OUT OUT OUT I say! I will consult with the butler in the morning.

— So time travel actually IS impossible. Sue me. The basics are covered, though. What it means is that I’ve figured something else out, something new. I think I’ve got some kind of parallel timeline leaping here, which means that while I can’t go back and fix my own life, I can screw up someone else’s just the same.

— I tried giving a machine gun to some of the local natives. They did not stick around long enough for me to explain it to them. That, and as I observe, it seems that they’re dying from a disease I probably gave them. So much for being altruistic.

— The windows on this new timeline are totally random. I am at 1200 AD one minute and at 2600 BC the next. What amazes me is that thus far no one has attempted to stop me. Surely there must be some higher power at work patrolling the timelines. Otherwise, what’s the point?



— I've discovered something unique, something special. It appears that the device is adjusting itself to become "at-tuned" to the other timeline, allowing for longer and longer durations.

— I've finally found the problem. The more I think about other times, the more it tends to screw things up. I'm going to try some self-hypnosis.

— That helped, but only so much. I've discovered something else: living matter does not disrupt things at all, but my attempts to send material objects into the other space create some kind of cosmic imbalance.

- How does this machine work? I don't understand it... it's as if I had the idea pressed into my head by a hot soldering iron, but now that I have it I have no idea what to do with it. The durations between temporal reset are getting farther and farther apart — almost logarithmic.

- Well, I have it now. I've made the final adjustment and it seems to just keep the window open all the time. I've wandered around a bit and attempted to figure out where exactly it is I am, and as near as I can tell from astronomical observation it is somewhere in South America. I've picked up a few early colonial artifacts, so I know that I'm on the right track. I intend to go down the mountain in order to get a better lay of the land.

The Mission

Iago explains that he wants the characters to go into that door and retrieve Frestar. He does not know if it really does go to another time or simply involves an elaborate hologram. He has hired the characters to figure that out. What he does want are results. The characters have approximately four months to find Frestar and bring him back. If 10 months have passed without a word, then Iago has no choice but to admit to the Colombian government that his employer is missing, thus making the his assets forfeit to his heirs.

The Curious Machine

As the characters study the notes, they learn that the theories behind the machine have a bizarre internal consistency. They follow conventional physics, but they can also readily see that even Frestar barely had an idea of what he had created. Anyone making a successful Knowledge (physical sciences) skill check (DC 25) can discover that some external intelligence clearly guided his actions, though gaining any useful knowledge about the target proves an impossible task given the lack of sufficient material.

Give the characters time to experiment with the device and explore the outside world before you start to throw complications at them. The sooner they learn that they can safely change the world inside of the doorway, the sooner they can stop simply looking for Frestar and start becoming demigods in their own minds.

The Basics of Time Travel

Time travel generally makes very large, nasty messes for a referee to deal with. Using Frestar's device, the characters do not actually travel backwards in time but sideways. The campaign involves the characters moving from one parallel timeline to another. However, in this case, the timeline takes place chronologically 200 years in the past while remaining progressively similar to our own. In other words, for every week that passes in the normal timeline, a similar week passes in the other universe.

The second component that often creates problems involves the mixing of the technologies. The characters do not have the option to experiment with that in this case (though of course if they desire to do so, and the referee allows it, they are more than welcome), since the mechanism of time travel involves a combination of quantum mechanics and hypnotism. In essence, the characters get hypnotized into thinking that they belong 200 years in the past. A part of their minds retains awareness of their true selves, but at the same time they believe themselves natives of the new timeline. In essence, they know what is really going on, but must take care not to think about it too much. Second, the quantum rotation device only works on living matter, forcing the characters to arrive at their destination sans clothing or equipment.

The obvious exception to the future technology comes in the creation of "retro" tech. Should one of the characters have a technological bent, he could attempt to create past technology far ahead of its time. However, he would find himself totally without any of the supporting infrastructure. They do not make silicon chips in the early 1900s.

A final complication involves the interference from the created timeline in the main time stream. In other words, should any of the characters allow even the slightest detail about their time traveling to escape, descendants of those who live in the time stream that they have altered learn about the nature of time travel and discover that the Gran Colombia timeline 200 years in the future *also* runs juxtaposed to the



1809-1811 Various councils come together in order to have a greater form of self-government. The viceroys crushed these councils almost immediately. Though initially thwarted, one of these councils (juntas) manages to take control of the country and install Francisco de Miranda. Initial divisions severely weaken the strength of this attempt. On July 5, 1811, Venezuela proclaims independence. They create a very liberal constitution that allows wide citizenship, but initial revolts cause members of the aristocracy to have second thoughts, severely weakening the strength of the country. Simon Bolivar comes on to the scene as a lieutenant of Miranda. Colombia hosts two entirely separate revolutions with many provinces remaining loyal to Spain.

1812-1814 Spain enforces its will on the territories and crushes Miranda, sending him in chains back to Spain. Spain exiles Bolivar from the country in disgrace. A year later, he returns and attempts liberate Venezuela a second time using extremely strong domestic enforcement to secure victory. Class warfare erupts, permitting Jose Tomas Boves to orchestrate an insurgent campaign against Bolivar. Ill-advised laws against the plainsmen ultimately causes the downfall of the movement, as numerous violent conflicts force Bolivar to leave the country a second time, this time forcing him to retreat to Colombia (New Grenada). Boves dies.

1815-1817 The revolution slowly collapses in Colombia. Bolivar again retreats, this time to Jamaica. He begins a series of letters to foreign nations, seeking support for his attempts at revolution. The royalist factions do not keep their promises to the plainsmen, and impose harsher and harsher repercussions upon the citizens of the Spanish colonies. The plainsmen (llaneros) balk and begin to rebel. They operate under the leadership of Jose Antonio Paez. Bolivar arrives in the area with his limited troops (including several Irish mercenaries) and meets with Paez. This time, he promises liberty for anyone serving under the revolutionary banner and ensures a popular base of support.

1818-1820 Francisco de Paula Santander arrives on the scene in Colombia. Bolivar leads his forces across the Andes in remarkable and frigid conditions and joins with Colombian forces to initiate final defeat of the Spanish. The turning point of the war takes place at Boyacá River (Aug 9, 1819). From this point forward the Spanish begin to lose without recovery. A short time later, the congress of Angostura unites to create a formal constitution naming Gran Colombia, with Bolivar as its first president and commander and chief. King Ferdinand VII dies but the war continues. The Spanish refuse to surrender.

1821-1823 Jose Antonio de Sucre, Bolivar's righthand man, begins to defeat the Spanish in Ecuador. Paez and Bolivar defeat the Spanish in Venezuela at Carobobo (June 24, 1821). Panama voluntarily joins Gran Colombia. A triad of power forms under a new congress, with Bolivar as president, Santander as Vice-President, and Paez in command in Venezuela. Bolivar's forces reinforce Sucre and they defeat the Spanish yet again in Quito at Pichincha. Difficulties in Peru between Bolivar and San Martin (who liberated much of the southern portion of the continent) causes instability in Peru. Sucre placed in charge of liberating Bolivia (Upper Peru).

1824-1826 Sucre begins a guerilla campaign against the wealthy landowners in Upper Peru. The royalist army is firmly defeated and a congress is formed proclaiming Sucre the president. Internal power struggles begin right away in the Gran Colombian congress. Many accuse Bolivar of dictatorship and use propaganda and slander to reduce his power base.

past of the "mainstream" timeline. The practical upshot of which is that while the characters cannot alter the past of their own time, they can indirectly change the real world as the future inhabitants of the Gran Colombia timeline change the mainstream timeline. It can get complicated rather quickly, but the main thing to remember from a referee standpoint involves total control of any changes to the main timeline that you want. While the characters can change Gran Colombia they cannot change the main timeline, or more importantly, they cannot control it.

What is Really Going On

The powers behind the machine sent the broadcast for the doorway into Frestar's mind. The idea behind their attempt involves loosening the barriers around the two timestreams. The more anomalies created by the interactions between the two, the easier it becomes, temporally speaking, for an outside timeline to come in and invade. The easiest



way to measure this involves “temporal paradox.” If the characters change the timeline, nothing really happens. On the other hand, if they blatantly admit that they come from another dimension or travel in time, etc., this builds up the future attempts in the Gran Colombia timeline to a point where they begin altering the mainstream timeline. Even worse, if the characters discover the alterations to their own timeline, and begin any sort of conflict with the future of the other timeline, the paradox reaches its limit, and the walls come down.

Frestar desires to assassinate Santander. He believes him responsible for the ultimate conflict between Santander and Bolivar and the subsequent dissolution of Gran Colombia. The “now” of the Gran Colombia timeline occurs just a few days before the battle of the Boyacá River. He has passes himself off as an American observer, sent by the United States to determine if they will aid in the war or not. He simply waits for a chance to get alone with Santander so he can shoot him and then return to the portal.

If the characters simply show up, grab Frestar and head back to the portal, closing it behind them, then they have thwarted the Outsider’s plans. Frestar does not want to leave voluntarily. If the characters end up helping him, he readily hires them and agrees to provide them with whatever materials they want. He will not go back voluntarily, and no amount of arguments against “corrupting the timestream” will convince him to return. He believes he has the physics worked out to a point that he can make any alterations he wants. A careful analysis of conversation, however, will reveal that he now has an acute case of megalomania. Frestar believes himself a direct and divine agent of God. The tampering and imprinting of the device upon his mind has left lasting damage.

The referee should use creativity and common sense when deciding what the future of the other timeline becomes. If the characters act like tyrants, then tyrants will most likely rule the area in years to come. If the characters act the part of heroes, then the future could have a far more benevolent outcome. Finally, in the mainstream timeline, if the characters allow word to get out of their actions or Frestar’s discovery, a number of world governments become very interested in just how the device works and anyone that had anything to do with it.

Drug Busters!

An armed society is a polite society. Manners are good when one may have to back up his acts with his life.

— Robert A. Heinlein, “Beyond This Horizon” (*Astounding Science Fiction*, April-May 1942)

Introduction

This campaign deals with the stereotypes of Colombia during the 1980s, when the drug war reached its height in the public mind. During a few years in this decade, people listed the War on Drugs as their top concern. Indeed back then a major cultural movement existed to eliminate drug use in the most inept manner possible. Generally, these efforts took place in the form of poorly done television commercials: “This is [random thing #1]. This is [random thing #2]. This is [random thing #1] on [random thing #2]. Any questions?” The joke has repeated to the point that the original has almost lost its meaning. However, the movies of the time often symbolized a more subtle form of attack, especially in the nation of Colombia. Almost no mention of Colombia occurred without the synonymous mention of the ominous and lavish drug lords.

In this campaign, the characters get the opportunity to go back to that decade of parachute pants and Vulcan mini cannons and fight crime. Drug crime, Hollywood style.

Recruitment

The characters get called in to the Los Angeles Police Headquarters. It does not matter what the characters actually do, they still get summoned to the Los Angeles Police Headquarters. The federal government has decided to create a special kind of super anti-drug squad to send deep into backcountry Colombia and fight the drug lords. They have concluded that since the Los Angeles Police Department has the world’s most successful anti-narcotics department, they want to work through them. They have assembled a team of the best of the best. The STRIKEBACK team!

Indeed, the more convoluted the reasoning that you can think of the better. The character is an accountant? No problem. Drug lords launder money, the accountant can track it. The character lifts weights at his local college and drinks prolific amounts of beer? No problem. His incredible strength will come in handy and his firm familiarity with the vice of beer will keep him away from evil drugs. The character works

as a janitor in a nearby carnival, has an IQ of 92 and speaks with a lisp? No problem. He's the perfect undercover agent. The drug lords will never suspect him.

The characters get put before the chief, who will (of course) yell at them extremely loudly and make no sense whatsoever; nothing new here. However, the thing that probably gets their attention comes from the secret STRIKEBACK arsenal underneath the station. They take a secret elevator 2000 feet down (placed in natural caverns created by the San Andreas Fault). Any weapon that the characters could possibly want lies stashed in the vast underground warehouses. The characters can requisition and use it all. The characters want a stinger missile? Not a problem. Characters want a Harrier jumpjet? No problem. Characters want a fuel air bomb? Not a problem. No amount of ridiculous violence is too much for the STRIKEBACK team.

Once the characters have successfully loaded up on as much ridiculous gear as they can carry, they each get a super gadget of unique design and request. This requires a bit of thought on the referee's part, since it's easy here for a device to break the campaign (more than it already is anyway). The devices should all work usefully... *once*, at the most appropriate dramatic time. If the character tries to use it for everything and anything, feel free to have it cause disastrous results.

Colombia — Haven of Evil

The first thing that the characters notice upon leaving the airport involves coffee. The smell of it permeates the atmosphere. A small brown man with a donkey and several saddle bags filled with the stuff gives the characters their complimentary batch. Once they leave the plane, their local contact, Juan, informs the characters that he has arranged for them to secretly infiltrate the Colombian drug lord's health spa. All of the rival cartels use the same spa (El Gato Feliz) and he has given the characters undercover jobs working inside so that they can listen in on their evil plans.

Once the characters infiltrate the area, they learn that the drug lords have planned a special conference to unite all of their empires under one giant Super Cartel. They have also received a recent shipment of a new drug, called Drug X, that should triple their profits. At some point, the drug lords should notice that the characters do not exactly fit in. Preferably, this should involve the most ridiculous thing possible. All

movie villains have very blind-sided intelligence and so will not notice the most obvious things imaginable (like the hoards of guns the characters have hidden under their jackets). They will, however, have an intimate knowledge of American baseball, and should talk about it as much as possible.

Once the obligatory firefight at the spa ends, Juan informs the characters that he has gained a deep undercover agent ally, allowing the characters to enter the secret drug lord conference compound. Little Pablo looks five years old but insists that he just turned eight. He explains that his mother used crack cocaine when he was a baby and so his growth was stunted. While this might bring a harrowing, real world problem into an otherwise ridiculous campaign, the characters should forget this rapidly as Little Pablo proceeds to give them lectures about the evils of drugs as the most inopportune moments. Never mind the fact that the characters have come to *fight* drugs, Little Pablo wants to make absolutely sure that the characters understand that drugs are evil. Little Pablo will also frequently talk to a wall, or stare into blank space and nod. If asked, he whispers conspirator-like that he hears voices in his head and that these tell him that he and everyone else there really belong to part of a special television program called "Drug Busters!" No amount of violence can possibly hurt or stop Little Pablo in any way. He does not sleep. He does not have emotions, and he absolutely will not stop until the end of the scene.

Make the conflict in the drug conference area as violent as possible. The characters should get this opportunity to use all of that firepower that they picked up back at the armory. Indeed, get them to use up as much of the heavy stuff as you can, since they will most definitely want it later on. Once the drug lords have all died, the characters can slap themselves on the back for a job well done. Or can they?

Drug X — Getting there is Half the Fun

An examination of the area reveals large quantities of Drug X. If the characters analyze the drug, they discover it to have highly addictive hallucinogenic properties. An analysis of the paper work reveals that it has come from a massive drug manufacturing plant in the middle of nowhere, deep in Colombia. The party receives orders to track these evil drugs back to their source and blow it up before any more gets into



the wrong hands.

At this point, the most important thing involves not what the characters do but how they get there. The only safe passage to the interior comes from taking Guadalupe's Chicken Bus. The characters must ride on the bus with a lot of rural Colombians, who all have clothing exactly like the man handing out coffee at the airport. There are also chickens in cages and at least one small pig running back and forth across the main isle. If the characters attempt to rent a helicopter, have it malfunction and crash next to the Chicken Bus. If the characters buy their own vehicle, it gets a flat tire. If the characters attempt to walk on their own, have the Chicken Bus pull alongside and offer them a lift.

The Chicken Bus only takes the characters to a government checkpoint. The ominous looking secret police pull the bus over and inspect everyone inside. If the characters reveal that they work for STRIKEBACK, the authorities will obsequiously defer to their wonderful and intelligent North American mast— er, ... *allies* — and offer to take them in government cars. As soon as the characters enter these cars, no matter where they are, guerillas attack them. An intense firefight ensues between the guerillas and the government forces, causing the car (or whatever vehicle in which they find themselves) to careen off the cliff and slide off through the jungle.

Things should remain quiet for a while, giving the characters some much-needed time for stress, interparty conflict, and extremely shallow character development. Take this opportunity to increase any sexual tension that might exist between party members. Pick the most important moment possible and then have them make a Listen check (the DC is irrelevant). They hear, just barely, in the distance, an inhuman and eerie growling noise coming closer.

Doctor Drugs — The Evil That Men Do

Rushing through the trees, horrifically deformed human beings wielding weapons with advanced laser sights descend upon the characters in hoards. They shoot to kill but die rather easily. Still, the sheer psychological trauma of having a laser pointer on one's forehead should count for something. Should the characters realize that all these poor creatures merely represent the victims of drug abuse, they must capture them alive so that medical science can search for a cure. However, if the characters simply lay waste to everything that moves (likely) then this opportunity for public service passes them by.



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If the characters perform poorly, then the creatures capture them to take them back to their master. If the characters manage to kill each of the drug crazed mutants, then make sure at least one of them has a map of the area highlighting the exact location of the drug factory.

Doctor Drugs lives a simple life. He used to work as an orthodontist but realized that he had no real prospects of finding a girlfriend, a truly satisfying career, or any real goals. So, he decided to become evil and work as a mad scientist. He has a lot of skill at it and gets a deep feeling of personal fulfillment at what he does. At the moment, he has kidnapped several hapless teens and has them strapped in a cage over a simmering cauldron of Drug X, and plans to lower them into it to create more of his Drug Predators. Should any of the characters get captured, the good doctor tosses them in for good measure.

Give the characters a chance to escape (or just turn them all into drug-crazed mutants) and confront the evil doctor. Sadly, this fight remains largely anticlimactic, since Doctor

Drugs has no combat skills whatsoever. He does, however, have some experience with self-destruct mechanisms. Give the characters five minutes to get out. The blast radius of the explosion destroys as much terrain as whatever the characters run away from, minus five feet (example: If the characters run 500 feet, the blast radius of the explosion covers 495 feet).

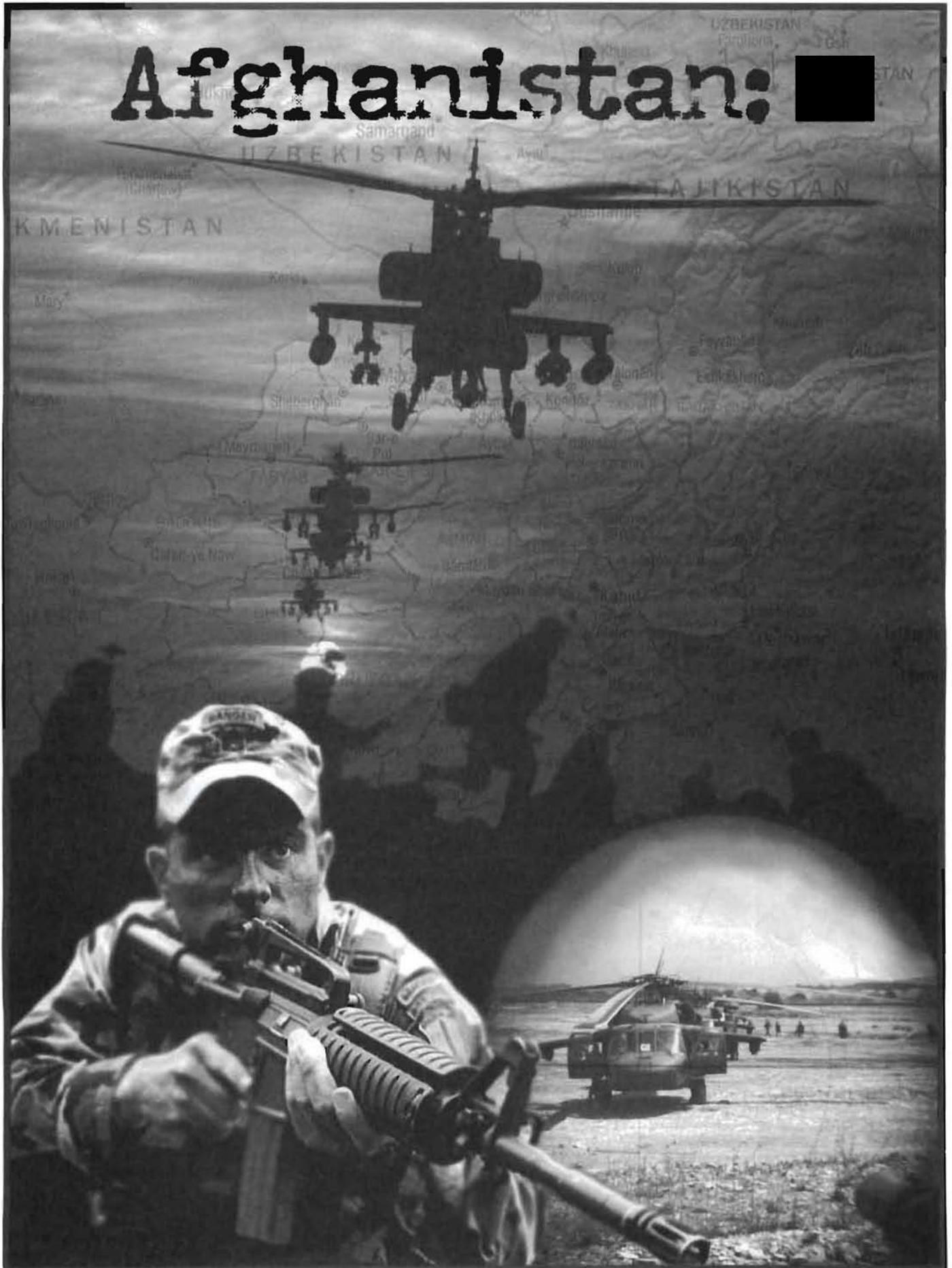
Resolution

The chief thinks that they all did a fine job. They each get a meaningless promotion and a pat on the back. They get offered a job to stay with the STRIKEBACK! team on a permanent basis. Ignore anything the characters did, since no amount of violence against the forces of narcotics is too much. The one exception to this, however, comes if any of the characters voluntarily used illegal drugs of any kind. At that point, the long arm of the law gets them on a blood test and throws them into prison. Case closed.



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Colombia:

MODERN

Colombia's history is rife with revolution. From the Spanish conquests of the 16th century to the 19th- and 20th-century peasant uprisings, the land has seen much spilt blood and little stability. In the modern era, the Drug War ups the ante even more, with drug lords, leftists guerillas, right-wing paramilitaries, and U.S. special ops troops and mercenaries all fighting one another for what they perceive as theirs, whether it be money, political power or protection of oil pipelines. The little guy, as always, is caught in the middle, trapped between warring ideologies.

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