



SAVAGING YOUR FAVORITE RIFTS® IDEAS

RIFTS®



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SAVAGING YOUR FAVORITE RIFTS® IDEAS

FROM the day the *Savage Rifts*® project was announced as a reality, the most requested companion piece was a “conversion guide,” something fans could use to bring their favorite things from the massive library of *Rifts*® books published by Palladium Books, Inc., into *Savage Worlds*.

Though both the *Rifts*® system from Palladium and *Savage Worlds* fulfill similar roles—core rules used to express a vast array of concepts, genres, and stories—they do so in very different ways. Both are powerful and effective, giving their fans a great gaming experience, yet they handle the core tasks of expressing characters and actions so differently that creating a strictly mathematical process to convert from one to the other would be an exercise in frustration and futility, as the end product wouldn't be very fun.

Instead, this guide is meant to aid you in **translating** your favorite ideas from the vast amount of material in Palladium's *Rifts*® library

into *Savage Worlds*. You may discover these guidelines help you translate almost *any* idea from Palladium Books supplements into something you can use in *Savage Rifts*®.

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION

Savage Worlds fans have long known the philosophical foundation of writing things up in the system—translate and interpret, rather than convert. Whether creating something from scratch or bringing an idea in from another source (movies, comics, another game setting, etc.), you are best served by trying to recreate the essential aspects of the concept, rather than attempting to directly convert each and every minute detail of the idea.

If you're writing up a specific character from another source, what are the essential qualities of that character? Is



she quick-witted? Brutally strong? A two-guns-blazing acrobat? A strong-willed and hard-boiled detective? When recreating a previously-designed RPG character, you will be better off stepping away from the numbers and figuring out the essential questions and answers about her. Once you've done that, it's a lot easier to go through the *Savage Worlds* material and find the elements which best define her.

For example, if she's a "strong-willed and hard-boiled detective," you can design her to have Edges like Investigator, Nerves of Steel, and (of course) Strong Willed. There may be nothing in her original system write-up which reflects those exact mechanical qualities, but that may be because the original system handles such concepts very differently.

Of course, the game system may have equivalent ideas, in which case your task is to look for roughly similar ways to express the same thing. Regardless, the above mental approach serves you best as you seek to make sure this character *feels* right under *Savage Worlds* rules, rather than reflecting a mathematical approximation of her pure stats from the *Rifts*® system.

This same design philosophy applies to most everything else you'll want to translate to *Savage Worlds* rules, though in the case of things like monsters, vehicles, and character types (Occupational Character Classes, or O.C.C.s, in *Rifts*® terms), you have another very useful tool to wield. The best guide to bringing a creature, piece of equipment, or even O.C.C. over from *Rifts*® to *Savage Rifts*® is to simply look at an existing, similar item in the *Savage Rifts*® books and start from there. In many cases, you can even use that concept's stats as a starting place, varying them to better represent the new concept.

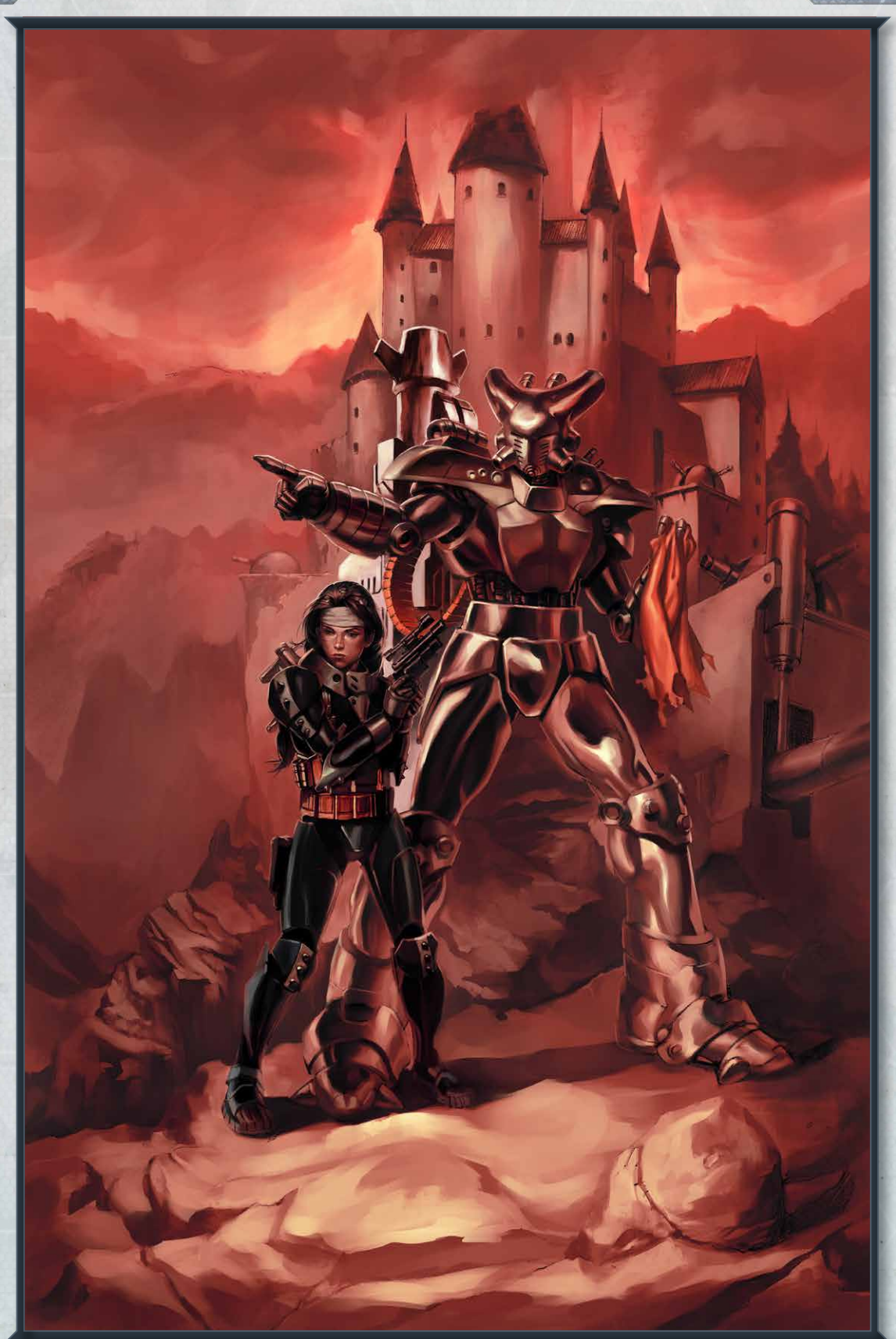
For example, when translating a Northern Gun robot vehicle into *Savage Rifts*®, you'll have a much easier time looking at the NG robots already in *The Tomorrow Legion Player's Guide* and using one of them as a starting framework. The same idea goes for translating O.C.C.s—most of them are readily understood as variations on existing Iconic Frameworks, or at least similar enough in concept and power usage to be relatable.

MORE VARIETY, NOT MORE POWER

Most gamers know the term "power creep." Newer material comes out for a game of almost any kind, and there is a righteous concern that the new character type, weapon, armor, etc. will be so much better than what's come before it makes the older release obsolete. Designers of all forms of games conscientiously struggle to ensure new material makes the game experience more dynamic and interesting without creating an arms race to acquire the new releases just because it completely overpowers anything else.

This is a concept you should keep in the front of your mind as you go through your own creation process to add things to your *Savage Rifts*® campaign. While the temptation is strong to ensure your personal favorite O.C.C. or power armor is as awesome as you can possibly make it, you will do better by your game and your fellow players by working on making it stand out creatively, rather than in terms of raw power. *Savage Worlds* is a game system which favors a certain amount of balance among roughly equivalent things, and the game works best when honoring this idea.

Look for what makes your favored idea special and interesting, rather than what makes it kick the stuffing out of every other like it in the setting. After all, it's relatively easy to just make something stronger, tougher, and more damaging... but that's hardly exciting or intriguing. It's better to find the elements which make it stand out in more memorable ways.



Herein lies a key idea to internalize: *Savage Worlds* amalgamates a lot of intricate detail into larger, broader “packages.” This not only makes for faster and easier game play, it also simplifies both the creation and understanding of characters and other builds. Wielding a rapier, punching, and swinging a lamppost all fall under the Fighting skill. Missiles of magic, holy bolts of energy, and a telekinetic punch at a distance are all best interpreted as the *bolt* power. Having a thick hide, reinforced bones, or an incredible pain tolerance all fall under the auspice of possessing a high Toughness.

As you go through the very specific details and ideas of a given character, monster, piece of gear, or whatever, remember to figure out its essential game play quality and find the *Savage Worlds* mechanic that represents it best. Think in broad concepts, then use your descriptions and trappings to elaborate on the details which make the story part of that concept stand out.

CHARACTER OPTIONS

You've likely heard the phrase “more art than science” when it comes to game design. This truism certainly comes into play with all of the *Savage Rifts*® character rules, from Iconic Frameworks and MARS packages to Edges and special abilities—not to mention Race and power options. The numbers are important, yet how those numbers interact in terms of game impact and the player's experience is as much about intuition and narrative understanding as it is about formulas. Nowhere is this more evident than in the crafting of character options.

THE HITBASH APPROACH

Those who work with miniatures for RPGs and wargaming know the term “kitbash” very well. It's the process of taking existing models and pieces, pulling them apart, and recombining those pieces into a custom result which more exactly fits what the modeler wants. This is the right approach

to take in creating new character options for *Savage Rifts*®.

The core Iconic Frameworks in *The Tomorrow Legion Player's Guide* and *Edges* from that book and *Savage Worlds* represent the foundation concepts of the *Rifts*® setting, making them the best starting places for translating other ideas, or even in creating new ones to play with. Thinking in these terms, your best steps in translating a favorite O.C.C. into character options are:

1. Brainstorm the major abilities of the O.C.C. and compare them with known *Savage Rifts*® character options. Depending on how unique the concept is, there are a few broad possibilities:
 - **Edges:** Many character concepts can be covered by creating a new Edge; not every hero type needs a whole new Framework to fulfill their shtick. The simplest variations on characters fit into this theme—like the Ley Line Rifter, which we accomplished by adding the Teleportational Hitchhiker Edge to *Blood & Banesh*—and are usually derivative of core iconic *Rifts* archetypes like the Juicer, Ley Line Walker, etc. Keep in mind that not every Edge needs to be available at character creation—it's OK to let players work towards the Edges needed to fully realize their heroic ideal. Even if some Palladium O.C.C.s started with those abilities, *Savage Worlds* characters tend to progress more over time.
 - **MARS packages:** Use the MARS framework if the character option is more than an Edge or two's worth of abilities, or part of a “full package” concept. MARS packages often have a unique special ability (roughly equal in value to an Edge) or custom power list to help the character concept be truly unique. If you don't need a special ability or custom power list to build the package, realize what you are creating is essentially just a MARS Personal Concept Option with added steps (which is totally acceptable!).

- **Iconic Frameworks:** For truly unique *Rifts*® concepts with a combination of special abilities and complications, you can build your own custom Iconic Framework. This is the most work out of all of the options, but can be the most rewarding when you get it right! Remember that, like building a custom Race in *Savage Worlds*, you will need unique complications for the concept to offset its powerful abilities.

2. Whichever approach you take — Edges, MARS, or IF — decide which existing Iconic Framework or MARS package most closely resembles the idea of what you want to translate or create.
3. Go through existing abilities, Edges, and power lists, then modify the most similar ones to fit your current idea. Make sure to keep things about the same effectiveness and power level.
4. For any additional abilities you feel are important to the concept, define them as Iconic Edges the player can choose for the character either at creation or later.

This is the best approach to give you balanced results in keeping with the spirit of *Savage Rifts*®. The devil resides in the details, however, so let's go over these steps a bit more.

CHOOSING A MODEL FRAMEWORK

This is the most important part of the process. The right choice means the least amount of serious work you have to put in and establishes the foundation of your build. The wrong choice can set you off on a frustrating path and a lot of re-working.

Again, the temptation may be to make a choice you see as the most powerful. This isn't really the best approach, however, and can lead to a very clunky result more about the power than about representing the best elements and lore of the O.C.C. you are trying to emulate. It's better by far to target the Iconic Framework that exemplifies the same kind of role and capabilities the established O.C.C. represents from the original *Rifts*® sources.

Another thing to watch out for is being *too* literal in your choice of foundation. For example, if you're translating something with a strong set of psionic abilities, you might be automatically drawn to the Mind Melter as your starting place. This is probably the right choice for many ideas, but if the particular concept you're playing with is less about raw power and more about a variety of special abilities outside of simply using psionics, you *might* be better off looking at the Ley Line Walker.

Yes, the Walker is arcane-based, but realize that much of what you are doing is effectively "re-skinning" an established framework so that it looks and feels like what you want. If the Ley Line Walker gives you more options



by switching out ley line abilities for specialized psionic abilities (while still giving the character significant raw power), that's probably the better choice. After all, you can simply replace PPE with ISP and an updated power list, and the core powers system functions essentially the same.

Some other guiding points to consider as you choose where to start:

- Is your concept driven *heavily* by cybernetics? The Combat Cyborg may be your best choice to base it on.
- For super-soldier types — especially those for whom some kind of sacrifice for sheer, raw power is part of the build — either the **Crazy** or **Juicer** is the way to go. Note that the variant Juicer concepts have been covered in the *Savage Rifts*® supplements *Arcana & Mysticism* and *Empires of Humanity*.
- Is there a combination of mystical, psionic, or arcane talents with strong combat competence at the heart of what you want to translate? The **Cyber-Knight** is a firm foundation to look at. It's also good for any character with low level powers and lots of variety.
- Does the concept have raw innate power with a fairly narrow focus? The **Burster** is perfect for such types.
- **Mind Melters** are a good foundation for any O.C.C. oriented around heavy focus on power with a good amount of specialization toward that power.
- Most arcane-focused concepts should start with the **Ley Line Walker** as their foundation, especially those that have lots of special abilities to articulate in order to represent them best
- The complexities of the **Mystic** make that Iconic Framework an excellent "catch-all" kind of foundation when you're just not sure what else to use. They work especially well for something with lots of power, but also a broad focus.
- One option for a highly-skilled concept with lots of focused capabilities, yet not a lot of massive power (at least to start) is the **Techno-Wizard**. This Iconic Framework fulfills a similar role,

in terms of translation foundations, as that of the Cyber-Knight.

- Looking to create a custom Dragon Hatchling race option? Check out the new **Dragon Hatchling Options** and their related Iconic Edges in the *Tomorrow Legion Field Manual*.

One Iconic Framework we'd advise against using as a foundation for translating O.C.C.s and other concepts is the **Glitter Boy**. There is no more archetypical, definitive icon in the *Rifts*® setting than this one, and its design is very specific to what it is and what it does. For O.C.C.s based on the use of Power Armor or Robot Vehicles, you're much better off going the **MARS** route.

THE TRADE-OFFS

This is easily the most involved part of the process. While the basic idea is pretty simple, you will need to spend some time and serious creative thought on it as you decide what parts of the foundation Iconic Framework to keep, and what parts to replace with something else. Moreover, you'll be coming

FOR EVERYTHING ELSE, THERE'S M.A.R.S.

As many *Savage Rifts*® fans have discovered, your best bet for many O.C.C. translations is to simply employ the *Mercenaries*, *Adventurers*, *Rogues*, and *Scholars* framework. Many concepts are easy to simulate via the Personal Concept Option.

This is especially true for any O.C.C. heavily based on use and ownership of Power Armor, Robot Armor, or vehicles. As well, any concept very oriented on combat skills, or best defined as highly skilled and talented, expresses quite well using MARS. Definitely try building your concept using MARS before diving into the Iconic Frameworks described above.

up with your best estimations of what is equivalent, and in some cases may even be inventing new things.

Your choices may be as easy as trading one Edge or set of Skills for another. You may also take established special abilities and tweak to fit the idea you're working on. Honestly, your instinct should be to borrow and re-skin as many established things from existing write-ups as possible, both to make things easier for yourself and to feel more confident in the balance of what's created.

The **Making Races** section of *Savage Worlds* is another great tool to rely on. Those rules will give you a solid sense of what balances against what and the relative value of abilities, Edges, and other talents. In fact, the Race creation rules formed a solid foundation for much of what we created for *Savage Rifts*®.

Complications are also of importance when looking at this process, note which ones are associated with a given Iconic Framework. You will need to adapt the ones that exist, or replace them with roughly equivalent issues, if you want to ensure that your final result is effectively in balance with other Iconic Frameworks. Don't forget to read up on the Palladium lore for the character types, as that often contains hints at role-playing Abilities and Hindrances which are often very mechanically applied in *Savage Worlds*.

Hero's Journey rolls for the Iconic Framework should also be considered. Take a close look at the original framework, and remember to establish a roughly equivalent scheme for your new one.

Playtesting is important, you never know exactly how some things will work (or not) until they hit the tabletop. At some point, you're likely to come up with something new, especially if you feel a key concept in an original *Rifts*® O.C.C. isn't represented in the necessary way in anything found in *Savage Worlds* yet. Feel free to run with your inspiration, but understand that you may need to play around with the idea over a few sessions to be sure it really works as well as you intend. If it turns out overpowered, or next-to-useless, you (and the Game Master, if that's not you) need to be willing to go back to the drawing board and rework it.

NEW ICONIC EDGES

There are times when everything simply won't fit into a baseline Iconic Framework or MARS package, yet these abilities need to be possible for a character of that type. This is where Iconic Edges come into play. These represent special abilities someone on that particular path can learn over time, or perhaps they are an evolution of an existing power. For example, the Burster's *Flame Blast* represents an advanced technique for her use of pyrokinesis.

Your best guide for creating Iconic Edges is both the core *Savage Worlds* rules and *Savage Rifts*®. The Edges already listed give you a baseline for deciding the required Rank as well as other things like Traits and prerequisite Edges. As a general rule, Rank requirements should reflect how far along a character is on his journey before he develops this particular new technique or talent. Attribute and Skill requirements are best used sparingly, but one or two are often a good idea to ensure that the Iconic Edge isn't just a "gimme" for every character on this Iconic road.

EXAMPLE TRANSLATIONS

For something this involved, some good examples of how our team did this for the first three *Savage Rifts*® world books will serve to illustrate the process for more clarity.

EDGE EXAMPLE

When translating the **Juicer variants** from Palladium Books' excellent *Rifts*® *World Book 10: Juicer Uprising*, we decided that most of them would be best served as Iconic Edges. To come to this decision, we looked at the lore and rules presented in the source material and compared many of the ability boosts and trade-offs with the costs listed under **Making Races** in *Savage Worlds*.

In most cases there was roughly an Edge's worth of special abilities that set one Juicer variant apart from another. In the case where the Juicer variant was more powerful, there was usually a trade-off in lost core Juicer abilities or unique disadvantages that we could include as an offset. In a few cases, keeping to the original thematic abilities required the Juicer taking the Edge to also

sacrifice a point of Burn to make sure that the math came out balanced. You can see the results of this work in *Empires of Humanity*.

One Juicer variant defied this method: the Dragon Juicer had so many interesting abilities and different lore that it really deserved an Iconic Framework. We had to leverage a lot of existing concepts from the Juicer, Crazy, and Dragon Hatchling frameworks to get it to work—there were a lot of revisions in our playtest!—but you can see the fruits of our labor in *Arcana & Mysticism*. It was pretty atypical and introduced some of its own new twists, though, so we won't use it as an example of how to translate most character concepts.

MARS PACKAGE EXAMPLE

An example of a character concept best translated as a MARS package is the **Psi-Slinger** from *Rifts® World Book 14: New West*. Originally our team worked it out as an Iconic Edge, but early playtest feedback was dissatisfied with the result—there was a little too much going on for one Edge to handle.

Instead, we ended up with an iconic "Man at Arms" O.C.C. translated into an experienced MARS warrior package—often a great fit for experienced and highly skilled fighter concepts. It also gave us the freedom to expand the concept's talents by translating its traditional Palladium abilities into MARS special abilities, which were offset with some thematic Hindrances. Lastly, since MARS characters begin play at Seasoned Rank, this would allow players to customize their Psi-Slinger's various combat Edges or skills through advances to show what kind of elite soldier they are. Flexibility is always a great thing! Check out the Psi-Slinger MARS package in *Arcana & Mysticism* to see what we came up with.

ICONIC FRAMEWORK EXAMPLE

Let's dive into the concepts behind the **Shifter**, an Iconic Framework many *Rifts®* fans clamored to see as part of the *Savage Rifts®* offerings.

Choosing a Model Framework. Anyone who's read through the first edition of *Savage Foes of North America* can readily tell we used the **Ley Line Walker** as the foundation for

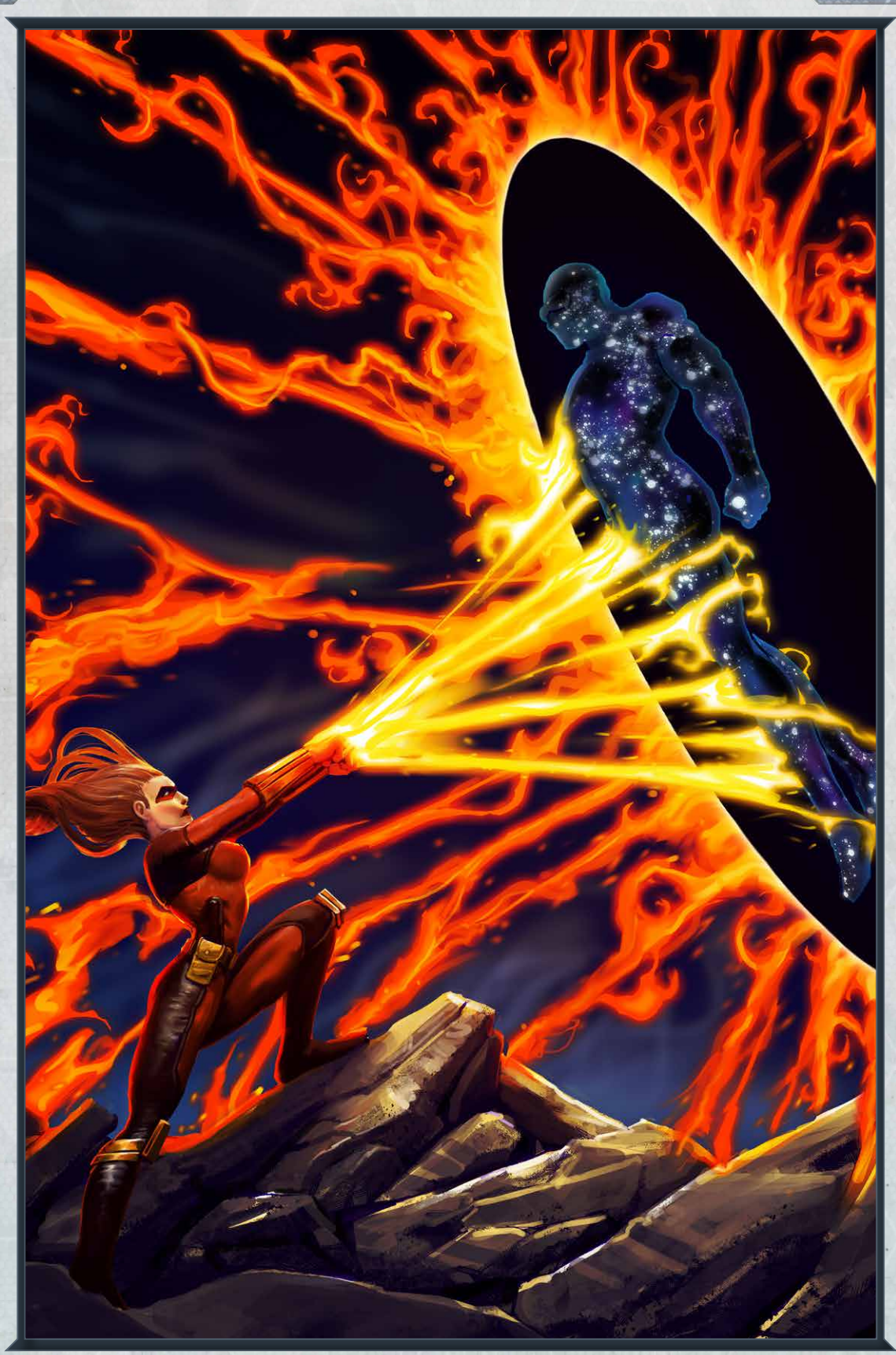
the Shifter in that book. While their narrative components are a bit different, the effective reality is their skills and abilities run to very similar end results. They are both adept at manipulating Rifts and ley line energy, and they are both powerful arcane casters.

The Trade-Offs. Let's start by taking a look at the various **Ley Line Walker Abilities and Bonuses**. We won't list all the information here, please pop open your copy of *The Tomorrow Legion Player's Guide*. First, we look at the core Ley Line Walker abilities and Edges that are absolutes to keep—**Arcane Background**, **Expanded Awareness**, **Master of Magic**, **Power Points**, and **Rapid Recharge**. We then update the Shifter's power list to match his thematic abilities, and start him off with *banish*, *drain Power Points*, *summon ally*, and *teleport*, and we leave the starting PPE at 15 and the Spellcasting skill at d6.

Looking at the list of things we feel the Shifter needs which are specifically "Shifter" in nature from Palladium's *Rifts® Ultimate Edition*, we determine **Communication Rift**, **Dimension Sense**, **Dimensional Teleport Home**, **Sense Rifts**, and **Summoner** are core essentials. To "fit them in," we take out **Arcane Academic**, **Ley Line Rejuvenation**, **Ley Line Sense**, **Ley Line Rejuvenation**, **Ley Line Transmission**, and **Ley Line Walking**. Six old abilities out, and six new ones in. Seems like a balanced place to start.

Looking at the Complications, we add the **Corruption** entry that is in line with the rather negative reputation Shifters have, especially amongst the magic-wielding community. This allows us to add an extra thematic ability to the Shifter—derived from some expanded applications of his original Dimension Sense ability—which we name **Shift Reality**. We can tweak the **Enemies** entry to better reflect the specifics as applied to Shifters. For the **Hero's Journey**, we decide to leave the entry basically the same; it works as well for the Shifter concept as it does for the Ley Line Walker.

Some of the extra abilities were left for the Shifter to take as Iconic Edges. To see the full results after playtesting and feedback from fans like you, check out *Blood & Banes* and the *Tomorrow Legion Field Guide*.



SAVAGE SUPERHEROES

Ever since the massively popular *Heroes Unlimited*® and *Rifts*® *Conversion Book 1* were released alongside the original edition of the *Rifts*® RPG by Palladium Books over three decades ago, superheroes have been a common part of fan campaigns and a semi-official part of the *Rifts*® setting. With the *Super Powers Companion* bringing comic-book heroes (and villains?) into the newest edition of *Savage Worlds*, it's relatively simple to bring supers into *Savage Rifts*®.

Supers are flexible enough to adapt in multiple ways, so we'll create a full Iconic Framework and a MARS Package.

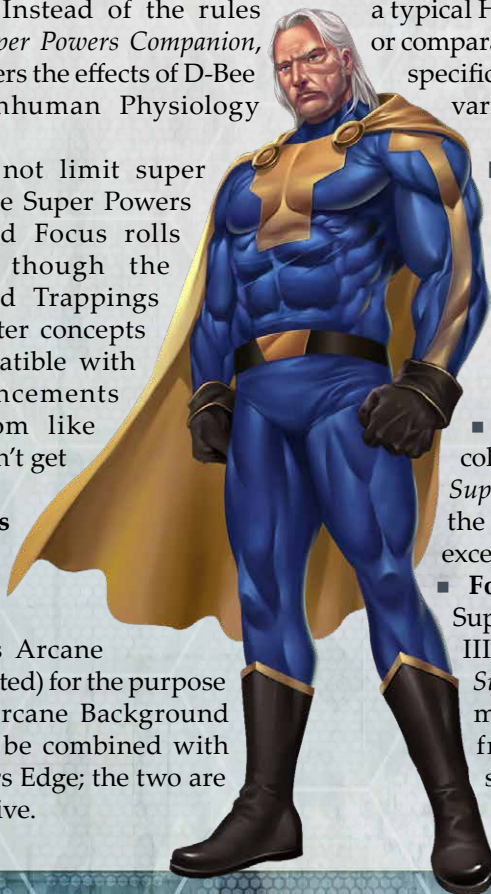
SUPERS IN RIFTS®

Supers do not pick a **Race**. By default, their Race is Human with the Mutant Negative Racial Ability from *The Tomorrow Legion Player's Guide*.

The **Alien Form Hindrance** may be taken by a super, replacing the Mutant Negative Racial Ability. Instead of the rules listed in the *Super Powers Companion*, Alien Form confers the effects of D-Bee (Major) and Inhuman Physiology (Bizarre).

Strain does not limit super powers from the *Super Powers* Edge or related Focus rolls in any way, though the Hindrances and Trappings of some character concepts will be incompatible with certain enhancements (e.g., a phantom like Nocturne couldn't get cybernetics).

Super Powers conferred by the *Super Powers* Edge are the same "type" as Arcane Background (Gifted) for the purpose of *dispel*, etc. Arcane Background (Gifted) cannot be combined with the *Super Powers* Edge; the two are mutually exclusive.



THE MEGA-SUPER AN ICONIC FRAMEWORK

Most supers hail from another dimension, possibly a world of heroes in tights and monologuing villains. One day, they were sucked through a wormhole of swirling colors and deposited on this new, terrifyingly alien world. Alternatively, some supers are home-grown on *Rifts*® *Earth* or changed by their journey to our dimension, mutated by supernatural energies into something bizarre.

Either way, what's special about the Mega-Super isn't having impossible powers — that's common in this setting! It's that their collection of abilities is unique; a superhero can be unlike anything else in the Megaverse®.

There's no existing Iconic Framework to adapt this from, so we'll be building it from the ground up. We end up using a budget of 39 points, typical for an Iconic Framework.

HERO'S JOURNEY (ONE ROLL)

Supers gain one roll on any table, subject to GM approval. This is worth 2 points, since a typical Hero's Journey roll grants an Edge or comparable benefit. We could limit this to specific tables, but supers have too much variety for that.

MEGA-SUPER ABILITIES AND BONUSES

The super power points listed below are worth 47 points, including the *Super Powers* Edge. Everything else is a 0-point feature.

- **Comic-Book Combat:** This collection of Setting Rules from the *Super Powers Companion* applies to the super and his abilities, with the exception of Knockback.
- **Four-Color Fun:** Begin with the *Super Powers* Edge and Power Level III super powers as listed in the *Super Powers Companion*. The super may take Edges and Hindrances from *Super Powers Companion*, subject to GM approval. Note the change to Alien Form, above.

MEGA-SUPER COMPLICATIONS

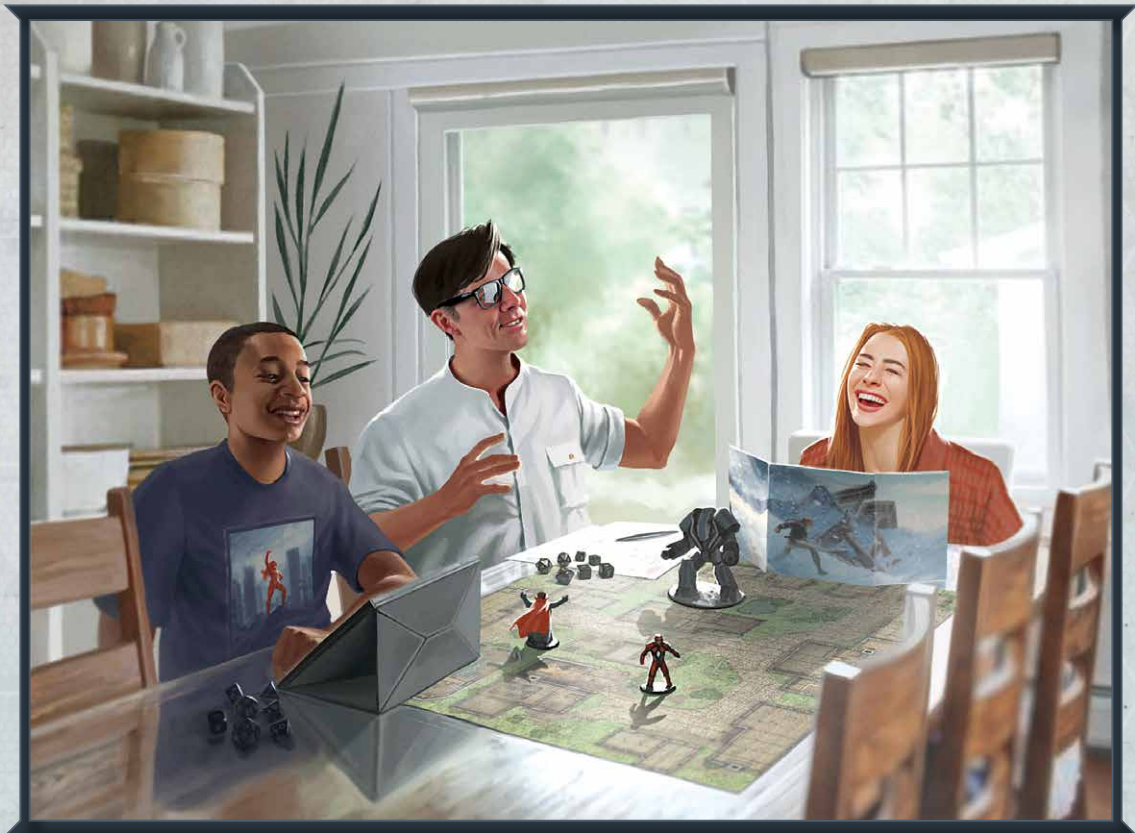
The following Complications are worth about -10 points. "Collateral Damage" is a 0-point feature since its negative effects are largely offset by granting a Benny. "No Race" is -3 points (lack of a Race's two build points worth of abilities, plus the Mutant Negative Racial Ability). "Reputation" is effectively a Minor Hindrance, as it provides no social bonus and gives foes a chance to know a super's abilities and weaknesses.

- **Collateral Damage:** The super gains the Reckless Hindrance, but is awarded a Benny each time his power goes out of control due to a Critical Failure. Additionally, if he uses a power in a risky manner (GM's call), the GM can award a Benny and say it went a bit wild, complicating the situation. For example, a heat ray sets the room on fire or radar sense is detected by enemy sensors.
- **Enemies (Major):** Major factions have heard of the hero's unusual abilities and want to study or dissect her.

- **No Race:** Supers do not choose a Race (see **Supers In Rifts®**, above).
- **Reputation:** The super's uniqueness makes them an occasional topic of conversation in the world. Anyone may roll Common Knowledge at -2 to know about the super, including their Thematic Problems — this increases +1 for every Rank above Novice.
- **Thematic Problems:** Every super has a weakness or two! Choose one Major Hindrance or two Minor ones from Dependency, Environmental Weakness, Power Negation, Transformation, or Vulnerability, for no extra benefit.
- **With Great Power:** Depending on how they see themselves relative to the average person, the super must choose the Arrogant, Heroic, or Overconfident Hindrance for no extra benefit.

MEGA-SUPER STARTING GEAR

Begin with standard Starting Gear. Alternatively, work with the GM to substitute other comparable items that better fit your motif or region of origin.



THE SUPER SOLDIER

A MARS PACKAGE

Some supers have a more modest power level paired with unique skills and abilities. Like the Mega-Super above, the hero may hail from another dimension or be a unique mutant from this one, but unlike that Iconic Framework, the Super Soldier has managed to fly under the radar of major Earth powers.

The below benefits total 16 points (17 – 3 + 2 + 0 + 0), equal to a typical MARS package.

- Begin with the Super Powers Edge and Power Level I super powers as listed in the *Super Powers Companion*.
- **No Race:** Supers do not choose a Race (see *Supers In Rifts®*, above).
- Begin with one Background or Combat Edge of choice.
- **Comic-Book Combat:** The same as listed above.
- **Collateral Damage:** The same as listed above.
- The super may take Edges and Hindrances from the *Super Powers Companion*, subject to GM approval. Note the change to Alien Form, see *Supers In Rifts®* above.

ADDING AN ICONIC EDGE

While the Comic-Book Combat rules already included offer no significant benefits or drawbacks, a few options from the *Super Powers Companion* are unquestionably advantageous.

We'll add those thematic benefits as a new Iconic Edge. "Death & Defeat" isn't included since the *Savage Rifts®* death rules are arguably more generous!

THEMATIC

Requirements: Novice, Super Powers Edge

The hero uses the following Setting Rules in play: No Finishing Moves, Never Surrender, Throwdown, and Knockback (a rule within Comic-Book Combat).

LEAVE IT TO FATE

One of our favorite things about *Heroes Unlimited®* from Palladium Books is the option to randomly generate a super! Take inspiration for a hero or villain using the percentile tables in that tome to create comic book themed aliens, super soldier experiments, mutant features, and more. After that, just pick similar abilities and trappings from the *Super Powers Companion* — capture the feel, don't convert game mechanics.



GEAR

The *Rifts*® series of books contains hundreds (likely thousands) of guns, suits of armor, and vehicles. Fans have their favorites, so it's likely they'll want to translate those into their *Savage Rifts*® games. Taking as simple an approach as possible is best in each case, with the technique described in **The Kitbash Approach** for character concepts remaining as the guiding principle.

ARMOR

The scale differences between *Rifts*® and *Savage Worlds* are significant. This needs to be understood and firmly in mind as you go forward with any translations. A single point of Armor in *Savage Rifts*® is much more than it might appear. It's a threshold, rather than something you have to "chip away" as is the case in Palladium's *Rifts*®.

With Body Armor, Power Armor, and Robot Vehicles, find the suit in *Savage Rifts*® that is closest to what you want to write up. If you have the appropriate *Rifts*® source for the *Savage Rifts*® armor, compare those mechanics and stats to the *Rifts*® armor you're translating. This should give you a decent sense of which one might have more or less total Armor, as well as other factors.

Resist the temptation to constantly escalate the Armor values of newer suits and systems. While this was a popular option in the original *Rifts*® series, for *Savage Rifts*®, you'll be better served keeping everything in the same general ranges. This ensures *Savage Rifts*® remains valid and effective in your campaigns for some time to come.

Once you have the suit of *Savage Rifts*® armor which best compares to what you want to translate, just make the tweaks necessary to give it the particulars that make it special to you. This includes some of those trade-offs that feature in **The Kitbash Approach** translations earlier. Of course, the ending cost of a suit may be effective in establishing the balance between it and one more or less expensive, based on final features. We've kept roughly the same credits costs as listed in original *Rifts*® sources.

BODY ARMOR

Savage Rifts® has a top limit of about +8 Armor and +3 embedded Toughness for Body Armor. This should be limited to the heaviest and most advanced protection available. You should also keep in mind the Strength Minimum listed for suits, as this also serves as a balancing factor. Better designed (and more expensive) suits, even heavier ones, will have lower minimums than cheaper suits of similar ratings.

POWER ARMOR

When constructing new iterations of Power Armor, the *maximum* Armor Values is +8 for Size 1, +10 for Size 2, and +12 for Size 3. Go with a standard of +4 embedded Toughness for Size 1, and +5 or +6 for Sizes 2 and 3 respectively. However, note that you *can* trade a +1 Toughness to raise the Armor of a suit by +2 to create some variances in the builds. All Armor for these suits is MDC.

As Power Armor can come in different Sizes, you should go with the following guidelines for scale.

When establishing the total load-out of weapons for a suit of Power Armor, the Size of the suit also represents the total Mods of vehicle scale weapons a unit can



SIZING THINGS UP

One thing we feel will be helpful to you as you decide how best to stat things up is to have a sense of relative heights and bulk in regards to the Size ratings. The following should help you with a sense of general comparison, at least for characters, Power Armor, and Robot Armor with a humanoid shape. Keep in mind that allowances are often made for other factors—something being longer, wider, more or less bulky than other things of its relative height—especially at the higher end of the spectrum.

- **Size 1:** Anywhere from more than six feet to seven and a half feet tall, something like a classic heroic fantasy orc or a full conversion 'Borg.
- **Size 2:** Humanoids up to nine feet in height, such as the mighty Grackle Tooth.
- **Size 3:** Beings of this height can just reach 12 feet. Ogres are rather famous examples of this category as is Glitter Boy armor, of course.
- **Size 4:** Truly large human-shaped beings up to 15' in height fall in this Size grouping, including the Triax X-535 Hunter Robot Vehicle.

This should give you a fair sense of beings and their sizes at the low end of the “bigger than humans” scale. For larger ones, note the top height for Size 4 is double that of Size 1; extrapolating from there is easy (note creatures smaller than Size 0 don't scale at the same rate).

bear—equal to its Size if one of the weapons is handheld (such as the SAMAS and its rail gun). Note that this set of limits is basically ignored for Robot Vehicles.

ROBOT VEHICLE

For Robot Vehicles, use the following to set the core Toughness and absolute maximum Armor for a frame (it is often a good 10% to 25% lower, only the most cutting edge war machines will have the max Armor listed):

- **Size 4:** Toughness 14, max Armor 16.
- **Size 5:** Toughness 16, max Armor 20.
- **Size 6:** Toughness 18, max Armor 24.
- **Size 7:** Toughness 20, max Armor 28.
- **Size 8:** Toughness 22, max Armor 32.
- **Size 9:** Toughness 24, max Armor 36.

The Armor on any Robot Vehicle is automatically MDC.

VEHICLES

There are a wild array of vehicles possible in *Savage Rifts*®, which can be intimidating. However, the *Savage Worlds Vehicle Guide* is great for creating vehicles of all kinds from any era of time! If you have the general size, speed, and characteristics of a vehicle already in mind then using that book for **conversion** is usually a breeze. For an entire points-based **vehicle construction system**, see the excellent *Science Fiction Companion*, which formed the basis for much of the original *Savage Rifts*® setting.

As a basic note, generally anything built for civilian purposes has regular Armor, while something designed for combat and related dangerous situations will have MDC Armor.

WEAPONS

The vast array of weapons from *Rifts*® is impressive. Outside of look-and-feel, however, there comes a point of diminishing returns when trying to translate *all* of them over into *Savage Rifts*®. Once again, your best bet is to pick the weapon already written in *Savage Rifts*® terms that most closely parallels what you wish to translate, then switch around the stats to meaningfully get you the desired final result.

AVOID ADDING MORE DAMAGE!

Avoid it like the plague, we did. Most laser pistols, for example, stay relatively in the same span of damage types, while laser rifles fall into their own category of damage dice. Remember that other defining factors—such as Range, Rate of Fire, Armor Piercing (AP) value, etc.—can help create variances between one kind of laser rifle and another.

Also be careful about adding flat “+x” bonuses to dice damage; it’s a great way to represent a particularly powerful entry in a particular category, but flat bonuses are *very* powerful and should be used sparingly.

When designing *Savage Rifts*® we created different *kinds* of weapons. *Empires of Humanity* lists unique Manufacturer Modifiers to differentiate weapons with identical stats. Plasma weapons have big damage dice but a shorter range and a peculiar raise effect (great against anything not wanting to burn alive). We used *Savage Worlds*’ “Shotgun Rules” to make ion weapons interesting, etc.

Vehicle weapons are the same story on a bigger scale. Using the established weapon

systems to translate other ones is your best guide. One important note here is that we decided to go more generic with the vehicle weapons, as this fits the essentials found in original *Rifts*®. At this scale, one specific brand of missile launcher over another has less meaning, though this can vary in vehicle entries when necessary to reflect more unique weapon systems. This makes it much easier to create Robot Vehicles, war machines, and even special monster attacks...

FOES AND MONSTERS

These provide the most variety and widest array of possibilities. At the same time, they’re probably the easiest to translate, at least in terms of flexibility for the person doing the work. The standing rule for creating any character or monster in *Savage Worlds* has been to simply give the entity



whatever it needs, never mind normal character building rules.

For most things you may wish to translate, there's a good chance you'll find an example of something similar in one of many *Savage* sources. Of course, *Savage Foes of North America* should be your first place to look, as it contains many things crafted specifically for the *Savage Rifts*® gaming experience. After that take a look at other *Savage Rifts*® world books and supplements, many of them have expansive and versatile bestiaries. The core *Savage Worlds* book also has a lot of monsters to use as a solid foundation; to make them more of a challenge for *Savage Rifts*® characters, however, you'll likely want to tinker with them considerably.

Of particular note in the *Savage Worlds* core book is the section just before the list of monsters and creatures, where you'll find all of the **Monstrous Abilities**. Not only is this a great list to look at for building or translating your favorite creatures, but what's found there should give you a solid set of guidelines for crafting any special abilities you feel your entity needs.

Again, the **Building Races** rules in *Savage Worlds* is a set of powerful tools for you to use. Full of special abilities and helpful packages oriented towards different types and roles, the **It Came from a Rift** section of *Savage Foes* has a lot of great, useful information to mine.

Finally, there are many *Savage Worlds* sources out there — both those published by Pinnacle and third party publishers — that give you a vast treasure trove of characters, gear, and monsters to use in your efforts to populate your *Savage Rifts*® campaign.

FINAL WORDS OF ADVICE

This document is more about how to think when translating your favorite ideas than it is about the specific numbers to use. Once again, this is intentional, because the process is ultimately better for you if you worry less about exacting mathematical formulas and more about getting the *feel* of what you want to create right for your campaign.

After all, what's fun for you and your group is the most important factor.

To that effect, don't be afraid to try something and have it not work. What looks good on paper or screen is rarely the best it can be in practice. Be willing to go back and re-design things that seem either next-to-useless or too-powerful. If you're not the Game Master, be willing to work with her to make sure you're not bringing something broken to the table. Good communication about these things goes a long way to better creations and more fun down the road.

You also have a rather large and impressive community in the fans of *Savage Worlds*, worldwide, to call upon for help and advice — check out www.pegforum.com to get connected.

Our *Savage* fans are among the best in gaming, always willing to provide friendly conversation about any topic without judgment or

predispositions. They know a great deal about what does and doesn't work in *Savage* terms, and can be a great resource for you as the creative process goes forward.

Here's hoping this document helps you bring over your favorite *Rifts*® ideas into *Savage Rifts*®, and may the Megaverse® be richer for what you bring into it!

