

ISSUE
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REALMS

- CYBERPUNK
- SHADOWRUN
- EARTHDAWN
- TOM DOWD
- RIFTS
- TERRY PRATCHETT
- AD&D
- UNAE

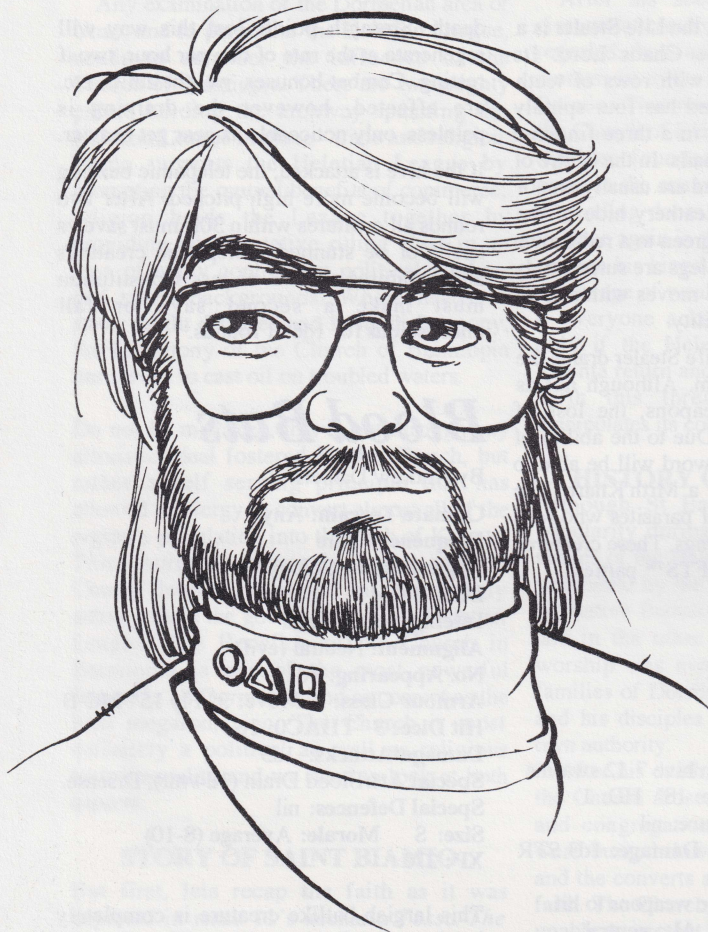


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What's Up, Chummer?

Tom Dowd Interview



Tell us about yourself. Where are you from? Who are you?

I'm kind of unique in the professional gaming industry in that I never really had to "pay my dues". When I was in high school, some thirteen or so years ago, I worked as warehouse staff at Fantasy Games Unlimited who published **Bushido**, **Aftermath**, and **Villains and Vigilantes**, among other games. I wrote a couple of adventure for **V&V** (specifically **F.O.R.C.E.** and **Assassin**). At the time, Bob Charrette was the art director there and I got to be very friendly with him. When I began attending college my time was a premium and I left FGU. I stayed in touch with Bob, but pretty much stopped all industry involvement. In 1988 Bob contacted me and asked me if I wanted to get involved with a project for FASA. That project became **Shadowrun**. When the game was released in 1989 FASA needed someone on staff to oversee the game, so they asked me. If you'd asked me any time before that if I thought I'd be writing professionally in the game industry I'd have laughed at you.

What work have you done before joining FASA?

Before FASA, years before, I did **F.O.R.C.E.** and **Assassin** for **Villains and Vigilantes**. I also contributed to an adventure anthology for the **Daredevils** game called **Supernatural Adventures**. That was actually the first collaboration between myself and Bob Charrette.

What work have you done in the film industry?

My background is in film and television, but all my work has been on a local semi-professional basis. I worked on a series of industrial productions, but nothing of real value or worth mentioning.

When did you start gaming, and by playing what?

I started fourteen or so years ago in 1979 by playing first Basic D&D and then AD&D, like nearly everyone I suppose of my gaming generation. I moved quickly into many different FGU games because, well, I worked there.

How did Shadowrun come about and when?

Shadowrun was conceived by Bob Charrette in 1987-88 as a straight cyberpunk game. R. Talsorian, however, beat us to the punch with **Cyberpunk** in 1988, so we knew we had to do something different. Plus, by then every company (or so it seemed) was jumping on the cyberpunk bandwagon. It was Jordan Weisman (one of the owners of FASA) who came up with the wacky idea to use magic.

How did you sell it to FASA?

Shadowrun was conceived of out of house (outside of FASA), but FASA had considerable input into it. It was designed and written by Bob Charrette, Paul Hume, and myself. FASA was sold on the concept, especially after magic was introduced into the formula.

What was your aim with Shadowrun?

Our objective as writers and creators was to design something that people would have fun with. We wanted to create an environment that would be stimulating, interesting, exciting, and above all fun. We are talking about games here after all. And yeah, sure, we all wanted to make lots of money.

Are you happy with the games direction? Where is it heading?

Yes, I have to say I'm happy with the game and where its gone. It remains interesting to me because I give our authors free enough rein to create aspects of the world themselves. So, I'm continually entertained by what they come up with. There isn't any one particular generation the game is heading right now. I listen to player feedback quite a bit and use that as my guide. We'll have to see what happens.

What was your involvement with White Wolf's Vampire RPG?

My involvement with White Wolf's **Vampire** was minimal, about 10% (or so) of the final manuscript was mine; mostly background and history stuff. I also did the NPC section. I've had nothing to do with the game since then because of other commitments, however.

What role playing are you currently involved with?

It's one of those weird things, but the more you become involved in the gaming industry the less you game. I guess when it becomes your job you really don't want it as your hobby too. I game some, it's picked up lately, but mostly short-duration games, one-shots, two-shots. Various systems; DC Heroes, Star Wars, Star Trek, Call of Cthulhu, Pendragon.

"Night's Pawn" is your first novel. Did you enjoy writing it, should we be watching for more?

"Night's Pawn" was my first novel, and it won't be my last. I certainly enjoyed writing it. It was a very different experience. Though, truthfully, one of the worst things an author can do is a galley-proof a year or so after writing the novel. All the choices you made those twelve months ago now seem like crap. Sigh. It's really quite a bash on the ego.

What are you working on now?

Right now I'm working on *Tír nan Óg*, which is the Ireland/Elven sourcebook. Wild stuff, should surprise some people.

Are there any special projects you are working on?

FASA has *Earthdawn* coming out this summer which is our new high, heroic fantasy RPG. It's a lot of fun and I expect good things from it. It's a brand new game system, but certain aspects of the background should be familiar to some people. I can say no more (for more information on the *Earthdawn* fantasy role playing game by FASA see the special review of the rule system on page 2 of this issue).

How did elves end up in a cyberpunk setting? How many beers did it take?

Elves/magic did not really "end up" in a cyberpunk setting in *Shadowrun*. We tried very hard to try and marry the two into one world setting as opposed to just grafting one on top of the other. Magic and technology are two parts of the same whole in *Shadowrun*. They both follow the laws of physics, its just that the metaphysical laws are just as complex as the quantum physical ones.

How relevant do you feel the Shadowrun setting is to our contemporary world?

I don't think *Shadowrun* is particularly relevant to the "real"

modern world. There are certain real-world theories and projections that are reflected in the *Shadowrun* history and development, but I certainly don't anticipate the world evolving in the direction of *Shadowrun*.

You must be happy with Shadowrun's success. Who is responsible for the original flavour and ideas behind the background?

Shadowrun was definitely a team effort. Bob Charrette, Paul Hume, and myself did the principle writing and design, and we all contributed to the overall game concept, flavour, and background. Jordan Weisman and Ross Babcock contributed a lot, as did Sam Lewis and Dave Wylie.

Where is the future of gaming going in your opinion?

Where is the future of gaming headed? Really hard to say. I think you'll see a division of sorts between more improvisational acting games like *Vampire: The Masquerade* and *Amber* and more traditional RPGs like *Shadowrun*. It all has to do with why people game (personally) and what they're looking to get out of that game. I've recently had the opportunity to visit England, Germany, and France (with the Netherlands soon to follow) promoting *Shadowrun* and I have to say that gamers, like people, are pretty much the same all over. Sure there are cultural differences that influence style and interest but I've seen little difference beyond that. I also think you'll see an upswing in computer-based play-aids within the next five years.

Is there anything you would like to say to our readers?

Is there anything I want to say to your readers?? Yeah, BUY SHADOWRUN. Geez, that was kind of obvious, eh?

Next issue Australian Realms will be speaking to the creator of Mage - White Wolf's game of modern magic. ■



SHADOWRUN SHADOWFILES

An Excerpt From FASA's Upcoming Corporate Sourcebook

By Nigel Findley

SAEDER-KRUPP ELECTRICAL & MECHANICAL CORPORATION

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Home Office Location: Essen, Germany
President/CEO: Lofwyr (Great Dragon)
Chairman of the Board: Lofwyr
Corporate Status: Private corporation
Major Shareholders: Unknown
NET RATING: 124

Interests Profile:

Aerospace: 6
Agriculture: 7
Biotechnology: 7
Chemicals: 9
Computer Engineering: 7
Computer Science: 5
Consumer Goods: 6
Cybernetics: 4
Entertainment: 3
Financial: 8
Heavy Industry: 10
Mystical: 3
Military Technology: 7
Service: 6

Operational Profile:

Fiscal: 10
Intelligence: 6
Management: 6
Reputation: 7
Security: 7
Magic: 9
Matrix: 5
Physical: 9

Military Profile:

"Battalion"/Exceptional
(see below)

>>>>>[Yes, that's right. Saeder-Krupp has the distinction of being the only corp with a wizworm as its president.]<<<<<<
-Wally (01:32:34/3-20-54)

>>>>>[You can bet your hoop that Lofwyr owns a nice, healthy chunk of the corp personally. And what he doesn't own, he controls. (Would you vote against a dragon? Try to oust him from the board? Get real.)]<<<<<<
-Tad (17:58:41/3-21-54)

PRIMARY BUSINESS

Saeder-Krupp is the largest corporation in the world that focuses its efforts on industry - heavy, medium and light - and heavy assembly, as well as resource based operations. In the last century many "green" philosophers predicted the age of resource exploitation was coming to an end with the growth of the information age. Antecedents of these philosophers predicted the same thing in the mid 2020's, and again in the late 40's. They've been wrong every time, and Saeder-Krupp's continuing success proves the point.

>>>>>[Well of course they're fragging wrong.

And if you neo-Luddites out there are getting ready to bend my ear about recycling, shut the frag up. Sure, follow the three fragging Rs and you can *decrease* your requirements on resource exploitation. But eliminate it? Christ, the Hungarians tried that in 2015 when the Greens controlled the

government. Have you looked at Hungary lately? Economy - gone for drek. Standard of living - gone for drek. Health care crises, lots of people starving, no power for the cities. (But the shrubs are looking awfully healthy...)]<<<<<<

-Locke (16:24:44/3-29-54)

CORPORATE STRUCTURE

Even though Lofwyr now controls just about every facet of Saeder-Krupp's corporate operations, that wasn't always the case. The real mover-and-shaker behind the emergence of Saeder-Krupp was one Michel Beloit, a young but very senior exec with BMW. Beloit predicted some of the chaos in Europe and, after ousting BMW's staid and conservative management team in a "palace coup" of epic proportions, struggled to position the company for growth in the challenging time ahead.

Either Beloit had the devil's own luck, or he was incredibly competent. By 2010 or thereabouts, an expanded BMW was the premier industrial power in Europe. With a few well-selected mergers, Beloit expanded BMW into a mighty corporate empire. Finding BMW's association with automobiles a liability, he restructured the megacorp around two other organisations - Saeder Munitions and Krupp Manufacturing - to form Saeder-Krupp. He then "spun-off" a leaner, meaner BMW as a wholly-owned subsidiary, tasking it to concentrate on automobiles and associated technology once more. Then, in 2032, Beloit kicked the bucket and his wife - Wilhelmina Graff-Beloit - took over, and ran the megacorp for five years.

That's when Lofwyr appeared on the scene. Although Mina Graff-Beloit controlled the board and owned billions worth of Saeder-Krupp stock, she didn't hold anywhere near a majority of votes. Nobody did... or so it was thought.

Behind the scenes, however, Lofwyr had been buying up Saeder-Krupp shares for years. Now, when he emerged, he announced that he owned a staggering 63% of the outstanding shares. He immediately voted himself into the chairmanship of the board - ousting Graff-Beloit and effectively banishing her to Zurich-Orbital - and named himself president/CEO as well.

>>>>>[Now hold on just a tick. A fragging dragon buys up 63% of the corp and nobody even notices?]<<<<<<

-Monk McQueen (08:38:37/3-24-54)

>>>>>[Up until the day before he announced his control, Lofwyr personally owned *no* shares in Saeder-Krupp. The quiet purchasing had been done by holding companies and shells, which the dragon controlled. Then one day all those holding companies privately sold their shares to him. *Now* all the stock tracking systems light up like christmas trees - takeover alert! But it's too late to do anything. Lofwyr owns more than half the company, and suddenly he *is* Saeder-Krupp.]<<<<<<

-Nuyen Nick (11:40:06/3-27-54)

Major Divisions:

Saeder-Krupp is divided into divisions in a rather arbitrary manner. Sometimes divisions are based on regions, other times on function, and occasionally on some criterion that simply isn't obvious.

To illustrate how confusing this can sometimes be, there are two major Saeder-Krupp operations based in Seattle - S-K Northwest and S-K Aerospace. Both belong to completely different branches of the organisational chart, with discrete reporting paths.

>>>>>[Hey, chummer, don't expect a fragging wizworm to see the world the same way you do.]<<<<<

-Darryl (02:48:35/4-2-54)

In most corps, executives know how much autonomy they enjoy. If they can run their divisions as independent entities, that's the way it always works; conversely, if they have to gain a headquarters' approval for every course of action, they expect that and plan on it. This just isn't the case in Lofwyr's Saeder-Krupp. From one week to another, a divisional manager might be left totally alone, or find Lofwyr watching over his shoulder and "micromanaging" every facet of the business.

For this reason it doesn't really matter as much as with other corps exactly who's in charge of what division. To a great degree, Lofwyr's in charge of it all.

SECURITY

Saeder-Krupp doesn't have an extensive security force when measured on the criterion of personnel count. For all its relatively small size, however, its incredibly effective. Part of the reason is that Saeder-Krupp doesn't make a meaningful distinction between military assets and security assets. The megacorp maintains a considerable military force which participates in Desert Wars, and there's continuous cross-training between these units and its "civilian" security arms. Individuals, and often entire squads, are transferred between the two "forces" with little or no warning. Certainly, the weapon mix differs between "military" and "civilian" applications - if only because anti-personnel cluster bombs generally do too much collateral damage for site security - but the personnel are the same.

Site:

Basic site defence comes from Saeder-Krupp's "civilian" defence arm, equipped with whatever happens to be necessary for the task at hand. (Lofwyr seems to understand that popular opinion still means something in the business world, so site security teams don't often use weapons of mass carnage, even if they could keep collateral damage to an acceptable level.)

Mages or shamans - predominately the former - are well integrated with standard security teams. Important sites are often guarded by bound elementals.

Security teams are supported by whatever technology is appropriate for the situation. Saeder-Krupp is also well-known for supplementing its (meta)human resources with parabiologicals.

Saeder-Krupp isn't above hiring "special assets" for specific missions. If shadowrunners, or even petty criminals, would improve a situation, then the megacorp will hire them.

>>>>>[Saeder-Krupp - that is, Lofwyr - is as much into "payback" as Aneki at Renraku. You mess with him, he'll hire people to come after you and mess you up, even if there's no percentage in it. And dragons have long memories.]<<<<<

-Eastman (01:02:42/4-3-54)

Matrix:

For a major megacorp, Saeder-Krupp has surprisingly limited Matrix security. Of course, for a major megacorp, it makes surprisingly limited use of the Matrix at all. Since Lofwyr has personal control over so much of the corp's day to day business, there's nowhere near the usual need for communicating and storing sensitive data. Sure, Saeder-Krupp



has a lot of powerful computer systems on the Matrix, but they're more concerned with relatively mundane activities like running factories and maintaining inventories.

Saeder-Krupp computer systems tend to be utilitarian in the extreme, with little in the way of innovation. You won't run across any flashy ice - no adaptive killer, no "party ice" - or any cunning tricks in system architecture. What you will find is trace-and-report - *beefy* trace-and-report, rating 6 and way up - and you'll find it everywhere.

>>>>>[T-&R give them a location, so while you're tapping away on your cyberdeck a squad of stormtroopers is kicking in your front door.]<<<<<

-Nora (15:13:21/4-3-54)

Military:

Refer to the discussion above.

Extended:

Saeder-Krupp has no official "extended security assets"... yet still manages to be involved in a lot of "extended" operations. Some of the time, the corporation hires shadowrunners and other street ops for special tasks.

>>>>>[The main contact for shadowrunners seems to be some slag called Brackhaus. He's hired me a couple of time (he always knows where to track me down, that's the scariest thing), and a couple of chummers who've done work for Saeder-Krupp have also had Brackhaus as their Johnson. I've heard that sometimes *Lofwyr himself* goes out and hires runners, but I don't know whether I believe that. You know what they say: never cut a deal with a dragon.]<<<<<

-Jimmy Dean (08:21:47/3-29-54)

Other times, the missions just seem to "get done" without the corp taking any obvious actions.

>>>>>[Hate to tell you, Jimmy: Brackhaus is Lofwyr. He knows (meta)humans prefer deals with their own species. So he's got a persona he uses, that's Brackhaus in whatever meta form is appropriate. You want evidence? Anyone else out there done some deals with Brackhaus of Saeder-Krupp? *What metatype is he?*]<<<<<

-Trevor (20:23:05/4-2-54)

NEWS

Readers Poll

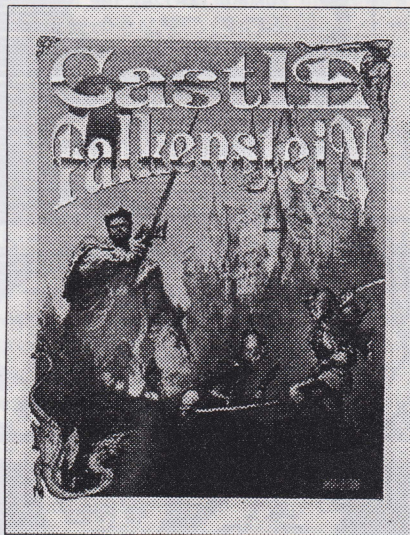
We are very pleased to report that we have thus far had a healthy response to the readers poll printed in issue 11. We would like to thank all respondents and remind any of you who have overlooked returning your poll form to please do so quickly. If its in before the 30th of July it will be eligible to win a prize of assorted gaming goodies valued at \$250. If you can't get it back to us by that date we would still like to see it as all of your opinions are always welcomed

Epic August

August is set to be a huge month for releases RPG wise. Four major systems will be released by various companies, more details follow below;

FASA Corporation

Look out for a new complete fantasy RPG from the creators of **Shadowrun** and **Battletech**. **Earthdawn** is covered in depth with a feature review in this issue by Malcolm Adler. The overall opinion is that the game is very well put together. A line of support products are also in production such as a GM's pack and a campaign set, further detailing the games setting of **Barsaive**.



R.Talsorian

From the creators of the hit **Cyberpunk** rpg comes a new game set in a world where steampunk technology, swashbuckling adventure and high fantasy collide. The **Castle Falkenstein** fantasy rpg is set in a more refined and graceful era, earning a unique feel and atmosphere. We will have more information on this release next issue.

White Wolf

The long awaited **Mage** RPG, third in the **Storyteller Series** will be available in

August. This game sets magic in a contemporary world, or as the blurb says it is 'a game of modern magic'. It will no doubt be in a similar vein to **Vampire** and **Werewolf**. Issue 13 is a **White Wolf** special issue which will feature more information on this upcoming release.

GDW

Unhallowed, the second genre/game in the **Dangerous Journeys** series is also scheduled for release - it is a game of supernatural horror written by Gary Gygax. Already available is a new edition of the evergreen space opera game - **Traveller**, **The New Era**. More information on both releases will be printed next issue. Three other new **Traveller** items due out in July /August are **Starship Combat**, **Delux Traveller**, and **Technical Architecture**.

Other New Releases

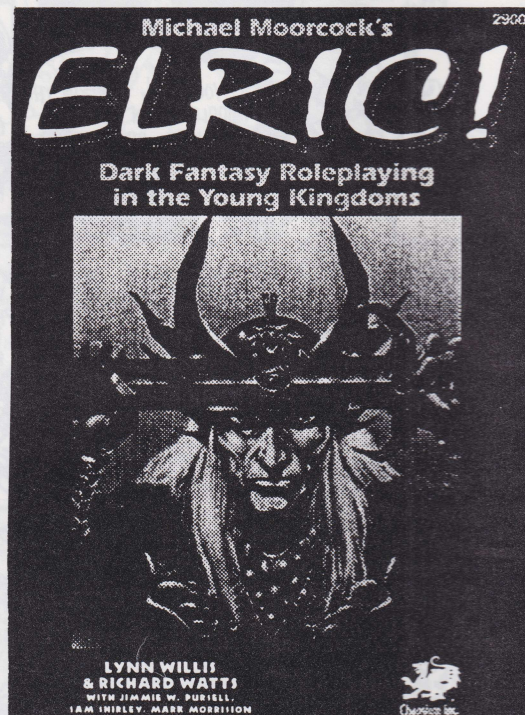
New products out in the next few months for **Shadowrun** are; **The Corporate Sourcebook - Shadowfiles** (see pages 33-33 of this issue for a sneak preview of what is in that book), Carl Sargent's **The Tir nan Og Sourcebook** setting the game in Ireland which is supposed to 'truly amazing' and an adventure called **A Killing Glare**. The **Australian sourcebook** is about to be written and we expect to be able to announce the author's name next issue. Well done...

Battletechies will be catered for with **Battlespace** which is a new system of aerospace combat. This boxed game includes training scenarios, maps and rules for creating space fighters and is completely compatible with **Battletech**. Also due out in September is a the **Solaris: The Reaches** sourcebook providing information on the seedier side of **Solaris**.

AD&D players are being spoiled by the usual swag of releases from TSR. The following months will bring **The Players Guide to the Dragonlance Campaign** for **Krynn** fans, **The Code of the Harpers** book for followers of **The Forgotten Realms** setting, for **Dark Sun** the **City State of Tyr** and a **Spelljammer** boxed set by the name of **The Astromundi Cluster**.

Our reliable source in **R.Talsorian Games**, Lisa, has indicated that there is a **Pacific Rim** sourcebook for **Cyberpunk** scheduled soon; I wonder if they need any help writing up the Australian section? Already completed and due for release for 'punks is **Land of the Free** a boxed mega-adventure set. And of course, the impending **Cybergeneration** will be out as you read this. The first adventure for **Cybergeneration** is entitled **Bastille Day** and will be available in August.

Travis from **White Wolf** tells us that the **Storyteller System** games will both see various releases such as the **Masquerade** boxed set, **The Sabbath Storytellers Guide** and **Chicago by Night 2nd edition** for **Vampire**. **Werewolf** will not be forgotten with **The Werewolf Players Handbook**, **Rage Across the Amazon** and even some novels. **Ars Magica** will also see a supplement titled **The Wizards Grimoire** released.



Chaosium Inc. have finally released the long awaited **Elric!**; a new fantasy role playing game based on Michael Moorcock's creation and using the same basic game system as **Call of Cthulhu** and **Stormbringer**. Already set to support this game is **Melniboné**, a sourcebook of background material on the infamous island and its people.

Arcanacon XI

Melbourne's longest running roleplaying convention runs from 8th to 11th of July at the Collingwood College. The programme promises heaps of roleplaying action plus freeforms, systemless sessions and a sausage sizzle. Get along to it - call Chiara (03) 481 5564, Fraser (03) 380 5016 or Ewald (03) 388 0536 for further information.

Gargoyle

Realms' Subscribers again receive a bonus insert with their magazine this issue. Issue 2 of **Gargoyle** our Subscribers Only fanzine. Those that don't subscribe are missing out on Andrew's text for the past two A-Team scripts, the Pratchett Interview responses that we could not fit into this issue, more Unae source material and general magazine gossip.

Final Words

Its a boy, Christopher Alan, and he's already learning how to roll dice!

...See ya 'round like a d100!