



 **2000 AD**
THE GALAXY'S GREATEST COMIC

REBELLION

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Strontium Dog

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INTRODUCTION: WELCOME TO THE DOGHOUSE

By the 22nd Century, mankind has reached the stars and beyond them. Warp drives take colonists to the outer reaches of the galaxy where terraforming has helped create new, Earth-like worlds that provide homes for a humanity that has outgrown its native planet. If this expansion across the depths of space was not enough, mankind has also learned how to manipulate the space-time continuum, permitting time travel and travel into parallel dimensions where the laws of the universe may not apply at all.

It should be a time of peace, prosperity, enlightenment, exploration and the expansion of horizons.

But it is not. Far from it.

The known universe is far from peaceful or enlightened. Earth, ravaged by three atomic wars, ravaged by global warming, is introverted, sullen and filled with prejudice and hatred. Elsewhere, the human colonies have encountered and come into conflict with alien races that are every bit as resentful and aggressive as humankind. The space-lanes are beset by pirates, reavers and slavers. The parallel dimensions are ruled by exploitative individuals who cannot resist imposing their will through the bending of the laws of reality.

The galaxy is a ruthless, dog-eat-dog place.

Colonists fight for survival. Despots plunder and murder with abandon. Criminals assault society and escape on the next starship, free to continue their crimes elsewhere. No one is safe. No one is secure. The rule of law is replaced by the rule of the gun. Where justice and order should exist, chaos, hatred, cruelty and prejudice prevail.

And nowhere is the cruelty and prejudice more prevalent than in the way humanity treats the most unfortunate people in its society – the mutants.

The atomic wars of Earth caused unprecedented levels of radiation to permeate the atmosphere. Strontium 90, a virulent

radioactive isotope, is responsible for creating severe and widespread mutation across the populace. The mutations range from the subtle through to the catastrophic but the degree of mutation is unimportant. Each and every mutant is feared, hated and despised by the 'Norms'. Through no fault of their own the mutants are forced to live in ghettos, are denied honest work and forced to scrape through life hungry, begging for both food and life.

Many will die – through neglect, Norm cruelty or as a result of their mutations. Most will spend their lives in abject misery, rejected by their families and wider society.

But for some – the strong, the quick-witted, the amoral – there is another way...

In a sprawling galaxy where law enforcement is simply impossible, the obvious recourse is to rely on bounty hunters to bring criminals to justice, or to carry out the death penalty for those crimes. Few Norms are willing to work for such blood money, but for mutants the Search and Destroy Agency offers a way out of misery and penury. A way to be of service to society; a way to make a living. The bounty hunters of the late 22nd Century are the mutants; Search and Destroy agents, at liberty to roam the galaxy in search of its scum and in return for money.

Society has a different name for these agents. To society, they are not Search and Destroy agents, but Strontium Dogs.

Welcome to the universe of 2182. Welcome to the universe of Strontium Dog...

Playing Strontium Dog

The characters in Strontium Dog are the mutant bounty hunters of the 22nd Century; humans mutated in grotesque ways, shunned by society and forced into a life of killing for profit. The game uses the *Traveller Core Rulebook* with appropriate modifications for creating mutant characters and the powerful, strange and weird weapons and devices of Johnny Alpha's universe.

Sample file

NEW TO STRONTIUM DOG?

Strontium Dog is a British comic series written by Alan Grant and drawn by the celebrated comic artist Carlos Ezquerra. Originally appearing in the Starlord comic, Strontium Dog moved to the pages of 2000 AD in 1978 when the two comics merged. Strontium Dog has since been reprinted in a complete collection available from Rebellion.

The Strontium Dog series tells the story of Johnny Alpha and his 'normal' partner Wulf Sternhammer – the two best S/D Agents in the known universe. Johnny's mutation is subtle but powerful; his eyes emit mutant alpha waves that can penetrate almost any substance save for lead, lending him X-ray vision. Furthermore his remarkable vision allows him to see into the mind, motive and soul of those he encounters, laying bare their secrets. There is no escaping the Evil Eye of Johnny Alpha.

Johnny and Wulf roam the galaxy in search of the most dangerous criminals and the highest bounties: Max Quirxx; Fly's Eyes Wagner; Billy-Joe of Paprika; the Mutator and many, many others. Armed with an incredible arsenal of weapons, including time manipulation devices such as the fearsome Time Bomb and Time Trap, their adventures take them from one end of the galaxy to the other, backwards and forward through time (in pursuit of Adolf Hitler, no less), and into parallel dimensions, one of which mimics Hell itself.

Johnny and Wulf are antiheroes in the mould of the Man with No Name; killers, certainly, but not without their own code of honour and a certain level of integrity. Johnny only hunts the guilty and only kills when a termination warrant permits it or he is left with no other alternative. On many occasions his conscience intervenes and, frequently, Johnny gives away his reward money or refuses a reward if the higher causes of justice and equality are served as a result of his actions.

Strontium Dog is therefore a futuristic spaghetti western. Its universe is one of dustbowl planets, corrupt land barons, trigger-happy desperados and simple folk, struggling to make a living, falling prey to the unscrupulous, the duplicitous and the murderous. Strontium Dogs roam the galaxy in search of blood in exchange for profit and, often, are as callous, duplicitous and murderous as those they hunt. Everywhere they go, Strontium Dogs face prejudice, hatred and distrust, both for what they are and what they are forced to do. There are few, if any, white-hatted heroes and black-hatted villains; everyone is driven by self-preservation in a universe of uncaring chaos.

The game is a high-concept mixture of spaghetti western, science fantasy, time travel, dimension hopping and, occasionally, magic and sorcery. Hard scientific principles are sacrificed in favour of the fast moving and the bizarre. Strontium Dog is story-driven adventure that relies on lashings of black humour and

deliberately ignores the issues and paradoxical concepts that time and dimensional travel inevitably produce. The emphasis is on fast-moving, violent stories that are laced with strange resolutions to perilous situations, focused on mutants blessed or cursed with the most strange and perilous mutations thinkable. Hard, realistic science is out and far-fetched, science-fantasy is in.

If you have never read the Strontium Dog comic series, you are strongly urged to do so; these are great adventure stories, quickly told in a popular style. However, they do contain a very moral edge, questioning the way society treats its disadvantaged and challenging the notions of retributive justice and the role of the hero. If you have not read the comics, or want to play Strontium Dog before you can read them, this book should give you all the tools to do so, either as a player or Referee. Here are a few pointers to set the tone:

- Virtually all Norms hate Muties and vice versa.
- No mutation is too extraordinary or far-fetched. Want a rabbit-headed human? You got it.
- Conventional science is out of the window. In the world of Strontium Dog, the more far-fetched the better.
- Humour is anarchic and pitch-black.
- There are no real heroes; anti-heroes abound. Everyone has an agenda.
- No one does anything for nothing. Everyone expects a payback or a payoff.
- Officials, bureaucrats, local law enforcement, rulers, nobles and politicians are invariably corrupt.
- The only truly honest men are dead men.
- Alien races abound; most of them are just as bad as humans.
- Nothing is too grotesque or bizarre.
- Trust no one. Especially other Strontium Dogs.
- Patience is *not* always a virtue.
- Violence is *always* an option.
- If in doubt, shoot first and ask questions later. That's what a Time Drogue's for...

So, to play *Strontium Dog* you need this book, the *Traveller Core Rulebook*, some friends, some character sheets, and a lot of wild ideas.

If you want to get a better idea of the Strontium Dog universe, turn to the **Bounty Hunter's Guide to the Galaxy** chapter on page 102, where you will be given an overview of life in the late 22nd Century. If you are eager to start creating Strontium Dog characters, turn to the **Portrait of a Mutant** chapter starting on page 7, grab some six-sided dice and start rolling!

Referee's Notes: Strontium Dog Continuity

Johnny Alpha's saga has grown in the telling. His first appearance in *Starlord*, in the inaugural 'Max Quirxx' adventure, sets the date as 2180. The final chapter of Johnny's saga, 'The Final Solution', also places the date at 2180... clearly continuity was lost in the excitement of the storytelling.

Furthermore, 'The Final Solution' brings an end to Johnny Alpha's story – and that of the S/D Agency – with the destruction of the Dog House and Johnny's own death in the dimension of Arcadia. Later tales continue the stories of Middenface McNulty, Durham Red and Feral after this point. Additionally, other stories about Johnny Alpha, changing the view of events from a future, 'folklore' perspective (including 'The Kreeleer Conspiracy') complicate continuity even more.

This book takes its default campaign date as 2182. It also assumes that the events of 'The Final Solution' occur in 2185. Referees are at liberty to follow the timeline and events of the Strontium Dog saga, as told in *2000 AD* and the *Search/Destroy Agency Files, Volumes 1-5 (Rebellion)* or, if they wish, to change the course of history in some way. In your *Strontium Dog* campaign the New Church might never come to power, and the events of 'The Final Solution' never come to pass; alternatively, *Strontium Dog* characters might prevent the New Church from opening the dimension to Arcadia and continue to fight against its holy war alongside Johnny Alpha.

From the perspective of Strontium Dog as a roleplaying game, certain problems with continuity have needed to be rationalised: dates, certain technological explanations, and so forth. But, at the end of it all, this is *your* Strontium Dog... the future, and its very nature, are in your hands.

How This Book is Organised...

Strontium Dog is mutated into the following chapters:

INTRODUCTION

Which you are now reading...

CHAPTER ONE: PORTRAIT OF A MUTANT

Creating a Strontium Dog character, including mutation rules and career tables.

CHAPTER TWO: NEW SKILLS AND SPECIAL TECHNIQUES

Introducing some modifications to existing skills, some new skills, and Special Techniques, to lend Strontium Dog characters that vital edge.

CHAPTER THREE: EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONS

The essential kit and weaponry for 22nd Century bounty hunting.

CHAPTER FOUR: MUTANT MASTERMINDS

An overview of advanced psionic talents to complement those in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE SEARCH/DESTROY AGENCY

An overview of the Galactic Crime Commission, the S/D Agency, and bounty hunting.

CHAPTER SIX: A BOUNTY HUNTER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

Sub-sector maps for the galaxy of the 22nd Century, with notes on planets found in Johnny Alpha's saga and new worlds for investigation and warrant execution.

CHAPTER SEVEN: SORCERY AND THE NEW CHURCH

This chapter introduces sorcery, as practiced by Malak Brood and the Sorcerers of Lyra – old foes of Strontium Dogs. It also details the New Church, which dominates New Britain and seeks to rid the Earth of mutants forever!

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE GOOD, THE SCUM AND THE VILLAINY

Non-Player Character statistics, and statistics for a variety of criminals, fugitives and aliens, all drawn from the Strontium Dog saga.

CHAPTER NINE: REFEREE'S NOTES

Notes on refereeing Strontium Dog campaigns, including detailed discussion on structuring Strontium Dog stories and warrants.

Sample file