

# RIPPING REALITY

Sample file

**CATALYST**  
game labs™

# DENVER: RIPPING REALITY

DENVER LITERALLY RIPPING APART .....	3
RIPPING REALITY.....	4
INTRODUCTION .....	5
SCENE 1 .....	10
SCENE 2 .....	14
SCENE 3 .....	22
SCENE 4 .....	32
SCENE 5 .....	38
SCENE 6 .....	45
SCENE 7 .....	54
PICKING UP THE PIECES .....	59
LOOSE ALLIANCES .....	64

## CREDITS

**Writing:** Scott Schletz, R.J. Thomas

**Line Developer:** Jason M. Hardy

**Cover and Internal Layout:**  
Matt "Headbanger Ball" Heerdt

**Art Direction:** Brent Evans

**Cover Art:** Alyssa Menold

**Internal Art:** David Dotson, Jeff  
Laubenstein, Chad Sergesketter

© 2017 The Topps Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Shadowrun and Matrix are registered trademarks and/or trademarks of The Topps Company, Inc., in the United States and/or other countries. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of the Copyright Owner, nor be otherwise circulated in any form other than that in which it is published. Catalyst Game Labs and the Catalyst Game Labs logo are trademarks of InMediaRes Productions, LLC.

First Printing by Catalyst Game Labs, an imprint of  
InMediaRes Productions, LLC  
PMB 202 • 303 - 91st Ave. NE, E-502  
Lake Stevens, WA 98258



Find us online:  
[info@shadowruntabletop.com](mailto:info@shadowruntabletop.com)  
(Shadowrun questions)  
<http://www.shadowruntabletop.com>  
(Catalyst Shadowrun website)  
<http://www.shadowrun.com>  
(official Shadowrun Universe website)  
<http://www.catalystgamelabs.com>  
(Catalyst website)  
<http://shop.catalystgamelabs.com>  
(Catalyst/Shadowrun orders)





## DENVER LITERALLY RIPPING APART

PEOPLE DISAPPEARING  
TO WHO KNOWS WHERE?

AUTHORITIES SILENT,  
POWERLESS TO DO ANYTHING

BY LENI GUNSEL, CHIEF EDITOR

The news from Denver is not good, my friends. You know that little affair people are calling the Yellowstone Calamity, the big rumble that seems to have left a permanent tear in the metaplanes? Well, compared to what I'm hearing about what's going on in Denver, that's just an appetizer. An opening act. A calling card.

The stuff I'm hearing about is so bad, it's tough to get any sort of top-down picture of it. The best I can say is that it seems like the whole fabric of reality is tearing itself, leaving gaping holes behind. And what do you get when you leave holes in reality? That's right, my friend: unreality. The tap keeps getting turned on, and bad craziness keeps flowing out. It's filling the streets, and it's taking plenty of people with it.

Why is it happening? How do you stop it? Those are the billion-nuyen questions, my friends, and the good news is there's a certain pale dragon who'd love the answers to those questions, and he happens to have a billion nuyen just sitting around. Just be careful—the right answer could make you a fortune, but the wrong answer could make you lunch. When the stakes are this high, the patience of a dragon wears thin.

But Leni, you're saying, all of this is so vague. You're not telling me what's really happening on the ground. Well, maybe I haven't, yet, but I'm about to. Here are some of the stories I've picked up.

### A THOUSAND HANDS GRABBED MY HUSBAND!

Louise Costa, CAS sector resident, tells us: "My husband and I went for a nice night out at the Buckhorn Exchange in the Hub, and then for a nice walk in Lincoln Park. At the north end of the park, we pass an old tree and then hear a tremendous cracking blast. Splinters and wood chips flew all

over, ripping into my arms, legs, and neck. I turned around to see what was happening, and it was hands! All these hands! Nothing but hands! They rushed toward us, and they left me alone but they grabbed my husband! He tried to fight them off, but it was like he was trying to hit air. They pulled him back to where they came from, a large hole in the middle of the tree. He disappeared inside, and so did the hands. I ran to find him, but the tree was empty. The hands were gone. He was gone."

### MONKEYS STOLE EVERYTHING I HAVE

Benjamin Corliss, UCAS sector resident, tells us: "I'm not wealthy or anything. I've got a few nice things, sure, but I've worked hard for everything I have. I've got a nice apartment and I take care what I have. So you can imagine I get upset when other people in the building don't take care of things like I do. I come home late one night after a long day of trying to convince sluggards to do their jobs, and the door next to my apartment is wide open, and the place inside is trashed. Lots of it seems to have been stripped bare, while the furniture was torn apart. I stuck my head in the apartment, didn't see anything moving, so I decided to mind my own business and go home. But pretty much the second I open my door, monkeys—at least they seemed like monkeys, and they certainly howled like them—streamed out of the neighbor's place and grabbed everything I had. Everything! Even my brand-new Xiao 9000 Soy Squeezer! What do monkeys want with a Soy Squeezer? It was a total disaster!"

### THE NIGHT CREATURES HAVE COME!

Pontifaxius of the Aurora Warrens tells me (verbatim): "The night is not dark! Not dark! So many things are so much darker. Dark as their souls, dark as *filth*. They lurk everywhere, behind cars, behind homes, behind *your eyes*! They're coming out now! They tear up reality, they chew it up and spit it out, they feed on it, they feed on us, they *feed*! You think you can stop them? You think *anything* can stop them? *Nothing* can stop them, because you can't stop *nothing*!"

You may not understand all of this—I sure as hell don't—but I know it's my duty to share it. To warn everyone about what I'm seeing.

You have been warned.





# DENVER: RIPPING REALITY

"Can't wait for this to be done"

The words echoed in Connor's mind for a few moments after he muttered them. He was nervous, even a bit jumpy as he walked through the drizzle towards Sam's No. 3 diner. It wasn't the Zone Defense Force armored vehicle parked nearby, soldier in mil-spec armor scanning the area from the top turret. Nor was it the eerie quiet compared to the chaos happening elsewhere in the rest of the FRFZ.

No, it was the damn job; weirdest one he'd ever had.

Even though the block was practically abandoned, Sam's was still open for business. Its bright lights and neon signs were like a defiant light in the darkness, proclaiming that they weren't going anywhere.

Not that he cared. Connor was beyond done with this city. There were too many complications coming, complications Connor wasn't going to deal with. Moving on was nothing new. He did it once, he'd do it as many times as necessary. Still, five years was a good streak.

It was easy to see Mr. Johnson sitting inside of Sam's through the massive front windows. Connor hated that; it was too exposed, too easy to be seen. It didn't make any sense. But then, nothing about this Mr. Johnson did.

Connor swung the door open, welcoming the rush of warm air against the wet chill from outside. At one of the booths was Mr. Johnson. On his right sat a plate with the remnants of what he guessed was a massive burrito. To his left, a half-empty kaf mug near the table's edge, the universal signal for "refill."

But what caught Connor's attention as he approached were the cards laid out before Mr. Johnson. He knew a little about magic, mostly to avoid it, but recent street buzz made him wonder if ...

"No, my good sir, they are not what you think, trust me," Mr. Johnson said, as if reading Connor's mind.

Connor hated that, too.

Rather than show irritation, he simply plopped down across from Mr. Johnson. Instead of the tailored business suit he wore the last time they'd met, Mr. Johnson now sported a battered leather jacket adorned with pins, buttons, and other flare Connor didn't recognize.

"Can I order you something, Mr. Rhys? The kaf here is quite good, and an associate of mine highly recommended the stuffed burrito." Mr. Johnson brushed a strand of errant hair

over his pointed ears. Not bothering to look up from his cards, he laid another down and grimaced.

Connor tilted his head back and exhaled in frustration. He learned at their first meeting not to question, just wait and follow Johnson's lead. Fragging keeb.

"Did you deliver the final message precisely as instructed?"

Connor's snapped his head back. "Yeah, *exactly* as you instructed. Pain in the hoop, but I got it done."

Mr. Johnson nodded, his gaze locked with Connor's

"And what exactly was Ms. Fairborne's reaction? And please, no editorializing this time."

Connor began painstakingly recreating the scene—how he broke into the home of acting UCAS Representative Sharon Fairborne, and her reaction when he extended the "invitation," right down to her body language. Sometimes having a photographic memory sucked.

"... and she didn't, or couldn't, stop shaking. After approximately fifty-five seconds, she said she would accept, against her better judgment."

Mr. Johnson again nodded. "Thank you Mr. Rhys. And as agreed, here is the final installment of your payment."

Connor snatched the credstick from Johnson's outstretched hand. Why did he have to do this dog-and-pony show instead of, oh, sending a written report or electronic transmission? Frag this Johnson, frag this city.

"Will I be able to make use of your services in the future?"

"Don't bet on it," Connor snipped as he slid from behind the booth and bee-lined out the door.

The wind had picked up, and bits of trash and debris swirled about the street. Connor shuddered as he pulled his coat collar up—only to look down and see the targeting laser on his chest. He followed it back to the roof across the street. Looking up with a sneer, he extended his middle finger.

But instead of feeling a sharp pain in his chest, Connor saw rays of light from behind him. On reflex he turned to look, only to see a gaping maw, filled with razor-sharp serrated teeth dripping with viscous black fluid, coming at him.

It was the most horrendous, nightmarish thing Connor Rhys had ever seen, the image seared into his mind for the rest of his life.

All thirty seconds of it.

Back in the diner, Mr. Johnson tilted his head and finished his kaf while watching the scene play out in the street.

"Well. That's new."

Sample file







## INTRODUCTION

*Ripping Reality* is the third of the *Denver Adventures* series for *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition*. It gives players the opportunity to experience events transpiring in the Denver Front Range Free Zone. The city is on edge after the events mentioned in *Storm Front* (**Lightning in Denver** chapter) and the previous adventures, *Serrated Edge* and *False Flag*.

*Ripping Reality* is an adaptable adventure; gamemasters can adjust it to suit their player's skills and/or team composition. The adventure centers on runners investigating reports of a great conspiracy amid a city that is scrambling to evacuate before an ominous deadline imposed by the great dragon Ghostwalker. All the while, reality seems to be literally tearing itself apart.

Players should stop reading now. The rest of *Ripping Reality* is for gamemasters only. It lays out the plots, characters, and secrets in the adventure. Reading beyond this point would reveal major spoilers.

## PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

*Ripping Reality* uses *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition* (SR5). However, many of the characters and gear presented are from additional core SR5 products, including (but not limited to): *Chrome Flesh*, *Data Trails*, *Rigger 5*, *Run & Gun*, *Run Faster*, and *Street Grimoire*. Historical information concerning Denver can be found in the *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition* (SR4A) book *Spy Games*, *Sixth World Almanac*, and the transition book *Storm Front*.

## ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

In *Ripping Reality*, the players travel to and around Denver to investigate specific locations and individuals. The gamemaster can run all objectives or choose only those objectives best suited to the group. They can also add additional objectives to expand this adventure into a full campaign.

## MAIN SECTIONS

This book is organized into sections to assist with running the adventure:

- **Preparing to Play:** A plot synopsis, necessary background information, and other useful details and data.
- **Scenarios:** The adventure itself, broken down into individual scenarios/scenes
- **Picking Up the Pieces:** Information about wrapping up the game. This includes and aftermath, money/Karma rewards, and information pertaining to legwork.
- **Cast of Shadows:** Profiles of the primary NPCs with whom the player characters will interact during the adventure.

## ADVENTURE SCENARIOS

The adventure plays out over a series of sequential scenes. Each scene contains the following subsections:

- **What's Up, Chummer?:** A brief summary of the events in the scene.
- **Tell It To Them Straight:** A text selection that can be read directly to the players or paraphrased when they reach specific points in the scene.
- **Hooks:** This section offers hints on mood for the scenario. It also reminds the gamemaster of twists and hidden information that the player characters may or may not discover.
- **Behind the Scenes:** The mechanics behind each scene, including NPC motivations, secrets, or special instructions/information. Places of interest along with any grunt NPCs stats are also found here.
- **Pushing the Envelope:** Suggestions on altering the scene to provide more of a challenge.
- **Debugging:** Suggestions for dealing with any potential problems.

## NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Non-player characters (NPCs) are essential to any adventure. NPCs include allies, enemies, and contacts with whom the player characters interact with. Relevant NPCs have pro-





Listed below are suggestions that should help the adventure run more smoothly.

### STEP ONE: READ THE ADVENTURE

Read through the adventure before introducing it to your group. Being familiar with the adventure lets you see how everything connects. This helps you adapt when your players (inevitably) come up with something not in the adventure.

### STEP TWO: ASSESS THE ADVENTURE

Rarely does an adventure go exactly as it's written. Some may want/need more of a challenge while sometimes adjustments for specialized teams (such as all mages) may be needed. Others may switch NPCs for characters with whom the players are more familiar. Assessing the adventure lets you customize it to make it more enjoyable and fit your own gamemastering style.

### STEP THREE: KNOW THE CHARACTERS

You should have complete information on each of the player characters prior to the adventure so you can assess their individual (and group) skills, contacts, and abilities. For example, if a scene calls for them to fly a plane and no one has the Pilot Aircraft skill, you may need to tweak the scene. If a character is sidelined for parts of the story because of lack of abilities or skills, consider adding scenes that play to that character's strengths.

files/stats in the **Behind the Scenes** section, while major NPCs who appear in multiple scenes are listed in the **Cast of Shadows** section at the end of this book. Gamemasters can tweak NPCs to make them more (or less) challenging opponents (see **Prime Runners** p. 385, SR5) as needed. NPCs groups benefit from Group Edge (p. 380, SR5), while individual NPCs use their own Edge.

## BACKGROUND

On February 10, 2079, approximately three weeks prior to this adventure's start, the great dragon Ghostwalker shocked the world when he announced that he was claiming sole jurisdiction over the Front Range Free Zone and kicking the governments of the CAS, PCC, Sioux Nation, and the UCAS out of Denver. He claimed they had failed to properly administer the FRFZ and protect its citizenry, and he also claimed they were all complicit, or at least negligent in preventing, an assassination attempt targeting him. The various governments were given one month to evacuate or face the consequences.

In short, he got tired of their drek. But in reality, this was all part his design to get the governments out of his territory; he was simply enacting it ahead of the original schedule.

## GAMEMASTERING THE ADVENTURE

### STEP FOUR: TAKE NOTES

Written notes keep things organized and make it easier to present the adventure smoothly and effectively. Taking notes during the adventure, including the things the players do and say, and the choices they make is useful in awarding Karma and handling contacts at the adventure's conclusion. More importantly, the choices made in one game will affect the players' options—and the consequences they face—in the next adventure. Players will sometimes make choices they'll regret, and in the shadows that means there's a good chance those decisions will come back to haunt them.

### STEP FIVE: DON'T LET THE DICE RUN THE GAME

Dice rolls are used to determine the outcomes of events in a roleplaying game. However, sometimes these rolls interfere with the story. As gamemaster, you have the authority—and the responsibility—to tweak the dice to enhance the story. As a rule of thumb, don't fudge the die rolls to hurt player characters, but an occasional tweak might help them out (going from death to serious injury for example) or recover the story from a catastrophic run of bad luck.

### STEP SIX: DON'T PANIC!!!

You will make mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes. Forget a rule, misread a scene, or forget an important clue—don't worry! You're there is to have fun, which is more important than a flawless performance. When a mistake is made, do your best to straighten things out and move forward.

Despite the vehement protests and military posturing by the CAS and UCAS governments, Ghostwalker has moved forward with his plans. Currently, there are eight days until the deadline, and the various nations are scrambling to get their assets and citizens out while the desperate look toward more, well, desperate means. And all the while the Zone Defense Force (loyal to Ghostwalker) is omnipresent. Chaos reigns supreme in the formerly free city of Denver.

But there's been a recent, odd development in Denver. Rumors and sketchy reports tell of so-called "rips in reality" that have been sighted all over the FRFZ. Some of these are minor and only last a short time, but there are reports of beings and spirits of varying types and intent coming through, while unlucky individuals fall through or are sucked into them. However, amid the chaos, these reports are either being denied or dismissed as some kind of scheme by Ghostwalker.

If people only knew what the rips *really* meant ...

## RIPS IN REALITY: BACKGROUND AND RULES

The rifts that are appearing all over Denver are the result of a narrowing of the connection between Denver's location on the physical plane and its metaplanar counterpart. The

