

DEATH SOLDIERS OF THE JADE HOOD

CHAPTER 1

Joe Biggs is an ordinary guy. He works as a hack on the late shift. Being on the low rung already, when the depression hit in '29, his lot in life basically stayed the same. Some of his buddies even say that he moved up in the world a bit. You see, the drivers on the day shift took bankers and businessmen from meetings to lunches and back to the office. When the market crashed many of these fares dried up. The cab drivers on the night shift, however, normally take passengers from the theater district to any one of a number of speakeasies that thrive after dark. For them the depression increased business as more people sought the escape of alcohol and all night dancing.

Joe is one of the lucky few who reside on Madame Tex's call list. Madame Tex runs a social club uptown. It's a high-class place with judges, councilmen, and the biggest names in the theater, as well as the occasional mobster and his goons, all stopping in. When one of her customers is unable to make it home on his or her own, Madame Tex will have a cab waiting discreetly around back. Tex hands the driver an address and a \$10 bill. The money covers the fare, the driver's silence, and a guarantee that the driver gets the passenger into the house.

It is still early and Joe is parked at his usual corner waiting for the shows to let out when Tex's messenger appears at his window. Unlike the usual procedure of being directed to the club's back entrance, the kid hands him an envelope and doesn't hop in the car to ride to the club. Joe opens the envelope. Inside are a \$100 bill and an address. By the time Joe looks back up, the kid has disappeared.

For a moment Joe considers driving to the club and handing the money back. A fare like this usually means keeping your eyes and ears shut and remembering nothing when the police come calling later. But he can't afford to lose Tex's business so he puts the taxi in first, turns the meter on and makes his way uptown to the address. About 15 minutes later he arrives at an office building. Joe hops out of the car to ring the buzzer and sees there are at least a dozen businesses housed here. He stares at all the names for a minute and when none of them jump out at him, he walks back to the car to wait.

No sooner is he in the driver's seat than the back door opens and his passenger hops in. Joe does not turn to chat up the passenger like he normally would. He glances in the rear-view mirror out of habit and quickly looks away. The man in the back seat is "Snake Eyes" Falcone, professional gambler and one-time enforcer for Boss Johnny Watkins' gang, before it was broken up and Johnny was sent to the Big House.

Falcone is a tall, thin man with a long face. His eyes are set wide apart and he has thin lips, which he has the habit of licking when he is not talking. The suit he wears costs more than Joe's car. And even Joe's quick glance caught the bulge of the .38 under his expensive jacket.

"Drive," came the command from the back seat.

Joe is about to ask, "Where" when he decides it would be better to get on the move before asking. He puts the car into gear and starts to pull out, then immediately slams on the brakes. Falcone slides forward and bangs the driver's seat.

"What the hell's your problem hack?" Falcone demands from the back seat.

Biggs doesn't turn around, but points out the windshield and responds simply, "Him."

Standing in the middle of the road, illuminated by the taxi's headlights, is a lone figure. He wears a long gray trenchcoat and his gray fedora is pulled down low. His head is slightly averted from the lights, keeping his face in shadow, but just below his hat a pair of large round goggles reflect some of the light back. He holds a .45 in his left hand, but keeps it pointed at the ground for now.

For a moment, Joe feels as though the world has stopped. Even the sound of his car engine seems distant. He can tell that his passenger is waiting for something to happen. Then a voice, no more than a coarse whisper,

fills the cab. "Get out of the car Falcone." The voice comes from nowhere and everywhere. With the figure's face in shadow, Joe couldn't tell if he spoke the words or not.

"Make tracks!" Falcone yells, pulling his own heater from beneath his jacket.

"Hey, I don't want no..." Joe feels the gun press against the base of his skull.

"You're bein' paid a c note to drive, so drive!"

Biggs slams his foot down on the gas pedal and the car lurches forward. "Snake Eyes" is tossed back in his seat and while he tries to pull himself upright, Joe cuts the wheel hard to the right bouncing up onto the sidewalk and into a lamppost. With the sudden stop, Joe's head bangs against the steering wheel and bright flashes of light dance around in his skull as he slumps down onto the passenger side of the seat.

Uttering a string of curses, Falcone leaps out of the car, his gun blazing. But, where a moment ago the lone figure stood, now there is just empty street. The former enforcer spins wildly around, jumping at every noise in this quiet section of the city.

"Where are you, you freak?"

"I want the Jade Hood, Falcone. Give him to me and you walk." The whisper emanates from the shadows all around the gungel.

"I'm no stooge Gargoyle, now come out and face me!"

A single shot rings out, the bullet strikes Falcone in the wrist of his gun hand. He grunts in pain as the gun falls to the pavement. The Gargoyle steps out from the shadows and walks straight toward Falcone. He doesn't slow down. The former enforcer opens his mouth to speak and suddenly finds himself with a mouth full of knuckles. He collapses to the ground unconscious.

Back in the car, Joe stirs and rises to a sitting position again. His head is swimming and it takes a moment to register where he is. The events of the last few minutes star to come flooding back and he springs from the car ready to bolt into the night. What he sees, though, is the figure of "Snake Eyes" sprawled out on the ground and a gray-clad figure hunched over and rummaging through his pockets. Joe is transfixed and stands next to the taxi, unsure of what he should do now.

The Gargoyle rises and faces the cab driver. "Thank you," he whispers walking forward. Though the light is dim from the askew streetlight, Joe does see the man's lips move, but the voice still seems to come from everywhere at once. "Your actions made my job much easier."

Being nearly six feet tall and having a slightly larger build (which Joe liked to brag was the Swedish blood from his mother's side), Joe is used to cutting an imposing figure next to other men, but the figure who approaches seems to tower ominously above him. Maybe the gray-clad vigilante isn't taller or broader, but the power of his presence makes Joe feel small and helpless. And the dark lenses in his goggles cause Joe to feel as though he is under constant scrutiny. He shifts uncomfortably as the Gargoyle approaches.

The gravity of his situation then dawns on Joe. "Damn!" he exclaims and runs to the front of his car. "Damn! Damn! Damn!" he continues, running his fingers through his hair and staring at the busted headlight and dented grill and hood. "They're gonna kill me. I wish I had never taken the damn money for this job."

"Who paid you for this job?" the Gargoyle queries.

Joe's jaw snaps shut and he eyes the stranger with suspicion. He's kept his nose clean by having nothing to say to cops or gangsters alike. And though this guy falls somewhere in between, Joe knows that the results of talking would be the same. But then his shoulders slump and his head drops. He is a dead man whether he talks or not. He didn't have to hit the lamp post, he could have run down the stranger with the goggles and the .45. He chose not to. So if he's going to help, he might as well help. "Madame Tex paid for it."

"Interesting. Did she personally give you the money?"

"No, she sent one of her runners."

"Tex does not give money to her runners to hand out. She likes to know who is getting the cash before she sends them on their way. You didn't betray her confidence, I doubt she even knew about this trip."

“That’s great. But what about him?” Joe points to the still unconscious Falcone.

“Did he see your face?”

“No, I don’t think so. I never turned around. And he came from the back of the car to get in.”

“He’ll remember the damage to the car, though, and it won’t take long for it to be spotted on the street by one of his boys.” The Gargoyle produces a scrap of paper and a pencil. He scribbles a quick note folds it, adds an address, and hands it to Joe. “Go to this garage and give the mechanic this note. Do it now. He’ll open up his shop for you once he reads this.”

“But I can’t afford this kind of repair work. Even with Tex’s business I just scrape by.”

“It will all be taken care of. Now go, our friend here is starting to come around and I still have business with him.”

Not wanting to see what happens next and definitely not wanting to be seen, Joe hops quickly back into his car. He puts the car in reverse and backs away from the lamppost. It creaks and threatens to topple and finally settles into its crooked position. It’s 10 blocks before Joe loosens his grip on the wheel. His knuckles are white and he shakes for a minute before settling into the drive. The office buildings give way to apartments and then the City Park comes in to view. Already the glow from the theater district makes the night feel like day. He pulls over beneath one of the brighter signs and pulls the note out from his pocket. He checks the address again and before putting the car into gear, starts to open the note. He stops himself, though and stuffs it back into his pocket.

“The last thing you want Joe Biggs is to get involved in that guy’s business.”

CAPTURING “SNAKE EYES” FALCONE SCENARIO IDEAS FOR .45 ADVENTURE

These are just some ideas for setting up a capture and get the information scenario. The information can be easily modified to any storyline you are using.

Set-up:

This game should be set up on a 2’ x 2’ board. All the action takes primarily in the street. There should be a sidewalk with a streetlight. A car should be “crashed” into the streetlight. A 12” diameter circle should be marked out on the center of the board. This represents the broken streetlight. The circle should cover part of the car as well. Any buildings or other terrain features can be added for atmosphere.

The Characters:

“Snake Eyes” Falcone - Grade 2 Enforcer, can only have a WS 4 pistol.

Joe Biggs - Grade 1 Driver, can have no weapon

The Gargoyle - Grade 3 War Veteran

“Snake Eyes” starts in the middle of the board within the 12” diameter circle. Joe Biggs starts at the car. The Gargoyle starts anywhere outside the circle of light and 14” from any other model.

The Objective:

The Gargoyle seeks to get information from “Snake Eyes” and he must beat him in close combat, in order to be

able to interrogate him (see Interrogation rules below). “Snake Eyes” wants to escape, but at the same time, not appear as a coward, so he sticks around longer than is prudent.

Special Rules:

Joe Biggs is undecided on what to do. He begins play on “Snake Eye’s” team, but at the beginning of each turn, he makes a GT test. If he fails, he stays with “Snake Eyes”. If he passes, then he joins The Gargoyle and needs to make no more GT tests to switch sides.

The Gargoyle starts the game outside the circle of light and because of this, the player controlling him places three markers at the beginning of the game (one should be marked as The Gargoyle). All of these are moved on the Gargoyle’s turn. If The Gargoyle shoots or moves into the circle of light he is revealed and the other two markers are discarded. If an enemy model moves into base contact with a marker, then it is revealed.

As long as the Gargoyle stays outside the circle of light, “Snake Eyes” must make a BR test in order to shoot at him (his clothing and the darkness combine to make him difficult to spot).

Once “Snake Eyes” has been beaten once in close combat (meaning he loses just one round of close combat), then he can be interrogated and no more combat takes place. However, this cannot take place until Joe has switched sides and joined the Gargoyle. As long as Joe is undecided, The Gargoyle cannot safely handle the interrogation.

Interrogation

There can only ever be two models involved in an interrogation: the Interrogator and the captive. Interrogation can only be used as part of a scenario where players agree to its use beforehand (ie. you can’t play a pick up game and attempt to interrogate someone in the middle of a gun battle).

Interrogation is a comparative roll.

The Interrogator adds their BR and BW scores together and adds d10 roll.

The Captive adds their GT score to a d10 roll.

If the Interrogator scores higher, then the Captive needs to make a GT test. If they fail then the Interrogator learns what he wants to know. If the GT test is passed, the Captives GT score is lowered by 1 for the next round of interrogation. If the GT score ever reaches 0, the model immediately gives up the goods.

If the Captive scores higher, than 1 is added to the Captive’s GT score for the next round of interrogation. If the Captive’s GT score ever reaches 10, then he has outlasted the Interrogator and will not give up the information under any circumstances.

Conclusion:

This is a rough outline and designed to get payers thinking about those scenes that are not the final climatic battle, but the “leg work” scenes where both sides try and gain the information they need. Check out the .45 Adventure website (www.pulp-heroes.com) for more information and I’ll see you for the next exciting chapter!