

RIFTS®

**RIFTS® FOR SAVAGE WORLDS
AMERICAN ARMAGEDDON!**

**DESIGN DIARY:
MEET THE TEAM!**

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First, I want to thank ALL of you for supporting our project. It really is a magical time to be a fan of Rifts® for *Savage Worlds*.

There has been a lot of interest in our new team so let me catch you up on the past couple of years of development. The foundations and outlines of the three new worldbooks were completed by early 2017, when Sean Tait Bircher, Robin English-Bircher, and I were asked to complete the manuscripts. The first big task we tackled was working with the Pinnacle team to clearly define the scope, theme, and name for each of the new books. We had a ton of fun.

As we finished up the manuscripts, the *Savage Worlds Adventure Edition* was also being developed. I guess Shane saw something in those manuscripts that he wanted more of, because he asked us to expand the worldbooks to 75,000 words each! This gave us room for Plot Point Campaigns and tons of character options that we just couldn't fit in previously. In addition, the decision was made to update the manuscripts to the upcoming Adventure Edition of *Savage Worlds*. Instead of launching three supplements before the new edition of *Savage Worlds* would be

released, the new Rifts® books would be launched afterward.

The three new worldbooks are 192-page behemoths jam-packed with new adventures, lore, heroes, villains, gear, and stunning art. Working on the newest edition of *Savage Worlds* as it developed has been quite the wild ride! The Rifts® for *Savage Worlds* team is spread across the United States, and our art team is quite global. As you read this, there are employees and contractors of Pinnacle Entertainment in all types of crazy time zones eating, sleeping, and finishing up work on all of these new products. By backing this project you are supporting creative people from all over the world. For that, we are truly grateful.

We want to share more about the core members of our *Savage Rifts*® team, and hope that the following author spotlights help you get to know us better. Let us know if you would like to see more spotlights in the future, there are tons of creative people involved in the project. Talk to you again soon, Rifters!

Sean Owen Roberson
Line Editor, Rifts® for *Savage Worlds*



KICKSTARTER ENDS MAY 6TH AT 6PM PACIFIC!
9PM EASTERN

SAVAGE WORLDS
ADVENTURE EDITION

RIFTS
EMPIRE OF HUMANITY

RIFTS
BLOOD & HONOR

RIFTS
MAGICAL REALM

KICKSTARTER
APRIL 16–MAY 6

The banner features three Savage Worlds Rifts books: 'Empire of Humanity', 'Blood & Honor', and 'Magical Realm'. The background shows a character in armor and a dragon. The Savage Worlds Adventure Edition logo is on the right.



Sean Roberson (that's him on the left)

SEAN ROBERSON

Sean Roberson is responsible for *Empires of Humanity*, and coordinated art as well as lore continuity for the worldbooks.

Sean is also heading up the final work on the *Rifts*® for *Savage Worlds* Adventure Edition series of books.



1) WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THE ORIGINAL RIFTS® MEGEVERSE®?

The mix of horror and powerful heroes captured my imagination. Adventuring as a Cyber-Knight or Glitter Boy in a post-apocalyptic America overrun by terrifying monsters and dark magic was just something I couldn't pass up, or apparently put down.

2) WHAT'S SOMETHING YOU FOUND EXCITING IN THE ORIGINAL SAVAGE RIFTS®?

The Tomorrow Legion was the most exciting new aspect of the plotline, but the chance to game in the Rifts® Megaverse® using the *Savage Worlds* game system was the most compelling aspect for me.

As an old-school Rifts® fan who no longer has high-school levels of free time, and whose buddies are successful professionals in a similar boat, the "fast, furious, fun!" aspect of *Savage Worlds* meant it was

possible for us to experience the world of Rifts® together again.

3) WHAT'S SOMETHING YOU FOUND EXCITING IN THE NEW BOOKS YOU JUST WORKED ON?

Wow, that is a tough one to answer because these new books cover so much ground.

I had fun throughout the process, but my favorite part had the Plot Point Campaign I wrote take place in some of my favorite fictional places in North America like the Robodome and Old Bones. The Republicans and Archie never get old, either.

4) WHAT WAS PARTICULARLY CHALLENGING IN THE NEW BOOKS?

Since our books are set in North America circa 109 PA, an area central to over two dozen Rifts® books set in different timeframes, it was a lot of work to stitch all of the information together correctly. In the end, though, Kevin Siembieda helped us make sure that we got the details right and even asked me to email him some notes from our conversations, so that was very rewarding!

5) WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO RUNNING OR ADDING TO YOUR NEXT SAVAGE RIFTS® GAME?

I can't wait to run some adventures where the Legionnaires are part of an expedition to navigate the Demon Sea and recon the coast of Atlantis. When they must inevitably pass through the Bermuda Triangle on their return voyage, I might conspire to shipwreck them in South America—the Land of a Thousand Islands.

SEAN TAIT BIRCHER



Sean Tait Bircher is the author of *Arcana & Mysticism*. He also put his knowledge of the *Savage Worlds* system to good use by leading the rules development on all three of the new *Rifts*® for *Savage Worlds* worldbooks.

1) WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THE ORIGINAL RIFTS® MEGVERSE®?

I have to admit it was the cover painting of the Minion of Splugorth and the Altara Warrior Women by the late, great Keith Parkinson. I could say that the quixotic blend of sci-fi and fantasy, the baroque details, or Parkinson's masterful palette were what drew my eye—but we'd know that was a lie. I was 18. We know why I did a double take when I saw that cover for the first time.

2) WHAT'S SOMETHING YOU FOUND EXCITING IN THE ORIGINAL SAVAGE RIFTS®?

As a much more evolved married man in my mid-40s, on the other hand, the thing that excited me about *Savage Rifts*® was how the team modernized both the text and

subtext of *Rifts*®. Turning the Altara into a playable race, giving them their own agency—that was just one of several ways Pinnacle revised *Rifts*® into a setting with a broader, more modern appeal.

3) WHAT'S SOMETHING YOU FOUND EXCITING IN THE NEW BOOKS YOU JUST WORKED ON?

"Souls of Darkness," the Plot Point Campaign for *Arcana & Mysticism*, is wild and crazy. *Savage Rifts*® grants the opportunity for players and Game Masters to indulge in seriously high-octane action scenes and massive carnage. In addition, I made sure "Souls of Darkness" included almost every option in the Adventurer's Toolkit: Allies, Chases, Dramatic Tasks, Mass Battles, Quick Encounters, Social Conflicts, and more!

4) WHAT WAS PARTICULARLY CHALLENGING IN THE NEW BOOKS?

I designed most of the Iconic Frameworks and M.A.R.S. packages appearing in *Blood & Banes* and added and tweaked some of the ones in *Arcana & Mysticism*. Living up to the design expertise on display in the original *Savage Rifts*® was daunting. Even though some of the new IFs take inspiration from



Sean Tait Bircher

villain stats in *Savage Foes of North America*, there's a big difference between what works as an antagonist statblock and what works as a player character.

5) WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO RUNNING OR ADDING TO YOUR NEXT SAVAGE RIFTS® GAME?

One of those Iconic Frameworks is my absolute favorite addition to the game—the Necromancer! While it veers away from some of the grotesquery of the original Rifts® villainous O.C.C., it does so in service to making the Necromancers described in the *Rifts® Vampires™ Sourcebook* into characters capable of playing nice with the rest of the Tomorrow Legion. The Necromancer provides a really unusual alternative for players interested in a commander-style role, taking great advantage of the *Savage Worlds Allies* rules. And the character illustration is the single best piece of art in all three new books!

ROBIN ENGLISH-BIRCHER



Robin English-Bircher is the author of *Blood & Banes*. In addition, she also headed up the vital playtesting and editing work for all three of the new *Rifts® for Savage Worlds* worldbooks.

1) WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THE ORIGINAL RIFTS® MEGAVEVERSE®?

Back in the nineties, the idea of a mash-up style game intrigued me; however, the rules scared me off. Coming back to it later, I gravitated to the diversity of races and the flexibility of characters.

2) WHAT'S SOMETHING YOU FOUND EXCITING IN THE ORIGINAL SAVAGE RIFTS®?

I totally fell in love with the M.A.R.S. packages. I played in the live stream game several years back. I chose my character relatively early and chose the Wilderness Scout; it allowed me to contribute more to the group, despite not having amazing abilities.

Later, I realized the potential of the M.A.R.S. packages; I could create a unique and well-rounded character from the beginning. The package provided me with the ability to have a diverse set of skills while specializing in a few, with starting out with a clear specialty in those skills. The ability to really develop the characters with the Edges sealed the deal.

3) WHAT'S SOMETHING YOU FOUND EXCITING IN THE NEW BOOKS YOU JUST WORKED ON?

When I got to write about the Cape, memories of my childhood in Florida came rushing back to me. I remember a visit to Cape Canaveral where we got out on the tarmac with one of the shuttles. I remember my tantrums when my brothers got to get up on the roof of the house to watch the shuttle launches—I was so jealous. I returned to some family photos to give me inspiration.



Robin English-Bircher



Robin's Cape Canaveral snaps

But most of all, the cats were the most exciting. Sean Bircher and I are super huge cat people. When we came across them in the vampire books, we both got excited. I could see myself—and my cats—embodied by the race. And then, they have a Wereocelot. A Wereocelot! Not only do I love cats, I love to visit and support my hometown zoo. One of my favorite animals to visit is the ocelot. Not only are they beautiful and intriguing, they are native to the region I live in. How could I resist such an awesome opportunity?

4) WHAT WAS PARTICULARLY CHALLENGING IN THE NEW BOOKS?

Balance. I wanted to offer new and exciting character options and getting them to balance proved difficult at times. Some of the more exciting races were hard to create.

The Vampire went through so many incarnations; it comes out balanced because we made it an Iconic Framework, but there is a lot going on with that character.

Same for the werocats. The werocats started as a race. Balancing took time and patience, but it felt encumbered as a race. When adding just a simple M.A.R.S. package with the race, the character felt unwieldy. In the end, we turned it into an Iconic Framework for the same reason the Vampire is an Iconic Framework.

5) WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO RUNNING OR ADDING TO YOUR NEXT SAVAGE RIFTS® GAME?

Luckily, I got to playtest so much of this. Every chance I got, I added elements I really wanted in my game. I totally reveled in a game I ran with the Tomorrow Legion hunting down a dangerous dinosaur. On one occasion, for the fun of it, I made each character a member of The Simpsons. That game got crazy, in all the best ways. And with the gonzo, over-the-top Rifts®, it felt somehow normal.

I do like running games against vampires. Just the idea that a super soaker, an item I can go buy right now, could take down a vampire, while they can just shake off a boom gun.

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