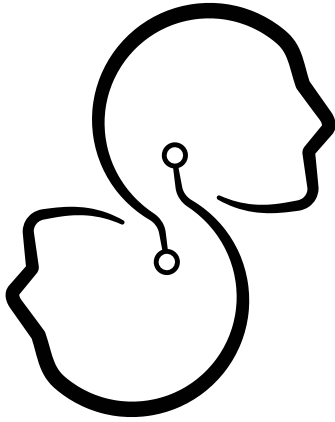


MARK RICHARDSON'S

HEADSPACE

SHARED CONSCIOUSNESS CYBERPUNK

MARK RICHARDSON'S
HEADSPACE



HEADSPACE

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APOCALYPSE**
apocalypse-world.com



**GREEN HAT
DESIGNS**

Dedicated to my Mom, Dad, Sarah, and Julie
whose support has made this book possible.

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FOREWORD

BY JOHN ADAMUS

I feel like I should start this foreword with a disclaimer: Mark is Canadian, so I'm confident that while you're reading this book you'll insert the appropriate amounts of apologies, "aboots" and "eh" throughout the text.

Now that we've gotten that out of the way, and I've prepared you as best I can, let me also tell you that what you're holding is something inspirational, something well made, and something worth your playing time. Mark has worked incredibly hard to produce a book that he's rightfully so proud of, and I'm one of the people lucky enough to have helped him get this book into your hands.

Don't tell him this, but I'm proud of him. Mark is crazy talented. *Headspace* is my benchmark for getting my own work finished, and at times it's such a high benchmark that I just want to put my stuff down and read his. He inspires me, and continues to do so. And if you tell him I said that, I'm going to deny it.

Headspace started as an idea at Metatopia. It sounded great in principle, or rather it sounded good the way Mark nervously explained to a small group of us. He was nervous. I mean, more nervous than normal, and it showed in all the uh's and um's and that weird Canadian way he says "Yeah, so" (Seriously, once you hear him say it, it never gets out of your head.)

To put it nicely, I think Mark would describe that focus group as an assault. We panned his idea. We picked it apart, then pulverized the bones and picked the dust apart. We did it not because we're dicks (We are, but this is a foreword, and I'm trying to be nice here, work with me), but because when you meet Mark you see he's got potential, and you don't want him lowballing himself. He'll do it because it's genetic Canadian to do it, but you want him to rise above his maple syrup and poutine roots.

He set about working, idea after idea, word after word, section after section, in this furious diligence to make his game. It became something he talked about, but I wouldn't see it again until GenCon.

I'm sitting on a big green faux-leather chair in the lobby of the Embassy Suites Downtown the day before GenCon starts, and Mark says to me, "So you blow a hole in the side of the building and jump out?"

That was the moment I wanted *Headspace* to be a game I'd have on my shelf. I mean, I knew I wanted it because I was asked to edit it, but playing it galvanized the decision. Here was a game Powered by the Apocalypse that made me care about how I felt while being Powered by the Apocalypse. That was new. That was interesting. That made me want to blow a whole lot of things up.

He could have stopped there; *Headspace* could have remained some little thing he made that never saw the light of day past a few select tables, but he didn't. He put together a fantastic team of writers. He got one of the best artists I've ever met. He got us all on board with a vision, and he trusted us to help deliver it. And everyone did.

Then came the crowdfunding. It would be a lie to say his friends didn't chat about how we thought it was going to go. We knew it would fund, but we tried to peg the amount. No one even came close to guessing the level of success he'd have. We were all so proud, envious, and excited for him. *Headspace* would be a thing on shelves. He turned his idea into a book. Awesome.

Watching Mark make this game is to watch someone take a dream and turn it into something tangible. I don't think there's any greater magic in the world, I don't think there's any greater route to fun and happiness than doing that. I was so lucky and honored to work on this game, even in its infancy, and super double flattered to write this foreword.

For all the grief I give Mark, I love him like a brother. I love his work as it leads me to think of mine in new and exciting ways (or that everything I do is a crushing bag of failure by comparison, so you know, mileage may vary), and I love to see him succeed.

Headspace is great. It does things in ways I never thought they could be done, and it makes them sound like they should have been done that way all along. It's a really artful book, it's an experience from cover to cover. Mark's hard work shows. We're well past the days of nervous Metatopia explanations. And I couldn't be prouder of the game or its creator.

I was lucky to be along for the ride. And now, you're along for the ride.

Take this game and blow up the world. Thrive in the cyberness of it all. Be badass and kick ass. Be inspired by the words and the ideas. I know I am.

You know what I'm talking about, eh?

JOHN ADAMUS

January 2016



CHAPTER 1

WELCOME TO HEADSPACE

Headspace is a roleplaying game that explores human emotion, memory, and personal identity. The world of *Headspace* is a dark future where technology has begun to alter not just our bodies, but how we feel and even think.

In this future, an advanced neural-networking technology, *Headspace*, has been developed. The *Headspace* allows a group of wielders to connect their minds directly to each other. But, jacking into the *Headspace* comes with a cost: there is no going back. Once your minds are bound together, every thought, sensation, emotion, and even dreams are shared over any distance instantaneously.

WHY WOULD ANYONE DO THIS?

In the world of *Headspace*, world governments struggle to maintain law and order. Most have all but ceded their authority to gigantic Corporations that now fight for control of Earth's remaining resources. In this future, few stand against the tide of corporate corruption and greed. Fewer still have the assets and abilities to make a difference. You could be that difference. You and your friends could be the ones to stand against the Corporations and make a better world for those left on the margins of society. To do it, you'll not only need the latest weapons and cyber technologies, but also the drive to work together, seamlessly sharing your skills and abilities, operating not as a group of individuals but as a perfect team, within the *Headspace*.



WHAT DOES SHARED CONSCIOUSNESS MEAN?

The Headspace gives all of the Operators a shared neurological space to which only members of their Cell are granted access. Any Operator can speak telepathically across any distance with any other Operator from their Cell (those who share the same network via a linked *Headspace* implant). This means all Operators can maintain conversations in all scenes whether they are all physically present or not. As Players, you should expect very little information to be kept private.

Sharing your consciousness with other people doesn't come naturally. It starts with multi-hour neurosurgeries that implant the technology that makes it possible. To boil it down to its most unemotional essence, you've networked your brain together with those of your Cell members, creating a wireless network that knows none of the limitations of standard technology. One that is secure, truly secure, with a capacity for storage that rivals anything a consumer could ever see in their lifetime.

But it's so much more than that.



The implants don't just network you together to speak at the speed of thought, mind to mind. It allows you to borrow the skills of the people who make up your Cell. It doesn't matter that you've never fired a gun or defused a bomb, as long as one of them has. You can reach out and access their skills, acting as if they were doing it for you. When your mind connects to theirs to share their skills, they can feel you. Every person in a Headspace finds they are now greater than themselves, because at any time they can assume the skills of someone else in their Headspace. At peak performance, in a best case scenario, a Cell is like having a multiplicity of everyone in it. One of you is enough to scare the corps; now there's potential for five more of you to exist. You can communicate in instantaneous real time, and you are never truly alone, even in the most desperate of situations. You can share your senses, and this technology-fueled telepathy may help save your city or your world. Maybe even help you save yourself.

All of this comes at a price.

Your connection to the Headspace is always on. Cell mates' dreams, nightmares, thoughts, memories, and emotions are all connected to the network. Privacy as you knew it isn't possible, and the emotional selves of the people you work with can bleed into your own. If one of you snaps under pressure, the stress careens through the system like a wild virus, unpredictably interacting with bodies and minds. The whole of you are like an ouroboros, as your once distinct selves get devoured to become less clearly individual. It can be difficult to see where your emotions end and the others' begin. This constant risk of emotional bleed can make intimate relationships that much harder to navigate, whether they're with someone from your Headspace, or outside it.

Even death won't stop your connection to the rest of your Cell. Ghosts can accumulate in a Headspace. When an Operator dies, fragments of their consciousness will cling to the network. Their dying thoughts and feelings, wishes for redemption or vengeance, even the skills they used alongside you, can all appear in the Headspace. Before you did this, mourning someone was easier. Now even your dead don't know how to stay that way. When you go to sleep, their nightmares may become your own.

This kind of neural networking isn't a widespread technology. But you're not the only people out there who've built a Headspace. Some of you are on the side of the angels, if you can buy that; fighting the corps, struggling for a world where personal freedom and human rights mean something again. In theory, there are Cells out there that are just like you.

On the other hand, there are Cells out there working for the corps. And they exist to rip you apart.

WHO IS IN THE HEADSPACE? —————

Six Operators make up your Cell, and each Operator has three unique skills they have mastered.

THE HANDLER

No one else would deal with this shit. Even if they did, they wouldn't actually do the job right. Managing talent and orchestrating the use of corporate or military assets is hard, and that's why it's your job. Some people are content with pulling the puppet strings of the world from behind a desk. But that's not your style. It's easier to convince people to sell out, convert an enemy to a friend, or arrange for ass-covering contingencies when you're not chained to a desk. You're going to make your old corporate masters pay for everything they've done, because you're the best person to make sure it happens.

THE INFILTRATOR

Your family used to complain that you snuck up on them when you were a kid. You didn't even mean to, it just kept happening. That natural ability for stealth has served you well. Sneaking past people without even trying made you wonder who you could sneak past if you actually applied yourself. It doesn't matter who picked you up—or caught you—because you're long past those days. The rookie either dies, or becomes a highly paid professional.

Since you're not dead, you're making pretty good money. Or you were, until you bugged out of the system to try and destroy it.

THE RONIN

You had a different team, once. You came up through the ranks, from soldier to commander. Despite the ugly things you did, your comrades in arms were your family. You protected each other. Struggling to do your job without losing your soul, you still suffered, as bit by bit, assignments grew more dangerous, people died, and the truth of things got to you.

Instead of going the way of your friends, you walked away, burning bridges behind you. The company made you a superior tactician, a fighter, a weapon. They're going to regret letting you leave alive. Not that they had a choice.

THE RUNNER

Some people get confused if they take the wrong turn or walk a block too far. Not you. Whether driving or on foot, your memory of places and understanding of the urban landscape are as automatic as breathing.

The city is as familiar as your own body. You know the rhythms of traffic and neighbourhoods. You can plan routes throughout your day that effortlessly shake tails and get you to your destination with time to spare. Being late is not a problem you suffer from. You're never late, because you'd never fail your Cell.

THE TECH

It's not that you don't understand people. You just understand them in a way that freaks them out. Through the lens of technology, you know how to take people out with remote weapons in the most efficient way possible. The security slip-ups of bad passwords and ill-advised cloud storage are second nature to you. Empathy is hard for you, because all you see are the horrific secrets that others try and protect, and the violence they commit to keep them buried. People like you are essential to a corp's ability to function because you can engineer anything they need. Now you're going to engineer the ways to take them down.

THE WHITE COAT

The science of the human mind and body is the most fascinating field there is, and your diagnostic skills help you understand the very world around you. Few people can match you as a field medic, and the things you can do when given access to a lab would terrify anyone in their right mind. Which is a good reason not to work for people like that. Like a determined hound when you're on a case, your intellect is unstoppable. You're going to lance the corruption in the world around you before it spreads.

THE HEADSPACE SOCIAL CONTRACT

Headspace is a game that showcases the lives of Operators sharing not only their talents, but their past emotional trauma; the searing heart-breaks and past terrors of Operators are inescapable for themselves and their fellow Cell members. It can be hard to play a game where trauma is part of the action, but it's also a rewarding experience to explore how emotional experiences can shape people. Still, the Players of *Headspace* may come to the table with their own harsh emotional experiences. Playing a game isn't fun if everyone at the table isn't able to enjoy themselves, which is why it's important to set ground rules that will enhance the group's ability to play the game without leaving someone behind because they've become uncomfortable.

Every gaming group is different, but playing *Headspace* and making sure everyone has fun can be built on the GM introducing the other Players to things they can do or ask for to take care of themselves when the action gets a little too much. Before starting a game, talk as a group or one-on-one about anything you don't want in your game's story.

While it's a great way to find out if the entire table wants an action-heavy or spy-packed plotline, remind Players that they can also bring up stuff that isn't fun for them, that's more emotional. There's no way to avoid every subject or situation that might upset a Player, but asking for folks who are willing to disclose topics or situations to avoid means your table has fewer roadblocks to the goal: fun. If someone's survived a traumatic car wreck and doesn't want to have to deal with them in character, the game won't break if you keep that situation off the table. What you have is something Players aren't interested in seeing, which is just like gauging if your group wants to blow up half of town or sneak their way past all their problems. Knowing the emotional landmines to avoid will make for a better game.

By building this kind of cooperative trust, you can explore other themes and situations, confident that if something does prove overwhelming, the table can work through it. At times *Headspace* can get too intense for Players because a session has become far more serious than anticipated. Dark things and revelation-filled conversations could have come up, and the Players—or the Game Master—may need a break. Never be afraid to suggest or request a brief five-minute break. Get a glass of water, physically leave the table for a minute, take a few deep breaths.

It's also important to remember that one-on-one dynamics need care too. If your Operator has developed emotionally or physically intimate relationships with someone else in their Cell, keep an eye out for the person whose character is on the other end of that relationship. They may need a break from time to time, but could be too shy to say so if they feel like they'd stop you from having fun. Because the Headspace wires everyone together so tightly in the game, discussing beforehand if anyone wants to keep romance of any kind off the table during play can help avert awkwardness later on. Players who are comfortable with romantic plotlines are prepped to know what Players' characters they should avoid out of respect, and Players uninterested in romance don't have to deal with awkwardly trying to shoot down an in-game romantic advance.

All of these topics can be intense. Roleplaying is a powerful experience, and it really is okay to need that break even when you're enjoying the session. Things like breaks are a tool to keep the game fun and help people stay in character.

In case someone needs a break because of personal feelings they would find difficult to disclose, refrain from asking why they requested a break. Players or the GM might not be ready to discuss what's going on in that moment, or they could be too deeply distressed to be able to on the spot. If it looks like they're emotionally distressed, try to be available for talking with them—even if it's about more light-hearted things—or letting them take a break without hovering over them. There are a lot of tools for dealing with game content in the moment, like John Stavropoulos' X-Card, which gives a very clear process of sharing a physical card. It allows people to pick it up at any time to signal something has happened that, for whatever reason, is out of their comfort zone. With the X-Card, a group can tweak a scene together, pulling the content that crossed the line for a Player out of the scene, and then rolling forward again.

If there's content a Player doesn't want to roleplay through, but is okay with it becoming a part of the game's plot, they can "veil" or "fade to black" those kinds of scenes, helping or letting other Players or the GM simply give a blanket statement about the scene not being roleplayed through. If someone feels awkward about their Operator seducing someone for information, it's perfectly fine to say they get a password out of someone in bed without making the Player roleplay something too intimate for them to be comfortable with. There can also be scenes that are too violent for someone's comfort level, where things are summarized because a Player is in no hurry to describe in detail wiping out an entire building of people, or torturing someone for information.

All of these tools are at their most effective when introduced at the start of a game, whether it's a one-shot with strangers or the inaugural session of a campaign with established friends. By putting these guidelines in place, people have the emotional permission to give the game their all without crossing lines—their own or others. *Headspace* isn't more or less dangerous than any other game, but it's built to explore emotions, good or ill, so setting an expectation for what you want your game to be like is important.

When you make the table a trustworthy place and prioritize comfort and fun for everyone as a group, you've started to understand what it's like to function inside *Headspace*.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book will teach you how to play *Headspace*. If you're going to be the Game Master (GM), you're going to need to read the whole thing. Try printing the play aids too; they'll help you see what's most important. If you're a Player, you might not need to read more than Chapter 2 | **Playing the Game** and Chapter 3 | **Moves in Detail**—a lot of the rules in *Headspace* are on the Character Sheets and Tracking Sheets you use during the game itself. You'll come back to the text a few times throughout your game to reference certain rules, but it should be a rare occasion.

1. Read over this entire document.
2. Print all of the reference and Character Sheets (see the end of this book). You may want multiple copies of the Move and Sub-culture Sheets for easy reference.
3. Brief the Players on the setting you have chosen to play (Chapter 11) and the Corporations that are vying for power.
4. Create the **Operators** using the instructions found in Chapter 5.
5. Follow the guidelines for starting the first session in Chapter 9. Ask the Players to choose a **Corporate Project** they plan to work against as the basis for the first Operation. Start the first Operation by following the instructions in **If All Went Sideways** in Chapter 9.
6. Follow instructions on **Long Term** play in Chapter 10.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

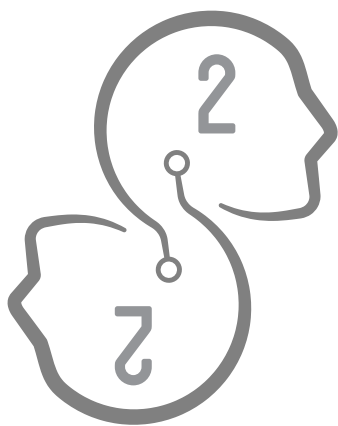
Headspace can be played with 4 to 6 people, and one member of the group needs to play the role of the GM. The GM is responsible for managing the fiction—the challenges and obstacles the Operators will face. Everyone else in the game is a Player and is responsible for playing an Operator and representing that Operator's actions in the fiction.

A group of five friends decide they want to play a game of Headspace: Julie, Phil, Valerie, Ahmed and Kenichi. Julie volunteers to take the role of the GM as she has already read this book and is the most familiar with the rules of play. Julie will guide the other 4 players through Operator creation and into their first session of play. Throughout this book numerous examples will reference this group: Ahmed is playing Nike the Runner, Phil is Whistler the Tech, Valerie is Dr. Stapleton the Whitecoat, and Kenichi is Cross the Handler.

MATERIALS NEEDED

You will also need some paper, pencils or pens, and at least two six-sided dice (D6), preferably two for each Player. You'll also need 6 tokens, five to track the shared Stress levels and one for Sync. The tokens don't have to be different and should be about the size of a quarter (try to avoid anything that's easy to lose or is edible).





CHAPTER 2 PLAYING THE GAME

EMOTIONS ARE ALWAYS IN PLAY

Human emotion is at the root of all Operator actions in *Headspace*. The rules rely heavily on the emotions experienced by the Operators over the course of play. Emotions are categorized into five core types: **Rage**, **Grief**, **Fear**, **Need**, and **Ego**.

THE EMOTIONS

Rage is a violent, uncontrollable anger, encompassing sudden outbursts at stressful situations or the heights of drug- or trauma-induced anger-management issues. It's also a passion that can fuel a violently strong impulse for honesty or order. Rage can be channeled into acts of incredible violence or humbling compassion. Physically, Rage commonly causes an increase in both heart rate and blood pressure, as well as elevated levels of adrenaline and cortisol.



Some examples of Rage are Irritation, Resentment, Excitement, Bitterness, and Fury.

Grief is mental suffering. It's loss, whether permanent or temporary, of friends, lovers, employment, family members, pets. Something is gone, and the suffering left in its absence can range from a dull ache to sanity-crushing despair. Grief can also be inflicted on someone in the form of harassment and mortification, causing mental suffering in others. Physically, Grief can cause changes in eating and sleeping, fatigue, headaches, and pains not experienced before the loss that brought them on.



Some examples of Grief are Harassment, Misery, Anguish, Despair, Regret, and Pain.

Fear is an emotion that can save a life or turn it on its head. Fear is a powerful form of anxiety, provoked by the thought of something terrible happening to you or someone you know or the likelihood of it happening. Fear can make it easier to balk at something dangerous, keep someone aware in a risky situation, or make someone prepare for the worst, just in case. It can also be a daily plague of terror and anxiety that erodes the physical and psychological resources of someone afflicted with excessive amounts of it. Physically, Fear can cause muscle tension, memory loss, digestive diseases, and heart attacks, in addition to high blood pressure, shortness of breath, and trembling.



Some examples of Fear are Suspicion, Anxiety, Panic, Terror, Helplessness, and Doubt.



Need is about want and longing. It fuels ambitions, provides motives, sparks eagerness, and can even lead to love. The wish to do well on the job, to gain respect from a disapproving family member, to satisfy your fascination for secrets; these are all desires. In its worst moments, it leads to frenzied, ravenous, or greedy behaviour. Physically, Need can cause increased stress hormones, higher blood pressure and heartbeat, endorphin rush, and a lower life expectancy.

Some examples of Need are Greed, Desire, Envy, Pining, Passion, Ambition, and Love.

Ego is an emotion rooted in a sense of satisfaction, even pleasure. That satisfaction can come from taking pride in one's work or the good work of one's team. Ego can cause people to take their work seriously and strive to be the best in their field, to cheer on the efforts of teammates and loved ones, and spark positive behaviours, like taking care of your belongings or your health. At its darkest, ego makes people conceited and blind to their own faults, under-estimating challenges and under-preparing for the trials ahead of them due to their arrogance.

Some examples of Ego are Pride, Dignity, Honour, Egotism, Satisfaction, Narcissism, and Vanity.



EMOTIONAL INFLUENCES

These five emotions are referenced in play by an Operator's **Baggage**, **Discipline**, and **Stress**.

Emotional **Baggage** represents the past of an individual's experiences and memories of a particular skill and their link to another Operator. During Operator creation, Players will connect a leading question of how they used their skill in the past to one of the other Operators in the Cell; the emotion that best represents how their Operator felt as a result of those past events is assigned as its Baggage.

Discipline represents an Operator's present state of mind and measures their ability to control each of their emotions and prevent the Baggage of a skill from overwhelming their decision-making and influencing their actions. During Operator creation, a Discipline value will be assigned for each of the six emotional types. Disciplines range from -2 (little to no control) to +2 (absolute control) and are assigned during Operator creation (see Chapter 5 | **Operator Creation**).

Stress represents an immediate and dangerous accumulation of raw emotions within the Headspace. The GM tracks Stress during play with five common pools, one for each emotional type.

MAKING MOVES

The most basic action a Player can take while playing *Headspace* is a **Move**. A Move represents an Operator doing something under duress within the fiction, be it hacking a security system or shooting a gun. If an Operator is not under emotional stress, then the dice will likely not be rolled. Each Player can make 3 types of Moves: **Professional**, **Headspace**, and **Improvise**.

A **Professional Move** defines one of three Skills the Operator has mastered and represents the Operator employing that Skill to complete an action in spectacular form.

A **Headspace Move** is when an Operator doesn't have the desired Skill but another member of the Cell does. The Operator accesses the other Operator's mind through the Headspace and uses one of their Skills (depending on group size, between 9 and 15 additional skills). The Operator's Discipline in that Skill's associated Baggage directly affects each Headspace Move.

An **Improvised Move** is when neither the Operator nor any other team member has the required Skill, but they must accomplish an important task within the fiction. Improvised Moves are required when you try to use the Skill of an Operator who has been **Taken Out** (see page 33) or when the GM asks you to because you don't have the Skill required. While success is still possible, failure will be swift and unforgiving.

For detailed explanations of these three types, see Chapter 3 | **Moves in Detail** and the **Move Worksheet** (found in the back of this book).


STRESS TRACKS

There are five distinct **Stress Tracks** (one for each type of Baggage) that the Cell shares. Stress will build throughout each scene and exists between scenes. Stress is added when Players make **Professional Moves** or take **Harm**, but it can also be added from **GM Moves**.

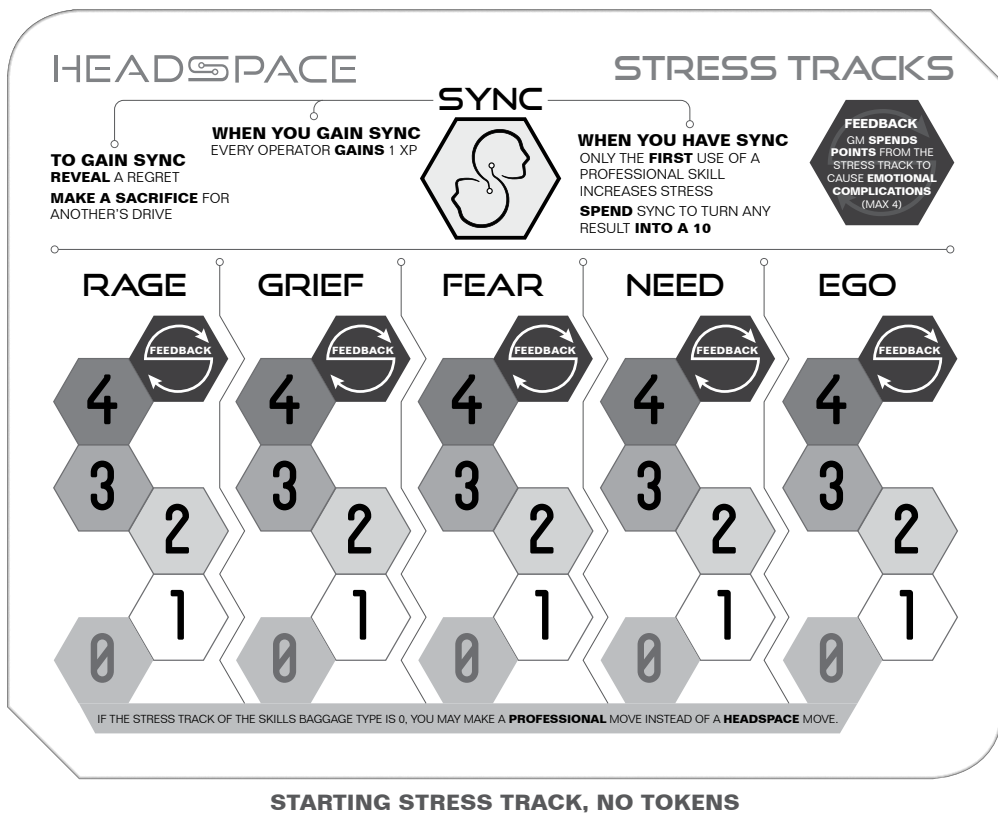
Stress decreases from any one of the following sources: when **Feedback** occurs, from certain **GM Moves**, or when the **Operators Rest**.

KEEPING TRACK

The GM is responsible for tracking the Cell's current Stress for each type of emotional Baggage as well as the presence of **Sync**. Place the Headspace Stress Track sheet in the middle of the table where all the Players can see it.

The GM should use 6 tokens to mark the current level of each Stress and the presence of Sync. 

At the beginning of the first session, the GM and Players set the **Initial Stress Tracks** based on a series of decisions they make during Chapter 9 | **If All Went Sideways**. In addition, no Sync is available at the start of play.



STRESS IN THE FICTION

Within the fiction of the game, the current **Stress Tracks** represent a lens of emotions through which the Cell interprets their world. Players are encouraged to roleplay aspects of the highest current Stress or when one particular Stress jumps a large amount suddenly.

INCREASING STRESS

The most common method of Stress increasing is by Players using their **Professional Moves** (see page 44). Stress can also increase by the GM making a **Foster Emotion Move** (see page 144).

Your Operator is trapped in a burning car. Julie, the GM, could increase the Fear Stress by a number of points, let's say 2, in relation to the event. While the other members of the Cell are not trapped in the car, your emotions bleed into the Headspace. The GM raises the Fear Stress Track by 2 (from 1 to 3), putting all the Operators on edge.



FEAR STRESS INCREASES BY 2

STRESS FREE

If there is ever zero stress in any individual track, an Operator who would normally make a Headspace Move using that Baggage type may opt to make a Professional Move instead to avoid any potential emotional complications for the scene; this will of course cause that Stress track to rise by 1.

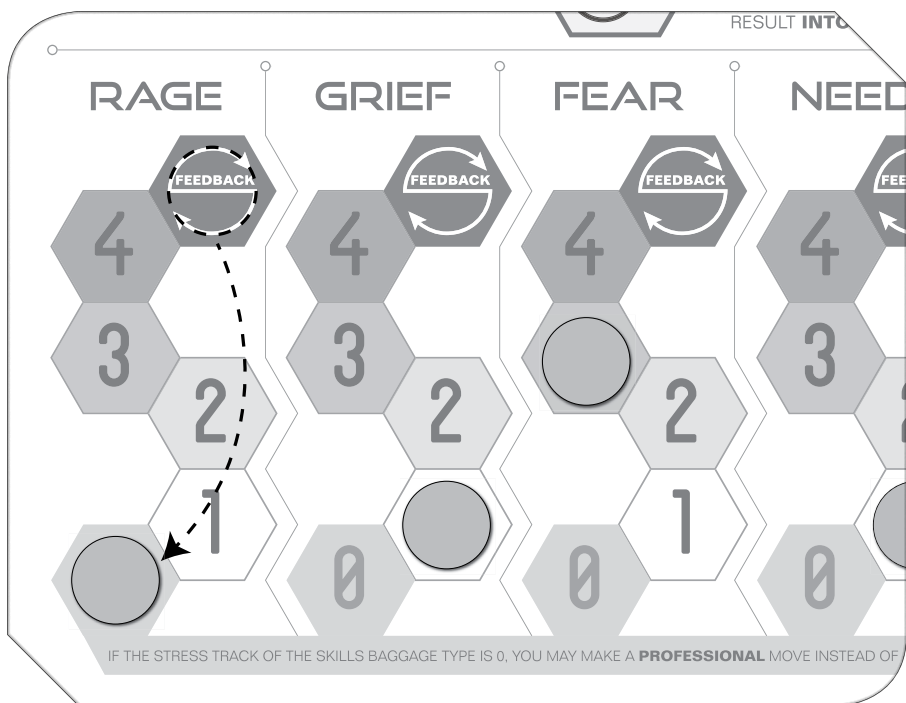
WHEN DOES STRESS GO DOWN?

Stress dissipates when **Feedback** occurs. Stress can also go down when an Operator gets a full night (or equivalent time) of uninterrupted sleep or when they engage with Civilian Anchors (see page 139). When this happens, the Player may lower one **Stress Track** of their choice by 1 point. If the entire Cell gets rest, then each Player may lower a track of their choice.

FEEDBACK

If an individual Stress Track accumulates 5 or more points, that emotion will **Feedback** to the entire Cell. Feedback causes the emotions of one Stress Track to overwhelm the Cell and potentially force a number of **Emotional Complications** on one or more of the Operators. The GM may expend points off the track to cause Emotional Complications. For each point of stress the GM spends, she can compel an Emotional Complication onto one or more Operators, up to a maximum of 4 points. In addition, the GM makes a Move (see page 141).

Benny, a close ally of the Cell, has just been viciously gunned down by corporate security forces. Julie describes the emotions of Rage flooding over the Headspace and moves the Rage Stress Track up past 4, causing Feedback. As Rage pours through the Headspace, she opts to spend all 4 points from the track and selects a Rage Emotional Complication for 4 different Operators (she could put more than one on an individual if she chooses). After this, the Rage Stress Track drops to 0.



**RAGE INCREASES OVER 4, TRIGGERING FEEDBACK
THE GM SPENDS 4 POINTS, REDUCING RAGE STRESS BACK TO 0**

REGRET, DRIVE, AND SYNC

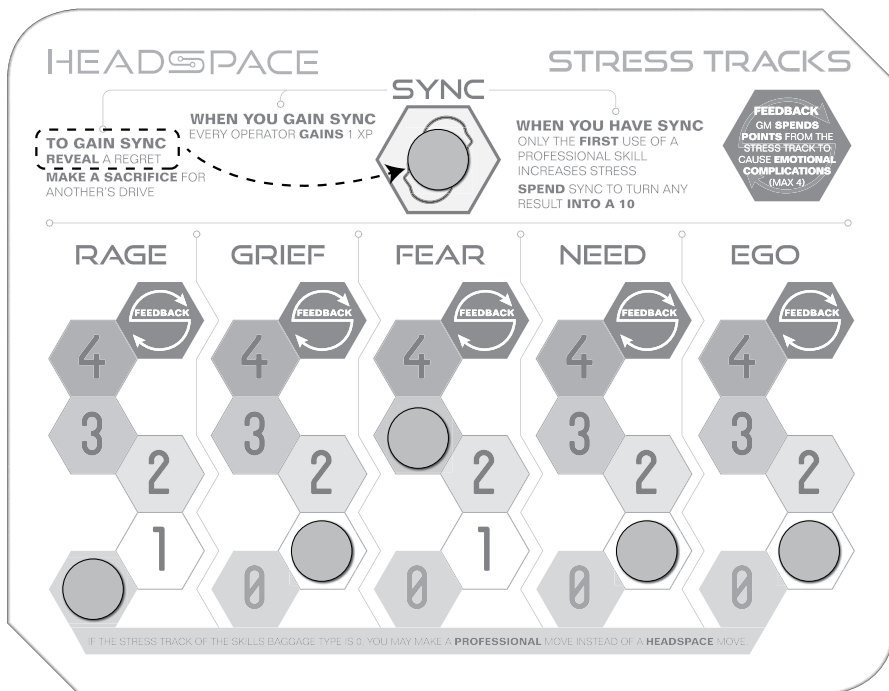
Your Operator in *Headspace* is defined by an action they deeply regret from their past, known as their **Regret**. Their Regret is a short statement that defines something your Operator wishes had never occurred in their lives and is directly tied to a Corporate Secret from the chosen Setting (See Chapter 5 | **Operator Creation**). No one wants to share their deepest, darkest shame, so these only surface in play during moments of great stress.

REVEALING YOUR REGRET

Once per session, **when you roll a 6- on any Headspace Move**, you can share your Regret with the Cell. Revealing your Regret is an emotionally difficult action, but it fosters a greater level of understanding between the Operators and the stresses that they face as a Cell.

UPON REVEALING YOUR REGRET, GAIN SYNC FOR THE CELL AND TURN THE 6- YOU JUST ROLLED INTO A 10.

HEADSPACE



A REGRET IS REVEALED, GAINING SYNC FOR THE CELL

Within the fiction, you reveal your regret as a **Flashback Scene**. This scene interrupts the current fiction, but it takes place within a blink of the eye for the Operators. During a Flashback Scene, the Player who is revealing their Operator's Regret is given full narrative control to play out a short scene depicting that moment from their past. The GM should encourage other Players to ask leading questions about the events of the flashback to the Player narrating.

Ahmed's Operator Nike has just rolled a 5 when making a Headspace Move for Firearms to take a shot on a group of gang members in a crowded street. Rather than accept 2 Emotional Complications, which he suspects would endanger the lives of the innocents caught in the crossfire, he opts to reveal his Regret to the Cell.

Nike's Regret is "I ferried VIPs on a Trauma One secret list out of the devastation of the Meltdown/Tsunami as the poor and unfortunate languished and died all around me".

Instead of simply stating this fact, Ahmed describes the scene as a flashback to the entire Cell. He describes a scene in a crowded evacuation zone during the ensuing chaos of the Reactor Meltdown. The scene is told from his perspective; he describes smoke and fire pouring from the horizon. Panicked and screaming people. He focuses in on the memory of a child shrieking for her lost mommy. Nike is trying to keep his mind on his job, checking his list of priority evacuees provided by Trauma One. He has loaded the plane with as many people on his list, but it's still well under capacity, and he knows this is the last flight out.

Kenichi asks a question, "Did you try to sneak the girl on the plane?"

Ahmed thinks for a moment, "Yes I did, but...", and describes a confrontation between him and the VIP's security team about not allowing additional passengers on the plane despite the clearly vacant space. The confrontation ended with Nike getting a black eye for the trouble and being forced into the pilot compartment while security cleared the landing strip.

Valerie asks a question, "Who was the security official who gave you the shiner?"

Ahmed says, "His name was Corporal Terrance J. Rooster, an employee of Trauma One, whose callous resolve during the crisis has led to him being a high-ranking Agent at Trauma One".

Julie notes the name and adds "Major Terrance J. Rooster" to the relationship diagram as an Agent of Trauma One and indicates hatred from Nike but notes that Terrance has long forgotten this incident.

Ahmed describes taking the plane into the sky and turning just in time to see the evacuation zone consumed in fire and smoke.

The flashback scene ends. The fiction pulls back to the present. Because Ahmed revealed his Operator's Regret, he gives the Cell Sync and turns his roll of a 5 into a 10. With that, Nike plants a precision burst of gunfire into the crowded street and drops the 3 gang members.

REFRESHING YOUR REGRET

If you plan on playing more than one session, you can flesh out additional details of your Operator's past by creating a new Regret to replace a revealed one. This allows you to reveal their new Regret in a future session to gain Sync. You do not create a new **Drive**.

DRIVE

Your Operator has a single goal of dealing with their own Regret, known as their **Drive**. A Drive is focused on **Vengeance** or **Redemption**. A Vengeance Drive motivates an Operator to acts of revenge against those they view as responsible for their Regret, whereas a Redemption Drive is about working towards atonement for their Regret. Once you have revealed their Regret to the Cell, you should also reveal their Drive.

After Ahmed finishes the Flashback scene, he reveals his Drive to the entire group:

Ahmed's Runner demands Vengeance from Trauma One: "Trauma One needs to pay for their crimes from the Tsunami, with interest".

SYNC

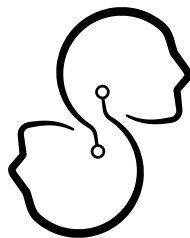
Sync indicates the current level of shared emotional understanding within the Cell. Within the fiction, Sync functions as emotional armour or group therapy; it's the ability for those in the Headspace to cope together through their shared familiarity with each other's Regrets. The Cell is either in Sync or not.

During play, any time an Operator reveals their Regret or makes a sacrifice working towards another Operator's Drive, the Cell gains Sync.

Whenever the Cell gains Sync, all Operators gain 1 XP. (See Advancement in Chapter 10 | **Session 2+**.)

When present, Sync can be expended by any Player to turn a roll into a 10.

When present, Sync makes using Professional Moves less stress-inducing than when the Cell is out of Sync. (See Professional Moves, page 44).



Later in the story, Kenichi's Handler, Cross, puts himself on the line while hacking a Trauma One security database. He stayed longer than he should have in Cyberspace looking for information about the current whereabouts of Major Terrance J. Rooster. While he succeeded in getting the information, he has placed himself right in the crosshairs of Trauma One's Corporate Agent Veronica Cote.

Julie notes that the actions of Cross count as making a sacrifice because he was working towards the goals of Nike's Drive. Julie places a token on the Sync space.

HARM AND DEATH

HARM

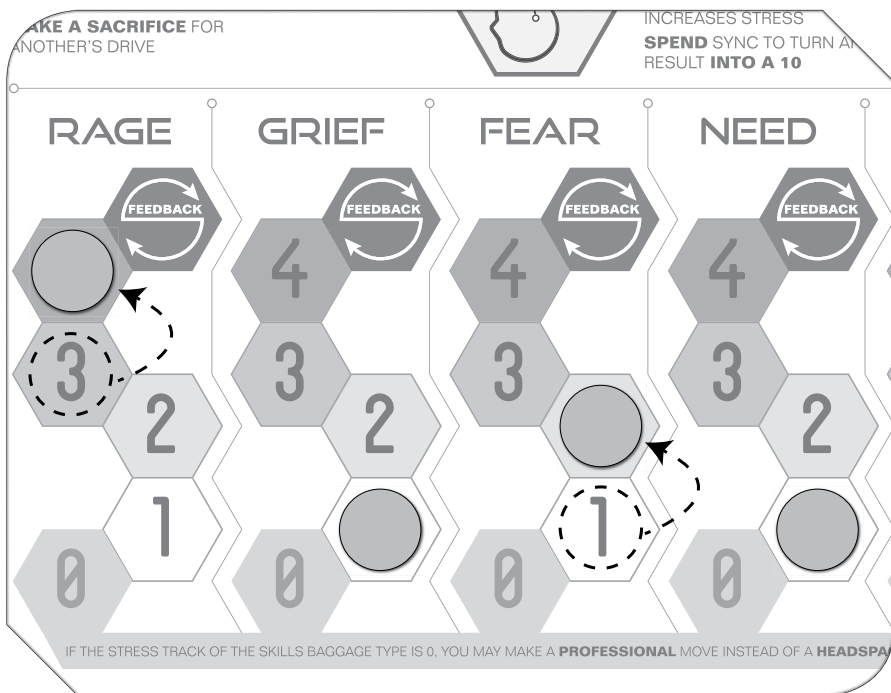
When your Operator takes **Harm**, their Armour rating is subtracted from the Harm, although weapons can halve Armour ratings if they have a **+AP** or **+HEAT** tag. The remaining damage is dealt directly to the Headspace. Each point of Harm taken becomes a point of Stress. The GM assigns the first point of Stress from an attack to an Emotion, and any additional Stress taken in the same attack is assigned by the Player whose Operator took Harm.

If assigning Harm to the Stress Tracks causes Feedback, then your Operator is **Taken Out** of play. When this occurs, the GM also follows the normal rules for inflicting Feedback on the remainder of the Cell.

When **Taken Out**, you decide whether your Operator is removed from the scene (unconscious, in shock, etc.) or whether the Feedback results in Operator death. While you are Taken Out, no other Operator may access your Headspace Skills, and Feedback will not affect you. An Operator who wishes to use a Skill you had will have to make an Improvised Move.

HEADSPACE

Nike (Ahmed's Runner) is wearing light dispersion weave armour (1 armour) and is hit by a close-range shotgun blast (3 harm). This causes 2 Stress (after the armour) to the Headspace Stress Tracks. Julie the GM decides to increase the Rage Stress Track by 1, and then Ahmed decides to put the remaining point on the lowest Stress Track, Fear.



STRESS FROM HARM

STUN HARM

Some gear inflicts **Stun Harm**; it functions mostly like normal Harm, but being Taken Out can't lead to Operator death. At the end of a scene or when you receive medical treatment, your Operator is no longer Taken Out. The GM cannot place a Cost on this recovery.

A Flashbang grenade detonates inside a room, causing 3 Stun Harm to everyone present. Nike was on the edge of the blast zone and takes the full 3 Harm, the last point of which causes Feedback on the Rage Stress Track, dropping Nike into a Taken Out status.

After a few actions have played out, Julie informs Ahmed that his Runner Nike can once again act and is no longer Taken Out.

HEALING

Medical treatment, drugs, or rest can resuscitate an Operator who's been Taken Out. If the Operator is brought back without an extended break of time, the GM will require a Cost to succeed. If the Operator is willing to wait, they can recover more slowly and become active in a future scene.

Valerie's Operator, Dr. Stapleton (the Whitecoat), is treating Nike for severe gunshot injuries from a point-blank shotgun blast. Ahmed described Nike bleeding out and unconscious when he was Taken Out by the Harm. It's imperative that Nike get back into the field as soon as possible, so Dr. Stapleton uses his Medicine skill to remove the Taken Out status on Nike by asking the GM for a Cost.

Julie says that Dr. Stapleton can bring Nike back from being Taken Out, BUT his expensive dermal stapler breaks and now needs repairs. Repairs will require some action in the future, or Julie may decide to make a Move the next time Dr. Stapleton attempts to use Medicine on a patient.

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OPERATOR DEATH (HEROIC SACRIFICE)

If you choose for your Operator to be permanently Taken Out, they no longer take Harm until the end of the scene (and they cannot cause Feedback).

At the end of this scene, you must narrate how your Operator dies. Your character becomes a **Ghost Operator** within the Headspace, and you will now have to make a new Operator in order to continue play with the rest of the Cell.

GHOST OPERATORS

Once connected to the Headspace, death itself doesn't erase a consciousness completely. It leaves a mark known as a Ghost. The Ghost is a fragment of the original Operator's consciousness; some of their motivations, regret, and even skills persist and become accessible to the rest of the Cell. The Ghost effectively becomes an NPC portrayed by the GM, an echo in the Cell's Headspace.

Ghost Operators become an Anchor (a Non-Player Character, see page 139) for the GM to use in future interactions with the group. Because Ghosts are considered Anchors, their motivations and desires will directly affect and shape the fiction. In extreme cases, Ghosts can affect the actions of other Operators through the Headspace via a GM Move (see Chapter 7 | **The Game Master's Role**).

Dr. Stapleton died heroically providing enough medical aid to Whistler (the Tech) for him to fix the aerodyne and allow the rest of the group to evade corporate security forces. Since Dr. Stapleton is Valerie's operator, she decides that Dr. Stapleton leaves the Skill MEDICINE in the Headspace and assigns it a Baggage of Fear, representing Dr. Stapleton's final moments holding Whistler's guts together under fire.

The Ghost of an Operator **forever leaves a single skill of the dying Player's choice** in the Headspace of the Cell. The Player of the dying Operator assigns a new Baggage best representing the state of mind of their Operator just before death (often these scenes will evoke Grief, Rage, or Fear).

From this point on, any of the Operators in the Cell can access this skill with a Headspace Move.

OBJECTIVE CLOCKS

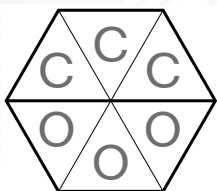
In *Headspace*, the Operators usually succeed on their actions, but some actions are more complex than a single roll can (or should) represent, so **Objective Clocks** are used to represent complex actions that can't be resolved with a single action or skill use.

All **Objective Clocks** are adversarial between a Corporation and the Operators. They are divided into six even slices of a hexagon, with each slice representing the status of a **Success** in completing an objective; the top three represent Corporate success and the bottom three indicate Operator success.

When one side achieves part of its goal, the GM should fill in the success. The completion of a success represents some element of change in the fiction. It could be as simple as an Operator using a single skill at an important time, but it is likely the result of several actions in the fiction. The GM is responsible for determining when a milestone is achieved, but if the Players make progress they feel is substantive, they can provide input into the decision.

Once **any three Successes** are filled in, the Objective Clock resolves and creates a **Temporary Event** in the fiction related to the objective. Depending upon which side succeeded the most, the Corporation (GM) or the Operators narrate the outcome.

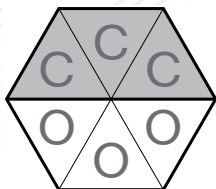
To represent larger corporate projects that play out over multiple sessions of play, a **Dystopian Clock** is used to represent the outcome of a large number of related Objective Clocks. When a Dystopian Clock resolves, it creates a **Permanent Event** that forever changes the setting's fiction (see Chapter 8, page 169).



The Operators are attempting to circumvent a heavily fortified security perimeter around a corporate compound. The GM creates an Objective Clock to track progress on "Breach security perimeter undetected".

TOTAL CORPORATE SUCCESS

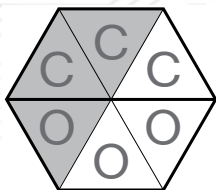
This is when the Corporation gets all three of its Successes. At this point, the GM (speaking as the Corporation) gets to write a sentence that is now true for the rest of the session.



The Corporate security perimeter is intact, and the Operators have been discovered at the edge of the perimeter.

QUALIFIED CORPORATE SUCCESS

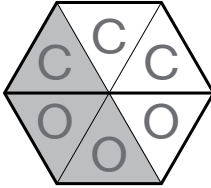
The Corporation achieves two of its three Successes; it's succeeded, but not to its full extent. The GM (speaking as the Corporation) gets to write a sentence that is now true for the session, but the Players get to append the sentence with an "and" or "but" statement that mitigates (not nullifies) the result.



The Corporate security perimeter is intact, and the Operators have been discovered BUT half of the team got through undetected.

QUALIFIED CORPORATE FAILURE

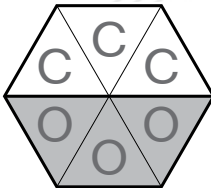
The Corporation achieves only one of its Successes, and things go badly for them. The Corporation still has a stake in the game, but it's greatly diminished. The Players get to craft a sentence that is now true for the session, and the GM (as the Corporation) gets to add a qualifier.



The Corporate security perimeter is down, and the Operators gain entrance to the compound BUT they triggered a silent alarm.

TOTAL CORPORATE FAILURE

The Operators have succeeded, cutting the legs out from under the Corporation's efforts. The Players write a sentence about the world that is now true for the session, without any GM qualifications.



The Corporate security perimeter is down, and the Operators have penetrated the compound undetected.

COUNTDOWN CLOCKS

The GM can use a variation on Objective Clocks, using slices that are not tied to either Corporation or Operator to represent a time-based threat. Every time the Operators act, the GM will fill in a segment. When all the segments are complete, the Countdown Clock resolves. The GM determines the number of slices in the clock based on an estimate of the amount of time.

GEAR AND TAGS

A tag is a descriptive word that describes a fictional characteristic of something in *Headspace*. Much of the gear your Operators use in the fiction will have tags. The Operators all have a **+HEADSPACE LINK**, armour can be **+BULKY**, weapons can be **+MESSY**, cybernetics are **+IMPLANT**. Tags provide a reminder for both the Player and the GM to bring the gear into the fiction either to aid an action or as a constraint.

NAME YOUR GEAR

Think about the look of your Operator's gear; you should give it a brand name that evokes the fiction (one of the Corporations from the chosen setting). It's not just a generic stun gun, it's a *PSS Pacifier R4*.

All weapons have a Harm rating and a Range tag; many will have additional tags that are reviewed in detail under **Weapon Tags** below.

WEAPON TAGS

Range Tags: Hand/Close/Near/Far/Extreme

The Range tag on a weapon or piece of gear gives you an indication of when it's appropriate (or possible) to use against a target.

- ◆ **Hand** is when you are within arms' reach.
- ◆ **Close** is within a few steps and is usually point-blank for most firearms.
- ◆ **Near** is anywhere within a few dozen meters up to 50m.
- ◆ **Far** is a few city blocks, up to 200m.
- ◆ **Extreme** is when you need artificial enhancement to see reliably and engage a target, up to 2km or more.

CHARACTERISTIC TAGS

- ◆ **AP (Armour Piercing):** treat the target as having half its armour value, rounded down.
- ◆ **Area:** its target is an area, not an individual; it affects everyone and everything there.
- ◆ **Bulky:** the item takes up a lot of space or is heavy as hell (or both!).
- ◆ **Dangerous:** this item can inflict Harm on yourself or others, hit or miss.
- ◆ **Disposable:** it has one use and then must be discarded.
- ◆ **Inconspicuous:** the item is easy to hide and will often be overlooked.
- ◆ **Flechette:** this weapon does more damage to flesh, but the target's armour is treated as double its value.
- ◆ **HEAT:** High-Explosive Anti-Tank is **+AREA**, **+AP**, **+LOUD**, and **+MESSY**. Furthermore, these weapons cannot be silenced, will go through reinforced walls, and generally just make a mess out of anything that gets in their way, including Tanks and Powered Armour.
- ◆ **Infinite:** you always have enough on hand for any situation.
- ◆ **Loud:** everyone nearby hears it and can potentially pinpoint where it came from. It wakes up sleeping people and is generally distinct and difficult to ignore. Items that are **+LOUD** cannot be silenced.
- ◆ **Messy:** items with this effect hit both the target and anything else nearby, and they always leave a mess behind; property damage, bloody dismemberment, and gore abound.
- ◆ **Reload:** after using it, you must spend a brief period reloading.
- ◆ **Radiation:** this weapon is unstable and gives off radiation from its power core. Causes 1 Harm that ignores armour to the user every hour of use (or per scene).
- ◆ **Stun:** this weapon inflicts Stun Harm.
- ◆ **Smart:** the item is equipped with some kind of advanced targeting. Examples are ammo that follows a target or goes around a corner.
- ◆ **Suppression:** at the Operator's discretion, the weapon makes an **+AREA** attack, but must immediately **+RELOAD**, unless fed by an ammo belt.
- ◆ **Quick:** if speed matters, quick weapons go first. If opposing sides have **+QUICK** items, resolution of effects occurs simultaneously.



CHAPTER 3 THE MOVES IN DETAIL



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WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN? ———

In *Headspace*, the Operators are the best in their field at everything they do, whether using their own skills (Professional Moves) or another Operator's Skill (Headspace Move). Success is rarely in question. Outright failure is only on the table when Improvised Moves are used.

Success represents the Operator getting their desired intent: coaxing someone into telling you what you want to know, having the *Contingency* you needed at just the right time, or cutting down the corporate guards with ruthless *Firearm* precision.

Players are encouraged in all cases to describe what is going on in the fiction, but there are a few limits where the GM will be given authority to resolve the situation. In cases where Harm is being inflicted, the GM is tasked with the resolution and its consequences.

Skill use shouldn't be used to penalize the Players, repeated use of the same skill, e.g. Firearms for every shot is discouraged. Let the results of Moves carry forward in the scene. Let the fiction the Players create drive the story forward. Build on their ideas, and feel free to make Moves in response to the complications that are created and on how the world reacts to the Players' actions. The GM Chapter 7 expands on these principles in the Action Cycle (page 136).

PROFESSIONAL MOVES

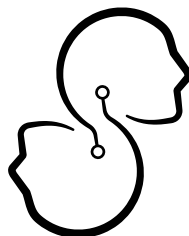
A **Professional Move** defines one of three Skills your Operator has mastered and represents their employing that Skill to do something spectacular.

When an Operator makes a Professional Move, success is never in question; however, the Baggage of your skill bleeds into the shared Headspace. This effect is referred to as **Stress**.

How often the Stress increases is dependent on whether or not the Cell is currently in Sync or not.

WHEN THE CELL IS IN SYNC:

- ◆ Anytime you want to use this Skill, say what you want to do with it, and you succeed.
- ◆ The first time you use this Skill while the Cell is in Sync, you must increase the Stress Track by 1 for the Skill's Baggage.



WHEN THE CELL IS OUT OF SYNC:

- ◆ Anytime you want to use this Skill, say what you want to do with it, and you succeed.
- ◆ Every time you use this skill you must increase the Stress Track by 1 for the Skills Baggage.

If the use of a Professional Move directly causes Feedback, be sure to resolve the use of the Professional Move first before resolving the Feedback.

Ahmed's Operator, Nike, is driving a van with the entire Cell in it down a busy freeway with PSS corporate security forces in hot pursuit. Nike wants to maneuver the van into the lane with opposing traffic to try to lose the tail. It's an incredibly dangerous stunt, but Nike is confident in his skills. Nike's Pilot skill has a Baggage of Fear, and the Cell is currently in Sync.

Ahmed describes how Nike deftly weaves between traffic, bounces over the median, and swings the van through 2 lanes of traffic without losing control, leaving the security force in a quagmire of traffic and crashed cars.

Since this is the first time Ahmed has used Nike's Pilot skill since the Cell gained Sync, the GM (Julie) moves the Fear Stress Track from 3 to 4.

HEADSPACE

STRESS TRACKS

TO GAIN SYNC
REVEAL A REGRET
MAKE A SACRIFICE FOR
ANOTHER'S DRIVE

WHEN YOU GAIN SYNC
EVERY OPERATOR GAINS 1 XP

SYNC



WHEN YOU HAVE SYNC
ONLY THE FIRST USE OF A
PROFESSIONAL SKILL
INCREASES STRESS
SPEND SYNC TO TURN ANY
RESULT INTO A 10

FEEDBACK
GM SPENDS
POINTS FROM THE
STRESS TRACK TO
CAUSE EMOTIONAL
COMPLICATIONS
(MAX 3)

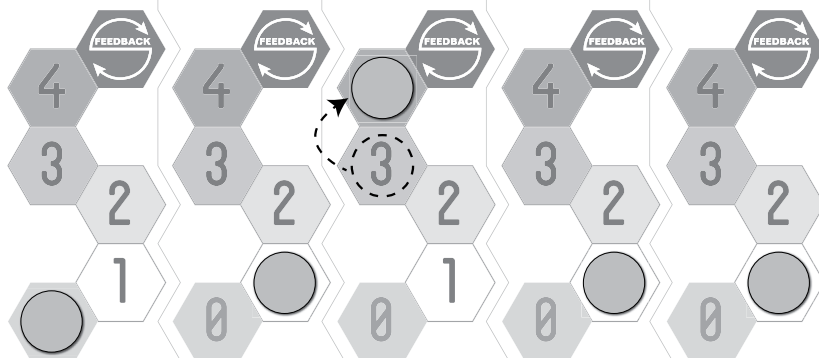
RAGE

GRIEF

FEAR

NEED

EGO



IF THE STRESS TRACK OF THE SKILL'S BAGGAGE TYPE IS 0, YOU MAY MAKE A PROFESSIONAL MOVE INSTEAD OF A HEADSPACE MOVE.

MAKING A PROFESSIONAL MOVE WHILE IN SYNC

VOLUNTARILY MAKE A HEADSPACE MOVE

You may voluntarily make a Professional Move as a Headspace Move. While this action could potentially force you to deal with **Emotional Complications**, it will not add additional Stress to a Track, so it won't lead to Feedback.

Nike is once again in the driver seat with the entire Cell. Nike wants to use Pilot to ram the van through a security checkpoint without causing any damage to himself or the passengers, but he notes that the Cell is no longer in Sync and with Fear at 4, a Professional Move would cause Feedback. To avoid this, Ahmed declares that Nike will make the action as a Headspace Move. In this case, Ahmed rolls 2 dice and adds his Fear discipline. He might roll low and get an Emotional Complication, but he won't cause Feedback to the entire Cell at a difficult moment in time.

HEADSPACE MOVES

A Headspace Move represents an Operator tapping into the Headspace to use another Operator's Skill. While Operators are used to dealing with their own Baggage, they are not used to the unfamiliar Baggage of another Operator's Skills.

Headspace Moves require the Player to narrate how the associated Baggage is represented within the fiction. The Player will pick Emotional Complications that they must incorporate into their Operator's actions in order to succeed. Incorporating an Emotional Complication doesn't prevent the original action, but it does add an unforeseen consequence. If a Player rolls a 6 or less, they may avoid making Emotional Complications by revealing their Regret, but they may only do so once per session.

PICKING EMOTIONAL COMPLICATIONS

The Player may pick the Complication(s) or allow the GM to select them. The table may decide this at the beginning of play, but the rules will assume the Player is making this choice. Either way, the Player is always responsible for determining how they interpret the Emotional Complication and how it affects the narrative.

STRUCTURE OF A HEADSPACE MOVE

All Headspace Moves use the following basic structure:

When you use a Skill with an Emotional Baggage, say what you want to do, roll 2d6 and add your rating in that Emotion's **Discipline**.

- ◆ On a 10+, Succeed without Emotional Complications.
- ◆ On a 7-9, Succeed, but pick 1 Emotional Complication based on the Baggage of the skill.
- ◆ On a 6-, Succeed, but pick 2 Emotional Complications based on the Baggage of the skill.
OR Reveal your Regret to the Cell (once per session).

REGARDLESS OF THE OUTCOME, HEADSPACE MOVES DO NOT AFFECT THE STRESS TRACKS.

Kenichi's Handler, Cross, and the rest of the Cell are in a low-rent, high-rise complex when a large corporate aerodyne hovering alongside the building opens fire on the team and gets ready to launch 6 heavily armed security officers onto a nearby balcony.

Not hesitating, Kenichi declares a daring plan: "Cross grabs an explosive satchel charge from his bag and plans to parkour off the balcony and into the aerodyne where he plans to take control by threatening to blow up the aircraft". This is a Headspace Move with Nike's Parkour Skill, which has Rage Baggage.

(example continues on next page)

Outcome 1: Kenichi rolls a 10+. There are no Emotional Complications, and Julie asks Kenichi, "So what happens?"

Cross parkours off the balcony, dodging gunfire from the security forces. He lands in the midst of the troops and yells out, "I'm going to take you all with me!". Julie describes the troops panicking. Some of them jump out of the aircraft while still roped to it. They are dangling, and it should be easy for Cross or another Cell member to seize control of the aircraft.

Outcome 2: Kenichi rolls a 7. Julie says, "Ok, you get one emotional complication." Kenichi examines the list of Rage Complications for something appropriate that he has ideas for and picks Ignore something obvious.

Cross parkours off the balcony, dodging gunfire from the security forces. He lands in the midst of the troops and yells out, "I'm going to take you all with me!". Unfortunately, Cross fails to notice the large, 30-second countdown timer on the explosive charge. While two of the guards panic and jump off, the rest realize the charge has some time to go off and raise their weapons to fight.

Outcome 3: Kenichi rolls a 4. Julie says, "Ok, you get 2 emotional complications." Kenichi then picks "Ignore something obvious and Inflict collateral damage."

Cross parkours off the balcony, dodging gunfire from the security forces. He lands in the midst of the troops and yells out, "I'm going to take you all with me!". Unfortunately, Cross fails to notice the large, 30-second countdown timer on the explosive charge. When two of the guards panic and jump, it causes the aerodyne to shift and swing into the side of the building.

Julie replies, "The aerodyne chops into the plaster walls of the low-rent high-rise and tears a gaping chunk out of the building. A civilian is tossed precariously close to the edge." Julie looks at the rest of the party, "What do you do?"

In all the results above, the fiction changes dramatically based on the Emotional Complications that the Player picks and how they work them into the fiction. The Players are encouraged in **Headspace** to change the fiction in fun and creative ways. Often, a Player's Emotional Complication will lead to the GM making a Move, but this is not required. If you're the GM, be ready to step in, like when Julie describes how Inflicting Collateral Damage affects the world and creates a dangerous situation for the Players to resolve.

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EMOTIONAL COMPLICATIONS

Headspace Moves have a Baggage corresponding to one of the five emotions: **Rage**, **Grief**, **Fear**, **Need**, and **Ego**. When you use another Operator's skill, you make a Headspace Move and incorporate the corresponding Baggage type.

Emotional Complications are designed to make the fiction more complicated but not disastrous for the Operators in the Cell. It is best to think of them as creating a complicated success rather than failure. Emotional Complications can change the fiction so that they impact the Operator using the Skill directly or in the fiction around them, possibly making future actions more unpredictable or dangerous to the Cell.

The Move Worksheet found at the back of this book provides quick reference to the possible complications in play.

ACT WITH RAGE

YOU IGNORE SOMETHING OBVIOUS

Ahmed's Runner, Nike, is attempting to use Security to override a secure door and access classified corporate records. Nike ignores something obvious by not noticing the backup silent alarm that the secure door has. Nike gets the documents, but someone knows he's here.

YOU INFLICT COLLATERAL DAMAGE.

Nike is using Firearms to provide covering fire to the rest of the Cell as they move up on a corporate assault team in a congested street after a fire fight has broken out. Nike keeps the assault team suppressed, allowing the Cell to advance and flank their position, but he inflicts collateral damage when his gunfire lights fire to a car's gas tank and causes an explosion that showers the area in debris and smoke.

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YOU PROVOKE A NEW CONFLICT.

Nike is using Coax to convince a corporate executive to provide him with the information he needs at a lower price. He provokes a new conflict by raising his voice and attracting attention of an off-duty security official who has just taken a bit more interest in the commotion at the back of the room.

YOU USE EXCESSIVE FORCE.

Nike sets up a series of bombs on a bridge using Explosives. He uses excessive force by using a few more charges to ensure that the bridge will blow. While this certainly destroys the bridge, it blows a column of concrete into the air above the ambush and rains shrapnel over the Cell.

Julie jumps on this opportunity and describes a chunk of stone embedded with rebar collapsing onto Dr. Stapleton's leg, trapping him until someone can give him aid.

ACT WITH GRIEF

YOU PUT YOURSELF IN HARM'S WAY.

Valerie's Whitecoat, Dr. Stapleton, is using Hacking to override a corporate surveillance drone. When Dr. Stapleton takes control of the drone's controls, he puts himself in harm's way by lowering his guard to an emergency cyberattack built into the drone systems.

Julie describes a brief attack on Dr. Stapleton as the defensive system cuts into his mind and inflicts 2 Harm.

YOU HURT SOMEONE YOU CARE FOR.

The Cell has taken refuge in a cafeteria as security forces surround their position. Dr. Stapleton is using Tactics to determine which doors the Cell should focus their attention on and which are least likely to be used. The strategy seems sound, and the Cell can cover all the entrances, but Dr. Stapleton hurts someone he cares for by placing Nike in a blind spot from the other team members.

When the forces break through the door ways, Julie describes how no one can get in a good position to provide covering fire for Nike. He'll be alone in holding his part of the room until someone can help him out.

YOU NEGLECT YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES.

Dr. Stapleton was the closest one to Nike and probably could have helped with Firearms, but he chose to neglect his own responsibilities by covering his own ass and keeping his position.

YOU RETREAT FROM A CONFLICT.

Dr. Stapleton was providing medical aid to an ally of the Cell and was pinned down by gunfire. Instead of playing it safe and staying put, he retreats from a conflict and pulls the wounded ally out of the firefight.

ACT WITH FEAR

YOU HESITATE WHEN IT MATTERS MOST.

Phil's Tech, Whistler, is attempting to set up a Contingency to have an explosive breaching charge to get past a secure doorway in a corporate complex. While his success means he has the charge, he hesitates when it matters most and delays placing the explosive charge until the security forces are practically on top of the Cell, leaving little time to ensure everyone will be out of the blast zone.

YOU AVOID AN EXISTING CONFLICT.

Whistler is using Parkour to jump between stairwells and plans on landing into the midst of a group of thugs threatening the Cell. Whistler, however, decides to avoid an existing conflict and instead traverses the stairway and lands in a position that gives him good cover from the gang of thugs.

YOU OVERESTIMATE THE DANGER.

Whistler is driving a car through a residential neighbourhood and is using Observation to lose a tail that has been following him for the last while. While Whistler loses the tail, he overestimates the danger by running a red light and attracting the attention of a nearby police cruiser.

YOU LEAVE BEHIND AN ALLY OR RESOURCE.

Whistler is using Firearms to cover his and Nike's retreat down a hallway and into a stairwell. He succeeds in getting to the stairwell first, but he leaves behind an ally or resource by closing the door in a panic of gunfire before Nike makes it through.

Julie, the GM, notes that because of some earlier actions involving alarm systems that the door automatically locks when Whistler closes it in his panic, leaving Nike locked on the other side in a tense standoff with a security patrol.

ACT WITH NEED

YOU GIVE UP A SECRET FOR ATTENTION.

Kenichi's Handler, Cross, is using a Drone during a surveillance operation of a corporate manager. He is using the drone to take detailed photographs, but in order to get the best shot (which he gets), he gives up a secret for attention by getting a little too close to the target and alerting them to the presence of the sound of the drone's engines.

YOU GIVE UP SOMEONE ELSE'S ALLY OR RESOURCE FOR PERSONAL GAIN.

Cross is using Hacking to break into the DMV and pull up records to aid in his surveillance operation. He gets the records but he also gives up someone else's ally or resource for personal gain by leaving breadcrumbs for a friend of Nike's who is a journalist that Cross has never had a great reputation with. The breadcrumbs should lead to the journalist and not back to Cross if anyone starts asking questions about this hack.

YOU OBSESS OVER SOMETHING.

Cross has been all about the details on this multi-week surveillance job. He has been very thorough—almost to a fault—in his pursuit of what this corporate manager has really been up to. Cross has been tailing him in a non-descript car for several hours and is using Pilot to ensure that he isn't noticed, but he obsesses over something (the tail) so much that he doesn't notice that someone else has begun to tail him.

Julie notes that Cross has only just noticed the car behind him and isn't sure how long it's been following him through the dark streets.

YOU IGNORE A PERSONAL RISK.

Cross isn't taking any chances with leading his tail back to the safe house he's been staying at. He decides to use Tactics to try to force the tail past a red light, leading either into a traffic accident or into an altercation with a cop. He manages to do so, but he ignores a personal risk by attracting the attention of the police cruiser by running the red light. While the tail winds up being T-boned by a bus, the patrol cruiser's sirens flash and blink behind Cross.

ACT WITH EGO

YOUR FALSE PRIDE PUTS THE TEAM AT RISK.

Ahmed's Runner, Nike, is using his own Pilot Skill as a Headspace Move to avoid any additional Stress, since the Cell is on the edge of hitting Feedback. Nike is driving a spinner in a high-speed chase and wants to ram another flying vehicle into a nearby advertising blimp. He deftly describes smashing the vehicle out of the way, but his false pride puts the team at risk when he doesn't pay attention to the blimp's sign, which falls away and crashes into their car.

Julie describes the spinner's rear engine burning out, and it begins to lose altitude as a plume of smoke trails off the back.

YOU BECOME JEALOUS OF ANOTHER.

Nike is using Medicine to give aid to Dr. Stapleton, who has suffered a severe knife wound to his arm. While Nike is able to stop most of the bleeding, he becomes jealous of another (Dr. Stapleton's skills), pushing him to try and impress, inadvertently breaking Dr. Stapleton's dermal stapler in the process.

YOU REFUSE NEEDED ASSISTANCE.

Nike is using Stealth to sneak through a sewer system and into a building. Nike could use some help from others in the Cell who are providing surveillance information, but he refuses needed assistance by pushing his own skills to do it alone, landing him in a tough spot against a random security sweep of the sewers.

YOU INSULT OR BERATE AN ALLY FOR BEING INFERIOR.

Nike is using Coax to negotiate a contract for ammunition supplies from a trusted source of one of the Cell's Ghost Operators, Yoshi (a Ronin). Nike insults or berates an ally for being inferior by saying that Yoshi died from some faulty supplies (a lie) that this dealer supplied her, creating tension within the Headspace of the Cell.

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IMPROVISED MOVES

Improvised Moves represent anything with a chance of interesting failure that an Operator attempts to do in the fiction that isn't a Professional or Headspace Move. You will be required to make an Improvised Move if you wish to use the Skill of an Operator who has been Taken Out.

Improvised Moves are always based on the Discipline that is currently highest amongst the Stress Tracks; in the event of a tie, the Player picks which Discipline to use.

Say what you want to attempt and roll + Discipline of the highest current Stress Track.

- ◆ On a 10+, Succeed.
- ◆ On a 7-9, Succeed, but the GM will also make a **Move**.
- ◆ On a 6 or less, the GM tells you what happens.



With Dr. Stapleton having made the ultimate sacrifice and dying to save Whistler, his other skills, Investigation and Psychology, are lost from the Headspace. Nike is investigating the scene of what he believes to be an assassination and corporate cover-up, but he can't be sure. So he decides to use Investigation as an Improvised Move to find clues at the scene.

Fear is the highest current Stress Track, so for this Improvised Move, Ahmed will roll + Nike's Discipline of Fear.



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HEADSPACE

STRESS TRACKS

TO GAIN SYNC
REVEAL A REGRET
MAKE A SACRIFICE FOR
ANOTHER'S DRIVE

WHEN YOU GAIN SYNC
EVERY OPERATOR GAINS 1 XP

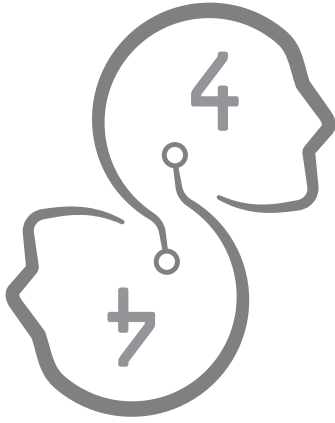


WHEN YOU HAVE SYNC
ONLY THE FIRST USE OF A
PROFESSIONAL SKILL
INCREASES STRESS
SPEND SYNC TO TURN ANY
RESULT INTO A 10



IF THE STRESS TRACK OF THE SKILLS BAGGAGE TYPE IS 0, YOU MAY MAKE A PROFESSIONAL MOVE INSTEAD OF A HEADSPACE MOVE.

MAKING AN IMPROVISED MOVE



CHAPTER 4

THE WORLD OF HEADSPACE

Hey. You okay? You with me? I know, the procedure can be a little disorienting. They monkeyed around with your brain meats, and that'll mess anyone up. I know you had a clear idea of what you were doing and why you were doing it when you opted in for the procedure, but there's probably a lot you don't remember.

It'll come back eventually. Probably.

In the meantime, I'm Valerie. I'm your handler, and I'm gonna give you a little rundown of what you need to know before I send you out into the field, your head full of shiny tech.

Ready? Let's go.

FUTURE TIME 101

How did things go so wrong? That's the question you're asking yourself, right? You look at your present, look at our future, and you say to yourself, "Man, those guys have it *rough*." You ask, "How do we avoid that future?"

You don't.

Sure, things might turn out a little differently here and there; different techs, different corps in power, different governmental puppets making believe that they run the show. But look around you. The board's already set. The pieces are already moving.

Don't believe me?

Here, I'll show you.

HAVES AND HAVE NOTS

This is where it all starts, where it was always going to start. The world in the early part of the 21st century was just humming along, blissfully ignorant of the fact that the gap between the people with money and the people without money was getting wider and wider, the differences more pronounced. Multi-billionaires dined on their private jets while the teeming masses beneath them got by on welfare, minimum wage, food stamps.

As the century pressed on, that gulf got wider. Now, it's like three different worlds.

In one world you've got the movers and shakers. They live in their safe, comfortable arcologies; they make decisions that move millions in currency from here to there multiple times a day. They work and live and play in the comfort of a world and a system that caters to their every whim.

Beneath them, the wage slaves. The salaried corporate workers, a middle class that gave up its freedom for comfort. Ever heard that old song about owing your soul to the company store? That song was about these poor saps. Eighteen-hour days. Mandatory implants that regulate sleep, reduce their need for relaxation time, and administer doses of endorphin-releasing drugs when they start to get antsy. They don't even get paid, at least not in the way you're used to. They work these long hours, endure these inhumane conditions, so that they can live in the arcologies with the pointers (we call them that because the rich make up something like 0.23% of the population these days), can fight for their scraps and bask in their shadows.

And beneath them—way, way beneath them—are the disenfranchised, the poor, the denizens of the Sprawl.

LIFE AT THE TOP

It's good to be king. It's also pretty good to be anyone in the king's court, or anyone who numbers among the elite few who have the vast majority of the world's wealth at their disposal. The rich folks—CEOs, politicians, and other bigwigs—live in arcologies. The wage slaves live there too, but it's kind of an upstairs/downstairs thing.

The rich have access to the best food, medical facilities, entertainment, drugs, protection... pretty much everything. Private security firms are formed with the sole intent of keeping single individuals safe. Real butter, real meat from real cows, real penicillin, real anything goes to the rich first, to the wage slaves next (if there's any left to go around), and then to everyone else last (yeah, there's none left at this point).

I met a guy once who had his own private nightclub, staffed and populated by people his Director of Entertainment hand-selected, filled with delicacies that no one else can find anymore, stocked with every drug—legal and illegal—that they could get their hands on. When he got bored with it two weeks later, everything was thrown into an incinerator, and the room was dismantled to make room for his newest plaything. I shit you not.

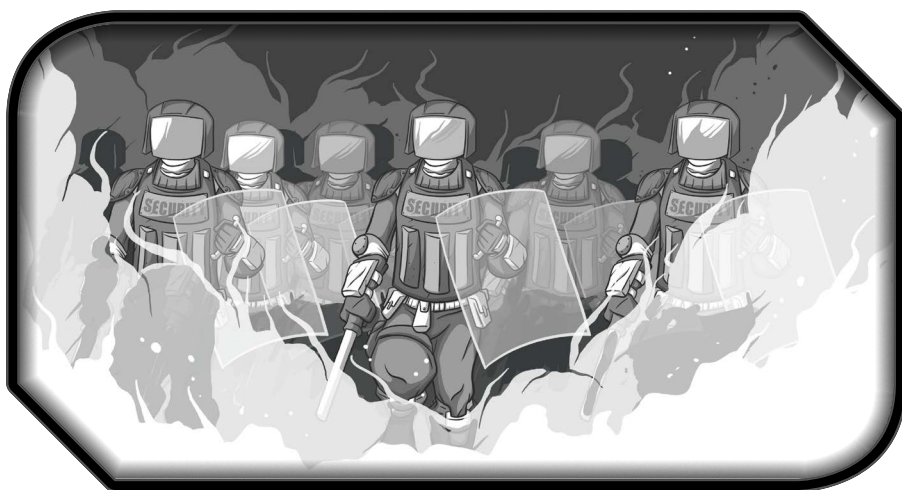
It's not just the toys, though; the arcologies are also where the power lives. The people at the top, and even a few echelons down, are the ones who

make the world go round. They make the decisions, they pull the strings. One guy can decide he's going to go to war against a rival corporation, and it just happens. That same guy can say that a specific drug or type of weapon or style of dress is illegal in that corporation's jurisdiction, and it's true; the rest of us just have to live with it.

For the wage slaves, arcology life isn't quite so glamorous. They go to work, churn away for sixteen hours or so, go shopping or go to movies or do whatever else they have corporate vouchers for, and then they go sleep in their fifteen-by-fifteen efficiencies until the next day, when they start it all over again. It's not a fun life, it's not an easy life, but it's a hell of a lot easier than life in the Sprawl.

THE SPRAWL

Outside the arcologies, you're not safe. The folks who live in the Sprawl aren't universally criminals and malcontents. They're not *all* dangerous, but out here, law is more theory than practice. See, law enforcement got privatized some thirty years ago, and since then the cops only really show up to help subscribers. And if you live in the Sprawl, chances are you can't *afford* to subscribe. Which isn't to say that nobody in the Sprawl makes enough to subscribe; there are Sprawl denizens who pay their dues and go to jobs and try to get by as honestly as possible. Actually, quite a few people are like that.



But that doesn't make the Sprawl safe, and that doesn't make it a good idea to prevail on someone's sense of rightness and honour out here. Gangs rule the streets, and more people pay for *their* protection than that of the various private security firms. For one thing, it's cheaper. For another, there's a lot less paperwork involved. But mostly the private cops just aren't that effective out in the Sprawl. In the arcologies, they're shooting fish. Out here, the gangs have better hardware, more potent cybertech, faster wetware. It's not even a contest.

Out here, cash is king. In the arcologies, you can go your entire life without touching a greenback or a yen or a ruble. Credit carries the day in those lofty heights, but out on the streets you need hard currency, or you need favors owed to you. Either will work, and either has equal value, depending on who you're talking to. But without one of them, good luck getting the things you need to get by.

There are a couple of advantages to living in the Sprawl, though. Lack of organized security means lack of surveillance. It's not that it doesn't exist, it's just that it's a lot easier to evade, and there are more people willing to help you slip the net if you grease their palms the right amount. It's also a lot easier to get your hands on the kinds of things you might need to do bad things to powerful people. Guns, drugs, illegal cybertech, experimental wetware, people willing to get you in a backdoor to some security system or another; it's all available for a price, and there's almost no regulation in place, no questions asked.

Oh, and you can mostly avoid the vultures.

THE GLORIOUS PUPPET THEATER —

Man, you remember what the media was like back in the early 21st? There were clearly shenanigans happening, but it wasn't nearly as blatant as it is now. Most media outlets are mouthpieces for some corp or another, and they're constantly trying to find ways to make each other look bad. It's all PR, and it's all *aggressive* PR. And they're *everywhere*.

You almost never know you're talking to a reporter until it's too late. The thing you've gotta watch for is the eyes: if you're talking to someone with jacked-out eyes, and they're looking at you just a little too intently, they're probably recording you, beaming it back to somebody who's editing it on the fly, splicing it to make it appeal to the right demographic or put the right spin on a story, and then broadcasting it out to anyone who'll listen.

Seriously, the news is barely worth paying attention to. It's all theater. If you want entertainment, I guess it's pretty good. But if you want *information*, you need to jack in.

HARDSPACE AND WETSPACE

Nobody *actually* jacks in. It doesn't work that way. It's a figure of speech we all use, though; I think it's a reference to some book.

Anyway, everyone's on the Net pretty much all the time. I'm sure you remember it being kinda that way back in the early 21st, what with smartphones and tablets being so ubiquitous, but trust me, it wasn't like it is now. Smartphones and tablets still exist, though they're a lot more advanced. Voice recognition, eye tracking, biometric sensors, advanced gesture-based touchless interfaces, and even neural rigs that allow you to think your commands at your device; all of these things exist. You can use a device to get information, play simple games, communicate at a basic level, and all that jazz. All the stuff you're used to, but more advanced. We call that *hardspace*.

Hardspace has one main advantage over competing technology: safety. Hardspace devices aren't exactly *cheap*, but there are folks who treat them as disposable. I've known more than a few hackers who use a tablet for the really risky hacking, trading speed and efficiency for the ability to not have their brain burnt out if they make a mistake.

But *hardspace* is mostly for the poor folks, the people who can't afford the good stuff. The good stuff, that's *wetspace*. If you're using *wetspace*,

you've got the device implanted directly into your brain. Your mind is connected to the Net, and you can access it at any time with a thought. You've got visual overlays, augmented reality, searches at the speed of thought, instantaneous access to all the information you could ever want. Think it and it becomes real.

Wetspace carries greater risk than hardspace does, though. If some hacker targets your phone, or you accidentally get infected by a virus, you buy a new phone, right? But what if you download a virus *into your brain*? Yeah, scary shit, right? Bet you wish you'd sprung for a paid antivirus suite now.

But it's the same Net, right? Whether you're using a tablet or a brain implant, you're accessing the same datastream. The Net doesn't change, but how you perceive it does. With a tablet, you're seeing icons and text and maybe some stuff represented as video games, and you can access it as fast as you can tap your fingers on the virtual keyboard. Wetspace, on the other hand, is a world of metaphor and overlay. A wetspace implant projects the Net directly on top of your vision, allows you to see both worlds at once, unless you switch it off. It's all augmented reality, direct stimulation of your brain, and information at the speed of thought. A wetspace hacker is a thing to be feared, especially if she's got some real skill. The human brain is the most powerful computer ever made, and there aren't many security systems that can withstand the kind of devious, creative assault that a wetspace hacker can launch against it.

The Net is everywhere. That's maybe an exaggeration, but only by a little. If you're in a populated area, you're on the Net. Everything's connected to the global cellular network, and if you're connected to that, you're on the Net. It's everywhere and it's free, though that doesn't make it fast, safe, or free of hassle. Everyone gets access to the basic network (unless you're out in the desert or something, and even then you might get spotty reception), but you've gotta pay for increased speed, increased security, removal of restrictions or ads or surveillance. Or you could, you know, hack it. Or get a piece of wetware that spoofs your signal such that you can ride the wave for free.

Yeah, there's an implant for that. Just don't get caught. The Net may be free, but it's subsidized by the corps, and they're the ones who profit from it when there's profit to be gained. And there's *always* profit to be gained. As such, you're gonna have to watch out for the watchdogs, the cyber cops and law enforcement algorithms that are all over the place. Sure, there are dark places they don't go; but for the most part, you're being watched. There

are ways to hide what you're doing, pretend you're doing something legit, misdirect attention, or something. You could also just grease the wheels. Cybercops—the ones that have humans on the other end—are just as susceptible to bribery as regular ones. Offer them something they aren't getting from their corporate masters (or more of something they *are*), and you might get away with what you're doing.

Of course, failing that, there's always cyberwarfare. There are a multitude of attack apps you can download, write, modify, and trade out in the dark places of the Net, and if a watchdog sees you, you can fry him with one of these apps. It's not without risk; he could have a protective app, or he might be using hardspace and just come back at you later. He might just be a more skilled hacker than you are, and throw your attack app right back in your teeth.

But that's the kind of thing you're gonna need to learn to do if you're going to take down the big fish. The corps, the really big ones that make the world go round, have oodles and oodles of security. Cybercops, watchdog apps, automated defenses, firewalls, encryption out the wazoo. But the most important piece of security that almost every corp uses for the really important data is the black box.

When a corp black boxes something, they remove it from the Net. They cordon it off in a closed network, a little mini-Net that doesn't have access to the outside cyberworld. This can make it a little inconvenient for the people who work there, but what it means for security is that anyone who wants to hack the site and get at the delicious, delicious data needs to actually be *at the physical location*. This means you'll need infiltration specialists, muscle, equipment, a ride, an exit strategy... basically it makes things a whole lot more complicated and, unless that data is something you *really need*, you're better off forgetting about it.

There are no specific electronic Harm rules in *Headspace*; there's not really a need to have an exhaustive list of software types, defences, and attack values. Keep things fluid and generally assume electronic attacks and wetspace security is similar in scale to normal weapons and armour.

HEADSPACE

Suuuuuper experimental and not at all approved by any regulatory body, but I guess you knew that already, didn't you? Headspace is the term we have for technology that allows for advanced neural networks between people's heads, at any distance. It was developed a few years back by a now-defunct company called Orphic Industries, but some enterprising industrial spies stole the plans before the company went belly-up. Orphic kicked it because they sank everything into Headspace, and nobody wanted it. Who'd want to voluntarily relinquish all privacy? But it found an aftermarket with folks unhappy with the current way of the world, so I guess there's that.

What having Headspace means, in a practical sense, is that you can hear each other's thoughts, communicate nonverbally no matter where you are, experience each other's emotions, and even use skills and knowledge that someone else acquired the hard way.

It's not without glitches and risks. I mean, you get no privacy anymore, ever. So there's that. And, like I said, it's experimental; it doesn't always work correctly, especially given that it's illegal. See, the fact that it's illegal means that only black market docs will do it, and when you get a black market doc to operate on your brainmeats, you're rolling the dice. And because it's both experimental and illegal, the tech itself varies wildly in quality. Some Headspace gear is top-of-the-line, stolen from some black ops facility or another. Some of it's cobbled together in some mouthbreather's basement, and works just well enough to get the job done, if you don't mind smelling fried chicken at weird times, and everyone in the Headspace developing an aversion to the letter G.

But, really, the biggest risk with Headspace is that the corps clamp down on that shit tight. It's a good thing that a Headspace rig is generally internal, because if the corps could easily spot it, they'd shoot on sight. Having one is enough to bring charges of sedition or corporate espionage down on you, so be very, very careful.

AN IMPLANT FOR EVERY SEASON

Man, when the corps figured out how to perfect cybertech, I think they were falling all over each other to see who could make the most money the fastest. And boy was it a license to print the stuff.

Imagine discovering the technology that allows you to offer cures to pretty much everything to those who want them. Replace lost limbs, restore lost senses. Now imagine you can use it to make people stronger, faster, more intelligent, healthier, give them wi-fi in their heads, give them smuggling compartments in their legs, make a person able to administer a sedative or a narcotic with a touch. What're you gonna do with that? You're gonna sell it like crazy, right?

That's what we did. We started marketing cybertech to anyone who would buy it, and we made cybertech that would fit any need, solve any problem, enhance any ability. If you *can't* do it, cybertech can help you *do it*. If you *can* do it, cybertech can help you do it *better*.

Of course, it ain't cheap, and it ain't without risks. If you want to go to a certified cybersurgeon, it'll cost you. There are screening procedures, credit checks, they ping your insurance, they make you go through a waiting period. Sometimes they even mandate counseling.

Who's got time for that?

That's where the street docs come in. You can walk in, get an implant, and limp out the same day, with only a week of recovery time. They even offer payment plans, though trust me, you do *not* want to get behind on those payments. And that doesn't even begin to touch the horrors that are ripper docs. Be careful; these guys offer cheap cybertech, and it's good quality stuff, but too many of them will take your money, then use some of it to hire rippers to take it back from you so they can resell it.

It's a brave new world, and it's a world where the human race is becoming more and more synthetic.

It comes in every flavor, every shape and size, and regulation is nearly non-existent. There are waiting periods, sure, but if you really want something, and you really want it *now*, you can get it.

The reason the technology was invented in the first place, is repair. Somebody loses a limb, you attach a new one. Someone was born without eyesight, you can replace their eyes and repair the nerves and give them eyesight that was better than their natural eyesight would've been anyway. Sometimes people are grateful for this kind of fix-it job, sometimes not. I've heard plenty of stories about war vets who lost their legs being given back the ability to walk, and being overjoyed. I've also heard

plenty of stories about blind or deaf folks whose parents robbed them of an important part of their identity by forcing implants on them. Just goes to show you, nothing's ever all good.

Some folks use it for body modification. People still get tattoos and piercings, but that sort of thing can go to an extreme level these days. Why get a regular tattoo when you can get one that glows, or changes shape when you want it to? Or, better yet, why not change your skin pigment altogether, or make it so you can do *that* whenever you want to? Or, even better still, why not give yourself fur, or a three-foot neck, or gossamer wings, or a prehensile tail?

Look, I'm not judging. People can do what they like with their bodies, and I totally get body modification as self-expression. But sometimes you go into a club and it looks like a goddamn menagerie, you know?

Maybe the most disturbing in its implications, and the one most in need of regulation (which, of course, it barely has), is enhancement. There are plenty of people who'll lop off a perfectly good limb so they can replace it with a better one. Want super-strong arms with blades that pop out of the wrists? Sure. Want legs that let you run and jump like nobody's business? We got that too. Want to scoop out all your organs and replace them with machines that serve the same purpose so you drink as much booze and do as many drugs as you want to without any repercussions? I know a guy.

People will do all sorts of things to their bodies in the name of self-improvement. What this means, practically, is that anybody you meet on the street who's cybered-up could be a living weapon. People, in general, are more dangerous than they used to be, and that danger is actually pretty easy to hide. Synthetic skin is easy enough to find at the local drugstore that you can hide the fact that your right arm is metal to anything but a very close inspection. Or, you know, a blade that rips through your fake skin and into somebody's jugular.

And that doesn't even get into the full-conversion borgs. They're not common, but there are people who have their brains removed from their bodies and put into completely synthetic bodies. They're basically robots with organic brains, and they come in every shape and size. Some of them look pretty much human until you see the kinds of things they're capable of. Others are towering mechs, big, walking tanks bristling with guns. I've heard of corps who force their wage slaves into dumping their brains into security bots. They hide it in the fine print.

IN A CANDY STORE (UPGRADES)

There's a dizzying variety of cybertech upgrades out there, but an operator like you is going to find a specific subset of these useful on a daily basis.

CYBERLEGS

+IMPLANT +INCONSPICUOUS +60 MPH +HEAVY

It takes a special kind of person to get both of their legs surgically removed and replaced with implants. If you're that special kind of person, you can run as fast as a car and jump fifteen or twenty feet vertically. When you take this implant, pick a Stress Track. Whenever you use your Cyberlegs in a Move, add the current rating of the chosen Stress Track to your roll.

EYEBALL DRONES

+IMPLANT +DRONE +A/V SUITE +RECORD +FLIGHT +HEADSPACE LINK

A pretty common upgrade for cybereyes, an eyeball drone is an eye you can take out of your skull and then pilot around so you can see what it sees. It's got a limited range of a block or two, but it can be useful in a variety of sneaky ways.

HAZ-MAT

+IMPLANT +INCONSPICUOUS +ANALYZER +POISON PREVENTION

Less a discreet implant and more a series of minor implants throughout your body, a haz-mat upgrade gives you blood filters, radiation dampeners, thermal and cooling systems, an oxygen distribution and filtration system, and all sorts of other toys that allow you to resist the effects of hazardous materials and environments for about 5 minutes.

JUICER

+IMPLANT +INCONSPICUOUS

A network of servos and tubes connected to an adrenaline collection and distribution system so you can trigger a powerful boost to your system when you need it. I've heard prolonged use makes your heart explode, but whatever. When you take this implant, pick a Stress Track. Anytime you make a Move that involves physical strength, add the current rating of the chosen Stress Track to your roll.

MONO-FILAMENT WHIP

2-HARM HAND/CLOSE +AP +AREA +DANGEROUS +MESSY +INCONSPICUOUS

A ridiculously dangerous weapon, hidden in your finger so you can have it on you all the time. If you're planning on using it for party tricks, give me ten minutes warning so I can leave.

MEDICAL SUITE

+ IMPLANT + HEALING + INCONSPICUOUS

Drug storage, vitals monitor, medical injectors, synth-skin sprayers. You can use it to treat yourself or someone else. Once per session, you can use drugs that your medical suite provides to lower any Stress Track to 0.

MUSCLE AND BONE STABILIZERS

+ IMPLANT + INCONSPICUOUS

Your bones are laced with a carbon-steel alloy, and your muscles are reinforced with filaments and medical gel injectors. Ignore up to 3 Harm from any Vehicle Crash/Crush or Fall. Allows you to jump from a 3-story building with little to no danger.

NANO-SURGEON DELIVERY SYSTEM

+ IMPLANT + INCONSPICUOUS

I once saw a guy take a clip full of flechettes in an alley, then saw that same guy the next week, good as new. He had one of these. Any sufficiently advanced application of nanomachines is indistinguishable from That Which Should Not Be, and will likely destroy us all. The first time you would be Taken out from Harm during a session, you may instead ignore the Harm.

PAIN EDITOR

+ IMPLANT + INCONSPICUOUS

When you feel pain, your body is trying to tell you something. Maybe you don't want to listen to your body, though. Maybe your body's an asshole, I don't know. When you take this implant, pick a Stress Track. You can no longer be Taken Out by Feedback on this Stress Track when you take Harm.

THE POTATO HEAD DISGUISE KIT

+ IMPLANT + DISGUISE

There are two useful things you can do with this implant. The first is that you can take pieces of your face off and replace them with other pieces so you look like someone else. The second is that you can just take all of them off and scare the bejeezus out of someone.

RABBIT EARS

**+IMPLANT +ENHANCED HEARING +LEVEL DAMPENER +RADIO/CELL LINK
+RECORD MUSIC SYSTEM +INCONSPICUOUS**

You can get civilian radio, police and military bands, and even some corporate bands with the right know-how, streamed directly to your head. Satellite radio still costs extra, though.

SHOCK PADS

3-STUN HAND +RELOAD +LOUD +IMPLANT

Pads in your cyberhands can deliver a variable electric charge, which has a couple of handy uses. One, you can jump a car (or someone's stopped heart) with it. Two, you can stop someone in their tracks with it.

SKIN WEAVE

ARMOUR 1 +IMPLANT +INCONSPICUOUS

Nanobots weave armour into your skin, making it a lot harder to penetrate. It also makes your sense of touch less... sensitive.

SNIKTS

3-HARM HAND/CLOSE +AP +MESSY +INCONSPICUOUS

I'm pretty sure you know what these do, bub. They're retractable claws, alright?



SUB-DERMAL PLATING

ARMOUR 2 +IMPLANT +PARRY +1 HARM WITH HANDS

Getting this stuff implanted is incredibly painful and debilitating for about three weeks, but when you recover you've got literal armour beneath your skin. Allows you to parry hand weapons and inflict +1 Harm in hand-to-hand.

THERMO-OPTIC CAMOUFLAGE

+IMPLANT +CLOAK

Your skin's wired with electronics that allow you to bend light and make yourself effectively invisible, even masking your heat signature. The downside: unless your clothes are made of thermal cloth, you've gotta be naked for it to work.

VISUAL SUITE

**+IMPLANT +ANTIDAZZLE +VISUAL ENHANCEMENT +THERMOGRAPH
+NIGHT VISION +RECORD +INCONSPICUOUS**

Night vision, telescopic magnification, microscopic magnification, video recording, glare protection, visual editing, and filtering. Cybereyes are way more advanced than they used to be, and they look almost normal to boot.

WIRED REFLEXES

+IMPLANT +QUICK +INCONSPICUOUS

You're fast, precise, and your reaction time is greatly enhanced because of the electronic stimulants applied directly to your brain. Side effects include being really hyperactive and annoying. You always go first in any situation where time is of the essence, and you can ignore the Reload constraint on gear you are using.

GHOSTS IN THE MACHINE

Yeah, AIs exist. They're pretty rare, and they vary a lot in intelligence and capability. Just like with people, some are pretty basic, only capable of a limited set of cognitive tasks. Others are genius-level smart and can process information on a much wider scale than a human can, and at ridiculous speeds. The fundamental thing that unites these AIs, other than the fact that they're comprised entirely of information, is that they learn.

An AI is capable of making a mistake, analyzing why its action failed, self-correcting, and implementing that change in the future. They evolve over time, altering their own code sequences on the fly to make themselves better. Most are pretty limited: the AI that governs the building's security doesn't need to know how to compose an opera, it just needs to know how to recognize unauthorized people and keep them out.

But I've heard stories about rogue AIs out on the Net, AIs so advanced and multi-faceted that they can pass for human in chat rooms and can probably surpass humans in most other arenas. Are they fairy tales? Who knows? But you have to wonder: what do these hypothetical beings want? What are their goals and motives? What's their endgame?

It keeps me awake at night sometimes.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SPECIFIC TAGS:

IQ: artificial intelligence is not under anyone's direct control; it can think for itself but generally acts within the limits of its programming.

Its intelligence is classed as one of the following: Simple, Complex, Sentient, Overmind.

DRUGS, LEGAL AND OTHERWISE

Medicine's a lot more advanced than it used to be. Besides the fact that you can replace a limb or an organ if you need to, drugs have gotten a lot more potent and specialized. There are a lot of drugs tailored to specific diseases, drugs that incorporate nanotechnology or gene therapy.

We cured cancer about fifteen years ago. Some scientist developed a drug regimen that gradually rewrites your genetic code, writing the cancer out of you over the course of about a month. Not only does it get rid of the cancer you *have*, it renders you immune to *every other form of cancer* for the rest of your life.

That drug is illegal, by the way. People still die of cancer, endure chemotherapy and radiation treatments, suffer for years and years. Why? Because there's profit in that suffering. The corps saw this wonder drug, saw that it meant the eventual extinction of cancer, saw that that would cut into their profit margins, and they got together to concoct some bogus story about clinical trials and deaths and all sorts of crap that allowed them to outlaw it and force it underground.

There are a lot of stories like that. I mean, there are plenty of illegal recreational drugs, but the corps don't really give a shit about those. They spend a token effort on combatting street drugs, but their narc squads spend most of their time going after legit medicines that've been forced underground, taking down street docs who are just trying to help people. It's pretty messed up.

And you, with your fancy headspace implant? Watch out: drugs'll mess you up but good. And I don't mean just drugs that *you* take; if anyone in a Head-space network takes a hit of cocaine, *everyone* feels the effects. Everyone gets jacked up.

This *can* have its advantages. Pop some speed and nobody will fall asleep during a mission. Take a hit of IEZ and everyone will be able to see in the dark (though everyone'll also have the light hypersensitivity thing, and that's a *bitch*). It's a savings, for sure, but it's also great for timing things out: it all happens simultaneously, so you can coordinate drug use to be its most



effective during an op. It also has the advantage of only ravaging the body of the person who took it, so a Headspace network can share the load a little, take turns.

There are two things you have to watch out for when you're talking about Headspace drug use. First, anything that affects a person's meatspace body doesn't go through to the Headspace. Yeah, I know, you wish you could rub some derma on yourself and make everyone feel better, but it doesn't really work that way. You can make other people's brains produce chemicals, but you can't make their skin knit.

The other thing you have to worry about is when people use drugs against you. If someone shoots one of you with a tranq dart, depending on the drug they use, they might knock out the whole network. It's a big vulnerability, but them's the breaks.

Feel free to increase or decrease the Stress Tracks accordingly based on the effects of any drugs or alcohol that Operators imbibe during play. An upper might -1 Fear +1 Ego or Need, a Downer might -1 Rage and +1 Fear or Grief.

POINT A TO B

People still drive cars, trucks, and motorcycles. Bikes are actually a lot more common than you might think. They're cheap, they don't require gas, you can store them in your apartment, and, with the right cybertech, they can go pretty fast.

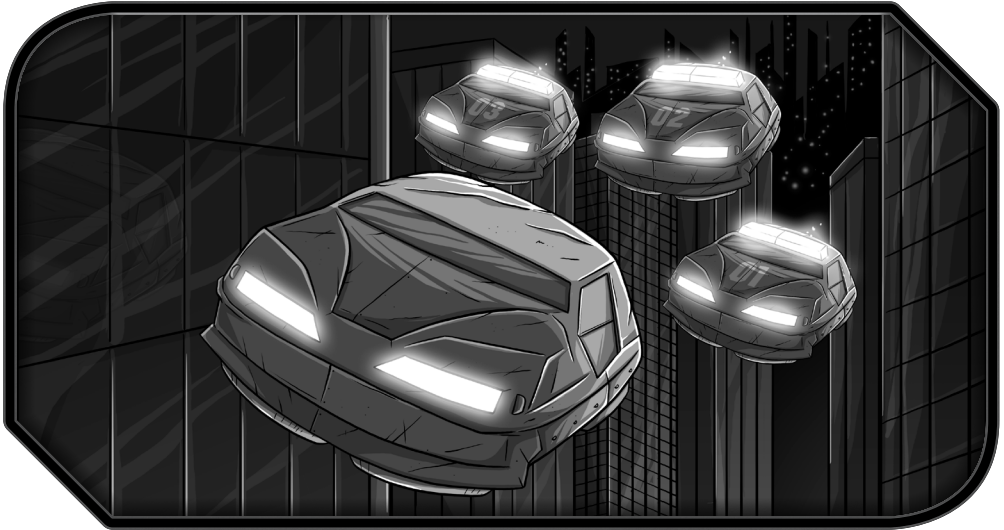
Most wage slaves live in the arcologies, so they commute by foot or use the tram system. For those who commute to their place of business but don't want to bike there, the mag trains are the method of choice. Fast, cheap, relatively safe, and you rarely have to deal with traffic.

The rich folks have the good stuff, though. If you're travelling within a city or to a neighboring city, you'll use private air travel. Within the city, most rich folks use spinners. Spinners are basically agile little vehicles based on helicopter technology. They can hover, they're pretty fast, and they can maneuver the city streets like nobody's business.

HEADSPACE

If you're travelling a little bit further, you'll want to use an aerodyne, a jet-powered VTOL craft that can travel at speeds of up to 300 mph. Aerodynes are the transportation of choice for the rich and elite when they have a business meeting that's in a different city but in the same geographical region.

But what if you're in New York and you need to get to Tokyo for an afternoon meeting, you ask? Well, we've got you covered there, too. It's expensive, but sub-orbital travel exists. That New York to Tokyo trip? You can do it in about three hours, and with less paperwork than the commercial flights of the early 21st century required. Most of the *really* rich have their own sub-orbital craft that they can take whenever they like, and just jet-set around the globe. Breakfast in Monaco, lunch in Seattle, a dinner meeting in Moscow. No problem.



VEHICLES AS GEAR

Most vehicles don't need specific rules or a detailed profile, just pick a Chassis and a Purpose and maybe a few extra Strength/Look/Weakness **+TAGS**, and give it a corporate name and model. If a vehicle is wired for cybernetic control systems, add **+WETSPACE LINK** or direct control via the Headspace add **+HEADSPACE LINK**. If the vehicle has weapon systems, add the appropriate weapons from the Weapon list (see page 78).

CHOOSE A VEHICLE CHASSIS:

Motorcycle, mag lev, car, hovercraft, boat, vectored thrust, aircraft, helicopter, submersible.

CHOOSE A VEHICLE PURPOSE:

Racing, recreational, transportation, cargo, military, luxury, civilian, commercial, courier.

CHOOSE STRENGTHS:

Fast, quiet, rugged, aggressive, huge, off-road, responsive, uncomplaining, capacious, workhorse, easily repaired.

CHOOSE A LOOK:

Sleek, vintage, pristine, powerful, luxurious, flashy, muscular, quirky, pretty, garish, armoured, armed, nondescript.

CHOOSE A WEAKNESS:

Slow, fragile, sloppy, lazy, cramped, picky, guzzler, unreliable, loud.

EYE IN THE SKY

Drones are pretty commonplace these days. Different corps use them for shipping small packages or for data transport. Security firms use them for surveillance and tactical support. The media uses them for footage. You can even order a drone that boosts cell signal if you're going somewhere off the grid.

They come in all shapes and sizes. There are surveillance drones the size of a mosquito, and there are transport and military drones as big as a tractor-trailer. The only thing that really unites them is that they don't have pilots, and they can be flown remotely.

Security firms actually use them quite a bit when they want to pacify rough neighbourhoods without risking any of their personnel, and taxi services are often drone-based too.

DRONES AS GEAR

The same general advice for vehicles applies to drones. Most drones only need a Chassis, an Engine, and a role in the story. Only make a profile if you need to. Give it a corporate name, though.

CHOOSE A CHASSIS:

- ◆ Tiny (insect-sized): **+TINY**, **+FRAGILE**, **+STEALTHY**, pick one sensor.
- ◆ Small (rat- to cat-sized): choose one strength, one sensor, one weakness, and one other from any category.
- ◆ Medium (dog-sized): choose one strength, one sensors, one weakness, and two others from any category.
- ◆ Large (bear-sized): **+BULKY**, choose two strengths, one sensor, one weakness and two others from any category

CHOOSE A MOTIVE STYLE:

Rotor, fixed-wing, quadruped, octoped, tracked, wheeled, aquatic, submarine.

CHOOSE STRENGTHS:

Fast, rugged, off-road, responsive, uncomplaining, easily repaired, stealthy, tight encryption, autonomous, robot arm, armed.

CHOOSE SENSORS:

Magnification, thermographic, jamming, image enhancement, analysis software, sonar.

CHOOSE WEAKNESSES:

Slow, fragile, unreliable, loud, loose encryption, obvious.

CHOOSE ARMAMENT:

One weapon can be mounted on a drone. The size of the frame determines the size of the weapon.

- ◆ A small drone can mount a gun dealing 2 Harm.
- ◆ A medium drone can mount a gun dealing up to 3 Harm.
- ◆ A large drone can mount a gun dealing up to 4 Harm.

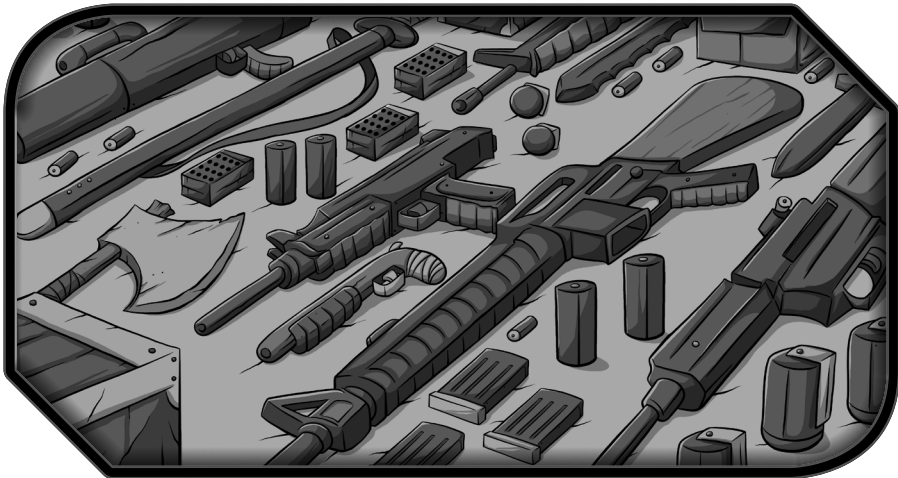
TOOLS OF THE TRADE

The discerning purveyor of violence has a dizzying array of choices when it comes to figuring out how best to implement destruction on a personal scale, or wider. Guns are cheaper, safer, and easier to get than they've ever been, and what regulations still exist are easily bypassed if you know the right person.

Most guns these days are stylish, lightweight, little plastic things, the better to go undetected. They use electric triggers rather than firing pins, and caseless ammo is all the rage. You can still find old-style guns, and they're dirt cheap, so street gangs still use them a fair bit. They're a bit gauche, though, so a true connoisseur of the art of violence wouldn't be caught dead with an AK.

The newer guns also come with a host of advantages that the older ones don't. They're built to handle a wide variety of different types of ammo: explosive, tracer, tracking, electric shock, flechette. You name it, we've got it. You can also link your gun up to your cyber-eye and your cyber-arm in order to get improved targeting and accuracy.

If you need a gun in a pinch, there are vending machines (I'm not kidding) that sell disposable pistols. You have to scan your ident chip for a quick background check, but you can always spoof that if you need to. Get your gun, empty the mag, and toss the thing. They're fully biodegradable.



And if you need to get up close and personal, monofilament blades are quite popular. Imagine a knife or a sword or a stiletto with an edge or a point that's honed down to a single molecule. Now don't cut yourself. These things are so sharp that you can literally cut a car in half with one of them. They're scary dangerous, and way too many people buy these things for protection and wind up cutting their hand off the next day. But in the hands of an expert? I wouldn't even want to imagine.

Lasers and rail guns also exist, but they're uncommon, and they're usually mounted on military vehicles. I've heard rumors about personnel-scale laser cannons, but I've also heard that they tend to blow up, and that the people who use them a lot tend to get radiation sickness. So there's that.

All weapons have a **Harm Rating** and a **Range Tag**; many will have additional tags that are reviewed in detail under **Weapon Tags** below.

HAND WEAPONS

Unarmed	(1-HARM HAND)
Bat/Wrench	(1-HARM HAND/CLOSE)
Knife	(2-HARM HAND)
Monofilament Knife	(2-HARM HAND +AP +MESSY)
Shuriken/Throw Knife	(2-HARM CLOSE +INFINITE +DISCREET +QUICK)
Sword/Machete	(2-HARM HAND/CLOSE)
Monofilament Whip	(2-HARM HAND/CLOSE +AP +AREA +DANGEROUS +MESSY)
Monofilament Katana	(3-HARM HAND/CLOSE +AP +MESSY)
Hand Stunner	(3-STUN HAND +RELOAD)
Shock Fist	(4-STUN HAND +DISPOSABLE)

PISTOLS

Holdout/Derringer	(2-HARM HAND/CLOSE +DISPOSABLE +LOUD +QUICK)
Revolver	(2-HARM CLOSE/NEAR +LOUD)
Semi-automatic Pistol	(2-HARM CLOSE/NEAR +LOUD +QUICK)
Machine Pistol	(2-HARM CLOSE/NEAR +LOUD +SUPPRESSIVE)
Stun One Shot	(3-STUN CLOSE/NEAR +DISPOSABLE)
Flechette Pistol	(3-HARM CLOSE/NEAR/FAR +FLECHETTE +QUICK)
Heavy Revolver/Pistol	(3-HARM CLOSE/NEAR +LOUD)

ASSAULT WEAPONS

Sub-machine Gun	(2-HARM CLOSE/NEAR/FAR +LOUD +SUPPRESSIVE)
Hunting Rifle	(2-HARM NEAR/FAR/EXTREME +LOUD)
Shotgun	(3-HARM CLOSE/NEAR +LOUD +RELOAD +MESSY)
Assault Rifle	(3-HARM NEAR/FAR +LOUD +SUPPRESSIVE)
Automatic Shotgun	(3-HARM CLOSE +LOUD +SUPPRESSIVE +MESSY)
Sniper Rifle	(3-HARM FAR/EXTREME +LOUD)
Sawed-off Shotgun	(4-HARM CLOSE +LOUD +RELOAD +MESSY)

HEAVY WEAPONS

Light Machine Gun	(4-HARM NEAR/FAR +LOUD +SUPPRESSIVE +MESSY)
Grenade Tube	(4-HARM NEAR/FAR +LOUD +AREA +RELOAD +MESSY)
Grenade Launcher	(4-HARM NEAR/FAR +LOUD +AREA +MESSY)
Assault Cannon	(5-HARM NEAR/FAR/EXTREME +HEAT)
Missile Launcher	(5-HARM NEAR/FAR/EXTREME +HEAT)

EXOTIC WEAPONS

Laser Cannon	(5-HARM NEAR/FAR/EXTREME +AP +RADIATION +DANGEROUS)
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EXPLOSIVES

At ranges of Hand/Close, explosives are also +DANGEROUS

Flash Bang	(3-STUN CLOSE/NEAR +LOUD +AREA)
Gas Grenades	(3-STUN CLOSE/NEAR +AREA +GAS)
Fragmentation	(4-HARM CLOSE/NEAR +LOUD +AREA)
Claymore	(4-HARM CLOSE/NEAR +LOUD +AREA)

AMMUNITION

Armour Piercing	+AP
Air Burst	+AREA +MESSY
Stun	+STUN (weapon fires gel/rubber/ taser rounds)
Flechette	+1 HARM , but armour is doubled
Explosive	+1 HARM , cannot be silenced

Modifications/Options:

Silencer	Removes +LOUD , a +MESSY weapon cannot be silenced
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NAME YOUR GEAR

Think about the look of your Operator's gear; you should give it a brand name that evokes the fiction (one of the Corporations from the chosen setting). It's not just a generic stun gun, it's a *PSS Pacifier R4*.

All weapons have a Harm rating and a Range tag; many will have additional tags that are reviewed in detail under **Weapon Tags** below.

WEAPON TAGS

Range Tags: Hand/Close/Near/Far/Extreme

The Range tag on a weapon or piece of gear gives you an indication of when it's appropriate (or possible) to use against a target.

- ◆ **Hand** is when you are within arms' reach.
- ◆ **Close** is within a few steps and is usually point-blank for most firearms.
- ◆ **Near** is anywhere within a few dozen meters up to 50m.
- ◆ **Far** is a few city blocks, up to 200m.
- ◆ **Extreme** is when you need artificial enhancement to see reliably and engage a target, up to 2km or more.



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THE WORLD

CHARACTERISTIC TAGS

- ◆ **AP** (armour piercing): treat the target as having half its armour value, rounded down.
- ◆ **Area**: its target is an area, not an individual; it affects everyone and everything there.
- ◆ **Bulky**: the item takes up a lot of space or is heavy as hell (or both!).
- ◆ **Dangerous**: this item can inflict Harm on yourself or others, hit or miss.
- ◆ **Disposable**: it has one use and then must be discarded.
- ◆ **Inconspicuous**: the item is easy to hide and will often be overlooked.
- ◆ **Flechette**: this weapon does more damage to flesh but the targets armour is treated as double its value.
- ◆ **HEAT**: High Explosive Anti-Tank is **+AREA**, **+AP**, **+LOUD**, and **+MESSY**. Furthermore, these weapons cannot be silenced, will go through reinforced walls, and generally just make a mess out of anything that gets in their way, including Tanks and Powered Armour.
- ◆ **Infinite**: you always have enough on hand for any situation.
- ◆ **Loud**: everyone nearby hears it and can potentially pinpoint where it came from. It wakes up sleeping people and is generally distinct and difficult to ignore. Items that are **+LOUD** cannot be silenced.
- ◆ **Messy**: items with this effect hit both the target and anything else nearby, and they always leave a mess behind; property damage, bloody dismemberment, and gore abound.
- ◆ **Reload**: after using it, you must spend a brief period reloading.
- ◆ **Radiation**: this weapon is unstable and gives off radiation from its power core. Causes 1 Harm that ignores armour to the user every hour of use (or per scene).
- ◆ **Stun**: this weapon inflicts Stun instead of Harm.
- ◆ **Smart**: the item is equipped with some kind of advanced targeting. Examples are ammo that follows a target or goes around a corner.
- ◆ **Suppression**: at the Operator's discretion, the weapon makes an **+AREA** attack, but must immediately **+RELOAD**, unless fed by an ammo belt.
- ◆ **Quick**: if speed matters, quick weapons go first. If opposing sides have **+QUICK** items, resolution of effects occurs simultaneously.

WEARING PROTECTION

With all these methods of dealing death, you'd think we'd have more methods of protecting ourselves from it, right? Well, yes and no.

Armour hasn't gotten more effective so much as it's gotten more common. Flak jackets and bullet-proof vests are a thing of the past; now you can get dispersion weave sewn into your jacket or your t-shirt and get the stopping power of tactical armour in a lightweight, easily concealable form factor. It's cheap, too. And if you want to be even more subtle about it, you can always get sub-dermal plating. Just be warned: it messes with your sense of touch a little bit.

If you don't mind being a little more obvious, there *are* tactical suits you can wear. They offer full-body protection and, while the protection isn't a *lot* better than dispersion weave is, there are a number of other advantages associated with these suits. Some have environmental protection, so you can withstand extreme heat or cold, or you can go without oxygen for a few hours. Some have servos that enhance your strength and speed. You can also get thermoptic cloaking, so that you can become effectively invisible for brief periods of time. Pretty useful when you're trying to sneak into a secure facility.



And then there's military-grade armour. These things are usually big, powered suits ten or twelve feet tall that weigh several hundred pounds. They're almost vehicles in their own right. They're armoured like tanks, but faster and more maneuverable, and they're usually bristling with built-in weapons. You *can* get these on the black market, but you'd better have a good way of hiding it because corps do *not* like private citizens having this stuff.

LIGHT DISPERSION WEAVE

ARMOUR 1, + INCONSPICUOUS

Light Dispersion Weave isn't obvious to the untrained eye, but it doesn't offer a lot of protection.

HEAVY DISPERSION WEAVE

ARMOUR 2

Heavy Dispersion Weave is significantly thicker and is reinforced with hard plates and padding. Heavy Weave isn't particularly inconspicuous; everyone can tell you're looking for trouble. It's probably why it's so popular with the gangs. Commonly available as jackets and coats offering a balance of protection and mobility.

BALLISTIC BATTLE ARMOUR

ARMOUR 3, + BULKY

Advanced military armour offering the best protection money can buy. Layers of ballistic plates over a mesh of Heavy Dispersion Weave. This armour shows you mean business in a serious way; it's often worn by SWAT and corporate militaries. Ballistic Armour offers protection to all but the most damaging weapons and high explosives.

Often comes with integrated **+AUDIO/VIDEO SUITES**, **+ANTI-DAZZLE** and **+LEVEL DAMPER**.

POWERED ARMOUR

ARMOUR 4, + HUGE + HEAVY

Advanced corporate military power armour is experimental and ludicrously expensive. This stuff is mostly found in active war zones and rarely shows up on the urban battlefield. As gear, treat it like a vehicle.

FULL CYBORG

ARMOUR VARIABLE 2-4, +IMPLANT, +HEAVY +PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES

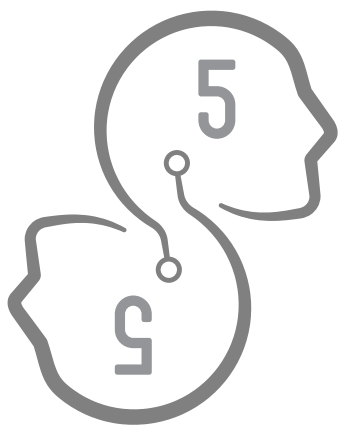
Full limb and armoured body replacement offers great protection at high financial cost and psychological toll as your brain is now sitting in a metal jar for the rest of your life. Those who survive the procedure aren't exactly human anymore.

Full military cyborgs are very heavy and not always welcome in public places. Most full cyborg bodies are considered property of the Corporation that financed them. Upon retirement, they expect the combat model back.



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THE WORLD



CHAPTER 5 OPERATOR CREATION

The following are all the steps required to create **Operators** using a pre-generated setting from Chapter 11. The setting not only defines the opposition to the Operators but what corporate actions they were complicit in that became their **Regrets**. The playbooks in Chapter 6 provide any Operator-specific information for each step. Use the worksheets at the back of the book to aid in this process.

1. CHOOSE A SETTING

As a group, look over the pre-generated settings in Chapter 11 and discuss what kind of game you want to play. If there is disagreement, act like adults and compromise.

Whoever is the GM will act as an arbitrator and coach to help the other Players get the most out of the process and have as interesting Operators as possible.

Julie, Ahmed, Kenichi, Phil, and Valerie sit down to play a game of Headspace. Julie decides to be the GM as she has read the entire game and goes over the various pre-generated settings to see what the group would like to play with. The group looks through the various settings and all like the idea of playing a group of Operators coping with a city on the edge of catastrophe and pick Vancouver Aftermath.

2. CHOOSE AN OPERATOR

Look over the six Operators (see Chapter 6) and choose one that interests you. The six professions represent a large breadth of professional archetypes, allowing the Cell to be sneaky, be packing heat, or some mixture of the two. Everyone must pick a different profession; there are no two Ronin in the same Cell. If two people want the same profession, discuss as a group and compromise.

*Ahmed jumps at the idea of an urban Operator with skills like parkour, so he picks the **Runner**.*

*Phil wants to play someone who understands the technology of this world, so he picks the **Tech**.*

*Valerie wants to provide the brains of the operation, so she picks the **Whitecoat**.*

*Kenichi wants to be the "man with the plan" and opts for the **Handler**.*

3. NAME YOUR OPERATOR

Pick a name for your Operator. You can use one of the ones in your playbook or one of your choosing.

*Ahmed names his Runner "**Nike**" after the old pair of retro-style pumps his character wears.*

*Phil names his Tech "**Whistler**" from this favourite spy movie Sneakers.*

*Valerie names her Whitecoat "**Dr. Stapleton**".*

*Kenichi names his Handler "**Cross**".*

4. DEFINE YOUR SKILLS BAGGAGE —

In *Headspace*, each of your three Operator Skills define not only what you are an expert at doing, but also a bit about what kind of a person you are and what kind of emotional past you have had with the other Operators. Each Skill has a question about how you used your Skills in the past working for the Corporations and defines a connection to one of your Cell-mates. Discuss amongst each other and determine who was involved with your Skill. Feel free to come up with as much fiction regarding this interaction in your past as you'd like.

Speak with everyone at the table and share your ideas; after all, they're going to know a great deal about each of your Skills and your experiences with them.

Based on the interaction of your Operators, choose a Discipline to go with each Skill. Do not choose the same Discipline twice. This is how your Operator feels when using that skill--their Emotional Baggage. Record this on your character sheet; all the other Operators should share this information so you can record what Baggage you will use when using their Skills.

As the GM, invite the Players to take turns in this process. Allow each Player to ask one question and see who would be interested in being part of this person's story. Start with the quietest person first. As the GM be sure to write down anything that you find interesting to build on and keep track of any people the Players make up to draw into future scenarios. If the Players are involved with a Corporation, get them to name it.

Julie helps facilitate and guide the following discussion, jumping in when the party needs help connecting ideas and ensuring that everyone has time to contribute. The group can start with anyone, so Phil decides to get the ball rolling and looks over the three Skills for his Tech named Whistler: Engineering, Drones, and Hacking. Phil decides to ask the first question about DRONES and reads the question aloud to the group:

(example continues on next page)

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“Who doesn’t know that Whistler used to monitor their family for a Corporation?”

The table goes quiet, but then Ahmed—who is playing the Runner named Nike—speaks up, “I love the idea that my corporate bosses didn’t trust me and hired someone to keep an eye on my family”.

Julie says “Ok great, which company do you think you were working for at the time?”

Phil says “Well, I don’t have a big preference at this stage, I think Whistler did a lot of freelancing so whatever Ahmed wants is cool with me.”

Ahmed says “I’m certainly thinking of being involved with Trauma One in most of my operator’s work, so why don’t we say they hired you to vet my family and make sure I didn’t do anything they wouldn’t like, something you still haven’t told me about.”

Julie says “Ok great, now Phil, how do you think spying on Nike’s family made your Operator feel about his actions using Drones?”

Phil ponders this and the impacts of the fiction that were just discussed, “I think the best emotion is FEAR, fear that Nike would find out and not trust me as much in the future.”

Phil writes down a few notes on his Operator sheet and writes FEAR in as the Emotional Baggage for the Drones Skill. Julie tells everyone else at the table to write FEAR next to Drones on their sheets as that is the emotion they will use when making a Headspace Move with Drones.

“OK who wants to go next?” Julie says.

Ahmed is keen to continue the story he started, “I like the idea that myself and Whistler have a bit of a history with Trauma One, but I want to try to branch out with another person too, I’m going to ask my question for PILOT”:

“Who pulled Nike from a fiery wreck just in time?”

“This seems like something my Whitecoat, Dr. Stapleton, would be involved with. Maybe I was with you when your vehicle crashed. You were knocked unconscious, and I dragged you to safety,” says Valerie. Julie wants to build on this fiction a bit more and asks the table “Was anyone else caught in this crash?”

“Why don’t we say Whistler was in the car as well. Maybe I was injured, maybe I even lost a limb which is now cyberware,” says Phil. Julie looks at Ahmed, “Great, so how does losing control of the vehicle with your allies make you feel about your Pilot skill?” Ahmed speaks up “Well I don’t think Nike would like that he lost control of his vehicle and got his friends hurt, I think he’d take it rather personally, so I’m going to say EGO”.

Everyone in the group records EGO next to Pilot.

Kenichi speaks up, “I’ll go next to define Cross’s baggage for his OBSERVATION skill”:

“Who don’t I trust because of something I saw?”

“Oh I’m totally game for this” says Valerie. “I think that Dr. Stapleton had a side business selling designer drugs to anyone that would buy them, and at more than a few points, he’s skirted some serious moral lines. Why don’t we say I was selling Trauma One drugs to some street kids, and you caught it on surveillance footage?”

“Well, that sounds terrible, but I like the idea,” says Kenichi.

Julie speaks up, “Lets dig a little deeper into this, what specifically made this a trust issue for Cross?”

“Hmm, well maybe Dr. Stapleton was using the drugs, and I question his judgment along with his moral fibre, if that’s ok with Valerie?”

(example continues on next page)

"Sure, I like the idea that Dr. Stapleton is always on edge and needs to take something to keep calm after his days overseas in the corporate war zones".

Kenichi makes some notes and then speaks to the Emotional Baggage, "I think as much as I don't trust part of what Dr. Stapleton did I also see these desires in myself so I'm going to go with NEED for OBSERVATION".

Everyone in the group records NEED next to OBSERVATION.

Julie says "Ok, so the last person to go this round is Valerie and her Whitecoat, Dr. Stapleton. Which skill do you want to start with?"

"I like the idea of jumping right from this story of drugs and addiction and some of the team's inner demons, so I'm going to go with PSYCHOLOGY":

"Who did Dr. Stapleton help that he now wishes he hadn't?"

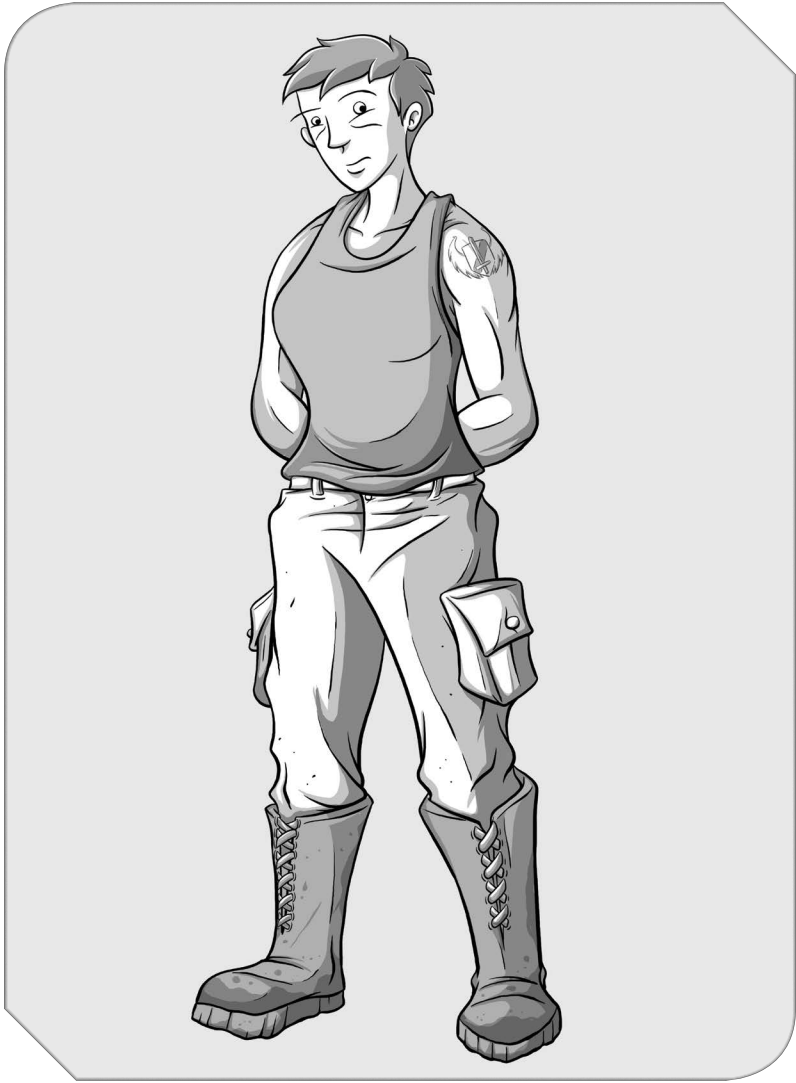
"Well, Whistler doesn't have much of a connection with Stapleton, maybe you coached me through the trauma of losing my arm and adjusting back to normal life, but maybe you found out I was keeping tabs on Nike's family and began to question whether helping me was the best thing to have done," says Phil.

"Sure that's all kinds of terrible, I'm thinking that Stapleton associates those memories with a lot of his own addiction troubles, so I'm going to associate GRIEF with that."

Everyone writes down GRIEF next to PSYCHOLOGY.

The above example represents one round of each player going through one of their Skills. The group would continue this process two more rounds, defining background on each Skill, building a connection with another Operator, and determining all their Emotional Baggages.

5. CHOOSE A SUB-CULTURE



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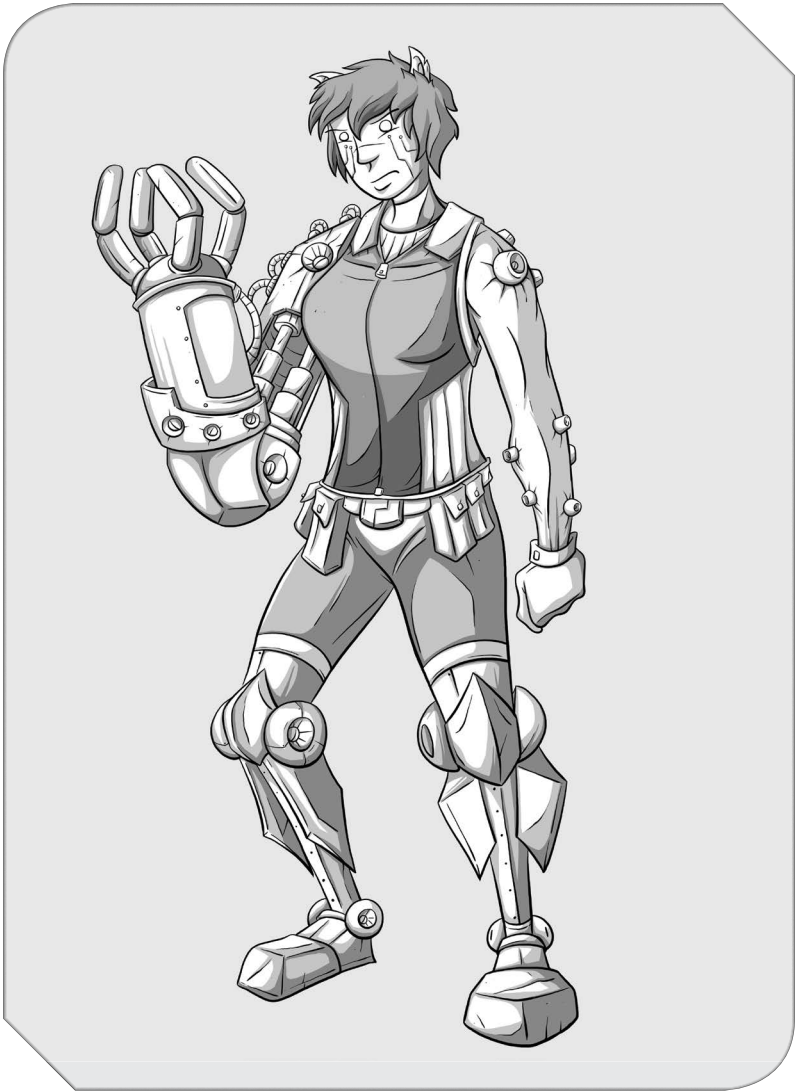
Your **Sub-culture** represents how your Operator looks and might indicate the types of people they stay with.

Choose one of the 5 Sub-cultures: **Neons**, **Trans-humans**, **Net-heads**, **Corporates**, or **Drifters**.

HEADSPACE

As a **Neon**, you demand the attention of others. You rarely stay quiet or in the shadows of a crowd. Neons pride themselves on standing out from the masses of corporate society and, most importantly, not conforming to the needs of that society. Neons generally wear bright, colourful clothing, full of life, and they avoid name brands at all costs. Neons embrace augmentation technology as long as it allows them to stand out from the sheep.





As a **Trans-human**, you have embraced cybernetics and body augmentation as the next step in human evolution. Whereas some replace because of injury, you do so to be better.

HEADSPACE

As a **Net-head**, you spend more time in virtual worlds than in the real. When you aren't on the Net, you're sporting the latest gadgets. Your meatsuit may be in decline, but what you really care about is how many Net followers you have.





As a **Corporate**, you like to follow the rules and avoid rocking the boat of society. You keep your clothing and grooming clean and orderly and prefer the record that comes from reliable consumer brands over the drivel of Drifters and Neons. Whether you're a business-savvy merchant or a middle-class staffer at the latest hi-tech outfit, you are always welcome in the ranks of corporate style.

As a **Drifter**, you're off the grid or at least live on the fringes of society. You like it that way: living life by your own rules, not being the center of attention. Not a fan of big brother, you tend to keep a low profile and keep moving.



A **Sub-culture Work Sheet** found at the end of this book can be printed to help aid this process.

*Ahmed likes the idea of a professional-looking driver, someone who may have had a rough life but prefers to spend his money on the finer things in life and look the part of the elite in society, so he chooses the Sub-culture of a **Corporate**.*

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6. CHOOSE A LOOK

Your Sub-culture gives you a pick list of how your Operator looks to the rest of the world, both in the flesh and online. Pick one from each of the following lists: **Eyes**, **Hair**, **Body**, **Clothes**, and **Avatar** (how you appear online in the Wetspace of the internet).

HOW NEONS LOOK

Eyes: Lava Lamp, Neon, No White, Patterned
Hair: Bright Dyes, UV Glow, Light-emitting, Metallic
Body: Digital Tattoos, TV Skin, Chem Skin Colours, Patterned
Clothes: Woven Hard Plastics, Vinyl, Light-paneled, Colour-changing
Avatar: (something bold with bright colours, describe yourself)

HOW TRANS-HUMANS LOOK

Eyes: Cyclops Visor, Cat Eyes, a Third Eye, Just Plain Cyber-eyes
Hair: Chrome Dome, Anime Plastic, Animal Ears, Wires
Body: More Metal than Flesh, Sculpted, Steampunk, Furry (tail optional)
Clothes: Hulked (One size too small), Clothing that Shows off Augmentations, Minimalist, Accommodating of Your Cybernetics
Avatar: (not like a person at all, describe yourself)

HOW NET-HEADS LOOK

Eyes:	Glazed-over, Distracted, Drifting, Focused
Hair:	Bald w/Retro Net Ports, Shoulder-length, Grunge, Greasy
Body:	Lanky, Chunky, Skinny, Average
Clothes:	Second-hand, Sweat-stained, Loose-fitting, Student
Avatar:	(very unique, probably NSFW, describe yourself)

HOW CORPORATES LOOK

Eyes:	Paranoid, Intense, Tired, Bored
Hair:	Trimmed/Groomed, Always Perfect, Unassuming, Gelled/Slick
Body:	Athletic, Botoxed, Unassuming, UV Tattoos
Clothes:	Overtly Expensive, Uniformed, Name Branded, Business Casual
Avatar:	(business-appropriate and uniform looking, describe yourself)

HOW DRIFTERS LOOK

Eyes:	Eye Patch, Hopeful, Tired, Thousand-yard Stare
Hair:	Bandana, Greasy, Long and Unkempt, Spikey
Body:	Pierced, Ripped, Skinny, Tattooed
Clothes:	Army Surplus, Biker Leathers, Revolutionary Student, Thrifty
Avatar:	(pre-selected iconography, describe yourself)

Ahmed uses the pick lists for Corporate to build up a description of Nike. Nike has Tired Eyes showing years of late nights on the town. His Hair is Always Perfect, even in the rain. Nike maintains an Athletic Body from Parkour and a very active lifestyle. His clothing is Overtly Expensive; he spends more money on his modest collection of suits than he does on his rent. Nike doesn't spend a lot of time in the virtual world of cyberspace, but when he does his Avatar appears as a man in a black suit with a monocle and pocket watch.

A **Sub-culture Work Sheet** found at the end of this book can be printed to help aid this process.

7. CHOOSE YOUR DISCIPLINES

Assign the following scores to your six Disciplines: +2, +1, +0, -1, -2. Discipline will tell you which emotions your Operator is good at dealing with and which they're not. Put your highest score in whichever emotion you want to have confidence in controlling and your lowest score in the emotion that gets the better of you.

Record your Discipline ratings on your Operator sheet.

Ahmed examines the list of Baggages that are associated with the Skills the group will be using, but he mostly considers the personality of his Operator Nike. Ahmed decides he's a cocky pilot who loses his cool more often than not and assigns his lowest score of -2 to Rage. He gives his highest score of +2 to Fear, since he figures Nike has nerves of steel to do Parkour moves between hi-rise complexes. Ahmed decides that Nike might have a problem with money and/or drugs and decides Need is going to be his second lowest score with -1. Ahmed assigns a +1 to his Grief representing some of the horrors he has lived through in his life and to round out his disciplines he places his neutral value of 0 for Ego.

8. DEFINE GHOST OPERATORS

Headspace is designed to work efficiently with a full group of 5 Operators out of total of 6, which gives the Players a breadth of different Skills to choose from in the Headspace.

Depending on the number of Players, there may be more than one Ghost Operator in the Headspace. Ghost Operators represent Operators that used to work with the Cell but died during a previous adventure (if you wish, you can have them die in the opening sequence of Chapter 9 – **It All Went Sideways**). However, when you die in the Headspace, you leave behind pieces of your consciousness and Skills with Baggage that continue to interact with the Cell.

Not only do Ghost Operators provide the Cell with a much needed Skill, they also become an NPC that the Cell will regularly interact with. Don't worry about too many details regarding the personality of the Ghost at this step.

Whichever Operators the Players choose not to play will be Ghost Operators.

For each Ghost Operator, the Cell should pick one Skill from that Operator's three Skills that will be accessible as a Headspace Move for all the Operators (It's the same Skill for everyone). The GM will choose a Baggage for the Skill after talking to the Players about who the Operator was and how they died. (If this is a one shot, feel free to kill the Operator off when the quick start goes south). Record the name of the Ghost, along with their chosen Skill and associated Baggage on your character sheets.

Julie notes that this group has four Players, so the group will need to pick Skills for 2 Ghost Operators. The Ronin and the Infiltrator were not chosen, so after some deliberation, the group decides they want to pick FIREARMS for the Ronin and STEALTH from the Infiltrator.

Julie proposes that the Ronin died staying behind giving covering fire so the Cell could escape a dangerous ambush, a heroic and brave act. Julie gives the FIREARMS skill of the Ghost Operator the Baggage of EGO representing the Ronin's final moments of bravery and honour.

Ahmed likes the idea that not everyone died as a hero. He proposes that his Runner inadvertently caused the Infiltrator's death during an operation. Everyone thinks that would add some interesting tension to the Headspace and agrees. Julie assigns STEALTH a Baggage of GRIEF representing that mistakes were made.

Julie names the Ghost Ronin "Yoshi" and names the Ghost Infiltrator "Shadow".

9. DEFINE YOUR REGRET

At the beginning of play, your Operator has a single **Regret**, a dark memory from their past dealings with one of the Corporations. It is directly tied to a single Corporate Secret from the Setting.

Corporate Secrets represent an action one of the Corporations made that directly contributed to one or more of the Events and Issues of the setting. Corporate Secrets are not considered public knowledge and only characters who tie their Regret to a specific Secret will truly understand what the Corporation may have gotten away with.

Vancouver Aftermath has a list of five Corporate Secrets (one for each Event and its proceeding Issue), pick one Secret and work with your GM to define your Regret. It's more fun if the Players don't know each other's regrets until they are revealed in play, but how secret you want to keep this should be left to the group to decide (keeping it secret will slow down Operator creation as you figure out the details).

The most important element in this step is that your Regret be consistent with the fiction as established in the setting and with the answers to the Skill Baggage questions of all the Operators. The GM will facilitate this process and work with each of the Players to ensure the Regret is interesting and works within the fiction.

Your Operator's Regret could be the direct result of the Corporation's request or be an action they took in the interest of the Corporation.

Valerie decides that her Whitecoat's Regret was working for Pacific Security Solutions (PSS) and "Under the orders of PSS, I implemented and managed a strategy to create a massive riot after the great Tsunami. Ultimately PSS was called in to pacify, and it was a bloody and savage massacre."

Kenichi decides that his Handler was working for Aesculapian Laboratories, and "I managed the project to find a cure to the terrible plague. In an effort to keep my own job, I fudged a few reports to look better. I never knew the drug would actually go into production..."

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Your Regret can also be passive; you could have stood by while something terrible happened.

Ahmed decides that his Runner's Regret will be "I ferried VIPs on a Trauma One secret list out of the devastation of the Meltdown/Tsunami as the poor languished and died".

Phil decides that his Tech's Regret was "I designed advanced geothermal plants for 3^H Energy, and I have since learned that 3^H Energy used my technology in an area I recommended against, possibly causing the great Pacific Tsunami."

Strong Regrets place the guilt on your Operator's shoulders but leave the Corporation strongly involved in your actions. A good Regret should have some way for your Operator to overcome their guilt (eventually).

Your Regret isn't something you initially want to share with anyone, let alone the other Operators. Without the Headspace implant, your Operator would be happy to take their Regret to their grave.

As the GM, use the thoughts of the Players regarding their Regrets to fill out and define the fiction of the Corporate Secrets based on your Operator's participation in those events. If multiple Players want to be involved in the same Corporate Secret, you should take care to make the fiction consistent between the various Players, i.e. it's likely that not everyone could have successfully assassinated the same person.

GHOST OPERATORS AND REGRETS

The GM should take this time to create Regrets for each of the Ghost Operators, using whichever Corporate Secrets the Players choose not to use. These Regrets will help to serve as motivators for their future actions as NPC Anchors (see Chapter 7 page 139).

Julie notes that no one picked the last Corporate Secret, the one involving Applied Optimism and decides that both of the Ghost Operators (Yoshi the Ronin and Shadow the Infiltrator) were involved in this secret and worked together to assassinate several high-ranking public officials and fake their deaths as suicides all in the name of better ratings.

10. DEFINE YOUR DRIVE

Each Operator will also have a **Drive**, a greater goal of dealing with their Regret when it is eventually revealed in play. An Operator's Drive is an achievable goal to right the wrongs of their past and should directly involve the Corporation that played a part in their Regret.

A Drive is defined as being either based on **Vengeance** or **Redemption** (circle on the Sheet).

A **Vengeance Drive** focuses on an act of retribution against the Corporation to make up for your Operator's past Regret.

Ahmed's Runner demands Vengeance from Trauma One: "Trauma One need to pay for their crimes from the Tsunami, with interest".

Phil's Tech demands Vengeance from 3rdEnergy: "I have a list of the 3rd Energy Board Members during the Tsunami, 9 to go..."

A **Redemption Drive** focuses on personal atonement for your Regret.

Valerie's Whitecoat seeks Redemption: "Reveal the truth about the PSS clandestine activities and urban pacifications during the food riots".

Kenichi's Handler seeks Redemption: "Reveal to the people that Applied Optimism has no cure, and accept some blame, if required".

GHOST OPERATORS AND DRIVES

The GM should take this time to create Drives for each of the Ghost Operators. These Drives will help to serve as motivators for their future actions as NPC Anchors (see Chapter 7 page 139).

Julie's Ghost Operator, Yoshi, seeks Redemption on Applied Optimism "Find forgiveness from the families of those I killed in Applied Optimism's name".

Julie's other Ghost Operator, Shadow, seeks Vengeance on Applied Optimism "Hunt down those responsible for the kill orders and ensure their deaths are just as public".

11. CHOOSE EDGES

Each Operator has choices to make for a variety of **Edges**. Edges define specific character elements that are unique to your Operator and give them an edge over the competition. Edges represent any exceptional gear, armour, weapons, or contacts that your Operator begins play with. Pick 2 from the list on your Operator sheet.

12. UPGRADES

Each Operator begins the game with one **Upgrade**, a piece of advanced cybernetic technology that will provide a specific benefit during play. Details are already on your sheet.

Optionally, if you have more time (or if you prefer), let each Player pick their own Upgrade instead of the default.

See the **Upgrade Sheet** (at the back of this book).

13. CREDITS

Money is still very much a fact of everyday life in the fiction of *Head-space*. Credits represent money, and all Operators begin the game with the number of credits indicated on their Operator sheet. They may acquire or lose credits during play based on actions they take in the fiction. Players may use Credits to buy objects, pay for favours, or put an Operator into debt with a mob boss.

- ◆ **1 Credit:** 2 weeks' salary at a decent job, a nice piece of gear or gun.
- ◆ **2 Credits:** In deep with a loan shark or a month of middle-class income.
- ◆ **3 Credits:** Enough for exotic trips, cyberware, gems, etc.
- ◆ **4 Credits+:** Enough to get a mortgage, buy a boat, or purchase a state-of-the-art spinner.

14. INTRODUCE YOUR OPERATOR TO THE CELL AND BEGIN PLAY

Introduce your Operator to the Cell, and you can begin play in Chapter 9 | **It All Went Sideways**.



CHAPTER 6 THE OPERATORS

THE HANDLER

You're the one with the plan. Before all this, you were respected, managing the kind of corporate and military assets that would make the people working above you salivate. It was a great way to make money hand over fist, but it was also a great way to lose your soul. Getting out of the office and being "hands on" meant that you couldn't isolate yourself from the calls you made or the actions your assets took in the field. Negotiating for cease-fires or hostage releases was where you started to feel like your life was a nightmare. Saving lives reminded you of all the ones you'd helped see end, many of them with a simple phone call. You were the top brass' golden child, and now you've thrown that all away. You're the guardian angel for your Cell, making sure everyone gets out alive by always having a backup plan. Regardless of your Drives, you're all united by wanting to take down the system many of you once belonged to. The same system that grinds the world under its feet and nearly took your humanity. Everything you learned about planning, coercing, and negotiating is all poured into your new calling: taking the corps down, one day at a time.

NAME

Choose one of the following:

Cross, Greer, Hannibal, Hamilton, Keaton, Stacker, Stickell, Voight, Washington, Wolf.

Or a leader's name, a name with history, or a name that elicits trust.

SKILLS

COAX

Skill Question: Who blew your cover on a major op?

Whether you need to bribe, threaten, or cajole, you can get what you need out of a person. There is nothing you can't get done—or get your hands on—with a few well-chosen words. The way to play every person regardless of who they are, the nuances of social engineering and subtle threats. They're all just a part of the job. Most people want to help out someone else, but they need to be given the opportunity to do that. The

worried phone call to IT from a clerk who locked themselves out of their terminal or helping the single parent late to their kid's recital get in the building to grab a forgotten briefcase is a chance to be a hero. You're just giving them an opportunity to feel better about themselves.

CONTINGENCY

Skill Question: Who risked the lives of your unit with their ego?

It doesn't matter how the plan was ruined, because you'd already planned for that to happen. You can anticipate the moves of your opponents because you've seen all this go down before. When the inevitable happens and an op goes sideways, you're never without a backup plan, or a substitute for a malfunctioning, yet vital, piece of gear. Your fallback plans have their own fallback plans. This cascade of contingency plans doesn't just save your neck; it gives insight into how others may have constructed their own contingency plans. It's like playing chess against yourself, and you plan to win.

OBSERVATION

Skill Question: Who don't you trust because of something you saw?

Nothing gets past you in any environment. There's always something moving, and you'll spot it. Surveillance is child's play. Counter-surveillance is where you get to have real fun. Spotting out-of-place people or items, unusual traffic, signs of security systems, people acting out of character, snipers, or rival surveillance are all part of the daily routine. The core of observation is constant situational awareness, an unwillingness to skip over even the smallest details around you. This makes you well suited to make initial contact with new groups and invaluable to have on hand when watching surveillance footage.

HANDLER EDGES

You start with:

- ◆ Secure Wetspace Implant (+**IMPLANT** +**WETSPACE LINK**)
- ◆ Headspace Implant (+**IMPLANT** +**HEADSPACE LINK**)
- ◆ Stylish Armoured Suit (Armour 1 +**INCONSPICUOUS**)
- ◆ Semi-automatic Pistol (2-Harm Close/Near +**LOUD** +**QUICK**)
- ◆ 3 Credits

Pick 2 Handler Edges:

CORPORATE LIASON

You maintain a positive relationship with one of the setting's Corporate Agents. Who are they, and why do you still work together?

THE RETIREMENT PLAN

You stole a major corporate secret and sold it to the highest bidder. One Credit is deposited into your account at the start of each session, but the Corporation you stole it from has put a price on your head. Who are they, and what did you steal?

BLACK HELICOPTERS

You have an ally in a government spy agency. Who are they, and what resources can they provide on a moment's notice?

THE BLACK LIST

You have a reliable list of freelance Operators on the run who need help and would be willing to provide help in return.

BLACK TIE

Your name always ends up on High Society e-vites. Who do you know in High Society, and what is your relationship with them?

SURVEILLANCE VAN

You have a van equipped with the latest and greatest for all of your surveillance/counter-surveillance needs.

SIGNAL BOOST

You are good friends with an up-and-coming journalist in the city. Who are they, and what is their latest big story?

UPGRADES

You start with the following:

VISUAL SUITE

+IMPLANT +ANTIDAZZLE +VISUAL ENHANCEMENT +THERMOGRAPH +NIGHT VISION +RECORD +INCONSPICUOUS

Night vision, telescopic magnification, microscopic magnification, video recording, glare protection, visual editing, and filtering. Cybereyes are way more advanced than they used to be, and they look almost normal to boot.



THE INFILTRATOR

When you do wetwork and infiltration for too long, you lose sight of everything. Who you are. Why you're doing it. Whether the damage you cause does anything but make the world a more hellish place. As a kid, your talent with stealth compelled you to explore. To go out at night, to trespass all hours of the day in places you didn't belong. It was a grand game that you thought you played by yourself, as if you were the only one on the playground—but you weren't. Not by a long shot. A natural-born Infiltrator is a rare thing, and the people who recruited you knew that. But day by day, you lost yourself. Something drove you out of your old life, and the new life you've chosen is your way to cope. No more being lost. You've found yourself again, in the Headspace you share, and you're not letting go. People see you as a person again, and the people who made you think you were just a tool are going to learn that their pet Infiltrator is uniquely suited to taking them down. You can be better than the nothing they made you. Sneaking through the shadows may not be full of childlike wonder, but for the first time in a long time, you know why you're doing this.

NAME

Choose one of the following:

Blade, Clancy, Cutter, Edge, Face, Fox, Hood, Midnight, Razor, Shadow.

Or a rogue's name, a thief's handle, or a name that invokes fear in your enemies.

SKILLS

MARTIAL ARTS

Skill Question: Who was the only one who stood up against you?

You can give or take the hit in a number of armed and unarmed schools of combat, from the most obscure, ostentatious fencing of centuries past to the newest, meanest boxing out of the worst prize-fighting outfits. In your hands, anything is a weapon. Hell, even your hands are a weapon. No matter what you're doing, every situation is evaluated for the weapons available to you, improvised or otherwise. Recognizing the training other people have in martial arts, evaluating an opponent for weakness, improvising weapons, and fighting your way out a situation where you're outnumbered are all things you learned the hard way.

SECURITY

Skill Question: Whose family did you forge documents for that allowed their escape?

There hasn't been a security system you couldn't crack in years, be it analog, digital, or human. From consumer security to the off-the-books protocols of major corps, you've got a handle on what to expect when breaking in to a place. Sleight of hand? They're not just tricks for cheering up kids—you can swipe anything you need on a moment's notice and put it back without ever breaking a sweat. You even picked up a hobby along the way: forgery counts as arts and crafts, right? Those forgeries can be paper or digital, from the right ID to entirely fake, yet utterly believable, love letters. Changing log books in an office to reflect incriminating visits by a fall guy? It's a walk in the park.

STEALTH

Skill Question: Who did you witness doing something that still puts you off?

Avoiding detection isn't about wearing black and tip-toeing everywhere. To be as good as you are at what you do, the object is to blend in regardless of surroundings. If you can't blend in, the goal is to avoid detection. Regardless of the assignment, you get in and get out before they ever realize you were there. You're a master of getting lost in a crowd, hiding in plain sight, following someone, trespassing in high security areas, and walking across a sleeping executive's hotel room without waking them up. If a task can succeed when someone stealthy carries it out, you're the answer to how to make it work.

INFLTRATOR EDGES

You start with:

- ◆ Secure Wetspace Implant (+**IMPLANT** +**WETSPACE LINK**)
- ◆ Headspace Implant (+**IMPLANT** +**HEADSPACE LINK**)
- ◆ Thermopitic Cloak (Armour 1 +**INCONSPICUOUS** +**CAMOFLAGE**)
- ◆ Silenced Semi-automatic Pistol (2-Harm Close/Near +**SILENT** +**QUICK**)
- ◆ Security Tools
- ◆ Forgery Kit
- ◆ 1 Credit

For close encounters you use (pick one):

- ◆ Monofilament Whip (2-Harm Hand/Close +**AP** +**AREA** +**DANGEROUS** +**MESSY**)
- ◆ Monofilament Katana (3-Harm Hand/Close +**AP** +**MESSY**)
- ◆ Monofilament Shuriken/Throwing Knife (2-Harm Close +**AP** +**INFINITE** +**QUICK** +**MESSY** +**INCONSPICUOUS**)

Pick 2 Infiltrator Edges:

REGISTERED AS A LETHAL WEAPON

You inflict +1 Harm in unarmed combat.

THE FENCE

You know someone who will always buy for the right price and has their ear to the ground on dealers just like them. Who are they, and why is your relationship to them so complicated?

IDENTIFY THIEF

You have a large collection of prepared IDs, disguises, and electronic background files and have access to a suite of state-of-the-art forgery tools/fabricators. Where is this equipment stored?

THE ANGEL

You refused to kill a high-value target in the heat of the moment, and they're still on the run. They owe you their life. Who are they, and why didn't you take them out?

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EYE IN THE SKY

You have backdoor access to a spy satellite and can get short windows (~5 minutes) of overflight on priority areas. You pay in non-financial terms for this access. Who are you paying, and what is their price?

THE CLEANER

A retired crime scene investigator can clean up even the bloodiest scene and leave no trace except your payment to them. They can also be asked to help with an investigation and their contacts on the force. Who are your contacts, and why do you trust them?

THE GUILD

You maintain a positive relationship with a guild of information brokers specializing in building blueprints and information. Who are they, and what do they ask from you?

UPGRADES

You start with the following:

THE POTATO HEAD DISGUISE KIT

+ IMPLANT + DISGUISE

There are two useful things you can do with this implant. The first is that you can take pieces of your face off and replace them with other pieces so you look like someone else. The second is that you can just take all of them off and scare the bejeezus out of someone.

THE RONIN

Once, you loved your job. You took pride in your tactical successes and the performance of your unit. You were the sort of officer people dreamed about serving with: a tough, fair commander prepared to live or die alongside your comrades in arms. The final straw was one you don't talk about, or all the almost-final straws before it. You wanted out, but they didn't want to let you go. Nightmares about what it took to get out alive still linger in your subconscious, striking with military precision and leaving you devastated in the dark of night. A soldier without an army, a unit cut off from serving any corporation or government. Only within the Headspace have you found new family to fight alongside, but that doesn't change the fact that some part of you is still alone, still without a people. Now, you fight for those who will never know you, the ones being victimized and ruled over by the corps. Life as you knew it is no longer possible, but the skills you've brought with you cannot be taken away from you. They can't even be taken from your Cell when you die. The Headspace brings a small measure of peace to you because of that. Even in death, you will make the corps pay for the sins they have committed, including the ones you once committed in their name.

NAME

Choose one of the following:

Callahan, Clark, Hammer, Hunt, Kurosawa, Munny, Reno, Willis, Wyatt, Yoshi.

Or a warrior's name, the name of a hunter, or a name that lets you blend in with the sprawl.

SKILLS

EXPLOSIVES

Skill Question: Who got hurt by the one bomb you didn't defuse in time?

You could write a book on making things explode. Or preventing them from exploding. Everyone expects professional bombs. No one expects an expertly spliced-together explosive made out of materials they could have found in their own house. To you, everything is a possible material for an explosive, be it a briefcase to house a bomb, the tape to hold the explosive material in place, or the homemade shrapnel out of your junk drawer. Corporate office cleaning supplies, faulty wiring, and engine blocks are all potential explosives, just waiting for you to set them off.



FIREARMS

Skill Question: Whose rival did you take down during a messy op?

From the smallest conventional gun to the most intimidating experimental weapons, you can shoot them all. You have an innate, intuitive understanding of military-grade weapons, and you can take a shot regardless of weather or surroundings. The work of a sniper takes finesse and exquisite focus, while firing a rocket launcher that could break some people requires an understanding of using physics to keep from ripping your arms off. Thankfully, you've got all of these qualities. Where other people may be afraid of the kind of weaponry you use with ease, you only see tools, each uniquely suited for different jobs.

TACTICS

Skill Question: Who did you save when everything went south?

There are few people in the world that can do the damage you can with a small unit of like-minded individuals. You're not the one with the contingency plan, but you do know how to fight even in the most cramped and far-from-ideal surroundings. You know sightlines like the backs of your hands, and just where to put your people to hit the hardest. Being outnumbered isn't a problem when your unit can eliminate most of the enemy before they ever know they have a problem behind their lines. Profiling the tactics of other groups, be they corp, gang, or independent, is part why you're so damn good at your job.

RONIN EDGES

You start with:

- ◆ Secure Wetspace Implant (+**IMPLANT** +**WETSPACE LINK**)
- ◆ Headspace Implant (+**IMPLANT** +**HEADSPACE LINK**)
- ◆ Ballistic Battle Armour (Armour 3 +**BULKY**)
- ◆ Assault Rifle (3-Harm Near/Far +**LOUD** +**SUPPRESSIVE**)
- ◆ Semi-Automatic Pistol (2-Harm Close/Near +**LOUD** +**QUICK**)
- ◆ Fragmentation Grenades (4-Harm Close/Near +**LOUD** +**AREA** +**DANGEROUS**)
- ◆ A small cache of weapons, ammunition, and explosives.
- ◆ 1 Credit

Pick 2 Ronin Edges:

UNSANITARY CONDITIONS

You have a trusted friend who owns an underground cyber surgery. They're always willing to patch you up and look the other way, no matter the danger. Who are they, and why do they trust you more than anyone?

WELCOME TO THE GUN SHOW

You maintain a major arsenal of weapons, ammunition, and explosives. It is highly illegal. Where is it? Who do you pay to keep it safe?

THE B-TEAM

A team of local heavy-hitting mercenaries owe you big. Who are they? Why do they still owe you?

PRECISION CRAFTSMANSHIP

One of your starting firearms has a permanent +1 Harm rating. You know a highly trained weaponsmith who can do this work, for the right price.

FREIGHT TRAIN

You are an unrelenting force. Stun damage is halved against you (round down).

BLACK OPS HANDLER

You have an ally at one of the Corporations who can provide you with reliable intel on their black ops. Who are they, and which Corporation do they work for?

THOUSAND-YARD STARE

You've seen so much death and destruction, nothing truly scares you anymore.

Once per session you can lower the FEAR stress track by 2.

UPGRADES

You start with the following:

PAIN EDITOR

+ IMPLANT + INCONSPICUOUS

When you feel pain, your body is trying to tell you something. Maybe you don't want to listen to your body, though. Maybe your body's an asshole, I don't know.

When you take this implant, pick a Stress Track. You can no longer be Taken Out by Feedback on this Stress Track when you take Harm.

THE RUNNER

You've done it all. Wheelman, bag man, courier, messenger. If it goes in the air, on the ground, or in the water, you know how to pilot it. Even your own body is a finely tooled instrument for navigating the city, using parkour to go from rooftop to alley floor and back again. The city's topography is as known to you as the few faded scars you have from the early days of learning how to climb the city itself. It doesn't matter that you were never a suit; corps got into your life, just like they get into anyone's. Whether you were a driver for a small tactical unit or a courier with a briefcase latched to their wrist, you had your own long, dark look into just how terrible things are. It was enough to make you want to push back. Helping people in need in the city treats a symptom, and not the disease. As much as you love your city and the people in it, they're being destroyed by a system bent on crushing everyone outside it. No matter how horrified it makes you to run deeper into this world, you have allies to depend on, and a city to liberate. And you'll do it all with a birds' eye view.

NAME

Choose one of the following:

Brooklyn, Charger, Dodge, Harlem, Bullitt, Gemmayze, Nike, Skid, Shelby, Wheelie.

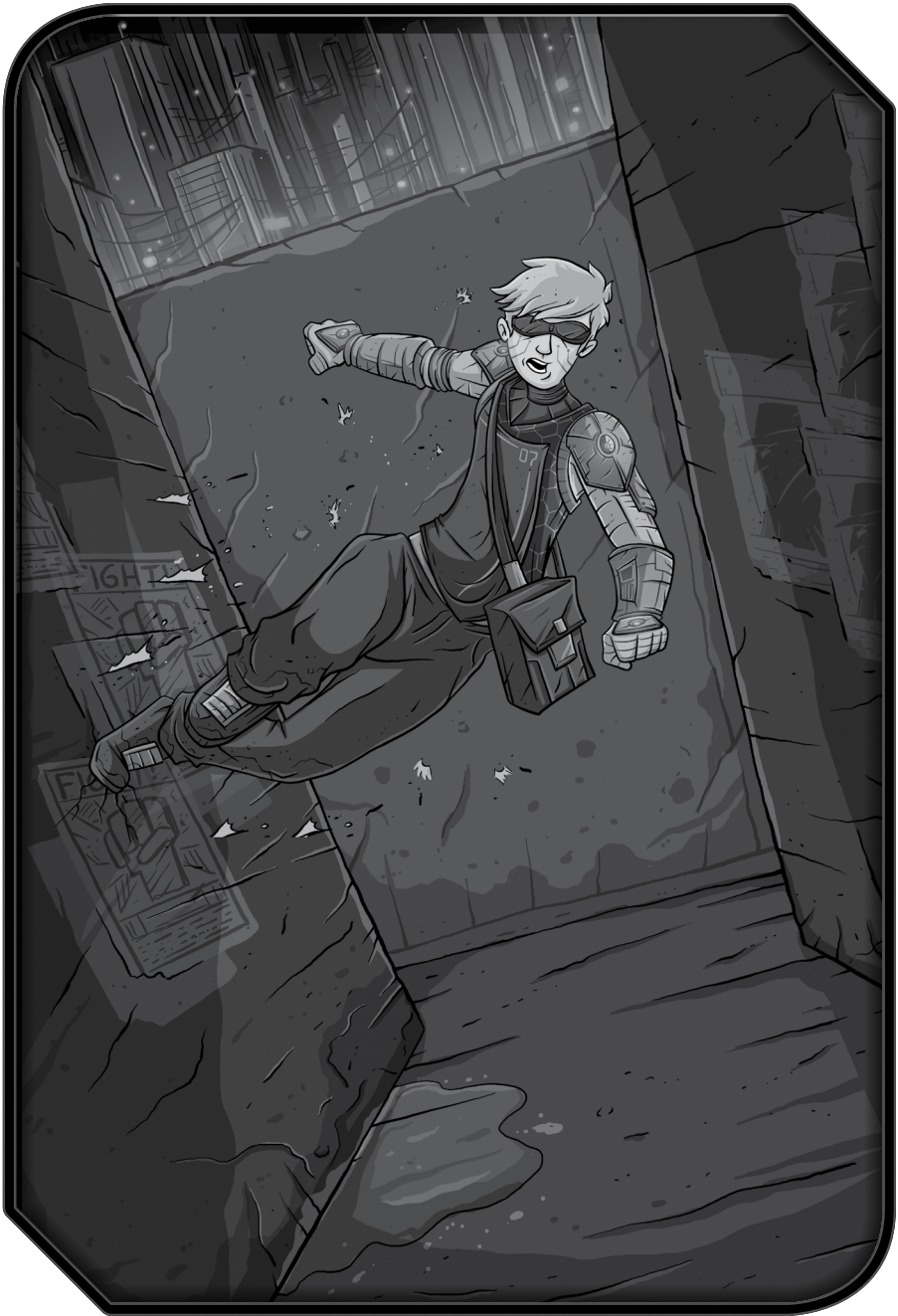
Or a name taken from something fast and stylish, the name of a neighbourhood, or a name that connects you to the Sprawl.

SKILLS

PILOT

Skill Question: Who pulled you from a fiery wreck just in time?

If it moves, you can make it go. Land, sky, sea, the shape of the landscape doesn't matter, because you can drive over them all and leave anyone who tries to follow as so much flaming wreckage behind you. This expertise makes you the perfect getaway driver for any op. Regardless of environment, you can spot or lose a tail, defend or attack with your vehicle, and perform each of these functions under a variety of conditions, from the most ideal traffic to being under heavy fire. You can escape, shadow, or kill someone with your skills behind a wheel (or stick).



PARKOUR

Skill Question: Who did you leave behind because they couldn't keep up?

You know the city with your whole body. Where someone sees a dead end, you know to look up, and how to find your way from ground to sky and back again. You can get anywhere your feet or hands can carry you, allowing you to travel swiftly and discreetly, while giving you an edge when being tailed on foot or by someone in a ground vehicle. Parkour can also be used to fight—taking out a corporate bag-man isn't so hard when you can use an alley wall against the guy who thought he had you.

SPRAWL

Skill Question: Who did you hide from a Corporate threat?

If you need anything in the city, you know where to find it. Your understanding of the city includes its physical and cultural terrain. Looking for a safe haven for a night—or even longer—is well within your skill set. The movements of gangs and corps throughout the city are things you keep track of, and you understand the possible meanings behind unusual activity in the city at large. Tracking down a piece of gear in the place you call home is just a matter of knowing where to look. And if someone gets the drop on you anywhere in the city, running them straight through the right gang's territory will take care of them for you.

RUNNER EDGES

You start with:

- ◆ Secure Wetspace Implant (+**IMPLANT** +**WETSPACE LINK**)
- ◆ Headspace Implant (+**IMPLANT** +**HEADSPACE LINK**)
- ◆ Crash Suit (Armour 2)
- ◆ Machine Pistol (2-Harm Close/Near +**LOUD** +**SUPPRESSIVE**)
- ◆ 1 Credit

Pick your ride:

- ◆ Kaneda Cyberbike (Armour 1) 1 pilot, 1 passenger, recumbent design, speed 130mph.
- ◆ Torque Truck (Armour 3 +**LOAD** +**TOW**) 2 crew, 4 passengers, storage, speed 70mph.
- ◆ Spinner Aerodyne (Armour 2 +**FLIGHT**) 1 pilot, 4 passengers, speed 200mph.

Pick 2 Runner Edges:

HEADSPACE VEHICLE LINK

You may remotely pilot your ride because of an implanted neural link between it and your Headspace implant.

A THIN CROOKED LINE

You've got a dirty cop on the take who can help you with more than just your speeding tickets. What's their name and expertise?

TAKE BACK THE STREETS

A guardian street gang has your back. What do they control in the Sprawl, and who's threatening to muscle in on their turf?

GONE IN 60 SECONDS

You're friendly with a gang of car thieves and have access to their large vehicle garage/chop shop. Name the gang. Why are they so friendly with you?

SPRAWL SAFE HOUSE

You have a very secure and well-supplied compound for when you need to lay low or hide an asset. Where in the city is it?

STUDENT REVOLUTION!

You have a strong ally/leader in the student/youth community. A rally or riot at a moment's notice isn't out of the question. Who are they?

FRIENDS WITH NO HOMES

You spent a long time on the streets and have built up a network of those who live there. You help them, they help you.

UPGRADES

You start with the following:

MUSCLE AND BONE STABILIZERS

+ IMPLANT + INCONSPICUOUS

Your bones are laced with a carbon-steel alloy, and your muscles are reinforced with filaments and medical gel injectors.

Ignore up to 3 Harm from any Vehicle Crash/Crush or Fall. Allows you to jump from a 3-story building with little to no danger.

THE TECH

The people who understand Techs best are other Techs. You've seen the worst secrets humanity has and the despicable things that have been done to keep those secrets from seeing the light. The data you've trawled alone would screw anyone up, and you've been watching it fill your screen for years. Corporations don't just have trade secrets to protect; they zealously defend the people filling their management and security ranks, many of them the worst examples of humanity that you've run across. These are the people who have to be exposed and held accountable for the atrocities they've committed to secure their bottom line. You've built drones to gather surveillance data and filled cars full of burst ammo from one of your air support drones. The things you can do as an engineer are much like medicine, capable of helping or hurting, depending on application. You've rewired generators in slums, and you've rewired smart houses to kill their executive owners. What your Cell needs to do their job, you'll find a way to create. The technology people use to victimize others is something you can use to bring them down. If you're lucky, if you do this long enough, you'll start sleeping without seeing the data you've exposed turn up in your dreams.

NAME

Choose one of the following:

Benji, Case, Crash, Flynn, Hiro, Mother, Morpheus, Spider, Whistler, Zero.

Or a hacker's callsign, something anonymous, or a name no one would ever give a person.

SKILLS

ENGINEERING

Skill Question: Who still doesn't trust your designs?

Most at home in the guts of technology, you can build, mod, or upgrade anything you put your hands on—and create the things you can't. You work miracles in the field, and what you can do with a properly equipped facility just might be blasphemy. Drill a hole underneath the city, build life support equipment for a Whitecoat, rewire a building, build a water purification plant from scratch? Give you a few hours, and it's a done deal. Engineering is a field for builders with a big imagination, be they low- or high-tech. Archimedes, eat your heart out.



DRONES

Skill Question: Who doesn't know you used to monitor their family for a Corporation?

If it can kill, survey, steal, or repair at a distance, you know how it works. Whether it drives, flies, crawls, or swims, piloting drones is easy—you can even do it from the Headspace. Drones are used when conditions are dangerous or dull. Eavesdropping on phone calls, gathering hours of surveillance footage of a neighbourhood, mapping an area during or after natural disasters, supply delivery, air support, and remote strikes, remote measurements of radiation after a reactor meltdown, all of these are possible uses for drones. You can make them as small as a butterfly or as big as a small plane. Their size and use are limited only by your access to materials and your imagination.

HACKING

Skill Question: Whose dark secret did you erase, and did you keep a backup?

Unrestricted to the laborious speed of keyboards, you hack at the speed of thought, using adept intrusions to make even the most advanced computer systems dance to your whims. Placing backdoors to ease your spying on corporate data, changing traffic lights, removing data from a system, disabling security and drones, turning someone's smart apartment into a death trap or hacking a car's autopilot system or GPS are well within your capabilities. Though you're not a brilliant digital forger like the Infiltrator, you're still capable of finding new and interesting ways to corrupt data and files. Faking logins and online traffic is child's play, and it's something you might do to kill some time.

TECH EDGES

You start with:

- ◆ Secure Wetspace Implant (**+IMPLANT +WETSPACE LINK**)
- ◆ Headspace Implant (**+IMPLANT +HEADSPACE LINK**)
- ◆ Armoured Tech/Work Coveralls (Armour 2)
- ◆ Heavy Wrench (1-Harm Hand/Close)
- ◆ Shotgun (3-Harm Close/Near **+LOUD +MESSY +RELOAD**)
- ◆ 2 Credits

Pick your drone:

- ◆ Vespa Drone (+**ROTOR** +**TINY** +**FRAGILE** +**STEALTH** +**QUICK** +**AUDIO/VISUAL SUITE** +**IR/UV/THERMO** +**CAMERA**)
- ◆ Wolf Drone (+**QUADRUPED** +**MEDIUM** +**TOW** +**TOOLS** +**WEAPON**: Monofilament Teeth 2-Harm +**AP** +**CLOSE** +**MESSY**)
- ◆ Predator Drone (+**FIXED** Wing +**LARGE** +**LOUD** +**CAMERA** +**WEAPON**: Missile Rack 5-Harm Near/Far/Extreme +**HEAT** +**RELOAD**)

Pick 2 Tech Edges:

ICE, ICE, BABY

You recognize that the best offence is a good defence, and your personal cyberspace defenses are untouchable. You maintain a highly secure online fortress. Where is it physically located?

MY PRIVATE RADIO SHACK

You possess a van or depot with a large collection of hi-tech tools. Everything you'd need to jury-rig a project.

DIRTY DEEDS, DONE DIRT CHEAP

You hold a reprehensible secret over a Corporate manager. Who are they, and what's the big deal?

THERE, I FIXED IT

Temporary repairs come naturally to you. You can add a +**TAG** on a vehicle or a piece of gear that lasts for one session any time you use your Engineering Skill.

HACK THE PLANET

You can post messages to an online repository where hackers are sure to notice. Some localized electronic mayhem (misbehaving traffic lights, ATMs spewing cash) is always good for a distraction.

SIDEKICK AI

You have an artificial intelligence of your own design who resides in your Wetspace Implant. They can gather data and administer simple tasks and converse. Name the AI, give them one personality trait and a dominant emotion. Their intelligence is rated as **+COMPLEX**.

DRONING ON

You begin play with a second drone. This second drone's type may differ from the first one you chose.

UPGRADES

You start with the following:

WIRED REFLEXES

+IMPLANT +QUICK +INCONSPICUOUS

You're fast, precise, and your reaction time is greatly enhanced because of the electronic stimulants applied directly to your brain. Side effects include being really hyperactive and annoying.

You always go first in any situation where time is of the essence, and you can ignore the Reload constraint on gear you are using.

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THE WHITECOAT

Whitecoats are doctors to people the public will never meet, if the public is lucky. Devastating in their brilliance, they are equal parts detective and miracle worker. You don't settle for mediocre or rest on your laurels as a doctor. Whether you were a ripperdoc, a field medic, or a coroner in foreign wars no one even knows exist, you were the best. You still are the best, even though you've turned your back on that life. You took an oath to do no harm, but you've broken it countless times in your life. Done things no doctor should do. But you're going to make up for it or—more likely—die trying. Your most important patients are the people you now work alongside, the brave and tortured souls whose pain is now your own through the Headspace. If your morals were asleep before, they are now painfully awake and magnified by the people you share your mind with. You know what kind of terrible things the world holds for the people in it who don't belong to the elite. Before this, you were a tool in the hands of people destroying the world. But the corruption and misery the corps has spread cannot stand. Like any malignant presence, it's now up to you to remove it. Surgically.

NAME

Choose one of the following:

Angel, Benson, Course, Op, Mills, Ryan, Somerset, Steel, Stapleton, Quincy.

Or a wise name, a famous problem solver, or a Dr. with a last name.

SKILLS

INVESTIGATION

Skill Question: Who did you find dirt on that you still aren't comfortable with?

From out-of-place car keys to the Byzantine end games of your former Corporate masters, you can find the details that are out of place, including the ones that were faked, or never there at all. Chasing down leads on a black bag op, examining a murder scene, and combing countless databanks looking for the file that will unlock everything are activities as second nature to you as finding a pulse. This kind of fine investigative mind is one of the reasons you're a brilliant Whitecoat. Your first love is medicine, and investigations related to it will always be ones at which you unquestionably excel.

MEDICINE

Skill Question: Who gets their fix from you?

Treating people is easy. Treating people without crashing their cyberware is less so. Performing heart surgery on a partly cybernetic heart with what you could find in the van while under fire is why you terrify people. Delivering medical attention in a fully outfitted surgical suite is second-nature to you, but you're equally adept at making do with supplies that were never intended to be used in a medical or technical capacity, under any conditions. Though you're not an engineer, cyberware is well within your capabilities to deal with, particularly when it comes to its implantation, upkeep, or removal. Making a diagnosis rarely involves bringing your patients to death's door before figuring out their maladies.

PSYCHOLOGY

Skill Question: Who did you help that you wish you hadn't?

Being brilliant hasn't blunted your ability to empathize with other human beings, a quality that makes you not only capable of assessing your fellow Cell members' psychological well-being but also provides insight into all the people you encounter—and it makes you dazzling at spotting lies. This masterful grasp on the human psyche would have made you a great Handler, but it instead serves as one of the linchpins of your practice of medicine. You can build trust, de-escalate tense situations, treat patients with a mental illness, and profile targets of your Cell, whether they're people, neighbourhoods, or corporations.

WHITECOAT EDGES

You start with:

- ◆ Secure Wetspace Implant (+**IMPLANT** +**WETSPACE LINK**)
- ◆ Headspace Implant (+**IMPLANT** +**HEADSPACE LINK**)
- ◆ Armoured Casual Clothing (Armour 1 +**INCONSPICUOUS**)
- ◆ Semi-automatic Pistol (2-Harm Close/Near +**LOUD** +**QUICK**)
- ◆ 3 Credits

Pick a place that you work and provides you with resources and tools:

- ◆ A sterile, professional, and bureaucratic hospital (Name the hospital and its location).
- ◆ The cramped and impoverished but essential clinic you run on the streets (What neighbourhood?).
- ◆ Your illicit underground clinic and cybernetic chop-shop (Who do you pay off to keep it safe?).

Pick 2 Whitecoat Edges:

THE COUNSELLER

You have a lot of blackmail material on a Corporate hotshot. Who are they, which Corporation do they work for, and what do you know?

VICE SQUAD

You have a friend on the police's vice squad. They have expertise, and sometimes contraband goes missing and winds up in your hands. Who are they, and why do they trust you?

PATENT PENDING

You have deep connections into the cybernetics black market. What implant did you invent? Every session you get 1 Credit from royalties.

M.A.S.H. VETERAN

You did some work in the Corporate warzones overseas. More than a few of the world's best Operators are only alive because of what you did. You can make some calls and get some favours.

TRAUMA SURGEON

You have far too much experience dealing with human tragedy. Once per session, you can lower the GRIEF track by 2.

REPO MEN

A group of unsavoury characters who work in the "organ donor" industry owe you some favours and will probably do anything for the right price. Name this group and why they owe you?

BACK OFF! I'M A DOCTOR

You have the same social status as a mid-level executive, with equivalent legal protections.

UPGRADES

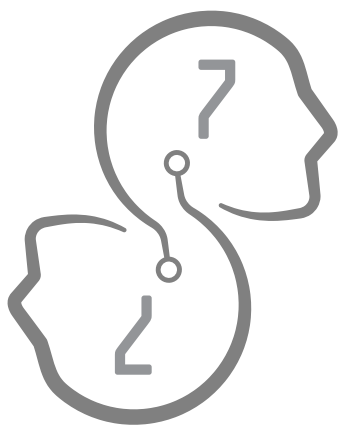
You start with the following:

MEDICAL SUITE

+ IMPLANT + HEALING + INCONSPICUOUS

Drug storage, vital monitor, medical injectors, synth-skin sprayers. You can use it to treat yourself or someone else.

Once per session, you can use drugs that your medical suite provides to lower any Stress Track to 0.



CHAPTER 7

THE GAME MASTER'S ROLE

OVERVIEW

The *Headspace* technology binds all the characters together in a powerful yet intimate way. They share their hard-won experience and heartfelt losses alike, in a bid to make the world a better place. The world is a corporate dystopia, with society battered and twisted by terrible ambitions.

The GM is the final piece that makes this all possible, and this chapter covers the rules, tools, and inspirations for the GM to make the world of *Headspace* come alive.

As the GM, you should know how to run a game for a table full of people. What *Headspace* offers is an overarching framework to make your job easier. The structure is designed to give you tools when you need them, and get out of your way when you know how to proceed.

YOUR MANDATE

As the GM for *Headspace*, you're making a promise to the Players to do three things:

- ◆ Make their Operators feel like hyper-competent badasses in their specialities;
- ◆ Present a world of ruthless ambition and emotional consequences; and
- ◆ Break the world in such a way that only the Cell can fix it.

So long as you honour these three promises, you are running *Headspace* “correctly.”

This is not a game about betrayal, powerless Players, or mindless destruction. This is about a close-knit team of talented people fighting the corporate dystopia and trying to fix the world together.

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YOUR TOOLBOX

The GM for *Headspace* has two categories of responsibilities: Actions and Plans.

During the session, you need to manage the **Action** by using three tools:

- ◆ **Lenses:** Where you need to focus the narrative.
- ◆ **People:** Which NPCs are acting and shaping the story.
- ◆ **Moves:** How the world responds or provokes the Operators (the specific fictional and mechanical tools available to you).

The rest of your time, you are making diabolical **Plans** and preparing for the Action:

- ◆ **Preparations:** How you plan for the game between sessions.
- ◆ **Techniques:** How you can navigate specific situations between Actions.
- ◆ **Maps:** How to draw the Operators into a web of relationships and places.

THE ACTION CYCLE

During the course of play, you manage **Actions**. Let the Operators direct the story and pick a new path. Your job is to react to their decisions, not mandate them. Just ask them the four magic words: “**What do you do?**”

If they want to do something simple or boring, just describe how they succeed. If they want to do a more difficult task, make them use the appropriate Move (Professional, Headspace, or Improvised) based on their Skills. Your job is to react to them and supply the consequences.

When the Players aren't using their Skills or don't know what direction to head, you have the opportunity to make your own contributions. Look at your **Lenses**, deciding whether to focus on honesty, dystopia, or emotions. If you require more to work with, consider the **People** who might get involved: Corporate Agents, Human Resources, Civilian Anchors, and the Wretched. Last of all, you can ponder the specific mechanical Moves you have at your disposal. When you are done with your contribution, ask them: “**What do you do?**”

YOUR LENSES

Your job is to describe the setting as the Operators experience it. When you run a game of *Headspace*, speak to the Operators directly instead of to the Players controlling them. When you describe the world of *Headspace*, you must speak using one of the following three rules.

WHAT HONESTY DEMANDS

Headspace is a game about teamwork. You are working together to tell an engaging story, full of wonder and cruel fortune. The best way to tell these stories is to speak with honesty and integrity. Be generous with the truth, telling the Operators as much as you can. If something is intentionally hidden from them or would normally be outside of their reach, ask them to make a move to determine the truth.

When in doubt, narrate an outcome that is obvious to you. It will keep the story moving forward and will give the Players the comfort that they live in a rational universe. Sometimes the most surprising path is the straight one.

This also means that you need to be honest about the consequences of the Operators' actions. If they blow up a bridge, it's going to be hard for people to cross that toxic river. If they gun down a hapless wage-slave, they might have a grieving family on their hands. Giving a few hundred creds to a beggar might be enough to pull them out of the gutter, or it might drive them deeper into the bottle. Every action has a consequence.

WHAT THE DYSTOPIA DEMANDS

The world is a place of faded wonders and shattered dreams. Tell the Operators that hope for a better world has been covered with filth and corruption. Tell them how society has been hollowed out by greed and cruel ambition. Tell them of the glittering towers of light that house the Corporations and the dank slums that the common people have to live in. Speak of rivers of industrial waste and skies filled with choking ash. Speak of the desperation of the downtrodden and the callous disregard of the elite.

Tell them how their world is dying and describe the cancers in excruciating detail. Inspire the Operators to act.

WHAT TROUBLED HEARTS DEMAND

View the world through the lens of emotion: Rage, Grief, Fear, Need, and Ego. Use these feelings to paint the world and to drive the Operators. Always think about the dominant emotions in the scene and in the Head-

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space. If the narrative doesn't make the emotion clear, choose one that will be dominant.

When there is a lot of Stress in the Rage Track, make the Wretched more aggressive and irritating. Make them threatening or cower when there is a lot of Fear Stress, or depressed when Grief is strong. Use body language, metaphor, and symbols to express how the emotional Headspace of the Operators changes their perception of the world.

YOUR PEOPLE

The world is full of people, both altruistic and selfish in nature. Each of them has their own relationships, hopes, and fears. Your most important tools are the people you speak through. They can be terrible villains, vulnerable friends, faceless opponents, or innocent citizens. All of these people can interact with the Operators to move the action forward.

CORPORATE AGENTS

Each Corporation has an **Agent** to represent them and interact with the Operators. They are proxies, ambassadors, bloodied fists. They have a similar degree of skill and competency as the Operators do. Agents have a single Emotion that they are most likely to bring to the fiction when they are present and two short descriptive adjectives to describe their personality. Consider Agents to be dark reflections of the Operators, who have bound themselves to their corporate overlords for a variety of reasons. Unlike the Operators, Agents don't have Headspace implants and have to lead their individual teams the old-fashioned way.

Agents start with the same kind of weapons, armour, and personal upgrades that any Operator would have. Similarly, they can only be slain permanently if the GM wishes it.

See the Settings in Chapter 11 for examples of Agents.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Corporations care about their valuable and skillful Agents. Everyone else is considered disposable meat, good enough to soak up gunfire and perform rudimentary tasks. These are the mooks, grunts, and other wage-slaves that the Corporations send to do their bidding.

Normally, Human Resources are considered in the abstract. These are the armed security squads, the IT monitors, and the public relations officers who are ordered to stop the Cell. They are the office-workers, accountants, and private investigators who do the scut-work that makes their employers a disgusting amount of money or gives them influence.

Outside of combat, each Human Resource can be defeated with one success on a Player Move. A single bureaucrat can be easily overcome, but a group of them working in concert could stop a tank.

In a combat situation, the GM should choose one weapon type and one armour type for the entire group. Each point of harm removes an individual from the group, taking them out of the conflict.

If there is only one person remaining, refocus the scene to introduce their individuality. Name that poor woman or man who just saw their colleagues taken down by freelance Operators. Let them beg for mercy, or stand firm with proud determination. Consider their families, their friends and their communities. Think about why they were willing to stand up to the Cell. Whatever the Players choose do to with the remaining Human Resource will have consequences.

CIVILIAN ANCHORS

Operators, no matter their professional training or deep-seated Regrets, have relationships with people from outside the Headspace: friends, family, rivals, and former partners. Every game includes three such people, called **Anchors**, and each Operator has a relationship with two of them.

For more information on how Anchors are created, check out Chapter 10 | **Session Two+**.

Use these Anchors as your mouthpieces, your avatars, and your tools during the game. Focus on their relationships to give solace to Operators in pain, or to punish those who go too far. Most of all, portray them as very real people with their own histories, fears, hopes, and dreams.

Anchors give the Operators a chance to vent their emotional stress through social interaction. The Runner might share a beer with a friend on the rooftops, talking through their problems. A former lover might help the Ronin express their grief and guilt. They can be the other half of those important conversations that will drain the emotional stress out of the Headspace. Anchors are what keep the Cell from spiraling out of control.

Ghost Operators are automatically Anchors; they don't count against the limit of three. For Ghost Operators, the Players chose their feature Skill during Operator Creation, and their dominant Emotion is the one associated with that Skill.

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Anchors exist because of their relationships, and each of their decisions can impact the Operators. The natural consequences of their choices will lead to conflict and drama.

THE WRETCHED

The ordinary people of the world are powerless, disenfranchised, and abused by their corporate overlords. The term “Wretched” reflects what those in power think of the average citizens in this dark world. The Wretched are the faceless hordes of humanity that the Operators are trying to save from this crumbling world. They are the ones serving oily-black ‘coffee’ with enough caffeine to keep a body moving. They are the hydroponic farmers that produce the only honest-to-goodness food in the cities, and the bureaucrats stuck trying to shut down the black-market rat farms. The Wretched are the ocean through which the Operators swim, providing you with the support and cover you need to ply their trade.

Over time, they will discover leaders among their ranks who will try to build something better. They will form economic and political movements that can influence their society. They come together to form cohesive communities, united by cultural heritage or religious traditions. The Wretched can try to make the world a better place, if the Operators can keep the Corporations at bay.

The Wretched are important because they can impact the setting as a whole. They form into angry mobs, build wonders, spread ideas, or express cultures. They can change the world, if you can give them the opportunity.

See Chapter 8 (page 172) for more information on movements and communities.

THE MARK

There is one more kind of person who you might want to use during play: the Mark. These are politicians who must be influenced before a vote, technical specialists who must be rescued, or family members that must be hidden from hostile forces. Unlike the other types of characters, Marks are purely reactive in nature. They don’t advance their own agenda, and they primarily exist as narrative gears that can be turned by the Operators.

YOUR MOVES

Moves are the specific fictional and mechanical tools available to push the narrative forward. The Players have three moves (**Professional**, **Headspace**, and **Improvise**) while you as the GM have five (**Ask**, **Offer**, **Threaten**, **Foster**, and **Seize**). When it is your turn to speak and you want to push the story forward, consider which of these Moves you wish to use.

Start with Ask and Offer. If those don't work, escalate to Threaten and Foster. As a last resort, you can Seize control.

ASK QUESTIONS

Questions are your most flexible tool for elaborating the setting, discovering character personality, and establishing facts in the fiction. Whenever a Player acts in a way that you don't expect or understand, ask them why they are doing so. Ask provocative questions and build on the answers.

Ask questions about their intent, reasoning, and motivation. You can ask questions about their history, their current activities, or their plans for the future. You can even ask questions about the setting, and give the Player a chance to establish something about the crumbling world.

Ask leading questions that have heavy implications, but don't require any specific answer. These questions let you propose something about the story and give the Players a chance to interpret or modify it.

Before you ask a question, consider whether it is specific or urgent. The classic question, "What do you do?" is none of these things by default, but the trick is in the asking.

- ◆ A specific question has a limited range of possible answers. It might be as narrow as "Do you go right or left?" or it might simply be constrained, as in "Who do you visit first?" Specific questions are easier to answer, and they provide a clear direction for the next action.
- ◆ An urgent question demands an answer. Not answering has clear and immediate consequences that push the session forward.

If a question is specific or urgent, then you can easily make a Move in response to the answer. If the question is neither, then it doesn't really go anywhere. "What do you do?" by itself is pretty flat, but it can be framed in such a way to provide specificity or urgency (or, ideally, both). It's all in the description that precedes it. "You've arrived in town, what

do you do?” is a pretty useless question unless you’re intentionally slowing down the pacing to futz around. “The drunk is swinging his axe at your head, what do you do?” is specific and urgent.

When you ask your questions, be certain to respect your Lenses. Ask them what they think would happen next. Ask them about the terrible realities of their dystopian world. Ask them about personal histories and relationships.

Why did you leave your husband?

Why are you so loyal to Clara?

How did Pacific Security Solutions find out you are a double agent?

OFFER BARGAINS

Present the Operators with exactly what they want or need. Perhaps it is power, fame, connections, tech, or information. Tell them what it will cost to get it.

Agents and Corporations can offer the Operators a deal. Anchors (the Cell’s allies) use their relationships with the Operators to get help.



Actions have unintended consequences. You can use this tool to respond to the Player's requests. All you need to do is say "Yes, but" or "Yes, if" and tell them what cost they must pay to get their way.

If they agree to pay that price, apply the consequences in the narrative. If an Operator agrees to this bargain, they get what they want and don't need to make a Professional, Headspace, or Improvised Move.

Conversely, the GM can simply explain what Skill would be necessary to overcome a given obstacle. If the Player succeeds on the appropriate Move, they can overcome that challenge.

The Agent reaches into a pocket and pulls out a black credit chip. "This is enough to keep you living comfortable for a year, if you drop this little investigation."

THREATEN VIOLENCE

Sometimes you just want them to bleed. With this Move, you threaten bodily (or neurological) injury unless they do what you want. This could be an intentional attempt at intimidation or merely an unwelcome truth about the world.

Describe something in the fiction that physically threatens the Operators in some way. If the Operators fail to deal with the threat or they capitulate, inflict the consequences on them. Deal Harm to an Operator (based on weapon or environment). The amount of Harm normally varies from 1 (for the lightest injuries) to 4 (major injuries). You can increase the amount if it is being inflicted by larger numbers of opponents.

- ◆ 1 Harm would be appropriate for a fist, knife, or mono-shuriken.
- ◆ 2 Harm would be appropriate for a machete or light pistol.
- ◆ 3 Harm would be appropriate for a mono-Katana, shotgun, or assault rifle.
- ◆ 4 Harm would be appropriate for a machine gun, sniper rifle, or grenade launcher.
- ◆ 5 Harm is the realm of mobile artillery and sophisticated cybernetic assault platforms. Use these sparingly.

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Ahmed's Runner, Nike, is approached by a group of street toughs in a narrow alleyway, with alcohol on their breath and hate in their eyes. They start to surround Nike as one of them asks him for money. Ahmed decides that Nike will not give up all his creds, so they pull out pistols and shoot him. Based on the weapon damage and their numbers, the GM decides that Nike takes two 2 Harm.

FOSTER EMOTIONS

Headspace is a game about emotions. You should use this Move to push the Operators around and force them to act. Describe something that encourages one of the given emotions.

- ◆ Rage: Provoke them.
- ◆ Fear: Threaten them.
- ◆ Grief: Blame them.
- ◆ Need: Bribe them.
- ◆ Ego: Flatter Them.

If the Operators fail to act out the emotion, by repressing their feelings or resisting the emotional pressure, inflict consequences on them. Add 1 Stress to one relevant Stress Track. If the NPC applying the pressure is family, by blood or by deed, increase it to 2 Stress instead.

The Corporate gentleman's words are soothing and reassuring. He has the power to make your problem go away, but his price might be too high for your moral code. You push past him, ignoring him to continue your search through the corporate gala. But you didn't give into it, you denied the emotion and pushed it out of your mind. It bleeds into the Headspace, and the GM adds one Ego to the Stress Track.

SEIZE CONTROL

Put the Operators exactly where you want them. This is the strongest and most unforgiving tool in your toolbox, best used precisely and infrequently. You can seize control in a variety of ways.

- ◆ Put an Operator where you want them, by moving, separating, blocking, or capturing one of them.
- ◆ Drain their resources: bullets, fuel, reputation, secrecy, contacts, or credits.
- ◆ Establish an event or introduce someone tied to an Operator's Regret or flashback scene.

A drone launches a gripping net at an Operator's motorcycle. The net clings to the bike like some kind of hungry spider, holding you firmly in place as the security forces descend on your position.

Your skimmer sputters and dies, coasting to a stop due to a lack of fuel.

If you need reminders during a session, the GM Reference Sheet has all of your Moves listed on it (see the end of the book).

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THE PLANNING CYCLE

PREPARATIONS

Once you've got the idea of Moves as actions that you take, the idea opens up a lot of possibilities, some of which exist outside of what we usually think of as "the game". There is a natural tendency to think that the game doesn't start until we're all around the table rolling dice. For some Players, that might be true—they just show up to play. But the reality is that it takes a lot of work to make a game go.

BEFORE YOUR FIRST SESSION

Assign Roles - Who in your game is responsible for hosting? For scheduling sessions? For food? In a lot of games, these end up being the GM's responsibility by default, and that's fine. But take the time to discuss who is responsible for what, so there's an understanding of what needs to be done and who's going to do it.

Create a World Sheet - This will start out as a single piece of paper and may grow over time. On it, write down the name of every Operator and the name of every NPC, Corporation, place, or thing that comes up in discussion. If something is interesting, write it down. This is your bucket for holding everything that comes up in the game, and it will become a critical reference.

BEFORE EVERY SESSION

Check in with Your Players - Make sure that everyone is still good with the responsibilities, that they'll be able to make it to the next session. Check if they have priorities for play or advancement they want to mention.

Review Notes - Look over your notes from the last session. Remind yourself of what happened.

Review the World Sheet - Look at the World Sheet. Make sure it's up to date, and ask yourself which elements might be fun or appropriate for this game. Figure out how you can hook in existing world elements into the broader narrative arc.

Write Your Opener - This is the first thing you're going to say to the players to start play. It should be no more than a sentence or three, framing the situation, and it should end in a question. You aren't obliged to read this verbatim, but the act of writing it down establishes a concrete starting point for you.

Think about Each Character - Stop and consider each character in your game. Look over their sheets if you have them. Think about some way this session is going to be about that character.

AFTER EVERY SESSION

Leave Time to Wrap Up - Let the end of the session have a little ritual to it, if only for a minute or two. If people need to leave quickly, then wrap up a little early to make time. Let the session come to a graceful close.

Ask for Questions - Ask your Players if they have any questions before they go. They might want rules clarifications or setting details, and this is an opportunity to give them. Similarly, if you have any questions for them, this is a good time for it.

Favorite and Least Favorite Moments - This will take a little time, so only do this if your table has the mental energy for it. Ask each Player their favorite moment of the game as well as their least favorite. This serves two purposes: it helps your Players build a story in their mind of what the session was about, and it gives you valuable feedback regarding what your Players latch onto.

Consider which Corporations Benefit - There is a delicate balance of powers established between the various Corporations, and the Operators serve to disrupt this equilibrium. For each of the major actions taken by the Operators, consider which Corporations suffer and which benefit. Those who have been hurt are liable to lash out at individuals or society. Those who benefit will use the opportunity to harm their rivals or secure more power for themselves.

Take Notes - Even if it's just a few scribbles of names, places, and events, do it now while it's fresh in your mind. Who knows when the next session will be, so do future-you a favor and write some stuff down.

BETWEEN SESSIONS

Update the World Sheet - What changed during play? What was added? Update the World Sheet to reflect it.

Create a Project Plan - Figure out what each Corporation wants to do and how it's going to go about it.

Create a Counter-plan - Identify possible ways that each Milestone (see Chapter 8 | **What are Projects?** on page 154) may be disrupted.

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TECHNIQUES

During each session, you will find moments of calm in which to make plans. Here are six techniques that will help you shape the game and make for a memorable experience. In these quiet moments between Actions, you should prepare to:

HONOUR THEIR EXPERTISE

Be a fan of the Players and their Operators.

The Operators are the world-experts in their specific fields, so acknowledge that. Ask the Hacker to describe the computer system. Make the Ronin name the mercenary band, and let the Runner describe the buildings they leap between. Delegate the narration to the experts, and build off their contributions.

You set up problems and let them come up with a solution. Say yes by default, unless a relationship is involved. When decisions affect other people, then you can invite them to roll the dice. Their job is to narrate how they overcome the problem, with or without Emotional Complications.

LISTEN FIRST, TALK SECOND

As GM, you'll talk a lot; it's part of the job. But always be suspicious of the sound of your own voice. Every time you notice yourself talking, try to figure out how to engage a Player. Ask a question, look for clarification, do whatever it takes to engage the Player in the way they want to be engaged. The ball will get passed back to you soon enough, but do what you can to pass it along.

FOCUS ON THE INDIVIDUAL

Headspace is, at its core, a game about teamwork. That is only a compelling story if there is something to work against the unity of the Cell.

As a GM, you need to highlight the individuality of its members in order to provide this adversity. Focus on the differences of opinion, belief, history, and privilege that divide the Cell. Use relationships to tug the Operators away from each other. The world in general, and Corporations in specific, seek to shatter the Headspace and reduce the threat they pose to the status quo.

Always leave the Players with the choice to stay united as a team, but tempt them to serve their individual goals over those of the Cell. If they choose the Headspace, show them the consequences and what they sacrificed in the name of the Cell. There are no easy decisions.

GIVE EVERYONE A NAME AND THE PRICE FOR THEIR LIFE

Society is comprised of people with their own hopes, dreams, fears, and ambitions. Give a name to each of them and which emotion dominates them. Consider how much their lives are worth to the various power-players and Corporations. Life is cheap and can be bought and sold in this broken society.

DIRECT CORPORATE ASSETS IN THE SHADOWS

The Corporations don't often work in the light of day. Their machinations remain covert and happen offstage. As a GM, always consider what the Corporations are doing elsewhere. Sometimes your best move is in another arcology, rust-stained apartment building, or noxious alleyway. Use your Moves off-screen and show their effects when they come into the spotlight.

THINK OF CONSEQUENCES, INTENDED AND OTHERWISE.

The world is a big place, full of vested interests and complicated relationships. Consider the consequences of the Operators' actions, both those they desire and those they did not account for. Ask yourself who will be hurt, who will be empowered, and who will seek revenge.

MAPS

Maps are incredibly useful tools for running games. If you ever find yourself getting mixed up about the course of the story, consider creating or revising a map. They will show you the way to awesome experiences.

MAP THE SPACE

Make maps and leave blanks. You can use the professionally created maps in each setting as a springboard, but there is nothing stopping you from making more detailed maps as well. Draw neighbourhoods, road networks, and tactical objectives. Sketch the layout of corporate arcologies as the operators plan their heists.

Of course, you can also map cyberspace...

MAP THE RELATIONSHIPS

It can be challenging to understand the various motivations and perspectives of everyone in the game, while also managing a complex social network. It's often useful to grab a blank sheet of paper and sketch out a map of the relationships between the Operators and Agents in the game.

Draw a rectangle for each NPC (Agents and Anchors) in the game and a circle for each Operator. Whenever two characters have a relationship or some common history, you should draw a line connecting them on

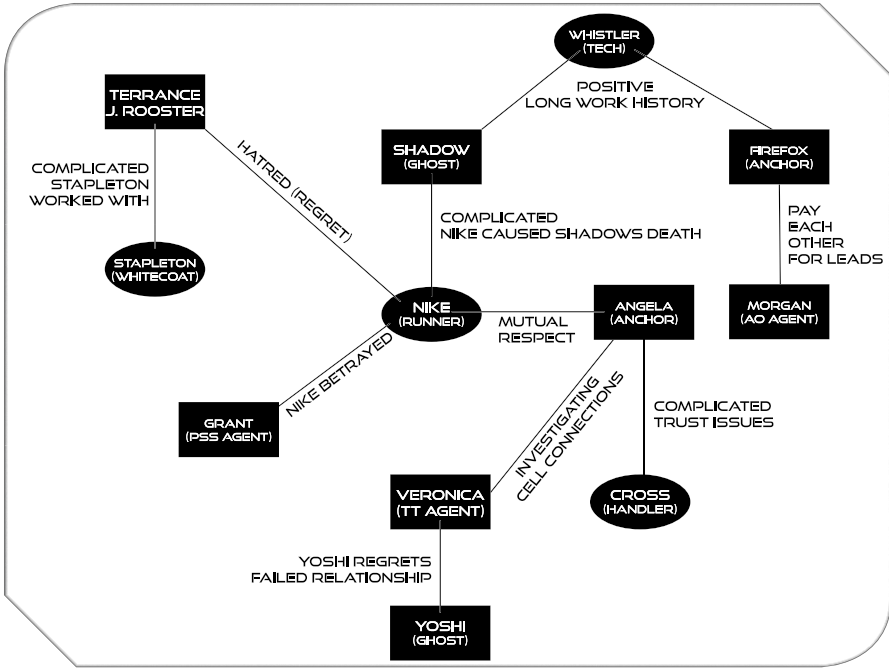
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the map. Write a couple of words beside those lines, describing specific kinds of interactions.

If you want to get fancy, consider colour-coding the relationships according to the dominant emotion in play. Maybe a red connection means that they have a bitter, angry relationship with each other, while blue might tie two people united by grief.

This relationship map will show you where to focus your attention. When an individual is under pressure, that stress will ripple through all of their relationships and affect the others nearby.



RELATIONSHIP MAP

MAP THE GROUP

There are many different maps that tell different stories.

Are the operators trying to infiltrate a corp to steal information? Preparing a simple organization-chart might show them who holds the valuable secrets, and who can be turned to help.

Are the Operators involved with a family and their dark secrets? Consider how a genealogy might help inform your story and give you a foundation to work with.

CHAPTER 8 CORPORATIONS AND THEIR PROJECTS

The world is a dark place, and it's getting darker by the minute. The Corporations fight their wars in the shadows and send their Agents to do the dirty work. They advance dystopic projects, aiming to make the world more favourable to their agendas.

When these Corporate Projects succeed, terrible events and social issues ensue. That's why the Operators fight back, interfering with the projects in the hope of forging some brighter future. They encourage activist movements filled with passionate citizens who stand up to the Corporations. They are invited into close-knit cultural and religious communities, long oppressed in the name of profit. They make a difference and try to shape the events to come.

This chapter deals with three components of longer-term play:

- ◆ **Corporations**, each of whom vie for control over society;
- ◆ **Projects**, which could harm society and the people that the Operators care for and about; and
- ◆ **Setting Advancement**, as a natural consequence when projects are completed.

THE CORPORATIONS

The Corporations are faceless. Vast, uncaring beasts worming their way through society like some kind of malignant cancer. They are driven by the bottom line and orders from their executives to uphold their mandate and further their power.

The Corporations are loose in the world. There used to be a day when governments chained them with laws, and the free markets kept them fed. Now the great beasts are unchained and dine on whoever gets in their way.

Each Setting in *Headspace* consists of 4-5 of these Corporations, who fight with each other for market share. Each of the pre-generated Settings in this book has fully developed Corporations for your game, or you can make your own using the structure laid out in this chapter.

- ◆ The Corporations for the Vancouver Aftermath start on page 194.
- ◆ The Corporations for Zero Hour in the Promised Land start on page 208.

Each Corporation has its own **Trade Name** and catchy **Slogans**. They have seized their place in society thanks to their **Public Mandate** to provide some useful goods or services. However, each of them has ruthless ambition and has committed terrible crimes in service to their **Shadow Mandate**.

They direct their **Corporate Agents** and their **Human Resources** to implement **Projects** that will influence the Setting in their favour. Whenever they successfully complete a Project, they can establish a new dystopic Event. Only the Cell stands in their way.

ELEMENTS OF A CORPORATION

Everyone knows the **Trade Name** of the Corporations. These are on all the contracts, the financial reports, and the press releases.

The **Slogan** is catchy and memorable, used in all the obnoxious advertising that pollutes the area of the Setting. These Slogans tend to be blatant and ironic falsehoods that promote the virtues of the Corporations.

A Corporation's **Public Mandate** expresses its perceived public purpose and identity. This is the role that the Corporation plays in local affairs and the benefit it provides to society. These are not necessarily morally good (providing arms) but are necessary to meet the needs of society (providing security with said arms). Because of this, the public empowers the Corporation to pursue this Public Mandate.

Whereas the Public Mandate defines how the Corporation works in the public interest, the **Shadow Mandate** represents what the Company is doing to further its own selfish ends. This is how the Corporation seeks power, influence, and the extension of their will. Shadow Mandates may align with the Public Mandate, or oppose it outright. Hypocrisy is normal for the Corporations.

CORPORATE OUTREACH

Agents are the powerful people who do terrible things in the name of their Corporate masters. They are project leaders, trouble-shooters, and tactical officers. They lead entire directorates of **Human Resources** in order to implement the various corporate initiatives that plague the city. They work to ensure that the Projects are accomplished.

Each of the pre-generated Corporations has one Agent. The Setting material establishes what price the Corporation had to pay for the Agent's support and describes the Agent's role in that organization, as well as their ulterior motives.

Each Agent has a complex nature. Some decide that their ultimate loyalty is to the Corporation that feeds them, clothes them, and keeps them safe. Others do whatever is in the best interest of their families and loved ones. Still others are pragmatic zealots who act on faith and conviction. Most Agents try to find a fragile balance between the demands of their three conflicting masters of employer, family, and ideology.

After the first session, the GM should discuss with the Players who each of the Corporate Agents are in the chosen Setting and what kind of pre-existing relationships they have to both the Operators and Anchors. For each Agent, answer these questions:

- ◆ Which Operator or Anchor does this Agent have a positive relationship with, and why?
- ◆ Which Operator or Anchor does this Agent have a negative relationship, and why?

Add these Agents to the outside of the relationship map. Use these Agents to direct the efforts of the Corps and to interact with the Operators. Use these conflicted characters to push the drama forward and to express the will of their employers.

The Human Resources are left out of the relationship map. They are often overlooked wage-slaves and common workers, who only want to ensure that their families can eat. They might very well hate their bosses more than the Operators do, but they don't have the courage or the resources to rebel. Some Agents decided to give their Human Resources their own collective nicknames, like "The Brute Squad" or "Rat Hunters".

WHAT ARE PROJECTS?

The real reason why the Corporations are so dangerous is that each of them is trying to advance a different Project to change the world. If the Corporations successfully complete one of their Projects, they will be able to establish a new, dystopian Event in the world. Fortunately for the Operators, they can mitigate or even seize control of the Project and change the outcomes for the better.

Projects are only completed in multi-session campaign play, allowing the Operators to fight the corporate dystopia over time and build a better world.



FUNDAMENTALS OF PROJECT WORKPLANNING

//// BEGIN TRANSMISSION //

Attached is something I pulled off a corporate server last time I was 'visiting'. Give a read. It's full of crap, but it's useful crap.

Attention: All Departments

Subject: Mandatory Project Training

This is a reminder from human resources that the project management training being offered this week is mandatory for all employees of grade 8 and above. If you have not registered for a session, you have until Friday COB. Failure to attend is grounds for sanction, so please, sign up before all slots are filled. If you have any questions, please take them up with Janice in our orbital office.

For your reference, the presentation notes for the training have been attached. Please review in advance of your session.

Introduction

I'm sure many of you are wondering why you're here today. Project management training is all well and good for project managers, but many of you work in sales, data, execution, and other departments. This is well outside of your wheelhouse, isn't it?

Let me tell you right now, that's old thinking. The Company has reviewed the past several quarter's initiatives and have discovered a disturbing trend - many of our most business-critical efforts have suffered nontrivial setbacks as a result of lack of comprehension of the basics of project management out in the field.

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Why We're Here

Let me make it clear - we hire only the best of the best here, but that potential gets wasted in the field when you lose sight of the end game. Our goal today is not to make you into project managers, but rather to help you with big picture thinking. However critical your piece of a project is, it does not exist in a vacuum. You need to understand the thirty-thousand-foot view in order to synergize with the other teams involved. Only when we all pull together this way can we deliver the best-of-breed, customer-driven solutions that have made us number one.

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The Means, the Goals, and the Bottom Line

Every project has a goal. Even if the project seems banal or mundane, like upgrading communication software, its ultimate goal is to improve company communications and make the company money (or otherwise serve the company's agenda). As such, a project can usually be articulated as: We will X in order to Y so that Z.

- We will release a new line of nasal consumables in order to corner the nasal consumable market so that the Company makes money.
- We will distribute builder units in coastal cities in order to build seawalls so that the Company helps save oh so many lives.

The goal of a project is that middle bit. The means of the project is the first part. The outcome is the last.

PROJECT TRAINING.DOC | Page 3

The Project Triangle

The means of a project are composed of three critical components:

- **Cost**
- **Quality**
- **Delivery**

PROJECT TRAINING.DOC | Page 4

Cost

This seems like the simplest of the components - how much will this project cost? But it's important to remember that cost is determined in a number of ways - currency, of course, but also in things like resources and reputation. The goal is, of course, to minimize cost. But you can't make money without spending money - every well planned project has a budget target. This will manifest in a number of ways - for marketing, this may be an amount to spend on shaping opinion. For extraction, it may be the munitions provided. Your piece of the budget may be critical to you, but it is only a piece of the whole.

PROJECT TRAINING.DOC | Page 5

Cost Use Case: Bakersfield

Some of you may remember the Bakersfield event last march, where one of our protection details was assigned to protect an atmospheric science delegate. Good, important work, and our people were on hand when the delegate came under attack by ecological extremists. The protection detail succeeded in protecting the delegate, so all was well, yes?

No. While the team performed their primary mission adequately, they failed to consider the cost of their actions. The application of high explosives in the middle of a protesting crowd was the fastest way to deal with attackers, but it introduced numerous costs to the company:

- Damage to the city has increased the Company's property damage premium by 1.5%. That may not sound like much, but that kind money could buy or sell everyone in this room.
- Bystander deaths increased legal costs for that year by 28%, and that number could have been much higher if our excellent legal division had not gotten the wrongful death suits dismissed en masse. That, by the way, is an excellent example of spending money to save money.
- Most damning was popular response, which skewed strongly against the Company. It is difficult to assign a numerical value to this, but specifically, it offset much of the goodwill that the delegates' report on our atmospheric scrubber development was intended to promote.

In final assessment, the Bakersfield incident is a first-rate example of cost spinning out of control because it was not properly considered.

PROJECT TRAINING.DOC | Page 6

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Quality

Quality is what connects the means of the project to the goal. What is being delivered? Does it do what's desired? A project may be on time and under budget, but if delivery is subpar, then we've made a lot more work for the marketing department.

We always strive to deliver the highest quality possible, but what that means is highly situational. When we're selling a product or service, then it must fulfill the customer's needs. If we're enacting a policy, it must serve the desired ends. Too often a great idea stumbles in implementation, and the quality is not what's desired.

PROJECT TRAINING.DOC | Page 7

Quality Case Study: Project Icarus

Many of you may remember project Icarus, the company's ambitious communications satellite launched last winter from the Kilimanjaro launch site. This satellite was expected to greatly improve the company's standings in telecommunications markets.

Yet some of you may have noticed that despite a successful launch, its impact has been muted.

AUTOMATED TEXT INSERTION: ALL EMPLOYEES ARE REMINDED THAT INFORMATION COVERED IN THIS COMMUNICATION IS NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION, AND FALLS SPECIFICALLY UNDER CLAUSE 37 OF YOUR EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT. EMPLOYEES UNFAMILIAR WITH THE CLAUSE 37 PENALTIES ARE ENCOURAGED TO SPEAK TO THEIR HUMAN RESOURCES REPRESENTATIVE.

The reason for this is simple - the Icarus satellite was damaged before launch, possibly in an act of corporate espionage; the deployed satellite has only a fraction of the intended capabilities.

PROJECT TRAINING.DOC | Page 8

Timeliness

Some equate this component with speed, and that is often true, but only in a secondary fashion. For every project, there is the implicit question “Why do this now? Why not earlier? Or later?” The goal of any project is to deliver at the optimal time. This requires a balance of speed and patience, and too much of either can throw a project off the rails.

Understanding the timeline of a project is critical to its success, and as with costs, there are often unobvious factors at work in determining the right time to finish something. Too soon to market and a rival may have a cheaper version before the next buying season. Misjudge demand and we’ll have wasted the Company’s time and money. Too late to market and a rival may already have a firm foothold. In projects, as in life, timing is everything.

PROJECT TRAINING.DOC | Page 9

Timeliness Case Study: The **REDACTED** Elections

Last year, the Company took a hand in backing key political candidates whose views were in alignment with our core principles. While all appropriate laws and regulations were strictly adhered to, there are always those who look askance at the open and democratic participation of business in elections.

The project was to oversee the delivery of significant contributions to key candidates. These contributions were, of course, not from the Company, as untraceable donations violate our code of ethics, but we had been contracted to oversee their entirely legitimate disbursement. This distribution was interrupted, and while the funds were eventually disbursed, it was not until after key elections were already complete, greatly diminishing the impact of the effort.

PROJECT TRAINING.DOC | Page 10

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Bringing It All Together

It is best to view these three elements as a triangle, because it reveals their strength. Ideally, all three are optimized, but quite often, one must be sacrificed for the other two. But since they form a stable tripod on which to balance a goal, your project is still standing on two strong legs when this happens.

Using the Triangle

To use the triangle, you need only ask yourself four questions about the project.

- What am I trying to accomplish? (This is the goal of the project)
- How will I know I've succeeded? (This is quality, your measure of what's delivered)
- What will I need to accomplish this? (Cost)
- When should this happen? (Timeliness)

These questions may seem banal, but the reason to work through them is to explicitly think it out. Too often, the assumptions are that the Company's pockets are bottomless and that everything needs to be done immediately - these are dangerous mistakes. Even more critically, this forces you to separate the goal from the means. There is no way you can produce the best outcome if you don't understand the situation. The highest quality ice in the world is a poor value proposition in Antarctica.

PROJECT TRAINING.DOC | Page 11

Sample Project: Metropolitan Water

Consider the following entirely hypothetical situation: The Company is investigating the possibility of taking over a water contract for a major metropolitan area. It's an open bid, and if successful, the Company will profit from the contracts for new treatment plants, plus get regular income for processing services. Unfortunately, there are factions at work who feel that water is best left in the hands of the public sector, and that resistance must be overcome.

This clearly lays out the bottom line (make money and serve the public) and the goals (Take over the water contract), but what are the means?

The actual contract itself is awarded by the city board after a hearing and a vote. The Company needs to make the most compelling case to the committee to insure that they make the right choice. So what does that mean to the triangle?

Quality

This is most successful if the city accepts the Company's bid and terms. Failing to win the vote would, of course, be a major setback (though possibly a recoverable one, as election can always change things). Another concern would be needing to amend the proposal to address the council's concerns, which could greatly decrease its profitability.

Timeliness

There's a hard deadline on this, as a proposal must be submitted in time for the vote. But at the same time, the proposal cannot be submitted too early - if a competitor has time to see the Company's bid and respond to it, that could go poorly for us.

Cost

There are two major costs to budget for in this. The first is the actual cost of winning the contract. We've run the numbers and know how many plants we need to build to maximize profit. If we are obliged to build more, that will impact the bottom line.

The other cost is, of course, research, education, and outreach. Local ad buys, environmental impact studies, public hearings, and so on all cost substantial monies, but greatly impact our chances of success.

PROJECT TRAINING.DOC | Page 12

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MONKEYWRENCHING LIKE A BADASS

Ok, Jesus, I've just about hit maximum bullshit threshold here.

Here's the thing you need to take away from this - when a corp makes a move, it's easy to view it as one big, monolithic chess piece moving on the board, but it's actually a craption of little pieces scrambling to do their little bit.

So look at that triangle if you want to think about how to fuck with their business. Just like they gotta break things down to make their plan manageable, if you can break things down, then you can attack parts of their plan, which can be a damn sight easier than trying to tackle the whole thing.

QUALITY

The Icarus example that asshole gave is hilarious. They love to pin that one on sabotage, but from what I hear, their chief engineer had been promising the moon and stars and disappeared with a lot of funding and most of the design ideas just before launch. But it's still a good example because it's how sabotage plays out, if you know what you're doing.

See, hitting a corp in quality depends on understanding what their endgame really is. If they're selling guns in Bangkok, you need to know if their goal is to prop up a gang boss or to dump defective inventory. Sabotaging the guns is a great play in the first case, but kind of useless in the second.

Now, I understand, the instinct is to gun for this leg, since it's most likely to kick the corp in the nuts if you pull it off, but it's rarely as big a win as you might think. If their delivery is crap, but they have time and money to fix things, then you've created an inconvenience, not a problem.

COST

Every corp watches the bottom line, and this is often the most vulnerable angle for you to attack. Like the man says, there are a lot more costs than money, and a creative team can make a project a lot more expensive for a corp.

But it's rarely as easy as it sounds. Corps may not have bottomless pockets, but they're damn deep, and they'll have budgeted for a certain amount of disruption. If you're playing into their budget, you need to hit really hard to

make a difference. But if you can play crosswise to their budget - introduce a cost they haven't planned for - you can go a long way towards gumming things up.

TIMELINESS

If you know the timetable, you're one step ahead of the game, which is one reason corps tend to stay pretty damn secretive about them. Sometimes you can figure it out, but watch out for the head fake.

Once you figure it out, or have a good guess, then look in both directions. Just like the asshole warns about assuming everything needs to be sped up, you need to consider that not everything needs to be slowed down. More than a few corp projects have been short-circuited by the premature release of their briefs by interested parties.

CORPORATE WATER REDUX

So, bear in mind that the Corp version of what they need to do is a bit sanitized. That metropolitan water thing? They've run that scam in a number of cities. They jimmy up bogus studies that let them build fewer facilities than required so they make a huge profit and the water is barely processed. In reality, the breakdown is more like this:

QUALITY

The corp's best outcome is their studies getting accepted at face value and their proposal getting passed with sub-par service. Undercutting the studies or getting the council to demand minimums can undercut this.

TIMELINESS

They're actually spot-on regarding time. Everything needs to be done before the vote, but any early leaks mean that the council (and competitors) are ready. So leak those muthas.

COST

As a general rule, "outreach" is corp speak for "bribes". Yes, the studies will cost money, and they'll buy airtime, but they're also going to sink serious cred into paying off council members, silencing opposition voices, and so on. Something like this, the corp is willing to spend big, so you'll either need to spend a LOT of time running interference against it, or you're going to have to find some new way to make it cost them more, perhaps in public opinion.

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BOTTOM LINE

Read the corporate bullshit because it helps you understand what the corps are trying to do. If you can understand that, then you can screw with it, and hard. Know thy enemy, even if he is an asshole.

PROJECTS IN PLAY

The Project Triangle is an easy way for you as the GM to come up with Milestones for a corporate effort: one for Cost, one for Quality, and one for Timeliness. Once you've identified these, the actions of the Corporation should be much easier to plan, and the shape of the mission for the Players becomes more evident. Rather than *"How do we stop this sinister master plan?"*, it becomes *"How do we stop them from bribing the mayor?"*

It also introduces a less binary outcome to missions, something that may seem odd from a traditional adventuring perspective. Normally, the heroes walk in, slay the dragon, and the menace magically evaporates. The world of *Headspace* is not so clear cut as all that.

It may be an unromantic notion, but the simple reality is that the players cannot stop a Corporation. It's too huge, too rich, and too powerful.

But, grim as that is, it is not the whole story. The reality is that the Corporation is never going to bring its full weight to bear on any one issue. It simply cannot afford to. A Corporation must be mindful of opportunity costs.

The GM should use the Dystopian Clock Worksheets (see the end of this book) to create and track the progress of corporate projects.

PROJECT GOALS

Each Project has a single goal which describes what the Corporation hopes to achieve. One Corporation may wish to *"Replace the Tokyo Police force with Otomo Security personnel"* while another may wish to *"Purge the slums of dissidents"*. These are always terrible, dystopian actions that will make the world a crueler place.

Each Project has a bottom line which describes exactly how the Project will bolster the Corporation's power or expand their influence. Based on the goals listed above, the benefit might be *"Gain control over law enforcement in the city"* or *"Stop the protests that are hurting our sales"*.

HEADSPACE

DYSTOPIAN CLOCKS

CORPORATION | Trauma One
PROJECT GOAL | Expand the reclamation zoning, force the poor from their homes and repossess the valuable coastline property. Starting with the abandoned 3^H Energy arcology island.

PERMANENT SETTING EVENT |

TIME MILESTONE
 Establish a foothold on the arcology. Base of operations and troops on the ground.

COST MILESTONE
 Take control of the arcology and evict refugee squatters.

QUALITY MILESTONE
 Prevent 3^H Energy from recovering it's facility.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

SESSION OBJECTIVES

SESSION OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE

OBJECTIVE

OBJECTIVE

OUTCOME

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Trauma One's Project is to "Expand the reclamation zoning, force the poor from their homes, and repossess the valuable coastline property. Starting with the abandoned 3^H Energy Arcology island." The GM determines how to break down this ambitious project into the three Milestones:

Time: "Establish a foothold on the Arcology base of operations and troops on the ground."

Cost: "Take control of the Arcology and evict refugee squatters."

Quality: "Prevent 3^H Energy from recovering its facility."

The GM records this information on the Dystopian Clock Worksheet for tracking purposes.

PROJECT MILESTONES

Each Corporate Project plays out over 2-3 sessions of play and is represented by three **Project Milestones**: Time, Cost, and Quality. Corporations want to get things done on a budget, in a reasonable amount of time, and with their desired result. Both the Corporations and the Operators can seek to claim Milestones and increase their control over the outcome.

As the GM, take care in determine your project milestones. Consider, for example, a scientist who has gone rogue from a research lab and is hiding out in Santa Fe. He's taken valuable information, and the Corporation wants to find him very badly.

Now, technically speaking, they could:

- ◆ Hire an army of private security to canvas the streets.
- ◆ Bribe local law enforcement to make finding this guy a priority.
- ◆ Trump up charges to make the manhunt legitimate.
- ◆ Offer a substantial reward.
- ◆ Buy out every billboard in town and a huge amount of airtime.
- ◆ Hack, infect, or infiltrate every computer system in the city.
- ◆ Temporarily move a large number of employees to Santa Fe and task them with finding their runaway.
- ◆ Kidnap and threaten everyone he knows and is related to.

There's probably more that they could do, but this is a good example of the full might of a Corporation brought to bear. But they'd never do all that for a number of reasons.

- ◆ The cost of this effort would very quickly outstrip any benefit of finding him.
- ◆ Acting overtly would tip their hand to competitors, who may offer the scientist refuge.
- ◆ Most critically, the resources allocated to this are not being used elsewhere. While the company has focused all its resources in Santa Fe, it's now fallen behind on R&D at its Los Alamos Lab, has lost a hold on seven other cities, and is going to take a significant stock hit when the cost of this shows up on the balance sheet.

The Corporate Milestones will be defined as the least expensive, quickest, and best way to get the results they want.

When you plan a Project by determining the goal, bottom line, and Milestones, you have the opportunity to establish more facts about the Setting. In the examples above, for instance, you can 'create' that police force or the protests by defining them in this process. This is a way to make those colourful aspects of the dystopia rise to prominence and interact with the Operators.

PROJECT MILESTONES AND OBJECTIVES

Each Milestone (Time/Cost/Quality) is further represented by 3 Objectives which each have a related Objective Clock (see Chapter 2, page 37). In most cases these three Objectives represent a single session of play. Objectives represent the Operators' goals; their success would seriously undermine the related Milestone. Either the Operators can define them with their actions as in Chapter 9, the GM could define them as clear things to resolve in the fiction, or both the GM and the Players can define them together.

Operator success may not appear binary. If the Operators blow up a shipment of computer parts, the Corporation can replace them, but that may introduce unexpected cost or delay to their effort. If that meaningfully impacts the Corporate Project, then it's an Operator success.

As Milestones resolve, write down their outcomes on the Dystopian Clock Worksheet. When all three Objectives resolve, they dictate the resolution of the Milestone above them. Whomever wins the Milestone (Corporate or Operator) claims a success on the main Dystopian Clock. When all three Milestones have resolved, then you resolve the Project (see page 169).

ACTIVATING PROJECTS IN PLAY

In the very first session of a campaign, the Players will pick which Corporation and related Project they wish to tackle first (see Chapter 9 | **If All Went Sideways**).

At the start of the second session, the GM activates an additional Corporate Project—starting a new Dystopian Clock Worksheet.

At the start of any session after the second, the GM may either activate an additional Corporate Project (up to the maximum of the number of Corporations in the setting)—or choose to give one of the active Corporate Projects a success towards establishing the Permanent Setting Event by completing one of its Milestones.

If the Operators didn't work against an active Corporate Project during the last session, the related Dystopian Clock automatically gains 1 Corporate Success.

During a session, Trauma One attempts to address its Cost Milestone, which is broken into three Objectives for the Operators:

Objective 1: "Recover important data/research from the 3^H Facility before anyone else does."

Objective 2: "Protect nearby civilian populations."

Objective 3: "Keep 3^H Energy out of the area; we don't want a war."

The Operators are fairly successful and manage to win a majority of successes against Objective 1 and 2 but fail to win 3. This translates to 2 Operator Successes against the Cost Milestone and 1 Corporate Success. Because the Operators won the Cost Milestone, they claim one success against the Permanent Setting Event clock at the top of the worksheet.

HEADSPACE

DYSTOPIAN CLOCKS

CORPORATION | Trauma One

PROJECT GOAL | Expand the reclamation zoning, force the poor from their homes and repossess the valuable coastline property. Starting with the abandoned 3H Energy arcology island.

PERMANENT SETTING EVENT |



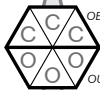
TIME MILESTONE

Establish a foothold on the arcology. Base of operations and troops on the ground.



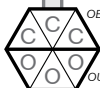
SESSION OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE



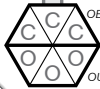
OUTCOME

OBJECTIVE



OUTCOME

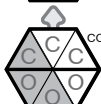
OBJECTIVE



OUTCOME

COST MILESTONE

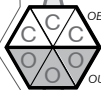
Take control of the arcology and evict refugee squatters.



SESSION OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE

Recover important data/research from the 3H Facility before anyone else does.

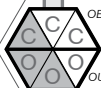


OUTCOME

We recovered encrypted data from the 3H mainframe.

OBJECTIVE

Protect nearby civilian populations.

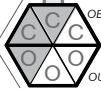


OUTCOME

Nearby civilians weren't evicted, BUT Trauma One has security check points

OBJECTIVE

Keep 3H Energy out of the area, we don't want a war.



OUTCOME

3H has a strong military presence, BUT Trauma One is still in control of the island.

QUALITY MILESTONE

Prevent 3H Energy from recovering it's facility.



SESSION OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE



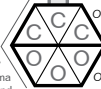
OUTCOME

OBJECTIVE



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OBJECTIVE



OUTCOME

PROJECT RESOLUTION

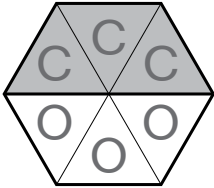
When all three Corporate Milestones are resolved, a new Permanent Event or Issue is created that changes the Setting. This Event or Issue is represented by a sentence that describes what happens.

There are several possible outcomes to a Corporate Project. The side that gets their way gets to author a sentence that **describes the new Event** that occurs in the setting. This is written onto the World Sheet, with lasting effects on the Anchors and the Wretched.

The following possible outcomes are not dissimilar from resolving a normal Objective Clock (see Chapter 2, page 37) except the outcome persists in play until it is changed by another Project.

TOTAL CORPORATE SUCCESS

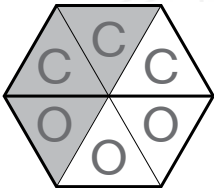
The Corporation succeeds at all three of its Milestones. At this point, the GM (speaking as the Corporation) gets to write a sentence that is now true about the Setting.



Trauma One rezones the 3^H Energy Arcology and its islands as its property for reclamation, evicting the poor and taking control of the Arcology resources.

QUALIFIED CORPORATE SUCCESS

The Corporation achieves two of its three Milestones, meaning it's succeeded, but not to quite the extent it would like. Once again, the GM (speaking as the Corporation) gets to write a sentence that is now true about the Setting. However, the Players get to append the sentence with an "and" or "but" statement that mitigates (but doesn't nullify) the result.



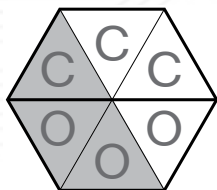
Trauma One rezones the 3^H Energy Arcology and its islands as its property for reclamation, evicting the poor and taking control of the Arcology resources but is subject to oversight of the previous land owners of 3^H Energy.

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QUALIFIED CORPORATE FAILURE

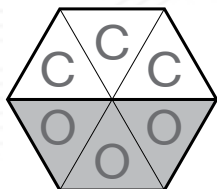
The Corporation achieves only one of its Milestones, and things fall apart badly. The Corporation still has a stake in the game, but it's greatly diminished. This time, the Players get to craft a sentence that is now true about the world, and the GM (as the corporation) gets to add a qualifier.



The city of Vancouver rezones the 3rd Energy Arcology as a private citizen safe haven, a place of refuge from the Tsunami, but Trauma One maintains law and order with its own security forces.

TOTAL CORPORATE FAILURE

The Operators have been like ninjas, cutting the legs out from under the Corporation's efforts. The Players author a sentence about the Setting that is now true, and the GM doesn't get to qualify it.



The city of Vancouver rezones the 3rd Energy Arcology as a private citizen safe haven, a place of refuge from the Tsunami that is protected by the civilian police authorities.

GOOD EVENTS

Because the creation of these sentences is often collaborative, it's worth discussing some guidelines of how to craft them. Most importantly, the sentence must relate to the specifics of the corporate effort. If the corporation has been trying to dump untested medical products on the market, then the sentence has to relate to the medicine, the disease, or both.

Similarly, the qualifier must respect the initial sentence. If the corp has managed to distribute bad medicine, then a good qualifier might be that it got some press attention or that local doctors have been warned. A bad qualifier would be "but nobody uses it", because that nullifies the first part. Mitigation or expansion are appropriate, nullification is not.

If play had led to having a third corporation, perhaps 3rd Energy intervene more directly against the goals of Trauma One the GM may have added an additional qualifier representing their interests – And 3rd Energy maintains a security force on the island to protect their own assets on the ground.

OPTIONAL RULE: MEGAPROJECTS

A complicated scenario may have more than 3 Milestones. If so, use the categories as a guideline. If there are seven Milestones and the Operators stymie five of them, that's a qualified corporate failure. If the Operators stop only three, that would be a qualified corporate success.

Sometimes a situation is even more complicated than this, especially when other Corporations and interests get involved. The reality is that it's going to be very rare that Operators are going to be able to completely stop a Corporation, and sometimes even stopping two Milestones can be a challenge. In these situations, the Operators may call in outside help. This might even cause a Milestone to be resolved off-screen (such as if the Players sic one Corporation on another). This can be a very effective means of stopping a Corporate Project, but it comes at a cost. In some circumstances, it may even be the Corporation who calls in a third party.

When a third party gets involved and resolves a Milestone, two things happen. First, determine which 'side' the third party is on for purposes of success and failure. Second, once the sentence is written, the GM (speaking as the third party) gets to add one more qualifier.

CORPORATE PROJECT SUCCESS

When the Corporations get their way, the Operators needs to fight back even harder. They need to rally with the people of the setting and organize future efforts to work against corporate oppression by establishing **Movements**.

BUILDING A MOVEMENT

Movements are social, political, or economic organizations that are established as a natural consequence of a new Event or Issue. These are the activists, the campaigners, and the social justice warriors who stand up for a cause. These are the rebels and the hidden factions that struggle against their corporate masters.

The Cell can make way for these Movements and receive benefits in turn. When a Corporate Project is either a complete success or a Qualified Success, the Players may create a new Movement in the City. They should name them and describe what they represent/believe in and where their power lies.

MOVEMENT ACTION

Once per session, the Operators can ask each of their Movements to interfere with one Corporate Project Milestone. For that session, and the beginning of the next, the GM will be unable to complete that Milestone.

If Trauma One had claimed the island and evicted the poor, those that were pushed out could have formed a guardian gang called the Angels who patrol along the coastline as an attempt to prevent the further reach of Trauma One.

CORPORATE PROJECT FAILURE

On some rare occasions, a strong Cell is able to complete two of the Milestones on a Project and turn the tables on a Corporation. They can slowly make the world a better place for the common people. They strengthen society, protect the downtrodden, and generally push back against corporate interests.

When this happens, the Headspace may collectively determine the new Event for the world, as well as how the Setting is now able to help their

future efforts. Whenever the project is completed in their favour, they can choose to join a **Community**.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY

Communities are where people unite as something greater. Culture, art, language, and religion can unite people within a given territory. The Operators are welcomed into such a Community with open arms and broad smiles.

When a Project ends as a Qualified Corporate Failure or a Total Corporate Failure, a new Community is formed in the Setting. The Community will often reflect some aspect of the Corporation's failure. The Players should name them and empower them with a base of operations and what kind of resources they have at their disposal.

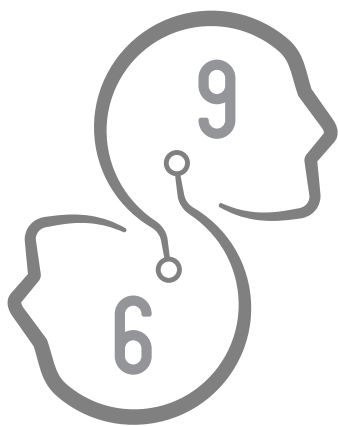
If Trauma One had lost its foot hold on the arcology, then the private citizens and the civilian authorities that claimed it would form a new Community, the Recovery Arcology.

COMMUNITY RESERVES

Communities can provide a refuge or safe haven to the Operators when they need it most. Once per session, a Community can be activated to provide much needed supplies, an ally, or a safe place to hide from Corporate interests.

CORPORATE REBRANDING

Corporations invest a lot of resources in their Projects, and the big bosses are unhappy when those are wasted. Any time that a Corporation fails **three** Projects, corporate HQ sends in a team from marketing to clean up the mess. They begin a Corporate Rebranding exercise, pumping money into the Setting, kissing babies, and generally being different from how they were before. They act like good Samaritans to regain the good-will of the masses, however long it takes. The Corporation are still assholes behind closed doors and are breaking the rest of the world, but this area is safe from their depredations for the time being. This is what victory looks like.



CHAPTER 9

THE FIRST SESSION

IT ALL WENT SIDWAYS



The first session begins *in medias res*; the Operators' first job has already started, and it's spun wildly out of control. In fact, the Operators are all still directly dealing with the fallout. Work with the Players to determine what the Operation was about, what the Operators were trying to accomplish, and what has gone horribly awry. After building the fiction, set the opening scene and begin play.

You are encouraged to work with the Players as much as possible to bring the fiction to life. The Corporate Project descriptions are merely meant to be jumping-off points for your own ideas!

If you run this game at a con or don't have a lot of time, you can speed things up by using the example Player decisions to start the session rather than asking questions.

Have a printed copy of the **Dystopian Clock Worksheet** (See the end of this book) in middle of the table and record the Players' answers and your decisions in the relevant areas as a reference for everyone.

Begin by asking the Players which of the 4-5 Corporations they are working against, depending on the chosen Setting. This will decide which of the Projects this session will be about.

The table has decided to use the Vancouver Aftermath Setting (page 194), so Julie begins by asking which of the following Corporations will figure prominently in this session: Trauma One, Pacific Security Solutions, 3^H Energy, Aesculapian Laboratories, or Applied Optimism.


The Players discuss for a few moments and decide that they want to place a priority on helping the innocents caught in the crossfire of the various Corporations within the reclamation zones and thwart the plans of Trauma One.

HEADSPACE

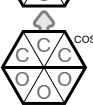
CORPORATION | Trauma One
PROJECT GOAL | Expand the reclamation zoning, force the poor from their homes and repossess the valuable coastline property. Starting with the abandoned 3H Energy arcology island.

DYSTOPIAN CLOCKS


PERMANENT SETTING EVENT |




TIME MILESTONE




COST MILESTONE




QUALITY MILESTONE



SESSION OBJECTIVES



SESSION OBJECTIVES



SESSION OBJECTIVES

The Corporation that has been selected is well on its way towards succeeding in its overall Project goal. To represent this, pick which of the Corporation's three major Project Milestones (Cost, Time, or Quality) has already succeeded and then describe this success to the players. Award all 3 Corporate Successes of the chosen Milestone to the Corporation (this in turn awards 1 Corporate Success towards the Dystopian Clock/Permanent Setting Event).


Julie declares that Trauma One got the jump on the Operators and has succeeded in its Time milestone of getting boots on the ground. Julie describes the situation as dangerously out of control with Trauma One security forces in the area.

HEADSPACE

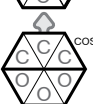
CORPORATION | Trauma One
PROJECT GOAL | Expand the reclamation zoning, force the poor from their homes and repossess the valuable coastline property. Starting with the abandoned 3H Energy arcology island.

DYSTOPIAN CLOCKS


PERMANENT SETTING EVENT |




TIME MILESTONE




COST MILESTONE




QUALITY MILESTONE



SESSION



SESSION



SESSION

Pick which of the two remaining Milestones will become the focus of this session of play. Upon selecting a Milestone, describe to the Players what the Corporation is trying to accomplish; this will be the focus of this session. Be evocative about how the fiction is changing.

Feel free to work with the Players on this and ask them what they want the session to be about.

After some discussion with the Players, Julie declares that Trauma One wants to keep their costs inline; they'll "Take control of the Arcology and evict refugee squatters", for their Quality Milestone she declares it as "Prevent 3^H Energy from recovering its facility". The group discusses and decides that saving the civilian populations is their priority so this session will be all about resolving the Cost Milestone.

HEADSPACE

DYSTOPIAN CLOCKS

CORPORATION | Trauma One

PROJECT GOAL | Expand the reclamation zoning, force the poor from their homes and repossess the valuable coastline property. Starting with the abandoned 3H Energy arcology island.

**TIME MILESTONE**

Establish a foothold on the arcology. Base of operations and troops on the ground.

SESSION

**PERMANENT SETTING EVENT |****COST MILESTONE**

Take control of the arcology and evict refugee squatters.

SESSION

**QUALITY MILESTONE**

Prevent 3H Energy from recovering it's facility.

SESSION

Ask the Players to break the chosen Milestone into 3 Objectives of relatively equal importance. These Objectives will represent the major goals of the Operators during this session. Successful completion of them will drive the fiction forwards.

The Players discuss and break down the Cost Milestone into three distinct Objectives that would seriously undermine the goals of Trauma One:

Objective 1: "Recover important data/research from the 3rd Facility before anyone else does."

Objective 2: "Protect nearby civilian populations."

Objective 3: "Keep 3rd Energy out of the area; we don't want a war."

HEADSPACE

DYSTOPIAN CLOCKS

CORPORATION | Trauma One

PROJECT GOAL | Expand the reclamation zoning, force the poor from their homes and repossess the valuable coastline property. Starting with the abandoned 3H Energy arcology island.

PERMANENT SETTING EVENT |



TIME MILESTONE

Establish a foothold on the arcology. Base of operations and troops on the ground.



COST MILESTONE

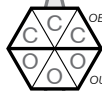
Take control of the arcology and evict refugee squatters.



QUALITY MILESTONE

Prevent 3H Energy from recovering it's facility.

SESSION OBJECTIVES



OBJECTIVE

OUTCOME

SESSION OBJECTIVES

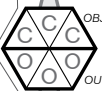


OBJECTIVE

Recover important data/research from the 3H Facility before anyone else does.

OUTCOME

SESSION OBJECTIVES



OBJECTIVE

OUTCOME



OBJECTIVE

OUTCOME



OBJECTIVE

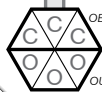
Protect nearby civilian populations.

OUTCOME



OBJECTIVE

OUTCOME



OBJECTIVE

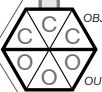
OUTCOME



OBJECTIVE

Keep 3H Energy out of the area, we don't want a war.

OUTCOME



OBJECTIVE

OUTCOME

The GM should then ask the Players to pick which of these objectives the Operators have been marginally successful with before everything goes sideways. (The GM awards the Operators one slice towards that Objective Clock.)

The Players decide that they were in the midst of cracking a security door and gaining access to the 3^H Energy Data archives.

HEADSPACE

DYSTOPIAN CLOCKS

CORPORATION | Trauma One

PROJECT GOAL | Expand the reclamation zoning, force the poor from their homes and repossess the valuable coastline property. Starting with the abandoned 3H Energy arcology island.

TIME MILESTONE
Establish a foothold on the arcology. Base of operations and troops on the ground.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE

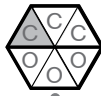
OUTCOME

OBJECTIVE

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OBJECTIVE

OUTCOME



PERMANENT SETTING EVENT |

COST MILESTONE
Take control of the arcology and evict refugee squatters.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE
Recover important data/research from the 3H Facility before anyone else does.

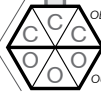
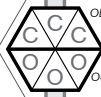
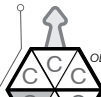
OUTCOME

OBJECTIVE
Protect nearby civilian populations.

OUTCOME

OBJECTIVE
Keep 3H Energy out of the area, we don't want a war.

OUTCOME



QUALITY MILESTONE
Prevent 3H Energy from recovering it's facility.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE

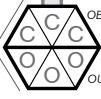
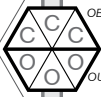
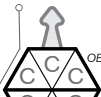
OUTCOME

OBJECTIVE

OUTCOME

OBJECTIVE

OUTCOME



BUT THE JOB WENT SIDEWAYS. BADLY.

Something has gone terribly wrong while the Operators were attempting to complete their three Objectives.

The GM should ask the Players to come up with something in the fiction that has gone horribly awry and left them scrambling to pick up the pieces and succeed in their Objectives. It could be a mistake on their part, unfortunate events, or just plain bad luck.

The Players discuss for a short time and decide that one of the Corporate Agents is present and leading the operation on behalf of Trauma One. This wouldn't ordinarily be a big deal, but one of the Operators decides they know each other. This leads to complications with their plan to be disguised as members of the corporate security detachment.

THE HEADSPACE REFLECTS THE EMOTIONS OF THE CELL AS IT ALL GOES BAD. . .

The GM should ask the Players to decide which of the Emotions best represent the Cell's current state of mind. The GM then sets the Stress Track for the chosen Emotion at 4. The GM should then pick one other Emotion that is higher than normal for the Cell and set that Stress Track at 2. All other Stress Tracks begin play at 1.

NEED MORE IDEAS?

If some additional details are needed to push the narrative forward, the GM can ask some additional questions to the Players to jumpstart their ideas:

- ◆ **Provide** one detail about the Operation that was going in your favour before it all went sideways.
- ◆ **Provide** one detail about how it specifically went sideways for your Operator.

HIT THE GROUND RUNNING!

The GM should set the stage. Everything has gone sideways, and it's up to the Operators to get out alive and with at least one of their goals intact.

Welcome to *Headspace*!

The Players agree that Rage is the focus of the situation, setting it at 4. The GM, Julie, then assigns a 2 to Need, representing the Cell's desire to get out of this situation. The remaining Stress Tracks are set to 1.

HEADSPACE

STRESS TRACKS

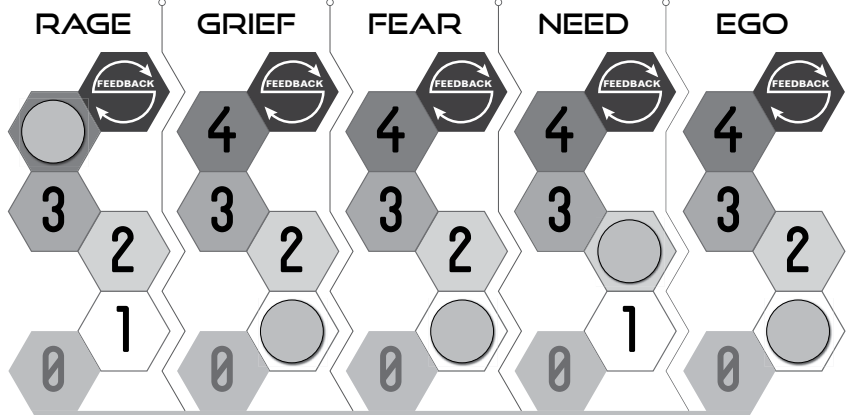
TO GAIN SYNC
REVEAL A REGRET
MAKE A SACRIFICE FOR
ANOTHER'S DRIVE

WHEN YOU GAIN SYNC
EVERY OPERATOR GAINS 1 XP



WHEN YOU HAVE SYNC
ONLY THE **FIRST** USE OF A
PROFESSIONAL SKILL
INCREASES STRESS
SPEND SYNC TO TURN ANY
RESULT INTO A 10

FEEDBACK
GM SPENDS
POINTS FROM THE
STRESS TRACK TO
CAUSE EMOTIONAL
COMPLICATIONS
(MAX 4)



IF THE STRESS TRACK OF THE SKILLS BAGGAGE TYPE IS 0, YOU MAY MAKE A PROFESSIONAL MOVE INSTEAD OF A HEADSPACE MOVE.

Bring your A game to the description of the opening scene. Remember to describe sights, sounds, and smells. Everything's gone to shit, allies are bleeding down the hall, and the smell of smoke is everywhere. Maybe the building is collapsing, and the sounds of metal twisting and furniture crashing is making it hard for the Operators to hear anything. Start things in a dire place, and let the Players figure their way out of the mess.

EXAMPLE OF THE FIRST SESSION PLAYING OUT

During the first session, the Operators made it out alive, succeeding in 2 Objectives, but losing a third.

The Operators managed to recover data from the 3^H mainframe, and they managed to protect nearby civilians, getting them off the island to safety. They didn't succeed in keeping 3^H Energy off the island, and they now have some security forces in the mix, potentially giving them a foothold for future actions. Julie awards the Operators their first success on the Dystopian Clock, putting them neck and neck with Trauma One. Next session, the Players will work on resolving the Quality Milestone and resolving the Dystopian Clock to create a new Permanent Setting Event.

HEADSPACE

DYSTOPIAN CLOCKS

CORPORATION | Trauma One

PROJECT GOAL | Expand the reclamation zoning, force the poor from their homes and repossess the valuable coastline property. Starting with the abandoned 3H Energy arcology island.

PERMANENT SETTING EVENT |



TIME MILESTONE

Establish a foothold on the arcology. Base of operations and troops on the ground.



COST MILESTONE

Take control of the arcology and evict refugee squatters.



QUALITY MILESTONE

Prevent 3H Energy from recovering it's facility.

SESSION OBJECTIVES



OBJECTIVE

OUTCOME



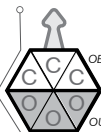
OBJECTIVE

OUTCOME



OBJECTIVE

OUTCOME



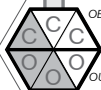
SESSION OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE

Recover important data/research from the 3H Facility before anyone else does.

OUTCOME

We recovered encrypted data from the 3H mainframe.

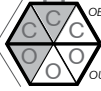


OBJECTIVE

Protect nearby civilian populations.

OUTCOME

Nearby civilians weren't evicted, BUT Trauma One has security check points



OBJECTIVE

Keep 3H Energy out of the area, we don't want a war.

OUTCOME

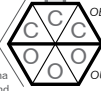
3H has a strong military presence, BUT Trauma One is still in control of the island.



OBJECTIVE



OBJECTIVE



OBJECTIVE

OUTCOME

CHAPTER 10

SESSION TWO+

The first session gave the Players an opportunity to get their feet wet with the system of *Headspace* and gave you as the GM an opportunity to see what makes them and their relationships tick. At the start of the second session, take some time to review the events of the last session. Then, you'll begin defining the Operators' connections with various elements of the Setting. You'll need to do the following:

1. Define Anchor Connections,
2. Define Agent Connections,
3. Activate your second Corporate Dystopian Clock, and
4. Continue the adventure from wherever you last left the Operators.

1. DEFINE ANCHOR CONNECTIONS —

Operators, no matter their professional training or deep-seated Regrets, have relationships with people from outside the Headspace. These are friends, family, rivals, and former partners who still have emotional bonds with the Operators. Every game of *Headspace* includes **three** such people, and each Operator has a relationship with two of them (one positive and the other complicated). See Chapter 7 | **The Game Master's Role** for more information on Anchors.

Work with the Players to flesh out who these Anchors are in your setting. For each Anchor, determine how they make a living in this difficult world. If they work for one of the Corporations, which one do they serve? If not, how do they survive in these hard times? What profession do they hold? Assign them one Skill (start with what is missing from the Headspace) to represent their competence. Lastly, assign each Anchor one dominant Emotion which defines their personality.

If the players are stuck on ideas, point them towards fleshing out some of the connections of their favourite Edges.

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Julie sits down to discuss who the Anchors will be for this game. The Players discuss some people from their histories. At the end of the discussion, Julie reviews the three Anchors:

Major Terrance J. Rooster appeared in Ahmed's *Runners Regret* as someone with a complicated history supporting *Trauma One* but perhaps a potential ally. Skill: TACTICS, Emotion: EGO.

Firefox is a crazy hacker and friend of Whistler's. Skill: HACKING, Emotion: RAGE.

Angela is an up-and-coming journalist who was caught in some of the crossfire on the first session and rescued by the Cell. She owes them her life, but there are a lot of questions swirling on why she was on the island in the first place. Skill: INVESTIGATION, Emotion: FEAR.

Ghost Operators are automatically Anchors; they don't count against the limit of three. For Ghost Operators, the Players chose their feature Skill during Operator Creation, and their dominant Emotion is the one associated with that Skill.

To review for the Cell, Julie notes that in this Headspace there are two Ghost Operators. For narrative purposes, they were both killed in the opening operation of the first session. These Operators still have Regrets and Drives, which Julie plans on using to motivate the Cell to action in future sessions.

Yoshi, a Ronin, died when he stayed behind to give covering fire for the Cell to escape a dangerous ambush, a heroic and brave act. Yoshi has the Skill FIREARMS and the dominant emotion of EGO, representing Yoshi's final moments of bravery and honour.

Shadow is an Infiltrator who was inadvertently killed by Nike during the opening session, a death marred in tragedy and bad luck. Shadow has the skill STEALTH with a dominant emotion of GRIEF, representing the sadness and guilt over their death.

Each Operator should define one positive relationship with an Anchor, as defined by a leading question from the GM.

Julie asks Ahmed (playing the Runner Nike) why he and Angela ended up in the same safe house long ago on the run from a Corporation.

Ahmed describes a situation where they were both on the run from Trauma One and had been seeking refuge independent of each other. One night when the heat was on them they bonded while sharing stories of their adventures and a few of the secrets they dug up about Trauma One.

Julie writes down a positive relationship between Angela and Nike based on mutual respect and trouble.

Each Operator has one complicated relationship with another Anchor, as defined by a leading question from the GM.

Julie asks Nike what he did that caused Shadow's death.

Ahmed describes the scene from last session where Nike acted like a coward and endangered Shadow, precipitating Shadow's death by getting him cut off from support in the opening adventure. Ahmed very much regrets this action.

Julie writes down a complicated relationship between Shadow and Nike based on the fact that one caused the other to die, something that is certainly going to lead to some drama inside the Cell's Headspace.

Julie manages this process for each of the three Anchors and the two Ghost Operators, spreading around both Positive and Complicated relationships.

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The Players get to answer these leading questions as they see fit, and that will tell you as the GM a lot about these character's personalities. You should use these answers to draw a relationship map for the game, with the Anchors in the middle (see Maps in Chapter 7 on page 149).

This is your chance to ask leading questions to the Players, getting their help so you can flesh out who these Anchors are and why they are important to the Operators. You will get as much out of this procedure as you put into it, so take a few moments to make some notes and work with the Players on building the fiction.

2. DEFINE AGENT CONNECTIONS

After defining the connections between the Operators and a few key civilians, as well as the Ghost Operators, you should discuss with the Players who each of the Corporate Agents are in the chosen setting and what kind of pre-existing relationships they have to both the Operators and possibly the Anchors and Ghost Operators.

For each Corporate Agent in the Setting (typically 4-5), have the Players work with you to answer the following questions:

- ◆ **Which Operator or Anchor does this Agent have a positive relationship with, and why?**
- ◆ **Which Operator or Anchor does this Agent have a negative relationship, and why?**

3. ACTIVATE THE NEXT CORPORATE PROJECT

At the start the second session, you should activate an additional Corporate Project—starting a new Dystopian Clock Worksheet.

During this session, you should define the three Milestones for this new Corporate Project and let the Players decide whether they want to try and continue working against the original Project, the new one, or split their resources and work against both.

In the last session, there was a lot of friction brought up between Trauma One and the original holders of the arcology islands, 3rd Energy. Julie decides this is a perfect time to bring 3rd Energy to bear with their corporate project of:

Reclaim the fallen 3rd Energy Coastal Arcology; it holds vast technology/information secrets.

Something destined to making everything complicated not just for the Operators but for how the final Milestone from the first session will play out.

4. CONTINUE THE ADVENTURE WHERE YOU LAST LEFT OFF

At this point the Players should be comfortable with who their Operators are and how they interconnect with the various anchors and corporate agents in the world. Continue play from where you ended your last session (It all Went Sideways) and play to find out what happens.

SESSIONS THREE +

At the start of any session after the second, you may either activate an additional Corporate Project (up to the maximum of the number of Corporations in the Setting) or choose to give one of the active Corporate Projects a success towards establishing the Permanent Setting Event by completing one of its Milestones.

If the Operators didn't work against an active Corporate Project during the last session, the related Dystopian Clock automatically gains 1 Corporate Success as one of the Milestones is completed in the Corporation's favour.

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OPERATOR ADVANCEMENT

Whenever the Operators gain Sync, everyone in the Cell gains 1 experience (XP). XP can be spent at any time to purchase additional Edges and Upgrades or to increase a Discipline by +1 (to a Max of +3).

- ◆ **Edges** costs 3 XP.
- ◆ **Upgrades** cost 6XP.
- ◆ **Adding +1 to any Discipline** (to a maximum of +3) costs 9XP per +1.



CHAPTER 11

HEADSPACE SETTINGS

UNDERSTANDING HEADSPACE SETTINGS

Each game of *Headspace* uses a **Setting** to tell its story. A Setting represents a distinct region or city of the world to explore, each with its own unique story to tell. Settings serve as the basis for tying the fiction of the Operators to the fiction of the world by connecting the stories of their Skills with the specific Events and Issues that have shaped the Setting.

A Setting provides everything a GM needs to tell a story; it fills out the fiction of the world and region and provides 4-5 readymade Corporations, each with its own **Corporate Agent** and an initial story hook in the form of a **Corporate Project**.

Settings in *Headspace* are treated as mutually exclusive from one another and don't interact with other Settings. You are making your own version of Earth. Each setting has a different set of **5 Events**, **5 Issues**, and **5 Corporate Secrets** that have changed the world into the dystopian future it is.

EVENT/ISSUE/CORPORATE SECRET TABLE

The primary building block of each Setting is a series of interconnected **Events**, **Issues**, and **Corporate Secrets** which together provide the basic fiction for the Setting, summarized in a simple table and in the much longer **Setting Background** section.

They are all purposefully simple ideas, allowing the Players and the GM to build on them in Operator Creation and during play to make the fiction as interesting and as evocative as possible.

Events and **Issues** are not mechanically used in creation; they more represent the core building blocks of your particular brand of dystopia. **Corporate Secrets** are used in Operator Creation to define an Operator's Regrets and Drives (each Operator will have had a direct hand in the secrets of your chosen Setting).

Complete examples of this process are in Operator Creation on page 87.

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EVENTS

Each setting is founded on five dystopian Events. Each event depicts a pivotal moment in history that changed the world, region, or city from what we know and will each have long lasting impacts into the Setting's future (see Issues, page 191).

Events are short, evocative statements of fact about the Setting. While they may be related thematically to each other, they should not flow from each other. Events are short and concise and purposefully do not delve into their potential consequences. Events often take the form of technological breakthrough, cultural shifts, physical changes, and economic/political upheaval.

Events can be large and world-changing or small and localized. Either way, they are important within the fiction of this specific Setting. Often the localized events will provide more detail to the location the game is set in.

Most Headspace Settings focus on 1 Worldwide Event, 1 Regional Event, and 3 Local Events.

Some examples of Worldwide Events:

The End of Oil, Orbital Human Colonies, Pandemics, Rare Earth Metal Shortage, Human Mutation

Some examples of Regional Events:

Pacific Coast Tsunami, Famine, Pipeline Leaking Toxins, Post-tsunami Earthquakes

Some examples of Localized Events:

Nuclear Reactor Meltdown, Political Assassination, the Shanghai Food Riots

ISSUES

Issues all stem from the five Events of the Setting. Issues represent long-lasting effects, consequences, and complications. More often than not, Issues are about how society struggles to cope with the Event. In the dystopian world of *Headspace*, society generally doesn't cope well, but it will be up to the Players to further develop the fiction of the Issues to determine just how dark this future is.

Some examples of Events that led to Issues:

Pandemic led to Quarantine Zones.

Post-tsunami Earthquakes led to Unpredictable Continued Tectonic Activity and worsening conditions in Vancouver.

Rare Earth Metal Shortage led to a Scavenging Economy.

Pacific Coast Famine led to Food Riots.

Massive Tsunami led to Corporate Reclamation Zones.

CORPORATE SECRETS

Corporate Secrets represent dark, clandestine activities of the Setting's Corporations. Corporate Secrets tie each Corporation to a specific Event and/or its Issue. The Corporation is not necessarily responsible for the Event or its Issue, but it did something to satisfy its own Ambitions, likely at the detriment of someone else. Secrets are not common knowledge; at best they are conspiracy and rumour, and only a few know the facts. It would be very bad if the truth of some of these secrets was to ever come to light, something the Corporations are highly motivated to prevent.

Because there are 4-5 Corporations, in some Settings, one will be involved twice, meaning it is likely the biggest Corporation in the Setting, or the most influential, the vilest, etc.

Corporate Secrets are a bit more specific and focused than Events or Issues in order to provide some key details to build the fiction on. Remember that every Operator will have a Regret tied to their involvement in one of these dark happenings.

Some examples of Corporate Secrets:

Massive Tsunami – Trauma One secured widespread access to secret documents and resources with a “rescue crew”.

Pacific Coast Famine/Food Riots – Pacific Security Solutions exacerbated the riots to ensure they were needed for future security contracts.

Post-tsunami earthquakes – 3rd Energy may have had a direct hand in the Tsunami through unstable geothermal power experimentations.

Pandemic/Quarantine Zones – Applied Optimism advertises a cure that they know doesn't work.

CORPORATE TABLE

In the near-future dystopia of *Headspace*, most of human civilization is manipulated by a few massive, multi-national corporations. Each setting provides four or five Corporations, each with its own personality, resources, and agendas.

Corporations are summarized in a simple table. This Corporate Table is mostly used as a quick reference tool for the GM, with each Corporation and its Agent having its own background info.

CORPORATE AGENT:

(Name, Dominant Emotion, 2 Characteristics)

Each Company is represented by at least one potent NPC called an Agent. Corporate Agents are not the public faces of the Corporation; Agents represent the top-tier operators, spies, business managers, and diplomats. Most often, a Corporate Agent works towards the Initial Project while not betraying the Public Mandate. The Operators will have active—and in many cases, complicated—relationships with the Setting's various Corporate Agents.

Operator Type: (pick one of the Operator types) The Agent is like an Operator, having the same Skills and a comparable level of expertise. See Chapter 6).

Dominant Emotion: (one of the five core emotions of *Headspace*: Rage, Grief, Fear, Need, and Ego) –

An Agent's Dominant Emotion represents the Emotion that they most often represent in the fiction.

Two Characteristics – Two descriptive adjectives of the Agent as a quick reference/reminder to the GM.

INITIAL PROJECT:

Projects are corporate plans to change the Setting to align with the Corporation's long-term goals (their Shadow Mandate). Projects are short-term goals (2-4 sessions) that will establish a new dystopian Event in the Setting if the Operators do not stop it.

Projects do not have to work for common goals; Corporations don't play nice with each other, so it's always good to have them at odds.

SETTING 1 - VANCOUVER AFTERMATH

Location: Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Date: Year is 2074



BACKGROUND

On June 1st, 2074 at 4:25 a.m. PST, the initial waves of a tsunami rolled across the coast of British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and much of California. By 4:30 a.m. PST, the rest of the country had begun to learn of the initial devastation. They knew something was wrong because of the sudden silence of telecommunications down the edge of the Pacific Coast. The Americans were mobilizing their own people as Canada readied theirs to survey the destruction. The waves and aftershocks of the anticipated return of geologic activity across the Cascadian Subduction Zone destroyed the fishing industry of the Pacific Coast within two hours of the original wave. By noon, it was clear that much of the coastal Pacific agricultural presence across both nations hadn't just been brought to its knees; it was underwater.

What Vancouver endured that morning was only the beginning of the horror to come.

It's been six months since the tsunami hit. Although Trauma One—the non-governmental organization (NGO) undertaking much of the dangerous rescue work—has urged the public to remember that the death toll could have peaked into six digits, this attempt at creating a silver lining from the still-increasing death toll has been met with considerable public resistance. Refugees still linger in “Devastation Zones,” and entire communities remain unreachable by any mode of transport. Clean water is scarce, and water-borne diseases are widespread. Because of the sheer scale of tsunami damage, standing water is omnipresent throughout the remains of what was corporate waterfront Vancouver. The fear of insect-carried illnesses hasn't borne fruit, but it's increasingly likely that an outbreak of malaria is not an if, but a when.

With the outbreak of a plague in the affected areas, massive quarantine zones have been in place for more than three months, despite initial statements that quarantine would be a temporary measure to ensure that the plague didn't spread to the rest of Canada, or the world. Aesculapian Laboratories has been touting a radical new drug for treating the plague, but the Quarantine Zones remain in place.

The food riots have been a grim preview for the rest of the country about the increasing instability of food supplies in the face of both fishing and farming in the area being destroyed. Conflicting reports have been smuggled out of the Devastation Zones, implicating that Pacific Security Solutions has been using force far beyond what's necessary (and that's the best case). 3^H Energy is still in 24/7 spin mode about their ruptured pipelines, and the press outside Vancouver has already learned that fetal deformities are skyrocketing after the tsunami. 3^H Energy would be very interested in finding out who their leak is; only someone on the inside could be getting the press the information that's turning up, and a person with a conscience that strong is bad for business. Even if it does distract from 3^H's much bigger, experimental projects.

Vancouver continues to be plagued with earthquakes and flooding, continually setting back operations to recover the most shattered parts of the city. Vancouver's least affected areas were quietly taken over by corporations, who pled that “restabilising business will help the economy recover sooner.” The people they forced into Devastation Zones and Quarantine areas have a vastly different perspective, however.

Vancouver is barely contained mayhem, choked in corporate corruption and government failure. If something isn't done, things will only get worse.

GEOGRAPHY

After the tsunami, the borders and names of Vancouver neighborhoods don't mean much anymore. It's all about the Zones now.

RECLAIMED ZONES

Maple Ridge, Burnaby, some of Langley, and most of Surrey are the exemplary models of what a "reclaimed Vancouver" will look like: stretches of rebuilt buildings and the familiar twinkle of street lights. It was expensive and brutal for corporations to get the kind of foothold the Recovered Zones represent, and not even Applied Optimism's news coverage is so bold as to pan too far up into the sky above the green zones. Beyond the street lights, the rest of Vancouver's skyline is damning in its darkness. Searchlights, helicopters, and drones roam the sky outside the propaganda-filled green zones. Not all those lights are corporate, and sometimes, they explode.

RECLAMATION ZONES

Portions of White Rock, Langley, Surrey, New West, Van West, as well as much of West, North, and East Van fall inside Reclamation Zones. Being halfway to Reclaimed doesn't make them any less dangerous to operate or live in. Corporations are using any means necessary to cover up any evidence of their malfeasance pre- or post-tsunami in these zones. The sooner they can kick out the survivors, the faster they can get their hands on more land to consume and recover their assets. These zones are a lattice of corruption and corporate violence, mowing down anyone who makes trouble on the path to being Reclaimed. The rest of the country—even the world—may be fooled by the tearful, somber media coverage of the past six months, but the locals think they have a pretty good idea of just how bad things are. But they're wrong.

It's worse than they ever imagined.

QUARANTINE ZONES

In Coquitlam—as well as sections of North Van, Burnaby, and New West—are thousands of people who haven't been heard from in more than three months. The Quarantine Zones put in place by Aesculapian Laboratories are walled off from the rest of Vancouver, with a mixture of field decontamination chambers and electric fences spaced with sterile barriers. The statements issued by Applied Optimism say it's purely for the protection of the Quarantined. Any attempts to gain footage via drone, or to do field reconnaissance, are met with extreme prejudice whenever detected. *He's in Quarantine* is becoming slang among operators about their brethren who have vanished in Vancouver. The field

hospitals are inscrutable boxes, guarded day and night. Unlike other zones, no bodies are ever seen being transported out of Quarantine. No one knows what they're doing with, or to, the people in Quarantine. No one wants to.

DEVASTATION ZONES

There isn't a square mile left in Vancouver that's safe, and these are the places it's the most readily apparent. Ladner, Delta, Richmond. The airport, the Boundary Bay Arcology. Parts of North Van, West End, Van West, Burnaby, and Whiterock. The corporations haven't penetrated far into these zones; the Arcology is currently unreachable rubble full of dangerous corporate secrets, and the closer to the shoreline of the red zones, it becomes impossible to enter without mounting an expedition only the best operators would ever be able to pull off. The further into the most devastated areas of Vancouver, aerial operations—rescue or espionage—escalate from impractical through too dangerous to certain death. There's only so much fuel a bird can hold, and there's not a single safe place to land. Once you pass the checkpoints, civilization gives way to the unending dark. There are survivors, criminals, runaways, stranded ops, and world-changing secrets in the Devastation Zones. These are places that still need rescue. Any rescue. With the way Pacific Security Solutions keeps shooting people (food riots or otherwise), there might not be anyone left to save in another six months.

CORPORATE & AGENT BACKGROUNDS

TRAUMA ONE

Trauma One was a nascent emergency services company in the early 2000s, a small EMS provider in Canada's limited pool of private providers. Trauma One's founder, Karl Bowen, was a WWII medic who was well versed in the use of bribes, theft, and manipulation to rescue his patients at any cost. Bowen passed on these skills to members of his board, as well as his employees. When opportunities presented themselves, Trauma One would provide assistance throughout the country and abroad, securing power, money, and allies along the way. Bowen's daughter Joanna took over after his death as the next hard-bitten soul to occupy the head of the board's table, bringing a new generation of allies and medical experience with her ascension. Her son Joseph was an adequate replacement, but right now eyes are on his children Zachariah and Rachel, poised as the possible successors to the family legacy of medicine and spycraft. Where Zach enjoys medicine and excels at selling the company's public mission, Rachel attended medical school begrudgingly. Alongside her father, she orchestrates the shadowy mandates that maintain Trauma One as one of

the best sources for espionage support in the world. In Vancouver their objectives have spread them in multiple directions. Underneath the guise of medical assistance after the tsunami, Trauma One is recovering corporate assets (for a price), forcing the poor out of the reclamation zones, and butting heads with 3^H over the abandoned Arcology. They've started digging into Aesculapian Laboratories; Trauma One's reconnaissance drones, bugs, and worms have all been killed after crossing into the Quarantine Zones. They'd like very much to know why.

The company knows no other methods of operation, and their stockpiled intel is beyond the worst nightmares of even their worst enemies. Though doctors are supposed to do no harm to their patients, the Hippocratic Oath never said anything about forbidding espionage.

TRAUMA ONE CORPORATE AGENT: VERONICA COTE

Veronica Cote popped up on Trauma One's radar as a teenager. She avoided violence whenever possible, driven by needs not even her new employer was entirely aware of. The unflappable teen managed to make her way into several small Trauma One operations, stealing supplies for the Whitecoats in her own neighborhood. When Trauma One offered Cote a job in exchange for not reporting her or making her disappear, she had a list of conditions, spanning several pages, that she told them to fill before she would agree. Amused, Trauma One accepted the young woman's demands. During her time at Trauma One, Cote has proven that she can get to anything or anyone, anywhere, and vanish without a trace. Vancouver was Cote's home turf, and the tsunami's devastation of the city has hit her deeply. Her mother's grave is somewhere underwater these days, and her childhood home in an unsavory section of Vancouver is rubble. While Cote will protect her employer and their interests, any operator who wants to deal with her won't get far without exhibiting caution, compassion, and humanity.

3^H ENERGY

Before the tsunami, 3^H was poised to destroy or absorb most of its competitors in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. The sheer amount of capital they were swimming in was enough to make them a titan, and the rumors that the nine-year-old company was about to make a huge breakthrough were yesterday's news by the time the company woke up with the rest of the world six months ago to find out all but a few of their Vancouver personnel were dead. Since the tsunami, business has been a nightmare. It wasn't easy to keep the risky geothermal experiments or copious espionage secret, but there's still plenty buried in the arcology to hang them all. By and large, 3^H is into flashy press, big secretive

research facilities, and all the gleaming tech and scientists that money can buy. The company is as much about the performance of being a tech company as it is about pulling in profits by any means necessary. Favoring espionage and blackmail over basic criminal violence, 3^H is trying to stay in the black while running a relentless spin campaign, recover its Vancouver assets, and get on the other side of the mess they know they probably caused. Their focus on profit over citizens is going to make things much, much worse than they already are.

3^H ENERGY CORPORATE AGENT: PETER NEMO

Peter Nemo used to have a group of friends in college, but they had a falling out, and Nemo went his own way after graduation. His friends went on to start 3^H. In college, they needed help with their engineering homework. Now, they need him to help clean up the mess. Though he's not the big dog in Vancouver, Peter is the one handling everything less than above board for 3^H in the area. Friendly, ruthless, and egotistical, this technological genius is pulling down an obscene amount of money to make all these pesky problems go away. Fudging reports, hacking systems, trying to run circles around Veronica Cote and Trauma One's team before they get a chance to try for the arcology. Peter's also devoted himself to a vicious mole hunt, trying to hunt down whoever's leaking information to Applied Optimism, who has no interest in playing ball with 3^H. In this particular situation, 3^H's problems are giving Applied Optimism all the ratings and money they could dream of.

PACIFIC SECURITY SOLUTIONS

PSS started as a small security firm in 2024. Rapidly growing beyond armoured car transports and private corporate security, the company expanded quickly into K&R (Kidnapping & Ransom), overseas field work, convoy security, and an increasing number of activities ranging from dubious to highly illegal. It would take a determined person with an impaired sense of self-preservation to go trawling the history of PSS that lurks beneath the squeaky clean press releases. Operating as if they're constantly at risk in hostile territory, even inside their own buildings, PSS exhibits the sort of caution and violence born from the worst nightmares of the Cold War. In Vancouver, most people only have an inkling of how bad things are inside the red zones. Outside Vancouver, much of the nation has little idea of the violent, ruthless plans PSS has for the devastated city, from the destruction of the police force to the erosion of safety and liberty of anyone who isn't either on the payroll or providing it. PSS isn't just doubling down for the profit—information about some of its ops have become whispers in British Columbia, and they're more than happy to kill whoever is violating operational security.

PACIFIC SECURITY SOLUTIONS CORPORATE AGENT: MAJOR ALICE GRANT

Major Alice Grant worked her way up through the ranks of PSS after lying about her age to join up at 17. PSS didn't care about the lie—hiding the truth to get in the door told them that Grant was the perfect woman for the job. That initial assessment by a PSS recruiter has never been proven wrong. Grant possessed the kind of fury that could lead to the demolition of an entire settlement, and she's used it with precision to intimidate and terrify anyone and anything standing between her and her mission objectives. Right now, Grant's got her eyes on the prize: dismantling civilian police presence in the area, positioning PSS as the only viable option for security in the region.

PSS employees who have survived working with her can all say the same thing: if you follow the mandate of PSS, you can do no wrong in the eyes of Major Grant. Unless someone is her manipulative match, or a bona fide peer, no operator should volunteer to be in a room with her. The results will be far too dangerous and unpredictable to plan for.

If 3^H, Applied Optimism, and Trauma One figure out what she's really there to do, and can somehow reconcile their competing mandates, Grant might finally have a real fight on her hands.

APPLIED OPTIMISM

The self-styled "Voice of the People" started on the laptops, tablets, and phones of a team of newsies in 2011, covering the Occupy movement in Canada and the States, expanding their focus quickly to other protest movements. Where the people felt their voice had been silenced, Applied Optimism was there to give it back to them. Over time, AO went from an ethos of current event reporting to uncovering corruption among law enforcement, companies, and governments. As the world drifted further into a surveillance state, AO drifted with it. There are people that could be called good. Moral. Ethical. They're not the people who control the company. Over time, the people at the top of the food chain were replaced by people who could helm a business. Managers, accountants, lawyers, suits. People who were good at making the company run.

Good people working at AO are, by and large, excluded from management. Such people are used as the faces on video feeds, the voices of podcasts, and the names on articles. When those good, ethical people die, AO mourns them publically, and the audience mourns with them. AO uses young, talented newsies to take down targets in the news. In Vancouver, the people feel voiceless. They want someone to blame. And if AO can manage it, 3^H is going to get dragged through the muck for

being at fault for the tsunami. There's a big, fat bonus in it for the team that can get them concrete dirt on PSS as well. As for Trauma One and AO, they're coming perilously close to starting a working relationship together. AO needs the ratings and dirt. Trauma One has access.

APPLIED OPTIMISM CORPORATE AGENT: TYLER MORGAN

Tyler Morgan is one of the tireless producers behind some of the best news at Applied Optimism. Starting as an independent in his teens, Applied Optimism got him on the payroll the second he graduated from high school. Morgan's list of awards is as long as his list of enemies. He's committed, analytical, and driven daily by intense grief. Unless someone is naïve, most employees can put enough pieces together to figure out the less savory aspects of their employer: AO's intense involvement in advertising, product placement, and lucrative deals in favor of—or against—any corporation targeted by Applied Optimism. Most people know AO engages in a little espionage in the service of journalism, but their banked intel is on par with Trauma One's. Morgan may be burnt out, exhausted, and grieving, but the chance to shove 3^H into the open maw of a grieving, angry city has a lot of appeal. Even if it might be the last story he ever reports on.

AESCULAPIAN LABORATORIES

Aesculapian Laboratories wasn't started by idealists who wanted to change the world. The founders of the company are the same people they were fifteen years ago when they opened for business: control freaks who want to eradicate disease and make some money doing it. While they're not the friendly type, the company has spent its time trying to avoid scandal, scooping their competition, and keeping their stock up. Aesculapian shareholders have been able to depend on the company for over a decade to keep its nose clean. Many of their contractors are with the province, and they have contacts in the Public Health Authority across Canada.

Then the tsunami happened.

Due to some obscure contract language, Aesculapian Laboratories wound up with the authority to set up Quarantine Zones, and with the death of most of the British Columbia CDC and most PHA reps doing frontline medical treatment, no one could really stop them. Catching a plague building was terrifying work for a company that never stepped outside the lab. Once people starting asking for a vaccine, a cure, anything, their research turned up some nasty surprises.

They have a lead on something no one else has managed to piece together: the likelihood that the plague in Vancouver was engineered. Due to the time, resources, secrecy, and expertise required for making bioweapons, the virus could have been in development for decades.

It's possible the disease isn't just a rogue creation orphaned by the disaster when its lab was ruined. The Vancouver Tsunami Virus (VTV) may have been planted deliberately among the population in the direct aftermath of the tsunami, if not before. Either option is chilling. Aesculapian has been keeping the PHA and BCCDC out of the loop over the past few months, paying out exorbitant bribes and contracting a steady stream of espionage and wetwork while they desperately scabble for information on the disease's origin. If Applied Optimism finds out they dispense a drug that they know cannot help, it's lights out for their stock. Trauma One is already sniffing around because of the extreme force Aesculapian is using to keep people out of the Quarantine Zones. With no allies and whispers of moles in the ranks, it's only a matter of time before personnel on the ground start making extreme choices about how to protect the company now that the wolves are at the door.

AESCULAPIAN LABORATORIES CORPORATE AGENT : DR. ELLE STONE

Aesculapian's only real field work has less to do with the media image of disease research in far-flung places and a lot more to do with espionage and mathematics. While her coworkers think she's a doctor turned pencil-pusher, Stone engages in delicate internal work for the company. Finding moles, locating labs that are embezzling, pinpointing employees with bad after-hours habits, spying on the competition, it's all a normal day at the office for the doctor. Leveraging both her brains and her looks, Stone is an appealing target for Applied Optimism's attention. Trauma One has already pegged her as someone to exercise caution with, while PSS and 3rd have yet to register that Dr. Stone is one of Aesculapian's most treasured doctors-turned-internal investigators.

When Aesculapian found itself suddenly at the center of post-tsunami response, Stone was attached to operations to keep an eye on things. It was a strange, volatile situation, and it's only growing stranger by the day.

EVENTS, ISSUES AND SECRETS

EVENTS	ISSUES	SECRETS
Massive tsunami decimates the Pacific Coast	Corporate Reclamation Zones	Trauma One secured widespread access to secret documents and resources with a "rescue crew".
Pacific Coast famine	Food Riots	Pacific Security Solutions exacerbated the riots to ensure they were needed for future security contracts.
Plague Pandemic	Quarantine Zones	Aesculapian Laboratories' treatment doesn't work, and they know it.
Corporate freeze-out of members of the press	Decreasing public trust in authority figures, exacerbated by the press	Applied Optimism isn't just reporting on what's going to spite the corps. They're playing the public against them using stolen information.
Post-tsunami earthquakes	Unpredictable continued tectonic activity and worsening conditions in Vancouver	3rd Energy may have had a direct hand in the Tsunami through unstable geothermal power experimentations

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THE CORPORATIONS

TRAUMA ONE
<i>"Saving lives, one donation at a time"</i>
PUBLIC MANDATE
Provide emergency disaster relief.
SHADOW MANDATE
Provide access to partners in disaster zones, for a price.
CORPORATE AGENT
Veronica Cote
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Role: Infiltrator ◆ Emotion: Need ◆ Characteristics: Compassionate, Networked
CORPORATE PROJECT
Expand the reclamation zoning, force the poor from their homes, and repossess the valuable coastline property. Start with the abandoned 3 ^H Energy Arcology island.

3^H ENERGY
<i>"Providing renewable energy for a new generation"</i>
PUBLIC MANDATE
Provide the next generation of renewable energies.
SHADOW MANDATE
Annex the poor regions for power.
CORPORATE AGENT
Peter Nemo
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Role: Tech ◆ Emotion: Ego ◆ Characteristics: Friendly, Ruthless
CORPORATE PROJECT
Reclaim the fallen 3 ^H Energy Coastal Arcology; it holds vast technology/ information secrets.

PACIFIC SECURITY SOLUTIONS
<i>"Private Security, Public Service"</i>
PUBLIC MANDATE
Provide the best private security money can buy.
SHADOW MANDATE
Secure an independent Pacific state.
CORPORATE AGENT
Major Alice Grant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Role: Handler ◆ Emotion: Rage ◆ Characteristics: Precise, Manipulative
CORPORATE PROJECT
Remove civilian authority from the city's police, allowing PSS to dictate the terms of Vancouver reclamation in their favour.

APPLIED OPTIMISM
<i>"The Voice of the People"</i>
PUBLIC MANDATE
The premier multimedia news provider.
SHADOW MANDATE
Use the media to control the people.
CORPORATE AGENT
Tyler Morgan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Role: Ronin ◆ Emotion: Grief ◆ Characteristics: Analytical, Committed
CORPORATE PROJECT
Get proof that another Corporation was responsible for the Tsunami, starting with the 3 rd Energy leak.



AESCULAPIAN LABORATORIES

"New solutions for the oldest problems."

PUBLIC MANDATE

Provide the cutting edge of medical solutions to all of humanity's children.

SHADOW MANDATE

Obtain a multi-decade contract to provide medical research services to the province.

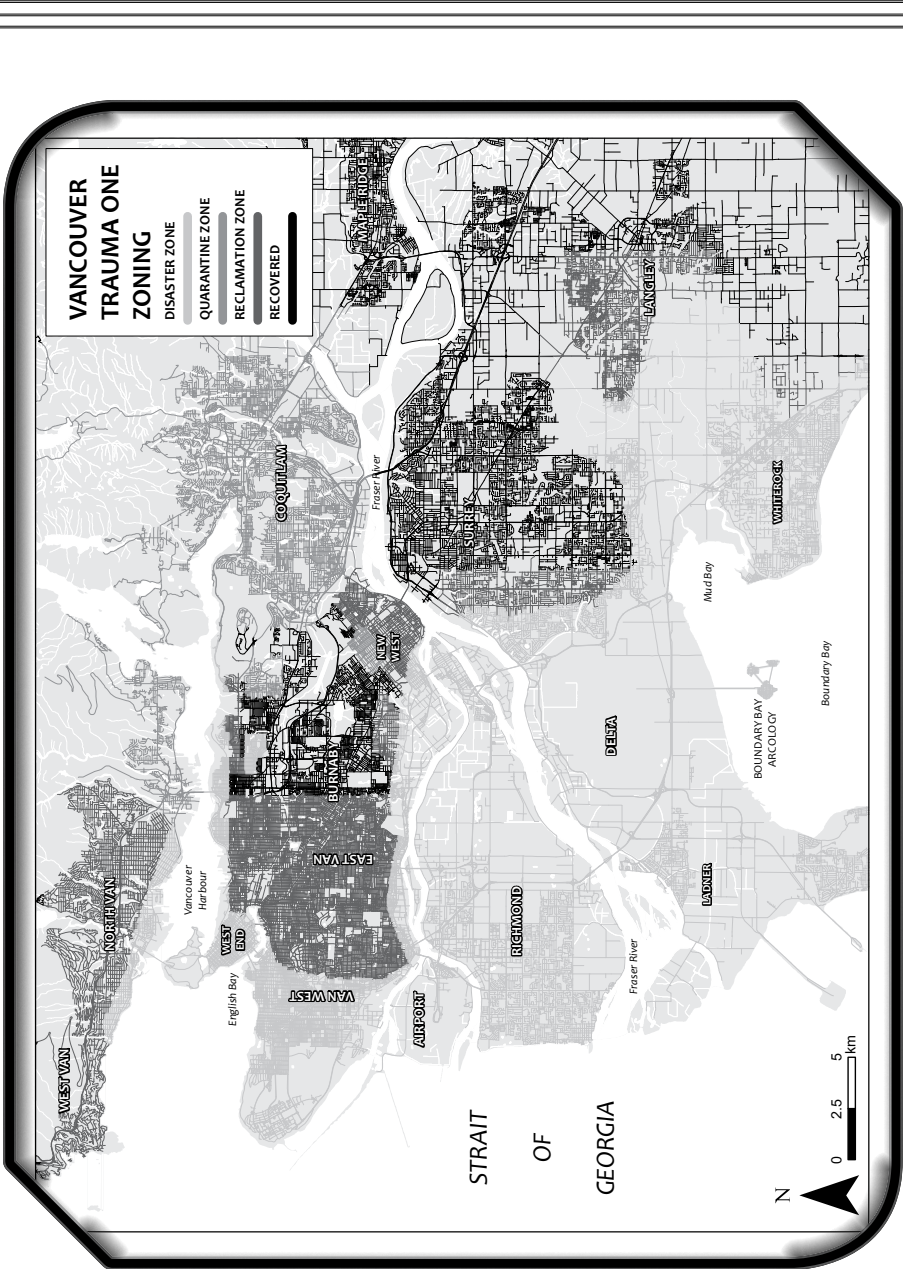
CORPORATE AGENT

Emily Stone

- ◆ Role: Whitecoat
- ◆ Emotion: Need
- ◆ Characteristics: Compassionate, Ruthless

CORPORATE PROJECT

Identify, locate, and destroy the responsible party behind the Vancouver Tsunami Virus, securing public and governmental trust in Aesculapian.



TRAUMA ONE DISASTER ZONING

SETTING 2 - DAY ZERO IN THE PROMISED LAND

Location: Israel

Date: December 2076



BACKGROUND

A long time ago, the country known as Israel was called “The Promised Land” by many. Three of the largest religious groups in the world—Christians, Muslims, and Jews—all had a huge stake in the fate of this land, said to be central in each of their belief systems. Israel also stood prominently as an economic centre and democratic state in the Middle East, a region that was a hotbed of controversy, unrest, and warfare for generations. Many hoped that the twenty-first century would finally see peace reign in this beleaguered country. Sadly, that was not to be.

It began with a devastating water shortage in 2066. The country that once bloomed out of the desert slowly began to dry up once more. Emergency water-rationing was enacted, and scientists sought new

technological solutions to cultivate options for hydrating the desiccating country. Three months with no rain led the already tense country to the brink of war. Violent riots rocked the major cities and along territorial borders, ending in huge military and civilian bloodshed. Yet still the people struggled on. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and allied countries brought in what aid they could, but it wasn't enough. Many people lost their lives in the ensuing years. Everyone believed that the country would annihilate itself.

All that changed on February 2nd, 2069. A group of scientists from around the world, along with the greatest Israeli and Palestinian thinkers from across the country, had come together to build a water reclamation centre. Together they built the Saba Water Reclamation Plant, a facility that would generate enough fresh water for the country to sustain itself into the future. It was hailed worldwide as a miracle breakthrough, just in time to save the ravaged country from self-annihilation. But then the plant exploded in an act of terror that destroyed any chance of providing water to the country. The people who claimed responsibility identified themselves as radicals, out to keep the government from controlling the water supply. These radicals were captured, and authorities discovered they hailed from a dozen different countries, brought together under a common, misguided cause.

The loss of the water reclamation plant was devastating. The entire country lost hope in salvation, and it destabilised as the world watched on the news. In the end, the United Nations was invited to step in before the country collapsed and its people died of thirst. UN troops took control of the region under a provisional government on January 1, 2070. Gone were territorial borders based on former treaties and declarations. Instead, the United Nations declared it the Unified Israeli Territories for the sake of sustainability. The idea was to shore up the country and then give it back to its own people. To ensure that that remained the plan, the charter for the provisional government had a time limit: within seven years they must stabilise the region or leave. That was six years, eleven months ago, give or take a week.

This government, under UN control, was a pretty idea at the start. They believed that they could solve the problems of the region by combating the drought and the economic collapse together, as one country. It might have worked, if the UN had had the resources to rebuild the country's damaged infrastructure. But when money ran short, the UN fell back on private organisations to keep the Unified Territories together. And so began the age of the privatised Territories, home to private corporations out to buy themselves the title of saviours of the Promised Land.

The corporations wasted no time in sinking their mottos and ethos into the hearts and minds of the weary population. They presented themselves as building the best tomorrow for the Unified Territories, providing new infrastructure in areas like security, technological advancement, pharmacology and medical research, and agriculture. And of course, each company on the ground invested in the one thing that was needed in the Unified Territories: water. A national pipeline was built using funds from all those corporations that invested in the area, the price exacted by the United Nations for the chance to start new business there. The water flowed once more, under the UN's control. But once that basic necessity was returned to the region, the Unified Territories were carved up by corporation. Corps controlled whole square kilometres for their research and staging, or else cities were carved up into areas that housed corporate personnel and their interests. All goods and services were controlled by the corps until small businesses were, for the most part, squeezed out. The only free trading zones were city marketplaces, held as open space by the United Nations. Otherwise, a citizen of the territories worked for a corp, shopped at their special commissaries, and lived in corporate-sponsored housing.

And the advancements in the Unified Territories grew by leaps and bounds. Each of the corps did their very best to expand and grow their influence, but each also developed new technologies and innovations that could be sold the world over. Soon, the Unified Territories was seen as a place where startling growth was happening and, on the eve of the expiration of the UN charter, many wonder how this brave new world of expansion and progress will survive. Many advocate for keeping the charter in place indefinitely to maintain the peace. If you listen to the corps, they'll tell you that the people would prefer to stay under the provisional government. Yet outside of the corporate buildings, in the markets and in the streets, rumbles of revolution are spreading. People are waiting to hear whether the United Nations will honour their charter and leave.

Fresh on the heels of this upcoming deadline, a group has been growing outside of the reach of the corporations or the UN. Calling themselves Adama, these activists are a grass-roots movement named after the Hebrew word for earth. They believe that the corporations must be removed so that the country may be locally controlled. What that control would look like is up for debate, but Adama is growing in strength, and many believe they are well on their way to being militant. Both the UN and Hardcastle Industries have issued statements that they would defend the designated government of the land at all costs, but that has not halted Adama's influence taking hold across corporate lines, in

neighbourhoods, and in local hearts. The message is spreading: peace without exploitation, in our land, in our homes.

In this unstable time, it seems there's also a new disaster waiting in the wings. A mysterious illness sprang up in the most economically troubled neighbourhoods. It has proven difficult to contain, and though the UN's medical consultants assured the world on the news that everything is all right, the death toll is already in the hundreds. So far there is no cure in sight, and no word on any progress from top medical technology and pharmaceutical corp, Uriel Consolidated. No one has any idea how to stop this plague in the making on this, the eve of a whole new world for the so-called Promised Land.

GEOGRAPHY

The land that became known as the Unified Territories was once a single country torn by political borders and national conflict. Before the establishment of the Territories, the tiny stretch of land known as Israel was fractured into two areas: the larger state of Israel and the Palestinian Territories of the West Bank and Gaza. Those borders shifted dramatically after the establishment of the Territories under the United Nations and were then further changed by the mandate to allow the corporations to establish their own compounds around the country. So though one can travel from the north of the country to the very southern tip in less than five hours and from the Dead Sea on the eastern border to the Mediterranean in far less, the actual geography of the region is as complex as the Territory itself.

Large sections of the Unified Territories have been broken up into divisions, run by the United Nations as separate sectors. The north of the country is Sector One, running from the town of Haifa down to include Nazareth and across to the southern tip of the Golan Heights. This section is known for its beautiful mountains and farmland and has several large DuVales facilities, with a giant facility near the city of Tiberias. Of course the Yama Corporation holds most of Nazareth as their own to feed the central hub of the pipeline, but the territory is considered one of the quietest. The city of Safed in the north-east is considered a tremendous arts center, old-fashioned and considered a haven for those interested in a more low-tech lifestyle. The west coast from Haifa to Akko in the north have all been industrialised for sea trade, with shanty-towns in Akko bringing in all kinds of goods from around the world.

Sector Two runs the swath across the middle of Israel from the city of Hadera through Janin and all the way down to Jericho. It is the largest territory, hosting such major cities as Tel Aviv, Nablus, Netanya, and

Ramallah. This area is heavily controlled by UN forces to better help maintain infrastructure in the densely populated cities. The coastal region is also largely UN-controlled with cities like Hadera remaining under the shaky control of the provisional governors. Miles of populated areas and industrial plants have turned most of this region into one large megacity. Tel Aviv has remained the center of commerce and diplomacy in the region, despite its status as second-class to the country's capital, Jerusalem. Tel Aviv is the city of lights, glistening on the coast, a technological marvel which hosts the headquarters for Uriel Consolidated and the Yama Corporation. Just to the south-east, Ramallah is a major centre for industry as well, thanks to Uriel Consolidated, and serves as a hub for telecommunications for Yama. Hardcastle's northern command is based out of Nablus, with a smaller garrison near Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion Airport.

Lying dead between Sector Two and Three is the capital of the Territories, Jerusalem. Of all the cities in the region, Jerusalem has become the most hotly contested area. Nowhere in the country is the clash of the old and the new, the fragility of the Territories, felt more strongly. There are major headquarters for all the major corporations here, and it hosts the seat of power for the provisional government. Central Command for the United Nations lies just beyond the Mount of Olives, the most ancient cemetery in Jerusalem. The Mount itself has a ghoulish history; during the drought and subsequent instability, people sought refuge by living amongst the graves in an impromptu shantytown that exists until this day. Yet the city has a nostalgic feeling under the layers of technology and industrial growth. The Old City of Jerusalem, an area which harkens back to ancient times, has remained and is considered a centre for education and religious thought. The city is the most densely populated of any in the Territories, with mega-structures dwarfing ancient architecture.

Sector Three is the largest of the sections and controls everything south of Jerusalem from the Dead Sea to Gaza and down to the city of Mizpe Ramon. This territory is huge and holds the city of Hebron, which has become one of Yama's telecom hubs, and the largest labs for DuVales in the city of Ashqelon. Yet it's the giant facility for Hardcastle in Gaza that remains the most impressive in the region, with its military complex stretching for miles in every direction. United Nations checkpoints dot the region, and DuVales factories and cultivation centres fill the Negev desert as they continue to make the desert bloom.

The final sector, Sector Four, covers the very south of the country. Large swaths of this desert area are held by corporation research land grants, with small towns grown up around them for employees and their families. Roving Bedouin populations still live and operate traveling businesses

between facilities, creating commerce in the desert. Yet this sector also draws a huge portion of its revenue from Eilat in the far south on the Gulf of Aqaba. Eilat, always a tourist and beach resort town, has become a decadent hotspot for the region, though rumours of run-off from the pipeline negatively impacting the local ecology have locals very concerned. It's considered a town where you can find anything and sell anything, and even perhaps arrange passage out of the Territories, for the right price.

The territorial boundaries and control of the Sectors are constantly shifting. Yet the one geographic constant in the region is the pipeline. When the Saba Water Reclamation Facility was destroyed, the pipeline became the most highly protected bit of infrastructure built. Sunk deep into the earth and serviced by miles of tunnels alongside and under the pipes, the line carries fresh water in all directions from the Yama Corporation facility just outside of Nazareth. From there it carries water north into what was once the Golan Heights and south all the way into the desert. The remains of the old Saba Reclamation Plant lie just outside of Beer-sheba in the south of the country, a grim reminder of the hopes that were dashed by a still-unsolved act of sabotage.

CORPORATE & AGENT BACKGROUNDS

THE UNITED NATIONS

Since its inception on October 24, 1945, the United Nations has served as a body dedicated to international cooperation. Through representation by member nations, the UN tackled global issues from human rights to war, economic crises to natural disaster. It was not surprising that the UN stepped in to shore up the ailing region when the drought and subsequent conflict brought Israel and its population to the edge of extinction. Yet the United Nations forces and aid workers on the ground were not equipped to handle the ongoing tension in the area, the complex needs of such a diverse population, or the economic burden needed to rebuild infrastructure. Struggling, the United Nations forces restructured to draw support from the other corporations, receiving money and supplies from the corps to keep the Unified Territories running. Brought together by their aim to do good, the UN is the well-meaning framework that keeps the Territories from destabilising completely. Their motto is "Peace and Security."

THE UNITED NATIONS CORPORATE AGENT: CAPTAIN JANA ESTERHAZ

One of the movers in the Territories working for the United Nations is Captain Jana Esterhaz. Daughter of a Hungarian national and a British father, Esterhaz grew up scrapping her way up in poor neighbourhoods in

Bristol. It wasn't until she joined the British military and worked her way up in Special Forces that she discovered a knack for creating order from chaos in the madness of combat. There's nothing that makes Esterhaz happier than a well-executed tactical plan or a mission gone smoothly. A born leader, Esterhaz still encountered terrible sexism on her rise to become a great officer and fighter. It was on a mission in the new Unified Territories that saw her left behind by two of the men under her command. She was rescued by UN forces and mustered out of British service shortly thereafter. In her eyes, her talents would be better served bringing order to the fragile Territories instead. A consummate military genius, Esterhaz is a star soldier on the rise.

YAMA CORPORATION

The Yama Corporation started out as the inheritors of the researchers that gave their lives to create the Saba Water Reclamation Facility before its destruction. The backers for those scientists and their colleagues came together to form a company that would focus on developing technological advancements in the Unified Territories. Yama focuses on tech that helps make the basics easier: water and power are their focus. However, they also own a large portion of telecommunications in the country and have a hand in computer hardware and software development. A highly diversified company, they employ people in a dozen different sectors under the banner of their inclusive corporate culture. Any may find a home under the wing of the Yama Corporation, whose motto is "From Harmony Comes Innovation."

YAMA CORPORATION CORPORATE AGENT: ELIEZAR MARKUS

The innovative spirit of Yama is perfectly epitomised in one of their top tech wizards, Eliezar Markus. A transplant from just outside of Austin, Texas, Markus jumped ship from a promising career at MIT to head to the Unified Territories just as soon as Yama Corp put out the call. They wanted the best and brightest in developing new communications software for mobile devices. Markus brought with him a patent for a brand new encryption scheme based on facial recognition software. His work was so well received that he got the full rockstar developer treatment, receiving a luxury apartment, plenty of cash, and access to all the high-tech toys. Friendly and a bit of a hedonist, Markus was down in a bar partying it up when he got on the wrong end of a scuffle between some drunk Hardcastle mercenaries and some locals. Markus owes some markers to an Uriel scientist for fashioning him the latest in hi-tech wheelchair technology to get around, but the whole thing hasn't slowed him one bit. It has opened his eyes to the realities of the dangers of the Territories, however.

URIEL CONSOLIDATED

Even before the creation of the Unified Territories, Israel was a country known for its advances in pharmaceutical and medical technology. With sickness rampant in the wake of fighting and drought, Uriel Consolidated was called in early to help the ailing population. They secured numerous patents and drug discoveries during that time and, once formally invited into the Unified Territories, secured themselves several massive, state-of-the-art complexes to continue their research and development. Because of this and their aggressive movements to procure any advancements that might outshine their own (no matter the cost), they are known as the world leader in medicine. Uriel remains one of the leaders in humanitarian efforts to aid ailing populations and has made public statements about doing everything they can to combat the illnesses sweeping the Territories. Their motto is "Together, For A Healthier Future."

URIEL CONSOLIDATED CORPORATE AGENT: DR. MELISSA HAKIMI

Nobody represents the driving ambition of Uriel Consolidated quite as much as Dr. Melissa Hakimi. Melissa grew up the child of the political conflicts in the region, the daughter of an aid worker and a professor from Ramallah. She grew up traveling with her parents, seeing what the devastation of political turmoil had done to her childhood home. She went into medicine with the intent of returning home to practice, but she struggled to pay her way through school. That's when Uriel Consolidated stepped in. With their financial support, Hakimi discovered her driving medical passion in experimental surgery. She became one of the foremost physicians in the field, known for her unusual theories about technological augmentation of the human body. When the Unified Territories were established, she was one of the first scientists at the new Uriel compound just west of Ramallah. They say she was the one to suggest the compound be built there, so she could look after her old home.

HARDCASTLE INDUSTRIES

In a region as historically unstable as the Unified Territories, it's not surprising to find a corporation specialising in weapons technologies and private security. Hardcastle Industries is a clearing house for new weapons discoveries with a host of military contracts for nations across the world. Not only do they help arm a significant number of countries, they also provide trained military personnel that can enter conflict zones unencumbered by the title of 'national military.' Instead, Hardcastle's well-trained, well-outfitted private security contractors are known as the perfect aggressive and defensive force on the market. Their motto is "Your Safety In The Hands of Experts."

HARDCASTLE INDUSTRIES CORPORATE AGENT: BERNARD STEIGER

A perfect example of the Hardcastle mentality is their agent, Bernard Steiger. A company man from the moment he got out of the Israeli military, Steiger was hired by Hardcastle even before the United Nations moved in. He'll tell anyone who'll listen that he traded a low-paying job serving his country for a better one paving the way to a better retirement. Fact is, Steiger left the Israeli military after watching two high school friends shot down in the line of duty at a border crossing. Fueled by rage at losing his friends, Steiger turned those unresolved feelings into an angry protective streak for anyone under his command. A munitions expert, Steiger is cunning, manipulative, and stubborn to a fault. And nothing is more frightening than a stubborn, angry man who likes his explosives.

THE DUVALES GROUP

A people can't simply survive on water, and the DuVales Group knows this all too well. While Yama Corporation began with their focus on the water crisis, the DuVales Group let others take over dealing with the drought and instead brought in scientists to help revitalise the struggling agriculture of the country. From their laboratories, newly-engineered strains of genetically-transformed foods were grown and then planted in industrial farm complexes across the Territory. DuVales created tracts of land where corporate-owned cattle roam the land, changed forever by genetic modifications whose effects on consumption aren't fully understood yet. Their motto is "Rejuvenating The Land, Together."

DUVALES GROUP CORPORATE AGENT: AARON BEN-AMI

A rising star in the DuVales Group is Aaron Ben-Ami, a gifted businessman turned corporate frontman. What makes Ben-Ami so good at his job is his singular dedication to staving off hunger in the region. An American-born Israeli, Aaron was raised in the north of Israel in a farming cooperative called Kibbutz Amichai. His family managed to get him sent back to the United States for college, where he studied agriculture and business. He thought he'd come back and help turn his home into a thriving paradise. Instead he returned to watch his family die of typhus when the drought hit. Ben-Ami survived and spent months in a UN refugee camp recovering. It was there that he first heard of DuVales and their intentions to make the country blossom again. Since being hired, Ben-Ami has turned his quick analytical mind towards convincing smaller land owners to sell their property to DuVales, for their own sake. It's all with the best of intentions. After all, he never again wants to witness devastation like the kind that destroyed his home.

EVENTS, ISSUES AND SECRETS

EVENTS	ISSUES	SECRETS
Drought hits Israel	Violence rocks population as people fight to survive.	Contractors from Hardcastle Industries were reportedly in the area providing weapons to both sides of the fighting.
Explosion of the Saba Water Reclamation Facility	Total government collapse	Rumor has it that a rogue element in the Yama Corporation was behind the explosion at the Reclamation Facility.
The United Nations takes control of the region.	Natives to the region lose all governmental autonomy.	The vote in the UN was close. Theories say the DuVales Group bribed the key votes to get the UN into power.
Nation-wide pipeline established; Corporations allowed entrance into Unified Territories.	Corporations divide up the territory into zones.	United Nations paid a fortune to allow weapons smuggling and slave trade through the region.
Unknown sickness devastates population.	Poorest populations dying of evolving plague.	Uriel Consolidated has no way to combat the sickness, or else refuses to provide one to foster a new plague. Or else it was created by them...

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THE CORPORATIONS

YAMA CORPORATION
<i>"From Harmony Comes Innovation."</i>
PUBLIC MANDATE
Provide water to the entire region and extend their cutting-edge tech division.
SHADOW MANDATE
Gain a strangle-hold on the region by controlling the country's water.
CORPORATE AGENT
Eliezar Markus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Role: Tech ◆ Emotion: Need ◆ Characteristics: Compassionate, Friendly
INITIAL PROJECT
Control All Territory Water Rights

URIEL CONSOLIDATED
<i>"Together, For A Healthier Future."</i>
PUBLIC MANDATE
Develop the latest medical technology and cultivate a pharmaceutical empire.
SHADOW MANDATE
Thin out the population using a synthetic virus, while profiting from the cure.
CORPORATE AGENT
Melissa Hakimi
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Role: Whitecoat ◆ Emotion: Ego ◆ Characteristics: Precise, Ruthless
INITIAL PROJECT
Contain Spread of the Plague

THE UNITED NATIONS
<i>"Peace and Security"</i>
PUBLIC MANDATE
Maintain the infrastructure in the Territories and rebuild the region.
SHADOW MANDATE
Use the current situation to secure fortunes from the Corporations.
CORPORATE AGENT
Captain Jana Esterhaz
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Role: Ronin ◆ Emotion: Need ◆ Characteristics: Networked, Committed
INITIAL PROJECT
Support the Provisional Government

THE DUVALES GROUP
<i>"Rejuvenating The Land, Together."</i>
PUBLIC MANDATE
Cultivate land to turn the Territories into a food-producing paradise.
SHADOW MANDATE
Acquire as much land as possible to own the country by mandate's end.
CORPORATE AGENT
Aaron Ben-Ami
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Role: Handler ◆ Emotion: Grief ◆ Characteristics: Analytical, Haunted
INITIAL PROJECT
Secure All Food Contracts



HARDCASTLE INDUSTRIES
<i>"Your Security In The Hands of Experts"</i>
PUBLIC MANDATE
Supply the world with well-trained, well-regulated private military operatives.
SHADOW MANDATE
Use the Territories as a secret black market for arms, slaves, and drugs.
CORPORATE AGENT
Bernard Steiger <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Role: Runner◆ Emotion: Rage◆ Characteristics: Stubborn, Manipulative
INITIAL PROJECT
Establish the Territories as the premier weapons marketplace in the region.



UN SECTOR MAP

CHAPTER 12 THE LUDOGRAPHY

SPECIFIC INFLUENCES

My core ideas of shared consciousness originate in the wonderful novel *The Chrysalides* by John Whyndham (1955) and exploring these ideas years ago in *Cybergeneration* by R. Talsorian games.

My first modern re-think of these ideas was in a short game titled *The Freezer* as a Game Chef 2013 submission. *The Freezer* was my first attempt at game design. The central mechanic of skill sharing and emotional baggage originated in this early work.

Moves, Harm, and Gear Tags by D. Vincent Baker, writer and designer of *Apocalypse World*.

Being Taken Out but the Players retaining agency originates from the *Spark RPG* by Jason Pitre.

Vehicles and Drones as Gear by Hamish Cameron, writer and designer of *The Sprawl*.

Skill Questions, Regrets, and Anchors are heavily influenced by the musings of Rob Donoghue on his wonderful blog (<http://walkingmind.evilhat.com>) as well as musings by John Adamus (<http://writernextdoor.com>) and by *A Penny for My Thoughts* by Paul Tevis.

Edges and Upgrades were shaped by discussions with Brian Engard and his work on *Wetworks*.

IMMEDIATE GAME INFLUENCES

Apocalypse World, D. Vincent Baker

Burning Empires, Luke Crane

Cyberpunk 2020, R. Talsorian Games

Cybergeneration, R. Talsorian Games

Dungeon World, Sage Latorra and Adam Koebel

Dread, Epidiah Ravachol

Mage the Awakening, White Wolf

Monsterhearts, Avery McDaldno

Mythender, Ryan Macklin

Noir World, John Adamus
A Penny for My Thoughts, Paul Tevis
Saga of the Icelanders, Gregor Vuga
Spark, Jason Pitre
The Sprawl, Hamish Cameron
Technoir, Jeremy Keller
The Warren, Marshall Miller

IMMEDIATE MEDIA INFLUENCES

A lot of the following titles influenced my ideas.

12 Monkeys (1995)
Akira (1988), Manga
Blade Runner (1982)
The Bourne Identity (2002), *Supremacy* (2004) and *Ultimatum* (2007)
Fight Club (1999)
The Fifth Element (1997)
Ghost in the Shell (1995), Manga
Looper (2012)
Lost (2004-10)
The Matrix (1999)
Michael Clayton (2007)
Neuromancer (1984)
Pacific Rim (2013)
Pandorum (2009)
The Running Man (1987)
Ronin (1998)
Serial Experiments LAIN (1998)
Sense8 (2015)
Total Recall (1990)
Tron (1982)

CHAPTER 13

CREDITS AND THANKS

Without the continued advice and support of my good friend Jason Pitre, this game would never have gotten off the ground. Special thanks to Eloy Lasanta's GenCon 2013 battle challenge to make this game, Jonathan Lavallee for your continued advice and to the many people who have tirelessly contributed either as staff, playtesters, or Kickstarter backers.

STAFF CREDITS

John Adamus has edited many ENnie award-winning projects including the World books for Fate Core, Marvel Heroic Roleplaying, and Night's Black Agents. He's most recently edited *Headspace*, *Iron Edda: War of Metal and Bone*, and the 4-volume *Designers and Dragons* series. He tweets regularly at @awesome_john, blogs less regularly, and is a vocal supporter of writers, designers, and creators everywhere. He is currently designing his own game, *Noir World*, and you should ask him about it.

Lillian Cohen-Moore is an award winning editor and devotes her writing to fiction, journalism, and game design. Inspired by childhood subscriptions to *Omni* and *Asimov's*, science fiction formed the foundation for her future love of cyberpunk. She is a member of the Society of Professional Journalists and the Online News Association.

Rob Donoghue is the co-founder of Evil Hat Production, has contributed writing to a number of RPGs, and still largely views all this writing stuff as a glorified version of telling you about his character.

Brian Engard is a freelance game designer and writer. He's done work for Evil Hat, Galileo Games, and Rite Publishing, and he's currently acting as Creative Director on two different Evil Hat projects. He's a bit of a cyberpunk nerd, so when Mark asked him to write for *Headspace*, he said yes immediately.

Shoshana Kessock is co-creator of Phoenix Outlaw Productions, an indie game production and publishing company, and creator of the Living Games Conference. I'm currently a full-time writer at John Wick Presents working on the 7th Sea tabletop RPG, and well as working on my own projects. www.phoenixoutlaw.com

Jeremy Morgan is a freelance editor whose most recent work is *Bulldogs!* Fate Core and *Sig: The City Between*. Although you can usually find him at his day job or at home with his family, it's probably best to

find him on twitter as @TriskalJM, or on his (infrequent) blog at www.stormindacastle.com. The integration of tech into our everyday lives, the very present reality of dystopia, and a stubborn hope for the future are all part of the allure of cyberpunk for him.

Brian Patterson is a cartoonist and graphic designer behind the webcomic d20Monkey, a series following the in-and-out-of-gameplay experiences of lifelong friends and gamers, Sam Tigh and Brett Tucker. Adored by tens of loyal readers, Brian continues to publish d20Monkey 3-days a week and operates in the gaming industry as a freelance illustrator and cartographer. Brian currently lives in Denver, Colorado, with his two cats (Emma and Gizmo). Brian plays games, draws comics, listens to music, and runs his mouth about all sorts of things on Twitter (comics, gaming, DIO) @d20Monkey. Seriously, he's ridiculous.

Nathan D. Paoletta is a graphic artist, game designer and independent publisher currently hailing from Chicago, IL. He makes bad jokes about pro wrestling on twitter @ndpaoletta, and you can find out more at ndpdesign.com.

Jason Pitre is a game designer and professional ecologist from the wilds of Canada. As the mind behind Genesis of Legend Publishing, he has designed the Spark Roleplaying Game (2013), Posthuman Pathways (2014), and runs the RPG Design Panelcast. When he isn't working on games or reading up on polar bears, he roasts 'n brews a mean cup of coffee.

Brianna Reed is a freelance designer, illustrator, and WordPress developer based in Nashville, Tennessee. Web design has been an interest of mine since I got a hold of the Internet, and ever since my first HTML project at ten years old, I've been hooked. I'm a code-writing, tweet-slinging, dice-rolling type of nerd... that is to say, I play a lot of tabletop games. I'm also heavily involved in a whole slew of related hobbies, like D&D, LARP, video games, and designing space colonies. (Seriously, ask me about it sometime. I know a lot about toroidal colony structure!) www.nerdettedesigns.com

Mark Richardson is the lead designer and writer for *Headspace* and owner of Green Hat Designs. He's been working *Headspace* for the last three years and is looking forward to seeing this game in print. When Mark isn't working on *Headspace*, he works as a Cartographer for the Canadian Government and for RPG's as a freelancer. Mark lives in Ottawa, Canada. @slavetothehat www.greenhatdesigns.com

Mark Diaz Truman is an independent game developer, the co-owner of Magpie Games, and the Editor in Chief for The Fate Codex. He's managed a number of Kickstarter projects, including Wicked Fantasy, World of Dew, Pleasant Dreams, and Urban Shadows. You can find him on Twitter (@trumonz). He's a passionate advocate for a more inclusive gaming community and currently serves Indie+ as a Community Manager for the G+ Community.

PLAYTESTER THANKS

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2013 METATOPIA FOCUS GROUPS

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Agnes Richardson, Nick Bate, Robert Booth, Simon Teather

THE CELL

Mary & Wayne Richardson

THE CORPORATES

Dragon's Lair Comics & Fantasy, Kris&Jake Kelly, Sean Holland and Tyche's Games

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THE HANDLERS

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THE RUNNERS

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Daniel Lewis, Daniel Steadman, Darcy "Danger" Ross, David A. Harrison, David Beaudoin, David Crary, ohhithere.com, David E. Smith, David Heeney, David J. Sirois, David M, Declan Feeney, Dennis McFaul, Don Gardner, Donogh McCarthy, Drew Ness, Drew Pessarchick, Duncan & Lorna, Duncan Hadley-Harris, Dylan Clayton, Edouard Contesse, Enkufka, Enrique Esturillo Cano, Eric Bontz, Eric Coates, Eric M. Paquette, Esteban Bondy, Evelyn Gabrielle Bivens Smith, Eversong, Evil Hat Productions, Felix Girke, Fireside, Florent "killerklown" Didier, Frank Emanuel, Frankie Mundens, Gabriel Birke, Gabriele Artanis Locatelli, Gagaro, Game Masters Table, Gareth Hanrahan, Gary Anastasio, Gilberto Leon, Ginger Stampley, Glenn Francis II, GrappleJuice, Gustaf Sjöstedt, Hanno Sternberg, Herman Duyker, HMahmood85, Iacopo Benigni, Ingo Beyer, J, J Brad Woodfin, J Graham Orr, J Westrick, J. Brandon Massengill, Jacob H. Poole, Jacqui Macgregor-Pahl, James D'Amato, James Whittaker, Janet Macklin, Jaraad T Williamson, Jason Corley, Jason M Flow, Jason Pelloni, Jason, Kristin, and Peter Childs, Jeff & Patricia Sampson, Jeffrey Dieterle, Jeffrey S. James, Jennifer Fuss, Jeremy Collins, Jeremy Tidwell, Jeremy VanSchalkwyk, Jim Dagg, Jim DelRosso, JJ Maloney, Joe Amon, Joe Beason, Joel Pearce, John Bjørnevik, John Bogart, John Noble, Jonathan "Recompiled" Perrine, Jonathan Dunlap @jadbox, Jonathan Lavallee, Jonathan Sharp, Joseph Le May, Josh Fox, Josh McGraw, Joshua Ramsey, JP Sugarbroad, Judupo, Justin, Crystal, & The Kid, Kalinda Little, Kaminiwa, Karolyn Chowning, Katrina Gischer, Kevin Lemke, KH_L2k, Knights of the Night Podcast, Kyle Thompson, Kyle Urban, Kyorou, Larry, Les and Dashiell Simpson, Liam Murray, Lukar - Lucas Millan, Luke-Wayland, Marc Cain, Mark Delsing, Mark Fielding, Marshall Miller, Martin Greening, Martin Gubri, Matt Ballert, Matt Zimmermann, Matthew Gadsby, Matthew McFarland, Matthew Nielsen, Mattia Davolio, Megan Pedersen, Mendel Schmiedekamp, Michael Feldhusen, Mickey Barfield, Mike Pitre, Mikko Västi, Morgan Ellis, N. Phillip Cole, natb, Nathan Mitchell, Nathan Russell, Niels Kobschätzki, Nina McCannell, Oddtwang of Dork, Oliver Lind, Oliver Vulliamy, Olivia G, Ollie Gross, Oscar Iglesias, P. R. O'Leary, Paris Conte, Pat Perkins, Patrice Mermoud, Paul Beakley, Paul Kalupnieks, Paul McBride, Pete Griffith, Pete Petrusha, Pete Tracy, Pete Woodworth, Philip "xipehuz" Espi, Philip Brown, Philippe "Sildoefein" D., pookie, R. J. Ruthven, Rachel E.S. Walton, Raúl Peña Fernández, Reibello, Rich Howard, Rick Harelson, Rob Boyle, Rob Jones, Rob Nadeau, Robert Carnel, Robert De Luna, Roberto Henríquez Laurent, Ruben Merlos, Russell Benner, Russell Collins, Ryan "Gilligan" McRae, Ryan Holdbrooks, Ryan Poe, Sam "Jacked-in" Carter, Sangster the Gangster, Sarah Richardson, Senda from She's A Super Geek, Seth Spurlock, Simon Brunning, Smaugroff, Sophia Brandt, SRAO, Stacie Winters,

Steve "Bearly Normal" Discont, Steve Huff, Steve Jakoubovitch, Steven K. Watkins, Steven Moy, Steven Ward, Leland S. Crawford, Taylor LaBresh, The Hope Family (AGCD), The Skizz, Thomas Willoughby, Tim Ireland, Todd Crapper, Toggles, Tom "palfrey" Parker, Tom bither, Tony Morgan, Trent "Ax_kidson" Boyd, Trevor Landon, Trip Space-Parasite, Vladimir T. Gwendolyn, We're all in this together!, Zachary Richardson, Zikkurat, Zurotzu

THE INFILTRATORS

Aaron Griffin, Aaron J. Schrader, Aaron L. Nuttall, Adam Neisius, Adam Rajski, Adumbratus, Alasdair Corbett, Alex "Tritium" Walters, Alexander Biezenski, Alexander Kirion Schwegler, Amber Viescas, Ambjörn Elder, Amelia Sarif, Andi Carrison, Andreas Block, Andrew Hill, Andrew Luczak, Andrew Piseck, Angelo Pileggi, Anthony Knight, Ash Walter, Astrid Assmann, Austin S., Bailey O. Veasey, Bastien Daugas, Ben Blanding, Benj Davis, Benjamin Reinhart, Benjamin Voigt, Benton Little, Bert Isla, Biohazard Jeff, Bo Sunesen, Bob, Brandon Schoenfeldt, Brian Trotter, Bruce Curd, Brugia, Bryant Stone, Bryce Duzan, Caitlin Jane Hughes, Carmen Marin, Carsten "semiomancer" Husek, Cate-Lyn Garston, Ceton Nervo, Charles Picard, Charlie. A. Main, Cheryl Trooskin-Zoller, Chris Cooper, Chris Miles, Chris Tihor, ChrisCL, Christopher Lavery, Christopher M. Sniezak, Chuck Cooley, Colin Niaudet, Colin Urbina, Craig Vial, CSR, Daimadoshi, Damien "Rahyll" C., Dan "Nevenall" Behlings, Dan Noland, Dan Suptic, Daniel Goupil, Daniel Schlegel, Daniel Scribner, Daniele Di Rubbo, Danny W Silva, Dario Praselj, Darren "littlebear" Pearce, Darren Watts, Dave Rezak, David Chart, David E. Mumaw, David Gordon, David Jansson, David Lacerte, David Morrison, Derek Pounds, Derpy Games LLC, Diego "The Finn" Minuti, Dirk Keienburg, DocChronos, Dokkalfar, Dread_Priest, Drew Blackmore, Drew Wendorf, Dylan Boates, Dylan Malenfant, Dylan Tobias, Edward Linder, Edward Saxton, Eloy Lasanta, Elsa S. Henry, Emily Hunt, Emre Göver, Eric "Iceman00x" Herring, Eric Guindon, Eric Huckabay, Eric Levanduski, Eric Mersmann, Erin Kahoa, Erwan LE CORRE, Esteban Riviera, Federico (Dimofamo) Totti, FelTK, Ferrell Riley, The Gauntlet – Houston, Foglet, Fraser Ronald, Fraser simons, Fred Lott, Frost Holliman, Gary Lucas, George Austin, George L, Gian Holland, Glenn Seiler, Graeme Comyn, Grant Robinson, Greg Krywusha, Greg Sanders, Guillermo Ruiz, Gustavo Campanelli, Guy Sodin, H. M. 'Dain' Lybarger, H.M.Schaap, Hannah Shaffer, Hans W. Uhlig, Harry Lewis, Hidetoshi Hayakawa, Igor "Bone" Toscano, Ilya Shishkoankov, Ira Kalina, Irawulf, Izabella Earnshaw, Jack Thompson, James C. Holder, James Dillane, James Gabriel, James P Sauers III, Jamie, Jamie Richards, Jared Hunt, Jason Moniz, Jason Steel, Jason Tocci, Jaymes W., Jenn Martin, Jennifer Rigby, Jeremiah Frye, Jeremy Mahr,

Jessica Alfoldi, Jim Hart, Jim Remmes, Jim Ryan, Joanna Piancastelli, Joe O'Toole, Johannes Paavola, John A W Phillips, John Hardey, John Hunter, John & Karin Lindsay, John M. Portley, John Massie, John Roberts, John Willson, Jon Dailey, Jonathan Beverley, Jonathan Breese, Jonathan Grimm, Jonathan Korman, Jordan Block, Jordan White, Jordan Davidson, Josh Hatfield, Josh Hawthorne, Josh Rensch, Joshua H, Joshua Straub, Justin Baldock, Justin Meinert, Kaarchin, Kat L., Katherine Fackrell, Kathleen Bullock, Ken Finlayson, Kendall Coombe, Kenny Khek, Kerri Regan, Kevin Baird, Kevin Farnworth, Keyl Sanders, Kristin Firth, Kristopher J. Miller, Kyle Burckhard, Kyle E. Rakoz, Landan Smith, Lapo Luchini, laresgod, Lars-Emil Silfvstål, Laura Markham, Lauren W, Lee Sims, Leo Lalande, Leon & Theo, Leslie Shields, Lester Smith, Lewis Wakeford, Linus Råde, liorean, Lisa Padol, Lowell Francis, Luca Gioppo, Lukas Myhan, Luke Jordan, Lupin Chevalier, M Alexander Jurkat, M&C Limited, Magus, maiki, Malcolm Haddow, Manfred Gabriel, Manu Marron, Manuel Suarez, Marc L, Marc Lummis, Marc Majcher, Marcel Hill, Marco "_Journeyman_" Bignami, Marcus Neil Morrissey, Maria Azamkhuzhaeva, Mark Redacted, Mark Saniter, Mark Scheid, Marko J Sertic, Matt Chapman, Matthew L L Wheeler, Matthew R May-Day, Matthew Terry (operator), Matthew Ward, Mauro Adorna, Max Kaehn, Megan Tolentino, Michael A. Ringenberg, Michael Atlin, Michael D. Blanchard, Michael Harmon, Michael T., Mike J. Carlson, Mike Wawrzyniak, Misha B, Mitchell Roggeveen, mr deerheart, Myra Lara, Nathan Black, Neil Coles, Nicholas Cadigan, Nick Hopkins, Nicolas Gazi, Noah McConnell, Omar Amador, Omari L. Brooks, Owen Nicholson, pandagm, Patrick Bingham, Paul Sheppard, Penny Wright, Peter Gates, Peter Hoolihan, Philip Adler, Quark, Quasi, Rachael Swertfeger, Raymond Bennett, Raymond Nagle, Reality Happens, Reverance Pavane, Richard Clayton, Richard Ruane, Ricky Teel, River Williamson, RJ Stewart, Robby Anderson, Robert Vincent, Rolagza, RÖSS DIXØN, Rukesh Patel, Ryan Emnett, Ryan J Williams, Ryan Macklin, Ryan McWilliams, Ryan Perrin, Ryan W. Roberts, Sam Wright, Sami "Cyberpilot" Veillard, Sascha Müller, SC Gooch, Scott E. Robinson, Scott Vandervalk, Seale, Sean G., Sean M Smith, Secvalve, Serena Tempest, Seth Halbeisen, Seth Hartley, Shane Harsch, Sir Fuente - The Man Who Made This Possible!, Sonja Marcus, Spookie, Stefan Ohrmann, Stentor Danielson, Stephanie Bryant, Stephen "SDJThorin" Johnson, Sterz Sebastian, Steve Hickey, Steve Mackenzie, Steve Moore, Steve Radabaugh, SteveGemzell, Steven D Warble, Steven E. Schwartz, Stevey Westside, Stew Wilson, Storium.com, Stras 'Cyberbrain' Acimovic, Superfritz, T Lee, T.J. Tague, T.W.Wombat, Tara Dentry, Tezkat, The Great and Powerful Mike, TheChoedanKal, Theo, Thomas Balls-Thies, Thomas Sterchi, Thomas Tramantano, Tianlong, Tim Ellis, Tim Fiester, Tim Franzke, Tim Griffith, Tim Oliver, Tim Rodriguez,

HEADSPACE

Tobia Dh, Todd Furler, Tor Teigen, Torg_or, Troy "Wrongtown" Hall, Turtle Schille, Unkleshazam, Victoria Hawthorne - Operator Zero, Ville Halonen, vincent furstenberger, Wednesday Sophia, Whidou, Whitney M. Delaglio, Willem van der Horst, William Carter, William Nabors, William Palmer, Woodrow Jarvis Hill, Wyatt Nelson, Xavier "Globo" de Caneloube, Yannick Loitière, YG Mitchell, Yoshi Creelman, Zach Bertram, Zack Wenning, Ziggy Ramone, Zionblade

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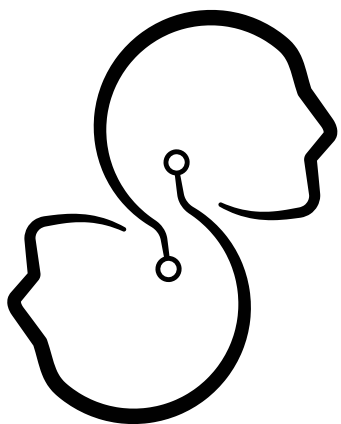
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THIS FIGHT IS PERSONAL

Headspace is a Cyberpunk roleplaying game about hyper-competent operatives fighting personal battles against the Corporations controlling the world. These unlikely heroes regret the direct hand they had in making the world the dystopian place it is, so now they're going to try and change the world. Alone, they wouldn't stand a chance. But with Headspace, an advanced technology to share consciousness, together the Operators can make a difference. But will their Headspace be able to manage the Stress of sharing skills, memories, and regrets?

Armed with Headspace technology, no Operator is ever alone. The Headspace makes everyone in it greater than themselves, able to use each other's skills with seamless efficiency. So long as one Operator can do something, they all can.

Inside this book you will find:

- ◆ **6 unique Operators, each masters of their field: the Handler, the Infiltrator, the Ronin, the Runner, the Tech, and the Whitecoat.**
- ◆ **Immersive Operator creation rules linking all the characters directly to each other and to why the world is the way it is.**
- ◆ **Game play that focuses on five emotions: Rage, Grief, Fear, Need, and Ego. Explore how they influence play in a rules system that moves the fiction forward through emotional complications.**
- ◆ **Clear guidance for the Game Master on how to run the game and portray the Corporations fighting for control in this dark future.**

Headspace is inspired by the rules-light framework of **Apocalypse World**, **The Sprawl**, **Monsterhearts** and **Dungeon World**.

**TAKE THE FIGHT TO THE CORPORATIONS.
CHANGE YOUR WORLD.**

4-6 Players
2-4 Hours/Session



**POWERED BY THE
APOCALYPSE**
apocalypse-world.com



**GREEN HAT
DESIGNS**



Digital Edition

THE HANDLER

NAME:

Cross, Greer, Hannibal, Hamilton, Keaton, Stacker, Stickell, Voight, Washington, Wolf.

Or a leader's name, a name with history, or a name that elicits trust.

SUB-CULTURE

- NEON
- TRANS-HUMAN
- NET-HEAD
- CORPORATE
- DRIFTER

Circle one

EYES:

HAIR:

BODY:

CLOTHES:

AVATAR:

Note your Look

REGRET

You are haunted by an action you took in the name of a Corporation. Which Corporate Secret is this Regret tied to?

What do you Regret doing?

ONCE PER SESSION, WHEN YOU ROLL A 6- ON A HEADSPACE MOVE, YOU CAN **SHARE YOUR REGRET WITH THE CELL**. YOU **GAIN SYNC** AND ALSO **TURN THE 6-** YOU JUST ROLLED INTO A 10. THEN CREATE A NEW REGRET.

DRIVE

Your Drive gives you purpose and motivates you to deal with your Regret.

Describe your Drive:

VENGEANCE

REDEMPTION

Circle One

DISCIPLINES

WWW.HEADSPACERPG.COM

HOW WELL DO YOU CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONS? ASSIGN +2, +1, 0, -1, -2 AMONG THE FIVE DISCIPLINES.



RAGE

Irritation, Resentment, Excitement, Bitterness, or Fury.



GRIEF

Harassment, Misery, Anguish, Despair, Regret, or Pain.



FEAR

Suspicion, Anxiety, Panic, Terror, Helplessness, or Doubt.



NEED

Desire, Greed, Envy, Pining, Passion, Ambition, or Love.



EGO

Pride, Dignity, Honour, Satisfaction, Narcissism, or Vanity.

OPERATOR SKILLS

MAKE A **PROFESSIONAL** OR **HEADSPACE MOVE** WHEN USING YOUR OWN SKILLS.

HANDLER		BAGGAGE
	COAX	
	CONTINGENCY	
	OBSERVATION	

Choose a Discipline to go with each Skill. Do not choose the same Discipline twice. This is how your Operator feels when using that skill—their **Emotional Baggage**.

Each skill has a question below about how you used them in the past working for the Corporations and defines a connection to a fellow Operator.

COAX

Who blew your cover on a major op?

CONTINGENCY

Who risked the lives of your unit with their ego?

OBSERVATION

Who don't you trust because of something you saw?

HEADSPACE SKILLS

MAKE A **HEADSPACE MOVE** WHEN USING ANOTHER'S SKILL.

INFILTRATOR	NAME	BAGGAGE
	MARTIAL ARTS	
	SECURITY	
	STEALTH	

RUNNER	NAME	BAGGAGE
	PILOT	
	PARKOUR	
	SPRAWL	

RONIN	NAME	BAGGAGE
	EXPLOSIVES	
	FIREARMS	
	TACTICS	

TECH	NAME	BAGGAGE
	ENGINEERING	
	DRONES	
	HACKING	

WHITECOAT	NAME	BAGGAGE
	INVESTIGATION	
	MEDICINE	
	PSYCHOLOGY	

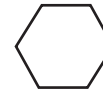
EDGES

You start with:

- ◆ Secure Wetspace Implant
(+ **IMPLANT** + **WETSPACE LINK**)
- ◆ Headspace Implant
(+ **IMPLANT** + **HEADSPACE LINK**)
- ◆ Stylish Armoured Suit
(Armour 1 + **INCONSPICUOUS**)
- ◆ Semi-automatic Pistol
(2-Harm Close/Near + **LOUD** + **QUICK**)
- ◆ 3 Credits

ARMOUR

ARMOUR IS SUBTRACTED FROM HARM.



CREDITS

\$

OTHER GEAR

PICK 2 HANDLER EDGES:

⬡ CORPORATE LIASON

You maintain a positive relationship with one of the setting's Corporate Agents. Who are they, and why do you still work together?

⬡ THE RETIREMENT PLAN

You stole a major corporate secret and sold it to the highest bidder. One Credit is deposited into your account at the start of each session, but the Corporation you stole it from has put a price on your head. Who are they, and what did you steal?

⬡ BLACK HELICOPTERS

You have an ally in a government spy agency. Who are they, and what resources can they provide on a moment's notice?

⬡ THE BLACK LIST

You have a reliable list of freelance Operators on the run who need help and would be willing to provide help in return.

⬡ BLACK TIE

Your name always ends up on High Society e-vites. Who do you know in High Society, and what is your relationship with them?

⬡ SURVEILLANCE VAN

You have a van equipped with the latest and greatest for all of your surveillance/counter-surveillance needs.

⬡ SIGNAL BOOST

You are good friends with an up-and-coming journalist in the city. Who are they, and what is their latest big story?

NOTES

UPGRADES

You start with the following:

✓ VISUAL SUITE

(+ **IMPLANT** + **ANTIDAZZLE** + **VISUAL ENHANCEMENT** + **THERMOGRAPH** + **NIGHT VISION** + **RECORD** + **INCONSPICUOUS**)

Night vision, telescopic magnification, microscopic magnification, video recording, glare protection, visual editing, and filtering. Cybereyes are way more advanced than they used to be, and they look almost normal to boot.

Additional Upgrades:

THE HANDLER

No one else would deal with this shit. Even if they did, they wouldn't actually do the job right. Managing talent and orchestrating the use of corporate or military assets is hard, and that's why it's your job. Some people are content with pulling the puppet strings of the world from behind a desk. But that's not your style. It's easier to convince people to sell out, convert an enemy to a friend, or arrange for ass-covering contingencies when you're not chained to a desk. You're going to make your old corporate masters pay for everything they've done, because you're the best person to make sure it happens.

THE INFILTRATOR

NAME:

Blade, Clancy, Cutter, Edge, Face, Fox, Hood, Midnight, Razor, Shadow.

Or a rogue's name, a thief's handle, or a name that invokes fear in your enemies.

SUB-CULTURE

- NEON
 - TRANS-HUMAN
 - NET-HEAD
 - CORPORATE
 - DRIFTER
- Circle one

EYES:

HAIR:

BODY:

CLOTHES:

AVATAR:

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Harassment, Misery, Anguish, Despair, Regret, or Pain.



FEAR

Suspicion, Anxiety, Panic, Terror, Helplessness, or Doubt.



NEED

Desire, Greed, Envy, Pining, Passion, Ambition, or Love.



EGO

Pride, Dignity, Honour, Satisfaction, Narcissism, or Vanity.

OPERATOR SKILLS

MAKE A **PROFESSIONAL** OR **HEADSPACE MOVE** WHEN USING YOUR OWN SKILLS.

INFILTRATOR	BAGGAGE
MARTIAL ARTS	
SECURITY	
STEALTH	

Choose a Discipline to go with each Skill. Do not choose the same Discipline twice. This is how your Operator feels when using that skill—their **Emotional Baggage**.

Each skill has a question below about how you used them in the past working for the Corporations and defines a connection to a fellow Operator.

MARTIAL ARTS

Who was the only one who stood up against you?

SECURITY

Whose family did you forge documents for that allowed their escape?

STEALTH

Who did you witness doing something that still puts you off?

HEADSPACE SKILLS

MAKE A **HEADSPACE MOVE** WHEN USING ANOTHER'S SKILL.

HANDLER	NAME	BAGGAGE
	COAX	
	CONTINGENCY	
	OBSERVATION	

RUNNER	NAME	BAGGAGE
	PILOT	
	PARKOUR	
	SPRAWL	

RONIN	NAME	BAGGAGE
	EXPLOSIVES	
	FIREARMS	
	TACTICS	

TECH	NAME	BAGGAGE
	ENGINEERING	
	DRONES	
	HACKING	

WHITECOAT	NAME	BAGGAGE
	INVESTIGATION	
	MEDICINE	
	PSYCHOLOGY	

EDGES

You start with:

- ◆ Secure Wetspace Implant
(+**IMPLANT** +**WETSPACE LINK**)
- ◆ Headspace Implant
(+**IMPLANT** +**HEADSPACE LINK**)
- ◆ Thermopitic Cloak
(Armour 1 +**INCONSPICUOUS** +**CAMOFLAGE**)
- ◆ Silenced Semi-automatic Pistol
(2-Harm Close/Near +**SILENT** +**QUICK**)
- ◆ Security Tools
- ◆ Forgery Kit
- ◆ 1 Credit

PICK 2 INFILTRATOR EDGES:

⬡ REGISTERED AS A LETHAL WEAPON

You inflict +1 Harm in unarmed combat.

⬡ THE FENCE

You know someone who will always buy for the right price and has their ear to the ground on dealers just like them. Who are they, and why is your relationship to them so complicated?

⬡ IDENTIFY THIEF

You have a large collection of prepared IDs, disguises, and electronic background files and have access to a suite of state-of-the-art forgery tools/fabricators. Where is this equipment stored?

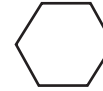
⬡ THE ANGEL

You refused to kill a high-value target in the heat of the moment, and they're still on the run. They owe you their life. Who are they, and why didn't you take them out?

NOTES

ARMOUR

ARMOUR IS SUBTRACTED FROM HARM.



CREDITS

\$

OTHER GEAR

For close encounters you use (pick one):

- ⬡ Monofilament Whip (2-Harm Hand/Close
+**AP** +**AREA** +**DANGEROUS** +**MESSY**)
- ⬡ Monofilament Katana (3-Harm Hand/Close
+**AP** +**MESSY**)
- ⬡ Monofilament Shuriken/Throwing Knife
(2-Harm Close +**AP** +**INFINITE** +**QUICK**
+**MESSY** +**INCONSPICUOUS**)

⬡ EYE IN THE SKY

You have backdoor access to a spy satellite and can get short windows (~5 minutes) of overflight on priority areas. You pay in non-financial terms for this access. Who are you paying, and what is their price?

⬡ THE CLEANER

A retired crime scene investigator can clean up even the bloodiest scene and leave no trace except your payment to them. They can also be asked to help with an investigation and their contacts on the force. Who are your contacts, and why do you trust them?

⬡ THE GUILD

You maintain a positive relationship with a guild of information brokers specializing in building blueprints and information. Who are they, and what do they ask from you?

UPGRADES

You start with the following:

⬡ **POTATO HEAD DISGUISE KIT** (+**IMPLANT** +**DISGUISE**)

There are two useful things you can do with this implant. The first is that you can take pieces of your face off and replace them with other pieces so you look like someone else. The second is that you can just take all of them off and scare the bejeezus out of someone.

Additional Upgrades:

THE INFILTRATOR

Your family used to complain that you snuck up on them when you were a kid. You didn't even mean to, it just kept happening. That natural ability for stealth has served you well. Sneaking past people without even trying made you wonder who you could sneak past if you actually applied yourself. It doesn't matter who picked you up—or caught you—because you're long past those days. The rookie either dies, or becomes a highly paid professional.

Since you're not dead, you're making pretty good money. Or you were, until you bugged out of the system to try and destroy it.

THE RONIN

NAME:

Callahan, Clark, Hammer, Hunt, Kurosawa, Munny, Reno, Willis, Wyatt, Yoshi.

Or a warrior's name, the name of a hunter, or a name that lets you blend in with the sprawl.

SUB-CULTURE

- NEON
 - TRANS-HUMAN
 - NET-HEAD
 - CORPORATE
 - DRIFTER
- Circle one

EYES:

HAIR:

BODY:

CLOTHES:

AVATAR:

Note your Look

REGRET

You are haunted by an action you took in the name of a Corporation. Which Corporate Secret is this Regret tied to?

What do you Regret doing?

ONCE PER SESSION, WHEN YOU ROLL A 6- ON A HEADSPACE MOVE, YOU CAN **SHARE YOUR REGRET WITH THE CELL**. YOU **GAIN SYNC** AND ALSO **TURN THE 6-** YOU JUST ROLLED INTO A 10. THEN CREATE A NEW REGRET.

DRIVE

Your Drive gives you purpose and motivates you to deal with your Regret.

Describe your Drive:

VENGEANCE

REDEMPTION

Circle One

DISCIPLINES

WWW.HEADSPACERPG.COM

HOW WELL DO YOU CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONS? ASSIGN +2, +1, 0, -1, -2 AMONG THE FIVE DISCIPLINES.



RAGE

Irritation, Resentment, Excitement, Bitterness, or Fury.



GRIEF

Harassment, Misery, Anguish, Despair, Regret, or Pain.



FEAR

Suspicion, Anxiety, Panic, Terror, Helplessness, or Doubt.



NEED

Desire, Greed, Envy, Pining, Passion, Ambition, or Love.



EGO

Pride, Dignity, Honour, Satisfaction, Narcissism, or Vanity.

OPERATOR SKILLS

MAKE A **PROFESSIONAL** OR **HEADSPACE MOVE** WHEN USING YOUR OWN SKILLS.

		BAGGAGE
RONIN	EXPLOSIVES	
	FIREARMS	
	TACTICS	

Choose a Discipline to go with each Skill. Do not choose the same Discipline twice. This is how your Operator feels when using that skill—their **Emotional Baggage**.

Each skill has a question below about how you used them in the past working for the Corporations and defines a connection to a fellow Operator.

EXPLOSIVES

Who got hurt by the one bomb you didn't defuse in time?

FIREARMS

Whose rival did you take down during a messy op?

TACTICS

Who did you save when everything went south?

HEADSPACE SKILLS

MAKE A **HEADSPACE MOVE** WHEN USING ANOTHER'S SKILL.

INFILTRATOR	NAME	BAGGAGE
	MARTIAL ARTS	
	SECURITY	
	STEALTH	

HANDLER	NAME	BAGGAGE
	COAX	
	CONTINGENCY	
	OBSERVATION	

RUNNER	NAME	BAGGAGE
	PILOT	
	PARKOUR	
	SPRAWL	

TECH	NAME	BAGGAGE
	ENGINEERING	
	DRONES	
	HACKING	

WHITECOAT	NAME	BAGGAGE
	INVESTIGATION	
	MEDICINE	
	PSYCHOLOGY	

EDGES

You start with:

- ◆ Secure Wetspace Implant
(+IMPLANT +WETSPACE LINK)
- ◆ Headspace Implant
(+IMPLANT +HEADSPACE LINK)
- ◆ Ballistic Battle Armour (Armour 3 +BULKY)
- ◆ Assault Rifle
(3-Harm Near/Far +LOUD +SUPPRESSIVE)
- ◆ Semi-Automatic Pistol
(2-Harm Close/Near +LOUD +QUICK)
- ◆ Fragmentation Grenades (4-Harm Close/Near
+LOUD +AREA +DANGEROUS)
- ◆ A small cache of weapons, ammunition, and
explosives.
- ◆ 1 Credit

PICK 2 RONIN EDGES:

⬡ UNSANITARY CONDITIONS

You have a trusted friend who owns an underground cyber surgery. They're always willing to patch you up and look the other way, no matter the danger. Who are they, and why do they trust you more than anyone?

⬡ WELCOME TO THE GUN SHOW

You maintain a major arsenal of weapons, ammunition, and explosives. It is highly illegal. Where is it? Who do you pay to keep it safe?

⬡ THE B-TEAM

A team of local heavy-hitting mercenaries owe you big. Who are they? Why do they still owe you?

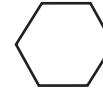
⬡ FREIGHT TRAIN

You are an unrelenting force. Stun damage is halved against you (round down).

NOTES

ARMOUR

ARMOUR IS SUBTRACTED FROM HARM.



CREDITS

\$

OTHER GEAR

⬡ PRECISION CRAFTSMANSHIP

One of your starting firearms has a permanent +1 Harm rating. You know a highly trained weaponsmith who can do this work, for the right price.

⬡ BLACK OPS HANDLER

You have an ally at one of the Corporations who can provide you with reliable intel on their black ops. Who are they, and which Corporation do they work for?

⬡ THOUSAND-YARD STARE

You've seen so much death and destruction, nothing truly scares you anymore.

Once per session you can lower the FEAR stress track by 2.

UPGRADES

You start with the following:

✔ PAIN EDITOR

(+IMPLANT +INCONSPICUOUS)

When you feel pain, your body is trying to tell you something. Maybe you don't want to listen to your body, though. Maybe your body's an asshole, I don't know.

WHEN YOU TAKE THIS IMPLANT, PICK A STRESS TRACK. YOU CAN **NO LONGER BE TAKEN OUT** BY FEEDBACK ON THIS STRESS TRACK WHEN YOU TAKE HARM.

Additional Upgrades:

THE RONIN

You had a different team, once. You came up through the ranks, from soldier to commander. Despite the ugly things you did, your comrades in arms were your family. You protected each other. Struggling to do your job without losing your soul, you still suffered, as bit by bit, assignments grew more dangerous, people died, and the truth of things got to you.

Instead of going the way of your friends, you walked away, burning bridges behind you. The company made you a superior tactician, a fighter, a weapon. They're going to regret letting you leave alive. Not that they had a choice.

THE RUNNER

NAME:

Brooklyn, Charger, Dodge, Harlem, Bullitt, Gemmayze, Nike, Skid, Shelby, Wheelie.

Or a name taken from something fast and stylish, the name of a neighbourhood, or a name that connects you to the Sprawl.

SUB-CULTURE

- NEON
 - TRANS-HUMAN
 - NET-HEAD
 - CORPORATE
 - DRIFTER
- Circle one

EYES:

HAIR:

BODY:

CLOTHES:

AVATAR:

Note your Look

REGRET

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DRIVE

Your Drive gives you purpose and motivates you to deal with your Regret.

Describe your Drive:

VENGEANCE

REDEMPTION

Circle One

DISCIPLINES

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RAGE

Irritation, Resentment, Excitement, Bitterness, or Fury.



GRIEF

Harassment, Misery, Anguish, Despair, Regret, or Pain.



FEAR

Suspicion, Anxiety, Panic, Terror, Helplessness, or Doubt.



NEED

Desire, Greed, Envy, Pining, Passion, Ambition, or Love.



EGO

Pride, Dignity, Honour, Satisfaction, Narcissism, or Vanity.

OPERATOR SKILLS

MAKE A **PROFESSIONAL** OR **HEADSPACE MOVE** WHEN USING YOUR OWN SKILLS.

RUNNER		BAGGAGE
PILOT		
PARKOUR		
SPRAWL		

Choose a Discipline to go with each Skill. Do not choose the same Discipline twice. This is how your Operator feels when using that skill—their **Emotional Baggage**.

Each skill has a question below about how you used them in the past working for the Corporations and defines a connection to a fellow Operator.

PILOT

Who pulled you from a fiery wreck just in time?

PARKOUR

Who did you leave behind because they couldn't keep up?

SPRAWL

Who did you hide from a Corporate threat?

HEADSPACE SKILLS

MAKE A **HEADSPACE MOVE** WHEN USING ANOTHER'S SKILL.

INFILTRATOR	NAME	BAGGAGE
	MARTIAL ARTS	
	SECURITY	
	STEALTH	

HANDLER	NAME	BAGGAGE
	COAX	
	CONTINGENCY	
	OBSERVATION	

RONIN	NAME	BAGGAGE
	EXPLOSIVES	
	FIREARMS	
	TACTICS	

TECH	NAME	BAGGAGE
	ENGINEERING	
	DRONES	
	HACKING	

WHITECOAT	NAME	BAGGAGE
	INVESTIGATION	
	MEDICINE	
	PSYCHOLOGY	

EDGES

You start with:

- ◆ Secure Wetspace Implant
(+IMPLANT +WETSPACE LINK)
- ◆ Headspace Implant
(+IMPLANT +HEADSPACE LINK)
- ◆ Crash Suit (Armour 2)
- ◆ Machine Pistol
(2-Harm Close/Near +LOUD +SUPPRESSIVE)
- ◆ 1 Credit

Pick your ride:

- ⬡ Kaneda Cyberbike (**ARMOUR 1**) 1 pilot, 1 passenger, recumbent design, speed 130mph.
- ⬡ Torque Truck (**ARMOUR 3 +LOAD +TOW**) 2 crew, 4 passengers, storage, speed 70mph.
- ⬡ Spinner Aerodyne (**ARMOUR 2 +FLIGHT**) 1 pilot, 4 passengers, speed 200mph.

PICK 2 RUNNER EDGES:

⬡ HEADSPACE VEHICLE LINK

You may remotely pilot your ride because of an implanted neural link between it and your Headspace implant.

⬡ A THIN CROOKED LINE

You've got a dirty cop on the take who can help you with more than just your speeding tickets. What's their name and expertise?

⬡ TAKE BACK THE STREETS

A guardian street gang has your back. What do they control in the Sprawl, and who's threatening to muscle in on their turf?

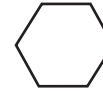
⬡ GONE IN 60 SECONDS

You're friendly with a gang of car thieves and have access to their large vehicle garage/chop shop. Name the gang. Why are they so friendly with you?

NOTES

ARMOUR

ARMOUR IS SUBTRACTED FROM HARM.



CREDITS

\$

OTHER GEAR

⬡ SPRAWL SAFE HOUSE

You have a very secure and well-supplied compound for when you need to lay low or hide an asset. Where in the city is it?

⬡ STUDENT REVOLUTION!

You have a strong ally/leader in the student/youth community. A rally or riot at a moment's notice isn't out of the question. Who are they?

⬡ FRIENDS WITH NO HOMES

You spent a long time on the streets and have built up a network of those who live there. You help them, they help you.

UPGRADES

You start with the following:

⬡ **MUSCLE AND BONE STABILIZERS** (+IMPLANT +INCONSPICUOUS)

Your bones are laced with a carbon-steel alloy, and your muscles are reinforced with filaments and medical gel injectors.

YOU MAY IGNORE UP TO 3 HARM FROM ANY CRASH/ CRUSH OR FALL. ALLOWS YOU TO JUMP FROM A 3-STORY BUILDING WITH LITTLE TO NO DANGER.

Additional Upgrades:

THE RUNNER

Some people get confused if they take the wrong turn or walk a block too far. Not you. Whether driving or on foot, your memory of places and understanding of the urban landscape are as automatic as breathing.

The city is as familiar as your own body. You know the rhythms of traffic and neighbourhoods. You can plan routes throughout your day that effortlessly shake tails and get you to your destination with time to spare. Being late is not a problem you suffer from. You're never late, because you'd never fail your Cell.

THE TECH

NAME:

Benji, Case, Crash, Flynn, Hiro, Mother, Morpheus, Spider, Whistler, Zero.

Or a hacker's callsign, something anonymous, or a name no one would ever give a person.

SUB-CULTURE

- NEON
- TRANS-HUMAN
- NET-HEAD
- CORPORATE
- DRIFTER

Circle one

EYES:

HAIR:

BODY:

CLOTHES:

AVATAR:

Note your Look

REGRET

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Describe your Drive:

VENGEANCE

REDEMPTION

Circle One

DISCIPLINES

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RAGE

Irritation, Resentment, Excitement, Bitterness, or Fury.



GRIEF

Harassment, Misery, Anguish, Despair, Regret, or Pain.



FEAR

Suspicion, Anxiety, Panic, Terror, Helplessness, or Doubt.



NEED

Desire, Greed, Envy, Pining, Passion, Ambition, or Love.



EGO

Pride, Dignity, Honour, Satisfaction, Narcissism, or Vanity.

OPERATOR SKILLS

MAKE A **PROFESSIONAL** OR **HEADSPACE** MOVE WHEN USING YOUR OWN SKILLS.

		BAGGAGE
TECH	ENGINEERING	
	DRONES	
	HACKING	

Choose a Discipline to go with each Skill. Do not choose the same Discipline twice. This is how your Operator feels when using that skill—their **Emotional Baggage**.

Each skill has a question below about how you used them in the past working for the Corporations and defines a connection to a fellow Operator.

ENGINEERING

Who still doesn't trust your designs?

DRONES

Who doesn't know you used to monitor their family for a Corporation?

HACKING

Whose dark secret did you erase, and did you keep a backup?

HEADSPACE SKILLS

MAKE A **HEADSPACE** MOVE WHEN USING ANOTHER'S SKILL.

INFILTRATOR	NAME	BAGGAGE
	MARTIAL ARTS	
	SECURITY	
	STEALTH	

HANDLER	NAME	BAGGAGE
	COAX	
	CONTINGENCY	
	OBSERVATION	

RONIN	NAME	BAGGAGE
	EXPLOSIVES	
	FIREARMS	
	TACTICS	

RUNNER	NAME	BAGGAGE
	PILOT	
	PARKOUR	
	SPRAWL	

WHITECOAT	NAME	BAGGAGE
	INVESTIGATION	
	MEDICINE	
	PSYCHOLOGY	

EDGES

You start with:

- ◆ Secure Wetspace Implant
(+IMPLANT +WETSPACE LINK)
- ◆ Headspace Implant
(+IMPLANT +HEADSPACE LINK)
- ◆ Armoured Tech/Work Coveralls (Armour 2)
- ◆ Heavy Wrench (1-Harm Hand/Close)
- ◆ Shotgun (3-Harm Close/Near +LOUD
+MESSY +RELOAD)
- ◆ 2 Credits

Pick your drone:

- ⬡ Vespa Drone (+ROTOR +TINY +FRAGILE +STEALTH +QUICK +AUDIO/VISUAL SUITE
+IR/UV/THERMO +CAMERA)
- ⬡ Wolf Drone (+QUADRUPED +MEDIUM +TOW +TOOLS
+WEAPON: MONOFILAMENT TEETH 2-HARM +AP +CLOSE +MESSY)
- ⬡ Predator Drone (+FIXED WING +LARGE +LOUD +CAMERA
+WEAPON: MISSILE RACK 5-HARM NEAR/FAR/EXTREME +HEAT +RELOAD)

PICK 2 TECH EDGES:

⬡ ICE, ICE, BABY

You recognize that the best offence is a good defence, and your personal cyberspace defenses are untouchable. You maintain a highly secure online fortress. Where is it physically located?

⬡ MY PRIVATE RADIO SHACK

You possess a van or depot with a large collection of hi-tech tools. Everything you'd need to jury-rig a project.

⬡ DIRTY DEEDS, DONE DIRT CHEAP

You hold a reprehensible secret over a Corporate manager. Who are they, and what's the big deal?

⬡ DRONING ON

You begin play with a second drone. This second drone's type may differ from the first one you chose.

NOTES

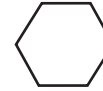
ARMOUR

ARMOUR IS SUBTRACTED FROM HARM.

CREDITS

\$

OTHER GEAR



UPGRADES

You start with the following:

⬢ WIRED REFLEXES

(+IMPLANT +QUICK +INCONSPICUOUS)

You're fast, precise, and your reaction time is greatly enhanced because of the electronic stimulants applied directly to your brain. Side effects include being really hyperactive and annoying.

YOU ALWAYS GO FIRST IN ANY SITUATION WHERE TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE, AND YOU CAN IGNORE THE RELOAD CONSTRAINT ON GEAR YOU ARE USING.

Additional Upgrades:

THE TECH

It's not that you don't understand people. You just understand them in a way that freaks them out. Through the lens of technology, you know how to take people out with remote weapons in the most efficient way possible. The security slip-ups of bad passwords and ill-advised cloud storage are second nature to you. Empathy is hard for you, because all you see are the horrific secrets that others try and protect, and the violence they commit to keep them buried. People like you are essential to a corp's ability to function because you can engineer anything they need. Now you're going to engineer the ways to take them down.

THE WHITECOAT

NAME:

Angel, Benson, Course, Op, Mills, Ryan, Somerset, Steel, Stapleton, Quincy.

Or a wise name, a famous problem solver, or a Dr. with a last name.

SUB-CULTURE

- NEON
 - TRANS-HUMAN
 - NET-HEAD
 - CORPORATE
 - DRIFTER
- Circle one

EYES:

HAIR:

BODY:

CLOTHES:

AVATAR:

Note your Look

REGRET

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DRIVE

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Describe your Drive:

VENGEANCE

REDEMPTION

Circle One

DISCIPLINES

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Irritation, Resentment, Excitement, Bitterness, or Fury.



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Harassment, Misery, Anguish, Despair, Regret, or Pain.



FEAR

Suspicion, Anxiety, Panic, Terror, Helplessness, or Doubt.



NEED

Desire, Greed, Envy, Pining, Passion, Ambition, or Love.



EGO

Pride, Dignity, Honour, Satisfaction, Narcissism, or Vanity.

OPERATOR SKILLS

MAKE A **PROFESSIONAL** OR **HEADSPACE MOVE** WHEN USING YOUR OWN SKILLS.

WHITECOAT	BAGGAGE
INVESTIGATION	
MEDICINE	
PSYCHOLOGY	

Choose a Discipline to go with each Skill. Do not choose the same Discipline twice. This is how your Operator feels when using that skill—their **Emotional Baggage**.

Each skill has a question below about how you used them in the past working for the Corporations and defines a connection to a fellow Operator.

INVESTIGATION

Who did you find dirt on that you still aren't comfortable with?

MEDICINE

Who gets their fix from you?

PSYCHOLOGY

Who did you help that you wish you hadn't?

HEADSPACE SKILLS

MAKE A **HEADSPACE MOVE** WHEN USING ANOTHER'S SKILL.

INFILTRATOR	NAME	BAGGAGE
	MARTIAL ARTS	
	SECURITY	
	STEALTH	

HANDLER	NAME	BAGGAGE
	COAX	
	CONTINGENCY	
	OBSERVATION	

RONIN	NAME	BAGGAGE
	EXPLOSIVES	
	FIREARMS	
	TACTICS	

RUNNER	NAME	BAGGAGE
	PILOT	
	PARKOUR	
	SPRAWL	

TECH	NAME	BAGGAGE
	ENGINEERING	
	DRONES	
	HACKING	

EDGES

You start with:

- ◆ Secure Wetspace Implant
(+IMPLANT +WETSPACE LINK)
- ◆ Headspace Implant
(+IMPLANT +HEADSPACE LINK)
- ◆ Armoured Casual Clothing
(Armour 1 +INCONSPICUOUS)
- ◆ Semi-automatic Pistol
(2-Harm Close/Near +LOUD +QUICK)
- ◆ 3 Credits

Pick a place that you work and provides you with resources and tools:

- ⬡ A sterile, professional, and bureaucratic hospital (Name the hospital and its location).
- ⬡ The cramped and impoverished but essential clinic you run on the streets (What neighbourhood?).
- ⬡ Your illicit underground clinic and cybernetic chop-shop (Who do you pay off to keep it safe?).

PICK 2 WHITECOAT EDGES:

⬡ THE COUNSELLER

You have a lot of blackmail material on a Corporate hotshot. Who are they, which Corporation do they work for, and what do you know?

⬡ VICE SQUAD

You have a friend on the police's vice squad. They have expertise, and sometimes contraband goes missing and winds up in your hands. Who are they, and why do they trust you?

⬡ PATENT PENDING

You have deep connections into the cybernetics black market. What implant did you invent? Every session you get 1 Credit from royalties.

⬡ BACK OFF! I'M A DOCTOR

You have the same social status as a mid-level executive, with equivalent legal protections.

NOTES

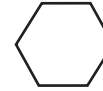
ARMOUR

ARMOUR IS SUBTRACTED FROM HARM.

CREDITS

\$

OTHER GEAR



UPGRADES

You start with the following:

⬢ MEDICAL SUITE

(+IMPLANT +HEALING +INCONSPICUOUS)

Drug storage, vital monitor, medical injectors, synth-skin sprayers. You can use it to treat yourself or someone else.

ONCE PER SESSION, YOU CAN USE DRUGS THAT YOUR MEDICAL SUITE PROVIDES TO **LOWER ANY STRESS TRACK TO 0.**

Additional Upgrades:

THE WHITECOAT

The science of the human mind and body is the most fascinating field there is, and your diagnostic skills help you understand the very world around you. Few people can match you as a field medic, and the things you can do when given access to a lab would terrify anyone in their right mind. Which is a good reason not to work for people like that. Like a determined hound when you're on a case, your intellect is unstoppable. You're going to lance the corruption in the world around you before it spreads.

SUB-CULTURES

Pick a sub-culture, then pick one element from each category to describe your Operator's Look.

NEONS

As a **Neon**, you demand the attention of others. You rarely stay quiet or in the shadows of a crowd. Neons pride themselves on standing out from the masses of corporate society and, most importantly, not conforming to the needs of that society. Neons generally wear bright, colourful clothing, full of life, and they avoid name brands at all costs. Neons embrace augmentation technology as long as it allows them to stand out from the sheep.

LOOK

Pick one from each category:

- ◆ **EYES:** Lava Lamp, Neon, No White, Patterned
- ◆ **HAIR:** Bright Dyes, UV Glow, Light-emitting, Metallic
- ◆ **BODY:** Digital Tattoos, TV Skin, Chem Skin Colours, Patterned
- ◆ **CLOTHES:** Woven Hard Plastics, Vinyl, Light-paneled, Colour-changing
- ◆ **AVATAR:** (something bold with bright colours, describe yourself)

TRANS-HUMANS

As a **Trans-human**, you have embraced cybernetics and body augmentation as the next step in human evolution. Whereas some replace because of injury, you do so to be better.

LOOK

Pick one from each category:

- ◆ **EYES:** Cyclops Visor, Cat Eyes, a Third Eye, Just Plain Cyber-eyes
- ◆ **HAIR:** Chrome Dome, Anime Plastic, Animal Ears, Wires
- ◆ **BODY:** More Metal than Flesh, Sculpted, Steampunk, Furry (tail optional)
- ◆ **CLOTHES:** Hulked (One size too small), Clothing that Shows off Augmentations, Minimalist, Accommodating of Your Cybernetics
- ◆ **AVATAR:** (not like a person at all, describe yourself)

CORPORATES

As a **Corporate**, you like to follow the rules and avoid rocking the boat of society. You keep your clothing and grooming clean and orderly and prefer the record that comes from reliable consumer brands over the drivel of Drifters and Neons. Whether you're a business-savvy merchant or a middle-class staffer at the latest hi-tech outfit, you are always welcome in the ranks of corporate style.

LOOK

Pick one from each category:

- ◆ **EYES:** Paranoid, Intense, Tired, Bored
- ◆ **HAIR:** Trimmed/Groomed, Always Perfect, Unassuming, Gelled/Slick
- ◆ **BODY:** Athletic, Botoxed, Unassuming, UV Tattoos
- ◆ **CLOTHES:** Overtly Expensive, Uniformed, Name Branded, Business Casual
- ◆ **AVATAR:** (business-appropriate and uniform looking, describe yourself)

NET-HEADS

As a **Net-head**, you spend more time in virtual worlds than in the real. When you aren't on the Net, you're sporting the latest gadgets. Your meatsuit may be in decline, but what you really care about is how many Net followers you have.

LOOK

Pick one from each category:

- ◆ **EYES:** Glazed-over, Distracted, Drifting, Focused
- ◆ **HAIR:** Bald w/Retro Net Ports, Shoulder-length, Grunge, Greasy
- ◆ **BODY:** Lanky, Chunky, Skinny, Average
- ◆ **CLOTHES:** Second-hand, Sweat-stained, Loose-fitting, Student
- ◆ **AVATAR:** (very unique, probably NSFW, describe yourself)

DRIFTERS

As a **Drifter**, you're off the grid or at least live on the fringes of society. You like it that way: living life by your own rules, not being the center of attention. Not a fan of big brother, you tend to keep a low profile and keep moving.

LOOK

Pick one from each category:

- ◆ **EYES:** Eye Patch, Hopeful, Tired, Thousand-yard Stare
- ◆ **HAIR:** Bandana, Greasy, Long and Unkempt, Spiky
- ◆ **BODY:** Pierced, Ripped, Skinny, Tattooed
- ◆ **CLOTHES:** Army Surplus, Biker Leathers, Revolutionary Student, Thrifty
- ◆ **AVATAR:** (pre-selected iconography, describe yourself)

UPGRADES

You start with one Upgrade based on your Operator. Alternately, the GM may ask you to pick a starting Upgrade.

You can spend 6 XP to gain another Upgrade.

⬡ CYBERLEGS

+IMPLANT +INCONSPICUOUS +60 MPH +HEAVY

It takes a special kind of person to get both of their legs surgically removed and replaced with implants. If you're that special kind of person, you can run as fast as a car and jump fifteen or twenty feet vertically. When you take this implant, pick a Stress Track. Whenever you use your Cyberlegs in a Move, add the current rating of the chosen Stress Track to your roll.

⬡ EYEBALL DRONES

+IMPLANT +DRONE +A/V SUITE +RECORD +FLIGHT +HEADSPACE LINK

A pretty common upgrade for cybereyes, an eyeball drone is an eye you can take out of your skull and then pilot around so you can see what it sees. It's got a limited range of a block or two, but it can be useful in a variety of sneaky ways.

⬡ HAZ-MAT

+IMPLANT +INCONSPICUOUS +ANALYZER +POISON PREVENTION

Less a discreet implant and more a series of minor implants throughout your body, a haz-mat upgrade gives you blood filters, radiation dampeners, thermal and cooling systems, an oxygen distribution and filtration system, and all sorts of other toys that allow you to resist the effects of hazardous materials and environments for about 5 minutes.

⬡ JUICER

+IMPLANT +INCONSPICUOUS

A network of servos and tubes connected to an adrenaline collection and distribution system so you can trigger a powerful boost to your system when you need it. I've heard prolonged use makes your heart explode, but whatever. When you take this implant, pick a Stress Track. Anytime you make a Move that involves physical strength, add the current rating of the chosen Stress Track to your roll.

⬡ MONO-FILAMENT WHIP

2-HARM HAND/CLOSE +AP +AREA +DANGEROUS +MESSY +INCONSPICUOUS

A ridiculously dangerous weapon, hidden in your finger so you can have it on you all the time. If you're planning on using it for party tricks, give me ten minutes warning so I can leave.

OPERATOR:

⬡ MEDICAL SUITE

+IMPLANT +HEALING +INCONSPICUOUS

Drug storage, vitals monitor, medical injectors, synth-skin sprayers. You can use it to treat yourself or someone else. Once per session, you can use drugs that your medical suite provides to lower any Stress Track to 0.

⬡ MUSCLE AND BONE STABILIZERS

+IMPLANT +INCONSPICUOUS

Your bones are laced with a carbon-steel alloy, and your muscles are reinforced with filaments and medical gel injectors. Ignore up to 3 Harm from any Vehicle Crash/Crush or Fall. Allows you to jump from a 3-story building with little to no danger.

⬡ NANO-SURGEON DELIVERY SYSTEM

+IMPLANT +INCONSPICUOUS

I once saw a guy take a clip full of flechettes in an alley, then saw that same guy the next week, good as new. He had one of these. Any sufficiently advanced application of nanomachines is indistinguishable from That Which Should Not Be, and will likely destroy us all. The first time you would be Taken out from Harm during a session, you may instead ignore the Harm.

⬡ PAIN EDITOR

+IMPLANT +INCONSPICUOUS

When you feel pain, your body is trying to tell you something. Maybe you don't want to listen to your body, though. Maybe your body's an asshole, I don't know. When you take this implant, pick a Stress Track. You can no longer be Taken Out by Feedback on this Stress Track when you take Harm.

⬡ THE POTATO HEAD DISGUISE KIT

+IMPLANT +DISGUISE

There are two useful things you can do with this implant. The first is that you can take pieces of your face off and replace them with other pieces so you look like someone else. The second is that you can just take all of them off and scare the bejeezus out of someone.

⬡ RABBIT EARS

+IMPLANT +ENHANCED HEARING +LEVEL DAMPENER +RADIO/CELL LINK +RECORD MUSIC SYSTEM +INCONSPICUOUS

You can get civilian radio, police and military bands, and even some corporate bands with the right know-how, streamed directly to your head. Satellite radio still costs extra, though.

⬡ SHOCK PADS

3-STUN HAND +RELOAD +LOUD +IMPLANT

Pads in your cyberhands can deliver a variable electric charge, which has a couple of handy uses. One, you can jump a car (or someone's stopped heart) with it. Two, you can stop someone in their tracks with it.

⬡ SKIN WEAVE

ARMOUR 1 +IMPLANT +INCONSPICUOUS

Nanobots weave armour into your skin, making it a lot harder to penetrate. It also makes your sense of touch less... sensitive.

⬡ SNIKTS

3-HARM HAND/CLOSE +AP +MESSY +INCONSPICUOUS

I'm pretty sure you know what these do, bub. They're retractable claws, alright?

⬡ SUB-DERMAL PLATING

ARMOUR 2 +IMPLANT +PARRY +1 HARM WITH HANDS

Getting this stuff implanted is incredibly painful and debilitating for about three weeks, but when you recover you've got literal armour beneath your skin. Allows you to parry hand weapons and inflict +1 Harm in hand-to-hand.

⬡ THERMO-OPTIC CAMOUFLAGE

+IMPLANT +CLOAK

Your skin's wired with electronics that allow you to bend light and make yourself effectively invisible, even masking your heat signature. The downside: unless your clothes are made of thermal cloth, you've gotta be naked for it to work.

⬡ VISUAL SUITE

+IMPLANT +ANTIDAZZLE +VISUAL ENHANCEMENT +THERMOGRAPH +NIGHT VISION +RECORD +INCONSPICUOUS

Night vision, telescopic magnification, microscopic magnification, video recording, glare protection, visual editing, and filtering. Cybereyes are way more advanced than they used to be, and they look almost normal to boot.

⬡ WIRED REFLEXES

+IMPLANT +QUICK +INCONSPICUOUS

You're fast, precise, and your reaction time is greatly enhanced because of the electronic stimulants applied directly to your brain. Side effects include being really hyperactive and annoying. You always go first in any situation where time is of the essence, and you can ignore the Reload constraint on gear you are using.

THE MOVES

OPERATOR SKILLS

When you use one of your three **Operator Skills**, you may make a **Professional** or **Headspace** Move.

PROFESSIONAL MOVE

WHEN THE CELL IS IN SYNC:

Anytime you want to use this Skill, say what you want to do with it, and you succeed.

The first time you use this Skill while the Cell is in Sync, you must increase the Stress Track by 1 for the Skill's Baggage.

WHEN THE CELL IS OUT OF SYNC:

Anytime you want to use this Skill, say what you want to do with it, and you succeed.

Every time you use this skill you must increase the Stress Track by 1 for the Skills Baggage.

NO SKILL

IMPROVISED MOVE

When you are confronted with a challenge that neither you nor any other Operator has a Skill for, say what you want to do and roll the + Discipline of the highest current Stress Track.

- 10+ Succeed.
- 7-9 Succeed, but the GM will also make a Move.
- 6- The GM tells you what happens.

HEADSPACE SKILLS

When you use a **skill from another Operator**, you must make a **Headspace Move** and **act with the Emotional Baggage** of the Skill.

If the Stress Track of the Skills Baggage type is 0, you may make a **Professional Move** instead of a **Headspace Move**.

HEADSPACE MOVE

When you use a Skill with an Emotional Baggage, say what you want to do, roll 2d6 and add your rating in that Emotion's Discipline.

- 10+** Succeed without emotional complications.
- 7-9** Succeed, but pick 1 Emotional Complication based on the Baggage of the skill.
- 6-** Succeed, but pick 2 Emotional Complications based on the Baggage of the skill.
OR Reveal your Regret to the Cell (once per session).

GRIEF COMPLICATIONS

- ◆ You put yourself in harm's way.
- ◆ You hurt someone you care for.
- ◆ You neglect your responsibilities.
- ◆ You retreat from a conflict.

RAGE COMPLICATIONS

- ◆ You ignore something obvious.
- ◆ You inflict collateral damage.
- ◆ You provoke a new conflict.
- ◆ You use excessive force.

NEED COMPLICATIONS

- ◆ You give up a secret for attention.
- ◆ You give up someone else's ally or resource for gain.
- ◆ You obsess over something.
- ◆ You ignore a personal risk.

EGO COMPLICATIONS

- ◆ Your false pride puts the team at risk.
- ◆ You become jealous of another.
- ◆ You refuse needed assistance.
- ◆ You insult or berate an ally for being inferior.

FEAR COMPLICATIONS

- ◆ You hesitate when it matters most.
- ◆ You avoid an existing conflict.
- ◆ You overestimate the danger.
- ◆ You leave behind an ally or resource.

REVEAL YOUR REGRET

Once per session, when you roll a 6- on any **Headspace Move**, you can share your Regret with the Cell

UPON REVEALING YOUR REGRET, GAIN SYNC FOR THE CELL AND TURN THE 6- YOU JUST ROLLED INTO A 10.

You reveal your regret as a Flashback Scene. This scene interrupts the current fiction, but it takes place within a blink of the eye for the Operators. The Player provides a full narrative of the scene. The GM should encourage other Players to ask leading questions about the events of the flashback to the Player narrating.

THE GAME MASTER

YOUR MANDATE

Make the Operatives feel like hyper-competent badasses in their specialities.
Present a world of ruthless ambition and emotional consequences.
Break the world in such a way that only the Cell can fix it.

YOUR LENSES

Say what...

- ◆ Honesty demands
- ◆ The dystopia demands
- ◆ Troubled hearts demand

YOUR TECHNIQUES

You should prepare to...

- ◆ Honour their expertise
- ◆ Listen first, talk second
- ◆ Focus on the individual
- ◆ Give everyone a name and the price for their life
- ◆ Direct corporate assets in the shadows
- ◆ Thing of consequences, intended and otherwise.

EMOTIONAL COMPLICATIONS

RAGE

- ◆ You ignore something obvious.
- ◆ You inflict collateral damage.
- ◆ You provoke a new conflict.
- ◆ You use excessive force.

GRIEF

- ◆ You put yourself in harm's way.
- ◆ You hurt someone you care for.
- ◆ You neglect your responsibilities.
- ◆ You retreat from a conflict.

FEAR

- ◆ You hesitate when it matters most.
- ◆ You avoid an existing conflict.
- ◆ You overestimate the danger.
- ◆ You leave behind an ally or resource.

YOUR PEOPLE

Speak through...

- ◆ Corporate Agents
- ◆ Human Resources
- ◆ Civilian Anchors
- ◆ The Wretched

PEOPLE NOTES:

NEED

- ◆ You give up a secret for attention.
- ◆ You give up someone else's ally or resource for gain.
- ◆ You obsess over something.
- ◆ You ignore a personal risk.

EGO

- ◆ Your false pride puts the team at risk.
- ◆ You become jealous of another.
- ◆ You refuse needed assistance.
- ◆ You insult or berate an ally for being inferior.

YOUR MOVES

ASK QUESTIONS

OFFER BARGAINS

THREATEN VIOLENCE

- ◆ Deal Harm to an Operator - 1-5 based on Weapon/Environment

FOSTER EMOTIONS

Headspace is a game about emotions. You should use this Move to push the Operators around and force them to act. Describe something that encourages one of the given emotions.

- ◆ Rage: Provoke them.
- ◆ Fear: Threaten them.
- ◆ Grief: Blame them.
- ◆ Need: Bribe them.
- ◆ Ego: Flatter them.

If the Operators fail to act out the emotion, by repressing their feelings or resisting the emotional pressure, inflict consequences on them. Add 1 Stress to one relevant Stress Track. If the NPC applying the pressure is family, by blood or by deed, increase it to 2 Stress instead.

SEIZE CONTROL

- ◆ Put an Operator where you want them by moving, separating, blocking, or capturing one of them.
- ◆ Drain Their Resources: Ammo, fuel, reputation, secrecy, contacts, or credits.
- ◆ Establish an event or introduce someone tied to an Operator's Regret or flashback scene.

OPERATOR REFERENCE

SESSION NOTES

INFILTRATOR	NAME	BAGGAGE
	MARTIAL ARTS	
	SECURITY	
	STEALTH	

HANDLER	NAME	BAGGAGE
	COAX	
	CONTINGENCY	
OBSERVATION		

RONIN	NAME	BAGGAGE
	EXPLOSIVES	
	FIREARMS	
TACTICS		

RUNNER	NAME	BAGGAGE
	PILOT	
	PARKOUR	
SPRAWL		

TECH	NAME	BAGGAGE
	ENGINEERING	
	DRONES	
HACKING		

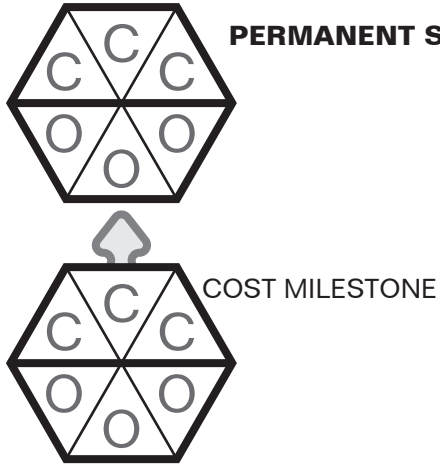
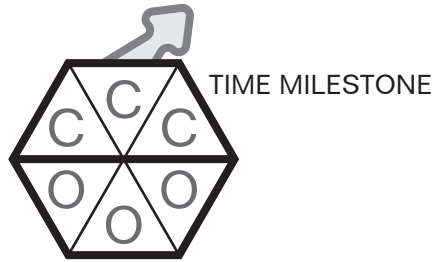
WHITECOAT	NAME	BAGGAGE
	INVESTIGATION	
	MEDICINE	
PSYCHOLOGY		

HEADSPACE

DYSTOPIAN CLOCKS

CORPORATION |
PROJECT GOAL |

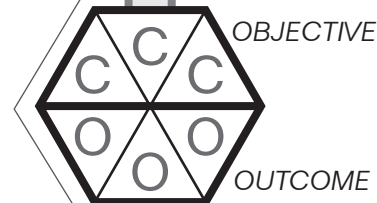
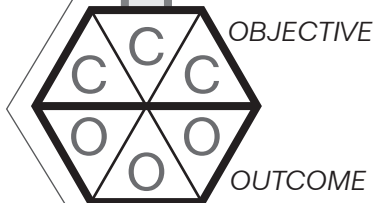
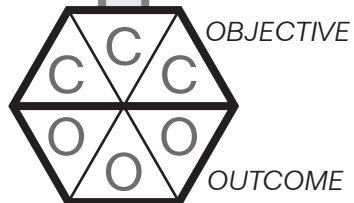
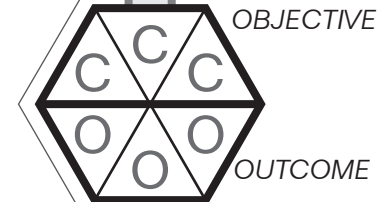
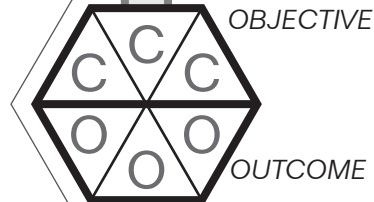
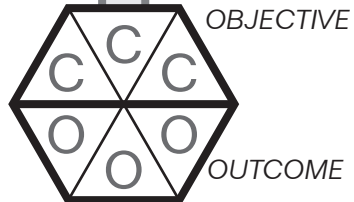
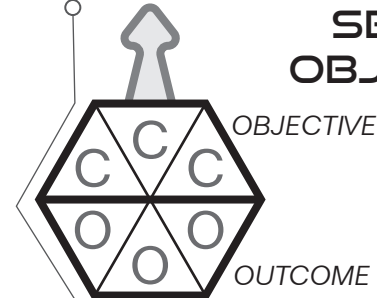
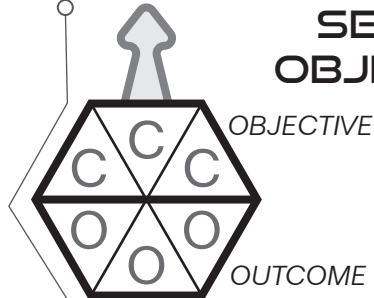
PERMANENT SETTING EVENT |



SESSION OBJECTIVES

SESSION OBJECTIVES

SESSION OBJECTIVES



HEADSPACE

STRESS TRACKS

SYNC



TO GAIN SYNC
REVEAL A REGRET
MAKE A SACRIFICE FOR
ANOTHER'S DRIVE

WHEN YOU GAIN SYNC
EVERY OPERATOR **GAINS** 1 XP

WHEN YOU HAVE SYNC
ONLY THE **FIRST** USE OF A
PROFESSIONAL SKILL
INCREASES STRESS
SPEND SYNC TO TURN ANY
RESULT **INTO A 10**

FEEDBACK
GM SPENDS
POINTS FROM THE
STRESS TRACK TO
CAUSE **EMOTIONAL**
COMPLICATIONS
(MAX 4)

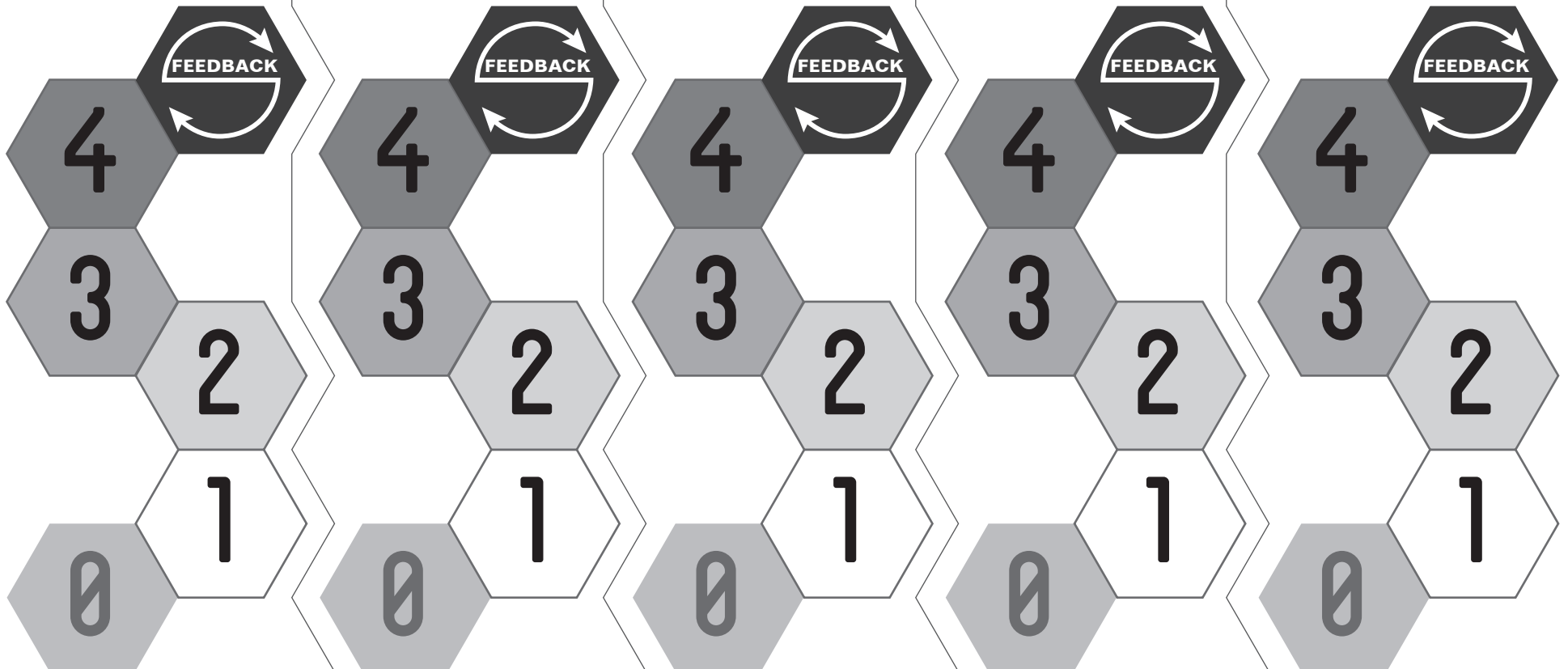
RAGE

GRIEF

FEAR

NEED

EGO



IF THE STRESS TRACK OF THE SKILLS BAGGAGE TYPE IS 0, YOU MAY MAKE A **PROFESSIONAL** MOVE INSTEAD OF A **HEADSPACE** MOVE.