



OVER THE EDGE

Friend or Foe?

CHARACTERS OF THE EDGE

Edited by Jonathan Tweet

CSM
EDGE

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Introduction

by Jonathan Tweet

Over the Edge™ runs on the strength of fictional personalities. Whole game sessions can be driven not by a plot or a group goal but simply by the interactions among the eccentric PCs and GMCs that populate Al Amarja.

What follows are dozens of personalities to include in your series. They fulfill a variety of functions. Some, such as Anastasia Crowley, illuminate some interesting aspect of the Edge that has not been previously detailed. Others, such as Denise Felder, demonstrate how much high weirdness can lurk under a mundane surface. But

the main role that these GMCs serve is that they are people. They have backgrounds, personalities, and goals. Every time one of these characters comes on stage, Al Amarja becomes more real, not because these characters have any firm connection to reality as we know it, but because they remind the players that there is more going on in this shared world than what they see, or even than what concerns them.

The Asterisk

Traits whose die ratings are marked with an asterisk (e.g., “2* dice”) are technical or fringe traits. The average character would have no dice with this trait.

Kyemba Adoko

Information Broker

In 1971, Idi Amin, commander of Uganda’s army, deposed Milton Obote and began an eight year reign of terror. Pulling himself right up along with Amin was Kyemba Adoko. A member of the Ugandan portion of the Kakwa tribe, Idi Amin’s chief power base during his reign, Adoko used his tribal connections and position as a tank driver in the Ugandan Army to land himself a job at the State Research Bureau.

Far from the innocuous scientific organization that its name suggests, under Amin, the State Research Bureau acted as both bodyguards and killers. Hunting down and torturing Amin’s real and imagined enemies, Adoko and the rest of the State Research Bureau reached a level of sickening violence. Disembowelment, burning, the forced killings of prisoners at the hands of other prisoners, and even more depraved methods were used to punish those who opposed Amin.

Adoko worked hard, kept a low profile, and ascended in the Bureau. Siphoning off money from covert funds, he built up quite a nest egg. In 1978, he got bad feelings about the strength of Amin’s regime. In December of that year, with over \$200,000 in US currency and deeds to sev-

eral pieces of property overseas, he walked out of Uganda, supposedly on a covert mission. He never returned. In 1979, Amin’s government fell to the return of Milton Obote.

Adoko’s first step was to enter Zaire, where large numbers of his Kakwa tribe live. Then, with a false passport, Adoko fled to England. By investing his money in several legally and morally questionable business ventures, he amassed a small fortune. Still worried that he might be recognized by a Ugandan or foreign official, he moved to Al Amarja, where he had been told that extradition was rare and identities were cheap.

For the past seven years, he has been living in Al Amarja. Initially wary of growing involved with politics, he realized that in Al Amarja, life is cheap but power is dear. Seeing information as probably the safest route to gaining some form of power, he began to work as an information broker and deal maker. His money has bought him spies in many corporate and government offices, and he has collected secrets that point to the actions of various conspiracies. The only conspiracy whose existence he has deduced, however, is the Net.

Adoko is a cruel, cold man. The concepts of honor and kindness simply seem non-essential to him. Although he has acquired a reputation for being honest with those in his pay, he would not hesitate to go back on a deal if he thought some



measure of profit could be gained and he felt he could get away with it. Not formally educated, he is nonetheless a highly intelligent man, and has been known to launch preemptive strikes on those who are about to double-cross him.

Adoko lives in Broken Wings, and his dealings in information take him to Golden, Four Points, and Flowers. He can also sometimes be found in Justice, where he keeps a lover.

Ugandan black man, age 52, 188 cm, 102 kg. Fat, closely cropped hair going to gray, dark brown eyes, dark skin, three vertical marks on temple (tribal scars). Dresses in well-tailored suits.

Languages: Luganda, English, some Swahili

Attack: 3 dice + penalty die

Defense: 2 dice + penalty die

Hit points: 22 (large)

Traits

Connected, 4 dice — Adoko has an impressive number of contacts in the Al Amarjan popu-

lace, the government, various corporations, and criminal groups. Given long enough and enough money to spread around, he can probably ferret out information known to these groups. He also knows some embarrassing secrets regarding covert connections to Amin's regime, allowing him to call in favors from or put pressure on U.S., English, and Israeli secret intelligence agencies, though he doesn't dare overuse this edge. (Calls various people by their first names)

Torturer, 2* dice — Adoko has an impressive knowledge of ways to make human beings feel pain. He hasn't used this knowledge in years, but it's just like riding a bicycle... With a few household tools and a lighter, he could have the average person confessing to killing John Lennon. (Aura of menace)

Intuition, 1* die — Although canny and possessed with a decent knowledge of strategy, Adoko has been proved correct far more often when he played on hunches. Whether this is some sort of supernatural power or just some heavy subconscious thinking is unknown. (Carries a copy of the Racing Form)

Fat — Adoko's years of easy living have taken a toll on his physique. He suffers a penalty die on physical actions. (Fat)

Story Ideas

- 1) Adoko's attempts to figure out who the real movers and shakers are on the island could lead to a full-fledged attempt to silence him by the Movers, the Kergillians, or practically any other secret group. Adoko's money and contacts make him a difficult target. The PCs could take either side in the conflict.
- 2) An African or an international journalist present in Uganda during Amin's regime recognizes him, prompting an "extradition" attempt (also known as a kidnapping). If this fails, certain groups may try to arrange an execution without the benefit of a trial. Thousands of people died during Amin's reign; many of their families may bear grudges against Adoko.

Arenel

Child Time Surfer

Arenel has almost completely lost touch with reality. The reason? His mind is not firmly in place with our time frame. Instead, it wanders the time stream, often retreating to his happiest times, those when he was still in his mother's womb.

Arenel, whose real name is Steven Miles, was sent to Al Amarja by his father when he was nine. The Movers, who wanted to study the child, conned Mr. Miles into believing that the D'Aubainne Asylum would be the best place to send his son for treatment. Steven was sent to the Asylum, but the Movers transferred him to their own research facilities. A year ago, when they finally decided he wasn't worth anything to them, the Movers dumped him onto the streets of Al Amarja.

Since then, Steven has somehow managed to survive. He has been more or less "adopted" by several artists in Flowers. They give him food and, having discovered he likes to draw, the occasional paper and pencil. They have been helping him out for a year or so, and have no idea where he came from. They don't know anything about him, and have nicknamed him "Arenel." When not crashing at an artist's place, Arenel lives on the streets, normally staying within Flowers. He can be found wandering around the Great Men Barrio.

The artist closest to Arenel is Vahe Joheno, an Al Amarjan man who paints fantastic and repellent scenes with super-realistic technique. Joheno gave Arenel his nickname (the only name by which he is known). Image Akbar, a mediocre sculptor who constantly invents new styles (her latest is "Neo-Surrealistic Classical Statuary"), also looks after Arenel.

US Jewish boy, age 11, 143 cm, 36 kg. Pretty, silent, ghostlike. Dirty clothes and body indicate that he lives on the street. Darts about furtively.

Languages: None (says one word on occasion, "gubbish")

Attack: 1 die + penalty die

Defense: 1 die + penalty die

Hit Points: 8 (small)

Traits

Time Psychosis, 3* dice — Arenel's psychosis allows him to see into the future. His vision of the future world, however, is warped, as Arenel is a warped boy. The visions present a decaying, destroyed, and violent future. The worst part is that if people learn what Arenel sees, then it will happen. Therefore Arenel's talent may prove to be a liability for anyone who tries to use it. His abilities manifest in various ways. He sometimes draws pictures of his visions. In addition he instinctively knows when something bad is going to happen, but this is very difficult for anyone else to realize as it is next to impossible to communicate with him. Finally he can sometimes, under special circumstances, draw people into his world. PCs can try to resist by rolling against his power. (Characters with any history of insanity or psychic sensitivity receive a penalty die on the resistance roll.) If a character fails to resist, he finds himself in a warped and twisted vision, probably of



the near future. Actions that the PC undertakes in this vision do not affect the real world for they are not really in the past or future, just in a vision of it. (In other words, if the PC kills his grandparents, that doesn't change anything once he's back in normal time.) Should a player die or be seriously injured in this vision, he comes back to the present unharmed. (Darts about quickly, as normal time is slow to him)

Out of touch — Arenel gets only one die when dealing with perceptions in the real world. He has to be dealt with very slowly for him to understand what is going on. (Stares off into nowhere)

Attractive, 3 dice — For a boy his age Arenel is rather pretty. His most striking feature is his face. (Attractive face)

Filthy — Arenel lives on the street. He is also completely detached from reality. The only people who care for him at all are his artist friends, and they rarely clean him up. Because of this he is normally filthy. This gives him a penalty die when dealing with people who are concerned with such matters. (Distinctive smell)

Story Ideas

- 1) Arenel hands a PC a drawing of the PC in the near future. It is a picture of the PC in the middle of a fight. A few hours later, the fight occurs much like the drawing showed. If the PCs investigate, they find Arenel just as he is being abducted by someone who knows Arenel's talents and hopes to be able to use them.
- 2) A fringe scientist dedicated to time travel learns of Arenel's talents. He hires the PCs to help abduct Arenel, and then, when he thinks he can use Arenel to transport people in time, to come along as bodyguards into a journey to the near future. The future, of course, is horrible and the players find themselves caught in a nightmare until they either find a way out or die and return.
- 3) Andrew Miles has discovered how bad the D'Aubainne Asylum really is. However when he tries to get his son back he discovers Arenel is no longer there. Now he wants his son

returned to him, and may hire the PCs to find Arenel and to discover what happened to him.

- 4) Arenel can help the player characters learn more about the Throckmorton device, though communication with him is difficult.

Nordica Barron

Black Marketeer

Nordica Barron is a woman with connections, both on and off Al Amarja. She can buy or sell almost anything, and call on countless well-placed people for favors. The Net considers her an asset and individual grifters, conspirators, criminals, agents, and undercover Peace officers depend upon her. Barron's skills at procuring useful items make her a noteworthy figure in the underworld. She uses this prestige to her best advantage, serving as a broker during negotiations between powerful factions. Barron operates from a three-story stone townhouse in the Great Men barrio. City directories identify her as a dealer in art and antiquities. Indeed, relics and rare art objects form a significant part of her trade.

Barron's work keeps her constantly busy and constantly scheming. She fuels herself on jumped coffee, sleeping three or four hours at a time. A lifetime of dealing with shadowy people has taught Barron the art of politics. She knows how to cajole, how to command, how to bargain and how to make herself popular. However, she has grown weary, bitter and forbidding. When Barron deals with those more powerful than herself, she behaves respectfully. She also treats her friends well. However, she maintains an intimidating air, brooding by herself and silencing people with sharp glances.

Barron cultivates a friendship with Gerard Blaque, proprietor of the Midas Hotel, a prominent establishment in the Golden Barrio. Blaque has the mannerisms of an archetypical French gentleman, with a flair for dressing and a taste for fine wine. The two of them attend theater performances, dine at expensive restaurants, and tour the more interesting parts of Al Amarja. There is

only a touch of romance in Barron's relationship with Blanque. Barron feels slightly old-fashioned about sexual relations, does not want a torrid fling, and does not want a risky commitment either. As for Blanque, he enjoys nightly conquests with beauties in his hotel. He knows that Barron would not tolerate that in her own lover. Therefore, he enjoys keeping her on her own terms, as one of the only women who he considers a friend and not a target.

The relationship between Barron and Blanque serves each of them well. Barron uses Blanque to keep her reputation from becoming too seedy. He can also launder money and find wealthy clients. Blanque, in turn, can make Barron's services available to customers. He also likes to "invest" in shady transactions, purchasing weapons or stolen art in hopes of later selling it at a profit.

Despite her success, Barron does her best to remain obscure. She considers herself a hunted woman, and this was the stimulus which brought her to Al Amarja. Barron grew up the daughter of Preston Barron, a British college professor who acted as an undercover operative for a controlling agent who called herself "Lucky." He always assumed that he was doing something moderately heroic, probably for MI-5, or at least the CIA.

By the time Nordica reached her teens, she'd become an active partner on her father's missions, using the advantage of her youth and appearance of innocence. During this period, she began building her network of contacts. A few of these friends vanished after they came to Lucky's attention and Nordica Barron began to suspect that her father's patron was more sinister than he realized.

When Nordica Barron was 24, someone poisoned and killed her father. Considering herself at risk, she broke ties with Lucky and fled. Her path eventually led to Al Amarja.

Barron takes every means she can to protect herself; she can fight viciously. Before arriving on Al Amarja, Barron had killed twice, favoring the Ingram M-10 submachine gun. Now, unable to carry firearms, she carries her taser everywhere and trains at Kuan Tun's Black Belt Academy to learn better techniques using a knife. She wears body armor at all times. Barron keeps a chemical-



defense poncho nearby whenever she can. Once, while in Japan, she saw people wearing surgical masks to screen out pollution and bacteria. Barron took the idea a step further. She wears a half-face oxygen mask as part of her regular attire.

Barron's preoccupation with protection from gasses is an obsession but not a compulsion. If she has a reason not to wear her gear somewhere, she leaves it behind. Barron never wears it to social functions with Blanque. However, in the Edge, a person with her sort of influence can usually get away with eccentric behavior. In fact, this is a secondary reason why Barron likes her oxygen mask. It offers her a subtle way to flaunt her power, to remind people that they have to treat her respectfully even if her behavior seems paranoid or bizarre.

Barron has an oval face and lustrous hair. Her developed muscles give her a sturdy appearance. She dresses casually but well, often wearing a leather jacket to cover her body armor. Many would describe Barron as quite attractive. However, Barron has no affectations about her appearance

and seems completely unconscious of the fact; her oxygen mask hides her face in any event.

British Nordic woman, age 26, 170 cm, 75 kg. Solid build, gray eyes, light-brown hair in ponytail. Usually wears a half-face oxygen mask.

Languages: English, Al Amarjan patois, French, German, Japanese

Attack: 3 dice, X5 (stun only) with taser or X2 with knife

Defense: 3 dice

Hit Points: 21

Traits

Contacts, 4 dice — Barron can buy unusual or illegal things, find information, locate missing people, secure loans, arrange for dirty work to be done discreetly and negotiate underworld bargains. She is also a skilled broker in art and antiquities. (Can get into exclusive clubs)

Self-Defense, 3 dice — Barron is a crack shot with a pistol. On Al Amarja, she quickly honed her skills with tasers as a substitute. She can also brawl hand-to-hand at three dice, and was recently acquainted with a knife. (Solid build)

Manipulation, 3 dice — To keep up her business, Barron must be at turns personable, persuasive, and forceful. To maintain all these skills, she must also be something of an actress. Barron may use this three-dice skill for bargaining or keeping up a pretense. (Confident air)

Story Ideas

- 1) Barron offers a useful resource for PCs who are looking for sensitive information, special devices, or rare materials; or who are looking to profit from recent acquisition of the same.
- 2) Barron hears word that Lucky's agents are active on Al Amarja. She does not wish to

Midas Hotel

Type: Hotel

Rep: A swank place with an upper-class atmosphere, able to satisfy unusual needs.

Brief: The Midas Hotel offers rooms and entertainment for the more refined element of society. Through its connection with Nordica Barron, it can cater to the tastes of the eccentric rich, along with the special needs of those who have acquired their fortune in questionable ways.

Address: 1050 Point West, Golden Barrio

The hotel is an ancient structure of damp stone surrounded by a fence of wrought iron. Its doors are flanked by massive columns. A courtyard contains a fountain, with a polished copper statue of Neptune.

One can find every modern convenience within this establishment. Bathrooms are luxurious. Rooms have fax machines and personal computers and guests may set their own secret access codes to these machines, to ensure privacy. (Rumors, of course, maintain that the hotel

staff itself can eavesdrop on these machines through "taps" wired into the circuitry.)

Despite the modern equipment, this building has a lovely antique decor. The vaulted stucco ceilings and statuary recall a grand hotel of the Victorian period or earlier. The restaurant offers the finest foods of many nations, all served on elegant porcelain or silver. Ivory chopsticks accompany Far Eastern dishes. This hotel also has a series of private rooms for special entertainment, some of them soundproofed. The Midas Hotel generally has some form of special attraction for guests, which may range from an appearance by some noted entertainer to an authentic séance.

Midas's Prices

Single: \$300 (per night)

Double: \$400

Suite: \$500-1,500

Room Service: Expensive

Special Services: Very Expensive

Phones: 75¢ per local call

investigate, for fear of leading assassins to her. Therefore, she hires the PCs to quietly find out the truth. Lucky turns out to work for the Russian secret intelligence service (the descendant of the KGB). Her operatives are here to develop a network of agents on Al Amarja. Decide for yourself which Al Amarjan personalities the secret agents discover first, and whether they end up as dangerous intruders or hapless burger. In either event, once the spies discover Barron, they will certainly wish to eliminate her unless she works with them. Therefore, the party's next adventure may involve destroying these agents.

- 3) Barron constantly needs exotic items for customers. PCs who enjoy acquiring these things in creative ways may find her a ready patron.

Rixa Bekker

CPC Hound

Rixa Bekker came to Al Amarja for a vacation, but ended up staying after being hired by the Democratic Bureau of Investigation. As a part of her "routine" Customs and Immigration interview, Bekker was screened for paranormal abilities. The results indicated that she was sensitive to psychic phenomena. While she toured the Edge, Bekker was carefully monitored by Bureau agents to determine her motives and to ensure her suitability as a DBI agent. As she was preparing to leave the island, she was contacted by an agent and offered a position working for the Bureau. Bekker had become enchanted with Al Amarja and jumped at the chance of staying. After passing through the standard indoctrination and training programs, Bekker was assigned to the Center for Paranormal Control, working under a man named Shadrach — who is secretly a Vornite Mover.

Bekker's role with the CPC is to circulate through the Edge to pick up psychic phenomena and report them to Shadrach for further investigation. Personally, Bekker is dedicated to her job and believes that she plays a key part in ensuring Al Amarja's safety. She considers herself on

duty at all times and always exhibits a professional attitude. Bekker can be encountered just about anywhere in the city, looking out for psychic manifestations. She has an office in the CPC building, but it is collecting dust because she is rarely there. Bekker prefers not to let her work come to her, rather she seeks it out. She is tenacious and will track a phenomenon until she has found its source. She resides in one of the single women's dorms in the Arms Barrio.

Like all CPC inspectors, Bekker has a built-in crystal trap in her badge.

German woman, age 31, 170 cm, 70 kg. Short brown hair, brown eyes. She dresses in casual clothing to better fit into her surroundings. She always acts professionally.

Languages: German, English, Al Amarjan patois

Attack: 3 dice, X1 unarmed, X4 with 9mm automatic pistol

Defense: 3 dice



Center for Paranormal Control

Type: State security arm

Rep: Mysterious and sinister

Brief: The agency assigned to keep track of paranormal activity and neutralize it when it threatens the state

Address: Plaza of Arms

The CPC, a special branch of the Democratic Bureau of Investigation, is housed in an old-fashioned rectangular brick building in the Plaza of Arms. Its mundane appearance belies the great fear the organization inspires in everyday residents of the Edge. It is well known that the building houses a powerful coven of sorcerers and vampires ready and willing to destroy enemies of Monique D'Aubainne. As usual, the truth is somewhat less dramatic.

The CPC's mission is to identify any visitors or citizens who possess paranormal powers, and to notify them that such powers are illegal on Al Amarja. In order to escape prosecution, wielders of psychic or magical abilities are required to sign a loyalty oath which provides for severe penalties should the signer ever be caught acting against the interests of the state, as defined by the state. This includes, but is not limited to, crimes committed using paranormal abilities.

The teeth for this agreement are supplied by the enforcement end of the CPC, the agents who inhabit the top two floors of the building, the ones whose shades are always pulled. It's staffed around the clock by mighty (i.e. 5 dice in their main paranormal ability) wizards and mindworms. Their job title is "Chesspiece." Although they exercise great mystic powers, these folks are basically bureaucrats. They've retired from active participation in the vicious wars of the occult underground, and have found a way to draw a nice paycheck while protecting themselves from up-and-coming spell-slingers out to make reps for themselves. They while away their on-duty time playing cards (very interesting when all participants have

extrasensory capabilities), knitting, reading, watching televised sports, or doing crossword puzzles. They're paid to wait. What they're waiting for is a Code Astral.

When the Center for Paranormal Control receives a report of paranormal activity — which can come from any number of sources, from concerned citizens to government cloaks and stoolies — Intelligence Analysts on the second floor of the CPC building quickly determine how to categorize it. The minority of cases are categorized Code Astral — reports from completely reliable sources of fringe activity immediately dangerous to the State.

However, the vast majority of reports are much less clear, whether they be vague descriptions of luminous objects in the sky or possibly paranoid complaints of harassment from ghosts or demons. These are classed as Code Ethereal cases. At least ninety-five percent of these accounts are due to misperception, delusion, or hallucination, of which the drug-hazed island gets more than its fair share. The CPC assigns inspectors, who have the full arrest powers of Peace Force officers, to interview complainants and do whatever other legwork is required to separate the valid cases from the bogus. Inhabiting the first floor of the building, these walking BS detectors are the unglamorous backbone of the department.

The inspectors' secondary mission is to remind the public that magic doesn't really exist, just psychic powers. Psychic powers can fit into a materialist paradigm, whereas magic operates on the level of meaning and symbol, which just isn't scientific. The government's official line is that what people call "magic" is simply a primitive and superstitious use of psychic power.

PCs who are thought to have undeclared paranormal powers will most likely deal with an inspector, like Rixa Bekker or Anima Nee-Owoo. Only if they're actively using their talents to wreak obvious havoc in public will the Chesspieces show up with magic wands blazing.

Hit Points: 22 (conditioned)

Traits

DBI Training, 3 dice — This trait includes criminology, interrogation, subterfuge, Al Amarjan law, cutting through red tape, and spotting trouble. (Professional attitude)

Psychic Awareness, 2* dice — This trait allows Bekker to sense when a psychic event is taking place or when a psychic talent is being used nearby. It does not point out who is causing the manifestation, so she must rely on her DBI training to identify the source. Bekker suffers tremendous headaches after detecting a psychic manifestation. (Carries a big bottle of aspirin)

Self Defense, 3 dice — Bekker has been trained in basic self defense tactics and firearm skills. As an agent of the DBI, she carries a Heckler & Koch 9mm pistol and uses it when the situation warrants. (Slight bulge under her left arm)

Story Ideas

- 1) The PCs' actions have inadvertently disrupted one of Shadrach's secret, Vornite plans. He assigns Bekker to follow the PCs and report her findings. She follows them carefully and if not discovered, she reports as ordered. The PCs are then set up for a fall, if possible. If Bekker is spotted and questioned, the PCs can't get much out of her, but they are at least alerted to the fact that somebody in the government is eyeing them.
- 2) Bekker has recently become suspicious of Shadrach's true motives. If the PCs were innocent (in Bekker's eyes) and they are set up by Shadrach, Bekker tries to intervene on the PCs' behalf. This could result in Bekker being fired from the Bureau (or killed) or in Bekker and the PCs joining up to remove Shadrach from the Bureau.
- 3) If any PC exhibits a psychic ability or unusual power, Bekker eventually tracks him down. What happens next depends on how sadistic you want to be.



Alexandria Bennett

Independent Doctor

The world fascinates Bennett, and she makes a study of everything in it. Her curiosity about science and the human body led her to the study of medicine, although she never obtained her license to practice. She has also always felt a passionate interest in Alexander the Great, not so much for his military conquests as for his scientific experiments, his personal courage, and his conviction that he was a god.

When an obscure archeological journal reported the discovery of a manuscript in Alexander's hand on Al Amarja, she immediately went there to see it. Details on the exact ownership of the manuscript were sketchy, and Bennett has yet to hear another word on the subject. She has, however, thrived on the island. Her pleasant good humor has allowed her to make friends and her medical talents have allowed her to make

a living. Nobody considers her obsessions out of place here and she, in turn, overlooks most eccentricities in others.

Bennett performs minor surgery and administers drugs for all who come to her. Many of her clients come to her without money, either due to poverty, or due to Powerful Individuals pursuing them. Therefore, she accepts their thanks in gifts. She has an enormous collection of weapons, strange artifacts, books, and other presents from clients.

Bennett still lives in her apartment in the Sunken Barrio, but she has moved her storefront clinic to Justice. She spends much of her time at performances in the Flowers Barrio or on the campus of D'Aubainne University, continuing her studies.

US white woman, age 32, 158 cm, 51 kg. Light brown hair, round face, small nose. Wears casual sweatshirts and jeans, often wears a baseball cap and runs her long hair through the band used to tighten it.

Languages: English, Al Amarjan patois

Traits

Medicine, 1* die — While not as well-trained or well-equipped as a doctor at the D'Aubainne Hospital, she can take care of the routine problems, including flesh wounds and minor illnesses, that make up 90% of doctor visits. (Washes hands scrupulously)

Alexandrian Lore, 3 dice — Bennett's knowledge extends not only to lore specifically pertaining to Alexander, but to the wide variety of subjects which interested him. That includes botany, astronomy, anatomy, the ocean, foreign cultures, and military strategy. (Talks animatedly on all these topics)

Story Ideas

1) One of Bennett's clients gives her a gift — a Styrofoam package cradling a computer chip

— and promptly expires. Shortly thereafter, she receives mysterious telephone calls demanding the chip. Bennett asks the PCs to find out why people want the chip and to help her take appropriate measures. She's a good friend to have, and she can also pay them a share of the profits if they end up selling the chip.

The chip contains circuitry allowing a vehicle to navigate in non-Euclidean dimensions. An openheimer working for the D'Aubainne International Airport invented it to control cleaning crew motor-carts within the Terminal. The chip may have more significant uses in time travel, faster-than-light spacecraft design, and the creation of artificial intelligence.

Kergillians, other openheimers, followers of Throckmorton, and others all might have reasons to kill for the chip. They also might pay well for it. The PCs must help Bennett decide what to do. Of course, if they sell the device to the wrong people, they may later regret the decision.

2) Bennett still wants to find the book of Alexandrian lore that first lured her to Al Amarja. She may ask the PCs to assist her, possibly offering some interesting equipment as payment. She may also consider information from the book essential to saving some important GMC's life.

The book belongs to the Pharaohs, who consider it a moderately useful source of mystic inspiration. However, they are quite upset to learn that news of the book's existence not only leaked out, but spread to the world beyond Al Amarja. Pharaoh operatives attempt to manipulate PCs into tracking down the source of this leak, allowing the adventurers to believe that this is their only hope of finding the book. If the party goes ahead and locates this person, the Pharaohs may simply try to exterminate everyone involved, but they also may reward cooperative characters with the book.

Tomek Bereszowsky

Vegetarian Lycanthrope

Tomek Bereszowsky is representative of the crowd of mystic s— types who form Anastasia Crowley's circle of companions. Like the others, he whiles away his leisure hours at her table in the Chateau Melmoth's Wooden Plate restaurant. The group gossips, laughs, smokes, drinks, and generally has a good time. Unlike the others, Tomek avoids the delicious veal cordon bleu; he's a strict vegetarian. This is because, not in spite of, the fact that he becomes a werewolf on the nights of full moons, solstices, and equinoxes. Since he's closer to the animal kingdom than most, he feels queasy about eating his brothers and sisters.

Bereszowsky became a lycanthrope about seven years ago during a visit back to his native Poland. (He had been living in France at the time.) His great-grandfather, unknown to the rest of the family, had been a lycanthrope for years. The two of them were lost together in the woods, hunger overcame the old man, and the rest is history. Initially appalled by his new condition, he sought out the mystic s— community of the Edge and received advice on handling his new state. These days he's come to terms with the beast within, and is able to control it quite well. Even in werewolf form he's a solid, well-behaved citizen who would never think of taking a bite out of anybody.

By trade, Bereszowsky is a radio engineer. He works at KRAK radio; few people there suspect the true nature of his secret life, though they know he's a friend of Anastasia Crowley's and interested in the occult. He continues to hang out with Crowley and company because they helped him when he was in trouble, and he enjoys their friendship. By instinct, he avoids getting caught up in mystic s— power struggles, but would probably come to Crowley's aid if she found herself in danger she couldn't handle.

He's a big strapping fellow with a bellowing laugh and a rowdy, back-slapping manner. His voice is deep and gravely in human form, but curiously squeaky as a werewolf. He can really put away the beer.

Polish man, age 39, 190 cm, 110 kg. Very hirsute, reddish hair turning gray at the temples, stubby fingers. Dresses casually.

Languages: French, English, rusty Polish

Attacks: 3 dice (X2 damage in werewolf form)

Defense: 3 dice

Hit Points: 27 (big bruiser)

Traits

Werewolf — During the nights of full moons, solstices and equinoxes, he turns into a hair-covered humanoid with a wolf's head. These days he finds it quite simple to maintain his normal happy-go-lucky personality in this form, though this wasn't always so. As a werewolf, he gains X2 damage in combat with claws or bite, and is impervious to attacks made by anything other than magic or silver. In this form, he's also highly allergic to wolfsbane: his sinuses congest, causing a very painful headache and a penalty die on all actions requiring mental concentration. (Hairy palms)

Bruiser, 3 dice — Bereszowsky is a big guy who loves to wrestle and horse around. The few times muggers have hassled him in Al Amarja have ended with an exhilarating victory for him. (Massive frame)

Radio Engineer, 3 dice — Prides himself on smooth efficient work on the job. (Winces when he hears an engineering mistake on the radio)

Former Murderer — Before he came to Al Amarja and learned to control his wolf side, Bereszowsky committed several outstanding murders in France, which are still unsolved cases. Someday a homicide detective or vengeful relative could come after him. (Blasé about his lycanthropy, but won't talk about his early werewolf days)

Story Ideas

- 1) If Anastasia Crowley befriends some PCs, she introduces them to Bereszowsky and other low-level supernatural beings. Others include Marcella Infiorati, who claims to channel the spirit of Delacroix; and Middle

Husmali, who says he's a reptile sorcerer, whatever that means. They exist primarily to show that such things are taken to be a normal part of life at least among some on Al Amarja, and that such individuals carry on normal lives. Only under extraordinary circumstances does this group get involved in dangerous activities. Only Crowley has ambitions of power; the rest are content to pursue their everyday activities while gossiping about those with grander occult agendas.

- 2) Once he gets to know the PCs and realizes that they're involved in some kind of trouble with the island's conspiracies, Bereszowsky comes to them with a disturbing report. He was attending a meeting of a new vegetarian organization hoping to get some new bean recipes. Instead, he discovered a violent terrorist cell planning to firebomb local restaurants in the name of animal rights and someone named LeThuy. The lycanthrope's tip can lead the group either towards a direct confrontation with the LeThuys, or win them points with the Peace Force if they pass the word along.

“Springheel,” Jack Coogan

The Bionic Freshman

Dr. Wilhelm Martin took an interest in bionics when his young son, Jack, lost both legs in an automotive accident. Jack Martin has used a wide variety of prostheses for almost all of his life, eventually finding that nothing compares with the Springheel Mark IV Bionic Legs. There's just one small problem with them; they're stolen. Wilhelm Martin is in jail, and his son (now going by the alias Jack Coogan) has enrolled at D'Aubainne University to hide out. He's accepted a track scholarship, though he's reluctant to draw attention by excelling.

Jack spends a lot of his time playing pinball at Morrie's Arcade in Science. He can also be

found at track practice many evenings, or hanging around his dormitory playing cards. Jack is genial without being outgoing, so he might tag along with students anywhere in the city. He's been known to barhop with Federico Georno on Friday nights.

US white man, age 18, 185 cm, 80 kg. Very thin, limp, straw colored hair; thin face. Wears baggy sweat pants most of the time. Nervous.

Attack: 2 dice X1 with fists, or 5 dice X2 with kick

Defense: 2 dice or 4 dice

Armor: 4 dice on legs.

Hit Points: 14

Traits

Bionic Legs, Upside — Built by his dad for the U.S. division of Investigative Cybernetics, the Mark IV Springheels are tireless and incredibly strong. Jack can jump 4m straight up and 8m horizontally from a standing start. With a good run he can cover 15 horizontal meters. Land-



ing, however, is dangerous for leaps over 6m and life-threatening if over 12m. His top running speed is 70 km/h, but his safe running speed is 50 km/hr. (Olympic class sprinting is about 35 km/h.) Reinforced with depleted uranium, the Springheels do X2 damage with kicks, and their incredible strength and speed make them vicious weapons (5 dice attack). After two kicks from them, however, Coogan takes a penalty die on attacks because he's not a trained fighter, and his usual attacks of kicking low or jumping up and kicking the head become predictable. He can also use them to jump out of the way of attacks (4 dice defense, but only when escaping the fight). (Wears baggy pants, even while competing)

Athletics, 3 dice — Coogan's upper body is athletic. He needs to be in good shape to be able to use his bionic legs. (Good muscle tone)

Art, 3 dice — Coogan wants to be an artist, and he's got some talent and some training. His artistic tendencies make him an outsider from the jock crowd, and his track scholarship makes him an outsider from the art crowd. (Has his own paintings on his wall)

Bionic Legs, Downside — He can't go through a metal detector without a lot of explanation. The legs are terribly heavy (about 30 kg each) and not completely convincing if viewed up close. He has a few canisters of spray-on "flesh" in his room. Plus, I.C. is still on his tail. (Secretive)

Story Ideas

- 1) Someone from I.C. hires the PCs to investigate Jack Coogan. If they can get their employer his fingerprints or some other proof of his identity, they'll be hired to kidnap him (without being warned about the legs, of course — that would be a breach of security).
- 2) One night Jack runs into (and immediately out of) some trouble. Stories abound about an "Al Amarjan wild man" who can jump two stories straight up and escape across the rooftops. A "bigfoot hunter" offers a big reward for the capture of the "creature."

Anastasia Crowley

Small-time Prophet and/or Wizard

Anastasia Crowley is one of the Chateau Melmoth's permanent residents. She purports to be the granddaughter of Aleister Crowley, though this is unlikely. She's the social center of the mystic s— community on Al Amarja, and is always the first to approach a burger who seems to exhibit genuine mystical powers. Such folks are introduced to her other cronies, and given dire warnings about other magical operators. In particular she fears Sir Arthur Compton, and urges caution in all dealings with him.

Crowley is without doubt a player in the Edge's magical power games. The question is whether she's won her position through true occult prowess, or mundane means. She's a voracious accumulator of relevant gossip, and a networker without equal. She casually claims to have the ability to detect fluctuations in the arcane energies surrounding the island. This might mean that she possesses true sorceress prowess, or simply that she's good at gleaning relevant gossip and passing it off as the result of clairvoyance. Whether she is truly potent or not, many believe that she is, and this gives her power and influence.

You might find it convenient to make Crowley a genuine mentor in magical matters, or a fake looking for a real magician to con into serving her ends. Therefore, you'll find below two alternate versions of her traits. You may want to wait until the last possible moment in the storyline to decide which set is valid.

Whatever her true status, Crowley is a charmer. She projects the image of a helpful and caring friend, and is almost always available to provide advice to the mystic s— newcomer. Her basic advice is sound: Don't mess with Compton and don't alert the Neutralizers or Center for Paranormal Control by obviously manifesting fringe powers in public. More specific counsel may or may not be valid, depending on the role you want her to play. She can often be found holding court at the Chateau Melmoth's restaurant, the Wooden

Plate, where she is always ready to pull up another chair to let another person in on the gossip.

English woman, age 32, 160 cm, 50 kg. Very pale skin, long auburn hair. Effects Edwardian dress.

Languages: English, can read but not speak Latin and German

Traits (both versions)

Networker, 3 dice — Supplements whatever mystic knowledge she possesses with scuttlebutt and rumor gleaned from dining with the Wooden Plate regulars. Has accumulated network of mystically powerful friends who believe she's the real article and are willing to do things for her. (Always willing to trade info)

Impressive, 3 dice — Maintains an image of herself as dazzlingly beautiful, smart, well-connected, and mystically powerful. (Always hints at yet another layer of knowledge)

Traits (as poseur)

Minor Prophet, 2* dice — Receives flashes of insight about the secret reasons behind current events, and of possible future events. The scope of these can be worldwide, but must pertain to magic in some way — psychic or physical events are beyond both her powers and her interest. Other than this uncontrollable information gathering ability, her claims to great mystic power are a sham. (Prophetic power triggered by physical sensation — whenever she eats toast with marmalade)

Poseur, penalty die — In any negotiation or personal interaction with a genuine wizard, she suffers a one die penalty because she fears that he might see through her act. (Intimidated by real power)

Traits (as sorceress)

Ritual Magic, 3 dice — In contrast to her enemy, Sir Arthur Compton, Crowley relies on a general knowledge of magical principles instead of mastering specific spells. She has a wide range of occult books in her personal library in her Melmoth room, and consults these when she wishes to create a particular magical effect. This means that she can't spontaneously pop off a spell when surprised, for example. Instead, she has to figure



out the ritual required (necessitating a die roll) and then spend time creating the ceremony. No ritual takes less than an hour; some take days. The mean time for ritual casting is three hours. Crowley requires a second roll to successfully complete a successfully researched ritual. Most rituals deal with information gathering, the strengthening or weakening of human emotional connections, or the acquisition of wealth. Smiting an enemy from a distance is also ever popular. Many require successful negotiation with good or evil spirits to complete — in effect the ritual compels the spirit to use its own power to create the desired effect. This approach trades off speed and certainty for greater versatility. (Wears charm bracelet with a key, a wand, a pyramid, and a clear vial of white milky fluid. Occultists may recognize these as symbols of Aleister Crowley's elemental control magic)

Trusting, flaw — Crowley's need for social contact and gossip have exposed her should Compton or another enemy decide to move decisively against her. Her whereabouts at the Melmo-

Chateau Melmoth

Type: Hotel

Rep: Creepy hangout for evil mystic s— types

Brief: Charming hangout for benign mystic s— types

Address: 777 John Dee Lane, Sunken Barrio

The Chateau Melmoth is an impressive, if slightly decayed, structure, tucked away in a twisting lane way. Owner Nicolai Nemeth runs the place with efficiency and Old World grace. Room service is expensive but quick. Physically, the hotel rooms are a reminder of an earlier time. Flocked wallpaper, velvet curtains, mahogany fixtures, and four-poster beds all contribute to the atmosphere. Strangely, there are no mirrors in any of the rooms, including the washrooms. If requested, room service will bring up a small mirror and hold it up for the patron's use. Then they'll promptly return it to storage.

Rooms are all named after a well-known figure in the Romantic or Gothic movements — mostly English writers and European composers, such as Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Bram Stoker, Hector Berloiz, and Richard Wagner. Rooms are never referred to by number, only by name, and full name at that. It's "the Carl Maria von Weber room," never "the Weber room."

The hub of activity at Chateau Melmoth is The Wooden Plate, its restaurant, which specializes in Hungarian cuisine. Many diners recommend the veal cordon bleu with dumplings in sauce, but the legendary Transylvanian Wooden Plate is always an epic challenge for a determined dining party.

The Wooden Plate is a gathering place for the Edge's sorcerers, witches, occultists, and mystic dabblers. Satanists avoid the place because here they tend to be treated with amused condescension, which drives them crazy. Standards of decorum are enforced with strict peer

pressure: poltergeists restrain themselves from dropping the silverware, and vampires restrict themselves to items on the menu. Magic use in the dining room, aside from the occasional cantrip to light a cigar or reheat one's espresso, is a major faux pas. Gossip is the main medium of expression here, though its content may be incomprehensible to the uninitiated.

A small magical device built into the dining room chandelier is triggered by hostile thoughts. When triggered, it casts a mild charm on the aggressor, giving him the feeling that he's about to do something very stupid. If anyone were to start a fight, physical or otherwise, in the Wooden Plate, the assembled diners would no doubt be able to put him out like a damp cigarette.

Watchtowers have been built into the Chateau's roof, and two guards are constantly on watch, manning modern whaling harpoons. They're there to assure no Empties get closer than 100m from the hotel entrance. (John Mohammad helped the Chateau get permission to install the harpoons. Since they are bolted in place, they pose little threat to Her Exaltedness, and their presence is allowed.)

Any veterans of the mystic s— scene at the Melmoth will be registered with the CPC and have signed the required loyalty oath. They'll advise new arrivals to do the same. These folks carry on their business too openly to be anything but law-abiding Al Amarjans. Most are vociferous defenders of the D'Aubainne regime — in public, anyway. They appreciate the safe haven she's created for those who inhabit alternate paradigms.

Prices

Single: \$150 (per night)

Double: \$175

Room Service: Expensive

Phones: Spotty service; 50¢ per local call

th are widely known in the mystic s— community, and she might easily be duped by a plant posing as a naïve newcomer to the local scene. (Holds court at Wooden Plate)

Story Ideas

- 1) If PCs ask about a mystical hangout on the island, even normies know that the Chateau Melmoth is the place to go, although they may dismiss its clientele as a pack of wackos. Once they arrive at the hotel, Anastasia approaches them when they show any signs of true mystical power. She buys them dinner and offers her advice, subtly drawing as much information as possible from them. If your PCs are typical, they soon become dependent on her freely offered aid.
- 2) A lonely PC picks up Little Scratches to read the following ad: “Slim white female, 32, seeks individual for one-time sexual encounter. Strict guidelines must be followed. Gender, attractiveness not relevant. Contact Box 523.” It’s Crowley, looking for a partner for a sex magick ritual. If the PC responds, he or she has an unsettling encounter with her in a ritual context. If you’re using the genuinely sorcerous Crowley, and she fails her roll during the ritual, a gate is opened between the astral plane and the subject’s mind. Over the next few months, a hostile elemental entity possesses the PC at inopportune moments. Its interests lie in vandalism and other acts of petty destruction.

Elaine Czarny

One Tough Gal

Czarny teaches karate at Kuan Tun’s, and serves as a fight coach for several fighters at Sad Mary’s. She has a nasty reputation as being ill tempered and vicious; once Gordon Dobson tried to “score” on her at Sad Mary’s. It took four Ar-ies gangsters to kick her out, but not before she’d knocked one gangster out and had staved in three of Gordon’s ribs.

Czarny has a secret in her past. She claims to be the sister of Eric Czarny, a moderately successful kickboxer of about eight years ago. She’s not; she is Eric Czarny, who had a sexuality crisis and decided he was a lesbian trapped in a man’s body. Since he was a disturbed man, not a true transsexual, the only institution that would give him sex change treatments was the D’Aubainne Hospital and Trauma Center.

She’s really a very unhappy woman. It was the guilt she felt as a man that made her want to dissociate herself from masculinity, but she still feels an intense attraction for many aspects of machismo (obviously). The tension between her idealization of the feminine and identification with the masculine (and usually the worst aspects of that) leaves her edgy, irritable, and miserable.

She can most often be found at Kuan Tun’s or watching the fights at Sad Mary’s. She has an apartment in the same building as Kuan Tun’s, where she lives with her girlfriend (who is extremely fragile, quiet and feminine).

U.S. white woman, 170 cm, 72 kg. Short black hair in a bob, small breasts, pale skin, sulky expression. Usually wearing all black leather and carrying a matched pair of daggers at each hip (plus one in the boot).

Languages: English

Attack: 4 dice, X2 with knife

Defense: 4 dice

Hit Points: 28 (impervious)

Armor: 1 die plus 1 point (leathers, and kote ate) against blows, 1 point (leathers only) against stabbing or cutting attacks.

Traits

Butt Kickin’, 4 dice — Czarny has studied a broad number of martial arts, and has synthesized them into something that looks remarkably like the techniques of a superb street fighter — only a little prettier. Technically she’s a san dan in Shorei Ryu Karate. (Sullen manner)

Kote Ate, 1 die — Kote ate is a discipline known as “body hardening” in the West. It consists of hitting things really hard with your body, and then hitting your body with really hard

things. Eventually, the bones develop extra layers of calcium, the skin becomes desensitized to pain and bruises less easily, while tough calluses develop on the striking surfaces. Her routine includes dropping a shot put on the tops of her feet, doing full power punches and kicks against concrete, and having guys from the dojo try to break two by fours against her tensed stomach. It gives her 1 die of armor against blunt attacks. (Does not change expression when struck)

Disturbed, penalty die — Czarny is sullen, inarticulate, and possessed of an enormous mean streak. She's baffled by the damaged communication between genders and takes out her frustration on anyone who offers her the slightest excuse. (Sullen)

Story Ideas

- 1) The PCs learn of Czarny, either by observation or reputation. One late night in Justice, they see her beat the tar out of a bunch of Otto's Men to keep them from tormenting a drunken drag queen. Curiosity piqued by



this display of uncharacteristic chivalry, they investigate her and find out that she's secretly going to an encounter group of the "sexually confused."

- 2) If the PCs are annoying Dr. Nusbaum, he might threaten to reveal Czarny's sex change secret unless she puts a little fear into the PCs.
- 3) Czarny's girlfriend breaks up with her, and the PCs see Czarny's inarticulate pleas for her to return in Little Scratches. Then the girlfriend turns up dead, and Czarny is arrested for the crime. Perhaps the PCs know who really did it, or have befriended Czarny and must prove her innocence.

Gordon "Whiny" Dobson

"Social Guide"

Dobson is from Seattle, Washington, by way of Perth, Australia. In one city he left behind a pregnant girlfriend — a convicted arsonist's girlfriend, to be exact; in the other — massive credit card debts under the name "Leonard Gluck." Deficient in class, morals, and money, Dobson (or "Whiny" to his acquaintances) works as a guide for Al Amarjan tourists. Dobson makes a perfect addition to any PC group — seemingly worth enough to go out on a limb for, but unreliable enough to infuriate even the kindest PC.

Dobson lives in a cruddy apartment in Great Men, but spends most of his time at the Terminal trying to sell his services to tourists. He can also be found in the bar at Cesar's, or Sad Mary's if Cesar's kicks him out.

US white man, age 20, 170 cm, 66 kg. Unkempt, worn-looking, crooked teeth. Shabby, wears sunglasses. Smokes constantly.

Traits

Ingratiating, 3 dice — Copious bootlicking skills have kept Dobson alive and whining. They've also provided him with some street



contacts — he's tolerated most everywhere, knows where to find whatever delights his employers seek, and can persuade people that he knows the town. At the first meeting, play him in such a way that the PCs will respond favorably. (Lots of people know him)

Sneaky, 3 dice — The other stilt supporting Whiny's life. Dobson knows when to chicken out of a fight, when to stand someone up when they need him most, and how to decide between saying "I just found it there, Officer!" and "You know, there's more than enough for two here..." (Wears sunglasses to conceal constantly shifting eyes)

Trouble Magnet — For some reason, trouble just finds him. Although he doesn't know it, he's begged for his life from (at various times) Neutralizers, Movers, and Throckmorton operatives. This is a guy who, when confronted with a bar full of women, will head straight for the karate black belt who's on a mean drunk streak and ineptly hit on her (see Elaine Czarny). (Constantly complaining about his string of bad luck)

Story Ideas

- 1) Dobson makes himself useful to the PCs and guides them around. Then, while on his own, he steals a briefcase from a Quisling. While begging for his life, he tells the Quisling that the PCs hired him. By this time, someone else has the briefcase...
- 2) The PCs need a spy or informant, and Dobson is recommended to them. He either makes up whatever story he thinks they want to hear, or gets caught in the act and fingers the PCs.
- 3) The Peace Force suspect Dobson witnessed something extremely dangerous to them — evidence that Monique D'Aubainne bought a Soviet nuclear sub, for instance. He vanishes, and everyone he's been seen with is questioned. A large reward is offered for his capture.

Gerard Duplat

Dealer in Rare Animals

The liberal import/export laws of Al Amarja make it a haven for businessmen whose product lines are illegal elsewhere. These include drug runners, brokers in stolen art and antiques, pornographers — and men like Gerard Duplat, who sells endangered animals to a worldwide network of collectors. Surprisingly, the large international market for rare creatures includes many highly respectable institutions like research universities and zoos. In any area where demand for a commodity exceeds the supply, there are people willing to meet that demand — even if the commodity is a species, and the demand ends up destroying it forever.

Gerard Duplat avoids thinking of the consequences of his actions. He thinks of himself as an animal lover — at the drop of a hat he extols the beauty of any rare animal at enraptured length. From elaborately feathered bird to hairy spider, Duplat adores the complexity and wonder of nature's creations. Like any collector, he must possess the things he loves. He well understands the psychology of his clients because he

shares their passion. And if their hobby drives the odd species to extinction in the wild, Duplat can always shrug his shoulders and hope one of his clients sets up a breeding program with the specimens he sold them.

Gerard Duplat Import Services, as his company is called, is one of a number of businesses on the second floor of a converted tenement in the Plaza of Great Men. Physically unimpressive, with plywood fixtures, Duplat's operation consists of a counter, a back room for working on the books and making phone calls, and an open holding area with enclosures ranging in size from small terrariums for lizards and bugs to a large cage suitable for a mountain gorilla. Gerard takes pride in the health of his animals and the quality of his service; his operation depends on repeat business and he takes no chances when it comes to keeping the clientele happy.

All of the "merchandise" present awaits pickup by clients; Duplat keeps nothing in stock. When he receives an order, Duplat then contacts one of the many groups of specialist poachers from around the world. He offers no guarantees as to delivery time; obviously rare animals are hard to find and catch. On average orders take six months to a year to fulfill. Some clients have had standing orders with Duplat for years, requesting incredibly rare creatures or even those thought to be extinct, like the Tasmanian Tiger or thylacine. Sometimes a poacher contacts Duplat after having bagged a coveted animal, and Duplat searches his customer base for a likely buyer.

Common animals with export restrictions cost a couple of thousand dollars apiece; rarer beasts can go for up to \$100,000. Those with known populations of less than a thousand can net five times that amount.

French man, age 57, 168 cm, 72 kg. Partially bald, well-trimmed dark hair on the sides. Dresses in expensive casual clothes, wears a gold Rolex and glasses with designer frames.

Languages: French, English, Bantu

Traits

Business contacts, 4 dice — Duplat has a large client base and knows how to maintain it through

efficient service. He also keeps careful tabs on the shadowy world of his suppliers — knowing who's in jail, who has the heat on him, and who operates in the clear. Now and then he supplies bail money to a reliable supplier or helps fund bribes for wildlife officials. He also keeps his protection payments to the Net in order, and through them knows smugglers capable of moving contraband animals into most major markets. (Carries little black book in front pocket)

Amateur Naturalist, 3 dice — Although he has no formal training, Duplat's years of obsessive reading on the subject has made him an expert on most of the animal kingdom. His business includes a sideline on rare plants, so he knows a little about these, too — though they don't arouse his personal interest the way animals do. (Speaks knowledgeably about animal anatomy and behavior)

Wealthy, 3 dice — Duplat's business allows him to charge a hefty markup on each item sold, and he lives in serious comfort, if not splendor, in a villa on the side of Mt. Ralsius. It is well-



protected with security and houses his striking personal collection of rare animals. (House is patrolled by Larry, Duplat's pet jaguar, who serves as a very intimidating watchdog)

Hates travel, flaw — Duplat dreams of seeing his beloved animals in the wild, but is terrified of flying and becomes sick on long car, train, or boat rides. (Jealously inquires about the travels of others)

Story Ideas

- 1) PCs are likely to encounter Gerard if they're into mystic s—. Many spells and ritual magicks require plant or animal parts as props or sacrifices. Many black magic theorists contend that the rarer the animal, the more potent its mystic charge is — either because the act of destroying the animal is more evil, or because rare animals possess a much higher proportion of the spiritual essence of their species, as there are fewer individuals to share it with. Others heatedly contend that the use of endangered species in magic is a mere affectation with no apparent mystical benefit. Though he has no opinion on the matter — and doesn't really believe that sorcerers can do half of the things they claim — Duplat is happy to part budding mages from their hard currency.
- 2) On the other hand, Duplat would be a good outlet for the disposal of any weird creatures or entities the PCs end up acquiring in the course of their adventures. Even if he's never heard of or seen the thing in question — say it's a captured Betelgeusan (see the description of E-Z Sleep in OTE) — he can find someone eager to pay big money for it. Duplat pays his suppliers 30% of the final purchase price. He'd even be unethical enough to arrange for the sale of sentient aliens or non-human entities. Since some PCs may fit these categories, he might end up paying mercenaries to capture them for resale to a collector.

Mesut Economou

Dealer in Arcane Tomes

When a burger with an interest in mystic power arrives in Al Amarja, he usually makes a beeline for The Golden Bough in the Plaza of Flowers. Though its stock is no better than that of a New Age bookstore in any major city, the cachet of buying a copy of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* in Al Amarja keeps the Bough in business.

But when someone really in the know seeks out a magical text, he doesn't bother with the Bough. He leaves word with the man who has been reliably providing the straight goods to the Edge's mystic s— community for nearly two decades — Mesut Economou. Economou does not maintain a regular shop as the transactions he specializes in are better off without walk-in customers. He generally works on a special order basis, though he has a few select volumes in his private collection that he would be willing to sell given the correct price. He also does not advertise, but relies completely on word of mouth for his clientele. If one is not sufficiently trusted by the M.S. crowd, one does not find out about Economou's services. He has no time or patience to deal with the many poseurs and lunatics who gravitate towards Al Amarja in the hopes of finding mystic enlightenment. He deals only in rare antique books; even if he sells a mere handful a year he gets enough in commissions to live comfortably.

To contact Economou, one must leave a message for him at the front desk of the Chateau Melmoth. Economou does not live at the Melmoth, but wishes his residence to remain unknown for security reasons — a burglar once made off with an edition of Kardek's *The Book of the Spirits* with margin notes penciled in by the author, and Economou does not wish to repeat the loss. He visits the Melmoth's famous Hungarian restaurant, The Wooden Plate, on a biweekly basis, at which time he picks up his messages. He does not come on any particular day or hour, so as to avoid being ambushed.

Books of the sort Economou specializes in take a while to arrive once ordered, as they're often scarce or even unique items. Economou contacts known owners of the book in question and inquires as to the asking price. He then contacts his client and suggests a bid. Actually, he is selling his knowledge and contacts more than he is the books themselves — and therefore refuses to name buyers or sellers in the transactions he arranges. His list of contacts and possessors of books is his stock and trade, and he shares it with no one. Economou takes an undisclosed commission on the purchase price of every item sold. He also works as a broker, facilitating the sale of magical texts that are offered to him. He has a lengthy standing order list of clients, both in Al Amarja and throughout the Continent, who wish to purchase given books should they become available. When he receives a tome from a client wishing to sell, he contacts everyone he knows who he thinks would want an opportunity to buy, and allows them to bid. He is quite skilled at jacking up the price of items sold in this manner. Sir Arthur Compton once accused him of creating nonexistent bidders to drive up the price of a manuscript he ended up buying. But even the dangerous Compton avoids antagonizing Economou, as his ability to sniff out and acquire essential volumes is unparalleled.

Economou is a reserved man who reveals little of himself during transactions. He speaks in short, clipped sentences, and provides no information unasked. He especially refuses to engage in the gossip and speculation that is a staple of mystic s— conversation. Similarly out of bounds are questions about his past or how he came into this line of work.

Yemenite man, age 57, 168 cm, 76 kg. Thinning white hair, nut-brown skin. Green-lensed sunglasses, fraying gray suits.

Languages: Arabic, English. Can read but not speak Latin, Ancient Greek, French, German.

Traits

Bookseller, 4 dice — Specializes in rare occult books; carefully tracks the current whereabouts of all known copies of such volumes. Knows all collectors in the field, can spot forgeries and stolen merchandise, drive up prices to enhance his com-

mission, repair damaged books, and provide provenance for books in his field. This has tangentially made him an expert in the history of the occult, though he professes little knowledge or interest in the actual contents of the books. He loves them for their histories, and their physical manufacture. (Smells old books for their bouquet, like a wine taster)

Synesthetic, 3 dice — Although blind, Economou can see with his skin; he can slowly read by running the tips of his fingers along the page, or identify the contents of a photograph by pressing it against the skin of his bare chest. He also smells sounds, and hears tastes. Aside from his sight, all other senses can work normally as well as synesthetically. (Reads with his fingers)

Mesmerism, 2* dice — If sheltered from distractions, Economou can put trance-susceptible individuals into a hypnotic state through the sound of his voice alone. He finds little use for this talent and practices it rarely. (Soothing voice)

Blind — Blind since birth, Economou is pretty good at navigating around familiar areas of the city. His other senses do compensate to a great degree, especially with their synesthetic enhancements — it's hard to sneak up on him, for example. But still there are situations, like combat, in which he suffers a penalty of one or even two dice. (Carries white cane)

Story Ideas

- 1) The PCs find an old book sitting on a park bench. Though written in what looks like archaic French, its diagrams make it clear that it is a work of demonology. They take it to a friend at the Chateau Melmoth, who recommends that they contact Economou in order to sell it at a good price. Economou examines the book, running his hands rapturously across its pages. Then he stops, the color draining from his face. The demon that's supposed to be illustrated there is missing; only a white silhouette outline remains. Economou tells them that the book could fetch them up to \$100,000 from one of several possible customers. But that they must first catch the demon

and return him to the book — until then it is worthless.

- 2) Once he's come to know and trust them, either as suppliers or buyers, Economou comes to the PCs to hire their services. He's been trailed by unknown individuals — who he of course can't describe visually — on four separate occasions in the last week. He wants the group to find out who's following him and then drive them off. It turns out that a Hermetic Cell Mover is trying to throw an enemy off his trail by diverting suspicion to Economou. The enemy, a shell-shocked survivor of the Lebanese civil war, is convinced that the Movers exacerbated the conflict that killed his family. He's in fact a dupe of a Pharaoh quisling. However, he's very dangerous and a real threat to Economou if not put back on the right track.

Fat Benny

Gargoyle Fence

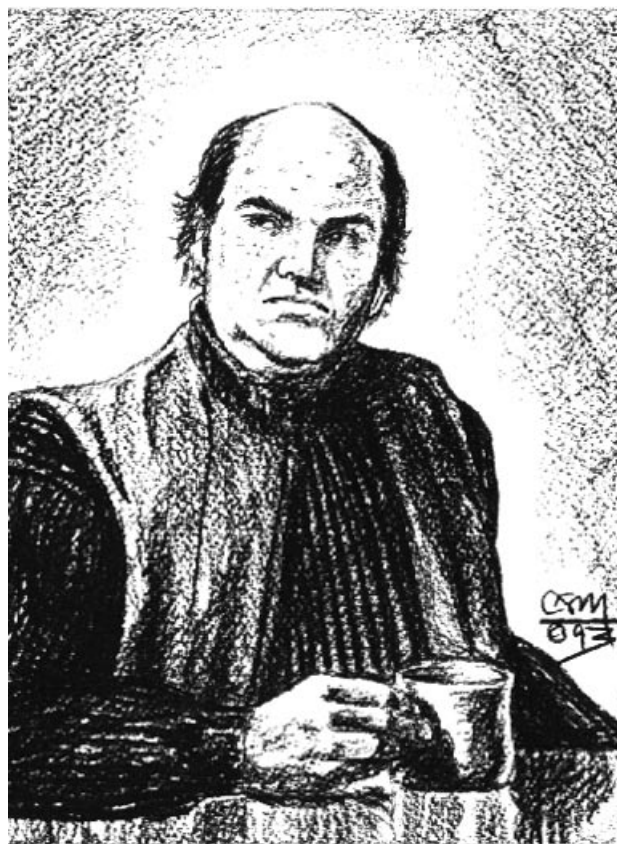
Gargoyles, of course, are real. They're a small race, in number, and have been for a very long time. They very rarely leave the cathedrals they call home. Based on silicon rather than carbon, they exist by a slow photosynthesis, and although they have the innate ability to change their shapes, most are content to remain hidden among the inanimate stone sculptures with which they share their lofty perches.

They lead quiet lives. Most gargoyles are content to spend their time in aimless silent communion with the sky around them and the birds that fly past. Sometimes they turn to conversation, and at these times great philosophical structures are spun which lead to nothing and are forgotten the next day for the joy of recreating them all over again.

Their lives are as content as they are quiet. It is the rare gargoyle who wants for much. They believe that if there is a God, He (or She) has not chosen to manifest Him or Herself to them, and that if the time is ever right God will send to them a Jesus of the Gargoyles.

When the sun goes down, they sleep. Without sunlight, they cannot function. There are no natural predators of gargoyles, and as such no evolutionary pressure that might force them out of this strict diurnal pattern. It is rare that a gargoyle is born (although they choose mates much as humans do, if more slowly) and equally rare that one dies; those who do are those who fail to take proper care against falling, or who simply do not wish to live any longer. A gargoyle who is only injured heals quickly, able to shift the rocky substance of his or her body to repair the damage. At worst, the injured gargoyle becomes slightly smaller due to loss of tissue.

This inertia to bodily change extends to the various substances that affect a human's bodily chemistry. Most drugs have no effect on a gargoyle; UV radiation and heat are their stimulants of choice. It would be possible to design drugs that affect a gargoyle's silicon chemistry, but no gargoyle has ever wanted to and no human has ever realized it might be worthwhile.



Gargoyles very rarely leave the cathedrals where they are born. The last gargoyle to leave his home (before Fat Benny) was known by humans as the Phantom of the Opera.

Benny is young for a gargoyle, about 50 years old. He left Winchester Cathedral simply because he was bored. He'd heard a lot of the younger humans in the congregation talking about the modern world, and felt, with good reason, that the other gargoyles were far too willing to live in the past.

Unsurprisingly, given his unusual nature and yen for observing interesting events and people, he wound up on Al Amarja. As a fence, he finds that some of the most interesting items on the island pass through his hands on their way to some of the most interesting people. This fascination has not gone unnoticed, but most people mistake his fascination with the outré for a love of power; "Fat" refers to this perceived desire rather than to his weight.

He can be found every morning at the Breakneck Cafe on the Plaza of Flowers, sipping coffee (the heat is enjoyable even if the caffeine has no effect) and doing business. Generally, he remains in the Breakneck for most of the day, with occasional side trips to do business with various people. He is, of course, never out during the night.

He lives in the Flowers Barrio in a small walk-up apartment that's generally messy. The astute observer might notice that his bed is unusually sturdy.

Apparently an Irish man, age 35 (actually 54), 167 cm, 114 kg. Compactly built but doesn't look overweight, bald, brown eyes, dark pock-marked skin. Dresses casually.

Languages: English, Latin, Al Amarjan patois

Attack: 2 dice, X2 damage in stone shape

Defense: 3 dice

Hit Points: 21 (built to last)

Psychic Pool: 4 shots

Traits

Fence, 3 dice — He's an experienced fence, talented at negotiation, price estimates, and salesmanship. (Refers to objects by their values, e.g., "Let me grab my ten dollar noose.")

Limited shape shift — Although he's limited to one human form, he can change into any form made of stone and of the same mass. This ability is always successful, although it takes about ten minutes to transform completely. (Rough cast to his skin)

Tough Internal Structure, 3 dice — Due to the silicon nature of his body, even when in human shape he's very hard to damage. (Doesn't notice small jolts, bumps)

Immobile at Night — Gargoyles cannot move about unless the sun is out or they are exposed to UV light. (Keeps a tanning booth in his apartment for emergency situations)

Fascinated by the Unusual — He has a very difficult time refusing any opportunity to meet unusual people, witness unusual events, or fence unusual things. (Shows people odd knickknacks he carries around with him)

Story Ideas

- 1) Fat Benny discovers that he rather enjoys some of the things money can bring him, perhaps becoming addicted to some human drug. Unfortunately, his fencing isn't bringing in enough money to keep him in his newfound vices. In desperation, he begins to fence himself, in various stone shapes, as "rare statues." After the buyer makes the pickup, Benny waits until he's alone, reverts to human form, and escapes. PCs might be hired by an accomplice to help Fat Benny escape from a more than usually well-guarded gallery, or by someone who's considering buying a statue from Fat Benny to guard the statue. If your PCs aren't the types to get hired, a PC or a friend might get burned by Fat Benny's scam.
- 2) The secret ingredient needed to modify Nusbaum's plastic surgery (see *New Faces*) is gargoyle blood. Either Dr. Rodriguez has

used up his supply of gargoyle blood and is looking for more, or poor Fat Benny has been the source all along. PCs could be hired to find Fat Benny by any number of people, including Dr. Rodriguez, who need a source of blood; Dr. Nusbaum, wanting to stop Dr. Rodriguez; or just someone who wants to do business with Fat Benny and can't find him. Alternatively, Fat Benny could hire them to find out who's the blood source.

- 3) Fat Benny has a brother named Samuel. Samuel would never have left the cathedral by himself — indeed, he doesn't even like to listen to those silly humans. However, he misses his brother Benjamin enough to want to go visit him. Samuel does not understand human ways. ("But where do you worship if there is no cathedral here?") The PCs may run into him in the course of their daily business, while he's asking everyone in sight if they've seen his brother, or they may be hired by Fat Benny to guard him while he visits.



Denise Felder

Snake Dancer

Denise Felder started out as a slightly frumpy research librarian. Then she met Dr. Jamaranathy Panil, of her university's Asian Studies department. Dr. Panil was interested in certain obscure Indian religious texts that had to be painstakingly reconstructed from various fragments, and he hired her to do the legwork. Tracking the sources down took Felder months. Slowly, the photocopied pages and borrowed volumes trickled into her office, where she helped Dr. Panil reassemble the original and translate it.

Then Felder started to notice the changes. They came on so gradually that at first she paid them no heed. Then she could barely help but notice. Her blood started to bubble, telling her of the wondrous things that could be had in the world, the glories that could be hers. She began skipping work, making feeble excuses to her colleagues, and throwing herself into exhibitionistic

frenzies. Much to her surprise, her co-workers accepted her explanations without hesitation.

One morning, Felder was singing loudly in the shower when she felt something odd touch her nose. She checked in a mirror, and screamed. Her tongue had become long and forked, like that of a snake. She ran to Dr. Panil's office, only to find it abandoned. She found that he had left the country weeks ago, taking the translation with him. At the time, she hadn't even noticed.

Since then, Felder has gone where her "inner demon" has taken her. Along the way she has made some effort to locate Dr. Panil, hoping that he knows exactly what has happened to her. She's been in Al Amarja for a couple of years, after hearing rumors that Dr. Panil had joined the faculty of D'Aubainne University. She hasn't managed to find the time to really check the rumors out yet, though. She has a flat in Sunken Barrio, and will often sublet a room to anyone she figures she can soak for money. She works as an exotic dancer in whatever bars and clubs will have her when she needs money, which is all the time. (Sad Mary's

is a favorite of hers.) The rest of the time, she is either out on the town looking for new things to do or asleep.

US white woman, age 39 (looks much younger with makeup), 173 cm, 59 kg. Hair dyed fiery red (naturally black), long legs, black forked tongue. Dresses racy.

Languages: English, badly-accented Arabic, scraps of several dead languages (written only)

Hit Points: 21 (quick on her feet)

Traits

Forked Tongue, 4 dice — Felder’s “inner demon” (as she calls it) is a sybaritic creature, accustomed to luxury and pleasure. It has given her an aptitude for lazy lies and untruths to avoid unpleasant realities. Felder doesn’t really understand how it works (though some drunken intellectuals have theorized that the ends of her tongue may give off pleasing vibrations), but people she speaks to tend to believe her lies, and even regard her as a friend and confidante for no good reason. (Forked, snakelike tongue)

Exotic Dancer, 3 dice — Felder’s specialty is erotic dancing, but she’s fairly good at other forms as long as they aren’t too structured. Her inner demon isn’t interested in dancing as an art. She prefers dancing as an excuse to glory in her body and the ways it can move. Plus, it gives her a good way to show off. (Muscular legs)

Library Research, 3 dice — Felder was once a good researcher. She specialized in finding unusual books and assisting in academic research. Now she has a lot of trouble using these skills, most often taking a penalty die when using them. She’d like to be able to use them to track down Dr. Panil, but can’t be bothered just now. (Subscribes to esoteric literary magazines, but never reads them)

Sybarite — Felder is at the mercy of her inner demon when it comes to entertainment. Her attention span is practically nil and her appetite is endless. She can’t stand hard work or anything requiring concentration, and will do whatever it takes to avoid them. Fortunately, her ability to exploit those around her gives her a ready supply of excuses. She has reached the point where she even uses them when there’s no need. She’ll gen-

erally take a penalty die when trying to accomplish anything difficult or unpleasant, if her efforts to avoid it somehow fail. (Hisses occasionally, lies all the time)

Story Ideas

- 1) A PC needs a place to stay, and an acquaintance (preferably one who spends a lot of time in bars) suggests that Felder might have a room open. If the character is at all appealing to her, she’ll agree instantly, even if she’s already got a roommate. Her idea of a good roommate is someone who pays all the rent and the bills and stays out of the way when she’s having fun, and she assumes that pretty much anybody can fit this description until proven otherwise. She brings people home all the time, holds wild parties (catered, because she can’t be bothered to prepare food), and justifies it all with a string of frighteningly plausible untruths.
- 2) When Felder talks about her “inner demon,” she thinks she’s kidding. What if she’s not? Thus far, the creature has been absorbed by the less offensive pleasures of the flesh. It could acquire a more vicious sense of amusement quite easily, especially when a hidden sorcerer prods it in that direction. Felder comes to the characters, blood streaking her body, and begs them to help her with all her usual snaky charm. It quickly becomes clear that she has been taking up torture as a recreational activity, and is also prone to frenzied outbursts of violence. Meanwhile, the sorcerer is drawing upon the pain energy she produces to further his own nefarious schemes. For purposes of this story, when the demon comes out Felder should be able to use her “Forked Tongue” trait to fly into violent frenzies, giving her 4 dice to attack (but not to defend) and +10 hit points.
- 3) A shrunken, old Indian man approaches the characters and introduces himself as Dr. Panil. He has heard of a particular American working in the Edge as an exotic dancer, and he’d very much like to meet her. Perhaps the characters could arrange an introduction...?

Andrew Garret

Brainwiped CIA Agent

Andrew Garret (not his real name) was a crack CIA agent doing undercover work on Al Amarja. His current mission involved penetrating one of the local Mover cells. He was doing well, and managed to gain the good favor of his Mover superiors before he made a big mistake. Garret relied on what he thought was a loyal delivery boy to pass a message to his CIA contact. As it turned out the delivery boy, Ping, also does part time gopher work for Madam Vylaska (see the Bienvenidos Hotel description in OTE). Ping mixed up the packages and the CIA memo was accidentally given to one of the Madam's girls. Garret's cover was quickly blown. The Movers tried to interrogate him, but his years of CIA training prevented him from giving in. Instead, they completely wiped his memory and left him in the Edge.

Since his brain wipe a week ago, he has gotten a job at Scoopmeisters as a counter worker, and a room at Rooms for Men. He also has a room at Cesar's that contains all his spy gear, but he doesn't know about it. When not working, Garret can be found wandering the Flowers and Great Men Barrios.

When encountered, Garret seems distant, as if preoccupied. He acts very much like a small child: trusting, naive, and confused by large words. If anyone befriends him, Garret follows him around and tries to be helpful. He realizes that he has no knowledge of his past and will do what he can to restore his memory if given the opportunity. Certain spy related phrases (e.g., "CIA," "the Company," "wet work," etc.) or activities (sneaking around, breaking and entering) may help him recall certain aspects of his former career.

US white man, age 25, 185 cm, 85 kg. Close cut brown hair, well muscled, vacant look in eyes. Dresses in an apron and hat from Scoopmeisters.

Attack: 3 dice, X1 unarmed

Defense: 3 dice

Hit Points: 20 (hardened)

Traits

Fighting, 3 dice — As a CIA operative, Garret was a trained martial artist. His brainwashing has caused him to lose some of his technique, but his instincts are far above an average person's. (Well muscled)

Stealth, 4 dice — Garret's neurons retain some of the techniques he learned when he was with the "Company." He can sneak and hide almost without a thought. (Light step)

Brainwashed — Garret has been stripped of all his memories at the hands of the Movers. (Vacant look in eyes, wanders around aimlessly)

Story Ideas

- 1) If the PCs are in the market for a job, they could be approached by CIA operatives who need the assistance of people steeped in the local culture to help track down their missing agent.
- 2) PCs investigating the Movers come across Garret's name in a secret communiqué. They may wish to track him down and try to bring back some of his memory.
- 3) Garret's credit at Cesar's runs out, and the staff cleans out his room, dumping his spy gear into the trash. The PCs stumble across it, possibly as it's being sold as second hand junk in the Plaza of the Four Cardinal Points. Then other cloaks get word that some burger have sensitive information and advanced espionage gear...

Federico Georno

Sophomore Lothario

Federico grew up penniless in a Catholic orphanage in southern Italy, but has worked hard and gotten a scholarship to D'Aubainne University. He's very grateful, because he doesn't really feel he earned it.



There are two important things Federico doesn't know. One is that he's half glug, the child of a "sower" (see the description of glugs in OTE). The other is that he was recruited to the U by a professor who recognized his heritage.

Since coming to the island, Federico has become very busy. Most of his days are spent in the biology labs, trying to keep up with his more talented classmates. Nights, he goes wherever there are women; he attends the Sommerite meetings steadily (but not religiously), spends a lot of evenings at Sad Mary's, and attends every Sigma Ep function he can.

Al Amarjan/Italian man, age 22, 180 cm, 68 kg. Crooked teeth, ridge on skull. Wears cheap clothes.

Attack: 3 dice, X1 damage unarmed

Defense: 3 dice

Hit Points: 23 (tough)

Traits

Tough, 3 dice — This is the typical glug toughness. (Parties long into the night)

Scrap Fighting, 3 dice — They didn't have many toys in the orphanage, so they just fought each other. (Scar reaching from base of neck down his back along the spine)

Psychic Resistance, 5 dice — Glug trait. (Doesn't believe in the paranormal)

Other Glug Traits — Strange taste in food, sensitive to stimulants, addictive sex, ridge on skull. (Ridge on skull)

Womanizer — Since leaving the Sisters of Perpetual Sorrow Orphanage, Federico has learned that he can attract many women to have sex with him. He has yet to learn that these women will get increasingly desperate for his favors. (Roommate complains frequently about Federico's loudness and "terrible body odor.")

Story Ideas

- 1) A PC is romantically attracted to a woman, but she tells him she "just can't forget" Federico — even though he won't give her the time of day anymore.
- 2) Federico turns up missing when his professor decides to try a few involuntary experiments on him to extract those valuable pheromones.

Giorgos Antonio Hamati, Ph.D.

Intellectual Radical and Mover Ideologue

"Under Communism, every man could imagine that, were he only free, he would be among the Special Few; and reality would not challenge him. Now we must build new strata to perpetuate this vital delusion."

— Professor Hamati

A "post-Marxist cynic," Professor of Political Science G.A. Hamati has been labeled racist, sexist, communist, fascist, insane, and (most

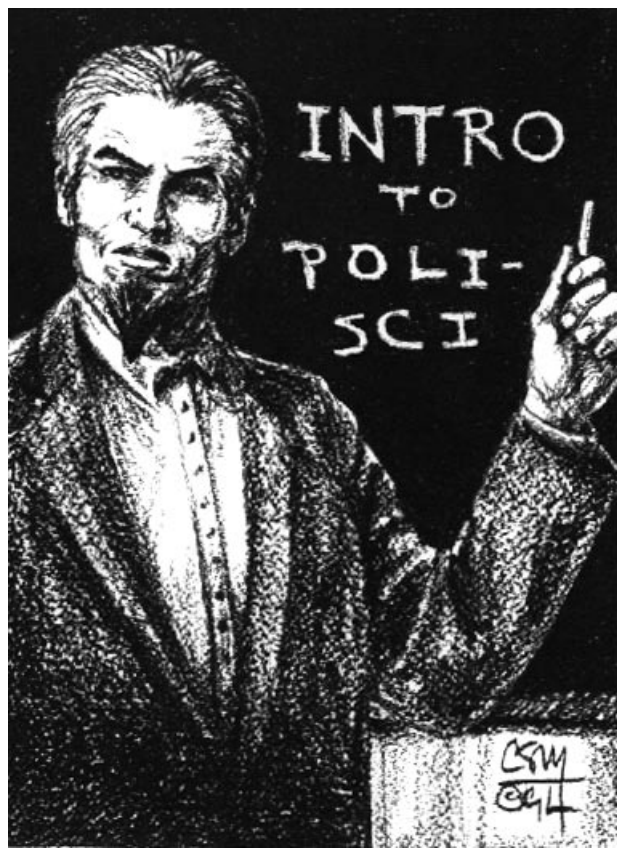
often) insignificant. To most people he is just another loopy professor, spouting nonsense at D'Aubainne U. Just about the only people who get riled up about him anymore are the University's "progressive" student societies, Delta Epsilon Theta ("Neanderthal revisionist!" they scream) and especially Alpha Rho Tau ("patriarchal hate monger!" they howl). Their efforts over the years to have his tenure revoked have included charges from harassment to treason — and have always failed.

What does Dr. Hamati say to upset these people? The thrust of his political theory is this: Most people are just not go-get-'em, aggressive types. These are the great majority who see the wealth capitalism brings some, while they struggle to get by; who see the beauty that commercialism and the media promise, while they suffer homeliness; and who look at the walls of the Ivory Tower, which they cannot understand. In a competitive society, it is the rule that some, indeed most, must be losers.

If one really values each and every individual — if one is concerned with their unique welfare, not utilitarian notions of the greatest good for the greatest number (a goal for which many may suffer hugely), one should promote a socio-political system in which either (a) no one can surpass her peers, or (b) people are given their places in life by obvious chance and events outside of their control, and an individual's duties have no necessary relation to his competence to perform them.

Thus, in Hamati's view, communism offered the best society to date. "Getting ahead" under communism had nothing to do with talent; indeed, real talent would get in the way by inspiring jealousy among superiors. Oriental societies have generally bested the West in meeting this ideal, Hamati has argued, whether in the form of India's caste system, China's modern communism, or the self-negating ideals of Buddhism. (Nirvana, to Hamati, is the state of ideal worldly mediocrity.)

This much does Hamati speak in public, and it incenses a great many people. After all, it rationalizes all sorts of unpopular "isms," from racism and sexism to classism — it's better for



people to be convinced that "the system" won't let them get ahead, rather than to have to accept failure at face value when they try and don't succeed. They may then be resentful, but they can also maintain their dignity (or at least righteous indignation).

Of course, someone needs to be behind a system — controlling without their control being known. This was the place of the Nomenklatura in Soviet Russia, or Milovan Djilas's "New Class" in old Yugoslavia. And, more insidiously, it is the place of the Movers. While "Matter" should languish in blissful mediocrity, the Movers must be conscious of what they are — and the terrible power of free will and total responsibility that falls in their hands.

This "secret lore" Hamati shares only with the most promising students — those whom he may ultimately induct into the Movers. Hamati is generally held (by those "in the know") to be a powerful member of that conspiracy; perhaps even a Leader. (His power derives mainly from

having taught and influenced so many future Movers over the past few decades; and he knows many secrets...) Sometimes he has claimed to be a key member of Cell Z; other times he denies being a Mover at all, but casts himself as a mere “friend” who provides connections to those who would help spread his ideas.

Al Amarjan man, age 47, 172 cm, 67 kg. Peppered black hair with white sideburns, pocked cheeks, goatee. Dresses conservatively.

Languages: Al Amarjan patois, English, Italian, German, Russian, French

Traits

Intellectualizing, 4 dice — Dr. Hamati could argue with the Devil as well as Daniel Webster. Most people are too intimidated by his forcefulness to confront what he says; they either believe or dismiss it outright. Those who are confident in their own intellectual prowess may find Hamati a pleasant interlocutor; among peers he speaks more genially, and even entertains others’ views. (Smokes a pipe and holds it in his mouth while considering someone’s point)

Moving Oratory, 3 dice — Using techniques common among Mover operatives, Hamati is a powerful lecturer. While many “politically correct” students are repulsed by his views, others throng about him as disciples. (Rich voice with a vaguely exotic, yet clear, accent)

Political Science, 4 dice — Hamati’s academic specialty; he has read hundreds (maybe thousands) of books in the field, and written several as well. (Wears an ancient “I Like Ike” button)

Been Around, bonus or penalty die — Hamati’s exposure to so many diverse people, ideas, and events over the years makes him almost invulnerable to the strange, sick and bizarre — from the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge to paranormal phenomena. On the upside, weirdnesses that might stun other people are less likely to make Hamati flinch (bonus die against horror, fright, etc.); on the downside, he’s more likely to be apathetic and “academic” even in a crisis (penalty die when quick action is required). (Often raises eyebrows nonchalantly)

Story Ideas

- 1) Student PCs at D’Aubainne University may take one of Hamati’s courses. If they make a strong impression on him, he may introduce them to the Movers through a front organization. (Indeed, the loose collection of his “disciples” might be considered a Mover front of sorts.)
- 2) As a member of the intelligentsia, Hamati is found at many island events of “high culture” — poetry readings, art exhibits, and so forth. There he contacts the PCs on behalf of a former student (or maybe only in appearance, and the errand is ultimately his, but he’s concealing his position in the Mover hierarchy.)
- 3) PCs who take a profound dislike to Hamati’s ideas may try to silence or humiliate him. This would bring out his allies...Alternately, a group of irate first-year students start a radical gang with the goal of removing him permanently from his teaching position — and the PCs must stop them.

Geoffry Hienzen

The Weed Man

In his own words, Geoffry Hienzen says with a sad smile, “All the losers of the world need somebody to look up to, a leader of some sort; I’m that guy.” Hienzen has a fatalistic, but humorous outlook on life; he has to because he has the uncanny ability to attract the worthless and useless people of the world. Hienzen calls them “weeds.” “They’re like weeds, you know. No matter where you go, there they are, sticking up through the cracks of the world. You get rid of one batch, more of them spring up to take their place.” He doesn’t know where this ability comes from or how to control it, but Hienzen has found that these weeds will do anything for him. Hienzen is extremely charismatic, but only when it comes to weeds. For some reason, they find it important that Hienzen likes them and they will do anything to be in his good favor.

To his credit, Hienzen is a very amiable person and hasn't taken advantage of his ability, yet. He gets along well with normal people and desperately wants to live a normal life. He once tried to drive the weeds away by reviling or ignoring, but after several months he found that he could not keep up the effort, and a new batch of weeds attached themselves to him in short order.

Hienzen moved to Al Amarja for two reasons. The first is that if Hienzen can find someone who can counteract his ability nowhere else, he may find it in the Edge. Secondly, in the Edge his affliction goes mostly unnoticed among the other oddities. The only person who has taken a real notice of Hienzen's ability is Mr. Tramh LeThuy. It seems that Hienzen's ability works even on people who have been injected with LeThuy's genes. LeThuy despises Hienzen because they share the same human resources and Hienzen's influence disrupts LeThuy's plans. Hienzen is oblivious to this and isn't even aware of the LeThuys.



Currently, Hienzen lives in a modest house in the Great Men Barrio, where many of the dirt poor and hopeless idolize him. He is attended by a group of followers who go out and perform actions on his behalf (a poor man's bennies). The weeds are very enthusiastic about doing things for Hienzen and are not easily deterred. He has set up on the plaza a small store specializing in games and books, but it barely makes a profit. Those entering Regal Games and Books find the store to be terminally messy with a sparse selection of product and crowded with weeds.

German man, age 33, 174 cm, 81 kg. Large nose; weak chin; short, blondish hair. Usually dressed in jeans and a t-shirt.

Languages: German, English, Al Amarjan patois

Traits

Weed Magnet, 3* dice (upside) — Hienzen possesses a tremendous charisma with regards to the losers of the world. They unconsciously recognize him as the king of their kind and follow any reasonable order he gives. The vast majority of these followers are male, but it is the females who are the most devoted. In game terms, Hienzen's ability allows him to call on the aid of low lifes, zeroes, and some dispirited mutants. (Dogged by losers)

Joketelling, 3 dice — In order to keep from going completely insane, Hienzen has developed a keen sense of humor. He is skilled at telling jokes, solving riddles, making puns and turning a phrase. (Tells jokes)

Weed Magnet, (downside) — Hienzen's irresistible charisma means that wherever he goes, Hienzen is followed by losers. He rarely has a moment of peace and is continually surrounded by losers and idiots. He hasn't been on a date in years because no decent woman wants to be seen with a man who has such lame friends. (Dazed look in his eye)

Story Ideas

- 1) Hienzen has decided to use his control over weeds to get something out of life. With his

army of losers, Hienzen is slowly gathering power and assuming control of the Great Men Barrio. At first his motives seem noble as he intimidates the Glorious Lords, but his plans include the eventual control of the Edge. Can the PCs stop this madman?

- 2) Hienzen's power comes from a strong pheromone or uncontrollable mental ability. Dr. Nusbaum wants Hienzen for testing, which is sure to be painful. Can the PCs bring Hienzen in or can they save him from trouble?
- 3) Hienzen is getting desperate; he needs to go out with a real woman. He contacts the PCs and asks them to run interference while he enjoys the first date he's had in years. (If the PCs have made a reputation for themselves, it may be easy for you to introduce this plotline. Otherwise, introduce Hienzen as a background character prior to running this story.)
- 4) The Mr. LeThuys are fed up with Hienzen's ability to interfere with their carefully laid plans. LeThuy is going to make sure that the Hienzen "problem" is fixed, permanently. Will the PCs be able to save the only man who can counteract LeThuy's evil?
- 5) Is there a loser among the PCs? If so, he may become enamored with Hienzen.

Hun Ku-Gong

Immortal Warrior

The people of the Edge know Hun as a brooding, dangerous man who sells his services as a warrior. He does not fight for money alone. He has a taste for worthy causes and doomed heroics, which has earned him the nickname of "Chinese Paladin." Yet rumors whisper that his sense of fair play is less than honorable. Certainly, Hun's ability to take the underdog's side and survive proves that he is not naïve. Few people really understand this man, with his impenetrable reserve and his narrow, glittering eyes. He seldom tells the story of his past.

Hun has followed the warrior's path longer than anyone can guess. His career began before

the birth of Christ, in a cavalry detachment of the Chinese Emperor Han Wu. He won a reputation not only for his bravery but also for his cunning pragmatism. Therefore, the Son of Heaven summoned him for a more special task: steal the Dragon Cinnibar Elixir from the wizard Wang Chi-Jen and bring it back. The Elixir was said to grant immortality. Hun sneaked into the wizard's hut while he was away, defeated the guard dogs and magical wards, and found the Elixir. In addition to taking a flask for the Emperor, however, Hun ladled a healthy draught for himself.

The Dragon Cinnabar Elixir, like all draughts of eternal life, contained the most lethal poisons. Hun Ku-Gong collapsed after one sip and lay helpless on the edge of death until Wang returned. Wang cursed Hun, saying, "Life you shall have, everlasting. But death you shall seek, for others and for all you know. Yea, there are but so many years in a man's allotment, and to live beyond them is a burden which drives the strongest to madness! When all that you love has perished, and all that you know has changed, you shall kill like a ravening beast and you shall seek death from all the things which deal it. But you shall succeed in killing only others, never yourself, for there is but one antidote to this Elixir and I alone know the secret of it."

Wang Chi-Jen poured the remaining elixir upon the ground. Then the wizard departed, and was not seen in China again.

Hun Ku-Gong has spent ten centuries trying to prove the wizard wrong.

This warrior traveled Europe, Asia, and the Americas over the centuries. He has learned the skills and acquired the tastes of many eras. His six-shooters come from the Arizona Territory of the late 1800s and his reserve of gold coins comes from the treasury of the Tsars.

Hun has also had many friends but lost them all.

Before the Elixir, Hun was caught up in the day-to-day excitement of a warrior's life, in winning on the battlefield and in his ambition for rank and station. Now, he faces the challenge of finding something of enduring meaning. Should Hun fail at this, he fears that the wizard's curse shall come

true, he shall despair of the world, and he shall go insane. Hun has found himself forced to become a reflective man.

Hun finds himself torn between several paths, and hence, several personalities. His quest for the worthwhile impels him to fight for causes he considers just. This is his warrior self, quiet, determined and fatalistic. But Hun also feels he must enjoy himself, in case simple pleasure can stave off madness. Therefore, he occasionally plunges into debauchery with all the determination he devotes to any other duty, ignoring the impossibility of having fun on demand. Those who know him as a silent warrior, almost ascetic in his practices, find it shocking to see him in this configuration.

Hun also has a dark, depraved side. Over time, he sees how his causes ultimately fail, and his friends inevitably die. From time to time, this leaves Hun in a state of sheer frustration. Then Hun forgets his sense of compassion and philosophy. He seeks revenge upon his latest enemies in particular and the universe in general. This has led to rumors about his cruelty. These bouts of despair and cruelty terrify Hun, because in them, he sees Wang's curse coming true.

Hun shares a house with three graduate students in the Science Barrio. He performs occasional work as a mercenary in addition to lecturing on ancient cultures.

Hun's name means "Spirit of Sad Toil."

Chinese man, apparent age 27 (b. 140 B.C.), 166 cm, 70 kg. Lean build, glittering brown eyes, hair in topknot. Dresses carefully.

Languages: Hun speaks nearly all major languages of the past ten centuries, though he is rusty with most of them.

Attack: 4 dice with both archaic and modern weapons

Defense: 4 dice

Hit Points: 28

Armor: 1 die (Immortality)

Traits

Immortality, 1* die — The effects of the Dragon Cinnibar Elixir have left Hun able to re-

cover from wounds and disease of almost any sort, and to resist damage in the first place. Upon suffering a wound, Hun may roll 1 die, the equivalent of armor. This roll does not keep Hun from being cut or bashed; it just represents his ability to shrug off small wounds. He also heals at double the normal rate. Hun does not age, and damage caused to him by bacteria, viruses, and cancers inevitably reverses itself. Despite his ability to survive injuries and to avoid minor damage entirely, Hun feels pain normally, and can suffer incapacitation from wounds or illnesses until they heal. Hun can regrow lost limbs and heal even massive burns, although this requires one year for each limb or major organ. Complete regeneration of his body would require as much as a full century. (Not scarred)

Skilled Fighter, 4 dice — Hun seeks excellence in everything he attempts, and he finds particular satisfaction in the mastery of martial arts. He learned to use the sword, the bow, the three-piece rod, and the iron whip even before attaining immortality. In his long journey through history, he has also mastered the rapier and main-gauche, the aboriginal throwing stick, and trick-shooting with a six-shooter. Hun owns a pair of 1872 vintage revolvers acquired in the Arizona Territory. Although he cannot carry them on the street, he has managed to retain possession of them on Al Amarja. This involves both judicious bribery and extreme discretion. Hun frequently visits Blackfire Entertainment's offshore shooting range to practice with pistols. (Calm in face of danger, attempts tricky maneuvers)

Philosophy, 4 dice — Hun meditates deeply, trying to learn what things in the world are worthwhile. He feels that if he fails to discover these truths, Wang's curse will eventually catch up to him and drive him mad. Therefore, Hun not only studies philosophy but does not hesitate to act upon it. He is as interested in the insights of friends and strangers as in the writings of classical philosophers. (Pauses to reflect on things, quotes sayings he finds meaningful)

Wealth of Experience, 3 dice — Hun has a keen memory, and has spent thousands of years filing away useful skills and facts. Just as a normal person gets 2 dice with most skills, Hun gets

3 dice. (Can talk about ancient history and speak from experience.)

Curse — Whatever Hun becomes attached to eventually decays, and whoever he grows fond of inevitably dies or turns against him. Sometimes, this process takes place slowly, so that it becomes scarcely indistinguishable from the normal ravages of time. On other occasions, the curse strikes almost at once. This curse manifests itself only through seemingly natural developments. His friends do not irrationally turn on him; they drift away for valid reasons. His causes do not mysteriously fail; they succumb to pressure from enemies or internal factions. It is, therefore, possible to reverse any individual manifestation of the curse. Hun's ultimate destiny, however, remains unchanged. Hun is not sure whether Wang's "curse" was a magical spell that ruins his life or merely an accurate prediction based on Wang's knowledge of the world. Is this curse supernatural, or is it simply the way of the world? (Reserved)

Story Ideas

- 1) In his search for solace and stability within the ever-changing world, Hun discovers the Sommerites. No sooner does he develop an interest in that religion than his curse comes into play. Hun comes to the attention of Deborah Childe, a notable Sommerite whose own singing ability gives her hypnotic powers, who attempts to dominate him. Childe is an insecure woman who can boost her own ego only by killing or horribly punishing those who threaten her, emotionally, physically, or politically. She begins directing Hun to kill these enemies. The PCs find themselves called in by one of the intended victims to stop the murders. Good-hearted PCs, especially those with Sommerite connections, may try to redeem Hun and show him the true meaning of Sommers's music. This may solve the problem for the moment, but it may lead to far more serious dissension within the Sommerite church in later years.
- 2) Hun is one of the few people on Al Amarja capable of taking up a cause for the sheer righteousness of it. He therefore makes a useful patron to send PCs on missions without clear gain for one faction or another. Hun has discovered the Kergillians, and finds them a particularly satisfying target for himself and his followers. The Pharaohs and Movers may soon appear on his enemies list.
- 3) The Pharaohs are in a unique position to find out Hun's secret. They may have met him in person several times over the millennia. He is likewise in a unique position to find out about them. Alternately, Hun could be a target of Movers who suspect he is a Pharaoh. In any case, you can use Hun as the means by which the PCs first get the straight scoop on who the Pharaohs are.

Commander Kismet

The Ultimate Remote Control

"The future (or at least, one possible future) is a kind and gentle society. Nonetheless, human nature being what it is, criminals exist in the year 2261. Some criminals are so heinous that they simply cannot be allowed to continue to interact with other humans, and so cunning that they cannot safely be imprisoned. Rather than kill them (which is unethical and socially disruptive), the rulers have come up with a final solution. An agent has been sent back in time to prevent the births of the ten worst criminals of the last century. Elaborate computer simulations indicate that at one juncture their timelines can all be truncated with minimum disruption to future history.

"Now is that juncture. I am that agent."

That's the story Commander Kismet tells. Sadly, due to the power requirements of moving mass against the time flow, less than a kilogram of matter could be sent back to our present. The personality of their best agent was read into a computer and hidden in a shell representing the most innocuous of 20th century artifacts: the remote control.

An almost identical remote control called Destiny Master has also been sent back, charged with thwarting or destroying Commander Kismet. Destiny Master claims that Commander Kismet was sent to destroy the forces of enlightenment that opposed a rising tyranny. Destiny Master has red lettering on his keys, while Commander Kismet has blue and white. Otherwise they are identical — the same personality was programmed into each.

Commander Kismet and Destiny Master both need humans to carry them around and do much of their “dirty work.” Note that though both claim to be from benevolent governments, neither will shy away from bribery, blackmail, and theft to attain their goals. Still, the same ethic that prevent the future government from executing the criminals prevents Commander Kismet and Destiny Master from murdering.

Commander Kismet has ten goals, five of which are listed here. The other five can be tailored to your needs (or may be years in the future and not relevant to the series). It’s also possible that Commander Kismet has secret tasks that even he doesn’t know of, or additional tasks he may recall once the first ten are complete.

Tasks

- Angela Reyes (OTE p. 87) and Federico Georno will meet at a party and later have sexual intercourse in his dorm room. Prevent it.
- Dr. Nusbaum (OTE p. 80) will have a lab accident which sparks a bizarre idea. This idea leads to another, which must be prevented.
- Dmitri Vatsavos (OTE p. 88) must never reproduce.
- A man named Vassily Karpov will be in the Terminal, disguised as a fat woman in a flowered dress, trying to flee the island. He’ll spontaneously combust (though he has no history of Blue Shock use). Stop it.
- Julio and Esther Nurami have been happily married for seven years and are trying to have a baby. They must never do so, though a recent medical development makes it possible.

Dogo Mamanan is the name of the agent whose personality was used as the template for both remotes. It’s his image and voice that come through TVs and radios (though of course he can change both to fit his own designs). Dogo is of an indeterminate race, with a black crew cut, a long face, and deep sunken eyes. He never smiles, laughs, or jokes, maintaining a dour expression at all times. His uniform as Commander Kismet is green with red epaulets and a high, buttoned collar. As Destiny Master, his uniform is blue-black with bright silver buttons. Both have several ribbons and medals.

Neither remote really “identifies” with Dogo, always referring to him in the third person if questioned about him. Both are completely serious at all times and will do other tasks only in return for assistance in their own missions.

Both remotes are very powerful and totally ruthless (though they never kill). If it serves their purposes to abandon the PCs (or abandon another character for the PCs), they do so without remorse or regret. They have no vices to exploit or human weaknesses to appeal to; the only way to get them to do anything other than advance their mission is to offer to do something they can’t in exchange for a favor. Though their powers are great, they are stingy in using them, citing their need for “minimal temporal disruption” and leaving unspoken their need to keep the players dependent on their good will.

Either remote could “materialize” anywhere on the island. Their bearers might be anywhere, and persons of any social class or position.

Hit Points: 40 to destroy (built to last).

Traits

Database, 4* dice — Commander Kismet’s data storage method is incredibly compact. He can speak English fluently, and almost every other human language adequately. He can access facts about all aspects of 20th century life and 21st century technology and history. This includes knowledge that could enable him to blackmail many prominent people (though some can’t be blackmailed yet because they haven’t *done* it yet.) Another likely use is to generate money through gambling.

Note that while he has the knowledge to design extremely powerful and advanced machines, there are barriers to building them. The materials required may be inaccessible (unless the PCs happen to have, for instance, weapons grade plutonium on hand). He may simply refuse, citing “unpredictable disruption of the future.” The techniques of assembly may require skills or tools beyond what the PCs have access to. Finally, there’s the question of time: “Wait a minute Commander. You mean we have to fabricate this rare material so we can build a micro manipulator fine enough to build the *guidance system* for this device?” “Correct. It should take about six months, so you’d best get cracking.” (Speaks in the past tense of future events)

Remote Control, 4* dice — This is Commander Kismet’s big power. If a device operates with electronics and silicon, he can make it do pretty much whatever he wants. This is how he communicates, by “possessing” TVs and radios. He can also post fake messages over Peace Force bands, make cash machines spit out money, get free phone calls, infiltrate computer systems, etc. He gets 4 dice to impersonate any person’s voice and image on electronic media, as well. The remote can only control a maximum of six devices at once. (Only speaks through electronics)

Strange Perception, 3* dice — The remotes can only “see” and “hear” what happens for about 30 meters around them, but they do have 360 degree vision. Additionally, they are aware of any and all electronic devices active within 2 kilometers. They can only tell what one device at a time is actually doing within a 2 km range, by concentrating their perception on it. If an electronic device is within 100 m, they automatically know what it is and what it’s doing. (Cocks head at odd times)

Story Ideas

- 1) A PC gets a weird message through phone, TV, or radio, guiding him to pick up a small remote control. The same voice keeps offering him money and other rewards if he’ll complete some simple tasks.
- 2) The PCs see someone shuffle up to a cash machine, point a remote control at it, and get money without putting a cash card in.

Plot Twists for Crafty GMs

- Why does a remote need be carried around at all? It might just tell its agent to obtain a small video camera for it to “see” through and a microphone to operate as its “ears.” In this fashion the seat of the intelligence, the actual remote casing, can remain safe elsewhere. The limit to this tactic is the range of perception and control, which cannot be extended without at least a year of high tech fabrication.
- There’s nothing preventing one remote from masquerading as the other; given that they’re both based on Dogo, it might just be a matter of changing uniforms. The remote that the PCs work for might get around this by asking them for a password for it — but they would have to careful to never use that password around any electronic perception media.

Ishaq al-Masha

Occultist Mover

Ishaq al-Masha is the proprietor of Forbidden Words, a dusty old bookstore that specializes in the occult. Many scholars and collectors visit his shop as they look for rare books. However, few people that visit his store know of his true occupation: an operative of the Movers (Hermetic Cell). Almost all of the books in Forbidden Words have some occult connections, though they are not of any great significance. Every so often, al-Masha gets an authentic occult tome or item.

Compared to some of the other cells on the island, al-Masha’s operation is relatively small. (But when it comes to the Movers, who can ever be sure about the other cells?) He has a couple of hired toughs in his employ, who perform menial and leg-breaking tasks for him. They have no

idea that they are connected with the Movers or any kind of conspiratorial organization. Al-Masha has had contact with Madam Vylaska and knows all about her operation, though she thinks he is a Vornite.

Al-Masha's general mission is to make magic seem frightening to Matter. In this way, the Hermetic Movers see to it that only the daring and the deviant explore magic. The daring may then be recruited and the deviant exploited. He uses tone of voice, muttered words, leers, and body language to give people the creeps when they visit his shop. If he does it right, visitors to the shop think they're being spooked by the books and pictures, not by the "harmless proprietor."

When not working at his shop in the Great Men Barrio or conducting Mover operations, al-Masha likes to unwind by watching the fights at Sad Mary's or the operations at the D'Aubainne Hospital and Trauma Center. He also enjoys eating at Sequins and never misses a party thrown by Sir Arthur Compton. Al-Masha lives in an apartment above his shop.

When dealing with someone in his shop, al-Masha effects the persona of a bumbler. Beneath this exterior al-Masha is cold, calculating, and thoroughly evil. He plans everything thoroughly before making a move, taking into account all options and possible courses of action. This results in elaborate and diabolical schemes that are almost foolproof when put into action.

When he was a boy, al-Masha had a pet jackal, which was run down by a car when he was eleven. Since that time, he has always had a soft spot for wayward animals and a hatred for animal abusers.

Saudi Arabian man, age 41, 177 cm, 68 kg. Black hair, small pointed beard. Wears strange occult trinkets.

Attack: 3 dice, X2 with knife

Defense: 3 dice

Hit Points: 19

Astral Pool: 9 shots

Traits

Moving, 4 dice — Al-Masha has worked his way up through the ranks and now has become chief of one of the Hermetic cells on the island (or so he thinks). He is skilled at manipulation. (Keeps an eye on customers)

Fighting, 3 dice — Although he prefers to let his hired muscle duke it out for him, al-Masha works out and hones his fighting skills whenever he gets a chance. (Carries a knife at all times)

Occult, 2* dice — Al-Masha has studied many books of forbidden knowledge. (Has strange symbols on his tie)

Wards, 2* dice — Al-Masha is familiar with wards to protect him from evil spirits, spells, and the like. If he tries to dispel or block a malign spell, compare his roll to the spell's level or the caster's roll. (Wears strange amulet and charms)

Partially Insane — Long hours of pouring over ancient occult tomes and participating in black-magic rituals have left al-Masha a bit men-



tally unbalanced. (Prone to delusions of grandeur; cruel, has little regard for human life)

Lecherous — Al-Masha loves women in all forms and makes no secret of this when dealing with the opposite sex. (Charming)

Story Ideas

- 1) Al-Masha has used his Mover resources to tap into the History of Magic exhibit at the D'Aubainne Museum of Modern Life. Now any time a magical visitor sets off the alarm, he is notified too. He also has a contact at the Center for Paranormal Control, and can access their information. He may therefore learn about magical or psychic PCs before they learn about him.
- 2) Alternately the PCs encounter al-Masha through Forbidden Words. He may have a book or occult item they want to buy, or they may have a moldy tome they're looking to unload.
- 3) Al-Masha takes part in a larger Mover plot with the PCs either working for him, or against him.

John Krishna Mohammad

City Manager of the Edge

In the heterogeneous, shifting, fast-moving environment of the Edge, it takes an exceptional person to bring order and encourage progress. John K. Mohammad is one such person. Possessed of a vision, stubborn or yielding as the situation warrants, energetic, personable, and experienced, he has guided the Edge for fourteen years as its City Manager.

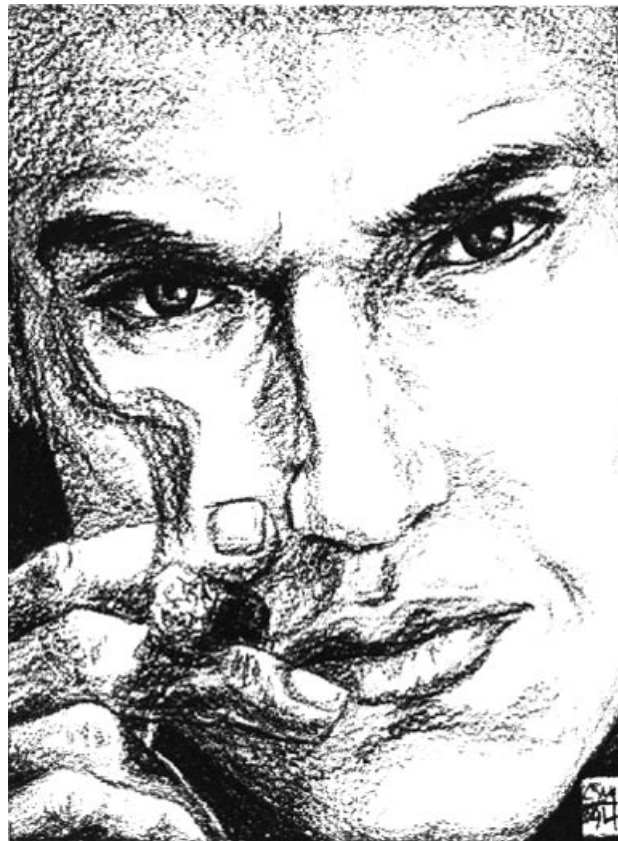
On the surface, his goal is to coordinate the growth of the city. He talks developers into erecting apartment complexes where he thinks there ought to be apartment complexes, settles "turf wars" between competing businessmen, paves the

way for European businesses to open confidential branches in the Edge, and keeps the city's exclusive tourism industry safe and profitable. Most business leaders in the Edge respect his guidance and help.

Mohammad powers his vision partly with personal ability and partly with an extensive amount of industrial espionage. He oversees an elite force of spies who steal information from uncooperative entrepreneurs and hand it to "team players."

Unknown to most, Mohammad is a Dionysus Mover, though he belongs in order to further his career, rather than to subordinate his career to the Movers. His elite industrial spies have compiled dossiers on various conspiracies on the island, especially other Movers.

Mohammad has stepped on Constance D'Aubainne's toes on more than one occasion, though neither of them mention it in public. If pushed too hard, Constance D'Aubainne could topple Mohammad, but he could do some damage to her on the way down. Adding to the hostility between Constance D'Aubainne and



Mohammad, he is a closet Sommerite. (He keeps this secret to maintain his reputation as an unbiased man, and because he considers spirituality to be a private matter.)

An even deeper secret is that Mohammad has a vision of the Edge which comes to him in fragments when he dreams. In his waking hours, he tries to shape the Edge to match the city he visits at night. He may stubbornly insist that roads follow certain routes, that a new building include more zinc in its construction, or that Asians be encouraged to live along a certain street. The conspirators and businessmen who try to influence Mohammad all assume that he is acting under the direction of their competitors; they never imagine that he has his own reason for these strange demands. What will happen when Mohammad finally completes this project? Take your pick.

- The Edge becomes a physical manifestation of a modern mental structure. Any Pharaoh who comes to the Edge gets lost in the “all too human” construction and loses the will and ability to command.
- The inhabitants of the Edge are slowly transformed into inhabitants of Mohammad’s “dream Edge.” The dream Edge is the reality that “should” have been (and would have been without the Edge’s numerous reality-warpers), and it re-asserts itself into existence.
- The minds of the inhabitants conform to a greater pattern and act as the city’s nerves, neurons, and muscles. The Edge becomes the first truly “living” city, and groups of citizens are sent to “fertilize” other cities.
- The Edge becomes a conduit through which the Old Magic returns to the world.
- The Edge becomes a giant navigational computer to guide Starship Al Amarja on endless journeys through space and time.

Mohammad’s office is in Arms, but he’s usually wheeling and dealing in Broken Wings or Golden. When he relaxes, he blows thousands at Sequins or spends time at home in Broken Wings with his four wives and eleven kids. (Three other children are grown and abroad.)

City Government in the Edge

Every year, one of the Edge’s seven city council members comes up for re-election. The election is city-wide and generally non-partisan. Since the single incumbent is often running against several competing candidates, a majority vote is rare, and there is usually a run-off between the number one and number two candidates. The incumbent, who has had seven years to do favors since the last election, usually wins; but those seven years are also spent making enemies, so victory is rarely assured. Anyone of adult status and with a permanent address can vote, but it costs \$5 (to cover the costs of the election). The homeless are disenfranchised and the poor rarely vote.

The seven council members see to the day-to-day needs of the city, including road construction and repair, fire protection, and sewage. The Peace Force, however, is not under their jurisdiction. It is a branch of the Al Amarjan government. (When it needs to, the council can appeal to the Peace Force to enforce its rulings.) The main task the council has is hiring and overseeing the City Manager. The terms of the City Manager’s contract are open to negotiation.

The current City Manager, John K. Mohammad, works as a negotiator, mediator, and ombudsman for the city. He encourages businesses to build and develop according to his undefined plans, and throws the support of the city behind those who play ball.

The issues that the council raises affect everyone, but only the wealthy have the resources to influence the council. The council members are almost all drawn from Broken Wings, and they serve the community from which they come. City services are all much better in Broken Wings and Golden than in other barrios. Arms and Sunken also get more than their share of the council’s attention.

Mohammad has a crystal trap set in one of his gold rings.

Al Amarjan man, age 54, 171 cm, 69 kg. Light brown skin; broad nose; very short, black hair; broad-shouldered. Dresses in a suit with a silk noose, wears several gold rings, smokes cigars constantly.

Languages: Al Amarjan patois, English, passable Arabic

Traits

High-Power Managing, 4 dice (plus bonus die) — Experience has polished Mohammad's natural gifts. Few are as talented as he when it comes to negotiating, bargaining, mediating, and performing the other tasks of his position. (Expensive suits and cars)

Moving, 1* die — He's picked up some Mover techniques but hasn't gotten much formal practice with them. These skills give him his bonus die with high-power managing. (Takes "moment of silence" before a negotiation, a technique that the Movers taught him)

Mental Integrity, 4 dice — While in the dream Edge, Mohammad met a woman who taught him how to protect his mind from the influences of others. This ability works against mundane and fringe influence, replacing the 2 dice roll that a character gets by default. (Stays serene in crisis)

The Vision — The strength of this vision and Mohammad's commitment to it give him a bonus die on most tasks related to bringing his vision to reality. It also makes him irrational when he's pursuing the vision. Whether this is a gift or a curse depends on what happens once the vision is made real. (Gazes long over the city when he can get a good view)

Story Ideas

- 1) If the PCs attract Mohammad's attention, he may arrange a meeting with them to see whether he can bring them in line with his goals. PCs who are wealthy or powerful may be courted, complimented, and helped. PCs who are disrupting tourism, threatening the city's progress, or causing trouble may be

threatened, chided, warned, or (if the situation warrants) killed. Mohammad fills the role of a politically powerful person that the PCs can work with or oppose, someone less overwhelming than the D'Aubainnes.

- 2) A business owned by the PCs or by friends of the PCs is in the way of Mohammad's vision. He thinks there should be a greenhouse in that location. Stopping Mohammad from putting that greenhouse there may be impossible, but tough bargainers may be able to squeeze profitable concessions from Mohammad as part of a deal.
- 3) Business enemies of Mohammad, perhaps secretly backed by Constance D'Aubainne herself, hire the PCs to investigate him. His ties to the Movers and secret Sommerism may be enough to satisfy the employers, but PCs may also stumble onto sketches of "the Edge to be." While these sketches may be mere doodles to Mohammad, a PC or ally may recognize their true significance, and suddenly take the plot to a much deeper level.

Finola Montague

Freelance Photojournalist

Finola Montague was born to an Irish mother and French father in strife-torn Belfast. At an early age she became accustomed to scenes of destruction and violence. While growing up, she became interested in photography and when she was eighteen, she took some spectacular photos of an IRA mortar attack on a police station. These photos caught the attention of veteran photojournalist Josh Vincent. Vincent offered to purchase Montague's pictures, but she made a counter offer. Seeing a chance to escape Belfast, she asked him to take her on as an apprentice. Her stubbornness paid off and Vincent accepted.

Traveling the globe with Vincent, Montague was exposed to even more violence and destruction, but the air of danger was an intoxicant for her. She found herself craving the dangerous assignments that she and Vincent took. As they

traveled together, the two became close friends. Their friendship was cut short, however, during the Gulf War. Vincent was killed after Montague insisted they break off from the reporter pool and see some of the real action. She blamed herself for Vincent's death and made a rash decision to stop covering the dangerous assignments. After a year of covering safe stories, Montague found herself craving the rush that comes from being in a dangerous situation. The name of a little known Mediterranean dictatorship named Al Amarja caught her attention and Montague bought a one way ticket.

Since her arrival, Montague has been covering the seedier side of the Edge as a freelance journalist for *Al Amarja Today*. So far, she's done features on fixed hospital betting, the MDA-cubed epidemic, and a photo-essay on Otto's Men. She has three projects in the works: a photo-essay on the fighters from Sad Mary's, an interview with members of the Cut-Ups, and an interview with Sir Arthur Compton.

Montague has an apartment in Justice that also serves as her darkroom. When covering a story, Montague is all business. She prefers to work alone since the incident involving Vincent's death has left a deeper scar than she likes to admit. However, when she is not working, Montague enjoys touring the Edge's nightclubs and having a good time, in a futile attempt to forget Vincent. Montague has a portable police scanner that she keeps handy for tracking down stories and drives through the city in a dilapidated land rover.

Irish woman, age 25, 167 cm, 64 kg. Medium length auburn hair, green eyes, pale skin, moderately good looking. Dresses in utilitarian clothes, always has a camera handy. Has an air of danger about her.

Languages: English, Al Amarjan patois

Attack: 3 dice, X1 with fist, X2 with knife

Defense: 3 dice

Armor: 1 point (leather)

Hit Points: 21 (in shape)



Traits

Photojournalism, 3 dice — Taking good pictures, writing articles, asking prying questions, selling photographs, etc. (Camera bag over shoulder)

Streetfighting, 3 dice — Growing up in Belfast and traveling the world's danger spots, Montague has learned how to defend herself. (Carries a knife)

Nose for News, 2* dice — Montague has an uncanny ability to be in the right place at the right time for covering a story. It works best for drawing her to dangerous situations, but it also allows her to tell when somebody is giving her the brush-off. (Fearless)

Story Ideas

- 1) Montague's contact at Al Amarja Today is a member of a major conspiracy (take your pick: Kergillians, Movers, Pharaohs, whatever) who wants information on the PCs. She contacts

Montague and tells her that a story on the PCs would bring Montague some money.

- 2) If the PCs have made a name for themselves or are very public about their goings on, Montague is among the first to show up, camera in hand, asking questions.
- 3) Montague has taken some incriminating pictures of the PCs which she is planning to sell to the paper. To protect herself, she has ensured that if she dies or is harmed, the photos will be released. Can the PCs convince her not to publish the pictures? Alternately, the PCs could be hired to retrieve the incriminating photos for an important person on the island or they may be contacted by Montague to protect her from somebody who wants the pictures.
- 4) If the PCs become involved with the Kergilian/MDA-cubed conspiracy, Montague could be introduced as an ally since she has done some investigation of her own while looking into the MDA-cubed epidemic.

for scrounging. She can swear a blue streak that would make a sailor blush. Imzon is Dr. Morpheus's chauffeur, an excellent driver and a competent practitioner of an Egyptian martial art. He learned this fighting style, predominantly sharp kicks and punches, on the street and does not know whether it is a defined system or merely a collection of techniques.

When not working on his projects, Dr. Morpheus travels in the Edge with his two bennies in a suped-up 1932 Lincoln touring car. Nina and Imzon prowl through the refuse sold in Four Points while Dr. Morpheus often visits Dmitri's Fix-It Shop, where he talks to Dmitri about things mechanical. Dr. Morpheus is very careful about these conversations because he has realized that Dmitri is doing something special, and he doesn't want anyone else to find out about it, nor does he want Dmitri to realize just how extraordinary his talents are. Their conversations are held in Greek.

Dr. Morpheus has frequently encountered Molly, Queen-Mother of Baboons, at Dmitri's

Dr. Morpheus

Fringe Gadgeteer

Dr. Morpheus is an enigmatic scientist with a private laboratory located just on the southeastern edge of the Burbs. He spends most of his time working on new experiments and perfecting old ones. Dr. Morpheus's laboratory is the template on which all the "B" grade science fiction movie laboratories were modeled. It is an Art Deco styled basement filled with noxious fumes, smoke-blackened beakers, bubbling chemicals, Tesla coils, vacuum tubes, and so on.

While he is familiar with traditional mechanics, engineering, and chemistry, Dr. Morpheus's real talent lies in "weird science." Among Dr. Morpheus's accomplishments are the Morpheus Perpetual Energy Device (MPED), the Morpheus Force Field Generator, and the Morpheus Anti-Gravity Boots. (See boxed text.)

Dr. Morpheus has two loyal bennies. Nina is a scrawny 14 year old pube with a talent



Fix-It Shop, and neither wants to have anything to do with the other.

Hungarian man, age 69 (appears to be in his late 50s), 172 cm, 83 kg. Muscles turning soft; thinning, gray, unkempt hair. Wears a stained lab coat.

Languages: Hungarian, German, French, passable Greek, passable English

Attack: 3 dice + penalty, X1 with fist

Defense: 2 dice + penalty

Hit Points: 22 (guts)

Traits

Fringe Gadgeteer, 3* dice — Dr. Morpheus is extremely adept at creating useful items out of useless junk. With the proper tools, he can

fix anything, modify any existing item, or build something new and strange. (Always fiddling with things)

Strong, 3 dice — In his prime, Dr. Morpheus was a man of superior strength. While the muscle is still there, he's getting older and slower. (Big and burly)

Storytelling, 3 dice — A master storyteller, Dr. Morpheus can spin a yarn a mile long. He has done some amazing things in his time; just give him the chance and he'll tell you all about them. When he's done telling his tale, it's hard to pick out where fact ended and fiction began. (Frequently begins sentences with: "Why, once I was lost...")

Dr. Morpheus's Fringe Tech

Dr. Morpheus has created three major devices that might have some impact on your series.

The first is the Morpheus Perpetual Energy Device (MPED). The MPED is a backpack-mounted conglomeration of gears, circuits, and wires. Dr. Morpheus's explanation of how it generates perpetual energy is torturous and filled with pseudo-scientific neologisms, which conceals the fact that Dr. Morpheus himself isn't sure how it works. In reality, it circumvents the laws of thermodynamics by creating order (and thus energy) on the physical level while causing more disorder on the personal level. The MPED causes marital stress, clumsiness, structural weakness in bridge supports, computer glitches, and other kinds of entropy all across Al Amarja while creating less entropy (and thus perpetual energy) within the device itself. These effects are scattered across time and space, making it nearly impossible to correlate increased entropy with the MPED's operation. The energy created is an invisible field, which Dr. Morpheus has learned to manipulate in several ways.

The next device is the Morpheus Force Field Generator (MFFG): a metal box with one plastic button. The MFFG is worn on a

belt and is connected to the MPED via two thick, non-insulated wires. When the button is pressed, these wires guide the MPED's energy field, creating an invisible vibratory resonance field around the wearer. The field bestows 3 dice of armor with no movement penalty. While the field makes no noise, it does interfere with sound waves (giving the wearer a penalty die on hearing rolls). Using the MFFG for more than three minutes causes it to burn out, its innards shaken to pieces. Pressing the button again turns off the MFFG.

The third device is the Morpheus Anti-Gravity Boots (MAGB): a pair of boots, each with a cable connecting it to the MPED. The boots create an anti-gravity field. Using a hand held joy stick controller, the wearer can raise or lower himself. The boots are restricted to vertical movement only. Horizontal movement is created by pushing against a stable surface (like the wall of a building). With sufficient practice, the wearer can manipulate gravity to the extent that he can "run" with leaps and bounds just like the men on the moon.

It should be stressed that all of Dr. Morpheus' devices are designed more for function than looks.

Aging, penalty die — Dr. Morpheus is no longer the young man he used to be or thinks he is. He's slowing down in his old age and doesn't react as quickly as he used to. (Muscles softening)

Story Ideas

- 1) The PCs have found a weird piece of equipment and need it identified. Perhaps the enigmatic Dr. Morpheus can help.
- 2) Dr. Morpheus' arch enemy, Professor Von Krieg, has arrived on Al Amarja and the good Doctor has decided to settle their feud once and for all. The Edge trembles as these two mad doctors battle. Of course, either one could use the PCs' help.
- 3) A visit to Dmitri's Fix-It Shop proves stranger than normal as Dr. Morpheus is present, demonstrating one of his new devices. Here's a chance for the PCs to hook up with an interesting and powerful patron.

Michiko Nariga

Outré Pollster

Michiko Nariga spent years working for a prominent market-research company in Tokyo, growing steadily more proficient but never gaining much responsibility. Slowly she realized that, due to her gender, she was never going to attain any more status than that of a junior office worker no matter how long or hard she worked. Finding this utterly unacceptable, she left to search for alternatives. She found one: Al Amarja.

For the last few years, Nariga has been the president and guiding light of her "market research" company, Needle Research. From her office suite in Golden, she looks out over the life and soul of the Edge. Her company performs all sorts of polls and surveys on behalf of the oddest clients.

Nariga is an exceptional pollster mostly thanks to her almost supernatural ability to know what questions to ask and what populations to target. Almost any research firm could determine

what locations in Broken Wings would be best for a new pharmacy. Nariga is the one people go to when they want to find out what pseudonyms the pharmacists should put on their name tags to instill trust and devotion among the customers.

Nariga knows that the Net has become a regular customer of hers; she deduced its existence from the questions their agents wanted answered. Since then, she has carefully cultivated a public life, to make it more difficult to "disappear" her. She recognizes that other conspiratorial organizations have used her services (especially when she is asked to assess the effect a new brand of dental floss has on people's opinions of airplanes, or something similar), but doesn't really know who she's worked for. She really doesn't want to know.

Nariga employs a fair number of people in her office as secretaries and low-grade assistants, but most of her polling is done by temporaries or contract workers, especially when she wants unusual questions asked of unusual people. She refuses to hire any analysts other than herself. Even though her waiting list is often quite long, she only works for one client at a time. To work for more would conflict with her linear organizational style.

Nariga spends long hours in her office in Golden Barrio, only occasionally returning to her orderly townhouse in Broken Wings. She has a social calendar regular enough to set a clock by, with emphasis upon the fancier clubs and restaurants in Golden and Broken Wings.

Japanese woman, age 42, 173 cm, 55 kg. Graying hair cut short. Wears a militaristically severe business suit.

Languages: Japanese, functional English

Traits

Pulse of the People, 4 dice — She can't explain how, but she knows what the great mass of humanity is thinking. She doesn't spontaneously come up with useful information. Rather, she knows what questions need to be asked (and sometimes, which ones ought not be asked). Just like anybody else, she must harass the population with nagging phone calls and irritating pollsters, but the results of her surveys can be surprising. (Predicts radio talk show topics)

Organization, 3 dice — Nariga learned her art in one of the most strictly organized nations in the world, and her current practices reflect that. With her disciplined employees and well-structured office, successfully carrying out complicated projects on time and under budget is not a problem. The fact that the assistant office boy was caught using nonstandard paper in the copier is. (Desk is spotless)

Obsessed With Detail — Nariga can't stand disorganization. "Everything in its place, and a place for everything" is a phrase she overuses dreadfully. This served her quite well back in Japan, where, as a harried underling, she was expected to worry about details. It isn't quite so helpful to her as a budding entrepreneur in the Edge. She takes a penalty die whenever she is faced with something she hasn't planned for or anticipated. (Clothes fit with military precision)

Demands Respect — One thing Nariga can never get enough of is praise. She never got it back in her homeland, and now regards it as her due. If a client is not sufficiently appreciative of her efforts, or if a date doesn't compliment her

appearance appropriately, she becomes testy and irritable. She also doesn't take criticism from her underlings overwhelmingly well. (Displays diplomas prominently in office)

Story Ideas

- 1) Nariga constantly needs people to go out into the Edge and actually ask her questions for her. Many times, she needs people to go into unpleasant or dangerous parts of the Edge to do this. She only rarely explains exactly what she's looking for because that might bias the results of the survey. This time, she needs people to go into Justice Barrio and ask a hundred males the following questions:

"Do you believe in life on other planets?"

"Do you think lemurs would enjoy wearing denim jackets?"

"How do you feel when you dress up in women's clothing?"

"If your house could talk to you, what would it say?"

"Name three brands of deodorant you dislike."

Can the PCs hack it?

- 2) The PCs get access to a series of surveys undertaken by Nariga's company. They show that, over the past three years, public opinion has been unifying on a wide variety of seemingly unrelated topics. Is someone's mind control experiment proving to be successful? Is the Throckmorton Device finally tipping its hand? Nariga might know the answer, but she seems to have disappeared...
- 3) Moritz Vetter (OTE p. 142), the President of Al Amarjan Investments, is one of Nariga's most regular customers. Lately, he has been unable to hire her; her waiting list has grown suspiciously long. He knows about her only-one-client-at-a-time policy, and wants to know what she's spending so much time on. He chooses the PCs as agents to find out...



Anima Nee-Owoo

CPC Inspector

Anima Nee-Owoo is a CPC inspector. (See “Center for Paranormal Control.”) She likes the job because it lets her get out in the fresh air and meet new people. Her wry sense of humor is a big contributing factor to her positive attitude because many of the people she meets are a little cracked. Although she’s seen some high weirdness in her time (much of it in the top floors of her own work place), Nee-Owoo operates from the assumption that reports of the paranormal are almost always mistaken. She’s gained an instinct over the years for which cases will need to be referred upstairs and which will get dumped in the false claims database. CPC inspectors end up dealing with some delusional people on a regular basis; Nee-Owoo treats them with bemused affection.

Like many low-level officials of Her Exaltedness’ administration, Nee-Owoo has a fair bit of discretion in exercising her duties. If she runs across wielders of undeclared fringe powers who seem to be minding their own business and posing no threat to the State, she’d sooner help them fill out the appropriate forms and backdate them than go to the trouble of running them in. She’s seen too many law-abiding channelers and dowsers shot down by untrained Peace Officers, who tend to get nervous in the presence of a known mindworm. When she does find herself face to face with a genuine hostile entity, she’s no cowboy — she disengages and calls for “Chesspiece” backup.

Like all CPC inspectors, Nee-Owoo’s badge contains a built-in crystal trap.

Ghanaian woman, age 38, 165 cm, 58 kg. Short hair, gold nose ring. Wears white or orange cotton jumpsuits, carries a clipboard.

Attack: 3 dice, X1 unarmed

Defense: 3 dice

Hit Points: 21 (rugged)



Traits

Investigator, 4 dice — Good at legwork, patient about asking questions, has manner that puts nervous witnesses at ease, instinct for telling whether people are lying or delusional. (Stock phrase: “Okay, now let’s run through this just one more time...”)

DBI Combat Training, 3 dice — Like all DBI officers, CPC inspectors are given the basic combat training and periodic refresher courses. Includes firearms training, though she carries her 9mm automatic pistol only when her superior gets on her back about it. (Adopts combat stance when threatened)

Pirate History, 4 dice — Nee-Owoo’s hobby is reading up on the great Age of Piracy. She has theories about the location of several sunken galleons in the Bermuda Triangle and hopes one day to attract investors and take a leave of absence to go search for them. (Calms distraught witnesses by boring them with irrelevant historical anecdotes)

Story Ideas

- 1) PCs are most likely to meet Nee-Owoo if they unwisely exhibit paranormal abilities in public in front of witnesses. Once she determines that there's some validity behind a witness's report, she'll patiently track down the clues until one day she finds herself knocking on the PC's door. She flashes her badge, introduces herself, and starts asking questions about the incident in question. Roll her 4 dice in Investigation against any attempts to fool her. If she decides that the fringe power PC is a possible threat to the State, she'll end the interview without letting on that she suspects anything of his unnatural abilities. Then she'll call for a squad from the Upper Floor, who come accompanied by a team of Loyal Defenders to handle any resistance on the material plane.

If she figures that the PC does have paranormal powers but is no real threat, she arranges to fudge the paperwork to keep him out of trouble and gives him advice on keeping a low profile with his weird abilities.

- 2) After having fixed the paperwork on behalf of a fringe-powered PC, Nee-Owoo runs into him at a party. After chatting for a while about the mysterious Oak Island treasure, she notices something that concerns her — the PC has a pattern of birthmarks behind his left ear that she's seen before on other “strangely endowed” individuals. Later, she calls back and offers to give the PC the names of the others, who are also concerned by the mystery. When the PC meets the other paranormal types, they find nothing in common to explain why they all have identical birthmarks.

Actually, the “birthmarks” are the result of a Pharaoh campaign to identify paranormals. Quislings have been releasing a chemical into the Al Amarjan air through the exhaust pipes of specially modified jitneys. Some individuals with innate psychic or mystical powers (as opposed to those who have learned magic intellectually) spontaneously gain this new “birthmark,” though the chemical is not fool-proof yet. An investigation with the proper scientific equipment could lead to the exposure

of the quisling operation. When the chemical dissipates from Al Amarja's air several months later, the telltale birthmarks vanish as well.

“Pork,” Veritas Salomi

Caseworker for Guiding Hand

Roaming about Four Points and Justice, a meek-looking but confident young woman visits the poverty-stricken. A name tag identifies her as a caseworker for Guiding Hand, a prominent Al Amarjan charity. Her job is to see to it that the poor get the help they need, and to make sure that they are following the strict guidelines of behavior that qualify them for the hand-outs. Since recipients of Guiding Hand's help know that they can be blacklisted for “moral intemperance,” and they know that their caseworker can write them up for misbehavior, they resent her while they depend on her good will. The caseworker, known to all as “Pork,” doesn't care what her clients think of her; she's above all that emotional stuff.

Pork was born to parents who believed that Mr. Spock represented the ideal to which humans should aspire, and they taught her to disregard emotions and to live life by logic. As a result, she has dysfunctional emotions. Unknown to herself, she took the job as caseworker so she could expose herself to emotional people, such as those who become furious or suicidal when she informs them that aid from Guiding Hand is to be terminated. At home, in private, she relives these emotional scenes in heady, ecstatic, overpowering daydreams.

“Camel” Czersky, a superior at Guiding Hand, has convinced Pork that the charity has a secret goal of spreading rational enlightenment, and that she has been chosen as an operative for this secret branch of Guiding Hand. He is coaching her in personal manipulation and has sent her on some fact-finding missions. Czersky himself believes that he works for a German-based international criminal organization called Die Familie, but he actually works for the Mov-

ers who have infiltrated and taken over Guiding Hand. They use the “charity” to glean money from the wealthy and to compile data on the needy.

Guiding Hand is a popular charity among Al Amarja’s wealthy. It provides assistance to the needy, but, more important to the donors, it demands that they conform to standards of behavior. Assistance to families, for instance, is cut off after the birth of a third child, or if the marriage breaks up. On paper, these policies encourage the poor to stay married and have few children. Continued unemployment, criminal convictions, and class-consciousness are also grounds for blacklisting. These policies convince the rich that they are giving their money to the “deserving needy.”

Pork earned her nick-name in arguments with Muslims over dietary norms. Her stock phrase is, “Pigs are wonderful animals; very similar to humans, you know.” The nickname does not endear her to Muslims, but she considers that to be their problem, not hers. She only uses her given name for official records.

Since her job sends her into dangerous areas, Pork wears a large digital watch that, when struck, lets out a piercing shriek and alerts Safe ’n Sound. Safe ’n Sound agents can home in on her as long as the signal continues. (She can shut off the shriek without shutting off the radio signal.)

Al Amarjan woman, age 23, 161 cm, 60 kg. Dark brown hair cut in page-boy style, big nose. Modest clothes, photo ID name tag.

Languages: Al Amarjan patois, poor English, some Arabic words

Attack: 2 dice plus penalty die, X1 damage unarmed

Defense: 2 dice plus penalty die

Hit Points: 11 (soft-looking)

Traits

Observing the Human Animal, 3 dice — Her experience as a caseworker and her training under Czersky give her the ability to size up people and families. (Asks open-ended questions)

Manipulation, 3 dice (plus penalty) — Neither she nor Czersky know enough to call it

“Moving,” but that’s what it is. She suffers a penalty when trying to manipulate people because she understands emotions very poorly. (Has a small notebook for recording successful and failed manipulations, in a simple, personal code)

Science Fact/Science Fiction, 3 dice — Her interest in science and logic led her to an interest in science fiction. She is familiar with both science and science fiction, and she criticizes popular science fiction for its scientific errors. This interest makes her especially susceptible to cover stories dealing with science, space aliens, or related topics. (Reads sci-fi paperbacks while eating)

Physically Incompetent, penalty die — Her parents taught her to hold things of the body in contempt, so she has neglected her body’s need for exercise and play her whole life. She takes a penalty die on all physically demanding actions. (Looks soft)

Unemotional, penalty or bonus die — She has a hard time imagining herself experiencing the emotions that others experience, so she does not understand others’ emotions well. She suffers a penalty die in most interpersonal interactions, but she gains a bonus die when resisting emotional temptation or manipulation. (Thoughtlessly cruel)

Story Ideas

- 1) When the PCs are nosing around Justice or Four Points, they may run into Pork. In a barrio of suspicious schemers, she may be a very useful source of information, and a pleasure to speak to. Of course, she expects information as well, though she may not come out and ask for it.
- 2) If you can convince the players that Pork is just “local color,” all the better, because her reports to Czersky may arouse his interest. Die Familie may order him to ask her to get more information on the PCs. She may also be ordered to feed them misinformation. If the players don’t suspect her, she could really hose the PCs.

- 3) If any PCs seem amenable, Pork may be ordered to initiate them into the “secret branch” of Guiding Hand and its stated goal of bringing rationality to humanity. Alternately, she may be ordered to use a cover story to involve PCs that are not interested in spreading rationality, creating yet another layer of deception.

Keewatin Razutis

Unhelpful Clerk

Keewatin Razutis is the desk officer of the Al Amarja Hall of Records in the Arms Barrio. The Hall of Records contains all of the public documents of the D’Aubainne regime — “public document” meaning something different here than in other democracies. The Hall of Records is a moneymaking venture; anyone seeking access to documents must pay a fee of \$2.50 per page. Most documents are triple-spaced with extremely wide margins, for an average of 150 words per page. This can get quite steep. Available documents include deeds to property, business licenses and registrations, copyright and trademark information, and so forth. Secret government documents are sometimes sent to the Hall of Records in error, or at the behest of conspiratorial moles, but it’s very difficult to find what you want in this category.

Especially with Razutis on duty. He’s become quite expert at spotting burger, and when one approaches he makes a great show of being the most bored public servant in the universe. With burger, he’s always smoking, yawning, looking at the clock, flossing his teeth on duty, and just generally looking unprofessional. When they request any piece of information, no matter how trivial, he’ll refuse it. He alternates between the following excuses for refusal:

- 1) Al Amarjan privacy laws prevent the release of this vital information.
- 2) Your security clearance does not permit it.

However, Razutis is very amenable to bribes, though he is too careful to propose one himself. If

offered \$20 per search, he will happily pop back and find the documents himself. He also knows where all of the secret documents that shouldn’t be here are stored — in fact, he’s invented a secret filing system to organize them. These he prices individually based on perceived value, with a starting price of \$250 a document.

Razutis lives a nice suburban existence in Traboc with his wife and teenage daughters; he won’t do anything to endanger himself either with violent types or his unforgiving employers.

Canadian white man, age 45, 164 cm, 78 kg. Bloodshot green eyes, nicotine stained fingers. Olive polyester suit, bright orange tie with monkey print pattern.

Traits

Judge of Character, 4 dice — Can size up people right away, dividing them into those he can hose and those he cannot. Can sense when someone is disguising his identity or has something weird going on under a mundane surface appearance. (Hard to tell, but his tired eyes actually never leave you)

Filing, 3 dice — Knows where everything in the Hall of Records is and can find it quickly. (Makes beeline to correct shelf)

Creative Tax Accounting, 3 dice — Successfully hides the source of his additional income from the government. (Fave saying — “Well, there’s how you’re supposed to do it, and how it’s really done.”)

Story Ideas

- 1) A PC comes to the Hall of Records for a basic piece of information, whether it be the ownership of a particular property to a simple street map of the city. Razutis refuses the request as he yawns and watches the clock. He won’t initiate a bribe unless he’s certain the PC won’t squeal; otherwise he’ll filibuster all day or wait till the PC proposes an additional “defraying of expenses.”
- 2) If a PC becomes a regular enough customer that Razutis knows his name and phone number, he’ll get a late night call. “It’s Keewatin

Razutis, from the Hall of Records. We just got a misfiled document that was supposed to go to the DBI. Your name is prominently mentioned. In these misfiling cases I'm supposed to send it on to the proper department, but I could make a mistake and give it to you — of course, I'll need my expenses defrayed."

If the PC comes to get the document, it's a legitimate item. You can make it a plot point, if you wish, revealing what the government knows about the PC's involvement in a current plotline. Or it can just be the DBI's basic file on him.

Tony Red Hawk

Private Investigator

Tony Red Hawk is a Lakota Sioux private eye who was working on a case that had a trail of clues leading to Al Amarja. Tony never solved the case, and has been living in the Edge ever since. (The details of this case are for you to decide.) Tony currently works out of a small office that doubles as his living space in the Four Points Barrio. With his marketable skill as a private investigator, and semi-regular advertisements in Opportunities on the Edge, Tony stays busy, and he has come to like the fast-paced and unusual action that makes living in the Edge so unique. Although Tony isn't aware of this fact, he has done some investigative work for a few of Al Amarja's conspiracies. Groups such as the Movers, the Net, and the Neutralizers have hired Tony for various cases. Each time, he was contracted through a third party that reported back to a contact within the conspiracy.

Tony spends most of his time in his office, waiting for the phone to ring or for some desperate soul to come crashing in, demanding to pay Tony large sums of money to solve a very simple case. The latter has yet to happen. Tony generally charges \$125 a day, plus expenses. His fee is slightly less than his competitors, but he makes up for it by padding the expense account.



When not in his office, Tony can be seen driving around the Edge on a battered World War II era motorcycle with a club strapped to the handlebars. When on a case, Tony dresses in casual clothing. The only notable feature of his costume is the armadillo skin cowboy boots he wears. Tony is also a regular customer at the Last Supper in Justice.

Amerindian man, age 27, 182 cm, 81 kg. Clean shaven, scar on face, coppery skin, long black hair pulled into a single braid. Wears armadillo skin boots, a noose, and a large Bowie knife.

Languages: Sioux (Lakota), English, Al Amarjan patois

Attack: 3 dice, X2 with club or knife

Defense: 3 dice

Hit Points: 23 (wiry strength)

Armor: 1 die, armored jacket

Traits

Private Investigation, 4 dice — Tony knows the ins and outs of being a private dick; he can tail people, pick locks, spot clues and trouble, engage in subterfuge, take incriminating photographs, and pad the expense account. (Hands out business card)

Brawling, 3 dice — Growing up on a reservation taught Tony how to defend himself at an early age. With a knife, a club, or bare fists, Tony can handle himself in a fight. (Scar on face)

Cool, 3 dice — Tony has had a lot of practice and knows how to keep his wits about him even when he is in way over his head. (Always speaks calmly)

Story Ideas

- 1) The PCs need some information but lack either the time or the abilities to get it. Tony Red Hawk is talented, he doesn't charge much money, and his name's in the phone book.
- 2) The PCs have been poking around where they don't belong. Through an intermediary, somebody has hired Tony to follow them and gather information about them. Using this information, the "client" will later attempt to bump the characters off.
- 3) After busting the heads of some conspiracy's operatives, the PCs find Tony's card on one of the bodies. What information does Tony have that the PCs need?

El-Hajj Hamid al-Samman

Record Label Owner

As bassist for the near-legendary punk band Mugwump, al-Samman spent most of the late '70s and early '80s crashing, grinding, and generally blaring out music calling for a revolution. The revolution never came. After the death of lead vocalist Richard "Buzzsaw" Wheeler, the band fell

apart. Al-Samman spent several years in a lesser band, Express, before realizing that his time was past. People didn't want to listen to him; they wanted to listen to the next big thing. If his music was no longer a tool to shape attitudes, he could still work from behind the scenes. In 1986, he used his savings to start Fifth Column Records.

Fifth Column created a buzz in the alternative music scene, and continues to do so years later. Using his own ear, al-Samman was able to pick out music that just needed a slight push to make it big. Despite the constant defection of bands from his label to major record companies, Fifth Column is still making money and letting young bands shine. Moreover, as a dedicated Muslim, he is able to find bands able to communicate his message of social activism and positive change.

Fifth Column has an office in Flowers, where al-Samman also rents a warehouse apartment.

Egyptian man, age 34, 185 cm, 65 kg. Thin frame; small, neatly trimmed mustache; shoulder length, black hair. Dresses neatly but casually, wears a noose and wire-rim glasses. Smokes unfiltered cigarettes

Traits

Ear for Music, 3 dice — Al-Samman wrote most of Mugwump's best songs; he has a natural gift for music and he knows it. Previously he used this gift as a bassist, now he applies it to his scouting. Given two decent bands, he can decide which is really good. Note that "good" doesn't always mean "profitable." (Discusses flaws in music on the radio)

Businessman, 4 dice — Fifth Column has stayed afloat longer than most independent record labels for two reasons: al-Samman knows music, and he knows business. Rather than leave promotion and marketing to underlings, he takes an active hand himself in most of the company's day-to-day operations. He also knows, unlike many managers, when to leave things to the experts. (Reads record industry trade journals)

Social activist — Mugwump differed from most punk bands in the late '70s by suggesting channeled anger. The system should be torn down, their music shouted, but help should also be given to those who need it. Whether through

benefit concerts or donating to charity, al-Samman continues to help make a difference. He also takes the Muslim duty of alms-giving very seriously. (Wears AIDS awareness button)

Story Ideas

- 1) Any characters or important GMCs involved in the music trade are naturals to come into contact with al-Samman. Record contracts and tours could offer whole new realms of exploration off of Al Amarja.
- 2) Al-Samman's social activism has made him a target of off-island intelligence agents. They want to end his attacks on the support of right-wing governments in Asia and Latin America, and they undertake a campaign of intimidation and character assassination. Al-Samman could hire the PCs to clear his name, or, if they are slightly less concerned about being the good guys, the agents could hire the PCs to silence him permanently.



- 3) Who says that Buzzsaw's death really was a drug overdose? Your favorite conspiracy could have killed him for any number of reasons. Here's your chance to let the characters play Sam Spade.

Silk

Exceptional DJ

Silk, or Raquel Laffitte, was born to a very rich and eccentric family. In her teen years, she fell in with a "bad crowd," stopped going to church, and started going to night clubs. A few years ago, she flew with a group of friends to the Edge where, at the conclusion of their trip, she slipped into a back alley and disappeared into the shadows. She is officially missing in France, and her parents have offered almost ten thousand dollars to anyone that has information leading to her location.

Of course, she didn't want to go back, and she assumed the name "Silk." At first she worked as a courier for an organization that was (unknown to her) a Mover front, but her natural ability to pick out good music from bad soon landed her a job as a DJ in a nightclub on the fringe.

She gained fame quickly and was soon playing private parties, even playing a party on the Red Orca once. Her fame on the island continues to grow, and already she's been asked to play parties in various locales around the world.

Her only weakness is the very thing that brought her all this fame. Her moods depend mainly on what type of music she's playing at the time, or what music someone else is playing.

French woman, age 21, 165 cm, 58 kg. Shoulder length white hair (bleached). Wears colorful clothes.

Languages: French, passable English, some Spanish

Attack: 3 dice

Defense: 3 dice

Hit Points: 21 (trained to fend off pain)

Traits

Street-fighting, 3 dice — During her adventures on the fringe, Silk has picked up a mish-mash of offensive and defensive moves. Her fighting style is unique, and those that have seen her fight say it definitely works. (Muscular legs)

Music Composition & Mixing, 4* dice — Ever since she was young Silk has had a talent for music and how to make it even better. She has improved this talent while on Al Amarja to the point where she is the best, period. (Looks through record store windows at new releases)

Streetwise, 3 dice — Yet another trait Silk picked up on the fringe. She has contacts everywhere, which has kept her out of jail numerous times. She also can get access to illegal weapons, drugs, equipment, etc., if need be. (Always meeting with “shady” people)

Influenced by Music — Silk is emotionally unstable and thus easily influenced by the type of music currently playing. Under the right circumstances, this penalty might translate into a bonus. (Tries to stay near up-tempo music)

Story Idea

- 1) An openheimer learns of Silk’s weakness and beams music directly into her brain, effectively changing her mood at a whim. He uses her as an agent in a plot of his, taking advantage of her fame to get her into places that another agent could never get into. The PCs find themselves opposing Silk, but can they find their real enemy before Silk is permanently damaged or killed by this plot?
- 2) While unwittingly working for the Mover front, Silk stumbled onto an apparently meaningless datum. Now that datum has become vital to certain underground agent wars, and Silk is being pursued. She hires the PCs to protect her, or the Movers hire them to capture her so she can be hypnotized and forced to recall what she knows.

V.1, aka Veedot One

Biological Simulacrum

Veedot One takes his name from the official military designation: “Biological Simulacrum, V.1.” He was created by a group of fringe U.S. military scientists working in secret. He was to be the ultimate fighting machine, hardwired with extensive combat training and tactical programming. The project was independently funded, and the government knows very little about the project’s success. Thanks to the efforts of an anti-military radical who erased his slave programming, Veedot was able to escape from the installation after destroying the data needed to create more beings like himself.

Externally, Veedot appears to be a tall, well muscled human; however, internally he is quite different. In addition to having two hearts, Veedot’s internal organs have been re-arranged for better combat survival and his body’s soft spots are protected by a cartilaginous armor. Veedot has no navel, of which he is painfully aware. He goes to great lengths to keep his belly hidden.

After being freed, Veedot hunted down and killed the scientists responsible for his creation to insure that no more super-soldiers are created. Veedot has tracked the two remaining scientists who worked on the project to Al Amarja. Shortly after arriving in the Edge, Veedot applied for a job with the Peace Force, but left when he was told that he’d have to submit to a complete physical. Since then, he has become a fighter at Sad Mary’s, where he makes decent money and is able to keep a finger on the pulse of the city. He lives in the Flowers Barrio, and when he is not fighting, Veedot spends his time methodically searching the city for clues that will lead him to the last of the openheimers who created him.

US black man, 188 cm, 108 kg. Heavily muscled, clean shaven with military crew-cut. Dresses in combat boots, fatigue pants, black sweatshirt, and a leather bomber jacket.

Languages: English, Al Amarjan patois

Attack: 4 dice, X1 with fist, X2 with knife



Defense: 4 dice

Hit Points: 34 (inhuman constitution)

Armor: 1 die + 1 point. Internal armor, plus leather jacket

Traits

Biological Simulacrum (upside) — Veedot One is not human; he is a biological robot designed specifically for combat. His mind is actually an artificial intelligence, and his body is naturally armored and combat-worthy. (No navel)

Commando Training, 4 dice — Veedot One's artificial brain has been programmed with many forms of hand to hand combat, stealth, and basic first aid. (large and muscular)

Heightened Senses, 3 dice — All his senses have been designed to perform better than a normal human's. (Eyes gleam green in the dark)

Biological Simulacrum (downside) — Veedot One is not human and he knows it. His programming makes it hard for him to think about things other than combat. Furthermore, he fears someone will discover he is not human and thus avoids

doctors and hospitals at all costs. (Shuns hospitals)

Story Ideas

- 1) Perhaps one of Veedot One's creators is the PCs' patron. They must protect their patron from Veedot's revenge.
- 2) Veedot One fights at Sad Mary's and thinks fondly of Portia. Any PC that becomes a fighter at Sad Mary's, or who takes a hankering to Portia, eventually meets Veedot.
- 3) Veedot One is hired by Armorguard. When a PC needs to hire a bodyguard, they get someone who's exceptionally skilled, Veedot One.
- 4) Veedot One gets messed up badly enough that he needs a doctor, and he looks up Alexandria Bennett, hoping that she will be discreet. Bennett then hires the PCs to observe Veedot One and report back to her.

Guillermo Venzor

AIDS Activist

Guillermo can often be seen outside such notorious party venues as Sad Mary's or Den of Thieves handing out AIDS awareness literature and free condoms. Nobody in Al Amarja likes to be reminded of the potentially catastrophic consequences of too much sexual abandon; he is often ignored for his troubles. But Guillermo soldiers on, determined to save at least a few people from his own fate — he was once a notorious king of the party circuit himself, and isn't sure whether he got HIV from unprotected sex or a shared needle.

Since his diagnosis, Guillermo is a changed man, pouring all of the energy he once directed towards debauchery into organizing a support network for Al Amarjans with the disease and an educational campaign for those at risk of getting it. He speaks a mile a minute, his eyes burn with intensity, and he soon steers any conversation back towards the only topic that matters to him — the treatment and prevention of AIDS.

Al Amarjan man, 32 years old, 179 cm, 70 kg. Dark hair, well-coifed, small ears, blunt nose, round chin. Dresses neatly.

Languages: Al Amarjan patois, English

Hit Points: 11 (weak from AZT treatments)

Traits

Connections, 4 dice — His organizing efforts have put him in touch with a surprising range of people. From Lydia Goodman to Monique D'Aubainne herself, Guillermo shows the surprising ability to pick up the phone and get in almost immediate touch with virtually any of the island's heavy hitters. (Always jotting phone numbers in his notebook)

AIDS Education, 3 dice — Follows developments in the politics and medicine of AIDS

AIDS on Al Amarja

Proximity to Africa, an active sex tourism industry, and ties to the U.S. combine to make Al Amarja a center for the incubation and transmission of HIV. Of course, that's not what Her Exaltedness would have you believe.

In an effort to bolster tourism, the city council of the Edge authorizes doctors to declare brothels "HIV-Free." Of course, a brothel whose employees are HIV-free one day may be infected the next, so these "HIV-Free" designations must be frequently renewed to be worth anything.

Superstition and rumor in regard to AIDS abound on Al Amarja. A dozen crack-pot theories about the cause of AIDS appear for every legitimate medical advance in the treatment of the disease. Superstitious Al Amarjans are more likely to "protect" themselves by burning their Freddie Mercury records than by practicing safe sex.

Meanwhile, the D'Aubainne Hospital and Trauma Center makes a mint by using outrageous treatments to "help" wealthy, desperate AIDS-sufferers, who come from around the world to get treatments that are unproven, illegal, or discredited in other countries.

worldwide, becoming better and better at getting his message through to the unreceptive audience of Al Amarja. (Hands out leaflets)

Drug Lore, 3 dice — Extensive experience in the old days have made Guillermo a non-practicing expert in any exotic pharmaceutical you care to name. (Uses slightly outdated drug slang)

HIV Positive, penalty die — Though he doesn't suffer from full-blown AIDS as of yet, Guillermo's AZT treatments have left him rather weak, costing him a penalty die on all physical actions. (Pale, moves slowly at times)

Story Ideas

- 1) As the PCs head into a busy nightclub, Guillermo is handing out condoms and shouting reminders about safe sexual practices. He hands supplies to the party members, should they accept them. The next time one of them engages in a liaison with a GMC, see if he makes a note of pointing out that his character is taking precautions. If not, the GMC later approaches the PC and tells him she's just tested HIV positive. You'll probably want to make this just a scare for the PC — or this could start a plotline devoted to a fringe-power search for a cure. Should such a cure be found, Giuseppe Raimondi (OTE p. 105) would be very interested.
- 2) If the PCs are receptive to Guillermo and help him out — either by passing out leaflets or driving off some threatened fools subjecting him to harassment — he gives them a card and tells them to call if they ever need help. Though they might well write him off, Guillermo can secure just about any bit of info or arrange any sort of meeting for the group. He will require additional favors to the cause if the PCs call on his aid a second time.

The Mysterious Dr. Zilch

Fringe Neurologist and Patron

Zilch is one of the most dangerously unpredictable of conspirators — because he is motivated *solely* by curiosity.

He can (rarely) be seen walking purposefully through the Science or Arms barrios, but has been reported as far afield as Flowers and Great Men. He keeps no schedule, but his alter egos make periodic appearances — Lance Nuer can be seen wandering through the University library, Craig Mendohlsson shows up at an art gallery opening or party, Marilyns Roan might drop in at a café for a few hours, or Shane Philburn is seen talking importantly to a group of suits at a restaurant in Golden.

Zilch's cane contains a device he calls a "brain-jammer." It shoots out a disruptive energy beam. Roll 3 dice versus the target's roll; if successful, it stuns the victim for 1-6 rounds. It delivers 6 shots before it has to be recharged. (No one's quite sure why Zilch is immune to it.) He also carries a knife coated with a paralytic poison and a bottle of chloroform.

Austrian man, age 44, 170 cm, 68 kg. Brown hair worn straight up. Usually carries a cane.

Languages: German, Italian, English, some Arabic

Traits

Rich and Powerful, 3 dice — He has connections at all levels of society. (Wears a beeper)

Neurology, 4* dice — If it affects the brain in any way, shape, or form, Zilch is interested. (Wears a lab coat)

Paranoid, 3 dice — A virtue in his biz. No matter what the surprise, there's a chance Zilch is prepared. (Wears dark glasses)

Quick Change, 3 dice + bonus — Zilch is an expert at completely altering his appearance and demeanor instantly. He can raise or lower his shoes, changes clothes and personal story with

equal speed, and carries wigs and inflatable body bulges. The bonus is from the expense he puts into his disguises. (Often has a striking appearance)

Rumors About Dr. Zilch

He broke the Slo-Mo recipe.

He doesn't exist.

He secretly controls all drug trade on Al Amarja.

He's a front for _____ (insert conspiracy, or the D'Aubainnes).

He owns Total Taxi.

He hates Total Taxi.

He can inflict madness on his enemies.

His constant attempts to boost his own brain power have eroded his persona, until even he isn't sure who he is.

He has built psychic detection devices for the CPC.

He invented Blue Shock/Wings/Zoroaster.



Dr. Zilch's Alter Egos

Lance Nuer — laid-back, blond college student.

Craig Mendohlsson — stylish freelance writer who lives in Flowers.

Marilyn Roan — plain woman who owns (in absentia) Clark's Café in Sunken.

Shane Philburn — middle-aged, overweight freelance structures advisor with an office in the Golden Barrio.

Bennies and Cloaks

Felicia Carleton — computer hacker.

Alfredo Pirelli — cabbie and brawler, keeps his ear to the ground.

Hans Schmidt — paranoid cat burglar and suspected vampire.

Francine Francisco — the kind of nice gal that a guy would like to take home to Mom.

Story Ideas

- 1) The characters need some psychoactive chemical analyzed, and a contact promises to hand it over to "Dr. Zilch." It could be the real doctor, or just a con artist using his name.
- 2) The PCs see an ad in the paper for "confidential agents." If they answer it, Zilch sends them on some bizarre mission to test them out as possible bennies and cloaks.
- 3) Zilch, posing as one of his alter egos, is the key witness to a crime or paranormal event. The PCs' hunt for the alter ego is fruitless, unless they can crack the Zilch mystery.

Butheina Zuhar

Palestinian Terrorist

A refugee from the occupied territories in Israel, Butheina fled to the United States as a teenager. She arrived on a tourist visa, but had no intention of leaving when it expired. Life proved

difficult, however, especially as tighter immigration laws in the later 80's made it more difficult for illegal aliens to find legitimate work.

Then she found what seemed to be a promising job. With other young women from the Middle East, Butheina would be paid to drink and converse with businessmen and others who wanted to learn or polish their knowledge of Arabic. She didn't like drinking (the Koran forbids alcohol), but the money was good — and she desperately needed it.

One night a businessman with whom she'd been speaking offered her a ride home. She accepted. Once on the road, he suggested they stop by his place for one more drink. Butheina became afraid, but didn't know how to turn him down without making a scene. He took her to his condominium and raped her. The next morning he told her not to tell anyone or file charges. He warned that if she did, not only would she be laughed out of court; she would find herself arrested for being an illegal alien, for working without a green card, and for prostitution. The businessman had government connections, he said, and could make sure this happened. He laughed, called her a "sand-nigger whore," and dumped her out on the street.

This disillusioning experience gave Butheina a new view on the West, and in particular its regard for women. Once she thought Western culture was "liberating"; now she realizes that the only liberty it confers is the freedom to be abused and enslaved by vice and evil men. It was a mistake for her to forsake the Koran by drinking and having commerce with strangers. Now she knows better — but the price of this knowledge was more than any woman should pay.

Butheina has since become involved in radical Muslim groups, struggling against Western secularism and Zionism, and trying to establish strict Islamic law in the lands of Believers. She has been trained in Iran, Libya and the Sudan, and has been active in Lebanon, Jerusalem's West Bank, Egypt and Algeria.

In Butheina's eyes, this is a feminist cause, to preserve women's dignity under the Law of the Prophet. When actually enforced, it will rein in the predatory nature of men.

Al Amarja is a meeting ground and base for several Islamic terrorist cells (and plenty of non-Islamic ones!). With its libertarian (indeed, almost non-existent) immigration policy it is a welcoming shore for Palestinians and other expatriates. Butheina's missions often bring her to the Edge, where she may encounter player characters. Her cause may bring her to cooperate with or struggle against them.

Butheina's connections on Al Amarja have been left deliberately vague. Given the background of *Over the Edge*, it is likely that whatever organization she works for is in some way infiltrated, manipulated, or dominated by some other force for which religion is one of many fronts. Her terrorist cell might unknowingly serve the Movers (for whom terrorists are a valuable tool), the Mr. LeThuys (who like the chaos and fear generated by terrorist acts), or even the Throckmortonianians (whose control freak nature helps them get along with almost any religion's zealots).

Whether a sister in arms or an implacable foe, Butheina is not a character to be slighted, nor easily distracted from her chosen path.

Palestinian woman, age 27, 175 cm, 60 kg, black hair, deceptively gentle, large brown eyes. Dresses in "street camo" (Western garb) on operations; otherwise prefers traditional Muslim women's garb.

Languages: Arabic, English.

Attack: 2 or 4 dice, X2 damage (knife)

Defense: 2 or 4 dice

Hit Points: 24 (resolute)

Traits

Anti-Western — Bitterly opposed to American hegemony and Western materialism. (Refers to USA as "the Great Satan")

Devoted Muslim, 3 dice — Knows the Koran and Shari'a intimately, as well as the writings of

many great Islamic thinkers from Ibn Sina to Khomeini. (Wears traditional garb except when on missions)

Terrorist, 4 dice — Familiar with guns, knives, explosives, security systems, and basic espionage skills (eluding pursuers, debugging rooms, conducting surveillance, etc.). (Carries a concealed knife at all times)

Good Physical Conditioning, 3 dice — Butheina follows a strict dietary regimen and exercises frequently, to maintain superior physical form. (Lean and muscular, although this is often concealed by her clothing)

Self-Reliant, bonus die — Butheina knows she can only depend on herself. No Western men are to be trusted, and even her comrades are of dubious value — most of them are soft and morally corrupted by the insidious and far-reaching tendrils of satanic Western culture. In a desperate situation (GM's judgement), Butheina should receive a bonus die on crucial rolls as she calls on her inner reserves of strength and faith. In effect, this works much like PCs' experience dice. (Unshakeably calm)

Story Ideas

- 1) Butheina comes to Al Amarja to make contact with an Algerian terrorist cell. Along the way she learns of the Scarlet Palace (the brothel described in *Wildest Dreams*, p. 34), and resolves to bring the righteous wrath of Allah down upon it. She invites sympathetic PCs to join her effort. If they help her, she may return the favor with future aid. (If plots should take the PCs through the Middle East's underworld, Butheina's contacts may be invaluable.)
- 2) Plans of the PCs go awry when an important contact turns up dead. It turns out this man was Butheina's rapist, and she has scored gruesome vengeance upon him.

Appendix:

GMC Locations

On the following pages are the “encounter charts” for *Friend or Foe?*. They list the GMCs described above by location so that, in the middle of a game session, you can look for the PCs’ current location and see whether any promising GMCs are usually found there. There are no random rolls to determine who the PCs encounter because that should be up to you. If you have other GMCs you’d like to introduce, scribble their names onto these lists as well.

Anywhere

Rixa Bekker, CPC Hound
 Fat Benny, Gargoyle Fence
 Commander Kismet, the Ultimate Remote Control
 Finola Montague, Freelance Photojournalist
 Anima Nee-Owoo, CPC Inspector
 Tony Red Hawk, Private Investigator
 Butheina Zuhar, Palestinian Terrorist

Barrios

Arms

Rixa Bekker, CPC Hound
 John K. Mohammad, City Manager of the Edge
 Anima Nee-Owoo, CPC Inspector

Broken Wings

Kyemba Adoko, Information Broker
 John K. Mohammad, City Manager of the Edge
 Michiko Nariga, Outre Pollster

Flowers

Kyemba Adoko, Information Broker
 Arenel, Child Time Surfer

Andrew Garret, Brainwiped CIA Agent
 El-Hajj Hamid al-Samman, Record Label Owner
 Silk, Exceptional DJ

Four Points Barrio

Kyemba Adoko, Information Broker
 Dr. Morpheus, Fringe Gadgeteer (possibly with bennies)
 Pork, Caseworker for Guiding Hand
 Tony Red Hawk, Private Investigator

Golden Barrio

Kyemba Adoko, Information Broker
 Nordica Barron, Black Marketeer
 John K. Mohammad, City Manager of the Edge
 Michiko Nariga, Outre Pollster

Great Men

Arenel, Child Time Surfer
 Gerard Duplat, Dealer in Rare Animals
 Andrew Garret, Brainwiped CIA Agent
 Geoffry Hienzen, the Weed Man
 Ishaq al-Masha, Occultist Mover

Justice Barrio

Kyemba Adoko, Information Broker
 Finola Montague, Freelance Photojournalist
 Pork, Caseworker for Guiding Hand

Science Barrio

“Springheel” Jack Coogan, the Bionic Freshman
 Federico Georno, Sophomore Lothario
 Giorgos Antonio Hamati, Intellectual Radical
 Hun Ku-Gong, Immortal Warrior

Sunken Barrio

Gordon “Whiny” Dobson, “Social Guide”
 Denise Felder, Snake Dancer
 Dr. Zilch, as Marilyns Roan

Businesses

Breakneck Cafe

Fat Benny, Gargoyle Fence (every morning)

Cesar's

Gordon "Whiny" Dobson, "Social Guide" (at the bar)

Chateau Melmoth

Tomek Bereszowsky, Vegetarian Lycanthrope (dining)

Anastasia Crowley, Small-time Prophet and/or Wizard (dining)

Mesut Economou, Dealer in Arcane Tomes (dropping off or receiving messages)

D'Aubainne Hospital

Ishaq al-Masha, Occultist Mover (placing bets)

D'Aubainne International Airport

Gordon "Whiny" Dobson, "Social Guide" (scamming)

Dmitri's Fix-It Shop

Dr. Morpheus, Fringe Gadgeteer (chatting)

Hall of Records

Keewatin Razutis, Unhelpful Clerk (being unhelpful)

KRAK Radio

Tomek Bereszowsky, Vegetarian Lycanthrope (working)

Kuan Tun's

Elaine Czarny, One Tough Gal (teaching)

Last Supper

Tony Red Hawk, Private Investigator

Rooms for Men

Andrew Garret, Brainwiped CIA Agent (zoning)

Sad Mary's

Elaine Czarny, One Tough Gal

Gordon "Whiny" Dobson, "Social Guide"

Denise Felder, Snake Dancer

Federico Georno, Sophomore Lothario

Ishaq al-Masha, Occultist Mover

Finola Montague, Freelance Photojournalist

Silk, Exceptional DJ

Guillermo Venzor, AIDS Activist

Scoopmeister

Andrew Garret, Brainwiped CIA Agent (working)

Sequins

Ishaq al-Masha, Occultist Mover (drinking)

John K. Mohammad, City Manager of the Edge (gambling)

Plazas

Plaza of Flowers

Arenel, Child Time Surfer

Alexandria Bennett, Independent Doctor

Fat Benny, Gargoyle Fence

Denise Felder, Snake Dancer

Andrew Garret, Brainwiped CIA Agent

Guillermo Venzor, AIDS Activist

Hun Ku-Gong, Immortal Warrior (debauching)

Plaza of the Four Cardinal Points

Dr. Morpheus, Fringe Gadgeteer (with bennies)

Pork, Caseworker for Guiding Hand

Plaza of Gold

John K. Mohammad, City Manager of the Edge

Dr. Zilch, as Shane Philburn

Plaza of Great Men

Geoffrey Hienzen, the Weed Man (in his store)

Plaza of Justice

Pork, Caseworker for Guiding Hand

Tony Red Hawk, Private Investigator

Plaza of Science

Alexandria Bennett, Independent Doctor

“Springheel” Jack Coogan, the Bionic Freshman

Federico Georno, Sophomore Lothario

Sunken Plaza

Guillermo Venzor, AIDS Activist

General Locations***Art Happening***

Arenel, Child Time Surfer (with artist guardian)

Alexandria Bennett, Independent Doctor

Fat Benny, Gargoyle Fence (as statue)

Finola Montague, Freelance Photojournalist

Dr. Zilch, as Craig Mendohlsson

Intellectual Event

Alexandria Bennett, Independent Doctor

Giorgos Antonio Hamati, Intellectual Radical

Library

Alexandria Bennett, Independent Doctor

Finola Montague, Freelance Photojournalist

Dr. Zilch, as Lance Nuer

Musical Event

El-Hajj Hamid al-Samman, Record Label Owner

Silk, Exceptional DJ

Night Club

“Springheel” Jack Coogan, the Bionic Freshman

Federico Georno, Sophomore Lothario

Finola Montague, Freelance Photojournalist

El-Hajj Hamid al-Samman, Record Label Owner

Silk, Exceptional DJ

Guillermo Venzor, AIDS Activist

Party

Gordon “Whiny” Dobson, “Social Guide” (crashing it)

Denise Felder, Snake Dancer

Federico Georno, Sophomore Lothario

Silk, Exceptional DJ

Scientific Event

Rixa Bekker, CPC Hound (if it’s fringe science)

Alexandria Bennett, Independent Doctor

Dr. Morpheus, Fringe Gadgeteer

Anima Nee-Owoo, CPC Inspector (if it’s fringe science)

Pork, Caseworker for Guiding Hand

Veedot One, Biological Simulacrum (looking for those he wants to kill)

The Mysterious Dr. Zilch, Fringe Neurologist and Patron

Sommerite Happening

Federico Georno, Sophomore Lothario

John K. Mohammad, City Manager of the Edge (incognito)

Silk, Exceptional DJ

Other Locations***Burbs***

Dr. Morpheus, Fringe Gadgeteer

Traboc

Keewatin Razutis, Unhelpful Clerk