



## And So It Came To Pass

It's been forty-nine years since our world changed almost beyond recognition.

Nearly half a century of what should be called progress, and we're all still trapped on the merry-go-round of oppression, prejudice, destruction and survival. As a people, we innovate and create for money rather than the pure pleasure of bringing something new into the world. We seem more willing than ever to climb to the top of the heap over the backs of our fellow man. Rather than using technology to improve the lot of mankind, we've allowed it to separate us even further from each other. If we ever did have a golden age, we somehow slid past it without gaining anything lasting or important.

My name is Captain Chaos, and I'm having a bad day.

For those of you who don't know me, I'm the sysop of Shadowland, a next-generation BBS based in Seattle. If that description doesn't help, think of Shadowland as a sort of branch library of the Denver Data Haven—the North American nexus of information, assistance and data exchange, free to anyone who can find it.

And that's precisely my problem today. I've spent years collating and posting other people's adventures, advice and anecdotes to this board, and it's been a pretty informative and entertaining time. We've managed to save a lot of people a lot of trouble in one way or another, and that's a pretty satisfying accomplishment to have attached to your name. Unfortunately, not everyone understands what we're here for, and not everyone who finds their way into the nexus knows how to handle what they find. So you occasionally have to accept the sorry fate of newbies who find a way to self-destruct despite the guidance of their elders—and the two soft-shells who crashed and burned in the Matrix less than two hours ago represent prime examples of what happens to people with too much money and too little knowledge.

So today I'm going to take advantage of my position and use Shadowland to post my own favorite rant, without interruptions. The topic is the world we live in and how it got that way. The justification is that those who refuse to learn from history are doomed to repeat it—and I'm tired of them repeating it on my board. Pardon my attitude, but I'm not going to pull any punches here.

In the Sixth World, multinational megacorps pull the world's puppet-strings to benefit their bottom lines—and shadowrunners, folks living on the edge like you and me, do the corps' dirty work for pay. These days, survival means working the shadows; you've got to be willing to lie, steal and kill to stay alive. The technology we depend on doesn't bring us together. Worldwide communications net? Great idea, but not much use when half the population is zoned out on simsense chips and the rest can't access a working dataterminal

in the slums where they're forced to live. The rich have gotten richer and the poor a lot more plentiful, so the wealthy barricade themselves in armed enclaves and leave the rest of us to squat and rot. Large chunks of our planet are dying, swallowed by urban sprawl or choked to death by corp polluters. There's still green wilderness in some places, lots of it restored by magic—but I can't see much of it from the sprawl where I live, and neither can hundreds of thousands like me.

And then there's the return of magic, which really turned things upside down. The destructive power of the Great Ghost Dance, the shock of watching loved ones turn into trolls, real live dragons showing up on the evening trid—all that and more now are part of our everyday life.

Some people might say we're back on track, back into our usual happy routine of slowly destroying ourselves and everything around us. But that's a load of drek. In the last century, do you think people considered installing direct neural implants in their bodies for job security, or had to worry about a neighbor incinerating them with a fireball over a parking dispute? You think they suffered anything comparable to the trauma of goblinizing into something their own families considered a beast? Did they worry about getting brain-fried if they wandered into the wrong end of a computer network, or that some astral peeping-tom might be watching what they were doing in the bedroom? Could they vote for a fragging dragon for President?

A lot of things have changed, but some things are still the same. Big business will still screw you as soon as look at you, and for those of us not working for the corps, crime is our meal ticket.

## **Slouching toward Apocalypse (1999-2010)**

The kickoff came with two Supreme Court rulings, made in 1999 and 2001 respectively, that set the stage for a world in which megacorporate octopi call the shots and use shadowrunners like so many pawns in their games. Megacorporations had begun to evolve in the 1980s and '90s, when merger fever had everyone from banks to defense contractors glomming together like so much gunk on bathroom tile. But the first real nails in the coffin of the old world were the Seretech and Shiawase decisions. The first one upheld Seretech Corporation's right to maintain an armed force for the protection of its personnel and property, effectively legitimizing private corp armies. The second had even worse consequences; it established corporate extraterritoriality, giving multinational corporations the same rights and privileges as foreign governments. (The Shiawase Decision owed its existence to a botched attack on a Shiawase, Inc. nuclear power plant by the radical eco-group TerraFirst! Evidence subsequently acquired by TerraFirst! that Shiawase had conspired with several other corps to stage the attack was destroyed when a bomb wrecked the group's California office and killed several key members. Probably a bomb planted by a shadowrunner. That's how things work in the Sixth World.)

## **The Resource Rush and Lone Eagle**

The world felt the consequences of the corps' newfound power and influence right away,

when a mass corporate land grab snarked off a bunch of Native American tribes and helped redraw the map of North America. Barely a year after the Shiawase Decision, the U.S. government sparked the Resource Rush, a corporate grabfest of natural resources from Indian reservations and federal parklands. A real sweet deal, it was; the gummint invoked eminent domain to bring property under its control, then licensed its exploitation to corporate sponsors. The land grab was the proverbial last straw for many Native Americans; we'd spent centuries taking everything away from them, and now the Great White Father was snatching at what little they had left. The more radical-minded founded the Sovereign American Indian Movement (SAIM) to fight the corporate takeovers.

The SAIM talked a good game, but didn't make much headway against cold, hard corp cash until 2009, when United Oil Industries acquired the petrochemical resources in one-tenth of the remaining Indian reservations. That acquisition was the spark that lit the flames. The SAIM responded by capturing a missile silo at the U.S. Air Force's Shiloh Launch Facility in northwest Montana, then threatened to launch the missiles unless the U.S. government and the corps that owned it returned all Indian land.

Predictably, no one really tried to settle the issue. Instead, the U.S. head honchos spent ten days pretending to negotiate and then sent in the Delta Team anti-terrorist squad. The "good guys" recaptured the silo, but not before someone sent a single Lone Eagle ICBM on a collision course with the Russian Republic. World War III was staring us in the face—and then the impossible happened. The warheads never hit. To this day, the truth as to why hasn't been uncovered. Did the Russkies' missile defenses work, or did we get a miracle? You tell me.

While all this was going down, of course, the Leaders of the Free World were keeping the folks who'd elected them in the dark about the planet's impending destruction. Once the heat was off, however, the Lone Eagle "incident" (as it came to be called—I love understatement) proved to be a propaganda boon in the dispute with the SAIM. When the public found out about it, Native Americans became pariahs just about everywhere. With a little help from corporate PR departments and a hyped-up national media, all Native Americans became scapegoats for SAIM. Before long, anti-Indian riots were breaking out nationwide.

The U.S. Congress, quick to pick up on poll numbers that showed Americans ranking Indians as less trustworthy than car salesmen, added to the xenophobic atmosphere by passing the Re-Education and Relocation Act just months after its introduction in late 2009. The Act called for the confinement of anyone connected in any way to SAIM. On the same day, Canada's Parliament passed the Nepean Act, legitimizing internment camps for Native Americans. Not surprisingly, abuses of both laws were rampant. Throughout 2010, thousands of innocent Native Americans got shipped off to "re-education centers" (my personal favorite euphemism for concentration camps). Many of them never returned.

An interesting spot of trouble cropped up in Texas that year as well—the only one that came close to hitting the real culprits behind the whole mess. A gang of unemployed, homeless workers stormed the Dallas HQ of United Oil Industries, demanding that the "fascist corporations" be held accountable for the city of Dallas' financial and crime-related

problems. The governor of Texas called in Texas Ranger Assault Teams, and after the smoke cleared, the Texas state legislature passed laws giving corporate security forces carte blanche in dealing with armed intruders. (So be sure to thank any Texans you know for helping usher in the era of "Shoot first, ask questions later" as a legally sanctioned operating procedure.) Around the world, other laws were being passed along similar lines, allowing the creation of urban militia units armed with military weaponry, and giving residents the right to contract private security firms to protect their communities with lethal force. That set the stage for the existence of Lone Star, the for-profit rent-a-cops that so many shadowrunners love to hate.

## **Japan, INC.**

The first decade of the new century also saw Japan re-emerge from its long recession as a major power, mostly because of its wealthy and rapacious corporations. (Yup, we're still not done trashing our modern-day robber barons.) In 2005, backed by Japanese corporate interests, South Korea declared war on North Korea. In early 2006, North Korea launched nukes at Japan in a desperate effort to force them out of the conflict. The missiles didn't detonate, however, and by the end of the year North Korea was overrun. Emboldened by the success of these maneuverings, Japan soon afterward proclaimed itself the Japanese Imperial State. It followed up by deploying the first of a fleet of solar-powered collection satellites to beam microwave energy to receptors on the Earth's surface. With this relatively cheap method of distributing power to isolated regions, Japan (read: the Japanacorps) began a virtual economic takeover of the Third World. The resurgence of Japan as a military power soon followed, as the people of the Philippines, San Francisco and elsewhere found out. But we'll get to that.

## **VITAS — the new black death**

All this paled, however, in the face of the VITAS plague. The first cases of Virally Induced Toxic Allergy Syndrome turned up in India in 2010; by the end of the year, the disease had claimed roughly a quarter of the world's population. People panicked; even the rich and well-cared-for could die of this scourge, and those still healthy resorted to any means necessary to stay that way. Mexico City suffered through one of the most brutal responses, which the locals call "Terror Time"; as the dead piled up in the streets, self-styled Citizens' Action Committees burned whole portions of the city as "a safety precaution."

## **2011 — The Year of Chaos**

As bad as VITAS was, there was worse to come. The year 2011—flagged by the ancient Mayans as the year in which the world would end and a new world emerge—saw more bizarre kinds of upheaval than any year before or since. It started off with a more usual kind of chaos—racial violence in Texas, as the dissolution of the Mexican government in January sent thousands of refugees across the Texas border. Then things got real strange, real fast. All over the world, "normal" parents started producing apparently mutant children—elves and dwarfs, the first metahumans. The scientists called this frightening phenomenon Unexplained Genetic Expression, or UGE. I guess they figured giving it a clinical-sounding name might calm people down ("Your kid's not a freak, he's just a UGE baby"), or at least

distract people from the unsettling fact that the medical community had no fragging idea what was causing it. Nobody realized that UGE was the first manifestation of magic in the world; no one knew then what magic looked like.

More magical incidents followed, piling up on top of one another like so many cars in a highway wreck. On December 24, hundreds of Japanese on a bullet train whizzing past Mount Fuji witnessed the first appearance of the great dragon Ryumyo. At precisely the same moment, Daniel Howling Coyote—the Native American shaman later dubbed the Prophet of the Great Ghost Dance, the architect of the guerrilla war against the U.S. government that gave rise to the Native American Nations (NAN)—led his followers out of the Abilene, Texas Re-Education Center. According to eyewitness accounts by camp guards, all the shots fired at Howling Coyote failed to touch him; several guards insisted that their bullets were stopped by "a glow" that surrounded the shaman as he took his first steps toward freedom for his people.

The magic changed weather patterns and landscapes in several places, too. In Australia, the first of many violent "mana storms" swept through the Outback and killed hundreds. In Ireland, western forests began growing rapidly for no apparent reason, and ancient Slighe roads, peat bogs and cairn lines began to re-emerge from the land. Across Great Britain, stone circles and standing stones erupted through the earth, forming patterns of sacred sites extending along known ley lines.

We didn't begin to realize what the hell had hit us until January 27, 2012, when the great dragon Dunkelzahn made his first appearance near Cherry Creek Lake in Denver. Reporters from all over fought for an exclusive, even as the military attempted to seal off the area. The winner was Holly Brighton, an early-evening weekend anchorwoman. The resulting interview—twelve hours and sixteen minutes of it—gave the world its first clue to the breadth and depth of the rise of magic that came to be called the Awakening.

## **If It's Tuesday, This Must Be The UCAS (2012–2018)**

## **Disasters-R-Us**

Which has done more damage so far—Man or Nature? You make the call!

**2003:** A flash flood in the North Sea region of Germany spreads toxic water everywhere. Hamburg is flooded in sewage, and several nuclear plants go through emergency shutdowns.

**2004:** In Great Britain, a nuclear meltdown in Kent creates a local irradiated zone and kills more than 6,000 people.

**2005:** A major earthquake rocks New York City, killing 200,000 and doing billions of nuyen worth of damage.

**2008:** A meteor impacts with the Mir II space platform (recently sold by the Russians to the Harris-3M corporation), killing two of the crew outright. The rest die later when Harris-3M fails to launch a rescue mission. (Nice folks, those 3M guys.)

**2009:** The French nuclear plant at Cattenom, on the German border, suffers a meltdown, contaminating Luxembourg, French Lorraine and German Saarland.

**2011:** A banner year. Hurricane-force winds push poisoned North Sea waters into the mouth of the Elbe River, bursting numerous dams and dikes. The flood washes away much of the Netherlands and buries large parts of Belgium, Germany and Denmark under toxic sludge. Heavy spring floods hit western England, landslides bury Wales and central Scotland suffers an earthquake. The natural disasters are followed by a string of toxic leaks from landfill sites and chemical spills into rivers. And to top it all off, two more nuke power plants in Great Britain suffer critical meltdowns, killing thousands.

**2016:** A gang of terrorists causes a major oil spill in the North Sea that penetrates more than 20 miles inland, creating the Scottish Fringe Toxic Zone.

**2028:** A major earthquake rocks Los Angeles, destroying LAX.

**2039:** A massive chemical spill in the Teeside district of London kills more than 70,000 people.

The world barely had time to catch its breath when a wave of secessions hit. The first and most significant for the people of the United States and Canada was the formation of the Native American Nations, announced by Daniel Howling Coyote in 2014. Not to be outdone, in 2015 the newly elected president of Mexico renamed his country Aztlan and called for all Hispanic peoples to "join in reclaiming our glorious cultural heritage." That rhetoric glossed over the sordid reality that Aztlan was actually a shiny new toy for ORO Corporation to play with, because ORO had the Mexican president and his government in its pocket. (ORO would later become Aztechnology, one of the most feared megacorps of our modern day, with Aztlan as its wholly owned subsidiary.)

## The Indian War and the great ghost dance

The NAN, a coalition of tribes headed by a body known as the Sovereign Tribal Council, laid claim to all of North America and ordered all Anglos out under pain of dire magical retribution. (By "Anglos," of course, they meant everyone of African and Asian as well as European ancestry. I guess all us non-Natives started looking alike to them ... .) Despite all the bizarre magical drek the world had just lived through, no one believed the threat was real ... until Redondo Peak in New Mexico erupted and buried Los Alamos. Almost immediately afterward, Howling Coyote appeared in a vid-cast from a nearby Zuñi reservation and claimed credit for "invoking our Mother Earth to punish the children who forsook Her." Within an hour of the broadcast, the Sixth Air Cavalry Battalion took off from Fort Hood, Texas, only to be destroyed by sudden, violent tornadoes. This incident marked the official beginning of the NAN guerrilla war.

The NAN conflict swiftly degenerated into a debacle for the U.S. government, which reacted with predictable harshness. President Garrety was no friend to the Native Americans, and his successor was even worse. In 2016, a no-hoper named William Springer cacked Garrety and cleared the way for his veep, William Jarman, to park his butt in the Big Chair. Jarman celebrated his unexpected accession to high office by issuing the now-infamous Executive Order 17-321, calling for the extermination of all Native American tribes. One month later, Congress gleefully ratified the

**2042:** The Zeta-Impchem corporation is exposed in the Polydopa scandal; seems they'd been dumping neurotoxins in central Africa for the past four years. Net result: 4,000 deaths and 35,000 cases of irreversible brain damage.

**2051:** A major earthquake hits the San Francisco Bay area.

**2053:** A United Oil tanker dumps millions of gallons of petrochemicals into Boston Harbor. The marine life that survives is mutated beyond recognition.

## Wyrms Turns

Here be a brief description of ye olde dragons at work and play:

**2012:** The great dragon Lofwyr appears in Germany and makes his first moves toward becoming a major corporate player.

**2020:** In response to a jihad declared against the emerging metahuman races by Iran's ruling Ayatollah, the dragon Aden demolishes the city of Tehran.

**2039:** The great dragon Dunkelzahn's second interpreter resigns and is replaced by Nadja Daviar, an Eastern European elf with no personal history on file. (And I mean nothing. Lots of us have been looking.)

**2041:** EuroAir Flight 329 from London to Atlanta is destroyed over the Atlantic. A garbled last transmission and recovered tapes indicate that the aircraft was attacked by a dragon (later identified tentatively as Sirurg), and that one heroic passenger held the beast off for several minutes with sorcery before the flight's demise.

**2042:** Dunkelzahn launches "Wyrms Talk," a semi-annual vid program. Topics range from celebrity interviews to insightful commentaries on culture and society. (Catch the reruns on Channel 62 in Seattle.)

**2053:** Tir Tairngire attempts to capture Shasta Dam in northern California, but the great dragon Hestaby forces the

order with the Resolution Act of 2016. The battle lines were drawn, leaving not so much as a scrap of hope for a peaceful settlement.

elven troops to withdraw. Hestaby takes possession of the dam and the surrounding land.

Howling Coyote responded with the most effective weapon in his arsenal: magic. Over the following year, Coyote and his people—and later, Native Americans all across the continent—began the magical ritual known as the Great Ghost Dance. The Dance raised vast amounts of magical power, which the Native Americans turned against their enemies. As the U.S. government moved to implement the Resolution Act, freak weather and other uncanny disturbances disrupted military bases and supply dumps assigned to the operation. The havoc reached its height on August 17, 2017, when Mount Hood, Mount Rainier, Mount St. Helens and Mount Adams all erupted in cataclysmic fury. The suddenness and extent of the devastation finally convinced even the most skeptical boneheads that the magic was real and that the Indians were serious. As one oft-quoted wit from the time put it, "Mother Earth let us know whose side she was on, and it wasn't ours."

## The Treaty Of Denver

The question then became what to do next. Annihilating the Injuns suddenly didn't look so simple, so the governments of the U.S. and Canada had to think of something else—like talking. In 2018, leaders of the U.S. and Canada grudgingly met the leaders of the NAN in Denver to talk peace. The guest list included Aztlan, which had received a seat on the Sovereign Tribal Council in return for providing assistance and safe havens to NAN forces.

Over three long and contentious months, the participants hammered out the Treaty of Denver, which acknowledged the sovereignty of the NAN over most of western North America. Provisions included the establishment of reservations for non-tribals and corporations, the maintenance of cities like Seattle as extraterritorial extensions of various governments and the retention of most of California by the United States. Denver became the "Treaty City," under joint administration by the signing parties. This arrangement made almost nobody happy, though in subsequent years it turned Denver into a smuggler's paradise. (T-bird jockeys love the place. So many borders, so much to sneak across them ... who could ask for anything more?)

## Welcome To Our World (2018–2029)

### Magic on the Cutting Edge

Here's a few tidbits I found interesting:

**2021:** Sheila Blatavska establishes the Atlantean Foundation, which advocates "a return to the enlightened days of Atlantis" (whatever they might be).

**2025:** UCLA establishes the first undergraduate program in occult studies. Within three years, similar programs are established at Texas A & M, University of Chicago, MIT (renamed "MIT&M," for "and Magic"), Oxford, Edinburgh University and several universities in Germany.

**2039:** In Charleston, South Carolina, a serial killer is captured after the detective-mage handling the case studies the ghost of one of the killer's victims. The ghost's actions reveal sources of evidence that lead to the murderer's arrest and conviction. (And yes, it held up in court.)

**2053:** Newly published magical theorems describe the anchoring skill, which allows a mage to cast a spell that won't go off until specific circumstances trigger it.

**2054, Part I:** In Boston, a team of scholars and archaeologists report a major archaeological find 130 miles off the coast of Crete. The expedition, funded by the Atlantean Foundation, discovers a treasure trove of artifacts in

In the hallowed halls of scientific research, however, all this turmoil was nothing more than faint sound and fury. While everyone else was packing up and moving cross-country or dealing with the strangeness of having a kid who looked like something out of a Tolkien novel, the techno-geeks were busy creating a few things that would have a greater impact on the Sixth World than almost anything else: simsense and cyberware.

In the same year that the politicians signed the Treaty of Denver, Dr. Hosato Hikita of Chicago-based ESP Systems, Inc. created the first-generation ASIST (Artificial Sensory Induction System) technology. The entertainment industry went wild exploiting the commercial aspects of simsense, starting us down the road to a world in which people could get addicted to simsense chips in lieu of chemical mindbenders. Other researchers saw the new tech as a key to containing the data explosion, which had been going on nonstop since the last two decades of the twentieth century.

Not quite a year later, Transys Corporation announced the successful implantation of the first cyberlimb in a human being—specifically, the left hand of a virtuoso violinist who'd lost her meat original in a freak accident while debarking from a bullet train. Transys just happened to be experimenting with a new type of extra-sensitive prosthetic, a cyberhand whose electronic components could link directly into the nervous system and thereby allow better fine-motor control than any other artificial limb. Less than two years after the accident, Leonora Bartoli was once again the toast of the world's concert stages. The cyberware revolution had begun.

Other developments as the teens drew to a close included the appearance of Lone Star Security Services in Corpus Christi, Texas, which became the first city to contract full-service, city-wide law enforcement with a private agency; the transformation of the old U.S. space station Freedom into the Zurich-Orbital Space Habitat; and the official founding of the Seattle Metroplex, with Seattle Mayor Charles C. Lindstrom as governor. The conflicts and chaos seemed to be behind us, and everyone breathed a sigh of relief as the new decade dawned.

We had no idea what was waiting in the wings.

## **Goblinization**

On April 30, 2021, all over the world, one out of every ten adults suddenly metamorphosized into hideous humanoid shapes. Soon the phenomenon started to afflict children; some were born "monsters," while others changed soon after puberty. The media, with its unerring instinct for sensational buzzwords, dubbed the process "goblinization." Before long, the afflicted were called "orks" and "trolls" after the creatures from fantasy that they resembled.

an area known to history as the location of the island of Thera, which may be the site of lost Atlantis. (Or may just be a rock in the ocean.) Experts dismiss allegations that the artifacts are magical in nature.

**2054, Part II:** A doozy of a year in Tir Tairngire. First off, some slag named Lacrima—a self-styled "mage-historian"—declares that the exact date of the volcanic eruption that formed Crater Lake in Tir Tairngire is July 22, 3454 B.C. A few weeks later, the Tir military seals off Crater Lake. A Sioux-registered airbus that blunders into the region suffers engine failure and crashes, with no survivors.



The earlier wave of UGE had been frightening enough; goblinization reduced just about everyone to either gibbering terror or vicious fits of hatefulness toward the victims. Fearing that it might be contagious, governments all over the world begin rounding up metahumans and their families. In North America, the bulk of these unfortunates got shoved into the same camps that had once held Native Americans, and they fared just about as well. The Japanese Empire went us one better, forcibly relocating metahumans to the godforsaken island of Yomi in the Philippines. Meanwhile, race riots wracked the globe on a scale never before seen. The smart or the lucky among the world's metahumans went into hiding—underground, into the wilderness, or in communities of their own kind. The unlucky died in droves. The U.S. government declared martial law for months in a futile attempt at control, but things didn't really calm down until a new wave of VITAS swept the planet in late 2022. This outbreak claimed another 10 percent of the world's population, briefly uniting human and metahuman in fear.

### **In Other News...**

The lull wouldn't last, of course. It never does. A warning sign of things to come was the founding of the Humanis Policlub, as nasty a collection of human-supremacist bigots as ever was, in 2023—the same year that the U.S. Supreme Court granted metahuman races equal protection under the law (to the extent that any slag without meganuyen can claim it, anyway). By 2046, Humanis had built a major following, and I'm sorry to say it's still going strong. But for the moment, race hatred had subsided to a slow simmer and we could all marvel at the other weird and wacky events of the millennial century's second decade.

Lone Star took over law enforcement in the Seattle Metroplex in 2025, after the Seattle Police Department had the bad judgment to go on strike. The governor declared the strike illegal, fired them all and hired the cop corp to police the streets. They've been there ever since and in dozens more places across North America, making life miserable for the honest crook. On the political front, in 2029 scads of elves in Salish-Shidhe territory moved to the Mount Rainier area and declared themselves a separate tribe called the Sinsearach. This event would have momentous consequences before too many more years passed, but at the time no one much noticed except a few who said "Good riddance" to the migrating metahumans.

And then there came the techno revolution. The mid-2020s saw sales of the first simsense entertainment unit, offering the user rudimentary sense impressions. The experimental

## **This Modern Life**

Some of the techno-breakthroughs that made the world what it is today:

**2002:** The first optical chip that can stand up to electromagnetic pulse effects is constructed. Welcome to the data revolution!

**2025:** Cyberware comes to professional sports; the first cyber-modified players enter the NFL. (Their teams lost. Go figure.)

**2026:** Nerps goes on the market. Need we say more?

**2037:** New-and-improved simsense gear can broadcast emotive signals. Say hello to chipheads and BTL dealers. If it's Better-Than-Life, it's got to be good!

**2037:** The Denver Data Haven comes out of the closet and into the shadows. And we're not going to say anything more, on the grounds that it may tend to incriminate us. So there.

**2052:** In the New-And-Better-Ways-To-Frag-Yourself-Over department, 2XS—a chip lots more potent and addictive than your average BTL—hits the streets. This sucker works on the body through what it does to the mind. Nasty.

"remote-vote" system was up and running for the 2024 U.S. presidential election, though opponents of re-elected-by-a-landslide President Jarman had their doubts about how well it worked. Nobody paid much attention to claims of fraud, however. Nobody wanted to hear it; after all we'd just been through, most people just wanted the world to calm down and everything to be okay.

The breakthrough that did the most to make our wired-up world what it is today came between 2026 and 2029, when Sony Cybersystems, Fuchi Industrial Electronics and RCA-Unisys all developed prototype cyberterminals that allowed users to interface with the world data network via the central nervous system. You whiz-kid electron jockeys nowadays, surfing the datastreams with cyberdecks barely the size of an old-fashioned computer keyboard, wouldn't have recognized these granddaddies of your favorite toys. The first cyberterminals were huge isolation chambers with multi-contact point jacks and multiple hook-ups for the operator, designed for military- and corporate-intelligence super hackers. The first volunteers to use them went mad, which the corps and the military took as a scandalous waste of training dollars. Over the next few years, various R&D gurus refined the technology and made it safer, much to the glee of certain agencies in the US gummint. The CIA, NSA and IRS pooled their resources to exploit cyberterminals as quickly as they could manage, recruiting and training a team of "cyber-commandos" under the code name Echo Mirage.

And not a moment too soon, as it happened.

## **The Crash Of '29**

On February 8, 2029, computer systems across the world got hit with apparently random attacks by a virus nastier than anything ever seen before. System after system crashed, their data wiped clean and even their hardware burned out. As the killer program spread, governments toppled and the world economy neared collapse. The virus shattered the Grid, the data network that held the world together. We were back on the road to apocalypse, this time via the virtual world—unless someone could stop the bug.

Echo Mirage swung into action almost immediately by presidential order, but the psychological demands of combat in cyberspace overwhelmed the mostly straight-arrow, linear-thinking agents. So the folks in charge recruited the most brilliant data-processing mavericks from industry and several universities, ramming them through a brutal training program. Thirty-two men and women graduated with their sanity intact.

In August, armed with improved cybertech, the new Echo Mirage team mounted a coordinated attack on the killer program. Eighteen minutes after engaging the virus, four members of Echo Mirage were dead. The data logs showed that the virus program induced lethal biofeedback in humans accessing the Matrix, and also that no existing computer security could even slow down someone using a cyberterminal. Horrified at the ease with which Echo Mirage had penetrated their most secure data systems, the corporations began secret research to develop new security software—including, of course, programs that could duplicate the lethal effects of the virus. To these hardworking wage slaves we owe the wonderful world of the modern-day Matrix ... including such charms as tar-baby programs

that glom onto your programs and reduce them to so much useless sludge, and killer intrusion countermeasures ("black ice") meant to brainfry the unwary. (Yep, it's a wonderful virtual world.)

But back to Echo Mirage. Equipped with new combat programs and beefed-up cyberterminals that used desk-sized hardware and needed no sensory deprivation tank, the remaining Echo Mirage team began purging the Grid of infection. Late in 2031, Echo Mirage wiped out the last known concentration of the virus code. Shortly afterward, four of the surviving seven members decamped into the private sector, taking with them the secrets of the new technology. To this day no one is sure just where they turned up (though some of us have our suspicions).

## Secession And War (2030–2037)

The Crash destabilized a large chunk of the world, which realigned itself with greater or lesser degrees of accompanying violence during most of the decade that followed. The U.S.-Canada merger went more smoothly than most; the Crash had done so much economic damage to both countries that it made sense for them to combine, and the few protests went largely unheeded. On October 15, 2030, the remnants of the U.S. and Canada—minus the ceded NAN lands, of course—officially became the United Canadian and American States (UCAS). The only place where opponents of the union got a respectful hearing was in California, which held a referendum on secession from the UCAS. The first of many, as it turned out. Before long, the secessionists got their wish, though not exactly in the way they likely hoped. It's one thing to leave under your own steam, quite another to be kicked out on your hoop. (Plenty of UCASers were glad to see California go; by their book, it's always been too crazy to bother with. But I'm getting ahead of myself.)

Elsewhere in the world, things didn't go so well.

Awakened forces seized control of Siberia, much to the Russkies' chagrin. Russia's western neighbors seemed to appreciate the move, however, and Belarus and the Ukraine tried to secede in 2031. The Russians, who were getting their hoops kicked by Siberian magic and were starved for resources, figured they had to regain control of their western border and rolled in the troops. Inevitably, Poland got involved, and when the Russians stepped on them, so did a lot of other countries. It all exploded in a conflict that would last for more than a dozen years, predictably dubbed the Euro-Wars. The hard-core fighting only lasted until 2033, however, when one of the weirdest incidents of this century nipped it in the bud.

In the dead of night on January 23, 2033, Swedish airspace monitors detected several flights of what they took to be British Aerospace Nightwraith fighter-bombers streaking across

## New Nations: Keeping Score

The following events contributed to the collective nervous breakdown of the world's atlas manufacturers in the middle decades of the century:

**2018:** China erupts in civil war, from which emerges the states of Manchuria, Xinjiang, Guangxi, the Canton Confederation and numerous others.

**2022:** Cuba, Jamaica, Grenada, Bermuda and the Virgin Islands join together to form the Caribbean League.

**2030:** Ghouls from all over Africa migrate to northern Ghana, where the ghoulish nation of Asamando is founded. (The latest hot spot for tourists?)

**2040:** Southern Africa finally settles into its current Azanian Alliance, composed of the Cape Republic, Oranje-Vrystaat, the Trans-Swazi Federation and the Zulu Nation.

**2045:** After decades of secessions and infighting, more than fourteen separate states form the German Alliance.

northern Europe. In short order, the aircraft obliterated key communications and command centers belonging to all sides. That same night, unknown assassins nailed more than a dozen key commanders. The combatants announced a cease-fire the following day. (Neither the Brits nor anyone else ever claimed responsibility for the Nightwraith strike; in fact, every single government that might plausibly have been involved made a point of publicly denying it. Whodunit remains a mystery to this day.)

The Americas' turn came in 2034, when a force of Awakened beings and metahumans led by three great dragons descended on the Amazon basin. After a short and bloody conflict, Brazilian forces ceded most of the Amazon basin to the invaders. Two days later, the newly declared nation of Amazonia, self-proclaimed savior of the eco-sphere, claimed most of Brazil. They've been quiet down there since (too quiet, according to a lot of people who regularly post to this BBS). Turmoil also erupted north of the equator when Aztlán resigned from the Sovereign Tribal Council to protest its members' constant internal squabbling. That move made it no friends in the NAN, which censured Aztlán for its treatment of aboriginal peoples. Scenting an opportunity in this family quarrel, the Texas State Legislature began agitating for a military venture to recover lands lost to Aztlán.

And then there were the southerners. Lots of them had never forgotten the South's brief existence as a sovereign nation, and the 2030s gave diehard lovers of the old Confederacy a chance to resurrect it yet again. In 2033, led by senators from Alabama and Georgia, legislators from the southern states staged a mass walkout that threatened to derail the ongoing merger of the United States and Canada. Delegates from ten southern states met to discuss secession, and though they ultimately decided against it, the seed had been sown. A year later, to protest what they saw as preferential treatment for northern sprawl zones, these states broke away to form the Confederated American States (CAS).

Everyone expected a second Civil War to break out, but we got lucky. Despite emotions running high on both sides, most military units dealt with their divided loyalties by splitting up and moving to the country of their choice. Interestingly, the Sovereign State of South Florida chose to join the recently formed Caribbean League rather than the CAS.

And then came the elven nations—Tír na nÓg and Tir Tairngire, in Europe and North America respectively. A few other metahuman races have founded their own little countries since, but the elves did it first and most thoroughly. (Ask any dwarf or ork or troll how hard it is to get permission just to visit the two Tirs; they'll talk for a week and still not be done describing all the official roadblocks.) The elves of Ireland led the way, proclaiming the foundation of a new nation after the impeachment of Ireland's president over a vast corruption scandal. In an emotional Christmas Day broadcast in 2034, politician extraordinaire Seamus O'Kennedy announced the transformation of plain old Ireland into Tír na nÓg, an elven nation steeped in "the grace of magic, our Celtic heritage and our destiny in the Sixth World" (to quote the man himself).

The Sinsearach elves —remember them? —took their cue from their Irish cousins and announced the birth of Tir Tairngire (the Land of Promise) in 2035. Simultaneously, they seceded from the NAN. After driving off Salish-Shidhe troops, the leaders of Tir Tairngire then settled down to the business of putting their elven paradise in order. They created the

Council of Princes to run the place, with Lugh Surehand as High Prince. Originally all elven, over the next two years the Council admitted other metahumans as members, including the dragon Lofwyr. (Given that many elves trust dragons about as far as they can throw them, you've got to wonder just how many skeletons Lofwyr threatened to yank out of whose closets. But that's another story.)

The wave of secessions finally ended in 2037, when California became the California Free State in spite of itself. This particular comedy of errors began in 2036, when President McAlister kicked California out of the UCAS and withdrew all federal forces from the state in response to its latest secession threat. Tir Tairngire lost no time mounting a surprise attack on Northern California, rolling all the way south of Redding with infantry and air support aided by paranimals, combat mages and allegedly at least two dragons. The victorious Tir army demanded that all non-elves leave the captured area within thirty days, to which the good citizens of Northern Cal said "Frag you." Guerrilla resistance sprang up like wildfire, and soon forced the Tir troops to pull back to Yreka. The land between Yreka and Redding remains a buffer zone, claimed by both sides.

But California's troubles weren't over yet. Simultaneously with the Tir assault, Aztlan struck northward into the Free State and captured San Diego. California's governor then made the supremely boneheaded move of appealing to the Japanese for military aid, hoping to shame the CAS or UCAS into sending troops. The Japanese sent aid, all right—in the form of Imperial Japanese Marines, who took control of San Francisco to "protect Japanese lives and corporate assets" in the Bay Area. A council of Japanese megacorps soon asserted control over the city, turning Greater San Fran into Tokyo by the Bay.

## Corporate Machinations (2033–2048)

As the thirties rolled on into the 2040s, the megacorporate landscape gradually came to resemble the one we know and love today. The first of our current major players to burst onto the scene was Damien Knight, who made his debut with the famous Nanosecond Buyout of Ares Industries in 2033. Before the buyout, no one had ever heard of this guy; afterward, no one could stop talking about him, mostly speculating on how he'd pulled off the feat. Using a series of expertly programmed computers in Stockholm, Sweden, Knight executed a series of transactions so complicated that only another computer could read them. By the end of the minute it took for the whole deal to go down, three corporations had ceased to exist, two multi-millionaires lost their fortunes, three other people became multi-millionaires, and Damien Knight had acquired 22 percent of Ares. That put him in the same league, control-wise, as CEO Leonard Aurelius. The two men loathed each other on sight, and the history of Ares for the past twenty-seven

### Have Yourself A Free City

The following sprawls consider themselves independent geopolitical entities. Some are run by anarchists, others by corps:

**Free City of Hamburg:** Flooded badly in 2011, but the corps and smugglers rebuilt it and kept it alive.

**Hong Kong Free Enterprise Zone:** Won their independence from China in 2015, thanks to Triad and corp backing.

**Independent City of Sekondi:** Became an extraterritorial corporate enclave in 2023, used by several corps engaged in exploiting West Africa.

**Free City of Kronstadt:** In 2034, a coalition of criminals, anarchists and mutineering military officers seized control of this Russian city and managed to keep it.

**Berlin:** Abandoned by the German government during heavy riots; anarchists took over in 2037.

years has been a laundry list of their attempts to somehow bring each other down.

At around the same time, the company that would later become the North American branch of Fuchi Industrial Electronics acquired one of the major pieces of its future empire, under decidedly mysterious circumstances. In May of 2034, a two-horse corp named Matrix Systems of Boston came out with the first gray-market cyberterminal. Six weeks later, the company's main computer crashed and its two founders died in apparently unrelated accidents. Now it just so happened that Richard Villiers, a corporate raider with a reputation for ruthlessness, had bought himself a 49-percent stake in Matrix Systems the year before, and only settled for that because the company's founders wouldn't let him buy the whole thing outright. After their deaths, Villiers bought the company for pennies. One month after the computer crash, who but Richard Villiers should contact Fuchi—then owned by a pair of Japanese partners—with copies of the very Matrix Systems research data that was supposedly lost forever? The data enabled him to buy his way into Fuchi, eventually becoming one of that corp's ruling triumvirate.

Third on the list of corporate players to emerge was the great dragon Lofwyr, who in 2037 made the startling announcement that he owned 63 percent of Saeder-Krupp stock (the backbone of the BMW corporate empire). The big wyrm used it to vote himself into the chairmanship of the board, then name himself president and CEO of BMW. He changed its name to the Saeder-Krupp Corporation, and the rest (as they say) is history.

The final player on the scorecard was Yamatetsu Corporation, which didn't manage to break in to the "Big Seven" until 2041. This "upstart," as some of the older corps persist in calling it, made determined efforts throughout that year to snag itself a seat on the Corporate Court and on the board of the Zurich-Orbital Gemeinschaft Bank. Despite fierce opposition, Yamatetsu had carved out its niche by 2042, turning the Big Seven into the Big Eight.

## **Humans And Metas — From Bad To Worse (2036–2046)**

While all the above corporate shenanigans were going down, life for ordinary people was going to Hell in the proverbial handbasket—again. Human-metahuman relations, uneasy at the best of times, were reaching rock bottom and starting to dig. The year 2036 opened with the napalm fire-bombing of a town in rural Ohio that claimed twenty lives, most of them metahumans. A group calling itself Alamos 20,000 claimed responsibility; over the next fifteen years, Alamos would be linked to the deaths of more than a thousand

**New York:** All shook up by Momma Earth in 2005, NYC got rebuilt by the corps in exchange for certain concessions that left the tycoons effectively running the place.

**Free State of Konigsberg:** In the chaos of the Euro-Wars, the corps somehow bought themselves a city and enough land to make a small country, which they've since developed into a sophisticated haven.

**Los Angeles:** The CalFree State and LA bigwigs decided they didn't want to deal with each other in 2046, and LA went solo. Since then, various mouthpiece leaders have been dancing to corporate hymns.

## **Show Me The Money**

No history of the 21st century could be complete without a history of corporate doings—the good, the bad and the ugly.

**2005:** The East Coast Stock Exchange moves to Boston from NYC in the aftermath of the New York quake. (Which wouldn't matter a damn, except that Boston will soon be the ol' hometown of a corporate shark named Richard Villiers ... )

metahumans and humans who didn't happen to share Alamos' bigotry.

Similar attitudes, though less violently expressed, made themselves felt in the 14th Amendment to the UCAS Constitution. Ratified that same year, the amendment established the System Identification Number (SIN) and required the registration of every UCAS citizen. People without SINS were defined as "probationary citizens," with sharply limited rights. (Yup, Mr. Pinkie Shadowrunner Wannabe, that means you.) The amendment made species other than homo sapiens eligible for—you guessed it—probationary citizenship. Full citizenship to such "undesirables" could be granted only by act of Congress. (Not a single application actually was granted until 2056, when the late, lamented Dunkelzahn got the nod.)

Over the next three years, hate crimes against metahumans escalated. They reached a peak on February 7, 2039, aptly known ever afterward as the Night of Rage. Thousands of metahumans, friends of metas and metahuman wannabes (ah, the wonders of cosmetic surgery!) died in worldwide riots. In many cities, metahumans were rounded up and detained under armed guard "for their own protection." In Seattle, the warehouses doubling as detention centers on the docks were attacked and burned by Hand of Five terrorists. The Metroplex Guard did nothing to stop the blaze, and hundreds died.

Three days later, some Alamos 20,000 thugs used explosives and magic to destroy the supports of the Sears Tower in Chicago, sending the building crashing to the street during a weekday lunch hour. The falling debris destroyed blocks' worth of buildings, streets and sidewalks, crushing thousands of people and rupturing gas lines. No one has rebuilt in the years since; the ghosts of the dead are said to haunt the area, and the increasing presence of ghouls there earned it the name "Shattergraves." The rest of the Loop was likewise left to rot, and eventually became an underworld haven.

More killing took place in Boston, on a day later known as Bloody Tuesday. During the St. Patrick's Day March, the Knights of the Red Branch detonated a bomb in a popular elven restaurant along the parade route, killing

**2015–2016:** The orbit of the U.S. space station Freedom begins to decay.

Scientists predict that it will burn up in Earth's atmosphere within two years. In 2016, Ares Industries purchases NASA from the United States government, re-stabilizes Freedom's orbit and begins expanding its facilities. They also team up with Lloyds of London and begin salvaging non-functioning satellites.

**2020:** The World Bank, suffering from financial problems, is replaced by Global Financial Services, a Zurich-based financial corporation. (There's a point to this one. Wait for it.)

**2020:** Ares Industries unveils its new space platform, Apollo.

**2032–2033:** The Corporate Court takes over Global Financial Services. It moves GFS to the Zurich-Orbital Habitat and renames it the Zurich-Orbital Gemeinschaft Bank. (Told ya there was a point.)

**2036:** Fuchi Industrial becomes the first major corp to market its own third-generation cyberdeck, the desktop CDT-1000.

**2037:** DocWagon is founded in Atlanta, Georgia. It promises to provide better emergency on-site medical care by responding to calls much faster than any other private paramedical service. (Best health care money can buy.)

**2039:** Fuchi sponsors the Universal Matrix Specifications Conference in Tokyo. More than 7,000 humans and metahumans meet for three months to determine the details of Matrix programming. (That's where we got all that boring generic imagery from.)

**2040:** Construction begins on the Renraku Arcology in Seattle.

**2046:** Three megacorporations—Aztechnology, Shiawase and Universal Omnitech—announce that they have fully decoded the mundane segments of the human/metahuman genome.

**2048:** The Corp Court earns its pay. After the Aztlan government nationalizes all foreign businesses, the corps strike back with Operation Reciprocity, a combined corporate military strike on Aztechnology troops in Ensenada. Shortly afterward, Aztlan negotiates the Veracruz Settlement, which compensates the other corps for assets

twenty-four and injuring dozens more. The parade degenerated into a race riot that engulfed the Boston metroplex. By the time the authorities managed to get things somewhat under control, hundreds of people were dead or injured.

In what looked like the only bright spot of the 2040s (shows how much we knew), the Universal Brotherhood opened up shop: in California in 2042 and in Seattle in 2045. A humanitarian organization that preached group consciousness and love for one's fellow sentient—human, metahuman, whatever—the UB was one of the only voices that seemed to be speaking out for tolerance, compassion and other such sweetness and light. Some distrusted them right off the bat, just out of habit; those of us born and raised in this brave new Sixth World had learned young not to trust anything. But most people, if they thought about it at all, saw the Brotherhood as a harmless bunch of do-gooders.

They were wrong, of course. We wouldn't find out just how wrong until more than a decade after the Brotherhood's first appearance.

### **Life on the Cutting Edge (2049–2060)**

As the 21st century spun toward and beyond the halfway point, every trend that had marked the new world intensified. Technology developed faster than we could keep up with, war reared its head around the globe and new magical phenomena seemed to crop up every time we thought we'd figured the whole magic thing out.

Tech-wise, Renraku developed the first semi-autonomous knowbot (SK), an expert system program with a sophisticated holographic neural network, in 2049. Cyber- and biotechnology continued to advance throughout the '50s as more and more people chose to distance themselves from the frailties of the flesh. By 2052, bioware—organic implants less invasive than cyberware—had turned up on the public market, and swiftly became popular among those with the cred to afford them. (Street grunts like the slags reading this board, who often needed fancy 'ware to survive the dangers of doing business but couldn't afford the good stuff, tended to settle for secondhand vat jobs, and suffered their attendant messy complications.)

On the war front, 2050 saw an uprising in the Campeche District of Aztlan. Aztechnology decided to teach the rebels a lesson, and ordered its corp security to slaughter hundreds of unarmed civilians. That taught them something, all right, though not what the corp/government honchos wanted. The carnage sparked a major rebellion, which is still going strong and which has provided dozens of runners interested in mercenary work with lucrative (if highly dangerous) contracts. The fighting kicked off in 2051 with successful

lost during nationalization and permits them to play in Aztechnology's sandbox as long as the major shareholders of "foreign" subsidiaries are Aztlan citizens. In the same year, the Panama Canal becomes a Pan-Corporate Zone under the authority of the Corporate Court.

**2052:** In an attempt to gain a controlling share of Fuchi stock, the Yamana family plays several trump cards to plunge the stock price. As they buy up stock at an astounding rate, the Virtual Stock Exchange in Chiba, Japan crashes in the middle of trading. The takeover attempt fails.

**2053:** Proteus Corp completes construction of two "arkoblocks" (offshore arcologies) in Japan, followed by four more in four years in the polluted North Sea.

**2057:** Proteus completes another North Sea arkoblock, as well as a space-launching arcology on Devil's Island in French Guyana.



strikes on strategic sites in the Yucatan peninsula, which remains a rebel stronghold.

Things weren't all bad, though. In 2052, Seattle got a fat influx of cred when Tir Tairngire negotiated for the use of its ports and started sending bucketsful of trade goods through the metroplex. Later that year, UCAS President Adams died suddenly, and Vice President Thomas Steele moved up to the Big Office. Which didn't matter a damn to anybody at the time, except that Steele's Technocratic Party seemed to be doing OK by the economy (for those with SINS, that is). And the Universal Brotherhood—remember them?—was doing a booming business, opening up branches all over the globe. Yep, things were looking up.

But not for long.

## **Bug City**

OK, who here hasn't heard of insect spirits—those nasty giant bugs with mondo magical power that we've all come to know and loathe? Raise your virtual hands, kids. No one? Thought so. In 2055, the UCAS FBI found out that the bugs were using the Seattle UB as a front to recruit hosts and summon more bug spirits. Needless to say, the Feds started shutting down the UB's installations quicker than a hyper-wired street samurai can fire a smartlinked Ceska Scorpion. But did they tell anyone what they knew? Of course not. Can't start a panic among the sheep, now can we? Instead, they fed misinformation about UB financial corruption to the media. Authorities in plenty of other major cities soon followed suit, after the blizzard of missing-persons reports among society's down-and-outers became too large to ignore. Subsequent investigations determined that insect spirits had established hives in lots more cities than Seattle. Across the board, authorities publicly discredited and arrested UB executives for alleged illegal deeds while secretly wiping out the hives in commando-style raids. Incidents of "unmotivated terrorist violence" against the UB rose dramatically, until it was shut down worldwide in 2056.

Unfortunately, by that time it was too late for the city of Chicago. An Ares investigative team discovered a major hive there, possibly the largest in North America, and sent in a small army of Knight Errant Security personnel to deal with it. KE botched the job, however, sending bug spirits flooding across the city. UCAS authorities walled off a huge chunk of Chicago, calling it the Containment Zone and serving up a bulldrek story about another possible VITAS outbreak. Wild rumors—accurate, as it turned out—flew around cyberspace that an Ares force trapped inside the Zone had detonated a subtactical nuke inside the main hive on Cermak Street. Luckily for the surviving Chicagoans (or maybe not, depending on your point of view), the Cermak Blast, as it came to be called, was mysteriously contained. For the next three years, however, Chicago's fate was sealed. Swarms of insect spirits terrorized the place, while various opportunists with heavy weapons christened themselves warlords and began consolidating power in different neighborhoods inside the Zone.

## **Election Fever**

The 2056 election put President Steele back in the White House, but not for long. In early 2057, evidence came to light that the '56 contest was rigged. Scandal rocked the UCAS, Steele and VP Booth were impeached, and President Pro Tem Betty Jo Pritchard called for a

new election. All this likely wouldn't have mattered much to the average shadowrunner, what with us being SINless and therefore unable to vote without using a fake ID. But then the great dragon Dunkelzahn declared his intention to run, and suddenly politics got real interesting. They got even more interesting in July, when candidate General Franklin Yeats was found murdered in a hotel room. Investigators later determined that his assassin was an FBI agent possessed by a wasp spirit.

After eight months of hard campaigning, Dunkelzahn won the election. That pissed someone off big-time, and whoever it was decided to take action. On the night of his inauguration, the new president was assassinated when an explosion engulfed his limo. The blast tore open an astral rift above the murder site, which is still there. All attempts to investigate it have failed; the mages who try end up dead or insane.

Riots engulfed the UCAS upon word of the dragon's death; we're still dealing with the aftereffects. Upon his swearing-in as president, former VP-elect Kyle Haeffner nominated Nadja Daviar, the "voice of Dunkelzahn," to fill his veep shoes. Shortly after her own swearing-in, Daviar revealed the existence and contents of Dunkelzahn's will in a major press conference. The will provided for the establishment of the Draco Foundation to administer all bequests, with Daviar as chairman of the board, and also for the creation of the Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research, with a board made up of the best magical minds available. The will was a master stroke of manipulation from beyond the grave; it put two brand-new, well-financed players on the scene and shook up the status quo big-time with individual bequests that more often than not caused trouble.

One of those was a stock bequest to a corporate bigwig—Miles Lanier, head of Fuchi Internal Security. Lanier received a seat on the board of Renraku Corporation, Fuchi's biggest rival. When he left Fuchi for Renraku, speculation ran wild as to which corp he might be setting up for betrayal. In the end, Lanier's move turned out to be the first rumbling of the corp war to come.

## Corp War

Lanier's transfer in 2058 was just the beginning of trouble for Renraku and Fuchi. Tensions escalated fast, not only between Fuchi and Renraku, but also between Fuchi's three internal factions. The infighting at Fuchi got worse when Renraku began producing amazing techno-logical advances just months after Lanier joined the board. As if the Fuchi-Renraku turmoil had been a green light, other corporate conflicts heated up as well. The Big Eight megas were all doing their best to quash the smaller corps that had received chunks of cred from Dunkelzahn's will; they didn't want another Yamatetsu joining their exclusive club, and so took steps to keep that from happening (with much resulting business for shadow-runners). Second-tier corp-orations like Cross Applied Technologies, a big noise in Quebec and

## All In The Family

From corp war to Mob war; here's a smattering of significant events in the criminal underworld, where so many of us find a living.

**2030:** Mafia-Yakuza war breaks out in Seattle when the leaders of both syndicates are assassinated. After many deaths, the worn-out organizations call a truce.

**2032:** The oyabun of the Yakuza in Chiba, Japan sends Korean bosses to rebuild the Seattle organizations.

**2042:** The Korean Yakuza bosses in Seattle suffer through a bloody purge after the oyabun in Chiba gets tired of

interested in expanding into the UCAS market, soon learned the price they might pay for attempting to play in the big leagues. Lucien Cross, CAT's chief exec, survived three assassination attempts in 2058 alone.

The death in 2059 of Tadamako Shibanokuji, chair-man of Yamatetsu, stirred up still more trouble. His shares reverted to his son Yuri, who happens to be an ork. Now, the Japanese don't care much for metahumans—in fact, plenty of Japanese don't even regard them as people. So they sure as drek weren't going to stand for a mere ork becoming the head of a major corporation. Yamatetsu, pressured to depose Yuri, instead relocated its corporate headquarters to Vladivostok, Russia.

Meanwhile, the Fuchi-Renraku plot was thickening. Around mid-2059, Fuchi formally accused Renraku of industrial espionage with the aid of Miles Lanier. The charges were eventually dropped, but not before Lanier left Renraku and sold his Renraku stock to the Zurich-Orbital Bank. At around the same time, Richard Villiers of Fuchi formed Novatech, Incorporated, through which he discreetly began buying up most of his Fuchi North America holdings. (He knew that the rival factions meant to force him out, so he was getting ready to jump ship before they could.) And surprise, surprise, he offered his old buddy Miles Lanier the job of Head of Security.

And then two Corp Court representatives conveniently died, one in a plane crash and another in a bombing. In 2059, suborbital Flight 1118 from Tokyo crashed into Seattle's Redmond Barrens, killing nearly two hundred people, including Fuchi Corporate Court Representative David Hague. No one from the Big Eight replaced him, however. Instead, that honor went to an exec from Wuxing, Incorporated—a mom-and-pop corp jumped up to the big time by an infusion of cash from the late, lamented Dunkelzahn. (Makes me wonder where the bodies were buried ... .) In 2060, Renraku lost its Corporate Court rep in a terrorist bombing in New Delhi. Cross Applied Technologies got the nod to fill that gap (which must have made Damien Knight spitting mad). That same year, the corp war claimed its first victim—Fuchi Industrial Electronics. Fuchi broke apart as Richard Villiers brought his portion of it to Novatech. The remaining two factions bought and married into Renraku and Shiawase, respectively; those two corps gobbled up what remained of Fuchi Industrial Electronics, until Fuchi was officially dissolved.

## 2060 and beyond

So now it's 2060, and the Sixth World has changed yet again. The Big Eight mega-corps have become the Big-No-One-Knows-How-Many and the streets are buzzing with shadowrunning biz. The insect spirits have supposedly been cleared out of Chicago courtesy of Ares Inc., and the wall is down ... but no one knows for sure if the bugs are really gone, from Chicago or from anywhere else. Magic keeps finding strange new wrinkles to throw at us, and no one knows what's going on in the Matrix. We only know that there's something,

them putting Korean over Japanese interests. Most of the Koreans are killed; the survivors later form the Seoulpa Rings.

**2044:** Hanzo Shotozumi is appointed head of the Seattle Yakuza. His strong-arm tactics spark renewed hostilities between the Yaks and the Mafia. Don James O'Malley comes out of retirement to deal with the new Yakuza threat.

**2058:** Don O'Malley is shot dead outside his Seattle home, spawning an all-out Mob war as Mafia, Yakuza, Triads and Rings go at each other's throats. The resulting chaos is good for biz, but only if you can dodge the bullets.

and that it probably isn't good.

The otaku were odd enough when they first appeared in 2055, especially with the noises they made about "the Deep Resonance" and "the spirits of the machine." We're still not sure exactly what the otaku are or where they came from, but one thing we do know—they're mostly young, lots of them kids, and they can surf the Matrix without a cyberdeck. And they're very, very good at it. And now some of us are starting to wonder if the spirits they sometimes mutter about might really exist.

In December of 2059, the Renraku Arcology in Seattle went off-line for no apparent reason. The corp sealed the place off to the public right away, and corp PR flacks have refused all comment. The UCAS military had stepped in by January of 2060, and we're wondering what's really going down.

No matter what the dark secret is, some things will always remain the same. The world will always be unfair, and those with the cred will always make the rules. And people like us—shadowrunners, who'll do whatever's necessary to keep food on the table, a roof over our heads and the latest bleeding-edge cyberware in our meat bodies—will always break the rules. Because we have to. That's how we survive.



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