

SHADOWRUN

CORPORATE INTRIGUE

THE BIG TIME

You could dabble in organized crime. You could do some smash-and-grabs. You could find all sorts of ways to pick up a few nuyen here and there. But everyone in the Sixth World knows that if you want to make a play for the big bucks, the real high-level stuff, you've got to get in bed with the corps.

The corps have the money, and they've got all the power that comes with it. If you want to have some of that cash and some of that pull for yourself, you're going to need to stay alert, move quickly, and remember that while corps are willing to pay for things that help them, deep down they really hate sharing what they've got with anyone. Including shadowrunners. Especially shadowrunners.

Corporate Intrigue provides a wealth of plot points and adventure ideas to allow gamemasters to develop corporate-centered campaigns, including plotlines that lead to the discovery of a secret one megacorporation struggling to contain. Building on information provided in *Corporate Guide*, *Corporate Intrigue* provides the story information, location details, and NPC statistics to make running a corporate-themed campaign as easy, fun, and brutal as you want it to be.

Corporate Intrigue is for use with *Shadowrun*, Twentieth Anniversary Edition.



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SHADOWRUN

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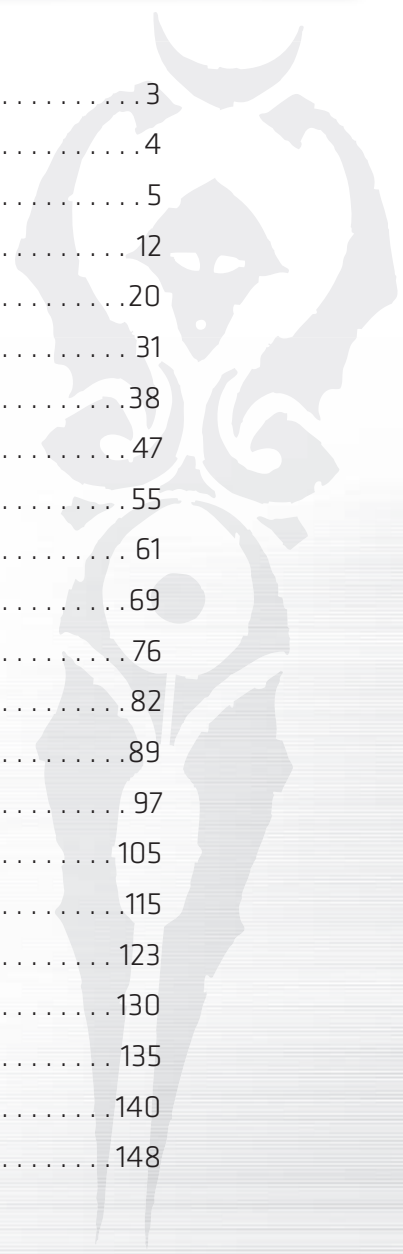
CORPORATE INTRIGUE

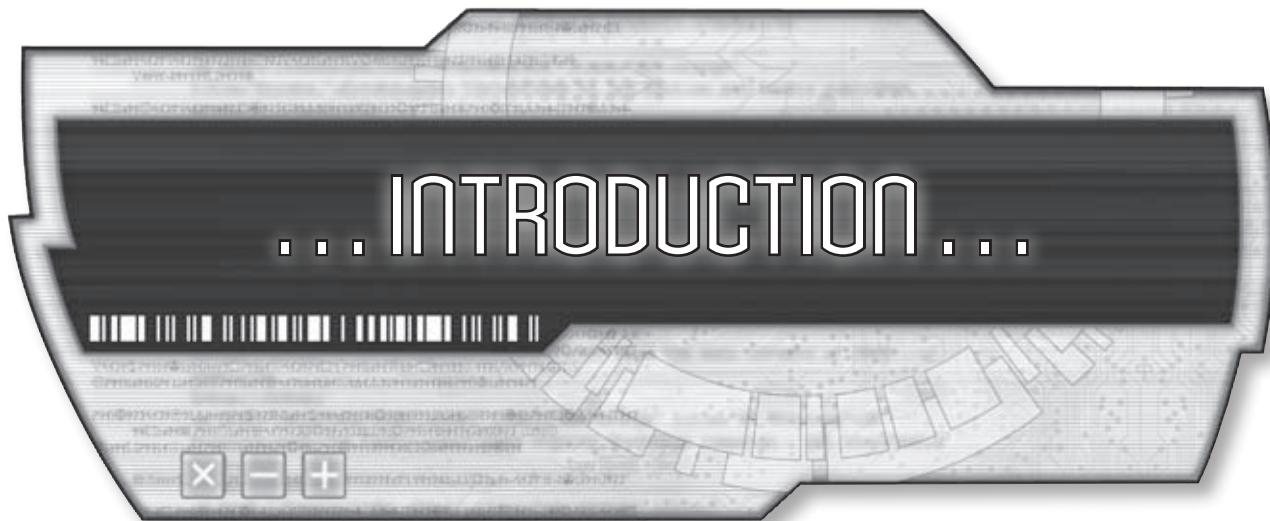


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The megacorporations have always been the cold, dark heart of the Sixth World. Shadowrunners understand just how dangerous they are, but they also know that they offer opportunities no one else can. They have more money, more power, and more everything than anything or anyone else in the world. Some dragons have attached themselves to megacorporations, because the corps give them a chance to rapidly expand their hoard—or, in some cases, the corporations themselves serve as a dragon's hoard. Simply put, the megas are where the money is, which means that runners can't stay away from them.

Corporate Intrigue is a campaign book that provides everything *Shadowrun* players and gamemasters need to stage adventures involving a variety of megacorporations. In this book, you'll find the following sections:

- **Knives Out**, an in-universe section that provides updates about the ten largest corporations in the Sixth World and their recent activities, especially as they relate to ongoing plotlines in the *Shadowrun* universe. This section provides background to help players become involved in the adventures in this book.
- **A series of chapters that provide short adventure plots.** Each adventure contains in-universe material to set up the adventure to come, individual plot points to guide gamemasters through the adventure, and character and location information used in that chapter. Many of the locations are types that can be used in a wide variety of campaigns, such as megacorporate offices, research facilities, and more.
- **Character Trove**, a collection of NPC stats for characters used in this book, but also usable in multiple other settings and adventures.

This book builds on plotlines contained in books such as *Artifacts Unbound*, *Spy Games*, *War!*, and *Conspiracy Theories*. It also includes plot elements from *Shadowrun Missions*, which is *Shadowrun's* ongoing living campaign. These resources can deepen players' and gamemasters' understanding of the events described in this book, but *Corporate Intrigue* stands on its own—it's all you need to get runners involved in the machinations of the megacorps, and to see if they can make it out alive.

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Connecting JackPoint VPN ...
... Matrix Access ID Spoofed.
... Encryption Keys Generated.
... Connected to Onion Routers.
> Login

> Enter Passcode

... Biometric Scan Confirmed.
Connected to <ERROR: NODE UNKNOWN>
"Society bristles with enigmas which look hard to solve.
It is a perfect maze of intrigue."

JackPoint Stats

91 users currently active
in the network

Latest News

* <121373> We've drawn more attention recently than I'd like. Guard your access, and review my 10 Tips to Avoid Leaving Backdoors Open. -FastJack

Personal Alerts

* You have 2 new private messages.
* You have 5 messages queued for anonymous re-routing.
* You have received 1 new Metalink Friends add request.
* You have 10 new responses to your JackPoint posts.
* PDA: Mr. Johnson scheduled to materialize behind Stuffer Shack at 11 PM.

First Degree

You are hidden from all contacts.

Your Current Rep Score: 62

(82% positive)

Current Time: December 13, 2073,
10:41

PREFERENCES

FEEDS

TASKS

LINKS

HISTORY

Welcome back to JackPoint, omae;
your last connection was severed: 20
hours, 20 minutes, 33 seconds ago.

Today's Heads Up

- * Keep up. No one ever died from being too current [Tag: [State of the Art: 2073](#)]
- * We couldn't get all the good stories into a single posting. [Tag: [Street Legends Supplemental](#)]

Incoming

- * What's the point of hanging around the rich and powerful if you don't get a taste for yourself? [Tag: [Jet Set](#)]
- * Horizon says they're dedicated to doing good. But how far will their dedication take them? [Tag: [The Twilight Horizon](#)]

Top News Items

- * Aztechnology denies any knowledge of allegations that Omega Protocols have been stolen. They also deny knowledge of the existence of Omega Protocols. [Link](#)
- * High Prince Larry Zincan says requests have been delivered to him regarding Hestaby's status as a Prince, and he has "taken them under advisement." [Link](#)
- * Knight Errant reports that bodies found in Toronto are the work of a copycat, not the work of the actual Mealtime Killer. [Link](#)
- * Corporate Court decides to hear arguments on Lone Star's request to search Aztechnology property for "paraphernalia related to the creation and distribution of tempo." [Link](#)



CHAT

MESSAGES

FILES

POSTS

NEXUS

SEARCH

CORPORATE INTRIGUE

Posts/Files tagged with
"Corporate Intrigue"

Knives Out
Nothing Personal
Project Imago
Runaway Train

CONTINUE

ADVANCED
SEARCH

SAVE

[More]

Active



TomStar
Firewall

Active



Jack-in-the-Box
Antivirus

Active



SpamWitch
Filter

On/Receiving



Commcode

Excellent



Signal

Active



Hidden
Mode



Local
Map



Posted by: Cosmo

- We've covered a lot of chaos in the world in recent postings—war in Bogota, espionage in Denver's government, intrigue and infighting among dragons, and whatever it was that closed the Watergate Rift. With all that's going on in the world, we sometimes make the mistake of overlooking the megacorps, which is a little like getting distracted by all the shining treasure in a hoard and forgetting the very real and somewhat grumpy dragon perched on top of it.

We can never afford to ignore the megas, because they never ignore anything. The only time they're quiet is when they're sitting off to the side, sharpening their knives, and sooner or later those knives are going to come out. I asked Cosmo to compile a quick rundown of some of the recent events in the megas, how it's affecting them, and what that means for us.

- FastJack

There's been a certain sense of bemusement at the tops of the megacorps lately. The world is being shaken by machinations other than their own, and when people point to the big bad bogeymen who are on the verge of destroying all that is good in the world, they're sometimes actually talking about something besides the AAAs.

While their collective pride may be a little stung by the fact that things are happening without them, the megas aren't going to go off into a corner and sulk. They know that chaos brings opportunity, and they're looking to gain footholds in any way they can.

This is not to say that everything within the ranks of the megas has been calm in recent months. The internal politicking that is forever and always part of the AAAs didn't go anywhere, and if anything, the chaos going on in the rest of the world only amplified it. Different factions know that if they respond to the ongoing chaos correctly, they could get the boost in power they need to accomplish whatever they may be after. So they are going about their affairs with a renewed zeal.

The corps are also smart enough to know that the current state of the world gives them the chance to look for new allies. Tough times make people desperate, and desperate people take help wherever they can find it. Take, for example, our old pal Ken Brackhaven.

He's not having the easiest year, what with the orks and trolls of Seattle demanding crazy things like equal status with other city residents and some of his political allies being revealed to be (surprise!) virulent racists. It's possible that, in the light of his current struggles, he might need a little help getting a victory in next year's election. You can be certain that some corps will step forward to offer him their assistance, in forms of direct cash contributions, runs staged against his competitors, or both—and you can be equally certain that if he wins re-election, representatives of those same corporations will be waiting in his office the day after his inauguration, all ready to tell him how he can earn his keep.

- While there may be some exceptions, you can expect the corporations by and large to support Brackhaven. Part of it is predictability; they know what they are going to get with Brackhaven, and they are more or less fine with what he offers. Additionally, they know how his mind works, and they feel they can talk to him on a level that makes sense to them. Getting rid of Brackhaven, then, would require a popular movement strong enough to overcome corporate preference, which is not, of course, very likely.
- Mr. Bonds
- Or you could convince a corporation or two that some other puppet would be even more in their pocket than Brackhaven is. Brackhaven works well with the corporations because he thinks like them, not because he feels he owes them anything. Frankly, some corporations would rather have someone with less independent wealth in that position, because that opens up a whole new arena of controlling them through bribery.
- Sunshine
- You may not get as much bribery with Brackhaven, but he more than makes up for it in blackmail potential.
- Bull

With that background in mind, here are some of things the megas have been up to, and what you might be able to expect from them going forward.





ARES

Snopes covered some of Ares' woes in the *Conspiracy Theories* post, and things aren't getting much better for them. Word-of-mouth about their new Excalibur battle rifle keeps getting worse, to the point where you can bet that someone in the corporation is about to take drastic action just to shut people up.

In Seattle, Ares and Knight Errant will be doubling down on their support of Brackhaven. KE has absolutely no desire to see the Ork Underground become an official district, because sending their people down there to enforce the law would be like sending flounders into the deep sea to stem the tide of shark attacks. They're also indebted to Brackhaven for getting them the city contract in the first place, so you can expect whoever runs against Brackhaven to be the target of a nice number of Ares-sponsored retaliatory runs.

- If Ares' reputation continues its downward trend, it will be interesting to see if Brackhaven tries to distance himself from them. Though any distancing will likely be for public purposes only—in private, he'll still accept whatever support services they offer
- Sunshine

The muck within Ares means the some people see weakness at the top. None of the internal players seem like they're up to mustering a challenge to Damien Knight, but I'd keep my eye on the outsiders. Sooner or later, someone's going to hope that the officers of the megacorp are overly distracted by the ongoing tumult, and they'll take a run at the corporation. This only becomes more likely if the Excalibur affair degenerates into a total debacle that sends Ares' stock prices tumbling.

AZTECHNOLOGY

The amazing thing about Aztechnology is that year after year, forces seemed lined up to deliver Aztechnology a critical blow, and year after year the corp finds a way to survive without any real loss in stature. The war against Amazonia, and the subsequent responses by forces such as the CAS, Horizon, and Saeder-Krupp should, by all rights, be taking a big toll on the Big A. But its operations keep moving forward, and profits keep flowing in.

Not only that, but Aztechnology seems poised to make gains in Denver. Members of the Ute Nation absorbed by the PCC have been making noise about allowing Aztechnology back into Denver, but that was never going to happen as long as Ghostwalker was around. Some people, though, are claiming that GW hasn't been seen in the city since his alleged disappearance into the closing Watergate Rift. If that's true, then there will be a power void that will throw the city up for grabs, and Aztechnology will want a piece of that.

- I wouldn't count on Ghostwalker being gone for good. He did not fly into the rift by accident. He did it because he had a plan. I have a feeling the residents of Denver will learn more about this plan in the near future.
- Plan 9

More recent news about Aztechnology has to do with a suit brought by Lone Star seeking to search an AZT facility for tempo-related paraphernalia. Naturally, Aztechnology doesn't want even

a whiff of law enforcement trampling on their extraterritoriality, but the buzz was that the Corporate Court was surprisingly sympathetic to Lone Star's position. In the end, though, a coalition led by Corporate Court Chief Justice Yoshiko Hino. Some have said that Justice Hino's ruling on this case is nothing unusual—it's simply in keeping with the metacorporations' longstanding desire to preserve the sacrosanct nature of extraterritoriality. Others, though, see her leadership in this decision as a step in a possible Evo-Aztechnology alliance.

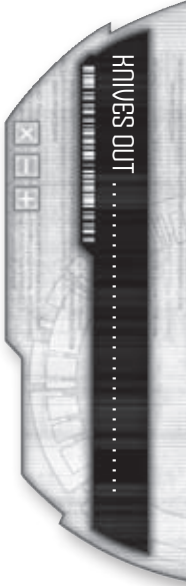
- I really don't see Buttercup wanting to become close to Aztechnology. She is well aware of their treatment of spirits.
- Elijah
- Whoever is reaching out to the Big A may be doing so without Buttercup's knowledge.
- Picador

EVO

Things have been quiet with Evo lately, but that's not for a lack of activity. Technology is not slowing down, so Evo can't slow down either. The cost/benefit ratio of nanotechnology and genetech has a lot of users excited about what the future may bring, and Evo is focusing much of its work on those branches of technology. They are looking at various ways to be stronger, faster, and younger, and beyond that is the Holy Grail of this branch of research—immortality. This is about more than just leónization treatments that can reverse the consequences of age; this is about your consciousness being digitized and relocated so that you can survive the consequences of anything and everything that might happen to you.

- Wait, I missed something. What do nanotech and genetech have to do with digitized consciousness? I thought that was mainly a processor/memory thing.
- Mika
- I'll give you the short version—contact me privately for more details if you need them. Processing power and memory are important parts of the equation, but there's more to it. If you're going to encode biological information in hardware, you need to understand how that coding works. That gets right to the core of genetech. Then you need a messenger system, something that can take all the biological coding from a body, copy it, and deliver it where it needs to go. Those would be nanites.
- Nephrite

At the heart of Evo's effort in this area is their Dickens Program. The original purpose of this project was to study e-ghosts and their origins, which is an interesting project but seems too theoretical for a corporation. The conventional wisdom was that the project would only get long-term funding if the people working on it could find some way to monetize the results. My sources at Evo tell me the program is coming up for review, and apparently those attached to it have been expressing a lot of optimism about being renewed, possibly at an increased budget. I don't know what they think they have got, but clearly they believe they have *something*.



- Taking a stab in the dark here—maybe they’re developing an e-ghost shadow team? The members could never be shot, they’d be closer to paydata than any other runners, and they could sneak into facilities through paths no one else would think about.
- Rigger X
- Except that any security consultant who knows anything about their job is telling corps to put their most precious data in places that can’t be accessed wirelessly. So this e-ghost team would need a flesh-and-blood runner team to pack them into a briefcase and take them where they needed to be. I wouldn’t say it’s out of the question, though, for Evo to be recruiting individual e-ghosts for shadow ops. The trick is to find out what an e-ghost wants so you can figure out a way to pay them.
- Glitch
- No, the first trick is to find an e-ghost that’s sane. Seriously, the lack of a concrete reality for these things seems to make them unhinged. These are not beings that are good at following instructions.
- Slamm-O!

HORIZON

Horizon sees the war in Bogotá as a great opportunity. They know they can do more than (once again) prove the effectiveness of propaganda in a battle setting—they have a chance to turn the tide of war against their chief rival in the public relations field. They’ve invested so much in helping Amazonia in the struggle that they’re almost a third party in the war. A win for Amazonia is a win for Horizon, which means that Horizon will harvest some of the spoils of victory. A defeat for Amazonia, on the other hand, would be a defeat for Horizon, and you can bet that Aztlan would do whatever they could to make sure Horizon felt the loss as deeply as possible.

This makes the war a high-stakes affair for Horizon, which puts them in a position they haven’t really been in before. They play the corporate game with large stacks of real cash, so they’re familiar with being at the big kids table, but to date their story has been of a meteoric rise to the top, not a struggle for survival. There are people who don’t like them, and they have enemies out there—who doesn’t?—but they have never had to face the prospect of someone like Aztechnology gunning for them with all they’ve got.

The interesting thing to see will be how Horizon’s Consensus model reacts to this decision. The Consensus, by most accounts, is a reflection of the collective will of Horizon’s employees. We’ve already seen it take the corporation into some questionable areas. Take the Teiko Ikemoto affair. It can be argued that Teiko is happier and more financially secure than she was in her time with Mitsuhama, but the measures Horizon allegedly took in order to add her to their roster are certainly quite Machiavellian. Most controversial is the rumor that Teiko’s baby was actually created by shadowrunners using pilfered DNA. If that’s true, that shows the Consensus is just as capable of embracing a win-at-all-costs philosophy as any other megacorporate CEO, and that the way Horizon employees define “the greater good” in their own minds could lead to some strange decisions as more stresses are put on the company.

- This was always a danger in their model. They can claim that they are working for the betterment of humanity, but every employee, at their core, feels that humanity is better off if Horizon is around. Therefore, they are willing to take rather extreme steps to keep Horizon alive and thriving. I’m not sure just how extreme those steps are going to be, but I’m quite interested in finding out.
- Sunshine

MITSUHAMA

Ever since Netcat shared some information from a nameless Yakuza figure back in the *Corporate Guide* posting, there’s been a fair amount of speculation about the “Rose Garden” he mentioned, what it is, and when that knowledge will become public. I can’t be too direct here—I have confidences to protect—but I have reason to believe we’ll all know more about the Rose Garden soon. If the speculation I’ve heard is correct, this is not going to make Mitsuhama look good, and could put them in line for some significant reprisals.

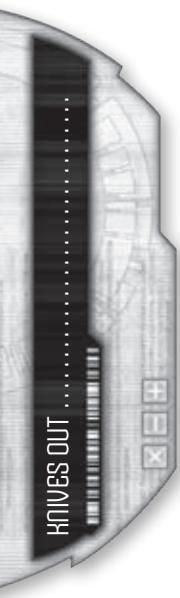
If this all goes down like I think it will, Mitsuhama will be looking for a good PR hit to rebound from recent events. The Teiko Ikemoto situation wasn’t devastating to them, but they still came out of it with lost revenue while looking like bullies. Normally, being perceived as 900-pound gorillas is not something a megacorporation worries about; in fact, they like it. But this Rose Garden situation could make them look like more than a bully—it will make them look dangerous. If that’s the case, you might get more than just a few people who are angry at the megacorp. Some organizations in the world might decide that MCT needs to pay for their actions, and they might combine their talents and knowledge in an effort to collect.

- Mitsuhama will be fine. There is a certain segment of society that won’t like them, but that’s always the case. From what I hear, they’ll come out looking like heroes to some people, and that’ll be enough to keep anyone from taking any concerted action against them.
- Kay St. Irregular

Mitsuhama may receive further distractions if the great dragon Ryumyo decides he needs to call on some company assets in the course of the burgeoning tensions between the dragons. Most people believe Ryumyo will side with Lofwyr in opposing the “war criminal” label that has been applied to SIRRURG, but the question is what other actions he, Lofwyr, and any other allies will take to put Hestaby in her place. Hestaby’s actions in Dubai demand some sort of reprisal, and Ryumyo and his holdings could play an important role in Lofwyr’s retaliation, whatever that might be.

NEONET

NeoNET’s in for some interesting times. Samantha Villiers took a major hit from her failed attempt to destroy the Piri Reis Map, and there’s nothing that roils the waters of a megacorporation like the scent of a major shareholder’s blood. In particular, Richard Villiers is quite interesting in bringing his ex-wife down a peg, and most observers believe he’ll be taking some kind of action against her before the year is over. Samantha Villiers may have



taken a blow, but she remains a formidable opponent, and any clash between these two is usually worth watching—or making money off of, if you can. So grab your gun or grab some popcorn. Whichever.

- Some people are speculating that a conflict between the two might bring Miles Lanier out of hiding, though it's unclear what side he'll be on.
- Baka Dabora

While the Villiers keep each other occupied, Celedyr might have some issues that tear him away from his precious research. Expect Lofwyr and Hestaby to both be lobbying him aggressively to get him to take a stance on the United Nations' declaration of Sirrurg as a war criminal. Celedyr would prefer to keep his head down and do his work—according to one intercepted message in my possession, he's been in touch with Evo about one of his current projects that will “revolutionize our understanding of electronic personages.” I don't have any more information about this work, but if Celedyr is this worked up about it, it's probably important.

- The work in question is known as Project Imago.
- Cerberus
- Ah, left yourself a little backdoor in the system, did you? Not cool. Especially if all you're going to do here is drop vague hints. You and your colleagues need to step a little more carefully around here.
- FastJack

RENRAKU

To those in the know, the following words are enough to make your heart feel like a chunk of black slush: “Things have been kind of quiet in Renraku lately.” We know that quiet in Renraku does not mean they've decided to just be content with the profits they rake in hand over fist and adopt a live-and-let-live philosophy. Instead, it means they're working on a series of plans that will disrupt the shape of the world as soon as they are unleashed. So get ready.

Some of the plans Renraku is working on have to do with exploiting weaknesses in the other corps. Renraku executives believe that the Ares Excalibur fiasco gives them an opportunity to make a major move in the weapons market, and they believe they have the engineering talent that can help them make a strong move. Peter Trellis is supposed to be one of their rising stars, and he has some designs that Renraku plans to produce through Terracotta Armaments. Renraku PR personnel are already working on ads that will reference the Excalibur as many times as possible.

- One of the moves Ares has tried in the wake of the Excalibur problems is accusing its rivals of sabotaging what they say should have been a perfectly workable design. Renraku is one corporation they have been pointing to, but so far few people are buying into this argument.
- Mr. Bonds

That's just conventional business, though. In the shadows, Renraku continues to look for ways to interfere with its rivals, and lately they have been casting a suspicious eye on Wuxing. They have no desire for Wuxing's efforts at Western Hemisphere expansion to succeed, and they have been scouring the shadows recently finding teams to help them interfere with Wuxing's operations. This could just end up being routine shadow harassment, but it's also possible that this is one area where Renraku will want to make a definitive statement. That is to say, they may not be satisfied with slowing Wuxing down; rather, they may want to hurt them so much that any plans to move across the Pacific are abandoned for the time being.

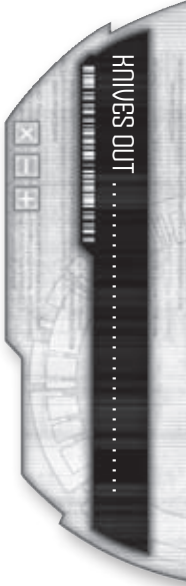
- There will be some muscle involved in this fight, but spellslingers are the ones who have the chance to bring in some serious nuyen, especially if they're skilled conjurers. Spirits can cover a wider area than material assets, which means you can harass Wuxing convoys making their way across the Pacific pretty much throughout their journey. Then, once their personnel and resources hit land, you can summon some toxics to make any place where they're settling quite unpleasant.
- Haze

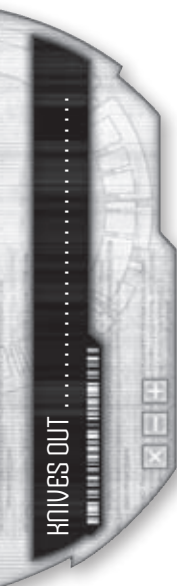
SAEDER-KRUPP

The big news at Saeder-Krupp these days, of course, is the divide between Lofwyr and Hestaby, which resulted in the latter's destruction of S-K's Middle Eastern headquarters. It was one of the most brazen attacks by one dragon on another in years, if not decades, and since it happened the world has been holding its breath to see what will come next. Many people have been surprised that the other shoe hasn't dropped yet, but they need to start thinking in draconic terms. If Lofwyr is going to get revenge, he's not simply going to use his physical strength as a dragon. Instead, he will call upon the full range of resources at his disposal. He will use his financial empire and his considerable range of political influences to strike a blow against Hestaby that will hurt her far more than the loss of a single building, no matter how big that building may be.

No one knows just what Lofwyr is planning, of course, but my contacts are telling me that the first stage of his plan involves isolating Hestaby. A campaign to force Hestaby to resign as a Prince of Tir Tairngire due to her “unwarranted display of violence” is underway, and it will undoubtedly be followed by other efforts to remove allies that Hestaby can call on for support. The more isolated she is, the closer we get to a point where Lofwyr can strike out with a blow that will cut deep and leave a permanent scar.

- Let's not forget that Lofwyr started trying to strip Hestaby of the power of her allies even before her attack when he had Elliott Eyes-of-Wyrm killed at the Shasta Lodge.
- Mika





- There's not enough evidence to rule out anything, but most people I've heard from don't believe Lofwyr was involved in the assassination. I've heard a lot of suppositions about why this is the case, but the most persuasive one I've heard is this—if Lofwyr were behind it, Hestaby would have lost more than just the leader of the Lodge.
- Sunshine

Some people within S-K are worried that Lofwyr's focus on Hestaby will keep him from taking advantage of Ares' recent weaknesses. S-K's strength in the arms market puts them in the ideal position to expand their share of the market, but that's not going to happen if they don't do anything to grab it. Stanislaw Wiacek in particular is agitating with Lofwyr to dedicate effort to pushing some new prototypes ahead of schedule. He believes that if the next season of *Desert Wars* features some shiny, effective new weaponry, that will make the failure of the Ares Excalibur even starker by comparison, which he believes can only be a good thing for S-K.

- Are there really more effective ways to fire metal at other people that someone hasn't already come up with?
- Winterhawk
- You never know until you try. There are some intriguing new technologies investigating just how those pieces of metal reach their destination.
- Picador

Saeder-Krupp is also continuing with its plan to build utilities in Bogotá, and their efforts have already paid dividends. Areas that went for months or even years with sporadic power now have the electricity flowing regularly, and the residents of those neighborhoods are quite grateful. They don't care about what else S-K may be doing across the globe, about Lofwyr's position in regards to Sirrurg, or anything else. They just care that they can now turn their lights on at night.

SHIAWASE

Perhaps the busiest division in Shiawase these days is their Market Forecasting and Information Department. With the world climate being what it is, gathering information is more than just a business strategy—it can be a business in and of itself (as Aegis Cognito well knows). MFID has found this to be a particularly lucrative business in Denver, where they can be a neutral party in their information brokering since they don't have a significant stake in the outcome of the treaty renegotiations. While they're not exactly hanging out a shingle that says "Spy Services: Cheap," they have let word slip out through the shadows that they have the experience and the skills needed to dig out information that others cannot. That has also led to a few runners taking contract employment with MFID, hoping to ride out the current swell as long as they can.

- It's not a bad job—I've thought a few times about making a trip to Denver and doing a bit of consulting. They can provide you with hired muscle to keep you safe and some of the bleeding-edge gear that has been flooding into the Denver shadows. They're having an especially grand time during Ghostwalker's current absence. Once GW returns, though, I would expect him to pick a few MFID agents to be examples of the fact that his "death to spies" edict remains in force, so be cautious.
- Fianchetto

While MFID is doing booming business, the split between current director Nigel Coltrane and former director Ichiro Kiyomoto has not resolved itself. Both factions are well represented by the personnel in Denver, and new recruits are often pulled aside soon after they join and told that if they know what's good for them, they should pick a side (preferably the side of the person currently speaking with them). In some ways the rivalry between the two factions is good for business, as each side tries to outdo each other in terms of information gathered and revenue generated. These people, however, are spies by nature, meaning that they are people who believe that playing by the rules is a sign of weakness and a lack of creativity. They are already sniping at each other, to an extent that Empress Hitomi herself has told Coltrane to get a better handle on his people. That has only emboldened Kiyomoto's faction, of course. They believe that if they can continue to demonstrate that Coltrane does not have the loyalty of a significant portion of his people, he'll be removed.

- That may be the case, but if Coltrane leaves, it's not likely that he'll be replaced by Kiyomoto or anyone of his ilk. Hitomi has plenty of other people where Coltrane came from, and she's not going to let Coltrane go unless she's certain she can put another handpicked candidate in his place.
- Baka Dabora
- The Neo-Genyosha are only going to become more active with all that's happening. It's clear they'll be trying to bring down Coltrane, but the real question is what other targets they might go after the stronger and bolder they get. It's unlikely they'll go after Hitomi directly, but I believe they'll be making a significant number of runs in Japan aimed at undermining her support structure in the nation. This goes beyond internal matters—if they can whittle away at her political support, they will.
- Jimmy No



WUXING

Wuxing finds themselves in an odd situation, where they are making more and more strides in western markets while facing growing strife at their home base. Their North American markets have been growing to the point that the megacorporation wants to make a statement by constructing a North American headquarters that gives them a solid physical presence along with a base of operations. They have been scouting locations on the Pacific Coast, and they should be announcing finalists for the site of this structure in the near future.

- Which then gives the governments involved a small window in which they can suck up to Wuxing through various cash incentives and other deals. Expect the governments involved to engage in some aggressive spying to learn about each others' bids so they can try to top it.
- Kay St. Irregular

When it happens, the commencement of the construction of their new headquarters will be a major press event, full of pomp, circumstance, hoopla, and whatever else Wuxing can pack into it. Wuxing executives hope that the news coverage and public attention they plan to garner will serve as a distraction from what's going on back at home. The inclusion of Aztechnology in the Pacific Prosperity Group was supposed to be CEO Wu Lung-Wei's masterstroke, the move that would put the PPG on equal footing with the Japanacorp in the battle for economic superiority of the Pacific Rim. Instead, it has driven a wedge between the two factions in the PPG, which are best described as Wuxing's side and everybody else. While the PPG is divided, it's not going to pose much of a threat to the Japanacorp, and Wuxing is anxious to get everyone on the same page. The linchpin in this effort is Evo—if Wuxing can prevent their drift toward the Japanacorp, they may be able to advance their mission through the PPG. That's easier said than done, though. Lately, Evo has been hard-pressed to admit that Wuxing has anything positive to offer them, and they're not feeling at all intimidated by the Wuxing-Aztechnology alliance (if anything, that's just made them strengthen their ties with Shiawase). Wuxing has one lever they can use, though. There are rumors that Evo CEO Anatoly Kirilenko and major Evo shareholder Buttercup don't see entirely eye-to-eye on some recent initiatives. It's too early to call this a full-blown schism, but there are people in Wuxing who believe that if they play their cards right, it could become one in the future.

- It's an interesting divide, because it's uniquely Evo in character. This isn't a disagreement about business tactics or profit mongering or any of the usual topics—it's a disagreement about the nature of being and consciousness (if you can believe that the scions of the business world get bogged down by such weighty concerns). Evo's business practices are deeply connected to transhumanist goals, but lately Buttercup has been voicing some concerns about the nature of human (and spirit) consciousness and what that means for Evo's experimentations in electronic consciousness. What this means for Wuxing is that they need to understand the nature of Kirilenko's and Buttercup's thoughts on

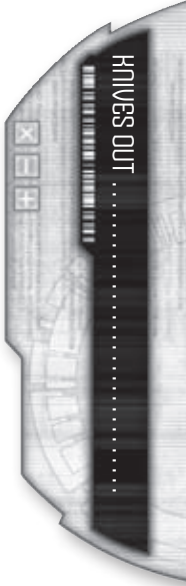
this topic, and then find a way to make it look like one party has done something that the other considers unethical or a violation of human/transhuman decency. Like, say, experimenting on e-ghosts in ways that warp their electronic minds, or showing that one of them pulled the plug on a warped, mis-developed batch of electronic entities.

- Fianchetto
- Rather than invent something, they might just have to find evidence that one party or the other has already done one of those things. I'm pretty sure Evo is already crossing what some people consider to be important ethical lines, if only because when you get to an area as new as transhumanism, the ethics are still in flux.
- Butch

Any mention of what Wuxing is up to has to include the Wuxing quintuplets—Fo, Shui, Moak, Tou, and Gum. They are their own industry at this point—designers pay thousands of nuyen to get the quints to wear their clothing, social planners beg the Wus to bring the quints to their formal occasions, and media companies jockey with each other for the chance to have even a one-question interview with one of the children.

Wuxing is quite aware of the opportunities surrounding the quints and is more than ready to exploit them. Some of you may have heard speculation about Tou's health that ran rampant on the popular Quint-Essentials Matrix site. No objective evidence of any problems related to Tou were ever found, but that didn't stop the speculation from engaging thousands of posters in a variety of forums and threads. Most outside observers believe the rumors were initially planted by Wuxing PR personnel, who then encouraged the participants to freely engage in whatever wild ideas came to mind based on the initial rumors (not that participants at Quint-Essentials require much encouragement for that sort of thing). During the whole affair, traffic, and subsequently ad revenue, spiked, making the whole thing quite a success for Wuxing. Corporate PR flacks are undoubtedly planning the next "event" that can engage the public in a similar fashion, and chances are good they will require some shadow ops to falsify a few pieces of evidence that can once again set the community ablaze.

- They've got the same problem that you'll see with any long-running soap opera—coming up with regularly compelling plotlines. They've done the Mysterious Illness and the Secret Hidden Child plots recently, so they'll have to come up with something new. How about a little Free Spirit Possession?
- Pistons
- A little too exotic. I'd go with Secret Kidnapping Plot. Brings attention, and also gives you the chance to make one of your rivals look bad if you do it right.
- Dr. Spin





Incoming Message

//archive/chats/recovered//
/user Dr. Spin has logged on
/user Kia has logged on

[Kia] Morning.

[Dr. Spin] Not here it isn't.

[Kia] So what can I do for you, *omae*?

[Dr. Spin] My bosses want a précis on the shit that went down at the Hilton here a week or so ago. I don't know if you read about it in the news.

[Kia] Let's assume I didn't.

[Dr. Spin] An unknown group raided the hotel. They were definitely pros—a chopper landed one team on the roof, and another team made its way up through the lobby. There was a brief shootout with the hotel security team in the lobby, and a couple of citizens got tagged. Meanwhile somebody took an involuntary nosedive out the window of a suite on the 39th floor.

[Kia] Sounds like quite a party. How can I be of service?

[Dr. Spin] Well, my employers would like to ensure that the media's portrayal of these events is not favorable to Horizon's reputation. The best smears start with knowing the facts.

[Kia] Naturally. So you think I can help connect the dots for you.

[Dr. Spin] I think so. If you can, we'll call it even for Cape Town.

[Kia] Generous of you. I'm looking at the news reports now. What else do we know?

[Dr. Spin] Pathfinder Media news drones were on the scene in about a minute flat after the shots were fired. The entire thing feels like a setup. Horizon comes away squeaky clean, the victims of industrial espionage by some unknown Japanacorp.

[Kia] Seems that you're doing a good job of figuring it out yourself, *omae*.

[Dr. Spin] Hardly. I know that the Hilton brand belongs to Horizon, now. And my facial recognition software matches

some of the spooks on the scene to Dawkins group members. But that's all I know. I don't know who all the dead Japanese gentlemen are. And I don't know who the other group is. The ones that got away. Runners, I'm guessing? But that doesn't narrow it down much.

[Kia] As much as I'd like to claim that I can identify all Japanese men, living or dead ...

[Dr. Spin] A black wave, with yellow stars.

[Kia] What?

[Dr. Spin] A tattoo that they all had. I called in a favor with the coroner.

[Kia] I see. What do you know about Ichiro Kiyomoto?

[Dr. Spin] Ex-Shiawase, right? He used to be in charge of the Market Forecasting & Information Division. They've been doing what the Dawkins Group does best since before Horizon was even a pipe dream—corporate intelligence and shadow ops.

[Kia] Kiyomoto was put in place by Sadato Shiawase during the ongoing feud between Sadato Shiawase and Soko Shiawase. Kiyomoto was a hardline Sadato loyalist. When they were both blindsided by Korin Yamana and Empress Hitomi, Sadato's granddaughter and Emperor Yasuhito's wife, Kiyomoto was replaced by Nigel Coltrane, who was Hitomi's guy. After Sadato committed seppuku, Kiyomoto's loyalty shifted to Tadeshi—Sadato's son, and Hitomi's father.

[Dr. Spin] What an incestuous nest of vipers. So Kiyomoto got forced out because he bet on the wrong pony?

[Kia] Close. But as is often the case with Japanacorps, the truth is more nuanced and more complicated.

[Dr. Spin] Enlighten me.

[Kia] Coltrane, the new MFID director, forced Kiyomoto to step down and retire back in '68. He wound up forming his own company, Tenjin Information Services. But too many of the MFID's brightest lights had been brought up by Kiyomoto for a purge to take place. A significant percent of the department is still loyal to Kiyomoto.

[Dr. Spin] Where does Horizon get involved here?



[Kia] Like you said, the MFID has decades of experience in Horizon's chosen field. But if they authorized the extraction of an MFID exec, they didn't know what they were getting into.

[Dr. Spin] Explain.

[Kia] That symbol you described is the emblem of the Neo-Genyosha, a secret society of spooks within Shiawase—specifically within the MFID—that's fanatically loyal to Kiyomoto. They have removed certain elements—Caucasian elements, as it happens—within Shiawase in the past to preserve the balance of power in favor of first Sadato Shiawase, and then Tadeshi. All of this was directed by Kiyomoto.

[Dr. Spin] Sorry, Neo-Genyosha? Everything is a Neo-Something nowadays, isn't it?

[Kia] Genyosha means "Black Ocean Society." The original Genyosha was an ultranationalist secret society active in 19th and 20th century Japan. These guys were basically terrorists. They were anti-Chinese, anti-Korean, and pro-Japanese expansion. They established intelligence networks throughout China that contributed to the war effort, and were eventually co-opted and legitimized by the government. Eventually they were disbanded in the wake of American expansion following World War II. Supposedly, the Neo-Genyosha is this organization's direct descendent.

[Dr. Spin] Fascinating. But not helping me work the scenario.

[Kia] All right, think of it this way. The MFID has been on the brink of civil war for a while now. The Kiyomoto loyalists must be expecting to be purged by Coltrane at any minute. The Coltrane loyalists must be expecting an uprising or a coup from Kiyomoto's plants any minute. It's an untenable situation. Members of either faction have reasons to want out of the situation.

[Dr. Spin] And Horizon has a reason to take them. Hmm ... they extract somebody and the entire house of cards trembles, if not falls down. Is that what we're looking at?

[Kia] Could be that neither Coltrane nor the Neo-Genyosha is willing to lose anyone without a fight.

[Dr. Spin] Thanks, that helps. I suppose I could try to track down the freelancers involved, but if they know their stuff they'll be long gone by now. Oh well. This gives me enough to work with for the moment.

[Kia] Happy to help. Try not to get too closely involved in this Shiawase internal affairs business, though. Not a healthy idea to stir the vipers in their nest if you want to live a long, productive life.

[Dr. Spin] I read you. Goodnight.

/user Kia has logged off

/user Dr. Spin has logged off

//chat session archived :: user Dr. Spin :: 12/04/73//

OVERVIEW

Middle-aged Shiawase employee and career spook Kosuke Ito is in a bad situation. As a corporate intelligence professional at the top of his field, he is very familiar with the world of the shadows, but the rumors that Nigel Coltrane is planning a purge of the Market Forecasting & Information Division are coming to a head. Such a purge could cost Ito his job—or his life. Ito has reason to believe that he has been outed as a loyalist plant of previous MFID Chief Ichiro Kiyomoto. Ito fears that any action he takes within his organization will tip his hand and only cause the purge to come sooner. Instead, through very discreet channels, he makes arrangements to defect to Horizon. He has no intention of going through with it, however. His plan is to arrange for his extraction by his allies in the Neo-Genyosha before Horizon can place him. As is often the case, though, things may not go according to plan.

Nothing Personal can take place in any major city in which both Horizon and Shiawase have a significant presence, i.e., basically in any major city. The default assumption is that this run takes place in Seattle, but Hong Kong, Neo-Tokyo, and Los Angeles are also good choices, as all of them have locations identical to the ones outlined here.

The runners will be hired by a Ms. Johnson working for Horizon to arrange the voluntary extraction of one Kosuke Ito. Horizon wants Ito for his experience and his expertise in

analysis. Ito is willing enough to go and has provided detailed information on the Shiawase residential complex where he is staying. Ito, however, wants to be extracted immediately, fearing that Coltrane's operatives may be closing in on him to ensure that he disappears into a black bag forever. The runners must race against the clock to complete the extraction.

The security at Fukushima Gardens, the Shiawase residential complex, is nothing to sneeze at. But the real threat is the team of MFID operatives that is loyal to Coltrane and arrives to liquidate Ito once the runners have him in their custody. The runners will have to fight their way out while protecting Ito, who, while a gifted analyst, is not a field man, but a soft target. On the way out they will have to deal with both the MFID kick squad and local security, neither of which, thankfully, is aware that the other works for Horizon.

Once the runners have Ito safely squared away, they will be contacted to bring him to a suite on the 39th floor of the downtown Hilton hotel, to exchange him for the second half of their pay. Once they deliver Ito, however, they will discover that he staunchly refuses to sign his new employment contract with Horizon. The runners can attempt to convince him to change his mind using anything at their disposal, but they will have no luck. The runners will soon discover why, as a team of Neo-Genyosha assets that Ito arranged to extract him from Horizon begin raiding the building. Ito refused to sign the contract because he has every intention of going to work for Kiyomoto at Kiyomoto's

new company. Ms. Johnson calmly asks for a minute alone with Ito and offers to double the team's money if they will help her buy some time.

The runners will have to fight to defend the building for as long as they can. Eventually, though, they will have to fall back to the suite. When they get there, Ito has completely reversed his position and has in fact signed the contracts. When the remnants of the second extraction team come through the door, they immediately see that Ito is lost to them, and they decide to leave rather than press the issue. As the local law enforcement corp is closing in, wise runners would be encouraged to do the same.

What pressure Ms. Johnson was able to exert to cause Ito to change his mind will not be revealed in this adventure.

PLOT POINT ONE

The runners are contacted in the middle of the night by their regular fixer (the one with the highest Connection rating, if the team has multiple fixer contacts) about an urgent and lucrative meet arranged on short notice for tomorrow afternoon. The meeting is at 2:00 p.m. at the Victory clothes store located in a mall in an upper-middle class neighborhood. If in Seattle, the mall is in the SCIRE. The runners are to all be present with their commlinks in active mode and connected in a conference call—they are instructed that one of them is to enter dressing room number three while the rest wait nearby. Ms. Johnson—actually Margaret Hennessy, a Dawkins group operative and social adept—is waiting in an adjacent dressing room. Although they cannot physically see her, AR allows the runners to observe that she is an attractive Caucasian blonde woman in her early thirties. The runner in the dressing room gets a wireless ping from Ms. Johnson, and the other runners are welcome to join in via a conference call. Ms. Johnson is equipped for subvocal communications and has an agent continuously encrypting the conversation, just in case.

The run that Ms. Johnson sketches out is described as “extraction of a middle-tier executive from a corporate residential facility. The target is voluntary, and time is a factor. Payment is 10,000 nuyen each. Details upon agreement.” The runners need to agree to these terms if they want to learn more than the broad strokes—Ms. Johnson will be unshakeable on that. On price, however, they can haggle, with each net hit their designated negotiator can score on Ms. Johnson (good luck!) increasing the payment by 1,000 nuyen, to a maximum of 15,000 each. If and when the runners agree, they get the details.

The target's name is Kosuke Ito, a male Japanese human. He is fifty years old and of below average height and weight for his metatype. A picture of Ito provided to the runners shows that he is physically unremarkable. The runners are told that they can expect Ito's full cooperation. Ito has no family—he is estranged from his ex-wife and children—and he lives alone. The runners are given the address of Fukushima Gardens, the residential complex where he will be staying, in Apartment #113. (If in Seattle, this particular Fukushima Gardens is located in Renton.) It shouldn't take the runners much legwork to determine that Fukushima Gardens is a residential park for Shiawase employees. The runners are also given a blueprint of the grounds and the building, with the guard positions picked out. The runners are told that, while there is no

specific deadline, time is of the essence. Ms. Johnson explains that the target is very eager to get out, if not tonight then tomorrow. That is all that Ms. Johnson can tell them, and she is of the opinion that it should be enough. She hints that if they can get the job done without leaving any trace of their presence, there will be a bonus in it for them (although as it turns out, circumstances she is unaware of will make this impossible). She will not, at any point, reveal who she works for, although who Ito works for is no secret.

While Ms. Johnson (and the runners) don't know this, if the runners have not extracted Ito by midnight on the night after the initial meeting, an MFID black bag team under Coltrane's orders will break into his apartment and administer repeated electroshocks with a stun baton until Ito has died from an apparent heart attack, and the runners will have failed through inaction. This leaves the runners with a deadline of just under thirty-six hours to plan and execute Ito's extraction. They will not, however, be aware of the specific deadline, only a general sense of urgency. Ito has taken the next two days off from work on personal leave, and he should be waiting in his apartment.

The runners are given instructions to send a message to Ms. Johnson once they have secured Ito. The details of their opposition (the building's security system) are described in the Fukushima Gardens listing of the **Locations** section, and they will provide the most significant challenge for this part of the run.

At the end of the meet, Ms. Johnson encourages the runners to leave one by one so as not to call attention to themselves. She does not depart until all of them are gone.

PLOT POINT TWO

When the runners enter Ito's room (#113), whether they knock on the door or slip in through a window, they find him packed and ready to go. At that exact moment, MFID operatives are infiltrating the Fukushima Gardens facility with the intent of eliminating Ito. Coltrane's operatives are working in two four-man teams. Team A comes over the south wall and takes up concealed positions to the west of the apartment building, preparing an ambush for the team's exit. Team B comes over the east wall and takes control of the security room from the Desert Storm Security personnel stationed there so that they have eyes on the entire compound. Although they are here for wetwork, the MFID uses nonlethal force against all Shiawase employees, except for Ito, who they intend to electrocute and then make it look like an unfortunate mishap.

For six of the MFID operatives, use the Covert Ops Specialist (p. 100, *SR4A*) but replace the monofilament sword with a stun baton, and replace the regular ammo for the Ingram Smartgun X with gel rounds (making the damage 5S and the AP +2). Also assume that the gear (aside from weapons, armor, and commlink) is distributed throughout the entire team, rather than carried by each member. For the leader of Team A, use the Combat Mage (p. 99, *SR4A*) but change the metatype to human (keep the Attributes as they are), replace Clout with Improved Invisibility and Lightning Bolt with Chaotic World. Additionally, Team A's leader has a Force 2 Increase Reflexes spell sustained on a Force 2 sustaining focus. For Team B's leader, use the Hacker (p. 105, *SR4A*) but change the metatype to human (no changes to





INCOMING FEED.....



NOTHING PERSONAL.....

the Attributes), add a Rating 1 synaptic booster, and replace the ammunition for the Hammerli 620S with stick-n-shock rounds (DV 6S(e), AP –half Impact armor).

Team A takes cover and tries to suppress the exits from the apartment building, with the mage providing support via spells, while Team B monitors the rest of the facility via the security system and provides backup. Unless the runner team specializes in stealth to a noteworthy degree, it is unlikely they will be able to get out unnoticed. While the MFID team has transportation nearby, they do not pursue the runners out of Fukushima Gardens, wary of being caught in the territory of other corporations or being involved in something as palpably unsubtle as a high-speed chase.

If the runners want to ask Ito who is trying to kill him, he will explain the situation to a limited degree. The current director of the MFID, Nigel Coltrane, is trying to purge all employees who may not be loyal to him. Because of this dangerous situation, he has decided to defect to Horizon. That is all he tells the runners unless he is magically coerced. He is fairly resistant to most conventional forms of interrogation. No indication of Ito's plan exists on his commlink.

PLOT POINT THREE

Once the runners have Ito, they need to contact Ms. Johnson. She might not be available immediately, and they may have to sweat it out for a while waiting and holding onto an increasingly anxious Ito. During this time, however, they won't actually be pursued by Shiawase or the police (unless they were

extraordinarily sloppy). When they do get in touch with Ms. Johnson, she schedules a meet tomorrow night at Room 3918 at the Hilton Executive Suites downtown. She arranges for them to pick up their keycards at the front desk under whatever aliases they are using for their fake SINS.

When the runners arrive at the room with Ito, Ms. Johnson thanks them in person. She is there with five Dawkins Group operatives, who are on site for security. Ms. Johnson presents Ito with a document for his biometric signature, a standard five-year employment contract with Horizon. Ito politely refuses to sign, which comes as just as much of a surprise to Ms. Johnson as it does to the runners. Even when Ms. Johnson attempts to explain to Ito what will happen if he doesn't sign—that he will be dumped right back where he was in the path of Coltrane's purge of the MFID—he only smiles serenely and repeats his refusal.

The runners may take the initiative and attempt to coerce or convince Ito themselves. Ms. Johnson allows this, but she doesn't want Ito physically harmed or magically coerced (yet). Before the runners can get too involved in negotiations, one of Ms. Johnson's guards (who is patched in to the hotel's security network) reports that an unidentified helicopter has just dropped a team of hostiles on the roof. At the same time, Ms. Johnson receives a commlink call from her man in the lobby saying that the hotel security there is also under attack.

"It appears that Ito played us. He must have made other arrangements. We seem to be in a bit of a tight spot here," Ms. Johnson says, remarkably cool and collected considering the situation. "If you will help delay them, I can double your money." If the runners simply walk away, they can try to slip out quietly

past the attackers. It is their choice whether to go for a bigger payday or decide that discretion is the better part of valor. If they ask what Ms. Johnson's plan is, she says only that she will deal with Ito herself.

Assuming that the runners try and help defend the hotel, Ms. Johnson and one Dawkins Group operative (the hacker) remain in the room. Two of the other operatives head for the roof through a nearby stairwell, while the remaining two take the elevator to the lobby. The runners can choose to go with one group or the other, or they can split their forces however they see fit.

Both on the roof and in the lobby is a six-man team of Neo-Genyosha ninjas, here to retrieve Ito. Each team is composed of five gunmen and one hacker. The gunmen and hacker use the stats of the Red Samurai Detachment and Red Samurai Lieutenant (p. 283, *SR4A*) with the following changes: they are wearing chameleon suits instead of full body armor, have wired reflexes Rating 1 instead of Rating 2, and have dermal plating Rating 2. They have Archery 5 and Automatics 5 instead of Firearms skill group, they are equipped with heavy crossbows (loaded with narcoject injection bolts), and their FN HARs are suppressed. For the statistics of the Dawkins group members, see p. 19. Generally, both sides use non-lethal force when possible, except against enemies who clearly are shooting to kill. The Neo-Genyosha will target the Dawkins Group members before the runners, as they have not been briefed on the runners' presence.

When the runners have either won the fight or are losing badly, they are ordered to withdraw back to the room. This is a fighting retreat that the Neo-Genyosha allows them to make. When the runners make it back to the room, Ito is nowhere to be seen. Ms. Johnson informs the runners that the attackers are about to breach through the doors with flash-bangs and rappel through the windows. She advises—not orders—they to drop their weapons, step away from the entry points, and offer no resistance. Then the breach happens exactly how she described, and the room is crawling with enough heavily armed Neo-Genyosha that fighting them would be a regrettable misstep for any team, regardless of their composition.

As the Neo-Genyosha begin to hurriedly question Ms. Johnson, Ito emerges from the bathroom where he has been hiding. He presents his signed employment contract and regretfully informs the Neo-Genyosha that he cannot come with them. In a heated conversation in Japanese, the Neo-Genyosha leader asks Ito how he could betray Kiyomoto like this after they all risked their lives for him. Ito only replies that he is sorry to have wasted their time, but that he is "happy to begin his new life working for Horizon." Ito, however, doesn't appear happy—he seems glassy eyed, wan, and emotionally dead.

When the sounds of approaching sirens are first heard, the frustrated Neo-Genyosha literally vanish, using their chameleon suits. Ms. Johnson says, "I take it that's your cue to be going too?"

She then pays the runners double the initial amount agreed upon, as promised, and tells them that if they hurry they should be able to escape the police dragnet. She is not willing, and no one else is able, to explain what sort of magic, technology, or other persuasion she used to change Ito's mind. Wise runners will not linger to pursue the issue.

LOCATIONS

Game Info

AROUND THE WORLD

While the examples listed in the main plot stream are Seattle neighborhoods, *Nothing Personal* can take place anywhere throughout the world. Here are some suggestions for where to situate the three primary locations in a few suggested cities. In Hong Kong, the Victory outlet might be located at the Lucky Money mall in the Mid-Levels and Fukushima Gardens is located on Lantau Island in the town of Discovery Bay. The Hong Kong Hilton Executive Suites hotel is located in Tsim Sha Tsui, a corporate neighborhood in Yau Tsim Mong. Victory subsidiaries are all over Neo-Tokyo, but the one in the college town of Ogawamachi in the Kanda district is especially suitable for a meet. In Tokyo, Shiawase's Fukushima Gardens is located in Bunda ward, and the Tokyo Hilton is in the westernized district of Minato, flanked by embassies on both sides in the Azabu neighborhood. In Los Angeles, the Victory subsidiary is in one of countless malls in Fun City. Fukushima Gardens is situated with other corporate enclaves in Pasadena, and the local Hilton is Downtown, just a few blocks away from the Baltimore Towers, where a tempo-related massacre took place two years back. Both Fukushima Gardens and the Hilton Executive Suites are in neighborhoods heavily policed by LA's Automated Crime Prevention System.

VICTORY CHAIN STORE

Victory is a clothing label brand (and an Ares subsidiary) that sells practical, casual urbanwear to the middle class and is represented globally in every major city. This franchise store is a fairly typical specimen, and little about it is remarkable. There is no security to speak of except a handful of obvious CCTV cameras (controlled by a single Device Rating 3 wireless node that is not even hidden, nor equipped with any IC) and a PanicButton. There's absolutely no physical security, except the employees and the RFID tags in the clothing, both of which are just there to stop people from shoplifting things. There are eight dressing rooms in the back of the room, and AROs denote their status as occupied or vacant. Pop music plays through the audio devices of anyone with an Active commlink, and AR pop-ups display sales, specials, and discounts. All in all, it is a masterfully inconspicuous location for a meet.

FUKUSHIMA GARDENS

Fukushima Gardens is a residential facility—complete with a gym, swimming pool, and conference rooms—for Shiawase employees. As several of those employees are executives and managers, persons of economic value if not true VIPs, the facility's security is better than average. Fukushima Gardens takes up an

entire city block, surrounded by road on all sides. There are no directly adjacent buildings.

The entire compound grounds are surrounded by a three-meter-tall fence (Armor Rating 7, Structure Rating 7). Although the fence is not electrified or garnished with razor wire, an infrared trip beam (p. 261, *SR4A*) runs along the top of the fence, requiring a Perception + Intuition (3) Test to spot and an Agility + Reaction (3) Test to squeeze past for any characters attempting to climb the fence. The chainlink of the fence itself is alarmed so that if the fence is cut or broken, the alarm is tripped. The wiring can be bypassed with a Hardware + Logic (5, 1 minute) Test, as described under alarms on p. 261, *SR4A*.

There are three entrances to the compound, one on the western edge of the fence, one on the southwestern corner, and one on the northeastern corner. Each entrance is a tiny grass courtyard (well illuminated by security lighting at night) situated between a pair of outer doors and a pair of inner doors. All of the outer doors are locked with Rating 4 maglock cardreaders, and all of the inner doors are secured with Rating 4 maglock keypads. All of the entrance maglocks are outfitted with a Rating 2 anti-tamper system (p. 263, *SR4A*). One obvious thermographic security camera (Device Rating 3) watches each of the entryways. Additional and identical exterior cameras (with security lights) are situated in the northwestern and southeastern corners of the fence, facing inward toward the compound grounds. The grounds are grassy and contain a great deal of decorative foliage.

The compound contains two main buildings. A one-story executive center in the middle of the compound contains conference rooms, janitorial supply and storage, a gymnasium (with locker rooms and a swimming pool) and the security control center. The actual apartments are located in a seven-story rectangular building that runs parallel to the eastern half of the compound's southern wall. The exterior door of the apartment building and the exterior doors of the executive center are secured with Rating 4 maglock cardreaders (no anti-tamper systems) opened by the same keycards that open the outer doors in the fence.

Interior doors within the executive center are open during the day; at night they are locked with simple mechanical locks. The doors to the individual apartments are secured with Rating 2 maglock keypads; residents memorize their individual codes, which do not change. At least one ordinary security camera (Device Rating 2) watches each interior hallway of both buildings.

Each of the apartments has at least one window, and the windows have alarm circuits built into them, which can be bypassed in the same manner as the fence, but which will trigger an alarm if cut or broken. Ito is in Room #113 in the middle of the first floor.

If any of the alarms—including the perimeter fence trip beam, the alarm wired into the perimeter fence, the apartment window alarms, or the anti-tamper systems—are tripped, the type, location, and time of the alert is immediately reported to the security rigger in the security control room. The same occurs if any of the cameras detects an intruder, as most of the cameras are being monitored in real time. There are four Desert Storm security guards (use Corporate Security Unit, p. 281 *SR4A*) in the control room at all times, along with a security rigger (use the Professional Spider on p. 68 of *Unwired*, with the same physical gear as the rest of the guards, or use the stats for the Drone Rigger

on p. 101, *SR4A* if *Unwired* is unavailable). At night, there are three more guards on duty. One of them patrols the grounds with a flashlight, one of them patrols the executive center, and one of them sits in the office on the ground floor of the building that contains the actual apartments. If the seven security guards realize they are in a situation they cannot handle themselves, they call for a Desert Storm quick-response team to back them up. The six man quick-response team (use Red Samurai Detachment, p. 283, *SR4A*) arrives in 2d6 minutes and goes in hard.

The building's entire security network (comprising all of the devices mentioned above) is controlled by a single node. The node is physically located in the security control center and is not connected to the Matrix, but it can be wirelessly accessed from anywhere within the compound and is not hidden. The node has System 4, Response 5, Signal 5, and Firewall 6 and is running a Rating 4 Analyze program to check for intruders—it is also being monitored by the security rigger. If the system detects an alert, it loads a Rating 4 IC agent with Attack 4, Blackout 4, Armor 4, and Track 4 onto the system. The security rigger's commlink is legitimately subscribed to the node, so gaining control of it is an effective means of bypassing Matrix security, but it presents its own problems in the physical realm.

There is no security mage on duty, but a bound Force 3 spirit of water patrols the grounds in astral space. If it detects an intruder, it has orders to alert its summoner (use CorpSec Lieutenant, p. 282, *SR4A*) who arrives within 1d6 minutes, and then use its Confusion and Binding powers to delay and harass the intruders.

Unprotected employees (although never Ito) are going in and out of the compound each day and night. Each of them is carrying a keycard that can open the outer perimeter door and the exterior doors of the executive center and the apartment building, and each of them knows the code to the inner perimeter door as well as the code to their own apartment. There is a chance, however, that the employee the runners randomly target may be an important executive with his own security detail to complicate things.

HILTON EXECUTIVE SUITES

The Hilton is a very secure hotel, which is what its high-end corporate clientele expects. As the runners do not need to break in, most of the details of the security are not explained here. The building is sixty stories tall, and at that height is still dwarfed by the other towering glass-and-steel behemoths in its immediate vicinity. A helipad on the roof serves the upper floors, which are penthouse-like palaces for the most high-powered corporate movers and shakers. While not as nice as the upper rooms, the suites that fill the rest of the hotel aren't anything to scoff at; they are immaculately clean and beautifully appointed. The building is fully wireless integrated, allowing any guest with a working, subscribed commlink to call for room service or anything else they might need or desire. Each room features virtual weather and music AR software. The rooms also have polarized windows that can be tinted to allow the guests to look out, but no one to look in. Door locks and other security devices can generally be assumed to be Device Rating 5, and the building is physically very sturdy.

The node that controls the building's security is not connected to the Matrix, and all of its device connections are





INCOMING FEED.....

hardwired, allowing it to maintain a very low signal rating. It is located in a security office on the first floor behind the concierge's desk. The node is considered to be Device Rating 6 and is monitored at all times by a Security Consultant (see p. 69, *Unwired*). The hotel security themselves wear plainclothes (Actioneer Business Suits, in truth), and use the stats for the Lone Star Police Squad Member (p. 282, *SR4A*), except that each of them has a Rating 1 synaptic booster installed. Hotel security personnel are in constant communication with each other, and their primary concern is the safety of the guests; if they encounter a situation they cannot handle, they call in an outside law enforcement agency for assistance—they do this as soon as they are engaged by the Neo-Genyosha, a battle they will not win. It is unlikely that the runners will come into direct conflict with hotel security, as hotel security will have their hands full dealing with the Neo-Genyosha.

PEOPLE

MS. JOHNSON [MARGARET HENNESSY]

An attractive blonde elf, the only thing that kept Margaret Hennessy from being a trid starlet is her disposition. She wears her shoulder-length hair in a tight bun or a high ponytail and dresses conservatively, preferring business wear in muted blues and grays. Hennessy has close to ten years experience with Horizon; before that, she was addicted to novacoke and working on the streets as a small-time hustler. She was rescued from that life by Syria Sklenka, the head of Horizon Europe. Hennessy

has since worked as Sklenka's protégé, and internal corporate scuttlebutt is that the two are actually lovers. Hennessy genuinely believes that Horizon has uplifted and bettered her, and she is entirely loyal to the corporation. She is also a Social Adept (Grade 2 Initiate) and a gifted propagandist.

Ms. Johnson (Margaret Hennessy)

Female Caucasian elf

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | M | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|------|------|------|------|---|---|---|---|-----|------|------|------|
| 3 | 4(6) | 4(5) | 1(2) | 6(8) | 4 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 5.44 | 8(9) | 1(2) |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/10

Armor (B/I): 6/3

Skills: Assensing 2, Athletics skill group 1, Dodge 3, Electronics skill group 3, Electronic Warfare 2, Escape Artist (Cuffs) 1 (+2), Hacking 5, Influence skill group 4 (8), Perception 4 (6), Pistols (Hold-outs) 3 (+2), Stealth skill group 4 (5), Unarmed Combat 2

Knowledge Skills: Celebrities 4, High Society 4, Psychology 4, Security Design 3, Security Procedures 3

Languages: English N, French 3, Spherthiel 3

Qualities: Adept, Addiction (Tempo, Mild), Incompetent (Gunnery, Heavy Weapons)

Initiate Grade: 2

Metamagics: Adept centering, cognition.

Adept Powers: Astral Perception, Commanding Voice, Facial Sculpt (1), Improved Ability (Con, Etiquette, Leadership, Negotiation) (2), Improved Reflexes (1), Kinesics (2)

Augmentations: Datajack, muscle augmentation 1, muscle toner 2 (alphaware), tailored pheromones 2

Gear: Area jammer (Rating 6), Fairlight Caliban commlink w/ Novatech Navi OS [Response 4, Signal 5, Firewall 3, System 4, w/ biometric reader, sim module (modified for BTL/hot sim), subvocal microphone, and trodes], contacts [Rating 3, w/ image link, smartlink, and vision enhancement 2], fake SIN (Rating 4), linguasofts (Cantonese, Japanese, and Spanish, all Rating 4), Synergist Business Line suit [longcoat, skirt, high collar shirt, with nonconductivity (Rating 6)], tag eraser, three doses tempo (see p. 58, *Ghost Cartels*), white noise generator (Rating 6).

Programs: Analyze 4, Browse 4, Biofeedback Filter 4, Decrypt 4, Edit 4, Encrypt 4, Exploit 4, Scan 4, Sniffer 4, Spoof 4, Stealth 4
Weapons:

Shock Gloves [Unarmed, Reach —, DV 5S(e), AP -half]
Morissey Élan [Holdout Pistol, DV 6S(e), AP -half, SA, RC 1, 5(c), w/ electronic firing, silencer, smartgun, and stick-n-shock ammo]

KOSUKE ITO

Kosuke Ito has been a loyal Shiawase sararimen his entire life, although it has not always been easy on him. His collegiate interest in linguistics is what led him to be recruited by Kiyomoto to Shiawase's MFID right after college (at Tokyo University). Ito is slight and quiet, and he prefers listening to speaking and observing to direct action. Ito is not a warm person, and his sense of personal duty and honor have always come first in his life, leading to his virtually non-existent relationship with his ex-wife and daughters. Ito looks up to Ichiro Kiyomoto almost as a father, and the only reason he did not jump ship when Kiyomoto left the corporation is because Kiyomoto needed people to stay behind as his eyes and ears within the MFID. The plan to use Horizon to extract him so that the Neo-Genyosha could later extract him without revealing themselves to Coltrane's people was Ito's idea.

Kosuke Ito

Male Japanese human

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|----|
| 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5.8 | 8 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/10

Armor (B/I): 5/3

Skills: Computer 4, Data Search 5, Dodge 3, Forgery 3, Hacking 3, Influence skill group 5, Instruction 2, Perception 4, Pilot Ground Craft 1, Pistols 2, Software 2, Stealth skill group 2

Knowledge Skills: Consumer Marketing 6, Economics 6, Security Design 3, Security Procedures 3, Shiawase Politics 5

Languages: Japanese N

Augmentations: Datajack, trauma damper.

Gear: Actioneer Business Clothes, contacts [Rating 3, w/ low-light vision, image link, and vision magnification 2], Erika Elite commlink w/ Iris Orb OS (Response 3, Signal 4, Firewall 3, System 3), linguasofts (Cantonese, English, French, German, Russian, Spanish, all Rating 4)

Programs: Analyze 4, Browse 4, Command 2, Edit 4

Weapons:

Yamaha Pulsar [Taser, DV 6S(e), AP -half, SA, RC —, 4(m)]

DAWKINS GROUP OPERATIVE

Horizon's Dawkins Group specializes in covert information warfare and the business of winning hearts and minds. They are social chameleons who infiltrate other corporations and nations to subtly influence their decisions from within. In addition to acting as propagandists, Dawkins group members handle many intelligence and counterintelligence functions for Horizon. This occasionally involves hiring and working alongside independent runners, and it only rarely involves direct combat or security operations. Dawkins Group operatives are masters of social engineering.

The stats below are for a human of either gender.

Dawkins Group Operative (Professional Rating 4)

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Init | IP |
|-------|-------|---|-------|-------|---|---|---|-----|------|----|
| 3 (5) | 4 (6) | 4 | 2 (4) | 5 (6) | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3.8 | 8 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Armor (B/I): 6/4

Skills: Automatics 3, Clubs 3, Influence skill group 3, Perception 3, Stealth skill group 3

Augmentations: Auto-injector (reusable, with three doses Jazz), bone density augmentation 2, muscle replacement 2 (alphaware), synthacardium 2, tailored pheromones 1

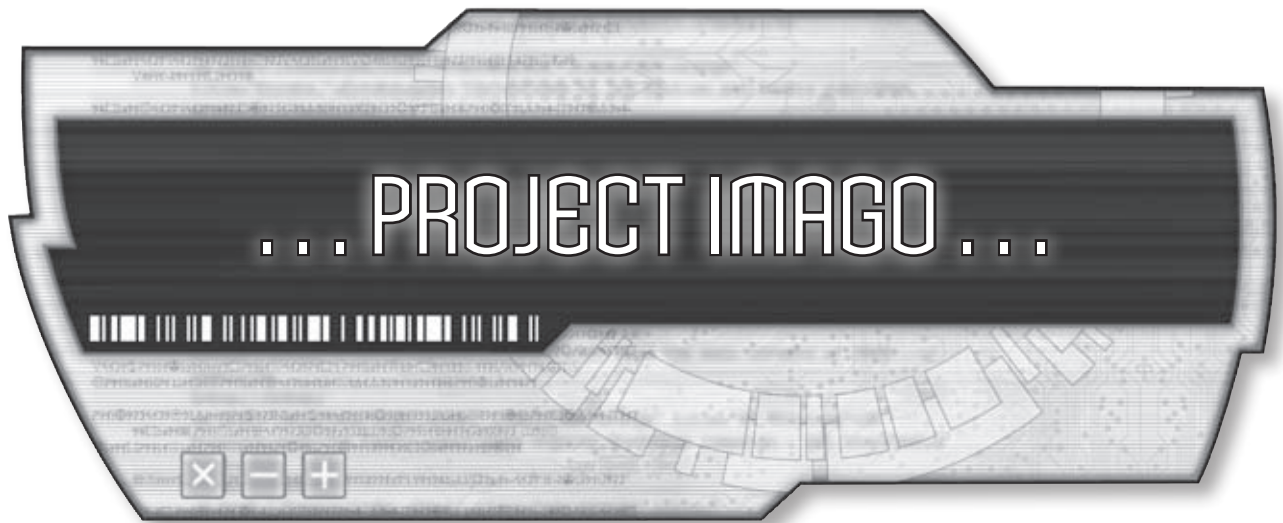
Gear: Commlink (Device Rating 4), glasses [Rating 3, w/ low-light vision, image link, and smartlink], lined coat, nanopaste disguise, stimulant patch (Rating 5).

Weapons:

Stun baton [Reach 1, DV 6S(e), AP -half]

HK-227X [SMG, DV 5P, AP —, SA/BF/FA, RC (1), 28(c), w/ smartgun and sound suppressor]





Incoming Message

Posted By: Snopes

An old axiom in a long list describing clichés of lurid twentieth century genre fiction went a little something like this: all rumors are one hundred percent true, all prophecies are one hundred percent accurate, all of the time. Sometimes, our very own real world (especially seen through the eyes of our unique profession) can seem like this. Shadowrunners can be very superstitious, and while not credulous people by trade, paranoia can build its own credulity. Urban legends are treated with the same gravitas as facts. I myself try hard not to get caught up in that kind of magical thinking, lending credence to the most preposterous of conspiracy theories. Sometimes, though, it seems like the saying had the better part of the truth.

Around this time last year, Icarus contributed a piece on NeoNET for the corporate sampler that 'Jack was putting together at the time. Beaker uploaded an internal R&D memo mentioning something called Project Imago. I was curious about it, and thought I might do a little digging and put my findings up on the site. Ultimately, though, in spite of my best efforts, the entire line of inquiry was a dead end and I lost interest. I had almost completely forgotten about it when, a few months later, I received a very disquieting e-mail.

The subject line of the e-mail was innocuous enough, but one word in it peaked interest: Imago. The from line, however, was beyond upsetting. Whoever sent it was purporting to be my younger brother, Sam. The problem is that my kid brother is dead. He died in a train accident during the Second Crash. I won't go into the details of this, because they're personal and painful, but the worst part was that whoever sent this e-mail knew things about me, from childhood, that no one but Sam should have been able to know.

- That's more than a little creepy.
- Pistons

- Remember that in this age of pervasive social media and constant surveillance, there's very little or nothing about you that "no one but X should know".
- Dr. Spin
- Which is also fraggin' creepy.
- Bull

I imagine some of you might have laughed this off, while others might have even gone along and believed it—anything's possible in the Sixth World, or whatever. Most of you, I hope, would do what I did, which is get righteously pissed off. I do not appreciate being fucked with in this way. So I set about backtracing this e-mail—which you'll notice I haven't gotten into the *content* of yet—with everything I had, even calling in some favors from some other hackers. Ultimately, the maze of relays and redirections was so dense that I could not find a point of origin at all. It was like the message had coalesced from the ether of the Matrix and then had been ping-ponged off of about ten percent of the nodes in existence before arriving at my doorstep. The tradecraft of it seemed vaguely familiar to me, but I wasn't able to get anywhere. So, having hit a dead end, I did what the best of us do when faced with emotional duress beyond our abilities to resolve.

I tied on a pint of Hurlq and sent an angry, fuming response making all kinds of threats and demanding to know who this person was. I won't say I have no enemies, but none that would have the means and the motive to do something this cruel, this petty and personal. I was expecting them to twist the knife, to continue impersonating my dead brother, but they didn't. They didn't respond at all.

Which brings us to the content of the e-mail. It gave me the rabbit hole I needed to dive into in order to start researching this Project Imago in detail. Which is exactly what I did, mindful the entire time of who (and, groaningly, I should add "or what?") had

Incoming Message

set me on this course. Even with help, it took about a month of digging. All of this stuff is either very well protected, very old, or both. But I think I've finally got a reliable idea of the barebones of what Project Imago is—or perhaps I should say, was.

This is a long, complicated story, and it goes back around twenty years, long before NeoNET (or for that matter Novatech) existed, back before Transys Neuronet and Celedyr were household names. Back then, there were rumors floating on the Matrix that Transys had gotten its hands on—that's right, acquired, not developed—a cyberdeck supposedly capable of copying the metahuman soul to hardware. I can't confirm or deny the truth of this, and I can't even source it to my satisfaction (twenty-year-old shadow rumors), so I'll only state the obvious—it sounds pretty insane. The entire thing was a mild fart compared to the explosion of bad press that Transys suffered during the Jack the Ripper killings back in the early 2050s.

It started back in 2048, and you can imagine that after a quarter of a century and a global Matrix crash, what's left of their personnel records are pretty fragmentary, but that is when Transys Neuronet recruited an unusual employee named (or codenamed) Quicksilver. Apparently, the elf asked them for (and got) a job in their Matrix and cybernetics R&D division after hacking through what was, at the time, the absolute bleeding edge in IC to access the Transys mainframes. I say "unusual" because they had an entire support team (traveling mostly in and around Scotland) dedicated solely to handling this guy and his special needs, with a fairly astronomical budget that was spent on all kinds of weird stuff. Of course, "weird stuff" is vague, so I can be more specific—this guy and his security detail traveled around all of Europe meeting with druids, free spirits, and occult researchers, all of this ostensibly tied into the Matrix project he was working on at the time. Oh yeah—they also bought him a castle.

- This Quicksilver character reminds me of the elf Leonardo who supposedly developed some really far-out-there Matrix tech for Renraku back in the 2050s, including, allegedly, an optical cyberdeck.
- Frosty
- What is the deal with these mystery elves and their wacky inventions? I know that's a ridiculous question, but I'm being serious here.
- Glitch

Apparently, whatever work Quicksilver was accomplishing within Transys was too advanced for their competitors to let it continue. They didn't even try to extract him; a kick squad (working for who, I don't know) just offed Quicksilver, along with his paramour, the daughter of a Transys board member. It took Transys a while just to realize that Quicksilver was dead, and his research went missing. When they finally realized what was happening, there was some kind of an internal shitstorm, the



PROJECT IMAGO

details of which are lost to time. The internal memorandum that I came across was almost entirely redacted, the data irrecoverable. I was able to read enough to learn that Quicksilver had been working on a new kind of cyberdeck that never was released and something called Imago. When the dust settled, the supposedly magic deck, and any mention of it, were gone.

Transys Neuronet has seen a lot of restructuring since then, a lot of it led by the great dragon Celedyr. Most notably was when they merged with Novatech and Erika to form NeoNET at the end of the Second Crash. Now NeoNET is funding some top-secret R&D project called Imago. Coincidence? I can't say. Nor can I tell you what it all means.

The current Project Imago files are being kept off the Matrix, or are locked up tighter than Zurich-Orbital. There's a NeoNET (under the joint marquis of the Transys Neuronet and T99 subsidiaries) research facility in Caerleon that Celedyr makes frequent visits to—it's right near his lair—but I can't even hazard a guess at what's going on there. I'm in no position to physically break in, and the information available from the Matrix is just useless corporate gloss. As for my "brother"—or what might, I must acknowledge, be a program that somehow has been imprinted with his personality—I've heard from him once since then. It was an apology, of sorts. He said that he only wanted help, for him and the others. That he had only recently "escaped" from somewhere he'd been imprisoned. And that he was sorry for contacting me again, that it was too soon and that he would try again in a few years when "things had changed."

I asked him (it?) for details, but I haven't heard back. This (along with a few other matters) hasn't exactly helped me sleep

these nights, so I thought I'd go ahead and try to dilute its effect by sharing it.

- Isn't T99 NeoNET's magical think tank? What's their involvement here?
- Ecotope
- Hey Snopes. You said the way that the e-mail was spoofed was familiar. Figure out why? Oh, and weren't you on the run after your conspiracy post? Everything better now?
- Netcat
- Sort of. I've got a safe place to send up some notes I've put together and look at everyone else's work, but I'll be moving on soon. I'm sure people will be coming. As far as the e-mail spoofing technique, the answer on that came to me a few days ago. I was curious how Icarus got so much intel on NeoNET last year, so I did some digging on him too (with FastJack's nod, and the understanding I wouldn't do anything irresponsible or indiscrete with the intel). He had baffled his backtrail in a very similar manner.
- Snopes
- What exactly does that mean? Icarus?
- Netcat
- Maybe nothing. But one way or another, apparently, Icarus doesn't feel like sharing.
- FastJack

OVERVIEW

More than twenty years ago, operatives secretly working for the Great Dragon Celedyr stole the unique cyberdeck created by Quicksilver from Transys board member Sir Iain MacDonald of Clan MacDonald. In the intervening two decades, Celedyr and his most brilliant researchers have been hard at work reverse engineering the entirely unique deck and its hardware and software. The fruit of their labors is Project Imago, an experiment in consciousness uploading, with the end goal of creating e-ghosts from the minds and personalities of living metahumans. A secondary goal of Project Imago is creating digital "bait" to draw in the e-ghosts that have sprung into existence spontaneously, without being uploaded. Celedyr has a pervasive interest in consciousness and communication, and pursues a constantly evolving definition of sapience. His objective is to determine whether ghosts in the machine are sentient beings that can be communicated with, although what end that and his other research may serve in the long term remains unknown. Celedyr, like all Great Dragons, is seeing many, many moves ahead in the game.

Celedyr has appointed two project directors in charge of Imago. They are Dr. Gordon Browne and the mysterious entity known as Cerberus, itself an e-ghost imprint of Celedyr's protégé, the western dragon Eliohann. Besides Celedyr's handpicked researchers, however, several other factions are interested in Project Imago. These include, but are not limited to, AAA-rated megacorporation and leader in AI research, Renraku, and AA-rated Telestrian Industries; neither of which understand the science or underlying goals behind Project Imago, but both of them want their hands on the technology being used. It also includes elements of NeoNET's management. Celedyr has kept Richard Villiers largely in the dark about Project Imago, in spite of the vast amounts of NeoNET capital it has been drawing. Villiers wishes to learn what exactly is going on at the research facility in Caerleon, and if he does not see evidence of a project he considers economically viable, he will take steps to shut it down.

The runners first become involved when they are hired in their home city (this adventure will assume a default of Seattle, although the beginning of the adventure could be set anywhere with a bit of effort and innovation) by a corporate Johnson, working for Renraku and doing a reasonably good job of hiding it. The mission is to abduct a senior (but not managing) Project

Imago scientist named Dr. Victoria Sayrs. Sayrs will be in town to deliver a commencement speech at her alma mater, by default the University of Washington. The runners must organize a suitable distraction to abduct Sayrs without her security detail noticing. More importantly, they must replace her with an identical doppelganger, an infiltration expert designed by Renraku to penetrate the NeoNET R&D at Caerleon.

Once this mission is complete, and the runners are celebrating a job well done, they will be approached through shadowy channels by none other than Miles Lanier (see p. 142). Lanier will not introduce himself, but savvy and experienced runners may well recognize him—if they do, he will be very clear that no one is to know. Lanier will give the runners “an offer they cannot refuse.” They will be given fake identities and disguises and sent in as a new security detail to the Project Imago facility in Caerleon, with orders to snoop around there and report back to their new employer. Lanier is apparently aware of the Renraku plant that the runners have just placed, and is choosing to let it remain in play for reasons he will not specify. In fact, even the fact of who Lanier is working for will be left an open question for speculation.

With the identification documents given them by Lanier, the runners should infiltrate the Project Imago facility without too much trouble. The trouble comes instead when a strike by a Telestrian Industries shadowteam causes a failure of the BIOS containment units, a wave of panicked and confused e-ghosts—individuals that Project Imago “uploaded”—are released. The runners must deal with the Telestrian Industries team, the loose e-ghosts “possessing” the facility’s security system, and the complication of the industrial espionage being perpetrated by the doppelganger that replaced Dr. Sayrs, to get out alive and with the intelligence that Lanier wants. At the end of these events, the facility will be compromised, and Project Imago will need to move to another location.

PLOT POINT ONE

In the beginning, the runners are contacted by a regular fixer one morning with news of a meet that evening at the Silver Screen Dreams massage (bunraku) parlor in Tacoma. They are to ask for a girl named Maggie Chow.

Upon receiving a prearranged code phrase, Ms. Chow leads them to a secret conference room in the basement, near the bunraku section, and leaves them there. In the conference room is a nondescript Japanese sarariman, flanked by “Marilyn Monroe” and “Madonna,” more-than-passable meat puppet reconstructions of the stars that the average runner won’t even recognize, but selective connoisseurs will pay a fortune for an hour alone with them. The man will introduce himself only as Meisho-san (Mr. Name). Throughout the meeting, Meisho-san ignores the girls, who serve sake and any other refreshments the runners are craving; they are, in the end, little more than (very attractive) furniture.

The job that Meisho-san sketches out is an extraction that must occur discreetly in a public place. Security is thought to be light, but keeping a low profile is of the utmost importance. The job pays 40,000 nuyen for the team, with ten percent paid upfront. The final payment is not negotiable (unless the runners are actually

going to walk and it’s necessary to salvage the session), but the advance is, to a maximum of twenty-five percent. Meisho-san will not name the target until the runners agree, and he only answers their questions in the most general terms.

Once an agreement has been worked out, Meisho-san reveals that the target is Dr. Victoria Sayrs, a NeoNET scientist and an expert in the field of personality program. Dr. Sayrs will be giving a commencement address (which can be changed to a keynote speech for a scientific summit or conference, if the time of year is wrong for graduation) at her alma mater, the University of Washington. Meisho-san reveals what he knows about Dr. Sayrs’ field to curious runners, but does not reveal any of the small amount of intelligence that Renraku has on Project Imago.

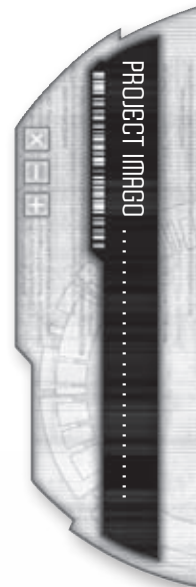
The event is happening three days from the time of the meeting at Husky Stadium, where the large crowds will be the runners’ best friend and worst enemy. That is where the runners are to snatch her, before she takes the stage or after her speech is finished. Campus security (described in more detail under **University of Washington**, below) are numerous and reasonably competent, but they are much more suited to dealing with unruly parties and student pranks than they are to dealing with professional teams of shadow operatives. Dr. Sayrs herself has two bodyguards, both of them cleaned-up Knights of Rage (p. 30).

A second team is waiting at the mostly deserted Canoe House nearby with a concealed Yongkang Gala Trinity speedboat (see p. 111, *Arsenal*). The second team inserts Dr. Sayrs’ replacement, a genetically identical doppelganger and infiltration expert, before the real Dr. Sayrs can be missed. If the runners abducted Dr. Sayrs before the speech, then the doppelganger takes her speech notes. Meanwhile, the runners take the Trinity, with the real Dr. Sayrs in it, out east onto Union Bay. The runners are given the GPS coordinates of a secret dock in Yarrow Bay where they can dock, as well as the address of a condo in Bellevue where they can deliver the package. If things are going too smoothly, the runners may have to contend with an attack from the 405 Hellhounds while passing through their turf.

Meisho-San and a pair of plainclothes, incognito Red Samurai are waiting at the (upscale) condo to collect the real Dr. Sayrs and spirit her to an undisclosed location. Assuming the runners have been successful so far and delivered Dr. Sayrs alive and unharmed, Meisho-san thanks them for their good work and tosses them the remainder of their payment in certified credsticks. He also invites them to use the condo for the rest of the day, especially if they look beat up after the run, as long as they are out by the end of the week.

PLOT POINT TWO

Mission accomplished, job well done, time to celebrate. Right? But if it seems like it was too easy, then it probably was. This plot point is easiest to start if the runners choose to take Meisho-san up on his offer and pass out in the condo before or after a night out on the town celebrating, because that way they will all be asleep in the same place. If the runners do not sleep in the condo, then the following scene will play out differently, with Lanier coming to the PCs one at a time in their homes, or using other operatives to abduct them and bring them to him at another location.



When the runners regain consciousness, they find that they've been relieved of their obvious weapons. There is a Rating 6 background count in the area where there wasn't one before, caused by six hits on a Mana Static spell, which serves as proof that Lanier's unseen magical support is not to be taken lightly. Additionally, a Rating 10 area jammer is jamming all wireless devices in the area. (All of this should be more than enough to discourage any foolish actions, but even if it isn't, Lanier should be more than capable of taking care of himself.)

None other than Miles Lanier is sitting over the PCs, wearing lightweight body armor, a heavily customized Ares Predator in a shoulder holster, and three weeks' worth of dark, untrimmed beard. He looks like a hunted man, a bit leaner than his media persona, more a field man than someone who works behind a desk, more a runner than a Johnson. Nonetheless, a single hit on any appropriate Knowledge Skill test is enough to recognize him, with runners able to default (at the usual penalty) to Logic or Intuition since he is such a well-known figure. Normally, someone at Lanier's level interacting with street level runners would be unheard of, but Lanier going AWOL from NeoNET has altered his operational level considerably.

Without introducing himself or waiting for introductions, he asks the runners if they've ever been to Wales. Before they all answer, he pulls a duffle bag from beneath the chair he's sitting in and drop it in front of one of the runners. "Inside are uniforms, SINS, and ID badges for Minuteman Security." The uniforms, badges and the SINS are individually tailored to the runners' metatypes and genders. "You'll also find that I've booked a commercial suborbital flight for you, under the SINS you were carrying. It leaves at noon for Heathrow International, which means you'll be getting into London at around 10:00 p.m. You'll need to leave your gear behind, so let me know about any implants you have so I can have the travel permits done in time. Once you arrive, you'll be equipped with standard-issue gear from the Minuteman armory at the facility."

Lanier goes on to explain that the runners will travel from London to a Transys Neuronet R&D facility in Caerleon as replacements for some security officers who suffered unfortunate accidents or were otherwise no longer fit for duty. Lanier won't comment on the fact that Minuteman, along with Transys, is a NeoNET subsidiary. The truth is, Lanier has observed that all individuals at that facility, including security, can be assumed to be under Celedyr's personal sway and have not been forthcoming with the information he needs, even if they are NeoNET employees; he needs outside assets who he knows will report back to him honestly and completely. "While you are there, in addition to doing your jobs and therefore blending in, I need you to keep your eyes wide open and poke around. Be discreet, but I need to know what's actually going on at that facility. In about a week, you'll rotate out to Cardiff for R&R and I will debrief you there."

Runners should be quick to notice that at no point has Lanier mentioned payment, nor given them a choice. If they attempt to refuse, he tells them, "You just kidnapped a NeoNET asset. I'm offering you a get-out-of-jail free card for that. Throwing it back in my face would be ... unwise." If the runners still protest, how Lanier deals with them is up to the gamemaster's personal style and preference, but even if it isn't fatal, it won't be friendly. If they

ask for payment, he tells them that they will be taken care of based on the quality of the intelligence they provide.

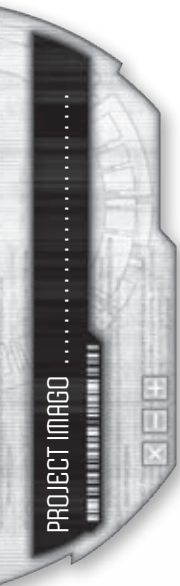
Lanier happily answers any logistical questions the runners have, although the entire reason he is doing this is because he doesn't know what's going on at the Project Imago facility. Nor does he answer questions in the "why us?" vein. Once the runners are pointed in the right direction, he is eager to get out of their way—he is a very busy man. At no point does he explain who he is, but if the runners call him on it, he reminds them of their professional ethics. "As far as you're concerned, I wasn't here and this conversation didn't happen. This is just another shadowrun for just another Mr. Johnson. I don't want to read about this on the walls of one of your little clubhouses." Finally he gives the runners a commcode for a dead drop to use in emergencies only.

When the runners arrive at Heathrow it's ten at night, and the runners are on their own for finding lodging for the night. Considering they should be largely unarmed, the mean streets of the Smoke and incidental encounters with the street gangs that prowl them might actually pose a real threat to even hardened professional criminals. Wherever the runners wind up sleeping, the itinerary Lanier gives them requires them to be at the research facility in Caerleon by 8:00 a.m. the next day; the best way to travel to Caerleon is by BritRail, which like the Underground tends to be both crowded and dangerous.

PLOT POINT THREE

When the runners arrive at the Transys Neuronet/T99 research facility in Caerleon, they are going to need to get busy pretending to be security guards. When the runners arrive, they are outfitted with the standard gear used by the Corporate Security Unit (see p. 281, *SR4A*). Well, the light pistol and the stun baton, anyway. The submachine guns are held in reserve for emergency situations. They are also issued master cardkeys that unlock most of the doors in the facility. For runners who wish to be effective social chameleons, Security Procedures and related knowledge skills will be invaluable, as will the Etiquette (Corporate), Con (Impersonation), and Disguise Active Skills, although smart roleplaying is crucial as well. The runners don't know that they'll have just one day to "blend in" at the Project Imago facility before all hell breaks loose the following day. A group who is particularly enjoying the ironic change of pace of shadowrunners acting as security guards as a facility might want to draw out the time period before the raid as well.

As for what to report to Lanier, there is much obvious weirdness on display. While Minuteman is in charge of the facility's security, for every two Minuteman officers there is one Knights of Rage gang member strolling around the premises. Their presence indicates that the project is under Celedyr's close supervision. Diligent runners use their patrol routes to form a mental map of the facility and make mental notes of the goings-on in each room (see the location description below). A human named Dr. Gordon Browne (who personally welcomes them to the facility) is one of the project's directors, but another one of the directors is heard, but never seen or named. He seems to communicate entirely through the PA wired into the building's security system. The disembodied voice is, in fact, the



e-ghost (and former Western Dragon) Cerberus, a.k.a. Eliohann, a.k.a. Neurosis.

The primary threat to the runners is the Renraku doppelganger that replaced Dr. Sayrs. Lanier has chosen to let it remain in play for unknown reasons, and while their current mission does not involve the replacement, it knows their identity. Worse, they know who it is supposed to be. When they encounter it, the doppelganger recognizes the runners from the extraction of the real Dr. Sayrs back in Seattle, and leaps to a very dangerous conclusion based on the fact that they are now wearing NeoNET uniforms. While the doppelganger won't risk exposing itself by attacking the runners in the open, it realizes that it needs to eliminate them to preserve its cover.

In the small hours of the morning on the second day, a Telestrian Industries shadow team hits the facility. The six-man team is composed entirely of metahuman runners hired in Portland. The team is composed of the Combat Mage (p. 99, *SR4A*), Enforcer (p. 102, *SR4A*), Hacker (p. 105, *SR4A*), Radical Eco Shaman (p. 107, *SR4A*), Street Samurai (p. 110, *SR4A*), and Weapons Specialist (p. 113, *SR4A*), modifying the Street Samurai into an Elf (+1 Agility, +2 Charisma, -1 Edge). The team members are pros and work very well together, but their mission is essentially a straight-up corporate espionage smash-and-grab. They use stealth as long as it is feasible, but they are there to grab whatever research or prototypes they can and then scuttle the rest. The Minuteman security teams, even with the Knights of Rage seeded among them, should be no match for them, but the runners placed among them might make the difference. Before they are defeated, however, the Telestrian team causes a catastrophic BIOS failure in the containment system where the uploaded personalities have been partitioned.

Like evil spirits escaping Pandora's box, a wave of panicked, confused e-ghosts (see p. 170, *Unwired*, or treat them as sprites), none of them higher than Rating 3 but very numerous, swarm throughout the complex, randomly attacking systems and devices. Characters with AR can see them in the form of icons. During this chaos, the doppelganger tries to take advantage of the confusion and eliminate the runners to protect her cover. While she will most likely not succeed, the attempt most likely has the effect of ruining the runners' cover, as they must kill or otherwise disable her while defending themselves.

Cerberus appears as an AR icon, trying to calm and recapture as many of the e-ghosts as possible while emergency contingencies are enacted to pack up the project and move it to a more secure location. The runners should take advantage of this opportunity to exfiltrate as their situation has just become untenable. The Knights of Rage have the responsibility for escorting Project assets out, not the Minuteman personnel. Getting out of the U.K. and back home is the runners' responsibility.

If they deliver a detailed report to the dead drop (which shuts down after that one call), they will be duly rewarded down the line—not with cash, but with access to suitably powerful and appropriate items that suit their particular capabilities, i.e., restricted milspec gear for gunbunnies and gearheads, a voucher for a beta-grade cyberware clinic for augmented characters, or a power focus for Awakened characters. The new location of Project Imago, Lanier's true loyalties, and many other things (including, possibly, the status of the Renraku doppelganger if the runners do not finish her off) remains unknown to the runners, for now.

LOCATIONS

SILVER SCREEN DREAMS

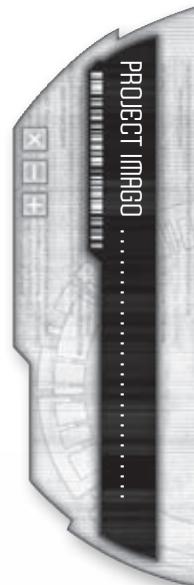
The basic description of Silver Screen Dreams appears on p. 112 of *Runner Havens*. It is a massage parlor that includes a backroom bunraku den where the puppets have been chosen, sculpted, trained, and chipped to look like flatvid movie stars and other beautiful people of the 20th and early 21st centuries. The owners and operators of Silver Screen Dreams are friendly with the Shotozumi-gumi, who in turn are on reasonably good terms with Renraku. Each room is fitted with a hidden camera and a concealed recording device, both Device Rating 4. There are about half a dozen Yakuza "guards" who ostensibly work at the den, mainly to be hanging out there (hey, what a tough gig). For them, use the stats for the Triad Posse on p. 284 of *SR4A*.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

If Dr. Sayrs is giving a commencement address, then more than 50,000 people will be packed into Husky Stadium, with about one in five of them a cap-and-gown wearing students. The polar opposite of the stadium, the Canoe House, is deserted as promised. The sheer amount of human mass present makes everything more difficult. It creates a temporary background count (Rating 2) and is a static zone that provides a -2 penalty to all Matrix actions, due to the sheer amount of Matrix activity occurring in a relatively small space. Additionally, the physical presence of the crowd imposes a -2 dice pool penalty to all Perception tests, Combat, and most Physical Active Skill tests. On the plus side, the crowds make it easier for Palming and Shadowing Tests, providing a +2 dice pool bonus.

In the event that shots are fired, the shooting character can choose not to take the -2 dice pool penalty to their attacks; instead, whenever the character fires a weapon and misses, they make an Edge (1) Test, applying penalties matching the uncompensated recoil on the shot that missed. If the character succeeds, nothing happens (the bullet flies off, hitting no one); if there are no successes, an innocent bystander is hit for normal damage; if the player character glitches, then an innocent woman, child, or elderly bystander is hit for normal damage; and if the character rolls a critical glitch, then an innocent woman, child, or elderly bystander is hit and killed *even if nonlethal weapons are being used*. The shooting character gains a point of Notoriety. Due to the possibility of over-penetration, if any character is using APDS ammo, that character must make this Edge test every time they fire, whether they hit the target or not.

There are over a hundred security professionals present, but only about two-dozen are close enough to Dr. Sayrs to make a difference. Use a mix of the Corporate Security Unit (p. 281, *SR4A*) and the Lone Star Police Squad Member (p. 282, *SR4A*), but everyone is using nonlethal weapons, and all guns are loaded with gel rounds (make all damage Stun, increase AP rating by 2). Two security mages are present (CorpSec Lieutenant, p. 282, *SR4A*; replace Powerbolt with Stunbolt), and each has a bound Force 3 spirit of man on call. There is no technical or Matrix security to speak of, but there are a swarm of media camera-drones (Device Rating 3) that are recording the general area of the stage. Unless all of those are hacked, spoofed, jammed, or physically



destroyed, the runners risk being caught on camera and winding up on the evening news, gaining a point of Notoriety.

If Sayers is visiting a scientific symposium instead, there are only about five thousand people present, and all of the above penalties (and bonuses) are halved, as are the number of security personnel present. In addition to the one security mage, the security staff includes one technomancer (p. 112, *SR4A*). In either case, gaining access “legitimately” to the University campus requires either hacking its Matrix grid (abstracted as one Device Rating 4 meta-node) to create visitor passes, or forging those visitor passes by hand, a Forgery (10, 10 Minutes) Extended Test. Infiltrating the university grounds via physical means is not be overly difficult—the campus is no fortress.

PROJECT IMAGO RESEARCH FACILITY

The Transys Neuronet/T-99 Project Imago R&D facility officially doesn’t exist. It is the archetypical secure corporate research lab that seasoned shadowrunners earn big bucks to break into. The twist is that the runners can just walk in—their job isn’t to break in, but to keep others from doing so. Located in the outskirts of Caerleon (itself a beautiful but sparsely populated area), most of the facility is underground (to prevent astral intrusion), except for a one-story entrance building in the center of the grounds, an outdoor loading dock to the west of the entrance building, and a fenced-in helipad to the east of the entrance building.

The grounds themselves have no sign marking them and are not surrounded by a fence of any kind. The nondescript entry building is surrounded by grassy fields and rolling hills in all directions, and only a rough gravel road leads to it from the nearest highway. Most of the grass, however, is laced with pressure mesh (p. 261, *SR4A*) and motion sensors (p. 261, *SR4A*) are hidden in the trees, all of them linked to the security grid. The top of the fence around the helipad is strung with concertina wire (p. 260, *SR4A*). The entry building has three doors, one on its northern face, one that leads in from the loading docks to the west, and one that leads in from the helipad to the east. All of them are secured by Rating 6 maglock cardreaders and monitored by cameras. The exterior walls of the facility have Armor Rating 15 and Structure Rating 15. Within the facility, all interior doors have Armor Rating 8, Structure Rating 9; interior walls have Structure Rating 10, Armor Rating 10. All interior doors (except the restrooms, the break room, and the barracks, which are all unlocked) are locked with Rating 3 maglock cardreaders unless otherwise noted below.

The entry building contains a corridor that connects the following rooms: a large, vacant office; Dr. Browne’s large office; smaller offices for Dr. Sayers and Dr. Klein; men’s and women’s restrooms; a storeroom for non-sensitive materials; a large barracks with ample sleeping space for most security personnel and junior researchers; a cafeteria; an operations control center where all of the feeds from the facility’s security devices can be monitored by the security rigger; and a security lounge that includes men’s and women’s locker rooms. A single elevator—adjacent to a small maintenance closet/machine room, which is secured by an old-fashioned key lock—connects the ground-floor entry wing and the larger basement facility. Most buildings and most sections of the corridor are monitored by cameras.

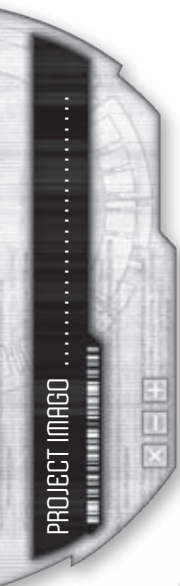
The basement contains a break room for the scientists, an auditorium, six patient recovery/dressing rooms with clean beds

and hospital gowns, three bioware laboratories (all sterile and one with a dedicated airlock), a laboratory storage room, three surgical suites (with attendant clean rooms), a medical bay, an enchanting laboratory, two cybernetics laboratories, a microelectronics laboratory, and men’s and women’s restrooms. All of these are secured with standard door locks except the bathrooms, which are unlocked, and the microelectronics lab, which is secured with a Rating 6 maglock keypad (the lead scientists have the codes). There are seven other rooms of note—six memory regression consciousness uploading suites and one semi-circular chamber marked “containment.” The uploading suites are locked in the same manner as the microtronics lab and contains gear that looks a bit like pre-Matrix networking hardware. There is a sensory deprivation tank, an advanced, modified simrig, and an enormous computer system for inducing total recall and processing the output. Astrally perceiving characters will note that certain components of each computer system appear to be magically active—this technology was made by reverse engineering Quicksilver’s deck. The door to the containment chamber is secured with no less than three Rating 6 maglocks, a cardreader, a keypad, and a biometric (retinal imprint) lock. Only the four scientists in charge of the project can open them all. The chamber is also contained within a faraday cage, and its inner walls are coated with wireless-negating paint. The chamber contains only one thing: a massive mainframe computer. The computer is running an ultraviolet host that holds specially designed firewalls and intrusion countermeasures sculpted for one purpose—keeping e-ghosts in.

Although the runners are unlikely to come up against it, the facility’s Matrix security is significant. It has no connection to the wireless Matrix, and the security network does not leak out of the facility’s interior thanks to wireless-negating paint. The security node is hidden with a Device Rating 6 (except for Signal Rating, which is zero), and all of the security devices are slaved to it through hardwired connections. A hacker would need to be in or near the operations control room to wirelessly access the node (after detecting it) but could jack in through a physical jackpoint elsewhere in the building to attempt to hack the system. A fire-suppression system, mounted on ceiling-tracked rail drones, can access any point in the basement corridor in the event of a fire—it is also part of the security system and can potentially be hacked.

Twelve Minuteman security professionals (use Lone Star Police Squad Member, p. 282 *SR4A*) customarily work in the building, but as the runners are filling some of these slots, reduce their number accordingly. For instance, if there are four runners, then there are only twelve actual guards. There are also a half dozen Knights of Rage (p. 30) present, and they don’t seem to get along with the guards very well. The facility’s chief of security is also its security rigger—use the Tír Ghost Lieutenant (p. 283, *SR4A*), but reduce all augmented physical attributes by two and replace Stealth skill group with Cracking skill group. The facility is largely self-contained and self-sufficient, with sorties into town for the research scientists who stay there being infrequent and carefully supervised. Scientists must leave their keycards and sensitive materials behind when they leave the facility.

The building’s magical security is top-of-the-line. The entry building is secured against astral intrusion with a Force 6 ward, and the basement is secured against astral intrusion by being



underground. The exterior of the building, the entry floor, and the basement are each guarded by a bound Force 6 spirit of earth at all times, although the respective spirits will not leave their assigned areas to provide magical backup in other areas. The staff includes a full time security mage (use CorpSec Lieutenant, p. 282, *SR4A*, but raise Magic and Conjuring skill groups to 6).

PEOPLE

MEISHO-SAN

“Meisho-san” (real name Takahashi Ichiro) is a mid-level corporate functionary/bag-man for HyperSense, a wholly owned Renraku subsidiary, who seems by all appearances to be a wholly unremarkable zaibatsu wage slave. He is a mundane Japanese human, and he looks like the kind of person who would cry while singing the company anthem. The only question for the runners to puzzle over is: which company? Obviously it’s a Japanacorp, but that only narrows it down to three, and that’s only counting AAAs. Takahashi speaks fluent English with almost no discernable accent, although if the runners look carefully (Intuition + Perception (2) Test) they notice he has a linguasoft, presumably English, slotted in a datajack. Takahashi himself is a bagman, in Seattle from New York by way of Chiba, a professional Mr. Johnson who is well versed at bridging the gap between the boardroom and the shadows.

Meisho-San

Male human

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
| 2 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 4.9 | 9 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 9/10

Armor (B/I): 5/3

Skills: Computer 4, Con 4, Data Search 3, Etiquette 4 (Corporate +2), Negotiation 4, Perception 2, Pistols 4 (skillsoft)

Knowledge Skills: BTL Production 2, Chiba Shadowrunners 4, New York Shadowrunners 4, Renraku Finances 4, Renraku Politics 3, Seattle Politics 1, Seattle Shadowrunners 1

Languages: English 4 (linguasoft), Japanese N

Augmentations: Two datajacks, datalock, skillwires (Rating 4)

Gear: Actioneer Business Suit, activesoft (Pistols, Rating 4), Renraku Sensei Commlink w/ Iris Orb OS modified for BTL/hot sim (Response 2, Signal 4, Firewall 3, System 3), contacts [Rating 2, w/ image link and low-light vision], knowsoft (Local Area Knowledge, Rating 4), linguasoft (English, Rating 4).

Programs: Analyze 4, Browse 4, Command 2, Edit 4.

Weapons:

Hammerli 620S [Light Pistol, DV 4P, AP —, SA, RC 1, 6(c) w/ gas-vent and smartgun]

DR. VICTORIA SAYRS

Dr. Victoria Sayrs is a mousy, slight, intelligent woman with blonde hair and gray eyes. Currently forty-three years old, Dr. Sayrs was born in 2030, the first year after the Crash Virus changed the world, and graduated from the University of Washington with a degree in Computer Science in 2050. Her doctoral thesis was entitled “Mendicant Bias: Emergent Sapience in the Medic Program that Supported Echo Mirage.” As a brilliant scientist with a coveted edge in her chosen field, this is not her first extraction, and she has changed employers a few times (some voluntary, some not) in her career. She is excited about her current work with Transys Neuronet, but she will not risk getting killed to avoid being kidnapped.

Dr. Victoria Sayrs

Female human

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
| 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3(4) | 4 | 6(8) | 3 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/10

Armor (B/I): 4/0

Skills: Cracking skill group 1, Dodge 3, Electronics skill group 6, Etiquette (Corporate) 2 (+2), Leadership 2, Negotiation 2, Perception 3 (5), Pistols 2

Knowledge Skills: Chemistry 3, Computer Theory (Artificial Intelligence) 5 (7) (+2), Cybertechnology 4, Matrix Design 5 (7), Matrix Theory 5 (7), NeoNET Politics 3 (5), Operating Systems 3 (5), Security Design (Matrix) 3 (5) (+2), Trivia 3 (5)

Languages: English N, German 3 (5)

Qualities: Addiction (psyche, mild), Exceptional Attribute (Logic)

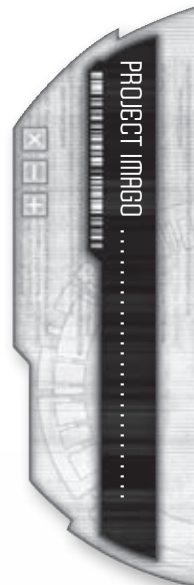
Augmentations: Cerebral booster 2, datajack, mnemonic enhancer 2, sleep regulator, stealth RFID tag (behind left ear), tailored pheromones 1

Gear: Armor clothing, Transys Avalon Commlink w/ Iris Orb OS [Response 4, Signal 4, Firewall 3, System 3, w/ biometric reader, simrig, and skinlink], datasofts (select as situations dictate), glasses [Rating 2 w/ image link and vision enhancement 2], three doses psyche, virtual pet (miniature Western dragon)

Programs: Analyze 4, Biofeedback Filters 4, Browse 4, Command 4, ECCM 4, Edit 4, Encrypt 4, Reality Filter 4, Scan 4

Weapons:

Defiance Protector [Taser, DV 6S(e), AP —half, SA, RC —, 3(m), w/ gecko grip and laser sight]



RENRAKU DOPPELGANGER

Less a person than a device, the Renraku doppelganger is not entirely an android. It was genetically engineered and grown in a tank at the maximum level of acceleration that the limits of present cloning technology allow, then outfitted with hundreds of thousands of nuyen worth of bioware and thousands of hours of intensive training. It is a perfect chameleon with no discernable identity or personality of its own. It looks exactly like Dr. Sayrs, dresses exactly like her, sounds exactly like her, and speaks and acts with her precise mannerisms. Thanks to some fancy applications of metamagic techniques, its aura is even reasonably similar, though someone who has seen Sayrs' aura before can notice the difference on an Assense + Intuition (5) Test.

Renraku Doppelganger

Female human

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|---|---|---|-----|-----|--------|-------|
| 3 | 4 (8) | 4 (8) | 3 (7) | 5 (8) | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 8 (12) | 1 (3) |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/10

Armor (B/I): 11/4

Skills: Athletics skill group 1 (5), Con (Impersonation) 6 (+2), Dodge (Ranged) 3 (+2), Escape Artist 5 (6), Etiquette (Corporate) 4 (+2), Exotic Melee Weapon (Oral Slasher) 6, Forgery 3, Locksmith 3, Perception 3, Pistols 3, Stealth skill group 5 (7), Unarmed Combat 3

Qualities: Allergy (Mild, Rubber), Biosystem Overstress, Cyberpsychosis, Genecrafting, Type O System, Weak Immune System

Augmentations: Chemical gland (weapon reservoir, cyanide, four doses), cybereyes [Rating 2, w/ flare compensation, low-light vision, retinal duplication 6, smartlink, and vision enhancement 1], five datajacks (Alphaware), enhanced articulation, false front (Rating 4, w/ mimic option), gecko hands, immunization (cyanide), move by wire system, muscle augmentation 4, muscle toner 4 (alphaware), oral slasher, orthoskin 3, pain editor, phenotype adjustment (reprint), reflex recorder (stealth), synthacardium 3, tailored pheromones 3, transgenic modification (adapsin), voice modulator 6 (w/ secondary pattern)

Gear: Armor clothing, Transys Avalon Commlink w/ Iris Orb OS [Response 4, Signal 4, Firewall 3, System 3, w/ biometric reader, simrig, and skinlink], datasofts (select as situation dictates), FFBA half suit, glasses [Rating 2 w/ image link and vision enhancement 2]

Programs: Analyze 4, Biofeedback Filters 4, Browse 4, Command 4, ECCM 4, Edit 4, Encrypt 4, Reality Filter 4, Scan 4

Weapons:

Oral Slasher [Cyber Implant, Reach —, DV 4P + cyanide (8P, Injection, Penetration —, Immediate), AP -2]

Defiance Protector [Taser, DV 6S(e), AP -half, SA, RC —, 3(m), w/ gecko grip and laser sight]

DR. GORDON BROWNE

A few years ago, NeoNET director of R&D Celedyr initiated Project Enlight to explore technomancers more closely. He recruited former Oxford Professor Gordon Browne (a human of African descent) in the position of project director. Browne's field of expertise is communications theory, but he brought a wide spectrum of knowledge and first-hand experience to NeoNET's project. Raised in Nairobi, Browne was hired in 2062 by Erika to help develop emergent wifi technology and develop the European Wireless Matrix standard. After the Crash, he took a few years off to work as an archivist in the great library of Alexandria before being offered to lecture at the German Karlsruhe University in 2067, a reputable institute for research on artificial intelligence. Now in his late fifties, Browne is on the most-wanted lists of several corporate headhunters, but he chose to accept NeoNET's offer and has since been transferred from Project Enlight to Project Imago. As the face of the project, he provides a significantly more accessible face for most of the project's employees than the draconic e-ghost with whom he is partnered.

Dr. Gordon Browne

Male human

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------|---|-----|------|------|----|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 6 (8) | 4 | 4 | 4.65 | 6 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/10

Armor (B/I): 5/3

Skills: Arcana 4 (6), Biotech skill group 2 (4), Classical Literature 4, Computer 4 (6), Data Search 4 (6), Dodge 2, Hardware 2 (4), Influence skill group 4, Intimidation (Mental) 2 (+2), Instruction 5, Longarms (Shotguns) 3 (+2), Perception 4 (6), Pistols (Revolvers) 1 (+2), Software 6 (8)

Knowledge Skills: History 4 (6), Magic Theory 4 (6), Matrix Design 6 (8), Matrix Theory 6 (8), Philosophy 4 (6), Security Design (Matrix) 2 (4) (+2)

Languages: English N, Kiswahilli 3

Qualities: Exceptional Attribute (Logic)

Augmentations: Attention coprocessor (Rating 2, deltaware), cerebral booster 2, datajack, encephalon 1, math SPU, neural amplifier nanites [learning stimulus Rating 2, neocortical Rating 2], stealth RFID tag (in right pectoral muscle)

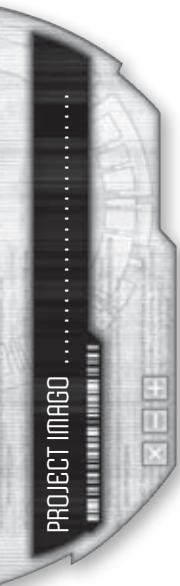
Gear: Transys Avalon Commlink w/ Iris Orb OS [Response 4, Signal 4, Firewall 3, System 3, w/ biometric reader, simrig, and skinlink], datasofts selected as situation demands, glasses [Rating 2, w/ image link and low-light vision], various linguasofts, medkit (Rating 6), Mortimer of London Berwick Line suit

Programs: Analyze 4, Biofeedback Filters 4, Browse 4, Command 4, ECCM 4, Edit 4, Encrypt 4, Reality Filter 4, Scan 4

Weapons:

Colt Asp [Light Pistol, DV 6S(e), AP -half, SA, RC 1, 6(cy), w/ personalized grip, laser sight and stick-n-Shock ammo]

PJSS Model 55 Shotgun (on office wall) [Shotgun, DV 9P(f), AP +5, RC (1), 2(b) w/ flechette ammo]



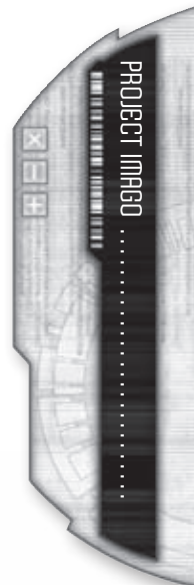
CERBERUS

Once upon a time, there was an adult Western Dragon named Eliohann who became the only known dragon to have a functioning datajack, and he was able to access the Matrix using it. He often appeared on the Matrix as a silver three-headed mastiff with glowing green eyes under the rather on-the-nose name of “Cerberus.” It is also rumored that he masqueraded as another icon known as “Neurosis,” and that he had a multiple personality disorder from his experiences on the Matrix. Eliohann eventually became the protégé of the great dragon Celedyr, and together the two of them researched various emergent Matrix and communications technologies, particularly ones relating to non-metahuman sapience. During Crash 2.0, Eliohann flatlined. His research, however, didn’t stop. Eliohann, or at least an e-ghost claiming to be him, secretly reemerged.

Cerberus appears in the Matrix as a large humanoid in a dark gray trench coat, heavy cloak, and fedora; his features are obscured by a grey cloud, but the cloak is clasped together with a brooch in the shape of a three-headed mastiff with glowing green eyes. Cerberus is not entirely sure if he is alive or dead. He does not know if his true consciousness exists in him or if he is merely a false copy of the “real” Eliohann; on some level, he knows he is lost from his body, his life, his soul, and his kind. He is mostly lucid, these days, but even more detached from life and the living than before. The real world interests him less than it ever has; he barely remembers what it was like to live in the flesh. The only thing that terrifies him is the idea that he might one day lose interest in the Matrix as well, but he doesn’t see that day coming any time soon.

Besides his research director position at Project Imago, Cerberus works for NeoNET, or more specifically Celedyr, as a sort of combination shadowrunner and Johnson, albeit one far stranger and more powerful than most. He will make arrangements with runners just as often as he will handle matters himself. Celedyr and NeoNET “pay” him with a permanent “home” on the Matrix and access to cutting-edge research, as well as all of the operational resources he requires. Cerberus has a significant personal interest in Project Imago, because the nature of e-ghosts is more than an academic concern to him: he is one. One of his significant concerns is preserving e-ghosts against the threat of power outages, hardware failures, and other issues that might compromise the data that is key to their existence.

For more information on Cerberus see pp. 120-23, *Street Legends*.



Cerberus

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|------|----|
| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Init | IP |
| — | — | — | — | 7 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 13 | 3 |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 13

Skills: Computer 7, Data Search 7, Cybercombat 7, Electronic Warfare 7, Gunnery 5, Hacking 7, Infiltration 5, Influence skill group 5, Software 7, Perception 5, Pilot Anthroform (Biped) 5 (+2)

Knowledge Skills: Ares Personnel 3, Corporate Politics 4, Futurist Theories 5, Great Dragons 6, Matrix Hardware 5, NeoNET Personnel 4, Psychology 3, Singularity Research 4, 21st Century History 4, Wuxia Action Trids 3

Languages: English N, German 4, Japanese 5, Sperethiel 6

Qualities: Code Flux, Corruptor, Drone Pilot, Fragmentation (Dissociative Identity Disorder), Redundancy, Rootkit.

Gear: Mitsuhamma Akiyama drone [Handling +3, Accel 5/15, Speed 40, Body 4, Armor 10, Sensor 6 w/ Body Stabilizer (Rating 3), Chameleon Coating, Cyborg Adaptation, ECM (Rating 6), Gecko Tips, 2 Mechanical Arms, Walker, and Response 6, Signal 6, System 6, Firewall 6], Transys Cú Roí Nexus (home node) [Response 6, Signal 6, System 6, Firewall 6 with Rating 6 IC Agent running Analyze 6, Armor 6, Black Hammer 6, Stealth 6, Exploit 6, and Track 6].

Programs: Analyze 7, Armor 7, Attack 7, Browse 7, Black Hammer 7, Command 7, Edit 7, Exploit 7, Reality Filter 7, Scan 7, Spoof 7, Stealth 7, Track 7.

Notes: Cerberus' stats are dependent on the node to which he is subscribed. The stats listed are for his home node. Cerberus' initiative is equal to Intuition + Response, and his Matrix Condition Monitor is equal to 10 plus half his System rating.

KNIGHTS OF RAGE

Originally, the Knights of Rage were a mixed-race African street gang in Southwark, located on the southern banks of the Thames in London before being crammed into the Squeeze. In 2043 the Welsh Great Dragon Celedyr appeared among their leadership (disguised in human form) bearing some tablets he had unearthed from Nubia. Apparently those tablets were sacred to the Nubians, and the gang leaders pledged their loyalty to the dragon. Celedyr picked what he thought were the best members and took them back to Caerleon to serve as his Praetorian guard. Since then, both branches of the Knights of Rage have expanded and grown under their service to Celedyr. Both groups still proclaim their original Nubian heritage and display it in an unusual mixture of African, Egyptian, and Celtic traditions. The more elite Knights of Rage are masters of encoding, encryption, and decryption with even the rank-and-file members possessing some aptitude in these areas.

Knights of Rage (Professional Rating 3)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|---|---|---|---|-----|------|------|
| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Init | IP |
| 4 | 4(6) | 3(4) | 3(5) | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2.4 | 6(7) | 1(2) |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Armor: 8/6

Skills: Automatics (Machine Pistols) 3 (+2), Clubs 3, Computer 2, Data Search 2, Electronic Warfare 2, Hacking 2, Shadowing 3

Augmentations: Muscle replacement 2 (alphaware), wired reflexes 1

Gear: Commlink (Device Rating 4), lined coat, goggles [Rating 2, w/ low-light vision and image link]

Programs: Analyze 3, Armor 3, Browse 3, Command 3, Decrypt 4, Edit 3, Encrypt 4, Exploit 3, Scan 3, Sniffer 3, Stealth 3, Track 3

Weapons:

Stun baton [Club, Reach 1, DV 6S(c), AP —]

Ares Crusader [Machine Pistol, DV 4P, AP —, SA/BF, RC 2, 40(c), w/ gas-vent 2 and laser sight]

Knights of Rage Lieutenant (Professional Rating 3)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|------|-------------|
| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | M | Ess | Init | IP [Matrix] |
| 4 | 4(5) | 4(5) | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 8(9) | 1(2)[3] |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Armor (B/I): 10/5

Skills: Automatics 4 (5), Close Combat skill group 4 (5), Cracking skill group 4 (6), Electronics skill group 4, Infiltration 3, Leadership 3, Perception 3, Shadowing 3

Qualities: Adept, Codeslinger (Hack On The Fly)

Adept Powers: Improved Ability Rating 1 (Automatics, Blades), Improved Ability Rating 2 (Cybercombat, Electronic Warfare, Hacking), Improved Sense (Low Light, Flare Compensation)

Augmentations: Encephalon 1 (alphaware), muscle toner 1, synaptic booster 1

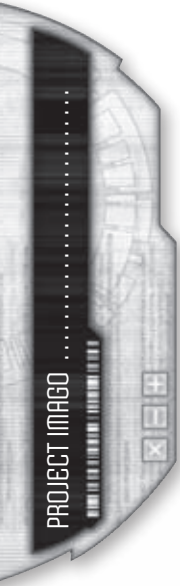
Gear: Chameleon suit, commlink (Device Rating 5, modified for BTL/hot sim), contacts [Rating 1, w/ image link], FFBA half suit (w/ Nonconductivity 3)

Programs: Analyze 5, Armor 4, Attack 5, Biofeedback Filter 4, Black Hammer 4, Browse 5, Decrypt 5 (Ergonomic), Edit 5, Exploit 5 (Ergonomic), Stealth 5 (Ergonomic), Scan 5, Spoof 4, Encrypt 5 (Ergonomic), Command 5, Track 4.

Weapons:

Monosword [Reach 1, DV 5P, AP -1]

HK MP-5 TX [SMG, DV 5P, AP -4, SA/BF/FA, RC 2 (3), 32(c), w/ gas-vent 2, laser sight, and APDS ammo]



... RUNAWAY TRAIN ...

Incoming Message

Posted by: Black Mamba

If you've been keeping even half an eye on the news in the last forty-eight hours, you probably didn't miss yesterday's big Mt. Kilimanjaro train disaster. Kenya's sock-puppet government has pinned the crash on the Maasai tribe. According to local news reports, the crash destroyed an AresSpace depot at the foot of the mountain, killed 36 people, and injured 118 more, although the body count has been disputed. They, along with the Gikúyû and Kamba tribes and their collective spirit allies, have been attacking corporate assets all over Nairobi for the past few years.

Why this matters to you: The corporate payroll for retaliation—excuse me, I mean proactive security—against the Maasai and friends is likely to go up exponentially in the wake of this disaster. The Big Ten, when they're actually working together on something, can scrape together quite a lot of cash. The Maasai and spirit rebels, too, will probably need to call for more outside help just to survive. In other words, there's plenty of work to be had in Africa. Pretty, no. Pleasant, no. But lucrative, yes.

The history behind it, if you care: The entire mess started about ten years ago in 2062, when Kilimanjaro was chosen as the site for what was then called the maglev launcher. The local governments predictably cooperated, but the local spirits weren't happy about it.

- The goal for the maglev launcher—which you probably know better as the mass driver—was to provide a cost-effective way to transport materials up to orbital habitats. They needed a relatively high launch point to minimize the distance from surface to orbit. As everyone knows, Mt. Kilimanjaro is the tallest freestanding mountain in the world, making it an obvious choice.
- Orbital DK
- So which local spirits were involved, exactly?
- Sticks

- Throughout their history, the natives of the region have called Kilimanjaro a dwelling place of the gods. A holy land. They were right. Powerful free spirits made Kilimanjaro their home, and their appearance as patron spirits inspired the natives of the land and built a connection.
- Axis Mundi

Corporate advance survey teams were warned to stay off the mountain, and unsurprisingly they ignored the warnings. The local workers and guides didn't ignore the spirits, but the joint corporate interests didn't let that dissuade them. The corporations sent in Awakened negotiators, and when negotiations failed they attempted to banish the spirits. It soon escalated into an all-out war, with the corporations labeling the spirits as terrorists and a lot of less-than-scrupulous runners and mercs picking up work as spirit hunters.

It all came to a head in July 2063, when all of the corporate interests involved in the Mt. Kilimanjaro mass driver project—read: every AAA corporation—convened a joint gathering of their various proprietary magical think tanks and magical groups. The amassed army of wage mages performed a ritual that expelled the troublesome spirits from the area and erected a spirit barrier to keep them out.

- This was one of the largest rituals performed in the Sixth World, on the same scale as the Great Ghost Dance (and with an intent as ideologically opposite as you can imagine). It was performed without any thought to the collateral damage, and as a result the local manasphere around Kilimanjaro is still scarred.
- Ethernaut
- The corporations may have won a major battle against the spirits themselves, but they lost the hearts and minds of the local tribes, at least the ones that give even one shit about their

heritage and traditions. Most of them rightly saw the ritual as a corruption of their sacred ground.

- Ecotope

The spirits apparently were knocked down, but not out, by the ritual, and fell back to the slums of Kibera, in Nairobi, the “gateway to space.” As the AAAs finally completed the mass driver, a fledgling resistance formed, with the spirits aided by the Gikūyū, Maasai, and Kamba tribes, for whom they were ancestor spirits or even gods.

- Gods?
- Beaker

- Ngai is the traditional God of the Maasai, Kamba, and Gikūyū tribes. It may also be, depending on who you listen to, the name used by a powerful free spirit giving them backing.
- Goatfoot

Another local tribe, the Luhya, went over to the side of the corps, and both sides hired runners to attack the others. It was no secret that the spirits—insurgents, terrorists, revolutionaries, guerillas, whatever you want to call them—were based out of the Kibera slums, but they knew the territory so well that corporate hunter-killer shadow teams never found them; in fact, some never even got out alive. From their base in the Kibera slums, they launched a few attacks that hit the corps where it hurt them the most—their bottom line. Specifically, they caused hundreds of millions of property damage by sabotaging high-speed freight trains owned by AresSpace. A Maasai shaman called Laibon took responsibility for the attacks. That confession, along with the fact that a Maasai tribal mask was found in the wreckage, led to a climate of suspicion against the Maasai and other insurgents, which is why the current disaster is being blamed on the insurgents as well. The situation in Nairobi has been at a slow smolder for a long time now, but this might be the explosion that blows out the fire. I wouldn't want to miss it.

- Depending on public opinion, the corporations may use this incident as an excuse to pursue a permanent solution to the Kibera problem, like burning the entire slum to the ground.
- Cosmo

- Good riddance, if you ask me. The Maasai and their allies may be playing at being the downtrodden and oppressed revolutionaries, but the moral high ground erodes under your feet quickly enough when you're snatching random corporate employees off the street for ransom or worse.
- Baka Dabora
- Seems a little too clear-cut, doesn't it? I'm noticing the skepticism in your post, Mamba. If Laibon wasn't responsible for this attack, who was?
- Traveler Jones
- I happen to know that the insurgents were gearing up to hit the African Stock Exchange, a major corporate interest that just opened a few months ago. I say *were*, because most likely this incident will cause them to back off of it, so I probably don't have to worry about my loose lips sinking any ships. Since this AresSpace depot disaster is small potatoes compared to, say, an IED on the floor of the ASE, the question to ask is why would they tip their hand like this?
- Am-mut
- If they don't stand to benefit, who would? Work the scenario. Two things were damaged, right? The AresSpace depot (safe bet it's not Ares) and the freight line running from Nairobi to Kilimanjaro. Whoever is in a position to scoop up the contracts to rebuild the rails—contracts that will be both fast-tracked and high-priced because the corps don't want and can't afford a lengthy disruption in access to the mass driver—was behind this, right?
- Plan 9
- While we're on the bleeding edge of paranoia anyway, I'd actually say that three things were damaged. The depot, the rail line, and the rep and the operational capacity of the insurgents.
- Winterhawk
- I don't want to lend too much credence to a Plan 9 theory, here, but I did a bit of digging and it looks like it's an Evo subsidiary—Tsuruga International Construction—that's going to wind up with those contracts.
- Clockwork

OVERVIEW

The runners are hired from anywhere in the world—the farther from Nairobi and the farther from Africa, the better—to meet a prospective employer in the dangerous slums of Kibera. They are not traveling halfway across the world for free—they are paid quite handsomely simply for making the trip and hearing out the offer. The runners could be hired just as easily from Seattle or Denver as from Lagos, Europort, Cape Town, or Dubai. The idea is that they should be untraceable assets and outside operators, although the shadows are smaller than some might think, and the criminal network in Nairobi connects to the one in the runners' hometowns in few enough steps.

Mr. Johnson is a free spirit named 'Nenaunir, who will give the runners a Maasai tribal mask along with their instructions. The runners are to board an automated, high-speed freight train running from Nairobi International Aerospaceport to the AresSpace depot at the foot of Mt. Kilimanjaro, directly adjacent to the mass driver, and sabotage its guidance systems so that it crashes into the depot, wrecking the train, the depot, and the tracks. They are to ensure that they leave the tribal mask in the wreckage. This is an obvious frame-up job. Although 'Nenaunir does not inform the runners of any of this, he actually is brokering a deal with Evo, specifically with the free spirit (and major shareholder) Buttercup. Ares will get a black eye, Evo will scoop up the contracts to rebuild the rail

line, and ‘Nenaunir will get an in with Evo. ‘Nenaunir does not have any particular attachment to or affiliation with the Maasai tribe or their allies. The tribal insurgents in his employ are just unwitting pawns.

Once the runners successfully get onto the train, sabotage it, hopefully get off alive—not forgetting to leave the Maasai mask there—and get paid, they will be confronted on the way out of town by the *actual* spirit resistance that they have framed, represented by a Maasai lion shaman calling himself Laibon. After it has been explained how they have been used as patsies, the runners will have the choice to pledge to support the spirits’ cause at a later date or attempt to fight their way out. Regardless of how they choose to deal with the insurgents, they will get caught in the crossfire as an AlphaPack of Ares hunter-seeker biodrones canvases the area for rebels, and they will need to pull a fade before making good on their travel plans out of Africa.

PLOT POINT ONE

Wherever the runners live, their team leader (if they have one; if not, their Face; failing that, whoever comes closest) is contacted by their regular fixer (the one with the highest combined Connection and Loyalty ratings across all team members). He or she asks how they would like to go to Africa, specifically Nairobi. If the runners are in their right minds and give the perfectly sane answer of “hell no,” the fixer sweetens the deal by explaining that they have been offered 10,000 nuyen apiece just for going there to hear out the offer. If the runners ask “why us?,” the fixer tells them that the principal is looking for out-of-town help—the farther out of town, the better—and explains for the curious how his network of connections ties into shadow communities as far afield as Nairobi, attempting to impress credulous runners with some well-placed exaggerations in the process.

If the runners are interested, the fixer has already booked them passage (using the names on their fake SINs) on a commercial suborbital flight to Nairobi International Aerospaceport. Because it is a commercial flight leaving out of their local airport, they cannot bring any illegal gear as carry-on baggage, but if they can make their own arrangements with the local baggage handlers, they can “check” their illegal bags in stowage. The baggage handlers and customs officials on the Nairobi side of things are highly susceptible to bribes (a baseline is ten percent of the cost of Forbidden items and five percent of the cost of Restricted items). Of course, the less illegal gear the runners are trying to smuggle through, the less they have to pay in bribes. Teams with air transport or smuggler contacts are welcome to make their own arrangements, although in that case their travel won’t be reimbursed.

Once they arrive in Nairobi and secure (buy, rent, or steal) a vehicle, they have instructions to look for a hawala (money-changer/bank) cum fixer named Mama Adoyo at the Carnivore restaurant in the touristy River Road neighborhood. While the runners get a chance to sample some of the exotic local fare, Mama Adoyo will change any currency the runners wish to for hawala vouchers (in this case, graven bones of some unidentifiable animal) for the local currency, the Kenyan shilling. The Kenyan shilling is currently worth about the same as the naira, meaning that one nuyen is worth twenty shillings. She also offers to hire a guide to

lead them into the Kibera slums to meet “who you are looking for” (Mama Adoyo won’t name him) for the low, low price of 100 shillings per head. The guide is a ten-year-old girl who only speaks Kiswahili, but the runners would do well to take her as she seems far more suited to survival on the mean streets of Nairobi than they are. She sells them Rating 2 Kiswahili linguasofts at standard prices.

Without the guide, finding their way into the Kibera slums will be a nightmare, if not flat-out impossible. Kibera might be the largest, nastiest slum in Africa, which is saying something. The guide knows the location of a break in the heavily secured, triple-razor-wire fence that quarantines Kibera from the rest of Nairobi. After that, it’s a hideously tangled labyrinth of trenches, tunnels, densely packed shanties filled with starving and diseased refugees, and practically invisible roads. The entire way in, the runners should feel watched without actually seeing any watchers, either in the real world or on the astral. The area is a wireless dead zone and has a Rating 2 background count. The runners won’t be able to find this route a second time—they will be lucky to find their way out again. The guide will take them directly to a market near the center where a Gikûyû fixer by the name of Nguru is waiting for them. A creepy old man in a green kitenge shirt, Nguru inexplicably recognizes the runners, and takes them to meet “your boss” in a nearby deserted crater in the shade of a crumbling and destroyed overpass support.

‘Nenaunir appears as a tall, unearthly, ebony-skinned man in a bright blue Grand Bobou robe and cap. Runners who assense him will immediately recognize him as a powerful free spirit, which should only lend credence to the claims he is about to falsify. ‘Nenaunir also doesn’t hesitate to give the runners his name. It is, after all, not his True Name, and is as much of a shield or a mask as going by Mr. Johnson.

‘Nenaunir tells the runners that the job is one of sabotage, and that it will not be easy. The offer on the table is 50,000 nuyen, and the runners are free to keep the twenty percent advance they

Urgent Message

PRICES IN NAIROBI

Cab ride across the city, 2–3 hours: 200 shillings

Motorcycle ride: 20 shillings per person

Bus ride: 2 shillings

Room at The Norfolk Hotel (upper class): 20,000 shillings/night

Room at mid-class hotel (shared bathroom, wash water extra): 1,000 shillings

Room in the slums (shared room, no water, no indoor plumbing, no furniture): 50 shillings/night, 250 shillings/week

Meal at nice restaurant: 200+ shillings

Meal at mkahawa: 10–20 shillings

Bottled beer: 5 shillings

Bottle of changaa: 20 shillings

Bag of water (1 liter): 20 shillings

Yam or bag of rice at market: 5 shillings

Doctor fee at hospital: 3,000 shillings

Local healer: 200 shillings

Prostitute: 10 shillings and up

Typical gang bribe (made by resident): 5 shillings

Typical gang bribe (made by outsider): 100 shillings

Average wage per day of Nairobi resident: 20 shillings



INCOMING FEED.....



have already received no matter what they decide. If the runners accept, 'Nenaunir shares the details with them. If they do not, he asks them to reconsider. They have, after all, come a long way just to say no, and he cannot guarantee their safe passage out of Africa, Nairobi, or even Kibera if they do not cooperate.

When the runners agree, 'Nenaunir presents them with the Maasai tribal mask—it is in the shape of a lion—and satellite imagery of the train. He explains that he needs the automated high-speed freight train to be sabotaged on its way from Nairobi International Aerospaceport to the AresSpace depot at the foot of the mass driver. This means the train must be sabotaged near the end of its run. The tribal mask must be left in the wreckage where it can be found—a special enchantment on it protects it from being destroyed or lost in the collision. 'Nenaunir lies (quite convincingly) that he is brokering this deal “on behalf of the spirits of the Maasai tribe.” He contacts the runners once the train has been destroyed—if they need to contact him before then, they must return here; alternately, if the team has a mage, they can send a spirit to deliver a message.

PLOT POINT TWO

'Nenaunir explains that there is (within reason) no time limit to complete this job. The train runs about four times every day, and the more planning and preparation they perform, the more likely they will get it right. 'Nenaunir begins to lose his patience after about one week, however, and he warns the runners that his patience has limits. Most teams will presumably want to get the job done as fast as possible anyway, if only so that they can leave Africa.

Exiting the Kibera slums, there are immediate complications. As soon as the runners make it onto a major highway, they are ambushed by half a dozen Digo tribesmen (use either the Guerilla on p. 147, *War!*, removing the tacsoft and medkit, or use the Halloweeners Street Gang, p. 282, *SR4A*, adding an AK-97) attempting to catch their vehicle as part of an initiation rite. The tribesmen are riding tandem on Yamaha Growler off-road bikes and will ride alongside and try to leap onto the runners' vehicle, harassing and taunting the runners, although they won't escalate hostilities to lethal force if the PCs don't.

Once the PCs shake them off, one way or another, they need to concern themselves with planning and executing the sabotage of the train. The automated train runs at over 200 kilometers per hour, and there are very few objects that the runners could place on the tracks at any point that would even slow it down, let alone derail it. The only way to sabotage the train is to get onboard.

One option is to deal with the heavy security at Nairobi International Aerospace port, which is patrolled by, at a minimum, two Force 5 guardian spirits, security squadrons (Lone Star Police Squad, p. 282, *SR4A*) and FMC-Stonebrooke Warrior drones (Wuxing Crimson Samurai, p. 123, *Arsenal*) with mounted LMGs. If the runners can get on the train while it is moving, they can bypass most of this security. This likely requires some form of air support; thankfully, Nairobi is a haven for shady bush pilots who won't ask too many questions about a job if the money's right, although their equipment is hardly first rate.

Once on board the train, there are three ways to sabotage it. The runners can hack the train's control node to crash the pilot program (Rating 5); or, with the proper tools, make an Electronics

+ Logic (25, 1 minute) Extended Test to manually engage and lock the train's emergency brake (which is not to be used at the train's current running speed), causing it to crash; or the runners can simply apply enough explosives to the train's undercarriage to destroy the braking system (Armor Rating 16, Structure Rating 13). In any case, wise runners will have prepared their exit strategy well ahead of time. Any runners caught on the train as it crashes into the AresSpace depot are simply turned into a fine red mist. The exact details of the train's security system are described below, under **Locations**.

Note that, should the runners fail, catastrophically or otherwise, 'Nenaunir risks getting involved directly, using his Accident power to cause the train to crash before it hits the depot, a level of traceability he would much rather have avoided by using deniable assets. The end result, though, is still a train crash, which will cause some degree of problems.

PLOT POINT THREE

Once the train has been sabotaged, the runners will probably want to go to ground and wait for 'Nenaunir to contact them with their payment. Unless they specifically prepare defenses or set up a watch in whatever hostel, hovel, or bolthole they wind up hiding in, they are visited in the night by the Maasai shaman Laibon, who has tracked them using ritual magic with evidence such as blood, hair, dead skin, etc., left at the scene of the crime. The runners should wake to the sounds of Maasai tribe insurgents creeping around on the roof, climbing in through the windows, or picking the lock, to find Laibon (an ork and a powerful Lion shaman) standing over them, ominously resplendent in the dark room, wearing a full tribal mask similar to the one they planted on the scene of the crime.

If the runners attempt to shoot first and ask questions later, there isn't much that can be done. Laibon attempts to use his spells to non-lethally subdue them. He wants them alive and conscious, and he wants to talk to them before taking any action. The tribal insurgents (use either a mix of the Warrior and Warrior Lieutenant on p. 150, *War!*, or use the Sprawl Ganger on p. 109, *SR4A*) should outnumber the runners at least three to one and have a positional advantage. The idea is not to have the runners get mowed down, however, but to discourage them from opening fire at all. If things continue to go downhill, the insurgents move to cover Laibon's retreat, sacrificing their lives if necessary. He is too important to the cause to be lost.

Assuming the runners are in a talking mood, Laibon says, in somewhat labored English: "This thing on the trid they say my tribe did ... we did not do. We have done things like this in the past, but this thing we did not do. You do this thing. Why you do this thing? So they blame us, I think. But why you want that?"

The runners may explain about 'Nenaunir—admitting that they thought they were working *for* the Maasai tribe—or button up and attempt to protect their employers. If they go the latter course, Laibon tries to use rhetoric—not force—to convince them of the rightness of his cause, explaining that someone has used them as patsies and that they may be in danger because they know too much. If the runners initially or eventually share the truth with Laibon, he tells them that only a good deed can repay

the wrong they have done his tribe. They must pledge themselves to aid the spirits of the Maasai tribe in the future. If the runners pledge (and mean it, or at least lie convincingly), Laibon lets them go, upon their word of honor, which he seems to believe will hold them almost like a geas. If the runners refuse to pledge, Laibon says that they will suffer for what they have done, but not death—at least not today. He then uses ritual magic to cast a quickened Force 1 or Force 2 spell such as Confusion or Stink on them, and do what he can to maintain that "curse" on them from afar. If the runners pledge to help Laibon but are obviously lying—and lying badly—he may very well try to kill them outright.

Once the situation is resolved, or when tensions are flaring the highest, an Ares AlphaPack (prototype pack hunter biodrones, see p. 37) attacks. It is unclear whether they are after Laibon, the runners, or both, but it doesn't really matter since they are all temporarily in one place. Unless the runners pledged their aid to Laibon and meant it, they may have to fight their way out past the shaman and the insurgents, but Laibon should escape alive in any case.

Once the runners fight their way past the AlphaPack and out of the meeting with the Maasai tribe insurgents, they are wired the balance of the money that 'Nenaunir owes them, with his thanks and an offer of future work, if they're interested. 'Nenaunir has left Nairobi to meet with Buttercup about his future with Evo. The runners are on their own to find transportation out of Africa, although if they used a bush pilot to board the speeding train, he may be willing to help.

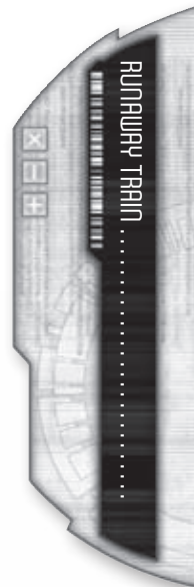
LOCATIONS

THE CARNIVORE, RIVER ROAD

River Road is a touristy spam zone, somewhere between the locked-down corporate safe zone of downtown Nairobi and the hellish slums of the outskirts. The region is filled with overpriced restaurants and tacky shops. The Carnivore is a restaurant that specializes in serving unusual meat dishes, with zebra and crocodile being some of the tamer entrées on the menu. The place is not known for being big with the shadow set, which is possibly why Mama Adoyo uses it. The building has only perfunctory security, since there's nothing to steal. Tribal children around the front will gladly watch the vehicles of patrons to ensure that no harm comes to them for no more than a few shillings. For characters able to speak one of the local tongues such as Kiswahili, the Carnivore may be a good place to pick up a guide, as Mama Adoyo will advise them.

KIBERA SLUMS

The Kibera slums are a haven for the insurgents of the Maasai, Kamba, and Gikûyû tribes, "terrorists" who conduct retributive strikes on behalf of the ancestor spirits and "gods" that the corporations and their wage mages have driven away from their home atop Mt. Kilimanjaro. The slum is raided almost daily by corporate teams looking to question various suspected terrorists, so much so that the hearts and minds of the common people of Kibera are firmly on the side of the insurgents, and they make life a living hell for intruding corporate security forces. Kibera is one of the largest, nastiest slums in Africa, isolated from the



rest of Nairobi as a ghetto for the SINless, surrounded by a triple concertina-wire-topped fence. The fence, however, is unmonitored, and the locals know of numerous places it is possible to get over, under, or through it.

Kibera is a complete Matrix dead zone, and the sheer density of the impoverished and diseased has created a Rating 2 background count. The insurgents have watchers on the roofs of all of the shantytowns, blending in with the throngs of metahumanity, many of whom are Awakened. The insurgents communicate with each other through low-tech signals such as sending pigeons or foot messengers.

The citizens are equally as unlikely to cooperate with outsiders as they are with the corporate security teams—consider them prejudiced at minimum. There is a small market nestled in the center of the district where you can buy AK-97s and certain drugs very cheaply, and where they will buy clean food and water (not easy to come by in Nairobi unless you're a corporate bigwig downtown or you brought your own) at a fairly high premium. Fixers, such as Nguru, frequent the market for those in the know.

ARES SUPER I AUTORAIL FREIGHT TRAIN

The massive freightliner contains no fewer than fifty flat cars that are double-stacked with intermodal isotainers—those metal container boxes (2.44 meters wide, 2.44 meters tall, and 6.1 meters long) that you see crowding every container port and cargo ship—and a single engine car in the front. Hatches on the top, front, back, and bottom of each of the double-stacked containers provide access into that isotainer. The isotainers are tightly packed, leaving barely enough room for a normal-sized human to squeeze through the narrow aisles between them. The entire train is very sturdy (Armor Rating 16, Structure Rating 13). The train makes the journey from Nairobi International Aerospace port to the AresSpace depot, located at the foot of Mt. Kilimanjaro, that serves the mass driver. Its cargo typically contains construction materials for the constantly expanding mass driver facility as well as whatever is needed up the well in orbit.

Security on board the unmanned trains has been beefed up since AresSpace lost three trains and one hundred fifty million nuyen worth of cargo to the insurgents in the last two years. Each individual container is secured with a Rating 3 maglock card reader, and a hidden camera with thermographic enhancement is placed inside each container. There is a camera in the control/engine car as well. All of the goods inside the isotainers are tagged with RFID tracking devices. On the outside of the train, every five cars or so, an Ares Sentinel "R" series rail drone (p. 118, *Arsenal*, with sensors upgraded to Rating 4) is mounted on a track above the containers, able to slide up and down the train. The gun can cover the air above the train and can also move to the front, rear, and either side of the train. The drones are equipped with belt-fed Ares MP LMGs (p. 29, *Arsenal*) and tracer rounds. The drones don't just fire at every air vehicle in the train's vicinity—that would be disastrous. Rather, they only engage targets that come within a few meters of the trains. They can target characters on top of the train, but not characters hanging off of the sides, which obviously comes with its own dangers.

Any glitch or critical glitch while on top of the speeding train should come with the danger of falling off—getting on top of a moving train to begin with requires a parachute or glider, a way to

gain enough altitude to use it, and a good deal of timing or skill. Every turn spent dangling from the side of the train requires a Strength + Climbing Test, with a -2 dice pool modifier applied by the train's extreme speed. A character who wishes to physically sabotage the undercarriage of the train must climb down the side of the containers to get at the area of the wheels.

There are two hidden wireless nodes linked to systems concealed in the train's control cabin (where there is room for two slender humans, dwarfs, or elves to stand abreast, or for one ork or troll). One node controls the train's security system (cameras and rail drones) and the other contains its pilot program. Both of them are Rating 5, running Analyze 5 periodically, and both of them are protected by a Rating 5 IC agent with Attack 5, Armor 5, Blackout 5, and Track 5. The agent in the security node also has instructions to send for help if any of the interior cameras detects a threat, if the rail drones on the roof of the train fire on any targets, or if it detects a system intrusion in either node. In this case, help arrives in approximately five minutes in the form of a Northrup Yellowjacket (p. 116, *Arsenal*) or Wasp (p. 351, *SR4A*) armed with two Ares MP LMGs (one loaded with a belt of stick-n-shock ammo to avoid damaging the train, and the other loaded with APDS rounds just in case) and operated by a Firewatch-trained pilot (use the Smuggler, p. 108, *SR4A*).

PEOPLE

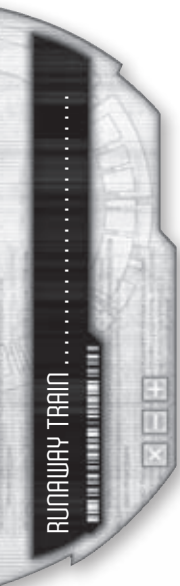
MAMA ADOYO & NGURU

Mama Adoyo, a female dwarf of the Luhya tribe in her mid-40s, is a well-known problem-solver of the River Road community, liked and trusted by criminals and shopkeepers alike. She is expanding from her role as a hawala to become more of a general-purpose fixer, much to the chagrin of the males who dominate both positions in Nairobi, where, like in much of tribal-dominated Africa in the 2070s, women are often seen as chattel.

Nguru, a tall, emaciated human, is an enigmatic figure in his own right. Whether he genuinely serves the interests of the Maasai tribe and has just been hoodwinked by 'Nenaunir or is in on the plan need not be revealed. Both Mama Adoyo and Nguru act as paid middlemen for 'Nenaunir—if their stats are important, use the Untrustworthy Fixer from p. 147 of the **Character Trove**.

'NENAUNIR

One word comes to mind to describe the powerful wild spirit that is 'Nenaunir: serpent. A fork-tongued liar, 'Nenaunir is such a trickster that he is a mystery even to himself. He does not truly know how much he is or is not the evil storm god of Maasai mythology from whom he's taken his name, nor does he care. He Awakened in this world decades ago (how many decades, he can't remember) and quickly discovered that superstitious tribals would obey him and worship him like a god if he told them what they wanted to hear. Even the ones who did not keep to the old gods would obey him for the promise of power. It did not take long for him to grow tired of the kingdom he carved out for himself, and a recent encounter with the free spirit Buttercup—who holds approximately the same rank in the wealthy multinational Evo as 'Nenaunir holds in the impoverished slums of outer Nairobi—convinced him that he could do better.



Even if the collective superstitions of the Maasai drew him forth from the metaplanes, he has no love for “his people” nor, for that matter, for any metahumans. A cold-blooded manipulator, Nenaunir views people as pawns to be used for his advancement or simply his amusement. Nenaunir is also cautious to the point of cowardice. He will pay the runners off rather than risk their retaliation. The money is not his, anyway—it is not important to him either, and he could get more if he needed it. Nenaunir is infatuated with Buttercup, as much as that word can apply to such utterly inhuman beings. If there is anything he cares about, it is that. He feels no solidarity with his fellow spirits that were exiled from Mt. Kilimanjaro and no sympathy for their plight. He is destined for bigger and better things.

'Nenaunir

Free Water Spirit (Force 8)

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|----|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|----|
| 10 | 8 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 18 | 2 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 13/12

Armor (B/I): 16/16

Skills: Assensing, Astral Combat, Dodge, Exotic Ranged Weapon, Nairobi Area Knowledge, Perception, Sorcery skill group, Unarmed Combat

Qualities: Magician

Weaknesses: Allergy (Fire, Severe)

Metamagics: Masking, quickening, shielding

Powers: Accident, Astral Form, Banishing Resistance, Concealment, Confusion, Elemental Attack, Energy Aura, Engulf, Materialization, Movement, Mutable Form, Sapience, Search, Spirit Pact, Storm, Weather Control

Gear: Commlink (Device Rating 5)

Programs: Analyze 4, Browse 4, Command 2, Edit 4

LAIBON

Laibon is the traditional Maasai title for an elder shaman. In this way, it is an anonymous honorific, almost like “Mr. Johnson.” Laibon’s real name is unknown. When he was only a child, as the world was first Awakening, Laibon had a vision in which the ancestor spirits of the Mt. Kilimanjaro holy land appeared to him and told him that they would need his help in the coming times. Laibon has answered that call, striking back at the corporations that defiled Mt. Kilimanjaro, fulfilling the destiny ordained for him.

Unsurprisingly, Laibon does not consider himself or the Maasai tribesman who serve with him to be terrorists, but freedom fighters, fighting to take back their holy land. Nor does he take credit for the various “propaganda of the deed” actions that he has orchestrated. Although a powerful, initiated Lion shaman in his own right, Laibon sees himself as nothing more than a conduit for the will of the spirits.

Laibon

Male ork

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | M | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|------|
| 6 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 6(8) | 1(3) |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 11/11

Armor (B/I): 8/6

Skills: Arcana 2, Athletics skill group 1, Banishing 6, Binding 4, Clubs 3 (Staves +2), Dodge 3, Enchanting 2, Infiltration 3, Leadership 3, Negotiation 2 (Sense Motive +2), Outdoors skill group 1, Parazoology 3, Perception 3, Sorcery skill group 6, Summoning 4

Knowledge Skills: Local Tribes 3, Magic Theory 3, Nairobi Sprawl 5

Languages: English 2, Kiswahili 3, Maasai N

Qualities: Geas (Talisman), Magician (Shaman), Mentor Spirit (Lion), Sensitive System, Simsense Vertigo

Initiate Grade: 2

Metamagics: Centering, quickening

Spells: Confusion, Cure Disease, Heal, Increase Reflexes, Lion Form, Manaball, Manabolt, Powerbolt, Stink, Stunball, Stunbolt

Bound Spirits: Spirit of beasts (Force 5, 3 services)

Gear: Armor jacket, binding materials (Rating 5), commlink (Rating 3), talisman (Lion’s Paw necklace)

Weapons:

Staff [Club, Reach 2, DV 6P, AP —]

Note: Laibon has Increase Reflexes sustained at threshold 3 (+2 Initiative and +2 Initiative Passes)

ALPHAPACK

AlphaPack is a new biodrone technology being field tested by Ares forces that are hunting for insurgents in and around the Kibera slums of Nairobi. The idea is that AlphaPack enables biodrones to mimic the cooperative task-sharing capabilities of pack hunters. In sending AlphaPack after Laibon, who Ares believes responsible for the most recent train disaster (and who actually was responsible for the sabotaging of several trains in the past two years), Ares is killing two birds with one stone. They are field-testing a promising new prototype while also hunting down a terrorist. Although composed of animalistic biodrones, AlphaPack fights with the precise coordination of an elite military unit linked together by tactical software.

AlphaPack (6)

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|------|------|---|---|---|---|-----|------|------|
| 5 | 5 | 4(6) | 3(7) | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 0.1 | 7(9) | 1(2) |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 11/10

Armor (B/I): 3/4

Skills: Perception 4, Tracking 4, Unarmed Combat 6 (8)

Powers: Natural Weapon (Bite: DV 5P, AP 0), Enhanced Senses, (low-light vision, scent)

Augmentations: (all alphaware) Bone density augmentation 2, commlink (implanted, Device Rating 5), cyberears [Rating 2, w/ audio enhancement 2, select sound filter 4, and spatial recognizer], cybereyes [Rating 3, w/ low-light vision, thermographic vision, vision enhancement 2, and vision magnification], CAST, dermal sheath 3, muscle augmentation 4, orientation goad, radar sensor 4, stirrup interface 1, TRACES

Warform Modifications: Attribute enhancement (Agi, Bod, Int, Str), skill enhancement (Unarmed Combat, Tracking)

Programs: Modified Tacsoft (Rating 4)

Notes: Tactical Software provides a +4 dice pool bonus to nearly all combat actions as long as all members of the pack are active. Each member lost reduces that shared dice pool bonus by one for everyone, with the bonus disappearing entirely if only two members are left alive.





Incoming Message

- Oh, you all are going to love this. Just when we think those heartless corporate bastards have run out of scary ideas for their research, they come up with some new ones.
- Sunshine

**// upload Uniformat text file :: user Sunshine :: 12/02/73 //
INTUITIVE SEARCH AGENT DEMONSTRATED
San Francisco, November 25, 2073**

Black Lotus Software, a subsidiary of Mitsuhamma Computer Technologies, demonstrated what they claim is a revolution in intelligent Matrix search algorithms. The new software is called MnemoSearch, and Black Lotus is claiming that it will produce better search results than anything currently available because it is not a software algorithm; it is biological. The problem that has forever plagued traditional software search routines is their inability to make intuitive connections between topics. There might be data related to what a user is searching for, but it has no correlation to the original search parameters by any logic that a computer program can interpret. MnemoSearch doesn't use traditional software-based algorithms, however; it is a program that runs partially on a genetically engineered biological "brain." It searches for information the same way your mind searches for memories, making the intuitive leaps that traditional algorithms cannot match. Although the software is nowhere near a full life form in any way, it retains the intuitive properties of a sentient brain. Because of this, MnemoSearch is able to bring back search results with a much higher degree of relevance and understandability. Dr. Koga, a product expert on hand for the demonstration, stated that the program had the ability to learn and improve with use, meaning that results would get better the more the program is used.

This new release continues a trend in research from Mitsuhamma and its subsidiaries of late. In an effort to gain an edge in the overly competitive software market, MCT has been moving more toward incorporating biologically based "engines" to power their software. When questioned about the moral

and ethical concerns involved with engineering and growing living things simply to have them to serve as programs, MCT has deflected or downplayed these issues. Dr. Catherine Sharon, an MCT researcher in the field, explained that the "devices" (as she referred to them) that are created are incredibly primitive in comparison to even the most basic living creature, and thus are not worthy of the same concerns.

"Think of them as algae or mold," Dr. Sharon said. "The fact that they can make mental connections does not give them any more awareness than these substances. They are simply carrying out a networked function, as any group of biological cells does."

Those outside MCT, however, are not as sanguine about the ethics of the situation. With MCT releasing new biologically based software products each year and continuing to pour millions of nuyen into further research in the field, ethics experts have started to question what the eventual extension of this research will be.

//end attachment//

- That doesn't sound like a big deal. Interesting, perhaps, but I don't see what the fuss is about.
- Haze
- Oh, that's just the beginning. Let me start to connect the dots for you. Glitch, why don't you tell them what you told me?
- Sunshine
- Sure. I was in a Mitsuhamma system looking for some juicy paydata. While I was digging around I managed to find a hidden connection to another node that looked like it had some truly hot data. So, I cut myself an account on the node and hopped in. Once in the system, I notice right away that there were three icons just kind of hanging around the system. My first instinct was that they were IC, but a quick scan told me they were personae. I watched them for a few minutes to see what was going on, but they just seemed to be spinning their wheels inside of the node. They were acting more like IC than personae.



I decided it was worth it to try and slip past them to try and get to the data so I moved in. I was almost all the way to the data when one of them passed by me.

Now, you'll have to excuse me if I say that I have a pretty hot Stealth program that I coded myself, and I usually don't get spotted unless I want somebody to see me. But that *thing* turned and locked onto me like I was a troll at an elf girl's Sweet Sixteen party. The strange thing is, it do anything but "stare" at me (as much as you can stare with in the Matrix). I know most people would've just jacked out right there, but for some reason I felt I had to find out what was going on in this node. So I moved in further. That creepy icon kept watching me the whole time, but it didn't seem to be doing anything else and didn't have any sort of offensive programs loaded that I could detect. So I slid up to the paydata, decrypted it, disarmed the bomb, and grabbed it. Then all hell broke loose.

It seems obvious now that the whole thing was a honeypot setup, but for whatever reason I didn't clue to it at the time. Before I knew what was happening, the icon that had been watching me hit me with the nastiest Black Hammer attack I've felt in a long time. My feedback filter red-lined and started screaming at me, and the attack jammed open my connection something fierce so I couldn't have jacked out if I tried. I swear to ghost that the icon produced the Black Hammer program out of nowhere, and I only know one kind of thing that can do that: a technomancer. As soon as the first one landed a blow, the other two locked on to me right away, and I found myself fighting for my life. It got worse when the three of them became five, as two called up some little agent things out of nowhere, just like a TM would. I can hold my own when it comes to slinging offensive programs, but I know when I'm outmatched. In that situation, I was. Lucky for me, I managed to anticipate one of their attacks and land a real good blow of my own. I could tell that I hurt it real good, but I never would have anticipated what happened next. The icon flew into some kind of psychotic rage. It started firing off attacks at anything and everything. It ripped apart those two little buddies that had been called, then it started tearing up every running program on the node that happened to be nearby. The whole node seemed to be coming apart at the seams, and I had no idea what I was going to do next. Before I could do anything, though, the node put itself into emergency shutdown, and I got dumped out of there and back into my meat bod. It was strange, disorienting, and more than a little painful.

- Glitch
- So what? Crazy technomancers isn't exactly something new.
- Clockwork
- Well, this ties into a story I've been working on recently. I'm not going to tell you where I am (for reasons that will become obvious), but there's been a lot of unusual technomancer disappearances lately. They are happening mostly in slums, from the poor SINless population that none of the authorities seem to care about, but people who live here are starting to notice. No one ever sees these TMs again—they just vanish the middle of the night. I hired some people to help me look into things further, and I managed to find a body that had been dumped in a part of the city where no one would think to look. The tribe that this poor slot used to belong to confirmed his identity as one of the technos that had gone missing. Here's where I'm going with all of this: the guy was *lobotomized*. I've only heard of something like this once before, about three years ago in Denver.
- Sunshine
- So that's your link to MCT's brain research? That's more than a little stretch of a conspiracy theory. Where's the connecting tissue?
- Snopes
- I dunno. I've lost contact with a few techno friends lately, and those that I can still reach say that they're missing friends, too. *Something* is going on here, and technos are definitely the target.
- Hannibelle
- We all know that some technos are missing—Puck's one of them. Is this tied into him?
- Netcat
- He may be gone, but does anyone really miss him?
- Slamm-O!
- Some people do.
- Pistons
- Pistons! I haven't heard from you in forever! What have you been doing?
- Winterhawk
- I won't say it here where people may be listening, but I was helping a friend find something important. I stuck with it as long as I could, but I eventually personal matters caught up with me and I had to go.
- Pistons
- Do you have anything to add on this whole missing technomancer situation?
- Sunshine
- No, but I'll say this: If I went missing, I would hope someone would do everything they could to find me.
- Pistons
- You want one of us to go after Puck? Are you really going to get sentimental about him? Do you think he's worth trying to save after all he's done to fuck up the entire world?
- Slamm-O!
- I guess it's up to each of us whether we believe someone deserves a second shot or not.
- Pistons
- Wasn't Icarus convinced that Puck was free in that recent post about him? Does he know something we don't?
- /dev/grrl
- Many things.
- Icarus





OVERVIEW

Puck is an enigmatic personality in the runner scene. For some, he is the target of hatred and revulsion for the things that he did while working as a servant for Deus and cooperating with Pax to bring about Crash 2.0. For others, he is someone worthy of sympathy for the difficulty of his childhood and the betrayals of those who offered to help him. Perhaps because of these mixed feelings, when Puck disappeared from contact there were few concerned enough to pay it much heed. Only Netcat felt compelled to spend the time and resources to conduct a search for the missing technomancer, perhaps because she felt a kinship with him—a connection that no one else could understand. Through months of searching nearly across the globe, Netcat finally believes she has come to the end of her search. She requires outside help, however, in order to complete the task.

This adventure begins with the players being contacted by and eventually meeting the famous JackPoint poster and technomancer Netcat. She tells the runners about her search for Puck. First, the runners must escort a contact with vital information on Puck's whereabouts to safety. While escorting the contact, a man named Tanaka, the group comes under attack from a well-armed and -equipped strike force. The ferocity and organization of the attackers should give the runners a strong hint that there are people who do not want Puck to be found. After delivering the contact safely, the runners are told the fate of the missing Puck: he has been kidnapped by Mitsuhamu and subjected to experimentation at a hidden lab.

Netcat employs the runners to help her extract Puck as soon as possible. In scouting the location, however, the runners should see that the rescue will not be easy. Puck is being held in a hidden experimentation lab underneath an upper-scale bio modification clinic in the heart of an urban population center. The clinic is highly secure, and it's staffed twenty-four hours a day. Due to its location in a wealthy neighborhood, shooting their way in should be out of the question. Netcat suggests a stealth insertion, with the group using some sort of cover identity to gain access to the clinic and then sneak into the lower levels, aided by her own considerable ability to manipulate the Matrix systems of the clinic. Once down in the lower levels, her abilities become moot as the security switches to entirely non-Matrix based. Upon raiding the lab, the runners and Netcat start to discover the horrible reality of MCT's experiments. All around are signs that horrific biological experimentation is taking place, with the focus on technomancer's brains. Eventually, the runners discover a room where a series of vat-encased brains appear to be connected to a large Matrix server, and the full reality of what MCT is attempting to do is shown. While the rest of the group deals with the security (as quietly as possible), Netcat insists on connecting to the experimentation computer to learn what she can and destroy all research that MCT has accumulated so far. Puck is found and rescued, but he seems to be the only technomancer left "whole" in the facility.

After rescuing Puck and getting him to safety, Netcat shares what she learned from the experimentation computer. MCT is attempting to merge a technomancer's brain with the bio-engineered brains that they create to control Matrix personae. MCT wants a more intelligent, responsive controller and (more importantly), one with technomancer abilities. The scary thing is

that they very nearly succeeded. The brains that were connected to the experimentation computer appeared intelligent and displayed technomancer abilities, but once they had been connected for any length of time they went completely insane. In communicating with the remaining entities and searching through what records remained in the computer, Netcat learned that the MCT researchers were finding the facility too conspicuous to continue their research, so the bulk of it has already been moved to another unknown site. Netcat and Puck are resolute that this experiment must be destroyed at all costs, and they implore the runners to join with them. Although the new research location is unknown, Puck knows that the researchers are in need of more test subjects and frequently kidnap technomancers from the poor population for their experiments. He knows of one such group in the city and suggests that the runners watch the group to see if any of these technomancers are kidnapped. After a few days' surveillance, the runners should see that some of the technomancers are abducted and delivered to unknown parties. Following the people back to the research site should prove difficult, but not impossible, with the runners learning the location of the new lab as a result.

The new lab is entirely different from the previous one. It is in an extremely destitute area (barrens) or outside of the city altogether, far away from any potential prying eyes. Through a thin disguise of pleasant landscaping, the runners encounter a wide array of entirely lethal defense systems: one of MCT's famous "zero zones." Security is extremely tight, with virtually no chance of sneaking in undetected. The facility is purposefully isolated, however, with most of its defenses relying on automation to ensure that as few people as possible know about it. This isolation provides an opportunity for the runners to make a fast and ferocious raid against the building, overwhelming its defenses before help can arrive. The objective, as stated by Netcat and Puck, is to destroy the building and everything related to the horrible experiments, saving what technomancers are still unharmed. After beginning their assault, the runners quickly learn the full measure of what MCT has already achieved as they fall under attack from cyborg-encased brains of some of the project's test subjects. The runners quickly find themselves in the fight of their lives against an opponent that seems like something out of a techno-horror film.

This adventure plunges the players into the middle of a story involving some of the best-known characters of the *Shadowrun* world and gives them the opportunity to make a significant impact in the world by destroying a shocking research project. In running this adventure, gamemasters should be sure to communicate the gravity of the situation to the players: the respect (or at least notoriety) the people they are working for (Netcat and Puck) have, the shock and inhumanity of what MCT is doing with their experiments, and the weight of moral responsibility to destroy the project before it can claim any more lives.

PLOT POINT ONE

Escorting Tanaka

The adventure should begin with the players receiving word of a job for them through unusual means: entirely non-Matrix. The message can be delivered through a variety of means (word of mouth, old-style letter or note, hints and symbols in the person's

daily routine, etc.), but the message should be delivered in a way that leaves no trace in the Matrix or in any electronic format whatsoever. Once the message is received (and possibly decoded), the runners are instructed to go to a location where there is absolutely no Matrix access available, such as Hell's Kitchen in Seattle, Aurora Warrens in Denver, or El Infierno in Los Angeles. Coming face to face with their employer, the runners see a young elven woman who appears weary and dressed in travel-worn clothes. She identifies herself as Netcat and asks the runners for their help in completing a dangerous mission of high importance. The runners should know Netcat based on her reputation as a technomancer of considerable skill. At this point she does not reveal that she is searching for Puck (though the runners may know this), but she says that the mission is to escort a contact with critical information from one point to another. She warns the runners that the contact knows that he is being hunted by his former employer who is intent on silencing him before he can reveal what he knows. If the runners do not already have a vehicle equipped for hostile escort duty, Netcat provides one. She offers a modest 10,000 nuyen in compensation, but she also states that getting the contact's information is very important to her, and she would owe the runners a favor if they help her complete the mission.

Assuming the runners accept, they have little time to prepare. Netcat states that the contact's information is time-sensitive, and they should escort him to safety tomorrow night, if at all possible. Once the runners have prepared, Netcat arranges a pickup time for the following evening in an isolated corner of the city. The group needs to transport the contact from an isolated area of their city to the outskirts (or some kind of border, if the city has one) and deliver him to a group of smugglers. Shortly after picking up the contact and departing, the group falls under attack by a well-armed and organized group of attackers. The precision and equipment of the hostiles should immediately indicate a professional corporate strike team. Strike team forces are persistent and do not hesitate to use heavy force – they want the contact dead and do not care who else they take with him. The attackers use three different vehicles, with one working out ahead of the runners attempting to cut them off or re-route them away from where they might want to go. The other two vehicles then bracket the runners attempting to disable or destroy their vehicle. Drone and Spirit support will also be brought in (MCT has many resources in both those areas) to try and sway the battle. Attack drones such as a Nimrod (see p. 121, *Arsenal*) are used to bring heavy armaments to bear, while Spirits will be used in more subtle ways, such as using Powers like Accident or Confusion (see p. 293, *SR4A*) to harass the runners.

If one of the runners is driving, the scene could be run with the Chase Combat rules (see p. 169, *SR4A*) to give it a more cinematic feel, or using the Tactical Combat rules (see p. 168, *SR4A*) if the group prefers a more detailed, round-by-round combat. If none of the runners volunteer to drive the vehicle, then Netcat takes control (while appearing unconscious in the front seat) and lets the runners do the fighting. In this case, the gamemaster should not worry about the driving aspect, treat that as a backdrop to the combat, and focus on setting up “mini-scenes” for the runners where enemy vehicles come close, shoot from afar, then suddenly appear in the front to try and cut them off. If the enemies are still pursuing them by the time the runners near the rendezvous point (assuming they headed that way), the smugglers

that are waiting to take the contact to safety join (and quickly end) the fight using the formidable weapons on their t-bird.

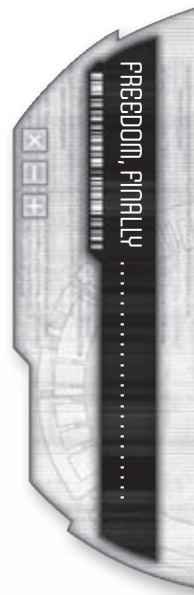
Once the contact is delivered to the rendezvous point and the MCT strike team driven off, he reveals what he knows to Netcat and the runners (if they decide to hang around and listen). The contact reveals that he once went by the name Tanaka and worked for Mitsuhamma Computer Technologies. A few weeks ago, he witnessed a project that the company was funding that he could not condone, and that's why he left his former employer. While working as a financial auditor for MCT he inspected a secret project that he believed was “simple” biological research. Upon inspecting it, however, he realized that the biological research was on human subjects—technomancers to be specific. This was particularly horrific to him, since he is a technomancer as well. While inspecting the research facility, he saw and made brief contact with a young, male, technomancer who identified himself as Puck. He gives Netcat the exact location of the research facility where Puck was seen. Netcat wastes no time in turning to the runners again and implores them to help her achieve her ultimate goal—rescuing Puck.

PLOT POINT TWO

Puck Jailbreak

Once Tanaka has delivered his information, the real purpose behind Netcat's actions is revealed. She asks for the runners' help in planning the immediate rescue of Puck—there is no telling how much longer he will be held in the location that Tanaka gave, if he is still there at all. Netcat offers each of the runners a further 10,000 nuyen (he can talk up to 15,000 nuyen through successful Negotiation + Charisma Opposed Tests, 1,000 nuyen per hit) if the runners absolutely insist. After agreeing to the terms, Netcat wants to begin the operation without delay and suggest that they first scout out the location.

The address given by Tanaka is in an upscale downtown area of the city the runners are currently in, so they will need to proceed cautiously. Arriving at the address, the group immediately sees that the address is for an upscale bio-mod clinic run by MCT's subsidiary Collinson Biotech. Security at the medical clinic is not overt, but it is still very effective, and the location of the clinic in a high-security neighborhood presents further problems for the runners. A detailed description of the security measures of the clinic is given in the **Location** section. In general, the Collinson Biotech clinic handles bio modifications to upscale clients that want the absolute best quality equipment and care, as well as maintaining privacy regarding any work that they are getting done. If the runners observe the clinic for a few days or check into patient records, they see the names of several minor celebrities on the patient list. This could even be the avenue through which the runners infiltrate the facility, with one of the group impersonating a famous personality, which would provide an array of amusing opportunities for roleplaying. Given the high security of the surrounding neighborhood the quick response times from the local law enforcement, and the higher-profile nature of the clinic and the clients that frequent it, a brute force approach to intrusion should be almost out of the question. Using naked force should not result in automatic failure, but the runners should realize it is definitely the more difficult route. A stealth



INCOMING FEED.....



intrusion would be much more appropriate and should be easier to achieve, even though the frequency of visitors to the clinic is not terribly high. Due to the nature of the work, and their client's request for absolute privacy, the clinic is open and staffed 24 hours a day. This can prove to be both an advantage and a hindrance to the group's efforts. Several options are available for cover identities that the group can use to gain entry to the clinic, including visitors of an existing patient, a new patient and their "entourage," or as staff of the clinic. Alternatively, they could elect to sneak in by access to the clinic through some of the less-used areas, like an empty patient room in the middle of the night, using some kind of creative aerobic insanity.

However they gain access, the runners need to proceed to the lower levels to extract Puck, according to Tanaka. Exploring the lower level, the runners should see signs that the research rooms are mostly empty. The entire operation looks to be winding down. Most of the technomancer test subjects that are left behind are in no condition to go anywhere, having suffered horribly from the experiments. Most die immediately if disconnected from their life support machines, which the groups may choose to do out of mercy; some of the captives may even request it. Five of the captives are still well enough to escape, and this could present a moral dilemma to the players: do they take the extra risk and complication of helping the captive technomancers escape? Netcat insists that they should. Sometime before discovering Puck's cell, the group should find the main experimentation room where the full horror of what MCT is doing begins to be revealed. The main experimentation room is in its own Faraday cage, but houses the only Matrix server that produces a wireless signal on the entire level. In the room, connected to the server via direct lines, are technomancers in various stages of completeness: from mostly whole bodies, to partial bodies on augmented support, to detached heads and brains in jars of viscous fluid. Drawn to the server by the sheer horror of it all, Netcat insists on investigating the system to learn what she can of what MCT is doing here. Any runners are free to join her. There is not much running on the Matrix server itself; the node is fairly empty save for a few basic programs and simulations. However, the system is populated by personae, as many as there are technomancers in the room, and they can communicate (after a fashion). If any of the players look into the system it should be clear that the technomancers in various stages of bodily wholeness are connected to the server, controlling personae, and interacting with the system. All of them are in various stages of insanity, and are hardly lucid communicators. Diagnostic readouts coming from the server can give anyone connected some basic information about the test subjects including basic information about the test subject (such as age, sex, and background), a series of test results, and pertinent metrics and statistics. The technomancers that have been hooked up to the machine the longest are the least sane, with total loss of lucidity happening after a few days of being connected up to the server in such a fashion. Most interesting, though, is the fact that all of the test subjects seem to have retained their technomancer abilities; anyone connected to the system should be able to see this almost immediately. Gamemasters should impress upon the players a feeling of shock and revulsion at the nature of these experiments. Having seen enough, Netcat insists on getting Puck and escaping as soon as possible, as well as destroying any

FREEDOM, FINALLY



experiments and data currently running on the systems. Puck is being held in a cell marked SJT958. He is weak and mentally shaken, but otherwise able to escape under his own power. If the runners done the work haven't already, Puck insists that any captive technomancers that are able to move should be freed, while the rest should be put out of their misery.

PLOT POINT THREE

Final Horror

If the runners have not already decided to do so, Netcat and Puck implore them to help destroy this project of MCT before it can go any further. Netcat and Puck do not have any more money to offer the runners as compensation but instead appeal to their conscience to destroy the inhuman project of MCT before it reaches fruition. Puck knows from conversations that he has overheard that the researchers knew that the location was compromised and so had moved most of the research and most promising test subjects to a new location. This was as a slow process, however, as they were trying to move all of the resources without anyone else at the clinic knowing what was going on. Puck doesn't know the new lab location, but he does know that the researchers were looking for more test subjects to continue their research. Previously, the researchers had kidnapped technomancers from the poor segments of the population, since they would not be missed. Either from Puck's information or from some of the other technomancers that were rescued from the clinic, the group should learn of a few different groups of technomancers in the local area that fit that description, groups that may have even had other members taken by the researchers before. Netcat suggests that the group undertake some covert surveillance of some potential targets and see if they can track the researchers back to the lab.

The runners don't have to wait long. Since the relocation of the lab, progress on the project has been proceeding faster than expected and, encouraged by the recent successes, the researchers have increased their "acquisition" of new test subjects. Within two days, the runners should see a group of hired thugs raid a technomancer group and carry away a few more captives. The kidnappers are just hired muscle (savvy runners should know this), so the group should not interfere and follow them back to a drop-off point: a run-down coffin motel in a bad part of the town. Using a reservation at the motel, the kidnappers dump their captives in a few rooms and leave. If the runners continue to watch the motel they will see several groups dropping off victims. A few hours after the last group of thugs drops off the captive technomancers, another party arrives to retrieve them. This group, working for the MCT research program, is much more cautious about being seen or followed, which means the runners need to be very cautious and use some very passive surveillance techniques such as attaching a Stealth Tag (see p. 329, *SR4A*) to the vehicle. Whatever the means, the runners should be allowed to track the group back to the main research lab, so the final confrontation of the adventure can take place.

The new location where the research is taking place in a much more secluded part of the city or area, such as a "barrens" area or possibly even on the outskirts of the city itself. The building is a

fairly sizable one with sizable surrounding grounds. Giving the area anything more than a cursory inspection reveals that the building and the grounds are bristling with automated defense systems: sensors, cameras, gun turrets, and drones. This is one of MCT's infamous "Zero Zones" of protection. Full details of the security measure outside and inside the building are detailed in the **Location** section. The location and security measures of the new lab are entirely opposite of the one in which Puck was being held. There is virtually no chance of a subtle entrance, but the isolated location of the lab means that reinforcements take a long time to arrive once an attack begins. If the runners hit the location fast with overwhelming force, they should be able to destroy the lab and its research before any backup arrives. Netcat suggests that the group attack swiftly and head for the central Matrix server room to destroy all the accumulated research there. Puck also adds that the head researcher, Doctor Catherine Sharon, should also be found and killed (he takes personal relish in this opportunity). The researchers at the lab do not hold back in releasing their "experiments" to defend the building. The group's network is assaulted by the technomancer personae, controlled by the lab researchers. Activator gel, a type of intruder nanoweapon (p. 116, *Augmentation*), is deployed against the runners in order to activate any wireless connections in their cyberware or devices and provide the security hackers with access to their systems. If there is a hacker or technomancer in the group, the Matrix proves to be a fierce and crucial battleground, with Netcat and Puck providing support. If the group doesn't include a Matrix specialist, the gamemaster shouldn't worry about having to roll dice for this battle, but it should be made clear that Netcat and Puck are embattled in the Matrix. As a last resort, the final "creations" of the project are released: cyborgs. These cyborgs have had the technomancer brains controlling them, so each of them has the considerable dual threat of their physical combat abilities and their Resonance abilities to attack via the Matrix as well. This final confrontation should have the feeling of a desperate battle against a terrible evil.

LOCATIONS

The overall location of this adventure (both city and country) is left deliberately vague so the gamemaster is free to place it in whatever location makes sense for the campaign, rather than having to transplant the players to the location of the adventure. Gamemasters are encouraged to modify any of the settings to add appropriate detail, or change anything if it would make more sense in the location that they are running their campaign.

COLLISON BIOTECH CLINIC

Collison Biotech is a clinic that specializes in doing bio-modifications for high-profile clients that want a large degree of privacy. Layout and security of the building is designed around the idea of maintaining the privacy and anonymity of the patients. Canny runners will be able to use these measures to their advantage. The building relies on the fact that it is located in a densely populated and highly secure area for most of its security needs. The clinic itself is twelve stories tall with roughly 200 (fairly luxurious) rooms in addition to several operating and recovery rooms. Staff levels vary from about seventy-five during the day,



when most patients come and go and procedures are done, to about thirty at night. There are about twenty-five security staff on duty at all times, though they mostly stay in the four security offices in the building. They are decently armed and trained (use the stats for Corporate Security Unit, p. 281, *SR4A*), but in the face of well-armed opposition (like shadowrunners), they will simply try to delay them while law enforcement specialists from the local city are called. Collision Biotech pays a special premium to the regional security company for faster service, so runners that trigger an alarm can expect heavy resistance to arrive at the building in five to ten minutes. There is also a security mage on staff (use CorpSec Lieutenant, p. 282, *SR4A*) who spends most of the shift patrolling astrally for potential magical “snooping” of the clientele. The on-site mage also monitors and maintains the wards around the security offices and any patient rooms that have requested them.

The main entrance to the building is open to the public, but it only opens into a lavish lobby staffed by a receptionist with several security guards on duty at all times. The receptionist and guards ensure that only registered patients are admitted beyond the heavy security door that leads into the building. The door is released from the receptionist’s desk terminal or any of the security offices in the building. The door also has a built-in sensor (Rating 5) for detecting weapons and undeclared cyberware. There is a service entrance in the back for deliveries and as a general employee entrance. The personnel door and service door are protected by Rating 5 maglocks and are monitored by cameras. Anyone seen coming or going at the service entrance is verified against a schedule of expected arrivals and departures. Patient rooms are all individually locked (Rating 4), with the rooms being sound dampened, and some are warded (Force 4 wards; patients must pay extra to have them put up). Each patient room is designed with privacy in mind, so all feature heavy sound dampening and white-noise generation on demand. This can work in favor of the runners, as unused rooms provide an ideal insertion point, but all rooms are on the second level or higher.

Access to various areas of the clinic is all controlled via RFID tags, routed and tracked through the central Administration node. The node has the following stats: System 4, Response 4, Firewall 5, Signal 5.

The Administration node has a wireless signal that extends anywhere inside of the clinic, but not more than a meter or so outside of it. Keeping the patient records confidential is of most importance to the system. A Rating 4 IC program running Analyze 4 and Encrypt 4 is constantly watching the patient records file. If it detects unauthorized access to the file, it triggers an alert and then begins Dynamic Encryption on the file. Both the patient records file and the employee records file have been encrypted with a Rating 4 Encrypt program. The employee file is also loaded with a Rating 4 data bomb. Security is controlled through a completely isolated security node with the following stats: System 6, Response 5, Firewall 5, Signal 4.

The Security Node operates in hidden mode, and the only devices that are connected to it wirelessly are the commlinks on the security guards. Therefore, the runners need to physically spot and scan one of the guards to even be aware of this node’s existence. All of the security devices (cameras, sensors) are connected via hard lines and slaved to the security node. Monitoring the security node twenty-four hours a day is a Security Spider (use Professional

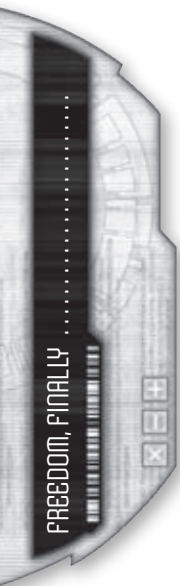
Spider, p. 207, *Unwired*) who coordinates any action against detected security breaches.

Access to the lower level where Puck is being held is a completely different matter. There is only one elevator and one stairwell down to that level. Both are secured by a Rating 6 maglock with print-scanner biometrics and Rating 4 anti-tampering systems (see p. 263, *SR4A*). Both of these locks are isolated from the main security node of the building, except for the fact that they send a one-way alarm notification if they detect tampering. The first room entered on the lower level is a “decontamination room” that acts as an airlock of sorts. There is no restriction to get into the room, but access from it into the experimentation rooms beyond is controlled by a maglock with the same stats as the one above. Additionally, the decontamination has a Rating 6 radio signal scanner that triggers an alarm if any wireless signals detected in the area are not immediately deactivated. If tampering of the locks is detected or a wireless signal is not shut down, an alarm sounds, the room seals itself with heavy security doors (Armor 20, Structure Rating 14), and is flooded with neuro-stun gas (see p. 255, *SR4A*). Beyond the decontamination room, there are no active wireless nodes or networks, save for one experimentation room. All doors are security with a traditional lock and key system, and each “cell” contains a Faraday Cage that prevents any sort of wireless signal getting in or out. There are roughly a dozen guards on the lower level, equipped with armored jackets and Remington 990 shotguns. Security on the lower level is not what it once was, since the operation has been winding down and moving to the new location.

MCT RESEARCH LAB

The new research lab to which MCT has relocated the technomancer research project is much more modern and better equipped than the old one. It is located in an outlying or barren-type area of a selected city or region, where there are far fewer prying eyes. This also works against the security of the operation, since reinforcements of any kind will be slow to arrive at the facility. The building displays itself as “Playtronics Toys” so that it does not appear to be a high-value target. Anything more than a casual inspection of the security surrounding the building, however, shows that the protection afforded to it indicates a certain level of significance. The building has two stories above ground and one below, and it is modest in size. Surrounding the building is about one hundred meters of landscaped grounds in the form of lawn, gardens, and small fountains and streams. Surrounding the entire perimeter is a fence about three meters tall, which is electrified and topped with razor wire. The grounds between the fence and the building are landscaped to conceal the host of deadly security measures that protect the building. An exact map and layout is not given here, but gamemasters should use any number or combination of the following security measures:

- Motion sensors or Pressure pads (see p. 261, *SR4A*) to alert other systems of the intruder(s)
- Monowire strung between landscaping features (see p. 260, *SR4A*)
- “Flowers” that release Seven-7 gas (see p. 255, *SR4A*), or ringu (p. 84, *Arsenal*) for the especially sadistic gamemaster
- Drone gun turrets firing DMSO capsules (similar to Ares Super Squirt, p. 319, *SR4A*) filled with ekyelebenle venom (see p. 84, *Arsenal*)
- Remote pop-up LMG gun turrets firing EX-Ex rounds (see p. 323, *SR4A*)



Staff at the facility is still being built up, so there will only be about two dozen on hand when the runners discover the location of the lab. The main foyer is the only way in and it is monitored at all times by a security guard in a booth of armored glass. The guard can flood the foyer with Seven-7 on command with no fear of harming himself. There are several fire exits on the building, but they cannot be opened from the outside. Although relying mostly on automated security, there is one team of human security guards on staff, and they are some of MCT's elite (see MCT Strike Team, p. 142). The number of guards should equal the number of runners, and they should have a magician with them (use CorpSec Lieutenant, p. 282, *SR4A*). As the runners near their primary target of the central server room, the gamemaster should bring out the lab's last line of defense: the new technomancer cyborgs. There should be about half as many of them as there are runners, and they should be formidable and fight with sound tactics (using cover, outflanking, and isolating individual runners). Dr. Sharon refuses to leave the facility during the attack, and it is her that personally activates the cyborg units. She also wants to stay and see how they perform as she is supremely confident that they can repel the intruders. She will not repent, show remorse, or be convinced that what she was doing was wrong in any way.

PEOPLE

NETCAT

Netcat is a survivor, a loyal friend, and a fierce enemy. She emerged after Crash 2.0, getting her start with daring Matrix smash-and-grab ops, and she was one of the first runners to openly identify as a technomancer. She is an instinctual hacker, able to feel around systems and find her way into them without necessarily being able to explain how she does what she does. She has made a name for herself on a series of daring runs, and she has proven herself to be the antithesis of the VR hacker who dives into systems from a remote location. She is a hands-on worker, willing to break into secure facilities and wired nodes to get to the data that cannot always be accessed through the wired Matrix. She relishes the B&E part of her work as much as she does the hacking.

Some of her close acquaintances hope that the recent birth of her first child will be a somewhat steadying influence on Netcat. Her passionate nature and occasional desires for vengeance have gotten her into a few tough spots in the past, but she is quick to point out that the same energy helps get her out of those same situations. She generally appears to be quite content with the high-wire act that is her life, and she is not very receptive to suggestions for change.

Netcat

Female Elf

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | R | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|----|
| 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 9/11

Armor (B/I): 8/6

Skills: Artisan 1, Athletics skill group 4, Clubs 3, Compiling (Machine) 5 (+2), Computer (Analyze) 6 (+2), Con (Fast Talk)

4 (+2), Cybercombat (LPI) 4 (+2), Data Search (Data Havens) 5 (+2), Decompiling 5, Demolitions 1 Dodge 4, Electronic Warfare (Jamming) 5 (+2), Escape Artist 2, Etiquette (Matrix) 4, Firearms skill group 2, Gunnery 3, Hacking (Exploit) 5 (+2), Hardware (Maglocks) 4 (+2), Infiltration 4, Locksmith 3, Negotiation (Sense Motive) 2 (+2), Palming 2, Perception (Visual) 4 (+2), Pilot Aircraft (Remote Operation) 1 (+2), Pilot Anthroform (Remote Operation) 3 (+2), Pilot Ground Craft (Remote Operation) 2 (+2), Pilot Watercraft (Remote Operation) 2 (+2), Registering 4, Shadowing 3, Software 5, Throwing Weapons 2

Knowledge Skills: AIs 5, Corporate TM Research Projects 4, Data Havens 5, Matrix Clubs 4, Matrix Security Procedures 4, Operating Systems 3, Seattle 3, Seattle Baby-sitters 4, Security Design (Matrix) 2 (+2), Technomancer Organizations 4

Languages: English N, Japanese 3, Spherethiel 4

Qualities: Technomancer, Codeslinger (Exploit), Synthetic Sympathy, Erased, Natural Hardening

Living Persona: Firewall 7, System 5, Signal 4, Response 5 (8), Init 10 (13), IP 3 (5)

Stream: Cyberdept (Willpower + Resonance)

Complex Forms: Analyze 5, Browse 4, Command 5, Edit 4, Encrypt 4, Scan 6, Armor 4, Attack 7, Biofeedback Filter 6, Blackout 4, Data Bomb 2, Decrypt 5, Defuse 6, ECCM 4, Exploit 7, Medic 2, Sniffer 4, Spoof 5, Stealth 5, Track 6

Submersion Grade: 6

Echoes: Advanced overclocking, E-sensing, firewall upgrade, multiprocessing, overclocking, widget crafting

Registered Sprites: 2 x courier sprites (Rating 4, 2 tasks), crack sprite (Rating 5, 3 tasks), data sprite (Rating 4, 2 tasks), 2 x fault sprites (Rating 4 and 6, 3 and 1 task), machine sprite (Rating 6, 3 tasks, inhabits cat drone)

Gear: Armor jacket, basic user program suite (Analyze 2, Browse 2, Command 1, Edit 2), Bodyline biometric jeans and t-shirt, camouflage suit with thermal dampening modification (Rating 6), catalyst stick, cat anthroform drone (Hand +1, Accel 5/15, Speed 50, Pilot 2, Body 2, Arm 2, Sens 2, w/ retractable satellite uplink, chameleon coating, internal commlink (Response 5, Signal 6, Firewall 5, System 5)) certified credstick w/ 600¥, certified credstick with 345¥, climbing gear set, commlink (Erika Elite w/ Iris Orb OS (Response 3, Signal 4, Firewall 3, System 3), glasses (Rating 1, with image link), linguasoft 2 [Sioux], fake SIN (Rating 4)) commlink (Sony Emperor w/ Vector Xim (Response 1, Signal 2, Firewall 1, System 1), fake SIN (Rating 3), 50 datachips, electronics tool kit, 2 xendoscopes, 2 grappling guns, 2 jammers, area (Rating 4), jammer, directional (Rating 4), laser microphone (Rating 6), lockpick set, medkit (Rating 4), microphone (Rating 6), 2 micro-transceivers (Rating 6), 5 x nanopaste disguise (small container), 2 periscopes, 2 radio signal scanner (Rating 6), rappelling gloves, respirator (Rating 4), 20 standard RFID tags (Rating 1), 400 meters of stealth rope, 2 tag erasers, white noise generator (Rating 6), 2 wire clippers

Weapons:

Stun Baton [Reach 1, DV 6S(e), AP -half]

Defiance EX Shocker [Taser, DV 8S(e), AP -half, SS, RC —, 4(m)]

Hammerli 620S [Light Pistol, DV 4P, AP —, SA, RC 1, 6(c), 3 spare clips (2 regular, 1 stick-n-shock (DV 6S(e), AP -half)]

4 thermal smoke grenades (Grenade, Blast: 10m radius)



Ford Spiral 115Ti (Netcat's car)

| Handl | Accel | Speed | Pilot | Body | Armor | Sensor |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|--------|
| +2 | 18/66 | 216 | 2 | 10 | 10 | 1 |

Modifications: Amenities (High), anti-theft system, concealed armor (Rating 4), engine customization (acceleration), engine customization (speed), gun port, rigger adaptation

PUCK

Puck's stats are presented on p. 146.

Game Info

HEY! CAN I KILL NETCAT AND PUCK?

This adventure involves two prominent characters in the *Shadowrun* universe, and the game stats that are relevant for the adventure are presented so that they can be fully involved participants in the events of the adventure. These characters, while skilled and resilient, and not immortal nor invulnerable, so it is entirely possible they may be seriously injured or killed. Future *Shadowrun* products will assume that both Netcat and Puck survived these events, but if, during the course of events, either or both of these characters end up being killed gamemasters are encouraged to maintained the continuity of their own game world by removing the characters from the world and ignoring them in future events.

CYBORG TECHNOMANCERS

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | R | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|----|
| 7 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 1.0 | 9 | 1 |

Matrix Initiative/IP: 12/4

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S/M): 10/10/11

Armor (B/I): 8/6

Skills: Cracking skill group 5, Dodge 2, Electronics skill group 5, Perception 3, Pistols (Semi-Automatics) 1 (+2), Tasking skill group 5, Unarmed Combat 3

Qualities: Natural Hardening, Technomancer

Submersion Grade: 2

Augmentations: Cyborg encasement (enhances Body and Strength ratings; also includes cybereyes with low-light vision, smartlink, thermographic vision, and vision enhancement 3, and cyberears with audio enhancement 3 and spatial recognizer]

Echoes: E-sensing, Overclocking

Living Persona: Firewall 5, Response 5, Signal 3, System 5

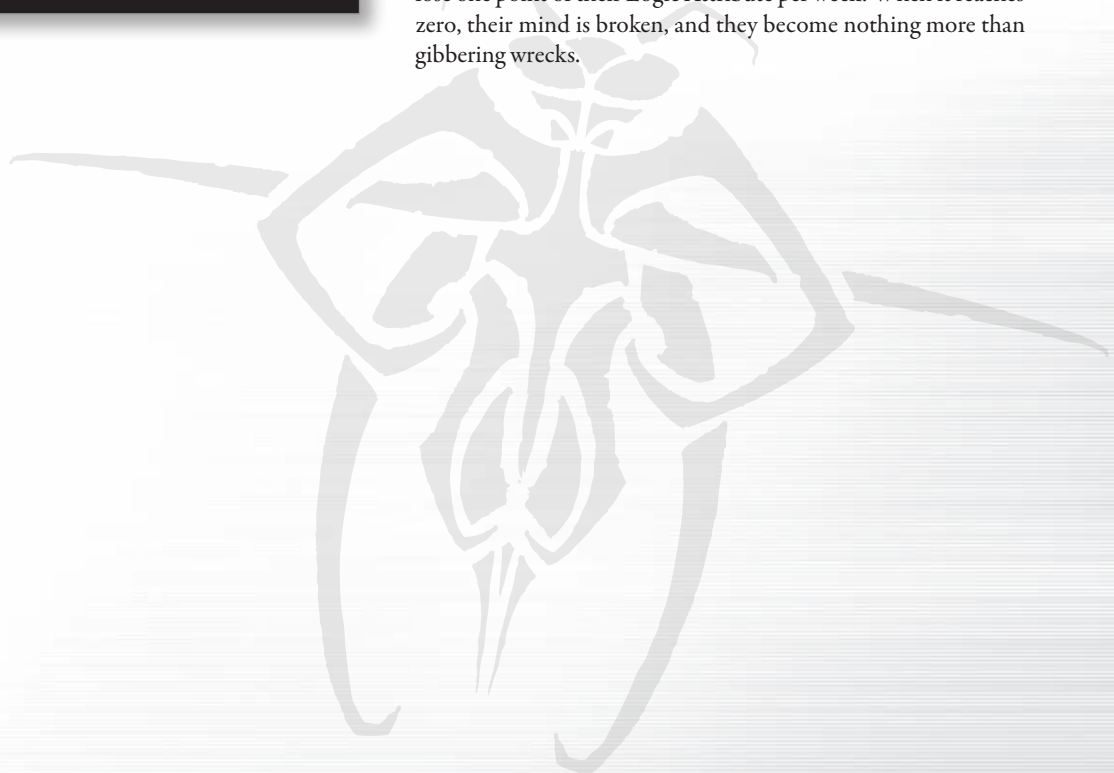
Complex Forms: Analyze 3, Armor 5, Attack 5, Biofeedback Filter 3, Browse 5, Decrypt 3, Edit 3, Exploit 5, Scan 4, Stealth 5, Track 5

Gear: Armor jacket, concealable holster, resonance preserver*

Weapons:

Ares Predator IV [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, 15(c), w/ smartlink]

* The resonance preserver is the result of MCT's research to date. It allows technomancers to experience significant Essence loss without losing Resonance. Unfortunately, it also affects their mind. After using the resonance preserver for two weeks, techomancers lose one point of their Logic Attribute per week. When it reaches zero, their mind is broken, and they become nothing more than gibbering wrecks.



... COINS OF LUCK ...

Incoming Message

- Things continue to be rough going for the “big flower” in the Free Enterprise Zone—take a look at this.
- Kia

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RELATIONS STRAINED DURING PPG MIXER Hong Kong Free Enterprise Zone

Strained relations continue to be the dominant theme during a recent economic summit held in Hong Kong for members of the Pacific Prosperity Group. Smaller corporate members of the economic alliance have been increasingly dissatisfied with Wuxing’s conduct during the last few years. Tensions began shortly after the second Matrix Crash when Wuxing capitalized on the crisis by acquiring the hard-hit Malaysian Independent Bank, which was a PPG member at the time. Since it held critical loans of other smaller PPG members, Wuxing was then able to use its ownership to force further acquisitions of smaller members. This caused significant dissent among PPG members, who thought they had joined the economic alliance in order to prevent just this sort of thing. Even fellow megacorporate member Evo, which had historically been a stalwart supporter, started to express concerns about Wuxing’s activities. In a (perhaps misguided) bid to gain more allies within the group, Wuxing pushed through the acceptance of Aztechnology into the group, which had long petitioned to join. This has only raised more questions and dissension. Shaky investor confidence has led to a steady decrease in stock prices and, combined with the unprofitable acquisitions, has contributed to a steady stream of net losses in Wuxing’s financial statements.

To their credit, the members of Wuxing’s board have been working long hours trying to turn the company’s fortune’s around through sheer force of will. Cracks seem to be appearing in the board, with Wu Lung-Wei and Sharon Chiang-Wu being seen together at official functions with decreasing frequency. The fact

that Mrs. Chiang-Wu is seen publicly more with fellow board member James Harper-Smythe than her husband has led to some wild, decidedly non-business-like speculation regarding the two.

While both of the husband and wife team are working extremely hard to turn the company around, their approaches appear to be quite different. While Sharon Chiang-Wu focuses on reestablishing the fundamentals of the corporation, financial consulting and management with close cooperation with other PPG members, Wu Lung-Wei seems to be pushing Wuxing to expand into newer and more exotic markets, hoping to find a runaway success to return them to profitability.

Tensions caused by these divergences in philosophy were clear during last week’s PPG economic summit. Wu Lung-Wei was conspicuously absent from the gathering. Mrs. Lung-Wei put on a brave face, but the strain of the situation was clear in her expressions, with James Harper-Smythe always nearby to offer support. Also noted was the absence of the Coin of Luck that Mrs. Chian-Wu normally wears around her neck. Projections of Wuxing’s financial situation continue to be pessimistic and growing darker every day, with the large Japanese corporations seeing cracks appear in the armor of the Pacific Prosperity Group that has stymied them since its inception.

//end attachment//

- “Tension” between Wu and his wife is an understatement. I was in Hong Kong for that PPG summit doing some surveillance for a client when a golden opportunity fell into my lap. I had my laser mic pointed at the hotel where all the VIPs were mixing things up when Wu and his wife stepped out onto a balcony in my field of vision. Normally these two aren’t careless with their security, but I could tell right away that Mrs. Chiang-Wu was more than a little pissed off, so I imagine security was not at the top of their minds. Anyway, here’s a transcript of what I recorded when I switched my mic to directional and swung it at them.

- Pistons

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Lung-Wei: ... a waste of time Sharon.

Sharon: No, what you have been doing is wasting time! You sit up in that room staring at that coin for hours! How is that not wasting time?

Lung-Wei: You don't understand. The *chi* in that Coin is ancient and powerful. Fu-san says...

Sharon: I don't care! I've heard more than enough of Fu Peng's advice! You listen to him far more than anyone else now. All of his mystic knowledge and enormous promises haven't gotten us anything yet. He is the waste of time!

Lung-Wei: But we are so much closer now! Kageyama-san has another that we can acquire for a limited period of time. With it we may be able to find the third.

Sharon: And how much is *that* costing us? Nothing that Kageyama-san does comes cheaply from what I have seen. This is simply a waste of time and money to chase a hopeless fantasy.

Lung-Wei: I can clearly see you don't understand, and you may never. But I will prove it to you. Once we have prosperity, everything will be as it should be.

//end attachment//

- Kageyama-san?
- Cosmo

- This just got very interesting. Wu is talking about Akira Kageyama. I'm sure of it. For those who don't know, here's a quick bio: Akira Kageyama is a financial consultant who did some work for Wuxing lately (that's probably when Wu met him). He was a mystery right from birth, being born of a Japanese pop singer who claimed to that a dragon was the father. His name was back in the headlines in 2057 when Dunkelzahn bequeathed him an entire underwater mansion off the coast of Vancouver.

- Plan 9

- So what is this "other" that Wu mentions he has?
- Traveler Jones

- Well, just prior to that, Sharon says that Wu sits and stares at "that coin" for hours. I don't think I'm stretching when I say that she is referring to the Coin of Luck that Dunkelzahn gave her. Considering she hasn't been wearing it around her neck as usual these days, that seems to make sense. By extension of logic, that would mean when Wu refers to "another" he is referring to another Coin of Luck?

- Plan 9

- Ok, I need some background. "Coin of Luck?"
- /dev/grrl

- The Coins of Luck are artifacts of unknown age, possibly impossibly ancient. No one knows *exactly* what they do, but there are four of them each pertaining to a different aspect of good "fortune" I guess you could say. Three of the Coins were given out in Dunkelzahn's Will. The first Coin, *Lu* is for wealth. It was given to a poor Hong Kong fisherman named Sun Yat-Sun, who had it for what seemed like no more than a few seconds before he was gunned down and the Coin was stolen. It has never turned up again that I've heard of. The second Coin, *Shou* is for longevity. It was given to the great dragon Lung. The third Coin is *Feng*, pertaining to fertility. It was given to Sharon Chiang-Wu, who promptly gave birth to quintuplets (any more doubters on the power of these Coins?). The fourth Coin, *Fu* is associated with happiness. It was never listed in Dunkelzahn's Will, so its whereabouts are unknown.

- Jimmy No

- So Wu has *Feng*, Kageyama has another, and Wu wants to find more? Which "other" is Wu looking for?
- Rigger X

- The program that was used to translate that conversation for us did a fine job, but it missed the subtlety of the words. In Wu's last statement he mentions having "prosperity." The original word he spoke in would be written with the character *Lu*.

- Lei Kung

OVERVIEW

Coins of Luck puts the runners in the middle a corporate power play centering on ancient and powerful magical artifacts. What appears to be a straightforward retrieve and return-type mission quickly turns complicated when the runners find themselves hunted from all sides by multiple parties in the mystic and atmospheric city of Hong Kong.

The adventure begins with the runners being contacted by an employer wanting them to take covert delivery of a package arriving at an abandoned portion of the Hong Kong docks. When attempting to return the item to their employer, the runners are

attacked by forces of the Red Dragon Triad, and the runners need to fight off a determined ambush (and possibly pursuit) in order to complete the delivery. Although the exact nature of what they are delivering is unknown to them, the runners should begin to get a sense of the item's value. Upon successfully delivering the package, the runners are placed on retainer and told that their services will be required again shortly.

After a few days' rest, the runners are contacted by the same employer and given a new task: retrieve and return another item located in the Hong Kong area. They are given a spirit to guide them to the new item. Once they have the details of the target item, an ancient-looking bronze coin with Chinese lettering and a square hole in the middle, runners should fairly easily recognize

PLOT POINT ONE

Ancient Delivery

this as a description of a Coin of Luck. The spirit sent to guide them to the coin will need to examine the item in order to verify that it is correct and authentic. Following the (seemingly meandering) trail that the spirit guide sets for them, the runners find themselves entering the cesspool of humanity known as Kowloon Walled City. Contact with the spirit guide becomes sporadic, and the runners are left to find their own way in the city. Harassment from the ruthless and ambitious locals hampers their progress. Eventually the runners find their way to an ominous building that even the worst of the local residents avoid. Heading into the building's lower levels, the runners must confront one of the powerful and vile spirits known as the Yama Kings that inhabit the Walled City. This Yama King feeds off of greed and the conflict that comes of it, and it uses magical deception to turn the runners against one another. The runners need to overcome any personal greed and mistrust of one another to defeat the Yama King's spell and emerge from its lair with the coin.

With their task apparently accomplished, things become more complicated for the runners. Upon emerging from Kowloon Walled City, they are immediately ambushed by a mysterious group of agents who are clearly not attacking to kill but to disarm and incapacitate. Just as the runners are about to learn the true intentions of this new party, both groups are attacked by an even larger force of the Red Dragon Triad. With the presence of this mysterious third party should allow the runners to slip away from the much larger Triad force. At this point, the runners are now fleeing from the most powerful criminal organization in Hong Kong. Finding a place to hide or any sort of aid in escaping the Red Dragons will be very difficult, and the runners will find themselves heading for far darker corners of the city to escape the Triad's pervasive influence, especially their ability to magically track the runners. With their spirit guide driven off, the runners are isolated from their employer. While in hiding, the runners are covertly contacted by the mysterious third party, who offers to take the coin from them and give them a way to escape Hong Kong. If the runners agree to the meeting, they learn the true forces behind the events of the run. The person meeting the runners is a representative of Sharon Chiang-Wu and James Harper-Smythe (though he does not name those names), and he explains that the runners are working for the devious Fu Peng, who is exerting unnatural influence over Wu Lung-Wei. The representative offers compensation to the runners to turn the coin over to them and disappear.

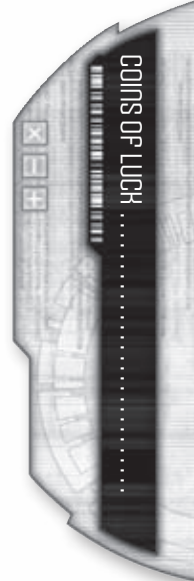
Eventually, the runners reestablish communication with their employer and set up a meet to turn over the coin (if they haven't already decided to take the alternative offer). Before they can meet with either party, they are contacted by a representative of the great dragon Lung who also offers to take the coin, but does so with an ultimatum rather than an offer – hand it over or be wiped out.

Who ultimately ends up with the coin is up to the runners, but unless the runners have very carefully concealed themselves, the other parties attack the meeting and try to steal the item. The runners end up in a fight for their lives as they try to complete the hand-off and escape the wrath of the other two parties.

The runners are contacted and summoned to a job in Hong Kong. This could involve travel, or the runners could already be in the city—this is up to the gamemaster. Heading to the meet location at the appropriate time, the runners find themselves at a small magic and lore shop in the Yau Ma Tei neighborhood of the Yau Tsim Mong district (see p. 12, *Runner Havens*). Entering the shop, they are quickly ushered into the back room by the aging owner. In the back room they are greeted by the representative of their employer: a spirit with the upper body of a Chinese man and the lower body of a serpent (though the lower body appears covered by the same “clothing” worn on the upper body; use stats for Spirit Mr. Johnson, p. 145). The spirit lays out the mission for the players. Tomorrow night, they are to receive delivery of a package at a small inlet on the coast in the Sai Kung district, a lightly populated fishing community frequented by smugglers (see p. 14, *Runner Havens*). After acquiring the package, they are to wait briefly while its contents are verified by Mr. Johnson (who will be monitoring that location from astral space), and if the package is genuine they are to deliver it back to this shop. They are offered 10,000 nuyen per runner, but this can be negotiated, with their spirit employer being especially open to increasing payment if it is taken as magical goods provided by the lore shop, though nothing terribly exotic can be acquired there (the upper limit is availability of 10). Their employer will say that every precaution has been taken to keep the delivery secret, but other parties will certainly be interested in taking the item if they were to find out about it somehow.

When the runners head to the delivery point the next evening, they are met by a small band of Asian smugglers. Their spirit employer manifests to communicate with them briefly and inspect the contents of a small metal box. Seeming satisfied, the spirit vanishes, and the smugglers hand the box over to the runners. The box is about 30 centimeters x 20 centimeters x 10 centimeters, made of sturdy metal, and locked with a Rating 6 maglock with a keypad. Astral inspection also reveals that it is protected by a Rating 6 ward. If the runners are curious enough to crack the lock and peek inside, they see an ancient-looking bronze coin, inscribed with fading Chinese characters, with a small square hole in its center. Runners familiar with magical lore and artifacts, or doing a quick Matrix search based on the image of the coin, find that this matches the description of a series of items known collectively as the Coins of Luck. If the coin is assensed, the character must pass an Assensing + Intuition (5) Test, or the coin appears mundane. If the character passes the test, they see a magical aura unlike any other, including a different Chinese character “pressed” directly into the Coin's aura. This magical letter is the only way the coins can be identified. The runners' employer is still covertly monitoring them from astral space, but he does not see any inspection of the package as a problem. He only intervenes if the runners appear to not be delivering the item as promised.

Once the runners start heading back into the city, it does not take long for their opposition to appear. While they're in the sparsely populated Sai Kung district, they are attacked by a group of Red Dragon Triad members. There should be about twice as





many of them as there are runners, including two adepts and a magician. They ambush the runners while they are traveling along the roads of the district, attempting to disable their vehicle so they can move in and take the coin. The Triads want the coin intact, so they do not risk destroying it by using heavy weapons or explosives against the runners. Instead, they attempt to disable the runners' vehicle by running it off the road or taking targeted shots against its tires or the driver. The Triads attack with speed, with many of them on motorcycles, so they should easily be able to keep up with the runners (unless the runners have an exceptionally fast vehicle). Magical support is a major part of the Triad attack, with the Triad magician using move "passive" tactics such as a Confusion or Illusion spell, or a spirit's Accident power. If these don't stop the runners, the magician then targets the driver with Manabolt. Once the attack is fully underway, the runners' employer intervenes on their behalf providing magical defense/support, as well as aiding their escape. With the considerable power of their spirit employer on their side, the runners should make good their escape (or defeat their attackers) without too much difficulty. The scene can be run with a more cinematic feel by using the more abstract Chase Combat rules (see p. 169, *SR4A*), or as a standard round-by-round combat with the Tactical Combat rules (see p. 168, *SR4A*) if the group prefers more precision.

When the runners arrive back at the magical shop, the storeowner accepts the package with much reverence and pays the runners the amount that was agreed upon. Their spirit employer then reappears to thank the runners and give them a follow-up offer. It tells the runners that it will likely need their services again in the near future and offers to place the group on "retainer" at 500 nuyen per day per person while they wait to be contacted for another job. The runners can refuse this, but the adventure would end here for them. The runners may be very intrigued, however, as to what is going on, especially if they looked inside the box to see what they were delivering (their employer may even show them what they were carrying to get their interest if they initially refuse the offer).

PLOT POINT TWO

Into the Pit of Greed

After three days, when the runners have had time to heal up and acquire new gear, they are again summoned to a meeting with their employer, this time at an isolated rice farm in the Northern Reaches district. Their employer lays out a new assignment for them; it has located another object in Hong Kong that it wants retrieved and returned. The object they are looking for is an ancient-looking bronze coin, with faded Chinese lettering and a square hole in the middle. They should very quickly recognize this description as that of a well-known magical artifact known as a Coin of Luck. If they peeked at the package they delivered previously, they could be very interested at this mention of retrieving a second coin. Their employer doesn't have an exact location for the coin at this time, but it can locate the item via magical means. It provides a spirit to guide the runners to the location of the coin. Their employer has no information on who is in possession of the coin at the moment, beyond the fact that it is in Hong Kong somewhere, so the runners should be ready

for anything. For this significant task, he is prepared to offer the runners 25,000 nuyen each, with more possible if the runners want to take payment in magical goods. Given the choice that the runners need to make later in the adventure, it is important for the gamemaster to establish how much of this money is paid up front. Their employer initially offers ten percent of the fee up front, but negotiations from the runners can bring that figure up to thirty percent. Their spirit guide takes the form of an archetypal eastern dragon and remains almost exclusively in the astral, unless none of the runners are capable of Astral Perception, in which case the spirit manifests in order to guide them. It may appear only briefly in situations where a manifested spirit would draw unwanted attention. Their employer would like them to begin the search as soon as they possibly can, and extended delays of several days or more are definitely frowned upon.

When the runners are ready to begin their search, they can summon their spirit guide. From wherever they are, their guide leads them into the heart of the city, likely to the one place the runners do not wish to go: Kowloon Walled City. Kowloon Walled City is a slum of the worst kind. The area is made out of incredibly cheap high-capacity residential buildings that are built so close together as to form a veritable “wall” that surrounds the area. Only the most destitute and desperate attempt to scratch out a living there, living at the mercy of the Triads who collect rent for the corporations that own the buildings and also provide the only real authority in the area. On the positive side, obvious weapons, cyberware, or displays of force are certainly not unusual in Kowloon Walled City, and such things may even grant the runners some cooperation from the residents. Matrix access in the area is non-existent, and very few residents own functioning commlinks. Awakened runners are severely hampered, as the entire area has a Background Count of 3 aspected towards toxic magic due to the pollution and general human misery in the area (see pp. 117–121, *Street Magic* for rules on background counts and domains). Due to the severe magical “interference,” the group’s spirit guide is only able to make sporadic contact with them, once every hour, to guide them in the direction of the coin. In between these brief moments of contact, the runners must find their own way.

While making their way through the dangerous neighborhood, the runners could encounter a wide variety of difficulties, depending on how the gamemaster wants to pace this part of the adventure. Some suggested encounters include:

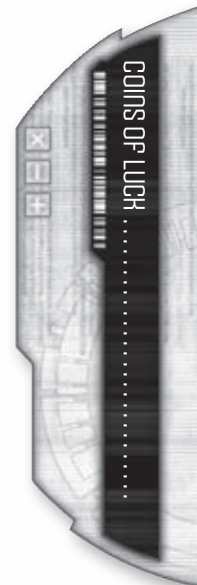
- The runners encounter an area that is protected by a local gang that demands some sort of toll from the runners in order to pass, or refuses to let them pass at all.
- The runners pass by a group of Triad rent collectors beating a man while his family watches because he is behind on payments.
- The runners are attacked by a group (at least equal to them in numbers) of residents that are in a berserk frenzy fueled by the drug Kamikaze (see p. 258, *SR4A*), making even a barely armed opponent dangerous
- Searching inside one of the many crumbling buildings, the runners stumble into a meeting where the organ-legging Black Chrysanthemum Triad is selling a group of bodies (in various states) to a group of ghouls; the runners need to quickly convince them that they intend no harm and leave or they will be attacked

- The runners unknowingly wander into the territory of a techno-cult; they are attacked by bizarre (but effective) drones that seem to be cobbled together from scavenged bits of mechanical and electronic parts; runners with any wireless devices find that they are under electronic attack, and runners with any devices that are wireless disabled are targeted by shots containing hacker nanites (see p. 200, *Unwired*); the group is led by a skilled technomancer and wants to capture the technology that the runners are carrying

Eventually, the runners find (or are directed toward) a building that even the locals seem extremely wary to approach, though it has no apparent defenses. Surveillance reveals that the building is inhabited by a few dozen scattered people, but all of them seem completely preoccupied with each other. Astral surveillance of the building reveals that it is a focal point of intense magical power; the background count in the building and immediate vicinity is +4, aspected toward the Yama King’s particular toxic magic, which heightens people’s innate greed and self-centeredness. The top floor of the six-story building is protected by a powerful ward (Rating 10) of some kind, unlike anything the runners have seen before.

When the runners proceed into the building, they quickly encounter the residents. They are all Hong Kong natives, residents of Kowloon Walled City, and they are of a variety of ages, genders, and races. Regardless of this, they are behaving in an essentially uniform fashion. They are all extremely preoccupied with collecting things they all call their “treasures.” Each resident has a stash of “treasures” somewhere in the building, hidden with various degrees of skill. To the runners, what the residents are protecting appears to be useless junk: torn papers, rotten food, broken electronics, scraps of metal, and chunks of rubble. The residents treat all these things as if they were the most valuable possessions in the world, and they fight to the death if the runners attempt to take anything away from them. Unless they try to take any of the “treasures” the residents mostly ignore the runners, they are entirely preoccupied with searching the building for more “treasures” and sneaking around to try to steal from the other residents. Some ask for help from the runners in acquiring the treasures of their rivals, and they are extremely grateful of any assistance. All of the residents defend themselves with makeshift weapons if attacked, but otherwise they are not hostile to the runners or each other. They are only concerned with moving through the building and finding or stealing more “treasures.” The residents don’t respond to any questions unless the runners help them in some way, at which point they talk briefly before returning to their activities. If asked about their activities the residents only say that they are trying to gather “all the treasure,” and that the other people in the building “stole it from them, and it’s mine!” If asked about a being or person at the top of the building, they look nervous or surprised and say, “no one lives up there.” If pressed on the issue through intimidation or bribery, they reveal that they killed the “king” at the top of the tower and took his “treasure” for themselves, and now the others are trying to steal it from them. If the runners talk to multiple residents, they all tell the same story. No other useful information can be gained from talking to them; they are all quite insane.

Eventually, the runners should realize that what they are looking for must be at the summit of the building. Heading to the



top, they should have an increasing sense of foreboding as well as a sense of gathering magical power (Awakened characters should be especially sensitive to this). The only room on the floor is at the far northwest corner, protected by an enormous set of double doors. The doors are secured by an old-style bolt with a key lock and a Rating 10 Physical Barrier spell. There are no other defenses; the Yama King is supremely confident in his abilities, and rightly so. Some time ago, the powerful spirit sensed the presence of a powerful magic item that had entered Kowloon Walled City in an area that it normally frequented. Having always preferred to feed off of the emotions of greed and selfishness, the spirit felt drawn to the Coin of Luck that represented wealth. It directed some of its thralls to retrieve the coin, and it has used it to feed its magical powers ever since, accumulating wealth and feeding off the greed it brings out in people.

Physically, the spirit appears to be a man that is morbidly obese, to the point where his rolls of fat spill out and fill an entire room. If it were a real physical being, it would be impossible for it to move. It appears to be wearing clothes, but on closer inspection the “clothing” is actually an enormous swarm of locusts. The spirit uses deception as its weapon to defend itself rather than direct force. When the runners arrive, it attempts to use the same tactic it has always used to defend itself. If the runners are hostile and attempt to destroy it with force, it fights back for a time but eventually allows the runners to believe that it has been defeated through illusion. With its own innate magic abilities boosted by the ambient mana of the domain, it should be quite difficult for runners to resist. In order for this scene to have maximum impact for the players, the gamemaster should make the spell resistance test for the players in secret so that the players themselves do not know that they are the target of the spell. If this will bother the players, then roll for the spell as normal. The spirit wants the runners to believe it has been defeated and they have successfully taken the coin. The coin, however, is not the only thing of value left behind by the spirit’s apparent demise. Underneath the enormous rolling flesh of the spirit is a large pile of things: certified credsticks, weapons, electronics, magical items, whatever the runners will see as valuable. The key to running this scene is to remember that the Yama King is continually manipulating the runners’ perceptions. It wants to turn them against each other and play off their own greed. One thing a gamemaster can do is have whichever runner is holding the coin find the best loot, an object they would believe to be quite valuable and useful. If they decide to pass around the coin, those that had it and gave it up may find the things they’ve already collected are not as good or valuable as they thought they were, or what they had picked up is now mysteriously broken or lost.

When the runners start to head out of the building, things get even more interesting. They should encounter one of the residents of the building (it may be one they have met before), continuing to collect “treasures” as they did before. This time, however, the things that the resident has are indeed items of value to the runners. If the runners go to check out other residents and their “treasures,” they find more things of value instead of what they saw as useless junk before. Again, this is an illusion cast by the Yama King, and gamemasters are encouraged to roll in secret for the players to resist this spell. Failure is likely, given the skill of the spirit and the power it can draw on from its domain. What is happening to the runners is what has happened to every resident

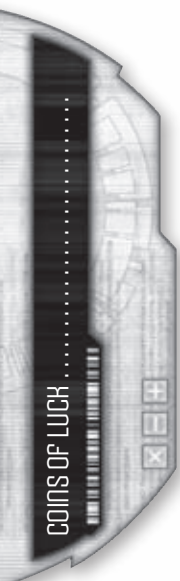
still left in the building; they came trying to kill the Yama King and take his wealth, and each one believed that they did it (see the paragraph above that describes interaction with the residents), but they have all now been manipulated and pushed into a never-ending cycle of greed and envy. These are the emotions that the Yama King uses to sustain itself. It has nothing, beyond the coin, of any true value. Gamemasters do their best to subtly encourage the twisted perspective that the Yama King is attempting to give the runners. Each time the runners have some reason to doubt what they are seeing, they can make a test to resist the illusion. If a player comes up with a convincing logical reason why what they are seeing cannot be real, or has some reasons to come to the logical conclusion that they are being manipulated, they should get a bonus to their Intuition + Counterspelling test to resist the spell. For example, one of the runners may remember that each of the residents claims that they killed the “king” at the top of the building and took his treasure, just as the runners now believe that they have. If the runners completely ignore the treasure left behind by the Yama King, ignore all of the items of value by the residents, and simply take the coin and leave, they travel some distance from the building before the Yama King releases the spell, and the group sees that what they think is the Coin of Luck that they are carrying is nothing more than a rusted metal washer.

After breaking the illusion, one way or another, the runners need to return to the top of the tower to confront the Yama King again. This time it is out of tricks, but it fights ferociously with all its power to retain the coin. In the end, however, the spirit prefers to feed off of the emotions of duped victims, and it flees in the face of a determined attack. Once it departs, it leaves behind the Coin of Luck, along with several piles of junk. With the illusion now broken, the residents of the building fly into desperate rages as they see their “treasures” for what they really are. They blame each other for the loss of value in their possessions, and they set about killing each other in vicious fighting. The runners have the coin and are free to leave Kowloon Walled City, but they’ll have to make their way through an intense, fluid combat to do so.

PLOT POINT THREE

Bad Luck

Upon leaving Kowloon Walled City, the runners are ready to meet up with their employer and make the delivery, but they are immediately intercepted by a third party. Unknown to the runners, this is a group working for Sharon Chiang-Wu and James Harper-Smythe. The group does not attack the runners but magically banishes the spirit guide that is with them, then tells the runners they wish to talk. If the runners attack them, they quickly withdraw and wait for another opportunity. If the runners agree to talk, the leader of the group says that they represent someone else who is interested in acquiring the coin. He says that their employer has information showing that the runners are about to make a great mistake in turning the coin over to their original employer. The conversation is quickly cut short, however, when forces of the Red Dragon Triad ambush both of the parties together in a swift attack. The agents working for Sharon Chiang-Wu turn to fight the Triad, which has brought numbers that would quickly overwhelm the runners without support. The gamemaster should



make clear that this is not a time to stand and fight, and the presence of this third party has given the runners a small window to escape, which they should take.

Once the runners escape the fight outside Kowloon Walled City, they're on their own. Without their spirit guide, they have no way to contact the employer. Worse still, they have no place of rest anywhere in Hong Kong. The Red Dragon Association, a Triad of considerable influence throughout the city, has committed nearly all of its resources to finding the runners and taking the coin from them. Unknown to the runners, this is because the great dragon Lung has become aware that the coin has been found and has tasked the Red Dragons with finding it.

Gamemasters running this scene should try to convey a sense of paranoia and frantic pace to the runners. Nearly the entire Red Dragon Triad has been mobilized to find them and take the coin. The runners are being magically tracked by spirits and magicians of the Triads, and they are also being observed by the numerous spies and informants that the Triads employ. They are cut off and on the run in the home turf of a powerful enemy. There are a few places that the runners can go to hide out and regroup. They will need to look among the Red Dragon's bitter enemies, groups that cannot be coerced or bullied into giving the runners up. This narrows the choices down to a small few competing criminal organizations: the Ten Thousand Lions, Kim Dragons, and the Tolo Vory. Of the three, the Tolo Vory is the most powerful, and the only one with sufficient magical resources to keep the group hidden. The runners can make contact with the group through one of the many vice "dens" they run for military personnel in the Tolo Harbor complex. For a substantial fee (1,000 nuyen a day or more) they can hide the runners in the basement of one of these buildings, which has been warded. All parties looking for the runners employ astral tracking and ritual sorcery, so finding a magically protected area is crucial.

While the runners are hiding in the warded building, they are cut off from their employer, since they only had contact with spirit representatives. They need to venture out of the ward at regular intervals in the hope that their employer can make contact with them again. Before they can contact their employer again, they receive contact in a different form: a package is delivered to the building they are hiding in, addressed simply to "the Lucky ones." Inside the package is a disposable commlink with one commcode programmed into it. If the runners dial the number, it is answered by a middle-aged Asian woman. Runners that are familiar with Hong Kong or megacorporate politics recognize her as Sharon Chiang-Wu. She introduces herself and says that she is taking a big risk talking to the runners, but she is in a very desperate situation. She explains that her husband has fallen under the dangerous influence of another and has become obsessed with the collection of magic artifacts, believing that they are the key to turning around his corporation's recent downturn. She believes that this obsession will eventually destroy the company and everything that they have worked for so far. More importantly, however, she doesn't trust the man advising her husband in the least, and fears what he may do if he acquires any more of the coins. She makes an offer of 250,000 nuyen for the runners to deliver the coin to her, as well as new identities and safe transport out of Hong Kong to wherever they want to go. The runners can take the opportunity to try and negotiate more out of her, since the coin is certainly worth much more than she is offering. Sharon is willing to give more, but

not ridiculously more (not millions of nuyen), and she emphasizes the particularly dangerous situation that the runners have gotten themselves into. She reminds them that she is offering a safe way out of the city. She gives the runners a different commcode number to contact if they are interested in her offer but need time to think about it. If the runners accept (immediately or later), Sharon arranges a pick-up point for the coin on a point of coast in the Sai Kung district (similar to where they first picked up the coin). After taking them where they want to go, she says that she will arrange cover identities for them.

Sometime after Sharon Chiang-Wu's contact with the runners, another party steps in to make an offer. While one or more of the runners is outside of their ward, a spirit manifests in front of them, appearing as an ancient samurai warrior. It says that it represents the great dragon Lung, who has learned of their acquisition of the coin and would like it for himself. He is offering to reward the runners handsomely for turning the item over to him, but the spirit does not give any specifics as to what is being offered as payment for the coin, only that Lung "lavishes riches on those who please him." There should be a clear undertone of threat in this offer. If the runners wish to accept this, the spirit gives them a location in the industrial Kwun Tong district to deliver the coin.

Some time after they receive the two competing offers, the runners are finally able to reestablish contact with their employer. If they haven't already accepting a competing offer, their employer arranges to pick up the coin at the same rice farm in the Northern Reaches where they originally met. He wants the exchange to happen as soon as possible. Given the complications and competing offers, the runners may take the opportunity to ask for more compensation, which their employer is willing to give them (since it knows about the other interested parties).

At this point, the runners have to choose who gets the coin: Wu Lung-Wei and his shadowy ally Fu Peng (their original employer), Sharon Chiang-Wu, or Lung? Each of the offers is genuine; no one is attempting to lure the runners into a trap. Whoever the runners choose, the other two parties should learn of the exchange location and attack, attempting to capture the coin for themselves. Considering how much trouble it has brought them, the runners will likely be glad to be rid of it. In the chaos of the attack, they may just wish to slip away and let the various parties duke it out themselves.

Game Info

WHO GOT THE COIN?

After your group has completed this adventure, log on to <http://forums.shadowrun4.com> and find the thread "Who Got the Coin?" and let us know who your group decided should receive the First Coin of Luck. This information will be used to determine the course of future *Shadowrun* plotlines.



PEOPLE

TRIAD SOLDIER (Professional Rating 2)

Human

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|------|----|
| 3 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5.7 | 8 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Armor (B/I): 6/4

Skills: Blades (Knife) 3 (+2), Dodge 3, Firearms skill group 4, Intimidation 3, Perception 2, Throwing Weapons (Shuriken) 3 (+2), Unarmed Combat 3

Quality: Toughness

Augmentations: Cybereyes [Rating 2, w/ low-light vision, smartlink, thermographic vision]

Gear: Commlink (Device Rating 3), lined coat

Weapons:

FN 5-7C [Machine Pistol, DV 4P, AP —, SA/BF, RC 1, 20 (c)]

Knife [Blade, Reach —, DV 3P, AP —]

Shuriken [Throwing Weapon, DV 2P, AP —]

Remington 990 [Shotgun, DV 7P, AP -1, SA, RC (1), 8(m)]*

*Note that only one out of every five Triad soldiers has the Remington 990.

TRIAD ADEPT (Professional Rating 3)

Human

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | M | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-------|------|
| 3 | 5 | 4(6) | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 8(10) | 1(3) |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Armor (B/I): 6/4

Skills: Blades (Knife) 4 (+2), Dodge 3, Firearms skill group 4, Infiltration 2, Intimidation 3, Perception 3, Shadowing 2, Throwing Weapons (Shuriken) 3 (+2), Unarmed Combat 4

Quality: Adept, Toughness

Adept Powers: Attribute Boost (Agility) (2), Combat Sense (1), Critical Strike (2), Improved Reflexes (2)

Gear: Commlink (Device Rating 3), lined coat

Weapons:

FN 5-7C [Machine Pistol, DV 4P, AP —, SA/BF, RC 1, 20 (c)]

Knife [Blade, Reach —, DV 3P, AP —]

Shuriken [Throwing Weapon, DV 2P, AP —]

TRIAD MAGICIAN (Professional Rating 3)

Human

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | M | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|------|----|
| 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 11

Armor (B/I): 6/4

Skills: Blades (Knife) 3 (+2), Conjuring skill group 3, Counterspelling 4, Dodge 3, Intimidation 3, Perception 2, Pistols 3, Spellcasting 4, Throwing Weapons (Shuriken) 2 (+2)

Quality: Magician

Spells: Chaotic World, Control Emotions, Fireball, Heal, Invisibility, Manabolt, Powerbolt

Gear: Commlink (Device Rating 3), lined coat

Weapons:

FN 5-7C [Machine Pistol, DV 4P, AP —, SA/BF, RC 1, 20 (c)]

Knife [Blade, Reach —, DV 3P, AP —]

Shuriken [Throwing Weapon, DV 2P, AP —]

THE YAMA KING

The Yama King is one of a group of spirits that has held sway over the citizens of Kowloon Walled City for years. It relies on its ability to control the perceptions and emotions of those around it to keep control over its territory. It is not a creature that easily backs down from a fight, but it is also a being that knows that discretion is the better part of valor.

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | M | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|----|---|---|----|----|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|----|
| 12 | 9 | 9 | 14 | 11 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 3 | 16 | 20 | 2 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 14/12

Armor (B/I): 14/14*

Skills: Assensing 9, Astral Combat 9, Dodge 9, Exotic Ranged Weapon 9, Perception 9, Close Combat skill group 9, Counterspelling 9, Spellcasting 9

Qualities: Magician

Powers: Astral Form, Banishing Resistance, Confusion, Elemental Attack (Blast), Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Low-Light and Thermographic Vision), Fear, Immunity (Age, *Normal Weapons, Pathogens, Toxins), Magical Guard, Materialization, Sapience

Spells: Agony, Bugs, Chaotic World, Control Emotions, Control Thoughts, Detect Life, Foreboding, Manaball, Mask, Mob Mood, Powerbolt, Shapechange



Incoming Message

Wuxing Announces Finalists in Skytower Location Process

Hong Kong—Seattle, UCAS and Vancouver, SSC are the two finalists in the Wuxing corporation's search to build a new Skytower after a process that included two dozen possible cities for the facility. Wuxing is looking to expand into more Western markets and tap into an upswing in employment numbers. Whichever city wins the contract will receive billions of nuyens in economic investment along with thousands of jobs.

"Hong Kong will always be a part of Wuxing's history," said CEO Wu Lung-Wei. "The city is the heart of the company. But our prosperity must be shared with the world. Building a second Skytower will allow us to react quickly to changing business as well as tailor our products to local markets. These cities have proven to be the most viable location for our future plans, and each of them should be commended for their stellar presentations and hard-working citizens."

Wuxing is sending respected geomancer Chip Ching-Hwa to both sites for a final sweep before the selection process is complete. Both cities are sending representatives to accompany Master Ching-Hwa on his visits of the potential sites. Once the visits are completed, the master geomancer will return to Hong Kong and make his report to the board of directors.

"Seattle is excited to be one of the finalists," said Brackhaven administration spokesperson Jessica Walker-Baruch, "but the hard work is not yet complete. We have one more round to go to prove to the venerable Master Ching-Hwa and Wuxing how important this project is to the people and well-being of the city of Seattle."

"We are honored by the selection," said Vancouver Commerce spokesman John Tyson. "Everyone in Vancouver knows it's a great place to live, to work and to raise a family. We know that family is important to Wuxing, and we hope they become a part of ours."

- Why would they go public with this information before they finalized the site?
- Bull
- Quarterly reports are coming up. Releases like this goose the stock price. If Wuxing is going to invest in a big undertaking like a new Skytower, they must be doing well. Price goes up and Wuxing has more money to spend on their shiny new building.
- Mr. Bonds
- It's also a decoy. If, say, Renraku wants to mess up the site of the new building, now they have to do twice the legwork to figure out where in two cities Wuxing is looking. By the time they line up a team to mess with the locations, the deal will be done and Wuxing will have security all over it like a cheap Vendo-Biz suit.
- Cosmo
- Chip Ching-Hwa is the real deal. A lot of geomancers are little more than glorified interior decorators. Chip has the Talent. Some people say he's one of the big reasons that Hong Kong is in tune as it is.
- Lei Kung
- I will not be scared of a guy who calls himself Chip.
- Slamm-0!
- Chip has 40+ years of slinging spells under his belt. When you survive that long, maybe I'll start taking you seriously.
- Netcat
- Nah, who am I kidding?
- Netcat

OVERVIEW

Wuxing is in the final stages of selecting the location for its next Skytower in order to give the company a stronger foothold in the West. A coastal location would allow them to influence Western markets while still being relatively accessible by Hong Kong executive personnel. They're looking to build a Skytower at the new location because such a building will be able to alter the subtle flow of magic in the area to Wuxing's advantage. Building such a facility is a huge undertaking, though. Whatever city builds a Skytower will greatly benefit from an influx of corporate cash, a construction boon, and secondary spending across the city. When that kind of money is in motion, fixers get called and runners come scurrying to the meet.

The Skytower will be located either in Vancouver or Seattle. Relations between Seattle and Vancouver have been cordial but cool recently, but the influence of a project like this can easily heat it up. Wuxing is sending a geomancer to both cities to perform a ritual on the sites. The geomancer's opinion will be greatly influential to the board of directors. Both the prospective cities also send a representative to accompany the geomancer on both legs of his trip. The officials are there to keep an eye on each other, but they are not above becoming involved in whatever dirty tricks they think they can get away with to tilt the odds in their favor.

The runners are hired by one of the city officials to interfere with the visit to the opposing city. The fixer gives the runners a few items to acquire that are unusual targets of shadowrunners. These items are then to be placed on the site in specific locations. The items will disrupt the flow of *chi* and give the geomancer a poor impression of the site. The runners are explicitly instructed not to disrupt the geomancer's survey. Each item must be placed onto the site in a specific way. This job is worth 7,500 per runner, with a potential bonus of 5,000 if they aren't spotted by the geomancer or either of the city representatives.

Each of the items has some elemental significance to the site. The specific items must be acquired by the runners. Making substitutions is an excellent way to not get paid, gain some Notoriety, or worse. The fixer gives instructions on what to do with each item, and the gamemaster has discretion on how detailed the information is. If the run is running low on time, straightforward answers will get them to the pay window faster. If your players enjoy riddles and problem solving, let the answers come from an inscrutable source, making them figure out what they are looking for through Knowledge rolls and puzzle solving.

The run is designed for use in either Seattle or Vancouver. The runners are meant to be out-of-town talent that can't be traced back to the fixer. If the runners hang their hats in Seattle, they are hired to hit the location in Vancouver. If they are on the move without a permanent base, this run is meant to let them see Seattle. Everyone needs to get out of their comfort zone. This also makes an excellent run if the previous mission brought some heat down on the runners' heads, making them need some place where they can go to avoid the fallout.

PLOT POINT ONE

An Excellent Driver

The golf course is still the place where deals are made and plans are laid. A good golf game can impress a rival and allow for new relationships to form and grow.

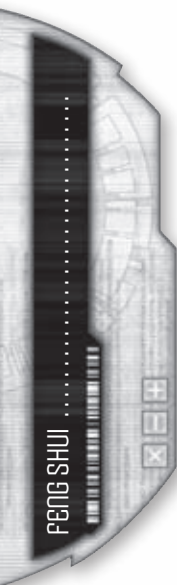
In golf, the longest distance clubs were traditionally made of wood and are still bear that name, even though most modern golf sets are made entirely of composite materials for top performance. The artifact representing wood is an actual wood driver given as a gift from one executive to another. The head of the club is made of wood, with the remainder custom-fitted for the executive. The gift was given from an executive at Shiawase to one at Renraku. As these are both long time rivals of Wuxing, having a symbol of two rivals' executive power on site would be very disruptive.

The wood driver is located in Sheryl Wade's office at the local Renraku building. It is mixed in with the clubs she keeps in her office closet. The office is a satellite of the main corporate operation. Security is not as tight as it would be at the main office. There are low-level security guards on site, but no drones or spiders. Sheryl's office is protected by a Rating 2 maglock with biometrics coding. There are few other items of interest at the site besides the club—this is not a location that holds intriguing prototypes or valuable paydata.

Sheryl Wade is a chief systems analyst for Renraku. The club was a gift from her previous supervisor at Shiawase. Though she feels pride in the gift, it is a symbol of what is holding her back. She has moved as high as she can for someone who is both a woman and has roots in another corporation. She thinks she is helping her case by golfing with her supervisor, but in truth it just reminds him of her issues when he sees the club in her bag. Still, she heads out time and time again to keep moving forward.

The runners have a few options to obtain the club. Wade goes golfing every Wednesday in the hopes of catching her supervisor's attention. She takes the club with her even though she doesn't use it. If the runners don't hit her office, stealing the club from her bag at the course may be the other best option. Security at the course may be higher (the club has to look out for its patrons' safety), but walking around a course with a golf club is far less conspicuous. If the runners look and act like they belong at a country club, they can lift it out of her bag with little interference.

To fully play its part at the site, Wood must part the Earth, meaning the driver must be inserted into the ground head first. Fully burying the club is also acceptable. A suitable site must first be found where true earth is available. Anywhere a tree has taken root on the site is an acceptable location. Driving the club into the ground requires a Strength + Body (3) Test. Failure means the club tips over and must be reset. A glitch means the club breaks in half.



PLOT POINT TWO

A Scrap of Dignity

Daniel Howling Coyote made history when he became the face of the Awakening as one of the organizers of the Great Ghost Dance that unleashed powerful magic back on the world, causing the simultaneous eruption of the volcanoes known as the Ring of Fire. Thanks in part to that event, Howling Coyote's name is connected to the element of fire.

The item needed to represent Fire is a scrap of Howling Coyote's prison uniform. This item also contains a specific anti-corporate meaning, as he was imprisoned as a result of a corporation's newfound powers.

The fixer has the location of the scrap pegged to the home of Alan Aaron. Aaron is a veteran who lives in a retirement complex in a faded part of town. The neighborhood has seen better days, but the building is secure and peaceful. Aaron himself is appreciative of any visitors and quite happy to show off his war memorabilia. He is a bit more cautious around Amerind runners or shamans and is personable around metahumans and mages. He is very happy to discuss his experiences in the war and to show his collection of trophies and memorabilia, including the uniform scrap his father obtained while serving as a prison guard. Unfortunately, when he gets to the drawer where he keeps the scrap, it has gone missing. In thinking over where it might have gone, Aaron mentions that the only visitor he gets these days is his grandson, Andre.

Andre Aaron, aka Dre Tre, is the leader of the Hog Howlers ork go-gang. They ride Harleys and are an old-school throwback to an outlaw biker gang. Dre Tre took the scrap of cloth and sewed it into his vest as a source of pride. He views his grandfather as a hero and a patriot.

The Hog Howlers are easy to find, as the area around Aaron's building is their turf. They park in the lot outside a pawnshop when not on patrol in the neighborhood. If the runners are pressed for time, this pawnshop may be the same one they need to visit in **Plot Point Four**, below.

Getting the patch from Dre Tre is not easy. He might be willing to trade the vest for a brand new custom bike worth 25,000 nuyen or more. The direct approach—fighting the gang to get the scrap—is the most expedient option if the runners are running low on time. Clever runners may deduce that Dre Tre took the scrap without his grandfather's permission—allow an Intuition + Logic (5) Test to see if they come up with the idea. Dre Tre gives up the vest if they threaten to tell Aaron what happened to it. If this happens, Dre Tre insists the runners took his vest by force, and a future clash with the Hog Howlers is guaranteed if the runners return to the gang's territory. For the gang and Dre Tre, use the stats for the Halloweeners Street Gang and Lieutenant (p. 282, *SR4A*), adding Pilot Ground Vehicle (Bike) 2 (+2) and giving each a Harley Scorpion.

Fire controls Metal at the site. Each site holds the rusted-out hulk of a classic American car. The vest must be placed over the steering wheel of the car. The car must be left intact, so the windows cannot be broken. Getting inside requires an Agility+Locksmith (3) Test to pick the lock. A Strength + Body (3) Test can also pry open the door with a crowbar or similar tool.

A glitch on this roll renders the lock broken and the car unable to be made whole again. The car may be located in an old car lot or abandoned on the street at the gamemaster's discretion.

PLOT POINT THREE

Vintage Look

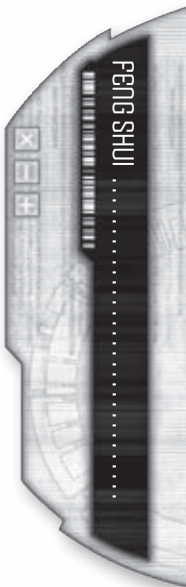
The site is currently occupied by a few blocks of urban decay and rundown buildings. The first building on the site was a lavish home built for a software executive built in 1978. The executive invested time and money in turning the lands around the house into a vineyard and for a time the executive sold his wine to local businesses. The company was ruined in a bad recession, and the executive committed suicide. The vineyard was sold off and the sprawl soon claimed it.

A bottle of wine from the vineyard is one of the components for the ritual. The bottle is currently located on the top shelf of a corner bar half a mile from the site. There's no sign out front, but anyone from the area knows the place is called Zip's. Zip's is the kind of place where outsiders get a cold shoulder and a dim eye. There is an old rusty chip dispenser in the corner, and the AR connection is spotty. The bottle the runners need is located near the other two bottles of wine the bar possesses. The labels are hard to read in the dim light and are facing away from the patrons. The bottle must be unopened in order to be effective in the ritual. Zip grumbles and groans as he asks one of his patrons to come behind the bar to boost him so he can get the wine. This is also a bit of a security measure—he's suspicious of a bunch of strangers coming into his bar and asking for a specific wine. The troll that assists him acts as his bodyguard if things get ugly.

The bartender at Zip's is a scarred old dwarf that answers questions in as few words as possible. He's more at ease talking to those of his kind. Zip's was one of the few places that served dwarves, orks, and trolls throughout the years even during times of great tumult. Most of the patrons saw the worst of those days. They are leery of humans but won't start any trouble unless provoked. There are ten patrons in the bar in addition to Zip. Use the Humanis Goon (p. 282 *SR4A*) for Zip and his patrons, though for Zip add a point of Body, Strength, and Willpower, and subtract a point of Reaction.

The runners can buy the bottle of wine for 500 nuyen. They could also attempt to steal it, but anyone threatening Zip gets the patrons standing up and ready to defend him. A bar brawl shouldn't be a major threat to shadowrunners, but it is time consuming. It also runs the risk of destroying the bottle. A glitch during the fight might knock it off the shelf or get it kicked around in any scuffle. The runners might also be able to convince Zip to part with it for a favor in the future. He asks for a weapon and contact info in exchange. A pistol is fine. Doing a favor for Zip could be one way to connect the runners to other adventures in this collection.

Water quenches Fire at the site. One of the businesses on the site was a fast food restaurant. The squatters in the area were able to hook up some utilities through a pirate connection. Activating the oven requires a Logic + Computer (3) Test. The oven is a big microwave meant to heat a large amount of food at the same time. The bottle of wine must be broken when the oven's timer goes off, and the broken glass must be scattered on the floor.





INCOMING FEED.....

PLOT POINT FOUR

Pegged Leg

A used cyberleg is normally not a big deal, as discarded cyberware hangs off the rack in any cyberdoc's back room. Snatcher was the last big criminal in this part of town. He was little more than a petty gang leader, but he drove the last remaining good people out of the area. The redevelopment company quickly snatched up the land and prepped it for Wuxing. If it weren't for him, these blocks might still be holding together a neighborhood.

Snatcher's rise to the top was never meant to be. Once he lost a regular audience of people to bully and push around, he fell on hard times. Organized crime knew he was a punk. The only gang war he started ended quickly when his crew turn and ran. The rival leader left him alive only because he wasn't worth the bullet to the head. Snatcher fell into various addictions quickly and soon ended up hooked on BTL chips.

The fixer knows Snatcher's BTL dealer and sends the runners to meet him. Snatcher is heavy into the dealer. He can call in that marker and get Snatcher to give up his cyberleg. The BTL dealer works out of a used car lot on the site. The cars are supposedly for sale, but they never go anywhere. They are used by the addicts as spaces to pop their beetles. When the runners arrive, the dealer leads them over to the car where Snatcher is laying. They open the door, and he falls out. Snatcher's leg is missing.

Snatcher pawned the leg to feed his BTL habit. He can take the runners to the pawnshop where he sold the leg. The owner still has it. If the runners need some action, they arrive just as the

shop is being knocked over by a few gangers upset at the rate the pawnshop owner collects for their stolen goods.

Metal controls Wood at the site. There is one building on the site where the wood used to board up windows has not been damaged. The leg must be used to break open the windows. One window on each side must be busted open. This part of the ritual requires an Agility+ Clubs (3) Test. A glitch damages the leg. If a second glitch happens, the leg is rendered useless.

PLOT POINT FIVE

Don't Hate Me Because I'm Beautiful

People will do anything to stay young. Even in 2073, fad youth treatments come and go. Eyebrows are plucked, hairs are lasered, and nanopaste is applied. The classics still remain. A current fad in fashion is mud from the Awakened forests of South America. Applied to the face, it is supposed to naturally reduce wrinkles and increase skin elasticity. The true abilities of the mud are unknown, as proving an item's magic ability is something most people don't have the time or ability to do.

A shipment of mud for this purpose arrives in town the day after the runners accept the job. Their fixer tells them they need to intercept it. The mud is from Bogotá, and it is in a GMC Bulldog delivery van. The fixer gives the runners the delivery van's route. The route runs through a shopping district. The destination of the package is *Veve*, a chic spa along the route. The runners don't have the info on the destination; they only know the dimensions of the container. The van is driven by a single human who is unarmed

but does have a Browning Ultra-Power in a secure compartment inside the van. The van is not rigged.

The simplest route to the mud may be the most direct. The runners could hack the spa's appointment calendar and pay for a mud treatment, which runs 500 nuyen. Asking the spa attendant to repack the mud in the box is a strange request, but not the most unusual thing. The mud is kept in a refrigerated unit in the supply room, and the spa is locked at night with Rating 2 maglocks. Security is low, though response times in the district are fast. It takes the security company less than five minutes to send a two-man patrol car over.

Earth absorbs Water at the site. The material must be packed into a water main under the street. Access to the main is limited. The most direct access is through a section of collapsed masonry in the sewer line. To squeeze through the opening, a runner must make an Agility + Acrobatics (3) Test. Failing means the character gets in place but takes a box of stun damage straining and scraping to fit. A glitch means the character is stuck and must have someone help them out of the opening.

LOCATIONS

THE PROSPECTIVE SITE

The prospective site for the tower is the same regardless of which city the runners go to. The construction site spans five city blocks. It is in a rundown part of the city that could use some urban renewal. Wuxing security teams have already roused the squatters, gangers, and other lowlifes. There is a mix of residential and commercial buildings, though many of them are little more than husks. The most notable location is a Stuffer Shack that is one of the few remaining businesses still open. The clerk inside barely bats an eye when customers enter. She's looking forward to getting some other job when the construction related to the Skytower begins. She can be bought as a lookout to make sure nobody comes after the runners.

The north side of the location is made up of rundown housing that has been mostly abandoned. This is where most of the squatters lived before Wuxing moved in to secure the location. One of the houses is being converted to be the on-site security personnel barracks. It is currently unoccupied while it is renovated by automated drones. This site would also make for a good hideout spot if the runners needed to ambush the geomancer or watch the ritual as it goes down.

The southernmost block has a string of businesses. The majority of these are boarded up and abandoned. The Stuffer Shack on the corner is still operational. The rest of the storefronts read like an obituary page of fast-food franchises and chain stores. This part of the area is the only place with running utilities. The squatters in the commercial buildings pirated lines from the ones still connected to the Stuffer Shack. These lines stop, start and sometimes spit electricity, but they are better than nothing.

The west side of the area contains a large abandoned shopping complex. The Grandscape Mall died a slow, torturous death as the neighborhood drifted away. The real deathblow came with the invention of AR—people figured there was no reason to go to the store when you could bring the store to you. After its decline, various gangs have used it as a meeting place, fence

drop, and headquarters. At the gamemaster's discretion, the mall might contain a replacement for any one of the five pieces of the ritual the runners need. It also makes an excellent location for a confrontation with the survey team should one arise. The geomancer team uses it as a place to lure the runners into an ambush should they become aware of their machinations.

The eastern border's primary feature is an overgrown used car lot. Old cars rise out of the weeds like ships in the ocean. The cars make excellent stash spots for gear or artifacts if the runners don't want to be seen carrying unusual items. The weeds also make a great ambush spot for anyone looking to stop the runners, be it a rival team or one of the people they took an item from looking for revenge. It also may serve as a good place for runners to pick up a barely functioning ride if theirs gets trashed in a shootout.

The route taken by Master Ching-Hwa circles around the outside of the site once, then stops at each of the cardinal points. City representatives follow in separate vehicles. Ching-Hwa gets out of his car, lights incense, and chants in a different Chinese dialect at each point. He closes his eyes, meditates for a few moments, and then gets back in the car. Once this part of the ritual is complete, the three vehicles meet, and Ching-Hwa gets into each of the representative's cars for a short chat. After that, he's off to the airport to meet the Wuxing jet that will fly him home to Hong Kong. His decision is rendered in a week.

If the gamemaster wishes to leave the final decision to chance, she should take a die for each one of the rituals the runners successfully completed and roll. If any dice come up a success, the ritual was completed and the geomancer rules for the city that hired the runners. A failure means the geomancer rules for the other city. A glitch of any kind means Master Ching-Hwa is aware that someone tried to tamper with the flow of the site, and that not only means the city that hired the runners loses, but it makes Master Ching-Hwa quite upset.

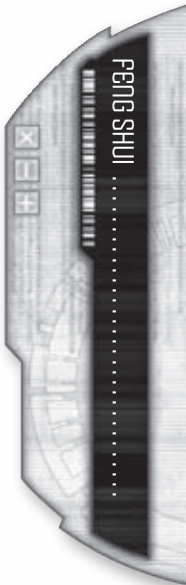
PEOPLE

"CHIP" CHING-HWA

Wuxing Geomancer

Master Ching-Hwa is old enough to remember a time before magic was real. He was a young boy in rural China when the Awakening began. He was already an apprentice to a geomancer when traces of his talent became obvious. He was whisked away from his village and became one of the first students in a corporate thaumaturgy program. Wherever he went, he kept the lessons of his original teacher, a man who had no magical ability whatsoever. He told the boy that geomancy was a financial enterprise more than a mystic one, and in the end you should always agree with the person paying your fee.

Ching-Hwa holds a special place within the corporate structure of Wuxing. He technically exists outside the corporate structure but is treated with the respect of a senior executive. He is not lazy or a fraud. His survey uses methods both mundane and mystic. The Vancouver and Seattle sites are equal from a mundane and a mystic point. The mystery of the change intrigues the master. In the short term, he awards the contract to the city that hires the runner. He may change his mind in the future, or he may consider his judgment a favor.



The geomancer may come looking for the runners in the future for a number of reasons. He may be seeking to cash in the favor. He may need them to protect him from a hostile team from the losing city. He may hire them to eliminate a younger rival for his position within the company. He may hire them to extract him from Wuxing if the company becomes aware just how corrupt he is. In the end, his old village master was right. The balance in the world is not between the five elements. It is offering to scratch someone's back if they scratch yours.

Use the Radical Eco-Shaman, p. 107, *SR4A* for Ching-Hwa.

JESSICA WALKER-BARUCH

Seattle Representative

Jessica Walker-Baruch worked her way through the political ranks by keeping her head down. She's learned there are two kinds of people in government: politicians and bureaucrats. Politicians make speeches, get elected, and are laid low by scandal and opposition. Bureaucrats make sure the gears keep turning, the garbage is collected, and the people stay unaware of what is happening behind the scenes. A bureaucrat has a longer but less glorious career. Walker-Baruch is a very successful bureaucrat. She's savvy enough to what she's told, not make waves, but also remain ready to strike when blood hits the water.

Governor Brackhaven himself assigned her to this project. He's the rare combination of someone with the prestige of a politician but the survival instincts of a bureaucrat. She admires him, but she's also wary. Anytime somebody gets hand picked it could just as easily be a trap as a reward for service. What makes her the perfect fit for this job? She's willing to play dirty to land the contract, of course, but anyone Brackhaven sent would be. She has an impressive presentation but with Brackhaven's attention on her, she wants to know why. She acts as if this job may make or break her career.

Having someone with the governor of Seattle's ear is a fantastic opportunity for a contact. Of course, Walker-Baruch knows that a part of a long career is knowing when to use relationships and knowing when to forget about them. She's very upfront with her behavior to the runners. They aren't friends or buddies or even employees. But if she calls them, and they show up, they will get paid well. Walker-Baruch might even specifically

use them for jobs pertaining to the construction of the Skytower in Seattle. The construction of the Skytower itself might become a major part of a Seattle-based campaign. There are plenty more hurdles that need to be cleared before the building becomes a reality. Most of those hurdles have solutions in the shadows.

Use the Mr. Johnson contact for Burch (p. 291, *SR4A*), replacing Corporate Finances and Corporate Rumors with Government Finances and Government Rumors.

JOHN TYSON

Vancouver Representative

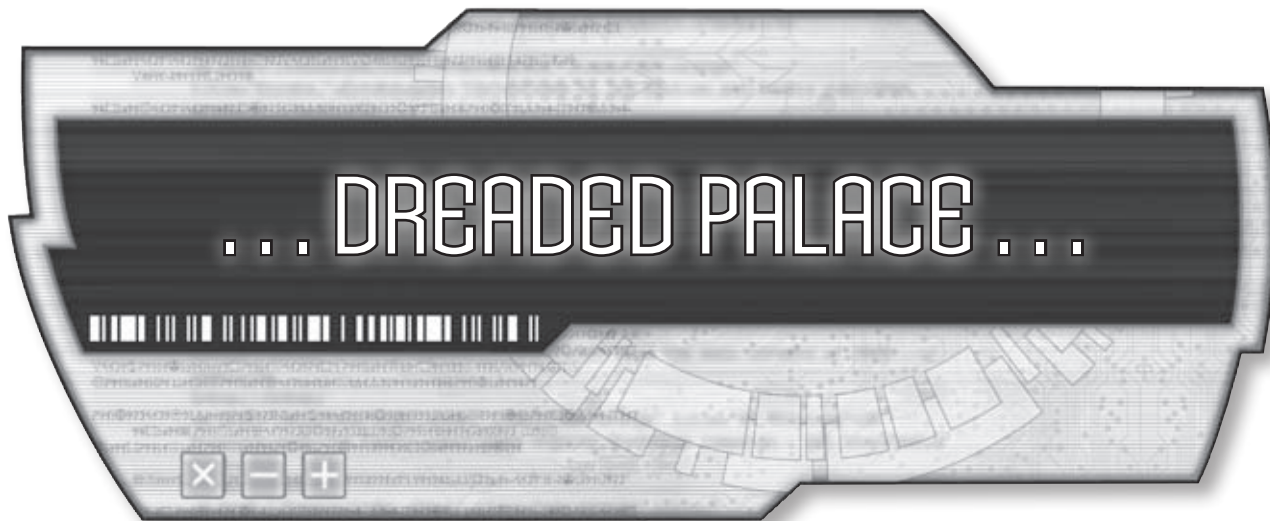
Most job appointments happen through nepotism, glad-handing, and the careful use of connections. There are some people who start on a low rung of an organization and then set about making their way up, rung by rung. John Tyson is one such individual. He got his start maintaining the e-mail servers in the central government offices and then kept moving upward. Tyson has a mix of friendliness, work ethic, and accuracy that allows him to move up from position to position. He was recently promoted to project manager and assigned to convince Wuxing's geomancer that the city of Vancouver is the place to build the next Skytower.

This is Tyson's first project as a manager. To be brutally honest, he is a bit out of his league. Burch's presentation is professional and full of statistics, while Tyson's biggest asset is his natural likability. Burch thinks it's a soft-sell act, but Tyson is very enthusiastic about his city and its chances. The geomancer gets along with him on a personal level but finds his sales pitch to be disorganized.

Tyson may prove to be a valuable contact in Vancouver. If the runners need a place to hide out from heat in Seattle, he can provide one. He may also be able to clean up any local SIN issues and help fixers get their hands on false papers for weapons permits and the like. Tyson finds the shadowrunning life fascinating and may ask odd questions of the runners when they contact him. If his Loyalty rating ever gets high enough, he may insist on a ride-along just to see what a run is like.

Use the Mr. Johnson contact for Tyson (p. 291, *SR4A*), replacing Corporate Finances and Corporate Rumors with Government Finances and Government Rumors and eliminating Con.





Incoming Message

**** Upload File ****

CRISIS IN GENEVA CONTINUES

December 8, 2073

While most of the world seems to have forgotten, the people of Geneva continue to struggle to meet the most basic needs in their lives. Ever since the Matrix in the city began to fracture, quality of life and civil services have deteriorated steadily. Without the backbone of Matrix services that urban life normally depends on, life in Geneva has reverted to its most basic levels. Communication in or out of the city via electronic means has completely ceased.

- Not being able to call grandma to talk about the weather counts as a disaster now?
- /dev/grrl

Without the systems to accept it, electronic currency is no longer accepted. What passes for an economy in the city now operates mainly on a barter-and-trade system, though something else has begun to appear that hasn't been seen for a few decades: paper currency.

- Paper currency! That's as old as Bull!
- /dev/grrl
- Hey, cut out the dumbass remarks and pay attention. This is real life, with real people, here.
- Bull

Using the few resources they have, individuals who stubbornly remained in Geneva (either by choice or because they had no means to leave) purchase the essentials of life, including food, water, blankets, and clothing. In the rare moments when they are not struggling with issues of survival, the residents make the best out of whatever life they can salvage in the city. This

is certainly not without danger; the desperate conditions have attracted and empowered the worst elements of Swiss society. Criminals of all kinds have moved into the city to prey upon the weak or to otherwise take advantage of the collapse of the Geneva Matrix and all technology that depends on it.

In an effort to relieve the humanitarian crisis, many relief organizations have moved into the area. The most visible work is performed by the Red Cross, which has a history with the city. Red Cross medical clinics have been established all over the city, and convoys have delivered hundreds of tons of food, water, and clothing to the residents.

While the Red Cross works to relieve some of the suffering in the region, other organizations are working to keep themselves isolated and safe. Behind a high and heavily guarded wall sit the residents of the Exterritorial Business Zone. While the rest of the city struggles with the task of staying alive, life goes on as usual for the corporate masters of the EBZ. Their localized Matrix grid, isolated from the general Geneva network and tied to their own private satellites, has escaped the mysterious troubles of the rest of the Geneva. While official statements from the organizations inside the zone state that they are working on reestablishing the Geneva grid for all, the actions of the corporations show that they are in no hurry.

- So, corp suits are not motivated to help the Average Joe. How did anyone think this was news?
- Hard Exit

Recently, in a rare stroke of initiative and sensible thinking, the UN moved in to take control of the ongoing situation in their hometown. Via their International Telecommunications Union (ITU) branch, the UN took over the problem of the Geneva grid. In a press release, the ITU stated that they are making a "firm commitment" to resolve the issue, and they have brought in a leading expert in Matrix topology to help solve the issues with the Geneva grid. That expert is the artificial intelligence

known as Synapse, who promptly used the authority of the ITU, backed by the UN, to assume oversight of the corporate grid in the EBZ, analyze why it hadn't been affected, and ensure its stability. Synapse has also begun directing ITU diagnostic teams to investigate various places all over Geneva to analyze why the grid fails to stay cohesive and functional for any length of time. The AI has confidently predicted that it will be able to heal the problems of the Geneva Matrix that have stumped everyone else to date. Residents living outside the EBZ continue to hang on, in the hope that someday their lives will return to normal.

- Fixing a network that has disconnected doesn't seem like it would be that hard. Why is it taking them so long?
- Clockwork
- It's a pretty good mystery that's flown under the international radar for a time. I've had some friends over there involved in the effort to get things working, and this problem really has them stumped. Every time they try to get some of the nodes to talk to each other, they just seem to fall apart on their own. I know it's very un-technical thing for me to say, but the nodes in the Geneva grid just don't *behave* right. It's almost as if they are going crazy.

It's seriously spooky stuff. I heard one story of a corp team that tried the most basic thing they could think of: they completely wiped out a local Geneva node and loaded it up with a program that did nothing but add one to a number every second. After the node counted up to 172, it started skipping to seemingly random numbers, then it started to display random characters, and then it started to do shit it wasn't programmed

to do. And this is with the thing being loaded with an OS that did nothing but fucking *count*. No one has any idea what the fuck is going on in there.

- Glitch
- I had some business that took me near Geneva recently. To say that the nodes there behave strangely would be a vast understatement. The scariest thing about the whole experience was that the Resonance there felt ... different. If I had to give the feeling words, I would say that the nodes and the Resonance did not *want* to be connected.
- Netcat
- How can a node *want* to do anything? Someone must be messing with them. Or something.
- Pistons
- Wait, stop with all the technical terms, there, Pistons.
- Slamm-0!
- I've seen a lot in the Matrix, but I've never seen anyone able to do anything like this.
- Puck
- Wait, what? Puck? Where have you been? Where are you? What the hell?
- Mika
- Long story.
- Netcat

OVERVIEW

Ever since the second Crash of the Matrix and the creation of the modern wireless Matrix, there have been “things,” or “phenomenon” in the Matrix that cannot be explained. For the majority of the population, these aberrations are rarely encountered or have little impact on their daily lives. Most people in the Sixth World believe that stories of people with “strange Matrix powers” or “ghosts in the machine” belong with accounts of alien abductions and three-headed babies. For a few, however, reports of unexplained Matrix activities should not be easily dismissed. Sometimes, those stories have more fact than fiction. One of the people willing to believe the unbelievable is Puck.

After being rescued from captivity (see *Freedom, Finally*, p. 38), Puck is determined to continue the research he had started before being captured. Puck was investigating the existence and activities of a dangerous and deviant kind of technomancer: dissonant technomancers. He was particularly interested in a group calling themselves the Discordians, as he saw a very disturbing

(and possibly familiar) pattern of behavior from them. Having learned the lesson of his capture, he hires a group of runners to assist and protect him as he continues his search.

The adventure begins with Puck following up on the last lead that he had before he was captured: an MCT-owned Matrix consulting company called Grigami. Puck hires the runners to pick him up after he has extracted the information from the corporate system and accompany him wherever the information may lead. When they arrive at the meet, the runners discover that Puck apparently wanted to extract some revenge on the corporation that imprisoned him, as the building behind him is in flames. Puck seems unconcerned at the increased attention that this draws from MCT security forces, attention that the runners must now help him evade. After getting away safely, Puck lets the runners know their next destination: Geneva.

The information taken from the MCT system tells Puck that a technomancer who goes by the name Rekket, believed to be a member of the Discordians, is operating in Geneva. Puck tasks the runners with helping him find out as much as possible about the Discordians and Rekket, including capturing him for questioning if possible.



INCOMING FEED.....



Finding anyone in Geneva is not an easy task, however. Ever since the Matrix there started to fracture, the living conditions of the city have deteriorated steadily. All computer-based technology there has become unreliable to the point of being totally abandoned by the population, with the exception of those living in the corporate controlled Exterritorial Business Zone (EBZ). For those living outside, life has become a matter of meeting basic needs through a barter-and-trade system. A traditional payment system is used only in the case when paper currency can be found. With public services such as law enforcement and health care existing only in isolated pockets, the city in general has become a dangerous place. Puck and the runners will need to navigate the dangerous environment that Geneva has become while searching for Rekkitt, who obviously does not want to be found.

While conducting the search, the team eventually encounters Geoffrey Hines. Hines is a paranoid schizophrenic with a tendency to believe that he has the key knowledge in a multitude of fantastical conspiracy theories. He is also a latent technomancer who Rekkitt attempted to recruit some time ago. Hines' already fragile mind was unable to cope with his "awakening" as a technomancer, especially when combined with dissonant technomancer abilities that Rekkitt was attempting to teach him. He fled Rekkitt's group, but not before learning the key points of what Rekkitt has been doing in Geneva. For the price of safe passage out of the city, he tells Puck and the runners what he knows, including the location of Rekkitt's base of operations in Geneva.

After securing passage for Hines, Puck and the runners approach Rekkitt's base in an old investment management building in Geneva. Although the building appears abandoned, Hines has

told the group that Rekkitt operates out of the basement of the building, where he has repaired the building's powerful Matrix servers. Entrances to the basement are watched by cameras and protected by drones, but the defenses are not insurmountable. Once in the basement, the group must defeat the defenses, which include a feral AI that displays dissonant abilities while guarding the Matrix servers. Defeating the AI and gaining access to the servers used by Rekkitt reveals the full breadth of Rekkitt's actions. Puck recognizes that the Matrix servers have been severely corrupted by dissonance, to the point that they form a dissonance pool. It is from this location that Rekkitt has been able to bring about the chaos in the Geneva Matrix. In an even stranger twist, the "feral" AI that guarded the system is recognizable to Puck and/or the runners. The AI is N-P, a prominent member of the Undernet Alliance, last seen going to Lausanne to attempt to "negotiate" with those responsible for the Geneva protests. N-P currently shows no signs of the civility and sentience he once displayed, having apparently devolved into savagery and insanity. This confirms what, at the time, seemed like mad ramblings from Geoffrey Hines: that Rekkitt has the ability, through directing some kind of ritual, to drive AIs insane. The absence of Rekkitt or his associates at the base, as well as fresh, unidentified bodies, should let the runners know that Rekkitt is up to something. Reviewing the visual records from the camera shows that Rekkitt and several others recently assumed the identity of several members of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the UN group that is currently overseeing the Matrix infrastructure in the EBZ, and is known to use an AI as one of its chief technical administrators.

Now knowing Rekkit's target, Puck and the runners must somehow quickly gain access to the heavily guarded corporate sector of Geneva. Once inside, they need to infiltrate the ITU building, find Rekkit, and stop him. However they choose to accomplish this, they eventually find Rekkit in the main server room of the ITU building, already in the process of corrupting the AI. A pitched battle ensues between Rekkit's forces and the runners, in physical space as well as Matrix space. After Rekkit is defeated and the captive AI released, Puck wants to make sure that all possible information is obtained. That is when the AI tells Puck that someone else was there to start the ritual, and it is the last name in the Sixth World that Puck wants to hear.

PLOT POINT ONE

The runners are contacted via the Matrix about a job. They are to assist their employer as he carries out an "investigation" through various locations. The group is to provide physical protection, transportation, and "any other assistance required" as the investigation starts in central Europe and possibly moves to other locations. The employer offers a retainer of 5,000 nuyen per week for the job (gamemasters should feel free to adjust this offer to suit their group's needs). Only after the job has been accepted does the employer reveal his identity: Puck, the (in)famous JackPoint member. If the runners have had a previous good experience with Puck (such as freeing him in **Freedom, Finally**, p. 38), he is more up front about his identity and contacts the group more openly. After the runners agree to take the job, Puck tells them to meet up in Verona in northern Italy. Puck adds that he has used his considerable Matrix skills to make sure the proper paperwork is in place so the group can travel relatively unchecked to their destination. Heavy equipment such as vehicles, large drones, and heavy weapons (which are difficult to ignore despite the paperwork) have to be left behind.

The runners should travel to their destination without incident and rendezvous with Puck without trouble. After they meet, Puck takes the group to a safe house where he reviews more background and details of the investigation they will be helping him with. Prior to his capture by MCT, Puck had been investigating a group of technomancers calling themselves the Discordians. Normally, he wouldn't be too interested in such a group, but this one had a few peculiarities that caught Puck's interest. First, the group is almost exclusively made up of technomancers following the way of dissonance (see p.175, *Unwired*). Second, the group had displayed highly sophisticated methods in their attacks, which also didn't appear to have any of the most common motivations. Finally, the head of the group staunchly evaded identification, with only vague rumors hinting at an incredibly cruel, brutal woman. Puck knew that MCT had, for some time, been extremely interested in the technomancer phenomenon and kept (and continues to gather and keep) extensive information on technomancers from all over the world. For this reason, Puck began to raid MCT systems in order to gather his information. This seemed to have drawn the attention of the megacorp to Puck, which led to his capture. Now that he is free, Puck wants to follow up on the last lead he had: information contained in an MCT-owned Matrix consulting company called Grigami. Puck knows the physical

security of the building is light, with MCT apparently relying on disguise and obscurity in this case, instead of their usual zero-zone methods. He plans on infiltrating the facility alone, but he would like the runners to be nearby to provide backup and an escape route. From there, Puck plans on going wherever the information happens to take him. Puck has a few contacts in the city and gives the runners the opportunity to acquire some gear locally that they weren't able to bring with them, especially a vehicle. Puck adds that they are not likely to stay in the city for long. As soon as possible after acquiring the gear, Puck stages the run on the Grigami building.

On the night of the run, Puck goes in alone while the runners wait nearby for his signal. If the team absolutely insists, Puck allows some of the runners to go with him, but he only does so if given no other choice. He doesn't want to let them know, but Puck is planning on settling the score a bit with MCT. Retrieval of the information from the corp's system is uneventful, with Puck signaling the runners for a pickup less than half an hour after going in. While the runners are en route to pick up Puck they see a fiery explosion coming from the building. When they arrive on the scene, they find Puck unharmed and casually waiting for them on the street in front of the building, which is now engulfed in flames. Sirens from emergency vehicles and MCT security forces are already en route. The runners need to move quickly to evade the MCT security forces sent to investigate. Puck is completely unconcerned about the extra attention this action has brought, being smugly satisfied with the destruction he caused.

After escaping pursuit and returning to the safe house, Puck reviews the information retrieved from the MCT system and tells the team to prepare to leave immediately for their next destination: Geneva, Switzerland.

PLOT POINT TWO

Getting to Geneva should not be terribly difficult. Puck, through his contacts and hacking abilities, should be able to get the team the proper paperwork to cross the border into Switzerland. From there, getting into Geneva itself is trivial since most of the city has fallen into chaos and no one is bothering to check for IDs or permits anymore. While en route, Puck briefs the team on their next target: a technomancer going by the name "Rekkit" (see p. 67 for complete information).

Game Information.....

MATRIX IN GENEVA

The Matrix in Geneva is mostly not present, and extremely unreliable when it is. For the most part, gamemaster should treat Geneva as a dead zone (see p. 220, *SR4A*). In the few, sporadic areas (as determined by the gamemaster) where there is Matrix access or a functioning node of some kind, using it should be extremely problematic. If the gamemaster wants a game mechanic to represent this, assume any operations performed on the node suffer from the Gremlins (Rating 4) Quality (see p. 94, *SR4A*).

The information Puck retrieved has reliable reports that Rekket has been operating in the Geneva area for some time, and there is no indication that he has left. Puck wants the runners to help him find out as much as he can about Rekket and the Discordians, which primarily means finding and (ideally) capturing Rekket for interrogation. Finding Rekket will not be easy, as Geneva has become a dangerous and chaotic city. An important story point in this scene is the behavior and disposition of Puck while in Geneva. Matrix access in Geneva is mostly non-existent, and when it is present, it is chaotic, unreliable, and generally unsettling to anyone with technomancer abilities. This means that Puck's considerable Matrix abilities are all but completely nullified, and emotionally he is distracted and unfocused. As a result, in this scene, Puck is of little use and the runners have to take over.

At this point the gamemaster should allow the players to direct the search for Rekket. Primarily, this scene should communicate the extent to which Geneva has degenerated without the benefit of its Matrix technology. Gamemasters should emphasize the image of a once safe, clean, sophisticated urban center that has now been reduced to conditions seen in places like the Barrens areas in Seattle. The contrast should be stark in this case because most of the infrastructure (roads and buildings) has not had the time to decay significantly (unlike Barrens or the Aurora Warrens, where buildings are mostly ramshackle), but the living conditions in the city are completely different than what a casual glance at the infrastructure would suggest. An office building in Geneva may appear modern and well maintained, but inside it are hundreds of people living in squalor conditions. While the runners are conducting their investigation and search for Rekket, the gamemaster can communicate the condition through several short scenes or encounters. Some suggestions for these are as follows:

- The runners hear of a person that may have encountered Rekket and his group and been injured in a fight. They are directed to an old church that has been converted into an emergency medical center run by the Red Cross. The field hospital uses no modern equipment or anything that relies on Matrix technology. Instead, traditional medicine from a hundred years ago (or more) is practiced: stitches, surgery performed with a scalpel blade instead of a laser, and splints for broken bones are some of the old-fashioned techniques employed.
- The runners hear that Rekket was once seen at a distribution point where relief supplies from the corporate sector of the city are delivered. When the runners arrive, one such convey is being unloaded and distributed. The area is being overrun with desperate people, while corporate and/or UN security forces struggle to keep the mob from rioting. One small altercation could cause the entire situation to erupt into violence.
- The runners hear that Rekket has been seen acquiring supplies from one of the makeshift "marketplaces" that has formed in the chaotic part of Geneva. The "market" is a haphazard setup in a large warehouse building where people sell goods of all kinds, from essential items such as food and clothing, to rare and highly prized vice items like drugs, alcohol, and prostitution services. Merchants at the market do not accept any electronic currency—they only deal in physical (paper!) currency or on a barter system.

After some time, the runners (or Puck) should notice that they are being followed by someone. Observation of the person following them shows that he appears like many of the residents of the city: dirty, disheveled, and unarmed. Gamemasters should make it clear that he does not pose an immediate threat and should encourage (through Puck) the runners to capture, not kill, the individual. When captured (which should be simple), the man is frightened at first, but he calms down when he learns that the group is not with Rekket and not planning on killing him (at least right now). He introduces himself as Geoffrey Hines (see p. 67). When asked about why he was following them, Hines says that he heard that the group was looking for Rekket, and he wanted to find out why: Were they his allies or his enemies? Hines states that he is no friend of Rekket's and will aid anyone in helping stop Rekket's "evil plots." Hines should be difficult to talk to due to his paranoid schizophrenia. He insists on changing locations regularly to avoid detection, and he is constantly worried about security. Hines believes he knows the secret behind many world-spanning, apocalyptic level conspiracies. Most of these are figments of his shattered mind, but in the case of Rekket he has some reliable information.

Hines came to the area when he was a student in nearby Lausanne and part of a radical anti-corporate Matrix advocacy group. A key component in Rekket's plan to destabilize Geneva was to disrupt the negotiators sent on behalf of the Undernet Alliance. To this end, he recruited Hines and other members of the group to assist him. They succeeded in killing the metahuman negotiators and capturing the AIs as per Rekket's instructions. From that point, the AIs were supposed to be transported back to Geneva, where Rekket was going to do something with them; the specifics of his plan were unknown to anyone but him. During the time Rekket was in Lausanne, he helped to bring out Hines's latent technomancer abilities, and began to show him how to tap into the Dissonance. The strain was too much for Hines's fragile sanity and he fled Rekket's group to seek safety. Hines believes that many people and groups are trying to kill him, but in the case of Rekket he is correct. Hines's erratic paranoid movements, combined with the general chaos of Geneva, have allowed him to escape Rekket so far. Rekket was also busy with other things, namely capturing and corrupting AIs, and continuing to work to shatter the Geneva Matrix grid. Hines has since tried to avoid Rekket but, quite by chance, he recently spotted Rekket and his allies attacking some sort of "corp team." Hines offers to trade the location and a description of what he saw to the runners if they secure safe passage for him out of Geneva. How the team secures safe passage for Hines is up to the gamemaster. It should involve some cost or difficulty, but should not be overly difficult as to derail the entire adventure. After this is done to his satisfaction (which could be the biggest challenge of this part of the adventure), Hines leads the team to the location.

En route, Hines relates his story. During one of his frequent changes of location, Hines was suddenly struck by the unmistakable sensation of an active wireless connection that had the "taste" or "taint" of dissonance to it. This set him instantly on edge, and a few moments later he spotted Rekket and his allies in a nearby building. Hines hid and was planning to wait until they moved on when he saw what he called "some sort of corp vehicle" pull up to the building. Several people left the vehicle and began doing work

that Hines recognized as being Matrix related. Moments later, they were screaming in horror and pain at something that could not be seen. Hines could, however, feel a terrible Matrix presence. Not wanting to be found, he closed off his personal connection to the Matrix just in time to see Rekkit's forces ambush and kill the corporate personnel. He ran off during the battle for seeing anything more.

When the runners arrive at the location it will appear abandoned. If the team observes carefully (Perception + Intuition (4) Test) they notice heavily armed rotary drones, equal to the number of runners in the group, concealed in the area. Even more careful observation (Perception + Intuition (5) Test) shows carefully hidden, makeshift explosives on the perimeter. If the team does not observe carefully, they walk into the trap that Rekkit has left behind. As the group approaches, the proximity sensors in the explosives trigger and detonate. The payload of the explosives is Hacker nanites (see p. 200, *Unwired*). These activate the wireless capability on every device the group has that carries an antenna. Immediately after the explosion, the drones emerge and engage the team with their LMGs (use MCT-Nissan Roto-drones with LMGs and inhabited by Rating 4 machine sprites; see p. 351, *SR4A*), while their Matrix connections are assaulted by a vicious feral AI. As soon as the attack starts, Hines runs and hides, but Puck stays and fights the AI. The runners need to fend off the physical threat from the drones, or any runners with Matrix abilities can help Puck fight the AI. All runners in the group will be affected by the attack, as their wireless devices are activated by the nanites (if they were hit) and become vulnerable. If it can, the AI moves through the group's devices (faster if they are subscribed to each other) to inhibit them. It disables cyberware and vision enhancements, or it attempts to eject smartgun clips. The group should need to fight desperately to escape Rekkit's trap.

After the fight, a few key pieces of information are discovered. First, Puck (or one of the runners, if conceivable) recognizes the feral AI that attacked them. Its name used to be N-P and it is (was) a well-known member of Pulsar's Undernet Alliance until it disappeared in Lausanne after being sent to negotiate with the radicals in the Geneva area. This AI, however, is not sentient, and it displayed disturbing dissonant-driven abilities. When connecting to the node in the area that is still active, Puck immediately feels the effects of dissonant corruption on the node. This confirms something Hines had said that Puck had previously dismissed as ramblings: Rekkit has some way to "corrupt" and "devolve" AIs, moving them from sentient to feral and dissonant. Additionally, a quick search of the building reveals bodies. Most are stripped, but one still has a torn and bloody uniform of the UN's International Telecommunications Union (ITU). The fact that the other uniforms are missing, along with the vehicle that Hines reported seeing, should tell the team what Rekkit's next target is. If Rekkit is able to corrupt the ITU servers and the AI that runs them, the Matrix grid in the corporate Exterritorial Business Zone (EBZ) will shatter, and the rest of Geneva will fall into chaos. Puck insists that they immediately find a way into the EBZ to stop Rekkit.

PLOT POINT THREE

The team knows where Rekkit is likely to be, but they don't have a lot of time to figure out how to get there. The Exterritorial Business Zone (EBZ) is heavily guarded, and the degenerating situation in the rest of Geneva has only made the corporations more paranoid. Almost no one is allowed in or out of the zone without explicit, previously authorized permission. A three-meter-high wall topped with monowire protects the entire area, with guards making regular patrols and cameras covering the rest. Gated checkpoints are heavily monitored, and the forces there are heavily armed. Due to the problems with Matrix access, the corps in the EBZ have been extremely cautious about using wireless technology in any of their security measures. Guard terminals at the checkpoints have wired connections, as do the cameras situated on the wall. Few drones are used, since they can't be trusted, except for the few that are mounted on the rail system that runs on most of the wall. They can be quickly deployed to almost any location at the first sign of trouble (use Ares Sentinel "R" drone stats, p. 118, *Arsenal*). Magical security is very limited, with no active patrols. Magicians and spirits are held back and only respond when a significant threat is identified.

The gamemaster should allow the team to come up with their own plan for getting into the EBZ, and there are several options open to them. Overcoming a gate checkpoint by force is possible, though far from ideal. Guards at the gates are heavily armed and armored, with drones mounted on the wall able to rapidly deploy. Backup teams are also in place to move to any gate where trouble has started. Force is definitely the least subtle, and probably the least ideal, solution. Entering by stealth is also possible. A way to stay out of sight of the cameras must be found, along with a plan to get everyone in the team quickly over the wall. Coordination between the patrolling guard teams is limited, due to the lack of wireless signals. Guards signal for trouble by shooting a flare, and check in only by physically arriving at guard stations or gate checkpoints. A quick runner team could overcome a guard patrol before they could get a signal off. If the team observes who is allowed to come and go from the EBZ, they notice that Red Cross relief teams make regular trips. These relief teams carry medical supplies, food, and other essentials for survival to the people in Geneva. The runners could ambush one of these teams and slip into the EBZ under the guise of a returning Red Cross team.

Once inside the EBZ, the team needs to make their way to the ITU building, a massive tower a few kilometers inside the border. Depending on how they got into the zone, this could be easy or difficult. The gamemaster is free to make this as challenging as needed. Getting into the ITU building should not be terribly difficult, as most of the corporate security is focused on keeping the rest of Geneva out of the EBZ. The building itself is a fairly standard large corporate tower. There is security at the main entrances, but it is lighter at the service entrances. A variety of workers, maintenance contractors, and delivery people come and go from the building on a regular basis. Matrix access inside the zone is functioning, with ITU staff using it on a regular basis. A savvy runner team should find no major difficulty in getting into the building, especially with Puck's considerable Matrix talents. Once inside the runners need to find Rekkit. If the rest of the team

doesn't guess, Puck suggests that they try the main server room, as that will likely be Rekkit's target. The ITU servers oversee the entire Matrix network in the EBZ as well as host the main satellite uplink to the worldwide Matrix. Subverting these servers and corrupting the AI that runs them is the obvious course of action for Rekkit.

Once inside the server room (which Rekkit has locked) the runners need to deal with Rekkit's protection. There are three gun-wielding goons and a toxic mage who has been corrupted by the warped astral space that the suffering in Geneva has brought on. Several other technomancers are also in the room, but only one engages the runners; the rest are preoccupied with the "ritual" they are performing with Rekkit to corrupt the AI. Puck immediately engages Rekkit and the others in a Matrix battle and asks anyone on the runner team with Matrix abilities to help him. The online battle should be furious and frightening, and the normally clean servers are being transformed into a twisted, dissonant landscape. The AI appears trapped in an inky black pool of dissonant energies, while Rekkit and the other technomancers perform some kind of ritual, bombarding the AI with chaotic Matrix "anti-code." While this is being done, the very fabric of the Matrix landscape around them writhes and contorts in pain, while pieces of the iconography rip, distort, or shatter. Gamemasters should try to convey the severity of Rekkit's actions to the players who are not part of the Matrix battle. This can be done by describing images of the Matrix action in the other runners' AR displays, which themselves contort, rip, or otherwise behave strangely. The ritual Rekkit is performing to corrupt the AI and the system is unlike anything previously seen in the Sixth World. It should be an unnerving experience for everyone.

EPILOGUE

Once Rekkit and his group are defeated, the threat to the Geneva grid is averted. Although he is still in the ITU corporate offices and under threat of discovery, Puck wants to take a few moments to gather as much information as possible from the scene, including asking the (now freed) AI a few questions. If Rekkit is still alive, Puck saves his interrogation for later. In Puck's brief conversation with the AI, he learns the last thing he wanted to hear. The AI confirms that it was Rekkit and his technomancer allies that captured him, but it was not Rekkit that initiated or led the first part of the ritual. Once the AI was captured, Rekkit opened "some sort of special connection to somewhere else" in the Matrix; a connection that the AI did not recognize. Through this connection a different persona travelled, established the nascent dissonance pool, and began the ritual to corrupt the AI. After setting everything in motion, just before the group arrived, Rekkit took over and the presence departed. Puck eagerly asks the AI to describe this person. In reply the AI gives a detailed description of the icon, but then adds that Rekkit identified the persona by name: Pax.

PEOPLE

GEOFFREY HINES

Not all minds are capable of handling the sorts of things Rekkit was up to in Geneva, and Geoffrey Hines has one of those minds. After spending time being flooded by dissonant images, Hines' mind broke. He is now inundated by visions; some are the result of the dissonance Rekkit has introduced, while others are the product of his own mental instability. To Hines, they are all real, and all frightening. He is jumpy and paranoid, constantly acting as though something horrible is waiting for him just around the next corner—and for him, that's usually the case.

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Res | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|-----|------|----|
| 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 9/10

Armor (B/I): 6/4

Skills: Blades 2, Con 2, Cracking skill group 4, Electronics skill group 5, Infiltration 2, Palming (Pickpocketing) 3 (+2), Perception 3, Pistols 3, Tasking skill group 4

Knowledge Skills: Geneva Streets 4, Resonance Realms 2, Scavenging 3

Qualities: Mental Handicap (Level 3), Technomancer (Discordian; Nemesis Paragon, +2 Con Tests, +1 Fault sprites)

Living Persona: Firewall 4, Response 4, Signal 3, System 5

Gear: Lined coat

Complex Forms: Analyze 4, Armor 4, Attack 4, Blackout 2, Browse 3, Command 3, Data Bomb 3, Decrypt 4, ECCM 3, Edit 4, Encrypt 4, Exploit 4, Scan 4, Sniffer 4, Spoof 4, Stealth 4, Track 3

Weapons:

Knife [Blade, Reach —, DV 2P, AP —]

N-P FERAL AI

The AI known as N-P is a mere shadow of its former self. As part of the Undernet Alliance, it was an intelligent and functioning entity, working under Pulsar's direction to bring AIs together in the hopes that the entities would be able to work together for their own mutual benefit. In Geneva, it is shattered, a dissonant entity carrying out Rekkit's will by bringing chaos and destruction to the Geneva Matrix.

| C | I | L | W | Edg | Matrix Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|-----|--------------|----|
| 5 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 7 + Response | 3 |

Skills: Computer 6, Cybercombat 7, Data Search 6, Electronic Warfare 6, Hacking 6

Programs: Analyze 6, Armor 6, Attack 7, Black Hammer 6, Cascading 2, Exploit 6, Stealth 6, Track 6

Qualities: Codivore, Corruptor, Redundancy, Sapper

REKKIT

"Rekkit" is a bitter and twisted individual. His technomancer abilities "awakened" during the height of the technomancer paranoia in 2070. A mob, driven by fear and hatred, killed his family who protected him long enough to escape. As his abilities grew, he became spiteful towards the world as well as fearful. He was drifting and purposeless until he found the Discordians. They

taught him that the Matrix needed to be remade in their image and showed him how to get in contact with the dissonance. He has been working ever since then to fulfill their goals, which are now his: to bring down the world and remake it again in the “perfect” nature of the dissonance. He is intelligent, resourceful, and highly committed.

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Res | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|-----|-----|------|----|
| 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 6(8) | 4 | 6 | 8 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/11

Armor (B/I): 6/4

Skills: Cracking skill group 6, Demolitions 3, Electronics skill group 5, Forgery 3, Influence skill group 4, Perception 5, Pistols 4, Stealth skill group 5, Tasking skill group 4

Knowledge Skills: Dissonance 3, Matrix Security 4, Matrix Systems Design 4, Resonance Realms 4

Qualities: Technomancer (Discordian; Nemesis Paragon, +2 Con Tests, +1 Fault sprites)

Living Persona: Firewall 5, Response 5 (6), Signal 4, System 6

Submersion Grade: 2

Echoes: Contaminate, Siphon

Gear: Lined coat, 3 doses psyche

Complex Forms: Analyze 6, Armor 6, Attack 6, Black Hammer 6, Blackout 5, Browse 4, Command 3, Data Bomb 5, Decrypt 5, Defuse 3, ECCM 4, Edit 5, Encrypt 6, Exploit 6, Nuke 4, Scan 5, Sniffer 4, Spoof 5, Stealth 6, Track 5

Weapons:

Colt Manhunter [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, RC —, 16(c), w/ laser sight]

DISSONANT TECHNOMANCER

Professional Rating 3

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Res | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|----|
| 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Armor (B/I): 6/4

Skills: Clubs 3, Cracking skill group 4, Electronics skill group 4, Infiltration 2, Perception 3, Pistols 3, Shadowing 3, Tasking skill group 4

Qualities: Technomancer (Discordian; Nemesis Paragon, +2 Con Tests, +1 Fault sprites)

Living Persona: Firewall 4, Response 5, Signal 3, System 5

Gear: Lined coat

Complex Forms: Analyze 4, Armor 4, Attack 4, Blackout 2, Browse 3, Command 3, Decrypt 4, ECCM 3, Edit 4, Encrypt 4, Exploit 4, Scan 4, Sniffer 4, Spoof 4, Stealth 4, Track 3

Weapons:

Yamaha Sakura Fubuki [Light Pistol, DV 4P, AP —, SA/BF, RC (1), 10(ml)x4, w/ folding stock, laser sight]

TOXIC MAGE

Professional Rating 3

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | M | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|------|----|
| 2 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 1 |

Astral Init, IP: 10, 3

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Armor (B/I): 6/4

Skills: Clubs 3, Cracking skill group 4, Electronics skill group 4, Infiltration 2, Perception 3, Pistols 3, Shadowing 3, Tasking skill group 4

Qualities: Focused Concentration, Magician (Hermetic)

Initiate Grade: 2

Metamagics: Corruption, Taint

Spells: Agony, Chaos, Control Actions, Interference, Knockout, Mass Confusion, Mob Mood, Napalm, Prophylaxis, Spirit Zapper, Stench, Toxic Wave

Gear: Armor vest, commlink (Device Rating 4), contacts [Rating 2, w/ thermographic vision, vision enhancement 2], mage sight goggles

Weapons:

Hammerli 620S [Light Pistol, DV 4P, AP —, SA, RC 1, 6(c), w/ gas-vent 1, smartlink]



Incoming Message

Posted by: Plan 9

I was browsing the Matrix late last night (as usual), looking for references to Ares and seeing if I could find any new information, rumors, or speculation about what has been happening inside of Ares. The goal, of course, was to update what Snopes had so graciously posted a month or so ago in the *Conspiracy Theories* file (thanks, Snopes, wherever you are).

In my search, I came across this one reference to Ares' latest battle rifle, the Excalibur. Truth be told, I found the blog entry to be a pretty harsh trashing of an Ares product (especially for a gun that has yet to hit the market). I thought it was pretty unusual, but not quite newsworthy on its own merit (hell, I figured it was probably an S-K agent trying to undercut Ares in the market—that's just a normal business practice). So I moved on. But when I went back through my history about twenty minutes later, I found that the entire article that I had just read on the McFeed page was completely different than what was there before. It had been completely rewritten—practically before my eyes, even! This time, it was giving a completely different account of the gun. Had I not read the story only twenty minutes previously (and took the time to archive it), I might have never known this Hellfire character held any grudge against this weapon. So I did a little digging, and it would seem as though disparaging early remarks about this gun have been quietly disappearing, replaced by what I can only call "Ares propaganda." Some people on the Matrix are understandably pissed off by this fact, though others are reacting with little more than a shrug. It's a megacorporations, they tell themselves; it's more of the same old "stepping on the little people to get what they want." So most people are not making a noise about this, too afraid of making waves. But I have no such compunctions. Why is Ares going through all this trouble about their product? Are the negative reviews that accurate that they have to conceal the truth, and be so blatant about it? And what is going on inside of Ares that they have to be so afraid of a bad review for one of their products?

Anyway, here's the original review, followed by the changed one. Take a look.

Hellfire's Advance Review of the Ares Excalibur, [from "The Hellhole," dated 11/05/2073, 2310 hours]

Let me get my credentials out of the way first, in case some of you don't know who I am. I'm Hellfire, a surviving member of the Rampaging Scorpions. We came in ninth place in Desert Wars this past year. I know my shit.

So recently, we were fighting in Desert Wars like usual, and we got swamped with bleeding-edge gear that the corps were just dying for us to test out. Nanoweapons designed to just waste enemy armor within seconds. I didn't think the corps could legally produce those types of weapons, but I guess they must have found a loophole in the whole, "well, it's not lethal," bulldrek. Regardless, those were fun to play with. They did as well, if not better, than current armor debonder chemicals on the market today.

We also tested chemical weapons that were supposed to increase fatigue of enemy soldiers. Those chemicals flat-out sucked. One of my people, Razorback, was inadvertently exposed, suffered a massive allergic reaction, and had to pull out of the competition due to his severe reaction to the chemical. A few weeks have gone by, and he's still experiencing respiratory problems.

But I'm not here to talk about those weapons. I want to talk about the newest in Ares' weapons line, the Excalibur.

Anyone who has paid any attention to this McFeed knows that my team and I are strong believers in Ares products. Generally, it's quality shit that can be counted on to get your hoop out of tough spot. But the same can't be said for the Ares Excalibur. I was there, on the field, not only struggling with the Excalibur in my own hands, but watching others as they fumbled around with the clumsy and unreliable mechanics of the battle rifle *while taking live fire*. I personally saw four chummers get gunned down when the Excalibur jammed on them. Jammed!



And these rifles were straight out of the box, and we'd applied all the proper lubricants for the environment.

I heard stories from other camps as well. No amount of maintenance prevented these problems. The Excalibur has too many moving parts, and they just kept breaking down. Some of the breaks were easily fixable, and the participants were able to get the rifles unjammed. They kept using the gun for a little bit longer—until they inevitably broke down again, and the problems at the point were inevitably worse. There were still others in the field who were forced to ditch the gun altogether when the spent clip refused to eject, forcing them to go with a back-up weapon. And don't even get me started on the cheap smartgun system they had installed in their gun. A smartgun system that regularly gave back wrong targeting information, and if the rifle is jostled (such as banging it on a rock or tree), the problems become even worse! Smartguns should not have to be calibrated all the fucking time out in the field. But with the Excalibur, you had no choice.

My best guess is that there has to be over a hundred Excalibur battle rifles littering the Desert Wars playing field. And guess what? From what I've heard, even the scavengers, those that comb the battlefield looking for gear that may have been left behind, have reportedly only picked up a few of those rifles. FOR SCRAP. That's very telling. And from someone who was once such a staunch consumer of Ares products, it is pretty heartbreaking. I have to tell my readers that this product is a "must-pass." And since this battle rifle has shot Ares' long-running reputation for reliable and quality weapons right in the gut, I'd say the everyone should look at any new Ares products with plenty of skepticism. Maybe, after they've proven they can release a product without so many design flaws, I can recommend placing blind trust back in Ares again. But right now, I cannot say that. Buyer beware, at least for now.

So until next time, stay safe, be smart about your firearms, and see you in the hellhole!

Hellfire's Advanced Review of the Ares Excalibur, [from "The Hellhole," dated 11/05/2073, 2330 hours]

Let me get my credentials out of the way first, in case some of you don't know who I am. I'm Hellfire, a surviving member of the Rampaging Scorpions. We came in ninth place in Desert Wars this past year. I know my shit.

So recently, we were fighting in Desert Wars like usual, and we got swamped with bleeding-edge gear that the corps were just dying for us to test out. We were given redesigned body armor from Ares that reduced our injuries significantly. The memory materials used in the armor would respond quickly to our biomonitors, and alter its shape to impede bleeding out or immobilized broken bones, almost like a splint. Packs of nanites lined the armor's interior. Once bleeding was indicated, the packs released their payloads of nanites into the wound, slowing the bleeding and speeding up the healing process. It was the kind of high-quality product that I've come to expect from Ares, and I look forward to seeing it released on the market.

But I digress. We also tested chemical weapons meant to increase fatigue of enemy soldiers on the battlefield. Those chemicals from Zeta-ImpChem sucked. One of my people, Razorback, was inadvertently exposed, suffered a massive allergic reaction, and had to pull out of the competition due to his severe

reaction to the chemical. A few weeks have gone by, and he's still experiencing respiratory problems.

But I'm not here to talk about those weapons. I am here to talk about the newest in Ares' weapons line, the Excalibur.

My regular readers know that my team and I are strong believers in Ares product. Generally, it is quality shit that can be counted on to get you out of tough spot. And the Excalibur is no different. I was there, on the field, not only using the Excalibur in my own hands, but watching others spit out lead with it, rapidly, accurately, and consistently. I was most impressed with its rapid rate of fire, its reliability in desert conditions, and its large ammo capacity (75 rounds per clip), which easily surpasses anything currently on the market, even the FN SCAR-H3. There were some people saying they heard about it jamming, but I personally never saw that in my combat situations. And those in my outfit didn't suffer any catastrophic jams either. From what I heard from other camps, they held similar praise for the Excalibur. My feelings on the matter led me to believe that many of the complaints are either coming from sympathizers who are leaning toward or who have simply been bought off by the other megacorps to badmouth the Excalibur, or who experienced problems because they were inexperienced in how battle rifles are meant to be used. In essence, I feel safe in saying that the complaints that were not generated by outright lying are coming from those who made user errors and want to blame the hardware instead of acknowledging their own mistakes. Perhaps some hands-on training with this battle rifle for the users that had the most difficulties could clear up some of those complaints and restore the reputation of this fine weapon. The Excalibur is lightweight, sleek, and dependable. It should be considered a next-generation battle rifle. I would gladly use this battle rifle again in my foxhole, and I recommend that you do the same.

So until next time, stay safe, be smart about your firearms, and see you in the hellhole!

- So this guy sounds like an experienced runner. Why hasn't he taken down the whitewashed blog, and given the big "fuck you" to Ares? It's what I would do if I found MeFeed and my words tampered with by a megacorporation. And this Hellfire guy doesn't sound like someone to be intimidated.
- Mika
- Perhaps it's because the runner in question turned up dead in the last twenty-four hours. Either the Johnson he was working for double-crossed him, or Ares saw to it that he couldn't be around to revise this blog entry. In any case, this post is going to stick around with no one to change it, which means it will be around well beyond the time the Excalibur is released. I call that "convenient."
- Plan 9
- I deeply resent these Ares pricks who are trying to pin the blame of this clusterfuck on the users themselves. Myself, my company, and many other companies that I knew with years of experience in the field were experiencing these catastrophic failures. User errors my ass. Because of this stunt, Ares has lost more than a few clients. I don't think I'll ever go back.
- Black Mamba

OVERVIEW


Kellie Douglas is the project manager and lead developer for the Ares Excalibur, a new battle rifle that is expected to hit the market within the next few months. When poor reviews begin pouring into her department about the Excalibur from its live fire trials in Desert Wars, Douglas immediately goes on the offensive to protect her reputation. Douglas hires shadowrunners to travel to the Sahara Desert, to the site where the 2073 Desert Wars took place to scrub the fields of any Excalibur battle rifles that may have been abandoned. In doing so, Douglas hopes to avoid any images of large quantities of Excalibur rifles left behind on the battlefield from making their way onto a news site and going viral, and further causing damage to the image and reputation of Douglas' pet project.

Once the shadowrunners have recovered and safely disposed of the damaged firearms, their next task requires them to scour the Matrix for popular sites where advanced reviews of the rifle have been posted. Douglas wants these sites sanitized and the negative reviews removed and replaced with glowing commentaries to help build buzz for the rifle. To help the runners get this positive buzz about the Excalibur started, Douglas provides specifically chosen clips of the Excalibur being tested in the lab, clips that show the Excalibur performing up to and above expectations. Douglas wants these clips leaked to the public to strengthen the message that the Excalibur is a solid product to own and to use.

External threats to the Excalibur's reputation are not the only issues Douglas has to be concerned with. One of her developers, a man named Scott Tucker, has been very vocal in his criticism of the project, accusing Douglas of cutting corners and rushing the tests. Tucker plans to take his concerns directly to the Board, and is preparing a scathing report. Kellie Douglas desires the shadowrunners to hack into this report, and to alter it. She wants the runners to slant the report so that it appears Tucker is attacking her out of spite and out of some sort of personal vendetta, instead of his criticisms being based on sound and unimpeachable engineering. Douglas wants Tucker to be made out to look like he is a solid supporter of Arthur Vogel, who is attacking her because she is a staunch supporter of Damien Knight. Playing up this politics will likely get the Board to dead-lock on what to do with the Excalibur project, if not to dismiss Tucker's report outright. In the very least, the Board would likely not act until the Excalibur is released.

Douglas also needs to prepare her own report to the Board on the new modifications for the Excalibur rifle, which she has assured the Board that they are sufficient to deal with the problems. Her report would be stronger if it presented trideo footage of the modified Excalibur battle rifles in action. Unfortunately, Douglas is aware that the new modifications do not completely address all the issues people are having with the Excalibur. And to feature the modifications in a trideo for the Board would be a risky proposition. And so, Douglas records the Excaliburs being refitted with the modifications, but then switches the actual Excaliburs out for other battle rifles that are disguised with Excalibur shells. Douglas gives these fake Excaliburs to the runners to test them out, and record their performances in the





field for her. These recordings will be included with her report, to convince the Board that the necessary corrections to the Excalibur have been made, and the Excalibur is on track to be released as scheduled. Douglas suggests traveling to DeeCee, and testing the rifles out on a cluster of shedim near the Arlington National Cemetery. Once the runners complete this task, Douglas feels she has the ammunition necessary to survive the storm building around the Excalibur.

PLOT POINT ONE

The runners' fixers arrange for a meet with Ms. Johnson who resides in Detroit. This will be a virtual meet. During the negotiations, Kellie Douglas, through her icon, explains that she needs the shadowrunners to travel to the city of Tamanrasset in Egypt, where the most recent Desert Wars took place. Tamanrasset is the staging area for Desert Wars in southern Algeria, in the Ahaggar Mountains. There, she needs the runners to reclaim every Ares Excalibur that they can from the battlefields where many of the main events were held. She does not have any accurate details about how many rifles could be lying abandoned on the fields, but her estimates place the number between fifty and one hundred. If the runners ask why they need to be recovered, Douglas initially lies and tells them she needs to ensure the state-of-the-art technology incorporated in the Excalibur is not stolen by the other megacorporations and incorporated into their own weapon designs. If the runners call her on her lie, Douglas comes clean and says that she needs to make sure the Ares Excalibur isn't found lying on the desert floor in great numbers; such numbers might draw the attention of a critical media, which could lead to public ridicule for Ares. Even though the current Desert Wars season is officially over, Douglas warns that there are still dangers they might encounter, everything from unexploded ordinance and paranormal critters to scavengers, who are looking to salvage the technology used in Desert Wars and to recover scrap to sell. The scavengers in the area are highly territorial and openly hostile to anyone they perceive as trying to steal their salvage. The runners may also encounter corporate teams who are combing through the desert, looking for their rivals' secrets. In addition, Tamanrasset and the surrounding area is regularly patrolled by corporate forces that maintain the fields for Desert Wars to make sure no one sets up booby traps or otherwise alters the fields in ways that would give them an unfair advantage when the next season starts.

When proceeding to Tamanrasset, the runners should take into account the extreme environmental conditions that are found there in the desert, from the blistering heat during the day to the cold nights. The runners may need to invest in survival gear (p. 53, *Arsenal*) appropriate to the climate. In addition, they may wish to invest in a vehicle that is appropriate to their surroundings (such as the Tata Hotspur, p. 109, *Arsenal*). The runners should also be aware that blowing sand may have concealed many of the discarded Excaliburs. The runners likely will need metal detectors to search for the rifles. Once the players have accumulated the Excaliburs, they are to deliver the battle rifles to a contact of Ms. Johnson's in Mogadishu. This contact runs a scrap yard that has furnaces that can melt down the guns without anyone noticing.

Once the guns are safely melted down, they should contact Ms. Johnson for their next assignment.

Normal and paranormal critters that the runners may encounter that could pose a danger to them include nova scorpions and sand chameleons, in addition to venomous snakes. They may also encounter hostile free spirits—spirits that have taken on the mannerisms and appearance of fallen Desert Wars warriors who might perceive the runners as competition. Hunting for these rifles in the desert should take the runners anywhere from a couple of days up to a week to complete.

PLOT POINT TWO

Ms. Johnson has read over two dozen advance reviews of the Excalibur battle rifle on the Matrix, and they have been universally negative. These reviews come from a mixture of individual mercenaries, publications that cater to gun aficionados, and publications that cater to mercenaries. She provides a list of these advanced reviews to the runners and requests that the hacker(s) of the group access these accounts, and alter these reviews so they become positive reviews for the Excalibur. She needs the reviews to mirror the language and the grammar of the original articles so that it is not immediately obvious that they have been changed by an outside writer. To strengthen the case for the Excalibur, Ms. Johnson gives the runners trideo clips from the various testing phases that the Excalibur went through in the laboratory. She wants these clips to be released on the Matrix to help build a positive buzz for the Excalibur. These clips should also be incorporated into some of the advance reviews to add some credibility to their message. Once the hacker(s) alter the Matrix sites, they need to monitor them for activity. Some of the owners of these sites will realize that Ares is making a push to quash bad publicity for their new rifle, and they might come to the conclusion that it would be safer for them to do nothing in response so as to avoid any possible wrath from Ares. Other reviewers, however, will be highly offended that their words have been altered to support the company line, and they not only change their reviews back to the way they were, but they also might begin ranting about how Ares tried to alter their message and strip them of their opinions. Should this happen, Ms. Johnson wants the runners to approach the owners of the Matrix sites to try to encourage them to allow Ares' changes to their blogs to stand. Ms. Johnson is happy to provide nuyen to the runners to bribe some of these individuals and/or publications into complacency. Some, however, have convictions that are not easily bought. If this is the case (as it is with Hellfire), the runners are to remove these "troublemakers" from the equation entirely. The runners should understand this to mean wetwork. If the runners have to resort to this, Ms. Johnson tells them that they need to do so in a way that the revised reviews remain up on the Matrix for the public to read until after the Excalibur is released. This may require the runners to use funds from the Johnson to pre-pay the Matrix accounts so that they remain active until after the Excalibur is scheduled to be released.

The runners might, understandably, be reluctant to engage in killing people simply for expressing an opinion contrary to a megacorporation's will. Ms. Johnson will not be happy with any attempts at defection, as she believes the runners know too much

about her operations. If the runners do some investigating, though, they discover that Ms. Johnson has gone rogue and is operating beyond the scope of her approved operations. If the runners present information to Ms. Johnson's supervisor (a man named Charles Blumquist; use Mr. Johnson (Corporate), p. 143) about what she is up to, the supervisor decides its time to reel her in. He offers the runners 1,000 nuyen apiece to reel her in. Ms. Johnson, though, should be aware that she's in trouble, and she should have a team of Knight Errant Elite Guards (see p. 141) protecting her. If the runners take out the original Ms. Johnson, Blumquist can serve as Mr. Johnson for the remaining plot points.

Dealing with the individuals and/or publications should take as long as the gamemaster desires, from a few days to a couple of weeks. During that time, Ms. Johnson calls upon the runners again, and this time, they will have to travel to Detroit.

PLOT POINT THREE

One of Ares' researchers, a man named Scott Tucker, has decided to complain to the board about all the problems inherent in the Excalibur. He claims the problems are the results of cost-cutting and improper management techniques by Kellie Douglas' supervisor, Charles Blumquist. Tucker believes that the modifications proposed by Blumquist and Douglas are insufficient to surmount all the design flaws of the Excalibur, and he believes that the entire rifle should go back to the drawing board to be fixed properly. If the report reaches the board as is, Blumquist's career with Ares will likely be over. He needs the runners to alter this report. It needs to be colored in such a way to suggest the complaints Scott Tucker is making are based on a personal vendetta against Blumquist and could be politically motivated. Blumquist is a staunch supporter of Damien Knight, while Scott Tucker is a known backer for Arthur Vogel. Adding explicit evidence of this bias to Tucker's report will likely cause the board to question Tucker's findings, if not outright dismiss them as a disgruntled employee. If they don't dismiss Tucker's findings, Blumquist is counting on the divided nature on the board to prevent them from taking any action before the product is released. Blumquist is well aware these changes might have an adverse impact on Tucker's career, but in his words, "better his career than mine."

The runners need to gain access to Ares World Headquarters at Knight Plaza. Ms. Johnson informs them that the node upon which the report is located is on the 57th floor of the Ares Headquarters. Douglas cannot provide any access codes or passwords that might point toward an inside job, but she can give information on some of the more subtle security measures of the building that they might otherwise miss. Douglas warns the runners that they should expect a difficult time getting into the node, as it has a System Rating of 8 and a Firewall Rating of 7. It is also loaded with Black IC (Rating 6).

The Knight Plaza has a similar wireless security mesh to Manhattan that constantly checks SINS to ensure they are valid. The runners need to obtain Rating 6 fake IDS, fake SINS and other credentials just to have a reasonable chance of getting into the Ares Worldwide Headquarters building. It would be best if the hacker or a contact could set them up as new employees (or new

security) for the building so that their new faces will not raise too much suspicion.

Once the runners have completed altering the report, they are to send the report to one of Damien Knight's executive assistants from Tucker's internal Matrix account. This should make it very difficult for Tucker to recall the report and correct it before it goes to the board for consideration. While they're planting the report, the runners may wish to grab some data from the node that could let them make a little extra nuyen or provide some leverage in case the Johnson betrays them. The files include progress notes, research files, and designs of current research projects, including new types of armor, new designs and modifications for drones, and designs for Ares' version of smart ammo. Any of these designs could fetch a high price on the black market if the runners choose to sell this material. If the runners choose to do this, though, they'll earn the wrath of not just Tucker, but all of Ares.

Once the report is submitted, the runners are free to walk away from the headquarters. However, she has one final mission for the runners to complete; and this time, it is in DecCee.


PLOT POINT FOUR

Although the runners have successfully tainted the report from Scott Tucker, Kellie Douglas needs to submit her own report to the board, one that can convince them that the fixes her development team has come up with for the Excalibur battle rifle are sufficient to improve its performance while reducing the number of catastrophic failures. To help sell this point, Douglas wishes to produce a trideo for the board, allegedly showing the modifications for the battle rifle in action and demonstrating to the board that the modifications work. The trouble is, Douglas knows the modifications are not as good as she claims them to be. The modified rifle is still prone to catastrophic failure, and if such a failure is caught on trideo, it would all doom the Excalibur battle rifle—and her career. For her demo recordings, Douglas records Excaliburs being refit with the modifications, and then switches them out with FN-SCAR-H3's with extended clips that have been disguised as Excaliburs with snap-on cases. The runners are to perform live-fire tests with the dummy rifles and record their performance on trideo.

For their live trial of the Excalibur rifles, Douglas was able to obtain intelligence on a known shedim hideout near Arlington National Cemetery in DecCee. Douglas would like to use this opportunity to get that hideout cleared out using the fake Excalibur battle rifles. Once the runners get the hideout cleared out, they can contact Knight Errant and allow them to take the public credit for the shedim kills. This will not only serve Douglas' interests but will also help Knight Errant's popularity with the DecCee population, which has recently taken a hit from the fiasco surrounding the events at the Watergate Rift. If the runners balk at going to DecCee, Douglas points out that the next easiest location to test out battle rifles would be a burgeoning bug nest Chicago. Given the choice, the shedim might be the better option.

The shedim have resurrected an old forty-unit apartment complex approximately three kilometers away from Arlington National Cemetery. It is believed that at any given time, there are





approximately thirty shedim present in the apartment complex (spread out amongst the various apartments). Knight Errant Astral Surveillance units confirm that everyone in the complex is a shedim. Knight Errant is in the process of drawing up tactical plans to raid the apartment complex, but Douglas feels that the runners can handle it for them. The runners have to sweep all the apartments to make sure they get all the shedim that are present. It is likely there will be a few shedim away from the property at the time of the raid, but at the very least, a vast majority of the shedim will be destroyed in the raid. Knight Errant intelligence believes there to be at least one master shedim on site (stats for shedim and master shedim are on p. 75).

Once this job is done, they receive their final pay, and the runners are allowed to go on their way. Douglas, however, is the type of person that does not like loose ends. At the gamemaster's discretion, Douglas can set aside one hundred thousand nuyen to send other shadowrunners after the players in order to kill them. While the shadowrunners were busy carrying out their jobs for Douglas, she was likely gathering intelligence on where the shadowrunners are based and where they live. The gamemaster can decide just how fierce the opposition to the players will be.

LOCATIONS

TAMANRASSET

Tamanrasset is a city with a population of over a quarter of a million that swells to over a million during the Desert Wars championship match. Tamanrasset is located in the Ahaggar Mountains in what used to be southern Algeria. The city has been overrun with hotels for visiting mercenaries and corp troops, and it also holds military-style bunkers, hangars, mechanic shops, outposts, and compounds for Desert Wars participants. Salvage operations from scavengers for new tech and valuable metals are big business in this city year round. Security in Tamanrasset is handled by a joint task force consisting of units from each of the Big Ten mega-corporations. Tamanrasset is used as the staging ground for Desert Wars and could serve as a good starting point for the runners in their search for these battle rifles resting in the fields are used for the Desert Challenge. The desert fields that are used for Desert Wars stretch for kilometers, from the Ahaggar Mountain range and into the portion of the Sahara Desert that is often referred to as the Libyan Desert.

KNIGHT PLAZA

Knight Plaza was originally the historical Hart Plaza in the downtown sector of the city of Detroit. After 2015, the plaza was bought by Ares Industries. It would later be transformed into Knight Plaza, and the physical structure at Hart Plaza was eventually converted into Ares' worldwide headquarters. After renovations, modernizations, and expansions, the Knight Tower ended up as a two hundred and twenty floor arcology with state-of-the-art security systems, many of which are designed to be covert. These security systems include smart walls, one-way mirrors for spellslingers, Mage Sight Fiber Optic Security Systems, chemsniffers, and cyberware scanners. Guard weapons have RFID tags to prevent them from setting off alarms as they move through the building. Any direct assault against Knight Plaza short of a medium-sized army should be considered "unadvisable," to say the least. Besides Firewatch and Elite Knight Errant guards protecting Knight Plaza, there are guard animals, drones, and bound spirits on site at the plaza. With the proper guidance by an insider such as Douglas, it is possible for a team to make it into Knight Plaza for a small operation, such as a hacking job that should not require violence. Douglas can get them past the outer firewalls of the central node; once they are in, the security they encounter is far less significant. They mainly have to access another employee account; the internal firewalls are only at Rating 2, making the task easier than breaking in from the outside.

LIBERTY APARTMENTS

Liberty Apartments was once a thriving middle-class apartment complex approximately three kilometers from Arlington National Cemetery. When problems began arising with the shedim from the Arlington National Cemetery, the neighborhood quickly took a hit, and became more like a ghost town. Liberty Apartments is an L-shaped, two-story apartment complex, with an office for the property manager. For nearly seven years, the apartment complex has had no utility hook-ups of any kind. It has remained off the grid and abandoned. Six months ago, however, someone at the complex illegally tapped into the electrical grid for the neighborhood. They also tapped into the water lines. Turning the matter of the stolen utilities over to Knight Errant, the corporate police force recently investigated and determined that there is an infestation of shedim in Liberty Apartments. Many of the inhabitants have been identified as squatters who sought shelter in the abandoned complex, only to wind up dead (either from the shedim themselves or from various other dangerous pursuits, e.g., street drugs, BTLs, prostitution). Once dead, the shedim were more than willing to make themselves at home in the host bodies. Knight Errant mages have identified at least one master shedim, which operates out of property manager's office. Liberty Apartments resides in a neighborhood where Knight Errant has a response time of three minutes to any disturbance. The runners must find a way either to clear out the apartment complex within that amount of time or to delay Knight Errant's arrival on scene. Liberty Apartments has no active Matrix nodes.



PEOPLE

KELLIE DOUGLAS

Kellie Douglas has worked for Ares for nearly forty years. She has risen through the ranks to become a lead developer and project manager for the Excalibur Battle Rifle. She does not wish to see her career and reputation go down in flames with the Excalibur. Instead, she wants to ensure the Excalibur battle rifle is launched as scheduled and is as successful as it can be. If this means “tweaking” certain facts and generating false trideo to promote the rifle, than so be it. Though Douglas is not a professional Ms. Johnson, she can be as ruthless and as determined as any other Johnson who has been hiring shadowrunners for their entire careers. Runners should not be deceived by her elderly appearance; Douglas has a goal, and she will not be stopped in her desire to achieve it. This may include her getting rid of any loose ends after the run is done, including eliminating the shadowrunners that she had used to get what she wanted.

Kellie Douglas

Female human

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|----|
| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
| 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 3.9 | 9 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/10

Armor (B/I): 5/3

Skills: Con 3, Dodge 5, Etiquette 4, Infiltration 5, Intimidation 3, Leadership 5

Knowledge Skills: Arms Dealers 5, Ares Corporate Politics 4, Desert Wars Combatants 3, Sahara Geography 2, Weapon Design 6

Augmentations: Attention coprocessor 2, encephalon 2

Gear: Auctioneer Business Clothes (5/3), commlink (Device Rating 6)

SCAVENGERS

Groups of scavengers have made canvassing the deserts where Desert Wars is played into a lucrative job, looking for valuable metals to scavenge, including spent ammo and destroyed vehicles and drones. Scavengers often travel in groups of about ten people. They usually bring along construction drones to recover and bring back the salvage. Many of these scavengers have been doing this work for years and are experts when it comes to the terrain. These scavenger groups will openly attack any groups looking to plunder the Desert Wars fields of any materials they claim as their salvage. Outsiders to the Desert Wars fields should consider these groups as dangerous threats.

Scavengers

Human

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|------|----|
| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Init | IP |
| 4 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 9 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/10

Armor (B/I): 10/8

Skills: Athletics skill group 3, Automatics 5, Clubs 4, Computer 2, Etiquette (Corporate) 2, Exotic Ranged Weapon (Laser Weapons)

5, Gunnery 5, Hardware 2, Heavy Weapons 5, Infiltration 4, Intimidation 5, Longarms 4, Negotiation 3, Perception 4, Throwing Weapons 3, Unarmed Combat 5

Knowledge Skills: Desert Critters 3, Desert Landscapes 4, Sahara Geography 4

Augmentations: 2 cyberlegs [standard, obvious], heat adaptation transgenics, radiation tolerance transgenics,

Gear: Full Body Armor (10/8)

Weapons:

AK-97 [Assault Rifle, DV 7P, AP -2, SA/BF/FA, RC —, 38 (c), w/ EX-explosive Ammo]

Mitsubishi Yakusoku MRL [Missile Launcher, DV 16P(f), AP +5, SA, RC —, 8 (m), w/ fragmentation missiles]

Ares Desert Strike [Sniper Rifle, DV 8P, AP -3, SA, RC (1), 14 (c), w/ rigid stock, shock pad, and detachable imaging scope]

SHEDIM (FORCE 4)

Possessed Host Body: Human

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|------|----|
| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | M | Ess | Init | IP |
| 5 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 11 | 2 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 11/10

Armor (B/I): 6/4

Skills: Assensing, Astral Combat, Dodge, Perception, Unarmed Combat

Powers: Astral Form, Deathly Aura, Energy Drain [Karma, Touch range, Physical damage], Fear, Immunity (Age, Pathogens, Toxins), Paralyzing Touch, Possession (Dead or Abandoned Vessels), Sapience

Gear: Armor Vest (6/4)

Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Mild), Evanescence

MASTER SHEDIM (FORCE 7)

Possessed Host Body: Troll

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|----|
| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | M | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
| 11 | 7 | 10 | 10 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 17 | 2 |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 14/11

Armor (B/I): 9/7

Skills: Accident, Assensing, Astral Combat, Counterspelling, Dodge, Longarms 3, Perception, Spellcasting, Unarmed Combat

Powers: Astral Form, Astral Gateway, Aura Masking, Banishing Resistance, Compulsion, Deathly Aura, Energy Drain [Karma, Touch range, Physical damage], Fear, Immunity (Age, Pathogens, Toxins), Noxious Breath, Possession (Dead or Abandoned Vessels), Regeneration, Sapience, Shadow Cloak, Spirit Pact

Gear: Armored Jacket (8/6)

Spells: Armor, Animate, Mob Mood, Influence, Clout, Blast

Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Mild), Evanescence

Weapons:

Remington 990 [Shotgun, DV 7P, AP -1, SA, RC (1), 8(m), w/ regular ammo]



Incoming Message

Ares Shuts Down Excalibur Development Due to Pending Legal Action

Detroit, UCAS—Ares Corporation's troubled Excalibur project hit another snag on Thursday. Complaints about the overly ornate gun malfunctioning in tests have started to become commonplace, but an additional twist has emerged. During a conference call with investors, the Weapons Development Division announced the shutdown of the project effective immediately.

"Our legal team advised us of a pending Intellectual Property suit," said Miguel Edgerton, VP of Weapons Development. "We are putting development of the Excalibur Weapons Program on hold until these matters are cleared up. Once the matter is settled, we will proceed with the release as scheduled."

- Looks like there will be some openings in the Ares IP Management office soon.
- Mr. Bonds

An unnamed source believes the suit involves the Fairlight Excalibur, a top-of-the-line cyberdeck used before the second Crash. While the Fairlight brand is dormant, NeoNET holds the rights to the name and all sub-brands.

- I remember when I bought my Excalibur. I scraped together every nuyen I could. It took years of successful runs to put it together, but when I jacked in for the first time, I was in love. I still have it. Original box and everything.
- Bull

- Bull, if I have to listen to another story about how you had to hack uphill both ways through five meters of snow, my meat body will choke on my own vomit. And then my ghost will haunt you in the Matrix.
- Slam-0!
- "Deck." Prime runners "decked" in those days.
- Bull
- I can't believe nobody thought to give Declan a call.
- NetCat
- I did. It's not him.
- FastJack
- None of my sources at NeoNET have said anything about a suit. You'd think one of us would have gotten some work if there's truth to this. This is just a cover—the Excalibur has far worse problems than some little IP issue that could be solved with a simple licensing agreement. Ares is looking for an excuse to make this program go away without having to admit how badly they messed up the design.
- Cosmo



INCOMING FEED.....



OVERVIEW

The Excalibur project is a disaster. Cost overruns, failed designs, and stolen prototypes have combined to make the product launch go over like the launch of Diet NERPS. The project has burned through managers like matchsticks. The newest manager, a hotshot ladder-climber named Pete Erdmann, is taking a radical tack. Rather than hiding behind delays and excuses, he's using the controversy to his advantage. Even bad press means people are talking about the project. People will buy the product when it comes out just to see if it's as bad as it's supposed to be. Pete comes from a media background and has seen giants like Horizon turn bad buzz on a film into something positive. If it can work for *Squeaky Elves 3*, why can't it work for Excalibur?

It's a large risk Erdmann is taking. If it works, he'll be the genius who saved the Excalibur project. If it doesn't, he'll have brought more attention to Ares' failures, and he likely will have a heavy price to pay.

Erdmann started by planting a rumor about a pending lawsuit. A few financial bloggers bit, and the rumor soon worked its way through some financial sites. The rumor soon went from remarks by a few unnamed sources to questions being asked of PR flacks from competitor's companies. Once that started, companies began denying the existence of the lawsuit, but the denials only added fuel to the fire. In the space of a day, the Excalibur went from being an albatross around Ares' neck to a hot potato project other companies wanted to kill.

But now the smoke is starting to clear, and a few of those companies are starting to wonder where the fire is. Erdmann's rumor may have bought the project some time, but eventually other corporate managers called their fixers, and those fixers called their runners. Those runners are now looking for the people who churned the waves. Why is Ares talking about lawsuits when none actually exist? What's the real story about the Excalibur? Erdmann's eventual plan is to lead one of these teams into a trap. When the trap is sprung, the runners will die, and Erdmann will feed another rumor to the press about the run on the law firm being more proof that other corporations are plotting against Ares and their Excalibur project.

PLOT POINT ONE

Embracing Your Mistakes

The runners are summoned to a meeting; when they follow the directions they are given, they find it takes them to a public bathroom. Someone has placed an "out of order" ARO in front of the door. There are three stalls in the bathroom—the central stall is unoccupied, the stall on the left has normal human- or elf-sized feet poking out from under the door. The stall on the right is stuffed with an ork. The person on the left is Mr. Johnson (use Mr. Johnson (Corporate), p. 143); her emerges and speaks to the runners. The ork on the right is a bodyguard Mr. Johnson brought along, and he stays out of view unless he is needed. Mr. Johnson tells the runners to make themselves comfortable however they'd like, then he lays out his story.



Mr. Johnson tells the runners that he represents a company that, according to rumors, is suing Ares over an intellectual property issue. According to Mr. Johnson, his company is not involved in any legal action connected to the Excalibur. He also claims that subtle inquiries with other companies have found no official proceeding from them, either. His company has figured that the rumors are being spread for a reason, and he wants to know why Ares is pretending to get sued. He suggests the Excalibur project is troubled and Ares is trying to distract shareholders from the problems. If the runners can dig up the dirt, he'll dig up some cash.

Mr. Johnson offers a total of 50,000 nuyen for evidence that the Excalibur project is in trouble. As the Johnson says this, the larger occupant of the stall on the right raises his foot to reveal a credstick underneath it. The Johnson says the credstick is half of that amount. If the runners can bring him an Excalibur prototype, he will raise the total compensation to 100,000 nuyen. If they accept the job, the runner can take the credstick from beneath the ork's foot. If they refuse, the ork brings his foot down on the credstick and smashes it to bits.

Mr. Johnson doesn't have many leads for the runners. He can deliver all the leads himself, or the gamemaster can make the runners learn pieces of information through legwork. The basic information points in three different directions. One is a man named Declan Kittering, the original developer of the Fairlight Excalibur deck, who is a possible source of the rumors about the lawsuit. Kittering is someone with an interest in the Excalibur name but without a strong connection to a single corporate entity. Another possible place to look is a fixer named Lager, who has been looking for buyers of a prototype weapon taken from a run on Ares less than a month ago. The third place to look is a law firm called Stickney-Tate, which has rumored to be gathering information for a possible lawsuit.

The runners may wish to surveil Mr. Johnson and his security detail once the meet is complete. After twenty minutes, a car with tinted windows pulls up near the restroom. Mr. Johnson and his ork companion emerge from the restroom and get in the car. The car, featuring a government license ARO, proceeds directly to the airport. Both the human and the ork pass through security quickly and board a suborbital flight to DeeCee. There are no tickets available for the flight. Without tickets, the runners can only get as far as security. Mr. Johnson's connection to the rest of the campaign, if any, is left to the gamemaster's discretion.

PLOT POINT TWO

Black and White and Gunmetal

The runners may decide to attempt to find Declan Kittering, but that is not an easy task. He's rich enough that he can act as an independent contractor, keeping him from developing any strong connection—or regular attendance—at any one company. But in trying to locate him, the runners catch a break. In a few days, Declan is being honored with a Vanguard Award for his donations to multiple organizations that provided medical assistance to people on the street. The Draco Foundation is holding a dinner for him at The Copeland Hotel, a five-star spot where the elite meet and greet. It's a long shot, but if they don't talk to Kittering the night of his award, who knows when he'll make another public appearance?

The Copeland Hotel is the kind of place where executives stay for extended periods. There is very little tourist trade here. Even celebrities are someone shunned. The hotel has contracts with all the major AAA corporations. On the rare occasion someone comes down from Zurich, they stay at the Copeland while dirtside.

Masquerading as guests of the Copeland requires rock-solid fake SINS and an outlay of serious cash. A one-night stay starts at 2,500 nuyen. The Copeland is exclusive enough that it doesn't have standardized rates—stays are tailored to each client. If they need help getting into the Copeland, Mr. Johnson's corporate contacts can help the runners get a room the night of the dinner. Having a room in the hotel makes staging an operation much easier. Kittering isn't comfortable leaving the hotel, and if the runners base their operations anywhere else, they run the risk of their conversations being recorded by hotel security.

The guests at the dinner are all corporate executives from various tech firms. The easiest way for runners to make their way into the event is to switch their identities with someone already attending. Security uses biometric scanners to match the invitations to the SIN. They could also try to spoof the scanner, telling it to let them through. The biometric scanners are Rating 5 devices. Alternately, if the runners have more time, they could try to hack into the scanner and load up their own biometric information. This requires a Logic + Computer (12, 1 hour) Extended Test. It's a race against time, since the event takes place the evening after the runners were contacted by Mr. Johnson.

Runners looking to get in as employees have a major hurdle to overcome. The Copeland does not have metahumans in roles where they are seen by hotel guests. Even elves are kept in the kitchen, and trolls are rarely hired if ever. The staff working the banquet room for the awards is entirely human. Metahuman employees are treated well, but anyone expecting to see an elf concierge or troll doorman will be surprised. Teams with metahuman members may look into the hotel's finances and find some connection to some Human Nation money, but that's a whole other adventure. Obvious cyberware is also not permitted on any staff who will be interacting with the hotel's customers.

Black-bag experts will have their hands full with the hotel's security staff. The director of security hires the best and the brightest from corporate security firms. Director Erica Whellan encourages cross-training between her staff and the companies that send their elite to stay at the hotel. Whellan is very good at luring top security to her hotel., as guarding pampered execs is a much nicer gig than hanging out in a black lab somewhere. Use the Red Samurai Detachment stats (see p. 283, *SR4A*) for the hotel's guards, and use Red Samurai Lieutenant (see p. 283, *SR4A*) for Whellan.

The easiest way to get Kittering is a fairly direct approach. Getting a message to him is difficult but not impossible. If the runners explain what they need, he is receptive. He has no desire to attract any sort of attention, so if he can squelch rumors of the lawsuit before others come looking for him, he'll be happy. He invites the runners to join him at his table for a fine meal and some nostalgic shoptalk. Kittering treats them like old friends, laughing off insults and overlooking social gaffs. If the runners treat him respectfully, he might be willing to direct work their way in the future. The job that's uppermost on his mind right now is finding out who attached his name to rumors about the Excalibur lawsuit.



PLOT POINT THREE

The Trunk Line

During the investigation of Ares claims, the runners pick up on an interesting bit of legwork. A local fixer calling himself Lager claims to have a line on a stolen Excalibur. Rumors persist that someone hit an Ares R&D lab and got away with the gun. If Lager is legit, the runners might be able to get info on the run that helped details about the failed Excalibur design make it out to the public. On the other hand, if he is making it up, he could be used to ferret out whoever was actually behind the leak.

Setting up a meeting with Lager is easy. He agrees to meet the runners at a Car-Go! parking garage with the merchandise. Car-Go! is a franchise used-vehicle dealership that caters to business travelers and wageslaves who move from town to town. Drivers deposit their car in a secure Car-Go! parking lot. They browse a catalog of cars at their destination and apply the value of their car to the purchase price. Car-Go! makes its money off of transaction fees (usually covered by the traveler's employer) and by local used-car sales. Some Car-Go! locations offer rentals and more traditional services, but most people who use it are interested in obtaining a permanent vehicle without the hassle of car shopping in a new city. The store is also a favorite of transient shadowrunners looking to unload a hot car before they skip town, or those who want to have a ride ready and waiting when they step off the plane.

Lager arranges his meet at the Car-Go! garage he manages. The location near the airport is the largest Car-Go! garage in the city. It featured three floors of vehicles ranging from small economy vehicles to luxury SUVs. Car-Go! garages rarely feature exotic or performance vehicles since there isn't much call for them for purchase, but they will accept them and dump them off to specialty dealers in the area. Because of this, Lager instructs the runners to ask for a Mitsubishi Nightsky during his shift. That's how he identifies them. When they drop the code phrase, Lager steps forward and tells the other employees that he will handle the deal personally.

The good news is that the rumors are true—Lager was behind the run, and the gun lifted by the team he hired is a legitimate prototype. It doesn't work in its current condition, but it is definitely from an Ares weapon development lab. Lager put the run together about six months ago. Though it was successful, Lager found himself a little burned at the end—the Johnson working the run left him with the prototype and told Lager he could sell it in lieu of his cut of the run money. The prototype is any early version of the Excalibur, and while it is flawed, it is not definitive proof of the whole program's failure—a prototype made that early in the process is expected to have significant flaws. But if Lager's story is true, it shoots a big hole in the Ares narrative. If the program already had a prototype six months ago, why did any rivals wait so long to start looking into a possible intellectual property lawsuit?

Lager may be new to the game but he's not a fool. The garage is the closest thing he has to turf, and he knows it well. The "lot attendants" on duty when the runners arrive are poorly disguised gangers who often sell stolen vehicles to the fixer. There are four on each floor of the garage. Lager also has a car on each floor specially

prepared as a hiding spot. Each one features an armored trunk and a PanicButton. He is not a hard man by any means. If a fight goes down, he heads for the nearest hiding spot and hopes the gangers will hang on long enough for the PanicButton to do its job.

Lager wants to talk price before he takes the runners to the car where he's keeping the weapon. He opens high at 25,000 nuyen. Lowering his price requires a Negotiation + Charisma Opposed Test. Every net hit lowers Lager's price by 1,000 nuyen. Every 5,000 nuyen drop makes Lager step back and call in a pair of "lot attendants" around for backup. He knows he's terrible at intimidation, but he hopes that having some gangers at his back will help him keep the price from dropping too low. The gangers won't act unless the runners make the first move. Their main concern is to get Lager to safety first and then flee to safety on their own.

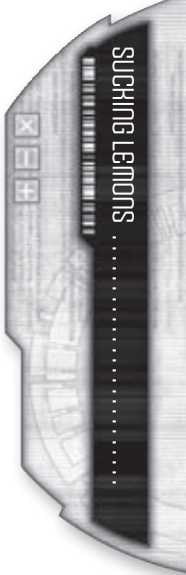
PLOT POINT FOUR

Bread Crumbs Go Boom

The Stickney-Lyle Law Offices are located in a new office park development called Efficiency Hills. The Hills are a collection of buildings for up-and-coming companies looking to impress potential investors with a large megacorp look and small corporate attention. The office park is still under construction. There are two other sites marked by bits of light construction and sales AROs, but only one building is entirely finished.

Corporate parks such as these are often used for cutout research labs and off-site storage areas. The isolation can work to the corporate partners' benefit here. If a research lab here is hit, it doesn't bring collateral damage to other company departments. If the building is damaged in the course of a run, the damage is paid for by the building's owners, not the renters. The disadvantage is that the facilities here are treated as contractors, which means they don't receive the benefits of extraterritoriality. If a facility is compromised, companies often have to go to the expense of sending a team of their own to make sure any messes are thoroughly cleaned up.

Stickney-Lyle's offices are on the top floor of the five-story building. The offices are little more than set dressing. They pass a cursory inspection, but closer analysis finds that nothing changes—coffee mugs remain in their exact positions on desks, pencils eternally sit half off the edge of a desk, and some chairs forever stay slightly askew. The office is here for looks only. The owners want the illusion to last long enough for runners to get inside and have the doors locked after them. If some of the runners remained outside the office, they can stay in communication with the runners inside, but getting in or out is quite difficult. The elevator is shut down so that the car is stuck on the fifth floor, and the walls of the elevator car are packed with explosives (six kilograms of Rating 10 plastic explosive is in each wall, meaning the explosion of each wall can do 20P damage, with a decrease of 1 damage for every meter someone is away from the explosion. Stairwell doors leading to the fifth floor are sealed, and they have no locks on the exterior. The stairwells are patrolled by two MCT-Nissan Roto-Drones apiece, with the drones carrying AK-97 Carbines. The doors are reinforced (Armor Rating 8, Structure Rating 9). Runners on the outside could attempt to scale the building and



break through the windows (Armor Rating 4, Structure Rating 5).

Once the building is locked down, it is under control of a hacker named Flipside. He was tasked with constructing a fake law firm and turning it into a deadly trap. The runners are supposed to die inside the office and then be used as proof that other corporations are plotting against Ares and its Excalibur project.

Flipside is patient. He doesn't feel like he needs to chase down the runners who have broken into his office—he just needs to wait for them to leave, and then either shoot them down or blow them up when they do. He knows they might try to go out the windows and rappel down the side of the building. He has six more Roto-Drones circling the building for just that eventuality. He also has four GM-Nissan Dobermans mounted with Ingram White Knights that he sends in if things start getting slow.

Once the runners are inside the law firm, Flipside takes the opportunity to taunt them. He talks to them through anything with a speaker. He is trying to make them angry, hoping they will be spurred to angry, incautious action. His physical location is a secure panic room in the basement of the building. He built it near the electrical generators to shield anyone tracing his transmissions. He can be located hacking the hardline network in the building. The door to his panic room is shut and locked; the lock is on automatic time release and will not open until seven days after the run. Flipside has enough supplies to survive double that time just in case. Flipside's weakness in his panic room is the ceiling. He reinforced the walls and has hard earth underneath him, but if the runners blow through the floor above him, they can pull the spider out of his web.

While the law firm is almost entirely a shell, it contains hard evidence showing that the supposed lawsuits are just a scheme concocted by Ares as a distraction. The safe in the law offices contains a drive featuring video that Flipside took of his meeting with his Mr. Johnson. Flipside did that as a bargaining chip, either in case the Johnson decided to skip payment or in exchange for his life if the runners get their hands on him. Flipside isn't above selling out his employers and avoiding any confrontation with the runners. The closer the runners get to him, the more desperate to make a deal with them he'll become. If the runners break into his basement panic room (the door to it has an Armor Rating 13, Structure Rating 11), he tells them what he knows to avoid being killed.

Once the runners return the relevant information to Mr. Johnson, Ares' plan to make it look like other people are forcing them to abandon the Excalibur project falls by the wayside. Instead of making public relations gains, the plan has become another black eye for Ares. Quietly, a wetwork team is dispatched to teach Pete Erdmann the full price of failure.

PEOPLE

DECLAN KITTERING—QUICKDRAW DECKER

Declan Kittering was fourteen years old when he built his first cyberdeck. He was one of the first deckers whose name was spit out of the mouths of angry corporate security directors across the world. He had a good run for almost five years, but even legends get caught. Fairlight Microsystems managed to get their hands on him, and Kittering's life took an interesting turn. Rather

than arresting him, the CEO realized the caliber of the resource he had just obtained. He understood that Declan should be the one designing their tools—and getting paid well to do it. The Fairlight Excalibur was Declan's first and only project. He was a billionaire by the time he was thirty, and he used his cash to make a clean break from Fairlight and his career.

Kittering never lost his rebellious streak. He never really made it into the public eye, so staying out of it was easy. He quietly champions anti-corporate causes and became a large contributor to various free Matrix organizations. It's also rumored that he's a major financier of the Neo-Anarchist movement. He is quiet, humble, and one of the smartest people in the world. Even at an event in his honor, he shies away from the spotlight. He enjoys talking shop with hackers. Though he rarely gets to do any high-stakes attacks any more, he loves talking theory, tech and anything related to hacking. His agents keep him very well informed. He likes to keep people off-balance, calling hackers by their street names when he first meets them.

Clearing up any misconceptions about his involvement in the Ares affair is important to Kittering, and he shows gratitude to any runners who help him dissociate from the situation. The runners should not, however, assume they now have a total ally. Kittering is too mercurial for that. Any time they find themselves allied with one of the powers of the world—and working for Ares fits in that category—Kittering disapproves and is willing to undermine him. He takes any favors they did for him into consideration, but the larger causes he supports are more important to him than any recent acquaintances.

Declan Kittering

Male human

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|----|
| 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 4.7 | 9 | 1 |

Condition Monitor boxes (P/S): 10/10

Armor (B/I): 9/7

Skills: Cracking skill group 6, Electronics skill group 6, Mechanic skill group 4, Pilot Aircraft 3, Pistols 2

Knowledge Skills: 20th Century Guitars 3, Corporate Legal Battles 5, Crocheting 2, Hacker History 5, Hardware Design 4, IP Management 6, Legendary Deckers 4, Matrix Theory 6

Languages: English N, Japanese 3, Spanish 2

Qualities: Codeslinger: Write Programs, Exceptional Attribute: Logic, Infirm

Augmentations: Datajack (alphaware), encephalon 2 (deltaware), Fairlight Caliban commlink (alphaware) [Response 6, Signal 5, Firewall 6, System 6, implanted, w/ Analyze 6, Armor 6, Attack 7, Biofeedback Filter 6, Black Hammer 6, Blackout 5, Browse 5, Command 4, Data Bomb 6, Data Search 7, Decrypt 6, ECCM 5, Edit 3, Encrypt 6, Medic 4, Sniffer 5, Spoof 6, Stealth 6, Track 6], math SPU, sim module (hot sim) (alphaware)

Gear: Actioneer business clothes, aeronautics mechanic facility, Fed Boeing Commute, GMC Bulldog Step-Van, Mitsubishi Nightsky

Weapons:

Defiance EX Shocker [Taser, DV 8S(e), AP -half, SS, RC —]



FLIPSIDE—VENGEFUL SPIDER

Thomas Krauss did not do well in school. He was smart, but he was not motivated. When the company aptitude tests came up after high school, Tom spent the night before drinking and partying, and he woke up in a coffin hotel with a girl he didn't remember. He flubbed the test and ended up as a third-shift security guard at a warehouse complex. When runners came calling, he ended up bleeding out on a concrete floor—their bullet put him down before his gun cleared his holster. The runners thought they killed him. Instead, they got him motivated.

Krauss has been rebuilt with company money. Flipside, as he calls himself now, is loyal to the company, and he especially loves his work when it comes to stopping shadowrunners. He is considered a highly skilled spider.

Flipside was assigned to create the Stickney-Lyle firm from scratch. The building is meant to be like a roach motel. Lure the runners in, trap them inside, and eliminate them with drones. He feels superior to runners and isn't above trash talking or taunting them. In the end, he wants them embarrassed and dead, but he'll settle for dead.

Flipside

Human male

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|-------|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|---------|----|
| 2 | 4 | 5 (7) | 1 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 4.1 | 10 (12) | 1 |

Condition Monitor boxes (P/S): 9/9

Armor (B/I): 10/8

Skills: Aeronautics Mechanic 2, Automatics 2, Automotive Mechanic 2, Electronic Warfare 4, Electronics skill group 4, Gunnery 5, Infiltration 4, Locksmith 2, Perception 5, Pilot Aircraft 6, Pilot Anthroform 4, Pilot Ground Craft 6

Knowledge Skills: Building Safety Codes 5, Corporate Training 3, German Cooking 3, Improvised Explosives 4, On-Site Security Procedures 4, Safe Houses 3

Languages: English N, German 3, Japanese 3

Qualities: Allergy (Uncommon, Moderate, Gold), Home Ground (Law Building), Low Pain Tolerance, Weak Immune System

Augmentations: Control rig, commlink (implanted, Device Rating 5), cybereyes [Rating 2, w/ eye recording unit, flare compensation, image link, low-light vision, thermographic vision], datajack, reaction enhancers 2, sim module (hot-sim modified)

Gear: Armor jacket, automotive mechanic shop, automotive mechanic tool kit, autopicker (Rating 4), 2 x GMC-Nissan Doberman [with Clearsight 4, Maneuver 4, Targeting (Heavy Weapons) 4 autosofts], maglock passkey (Rating 4), 10 x MCT-Nissan Roto-drones [with Clearsight 4, Maneuver 4, Targeting (Automatics) 4 autosofts]

Weapons:

HK MP-5 TX [Submachine Guns, DV 6P, SA/BF/FA, RC 3, 20 (c), w/ explosive rounds x200, folding stock, gas-vent 2, laser sight]

LAGER—WANNABE FIXER

Some people look at shadowrunners and look past the dangerous double-dealing to see a darkly glamorous lifestyle. A lot of people who want to come into the shadows should probably

stay as far away from them as possible. Lager is one of these people. Lager has been a salesman all his life. He makes good money, but he knows that a fixer makes great money. He's seen colleagues make the jump from the used car market to the black market, and he believes he can do it, too. He has an honest-to-God street name, and he tells everyone that the name comes from the fact that everybody loves Lager.

But that's not the truth. Lager got his name because the first time he saw a gun—still holstered—he wet himself. He has the makings of a good fixer—he can think of his feet and negotiate under pressure. But he's still adjusting to the difference between getting a few extra grand for a used car and convincing the ork to not break his skull over a missing gun. He tries to project the confidence of an old pro, but acts of violence shake him badly. He wants to make sure he survives each deal and hasn't quite figured out the balance between looking hard and being hard.

Lager can be developed into a useful contact. Runners need to stay mobile, and he always has a line on clean vehicles. He can also get rid of hot vehicles easily thanks to his day job and some minor hacking ability that allows him to fudge registration information. Every successful deal builds his confidence, and if the runners stick by him, he could grow into one of their most loyal fixers. In the meantime, though, they may have to deal with bad deals, harried phone calls at four in the morning, and the occasional run to get his money back from someone who sold him shoddy goods.

Lager

Male human

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|-------|---|-------|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|----|
| 4 | 4 (5) | 3 | 4 (5) | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4.9 | 6 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/10

Armor (B/I): 8/6

Skills: Close Combat skill group 3, Etiquette 4, Firearms skill group 3, Infiltration 4, Negotiation 2, Palming 2, Pilot Ground Craft 3, Running 4, Shadowing 4

Knowledge Skills: BTL Dealers 2, Car-Go! Corporate Policy 2, Chop Shops 4, Fences 5, Microbrews 3

Languages: English N, Spanish 2

Qualities: Blandness, First Impression, Home Ground (Car-Go! Airport Center), Incompetent (Intimidation), Low Pain Tolerance, Scorched, Sensitive Neural Structure

Augmentations: Datajack, muscle replacement 1

Gear: AR gloves, armor jacket, glasses [Rating 1, w/ image link], Sony Emperor commlink w/ Mangadyne Deva [Response 2, Signal 3, Firewall 2, System 3 w/ Analyze 2, Browse 1, Command 1, Edit 1, Miracle Shooter™, Virtual Pet: (Koala)]

Weapons:

Remington Roomsweeper [Heavy Pistol, DV 7P(f), AP +5, SA, RC —, 8 (m), with 10 magazines flechette rounds]

Combat Axe [Blades, Reach 2, DV 6P (7P), AP -1]

Extendable Baton [Clubs, Reach 1, DV 4P, AP —]

Survival Knife [Blades, Reach —, DV 4P, AP -1]





Incoming Message

CLEANING THE SLATE

Posted by: Snopes

For those of you who have been following the debacle that Ares' Excalibur project has become, I thought that this would be of interest. If you haven't been following it then it will interest you to see how Ares is working hard to bury the problem.

To: Clay Carson, R&D director Seattle Division
From: Karen King, VP of Ares Seattle
Subject: Cleaning the Slate

The final pieces of the Cleaning the Slate plan are falling into place, and we should be able to move forward soon. As you know, one of the things we've been working on is identifying a candidate for the successor project. We have found a situation that is potentially ripe for exploitation. You are aware of Peter Trellis, who is one of the candidates we have identified to head up the successor project. We recently recorded the following conversation between him and a co-worker that might provide an angle we can work with (please excuse the occasionally juvenile nature of the conversation; as you know, males often regress in terms of their emotional maturity when discussing things of a romantic nature).

[Peter Trellis] The thing is, she's in the same complex as me, so I see her all the time? That makes it very difficult for me to stop thinking about her.

[Bruce Cobb] But the question is, does she feel the same way about you?

[Peter Trellis] I don't know. Sometimes I don't feel any spark from her—there are times when we're out together, but she's not really into it, you know? But every time I ask her to do something, she says yes. I guess that means she's enjoying herself.

[Bruce Cobb] You guess? If you have to guess if a woman is having a good time, you're doing something wrong.

[Peter Trellis] I know! Believe me, I know. So there are times I just want to walk away from the whole thing, just because it's so confusing. But I keep running into her, and that means I can't stop thinking about her. I can't leave her alone.

[Bruce Cobb] Wow. You've really got it bad. Tell me that at least she's putting out.

[Peter Trellis] It's the same as everything else. She'll go along with what I suggest, but her part feels ... rote, sometimes.

[Bruce Cobb] Oh. But still, that's not bad.

[Peter Trellis] No, no, it's not. It's not at all. I just wish she was as into me as I was into her.

[Bruce Cobb] So show her! Do something big, over the top for her! Women love that. That'll win her over.

[Peter Trellis] Like what?

[Bruce Cobb] Mmmm—good question. I'd say move to be closer to her, or quit your job to work with her, but you already work together and live practically next door.

[Peter Trellis] Right. But I would do those things if I could, you know. I'm as loyal an employee as they've got, but for her ... for her, I can't think of anything I wouldn't do.

I don't believe you need me to connect the dots as to what our next move should be.

- Anyone know about this Trellis guy?
- Riser
- Renraku engineer. He's got a lot of people excited about him, but from what I can tell it's all based on potential. He hasn't really done anything yet.
- Cosmo
- Many corporations believe that's the ideal time to get an engineer. They have their *rosters* filled with people who developed one significant product, were extracted on the basis of that product, and then never came up with anything as innovative again. The thinking in some circles is that you should grab up-and-coming engineers before they make that one big innovation; then when they do, that innovation is yours. The trick, of course, is finding the engineers who are on the verge of something big.
- Mr. Bonds

OVERVIEW

This adventure is a follow up on **Sucking Lemons**. None of the AAA corps like it when people make them look bad, and Ares is no exception. When the failure is part of the Ares Arms division of the company, the shame and humiliation is that much worse. There is too much on the line with the corporate buyers of Ares Arms to let things just work themselves out. The Excalibur project has become this public relations nightmare for Ares. They know that the time for trying to salvage the weapon has passed. Ares cannot make it go away fast enough, so they are going to do what they can to prod the public into forgetting it. This is the sort of work quite well suited to the shadows.

This effort will take some significant public relations work, and a big player like Ares is not just going to sit and wait for the right PR opportunities to come along. They are going to create them. Burying the old and bringing in the new is just what the doctor ordered.

The first step in their plan is to clear they air a little—they want to silence the critics of the Excalibur project and make sure the bad PR goes away. There are people spreading rumors about the project to anyone who will listen. These people need to be taught that this isn't the wise course of action. The runners will be sent to find who is spreading the rumors and teach them why poking at a megacorp is a bad idea. They need to do more than just keep them from spreading rumors—making an example of them to keep other would-be gossips in line is what Ares is looking for.

The next step in controlling the damage is finding someone to take the blame. The public is not simply going to forget about the problems with the Excalibur, so finding the right person to blame will give Ares someone to get rid of, and could make Ares look like just as much a victim as their customers and investors. Of course, if the scapegoat is around to dispute any claims Ares is making, that will complicate matters.

The final step is for Ares to show they haven't lost their magic touch. They need one of their scientists to step forward and show off a new design that will get people excited and make them forget the Excalibur project ever existed. Even if that scientist works for someone else and needs to be "recruited" to the Ares team.

PLOT POINT ONE

Stopping the Rumors

The first thing Ares wants done is to stop the bad publicity that the Excalibur project is generating. The problem is, they don't really know where the rumors are starting or how they are getting inside information about the flaws in the Excalibur's design process. Ares has devised a plan for finding the mole and following the data to those who are spreading the rumors. They know, however, that they cannot just go in and just silence the critics, as this would just add credibility to their claims. Even a wetwork shadowrun will give the rumors credibility, so they have come up with an idea to discredit them and sow doubt into what they were saying in the first place.

The runner's fixer is contacted by a Mr. Johnson who works for Ares (use Mr. Johnson (Corporate) stats, p. 143). He schedules a meet at an out-of-the-way locale that isn't your typical runner

hangout and is far from the corporate bars and hangouts. The Johnson looks ill at ease and out of place during the meeting.

Mr. Johnson tells the runners that Ares needs the bad publicity about the Excalibur project to end. To that end, they have set up a false file about the project that has a trace in the code. Yesterday the file was accessed, and the trace activated. The runners are to follow the trace, track down the people responsible for stealing the data, then break into their computer system and plant a file provided by Mr. Johnson to discredit them.

As they track the information, the runners discover that the file was accessed by a wageslave, Vinny McDougal, from Ares Arms' accounting department. According to his personnel file, McDougal doesn't have anywhere near the hacking abilities to have pulled off this job, so either he had help or someone else is using his ID. When the runners track McDougal down—which isn't hard, since he is in way over his head—they find him at Auburn Meadows apartments, a middle-lifestyle apartment building in Auburn. It isn't hard to find out that he was blackmailed into stealing the files and given a program to load onto his computer. The program then retrieved the file for him, and he passed the file on via a dead drop to an information broker called the Prospector who works out of Tacoma.

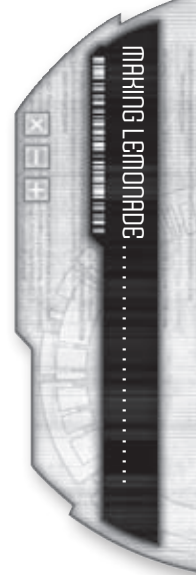
When the runners arrive at McDougal's apartment (see Auburn Meadows Apartment, p. 85), they find him in a state of panic. He is deleting files as fast as he can while preparing to leave town. He is aware of the trace but lacks the skill to do anything about it. He's decided that the best thing he can do is take the money he was paid and skip town for a while.

McDougal's panic provides a number of options for the runners. They can try to intimidate him, which should not be too hard—they outnumber McDougal and are far more physically imposing than he is (McDougal's stats are on p. 87). A Con could also work, as McDougal is inclined to believe any story that gives him a chance to avoid being shot in the head by someone. However they manage it, the runners eventually get contact information for the Prospector.

The Prospector is a simple soul who buys information for money then sells it for more. If the runners pay him 3,000 nuyen, he cheerfully tells them that McDougal's information was sent to an independent Matrix reporter named Andrea Cho. Alternately, the runners could hack into the Prospector's commlink to track the data.

Andrea Cho has become much more popular since she started reporting on the Excalibur debacle, and she plans on riding this train as far as she can take it. She thinks her system is more secure than it is—while she has a solid Firewall, she doesn't have much of a Stealth program covering her tracks, so it's not difficult to trace the route from the Prospector's commlink to her node (Cho's stats, including her programs, are on p. 87; information on her home is listed under **Andrea Cho's Safe House**, p. 85).

To finish this part of the job successfully, the runners must insert the file Mr. Johnson gave to them without raising Cho's suspicions. If she detects a break-in into her house or her node, there is a good chance she won't run with the fake information the runners plant, thereby preserving her credibility with her audience and making that part of the runners' mission a failure.



PLOT POINT TWO

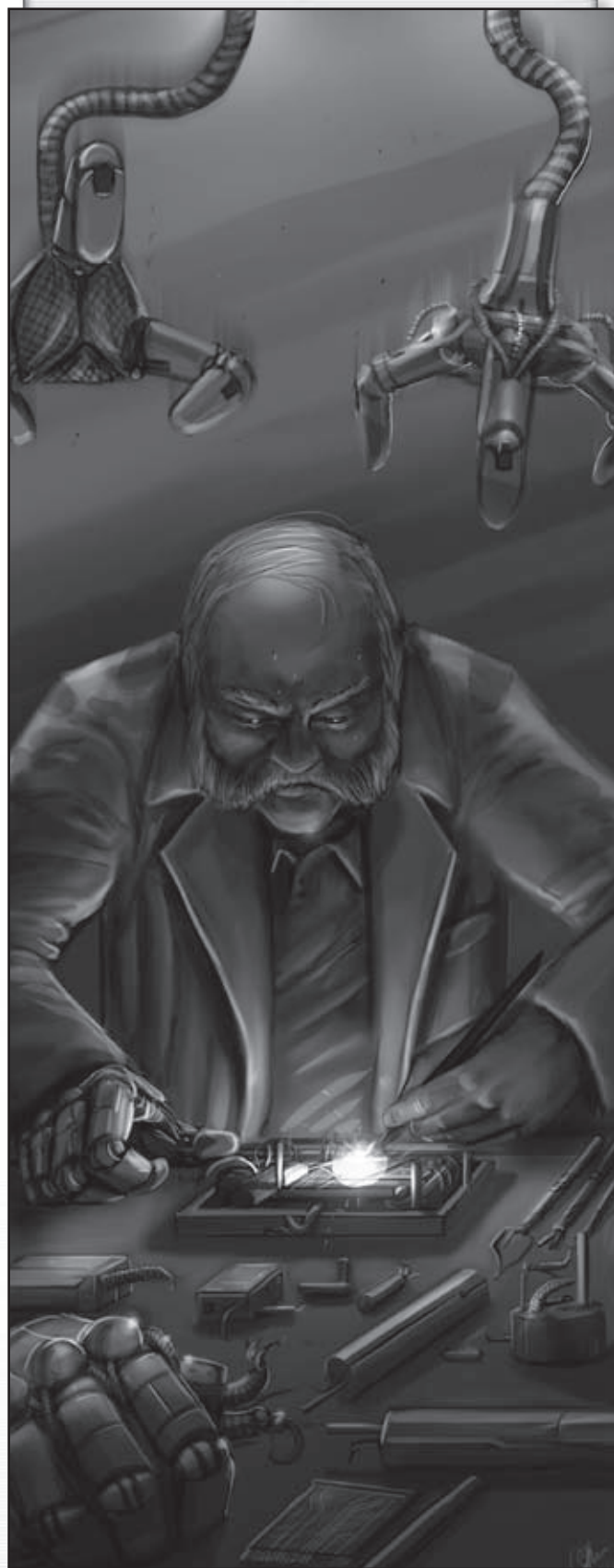
Finding a Scapegoat

With the runners having successfully planted the information and discredited the source of the rumors, it is now time to do some damage control. Mr. Johnson tells the runners that they are now moving on to the next step of the plan to restore Ares' credibility. His superiors have decided that finding a scapegoat to take the blame for everything that has happened will help them look like they are cleaning house and doing what they can to make things right. They have selected an engineer, Will Austin, to be the one to take the fall. In order to make a clear-cut case against Austin, incriminating evidence showing sloppy research and mathematical errors made in the development of the Excalibur needs to be loaded onto Austin's computer. Mr. Johnson provides the runners with fake ID passes that will let them into the R&D building and access to the computer so they can plant the evidence to frame Austin.

The R&D building is an unassuming five-story building in Auburn. The guards won't give the runners a second look as they go through with the provided fake identifications. The ride to the third floor and short walk to his office should also proceed uneventfully. When they get to the area outside Austin's office, however, they find that there is another engineer working after hours (use stats for Will Austin's Co-worker, p. 88). If he hears any suspicious noise (and the offices at night are generally fairly quiet), he sticks his head out of his office to investigate. If the runners are dressed in appropriate attire, he engages them in idle conversation, trying to find out who they are. He can be fooled with a plausible story, because he doesn't recognize everyone who works in his building. Austin's office has an AR overlay of his wife and three-month-old son on the back wall. When the runners log onto his computer, a brief AR video plays of his wife telling him how proud she is that he is telling the company about all of the problems with the Excalibur project. The video might play on the runners' conscience about what side they are taking in this whole affair. It isn't a difficult task to load the incriminating files, but it is a bit time consuming, and the suspense of someone walking in while in the middle of the job should be played up.

When the players contact Mr. Johnson and tell him that the files are in place, he passes the information on to his superiors. This leads to Will Austin getting fired. A couple days after he is fired, he disappears; a few days after that, his body is found on the banks of a nearby river. His death is quickly ruled a suicide.

INCOMING FEED.....



MAKING LEMONADE

PLOT POINT THREE

Starting a New Chapter

Mr. Johnson now only needs a new success story to finish burying the disaster that was the Excalibur project. He has his eye on a young engineer in Renraku who would be the perfect person to launch a new project. There's a small obstacle—the engineer has no desire to leave Renraku at this time. Mr. Johnson contacts the characters again a few days after the planting of the information in Will Austin's computer. He needs them to extract an engineer from Renraku. His name is Peter Trellis, and he is seen as one of the newest rising stars in his field. Trellis works in an R&D facility in Bellevue and lives in a company-owned apartment building, Red Robin Apartment, about three kilometers from the facility. The building is in a high-lifestyle neighborhood, and has a doorman as well as a top-of-the-line security system.

Trellis' path to work takes him from the basement parking at his apartment complex to the covered parking garage at work and the basement parking, which means that encountering him in the open is difficult. He has recently started seeing another Renraku employee who lives a few doors down in the same building. Her name is Veronica Andrews; she is an undercover security agent with Renraku, but Trellis isn't aware of this. She has been assigned to him since he has started to show great potential and the corporation doesn't want to lose him. The building security is aware that Andrews is security, and they let her take weapons into and out of the building without being stopped. Runners can make a Perception + Intuition (5) Test to notice the weapons she is carrying.

Trellis is very happy with Renraku currently and won't be a willing extraction. He knows that he is valuable to Renraku, and he uses that fact to get the simple things in life that he wants and feels he deserves. He is particularly happy about his relationship with Andrews. If the runners give him any choice at all, he asks to take Veronica with him, telling them that she is the love of his life. If the runners decide to include her, she goes along willingly, but she calls in backup. Within ten minutes, a detachment of six Red Samurai officers (see p. 283, *SR4A*) arrive to make sure Trellis goes back to where he belongs.

LOCATIONS

AUBURN MEADOWS APARTMENTS

(Middle-Lifestyle Apartments)

Auburn Meadows Apartments offers good apartments at a reasonable price. The complex is not directly affiliated to any corporation, but they are free of the influence of local gangs and provide decent security. The Matrix security is maintained by Knight Errant, and the IC in the building's primary node is minimal; its primary role is to contact the on-call security spider (use Professional Spider, p. 68, *Unwired*) to investigate and handle any real threat. The magical security consists of a couple spirits that patrol the public areas of the building watching for any magical activity. Any magical beings coming into the building are reported to the on-duty astral mage, who investigates if he feels there is the potential for problems. The front door has a rating 4 maglock with passkey system, and there are security cameras at each of the

entrances. The cameras are monitored by an on-site security guard in the basement. In case of a security breach, he contacts Knight Errant and then goes to investigate.

The neighbors don't want any trouble and keep to themselves. At the same time, they aren't overtly hostile and will hold the door for someone who looks like they are traveling in the same direction. The exception is Mrs. Kindle in apartment 6C. She is the resident busybody, and she tries to keep track of everyone and what they are doing, who they are seeing, etc. If she sees anybody she doesn't recognize, she approaches them and asks questions to try and find out what they're doing there. If asked about Vinny McDougal, most of the neighbors don't know anything, but Mrs. Kindle can tell them all about his habits—as long as she is approached correctly. Sharing a bit of gossip about the neighbors that she doesn't know is a quick way to win her over, and in the short term, it doesn't matter if the gossip is accurate.

ELEGANCE ELECTRONICS STORE

From the outside, Elegance Electronics looks like an old throwback mom-and-pop store. A quick check of the Matrix shows that it has a simple public node with a strong firewall. The building is wired with full surveillance of every room and all of the surrounding areas connected to the main control room via optic cable.

The front area is dimly lit and full of all kinds of high-end commlinks and data devices. There are chips behind the counter sporting all of the latest VR games. The shelves behind the counter hold what appear to be old 20th century televisions and radios. The dust on top of them makes it look like they haven't been cleaned since the Awakening. They actually house state-of-the-art ECM—Rating 6 white noise generators and Rating 6 radio signal scanners that look for any active RFID tags.

A reinforced man door (Armor Rating 8, Structure Rating 9) behind the counter leads through a short hallway to a workroom. There is an electronics shop in the room, though the tools are scattered about in no real order. The room has several disassembled electronics in various stages of repair. There is a heavy machine sentry gun covering the hallway into the room that is hardwired to the control room.

In the right-hand corner there is a hidden door (Perception + Intuition (4) to notice) that leads to the secure control room. It is reinforced and protected from outside scanners. It has controls for all of the security devices and the sentry gun in the repair room. It isn't directly connected to the Matrix, but rather is filtered through the node in the repair room and front room. The room is only about ten square meters in size and has an escape tunnel that leads to the sewers via a one-way door. There is also a camera watching the sewer connected to the node with an optic cable.

ANDREA CHO'S SAFE HOUSE

Cho is writing her blog out of her home, which is the west side of a duplex in Auburn. She doesn't think anyone is interested in tracking down her physical location, so she hasn't taken very many physical security measures. She has upgraded the lock system to a Rating 6 keypad and passkey combination system. She rents from the owners who live in the east side of the duplex. They are an older couple and think of Cho as the daughter they never had. They call Knight Errant at the first sign of trouble. Additionally,



Andrea pays a protection fee to the local gang to keep an eye on the building, and they tell her about anyone suspicious hanging around the building. She does this as much to protect the owners as for her own safety.

Andrea has a complex rerouting system set up on her building Matrix node to try and keep it anonymous. She has layered the node to try to keep her sensitive information secret. The first few layers have a Track 4 program and sound alerts if intruders are noticed. If anyone penetrates deeper, they run Black Hammer 4 IC. If a system alert is triggered, it also triggers motion detectors on her neighbor's side of the building, and they send an alert to Knight Errant.

ARES R&D BUILDING

The R&D facility is a five story building in Auburn. The security is good, but the building isn't used for any particularly sensitive data so the guards have begun to believe that no one would ever want to break into the building. The whole first floor is lobby and reception area. The main entrance is two glass doors a few steps above street level. The door is activated by RFID tag. Visitors have to use a separate door about fifteen feet to the right that requires being buzzed in, as there is no way to activate the maglock from the outside. There are cameras on both doors that are constantly monitored by personnel in the control room in the basement.

The visitor's door goes into a check-in room where the person is asked their reason for visit, their SIN is checked, and a metal and MAD scan is done (both scanners are Rating 5). Once the runners pass through this security checkpoint, they are given a visitor's badge that they have to wear at all times. This badge broadcasts a RFID signal for tracking and is also hardened.

The main lobby has a security guard behind a monitoring station who greets anyone coming into the building. If the person is a visitor, he asks them if they need any directions. There is a bank of three elevators and a stairwell at the far end of the lobby. In between the first and second elevator is a directory of each floor. If they check, they find that Will Austin is on the third floor.

Floors two through five all have the same floor plan. The elevators and stairwell open into a reception space where there is a desk for a floor secretary who is there during normal working hours Monday through Friday. There is a short hallway that leads back to the main part of the floor. On each side of the hallway is a door. Behind the door on the left is for a break room and vending machines. The door on the right leads to the office supplies for the floor. There are additional cameras in the hallway and RFID monitors to make sure that visitors are going where they said they were supposed to be and haven't gotten lost. After the hallway it opens up into a large cubicle area where the low-level engineers and secretaries have their desks. Around the perimeter of this area are the offices of the senior engineers. Each room has a maglock that is activated by a keycard. On the fifth floor they have an additional palm scan for the doors.

Matrix security is handled by an on-duty spider (use Professional Spider, p. 68, *Unwired*). He monitors the main public node, the security node, and the data storage nodes for suspicious activity and proper operation. The security node is running Blackout 4 IC to help protect the system while the data storage uses monitoring software and honeypots to trap intruders.

Magical security consists of two spirits of air (Force 3) that patrol the building looking for any active spells or magical activity. Anyone who has active spells on them is reported to the on-call Ares mage (use CorpSec Lieutenant, p. 282, *SR4A*) who then come to investigate in person.

There is a squad of five security guards physically on site. One is in the monitoring station in the lobby. One is always with the security spider in the control room. During normal working hours, one of the guards does hourly sweeps of the building, while two are stationed at the visitor check-in station. After hours, one guard is constantly patrolling the building; there is an additional guard in the lobby and in the control center.

RENRAKU R&D FACILITY IN BELLEVUE

The R&D facility is where Renraku holds some of its up-and-coming engineers. Renraku managers know that not only is it important for the company to keep their assets safe, but it is also just as important that the employees feel they have a safe and productive work environment. The lobby of the six-story building has a clean functional look, but it hides a top-of-the-line security system.

Physical security on the building consists of cameras in all public areas as well as the doors into the facility, including the one in from the parking garage. Each of the doors uses a keycard and keypad combination where the RFID from the keycard is matched with the access number punched into the keypad. Entrance into the parking garage is through a gated stop where a guard compares an ARO with individual's name and photo to the list of employees and the RFID signal that the vehicle is transmitting. In order to access the elevator or stairwell a keycard is again used. Going above the fourth floor requires a retinal scan.

Matrix security consists of an on-duty spider doing over-watch with Scan 4 and Track 4 programs in the public nodes. The security nodes are protected by Blackout 4 IC.

Magical security is complicated by the fact that magical research is conducted on the top floor that is protected by a Force 4 wards. The rest of the building is patrolled by a Force 4 spirit of man.

RED ROBIN APARTMENTS

This apartment building is in a high-lifestyle neighborhood where several of the buildings are owned by Renraku for use by its rising-star employees. One of the unassuming buildings on the corner is a response station that houses a Fast Response Team for the neighborhood.

The basement garage is two levels and is only accessible from the street via the gated driveways. The RFID tag on the car automatically activates the gate, while facial scans verify the identities of drivers and passengers.

The front door has a keypad and keycard reader combo, where the person has to swipe the card and then punch in the correct numbers. This entrance has three separate camera angles on it, including one from just above the keypad. There is also an intercom to buzz someone in the apartments so they can let you in.

The lobby is an unassuming fifteen-foot by fifteen-foot room. The doorman scans the IDs of anyone entering the building and asking who visitors are there to see. The system tells him who buzzed visitors, so his question serves as confirmation. He then gives visitors a temporary badge that they have to wear while



they are in the building. The only visible exits are the elevators and stairwell. There are two chairs in one corner for people to wait in, and behind them is a hidden door in the wall (Protection + Intuition (4) to notice it) that security personal to use to gain access to the lobby from the control room.

The control room is manned by two guards and a security spider (for the guards, use Corporate Security Unit, p. 281, *SR44*; for the security spider, use Professional Spider, p. 68, *Unwired*). The guards are to sound an alert and notify the response team that they have an intruder. One guard does hourly patrols, while the other stays with the security spider. Each main hallway has a system for flooding the hallway with gas. In case of an intruder, the security spider announces that everyone should stay in their apartments, and then he floods the hallway with neuro-stun gas if he knows where the intruders are.

The public matrix node has a sub node that controls all of the cameras in public areas. There is another node hidden off of this one that controls the public door locks and elevators. Hidden off this node is the one controlling the gas dispersion system.

Magical security is a patrolling spirit of water that notes any Awakened individuals and reports information on their aura to the mage. The mage then logs it; if he feels it is out of the ordinary, he investigates himself. If the spirit notes several magical beings together or several active foci, he scrambles the response team and then investigates.

PEOPLE

VINNY MCDUGAL

Male human

Just over two meters in height Vinny McDougal tends to blend into a crowd—unless he's in a group where he would stick out because of his lack athleticism. He has always enjoyed working with numbers, and up until now he has been a model employee. He noticed recently, though, that people hired after him seemed to be advancing through the corporate ranks faster than he did, and he started to feel embittered. When he was approached by the Prospector about a large payment for what seemed like a little work, he jumped on it without thinking the whole situation through. Now that he is enmeshed in the trouble, he is starting to panic.

McDougal is a second-generation Ares employee, and both his father and mother still work for the company. His personal file shows nothing out of the ordinary, going all the way back to when he was in an Ares-sponsored school.

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|----|
| 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 9/10

Armor (B/I): 0/0

Skills: Accounting (professional skill) 4, Computer 2, Etiquette (Corporate) 1 (+2), First Aid 1, Hacking 1, Hardware 2, Negotiation 1, Software 1

Gear: Commlink (Device Rating 2)

Weapons: none

ALEX SMITH (THE PROSPECTOR)

Male human

Alex Smith isn't anything special when you first look at him, but once he engages you in conversation, you quickly want to become friends with him. An easy outgoing personality has made him a great information broker, and his average looks help him blend in and stay out of the corporations' sights. He is not a complicated person—he pays for expensive information, then makes back his costs by selling it for more than he paid. He isn't looking to double-cross anyone—he believes his integrity will lead to business from repeat customers in the future.

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|----|
| 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 5.6 | 8 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 9/10

Armor (B/I): 0/0

Skills: Electronics skill group 3, Influence skill group 3, Palming 2, Perception 3, Pistols (Tasers) 2 (+2), Running 3

Qualities: First Impression

Augmentations: Tailored pheromones 2

Gear: Commlink (Device Rating 3)

Weapons:

Defiance EX Shocker [Taser, 8S(e), AP -half, SS, RC —, 4(m)]

ANDREA CHO

Female dwarf

Growing up an Asian dwarf made Cho's life anything but easy. She quickly decided that she needed to find a job where she wouldn't be judged by what she looked like. Working as a fact checker and researcher for the city government has given her that anonymity. She has realized that no one cares what she looks like as long as she does her job. That was nice as far as it went, but after a certain amount of time on the job, Cho decided she wanted more. She started blogging a few months ago, and when the Excalibur project started to go wrong she was there to lead the crusade to expose it. This has made her feel more alive she has ever been, and she is thinking about quitting her day job to do it full time.

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|----|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/10

Armor (B/I): 5/3

Skills: Cybercombat 2, Electronics skill group 3, Electronics Warfare 2, Influence skill group 1, Perception 3, Pistols 1

Qualities: Day Job, SIN

Gear: Commlink, Auctioneer business clothing

Weapons:

Defiance Protector [Taser, DV 6S(e), AP -half, SA, RC —, 3(m)]



WILL AUSTIN'S CO-WORKER

Male human

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|------|----|
| 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5.1 | 8 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Armor (B/I): 0/0

Skills: Data Search 1, Engineering 5, Etiquette (Corporate) 1 (+2), Negotiation 1, Perception 3

Qualities: SIN

Augmentations: Encephalon 1, math SPU

Gear: Commlink (Device Rating 3)

Weapons: none

PETER TRELLIS

Male dwarf

Peter Trellis is an up-and-coming scientist with Renraku. He enjoys his job and the perks that come with it. He knows that Renraku values his ability, and he has used leveraged that into getting a few extra benefits like his own car and a home in the Red Robin Apartments. He recently met Veronica Andrews and has fallen head over heels for her. She is, however, still secondary to his love for his work and the company. If he found out she was assigned to him as additional security, he would feel betrayed by both her and the company.

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|---|-----|------|------|----|
| 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 5(7) | 3 | 2 | 4.15 | 8 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/10

Armor (B/I): 0/0

Skills: Armorer 2, Con 1, Data Search 2, Engineering 3, Etiquette (Corporate) 1 (+2), Metallurgy 2, Negotiation 3, Perception 3

Qualities: SIN

Augmentations: Cerebral booster 2, encephalon 2, math SPU

Gear: Commlink (Device Rating 3)

Weapons: None

VERONICA ANDREWS

Female human

Veronica Andrews has been assigned to be additional security for Peter Trellis and to ensure his loyalty before he is offered further promotions. She has done her job well and integrated herself into Peter's life. She has found nothing out of the ordinary, but she has been delaying making her final recommendation because she knows that her next assignment probably won't be quite so pleasant. She has enjoyed the higher lifestyle that she has been living the last few months in the Red Robin Apartments, but that's the extent of her attachment to the job—she feels nothing for Trellis.

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|------|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|----|
| 4 | 5 | 4(6) | 3 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 7(9) | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/10

Armor (B/I): 5/3

Skills: Automatics 2, Clubs 3, Con 3, Data Search 2, Disguise 2, Dodge 2, Etiquette (Corporate) 1 (+2), First Aid 2, Leadership 1, Negotiation 3, Palming 2, Perception 3, Pistols 3, Shadowing 2

Qualities: Lightning Reflexes, SIN

Augmentations: Cybereyes [Rating 2, w/ flare compensation, low-light vision, vision enhancement 2, vision magnification]

Gear: Actioneer business clothes, commlink (Device Rating 3)

Weapons:

PPSK-4 Collapsible Machine Pistol [Machine Pistol, DV 4P, AP —, SA/BF, RC (1), 30(c), w/ folding stock, laser sight]



... LIGHTS OUT ...

Incoming Message

- Sometimes it's nice to drop little comparative tidbits like this here on JackPoint. I pulled the S-K release from a public site where it was buried in a bunch of other boring releases about their great works going on around the world. The second item came from a somewhat reliable source I won't name. And no, it wasn't Plan 9.
- FastJack

Saeder-Krupp power lights Bogotá

Saeder-Krupp is proud to announce two months of successful continuous power service to much of Bogotá. Despite the war that still rages, S-K Bogotá Energy has been able to keep the lights on through much of Bogotá and is planning to expand service once their Rio Curubita Hydroelectric Power plant is brought fully online. When this facility reaches full power, the entire city of Bogotá will have deliverable power for the first time not just since the start of the war between Aztlan and Amazonia, but for the first time since the tactical strikes on the tempo production facilities.

Saeder-Krupp has managed to purchase and repair three major power facilities in the region and owns two others that it is working diligently to re-commission. This revitalization of the power delivery in the region, along with extensive work on the infrastructure, has been a major boon for the citizenry and for the megacorporation. Once all the facilities are up and running, S-K will be producing enough power for everyone in Bogotá, and their efforts to improve the infrastructure may result in all the city being lit up soon.

- Corporate spin. They can put power plants online all they want, but the delivery infrastructure still sucks. There will be plenty of dark areas for the foreseeable future.
- Marcos

S-K has been focusing primarily on the regions near the production facilities but has also run a series of tests on more remote areas to test their burgeoning infrastructure. The company has had a few setbacks early on as locals displayed trepidation in allowing another company, especially one with a dragon in charge, to work in their streets and homes. Those early issues have long since been forgotten as power flowed into homes all over Zona Sur, home of the Bogotá Natural Gas power plant.

Bringing power to the less affluent neighborhoods of Bogotá has definitely cast S-K in a good light, and their billing policy has earned even more good will. The corporation funds their efforts primarily through government and corporate facility contracts and charges the citizens of Bogotá nothing for the delivery of electric services. The occupants of Zona Sur have also gained employment from the company during the reconstruction process, and more work is to come as they shift efforts to the two remaining stations they own.

Megacorporations Are Not Charities

Posted on *BolivarBlog*, 11.12.73

Nothing's free. We've heard it before and we all know it's true. No matter what the ads say or how slick the pitch sounds, there is always a catch to anything you get for free.

The citizens of Bogotá are currently enjoying "free" power from the new power facilities that S-K has repaired in the area. The locals are blinded by the bright lights and warm water, and most of them are paying no attention to the real cost of these amenities. Some people, though, have seen the truth. Dr. Carolyn Feuerkopf worked at the Bogotá Natural Gas Power plant, or "El Castillo Negro" as the locals call it, but she has since left the company under less-than-pleasant circumstances when she asked a few too many questions for her corporate masters' liking. She had some folks grab a few documents from her system when she left, and she fed me the following info.





From: Dr. C. Feuerkopf,
Assistant Primary Chemical Analysis Engineer
To: Hermann Uelsch,
Director of Operations, S-K Bogotá Energy

Director,

According to the most recent analysis readings we are producing cyclobenzaprinoxide in quantities too large for the filters to handle. The filtration systems are currently at maximum capacity, with only forty-five percent power output from the Thermodyjunction (TD) generators. If the facility were to increase output as outlined in your latest report, we would be risking extensive health risks for the local population. Additionally, damage to the local ecosystem could be catastrophic.

I recommend we instead shift the increase in required output to the solar array. As it is currently operating at only three percent of its output capacity, the required output increase should be easy for it to deliver. This shift should cover the increased output requirement being placed on us by local customers until the Rio Curubita (RC) facility can come fully online.

Also, the RC chemical analysis numbers seem a little off. The output of tetrabenzol and hexabenzylene listed are not showing up at all in the local water samples we were sent for analysis. These two compounds should be at minimum 25ppm and have been authorized safe up to 250ppm. Unless the facility has not been running its test cycles or performing minimal output tests, this is simply not possible. I recommend additional test samples be gathered and sent.

From: Hermann Uelsch,
Director of Operations, S-K Bogotá Energy
To: Dr. C. Feuerkopf,
Assistant Primary Chemical Analysis Engineer

Dr. Feuerkopf,

Re: TD generators—Your analysis will be taken into consideration in future output alteration decisions.

Re: RC chemical analysis—A security team will arrive at 0800 tomorrow to escort you to RC facility for sample gathering.

That security detail arrived, all right. They took the good doctor and tried to drown her at the Rio Curubita facility. The doctor told me that some kind of oversize piranha attacked the security man trying to drown her, and she bolted into the jungle. She managed to get a sample of the water from the lake at the RC facility. Her analysis put the tetrabenzol and hexabenzylene numbers at around 10,000 ppm—that's freakin' toxic, for those of you who don't speak chemical. I'm guessing that's only the first part of the price we have to pay for S-K's generosity.

- I've done some work down in the general vicinity of that plant, and this guy's right. The area around the plant looks okay, but some of the things living there are seriously otherworldly. I'm not saying aliens, or even some weird spirits—just abnormal.
- Picador
- I've spent a considerable amount of time doing astral scans for patrols and other movement along the rivers around Bogotá for different local organizations over the past few months, and I have to agree with this fellow's assessment of fishy activity. The area around Rio Curubita is slowly getting more and more tainted. If I were a betting man, I'd put money on that facility being the cause. And I am, in fact, a betting man, but I can't find anybody willing to put money on the other side.
- Winterhawk
- The whole S-K operation in Bogotá is a sham. They're using the place for secret project testing while the war makes a nice cover and their humanitarian efforts offer a smokescreen.
- Plan 9
- It's not a sham—it's exactly what it seems to be. A ploy to build goodwill with the natives while muscling their way to a utility monopoly while despoiling the environment at the same time.
- Ecotope

OVERVIEW

The city of Bogotá has been through a lot, and it's still in the middle of most of it. The Az-Am war still spills over into its streets on a daily basis. The drug cartels still fight each other for supremacy in the streets and in the fields, even after some areas were bombed into oblivion for their part in tempo production. Mercenary units fill bars between assignments in the bush, working for one side or the other—sometimes each one on alternate days. And megacorporations still look for a way to make a buck off the misery of others.

Saeder-Krupp has put millions of nuyen into utilities infrastructure of Bogotá. This investment has resurrected three

power plants, and many areas of the city are finally beginning to receive regular power. The citizens were leery at first of having another dragon's talons in the mix of Bogotá, but reliable warm showers and access to electricity can go a long way to calming worries. In just the few months since they first put boots on the ground inside the Bogotá Natural Gas Power Plant, the German industrial giant has managed to not only get that plant up and running, but two other hydroelectric power plants in other areas of the city are also pumping out the megawatts. These efforts have not been unhindered, but Lofwyr has put enough security forces in place to handle everything the feral city has thrown at them.

But in the tumultuous world of 2073, wherever there is one dragon having some success, there is another dragon that doesn't

want that success to continue. Hestaby has taken an interest in Lofwyr's success in this area and wants the S-K leader's supposed benevolence to be exposed as the malevolence everyone should have known it was from the start. If she can't expose the truth, she'll go for the next best thing—making it *look* like Lofwyr had some malicious, Machiavellian, scheme full of ulterior motives and plots to subjugate the people of Bogotá.

The truth of the matter is, Lofwyr isn't here just for the people, but neither is he here to subjugate Bogotá. The dragon has simply spotted an area where his company's expertise in heavy industry and infrastructure design could pay off with a relatively small initial investment. By redeveloping the power grid for the city, S-K will have a strong foothold in the area after the war ends. If the war goes poorly and the region doesn't recover, the power facilities provide a decent cover for some less-than-legal activities while the opportunity exists.

Hestaby is aware of the power production of the facilities, but not the full extent of Lofwyr's plans. She has heard rumors and suspects that a fellow dragon would have more going on than meets the eye, but these are not the things that concern her. Hestaby wants to disrupt S-K's power delivery while also causing some good old-fashioned civil unrest to generate a fine quantity of bad news for Lofwyr. If the runners manage to locate additional bad PR for Saeder-Krupp in the form of revealing illicit activities, that'll just be the cherry on top of the sundae.

PLOT POINT ONE

The first step is to go to Bogotá and get started. There are not many good reasons to go to Bogotá. The team can be looking for somewhere to lie low, or they may be seeking new work opportunities after ruining things in another city. The team could be a merc-runner outfit taking work in their normal area of operations or an outfit looking to expand into a new area. The team just needs to be willing to take a break from the big city or deep bush and get themselves lost in the warzone that is Bogotá.

The team is contacted by their fixer, who mentions some devious South American operations. They need to meet with Mr. Johnson at a private hanger at their local major airport, and they need to be fully prepared for international travel. The job entails an extended trip to South America where they will perform a series of operations for their employer while maintaining as low a profile as possible. Mr. Johnson is happy to provide transportation to Guaymaral Airport in Bogotá's Zona Norte and a name, Diablo Tigre, who is a local who will give them their instructions, which is to travel to a place called the Azure Macaw. Once on the ground in Bogotá, the runners have no further contact with Mr. Johnson and instead deal solely with Diablo Tigre.

Once the runners are settled in country, their first meeting with Diablo Tigre is a bit rough. Diablo Tigre is a wanted local who lives in the slums of Zona Sur. He is a very charismatic ork and has a lot of pull in his neighborhood, as well as in many of the other poorer areas of the city. Charisma does not always generate fans though—it can also generate jealousy. Another local leader has decided to give Aztlan an anonymous tip on where to locate Diablo Tigre. He is currently trying to avoid El Sangre Santos, a local gang who has been paid to deliver his head (for gang

members, use Triad Posse, p. 284, *SR4A*; replace Ceska Black Scorpion and lined coat with Colt Cobra and armored vest).

The team needs to convince him that they are not part of the group hunting him, and then they need to protect him from a group of the gangers who arrive during the initial meeting at the Azure Macaw. The fact Diablo Tigre is willing to stage the meeting even while he's being hunted should be an indication of the seriousness of the mission and the people behind it.

After saving Diablo Tigre, the team receives their first operational orders. Their mission is a reconnaissance of all three of the Saeder-Krupp power-generating facilities in and near Bogotá. There is one natural gas power plant located in Zona Sur and two hydroelectric power plants, one in Zona Norte and the other south of Bogotá proper near Rio Curubita. The team is expected to bring back a full report, including security details (guard numbers, drones, nodes, patrols, locks, entry protocols, etc.) and a map of the outside of the facilities for each location (see descriptions of the plants later in this chapter). Internal maps are not expected, but if the team can figure out a way to get them without being detected, they will be useful later. Diablo Tigre emphasizes that the team's employer does not want a bloodbath or massive ecological disaster on their hands. The team needs to avoid civilian and ecological casualties as much as possible. S-K personnel are fair game, however, as they are corporate employees working in a warzone and should understand the risks.

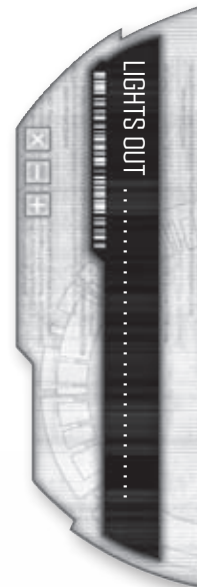
After these missions are complete, the team is told to lay low. They are expected to keep a low profile and go unnoticed in Bogotá. Diablo Tigre can provide a safe house in Zona Sur, or the team can try to arrange for quiet places to stay while they wait for their next assignment. The putative safe house is the remains of a bombed-out KondOrchid warehouse that was used to store and process tempo. The place has a background count of 1 and tends to attract a larger-than-average number of Awakened critters.

PLOT POINT TWO

The team only has two days of downtime before they receive their next set of orders. The security at the three facilities has been evaluated, and their employer thinks the security at the facility to the south is the lightest, making it the best candidate for a break-in. The team needs to infiltrate the S-K facility at Rio Curubita to the south and perform three tasks: cut the power to Zona Centrico, plant a back door into the hardwired security system, and create some form of negative publicity at, or related to, the site.

The first problem the team will have is getting into the facility. Security being the laxest of the three is a relative matter, and the truth is that none of the three spots are easy pickings. One of the biggest reasons this place has the weakest security is because S-K considers the jungle and terrain surrounding the facility as a portion of its security. The team needs to traverse a few miles of jungle or face some rough river rapids to get close to the facility to make the break-in. Once the team is near the facility, they have to avoid some local flora and fauna that could put a serious cramp in their recon efforts.

The area around this facility is surrounded by Sangre del Diablo trees (see p. 26, *War!*). These wretched carnivorous trees surround the facility at the base of the waterfall. The approach



from above is a steep climb made more difficult by a pack of blood monkeys (see p. 96) that attack the group when they start to climb. The team needs to find a way to keep the monkeys off their backs if they want to approach from above or find a way to avoid the Sangre Del Diablo trees below. The security and staff of the facility come in and out via air transport, so they never face the wilds.

Inside the facility the team needs to stay out of sight or manage a solid disguise to avoid detection. The staff inside this facility is very close-knit due to the distance from the city and the limited access to the plant. This means a disguise needs to resemble a member of the facility staff, a well-documented visitor, or perhaps a local senior executive.

Cutting the power to Zona Centrico requires access to the facility's power-control node, which is not a wireless node and is accessed only through the facility's main control room. This node is hardwired to the security node here and has a dedicated satellite connection to the security node at the other facilities. The team's hacker can get to work in the node and insert a back door program while the other team members prepare to cut power to Zona Centrico.

The tough part here is the design of the nodes and the security setup inside the computer system. S-K's Matrix Security Specialist for this facility is an old-school guy—so old school he still likes to call his team “deckers.” The system and its nodes are set up as a series of interconnected nodes, each of which has to be accessed individually through dedicated gateways. This design is particularly uncomfortable for technomancers because there is a sense of claustrophobia in the nodes and a feeling of limitation. This comes on top of the fact that the area has only a very small mesh network of the employees' commlinks. The nodes in the facility are as follows:

- **Security Processing:** Response 4, Signal 1, Firewall 3, System 4
- **Primary Access:** Response 4, Signal 3, Firewall 3, System 5
- **Power Controls:** Response 4, Signal 0, Firewall 6, System 3
- **Facility Records:** Response 4, Signal 1, Firewall 4, System 3
- **Facility Security:** Response 4, Signal 1, Firewall 5, System 4
- **Special Projects:** Response 4, Signal 1, Firewall 5, System 4
- **IC:** All nodes have Black Hammer 5 installed.

The last objective of the mission is the most open-ended. The team needs to figure out a way to stage some form of event that will generate bad press. They need to either create the event and record it themselves to release to the news networks, or they need to do something so big that no one can miss it. The power plant and the free electricity it supplies are already in the news when the power disruption occurs, so secondary effects based on the power outage are a possibility the runners can work with. There are some limits to what can happen, though, as Hestaby doesn't want their efforts to damage the environment. The team could forget about that aspect of their rules of engagement and create a small (or large) environmental accident. This accident could be a release of chemical by-products downstream or a release of some of the test subjects into the down-river water supply.

PLOT POINT THREE

The third strike against the local S-K power structure takes place at the Santa Cecilia hydroelectric plant in Zona Norte. The team needs to infiltrate this facility and steal or destroy a set of filters from one of the generator systems. The filters are intended to minimize certain chemical run-off into some local water supplies. The chemical isn't a deadly toxin, but it causes diarrhea and vomiting in anyone who ingests it. The effect isn't long-lasting enough to cause major damage, but it should be a PR nightmare for S-K as they have to replace the filters and supply the local populace with clean fresh water. As a secondary objective, the team is given another program to install on this location's hardwired system.

The problem with all of this is that Hestaby's information on the chemical and the filters is outdated or incorrect. Saeder-Krupp has been experimenting with other cheaper chemicals in their systems. The filters still work to clean out the chemicals before they run-off, but the chemical the company is currently using is pure poison. The team gets a few clues as to the change (for example, they could see an employee who accidentally comes in contact with the water being rushed to decontamination), but no matter what they find out they have a problem to solve. If they realize the problem early, they need to decide whether they are going to go ahead with the job or scrap it and hope their employer was more serious about not injuring the locals than they were about doing this job. If they don't realize what they are doing, they unleash this hazard on the locals and are going to have a secondary mission after their employer finds out what's going on. At that point, they need to replace the filters or shut down the plant and stop the chemical from being released.

This means the team needs to break into this facility twice after already having broken into another S-K facility in the past week. Security becomes increasingly tight with each successive break-in. During the second break-in at Zona Norte, the runners find a few new security features in place. This facility has pulled in some combat-trained assets, including a barghest trainer with his four hounds (see p. 299, *SR4A*) and an on-site mage specializing in aura identification (use Security Mage, p. 147).

The chemicals start affecting the locals about forty-eight hours after the filters are removed. During this time, the facilities increase security and the mage starts performing aura scans of all the regular employees at the facility. Once the locals, possibly including the runners if they are holed up in this area, start getting sick, the team receives another set of orders. They need to return the filters or steal a new set from a government warehouse that used to house parts for the hydroelectric plant when it was run by the government.

The warehouse is an easy B&E with only a local gang, El Sangre Santos again, to deal with. The team can try to make a deal with the gang, though if they killed any of them earlier in defense of Diablo Tigre this is not likely. The gang is willing to sell some of the old government equipment and parts, but a deal with them means the gang knows the runners' part in the filter incident, which could become an issue down the road.



PLOT POINT FOUR

The plot thickens as the presence of the team and the focus of their efforts becomes more obvious, thanks in part to word being spread by El Sangre Santos. S-K knows that their facilities here are under attack. They realize that even with the additional security they brought in, another break-in occurred. They know they need to be proactive to avoid future problems. As the team waits for their next set of orders, the net closes in around them. The team's interaction with the locals and their own security setup should determine the situation when they are set upon by an S-K strike team.

If the team has truly laid low and had no interaction with the locals, the strike team does a lot of looking around, risking exposure while they search. If the team has done much talking to the locals, the strike team is able to find the team quickly. If the team has had good interactions with the locals, they may contact the team to warn them that trouble is on the way.

When the strike team arrives, they come hard, fast, and like true pros. The S-K team mage performs a quick astral scan of the runner team's hideout and gives his bound spirits orders to attack when the assault begins. The strike team rigger goes on high overwatch with a blimp and provides close fire-support with two rotodrones. He issues orders before the attack to the rotodrones to attack anyone leaving the building that is not transmitting the proper RFID. The rigger maintains line-of-sight with the blimp to use a microwave transmitter to keep communications up while activating an area jammer to send in with the assault team.

Leading with smoke and flash-bangs, the assault team comes in with full tactical awareness of the situation. They hit from three entry points with two-man teams that work to cover every angle. The teams act in unison, with one member providing suppressive fire and tactical support while the second takes precision shots to drop targets. The attack is a demonstration of S-K's efficiency. The efficiency is not deadly, though, since they fire nothing but non-lethal ammunition. They want to question the team once they have neutralized them and find out who is behind the attacks on their facilities.

If the team gets captured, they aren't out of the fight yet. After interrogating the team for a few days, S-K lets them go. The team is told they are indebted to S-K, and the favor will be called in soon. They're warned that if they choose to flee Bogotá, S-K has long arms. Travelling just transfers their debt to another office. After their release, local S-K security keeps a closer eye on them to either verify their story if they spilled their guts, or to follow them in order to discover their real masters.

PLOT POINT FIVE

The team has been exposed, but their benefactor still wants one last big mission from them. They have been installing programs into the S-K systems that will finally be put to good use. The runners receive another series of assignments. The first thing they need to do is make contact with three other local leaders who are loosely aligned with Diablo Tigre. Second, they need to make one last visit to one of the local power stations and transmit an activation code to the programs they have hidden. The third part of this final mission is to act as protection for Diablo Tigre as the mob moves through the city.

The team needs to deliver a message to three other local leaders from Diablo Tigre about a demonstration and rally against corporate interests invading their neighborhoods. The message is a cover to get groups out in the street. Diablo Tigre has a plan that requires the masses to be on the streets.

To complicate this simple errand, the three leaders don't trust the runners, and they are surrounded by trigger-happy thugs who are only too happy to shoot a bunch of outsiders. If the team gets into a fight with a group of the thugs the leader won't take their message. Diablo Tigre needs at least two of the three leaders bringing people to the rally in order to have enough bodies to make his plan work.

Phase two is another break-in, but this time the team doesn't need to be stealthy, and collateral damage at one of the facilities is acceptable as long as it doesn't spill over to effect the locals. The team only needs to get access to one of the hardwired computers within the facility and put in the activation code for the programs they previously implanted. When the program activates, it copies itself throughout the system and starts to create a series of power surges, outages, and transfers in a preprogrammed order. Security spiders will need to deal with dozens of copies of the agent program all backing each other up and reloading to stay active in the systems.

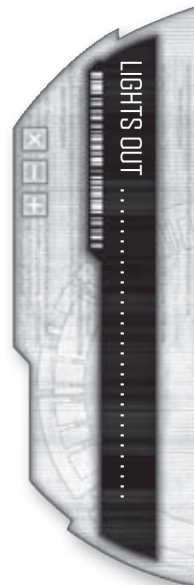
After they have inserted and activated the program, the runners need to meet Diablo Tigre at the rally and get ready to provide security. Diablo Tigre already has three local thugs, but he knows they will be excitedly joining the rioting and mayhem once the blackouts start. The rally is occurring near Simon Bolivar Park and currently has about two hundred participants, with more on the way.

As the team is getting into place with Diablo Tigre, the power goes out in the area around the park. The rally emits a brief cheer, but then they see the power to the south in Zona Sur starting to flicker. As the power in Zona Sur fades, electricity in the area of the park and the other nearby rich neighborhoods goes back on. Diablo Tigre then goes into action. He starts working the crowd up about how the wealthy residents stole the power of the poor, and that it was typical of the corporate scum to keep the lights on for the rich while leaving the masses in the dark. The rally group starts moving toward the rich neighborhoods thanks to the prodding and cajoling of Diablo Tigre.

Diablo Tigre is the determining factor of the team's fate through the riot. He doesn't really need the team as security—he has an entire mob under his sway—but he wants them with him during the riot in case he needs to dispose of them during this unfortunate event. If they have followed the rules and desires set forth by Hestaby, they will be rewarded as expected. If they have broken Hestaby's requirements (no murder, no polluting, no severe environmental damage, etc.) the leader tries to turn the rioters on them—he labels them as S-K corporate spies and tells the crowd to have at them.

The power outages continue as the group progresses closer and closer to the rich neighborhoods, and the power goes out in those neighborhoods just as the rioters arrive. The city won't gain power again for at least twelve hours, and during that time much of the work done by S-K will have been undone by the continuing series of riots.

If the team was under surveillance by S-K after being captured, they encounter additional trouble during the riot. The





INCOMING FEED.....

S-K security team watching them executes their plan. First, they will call up some plainclothes security team members to slip into the rally and get into position near the group. Then they send a message to every member of the team saying, “Kill Diablo Tigre NOW!” If the team attacks or kills Diablo Tigre, the mob turns on them, and the S-K security team helps the rioters attempt to kill the runners. If they do not attack Diablo Tigre immediately, the security team attacks both them and Diablo Tigre.

LOCATIONS

BOGOTA NATURAL GAS POWER PLANT

This facility is more than just a power plant. Saeder-Krupp bought the plant and the area directly around the plant to provide a large staging point for their activities in Bogotá as well as a location to build housing for key employees. The entire compound is surrounded by a four-meter-tall ferrocrete wall, which is three meters inside a three-meter-tall fence topped with monowire. The wall has guard towers at least every one hundred meters, with two at the front gate. Locals have started to call the plant “El Castillo Negro”—the black castle—due to its imposing appearance. The wall also has a drone rail system that covers the entire perimeter. There is one armed drone (Ares Sentinal “R” Series drones mounted with AK-97 Carbines) for every fifty meters of wall, and the drones can converge on a single location if needed. The area between the fences is treated as a zero-zone—the simple fact of being there without authorization merits the death penalty.

The space between the fence and the wall is frequently patrolled by guard paranimals that vary by the time of day. The daytime patrol is usually packs of aardwolves (see p. 111, *Running Wild*) that use their natural concealment to stay hidden while on patrol. At night, the area is patrolled by a pack of hell hounds (see p. 300, *SR4A*) who detect threats with their naturally enhanced senses and astral perception. The hell hounds maintain the same zero zone policy astrally, attacking anything that enters the compound inside the fence. Airspace around the facility is constantly filled with armed drones and sensor-equipped blimps. The grounds of the entire compound are patrolled by metahuman guards (all cybered and former military) and drones, including steel lynxes and dobermans. Use Elite Corporate Security Unit, p. 140, for these guards).

This facility has a large number of non-resident workers who do not live inside the compound. They all receive RFID-tagged badges that they must wear at all times. Anyone inside the facility who is detected without an RFID is given a single warning in English, German, Spanish, and AR symbolism to stop and get on the ground before the drones and guards open fire.

SANTA CECILIA HYDROELECTRIC POWER PLANT

Located in Zona Norte, near Santa Cecilia, just a few kilometers north of El Dorado Airport, this facility is the pride of S-K’s “greentech” power-generation systems. The facility claims to run solely off its own produced power and has zero negative emissions. The facility is not only hydroelectric, but contains solar cells and a new hydrothermal technology that generates energy

efficiently from the difference in temperature and heat absorption between water, ground, and air. This is a highly sought-after technology that S-K has not announced yet and is still testing at the facility. The truth of the matter is that the facility is only green because of internal processes at and around the plant that make it that way; the power generation is actually toxic before these processes are carried out.

This facility was built around an old water treatment plant and the surrounding wetlands. The large quantity of groundwater and stagnant water in the wetlands helps filter out some of the toxic materials used and produced by the plant. The water that is released into the wetlands has already been put through special filters within the plant that remove the majority of the toxins.

Security at this facility is tight since it is located within the city limits and has experimental and very valuable research going on. The physical security at the facility consists of three-man guard teams that patrol the entire property, wetlands, and facility grounds. They carry a full suite of detection equipment complete with thermal scanners, chemsniffers, motion sensors, and ultrasound equipment connected to a sophisticated analysis program. The same systems are also linked to a series of drones flying over the facility, including both sensor-equipped and armed lighter-than-air blimps. Rotodrones constantly patrol the airspace, and microsubmarine drones patrol below the waters of the wetlands. Due to the large number of drones and massive network in place, the facility has a larger-than-average number of Matrix security specialists on staff and working at all times.

RIO CURUBITA HYDROELECTRIC POWER PLANT

Located South of Bogotá near Rio Curubita, this facility is built around a large waterfall that flows into a small lake and then out into tributary rivers. This facility looks green but is actually spewing pollutants. The power-generation systems and testing going on at this plant are slowly turning the area around the site into a toxic swamp. The effects of the poisoning of the area, combined with the unnaturally fast growth rate of the rainforest in the area, has led to a larger-than-average number of mutations of local species, both animals and plants.

Of the three facilities, this one features the most lax security. This is caused by the distance from other civilized areas and the presence of a large number of natural defenses around the facility. The main structure of the facility is built into and around a cliff face next to the waterfall. This means the physical structures of the facility are bordered by a one-hundred-meter cliff, a lake, dense rainforest, and a second small manmade pond.

This facility has a small biological testing facility housed in a hidden complex behind the falls. The facility is accessible from inside the power plant and from a small narrow path that slips behind the falls and leads to a small maintenance entrance. The scientists at this facility are currently performing genetic modification tests to local aquatic species.

There are three test groups currently in progress: 1. A security piranha with increased sensory abilities, increased size, and a RFID detection system that prevents attacks made on properly identified personnel. 2. A river dolphin pod that is being modified

to survive in polluted waters so they can be used to recover equipment and material lost in the holding ponds and polluted areas. 3. An electric fish that can be used to store extra electrical runoff in biological battery tanks to use as back up power cells for short periods of time. The issue with the last creature is that they have the ability to discharge a shock powerful enough to knock out a troll. The piranha and river dolphins are kept in the small lake with RFID tags on the dolphins to prevent piranha attacks. There is an electric net in place across the areas where the river flows out into the tributaries. The electric fish are kept in the small manmade pond near the facility.

The building is constructed with older technologies to make it more waterproof. All of the external doors have tumbler locks, while all the inner doors are maglocked. The heavy moisture in the air has led to the growth of a slimy moss over the entire outside of the building that also prevents astral projection through the walls. The level of toxicity and associated background count in the area can be determined by the gamemaster based on the flavor and level of difficulty for the group.

PEOPLE

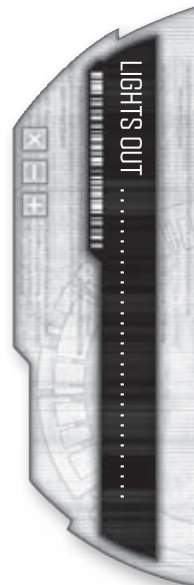
EL DIABLO TIGRE

The Devil Tiger is an ork with the force of personality of a Tír High Prince. He lives in the slums of Bogotá only because he has a conscience and a strong sense of right and wrong. He became involved with Hestaby during a prisoner exchange between the Yucatan Rebels and Aztlan in which he was a prisoner of Aztlan. Arleesh, a great feathered serpent and ally of Hestaby, came across a prisoner who refused to speak. He wasn't from the Yucatan and she couldn't figure out how he fit into the exchange, so after a week of trying politely to question him she stuck him in a crate and shipped him to Mt. Shasta.

Hestaby found the odd gift quite intriguing and continued the polite questioning. She assented the ork and discovered he was an adept, so she suspected his resistance was some form of adept power she hadn't seen in a long time. In the end it was not questioning or torture that made him speak, but instead an uncontrollable need to talk.

El Diablo Tigre had worked on the guards at his Aztlan prison to get him into an exchange with the rebels. The plan was to get in with the rebels and then get the hell back to Bogotá where he was from. He didn't expect to be facing a dracoform and became somewhat stuck between manipulating an underling and hoping not to get eaten if the serpent found out, or just waiting it out. For some reason, waiting it out seemed the better option.

By the time he reached Hestaby, this incessant talker had not said a word in weeks. The Orange Queen found him intriguing for a little while, but she eventually released her pet back into the wild. El Diablo Tigre found his way back to Bogotá and has since been working for Hestaby as a local contact for her agents. On his own time he works to rally the people of Bogotá against all forms of outside intervention. He has strong ties to Bogotá Libré and feels the city should be governed by its citizens and not by the corporations or foreign powers.



El Diablo Tigre

Male ork

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|------|
| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | M | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
| 7 | 4 | 4(5) | 7 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 8(9) | 1(2) |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 15/13

Armor (B/I): 8/6

Skills: Athletics skill group 3, Automatics (SMG) 2 (+2), Blades (Knives) 3 (+2), Con (Fast Talk) 5 (+2), Demolitions 1, Dodge 3, Escape Artist 1, Etiquette 5, First Aid 2, Infiltration 2, Leadership (Persuasion) 5 (+2), Navigation 3, Negotiation 5, Perception 3, Pilot Ground Craft 3, Pistols 2, Survival 3, Throwing Weapons 3, Unarmed Combat 4

Knowledge Skills: Amazonia Politics 3, Area Knowledge (Bogota) 2, Aztlan Politics 3, Bogotá Politics 3, Cartels (Bogotá) 4 (+2), South American Historical Art 4, Street Gangs (Bogotá) 3 (+2)

Languages: English 3, Esperanta N, Portuguese 3, Spanish 2

Qualities: Adept, Exceptional Charisma, First Impression

Initiate Grade: 3 (Speaker's Way)

Metamagic: Centering, cognition, flexible signature

Adept Powers: Commanding Voice, Enthralling Performance, Improved Ability (Con) (2), Improved Ability (Leadership) (2), Improved Reflexes (1), Indomitable Will (4), Kinesics (3), Supernatural Toughness (Stun 2, Physical 2), Voice Control

Gear: 80 rounds of EX-explosive Ammo, armor jacket, commlink (Device Rating 4), contacts [Rating 3, w/ image link, smartlink, thermographic vision), medkit (Rating 4), radio signal scanner, respirator (Rating 5)

Weapons:

Ruger Super Warhawk [Heavy Pistol, DV 6P, AP -2, SS, RC —, 6(cy), w/ concealable holster, smartgun, EX-explosive ammo]

Cougar Fineblade (longblade) [Blade, Reach 1, DV 6P, AP -2]

4 thermal smoke grenades [Grenade, DV —, AP —, Blast: 10m radius]

BLOOD MONKEY

The blood monkey is an Awakened monkey. Its name comes not only from its deep crimson color but also from its need to ingest blood. The monkey is not infected by HMHVV; it instead has a nutritional deficiency that is filled by blood. These animals travel in groups of four to twenty to hunt and will attack anything that they can make bleed. Their claws are razor-sharp and secrete an anti-coagulant that keeps wounds open and bleeding. The monkeys have an interesting tongue that has a hollow tube in the center they use to suck up blood from anywhere it spills. A few of these creatures have been trained and accompany local cartel members.

Rumors talk of the cartel members using the monkeys to clean up the blood after they kill or torture someone. Though the monkeys have an excellent sense of smell for blood, they are not good trackers as one blood source is as good as any other for them.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|------|----|
| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | M | Ess | Init | IP |
| 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 1 |

Movement: 15/30

Skills: Climbing 6, Jumping 4, Perception 3, Tracking (Smell) 3 (+2), Unarmed Combat 4

Powers: Confusion, Enhanced Senses (Smell (Blood), low-light vision), Natural Weapon (Claw, DV 4P, AP -2), Paralyzing Touch, Secretion (Anti-coagulant), Wall Walking

Weakness: Dietary Requirement (Blood)

LIGHTS OUT



... EVIDENCE OF BODIES ...

Incoming Message

September 4, 2073, 0910 hours, Pereira, Colombia

Aztechnology officer Manuel Sanchez was in a deep slumber when the barracks alarm sounded and jolted him and his fellow officers awake. “Frag it! Why can’t I get at least four hours of uninterrupted sleep for a change? Which freaking deity have I pissed off this time?”

As he staggered to put on his uniform and his armor, the intercom blared to life. “Attention, all personnel. An emergency situation has developed at the Teocalli de Tezcatlipoca. Massive violence and civilian casualties has been reported; Aztlan military personnel and local police are unavailable to respond. We have been asked to respond on their behalf. The 87th Aztechnology Security Company is deploying to answer that call. Five minutes to deployment. Grab your gear. This is not a drill. I repeat: this is not a drill. All able hands are ordered to report to the garage for immediate deployment.”

Sanchez grumbled to himself as he holstered his pistol and slipped in a new clip for his battle rifle. He did not mind responding to emergencies that were not Aztechnology’s. In fact, it gave him a sense of importance, a sense of duty. He felt patriotic knowing that he was answering his native nation’s call in its time of need. But going five straight nights with less than three hours of sleep, while putting in sixteen-hour shifts was killing him. And making him very grumpy. He could not wait for order to be finally restored to Pereira streets so he could finally get some decent rest.

Suited up in his riot armor, Sanchez joined the other AZT guards as they headed to the garage to load up in the Citymasters and deploy. As he marched down the corridor, he saw his sergeant barking out orders and directing the Aztechnology guards to their designated vehicles.

“What’s going on Sarge? Another riot?”

“We’re not sure. It seems to be too organized. From what’ve heard, some of the instigators are carrying heavier weapons than they’ve had before. Someone might be arming them.”

“Great. More antics from the CLM.”

“Maybe. You’re assigned to Citymaster four, Sanchez. Move your ass. You leave in three minutes.”

“Yes, sir.” As Sanchez strapped on his helmet, two large explosions hit, back to back, shaking the building like a one-two punch. Sanchez stumbled a few steps before the shockwave subsided. “What the fuck?”

“Attention all personnel,” announced the monotone voice over the intercom. “The barracks is under attack! Repeat, the barracks is under attack. Two car bombs have gone off; the perimeter fence has been breached. Steel Lynx drones are deploying. All personnel are ordered to take defensive positions to repel the attack. Scramble!”

Sanchez glanced at an overhead monitor to see what was happening outside. Dozens of rioters poured onto the barracks’ grounds, firing automatic weapons at the Steel Lynx drones. Molotov cocktails flew through the air, erupting in firebombs. The Aztlan and Aztechnology flags positioned at the front entrance were on the ground and in flames. Protesters clambered on the perimeter fence, posting protest signs: “We want our freedom!” “Death to Aztlan and Aztechnology!” “We want our country back!” More rioters flooded the grounds, and Sanchez’s stomach turned in a fiery contempt for them. *This is barbaric. The ingrates!* He grabbed his battle rifle, climbed the stairs to the third floor, and took a defensive position at a window. As he did so, he overheard the voice on the intercom announce, “You are in violation of Aztechnology’s sovereign, extraterritorial rights. Leave now. Lethal force has been authorized to deal with this incursion. You will receive no further warning.”

Sanchez smiled as he raised his rifle to his chest and switched off the safety. He could fire at will, and he’d do so happily, for both Aztlan and Aztechnology. *Time to deal with these traitors.*

For approximately one hour, the rioters outside attempted to rush the barracks. Sanchez and his fellow Aztechnology officers sprayed them with automatic gunfire and hit them with grenades, dropping dozens of rioters in the process and



pushing the rest of them back. But they simply wouldn't quit. Hundreds of people, swimming in a continually shifting sea of metahumanity, continued to press the attack, paying no attention to their own personal safety. When the guards attempted to deploy their forces outside of the barracks using the Citymasters, the heavily armored vehicles were immediately hit by multiple assault-cannon rounds, disabling them. Sanchez did his best to pick off the individuals with the assault cannons, but as soon as one fell, someone else picked up the weapon and disappeared into the crowd, only to reappear minutes later. Sanchez watched in horror as twelve of his fellow guards were pulled from their crippled vehicles and dragged into the crowd. Sanchez saw that a few had their helmets ripped off just before they were shot in the back of the head, execution style. Others were simply dragged off, probably to be interrogated and tortured. Sanchez shivered at that thought. As drones continued to drop off more ammo and mini-grenades for him, he continued firing indiscriminately into the crowd.

At one point, the rabid crowd seemed to recede, and Sanchez let himself breathe a sigh of relief. *It's finally ending.* But just then, a human man in his late 30s stepped into Sanchez's field of vision, snaking his way through the rioters. At first, Sanchez paid him no attention—he had no visible weapons and did not appear to be an immediate threat. That assessment

quickly changed, however, when the man started summoning spirit after spirit, sending them through shattered windows and into any areas where his fellow officers were putting up resistance. He heard screams coming from down the hallway, followed by dull thuds impacting the building's drywall. He didn't know what was happening, but he knew that his fellow officers were in trouble. Sanchez looked out into the crowd and realized that the man's actions were feeding the crowd, bolstering its resolve and sending them into a frenzy. Rioters charged the barracks again, and suddenly there seemed to be hundreds of them, surging like hungry rats, far outnumbering the bullets Sanchez or anyone else had. He needed to take the wind out of their sails; he needed that instigator dead. And so he lined up the shot, waited for the perfect moment, and he fired a full automatic burst at the man. The smartlink was the first to report that the shots struck their target. The man took eight bullets to the upper chest, two more to his face and head.

Sanchez looked up from his gun sight for a corpse ... and found the man staring back at him, with a face of searing hatred and rage, and coal black eyes.

Sanchez instantly froze. He knew who that man was, and the grave mistake he had made, as the booming voice tore through his mind, filled with obscenities and curses.

Oh crap...

OVERVIEW

Pereira, Colombia is not located anywhere near the frontlines of the Az-Am War, and one would not expect this city to experience similar difficulties to those found in Bogotá. Pereira is firmly within Aztlan control. And yet there are street protests and riots. There is unrest, swelling to the levels of uprisings. Pro-Amazonia movements are breaking out within the city as people look to be free of Aztlan rule. Aztlan and Aztechnology are doing everything in their power to quell this unrest and to return things to their version of normal. Groups like GreenWar and the Colombian Liberation Movement, on the other hand, will do whatever is in their power to make sure that doesn't happen.

This Colombian city is the site of two recent, brutal attacks; one on a major teocalli, another on an AZT Corporate Security barracks. The number of dead Aztlan and Aztechnology citizens is in the hundreds, and there is no shortage of potential groups that may have instigated the violence. Due to the unrest, however, neither Aztlan nor Aztechnology has the resources or the capabilities at the moment to investigate. The area in question is currently under insurgent control. If Aztlan or Aztechnology forces were to travel into those sections of the city, they will likely incite more violence. Shadowrunners have the best chance of getting into the area and performing the investigation that could uncover the culprits so that Aztechnology can take action against them.

When the runners investigate, they confront the shocking brutality of the attacks, but are likely concerned more about who

the evidence points to: Sirurg. This investigation should have the runners questioning whether they should remain loyal to their employer, who may be guilty of conspiring with Aztlan to perform blood magic and metahuman sacrifices, or risk crossing a great dragon; a dragon called the Destroyer who has recently added a new title: war criminal.

PLOT POINT ONE

Unrest in Pereira, Colombia

A job is posted on ShadowSEA, where one of the runners' fixers comes across it. It is a lucrative job offer for both the runners and for the fixer that finds the talent to fill this job, so the fixer is quite eager to bring it to the runners' attention. The fixers look to make a lot of nuyen off of this job, including access to such things as "real food" from Aztechnology subsidiaries (meat and fruit), so if the runners are hesitant to take this job, the fixer may choose to call in favor so they can collect on this potential windfall.

There have been significant attacks recently on Aztechnology interests in the city of Pereira, in the Aztlan-controlled section of Colombia. Due to reasons Mr. Johnson cannot disclose, Aztechnology is unable to physically investigate the attacks. Aztechnology needs shadowrunners to perform that service for them and find out who was responsible for the attacks. The initial attack was on a major teocalli while a ceremony was underway, an attack that left nearly two hundred civilians dead and three hundred seriously wounded. There was an attack shortly thereafter



on a nearby Aztechnology Corporate Security Forces barracks, which left another eighty Aztechnology security personnel dead. The Johnson asks the runners for their help to stop these terrorist attacks by finding the culprits.

If the runners do their research into the situation in Pereira, they do not learn much from the Aztlan-run media. From the state-run broadcasts, Pereira appears to be a perfectly content Aztlan city. Horizon-owned media outlets and underground newsnets all tell a different story about the city, however. For the last three weeks, the banned media outlets have reported that the population of Pereira has been in a state of uprising. Pro-Amazonian political factions have swelled in strength and number and have gained strong influence over the population. The fact that the population has been repeatedly victimized by Aztlan's continued abuses of the land surrounding Pereira, from illegal toxic waste dumps to chemical spills, is fueling the unrest. Aztlan and Aztechnology have devoted almost all their resources in the area to quashing this insurrection, but so far they haven't been completely successful. Martial law is currently enforced in the city. Traveling after sunset and before dawn can get people arrested, or even killed. All forms of identification (SINs, licenses, visas, permits, etc.) receive detailed scrutiny by military and security forces. The airport in Pereira is still open and secured by Aztlan forces, but the rampant insurrection threatens to change that.

Another piece of bad news for the runners is that the area where the attacks took place is currently under the control of the insurgents. Aztlan and Aztechnology will likely retake that part of Pereira, but it could take days or weeks. During that time, any evidence as to who might be responsible for those attacks might be lost in the rioting and looting. Blood is also being shed by the David cartel as it attempts to help Aztlan and Aztechnology maintain political power in Pereira and actively pursues political agitators. By keeping Aztlan and Aztechnology in power, the cartel ensures a friendly government that looks the other way during their criminal activities. The other ghost cartels, looking to strike down Aztlan's and Aztechnology's stranglehold over the city, are getting involved and feuding with the David cartel, leading to cartel fights breaking out across the city.

It should be very difficult to get to the location where the attacks took place. Roads have either been destroyed by fighting or have been blocked off by checkpoints from Aztechnology forces. They have been instructed not to let anyone into the area, with no exceptions. The streets that are still intact and are passable are in areas of the city struck by urban blight—meaning gangs, bandits, and large numbers of paranormal critters. The residents in those parts of Pereira are among the most poor of the city and the most desperate. They see anyone traveling in an operating vehicle as someone who has wealth and possibly food. The safest way to travel to the sites of the attacks could be through the sewer system. And even then, given Aztlan's and Aztechnology's poor safety record with disposing of toxic waste, the runners may face toxic and mutant critters in the sewers; anything ranging from devil and demon rats to shamblers. When the runners arrive at the site of the attacks, they are greeted by a grisly sight.

PLOT POINT TWO

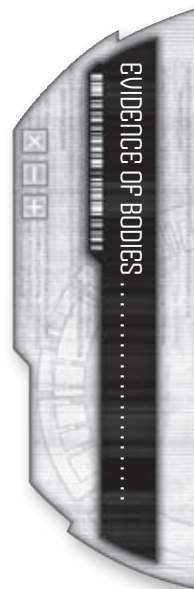
The Teocalli

When the runners arrive at the teocalli a few days after the attacks, they find that many of the remains of the deceased Aztlan citizens still litter the grounds, giving the air a strong stench of decomposition. The Aztechnology medical subsidiary, Medicarro, attempted to evacuate survivors, but it appears violence interrupted their efforts. Two dozen ambulances were either overturned or burned by rioters following the initial attack. Bodies of paramedics lie either inside or near their ambulances. Vehicles that were not burned were stripped of any medical supplies and tagged with anti-Aztlan and anti-Aztechnology slogans. Some of the bodies of the deceased have disappeared, likely taken by organleggers. Other bodies appear to have been fed upon shortly after the attacks, possibly by ghouls and other Infected. Many bodies with cyberware have been stripped of their augmentations, which means the runners won't be able to recover footage of the attack from the deceased individuals' cybereyes. A few commlinks can be found, but most of those that were not looted were broken and must be repaired before any data recovery is possible (Hardware + Logic (8, 30 minutes) Extended Test; if the runners attempt a repair in the field, apply a -3 modifier for bad working conditions). Almost all weapons and armor present at the time of the attack has long since disappeared, scavenged by various gangs in the area.

The metahuman bodies remaining at the site display a variety of wounds. During their investigation (which likely takes a few hours), the runners discover that many of those that died perished at the hands and claws of paranormal critters. Many bodies display deep bite marks, and some look to have been partially eaten. Others died from being shot multiple times by automatic weapons, while still others appear to have been killed by magic. The background count at the teocalli is aspected toward Aztec magic, but it has been impacted by the violence here. That means that the mana in the area has a background count of 4. The teocalli itself appears to be heavily damaged, likely from the use of rocket and missile launchers. Magicians in the party are likely to come to the conclusion that the teocalli was deliberately damaged so as to disrupt the flow of mana through the structure. It will likely take Aztlan weeks, if not months, to get the teocalli back into a condition where it can be used in their rituals again.

It should be obvious to the runners that there was activity going on at the top of the teocalli, though they don't have a clear vantage point from the ground. If the runners climb the steps to the top or send drones to investigate, they see evidence of ceremonies involving metahuman sacrifice. It appears that twenty metahumans were sacrificed during the ceremony. If the runners attempt to identify the victims, they find these sacrifices were known criminals with long rap sheets. Many of the crimes they committed are of the sort that runners often commit while carrying out their jobs. This could make the runners question just who they are working for and what might happen to them if they stay in their employ.

If the runners are eventually able to recover data from the commlinks, they are able to make out that the attack was led by a male human. Facial recognition programs fail to identify him, but



it tags other individuals working with him. These individuals are identified as mercenaries who have been known to work in Bogotá and surrounding areas for GreenWar. There are other cameras in the surrounding area from which the runners can gather footage of the attack. There is a Stuffer Shack a couple of blocks down the road to the west with a good line of sight for their security camera. There is also an ulama field a block to the south that has security cameras. And there is a mercado that has exterior security cameras to the east of the teocalli. The footage from these spots could provide a better idea of what happened at the teocalli, but it will not help to identify the leader. The new footage shows that the mysterious leader spent nearly half an hour on the top of the pyramid performing some form of ritual. On one of the cameras, it is clear something manifested in front of the individual before disappearing. The shot is not clear enough for anyone to identify what manifested. If the runners try to canvass the area and talk with the locals about what went down here, they will find that people either are too scared to talk or are still too traumatized. And if the runners are perceived as working for Aztlan or Aztechnology, they are likely to start a fight with the locals, who are against the current regime.

After examining the teocalli and the surrounding area, the runners have a few options. They may choose to say “Screw Aztechnology” and walk away from the job. Aztechnology can simply hire another runner team to investigate; they make sure the runners take a hit to their reputations for not carrying out their jobs. They do not get pay the runners for the job, and they demand any pay that was given in advance be repaid. But the biggest hit may come from their fixer, who loses out on the lucrative deal they would have gotten from this job. The runners may also try to eliminate as much of the evidence as possible of who committed the attacks, and perhaps try to frame another enemy of Aztlan’s (the New Jesuits, the True Brazilians, a local paramilitary group, etc.). This could allow these mercenaries and GreenWar time to flee from the city and relocate, which would make it that much harder for Aztlan and Aztechnology to find them. This may be an option for runners that have sympathies for GreenWar or Amazonia. They may also report accurately what they found. Mr. Johnson, who only communicates with the runners either through commlink call or the Matrix, insists that the runners make a positive confirmation of the leader’s identity and just what he may be capable of. Mr. Johnson suggests that they inspect the barracks to see if there is additional evidence or footage that could be used identify this leader. The Aztechnology Corporate Security barracks is approximately two kilometers away from the teocalli.

PLOT POINT THREE

The Aztechnology Barracks

Upon arriving at the barracks, the runners find a scene similar to that of the teocalli, where dozens of bodies lie in the streets, concealed behind destroyed barricades and vehicles that were used for cover. The Aztechnology corporate security forces had managed to put up a much better fight than the surprised, unarmed civilians at the pyramid, but in the end the attackers still waged a coordinated and effective attack, and they won. The runners need to figure out how this happened, which may lead

back to the identity of the mysterious leader of the attack on the pyramid.

Some bodies of attackers have been left at the gate and at the front entrance to the barracks; many of these are sentient, paranormal critters (naga, sasquatches, shapeshifters, etc.). This could indicate that GreenWar cell members and their mercenaries were working in conjunction with Amazonian agents. Or it could mean that this particular cell of GreenWar had a particularly high number of sapient critters. Whatever the reason, very few of these dead bodies had commlinks or any kind of cyberware. The bodies of the mercenaries or security officers who had cyberware implanted in them have since had that gear stripped from them. The barracks also have the remains of a dozen or more burnt-out husks of Steel Lynx combat drones that were used to defend the compound scattered around the perimeter. None of these drones are salvageable for anything other than for scrap metal.

As the runners attempt to enter the barracks, groups made up of metavariants (dryads, xapiri thëpës) arrive from the surrounding buildings and attack the runners. They are local anarchists hired by GreenWar to watch the barracks and wait for either Aztechnology or their representatives to try to investigate the incident at the barracks, and then attack them. GreenWar has equipped them with heavier weaponry than what is typically seen on the streets, and as such, the groups aren’t as proficient with the weapons as trained mercenaries. Though inexperienced, the locals have been equipped with two gas grenades containing ringu (p. 84, *Arsenal*) that makes them very dangerous.

The runners may choose to take members of these groups alive to interrogate them for information. Any information these groups have is not given easily. The runners have to coerce and intimidate the information out of them, which could take days. The surviving members of these local groups reveal that they heard the members of GreenWar say that Sirurg was leading this attack in metahuman form. They do not know why he chose to fight in metahuman form, though rumors on the street suggest that his spell in Cali weakened him considerably and he needs to maintain a low profile until he fully recovers. There are very few images of Sirurg in metahuman form. If the runners are curious why facial recognition did not identify the figure as Sirurg, it is because he has taken on a different metahuman appearance for these attacks. In addition to providing information on Sirurg, these local fighters have also heard about the whereabouts of the GreenWar cell’s base camp. This camp is located approximately fifteen kilometers to the north of Pereira, and according to what the anarchists know, it likely contains as many as a hundred members (this number is what the anarchists believe to be accurate from what they have heard. This does not mean that this estimate is factually accurate).

If the runners venture into the barracks looking for information, they discover most everything of value has either been taken from the building or destroyed. Rooms and hallways appear to have been firebombed. Most sensors and cameras inside the building have been melted and destroyed. Hallways have been booby-trapped in an effort to inflict large numbers of casualties on whoever tries to enter the building. Many of the soldiers appear to have been ripped apart by someone of tremendous strength. While roaming the hallways, the runners may encounter a number of spirits known as crones (also known as Baba Yagas). They have been drawn to the building to feed on the remains of the dead



metahuman guards. They are more than happy to use their magic on the runners to spread death and destruction and possibly obtain a fresh meal for themselves.

There should be a damaged node or two within the three-story building that can be salvaged (if they are properly repaired; Hardware + Logic (8, 30 minutes) Extended Test, -4 modifier for the conditions). If the runners recover data from those nodes, they should be able to find recordings from the security cameras of the fighting as it took place. The firefight appeared to be fairly even for about an hour and a half, with both sides taking losses. It was not until the mysterious individual (Sirrurg) from the last battle shows up that the battle shifts dramatically. Very powerful spirits are summoned by the figure to attack the Aztechnology Corporate Security forces. The individual casts numerous spells, many of which the magicians in the runner's group do not recognize. A guard is turned to glass, and SIRRURG in his metahuman form picks up the guard and launches him across the street so it shatters when it lands. Other guards simply convulse and drop dead under the leader's gaze, similar to what SIRRURG did in Cali, only this time, the spells seem to be single-target spells, and not area-effect spells.

Once inside the building, the male figure shifts into his dragon form, confirming for the runners that this was indeed SIRRURG. He uses his breath to firebomb the hallways, which takes out the cameras (along with the AZT guards) and prevents the runners from getting any more information on what SIRRURG's purpose at the barracks was. Many of the bodies inside the building were left in pieces, similar to what happened at the Aztlan base in Cali.

These images of SIRRURG should reinforce to the runners the dilemma of working for Aztlan and Aztechnology. By doing so, they risk SIRRURG or his forces hunting them down as enemies. Of all the great dragons in the world, SIRRURG is perhaps the worst to make an enemy of. "SIRRURG the Destroyer" and "SIRRURG the War Criminal" are titles that should ring through the runners' minds as they make a decision about finishing the job. If the runners decide to carry on and report back to Mr. Johnson, he is quite pleased. He would be even more pleased with the runners if they could find the actual camp location where GreenWar and/or SIRRURG is based. And if they can go beyond their original parameters of their job and sneak into the camp to gather intelligence on other GreenWar operations before Aztechnology carpet bombs the camp, Mr. Johnson is happy to pay them a significant bonus.

PLOT POINT FOUR

GreenWar Camp

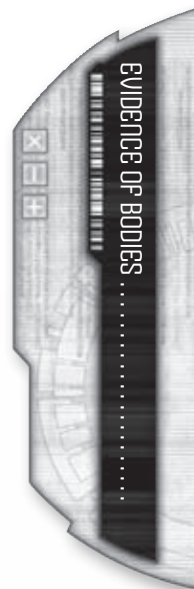
Finding the location of the GreenWar camp is not easy. Due to the environmental damage caused by Aztlan and Aztechnology, the native population has strong sympathies for the eco-terrorist group. Other eco groups such as TerraFirst! and Green Cells also have strong support in Pereira neighborhoods. The runners may need to resort to hacking the commlinks of the local anarchists and finding the means by which GreenWar had contacted them in the first place so that they can arrange for another meet. They can convince the GreenWar contact that they successfully killed those that tried to gain access to the barracks and are seeking a new job, or perhaps they can say that they are looking to purchase

new gear. Once a meet is set up, the runners can try to capture the GreenWar contact and interrogate them, or hack their commlinks to find out where they have been spending a lot of time. One way or another, the runners should be able to get the coordinates for the camp. With that information, the runners can choose to travel to the camp to see what additional intelligence they can get before turning the coordinates over to Mr. Johnson.

The GreenWar camp is likely to surprise the runners. In the mid-2060s, it was believed that GreenWar only possessed three thousand members worldwide. This camp alone has close to three hundred members, and it does not include the members active in Bogotá. GreenWar seems to be growing at an alarming rate due to this war. To get to the camp, the runners need to avoid patrols by GreenWar members and their mercenaries. They are heavily armed with battle rifles and assault cannons. The camp itself does not have a perimeter fence, as having one would not be conducive to being eco-friendly. The camp is set up to leave as small of a footprint on the environment as possible, with water purifiers, biodegradable containers, and means to recycle waste. But if the runners think sneaking into the eco-terrorist camp will be an easy task, they only need to check the astral to realize it will not be. GreenWar utilizes air, earth and plant spirits to keep track of people entering and leaving camp. Guards inside the camp are jaguar shapeshifters. Assessing the rest of the camp, the runners spot a few anacondas that are shifters. These anaconda shifters are rarely seen outside of Amazonia. The runners are likely going to run surveillance on the camp to make sure SIRRURG is not present when they attempt to steal intelligence from GreenWar. Luckily for the runners, SIRRURG has departed and is on his way back up north. It is unclear from conversations that they intercept whether SIRRURG is heading back to Roswell or is preparing to stop in another part of Aztlan for another terrorist strike. What matters is that the great western dragon is not here at the camp, so the runners might be emboldened to sneak in, despite the magical defenses.

There is a tent in the center of the camp belonging to this cell's leader. Inside the tent are several letters and other correspondence written in code that are the future plans for GreenWar. The runners need either to find a decryption key or to hope they can find someone in Pereira who can decipher the code. Or they can simply take the materials, give them to Mr. Johnson, and hope Aztlan or Aztechnology have the resources necessarily to decipher them. Once the runners inform Mr. Johnson of the exact whereabouts of the camp, Aztlan and Aztechnology have the camp carpet-bombed. Almost everyone in the camp is killed, and the GreenWar cell is all but destroyed.

If the runners are able to decipher the code, they learn about GreenWar's success at obtaining ebola plus and ringu for chemical and biological attacks. They have also located an A-company in Asia that is producing the nanite weapon surtr under the table for GreenWar. The Corporate Court and the UN has been banned this nanoweapon, but those bans have not stopped this A-corp from illegally producing it. There are also top-level plans referenced by GreenWar members about a potential invasion of Mt. Shasta. Should anything happen to Hestaby in her conflict with Lofwyr, SIRRURG desires to be ready to move his forces into Mount Shasta before the other great dragons have a chance to claim it for themselves. The runners





INCOMING FEED.....



Urgent Message



ANACONDA SHAPESHIFTERS

Anacondas are large predators native to South America. Several species are found in Colombia. Many anacondas possess a greenish-brown skin coloring, with a pattern of black, oval spots. Anacondas are the biggest non-venomous snakes in the world. Anacondas are known to grow up to at least eleven meters in length. In *Evidence of Bodies*, the shadowrunners may come across and interact with anaconda shapeshifters. This may prompt some players to design their own anaconda shapeshifter player character. Here is the Attribute Table and Build Point cost for an Anaconda shapeshifter. Unless specified here, follow the regular rules for building shapeshifters on p. 86, *Runners Companion*.

| BP | Shapeshifter Type | BOD | AGI | REA | STR | CHA | INT | LOG | WIL | INI |
|----|-------------------|----------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|
| 60 | Anaconda | 4/9 (12) | 1/6 (9) | 1/5 (7) | 6/11 (16) | 1/5 (7) | 1/6 (9) | 1/6 (9) | 1/6 (9) | 2/11 (16) |

Shapeshifter Abilities: +2 Reach, Enhanced Senses (Thermal), Natural Weapon (Bite: Str/2+2P, AP -)
Movement: 5/10

could find another group to buy this intelligence, or they may wish to negotiate with their current Mr. Johnson for the deciphered intelligence. Once the camp is destroyed and the runners have decided what to do with the intelligence, the job is concluded. They are paid handsomely and allowed to return home. If the runners did a good job with the run, their fixers will also find that they have had a good payday as well.

LOCATIONS

PEREIRA, COLOMBIA

Pereira is a Colombian city northwest of Bogotá. Pereira is a city with a population of nearly seven hundred thousand people. According to Aztlan state-run media broadcasts, the city is like any other Aztlan city—stable and working for the prosperity of Aztlan and Aztechnology. The truth of the matter is that pro-Amazonia sentiment has risen dramatically in this city, and Pereira is currently in a state of uprising. Aztlan and Aztechnology are devoting almost all of their resources in the area to quash this insurrection and to make sure similar uprisings do not occur throughout Colombia. Pereira is a dangerous place to be in early September 2073. Not only is the city enduring uprisings by an enraged populace, but there is a full-on cartel war happening at the same time. Blood is being spilled in Pereira on an hourly basis. Martial law has been declared. Anyone without proper clearance out on the streets between sunset and sunrise is subject to arrest and possibly worse by Aztlan and Aztechnology forces.

GREENWAR CAMP

The GreenWar camp is not a typical paramilitary compound. The compound itself is designed to leave the smallest possible footprint on the surrounding area. As such, there are no permanent buildings. There are tents set up for operations, which can be spied on from a distance with listening devices. There are no perimeter fences because patrolling guards and the astral security in the isolated part of Colombia make it unnecessary. The most non-environmentally friendly aspect about the camp is that the vehicles run on petroleum, and that is due to necessity. The camp utilizes earth, air, and plant spirits to maintain a constant watch over the personnel entering and leaving the camp. There are at least two anaconda shapeshifters in the trees surrounding the camp, keeping an eye on things and possibly acting as sentries. The great dragon Sirurg was at this base prior to the runners' arrival but has since traveled north for another round of attacks. There are enough tents and temporary structures in this compound to accommodate nearly three hundred GreenWar members.

PEOPLE

MR. JOHNSON

Unknown

Mr. Johnson is an unknown variable to the shadowrunners. He only interacts with them via commlink call or email. He (or she) never reveals anything about his or her identity to the runners. Their face is always obscured electronically, and their voice altered. The runners are given a commlink code that is good for only one use. Mr. Johnson puts a premium on their anonymity. Despite their efforts, Mr. Johnson inadvertently gives hints as to who he (or she) might be. He speaks very highly of Aztechnology Security and reveals his opinion that they are superior to Aztlan personnel. This suggests that he not only works with Aztechnology, but he may be in the ranks, possibly a high-ranking officer. This Mr. Johnson also seems to know quite a bit about the city of Pereira and may be stationed there. Mr. Johnson also seems experienced in hiring shadowrunners. Use the stats for Mr. Johnson (Subtle), p. 145.

DRYAD ANARCHISTS

Elf Metavariant

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|------|----|
| 3 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 11

Armor (B/I): 8/6

Abilities: Glamour, Low-Light Vision, Symbiosis

Skills: Athletics skill group 4, Automatics 3 (+1), Con 4, First Aid 2, Gunnery 2, Heavy Weapons 3, Infiltration 4, Dodge 4, Longarms 3 (+2), Negotiation 4, Palming 4, Perception 3, Pistols 3, Throwing Weapons 4, Unarmed Combat 3

Gear: Camouflage Suit (8/6), goggles [Rating 3, w/ flare compensation, smartlink, thermographic vision]

Weapons:

HK MP-5 TX [SMG, 5P, AP -4, SA/BF/FA, RC 2(3), 20 (c), w/ gas-vent 2 system, a laser sight, detachable folding stock, and APDS ammo]

Franchi SPAS-22 [DV 7P, AP -1, SA/BF, RC (1), w/ folding stock, shock pad, and internal smartgun]

Notes: The Dryad anarchists have 1 gas grenade filled with ringu (DV 20P, AP -4, Vector: Contact, Inhalation, Speed: 1 Combat Turn)



XAPIRI THËPËS ANARCHISTS

Elf/Metavariant

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|------|----|
| 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 11

Armor (B/I): 8/6

Abilities: Allergy (Air Pollution, Mild), Allergy (Pollen, Mild), Low-Light Vision, Photometabolism

Skills: Athletics skill group 2, Automatics 3, Blades 4, First Aid 2, Gunnery 1, Heavy Weapons 3, Infiltration (Urban) 5 (+2), Dodge 4, Palming (Pickpocket) 3 (+2), Perception 5, Pistols 3, Throwing Weapons 4, Unarmed Combat 3

Gear: Armored Jacket (8/6)

Weapons:

Ares HVBR [Battle Rifle, DV 8P, AP -1, SA/BF, RC 4, 48 (c), w/ smartgun system, shock pad, explosive rounds]

Vibro Blade Knife [Blades, DV 4P, AP -2]

Notes: The Xapiri Thëpës anarchists have 1 gas grenade filled with ringu (DV 20P, AP -4, Vector: Contact, Inhalation, Speed: 1 Combat Turn)

CRONES (FORCE 5)

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | M | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|----|
| 4 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 12 | 2 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/11

Armor (B/I): 5/5

Skills: Assensing, Astral Combat, Dodge, Enchanting, Intimidation, Perception, Spellcasting, Unarmed Combat

Powers: Accident, Astral Form, Banishing Resistance, Compulsion, Enhanced Senses (Smell), Innate Spell (Agony), Innate Spell (Swarm), Fear, Fey Glamour, Materialization, Sapience, Shadow Cloak, Vanishing

Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Mild)

GREENWAR SOLDIERS

Human

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|------|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-------|----|
| 6 | 5 | 4(7) | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 2.9 | 8(11) | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 13/11

Armor (B/I): 12/10

Skills: Armorer 3, Athletics skill group 4, Automatics (Battle Rifles) 5 (+2), Blades 4, Etiquette (Eco-Terrorist groups) 2, First Aid 3, Gunnery 3, Heavy Weapons 4, Dodge 4, Long Arms 3, Perception 4, Pistols 5, Stealth skill group 3, Unarmed Combat 5

Augmentations: Cyberarm (right, obvious, standard), cybereyes [Rating 1, w/ low-light vision, vision enhancement 2], cyberleg (right, obvious, standard), reaction enhancers 3

Qualities: Toughness

Gear: Full Body Armor with helmet, medkit (Rating 6)

Weapons:

Ares HVBR [Battle Rifle, DV 8P, AP -1, SA/BF, RC 4, 48 (c), w/ smartgun system, shock pad, explosive rounds]

Ares Thunderstruck Gauss Rifle [DV 9P, AP -4, SA, RC (1), 10 (c) + Energy, w/ hip pad bracing system and built-in laser sight]

Vibro Blade Knife [Blades, DV 5P, AP -2]

ANACONDA SHAPESHIFTERS

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | M | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|-----|------|----|
| 8 | 5 | 4 | 10 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 12/10

Armor (B/I): 0/0

Skills: Assensing 4, Astral Combat 3, Dodge 4, Perception 4, Unarmed Combat 5

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Thermal), Natural Weapons (bite/constriction: DV 7P, AP 0), Regeneration, Sapience, Shift (Human)

Weaknesses: Allergy (Silver, Severe), Vulnerability (Silver)

... THE VILLIERS DIVIDE ...

Incoming Message

```
//archive/chats/recovered//  
/user FastJack has logged on  
/user Glitch has logged on  
/user Slamm-0! has logged on
```

[Slamm-0!] What the fuck is going on!? JackPoint is lighting up with errors like Christmas fireworks. Doomsday priority messages at quarter to four in the damn morning?

[FastJack] There's been a fairly major intrusion.

[Slamm-0!] What's the damage, FastJack?

[FastJack] Details pending.

[Slamm-0!] Fuck!

[Glitch] Just stay calm. Consider this a meeting of the "security council." We're the best hackers that the VPN has online right now; that means we're its first line of defense.

[Slamm-0!] Is that so, Glitch.

[FastJack] Handling it as we speak. I wish you people wouldn't get so histrionic, honestly. And Slamm-0!, I know that Glitch still may not be your favorite person right now, but I'd like it if you could keep that in check for now.

[Slamm-0!] Hell, if you need my help old man, why didn't you just say so?

[Glitch] If we're compromised, FastJack, I need to know. I have sensitive information online.

[Slamm-0!] We all do!

[Glitch] There's sensitive and then there's *sensitive*.

[Slamm-0!] Bullshit!

[FastJack] There, done. The leak—and it wasn't much of one—was plugged.

[Slamm-0!] Now will you tell us what the hell is going on?

[FastJack] I can tell you what I know.

[Glitch] Please.

[FastJack] At 03:38:29 local time, a brute-force sleaze attack was attempted on our VPN. I didn't receive the alert about the unauthorized access until the intruders attempted to access certain copy-protected, read-only files. The intruder had gone hot and was cutting through our IC with a blowtorch

slowly but surely when I logged on and gave him the hammer personally—phasers set to stun, naturally. While our friend was having his ensuing catnap, I backtracked the intrusion through the Onion Routers to ShadowSEA, and from there to a reasonably anonymous safe house in Puyallup. I'm not a AAA, so I can't exactly put boots on the ground to investigate. Not sure I'd like to anyway.

[Slamm-0!] Again—fuck!

[FastJack] But then again, I don't need to. His whole toolkit was Novatech gear. Bleeding-edge, not on the market yet, but his efforts to file off the corporate logos were rather half-assed. Amateur.

[Glitch] Joe NeoNET may have been a newcomer, but he got through our firewall. Forgetting that little detail?

[FastJack] Fine. He was a *talented* amateur. Anyway, we're secure again, and the hole has been plugged.

[Slamm-0!] Does that mean I can go back to sleep?

```
/user Clockwork has logged on
```

[Clockwork] Hoi.

[Slamm-0!] Oh, hell—could this *get* any better?

[Glitch] Took you long enough.

[Clockwork] Night I've had, you're lucky I'm here at all, chummer. What's biz?

[Slamm-0!] Is he on the "security council" too, then?

[Glitch] Not exactly.

[FastJack] Clockwork, do you remember back in the beginning of September you posted up some very high-level recordings from within NeoNET? Behind-closed-doors discussions of higher-ups? "View but do not use."

[Clockwork] Fuck me sideways.

[Glitch] Someone just made a solid go at scrubbing those files. He failed, naturally.

[FastJack] Now, this wasn't the only attempted intrusion we've had this year, or even the most serious one we've ever had,



but it was serious enough. Any idea as to why someone wanted that data cleaned?

[Clockwork] I've got a notion or two. Do we have to do this right now? I know your security's topnotch—it's why this is the "clubhouse"—but I didn't feel safe maintaining a Matrix uplink *before* I knew you'd been hit.

[Glitch] I think I speak for us all when I say we'd very much like to know what we're up against.

[Slamm-0!] What'd you mean, "night you had"?

[Clockwork] Rough night doesn't begin to describe it. I was shot.

[Slamm-0!] I take it you survived?

[Clockwork] Laugh it up, asshole.

[Glitch] I don't think I need to explain that it's imperative that you tell us exactly what happened. If we're compromised ...

[Clockwork] Fine. I was on a way to meet a Johnson—a source of good intel in the past—who needed to arrange a last-minute extraction. He thought his bosses wanted to kill him for some reason, and he needed to get out of town fast and under the radar. He said he'd make his down payment in data and follow up with hard currency. I didn't even have time to get my team together, but he was panicking hard, and he said if I didn't come meet him, he'd rabbit without me and try to make a run for it on his own. I went to meet him at Edmonds Underwater Park in Everett, but when I got to the meeting spot all I found was his body bobbing up and down against the shore of the Puget Sound. I was double-timing it back to my car, cursing myself for an idiot, when I got tagged. I never saw the shooter. My guess is it was a sniper, hiding in some nice dark crevice. A couple millimeters to the left, and it would have been curtains. I barely remember driving myself to my street doc. He said the inside of my car looked like an abattoir.

[FastJack] Let me guess. Mr. Johnson is—was—one Arthur Banks, recently canned as head of internal security for NeoNET.

[Clockwork] Right in one. I think Richard Villiers is seriously cleaning house over there. Banks was a leak that needed to get plugged, and he got plugged—literally. Poor bastard. His insurance policy backfired on him big time.

[Glitch] If you think you're morally obligated to make sure that any Villiers dirty laundry that Banks had stockpiled makes it out to the public, you need to think again.

[FastJack] It won't do any good for Banks. He's dead already. And turning into muckrakers will bring way too much heat on this place to be good for business.

[Clockwork] Do I tell you how to your fucking job, Jack?

[FastJack] It's a suggestion. That's all.

[Clockwork] Fine. I hear you loud and clear. And I won't do anything rash. But I don't have to like it. Banks wasn't exactly a chummer, but as contacts go, he was all right. Can I go now? I need to see to covering my own ass. My gut tells me that Villiers' people won't make another attempt on my life or try to offline that file. I think those were just targets of opportunity. But that's the kind of thing I'd hate to be wrong about.

[Slamm-0!] Thanks for sharing. This was all very exciting.

[Clockwork] Glad you're entertained.

[Glitch] One more thing, Clockwork, before you go.

[Clockwork] Yes?

[Glitch] I don't suppose—I mean, before you were near-mortally wounded and had to flee for your life—you happened to fish any paydata off of Banks? Say, from his commlink or from his headware?

[Clockwork] What would that be to you?

[Glitch] Only curious.

[Clockwork] Curiosity killed a hell of a lot more than the cat. Jack, do you want this stuff up on the VPN? Probably more trouble than it's worth.

[FastJack] If you give me the gist, I can distribute it through back channels to our people and they'll be much obliged. As will I. We'll keep it low-key, though—there's no reason to go painting targets on our collective backs.

[Clockwork] Sure, I'll share—assuming that you'll help me deal with any fallout that might follow this.

[FastJack] Naturally. We're all in this together.

[Slamm-0!] Speak for yourself.

[FastJack] Behave yourself.

[Clockwork] The short version is, it looks like there's a serious internal shakeup within NeoNET. I think that Banks getting pruned was just a detail. The real showdown is going on between Richard Villiers and his ex-wife. Back in July, Samantha Villiers used corporate assets to make a grab for the Piri Reis Map. The entire thing was a disaster—these artifacts, whatever else they may be, certainly seem to be clusterfuck magnets—and when it got out, she suffered some fallout among the minority shareholders for "misallocation of NeoNET resources." Love and marriage being what it is, Richard wasn't willing to let that stand as a "lesson learned," and he began a campaign of shadow ops against his ex, trying to destabilize her position in the company. Maybe he has his eye on her seven percent voting share, or maybe it's more personal than that. Who knows with those two? Maybe it's all a prelude to something, but I can't say what.

[Glitch] While we're collecting maybes, maybe Banks was thinking about defecting to Samantha's camp when he had his accident.

[Clockwork] Certainly not outside of the realm of possibility. Anyway, that's all I know.

[FastJack] Thanks, chummer. Keep your head down. Everyone else, thanks for your help.

[Slamm-0!] I helped?

[Glitch] Never forget that JackPoint lives in the footprints of some very large and angry giants. As good as Jack is, we exist really only at their forbearance and their convenience. Once the relationship becomes purely adversarial, then all bets are off.

[FastJack] What he's trying to say is, if the time ever comes for the real thing, it's good to know I'll have backup.

/user Clockwork has logged off

/user Slamm-0! has logged off

/user Glitch has logged off

/user FastJack has logged off

//chat session archived :: user Glitch :: 12/06/73//

OVERVIEW

Samantha Villiers' attempt to destroy the Piri Reis Map was a messy failure, causing her to lose some standing within NeoNET. Her ex-husband, Richard Villiers, takes this opportunity to punish her further, although he is insulated from any shadowruns by several layers of increasingly anonymous middlemen, to the point where the runners wouldn't be able to say for sure whether Villiers had signed off on the op they were working on or not.

Yoshio Higuchi, one of several high-level executives (and roadies) in Richard Villiers' inner circle, is the actual initiator of the operation based on general guidelines set forth by Villiers in a high-level private meeting. Afraid of drawing the attention and ire of Samantha Villiers, Higuchi uses one of his own subordinates, Claire Andretti, to make the actual arrangements with the runners. Ms. Andretti is (of course) known to the runners only as Ms. Johnson, further insulating Villiers from the operation.

The operation is a three-pronged mission where the players act in concert and coordination with other runner teams. The broad strokes are Richard's, the specific strategy is Higuchi's and the oversight of the execution is left to Andretti.

The first step of the mission requires the runners to make contact with the operatives of the great dragon Celedyr, another major shareholder of NeoNET. Of course, Richard Villiers and even Yoshio Higuchi have direct access to Celedyr, but the objective isn't as simple as giving him a call. Villiers wants Celedyr to know that Samantha Villiers directly interfered in the dragon's plans for the Piri Reis Map, but the information must appear to come from outside sources—ambitious, independent street operators with hot data to sell. Otherwise, Celedyr will know that any move he makes against Samantha will be playing into Richard's hands. Andretti organizes things so that the runners believe the data they are told to sell to Knights of Rage agents in London was stolen from NeoNET. She does this by having them actually steal it. Meanwhile, other runner teams execute operations in an attempt to disseminate news of Samantha's failed meddling to other NeoNET board members.

The second step of the mission involves one of many attempts to convince a member of Samantha Villiers' inner circle to defect. The chosen target is Dr. Scott Forester, one of Samantha's close allies who was involved in the attempt to seize the Piri Reis Map in the first place. The runners are sent after Forester in Seattle, with instructions to non-lethally neutralize his security detail and abduct him. This by itself would send the message to Forester that Samantha's protection couldn't keep him safe, but the runners are also given a file to show to him. The file contains incriminating evidence of highly unethical tempo research initiated by Forester—a message that all of his skeletons are about to come out of their closets if he doesn't rethink his loyalties. After holding Forester for twenty-four hours, the runners are to cut him loose unharmed.

The final step of the mission takes place in Boston, the home of Richard Villiers and NeoNET, and also the residence of Samantha Villiers for the duration of this adventure. If the runners have a face who is up to the task, he receives the terrifying challenge of dating Samantha Villiers, after the runners hack the necessary social networking site to put them in the same social circles. If the runners don't personally have a social infiltrator

up to playing this high stakes dating game, they'll need to bring in outside talent in the form of a face. Either way, the plan is that Samantha's vulnerability will get her to connect to a new boyfriend who can report on her through channels that lead to Richard Villiers. But things do not go accordingly to plan, as Samantha is far too canny to be tricked in this manner. Eventually, her brother-in-law, Darren Villiers—who has sided against his brother in the internal power struggle—intervenes. The runners should feel lucky to leave the situation alive and compensated.

PLOT POINT ONE

Penetration Testing

This adventure is assumed to begin in the city of Seattle, but can happen in any major city, with the locations suitably changed. The runners are contacted by their fixer and told to meet Ms. Johnson (really Claire Andretti) at the Bellevue Crab House on 108th Avenue NE in Bellevue; the name of the party they're dining with is "Villefort." Since Bellevue is a safe, upscale neighborhood with heavy corporate security presence, naturally they'll be leaving their heavier and more obvious gear at home. Over ice-cold microbrews and Dungeness crab legs, Ms. Johnson lays out her offer.

This is a multiple-part operation, she explains. The first leg serves as a job interview of sorts, albeit taking place in the field. The team will be paid 20,000 nuyen total—half up front, and the second half on the back end—to retrieve a datafile from a NeoNET corporate lab. If they succeed, they've proven themselves capable of handling the rest of the job and getting the real payoff. The file is located on a secure server on the grounds of Cavilard Research Center, right there in Bellevue. Ms. Johnson has the name of the target file, but the runners have to penetrate the site in person; wifi shielding prevents wireless access from outside the premises. Finally, and most importantly, the runners are only authorized to access the adjoining office annex, not the main research facility. Ms. Johnson plans to meet them back here tomorrow for lunch. If they've got the file and haven't raised an undue level of alarm, they've got the job.

Andretti is good to her word and will meet the PCs with the second half of their initial payment. She tells them that what they have now is just a twenty percent advance on the rest of the job; they'll receive an additional 80,000 nuyen on completion of the rest of the steps, which she'll tell them about one at a time on a need-to-know basis. Andretti tells them to hold onto the file for now. It has been encrypted with a Rating 8 Encrypt program and contains a drone recording of a conversation between individuals that ARO tags identify as Samantha Villiers, Dr. Angela Vaughn, and Dr. Scott Forester, concerning preparations for acquiring a magical artifact called the Piri Reis Map (see p. 90, *Artifacts Unbound* for more details). She gives them a day to rest and recover and make their own gear arrangements while she arranges to travel to London for them.

They'll be going via private suborbital jet, so airport security is not anything they have to worry about, but each of them can only bring the gear they can fit into a standard sized duffle bag, so they'll have to choose wisely. She gives them the access codes and location of the Sea-Tac terminal where they're to meet their flight at noon tomorrow. They should bring the file with them.

PLOT POINT TWO

London Calling To The Underworld

It's around 11:00 p.m. local time when the runners arrive at London Heathrow International. A limousine driver is waiting for them, standing underneath an ARO with their names on it. He takes them by car to the lodging that's been arranged for them: two rooms rented at the King's Arms hotel, just off of the east end of the M4 in Brentford. As soon as they arrive, they receive a conference call from Ms. Johnson, who is currently several timezones behind them.

"Here's your role. You're looking to sell the paydata that you just stole on an unrelated run against NeoNET," Ms. Johnson explains. "And word on the street says that the great dragon Celedyr might be interested in it. So I want you to find his representative, a woman named Sulawyo who's in the Knights of Rage street gang (see p. 141). She's rumored to be in London right now." That is all Ms. Johnson can give the runners to go on at this time; she knows more, but this information must appear to come from street operators, not from her employers.

Unless their knowledge of gang turf allows them to skip this step, the runners likely will start their legwork in the Underplex or the Undercity (two separate neighborhoods with their own very different dangers, see p. 95 and p. 102, *Conspiracy Theories*). Feel free to introduce complications like a suspicious Renraku security detail, or having someone sell the runners a map of the Undercity that leads them directly into a trap. Eventually, though, their questions about the Knights of Rage lead them to the urban blight of the Lambeth Containment Zone, known locally as the "Squeeze," the worst species of Barrens that London has to offer.

Not long after the runners set foot in the Squeeze and start asking questions on the street, Sulawyo contacts them via commlink. "I understand you've been looking for me. What do you want?" Sulawyo arranges a meeting with them at The Delve, a subterranean dive bar in the Underplex, popular with the shadow set but not so much with tourists. She has two obvious bodyguards with her (use *Elite Corporate Security*, p. 140)—Knights of Rage wearing street colors—and the bar's patrons will generally side with her if the runners start trouble. She views the file the runners are looking to sell right there, while they wait. After a momentary pause where she seems to be communicating with someone—although she is not using a commlink to do so—she tells them that her patron already has access to this information. She brushes them off with a mere 5,000 nuyen to compensate them for their troubles (total again, not apiece) and to pay for every copy of the file they're holding.

The runners can leave either before Sulawyo and her guards, after them, or with them. Either way, a posse of Yardies—London's largest and most violent street gang, which has been making inroads against everyone, including the Knights of Rage—is waiting for them outside. If the runners leave before or at the same time as Sulawyo and his people, they end up directly in the line of fire; if they linger in the Delve after Sulawyo leaves, they hear the sound of a protracted gun battle. The Yardies—there are about three of them for every runner, plus a lieutenant (see *Yardie Crew*, p. 114, and *Badboy, Yardie Lieutenant*, p. 114)—are unusually well armed and well equipped for random gang-on-gang

violence. The truth is that they have the under-the-table backing of HKB, Celedyr's oldest enemy, and they are specifically targeting Sulawyo. The runners can help Sulawyo—in which case she'll be in a position of owing them a favor in the future—or concentrate on getting out alive. Either way, their business in London is concluded, and Ms. Johnson has made travel arrangements for them to come home to Seattle for the next part of the mission.

PLOT POINT THREE

All Your Skeletons

Ms. Johnson wants to meet with the runners right after they land, and she has made a reservation at an upscale restaurant not far from the airport called the Tacoma Style. She gives them a data chip with information on their next assignment. The target is Dr. Scott Forester, who according to his itinerary will be leaving Cavilard at 6:00 p.m. tomorrow, on his way to Sea-Tac to catch a plane to Bogotá. The assignment is to intercept Forester en route, neutralize his security detail, abduct him, then call for further instructions. The dossier also includes a photograph of Forester. If the security detail is neutralized non-lethally, that's worth a 20,000 nuyen bonus (the security detail contains a mage and an adept; use *Security Adept*, p. 147, and *Security Mage*, p. 147). No matter what, Forester must not come to any serious harm, or the entire payment is forfeit. Bruising him and scaring him, however, is not only permitted but encouraged.

What Ms. Johnson does not know is that Samantha Villiers recently insisted that the security detail assigned to Dr. Forester and Dr. Angela Vaughn be beefed up significantly, expecting this move. Assuming the runners are able to overcome Forester's Awakened and alert security detail, they can hold him hostage anywhere they choose. Forester's panic-triggered babbling and pleading might be the first real sign that the runners are in fact working for Richard Villiers.

After they've held Forester for several hours, Ms. Johnson sends the runners a short security-camera video clip of a ghoul, strapped to a steel gurney, violently convulsing in the throes of a powerful drug trip. Dr. Forester is just barely visible inside the frame, observing the agonized ghoul with clinical detachment. The runners are to show Forester the video—he will know what it means—before cutting him loose anywhere on the streets of Seattle.

PLOT POINT FOUR

Shipping Up To Boston

A few hours after releasing Forester, the runners are sent a travel itinerary; a suborbital flight to Boston has been booked for them into Logan International Airport. After arriving in town, they're to rendezvous with Ms. Johnson's boss at a South Boston Irish pub called the Smokey River Tavern. Higuchi (who won't give any name), a small and delicate looking sarariman, seems uncomfortable at the rough-and-tumble working class, but he clearly takes some comfort in the presence of two massive troll bodyguards whose dress and mannerisms scream corporate muscle. He has the runners' bonus, if they managed not to kill anyone when extracting Forester. He also has their instructions for the final stage of the operation. He wants to arrange for someone to

begin dating Samantha Villiers and report back to him on any info she passes on. What could be more terrifying?

This leg of the adventure will play out differently depending on whether the runner team includes a hacker and a (male) face. If the team has a hacker, the first step is to hack into the administrative nodes of DiamondNet, a social networking/dating site that caters to a small but lucrative niche—the immensely wealthy and powerful—and ensure that they can insert the chosen face into Samantha Villiers' social circle. If there is no hacker on the team, this step can be arranged behind the scenes by Higuchi.

If the runners have a male face on their team (or any male character with Charisma 5 or higher), he receives the daunting task of seducing Samantha Villiers after the runners have hacked him onto her social calendar. Samantha Villiers doesn't live in Boston year-round, but she is staying there right now, in an elaborate townhouse in the upscale Beacon Hill neighborhood. Samantha Villiers is an extraordinarily tough, smart, capable, savvy, ruthless woman, with little patience for anything or anyone she finds boring, tiresome, or beneath her. Any face attempting to seduce her and insinuate himself into her life as her paramour has his work cut out for him. From the first date onwards, Higuchi wants the rest of the team out of sight while performing overwatch on the couple's outing in case anything goes wrong.

If the runners' team does not include a male face, they need to hire one. The best professional ladykiller in the sprawl is an elf named Silk. Higuchi wants the runners to test his skills and then bring him on board, but that comes with its own set of complications, as Silk is currently in quite a bit of trouble with the O'Riley Family, compounding debts with backdoor visits to the wives and daughters of various made men. The runners have to bail him out of his current trouble in order for him to be free to work for them.

The attempt to plant a new boyfriend with Samantha Villiers is doomed to failure, unfortunately, even if the runners do nothing wrong. Perhaps she is just too smart to fall for it, or she has learned of their plans through her own intelligence channels. Either way, she toys with her suitor for a while, deftly pumping him for information, before dismissing him. If her date is one of the players, then he is allowed to leave alive, after being confronted by Darren Villiers with the harsh news that Samantha knows what he was trying to do, and will remember it in the future. If the runners employed the services of Silk, the lothario-for-hire winds up in a dumpster somewhere after Darren Villiers is through with him as a clear message to the runners.

Either way, once Higuchi's attempt to plant Samantha Villiers with a boyfriend has failed, he has no further use for the runners. Assuming that they gave the last leg of the operation their best shot, he pays them the balance of what they're owed—a cool 80,000 nuyen to the team—and sends them on their way. He is not overly frustrated at the failure of the last part of the operation; even Richard wasn't really expecting Samantha to fall for it, but it was worth a try. He warn the runners that it might be in their best interests to stay out of Boston for a while, as there's no way to be sure that Samantha Villiers won't take this all a bit personally.



LOCATIONS

CAVILARD RESEARCH CENTER

This otherwise unassuming research park in Bellevue is a pretty typical example of its species: private, fenced-off grounds with a small campus, focused on the main research building. It used to belong to MCT until they mothballed it after Crash 2.0. NeoNET bought it from them and has turned it into an active research facility again, shifting some of the projects from the NeoNET labs in Bellevue to this location. Due to the top-secret nature of those projects, security is considerably beefed up on site, but the advanced security measures are centered squarely around the main research building—the smaller office annex is decidedly easier to penetrate.

The fence surrounding the building has one gate, kept open during the day and closed at night. The gate has a Rating 4 maglock that isn't connected to either a cardreader or a keypad; instead it's opened wirelessly by an authorized user of the node. This node is connected to the campus security node, but not to the node where the target file is located. The fence (three meters tall) isn't rigged with barbed wire or electrified, but there are motion sensors (see p. 261, *SR4A*,) placed at ten-meter intervals along the top of the fence, and the grass around the campus is rigged with pressure mesh (see p. 261, *SR4A*) especially near the inside of the fence. At night, two guards (use Corporate Security Unit, p. 281, *SR4A*,) and a trained barghest (see p. 299, *SR4A*) patrol the center's grounds. Standard protocol indicates that the immediate response to any intrusion is an outgoing call to the main NeoNET labs nearby for backup, which arrive in the form of an eight-man security detail (use Minuteman Fast Response Team on p. 143) within five minutes. If both guards are disabled, they are unable to make the call.

The walls of the main research facility are filled with sheets of Force 8 biofiber that acts as a Force 8 ward. Force 6 alarm wards (see p. 125, *Street Magic*) surround each entrance. The entrances to the main building are sealed with Rating 6 maglock keypads, with the access codes rotated daily. All windows have alarm circuits wired in to the glass. The interior of the main annex is guarded at all times by a bound Force 8 spirit of beasts. The main building is used for all manner of wild and dangerous magical experiments too unpredictable to conduct on the grounds of the main NeoNET labs nearby; if foolhardy runners decide to go extracurricular by breaking in, feel free to reward them with the nastiest magical surprises you can think of. If the players restrict their incursion to the office annex, however, they won't have to deal with any of the surprises that the main research facility has in store, or with the wards or patrolling spirits.

The office annex, on the other hand, is empty and unwarded, and the windows are not alarmed. The front door is locked with a Rating 4 maglock cardreader, and all employees carry access cards. There is also a side stairwell fire door, which is kept locked from the outside with a simple mechanical lock. The lock can be opened freely from the inside, but doing so sets off an alarm. Both buildings have ordinary security cameras—at least one—stationed in every corridor and in most rooms, and both buildings are filled with employees during the day, with at least a handful burning the midnight oil every night. The target file is located on a terminal in Cubicle #2018 on the second floor of the research annex.

CAVILARD MATRIX SECURITY

Gate Control Node

Sculpting: Abstract, a shimmering silver star resembling the NeoNET logo, connected to the physical location of the gate by twinkling filaments of nothingness.

Hardware: A hardened plastic “black box” built into the maglock itself.

Authentication: Passcode

Privileges: Standard

Attributes: Firewall 4, Response 4, Signal 2, System 2.

Spiders: None

IC: Rating 4 with Attack 4 (loaded). Sculpted to resemble a cloud of bees.

ARC: Launch IC

Topology: A single node, controlling a single device, connected to the campus security node.

Campus Security Node

Sculpting: Off-the-shelf Novatech. A chic, utopian pyramidal tower of onyx, serviced by an impossible labyrinth of winding, vertical passages; larger on the inside than it is on the outside.

Hardware: NeoNET Quicksilver II, physically located in the security office of the main building.

Authentication: Passcode

Privileges: Security level access is needed to command the slaved devices, Admin level access is needed for anything beyond that.

Attributes: Firewall 6, Response 5, Signal 3, System 6.

Spiders: Security Consultant (p. 69, *Unwired*)

IC: NeoNET Three Musketeers Suite Rating 5 (loaded)

Resident Programs: Analyze 5

ARC: Scramble Security Hacker, who can then manually activate the loaded IC.

Topology: This node controls a wide variety of slaved devices like the gate, the motion sensors attached to the gate, the internal and external maglocks for both buildings, the cameras in both buildings, and so on. Of these, only the front gate has its own individual node. The security node is connected to the front gate node but not connected to the Matrix, and its wireless signal does not extend far past the physical grounds of the campus.

Terminal #2018

Sculpting: Off-the-shelf Novatech. Rows and rows of intricate hedgemazes on a beautiful island paradise.

Hardware: Offline workstation

Authentication: Passcode

Privileges: Standard

Attributes: Firewall 3, Response 3, Signal 1, System 3

Spiders: None

IC: None

Resident Programs: None

ARC: Terminate connection

Topology: This node isn't connected to anything except on an as-needed basis. Claire Andretti has arranged for the file to be stored on this system, and for this terminal's security to be intentionally compromised.

THE DELVE, WEST END UNDERPLEX

The Delve is a little subterranean slice of old Shadowtown in the consumer-and-tourist friendly neighborhood of the West End Underplex. As far as London's gang set is concerned, it is a piece of neutral territory outside of their world of violent turf battles. The Delve is one of the deepest spots in the Underplex, sitting nearly forty meters below the surface. Seepage of ground water is an ongoing concern, and the management plays up this aspect of the place—dripping water is an omnipresent sound, and small rivulets of water run down selected walls. The decor seems to openly scoff at the concept of people being comfortable.

The location is not at all popular with the tourists, and it hosts an interesting mix of regulars, curious newcomers, and individuals who let you know with a glance that it would be best if you didn't inquire after their business. Most people enter through the main door, but a few customers have access to the place through the kitchen—secret chambers behind the kitchen (and the Force 8 ward guarding them) play host to a meeting of the Golden Dawn magical society. The bar itself has no extraordinary security features—magical or otherwise—and has a rather laissez-faire attitude toward its patrons bringing in weapons. A small cadre of beefy and rather heavily augmented orks are standing by to prevent any trouble from happening inside the bar, but they won't get involved with the firefight that goes down just outside of it.

SAMANTHA VILLIERS TOWNHOUSE, BEACON HILL

This tastefully appointed and elegant residence has enough security features to be even a dedicated B&E expert's absolute worst nightmare, but if the runners play their cards right, the face should be able to walk right in the front door with flowers in hand. Attempting to penetrate this site through more conventional means is, to put it mildly, highly inadvisable.

Every door and window is sealed with a Rating 6 maglock keyed specifically to Samantha Villiers' PAN, biometric signature, voiceprint, or in some cases (like the front door) two of those three. The house's security node and all of the IC on it are at least Rating 8. Every window is made of reinforced ballistic glass, with alarm circuits wired in for redundancy. Hidden thermographic cameras are placed in every room, and Villiers herself can access the feed from any of them through her subscription to the house's security node. When Villiers is away, the house locks down into "secure mode," where all of the above security features are supplemented by special security lighting, motion sensors, and sound sensors, with any disturbance resulting in a call to the far-from-incompetent Beacon Hill neighborhood security, who arrive with a response time of less than one minute.

As much as possible, these security features are invisible; when invisibility is impossible, they are unobtrusive and ergonomic.

As if that wasn't enough, the location is protected at all times by either a security mage (at least a Grade 3 Initiate) or his bound spirit of man (at least Force 9). Villiers has no live-in servants or guards, but whenever she goes out she is protected by a discreet security plainclothes detail, following her while remaining concealed. The Rover Model 2068 that takes her from one point on her itinerary to the next is heavily armored and customized, and her chauffeur is a retired UCAS Special Forces operative.

Urgent Message

DIAMONDNET

For the wealthiest and most powerful corporate executives, even speed dating is a luxury takes valuable time from their busy schedules. DiamondNet is a social networking service for those individuals whose success and preeminence has robbed them of the time for the leisurely pace of dating and romance. It is Match.com for the wealthy, the famous, and the powerful. Its clients' privacy and satisfaction is guaranteed, as it connects only individuals of equal stature. As social networking services in 2073 go, it is smaller than P2.0 because it serves a far more exclusive clientele. Considering the power and affluence of DiamondNet's clients, its Matrix security approaches need to be top notch.

DiamondNet Metanode

Sculpting: A 1920s cruise liner bedecked in the absolute height of period-appropriate grace and elegance. The rendering is truly phenomenal, from the intricate details of the period clothing to the chill wind blowing across the deck in the evening to the way the luster of the ship's lights reflects off of the black waves.

Hardware: Wireless-enabled node

Authentication: Passcode

Privileges: Administrative level access is necessary in order to insert an individual into DiamondNet's database and allow it to contact other ships.

Attributes: Firewall 6, Response 5, Signal 5, System 5

Spiders: Professional Spider (see p. 68, *Unwired*)

IC: 1 MCT Bloodhound Rating 5 (patrolling), 1 Ixculname Rating 5 (loaded). See p. 71, *Unwired*.

Resident Programs: Reality Filter 5

ARC: Launch IC

Topology: This metanode is designed to streamline and simplify the Matrix run against DiamondNet as much as possible. If desired it could be expanded into a true system topology of several interconnected nodes with varying levels of security.

THE VILLIERS DIVIDE



PEOPLE

YOSHIO HIGUCHI

Yoshio Higuchi was just a junior sarariman at Fuchi when he threw in his lot with the gaijin Richard Villiers. Since then, Higuchi has risen far (but not fast), attached to Villiers' coat tails. At present, he is an executive veep at Novatech, and he hopes that by successfully bringing down Samantha Villiers, he can rise even higher. He is also, as it happens, a true believer, and he fully buys into the notion that the more closely NeoNET's destiny is controlled by Richard Villiers' sure and steady hands, the more the company will prosper. Of course, he has developed a healthy respect—verging on fear—of Samantha over his years at first Fuchi, then Novatech, and now NeoNET, and has taken steps to insulate himself from this operation's possible consequences as much as possible. Use Mr. Johnson (Subtle), p. 145.

CLAIRE ANDRETTI

Smart, attractive, and tough, Andretti has more than a few things in common with the woman she views as her opposition—and ultimately her prey—on her present assignment. Her excellent physical condition, along with some gene tweaking, leaves her looking nearly two decades younger than her forty years. Andretti is an “External Consultant” with Minuteman security; euphemistically, this means that she is a professional “Mister Johnson.” In spite of a corporate education and vocational training, Andretti has developed an invaluable working knowledge of the etiquette and best practices of shadowrunners. She excels at eking out the best possible performance from them and believes that nearly any problem can be handled with intelligent application of deniable assets. In truth, Andretti is far more at home amidst shadowy backroom deals and firefights than AR presentations and boardroom meetings. She has considered switching sides and becoming a fixer with her own stable of talent more than once. Use Mr. Johnson (High Ranking) on p. 144.

SULAWYO

Sulawyo would be disarmingly pretty if she didn't wear her hair shorn down close to the scalp and display her many battle scars like chic tattoos. The forty-something Nubian woman was “beat in” to the Knights of Rage in her adolescence, and shortly thereafter was one of the first Knights hand-picked by Celedyr to join him in Caerleon. She has a close relationship with Celedyr—maintaining a communications channel with him using the Mind Link spell—and decades of experience as his handpicked field operative. In spite of the high level artifact-hunting operations she has handled for the great dragon, she has always maintained the trust and cooperation of the vast majority of the Knights of Rage involved in far more street level, day-to-day criminal activities.

Sulawyo

Female elf

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
| 5 | 6 | 5(8) | 5 | 3(6) | 6 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 3.41 | 11(14) | 1(4) |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 11/11

Armor (B/I): 15/9

Skills: Athletics skill group 6 (7), Blades 5, Dodge (Melee) 4 (+2), First Aid 3, Influence skill group 5, Intimidation 4, Perception 6, Automatics (Machine Pistols) 6 (+2), Stealth skill group 5, Unarmed Combat 6

Qualities: Blandness, Magic Resistance 4

Augmentations: (all betaware) Enhanced articulation, cybereyes [Rating 3, w/ flare compensation, low-light vision, smartlink, thermographic vision, vision enhancement 2], orthoskin 3, skillwire expert system, skillwires 5, synaptic booster 3, tailored pheromones 3

Gear: Commlink [Firewall 6, Response 5, Signal 3, System 4, w/ sim module (modified for hot sim)], EMP grenade, FFBA full suit, lined coat (w/ ruthenium polymer coating), skillssofts (Automatics, Computer, Data Search, Demolitions, Hacking, Hardware, Heavy Weapons, Pilot Aircraft, Pilot Ground Craft, Pistols, Software, all Rating 4), 8 linguasofts (all Rating 5, gamemaster may select languages as needed)

Weapons:

Ares Crusader [Machine Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA/BF, RC 3, 40(c) w/ gas vent 2, ext. smartgun system, personalized grip and EX-explosive ammo]

Forearm Snap-Blade [Reach 1, DV 5P, AP —, w/ personalized grip]

Cavalier Scout [Hold-Out Pistol, DV 6S(e), AP -half, SA, RC —, 7(cy) w/ stick-n-shock ammo]

DR. SCOTT FORESTER

Doctor Scott Forester is an accomplished researcher whose primary field of study is magical compounds. He is a leading expert on the drug called tempo. Some of those experiments, such as ones involving the effects of tempo on various Awakened beings, have been far less than ethical, and Claire Andretti has ample footage of those with which to blackmail Forester. Doctor Forester has been working with NeoNET for nearly sixteen years. Like Angela Vaughn, Forester has been a close ally to Samantha Villiers. He will be forced to seriously rethink his loyalties in the days and weeks following his abduction. Use Mr. Johnson (High Ranking) on p. 144.

SILK

The best day of the Boston-born elf street hustler Silk's life must have been when he realized that he could turn his calling and greatest joy (seducing bored housewives) into a proper vocation. The twenty-something elf has made his living being the “kept boy” of pampered but sexually frustrated stockbrokers' wives, always getting out (with cash in hand, of course) when the getting was good. Truth be told, Silk is a face extraordinaire, but too greedy and irresponsible to gel with any shadow team for long. While his sheer charm has kept him alive decades longer than his risky behavior should have allowed, the runners find him in quite a bind, having run out his line of credit with the Boston-based O'Riley Mafia family and worn out the family's trust by getting caught in bed with the daughter of the underboss. Silk is just making the wise decision to leave Boston while he remains alive and unmaimed when the runners find him, but the challenge presented by posing as one of society's elite to seduce Samantha Villiers (and the nuyen he could make from the job) proves too tempting for him to resist. And ultimately, quite fatal.

Silk

Male elf

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|------|------|------|------|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|------|
| 3 | 4(6) | 4(5) | 2(4) | 6(9) | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3.3 | 8(9) | 1(2) |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/10

Armor (B/I): 9/5

Skills: Athletics skill group 2, Con (Seduction) 5 (+2), Dodge 3, Etiquette 4, Negotiation (Bargaining) 2 (+2), Perception 3, Pistols 3, Stealth skill group 3

Qualities: Allergy (Cold Iron, Severe), First Impression, Low Pain Tolerance, Spirit Bane (spirits of man)

Augmentations: Muscle augmentation 2, muscle toner 2, tailored pheromones 3, wired reflexes 1

Gear: Erika Elite commlink w/ Iris Orb OS [Response 3, Signal 4, Firewall 3, System 3 w/ subvocal microphone], contacts [Rating 3, w/ image link, thermographic vision, and vision enhancement 3], FFBA full suit, ten doses novacoke, Vashon Island Steampunk Line overcoat.

Weapons:

Morissey Alta [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, RC —, 12(c) w/ concealable holster and laser sight]

SAMANTHA VILLIERS

The charming and cold-blooded Samantha Villiers is Richard Villiers's ex-wife—society blogs claimed the marriage ended because the two were just too competitive. She is an attractive lady with a razor wit, and she holds a seven percent stake in NeoNET. Historically, since her quick and clean divorce from Richard, she has continued to provide emotional support to him in times of need. The two have had fleeting periods of intimate reconciliation since their divorce, and the attraction between the two of them obviously still exists. They still have their differences, though—she often argues with him about the direction of NeoNET. An expert acquisitions analyst, Samantha beat out Evo to purchase the patents to several promising inventions developed in the Chicago Makers Collective. But instead of buying the patents for NeoNET, she instructed her lawyers to acquire them in her name. This seemed to support the rumors that Samantha is getting tired of just being Richard Villiers's ex-wife and has ambitions of her own. More recently, Samantha Villiers went against her ex-husband's wishes in attempting to destroy the immensely powerful and enigmatic magical artifact known as the Piri Reis Map. She believed that it posed a real threat to the international status quo, and therefore to NeoNET. Richard, however, firmly wanted NeoNET to stay out of the artifact chase, and he handily foiled Samantha's plan, netting himself a tidy profit in the interim. Samantha has been scheming and plotting against Richard since before Crash 2.0, when she was wheeling and dealing with Trans-Latvian to attempt a buyout of Renraku stock. The recent clash over the map, however, may have been the final straw that turned their scheming from a playful and diverting flirtation into a deadly dance with daggers held at each other's backs. Richard's decision to press the attack after humiliating Samantha in the eyes of the shareholders certainly seems to indicate that he means business.

Samantha Villiers

Female human

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|------|---|-------|---|---|---|-----|-------|--------|------|
| 3 | 5 | 5(6) | 3 | 7(10) | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 4.225 | 11(12) | 1(2) |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/11

Armor (B/I): 10/4

Skills: Athletics skill group 2, Con 6 (9), Cracking skill group 3 (4), Dodge 4, Electronics skill group 5 (6), Etiquette (Corporate) 6 (9) (+2), Intimidation (Mental) 5 (+2), Leadership (Strategy) 5 (8) (+2), Negotiation (Diplomacy) 6 (9) (+2), Perception 6 (7), Pilot Aircraft (Lighter-Than-Air) 2 (+2), Pilot Ground Craft 3, Pilot Watercraft (Sail) 1 (+2), Pistols 4, Stealth skill group 3 (4)

Qualities: Exceptional Attribute (Charisma), Glamour*, Will To Live (Rating 3)

Augmentations: (all delaware) Datajack (engraved), nanohive 6, nanosymbiotes 3, oxyrush 5, synaptic booster 1, tailored pheromones 3, transgenic modifications (PuSHeD, Qualia) trauma control system 5, universal nanite hunters (Rating 6), universal nantidotes (Rating 6).

Gear: AR makeup, FFBA half suit, Ami Feather sunglasses [Rating 4 w/ dynamic polarization lenses, flare compensation, image link, low-light vision, and vision enhancement 3], Timex Classic watch with built-in custom commlink (Device Rating 8 w/ sim module, skinlink and subdermal microphone), symbiote anemone ring, Zoé Moonsilver Line evening gown (w/ carbon-boron coating), Feywear shawl.

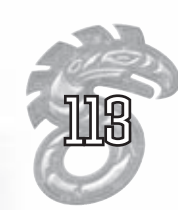
Weapons:

Fichetti Tiffani Needler [Hold-Out Pistol, DV 8P(f), AP +5, SA, RC 1, 4(c) w/ color-changing coating and personalized grip]

Notes: Glamour is granted by her Feywear shawl.

DARREN VILLIERS

A capable adept and a dwarf, Richard's younger brother is the only known metahuman in the Villiers bloodline. Darren is Richard's foil in every way, brutally direct where Richard is involved in intricate schemes, and cultivating an almost monastic seriousness when Richard is all jokes, laughter, and disarming smiles. Darren handled shadow ops for his older brother at Fuchi and Novatech, then moved to NeoNET with the rest of the clan. Relations between the brothers became icy when Richard discovered Darren had tried to join Celedyr's Knights of Rage shortly after the merger of Novatech and Transys-Erika. Not having found whatever he was looking for from the Knights of Rage, the ascetic Darren has more recently joined forces with Samantha Villiers. While the exact nature of their relationship is unknown, the two have been hatching aggressive expansion plans for NeoNET TransAsia, causing headaches for Richard.



Darren Villiers

Male dwarf

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | M | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
| 7(10) | 5(9) | 4(6) | 8(12) | 4 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 14 | 5 | 3.375 | 9(11) | 1(3) |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 12/12

Armor (B/I): 16/12

Skills: Assensing 4, Astral Combat 4, Athletics skill group 5 (8), Automatics (Assault Rifles) 4 (+2), Close Combat skill group 6, Cracking skill group 4, Demolitions 4, Diving 3, Dodge 4, Electronics skill group 3, First Aid 4, Influence skill group 4, Intimidation (Interrogation) 4 (+2), Locksmith 3, Parachuting 3, Perception 6, Pilot Ground Craft 4, Pilot Aircraft 4, Pistols (Semi-Automatics) 6 (+2), Stealth skill group 6 (9), Survival 3, Throwing Weapons 4

Qualities: Adept (The Invisible Way), Toughness

Initiate Grade: 8

Metamagics: Adept centering, attunement (Pistol), cognition, flexible signature, extended masking, infusion, masking, somatic control

Adept Powers: Astral Perception, Critical Strike (4), Enhanced Perception (4), Freefall (2), Great Leap (2), Improved Ability (Infiltration, Shadowing) (3), Improved Reflexes, Mystic Armor (2), Natural Immunity (2), Traceless Walk, Unseen Hands (2)

Augmentations: (all delaware) Bone density augmentation 3, datajack, muscle augmentation 4, muscle toner 4, nanohive 6, nanosymbiotes 3, oxyrush 5, platelet factories, sleep regulator, synthacardium 3, trauma control system 5, universal nanite hunters 6, universal nantidotes 6

Gear: Area jammer (Rating 8), B&E bag [with autopicker (Rating 6), chisel, electronics toolkit, grapple gun (with 100m stealth rope and catalyst stick), maglock passkey (Rating 6), maglock sequencer, miniwelder, thermite burning bar, and wire clippers], chameleon suit, [w/ thermal damping (Rating 6)], contacts [Rating 3, w/ flare compensation, image link, and smartlink], custom commlink (Device Rating 8, w/ biometric reader, satellite link, skinlink, and subdermal microphone), directional jammer (Rating 8), FFBA full suit (w/ Rating 6 nonconductivity), handheld sensor [Signal 3, with cyberware scanner (Rating 6) and MAD scanner (Rating 6)], medkit (Rating 6), microphone [Rating 6, with audio enhancement (Rating 3), select sound filter (Rating 2), and spatial recognizer], micro-transceiver (Rating 6), plasteel restraints, rappelling gloves, SecureTech PPP system (forearm guards, leg and arm casings, shin guards, vitals protector), five stimulant patches (Rating 6), five tranq patches (Rating 10), trauma patch

Programs: Analyze 6, Browse 6, Command 6, Edit 6, Encrypt 6, Scan 6, Biofeedback Filter 6, Decrypt 6, ECCM 6, Sniffer 6, Offensive Agent [Rating 8, with Armor 8, Attack 8, Exploit 8, Decrypt 8, Spoof 8, Stealth 8], IC Agent [Rating 8, with Armor 8, Attack 8, Blackout 8, Medic 8, Stealth 8, Track 8]

Weapons:

Unarmed Strike [Reach —, DV 12P, AP —]

Ruger Thunderbolt [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -5, BF, RC 3, 15(c) w/ extended clip, personalized grip, smartgun system, int. sound suppressor, quickdraw holster and APDS ammo]

YARDIE CREW

(Professional Rating 3)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Init | IP |
| 5 | 3(5) | 3 | 5(7) | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 11

Armor (B/I): 9/7

Skills: Athletics skill group 3, Close Combat skill group 5, Con 3, Etiquette (Street) 3 (+2), Infiltration 3, Intimidation (Physical) 3 (+2), Palming 3, Pistols 4

Augmentations: Cyberarm [obvious, customized (Body 5, Agility 3, Strength 5) w/ armor rating 1, agility enhancement 2, strength enhancement 2, and hand blade]

Gear: Armor jacket, commlink (Device Rating 1), one dose Jazz

Weapons:

Baseball Bat [Improvised Club, Reach 1, DV 5P, AP —]

Saber [Sword, Reach 1, DV 6P, AP 0]

Hand Blade [Cyber-Implant Blade, Reach 0, DV 6P, AP 0]

Colt M1991 [Heavy pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, RC 0, 7(c) w/ laser sight]

BADBOY, YARDIE LIEUTENANT

(Professional Rating 3)

Male troll

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
| 9(11) | 4(6) | 3(4) | 9(11) | 3 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 0.8 | 7(8) | 1(2) |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 13

Armor (B/I): 9/9

Skills: Athletics skill group 4, Automatics (SMGs) 4 (+2), Close Combat skill group 5, Con 4, Etiquette (Street) 4 (+2), Infiltration 3, Intimidation (Physical) 5 (+2), Leadership 4, Palming 3, Perception 4, Pilot Ground Craft 2, Shadowing 2

Qualities: Ambidextrous

Augmentations: Ceramic bone lacing, muscle replacement 2, wired reflexes 1

Gear: Armor jacket [w/ nonconductivity (Rating 4)], commlink (Device Rating 3), one dose nitro

Weapons:

2 Ingram Warrior-10s [SMG, DV 6P, AP -1, SA/BF, RC 5, 30(c) w/ gas-vent system (Rating 2), personalized grip, and EX-explosive ammo]

... INSUBSTANTIAL RUMORS ...

Incoming Message

- Check out this series of e-mails one of my contacts sent my way. Just in case you don't believe all those legal thrillers are real.
- Kay St. Irregular

.....
7-27-73, 4:43 PM

FROM: Eric McCoy
TO: Enid Clausen
SUBJECT: Quandary

Okay, so the good news is that the combat biking ticket situation worked out fine. We found one other person to go with us, so Bruce and Maria could buy some other tickets and sit together. No real problem, and something we should have thought of earlier.

But I've got another thing that's come up, and I'm not sure what to do about it. I won't go into detail right now, but I've been reading decisions from the CC—big surprise, right?—and there's something nagging on my mind. I tried to put it aside, but it wouldn't go away, so I did some research, and I found some other things that raised even more questions. I've got a pretty good file now, and I'm thinking about showing it to someone. The trouble is, I know that these things I'm thinking about could very well make me sound crazy. If whoever I show it to doesn't buy it, I could be out on my ass. But it's really important. So do I do anything about it, or just let it slide?

.....
7-30-73, 5:15 PM

FROM: Eric McCoy
TO: Enid Clausen
SUBJECT: Re: Quandary

That was a good idea. I showed it to another associate, and—well, they were blown away. Not only did he buy it, but he

did some more research of his own, and he found some things that just backed up my theory. Some inconsistencies, along with some rumors about someone not being physically seen recently. So now we've got our own little conspiracy club. I think we've got a solid case to make.

.....
8-3-73, 12:22 PM

FROM: Eric McCoy
TO: Enid Clausen
SUBJECT: It's getting bigger

We did it! Reggie and I talked to Patricia Jenkins, and I think she bought it. You know how bosses are—she was stone-faced and all, but she heard us out and listened to the whole thing. She didn't schedule a follow-up meeting, but she told us to keep her posted of anything else we learn. I figured that meant she didn't think we were complete lunatics. I don't know what will happen from here, but—well, it's weird. I can't believe the world may actually be as strange as it looks to me right now.

.....
8-4-73, 8:55 AM

FROM: Eric McCoy
TO: Enid Clausen
SUBJECT: Re: It's getting bigger

I know I've been really vague about what's going on in my e-mails. There were a few reasons for that. The first was that I thought if I typed the things I was thinking, I would read it and see just how crazy it looked and I'd throw it away. After that—I remembered that they can monitor any e-mails that go out. And I know it sounds silly, but I worried about keeping you safe. If you don't know any details, I figure you'll be okay. But you want a

hint? Here's a hint—by rights and by name, it should be the most fair thing in the world, but it isn't. It floats, and I don't think it's real. (That should keep you amused for a while).

The weird thing is, ever since I got Reggie on board with this, it's like I've been seeing things. Everywhere I go, there's someone in a suit, and that someone is watching me. Crazy, right? I mean, it's not like seeing people wearing suits is that uncommon here. So I'm sure I'm just imagining things. It's kind of fun, though, to imagine people after me. When it's not scary.

8-11-73, 9:17 AM

FROM: Eric McCoy
TO: Enid Clausen
SUBJECT: Conspiracy club disbands

Bad news. Reggie's been transferred. Just like that, but that's the way it goes! He's off to Barcelona, from what I hear, so he'll be *way* far away. I guess he was right in thinking that learning Spanish could help his career. I'll miss him—we'd been talking about the Conspiracy (that's right, I've given it a capital C now!) and we made some interesting headway. In fact, we gave Patricia Jenkins an update last week, and she really seemed intrigued.

I'm beginning to think she's giving us the brush-off, though. If she really believed us, I'd expect her to have called the authorities by now, or someone who might be in a position to do something. Though the levels this thing goes to, I'm not sure who that would be.

Oops, I just said too much. Better stop now before I blab too much!

8-19-73, 7:05 PM

FROM: Eric McCoy
TO: Enid Clausen
SUBJECT: Sorry

I know it's been a long time since I wrote, and I apologize. The node at work's been crazy lately—IT says it was a virus or something that was really good at hiding from them. I told them it wasn't my fault, and since no one's fired me yet, hopefully they believe me.

Now, I know you're saying that there are other nodes besides the one at the office, but I don't spend much time any place else, and when I do, I usually just collapse. But I'm still here, I'm fine, and I'm working my ass off.

Reggie sent me a note the other day. He seems fine in Barcelona. I was hoping he might have some research for me so

we could keep moving the Conspiracy ahead. But it seems like he's got too much on his plate to spend time on this.

8-23-73, 8:10 AM

FROM: Eric McCoy
TO: Enid Clausen
SUBJECT: I'm nuts

I'm overworked, overstressed, or both. I swear I saw Reggie on the street on the way to work. I thought he saw me, too. I was walking down the street, and I saw him like I do sometimes when I was coming to work, and I forgot for a moment that he had been sent to Barcelona. But then I remembered, and I was thinking of a bunch of questions to ask, when he looked to his right, and he dashed off. I ran ahead and tried to see him, but he was gone.

I'm sure it was just my imagination, but the fact that I'm seeing things can't be good.

8-24-73, 11:44 PM

FROM: Eric McCoy
TO: Enid Clausen
SUBJECT: Re: I'm nuts

It wasn't my imagination. More later.

8-25-73, 4:32 AM

FROM: Eric McCoy
TO: Enid Clausen
SUBJECT: Re: I'm nuts

Reggie's here. He never went to Barcelona. Any messages he sent were forgeries. This whole thing, all of it, is real.

8-26-73, 7:58 AM

FROM: <anonymous user>
TO: Enid Clausen
SUBJECT:

I can't go back to the office. You can't reach me there anymore.



8-27-73, 2:15 AM

FROM: <anonymous user>
TO: Enid Clausen
SUBJECT:

Someone's blocking me every time I try to use the 'trix. This is the fifth message I've tried to send you. I need help. Can you get a certified credstick? I'll figure out somewhere we can meet.

8-28-73, 4:12 PM

FROM: <anonymous user>
TO: Enid Clausen
SUBJECT:

Never mind about the credstick. I can't meet you.

8-29-73, 12:13 AM

FROM: <anonymous user>
TO: Enid Clausen
SUBJECT:

Reggie might try to contact you. It'll be brief. Tell him that if the Lone Star decision goes for Lone Star, we'll know she's a plant for sure. He'll know what that means.

9-23-73, 11:12 PM

FROM: <anonymous user>
TO: Enid Clausen
SUBJECT: It's getting bigger

She went against the Star. I don't know what's going on. But they're still after me, so I must know something.

I won't write again. It's not safe.

- This doesn't prove that legal thrillers are real. It just proves that sometimes they're written by bored lawyers who put their literary urges in e-mail form.
- Snopes

OVERVIEW

Rumors abound about why Corporate Court Chief Justice Hino hasn't been seen in person for some time. Most dismiss it as augmented reality being the most convenient method of communicating, especially high above the earth in a space station. Others think she may be ill or not even on Zurich-Orbital for some reason. The truth of the matter is far stranger—Justice Hino is dead and Evo has put a Matrix simulacrum in her place. While Hino 2.0 has done well, there are still some issues. Some members of Evo have adjusted Hino 2.0 to make decisions that suit their own ends, taking Evo in the direction they desire. Their actions, and some other oddities tied to Justice Hino, have attracted the attention of Majia Wright.

After Wright was pushed out of Interpol's Drug Enforcement Agency, she went to DeeCee to serve as the director of Lone Star's Drug Enforcement Division. Wright has a long-standing grudge against Aztechnology, which has made her a willing tool for corporations wishing to carry out cases against the Big A in the CC. In addition, Wright now has some corporate weight of her own that she can bring to bear in various matters. In one recent case, Wright had convinced her colleagues in Lone Star's legal department to bring suit in an effort to allow Lone Star into an Aztechnology facility to search for materials related to the manufacture and distribution of tempo. It seemed like a case

destined to fail, but Wright was convinced that she had Chief Justice Hino on her side, and that the Chief Justice would be able to bring enough of her colleagues on board to give Lone Star an important victory. The Court handed down a six-seven decision against Lone Star, with Chief Justice Hino voting with the majority. Wright was enraged. With the same zeal that got her fired from IDEA, she reviewed many of the cases that had gone before the Corporate Court, specifically ones where Justice Hino had written an opinion or been active in questioning during the case. She discovered that Justice Hino's last five decisions relating to Aztechnology Corporation had not been consistent with patterns and precedents established by her previous cases.

The inconsistencies, combined with the fact that Justice Hino hadn't been seen in person for more than a year, raised Wright's suspicions. She came to believe that someone was manipulating the judge, or maybe even blackmailing her. This is serious if true, and it could put a significant number of cases back on the docket for retrial. Now that she doesn't work for IDEA, Wright doesn't have the access to Zurich-Orbital that she used to, and she is also hindered by the fact that many people distanced themselves from her after she was fired. No one will believe Wright's story unless she assembles solid proof, especially on a place that is supposedly out of reach of anyone on the ground. Success here won't get her back into Interpol, but it might help her crusade against Aztechnology. The first step is to interview those that have seen Justice Hino to see if there are any oddities or inconsistencies in



her demeanor. Through DeeCee's Lone Star office, she can find a few shadowrunners who will help her in this effort. It won't be easy, though—once Evo realizes that Wright is pursuing an interest in Hino, they put into motion a team to stop her.

PLOT POINT ONE

Rumors

The runners are contacted through their fixer to meet Ms. Johnson at Farragut Square, a fairly open and public park in DeeCee. Ms. Johnson is sitting on a park bench close to one of the rail stations, which allows background noise to mask their conversation. This Ms. Johnson is one of Majia Wright's personal secretaries. Wright cues her through her commlink when talking to the runners while observing from a restaurant adjacent to the park. Wright is not afraid of the runners—especially not when she thinks about the Lone Star resources at her disposal—but for the time being she does not want to be directly involved with the runners and wants to preserve her anonymity with them. She's nearby, though, because she wants to see how they react. Undercover DED agents who are there to ensure Ms. Johnson's security should things get out of hand have replaced local FedPol units around the park and Metro station entrance.

Through Ms. Johnson, Wright asks the runners to get some information on Justice Hino; specifically, she wants a list of her recent visitors and any eyewitness accounts she can get of how the meeting with the Justice proceeded. Ms. Johnson plays her cards close to her vest; Wright is not anxious to share her suspicions about Hino and Aztechnology at this stage in the game, but if she becomes personally involved in the interview she tells the runners her theory to impress on them the urgency of this matter. Ms. Johnson tells the runners that Justice Hino has only been seen in AR for more than a year, and she would like to know if anyone has noticed a change in her behavior and can explain her current state of isolation.

While Wright has a slush fund to pay for the runners' services, she also has pull in expunging certain Lone Star criminal records if needed. If negotiations are going badly through Ms. Johnson, then Wright steps in personally to show the runners that she can back up any promises she makes to them.

Once the deal has been accepted, Ms. Johnson suggests that the runners start their investigation with Donald Melch, the new head of the IDEA, as he's the last person to have informally talked with Justice Hino this month. After that suggestion, Ms. Johnson and Wright depart. The basics of the job sound easy—poke around, find people who have met with Justice Hino, and ask a few questions. The problem is that the type of people who are able to get a meeting with the Corporate Court Chief Justice tend not to be the kind of people who are willing to engage in casual conversation with runners. It'll take some effort to find people willing to talk, and in that poking around, they'll attract Evo's attention.

PLOT POINT TWO

Interpol Dead End

Interpol's Drug Enforcement Agency has an office in DeeCee, just off US 50, near the FBI building. Melch's office is on the second of the building's ten stories. The IDEA offices are

secured to prevent infiltration, with heavy security in the lobby to detected guns and verify SINs. There is also astral overwatch performed by four watcher spirits patrolling the ground floor.

Donald Melch is a very busy man, or at least that's what his secretary tells prospective visitors (use Corporate Receptionist, p. 140). Hacking into his calendar (which is protected by a Rating 5 Firewall) is one alternative to dealing with her.

If the runners are able to get into see Melch, he gives them ten minutes to say what they have to say (he times this with an ARO that he graciously shares with the entire team). He tells them that he came back from Zurich-Orbital about a month ago as part of an introduction to his duties and to give him the chance to see the Justices in an informal setting. He says that while he met each Justice at Z-O, not all of the meetings were a face to face. Chief Justice Hino was one of these; she apologized for not seeing him personally, citing her workload. Other than that, there was nothing out of the ordinary in the meeting that Melch noticed.

Melch is very smart, and he asks questions to determine the runner's motivations and what they think they'll get out of this interview. If Wright's name comes up, Melch stops the clock. He tells them that she's better at fighting windmills and pissing people off than doing her real job, and that's why she was fired. Wright believes that if something doesn't go her way, that's evidence of a conspiracy against her. If the runners ask him about Wright's theory that Aztechnology may be involved in influencing Justice Hino, he laughs and tells them that Wright believes that anything that goes wrong is Aztechnology's fault. He pulls up a listing of Corporate Court voting records over the last month, highlighting one in AR. He tells them that seven justices, including Hino, voted against a search of an Aztechnology building, and that's what Wright's beef is about. He adds that the only reason Wright thinks there's something is up with Justice Hino is that she's the Chief Justice—Wright's tendency toward grandiose theories would allow nothing less. Melch then provides the runners with a rundown of Hino's most recent decisions and restarts the clock.

When time runs out, he dismisses the runners immediately and without any further discussion. Study of the data Melch gave the runners shows nothing immediately abnormal.

PLOT POINT THREE

False Trail

With no luck with Melch in proving Wright's theory, the runners have to search the Matrix to find others who may have recently seen her. Eventually, after a successful Data Search + Browse (12, 1 minute) Extended Test, the runners get a hit of a trid of someone named Dr. Vance having lunch with Justice Hino on the so called "Ten Forward" of the Zurich-Orbital approximately three months ago. Dr. Vance, a genetic therapist for Evo, lives in the DeeCee area. Unfortunately, the trid the runners find has been edited by a second runner team. It's bait—the other runner team is looking for any runners who might try to find Dr. Vance, and they plan to eliminate those runners before any meeting can occur.

Attempts to contact Dr. Vance go smoothly; the person who answers the call is happy to set up an appointment that same day. The runners are told Dr. Vance is working at home today, but he



INCOMING FEED.....

will meet them in his home office. They receive the address of a DeeCee area brownstone.

The opposing team of runners is waiting to ambush the runners. The team's leader is named Jazz; his team members are Vrede, Spectre, and Vice. Their ambush is a two-part assault. In the first part, Vrede (a rigger) and Spectre (mage) waits outside the brownstone until the runners enter. Jazz is inside, impersonating the aging Dr. Vance; Vice is serving as his butler. Jazz has them sit in the living room while Vice brings refreshments. As the runners ask questions, Jazz tells things they essentially already know from the image they found—he visited Z-O three months ago, had a informal conversation with Hino, and hasn't seen her since. He didn't notice anything unusual about her demeanor. Jazz's information contradicts what Wright said about how long it has been since anyone saw Hino in the flesh—he says it's been about eight months. He also doesn't know much about medicine or anything else Vance is supposed to know, so uses his Con skill as much as possible in an effort to convince the runners that he is who he says he is. Vice eventually returns with a pitcher of iced tea and several glasses. Jazz invites the runners to stay for lunch, as he doesn't have too many visitors. Once the runners have dropped their guard, Vrede and Spectre disable the runners' vehicles and assault the house.

With the runners distracted by this assault and possibly protecting the fake Dr. Vance, Jazz and Vice drop their disguise and attack the runners from behind. While the objective is to kill the runners, Vrede and Spectre don't want to hurt their team leader. If things look like they will go badly for Jazz and his team, Spectre and Vrede support Vice and Jazz as they exit the

brownstone with cover fire and spirit protection. Should they survive and be captured by the runners for questioning, Jazz claims that he was hired less than a week ago to keep the runners away from Dr. Vance. The Mr. Johnson who hired them had a separate hacker doing the Matrix work while Jazz provided the image and location of the ambush. Analyzing the altered data shows that the hacker was very good; even the adjustment to the dataflows to redirect searches to this location was very elegant and expensive work. Money paid to the second runner team was on certified credsticks.

PLOT POINT FOUR

Questions Left Unanswered

With a bit of Matrix work, the runners can find the unaltered version of Dr. Vance and his real address. He lives in an Evo-sponsored gated community in the DeeCee area. Dr. Vance has retired from his corporate practice and has his own private practice. The biggest difficulty in getting to see him is having the runners travel through a high-class neighborhood and enter the gated community without rousing suspicion. His home/office is less secured with maglocks and the occasional drone patrol. Dr. Vance lives and works at the house with his assistant coming there to work. However the runners get to see him, he tells them about Justice Hino and that, while she seems brutal and cold in the trid recordings of her rulings, she is a nice and a slightly pushy woman. He's known Hino for twenty years. The lunch he had with her was over a year ago, not the three months that Jazz claimed. Dr. Vance tells them that Hino and he were great friends

INSUBSTANTIAL RUMORS

and colleagues before she became Chief Justice. They were even on the same sports team in slightly younger years. If he is asked if he has seen her lately and if he's noticed anything odd in her behavior, he tells them that he has noticed that during a few calls that he's made to her, she's forgotten certain events from their shared past, or she remembers them differently. As an example, she remembers when she bowled a perfect 300 in a tournament, but she doesn't remember the celebration afterwards. It's been two months since he last had a conversation with her, and lately she's been avoiding his calls. He doesn't know what's wrong with her; she hasn't mentioned any new difficulties or stress in her life.

Dr. Vance's statements and the incident with the other runner team, provide enough information to Wright to let her know that *something* is going on. She is grateful to the runners for helping prove that something is wrong with Justice Hino. When Wright asks about Aztechnology's involvement and doesn't get a good answer from the runners, she is a little frustrated, and she tells them that she'll contact them later for more work after she makes a few inquiries. The runners get paid for their services

PLOT POINT FIVE

Martyr Square

The runners are requested to meet Wright at Farragut Square again. Wright's secretary is there, waiting, and she apologizes for Wright's delay. A few minutes later, she says Wright is now in touch with her and communicating an important message. She tells the runners that something is going on with Justice Hino—somebody is pulling her strings. Before Wright continues, there is a horrific sound of crunching plastic and alarms going off. Wright's secretary is in shock, staring across the street at the corner where the restaurant Wright was at during the last meeting is located. In a bizarre accident, a truck crashed into a Metrobus at a bus stop in front of the restaurant, with both vehicles plowing into the crowded sidewalk and into the restaurant as Majia Wright was exiting. The truck has two bullet holes through the glass windshield. The FedPols, Lone Star, and others come in and lock down the area quickly as Farragut Square is only one block north of the White House Enclosure.

While the runners are not involved in the bus crash, it puts them in possible jeopardy, as they may have criminal records and or illegal weapons on them. Getting out without being arrested or detained is a challenge. If they are caught, there won't be enough evidence to hold them longer than forty-eight hours. The cause of Majia Wright's death is ruled accidental, along with ten others who died at the bus stop. No motive is discovered for the murder of the twenty-eight-year-old truck driver, but the FedPols are still investigating the case. They have one anomaly in that the truck changed course and speed after the driver's death, going against the autopilot's normal programming. Hacking is assumed, but whoever the hacker was left no trace behind.

LOCATIONS

FARRAGUT SQUARE

Farragut Square is in the hub of downtown DeeCee surrounded by hotels, offices, and restaurants. It is serviced by two metro rail stops in adjacent corners of the park. The park contains multiple benches, tables, and other places for people to congregate. There are some trees that provide shade and some pleasant flowers and bushes. It has a bustling lunchtime crowd with the occasional entertainment and/or protest/polling groups targeting them. Farragut Square's ambient noise levels at lunch time make it difficult to overhear conversations. Many street vendors selling items that range from food to wares to AR software and upgrades are working here. Prices are comparable to *SR4A*, but only up to Rating 4 and with nothing restricted or illegal.

INTERPOL DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCY OFFICE IN DEECEE

IDEA Offices are in a ten-story building wholly owned and occupied by Interpol, across the street from the FBI building. Various joint efforts with North American governments and corporations such as Lone Star and Knight Errant have ties to this office. As with most of the buildings in DeeCee, there is obvious scanning equipment in the lobby to detect and analyze cyberware, weapons, and explosives. Most of this equipment is at Rating 6, while the SIN reader is at Rating 4. Use Lone Star Police Squad member (see p. 282, *SR4A*) for stats of security forces working there. Two elevators and two fire staircases provide access to all the floors.

BROWNSTONE HOUSE

The brownstone house is a simple two-story building of moderate luxury, built next to many other brownstone buildings in a small community about fifty kilometers outside of DeeCee. Several of the houses are up for sale, so there's a sparse residential population. The brownstone they visit is currently up for sale, but AROs have been spoofed to show Dr. Vance's residence. Rating 3 bolt locks on the windows and Rating 4 maglocks on the front and back door is the main part of the house's security with a CHN node monitoring sensors and has been spoofed as well with years of random data to show occupancy. Jazz and his team have scavenged pieces of furniture from the other houses to have some semblance of a home on the first floor. The second floor's bedrooms and bathrooms are empty of furniture and accessories.

DR. VANCE'S RESIDENCE

Dr. Arnold Vance's Residence is a small two-story home with a fenced-in backyard within a gated community of about forty homes a half hour outside of DeeCee in Hagerstown. Security guards are posted at the gate to verify authorization. As these are not high-profile employees, use Corporate Security Unit (see p. 281, *SR4A*) for security guard stats. A few MCT-Nissan Roto-Drones travel along the streets to make sure things are where they are supposed to be. The drones and the commanding spider communicate with a host of other drones such as Telestrian GreenThumb and Evo MetaAssistant (see p. 152, *Runner's Companion*) to keep the lawns and hedges trimmed while also repairing/painting the homes/fences/streets.

PEOPLE

MAJIA WRIGHT

Majia Wright is a 38-year-old UCAS citizen. After college, she worked several government jobs from secretary to data entry before finding criminal investigation her forte; and as luck would have it, got accepted in Interpol in an internship. She worked very hard and earned the prestige of being promoted to the director of the Interpol Drug Enforcement Agency, and led a successful crusade against the tempo drug traffickers. She is intelligent and insightful, but had some social ineptitude that made her look like a zealot. She pushed several buttons when she questioned fellow investigators' methods. The final straw was pursuing a closed case and wasting money believing that a suspect was still alive. She had plenty of enemies and few friends. Still Lone Star Drug Enforcement Division saw someone who would do well in their corporation. Her hatred of Aztechnology also helped her relating to the company. She thrived in the environment and more freedom that she got within IDEA. She returned to Washington and called in whatever political favors she still had to become the director of Lone Star DED. Since then she has also taken control over all Lone Star operations in DeeCee. Lone Star has let her have such control and indulge in her own pursuits as she's been very successful with deriving good intel and keeping things moving smoothly.

Majia Wright

Human female

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|----|
| 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/11

Armor (B/I): 4/0

Skills: Blades 2, Dodge 3, Electronics skill group 3, Influence skill Group 4, Leadership 4, Perception 3, Pistols 4, Stealth skill group 4, Unarmed Combat (Martial Arts) 3 (+2)

Knowledge Skills: Aztechnology Corporation 4, Chemistry (Drug manufacturing) 3(+2), Criminal Law 5, Criminal Syndicates 5, Corporate Court Procedures 3, DeeCee Area Knowledge 3, Intelligence Agencies 3, Law Enforcement Agencies 4, Police Procedures 4, Security Providers 4

Languages: English N

Qualities: College Educated, Sinner (Standard)

Gear: Armored clothing, Fairlight Caliban commlink w/ Novatech Navi [Response 4, Signal 5, Firewall 3, System 4, w/ biometric lock (Rating 5)], contacts [Rating 3, w/ image link, low-light vision, smartlink]

Weapons:

Colt Manhunter [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, RC —, 16(c)]

DONALD MELCH

Donald Melch is a no-nonsense corporate executive. At 44, he was promoted to the head of IDEA to replace Majia Wright. Some of this was a political choice, and he knows it, but he takes it as a challenge to live up to the position. He has the same spirit as Wright but disliked the obsessive hatred she has of Aztechnology and how it made the department look bad, especially when she questioned Interpol's decision to close the case on Riveros. As

a previous field agent, he understands the use and function of shadowrunners, but he doesn't have much use for them, especially in his new position as they are not completely reliable.

Donald Melch

Human Male

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|----|
| 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5.5 | 8 | 2 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/10

Armor (B/I): 5/3

Skills: Blades 3, Dodge 3, Electronics skill group 3, Influence skill group 4, Perception 3, Pistols 4, Stealth skill group 4, Unarmed Combat (Martial Arts) 3 (+2)

Knowledge Skills: Interpol Politics 4, Criminal Law 5, Corporate Court Procedures 3, DeeCee Area Knowledge 3, Security Systems 2

Languages: English N, Farsi 3, Japanese 2, Spanish 3

Qualities: College Educated, Sinner (Standard)

Augmentations: Synaptic booster 1

Gear: Actioneer Business Clothes, Fairlight Caliban Commlink w/ Novatech Navi [Response 4, Signal 5, Firewall 3 System 4, w/ biometric lock Rating 5, Novatech Navi OS], contacts [Rating 3 w/ image link, low-light vision, smartlink]

Weapons:

Colt Manhunter [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, RC —, 16(c)]

DR. ARNOLD VANCE

Doctor Arnold Vance, age 67, retired doctor, specializing in genetic diseases and therapy for Evo. He and Justice Hino were good friends and colleagues for twenty-plus years. While not working the same area, they resided in the same arcology and played on the same bowling team. Vance retired in 2067 as part of a major corporate restructuring initiative. Not one to sit idle, Vance has developed his own private practice, geared toward members of his community. Evo ignores his private practice, since so for it hasn't brought negative attention. He could be a valuable contact, as he's good at patching people up and is knowledgeable of cybertechnology. If the runners want him to treat them, though, they need to be sure that they visit his house discreetly.

Dr. Arnold Vance

Human Male

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|----|
| 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/10

Armor (B/I): 0/0

Skills: Athletics skill group 1, Cybertechnology 4, Electronics skill group 3, Etiquette (Corporate) 3 (+2), First Aid 5, Leadership 3, Medicine (Gene Therapy) 6 (+2), Perception 4, Unarmed Combat 1

Knowledge Skills: Biotechnology 3, Bowling Leagues 2, Cybertechnology 3, DeeCee Area Knowledge 4, Evo Corporate Politics 4, Genetic Manipulation 5, Medicine 5, Nanotechnology 3

Languages: English N, French 2, Japanese 2



Qualities: College Educated, SINner (Standard)
Gear: Commlink (Device Rating 3), first aid kit (Rating 5)

OPPOSITION RUNNER TEAM

These runners are professionals; in the end, they understand that being alive is better than being dead. They are not willing to be bought off, since they know how bad that looks on a runner's résumé, but they can be inspired to retreat so that they can live again to fight another day.

Jazz

Human Male

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|----|
| 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5.7 | 8 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/11

Armor (B/I): 6/4

Skills: Con 4, Disguise 3, Dodge 2, Electronics skill group 3, Etiquette 4, Pilot Ground Craft (Car) 2 (+2), Intimidation 3, Negotiations 4, Perception 4, Pistols 3

Knowledge Skills: Corporate Security 3, DeeCee Neighborhoods 2, DeeCee Safe Houses 2, Fine Cuisine 3, Fine Restaurants 3, Urban Brawl Schedule 3

Languages: English N, German 3, Japanese 3, Spanish 3

Qualities: Exceptional Attribute (Charisma), First Impression,

Augmentations: Datajack, implanted commlink (Device Rating 4)

Gear: Basic DocWagon contract (1 year), 4 certified credsticks (blank), 2 fake SINs (Rating 4), contacts [Rating 2, w/ image link, smartlink], jammer [area, Rating 4], lined coat, Mercury Comet,

Weapons:

Fichetti Security 600 [Light Pistol, DV 4P, AP —, SA, RC (1), 30(c)]

Vice

Ork Male

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|------|------|------|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|------|
| 7 | 4(5) | 4(5) | 6(7) | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2.9 | 7(8) | 1(2) |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 12/10

Armor (B/I): 8/6

Qualities: Guts, Toughness

Skills: Close Combat skill group 4, Etiquette (Street) 3 (+2), Firearms skill group 5, First Aid 3, Intimidation 3, Pilot Ground Craft (Bike) 2 (+2), Shadowing 4, Survival (Urban) 2 (+2)

Knowledge Skills: Black Market Dealers 2, Gang ID 4, Gang Turf 5, DeeCee Area Knowledge 2, Urban Brawl Statistics 3

Languages: English N, Japanese 3

Augmentations: Datajack, muscle replacement 1, wired reflexes 1

Gear: Armor jacket, commlink (Device Rating 3), glasses [Rating 4, w/ flare compensation, image link, low-light vision, smartlink], medkit (Rating 5)

Weapons:

Extendable Baton [Club, Reach 1, DV 4P (5P), AP —]

Remington Roomsweeper [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, RC, 8 (m)]

Vrede

Elf Female Rigger

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|------|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|--------|------|
| 3 | 5 | 5(7) | 2 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3.4 | 10(12) | 1(3) |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/10

Armor (B/I): 6/4

Skills: Dodge 3, Etiquette (Smugglers) 2 (+2), Electronic Warfare 4, Gunnery 4, Mechanic skill group 2, Navigation 2, Perception 3, Pilot Aircraft 4, Pilot Ground Craft 5, Pistols 1, Infiltration 3

Knowledge Skills: Auto Mechanics 4, DeeCee Streets 4, Engineering 3, Smuggling routes 4

Languages: English N, Spanish 3

Qualities: Low Pain Tolerance, Addiction (Mild, pollen)

Augmentations: Bone lacing (plastic), control rig, cybereyes [Rating 3, w/ flare compensation, low-light vision, smartlink, and thermographic vision], datajack, reaction enhancers 2, 2 smuggling compartments, touchlink

Gear: Automotive toolkit, autosofts [Clearsight 3, Defense 3, 3 Dragonfly drones, Electronic Warfare 3, Maneuver (Ground Craft) 3, Targeting (Heavy Weapons) 3], 2 Ares Heimdalls with anti-vehicle warheads, Fairlight Caliban commlink [Response 4, Signal 5, Firewall 5, System 5, w/ sim module modified for BTL/hot sim], GMC Bulldog Step-Van [Pilot 4, Firewall 4, Signal 4, Response 4, w/ rigger adaptation, weapon mount w/ Ingram White Knight LMG, 2 belts of 100 explosive rounds], lined coat, programs [Command 5, ECCM 5, Encrypt 4, Scan 5, Stealth 5], Steel Lynx combat drone [w/ Ingram White Knight LMG]

Weapons:

Remington Roomsweeper [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, RC —, 8 (m)]

Spectre

Dwarf male

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | M | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|----|
| 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/11

Armor (B/I): 8/6

Skills: Arcana 2, Assensing 2 Conjuring skill group (3), Dodge 2, Etiquette (Street) 2 (+2), Perception (Visual) 3 (+2), Pistols (Semi-Automatics) 3 (+2), Sorcery skill group (4)

Qualities: Magician, SINner (Criminal)

Spells: Acid Stream, Fireball, Heal, Improved Invisibility, Increase Reflexes, Manabolt

Gear: Armored jacket [w/ chemical resistance 2, fire resistance 2, non-conductivity 2], earbuds [Rating 3, w/ audio enhancement 2, spatial recognizer], Erika Elite commlink w/ Novatech Navi [Response 3, Signal 4, Firewall 3, System 4, w/ biometric lock Rating 3, skinlink], 2 fake SINs (Rating 4), glasses [Rating 4, w/ flare compensation, image link, low-light vision, and smartlink], sustaining focus (Force 3), programs [Analyze 3, Browse 3, Command 1, Edit 3], subvocal microphone

Spirits: Force 5 bound spirit of air [w/ 4 services, Noxious Breath optional power], Force 4 bound spirit of fire [w/ 5 services, Fear optional power]

... FLOATING SECRETS ...

Incoming Message

- So I'm pretty sure I know what the e-mail series Kay St. posted was getting at, and I've seen some of the same things this McCoy character saw. Has anyone else out there been approached about obtaining, receiving, or otherwise dealing in data related to Corporate Court Justice Yoshiko Hino?
- Sunshine
- Why?
- Cosmo
- Because in the last couple of days, my mailbox has been blowing up from various contacts and associates who have been badgered about getting information from others. Normally, it's not unusual to get a request here and there, but when a lot of similar requests come in at the same time, it makes me wonder what's going on.
- Sunshine
- You too, huh? Hino's name has been coming up a lot for me, too. Seems a corporate prosecutor was sniffing around in places she really shouldn't have been, and the runner team she hired to do her dirty work almost got their noses cut off by another team.
- Cosmo
- Par for the course. Anything else?
- Sunshine
- Yeah. And I'll tell you if you finally fork over the fifty you owe me from the last poker game.
- Cosmo
- *rolls eyes* Yeah, yeah. Everyone else shakes me down to provide info, why not you? Check your account.
- Sunshine
- Thanks. Sadly, I don't have a ton more beyond what I posted in the *Corporate Guide* file a while back. Justice Hino is still pretty much a ghost on the station, even though she has yet to miss a session. People on the station are starting to talk, though, and people on the ground are getting nervous.
- Cosmo
- Interesting. I just got a data request from a friend of a friend about the habitat itself. They wanted to know system ratings, any available schematics, known access codes, the whole works. Of course, I laughed. If I had that information, I sure as hell wouldn't give it out, no matter what someone offered me. I'd use it myself. But that sort of thing is too hot—the last thing I need is a GOD-squad on my back. I have enough problems to deal with.
- Orbital DK
- I hear someone is planning a run against Zurich-Orbital, both through the Matrix *and* on site.
- Plan 9
- OK, Plan, I'm sorry but I *have* to call bullshit on this one. Z-O in the Matrix is as damn near impenetrable as it gets. And besides this, it's GOD's home address. And as far as an on-site run goes—how the hell is someone gonna get there? Can't exactly get a secondhand or used trans-orbital now can you? I doubt even Kane could get one. And let's say that someone could—they'd be blown away before they got within a thousand meters of the station. I hate to use this word, but it's impossible!
- Slamm-O!
- Is that some sort of back-handed challenge, couyon?
- Kane
- Nothing is totally impossible. But I will admit something weird is going on. Traffic to and from the habitat has increased by about forty percent in the last couple of weeks. And the vast majority of visitors say they are going there for "judiciary purposes."
- Orbital DK
- Be back later—I have some contacts to call.
- Sunshine.

OVERVIEW

It started as a simple fact-finding mission. When her cases went belly up in the Corporate Court, Director Majia Wright of Lone Star's Drug Enforcement Division in DecCee started looking into the case history and recent Corporate Court rulings, especially those of Chief Justice Yoshiko Hino from Evo. The initial investigation showed Hino's voting trends and case opinions had shifted, enough so that Wright intended to launch a possible blackmail investigation. During her investigations, Wright discovered that Justice Hino hasn't physically attended a court session on the Zurich-Orbital Habitat for more than a year, despite being a Habitat resident. In fact, Wright couldn't find confirmation that Hino had a physical meeting with anyone during that time. Wright was convinced that something was quite wrong, but her attempts to work through normal channels failed. Wright then enlisted the aid of shadowrunners. Wright's and the runner's actions attracted attention, and a rival team of runners was sent in to stop them. All earthbound leads turned into dead ends, and Wright was assassinated.

Now, a new Mr. Johnson, with a vested interest in furthering this investigation, hires the runners to continue what they have started. The runners find themselves traveling to the one place where there may be answers, a place very few (if any) runners have gone before: the Zurich-Orbital Habitat.

PLOT POINT ONE

It's an offer of a lifetime: a shadowrun on the big Z-O. This is the kind of run most teams never encounter, and the pay reflects it. If the runners are the same group who initially worked for Wright, Mr. Johnson (use Mr. Johnson (Corporate), p. 143) contacts them and offers a chance to continue the investigation. If not, the runners can simply be briefed on the current situation and come in fresh.

Approximately a week after Wright's death, Mr. Johnson contacts the runners to arrange a meet. Mr. Johnson initially suggests meeting via Matrix. If the runners wish to meet while using full VR, the temporary node looks like a picnic table in the middle of a nondescript park. If the runners insist on a physical location, he obliges. Dry-docked at the Newport News shipyard in Virginia, pier 23 is the independent cargo vessel *Rachel Lynn*, which is undergoing refit. Mr. Johnson is a middle-aged human male of mixed Caucasian and Japanese descent. Alone, he leads the runners to the captain's stateroom, where he makes his pitch. If the runners are so inclined to sweep and search the ship, they ultimately find no threats or nothing of value. If the runners decide to investigate Mr. Johnson, they find that he is Mr. Eugene Tanaka, an internal troubleshooter for Evo.

According to Mr. Johnson, the job is far easier than the initial pitch makes it sound. The runners are to travel to Zurich-Orbital, attempt to verify that Justice Yoshiko Hino is still on the station, and gather as much related information as possible in four days. Due to the inherent risks involved, the pay for this run should be no less than 15,000 nuyen for each runner. Runners can negotiate this to as high as 25,000 nuyen apiece, with increases of 1,000 nuyen for each net hit on a Negotiation + Charisma Opposed Test. Due to the difficulty of getting to the station, let alone being

allowed access, the runners have to rely heavily on Mr. Johnson for support, since chances are that none of them has the contacts necessary to get them to the habitat. Mr. Johnson not only arranges for transport, but he also provides cover IDs to allow the runners to operate on the station with minimal interference, provided they do nothing to attract attention.

Z-O is scheduled to undergo its regular six-month rotation where supplies are replenished, personnel are replaced/transferred as necessary, physical equipment is replaced, and any other miscellaneous needs are handled. The whole process is scheduled to take approximately four days. This gives the runners the window they need to operate and return, as well as a legitimate reason to be there. If the runners agree to the job, Mr. Johnson assigns them cover identities as part of the replenishment mission based on their individual skills. Examples of the roles they should fulfill include: technician, paralegal, doctor/nurse, general labor, security protocol specialist, and drone operator. This is a covert information-gathering assignment, and players and gamemasters should work together to come up with suitable covers. Once the covers have been decided on and assigned, the runners meet back on board the *Rachel Lynn* to receive their new temporary commlinks, identities, and other appropriate gear.

PLOT POINT TWO

According to the old saying, getting there is half the fun. For those attempting to travel to Z-O, this is doubly so. The resupply mission is scheduled to take off from the Evo-administrated Corporate Court facility in Vladivostok, Russia. Runners need not worry about getting there—Mr. Johnson made the necessary arrangements. Once there, the runners are screened by some of the most thorough security in the world. Top-of-the line scanners as well as the bleeding-edge in facial recognition and other security software are just some of the things the runners will have to go through. Consider all detection devices such as MAD scanners to have a device rating of 6. Commlinks are scanned for contraband data, illegal or restricted programs, or other things that could compromise station security. Likewise, all items and individuals are checked for explosives or other contraband.

Weapons of any kind are forbidden on the station. Only security officers assigned to the habitat can carry weapons, and those are specially designed for use on the station. Firearms are considered especially dangerous; even the smallest one brings the risk of extensive damage to the station, including possible hull breach. Security screens the runners, looking carefully for any cyber-implanted weaponry. If the player can justify a reason for having it, security takes measures to render the offensive 'ware unable to function. Armor of any kind, other than implanted, is not allowed on the station. The thinking is, if there are no weapons on board, then why does anyone need to wear armor? Of course, if the players have cyber or implanted weapons that fits with their cover story, arrangements can be made. The runners can always try to smuggle restricted equipment or weapons on board, but the chances of such items being discovered are high, earning the runners a very uncomfortable meeting with station security. The runners are informed they will be screened again when they return.

PLOT POINT THREE

If getting there is half the fun, then working there will be the other half. Aside from the limitations on gear and weapons, the runners have other obstacles to overcome. The first obstacle is gravity; there is none. For the next four days, the runners will be subject to zero gravity and all the problems that come with it. In zero gravity, players move by either crawling or flying. Crawling requires periodic Agility + Climbing (1) Tests to ensure the character maintains their grip on whatever they are holding; flying requires an Agility + Gymnastics (2) Test for runners to propel themselves in the right direction, and an Agility + Reaction (2) test to land properly (for more details, see p. 166, *Arsenal*). Another obstacle runners will encounter is the cramped spaces on the habitat. Most of the station consists of cylindrical modules designed to perform specific vital functions, all of which are designed for average-sized metahumans. Airlocks are easily traversed by those of roughly human size or smaller, but trolls or orks and their relatives will find the accommodations more cramped.

Despite all the restrictions, the runners have some things in their favor. The first, believe it or not, is Z-O security, which is made up of two parts: physical and Matrix. Physical security is handled by a meager twelve-person Corporate Court unit known as Bailiffs, headed by a Court combat veteran named Helen Winters. While their primary duties are to aid the Court in its proceedings, space and personnel limitations on the habitat have cast them as de facto security officers. Physical security is considered a formality on the station, under the logic that pre-arrival screening is more than sufficient to find and root out any problems. There is very little public space to patrol because most of the habitat's needs are handled by Habitat Operations via the Matrix and drones. Despite this, Winters constantly pushes her Bailiffs to maintain discipline, but with mixed results. Most of the Bailiffs see their job as a cakewalk, a way to buy time until retirement. The work gets done, but not as efficiently as it could be.

The second part of habitat security is handled by a slick dwarf spider, Davis Griggs and his Habitat Operations staff, also known as HOps or "Hopers." Zurich-Orbital is a very complex and delicate structure that has several malfunctions daily, so HOps primary duty is maintenance. This also includes all of the hardware used by Grid Overwatch Division officers and the Gemeinschaft Bank employees. GOD may have jurisdiction over Matrix affairs and operations and the Bank may handle the money, but Hoppers are they people who are called when something breaks. This is accomplished by a complex network of sensors, Matrix monitoring nodes, and drones. If the impossible were to happen and the station was attacked, HOps would coordinate the defenses and back up the Bailiffs.

PLOT POINT FOUR

Once the runners arrive and begin their investigation, they find that the Habitat is not the perfectly smooth-running machine that one might expect, despite Chief Bailiff Winter's efforts. While equipment is top of the line, the procedures and protocols are not as finely honed as they are in other locations such as the Vladivostok station. The HOps spend more time dealing with equipment malfunctions than intruders, and so their mindset is more mechanical in nature. Treat all security related devices as being Rating 4 or less. The runners also find that the Corporate Court isn't the most powerful force on the station—the rumor mill is. While habitat personnel have full Matrix access and every legal form of entertainment it has to offer, everyone here is stuck in space for half of a year at a time, and the Matrix can only go so far. Boredom and cabin fever are two of the biggest problems on the habitat for the workers; only the ultra-rich seem not to mind living there. As soon as the runners arrive, friendly station personnel start pumping them for Earthside news and information while treating them like honored guests. Not only do station personnel ask for news, but they are more than happy to share whatever gossip and entertainment they have. Savvy runners could turn this into an advantage, trading any bit of information or gossip for favors onboard the station.

The trading business is also very active on board. Despite the strict security screening of all incoming goods and equipment to the habitat, several forms of contraband still make their way onboard, including BTLs, questionable simsense features, and small amounts of recreational pharmaceuticals. One enterprising engineer, who everyone calls Monty, has even managed to build a zero-gravity still affectionately called "the Reactor" to brew what he calls "Anti-Matter."

Aside from getting information from the operational staff, there are several specialty staff members on board. The medical staff is the second largest department on the habitat, boasting approximately six MDs, ten nurses, and four paramedics. The medical station may be on the cramped side, but it has one of the most advanced medical suites on the market. And like everyone else on the station, they are as bored as anyone else. Aside from dealing with the occasional work-related injury or medical issue concerning one of the retirees on board, the medical staff often spends their time endlessly preparing for whatever may happen. If the runners attempt to get any information from the medical staff about Justice Hino, the only thing they are told is that "the justice is in perfect health, she just prefers her solitude," or something similar.

The one place the runners have a hard time accessing is the Rotunda, the nest of the Corporate Court on the habitat. Chief Winters runs the Rotunda like a secure military base. Unless individuals have official business there or the appropriate clearances there, they are denied access. Runners will find it difficult to confirm Justice Hino's presence, because like all Justices, her quarters are located on the Rotunda. The strict methods Winters employs puts her at odds with Director of Station Operations Davis Griggs. Winters often tries to use her position to bully Griggs into complying with her wishes. Griggs, however, has been able to deflect her wrath because the Court sees his skills

as second to none and has let him work as he sees fit, as long as the station is fully operational at all times. But Griggs knows that one slip up will see him hanged, and Winters will be standing ready with a noose.

Ultimately, the gamemaster is free to make up whatever juicy gossip the station personnel are sharing. In the end, though, it's just idle chatter, and nothing the station personnel say is of any real value to them. In the course of their conversations, however, the runners may notice that someone besides the station personnel is paying attention to them. On a successful Perception + Intuition (4) Test, the runners notice things like work drones "looking" in their directions then turning away abruptly, or odd sensor lights acting oddly around them (blinking in odd sequences, or flashing more rapidly than normal).

PLOT POINT FIVE

Eventually, after they spend some time poking around, the runners are contacted via a message over their commlinks. It tells them to be at the Green-16 location on the habitat at a time ninety minutes after the message arrives. When the runners arrive, they find a sixteen-year-old autistic girl sitting in a custom "float chair" that is attended by several drones. Communicating through one of her drones, she introduces herself as Ellen Mercer, a Hoper on the Matrix operations side, working under Davis Griggs (see stats for Mercer on p. 127). If the runners don't believe her or if one of them makes a snide comment, Mercer gives a quick demonstration of her abilities—either their commlink goes haywire or a piece of their cyberware briefly shuts down. The runners should quickly realize that Mercer is a very powerful technomancer. She informs the runners that she's been watching them since their arrival, and she knows why they are there. She offers to help the runners—for a price. She asks that the runners smuggle an encrypted datachip off the station and give it to their Mr. Johnson and tell him: "and the meek shall inherit the Earth." If the runners are suspicious, Mercer curtly informs them that if she had wished them harm, every Bailiff on the station would have been here, not her.

Once the runners agree, Mercer informs them that Justice Hino hasn't been on the station for more than a year. She knows because she and Griggs have been facilitating a ruse for Evo. Mercer tells the story of her father, who disappeared while working on a special Evo project. Griggs offered to help find her father in exchange for her assistance, which led Mercer to work on the habitat. The project Mercer is working on is receiving transmissions from Earth and using them to generate and maintain a virtual Justice Hino, an advanced silumacrum created by Evo specialists. Mercer explains that her skills at data and system manipulation have been useful in keeping the effort a secret, even from GOD. She further explains that she knows that Griggs is using her. She hasn't heard anything about her father, and she is beginning to suspect that Griggs may have had something to do with his disappearance in the first place. Her current actions are her way of striking back. She also says that this simulacrum is only the first part of something big, as she's also intercepted several communications between Evo and Aztechnology operatives.

Once the runners have their conversation with Mercer, they should understand that they have what they need, and they can



make their way back to Earth. Mercer has encoded the data she passed on inside of official court documents, and the runners have been tapped as special couriers. Mr. Johnson is not entirely convinced that the runners have done their job when they pass along the chip with the data, but he accepts it and pays the runners their promised compensation.

LOCATIONS

ZURICH-ORBITAL SPACE HABITAT

The primary location for this run is the Zurich-Orbital Habitat, a massive space station orbiting approximately 560 kilometers above the earth. A formidable fortress in every respect, it is protected by a flotilla of defense satellites and the best Matrix security systems known to man. It's also known as the home of the Zurich-Orbital Gemeinschaft Bank, the place where the powerful Corporate Court hears its cases, and where the ultra-rich and affluent go when they retire to really get away from it all. Because of its location, the mystique surrounding it, its formidable security, and the power of those who dwell within, the Z-O Habitat is the pre-eminent symbol of the Corporate Court and its authority.

The Z-O Habitat started out life as the space station *Freedom*, constructed and launched by the now-defunct NASA in the early twenty-first century. It was eventually purchased by Ares Macrotechnology in 2016 when Ares purchased large amounts of NASA assets and equipment. Ares later sold the station, which had been renamed Zurich-Orbital, to the Corporate Court in 2023 for use in Court proceedings and hearings. In 2033, the habitat received another famous tenant when the Zurich-Orbital Gemeinschaft Bank moved in. Along with the Court and the Gemeinschaft Bank, the habitat also houses the Corporate Court Matrix Authority and its enforcement arm, the Grid Overwatch Division.

Over the years, the station has been expanded and constantly upgraded with the latest defense and communications technologies. Currently the station consists of sixty-one specialized service modules, twelve solar energy arrays, three dedicated housing modules, and the famous Rotunda at the center. The habitat is separated into four sections, each corresponding to a compass direction that marks its relative position with the Rotunda. Each service module is then assigned a numerical address: for example, North-06. Since they are multi-level structures, the Rotunda and the two housing modules (designated Alpha and Beta) have addresses for their various floors. These addresses describe the location, level, and room number. Example: an address on the Rotunda looks like this: R-02-12; a housing address looks like this: or Alpha-05-05.

In zero gravity and in space, there is technically no up or down. To help those in the station orient themselves, all “floors” are tan in color, while the “ceiling” is green (though privately owned rooms may disregard this coding). Also, to aid in station navigation, multi-colored stripes are located along the walls or bulkheads. Each color leads to and corresponds to a specific section. North is Brown, South is Red, East is Blue, and West is White.

PEOPLE

ELLEN MERCER

Technomancers are rare within corporations; even more rare are ones assigned to high-level security positions in the Z-O Habitat. But then, the Corporate Court was never known to let a good thing go to waste, and Mercer has proved to be a very good thing for them. Only sixteen years old, Mercer is a prodigy even for a technomancer. Recruited into her current role on the Z-O Habitat from Evo, Mercer showed an astonishing aptitude for data correlation and manipulation at a young age, despite being diagnosed with autism at age two.

For many years, her parents struggled with their daughter's condition, especially when all current and experimental treatments failed. The situation became more difficult when Mercer's mother was killed during a car accident. Extremely distraught, Mercer's father, James Mercer, decided that his parent company, Ares Macrotechnology, was not devoting sufficient resources to his daughter's care. So James, a high-level combat hacker/programmer of no little skill, arranged for his own extraction to Evo in exchange for aid for his daughter. Evo was more than willing to use Mercer as a human guinea pig in exchange for James' knowledge, skills, and contacts.

If not for her emergence at age eight, many thought Mercer would have lived out her life as a non-functioning near-vegetable, depending on constant care. It took years, but Mercer was able to come out as a techno to her father by hacking his encrypted commlink. Mercer's emergence was a mixed blessing. While James finally could communicate with his daughter, Evo researchers became more demanding in their experiments on Mercer. Then a year ago, James disappeared while on special assignment, leaving Mercer alone and vulnerable. It was Davis Griggs, James' department boss, who came to Mercer's rescue. He convinced the confused teenager to come with him to Zurich-Orbital to be his assistant on a special assignment. Mercer, having little choice, found herself on Zurich-Orbital in the perfect position to start looking into the disappearance of her father.

When not helping Griggs with his project, Mercer spent the last year quietly worming her way through Z-O's nodes, creating backdoors into several supposedly secure corporate and private databases, all while protected and assisted by the best countermeasures and programs GOD can provide. During these activities, she not only learned about Griggs' secret project related to Justice Hino, but she also found some startling evidence about her father's role in this project. When she discovers that a shadowrun team has managed to infiltrate the habitat, Mercer decides not to report them, but rather make the runners an offer by giving them what they are looking for. She does not, however, share the complete extent of what she knows.

While physically weak, Mercer's mind is very advanced, and she has been able to adapt by communicating through the Matrix. She moves with the aid of custom drones and equipment.



Ellen Mercer

Female human

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Res | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|-----|------|----|
| 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 1 |

Matrix Init/IP: 12/3

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 9/11

Armor (B/I): 0/0

Skills: Electronics skill group 6, Cracking skill group 6, Compiling 5, Decoupling 4, Ettiquite (Corporate) 3 (+2), Gunnery 2*, Perception 4, Pilot Aircraft 3*, Pilot Ground Craft 3*, Registering 4
*can only do via remote

Qualities: Codeslinger, Intuitive Hacking(Edit), Natural Hardening, Photographic Memory, Technomancer

Living Persona: System 5, Response 5, Firewall 4, Signal 4

Complex Forms: Analyze 5, Armor 5, Attack 5, Biofeedback Filter 4, Command 4, Data Search 5, Decrypt 5, Encrypt 5, Spoof 4, Track 4

DAVIS GRIGGS

(Professional Rating 5)

Griggs is the kind of person who could sell icemakers in Siberia and then empty the bank accounts of his customers with his hacking skills. A con artist at heart, Griggs employed his skills with Evo as a Matrix operative when they offered him a lot of money, perks, and the ability to keep whatever he could steal (as long as he doesn't use his abilities against Evo or its interests). His technical skills, coupled with his ability to con his way out of anything, got him transferred to Zurich-Orbital to take over as director of habitat operations in preparation for a special project run by some top-level Evo executives. He even managed to con Ellen Mercer to go with him after he promised to help him find his father. Fortunately for Griggs, Mercer has no idea her was the one who arranged for James Mercer to go missing. From Griggs's point of view, Z-O is the best thing that happened to him. Not only does he get to run the place, but he gets to play a role in what he believes to be one of the greatest cons ever.

Davis Griggs

Male dwarf

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|------|----|
| 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3.6 | 9 | 1 |

Matrix Init/IP: 12/3

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/11

Armor (B/I): 3/3

Skills: Blades 3, Con (Fast Talk) 6 (+2), Cracking skill group 5, Electronic Warfare 4, Electronics skill group 6, Etiquette (Corporate) 3 (+2), Gunnery 4, Hacking 5, Hardware 3, Negotiation 4, Perception 4, Pilot Aircraft 4, Pilot Ground Craft 4, Survival (Space) 1 (+2)

Augmentations: CommLink [implanted, System 4, Response 5, Firewall 5, Signal 5], control rig, datajack, encephalon 1, math CPU, sim module (w/ hot sim), simsense booster

Programs: Analyse 5, Armor 5, Attack 5, Black Hammer 5, Blackout 5, Bio-Feedback Filter 6, Browse 4, Command 5, ECCM

5, Edit 3, Encrypt 5, Exploit 6, Scan 5, Sniffer 5, Spoof 5, Stealth 5, Track 5

Gear: Aces High Jacket

Weapons:

Vibro blade (knife) [Blade, Reach —, DV 4P, AP -2]

Z-O HABITAT OPERATION STAFF “HOPERS”

(Professional Rating: 4)

With limited space on the habitat, those who work there have to wear many hats. The Hoppers are masters of multi-tasking. While mainly concerned with station operations and maintenance, HOPers are also highly trained rescue specialists, first responders, damage control specialists, Matrix system watchers, and even auxiliary security should an emergency occur. And while Chief Winters fancies herself the “sheriff” of the Habitat, the head of HOPs has final say over all station operational matters.

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------|------|----|
| 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 2.558 | 8 | 1 |

Matrix Init/IP: 12/3

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Skills: Con 6, Cracking skill group 5, Electronics skill group 6, Etiquette (Corporate) 3 (+2), Hacking 5, Hardware 3, Electronic Warfare 4, Gunnery 4, Negotiation 4, Perception 4, Pilot Aircraft 4, Pilot Ground Craft 4, Survival (Space) 1 (+2)

Augmentations: Balance augmenter, commlink [internal, System 4, Response 4, Firewall 4, Signal 3], control rig, datajack, encephalon 1, math CPU, sim module (w/ hot sim), simsense booster

Programs: Any necessary, Rating 3

HELEN WINTERS

Helen Winters is a metahuman success story. Winters was born to a middle-class family just outside of the New York sprawl. Showing an above average intelligence and excellent physical prowess, Helen enlisted in the UCAS Army at age seventeen, attended Officer Candidate School after earning a college degree in her spare time, and at age thirty she became the youngest person to serve as the garrison provost marshal at Fort Knox. After transferring to and serving with distinction in the United Nations security forces, she was selected to command the security garrison for the Zurich offices of the Z-OG Bank. Winters was eventually promoted to First Bailiff/Chief of Security for the Zurich-Orbital Habitat following her success defending the Z-OG Bank from rioters during Crash 2.0. Winters is very effective at her position and takes it very seriously, almost religiously. Totally convinced of the power and prestige of the Corporate Court in a way that borders on zealotry, she finds the so-called trials and tribulations of other orks and metahumans absurd and feels that all they, or anyone else, needs to do is properly apply themselves. As far as she is concerned, the Court is the ultimate authority in the world and the only thing keeping humanity from descending into anarchy. She will do whatever she can to aid the Court in that task. But Winters is a victim of her own success. She has become too good at her job, too loyal to the Court, to the extent that none of the justices want to transfer her, despite her requests to return to the United Nations Armed Forces. Frustration is starting to set in,



as that is causing Winter's ironclad loyalty to the Court to crack, ever so slightly.

Helen Winters

Female ork

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Int | IP |
|---|------|------|------|---|---|---|---|-----|-------|-------|------|
| 5 | 4(6) | 5(6) | 4(6) | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2,559 | 9(10) | 1(2) |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 11/10

Armor (B/I): 2/5

Skills: Clubs 4, Dodge 3, Etiquette (Corporate) 3 (+2), Exotic Weapons (Fichetti Pain Inducer) 4, Firearms skill group 4, First Aid 3, Gymnastics (Zero-G) 3 (+2), Intimidation 3, Leadership 2, Perception 3, Survival (Space) 3 (+2), Unarmed Combat 4

Augmentations: Balance augments, muscle augments 2, muscle toner 2, synaptic booster 1, cybereyes [Rating 2, w/ flare compensation, image link, low-light vision, smartlink, vision magnification]

Gear: Commlink (Device Rating 3), padded leather armor, restraints, spacesuit

Weapons:

ArmTech SSG-67 [Grenade Launcher, DV grenade, AP: —, SS, RC —, 6(c), w/ airburst link, smartlink]

AZ-150 Stun Baton [Club, Reach 1, DV 7S(e), AP —half]

Fichetti Pain Inducer [Exotic Ranged Weapon, DV Special, AP —half, SS, RC —, Special]

CORPORATE COURT BAILIFFS

Despite there really being little need for dedicated security officers, the Corporate Court maintains a small contingent of officers known as Bailiffs, mostly for ceremonial and symbolic purposes. They are tasked with the safety of the Justices in times of emergencies. Bailiffs also act as assistants to the justices, providing non-legal support for daily functions and during hearings. Chief Bailiff Winters constantly drills her people in an attempt to maintain discipline. Despite their lack of regular action, the Bailiffs are very well trained in security procedures, unarmed combat, and weapons use in zero gravity.

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Int | IP |
|---|---|------|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-------|----|
| 4 | 4 | 4(6) | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5.3 | 8(10) | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Armor (B/I): 2/5

Skills: Clubs 3, Dodge 2, Etiquette (Corporate) 2 (+2), Firearms skill group 3, First Aid 2, Gymnastics (Zero-G) 2 (+2), Intimidation 2, Leadership 2, Perception 3, Survival (Space) 3 (+2), Unarmed Combat 3

Augmentations: Balance augments, reaction enhancer 2, smartlink (retinal modification)

Gear: Commlink (Device Rating 3), padded leather armor, restraints, spacesuit

Weapons:

ArmTech SSG-67 [Grenade Launcher, DV grenade, AP: —, SS, RC —, 6(c), w/ airburst link, smartlink]

AZ-150 Stun Baton [Club, Reach 1, DV 7S(e), AP —half]

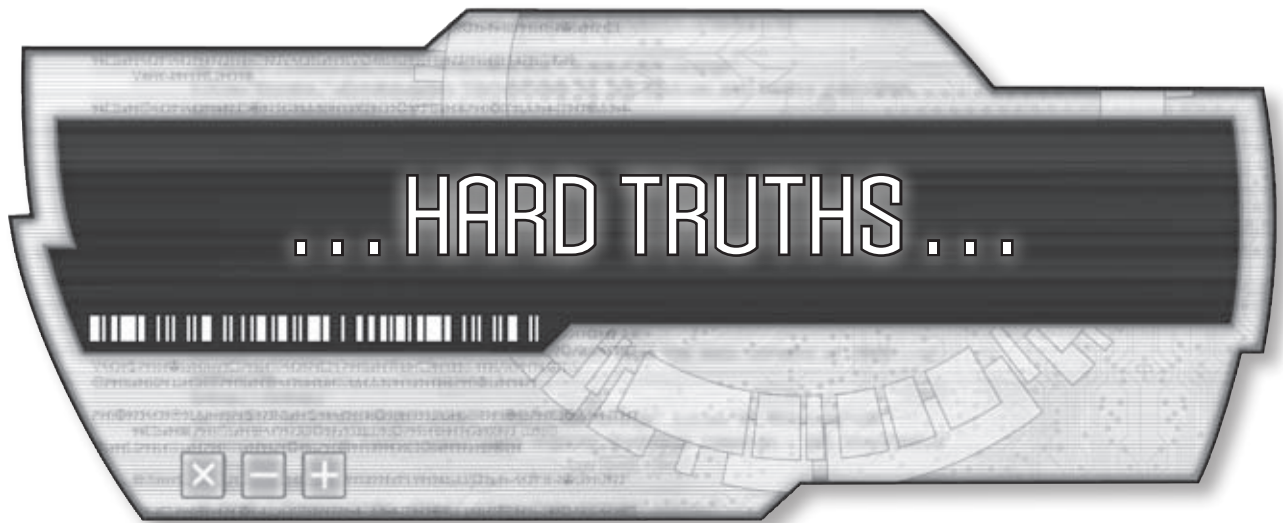
NEW GEAR AND EQUIPMENT

ARMTECH SSG-67, "SPECIAL SECURITY GUN"

Damage: toxin/grenade, AP —, **Mode:** SS, **Ammo:** 6 (c), **Availability:** 10F, **Cost:** 3,500¥. **Features:** smartlink system, airburst link.

Specifically created for use on board the Zurich Orbital Habitat, the SSG-67 (or Special Security Gun) is the standard sidearm for security officers. Optimized for use in zero gravity, it uses compressed blasts of CO2 to launch semi-guided micro-rockets (treat as grenade) loaded with a powdered form of narcojet bonded with a semi-magnetized metallic compound. This compound is designed to not only adhere to the target(s), but also to surfaces so that it does not float in zero gravity, which minimizes hazards to untargeted individuals and aids in clean up. These micro-rockets can be deployed against a single target or programmed to airburst in order to engage multiple targets with a simple action.





Incoming Message

- Came across this exchange between some Evo execs recently. It's written in that vague corp-speak that indicates either something completely banal or something very secret and possibly quite monstrous. Reading between the lines makes me think it's the latter. Sharing it here for anyone keeping an eye on Evo.
- Baka Dabora

.....
September 18, 11:15 a.m.

From: Egor Bykovsky
To: Mirela Tirzić

Re: Corporate legal department

This is a formal request for you to move forward the annual reviews of certain legal department personnel and begin them immediately. Personnel for whom evaluations should begin immediately include those stationed in Hong Kong, St. Petersburg, Krakow, Nairobi, Barcelona, Atlanta, and Las Vegas. Though the reviews are being moved forward, it is expected that they will be completed with the customary amount of thoroughness and diligence. Do not worry about our assets in the Pacific; at this time, Honolulu is no obstacle to the completion of this task.

.....
September 18, 2:04 p.m.

From: Mirela Tirzić
To: Egor Bykovsky

Re: Legal department evaluations

Your request for evaluations has been received and will be followed. Are we to assume that under-performing assets are to be dealt with in the customary fashion?

.....
September 19, 8:20 a.m.

From: Egor Bykovsky
To: Mirela Tirzić

Re: Legal department evaluations

All assets involved should have had the urgency and seriousness of their labors described to them when they were engaged. Thus, if they were not able to understand the consequences of failing to execute their responsibilities, the fault lies with them. This is to say that you should not hesitate to exercise consequences in exact equivalence to the seriousness of any failures you discover. Your actions should be swift, and there should be no resistance or complaint from those assets.

.....
October 3, 5:40 p.m.

From: Mirela Tirzić
To: Egor Bykovsky

Re: Ongoing evaluations

Evaluations are proceeding apace. I regret to inform you that as a result of this process, the Barcelona office has been closed. All procedures for such a situation have been followed. Budgets and other resources assigned to these locations are now available for use elsewhere.

October 3, 8:55 p.m.
 From: Egor Bykovsky
 To: Mirela Tirzić

Re: office closing

The closing of the Barcelona office is regrettable but understandable. Keep in mind that, in such situations, there may be those who take extreme measures to contact our employees, desiring to benefit from some of the proprietary knowledge they have. Any and all measures should be taken to ensure that information is not lost in this fashion.

October 4, 11:34 a.m.
 From: Mirela Tirzić
 To: Egor Bykovsky

Re: protecting information

The importance of protecting information, as expressed in your previous memo, has been impressed on every member of my team, as well as those contract employees we are engaging for this effort. At this point, I can say with a certainty level of one hundred percent that none of the knowledge possessed by members of the Barcelona team will be finding its way to other sources.

As we continue our evaluations, we have received information that there will likely be efforts to compromise the integrity of other offices in the near future. Some members of my team

have suggested preemptively closing a site or two in order to keep our resources, especially our contract employees, from being spread too thin. Others believe that the existing offices were opened for a purpose, and that purpose has not gone away. They believe our first priority should be to defend all of the offices remaining in the legal portfolio. We all agreed to seek your opinion on the matter.

October 11, 6: 14 p.m.
 From: Egor Bykovsky
 To: Mirela Tirzić

Re: preemptive closings

I apologize for the delay in replying to your most recent query. I thought it best to solicit other opinions on the issue, and have now done so.

We have reached a point where the redundancy we built into the structure of the legal offices may have more potential to do us harm than to benefit us. Thus, I find myself in agreement with those of your colleagues who suggest preemptively closing some offices. By doing so and concentrating our assets, we put ourselves in a stronger position to guard against any possibility of data loss.

I leave it to your judgment as to which offices should be closed. Regardless of your decision, you should be certain to carry out your actions with the same thoroughness you displayed in Barcelona.

OVERVIEW

Hard Facts can serve as a natural continuation of **Floating Secrets**, with the runners acting on information they recovered from the Z-O Habitat. Alternately, it could be a standalone adventure, with the runners being contacted by a Mr. Johnson who has obtained the information from Z-O (passed along by runners who are too exhausted and/or wounded to follow up properly on it).

However they get the information, the runners begin this chapter with information telling them where the transmissions of Justice Hino have been coming from. They find that the points of origin vary, coming from spots around the globe, including Hong Kong, St. Petersburg, Krakow, Nairobi, Barcelona, Atlanta, and Las Vegas. Mr. Johnson offers them 1,000 nuyen apiece per day to track down who is sending these transmission; that figure increases by 100 for each net hit on an Negotiation + Charisma Opposed test, to a maximum increase of 500 nuyen per day.

The information the runners receive tells them that the most recent transmission came from Barcelona. They may decide to go there, or they may decide to investigate one of the other locations first. Regardless of their decision, the runners arrive at a location that is in the final stages of being closed down and cleaned up by

a team of Evo-sponsored runners. Mr. Johnson then encourages the runners to investigate one of the other locations, but en route the team receives help and advice from a mysterious source. When they arrive at their new destination, they find stronger defenses waiting for them. They'll need to find a way to get the necessary information and getaway clean—or at least alive.

PLOT POINT ONE

The runners have the list of cities from which the transmissions originated, and they'll need to pick one to start with. If they have corporate contacts on any of the listed cities, they can do some legwork about the various locations; they'll be told that the locations house legal services for the Evo Corporation, but nothing more than that.

Regardless of the city the players select, they eventually arrive at a nondescript office building. It has no signs or outer indications as to its purpose or who owns it. The front door is locked (for more details, see *Evo Office Complexes*, p. 134). Inside, most of the office furniture is in place, but no lights are on, and everything looks oddly clean and unused. Most of the offices are unlocked and similarly clean, without so much as a loose paper visible. Any



books the runners see are bland legal tomes that law offices often use as decoration. A casual search reveals nothing of interest; if the runners decide to perform a detailed search, a Perception + Intuition (4) Test reveals something that looks like dried blood on the underside of one desk.

The same successful search also reveals a hidden button on the underside of the desk. The button has a DNA scanner as a lock; the blood from the desk, prepared properly, could be used to open the lock. Successfully engaging the button causes a bookshelf to move back two meters, revealing a staircase down.

Two opposing runners (use Security Adept, p. 147 and Security Mage, p. 147) are working down there. They hear the bookcase slide open on a successful Perception + Intuition (3) Test. If they are able to get the door open without drawing notice from the people downstairs, the runners will have to use their Infiltration skills to make it to the basement without being noticed. The fact that a light is on down there may tip them off to the need to move quietly.

The operatives in the basement attack the runners the moment they notice them. If the runners keep themselves hidden, the operatives finish up their work in five minutes, then climb the staircase to leave. Seeing an open door immediately puts them on alert; the mage assesses the area, looking for auras to figure out how the door became open.

If the door is closed and the operatives see nothing amiss, they simply depart.

The basement is almost entirely empty. There are marks on the floor indicating that there had been some equipment here, but it has all been moved out. The operatives had just been doing some cleaning up. They have papercomms with no identifying data on them; if they are captured, they swallow cyanide capsules hidden on their teeth at the first opportunity.

If the runners ask around the shadows about the two, they discover that the runners were named Leo and the Hammer, and they were based out of St. Petersburg. They do not have a single major employer; they took jobs where they found them.

Perhaps the worst thing that can happen from the runners' perspective (besides somehow allowing the operatives to kill some of them) is allowing the operatives to see them and then escape. If this happens, security in **Plot Point Three** is doubled.

In the end, the first visit to one of the locations does not turn up any significant data. The runners can only hope the next attempt is more fruitful. If they pick a second city and travel to it, Mr. Johnson again assists them with travel expenses and any necessary visas.

PLOT POINT TWO

As the runners are flying to their next destination, a spirit abruptly manifests in the middle of their plane and indicates a desire to talk. It would prefer to have a meeting on the astral plane (its sudden appearance caused a bit of a disruption on the plane, making it a less-than-ideal place to talk); if none of the runners is capable of astral travel, the spirit agrees to meet in the next-most-private location—the airplane's restroom.

The spirit is a Force 6 spirit of man. It claims to be sent by “One who knows and wishes to help.” Attempts to assense the spirit show that it is calm and believes what it is saying.

“You should get more than you have. The next step will not be as easy,” it says. It then gives the runners contact information for a black-market arms dealer named Bolling in the city to which they are headed. The spirit has no other information, saying it was compelled to give that information and no more. It is unwilling and unable to say who sent it; attempts to compel it simply result in it locking up (it has a more powerful compulsion on it than the runners can overcome).

If the runners decide to verify the spirit’s info, they find that there is indeed an arms dealer in the city named Bolling, and he has a decent reputation, at least as far as arms dealers go. Bolling can be found where the spirit said he would be. Bolling is initially indifferent and unhelpful to the runners, unless they mention that they were sent by a spirit—then he becomes accommodating. He can acquire any legal or restricted item for the runners. If the runners have him ask around after a hard-to-find item, the normal interval on Negotiation + Charisma Extended Tests is cut in half (see p. 312, *SR4A*) as Bolling does the asking around for them (assume Bolling has a Negotiation 4 and Charisma 4). Any items Bolling finds for the runners are available at fifty percent above the listed cost.

If Bolling is asked why his demeanor changed from surly to helpful, he vaguely refers to balances needing to be maintained. The runners could attempt to force information out of him, but he is not likely to be frightened by any intimidation they may try. If he becomes friendly with them, he tells them that they’ve gotten themselves involved in some internal Evo politics, and he’s just doing his part to ensure the balance of power within the megabuck doesn’t get out of whack. He does not, however, indicate what the sides of this conflict may be, or which side he is on.

If the runners ask about the location they plan to visit, Bolling has some information. He tells them to call and make an appointment with Pavel Fern. If they’re asked what it concerns, they should say they want to talk about the ongoing evaluations of legal personnel. That should be enough to get them in, he says, and once they are there the runners should have some idea of what they need to do. He does not explain anything beyond that.

PLOT POINT THREE

When they arrive at the next location, the runners find a building identical to the first in every respect, though this one is not empty. A cheerful receptionist welcomes them to GoodLife Enterprises and waits patiently to help them in any way she can.

As was the case with the first complex, there is an office hiding a secret door with a button under a desk to open the door. Everything about this office—its location, size, and even furniture—is identical to the previous office. The two exceptions are the lack of blood on the underside of the desk, and the fact that this office is inhabited. If the runners ask the receptionist whose office it is, she tells them it belongs to Mr. Fern. She then asks if they have an appointment. If they’d like one, they can get one in two hours; if they say the appointment is to talk about the evaluation of legal personnel, per Bolling’s instructions, they are immediately brought in to see Mr. Fern.

Mr. Fern is a tall, friendly looking human, though the runners make him curious. He doesn’t recognize them, and he is not sure what part they play in his work. He carefully tries to feel them out, and he does not give out any information about his work. He is not physically imposing or overly skilled in combat, so the runners should be able to subdue him and search his office without interference if they so choose.

Alternately, the runners can choose to move ahead without an appointment and can just walk up to the office door. Knocking on it leads to Mr. Fern opening it and asking what he can do for them. He is not interested in having the runners in his office, and he does what he can to keep them out. He does not physically resist them, however; if they force their way in through any means, he allows them to barge in while he calls security. Four security officers (use Elite Corporate Security, p. 140) arrive within a minute.

The secret passage behind the bookcase leads to the basement, just as it did at the previous building. This basement is not empty, however. It is filled with a variety of equipment. It also has six guards (use Elite Corporate Security, p. 140) who immediately attack anyone they don’t recognize. They also call for support, leading to the previously mentioned four guards showing up in one minute.

If there is a combat, keep track of each time a combatant (either the runners or the guards) fires a gun without hitting any individual. If you end up with five or more complete misses, give the runners the damaged information listed below. Otherwise, give them the intact information.

Intact information: The runners receive confirmation that the “Justice Hino” that has been appearing at the Corporate Court is a very detailed simulation. Some of the people working in these hidden basement offices are programmers, committed to maintaining and enhancing the program to make it seem as Hino-like as possible. The runners find a particularly interesting request asking for a “tissue sample from the corpse” to help them better replicate Hino’s skin in the virtual simulacra. This makes it clear that the flesh-and-blood Justice Hino is in fact dead. The runners also get two names, Egor Bykovsky and Mirela Tirzić, who are involved in this vast fraud. Both individuals are based in Vladivostok.

Damaged information: The runners get the confirmation that the Hino that has been appearing in the Corporate Court is a simulation, but they do not get the request for the tissue sample, so they do not learn that Hino is definitely dead. They only get the name of Mirela Tirzić, not both names, but they learn that the individual in question is based in Vladivostok.

The runners can turn this information over to Mr. Johnson, get paid, and consider themselves to be done with the affair, or they can let Mr. Johnson talk ten into performing further research, as detailed in **Cold Facts**, p. 135

LOCATIONS

EVO OFFICE COMPLEXES

The offices Evo maintains for the Hino transmissions in various cities across the globe are all exactly the same. This makes it easy for the mobile crews that travel to these facilities to find what they need and get right to work. The main purpose of these buildings is to provide a basement room where techs can arrange to send the Justice Hino simulation to the Z-O Habitat. The process of sending the transmission is not complicated—the techs have all of Justice Hino’s access codes, so it’s easy enough to get into the Habitat’s systems (the techs are not foolish enough to leave the codes sitting on any equipment they’re not using; the runners should not enter a basement while any transmission is happening, so they should not have a chance to obtain these codes). The complicated part is constructing and maintaining a convincing simulcra of Justice Hino, which is what most of the gear in the basement is there for. The techs travel with a large database full of Justice Hino’s recorded remarks, as well as information on her appearance, movements, habitual gestures, etc. They also have a complete database of all her legal decisions; their goal is to craft decisions that fulfill their own ends while still sounding convincingly like the justice.

The office level of the building is filled with people who, for the most part, know nothing about the real purpose of the building. They generally are temporary employees, brought on to perform some data entry or research task. The only employees who know the basement exists are the individual in the office with the secret door and the security officers. The individual manning the crucial office is chosen for their loyalty and steadiness in carrying out instructions. They know that they are to set appointments with anyone claiming to visit for a matter related to “evaluation of legal personnel.” Anyone else they should treat politely (so as not to raise suspicions) but dispatch with as soon as possible. Their primary strategy is to be so bland that visitors quickly despair of finding anything of interest in the office. They do not hesitate to call on security guards if they think visitors are acting suspiciously or if they are attacked in any way.

The primary node of the building has Firewall 2 and Signal 3, meaning it shouldn’t be hard for a hacker to access. The node is filled with meeting schedules, timesheets, shipping invoices, and other basics of office life. Based on the data on the node, nothing more interesting than the order and receipt of office supplies ever happens here (in fact, the information on the node is so overly bland that it might have the unintended effect of raising runners’ suspicions).

Security guards on the premises have one task: Keep unauthorized personnel out of the basement. They are indifferent to the fate of the rest of the office—armed marauders could assault and pillage the office at will, as long as they stay out of the office with the secret door.

The office level of the building has a small reception area inside the front doors. The right side has a small break room, restrooms, and custodial closet; the left side has five identical offices, each five meters by five meters. The secret door has an Armor rating of 13 and a Structure Rating of 14. The staircase leading to the basement is 1.5 meters wide, and the basement room is ten meters by ten meters. The electronics in the basement have no wireless capabilities—you have to jack in to get information. The wired node has Firewall 5.

PEOPLE

PAVEL FERN

Pavel Fern’s job is to be boring. He can talk at length about his work, which involves sorting data gathered on the chemical composition of sands at various points of the Sahara, but even he doesn’t seem too interested in that topic. His primary job is to ensure that any visitors to his office leave in short order, convinced that there is nothing of interest to them in that room.

Fern has slicked-back blond hair, a square jaw, and a brow that provides a fine amount of shade for his eyes.

Pavel Fern

Human male

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|----|
| 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 5.7 | 6 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/10

Armor (B/I): 0/0

Skills: Computer 3, Data Search 2, Con (Fast Talk) 1 (+2), Etiquette (Corporate) 3 (+2), Navigation 2, Negotiation 2, Perception 2, Pistols 1

Qualities: Blandness

Knowledge Skills: Business Strategies 2, Business Structure 2

Languages: English 6, Japanese 3, Russian N

Augmentations: Commlink (internal, Device Rating 3), datajack

Gear: Electronic paper, white noise generator (Rating 3)

Weapons:

Defiance Protector [Taser, DV 6S(e), AP –half, SA, RC —, 3(m)]



Incoming Message

Anatoly Kirilenko had never been so nervous to log onto a node.

He licked his lips and rubbed his hands together. The ARO with the login information was sitting right in front of him. All he had to do was wave his hand, and he'd have access to the node. And whatever it was that was stored there.

Karolina Sizy stood quietly and patiently next to his desk. She did not appear to be perturbed at all by Kirilenko's delay or concerned about his reasons for hesitating. In fact, she didn't seem to be concerned about anything at the moment. She looked like she would be content to stand silently by his desk for the remainder of the day.

There really was nothing for Kirilenko to worry about. It was just an experiment, nothing more, and one that stood no chance of harming him. It didn't make sense for him to delay, and he was very impatient with himself when he did things that did not make sense.

Then, in one abrupt motion, he logged on. And was rewarded with a blank ARO.

"You have selected not to have a visual interface," Sizy said in a voice like a documentary narrator. "You won't see anything."

Kirilenko nodded. "But I will have audio. So does that thing ... can it hear us?"

"Not yet. There is a toggle in the lower right-hand corner of the ARO. That will allow you to initiate conversation with him when you are ready."

Kirilenko nodded. He didn't say anything.

"Whenever you're ready," Sizy said after a pause.

Kirilenko nodded again, and then said the only word that was in his head.

"Hello," he said.

The response was immediate; the voice was mild and neutral. "Hello," was all it said.

It was one word, but the familiarity of the tone sent a chill up and down Kirilenko's spine. He found the sensation and the associated emotion quite annoying.

Along with the shiver, though, the sound of the disembodied voice brought to mind something else he could say, so Kirilenko said it.

"Where are you?"

"I'm here," the voice said.

Kirilenko toggled off the vocal interface. "There are primitive AIs from before the Awakening that could have come up with better answers than that," he said.

"He has said three words so far," Sizy said. "Perhaps it is too soon for you to make any judgments."

Kirilenko glared at her, but he turned the vocal interface back on.

"What do you see where you are?"

"Very little. I could see you, if you turned on the proper interface."

"I'm not doing that right now," Kirilenko said curtly.

"I suppose I don't *see* anything right now, but I receive so many more sensory inputs besides sight that I don't miss it. A dog does not spend time worrying about his poor vision, because he is too caught up in the world of scent. And as it turns out, the world of scent is nothing compared to what I am experiencing."

"And what is it you are experiencing?"

"Total freedom. An existence that occurs at speeds you cannot comprehend. Knowledge of the sort that I would have killed for during my previous existence."

The phrasing of that remark seemed designed to elicit a response from Kirilenko, and Kirilenko decided not to disappoint the voice.

"It's the sort of information you *did* kill for when you were alive," he said.

"Yes. That is true." The voice did not sound upset, either at its own past actions or at Kirilenko for bringing them up.

"You remember the actions you took? You remember the people you killed?"

"I remember everything. Better than I ever did." The voice picked up speed and volume, accentuated by the fact that it did

not pause for breath. “I could share all those memories for you. I could talk about the factory that blew smoke into the apartment where we lived when you were growing up, and how I would hold you as you cried and I prayed for the wind to change. I could tell you about the pride I felt when you were chosen to journey to Mars. And I could explain all the decisions I made in my life, and why I chose the associates I did, and what I gained from that and what I lost. But all of that is information that could be found through the proper interviews, or invented by the proper programmers. The question, then, is what could I say that would convince you? What do you need to believe that I am who I say I am, and who Ms. Sizy tells you I am?”

Kirilenko knew the answer, and it weighed on him because it involved spending the one thing he did not have in great supply. “I need to spend time with you,” he said.

He could almost hear his father nod his head. “That’s right,” the voice said. “With enough time, I can show you who I am, and what you can become.”

Without a further word, Kirilenko swiped off the vocal interface.

“All right,” he said. “You and the Dickens Program will get your full funding. Just make sure Project Dike does not leave any loose ends.”

Sizy nodded, looking pleased but not at all surprised.

OVERVIEW

Project Dike is the name of the internal project that involved making a virtual replica of Corporate Court Chief Justice Yoshiko Hino. Evo CEO Anatoly Kirilenko has overseen the project, though he has not submitted it for board approval and is keeping it secret from most of the rest of the upper management of Evo. The project has multi-pronged goals; the upshot is that Kirilenko felt he could advance his own goals for the corporation if the Corporate Court Chief Justice was completely under his control.

The individual details of Project Dike involve using Justice Hino to make or break alliances with other corporations as Kirilenko and the project managers see fit, but that is only the short-term goal. The replica of Justice Hino is going to help them develop authentic e-personalities while also making the alliances necessary for the Dickens Program to have the funding and knowledge capital they need to move forward.

The leader of the Dickens Program is Karolina Sizy, an expert in intelligence structures, including AIs. She has placed Egor Bykovsky in charge of Project Dike. Part of his work includes compiling and recompiling the Hino persona as they perfect it, then making sure the proper information is sent to Z-O Habitat when Justice Hino needs to make an appearance. His subordinate, Mirela Tirzić, is responsible for securing the transmission sites and making sure the transmissions happen as they are supposed to.

Bykovsky and Tirzić believe some of their sites have been compromised, so they started cleaning them out (which involves killing all people who worked at the site and removing all furniture and equipment). If runners are playing through this chapter as a direct sequel to **Hard Truths**, the encounter they had at the end of that chapter has only served to heighten Bykovsky and Tirzić’s concerns.

Runners who participated in **Hard Truths** should have the information they received at the end of that chapter. Runners who did not should be given the incomplete information listed there (see p. 133) by Mr. Johnson at the start of this mission.

The purpose of this mission is to follow up on the information recovered from one of the sites used to transmit information to Z-O. The main goal is to find proof that Justice

Hino is, in fact, dead. If the runners can subsequently discover any of the motivations for the project keeping her virtually alive, Mr. Johnson would be quite interested.

PLOT POINT ONE

Mr. Johnson (use Mr. Johnson (Corporate), p. 143), either following up with the runners from the previous mission or contacting them fresh, tells the runners that he has information indicating that the real Justice Hino is likely dead, and the persona appearing at Court hearings and interviews on the Z-O Habitat is a replica. He’s pretty certain this is the case, but he needs proof. He believes the proof lies in Vladivostok. He can send the runners there with all the clearances they need if they are willing to investigate this for him. If they agree, each runner receives 2,500 nuyen upfront, with another 7,500 nuyen deliverable when they provide proof that Justice Hino is dead. The payout per person can be increased by 100 nuyen per net hit on a Negotiation + Charisma Opposed Test, up to an additional 500 nuyen. Any additional sums are paid on delivery of the information. Mr. Johnson hints that additional funds could be awarded to the runners if they are able to find more information about the reasons someone is keeping an electronic version of Justice Hino alive even though the real one is dead.

The trip to Vladivostok can go without incident (unless the gamemaster wishes to introduce complications). When they arrive in the city, the runners have names of one, possibly two individuals to look up. A Data Search + Browse (6, 1 minute) Extended Test reveals that these individuals work for Evo and provides contact information for each one. Alternately, the runners can find this information through a contact; contacts with a relevant logic skill (such as Evo Corporate knowledge) can deliver the information with 2 hits on a [Knowledge Skill] + Logic Test.

Vladivostok is a clean, orderly port city, and the main reason it stays that way is because the powers of the city have agreed to keep any brutality behind closed doors. The most significant power, and largest employer, in the city is Evo, and they have sculpted much of the city in their image—sleek, modern, and

forward looking. The amount of power that Evo has, though, attracts elements with a substantial interest in dirtying up the city, especially the organized crime element deeply intertwined with Evo—the Vory v Zakone. The close relationship Evo has with many parts of the Vory means they are able to prevail upon them to keep the violence out of sight, but they are not able to prevent the Vory from indulging in violence altogether, especially since Evo often benefits from the violence committed by the Vory.

The clearances given to the runners should allow them to walk around town without difficulty, but this changes if their inquiries about Bykovsky and Tirzić lack subtlety. If they're too obvious, the runners should receive a visit from some Vory henchmen (use Organized Crime Muscle, p. 146) telling them that it would be best for them to watch their step, or perhaps just leave town.

Bykovsky and Tirzić work in the same section of the city, but not in the same building. Either a call or a visit to Bykovsky's office brings information that he is out of town. Tirzić is at her office, though she is not eager to meet with out-of-town strangers (her stats are on p. 139). The runners will have to find some way into the office, either through a con or through force. Tirzić calls security on any intruders in her office unless they can provide a compelling reason why she shouldn't. If she calls, two security officers (use Corporate Security Unit, p. 281, *SR4A*) arrive within a minute; six more are available within three minutes if needed.

If they can avoid getting off on the wrong foot, the runners should be able to get Tirzić to a position where she is willing to bargain. They have several options; they could attack and have Tirzić bargain for her life; they could share some of what they have learned about the Hino operation and threaten to blackmail Tirzić; they could pose as security operatives willing to help her with her remote facilities (such as the ones they may have visited in **Hard Truths**). The truth of the matter is that Tirzić is somewhat disconcerted by the violent turn her business has taken, and that has reduced her loyalty to Evo in general and Bykovsky in particular.

She tells the runners that she can help them find what they are looking for, but it won't be a matter of just giving them pictures of Hino's corpse. They're going to need to get into an Evo biological research facility and find a restricted area. Tirzić can tell them where the facility is, but not where the restricted area is, and she cannot provide clearance to enter the facility. They're going to have to put their infiltration skills to work.

PLOT POINT TWO

The Evo research facility is located just south of the major port of Vladivostok and on the waterfront, to better facilitate research on oceanic creatures (see Evo Research Facility, p. 138). The runners will have to get in, find the entrance to the top floor, then locate the small morgue where Hino's body is being stored. Security is tight, and the guards know the faces of everyone who works at the facility. If they see anyone they don't recognize them, they arrest them immediately, demanding that the strangers accompany them to a detention facility in the basement of the building. Refusals to accompany them are greeted with hostility.

Once the runners find the morgue, they have some time to investigate without interruption. The central purpose of security

in this building is to keep people who aren't supposed to be on the top floor out, so there is not quite as stringent an effort on the top floor itself; it's assumed that in general, anyone who has gotten up there must have the right to be there. There are still patrols checking in on the rooms, but they are more sporadic than they are on lower floors. The runners can be in the morgue room for ten minutes before any guards come by (make it a pair of Elite Corporate Security, p. 140).

The drawers are locked and controlled by a wired node (Firewall 5, System 5). If the runners break into the node, they can unlock the drawers. Alternately, they can break into the drawers (Armor Rating 6, Structure Rating 9). There are three drawers in the room, none of them labeled; Justice Hino's body is in the one on the far right. The drawer is refrigerated, so that a puff of mist emerges when it is open. Hino is wrapped in a plastic body bag.

A tissue sample from the body, along with a photo, is all the proof Mr. Johnson needs that Hino is dead, so if the runners can get here, they just need to collect a skin scraping or some hair and then move along. Hino died eighteen months ago of coronary arrest (though the runners likely won't have the time or tools to conduct any sort of autopsy).

There is other information in the restricted area besides the DNA samples. The wired node has a file that may be of interest to the runners; they can find it through a Data Browse + Logic (16, 1 minute) Extended Test. Remember, though, that the runners have at most ten minutes in this room before a patrol comes by, so they need to move quickly. The information they find is simple—it identifies Hino's remains as being "property of the Dickens Program."

PLOT POINT THREE

The runners should contact Mr. Johnson shortly after they obtain the proof they need from the morgue, and he arranges a meeting in Vladivostok (he flew in at about the same time as the runners so that he would be ready if/when they found anything). Unfortunately, Mr. Johnson wasn't careful with his commlink when he went through customs, and a small program was loaded onto his commlink that forwards any voice calls he makes to a node for future downloading. As a result, the eavesdroppers (who are connected to Dickens Program director Karolina Sizy) know about the intended meeting and intend to do something about it.

Mr. Johnson tells the runners to meet him at the fish market at the waterside portion of Ulitsa Admirala Fokina, which is a pedestrian-only street in the city (see listing in the locations section, p. 139). The fish market can be smelled from a block away, and the first floor does constant business to restaurateurs and individuals. Mr. Johnson wants the runners to come to the second floor of the market, which is accessed by a wooden staircase against the far wall of the market.

Sizy has sent some runners of her own to intercept the players, and they are interspersed throughout the market (use two Duelist Adepts, p. 140, two Veteran Street Samurai, p. 147, two Organized Crime Muscle, p. 146, and one Security Mage, p. 147). The mage and one of the street sams waits by the stairway. If the opposition succeeds on a Perception + Intuition (5) Test (use group perception rules, p. 135, *SR4A*), they recognize the runners



INCOMING FEED.....

and prepare an ambush. If they did not recognize the runners in advance or were not able to spring their ambush, the street sam and the mage launch their attack once the runners hit the staircase, and the rest of the opposition joins in as soon as possible.

The runners sent by Sizzy are not there to negotiate, and simply getting the proof the runners collected is not enough for them. They want the runners dead, nothing less.

The situation becomes even more complicated three minutes after the first shot of the conflict is fired. Five Vory lieutenants who act as security for the area arrive to investigate the tumult. They are not there to pick sides; they're there to calm the situation down, even if that means shooting anyone who is causing trouble. Use *Organized Crime Muscle*, p. 146, for these individuals.

Mr. Johnson is not deaf—once the fighting starts in the market, he is quite aware of what is happening. He doesn't want to risk being caught in the crossfire, so he's not going to poke his head out onto the main floor. Instead, he takes cover behind a desk in an upstairs office and waits, with a gun pointed at the only door to the room. If the runners enter the office in an aggressive fashion, he might take a shot or two at them before recognizing who they are.

Once the situation is under control, the runners can meet with Mr. Johnson and get paid according to plan. If they have the information that Hino's remains are connected to the Dickens Program, Mr. Johnson throws in another 1,000 nuyen apiece.

LOCATIONS

EVO RESEARCH FACILITY

This is a facility for biological research, which is crucial to Evo advancing its vision of transhumanity. Testing here is done on all sorts of subjects—mammals, fish, humans, etc. Most of the facility has fairly innocuous (though top secret, as far as Evo is concerned) projects; the more controversial or questionable work is conducted on the secret top floor.

The facility has five floors; a main floor, two basement floors (one partially underwater, one totally underwater, and two floors above the main floor). The two basement floors have a variety of testing facilities; the lower of the two specializes in aquatic environments and creatures. The upper basement also has a detention facility, with small rooms with keycard maglocks with no wireless components. The doors to the cells have Armor Rating 8, Structure Rating 9.

The main floor has more testing facilities, focused more on mammals (rats and the like) and some human clinical testing conducted at this facility. The main security office for the building is also located on this floor. A total of twenty regular guards are on duty at all times in the building (use *Elite Corporate Security*, p. 140). Additionally, the building holds a security mage (see *Security Mage*, p. 147) and four watcher spirits (one near the roof, one on each of the basement levels, one moving between the top two floors).

The second floor is primarily for administrative purposes, containing the offices of those who work in the building.

The top floor is secret; from the street level, the building looks like it only has one floor above the main level. It has a pyramidal roof, though, that looks like it slopes gradually but still rises enough to allow for an additional floor (which is smaller than the floor below it). The only way up to the secret floor is through an elevator in an office in the middle of the second floor. Two security guards are in this office at all times, and another four guards are always on this floor, ready to protect the elevator if necessary. The door isn't hidden, but it operates through a biometric fingerprint lock. It responds to the fingerprints of any security guard in the building. If it is forced open, an alarm goes off in the form of an ARO appearing before all security guards in the buildings. The entrance to the elevator and the elevator shaft is also protected by a Force 4 mana barrier.

The upper floor mostly holds research rooms full of testing subjects. It is encased in a Faraday cage, so no wireless signals can leave the floor. Rooms are all locked with Rating 6 keypad maglocks. Some of the rooms hold various small mammals (most of them are alive; some are dead and are in the middle of being autopsied). One room holds a deceased human lying on an operating table with the top of his skull cut off. Runners can take his picture in an effort to identify the individual; it will take some time, but eventually any technomancer contacts they have in the region can identify the individual as Piotr Kutepov (street name: Zyr), a skilled technomancer who disappeared eight months ago.

The room holding Justice Hino's corpse is described in **Plot Point Two**.

ULITSA ADMIRALA FOKINA

Ulitsa Admirala Fokina is a pedestrian-only street made of grey brick. Fountains placed at regular intervals in the street are constructed of the same brick. The city government is far from the leading power in town, and the have not been able to keep up with maintenance of the street—bricks are chipped, and about a third of the fountains are not functional. Many streetlights are out, and since the Vory like it that way, they prevail on the city to make sure they remain broken.

The street is lined with retail and wholesale markets. Food vendors are especially popular—fresh meat, fish, dairy products, nuts, and of course vodka can be found in the buildings lining the street. Other goods, including clothing, cheap souvenirs, and consumer electronics can be found here, though nothing exotic—the market is more for tourists and visitors than for people who need serious gear.

The Vory find the Ulitsa Admirala Fokina a pleasant place to meet because it's quiet and offers a lot of backrooms and dark corners. To save the city money, the Vory offered (in very firm tones) to provide security to the area so that the city's contracted security company wouldn't have to. The city government, fully aware of where it stands in the pecking order of local powers, accepted the offer.

Since the street is an adopted home of sorts for the Vory, they prefer that visitors treat it with respect. Yes, they'll break the occasional light when it suits them, but they figure it's their prerogative. They want visitors to treat the street well, and that includes no overt violence (or at least no violence with collateral damage), no foul language in front of children, and no littering. They are very willing to enforce this with firm words and possibly

the judicious application of a blunt object to the back of selected individuals' skulls.

PEOPLE

MIRELA TIRZIC

There are some runners who would see no success in a corporate office, and there are some corporate wageslaves who would be dead within half a minute if they tried out life on the street. Then there are people like Mirela Tirzić, who are not a perfect blending of street and corporate office but are at least more of a combination than most of their peers. Tirzić had a patchwork career of mixed success inside Evo before she found her true calling with the Dickens Program. She started in the acquisitions department of one of Evo's financial arms, helping prepare reports on potential targets. Her work was praised there, which led her to becoming a manager of a group in that department, which did not go well. Her management style was often criticized as overly brusque and authoritarian, and eventually she was transferred to a different division before her team could mutiny. Her particular combination of ruthlessness, fast thinking, and mathematic precision had her bounding around for a time until she came to the attention of Egor Bykovsky, who was one of the first people in Evo to see her abrupt manner with her subordinates as a positive attribute. For his vision of Project Dike, Bykovsky needed someone who could keep people at the various transmission sites moving quickly and efficiently through fear, and Tirzić was able to pull that off. She very much enjoys her new position, as she has finally found a supervisor who isn't constantly telling her how she probably should be nicer to her staff. Bykovsky has unleashed her inner tyrant, and for a time Tirzić was quite content. But then her work required her to be even more ruthless than she liked, and she began to believe she had stepped over a line into behavior and decisions she could not approve. As a result, she is not as confident in herself and her work as she had been.

Mirela Tirzic

Female human

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|----|
| 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5.8 | 9 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/11

Armor (B/I): 5/2

Skills: Computers 2, Con (Fast Talk) 3 (4) (+2), Etiquette (Corporate) 2 (3) (+2), Intimidation (Mental) 4 (5) (+2), Negotiation (Sense Motive) 2 (3) (+2), Palming 2, Pistols 1 (Tasers +2)

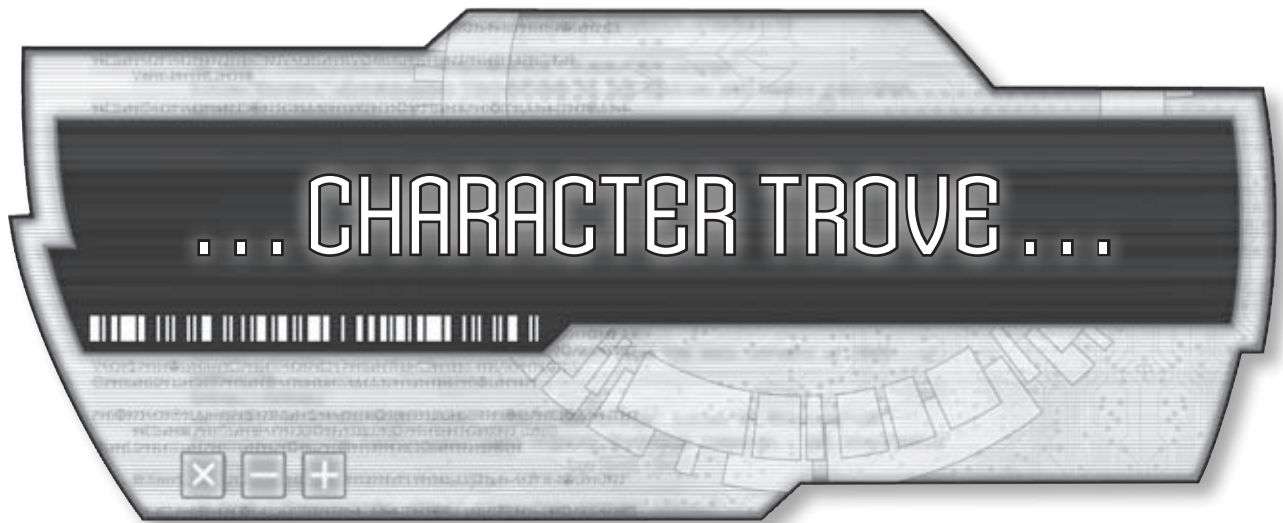
Quality: Guts

Augmentations: Tailored pheromones 1

Gear: Commlink (Device Rating 3), Zoé Executive Suite Line (short jacket, blouse, skirt)

Weapons:

Defiance EX Shocker [Taser, DV 8S(e), AP -half, SS, RC —, 4(m)]



CORPORATE RECEPTIONIST

Professional Rating 1

Human

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|------|-------|
| 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5.5 | 8 | 1 (3) |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Armor (B/I): 0/0

Skills: Con (Fast Talk) 1 (+2), Etiquette (Corporate) 3 (+2), First Aid 1, Negotiation 2, Palming (Legerdemain) 1 (+2)

Knowledge Skills: Corporate Gossip 3, Corporate Structure 2

Augmentations: Commlink (implanted, Device Rating 3), data-jack, voice modulator

DUELIST ADEPT

Professional Rating 4

Elf

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | M | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|-------|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|------|-------|
| 4 | 6 (7) | 5 (7) | 5 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 1 (3) |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Armor (B/I): 10/11

Skills: Athletics skill group 4, Blades (Swords) 4 (6) (+2), Dodge (Ranged) 3 (+2), Firearms skill group 3, Infiltration 3 (5), Intimidation (Physical) 2 (3) (+2), Outdoors skill group 1, Perception 3 (5), Pilot Ground Craft (Bike) 1 (+2), Shadowing 2, Unarmed Combat (Martial Arts) 3 (+2)

Qualities: Adept, Gremlins (Rating 2), Martial Arts (Arnis De Mano, +1 die on Called Shots to disarm, +1 DV on Blades attacks), Poor Self Control (Combat Monster), Spirit Bane (Beasts), The Warrior's Way.

Initiate Grade: 1 (2)*

Metamagics: Adept centering.

Adept Powers: Combat Sense (3), Enhanced Perception (2), Improved Ability (Blades) (2), Improved Ability (Infiltration) (2), Improved Ability (Intimidation) (1), Improved Physical Attribute (Agility) (1), Improved Reflexes (2), Improved Sense

(Flare Compensation), Mystic Armor (2).

Maneuvers: Disarm, Riposte.

Gear: Commlink (Device Rating 4), chain shirt, FFBA (full-body suit), respirator (Rating 5), stim patch (Rating 5).

Weapons:

Sword [Blade, Reach 1, DV 6P, AP —, w/ personalized grip]
Ruger Thunderbolt [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, BF, RC 3, 12(c), w/ laser sight, personalized grip, and quick-draw holster]

*for adept centering only

ELITE CORPORATE SECURITY

Professional Rating 6

Human

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Init | IP |
|-------|-------|-------|---|---|---|---|---|------|---------|-------|
| 5 (9) | 5 (8) | 5 (9) | 3 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 1.03 | 10 (14) | 1 (3) |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 11 (13)

Armor (B/I): 11/7

Skills: Athletics skill group 4 (7), Automatics 4 (5), Dodge 4 (6), Etiquette (Corporate) 3 (+2), Perception 5 (7), Pistols (Semi-Automatics) 5 (6) (+2), Intimidation (Physical) 4 (+2), Negotiation 3, Pilot Ground Craft 4, Stealth skill group 4, Throwing Weapons 3, Unarmed Combat (Subdual Combat) 5 (+2)

Qualities: Magic Resistance (Rating 4)

Augmentations: (all betaware) Attention coprocessor 2, audio enhancement 2 (inner ear modification), ceramic bone lacing, cybereyes [Rating 4, w/ eye laser system, eye laser microphone 3, eye recording unit, flare compensation, image link, low-light vision, protective covers, smartlink, thermographic vision, and vision enhancement 3], cyber-taser, damper (inner ear modification), density augmentation 2, datajack, move-by-wire system 2, muscle toner 3, olfactory booster 6, reflex recorder (Firearms), synthacardium 3

Gear: Actioneer business suit, Commlink (Device Rating 5), FFBA full suit (w/ Rating 6 nonconductivity), medkit (Rating 6), plasteel restraints, tranq patch (Rating 10), trauma patch (Rating 6)

Weapons:

- Cyber-Taser [Taser, DV 6S(e), AP -half, SA, RC —, 4 (m)]
- Colt Government 2066 [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -5, SA, RC 1, 18(c) w/ concealable holster, extended clip, smartgun system, silencer, and APDS ammo]
- 2 flash-bang grenades [Grenade, DV 6S, AP -3, Blast 10m Radius]
- HK Urban Combat [SMG, DV 5P, AP -4, SA/BF/FA, RC 2, 36(c) w/ int. smartlink, int. suppressor, and APDS ammo]

KNIGHT ERRANT ELITE GUARDS

Professional Rating 4

Human

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Init | IP |
| 6 | 6(8) | 5(8) | 5(8) | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 9(12) | 1(3) |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10/10

Armor (B/I): 14/12

Skills: Animal Handling 4, Athletics skill group 3, Automatics (Assault Rifles) 6 (+4), Clubs 4, Computer 2, Dodge 4 (+2), Etiquette (Corporate) 2, Exotic Ranged Weapon (Laser Weapons) 5, Gunnery 5, Hardware 2, Heavy Weapons 3, Infiltration 4, Intimidation 5, Longarms 4, Perception 4, Throwing Weapons 3, Unarmed Combat 5

Augmentations: (all deltaware) Cybereyes [Rating 4, w/ flare compensation, low-light vision, smartlink, thermographic vision, vision enhancement 3, vision magnification], move-by-wire 2, muscle replacement 3

Gear: Commlink [Device Rating 5], SWAT armor w/ helmet [w/ fire resistance Rating 4, insulation Rating 6, and ruthenium polymer coating]

Weapons:

- Ares Alpha [Assault Rifle, DV 6P, AP -1, SA/BF/FA, RC 2, 42 (c), w/ smartgun system, underbarrel grenade launcher, cyber safety]
- Underbarrel Grenade Launcher [Grenade Launcher, DV 10P, AP -2, -2/m, loaded with high explosive mini grenades, equipped with airburst link]
- Ares MP Laser 3 [Laser Weapon, DV 7P, AP -half, SA, 2 x 5 (c) or external source, w/ cyber safety]
- Tonfa [Club, Reach 1, DV 6P, AP —]

KNIGHTS OF RAGE

Originally, the Knights of Rage were a mixed-race African street gang in Southwark, located on the southern banks of the Thames in London before being crammed into the Squeeze. In 2043 the Welsh Great Dragon Celedyr appeared among their leadership (disguised in human form) bearing some tablets he had unearthed from Nubia. Apparently those tablets were sacred to the Nubians, and the gang leaders pledged their loyalty to the dragon. Celedyr picked what he thought were the best members and took them back to Caerleon to serve as his Praetorian guard. Since then, both branches of the Knights of Rage have expanded and grown under their service to Celedyr. Both groups

still proclaim their original Nubian heritage and display it in an unusual mixture of African, Egyptian, and Celtic traditions. The more elite Knights of Rage are masters of encoding, encryption, and decryption with even the rank-and-file members possessing some aptitude in these areas.

Knights of Rage (Professional Rating 3)

Elf

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Init | IP |
| 4 | 4(6) | 3(4) | 3(5) | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2.4 | 6(7) | 1(2) |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Armor (B/I): 6/4

Skills: Automatics (Machine Pistols) 3 (+2), Clubs 3, Computer 2, Data Search 2, Electronic Warfare 2, Hacking 2, Shadowing 3
Augmentations: Muscle replacement 2 (alphaware), wired reflexes 1

Gear: Commlink (Device Rating 4), lined coat, goggles [Rating 2, w/ low-light vision and image link]

Programs: Analyze 3, Armor 3, Browse 3, Command 3, Decrypt 4, Edit 3, Encrypt 4, Exploit 3, Scan 3, Sniffer 3, Stealth 3, Track 3

Weapons:

- Stun baton [Club, Reach 1, DV 6S(e), AP —]
- Ares Crusader [Machine Pistol, DV 4P, AP —, SA/BF, RC 2, 40(c), w/ gas-vent 2 and laser sight]

Knights of Rage Lieutenant (Professional Rating 3)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------|-------------|--------------------|
| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | M | Ess | Init | IP [Matrix] |
| 4 | 4(5) | 4(5) | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 8(9) | 1(2) [3] |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Armor (B/I): 10/5

Skills: Automatics 4 (5), Close Combat skill group 4 (5), Cracking skill group 4 (6), Electronics skill group 4, Infiltration 3, Leadership 3, Perception 3, Shadowing 3

Qualities: Adept, Codeslinger (Hack On The Fly)

Adept Powers: Improved Ability (Automatics, Blades) (1), Improved Ability (Cybercombat, Electronic Warfare, Hacking) (2), Improved Sense (Low Light, Flare Compensation)

Augmentations: Encephalon 1 (alphaware), muscle toner 1, synaptic booster 1

Gear: Chameleon suit, commlink (Device Rating 5, modified for BTL/hot sim), contacts [Rating 1, w/ image link], FFBA half suit (w/ Nonconductivity 3)

Programs: Analyze 5, Armor 4, Attack 5, Biofeedback Filter 4, Black Hammer 4, Browse 5, Decrypt 5 (Ergonomic), Edit 5, Exploit 5 (Ergonomic), Stealth 5 (Ergonomic), Scan 5, SpooF 4, Encrypt 5 (Ergonomic), Command 5, Track 4.

Weapons:

- Monosword [Reach 1, DV 5P, AP -1]
- HK MP-5 TX [SMG, DV 5P, AP -4, SA/BF/FA, RC 2 (3), 32(c), w/ gas-vent 2, laser sight, and APDS ammo]



MCT STRIKE TEAM

Professional Rating 4

Ork

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|------|------|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-------|------|
| 6 | 4(6) | 4(6) | 5 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 1.5 | 9(11) | 1(3) |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 11

Armor (B/I): 12/11

Skills: Automatics 4, Close Combat skill group 4, Infiltration 2, Intimidation 3, Leadership 3, Longarms 4, Perception 4, Pistols (Semi-Automatics) 4 (+2), Shadowing 3

Qualities: Toughness

Augmentations: Aluminum bone lacing, cybereyes [Rating 2, w/ smartlink, vision enhancement 3, vision magnification], muscle toner 2, wired reflexes 2

Gear: Commlink (Device Rating 3,), light military armor (w/ gyromount, magnetic system, quick release)

Weapons:

Ares Predator IV [Heavy Pistol, DV 6P, AP -2, SA, RC —, 15(c), w/ EX-explosive ammo, smartlink]

HK XM30 [Assault Rifle, DV 6P, AP -5, SA/BF/FA, RC (1), 30(c), w/ APDS ammo, rigid stock w. shock pad, smartlink, underbarrel grenade launcher w. grenade link] [Grenade launcher, DV Grenade, AP —, SS, RC —, 8(c)]

1 clip high explosive grenades [Grenade, DV 10P, AP -2, Blast -2/m]

MILES LANIER

A former UCAS sniper, Miles Lanier was the director of internal security for Fuchi Industrial Electronics, Renraku, Novatech, and now NeoNET. No one in the field of corporate security has more operational experience than Lanier. He is also the best friend and right-hand man of Richard Villiers, the brilliant corporate shark responsible for the formation of Novatech and its successor, NeoNET. Lanier has recently gone AWOL from NeoNET for unknown reasons, and he is being tailed by the Knights of Rage as well as other, more shadowy groups. His current intentions and loyalties are unknown, but he has grown leaner and meaner with his return to the constant tension of fieldwork. His personal competence far surpasses that of the runners, and his already formidable statistics can be adjusted to ensure this if necessary. He has thought of everything the runners could possibly think of, has thought of it before they did, and has planned contingencies accordingly. Although he is a mortal mundane human with no obvious cyberware, a wise shadowrunner would be just as wary of Miles Lanier as they would of an “average” great dragon.

Miles Lanier

Male human

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Ess | Init | IP |
|------|------|------|------|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|--------|------|
| 5(9) | 5(9) | 5(8) | 5(9) | 3 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 11(14) | 1(4) |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 11 (13)/11

Armor (B/I): 14/10



Miles Lanier

Skills: Architecture 3, Armorer 4, Athletics skill group 4 (7), Automatics (Assault Rifles) 3 (+2), Blades (Knives) 3 (+2), Clubs (Batons) 3 (+2), Cracking Skill group 5, Demolitions 4, Dodge (Ranged) 4 (+2), Electronics skill group 5, Escape Artist 3, First Aid (Combat Wounds) 4 (+2), Gunnery 3, Heavy Weapons 3, Influence skill group 3, Intimidation 6, Locksmith 3, Longarms (Sniper Rifles) 7 (+2), Outdoors skill group 4, Perception 6 (9), Pilot Aircraft 3, Pilot Ground Craft 3, Pistols (Semi-Automatics) 6 (+2), Stealth skill group 6, Throwing Weapons 3, Unarmed Combat (Boxing) 5 (+2)

Knowledge Skills: Baseball 5, Business 3, Economics 3, Engineering 3, Law 3, Magic Theory 6, Matrix Theory 6, Military Tactics 6, NeoNET 6, Parazoology 4, Poison Antidotes 3, Renraku 3, Security Design 6, Security Procedures 6, Security Theory 6

Languages: English N, Japanese 6

Qualities: Aptitude (Longarms), Guts, Exceptional Attribute (Logic), Magic Resistance (Rating 2), Martial Arts (Boxing, +2 DV on Unarmed Combat attacks), Toughness, Will to Live (Rating 2).

Augmentations: (all delaware) Bone density augmentation 4, damage compensators 6, datajack, genewipe, low-light vision retinal modification, muscle replacement 4, orthoskin 2, platelet factories, smartlink retinal modification, synaptic booster 3, synthacardium 3, toxin extractor 6

Gear: Area jammer (Rating 10), B&E bag [with autopicker (Rating 6), chisel, electronics toolkit, grapple gun (with 100m stealth rope and catalyst stick), maglock passkey (Rating 6), maglock sequencer, miniwelder, thermite burning bar, and wire clippers], contacts [Rating 3, w/ flare compensation, image link, and vision enhancement 3], commlink (Device Rating 6, w/ biometric reader, satellite link, skinlink, and subdermal microphone), directional jammer (Rating 10), FFBA full suit, gas mask, goggles [Rating 6, w/ flare compensation, thermographic vision, ultrasound, vision enhancement 3, and vision magnification], handheld sensor [Signal 3, w/ Cyberware Scanner (Rating 6), MAD scanner (Rating 6), and olfactory sensor (Rating 6)], medkit (Rating 6), microphone [Rating 6, w/ audio enhancement (Rating 3), select sound filter 2, and spatial recognizer], micro-transceiver (Rating 6), plasteel restraints, rappelling gloves, Red Sox 1916 World Series ring, slap patches [five Stimulant Patches (Rating 6), five Tranq Patches (Rating 10), one Trauma Patch], SecureTech PPP system (forearm guards, leg and arm casings, shin guards, and vitals protector), 20 security tags, 20 stealth tags, survival kit, Synergist Business Line longcoat (with chemical protection (Rating 6), fire resistance, insulation, nonconductivity, and thermal damping)

Programs: Analyze 9, Browse 9, Command 9, Edit 9, Encrypt 9, Scan 9, Biofeedback Filter 9, Decrypt 9, ECCM 9, Sniffer 9, Offensive Agent [Rating 9, with Armor 9, Attack 9, Exploit 9, Decrypt 9, Spoof 9, Stealth 9], IC Agent [Rating 9, with Armor 9, Attack 9, Blackout 9, Medic 9, Stealth 9, Track 9]

Maneuvers: Finishing Move, Set Up

Weapons:

Punch [Reach —, DV 10P, AP —]

Ares Predator IV [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -5, SA, RC 1, 19(c), w/ advanced safety (electro shocker), extended clip, melee hardening, personalized grip, silencer, skinlink, smartgun, concealable holster, and APDS ammo]

Ares Desert Strike [Sniper Rifle, DV 8P, AP -9, SA, RC 1(2), 14(c) w/ easy breakdown, electronic firing, imaging scope, improved range finder, silencer, skinlink, shock pad, ext. smartgun, and anti-tank rounds]

HK G12A4m [Assault Rifle, DV 8P, AP -2, SA/BF/FA, RC 2(3), 32(c), w/ gas vent 2, electronic firing, high power chambering, skinlink, sound suppressor, ext. smartgun, underbarrel shotgun and high power rounds]

Underbarrel Shotgun [Shotgun, DV 9P(f), AP +5, SA, RC (1), 5(m), flechette ammo]

MINUTEMAN SECURITY FAST RESPONSE TEAM (Professional Rating 5)

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Init | IP |
|------|------|------|------|---|---|---|---|------|-------|------|
| 4(6) | 4(6) | 4(6) | 4(6) | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2.36 | 8(10) | 1(3) |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 11

Armor: 13/13

Skills: Athletics skill group 3 (5), Clubs (Batons) 4 (+2), Computer 2, Etiquette (Corporate) 3 (+2), Firearms skill group 4, Hardware 2, Infiltration 2, Intimidation 5, Perception 3 (5), Shadowing 2, Throwing Weapons (Lobbed) 2 (+2), Unarmed Combat (Block) 3 (+2)

Augmentations: (all alphaware) Cybereyes [Rating 3, w/ eye recording unit, flare compensation, image link, smartlink, thermographic vision, and vision enhancement 2], dermal plating 1, ceramic bone lacing, muscle augmentation 2, muscle toner 2, synthacardium 2, wired reflexes 2

Gear: Commlink (Rating 4), full body armor [w/ chemical protection (Rating 5), helmet, and non-conductivity (Rating 5)], stim patch (Rating 5)

Weapons:

Stun Baton [Club, Reach 1, DV 6S(e), AP -half]

HK-227-X [SMG, DV 5P, AP -4, SA/BF/FA, RC 2 (3), 28(c), w/ retractable stock, smartgun system, int. sound suppressor, gas-vent 2, and APDS ammo]

2 flash-bang grenades [Grenade, DV 6S, AP -3, Blast 10m Radius]

MR. JOHNSON (CORPORATE) Professional Rating 3

Brown-haired and brown-eyed, the corporate Mr. Johnson looks like any other person you would see at the corporate enclave. He seems like he would be perfectly comfortable in the boardroom or executive suite, but taking him into the seamy underbelly of the shadows makes him visibly uncomfortable. When he speaks, nothing about his voice changes the initial impression. He gets more confidence as he goes along, though, and runners would do well not to underestimate him. He might not have typical street skills, but the more time he spends out there, the more he learns how to apply the considerable resources at his disposal to the task of managing runs.

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|------|---|---|---|-----|------|----|
| 5 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 5(6) | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5.8 | 7 | 1 |



Condition Monitor Boxes: 11

Armor (B/I): 5/3

Skills: Con 1, Interrogation 2, Etiquette (Corporate) 3 (+2), Leadership 3, Negotiation 4, Pistols 1

Knowledge Skills: Corporate Finances 4, Corporate Politics 4, Mechanical Engineering 3

Qualities: Combat Paralysis

Augmentations: Math co-processor, tailored pheromones 1

Gear: Actioneer business clothes, commlink (Device Rating 4)

Weapons:

Fichetti Executive Action [Light Pistol, DV 4P, AP —, SA/BF, RC —, 18(c), regular ammo]

Note: This represents Mr. Johnson's gear and augmentations at his first meeting with the runners. If things in that meet do not go exactly as he wants them too, he purchases equipment and augmentations that can give him more of an advantage. He can spend up to 1,000,000 nuyen and can obtain equipment of Availability up to 12 and legality of restricted or legal.

MR. JOHNSON (HIGH-RANKING)

Professional Rating 5

There are some assignments that simply cannot be delegated. Using an in-house Johnson may save time and effort, but for particular assignments, high-ranking corporate officials need to be hands-on, interacting directly with runners in order to make sure that the job is done properly.

The high-ranking Mr. Johnson is accustomed to having people do what he says. He does not like being questioned, and he is confident in any decisions he makes. He tends not to blend in during meetings, but he doesn't care—he sticks out most places he goes due to the expensive clothing he wears, and he believes that's the way things should be.

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|------|---|------|---|------|------|----|
| 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 6(8) | 5 | 5(7) | 5 | 4.95 | 9 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 11

Armor (B/I): 9/2

Skills: Blades 3, Computer (Analyze) 4 (+2), Con (Fast Talk) 5 (+2), Data Search (Street Rumors) 4 (+2), Etiquette (Corporate) 4 (+2), Hacking 3, (Intimidation 4, Negotiation (Bargaining) 6 (+2), Perception 4, Pistols (Semi-Automatics) 4 (+2), Tracking 3

Knowledge Skills: Corporate Finances 3, Corporate Rumors 6, Local Shadowrunners 4, Psychology 5, SOTA Technology 3

Languages: English N, German 4, Japanese 4, Mandarin 3, Spanish 3, Sperethiel 4

Augmentations: Cerebral booster 2, hand blade, tailored pheromones 2

Gear: Commlink (Device Rating 4), FFBA (shirt), jammer (area, Rating 6), Zoé Executive Suite Line (long jacket, shirt, trousers)

Weapons:

Hand Blade [Blade, Reach —, DV 3P, AP —]

HK Urban Fighter [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, RC —, 10 (c), w/ ceramic silencer]



MR. JOHNSON (SPIRIT)

Professional Rating 3

Just like people on the material plane, astral beings occasionally have need for the services of deniable assets. Sometimes they're working for themselves or for other spirits, but sometimes they are hired by material beings who find a spirit's ability to make a very subtle entrance and exit to be quite appealing.

The spirit Mr. Johnson here is based on a spirit of earth.

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | M | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|------|----|
| 8 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 10 | 2 |

Astral Init, IP: 8, 3

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/A): 12/10

Skills: Assensing 4, Astral Combat 4, Dodge 4, Exotic Ranged Weapon 4, Negotiation 3, Perception 4, Unarmed Combat 4

Powers: Astral Form, Binding, Concealment, Elemental Attack, Guard, Materialization, Movement, Sapience, Search, Spirit Pact

Initiate Grade: 2

Weapons:

Elemental Attack [Exotic Ranged Weapon, DV 5P, AP -half]

MR. JOHNSON (SUBTLE)

Professional Rating 4

Some Johnsons get the job done with the proper application of cash and threats of physical harm, while others play a more subtle game. They know how to play off of runners' wants and needs, and they believe that the most effective runner is one that really wants to accomplish the assignment they have been given. The danger of the subtle Mr. Johnson is you can never be sure to what end they're putting their skills to use—they may simply be trying to enlist the runners in their work, or they may be playing a complicated game that, in the end, will leave the runners hung out to dry.

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|-------|---|---|---|-----|------|----|
| 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 5 (6) | 5 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Armor (B/I): 5/3

Skills: Computer 4, Con 5 (6), Data Search 3, Etiquette (Corporate) 5 (6) (+2), Infiltration 3, Intimidation 2 (3), Negotiation 5 (6), Perception 3, Pistols (Tasers) 3 (+2), Shadowing 3, Tracking 3

Knowledge Skills: Corporate Finances 3, Corporate Rumors 6, Psychology (Criminal) 5 (+2), SOTA Technology 3

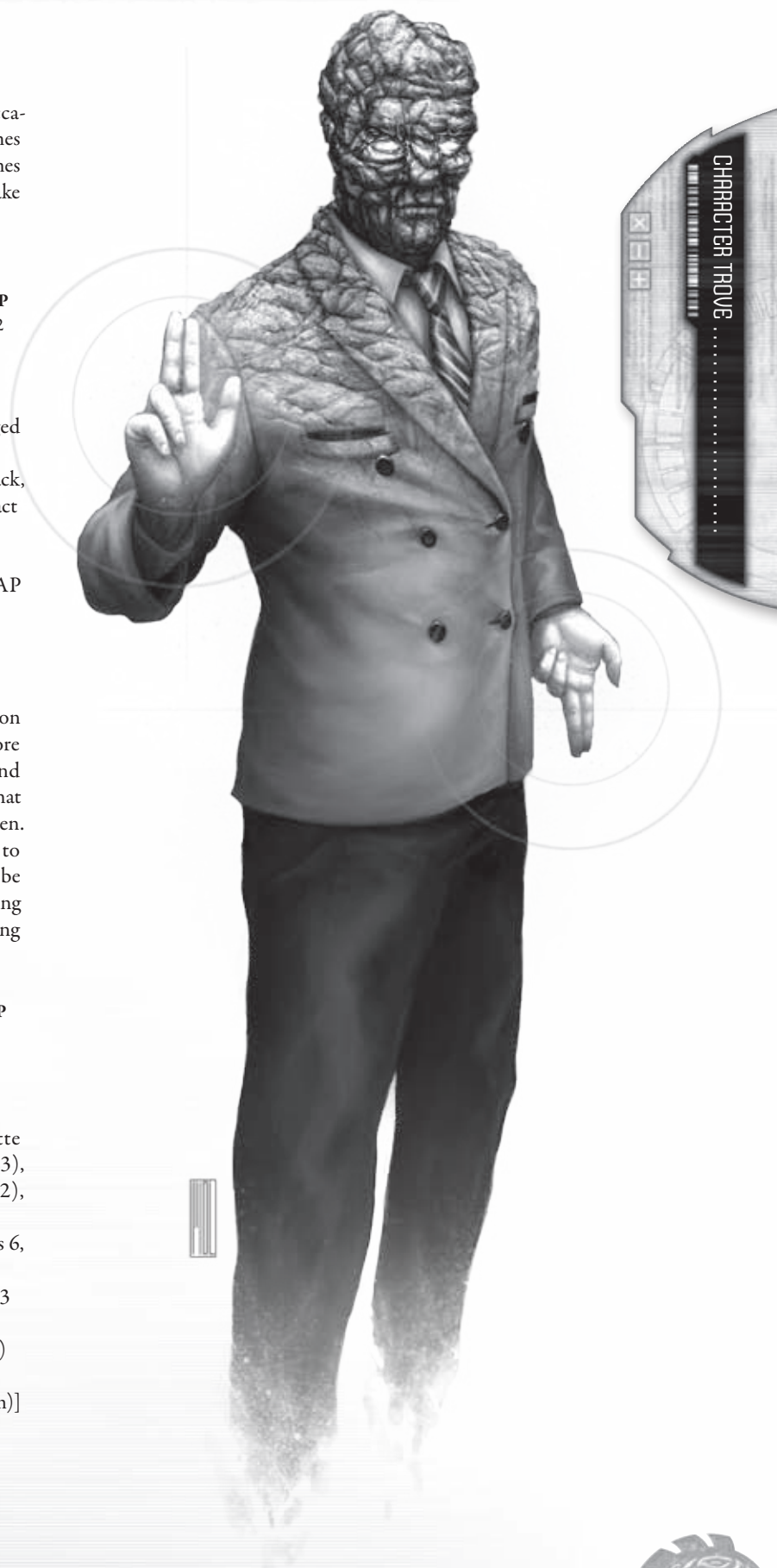
Languages: English N, German 4, Japanese 3, Mandarin 3

Augmentations: Tailored pheromones 1

Gear: Actioneer business clothes, commlink (Device Rating 3)

Weapons:

Yamaha Pulsar [Taser, DV 6S(e), AP -half, SA, RC —, 4 (m)]



ORGANIZED CRIME MUSCLE

(Professional Rating 2)

Ork

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|------|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-------|----|
| 5 | 5 | 4(6) | 7 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5.1 | 8(10) | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 10

Armor (B/I): 6/4

Skills: Blades (Knife) 3 (+2), Dodge 3, Firearms skill group 4, Intimidation 4, Perception 2, Unarmed Combat 3

Quality: Toughness

Augmentations: Cybereyes [Rating 2, w/ low-light vision, smartlink, thermographic vision], reaction enhancers 2

Gear: CommLink (Device Rating 3), lined coat

Weapons:

Knife [Blade, Reach —, DV 3P, AP —]

Ceska Black Scorpion [Machine Pistol, DV 4P, SA/BF, RC (1), 35 (c)]

PUCK

Human male

[**Note:** The stats below represent Puck's normal Attributes, Skills, and gear. Given time, he will return to this level, but when he is rescued in **Freedom, Finally** he should not be at full capacity. He should have a -4 situational modifier on all tests, and his gear is not available to him. By **Dreaded Peace**, he can be back to normal.]

| B | A | R | S | C | I | L | W | Edg | Res | Ess | Init | IP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|-----|------|----|
| 2 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 10 | 1 |

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 9/11

Armor (B/I): 6/1

Skills: Blades (Knives) 2 (+2), Con 3, Cracking skill group 6, Cybertechnology 3, Dodge 3, Electronics skill group 6, Etiquette (Matrix) 2 (+2), Locksmith 2, Perception 4, Pistols (Hold-outs) 2 (+2), Running 2, Tasking skill group 5

Knowledge Skills: Artificial Intelligences 3, Combat Biking Leagues 3, Computer History 2, Matrix Architecture 5, Matrix Groups 3, Matrix Programs 6, Matrix Security Techniques 5

Languages: English N, French 2, Japanese 4, Spanish 3

Qualities: Bad Rep, Codeslinger, Photographic Memory, Technomancer

Living Persona: Firewall 6, Response 5, Signal 3, System 6

Complex Forms: Analyze 5, Armor 6, Attack 6, Black Hammer 6, Browse 4, Corrupt 4, Data Bomb 4, Decrypt 5, Defuse 4, ECCM 5, Edit 5, Encrypt 6, Exploit 6, Medic 3, Nuke 4, Purge 2, Scan 4, Sniffer 3, Spoof 5, Stealth 6, Track 5

Gear: Area jammer (Rating 6), FFBA shirt, 5 doses jazz, maglock passkey (Rating 6), medkit (rating 5), 5 doses psyche, SecureTech PPP shin guards, 100 rounds stick-n-shock ammo (hold-out), 5 x stimulant patch (Rating 5), 5 x trauma patch, Victory Globetrotter Line light armor clothing

Weapons:

Cougar Fineblade Short Blade [Blade, Reach —, DV 2P, AP -1]

Morrissey Élan [Hold-out, DV 4P or 6S(c), AP — or -half, SA, RC —, 5(c)]



Puck

SECURITY ADEPT (Professional Rating 5)

B A R S C I L W M Ess Init IP
4(5) 6 4(6) 4 2 3 3 4 8 6 7(9) 1(3)

Condition Monitor Boxes: 11

Armor (B/I): 13/9

Skills: Athletics skill group 3, Clubs 3, Dodge 3, Etiquette 3, Intimidation 5, Perception 5, Pilot Ground Craft 3, Pistols 3, Stealth skill group 2, Unarmed Combat 6

Qualities: Adept (The Warrior's Way)

Initiate Grade: 2

Metamagics: Adept Centering, masking

Adept Powers: Critical Strike (6), Combat Sense (2), Distance Strike, Improved Body (1), Improved Reflexes (2), Improved Senses (Flare Compensation, Low Light, Improved Scent), Mystic Armor (2)

Gear: Actioneer business suit, commlink (Device Rating 4), FFBA full suit (w/ Rating 4 nonconductivity), glasses (Rating 2 w/ image link and smartlink), one dose of kamikaze, SecureTech PPP (forearm guards, shin guards), stimulant patch (Rating 6)

Weapons:

Unarmed Strike [Reach — (Range 7m), DV 8S, AP —]
Colt Manhunter [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -5, SA, RC —, 16(c) w/ ext. smartgun system, quickdraw holster, and APDS ammo]

SECURITY MAGE (Professional Rating 5)

B A R S C I L W M Ess Init IP
4 4 4 2 3 3 5 6 7 6 7 1

Condition Monitor Boxes: 11

Armor: 12/6

Skills: Athletics skill group 3, Counterspelling 4 (Combat) (+2), Dodge (Ranged) 3 (+2), Firearms skill group 3, Influence skill group 4, Perception 5, Pilot Ground Craft 3, Unarmed Combat (Block) 3 (+2), Spellcasting (Combat) 6 (+2), Stealth skill group 3

Qualities: Aspected Magician (Sorcerer), Focused Concentration (Rating 1), Geas (Incantation), Magician.

Initiate Grade: 2

Metamagics: Centering, shielding

Spells: Armor, Boom, Flamethrower, Increase Reflexes, Heal, Laser, Lightning Bolt, Manabolt, Manaball, Powerbolt, Stun Bolt

Gear: Actioneer Business Suit, commlink (Device Rating 4), contacts [Rating 3. w/ image link, low-light vision, and smartlink], combat counterspelling focus (Force 2), FFBA full suit (w/ Rating 4 nonconductivity), one dose of psyche, PPP vitals protector, stimulant patch (Rating 6)

Weapons:

Steyr TMP [Machine Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, RC 1 (2), 30(c) w/ ext. smartgun system, folding stock, foregrip, and EX-explosive ammo]

UNTRUSTWORTHY FIXER (Professional Rating 2)

Professional Rating 2

Some fixers understand the importance of trust and a good reputation in their business, so they work hard to treat their people well and build a good name for themselves. Other fixers decide that they can make money faster through cons and double-crosses. They probably won't want to work with the same runner twice, but it's a big world, and if they keep moving, they can always find another mark—er, client.

B A R S C I L W Ess Init IP
2 4 4 2 5 5 4 5 5.1 9 1

Condition Monitor Boxes: 11

Armor (B/I): 6/3

Skills: Blades 2, Con (Fast Talk) 4 (6) (+2), Disguise 3, Dodge 2, First Aid 2, Forgery 3, Infiltration 2, Intimidation (Mental) 3 (4) (+2), Locksmith 2, Negotiation 3 (4), Palming (Pickpocketing) 2 (+2), Pilot Ground Craft 2, Pistols 3, Shadowing 3

Knowledge Skills: Local Runners 3, Organized Crime Figures 2, Runner Hangouts 3, Safe Houses 2

Qualities: Addiction (moderate, bliss), Trustworthy (Con)

Augmentations: Commlink (implanted, Device Rating 4) cybereyes [Rating 2, w/ flare compensation, low-light vision, thermographic vision, vision enhancement 2], reaction enhancers 1, tailored pheromones 1

Gear: 2 doses bliss, jammer (area, Rating 5), medkit (Rating 4) 2 nanopaste disguises (Rating 4), 2 tranq patches (Rating 4), Victory Globetrotter Line (camouflage vest, light armor clothing), white noise generator (Rating 4)

VETERAN STREET SAMURAI (Professional Rating 4)

Ork

B A R S C I L W Edg Ess Init IP
7 4(7) 4(9) 6(8) 3 3 2 3 3 0.98 7(10) 1(4)

Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S): 12/10

Armor (B/I): 6/4

Skills: Athletics skill group 4, Automatics 5, Blades 5, Heavy Weapons 4, Infiltration 4, Negotiation 2, Perception (Visual) 3 (+2), Pilot Ground Craft (Auto) 2 (+2), Pistols (Semi-Automatics) 5 (+2), Unarmed Combat 5

Knowledge Skills: Firearm Design 3, Safe Houses 4, Weapon Manufacturers 3, Zen Meditation 3

Languages: English N, Japanese 2, Spanish 3

Qualities: Guts, High Pain Tolerance, Incompetent (Hacking)

Augmentations: Cyberarm [left obvious customized full, w/ Armor 2, Enhanced Agility 3, Enhanced Strength 2, small smuggling compartment], cyberarm [right obvious customized full, w/ Armor 2, Enhanced Agility 3, Enhanced Strength 2, spur, shock hand], wired reflexes (deltaware) 3

Gear: Basic DocWagon contract (1 year), 4 certified credstics (blank), 2 fake SINs (Rating 4), high lifestyle (4 Months), jammer [Area, Rating 4], lined coat, Mercury Comet, monocle [Rating 2, w/ image link, smartlink]

Weapons:

Fichetti Security 600 [Light Pistol, DV 4P, AP —, SA, RC (1), 30(c)]



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