

# SHADOWRUN



# SACRIFICIAL LIMB

BOARDROOM BACKSTABS

**CATALYST**  
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ERIC WILLIAMS II

A SHADOWRUN ADVENTURE

# SECRETS WORTH KILLING FOR

In 2072, Roger Soaring Owl, CEO of Knight Errant, resigned.

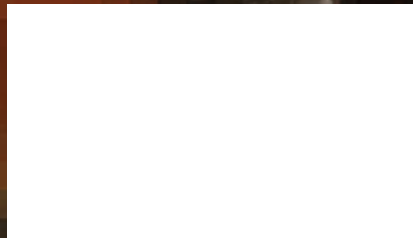
In 2073, Roger Soaring Owl was attacked on the streets of Denver. Witnesses were not clear on just what attacked him, but most say it was meaner, stronger, and faster than any metahuman.

Now it's 2074. It's time to find out what Roger Soaring Owl learned.

Corporate machinations don't get any meaner than this. Rivals of the megacorporation are certain it's hiding some dark secrets, and they're willing to spend significant nuyen to uncover this information. Runners are going to have to infiltrate an Ares subsidiary and gain the corporation's trust if they want to discover the secret—and if they do, they will have to find a way to survive with what they have learned.

*Sacrificial Limb* is the second in the *Boardroom Backstabs* series of adventures for *Shadowrun*. It has plot information, NPC details, player handouts, and everything needed to throw players into the depths of corporate espionage, digging for the paydata the megacorps want to keep hidden.

*Sacrificial Limb* is for use with *Shadowrun, Twentieth Anniversary Edition*.



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BOARDROOM BACKSTABS

# SACRIFICIAL LIMB





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## CREDITS

**Writing:** Brandie Tarvin  
**Editing:** Jason M. Hardy  
**Art Direction:** Brent Evans  
**Cover Art:** Eric Williams  
**Cover Layout:** Matt Heerd  
**Interior Art:** Chad Sergesketter  
**Maps:** Sean MacDonald  
**Interior Layout:** Matt Heerd  
**Shadowrun Line Developer:** Jason M. Hardy  
**Proofreading:** Bruce Ford, Lars Wagner Hansen,  
 Mason Hart, James O'Laughlin, Jeremy Weyand

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 PMB 202 • 303 -91st Ave. NE, E502 • Lake Stevens, WA 98258.

**Find us online:**  
[info@shadowrun4.com](mailto:info@shadowrun4.com)  
 (Shadowrun questions)  
<http://www.shadowrun4.com>  
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## ... SACRIFICIAL LIMB ...

She chose a Horizon charity ball as her coming-out party, a way of making her return public knowledge. Not that people didn't already know she had returned from her self-imposed exile, but the act of coming to this party declared her intentions loud and clear. Nadja Daviar was back and loaded for bear.

They swarmed to her like butterflies scenting nectar in a particularly fragrant flower. Dressed in bright colors and over-polite mannerisms, they came seeking approval, asking favors, and determining intent. Some even came for information, stepping through the dance of politics and peppering the air with open-ended questions. Nadja waited with a saccharine smile that encouraged them all to spill their treasured secrets while holding close to her own.

Nicholas and Arthur visited her first, of course, sounding her out for possible alliances. They asked after Gavilan Ventures, if she planned to reclaim her proxy vote authorization, and if she intended to help them topple Damien Knight. She nodded and mumbled in all the right places, letting the two men walk away with smug expressions plastered on their faces.

Knight came next, brushing away Nadja's other admirers with the sheer power of his intimidating aura. "Well, well," he greeted. "Look who finally crawled out of her hole."

Nadja gritted her teeth from behind her politician's mask. "Hello, Damien. Lost any company resources lately?"

His eyes narrowed, an inferno of rage flaring to brief life behind them. Then ice descended. "None we couldn't afford to lose."

"Some would beg to differ, dear heart. Given the nosedive in Ares' stock price after Roger left—"

"A temporary market blip that corrected itself two days later," he interrupted with a snap.

Oh, how she loved watching him squirm like a fish on her hook. "I look forward to hearing your detailed explanation at the next board meeting. Especially since that pesky sword seems eternally stuck in its stone."

His shoulders tightened, pulling back military-style like a general who'd just been given distasteful orders. "Don't ask questions you don't want the answers to, Nadja. The results could be disastrous."

With that he stalked away, leaving a flurry of gossip in his wake. Across the room, Arthur and Nicholas glowed in satisfaction, assuming she did this all for them. She didn't—it was mostly for her. And picking the recent scab of the Excalibur wound was particularly satisfying.

After Damien came the parade of politicians, celebrities, and various people of influence. Executives of other corporations paid their

respects, treating her with equal parts respect and cautious awe. They talked of simple things, hoping she'd drop some hint of where she'd been, what she'd done, and what she planned to do. But still she remained silent, waiting for the one butterfly she truly wanted to catch.

Samantha Villiers.

Samantha drifted around the room, refusing to fall into the honey trap with the ease so many others had. Clever woman that she was, she instead flirted with those who had left Nadja's company, no doubt plying them for details about their brief meetings. Her path took her in a slow, deliberate spiral around the center of activity. By the time she stood before Nadja, her presence seemed an accident of social coincidence rather than a planned meeting.

Which was one of many reasons Nadja wanted Samantha on her side.

Taking a pull from her lavender-scented e-cig, Samantha gave Nadja a gracious nod. "Welcome back."

She asked no questions and made no other commentary.

Nadja returned the nod. "Thank you. So how are things going at NeoNET lately? Is Richard treating you well?"

Samantha waved her e-cig in the air, letting the vapor create a haze around both women's heads. "As well as can be expected, considering the circumstances." That was her all-purpose expression used to cover up all manner of chicanery between the two.

"I feel your pain. Men do have a talent for making a mess of things, don't they?"

"They do," Samantha agreed.

"What would you say if I told you I had a solution?"

A slight grin tugged at the edges of Samantha's lips. "I would ask what price such a solution carried."

Nadja grabbed a pair of champagne flutes from a passing waiter, handing one over to her potential partner. "Nothing complicated. A favor for a favor. You have Richard, I have Damien. I propose we swap problems. You deal with mine. I deal with yours. Anyone following the money trail doesn't find the culprit they expected, which protects us both from any in-house retaliation."

"Assuming there is a money trail to follow." Samantha sipped at her drink, her face a mask of disinterest to the curious and distant onlookers. "Perhaps we should continue this discussion in a more private venue?"

Burying her triumphant expression against the edge of her glass, Nadja replied. "Absolutely."

Finally, ten long years of meticulous planning were about to pay off.



# INTRODUCTION

*Sacrificial Limb* is an adventure designed for use with *Shadowrun, Twentieth Anniversary Edition*. While this adventure is not designed specifically with novice players in mind, it can be easily tweaked to suit a range of player experience.

*Boardroom Backstabs* adventures are designed to give players the opportunity to experience the intrigue and dangers inherent in the vicious competition between the megacorporations, and the cutthroat extremes that these world-dominating companies will go to in order to undermine their competition. *Sacrificial Limb* features Ares and its world-famous security subsidiary, Knight Errant. In 2072, Knight Errant CEO Roger Soaring Owl had a famous falling out with Ares CEO Damien Knight. The public assumed Soaring Owl quit on his own, and Ares' PR machine did everything to support that view. In truth, the two old friends disagreed about certain projects occurring at another Ares subsidiary called Unlimitech, and Knight fired Soaring Owl over it. The ramifications of this disagreement have left shockwaves in the shadows. A lot of powerful people are very interested in the reasons why Soaring Owl left Ares, and they also would like to gain access to the proprietary company knowledge he carries around with him. Since Soaring Owl refuses to share what he knows, the corporate players have turned to the shadows to obtain the paydata they seek.

Only gamemasters should read beyond this point. Advance knowledge of the secrets and plot revealed in the following text could reduce the enjoyment of playing this adventure. *Sacrificial Limb* is the second adventure in the *Boardroom Backstabs* series. Gamemasters and players who wish to play all three should keep in mind that the player characters' actions and contacts in previous adventures could have ramifications in this one.

## PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

*Sacrificial Limb* takes place over seven distinct stages. Four are small, self-contained missions, the first of which is a trial run to give the players a hint of what they will encounter. The other three stages are capstone pieces, meant to introduce the missions to the players and give them the opportunity to do legwork they may not otherwise have time to do. The default setup assumes this game takes place over three or four sessions, but expansions are possible.

Throughout the book, you'll find hints for side missions that you can use if you and your players are interested in lengthening the process. There is no right or wrong timeframe in which to run this adventure. You can treat it as a single-session marathon or a year-long campaign. Choose what feels right for you and your group. If you prefer the multi-session method, this mission can be run as a series of short adventures or expanded into a full campaign. Subplots and sidebars are designed to give the game-master flexibility in how to approach each scene.

This adventure takes the players to Detroit (home city of Ares headquarters), where the player characters will initially infiltrate Knight Errant's training academy, and then on to Chicago (Bug City) to follow up on the intel they have gathered. Handouts on both cities are included in this book and can be given to the players at the relevant scenes, or used as additional information-gathering sources when the players research the cities in preparation for their runs.

The default campaign assumes that the characters involved are a little above average, but is perfectly playable for 400 BP characters. It may be a bit tricky, but it's designed to be a memorable challenge for characters of almost any level. Some of the scenarios will present relatively daunting odds if approached head-on. That's intentional. There are a number of situations that the runners won't be able to stomp roughshod over unless they're at the absolute high-end of the power scale. This adventure requires a certain amount of subtlety and stealth as it strips the player characters of their usual tweaked-out gear kits in favor of gear that may put them at a disadvantage during an all-out O.K. Corral-style gun fight. Encourage your players to think through their decisions, and give them plenty of options to achieve their goals. This is a perfect opportunity for them to get even more creative than usual with their roleplaying.

Additional information about Roger Soaring Owl can be found in the *Street Legends* supplement. The *Spy Games* supplement can also be used to spice up the subplots. However, it is not necessary to have either book, as everything in this adventure is self-contained.

## MAIN SECTIONS

This book is divided into several sections designed to assist you in bringing this adventure to your table:

- **Preparing the Adventure:** A plot synopsis, necessary background information, and other useful details and data.
- **Adventure Scenes:** The adventure itself, broken down into individual scenes.
- **Aftermath:** What to do when the adventure is finished (awarding Karma, money, and contacts).
- **Legwork:** Summaries of information and data the player characters might find during their research.
- **Cast of Shadows:** Profiles of the primary NPCs with whom the player characters will interact during the adventure.
- **Player Handouts:** Information designed for players.

## ADVENTURE SCENES

The adventure itself plays out over a series of sequential scenes. Each scene contains some or all of the following subsections:

- **Scan This:** A brief summary of the events in the scene.
- **Tell It to Them Straight:** A text selection that can be read directly to the players or paraphrased when the player characters reach specific points in the scene.
- **Hooks:** Descriptions of ways that characters might be encouraged to play a scene.
- **Behind the Scenes:** The mechanics behind each scene, including NPC motivations and any secrets or special instructions.
- **Subplots:** Secondary adventures—or red herrings—that offer avenues for gamemasters to develop to make the adventure less linear for players.
- **Pushing the Envelope:** Suggestions for gamemasters on altering the scene to challenge more experienced players or more powerful player characters.
- **Debugging:** Suggestions for getting the adventure back on track if the player characters' actions derail it.
- **Places of Interest:** Locations featured in the scene, including descriptions and ratings for security systems and Matrix systems.
- **Grunts and Moving Targets:** NPCs in that particular scene. NPCs that are featured in multiple scenes are found in the *Cast of Shadows*.





## GAMEMASTERING THE ADVENTURE

*Sacrificial Limb* is an adventure designed for *Shadowrun, Twentieth Anniversary Edition*, and is the second in the *Boardroom Backstabs* series, which involves player characters in the machinations of the megacorporations as the latest battles of the corporate wars get underway. In this adventure, players and their characters will see what lengths a megacorp can go to for that extra competitive edge that can make or break a corporation.

Here are a few suggestions that will make gamemastering the adventure more smooth.

### Step One: Read the Adventure

Reading through the adventure prior to introducing your group to it ensures you know what's coming down the line and are familiar with the entire story. This helps when your players (inevitably) come up with something not presented in the adventure.

### Step Two: Assess the Adventure

Rarely does any gamemaster take a written adventure and run it without any changes. You may decide it needs to be more challenging for your players, or perhaps they form a specialized team (such as all mages) who will undoubtedly approach certain tasks in unique ways. You may want to switch certain NPCs with characters your players are familiar with from their game, such as a common fixer or corporate contact. Assessing the adventure lets you make notes on how you want to customize it to best fit your game and your gamemastering style.

### Step Three: Know the Characters

You should have a copy of each character prior to running the adventure, so you can assess their individual (and group) skills, contacts, qualities, and abilities. If a scene calls for them to fly a plane through the Rockies, and none of them have a Pilot Aircraft skill, you may need to tweak the scene

so they'll still have a chance at success. If a character is sidelined for parts of the story due to lack of abilities or skills, the gamemaster should consider adding scenes that play to that character's strengths.

### Step Four: Take Notes

Written notes help you keep things organized. You may want to jot down a note to give a particular handout to players at a specific moment or highlight important details about an NPC or combat scene. Taking notes during the adventure helps you remember characters' actions, which can be useful when awarding Karma and handling contacts at the conclusion. Since this is the second adventure in a series, these characters may have played through *Damage Control*, and you may want to refer to your notes from that game. Likewise, it is not unlikely that the players' decisions in *this* adventure might come back to haunt them later!

### Step Five: Don't Let the Dice Run the Game

Dice rolls normally dictate the outcome of events in a roleplaying game. Sometimes, however, the dice fall in such a way that they interfere with the story. Remember, as gamemaster, you can always tweak the dice to enhance the story. As a rule of thumb, a gamemaster shouldn't fudge the die rolls to *hurt* player characters, but occasionally might tweak the roll to help them out or to help the story progress (softening a roll to seriously injure a player rather than killing them is one example).

### Step Six: Don't Panic

You'll make mistakes. *Everyone* makes mistakes. You may forget a rule, misread a scene, or forget an important clue. Don't worry. The reason you're there is to have fun, and fun is far more important than a flawless performance. If you or the players make a mistake, do your best to straighten things out, then keep moving forward.

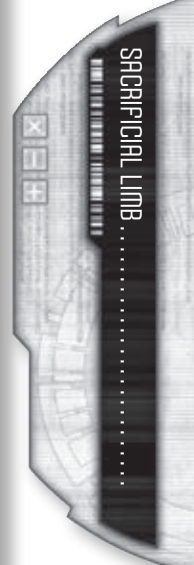
## NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Non-player characters (NPCs) are crucial to bringing any adventure to life; they include the allies, enemies, and contacts the characters will interact with during the shadowrun. Important NPCs have relevant profiles, including stats, in the *Grunts and Moving Targets* section for each scene. Major NPCs who appear in multiple scenes are listed in the *Cast of Shadows* section at the end of this book. Some of the grunt NPCs can be treated as recurring characters from the previous *Boardroom Backstabs* adventure, *Damage Control*; they have additional background provided that reveals more of their motivations. Gamemasters can and should tweak the NPCs to make them more or less challenging opponents (see *Prime Runners*, p. 284, *SR4A*). NPCs in groups benefit from Group Edge (p. 281, *SR4A*), while individual NPCs in this adventure possess their own Edge stat to use.

## BACKGROUND

In February 2012, Ares announced the resignation of Knight Errant CEO Roger Soaring Owl, saying that he had returned to his Sioux Nation home to do consulting work. Soaring Owl's resignation coincided with his return from a visit to an Ares research facility called Unlimitech, Inc., located at the Chicago O'Hare corporate complex. While many big names in the shadows took notice, the public remained unaware of the significance and connection between the two events.

Seven months later, amidst unfounded rumors that he was selling proprietary Ares secrets on the black market, Soaring Owl was attacked in Denver by a former Knight Errant Firewatch captain. Some stories claim Damien Knight put out a hit on Soaring Owl. But eyewitnesses saw the captain as a flesh-form insect spirit murdering innocents on the streets of Denver, stopped only by the bravery of Roger Soaring Owl. The Denver



City Council and the Zone Defense Force moved to quash the tales of insect spirits in Denver, and the fact that this one had come to town specifically to take down Soaring Owl, but enough information leaked out via Matrix rumors and poor-quality video footage that certain interests in both the shadow and corporate worlds decided to do their own investigations. Unlimitech, the facility Soaring Owl visited before the big Ares shakeup, was known for its bug research. It hardly seemed a coincidence that a bug chased Soaring Owl all the way to Denver just as he was ready to sell Ares secrets.

The truth of the matter is that Soaring Owl was fired after he demanded Knight stop Unlimitech's current line of research. Under corporate mandate, Unlimitech has been experimenting on insect spirits since the destruction of the Chicago superhive back in the 2050s. The official company line is they are seeking ways to permanently remove the insect spirit threat by dissecting and experimenting on the bugs they collect from Chicago and cities around the world. In the past decade, Knight created a new department called the Office of Special Projects. His personal mandate dictates the OSP focuses its bug research on military applications. Knight's long-term goal is the creation of the perfect super-soldier, who won't need external armor or weapons to take down the enemy. If the bugs' natural armored shells and weapons can be replicated in a lab and distilled down to a saleable bio-enhancement product, Ares can make its security forces indestructible while still making a fortune licensing the technology to warlords, world leaders, and other corporations.

Unfortunately for Damien Knight, he has a lot of enemies. Inside the company, fellow executives Arthur Vogel and Nicholas Aurelius are seeking to remove him as CEO and take his throne for themselves. Neither of these men know about the OSP or its special mandate. Knight also has to worry about his external enemies. Nadja Daviar, who owns only 12.2 percent of Ares stock, and Samantha Villiers of NeoNET, have teamed up in an odd cross-corporate partnership to destabilize Ares and secure the CEO position for Daviar. If they can knock Knight down before Vogel or Aurelius notices a problem, Daviar can assume control of the world's foremost military megacorp. With the player characters' assistance, this dynamic duo will end up with enough blackmail material to take control of Ares without leaving the comfort of their own homes. Assuming, that is, that the player characters don't end up selling out to Vogel or Aurelius.

Knight Errant has gone on a major hiring spree ever since assuming former Lone Star contracts in Seattle and other cities, but the past few months have seen a serious spike in their recruitment efforts. It has not escaped notice that Knight Errant's usually rigorous hiring standards have been abandoned in favor of meeting a body count quota. Spies from all types and sizes of corporations, from A to AAA, have attempted to infiltrate the company through the training academy. Few of them are ever seen again. Villiers and Daviar are aware of the danger. Not only do they not wish to risk their own assets on this job, as it would point the finger straight back at them, but their own corporate coworkers are completely unaware of their unholy alliance. So they hire the runners to do the dirty work and, if possible, frame Vogel or Aurelius for the deed.

Unknown to the corporate players, there is a wild card in the deck. The OSP has been compromised by the very experiments

it performs. Head scientist Raquel Bliss inadvertently created a breeding ground for a new, more dangerous kind of insect spirit. By combining different insect types—cockroaches, wasps, termites, etc.—with metahumans, the bugs now have a more discreet method of investing hosts, and they have used their new technique to create a hive and summon a queen right under Ares' corporate nose. Most of Unlimitech is overrun with insect spirit flesh forms, and not even Damien Knight knows what's happened.

## PLOT SYNOPSIS

The player characters' work starts the instant they talk to their fixer, before they even meet Ms. Johnson (Villiers in disguise) online. The legwork they do before the meet, and their behavior during the meet, should set the tone for the rest of the adventure and dictate how much information they receive. Ms. Johnson hires the player characters for a straightforward infiltration of Knight Errant's main training academy in Detroit. She wants proprietary training techniques and the schematics of any experimental weapons or armor used during training. Dirt on the academy instructors would be a bonus but is not required. The data recovered will give Ms. Johnson the information she needs to plan future operations.

The most important part of the first job, though, is for the player characters to create and maintain covers as desirable candidates for permanent Knight Errant employment, with the eventual goal of obtaining actionable intelligence on Knight Errant, Ares, and Damien Knight. During academy training, the player characters will uncover rumors about vanishing recruits, megacorp saboteurs, and top-secret Ares R&D projects. They may also receive the opportunity to work on behalf of Vogel or Aurelius. The player characters' performance during training can even earn them an early academy graduation, along with an emergency retrieval mission authorized by Ares.

Whether the player characters maintain their cover or not, the academy observers tag them for promotion into the OSP. If they are unconvincing in their infiltration, their "promotion" happens sooner rather than later, and they will not end up at Unlimitech under their own power. If they are convincing, they are offered the promotion as a good thing, and Villiers encourages the player characters to take the new position, copy the research, and steal project samples (for an additional fee).

Once the player characters accept that promotion, there is no going back. The OSP carts them off to Chicago—without telling them their final destination. Contact with the outside world is prohibited, and prevented by various jamming and counter-surveillance techniques.

Once inside Unlimitech, the player characters find themselves either prisoners for experimentation or assigned as guards over Dr. Bliss' research crew. During their search for the paydata or their escape attempts, they are given the opportunity to once again work the job from a different angle.

Dr. Bliss, the new hive queen, has her own agenda: increasing the size of her brood, keeping her children safe, and migrating as many of them outside the facility as possible without making the hive's presence known. While the bugs do not reveal their true nature to the players unless they have no choice, she and her children actively assist the player characters in obtaining "usable





research samples,” insect spirit eggs in reality, to sell on the open market and to the Johnsons who hired them. And if the player characters discover the hive’s existence, the queen offers them the chance to willingly help her as themselves, or to be fully invested and become her pawns.

To keep everyone in the dark and to minimize their risk, Villiers hires the player characters at as far a remove as possible. Villiers only discusses business with the players in a VR chatroom, or she does business through an Ares wageslave who dares not betray Daviar for fear of his life and livelihood. Neither woman meets the player characters in person. So unless the team does their homework—and does it well—it is entirely possible for PCs to play through this mission without knowing the truth about their employer.

If at any time the queen feels the Unlimitech hive is threatened, she destroys the facility rather than let the player characters escape. The player characters are not the first pawns to come into her lair, nor would they be the first to assist her breeding program. Unlimitech, as favorable a location as it is to the bugs, is expendable and will be severed as easily as a cockroach leg comes off in the claws of a predator.

If the player characters do not do their research, it is possible for them to go through the entire mission without knowing who hired them, to get out of Unlimitech alive without knowledge of what is actually going on in the facility, to unwittingly aid in the bugs getting a stronger foothold in the material plane, and to facilitate the migration of insect spirits version 2.0 across the globe.

The first two scenes are tests of the player characters’ abilities to do legwork, infiltrate unfamiliar territory, and maintain a long-term cover. In scene two, hints start dropping about the seriousness of the upcoming missions. But the adventure shouldn’t be allowed to go completely sideways until the player characters are transported to Chicago. Let them have a little fun first.

Urgent Message .....

### OUTLINE OF THE ADVENTURE

- **Scene 1:** Kicking Things Off
- **Scene 2:** Orientation Day
- **Scene 3:** Bug Stomping
- **Scene 4:** Chasing Geese
- **Scene 5:** It’ll Cost You Extra
- **Scene 6:** Welcome to the Office of Special Projects
- **Scene 7:** Exit, Stage Left

## SCENE 1: KICKING THINGS OFF

The player characters’ fixer contacts them about a virtual meeting with a prospective client. The client, Ms. Johnson, likes her privacy and will not meet in person. Nor will she share the details of the actual mission unless the runners come to the meet. The runners will receive 500 nuyen apiece just for showing up to hear her out.

The meet will be in the Matrix (VR required) in a private chatroom hidden inside the publicly accessible Mercury Maxim chatroom dedicated to the young fans of the popular kids show. The player characters’ ability to follow instructions and do their research, along with their bearing and conduct in both the public area and the private chatrooms dictate how well their meeting with Ms. Johnson goes. If the meet does not go well, they will have a chance to redeem themselves later.

The runners are asked to infiltrate a Knight Errant training facility in Detroit, retrieve the KE training manual, record training exercises, detail the academy’s security setup, grab any prototypes, and basically get as much information as they can about everything, including the instructors, without blowing their covers. Ms. Johnson provides Rating 6 fake SIDs that best suit the player characters’ strengths and hide any previous criminal activity. Should the characters accomplish their task and provide proof to Ms. Johnson that they have done as she asks, they receive further instructions in Detroit for a more lucrative job that takes advantage of their embedded status.

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The sun is shining, you’ve managed to scrounge up some halfway decent food, and you haven’t been shot at yet. All in all, this is shaping up to be a fairly decent, if boring, day. Desert Wars is due to premiere new footage tonight, so you’ve contacted your favorite posse to watch the chaos with you after sprucing up your place a bit. Wouldn’t do for them to see your dirty underwear on what you loosely call a kitchen table, now would it?

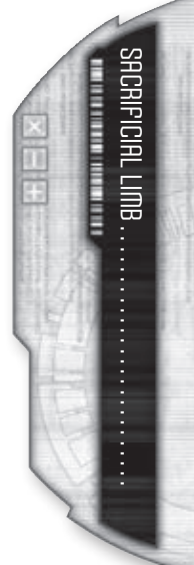
Still, you are bored. So bored that you’ve actually been counting the cracks in the ceiling plaster. That’s why when your fixer calls you up, you practically jump all over the commlink to answer. But of course, you play it cool. Wouldn’t do for him to know how desperate you are for a little excitement in your life.

“Heya, kid,” he says. “I know you’re probably busy, but I’ve got a fish on the line for you. There’s 500 nuyen for you if you’re willing to take a VR meet with a potential client. Whaddya think?”

*[The fixer gives the players a chance to respond. If they don’t want the meet, see Debugging on pg. 9. Otherwise, proceed with the task below.]*

“Yeah, I thought that would catch your attention. The money will be wired into your accounts when you show up for the meet. Ms. Johnson is expecting you online at eleven hundred hours at the Mercury Maxim chatroom. It’s not your typical haunt, so I advise doing a little research before you show up. You don’t want to show up in the, ah, wrong outfit. If you know what I mean.

Anyway, have fun. I’ll catch you later. I’ve gotta go arrange another date for another friend of mine. Ta.”





INCOMING FEED.....

**If the players did their research and are using kid icons, read the following when they arrive at the online forum:**

Because life isn't complicated enough, you are now surrounded by bouncing, energetic kids, all of whom think it is hilarious to pounce on any new icons that enter the room, or cover them with a sticky string-like substance. Some of the older kids seem content to toss virtual spitballs at one another, while still others huddle in corners debating the plot holes and logic of the Mercury Maxim trideo series. The younger kids run around dressed in icons of their favorite characters, be they heroes or villains, shooting one another with Bampf Guns or slapping one another with Thud Bats. None of the virtual weapons appear to be attack programs. The main chatroom is actually well designed to keep any of the kids from hacking the security and using real attack programs. Of course, it wouldn't stop a professional like you from taking over the reality here and changing the rules. It would take you some time, but the IC on this place isn't all that difficult compared to megacorp security.

Since you are "dressed" appropriately, walking in and past the other kids is no big deal. A few of the brats try to engage you in their games, but you won't get paid until you take the meet, so you wave them off and continue across the room to log into the private chatroom set up for you and your party. The node accepts your credentials, and your surroundings change, morphing from a playpen of destruction into a more sedate candy-shop motif. A pig-tailed girl with black hair, manga-sized purple eyes, and a bright yellow-and-pink dress sits at a table, surrounded by enough chairs for every member of your party. In her hands is a giant lollipop.

When she sees you, she smiles. "I'm glad to see you fitting in. It bodes well for the nature of the mission I need completed.

Please, have a seat." She uses the lollipop to gesture at the available chairs.

**If the players are not using kid icons, read the following when they arrive at the online forum:**

Because life isn't complicated enough, you are now surrounded by bouncing, energetic kids, all of whom think it is hilarious to pounce on any new icons that enter the room, or cover them with a sticky string-like substance. Some of the older kids seem content to toss virtual spitballs at one another, while still others huddle in corners debating the plot holes and logic of the Mercury Maxim animated series. The younger kids run around dressed in icons of their favorite characters, be they heroes or villains, shooting one another with Bampf Guns or slapping one another with Thud Bats.

None of the virtual weapons appear to be attack programs. The chatroom is actually well designed to keep any of the kids from hacking the security and using real attack programs on one another. Of course, it wouldn't stop a professional like you from taking over the reality here and changing the rules. It would take you some time, but the IC on this place isn't all that difficult compared to megacorp security.

Then one little girl shouts, "No adults allowed! I'm going to tell the room moderator!" and the activity comes to a sudden, screeching halt. The kids stare at you, mouths agape, before a few brave ones turn their Bampf Guns and Thud Bats upon you.

You have only seconds to log into the private chatroom with the credentials provided to you by your fixer. Just as you finish inputting the password, several big mecha-type robot icons show

up in the room, converging on your location. Fortunately, the login is accepted and the room dissolves around you, morphing from a playpen of destruction into a more sedate candy-shoppe motif. A pig-tailed girl with black hair, manga-sized purple eyes, and a bright yellow-and-pink dress sits at a table, surrounded by enough chairs for every member of your party. In her hands is a giant lollipop.

When she sees you, she frowns. “Thank you for coming. I had been hoping for a team professional enough to understand the need for discretion. I hope you will remedy that with your first assignment. Have a seat. We have a lot to talk about.” She uses the lollipop to gesture at the available chairs.

### **When the players are seated or comfortable, read the following:**

“My company is looking for some paydata on a certain corporate rival, but not the kind of data that can just be hacked from a server. This is information that requires an on-site presence and long-term investigation.

“You may have heard the rumors that Knight Errant is recruiting new members. This is your mission: Infiltrate Knight Errant and gather information on their training tactics and recruitment techniques. Record everything you can. Copy any proprietary data you can without getting caught. I need every piece of information you can possibly smuggle out, including images and information on the equipment used during training. You can keep a copy of the paydata for yourselves, but I require exclusive access to the data for two weeks. After that, you can do with it what you please, including selling it. If you manage to complete basic training without blowing your cover, my company will have additional work for you at a much higher rate.

“The pay is 5,000 nuyen each. It may not sound like much, but Ares will also be giving you a weekly paycheck, which of course is yours to do with as you please. Additionally, you will be supplied with top-notch credentials, specifically tailored for your skill set, to aid in your infiltration and hide any evidence of your true backgrounds. Feel free to talk this over amongst yourselves, but I need an answer from you before you leave.”

### **HOOKS**

This should be fairly straightforward. The players are being asked to pretend to be Knight Errant recruits to gather information on a corporate rival. On the surface of it, this is a good deal. The players won't have to create their own fake identities, they can keep copies of the paydata they get, and they get paid both by Ms. Johnson and the target of their infiltration. You might even be able to make them believe that they can keep the fake SINS they'll get for this mission.

If the players hesitate at infiltrating KE, Ms. Johnson will stress that they will be collecting information on Knight Errant tactics that they can use to their own advantage during future runs. She will also play upon Knight Errant's recent hiring spree and point out they've been hiring so many people lately that they can't possibly be doing deep background investigations of everyone they recruit.

### **BEHIND THE SCENES**

Most people consider Ares' true competitor to be dragon-run Saeder-Krupp. While NeoNET does indeed have a personal armament division, the megacorp is not considered the equal of either Ares or Saeder-Krupp in the weapons or military support industries. Nor do any of NeoNET's divisions own a security-for-hire company.

Ms. Johnson deliberately chose this Matrix meet-up so she could not be assensed or visualized. Her icon has some heavy-duty security on it to protect herself from being hacked or tracked, and to discourage attacks. A quick and dirty search of Mercury Maxim shows hundreds of thousands of results (fan sites, do-it-yourself costumes, merchandising, etc.) on the show and the public purpose of this room.

Any questions about Ms. Johnson's real name, the name of her employer, or anything about what her company will do with the paydata are not answered. Ms. Johnson is hiring them for a job and does not feel any of this information falls within their need to know. If the runners push the issue, she cuts the meeting short.

Ms. Johnson increases the pay if the runners succeed with a Negotiation + Charisma Opposed Test (Ms. Johnson has a dice pool of 13 for this test). Each net hit garners an additional 100 nuyen, to a maximum of 6,500 nuyen (that's 1,500 extra, or 15 net hits, just in case the group's face is slinging some serious dice). Beyond that, Ms. Johnson is not willing to negotiate. The players will also be getting paid by Ares, after all.

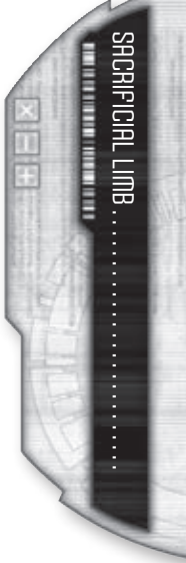
If the player characters show up in the main chatroom overdressed for the occasion (wearing adult or adult-like icons), the local spider attempts to evict them the moment he receives notification of their presence. When they leave the private chatroom, they have to exit the same way they entered, through the Mercury Maxim entrance. The spider and his programs will be waiting, and the children will be gone. The player characters can choose to disconnect immediately or engage in Matrix combat. Unless the team consists of riggers, hackers, and technomancers only, taking a stand may be a bad idea. These are not elite Matrix personnel but they are still skilled, and the fight would be an unnecessary distraction (use Professional Spider, p. 10; there can be as many of these as needed to make the encounter dangerous).

Ms. Johnson has set up an anonymous commlink account where the runners can send their videos and any electronic files they get. In addition, she has set up a blind drop box in Detroit for any physical evidence or samples (a trashcan in the middle of a tiny community park). The runners are to send a message to the anonymous account with a subject of “Pickup” as soon as they drop the goods in the trashcan. If they stay to watch the pickup, a park sanitation worker comes along shortly after the message is sent, gathers up the “garbage” in a gray plastic trash bag, picks up other debris around the area, then leaves. The sanitation worker doesn't touch any other trashcans, and he's bland enough to look like every other sanitation worker in the city.

### **DEBUGGING**

If the players refuse to take the meet, remind them they are getting free money just to attend.

If the players refuse the mission, consider playing up any anti-Ares grudges the player characters may have. Really bring home the idea that knowing how Knight Errant operates may assist them



in future adventures. Another option is to mention that an old friend, old shadowrunning buddy, or a dependent of one of the player characters was recruited by KE recently but hasn't been heard from since. This might be the incentive the players need to go take a look at what's going on for themselves.

If they still refuse to accept, the only other option is ask them to draw up new characters who would be willing to take this sort of mission on.

There is also the possibility that one of your player characters has a background involving Knight Errant where his face is known, either as a criminal or as an ex-KE employee. If this is the case, Ms. Johnson is willing to recommend a good plastic surgeon and pay the expense, or recommend the character get himself a lot of nanopaste. Even if the player left KE on good terms, Ms. Johnson will not want to take any chances that the character will be recognized.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

### Mercury Maxim Chatroom

The official Mercury Maxim room is a kids-only area of the Matrix dedicated to fans of the hit animated cartoon trid, *Mercury Maxim*. Mercury is a superhero with magical powers who belongs to a superhero collective and fights evil villains on a weekly basis. While the chatroom does not actively prevent the entrance of adults into the room, anyone who is suspected of not being under the age of thirteen is removed by the moderators so that the young fans can have a safe environment in which to express themselves. Bampf Guns (funnel-barreled guns that make a bampfing noise and let off an awful smell when fired) and Thud Bats (brightly colored baseball bats that set off mini-fireworks on physical contact) are harmless Matrix toys used by the kids to pound on each other while in the chatroom.

No attacks made in this room cause any real damage unless the local spider overrides that functionality or one of the runners hacks into the node and turns off the protections. Hacking the node on the fly is not an easy task, which is why Ms. Johnson picked this place to meet. She not only wanted to gauge the runners' legwork abilities and see if they could be subtle, she deliberately made it difficult for any of them to attack her in VR.

Research will show that this forum and the node it is on is hosted by Fuchi Studios, owned by Erika (a subsidiary of NeoNET). More information can be located in the *Legwork* section on p. 34.

### The Candy Shoppe

The Candy Shoppe is an unbranded emporium of sweet and sour delights. Walls and shelves are filled with colorful confections of every imaginable type, including the runners' favorites (if they like sweets). At one end of the shop is a long ice cream bar for making sundaes, banana splits, and the like. On the other end is a countertop full of cookies, fudge, and chocolate truffles. In the center of the room is a round table with enough chairs for every member of the party and Ms. Johnson. The candy smells and tastes just as good as the player characters' reality filters allow. The players can eat as much as they like, though as VR food it has no nutritional value, and they won't get sick.

Security here uses the same node as the main chatroom.

## GRUNTS & MOVING TARGETS

Security in the Mercury Maxim online forum consists of some non-lethal IC and spiders wearing mecha icons. If the players mess with the forum or the kids, or if they walk in wearing their normal "adult-looking" icons, they will be met with force.

### Professional Spider

This spider has settled into an easy and comfortable life babysitting the Mercury Maxim node. His node doesn't hide any company secrets and is so far out of the way of the important Matrix paths that few people bother him. At most, he's used to dealing with smart-ass punks trying to beat his system, or the occasional predatory adult sneaking into the node to take advantage of the kids. He's not expecting trouble, but will meet it head on if it comes his way.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
3	2	3	2	3	4	4	3	3	5	7	2

### Matrix Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

**Active Skills:** Computer 4, Data Search 3, Hardware 3, Software 3, Cybercombat 4, Electronic Warfare 4, Hacking 2, Con 2, Etiquette 3, Perception 2

**Augmentations:** Commlink [System 4, Response 4, Firewall 4, Signal 4], sim module, datajack, control rig

**Programs:** Analyze 4, Armor 5, Attack 4, Blackout 3, Bio-Feedback Filter 4, Browse 3, Command 4, Disarm 4, ECCM 3, Edit 2, Encrypt 3, Medic 3, Scan 3, Track 4

### Intrusion Countermeasures

#### Baby Swarm

This program's icon looks like chibi ninja characters wearing full black body suits (with a Mercury Maxim logo on their sleeves) and carrying wooden swords.

**Loaded Programs:** Attack (Area, AP -3), Armor

#### Mercury Maxim Superhero

This annoying IC is another chibi-sized character, only it looks like a superhero in a bright yellow, skin-tight suit with an orange cape. It will keep harassing its target until the intruder leaves.

**Loaded Programs:** Attack, Armor

### Mercury Maxim Node Security (Slaved Node)

Response	Signal	System	Firewall
5	5	4	3

### Mercury Maxim Node Security (Master Node)

Response	Signal	System	Firewall
5	3	4	4

### Ms. Johnson

Should the player characters engage Ms. Johnson in combat, she notifies the spider and instantly disconnects from the Matrix. When she disconnects, the private chatroom de-rezzes and dumps the player characters back into the main chatroom. Player characters need to make a Willpower + Biofeedback Filter (3) Test to avoid 3S of dumpshock damage. Whether they succeed or not,





INCOMING FEED.....

SACRIFICIAL LIMB

they suffer a  $-2$  disorientation modifier for 3 Matrix Combat Turns due to being dumped out of the Candy Shoppe.

**Gear:** Commlink [Response 6, Signal 4, System 7, Firewall 8]

**Programs:** Armor, Biofeedback Filter 6, Medic

## SCENE 2: ORIENTATION DAY

### SCAN THIS

This is it, the day the player characters get their very first taste of Knight Errant. Feel free to run this scene as a single adventure or a series of adventures to give the players a good taste of how life is going to be here. Travel to Detroit will be on the player characters' dime, as Ms. Johnson is not going to risk blowing her identity by providing it for them. Once they get to the city, getting to the academy is relatively easy, as a number of auto cabs or rental cars have the address programmed into Grid Guide.

Knight Errant Academy is a large facility with a lot of security. Hardly surprising given that Ares is so up in arms about being one of the best privatized armies in the world. Given Ares' reputation for elite troops and security ability, the player characters might be surprised to find out that this isn't nearly as bad as they might have expected.

Knight Errant trainers like Sgt. Tavers push the player characters through their paces. The runners are expected to show off their skills and prove they can handle the discipline and strict training regimen of the elite Knight Errant Firewatch teams. Initially, they will be searched for contraband, such as illegal drugs and weapons. Anything not Ares brand will be confiscated,

but if the players actually read the Ares handouts they received from Ms. Johnson, they should have been prepared for that. Additionally, any Ares weapons with illegal modifications that do not have the excuse of being from a previous military background are also confiscated. All other Ares equipment is closely examined to make sure it isn't knock-off or in bad shape before it is handed back to the player characters. Oddly enough, the academy staff gives their SINs only a cursory examination. It's almost as if Knight Errant doesn't care what walk of life their new recruits come from, which is not the usual way of doing business. Could they be desperate?

If the players do not pick up on this last point, roll a Perception + Intuition (4) Test to see if the player characters notice the staff's inattention to detail.

The trainers will issue all recruits armor jackets, ballistic underwear (form-fitting half body suits), and Ares Predators. If the players cannot shoot firearms, the trainers are willing to make arrangements for other weapons, but they grumble about how spoiled this recent batch of recruits seems.

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Detroit is a beautiful city—if you like smog, grease, and more smog. The sun is sort of shining, when you can see it, and the breeze kind of blows, when you're standing away from all the buildings. The streets, filled with potholes and cracks, have seen better days. Many neighborhoods in this city show signs of stress and abuse, their heavily made-up facades and architectural flourishes carrying the weight of two centuries worth of recessions and economic booms. Despite all this, Detroit is one of the cleanest cities you've

seen in a while. It's definitely more civilized than places like Seattle, Manhattan, or Chicago.

So you get yourselves settled in a local hotel, with its cracked swimming pool, overgrown shrubbery, and a promise that the roaches really don't bite, then grab an auto taxi and make your way to the academy. It's time to see how tough this job really is.

Thirty minutes later, you arrive at the Knight Errant campus. Located on Harsens Island east of Detroit, the academy looks like a mini-sprawl in and of itself, surrounded by a nine-meter-high perimeter fence. The fence is razor wire, cameras are posted every twenty-five meters, and visible drones patrol the length of the fence. A brief look at astral space reveals the presence of multiple watcher spirits patrolling along too. Which makes you wonder what's in this place that requires that kind of security.

The auto taxi halts at the front gate and one of two guards walks out of the guard house.

"Can I help you with something?" he asks in a bored voice.

He doesn't blink when you tell him the reason for your presence. He doesn't even check your SINS or look the taxi over for contraband. He just waves to the gate house where the second guard presses a button and opens the gate.

"Good luck, recruits," he says in that same bored voice as he walks away, leaving you to enter the facility unchallenged.

Once past the fence, you see buildings of varying conditions and heights littering about a third of the expansive hundred acres, with the newest and most well-kept buildings up front. Woods, rocky hills, sculpted sand dunes, and several firing ranges make up the rest of the facility. The auto cab drops you off at the main building, the one with the Knight Errant logo and a sign saying "Recruitment Center." The sliding glass doors open for you as you step out of the cab.

Guess it's time to go in and see what you can get out.

## HOOKS

This is an opportunity for the player characters to cut loose for a little mayhem without fatal consequences. Not only can they take advantage of the lax admission process to get information on a current, or potential, enemy (Knight Errant), but they are getting paid by the very corp they've managed to infiltrate.

Because of the open admission policy, all sorts of characters have shown up on Knight Errant's door trying to score off the opportunity. From go-gangers and the desperate SINless masses, to regular wageslaves who want to be heroes and other shadowrunners who are also trying to learn about KE's method of operations, the player characters have the opportunity to encounter people they may not otherwise meet. These colorful characters may provide fodder for future missions, or a list of low-level contacts for the player characters should the gamemaster choose. In addition, they can serve as scapegoats if the player characters handle them correctly.



## EXTENDING THE SESSION

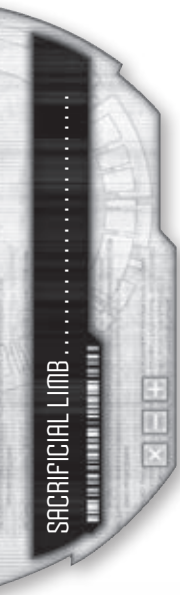
This scene can become a multi-session experience by adding some of the scenarios below to the plot. Sgt. Tavers will ensure everyone uses non-lethal force, and medics will be on the scene to assist anyone who sustains real injuries.

- Set the runners against a team of recruits for a game of Capture the Flag.
- Assign the runners the task of defending a building against a team of recruits trying to break in and steal a crate.
- The runners are mock criminals, trying to avoid capture by a team of recruits.
- The runners must capture a team of recruits playing mock criminals in the urban area of Harsens Island.
- Put the runners through an obstacle course using both their combat and non-combat (puzzle solving) skills.
- Put the runners in a sim of Harsens Island where they engage in non-lethal cybercombat against the instructors.
- Set up a scavenger hunt that requires the use of logic and legwork to find their Ares-assigned gear.
- Put the runners through a series of tests like field-stripping weapons, learning battlefield trauma care, and learning to patrol with drones or unruly animals.
- For humor potential, present the players with a cafeteria food fight or a metahuman sensitivity training session.

Most of the encounters should be rigged AR battles (a version of laser tag) that count against the player characters' condition monitors only as a method of keeping score in war games without causing any actual damage. For the most part, the players should not sustain any stun or physical damage unless they ignore the non-lethal force dictate or get injured by environmental hazards.

The gamemaster can even pit the runners against each other as individuals or by teams if the players like that sort of in-party fun. The players role-play their way through psychological evaluations or "Why do you want to join Knight Errant" interviews. Give the team a group of NPC rivals who think they are better than the player characters, and watch the hilarity ensue.

If you use the "defend the building" scenario, the mysterious crate can turn out to have a keg of beer or some other party item as an incentive for both the player characters and non-player characters to give the task their all.



## SUBPLOTS

### Subplot 1

An adept working for Nicholas Aurelius has snuck into the academy for the same reasons as the player characters. Though he is trying to play it cool, it is obvious that he is head and shoulders above the best of the recruits and perhaps even better than the player characters. If the player characters pay attention to the other recruits, they can catch him spying on the academy and its training methods, making meticulous notes in his commlink. Though they won't know he's working for Aurelius at first, they can figure it out by grabbing his data drops or hacking into his private commlink (not the public one he uses for his cover) and discovering the orders of his mission.

The runners have a choice of leaving him alone, taking him down, trying to use him as cover for their own operations, or exposing him as an anti-Knight spy (which would make them academy heroes). If the gamemaster wishes, this subplot is an opportunity to bring in some of the gear and rules from *Spy Games*.

### Subplot 2

Spies from Saeder-Krupp show up at the academy seeking their own paydata. They are here to steal prototype weapons. Unfortunately for the player characters, the spies' mission jeopardizes their own. Everything the SK spies do threatens to expose the runners, or threatens to kill their contract with Ms. Johnson. If the player characters allow the SK spies to steal from the academy, their contract with Ms. Johnson is null and void. She wants exclusive access to this data for two weeks, and it won't matter that someone else stole the paydata first, just that she didn't get her exclusive access.

If the player characters wish to keep their cover and their contract with Ms. Johnson, they must get the SK spies expelled or accidentally killed. Any attempt by the player characters to outright kill anyone at the academy (shooting first and without provocation) will get them expelled, so the trick is to convince Sgt. Tavers that the spies started the fight—or to get someone else to attack them.

### Subplot 3

A fellow recruit is smuggling illegal drugs, BTLs, or unknown substances into and out of the academy. One of these substances is a canister filled with what looks to be spider eggs. The recruit believes that this organic substance is a high-end biotech base for a new version of the Ares military combat suit.

This is a chance to let the player characters revert to type. Who seizes the opportunity to expand their own business operations? Which one steals the biotech and makes a run for the nearest exit? Do the player characters expose the misdeeds of this recruit? The Blue Wall exists even in 2073. Security forces protect their own with a loyalty bordering on the fanatical. If the player characters betray a fellow recruit, they may find themselves the targets of the other recruits. Snubbed and hazed beyond all reason, the runners may find it difficult to keep their cover and stay at the academy if they handle this situation badly. After all, if you can't trust your own to keep a secret, who can you trust?

### Subplot 4

A true form insect spirit scout has invaded the academy and is looking for a host. The recruits are in chaos as the instructors try to take the bug down. But several of the instructors have been badly injured, the insect spirit is heading directly toward the runners, and all they have are gel rounds.

This is an opportunity for the player characters to earn some academy street cred if they can rally the recruits into taking down the insect spirit. To make this subplot even more deadly, one of the academy staff has already been invested with an insect spirit, but no one has figured it out yet because she works in the kitchen and the Awakened academy employees don't bother themselves with such low-level wageslaves.

### Gamemaster Note

In the spirit of expanding this adventure into a full-fledged campaign, feel free to use all or some of these subplots in different sessions along with the other suggestions in the *Extending the Sessions* sidebar.

## PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

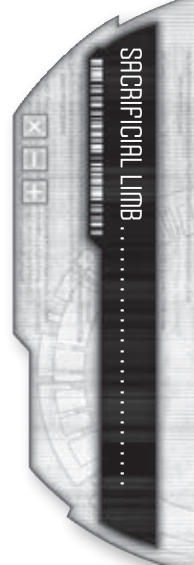
Other than adding subplots, there is not a lot of envelope pushing to be done here. This scene is designed to be easy. The goal is for the player characters to impress Sgt. Tavers and their other instructors while sneaking behind everyone's back to make the data grab. But if the runners are getting through every obstacle with too much ease, the gamemaster should raise the skill levels of the other recruits, introduce subplots, or raise the stakes by having one of the KE instructors be a member of the Ares team that the runners encountered in Dubai (if they played through *Damage Control*). Risk of discovery should motivate the player characters to take action to protect their identities and the mission.

Additionally, the gamemaster can make it more difficult to get the paydata they are targeting. Add jammers and electronic countermeasures to different scenarios to prevent them from recording their training. Have extra security wandering the corridors during the day or after curfew to keep the players from accessing the node in the commandant's office. Increase drone traffic around the academy and add layers of magical precautions that keep the team game busy.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Sgt. Tavers, a gruff satyr in his mid-fifties, is the runners' drill sergeant and chief instructor. His job is to train up the recruits to meet Roger Soaring Owl's high standards (Soaring Owl may have departed the company, but his long shadow remains) and give them the skills needed to survive the daily challenges Knight Errant security officers face. Tavers is not fond of shadowrunners in general, or any criminal for that matter. He is hard on his recruits, pushing to get the best out of them. The more the player characters impress him, the more he challenges them. Tavers has access to most of the buildings and security systems on Harsens Island, a fact that should not be lost on the more observant runners.

The runners have several goals in this scene. They need to obtain a copy of the academy training manual, which is stored in a secure, off-Matrix node in the commandant's office; record as much of the training and class lessons as possible; smuggle out any prototype equipment used in training; uncover background



information (and possible blackmail material) on the instructors; and uncover as much detail about the academy's security measures as possible. Ms. Johnson does not expect them to accomplish every goal. Her priorities are the training manual and records of the academy's training methods. Everything else is a bonus to her, but the players should not be aware of this.

Read the Knight Errant recruitment handouts carefully before proceeding with this scene. It is intended to take the player characters out of their comfort zone and put them on a more level playing field with the other recruits. It is also intended to spark the players' creativity. Feel free to adjust the situation if the elements in this scene will make it too difficult for them to actually accomplish anything.

Barring gamemaster adjustments, the player characters will be stripped of any customized or illegal weapons, most drugs, and any armor they try to bring into the academy. These items are confiscated until their graduation, kept in a vault and tagged so the staff knows to whom it belongs. Unless the runners are carrying heavily restricted or mil-spec gear, though, a few illegal weapons do not land them in the slammer with criminal SINs. They will be flagged as troublemakers and put on the short list for unwilling relocation to Chicago, so encourage the players to store their gear before they get to their destination. The runners are welcome to try smuggling in their own toys. They should be made aware of the risks, though. Anyone wishing to conceal weapons needs to pass through Rating 6 MAD scanners, chemsniffers, and cyberware scanners.

The only exceptions to the gear confiscation are common (unrestricted or low restriction) Ares weapons that, at most, have a silencer, shock pad, or gas-vent modifications. Each of these weapons is examined by the KE trainers to make sure it is in good enough shape to withstand the rigors of training. Any secondhand or jury-rigged weapons are taken from the recruits, as they present a potential danger to their safety.

Each Knight Errant recruit receives a brand-new heavy pistol, a stun baton, a commlink, AR glasses (for those who need them), and armor. Give the players the gear list in the *Handouts* section to keep with their character sheets.

As new recruits, the player characters will be put through their paces to prove they are up to the rigorous standards that were implemented by none other than Roger Soaring Owl. Soaring Owl's presence is sorely missed, as evidenced by the fact that the newest trainers' methods are haphazard and often contradict what was taught in a previous class. Loyalty to Damien Knight is a big thing in the academy, and the trainers look down upon anyone who espouses a contradictory point of view, such as loyalty to Vogel or Aurelius. Openly espousing loyalty to Soaring Owl would bring about significant discipline, including demerits, solitary confinement, and physical punishments such as excessive exercise. Repeated infractions of this nature result in expulsion.

## DEBUGGING

*Orientation Day* is designed to be a milk run with a moderate difficulty level. Let the player characters sweat over whether they've managed to throw the wool over someone's eyes. Feel free to fudge dice rolls or throw in NPCs to protect the player characters. If possible, the player characters should come off looking like heroes. Or, if not heroes, then they should get through this scene looking like they are a more elite type of recruit than the usual



## WE'RE WATCHING YOU

The recruits are being watched, not just by their instructors but by the OSP observers haunting the halls. These observers are very good at avoiding attention. Their job is to find recruits suitable for Dr. Bliss' experiments. Throughout the player characters' time at the academy (this includes the scenes *Orientation Day*, *Bug Stomping*, and *Chasing Geese*), the gamemaster should secretly make several Perception + Intuition Tests opposed by the observers' Intuition 5 + Shadowing 4. Applicable modifiers for the players include -2 for distraction and -2 for an object not being in the immediate vicinity. If the player characters are actively searching for someone observing them, they also receive a +3 modifier. Check the net successes against the below table.

Net Successes	Results
1	The hair raises on your back as if you're being watched, but you can't see anyone.
2	You just noticed that one of the academy drones has been following you around for a few hours
3	A shadowy figure moves just out of your focus. Whoever it was, he was definitely watching you.
4	You're being watched by a stranger. On the arm of his jacket is a badge with OSP embroidered on it. He walks out of sight when he catches you watching him.
5+	Not only are these OSP people watching you, they appear to be watching all the recruits. You're not sure of their number, but the OSP observers are definitely taking notes and using the drones to follow recruits into places they seem unwilling to go.

Depending on how poorly the dice are rolling during these sessions, you may need to fudge the numbers a bit. Don't give these hints out all at once. Make one or two rolls per session and give the players just enough to make them paranoid.

run-of-the-mill KE trainees. Above all, do your best to make sure that the player characters do not blow their covers, or if they do, that they are unaware they've blown their covers. This is essential for getting them on to the next steps of the adventure.

If they decide to go the badass, full-frontal assault route, they should be prepared to deal with the consequences. Take them straight to *Exit, Stage Left* (p. 29). Do not pass go, do not collect 200 nuyen. And make sure they are thoroughly strapped in for the ride.





This part of the adventure has the potential to become deadly if allowed to get out of hand. Any of the subplots can become a potential problem for the runners, as it is likely Aurelius' spy carries live ammo. If the runners have issues, cut back the spy's stats a little, fudge some dice rolls, or have an instructor step in at the last minute to help save the day.

If this part of the adventure is going too easily, bump up the NPC stats to balance out encounters. Even though the other recruits are supposed to be below the player characters' experience level, the other recruits should not be entirely outclassed either.

If you are not comfortable with the amount of role-playing in this scene, feel free to throw in a few other recruit-versus-player-character encounters in the way of vehicle chases around the compound, someone stealing someone else's sandwich (leading to a sort of bar brawl with no weapons), or a rousing game of Hide the Player Character's Favorite Gun.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

### Knight Errant Training Academy

The Knight Errant Training Academy is a place of malice and wonder located at Harsens Island on Lake St. Clair to the east of Detroit. The entire compound is a self-contained, six-story building, buried under ground for another three stories. It includes several kilometers of obstacle courses, high-tech training facilities, and over thirty-seven additional square kilometers of terrain terraformed to mimic every type of land that Knight Errant might be required to work in, from urban landscapes to heavy woods, rocky hillsides, and faux desert dunes. The scariest thing about the academy training ground is a stretch of city blocks, three by three square, built to mimic the damaged center of Chicago, complete with bug damage.

The facility is surrounded by a solid permacrete protective fence, topped with monofilament razor wire (DV 8P, AP -4). There are three gates, all of which are guarded by live guards, trained dogs, and drones. Drones and watcher spirits regularly patrol the fence line, ensuring that eager and unwanted eyes don't get too close to Ares secrets to steal them away. All of which does not explain how easy it is to get in the front entrance just by saying you want to join up.

There are two unhidden wireless nodes on the academy premises. One for use by the recruits to assist them in their training and studies, and one for the obvious security measures. The recruits' node does not have access to any other node, on or off campus. This includes wireless Matrix access. Its signal is restricted to the island and is strongest at the barracks. The instructors' node is set up for secure access only. For every five visible cameras, there is one hidden camera wired into a hard node that must be directly accessed from the office of the academy's commandant. The nodes' stats are in the Gunts and Moving Targets section.

Training manuals and instructor kits are kept on the hard node in the commandant's office with the same ratings as the other hard node. The files can be copied, but actual data access requires an encryption key attached to an acceptable SIN. The commandant's office is protected by Rating 5 maglocks as well as an old-fashioned key lock.

## GRUNTS & MOVING TARGETS

### Narayan Gupta, Aurelius' Spy

This social adept is good at getting in and out of places without anyone being the wiser. He is working for Nicholas Aurelius, and his job is to get as much dirt on the academy as possible. This guy is meticulous, though not as good at pretending to be a rookie as the real rookies are.

#### Dwarf

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

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

**Armor (B/I):** 8/6

**Active Skills:** Con 4, Cybercombat 2, Electronic Warfare 1, Hacking 2, Infiltration 4, Negotiation 3, Perception 3, Pistols 4, Unarmed Combat 5

**Qualities:** Adept

**Adept Powers:** Improved Ability (Con) 4 (1), Kinesics 3 (1.5), Traceless Walk (1) [Hearing-based Perception Tests to detect the adept receive a -4 dice modifier], Voice Control (0.5)

**Gear:** Ares-branded armor jacket [Chemical Protection (Rating 2), Insulation (Rating 1), and Nonconductivity (Rating 2)], Ares Streamline commlink [Response 3, Signal 5, System 4, Firewall 4, w/ biometric reader, skinlink, subvocal microphone, and trodes], earbuds [Rating 2, w/ audio enhancement (Rating 2), recording unit], glasses [Rating 3, w/ image link, smartlink, visual enhancement (Rating 1)], 2 x stimulant patches

**Weapons:**

Ares Predator IV [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, RC —, 15 (c), w/ internal smartgun system, regular ammo, 2 x extra ammo clips]

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

### Dog (Professional Rating 3)

These large black and brown dogs are trained for security purposes. They will chase and bite and knock down intruders. They have been augmented, and they respond only to the vocal commands of their handlers.

#### Rottweilers

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

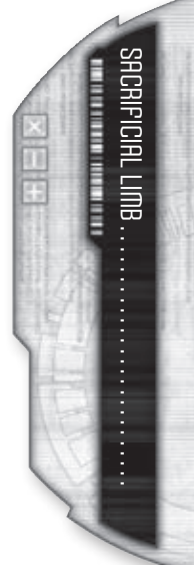
**Condition Monitor Boxes:** 10

**Movement:** 10/45

**Active Skills:** Intimidation 2, Perception 2, Running 2, Tracking 2, Unarmed Combat 2

**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Smell), Natural Weapon (Claws/Bite: Reach —, DV 2P, AP —)

**Augmentations:** Wired reflexes 2



### Knight Errant Recruits (Professional Rating 1)

These are citizens from all walks of life. Some of them want to be heroes; some of them are just trying to make a quick buck. The gamemaster should tweak stats up or down depending on how dangerous the recruit in question happens to be.

#### Human

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
4	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	6	7	1

**Condition Monitor Boxes:** 10

**Armor (B/I):** 8/6

**Active Skills:** Climbing 1, Clubs 2, Computer 3, Data Search 3, Intimidation 2, Leadership 1, Negotiation 1, Perception 2, Pilot Ground Craft 2, Pistols 3, Running 2, Unarmed Combat 2

**Gear:** Ares-branded armor jacket [Chemical Protection (Rating 2), Insulation (Rating 1), and Nonconductivity (Rating 2)], Ares Streamline commlink [Response 3, Signal 5, System 4, Firewall 4, w/ biometric reader, skinlink, subvocal microphone, and trodes], earbuds [Rating 2, w/ audio enhancement (Rating 2), recording unit], glasses [Rating 3, w/ image link, smartlink, visual enhancement (Rating 1)], 2 x stimulant patches

#### Weapons:

Ares Predator IV [Heavy Pistol, DV 4S, AP +1, SA, RC —, 15 (c), w/ smartlink, gel rounds, 2 x extra ammo clips]  
Stun Baton [Club, Reach 1, DV 6S(e), AP –half]

### Knight Errant Awakened Instructors (Professional Rating 5)

These are the magical men and women who will hone and train those who wish to serve the common good—or at least the good of Ares. They are smart, strict, and determined to run the recruits through their paces.

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

**Condition Monitor Boxes:** 11

**Armor (B/I):** 14/8

**Skills:** Banishing 3, Close Combat skill group 5, Computers 2, Data Search (Magical Research) 2 (4) (+2), Etiquette (Corporate) 4 (+2), Firearms skill group 3, Law Enforcement (Professional Knowledge) 4, Leadership 2, Negotiation 3, Perception 4 (5), Pilot Ground Craft 2, Sorcery skill group 5

**Qualities:** Analytical Mind, Magician, Mentor Spirit, Perceptive (Rating 1), SINner

**Mentor Spirit:** Dog (+2 to Detection Spells, +2 for spirits of man)

**Spells:** Analyze Magic [Detection, M, T, S, Drain (F/2)], Analyze Truth [Detection, M, T, S, Drain (F/2)], Clairvoyance [Detection, M, T, S, Drain (F/2) – 1], Combat Sense [Detection, M, T, S, Drain (F/2) + 2], Hot Potato [Illusion, M, LOS(A), S, Drain (F/2) – 1], Increase Reflexes [Health, P, T, S, Drain (F/2) + 2], Manabolt [Combat, M, LOS, Dmg P, I, Drain (F/2)], Stunbolt [Combat, M, LOS, Dmg S, I, Drain (F/2) + 1], Stunball [Combat, M, LOS, Dmg S, I, Drain (F/2) + 1]

**Gear:** Ares branded armor jacket [Chemical Protection (Rating 3), Insulation (Rating 2), and Nonconductivity (Rating 4)], Counterspell focus (Force 5, Combat Spells), earbuds [Rating 2, w/ audio enhancement (Rating 3), recording unit], spell focus (Force 5, Detection Spells), sustaining focus (Health Spells), sustaining focus (Illusion Spells), weapon focus (Bo Staff, Reach 2, Force 4), Glasses [Rating 4, image link, smartlink, visual enhancement (Rating 2)]

#### Weapons:

Ares Predator IV [Heavy Pistol, DV 4S, AP +1, SA, RC —, 15 (c), w/ smartlink, loaded w/ gel rounds,\* 3 x extra ammo clips gel rounds, 3 x extra ammo clips regular rounds]

Bo staff [Staff (weapons focus), Reach +2, DV 4P]

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

\*Gel rounds will be used during training exercises to avoid permanent damage to the recruits. Regular rounds will be used if they are attacked with real ammo by spies or the player characters.

### Ares 'P' Sentinel drones

Handl	Accel	Speed	Pilot	Body	Armor	Sensor
0	5/10	30	2	2	5	2

**Standard Upgrades:** Ammo Bin (Standard), Obsolescent, Track Propulsion, Weapon Mount (turret, visible)

#### Weapon:

FN HAR [Assault Rifle, 7P, AP –1, SA/BF/FA, RC 2, w/ 250 rounds, loaded with Explosive ammo]

### Knight Errant Node Security (Visible)

Response	Signal	System	Firewall
4	4	5	5

### Knight Errant Node Security (Hidden)

Response	Signal	System	Firewall
5	0	5	6

### Black IC: Three Musketeers Suite

This suite from NeoNET is actually three IC programs used in conjunction: Athos, Porthos, and Aramis. Each IC program has a different task. The Athos program runs a Track program on the user, while the Aramis program runs Attack against the intruding icon and Porthos runs its own Attack program to crash the invader's programs (selected at random).

**Loaded Programs:** Attack 5 x 2, Track 5, each with the Ergonomic option.

### Old Sheriff and Bloodhound

Based off the Three Musketeers Suite, this IC is two programs designed to trap and track hackers. The Old Sheriff uses a Blackout program to knock intruders unconscious, and the Bloodhound runs a Track program to find them. If the system is invaded by a virus, Old Sheriff runs a Purge program while Bloodhound tracks the source of the infection. Designed by Quick Trigger Systems, this IC is distributed only to Ares-owned companies and is not available for public sale.

**Loaded Programs:** Armor 4, Blackout 5, Purge 4, Track 5



## SCENE 3: BUG STOMPING

### SCAN THIS

Knight Errant has been kicking bug butt since the insect spirits arrived on this plane. It was the first company to understand the dangers of the bugs, and the first to formulate plans for taking down the hives. While Ares received public condemnation over the detonation of a nuclear warhead in downtown Chicago, Knight Errant Firewatch teams were hailed as heroes and rescuers. The company is justifiably proud of this reputation and protects it by training recruits in the art of “bug management.”

Today is the player characters’ lucky day. They have been chosen to receive this special training under controlled circumstances. With the guidance of Sgt. Tavers, they will take down their very own insect spirit. What they don’t know is how many they may have to take down.

Game Info .....

### GAMEMASTER NOTE

While this adventure is littered with insect spirit *Subplots* and *Pushing the Envelope* suggestions, you should be wary of how many of these elements you introduce. If you’ve expanded the adventure into a full-blown, long-term campaign, pepper the spirits between other elements and make them few and far between. Otherwise, you risk the players discovering too much before you are ready for the big reveal. There is a lot of fun to be had in building tension and seeing the horror on the players’ faces when they discover what their characters have walked into. Don’t ruin it by pushing the bug theme too hard. On the other hand, don’t ignore the opportunities for giving out warning signs either. In an ideal campaign, the players will kick themselves for noticing the trap too late, but they will be having too much fun to care that you’ve got them over a barrel.

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Just when you were getting used to the hectic pace and the hard-ass sarge running this fun-fest, you get dragged out of bed even earlier than usual. It’s like an audio bomb went off right next to your ear. That was the wakeup call, at oh-dark-thirty in the morning. You manage to pull yourself out of your bunk and get dressed just in time for Sgt. Tavers to stride in the room in his usual “get the hell out of my way” manner.

“Recruits!” he bellows. “It has come to my attention that your sorry asses aren’t treating basic training the way you should be. Since you pathetic excuses of metahumanity don’t understand the seriousness of what it is we do here at Knight Errant, your fellow instructors and myself have taken it upon ourselves to teach you the proper respect. Grab your gear, recruits. It’s time to stomp some bugs.”

Sgt. Tavers leads you outside. Floodlights brighten the field in front of your barracks, lighting several long tables covered with pistols, assault rifles, grenades, and ammunition. Real ammunition, not this stupid gel-round crap you’ve been dealing with.



SACRIFICIAL LIMB  
.....

The sarge leans over, a wild gleam in his eyes and an evil grin stretched across his face. “Hope you’re wearing your ballistic underwear, rookies. It’s going to be a long day.”

## HOOKS

Learning Knight Errant’s tricks for handling insect spirits is definitely a proprietary company secret that Ms. Johnson would like to know. If the players back out of this training session, they will also lose some major bonus points with Ms. Johnson. Besides, this is all happening in a controlled environment. What could possibly go wrong?

In addition, this training could assist the runners in future endeavors. There are a lot of corps, including Ares, that offer bounties on flesh-form insects. The player characters not only get the benefit of Knight Errant’s hard-earned wisdom, but they can make even more money off the bounties by using KE’s own methods.

Lastly, this is the player characters’ chance to get a weapons upgrade. They might be playing with the Excalibur for this scene, or they may just be trading out the gel rounds for real ammo. Regardless of which tactic you choose, make sure the players understand that Tavers is finally going to let them cut loose against someone—or something.

## SUBPLOTS

### Subplot 1

Arthur Vogel has managed to get a spy into the ranks of the KE instructors. Her job is to destroy the academy’s reputation. Vogel is an idealist and an optimist. He doesn’t realize that he’s given his spy carte blanche to cause damage he might otherwise disagree with. The spy’s plan is to trap a group of recruits (the player characters in this case) with the insect spirits and keep the instructors from interfering by whatever means necessary. If things go according to her plan, the recruits will be murdered in view of her drone cameras. She’ll then release the footage to the Matrix with proof of the instructors’ incompetence. If the runners aren’t killed by the insect spirits, she intends to drug the instructors and have them killed by the spirits, again recording the event for release to the Matrix.

Not only do the runners need to survive the bugs, they need to rescue their instructors, uncover Vogel’s spy, and prove her ill intentions toward the academy.

### Subplot 2

It turns out that one of the instructors was recently compromised by an insect spirit. This particular scout is stronger than the ones the runners are fighting against and has fully invested in its metahuman host, making it a full flesh form capable of retaining its host’s memories and personality. This scout destroys the mana barrier, releasing its cousins upon the academy at large, then takes advantage of the chaos by tracking down the commandant and investing him with another insect spirit.

The runners need to stop the wandering bugs, find the compromised instructor, and take him down. But they’ll also need proof this instructor is invested with an insect spirit or they will be arrested for murder. Proof can be acquired if they avoid killing the instructor. This means they need to stop shooting as soon as the instructor bug has gone down.

### Subplot 3

Kellie Douglas, a project manager and lead developer for Ares subsidiary Fleche Armaments, has convinced the Knight Errant instructors to give her prototypes to the recruits for a thorough pre-field test. Among these weapons are giant mech-like battle suits (which require delta-grade cyberware, special training, and custom-written rigger programs to run), manafilm armor designed to protect the wearer from spirit possession, and oversized assault rifles. Unfortunately, some of her prototypes aren’t quite up to Knight Errant’s standards and tend to break at inconvenient moments, while other prototypes are so good that Ares will clean up when they hit the open market. This is yet another thing Ms. Johnson wanted, including specs and samples. The problem is, each prototype is registered and accounted for, both before and after training. The prototypes are stored in a special room behind the armory, and security looks heavier than a Mitsuhamma Zero Zone.

It will take a lot of fancy footwork for the runners to steal this tech, if they can even manage it. They might be better off just recording the training sessions, getting close-ups of the equipment, and palming the smaller, harder-to-miss components (like software chips).

Incoming Message .....

### ARES EXCALIBUR BATTLE RIFLE\*

[Battle Rifle, DV 8P, AP -2, SA/BF, RC 2(8), 60 (c), w/ gas-vent 2, internal smartgun system, tripod mount]

**\*Gamemaster Note:** This rifle is seriously flawed and does not work consistently or well. The Excalibur program has been mostly scotched, but Ares is still looking for ways to salvage the line—and they have a fair number of weapons still lying around since the failed rollout. Each time a character fires this rifle, roll 1D6 against the table below to see how well it handles.

Roll	Result
1	The rifle jams. The character must eject the clip and insert a new one before it will work again.
2	The rifle barrel overheats and must be replaced before the weapon can be used again.
3	The rifle shoots off to the left of where it was aimed and jams on the next bullet. It takes a Complex Action to clear the jam.
4	The rifle shoots off to the right of where it was aimed, grazing the target. The game-master should pick a new target at random.
5	The rifle hits its intended target, but for only half the Damage Value. Not enough bullets were actually fired for the selected firing option. (This result is for Burst Fire attacks only. For semi-automatic shots, treat this result as if it had fired normally.)
6	The rifle hits its intended target and does the intended damage. Hooray! It worked!



## PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

If the player characters appear to be breezing through this section, feel free to add more bugs to the equation or boost the bugs' stats.

You can also make this a contest between the player characters and a rival recruit team. Whoever gets the most points wins. Points are scored by how many bugs each team manages to take out and the amount of time it takes to bring down the bug (the less time, the more points). The winning team gets a day off from training along with off-base passes, while the losing team has to buy the next round of drinks.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

After the runners are sent to the urban landscape section of the island, between one and three captured bugs are released and a mana barrier is put up to prevent escape. In order to pass this test, the recruits are required to track down the bugs and exterminate them. They will be given live ammunition for this exercise, both regular and explosive rounds. As a safety precaution, the instructors are standing by with insecticides and fireball spells in case the team fails this test.

Ares has imported these bugs and kept them for the sole purpose of training recruits. None of these insect spirits are successful merges of spirit and metahuman form. Rather, these are metahumans with some true-form characteristics such as wings, multifaceted eyes, mandibles, or underdeveloped extra limbs. While strong, these particular bugs are not too bright. They operate off instinct and seem incapable of coordinating as a team (if more than one is released). These insect spirits are hive scouts, sent out to observe and gather intelligence. They cannot speak, and careful observation (a Perception + Intuition [4] Test) indicates they operate under some sort of sensory handicap.

Pick one sense at random (sight, sound, or smell) to be dominant, and make the others especially weak. For instance, a bug that relies on sight won't hear or smell very well. A bug that relies on sound is blind. And a bug that relies on smell can't see or hear. The insect spirit stats in *Grunts and Moving Targets* should be used for this scene. Do not use the ones at the end of the adventure, which are for the more dangerous encounters later on. If things go well, the players will not see this as a precursor of things to come.

## DEBUGGING

If the player characters manage to take down one insect spirit too quickly, you can make the job more difficult by introducing a few more insect spirits in a simultaneous attack and make the runners focus on multiple targets instead of just one. If the player characters are having trouble with the insect spirits and appear to be on the verge of serious injury, adjust the bugs' condition monitors lower and make use of the sidelined instructors to keep the runners safe.

Sgt. Tavers may opt to give the runners a few chemical grenades filled with insecticide to make the mission easier (assuming one of them has the Throwing Weapons skill or carries an Ares Alpha with a grenade launcher). As a last resort, the instructor NPCs can cut loose on the bugs and rescue the player characters, though this rescue will not reflect well upon them or their final graduation grade.

## GRUNTS & MOVING TARGETS

### Captured Insect Spirits

These hybrid-form bugs (ant, wasp, and termite scouts) were captured by Ares forces, or Ares contractors, to supply Knight Errant recruits with training for anti-insect spirit operations. These bugs have been injured in some way that prevents them from using all their senses or powers properly, but they retain at least once sense that is enhanced. The gamemaster should leave the bugs tough enough to demonstrate exactly why everyone fears insect spirits, but keep them weak enough that the player characters or NPC instructors can take them out when push comes to shove. The easy way to do this is by increasing or decreasing the force of the spirits, which directly affects their attributes, armor rating, skill ratings, Damage Value, powers and the number of optional powers.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
7	7	7	7	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	11	2

**Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S):** 12/10

**Force:** 4

**Armor (B/I):** 8/8 (Hardened)

**Movement:** 10/45

**Skills:** Assensing, Astral Combat, Dodge, Infiltration, Perception, Shadowing, Unarmed Combat

**Powers:** Animal Control (Insect Type), Concealment, Enhanced Senses (Smell, Thermographic Vision, or Ultrasound), Hive Mind, Immunity to Normal Weapons, Inhabitation (Living Vessels), Movement, Sapience, Search

**Optional Powers:** Confusion, Guard, Natural Weapon (DV (F) P, AP —), Noxious Breath

**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Insecticides, Severe)

**Special Abilities (p. 150, Street Magic):** Acid damage (Ant), Reinforcement power (Termite), Venom (Wasp)

### Olivia Croft, Vogel's Saboteur

This operative works for Arthur Vogel. She's very enthusiastic about her job and willing to create as much damage as possible to earn her commission. She also conveniently ignores any instructions she doesn't like.

#### Human

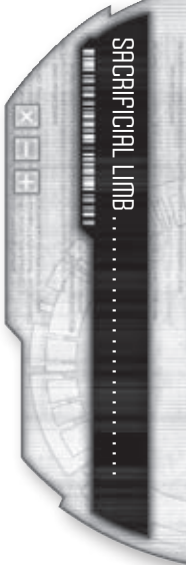
B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
3	5	3	3	3	4	4	3	5	6	7	1

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

**Armor (B/I):** 8/6

**Active Skills:** Artisan (Bombs) 4 (+2), Automatics (Submachine Guns) 4 (+2), Demolitions (Improvised Explosives) 5 (+2), Dodge (Ranged Combat) 2 (+2), Perception 4, Unarmed Combat (Martial Arts) 3 (+2)

**Gear:** AR glasses [Rating 3, w/ image link, smartlink, visual enhancement (Rating 1)], Ares-branded armor jacket [Chemical Protection (Rating 2), Insulation (Rating 1), and Nonconductivity (Rating 2)], Ares Streamline commlink [Response 3, Signal 5, System 4, Firewall 4, w/ biometric reader, skinlink, subvocal microphone, and trodes], earbuds [Rating 2, w/ audio enhancement



(Rating 2), recording unit), explosives equipment, form-fitting body armor (half-body suit) [Fire Resistance (Rating 1)], 2 x stimulant patches, recording drones

#### Weapons:

Ares Predator IV [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, RC — 15 (c), w/ smartlink, regular ammo, 2 x extra clips regular ammo clips]

#### New Weapons

These are the weapon options that will be available to the player characters for this scene, should they choose to upgrade. If they keep their Predators and just change out the ammo, account for the difference in AP values.

#### Weapons

**Ares Alpha** [Assault Rifle, DV 6P, AP -1, SA/BF/FA, RC 2 (3), 42 (c), w/ gas-vent 3 system, internal smartgun system, laser sight, shock pad], [Grenade Launcher, DV grenade, AP —, SS, RC —, 6 (c), w/ internal smartgun system, laser sight]

**Ares Crusader** [Machine Pistol, DV 4P, AP —, SA/BF, RC 2, 40 (c), w/ extended clip, gas-vent 2 system, internal smartgun system, laser sight]

**KE IV\* Grenades** [Damage: Chemical, Vector: Contact, Speed: Immediate, Penetration: 0, Power: 8, Effect: Acid Damage, Berserk\*\*] (These grenades are available in full-size for throwing or mini-grenades for use with the Ares Alpha Grenade Launcher).

\*KE IV is an insecticide cocktail designed to dissolve insect spirits from within. It is also toxic to metahumans if ingested.

\*\*Insect Spirits hit with KE IV may go berserk

#### Ammunition

**APDS Ammo** [Damage Modifier —, AP -4]

**Explosive Ammo** [Damage Modifier +1, AP 0]

**Regular Ammo** [Damage Modifier 0, AP 0]

## SCENE 4: CHASING GEESE

### SCAN THIS

The players have impressed their instructors so much that they have been tapped for a special mission off academy property. A shipment of biotech has gone missing from a Mercury Express warehouse. The player characters are given an opportunity to retrieve the shipment on their own. Sgt Tavers will ride along virtually, scoring their tactics and techniques via a pair of drones, but he will leave the method of retrieval entirely up to the team.

The biotech was stolen by a small-time group of shadowrunners who got away scot-free, or so they think. Unfortunately for them, Knight Errant's best and brightest recruits are on the job. The player characters must investigate the warehouse, using the clues left behind to track the thieves, retrieve the shipment unopened and undamaged, and arrest—not kill—the runners in question. This is a big deal. If they can pull this off, their reputations will be made, and their promotion into the Office of Special Projects will be assured.

## TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

It is another bright and sunny day at the Knight Errant Training Academy. Rumors of maggots and roaches aside, the food has actually grown on you. It's certainly better than the street-level scraps you've had to scrounge on a poor payday. Just as you finish shoveling the last mouthful of crème-de-la-soy leaf into your mouth, here comes good ol' Sergeant Tavers into the mess hall. He appears to be looking for someone. Just your luck he spots you before you can dodge under the table. As good as you are, apparently your reaction time isn't fast enough to avoid The Look.

Sighing, you wait for the sarge to approach. He gets to the end of the table and smiles at you. A nice smile. A considerate smile. A smile that you somehow find scarier than his evil "I'm gonna break a recruit" smile. Crap. What the hell did you do to deserve this?

"Buck up, recruits. This is your lucky day. I've got a job for you. A real job, on the outside. Time to see you do some real police work, rookies. Grab your gear and meet me in the main quad. We're going to hunt down some no-good shadowrunners today."

## HOOKS

Play this up as a fun thing. Sgt. Tavers truly believes the player characters have the potential to be elite recruits. He wants to give them a shot to prove to everyone just how good they are. He will play to their egos and praise them as much as a drill sergeant can praise a recruit without giving them swelled heads.

This is a chance for the player characters to be on the right side of the law for once, and have official approval of their tactics without fear of reprisals. So long as the players don't go into full runner mode, they should be able get away with a lot of things. They will also have access to Knight Errant resources to help resolve the situation, though they will be expected to do most of the legwork on their own.

## PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

There are a lot of people who don't want to see the player characters succeed at this job. Ares assets loyal to Vogel or Aurelius would rather embarrass Knight Errant by saving the day themselves. While they are unlikely to get into a direct shooting match with the player characters, these NPCs will do everything they can to slow them down, steal investigation information from them, and find the thieves first. If these Ares rivals succeed, it will boost their reputations, and they will have a means of humiliating Knight and his pet security firm.

Knight Errant tensions run high when the bodies of a few KE guards are discovered. These are a bunch of very unhappy cops. The "no lethal force" rule is still in place—Tavers is such a stickler about appearances—but the rest of the force are loaded for bear. The runners need to juggle their own needs against the wants of the other angry cops working with them. And the cops are getting suspicious over the player characters' lack of anger.

What the NPCs don't know can't hurt them, right? Unfortunately, they're working for a toxic shaman intent on polluting Lake St. Clair. If the use of Ares' biotech makes the megacorp look like a careless polluter, that's even better. When the player characters get close to their goal, the shaman and his spirits show up to take possession of the biotech. He's even willing to sacrifice the NPC shadowrunners to his cause.



## BEHIND THE SCENES

This scene assumes the player characters have sold their cover stories to Sgt. Tavers so well that they are believed to be the best and brightest the current recruit class has to offer. If the player characters have blown their covers, Sgt. Tavers will not invite them to work a real Knight Errant mission, as he feels the corporation has exposed enough of its secrets to these spies. If the player characters are known to be spies, the OSP observers in the academy have already instructed Sgt. Tavers to “promote” the runners. Sgt. Tavers does this reluctantly because he knows spies promoted this way tend to disappear and his honor demands a more direct confrontation. But orders are orders and he has no real proof of what happens to those spies sent to the OSP.

The NPC shadowrunners have been hired to retrieve specialized chemicals and biotech destined for Unlimitech. The runners didn't take everything that was available, just an easily transportable selection. If you aren't pushing the envelope, the runners don't know the name of their employers. They are getting paid good money for the biotech. Unlike the player characters, the NPC runners suffer under no lethal force restrictions. They are willing to shoot to kill (if they have to) to finish their job. If it comes to a choice between their mission and their lives, though, they may dump the goods and run with the hope that Knight Errant will choose to rescue the crates rather than chase down the shadowrunners.

This will not be a milk run. The players are constrained by the restrictions of non-lethal force, not to mention by the presence of KE instructors hovering over their shoulders with every move they make. This will make it difficult, if not impossible, for the players to use their real contacts or to step out of character. This is a good time to remind the player characters of all the nasty ways corp security can track them down when they commit crimes themselves.

It should be noted that the player characters may never reach this scene. If they have blown their cover, whether or not they know they've blown their cover, they should be routed directly to *Welcome to the Office of Special Projects*. Don't feel bad if this mission is skipped. With a few tweaks, you can always run it later as a standalone mission.

## DEBUGGING

If the players are having trouble with their investigations, Tavers can give them hints on things they should analyze, types of clues to look for, etc. He won't (and shouldn't) spell things out in detail, but he will start a sentence in a teacherly way and let them finish it for him. He will also remind the runners that they have access to Knight Errant resources, which includes a criminal investigative unit (if they need assistance processing the crime scene), a company hacker for interpreting the security footage, and tracking RFIDs the runners may have been carrying in their stomachs or on their clothes.

If the player characters are overwhelmed with the encounters from *Pushing the Envelope*, you may need to dial down the power level of the toxic shaman and reduce the number of spirits that have accompanied him. The Ares agents will most likely not use lethal force to accomplish their goals.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

### Mercury Express

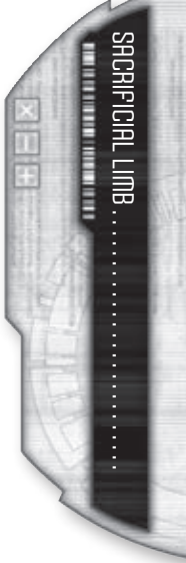
Mercury Express is Ares' courier and transportation company. It is a water-land distribution hub for package delivery, sorting, and pickup, and it sits on the north edge of the lakeside port authority. The crate was taken from the main warehouse as it awaited loading on a truck bound for Chicago. Multiple buildings, offices, and loading docks make up the facility proper. Trucks and cargo ships can load and unload at all hours of the day and night. Security consists of maglocks, cameras, motion sensors, and a few spiders monitoring security. Because there is so much activity, it is much easier getting in and out of this facility than most people might expect. The local node was expertly hacked, and footage was looped in that copied activity from the week before. A nondescript truck (that no one had ever seen before) drove in, picked up the biotech while dropping off a series of junk-filled crates, then drove off. The exterior cameras, which run off a separate, hidden node, will have images of the runners, their truck, and the direction they drove off in.

Because KE is a security firm and responsible for policing Detroit's streets, the player character hacker (or the company hacker) can tap into Detroit's street cam system to follow the truck to the NPC runners' safehouse, an abandoned storefront in a low-rent strip mall.

### Low-Rent Strip Mall

This strip mall has seen better days. Five stores extend along the length of it, with a Stuffer Shack sitting in the middle of the pothole-riddled parking lot. The two anchor stores, a Bargain Bin and a FleetFeet shoe store, are still in business but appear to have seen better days. Only one clerk works in each store, and there are no customers inside either establishment. The three middle stores appear to have been completely abandoned. Metal bars protect the glass windows and doors from vandalism, though the walls are tagged with obscene graffiti, both in reality and in AR. The only store that appears to be getting any business at all is the Stuffer Shack, and its customers consist of go-gangers looking for trouble.

Each store has a front and back entrance. The NPC runners have parked in the back of the strip mall. They live in the center store and have reinforced the walls between their hideout and the stores on either side. The front windows of all three stores have been sprayed down with light-reflecting spray paint, which prevents normal vision from seeing through the windows. The paint will not prevent thermographic vision or scanners from getting a peek inside, however. The only magical protection the runners have are two watcher spirits roaming around the back and front of the strip mall.



## GRUNTS & MOVING TARGETS

### Strychnine, Toxic Shaman (Poisoner)

The toxic shaman seems crazy to most people, since his goals are very different from theirs. This means that very little he does makes sense to others. Still, in his mind he's convinced he's going to save the world.

*Elf*

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

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

**Armor (B/I):** 6/8

**Skills:** Clubs 3, Conjuring skill group 5, Counterspelling 4, Dodge 4, Medicine (negative)\* 4, Perception 5, Spellcasting 6

**Abilities:** Low-Light Vision

**Qualities:** Mentor Spirit [Pollution, +2 for toxic water spirits, +2 to resist pathogens and toxins]

**Spells:** Bugs (illusion, realistic, multi-sense) [Type M, Range LOS, Duration S, DV (F/2)], Decrease Reaction (health, negative) [Type P, Range T, Duration S, DV (F/2) + 1], Decrease Reflexes (health, negative) [Type P, Range T, Duration S, DV (F/2) + 1], Decrease Strength (health, negative) [Type P, Range T, Duration S, DV (F/2) + 1], Foreboding (illusion, realistic, multi-sense) [Type M, Range LOS (A), Duration S, DV (F/2) + 2], Increase Reflexes (health) [Type P, Range T, Duration S, DV (F/2) + 2], Shatter (combat) [Type P, Range T, Dmg P, Duration I, DV (F/2) + 1]

**Gear:** 3 x sustaining focus (Health Spells), sustaining focus (Illusion Spells), Urban Explorer jumpsuit, helmet

**Bound Spirits:** Acid (Toxic Spirit of Water) x 2, Sludge (Toxic Spirit of Earth)

\*This skill is used to inflict bodily harm, not help people. If he uses it on a player character, subtract the net hits from the player character's condition monitor as if she were injured in combat.

### Toxic Spirit of Water (Force 4) x 2

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
4	6	7	8	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	11	2

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

**Astral INIT/IP:** 8/3

**Movement:** 10/25

**Skills:** Assensing, Astral Combat, Dodge, Exotic Ranged Weapon, Perception, Unarmed Combat

**Powers:** Astral Form, Elemental Attack, Energy Aura (Acid), Engulf (Acid damage), Materilization, Movement, Sapience, Search

**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Clean Water, Severe)

### Toxic Spirit of Earth (Force 3)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
6	2	5	6	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	8	2

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

**Astral INIT / IP:** 6/3

**Movement:** 10/25

**Skills:** Assensing, Astral Combat, Dodge, Exotic Ranged Weapon,

Perception, Unarmed Combat

**Powers:** Anaphylaxis, Astral Form, Binding, Corrosive Spit, Engulf (Earth), Materilization, Movement, Sapience, Search

**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Clean Earth and Water, Severe)

## SCENE 5: IT'LL COST YOU EXTRA

### SCAN THIS

The players have survived their first few weeks at the Knight Errant Academy, and honestly it wasn't everything it was cracked up to be. While they may have learned a few new things for themselves, training seems to be an inconsistent experience that doesn't live up to the reputation established while Soaring Owl was running the joint.

In this scene, the players meet with Ms. Johnson's proxy, Mr. Johnson, to receive their new assignments. Since Mr. Johnson works for Ares and is a double agent for Nadja Daviar, it is unlikely the player characters will make the connection between Daviar and Villiers. In fact, the only link between these two women in this adventure happens to be Mr. Johnson, but he is completely unaware of the fact. He's doing as he was instructed by Daviar, knowing full well that his career is on the line if he asks too many questions.

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The bar is a down-and-out kind of location with peanut shells strewn over the floor and the smell of cheap beer embedded in every possible surface. Everyone in this place definitely has a "mind your own damn business" vibe, and no one seems to care about the very obvious guns everyone is wearing. Then again, it's easy to see that if someone tries to start something, they're going to quickly develop a severe allergy to lead. It might be best to keep your head down and get this meeting over as quickly as possible.

Cameras dot the bar, the door, and the restroom area, but they don't appear to be functional. Two bored bouncers, an elf and an ork, sit at the bar chatting. The bartender stands behind the bar, cleaning a glass. They all look at you as you enter, then turn away.

Mr. Johnson looks decidedly out of place. He's chosen a booth in the back corner of the bar, near the restrooms. He's wearing a three-piece suit and shifting uncomfortably in his chair. The beer bottle in front of him has barely been touched. At a second glance, you realize every drink that every person in the place has is in a bottle. The only glass in sight is the one the bartender is cleaning.

As you sit, Mr. Johnson signals the bartender as if you are sitting in a much fancier restaurant. "A beer for my friends, please. Put it on my tab."

The elf snorts. The ork chuckles. The bartender puts down the glass, pulls out one single beer bottle, and slaps it on the table. Apparently he's decided to be affronted by the wageslave's attitude. You might have better luck if you order your own drinks.

After the delivery, the bartender returns to his spot, picks up the glass, and continues cleaning it as if it were the dirtiest thing on the planet.





[Give the players a chance to order up here. They will get much better service from the bartender if they're not dressed in "fancy" clothes.]

Mr. Johnson leans forward and coughs. "My employer is extremely satisfied with your work. In this bag are certified cred-sticks for the previously agreed upon amount. Now, may I assume your cover identities remain intact? Excellent. This is when the real work begins."

He pulls a chip out of his pocket and slides it across the table. "I hope you'll forgive the datachip, but one can't be too careful these days. Technomancers are everywhere. Who knows what they'll pull out of a wireless transmission? Please, feel free to download the data and pass it along to your teammates. This is an important part of the mission."

[Give the players the handout on Dr. Raquel Bliss.]

The data chip contains an intelligence briefing with an Ares watermark that someone tried, and failed, to completely erase. Also attached is an image file with the picture of a female dwarf and the name Dr. Raquel Bliss printed across the bottom.

"You may or may not have heard of an Ares department called the Office of Special Projects. The OSP operates out of Unlimited Technologies and is closely linked with Knight Errant. All of the OSP's security needs have been filled by Knight Errant graduates. We don't know what the OSP is up to, but it has forced Knight Errant to increase recruitment levels above what is manageable for the existing staff and instructors. This is why you didn't have much trouble getting into the academy. Knight Errant and the Office of Special Projects are desperate for bodies. Whatever is going on is so top secret that not even a whiff of it has leaked through the usual sources.

"Your next job is to get into the OSP, however you can manage it, and smuggle out evidence of what Dr. Bliss is developing. Video evidence is acceptable if you can make sure it is time-stamped and tamperproof. Physical evidence is better. A combination of the two would be best. My employer is willing to pay your team 60,000 nuyen for it. I understand the Office of Special Projects pays double the usual recruit pay, all of which we fully expect you to keep. Why get paid by only one employer when you can get paid by two? Just don't forget who you really work for.

"Additionally, you'll get a 30,000-nuyen bonus if you bring back any project samples intact. The timeline on this is tight. The longer you are away from the academy, the more likely you will not get back in. I need you to decide now if you're in or out. If you're out, my employer needs to make alternate arrangements."

## HOOKS

The Office of Special Projects appears to be the R&D section of Knight Errant. So far as Mr. Johnson knows, this is where much of the new Ares tech is coming from. Remind the players that their characters just got some free goodies. Mention that they might get better toys if they work for the OSP.

Also, the OSP pays double what they've been getting as Knight Errant recruits. And there is always the possibility that if Mr. & Ms. Johnson are willing to offer bonuses for project samples, additional samples on the black market could earn the

player characters even more money if they play their cards right. After all, Mr. Johnson didn't say they couldn't sell stuff on the side, now did he?

If the characters continue to balk, find a personal reason for them to continue. Did they discover an old contact's or dependent's name on the list of Special Projects employees during *Orientation Day*? Maybe Mr. Johnson could play upon a negative quality or an addiction to get them to agree.

## SUBPLOTS

### Subplot 1

The bartender knows runners when he sees them, even if they are wearing Knight Errant gear. He just so happens to be in need of a delivery crew who are good at their jobs and can keep their mouths shut. If the player characters agree, he hires them to deliver an ancient Chinese vase to a friend in Ottawa (the Republic of Quebec). The runners will have to brave UCAS customs, hope they speak French (the national language of Quebec), and deliver the vase with the seal unbroken to a talismonger in the high end of the city.

Unfortunately for the player characters, the vase contains some powerful magic. The Draco Foundation, the Atlantean Foundation, Ghostwalker's Watchers, and several other interested parties come out of the woodwork to arrange pickup of the vase, whether or not the player characters are willing to change their delivery plans. If the vase or its seal are broken, everyone discovers this "magical artifact" is instead the prison of a very angry feathered serpent.

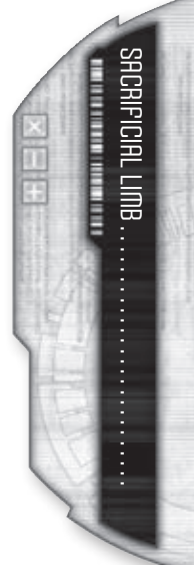
On top of all this, the player characters get to explain to Sgt. Tavers just why they went AWOL, and they have to find a way to get back in his good graces so they can continue their main mission.

### Subplot 2

Mr. Johnson is being extorted by an unknown agent. Addicted to gambling, he found himself over his head for more than he could afford. His wife doesn't know he's a gambler, and to protect her he stole then sold schematics for some Ares aerospace communications gear to a private party to pay the debt. Now someone has his number and is using it to manipulate him. He was forced to steal the briefing on Dr. Bliss, then to meet with the players and given them this assignment. Terrified, Mr. Johnson (a.k.a. Piotr Klast) would like to hire the runners for a side job. Discover who is behind this extortion and destroy the evidence this person has against him.

What Klast doesn't know is that one of his own employers has the drop on him. Nadja Daviar, a majority stockholder in Ares, has proof of more than just this one theft. She has reams of evidence to prove that Klast has been embezzling funds from the company to feed his habit and that he has a woman on the side that his wife is completely unaware of.

If the player characters take this job, they find blueprints and corporate financial documents in both his office and his apartment. Klast insists he didn't take these items and that he only committed the one crime, not all the others that the runners start to uncover. There may be truth to his claims, as his low-level management status does not give him access to the secure



nodes and departments where these documents reside. Klast is also a lousy hacker (he has the Gremlins quality), so it looks as if someone has set him up. Klast is being followed by a runner who was hired by a wageslave at Gavilan Ventures. His commlink has been hacked with proprietary Ares tracking software (not sold to the public). Eventually, the player characters could track everything back to Gavilan Ventures and Nadja Daviar.

There are a few ways this could end. The player characters could burn him if they wanted to, or try to subvert him for their own uses. Depending on how they treat him, they could end up with a low-loyalty contact for future missions. If they choose to go with the “let’s prove he was framed route” and get too close to proving Daviar had anything to do with his extortion, Klast will be discovered in his apartment with a bullet in his head, a gun in his hand, and a suicide note begging forgiveness for betraying Ares.

## PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

Someone in the bar turns out to be an enemy of one of the player characters. Or perhaps this person is one of the Knight Errant guards encountered in *Damage Control*, the first *Boardroom Backstabs* adventure. Regardless, the player characters have an interest in making sure this person does not reveal their true identities to anyone. The thing is, public murder or a bar brawl both have the potential to destroy any chance the player characters have of getting into the OSP. And Sgt. Tavers will not be pleased if the player characters ruin Knight Errant’s reputation by engaging in fisticuffs in a public place.

Alternatively, a bunch of no-good street punks are itching for a fight and think they can earn some street cred by taking down a bunch of Knight Errant recruits. In this case, a brawl might be acceptable to the good sergeant, but only if the player characters manage to take down their assailants with a minimum of property damage and fuss.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Being followed by OSP observers and the Academy rumor mill should have piqued the PCs interest in getting a closer look at the Office of Special Projects at this point. The gamemaster should keep in mind that this is a transition scene, meant to give the players a moment to catch their breath and give their characters possible clues as to what they are getting themselves involved in, if they are quick enough to pick up on the fact. Depending on the player characters’ previous actions, it is entirely possible for them not to reach this scene at all. So if they make a spectacular nuisance, or spectacular success, of themselves during training, feel free to take them along to *Welcome to the Office of Special Projects* (if they were good) or *Exit, Stage Left* (if they were bad).

Mr. Johnson’s real name is Piotr Klast. He works for Arthur Vogel, one of Damien’s rivals. This is his first attempt to play the part of Mr. Johnson, and he’s not good at it. He hasn’t turned off his PAN, he’s wearing security RFIDs that are traceable to his employer and division, and he’s nervous as all get-out. A good social adept or face character will be able to get him to spill his guts about every sin he ever committed if they catch on to his guilty conscience. His transgressions include everything from shoplifting

gum from a Stuffer Shack to swapping out his homework for his best friend’s work in high school. He’ll eventually get to his gambling addiction and the fact that he’s betrayed his immediate boss for another one, but not before boring the player characters to death with a laundry list of ridiculous infractions.

If the group hacker or technomancer manages to get into Klast’s commlink unnoticed, she can download incriminating comm traffic that will later be traceable to a Gavilan Ventures secure commlink. But do not stress that to the players if you can help it. They should be able to get through this adventure without knowing who their true employers are.

## DEBUGGING

If the players want to quit while they’re ahead, see if you can convince them that the fun is just getting started. They have the opportunity to get a lot more Karma if they continue, plus they’re getting in really good with Knight Errant here. If the players decide not to take the additional job, end the adventure here and go to the *Awarding Karma* section.

If things get too hot in the bar, DocWagon can always show up to assist one of its patrons and pacify the entire bar with smoke bombs and stun grenades. This gives the player characters a chance to get out of the situation intact.

If the NPCs need help defending themselves against the player characters, more go-gangers can always come in and take part in any fights. If the PCs need help, the opposite also holds true. Alternately, other Knight Errant recruits, curious about where their class buddies disappeared to, show up to help hold off the horde and arrest any troublemakers (not that the arrests will stick).

## PLACES OF INTEREST

### The Rat-N-Tat Bar

The Rat-N-Tat bar has seen better days. It used to be a premier hangout for Detroit cops back in the days before corporatized security, but now it’s become a cheap place for cheap beer. The menu consists of warm beer, beer nuts, and not-so-warm beer. All the patrons carry weapons here, and the bouncers really don’t seem to care about little shoving matches so long as they don’t escalate into anything major. If an out-and-out fight breaks out, the bouncers do not wade into it. Rather, they and the bartender pull their weapons and shoot anyone involved. Any survivors are invited to leave in a tone of voice that leaves no doubt that they are no longer welcome in the bar.

There is room for about one hundred patrons. The roof leaks, there’s a draft through the barred and glued-shut windows, and the floors creak. The restrooms don’t work nearly as well as they should, so most patrons go outside to the back alley to relieve themselves. Joyboys and girls wouldn’t be caught dead in a place like this, though it is a very nice place for runners to do business, because everyone minds their own biz. The local motto is “I didn’t see nuthin.”

The bar’s node can be easily hacked because there is literally nothing on it but a menu and beer adverts. And if a character has to ask for a menu, the bartender invites them to find someplace more to his liking.



## GRUNTS AND MOVING TARGETS

### Crimp, Bouncer (Awakened)

A mage with some skill, Crimp tried to get involved in running but kept being too blunt and too loud. When he iced a low-level administrator in the Brackhaven administration, it became time for him to lay low, and he managed to find work as a bouncer. He's still too loud, though, and too willing to throw around a Stunball when a stern glare would do. He has pale skin, black hair, and scars crisscrossing his forearms.

*Elf*

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
3	4	3	3	4	3	3	4	3	6	4	6	1

**Condition Monitor Boxes (B/I):** 10/10

**Armor (B/I):** 8/6

**Active Skills:** Astral Combat 3, Clubs 3, Counterspelling 4, Dodge 4, Intimidation 4, Pistols 2, Spellcasting 3, Unarmed Combat 3

**Spells:** Manabolt, Stunball, Stunbolt

**Gear:** Armor jacket

**Weapons:**

Remington Roomsweeper [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, RC —, 8 (m), w/ 1 extra clip regular ammo]  
Sap [Reach —, DV 3S]

### Deadweight, Bouncer (Mundane)

Young and tremendously strong, Deadweight is looking to make a name for himself, but he hasn't found anyone to show him the ropes. Bouncing seemed like a good way to learn some fighting techniques while also making to look connections with people who might help him take the next step up. Deadweight likes muscle shirts and tank tops that show off his physique, and he's good at controlling his temper. He's watchful and attentive, with a healthy sense of humor.

*Ork*

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
8	3	3(4)	9	2	3	2	3	3	2.9	6(7)	1(3)

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

**Armor (B/I):** 8/6

**Skills:** Close Combat skill group 4, Dodge 3, Intimidation 4, Pistols 4

**Augmentations:** Datajack, wired reflexes 1

**Gear:** Armor jacket

**Weapons:**

Club [Reach 1, DV 6P]  
Knife [Reach —, DV 6P]  
Remington Roomsweeper [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, RC —, 8 (m), w/ 1 extra clip regular ammo]

### Crain, Bartender (Mundane)

Crain's the sort of person who runs a dive bar because he never aspired to anything else. He feels the occasional fistfight keeps the joint lively, though he's not fond of the damage they sometimes cause. He has no patience with anyone putting on airs, and he'll only play the traditional bartender role of listening to sob stories if the stories are interesting. He's got a cauliflower left ear that clearly has been punched too often, he's bald, and he has a zig-zag pattern tattooed on his scalp.

*Human*

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

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

**Armor (B/I):** 8/6

**Active Skills:** Con 4, Etiquette 3, Firearms skill group 2, Perception 4, Thrown Weapons 3

**Gear:** Armor jacket, panic button to Knight Errant, bottles and glasses (behind the bar)

**Weapons:**

Remington 990 [Shotgun, DV 8P, AP -2, SA, RC (1), 10 (c), w/ 1 extra clip EX-explosive ammo]

### Street Punks (Professional Rating 3)

*Human*

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
3	4	4	3	2	3	2	2	5.2	7	1

**Condition Monitor Boxes:** 10

**Armor (B/I):** 6/4

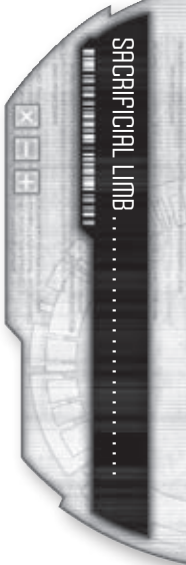
**Active Skills:** Blades 3, Clubs 3, Dodge 4, Intimidation 2, Pistols 2, Unarmed Combat 3

**Augmentations:** Bone Lacing (Plastic), Retractable Spur

**Gear:** Armor vest, Erika Elite commlink w/ Renraku Ichi OS [Response 3, Signal 4, Firewall 2, System 2], 1 dose cram

**Weapons:**

Club [Club, Reach 1, DV 3P]  
Colt America L36 [Light Pistol, DV 4P, AP —, SA, RC —, 11 (c), w/ 1 extra clip regular ammo]  
Knives (Qty 2) [Blade, Reach —, DV 3P]  
Retractable Spur [Blade, Reach —, DV 5P, AP —]  
Unarmed, [Plastic Bone Lacing, Reach —, DV 3P, AP —]



## SCENE 6: WELCOME TO THE OFFICE OF SPECIAL PROJECTS

### SCAN THIS

If the player characters were forcibly brought to Unlimitech, they will find themselves arriving as packages for Dr. Bliss' research. Skip down to *Exit, Stage Left* (p. 29).

Otherwise, the next stop on the Knight Errant whirlwind tour is Chicago. Much to the delight of their instructors, the player characters have been promoted to one of the best jobs in the company. Not only do OSP employees get all the best tech, but they get excellent pay, expense accounts, and the opportunity to work directly for executives like Damien Knight. Word has it that once you get Knight's attention, the troposphere's the limit. But while fellow recruits and most instructors are celebrating, Sgt. Tavers is not. He has a bad feeling about this. Too many of his kids have gone to work for the OSP and he has not heard from them again. Though the lack of communication could be due to the OSP's restricted access rating and their high security.

The player characters are busted into a plane where the windows are permanently covered over, the cabin interior has been plastered with wireless negating paint (Rating 6; p. 264, *SR4A*), and there's enough astral bacteria (p. 126, *Street Magic*) in the side-walls that no one, Awakened or mundane, can get a look outside or track the plane's route. The only place free from this interference is the pilot's cabin, which is locked and inaccessible.

After a short trip without Matrix access and no clue where they are actually going, the player characters disembark in a private Qantas Airline hanger with direct access to Unlimited Technologies. Other than the Qantas plane logo, there are no identifying marks inside the hanger or the Unlimitech facility, which should make it difficult for the player characters to determine their location. The runners have been seconded to Unlimitech's security staff. They are to escort certain members of the research staff around the facility and do a little bit of lift-n-carry upon request. The head of security will even mention that the researchers give their best-performing prototypes to the security staff who choose to opt in to the program.

During this scene, the player characters receive several opportunities to assist Dr. Bliss with her projects. And she will do everything in her power to get their assistance, whether as couriers, hosts, or research subjects. This scene can end several ways. The player characters may never discover what is truly going on here and get out with lots of stuff for Ms. Johnson. They may leave empty-handed knowing that there's something extremely off about this facility. They may find a few unwelcome biological additions in their bodies, or they may barely escape with their lives as the facility goes down around their ears. This scene is one of two possible endings to this adventure, so now is the time to pull out all the stops and give the player characters the ride of their lives.

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Promotion to the Office of Special Projects is sweet. Not only are you getting paid by Ares to steal from it, but you're getting double-pay to infiltrate the OSP and get the good stuff. Not to mention what Ms. Johnson-by-proxy promised to pay you. When you finally cash in, you're going to take a week off,

maybe fly off to some tropical island somewhere and sip funny-colored drinks with umbrellas in them. Or maybe you'll just buy a sim and down a beer while waiting for the start of the next urban brawl season.

Things are looking up, though, despite the cramped Qantas puddle-jumper of a plane you were stuffed into. At least the drinks are first class, even if the soy pretzels don't have enough salt. The lack of windows and a Matrix connection bother you, but not enough to complain. You're in the air for just over thirty-five minutes when you feel the depressurization of descent. So wherever they're taking you, it isn't far from Detroit.

The plane touches down smoothly, gliding to complete halt before the silent stewardess stands and releases the door. You walk down the ramp into a closed hanger. Two Knight Errant security officers wait for you, a female dwarf captain and a male human lieutenant.

"Welcome to Unlimitech. I'm Captain Kuchci, this is Lieutenant Briggs. He'll help you stow your gear and show you around the facility. You have a night to get comfortable before the real work starts. Any questions?"

Before you can formulate a response to that, Briggs takes over the conversation, motioning you down a stairwell. "I'm sure you've already noticed there is no wireless Matrix access, and that walls, ceiling, and floor are impenetrable to astral forms. This is intentional. The Office of Special Projects is working on research that could provide a huge boost to Ares' bottom line—or could be a big money hole. Unlimitech's security procedures are very strict. All employees must keep their PANs active and searchable at all times. All staff works at the facility in six-week rotations, meaning you will be sleeping here for the next six weeks of your life before a limited furlough is granted. No employee is allowed to leave the premises of the local Ares enclave or communicate with people outside without prior management approval. It's not all bad, though. We have a four-star chef on staff in the kitchen, a spa, a high-quality recreation and exercise room, and access to the best damn gear Ares will ever produce. If you agree to participate in Dr. Bliss' prototype tests, I can promise you will receive the best weapons and armor in the world. Not only is it free, but if you leave the company after this assignment, you get to keep the gear."

The stairwell leads to a well-lit underground tunnel. The tunnel leads to a pair of glass sliding doors with biometric scanners, motion sensors, cameras, and bunch of little nozzles lining the seams of the ceiling and the floor. For knockout gas, you guess, to keep unwary and unwanted visitors at bay.

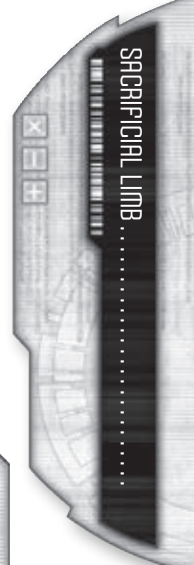
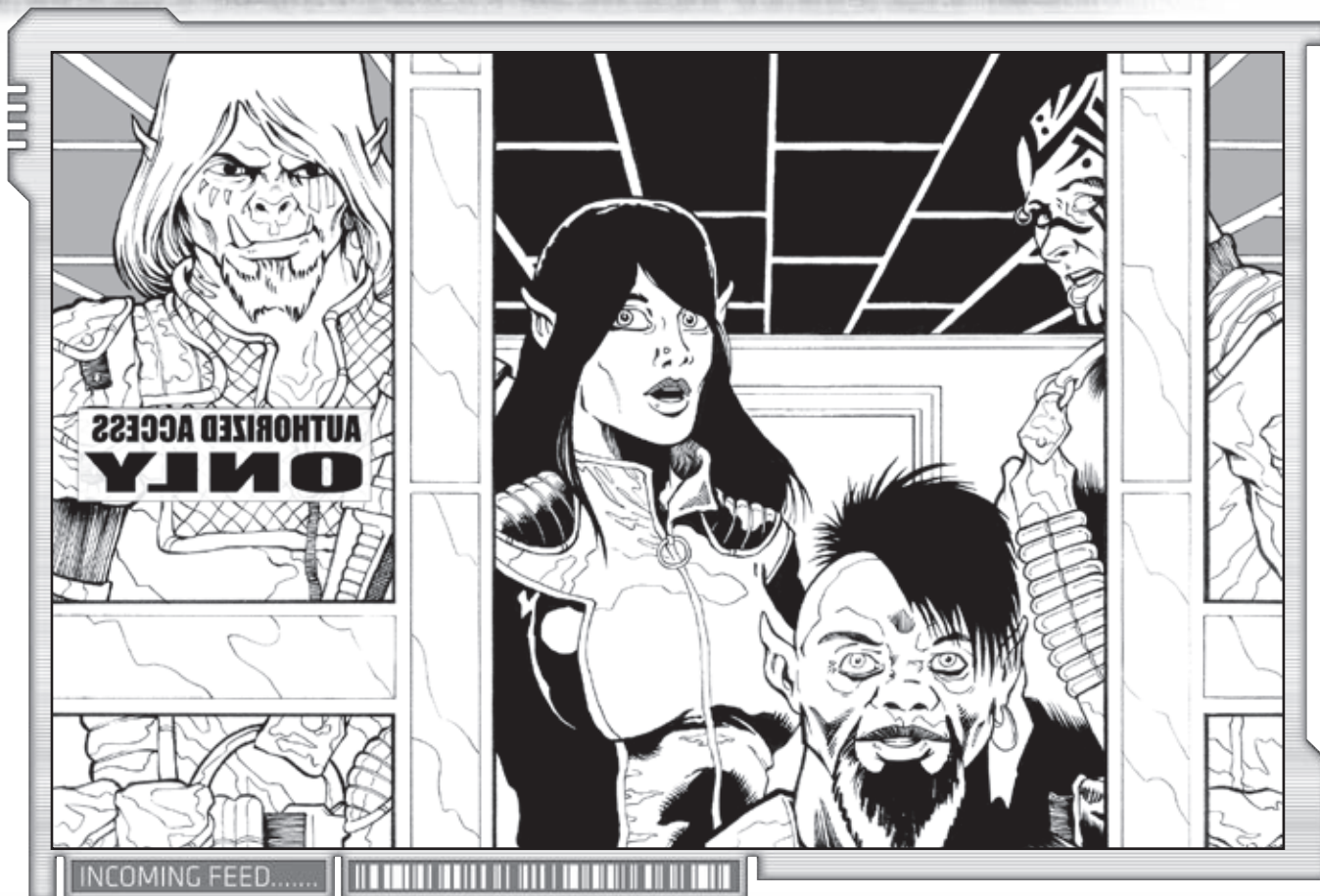
Briggs waves his hand in front of a laser, then remains still while various lights and scanners play across him. He announces the number of visitors he has with him and the doors slide open.

It makes you glad you've been invited. While he continues to give you the generic megacorp party line about the rewards of company loyalty, you notice he makes no mention of adding you to the approved security list. Maybe he'll take care of that little detail tomorrow.

### HOOKS

This is the big one, the payoff for everything the player characters have gone through up until now. It's easy money for little risk. Or for no more risk than the player characters have already taken. They've got Ares fooled into inviting them into a





top-secret facility and letting them have the run of the place. What could be better?

If the players balk before they get to Unlimitech, there's not a lot you can do unless you want to force them along to *Exit, Stage Left*. But if they've been roleplaying well, it's dirty pool to pull the rug out from under them at this point. Accept that they don't want to go on and maybe you can get them here at a later point in another game under a different pretext.

It's a completely different story if the player characters decide to bug out after they've reached Unlimitech. Once they've seen the inside of the airline hanger, the NPCs are not going to let them leave without a fight. Of course, if the player characters do manage to escape from the hanger and make it to the O'Hare airport, their mission SINS will be instantly burned and they will have failed to obtain the data and samples Ms. Johnson is so desperate to retrieve.

### SUBPLOTS

The player characters have decided to bug out before they've gotten into Unlimitech proper. They've fought their way out of the Qantas hangar and managed to make it to O'Hare. There's just one little problem. The SINS they are carrying have been branded criminal, and the Joint O'Hare Police Force is actively looking for them using their current descriptions. Maybe the runners can hide out among the homeless for a little while, but Unlimitech has offered a hefty reward for information leading to their arrest, not to mention that there are a lot of cameras and security drones wandering around O'Hare.

If the player characters wish to get out of Dodge, they have the option of heading into Chicago proper and lying low for a

while (and dealing with all the bugs, toxic spirits, gangers, and crazies in the process), jumping a train in Naperville-Bolingbrook for a ride out of the area, or heading west and taking their chances hitchhiking back home. Feel free to throw as many crazy stupid obstacles at the runners as you think they can take. It should be noted that this subplot replaces the remainder of this scene.

### PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

This envelope is pushed as far out as it can be without outright killing the player characters. If you need to up the stats on the insect spirits, you can do so, but be careful not to get too carried away. The bugs are meant to be nasty, but the player characters should have some chance for survival, presuming they don't make stupid choices.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

Unlimitech is a very large facility with a surprisingly small number of staff. Security is designed to keep anyone from warning the outside world what is really going on, and to prevent the outside world from peeking in on its own. That does not mean the facility is impossible to escape, just that it is very well protected on all fronts, mundane and magical.

Feel free to mention the occasional spiderweb in otherwise pristine laboratories, or the cockroach scuttling under a player character's bed, or a couple of termites marching along a metal floor in a mostly metal-and-stone building. Again, don't hammer the players over the head with this. Just give them a taste of "something's not right here." The horror should build slowly. The longer the player characters spend at Unlimitech, the better chance they should

have at discovering the truth. Don't foist it upon them, however. If they don't figure it out, they don't figure it out, and you can have a good chuckle behind your gamemaster screen as they walk away from being an important part of shadowrunning history.

Be aware that not every person in Unlimitech is a flesh-form insect spirit. Some of the people here stay because they are fascinated by the research and find they don't care what happens to Dr. Bliss' subjects so long as they continue to enjoy the power and perks of their positions. A few low-level employees, janitors, line cooks, etc. are simply unable to leave because they don't have the skills to escape and are watched very closely by the insect population of the facility. Or they may be drugged, brainwashed, or controlled through other methods to ensure their cooperation.

For those NPCs who are invested, the scientists are caretaker insect spirits, the security staff are soldiers, the HR department is full of scouts, and Dr. Raquel Bliss is the queen.

The scientists are very friendly and prone to accidentally leaving research samples lying in the open. If the researchers catch the player characters stealing data and research material, they extort the players into assisting with Dr. Bliss' export efforts. In exchange for a cut of the proceeds, the NPCs will supply the player characters with all the research materials they can sneak out of the facility under the condition that the player characters don't open the boxes themselves. Some of the staff may even have contacts that the player characters can use to fence the material. And once the deal is made, if Dr. Bliss and her people feel like the runners are honest about their intentions to help, Briggs and Kuchci can experience mysterious security lapses that enable the player characters to hightail it with the goods in tow.

Dr. Bliss, the queen of the Unlimitech hive, wants five things. First, she wants to increase the size of her hive by scattering it to the four winds as a series of mini-hives. She'll do this by "selling" research samples to the runners and captured spies sent to the Office of Special Projects. If they willingly agree to assist her, she takes no adverse action against them. The spirit knows from Dr. Bliss' memories that people won't agree to help insect spirits unless they have devoted themselves to that particular magic path like insect shamans, so she won't tell them what the samples contain. They are simply to sell them on the black market as genuine top-secret Ares tech, specifically the bio-organic base for the new armor Ares is developing.

Second, Bliss wants to keep the Unlimitech hive a secret while she continues to feed off of Damien Knight's generosity for as long as possible. This means anyone on the verge of discovering her secret becomes either a host for one of her children or parts for her experiments.

Third, she wants to discover better, more subtle ways of investing metahumans with insect spirits. To this end, she ends up using many of her new security staff as fodder. Given that only one out of every fifteen people actually survives the investiture process, the queen is going through a lot of bodies. In fact, the player characters may come across the basement incinerator where the leftover research materials are burned to prevent contamination.

Fourth, the queen wants her children to infiltrate other hives with the goal of unifying all hives into a single, unstoppable force. After all, it works for the metahumans—surely it can work for her.

Last, she wants to ensure the survival of all her hive network. If any single hive is compromised (this includes Unlimitech), she

will choose to detach it from the network by destroying it and moving elsewhere to start over. If the player characters choose to fight this hive and appear to be making progress, Dr. Bliss sets off explosives across the facility to completely destroy it, and she escapes in the ensuing chaos.

The research samples are sealed cylinders containing a material similar to normal spider eggs. These eggs are incredibly tiny and do not actually contain insect spirits. Upon insertion into a metahuman body, the eggs trigger biological processes that make the metahuman in question more receptive to insect spirits. Awakened characters so prepped may find themselves becoming insect shamans, while mundanes may find themselves willing to follow the orders of Dr. Bliss or the queens she has summoned. At the very least, these eggs allow for the investment of insect spirits into a willing host without relying on the over-obvious cocoon method used by other hives.

## DEBUGGING

The player characters should not have it too easy in this scene, but it shouldn't be an instant death warrant for them either. The horror of their situation should dawn on them slowly. Have the players make Logic + Willpower (3) Tests if they themselves have forgotten vital information their characters learned in earlier sessions. Give them a chance at survival.

Dr. Bliss will do everything from bribing the player characters to drugging their food in order to get what she wants. Remember, above all things, despite the fact that the player characters are essentially trapped here, they should be offered choices. They will not necessarily become hosts for insect spirits. Dr. Bliss has multiple goals, not all of which are lethal to the player characters. So if things are taking a turn for the worse, give them a chance to talk her into a different plan or agree to her demands.

If the player characters become suspicious or start acting out in any way against their supposed benefactors, their food and drink are drugged so the insect spirits have a chance to embed their own special brand of mojo into the runners' skin. This could range from the spirit eggs being implanted to a small biotech tracker. The eggs or device, or both, are implanted under the subdermal layer. This is the first step in prepping the players for investiture. And if the players freak out, Dr. Bliss is more than willing to promise she won't invest them as long as they follow her orders.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

### Unlimited Technologies (a.k.a. Unlimitech)

Unlimitech's focus is researching hybrid technologies, but they have also consulted with O'Hare security, supplying training and prototype magical security items for the airport's defense. Because of this assistance, airport customs tends to rubberstamp any incoming and outgoing shipments addressed to Unlimitech when the corp chooses to use O'Hare's facilities rather than the Qantas hangar.

The Qantas hangar and runway are used exclusively by Ares private jets and planes. This is how the OSP transports Knight Errant recruits to the facility. The hangar walls, ceiling, and floor contain sheets of Force 8 biofiber to prevent astral travel (p. 267, *SR4A*). They are also covered with Rating 6 wireless-negating wallpaper (p. 267, *SR4A*). The underground tunnel



and Unlimitech itself are outfitted with the same magical and wireless defenses. The underground entrance to Unlimitech is outfitted with biometric scanners and locks keyed to security RFIDs implanted in trusted employees. Anyone not trusted with easy in-and-out access is not in the security node's system and has no RFID. Security getting out of the facility is difficult to penetrate without actual Ares credentials, though getting in is a lot easier than it probably should be.

Inside the facility, the Background Count is +2, aspected toward insect spirit magic. A few mana warps (p. 121, *Street Magic*) seem to spontaneously generate in various locations, with one permanently hovering in the spa and another filling the front-door entryway. Since the local mana domain is becoming aspected toward insect spirit magic, any Awakened character whose magic does not rely on insect spirit power suffers a -2 reduction to their Magic Attribute (p. 118, *Street Magic*). This includes adepts, who temporarily lose 2 Power Points' worth of skills, and mystic adepts, whose reduced Magic attribute may affect either their magician abilities or their adept powers, or one point of each (player's choice).

Unless an Awakened character is inside the facility, he cannot read the insect-spirit-aspected nature of Unlimitech's domain. Chicago's existing mana warps, background counts, and changing domain aspects make it extremely difficult for any mage or shaman to notice such things unless they are right on top of the occurrence. This problem has only assisted the bugs in establishing their foothold at Unlimitech. Since everyone knows that Unlimitech engages in top-secret bug research, few people have questioned its restrictive security measures.

For such a large facility, the staff is relatively small and consists of seven scientists (including Dr. Bliss), ten research assistants, two cooks, fifteen security officers, and three or four miscellaneous staffers. Feel free to alter the staff numbers up or down as needed.

## GRUNTS & MOVING TARGETS

For Knight Errant guards and insect spirits, see *Cast of Shadows*.

## SCENE 7: EXIT, STAGE LEFT

### SCAN THIS

Boy did they blow it. Somehow, someway, the player characters exposed themselves as shadowrunners come to steal from Ares and worked themselves straight in the not-so-tender care of the Office of Special Projects. Overpowered, knocked unconscious, and drugged, the player characters wake up in Unlimitech's secret research facility—not the one in the O'Hare Sub-sprawl, the one buried underground in the Chicago Containment Zone. The runners are slated for use as research fodder, though Dr. Bliss may make an exception if she can be convinced the runners will willingly work for her. If nothing else, she might play the victim here, begging them to help her get out from under the thumb of Ares.

The player characters will have to use every resource at their disposal and then some to make it out of this place. The good news is, security isn't nearly as tight here as it is at the main research office. The bad news is that wireless Matrix access is practically

non-existent in the Zone, the use of magic tends to attract bugs and insect spirits, and there are a lot of bad people and nasty critters wandering around outside. Getting out of the facility may be easy, but getting out of the Zone is another story entirely.

## TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Consciousness pulls at you in waves, reminding you of the fierce migraine simmering in the back of your skull. You open your eyes to a sterile room and visions of your teammates scattered around on what look like operating tables. Vaguely, you remember the hiss of the grenade that took you down. Given that you didn't smell or see anything, you guess that it might have been knockout gas. Whatever it was, it certainly knocked you for a loop.

You are loosely strapped to the table, hooked up to a series of biometric sensors, and an I.V. drip has been attached to your arm. The fluid is clear and the bag unmarked. There's no telling what you've been given. But your senses are coming back to you and your mind is clearing just enough to allow you to think things through. The biomonitor has an alarm on it that will scream the minute it stops receiving signals from the sensors, so disconnecting yourself may be a bit of a chore.

There is no indication of where you are or who is holding you. Out of the corner of your eye, you see a single Knight Errant guard standing at the door. He faces out toward the hall, not in toward the room, and has a holstered taser. You exchange looks with your waking teammates. One guard against all of you? That's easy math.

And then you notice the antenna sticking out the top of his head.

## HOOKS

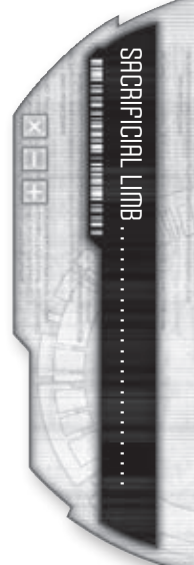
At this point in the adventure, the player characters are captives with one goal: get free. If the players "earned" this stop in the adventure by choosing poorly and allowing you to continue running it, then encourage them to cut loose and get the heck out of there. If instead the players are acting as if they were railroaded and have objections to being in this situation, take a few moments to discuss the problems, gamemaster to players. There will be some player groups that simply will not accept this specific scenario and not play along with it no matter what incentive you give them. That's okay. Don't panic. You may need to just rewind the adventure a bit to give them a do-over and let them choose a different path to the end, or introduce a bit of deus ex machina (like conveniently neglected and unlocked doors) to get them out quick and on their way.

On the other hand, this scene takes the player characters to a potentially brand-new staging area for future runs: Chicago. If your group has never played in the Zone before, and if they like scary, seat-of-your-pants types of runs, play up the fact that once their characters escape, they have a series of new challenges in front of them.

Whatever else you do, make sure the players understand you are not punishing them. This is simply one option available for this adventure, and they just stumbled into it.

## SUBPLOTS

This is a chance for the player characters to redeem their prior bad choices. Locked up in the incubator room are a group of local homeless children and maybe a pair of adults. The player





characters may choose to rescue these poor innocents and get them out of the Zone. Not only will it help their street cred, but the testimonials of these captives may be essential to detailing just what kind of grave Ares is digging for itself.

Of course, what the player characters don't know, what even the captives don't know, is that Dr. Bliss has already implanted some of her spirit eggs within the children, and she can use these eggs to control their young, impressionable minds. She may use the children to locate more subjects.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The player characters are trapped in an underground Unlimitech research facility in the western side of the Chicago Containment Zone (p. 30, *Feral Cities*). Though security wears Knight Errant or Ares-branded uniforms, there are no logos or markings in the facility to indicate who owns this place. The guards are all invested with insect spirits, though they aren't as bright as their fellows at the O'Hare office. Also, none of these guards are fit for metahuman company since each one of them shows some manifestation of the bug within. Antennae, multifaceted eyes, mandibles, and claw hands all make for rather obvious signs that these people have been compromised. Some of them even have wings and can fly. Different bug parts (spiders, wasps, roaches, and termites) were used to make these particular bugs. It appears as if some of these poor metahumans had insect parts grafted on to them. Not that they seem to notice. The metatypes in these unfinished flesh forms are rather equal across the board, since many of these hosts came from the spies and shadowrunners discovered at the Knight Errant training academy.

This facility does not have the internal security of the O'Hare office. For one, the use of magic tends to attract the wrong kind of attention (toxic spirits, rival insects, would-be heroes of the Zone). For another, there are very few Matrix access points in the Zone. The few that are left are nowhere near this facility and tend to be hard lines to the Matrix since Chicago fell before the wireless Matrix was established.

Dr. Bliss is not headquartered here, but feel free to have her make an appearance. She is looking for strong metahumans upon which to test new methods of investing insect spirits. She also may be looking to perform autopsies just to see what makes metahumanity tick.

If the player characters have reached this scene in the adventure, it's because they made a mess of their mission. If they escape, they still have a chance to blow the whistle on Unlimitech and the Office of Special Projects. Since the staff is possessed by bugs and there are no research samples or notes of any value here, they will have no actual proof that this is an Ares research facility. The player characters will only have their word, and any footage they manage to record on their way out. This is insufficient for Ms. Johnson's purposes, though she may toss them a small bone for the footage anyway. The most valuable thing the runners will manage to escape with will be their lives.

Once the runners manage to escape, they still have to survive all the fun, nasty types outside of the research facility.



## DEBUGGING

This is it, do or die. If the players don't even try to escape the facility, the only thing you can do is have them generate brand new characters for a new campaign. If they're having trouble escaping the facility, really dumb down the bugs. Getting out of the building shouldn't be too easy, but at this point, the player characters have no weapons and few options. So if they're trying to escape, help them with occasional boosts to give them a fighting chance.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

### The Hidden Facility

Unlimitech's hidden research facility is high tech compared to the other buildings in the Zone, but it's a dump compared to most megacorp research centers. This is due to its location in the Zone and the need to keep it under wraps. Because Chicago's perpetually shifting foundations make it difficult to build too deep underground, the facility is only fifty meters underground and requires constant shoring up to prevent lake water from undermining the foundations. It is a one-level complex, approximately five hundred square meters, buried on the west side of the Zone beneath what used to be Douglas Park, just south of I-290. Two massive cargo elevators, well hidden on the surface, are used to move personnel and supplies up and down inside the facility.

The facility itself contains an operating room, two laboratories, a generator room, the supply room, a computer room, an incubator, restrooms, a kitchen facility (where some royal jelly is kept for the invested guards), and a collection of small residential quarters. Cameras dot the corridors and cover the main entrances, but it appears as if several of them are no longer working. The internal node is hidden and hardwired to avoid detection. All maglocks, automatic doors, temperature controls, etc. are run through this node. The door to this room is not locked.

## GRUNTS & MOVING TARGETS

For high-powered Zone residents and insect spirits, see *Cast of Shadows*.

### Containment Zone Gangers (Professional Rating 3)

#### Human

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
3	4	4	3	2	3	2	2	5.2	7	1

**Condition Monitor Boxes:** 10

**Armor (B/I):** 6/4

**Active Skills:** Blades 3, Clubs 3, Dodge 4, Intimidation 2, Pistols 2, Unarmed Combat 3

**Augmentations:** Bone lacing (plastic), Retractable Spur

**Gear:** Armor Vest, Erika Elite Commlink Renraku Ichi OS [Response 3, Signal 4, Firewall 2, System 2], 1 dose Cram

#### Weapons:

Club [Club, Reach 1, DV 3P]

Colt America L36 [Light Pistol, DV 4P, AP —, SA, RC —, 11 (c), w/ 1 extra clip regular ammo]

Knives (Qty 2) [Blade, Reach —, DV 3P]

Retractable spurs [Blade, Reach —, DV 5P, AP —]

Unarmed [Plastic Bone Lacing, Reach —, DV 3P, AP —]

### FAB III Clouds (Fluorescing Astral Bacteria)

FAB III clouds consist of dual-natured bacteria, and they appear on the astral plane as a faintly glowing cloud. They can be mistaken for harmless low-level background counts unless a character succeeds in an Assensing + Intuition (3) Test. The clouds move slowly (1 meter per Combat Turn), so they can be avoided if they are seen. But once they reach an astrally active target, they attach and drain the target of its magic. Avoidance includes masking oneself appear mundane and turning off all foci until the cloud wanders off. A cloud starts off as a Force 5 entity and splits when it reaches Force 11, leaving the Force 6 cloud to feed off its target while the Force 5 cloud wanders off in search of new prey.

**Powers:** Energy Drain [Magic / Force, Touch range, 6 hours Extended Test, Damage: (F x 2)S]

### Ghouls (Professional Rating 3)

#### Various Metatypes

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	M	Init	IP
7	3	5	6	1	4	2	5	5	1	9	1

**Condition Monitor Boxes:** 12

**Movement:** As metatype

**Skills:** Assensing 2, Infiltration 4, Perception 3, Unarmed Combat 3

**Powers:** Dual Natured, Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Smell), Natural Weapon (Claws: DV 4P, AP —), Sapience

**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Sunlight, Mild), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Flesh), Reduced Senses (Blind)

### Toxic Spirit of Water (Force 4) x 2

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
4	6	7	8	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	11	2

**Condition Monitor Boxes:** 10

**Astral INIT / IP:** 8/3

**Movement:** 10/25

**Skills:** Assensing, Astral Combat, Dodge, Exotic Ranged Weapon, Perception, Unarmed Combat

**Powers:** Anaphylaxis, Astral Form, Elemental Attack, Energy Aura (Acid), Engulf (Acid damage), Materilization, Movement, Sapience, Search

**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Clean Water and Fire, Severe)

### Toxic Spirit of Earth (Force 3)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
6	2	5	6	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	8	2

**Condition Monitor Boxes:** 11

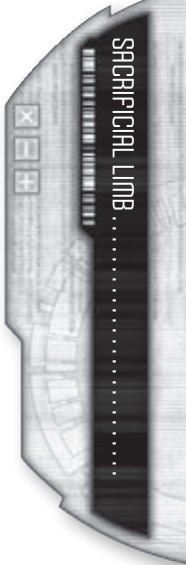
**Astral INIT / IP:** 6/3

**Movement:** 10/25

**Skills:** Assensing, Astral Combat, Dodge, Exotic Ranged Weapon, Perception, Unarmed Combat

**Powers:** Anaphylaxis, Astral Form, Corrosive Spit, Engulf (Earth), Materilization, Movement, Sapience, Search

**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Clean Earth or Water, Severe)



## Vampires (Professional Rating 3)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	M	Init	IP
3	5	5	3	5	4	3	4	8	3	9	2

**Condition Monitor Boxes:** 10

**Movement:** 10/25

**Skills:** Infiltration 3, Perception 3, Shadowing 5, Unarmed Combat 4

**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Smell, Thermographic Vision), Essence Drain, Immunity (Age, Pathogens, Toxins), Infection, Mist Form, Natural Weapon (Bite: DV 2P, AP —, Reach -1), Regeneration, Sapience

**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Sunlight, Moderate), Allergy (Wood, Severe), Dietary Requirement (Blood), Essence Loss

## AFTERMATH

### AWARDING KARMA

At the end of any *Shadowrun* adventure, Karma is awarded to each player character for their part in the adventure. Just surviving deserves some Karma, and accomplishing specific goals earns more. Most player characters won't earn every point of Karma available.

For awarding individual Karma, it is a good idea to keep notes on player characters' performance during the adventure. Exceptional roleplaying, humor, or heroics deserve to be rewarded, so keep notes on those actions (or others) to ensure you have an accurate tally by the end of the adventure. On the same lines, don't be afraid to subtract Karma from characters who do particularly foolhardy or out-of-character actions. Karma represents the universe's award for hard work and a job well done, and it can be lost just as easily as earned.

In *Sacrificial Limb*, Karma can also be subtracted due to the player characters' actions in the final two scenes. Of course, you don't need to share this with your players. Allow them to play the adventure as presented, without informing them of what actions will result in a Karma award or deduction. This will help keep them from second-guessing themselves (and you) as they go through the adventure.

Generally, Karma is awarded at the end of the adventure. Occasionally, some gamemasters like to award a point of Karma during the game, to reward a particularly impressive feat, exceptional roleplaying, or even a particularly brilliant in-character joke.

### Game Information .....

#### INDIVIDUAL KARMA

Situation	Award
Surviving	3
Good roleplaying	1-3
Guts/bravery	1
Humor	1
Pushing the storyline along	1

### Game Information .....

#### TEAM KARMA

Situation	Award
Group successfully infiltrates Knight Errant	1
Group uses stealth, guile, or negotiation to avoid combat	1
Group steals data from the academy and avoids unnecessary combat	1
Group acts in a professional manner and impresses Ms. Johnson	1
Group somehow thinks outside of the box and does something outside their comfort zone (i.e., uses unfamiliar gear to accomplish their goals)	1
Group avoids collateral damage when told	1
Successfully works to resolve problems without being overly reliant on contacts	1
Group discovers the truth of the Unlimitech insect spirit hive	1

#### NEGATIVE TEAM KARMA\*

Situation	Award
Group doesn't notice the insect spirit hive at Unlimitech	-2
Group becomes part of Dr. Bliss' distribution network	-2
Group fails to hide their identities at the academy	-1
Group tries to shoot their way out of every scene	-1

#### BONUS KARMA

**Bonus Karma:** 1 per each subplot goal achieved

Situation	Award
Group uncovers Aurelius' academy spy	1
Group tracks down and arrests runners who stole Ares property	1
Group disrupts the Unlimitech hive's operations / destroys hive	2

#### NEGATIVE BONUS KARMA\*

Situation	Award
Group kills the runners who stole Ares property	-1
Group lets Aurelius' academy spy escape	-1
Group betrays Ms. Johnson for a better offer	-1

\* Note that the net Karma for the adventure should never be less than zero, and should probably be a positive number unless the runners behaved quite poorly.

## AWARDING CASH

Knight Errant pays its recruits 2,000 nuyen a week, no negotiation. This amount accumulates in corporate bank accounts set up in the recruits' names and is paid in total upon graduation. Calculate the player characters' total amount paid based on the number of weeks they spend in the academy up to a total of ten weeks (the total amount of time any recruit spends in basic training before either graduating or washing out).

Promotion to the Office of Special Projects doubles a recruit's pay to 4,000 nuyen a week. Again, the player characters cannot negotiate this amount. Knight Errant is the subsidiary of a megacorporation, and they pay their legitimate employees what they wish to pay. Multiply the number of weeks the player characters manage to work for the OSP times 4,000 to get their final pay. At the OSP, employees are paid weekly. If the player characters try to take down the Unlimitech hive, they will not get paid for their final week on the job. Likewise, if they don't manage to complete a week of employment—the more likely scenario—they will not actually get paid for working at the OSP at all, though they can still earn money by agreeing to work for Dr. Bliss.

Ms. Johnson will pay out between 60,000 and 90,000 nuyen to the team, depending on what the player characters managed to recover from Unlimitech. If they recovered nothing, no data, no samples, then they will get no payment from her.

Extra research samples can be sold to a corporate fence for approximately 25,000 nuyen a sample. There are a lot of people interested in Unlimitech's research and willing to pay for it.

Side mission payout amounts are left up to gamemaster discretion. Base the totals off of the difficulty level of the run and usual earnings of the player characters.

## AWARDING CONTACTS

*Sacrificial Limb* is not a contact-heavy adventure. However, if the player characters have done their job spectacularly well, feel free to allow them to add Sergeant Tavers to their contact list with a Loyalty 2 and Connection 4. Additionally, the outcome of *Sacrificial Limb* should influence how Samantha Villiers and Nadja Daviar approach the runners in the future as possible assets.

## CONSEQUENCES

If the player characters choose to sell copies of the Knight Errant academy paydata on the open Matrix, they have the opportunity to auction off the information to megacorporations and governments alike. They should be extremely careful if they choose to go this route. Ares has been keeping an eye out for anyone trying this very stunt and will send elite Knight Errant troops to remove the threat to their operations. On this one point, Knight, Vogel, and Aurelius agree and will combine forces to ensure the safety of Ares' proprietary secrets.

## LEARNING SKILLS

At gamemaster's discretion, the skills learned by the runners during training should be made available during the next character improvement time for a Karma-only cost since the runners had an actual trainer. For instance, a hacker without a Firearms skill should be able to use Karma to buy a Rating 1 in Firearms without having to make the usual Firearms + Intuition Extended Test and without having to wait a week before adding the skill. Additionally, you

could give the players a temporary release from the -1 modifier on skill defaulting. A time limit should be imposed on both options, though, because skills that are not practiced or used deteriorate over time.

## NOTORIETY

If the player characters discover and reveal the Unlimitech hive, it is quite likely Ares will hire their own team of shadowrunners to cover up the incident. This, in addition to their actions against Ares' Dubai assets in *Damage Control* (if the player characters' disguises were penetrated in this adventure), will brand them as an enemy to the megacorp.

The more collateral damage the players do to Ares and Knight Errant during the course of the adventure, the higher their Notoriety should be. Every good deed accomplished (arresting the NPC runners, catching spies in the act, saving the lives of other Knight Errant employees, etc.), knocks one point of Notoriety off the total score.

### Game Information.....

#### TEAM NOTORIETY (ARES RELATED)

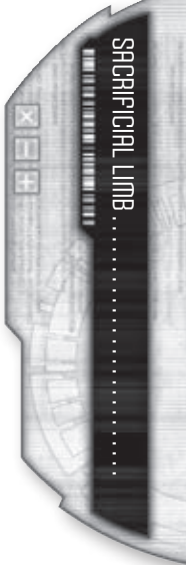
Situation	Points
Group spreads news of Unlimitech infestation on Matrix	2
Group destroys (or forces Dr. Bliss to destroy) Unlimitech facility	3
Group's identities are revealed as the runners who interfered at Dubai	1
Group did severe collateral damage in Dubai and their identities discovered	1
Group did severe collateral damage in Detroit	1
Group gets into drawn-out bar brawl and tarnishes Knight Errant's reputation	1

Do not be afraid to award points of Notoriety that might follow the player characters back home from Detroit or Chicago. Things such as failing to honor a contract (1), betraying Ms. Johnson (1), or failing to do what Ms. Johnson requested (1) can cause problems for the team.

Gamemasters should note that if the players did not discover the hive and perform work for Dr. Bliss, notoriety will come to them much later as events play out in the Sixth World and the truth of Unlimitech is eventually uncovered. The more smuggling work they do for Dr. Bliss, the worse the consequences should be for them later in life, especially if they sell Dr. Bliss' "research materials" under their real shadowrunning handles. The enabling of insect spirits is not looked upon kindly.

## THE SINS OF THE TEAM

Chances are that by the end of this adventure, the SINS given to the player characters by Ms. Johnson are well and truly



unusable. If the characters blew their cover, participated in activities that tarnished Knight Errant's (and Ares') reputations, or used these SINS for anything illegal, they will be flagged as criminal. The player characters should make every effort to ditch the identification and cover their link to them.

If the player characters managed to keep the SINS clean, it is up to the gamemaster whether or not they can keep and use the SINS in future endeavors. Rating 6 fake SINS don't come along every day, after all. It should be kept in mind, however, that Ms. Johnson supplied these SINS and can use them to track and obtain information on the runners anytime she wishes and every time the runners use them. It may be in the runners' best interest to destroy the SINS, regardless of whether or not they are burned.

## LEGWORK

As the runners go through the adventure, they'll have numerous opportunities for research. This section gives some results for legwork the runners may attempt. Research can involve the Matrix, checking with contacts, or any other method the player characters devise.

Note that some information is best presented to the players as handouts. These are found at the end of the book. You can provide them as handouts prior to starting the game or give the player characters the information only after they research the topic. Some information may be best presented during specific scenes.

## CONTACTS

The shadowrunners, and by extension, their regular contacts from wherever they originate, may not be familiar with cities, companies, and corporate characters above and beyond what is publicly accessible by Matrix. Apply a +2 threshold modifier for any rolls that a regular contact makes in regards to information that is not within their field of expertise. For example, a talismonger would have only limited information on Unlimitech or the Denver bug incident, whereas a hacker or journalist might be more likely to have access to the suppressed rumors about both. Also, keep in mind that a Lone Star contact might know general security information but would have no knowledge of specific training regimens or security procedures within the KE academy.

Apply a -1 threshold modifier to most rolls made by Ares or Knight Errant contacts, keeping in mind that most of the information in this adventure is not public knowledge, not even within the megacorp. The bugs are keeping very quiet. It is quite unlikely any contacts would know about the Unlimitech hive if even Damien Knight remains unaware of the threat.

## DROPPING HINTS

Regardless of whether the insect spirit subplot is introduced or not, make a roll or two against the academy rumor mill. Make sure to space out the rumors between the academy-related scenes, rather than hitting the players with them all at once. The setup for the final scenes should be a slow and subtle buildup.

### Game Information.....



## THE ACADEMY RUMOR MILL

Roll 1D6 for rumors the players may uncover when talking to other recruits, or, if they don't talk to the recruits, things they may uncover during training.

Result	Rumor
1	Exceptional recruits get promoted to provide security for the Office of Special Projects and get a major bonus.
2	Spiders have taken over the cafeteria stores. Don't eat the rice, it's full of spider eggs.
3	Three recruits disappeared two weeks ago, all at the same time. It's said they were spying for Mitsuhamma.
4	Be careful training in the desert dunes. There are a lot of termites hiding in the sand and they have a nasty bite.
5	If you need a little contraband, go see Edward in barracks three. That dude can hook you up.
6	The roaches around here spy on people. Don't believe me? Watch the cracks in the walls, the shadows under the door. They actually follow people around.

## SEARCHING THE MATRIX

Player characters may elect to search for information themselves by scouring the various data havens and informational dumpsites throughout the Matrix. In this case, have the player character perform a Data Search + Browse Extended Test, with intervals of one minute. Extended tests are limited by the addition of a cumulative -1 dice modifier to each test after the first. For example, a character with Data Search 3 and Browse 3 would roll 6 dice for their first test, 5 in their second, 4 on their third, and would only be able to roll 6 tests total (p. 64, *SR4A*). After this, any data not uncovered is simply too obscure or well hidden in the Matrix for that hacker to find.

Not everything is available on the Matrix. Gamemasters may decide what data is reasonably available on the Matrix, what data is available inside secured nodes, and what data simply isn't available at all.



## Damien Knight

The current CEO of Ares, Damien Knight, will not be encountered by the player characters but is listed here in case they decided to do any research on him.

### Contact Matrix Search Results

Contact	Matrix	Search	Results
0	0		"Damien Knight? Yeah, I've heard a' him. He's that guy. You know, the one who's always on the trid spouting some company line about military stuff. No, wait. Security stuff. That's the guy. He likes to be secure."
2	4		"You haven't heard of Damien Knight? Hoi, chummer, that guy wants to take over the world! If you're doing a job, better hope it's for him instead of against him."
4	5		"He's the CEO of Ares. Really scary guy, too. Likes people to jump at orders without asking too many questions. Not quite as dangerous as a great dragon, but that doesn't mean he won't chew you up and spit you out if you cross him."
6	8		"You want dirt on Knight? He's currently in a three-way power struggle with two other Ares executives, Arthur Vogel and Nicholas Aurelius. Those two gents would probably pay a pretty sum to have Knight taken down a peg or two."
7+	12+		"Knight recently had a spat with his long-time friend, Roger Soaring Owl, and fired him on the spot. Something to do with a disagreement about special projects, but no one has any hard paydata. If you find any details on the incident, I know people who would pay top nuyen for both the information and any evidence backing up your discovery. Just lemme know."

## Dr. Raquel Bliss

### Contact Matrix Search Results

Contact	Matrix	Search	Results
0	0		"Bliss ... Bliss ... I think that's a drug. You selling or buying?"
2	4		"Dr. Raquel Bliss is a rather talented dwarf bio-chemist who graduated top of her class at Harvard University, and was hired by Ares the moment she was handed her diploma."
4	5		"She works as some sort of director at the Unlimitech research facility in Chicago. I hear she never leaves the place, not even for vacation. She has all the amenities of home set up in her research lab."
6	8		"Bug girl! That's what she does, all day long. Work on bugs. Cuts 'em apart,

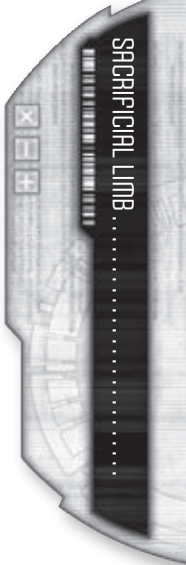
some of 'em while they're still alive, and finds out what makes them tick. I'm not talkin' about garden variety bugs, either. Insect spirits, chummer. Honest-to-drek insect spirits. That's one brave lady."

"Dr. Bliss is looking for a few good runners to assist her with some special projects. Word is she's selling out her boss, Damien Knight, for a few extra nuyen on the side. If you're willing, and discreet, she has some research material she'd like smuggled out. Doesn't matter who you sell it to, just so long as it doesn't remain in Ares' hands. She believes that information wants to be free, drek like that. Who are we to argue with paying customers, right?"

## Mercury Maxim / Fuchi Studios

### Contact Matrix Search Results

Contact	Matrix	Search	Results
0	0		" <i>Mercury Maxim</i> ? I love that show! Here, lemme show you my favorite 200 episodes. I edited out the commercial breaks so it should only take us about a week to see them all."
2	4		" <i>Mercury Maxim</i> is a popular kids trideo produced by Fuchi Studios. They've merchandised the hell out the property, too, with AR trinkets that can be bought to unlock the upper levels of the <i>Mercury Maxim</i> VR games and all that drek. There's even an online forum where parents can dump their kids for a few hours of unsupervised child-only entertainment."
4	5		"I suppose you could hack your way into Fuchi's node, but security's pretty tight. It's cheaper and faster to buy the Mercury tokens which have built-in login keys."
6	8		"Just make sure you change your icons before dropping by. You know, make yourself look like a kid or a character from the show or something, and then act like a little brat. Adults are not allowed in that forum and will be forcibly dumped if they're caught. The IC isn't lethal, but the spiders can make you wish it was."
7+	12+		"Fuchi Studios is one of the remnants of the old Fuchi megacorp. It's now owned by Erika."
14+			"Erika, NeoNET. Same company. <i>Mercury Maxim</i> is one of Samantha Villiers' pet projects. She bought the show back in the day as a present for her daughter Cara."



### Roger Soaring Owl

Roger Soaring Owl is one of the most famous figures of the Sixth World. While he will not be encountered by the player characters, his actions and misadventures have provided the catalyst for this adventure.

Contact	Matrix Search	Results
0	0	"Owls don't soar, drekhead. You're thinking about eagles."
2	4	"Hey, isn't he that guy who runs Knight Errant?"
4	5	"Roger Soaring Owl? Oh, right. I heard Ares put out a hit on him after he tried to sell company secrets on the black market. They attacked him right under Ghostwalker's nose in the middle of downtown Denver."
6	8	"Soaring Owl and Damien Knight are joined at the hip. At least, they were until Soaring Owl up and quit his job last year."
7+	12+	"You heard that Roger Soaring Owl resigned his position at Knight Errant last year? Untrue, omae. He got fired after he uncovered some of Damien Knight's dirty laundry, right after a visit to Unlimitech. I don't believe in coincidence. Do you?"

### Samantha Villiers

Samantha Villiers is Ms. Johnson for this adventure. She will not meet with the player characters in person in order to protect her identity and her true intentions from them, so the only way the players should end up with this information is if they did research on the initial meeting place and managed to roll high enough to get the last tidbit on Mercury Maxim.

Contact	Matrix Search	Results
0	0	"Samantha Villiers is one hot babe. I wouldn't mind getting a piece of her action, if you know what I mean."
2	4	"She's an executive over at NeoNET and CEO Richard Villiers' ex-wife."
4	5	"I hear she collects shadowrunners like interior decorators collect paint chips. She keeps detailed dossiers on everyone. You sure you're not on her list?"
6	8	"You hear about Roger Soaring Owl and that incident in Denver? Villiers is trying to dig up information on what really happened between him and his 'best buddy' Damien Knight. Don't know what she plans on doing with it, though."
7+	12+	"Villiers is in the middle of some major corporate power play. She's trying to keep it hush-hush, but you know how rumors spread. Still, she

pays pretty good for the work. More so if you know how to keep your trap shut and honor a contract."

### Sergeant Tavers

If the player characters choose to dig up dirt on the Sarge, this is what they can learn. This information can be found on the Matrix or via the Academy Rumor Mill.

Contact	Matrix Search	Results
0	0	"The Sarge doesn't just eat recruits for breakfast, you know. Lunch and dinner are meals too."
2	4	"His wife, an elf from the Tir, divorced him ten years back. I heard it got messy, custody battle and all."
4	5	"The asswipe is an alcoholic. He screwed up bad in Chicago and had no place else to go but the bottle. He's also a really mean drunk."
6	8	"Tavers lost his entire team in Chicago, that's why he used to get wasted. That's right. Used to. Since Soaring Owl saved his career and moved him to the academy, Tavers has really turned his life around."
7+	12+	"The way I hear tell, Tavers is making up for all those lost in the line of duty. He's hard on recruits because he wants everyone to survive when they graduate. He's a hardass, but he means well."

### Unlimitech

Contact	Matrix Search	Results
0	0	"Unlimited Technologies, Inc., you mean? It's an Ares research facility."
2	4	"Major research firm with only one facility. It's located in Chicago. Yeah, you heard that right. Bug City. Well, the outskirts of Bug City, really. In the O'Hare corporate complex where most megacorps have their Chicago operations."
4	5	"Oh, yeah. I heard of that company. They do bug work, research on everything and anything insect spirit related. They're trying to come up with new and improved ways to rid the world of the insect spirit menace, have been since the '50s. A lot of good stuff has come out of that place too. That's why we're winning the war against bugs."
6	8	"Ares claims Unlimitech is dedicated to ridding the world of bugs, but there's something I just don't trust about that place. A lot of people have



gone into their facilities and have never come out. Then again, they offer a hefty bounty for captured bugs. I might go out to Chi-town myself to collect some retirement funds, if you know what I mean.”

7+ 12+

“There are a lot of opportunities to be had at Unlimitech. The lady in charge, Dr. Raquel Bliss, is always on the lookout for talent. She made some friends of mine one of those ‘too good to be true’ kind of offers, and wouldn’t you know they’ve cashed in on a windfall since they running side jobs for Unlimitech.”

## CAST OF SHADOWS

### KNIGHT ERRANT GUARD—MUNDANE (PROFESSIONAL RATING 2)

*Human (Mundane)*

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
5	5	4	4	3	3	3	6	5.5	7	1

**Condition Monitor Boxes:** 11

**Armor (B/I):** 8/6

**Skills:** Athletics skill group 3, Automatics 4, Close Combat skill group 4, Demolitions (Defusing) 3 (+2), Dodge 4, Gunnery 4, Perception (Visual) 4 (+2), Pilot Ground Craft 3, Pistols (Semi-Automatics) 3 (+2), Stealth skill group 4

**Augmentations:** OXSYS cybergill, internal air tank

**Gear:** Armor jacket, glasses [Rating 4, w/ flare compensation, low-light vision, smartlink, thermographic vision],

**Weapons:**

Ares Sierra [Assault Rifle, DV 7P, AP -2, SA/BF/FA, RC 2, 42 (c), w/ melee hardening, smartlink, underbarrel stun baton, stem, specialized chambering system, EX-explosive ammo]

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

### KNIGHT ERRANT GUARD—AWAKENED (PROFESSIONAL RATING 3)

*Dwarf*

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	Ess	Init	IP
7	4	4	5	6	3	3	6	10	6	7	1

**Condition Monitor Boxes:** 12

**Armor (B/I):** 8/6

**Skills:** Assensing 4, Automatics 3, Astral Combat 3, Athletics skill group 3, Close Combat skill group 3, Conjuring skill group 6, Counterspelling 5, Disguise 3, Dodge 3, Infiltration 3, Perception (Visual) 5 (+2), Pilot Ground Craft 3, Pistols (Semi-Automatics) 5 (+2), Spellcasting 5

**Qualities:** Magician

**Spells:** Demolish (Gun), Improved Invisibility, Increase Reflexes, Mindnet (Extended), Night Vision, Slay (Human), Slay (Troll), Wreck (Gun)

**Spirits:** 1 x Force 4 great form spirit of water (4 services), 2 x Force 5 spirits of fire

**Initiate Level:** 4

**Metamagics:** Extended Masking, Invoking, Masking, Shielding

**Gear:** Armor jacket, glasses [Rating 4, w/ low-light vision, smartlink, thermographic vision, visual magnification (optical)],

**Weapons:**

Ares Sierra [Assault Rifle, DV 7P, AP -2, SA/BF/FA, RC 2, 42 (c), w/ melee hardening, smartlink, underbarrel stun baton, specialized chambering system, EX-explosive ammo], [stun baton, Reach 1, DV 5(c), AP -half, ammo 10]

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

### KNIGHT ERRANT OFFICERS (PROFESSIONAL RATING 3)

These are the regular Knight Errant employees that the player characters may encounter outside of the training academy who are hired as security for other facilities or as investigators on the bonus mission.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
4	4(5)	4(6)	3	4	4	4	4	3.5	8(10)	1(2)

**Condition Monitor Boxes:** 10

**Armor (B/I):** 14/8

**Skills:** Close Combat skill group 4, Computers 4, Data Search 2, Etiquette (Corporate) 4 (+2), Firearms group 5, First Aid 2, Intimidation 3, Law Enforcement (Professional Knowledge) 3, Leadership 2, Negotiation 3, Perception 4, Pilot Ground Craft 3

**Qualities:** Guts, Home Ground (Knight Errant Academy), SINner, Will to Live (Rating 2)

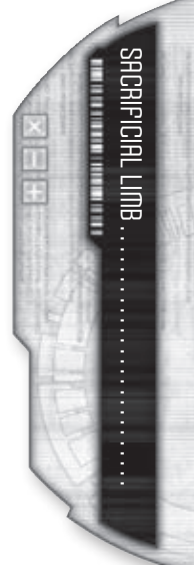
**Augmentations:** Commlink [Response 5, Signal 5, Firewall 5, System 5], reaction enhancers 1, wired reflexes 1

**Gear:** Ares-branded armor jacket [Chemical Protection (Rating 2), Insulation (Rating 2), and Nonconductivity (Rating 3)], DocWagon basic contract, earbuds [Rating 2, w/ audio enhancement (Rating 3), recording unit], forensics tool kit, form-fitting body armor [full-body suit, w/ Fire Resistance (Rating 2)], gekco gloves, glasses [Rating 4, image link, smartlink, visual enhancement (Rating 2)], medkit (Rating 6)

**Weapons:**

Ares Predator IV [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1 (regular ammo)/-5 (APDS ammo), SA, RC —, 15 (c), w/ 3 x extra ammo clips (regular ammo), 3 x extra ammo clips (APDS ammo), smartlink]

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



## DR. RAQUEL BLISS / UNLIMITECH HIVE QUEEN

Director for the Office of Special Projects and head researcher/scientist at the Unlimitech facility, Dr. Bliss is now queen of the Unlimitech insect hive. As a flesh-form termite insect spirit, she still retains her dwarf form and Dr. Bliss' memories and skills. She is intelligent, subtle, and deadly. She is careful to keep all her contact with non-hive members to Matrix communications or the internal comm system. Dr. Bliss started work with combining

different parts of insect spirits in an attempt to develop the perfect armor and natural weapons for Damien Knight's super soldiers. Unfortunately for her, she did her job too well and was used as the host for the hive's queen by the Ares-mage-turned-insect-shaman assigned as her protection.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
11	9	10	11	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	16	3

**Force:** 6

**Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S):** 14/10

**Armor (B/I):** 12/12 (Hardened)

**Astral Init/IP:** 12/3

**Movement:** 10/45

**Skills:** Assensing, Astral Combat, Con, Counterspelling, Dodge, Gymnastics, Leadership, Negotiation, Perception, Spellcasting, Unarmed Combat

**Qualities:** Focused Concentration, Magician

**Spells:** Alter Memory, Bind, Borrow Sense, Chaos, Chaotic World, Eyes of the Pack, Glue Strip, Physical Barrier, Manaball, Mindprobe, Napalm, Stunball

**Powers:** Animal Control (Termites), Astral Gateway, Aura Masking, Banishing Resistance, Compulsion, Concealment, Dual Natured, Enhanced Sense (Thermographic Vision, Ultrasound), Fear, Hive Mind, Immunity to Normal Weapons, Inhabitation (Living Vessels), Natural Weapon (DV 9P, AP -1), Realistic Form, Reinforcement, Sapience, Search, Spirit Pact

**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Insecticides, Severe)





## SERGEANT TAVERS, KNIGHT ERRANT INSTRUCTOR

Sgt. Tavers is a typical drill sergeant: tough, no-nonsense, and not easily amused. He is a big fan of Roger Soaring Owl and the discipline the former Knight Errant CEO brought to the company. In Tavers' eyes, the company lost its edge the day Soaring Owl left. Though he is still loyal to Damien Knight, Tavers is more loyal to the ideal of Knight Errant as established by his former mentor. He does not go easy on any of the recruits and pushes anyone he sees with potential. If the player characters do good by Knight Errant, he does good by them. If they disgrace themselves, and by extension, destroy Tavers' honor as an instructor, he brings every resource he has to bear in order to take them down.

*Human*

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
5	4	5(8)	3	4	5	4	5	5	3.2	10(13)	1(2)

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

**Armor (B/I):** 10/5

**Skills:** Close Combat skill group 4, Electronics skill group 4, Etiquette (Corporate) 4 (+2), Firearms skill group 5, Intimidation 5, Law Enforcement (Professional Knowledge) 4, Leadership 5, Negotiation 4, Perception 4, Pilot Ground Craft 3

**Qualities:** Guts, Home Ground (Knight Errant Academy), SINner, Will to Live (Rating 2)

**Augmentations:** Commlink [Response 5, Signal 5, Firewall 5, System 5], reaction enhancers 2, wired reflexes 1

**Gear:** Ares-branded armor vest [Chemical Protection (Rating 3), Insulation (Rating 2), and Nonconductivity (Rating 4)], earbuds [Rating 2, w/ audio enhancement (Rating 3), recording unit], forensics tool kit, glasses [Rating 4, w/ image link, smartlink, visual enhancement (Rating 2)], form-fitting body armor [half-body suit, w/ Fire Resistance (Rating 2)]

**Weapons:**

Ares Predator IV [Heavy Pistol, DV 5S, AP +1, SA, RC —, 15 (c), w/ smartlink, gel rounds, 3 x extra ammo clips]

Ares Predator IV [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, RC —, 15 (c), w/ smartlink, 3 x extra ammo clips (regular ammo), 3 x extra ammo clips (APDS ammo AP -5)]

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

## SHADOWRUNNER STREET SAMURAI

This character is one of a group of NPC shadowrunners that can be used as academy infiltrators, bar patrons, or enemy combatants on the bonus mission.

*Troll*

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

**Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S):** 13/10

**Armor (B/I):** 15/9

**Skills:** Climbing 2, Close Combat Skill group 4, Computers 2, Firearms skill group 5, Intimidation 5, Perception 4 (+2), Pilot Ground Craft 2

**Qualities:** Guts, Toughness (+1 to Body Damage Resistance Tests), Will to Live (Rating 2)

**Augmentations:** Commlink [Response 4, Signal 3, Firewall 3, System 4], cybereye [right eye, Rating 2, w/ flare compensation, smartlink, vision enhancement 2, vision magnification], cyberhands (obvious) [Left: nail pistol, DV 4P, AP —, SA, RC —, 30 (c), Right: shock hand (Reach —, DV 6S(e), AP -half)], muscle replacement 2, wired reflexes 2

**Gear:** Armor jacket [Insulation (Rating 2), Nonconductivity (Rating 5)], earbuds [Rating 2, w/ audio enhancement 3, recording unit], glasses [Rating 4, w/ image link, low-light vision, thermographic vision], form-fitting body armor [full-body suit, w/ Fire Resistance (Rating 2)], gel packs

**Weapons:**

Nitama Optimum II [Assault Rifle, DV 7P (+1 explosive ammo), AP -1, SA/BF/FA, RC 1, 30 (c), w/ 2 extra clips, smartlink, (underbarrel shotgun, DV 7P, AP -1, SA, RC 1, 5 (m), w/ 5 extra internal magazines)]

Savalette Guardian [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA/BF, RC 1, 12 (c), w/ 3 x extra ammo clips, smartlink]

\*Burst Fire with this weapon requires a Complex Action.

## SHADOWRUNNER THROWN WEAPON SPECIALIST

This character is one of a group of NPC shadowrunners that can be used as academy infiltrators, bar patrons, or enemy combatants on the bonus mission.

*Dwarf*

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
5	4	5(8)	5	3	5	4	5	4	4.15	10(13)	4

**Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S):** 13/10

**Armor (B/I):** 11/7

**Skills:** Automatics 4, Blades 3, Climbing 3, Computers 2, First Aid 2, Perception 4, Pilot Ground Craft 3, Pistols 3, Running 2, Throwing Weapons 5

**Qualities:** Blandness, High Pain Tolerance (Rating 2), Home Ground (Detroit)

**Augmentations:** Cyberears [Rating 2 w/ audio enhancer 3, damper, select sound filter 2, spatial recognizer], cybereyes [Rating 3, w/ flare compensation, low-light vision, smartlink, thermographic vision, vision enhancement 2, vision magnification], synaptic booster 3

**Gear:** Hermes Ikon commlink w/ Novatech Navi OS [Response 4, Signal 3, Firewall 3, System 4], greatcoat [Chemical Protection (Rating 2), Insulation (Rating 2)], form-fitting body armor [half-body suit, w/ Fire Resistance (Rating 3), Nonconductivity (Rating 2)], gel packs, medkit (Rating 5)

**Weapons:**

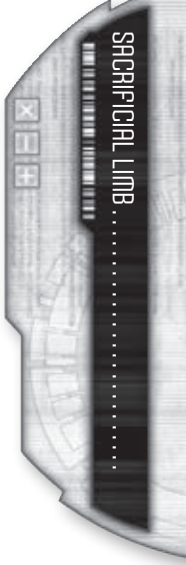
Ares Viper Slivergun [Heavy Pistol, DV 8P(f), AP +5, SA/BF, RC —, 30 (c) w/ smartlink]

Ceska Black Scorpion [Machine Pistol, DV 4P, SA/BF, RC 3, 35 (c), w/ gas-vent 2, smartlink, 2 extra clips regular ammo]

Flash-bang grenades (5) [DV 6S, AP -3, Blast 10m Radius]

Fragmentation grenades (5) [DV 12P(f), AP +5, Blast -1/m]

Gas grenades (3) [DV Chemical, AP —, Blast 10m Radius]



Warp (drug) [Vector inhalation, Speed immediate, Penetration -1, Power 10, DV Stun, Disorientation, Hallucinations]

Knives, Throwing (10) [Throwing Weapon, DV 4P]

## SHADOWRUNNER SHAMAN

This character is one of a group of NPC shadowrunners that can be used as academy infiltrators, bar patrons, or enemy combatants on the bonus mission.

*Human*

<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>Edg</b>	<b>Ess</b>	<b>Init</b>	<b>IP</b>
5	3	5	3	4	5	3	5	6	5	6	10	1(4)

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

**Armor (B/I):** 11/7

**Skills:** Automatics (Submachine Guns) 3 (+2), Clubs 2, Con 2, Conjuring skill group 4, Leadership 2, Perception 3, Pilot Ground Craft 2, Sorcery skill group 5

**Qualities:** Focused Concentration, Magician, Mentor Spirit

**Mentor Spirit:** Dragonslayer (+2 to Combat Spells, +2 for one Social skill test of choice)

**Spells:** Combat Sense, Fireball, Heal, Hot Potato, Increase Reflexes, Manabolt, Stunball, Stunbolt

**Gear:** Counterspell focus (Force 4, Combat Spells), earbuds [Rating 2, w/ audio enhancement 3, spatial recognizer], form-fitting bkdy armor [half-body suit w/ Fire Resistance (Rating 3), Nonconductivity (Rating 2)], gel packs, glasses [Rating 4, image link, smartlink, visual enhancement (Rating 2)], greatcoat [Chemical Protection (Rating 2), Insulation (Rating 2)], spell focus (Force 5, Combat Spells), sustaining focus (Health Spells), weapon focus (AK-97 Carbine submachine gun, Force 4)

**Weapons:**

AK-97 Carbine [Submachine Gun (weapons focus), DV 5P, AP —, SA/BF/FA, RC 5, 30 (c), w/ gel rounds, 3 x extra ammo clips, ceramic silencer, foregrip, gas-vent 3, smartlink, underbarrel weight]

## UNLIMITECH HIVE SOLDIERS

These are the protectors of the Unlimitech hive. They are flesh-form bugs hosted in most of the local security staff of Unlimitech. They have access to their hosts' memories, so they are able to blend in well and maintain appearances as the regular staff of the place. Not every soldier in Unlimitech has been compromised, as some humans are required to interact with the outside world or with the visitors Damien Knight so often brings into the place. They are a hybrid of many different insect spirit types, mainly roach and termite spirits with a bit of ant thrown in. Many of these soldiers will remain out of sight from any Awakened visitor that might see through their disguise.

<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>Edg</b>	<b>Ess</b>	<b>Init</b>	<b>IP</b>
7	5	6	8	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	11	2

**Force:** 5

**Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S):** 12/11

**Armor (B/I):** 10/10 (Hardened)

**Astral INIT/IP:** 10 / 3

**Movement:** 10/45

**Skills:** Assensing, Astral Combat, Counterspelling, Dodge, Exotic Ranged Weapon, Perception, Unarmed Combat

**Powers:** Animal Control (Roaches / Termites), Aura Masking, Dual Natured, Fear, Hive Mind, Immunity to Normal Weapons, Inhabitation (Living Vessels), Movement, Natural Weapon (DV 7P, AP -1), Realistic Form, Sapience

**Optional Powers:** Concealment, Confusion, Magical Guard, Noxious Breath, Shift,\* Venom

**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Insecticides, Light), Evanescence

\*Shift allows the soldiers to change into the form of a large insect that is segmented like a termite, but has the head, pinchers and jaws of a roach. The insect is two times the size of its human host and is capable of using Venom much more effectively when in this form.



INCOMING FEED.....



## UNLIMITECH HIVE WORKERS

These are the builders of the Unlimitech hive. They are flesh-form bugs hosted in the researchers and scientists of Unlimitech. They have access to their hosts' memories, so they are able to blend in well and maintain appearances as the regular staff of the place. Not every worker in Unlimitech has been compromised, as some humans are required to interact with the outside world or with the visitors Damien Knight so often brings into the place. They are a hybrid of many different insect spirit types, mainly roach and termite spirits with a bit of ant thrown in. Many of these workers will remain out of sight from any Awakened visitor that might see through their guise.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
8	5	6	7	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	11	2

**Force:** 5

**Condition Monitor Boxes (P/S):** 12/11

**Armor (B/I):** 10/10 (Hardened)

**Astral INIT/IP:** 10/3

**Movement:** 10/45

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

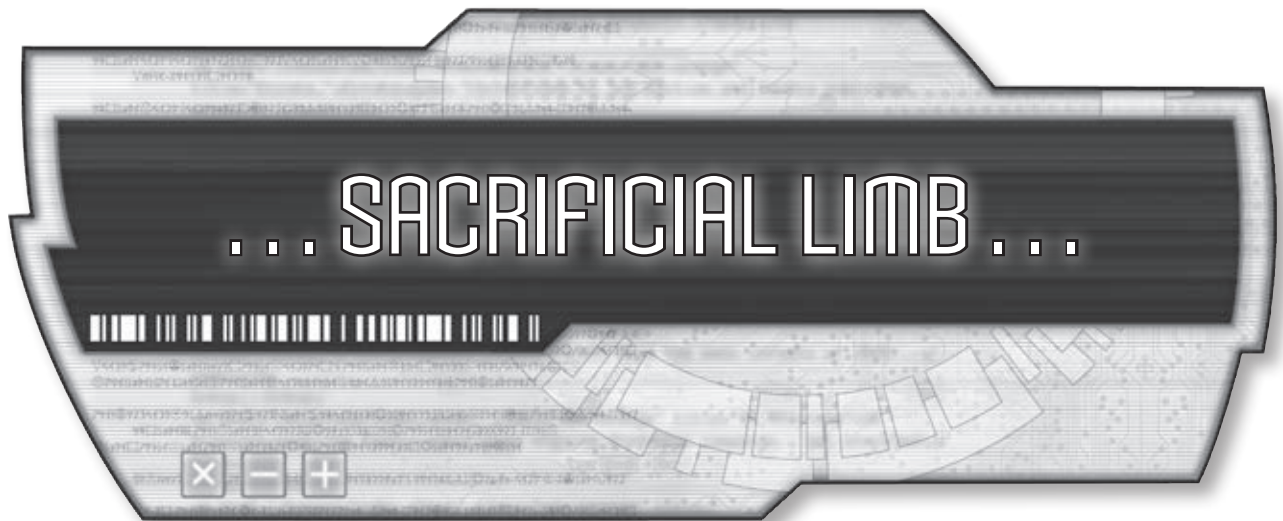
**Powers:** Animal Control (Roaches/Termites), Armor, Concealment, Dual Natured, Enhanced Sense (Smell), Hive Mind, Inhabitation (Living Vessels), Movement, Natural Weapon (DV 4P, AP —), Pestilence, Reinforcement, Sapience, Toughness (+2 to all Damage Resistance Tests)

**Optional Powers (choose one for each 3 full Force):** Concealment, Enhanced Senses (Ultrasound), Venom, Skill (a worker spirit may be given additional Technical or Physical skill instead of an optional power)

**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Insecticides, Severe), Evanescence

SACRIFICIAL LIMB





Two girls sat in a Candy Shoppe, surrounded by displays of sweet-and-sour heaven, bathed in the scent of warm fudge and saltwater taffy. One girl, a black-haired pigtailed cutie in a pink-and-yellow dress, trailed a long spoon in a puddle of marshmallow and fudge-drenched ice cream. The other girl, a blonde-haired beauty in a lavender jumpsuit with her hair pulled into a waterfall of curls, noshed on a coffee cupcake. A dab of frosting coated her nose.

Nadja wiped away the frosting with a thumb. "Sam, you have officially impressed me. I've never tasted virtual cupcakes this good."

Samantha licked the fudge off her spoon with a smile. "This is my favorite little hideaway."

"You didn't call me here to talk about ice cream and cupcakes, though."

A wave of Samantha's hand opened a series of AR windows that danced across the table. Videos of Knight Errant trainees, insect spirit-invested humans, and various blueprints scrolled across the windows. "This should help you with your little Knight-in-tarnished-armor problem."

Nadja scanned the upload, her grin growing larger the more she watched and read. "Just how many runners did you hire, dear?"

"Enough to get the job done. Are you satisfied with the data?"

Nadja bit a chunk out of the cupcake and nodded. "Mostly. Where can I pick up the samples?"

"Come now, Nadja. I'm not gullible." Samantha slid a slip of paper toward her co-conspirator. "Tit for tat, remember? I do Damien, you do Richard. Get what I need and you'll get the rest of evidence upon delivery."

Picking at her frosting, Nadja stared at the paper. After a moment, she chuckled. "No worries, dear. I know exactly what needs to be done."

# KNIGHT ERRANT WANTS YOU!

Are you clever, intuitive, and good with puzzles?

Are you a risk taker?

Do you dream of a job with good pay and high recognition?

Knight Errant is seeking talented individuals with drive and ambition to succeed in the next phase of their life. Come join the world's leading security firm in protecting the citizens of the Sixth World. Together, Knight Errant and you can change the world.

Be better, live better. Knight Errant is where you should be.

## Attention Applicants:

All applicants must pass a physical and psychological exam.

Knight Errant supplies all recruits with weapons and armor. Any outside equipment will be confiscated until basic training is over.

No contraband is allowed at the academy. This includes, but is not limited to, BTLs, drugs, black-market goods, unapproved military gear, and stolen property.

Applicants understand that injuries and possible death are a normal part of any security training program and that such events can occur during the course of basic training. By applying to the Knight Errant Training Academy, you agree to abide by academy rules and absolve Knight Errant and its parent company Ares of any liability and responsibility in such circumstances. Knight Errant will pay a reasonable amount of medical expenses for any injuries sustained in the course of an officer's normal duties.

## CHICAGO/O'HARE

Chicago, known to the locals as Chicagoland, is a city of history. A once-bright metropolplex of science, industry, and entertainment, as well as a city of dark myth and gory urban legend, it has become a sprawl with a dead core, broken by terrorist attacks, insect spirits, and a nuclear warhead. Overrun by ghouls, Infected, toxic spirits, and mad bugs, downtown Chicago is avoided by all but the desperate, the crazy, and the shadows. It is a feral city, lawless and abandoned by those who once called it home.

Chicago is divided into five distinct areas both by geography and the people who live there. The center of Chicago (called the Zone—a legacy from 2055, when Knight Errant kicked out the insect spirit superhive living there and barricaded the entire area to prevent the resulting bug stampede from spreading across the entire state) remains a place to be avoided. But the suburbs and outskirts still remain home to thousands of people unwilling, or unable, to relocate. These areas (Northside, Westside, and Southside) are collectively called the Corridor and serve as a sort of buffer between the Zone and the rest of Illinois. Naperville-Bolingbrook, with its middle-class labor pool, controls the local railways and ensures the continuous movement of cargo through Chicagoland with a minimum of fuss. The O'Hare sub-sprawl could reliably be called the most civilized, prosperous, and normal area of Chicago.

Except for the O'Hare sub-sprawl and Naperville-Bolingbrook, most of Chicago has spotty Matrix access,

with The Zone being the darkest area of all. Mana warps and dangerous FAB clouds fill the city, and the careless use of magic attracts both bugs and toxic spirits.

The major area of concern in this adventure is the O'Hare sub-sprawl. Over the years, it has expanded west, growing to approximately 180 square kilometers of glittering megacorp structures, residential areas, and defenses. Each corporation keeps its people clustered in corporate enclaves surrounding their main hub of business. The residents cram in tiny, multi-generational homes. Dedicated to business travel and tourists, this area of Chicago never sleeps. Enclave access requires employee IDs or day-only visitor passes that are sold for a price.

The O'Hare airport is a built-up complex with restaurants, theaters, and conference rooms. The available amenities make the airport an attractive place for the local homeless, but it also makes it a vector for rampant disease. Those with sensitive immune systems will need to be careful if they go to the airport.

Ares' enclave sits at the south end of the O'Hare airport, a twenty-five-square-kilometer campus with four research centers and a Qantas-run airline hangar. The local branches of BacteriTech (biotech and genetech), Quick Trigger Systems (software), and Ares Integrated Solutions (heavy industry and nanotech) exist to support Unlimited Technologies' research.

## DETROIT/KNIGHT ERRANT TRAINING ACADEMY

A prosperous city in the Great Lakes Region of UCAS, Detroit is the headquarters of Ares Macrotechnology and is considered one of the safest cities in the country. In 2055, the city absorbed over a million refugees from Chicago, offering them homes and jobs. This generosity earned both the city and Ares the undying loyalty of much of the populace. The former Chicagoans see Ares as the corporation that stood between them and the insect spirit menace that threatened the world, and few of them would betray their saviors. The local economy is based off heavy industry and manufacturing, boasting one of the highest export rates of automobiles, with aeronautics and military equipment a close second. Detroit also lays claim to the lowest unemployment rate of any sprawl in North America.

While Ares looms like a protective giant over the city, with Knight Errant security on almost every corner, Detroit still sees its share of urban blight, crime, and shadowrunning. Many outlying districts of the sprawl still wear evidence of alternating economic cycles of booms and bust, and some neighborhoods are in desperate need of urban renewal. The local shadow community knows every crack and weakness in the finely crafted image the Detroit city council presents to the world, and they're happy to share that information for the right price.

While Ares' and Knight Errant's headquarters reside in

downtown Detroit at the famous Knight Plaza, the same is not true for the academy. The training academy is situated at Harsens Island on Lake St. Clair, east of the Detroit sprawl. This allows the academy the space it needs to properly train its new recruits, to keep the public safe from residual effects of KE weapons training, and to prevent any would-be corporate saboteurs from using the academy as a method of infiltrating Knight Plaza.

Harsens Island has two bridges that connect to the mainland, both of which are monitored with drones and security cameras and both of which can be destroyed from the island should an army try to invade. The latter bit of information is known only to a handful of high-level executives, the academy commandant, and the academy's chief of security. Harsens' air space is restricted to Knight Errant traffic only, and there are only two docks, a commercial cargo dock and a small-craft dock, on the island. All water approaches are monitored with semi-intelligent aquatic critters, drones, and other security measures.

It should be noted, though, that as strong as the academy's security seems, the upkeep and monitoring of the systems have gone downhill since Soaring Owl's departure. Security is high enough to deter the opportunistic or accidental criminals, but a professional can find and exploit the holes by using patience and legwork.



# SUBJECT: DR. RAQUEL BLISS



AGE: 28                      HEIGHT: 1.3 m                      WEIGHT: 50 kg  
HAIR: Brown                      EYES: Brown                      GENDER: Female  
METATYPE: Dwarf                      AWAKENED: No

BORN: London, England, 10/7/2044  
PARENTS: Profs. Adrian Bliss, Lillian Moore-Bliss  
EDUCATION: Bachelor of Science in Chemistry,  
Master of Science in Genetics (minor in Neural  
Chemistry), Doctor of Biotechnology. Graduated with  
final degree on May 26, 2065.

EMPLOYMENT: Hired by Unlimited Technologies on May 26, 2065. Position: Head Research Scientist and Director of the Office of Special Projects.

NOTES: Dr. Bliss was hired by Damien Knight right after the end of her graduation ceremony. Human Resources does not have a copy of her contract on file, so it is reasonable to assume she works directly for Knight rather than for Ares Macrotechnology. She owns a private flat in the O'Hare sub-sprawl to which she used to commute when she first arrived in Chicago. She has a known BTL habit, preferring to purchase her chips through a gray-market distributor named Sparks.

Two years ago, Dr. Bliss' routine changed. She has not returned to her flat, nor has she met with, or purchased anything, from Sparks. It can be assumed her new project is taking up much of her spare time, as it is rumored she has set up a cot in her office and spends all her time at Unlimitech. Contact with our embedded assets has been severed due to the security restrictions placed upon the facility at the same time.

We know Dr. Bliss is alive and still functioning with absolute authority over the OSP. Rumors from our street-level assets indicate she is recruiting off-the-books labor for unknown purposes. Further investigation is recommended, both internally and externally.

**KNIGHT ERRANT RECRUIT GEAR**

**AR Glasses\*** [Rating 3, w/ image link, smartlink, visual enhancement 1]

\*Adds +1 to all Visual Perception Tests made while wearing the glasses.

**Ares Streamline Commlink** [Response 3, Signal 5, Firewall 4, System 4 w/ biometric reader, skinlink, subvocal microphone, and trodes].

**Stimulant Patches** (2, Rating 3)

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

**Ares Predator IV** [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP +1, SA, RC -, 15 (c), w/ gel rounds, smartlink, 2 x extra ammo clips]

**Armor (B/I):** 12/7

**Knight Errant-branded armor jacket** [Chemical Protection (Rating 2), Insulation (Rating 1), and Nonconductivity (Rating 2)]

**Form-fitting body armor** [half-body suit, w/ Fire Resistance (Rating 1)]

**KNIGHT ERRANT RECRUIT GEAR**

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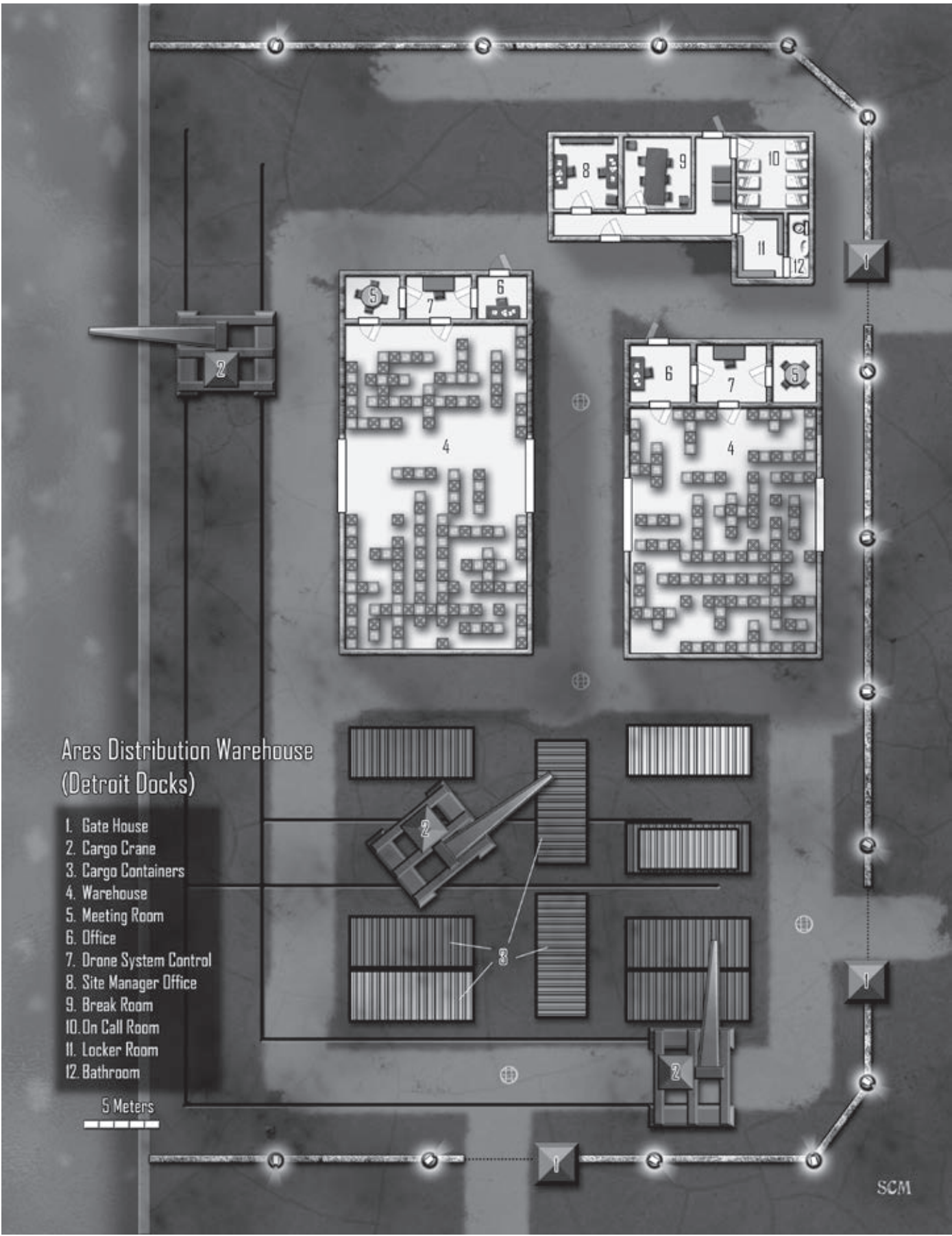
**Ares Predator IV** [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP +1, SA, RC -, 15 (c), w/ gel rounds, smartlink, 2 x extra ammo clips]

**Armor (B/I):** 12/7

**Knight Errant-branded armor jacket** [Chemical Protection (Rating 2), Insulation (Rating 1), and Nonconductivity (Rating 2)]

**Form-fitting body armor** [half-body suit, w/ Fire Resistance (Rating 1)]





### Ares Distribution Warehouse (Detroit Docks)

- 1. Gate House
- 2. Cargo Crane
- 3. Cargo Containers
- 4. Warehouse
- 5. Meeting Room
- 6. Office
- 7. Drone System Control
- 8. Site Manager Office
- 9. Break Room
- 10. On Call Room
- 11. Locker Room
- 12. Bathroom

5 Meters

# Unlimitech Facility

- 1. Reception
- 2. Security
- 3. Custodial Supplies
- 4. Security Supplies
- 5. Lab
- 6. Lab Supplies
- 7. Break Room
- 8. Conference Room
- 9. Scientist Office
- 10. Executive Office
- 11. Support Staff
- 12. Matrix Electronics
- 13. Science Offices
- 14. Restricted Lab

