

# SHADOWRUN

# SPY GAMES

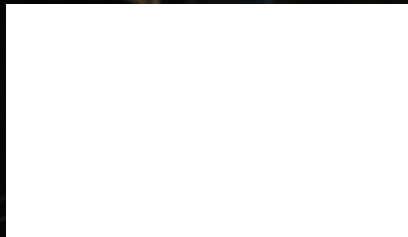


# A CITY OF SECRETS

Listen to the whispers—they're all over town. People have secrets, millions of secrets, and some of them are so explosive they could shift the balance of power in the Treaty City of Denver. Normally, the great dragon Ghostwalker's tight grip would keep the city under control, but some of the whispers moving around town say that Ghostwalker hasn't been himself lately. The powers of Denver are scrambling, the Treaty is about to be renegotiated, and information is the hottest commodity in town.

*SPY GAMES* brings *SHADOWRUN* players to the espionage-filled city of Denver, where secrets are bought and sold, and sometimes the price is paid in blood. Accessing these secrets may mean using cutting-edge surveillance gear or powerful magic, or it could mean turning back the clock and breaking out low-tech cloak-and-dagger approaches that the techheads of the world would never expect. *SPY GAMES* provides the setting information, gear statistics, and game rules players need to dive into Sixth World spycraft.

*Spy Games* is for use with *Shadowrun, Twentieth Anniversary Edition*.



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# SPY GAMES





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Connecting JackPoint VPN ...  
 ... Matrix Access ID Spoofed.  
 ... Encryption Keys Generated.  
 ... Connected to Onion Routers.  
 > Login  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 > Enter Passcode  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 ... Biometric Scan Confirmed.  
 Connected to <ERROR: NODE UNKNOWN>  
 "A spy, like a writer, lives outside the mainstream."

### JackPoint Stats

71 users currently active  
 in the network

#### Latest News

<051973> Keep sending in those stories. The compilation is coming along nicely. - FastJack

#### Personal Alerts

- \*You have 8 new [private messages](#).
- \*You have 1 [message](#) queued for anonymous re-routing.
- \*You have 12 new [responses](#) to your JackPoint posts.
- \*PDA: Battle rifle training course is being offered again. Take it this time.
- \*PDA: Make sure you've tapped into some good video feeds from DC to see just what's going on there.

#### First Degree

You are hidden from all contacts.

#### Your Current Rep Score: 64

(89% positive)

Current Time: 19 May, 2073, 21:43

- PREFERENCES
- FEEDS
- TASKS
- LINKS
- HISTORY

Welcome back to JackPoint, omae;  
 your last connection was severed: 33  
 hours, 10 minutes, 29 seconds ago.



### Today's Heads Up

- \* Sometimes it's about the clothes, sometimes the "I can take you, chummer" strut, but it's always about the Attitude. [Tag: [Attitude](#)]
- \* Adepts are doing new things, and it's not just punching you in the throat from a new angle. [Tag: [The Way of the Adept](#)]

### Incoming

- \* All that chasing after artifacts is going to add up to something, and that "something" may go boom. [Tag: [Artifacts Unbound](#)]
- \* They're the best, the brightest, or sometimes just the strangest, but they're all fun to talk about. [Tag: [Street Legends](#)]
- \* There are planes that inspire confidence in you the moment you set foot in them. And then there are the ones that put you in full-on prayer mode until they finally come to a shuddering halt on the ground. [Tag: [Unfriendly Skies](#)]

### Top News Items

- \* The great dragon Hestaby is planning a landmark speech at the United Nations. [Link](#)
- \* Seattle Governor Hestaby denies government involvement in undermining pro-Ork Underground efforts. [Link](#)
- \* Dawkins Group ramping up propaganda efforts in Az-Am War. [Link](#)

- CHAT
- MESSAGES
- FILES
- POSTS
- NEXUS
- SEARCH

Active

JamStar Firewall

Active

Jack-in-the-Box Antivirus

Active

SpamWitch Filter

On/Receiving

Commcode

Excellent

Signal

Active

Hidden Mode

Local Map

**SPY GAMES**

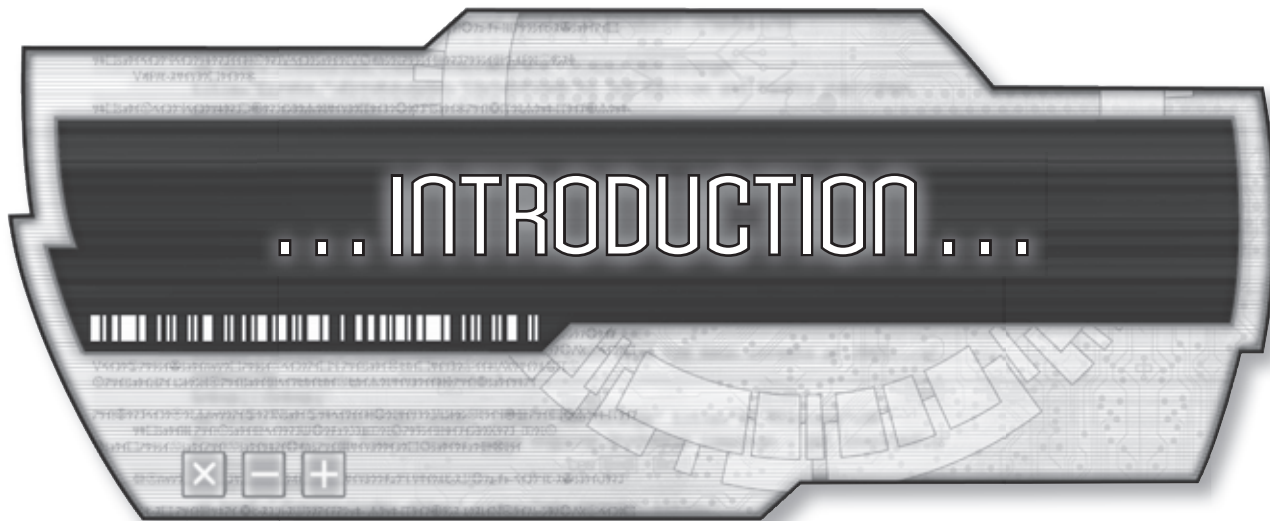
Invited Guests  
 Thorn

Posts/Files tagged with "Spy Games"  
 Welcome to Denver    History of the FRFZ  
 Denver's Sectors      Corporate Interest  
 The Culture of Politics    [\[More\]](#)

CONTINUE
ADVANCED SEARCH

SAVE





# ... INTRODUCTION ...

Before there were shadowrunners, there were spies. They did a lot of the same stuff we do—they snuck into corporations to find crucial paydata (though they generally didn't call it that), they got people out of places they didn't want to be in, and sometimes they put a bullet in the brain of someone that someone else really wanted dead.

The world has changed a lot, but spies are still out there, doing their thing, and a lot of us are doing those things too, or things that are pretty similar. Wherever there is information that one group wants and another has, wherever there are political groups looking to gain advantage on each other without having to open fire, and wherever there are people who will tell you what you want to know if you just know how to talk—or squeeze—it out of them, there will be work for us.

That's why there is so much work in Denver right now.

The Treaty City, with its divided political nature, has always contained a thriving espionage industry. The dragon at the top might not like the spy game much, but he can't stop it, even as powerful as he is. And there are times, of course, that he even plays along, which helps keep things interesting.

Several factors are making the spy situation in Denver hotter than ever. The Az-Am War is not exactly next door, but since it affects Aztlan, the CAS, and other nations, its effects are being felt on the Denver streets. More important than that, though, is the ongoing renegotiation of the Treaty of Denver. The various parties involved can give you a whole bunch of reasons and excuses why they're pushing the renegotiation now, but it all boils down to one thing: opportunity. They've spent years knowing that whatever power they had, they held at the mercy of Ghostwalker, and they had to be grateful he gave anything to them at all. But something

has changed recently, even though most people would be hard-pressed to say what it is. There is a perception that Ghostwalker is weaker than he used to be, that something has distracted him or sucked up his energy. No one can say what it is that has affected him, or even if the perception of his weakness is real, but it's there, and the sector governments are moving on it. They think they can wrestle a little more power out of the dragon, so they're going for it as quickly and aggressively as they can.

This means there's espionage work for those clever and skilled enough to take it. To give you a boost, a fine collection of your fellow JackPointers have compiled information on what you need to know. First, we have some information on Denver itself—how to get around it, where to go, and who to look out for in corporate circles, politics, and crime (since espionage is, broadly speaking, where these circles overlap). Then, because Denver is not the only espionage hotspot in the world, there are briefings on some other cities, including the corporate battleground of Kansai, the European viper's nest of Brussels, and the border city of Austin.

Following that I've had some of our experts put together briefings on the finer points of intelligence gathering, counterintelligence, and the growing field of extraplanar intelligence. Then, to top it all off, there's a rundown of some of the latest gear that can help a spy do their work, because what spy doesn't like their toys?

With the help of this information, you'll have most of what you need to know to get to Denver and plunge into the action there. The guts and the guns, though, you'll have to acquire for yourself.

—FastJack



Posted by: Traveler Jones

After the Olympics and its wall-to-wall coverage, a lot of people felt they had gotten to know Denver pretty well. And maybe they had—we all know that if you're going to get to know a city well, you have to learn the basics first—getting in, getting out, getting around, and just where it is you should be going. Since Denver has become the espionage capital of the world, which means its shadows are deeper and darker than just about any city in the world, a lot of you might be going there. I'll start you out with the basics, along with some help from the planners of the 2072 Olympics. Step one: Getting in.

Olympic Guide.....

**PLANNING YOUR TRIP**

When planning your trip to Denver for the Olympics, you may want to arrange your trip months in advance. Advance planning is wise for reasons besides the high demand for tickets to the various events of the Olympics. Visitors should plan ahead so that they can take advantage of the full range of experiences Denver offers. Denver is not just one city, but four, and to get to the full experience you need to visit all four of Denver's sectors, for each has their own flavor and style. If you are flying into Denver, the existence of seven international airports means that you have plenty of options at your disposal.

- Part of the reason visitors needed to arrange the trips far in advance is so they can deal with the travel visas between the sectors. If you are not already from Denver, traveling freely between sectors requires enough data that you'd better have a dedicated commlink to hold all of it. Honestly, I don't know how people that travel legally endure it all
- 2XL

## TRAVELING TO DENVER

There are almost as many ways to get to Denver as there are reasons to go there. The Olympics last year added yet another reason for people to flock to Denver, while also amping up security, since no host city wants to have their games interrupted by violence. The good news is that in the post-Olympics afterglow, some of that security has eased up. Since a portion of Denver's economy has always depended on the existence of smugglers, there is a healthy amount of illicit ways to get into the city, along with the normal host of legal entries.

## AIR

With seven active airports, plus military flights, smuggler runs, and an unknown number of dracoforms and spirits buzzing about, the air traffic over Denver is a confusing mess on its good days. A lot of careful scheduling is required to keep the airspace safe, so whenever a LAV flies too high or a dracoform goes for a midnight wander, things can go bad quickly. There have been numerous close calls in mid-air, and a regional jet went down in '68 due to "pilot error." The "error" consisted of a pilot not being able to dodge an LAV that was not paying enough attention to where it was going. During the Olympics, the airspace was even more congested, but apparently Ghostwalker was able to convince the paranormal critters to behave while the ZDF ferociously patrolled the airport approaches to keep the smugglers elsewhere, so there weren't any unfortunate accidents while the world was watching.

- What about the Air France HSCT that was carrying some of their Olympic team that got a wingtip torn off?
- Fianchetto
- Wind shear. At least, that was the official explanation.
- Traveler Jones
- Twenty millimeter wind shear?
- Marcos







SHAP

**FLYING INTO THE CAS SECTOR**

If you want to visit the lively CAS sector of Denver, your best option is Lowry International Airport. There is no better way to beat the crowds coming into Denver than with a visit to Lowry, whose efficient service will get you where you want to go in no time! The people at Lowry understand that you have more important things to do with your time than spend it at an airport, so they'll help you move on your way!

Chamberlain Airport is also available for flights in to the CAS sector.

- Chamberlain, which is a former Aztlan airfield, should feel lucky that it even got a mention. This is because the guide ignores as much as possible the fact that there ever was an Aztlan Sector. It is the smallest of the Denver airports but retains its international status since it is the only airport with direct flights to Aztlan.
- Marcos

**CAS SECTOR****Lowry**

Lowry is a former US Air Force Base that had been already decommissioned and partially redeveloped when Denver was partitioned. When the CAS needed an airfield for their sector, much of the airport had to be rebuilt. It was badly needed, so the terminals and hangers were quickly constructed and remain rudimentary and plain. With little traffic there has not been much impetus to improve it, but the combination of a full airfield that can handle any aircraft with low traffic volume has made Lowry the preferred airfield for corporate flights. When Chamberlain was taken over by the CAS from Aztlan, it was decided that Lowry would handle the semi-ballistic, suborbital, and HSC T flights, while regional and local traffic would be concentrated in Chamberlain. Considering CAS's corporate-friendly atmosphere, corps prefer to base their local military aircraft there along with their suborbitals with boosters, which allow them to reach low-earth orbit and the corporate platforms there.

During the Olympics, Lowry saw an increase in traffic, mostly from the CAS or corporate-related flights. The bump was only temporary, though—once the Olympics were over, the increased traffic disappeared.

At one time Lowry Air Base had several missile silos, all of which now lie in other sectors or within the Sioux Nation proper. The silos are now all decommissioned. Supposedly,

- These spots are pretty easy to find, if you're interested. Even with the data losses from both Crashes, their locations are all known.
- Orbital DK

- Are you sure about that? For a job I had to break into them and at least two were not where they were supposed to be. One of them we never found, and my employer looked very hard.
- Stone

Supposedly the silos were once controlled from a secure bunker from Lowry, so rumors insist that there are tunnels that allow access to them or old fiber-optics connections that allow surveillance of them.

**Chamberlain**

Built on the site of the former Chamberlain Observatory, this was once the Aztlan sector's sole airport, but since the Aztlan sector's absorption it has served as a regional airport. It was too small for most commercial aircraft, but it excelled as the local hub. It retains international airport status, as it is the only legal airstrip for airplanes flying direct from Aztlan. Aero Montezuma, Aztlan's official airline, is barred from landing here, or even flying overhead, but Delta Airlines, a favored CAS-based airline, has been granted the right to fly from Aztlan into the CAS sector. This is intended to allow former Aztlan citizens the chance to visit friends and family. Security on those flights are extremely high and tight, with almost every flight having at least one person turned back because of some Aztechnology or Aztlan government connection.

- The real miracle is that the flights take off without everyone getting kicked off due to some trumped-up connection.
- Sunshine

**FLYING INTO THE PCC SECTOR**

The Pueblo Corporate Council welcomes visitors with two of the finest international airports in the city. Enjoy modern comforts, beautiful views of the city, and first-class treatment at the Sedalia and Niwot airports!

- If you're not reading that to say "You'll pay extra to fly here," then you haven't traveled enough.
- 2XL

**PUEBLO CORPORATE COUNCIL SECTOR**

With a growing economy and two fine airports, you'd think the PCC would have all the air traffic they can handle. But because they have high-speed maglev lines connecting Denver to the rest of the country, and considering the Denver sector security concerns, in many cases international travelers prefer to fly into Los Angeles or Albuquerque and then simply take the rail the rest of the way in. Given the small size of the PCC's airports, it's good that they're not getting overwhelmed, because they would easily choke under excess traffic.





## Sedalia

Sedalia is a relatively small international airport, built by the PCC after the Denver Treaty to serve as the sector airport. It is a modern facility that was updated just before the Olympics with the latest security. But despite its modernity, it is relatively under-used, even during the Olympics. It often serves as the secondary airport for most flights, because it almost always has at least one runway free and has the most modern emergency response and repair teams of any airport in the sprawl. It is the other major airport that has semi-regular boost suborbital flights, though most of these are PCC-sponsored flights to their own microgravity production facilities.

- State-of-the-art facilities plus lack of large crowds equals bad news for runners. This is a tough one to sneak through, especially since security is often bored and all too anxious for something to do.
- 2XL

## Niwot

Niwot was the former Ute sector airport. It previously served as the Boulder municipal airport until the Ute government expanded it so they could have their own airport. When the PCC took over the Ute sector, arguments were made that it should be closed down, mostly because Sedalia was already underutilized, but former Ute government officials made a case for it being retained. For a while it was used primarily for ZDF and corp flights, with only a token service to other former Ute airports. However, with Horizon making serious investments in Boulder and a major university campus opening, the airport has been brought up to PCC standards, with a Horizon terminal built just to handle their traffic, the civilian airport refurbished, and additional flights added to the rebuilding University of Colorado, as well as the universities supporting that reconstruction.

- This is the sneak-in choice for anyone going to the PCC sector. College students are always good for creating chaos, plus forging a college ID is usually not too hard (as long as you can make yourself look young enough to pass for a student). Plus, the large footprint of Horizon means that security isn't as omnipresent as it is at other airports. Horizon's work to create a relaxed vibe is a definite plus for us here.
- Mika

## SIoux SECTOR

Denver International is the largest of the civilian airports, capable of landing three aircraft simultaneously and receiving any size aircraft without difficulty. Unfortunately, the Sioux sector has the smallest number of civilian aircraft visiting from outside the Zone, so it was mostly underused before the Olympics. It did, however, handle semi-ballistic and suborbital flights from other sectors, with the passengers transferring to regional aircraft within the airport before going to their final destination. The airport was suffering from benign neglect until the run up of the Olympics, when its size and ability to handle overflow came in handy. It became the official airport for the Denver Olympics, which required a lot of repairs and reinvestment into the facility. The Sioux sector invested the bare minimum they could get

Olympic Guide.....

### FLYING INTO THE SIOUX SECTOR

Denver International Airport is your official Olympic gateway to Denver! Every effort has been made to ensure this airport welcomes visitors to our great city and provides the information they need to make their visit as smooth and enjoyable as possible. Denver International offers a full range of services, including semi-ballistic and sub-orbital flights, and it offers all the amenities travelers have come to expect from a first-class airport. If you are visiting Denver for the first time, you could not pick a better gateway than Denver International!

away with in the upgrades, arguing (correctly) that after the Olympics the traffic would go back to pre-Olympic levels. The Sioux involvement on the airport renovations was committed with the understanding that Denver would host the inter-NAN Indian 2072 stickball tournament in the inter-Olympic period. The majority of the airport renovations were done by corp sponsorship, and not even a year after the Olympics, the renovations are showing their shoddy and temporary nature. The AR environment of Denver International is out of date, still showing Olympic-aimed advertising. The one thing that is well maintained about Denver International is the tent-like appearance of the main building, which has been repainted to match the appearance of a traditional Lakota tipi.

- Security sucks here. They hired a lot of new personnel in the ramp-up to the Olympics, and they never trained them properly to use all the gizmos they built into the airport (many of which are already starting to become outdated). They're lucky they got through the games without an incident.
- 2XL
- Working in their benefit is the Sioux reputation. It doesn't matter how good the security teams actually are, people assume that if they step out of line, they'll get scalped. Stereotypes suck, except when they do some of your work for you.
- Mika

## UCAS SECTOR

### Stapleton

Stapleton Airport was the original civilian airfield that was replaced by Denver International in the 1990s, but it reopened to service the UCAS sector when the sectors were divided. Many of the original buildings had been destroyed during the decommissioning, so when it was reopened, the buildings were brand new. Despite being the oldest civilian airport, it has the newest appearance, but it sports a very utilitarian design. Since the UCAS does not have an overland connection to the Zone, on a day-to-day basis this is the busiest civilian airport, so it was unable to

DENVER FACTS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS . . . . .



Olympic Guide.....



### FLYING INTO THE UCAS SECTOR

UCAS airports are at your disposal to make sure your trip is as safe and convenient as possible. By choosing these airports, you'll ensure that you'll be getting into the heart of the city as soon as possible to enjoy your stay.

- The airports in the UCAS sector aren't showy, but they work. Sometimes as a traveler—or a runner—it's okay to go to places that don't try to call attention to themselves.
- Rigger X

expand that much more for the Olympic traffic. It was upgraded to take advantage of the Olympics, and it has the most updated AR environments. It is maintained better than most of the others. The one problem is that the runways are relatively short, which limits the numbers of the semi-ballistic flights that the airport can safely handle.

#### Peterson

Peterson was originally a military base that was converted to civilian use. Pre-Ghostwalker, it was mostly used in order to get around the prohibition against military forces inside the zone, though it did have a civilian component. At the time, the UCAS was continuously directing combat aircraft through it to keep them available. After Ghostwalker's rise, the field retained the half-civilian, half-military designation, though the military half is mostly used by the ZDF. During periods of heightened tension, the UCAS retains the right to transition aircraft through the airfield and has done so several times, which especially aggravates the Sioux military, since according to treaty they cannot block UCAS aircraft moving through the UCAS sector. Supposedly, that is one of the issues that the Sioux government would like to bring up during the treaty negotiations.

The civilian half of the airport can handle all types of aircraft, but because of the shared nature of the airport, they do not have the capacity to handle that many aircraft per hour. During the Olympics, the airport was given over to more civilian traffic, with many of the military aircraft being dispersed to temporary VTOL fields. The civilian half of the field has a recently constructed terminal that was built after the ZDF started using the field and was paid for with rental funds that the ZDF paid the airport. The new terminal is a standard civilian structure, which means it looks a little bit better than the blockhouses that make up the military side of the base.

- Peterson is tough to mess around with since the UCAS military is watching it so closely. But forget about getting in for a second—there are plenty of other options for that. What Peterson is really good for is helping you find people who are looking to get weapons at a good price, and maybe without a lot of official hassle.
- Marcos

## LAND

### RAIL

Rail traffic in Denver is plentiful, though not always as fast and luxurious as the official material makes it seem. In the areas that have been recently absorbed from the Ute Nation, the network consists of slower trains unable to travel on the fast routes, and services is not as dense as it is in the rest of the PCC.

The PCC has put a lot of resources into their rail network, and having a passenger component of it gives them several passenger rail cars that they can use for the system's real purpose: moving military equipment and troops around the country quickly. While the country has a large lift capacity via zeppelins, in any real combat situation a lot of the supplies will be moving around in the days and weeks beforehand.

You can take high-speed rail from Los Angeles to the PCC capital Santa Fe, then from there to Denver. For people who arrive via sea route to LA, rail is actually the preferred way to travel to Denver, for there is a lot less hassle taking the train than flying, and with high-speed rail the travel times are not that different.

The PCC has a reciprocal agreement with the CAS, and CAS citizens can grab a train from Fort Worth to Santa Fe. Due to the agreement, CAS citizens have a slightly easier time taking the train than flying.

The Sioux suspicion of the UCAS means that there is a lot of hoops for UCAS trains to overcome to travel through the Sioux, so it is not a popular option, while the Sioux in general do not have the population density to support regular rail service to Denver.

- The LA-to-Denver train has become the scene of intrigue and espionage not seen since the glory days of the Orient Express. Everyone is in on the act, and the porters know there is good money to be made either in being discreet or in overhearing conversations, depending on the situation. Just make sure you get to them early, so you can buy them off for your side. They tend not to accept higher bids, because they know that would make them untrustworthy in the long run, which would cut off their business.
- Fianchetto

Olympic Guide.....



### TAKING THE TRAIN

For Olympic games visitors who want to see some of the beauty of the Rockies, the Pueblo Corporate Council has a dense network of passenger rails to bring you into the FRFZ. Journey to Denver in style, speed, and comfort as some of the most beautiful scenery on the North American continent rushes by. Enjoy the comfort of the luxurious sleeper cars and arrive at your destination rested, refreshed, and ready to take in all the sites that Denver and the Olympics offer.





- One advantage a train has over a plane is that it's easier to get on board between stops. At least, conceptually it is. There are a few places along the route to Denver that can make it easier for stowaways sneak on board the train, generally spots where the landscape forces the train to slow a bit. Smugglers have designed facilities to help you get on the train at these spots. Some are built to take advantage of your physical abilities, while others can help those who work with magic.
- 2XL
- I think I can sneak aboard trains on my own, thanks.
- Haze

### DRIVING TO DENVER

The major land route into Denver from the north is Highway 87, which travels from the Sioux Nation in the FRFZ, turning into I-25 at the border. I-25 goes through the FRFZ, north to south, coming out of the Zone in PCC territory.

East to west, the major land route is Route 70, which begins in the Sioux Nation, goes through the FRFZ, and exits in the PCC. In some places these highways serve as the border between the sectors, at which point they are designated International Highways, which means they technically do not belong to any sector. Only when you exit the highway, or if the highway itself crosses wholly into a sector, is there any border control. Patrolling the international highways is the responsibility of the ZDF. Unfortunately, the ZDF are a more military force and

Olympic Guide.....



### DRIVE YOURSELF

The magic of the great road trip is still alive, and it can be an important part of your Olympics experience. Denver highways are safe and well maintained, giving you the opportunity to drive to town at your leisure and enjoy the convenience of auto travel in our city. Border crossing has been streamlined and simplified, with an eye toward getting you to where you are going while also keeping you safe.

- Which means they installed a shit-ton of scanners at each exterior checkpoint and have no qualms about confiscating anything that looks even halfway dangerous if it means they can keep traffic flowing.
- Rigger X

have limited numbers of personnel for traffic control and similar duties. While violence on the International Highways tends to be met with force, less obvious crimes generally escape unpunished, though not necessarily unnoticed. The exception is if drivers are



foolish enough to break the law in front of one of the few military police units that patrols the highways.

## LANGUAGES

While all four sectors share English, the Sioux sector has Dakota, Lakota, and Tsalagi as recognized languages, while the PCC has Spanish, Zuni, and Hopi. There are some neighborhoods in the CAS sector that insist on the use of Aztlan Spanish. What that means is that Denver Administration is legally required to offer services in all of these languages. At times the powers-that-be have pushed for English to be named the sole official language of Denver, with the UCAS being especially supportive of that, but the two Native American sectors have fought against the idea. This is another issue that will be discussed in the Denver treaty negotiations.

During the Olympics, things were far more open, with the PCC making concessions with the Saints of Salt Lake City so that they would provide translators for many different languages that were not usually supported in Denver. Additionally, the PCC and Horizon made translators and free translation applications available for free during the Olympic games. The apps were supposed to delete themselves after the Olympics were over, which of course meant that someone had the timers hacked within a week of their release, letting loose a whole stream of translation apps on the Zone.

- The hacks of the software led to a useful side effect—this software has now spread to nodes across the city, which means that if there is a decent AR overlay, you can usually get translations into any of the major languages you need. It works throughout the city, though of course not that well in the Aurora Warrens.
- Thorn

Olympic Guide.....

### SPEAK AND BE HEARD

Denver is one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world, and its inhabitants practice a wide range of customs. They, along with the government of the city, are dedicated to making the visitors to our city feel welcomed and comfortable, no matter where you come from or what language you speak. If our skilled and hospitable translators do not speak your language, they can find either an individual or a software helper that will understand your needs and communicate with you as efficiently as possible.

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### MAKING MONEY SIMPLE

For your convenience, the nuyen will be accepted throughout the Zone during the Olympics, though the individual sectors will of course accept their own currency. The standard in international currency is also the standard for the Olympics, which gives you one less worry on your visit.

## CURRENCY

After the Olympics, most of the shops throughout the Zone continued to accept nuyen, though there were some that went back to only accepting their native currency. Both the Native American sectors used the nuyen anyway, but the CAS and UCAS sectors used their own version of the dollar. Shops that did not normally accept the nuyen were perfectly willing to convert it during the Olympics, though of course that service came at higher rates than banks charge, as well as a service fee. The highest fees were in the CAS, but no sector was free of this practice.

The fact that the whole city moved to the nuyen for the Olympics brought up the possibility of making the move permanent in the new version of the treaty. The Big Ten, naturally, favor the move, but the UCAS is loathe to give up currency control, especially since it is one of the few ways they have of affecting their economy that is outside the reach of the corps.

- Don't back away from runs in this area—it's not like you have to be an expert in monetary policy or anything. There are some wonkish arguments going on behind closed doors, but at its heart this argument is about people, and the runs that are being arranged are about persuading people to do what you want them to do. We're all familiar with that kind of work.
- Stone
- UCAS council rep Iain Lesker is particularly vulnerable with the rumored Humanis ties in his past. Plenty of people will be working to make him look bad so they can get him to drop UCAS's loyalty to the dollar.
- Kat St. Irregular

Olympic Guide.....

### CLEAR SKIES AHEAD

During your time in Denver, you'll enjoy plenty of clear skies! We get the snow needed to keep the ski runs well covered, and enough sunshine to make sure people enjoy their time on the slopes. During your visit, you can expect weather that is as friendly and welcoming as our citizens!



## WEATHER

Weather in Denver is not bad. On average, six out of every seven days are free of rain or other precipitation, but because of the city's location in the Rocky Mountains, nearby areas can be hit by heavy snow and low temperatures. This is one of the major reasons the Olympics chose the location. The full city wouldn't get snowed out, but it's near lots of locations that do. That balance of snow for the major events with the ability for the city to stay functional and blizzard-free made for a good combination.

It's important to remember, though, that weather throughout the Rockies was affected by Great Ghost Dance, so occasionally rules of how the weather is supposed to behave can be thrown out the window. This situation can be worsened when big magic is happening in the area. During the Year of the Comet, weather went really strange, with out-of-season snowstorms hitting Denver, while the surrounding areas that are normally covered in snow got hit by blistering heat. There was no rhyme or reason to it. Strange changes in the weather are usually warning signs that something big is going down. Just before the Olympics, for instance, there were a couple days of really strange weather, and there were a half-dozen athletes caught using various rituals and other magical cheats in the days before the opening ceremonies. All of these rituals were pushing something.

Besides the weather, when you are in Denver you need to remember to deal with the oxygen starvation tied to the high altitude. It is not that bad—you won't pass out or anything—but by the same token you will feel it when exercising. Or when you are running for your life.

If you do not have the time to be acclimatized to the altitude, there are two quick ways around it. The first is a shot of a drug whose proper name has more syllables than it is possible to pronounce in one breath. Someone nicknamed it tri-ox, after some old-school broadcast, and it basically helps you breathe in high altitudes. A shot lasts a week, tapering off in effectiveness over that time, and it doesn't really help you acclimatize. During the Olympics they had nurses at all the airports that could give you a shot before you left the pressure-controlled airport for a modest fee, and some of those nurses are still around, especially in high tourist seasons.

What the nurses don't tell you is that the shots they give you at the airport include RFIDs. They will naturally break down after a month or so, since they have to be so small to be included in the shot. They act as additional identification that is encoded to the ID you give the nurse when you get the shot. That means that if you try to pass through a checkpoint with an ID different than the one you arrived in Denver with, there will be questions. If you absolutely need to have a shot, either do it before you arrive, or look for a street doc once you arrive.

- These shots are a great way to get someone arrested. You can either lift some from a nurse, or pay her a little to make her your willing helper, and get them encoded to some ID or another. Then, inject them into your unwitting mark. The next time they pass some checkpoint or another, they'll get nabbed for the RFIDs not matching their real one. They won't be held for long, but they can

either be taken out of your way or put in a nice confined space for a time.

- Riser

The other workaround is a modified pollution mask. In some cities, air quality is so bad that wearing a pollution filter is mandatory. In most cities, you might need one only for bad quality air days. You can buy a pollution filter mask in Denver that has a very limited supply of oxygen. It has galvanic sensors built in the seal touching the skin, so when you are exercising heavily, it squirts some additional oxygen into the filtered air mix, giving you a bit more air. The mask doesn't have a large supply of oxygen—that would make it too bulky. If you are planning on running a marathon, think of another solution to your problem, but if you are thinking of something that will be good just for peak usage, this will work. It is also useful in helping acclimatize you to the altitude, as it can squirt more or less oxygen as needed, so how much it gives you can be altered as you get used to the thin air.

## GETTING AROUND IN DENVER

### CROSSING BORDERS

The inter-sector borders are not as demanding as the checkpoints at the exterior borders. The sectors depend on the outer borders to do the heavy lifting so that they do not need to be quite as stringent, and they work to make border-crossing go as quickly as possible. That doesn't mean they make it easy. Scanners check for identification, explosives, and weapons, though they grant a certain amount of leeway. One weapon in the car is not likely to get you stopped—the sectors tend to have a degree of respect for the principle of self-defense. Multiple guns, though, will attract unwanted attention.

That also doesn't mean that it makes them quick. No matter how convenient you try to be, a decent check takes time, and no checkpoint can handle the full brunt of rush-hour traffic, or even just a mid-day surge. Any highway is subject to getting snarled at any time that's not in the middle of the night.

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### GETTING ACROSS TOWN

In Denver, we know how important it is for people to get where they need to go. During the Olympics, drama can happen in a fraction of a second, and we want to make sure no one misses a second because of transportation woes. We've committed every effort to making border checkpoints as fast and efficient as possible, and we also have an affordable, comprehensive rapid transit system. For longer trips across the sprawl, there are short regional flights to take you from airport to airport, or you can take advantage of helicopter transportation. Don't forget to take advantage of Denver's cab service, which features the friendliest drivers on the continent!

Knowing full well that the human element can be the weak link in any security chain, the checkpoints often try to employ drones and automated systems as much as possible. The PCC leads the way in automation; Sioux checkpoints rely on humans the most (though many of these humans are Awakened).

The border checkpoints don't worry about customs much for passenger cars—your commlink has a record of your recent purchases and where they were made, so a quick wireless data exchange takes care of those payments in a flash. Trucks are another matter, and they're subject to more detailed scans to make sure they're not carrying anything besides what their manifest says they have.

- Look, border checkpoints between sectors are a joke. The sectors may try to control how people move into their territory, but Denver is a built-up city, and the borders between the sectors are quite long. They can build all the walls they want, but in the meantime people will be making holes or tunnels so that they can avoid the checkpoints. There are enough illicit paths around town that only a sucker would try to smuggle something through a normal checkpoint.
- Rigger X
- Berlin managed to keep an urban border fairly secure for a number of years with far fewer tech advantages than the sectors currently have at their disposal. I should add, though, they also had a certain ruthlessness, specifically on the East German side, that the sectors tend not to share.
- Aufheben

## PEDESTRIAN AND AUTOMOBILE TRAFFIC

Denver is not very pedestrian friendly outside of the Hub, and only marginally friendly to surface street traffic. The Hub acts as the center of the city—during the day it is filled with businesses, while in the evening clubs and restaurants welcome the Awakened community as they come out to mingle. Considering the physical danger that some of the Awakened face using public transportation, and the difficulty of a centaur finding a car that they can drive, most of the Hub's businesses have worked hard to make their area pedestrian friendly. They know that by encouraging the Awakened community to flock to the Hub, they also encourage tourism, since the Hub's Awakened community has become famous. The businesses that cater to metas are often filled with people hoping to discreetly observe some of the more rare Awakened races. Many of the Hub's streets become pedestrian-only during the evenings and weekends, with visitors encouraged to park at garages around the edges of the pedestrian areas and walk in. The Hub is also entirely walled in and split into two different sectors, so that moving into and out of it is very difficult. The surface border stations at the Hub are the slowest in the city—not only do the people have to be examined, but their vehicles also have to be searched. The leniency on individual weapons that occurs in the rest of the city disappears here. Depending on where the vehicle and the passengers are from and the current political climate, vehicles may be stripped down to the chassis for the search of contraband, and the searching authority is under no obligation to return said vehicle in driving condition.

- Before you ask—yes, they've heard of the non-intrusive scanners on the market. When they take a car apart, it's more of a nuisance/intimidation tactic, rather than because they think they'll actually find anything. Their excuse is that there are always "new shielding materials" being developed that they have to account for, and they can't afford to not be thorough. But that's just talk. They take cars apart because they want to.
- 2XL
- Anyone thinking of adjusting the treaty in a way that might make these searches less invasive, or less prevalent?
- Sounder
- Not really. All the members of the council have benefited from these searches at some point in the past, and politicians are loath to give up on tools that work for them.
- Kay St. Irregular

These detailed searches serve a secondary purpose of discouraging auto traffic in the Hub. The city in general is trying to become more pedestrian friendly, but these efforts face an uphill battle. Despite attempts to compact the sprawl due to treaty requirements, the city remains still too spread out for easy pedestrian travel. Add in the poor road maintenance in the Aurora Warren, the sections of the former Ute Sector that the PCC is still trying to bring up to code, and the deliberate policies of the Sioux, UCAS and the former Aztlan Sector of making their pedestrian paths and surface streets unfriendly in order to slow down armored and infantry movements, you can see why public transportation is a popular option for Denver's citizens.

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

### Maglev

For longer-distance travel across the sprawl, there is a elevated maglev train that runs between Boulder and Colorado Springs, with a major stop at Union Station downtown. The maglev has multiple lines, so not only are there express trains, there are also local ones that service stops in between. People are only examined when they leave the train at a station for border control, which naturally leads to people attempting to exit trains while they are in motion. Those attempts are generally not successful, though, because the elevated nature of the train means that it is easy to keep surveillance on it, while the speed makes it difficult for most to survive jumping off. Most smugglers opt for hacking security instead of putting life and limb at risk.

- Then most smugglers are boring and will never feel the rush of sticking the landing after a dismount from one of these babies.
- Ma'Fan
- Trid footage or it didn't happen.
- Haze

The system is alert for sabotage. Speeds are controlled remotely, and if a train's speed drops under what it should be, a recon drone immediately sets its eyes on it. It's not a perfect system—for one thing, the drones cannot always get an immediate



lock on the target—but in general it helps ensure that the trains get to where they are going when they are supposed to.

During the Olympics, there were a number of on-train border control officers that would check passes as trains crossed from sector to sector, mainly to save time at checkpoints at the end. An individual officer cannot carry the array of tools that a full checkpoint has, but the system seemed to work without incident during the games, and there has been some noise about reinstating it.

The maglev route to Boulder is likely to see increased traffic from Horizon staffers shuttling between there and their Hub offices. The corporation has been working on making some sort of arrangement to streamline procedures for their people (probably thanks to a generous contribution to the FRT authority), so it may be worth your while to give any cover identities you use in town a Horizon affiliation.

### Subway

Front Range Transit International Incorporated has a slightly strange setup. At one time each of the six sectors had an equal share of the company—not that it meant much, since it was a money-losing proposition. Due to the way the council was set up, there were not many ways to change that. When the CAS absorbed the Aztlan sector, they did not take on Aztlan's share of the transit company, as they considered it a liability to be avoided. That ownership percentage was received by Ghostwalker.

When the PCC took on the Ute, one of the conditions of the absorption that was jammed onto the PCC by the international banks was that the PCC had to take on all of the Ute's government's debts. That essentially meant that the PCC took on the Ute's ownership stake. The end result is that between the PCC and Ghostwalker, they have a fifty percent stake on the FTRII, and they are in agreement often enough that they can actually get things done. One thing they were able to do is expand the subway system.

At the moment, the city essentially possesses four separate subway systems, one for each sector. The systems do not directly connect, but there are transfer stations that allow passengers to switch from one line to another. These stations are for switching lines only—there is no street-level access to transfer stations. The scans at the transfer stations are quick—they don't want to clog the works with long lines of people—but the scanners in use are powerful.

- Like any subway system in the world, Denver's got unused tunnels, and various forms of life have taken shelter there. Sometimes it's just the homeless looking for shelter from the rain and snow, but there are a few tunnels with more interesting denizens. One tunnel supposedly shelters an incubus, while another is said to host meetings of Aztlan expatriates plotting for Aztechnology's return to the city. Council members occasionally make noise about sweeping the tunnels clean, but Ghostwalker ignores them, which leads people to believe he's got something going on down there, too.
- Bull

There are bus routes that cover almost all the places the trains don't go (except for the Aurora Warrens), but most of the coverage is limited to business hours, with off-work hours and weekends

having far more limited coverage. None of the bus routes cross the sector borders, though some of the routes end at a border crossing, and the FTRII makes an effort to have these routes sync up with each other.

Since the Olympics are over, the PCC has decided there is no longer a pressing need for expanded public transit. The FTRII is still a money loser, so the PCC wants the ownership shares rebalanced between the sector government. The other sector governments, however, have displayed no interest in increasing their financial burden. This issue has been raised in the Denver treaty negotiations, but since no one has a really strong position to advocate, most observers believe the status quo will continue unless someone decides to make it priority.

### Car

Route 6 is the main east-west highway through town, and 25 is the main north-south route. Near the Hub, these routes are tough to travel, but within their sectors they can move at a decent clip. My favorite route out of town is taking 6 through the Sioux sector, as long as you don't have an aura that Sioux security is looking out for. The road's not in great shape, but there's usually not a lot of highway traffic, and speed limits are casually enforced.

The Hub offers plenty of taxis, as do the administrative sections of each sector. Beyond that, though, cabs are scarce, and you cannot pay a driver enough to take you to the Warrens. They'll take you across sector borders if you want, but if there's a wait at the checkpoint they'll start charging you by the minute, and any fines against the vehicle will be passed right on to you.

### Air

With cross-sector auto traffic being problematic, a lot of higher-powered types opt for air travel. Every major airport in the city receives regional flights, and shuttles bounce back and forth across the city. Commuter zeppelins were put to use in the Olympics, but their slow speed has kept them from catching on with the general public. They still see use as a tourist attraction, though, and shipping zeppelins are able to navigate the mountainous terrain and make precision deliveries of supplies.

Regional flights may be fast, but they still come with the headaches and lines that accompany all air travel. Some individuals are choosing to live in fly-in communities, groups of houses clustered around small airstrips. The treaty's anti-sprawl requirements tend to make it tough to start new communities of this sort, but a few have taken hold, primarily in the Sioux and PCC sectors.

- I love these things. Yeah, they'll notice when a strange plane lands on their strip, and they'll usually call the cops, but response time is far less than what it would be at a regular airport. They're great for a fast landing.
- Rigger X

Helicopters are used by many executives in the city, since they let you go exactly where you want to go (provided it has a helipad). Hughes Stallions dot the skies, and the rich and famous are always competing with each other to see just how much luxury they can cram into a single craft. Right now, Johann Castle is believed to have the lead, mainly due to the full bedroom he has in one of his craft.

Of course, no discussion of air travel in Denver would be complete without a mention of the mighty thunderbird. The t-bird is not, of course, the craft of the powerful executives or high-level politicians, but even though they don't fly it, that doesn't mean they don't use it. Everyone knows how popular t-birds are among smugglers, and for a time there were people agitating for a shoot-on-sight law for any t-birds that took to the skies in the area. The thing is, while the various sectors don't like people smuggling things into their territory, they also tend to have their own smuggling operations that they care about. They might get to down some of their rivals if a t-bird bounty was enacted, but they'd also lose some of their own craft. To forestall this, sector governments started finding more legitimate uses for the t-bird. They promoted the use of them in aerial sports, encouraged small shipments of goods to be transported from sector to sector with them, and found other uses. The eventual effect was that you could no longer see a t-bird in the sky and assume it was a smuggler.

This was good for smugglers in that it gave them cover, but it also increased demand for the aircraft, driving up prices. Most smugglers, though, don't mind the increased prices if it means they don't get shot at as often.

- Word is that at least one of the fly-in communities Jones mentioned is a smuggler haven. They keep some craft other than t-birds on the runway just so they're not obvious, but if you watch what actually takes off and lands there, it'll be clear what kind of business is going on.
- Rigger X
- It's a foolish move. Making a permanent location just gives law enforcement something to find. I expect a large dragon to be cleared for landing on that strip before long.
- 2XL

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

### IN THE SECTORS

The security companies each run their own sector according to the laws of the nation the sector is part of, and in general have very little to do with the other police forces in Denver. While there are mutual aid agreements in place, it would take a major crisis for any force to call upon them. Any assistance they ask is usually handled on the corporate level; for instance, Eagle has purchased the services of both the Pueblo Security and Lone Star in past when they have been overloaded, or the case required specialized skills or tools they did not have in house. These agreements are typically made outside the mutual assistance pacts. There is a central information exchange to which all of the police operations are supposed to contribute to ensure that cross-sector crime is followed up on, but the actual compliance for major crimes is fairly low. Law enforcement agencies like to take care of their own major crimes in-house, instead of letting some other company get the glory of a high-profile nab. Sometimes, though, a crime is so major that the various agencies can't help but work together, as was the case when the serial killer Charlie Wire was determined to be in Denver. In all probability there were missed chances in tracking him because the information for the first case was not



### KEEPING YOU SAFE

Denver governments contract with the finest security corporations in the world to preserve the safety of its residents, and they have helped create an atmosphere that visitors cannot help but admire. Along with the work occurring within each sector are the efforts of the Zone Defense Force, one of the premier law-enforcement bodies in the world. Like the Texas Rangers or Canadian Mounties, the Zone Defense Force is a group of skilled professionals that provide role models for old and young alike. Your visit will be safer because of their vigilance.

shared with all of the police forces in the FRFZ until a KSAF stringer reported that another Charlie Wire case had occurred, suddenly focusing attention to the case in Denver.

Knight Errant provides security to the UCAS sector. The loss of the CAS sector stings, and Alice Bujold runs operations as if she has something to prove—though she is often willing to deal with difficult cases by pushing criminals across the border and letting them run amok in the CAS sector.

Lone Star recently won the CAS contract, which took a little sting out of their loss of their longtime position in Seattle. Espionage and counter-intelligence is not exactly the Star's strong suit, and they are struggling with how to work in this environment. They are looking for partners to help them use intelligence in their law enforcement efforts, with Aegis Cognito being a leading contender.

Pueblo Security Enterprises, Inc. continues to administer the law in the PCC. While supposedly an independent corporation, that's in name only—everyone knows that the PCC directs PSE's operations. Their methods are a little unusual, as PCC's shaman-based judicial system demands a different sort of information gathering than conventional law enforcement requires.

Eagle Security runs things in the Sioux sector, and they feature the heaviest use of shamans of any law enforcement body in the city. Their mundane investigations sometimes struggle, but their spirit-based work is generally very solid—until recently. Word is that some Eagle investigators have complained about something being “not right” with the local spirits.

- What affects the mightiest spirit affects them all.
- Man-of-Many-Names

### PRIVATE SECURITY

Private security in Denver is a burgeoning business, especially as the Denver Treaty negotiations begin. Nations are involved in trying to determine what each other is planning to bring to the table, while other actors work to safeguard the knowledge they possess. In some cases, it is easier to steal the information from someone else who has already stolen it rather than taking it from the original owner of the information, so private security is



sometimes hired to monitor what thefts are taking place and to see if they can lift something from the thieves.

The main challenge of doing so is that the four largest North American security organizations already have metropolitan contracts in Denver. Knight Errant, Lone Star, and Eagle Security are the three largest private providers of security on the continent, while Pueblo Security Enterprises is one of the largest public providers (if you include their military assets). So if a security corporation is hired in an area where they also have the public security contract, there is some concern about workers from the two contracts sharing information with each other. Now, normally, information sharing is considered a good thing in law enforcement, but the corps that are doing the hiring are not looking at this from a crime-fighting perspective. Their concern is that if they hire a company to do some private work, they'll share info with the branch working on the sector contract, and all of the sudden some of their proprietary corporate knowledge will leak out. By the nature of the public sector contract, security corps will not put the interests of a corp above the interest of the sector, and that's the kind of thing that makes corps nervous.

In an attempt to avoid this difficulty, most corporations look for private security firm that is not affiliated with the public security provider in their sector. The recent switching of firms between the UCAS and CAS sectors has created problems, as corporations are trapped into contracted agreements, unable to switch until their contracts expire. This has introduced some stasis into security contracts in these two sectors, as some companies are content to have their contractors tread water until the expiration date hits. From our perspective, this means that some private security may be a little less vigilant than they would normally be.

Some corporations have tried to avoid this whole mess by simply not going with any of the major security corporations. The megacorps have had some success in selling the services of their in-house security to other allied corporations, but no matter how good an alliance is, no corporation is entirely comfortable with having their security being handled by a potential competitor. As a result, several local security companies, most notably Cyclops Security Services, have been growing in the UCAS and CAS sectors. The most significant security corporation that does not have a city contract is Wolverine, and their reputation as head breakers and gangbusters actually serves them well here, especially with corporations that have facilities in or near the Aurora Warrens. Centurion has also recently snapped up a few contracts, some of their first in North America, usually acquired through word of mouth by corporate executives that had experience with them in Europe, Africa, or South America. Ares HardCorps is considered too close to Knight Errant, even though the executives of the two Ares companies have feuded over the years. The chance exists that one or the other may try to use information to get gain advantage over the other, so if a company has a reason to mistrust Knight Errant they also tend to do the same with HardCorps.

- There are some clear advantages to coming to town with a Horizon cover ID that we've already mentioned, but a Wolverine cover is pretty good, too. First of all, you get the Wolverine reputation working on your side, which can make some people nervous from the get-go. Second, their lack of city sector contracts means they're viewed as independent, which means they're getting

business from all sorts of different corps, especially the locals worried about the AAAs muscling in on their turf. That makes their nodes and their people goldmines of interesting data.

- Riser
- They also have this one operative, Miles Blank, who's trouble. He's the guy they call in when any case gets knotted up, and he gets things untied and smooth. He's built like a fireplug and has an affable, loud demeanor, but he can turn on a dime and go to vicious in the blink of an eye.
- Sticks

## THE ZONE DEFENSE FORCE

The Zone Defense Force was the creation of the negotiations of Ghotwalker and the council of Denver after Ghostwalker's appearance upended the old order in Denver. As the result of Ghostwalker's appearance, the Zone was militarized (though for all purposes the Zone had never really been demilitarized), and most of the sector governments ended up playing a bunch of games to hide their military assets. They'd claim they were "civilian security forces," or they'd stow their military forces just across the border in their home nation, or they'd keep moving military forces through their sector as if they were "transitioning." All of those tricks and more were used to keep military forces available for use in their respective sectors, and since everyone knew that the other sectors had forces at their beck and call, they weren't about to take their own troops out of the area. This strategy was legitimized by the use of the CAS forces to defeat and eject the Aztlan and Aztechnology forces from their sector. After that, it was decided that the ZDF would need to serve as an over-arching military authority in the city.

The ZDF is currently undergoing a transition following the retirement of Colonel David Benjamin. The new commander, Colonel Javier Hototo, is from the PCC, and he brings an increased emphasis on Awakened techniques and personnel. He also seems to have an increased appreciation for what t-birds bring to the Denver economy, so pilots can expect even less harassment than they've endured in recent years—though if the ZDF continues easing up, the sector governments might decide to take things into their own hands, which could get ugly in a number of ways.

- Civil war-like ways, to be specific. The sectors will down other people's t-birds, of course, not their own, and that will make the other sectors mad. And then you get escalation, and anger, and things that might make Ghostwalker step in. I'd recommend the ZDF get control of the situation before it gets to that
- Kay St. Irregular

Though the units themselves are kept intact at the company level, on the administrative end of things, soldiers that answer to each of the sector governments are intermingled into administrative sections, so that no one nation has presumptive control of any one task. On interesting quirk of the ZDF's structure is that you can still find a few people in the administrative section who wear Ute Nation uniforms, even though the nation itself has not existed for years. These are personnel who were seconded to the ZDF for the remainder of their service term, and their pay comes out of



the Zone's budget. In the last years of its existence, this was a place where the Ute dumped soldiers who were too skilled to simply get rid of but did not have the right attitude to serve in an increasingly corrupt military. Due to the legal nature of their seconding, they are still legally considered Ute soldiers even though their nation no longer exists.

The PCC has made offers to entice the officers to either retire or transfer formally into the PCC military, but a number have refused, vowing to wear the Ute Nation uniform until they retire. The PCC is concerned that these Ute soldiers have the potential to unite the various factions within the former Ute nation and cause trouble, but so far none of them have made any such moves, though several have been approached by Ute factions.

Olympic Guide.....

**CARING FOR YOUR NEEDS**

We want your visit to Denver to be as safe, healthy, and happy as possible. No one wants to have to visit a hospital or medical center while on vacation, but it's comforting to know that if you need it, some of the finest medical establishments in North America are available to you. Premier medical services corporations DocWagon and CrashCart cover the city, while the new Aurora Village Medical Sports Center offers the finest in care to visiting athletes and others who need its services. Whatever may happen to you during your visit, be assured that Denver is ready to take care of you!

## MEDICAL FACILITIES

One of the half-decent moves made by the old Denver Administration was giving every legal resident of Denver Basic-level medical care through DocWagon, thanks to the desire of the council to avoid a rash of problems that might come from citizens of the Aztlan sector, since the Aztlan government demonstrated a complete lack of interest in health coverage. When Aztlan was kicked out, the issue was raised that perhaps the issue could be devolved back to the sectors, but after negotiations the entire zone remained covered at the Basic level. Each sector, however, is free to layer additional benefits on top of that. The council also opened up the FRFZ medical/ambulance contract to more bidding, though there has not been a really viable alternative to DocWagon because of their advantage of having already built up and paid for the infrastructure to deliver their services. CrashCart has a presence in every sector, though they have nowhere near DocWagon's depth, and BUMC is set up to provide service both in the Hub and out in Boulder Springs.

- If you decide to go with another service provider, or if you want to upgrade your service package, you cannot transfer the value of the Basic coverage or apply it against an upgraded level of care.

And if you sign up for another service provider, you don't retain the your Basic DocWagon account. If your coverage from another company lapses, you have to petition to be back under Denver's general plan. It's just a lot of paperwork pushing, but if you forget to do it, I think the DocWagon guys get a good laugh out of it if they happen to pass you by while you are bleeding into the gutters.

- Stone
- All four sectors cover some additional stuff beyond the Basic Level Care, but it's not the stuff most of us are interested in. Unless you want to take advantage of the free annual mammogram that each CAS citizen can have after the age of 35?
- Kane

## THE HARGREAVES CLINIC

One of the understated tragedies of the Awakening is the shortened lifespan of the goblinized. At the turn of the century, the developed nations had life expectancies in the mid-70s, and the expectation was that this expectancy would continue to grow. The chaos of the intervening years has kept this from happening, and on top of that studies have shown that the goblinized have much shorter life expectancies. Currently, the only known method of extending the life of the goblinized are leonization techniques. This will extend the life of virtually any known animal, sentient or not, but it is extremely expensive. The best estimates conclude that there are perhaps a thousand leonization treatments done globally yearly, limited by cost and the relatively few specialists that are capable of the procedures.

The Hargreaves Clinic was originally founded with the goal of finding a selective way of returning the life expectancy of the goblinized back to human standards. In that, the clinic has failed, but it has been successful in treating a host of other specialized diseases and conditions of the goblinized.

It was during the Year of the Comet, when UGE broke out, that the clinic first went outside of its gerontology focus. They were among the few clinics that were capable of handling extreme cases of UGE and had the knowledge to treat cases of partial UGE. The Year of the Comet also proved that goblinization was not just medical but also a mystical condition, and the clinic remains at the forefront in investigating the intersection of DNA and magic. Unfortunately, there are so many avenues of research, and the megacorps are willing to pay far more than most private institutions, that it is hard for the clinic to retain researchers. It has been the target of a dozen unfriendly extractions in the last decade. Despite some rumors to the contrary, the clinic retains a good reputation and has opened an extension in the Hub that specializes in emergency care for the Awakened community there. This serves two purposes: it not only is a revenue generator for the clinic, but it also allows researchers access to a wide pool of patients that includes goblinized, UGE, and HMMVV varieties of metahumanity.

- What are these "rumors to the contrary" Jones mentions?
- /dev/grll
- There have been some vague assertions that the reason so many HMMVV patients stream into Hargreaves is not because the clinic



is treating them, but because it's feeding them. The rumors are baseless, though, and are probably being spread by Humanis and its ilk. They hate to see anyone looking out for metas.

- Hannibelle

## THE AURORA VILLAGE SPORTS MEDICAL CENTER

The Aurora Village Sports Medical Center was an outgrowth of the Olympics, the joint creation of a half-dozen medical corporations that sponsored it. Equipped with the latest sports medicine equipment, the original expectation was that after the Olympics, the medical center would be closed down. But with so many corporations and North American nations moving their Olympic and other sports training facilities to Denver to take advantage of the infrastructure that was built there, the facility has been made permanent, though there are concerns that several corporations will use the facility as way to spy on each others' sport teams.

- "Concerns"? Hell, it's not a bug, it's a feature. That's why so many of them are funding the thing still. They know their athletes will be spied on, but their arrogance tells them that the information they gather on their competition will give them the edge they need to beat back anything their competitors may gain.
- Cosmo
- This place is also great for sports docs testing out their latest biotech, performance-enhancing cocktails. I'm kind of surprised there's not a scrapheap full of discarded, twitching athletes sitting in a back alley behind the place. Any experiment has its failures.
- Butch

## MEDIA

### NEWS

As is the case everywhere in recent years, Horizon has put its stamp on the city. Its conquest of Truman Distribution Network made an immediate impact, and Horizon wasted no time packaging the information they wanted to get out there into news and entertainment broadcasts. Horizon knows what side its bread is

battered on, so their newscasts are not exactly scathing critiques of Ghostwalker's administration. They are not, however, the government shells that the voice-of-the-government *Rocky Mountain Post* is, and occasionally nuggets of truth accidentally pass through their channels.

Besides Horizon, the other growing power on the Denver media scene is the Native American Broadcast Service. NABS came into its own with the ground-breaking investigative reporting it did during the Olympics, and it has carried that same spirit over into the treaty negotiations. They package the best of their treaty-related program into a weekly program called *Discord in Denver*. Their reporters have an eye for secrets and know a lot about espionage techniques (the better to expose them). Keep an eye out for these guys—if you see them on the scene while you're trying to work, remember that they're not there to help you out.

- Some corporations and sector governments have taken to using NABS reporters as a kind of discount intelligence service. They feed them anonymous tips about things they think are going on, and then let the reporters do the actual digging. If the reporters find anything, they conveniently report back in the form of a broadcast.
- Kay St. Irregular
- You have to be careful, though. If you give a reporter too many bad tips, they stop listening to you.
- Sunshine

The Free Zone Voice, despite its continued lack of viewers, muddles along, providing earnest reporting and detailed coverage of public affairs and public meetings. They don't have much of an investigative staff, so you can't look to them for groundbreaking news, but they provide a lot of the raw material that people who know about policy and government affairs can use to figure out what's going on behind the scenes and what might be coming down the pike.

Also managing to stay afloat is KMAG, which has actually become a minor media empire of a sort. It's not going to challenge the big boys, but with its news offerings, MeFeeds from its most popular reporters, and simsense recreations of sensational crimes and current events, it has carved a niche for itself. While the Free Zone Voice provides the straight information about what happened during treaty negotiations on any given day, KMAG provides the investigative toughness, scrappiness, and creativity to help you understand what's going on behind the scenes.

- If you watch *Discord in Denver* and regularly check in on the MeFeed of KMAG's Dinah Crow, you'll be pretty well informed about the current status of the treaty negotiations.
- Sunshine

### ARTS

The Heritage Museum in the PCC sector has an excellent collection of Native American art, but to some people that's not enough. It's been criticized for being too mainstream and too safe, and for not giving voice to some of the edgier elements of Native culture.

Olympic Guide.....

### ENJOY YOURSELF!

While the action and pageantry of the Olympics will certainly take up much of your time, Denver offers a wide range of entertainment and cultural offerings to appeal to any interests. The concert offerings in the Hub are on par with any major city in the world, and Denver's museums boast excellent collections of modern art as well as works by the old masters. While you're in town, you should sample everything Denver has to offer—and be sure to watch the *Rocky Mountain Post Daily Wrap* for a rundown on all the excitement from the day at the games!



- You can say that again. If you put any sort of representation of Daniel Howling Coyote in your art, it's not getting into the museum. The man still has the power to ruffle feathers.
- Mika

The Denver Art Museum's collection has improved over the years, and lately they have been at the forefront of modern meta-human art. Their opening night receptions draw a who's-who of Denver's rich and powerful, meaning they're great opportunities for making connections and eavesdropping on very informative conversations.

- Just remember that museums are used to housing very expensive objects, so they know a thing or two about security. Don't expect to just waltz in there.
- Stone

In the former Aztlan sector, the Chessman Park Conservatory remains a great collection of Aztlan-based plants, and its connection to the Aztec Cultural Studies Center means it could be a good place to find Denverites who are hiding secret connections to Aztlan. Aside from that, there are rumors that the horticulturalists there are expanding their horizons and working with some Awakened plants. If they are, they haven't put any of them on public display.

- The use of Sangre del Diablo trees in the Az-Am war has a lot of people thinking about how to use Awakened plants to make battlefields more advantageous for them. I expect to see growth in the field of parobotany.
- Elijah

## MUSIC

Denver has a thriving music scene, and the undisputed king of it is the dragon Perianwyr. With Weekday Eclipse, which is both the hottest club in town as well as a trend-setting music label, Peri is introducing tomorrow's stars to the scene while also keeping the flame of the past burning. Thanks to the vast archive left to him by Dunkelzahn, Peri's got a deep reservoir of music to call on, and he also has enough taste to bring a steady stream of quality acts into his club. Weekday Eclipse is full of music execs looking to make a big signing, musicians trying to catch a break, and aficionados taking in the whole atmosphere.

The Hub has plenty of other fine venues for listening to music, including the Luxe, the Fillmore Auditorium, and the Amber Glow. The latter is particularly supportive of metahuman bands, and centaur group Thunder and the Prairie Boys recently made a rare club appearance there that almost shattered the stage with their percussive stomping.

- I was a mess for a week after that. I kept turning around, thinking I was hearing heavy footsteps behind me, but it was just the after-effect of the constant thumping in my ears. What a great show.
- Rigger X

The historic Red Rocks Amphitheatre remains one of the most spectacular settings to listen to music on the planet, and

Horizon is very happy to have ownership of it. It came at a price—Ghostwalker gets a healthy cut of the proceeds of the shows—but being able to put their name on this area landmark gave Horizon an instant boost in local credibility.

## NIGHTLIFE

Denver has the usual suspects—concerts, restaurants, theater, etc.—but there are a few choice venues to check out where business gets done. The chaos of the Splatter Bar and its perpetual game of Miracle Shooter don't seem like the ideal place for a business conversation, but the surrounding chaos makes it easy not to be noticed. Make sure you ignore the tyros who walk in there an act like being a good shot at the bar has any relevance in the real world.

The PCC inherited "jurisdiction" over the Lakeside Amusement Park when they absorbed the Ute Nation, and the casino is still going strong. The Diamond Jack Casino downtown has bled away some of the tourist dollars from Lakeside, but it has maintained its reputation as the place where serious gamblers play. It's also maintained its reputation of the place where organized crime figures surface to give the veneer of legality to their activities.

Goodfriends, in the CAS sector, would have run out of its nine lives by now if it were a cat, but as a club, it somehow keeps going, despite countless ownership changes and reinventions. In its current incarnation, the name is ironic, since its known as the place to go to make a quick, casual connection with an attractive someone-or-other. You'd think that after a certain amount of scandals, Denver's rich and powerful would stop getting caught in flagrante delicto there, but old habits are hard to break.

- Knowing how often the stuff that happens in Goodfriends is used as blackmail fodder, the owners tried to get on the act by installing cameras all over the place. The ZDF put a stop to that pretty quick, and word was that they were operating on orders from the top. Goodfriends got to be the place it is because it was famous for its discretion, and GW knows how valuable places like that are. While the staff won't rat you out, the other patrons are always a risk.
- Haze

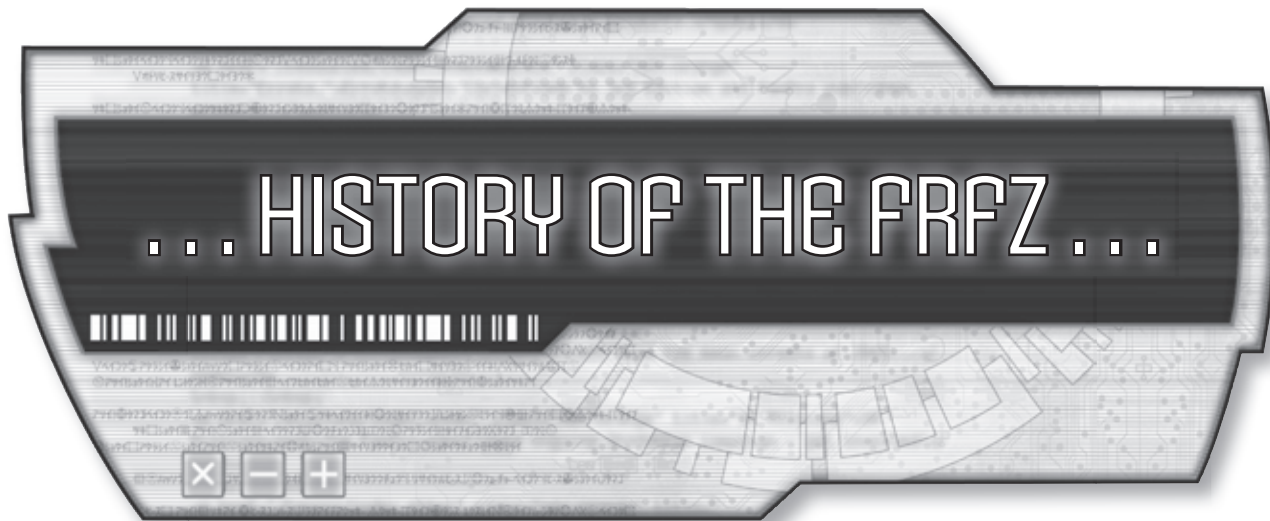
## SPORTS

Denver sports fans are dedicated and passionate, and the center of their universe is the Denver Sports Complex in the UCAS sector. The crown jewel of this complex is Broncomania Stadium, where the Olympic opening and closing ceremonies were held. The Broncos, naturally, play in the stadium, while the Nuggets have a basketball arena in the complex. Denver's urban brawl heroes, the Thunderheads, also have offices there, though of course they're not allowed to stage matches anywhere near this expensive piece of real estate.

- One cover identity I've enjoyed using is as a recruiter for the Thunderheads. Send people on an audition, tell them you're making conditions as realistic as possible, and they'll do just about anything for you because they're so desperate for a shot at being on the team. I once literally had someone run through a wall for me. Too bad there was an ork with a Ruger on the other side.
- Thorn







**Posted by: Kay St. Irregular**

While the history of the city of Denver goes back more than two hundred years, that's not what concerns us right now. Understanding the city as a whole may help you understand why it's laid out the way it is, and some of the characteristics of the natives (like their devotion to football), but to really understand how Denver got to be what it is today, you don't have to cover two hundred years of history. You just have to go back twelve years and hit some high points.

## YEAR OF THE COMET

Some people believe the story of modern Denver begins with the signing of the first treaty. They make a good case, but the real transformational event came in the Year of the Comet, while Ghostwalker escaped from the Washington Rift, headed west, and eventually rampaged through Denver. Afterward, when he installed himself as the head of the Denver Front Range Free Zone, the new leadership and the removal of Aztechnology fundamentally changed the balance of power in the area. The divided city remained divided, but it had a clear, strong ruler at the top of the messy heap.

## THE SECOND TREATY OF DENVER

After Ghostwalker seized power in the city, it became clear that the treaty needed some significant modifications. Some of the changes were not about writing new sections of the treaty, but enforcing and implementing the provisions that already existed. Before Ghostwalker arrived, the council was seen as an ineffectual body, since they couldn't agree on anything. That left city administrators to do pretty much whatever it wanted, since they lacked any effective oversight.

A detailed revision of the treaty may have more clearly established what the council should and should not have been doing, but in the rush following Ghostwalker's arrival, there was no time for a wide-ranging renegotiation process. During the Year of the Comet, so much was happening that Ghostwalker's appearance, while of concern, was not the only

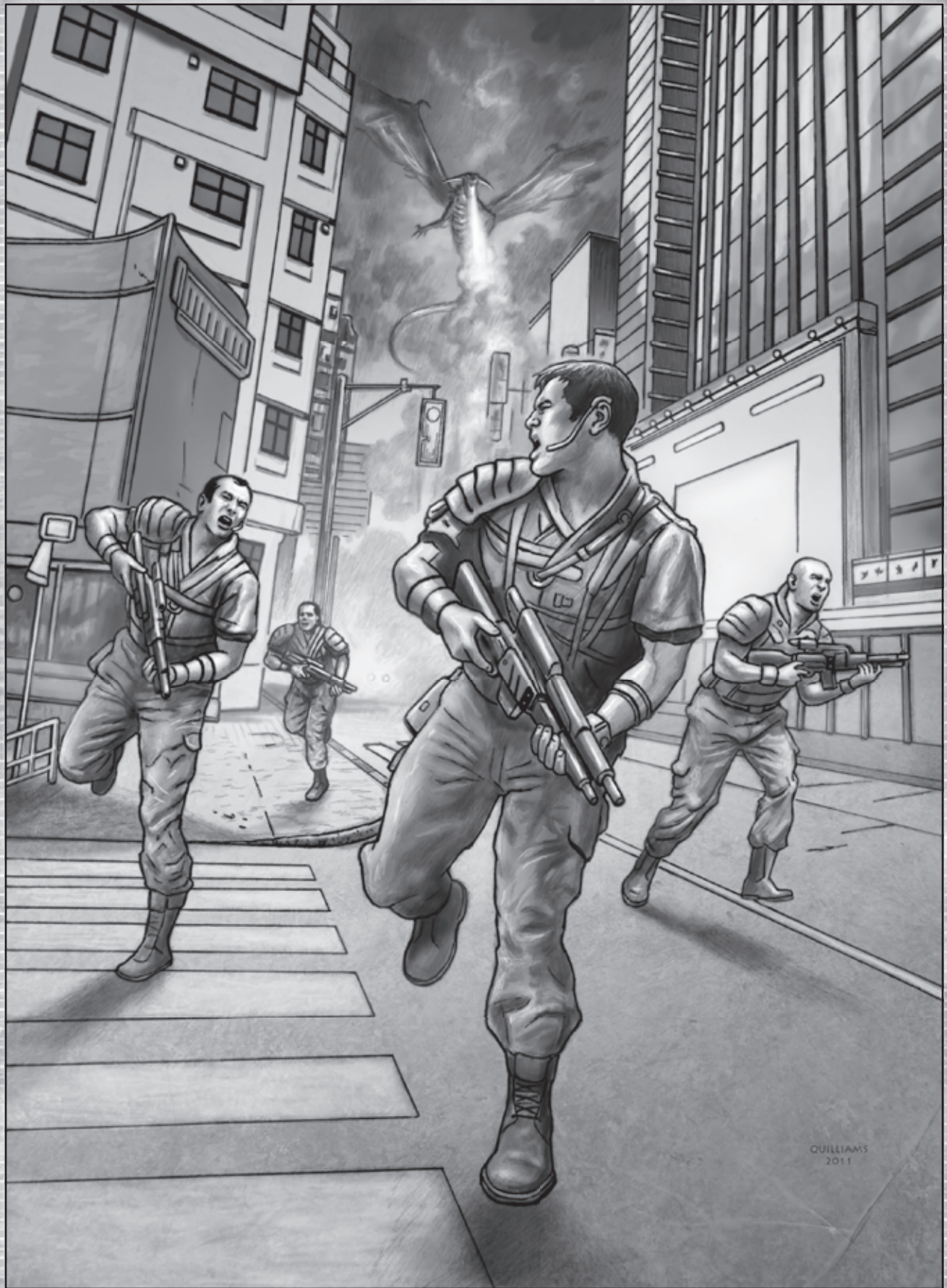
crisis the city was dealing with. When the Denver situation apparently stabilized, council members wanted to focus on the other things going on, so they merely signed off on changes that formalized what was already happening in practice. The changes included a provision saying that the Denver treaty could be brought up again later for a full negotiation, even if they were not prepared to do so now. It was these clauses that have led to the current situation.

- The fact that the treaty *could* be renegotiated didn't mean that it *had* to be renegotiated. That provision has been sitting there a while, but the sector chiefs have been too cowed by Ghostwalker to do anything about it. What's really led to the current situation is the perceived weakness of Ghostwalker. It's not entirely clear how this perception developed—it could be that he's made fewer public appearances and has seemed distracted when he has, or it could be that the crackdowns he's initiated have lacked the ferocity of his past actions. Whatever the case may be, the sector chiefs think he is vulnerable, and for the first time in twelve years, they think they can wring some concessions out of him.
- Dr. Spin

## CRASH 2.0

While Crash 2.0 affected the entire globe, Denver suffered no more than average, despite its heavy reliance on Matrix infrastructure for border crossings and air traffic. There had been some limited warning that something was up; one came in the early morning hours of November 1, when corp forces, led by several Ares Firewatch teams, attacked and seized a Winternight compound in the CAS sector. Knight Errant led the raid in conjunction with security forces of other corporations, and while the raid was noisy enough to make the other sectors take notice, its ultimate purpose was unclear. In reaction, the sector governments and the ZDF all heightened their security postures, forcing the CAS sector to do the same simply as a precaution. The Denver administration tried to pressure Ares and the other corps to tell each other what was going on, even as evidence was leaked that the Denver Data Haven was the target of the Winternight assets. The PCC and the Denver Data Haven begin taking precautions,





QUILLIAMS  
2011



though they naturally had no knowledge of the full extent of Winternight's plans.

When the Matrix began to crumble, the sector governments and the Denver Data Haven were as prepared as they could be, but even those precautions were far from sufficient in the face of the Crash. Denver was locked down once the extent of the crisis became clear, and the ZDF was able to stop a Winternight action team that had been missed in the previous day's sweep from attacking the Denver Data Haven. Due to the level of high alert, the Data Haven had virtually their entire staff and otaku already on site to try to combat the wyrm. Ghostwalker had his own private link to the Denver Data Haven as well as the knowledge about why the anti-Winternight strikes occurred, and incoming data from the DDH helped him understand just what was going on. His staff physically cut the connection from his side, protecting the majority of the administration files.

Of all the sector governments, the Sioux weathered the crisis the best, thanks to a heavily militarized society able to keep order, a relatively light footprint on the Matrix, and behind-the-scenes preparations made by the Sioux OMI. They had intercepted a Winternight bomb early in the year, and while they were unable to trace it to Winternight, they stayed on high alert until they could determine who was behind it and who the eventual target was (their initial fear was that it could have been a UCAS plot of some sort).

Martial law was enforced by the ZDF for the first few weeks, though there was rioting, especially due to food shortages in the Hub. All of the borders locked down, and air traffic was at a virtual standstill since all of the Matrix air guidance control systems were compromised. The city's Water Board had to turn off all their controls due to the Matrix failures so that water could flow, but without that control there were spot shortages throughout the city. Fortunately, the PCC plant that supplied power to the city had several isolated systems, and it was quickly cut off from the Matrix so that the city suffered from no more than a few brownouts.

The Denver Data Haven lost the majority of its sysops and otaku in the Crash as they attempted to contain and shut down the wyrm, and the physical damage that the wyrm did to their systems took months to fully repair, even with unofficial support from both the PCC and Ghostwalker. What was worse was the loss of the trained admins that ran the Haven, which forced the remaining admins to focus solely on maintaining the Haven for the next few years, even as the wireless Matrix grew around them. It was during this time that Shadowland lost its preeminence among shadowrunners. It remained important, but it was supplanted by various independent social networking platforms that could be secure and controlled much more closely than Shadowland ever was.

The various crises in the national governments of the sectors had little direct effect on the sectors themselves. Both the UCAS and Sioux militaries were forced to send troops out of the city while their governments dealt with other effects of the Crash, but other than that the national governments took care of their own business without burdening the sectors.

One political advantage of the crisis was that while Denver was battered, it was not as heavily damaged as other cities—including Calcutta. At the time, Calcutta was one of the most Matrix-reliant cities in the world and the economic prize jewel of the Indian subcontinent. The detonation of the EMP strike over

Calcutta had a devastating effect, and massive reconstruction was needed to bring the city back to even a shadow of itself. Calcutta would have been the host of the 2070 Summer Olympics, but in the aftermath of the Crash it became clear that Calcutta would not be able to fulfill its role. This led to a quandary, as the lead-time required to prepare the facilities needed in a host city makes it difficult to change hosts on relatively short notice. It was at that point that Denver stepped in and made the proposal of hosting not only the Winter but also the Summer Olympics, which would require only a mild expansion of their building program, since in the months between the Winter and Summer Olympics various facilities could be repurposed for other sports. After behind-the-scenes politicking, several exchanges of bribes, and various runs staged by the parties involved, Denver won the right to host both the Winter and Summer Olympics in 2072.

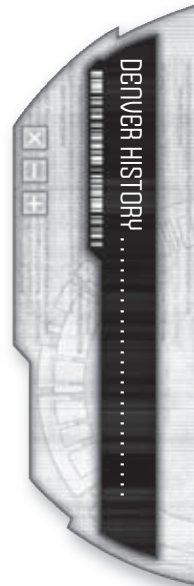
- Denver got the games because they were ready for them, and they were ready for them because they started preparing for them before Crash 2.0. I'm not saying they knew what was going to happen to Calcutta, or that they were behind it. But their proposal to host both games was put together so quickly that it was clear it had been on their minds before Crash 2.0. They had some alternate plan for getting the games away from Calcutta, but the Crash meant they never had to put it into action.
- Plan 9
- And that alternate plan was...
- Winterhawk
- Of *course* he doesn't answer that question!
- Slamm-O!

## THE EMERGENCE

The awareness of technomancers had been something of an open secret in Denver long before it came into the international consciousness. The Denver Data Haven had a large tribe of otaku (individuals that had abilities similar to technomancers) years before they became well known. As technomancers emerged in the aftermath of Crash 2.0, technomancers who felt that they had nowhere else to go and who were looking for someone who could explain what was happening with them tried to make their way to the Denver Data Haven. While some made it safely to the city, others were lost along the way.

When the existence of technomancers became a crisis, Denver served as an oasis. Both the PCC and Ghostwalker considered the Denver Data Haven an asset, which meant that the efforts of sector governments who tried to force the government to do something about the technomancers there came up empty. At the height of the crisis, many technomancers did not leave the confines of the Denver Data Haven at all, especially after several were rounded up at gunpoint by unknown individuals when they were away from the Haven.

The fate of both these kidnapped technomancers and those who had disappeared on the journey to Denver was discovered by investigative journalist Jane McCory of KMAG, who found technomancers being experimented on in a hospital run by MCT



subsidiary Gennex in the UCAS sector. McCory was attacked by MCT security even before she started transmitting her story, but she was smart enough to widecast it, and one place she sent it to was the Data Haven. Several Data Haven sysops tried to organize a rescue mission by pulling in favors from local runners, but it took almost three hours for the first team to arrive on site, and by then it was too late.

Unfortunately for the Gennex scientists and MCT security, the sysops were able to get a recon drone over the site within a half hour, which helped them identify the individuals leaving the area. They tracked down most of the identified parties in the next week, and all those involved in McCory's death suffered tragic "accidents." Denver Data Haven technomancers tracked down most copies of the data gleaned from the experimentation on technomancers and destroyed any copies they could find to prevent anyone from using it. While there are undoubtedly a few copies of that data out there, every copy that can be found by a technomancer is destroyed. Considering just how many places a technomancer can reach, any existing data from MCT's experiments in Denver must be well hidden indeed.

As the technomancer fervor died down, most of the technomancers in Denver Data Haven eventually started filtering back to their old lives and occupations, though the overall technomancer population in the PCC sector and the Denver Data Haven still remain higher than it was prior to the crisis. Ghostwalker has never issued an official policy, or even a statement, on the technomancer situation, but his protection of the DDH seems to make it clear which way he leans on the issue. None of the sector governments wish to push him on this, and anti-technomancer policies in all sectors are mostly unenforced within Denver.

- Thing about Denver is, you're never too far from the nearest boundary. Some sectors just escort TMs out of the Zone before they enforce their laws on them
- Netcat
- Some sectors are wise enough to not let what Ghostwalker wants compromise their core principles.
- Clockwork

## TEMPO

The tempo crisis hit Denver particularly hard, since it was one of the major centers of smuggling and shipment in North America. A large percentage of the overall tempo supply traveled through Denver, making it inevitable that some of it would hit the streets. The situation was the worst in the UCAS and CAS sectors, though all the sectors had some problems with it. Several small street gangs rose in prominence over their distribution of tempo, and then quickly fell back to obscurity once the supply shrank back down to a trickle. The PCC and Sioux were on top of the tempo crisis almost immediately, with the PCC slamming down hard on any trade. They believed that tempo initially was part of an Aztlan plan, and when it was later revealed to be from the Colombia area, other dangers of the tempo trade became apparent.

The Sioux had the advantage that several of their corporations tacitly support the smuggling trade, most notably Mesametric,

so they were able to use some of their goodwill to suggest that most of the tempo supply should be dumped into other sectors. Considering the demand, undoubtedly some of that supply was almost immediately brought back across the sector border. Interestingly enough, in the Hub various tempo gangs and dealers were unable to get a foothold, partly because the local Awakened population found tempo to be obnoxious in the extreme.

There were some arguments and other posturing on the part of the UCAS that the Sioux was trying to dump a dangerous drug on their streets, which was not entirely wrong. As the dangers of tempo became more apparent, Ghostwalker himself put down several policies, and for a while not only the sector police but the ZDF were set loose in order to control the flow of tempo. This included intercepting several smuggling runs that the ZDF had previously let through unmolested. In addition, through the underground contacts that Ghostwalker had acquired by encouraging the Awakened community in the Hub, he let it be known that he would be very put out if tempo continued to hit the Denver streets. Most of the smugglers in Denver got the message, and Denver became primarily a pass-through city for the drug—most of the tempo that landed in the FRFZ immediately passed on to other locales. Some tempo still went out on the Denver streets, generally smuggled in by lower-level operations than the ones the ZDF and Ghostwalker had targeted, but what had once been a crisis turned in a manageable (but still significant) problem. When the overall tempo supply shrank, the shoot-and-destroy policy of the ZDF eased up, and the force went back to treating tempo as any other illegal drug.

In the aftermath of the tempo crisis, both the UCAS and CAS switched security providers, similar to Seattle's response. The UCAS switched from Lone Star to Knight Errant, while the CAS did the opposite. The operators did not just switch from one sector to the other—clauses in the new contracts specified that new management needed to be put in place in each sector—but at the lower levels, the only change for a many patrol officers was that they now got off at a different stop of the subway.

- If that's really what you think, then you need to get yourself on the streets. The sectors might as well be different cities—different atmosphere, different cultures, etc.—so the tricks and tactics you used in one sector aren't necessarily going to work in the other. A lot of security folks on the street are in the middle of relearning how to do their job—which is, of course, great for us.
- Riser

## THE 2072 OLYMPICS

The 2072 Olympics was Denver's chance to shine on the international stage. With both the Winter and Summer Olympics being held in the same city, separated by several months, the plan was to host a series of international games that were not usually part of the Olympic games during the intervening months in order to keep interest focused on the FRFZ. Events such as sumo wrestling, American football, rugby, Indian ball, and other games that are not officially recognized by the IOC were played in the intervening months, and in many cases these games were the equivalent of playoffs or even world championships. What that meant is that for three months prior to the opening of the Winter







INCOMING FEED.....



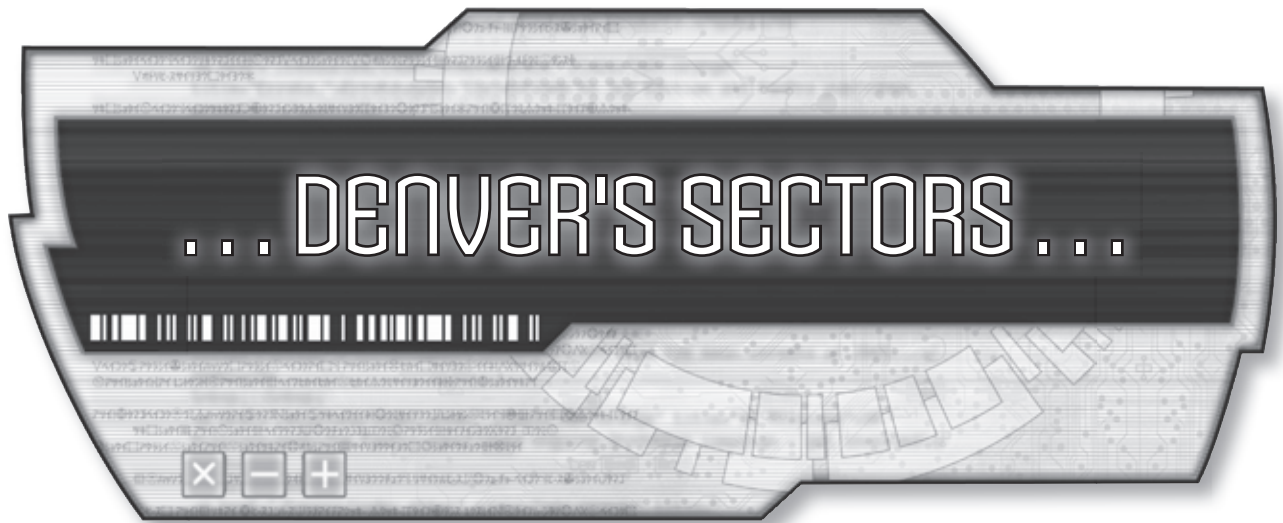
DENVER HISTORY .....

Games to around one month after the end of the Summer Games, Denver underwent the largest influx of visitors in its history. Many additional flights were added to the schedules of all airports, and security was beefed up, with all of the sector governments receiving additional troops from their governments, in addition to more units being seconded to the ZDF. Even with that additional security, the border controls were as lax as they have been since the walls first went up, simply due to the desire to get people through and prevent unending lines at the checkpoints.

During the 2072 Olympics, the largest scandal was the attempt of Aztlan and Aztechnology to bring their athletes into the games, either officially or under the radar. The majority of the attempts were done through the Sioux Nation, usually with the assistance of former Ute officials or administrators. Aztechnology and Aztlan citizens are permitted to visit the Sioux Nation but are barred from the Sioux sector. Usually the Sioux have a strong enough sense of internal border control that Aztlan visitors are easily tracked and turned back at the border, but during the heavy influx of visitors during the Olympics, there were so many border crossings that it became much easier to lose people in the shuffle, and a few people made it through. None of them managed to accomplish even the slightest bit of mischief—most of them wanted nothing more than to participate in the games, and some just wanted to watch—but Ghostwalker doesn't want a single bit of Aztlan flesh in his city, so the cold fact of several of them getting in and crossing sector borders rankled him considerably. While Ghostwalker did not deliver the dramatic reprisals some feared (which is one of the signs people have pointed at to show that GW may not be at the top of his game), he certainly remembers the actions of the Sioux, and that could make life difficult in the treaty negotiations.

Despite that small hiccup, the big picture is that the city acquitted itself quite well, and people who had shied away from the FREFZ out of nervousness of the dragon at the top are more likely to visit. What the city will do with this goodwill, and how it will affect the treaty negotiations, remains to be seen.

- Ah, the “remains to be seen” ending—the greatest, easiest cop out in all of journalism. Here's how this will play out—a little taste of the future to go with this overview of the past. First, the sectors think GW's weak, and they believe they have an opportunity to strengthen their position. They'll get hypnotized by the thought of increased tourism in the city and the benefits it can bring, and that will lead them to overreaching. Ghostwalker may be weaker than he normally is, but weak for a great dragon is still stronger than anything else on Earth. The sectors will get slapped back, hard, and they'll resent it. Then we'll see a demonstration of an important socio-political point: People don't rebel when things are bad—they rebel when things looked like maybe they'd get better, but then they don't. What will eventually happen in Denver won't be full-scale revolution, but there will be violence, and people will die. Then we'll see the full measure of Ghostwalker's current strength.
- Sunshine
- Mark the date—May 17, 2073. I intend to hold Sunshine accountable for his prediction.
- Kay St. Irregular
- Good. That's why I made it
- Sunshine



**Posted by: Kay St. Irregular**

Never underestimate the snowball effect of international politics. It only took a few people sticking their noses in someone else's business, and suddenly everyone's flocking to Denver. As more spies show up, more nations and corporations think Denver has something worth knowing. So they send their operatives, and their rivals send their spies, and suddenly the entire Front Range Free Zone is a seething mass of international mystique. With Geneva cut off and in a constant state of siege, Denver is the new center of world politics. There's a certain flavor of independence here, of being in a place where Big Brother isn't looking over everyone's shoulder. And if you can dig up any information on the resident great dragon while you're in town, well, that's just gravy.

Each sector of the FRFZ has its own unique culture and flavor that you need to understand if you want to fit in. Remember, though, these are the most commonly found cultural norms; there are other subcultures stratified throughout Denver. Finding the one you need, without exposing yourself as an outsider, is a delicate dance. For an infodump quick fix, you can download every document available at the Denver Tourist Board and grab the sims available via the Nexus. Local runners have uploaded full simsense experiences for visiting runners. If you have time, spend several months soaking up the atmosphere before you start picking up jobs. Even if you've previously spent time in Denver, you'll be surprised by the recent changes. The sims can't replace firsthand knowledge, no matter how detailed they are.

## CAS SECTOR

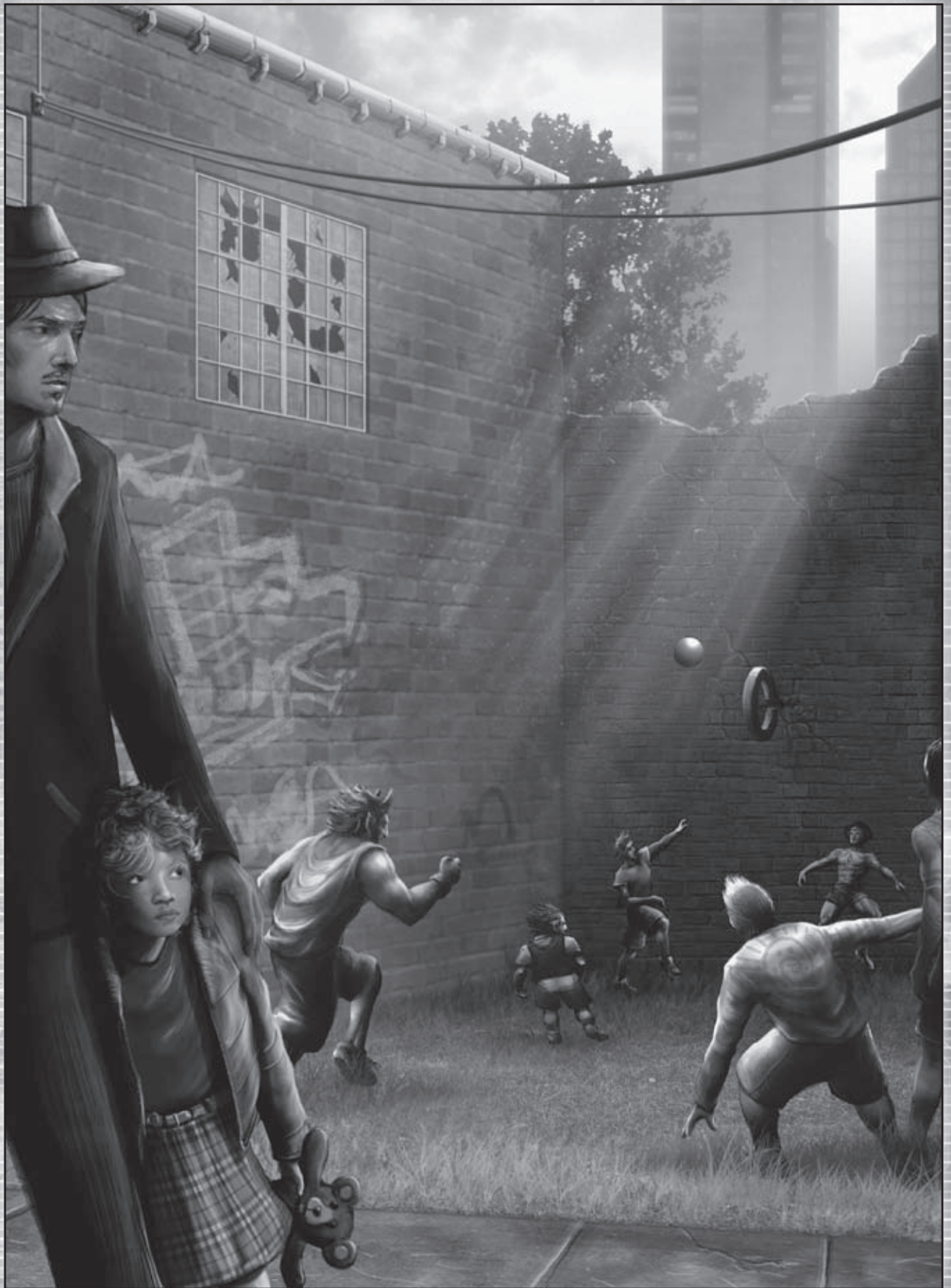
Of all the sectors in Denver, CAS has the most cosmopolitan atmosphere due to the universities and its status as the sector mostly commonly visited by tourists. Everyone wants to go to the CAS sector, to tour its old mansions, and to get a whiff of its rich heritage. But CAS is torn between the extremes of prosperity and poverty, much more so than the other sectors. After the economic ripples caused by Crash 2.0, many middle-class citizens vacated Denver as quickly as they could. While some still live in Denver, mainly in the Englewood neighborhood, the CAS district lost a

huge percentage of its labor pool. To that end, it actively recruits graduating university students, tourists, and even former Ute nationals to work in the service industry.

While the old Aztlan sections have been revitalized with new building and new business, the entire Old Downtown area has become something of a ghost town. Millionaire Row still stands and is still populated; the large, gated mansions stand out as bastions of historical irony against abandoned buildings. Old Downtown is the neighborhood hardest hit by the middle-class exodus. Empty buildings have become home to criminals or SINless, while occupied buildings have bars on their windows and triple locks on their doors. There have been attempts to revive Old Downtown by gutting old businesses and turning them into dormitories for the University of Denver, but they have only been partially successful.

- Sector administration hired runners to forcibly relocate the undesirable over the UCAS border to the Aurora Warrens. Some bright polibrain figured since there's already a dumping ground in Denver, why not take advantage of it?
- Turbo Bunny
- I've been wondering where the sudden abundance of product at the Meat Market came from.
- Hannibelle
- The ghouls are eating the displaced CAS residents? And Cuthbertson allows this? Why hasn't anyone stopped her?
- Glitch
- Because no one cares about the disenfranchised masses. Now if one of those CAS millionaires ended up there, it would be a different story. The uproar would be heard across the globe.
- Clockwork
- I doubt Bianca approved this. But she might be turning a blind eye until someone actually does make a fuss.
- Fianchetto







The richer residents have a blind spot when it comes to the poor. In a place where old but well-maintained mansions are interspersed with ghettos, the dress and attitudes are eclectic and clashing. The social elite drive where they need to go, or they take taxis. Only the poor walk anywhere. The rich have armed bodyguards. When the poor need protection, they defend themselves with rocks, sticks, or anything handy.

- That means don't go wandering around Old Downtown with obvious weapons. You will stand out.
- Hard Exit
- Concealable holsters are wonderful things. Or just disguise your club as a piece of rebar.
- Black Mamba

If you're near the University of Denver, the atmosphere is much less tense. Businesses dedicated to campus life—bars, bookstores, off-the-rack clothing shops, and late-night fast-food restaurants—surround the universities in a distinct buffer zone that separates the residents from the students. Student dress is casual, running the fashion gamut of loud, mismatched colors to sensible black pants and mono-color tees. Even the professors wear practical and well-worn—but not dumpster chic—clothing rather than suits and ties.

College culture is dynamic and multi-cultured. It's not uncommon to see students from around the world debating in rapid-fire multi-language conversations and sharing cultural experiences through impromptu bar contests. The students provide cheap labor for local businesses and politicians. They pass out flyers, courier packages, participate in protests, staff campaign offices, and work charity events. Once they get fired up about something, they serve as an unstoppable force for whomever is running the show.

Student politics are nothing to sneeze at. Influential students rally their peers to personal causes. Earlier in the year, UD student Chazel Domingo whipped several eco-friendly classmates into a frenzy. They picketed the Olympic games in protest of mega-corp strip-mining practices (a.k.a. Mitsuhamas's plundering of Tsimhian). These protests shut down two venues for several days before the Zone Defense Force could clear them out.

- Domingo wasn't a real student. He's a member of the Wardens who enrolled in UD to take advantage of young, impressionable kids looking for a cause.
- Netcat
- Don't assume these students are easy to manipulate. They have their own agendas and are capable of using the tools supplied them to act in ways contrary to the interests of their benefactors.
- Thorn

The University of Denver is closely involved in the work of re-opening the University of Colorado over in Boulder. They are not worried about competition at all—they see the university in Boulder as adding to the region's academic credentials, and they believe there are enough students and professors to go around. Due to the ongoing work, the University of Denver

regularly hosts visitors from the initial staff of the University of Colorado, which presents opportunities—people at a university do not always recognize everyone who works at their school, but they certainly don't often recognize someone from a school all the way out in Boulder. Disguising yourself as an academic is often a good option, and at UD it's a better choice than ever.

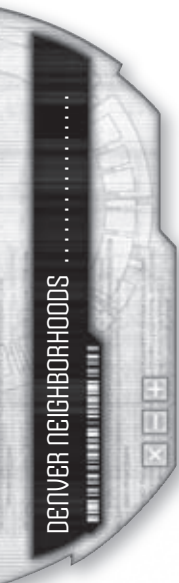
- Don't disguise yourself as a University of Colorado teacher, because there aren't really any of them yet. Instead, pass yourself off as a visiting Brigham Young University or University of Cheyenne official working on the re-building (those schools will be jointly administering the new U of C). Coming from either of those places, people at the University of Denver will be even less likely to look you up somewhere down the road.
- Thorn

The sector's Chinatown is a city within a city. Isolated by language and xenophobic by choice, the residents of Chinatown come from two distinct Chinese backgrounds: pre-Awakening Hong Kong and Taiwan. Though the residents are third- and fourth-generation inhabitants, they interact little with the rest of the CAS sector, shunning outsiders. While non-Chinese frequent the shops and clubs of Chinatown, for the most part outsiders are given the cold shoulder and treated with disdain.

Metahumans are treated as second-class citizens, save for the elves, who are treated as equals. Those metahumans residing on the outskirts of Chinatown live with this treatment, showing a surprising acceptance. While metahuman discrimination is a rule rather than an exception in this area, metahumans of Chinese descent are treated better than humans of other races.

- Similar to Japanese culture, Chinese culture holds that one must respect one's elders and those in positions of authority. The main difference is that in Chinese culture, family is more important than business, while Japanese culture teaches that business is family. Knowing the difference is essential for working the shadows in Chinatown.
- Kia
- Denver's Chinatown inhabitants mainly speak Taiwanese and Cantonese, though you may be able to get by if you speak Mandarin Chinese. The more fluent you are, the more likely you'll be listened to.
- Lei Kung

Englewood contains the bulk of the CAS's middle class and is the most sedate neighborhood of all. Despite this, it's also the area of the CAS sector most hospitable to runners, since many of these residents are gun-toting, red-blooded Americans who equate patriotism to the ability to defend oneself at a moment's notice. Violence is rare, though. Englewood residents are the most devout of all CAS sector citizens, regular Bible-thumpers with a strong belief in family values. There are more Christian churches per capita here than in any other neighborhood of the FRFZ. Since most locals can't afford heavy cyberware modifications, it's advisable to cover up with off-the-rack clothes that fit the weather so that you can blend in.





## PLACES OF INTEREST

### Five by Five

It's actually not entirely clear that this place is in the CAS—to get there, you have to travel a winding path through sewer tunnels or underground passages so that you don't know just what street you're under by the time you arrive. Most entry points to approach Five by Five are in the CAS, though, so it seems likely that that's where it is.

- You know, there's electronic equipment these days that you can use to help you with questions like this. Long story short—yeah, it's in the CAS sector.
- Clockwork

Five by Five is a small but comfortable bar for smugglers and coyotes to relax a little away from prying eyes and people trying to do business. It's a great place for finding some help, but make sure you don't actually talk business while you're in the bar—if anyone catches you doing that, you'll have to buy everyone in the place a round.

### Klub Karma

This Chinatown meeting place has been a runner hub for years, but it's also Mafia territory, so be careful. They keep a careful eye on things, and while they certainly tolerate people talking business, they don't want any actual combat occurring there, and they certainly don't want people targeting them for runs. The private rooms on the second floor are excellent places for meetings, if you can convince the owners to let you use one.

### Mystic Curiosities

A good talismonger is half crack researcher, half con man. It's tough to make a good living simply with quality telesma—the competition for such goods is high, and the supply is tight. If a talismonger wants to make a living, they have to be willing to get people to overpay for some cheap crap.

Zhang Wong, proprietor of Mystic Curiosities in Chinatown, has sold share of cheap crap in his time. Sometimes people use that to dismiss him, to label him as ignorant or a cheat. Ignoring him, though, means missing out on his considerable body of knowledge—and on the good stuff he occasionally has on display in his shop.

The best way to get the good stuff when it goes on sale is not to just show up, browse, and hope. Cultivate Zhang, ask him advice, and pay him when he tells you something useful. Build up that relationship, show him he's valued, and eventually you'll get a call from him telling you that he's got something in stock you may be interested in taking a look at.

- Zhang wants to get on the research of the various properties of Sangre del Diablo sap, but he doesn't have a good pipeline into the south. If you can help him build one, you'll get on his "valued customer" list. And that's a good list to be on.
- Frosty

### Goodfriends

Goodfriends has been through a lot of owners and incarnations, but one way or another it usually finds a way to attract a crowd. Currently it's known as a place for quick and easy hookups, and that gives the place a tawdry air that is completely intentional. There are a couple small, closet-size private rooms, which aren't comfortable, but you're extremely unlikely to be disturbed once you're in there.

### University of Denver

Like most universities, the University of Denver is full of students and professors who aren't as smart as they think they are, but the hustle of the place can at least be good for providing cover if you need it. One notable feature is the Psychology Department's Penrose Library, which has a doozie of a magical archive. It's not open to the public, though, so you either need a friend or a good cover identity.

- Dr. Lydia McDaniel used to be a good person to get to know for that sort of thing, but lately she's been hit up by a lot of people suddenly wanting to be her friend, and she's growing a little suspicious. This influx could be due to people looking for information on the artifacts that are rumored to be out and about. The fact that people keep going back would indicate that the archives likely have *something* on the subject, but it's not easy to understand.
- Elijah

### Ketring Park

Ketring Park is not the battleground it used to be, for a couple of reasons. First, police and citizens will eventually reach a point where they say enough is enough and they'll take steps to quell the violence taking place in any one particular location. Second, in Ketring's rougher days, the fighting got so rough that the weaker gangs started avoiding the place, leaving only the tougher, more professional gangs to have at each other. Eventually, the leaders of these gangs decided they might be better served with actions that did not result in regular manpower losses, and they used the gatherings at Ketring for negotiations instead of clashes. So gangs still gather nightly at Ketring, but now it's to exchange words, not bullets.

The authorities, wise enough to see that they lucked into a good thing, play along. If they cracked down on the meetings, the gangs would just find a new place to meet, which might bring out another spasm of violence. As long as the gang leaders are content to meet peacefully in Ketring, the authorities keep any eavesdropping equipment away. The leaders might be planning heinous crimes to take place in locations across the FRFZ, but at least Ketring is at peace.

- Two of the frequent attendees at Ketring are Dean Costello of the Casquilho family and Gob of the Fronts, keeping the lines of communication open on their CalHots distribution business. If you're looking to meet either of these two gentlemen—or eavesdrop on their plans—this would be a good place to do it.
- Traveler Jones



- If they catch you eavesdropping, that could push them out of the park, bringing on the violence that Lone Star's been trying to avoid. Just thought I'd mention it in case you didn't want that on your conscience.
- Fianchetto
- Shadowrunners might be responsible for violence? Oh no!
- Slamm-0!

## THE HUB

Known to locals as the Dragon's Playground, the Hub is home to the Council Hall, Ghostwalker's Liaison Office, a Draco Foundation office, a handful of autonomous corporate enclaves, and most diplomatic embassies. In addition, the Hub supports a thriving entertainment district with fine-dining restaurants, theatres, bars, and dance clubs. While the official boundaries of the Hub are drawn in the CAS sector, the unofficial boundaries have been creeping northwest into the Pueblo district. A nearby border crossing was widened to allow for the traffic coming to and leaving the Hub.

Politically, the Hub is divided between the Sioux and UCAS. Functionally, maintenance and support fell to the FRFZ administrative service as both nations have pulled back their own personnel. The Sioux and UCAS reps did this in subtle protest of Ghostwalker's constant interference in local politics, hoping the Hub would go bankrupt and the dragon would ask them to take control of it again. Unfortunately for them, the gesture backfired. The Hub is hardly suffering.

No longer run by specific government interests, the Hub has evolved into a city within a city, where diplomatic embassies are granted the same extraterritorial rights as corporations. It has experienced an influx of foreign nationals, politicians, and corporate executives, all of whom congregate with the express purpose of discussing business away from the interested eyes of their colleagues—or the recording suites of their official offices. These dignitaries congregate in the backrooms of the bars and restaurants, or arrange accidental meetings at the theatres. As the powerbrokers gather, so too do their rivals. More people spend their time in the Hub than can be accounted for as employees of the local businesses. Many visitors are likely national intelligence operatives, corporate spies, and runners looking for good payday.

The Hub is policed by a dedicated unit of the ZDF that has the right to enter any Hub property for any reason, though they seldom do so without an invitation. This keeps most overt crime, such as muggings and murder, to a minimum within the Hub itself. Most of Denver's free spirit population lives in the Hub, which gives rise to speculation that Ghostwalker himself lives here.

Hub culture is an odd mix of reserved flamboyance and subtle extravagance. Money pours out of pockets like beer from a tap, but it's spent on services, entertainment, and information, not shiny toys. Even if people don't have money, they dress like they do. It's not uncommon to see designer armored clothing. Cyberware is tastefully disguised by those wearing it, and even the more outré magicians or shamans find a way to make their

clothing choices fashionable while maintaining their unique identities. The pace is fast and intense. Here, people move with purpose. They are always going somewhere and doing something. Even when they stand still, there is purpose in their waiting. Those who wander around gawking at the sights or staring up at the sky stand out as tourists.

- Pickpockets love the Hub. Someone will shout out that Ghostwalker's flying overhead. The tourist looks up, then around in confusion when he doesn't see the dragon. By that time, any valuable property in his pockets or on his person has been removed, and the tourist is none the wiser.
- Traveler Jones
- Whether you're running from the ZDF or just looking to frame someone, this ruse is a classic. Once your mark is searching for the dragon, you can plant the incriminating evidence in her pocket and leave the rest to local security. Just don't use it too often—even tourists catch on if you repeat yourself too much.
- Stone

The Hub has become a kind of sanctuary/gathering place for a wide variety of metatypes, a place where they can feel accepted and welcomed. This goes beyond just welcoming trolls and orks; restaurants and hotels in the area have accommodations for centaurs, sasquatches, and other metatypes of unusual size.

There are no street vendors or buskers in the Hub. A few cafés maintain outdoor patios for diners who want to enjoy the night air, but most establishments are indoor only. This lends an atmosphere of eerie quiet to the frenetic energy of the area. Even when patrons leave the theatre or friends congregate on a sidewalk, conversations tend to be quiet affairs of low voices, pitched so words don't carry. In an attempt to "go native," many newcomers make the mistake of sub-vocalizing or whispering their discussions, which instantly makes them stand out. There's a difference between a low voice and a whisper; whispers carry further. Those who whisper are treated as people with something to hide.

Due to the scarcity of Hub real estate, and the restrictions placed on out-of-town business, many megas have resorted to staffing point offices in the Hub—small front-ends with a receptionist and a couple of sales people—while placing their main offices elsewhere in the city. This gives them a physical presence in the thick of things which they can use to re-route business to their bigger storefronts elsewhere in the city.

All businesses have a Matrix presence, but some business deals require person-to-person contact—often these involve people paranoid about their conversations being recorded or hacked. Given the presence of the Denver Data Haven, and the reputed number of technomancers in the city, people are very careful about what information they share and where. An increasing number of places in the Hub now cater to this demographic, advertising privacy booths and private rooms for hire.

- Since there are so many people coming and going out of the Hub at all hours, pinpointing who did what when is extremely difficult unless you spend your time doing nothing but watching.
- Thorn





The Hub is the one place in Denver not under the dragon's curfew. While the curfew was implemented to prevent ordinary citizens from crossing the borders at all hours of the night, except during the Olympics, it was never enforced in the Hub.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

### ZDF Headquarters

Among the many government buildings full of paydata in the Hub is the ZDF Headquarters. Among its other duties, the ZDF is working to enforce Ghostwalker's prohibition on espionage—which, in a rather ironic twist, means they have to engage in some espionage themselves, as the best way to catch a spy is to spy on them. The headquarters, then, have a large amount of information about ongoing investigations and techniques employed by the ZDF.

### The Tower of Babel

This bar/nightclub on the UCAS side of the Hub is a popular gathering place for all sorts of Denverites, including Dean Costello of the Casquilho family and other underworld types. Noted for its tall, etched-glass windows and the dynamic, colorful AR displays on its interior walls, the club recently underwent significant renovations after the dramatic appearance of a large alchera in the Hub. True to its spirit, it turned the rebuilding into an excuse for an inventive series of parties that incorporated the sounds of construction into the pounding rhythms of the club's music. As a result, the club didn't drop a bit in popularity while it rebuilt.

- There are plenty of private rooms for meetings, but that's not the best quality of this place. There is a floor on top of the whole thing that is hidden to almost everyone who enters, and it serves as a safe house for CAS spies. As you can imagine, a safe house in the middle of the Hub is a valuable thing.
- Fianchetto

## PCC SECTOR

The key to survival in the Pueblo sector is to know which areas you'll spend time in, and to act and dress accordingly. The merger of Pueblo and Ute is, in many respects, something that happened on paper only. In truth, the sector is one giant split personality. While there are no remaining walls between the old Pueblo sector and the former Ute sector, the physical demarcation is obvious in building upkeep and residential attitudes. Pueblo citizens waste no time whether they are working or playing. Everything they do is designed to lead logically into their next action.

In Old Pueblo, clothing is practical, though style is job dependent. Wageslaves determine the best route to work and back home again based not on which route is shorter but which one will enable them to grab their soycaf, buy their groceries, read their news, and drop their cars off at the mechanic's while making their trip.

- Here's an example: Pueblo shamans sew fetishes in their clothes or weave them into their hair. Resident mages make their power foci out of jewelry, umbrellas, or canes. That sort of thing.
- Mika

Each city block contains businesses that complement each other without competing with each other, so that citizens can do their shopping in one area. Council-owned factories fabricate parts that can be used interchangeably in a variety of equipment, from meat grinders to cars. Cost-cutting techniques are shared across industry lines. All in all, the old Pueblo sector, like the Pueblo Nation, runs like a well-oiled machine.

The old Ute sector is a study in contrasts. Though the citizens enjoyed the illusion of a democratic society, the Ute Nation was an effective dictatorship, with the Great Chief making all the decisions. The Ute lived in a culture of minimal choices, even in their consumer goods, and strict interpretation of their legal system. Their incorporation into the PCC created a culture clash of monumental proportions. For a long time, the average consumer was paralyzed by the array of choices suddenly available to them. Just as the expiration date on their conditional shares came due, the entire Ute populace seemed to wake up.

The Ute reacted to the new opportunity like thirsty men denied water too long. They snapped up residential shares as if they were going out of style, spent their money on consumables they'd never had access to before, and quadrupled their personal debt to achieve a standard of living they thought their new Pueblo brothers already had. But the Ute are anything but efficient, preferring instead to do everything with flair. They also maintain a rabid racist streak, refusing to accept the more lenient view of Anglos that their Pueblo brethren have.

- The PCC's "efficiency" has a lot of red tape attached that the Ute aren't used to. To say relations are tense between the two groups is an understatement.
- Mika

Utes are an energetic people, putting maximum effort into everything they do, even if that effort is overkill. Ute artisans and craftsmen over-engineer their goods, wasting resources, time, and money. This waste offends Pueblo sensibilities and causes friction between Pueblo and Ute businessmen.

The richer Pueblo neighborhoods are defined by their corporate model, their obedience to corporate culture and the Hopi traditions established by the Kachina society. The poorer Ute neighborhoods are defined by dilapidated buildings, drug addicts scattered on street corners, and a need to outdo each other with unaffordable body modifications, fashions, or other shiny toys. Additionally, after decades of a democracy that didn't work and the promise of one that does, Ute citizens are scraping up, or stealing, the money to buy every extra PCC residential share they can get so they can make their mark on the Pueblo sector.

- What, no mention of the Ute Rebels?
- Slamm-O!
- Keep in mind, the Ute rebels are a minority in Ute society, albeit a vocal one. Most Ute citizens, despite their friction with their Pueblo counterparts, are actually happy with the changes brought by the PCC takeover.
- Mika



## THE DOWNSIDE OF EFFICIENCY

Posted by: Fianchetto

If one is looking for a government that understands the business of government, the PCC arguably fills that role. Its government actually is a business, and it has brought its business model to its sector of the Front Range Free Zone. Efficiency is the watchword of the Pueblo Corporate Council. Do more with less. Make every effort count. Build one gear that works for multiple machines. Implement one procedure for all scenarios. This obsession with efficiency makes the PCC one of the more effective nations. But that efficiency comes at a price.

Due to their zeal for the “minimum effort, maximum results” business model, the Pueblo often find themselves doing the equivalent of shoving square pegs into round holes. When a situation isn’t covered by a set procedure, they try to force the situation to fit the procedure rather than improvising a new procedure. The Pueblo have been using this business model for so long, many of their citizens have forgotten how to adapt.

Here are a few examples of how obsessive efficiency works against the PCC.

**Money Efficiency:** The best example of this is the PCC-run power grid. Over the years, the utility has found ways to generate electricity more cheaply by re-engineering the processes it used. Pueblo engineers learned to recycle the plant’s waste heat and water run-off, reusing it to generate still more power. This recycling process saves on the need for nuclear material, which cut costs. Some of those reduced costs were passed on to the consumers in the forms of reduced rates. That raised demand, and increased population made the demand go up even higher. Usage rates doubled. The utility ended up buying more uranium to meet the demand, and the expense of the uranium wasn’t covered by the reduced rates. Suddenly it’s costing more to provide power to Denver than before the new efficient methods of energy production were implemented, and the PCC is scrambling to implement what will be a very unpopular rate hike.

**Time Efficiency:** Tablelands Restaurant, an upscale place off of Federal Boulevard North serving Southwest cuisine, is one of the most efficient restaurants in the

Pueblo sector. The speed of service is legendary, and much faster than any fast food restaurant you’ve ever visited. Tablelands achieves this by preparing their signature dishes in advance based off of previous sales. If fifty people ordered the rattlesnake with mango vinaigrette last week at this time, the kitchen whips up fifty plates of ready-to-heat rattlesnake with mango vinaigrette. But while this method is a timesaver, there are other issues. If only thirty people come in and order the rattlesnake, Tablelands has to throw out the other twenty meals due to food safety regulations. If seventy people place orders for the rattlesnake, Tablelands loses time because they don’t have the extra dishes prepared. They can also lose money because they didn’t staff their kitchen appropriately and may have to call extra cooks in for double pay that night. Either way, the restaurant saves time, but loses money by being obsessively efficient.

Tablelands is trying to turn this trend around. The restaurant hired Horizon consultants to provide an eating-habits and sales trends predictive algorithm. The longer the software works, the more it learns, becoming more sophisticated and accurate along the way.

**Manpower Efficiency:** The Acoma-Wear Lens Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Pueblo Corporate Council, makes designer AR goggles. Acoma-Wear uses an automated assembly line to push out thousands of goggles an hour. This company is the model of efficiency, requiring only a small staff to maintain the plant and double-check orders. Because the manpower requirement is low, the company saves money from lowered costs of benefits. Unfortunately, the robots aren’t A.I. quality and aren’t capable of quality control. Ten out of every hundred units have to be trashed because they don’t work properly. Adding more manpower for quality control checks is inefficient and reduces Acoma-Wear’s savings. Regardless, the company loses its manpower efficiency because it has to staff a returns department to exchange the faulty equipment that gets shipped to its customers.

There’s nothing wrong with being efficient. The Pueblo problem is that they’re too efficient, breaking things that worked just fine before those things were fine-tuned.

- That doesn’t mean there aren’t grievances to be exploited. I’ve started more than one brawl between Ute and Pueblo citizens at local bars.
- Rigger X

## PLACES OF INTEREST

### Lakeside Amusement Park

The former-amusement-park-turned-casino remains the operational base of the Chavez family, making it a good place to go to contact them or get information on them, and a bad place to go if you’re one of their many known enemies.

### Denim

The Chavez’s rivals in PCC sector organized crime, the Koshari, run this Hopi-themed nightclub and hold many of their meetings there. Oddly enough, while organized crime runs the place, they get a lot of PuebSec customers, which keeps the violence to a minimum.

### The Rattlesnake Grill

The Rattlesnake Grill has been popular among runners and non-runners alike for years simply because it’s southwestern food is so good. It gets a little touristy at times, but its unpretentious atmosphere makes it a simple, open place for a meet where there will be a lot of eyes around helping to keep things normal.



Urgent Message...





## DocWagon Hospital Complex

The largest DocWagon facility in the FRFZ boasts some of the top docs in the sprawl, as well as the best trauma center Denver has to offer. If you've got an emergency, go to the trauma center. For other services, get a visitor's pass (forged or real, whichever) and make your way to room 4-203. A few docs in the complex run an under-the-table street clinic there. They won't do anything excessively complicated, like full limb replacement, but they'll do some quick and dirty jobs for you. It's more expensive than most street clinics, but the care is way more competent.

## Lakewood Correctional Institute

Lakewood is still there, still operational, and still trying to do all sorts of weird things to keep criminals who end up there from returning to a life of crime. The staff there would really like to be able to perform chemical lobotomies on the prisoners and be done with it, but Ghostwalker hasn't let that happen yet. Instead, they're experimenting with BTL addiction, of all things. One of the problems with BTL addiction is the same as any other form of addiction—the user can never get enough, and so they dedicate their whole life to getting more, which leads to all sorts of complications. A Lakewood psychologist has a theory that if a single BTL were entertaining enough, the user wouldn't need to keep looking for more—that BTL would be sufficient for their needs. They wouldn't need to rob banks or Stuffer Shacks to support their habit, they wouldn't join a gang, they wouldn't do anything—they'd just sit and watch their perfect BTL. Of course, there's a chance they also wouldn't eat or drink or perform other necessary functions and would just die sitting in their living room, but unsurprisingly the Lakewood executive staff is okay with that.

- Sounds like this psychologist has been spending too much time in his own head, not enough time with his basic psychology texts. The whole premise of addiction is you never get enough, period. You're not going to satisfy an addict.
- Haze
- I guess this is something we can take Haze's word for. But still, if I had *Water Margin* as a BTL, I could probably watch it a couple hundred times without moving from my easy chair.
- Slamm-0!

## Compri Hotel

The luxurious Compri Hotel has found itself in a bit of a bind lately. It has long had a reputation for being perhaps the most private hotel in all of Denver, which in times like these has made it a destination for spies looking to be shielded from prying eyes. Spies are not, however, the clientele the Compri is looking for, so they are working to maintain their reputation while keeping spies from using their facilities. They have decided that their best course of action is to lean on Ghostwalker's "death for espionage" platform, so they are warning all guests that they will immediately report all suspected espionage activities to the authorities. This, of course, only makes their government and business clients all the more delighted with this place.

## SHIUX SECTOR

The Sioux sector has a reputation for being a tough neighborhood. Stories abound about tourists being mugged by sector security upon entering and brawls breaking out on every street corner. The Sioux despise outsiders, and anyone who walks like a victim will be treated like one.

- The mysterious "they" also say weapons are for sale at every bar, war paint must be worn to prove your strength, and that the Sioux keep their brains in their muscles. If you believe any of that, I've got a boatload of pharmaceuticals to sell you. You just need to break in drop by the local DocWagon office to pick them up. After hours.
- Butch

The truth, naturally, is not that extreme. Sioux aggressiveness is a ritualized form of greeting. Warriors use posturing and threats to establish the social pecking order. If a Sioux man threatens you, he expects you to threaten him back. If you back down or act apologetic, he will ignore you. If you resort to violence, he and his friends will kick your ass and send you packing. If you meet insult for insult, threat for threat, and don't draw weapons, you earn both respect and honor.

Anthropologists have pointed out the similarities in this behavior to that of wolf packs, with the whole threat-dominance-submission behavior. But it's more than that. Sioux culture is all about *wówitaj*, which means warrior pride and warrior honor. This isn't the kind of pride where a warrior walks around boasting about the battles he's won and the foes he's defeated. *Wówitaj* is a philosophy, a code of conduct, a reputation. A warrior with *wówitaj* walks where he will, does as he wishes, and is strong enough to stand up to others without resorting to dirty tricks.

The Sioux don't deal with those who have little or no *wówitaj*. Men without honor tarnish everyone they interact with. Understanding the concept of warrior pride is a vital part of surviving in this sector.

- Not every Sioux acts this way. If you walk into a four-star hotel doing the threat-posture thing, you're likely to get yourself thrown out. If they don't have you arrested.
- Kat o' Nine Tales
- Confrontations are quite common, actually, but the participants rarely come to permanent harm. Break that unwritten code and no one in the Sioux sector will talk to you. Not even your contacts.
- Mika

Since Sioux law requires everyone to serve in the military once they turn eighteen, it's rare to encounter a Sioux who doesn't carry a weapon or doesn't know how to defend himself. Most types of cyberware are legal in this sector, and no one bothers to disguise it. Those with wealth like to show off their fancy toys. This too is part of warrior pride. Showing off is not the same as boasting, however. It's just another facet of Sioux culture. People who walk around without obvious weaponry, cyberware, or magical defenses are usually seen as people who



INCOMING FEED.....



DENVER NEIGHBORHOODS .....

have something to hide. They are the first people targeted by sector security and examined most closely by the ZDF.

- The wolf pack attitude extends into community life too. The Sioux are very group-minded. Everything they do is aimed at gaining honor for their family, their tribe, and their nation.
- /dev/grll
- Someone's been in the Sioux propaganda chat room again, hasn't she? The Sioux may present a united front to everyone else, but the individual tribes don't get along at all. Take the Tsalagi (Cherokee), for instance. Most of them hate the Dakota Sioux, who pretty much run the Council of Elders. Give them a chance for a little political payback and they'll take it in an instant. But don't expect them to share that info with an Anglo or non-Sioux Native American.
- Mika

This sector is also the most eco-friendly area of Denver. While military-grade weapons are unlikely to draw attention, minor incidents like littering can get you arrested for the night. The Sioux are distant to strangers, but with people they know they are very friendly and touchy-feely, which draws attention when you walk around like someone who needs large amounts of personal space.

- Also, drug use is illegal in this sector and smoking in public is a major social taboo. Don't do it.
- Stone

The northern area, near Commerce City, has a slightly different attitude, though. The laborers here show an isolationist small-town attitude. They have a sense of community, but they are very tight-knit and closed-mouthed even to people from the rest of the Sioux sector. It's not uncommon to see durable work clothes that have been mended many times over and have a few stains on them worn by the denizens of this area.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

### Horse Trot Ranch

The Horse Trot Ranch is owned by Falcone Corporate Consultants, and it hosts several corporate retreats. It runs for twenty-five city blocks, and Jaron Falcone has done his best to make it look untouched and natural. That's just an illusion, though—groves of trees, barns, and the like are purposefully placed to allow for secluded, private meeting spots.

In his previous life Falcone was a runner, a decker who went by the name of HammerJack. He's got enough memory of his old life to have sympathies with people still on the street, but he needs the trust of his clients. That means he's going to be careful about sullyng his name.

- The easiest favor he can give you is to get you onto his property at the same time high-level executives are meeting in one of his groves. Just don't abuse the privilege, and be sure to give him deniability.
- FastJack



## Overmon-Aberny

The rustic log-cabin-and-fireplace can make visitors overly dismissive of the Overmon-Aberny, but that would be a mistake. For security, the management makes a point of hiring military veterans with a solid service record, and they also are certain to give their staff a month off to keep their skills sharp. As a result, the physical security of the hotel is excellent.

## Hardpan

It seems odd that people would travel to the worst-smelling, worst-located bar in the sprawl for the atmosphere, but that's the way it is with Hardpan. The only things near it are Apex Plasmid's algae tanks, a sewage treatment plant, and a cemetery, which does a lot to keep random passers-by from wandering in. The only people who come to Hardpan are those who want to be there and want to be in the company of its owner, Raquel "Sandy" Sands. On the whole, they're a tough, hard-nosed group which lots of great stories to tell—and a lot more information that they know but don't share with just anyone. If you're looking for a recruit or for inside info for what's happening on the Sioux streets, this is a good place to go.

## Apex Plasmids complex

As a growing business that seemingly has Ghostwalker's favor, Apex Plasmids has drawn a lot of attention. Their rapid growth has outpaced their existing security protocols, and runs against Apex are common if only because they're generally easy. Their main business complex is of interest for two reasons—either because people like us might make a run against it, or because some of us might be able to convince Apex to pay them a decent sum to protect the complex from our peers.

## UCAS SECTOR

This sector contains the biggest population of paranoid bigots in all of Denver. Anti-“everyone that's not a UCAS citizen,” this was the first sector to install fences and is the group mostly likely to board up the windows and hide in their bunkers the next time a crisis hits. Originally designed as a series of self-sustaining communities, with no need to go far for the essentials, these suburban corporate enclaves have an atmosphere of quiet desperation. UCAS displays the expected siege mentality more than their CAS counterparts, but even that attitude appears to be dissipating in the face of Ghostwalker's benevolent ownership.

Residents are reverting to the old attitudes and viewpoints that shaped the original United States of America. These are a strong, independent people who don't need their parents (the UCAS government) to take care of them anymore. Owning weapons is legal in the UCAS sector, but most citizens don't carry theirs around with them. If you're caught committing a crime (such as theft) with a weapon, the sentence carries federal-level penalties.

- UCAS law requires licenses for any weapon bigger than a butter knife. You must also be able to provide the licenses to sector or border security upon request. So make sure your documents are up to date before visiting.
- Cosmo

- Cyberware requires licensing too. If you have it, you'd better have the e-paperwork, or obtain it at the border. Military grade cyberware is outright illegal unless you can prove you're currently serving in the military. Retired military don't get a break.
- Hard Exit

UCAS has the highest cost of living of all sectors. Wages tend to be just as high, though, to keep workers from moving to the other sectors. Only the rich wear designer clothing, though they are more likely to walk around their neighborhoods than their CAS counterparts. Street squatters and SINless are rarely seen in normal UCAS neighborhoods. During the Olympics, the sector government rounded them up into specially designed community housing projects. Those they couldn't catch fled into the Warrens.

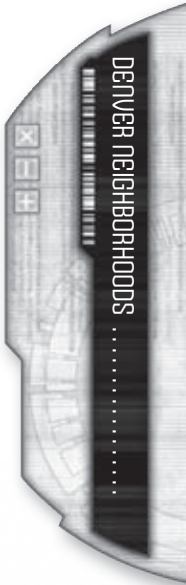
- Community housing projects? That's a helluva joke. More like government-subsidized ghettos.
- Sticks
- At least they got free food, potable water, and shelter. All at the government's expense. Unlike those who ran into the Warrens.
- 2XL
- No one fled into the Warrens. They were dragged there by Lesker's people. And the Warrens' new residents were any metahumans who couldn't prove to sector security that she or he had a legitimate street address. The people who got the ghetto deal were all human.
- Sounder

Given the UCAS's past with the NAN, it's a wise idea for any Native American to disguise himself before wandering around in this sector. Too many residents have a cowboy attitude and a strong resentment of the “evil Indians” who dared take their city from them. This resentment isn't all encompassing, however, as the younger residents tend to wear NAN fashions in an effort to be a part of the larger Denver community.

- Navajo jewelry with Hopi tops and Ute pants. Yep. That's exactly what the fashionable Native American is wearing these days. \*rolls eyes\*
- Netcat

The Draco Foundation and the Children of the Dragon have their largest presence in the UCAS sector. Though they clash frequently with Humanis, these groups have established an island of calm in the face of rampant UCAS racism. Those seeking a safe place to spend the night can find it in the free homeless shelters run by both groups.

- “Free” is a relative term. The CotD read you a sermon before you can spend the night, and the Draco Foundation would “appreciate” hearing about any information related to dragons or mystical artifacts that you might have. Apparently, the local DF chapter thinks every SINless adult is a shadowrunner, or knows a few runners.
- Slamm-0!



## PLACES OF INTEREST

### Brown Palace Hotel

A Seattle institution, the Brown Palace Hotel boasts rooms full of distinct and unusual pieces of art. Most of these are worth a decent amount of nuyen, so security on them is pretty good. The thing is, while the Brown Palace is pretty good at making sure that nothing gets stolen, in other respects, namely in the Matrix, its security is second rate. So don't go in there looking to take anything, but what you can do is plant bugs. Their knick-knacks provide great hiding places—as long as you don't set off any alarms on them—and if you do it right, the hotel's Matrix security likely won't notice what you did for a good, long while.

### Marcel's

Marcel's is a good, mainstream Italian restaurant, but a city like Denver is full of good, mainstream Italian restaurants. What sets Marcel's apart is that it is both the money-laundering front and primary haunt of the Casquilho family. It's also known for the unusual visuals presented by the staff, which includes changelings, people wearing more tattoo ink than clothing, and folks with some radical body modifications. It's a little overpriced, but it has some private rooms that even have one-way mirrors that allow you to overlook the patrons.

- If you're at Marcel's, never, ever forget that the prime users of the private rooms are the Casquilhos themselves. If you're in there, just assume that they're watching you.
- Pistons

### Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge

After years of indecision about what to do with the abandoned Rocky Mountain Arsenal, nature intervened and settled the question. The site had been damaged by interlopers, a few gang fights, and other illicit activities, and nature had been busy moving into the cracks that had been left behind. Plants started growing, animals followed, and eventually the government decided to make the whole place a wildlife refuge. It has a fine selection of animals and critters; an embracer colony has taken up residence there, and there are a couple of thunderbird nests. A couple of gyres have nested there as well, leading to the ominous sight of the birds hovering far over the UCAS sector, looking for the remains of a run gone bad.

## THE AURORA WARRENS

This district is home to urban squatters, go-gangs, and syndicate bordellos. The easiest way to attract attention is either to drive into the Warrens or dress in anything above Dumpster Casual. Few people in the Warrens actually own vehicles. Fewer still wear tailored clothes. Mismatched clothing, tattoos, cheap jewelry, and cheap guns/cyber are the expected fashions in the Warrens, all of it having the "previously owned" quality.

Despite officially being UCAS territory, the Warrens are not policed by either the ZDF or UCAS sector security. The only law here is the law of survival. Ghouls make their home in the old Aurora Marketplace, known in the shadows as The Meat Market.

INCOMING FEED.....





Anything goes here. Those carrying weapons are less likely to be bothered by the petty criminals, but if you're carrying something that looks valuable, the locals will swarm you to take it.

Unlike threats in the Sioux sector, promises of violence here are likely to be backed up, and people happily resort to violence if you don't give them what they want. Gunfights are common. Knife fights are more common. The residents use any weapon they can grab and are less concerned with the concept of killing than they are with the concept of surviving. Bodies are left lying in the street, to be collected by scavengers later. There is no such thing as murder in the Warrens. Even if you get shot and killed by someone else, it's considered a form of suicide, since only the foolish or the stupid enter the Warrens willingly.

This is a neighborhood of desperation. Mutual defense pacts are made and broken on a daily basis. The people who live here have no place else to go and nothing left to lose. Anyone who crosses the invisible boundary into the Warrens had better be able to defend himself.

## FUNCTIONALLY DYSFUNCTIONAL

As you can see, each sector has its own unique flavor, attitude, and cultural identity. The frenetic need to protect sector identities causes enough friction to set the entire city on fire. Some anthropologists believe a citywide war is on the horizon. But it's important to note that the isolationism of the Front Range Free Zone is evolving in a unique direction. Long used to civil unrest, social upheaval, and economic disasters, the residents of the Front Range Free Zone have shown an amazing resilience and ability to adapt. Inter-sector relations are tense, frigid, volatile, and fragile. Denverites hold fast to their belief systems with an intransigence that defies explanation. Even in the individual sectors, there is no

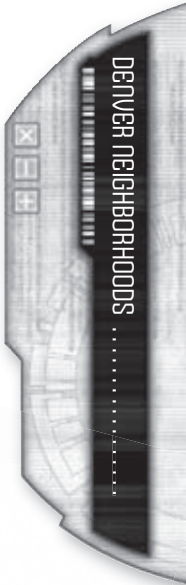
common, overriding goal that unites its peoples. Political agendas are all over the map, and subcultures often run counter to the prevailing attitudes portrayed by the public faces of each sector.

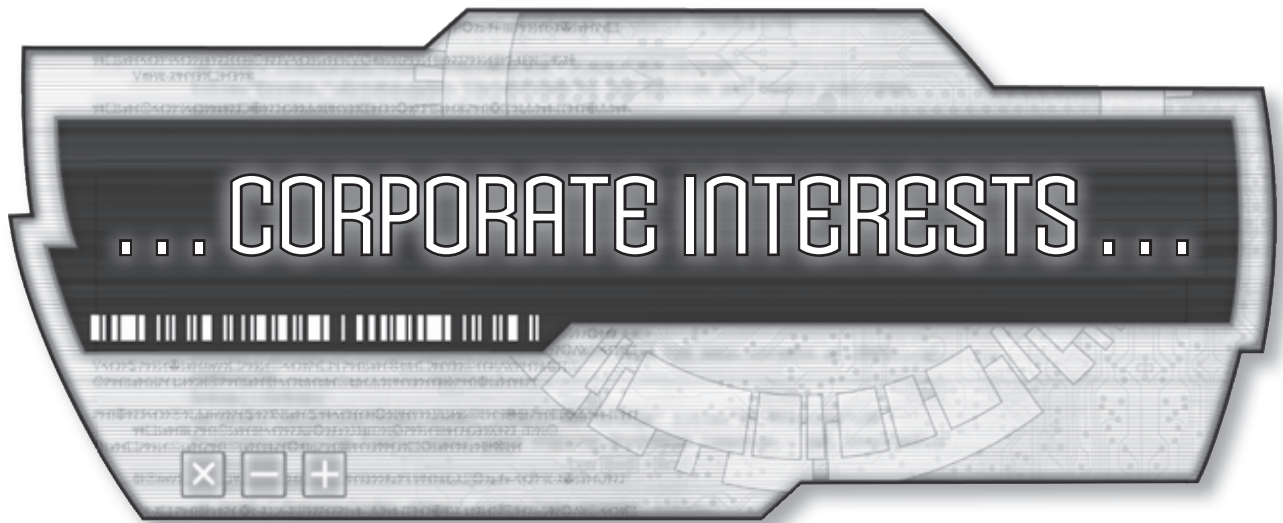
But there is an undercurrent, for those sensitive enough to feel it. A sense that this subdivided, chaotic madhouse is somehow pulling together in the face of external pressure. The treaty nation governments are losing control of their individual sectors. More and more, sector governments are pushing back against laws they dislike, politicians that don't speak for them, and expectations that no longer fit the Front Range Free Zone's shifting landscape. Ghostwalker is an icon, even to those who despise him, a unifying symbol of everything that is both wrong and right about Denver. His name is invoked in oaths and curses. His presence is a looming shadow that colors everything it touches. He is the horror under the bed used to threaten children into good behavior, or the paragon held up as a standard to which all locals should aspire.

Despite the differences in culture and politics, FRFZ residents pull together in an odd way. Foreigners are kept at arm's length, treated as outside invaders even as the locals offer them tourist-trap trinkets and take their money. In an argument between FRFZ residents and outsiders, the locals are often seen defending each other despite sector differences. A Sioux FRFZ resident will treat a UCAS FRFZ resident better than a non-resident UCAS citizen.

But the truest measure of how Denver culture and politics are evolving is the use of one word that has only popped up in the past year. A word used across sector boundaries that proclaims an allegiance above national interests. A word the treaty nations try to stamp out because of the connotations it carries.

Denverite.





**Posted by: Cosmo**

Not all power comes from money, but that's the form of power corporations are most interested in. The divided nature of Denver means the final shape of the treaty could have significant impact on how money flows in the town, so the megas are paying close attention to what's happening in town. The Big Ten have varying degrees of presence in the city (even Aztechnology, which is officially excluded from the city, has a few tenuous connections to the town), but whatever level they're at right now, they're looking to grow and see if they can grab a piece of the shifting pie. They'll have to contend with each other, of course, but they'll also have to keep their eyes on some local players who, while lacking the Big Ten's economic heft, make up for that with knowledge of the local environment and the nimbleness to respond to any changes and challenges it may throw their way. Here's a rundown of what the AAAs are up to in town, and which local As are keeping their lives interesting.

## THE MEGAS IN DENVER

### ARES MACROTECHNOLOGY

While Ares, as a megacorp, lacks any true national identity, the corp culture prides itself on having North American values. In Denver, despite Ares' PR efforts, this has given the impression that Ares is allied with the UCAS, and to a lesser extent the CAS, against the NAN sectors. This appearance has been strengthened by the recent shuffling of security providers, with Knight Errant gaining the security contract for the UCAS sector while losing the CAS one to Lone Star. At least part of the motivation for Knight Errant taking on the UCAS contract was the fact that its former head, Roger Soaring Owl, made a public split with it last year and took a position in the Sioux military. Despite claims that it was amicable split, some of Knight Errant's actions since that time have sent a message that all is not forgotten.

These factors have sabotaged Ares Arms' plans to sell to the Sioux military, but those plans had been struggling for years anyway. The Sioux military has not made the mistake of conflating Ares with the UCAS, but they nevertheless have

resisted being armed in a similar fashion to their opponents across the border. Other than purchases to equip Sioux's training cadres with UCAS military equipment in order to make their war games as realistic as possible, Sioux forces seem to be content using multiple suppliers, though they have increasingly turned to Mesametric's military offerings.

Ares Arms has several facilities in the CAS sector and is a major weapon supplier to the CAS military. That has given it an in with the PCC, since the PCC and the CAS often engage in joint operations and exercises, and both have an interest in containing Aztlan. With the recent flare-up between Aztlan and Amazonia, the PCC and CAS have beefed up their defenses—along with Ares Arms' bottom line. To meet this increased demand, Ares Arms has taken over some of the Knight Errant facilities that fell into disuse when KE lost the CAS contract. These facilities are not as secure as the purpose-built Ares Arms buildings, since they were intended to keep people in rather than out. To meet demands from the PCC, Ares Arms has expanded operations in its recently purchased MetalStorm division in the PCC sector.

- Regardless of how much MetalStorm does or does not sell to the PCC, it's giving PCC citizens jobs, which is always a nice way to build a relationship with local government.
- Kay St. Irregular

There is evidence to suggest that some of the old Knight Errant facilities have been taken over by Firewatch teams. Though the Firewatch teams are no longer considered the premiere bug hunters, it would not be surprising for them to look at the Hub and its growing paranormal community with concern. If nothing else, it provides an opportunity for the Firewatch teams to practice their intelligence-gathering abilities among the paranormal. They have not set up shop in the Hub directly, because Ares does not have the best reputation in the paranormal community. Its work to enslave bugs and other spirits, and its role in releasing FAB III (which kills dual-natured creatures indiscriminately) played a strong role in Ares' alienation in the paranormal community.









- This is one reason spirits get involved in intelligence work. Our reality affects theirs in ways we do not anticipate—or in ways we should have anticipated, but didn't. They want to head off changes that might negatively affect them, and possibly exact revenge for past damages.
- Axis Mundi

The expulsion of Aztechnology from Denver also removed many consumer-goods suppliers. Ares Consumer Products saw this as an opportunity and moved energetically to take over as a major supplier. It is using Denver as a test market, seeing what goods would be popular elsewhere in North America by examining which sectors prefer which goods. While the sectors are not perfectly representative of their home countries, they are similar enough, and this work was considered wise use of ACP's limited resources. ACP does not have the best reputation, so they have not had much success in dominating the Denver market.

Supposedly, it was a visit to UnlimiTech that caused Roger Soaring Owl to leave Knight Errant, so it is possible that the office it recently set up in the UCAS half of the Hub was placed there solely to interact with the paranormal population of the Hub. That was not the wisest decision on the company's part, for despite their best efforts to keep it a secret, it is widely known in the paranormal community that UnlimiTech conducts experiments on spirits and spirit forms. As a result, they are subject to continuous low-level harassment and other forms of intimidation from the Hub's residents, despite heavy patrol by the local Knight Errant forces and additional Hard Corps forces within the facility itself. Complaints to the Council are referred to Ghostwalker, and Ghostwalker seems content to let the harassment continue. UnlimiTech does not seem to be especially worried, and some conspiracy theorists believe that this has become an unconventional way to recruit new test subjects, since their facility is extraterritorial and any creature found inside no longer has any rights.

- Was recruiting harassers to be test subjects the hidden agenda behind UnlimiTech's move to the Hub? No, they don't plan that well. But they're not above reaping the benefits of an unintended consequence. It's a tricky balance—if someone leans on them to stop recruiting unwilling subjects, then they'll start asking Ghostwalker to put an end to the harassment, and Ares might be able to cajole him into action. No one wants that, so the current balance is likely to continue for a time, until one party or another gets too annoyed.
- Snopes

On the question of the Treaty of Denver, Ares has recently been undergoing rapprochement with the UCAS government, so while officially they are neutral due to their need to sell weapons to all the major powers involved, it will do what it can to repair its ties with the UCAS. According to shadow whispers, one thing Ares can do is provide some manpower for the UCAS sector's espionage efforts.

- This means that several UCAS handlers are building cover identities as Ares employees. Looking for the director of unspecified services at the local office of an Ares subsidiary is a good way in to the espionage business.
- Thorn

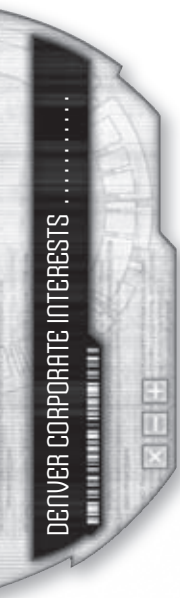
## AZTECHNOLOGY

Aztechnology does not have any official assets in Denver, since all of their subsidiaries were expelled from the city at the order of Ghostwalker when he took control of the city. All of their employees that had extraterritorial protection were deported on several chartered flights within days of the fall of the Aztlan sector. The ones that did not leave on those planes were given a one-time offer to take a flight back to Aztlan. Unless they have prior permission to visit Denver, no Aztechnology employee is currently allowed into the city. The individual sector governments are responsible for making sure that no Aztechnology employees travel from their nation to the sector, and after the first few times that a sector government was found to have been lax in their security and had their border crossings closed for several days, most exercise due diligence. The UCAS especially so, since losing the ability to cross borders effectively cuts them off from the rest of the world.

Most of the time, problems come from Aztechnology employees that use one of the Denver airports and leave the transfer area during a layover. If the employee is a wage-slave, they are usually punished with a fine and placed on the next jet to Aztlan. If the employee is caught in a criminal or terrorist activity, has any magical ability, or is of a middle-management rank or higher, they are given over to Ghostwalker. What happens afterward is unknown because none have turned up again. The same happens to any Aztechnology employee, no matter their position or activity, if they are found inside Denver itself rather than at one of the borders.

- The easy guess is that Ghostwalker just eats 'em, but that's too easy. And it's not like he's lacking for food anyway. No, his whole goal is to keep punishing Aztechnology, not necessarily their individual employees. He milks them for information, and he turns plenty of them into agents in his employ.
- Sunshine
- If they're acting as agents, how come none of them has been seen again?
- Picador
- Because sending back an employee that had recently been in his hands would raise a ton of red flags. They get some radical reconstructive surgery, use their knowledge of the Big A to get a new job, then go to work
- Sunshine

Most of Aztechnology's major facilities were destroyed either during Ghostwalker's rampage when he first appeared or during the invasion by the CAS, as the majority of those facilities served as defensive strong points. In the weeks after Ghostwalker's arrival, the rest of Aztechnology's subsidiaries and facilities were taken over and placed under the control of the Anasazi Holding Company. AHC has sold off parts of the Aztechnology empire, but it still controls many pieces because of the Ghostwalker's divestment requirements. They must be sold to either a locally controlled company or one run by Denver natives, and AHC has blocked more than a dozen sales to megacorp shell companies. AHC is linked to the University of Denver, with students





doing much of the grunt work of running it. Profits go into an endowment for University of Denver and to fund the re-opening of University of Colorado under the aegis of Brigham Young University and the University of Cheyenne.

While the destruction was considerable, many facilities survived. Thousands of Aztechnology employees and Aztlan citizens stayed in Denver, because leaving the city would be too much of a financial hardship. The CAS has given former Aztechnology and Aztlan citizens resident alien status, meaning they have some legal protections but need to take additional steps to become full CAS citizens. The conversion rate from resident alien to citizen has been low, as most of the former Aztechnology and Aztlan citizens resist assimilation. This resistance is partially fueled by a strong Aztec Revival movement in the former Aztlan sector.

The Aztec Cultural Studies Center was formerly owned by Anáhuac University and was sold off when it reverted to its original name as the University of Denver. Though most of the loyalist Aztechnology and Aztlan faculty left during or right after the takeover, several remained who wished to retain their culture. The CAS sector government, after taking a close look at the faculty and the Center's funding, found nothing that directly linked it to Aztechnology. Among its programs are weekly Path of the Sun services for those that do not feel comfortable attending Matrix religious services and Aztlan Spanish and Nuevo Nahuatl language classes. It sponsors an ollamaliztli league, including a youth division. It also has various home-design seminars to help attendees decorate or build Aztec Revival homes and buildings, it helps members arrange group purchases of Aztec clothing styles from Aztlan, and it runs several craft and clothing meets. Volunteers from the ACSC are now running the Chessman Park Conservatory and have kept the focus there on native Aztlan breeds. In all, these efforts have many former Aztlan and Aztechnology citizens looking and acting far more like Aztlan citizens than they did when the sector was still under Aztlan control. Though there is no direct connection to Aztechnology, it is an open secret that Aztechnology is finding a way to funnel support to the Center, along with several similar facilities that have opened up throughout Pueblo and the CAS.

- In the PCC sector, it's a common belief that Aztechnology is funneling money to these centers through their new Ute citizens. Proving that's the case would bring a nice payday.
- Kay St. Irregular

Aztechnology board member Domingo Chavez has not taken the loss of Los Angeles and the ejection of Aztechnology from the PCC well, and he has undertaken a personal campaign to rectify those errors. While the majority of Aztechnology's high-level executives are focused on the Amazonian conflict, he has not let the pressure off of the PCC or Denver. It is widely believed that he is behind the Ute voting bloc pressuring to bring Aztechnology back to the PCC, which is one way Aztechnology may return to Denver. In addition, it is believed that he is directly funding or otherwise supporting most of the resistance in the former Aztlan sector, either via passive means such as the ACSC or more active ones such as the Los Espejos. He has also placed pressure on Aztechnology subsidiaries to open branches in Denver—assuming their connection to Aztechnology is distant enough.

Genetique and Natural Vat Technologies have both opened food production facilities in Denver—Genetique in the Sioux Sector, NatVat in the UCAS sector. Genetique has several vat-food farms that are in direct competition with Apex Plasmids (the former Denver Food, Inc). Normally Genetique would simply crush a company like Apex, but Ghostwalker's protection of local companies has prevented them from employing the more violent techniques they would normally use. NatVat has built several facilities for fungi and soy production, and it is believed that those locations are also used to grow explosives and other chemical supplies for the Los Espejos movement. Like all Aztechnology companies that continue to operate in Denver, these operations have not been publicly linked to Aztechnology, though the connection is considered to be an open secret in the runner community.

Stuffer Shacks are a common sight in every sprawl, but few realize that the chain is owned by Aztechnology. Though the Denver Stuffer Shacks are now owned by AHC and the individual stores are sold as franchises, the Stuffer Shack supply chain is still part of Aztechnology, and most of the brands they sell are produced by Aztechnology affiliates. This supply chain offers ample opportunity for smuggling goods into Denver, despite the scrutiny that the shipments undergo. These smuggling routes seem to be exclusive for Aztechnology's use, which has many suspecting that is how Los Espejos is supported.

- Stuffer Shack owners are aware of how precarious their position is—Ghostwalker certainly wouldn't mind clamping down on some Aztech smugglers, and a disruption in the supply chain would severely disrupt their business. They have a business owners association, and while they're not about to cross GW on his own turf, they fund some runs outside of the city to make sure the supply train stays on track.
- 2XL

Maritech Enterprises has set up a branch in the CAS sector providing micro-power stations, which have been selling well since no one likes the fact that the PCC controls the main source of power for Denver, the Greenland fusion plant. Maritech has recently begun positioning itself for a bid to privatize the Water Board, based on its reputation as utility provider. Water has been a contentious issue in Denver, so in this area Aztechnology has been extra careful to bury their connections to this company. It's a high-reward scenario if they pull it off—controlling Denver's water supply may be the lever that Aztechnology needs to regain its position in the city.

Until that day, Los Espejos continues their low-level terrorist campaign against the CAS and Ghostwalker. Los Espejos is led by an Aztechnology Guerrero named Eagle Warrior (or Guerrero Águila) who has a blood spirit ally named Carmesí. Los Espejos laid low during the Olympics, relying on civil disobedience and other forms of peaceful resistance to bring their message to the world and maintain Aztechnology's positive image. With the international press attention starting to lessen and Treaty of Denver renegotiations beginning, they have restarted their more violent activity. While they had previously avoided targets in the UCAS, Sioux, and the former Ute sector, that reluctance seems to be no longer in force as they look for the best ways to disrupt



the treaty negotiations. Intelligence has suggested that several Cuachicqueh Guerrero teams have recently been added to Los Espejos along with increased recruitment in the former Aztlan sector. Considering the ramping up of activity, it seems inevitable that several Otontin (their deep cover operatives) will emerge on the scene—if they're not already there.

Aztechnology's goal during the Denver Treaty negotiations is simple—cause as much trouble as possible, especially for Ghostwalker. For the moment, Chavez does not believe that the opportunity exists for Aztechnology to return to Denver through the treaty negotiations, so he wishes to be as disruptive as possible while seeking any way to kill or weaken Ghostwalker. Other factions within Aztechnology would consider it a bonus if the CAS and the PCC were focused on Denver rather than taking advantage of any weaknesses Aztechnology or Aztlan may have due to the Amazonian conflict.

- Don't count on the CAS to be that stupid. Denver will take some of their attention, but there's no way they're going to forget about our neighbors to the south. Keep your eyes on Austin.
- Kane

## EVO

Yamatetsu, the prior incarnation of Evo, had a minimal presence in Denver, but its transformation into Evo and the growth of the Hub's metahuman community has drawn their interest. Evo's North American head, Mary Luce, has focused recent expansion efforts on the Pueblo Corporate Council and the Sioux Nation. Denver offers an opportunity to expand into both markets simultaneously, so Mary Luce is often there, meeting heads of local companies.

Yamatetsu's old headquarters in the UCAS portion of the Hub, on Tremont and Fifteenth, has been renamed Evo Gardens, with the formerly fanciful name being made real thanks to the greening of the office buildings in the complex. Rooftop gardens and terraces now connect the buildings. Though previously few Yamatetsu companies were actually based there, not only has Evo's North America's branch office been located there and expanded to coordinate the meetings and alliances that Mary Luce has been making, but Shibata Construction and Engineering and Tsuruga International have also opened offices to take advantage of the glut of construction contracts. First there was the reconstruction contracts that the CAS originally asked for to repair the damage done to the Aztlan sector when it was taken over, and then there were the PCC's contracts to bring the former Ute sector up to PCC's infrastructure standards. Both companies drew a lot of work from the Olympic construction boom and are currently angling for further contracts in the believed-to-be-forthcoming Aurora Warrens reclamation projects.

Evo Gardens is one of the centers of metahuman community in the Hub. With Ghostwalker's protection, many of the more unusual metahuman variants have been congregating in the Hub, and many of the restaurants and other shops have been built with them in mind thanks to the MetaErgonomics office in the Gardens. Additionally, MetaErgonomics owns several shops that sell specialized and custom items for metahumans. One of the restaurants originally aimed at centaurs, the Feed Trough, has become a popular location due to its wide and varied vegetarian

offerings, all of which come in large servings. MetaMatrix also has offices in the Evo Gardens and sponsors many metahuman events, often partnering with Weekday Eclipse to introduce new metahuman acts that MetaMatrix users have voted to be worthy of wider attention. Though their success rate has not been very high in breaking those groups out to wider audiences, the shows still have done well.

Evo has little directly at stake in the Denver Treaty negotiations, though Mary Luce would prefer that Aztechnology continues to stay out of the picture to make her expansion plans easier and that Ghostwalker's agenda be supported in general. This is assuming that whatever he has planned will probably be good for the metahuman community he has created and supported in the Hub, which is a market that Evo could easily dominate.

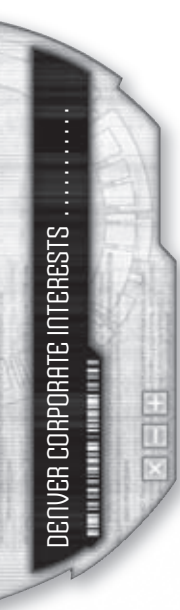
- Metahuman sympathies? Environmentally friendly policies? Is it just me, or does it sound like Evo could be the Trojan horse for Amazonia here? After all, why should the Big A be the only side in the southern conflict working to dig into Denver?
- Marcos
- It's just you. Amazonia's not going to use any of the Big Ten as a proxy.
- Snopes

## HORIZON

Mira Castillo, the elven head of Horizon Americas, has a personal interest in Denver. She is fascinated by great dragons, and it was her negotiating skill that convinced Ghostwalker to allow control of Denver's wireless infrastructure, which Horizon had shared with the PCC, to fall completely under the stewardship of Singularity. Singularity has taken over part of the Truman Tech Tower, which fellow Horizon subsidiary Pathfinder Multimedia gained when it absorbed the Truman Distribution Network, and the corp is hard at work upgrading the city's AR. Mira Castillo has been frequently seen in those offices and throughout the rest of the UCAS portion of the Hub as she continues to manage Ghostwalker's interest in the project.

Though the majority of Horizon's subsidiaries are spread throughout Denver, the Horizon office complex is mostly finished, and many have begun relocating to it. It's being built in Boulder near the rebuilding University of Colorado. Horizon employees voted on that location because they believed it had the right atmosphere for their creative activities. Boulder has retained the atmosphere of a college town, still filled with eccentrics even though the university has been closed for decades. With the university reopening under the guidance of Brigham Young University and Cheyenne University, Horizon will be in perfect position to benefit from those institutions' new projects, especially with the influx of ideas coming from the traditionally closed-off Cheyenne University. Horizon has pledged support to the University of Colorado, though to maintain independence the AHC has kept the amount they'll accept from Horizon low.

Horizon's major goal in the city—besides generating business, of course—is to keep Aztechnology out of the PCC. The Big A is their number one competitor in most of their best fields, and the PCC serves as Horizon's shield against Aztechnology's military forces. That said, Horizon is not actually fond of the PCC





and will not help the PCC more than it has to. Horizon Internal Intelligence, for instance, is using the fact that it is far closer to the negotiations than Aegis Cognito to compete with it in selling intelligence about the treaty negotiations, especially the PCC's positions, to European powers.

One option that is being explored is to prolong the treaty negotiations to allow the Dawkins Group time to work, to change the environment so that more favorable outcomes will be assured of happening. Unfortunately, the majority of the Dawkins Group seems to be involved with other projects, so it's uncertain whether or not the Dawkins Group even wants to affect the Treaty negotiations.

- It's a major political affair—of *course* they want to affect it. But if their twin goals are to do business in Denver and to keep Aztechnology out, there's another ally they should cultivate, and that's the dragon at the top. You'd better believe they're working on it.
- Kay St. Irregular

## MCT

Mitsuhamas Magical Services has set up operations in the UCAS Hub in the Mitsuhamas Tower, trying to take advantage of the Hub's metahuman community. Their bad reputation has made it difficult, though. Two of their divisions, Parashield and HermeTech, have had more success than the mother corp. Parashield markets the use of paranormal animals in security, while HermeTech helps security deal with magical challenges without magic (for example, they are working to make their own version of mage sight eye drops). Thanks to the metahuman community in the Hub, both companies have had additional security contracts, with Parashield trying to meet a heavy demand for dual-natured defenders. HermeTech had been competing with Ares Hard Corps for security contracts in the Hub, but with their magical defense approach they have been outpacing their competitors

Which means that someone will be hiring soon in order to trip HermeTech up.

While they have had success in security contracts, Mitsuhamas research initiatives in the Hub have been stymied, because they have a worse reputation than MMS—if that's possible. Mitsuhamas, along with VOR Robotics and BrainWave Inc., keep their main offices elsewhere in the UCAS sector, though it is commonly believed that Mitsuhamas will take a more belligerent approach within the Hub.

Mitsuhamas Media is based in the Mitsuhamas Tower, and until recently they looked at the Truman Tech Tower, thinking it would soon be theirs. It, however, was snatched out from underneath them by Horizon, along with the rest of the Truman companies. In Denver there is still some low-level conflict to acquire some of the now-orphaned production companies that were associated with Truman. Horizon has the inside track in acquiring them, but Ares is trying to recover what it can. This is a pet project of Daniel Truman's supporters within Ares—they hope that by saving some of his former empire, it will jumpstart his interest. Mitsuhamas Media had already been positioning itself to try to take Truman orphans away from Ares, so despite moves by Horizon, some of Mitsuhamas's executives are hoping that they will still be able to take some of the fragments for their own use.

CodeBlue Biotech is a MCT firm that has been previously been accused of experimenting on technomancers and is rumored have put up a black bag facility in the UCAS sector to further research them. The rumors are that they do bag-and-tag ops, taking technomancers off the streets, then dumping them back a short time later—after dosing them with short circuit to make sure that they don't remember that they had been taken. Thanks to the Denver Data Haven, Denver has a lot of technomancers in its population, many of them refugees from places that have less enlightened technomancer laws. CodeBlue Biotech believes this makes Denver the perfect spot for technomancer research, so part of its research includes genetesting a wide array of individuals along with trying to determine behavioral patterns. This research is noninvasive (especially compared to what MCT was rumored to be doing), but so far it hasn't resulted in anything concrete.

- Great. So they're going to read that as "not cutting into their brains doesn't get results." Wonder how that will turn out.
- Netcat

Traditionally, MCT has had tight ties with the Yakuza, but the Naito and Yamato-gumi in Denver has a relatively casual relationship with MCT. The closest relationship is that the Yakuza control a large percentage of the chip trade, so Mitsuhamas Media has been funding some of their takeover attempts of the Truman orphans by pushing product through the Yakuza. This may cause a glut and a crash in the price of chips, but in a post-tempo world, those low prices may help lure customers back.

MCT has no particular stake in any of the major players of the Denver treaty negotiations, which allows them to do whatever it thinks will support its business interests.

- The challenge is that megacorporations are not nimble enough to change directions quickly. The political situation in Denver is more fluid than Mitsuhamas can be, leaving the very real prospect that they will pick an ally just before that ally's fortunes will decline, and they will not be able to re-align themselves in time, which could leave them high and dry when the treaty is finalized.
- Mr. Bonds

## NEONET

Despite the fractious nature of NeoNET, there is little internal conflict in the corporation's Denver holdings. The only major conflict is between FTL Technologies and Steve Ridgemont, who was able to salvage various former FTL assets during Fuchi/Novatech/NeoNet mergers and formed Warpdrive Systems. The new management of FTL has made no secret that they believe Ridgemont walked away with more assets than he should have after selling FTL to Fuchi, but due to Ridgemont's influence in both the Sioux Nation and Denver, FTL only engages in nuisance actions against him. This puts FTL into conflict with the other parts of NeoNET, who were never part of the initial disagreement and thus have no problem doing business with Ridgemont—which means they often get hit by the blowback from FTL nuisance operations.

Since NeoNET is a hybrid of several different corporations, it lacks a consistent culture. While it is nominally based in Boston, it has no deep connections with the UCAS government. That does



not prevent other nations or corporations from seeing more of a connection than there actually is, but as a general policy NeoNET merely favors an outcome of the Denver treaty negotiations that will create the best climate for its business goals. Trouble comes, though, when you consider the fact that the different branches of NeoNET may not agree what the best outcome is. So far, though, they have resisted falling into conflict over this.

The major NeoNET player most interested in Denver is Celedyr, who is paying close attention to how Ghostwalker fares in light of the growing tensions between the various great dragons. Ghostwalker recently visited Celedyr's headquarters in Caerleon, and it is not known if Celedyr has reciprocated Ghostwalker's visit with one to Denver. Tracking dragon activities is difficult in any circumstances, and it's quite possible that the two met at Celedyr's secluded lair at Sandia Mountain, which is fairly likely since Celedyr may be continuing to consult with Ghostwalker over Eliohann's current status. Celedyr also has been running a campaign against Horizon because of its relationship with the Undernet Alliance. He encouraged NeoNET to bid on the wireless infrastructure contracts that Horizon eventually won. Celedyr's Knights of Rage have recruited members from Denver, and these new recruits have retained links to their original gangs. The gangs sometimes serve as local eyes and ears for the Knights, and they're also useful for irritating Horizon. They've been very careful, though, to stay out of Ghostwalker's way.

Major NeoNET companies in Denver include Iris Software, a former Transys company based in the Pueblo Corporate Council, while FTL Technologies remains based in the Sioux Nation. Novatech's Simplex Software is also based in the Pueblo Corporate Council along with Nightingale, a biotech operation that has a reputation of servicing every customer, for the right price. Though Celedyr had a good reputation in Pueblo, his continuing persecution of Horizon, especially in Denver, has led to Pueblo Corporate audits being more vigorous than the typically relaxed ones NeoNET companies usually receive. Novatech Matrix Systems has an office complex near Cherry Creek State Park in the UCAS sector. That was the company that Celedyr was pushing to bid on the wireless infrastructure contract, and the resulting flurry of runs between it and Horizon left NMS looking for payback.

- Yeah it did. They hired a new director of external security, a guy named Burt Traxhill, right off the streets. He ran under the name Skidmark. Tough guy, especially fond of thick-soled boots that do a lot of damage when they hit your face.
- Sticks
- Skidmark went legit? I'll have to look him up. As long as he doesn't remember what I did to his Ruger that one time.
- Riser

## RENRAKU

Renraku has never had major investments in Denver—they relied on Seattle to be their major base of power in the western half of North America. In the wake of the arcology shutdown, though, many of its surviving smaller subsidiaries were reestablished throughout NAN, while their higher-profile corporations went to Manhattan, where their membership on the Manhattan Development Consortium gave them secure footing. Renraku's

HyperSense remains their largest holding in Denver, located in the Pueblo sector, though Architectural Dynamics has opened a branch in the UCAS sector and is expanding. AD's traditional business has been developing malls and shopping centers, but what AD is really about is finding and exploiting valuable pieces of real estate. Despite its focus on buying real estate, AD does not appear to be involved in the land grab in Seattle, instead staying focused on the NAN.

Another subsidiary, Terracotta Armaments, has established a presence in the CAS Sector. Officially, they are expanding with the goal of making offers to the NAN, especially to the Sioux Nation since Ares' attempts have collapsed. Their business is shadowy—some legitimate sales channels have appeared, but there have been a surge of Terracotta products on the black market. Most of the movement seems to be flowing from Denver out to various NAN states, but there is enough variation in their movement to keep things interesting, and to keep rumormongers wondering what range of clients they might be cultivating.

Renraku's interests in the Denver treaty negotiations are uncertain, but it has a low-level interest in keeping the Pueblo and Sioux as weak as possible. They want a minimum of interference with whatever their plans are for the NAN, and those plans seem to be long term in nature. If a Renraku division could come up with a strong position that would offer the parent corporation a concrete benefit in the interim, they would take it.

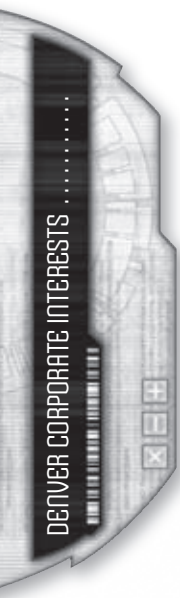
- The strong position is there, they're just figuring out how best to take advantage of it. AD is buying land, but they'd like to move faster. They will if they can figure out how to get a temporary drop in real estate prices. Best way to do that? Get banks to raise mortgage rates, buy a bunch of property, then have them drop rates again. It only works, though, if someone who can control the banks is on your side. That's what Renraku wants.
- Dr. Spin

## SAEDER-KRUPP

Saeder-Krupp was one of the targets of Ghostwalker's rampage when he first appeared and took control of Denver, which might make one think that Ghostwalker and Lofwyr have an antagonistic relationship. But other than that initial conflict, Ghostwalker and Lofwyr seem content to ignore each other. Saeder-Krupp is allowed to operate in Denver, though in most cases it is second-tier subsidiaries that do not use directly use its corporate name or identity.

Saeder-Krupp is making an effort to break into the Sioux Nation markets, and it has been using Denver as its jumping-off point. With Sioux no longer seeming interested in partnering with Ares for their military needs, Saeder-Krupp has made several partnerships with Sioux Nation military contractors, most notably with Mesametric. Many of the new Mesametric military vehicle offerings come with Saeder-Krupp weapon packages, while High Plains Coding is partnering with Saeder-Krupp for distributorship and product support of their consumer products in Europe. Additionally, their nanotech programmers have been adapting their breakthroughs for use with S-K nanotechnology.

Two of Saeder-Krupp's major magical corporations, Awakened World Research and the Spellweaver Consortium, have set up operations in the Sioux Hub. Most of their product lines





are dedicated to more formal thaumaturgical studies rather than the shamanistic ones, though they have attempted to branch out. Both of these corporations have been doing field testing and product trials of their newer shamanistic products inside the Hub along with interviewing local customers to guide product development. With so many other corporations wishing to take advantage of the Awakened community in the Hub, Saeder-Krupp companies have been involved with corporate espionage focused on making sure that no other company makes an advance that they can't match or steal outright. They're also focused on maintaining their edge in enchanting processes.

After razing the previous structure, Saeder-Krupp Prime built a facility at the location of the Denver Aztechnology headquarters. The building is nothing out of the ordinary, looking like the rest of the buildings around it, with only a few cosmetic touches marking it as belonging to Saeder-Krupp. It is commonly believed that the facility supports an intelligence-gathering operation, not only aimed at Ghostwalker but also the other megacorps and nations involved in Denver. This is common knowledge, but the puzzle is that none of the Denver movers and shakers tried to impede this, and they even encouraged Saeder-Krupp to construct a brand-new structure without any easy ways to gather intelligence on it. Their reasons for letting them have this much rope are not known, but I'd assume it's because they're hoping S-K will find a way to hang themselves.

If Saeder-Krupp has any goals in regards to the Denver Treaty negotiations, it is to continue to gather intelligence on Ghostwalker and perhaps subtly interfere with him. Beyond that, there appears to be nothing more than the usual clandestine games between dragons.

- You've got this wrong. S-K isn't gathering information on Ghostwalker to interfere with him—it's looking for leverage that it might use to gain an alliance in the brewing tensions between dragons. Lofwyr won't allow his minions to interfere with Ghostwalker in any way that might harm the chances of such an alliance.
- Plan 9

## SHIAWASE

Shiawase has been not directly involved in Denver for years, especially considering its recent focus on Japan. It's Market Forecasting & Information Department undoubtedly has an operation in Denver, probably expanded under the cover of the Olympics—it helped that there was some "confusion" over the total number of visas issued to the athletes and their supporters. Before the Olympics began, Shiawase sponsored a Shinto mission to Denver, and they have remained, having set up a small shrine in the Benedict Fountain Park in the Sioux Hub. There are several relatively high-level Shinto practitioners attached to the Shrine who have been seen in the company of some of the Hub's shamans.

The Sioux Hub is also home to Shiawase Plaza, local headquarters for most of the megacorp's local companies, the majority of which belong to their Envirotech and Biotech divisions. Shiawase's interests in the region have traditionally been agriculture and aquaculture, mostly in the Sioux Nation, and while most of the purely agricultural companies are located throughout the Sioux Nation, the genetic research to increase yields and fight



DENVER CORPORATE INTERESTS .....



disease is handled in Denver. Arboritech is the single largest Shiawase company doing research there.

While Shiawase is not an extension of the Imperial Japanese government, they are closely allied and will in general try to do their best to protect Imperial Japanese interests as long as it does not harm their own when considering their positions on the Treaty of Denver negotiations. From the empire's point of view, having a single, strong leader in charge of Denver works out fine, so they're likely to help keep GW in control.

- That may be the big picture, but there are some finer gradations Shiawase could work on. Wuxing's trying to move into town, and Shiawase has no interest in letting that happen. If they can make life harder for Wuxing, they will.
- Mr. Bonds

## WUXING

Wuxing is a new entry in the Denver scene, with few subsidiaries located there—it only moved in once Aztechnology was expelled. Wuxing has many logistics and shipping concerns, which was one of Aztechnology's specialties in the Denver, and it has taken over many of the same niches. But in doing so, Wuxing has attracted attention—not only have they moved into many of the Aztechnology's market spaces, they have also moved closer to Aztechnology, specifically by inviting them into the Pacific Prosperity Group. The fact that this happened after Wuxing took over the Aztlan teocalli site has made some suspect that Wuxing found something in the rubble that influenced their decision. As it was, even after the rubble was removed, it took years to cleanse the astral space at the site.

Wuxing relied heavily on local wujen from the Chinatown part of the CAS sector, led by several experts from Wuxing's Ming Solutions companies. That steady line of work has supported the formation of several wujen magical groups in Chinatown. The Triads have mostly stayed away from the wujen, not wanting to get into conflict with Wuxing, though they have made individual deals and contacts with both the wujen and Wuxing. With the construction boom leading up to the Olympics, Wuxing put off building their headquarters until afterward, so there would be no cross-contamination of purpose. They wanted to make sure that construction started an auspicious number of days after the

Olympics formally closed. There have been several attempts to ruin the site's geomancy, and the site now has round-the-clock security. Wuxing has offered large bounties on whomever is behind the attacks. The Golden Triangle has realized that information would gain them favor and ensure their own survival, so they are pushing their sources.

Until the headquarters are completed, Wuxing companies are scattered in temporary facilities throughout Denver. The ones not involved with shipping and transportation are mostly financial companies—the Malaysian Independent Bank and Prosperity Development Corporation have both tried to set up and enlarge their operations, but their attempts at expansion have been curtailed by Steve Ridgemont, head of Warpdrive, and the best-known local entrepreneur. Wuxing has not taken much official notice of his efforts, but as Ridgemont attempts to create an independent consortium, they may take steps to prevent the creation of a NAN-based version of the Pacific Prosperity Group.

Wuxing is still trying to establish itself in Denver, and that has made its position on the treaty negotiations to be whichever one will smooth that path along. That can and will undoubtedly change multiple times over the course of the negotiations, so it is no surprise that Wuxing appears to have no long-term partners or goals during the negotiations.

- It's going to be worse than just having no long-term partners. They keep double-crossing people, they're going to have some fine local enemies. Ridgemont's already on that list.
- Kay St. Irregular
- Ridgemont's got his hands too full to be too much of an obstacle to Wuxing. What Wuxing really needs to worry about is their deteriorating relationship with Renraku, because that could have some Ryumyo-related repercussions somewhere down the road.
- Winterhawk

Urgent Message.....

### CHOOSING SIDES

As is the case in sprawls across the globe, the particular conditions in Denver may cause members of the Big Ten to ally and partner in ways that they would not ordinarily do. They won't get too radical—for example, Horizon and Aztechnology are not about to initiate a joint venture PR firm in the immediate future—but they are capable of surprising veteran corporate observers. One example of this is NeoNET and Saeder-Krupp. In Europe, S-K often leads the charge against NeoNET, especially in matters tied to the NEEC, since NeoNET is seen by them as foreign interlopers. In Denver, on the other hand, both of them are wary of the progress Horizon has been making in the city, and at the moment neither one is stepping on each other's toes, so they're willing to work together. That will change, of course, should their subsidiaries grow large enough to start clashing with each other, but for the time being they are able to partner and occasionally share vital information in order to make progress against their opponents. So when you're dealing with the Big Ten, be aware that the normal rules and alliances may not apply.



## DENVER A CORPS

### APEX PLASMIDS

Formerly known as Denver Foodstuffs, Inc., Apex Plasmids was once the primary producer of dietary algae for Denver and surrounding areas. While they had a horrible reputation, both in safety and product quality, there was no real opportunity for other companies to challenge them due to the economics of producing large quantities of dietary algae. That status quo changed during the Year of the Comet when the Pueblo Corporate Council expanded to take on Los Angeles and its port, vastly reducing the cost of shipping goods to Denver. And then Ghostwalker appeared. Ghostwalker spent his first days in Denver attacking and destroying locations, most of which were under the control of either Aztechnology or Saeder-Krupp. Denver Foodstuffs' major production facility was attacked while several of its corporate officers were present. The building was heavily damaged, and most of its upper management was presumed dead in the attack. Considering Ghostwalker's targets, it was probable that at least one if not the entire upper management was in bed with one of the two mega GW targeted.

The company foundered for months, trying to finance repairs to restart production but unable to arrange loan guarantees without a management team. Meanwhile Ghostwalker secured his control over Denver and started making reparations for his initial rampage. His representatives not only arranged loans but also transferred patents for plasmid technology and techniques that were confiscated from a seized Aztechnology subsidiary. This method of genetic modification allowed Denver Foodstuffs to use their algae and bacteria farms to churn out virtually any hydrocarbon, which includes not only food products but also oil-based products or plastic, more cheaply and quickly than before. They were able to quickly regain their position as the single largest provider of dietary protein in Denver, aided by the fact that both the Sioux Nation and Pueblo Corporate Council require a percentage of all products sold in their nations to be from sustainable sources. Denver Foodstuffs found an immediate market for the new synthoil, bio-fuel, and plastic feedstocks that the new plasmid technology allowed them to produce, which funded further expansions.

As it grew, Denver Foodstuffs found itself caught between tough loan guarantees and a newly empowered and effective Council of Denver. The company was forced to clean up some of their worst excesses—even though DFI produced green products, they in no way could be considered a green company. Denver Foodstuffs found that their bad reputation hindered them to such an extent that most city residents believed that DFI had done something to deserve having their facilities and upper management destroyed. The company's new management decided DFI needed a new identity that reflected its location in the Mile High City and the plasmid technology it now used, so Denver Foodstuffs, Inc. became Apex Plasmids.

Apex Plasmids tried to leave most of their previous identity behind, but a corporate culture is almost impossible to shake. Their safety and security remains lax, and low-level corruption is endemic. For example, desktop forge feedstock is one of the products made by Apex, and that substance is legally required to have RFIDs mixed into it so it cannot be used to produce

untraceable materials. The Denver black markets, however, always seems to have a ready supply of RFID-free feedstock, most of which is funneled through the t-bird community. Legal repair and modification parts for t-birds are next to impossible to obtain, but virtually every t-bird mechanic in Denver has several desktop forges continually producing parts.

Ghostwalker has never stated the reason why he targeted DFI, but speculation has ranged to secret bio-warfare production to one or more of the original management team being under the control of Saeder-Krupp or Aztechnology. The latter seems more likely, but there does not appear to be any current manipulation of Apex's stock and there is no majority owner, which means that any control was exerted through blackmail or some other form of personal leverage. The fact that the previous management is dead may have slowed down whoever was controlling DFI from the outside before, but the rich and powerful don't like to lose their playthings for long—expect whoever it is to make a move on Apex in the near future.

- It's Aztechnology, and you'd better believe they're getting to make their move. Apex has a fine relationship with the PCC, and if the Big A gets its way with the help of the Ute Nation, the expansion of Apex will be a way for them to get some of their personnel, and eventually their businesses, into the city
- Marcos
- If it really is the Big A, what's their lever? How are they going to get their arm's-length control back?
- OrkCEO
- Their big moneymaking technology is based on an Aztech design. Imagine if the board was approached with the pitch that the designs have been recently enhanced, and they could produce more product for less nuyen. What would they give to make that happen?
- Dr. Spin

### EAGLE SECURITY

Eagle Security has a convoluted history in Denver. It was originally a minor-league security corp until the Sioux Nation needed a willing security corporation to conceal their military assets in pre-Ghostwalker Denver. In return for a hefty behind-the-scenes exchange of cash and favors, Eagle licensed the creation of an autonomous division in which ex-Sioux military staffed all of the managerial positions and controlled the hiring. Eagle Security Services, Inc., or ESSI was born. It fooled no one, but it still met the legal requirements of the original Treaty of Denver.

When Ghostwalker took control of Denver and created the ZDF, he made military forces within the Zone legal. The Sioux Nation no longer needed to act as the legal cover of ESSI, so it cut loose its official ties with it. This left the ex-military management of ESSI in a predicament, since ESSI had become a place for Sioux officers to go when they retired. Just letting ESSI dissolve back in Eagle Security would probably mean they'd lose their jobs, or they'd have to deal with a lot more oversight. The ESSI management, however, had used their military contacts to acquire an accumulation of favors and loans that the Sioux Nation had originally made when ESSI was created. Since the creation of



ESSI, Eagle had lost a great deal of its reputation when Chicago became Bug City, and they had lost many contracts over their perceived failure there. Using their Sioux government contacts and the influence that their heavy recruitment from various NAN militaries got them, ESSI expanded beyond Denver and became the municipal security company of choice within the NAN during the 2060s. Eagle itself was losing market share outside of the NAN even as ESSI expanded it within the NAN, and Eagle was unable to share in ESSI's good fortune since they were isolated from each other. Eagle was unable to even threaten ESSI's management's jobs in order to transfer some of ESSI's profits to Eagle to shore up the latter company's bottom line. This trend continued until ESSI became larger and more powerful than its parent company, with the final blow to Eagle Security in its old form coming during Crash 2.0. In order to survive, Eagle Security sold off its profitable private prison system to Reality Inc., an investment firm that then partnered with Lone Star to run them. The move, however, merely staved off the inevitable. Eagle Security suffered a takeover by ESSI in 2070, led by former ESSI managers now running Eagle Security as a whole, and once they were in charge they permitted ESSI to be absorbed back into Eagle so their successors could not do to them what they did to Eagle Security's management.

Eagle Security is now the third-largest municipal security corporation in North America, mostly on the strength of its Patrol Divisions. With new management in place, they have stressed military hires, mostly from the Sioux and the other NAN, but they have an open-door hiring and promotion policy, which makes them popular with metahumans. Even their divisions outside of the NAN have a heavy Native American presence. This has occasionally caused trouble in some UCAS and CAS client cities, but Eagle Security often takes on contracts that other municipal security providers won't touch. They have had success in patrolling low-security and zero zones of cities, often with minority officers, in places where Knight Errant and Lone Star will not patrol in less than fire-team strength. Not only is Eagle willing to put minority officers into areas where they can help defuse situations, but their focus on hiring ex-military with combat experience means that their patrol teams routinely handle situations that would have made Lone Star call in some Fast Response Teams.

The new Eagle Security also fields many shamans. When the Ute Sector was absorbed into Pueblo, ESSI aggressively hired many shamans, even if they didn't immediately have a position for them. Since they also aggressively recruit Native Americans, they are the majority employer of security shamans, which is helped by the fact that both Knight Errant and Lone Star are not welcoming shamans at nearly as fast a pace. The black eye that Eagle Security got from losing Chicago to the bugs gave it an institutional hatred for bugs, and they've focused this hatred into action. Eagle Security has shaman-supported bug hunting teams called Pisko (Lakota for Nighthawk) that have rapidly gained a reputation as being equal to Ares Firewatch teams when dealing with hostile spirits. It is rumored that Roger Soaring Owl, the former head of Knight Errant who is now in the Sioux military, has helped Eagle enlarge its bug-hunting capabilities.

- Yeah, Soaring Owl is rumored to be there, but Soaring Owl is rumored to be working with just about anyone who wants to

enhance their spirit-hunting cred. It's a story spread for PR purposes, nothing more.

- Dr. Spin

Their weakness is that Eagle's Investigative Divisions are not anywhere as good or as effective as their Patrol Divisions. In response, Eagle is trying to hire former MPs and CID military officers, but they are often in high demand after their enlistment ends. Other plans that Eagle is making includes partnering with Pueblo PubSec to create investigative training academies and opening recruitment offices in Seattle to hire former Lone Star investigators for relocation. Their weakness in this area doesn't mean they can be ignored when you're in Denver—their best investigators are the ones in that city. Since the current incarnation of Eagle grew out of ESSI, Denver is seen as Eagle's home, and its headquarters are located in the Sioux Hub, inside an office building called Precinct 1. Its bottom floors are the administration and specialized investigative offices for Eagle Security, while the rest of the floors are corporate offices. The actual Patrol Division and its secure facilities are in the Sioux Hub Precinct House several blocks away.

- Their head of investigations, Pamela Carlson, isn't anything to write home about, but they've got a field agent named Bo Liggity who you need to look out for. He's got a sharp, analytic mind and a fine gift for psychology. That makes him all too good at being a few moves ahead of anyone else.
- Thorn

## FOCUSED CONSULTING AND BROKERAGE

Focused Consulting and Brokerage is a recent entry into the Denver business scene, but its rapid rise to one of the most important companies in Denver has many people suspicious that it is a plant by Ghostwalker. FCB is basically a consulting firm and info brokerage that specializes in the Denver region. The precursor companies of Focused Consulting and Brokerage existed before the Olympics, but during the Olympics and immediately afterward the companies merged and started offering their services as a package. Denver has been home to many info brokerages, most of which lasted only for a few years until the individuals behind them either quit or were forcibly retired by aggravating the wrong people. FCB has chosen the public route, apparently hoping that if it does its business in the open, people who have issues with it will be restrained from taking direct action. FCB is undoubtedly the creation of several of Denver's pre-eminent fixers, but none of them have stepped forward to publicly declare their affiliation, probably planning to remain uninvolved if and when FCB suffers retaliation. The only person that likely knows FCB's backers is its CEO, Karl Wilkers, which is undoubtedly a false identity since little information is available on him prior to Crash 2.0.

FCB provides consultants to help its clients navigate the business wilds of Denver. Those consultants can be anyone from former Water Board inspectors who can help companies arrange exceptions to the Water Board regulations, to active information extractors who have unique skill sets tailored to dealing with Denver's challenges. Its brokerage functions encompass both information and traditional financial exchanges. The corporation's functions include contacting potential purchasers of



information on behalf of anonymous clients and negotiating to sell the exclusive rights to that data; arranging to ensure that their clients will benefit when private information becomes public; and making anonymous purchases of stock and other financial instruments. There are several other companies in Denver that perform similar services, such as Aegis Cognito, but FCB is the only one that is native to Denver. While other companies may have more people and money to throw around, FCB has the insider's advantage, having hired the best local people first. They also undoubtedly have several of the local specialized info fixers in their pocket.

- That they do. There's an old-timer named Moore in the city who's always been able to tap into a lot of information, and while he's not officially an FCB full-timer yet, he's been doing so much consulting with them that he might as well be.
- Kia
- Moore's a good guy. He's not gone full-time because his heart is still in the shadows. He's tapped in, so he'd be a good person to know, but don't make any rookie mistakes around him, because he's lost the patience to work with newbs.
- Bull

FCB has one other clear advantage over all of the other incoming companies setting up intelligence operations in Denver in that it already has a relationship with the Hub's Awakened and metahuman community, allowing them to tap that resource while other companies are still trying to figure out how to approach them.

- Part of the trick of approaching this community is understanding their ambivalent attitude toward Ghostwalker. They're not exactly prospering under his reign, and they fully understand how harsh he can be, but still—he's an Awakened being who has made it to the top. A lot of metas have trouble turning their back on him.
- Hannibelle
- If Ghostwalker puts himself on the wrong side of the upcoming dragon divide, it'll become a lot easier for them.
- Frosty

## MESAMETRIC

Mesametric is North America's largest construction equipment manufacturer, with a recent focus on making it possible for their entire line to be run solely by drones. They have also expanded their in-house rigger stable so that a Mesametric vehicle contract could include not just the equipment but also riggers for round-the-clock operation and service. The Sioux Nations are involved in both agri and aquaculture, giving Mesametric profitable sidelines in providing equipment in those industries, though they do not dominate that market as they do construction.

The most recent profitable sideline for Mesametric has been supplying light military vehicles for the Sioux Nation, which has led to it becoming a major supplier for the rest of NAN on the strength of the implicit endorsement of the Sioux military. This has broader ramifications beyond just the Sioux, as the only NAN that doesn't necessarily follow the Sioux lead in military matters is the PCC, and that is because they have to coordinate with the CAS against

possible Aztlan aggression. The Sioux Nation historically relied on a variety of military suppliers, Ares among them, until Ares made an aggressive push to be its sole military supplier on the argument it would simplify logistic requirements. While the logic behind the offer was sound and Ares had the means to make it happen, Ares' willingness to cozy up to the UCAS government made the Sioux Nation wary, for fear that once the logistics chain was established, Ares may be tempted to use it to make nice with a future UCAS administration. The Sioux began to create their own streamlined logistics chain out of NAN companies, which, while not as efficient as the one Ares could have provided, wasn't vulnerable to external political pressure. The most difficult piece of logistics was finding a manufacturer of military vehicles. The closest one was Mesametric, who produced a robust line of vehicles in their nearby factories. Thanks to generous loans and contracts from the Sioux Nation, Mesametric began to supply parts and whole vehicles, first using licensed designs, then later with their own designs.

While Mesametric is a Cheyenne-based corporation, their Denver branch is their largest facility, far larger than their headquarters. Denver is a better location for their primary vehicle showrooms, since there are far more international flights landing in Denver than there are in the entire Sioux Nation. Denver's decade-long construction boom has also resulted in a steady local market for Mesametric's offerings. Denver is a much more cosmopolitan city than Cheyenne, so it is easier to hire and retain construction riggers there. Along with their showrooms in the Sioux Hub, Mesametric maintains a vehicle proving ground out in the boondocks of the Sioux Sector, and they run regular commuter flights between the two locations.

There is an interesting loophole in Sioux law that allows Mesametric to set up showrooms for their light military vehicles in Denver. Individuals can get relatively easy exemptions to legally purchase military-grade vehicles, a provision that was originally intended to allow reservists to purchase their own vehicles. As a consequence, it has allowed the smuggler community to legally acquire thunderbirds. Considering that Denver is North America's premier smuggling hub and also home to its largest thunderbird community, there is a brisk sale of thunderbirds through the Mesametric proving grounds. The identity of thunderbird buyers is recorded, and their identity checks are rigorous enough that only the very best false identities hold up. Mesametric claims to closely protect the identities of their clients, but the common assumption is that the Sioux Nation can access that data whenever they feel it is in their best interest to do so. If a thunderbird owner does something unwise, such as engage in a running gun battle with the ZDF while news helicopters are recording, they'll find their records and privacy are protected by the flimsiest of firewalls.

- The best time to buy a t-bird from Mesametric is right after they've released some of their data to the Sioux Nation. Their public image inevitably takes a hit, business sags, and their salesmen are more willing to make a deal. Just make sure you use one of your better fake IDs.
- Rigger X
- Give them one of my better fake IDs just so they can burn it? No thanks.
- Traveler Jones



## NATIVE AMERICAN BROADCAST SERVICE

NABS began as a propaganda service under the control of the NAN Sovereign Tribal Council, but it has since acquired its independence. It has become a far better critic of the status quo than it ever was as part of the STC. While most of their news and investigative divisions are focused on the evils of the UCAS and CAS, they have uncovered scandals within the NAN that have occasionally made the STC wish they had not spun off the NABS. While the NABS entertainment and documentary divisions remain focused on the NAN, their news and investigative division has spread out, and they now have bureaus in every major North American city. Their largest bureau is in Denver, because its status as a divided city makes it a perfect example of the divisions and conflicts they prefer to focus their reportage on. While they have avoided investigating Ghostwalker directly, they have looked into Denver government several times, each time uncovering something unsavory.

- And each time finding out that it takes a whole lot more than exposing a few bribes or kickbacks to unsettle the dragon at the top.
- Kay St. Irregular

NABS shed most of its reputation as a source of NAN propaganda with its intensive coverage of the Olympics. While the rights to cover the athletic events of Olympics is always auctioned off, NABS developed a niche covering the other side of the games—the things happening elsewhere in Denver with the athletes off the playing fields. This included looking into the behind-the-scenes maneuvers that the Olympic teams were doing to ensure victory in their respective events. These tactics, including shadowruns, had always been whispered about but were rarely acknowledged. NABS, with a Denver-savvy stable of reporters that were already trained in uncovering corruption and other hidden information, was let loose into the hothouse of Olympic activity and found evidence of dozens of plots. During the Games itself NABS reporters changed the awarding of medals no less than three times after the events and caused over a dozen athletes to withdraw due to “family reasons.” While various national and corporate Olympic committees were upset by their activities, NABS emerged from the Olympics with a reputation as a hard-nosed, muckraking establishment. It came at a cost, though—several of their freelance reporters died mysteriously during the games, and one disappeared.

- It was crazy there for a time. Vans scooped up reporters from the streets and drove them to scheduled beatings, and people covering track meets wore the same sort of protection that journalists in a war zone put on. There was fear, tension, intimidation, rumormongering, and scandal, and it was all centered on what’s supposed to be a gathering of goodwill and international fellowship. It was great.
- Sunshine

In the current the treaty negotiations, NABS has decided to promote the current status of the Anglo reservations throughout the NAN. The original Treaty of Denver established the Anglo reservations as places where Anglos could live without having to

move back to the USA. During the split of the UCAS from the CAS, several of the reservations were handed over to the CAS, so both nations are interested in this. The reservations have nourished a militant culture, and residents are heavily armed in preparation for the day that the NAN will try to take the land back. The likelihood of that occurring is low, but the Anglo reservation problem is one of moderate concern for the NAN. For their part, the UCAS and CAS pretend to have forgotten about them, though it is suspected that the UCAS military have hidden weapon and supply caches in reservations near their borders with the NAN in order to supply their forces in an attack. NABS believes that this is a hot-button issue and is trying to whip up interest about any reservation throughout the NAN to jumpstart discussions of them in the treaty negotiations.

Since NABS is the only real investigative Matrix station in Denver, they have one of the best views of the treaty negotiations. Other stations from throughout the world, including KSAF, have their own news teams covering it, but NABS has the advantage of Denver being the home field. They are already armed with a full array of sources willing to talk to them—and to nobody else. Since the start of the negotiations, NABS has had a weekly show called *Discord in Denver*, providing updates on the official word from the negotiations, followed by updates on the behind-the-scenes affairs. The show is closely watched, if for no other reason than that no one wants their schemes featured on it.

- Sometimes it seems like they’re making shit up. That story they had last week tying Ghostwalker to these artifacts that are supposed to be floating around? Karl Kombatmage-level bulldrek.
- Slamm-0!
- It’s always comforting to believe things like that are lies, isn’t it?
- Plan 9

## SPIRITECH

SpiriTech is a magical research and consulting firm that was originally based out of Albuquerque. It began as a project of the Santa Fe Institute where researchers were looking into ways to integrate shamanistic practices with technology. When the PCC absorbed the Ute, many Ute shamans found themselves out of a job when security requirements dropped as the borders the PCC was responsible for in Denver shrank. Some were hired by other corporations, but a group decided to use PCC offers of loans and other assistance to go into business for themselves. The shamans all had practical experience but little expertise in theoretical or research fields. Several of the shamans had worked with SpiriTech when it was just a research organization, and they suggested merging their practical experience and ready source of funding with SpiriTech’s researchers and organizational structure. The researchers moved from Albuquerque to a facility in the former Ute sector (now in the PCC).

The result is an organization that specializes in merging shamanistic practices with technology to focus on security applications. The research half of the company is not particularly pleased with the security focus, but that is where the funding is. While they have made advancements elsewhere, most of the time it has been from spin-offs from security applications or from a researcher’s pet project.



Considering their shamanistic focus on spirits, they have made inroads into the Hub's Awakened community, especially among the free spirits. As part of their research, they have interviewed as many spirits as possible, and though it was not part of their plans, they have compiled a map of the metaplanes that also lists its inhabitants. Their researchers have yet to realize what the information is worth, though many intelligence agencies would, especially those becoming more involved in extraplanar intelligence.

While SpiriTech's primary focus is on shamans, they also have researchers looking into alternative traditions and how technology and magic could interact within them. They have made several contacts with the Shinto practitioners that Shiawase is supporting in Denver, and they have also explored supporting one of the new wujen groups in Chinatown. Additionally, several SpiriTech researchers have flown back and forth to New Orleans in the last year, making contacts with houngans and mambos in what looks like an effort to hire several to expand their expertise.

- It's going to be a waste of money. The theoretical people will have a little fun, but there's not enough of a market for the broad-based magical services they're looking into.
- Haze
- Not every business practice is about making money. SpiriTech looks beyond the horizon, seeking to understand the underlying magic of their home from as many angles as possible. I do not know what they intend to do with whatever information they uncover
- Man-of-Many-Names

## WARPDRIIVE SYSTEMS

Warpdrive Systems is the creation of Denver premiere entrepreneur Steven Ridgemont, a dwarf who is now on his second company. The first, FTL, was leveraged out from underneath him by Fuchi, though because of the Fuchi breakup, Crash 2.0, and Novatech's merger with Transsys, Ridgemont has managed to reacquire many pieces of his old company. Transwarp was Warpdrive's first major release, and it was one of the first telecommunications packages that was wireless compatible. Its descendents remain among the most cutting-edge comm packages available. In addition to telecommunications software, Warpdrive also releases much of the software that drives AR environments. Regardless of the changes that Denver has gone through, Warpdrive remains its single largest Matrix corporation, though if several megacorps united their local Matrix-related holdings into a single company, they could challenge that.

Steven Ridgemont is one of the few Matrix socialites, and he knows that the job of glad-handing requires him to go into all sorts of environments. He is comfortable in the seediest of Matrix virtual bars or in high-level business meetings. He has acted as a fixer for some of the other smaller tech companies that do not have the resources or knowledge to deal with runners themselves. While he dislikes Richard Villiers for taking over his first company, Ridgemont can overlook that if necessary because it was a hands-off transaction that never got too personal. So while Ridgemont was capable of doing business with Novatech (and now with NeoNET), he is far from trusting of Villiers. He'll analyze anything from NeoNET with a careful, cautious eye.

- Doesn't everyone?
- Lei Kung

It is partly because of Ridgemont's experience of almost losing everything to a megacorp that he has approached other Denver corps about forming a mutual support group along of the lines of the Pacific Prosperity Group. His tentative plans have it drawing its membership from Denver corps and then expanding to include the rest of the NAN. The stumbling block has been trying to find a financial services corporation that would serve the same role as the Malaysian Independent Bank did in the PPG. One trick would be keeping that bank independent enough; if taking over this bank could be used as a stepping-stone to taking over members of the group, that would keep people from signing up. Thanks to Ridgemont's excellent relations with Ghostwalker and the Denver administration, he has permission to use the Anasazi Holding Corporation as an investment bank for Denver-based businesses. Originally intended to merely hold and sell off former Aztechnology companies, AHC has acquired a wider portfolio while trying to achieve its main purpose, and it is now serving as the investment house for several Denver universities that are being revived under the new Denver Administration. Since AHC is intended to generate income for the universities, it offers more leniency in its lending terms without worrying about generating increasing profit every quarter. In theory Ghostwalker could use his influence over the AHC to make things difficult for any of the invested companies, but the reality is that Ghostwalker doesn't need AHC's help to make life difficult for anyone in Denver. While AHC does not have the full resources of a bank, it has enough assets to make loans for day-to-day use and for carefully planned expansion, which is all Ridgemont needs from it for now. Though currently only a handful of corporations are permitted to borrow from AHC, with each having undergone an exhaustive background and financial investigation, Steven Ridgemont hopes that once a critical mass of companies are signed on, he will be able to begin the negotiations to start creating a Denver-wide or even NAN-wide investment group.

- So Ridgemont's selling, but is anyone buying? His vision can't be pulled off by just one person. Anyone else jumping on board?
- Winterhawk
- Like so many things in Denver right now, that depends on the progress of the treaty negotiations. If AHC can raise their profile and become more of a player in the financial market, that could encourage people to align themselves with Ridgemont. One thing to watch is the progress at the University of Colorado. If it gets off the ground successfully and manages to grow its endowment, AHC will receive a nice infusion of capital that could move it toward the independence it needs to fulfill Ridgemont's vision
- Mr. Bonds

## WEEKDAY ECLIPSE

Weekday Eclipse started out as a club opened by Gahbardi, a former shadowrunner who had very little business sense. That changed when he met Perianwyr, a dragon who appreciates music in all of its forms and has had the time to become expert in all of them. Under Perianwyr's guidance, Weekday Eclipse became



the hottest club in the Hub, debuting acts of all kinds within its walls. After several years of merely getting the rights to Weekday Eclipse live performances, the club owners became agents for some of its acts almost by accident, because the competition for acts that debuted there had become so extreme that they had to step in to stop the regular extractions and assassination attempts. As soon as an act was announced on Weekday Eclipse's schedule, agents would start hunting down and signing the act to the most disadvantageous contracts possible. In order to protect the musicians he was nurturing, Perianwyr started offering new acts the option for Weekday Eclipse to negotiate on their behalf with the agents. That rapidly evolved to Weekday Eclipse acting as agents for several acts. As the wireless Matrix took off, Weekday Eclipse added a distribution infrastructure to its services; since releases tended to happen mostly via the Matrix, overhead was low.

Perianwyr can afford to bankroll Weekday Eclipse due to his behest in Dunkelzahn's will. As part of the will, Perianwyr received Dunkelzahn's collection of music in all of its forms. It included music from throughout history, including many studio and limited-release recordings that had been otherwise lost or unavailable. Perianwyr used the Weekday Eclipse label to bring some of the music to light, though negotiations with the heirs of some of the musicians occasionally delayed releases. He has it down to a science now, and the quarterly archival releases from Weekday Eclipse (including things such as an early studio appearance by Maria Mercurial and a scratchy Hamburg club bootleg recording of the Beatles) are hotly anticipated by music aficionados.

As Weekday Eclipse expanded their protection of local talent, it ended up owning many of the local public venues that had previously been owned by the Denver administration. Perianwyr apparently has an accommodation with Ghostwalker, with rumors saying that he occasionally acts as his enforcer.

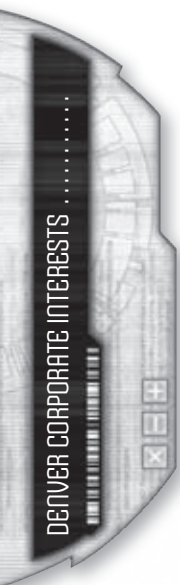
- Right. Because Ghostwalker has so much trouble enforcing his will by himself.
- Winterhawk

Regardless of the truth of the matter, Denver bureaucrats believe that making nice with Perianwyr gains them points with Ghostwalker, so several of the public venues that were once under their control have been sold to Perianwyr. As soon as the Weekday Eclipse acts were signed, many of them were immediately flown from their first performance to New York or Los Angeles, never to be seen in Denver again except for brief tour stops. To keep the local scene alive, Perianwyr is supporting several smaller studios that do Matrix releases and the smaller clubs that provide crucial

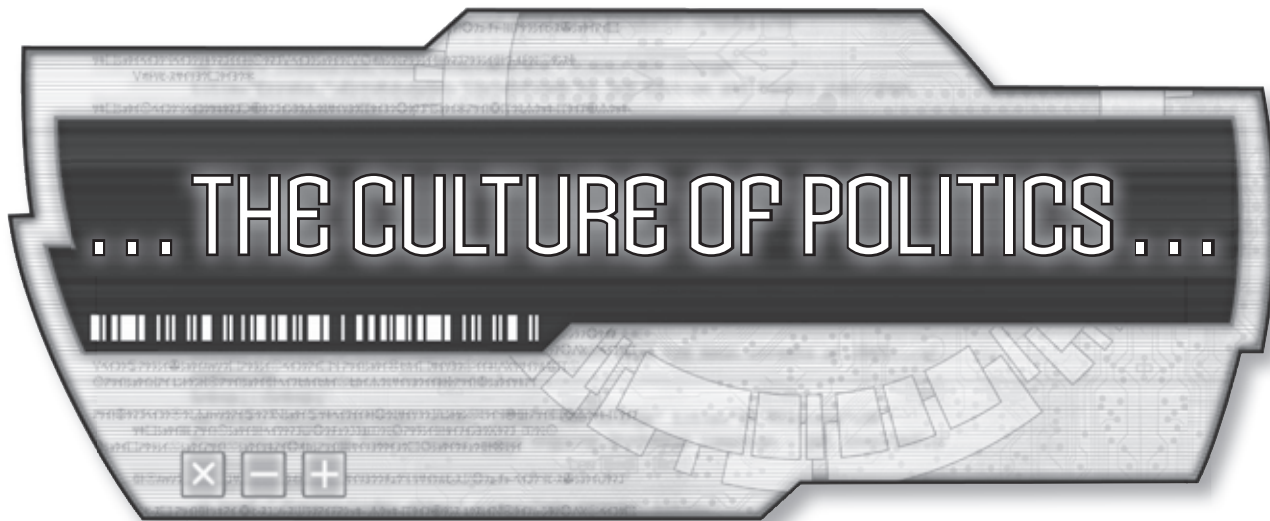
training grounds for young bands learning their craft. Slowly, Weekday Eclipse has become one of the largest independent music companies in North America and is expanding into several adjacent markets. It is currently sponsoring a series on NABS on Native American music and is the beginning stages of creating a NAN-wide Battle of the Bands, with unsigned bands in different NAN cities competing with the winners from the city contests and then going on to compete in a NAN-wide Matrix contest.

There have been several attempts to acquire Weekday Eclipse, but they have spectacularly failed due to several obstacles. The first is that Perianwyr is part of the Denver power structure, and there doesn't seem to be much that can move him from that spot. Any attack, either legitimate or illegal, is challenged by other Denver power players who think that the dragon they know is better than whatever-it-is you don't know that may replace him. The other major problem is obvious: Perianwyr is a dragon and immune to most intimidation tactics. In fact, he tends to find them cute. That is not to say that acts have not been extracted from his grasp, or that suspicious accidents have not occurred at his venues, but in the main Weekday Eclipse infrastructure has suffered lightly from such attacks. If Perianwyr left Weekday Eclipse for any reason, that would likely change, but for the moment he is apparently having too much fun to do anything else.

- There's also the fact that Peri's got Weekday Eclipse putting out some damn good music. Pathfinder can sell millions and millions of copies of teen pop crap, but WE's got gothabilly bangers Moldy Cabin, synthrash virtuoso Brik Cutlass, and e-trance charmers The Waking Dream. It's that rare label that's like that friend you have that's always telling you about killer tunes no one else has heard yet.
- Slamm-0!
- Perianwyr's not just lucking into these bands. He finds people with a little bit of a gift, then augments the hell out of them to extract as much from their talent as he can. His agent contracts ensure that he recoups his investment. And because they're contracts in a creative industry, they don't have any language at all about how the musicians can deal with any health complications that might arise from the augmentations Peri pushes on his people. If things go wrong, they're on their own.
- Aufheben







Posted by: **Kay St. Irregular**

*“Some-when, while the world was paying attention to other things, Denver mysteriously became the Geneva of the Sixth World. In addition to playing home to a great dragon and hosting the 2072 Olympic games, the city has become a flashpoint for international politics. Though only four nations currently hold territory in Denver, several other nations and megacorps are maneuvering for a place at the Council table, or at least a bit of someone’s ear. This is where the power-players hang their hats, and people are taking notice.”*

*Maria Chen, CBC Anchor  
The Macmillan Group*

The Front Range Free Zone’s cultural landscape is informed by the politics as much as the politics are shaped by the culture. To understand one, you must understand the other. I’ll try to separate the two things as much as possible, but the two subjects definitely overlap.

Defining culture is a difficult science at best. Anthropologists have argued about the definitive meaning for centuries. By one definition, culture is when both artifacts and nations have reference points, a zeitgeist, that informs behavior. By another, culture is the shared consumption of common products such as food, clothing, music, and entertainment.

Denver is a balkanized city, fragmented into six distinct areas with six distinctive cultures. Clockwise from north to west, the main sectors are Sioux, UCAS, CAS, and the PCC. The other two districts, the Aurora Warrens (UCAS) and the Hub (Sioux & UCAS), are not national sectors in their own right, but are special districts distinctly divided from the rest of the FRFZ by invisible boundaries of politics and culture. While sector leaders endeavor to keep their territories separate and functional within their own national identity, outside influences have penetrated sector borders and created a hybrid character that is entirely unique to the FRFZ.

The Pueblo Corporate Council and the Sioux Nation retain direct physical access to their territories in Denver, while the UCAS and CAS sectors are national enclaves, cut off entirely from their motherland with a sense of being the forgotten stepchildren

of their respective governments. It’s a situation much like Seattle’s. History shows similar circumstances to be detrimental to the citizens of such cities, like the East and West Berlin of the mid-twentieth century.

The belief that Denver is a city under siege is quite mistaken, however. The would-be isolationism of the four nations is undermined by Denver’s shared economy, the transfer of technology, the availability of cross-border media, the influx of tourists, and the shared Matrix node run by the PCC. Short of walling off the remaining border posts and preventing all traffic in and out of the individual sectors, there is no chance Denver will fall into the “siege mentality” many sociologists expected. The money to be made and power to be wielded brings new blood into the sectors, further facilitating the fracturing of societal boundaries. The inter-sector movement creates an exchange of ideas, philosophies, and information, which forms the backbone of a new cultural and political identity wholly unique to the Denver of the 2070s.

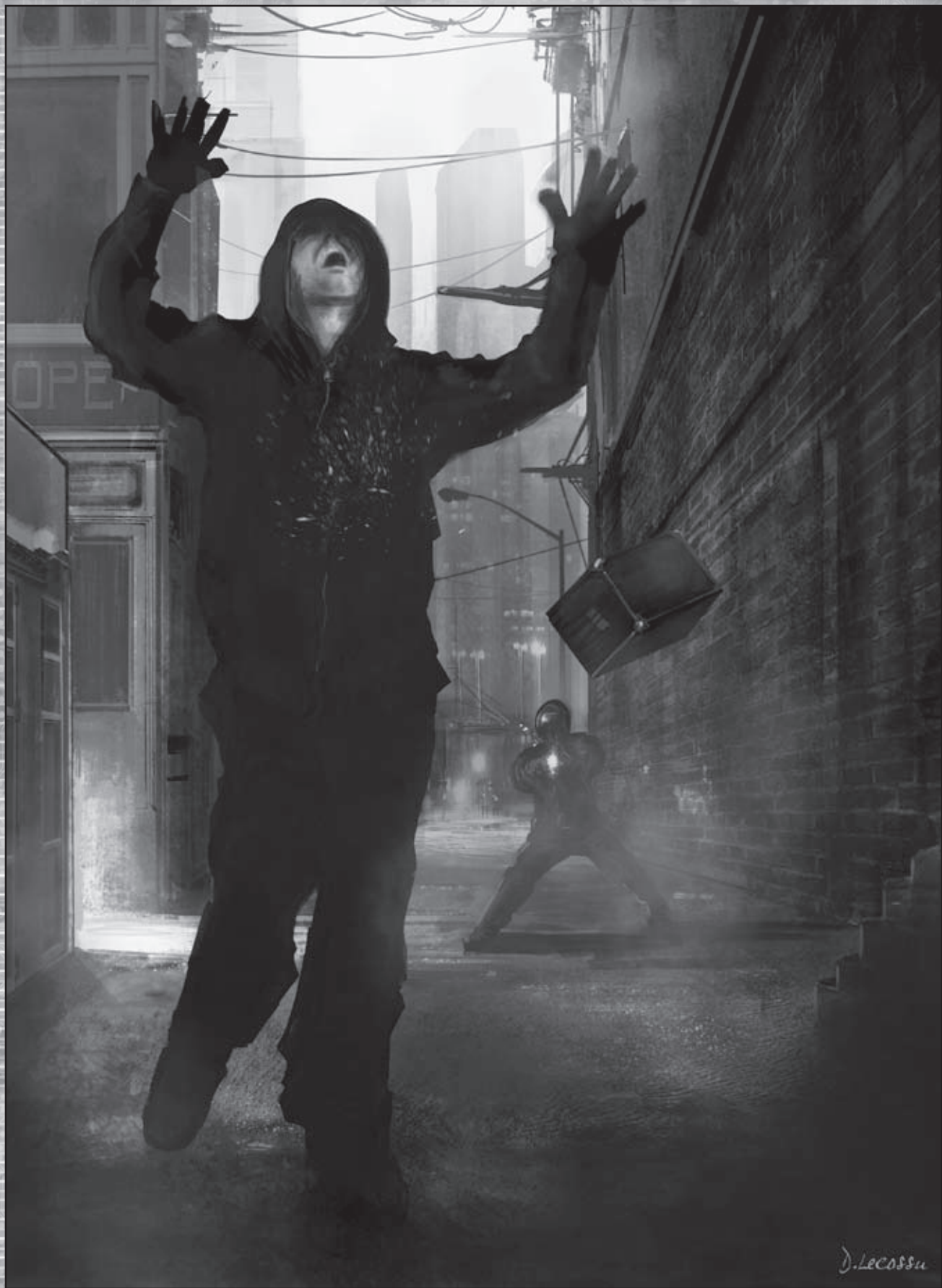
Denver is a city of extremes, fiercely protective of individual identity at the cost of a national identity while emphasizing cultural elements that transcend national boundaries. There is no other city in the world where arrogant racists take a knife in the back with a smile while picking their murderer’s pocket.

- Or as a chummer of mine once put it, “The FRFZ is a psychopathic free-for-all where your best friend is your enemy, your enemy is your best friend, and you can’t trust the face you see in the mirror.”
- Bull

## HERE’S HOW IT WORKS

The FRFZ is a sovereign and autonomous state collectively run by the Council of Denver. According to the first Treaty of Denver, and ratified in the second Treaty, each signatory nation of the original treaty is required to supply a representative to the Council. As nations have come and gone, the number of council seats has varied.

When the Southern States split from UCAS into their own nation, the Council agreed to create a new seat at the table for the CAS. UCAS split its territory, ceding a portion to the newly formed



D. LECOSSU



nation, setting the precedent for the Council to internally settle territorial changes with a rubberstamped, post-facto Treaty amendment.

When Ghostwalker moved in, Treaty renegotiation became imperative to prevent international war. Not only did an original signatory—Aztlan—get kicked out of the city, but the dragon insisted Denver belonged to him and everyone living here was an unwelcome colonist. So the nations did the inadvisable—they made a deal with a dragon and rewrote the Treaty.

In the wake of Ute's dissolution five years later, Ghostwalker approved the PCC absorption of its neighbor. Ute lost its seat at the Council table, PCC forces moved in and took control of the Ute infrastructure, and—since Ghostwalker had given the nod—no one bothered to write a treaty amendment.

This oversight opened up the door to legal challenges. Former Ute citizens are making waves from several directions. In addition to threatening a vote of no confidence in PCC leadership if the Corporate Council doesn't reinstate Ute-Aztechnology contracts, certain Ute-only political groups are decrying the Council of Denver's legitimacy, claiming that the Ute council seat was removed without legal cause. Former Aztechnology Corporate Court Justice Domingo Chavez has picked up the rally cry and voiced his own concerns about the way the PCC has treated their new Ute citizens.

- Chavez even funnels Azzie money to the Ute rebels to support their cause.
- Stone
- You think this is a precursor to Aztlan's lawyers arguing that Ghostwalker's removal of Aztlan from Denver was illegal?
- Cosmo
- The wyrm will never let that happen.
- Kia

Ute rebels aren't the only ones calling the current Denver government illegal. Humanis, Alamos 20k, and a collection of second-rate political groups from across the international community claim the Second Treaty of Denver is defunct and in need of renegotiation. Since this particular hubbub began, the Council has held occasional black sessions, with no media or outside visitors allowed.

- The Council is using these sessions to write the Third Treaty of Denver while publicly proclaiming that their current governance of the FRFZ is legitimate and requires no treaty renegotiations at all.
- Cosmo
- If this is the case, why have the different reps been meeting with various megacorp interests and ambassadors from "interested" countries like the Algonkian-Manitou Council?
- Snopes
- The trick here is that ordinarily none of this would get off the ground because these second-tier groups wouldn't have any influence on Ghostwalker at all. But these are not ordinary times.
- Plan 9

## TERMS OF THE SECOND DENVER TREATY

The Second Treaty recognizes the terms of the Original Treaty of Denver as follows:

1) Establishes the Native American Nations and the Sovereign Tribal Council as its ruling body.

2) Gives the STC the ability to exercise legislative authority over its citizens and make provisions for those not eligible for full NAN citizenship. The treaty also reasserts the rights of the NAN and STC to maintain reservations for non-NAN citizens within tribal property and legislate such reservations under the auspices of the Bureau of Non-Tribal Peoples.

3) Recognizes Denver, known as the Front Range Free Zone, as a sovereign state outside the bounds of all nations, divided amongst the signatories—specifically the Pueblo Council, the Sioux Nation, the United Canadian and American States, the Confederation American States, and the Ute Nation—with Aztlan's name, signatory of the original treaty, conspicuously absent.

4) Requires each signatory nation to supply a representative to the Council of Denver.

5) Reaffirms Seattle's status as an extraterritorial extension of UCAS and Council Island, formerly called Mercer Island, as a territory of the Salish Council.

Additionally, the Treaty contains the following terms:

- Acknowledges Ghostwalker's claims of ownership and sovereign rule over the Front Range Free Zone.
- Reserves a permanent Council seat for Ghostwalker or his chosen representative. Affirms Ghostwalker's right of full or partial veto on Council decisions, as well as executive decision rights during deadlocked sessions.
- Charges the Council of Denver to oversee the implementation of this treaty and to govern the Front Range Free Zone in Ghostwalker's name, with control of the city divided amongst the treaty's signatories.
- Establishes the Zone Defense Force as a unilateral security, defense, and law enforcement agency with each signatory required to supply an equal number of troops for duty and nominate eligible candidates to Ghostwalker for the ZDF command staff.
- In the eventuality that a representative is unable to perform his or her duties to the Council of Denver, all signatory nations are required to provide a suitable replacement within two weeks time. Also provides Ghostwalker with the authority to appoint a temporary representative to the Council from the sector's citizens until such time as the nation in question supplies the needed replacement representative.
- Used to be, if a rep got impeached or otherwise removed, a nation could hold up Council business for weeks at a time by not appointing a new rep because the Council required a full quorum to make decisions. The last provision was put in so that Ghostwalker wouldn't have to deal with that kind of nonsense anymore.
- Kia

Urgent Message...



DENVER CULTURE & POLITICS



Since Ghostwalker's assumption—or resumption—of control over Denver, the FRFZ has seen an economic renaissance of monumental proportions, and the permanent residents are reaping the rewards. Publicly, the dragon has adopted a claws-off policy of governance. The Council of Denver maintains the Front Range Free Zone and is responsible for implementing all economic, judicial, and security policies. Nicholas Whitebird attends most meetings as Ghostwalker's representative but rarely comments on Council decisions. Ghostwalker occasionally attends himself (though only rarely), sitting in on sessions that range from discussions on sanitation to debates about handling the influx of immigrants. If anyone knows what he gets out of these appearances, they aren't talking. The speculation in the shadows is that he's making a point that only the Council reps seem to understand.

Over the past decade, Ghostwalker has made a number of changes to the Denver landscape. He's outlawed smuggling, established a citywide nightly curfew of 1:00 a.m., granted citizenship to all resident free spirits—regardless of sector habitation—with all the rights and responsibilities thereof, encouraged the Council to give preferential treatment to local businesses when awarding city contracts, and insisted on a policy of open trade between sectors at a time when each sector is attempting to tighten borders.

- In one of the lesser-known laws, Ghostwalker has actually banned espionage. He doesn't want anyone digging into his business, so he decided to go as broad as possible to give him the excuse to punish spies whenever he could. In practice, this means is the ZDF can shoot suspected spies on sight. But it's best if they have proof of guilt just in case someone's superior decides to complain to the dragon.
- Cosmo
- And yet that law doesn't appear to apply to Ghostwalker's own network of spies, does it? A bit of a double standard, no?
- Kia
- Maybe. But only a fool would be stupid enough to complain to Ghostwalker.
- Winterhawk

Ghostwalker's policies have not affected the smuggler trade to any great degree. He knows the role smugglers play in the city's economy, and he apparently sees no particular reason to cut them off and put the hurt on his people. That's not to say the smugglers are ignored, however. The ZDF has made a number of arrests, stopping the careless and those bringing Aztechnology goods into the Front Range Free Zone. The general public doesn't know the truth. As far as the average Denverite is concerned, Ghostwalker's stance against smuggling has punished the criminal element and thus raised the standard of living in the city.

- It's assisted the smugglers as well. Experienced operators can charge exorbitant rates for the loads they haul.
- 2XL

- The curfew isn't evenly enforced across the FRFZ. Some areas are stricter than others. If you can prove you have a legit business reason to be out and about, most local security forces won't stop you. The ZDF might pull you aside to check your SIN and licenses, but so long as your documentation can stand up to a bit of scrutiny, you're good to go.
- Turbo Bunny

- Ghostwalker's been busy the past couple of years. Catch this warning posted on the Nexus by SilveryK.
- Ma'fan

#### Sticky Post: SilveryK, sysop

Date: 2070.03.15 01:05:36 a.m.

Heads up, boys and girls. If you haven't been paying attention to Council meetings as of late, then you should start. Last night, Ghostwalker exerted eminent domain on property in all four sectors for his own use. This unilateral pronouncement, handed down to the Council reps by Whitebird, declares certain buildings and the blocks around them as neutral ground owned by His Truly. These areas are to be used for the express purpose of housing local units of the Zone Defense Force.

Lest you think this means the volunteered forces get to police their own territory, with CAS units stationed in CAS and PCC units stationed in the PCC, the dragon has insisted that all posted squads be of mixed national origin. The idea is to prevent the kind of biased policing that has so often taken place in the past. Remember when the UCAS portion of the ZDF let off its own citizens with a slap on the wrist for drug smuggling while nailing Sioux offenders to the wall? Apparently, Ghostwalker won't put up with that any longer.

So do yourselves a favor; steer clear of the new ZDF territory. I've uploaded a local map with the specifics marked in red. Pass it around to your heart's content.

- A wonderful idea in theory. Not so much in practice. Ghostwalker tried to fix something that wasn't broken, proving that dragons don't understand us as well as they think they do. The ZDF forces that got stationed together were torn apart by inter-faction rivalries. The squabbling made it harder for them to work together, making things easier on the local runners.
- Black Mamba
- Not all units are created equal. Some have maintained their discipline better than others and have taken the best of each nation's culture and identity, forging themselves into crack units that rival even the Wildcats.
- Hard Exit

Urgent Message...





- Legitimate business reasons include playing corporate courier, driving a supply truck, having a diplomatic pass, working for DocWagon or one of the city service companies, and working for a restaurant or club with late hours.
- Mika
- In other words, pretty much any reason gives you an excuse to be out and about.
- /dev/grrl
- The curfew's considered a big joke around some parts of the FRFZ. Especially the Warrens. Who's going to enforce curfew there?
- Hannibelle

## NATIONAL INTEREST

Denver is already known as a seething cauldron of tension, but if you trust the meeting broadcasts to fill you in on the Council squabbles, you're missing a lot. Loyalties change at a moment's notice, hinging on the agenda of the moment. Culture clashes cause political grief. Economic extortion is the new trend. Outsiders assume the FRFZ is falling apart at the seams.

- Quite the contradiction to Maria Chen's piece about how Denver is the new "It" place of the Sixth World.
- Plan 9
- Have you been to Denver lately? It's the biggest block party ever!
- /dev/grrl

## THE TREATY NATIONS

### CAS

In the CAS sector, the top political position is that of sector manager. This position was originally established as a temporary post until the sector could implement democratic elections to choose a territorial governor. The elections never happened, and the CAS government gave up any pretense of the position being transitional after the arrival of Ghostwalker. Officially, the CAS president appoints the sector manager, but traditionally the president's cabinet makes the actual decisions in this area, looking for

ways to use the position to reward (or punish) the appropriate people. Lately, things have been in a stalemate. There are people who want the Denver job that presidential advisors haven't wanted to reward, and people who don't want the job who have been punished in other ways. Since the cabinets have been unable to agree on appointees, and recent presidents haven't wanted to pre-empt their cabinets by making the decision themselves, a new manager hasn't been chosen in over twenty years. Bianca Cuthbertson—financial wizard and experienced politico—has kept the job despite the efforts of opponents, such as the True Southerners political party, to remove her from power.

By most accounts, Cuthbertson's done an excellent job of improving life in the CAS sector, cleaning up local corruption, pushing jobs programs, and creating committees for economic improvement. But CAS is a sector divided against itself. Every decision Cuthbertson makes is sliced and diced by the local media, making it difficult to enforce the policies already in place.

- It doesn't help that the gap between poor and rich just keeps getting wider and wider.
- Sticks
- Bianca is good at her job, but more than once she's made the mistake of appointing someone she trusted to a position of power, only to find out later that said person is doing everything he can to undermine her. Those SURGE relief fund embezzlement charges could have landed her serious prison time if Pinkerton detectives hadn't revealed the culprit as sector comptroller, and True Southerner party member, Griff Nitze.
- Thorn

### PCC

Pueblo sector politics follows the national PCC model. Each resident can vote on a twelve member governing board, which manages sector services such as security, economic policy, law enforcement, and the justice system. The board in turn appoints, fires, or re-assigns corporate officers to fill needed positions, from lowly technicians all the way up to the sector presidency.

Once the strongest of the treaty nations, the PCC has weakened both financially and politically with its takeover of both LA and the Ute Nation. Following the model it established in LA, the PCC offered conditional shares of its stock to the former Ute citizens, with a two-year deadline to apply for residential shares or vacate Pueblo territory. Many expected a backlash of Ute citizens refusing to apply for residential status, becoming SINless like many Californians chose to. Instead, the majority of the Utes took their original residential shares and bought many more. And just before the conditional share program was implemented, SINless from all over Denver overwhelmed Ute sector security to cash in on the program, diluting the PCC's share values by a considerable amount and triggering a series of bond rating downgrades by international financial firms.

- The cash-in attempt failed miserably. The PCC sent the posers packing back to the CAS and UCAS sectors.
- Glitch

Urgent Message.....

### COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

As of this date, four nations have seats on the Council of Denver. The current list of representatives is as follows:

**CAS:** Johann Castle

**PCC:** Istas Catori

**Sioux:** Lucinda Gray Arrow

**UCAS:** Iain Lesker

**Reserved:** Ghostwalker / Nicholas Whitebird

**DEMOCRACY, PCC STYLE**

Voting in the PCC is not as simple as one citizen, one vote. It starts that way—each citizen gets one vote from their initial citizenship share. Additional voting shares can be purchased, but one share doesn't equal one vote. A logarithm of Base 10 is used to figure the share to vote ratio, multiplying the number of shares by factors of ten. So: one share is one vote. If you have ten shares, you get two votes. The third factor (100 shares) equals three votes. The mathematical shortcut is to count the number of digits in the tally of the shares you own. Shares are always rounded down—555 shares equals three votes because even though the shares are greater than the 100 needed shares for three votes, it is not the required 1,000 shares for four votes.

**PCC Vote Tally Example:**

# Shares	# Votes
1	1
10	2
50	2
100	3
1,000	4
10,000	5

- Not all of them, omae. Ute citizenship records were a hash when the PCC picked it up. I know several people who have “legit” citizenship shares due to doctored-up records proving they had Ute citizenship. And they'd only moved to Ute territory weeks after the takeover.
- Mika
- I've seen a flood of residential shares on the black market lately. Original citizenship shares can't be sold, but someone's been buying extra and reselling. It's no wonder PCC stock is taking a nosedive.
- Traveler Jones
- There are also counterfeit PCC preferred shares (not residential) on the gray markets. If you're looking for an easy way past border security, that's a good place to start.
- Mika
- It's also a good way to be arrested and get yourself a criminal SIN. Those are some really bad forgeries.
- Stone
- It's a case of “buyer beware.” Always know your supplier before you buy any forged or counterfeited documents. Verify that encryption codes, security tags, and certificate headers all match. The good forgeries even fooled me at first glance.
- Kay St. Irregular

In addition to issuing more residential shares, the Pueblo Corporate Council was forced to assume the debts of the former Ute government. With the need to focus both money and manpower on national issues, the PCC is neglecting its sector duties and residents are feeling the lack. Those living in the former Ute sector refuse to adopt Pueblo models of efficiency and business by ignoring the ordinances and regulations passed by sector administration. Those living in the former Pueblo sector see the deterioration of their neighborhoods and the erosion of their political voice. Hard feelings on both sides have paralyzed sector services in some neighborhoods, creating pockets of destitution and conflict where none previously existed.

- This explains why Juanita Iglala resigned her position as PCC Council rep. She wasn't getting any support from the Chiefs.
- Mika
- Whatever internal issues the PCC suffers from, they haven't skimmed on border security. It's still pretty tight. Though it's harder to get into the PCC sector than it is to get out of it.
- Turbo Bunny

The increase of Ute voters disrupted the Hopi-Zuni stranglehold on sector politics, giving the other Pueblo tribes (Acoma, Laguna, San Ildefonso, Taos, and Zia) a much-needed opportunity to make their voices heard. Leveraging Ute dissatisfaction of sector management to their advantage, the minority tribes have forced the board to appoint management positions to non-Zuni and non-Hopi political hopefuls. The Ute have used their new tribal friends to take half the board positions for themselves. Now, instead of a board unified by culture and common politics, sector governance has become the stuff of soap operas, with important decisions being relegated to games of one-upmanship and political blackmail.

**Sioux**

Even the savviest political players need a scorecard to keep up with Sioux politics. The Sioux nation is run by a Council of Chiefs appointed by the Sioux Council of Elders. If that weren't confusing enough, the Denver sector is run by a five-member Council of Chiefs—not to be confused with the national CoC—that is also appointed by the Council of Elders. Each member of the Denver CoC is chosen from the five biggest tribes of the Sioux nation—Sioux, Crow, Navaho, Hidatsa, and Arapaho—and only serves once. Afterward, a representative can go on to serve a single five-year term on the national CoC and a lifetime term on the Council of Elders, if she distinguishes herself enough to be chosen.

- It's rare for a political appointee to refuse the honor of serving, but it has happened, usually to the detriment of one's political aspirations. Roger Soaring Owl is the prime example.
- Orbital DK
- Soaring Owl is a military man. He's never been involved in politics.
- Hard Exit





INCOMING FEED.....



- You ever check into why he left the Sioux nation to work for Damien Knight?
- Stone
- Urban myth.
- Snopes

This sector's biggest internal conflict is the one between the Denver CoC and the smaller Sioux tribes, including the Cree and the Plains Chippewa, who occupy a greater percentage of Denver than the bigger tribes. For almost two decades, they've agitated for representation on the Denver CoC, and it appears they may finally be getting their way. Amelia Running Deer, a shaman from the Blackfoot tribe, has issued a ritual combat challenge to Crow Chief Daniel Lightfoot over his stance on public parks management. Usually the Council of Elders instantly dismisses challenges made to the Chiefs, but in this particular situation the CoE has remained oddly silent.

- Read between the lines on this one. It's about more than local politics. Rumors have Lightfoot consorting with toxic spirits. Yet, for some reason, the Council of Elders seems reluctant to move against him.
- Winterhawk
- A man's name should be a reflection of his character, but Lightfoot chooses to tread in bloody waters.
- Man-of-Many-Names

### UCAS

The UCAS sector is run by a commissioner appointed by the UCAS president and confirmed by the Senate. In the old days, the commissioner had a non-voting chair in the UCAS House of Representatives. This hasn't been true for decades. This post became a career killer, a dead-end job no one wanted and the dumping ground for political screw-ups. The commissioner was expected to run the UCAS sector with as little input as required from his superiors—no one in DeeCee wanted to hear about this sector's problems or needs.

- Until the Olympics came to town, that is.
- Kat o' Nine Tales

Since Denver became the focus of so many international eyes, this sector has suffered visits from an increasing number of senators, congressmen, and political aides, all of whom want to get their names and faces in the news, along with sympathetic platitudes for the plight of UCAS citizens stuck in Denver. Caring about Denver is the new political fashion. What many DeeCee insiders fail to understand, though, is that the UCAS Denverites are furious. They've felt ignored for so long, they've even started considering themselves a distinct state within UCAS borders, a feeling encouraged by Commissioner Ellyn Mecina. Mecina acts less like a government appointee and more like a state governor, running this sector with her own cabinet and promising to hold elections for local offices, a practice that fell to the wayside sometime in the 2030s.

- President Colloton's having a hissy fit over Mecina's actions, but she doesn't dare bring her to heel. Mecina's done too much good for the UCAS sector, and if Colloton removes her, Lesker will put his own appointee into the commissioner slot.
- Haze
- Lesker doesn't have that kind of power. President Colloton appointed him to office, remember?
- Snopes
- Actually, Lesker was appointed by President Pro Tem Gene Simone, right after Colloton won the presidential election but before she took office. Colloton's been trying to remove Lesker from his post ever since, but he has too many friends in the Senate. Every time she nominates a new Council representative, the Senate votes against her nominee, leaving Lesker the only Senate-confirmed candidate for the position.
- Fianchetto
- I heard Lesker was a leader of the New Revolution.
- Orbital DK

Urgent Message...

A commlink beeps twice. It stops when a well-dressed man answers. Violins play softly.

"Understood," he says, his body posture straightening.

He disconnects the call.

"My working hours can change instantly," he continues, speaking to the camera. "The mission is a constant, but every day is different."

The violins reach a crescendo. Cellos join in.

"What I do is important, yet no one will ever know. But an entire nation will be grateful."

Dramatic pause. Timpanis roll, overpowering the strings. Then the instruments fall silent.

"Don't just watch the news," he says. "Live it, 24-7."

The picture fades to a blue seal, a sixteen-point compass rose embossed upon an argent shield, beneath the crest of an American bald eagle's head. The agency's name flashes across the seal's top with "United Canadian and American States" printed below in lurid red. Commlink numbers scroll along the seal's gold edge while a woman's voice, equally serious, picks up the pitch.

"Be a part of history in the making. Become a National Clandestine Service officer at the Central Intelligence Agency. Contact us now. Recruiters are standing by."

## GAMES OF STATE

Each sector has its own internal headaches, compounded by intra-sector rivalries. In the past decade, few noticed Ghostwalker chipping away at civil liberties, stripping the Council of Denver of some of its powers. Only when Ghostwalker stopped making appearances, vanishing from the political scene, did anyone realize what had happened. Now that he's dedicated his attention elsewhere, the sector governments and Council representatives are pushing back. Each move they make is carefully calculated to test the boundaries, going only so far. Then everyone pauses to see if Ghostwalker has noticed before everything starts again. It's a nerve-wracking, and addictive, experience—assuming you like political games of these types.

### The Ute Issue

The biggest issue facing the Council of Denver is the fallout from the dissolution of the Ute Nation. The power handover went smoothly, but the consequences strained Council relations and left repercussions that foreign governments are exploiting.

The PCC sector didn't just double in size. Its size now rivals the other three sectors combined, and the recent influx of Utes has tripled its population. While the Council reps initially supported the PCC's assumption of control over the Ute sector, they've since had time to reconsider, and the close ties of several Ute leaders with Aztechnology have contributed to some unhappiness over the current arrangement. Before 2067, the CAS and PCC representatives found themselves in accord on many issues, and relations between the countries were warm. Now, PCC rep Catori generally finds herself standing on one side of an issue while the other reps hold the opposite view. This isn't always the case, but it happens enough that political observers have even noted inter-nation relations outside of Denver have significantly cooled.

UCAS has expressed its unhappiness over the issue by implementing economic sanctions, tariffs, and burdensome customs regulations on PCC-to-UCAS traffic outside of the FRFZ. The Sioux have made no official statement over the issue, though Pueblo visitors to the Sioux sector tend to get harassed a lot lately, especially anyone carrying the slightest bit of Aztechnology-issue gear.

Either the other treaty nations haven't noticed the grief the PCC has gained for itself by its actions involving the Ute, or they just don't care.

### Show Me the Money

CAS wants to bring more big business into their sector. Sector administration has even established a committee to find ways around Ghostwalker's small business incentives. One committee suggestion resulted in a campaign encouraging megacorps to fund franchises within CAS territory. While UCAS and the Sioux normally don't get along, one issue they're agreed upon is that CAS needs to follow the rules, just like everyone else. If CAS gets a pass, then they should all get a pass. This has caused a great deal of contention in Council meetings.

- It's currently unsubstantiated rumor. But if the recently leaked e-mails between Castle and certain megacorp CEOs prove authentic, it could torpedo Castle's career before he has a chance to accomplish anything.
- Sunshine



- The emails are forged, but the allegations are true. You'd be surprised at who's really funding the local mom-n-pop shops.
- Snopes
- Oh? Do tell.
- Sunshine
- Shoot me a message offline, Sunshine. I have a few ledgers you might be interested in. Off the record, of course.
- Snopes

Tariffs and taxes are forbidden in the city, except for the city's income tax and VAT. Since CAS can't use these economic incentives to increase sector revenue, it's looking for other methods. As the one sector that receives the most tourists, the most obvious method is to prevent tourists from staying or shopping in other sectors, especially during the Olympics. This includes rerouting traffic from and to the various venues into CAS shopping outlets, stopping trains at CAS-related stops, and offering hotels and hostels at steeper discounts than the rest of the city. Unfortunately, CAS dug itself into a financial hole with all these discounts, spending more than it actually took in.

- Castle is spending CAS's share of Council revenue on his drug habit.
- Haze
- Council members don't have access to the income tax and VAT revenue. If the CAS share is being drained from the coffers, it's someone in the sector comptroller's office or at the Administrative Branch.
- Mr. Bonds

CAS is the most politically active of the sectors. Students at the local universities are quite frequently seen participating in partisan politics, demonstrating for the cause of the week. They also bring a nice boost to the sector's economy, especially to fast food and entertainment businesses. With this in mind, potential students are being recruited from the other sectors in the hopes these students will bring their disposable income with them and spend it all here.

- And in hopes that the students from UCAS and Sioux territory will stay in the CAS sector once they graduate. Sort of a reverse brain-drain.
- Ethernaut

### Tug of War

Sioux and UCAS relations have been tense ever since Sioux territory was carved out of the former United States. Both nations have long memories for grudges, and military skirmishes still happen outside Denver along the Sioux/UCAS border. A miniature cold war has erupted between the two sectors, stretching all the way from local business disputes to the Zone Defense Force.

Sioux law requires all citizens to complete a year of military service followed by four years of reserve duty. Since those who live in Denver understand the FRFZ better than those who don't,

the Sioux government has altered the law so the Denver residents can rotate through the Zone Defense Zone after basic training. In response, UCAS sends its border guard units through ZDF service to learn Sioux military tactics.

- Clever.
- Rigger X
- Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, they say.
- Black Mamba
- And it hasn't occurred to the UCAS generals that the Sioux are learning as much about them as they're learning about the Sioux?
- Hard Exit

Another concern is the eco-friendly policy that the Sioux government uses to penalize UCAS businesses operating in their sector and nation. Any business behavior that can be vaguely interpreted as a violation of the Sioux Nation's ecological laws results in fines and closed plants. The UCAS government fights back with a series of punitive measures aimed at Sioux businesses in UCAS territory. So far, neither Ghostwalker nor Whitebird has stepped into the dispute, but only because neither nation has violated the letter of Ghostwalker's policies—even though they are violating the spirit.

- A perfect example of the Sioux prejudice against the Anglo businessman.
- Riser
- Not true. There are numerous Anglo reservations within Sioux territory, none of which suffer any form of discrimination. If the corporations would stop polluting Sioux land, they wouldn't have to worry.
- Ecotope

### Dumping

No one is quite sure where it started, though each side in the Sioux-UCAS propaganda war accuses the other, but the latest political trend in Denver is actually an economic tactic called dumping. One government buys a massive amount of off-brand or counterfeit technology, then ships it across sector borders and sells it at discounted rates on the gray market. Because of recent economic troubles, many wageslaves would rather buy the cheaper version rather than the brand-name version, despite the off-brand's inferior quality. This lowers the local sector's VAT and income tax revenue, which weakens its ability to provide services for its citizens, which in turn gives the "dumper" an economic edge on the "dumpee," and often gives the dumper political leverage at Council meetings.

- Wait a minute. Aren't the VAT and income tax revenues shared across the entire FRFZ, regardless of sector of origin?
- /dev/grll
- Shared, yes, but not evenly. The numbers get adjusted based on each sector's population size and demonstrated economic need. But the treaty nation governments are being so petty about their



arguments that they haven't realized what's going to happen when they run out of funds for city and ZDF maintenance.

- Kay St. Irregular
- Those idiot dumpers also haven't noticed that their own citizens are crossing sector borders to buy that dumped cheap junk and bring it back home. They're hurting themselves just as much as they're hurting each other.
- Pistons

Urgent Message...

### A NOTE ON ECONOMIC WARFARE

Posted by: Mr. Bonds

Aside from the VAT and flat income tax, tariffs and taxes are illegal in Denver. No nation can charge extra for commerce crossing their borders. That doesn't, however, prevent the locals from playing economic power politics.

Long ago, the UCAS ended up with control over Denver's municipal water supply, with a majority of the still-functioning reservoirs and water treatment facilities in their sector. Two months ago, when the CAS and Sioux took sides against Lesker in a Council fight, both sectors found their fresh water supply cut off and were forced to dip into their stockpiled reserves to keep their citizens hydrated. The public explanation claimed several older water mains had burst due to poor maintenance. Once Lesker got his way with the issue on the table, however, the mains were mysteriously fixed, resuming service to both sectors in record time.

Lesker's gambit paid off big time, but it opened the door to other sectors pulling the same stunt. The Pueblo Corporate Council owns the power plants. The Sioux Nation has access to the majority of the sewage reclamation facilities. The Confederation of American States owns most of the territory surrounding Denver's political center, the Hub.

In recent weeks, Denver has been plagued by a series of blackouts and backed-up sewers. Even locally maintained sanitation services have suffered. There's a lot of money to be made for runners willing to do a little utility sabotage. But if you take the job, be careful. The average citizen is fed up with losing access to his amenities—if you get caught, he might take out his frustrations on you.

### The Other Guy's Man

It's an open secret that treaty nation infighting is so fierce that each sector has infiltrated rival sector governments—and the staffs of rival Council representatives—with informants. Some of these informants are citizens of other nations, serving as consultants. Some are citizens with no loyalties to their own governments, or disillusioned patriots who believe their betrayal will fix fundamental problems. Each government has different ways of dealing with those who compromise their security. The

Sioux turn the informants into double agents while the UCAS make a production of arresting traitors. The Pueblo prefer the evil they know, so they feed misinformation to the spies they uncover. CAS uses a mix of all three methods and, depending on how damaging the informant's activities are, sometimes even ignores the would-be-spy.

- 'Fess up, Kay. This is pure speculation based on the number of known incidents. There are probably hundreds of incidents where each sector did exactly the opposite of your predicted behavior model.
- Thorn
- I won't deny that possibility.
- Kay St. Irregular

Ghostwalker's prohibition on espionage has done little to halt the spy trade. Given his current state of distraction, he may not be aware of this fact, since all but the most flagrant violations pass unhindered. Or perhaps he's aware that the more the treaty nations spy amongst themselves, the less they will bother him. Regardless, anyone planning to spy in this dragon's territory should place as much emphasis as they can on stealth and subtlety. Ghostwalker publicly executes spies, making examples of those caught in the act.

- Executions aren't only public, they're done by firing squad. Ghostwalker likes to make people leave messy corpses.
- Turbo Bunny

### The Zone Defense Force

There is plenty of political and military juggling over positions in the ZDF's command staff. Even though each treaty nation supplies a list of names to Ghostwalker, who makes the final decision on command staff, each nation does its best to discredit those officers who do not belong to its own military. Even the military gets involved in the process. Many a general tries enhancing their own resumes for a chance to get close to the dragon. Despite their best efforts, though, Ghostwalker has a knack for picking those officers who can keep a level head in the worst situations, and who will put Denver's welfare above their national loyalties. No one's quite sure how he does it.

- He's a fucking mind reader. That's how.
- Clockwork
- Dragons aren't telepathic, dumbass. Where do you get this stuff?
- Sticks
- Who needs telepathy when they can terrify you into spilling your guts? Don't believe me? Try looking into one of the wizworm's eyes sometime.
- Lyran
- Ever hear of a mind probe spell?
- Winterhawk



## The Administrative Branch

The Council of Denver may make the decisions, but the bureaucrats of the Front Range Administrative Branch are the ones carrying out those decisions. Prior to Ghostwalker's takeover, the Branch was a bureaucratic nightmare of ten thousand employees paralyzed by red tape. Ghostwalker downsized the office, weeding out Aztlan spies and other undesirables. Less than six thousand employees remain. Funded from the FRFZ revenues, these people are the true power behind the thrones. Their ranks come from every sector of Denver, and the Branch is only answerable to Ghostwalker and the Council of Denver.

The Branch's responsibilities include managing city operations, setting budgets, and contracting companies to provide services the Branch can't run, such as health care, city sanitation, and trash collection. Relations between the Branch and the sector governments are strained at the best of times. Sector governments see the Branch's mission as interference in sector-only business, while the Branch uses every opportunity to hammer home the fact that they rule Denver in Ghostwalker's name.

- Since they can't act against the Branch directly, sector government employees choose other retaliatory measures, such as alerting border security to potential contraband transportation. It's petty revenge, but the bureaucrats seem to enjoy these silly games.
- Orbital DK
- The Administrative Branch is difficult to infiltrate. Like a small town, everyone knows everyone else. If you want information, your best bet is hacking their on-site servers. If you can get past all the IC.
- Slamm-0!
- Branch HQ is pretty heavy on the mystic and physical security, not to mention it's right next door to Ghostwalker's Liaison Office. Breaking in is a bad idea.
- Ethernaut

## FOREIGN POWERS

Life in Denver got very interesting when the world learned the Olympics were coming to town. Businesses threw money at their favorite pet projects, and local politicians passed new ordinances to make allowances for Olympic construction. Somehow, someone even managed to shave one of the edges off the Warrens for a venue before Lesker even noticed it.

- Bet the ghouls had a field day, culling all the displaced folks.
- Kane
- The ghouls have an agreement with the long-time Warren inhabitants to only take outsiders, new arrivals, or those who can't survive in the Warrens any longer.
- Hannibelle
- Those who can't survive?
- /dev/grrl
- The elderly, the sick, and the dying.
- Hannibelle

- Is this why so many people disappeared off the construction crews? I thought they quit work because of the labor disputes.
- Rigger X
- That's what the politicians wanted people to think. They didn't want to scare away the tourists and athletes before the Games even started. Even the media bought into it.
- Sunshine

What really started the international intrigue ball rolling was a small press conference held by the Salish-Shidhe Council. While John Q. Public panicked about technomancers reading minds or taking over the world, Salish representatives paid a visit to Denver. For three months they tried to get an audience with the Council of Denver. They sent gifts, bribes, and finally made threats. None of it worked. As far as anyone can tell, the Salish reps never even got into the Council Hall.

So the tribal chiefs did the next best thing. They held their press conference, announcing the Second Treaty of Denver was null and void as of 2067, when the Ute Nation dissolved. They also announced their intentions to get a seat on the Council, granted them by the Third Treaty of Denver. Given that the first Treaty of Denver established the UCAS frontier city of Seattle right within Salish-Shidhe Council property and the whole of the NAN, the SSC believes it has the right to a voice in all things affecting Denver and treaty enforcement.

- So they plan to balkanize the city even further?
- Plan 9
- No. They're not asking for territory in Denver. They just want voting rights, and a say in future treaty negotiations.
- Pistons
- It's a small step from voting rights to stealing territory from another treaty nation. Look what happened to Aztlan and the Ute.
- Glasswalker

At the time, few people saw the newscast. Fewer understood what it meant. The Salish-Shidhe Council purchased an office in the Hub, working quietly to obtain their goal. It didn't take long before other people jumped on the bandwagon. Here's a breakdown of the current embassies you can expect to find in Denver. With a few noted exceptions, most of these embassies have homes in the Hub.

## Algonkian-Manitou Council

When the Salish-Shidhe petitioned for a voice on the Council of Denver, the Algonkian-Manitou Council started their own petition, reasoning that if the SSC could use their NAN membership to claim signatory nation rights to the first treaty, all NAN nations should get these rights. As far as the AMC is concerned, the Sioux, Ute, and Pueblo nations had no right to legislate matters on behalf of the rest of the NAN. Though, truth be told, many believe the AMC is so deep in Aztechnology's pocket that they're being pressured to make these demands on behalf of the economic powerhouse that bailed them out of financial difficulties back in the '50s.



- What's really got their goat is the way the Sioux insisted on interfering with their affairs when the Manitou tried to secede. The Chiefs are fed up with the Sioux getting all the power and no one else being invited to play.
- Bull
- Don't be stupid. The Sioux had nothing to do with that little civil war. It was the Sovereign Tribal Council that supported the Algonkian cause.
- Riser
- And who the hell do you think runs the STC, kid? It ain't Santa Claus.
- Bull
- Don't believe the rumors about the AMC and Aztechnology. The Azzies brought the country to financial ruin shortly after their supposed rescue. The AMC would sooner shoot themselves in the foot than admit they owed the Azzies a favor.
- DangerSensei

### Amazonia

Amazonia has a vested interest in keeping Aztlan out of Denver and established its embassy just on the PCC side of the Hub's boundary. While Amazonia doesn't have a seat on the Council, if Aztlan could get their old smuggling pipelines back, it wouldn't bode well for the war down south. In fact, Aztlan getting back any of its territory up north would be bad because it would provide them with easier access to other countries and an economic outlet that would only strengthen its ability to fight Amazonia in the war. It is in Amazonia's best interest to keep Aztlan out of Denver, and to find support here in Denver, the home of Aztlan's "worst enemies" for its own causes. Not to mention that Ghostwalker, as a dragon himself, surely feels some sympathy for the Amazonian government.

- In the World According to Dragons, "My enemies' enemy is not likely my friend." Dragons think long term, which makes instant alliances unlikely. Especially given the recent artifacts rush and the changing political climates.
- Frosty
- Even if Ghostwalker doesn't care, Amazonia has a vested interest in making sure he doesn't take sides against them. It's a lesson in dragon politics, if one is long-lived and patient enough to watch the paint dry.
- Glasswalker

### Austria

Austria is the new kid on the FRFZ block, relatively speaking, having only opened its embassy last month two buildings south of the Council Hall. Given Austria's tumultuous past—breaking apart into multiple states then reintegrating—in addition to its troublesome economic history, it should be no surprise that this European country is trying to reinvent itself as an international power. Only recently has the Austria situation settled enough for Chancellor Habsburg to reach out beyond her own borders. After the Austrian Olympic team went home with half the ski medals of

this year's games, she was able to convince the Austrian parliament to send a more political delegation outside of Europe. Given the delegation's destination, political opponents accuse her of serving the interests of Saeder-Krupp and Lofwyr instead of Austria. No one has proof of an actual alliance, though.

### Aztlan (no established embassy office)

Despite the 2062 humiliation at Ghostwalker's paws, Aztlan's interest in Denver is more about power than payback. Denver's abundance of mana lines and free spirits provided Aztlan and Aztechnology with magical resources they haven't been able to replace. In addition, the loss of Pueblo and Ute contracts—and Azzie interests in L.A. due to Pueblo interference—has left a sizable hole in Aztlan's economic infrastructure. Aztlan doesn't just want its seat on Denver's Council returned; it needs a Denver base in order to recoup its losses. In addition, Aztlan wants to reconnect with former allies for assistance in the war with Amazonia. Given this motivation, it is unlikely Aztlan or Aztechnology will lose interest in Denver anytime soon.

- Wants to reconnect? You are so out of touch. The deals are done. The contracts just need a little blood on the signature line.
- Marcos

### Egypt

Egypt is a surprising addition to Denver's embassies. Given how the Islamic-dominated government feels about the Awakening, they should be disinclined to play politics in a city where free spirits and magic abound. Supposedly, the Egyptian ambassadors are here to discuss the exchange of artifacts between the Cairo and Denver museums.

- The Egyptians are searching for ancient artifacts belonging to Egypt but currently residing in Denver.
- Frosty
- It's a cover. They think Ghostwalker is connected to the Egyptian sites that Awakened when Halley's Comet came through. They want facts they can use to eviscerate the old Egyptian faith cults.
- Am-mut

### Japan

Japan is fascinated with Denver's free spirit culture and the dragon in charge. While one could argue Denver's heavy Japanacorp presence is influencing the Japanese government, one could also argue that the Shinto priesthood is just interested in why Denver has an abundance of spirits given the city's broken, fragile astral nature. Many Shinto priests want to heal the city. The Sioux have welcomed the Shinto with open arms, and back the Shinto cause—to a certain extent. So long as the Shinto don't criticize their hosts, the Sioux—including Lucinda Gray Arrow, who's met with the Japanese representatives on many occasions—are happy to help with Denver's rehabilitation.

### The Papal States

Sent by Pope John Paul V, this embassy sits in the Mile High Hotel, just outside the Hub in CAS. Their stated goal is researching the local free spirits and Awakened creatures. They've





waited several months for an audience with Ghostwalker, only to be denied. Some people think the delegation's mission is a front to prove the Awakened are in league with the dark forces. Other rumors are that Ghostwalker has requested access to the Vatican library, that the delegation is seeking an artifact Ghostwalker may have, or that the Pope wants to convert a dragon to Catholicism.

### Republic of Quebec

While the Republic of Quebec tends to keep to itself, various Québécois ministers worry about the UCAS-Sioux border skirmishes and the AMC's sudden interest in Denver. Concerned that the UCAS might indulge in old United States expansionist policies (especially as the PCC and Aztlan have indulged in their own expansionism), scared that back-table deals are being brokered, and worried about the great dragon living virtually on their doorstep, the Republic has sent an official embassy to keep an eye on things. Rumor has it that the embassy personnel include Seraphim sent specifically to report on Ghostwalker's activities.

- Given Lesker's allegiances, their paranoia is well founded.
- Fianchetto

### Sichuan

Sichuan's presence in Denver is a front for Lung. The Eastern dragon knows the Fourth Coin of Luck appeared briefly in Denver back in 2062. The Coin then disappeared, showed up in Vancouver, and disappeared again. Ghostwalker's reputation for collecting magical artifacts has cemented Lung's interest in Denver, as has his certainty that Ghostwalker obtained the coin. The Olympics offered Sichuan the perfect opportunity to open an official cultural embassy, which they have not closed. Interestingly enough, they have not actually been asked to leave. Perhaps it has to do with the gifts of hospitality they brought to Ghostwalker the day they arrived in Denver. Or something to do with Nicholas Whitebird's reciprocal visit to their embassy, also bearing gifts. What the two parties exchanged is entirely unknown, but the Sichuan delegates maintain a low profile, ostensibly remaining in Denver to educate the denizens about Chinese culture and provide educational exchange programs with the Denver universities.

### Tír Tairngire

Given Hestaby's position as a prince of Tír Tairngire, it shouldn't surprise anyone that this nation has an interest in watching Ghostwalker. The Tír's stated goal is to watch the ever-shifting tensions of its Eastern neighbors, especially given the Pueblo Corporate Council's annexation of SoCal, and they have a vested interest in keeping the peace. The slow tightening of civil liberties, and the ever-increasing numbers of free spirits in Denver, have flustered the Tír politicians, who see Ghostwalker consolidating his power base and possibly increasing his sphere of influence.

- Part of this embassy's mission is one dragon spying on the antics of another. Hestaby has a vested interest in knowing what the dragon-next-door is up to. Especially as Ghostwalker is rumored to have been deeply involved in some grand scheme that seems to be falling apart.
- Winterhawk

## THE POWER PLAYERS

Many people will tell you they run things in their part of Denver. A few may even be telling the truth. Trading on Ghostwalker's name, and supposed support, is a common tactic used to enhance reputations. More than likely, anyone who says they work for the dragon is lying. Most of Denver's power players don't need to trade on Ghostwalker's name—their own name will do. And those who have his support tend not to advertise the fact. For those who need it, here is the unofficial Denver's Who's Who. The one you won't find in Vesper's "Guide to Denver's Rich and Famous."

### COUNCIL OF DENVER

**Johann Castle (CAS):** Castle is a thirty-five-year-old dilettante, playing at politics the way one might play the lottery. He's a human from old money, the robber-baron type that was around before the Awakening, and he is flamboyant in both personality and living style. His family originally made their fortune in real estate, and Johann owns several properties in UCAS, CAS, France, and Russia. In 2060, he graduated MIT&T with a dual degree in economics and civil engineering, then floated around in small positions at a few Boston A-rated corps. One day, he moved south and started making appearances at all the right social gatherings. Rumors romantically link him with CAS president Ramsay McMulkin, though the more cynical pundits claim his appointment to Denver, Christmas of 2071, was payment for a gambling debt rather than any personal feelings between Castle and McMulkin.

- What the fuck? How did a member of the UCAS Technocratic Party end up as CAS President?
- Clockwork
- Conspiracy theories are fun, but the truth is simpler. McMulkin saw an opportunity, and citizenship is easier to swap around these days if you have the right corporate backing—like, say, the backing you would need to get into a high office in the CAS. But we were supposed to be talking about Castle, not McMulkin, right?
- Snopes

Castle enjoys the drama of being in the spotlight and never seems to take his duties as seriously as his co-representatives wish he would. His self-proclaimed life's goal is to find the best party in Denver. If he can't find it, he'll make it. Castle has a minimal bodyguard contingent, supplied by Lone Star, and his detail is often seen carrying him home in the middle of the night.

- Castle's a worthless lush with a tempo habit. I don't know how he made this list. Don't expect him to last long in this town.
- Kat o' Nine Tales
- Don't underestimate the value of being underestimated. Idiots don't end up on the Council of Denver, and Castle's no idiot.
- Bull





INCOMING FEED.....

**Istas Catori (PCC):** Replacing Juanita Iglala, Catori is a Hopi-born elf who dresses in traditional styles using modern fabrics such as nano-fabricated linens and armor-weave silks. Her age is indeterminate, though rumor places her in her mid-forties. Serious and quiet, Catori only speaks when she has something important to say. She doesn't waste words, sounding blunt without being impolite, and isn't worried about impressing her fellow Council members. She disapproves of Castle's rambunctious attitude, ignoring him whenever possible. Shamans and free spirits who have met Catori always speak of her with awe in their voices. Her opinion of Ghostwalker's rule is unknown, but she's always addressed Whitebird and Ghostwalker with the utmost respect.

Catori has represented the Pueblo Corporate Council since late 2070. Little is known about her political agenda except that she supports Gray Arrow's eco-friendly policies and once proposed relaxing sector border security in the name of re-uniting the city and its citizens.

- You know what her name translates to, right? "Snow Spirit." That's right, folks. The PCC has appointed a free spirit to the Council of Denver.
- Goat Foot

- You're so full of it. Istas isn't awakened at all. She's a former mundane smuggler turned politico. The PCC wiped her past under the condition that she play nice and do for them what she did for her own pockets. Never read too much into names—after all, yours isn't literal, is it?
- Snopes
- The more powerful the shaman, the easier it is to mask one's abilities.
- Jimmy No
- We're talking about spirits, Jimmy, not shamans.
- Snopes

**Lucinda Gray Arrow (Sioux):** Lucinda is a human Cat shaman of Sioux descent, and the Council's longest-serving representative. When Ghostwalker arrived in 2062, she acceded to his demands on behalf of the Sioux without consulting the Council of Chiefs. Since two of the Chiefs lost relatives during Ghostwalker's Denver rampage, the CoC was not pleased. Over the years, there have been several motions to recall her, which seem to have unanimous support until voting time, but then are mysteriously defeated by the narrowest of margins. Gray Arrow is a known dragon sympathizer, regularly attending services at the Church of the Dragon, and has a reputation for being Ghostwalker's "yes-girl" on the Denver political scene. Her interactions with her Denver Council colleagues are professional and cool.



Gray Arrow used to be accompanied by a spirit cat familiar that hasn't been seen in almost eleven years. Some stories say the spirit left her because she was unworthy of its loyalty. Other tales say her familiar was stolen from her by a superior mage, or that she banished the cat when it went mad. Aside from wishful rumors of a possible romantic entanglement with Nicolas Whitebird, little is known about Gray Arrow's personal life, and her bodyguards—all retired Wildcats—ensure her privacy remains intact.

- There are rumors that Lucinda is bribing, or blackmailing, certain members of the Council of Chiefs right before they vote.
- Kat o' Nine Tales
- She's such a fuckin' dragon apologist, I wouldn't be surprised if Ghostwalker himself were exerting pressure on them to keep her in Denver.
- Clockwork

**Iain Lesker (UCAS):** Lesker is a Caucasian, human male in his late thirties. In 2069, he went from governor of the UCAS sector to Council appointee, riding on the coattails of Jeremy Falloon, the sitting UCAS Council rep at the time. He has brown hair and looks a lot like a bulldog, especially when he starts preaching on his favorite topics. Strongly opinionated in both politics and his personal life, Lesker isn't used to losing and rarely does. He throws his weight around in Council meetings but maintains the delicate fiction of toeing the line where Ghostwalker's mandates are concerned. When forced to deal with Whitebird, Lesker speaks in clipped, cool tones. Otherwise, Lesker tries ignoring the ork without giving Ghostwalker cause for anger.

Many UCAS citizens see him as the champion of the lower-class workers given his efforts to lower unemployment and push labor reform. When working up support for his agenda, he often cites his record in placing orphaned children with loving families, conveniently leaving out the fact that he only ever places human children with human families and leaves metahuman children in the orphanages. He has minimal cyberware, but it's all high quality. Known 'ware includes a datajack, cybereyes for low-light vision and visual recording, and a secure RFID tracker that's monitored by a local Knight Errant office that provides him with an all-human bodyguard service.

- A biased account if I ever heard one. The first item on Lesker's agenda was petitioning the UCAS government for the funds and equipment to demolish and rebuild the Aurora Warrens, the biggest blight in the Front Range Free Zone. His first two years in office, he was obsessed with this project. It never got off the ground, but that's not his fault.
- Glitch
- What meds are you taking? Lesker's never cared about the Warrens as anything but a dumping ground for the unwashed metahuman masses. His rhetoric is nothing but hot air.
- Butch
- Given the anti-meta hate speeches he made in his twenties, along with his continuing mentorship role in the Humanis Policlub, he

needs the bodyguard. Lesker receives no less than twenty threats a month and is the target of at least three assassination attempts a year.

**Nicholas Whitebird (Ghostwalker's Voice):** Whitebird is an ork shaman of Ute descent. Popular street tales say he was born in Boulder in 2030 and trained by the street shaman called The Guide. Whitebird first appeared in the Denver political sphere in 2062 as the Voice of Ghostwalker when he delivered Ghostwalker's decision on the Denver question. He rarely leaves the Hub. His known haunts include the Council Hall, Ghostwalker's liaison office, and a laid-back bar called Altitude. On rare occasions, he's left Denver to visit the dragon Bai Zhenzhu. Wharez Waldo recently reported that Whitebird visited Sichuan's Denver embassy on three separate occasions, but he had no further information on the subject.

- All these years Whitebird's been around and still no one has any real information on this guy?
- /dev/grll
- An old shadowrunner named Priest claimed to have the full biography of Nicholas Whitebird, for the right incentive, but he's disappeared since then.
- Bull
- Did the dragon get him?
- /dev/grll
- I'm not sure. Priest just dropped out of sight with hardly a ripple. Much like Puck's done, but in Priest's case, no one ever went looking.
- Fastjack
- Speaking of which, how is the search for the silver-haired bastard going, Netcat?
- The Smiling Bandit
- Nowhere pleasant.
- Netcat

## THE LITTLE PEOPLE

Before you misunderstand what I mean by the phrase "Little People," let me explain. On the surface, they come from ordinary walks of life. They aren't rich, they don't sit on the Council of Denver, and they aren't sector governors. This apparent lack of status only makes these people even more dangerous and more powerful.

People who only count on their money seldom last long in politics. This game is about what you know. More importantly, it's about who you know. These so-called little people are the true movers and shakers. Their hands are on the pulse of the city. Collectively, they might have more clout in Denver than Ghostwalker does.

Just don't tell him that.

**Alyss:** A self-proclaimed free spirit who walks around in an elf body, Alyss was one of the first locals to take Ghostwalker up



on his citizenship offer. She hangs out at a club in the Hub called Wonderland and is often seen on the arm of one dignitary or another. No one knows how old Alyss is or where she came from. While local media paints her as nothing but a high-priced call girl, Alyss listed “interpreter” as her job on Denver’s public tax records. One thing is for certain—she’s fluent in several different languages, knows most of the middle-class wageslaves who work in the Hub, and can walk into almost any government building without anyone batting an eyelash in suspicion.

- Alyss doesn’t just hang out in Wonderland. She owns it outright, though she uses shell companies to hide that fact from her clientele.
- Slamm-0!
- Interpreter? How droll. Alyss leads Ghostwalker’s personal intelligence network. She’s pumping those diplomats for information.
- Elijah
- I’m not so sure. Alyss has a cool relationship with the remnants of Dunkelzahn’s Watchers, especially the ones who are now working for Ghostwalker.
- Fianchetto
- Be careful when dealing with Alyss. If she weren’t a free spirit, I’d say she’s bi-polar. She has a nasty habit of going from the nicest person in the world one minute to trying to kill you over some minor slip of the tongue the very next moment.
- Ethernaut

**Denver Data Haven:** Everyone has heard of the Denver Data Haven, but few people, even in the shadows, know what it is. Many talk about the Haven, but no one realizes how much influence it wields. The Haven, or Nexus as some call it, is an open exchange for those living in the shadows. It’s similar to JackPoint, except it doesn’t require a private invitation. The Nexus was the first place otaku were welcomed and their presence unveiled to our community. Nexus sysops warned us about Jormungand, backed up Zurich-Orbital’s data, and gave their lives to save us from Crash 2.0. Today, the Nexus shelters the Denver technomancer community. They also have Ghostwalker’s ear and have provided him with his own Matrix node.

I don’t list the Nexus as a power player because of its connection to Ghostwalker. It isn’t the Nexus’s influence with the dragon that makes it a power player. It’s the Nexus’s influence over us. There isn’t a single one of us who hasn’t been on the Nexus at one point or another, who hasn’t learned something from it that has changed our lives. The information this network shares, the people who post on it, the sysops who control it, affect the shadowrunning community both in Denver and outside of it. We are shaped by our experiences and our experiences exist within the Denver Data Haven.

- I don’t know whether to be terrified or thrilled at that thought.
- Slamm-0!
- A fitting tribute, Kay. Thank you.
- FastJack



Alyss

- Whatever they did in the past, they’re harboring mutants today. Takes them down a peg, in my eyes.
- Clockwork

**Eddie “Mustang” Vass:** Vass is an elderly German human and former shadowrunner known as Mustang. He owns a hotel called the Raintree Inn in the Pueblo sector and is, so far as can be determined, one of the first contributing members of the Denver Exchange. He also maintains close ties with his contacts and the Denver runner community, which puts him right in the middle of the largest informal intelligence network in the city. While he may not know where the skeletons are, he knows a guy who knows a gal. Many of Denver’s Mr. and Ms. Johnsons seek out Vass for the lowdown on the best runners for their needs. Many runners go to Vass for info on Mr. Johnson. Don’t misunderstand—Vass is not a fixer. He’s more of an informal information broker. But many fixers hang out at the Raintree Inn, paying him a percentage for facilities use and his valued opinion.



**Eric Talbert:** Given Lesker's Humanis leanings, it's a surprise to find a giant within the UCAS sector administrative machine. But Talbert has an eye for talent, which makes him an indispensable asset with a lot of allies, who are able to keep Lesker in check. As the Manager of Metahuman Resources, he's responsible for the hiring and firing of all government employees, from janitorial staff and secretaries to analysts and managers. Talbert rules a tiny kingdom of five, but his clout is felt far and wide within the sector. He can make or break careers. A black mark from him ensures the employee in question never finds a legitimate job again anywhere in the UCAS sector.

Talbert's held his position for fifteen years and isn't going anywhere, despite Lesker's persistent attempts to fire him. His ability for cultivating people is so respected that even the local CIA and FBI filter their employee candidates through his office. It's not common knowledge, but Talbert also hires short-term assets for various under-the-table operations.

- Under-the-table?
- /dev/grrl
- Wetwork. Sabotage. Counter-intel. You know—our stuff.
- Bull

**Jan Drysik:** An awakened elf of Slavic descent, Drysik is a well-known magician and entertainer. He's tall, slender, in his mid-twenties, and he has dark brown hair. He dresses in dark suits, the kind that never go out of fashion, and always has an invite to all the important social events. He performs illusions for the wealthy and the elite, sometimes small, sometimes large. He's even been hired to "redesign" event venues, creating visions that leave even the most jaded individuals gasping in awe.

Drysik enjoys the faux notoriety his social position has granted him. Local media has pictures of him hanging on the arm of many a socialite or politician, and there is plenty of scandal attached to his name. Don't be fooled by this public persona, though. Drysik is savvy and smart. People are so used to seeing him hired for his performance art that hardly anyone knows he's one of Denver's highest-paid information brokers. He knows where the bodies are buried, along with plenty of other secrets important people would rather keep hidden. This gives him an influence few other people in Denver have. He also doubles as a problem-solver for a select set of government busybodies. He does some jobs himself, but more often than not, he prefers playing fixer for the right group of shadowrunners.

**Jorge Molinera:** A former Aztlan citizen who stayed behind when Ghostwalker took over Denver, Molinera was Dean of Archeological Studies at Anáhuac University before being promoted to President, a position he's held for the past seven years. Molinera straddles a fine line between supporting his fellow Aztlanders and obeying the dragon's proscriptions against Aztlan and Aztechnology. For years, he refused to allow Anglo (non-Azzie) teachers and students into his university, only to change his mind when informed of Ghostwalker's reported interest in Anáhuac's degree programs. He has strong political opinions (though he avoids public discussions of any issue involving Aztlan),

and he is often found debating Tess McCartle at various student hangouts on the outskirts of the Hub.

Molinera maintains contact with promising students as they graduate and move into Denver's political landscape. It's said he has eyes and ears in every sector and every industry in the FRFZ. His influence on the political scene is not yet well known, but more than one of his favorite protégés has ended up in possession of information that has ruined their political opponents.

- Jorge's not a fan of wetwork, but he pays good nuyen for blackmail information. If you've got something good on the anti-Azzie crowd, leave a message on the university's Student Union board with a tagline of "AzeX Marks the Spot." He'll get back to you within the day.
- Fianchetto
- Better make sure you have something worthwhile before approaching him, though. Friend of mine got burned for trying to pass junk paydata. He got fried by a fire elemental and ended up with a criminal SIN. Ouch.
- Hard Exit

**Juanita Iglala:** As both the former President pro-tem of the PCC sector and the former PCC representative on the Council of Denver, Iglala is well known in the FRFZ. She is a svelte ork with black hair worn in traditional Hopi braids. She stepped down from the Council of Denver in late 2070, stating she could do more good for the PCC off the Council than on it, and spends quite a bit of her time in Denver. Catori regularly meets with Iglala outside of Council meetings, causing many pundits to say that Iglala hasn't really retired from the Council at all. Iglala also spends a lot of time with the current President pro-tem of the PCC sector, Miguel Yatokya, which further fuels the speculation about who truly runs the PCC interests in the FRFZ.

Publicly, Iglala claims membership in the Kachina Society, and states her only intention is to preserve the traditions of the Hopi culture while expanding them into the business, politics, and practices of everyday Pueblo life. But Iglala's agenda seems to cover more than overt politics. Shadow rumor connects her with the Koshari, the Pueblo version of the mafia. How high up in Koshari leadership Iglala sits, no one is sure, but certain Koshari bosses have been known to send her unsolicited gifts from time to time.

- Iglala's savvier than most people—Iain Lesker, for example—give her credit for. She's consolidated her more talented assets into an unofficial counterintelligence operation for PCC Sec Force. The outfit is still small and is made up of non-military types, mostly ex-runners. All of them come from the PCC. The group doesn't have an official name, but I've heard the members calling themselves Smokers.
- Mika
- Unofficial, huh? Has anyone told the Corporate Council about this?
- Nephrine

**Riley Chaska and Rocko:** Chaska is a Sioux troll in his early thirties. He runs a local chain of hardware stores, the

Sock-n-Wrench, that spans Denver's fractured sectors. Despite being functionally illiterate, he is a sharp businessman who never makes a bad deal. Part of his success can be attributed to his business partner, a free spirit called Rocko, who manages the books and advises Chaska on promising new store sites. Rocko reportedly came to Denver by way of a tempo smuggling shipment.

While the Sock-n-Wrench is a legitimate business, both Chaska and Rocko have inroads to the Denver smuggling market. They know people who know people, and for the right price, they can provide safehouses, supplies, and the name of a good fixer. The Sock-n-Wrench is also one of the Council-approved vendors for the FRFZ, supplying tools, parts, and uniforms for the city's maintenance staff.

**Roger Soaring Owl:** Very few people don't know seventy-year-old Roger Soaring Owl's name. As the former CEO of Knight Errant and close friend of Damien Knight, Soaring Owl is one of the most famous people in the world. Earlier this year, he resigned his position in Knight Errant without explanation, taking a job as a military consultant in his homeland, the Sioux Nation. Rumors abound about what prompted his resignation; one prevalent theory is a falling out between him and Knight. With his security expertise and military experience, Soaring Owl has proved a boon to the Sioux intelligence machine. It is presumed he's sharing his intimate knowledge of KE practices and procedures with the Sioux government, but my sources say he's remained notoriously tight-lipped. Some loyalties are hard to shake.

Soaring Owl is included on this list because he's been recently spotted spending time in Denver. No one is sure where he's staying, but he's been caught drinking with Nicholas Whitebird at Altitude on at least two occasions and seen leaving Ghostwalker's Liaison Office on one other occasion. His name came up on the short list for the ZDF command staff, though sources insist it was not submitted by Gray Arrow or the Sioux Council of Chiefs. Regardless of Soaring Owl's current situation with Knight, many KE employees followed him into retirement and have taken up residence in the Sioux sector of the FRFZ. There are many eyes on Soaring Owl's activities, both government and corp, waiting for his next move.

- Soaring Owl's looking pretty good for a seventy-year-old. Based only on appearance, I'd have guessed he was forty-eight at most.
- Stone
- Roger's known for hiring runners to investigate corruption inside of Knight Errant. Rumor has it he's hiring again, looking for people who have had experience in Chicago. Wonder what bug crawled into his shorts.
- Sticks

**Tabitha "Tabby" Morgan:** Known around Denver as Tabby, this changeling human female is a corporate fixer based primarily in the CAS sector. She does occasional work in the Hub or the other outlying sectors. She's instantly recognizable in a crowd because of her two-toned fur and cat-slit eyes. While her personality is playful, Morgan always cuts straight to the chase rather than playing the double-talk games many fixers do. She has a solid network of runners at her beck and call, though she's willing to add

new faces to her roster if they prove themselves. Morgan specializes in corporate politics. While she still hires runners, lately she's spent more time fixing up ex-military and retired Knight Errant personnel with jobs protecting, and retrieving, corporate assets. She also hosts auditions, on behalf of her corporate contacts, for technomancers and hackers who are looking for full-time work as spiders.

**Tess McCartle:** Tess is a middle-aged dwarf who loves a good argument. Tough, tenacious, and feisty, this firebrand personally mentors those students who share her passion for politics. As Dean of the University of Denver's Political Sciences College, she insists on vetting every class and every teacher before allowing them on her turf. She has liberal leanings, though she'll argue any unsupported viewpoint in a debate. Tess is often seen at political mixers, and her assistance is actively sought for those planning fund-raisers and campaigns. Though many accuse her of being an armchair politician, she understands the undercurrent of Denver politics better than most people do. She's a good source to go to when you're trying to fit in with the political scene, and if you get on her good side, she's worth her weight in gold as a contact.

- Tess? Aside from Alyss, this is the first time you've referred to someone by her first name, Kay.
- Pistons
- Tess is a good teacher and the standard by which I measure all politicians.
- Kay St. Irregular

**Zany Zuni:** Zuni is a Matrix rumor in Denver. Some say he's an A.I., while others claim he's a hoax set up by a couple of pranksters. No one knows Zuni's real species, gender (which may not be applicable anyway), physical appearance, or age, but all who claim to have met him on the Matrix agree his icon is a walking rabbit dressed up in Zuni warrior gear. One thing that is known about him is that he's active on the Exchange. Whenever he leaves a package, or a data packet, Zuni leaves an imprint of his icon on it. Zuni is a playful, mischievous character who doesn't like people without a sense of humor.

Often nicknamed "the Librarian" for the sheer amount of information he has at his fingertips, Zuni is rumored to have direct access to all of Denver's public services. It's currently unknown if his access is legitimate or if he's simply hacked his way into the grids, but there are a lot of people in high places who are worried about the day Zuni decides to blackmail the Council, or worse. So far, all attempts to discover Zuni's true identity have turned up nothing. Zuni hasn't actually done anything dangerous, but while the various intelligence agencies investigate him, the politicians play nice when Zuni asks for a favor.

- It seems Kay St. Irregular has forgotten one of the more important power players in Denver. A recent Dawkins Group report has Kay on the short list of UCAS appointees for the Council. So, Kay, any hint as to when you're going to chase off Lesker and take your seat at the table?
- 





- Gossip is like water; it causes a mess when people spill it. I posted what everyone needs to know about the political scene. If you want to know more, get involved in the process yourself. And, you know, sign the crap you write.
- Kay St. Irregular

## GHOSTWALKER

No list of Denver power players is complete without a mention of the resident dragon. By right of law and treaty, Denver belongs to Ghostwalker. It's his lair, his hoard if you will. His will is supreme, a fact he reinforces when displeased. More than a handful of people known to have incurred the dragon's wrath have mysteriously disappeared from Denver. Word on the street says that this is Ghostwalker's way of enjoying the occasional midnight snack.

In the decade since his takeover of the Front Range Free Zone, Ghostwalker has been seen in almost every nook and cranny of Denver. A couple of years ago, reports even came out of the Warrens about a private meeting he supposedly had there. Ghostwalker seems to have no sense of social or political ranking. He's met with people from all walks of life, including the SINless. In the first few years of his residence, he brokered many deals, including one with the Denver Nexus. He's taken over a good percentage of Dunkelzahn's Watchers (though there remains a contingent that refuses to work for him), has created ties with the Draco Foundation, and purportedly he even has an alliance with the Children of the Dragon, though neither Ghostwalker nor Whitebird have commented on Joshua Morningstar's claim that the CotD serve Ghostwalker.

If Ghostwalker's information network is extensive, so is the list of people claiming to have his favor. But few ever have proof that he actively supports their agenda. Ghostwalker's spent a lot of tax dollars on improving life in Denver, from public works grants to financial incentives for local business owners. He allows the Council free reign in the FRFZ, but has slowly been curtailing many of the civil liberties many take for granted. Free speech, for instance, isn't free. It's believed Ghostwalker censors the media output of Denver, though few have proof.

- Yes and no. Ghostwalker isn't actively censoring the Denver media. But there are several people who've taken it upon themselves to edit the feeds on the notion that he'll reward them for their loyalty.
- Sunshine
- You sure about that? Wharez Waldo is engaged to one of Ghostwalker's Watchers, you know.
- Dr. Spin

In addition to stealing land from the treaty nations, Ghostwalker has created the Bureau of Operational Safety and Health, enforcing citywide standards for safety and health through an army of appointed inspectors whose only loyalty is to Ghostwalker himself. The Council chafes at this obvious abrogation of their agreement with Ghostwalker, as enforcement of local laws is supposed to be left up to the various treaty nations, but they have little recourse. If they don't abide by his dictates, they could very well end up following Aztlan out of Denver. Still, they encourage their people to make the inspectors' work more

difficult in small ways, such as deliberately misinterpreting the inspectors' questions and giving them misleading facility maps.

- It could be coincidence that several of these inspectors are members of the Children of the Dragon or Ghostwalker's Watchers, but I don't believe in coincidence.
- Thorn
- Violations of BOSH regulations can result in anything from fines to being shut down permanently, depending on the mood of the inspector and the severity of the infraction. BOSH authority hasn't been extended to the megacorps. Only sector government and treaty nation owned utilities are being subjected to Ghostwalker's new regulations.
- Cosmo
- Just wait. GW is priming the pump. The plan is to get the locals used to the inspections, then start imposing subtle regulations against regular businesses. It's a short jump from small business to megacorp, and if a corp refuses, they're always welcome to leave Denver.
- Kia
- I doubt it will come to that. Denver doesn't produce anything worth exporting. It needs the corporations to keep its economy running.
- Mr. Bonds

Ghostwalker's attention is wandering of late. Over the past year, his already-rare public appearances have become fewer and farther between. Nicholas Whitebird has attended an increasing number of functions in Ghostwalker's place, refusing to comment on the dragon's absence when asked. The free spirit community has gotten increasingly restless, frequently clashing with each other over unknown issues. Several arguments have spiraled into astral battles that have left their marks in the mundane world. Ghostwalker's detractors have grown bolder, espionage activities have increased, and a few Aztechnology subsidiaries, such as the Stuffer Shack, have maintained a presence in the FRFZ without being shut down. There is the perception that Ghostwalker has bitten off more than even a dragon can chew, and people are coming out of the woodwork to take advantage of the fact.

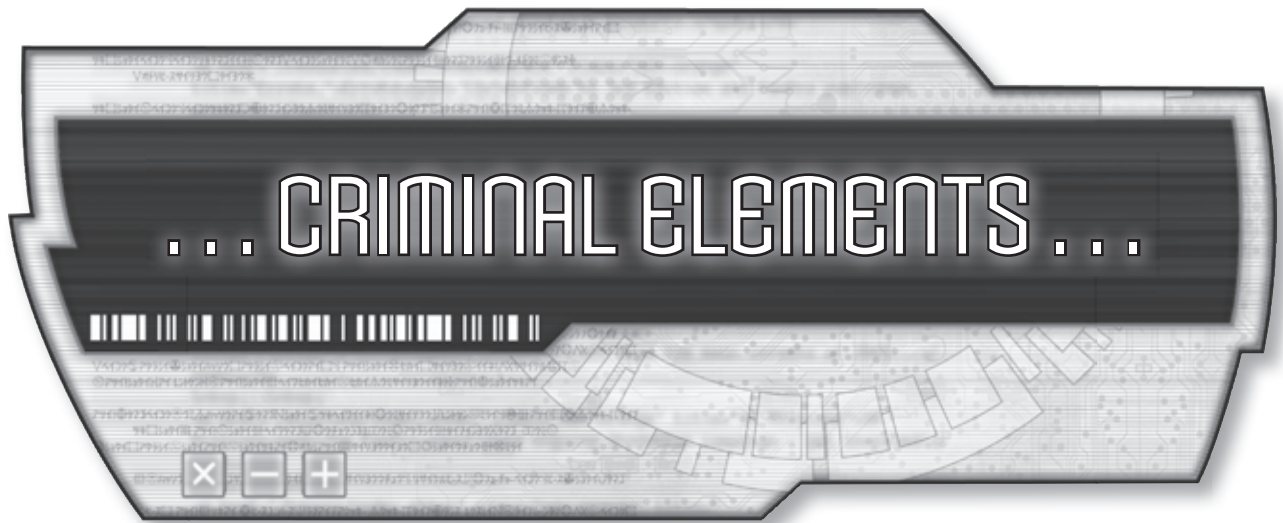
Private Message.....

- Hey, FastJack. Remember this blast from the past? Given the current situation in the Mile High City, it's a good bet ol' GW didn't take his fellow wyrm's advice.
- Kia

"Ghostwalker may find his appearance not unplanned for, and old alliances may be forged anew or crumbled to dust. Salutations, Lost One. Plan wisely."

**Ryumyo, Posted: 01-02-62**





## INTRODUCTION

Posted by: Traveler Jones

Denver is a nice place to visit every once in a while. There is such a mix of cultures and legalities throughout Denver thanks to the sectors that every trip for me is new: I can bring in explosive ammo through the Sioux sector and eat at the Eyrice before offering them up to the Yakuza in the CAS ten minutes away; or I can carry drugs through PCC sector, watch a concert at the Red Rock Amphitheater, then deliver them to the Casquilho family. I get to meet various criminal elements of Denver during my business travels, some of them in person. On my suborbital ride to Neo-Tokyo, I compiled my various notes into this chapter. The descriptions of the syndicates and individuals here are based on time I spent drinking with Dean at the Tower of Babel, since he's such a happy drunk, and details from Denver Nexus and the System Admin. Take it as you will.

## THE MAFIA

### THE CHAVEZ FAMILY

The Chavez family deals heavily in drugs, prostitution, and gambling. Miguel "Caesar" Chavez sent his son, Omar, to establish a market in Denver some thirty or forty years ago with the goal of sticking it to the Azzies, which he does whenever he gets the chance. They have their prime location of Lakeside Amusement Park and Casino in the CAS thanks to negotiations between Thomas Flying Squirrel and Omar. Miguel Chavez has kept the family strictly human, though he's not totally biased against metahumans. When Ghostwalker kicked Aztlan out, Omar got into the good graces of his father by taking out a few Aztlan sympathizers and company men once they lost their backing. In the years since, Omar Chavez and the Koshari formed a non-aggression pact, with the Chavez family giving the Koshari ten percent of Lakeside's profits for the next twenty years. I don't know if Miguel knew or would have approved of those terms, but it kept the Chavez family in business.

Omar had a saying, "The shadows can be a dangerous place," and he showed how dangerous they could be by leaving multiple

calling cards indicating his displeasure at runners' failings. In a karmic cycle, Omar met his demise at the hands of a few lucky runners paid off by a rival organization—probably either Yakuza or Triad. The Denver base of operations was shaken heavily with the death of Omar Chavez (1977–2071) and subsequent power plays by rival organizations.

- The Lakeside Amusement Park and Casino is a good place if you want a private conversation or if you're looking to set up an exchange. The park is loud and crowded with many tag erasers, white noise generators, and other surveillance countermeasures installed by Chavez security.
- Pistons
- One thing I love about the Mafia is that they know how to get stuff they want. Mr. Ruocco, who runs the casino, has managed to establish a network of smugglers and T-bird jockeys to import fresh meat and fish to the casino. It's not that meat and fish are illegal, but bypassing the taxes and tariffs is. If you've got refrigeration in your hold and a fast vehicle, then Ruocco wants you.
- Turbo Bunny

A big surprise to everyone, including Miguel, was that instead of Omar's older son Emilio taking over his father's territory and becoming the new sotto capo, Emilio's younger brother Carlos staged his own reorganization. Yes, Emilio was a hothead and a disappointment to his father, but the rotten apple really didn't fall too far from the Chavez tree. Carlos tried to kill his brother, blaming Emilio for their father's death, but Emilio escaped in the firefight.

It didn't take long for Don Chavez to become involved in restoring order. Two of the five capos were dead, however, along with a dozen soldatos, before Joseph Lovato, Miguel's right-hand man, arrived. Don Chavez was already en route to see his son when Omar was assassinated. To reduce animosity, he had the rest of the capos transferred to Dallas and a more neutral group brought in. Unfortunately, in the weeks it took for Joseph to restore order, the other syndicates smelled blood in the water and muscled in on the Chavez territory. There was one saving grace: the Koshari pact. With the Koshari pact, the Chavez family had a





QUILLIAMS  
2011



bit of a buffer zone with the Koshari staying neutral in their civil war and the mob war with the other organizations.

With the reorganization, the internal conflict became more subtle. Carlos brought in Mario “Tornado” Platte to check up on the loyalty of the family members. A gifted hacker, Tornado was recently recruited by the Chavez family when the sotto capo got tired of the Casquilho family knowing more about what was going on around Denver, and within his own organization, than he did. Tornado does very good work as a spider, patrolling the network of nodes controlled by the family. Carlos also has him intercepting communications, checking for any sympathy for Emilio. Two of the likeliest suspects are Hector “Torque” Casey and associate Erik Fjordson. Both were/are close to Emilio, and Erik has been rumored to provide drones to them from the company MetalStorm.

- Tornado is a recent graduate of UC Denver. Rumor has it that he failed a background check for security clearance with the CIA, but that was planted to get him into the organization.
- Plan 9
- You think anyone with a college education is part of some organizational conspiracy.
- /dev/grll
- No. Well, yes, Thorn already said it, talking about Yale graduates.
- Plan 9
- Do you have to associate my facts with your fiction?
- Thorn

#### **Don: Miguel “Caesar” Chavez, based in Dallas-Ft. Worth**

With the success of his organization, he took Leónization treatments to continue his reign for over five decades. Looking so good for someone in his late twenties—one hundred and twenties that is—it kind of makes you wonder whether he just liked the power or didn’t think his son could keep the family business running. After burying his son Omar, Chavez sent his right-hand man to oversee the Denver business and to keep everything running smoothly, a daunting task with the animosity between Carlos and Emilio.

- Omar was a bitter old man, but he was good at keeping ahead of the authorities. No one could catch him in any illegal activity for all of his life as the crime boss. It’s not just because he delegated duties but because he employed several surveillance and counter-intelligence measures to make sure that no one could tie him to any killings.
- Fianchetto
- Bribing federal agents helped as well.
- Snopes

#### **Sotto Capo: Carlos Chavez**

Carlos Chavez is in his late sixties but looks like he’s in his early fifties, which is about the same age his father was when he started. He keeps himself neat and trim and expects those close to him to show the same respect for hygiene. His father and brother

had parties with lots of booze, women, and food. Carlos, on the other hand, would have what he calls “social functions”—parties with more structure and formalities. Carlos inherited his father’s temper and is quick to anger if he feels slighted, so conversation is carefully spoken at his dining table.

- I’ve been to one of these “social functions.” Tables are arranged with one long table, where he sits, surrounded with smaller tables. The more he favors you, the closer you sit to the big table. Those at the big table are either his closest friends or those he wants to keep an eye on.
- Pistons
- Carlos is paranoid, possibly manic. For an analogy, if the Don is “Caesar,” then Carlos would be Nero. Like his father, he takes a personal hand in executing those who displease him.
- Sticks

#### **Consigliere: Joseph Lovato**

Joseph is a large man: 1.8 meters tall, 147 kilograms in weight. He is quite serious when it comes to getting work done for the Don. Between Carlos and himself, they recruited five new capos from the whole organization. His secondary objective has been to understand what happened in Denver and report it back to the Don. I doubt that Consigliere Lovato would hesitate in killing Carlos or Emilio if the Don asked, so I’m guessing the Don has some doubts about Carlos’ skill.

- Lovato is no fun at all—no sense of humor and meaty hands that can easily crush a man’s throat.
- Slamm-0!
- Here’s where it gets interesting. Joseph has to communicate with the Don without tipping off Carlos. He’s not afraid; he just knows that Carlos has more nearby guns at his disposal.
- Stone

#### **Capo: Jorge Chavez**

Carlos’ cousin was promoted quickly and moved from Austin. Away from his uncle’s influence, this thirty-something man delved into the entertainment portion of Denver. He lacks the discipline for the position given him, leaving little guiding direction to the lieutenants under him. His colorful-patterned, Tropicaliente-designed clothes make him look more like a tourist than a made man.

- Such a vice, though minor, leaves him open to exploitation.
- Glitch

#### **Capo: Mark Sanchez**

From the tourist trap city of Corpus Christi, Mark was brought in because of his gift for finding footholds in entertainment markets. Mark is one of the older capos, being in his late forties. He’s a little slow, but he’s getting the hang of the multiple markets and legalities. He is not related to the Casquilho capo, Miguel Sanchez.

- It’s funny; these guys have brought such tacky tourist clothing to Denver. His ponytail and Birkenstocks may make him seem





a friendly and successful businessman, but probably go against what Carlos thinks is professional.

- Kat o'Nine Tales

#### Capo: Stephen Rodriguez

He'd be the first one Lovato kills. Stephen is from Dallas and has serious prejudices against, well, everyone really. He's stupid and can't keep himself from making derogatory remarks. He's trying to push his way into the tempo market, which is legal in PCC and currently dominated by the Koshari. Unless he tries a different strategy, like taking on one of the Vory for their piece of the action, I don't see him staying long.

- Racist, sexist, you name it, Rodriguez has got it. He hits on everything female and can't help but sprinkle words like "goblin, squat, trog, or [insert color]-skin" into his conversations. As an example, I went to meet Chavez at some club in the PCC, and there was Stephen at the bar calling the waitress "Pocahontas" and the bartender "Geronimo." I'm surprised a brawl didn't occur. The only reason people still work with him is because of the fear of the Chavez family.
- 2XL

#### Capo: Lester "Scarface" Scrabulitelli

Lester, the lone elf, earned his nickname from the scars left after an unfortunate case of mistaken identity when he was a teenager. Some (poli)club gangers lopped off his ear and partially scalped him. A few years later, he hunted down and killed them. Enrique, Houston's sotto capo, saw the potential in him. He's an exception to the Chavez rule on family, as he became a made man seven years ago, before moving to Denver. He hates the cold and tries to avoid going outdoors whenever possible.

- Lester may be the most adaptable of Denver's Chavez family, if he can suck it up and put some thermal underwear on. Of course, he also might be biding his time, planning a way back to Houston.
- Slamm-0!

#### Sotto Capo: Emilio Chavez

Emilio is the sotto capo of Denver in name only, since the Don has not acknowledged his authority. Emilio is in his late seventies with fully white hair. While he is up there in years, he's very athletically built and is into extreme sporting events. His best friends are several retired urban brawlers. Bruno, one of his friends, is still a soldato for the family. Last year, Emilio and the Don exchanged polite words at Omar's funeral, but it would seem that there were still irreconcilable differences between them. Emilio was at the funeral first and then left after an hour. His brother Carlos arrived a few minutes later. The Don also exchanged words with Carlos, so it's apparent Caesar is not pleased with either of them. Emilio has a hideout in Godz territory at Standley Lake, and when he is there he usually has a handful of soldatos with him. Since the mob war, the Godz have broken most of their ties with the Chavez family and declared their independence. It's not much of a kingdom for Emilio, and it's still too early to tell if he will fight his brother for control of the family business.

- It's a toss-up on who's the smarter of the two brothers. I don't think either of them could fill their father's shoes in any capacity. Emilio is good at keeping up with technology, hence the surveillance drones, but he is too impulsive. Carlos has strategy and has been good at counterintelligence, but he's too quick to anger.
- Riser

### THE CASQUILHO FAMILY

The Casquilho family's main product is information. Their hackers buy, sell, and trade in paydata: anything from rumors to blackmail to corporate secrets. They also deal in CalHots and other BTLs smuggled through false business fronts, and they've added some prostitution and drugs to their business as they've advanced into Yakuza and Chavez territory. The Casquilho family is unusually diverse for a Mafia family, but on other fronts they are quite traditional—the Don strictly enforces the old codes of conduct.

In the chaos of the Chavez reorganization and the subsequent mob war, Don Casquilho expanded his territory and took out some obstacles. The Casquilho family was unable to make any advancement into the PCC sector or take over the Lakeside Amusement Park and Casino, but they now "own" Klub Karma in the CAS, and they gave Nikolai Kirillov a bloody nose by supplying intel to the Three Kings gang who wanted vengeance on the Vory. This effort has taken its toll on Don Casquilho. With his advancing age and ailing health, he brought his grandson Vasco from California to join him so that he could recuperate. This is seen by many as the first step in grooming a new don.

The Casquilho still mainly deal from Casquilho Imports, which brings handcrafted goods in from California, including CalHots. One of the advantages the Casquilho have over the other syndicates is their access to weapons and equipment from Ares Arms through Johnathan Belenkiy, an associate of the family.

- The Casquilho Family is a great example of a small intelligence organization. They already know how to recruit into the organization; they just focus more on gathering information than money. Then, like any smart intel org, they sell that info to the right buyers.
- Thorn

#### Don: Lucho Casquilho

The Don is about as old as Miguel, but less uptight. Don't let his apparent fragility fool you—he's a cold-blooded killer and has been that way for half a century. His grandfatherly looks, with a wisp of hair and wrinkled smile, can throw off people's perception. The Don has been seen at the Pensodyne Medical facility, and he hasn't been looking too good with his bouts of pneumonia. While he could probably afford Leónization, the money is on him leaving Denver for places further south for his health before he passes away.

During the Mob war, his strategy was to keep accurate tabs on the other organizations' movements and conflicts. He relied heavily on Matrix intelligence and his hackers' skills. This way he could focus manpower on, for example, places already weakened from another organization's hit. Lin Yao was only hours dead when Casquilho soldatos muscled their way into Klub Karma. This Matrix intelligence also helped to quickly flip gang loyalties



by staging drive-by assaults on Vory enforcers before they could intimidate/conscript several gangs.

- I see many possible gene therapies for him going there: Genetic Optimization; Environmental Microadaption; Phenotypic Alteration....
- Plan 9
- Or just some augmented healing. I don't think he's going to branch out into space. He's like a hundred years old. ZO is already full of the rich and geriatric.
- Orbital DK
- The Don's longtime security guard, Ramses, has a strong dislike of Peder. Maybe it's the disrespect he gives the Don, maybe it's Peder's fascination with poisons.
- Sticks

### Sotto Capo: Vasco Casquilho

Twenty-two-year-old Vasco is the grandson of the Don. Vasco and the Casquilho family in California were in charge of the creation and distribution of CalHots. He's shown promise in keeping the businesses running, even after the PCC moved in and established more trade into Aztlan during the war. Because of this, the Don asked him to come to Denver. While Vasco wasn't excited to leave the sun and surf of California, no one argues with the Don. Vasco left a system in place in LA with his cousin, Estêvão, and brought his trusted advisor Peder Vasquez with him. Vasco was having some difficulty with the PCC anyway, so this will give him time to learn about border crossings and possibly help expand the CalFree organization.

- Vasco likes to play things fast and loose. He also loves shiny new toys and will buy the latest gadget out there. This includes cars, security, etc.
- Pistons
- Probably also looking at better camouflage techniques in moving their product. The false bottom talvaras are so cliché now with Casquilho Imports.
- 2XL
- He's already started redecorating Casquilho Imports, modernizing its fifty-year-old look. He's even done some trideo commercials for the company, like that's going to throw off the authorities.
- Sticks

### Consigliere: Peder Vasquez

Accompanying Vasco in most things is Peder. While familiar with how Vasco runs a business, he is challenged by the environmental and political differences of Denver. He's also managed to rub the capos the wrong way by not taking their advice. Since he's been in Denver, he's been spending the weekends up in the mountains snowboarding. Peder is a little different than other consiglieri as he defers more to Vasco than to the Don, figuring perhaps that Vasco will become the new don in the near future.

- A background check on Peder shows that he has a degree in marine biology. His collection of cone shells could corroborate his experimentation with poison, given that cone shells have the quickest-acting neurotoxin.
- Plan 9

### Capo: Dean Costello

Of the seven capos, Dean is the youngest, just three years older than the sotto capo, and is the Don's star hacker. He'd been used to the freedom that the Don had given him, but with a new sotto capo and consigliere from LA, he's concerned that the Californian hotshots will not understand Denver's intricacies and screw up what the Don has done for the Casquilho family. Dean is usually found at the Hacker Bar in the Tower of Babel, in the Hub, where he's very much a social drinker. Dean has been hacking since he was a teenager and has been in trouble with the law before.

- Dean is a child prodigy of corporate espionage. I've found that man pretending to be a marriage councilor for Horizon, a lawyer at Proteus, and I'm still trying to figure out who he charmed to end up impersonating one of my technicians when I played at the Fillmore Auditorium. Tim isn't that good looking. Sorry Tim.
- Kat o'Nine Tales
- I have to admit, I like the guy's style. I've heard rumors of how, from the Tower of Babel, he messes with the relay stations, changing the commlink "address" so people are connecting to the wrong number.
- Slamm-0!
- Speaking of Tower of Babel, it's the ideal spot for watching data traffic. They actually added more repeaters and signal boosters so that the other building nodes downtown select the direction of the Tower of Babel as the most efficient for sending data. This gives any member a view of what data is coming through Denver. Just need the ability to sift through it all.
- Netcat

### Capo: Miguel Sanchez

Miguel was the last capo to be promoted. At thirty-something, Miguel is easily recognizable with that big ork grin and the one gold-plated tooth staring at you from your display link. He used to be the soldato in the ill-fitting suit who would delegate work to associates and runners. Now with his promotion, he's recommended several associates and runners to become made men to take advantage of the Chavez family's misfortune. Miguel doesn't forget where he came from: the streets of the Aurora Warrens. He occasionally heads back there, dropping off foodstuffs to shelters or candy to street kids.

- Miguel's rep with the Warren residents allows him access to a unique group of people to send messages for him off the grid.
- Fianchatto
- He also has Tiki, a Polynesian ork rigger doing deliveries for the family. Tiki has to be using dead drops, since no self-respecting rigger would need to stop for repairs as frequently as he has lately.
- Rigger X



## Capa: Juliette “Sparks” Junipero

Juliette is the first woman in the Casquilho family to be made capa. The reasons for the delay weren't that the Don is sexist, just that he hadn't found anyone who could do the job.

- Oldest excuse in the book.
- Pistons

The twenty-eight-year-old redhead got her nickname from her ruthenium hair and medusa extensions. Sparks oversees the prostitution rings for the family. She took the war against the White Lotus to their front door when she got word that Lin Yao was killed. She personally took care of the Triad at Klub Karma and officially took over the place with Dean's help.

## KOSHARI

The Koshari element of the Kachina Society has tight control of the vice in the PCC sector. The Koshari are organized into circles that are supposed to be independent, but they do get some direction from the upper circles, with the topmost being the Outer Circle. In Denver, we all know of Joshua Kawaiibatunya's influence in the Outer Circle. The council of elders in Denver tells him what they are doing, and he's supposed to relay the message on to the Outer Circle. While there are many circles, the three most notable are the Wahchinksapa (elder), the Nahimana (mystic), and the Ohanzee (shadow). The Nahimana Circle handles Awakened drugs and telesma. The Ohanzee Circle deals with a multitude of criminal activities such as armed robbery and arson. Runners who want to get into serious money work their way up into one of these three circles. The council of elders also brings “advice” to the other circles in Denver. It is also the Wahchinksapa Circle who put together the contract with the Chavez family to get a cut of the profits off the Casino. Recently, Mark Longfeather kept up his end of the bargain recently by not taking advantage of the Chavez family problems, instead becoming a buffer for the Lakeside Amusement Park and Casino while the Chavez family reorganized. This was a risky strategy and frowned upon by Joshua, but the Outer Circle relented. It was a bloody conflict with the other organizations, and at this point, without reward. Mark is reluctant to approach the sotto capo with a contract renewal right away. He's sent out feelers to see what Carlos and Emilio are up to before broaching the subject.

The First Nations gang, in connection with the Dogmen and Komun'go, have recently rubbed the Koshari the wrong way by trying to make an arms deal in the PCC sector of Denver. This has diverted some of the attention of the Koshari from the Casino contract problem.

- Mark has gotten a lot of heat over the decision to uphold the Casino deal, but he can be very persuasive. I believe he said that any deal made with the Koshari should be kept, whether it was written on white buffalo hide or not. It's probably how he got his backing in the first place.
- Snopes

- The Koshari have a unique set of symbolic languages based on Hopi symbolism that they use as part of their secret communication. While the individual symbols are easy to understand, they can be merged and blended together into new symbols, and that meaning is sometimes difficult to interpret. It's like trying to understand the origin of Chinese characters.
- Plan 9
- They also incorporate watchers and magically lock messages in them to make sure that the right person gets the message.
- Lyran

There are two prominent people in the Ohanzee Circle, Tahaum Soyoko and Nata-aska, who you should talk to if you want to deal with this circle. The circle is family-operated for the most part; Tahaum is Nata-aska's uncle. They run many of the operations involving theft and robbery for the Koshari. They are both orks and have undergone several cosmetic body modifications to make their appearances more terrifying. Their names are related to the scary kachina spirits that the NAN children are told will get them if they are naughty. It really works with recruitment of young men into the Koshari.

- Tahaum has an almost legendary quality as he's survived many incidents that should have killed him. Tally so far is five major vehicle accidents, one with a T-bird, multiple shootouts with security, and once falling from a three-story building onto a semi truck passing by. Oh, and I think he escaped from a morgue once too.
- Hard Exit
- Can't keep a good ork down.
- Kane
- Nata-aska has some serious augmentations and grafting, more than just cosmetic changes, in comparison to his uncle. He has a personal beef with First Nation as they are stealing parts and equipment from his chop shops. Nata-aska is not someone you want to piss off; First Nation has found several members buried in the back roads up to their necks like macabre speed bumps.
- 2XL

The Nahimana Circle has been under the most fire during the syndicate war as they handle the most lucrative drug trafficking in Denver, including Awakened drugs. The Koshari also had an advantage in being able to deliver tempo before the other syndicates. There are three prime players in this circle: Majenda, Elambr, and Johnny Backstreet. Majenda, while not on the council of elders, is very influential in finding suppliers and organizing the drug trade. When it became evident that she was poised to monopolize the market with tempo in all the sectors, there was a hefty price put on her head by other syndicates. During her first year with tempo, a new South American supply of drugs gave the Koshari an estimated six hundred million nuyen in sales. So far she has survived two assassination attempts by hired guns and a heavy Vory strike that destroyed an apartment complex in which she had resided.

Elambr is a free fire spirit who takes on the form of a two-and-a-half-meter-tall Amerindian with a full chieftain headdress.



He has his own agenda (as most spirits do), but currently he is protecting Majenda and the rest of the Nahimana Circle while the supply of tempo lasts. There have been several attempts at controlling or banishing Elambr, including a spectacular pyrotechnical display over Englewood last July.

- While Elambr is assumed to be part of the Koshari organization, there are rumors that he is building his own organization and making side deals with tempo. If he is, it's not with any of the syndicates.
- Mika

Johnny Backstreet is a thirty-year-old Amerindian. He usually wears several layers of jackets over duct-tape-patched Carhartts and boots, living as a squatter in the barrens. Johnny is a little slow and eccentric when it comes to normal life, but sharp when it comes to artificing and talislegging. There have been a few who have tried to do harm to Johnny, but his friends changed their minds.

- Changed their minds? The man has freaking devil and demon rats working for him at his rundown building. I was making a purchase from Johnny, and I had a dozen beady red eyes staring at me from the backroom.
- Mika

### WAHCHINKSAPA CIRCLE

There are five members on the council of elders, and they direct how the rest of the circles operate in Denver. When there is Koshari business to discuss, whether it's in this circle or outside of it, the council will always wear their masks. This has been the tradition, which continues with every new member to the council. It is not uncommon for the elders to have the ability to use magic, but it is not required. They generally meet at Club Denim, a fairly unusual and rough place, but considering that most of the patrons are PuebSec or ex-military, it's secure. Within Club Denim is a modernized kiva from which the council conducts business.

- Mark Longfeather has a habit of using the kiva for his own personal agenda. I've heard from several runners about meets at the club.
- Pistons

#### Leader Chief (Raven): Mark Longfeather

One of the most influential members of the Koshari council of elders is Mark Longfeather. When conducting Koshari business, he wears a Raven Mask and traditional garb. When not wearing the mask, his Hopi heritage is immediately recognizable through his straight broad nose and high cheekbones. Physically, he is short and skinny, and his short hair has turned grey. A best estimate would place him at sixty-five to seventy years old. The "mocking" aspect of Raven shines through in his personality. Mark has a wicked sense of humor and won't hesitate to make wisecracks at the expense of his contacts or his hirelings. He speaks slowly and methodically with a slight southwestern twang. Don't ask him for any help, or else you may be the butt end of one of his jokes.



Mark Longfeather

- Don't ask him for a fake SIN. He can get them, but the names are horrible puns.
- Pistons
- Like what? Al Koholic? Seymore Butts?
- Slamm-0!
- Pretty much, though slightly more subtle.
- Pistons

#### Chief (Bear): Doba Standing Kodiak

Doba is a large man, as large as any ork. He also has the straight broad nose and high cheekbones showing his Hopi heritage, but he is far from short and skinny. If the council



was a vaudeville show, Doba would be the straight man to Longfeather's comedy routine. He's very serious and focused in his work, and he has run a strategic network of agents throughout the PCC and Sioux sectors during his decade on the council. Doba is not Awakened like the other four members, but that doesn't put him at any disadvantage in their discussions. More often than not, it's Doba who brings the most information to the meetings.

- Standing Kodiak has been in the intelligence business far longer than he's been with the Koshari. Can't remember his code name at the time, but he was good enough to keep out of the limelight.
- Thorn
- It was Ambercrombie.
- Fianchetto
- Ah, yes. How disappointing it must have been to have predicted an event and spent your whole career planning out a counter strategy only to have it finally occur after you left. If Saito would have arrived a decade earlier, things might have turned out differently for Standing Kodiak.
- Thorn

#### Chief (Coyote): James Greytail

James Greytail, known for his trademark grey ponytail, is about as old as Longfeather. James went blind from advanced macular degeneration, though that doesn't stop a shaman like himself. He is a good storyteller and offers advice like a grandfather to his child. Of the five members, he's the most respected. Even Longfeather curbs his wisecracks when James speaks.

- An interesting tidbit—his blindness has opened up an old-fashioned way to communicate that technology seems to have made mostly obsolete: Braille. He could get messages that are not readable by anyone else in the council and have them out in plain sight.
- Plan 9
- He'd better be careful with that. I can't read Braille, but my camera and translation software sure can.
- Clockwork

#### Chief (Rabbit): Makawi Jameson

Makawi may look small and timid like her namesake, but she used to be part of PuebSec. There was an adage with her totem, "The hare runs toward the fire," and she does. She's an early forties gnome and the youngest member of the council. Her voting has been toward risk, which has her siding with Longfeather, but don't think they are friends. She is still resentful of his mocking of her talent while she was in the Ohanzee Circle.

- How would a gnome be part of Koshari council, let alone be Amerindian?
- Clockwork

- Well you know how many NAN leaders worry about white skeletons in their closet? She just won the genetic lottery. Besides, what's four hundred years of genetic infusion between friends?
- Plan 9

#### Chief (Snake): Kimo Taaho

Rumored to be related to Jack Diamond, lead singer and guitarist of the Wild Cards, Kimo Taaho is as crotchety as they come at fifty-eight. He pushes for traditional life and ways for all the Pueblos and seeks to purge any outside influences. He changed his name from Richard Diamond to Kimo Taaho to show his dedication to tradition. This is how the rumor came about—strict father of a rebellious son—since both are from the Moki tribe. Kimo is the practicing priest in the snake ceremony, focusing on making it bring rain and reining it back from being a tourist attraction.

- If you aren't a Native American, don't even bother talking with him. He's so focused on restoring tradition that he blames all "colonist descendents" for the troubles affecting the NAN. This stubbornness also puts him in conflict with NAN corporations and even technology, as these were "introduced" concepts.
- Mika

## YAKUZA

The Yakuza had a good chunk of Denver business, especially in the illegal chips area. It was estimated that almost half of the trade of BTLs and drugs through Denver was controlled by either the Yamato or Naito clan fifteen years ago. The Yamato clan then got into a war with the Triad when the Triad made it personal with a bomb that killed Kasigi's wife, his child, and the Yamato Oyabun. Naito clan ownership of illegal trade began to fade when they tried to "organize" the smugglers under them. This led to a war of attrition, with T-birds burning anyone working for the Yakuza. The Naito clan finally lost when Ghostwalker's rampage destroyed the building the Oyabun and Wakagashira were staying in, killing them both. By 2060, the Yakuza lost territory and a good percentage of the trade in illegal chips to the Vory and the Triad. Foreseeing this, Kasigi started branching out to information brokerage and recruiting hackers. This also allowed expansion into their sabotage services. Unfortunately, the Yakuza hackers picked some poor targets and received the wrath of the otaku and a five-year Matrix war.

Things didn't improve for the Yakuza either. The Wakagashira, Johnny Ono, and the Kodai, Kazuya "The Dragon" Hotomi, were killed by runners in 2071 during the brutal war between the organizations. The Yamato clan was losing territory fast in Denver and thus lost faith in Kasigi. He was replaced by Mikko Toyama in late 2071, and Kasigi Toda (1995–2072) committed seppuku in the beginning of the New Year.

- Runners—got to love them. They're the cheapest way to rock the boat.
- Kane

When the news reported that technomancers were responsible for the crash of the Matrix, Mikko was fueled by the ingrained



paranoia from the previous Matrix war. He created a specialized group that could track and bag a technomancer, cashing in on the hype. A whole business opened up for the Yakuza and infused their organization with cash.

- From 2070 to today, the Yakuza have been trying to take on the Denver Data Haven. They don't have the hardware or skill, but they have cash and they have the media, so it's only a matter of time. Mikko is rumored to have trained with this group of TM hunters since before he became Oyabun.
- Mihoshi Oni
- In terms of espionage, the Yakuza are the cleverest of all the organizations in keeping a low profile. They use many techniques in communication to keep them off the grid. Ciphers with primers are the most common with multiple layers of communication. Even the color of the message tagged on walls has some significance.
- Thorn

## YAMATO CLAN

### Oyabun: Mikko Toyama

Mikko is young and agile, a much different animal than Kasigi, and has thrown off many of the other organizations' defenses and strategy. This twenty-six-year-old CAS-born citizen has been able to get his organization into better position in the CAS and UCAS with legitimate business purchases in Cherry Hills and Montebello. He retook some of the territory lost when Kasigi was in charge and is on a high right now with serious corporate scrip coming in from MCT, allowing him to build a modest imperial "fortress" near Aikiwa. The group he has hired/organized for tracking technomancers has kept itself hidden for the most part. It is assumed to be some sort of special group of ninjas. Good enough to not be noticed by Denver Nexus. Some of his changes did ruffle the traditionalists. One major point that has come up has been with him bringing on Ohnee as a hitman for the Yakuza. The sticking point has been that Ohnee is a troll.

- Funny that they don't care that he dyed himself red and wears bone-black makeup, unbecoming of a professional assassin. They only care about the horns.
- Hannibelle
- You wouldn't think of Mikko being a criminal mastermind. He's a young man, with a typical urban look, wearing Bodyline shoes and jeans with a Common Denominator hoodie; rarely does he wear anything remotely business-like or expensive. Of course, his house shows his real financial situation, replicating a smaller version of the Matsumoto castle. He also acts like an unambitious young man, spending time at clubs or playing AR games. It's that perception that throws people off, and he will take advantage of it.
- Thorn
- I saw some poser, probably fresh meat from Knight Errant, trying to get into a Yakuza casino. He showed off his tattoos, trying to impress them. Some lieutenant walked out to greet this poser and then drew a flaming sigil in the air with magic. I guess the

guy didn't know how to respond, because as soon as the sigil died away, the doormen kicked the crap out of him and sent him home in a taxi.

- Axis Mundi

### Wakagashira: Setto Karemaru

Setto is the highest-ranking gajjin in Denver's Yakuza. Setto's name is a Japanese phonetic transliteration of his real name, Seth Kraemer. He's another young blood at thirty-seven years of age, and apparently, he's good at social manipulation and has a good sense of timing; otherwise he would not have made it to where he is now. Setto has been observed to have a few odd habits, presumably determined by his devoted following of the requests of the Matrix program, the Exchange. He can be found running a casino in the basement of a mansion in the PCC.

- Both Setto's actions and the Exchange are very unusual. Events are random and unpredictable, and yet the cost to him was worth the obedience to the Exchange. He has managed to survive where Johnny Ono did not, with "miraculous" happenstance. As an example, when the Casquilho were pursuing his car, the pursuing cars became boxed in by two tour buses and a senior citizen shuttle.
- Piston

### Saiko-Komon: Katsuo Sawaruma

Katsuo is a fairly recent immigrant from Japan and is a serious hard-ass and perfectionist in his work. At fifty, he is a traditionalist. Mikko's style does rub him the wrong way, but it was Mikko who promoted him to Saiko-Komon from just managing a bunraku parlor for the last decade. Katsuo is a serious task manager, expecting everyone beneath him to be equally diligent. The Yamato clan has been very profitable this year, and Katsuo has helped keep things in the black with legal investments.

- They've been raking in the cash hand over fist. I would not be surprised to see the Yakuza investing in more SOTA toys and challenging the Koshari.
- Kay St. Irregular

## TRIAD

The Triad organizations were always small in Denver. They had a niche market of imported Asian goods and drugs and a small percentage of the BTL trade and sex market. What started as three organizations—the Red Dragon, White Lotus, and Golden Triangle—in the '50s became two by 2065. The Red Dragon ceased to exist as an organization after taking two serious blows. First, when Ghostwalker rampaged through Chinatown, the Red Dragon took much of the collateral damage. Second, they failed to kill Kasigi when they bombed his house. Instead they killed his family and brought the Yakuza into an open war with them. It also didn't help that the White Lotus already had a beef with the Red Dragon for centuries, so they didn't lift a finger to help. Those who survived the subsequent slaughter merged with the Golden Triangle. The White Lotus and Golden Triangle try to stay out of each other's business. They also have an agreement at the Happy



Canyon Mall, where the Temple of Inner Light was constructed. Both can use it for religious purposes. Recently, Sheung Fa, Lin Yao of the White Lotus, got in over her head. She was apparently making deals on the side without the Shan Chu knowing and was executed for it. Hai Feng, the lodge master, has been busy and hasn't replaced her yet.

- Ballsy runners. From the rumors, this was the beginning of the mob wars. Lin Yao paid out big money for shadowrunners to take out Sotto Capo Chavez and pin it on the Koshari, all on behalf of the Vory. She was then double-crossed by the runners when the White Lotus, her own organization, paid them even more money to take out Lin Yao herself. Confused yet?
- Plan 9
- Is that how your brain works?
- Thorn

Between controlling organizations and controlling deaths, the two Triad organizations have taken different approaches. The White Lotus has gone on the offensive. They lost territory to the Mafia, including Klub Karma, and are trying to regain some. They tried to take the Amusement Park and Casino but were thwarted by the Chavez and hindered by Koshari. Not wanting to fight them, the White Lotus is focused on the Vory as the smallest of the syndicates. They did make some gains in the protection racket of what used to be Chavez territory but not much, as the Casquilho family moved faster. Hai Feng, who leads the White Lotus, has worked on recruiting new members capable of physical combat. These hardliners are led by Hu Yan Zhou in their overt war against the Vory.

- With the exception of the Vory, most syndicates try to keep things low key, including combat, to keep governments and law enforcement from getting too much in their business. Unfortunately, the White Lotus and the Vory are way too public in their attacks. I mean, come on, the latest news of well over two hundred combatants at the outskirts of the Warrens is going to get the dragon's attention again.
- Sticks

The Golden Triangle has emphasized defense as their strategy. They have recruited more Sze Kau in the defense of their existing markets. The Golden Triangle did push into information brokering to at least have some early warning of what the other organizations are up to. The exception to their defensive position was the retaking of Klub Karma by An Peng. The White Lotus enforcers are marked with a tattoo of a white lotus on the ankle or wrist, while the Golden Triangle uses scarring/branding techniques to put a triangle at the bottom of a foot or on a shoulder.

## WHITE LOTUS

### Shan Chu (Lodge Master): Hai Feng

Master Hai Feng is still running the White Lotus at almost seventy years of age. His control over his mystical powers not only enhances him physically, but also keeps him youthful, with a full head of peppered black hair and a long moustache. He has spent most of his time training new recruits and has done it for well over

twenty years. He's gotten more obsessed with getting the White Lotus back in power, the way it was before Ghostwalker showed up, and he's been pushing the recruits pretty hard.

- He doesn't hide the personal combat training; he hides the network training. A few of his brightest stars get special treatment and special toys to aid in his goal of killing off the Vory. Monowire garrotes and camouflaged grenades in commlinks are his favorites.
- Kat o' Nine Tales

### Heung Chu (Incense Master): Yue Fe

Yue Fe is a fourth-ranked master of the Wuxing path. One thing we know about him is his consultation of ancestors. He calls upon the ancestors from the Black, Red, White, Yellow, and Green lodges to help guide them. It is rumored that he also has been receiving insight on their current situation from Wang Lun, the eighteenth century White Lotus rebel.

- I've heard whispered rumors that the ancestors cannot agree on a specific path for the White Lotus to take.
- Black Mamba
- There's one that you might have missed: Yue Fe may not be himself anymore. The counseling voice to Hai Feng may be something more corrupt.
- Lyran

### Hung Kwan (Red Pole): Hu Yan Zhuo

Hu Yan Zhuo is a serious military commander for the White Lotus and one of Hai Feng's students. He's in his late thirties and wears a fearsome beard. Hu Yan prefers to wield double iron whips that crush skulls rather than just cut flesh. He's been very occupied in battling the Vory. With the approval of the Lodge Master and the Guardian, he has been striking back at Vladimir Kozolov, hoping to kick the Vory out of the CAS and give them some breathing room.

- Good luck with that. He's bringing a whip to a gunfight.
- Sticks

## GOLDEN TRIANGLE

### Shan Chu (Lodge Master): Li Zicheng

Li Zicheng is a fifty-plus-year-old master who immigrated from the Canton confederation. After twenty years of being in Denver, he finally realized the city is a very dynamic place both politically and economically.

- Um, duh! And how many border changes did it take for him to realize this?
- Slamm-0!

So to keep up on the times and details, he has branched out with a new twist on companion services. The Ascending Star, as the advertisement says, "is tailored to every traveling businessman or sarariman's needs." Now, before you dive into the gutter, sex is indeed an option in this, but it's not the



only, or even primary, purpose of the service. What they do is help a businessman or woman achieve success and increase their self-esteem. The companion is more of a life coach, doing things like getting the person into shape, showing them how to dress, training them to manage their time, even doing small stuff like babysitting or cleaning the car. It's all stuff to help a person achieve more. So far it's been very popular, especially with corporate management leaving the Falcone Corporate Consultants at the Horse Trot Ranch.

- It's an angle. They get people psychologically dependent on the companions, making them vulnerable. Companions then can get any information from them, and the people give it to them willingly.
- Glitch
- Heck, who's to say that they aren't just hacking the person's home network and getting information while babysitting the kids?
- Snopes
- I've heard that companions can help people achieve success by causing "accidents" and opening employment opportunities.
- Plan 9
- You're just having a great time with this whole spy games thing aren't you?
- Snopes
- Wait until I get to talk about conspiracies.
- Plan 9

#### **Heung Chu (Incense Master): Chen Seng-ho**

With all of Li's changes, the Golden Triangle needs more hackers to receive and protect its data, not to mention off-site spiders to defend places like Ascending Star. This has been left to Chen Seng-ho. He's a recent graduate from Caltech with two degrees, computer science and network security, and he has his work cut out for him in Denver trying to upgrade the Triad's security.

- Interesting fact and an added bonus: Chen is familiar with Peder and Vasco on a personal level, as he surfed with them in California before moving to Denver to be with his relatives.
- Pistons

#### **Hung Kwan (Red Pole): An Peng**

Enforcing the magical aspects and traditions of the Triad is An Peng. An Peng practices wuxing and usually dresses in a lined coat, heavily embroidered in magic symbols. He's also recognizable by the single polished horn from the right side of his head. An Peng has had his difficulties in the last few years with runners taking a crack at him and him losing his favorite table at Klub Karma. He's been recruiting a new group of soldiers so he won't be caught off guard like last year.

- I think it's more of a personal matter to take back Klub Karma from Sparks. He loved the food there.
- Slamm-0!

## VORY

With the exodus from Mother Russia, the Avtoritey and Vory have been bringing their families to North America and settling into their old ways. Three years ago, several of these families made their way to Denver. After dividing the city along the national boundaries, each Vor and Avtoritet began to slowly expand through their own means. They were, and still are, aggressive in their approach. They immediately went to war with everyone to gain a foothold, starting at the bottom with taking out gangs and pressing them into Vory rule. The CAS and UCAS were split between brothers, Vladimir and Nikolai Kirillov. The Pueblo went to Vasilli Fomin, who really took the short end of the stick in territory choices, and Alexei Klavikov took the Sioux sector. The Kirillov Vory made the most headway. In the early 2070s, the CAS sector Vory started targeting other syndicates' supply chains, threatening or killing smugglers. They also made headway into the Warrens, destroying gangs and taking over Triad brothels. The Fomin Vory joined up with Tamanov for finances and loan sharking small businesses, and the Klavikov Vory took to playing mind games with scare tactics.

- The Klavikov work at mentally breaking down the enemy with a series of physical and verbal threats, pushing them to a point of hopelessness and, ultimately, submission.
- Glitch
- It would have been smarter for them to pool their resources and go for one slice instead of taking on the whole pie. They're no bigger than they were when they started.
- Goatfoot

#### **Tsar: Vladimir Kirillov**

Vladimir Kirillov was sort of the black sheep of the family. He didn't do a whole lot of killing; he did more thinking. He worked on getting a college education while his brother honed his underworld skills. On the rare occasions when Vladimir used deadly force, it was both public and precise. For example, the general that his brother fled from died from a landmine that went off in the general's garden. In his recent move to Denver, Vladimir chose to take over operations in the CAS sector. Many Soviet crew members came with him.

- This guy's got some good tactics. I figured out how he got so many men to follow him to Denver—he tipped off the Coast Guard that the ship he was on was smuggling counterfeit goods. That way, once the ship gets taken over by the Coast Guard, the crew would be looking for some cover, and they'd turn to him for help. Once he had them in his debt, the rest was easy.
- Kane

#### **Sovetnik: Mikhail Petrov**

Always dressed to the nines, Mikhail is a scorpion in a silk suit. He speaks with a heavy accent and favors his right arm as he tries to conceal the fact that his left is cybernetic. He is very patient and prefers to use the exact amount of force to get a job done. He disdains killing, not because of moral constraints, but





**Mikhail  
Petrov**

due to logistics of manpower replacement and consequences. This is probably why he stayed with Vladimir instead of Nikolai.

#### **Shestiorka: Taijha**

Taijha married into the Vory through Mikhail's cousin. She is an ork of Caribbean descent and has lent her magical talents to the Vory. As a follower of Ghede, she provides a steady flow of souls to pass through the crossroads. Scary as it sounds, the bojeviks don't get a rest even after death.

- Yep, Vory zombies. And if they make a deal with Tamanous, it will be a B-movie horror fest with a Russian accent!
- Slamm-0!

#### **Tsar: Nikolai Kirillov**

Nikolai started out running errands for the Vor in St. Petersburg. In thirty-five years, he left a long trail of blood up the ranks of the Vor. There's an outstanding bounty of thirty thousand nuyen for bringing him back to the Soviet bloc for his crimes. He left for UCAS sector when he bumped into a high-ranking general of the Russian military who was very familiar with his crimes and put the threat of deportation over his head (the problem of this general was eventually taken care of by his brother Vladimir). Nikolai is two meters tall and likes to wear stretched t-shirts that show off his tattoos. He uses his size as an advantage in negotiations and intimidation.

- Since he's less circumspect than his brother Vladimir, Nikolai has to spend more time dealing with the authorities. Usually, this is simply a matter of paying an extensive assortment of bribes, but sometimes he turns over a low-level street thug to the cops to make them happy. Or, if he's really mad, he'll kill a few of them, even though he knows how angry that makes them.
- 2XL
- A distracted CAS is useful to Nikolai, which means he has an interest—a distant interest, but still—in how the renegotiation comes out. He'd like to see the CAS get some of the things it wants because that will give them more power, and a more powerful governmental body is often one that is too busy to look into every little bit of organized crime.
- Kay St. Irregular

#### **Tsar: Vasilli Fomin**

Vasilli Fomin, the youngest of the Vory tsars at age thirty-eight, had some success strong-arming those in the Warrens within the Pueblo sector, but it was short lived. The Koshari caught on to the Vory's strategy and left magical surprises for the bojeviks.

- Surprises like spirits tasked to gobble up little Russian soldiers that don't give the right password. It does annoy the rest of us who are trying to make a living.
- Mika

Vasilli is now on the defensive with little options or power, as none of the other Vory are willing to help him. He hopes that he can forge a deal with Tamanous, or maybe bring in ghoul reinforcements. To that end, he's offering organlegging deals to the



other Vory families in an attempt to form alliances, though some of his opposition, including Vladimir, would rather eliminate Vasilli and his organization so they can take over his territory.

### Tsar: Alexei Klavikov

Alexei has been quiet compared to the other Vory. This stern-looking man with the black goatee doesn't appear to have lost or gained any territory in the past three years. In fact, about the only thing from his organization to hit the streets is his daughter Irina, who frequently gets into trouble when she's out club-hopping.

- Yeah, I don't see much from the Klavikov Vory since they came to the Sioux sector a few years ago. It's like they invested in a few shops and were content with that. I think Alexei has been making a few corporate deals, but none specifically I can put my finger on.
- Snopes
- His stuff looks legit, from the gun shops to the fine dining restaurants. Maybe he retired early?
- Pistons

### Bojevik: Irina Klavikova

Irina, or Irishka as her friends call her, has a sorority girl look to her—tall, blonde, and fond of skimpy clothes—but don't let that fool you. She's a functioning psychotic who is able to handle all automatic and semiautomatic weapons. She toys with men, having her own club following, and she uses them to get whatever she wants, including admission to hot clubs, free drinks, and a steady supply of narcotics.

- Irina has got to be related to the Kirillovs. She throws sex and drugs into the mix of psychological games, dominating men. She even sets up love triangles, using her lovers' jealousy to get them to kill for her.
- 2XL

## GANGS

Gangs are, not surprisingly, abundant in Denver. With so many nations bumping territories against one another, it sometimes seems that there are more cultural gangs here than anywhere else. People can be fiercely protective of their heritage, no matter how the borders are drawn or redrawn. Some of the imported gangs, like the Trey Eights, BBs, Hudson Hawks, Brain Eaters, and Cutters have tried to make way for their satellite groups, with some success. Cutters knew a hostile takeover when they saw one and bailed when the Vory showed up. The Brain Eaters became divided and spawned several groups like the Zombies. The rest have been fighting to stay independent with mainly the Vory trying to force them under their law. Here are a few that I've encountered over the years.

## GODZ

This top-tier go-gang started out in the now-defunct Ute sector and has continually expanded so that it now covers all of the Pueblo sector. They deal in minor smuggling and run a protection racket for smugglers who don't have T-birds. They have

enough numbers that they control many of the highways within the Pueblo sector. Many of the Godz are elfen, but they have no ties to the Ancients.

The two driving forces for the Godz are Rex Paquette and Apollo. Rex is a whip-slender, dark-haired elf in his early forties. He cuts a romantic figure with the long hair he lets blow in the wind as he rides. Rex recently made a deal with exiled Chavez Family member Emilio Chavez, providing protection in exchange for the use of Emilio's contacts, especially for drone procurement. So far, the arrangement has been very beneficial to Rex, as he's obtained several Cyberspace Designs Hornet F21s to act as companions to his gang's vehicles.

The other leader of the gang, Apollo, is an aloof and haughty elf, with a crew-cut hairstyle, artificial tanning, and *très chic* armor with polished brass. He leads the Godz with military precision. He's more occupied with syndicate politics than Rex is. Apollo sees the benefits of the drones Emilio has helped the gang obtain, but he worries about the long-term ramifications of establishing close ties with an exiled Mafiosi.

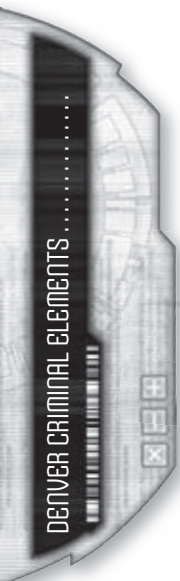
- Apollo and Rex both have the "god-like" appearance the gang likes, though Rex looks more like the god of wine and partying, Apollo like some kind of bronzed beach god. Don't make the mistake of thinking that just because they look nice, they must be soft. They aren't.
- Kat o' Nine Tales

## FRONTS

The Fronts operate mainly in the CAS and UCAS sectors, with a few cells scattered in other sectors of the FRFZ. These cells average thirty members each, mostly of humans and orks. It's suspected that there are roughly four hundred members in the Fronts. The gang deals primarily in protection, smuggling, drugs, and chips. They worked out a deal with the sotto capo of the Casquilho to sell CalHots fresh from CalFree, and the partnership has lasted two years now.

Amy Steur is the leader of the Fronts. She moved up from one of the smaller Front cells, defeating the previous leadership in motorcycle combat. She is a ruthless beauty with spiked red hair, and she's addressed the few challenges to her leadership quickly and cleanly in physical combat. She's very quiet, without any boasting or ranting, so when she does speak, the gang listens. One of her lieutenants is a heavysset ork named Gob. He's about as tricked out as his rig is for speed. Amy goes to him for any transportation of goods that needs to get out ASAP.

- Gob is easy to find. Just look around the fast food restaurants with a drive-through. The man can't be without a sloppy soy burger and fries for longer than ten minutes.
- Slamm-0!
- Like most of the other gangs in the area, the Godz and the Fronts use off-the-grid communications to keep from being hacked and to make sure there are no electronic datatrails of their activities. They use tags and zigs to silently communicate messages to other members or to other gangs. Since they work frequently with syndicates, they've picked up a few espionage tricks from them.
- Thorn





## AURORA ANGELS

Based in the Warrens, the Aurora Angels made a name for themselves by standing up to the Fronts. They have become a second-tier hybrid go-gang/hacker gang, adding pirating software and hacking to their resume. They are small compared to other second-tier gangs, especially after the war with the Fronts a year ago, but they've gotten themselves program agents and drones to augment their strategy and firepower. Their leader, Base-13, is a young man, barely in his twenties, living on the streets. He has gotten enough nuyen to get himself a decent commlink and software to get into better-paying criminal activities. He's a self-taught hacker, and has learned a lot about Matrix etiquette through trial and error. The twenty-plus-member group has built or purchased several skimmers, dragonflies, and a Doberman to help in surveillance and quick snatch-and-grabs.

On the Matrix side, Tenebrous, a mousy, young, little brunette, has been Base-13's right-hand woman. She's been able to support the Aurora Angels quite well in hacking nodes and building agents to help in stealing paydata. Oddly enough, she's kept a low profile, cutting her hair and giving herself a boyish look. It would be hard to distinguish her from the rest of the gang.

- Money is tight, so the Angels often use disposable commlinks, which gives them some anonymity in their communications. The anonymity is especially important to Tenebrous—she fears the syndicates because she's got the kind of talent they look out for, and she doesn't want to be picked up by them.
- Pistons
- If she's a TM, the Yaks are the ones she really should look out for.
- Netcat

## GHOST RIDERS

Ghost Riders travel Route 121 and the 285. It's hard to miss them when they ride because they tend to be surrounded by some crazy special effects like a stampede of phantom horses, rolling storm, or my favorite, cycles made of elements, leaving trails of fire, ice, and lightning. They've got at least one shaman in the group helping arrange all these illusory effects. They all hang out at All the World's a Stage, a bar in Bow Mar. They do minor talislegging and delivery jobs on Aurora racing bikes. They've had a few bouts with the Godz, which usually end in a draw. Their leader is Wanda, and she is one tough elf chica of Ute heritage who has survived many tribal ordeals and achieved respect from tribal elders. She's a little bitter that the Ute government ceded their section to the PCC, and she supports Ute independence from the PCC. Of course, she's a hypocrite, doing jobs for the Koshari in the meantime.

Wanda's chief lieutenant is Felicity, and she is probably the mastermind behind their signature style of travel since she is one of the known Awakened Ghost Riders. Felicity doesn't have any of the characteristic features of an Ute heritage, being tall and blonde, which has made her work quite hard to get respect. She and her half-brother, Haus, are also good mechanics and keep the bikes in working order.

- Ghost Riders and the Koshari do most of their communication via magic. The Koshari are good at keeping their side secure, but

Felicity is young and sometimes thinks the rarity of magic is security enough.

- Lyran

## THREE KINGS

The Three Kings' territory is on the Southside of the Warrens, a mile southeast of the meat market, and can be identified by three crowns tagged on the side of a building. They barely make third-tier status as a go-gang since their numbers were recently decimated by Vory enforcers engaging in some strong-armed recruiting tactics. They almost completely disbanded with the death of their leader, Jonny, and his chief lieutenant, Tony, at the hands of the UCAS Vory, but with some support from the Fronts, the Three Kings were held together by a new leader, Rembrandt.

- Rembrandt is a dwarven poet, previously a lieutenant and mechanic for the Three Kings, who didn't want the whole gang to fall to the Vory. He pulled some strings with the Fronts and got some heavy firearms for the gang. This helped keep the Vory soldiers at bay.
- Sticks

## DAMBUSTERS

The Dambusters are a third-tier thrill gang that sports bomber jackets and vintage clothing from the 1940s. They owe a lot of their success to their Yakuza connections, and they also provide protection to several coyotes on the PCC/CAS border in exchange for a cut of the action. They are known for cylindrical improvised explosive devices that they can throw with uncanny accuracy, skipping them to their target. Their leader, Wallace, used to be part of the Naito clan, but when Ghostwalker came through, he and a few others separated themselves and declared independence. This gave them the benefit of being able to contract jobs with the Yamato clan and actually get paid.

- I saw footage of them bouncing one of their IEDs to its destination once, and that thing took a few left turns that had nothing to do with the pavement or anything else it was hitting. Either they've got some magic ability guiding these things where they're supposed to go, or they have a spirit of air doing some behind-the-scenes work for them.
- Slamm-0!

## ZOMBIES

The Zombies are a third-tier go-gang, wearing drab grey clothes and favoring a heroin chic/macabre look. They have no claimed territory—they simply drive around in a pimped-out yellow school bus and a few other vehicles, and wherever it stops, they claim as their own for the day/night/week. They're mostly involved with street distribution of BTLs, and they generally get their supplies from the Mafia. Their leader, Romero, is a thin ork who wears harlequin-style makeup as he drives around Denver. He has no true loyalties to any syndicate and has rubbed several gangs the wrong way when the Zombies crashed on their turf. Sometimes he smoothes ruffled feathers by sharing some free drugs with people nearby, but other times he opts for intimidation, crashing into any vehicles that he thinks are in his way and daring anyone to challenge him.





COMING FEED.....



- Zombies couldn't care less if anyone knows what they are or are not doing. There is not a lot of method to their madness—Romero can go on and on explaining what he is doing and why, but most of what he says is just insane rambling.
- Stone

### KOMUN'GO/DOGMEN/FIRST NATIONS

The First Nations and their associated gangs, the Dogmen and Komun'go, have expanded their trade routes from Seattle all the way to Denver. The Dogmen and First Nations have small sects of fifty or so members working in the old Ute sector. The First Nations have been transporting tempo from the Komun'go, which has put them in direct conflict with the Koshari. They mainly deal with the smuggling of drugs and running some vice parlors. The First Nations believe they should be the only gang in control of tempo, which doesn't work well in Denver since the Koshari have control of the PCC sector and run their own tempo trade.

The Dogmen gang is more of a workhorse outfit. They're primarily into smuggling, and they don't much care what it is they're carrying as long as they're making money. They have a few T-birds and heavy weapons to control their trade routes to and from Denver, and they have had their own battles with the syndicates, such as the Vory and Yakuza, trying to control the T-bird route.

The gang is lead by Yáahl. She flies a T-bird and has an eye on the prettier things in Denver. She takes her cut of profits in

the form of jewelry and fine clothes, making her lifestyle different from the dirt and grease of the typical T-bird jockey.

Jessee Feldspar has been controlling the Komun'go sect more through intimidation than inspiration. This hotheaded troll has been starting trouble with the Koshari by stealing from Nata-aska's chop shops. This could be a ruse to distract the council of elders from paying attention to their other operations, such as smuggling weapons into the Ute sector.

### DENVER DATA HAVEN AND DENVER NEXUS

Last, but not least, of the criminal organizations in the city is the Denver Nexus. The old Air Force academy near Colorado Springs was abandoned by the U.S. government after the signing of the Treaty of Denver in 2018. The military removed their sensitive equipment and demolished what they could before turning it over to PCC. The PCC looked at what was left and found the location unsatisfactory in the newly drawn FRFZ. PCC then just fenced in the campus along the Academy, Parade, and Interior Roads, leaving one gate into the campus at Woodman Road. About a decade later, that mass of decaying buildings became the Denver Data Haven. At one time, the Denver Nexus was the largest repository of information on the Matrix and was the backup for many other nodes across the globe, with the Helix in Europe as the second largest and the Morgue in Singapore as third.

- While the military used explosives in destroying sections of the Air Force base and Cheyenne Mountain, there wasn't anything significant at the Academy, so some cadets took a few improvised



explosives and blew the hell out of the 18-hole golf course. The rest was just random vandalism. In the late '40s, the first of the deckers to move in found most of the complexes below ground still structurally sound and began to make a place for themselves. The rumors that the place was in worse shape than it actually was were encouraged to allow the deckers to work in peace. Junked-out vehicles from the abandoned housing complex were pushed inside the walls for effect.

- FastJack
- Creative use of plausible disinformation, and very effective considering it worked for a good part of, what, twenty years? Whose idea was it?
- Thorn
- I think it was from multiple sources. A little bit here, a little bit there, all adding up to one big lie.
- Snopes

In December 2061, the Nexus had to deal with Ghostwalker coming to Denver. It took a few days of negotiations by SilveryK before an agreement was reached. The Nexus was able to stay, provided that the Nexus group set up the Dragon's node and a hardwired connection to the Heap. Crystal, one of the otaku, became the admin to the Dragon's Lair (Ghostwalker's node).

- Whoops—they broke one of the prime rules there.
- Slamm-O!
- And paid for it, since being co-opted by a dragon doesn't usually stop once it's started. I have heard that the Nexus is now a prime resource for the Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research.
- Plan 9
- My sources inside the Nexus tell me that most rumors like that are crap.
- FastJack

November of 2064 was hard on everyone thanks to Crash 2.0. The worm came through the backdoor to the Morgue and burned everything in its wake. Bash, Crystal, Tid, and several others died initially in the combat, though Crystal managed to cut the hard-line to the Dragon's Lair, isolating it from the worm. Luckily, Denver Nexus got the message from Z-O on what was going on and how to combat Jörmungandr. Shiva died after killing the worm, but he bought time for Bitter Edge to cut the hard-line to the Heap and SilveryK to get the word out to Shadowland and Captain Chaos. The Data Haven didn't fare much better with the subzero temperatures and hail outside. AngelSat 9 impacted the old visitor center, killing one person. There was a lot to clean up before people could give themselves time to grieve.

- During the last weeks of December 2064 and early January of 2065, a few trucks came by, dropping off equipment and goods. No questions asked; no signature needed. It was an indirect acknowledgement of the Denver Data Haven's involvement in stopping Winternight.
- FastJack

Out in the old Air Gardens are a dozen small stone pedestals. Each has an artistic crafted metal and glass sculpture resembling RBG monitors or decks with words etched on the glass. Three stand slightly taller than the rest:

- Bash, Admin 2032-2065
- Shiva, Master System Admin 2024-2065
- Crystal, Dragon's Lair Admin 2053-2065

These monuments went well with the Eagle and Fledglings statue at the south end of the Air Gardens, which is inscribed with the quote, "Man's flight through life is sustained by the power of his knowledge."

After the Hong Kong incident of June 2070, there was panic among the general population thanks to the growing fear of technomancers. Abend, one of the original otaku who had left the Haven, saw a few of his friends go missing and his contacts dry up. He decided to make his way back to Haven, bringing those who would be persecuted, technomancer or not, with him. In August, Abend went missing in Denver. The Denver Nexus found him in a psych ward of the Fort Logan Medical Center. Shadowrunners supported by the Nexus crew busted him and the AIPS sufferers out.

- You would think people would come knocking on Denver Haven's door with torches and pitchforks. They might have tried, save for the PCC increasing their enforcement of the FRFZ around Denver Haven at the request of Ghostwalker.
- Perri
- Should have left them in the funny farm.
- Clockwork

The temple has become the focal point of the Denver Haven and Nexus with a population double what it was twenty years ago. Almost everyone is a permanent resident with most of the buildings restored for occupancy. As for the big question: What happened to the Data? The Heap was not devoured by the worm. It was beaten and burned, but not digested. It took three years of hardware replacement and data reconstruction before it was available for access.

With all the work that has been going on at the Denver Data Haven, non-humans have been taking up residence both on the grounds as well as in the Matrix. ANSI and Bitter Edge have teamed to handle these new residents so that they don't become a hazard or nuisance to the Denver Nexus or to the population of metahumans.



## Nexus Personnel

### Perri, Master System Admin

Technomancer extraordinaire, Perri is the Master System Admin of the Nexus. She oversees all of its operating systems and Matrix-related issues.

### Silvery K (Kimberly Robinson), System Admin

SilveryK joined the Denver Nexus group in 2058 after sharing some of the toys that were given to her in Big D's Will with Bash and Shiva. She is backup for Perri in administration duties, plus is the liaison for Ghostwalker's requests from the Dragon's Lair.

### Capt'n Kludge (Tom Kwan), Network Admin

Now forty-five, the Capt'n works on connectivity issues and communications hardware attached to the Denver Nexus and Denver Data Haven. Crash 2.0 was a lesson learned, so Capt'n Kludge has been working with multiple node connections, satellite uplink, etc.

### Spirit (Nahid Mostafavi), Technical Support

At fifty-eight, Spirit has retired from much of the hacking to help the influx of new technomancers and AIPS sufferers that now live in the Denver Data Haven. With the help of ANSI and Perri, they have remade the Academy Temple to be harmonious to the resonance.

- The family cohesion of the tribe was structured more like a single parent with a bunch of latchkey kids, with Shiva being the parent. So you can imagine the chaos there was with us kids having no responsibility and so much autonomy. When the older ones faded, they simply left the tribe. I see now how we missed passing down any traditions or caring for others outside the tribe. Now we have a variety of ages of technomancers and the "tribe" had to grow up. It's a community now with Spirit emphasizing the importance of family values and responsibilities. This has included a structure of rules, hygiene, jobs, and, of course, curfew that I would have had a kit fit about years ago. I'm not sure that it's better, but I feel more connected to the Haven as a whole, not just a tribe residing in it.

- Perri

- What do you think you're doing? I don't recall inviting you in.
- FastJack

- Sorry Jack, I wanted to clarify a few things.
- Perri

- Yeah Jack, she's just giving us the inside scoop.
- Sticks

//1 User: Sticks ejected from JackPoint//

- That's FastJack to you.
- FastJack





# ... PLACES OF INTEREST ...

## AUSTIN, CAS

Posted by: Thorn

Some folks have taken to calling Austin “Southwest Berlin.” It’s a city that’s been cut in half by a repositioned border between hostile nations, and forces seem to be conspiring to keep Austin weird.

Denver aside, spies don’t often get the chance to find conflicting national interests this close together, rubbing against each other in a densely populated urban area. Every country’s got great, wide expanses of border out in the middle of nowhere, but that’s not where most espionage agents like to operate if we can help it. Border patrols are light out in the middle of the woods for a reason—because there’s nothing there to spy on and no good reason for us to be there. Right?

- Hey, something spies and shadowrunners have in common!
- Slamm-0!

But Austin? Austin’s a hustling, bustling city that just happens to be split down the middle with Aztlan on one side and the CAS on the other. As military tensions flare, there are contracts aplenty to be found. If things ever cool down to a simmer, there are always a host of paramilitary groups—“paramilitary groups” when they’re paying you, mind, but “terrorists” when you’re hunting them—with a need for professional assistance to get the pot boiling again.

Now, it’s important to remember who’s invited to the party, who’s crashing it, and who’s hoping to score by the end of the night. You’ve got the proper CAS government on the north side of the river, and Aztlan on the other. Everyone knows that bit. But there are splinter factions and some unwelcome guests, too, to always be mindful of. The UCAS and CAS aren’t exactly in bed together, remember, and if you know a thing or three about “military advisors,” you know you just might find a few from the UCAS Army occasionally lending very, very covert support to Aztlan just to keep the CAS on their toes and measure tactical responses. There’s the rare Amazonian sympathizer pulling the same sort of thing against Aztlan, mind, so things can get complicated. There are vigilante-style paramilitary groups doing their own work night by night, too, like the Sons of the Alamo on the north side and

Los Lobo Escorchado on the south. In theory, every group is out to demoralize the CAS or Azzies and send them off to some imaginary new border. In practice, some are out to field test new guns and armor, some are out to train operatives, and most only measure their goals by scalps taken.

So, say you take the trip, throw yourself into the middle of the fun, and go looking for a job. What sort of work should you expect? Often it’s what I call the messy kind, especially if it’s your first such business trip. It’s not unusual to hear Austin called the “Violent Crown” as a tongue-in-cheek reference to its old nickname, and for good reason. There are kill teams running both sides of the river most nights. Generations of friendly Tejanos aside, there’s been a real racial spin to the Azzie/Texas dispute for the last several decades, and whenever that’s the case, things get bloody, and quick. Both sides feel they’ve got the rightful claim to the region, and both sides have invested heavily in dehumanizing media campaigns about the savages across the river. With whole generations of folks who’ve been born in a split city and fed on hateful, racist propaganda, it’s no surprise that lots of these jobs are just down-and-dirty execution squads. Demolition and arson work fall into the same category, mind you—the category where your primary factor of success is measured by property damage, body count, and other such things.

- The Sons of the Alamo can hook you up with this sort of work any time. An ork named Kerr does tattoo work at The Horny Hawg, inking up the Sons, local go-gangs, and other unsavory types. He’s a contact point, not a Son, but he’ll get you in touch.
- Riser
- Don’t ever pronounce his name “cur” by the way. Say it just like “care.” You call him a dog, and he’ll make you pay for it. And if you wake up at all, it will be with a shameful tattoo.
- Sunshine

Messy is easy though. Professionals might get tasked with that sort of ugliness once or twice, but after that they’re likely to get more delicate work. Any pissed-off sixteen-year-old with a Kalishnikov can cross a border and shoot up a cop car, after all. If





INCOMING FEED.....

they're paying you good money, the powers-that-be probably want a little more finesse from you.

Kidnappings are popular. Politicians visiting Austin, police, military, or paramilitary leaders on either side of the border, or even their families, are all fair game. The basic game plan is to cross the river and grab them, get them back into the "friendly" side of Austin, but then get them clear—farther to the north or farther to the south, depending on who you're working for—as soon as possible. You're still well within reprisal's reach if you're still in Austin, so mobility and speed are the keys to success. If you can't move them out quickly, at least get paid fast and make it someone else's problem.

Equipment theft tends to use the same game plan, but the cargo's heavier. The hardest part's figuring out how to get a big fat truck full of milspec gear across Checkpoint Charlie. Gliders and small watercraft might work for a kidnapping job or basic exfiltration, but there's no easy way to get a full cargo truck past a bridge full of CAS and Azzie guards. Make sure the syndicate or smuggling ring you're working for has appropriate transportation ready to go.

- Speaking of crossing the border, one way to manage it is to get some help from local business. Kirby Street Café has one store north of the border and one store south of it, and can often be persuaded to take on "temporary help" just long enough to shuffle you back and forth. They don't have megacorp extranationality protection; what they've got instead is local flavor. If you make sure to have a spare tray of enchiladas for both sets of

border guards, the restaurant van rolls through with just a cursory inspection for obvious weapons. They really are great enchiladas.

- Hard Exit

And then there's proper network. Not the sloppy kind that comes with blowing up a whole police station or gunning down a crowd but the more precise sort that ends with one dead guy and a whole bunch of surprised faces. You've really got to watch your step with assassination work though. When you're crossing national borders and counting on the goodwill of your employer for your extraction, you're well and truly putting your life in their hands. Have a back-up plan for getting home in one piece, and get as much of your pay up-front as you can instead of on completion, etiquette be damned. It's far too tempting for someone to just leave you dangling in the wind and wash their hands of you.

- It's not like that's unique to Austin. Just an everyday job hazard.
- Riser

Last, but certainly not least, there's recruitment aplenty going on, day in and day out. This is a deeper espionage game than most of you shadowrunner types will ever play, but the long and short of it is that a city like Austin breeds resentment and patriotism in equal measure. If you can get someone over the resentment, and focus on the patriotism, you're halfway toward making yourself a genuine field agent. It's not just government agencies that will look to recruit in a place like this, but you can bet they're trying to take the cream of the crop.



The University of Texas used to be a gold mine for this sort of work, and it provides a terrific way for agents to be on-site for short amounts of time, from anywhere in the world, thanks to the fluid nature of school populations. You can pose as an international student, a guest lecturer, a student who spent a few semesters studying abroad, and that sort of thing. It was like an espionage buffet. You could spy on students to find assets and score recruits, spying on faculty to look for other spies and flush out dissidents, spying on everyone, every day ... glorious times, and all while trying to juggle some graduate classes or working as a lecturer. UT spent the better part of a decade as *the* espionage hotspot of North America, hands down. In fact, I know of one regular JackPointer who spent at least two semesters at UT teaching Latin.

- Teach what you know, yes? What was your cover, lecturing on Political Science?
- Fianchetto
- Faith, no. I've been too long in this crazy game to keep a straight face in front of a bunch of bright-eyed Poli-Sci underclassmen, at least not without a dram or two in me. I teach a bit of Philosophy when I can, British Literature other times, maybe a spot of History. It all depends on the cover ID, aye?
- Thorn

Alas, the golden years are behind UT, having been academically dismantled due to the rising military presence just across the border. The various departments were scattered and sent to other Texas universities, along with—just as importantly to most students and faculty—their football and urban brawl teams, which now play out of UT Dallas. The university is just another fatality in the simmering war for Austin's soul. There's a popular campaign to get the campus restored, but only time will tell if tradition is able to buck security and get things rolling again.

- Hook 'em Horns!
- Hard Exit

One last word of warning, perhaps the most important: never, ever, forget that Austin is Lone Star's backyard. A lot of you coffee-sippers from Seattle might be feeling like Lone Star's second fiddle all of a sudden, since they lost the only contract you seem to care about. Don't kid yourself, especially in Austin. Lone Star's still the largest contracted security force in the world, and they still take an inordinate amount of pride in their home. These fellas care about Texas the way I used to care about Ulster.

What's more, they care about the law and their rep for upholding it, not the greater political scheme of things, so don't expect a warm welcome from the blue-and-yellows no matter who you're working for. If you're on a genuine DDI or DSI contract for the CAS government proper, you might have thought to negotiate yourself a get out of jail free card. Good thinking, but even if you do, you've still got to handle yourself right when the flashing lights catch up to you. The odds are decent these lads'll shoot you instead of arrest you if you give 'em any excuse, and then all the political favors in the world don't mean a damn.

Tread lightly. You're not safe just because you've made it back across the Colorado River. And mind Abobo.

- Uhh, what's an Abobo?
- Sticks
- If I knew for sure, lad, I would've told you.
- Thorn

## BRUSSELS E.C.

Posted by: Ecotope

If there is a place in Europe where international politics, summits, cross-national negotiations, economic haggling, (euro)-corporate backstabbing, and a plethora of “information gathering” (read: espionage activity) are your typical daily business, it is in *Bruxelles Cité Européenne*, or Brussels E.C. for short.

## THE POLITICAL ENCLAVE

Formed as an independent “free European city” by and under the control of the old European Union in 1988 in the wake of the implosion of Belgium (and disputes between Wallonia and Flanders on the fate of the city) the city prospered only for a few years because of the EU's own collapse in the subsequent years that finally led to its dissolution in 2028. In the years that followed the EU's demise, Brussels underwent several administrative changes until Euro-governments and corporations (the fifteen biggest AA+ corps in Europe) jointly decided to re-establish a common market and free-trade zone and to re-create a pan-European institution to regulate and develop it in the early '60s. Although the *EuroCité* now sits on the border between Wallonia (France) and Flanders (United Netherlands) as a pan-European extraterritorial political enclave, the city's metropolitan area hasn't changed since former times, when it was still the capital of Belgium (with the addition of the airport that is now part of city being one notable alteration).

Since the inauguration of the New European Economic Community (NEEC) in 2063, the city has blossomed. Serving as the administrative center of Europe, Brussels boasts an economy that is largely service-oriented and caters to the NEEC institutions and satellite associations, although a few notable craft industries have been preserved. Nevertheless nearly all of these industries, especially those dealing with the infrastructure, are tightly controlled by local proxies of the Eurocorps that comprise the Corporate Policy Commission of the NEEC who funded the city's modernization. Buildings that degenerated over the last thirty decades were refurbished, and new state-of-the-art buildings built, restoring the old look of heritage-protected architectural gems (like the Grand Palace) while also building up some cold, “neo-corporate-style” bunkers and ivory towers.

Their work eventually created a social rift. While the higher echelons and the administration are proud of their “clean and safe” image of a modern Neopolis that accommodates Europe's elite, i.e. politicians, eurocrat wageslaves, and corporate zombies, the “peasants” and other locals who have lived in the city for decades have been suffering under exploding rents and expensive living costs for years now. While it appears to travelers that Brussels has next to no urban ghettos, squatters or gang activity, (i.e. go-gangs and weaponized lower social sediments) that impression fades as soon as you get to the outskirts, where people can still afford living. And where police forces don't come knocking your door down as long as you disturb the illusion of security.



## JACKPOINT DATACACHE // PROFILES // POLITICAL BODIES

### NEW QUERY :: NEEC Institutions

<last update 12-03-74 :: user: Ecotope ::>

- I put the official summaries here, along with a few italicized comments of my own.
- Ecotope

**Council of Ministers (CoM):** Executive and legislative body of the NEEC comprising all national emissaries (ministers) and four corporate envoys elected by the CPC with a rotating six-month presidency, alternating between national and corporate representatives. Duty of the CoM is to discuss and vote on economic or social legislative proposals developed in the CPC or SPC and presented to the Council of Ministers for ratification. *This is the greatest assembly of power-hungry individuals apart from the CC and other megacorporate boardrooms.*

**Corporate Policy Commission (CPC):** Advisory body comprising the fifteen largest Eurocorps (according to Corp Court ratings) that elects peers to the CoM every two years. Duty of the CPC is to support the CoM in economic endeavours and to establish an open market and free circulation of money, people, and goods within its territorial limits. *The common nickname for this body is "the shark tank."*

**Social Policy Commission (SPC):** Advisory body to the CoM, consisting of national political appointees of the NEEC member states (three per country). Duty of the SPC is to develop legislations devoted to social and judicial topics (e.g., civil rights; citizenship; working permits; scientific, social, and agricultural grants; and NEEC laws) and further cooperation between governments and exterritorial corporate entities.

**Implementation Committees (ImpComms):** Implementation Committees come into existence when new directives and legislations are ratified by the CoM. Each ImpComm is responsible for the implementation of such pan-European directives to the national level (meaning introduction of laws in each member state country or corporation), overseen by a director picked from the CPC or SPC that manages the process and ensures certain deadlines are kept. *Runners are often contracted via ImpComms to "create an opportune environment for implementation" involving blackmail and meddling in national politics and corporate hierarchy.*

**Euroforce:** Present-day successor of the historic North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) that fulfils the role of a pan-European defence organization. Divided into four task-forces positioned in the North (ScandU), Center (France), South (Spain), and East (Austria/Czech Republic); consisting of five divisions of combined air and ground forces in addition to three marine fleets. *For economic reasons (functioning with contracted work as opposed to maintaining huge number of bases), operations are often contracted to mercenary resources such as the MET2000/Argus or 10K Daggers, causing a lot of resentment with federal defence forces such as German Bundeswehr, Her Majesty's Armed Forces, Fuerzas Armadas Españolas, and Scandinavian Armed Forces, whose numbers have been dwindling in the last peaceful decades.*

**Europol:** NEEC's criminal intelligence agency that answers directly to the CoM. Europol's task is to improve the effectiveness and co-operation between the competent authorities of the NEEC member states and corporations, primarily by sharing and pooling intelligence to prevent and combat serious criminal threats. Its mission is to make a significant contribution to the NEEC law enforcement efforts targeting organized crime. Possesses special task forces for Anti-Terrorism (AT), Organized Crime (OC), Arms, BTLs, Controlled Substances & Drugs (ABCD), Matrix Crime (MatPol), and Arcane Misuse and Magical Threats (AMMA, created 2070).

**European Supreme Court (ESC):** The ESC acts as a moderating body that handles intra-NEEC discord and international problems. Since the ESC is the highest European court recognized by all NEEC members, disputes can be ruled without the need to consider national or megacorporate courts. *Certain precedents have caused serious clashes between the ESC and the Corporate Court.*

**European Central Bank (ECB):** Overseen by European megacorporate banks such as the Commerzbank (S-K), Hildebrandt-Kleinford-Bernal, the Frankfurt Bank Association, and the Zurich Orbital Gemeinschaftsbank (on behalf of the Corporate Court), the ECB's main task is to control and enforce the stability of the euro as a currency. To ensure the economic stability of the euro zone, the ECB was endowed with far-reaching powers post-Crash 2.0 to review government deficits and national as well as corporate finances on behalf of the CoM (requires majority vote). *While ECB officials have signed piles of electronic NDAs to secure confidentiality, info leaks, extractions, and assassinations have been reported by various groups.*





INCOMING FEED.....



Urgent Message...

### NEEC MEMBERS 2073

#### Nations

Allied German States  
Austria  
Czech Republic  
Euskal Herria  
France  
Italian Confederation  
Portugal  
Poland  
Scandinavian Union  
Spain  
United Kingdom  
United Netherlands

#### Pending Membership

Hungary  
Slovakia  
Tír na nÓg

#### Corporations

AG Chemie  
Dassault/Esprit  
(Aztechnology)  
ESUS  
Frankfurt Bank Association  
HKB  
Lusiada  
NeoNET (Erika & Transys  
Neuronet)  
Mærsk Incorporated Assets  
Meridional Agronomics  
Proteus  
Renault-Fiat  
Saeder-Krupp  
Sol Media  
Spinrad Industries  
Zeta-ImpChem

### NEW EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

As the heart and headquarters of the NEEC, Brussels is considered by many foreign countries to be the political cradle of a unified Europe we have yet to see. Unthinkable fifteen to twenty years ago when its members used to be at each others' throats, the NEEC—against all odds and resistance by nationalist parties and policlubs—developed at an astonishing rate, hammering out legislations in time frames that normally would have been measured in decades (and endured changes in ruling parties).

The last decade since its Constitutional Act was a rough time for the NEEC and a proving ground for its political bodies. The Council of Ministers had to deal with a global economic crisis (which they weathered well due to S-K's involvement in shutting down the grids before further infection) and its aftereffects, political instabilities of its member states (especially Spain, with the nation divided over its ogre king), corporate takeovers, a digital Emergence, and continental drug trafficking.

Still, the NEEC and Europe got the best of the bargain compared to other continents. While some directives, like the implementation of the Common European Electronic Registration System and the finalization of the EuroRoute expansion, simplified travelling for Europeans (and those using forged CEERS IDs) not all legislations proved to be for the benefit of the people. Directives like the conservative Technomancer Registration Act that was passed by the Council in 2071 after being proposed by the SPC (with France, AGS, the ScandU, and UK being its main driving force), requiring

PLACES OF INTEREST .....

mandatory testing and licensing of technomancers, just raised people's fear of an ability that even scientific key opinion leaders hardly understand.

- It is not just the governments that have pushed this decision. The Technomancer Control Initiative supported by the Swiss government, Z-IC, NeoNET, and the Genom Corporation also used the pan-European anti-TM lobby to make that leash as tight as possible. Makes it also a lot easier to pinpoint test subjects for anti-technomancer drug trials.
- Nephrine

In the last few years, the NEEC has been suffering from "marital problems" within the corporate ranks of the CPC. The Novatech-Erika-Transys merger and subsequent "ascension" of the former AA corps to megacorporate ranks through the formation of NeoNET in the wake of Crash 2.0 caused a power shift in Europe's corporate scene, requiring the CPC to reorganize after long debates on megacorporations holding more than one seat in the CPC due to mergers.

- NeoNET, also due to its lack of corporate identity, is still perceived more as an "American" company than a European one by many of the old-established AAs like Z-IC, ESUS, Lusiada or Sol Media, despite Erika's and Transys' involvements. Nevertheless Regulus, HKB, Mærsk, and the FBA are trying to leverage Malmstein's "white knight attitude" against S-K to their advantage, often leading to deadlock situations during CPC sessions.
- Cosmo

After Spinrad Industries, who just won back its AA status by the Corporate Court, was accredited to the CPC to fill the gap, Esprit Industries was taken over by Dassault, shaking the corporate scene once again.

- While the merger (which is still consolidated, btw) created a new European defense heavyweight that opposes both Ruhrmetall and Aérospatiale, Dassault is not your average AA Eurocorp as it is has been under control of Aztechnology for decades. And while Aztechnology never meddled in Euro-politics before (with Spain being the only exception) many fear that this may change now with the admission of Dassault to the CPC.
- Mr. Bonds
- Given the fact that the takeover was only possible with S-K selling its stakes in Esprit, one can assume the dragon wanted Aztech (or its shadow) looming there.
- Cosmo
- Since the presence and membership of extra-European megas (directly or indirectly) is a weakening of the inland market the NEEC is supposed to protect, both Dassault/Esprit and NeoNET are currently getting most of the heat from Eurocorps, governments, lobbyists, and nationalist policlubs alike (often via runners), especially with Aztech being depicted as a warmonger due to the Azt-Am War.
- Goat Foot

## Chief Meddlers and Kingmakers

Since many have recognized the *Quartier Européen* (where the Consilium Arcology of the NEEC is located) as the seat of a new/old political force to be reckoned with, corporate negotiators and lobbyists, ambassadors from almost all major nations, representatives of several large organizations (e.g., United Nations, Islamic Renaissance Movement, Magocrat groups), as well as a plethora of policlubs and NGOs flock to the city. Brussels has therefore become a viper's nest for political and corporate meddling rivaled in complexity only by the Grand Tour in Europe, which is more populated by high society fashionistas, corporate extroverts, starlets, and Old World aristocrats than eurocrats, company lawyers, spin doctors, and professional politicians.

Being the place in Europe where pan-European negotiations and backroom deals between governments and corporations are orchestrated in the '70s, the city is pervaded with freelance and government spooks, agents and informants who gather information about what's going on, who is talking to whom, and about what.

- Since networking has become an inherent part of lobbying, it has become really hard to assess which of those countless meetings, dinners, and speeches are the really important ones.
- Kay St. Irregular

While many act under the guise of law firms, trade federations, national or regional associations, consultants, corporations, or think tanks, you find them also operating under the front of policlubs, which often rally in the city to (peacefully) protest against certain proposals and upcoming decisions.

- While most of these infomongers try to keep a low profile here is my top 3 of people to know:

- **Edmée De Vos**, a.k.a. **Occitan**—Officially an expat coach for a number of foreign embassies (and a huge network of people from different hierarchies), Occitan is very well connected globally. A former elven face in the European shadows (especially Southern Europe) she was approached by the CIA several years ago and hired as a freelance source, although it is said that several American companies (Federated Boeing, DocWagon, Ares) have been exploiting the connection lately.

- If it has something do to with politics and vices (prostitution, gambling, drugs), **Elon "Akoman" Bouchtat** is likely to be involved. Rumoured to be a Zoroastrian mage, Bouchtat is an associate of the Tremaine-Guliyev Vory syndicate, specializing in arcane-acquired information and spell drugs. He runs the Club Bizarre near Saint Pierre Hospital, which is favoured by locals for bio-shaping augmentations.

- While most rads think of **Kudzu** as a politically motivated left-wing hacker, the truth could be not further away. Operating under a pro-eco digital policlub front, he/she is a hacker mercenary adept specializing in network invasion, operating from within the city (or maybe from within the NEEC itself). Kudzu sells any kind of valuable information (stolen from commlinks and VPN) to the highest bidder through data auctions on Asgard.

- Cosmo

Beside the left-wing "common suspects" with green, pro-Awakened, anti-techno, anti-augmentation, metahuman,





technomancer, feminist, or equal-opportunity agendas, there are a surprising number of right-wing (**Anti-Eurocrats** and other like-minded groups like the **Spanish Pillar** or the **British Anti-European Movement**) to radical ultra-right groups (**Nationale Aktion**, **Vlaams Front**, **Union Wallonia**) with strong nationalist motives operating in the city. If you care to dig deeper, you find these groups often associated with or secretly funded by foreign groups and corporations who would benefit more from a divided Europe.

- While it is common for agencies to use shell companies for their local operations, funding policlubs and having undercover agents plant political agendas and radicalism through social engineering have become interesting tools in the trade. These are topics the Dawkins Group might be interested in.
- Sunshine
- Not all of the action is taking place in Brussels, though. While many of the players meet in Brussels, skirmishes are fought in capitals and major metropolises all over Europe. Sometimes even across the pond.
- Fianchetto

Given the fact that the NEEC consists of bureaucrats, politicians of the whole spectrum (depending on the country and current party in power) and company men of different doctrines, it is rarely a harmonious assembly of people working towards the same goals. National, corporate, or personal interests and benefits prevail and “pre-arrangements” are often made in advance of important meetings using bribes, blackmail, or other kinds of leverage.

Besides the Council of ministers and policy commission sharks such as former Erika-CEO Anders Malmstein (NeoNET), Isabelle Rochefort (France) and Cardinal Venturi (Italian Confederation), Julian Sergetti, S-K’s Neapolitan chief lobbyist, is Brussels’ one and only eminence grise. Having a whole office of S-K prime agents at his disposal, he is considered to be the best-informed (and most dangerous) individual within the city.

- This is true, but there are several other well connected lobbyists (such as Soren Johannson, vice president of Ares Europe, or Leon Fischer, the FBA’s chairman of the board and skilled diplomat who already worked for the dragon Nachtmeister) that use capable runners and local proxies as tools to position their pawns on the NEEC chessboard and counter Sergetti’s moves. Fischer usually stays informed with the help of a plethora of lobby groups like **Innovative Investment Management Association (IIMA)** and the **European Capital Association (ECA)**, as well as a vast elite network of managers and consultants that formed in FBA-sponsored business schools when he and McKinsey were graduate students. Sergetti prefers to use high-profile runners only for precise “cuts,” while Johannson often uses a more direct approach, sending several runner teams into the field via local handlers.
- Cosmo

### Current Affairs

While Central Europe is prospering since Crash 2.0 (also pushed by the political changes in the UK), the eastern expansion of the euro zone has been stalling. Although NEEC membership was granted to the new Republic of Poland soon after the war (due

to S-K’s support), other countries such as Greece and Turkey have turned down the NEEC’s offer due to their relationships with the *Philike Hetairia* (a.k.a. the Black Sea Friendship Association), with whom the NEEC is now negotiating trade deals.

And since religio-ethnic conflicts in the Balkans have reached new heights, the European Crisis Group in Sarajevo (Euroforce/MET2000 troops supported and re-commissioned by the NEEC) has faced some serious setbacks in their peacekeeping mission to turn the Balkans into an emerging market.

### BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

Playing “the game” in Brussels isn’t simple. **Uniforce**, Brussels own private security force, protects the city while heavily armed mechanized units (belonging to either **Europol** or **Euroforce** military police) patrol the borders and streets, hunting down rads, anti-NEEC policlubs (like the direct action Anti-Eurocrats), terrorists (read: runners) or foreign spies (national or corporate).

Checkpoints at Zaventem airport, Brussel-Centraal railway station, and the EuroRoutes, connecting Brussels to other European sprawls like London, Paris, the *Randstad* (Europort and The Hague), and the Rhine-Ruhr-metropex, force travelers (including ambassadors and megacorporate personnel) to undergo a strict and elaborate SIN, passport, and retinal-checking process, which is why high-class forged IDs are very much in demand.

- A great number of “normal” jobs (vendors, waiters, hostess, receptionists, cleaning crews, and other workers) are taken by Flemish or Walloon cross-border commuters, who have special working permits to get into the city. These can be forged, or you can get yourself placed in the right position. Don’t expect to be able to bring a lot of equipment with you, though. While Uniforce officials usually just screen the commuting masses, excessive baggage could prove fatal.
- 2XL

Since the city is riddled with sensors of all kinds, carrying (or using) conspicuous gear will usually draw attention by the authorities. Europol is trying to keep close tabs on black marketeers and weapon dealers to ensure the safety of the city’s high-ranking diplomats, but despite this, people who can get you high-tech equipment, cutting-edge programs, bullet-proof IDs, scanner-blind blades, and ready-to-assemble guns (like the *Puzzler*) exist but are not easy to make contact with if you don’t have a friend in the biz. Getting in contact with a professional

Private Message.....

**RE:** Brussels getaway

If you are looking for quick getaway, check the node of Alter Echo SPRL media services in Saint-Gilles near the Guillaume Tell. It’s a front for a Flanders smuggler collective that also has ties to the Helix in The Hague. According to Fleur-de-Lys, they can smuggle you out of the city towards Lille or Europort in ESUS extraterritorial conex boxes if your IDs get burned-2XL.

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ex-runner known as Red Wraith, who acts as a mediator in the local shadow economy nowadays, is usually a good start. His AR drop boxes with the iconography of a burning skull (looking like a rad tag) can be found all over the city, often in plain sight. Leaving your contact notes is easy. Persuading him to do anything with or for you is the tough part.

- So, Daniel Bogdanovich is still alive. That man is really a ghost.
- Fianchetto

## KANSAI, JAPAN

Posted by: Thorn

The Kansai region of Japan is many marvelous things. The Kyoto, Osaka, and Kobe triumvirate dominates the region, and the gathered population is second only to Neo-Tokyo within the Japanese Imperial State. It's the research and development heart and the academic soul of a modern-day empire based on both technology and tradition, a major shipping hub, and it just might be the battleground wherein the future of Japan is decided. Kansai, you see, is dominated by two giants, squared off against each other and glaring across the ideological gulf that's currently got Japan split in two: Mitsuhamma Computer Technologies, who has their world headquarters in Kyoto, and the Shiawase Corporation, which runs its own global empire from the heart of Osaka, not forty clicks away.

And, boyo, if you think those forty kilometers aren't crawling with shadow operatives every single night, you're in the wrong business.

Night after night, groups of independent operators, corporate grey ops teams, spies, assassins, shadowrunners, Yakuza thugs, and anyone else you can think of, are all engaged in a deadly game of attack, parry, defend, observe, counter thrust, and general backstabbery. There are probably more bodies in the Yodo River than in Puget Sound, and if there aren't, it's just because the Japanese have started pitching them into Biwa Lake or Osaka Bay instead. The men and women involved in these jobs aren't just fighting for the financial success of their beloved parent megacorporations but for the political future of their Empire. If you don't believe it, just ask them.

- This mixture of patriotic fervor and corporate loyalty is obvious in the increasing body counts. Everyone involved genuinely believes they're fighting on the right side, and things never get nastier than when both parties feel righteous.
- Mihoshi Oni

Shiawase stands proudly beside Emperor Yasuhito, waving the banner for traditional Japanese values, spiritualism, imperial loyalty, and all that hullabaloo. MCT works hard to keep up similar patriotic appearances but is a known backer of the more pro-progress, pro-corporate, pro-bottom line side of the split. They'd never be so rude as to speak out against the Emperor, mind you, but they very politely disagree with an awful lot of his decisions, once traditionalism starts to impact their profit margins.

There are a whole lot of other players in the game spread across the JIS and the globe. A whole host of other corporate

types, free spirits, Shinto priests, and even dragons all lock horns in their impeccably polite, unarguably deadly disagreements over how best to steer the proverbial ship. Nowhere is it fiercer—and more profitable—to independent operatives, than in the shadows betwixt MCT's Kyoto home and Shiawase's Osaka headquarters.

I can't overstate how much espionage pulls politics around by the nose, rather than the other way around, in this particular corner of the globe. For a fun drinking game, keep an eye on the tridcasts of the Diet, day after day. Track the JIS legislation voting and financial records, side by side, and you can see where each legislator really stands, for at least a session or two. The drinking game part? Track the body counts of unfortunate accidents, industrial mishaps, "random street crime," lethal house fires, and all the other media euphemisms for assassinations, ops gone sloppy, and burglary cover-ups, and then compare that to the way the various votes go the next session. Down a shot of your favorite whiskey every time someone's vote changes following a particularly high body count.

- Thorn is exaggerating, but not by much. The Diet really is in chaos right now, with multiple assassination attempts each month becoming the norm. There is a total of 682 members between the Houses of Representatives and Counselors, but between the bribery, blackmail, extortion, and general mayhem, no one knows who is trustworthy anymore or even who will show up to any given session. The Diet may meet in Neo-Tokyo, not Kansai, but don't let that fool you into thinking the one doesn't influence the other.
- Kay St. Irregular

Research and development draws bugs, spies, listening posts, and extraction jobs like nobody's business, right? Well, Kansai's the R&D hub of two of the world's most advanced corporations. Universities spawn would-be assets, with the best and brightest students serving as full, ripe fruit on low-hanging branches, waiting to be snatched up and turned into operatives. Kansai's got more top-notch universities than anywhere else in the Japanese empire. Port facilities serve as espionage gateways, letting agents slip in and out of countries unobserved, able to appear and disappear as anonymous ship crew and dock workers, safe from airport security, and, yes, Kansai's got one of the busiest ports in Japan with Kobe Port.

When you toss in the fact that both corporate and political maneuvering is going on, in addition to the stakes being as high as they are, the fact of the matter is that Kansai is one of the busiest areas on the globe right now, as far as the spy game is concerned.

With one glaring problem, of course. To play at the top levels of the game here, you need to be Japanese.

Now, it's true that the Yasuhito Ideal has opened up the JIS to foreign businesses and workers. They're allowed but still seen as outsiders, especially if they're too far from where they're known to work or live—which is often the same place, given the general Japanese population density and cultural fascination with arcologies. Ares, NeoNET, and Saeder-Krupp might have a fair number of non-Japanese employees working on JIS turf, but they're still generally the exception, rather than the rule. That means foreign agents are going to stick out like a sore thumb. Just like you might see the occasional elf strolling around in the Ork Underground, and the crazy bastards might be, individually, welcome there for





some reason, the fact remains they're exceptional when you see them. The same holds true for anyone who doesn't look the part around Kansai, be it a visiting student, corporate researcher, or whatever else your cover might be.

Rule number one in the spy game is to never make the other bastard's job easier. Any time you're going to stick out and be memorable, you're doing just that.

If you want to play on their island, you've got to be able to look the part and play the role. Even the more progressive faction is a stickler for etiquette and language, so a simple Mask spell won't cut it. You'll need familiarity with Japanese customs and culture in order to fit in as anything but a cheap gun, and everyone knows cheap guns get thrown away eventually. To play for very long, you'll need to assimilate to JIS culture enough to keep a low profile in a way that's harder to do than almost anywhere else I've worked.

- People might not gawk and stare at an outsider the way they would ten or fifteen years ago, but trust me, you're still being noticed. There's a Yakitori Koubou restaurant in Kobe that's opened a spare room upstairs to obvious outsiders in obvious trouble in the past, but don't abuse the privilege and ruin it for everyone else. Oh, and enter through the back door.
- Baka Dabora

Now, that hurdle jumped? Take care picking your side. You'll have a tiger by the tail, whoever you make it your business to repeatedly cross. All you shadowrunners out there know the "zero zone" policy Mitsuhama is so proud of and how their Yakuza cronies can

make your life miserable regardless of the usual extranationality clauses that keep security off your back. But don't let the name fool you, Shiawase's Market Intelligence and Forecasting Department is into quite a bit more than consumer feedback trials and taste testing. The MIFD's a top-notch shadow agency in their own right, with enough professional training to make up for MCT's Yakuza ties. Of the two, Shiawase is just a hair more likely to be slick and sophisticated about killing you, whereas MCT's got more raw firepower—sometimes tattooed punks, sometimes their damned Hachiman robots—to defend itself. Shiawase is stronger on the espionage offense, Mitsuhama more ruthless on anti-intrusion defense. Whatever else you do, bring a hacker. Hell, bring two, and a bloody technomancer if you can whistle one up. They'll be in heaven tagging along on a trip to the area, and you'll be in hell if you don't have enough tech support on your side. Mitsuhama's got top-notch magical security too, don't get me wrong, but either one of these megas will make your head spin with their electronic security. They know the stakes in the game they're playing, and they've both got some of the JIS's best and brightest technological minds at their disposal. Be prepared. Don't forget how many modern security protocols these two companies pioneered.

And for Christ's sake, stay the hell out of elevators. Never make the other bastard's job easier, I said. Security riggers can kill you a dozen different ways, but stepping into one of those death boxes just makes their job that much easier.

- It's true. We love that.
- Rigger X



## LONDON

Posted by: Stone

It's still a magical land, Britain, and some might say even more so since the velvet revolution almost two years ago (though the New Druidic Movement (NDM) certainly will disagree). Lord Protector Marchment's dictatorial and isolationist course burned far too many bridges for the corporate and political players to simply forgive and forget. Nevertheless, ever since Queen Caroline and Prime Minister William Darch steered the nation onto a seemingly more open-minded political course, attracting both corporate and political power players, London has become Europe's intelligence and espionage hotspot. In this environment it is not so much about secrets of the state as it is about secret alliances, hidden agendas, and the leverage to tip the scale to one's own favor without unnecessary exposure.

### BITTER BETTER TIMES

Even though the Prime Minister spares no chance to ensure the public of his good intentions, the new government's true agenda remains a mystery to Britain's citizens even today, twenty-three months after the Queen and the mysterious Pendragon ended the Lord Protector's reign. And after decades of party propaganda and increasing media censorship, a handful of symbolic court trials to root out loyalists of the old regime are not enough to win back the people's trust. Reconstruction initiatives like the attempted reintegration of the Lambeth Containment Zone (LCZ) into the 'plex also are cost-, time-, and labor-intensive, and progress is far too slow to convince the populace that change has already begun.

- Many of these initiatives are purposely delayed, though it's hard to tell whether leftover LPO-loyalists hidden in the bureaucratic apparatus, greedy corporations, or other forces are behind it.
- Stone

Without question, the reorganization of Lord Marchment's center of power—the Lord Protector's Office (LPO)—remains the Prime Minister's most challenging project and his biggest personal concern. Once it was officially announced to the public that the LPO and its administrative divisions had been disbanded after the revolution, the resultant media circus shed light on the intimidating and influential organization for the first time ever. While the media coverage certainly destroyed the LPO's aura of invulnerability and omniscience, it also laid open its vast sphere of influence and intricate network of contacts that controlled the nation and extended beyond domestic spheres into international aristocratic, economic, and political circles.

Realizing that shutting down the LPO and its divisions outright would risk allowing the country to become ungovernable—or worse, defenseless against foreign interests like the NEEC or the prying megacorporations—PM Darch had to choose between the lesser of two evils. In a surprise move, he turned to the British nobility to seek support in forming a new parliament and nominated the country's figurehead corporation **Hildebrandt-Kleinfort-Bernal (HKB)** to analyze the LPO's finances and administer its expenditures in accordance with the newly elected government.

- Not so much a *surprise* as a last resort move. Unfortunately, when it dawned on the prime minister that disbanding the LPO would not be that simple, the Office's divisions were already looking for other “sponsors” to keep them alive and in business.
- Fianchetto
- Given Johnny Spinrad's past role in the neo-aristocratic movement and European draconic affairs, I wonder if he had a hand in this. Though his relationship with the Queen went south, he remains an influential SOB.
- Frosty

### A WALK DOWN CHANCELLERY LANE

Re-shuffling parliament appeased the nobility, and elevating HKB as the government's treasurer calmed down the boiling tensions between the Prime Minister and the powerful New Druidic Movement (NDM), the nation's most influential political party and the former Lord Protector's closest ally. A powerful and wealthy society originating from Oxford University, the NDM became a neo-Celtic mass movement under Marchment, and through its financial dealing developed close ties to the banking giant from early on.

- Since then, the dragon's determination to bring down HKB has reached new heights. His agents, the Knights of Rage, are hiring local hackers left, right, and center to dig up new dirt on HKB.
- Cosmo
- Rumors in the European arcane circles claim the NDM is following a different path to “restore the land,” and that HKB's investigations on NeoNET brought them in touch with the Ordo Maximus. I can't help but wonder if these rumors are true given Celedyr's rekindled hatred for HKB.
- Ethernaut

### PLAYERS AND PAWNS

Though the PM's controversial move bought time for the new government to decide on a course of action, the political balance is fragile at best. Espionage between the parties is at an all-time high, with everybody looking into their political enemies' affairs. Simultaneously, corporations, as well as foreign intelligence agencies, offer their support to the various parties and individuals in exchange for future favors and concessions. The following is a short list of the major players and up-and-comers.

#### Hildebrandt-Kleinfort-Bernal (HKB)

This AA-level banking and financial services corporation could teach even Richard Villiers a few tricks in keeping a company alive, having survived its fair share of scandals, a change in government, and continuous attacks from one of the most powerful figures in the country, the great dragon Celedyr. Assisting the new government in the restructuring of the hated LPO and its divisions allows the corporation a much-needed breather while shielding it from Celedyr's personal vendetta. On a wider scale, HKB is promoting London as the new high finance capital of Europe, discrediting other high finance metropolises as too unstable and outright dangerous (Geneva) or questioning the extent of a true free market environment (Frankfurt).





- Heh, I wonder what the European wyrms might think of HKB's recent ad re-imagining the legendary dragon fight between Nachtmeister and Lofwyr as a devious battle for domination of the European financial markets.
- Snopes

Though all three founding families still appear in the company name, no member of the Kleinfort family has had a place on the board of directors ever since Dietrich Kleinfort died in 2063 and his son Uwe disappeared later the same year. In 2071, HKB announced Sir Henry Wilburton as director of both mergers & acquisitions and asset management, departments previously overseen by the Kleinforts.

- Wilburton is a high-ranking member of the NDM and was initiated by Marchment himself, who still calls the shots somehow despite his reported retreat into cryogenic stasis.
- Winterhawk
- Persistent rumors dating back to pre-Crash 2.0 tie the Ordo to a pan-European vampire conspiracy. If true, maybe the real reason for his retreat from the public is that Marchment allowed the Ordo to turn him into one of their own.
- Plan 9

### NeoNET

Like HKB, the world's number two megacorp was quick to offer its support to the new government, smelling business opportunities and paydata galore when the LPO was disbanded while its online service and maintenance division, the **Information Directorate**, was rumored to be outsourced. The Directorate is responsible for maintaining and administering the Chancellery Network (C-Net), Britain's public service network. Despite the uncommented rejection of Celedyr's audience with the Queen and the Prime Minister, NeoNET's bid for these services stands a healthy chance of being approved by Parliament soon.

- Especially since NeoNET CEO Malmstein has successfully painted NeoNET as the white knight against Saeder-Krupp's Aetherlink and its continued aggressive expansion.
- Cosmo
- So one dragon-run company is a better option than another dragon-run company? Somehow I doubt that.
- Sticks

### The British Parliament

The parliament is utterly divided, plain and simple. The **Green Party** and its NDM members fear they're on their way out, and the **People's Party** still question when the Prime Minister, one of their own, really will hand back "the power to the people" as promised by the Pendragon and the Queen. The neo-fascist **Conservationists** keep a low profile, waiting for a chance to spotlight the flaws of the current government and spin their nationalist propaganda, while the **Democrats** lick their wounds after the last election, courting the corporations for support and funding. The winds of change have taken on the smell of paranoia, and every party is suspecting their political adversaries of secretly knowing

more about the prime minister's true agenda than they're giving away. The **Oversight Board**, the LPO's secret police and intelligence division, is busy feeding these rumors, thereby making itself irreplaceable and at the same time collecting information on and from their clients firsthand. Aegis Cognito, InFolio, and other intelligence firms have increased their presence in London. Add the Tír na nOg Tír Republican Corps (TRC), German Argus, Israeli Mossad, and even more obscure outfits like the French Seers guild, and you can play spot-the-spy in the public parks and cafés around the **Temple**, the district around Chancellery Road and the LPO's center of power.

### The New European Economic Community (NEEC)

The NEEC is without question the largest foreign political body interested in Britain's state of affairs. Its member corps and countries use the NEEC's resources to spy on queen and country under the guise of pan-European neighborly help. Britain's actions are monitored carefully, with special attention paid to the neighboring Tír na nOg and corporate giant NeoNET. Saeder-Krupp is suspected to be behind the majority of NEEC's current covert operations in London, focusing on Britain's relations with the neighboring Tír and NeoNET (which is S-K's main rival in the old world). Still, France, the ScandUnion, and the AGS are carefully monitoring Britain's political and economic activity.

- Pulling strings in Brussels, S-K Prime in Essen has quite a fair number of British nobles under surveillance using contacts within Europol. They also can launch black ops disguised as observing NEEC implementation committees.
- Kay St. Irregular

Vera Dufries, a high-ranking NEEC operative, is monitoring the organization's ops on British soil. Interestingly enough, she also was responsible for uncovering a series of leaks within the NEEC and subsequently plugging them. She tried to find evidence Saeder-Krupp was calling the shots, but her investigations turned up nothing solid.

## NAIROBI, KENYA

Posted by: Thorn

In 1899, it was a wee little rail station that linked Mumbasa and Uganda. Today, it's grown into the site of the UN's African Headquarters, a major Corporate Court Complex, the Kenyan National Assembly, the brand new African Stock Exchange, and the mass driver that links all us little Earthbound types with the profits of space. Nairobi's been a city of change for a long time, and the last several months have been no different. The big news out of Kenya at the moment is the conflagration in Kibera, where Luhya and Luo militias made a mysteriously organized push against the pro-spirit, anti-corp tribes, and corporate troops rushed in to put an end to the fighting.

Those corporate troops were, according to official UN and Corporate Court accounts on the 7 o'clock news, sadly too late to prevent a dismantling and scattering of the terrorists that plagued the area for years. A pleasant side effect, according to the





11 o'clock news, was renewed financial stability, a spike in stock prices, and a return to business as usual.

For the last several years, the Gikÿyÿ, Maasai, and Kamba tribesmen were getting more and more organized. Fighting alongside the spirits of their ancestors in defense of their native land, they were allocating resources and getting low-budget merc units and shadowrunners to help them out, stockpiling weapons, and just getting more dangerous while the corps and government seemed to be even slower to react, more blundering, and more helpless.

- Ahh, business was good.
- Marcos

As it turns out, the combined Corporate Court and UN sec-forces had actually been purposefully and callously feeding their men into the meat grinder, accepting casualties and property damage as a fair price to pay for heavy media coverage of the increasingly "successful" insurgent attacks. When the outcry grew loud enough, when Horizon spin-masters were sure the public was indignant enough, when market conditions showed a favorable time, and when the ASE grand opening couldn't wait any longer, the kid gloves came off. The butchering was spearheaded secretly by local indigenous allies, and openly by contracted mercenary units.

- "Mercenary units" strictly means MET2000 here. There's nothing they love more than firing on untrained locals from their shiny tanks, right Thorn?
- Picador

The cover for the multi-faction assault was local fighting, of course. Tribal tensions still run high across much of Africa and are easy and convenient to exploit when there's violence needed. The Luhya tribe had long been in the Court's pocket, but the big surprise was getting the Luo on their side too. That shifted the balance of power and made the game decidedly one-sided.

- Anyone involved in regional gunrunning knew something was going to happen. Security might have been underperforming in the city itself, but their regional patrols and anti-smuggling actions were through the roof.
- 2XL

Backed by the Corporate Court's pretty much unlimited resources, the locals hit the pro-spirit factions hard. At dawn, just about every affiliated tribesman with a chip on his shoulder got handed an Ares Alpha, a bandolier full of incendiary grenades, and as much khat (laced with Kamikaze) as he wanted. They rolled into Kibera in the back of any vehicle that could hold them and just started shooting.

- MET2000 armor cordoned off Kibera's northern, southern, and western flanks before the Luhya and Luo hit. It was a classic kill-zone containment.
- Picador

Three hours after the first tribal militia went in and the cameras started rolling, Corporate Court forces were openly



PLACES OF INTEREST .....

mobilized to pacify the area. Officially requested by the “impartial” UN to stop the “unfortunate intertribal warfare” and “reestablish the region,” the Court sent in the combat mages and drones to clean up. Anyone their smartlinks didn’t recognize as holding an RFID-tagged Ares combatgun got blasted, and the Teketeza was done in time for dinner. Horizon made sure to broadcast plenty of information about the few corporate fatalities and lots of nonsense about property damage, but the long and short of it was that the Court troops were shooting ducks in a barrel, after letting their locals bear the brunt of the fighting.

- The Teckawhatzit?
- Slamm-0!
- It’s not a perfect Swahili transliteration, but good enough that it probably caught on with security pricks. Teketeza means the burning, incinerating, or ruining.
- Black Mamba
- Ares mages, specialized in tormenting spirits since Chicago, were vital to this terrible failure.
- Axis Mundi

The aftermath was some world-class media spin, re-aired footage of casualties from previous insurgent attacks, and renewed excitement about the African Stock Exchange launch. The business world ate it up and barely missed a beat. The Court even had construction crews on call to keep the Uganda railway running while Kibera burned around it.

People used to say almost half a million called Kibera home. Over half of the shantytown got burned down or blown up, and most sources are saying there’s a high four-digit body count, maybe even a five. They were squatters and insurgents and ne’er-do-wells, all, so no one in any official capacity is bothering to generate an exact count. The blame is being laid officially on intertribal warfare, and don’t be surprised when the United Nations inquiry finds that it was conveniently all the dead guys that initiated hostilities.

There have already been two major reprisal strikes since the Teketeza, but so far no organized human insurgency seems to have gathered. The spirits, both from Kilimanjaro proper and some that seemed based out of the Kibera, are plenty angry about how things went down, and it’s worth pointing out that the corp forces faced heavy magical resistance during the assault. In the long run, the odds are good this strike has scattered the mundane insurgents but has encouraged even more spirit activity.

But that’s the long run. What’s all this got to do with espionage, right this minute, you ask?

- You mean besides Argus being directly involved in the slaughter? Spies turning the Luo tribal leaders into allies? Assassinations of key insurgent members hours before the assault? Argus agents working as “military advisors” alongside the Luhya during the assault? I wonder which job was yours and how many kills you got. Oh, and how is your agency liking that UN contract that got renewed recently? Or will you claim that was just a coincidence?
- Picador

- You mind your temper, lass. I don’t work for them anymore, understand? I know all about what you did to Agent 94, and I know why. You need to know I’m not him, and you need to know I won’t go as easy as he did.
- Thorn

Basically, the local insurgent problem being swept away means the candy store’s open again for folks with the right skill set.

Every one of the Big Ten’s got a major facility right there in the heart of Nairobi, alongside the Corporate Court itself, the African Stock Exchange, the Kenyan National Assembly, and the UN offices. Any two or three of those would be a gold mine, but put them all together? Nairobi’s shadows are positively crawling with activity. Every megacorp in the world has their own intelligence and counterintelligence ops running, night after night, and there are probably more covert bugs in the UN building than legitimate media microphones.

But if you remember anything from this whole posting, remember this: No one disrupts the mass driver. Ever. You don’t hurt the goose that lays the golden eggs. It’s the one thing that every major corporate and government faction agrees upon entirely. It’s the sin that absolutely will get every significant power in the city out to very messily and publicly end your life, so that you can be an example to any other would-be troublemakers. No one, ever, directly impedes the flow of traffic through the mass driver for very long. It’s done only as a very temporary job with a very, very high price expected. Keep your criminal enterprises off-site, or you likely won’t live to be sorry.

- Honestly, people. Timely shipments are all we ask from the rest of you. Don’t disrupt that flow.
- Orbital DK
- Which isn’t to say such jobs completely don’t exist, they’re just dangerous and likely to be quite a pain in the ass even after the work is done. The fire-fucked Kilimanjaro insurgents aren’t quite the only ones who’d like to see the mass driver taken down a peg—there’s still the usual corporate infighting and guys who want to cause a ruckus and then pin it on their boss or whoever. Just go in with your eyes open when you look for this kind of work.
- Black Mamba

Incoming experts are snatched and turned, business and government leaders are spied on, turned, or attacked, plans are listened in on, all that fun stuff that keeps the bills paid. It’s a research and industry hub, a financial center, and the political heart of all of Africa. It’s hopping, and if anything, it’s doing so more now that all the insurgent hoopla’s been swept under the rug. With the common enemy routed, every corporate and political interest in the region is back in the game.

- Any who assumes the conflict centered around Kilimanjaro is finished deserves the downfall his hubris will bring. The spirits are not done, nor are their allies.
- Man-of-Many-Names



## TEL AVIV

Posted by: Thorn

Tel Aviv underwent a lot of restructuring in the last decade, but don't let the sparkling towers of the business districts fool you: the White City is only whitewashed. The capital of Israel and the largest city in the country, Tel Aviv has all the beachfront decadence of Miami coupled with the knowledge that it will always be a city under siege.

Last year, the government officially began repopulating the districts of FloPira and Ramat Gan, which were destroyed by Libyan chemical and biological weapons in 2004. FloPira (named for the neighborhoods of Florentin and Shapira) houses the new Center for Rabbinical Thaumaturgy and the controversial Museum of the People of the Book. Ramat Gan was a business district before the Ten-Minute War, and it now has returned to that purpose. Saeder-Krupp's Matrix subsidiary Aetherlink and Ares' new Europe and Middle-East Division financed the infrastructure in exchange for trade concessions, with the all-glass Aether Tower and the three crimson high-rises of the Knight-Efron Center serving as visual displays of their winnings.

- Ramat Gan and FloPira had a huge squatter population before the resettlement program began. Some of them are still there, hiding away in empty buildings, the ones that haven't been purchased or rented yet. The rest got shipped downtown to the slums. The call it the Black City.
- 2XL
- Lots of work from S-K and Ares spying on each other too. Neither corp liked that they had to work together to make the sale in Ramat Gan, but the Israelis offered them something to sweeten the deal.
- Cosmo
- Any idea what that is?
- Sticks
- Not exactly, but a little bird told me it has something to do with Jerusalem.
- Cosmo
- While FloPira is being played as a cultural and entertainment district by the government, plenty of shadow activity goes down here too. If you want to rub shoulders with diplomats and corp executives, or just hear what's going down, go to \*\*\*\*. Yeah, it's a weird name, but 4-Star is where it's at.
- Traveler Jones
- Or at least where all the Bond wannabes hang out.
- Fianchetto

Card-carrying government and corporate spies infest Tel Aviv like devil rats, and there is an increasing number of freelance operatives as well. Lately, rumors have placed two of the most famous names in the business in Tel Aviv: Rupert Reginald Duncan and Zagros, both of whom work for NeoNET. Rupert is

a grinning, blond human with a mean right hook, and he's a wiz with machines. I ran into him a few years ago in Lisbon. He likes to work with a team, and they are good. Whatever NeoNET has him doing in Israel is important.

Zagros is a real shadow, and plenty of corporations and governments want to know who he (or she—his gender is undertain, but I'm going with "he" to keep it simple) works for. He's probably human. The name comes from a mountain range in Kurdistan and northern Iraq, so Zagros is probably Kurdish. While Zagros has left behind a significant datatrail, some out there believe that he may not even be real. Whenever something goes wrong within the Middle East, the intelligence communities like to say that Zagros was behind it in an attempt to pass the blame rather than acknowledge their failures.

Like any big sprawl, Tel Aviv hides numerous corporate secrets, but with that you have ethnic and religious tensions not found anywhere else in the world. At least not quite like this. Israel is still a relatively strong government, partially because of the country's paranoia and the constant state of war or near-war since its founding over a hundred years ago. The sprawl houses some of the most advanced research centers in the world in terms of energy technology, weapons development, and biotech.

Tel Aviv also houses a lot of NGOs that focus on the Middle East. Many of these groups had offices in Jerusalem until the mana warp hit, and they decided that Tel Aviv was a safer place to make camp. Many of the NGOs are Jewish- or Christian-affiliated, but there are a rising number of Muslim charities doing work in Israel. The most notable is the Word of Ibrahim, a liberal Islamic group of historians and magicians that focuses on bringing the Abrahamic religions together in peaceful ways.

- Universities here study a lot of magic. Most people think this involves a lot of qabbalism and Judaism-centric research, but the reality is there are magicians of nearly every stripe at work in Tel Aviv. Israel is a country of immigrants, after all.
- Winterhawk
- The Word of Ibrahim consists of a bunch of liberal philosophers, mostly, without much talent but who pack a lot of theory. They have an office in Jaffa, where they coordinate meals for the poor and promote Awakened rights in the Muslim world. Not all of them are Muslim, but the majority is.
- Goat Foot
- They are more than academics; some of them are well placed in Palestinian and Israeli politics. They believe in a divine purpose for the people descended from Ibrahim (Abraham), namely the Jews and the Arabs. Lots of talk about bloodlines and the similarities between Judaism, Islam, and Christianity.
- Thorn
- Some of the rabbis the Word of Ibrahim associates with were involved in the "Zion's Shield" project back in '34. The plan was to use aspected mana sites in Israel to create a wall or defense grid or something. Failed spectacularly. I heard the bodies of the magicians they used were completely drained of blood.
- Elijah



INCOMING FEED.....

- What, more vampire conspiracies? I thought those were reserved for the public speculation boards on ShadowSea.
- Clockwork
- What's more unbelievable is that Zion's Shield was put on by Jewish arch-conservatives. Why would they align themselves with Muslims, liberal or not? These are the people that want Israel for Jews only.
- Goat Foot
- OK, I call bullshit on something Thorn said above. No way did he match wits with Rupert Reginald Duncan.
- /dev/grll
- I'll vouch for Thorn on this one. What he says matches my own experiences with Duncan.
- Fianchetto
- Thorn's talking about the re-education centers. People who come out of there are changed. The Shin Bet are very good at using drugs and magic to mess with people's brains. Makes your conventional interrogations seem rather humane.
- Fianchetto

Shadow activity in Tel Aviv—both professional and freelance—reached new intensity late last year when an excerpt of Evgeni Ulmert's paper on spirits and nuclear energy got leaked on the Matrix. Ulmert worked for Ares back in the time of the Chicago Containment Zone but retired to his home in Tel Aviv shortly after they liberated the city. It appears his retirement was short-lived, though, because apparently he's still doing some advanced research somewhere in Israel. Word is that Ares wants him back, but they can't figure out where Ulmert's hiding place is.

Another reason things are hot in the area right now is the continued tension between Sheba and Egypt. Israel has made no secret of the fact that they favor Asmara over Cairo in the Red Sea Incident. Israel sold twenty military aircraft to Sheba last week, along with assorted other weapons, and sent "strategic advisors" to the country. One of the advisors is Mason Zapruder, a chief rabbi in the Qabbalist faction and a good friend of Israel Military Industries CEO Mitch Goldstein.

A lot of folks will tell you to watch out for Mossad—and you should—but they aren't really the force you should be the most concerned with in Tel Aviv. Mossad mostly focuses on external threats. The people who watch what goes on within Israel are the Shin Bet, otherwise known as the Israeli Security Agency. The difference between the two is jurisdiction only; both are considered extremely dangerous, the elite of the elite. Rule number one for working in Israel, regardless of your job, is to not fuck with Israeli security interests. If you do, you'll end up in a Shin Bet interrogation center—or worse, released from one.

- So was Ulmert extracted? Or did he get recruited by the government?
- Riser



- I heard that treatise that got leaked cost the boys at Ares a few trade secrets. Wouldn't be surprised if they want to get a little satisfaction from him for that.
- Sticks
- I read that. Looked like a lot of nonsense to me, but it could have been out of context. As far as I can tell, Ulmert thinks that spirits can be used to generate energy. A sort of spirit engine.
- The Smiling Bandit
- If that's true, what sort of damage would that do to the spirit in question? Or to the manosphere?
- Ecotope

## THE RED SEA INCIDENT

### Egypt Claims Sheba 'Reckless, Dangerous'

*Cairo (Reuters) 04/12/73*

Egyptian president Baruti Elgabri today said that Sheba "must be held accountable" for its "reckless and dangerous attacks" on Egyptian shipping in the Red Sea. On March 17th, a Sheban Coast Guard vessel attacked and sunk the Egyptian merchant ship *Mubarak* in the Red Sea, near the disputed border between the two countries. Then, on March 31st, two Egyptian ferries sank, allegedly at the hands of the Sheban Coast Guard, killing 234 people. Sheba claims the first ship was attempting to smuggle arms to Islamic dissidents in the country. Ambassador Malachi Baliq, the Sheban representative to the United Nations, denied responsibility for the second incident. "Sheba has no ill-will toward the people of Egypt or its government. We are investigating the tragedy of March 31st, and our prayers go out to the families of those who were lost. We hope the angry rhetoric in Cairo is that of grief, and not of policy."

Pirate and other criminal activity on the Red Sea increased last year, rising to 1,453 cases. Experts believe Islamists, shadowrunners, and anarchists are behind most of these incidents, citing an internal study conducted by Wuxing and released publically last week. Wuxing controls most of the shipping in the region and owned two of the three ships that were sunk.

Urgent Message...





Marcus Webb knew he was being followed. He spotted them back on the Tsing Sha Highway after he left the embassy safe house. Three cars, all black. Webb called up a secure link and packaged a sensory feed replete with license plates and optically magnified facial shots he recorded while glancing in the rear-view mirror for the analytics hacks back in Langley to work over. It would have been easy to lose the tail then, stay in the fast lane until his exit came up and swerve off the highway at the last possible second. He decided to let them follow him to the café. If they were on him now, they already knew where he was going and where he went every morning. Besides, this plan gave Langley time to figure out who was on him and what Webb was allowed to do about it.

When he pulled off the highway, he eased the car a few blocks further north and walked the remaining five to the café. A spy isn't supposed to be static. If you have a routine it is easier to track you. Webb hadn't missed that lesson at the farm so much as ignored it.

The three cars dispersed four passengers, two ahead of him and two behind. They were clumsy and obvious with their tail. Shadowrunners, or maybe one of the smaller state agencies. Café Motenegro sat in the middle of a residential neighborhood near Lai Chi Kok Park.

The CIA agent didn't like coffee. He liked the girl behind the register. She must've been sixteen, with long black hair and oval eyes. He went straight up to her and asked for his usual. Afterwards, he found his usual seat. The third table from the door offered the best vantage point of the street without putting him in line of sight of the traffic cameras or the café's door cam. From there he could see two of the six spooks that had emerged from the chase cars. A third had followed him in and was ordering a drink. He was looking for the fourth when he glanced up, almost reflexively, at the petite elven woman standing outside of his window having a conversation over her commlink. There was something vaguely familiar about her. She noticed him and put on a demure smile. Webb raised his eyebrows invitingly, but then she furrowed hers, as if suddenly remembering her commlink conversation, and hurried off. Webb watched her go. She didn't seem like part of the surveillance. She didn't move the same as the others. Had his sensory link been active, her image would have been transmitted back to Langley via secure link. In moments they would have known why the woman looked so familiar. But there were things going on here that Marcus Webb didn't want the agency to see.

"Anything else, sir?" The young barista walked up to him with a tray of used cups. He offered his for a refill. She grabbed the cup from beneath where her small hands closed around a datachip he'd concealed there only moments before. No one saw the exchange.

His commlink buzzed. He thanked the girl then switched to a secure AR feed. The world blurred momentarily and a Taoist temple replaced the café.

"We are secure, Agent Webb," a man dressed in coveralls said.

"How you doing, Andrew?"

"Very good, sir. The office has identified the agents as freelancers, possibly working for Argus. You have a green light to deal with the threat."

"Good, its long past time I got back to work." After all, Marcus Webb hadn't killed anyone in days.



**Posted by: Thorn**

Reactions were generally positive toward my initial contributions to this cozy little shadow community, so FastJack asked me if I felt like airing any more dirty laundry. Like any jilted employee, I do. Not because I hold any sort of grudge against Argus in particular, mind, but because I'm just damned tired of the whole espionage world and its silly games. If telling other people about the rules of those games makes me feel better, so be it.

- I don't think this is the first (or last) time JackPoint has been used as a confessional.
- Fianchetto
- If so, which of us is wearing the collar, padre?
- FastJack

Why should any of this interest you? Because intelligence agencies and their operatives are everywhere. A hundred years ago, during the Cold War, the world thought the spy game was as complicated and important as it would ever be, but they were wrong. Back then it was about the old United States and the Soviets fighting each other through proxies in the shadows; now *the whole world is at war*. Everyone with two nuyen to rub together has secrets worth stealing, and everyone else knows it. Governments, corporations, the UN, the Corporate Court, insurgency groups, merc units. you name it—they've all got something they want to learn, or someone they want dead, or secrets they have to protect. Espionage isn't the exception anymore, it's the norm.

Why else should you care? Because if you're reading this, you're almost a spy yourself, and that makes *them* interested in *you*. A "shadowrunner" is only a good haircut, a tailored suit, and a nondescript sedan away from being a freelance espionage agent, when you get right down to it.

You hack into databases and steal information as your mode of employment, right? You break into restricted facilities after being fed security information by a handler—oops, I mean a Mr. Johnson—and you retrieve the data or prototypes they want, don't you? You shoot people in the face for a paycheck, yes? Do you carry out your mission while trying to avoid awkward entanglements with local law enforcement, corporate security, and other such sticks in the mud? Do you react well to rapidly changing tactical situations, keep your head when the by-the-book types are losing their cool, and get the job done by thinking outside the box?

Aye, I thought so. Congratulations, and welcome to the program. What you do, and what I did, is differentiated only by the semantics and euphemisms we use, how much and how steadily we get paid, and the level of support we can expect from our employers. If you took any of my field operations and compared it to whatever you did last month, I'd wager that the only difference you'd find was my Argus network and the fact you got paid for just that one job while I collected a regular salary.

**THORN'S TOP TRICKS**

Detailed volumes can, and have, been written about the various techniques a spy needs to know. If you have the time, go ahead and read them—knowledge is valuable. If you don't have time, at least read this, a quick guide to some of the tricks I found most useful during my time in the field.

**Have Plans**

Alpha is a dream when everything goes smoothly; Beta is your backup when one or two things go wrong but you deal with them; Delta is a realistic outlook when there's a major failure; et cetera, et cetera; all the way down to an Omega, which is your cover being blown, your mission being compromised, your handler changing sides, or the end of the world. Omega puts you into full bug-out mode, where all you want to do is hit your safehouse, grab a bag, and vanish. The trick is, don't have one plan when you go in—have several. Know how to deal with it when things don't go the way you'd planned them.

**WIPE THIS FROM YOUR MIND**

If you want to be a good and effective spy, there are some notions and pre-conceptions that you should erase from your brain. Decades of spy novels and movies have corrupted people's thinking on the subject, and individuals involving themselves in the spy game need to forget some of the bad lessons these fictions teach them if they want to be effective. So remember:

- Don't be casual about your cover identity. If a simple search of news headlines reveals your spy escapades, then you need to stop using the name associated with those adventures. Of course, if you were a good spy, your name would never hit the headlines.
- If you're firing a gun, you're doing it wrong. Yes, there are people who need to die, and there are times you need to defend yourself, but if you've already called enough attention to your actions that you need to break out your weapon, you probably made a misstep somewhere along the way. If you do not have tools besides violence and gunfire, you will not be an effective spy.
- Making people fall in love with you may work for a small handful of us, but for a lot of you out there it's not a viable strategy. Exploit existing intimate relationships between people, rather than creating new ones.
- A gadget used at the exact right moment is no substitute for a carefully thought-out plan. But that does not mean that gadgets are not nice to have, or that we do not love them.





- All that intel, world-class Matrix overwatch, and an unlimited budget for guns and cars? I wish.
- Riser
- They're always hiring, boyo. Just be ready to sign in blood.
- Thorn

Both professions have a tendency toward urban jobs. Leave the wilderness to the smugglers and full-on soldiers. The big city is where the people and technology are, and people and technology are where the secrets are. What's more, people and technology are what we're both trained to deal with. Good luck fast-talking your way past a hungry bear or swiping that stolen ID badge on a cliff face. We're urban critters, just like shadowrunners, and for many of the same reasons.

Both professions also appeal to individualists. Loner types. Spies tend to think a little differently and aren't always as good at following orders as soldier-types but we still get the job done when it counts. Ringing any bells? Not everyone's cut out for being a cog in the machine. That doesn't mean "cog" is a bad or unimportant job, but some of us just operate better with a little more independence. In the corporate world, creative thinking is one of the surest ways to get yourself stomped on by middle management; espionage and the shadows are both good ways to bypass that problem.

- In exchange for dodging bullets on a regular basis, yeah. I'm sure the middle managers of the world are just all kinds of jealous and eager to change places.
- Sticks

Lastly, both jobs require a certain ... moral flexibility. Both guilds frown on outright psychos—they're too loud, too messy, and make life too hard on the rest of us—but the simple truth of the matter is that when we've decided to do a job, we're unlikely to let someone's life stand in the way of it. Hell, sometimes taking a life is the whole job in the first place. Some shadowrunners shy away from wetwork, and so do some spies, early on. The difference is that the organization of an espionage agency understands that recalcitrance, and works hard at overcoming it. Psych evaluations are a big part of working professional espionage for a reason. They monitor and manipulate us as much as they can to make sure we're capable of doing our jobs, long before giving us our first assignments. It works. Just ask the rest of your team.

- Moral flexibility. Heh. That's cute.
- Black Mamba
- You must be a veritable yoga master, huh?
- Aufheben

### Act, Don't Think

Yes, espionage is a thinking man's game. But no, that doesn't mean you always have time to think about what to do next! That's why you have a plan in advance, and that's why you need to train yourself to the point where it's pure instinct to get the job done. It is better to act swiftly and surely on a half-assed plan than to stand there and be a target while you try to think up the perfect one. When it's time, take the initiative away from your opponent, act swiftly, and get home in one piece. Do the thinking ahead of time, so you can stay fluid in the field. Never hesitate when the action starts.

## OFF TO THE FARM

So you've all gotten Uncle Thorn's two-bit tour of why the dashingly roguish shadowrunners should learn about spies. Now what? Now we'll look at what spies do, and who teaches them to do it.

The first step is recruitment. People hear that word, and they picture a job fair or an enlistment office for the army. That's not always the case. Most recruitment attempts start with a cup of soykaf from a stranger on a transorbital flight, a conversation with a favorite professor, or a seduction at a local bar. If you're just out to turn someone else's asset or tap someone for information, what you look for is simple: Do they have something you want? If so, you play them like a violin, gain their confidence, engage them in conversation to get the information, and that's that. In the world we live in, most people are desperate for someone to just give a fuck about them. You can get most civilians to start spilling their guts just by pretending to care long enough to ask how their bloody day's going. Add a little alcohol into the mix, keep them talking, keep asking them questions, and before you know it you've got what you're after.

To actually recruit someone you might want in the field next to you someday, though? That takes a bit more work. We want people who can think on their own, who maybe even butt heads with authority figures to an extent, but who can still follow orders from a handler or work well in a group. Having a knack for travel and languages helps, but it's not just for being able to talk the talk; linguasofts can handle that in a pinch. What we're more interested in is someone who's an experienced traveler, someone with a natural talent for blending into unfamiliar cultures, who has shown they can function away from hearth and home for extended periods, and who might even have a ready cover story, contacts, or established safehouses; perhaps without even knowing that's what we call them.

The actual recruitment works a whole lot like a romance, though consummation's a bit less fun. You test the waters. Once you're sure you're interested, you do what you can to butter them up, and you try not to pop the question until you know what their answer will be. Turn yourself into their mentor if you can, first. Alienate them from friends and family, so that you become the



person they rely on and trust. Praise them often. Make them want your approval, make them care about your opinion, make it clear to them your work is important without divulging any specifics ... and then ask them to become a part of it. If you've done it right, if you've chosen the right sort of mark, it's easy as pie.

- Bastards.
- Picador

There are grades of recruitment, you see, and each one carries with it a little more knowledge about what's going on and who it is you're really working for. You've got to be in—really in—before anyone will even tell you that you're a pawn on the chessboard.

Most of the “agents” we've got, folks recruited just enough to be turned into assets, don't even know what they're doing. They've got a good-looking new boyfriend who's curious about their work as a congressional intern, let's say, or a video gaming buddy who's really interested in their latest R&D project, a neighbor who knows their travel schedule as a mid-level executive assistant because he house-sits their cat, or a new guy at work who's just such a fantastic listener everyone tells him all the juicy office gossip.

These people, who don't even know they're rubbing elbows with a spy, are assets. Take some of my previous assets as examples. Thanks to the girlfriend asset, we know that a certain congressman is visiting an Ares facility next month. Thanks to the video gaming asset, we know Ares is about to pitch the Ares Bravo assault rifle to him in a bid to get the CAS Marines to make it their standard issue. Thanks to the asset who's open with her cat-sitter, we know Ares is flying in a shark of a negotiator to make the formal pitch. Thanks to the chatty-Cathy who loves to spread rumors, we know that this executive did something—rather, someone—at the last office party, and that his wife would be less than pleased to find out. Putting it all together, we know we need to get an agent in place to watch the executive more closely, find evidence of infidelity, and blackmail him with it, all before the scheduled facility visit. That's how we protect our employer's ability to make their own bid to supply the CAS Marines with assault rifles.

Assets are little nuggets of information who don't even realize they're being fed into a pipeline. Their information is taken in by a proper agent who then sends it in to several agents who forward their files on to data analysts, who interpret what's there and tell a mission coordinator who feeds some of it back to agents who act on the decisions made. But who is really making the decisions? Think back to the last ten jobs you've pulled. You probably researched the Johnson, but what about taking it another step, and investigating who sent him?

How many times can you honestly say you were sure Johnson wasn't an asset, or hired by one? How many times was your objective so clear that he couldn't possibly have had a secondary objective in mind before he sent your team? And how many times can you honestly say things went exactly according to the “plan” you put together (invariably based largely on the information he fed you, of course)? What could a Johnson have gotten from that last datasteal, besides the obvious? How many e-mails were in the reply chain you saved and handed over to him that were supposed to be just R&D specs, with how many timestamps, how many IP addresses showing who was mailing whom and from where, how

many corporate signature attachments with how many official company communication addresses and numbers and names? Think about the incidental, and imagine the incidental as the objective. Is it possible?

Yeah. That little light bulb going off over your head and ball of indignation in the pit of your stomach mean you just might be an asset, too.

- The importance of assets cannot be overstated. There are far, far more “assets” running around than there are agents, operatives, handlers, spies, or anything else Thorn references later in this document. Everyone walking around, seeing and hearing the world around them, is a potential asset to an intelligence agency somewhere. Everyone on the American continent knows something the CIA would like to know. Everyone in Seattle knows someone the Information Secretariat is probably interested in. Everyone living anywhere near Austin, or Tel Aviv, or London, or Denver, has some trivial information in their head that an intelligence agency is willing to kill for but would prefer to lie for. Turning assets without them knowing they're being used, and keeping them in play for as long as possible, is far more important—but ultimately far less glamorous—than anything else a spy will do in the entirety of his career. In many ways, I think the legend of the flirtatious, irresistible superspy from fiction has grown out of this fact: Put simply, a good spy is always “on,” always pumping those around him for information, always listening, and always keeping people happy.
- Fianchetto
- In the shadows, people call them “contacts,” and the relationship is a bit more reciprocal. Good spies are a bit more parasitic about it, but still somehow leave their assets asking for more.
- Kay St. Irregular

### Tricks to Turning

If you're out to turn someone else's asset and you're in a hurry, the quickest, ugliest way is to just find out what they're after and offer them more of it. If they're getting paid, double it. If they're getting drugs, get them purer stuff. If they're after girls, get them prettier ones. If they're in it for idealism, sour them on their handler by sharing dirty deeds from that agency. If you know what someone wants, you know how to manipulate them. All you need is a big enough expense account and a willingness to indulge their vice.

Thorn's Top Tricks

The next level of recruitment is quite a bit more obvious and heavy-handed for a number of reasons, not the least of which is people are, well, in on the joke. They know they're being recruited, and we're often offering them a job, training, and all that jazzy “exotic spy lifestyle” crap you can thank over a century of popular



media for. Whereas basic field assets can be almost anyone, the flat truth is that genuine recruits tend to come from two places: universities and the military/security world.

Why? Because those two groups of people have quantifiable skill sets that can be evaluated prior to a face-to-face meeting; it's a more accurate method of gauging the traits we look for in recruits. One group brings a certain mentality to the table, the other the physical skills we need.

If we pull from the cream of the crop at a university, we get brilliant young scholars who've had their thinking skills professionally appraised by a bevy of academics, with grades and comments available to us in a flash. We can see how well they follow directions and how freely they don't when the directions don't make sense. We can see how passionately they throw themselves into research and get an idea how well they pick up foreign languages. Gauging their activity with on-campus groups can give us an idea of their social skills. Academic records hold a surprising amount of personal background information, and—yes, we stoop this low—most initial service contracts come with educational loan disbursement packages included, so we can even pique a potential recruit's interest by offering financial aid assistance.

Almost as important as all of that, of course, is the fact that college kids, even the bright ones, are easy marks. For all that you can admire them for their brilliance, they're young, they're far from home, they're starved for money, and you're often approaching them from a position of authority after praising their work for at least a semester. It doesn't get much easier than that.

- Just remember that Nathan Hale, "the first American spy," has a statue at Yale's campus and a matching one outside the CIA's Langley headquarters. For that matter, compare Yale student rolls to OSS enlistment records, going back to World War Two. Spies' cloaks and academics' gowns go back a long way, especially in this country.
- Kay St. Irregular
- It's not a love affair that's unique to American universities.
- Winterhawk

Soldiers and other military or security types? They're almost halfway through academy training with us, without even knowing it. The basic principles of small unit combat are much the same no matter who you're working for, and an understanding of weapon use and maintenance is crucial for every field operative. We've got a chain of command dedicated to commendations and demerits that lets us examine potential recruits' history, and military and security forces keep detailed medical and psychological profiles we can tap into. Potential recruits have also often overcome their socially ingrained reluctance to resort to violence, and—not least of all—every former Company Man is, after all, an expert on the security of his former employer, isn't he? If a field agent comes across a soldier who impresses him in the field, that soldier can safely expect to be courted somewhere down the line with a job offer.

- Even actual recruits are assets, and some of the best. Never forget that agents use one another just like they use everyone else around them.
- Fianchetto

Having been recruited, what actually happens at a formal espionage training facility? The specifics will differ based on who it is that's training you, but it's largely what you'd expect. Batteries of psychological evaluations, interviews, and both technological and magical lie-detector tests are conducted for two reasons: first, to make sure you're fit for the job, and second, to gauge how quickly you're able to catch on and beat them. After that, there is physical training to make sure you can perform the violence that's likely to be required of you in the near future, combat driving courses, demolitions and live-fire exercises, weapon and armor recognition simulator training, language tests, technology crash courses—maglocks beware—and probably a brief history of the agency you've signed up with, just to keep up morale.

Oh, and lying! Covert affairs training. Think of it as acting classes where the whole world is your audience and you're not allowed to let any of them know you're playing a part, and you're not far off. Professionals—often Adepts proficient in the Kinesics ability—will examine your body language, perhaps even monitor your aura, and do what they can to teach you to master yourself. It's a knack more than a skill, but they work hard at honing it. The trick to a good lie is to make it as close to the truth as you can and to make sure it's easy to remember. More spies have died by getting their own webs tangled than by crashing in a high speed chase or missing a shot in combat. Keep your lies simple. Put a bit of truth into them. Keep track of them, cleanly, in your head. Believe it like gospel when it comes out of your mouth. Don't outsmart yourself, outsmart the mark.

You likely won't leave an expert in any of these fields, but you'll leave with a solid working knowledge of each of them. Your employers trust that your first handlers and the draconian efficiency of on-the-job training will bring you up to speed on any deficiencies in your training. More experienced field agents will see how you perform, and suggestions will be passed up the ladder about what sort of assignments will play to your strengths.

- To be honest, going to a professional spy school would be a hell of a summer camp for would-be shadowrunners. If only intelligence agencies weren't so hard to get into, and even harder to quit.
- Picador

### Stick and Move

If you're engaged in violence as part of your espionage work, it means you're probably the underdog. You're likely serving in an advisory position for someone wealthy enough to hire you and desperate enough to need you. If they had overwhelming manpower and armor, they wouldn't need advisors. The odds are good you're even doing outright guerrilla work. If you're acting like a terrorist, think like a terrorist. Hit and fade. The most offensive of plans should have, at worst, two stages: for example, a bombing followed by sniping at first responders. Sticking around too long, and giving your opponent enough time to gather resources and manpower, is just asking for trouble. Punch, then duck and weave out of their grasp. Be smart. You need to be.





Someone invariably asks, so I'll just say a brief word about augmentations here. While the specifics will change based on employer, a few standards tend to apply. Anything that's too obvious is frowned upon. Things that'll set off security scanners are as well. Anything that'll be remembered is a no-no. Datajacks remain common, partially because they're so damned handy for day-to-day living and partially because they're expected in so many corporate and legislative settings where agents go undercover routinely. Headware is more common than bodyware, and bioware is more common than chrome, as general rules. Attention coprocessors are popular, and some of the more specialized agents out there are big advocates of cyberlogician and other full suites.

Traditionally, cyberoptics and cybersound packages are common. The bread and butter of a spy is made by, well, spying, after all, and anything that improves your ability to see and hear the world around you is terrific. In the last five years or so, they've stopped being offered as standard enlistment bonuses though because so many of the external hardware options have gotten so bloody good. Agencies dispute the need for augmentation when contacts and glasses will do the job just as well, but really it just comes down to a matter of individual handler and agent opinion. There are those who still swear by keeping gear internal for security's sake and for the color-change and iris-modification properties available. Opinions vary, but one thing's common—these and datajacks remain the most likely upgrades you'll find. You don't see many field agents who skate the razor's edge chromed out to the gills, except in action trids.

- One old asset of mine got cyberoptics back in the 2040s; they were all the craze when he finished his training. He loved to toggle the black and white filter option, especially when he knew he was heading out on a field operation. Dash insisted it added some of the old romance and mystery to an otherwise ugly business.
- Fianchetto
- Dashiel Fleming, you mean? Had those hand razors, too, aye? He almost got me in Paris in '49. You trained him well. I'm sorry things happened like they did.
- Thorn
- Ah, so you were codename: Silver Bowman, were you? I'd suspected. Spilled milk now, I suppose.
- Fianchetto

## THE PLAYERS

So, how does this training differ from agency to agency? I can at least answer you with general trends, if not a few specifics. For all our hard work dancing on the cutting edge and staying ahead of the curve, the simple truth is that espionage agencies, just like corporate or government entities, are ultimately traditionalists at heart. The bigger an agency is, the slower it is to evolve. You've got bureaucrats involved, whether you call them managers, politicians, or mission coordinators, so change comes slowly.

Further complicating matters is the fact that new recruits get trained by semi-retired agents. Then they go out in the field, and, if they survive long enough, they learn that lots of

what they'd been taught was out-of-date bullshit. Mind you, when they themselves semi-retire and pass on all that they've learned to the next generation of recruits, it's only new out-of-date bullshit. It's a never-ending cycle of experience becoming obsolescence.

That's part of why terrorists so often look like they're a step ahead of us—because they actually are. Formal intelligence agencies are full of smart people and have huge budgets, but it's just the nature of the beast that we're perpetually about a decade behind the times when you get right down to it.

Because so much of our training is handled in-house, it stays consistently ... flavored. I can't think of a better term for it, so there it is. Everyone's had chicken and soynoodle soup, and everyone has had it made a little differently from what they're used to. The nuts and bolts of chicken and soynoodle soup are dirt simple—some fake chicken and some fake noodles, but it's all the other little stuff that makes the pot, right? Espionage agencies work the same way. Anyone leaving a successful round of training from any reputable agency in the world will have the same basic skills, but they each tend to focus a little differently to play to that agency's strengths. Let me give you a little breakdown of most of the big players today, and, hopefully, you'll see what I mean.

Eurocentric elitist snob that I am, I'm starting with the **Upravleniye Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti**—don't panic, there won't be a test on that later—or UGB. They're the inheritors of a couple hundred years of cold Russian brutality, hearkening back to the Cheka, the NKVD, the KGB, and all those other alphabet agencies that perpetually played bad guys in European and American tridsims about suave spies and sinister Russian assassins.

- In fairness, it's not like the sinister Russian assassin is entirely a myth. In fact, one is about to take over the whole UGB. Rassily Romanov is undoubtedly going to move himself into the General Secretary's chair by year's end and will lead the entire Russian Federation instead of only the UGB. The likely heir to Romanov for the Chief Director position is a rising star operative named Sasha Kalinsky. Yes, Sasha, and, yes, he's a man. He was a transfer from Saeder-Krupp Prime several years ago, and his time in S-K was almost entirely as a black ops field agent.
- Red Anya
- Only time will tell which is more dangerous. The nation led by a spymaster, or the spy agency led by a simple killer.
- Fianchetto

The UGB's got a lot of ground to cover and a lot of enemies to keep a wary eye on—inside their borders and out—but thanks to the dissemination of Russian culture (by way of mobsters) across the globe, they've got a lot of dirty contacts they can use to help get the job done. They're perhaps the most blatantly militaristic of all the agencies I'm going to tell you about, being responsible not only for intelligence and counterintelligence work, but actually securing the Russian border itself. They've got the assets to do it, and the worst part is if you somehow get past them, pull a job, and leave, the odds are good they'll just contract their cousins in the Vory to cut out your heart anyway to save them the trouble of sending an agent.





- Think of it as somewhat similar to Mitsuhamas's ability to call upon Yakuza connections to handle dirty jobs, and you won't be far off. The main difference would be the UGB's reputation for being as thuggish and violent as their Vory comrades, whereas MCT at least keeps up a veneer of respectability.
- Mihoshi Oni

**MI-5** is the other traditionally big name in the European intelligence community, and they've also been lying and spying for over 150 years, which isn't a coincidence. MI-6 is worth a mention, as well, and it's best to think of the two of them as the two sides of the British espionage coin. Five handles internal issues and is a real peach of a counterintelligence agency, while Six is the foreign intelligence branch that is poking around outside the country and mucking about in other people's business. Like any good set of siblings, they're cheerful rivals who aren't above hiring shadow-runners and other independent agents to ruin each other's lives and make themselves look good enough to get a bigger allowance. You'll see that theme a lot, in the following pages.

- Thorn mentioned ties between academia and espionage. Keep that in mind if you visit Great Britain. While both of these terribly British agencies are headquartered in London, let's just say spies and their shadowy ilk should tread carefully around Cambridge.
- Winterhawk

### Stay Under the Covers

Work some obvious trait into every cover persona you take on. Speak with a thick accent, hum the same annoying pop song all the time, wear an ugly tie, limp, wear blocky glasses, slouch, chew on a toothpick, have a glowing tattoo, always tell the same off-color joke. *Anything* will work, just give each cover a distinctive trait that *you* don't have. Focusing on that trait will help you stay in character, and if/when your cover is blown, the everyday schmucks you were dealing with will remember that specific trait, not the person beneath it, and will feed information to counterintelligence groups accordingly.

A few of the newer kids on the block in Europe are **Argus** and **Aegis Cognito**. As spies-for-hire, you never know when you'll run into these two, and trust me, that's just how we like it. Both freelance espionage companies were started in Europe but have since branched out to anywhere contracts made themselves available, which is to say every corner of the globe. The biggest difference between the two comes in their general focus, rather than genuine ability. Argus has a tendency to focus on the sharp end of the spear, with Aegis generally more comfortable with corporate espionage than paramilitary. It only makes sense when you remember Argus started out as the intelligence and counterintelligence branch of a little merc outfit called MET 2000—you may have heard of them—so would keep that military feel throughout their history.

- Someone, please, tell me again how he's not as insufferably arrogant as most MET 2000 scum.
- Picador

One of the unique abilities of these freelance units is their flexibility. Britain's agencies serve Britain's interests, and everyone knows where and what Britain is. Likewise, the MVD and UGB are intrinsically tied to Russia and her well-being. Argus and Aegis Cognito, however, can show up anywhere, at any time, helping almost any side of any conflict. It's the nature of a mercenary to go where the business is and to do whatever job is presented so long as the money's right. I can't speak for Aegis Cognito, but I know very nearly the only hard and fast rule Argus has is not to shit where they eat, e.g., we could work in Germany, but not against Germany. There's a long-running UN contract that means Argus might as well be on retainer there too. But that deal could theoretically fall through, unlike the Germany clause. Everyone else, anywhere else, is fair game to Argus, even sometimes other Argus teams. Any little banana republic, late bloomer of a corporation, or policlub that has the money can get a little espionage backing in time for their next big project. So while MI-5 and the UGB have experience and, ultimately, budgets on their side, there's an unpredictability to being a freelancer that's hard to quantify.

- Gee, thanks. None of us knew the benefits of being freelancers before now.
- Riser

It's impossible to talk European spies without at least mentioning **Saeder-Krupp Prime**. Somewhere between the global flexibility of a mercenary agency and the loyalty and patriotism of a national one, S-K's intelligence and counterintelligence crew are a group of operators I've tangled with more times than I enjoyed, and every time it's been a hairy ordeal. Everyone thinks about the CEO of their company and just assumes they're all magically trained—and the worst part is that's somewhat true—but Saeder-Krupp's CEO has also got a budget like you wouldn't bloody believe and all the swankiest new toys to go with it. They're the worst of both worlds, for folks going up against them. The one saving grace is their high turnover rate. The dragon pays well enough that folks don't make the decision to quit lightly, but Saeder-Krupp is notoriously unforgiving with mistakes and failures. You only stay on with the company for as long as you're doing an excellent job, and, in the long run, I think that mentality hurts them. The spy game is already a dangerous one, and most of us already know the stakes of a dismal failure. Meting out the same punishments for a marginal success is making things a little ridiculous.

- I think he's a little too harsh in his S-K Prime criticism. What you really need to remember is to take them seriously because you know they're taking you seriously.
- Red Anya

Moving over to your beloved North America, it's hard not to start with the CIA. The **Central Intelligence Agency** still operates out of Langley, and probably always will. The Company's one of the oldest agencies still playing the game, and while they've had



their ups and downs, the fact that they haven't been restructured and renamed despite all the US/UCAS nonsense tells you they're doing more right than they are wrong. The UCAS' budget and paranoia means that they're about as technologically savvy an agency as you'll find in the world today. That sometimes means they'll be a little overly reliant on their tech toys, but I'll get on my soapbox about that later. What you need to remember right now is that just because I said agencies tend to play dinosaur doesn't mean they're using soup cans and pieces of string to get the job done. The CIA might be getting trained by soft-looking middle-aged guys, but they're doing that training with cutting-edge goodies.

- It's true that you can, if you're good enough, sometimes stall them by wreaking merry havoc with their electronics. They trust their gadgets' and communications' security a little too much. If you play your cards right, you can use that to buy yourself some time.
- Pistons

The UCAS **Defense Intelligence Agency**, on the other hand, is much more magically inclined (which isn't hard, when comparing anyone to the CIA). Perhaps because they don't get their very own budget, being a Department of Defense subgroup, they've been forced to go in an almost CAS direction, focusing more on experience and practicality and relying less on wiz-bang toys and reputation alone. They're also, naturally, almost Argus-esque in their focus on all things military, which makes them a bit more dangerous to openly confront, in the short term, than some other intelligence agencies.

The ERLA's not as well-known as either UCAS agency, and probably likes it that way. The **Extraterritoriality Registry and Liaison Agency**, operating out of Kennesaw in the CAS, has a major mad-on for megacorporations. The CAS also has the notorious **Department of Domestic Investigations** and the **Department of Strategic Intelligence** stomping around doing lots of their counterintelligence heavy lifting, but, ironically ERLA tends to work the most closely with the traditionally inept and corrupt **Department of Environmental Protection**, which is like the simple-minded cousin they hate to keep around. DEP is mostly only good for taking bribes, but the other agencies love that "environmental concerns" give them the right to send inspectors onto extraterritorial corporate turf whenever they want to. DEP is probably composed mostly of undercover ERLA, DDI, and DSI agents by now, in fact.

Every agency they've got—except the worthless buzzards in the DEP, mind—is currently all a-flutter in and around Austin and the rest of the south, no doubt about it. The Azzies have them all worked up, and it's not often all three of the big agencies get to dogpile on the same poor bastard. Aztlan and Aztechnology are so intertwined that ERLA and DSI both want a piece of the action. That means they sometimes trip over one another a little, and it also means they sometimes purposefully knock each other down just to look better. If they started coordinating, things might be running a little more smoothly down there, but there's no rivalry like a sibling rivalry, as I've already mentioned.

None of the CAS agencies have the budget they'd like. They make up for it by keeping their agents in the field longer, honing

their skills, granting them a little more leeway where the bureaucracy is concerned, and trusting them to follow their guts. Compared to the CIA up north, they're much more likely to go with an experienced agent's instinct than with a beeping commlink.

- And speaking of up north, with so much of their attention on Austin right now, there's a real weakening of counterintelligence work elsewhere in the CAS. UCAS and NAN agency jobs into Confederation territory abound.
- Kay St. Irregular

The Tir Tairngire **Information Secretariat** is another North American agency. They're headquartered in Corvallis but have their fingers all through the Tir. Their country's gone through such a fierce regime change that it's only natural to think their intelligence community's mission statement has changed, too. Remember what I said about it being veteran agents who train the new kids, though? That's just as true—maybe even more so—with us elves as with anyone else. Many of the veteran Tir operatives, particularly the senior agents, have been around since InfoSec was founded, and they've got long memories. They're not all happy with the regime change, and many of them aren't likely to start wildly changing their training methods because some fly-by-night new Prince told them to. They wound up with a new director during the big changes a few years ago, but he was a veteran agent brought up from within the ranks. InfoSec knows how to do their job. I don't imagine they got a complete agency overhaul just because the Council got shaken up.

Magic, magic, magic is their ace in the hole. While they lost some men when most of their high muckety-muck princes scurried off, tails betwixt legs, the core group of veteran spies that stayed behind still know their business. They employ more adepts, of more varieties, than any other individual agency I can think of on the planet, and that allows them a monstrous versatility and competence with each individual field agent. Those Rinelle lads and lasses had to work for their win, believe you me.

They might have had the Ghosts and Paladins and Black Daggers and a half dozen other mysterious and magical murder machines at their beck and call for a couple decades, but don't think that meant the InfoSec boys themselves got soft. They were busily suppressing a home-grown terrorist group for years, don't forget, and that weeds out the squeamish and unlucky like you wouldn't believe. Other groups got the headlines, but Prince Reed ran a tight ship.

- Some folks in Portland whisper Reed's still running this particular tight ship. If any of the princes was low profile and cunning enough to get back in, it would've been Reed. He made a career of letting Lugh get all the attention while he did all the dirty work.
- Sounder
- Nonsense. The new Operations Director is a dwarf named Jonathon Gant. He is over sixty years old and has been verifiably working there for almost three decades.
- Snopes
- Gant's been with InfoSec for 28 years, yes, but dig deeper and compare his service record to Reed's. The two are never





documented as having sat on a committee together, never worked directly together on an operation in that entire time, and have only been seen together in public a handful of times in all those years. Jonathon Reed, Jonathon Gant. I'm sure you'll say that's just a coincidence.

- Sounder
- I'm also hearing rumors Reed's not the only one to have, potentially, resurfaced since the Great Tir Prince Diaspora of 2064. MET 2000 seems to have recruited from outside the ranks, as an elf matching Dar Varien's description has been seen coming and going from the main Hannover office. Any truth to it, Thorn? Did the one-armed Prince find himself a new little band of army bullies to lead back home in Germany?
- Picador

### Change Colors

Be prepared to drop that cover at a moment's notice. When the heat comes, move, but do so smartly. Change your posture to affect your height, always walk quickly away from pursuers but never run in a crowd, and remember that the number one visual cue human beings use on one another is upper body recognition, particularly color. If they're looking for a limping blond guy in a red jacket, put on a dark hat and throw your ugly ass red jacket in the trash the first time you break line of sight. Every little bit helps to get the hounds off you. Mages and adepts have plenty of tricks, but don't forget the basics like just changing your shirt. Ruthenium comes in handy for this sort of thing, as does a handful of other high-tech clothing options; just remember to be wearing it when you need it.

I could keep going on this vein for a long while, rattling over every single intelligence agency I've bumped into—and that's more of them than I like—during the long years I've been doing this. The simple truth is that I hope you've sensed a pattern by now. Some are technologically savvy, like the CIA, or I could tack on the Pueblo Council's External Affairs operatives or Shiawase's MIFD. They'll all have absolutely cutting-edge Matrix security and electronics goodies to ruin your day. Others tend more toward magical ability, like the Information Secretariat or the DIA. Some get by with less specialized agents that have a broader range of experience at handling whatever comes their way, like the DDI. Some operate in their own little niche. The thing to remember is that every single one of them is out to steal from you if they can, lie to you if you let them, and kill you if they have to.

Don't let the tendencies I mentioned fool you. The CIA has plenty of mages, the DIA has hackers to make your head spin, and the DDI still has a bigger budget than you can dream of. When I compare these agencies, I compare them to each other—not to individual operatives or small teams. They're not necessarily hiring

you because you can do something they can't. They're hiring you to save them the trouble of having to do it themselves. Don't go into a contract with a big head. They're all titans.

- Just like the corps we're all so used to dealing with.
- Pistons

## TRICKIN' IT, OLD SCHOOL

- Did he really just say that? Someone tell me he's trying to be funny.
- /dev/grrl

I'm going to be blunt here and admit that I'm not an expert on the latest fancy, high-end gadgets.

- \*gasp\*
- /dev/grrl

I've had to keep up with enough changes in this business, and running myself in a perpetual hamster wheel to stay "SotA" with every software upgrade wasn't worth my time. I let them issue me my gear, I remember the basics of cracking locks and security, and that's that. As a result, I just haven't kept up on most of the technomancer controversy either. But if you ask me, there's one upside to all the recent paranoia and witch hunting.

- Oh, I can't wait to hear this one.
- Netcat

I know some horrible things have happened to kiddos who did no one any harm, and that's a shame on a personal level. On a professional level though? Just to make all you wee little technomancers feel better, the whole bloody intelligence community is scared positively shitless of you.

- Uhh, no duh. 'Cause they're awesome!
- Slamm-0!

The way I understand it, the Matrix has pockets called Resonance realms, which have been explained to me as something akin to electronic metaplanes. Here's the troubling bit though: Some experts say that every single piece of data, ever, leaves a print in those Resonance realms. Every tiny little snippet of data, every note, text message, e-mail, photograph, coded warning, order, GPS coordinates—everything, ever—is still somewhere in these realms. What's more, a technomancer with the guts to search for it can find everything he wants to. Everything.

Now, pretend you're a paranoid spy agency with millions of secrets to hide and think that over. You guys have us terrified.

So, why do I think that's a good thing? Because I'm a petty bastard at heart, and I got to say "I told you so." For years, I was telling management I felt the whole espionage world was getting too fancy and had to go back to some basics.

No, they're not going back to total low-tech solutions, because the world's still full of high tech problems. But it means spies are speaking in homemade pidgin codes now instead of





trusting in decryption hardware alone. It means a return to dead drops with handwritten notes on scraps of paper instead of always using commlinks. It means spies taking four different cabs, paid for with four different SINS, as they ride across the city to dodge tails. It means field agents learning how to shadow a “rabbit” again instead of just swiping them with an RFID tag and calling it a day. It means handlers and management recognizing the importance of skilled HUMINT operatives, not just brushing them off and trusting entirely in drones and facial recognition software and computer simulations.

- It means job security for old men who couldn't keep up?
- Slamm-0!

It means, in short, that fieldcraft is recognized as important again. I've spent a good, long time in this line of work, and I've seen a lot change while I've been here. While the skills never went away, the emphasis on them during training sadly did. There was a contagious overreliance upon gear, and that got good people killed.

Many agencies glossed over proper tradecraft and told their recruits to trust in their gadgets instead. They'd just dole out some nanites to squirt into a gun to clean it instead of spending extra time on field maintenance. They wouldn't bother telling recruits to pay attention to which way north was, just remind them of the GPS in their commlink. They'd tell agents to trust in white noise generators or Matrix overwatch agents instead of just reminding recruits about the importance of looking out for security cameras. The end result was something like a would-be black op going sour because a young agent couldn't properly handle a failure of his rifle in time for a proper follow up shot, then went out the wrong exit of a building because he thought in “left and right” instead of “east and west,” and then got his face plastered all over the Matrix since he'd blundered right past a half dozen cameras. That's sloppy spy work, sure, and he deserves his burn notice—but it was a training issue as well.

In the last couple years, though, that's started to turn around. There are these mystical wonder-punks who don't even need hardware to access the Matrix anymore; there are these creepy holes in the Matrix that everything, ever, has fallen into; there are AIs and who-knows-what-else running around; and everyone here should be old enough to remember just how shaken up the whole world was, Matrix-wise, by the Crash 2.0. Mindsets changed as a result of these system shocks. Training officers are starting to go back to basics, and I think that's a step in the right direction.

I don't mean to disparage the gadget guys. We've got some top-notch equipment out there, and it's saved my arse a time or two, sure. But your best bet is to save it for a rainy day instead of letting yourself rely on it.

- You can use something without relying on it. A walking stick isn't the same thing as a crutch.
- Mika

Remember that your brain is your most dangerous weapon, your feet are your go-to getaway vehicle, and your training is your ultimate tool. A good spy will have an agency that can give him a laser gun that looks like a belt buckle. Maybe someday he can use



it to get out of prison after an op goes sour and he gets pinched, aye? A great spy, though, will have a powerful local politician as an asset who'll see him sprung in no time—and he'll turn three or four violent convicts into assets while he's waiting to make his phone call—or he'll avoid the cops and not be locked up in the first place. That's the difference, to me.

- I want a laser belt buckle!
- Beaker
- I prefer the wristwatches. I like to leave my belts dedicated to climbing gear.
- Mika

Yeah, your little emotitoy might hook up to your PAN and tell you all sorts of neat stuff to make it easier for you to make someone like you. I'd rather get the same reaction by offering a mark a stick of gum or a smoke, personally. It stands out less, it's more universally accepted, you're automatically making them grateful to you in even a tiny way, and you're sharing with them in a way that everyone appreciates. You can get further in this business with a comfortable turtleneck, a pack of gum, some cigarettes, a decent pocketknife, and a bottle of whiskey than you can with all the ruthenium stealth suits, fancy transponders, exploding shoes, electronic contact lenses, and all manner of other nonsense. The batteries never die on a handshake and a smile.

- It's easy to be that condescending and smug when you're an adept that's been doing the job for like thirty years. Some folks just need every ounce of edge they can get.
- Black Mamba
- What's that? Mamba needs an emotitoy to play well with others? Say it isn't so!
- Winterhawk

### Lie, Cheat, and Steal

Don't kill unless you have to (and if you have to, you'll know). Remember, kiddos, in this business you'll normally get further with a smile and a handshake than you will a knife in the dark. It's easier to be where you shouldn't be by making people *think* you should be there than it is by sneaking in after hours and dealing with security. Get a job at a secure building instead of breaking in, visit a museum in broad daylight as an intern instead of blowing a hole in the wall, and seduce the pants off that secretary to get her passkey instead of knocking her out and rifling through her 'link. It's easier, safer, and it leaves less of a mess behind. On nine out of ten jobs, spies are liars first, murderers a distant second. You'll only get assigned the tenth job if you show them you know how to handle it.

## DOSSIERS

As I mentioned earlier, espionage is a field largely populated by well-trained specialists. There are a handful of different types you might run into in the field, and for all our individuality, most of us can be lumped into a few broad categories.

In the interest of brevity I'm going to ignore probably the biggest single group there is—support staff. Every spy who's out in the field telling lies and getting shot at has help from a whole bundle of desk jockeys back at an office somewhere. There are information analysts who put the pieces of each puzzle together, supply and requisition staff that handle equipment, research and development specialists who invent cutting-edge new gear, human resource staff just like any corporation has, and hell, even janitors who keep the home office clean.

Most of those people, sometimes dismissively called “drones” by the better paid and more glorified field agents they support, are pretty much exactly what you'd expect. Walking through an Argus office wouldn't be a huge surprise to anyone who's walked through a Saeder-Krupp office (though we do have fewer dragons, I suppose), and dropping by Langley to see how the CIA operates wouldn't be a huge culture shock to someone who's visited a secure Ares office.

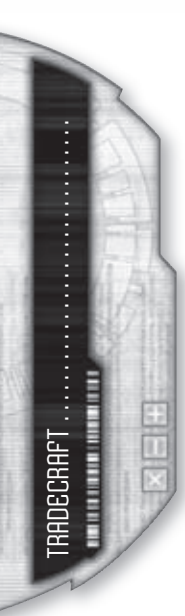
So instead I'm going to talk about field agents. Yes, yes, I'm wickedly perpetuating the stereotype that only field agents matter. Sue me. You know you don't want to read me describing the day-to-day life of some cubicle-shackled drone any more than I want to write it up. So! That's decided, then.

- He's kind of got a point.
- Kane

I'll start with, well, a basic operative. These field agents are only ever going to be this “generic” when they're still pretty wet behind the ears and fresh out of Moscow, or Langley, or Corvalis, or wherever. Specialization comes quickly in this line of work, as natural aptitudes show and are emphasized. The more you focus on whatever it is you're brilliant at, the rustier your other skills tend to get. Straight from the academy though—lack of experience and poor decision-making skills notwithstanding—you're about as generally useful as you're going to get. It's a little ironic, I know, that you're as broadly skilled fresh out of diapers as you'll ever be in your career, but that's part of the game, especially with corporate espionage groups. Specialization breeds weakness, but properly applied specialization breeds efficiency, and efficiency counts for a lot.

- Thorn knows as well as I do that this is one of his generalizations rather than a universal truth. Don't assume an old spy is only good at one thing. When you're in the business long enough, you see what happens to a specialized team when one piece goes missing. It pays to branch out, as a team redundancy system if nothing else.
- Fianchetto

Wetwork ops specialists, trigger men, tend to come and go quickly. In a formal espionage agency, as elsewhere, part of that's



just the nature of the business. Taking lives is a dangerous job, and it's easy to get sloppy and make that one little mistake that ends it all. It's common enough spy work that we get agents trained for it pretty often, especially the former military types who might've been recruited from sniper or spec ops programs, but the turnover rate's pretty high. Everyone reading this knows an assassin or is one, so the odds are good you understand what I'm talking about. Psychological as well as physical dangers rear their head pretty often. What's more, the simple truth is that the mediocre hitmen out there are all pretty much disposable and interchangeable. Folks are either very new to the assassin game or very experienced trigger men. No one's in it half-assed.

- Psychological dangers? Pfft, cry me a river. Stick to philosophy then.
- Riser
- He's done more than his fair share of both, Riser. Trust me.
- Fianchetto

Even if folks tend to picture a globe-trotting assassin when you mention espionage, they should be thinking of the, well, dedicated spy instead. They do what we're all supposed to do: lie, listen, and learn. When you get right down to it, the whole field revolves around the idea of being places you're probably not supposed to be, sweet-talking people into telling you things you're probably not supposed to know, or stopping other people from doing the same. We're called intelligence agencies, after all. Not to let bias show, but the masters of this aspect of the job are probably specialist adepts. Mages can do some of the same tricks, but they tend to be more obvious and intrusive about it when, ideally, you want to play someone like a fiddle and leave them actively liking you—not just never remembering it happened—so you can come back next week and do it again.

- Assets, assets, assets. Truth be told, I'm a little surprised Thorn didn't mention this sort of fellow first. He was one of the best at it, for a long, long time.
- Fianchetto

Lastly, handlers. They're somewhere between the voice in your ear from a friendly hacker, the voice in your ear from a friendly rigger, the voice in your ear from a superior military officer, the good advice you remember from a knowledgeable teacher, and that constant nagging you get from a micro-managing boss that you dream about murdering.

A good handler will have a dedicated hacker—or several—working to monitor and appropriate security devices and feed him information, a drone rigger or two doing the same thing, maybe even an astrally projecting mage on overwatch, and he'll then relay the absolutely crucial bits of that information to you, in order to let you do your job and stay in one piece. He'll make sure your support chopper takes off on time; he'll make sure locked doors slow down pursuers instead of you; he'll let you know when to turn left instead of right; he'll remind you exactly where you parked your car and talk you through a harrowing chase; then he'll buy you a pint when you get home. He won't coddle you, but he'll protect you.

- Sounds like adepts could be big here, too, especially ones with Analytics.
- Jimmy No

A bad handler never tells you anything important because he sees you as a hungry up-and-comer who's a threat to his job. He'll keep you out of the loop before, during, and after an operation; he'll insist all manner of nonsense is "need to know" and then say you don't need to know it; and just generally, he'll be an insufferable ass who almost gets you killed ten times a day to make himself look good. Try to get a good handler, if you can.

- Sounds just like your average Mr. Johnson to me. A "good" one would be a real treat for a change.
- Hard Exit

Game Info.....

## FIELD NPCS

### New CIA Field Agent Human, Female

The New CIA Field Agent is a young, smart, attractive professional who's recently finished her education and started to work in her chosen field: espionage. She dresses sharply but conservatively. She graduated near the top of her class with high ranks for marksmanship, combat driving, and covert affairs, but her superiors are well aware that only time spent in the field will tell if she has what it takes to make it with The Company.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
3	4	3	3	5	4	5	4	2	5.9	7	1

**Condition Monitor Boxes:** 10/10

**Armor:** 5/3

**Skills:** Athletics skill group 2, Cracking skill group 3, Diving 1, Electronics skill group 3, Escape Artist 1, Firearms skill group 3, Influence skill group 3, Navigation 1, Parachuting 1, Perception 3, Pilot Ground Craft 3, Stealth skill group 4, Unarmed Combat 3

**Augmentations:** Datajack

**Gear:** Actioneer Business Clothes, Hermes Ikon commlink running Iris Orb OS, agency Rover Model 2068 SUV, Glasses [Low Light, Flare Compensation, Image Link, Vision Enhancement 2]

**Weapons:**

Colt Government Model 2066 [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, RC 1, 14(c), standard ammo]

**Note:** Additional, almost limitless, agency equipment available as assignments dictate.





## FIELD NPCS, CONTINUED

**Elven Hitman****Elf, Male**

The Elven Hitman is slick and smooth, and he knows it. He is the quintessential gentleman assassin. He is always impeccably dressed, with accessories of the finest quality. His manners are smooth, with just a hint of dangerous arrogance. Unless, of course, he loses his temper. He is a living weapon wielded by S-K Prime, but drawn-out fights aren't his forte; murder is. In the face of strong opposition, he'll simply fall back to try again later, better prepared.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
5	6	6(8)	5	3	4	4	4	1	3.83	10(12)	1(3)

**Condition Monitor Boxes:** 11/10

**Armor:** 10/5

**Skills:** Armorer (Firearms) 2 (+2), Athletics skill group 4, Demolition 4, Etiquette (Corporate) 3 (+2), Firearms skill group 6, Perception 4, Pilot Ground Craft 4, Pilot Hovercraft 4, Stealth skill group 4, Unarmed Combat (Martial Arts) 4 (+2)

**Augmentations (All Alpha):** Wired Reflexes (2), Smartlink

**Gear:** Form-Fitting Body Armor Shirt, Berwick Line Tailored Suit, Eurocar Westwind 3K

**Weapons:**

Morrissey Elite [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, 12(c), w/ APDS ammo, Custom Grips, Smartlink]

Ranger Arms SM-4 [Sniper Rifle, DV 8P, AP -3, SA, RC 1, 15(c), w/ APDS ammo, Smartlink]

**Note:** Additional finely crafted equipment available as contracts require.

**Dedicated ERLA Spy****Human, Male**

Some would say the entire purpose of the spy game is to turn and maintain assets. The Dedicated ERLA Spy does so better than most, combining natural charisma with carefully honed adept powers to become a truly versatile social chameleon, especially skilled at undercover ops. Able to change his features dramatically, blend in at any corporate office, never forget a face, and overhear multiple conversations at once, he is a true expert at information gathering.

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

**Condition Monitor Boxes:** 10/10

**Armor:** 4/0

**Skills:** Athletics skill group 2, Electronics skill group 2, Influence skill group 5, Lockpicking 3, Navigation 2, Perception (Hearing) 5 (+2), Pilot Ground Craft 3, Pistols

(Hold-Outs) 3 (+2), Stealth skill group 4, Unarmed Combat (Martial Arts) 3 (+2)

**Initiate Grade:** 2

**Metamagic:** Flexible Signature, Masking

**Adept Powers:** Cloak (2), Eidetic Sense Memory, Facial Sculpt (2), Improved Ability: Infiltration, (2) Improved Sense: Select Sound Filter, Killing Hands, Kinesics (3), Linguistics, Melanin Control, Multi-Tasking, Voice Control

**Gear:** Nondescript Armor Clothing, Nondescript Mercury Comet

**Weapons:**

Raecor Sting [Hold-Out, DV 6P(f), AP +5, SS, 5(c), w/ Conc. Holster]

**Notes:** Additional equipment available at assorted boltholes and safehouses.

For those using **The Way of the Adept** in their games, you may modify the Dedicated ERLA Spy by giving him the positive qualities **The Invisible Way** and **Walking the Ways**. While he is an expert at many of a Speaker's tricks, he does so to remain undetected, rather than to draw attention to himself; he is a member of the Invisible Way. He should receive an effective +1 to his Initiate Grade for calculating his Flexible Signature and Masking techniques, and his power discounts would grant him an additional Cloak (2), Facial Sculpt (1), Improved Ability: Infiltration (1). For more information on Ways and the rules associated with them, see **The Way of the Adept** e-book.

**MI-5 Handler****Dwarf, Male**

The MI-5 Handler is an artist when it comes to managing field agents. Retired from active trade work thanks to an old injury, he eagerly works as an instructor and overseer instead. He is the center of his network of agents, filtering through the facts of their operations and telling them what they need to survive, while maintaining operational security. He does so from a command HQ position or a mobile headquarters, as Her Majesty's service requires.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
5	3	2	5	3	5	6	6	2	3.52	7	1

**Condition Monitor Boxes:** 11/11

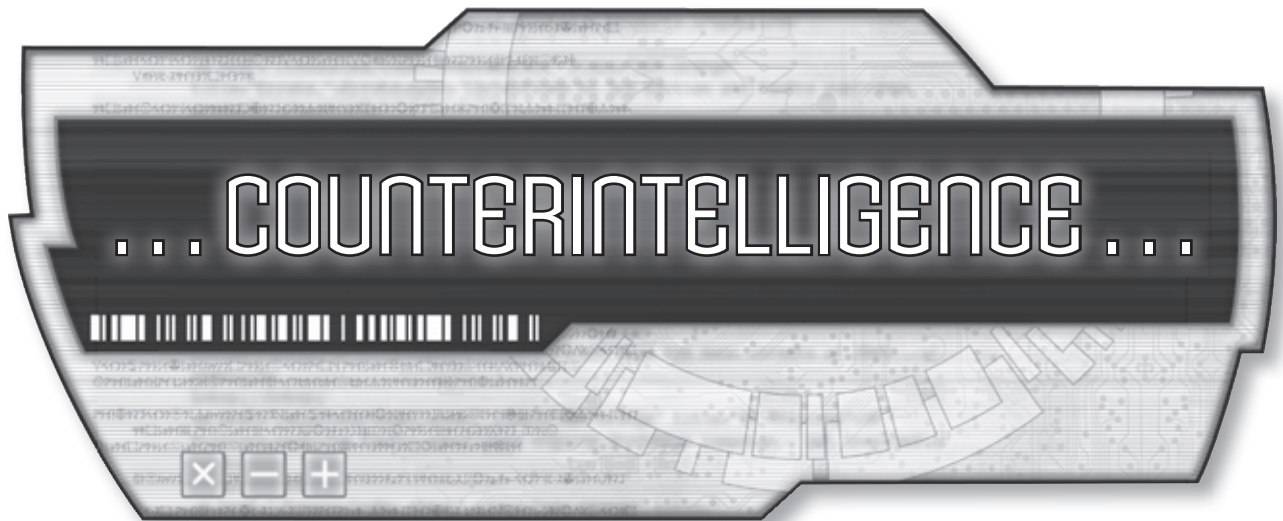
**Armor:** 5/3

**Skills:** Athletics skill group 1, Cracking skill group 4, Demolition 3, Electronics skill group 4, Firearms skill group 2, Influence skill group 4, Instruction 5, Navigation (Urban) 4 (+2), Perception 5, Stealth skill group 2, Unarmed Combat 1

**Augmentations (Alpha):** SK Cyberlogician Military Suite

**Gear:** Actioneer Business Clothes

**Note:** Additional, almost limitless, agency equipment available as assignments dictate.



That morning INFOSEC swept the office twice. The first sweep was routine. The second was just before the Deputy Director of Analytics called Andrew Gahref in.

"Tell me again." Deputy Director McClelland said, and Andrew went through it again, slower.

"I caught the feed when I was running LOCALS"—Locational Analytics—"for that business in Hong Kong. The operator I'd been assigned to, Samuel Webb, spends a lot of time in a café down there, so I decided to comb through 48 hours of audio surveillance on the location to see if our asset had been compromised."

McClelland, a dwarf in a pinstripe suit who fed his higher-ups whatever intel they wanted to hear, gave him a "get to the point" stare. Around the water cooler, the boys called McClelland "Mr. KUSD." Kiss up. Shit down. When things went sour in the field because of bad intel, he always blamed the analysts beneath him.

Andrew fought to conceal his scowl. "She must have been passing by when I heard what I heard," he said. "It was just a sliver of a voice file about a possible destination. Still, it was enough to know I had her."

"By her you mean Natalie Dark." McClelland said. He sat in a judge's chair behind an equally obtrusive desk. Both were raised up to allow the Deputy Director to peer down at whoever sat across from him. He cupped his hands under his chin and said, "What do you know about Natalie Dark?"

"I know, and pardon my language sir, that InfoSec has a serious hard-on for that lady."

"Consider yourself pardoned, son. MI-5, ERLA—shit, even the DEP wants a piece of her. And do you know why?"

"According to the file, Ms. Dark is one of Rhiannon Glendower's Knights of Harlech supposedly put on loan to the Tir's Black Daggers to serve Dar Varien. After the princes fled back in '64, everyone connected to them became a person of interest."

"You know, I've read your file too, Mr. Gahref. MIT&T, Graduate College at Yale, Suma cum everything. You're like our personal Nathan Hale running around here."

"Sir?" Andrew felt his mouth go dry. He'd never known a spook to give a compliment that didn't somehow wind up being bad news.

"I need you to tell me what you think is really going on. Not what the InfoSec file says."

He nodded and licked his lips. "Natalie Dark was a Black Dagger, but with this many flags on her there has to be more to it. I did a lot of digging and cross-checking with cooperating agencies. I learned that everything about her background before she joined the Knights of Harlech is false information. It has the footprints of Lowfyr all over it, and that really can only mean—"

"She's a double agent, son. She was trained by S-K prime years ago."

"You knew, sir?"

"A few people do. Now, explain to me why a pro like that would allow herself to get caught on audio talking about flight plans to Denver?"

"I think she knew we were there, sir. A good spy knows when a location is under surveillance. She chose to walk by that café talking biz. She let us hear her. I think she was sending up a flare."

The Deputy Director paused, thinking, but Andrew knew his silence for what it really was. McClelland was going to make him say it. Make it his idea. "Why would she be sending up a flare?"

"Because she's leaving Lowfyr, and she knows there's only one way to do it and live."

"And that is?"

Andrew's mouth was dry, and when he replied his voice cracked slightly. "To find another dragon to protect her."

McClelland clapped his hands together and grinned. "We are going to redirect Ms. Dark from her final destination. I want you front line on this, Mr. Gahref. You found the nanobot in the haystack, so you'll help with overwatch. If we can reel her in, it will mean big things for you."

Andrew forced a smile. He knew what McClelland meant. If this goes bad, it is your ass on the line. KUSD.







### Posted by: DangerSensei

A wizened “grey man” once told me that intelligence is being able to look someone in the eye and convince them to commit a hanging crime.

Counterintelligence is the hangman.

It’s a never-ending game between spies and spyhunters, so I’ll focus on the activities and techniques used by counterintelligence operatives. Counterintelligence involves many different kinds of missions, any of which could draw the shadows into the espionage game.

## FORCE PROTECTION

The first priority is usually ensuring that people are protected from espionage and its effects. It is most common in foreign military operations where there is an increased threat of enemy action, but it also applies to domestic encampments and permanent installations like military bases where there is a static physical and population target. Megacorps also take this route with many of their extraterritorial complexes for the same reason.

Counterintelligence covers defense of physical property, astral space, Matrix nodes, and people (generally in that order). Look at the astral shallows in Hong Kong. Those are being covertly researched by various organizations, but Wuxing in particular sees them as protected space and tries to deter such research. If that doesn’t work, then they’ll just hunt you down.

Of particular concern are the Resonance realms, mysterious areas in the Matrix where everything allegedly gets stored. Counterintelligence is scared to death at this possibility, because it affects all aspects of force protection, from Matrix nodes to security guidelines and protocols. On top of that, there is information that could be used to track and identify people moving in and around their area of concern. To that end, there is a concerted effort underway to figure out what is there, and how to get rid of it.

- Yeah, good luck with that.
- Netcat

## INFORMATION SECURITY

Information security is Matrix oriented and focuses on securing communications devices, emissions, and databases. This also extends to technical countermeasures, which is a fancy way of referring to the people who specialize in sweeping areas for eavesdropping devices and other electronic espionage devices. Given the prevalence of nanotech and cybernetics, this becomes rather intrusive at times, because if it’s got an optical chip, it can be hacked. People with cybernetics get scanned all the time and may not even be permitted into some areas.

- No one wants to admit it, but there’s no foolproof way to identify technomancers, and a clever one can defeat all of these countermeasures. It’s one thing to stop a Matrix entity in the Matrix, but it’s a whole other thing to think you’re offline and then have someone like me take your data anyway.
- Netcat

- The same goes for skilled adepts. Those with enhanced mental and mnemonic abilities are just as dangerous as someone with a scanner or a good hacker.
- Thorn

Information security also includes maintenance and operation of sensitive compartmented information facilities (SCIFs)—basically small zero-zones where the most secret information is stored, read, or discussed either in person or over hardened landlines. CI demanded more in-person usage during the Deus crisis, but it’s even more critical now. And this brings up another point: Information security also concerns the use and control of hardcopy paper.

The field is slowly encompassing magic and the astral. Security measures and awareness have limited the damage people feared magic could do, but there is a new field of intelligence focused entirely on the astral and metaplanes using spirits. No one is sure yet about the value that it provides for the blood and sweat put into it.

- I cover that later in the Extraplanar Intelligence post.
- Axis Mundi

## ASSET CONTROL

Asset control comprises everything from ensuring that a spy’s assets are reliable and accurate in their information to running double agents and their own assets. This involves interrogations of assets, background research, vulnerability assessments, and maintaining burn lists of unreliable, turned, and just useless agents.

- UCAS intelligence agencies have manipulated burn lists to feed agents to other agencies, either to support a particular agenda or just to hurt them. There are over twenty lists in DeeCee, plus one unified list, and that causes no end of conflict.
- Kay St. Irregular

Counterintelligence will do thorough investigations into an asset’s life, send officers to pose as foreign intelligence and security service (FIS) personnel, and in many ways make their own spies’ lives difficult. There are instances when CI agents will, with or without their handlers’ knowledge, “recruit” assets. Sometimes agents will “arrest” an asset and test the asset’s loyalty to their handler by exploiting known vulnerabilities. Higher-end assessments will feed the asset disinformation and measure how they use it upon release (and test the handler by seeing how far it travels). In some cases, CI agents will try to get the asset to help turn their handler into a double-agent.

- I’ve done that. This Evo wageslave was spying for MCT, and we pretended to rescue and debrief her because her cover got blown. As we were doing due diligence, it turned out that she was actually a member of an SSD team feeding MCT disinformation. I decided to hold on to that information, and I now have a valuable contact in HermeTech.
- Haze





## THREAT ASSESSMENT & ELIMINATION

Similar to force protection, this area encompasses attempts to pinpoint and neutralize security vulnerabilities, including the identification of foreign intelligence and security agents and operatives who may be posing as personnel. This is why CI does constant background investigations, polygraph tests, and other assessments, as well as setting up hostile intelligence simulations, which range from posing as enemy spies recruiting personnel to physically infiltrating facilities.

- CI agents hire runners for these jobs more often than any other. It keeps them from letting their people know that they are conducting internal assessments.
- Kat O' Nine Tales
- I'll be glad to keep testing their security measures without them asking.
- Mika

So what happens when a vulnerability is discovered? It has to be neutralized. This can range from reinforcing passive security measures to kicking out suspected spies protected by diplomatic immunity to walking someone into a cell and killing them. Since that is often likely to happen, there is no shortage of opportunities to liberate valuable assets or otherwise counter their neutralization efforts.

- Sometimes threat neutralization means silencing the person who noticed the vulnerability. As Stalin said, "Death solves all problems. No man; no problem." Those people might also need liberating.
- Marcos

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Espionage is a crime in every country and every megacorp; generally, it's a capital crime. Many convicts spend their lives rotting in prison, but for every country that does that (NEEC members), you have countries like Aztlan and the Chinese states that make executions a spectator sport. Espionage cases are investigated and prosecuted like any other crimes, with certain exceptions. Counterintelligence agents in the UCAS and CAS militaries or British MI-5, for instance, have far-reaching powers to investigate and commit espionage, but at some point, they have to turn over the cases to full law enforcement: military police or the FBI, or Scotland Yard's Special Branch.

This is a domestic policy issue, and agents therefore have to follow rules of evidence and criminal procedure from investigation to prosecution. Almost every government has a streamlined process for facilitating national security investigations while maintaining the barest criteria to uphold convictions.

- This doesn't stop when it goes to trial. CI will dig through the defendant's lawyer's life before allowing the lawyer access to any

classified information used against the client. The defendant has a right to counsel, but not necessarily of their choosing. Judges usually take CI at its word if it refuses to clear a lawyer.

- Kay St. Irregular

This usually applies to civilians, either those who spy against the government or those who spy against certain industries of concern to the government, like security and defense contractors. As the FBI and Air Force see it, breaking into a Fed-Boeing fighter plant is like sneaking into an Air Force hangar and taking a look around the cockpit.

## COUNTER-ESPIONAGE

Espionage isn't about weapons and tools and toys, or even about the information they gather; it's about the people who use them. I know that seems weird coming from a tech wonk like me, but you have to understand that for security and CI, the weakest point of control will always be metahumans.

- JackPoint is no exception. No one cracked my security. One of you bastards voluntarily sold us out to Horizon. So let's just say I take a particular interest in this subject.
- FastJack

In many ways, counter-espionage encompasses all other mission goals. People do the spying, and they are the ones who must be stopped. This ranges from stopping a snooping hacker trying to access a secured VPN to a commando doing long-range reconnaissance; from manning entry control points to responding, as necessary, with assassination, kidnapping, and state-sponsored terrorism. Stopping or neutralizing people is the goal, and that opens up a number of possibilities. Which response organizations choose is often tied to the personalities making the decision.

## SOURCES AND METHODS

So how does CI hunt and break spies? They do it the same way that they try to do with us, because as Thorn mentioned, we are them. They help design the security systems that we penetrate. They provide training and ARO posters and e-mail alerts reminding people to remember the basics—everything from protecting their passwords to keeping alert for people who are overly curious about their work, especially those who have no business being that interested in the minutiae of government contracting and such. Books have been uploaded across the shadow Undernet about security, but no one really discusses how counterintelligence can and will send assassins after you when they're not controlling double agents and running false flag operations.

### Intelligence Collection

Counterintelligence and Human Intelligence (HUMINT) often overlap for a number of reasons, but there are two distinct areas that you should be concerned about: running spies and deception campaigns. These are where they drag runners into the game. Intelligence orgs like to run their own assets, and some jobs are pure HUMINT—such as low-level source operations involving relatively overt contacts, like local informants and





political players used in force protection missions for deployed military forces. Others, however, include responsibility for running spies who work for foreign intelligence and security services (FIS) and deception campaigns where they feed false intelligence under the guise of another FIS.

- Some of these sources are confidential informants, and others are just contacts. They are incredibly valuable when you're on patrol in a hostile area, because good ones can let you know when someone arrives who doesn't belong or whether public sentiment is souring on you. Good ones have saved my life. Bad ones ... Well, it's best not to say.
- Hard Exit

I'll cover deception below, but the really important part is running spies as double agents. Counterintelligence always tries to flip intelligence officers and their assets to use against the enemy. HUMINT officers tend to focus on the assets if they are flipped, but the professional operatives who are recruited or "walk-in" volunteers are run by counterintelligence simply because they have to control someone volunteering for treason.

When any "walk-in" happens, the counterintelligence personnel are the first on the scene. This is when someone makes contact with foreign intelligence or security voluntarily. No matter how the initial contact actually happens—literal walk-ins, which are rare; dead drops to known FIS sites in the real world or Matrix; or some kind of magical contact—they have to evaluate it to ensure that the agency isn't being set up. There are unreliable agents, double agents, members of phishing expeditions, and good old lunatics who are all intent on fucking over the agencies for their own gain. There's a whole industry of professional agents who try to play agencies against each other for profit.

- The best/worst walk-ins are counterintelligence agents, especially if you're playing in their yard. They have enough intelligence to know your tradecraft, how to negotiate with you, what you want, and above all how to do it anonymously. It's like blindfolded sex where each partner waves knives around.
- Fianchetto

Turning someone requires you to determine their weaknesses and to exploit them. Most of the time you can manipulate someone with money, sex, or vices. There is no shortage of alcoholics and low-grade addicts in the intelligence community. The stress just wears on you, and the really rare and valuable assets like magicians and technomancers often get a pass for their addictions because they are irreplaceable. Recruiting assets from the community requires patience and a deep understanding of what the spy runner has to offer. Almost every spook gets a soft sell, partly to test their interest and partly to remind them whose turf they're intruding on. There is sometimes a need for the hard sell, and we often get used for those jobs. Sometimes the best way to exploit a vulnerability is to push an asset over the line, turning them into a foreign spy. These are assets valuable enough to target, but who could run to their own CI/security folks. Necessity, either in time or knowledge, requires CI to push an asset to become a double agent through intimidation or a fraudulent recruiting pitch. A third-party deniable operative can act as a white knight, offering

to protect an asset or provide them with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. In these situations, time tends not to be on anyone's side. A good CI agent is able to control the perception that no matter how much pressure is on them, it's magnitudes worse on their asset. Above all, the most effective method is to appeal to a spy's ego. Sometimes a walk-in approaches counterintelligence on ideological grounds, but the most destructive spies have volunteered because they thought they knew better than their superiors.

- The hard sell works especially well when you can put the asset in a position where exposure of their actions gets them imprisoned or killed no matter who else knows besides them and you.
- Thorn
- Spy agencies are run by politicians, and they don't always make the smartest or best choice as far as an operative on the ground is concerned. For example, the Elysee Palace may tell a veteran DGSE operative to liaise with a Nubian spy in Cairo that he *knows* is involved in corrupt French politics. The CIA may send a girl fresh out of college alone to meet some Russian mercs in Baku, and then half a dozen suits have to cover their asses when she unsurprisingly disappears. Politics drives veteran frontline spies to do dumb things, actions that end careers, like picking a verbal fight with the Secretary of State live on CBC or starting a private war in Tashkent.
- Kay St. Irregular
- I understand the frustration that many feel, but there are also a lot more opportunities now to walk away if you are sick of being jerked around by some desk spy. Espionage is political, and there's always someone who will back your private agenda these days. You can play the game, go independent, go corporate, or go into the shadows. I have no respect for traitors, as some old friends have learned.
- Fianchetto

Whether it's spyrunning or low-level source operations, CI operatives are paranoid as hell, even compared to normal spies. They distrust everyone and everything, and are willing to use disposable, deniable assets as intermediaries to gather intelligence on suspected spies to help them keep an eye on who's in their territory. There is a risk matrix they use to determine the reliability and value of an asset, and if an asset meets the criteria, they may hire runners to work as handlers in spite of the danger that comes from letting an outsider handle their information. Runners can be valuable wild cards.

### Investigation Tools

The term "Moscow Rules" refers to the countermeasures Western spies used when facing the omnipresent surveillance in Moscow and Beijing during the Cold War of the twentieth century. In totalitarian states, everyone and everything could be a spy, as the Stasi proved in East Germany. Saeder-Krupp shutting down Europe's Matrix during Crash 2.0 proved that their entire communications infrastructure was compromised to its core by Lofwyr's espionage operation. Counterintelligence operations are able to merge the clandestine nature of espionage with the authority that comes from their law enforcement role. Spies





running against the Indian Intelligence Bureau have to evade the hundreds of metahuman watchers in addition to the magical and Matrix assets it can send after one man. Even if they all fail, the IIB can then assert the fear and awe that most citizens experience when someone flashes a badge.

Investigations comprise so many different aspects. Counterintelligence includes surveillance, reconnaissance, interrogation, interviewing personnel for background investigations, and searching for criminals like normal cops. This is usually in the domestic capacity, but it also applies to foreign missions (embassies, military garrisons, etc.).

- Many counterintelligence agents are just that: trained and sworn pseudo-cops. It's always a trip to see them in a Yucatán forward operating base or a Desert Wars staging area flashing their badges and busting balls.
- Picador

Dedicated CI agents or law enforcement officers like the FBI or DDI have to follow certain rules of evidence and criminal procedure. But chances are you've seen or run for cops like Lone Star and know that there are ways to work around those rules when they don't get the results that they want. Remarkably, there are actually a number of legal opportunities for freelance experts to work with the cops if you have the barest of fake credentials. For example, the FBI has a unit called the Special Surveillance Group. It's a covert surveillance, SIGINT, and TECHINT unit composed of non-agent hackers. SSG does everything from counterinsurgency to organized crime, and they get spread pretty thin. Gone are the days when the government threw tons of cash at people to maintain a presence, and so agents will hire runners or semi-legit folks who don't cause too much trouble to provide technical assistance.

- Cops are behind the curve when it comes to technomancers and synthetic intelligence because there's really no body of law yet. Some in the UCAS DOJ are bringing "disposable" cases with friendly defendants and then arguing for courts to admit Resonance Realms data and AI testimony. This will take years, but if the courts side with the government, then it will change everything.
- Kay St. Irregular

Since all fences and most fixers are informants, cops rely on them to connect them with runners. It helps to be able to use people like us who are always using new IDs and who carry the scent of anti-authority on us to help front undercover investigations or to manipulate suspects into incriminating themselves, especially social adept faces or other con artists. And if someone runs, well ... extradition is not an easy task. So the cops aren't above "rendering" suspects back home.

- The Texas Rangers have been doing it for decades.
- Hard Exit

### Analysis and Threat Assessment

What does counterintelligence do with all of their criminal intelligence and information? Bundle it up and write reports,

sure, but they also have to be a little proactive in this regard. Counterintelligence ops perform a lot of testing. They sweep for bugs, probe Matrix nodes for security breaches, and sometimes test physical and magical security and intelligence countermeasures. Where we come in, it usually involves risking our lives either enhancing or blowing up attempts to put raw intelligence to use. First of all, CI spooks hire runners to perform hostile intelligence simulations. This is where they test their own capabilities and prove how clever they really are. This can range from trying to recruit an asset to using an integrated magic/tech team to test a spy's skills, since, frankly, runners are much better at integrating disciplines than most counterintelligence teams, especially since we don't have the bureaucracy and politics of your typical UCAS joint task force. Runners also make good "red" teams because we're even more improvisational than most spies. Of course, CI agents might not want clever or even successful recruits. They have to justify their jobs like anyone else, and if a red team does something unexpected or wins, then it makes them look bad.

- The Western agencies actually try to make runners hold back by demanding they don't cause harm. I've seen GRU operatives let runners go all out and then murder them during the after-action meet to conceal their part in killing a bunch of Red Army spies.
- Red Anya
- CI is more political than regular intelligence, and paranoid and political as they are, they would sooner conceal any evidence of their incompetence than fix it. If there's no awareness, there's no problem. So feel free to poke around a little more if you can, because what are they going to do? Of course that might be part of the test, too. The term "wilderness of mirrors" is not just a pithy saying; it's a way of life.
- Thorn

One of the other ways runners are drawn into this field is through the use of social network analysis tools and countermeasures. Any twelve-year-old can download this software to track webs of contacts and power players. There are also countermeasures that basically run those same algorithms and point out where to inject enough "clutter" variants to be discarded. Those countermeasures don't really mean anything unless somebody goes out there and becomes a social variable. Guess who that usually ends up being? Deniable, freelance assets like us are sent to put people together or keep them apart, or hack into accounts and lay datatrails to manipulate the data set that these algorithms use to model networks. Most of this is subtle work contracted to faces, mages, and hackers.

This gets into some crazy territory because runners end up working seemingly random jobs just so that someone can protect or defeat some asset. The whole thing works the other way, too, where to "clarify" their analysis, agents will send runners to investigate or neutralize web nodes in order to get a better picture of how someone is connected to a foreign operative. So who knows if you end up whacking some salaryman, a mafioso, or another runner all because some guy you never knew about had spoken to them, and a Truth Dancer is trying to prove he's an asset for the Information Secretariat?





- Does this sound a lot like The Exchange to anyone else?
- Slamm-O!
- This is dangerous and stupid, and becoming much more common. We don't need another Samantha Roth, the DIA colonel, running JTF Seattle counterintelligence. She ran a web of deceit and illegal operations and even used the New Revolution against Seattle's neighbors. Of course, she got caught up in her bullshit, and it literally blew up in her face while others died. Somehow she became a fucking trid star while every runner I know who worked for her, against her, and even one who "dated" her insist she never knew anything about what she was doing.
- Bull
- Sam knows exactly what she's doing.
- Kay St. Irregular
- How would you know?
- Bull
- You remember Colloton getting grief for her "Tree of Liberty" speech by a bunch of Monday-morning brawlers? The press aide who wrote that speech had been reassigned from psyops because he was incompetent. After all, how much damage can a speech-writer do?
- Sunshine
- Who transferred him?
- Snopes

### Strategic Influence and Communication

This includes everything from psychological operations to deception and false-flag operations. Psychological operations are intended to spread propaganda to discourage enemy forces, lower morale, or convince them to side with you. It began by using paper leaflets and then radio and other broadcasts targeting enemy and civilian populations. Now it includes anything available over the Matrix, from AROs to blogs and especially memes, which are far and away the most effective but the hardest to create. It's not "true" espionage, but President McMulkin's campaign successfully used these tactics to push his name recognition all the way to the Manor House despite him being the ultimate dark horse. He managed to convince the CAS populace that he was aligned with the UCAS veep candidate/Technocratic Party chair and that they should vote for him while ignoring his recent past (and some legal niceties). A side note: the guys in psychological operations are top-notch forgers, and Johnsons have been known to provide bulletproof IDs as compensation.

- Another good example is the technomancer hysteria the corps whipped up. Then they whispered how they or their proxies like the Undernet Alliance or Kivanet could protect the now-endangered TMs. Yeah, right. God knows how many poor slots got vivisected believing it.
- Netcat
- Not enough.
- Clockwork
- Proof that psyops works on anyone, even when by all rights it shouldn't.
- Dr. Spin
- I can vouch for those IDs. The best one I ever got was made by Aegis.
- 2XL

A lot of what psyops does is based on disinformation. Runners are hired for everything from planting commlinks in parking lots to feeding fake reports onto whistleblower blogs and the Resonance Realms. It also includes running false-flag operations, where counterintelligence runs spies and other assets using the cover of another agency or organization. This ranges from a Mr. Johnson calling himself Hans Brackhaus to suggest an S-K op to some pretty elaborate jobs involving a whole fake spy ring with offices and everything.

One of my favorite stories involves the creation of an entire ring of spies who were former operatives and contractors placed into politically useful positions in Hong Kong. Then they were marked and recruited by an intelligence agency that was secretly tipped off by their handlers. When it turned out they were spies, Wuxing counterintelligence sent a team of runners to kidnap them for further use and, hopefully, to convince the world that they were just random targets. The runners "failed" and the spies all escaped to meet up with their foreign handler. But that was when their real handler showed up and turned the foreign operative into his own asset. The other Wuxing agents were pissed at being played, but you can't deny that it was clever and it worked.

- Poor Jon. By the time the Red Samurai moved to arrest him he had committed seppuku. If Wuxing knew that he was already on three other payrolls they might not have wasted so many resources.
- Fianchetto

Horizon is by far the best in the field of psychological operations, from the public relations and strategic message-making and delivery of Charisma Associates to the stuff the Dawkins Group does. It's been well-covered that they use social adepts to conduct these specific types of operations on behalf of the corporation and its clients. So, how do they actually work? Let's look at Mogadishu.

Using the stable base of Somaliland, one of its neighboring Ethiopian territories to the north, NeoNET has been trying to develop the city as its African capital since it's close to Nairobi and other sites but isolated enough to dominate. Horizon is intent on preventing them from getting a toehold, so Dawkins Group adepts and contracted operatives (read: us) have been mingling among the populace, pretending to be affiliated with NeoNET or its allies, and doing everything from acting like jerks to building up sentiment only to pull the rug on some good deed at the last second. Others are trying to sow dissent and conflict just to keep NeoNET distracted. Another group is trying to get people to support Aztechnology since they're already pretty popular in Africa. Finally, and this is my favorite, there are Horizon operatives posing as Ares and Saeder-Krupp reps. Those corps have poor reputations because they reek of neo-colonialist superiority and







don't hide it, and these Horizon guys are selling the idea that if you want to be powerful, you have to be ruthless; so join the most inhumanly ruthless team you can. And it's working. The result is a lot of people who don't buy into NeoNET's goodwill efforts, and instead think they can take the city by force with those corps' covert, but nonexistent, backing.

- It makes sense to people who've grown up knowing nothing but that very idea that the ones who get ahead are the ones willing to do what no one else will.
- Black Mamba

### Special Operations

This is the stuff you all love: running and gunning, shooting and looting. Special operations start at assassination and bottom out at bribery of low-level sources. They contract a lot of wetwork against everyone from assets to politicians, especially since it overlaps with the fight against terrorism and insurgency. No one gives a damn about a dead terrorist or pirate, and since a lot of international law gives it a pass (especially piracy), it's more common to kill a target than to capture them. Military intelligence relies heavily on this for preventative measures to keep information from being used by the enemy. The Russians and Aztechnology are most notorious for counter-espionage assassinations, having dedicated teams of killers at their disposal.

- Aztechnology hired a lot of Russians after the EuroWars, and it duplicated the KGB playbook. While UGB is split among various factions that keep them out, Aztechnology Corporate Intelligence maintains deep connections with the GRU.
- Hard Exit
- Chimera, the assassins for hire, is composed of ex-UGB operatives.
- Riser

Beyond that business, special operations covers extractions, sabotage, subversion, and sedition field ops. It's all sorts of fun runner business, and to ensure deniability and expendability, runners and other freelance specialists get hired all of the time to do these criminal acts. Agencies have plenty of in-house talent: CIA has paramilitary officers, company men, and access to the military; the GRU runs Spetsnaz; OMI has a permanent detachment of Wildcats on call. Yet the importance of plausible deniability leads to many of these missions being performed by runners.

### THE SENTINELS

I've compiled a list of some of the most distinctive counterintelligence agencies to round out this upload. Basically, these eleven are most likely to delve into the shadows and work all sides. There is a North American focus, but most of these agencies have international scopes because that's the nature of the game now.

#### UCAS FBI National Security Service

Created after the New Revolution and based on MI-5, the National Security Service (NSS) is a sub-agency within the heart of the FBI to combat terrorism, insurgency, and espionage. It conducts domestic and limited foreign criminal investigations

into espionage, which creates no end of enemies when agents go into the CIA and stop operations dead to accuse officers of treason. NSS maintains surveillance on known and suspected spies, especially those who work in DeeCee embassies. It also coordinates operations with other law enforcement and intelligence agencies, again, serving as the lead agency for domestic investigations. This often puts them into conflict with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

- NSS almost took the Secret Service's protection mission after it lost four protectees in eight years. But the Service has powerful allies and now runs DHS. It took over the FedPols, and now it's gunning to incorporate the NSS. If you're interested, Hilary Stuart is the DHS agent to speak with in DeeCee.
- Pistons

The NSS adheres to the law when investigating government and corporate espionage. When its counterintelligence mission overlaps with other missions, NSS throws caution to the wind and will act outside the law. The overlap of the security mission also means that criminal intelligence is gathered alongside criminal investigations. Strategic influence and psyops are just as routine a set of tools as interrogations and covert surveillance.

Assistant Director David Greene recently announced the Counterintelligence Executive Program, which expands the role of FBI assistance to combat economic espionage against UCAS corps by providing them with information on tradecraft and personnel, including runners.

- Some liaison agents—Rahim Nazel (DeeCee), Marcus Williams (Denver), and Robert Johansson (Seattle)—are directing clients to shadow talent the FBI uses.
- Icarus
- I love it when law enforcement becomes an entrepreneurial activity. It makes my life infinitely easier.
- Kane

#### UCAS Defense Protective Intelligence Field Authority

DPIFA is a strategic initiative designed to create a proactive, strategic program unifying dozens of Defense CI components, including those of the defense intelligence agencies. In theory, DPIFA analyzes, coordinates, and supports field operations. In reality, it runs nearly all Department of Defense (DOD) counterintelligence operations. The wording of its authorization allows DPIFA to draw resources and information from any CI program, including military intelligence and law enforcement agencies.

Most DOD programs are defensive and reactive, hunting spies piecemeal. Director Louis Benavidez is expanding offensive operations in a concerted manner to hinder foreign intelligence, especially NAN intelligence. As Colloton deploys forces globally for UN interventions, and to the Desert and Rad Wars Open Challenges, DPIFA sneaks in undercover to conduct their own operations.

- There's a CID agent in Nairobi, Marion Newton, who is observing the corporate spies. Vincent Qi, a Marine major, is observing



Mediterranean anti-piracy naval intelligence. Both answer to Joanna Krstic out of Dubai.

- Thorn

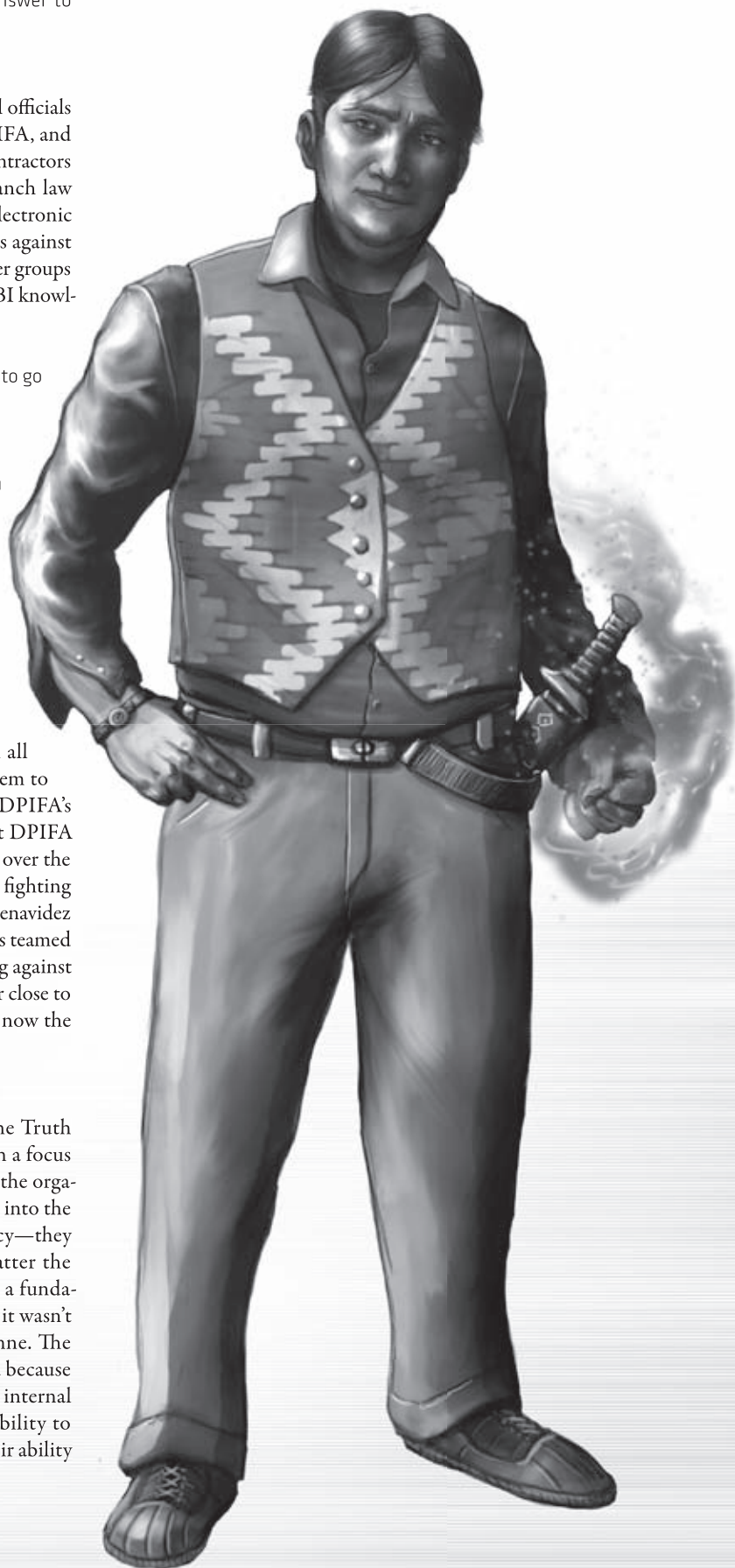
The Military Recovery Act allowed many mid-level officials to carve out niches that are now being attacked by DPIFA, and that has made the fight political across the UCAS as contractors like Federated-Boeing play the game. They assist branch law enforcement and intelligence agencies that engage in electronic and technical-based espionage and influence operations against domestic policlubs, peace groups, corporations, and other groups opposing national security interests, without DHS or FBI knowledge or approval.

- What a surprise—the American government using spies to go after political enemies.
- Aufheben
- All espionage is political. Colloton's administration understands that better than most. Benavidez is an ally of Iain Lesker, and both of them did very well in the private sector before returning to government service and continue to share political and shadow assets. This is all a proxy fight between President Colloton and the powerbrokers who forced her to take on Lesker and Benavidez in the first place.
- Kay St. Irregular

The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) has run all DOD espionage for a long time. One might expect them to be involved, but they are either bypassed or fighting DPIFA's encroachment. Admiral Fred Dominguez refuses to let DPIFA use his officers for CI operations. DPIFA has no power over the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), but it is fighting against them anyway because of an old grudge between Benavidez and its commanding general, Benjamin Miller. Miller has teamed up with Dominguez, and they stand with those fighting against DPIFA's expansion. John Kelley, a retired Delta operator close to Miller, runs a team of contracted spies for JSOC. He's now the point man for DIA jobs against DPIFA as well.

### **Sovereign Tribal Council Truth Dancers**

Originally made up mostly of Sioux shamans, the Truth Dancers have evolved to run all STC counterintel with a focus on magecraft. There is currently a dispute surrounding the organization, as the PCC wants to allow non-tribal citizens into the Truth Dancers. For them, it's all about ruthless efficiency—they want the ability to deploy the best resources, no matter the source. To the Sioux, the proposed change represents a fundamental blow to NAN security. The Pueblo reply is that it wasn't Hispanics and Anglos who briefly took over Cheyenne. The Dancers are a key part of the STC's anti-Anglo agenda because they have a free pass to go anywhere in the NAN. An internal schism could weaken the unit and hurt the Sioux's ability to influence NAN actors on security issues, along with their ability to spy from Council Island.





- Pueblo Dancers are unrepentant about hiring outside help to assist, with the SecForce picking up the tab. They regularly contract out to SpiriTech, but with their new stealth motif, they are hiring more deniable assets.
- Mika

The Truth Dancers have markedly altered their tactics. In part it is due to an injection of new blood, but mostly it is due to a newfound desire for clandestine operations. The Dancers used to ride into town as a show of force and use ritual sorcery to break suspects. They now include quite a few social adepts who can manipulate suspects with a great deal more subtlety.

- The difference is striking. Used to be you could tell when they were around because they left a lingering astral presence. Now there's nothing.
- Lyran

Rooting out infiltration using the old ways didn't work, so some of the Dancers are getting creative. Robert Yazzie, a Navajo eagle shaman, has been hiring runners to collect proprietary magical techniques from corps, institutions, and agencies all over the world. With Seattle still being a hotbed of intrigue, Joseph Paisano is the Pueblo adept to see.

- There are people on both sides who want to escalate the conflict for financial gain. As UCAS and Sioux hardliners pick fights, the PCC is working to profit in case either of the two overextend themselves in the northwest. It's as if all this counterintelligence is making the parties involved less safe, not more.
- Fianchetto

### **Knight Errant**

The CI boys in Detroit have two major problems. The first is Roger Soaring-Owl's resignation. Soaring-Owl doesn't just know about their sources and methods—he invented many of them. Damien Knight may trust his former right hand man, but Knight Errant has numerous counterintelligence contracts that could go bottom-up if there are breaches. Michel Laguiller, a former Seraph in Manhattan, is running deep-cover espionage against KE to determine if Soaring-Owl has been talking. He hasn't yet, but Anne Ravenheart, a Soaring-Owl loyalist to the end, is lurking in the shadows.

- Laguiller is a double agent for SDEI, Esprit's (thus Aztechnology's) intelligence subsidiary.
- FastJack
- Major Anthony "Mastermind" Clevinger has also been hiring runners to investigate Soaring-Owl. He's a social network analyst using a combination of augmentations and his adept abilities. He uses runners to help fill the gaps in his knowledge or as bodyguards when he goes into the field.
- Cosmo

The second problem arises from an otherwise stellar victory: the Seattle contract. In order to bring their contract fully up to speed, Knight Errant hired Lone Star personnel, and that's never

been a particularly warm relationship. To reassure the public and the Metroplex Congress, anyone who saw his surprise cameo on *Chase: Errant Knight* knows that Colonel Lloyd Ritter, the spymaster of Silicon Valley, is in Seattle to "enhance their intelligence operations." What that actually means is that his team has been crawling up the asses of ex-Star officers with a microscope.

- Ritter is an unlikely diplomat. He's not particularly charismatic (especially for an elf), but he is smart and clever in creating and running alliances. He has his hands full because the Seattle contract requires them to cooperate with UCAS law enforcement and intelligence while also running counterintelligence against those same agencies.
- Hard Exit
- He used to run the Seattle shadows as Grey Knight and has been seen in local haunts with Tyler, an ork adept, playing tour guide. They're meeting damn near everyone, and it's not to catch up on old times.
- Bull

### **Evo Special Security Detail**

The Special Security Detail (SSD) is an interesting bunch because they are a counterintelligence force masquerading as an executive protection unit. That isn't to say they aren't capable bodyguards, but the organization really exists as an asset-control and influence operation. They serve to reinforce the perception that Evo has a unique concern for its citizens, and that they are more than capable of protecting them. In addition, the clandestine nature of their security operations allows them to protect more than just their protectees.

This is all a myth. Realistically, the SSD is a massive counter-espionage force designed to prevent internal and external actions against the corporation. People are disposable. The corporation is forever. That is the only thing that SSD believes in. Operatives focus on information and asset control, and, to that end, almost all of their senses are recorded for archiving and analysis. Additionally, the other employees and their protectees' senseware is usually bugged. Since SSD operatives are in close proximity, it is not difficult for them to download the bug reports surreptitiously through skinlink or some other clandestine access.

- Supposedly SSD can also shut them down. Then, when their senseware restarts, they discover that they're strapped naked to a chair in the basement.
- Plan 9

A common concept employed by the SSD is deliberate extraction, where they will purposely allow personnel or data to be extracted in order to develop intelligence on the espionage, identify operatives, and either pursue them further up the ladder, disseminate disinformation, or send a counter-covert ops team after the offender. To further this goal, SSD hires runners to feed controlled intelligence to their enemies (with or without runners' knowledge) as bait.





- Those counter-operative teams are sent when Evo wants you to never have existed, especially if you worked on a regular basis for them. It took months of hiding and some creative dealings to finally get one of them off my ass.
- Mika
- I once got bounced around Europe moving a couple of Evo scientists around up the chain to someone I suspect was an MCT operative until I ended up in Bilbao. I wasn't two blocks from the final meet with all of their folks when the safehouse exploded. Deph, the ork fixer in Hamburg who first hired me, then appeared and had my team transport the scientists to Moscow. Wild.
- Ecotope

SSD operations in North America are run by Irina Seina out of Seattle. She started out in one of those counter-operative teams before moving on to being a handler working the shadows through a couple of trusted fixers. Be warned that her runs are extremely dangerous. SSD has a whole support structure, but their runs tend to involve deception or testing security or assets. SSD contracts out most of their special operations.

## GRU

The Glavnoye Razvedyvatel'noye Upravleniye (GRU) is the Red Army's military intelligence directorate, an oft-overlooked, but fearsome, presence in the spy game. There is a quiet insurgency brewing among the political officers assigned throughout the Red Army and the GRU itself. These officers are supposed to ensure that soldiers and officers in the army adhere to the Supreme Soviet's party line, and they even have the authority to countermand or remove a field officer. The political officers, however, have aligned with themselves and their own interests. Having already been positioned for maximum efficacy over the army, they have unified as the *Siloviki* to become a threat to their masters while remaining indispensable to those in charge. Political officers already have a considerable amount of power, being the ones to "maintain morale" and "reassure" military personnel of their loyalty to the Rodina, and the *Siloviki* have been moving people around the GRU and the rest of the Red Army as they make their move to get a seat in the Kremlin. The whole thing was masterminded by Colonel Natalia Davydovskaya, a social adept, during the Polish campaign. She definitely wants to be the one sitting in the *Siloviki*'s seat when they get it. The GRU controls the Spetsnaz, the Russian special forces, and the *Siloviki* have brought it under their control.

- If anyone could mount a successful move into the Kremlin, it would be Natalia.
- Red Anya

Beyond the palace intrigue, the GRU has been mounting a campaign to control the influence various corporations have on the Red Army. Evo and Saeder-Krupp both see it as their toy, but the political officers see them both as the enemy. Of everyone mentioned, GRU is by far the most paranoid. They are also the best equipped, in their own way, to combat certain elements. Because one of their main enemies runs the Russian Matrix, and they are as scared as anyone in CI of the dangers of the Resonance

Realms to uncover buried secrets, the GRU has gone back to the true classics of tradecraft. Business is done with hard copies, standalone computers or isolated networks, and a lot of face-to-face interactions. Between the Matrix and magic, they are basically fighting the future.

- There were always suspicions that Winternight thoroughly infiltrated the Russian government. Given GRU's legitimate concerns regarding the Resonance realms, one shudders to think what their solution might entail. Now Andrew Robinson, a EuroForce intelligence commander and suspected deep-cover GRU agent, is searching for Friday and members of Ex Pacis. Can anyone seriously say the Russians wouldn't explore those options?
- Fianchetto
- I hate to say it, but I wish Puck was here to say no.
- Slamm-O!

## Zone Defense Force

Given that the Zone Defense Force (ZDF) comprises several adversarial forces, it takes CI very seriously because the risk of infiltration is so high. Everyone knows that espionage will get you eaten in Ghostwalker's Denver, but that hasn't kept people from trying to spy on or within the Force. There are so many opportunities to exploit the access and intelligence that it gathers that people keep trying. The Counterintelligence & Security Command (CSC) is led by Colonel Denny Winters, a former Texas Ranger and Department of Strategic Intelligence (DSI) officer.

- When Winters started probing into Steve Ridgemont, he got shut down hard. Now he's focused his energy on Roger Soaring-Owl, which adds credence to the rumors that he might join the command staff if CSC is performing a background investigation.
- Kay St. Irregular

Winters was brought on because of his experience battling Azzies in the shadows. With the increase in diplomatic presence due to the new treaty negotiations and the Winter Olympics, he has no shortage of targets—any of which could be Azzies or their agents. At the same time, Ghostwalker's Watchers have become the target of interest and espionage by Watchers who never picked sides. In response, Winters assigned Anton Gage, a combat hacker, to help keep them from being flipped or neutralized.

- Gage is half Anglo, half Sandia Pueblo Indian, and put up with no end of grief for that in the SecForce. Now he's a top ZDF operative who's coincidentally hiring some of Juanita Iglala's Smokers to aid the wyrm. I don't think anyone likes the idea of PCC and GW teaming up.
- Kay St. Irregular
- This business began after one of the "Nadja Daviars" running around out there started making herself seen in Denver reaching out to all of Dunk's former watchers. I think someone needs to remind them that none of those women is the real Daviar.
- Snopes







- Just what is going on with all these Daviars?
- Stone
- That's a tale for another posting. Or two.
- Snopes

### Tír Republican Corps

Brigadier Niall McGuinness was brought in from the army to overhaul Tír na nÓg's Republican Corps (TRC) counterintelligence after a five-year tour commanding the United Nations Mission to California. After battling the Information Secretariat and engaging in diplomacy with politicians, soldiers, and mercenaries, he is easily the most experienced commander in foreign tactics and operations. This is also important for the Corps' mission, as its foreign presence expands and outside influence grows within, greatly increasing the difficulty of their mission. Before joining the NEEC, the Tír never had the kind of foreign presence that couldn't be tracked by the TRC. Now they are feeling the full effect of corporate espionage while having to deal with an insurgency—two elements that could be and probably are linked. One thing the elves brought back with them is a respect for the pool of shadow talent. Agent Gerry McKenna is recruiting runners for offensive foreign operations to identify and box in suspected leaks, coordinating with the only real ally the Corps has: Mossad. Some operatives are going to Israel for training, while Beth Barak's country team assists TRC with domestic counter-espionage.

- Niall's daughter Felicia is one of the feared Reach Fuileach. She's in North America hunting paramilitary organizations and their foreign backers because the woman is as persistent as crabs. She comes after me again and Niall buries his other child. His grandson Rory is on a SIGINT field ops team in Ulster.
- Thorn
- McGuinness still has many loyalists in Sacramento, specifically Captain Brighid O'Toole (Tír Army human) and Major Fábian Bã (Amazonian elf), who are hiring runners to continue battling Saeder-Krupp.
- Hard Exit

Captain Kieran O'Neill, a member of McGuinness' command staff, came back from California obsessed with technomancers (it's suspected he is one). He has been recruiting them and even hiring runners to fill the gaping hole he sees in his intelligence apparatus. Hopefully it helps with the larger issue: how the paramilitaries have suddenly been so effective at targeting the TRC. The suspicion is that there is treason in the Corps (which would help explain why they brought McGuinness back from abroad).

### Texas Rangers

To stretch the inevitable Cold War analogies endemic to the Texas border dispute, if the Department of Domestic Investigation (DDI) is the Cold War-era KGB, then the Rangers are the Stasi—and equally as fearsome. Their jurisdiction over Texas only makes them more committed, and they see themselves as at war with all things Azzie. While most eyes are focused on





the Amazonian border conflict far to the south, the Rangers have become increasingly active on both the CAS and Aztlan sides of Austin. The Rangers have a special relationship with Lone Star, mainly because of their mutual interest in fighting Azzies, that keeps them from officially crossing swords.

- Thom Anderson is the Ranger to speak with in San Angelo. He runs a number of smugglers and their crews and has enough political juice on both sides of the border to get you out of nearly any jam.
- Traveler Jones

As the state police/defense force, the Rangers maintain a defensive posture as well as engage in proactive, offensive counterintelligence and other state security operations. A Ranger is not just a cop; he's a trained paramilitary operative capable of waging low-intensity warfare and espionage. The Rangers still follow the motto, "One Riot, One Ranger," especially when it comes to counterintelligence.

This attitude demands that the Rangers develop their own networks of assets and operatives for offensive and defensive espionage operations. Rangers have plenty of responsibilities, and Texas provides them with some resources when they need the assistance. The Rangers are very effective in creating arrangements for compensation. There's nothing free in this world, but they can distribute favors and markers like the adept politicians they basically are, especially those operating outside of Texas.

- Their liaison to the ZDF is Illisa Therrien, an elf who used to live Tir Tairngire and who joined the Rangers a quarter century ago. She hates GW but hides it well.
- Kay St. Irregular

The Rangers rely on considerable training and analysis/data management. It's fascinating to watch how well they manage to switch between commando and peace officer. Since they themselves are targets, there is a mutual protection association composed of current and former Rangers who protect each other and will hire runners to do anything to protect the integrity of the Rangers. It's run by an ex-Ranger-turned-governor and is astonishingly well financed.

### United Kingdom Oversight Board

The United Kingdom Oversight Board runs all counterintelligence for Her Majesty at home and abroad. That is a crucial fact because the British almost certainly run more offensive foreign operations than any other government. UCAS intelligence preys almost entirely on its neighbors, but the British prey on everyone. The British are very intent on preventing espionage before it begins. And don't believe the hype about internecine conflict between MI-5 and MI-6, who both engage in offensive foreign operations. This is not the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), where the agencies have a voice and a say. The politicians' decrees are gospel, and the Oversight Office sub-agency still ensures that.

Everyone from Chairman Sir Henry Compton-Nelson on down is trying to exploit the transition of power to Parliament. Some people fear for their jobs. Others, like the Office's "director" Sir Adam Dashwood, fear for their lives and/or freedom. There are

people who like the status quo of having one effective intelligence agency and others who want the operational and political freedom that would come from reviving JIC and true autonomy. The British give their officers a freer hand compared to those countries that are heavy on task forces, working groups, and accountants. That's good for inspiring creativity and loyalty, but it also allows personal conflicts and compartmentalization to interfere with operations.

- Dashwood may be on leave, but that just frees him and his Templar Ewan McGowan to tie up loose ends in case the end comes. They are trying to rewrite history and burn, bury, or buy off anyone or anything that might send him to prison for the "unsanctioned" murders and the kidnappings his OOs committed, which Lord Marchmont suddenly knows nothing about.
- Thorn
- I knew this MI-5 officer was hiding something when we escorted her from Sarajevo to Dubai with Dashwood on our asses. As far as my contacts knew he was just some contract assassin—they didn't have him pegged as a OO.
- Clockwork

Agency rivalries don't exactly define conflicts like those between Stuart Ashland (MI-6) and Eric Neville (MI-5) in Denver. They are more deeply political. Ashland has deep ties to the New Druidic Movement (NDM) and its hardliners in the Office. Neville came up with his current director-general, Richard Ellis, and they support a scaling back of Britain's police state. You wouldn't expect that to affect the job, but they're playing North American spies off each other based on partisan politics back home.

- The upper vs. lower class divide that often differentiated MI-6 and MI-5 officers has only slightly mellowed over the years, and it affects working relationships such as the one between Ashland and Neville.
- Winterhawk

### Special Information Services

What most people don't realize is that, in addition to corporate and governmental clients, the corporation known as Special Information Services (SIS) also works for organized crime, political groups of all stripes, and, generally, entities that don't have much regard for neutralizing espionage through legal channels. Aegis sells data; SIS sells results. Their focus on espionage naturally includes counterintelligence, and it provides full-spectrum offensive and defensive programs. Ever since the firm was opened by ex-spies at the end of the Cold War, they've spied for the United States and now UCAS/CAS while working for organized crime abroad. It makes for some odd situations since many operatives float in and out of intelligence and law enforcement and then commit crimes in those same jurisdictions.

- SIS has a pretty strong anti-Ares slant going back to when Detroit consolidated a number of security contractors after Crash 1.0. It grew as SIS picked up a lot of Seraphim after CATCo died. Now that Aztechnology owns Esprit, it's using those Seraphim to poach SDEI operatives averse to the bosses from Tenochtitlan.
- Hard Exit





One of SIS's best clients is MCT. They developed a relationship through their mutual interests in the CBC network, and, yes, that now means SIS occasionally works with the Yakuza. This Richmond firm does a lot of business in Kansai in return for its use of ERLA contracts to benefit MCT ops against other extraterritorial corporations.

- MCT appreciates having a partner to cripple investigative reporting and other market action by its competitors. SIS operatives have no reservations about whacking producers, reporters, or even personalities.
- Sunshine

One unique aspect of SIS is that they train corporate and government intelligence officers at their Harvey Point facility, including shadow handlers—Messrs. Johnson. Runners can get into some of their courses if they know the right hoops to jump through and don't act like fools on the campus.

- I can vouch for that. I've done counter-surveillance and interrogation and recently completed the social engineering (spyrunning) program. I feel like a Galahad now, or at least like Riser.
- Haze
- Very funny.
- Riser

## THE LEGAL DIVIDE

Posted by: Hard Exit

There are two different endgames. Most of the time, the goal is to prevent intelligence from gathering actionable information, and agents and operatives can do pretty much anything to accomplish the mission. When prosecuting crimes, the law affords suspects certain rights which need to be observed. There are opportunities to exploit the situation in both instances, as I will discuss using two examples.

### Preventive Counterintelligence

The first example came up when I was working alongside an Argus team conducting counter-espionage on a peacekeeping mission in the Yucatán. In what is a secret to no one, the Azzies are doing everything to undermine and destroy the indigenous government. For the most part, the locals appreciated the UNAF intervention force. I was collaborating with Argus on low-level source operations, since I have had experience developing those types of contacts my entire adult life. This is important in low-intensity conflict zones because these are people who help keep your patrols safe from acts of terrorism and sabotage.

- It's also a key component for counterinsurgency influence ops. Getting local leaders on your side is invaluable to keeping your own forces safe.
- Picador

Things had been going well at first, but after a few weeks there seemed to be a shift in the mood of the populace around Chetumal.

I'd speak with my assets, and everything would be fine. I got some line of bullshit about how it was some internal dispute among the natives, but they appreciated our presence to keep them safe from the Azzies. What I found out later was that an Aztechnology Cuachicqueh warrior was running a very clever espionage operation using a runner team that does mostly face work to help sell the big lie that the UN was secretly on Aztechnology's side. He wasn't about to bluff the locals that this good ol' CAS girl was actually an Aztech double-agent, but the blue helmets I was with were mostly French Foreign Legionnaires. Aztechnology PR is very effective among French-speaking Africans because Aztechnology really sells the image of Ares and Saeder-Krupp (among other corps) being neo-colonialists, whereas the Azzies are a product of a self-determination movement like the Africans. So Major Mfume became an Aztechnology stooge, and we became the enemy.

- Mutual self-determination. Ha! The bullshit's so thick I can smell it from here.
- Sunshine

No sooner did I come out of a meeting with the mayor of Chetumal that the major was assassinated, and the locals refused to cooperate. It would have been bad enough that our low-level sources weren't cooperating, but Argus' recruited assets on both sides of the border were also being tight-lipped. The Argus commander, codenamed Wolf, called in a runner team for a counter-espionage assassination. We began to round up and interrogate people. Wolf's runners were inside Aztlan killing some of Argus' own assets. As far as he saw it, they were compromised. Some of them were just fed disinformation, but he had no qualms about liquidating low-value assets.

- Wolf is a ruthless bastard. He's an old-school UGB assassin who embraced capitalism, and he may be the only person alive who's volunteered for the Balkans. But he is very good at his job.
- Thorn

This Cuachicqueh warrior we nicknamed Joker was somehow outwitting us. He'd recruited assets to assist in spotting and setting up some daring kidnappings, only to come up blind and deaf when we asked them what happened. It got to the point where he put a .50-cal round through another mercenary that clipped me and a legionnaire before stopping, and that was just to distract us as his runners kidnapped a visiting Czech commander. But Wolf's own runners were causing havoc in Aztlan, and they broke open the whole thing. Their hacker cracked an intelligence network and found logistical information on the transfer of hostages. Every spy has a tell or a routine that will eventually give them away. In this case, Joker always transferred his data to another warrior in the same location. He was passing the Czech in less than an hour.

Wolf and the rest of our team moved out into Aztlan, but in the end we captured Joker and another warrior and brought them back to our camp. Wolf's runners were still looking for the other hostages, but it never panned out. For us, the mission became one of breaking someone who had nearly killed himself before he was neutralized. Again, the legal niceties that would have been afforded one in, say, the CAS were not observed. Nor, in the end, were those of the Geneva Conventions. As far as anyone in power

on either side was concerned, the whole thing never happened, and we never existed.

### Reactive Counterintelligence

In a wholly separate instance, I was involved in a criminal investigation in Denver. That didn't stop some of us from having to break the rules to fully pursue the case and secure a conviction. This was actually a pretty unique situation. The whole thing began with the arrival of Jackson Burke, SIS contractor for DSI's Guerrilla Science Section. Director Nevins sent him to Denver to brief forces deployed into the newly annexed Aztlan Sector for guerrilla tactics and to observe any new tactics.

Army and DSI counterintelligence kept an eye on him because he was a valuable resource and was expected to contact hostile forces. I got involved at first because I was part of the mobile team escorting him through the city. But after a while, one of my assets was making some noise about him being seen mingling with foreign intelligence. I brought this up with him, and he said that it was legit. I brought this up with an Army agent, and he replied that he and his DSI counterpart were aware of it.

Burke got a pass because he was politically connected. He'd been Director Nevins' research assistant at UT-Austin and was well liked and well connected in Atlanta. While Army and DSI gave him a pass, a couple of DDI agents had been covertly yet meticulously investigating his finances and his foreign contact reports. Special Agents Christopher J. Sims and Eugene Anh compiled evidence that he was spying for Amazonia.

- This makes sense. Even though they have a mutual enemy, if the CAS gets involved with this Amazonian border conflict, Amazonia won't necessarily welcome them or share the spoils.
- Glasswalker

Anh heard about my inquiries and one night approached me, saying that there were some people who wanted to pursue justice. They kept hitting an evidentiary wall though. When I shared some information about some other cases I had seen, pieces started falling into place. Sims arrived, and together we formed a plan. I approached one of my contacts in Lone Star to put me in touch with the shadowriders—Lone Star's company men. The runners

got to work searching for the missing evidence we needed that was beyond DDI's jurisdiction, since Denver has plenty of ways to conceal evidence beyond criminal jurisdiction. If we could, we would find a way to have the "discovered" evidence delivered in a way that would survive an evidentiary hearing. Lone Star came in again when someone in the UCAS Sector was able to deliver it to the Star in that sector, which then made it available to us in the CAS because the evidence was controlled by an entity with legal jurisdiction in both countries.

- Anything gained from an illegal search by law enforcement is generally inadmissible (depending on the government and how authoritarian it is, for example, YMMV) under the concept of "fruit of the poisonous tree." If some civilian decides to hand over evidence because they woke up that morning a born-again good citizen, though, that's completely acceptable.
- Kay St. Irregular

Even with the leeway granted to espionage investigations, the scrutiny that comes with such accusations leveled those advantages. So we had the intelligence to prove what was going on but no way to legally use it. They couldn't ask about what they shouldn't have known, but they were able to ask around it using what evidence Sims and Anh, who was a lawyer, knew was admissible. As soon as Sims said, "Here's the thing," Burke was toast. Sims is a powerful interrogator who knows how to tell the story that suspects will agree to because it sounds so right. And he makes their actions really clever right up until they got busted. He never gave the man an opening to deny anything or realize there were holes in the theory he presented. Sims has an encyclopedic knowledge of tradecraft, and so he'd flatter Burke, playing on his ego and acting like a fan to eke out the details. Anh would pose as the naïf to these two intellectual giants who knew so much about tradecraft, asking questions that drew exasperated and damning answers from Burke, who got lost in his own bullshit. Hours passed, and, in the end, he hanged himself on his own words while Sims and Anh got their conviction.

- Great manipulators are thrilling to watch. Sexy, even.
- Thorn



## ...EXTRAPLANAR INTELLIGENCE...

Milan's tendopoli stretched 17 kilometers in every direction; a mass of unwashed metahumans, the few Awakened among them flickering like sparks in a deepening night. On the east end, Virbius descended upon a cluster of tents belonging to the gangster Lucaro Giacoppo.

Virbius tried, once, to explain astral surveillance to a metahuman. The spirit asked her to imagine slotting a BTL with the sound turned off. This approximation seemed to please the woman, though it was completely off. In truth the woman could not have imagined what Virbius perceived, because she was flesh and blood. Her sinew grounded her to a reality interpreted through five senses, while Virbius came from another place entirely.

Virbius knew Lucaro's lair well. The spirit knew, for instance, that the gangster relied on a group of witches to protect him from astral intrusion, and only one of them had the sight. She did not see Virbius as she was guarding the item, which had originally brought Virbius here. The DIMR offered a reward for information leading to the return of a scepter stolen from their vaults. Virbius had known the scepter long ago. What little aural memory remained of it allowed the spirit to track it to this place. The reward for that descreyng had indeed been handsome. Then the spirit's handler turned the recovery work over to metahumans. Virbius could sense them nearby. Even masked, their auras glittered against the backdrop of wasted souls.

The spirit sank through the roof of the main tent. Lucaro was not alone. Four bodies were pressed into the cluttered space. The gangster had his techomancers with him; a Spanish male barely into his teens and a girl much the same. They could have been twins. The fourth person was an elven female unknown to the spirit. She did not have the gift, but Virbius could see that she'd sacrificed much of her natural self to wires and steel. It could be valuable to learn more about her presence here.

Virbius faded into the human realm, his material form a rat peeking out from beneath a split crate. At once the technomancer boy straightened and stared in the direction where the spirit had manifested. The girl's eyes passed over the place where the spirit hid. She and the boy seemed to share a silent message before both turned away. The elven woman was talking now, and Virbius poked his head out to listen.

"I brought what we agreed upon. Nothing more."

Lucaro said, "You know, this thing you ask for once belonged to Dunkelzahn. He gifted it to my people shortly before his death."

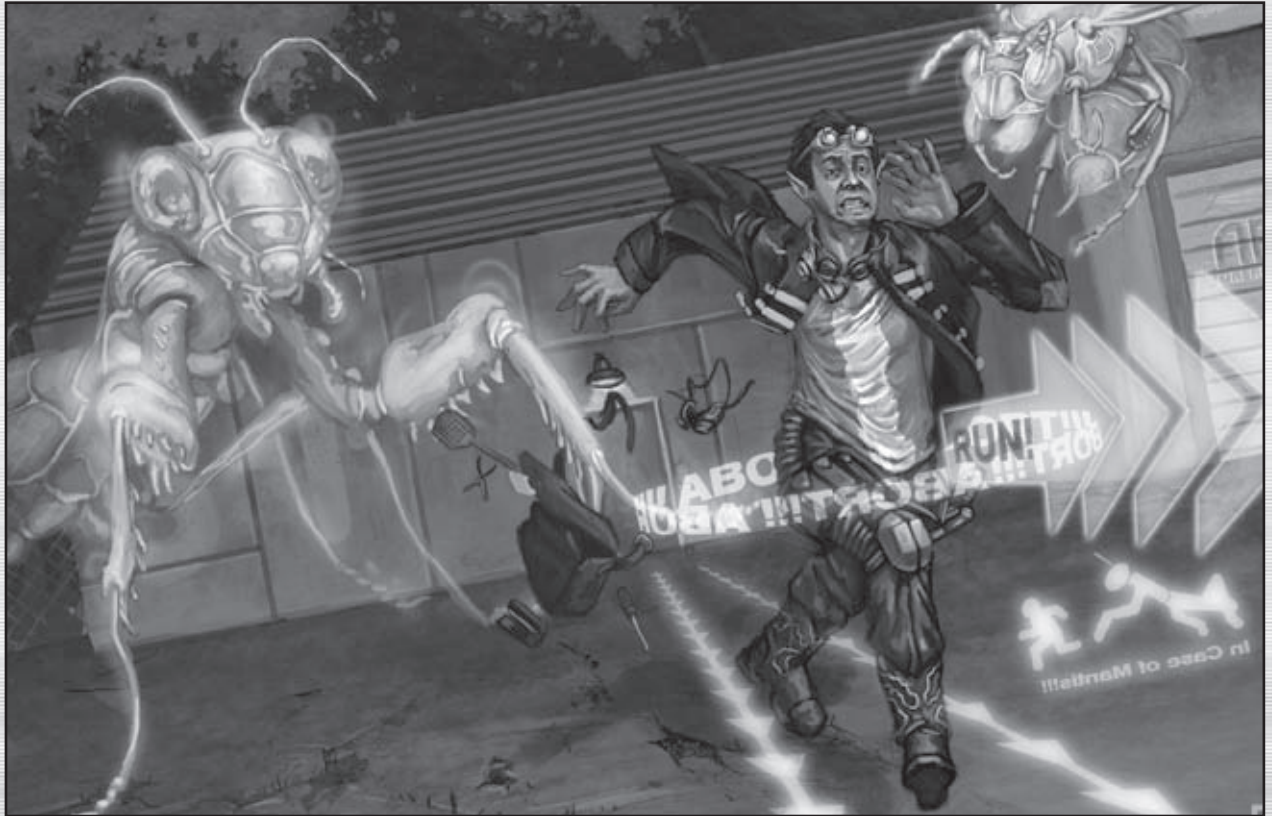
"No, Lucaro. I don't believe he ever did."

The old gangster chuckled. "You've always been smart Ms. Dark, but you are not of magic. What you want is only of use to those with very powerful, very old magics."

She nodded and handed over a thin, plastic credstick. Lucaro examined the payment and then passed it off to the Spanish girl. "Now comes the matter of delivery. You want—"

The technomancer straightened again. "Jefé, we are no longer alone."

In the distance, the DIMR's operatives were fanning out, forming a circle around Lucaro's lair. Virbius withdrew to the astral world. It would take merely moments to reach Crystalwell. Perhaps the DIMR no longer wanted to pay Virbius for what it knew, but Erithander would.



INCOMING FEED.....

**Posted by: Axis Mundi**

Governments are terrified of another Bug City. It was an intelligence failure, but one that many are still unsure of how to prevent. One spirit I consider a close associate is Firebird, a free fire spirit and a DIA intelligence officer. Since going free sixteen years ago, she has scoured the heavens and Earth recruiting assets—spirits, magicians, and “donors”—for the UCAS. Her original mission combating insect spirits has expanded to now encompass espionage against terrestrial enemies as well. The toys that most terrestrial spies rely on were of almost no use with those spirits, and new ideas had to be considered. Also worth considering is the fact that spirits have interests, needs, and desires. They benefit by our fighting.

- The spy tricks that work with humans also work with spirits. Congratulations, Axis. She’s running you. I hope you were kissed first.
- Fianchetto
- Business is business.
- Axis Mundi
- Not when it comes to you and spirits.
- Ethernaut
- Some *thing* in the Australian outback by the name of Altjira is furious about Kilimanjaro. A buddy of mine said that one of its enemies has thrown its lot with the CC as a show of support.
- Kane
- Great dragons and their ilk have yet to accept that the world moves faster than them, and it has no regard for their plans. They may think long-term, but humans are unpredictable and a bit crazy. We’ve also been playing this game for millennia without end.
-



- To anyone about to say anything about this poster—shut up.
- FastJack

One reason spirits allow us to commit espionage on their planes is that we can provide them with life energy as compensation. It is difficult to express how hard it is for spirits to accumulate power on the metaplanes, but the fact is that metahumans can easily and repeatedly give energy that seems like a pittance to them but is highly valued by the spirits. Over the last fifteen years there are still few officials who are willing to discuss the idea. Few spies are willing to make these sacrifices despite some apparent great benefits, and so assets get used in deals that conjoin HUMINT and EXPINT operations. Aztechnology has no shortage of sacrifices, and clearly no qualms, but what they do is not appetizing to most. Did you ever go on a quest to bind or permanently destroy a spirit? It's easier for us, and that makes us powerful assets for spirit spies and their political machinations. That service is how Azzie mages have sought to overcome their current deficiency, since they have less respect for spirits even than Ethernaut.

- I'd expect this depravity from spirits. Humanity disappoints again.
- Ethernaut
- Intelligence agencies are run by politicians who are by nature risk-averse, even with the lofty mission of national/corporate security. That's why they hate HUMINT so much; it demands taking risks. Extraplanar intelligence often provides intangible benefits while demanding more risk and uncertainty than HUMINT. You may be hot shit in the astral, but you've stumbled into a minefield here on Earth.
- Fianchetto

Another advantage DIA has is that it's willing to work with anyone or anything, which can't even be said of Aztechnology. Firebird confessed to me that one of the best assets she inherited is a Mantis spirit based out of the ACHE. I suspect that this new field of espionage is also responsible for DecCee's reduction in shedim activity. Ares' exploitation of captured insect spirits for security and other business purposes is further proof of how far they will go. Finally, there are rumors that Lone Star's DPI is working with insect spirits in Austin against Aztechnology.

- They have made a Faustian pact, and it will end like they all do.
- Man-of-Many-Names

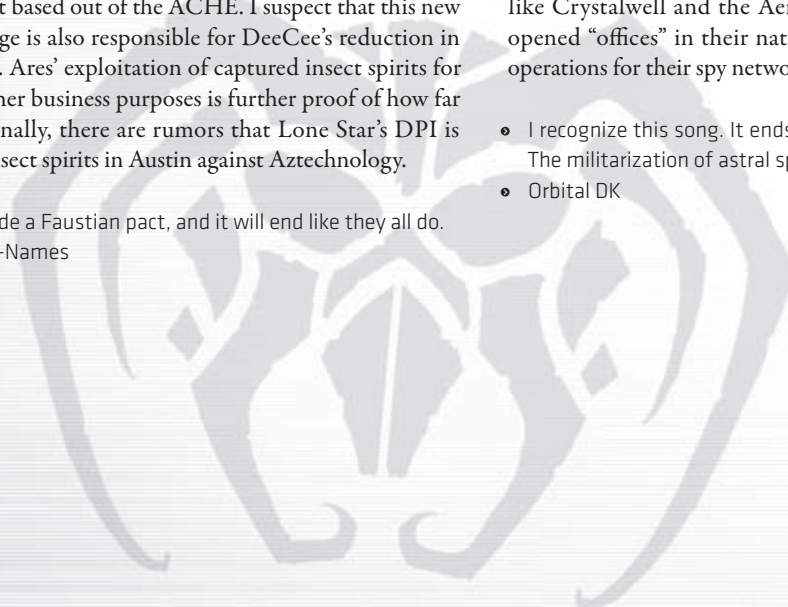
- The elven nations will never brook the idea of cooperating with the likes of insect spirits, nor would the Draco Foundation. If the DIA is working with these threats, there is no end to what they will do to stop them.
- Am-Mut

So far as I can tell, there are only six free spirit spies in North America: Firebird; Abobo, a spirit of man working out of Austin for Lone Star; Pony, a smart-ass air elemental loyal to Knight Errant; and Xochiquetzal, a blood spirit who reports directly to Motechuzoma. The other two are Erithander, a powerful guardian spirit who followed Lugh Surehand into exile before going mercenary two years ago and taking up residence in Los Angeles; and Stands-in-the-Rain, an earth spirit in Denver who is suspected of running counterintelligence for a powerful metaplanar figure. He pays well in money or mystical knowledge, but no one knows who he serves or what his handlers want.

- Lebensraum.
- Ethernaut
- Erithander still serves Surehand.
- Frosty
- What happened to Eidolon, the Information Secretariat's spirit spy?
- Slamm-O!
- That was Firebird.
- Axis Mundi

On Earth, these spies recruit spirit assets in hotspots where they can exploit existing intrigue among these large and diverse populations like in the Hub in Denver; Kibera, outside Nairobi; Kowloon and Wanchai-Causeway, Hong Kong; and Perth, Australia. They are also hiring mercenary magicians and spirits to build up their spirit networks on the astral in metaplanar haunts like Crystalwell and the Aerie. Both Firebird and Pony have opened "offices" in their native metaplanes to use as a base of operations for their spy networks.

- I recognize this song. It ends there the same way it did up here: The militarization of astral space.
- Orbital DK





Natalie Dark paid Fianchetto far too much to get the name, but her options were limited. She'd tried to stay away from JackPointers since their network had been compromised, but every independent dealer she worked with was either dead or knew about the price on her head. Fianchetto's fence dealt in the specialty equipment Natalie needed to pull off the Denver job. He was a risk, but one she thought she could handle.

The former Black Dagger took in her surroundings a second time, always alert. They were in a bowling alley in Paris. Vladimir Kuznetsov conducted business in a backroom close enough to the lanes that the sounds of pinsetter machines served as a natural white-noise generator.

"It was tricky to get everything you asked for. Some of this equipment is very hard to come by," Vladimir Kuznetsov said. He was a barrel-chested man with a deep black beard and ruddy cheeks. She ignored the comment and flipped open the first of five gray Securetech suitcases a bodyguard brought in. Inside were four canisters of nanosmoke, what looked to be an eyedropper, a six-meter length of rope, a magnetic scrambler, and a small box of slick grenades.

She said, "And the Icarus?"

Kuznetsov gestured to the other four suitcases. "I can have Arkadi set it up for you, if the strain would be too much."

Natalie Dark fiddled with the bandage around her bicep, a souvenir from Milan. She retrieved a small squirt bottle from her breast pocket and sprayed it across a nanosmoke canister. With her optics cued to ultraviolet, she scanned the cylinder from top to bottom. As she suspected, the Spectre-2 biotag mark was

near the bottom—small enough that she would have missed it on a casual inspection. Her heart beat faster. Kuznetsov's gear belonged to Saeder-Krupp. She wondered if he did as well. Natalie said, "You should clean your gear before you sell it, Vladimir. People might get the wrong idea."

"I have no idea what you mean."

"You don't want your clients thinking they've been set up."

"I'm sure your friend told you I was trustworthy." Kuznetsov held his hands up in a gesture of appeasement.

A spy's best asset is the ability to lie. There is cybware and even magic to mask the facial tics that would give you away, but a good liar believes the lie they are telling. Natalie looked directly at Vladimir and said, "They did, and I'll be sure to tell Sergei how well you treated me when I visit him in Seattle."

His smile nearly cracked at the mention of the name. "I was not aware you knew him."

She nodded. "After my friend directed me here, I contacted Sergei to confirm you were an honest salesman. He assured me you were."

Natalie watched the fence swallow back whatever words he planned to say next. It wasn't enough that she knew the name. Kuznetsov would want to check if she knew Sergei Malenkin, but would he risk contacting the former assassin? After a moment Kuznetsov closed the suitcase of gear she'd been prepared to purchase and led her away to another room. "Let me get you something, shall we say, less used?" He said, "Any friend of Mr. Malenkin is a friend of mine."



## INTRODUCTION

Posted by: Plan 9

I said it before, and I'll say it again, "Perception is Reality. Reality is Perception." People make assumptions, consciously or unconsciously, based on their perceptions. If people see a little old lady feeding pigeons, they don't suspect that she is a UCAS agent waiting to tag her mark for some wetwork operation. Without consulting a probability chart for water consumption, they won't notice that their local water deliveryman is making too many trips to the neighborhood. If things on the surface look the way people expect them to, they generally won't question it.

Part of what a spy's collection of gear should do, then, is to make what they're doing appear as ordinary as possible. That will buy you a pass from the general populace, but that's not the whole game. There are people out there who know what you know, and who are watching more carefully for any small thing that doesn't look right. The corporations and their puppet governments have eyes everywhere—they have cameras, and they have the whole data trail we all leave behind, like the food we order through the Matrix or the car trip we program using GridGuide. That means another part of espionage is keeping yourself hidden from the pros—having ways to counter their efforts to keep an eye on you. I've collected some of my favorite gadgets and techniques that can help you look normal and can help protect you from the eyes that are everywhere.

- Hey! What about the tinfoil hat? Are you still wearing one?
- Slamm-0!
- Tinfoil hats are so Area 51. I go with the Qiigam bowler these days; keeps those fucking mages from reading my thoughts.
- Plan 9

## THE ART OF CAMOUFLAGE

Most spies carry gear that is illegal or at least questionable in nature. Even their legal gear is likely to be put to questionable uses, so it's best if no one knows what it is or what it's doing. Camouflaging your gear is a good way to get it past prying eyes, to use it in plain sight without anyone knowing what you are doing, and to surprise people who don't know just what it is you are carrying.

Perception is not just seeing things—it's how we think about what we see. If a person sees what looks like a comfortable couch in a pleasant room, then their perception of the environment is that it's safe. They might even feel safe enough to fall asleep on the couch, never thinking that the environment could kill them if their guard is down. It's this disconnect between the eye "seeing" and the brain "thinking" that gets them. Not knowing exactly what one is looking at, the brain tries to interpret what it thinks it sees, often filling in the blanks with whatever convenient drivel has been fed to the perceiver. Generally speaking, people can't handle the unknown. That's why they watch Karl Kombatmage trids to understand magic (which, honestly, shows people aren't that bright). As people get used to their comfortable little worlds, their minds only pick up on the obvious dangers.

Corporations breed this complacency into their drones, like zookeepers handling wild animal babies to get them accustomed to humans. The flaw in this method is that the corporate sheep-dogs also become complacent while watching the sheep's behavior, looking only for the wild animal. Rule of thumb: Don't be a wild animal. If the keepers see you're hiding something—say, a suspicious package—they'll pluck you from the herd.

When a security guard sees a corporate executive eating an apple and putting his briefcase through the security scanner, she may make some faulty assumptions. Just because the man is in a suit, shows confidence, and has what appears to be the right electronic identification, that doesn't mean he's an exec. While most runners have an aversion to security measures, this "exec" didn't avoid security. Runners may use advanced materials and sensor blocking techniques, but if detected, a gun is a gun is a gun, and that is what security is looking for.

However, if the guard looks at the scan and the ID of the exec, and everything comes up green, does she pay any attention to the apple? No. That's because it was out in the open and perceived to be nothing more than an apple. Certainly not that the apple was cored out and concealed a micro grenade. (Word to the wise: This is a good trick, but I wouldn't try it at Renraku for a few months—once bitten, twice shy and all that.)

Camouflage can keep your enemies off guard. For equipment, there are many ways to disguise an object:

*Dice it up.* Disassemble it into smaller components that can be put back together with no or few tools in roughly three to five seconds. Each piece should be small enough that it gives few clues as to the fully assembled object's actual nature. Guns are given this treatment regularly—many can be broken into components that fit into a smaller case for ease of transportation.

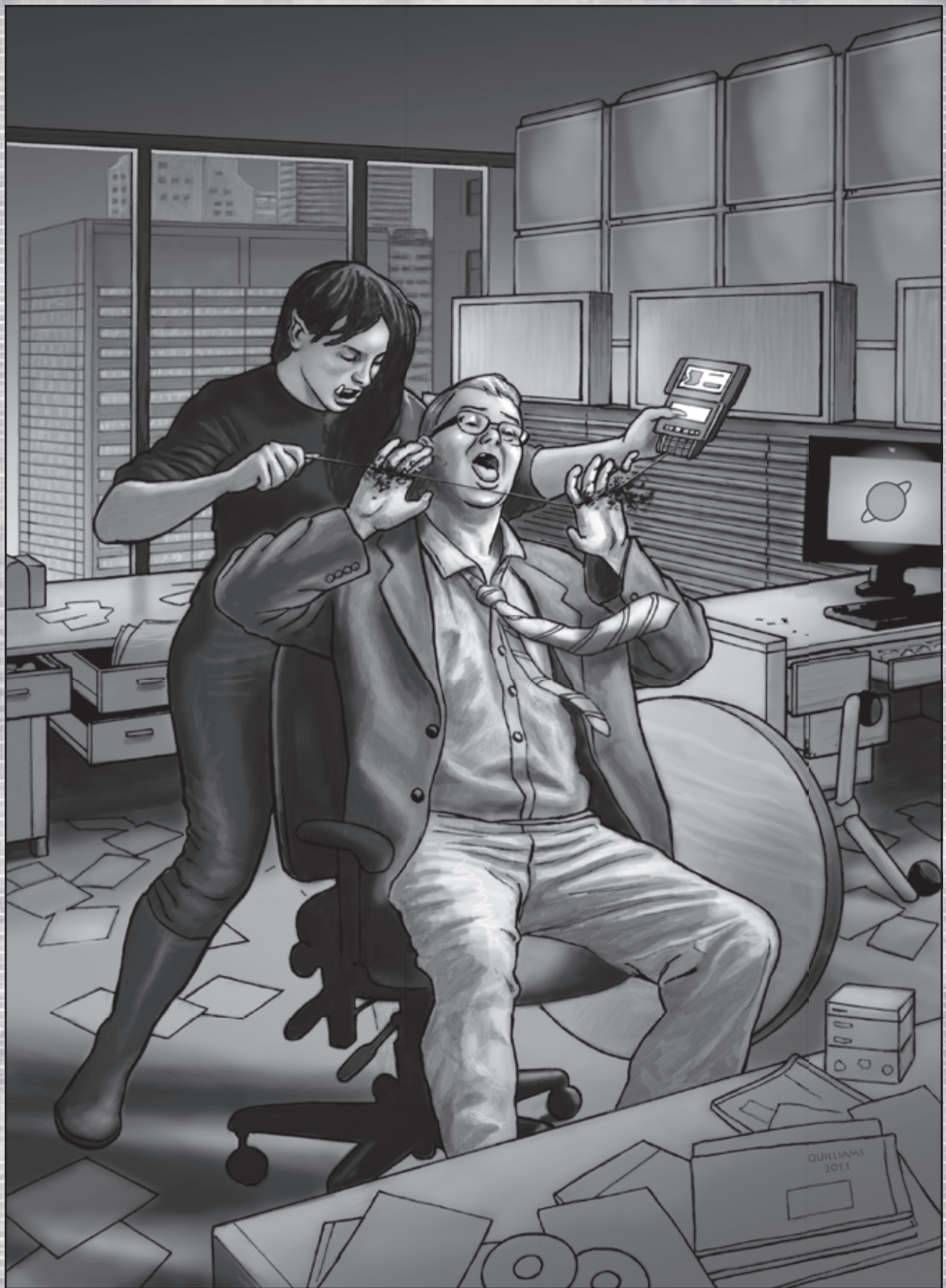
*Dress it up.* To fool casual observers, an intelligence agent's weapon or equipment can be made to look like some other mundane object or equipment. The camouflage is a purely visual disguise or covering (e.g., Hawaiian leis hiding detonation cord, smoke grenades inside soda cans, a camera containing a laser tool), and the disguise usually is not functional. Combining disassembly with this method means that you have several items that look like separate, mundane objects, but together they become something special.

The next level is giving the disguise functionality, so that it performs like the object it appears to be. This means that additional material is added to the equipment to allow functionality. One example of this is a pen that actually writes *and* shoots acid, or shaving cream that dispenses liquid *and* scans fingerprints.

*Change it up.* Sometimes the eyes whose gaze you are avoiding are not human. Scanners often look for items of a certain composition, so making the item with some other material is sometimes enough to fool them. It doesn't have to be high-tech—low-tech alternatives are sometimes preferable. Modern equipment is often made from composite plastics and graphene, but the same equipment can be manufactured with an exterior of cheap plastic or wood. Using these alternate materials usually means increasing the size of the item, which can serve as an additional distraction for observers, since the object no longer looks like they expect it to. Low-tech or common materials have drawbacks—the materials may be sensitive to the environment, may be less effective in their









## ADVANCED DISGUISE RULES FOR EQUIPMENT

Many devices can be camouflaged to fool the casual observer. Gamemaster approval is needed to apply any of the below to a player's gear. In *Arsenal*, p. 63, more specific instructions are given on how to disguise equipment. The maximum total dice pool modifier on Perception Tests when disguising a single device is -6.

### Disassembled

The device can be broken down or assembled in 3 complex actions. This only applies to objects that can be lifted by a single individual (including a troll), or to drones of micro, mini, or small size. Apply -1 die to concealment modifier and -1 die to failure pool modifier (see *Optional Rule: Failure Pool* below).

### Camouflage

The device looks like some other object. Apply -1 die concealment modifier per rating and -1 die to failure pool modifier. The rating of camouflage is the quality of the job taken to disguise it. Maximum rating of camouflage is 6.

If combined with disassembled, adjust the concealment modifier by another -1 penalty.

### Secondary functionality

The functionality of one device is placed into another device, such as a working pen that is also a laser tool. Secondary functionality can only be added to items that already have been camouflaged. Secondary functionality provides a -1 concealment modifier and a -1 failure pool modifier. The number of secondary functions that can be added into a single device is equal to the Device rating + 1, but additional secondary functions simply mean that the device can do more things; they do not provide additional concealment modifiers.

### Alternate materials

Alternate materials are any non-traditional materials used in manufacturing the device. Using these materials provides a -1 die concealment modifier per rating point, and -1 die modifier for tests utilizing traditional detection methods (e.g., MAD). Alternate materials also provide a -1 failure pool modifier. At the gamemaster's discretion, the device can be affected by elemental effects that are not normally an issue, such as fire burning a wood case or EMP taking out old-fashioned electronics. The gamemaster should also determine what materials are feasible. Alternate materials can only be taken once per item.

### Micro/nanoization

With micro/nanoization, the device is reduced in size. It is up to the gamemaster to decide what items can be reduced in size and how small individual devices can be rendered. Weapons, especially melee weapons, generally cannot be effectively reduced in size. When a device's size is decreased, the rating, power, and signal strength are reduced by 1. The device also receives a -2 dice concealment modifier, -2 dice to tests utilizing traditional detection methods, and a -2 modifier to skill checks involved in operating the device if there are non-wireless controls to operate. The device also receives a -1 failure pool modifier. Micro/nanoization cannot be used in conjunction with Option 2: Miniaturization for Advanced Materials.

### Advanced materials

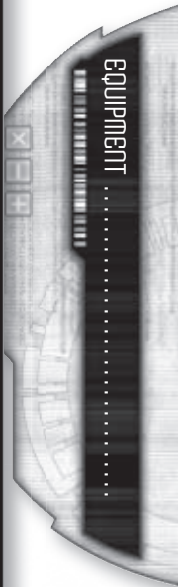
Advanced materials disguise a device from scanners that might ordinarily detect it. Use of these materials provides a -2 dice modifier to tests involving one specific traditional detection method and a -2 modifier to the failure pool due to the somewhat jury-rigged nature of using an unusual set of materials for a device. Each type of detection the materials are intended to avoid must be specified when the materials are purchased, and advanced materials can be applied more than once. For example, an airtight material would defend against chem sniffers, a Wi-Fi-negating material would protect against radar scans, and so on. Each use of advanced materials increases an item's cost by fifty percent (using the base price in the calculation each time, if advanced materials are used more than once).

## OPTIONAL RULE: FAILURE POOL

While disguising a device can offer significant advantages, they also can make the device less reliable than it would otherwise be. To use this optional rule, start each device with a failure pool of six dice. As described above, different modifications subtract dice from the failure pool. When the device is activated, roll the failure pool dice in a test if the device's failure pool has fewer than six dice. If the player does not get a single hit on that role, the device temporarily fails. The player can try again on the next turn or combat round. The Failure Test is rolled after the player's skill test. A critical glitch on a Failure Test means the device is now broken and needs to be repaired.

### Example:

*Pistons tries to operate her laser microphone disguised as a pen. She has five dice in her failure pool, but manages not to get a single hit. The microphone only picks up silence. Pistons takes a breath, then tries it again. This time she gets a hit, and the "pen" starts listening to the table 10 meters away.*



## THE QUICK CHANGE ARTIST

Posted by: /dev/grrl

If you want to make a statement or just blend into a crowd, fashion is your friend. When security is broadcasting that they are looking for a blond in a white Zoë dress, it's time to freshen up! There are three things to change: your clothes, your face, and your SIN.

### Fashion

I've said it before, I'll say it again: most bozos don't know how to dress themselves. If you want to do it right, you need to think about the time of day or night you're entering a building. Is it after closing, or are you pulling a bold, middle-of-the-afternoon job? Think about who you'll run into, and whether they will be management types, wageslaves, or (if you can't avoid them) security. All this needs to be factored into how you look and how you want people to react to you.

Now, for the moment I'm not going to talk about how to do this right the first time; I'm going to tell you what you need to do once you've fucked up. If you're not in a firefight, or just got out of one, have a change of clothes handy. If you just got out of a fight, blood is not a good accessory—it tends to bring unwanted questions when you're trying to make a quick getaway. A kit with a microweave spider, some nano-fixx caps, and a good stain cleaner comes in handy after a conflict. The quickest change without magic or a stash of clothes is snakeskin-coated clothes and Modez shoes. Snakeskin coating changes the color and texture of clothes in seconds, and Modez can adjust your height by several centimeters. You can change color with ruthenium polymers, but I love snakeskin because it changes the entire texture of what you're wearing. If you're in an environment where a lot of people are using AR-enabled clothing, use

that to your advantage—hack their clothes and turn them into a decoy that looks like the description of you security might be floating around. Once you've made the necessary changes to your clothing, dispose of your old clothes, if any, with C3 cleaners, then wash up. You don't want to have clean clothes and a bloodied face when stepping out into the street.

### Face

This brings us to changing your face. After a fight, skintoned creams and liquid Band-Aids help prevent you from looking like you just got out of a boxing ring. For camouflage, masks are fine if passers-by don't look too close and if you're skilled enough to put it on right. Nanopaste is okay, but it's not flattering on me. I tend to go with high-end makeup, like Zoë's Amber House line. It's subtle with coloring, plus it can change ethnicity with a fine touch. I like to be subtle, since it's easier to get by guards with AR-enabled optics. Add colored contacts, maybe holographic headgear to change hair if you don't have cybernetic ruthenium inserts. There are also wigs available.

### SIN

SINs are often annoying, but they're a necessity. If you don't have manufactured clearance or haven't snagged someone else's, then have a few fake SINs handy. Sure, you usually do the job in hidden mode, but what about before and after the job? There is always a risk that someone might detect your efforts to sneak around, so why take a chance? Go to the job with one SIN, leave the job with another. Switch commlinks as well. Your hacker may be good at editing you off the radar, but what if they get dumped? I may sound like Plan 9, but it's good practice, especially when the shit really does hit the fan.

operations, or may have a shorter lifespan than products made entirely of higher-tech materials.

Another option is to make items smaller and less conspicuous through micro/nanoization. While shrinking items provides a more efficient use of space, the reduction in size also reduces the power and/or signal strength of the device. Such limitations may be detrimental to operating mechanical parts, such as the trigger of a gun.

Finally, you can go plunge into experimental materials. Using advanced components, such as expensive composites and metamaterials that are not commonly detectable by scanners and other devices, or using miniaturization without compromising the power or signal strength of your equipment as micro/nanoization does, may better your chances at concealment.

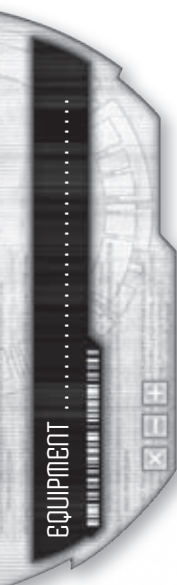
If all else fails, there's also the nanofax. One of the ingenious ways to smuggle an item (or items) through security is not having the actual item at all. Instead, camouflage a nanofax. Feedstock looks enough like grains of sand or salt, and it's small enough to hide in almost anything, even in plain sight. There's nothing illegal about feedstock, only the intent. The nanofax is not illegal, only

expensive. What you get for the price is the ability to build what you want, where you want it.

## HOW TO HIDE YOURSELF—AND YOUR STUFF

When I talked about makeup with /dev/grrl, in *Attitude*, we didn't touch on makeup techniques as a way to disguise yourself. But what's the point of making all your stuff blend into the background if you still stand out? If you have the skill, you can use any of the fashion and makeup gear and techniques we previously discussed to change your appearance. Or you can be like Kat, and just *not* use all that stuff for a day and have no one recognize you in your dressed-down state.

For a quick and dirty change, there are always rubber masks. While they won't hold up to close scrutiny, they're a lot more detailed than they used to be, and they have small motors built into them that provide somewhat realistic facial movement. A mask might be just the thing to help you move quickly through a crowd, or through an area where people will only see you at a distance. For prolonged, close-up conversations or interactions, though, they're no good—they're bound to be spotted fairly quickly.





For more detail, there is the face case, which is great for those who don't understand makeup. It comes with an ultrasound and optic scanner, so all you have to do is point the case at the target, and it will scan them and build the mask within a neat little case the size of a briefcase. The quality of the mask depends on the agent software inside and the number of scans you can get from different angles. It's really handy when you want a generic face to blend in with the crowd, as it has a few built-in faces designed to be nondescript. It can also take a sampling of faces and produce a mask based on the user's choice of sex, metatype, and ethnicity.

The programmable mask takes time, so if you need something on the fly, then nanopaste is really handy. Glop it on your face and hands, and in minutes it conforms to the color, texture, and bone structure that the case was programmed for.

For a more permanent solution, there are shadow plastic surgeons, especially in the CalFree area, who can perform minor facial sculpting surgery as well as full head reconstruction. This is where the serious ork and elf posers go to make themselves look the way they've always dreamed.

I know several riggers who enjoy making their drones look like some Japanese anime throwback. Other riggers have their own idiosyncratic preferences. For all of them, there's the drone case. The drone case is like a portable combination of drone rack and smuggling compartment for micro, mini, and small drones. I think of the case as a pet carrier for drones. The rigger then camouflages the case as a pen, credstick, or briefcase.

- This can be good for transporting your drones, or it can be nice when they're in use, because it's a quick and easy disguise. Some cases, though, don't allow the drone to operate while they're in them, making them less useful for in-mission camouflage.
- Rigger X

### Cyberware and Bioware

Makeup is not the only way to disguise yourself—there are cybernetics that can also be helpful. For wannabe street sams, superficial cybernetics are available that look like real cyberarms and legs at one tenth the price. They're popular with street gangs for the intimidation factor, who can't purchase the real thing. Some of these cybernetics spoof cyberscanners by registering as the real thing.

For the latest in disguise options, look to the jigsaw skull. This augmentation mimics the false front bioware in both use and materials. This cyberskull enhancement uses both bioplastic memory metal and flexible alloys to break up the skull to adjust the jaw, cheek, nose, and so on. The jigsaw skull works relatively quickly, and, with a scan of a target's face, can adjust the subject's face to resemble the target on the fly without the hormonal adjustments of false front. It's a very efficient way to impersonate a guard that you just took out.

Not to be outdone by double-jointed adepts are rotational cybernetic joints. It's only for a full cybernetic limb, as real muscles couldn't handle the strain these things exert, but imagine someone standing with his arms behind him. What looks like someone waiting patiently is actually someone who's cracking a maglock behind his back, thanks to the rotational joints. These things are also tremendously useful for escaping restraints and playing Twister.

- There is a school of thought in espionage that says that adopting an obvious quirk is a very effective disguise, as people learn to look for the quirk, not you. Both rotational joints and jigsaw skulls present opportunities to introduce some significant quirks to your appearance, then get rid of them when the need for them has passed.
- Fianchetto
- The description of the jigsaw skull is missing one crucial thing—from what I hear, using those suckers *hurts*. The various parts under your skin tend to make it clear that they don't like to shift in that way. Now, the skull implantation procedure naturally gives you a little more maneuverability in that area than normal people have, but still, this is not a comfortable process. It's best to make the change in private, and give yourself time to recover. Or be dosed up on painkillers before you start.
- Butch

### Battle Coating

What began as a perfect military application to protect tanker trucks from losing fuel to gunfire has now been applied to standard vehicles. After a shootout involving your vehicle, you can't just drive off and not get questioning looks because of your

#### WHAT IS INCLUDED IN A FAKE ID?

Any fake ID, whether it's a SIN or license, goes through rigorous security checks and cross checking among various databases (see *Fake ID*, p. 267, *SR4A*). To hold up as genuine, it must survive that scrutiny. The ID carries varying degrees of personal information and biometric data, depending on the rating (see *Forging SINs and IDs*, p. 96, *Unwired*). Here we break down examples of what exactly is included in a fake ID:

#### Rating, Biometric Information, Personal History, Security with Other Databases

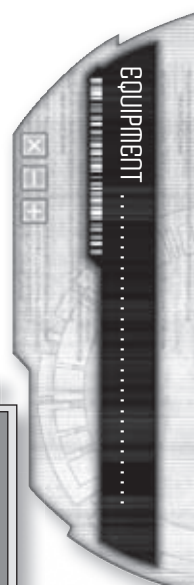
**Rating 1:** Basic physical description of the subject (height, weight, hair/eye color), current history (current address, current employment, vehicle registration), no confirming databases

**Rating 2:** As included in 1, plus fingerprint records, five years of employment history, one local database (e.g., A or AA corporate branch tied to former employer)

**Rating 3:** As included in 2, plus employment and criminal background check, two local databases (local city plus a shopping database)

**Rating 4-5:** As included in 3, plus voiceprint, five or more data trail history searches, three or four general databases containing corroborating data (e.g., issuing government, meFeeds, city and shopping databases)

**Rating 6:** As included in 4, plus DNA profile, check of most major available databases (e.g., issuing government, AAA corporations, meFeeds, information from social networks and blogs, and several local security and city databases)



Game Info.....

## CAMOUFLAGE RULES AND EQUIPMENT

### CAMOUFLAGING DEVICES

Device Mod	Threshold	Tools	Cost	Special Skill
Advanced Materials	30	facility	Device x 4	
Alternate Material	20	shop	Device x 2	
Camouflage	16	kit	500 for Rating 1, 2 250 x Rating for Rating 3–6	Artisan
Disassembled	24	shop	2,000	
Micro/Nanoization	30	facility	Device x 3	
Secondary Functionality	20	shop	Device x 2	

### CAMOUFLAGE GEAR

Name	Rating	Availability	Cost
Drone Case (Mini)	3		25¥
Drone Case (Micro)	4		50¥
Drone Case (Small)	6		75¥
Face Case	1-3	4*Rating	500*Rating¥
Novelty Mask	1		15¥

#### Clean Car Coating

Clean Car Coating (CCC) applies cosmetic, but not structural, repairs to a vehicle. It activates every time a vehicle is impacted enough to damage it. Anyone firing at the target needs a Perception (4) Test to see if they actually hit it, as the coating seals up in less than a tenth of a second.

#### Drone Case

The drone case comes in three sizes: micro, mini, and small. The case's armor rating is 1/2, and it stacks with the existing drone's armor. Example drone cases: Micro: button, earring, cufflink; Mini: pen, key, credstick; Small: shoe, commlink, concealed pocket.

#### Face Case

The face case adds its rating to the dice used in a Disguise Test (p. 133, SR4A).

#### Jigsaw Skull

Like the false front, the jigsaw skull changes the facial features of the subject, though the jigsaw skull gives the user even more control by working at a deeper level. No drug adjustment is necessary to mimic a target. If the subject has the Disguise skill, they can use it to manually adjust their face rapidly, using a Disguise + Intuition (4, 3 Combat Turns) Extended Test. (Do not add the rating of the jigsaw skull to the test when manually adjusting their face.) This does not stack with false front; if the user has both, use the higher-rated device in Disguise Tests. The process of re-arranging the skull takes two minutes and is painful; the user takes a -2 penalty to any tests (besides the Disguise Test) made during the process of altering their appearance. That penalty is reduced to -1 for the subsequent five minutes as the pain fades.

#### Rotational Joints

Rotational joints allow for more flexibility and movement than is otherwise possible for our skeletal structure. Add +1 die to Escape Tests (+2 if more than one limb has rotational joints) and allow the use of Active Skills with the limbs bending in the opposite direction with a -3 dice penalty in performing those activities due to the difficulty in paying attention to activities in different directions. Rotational joints only work in full cyberlimbs, and they take up two capacity slots.

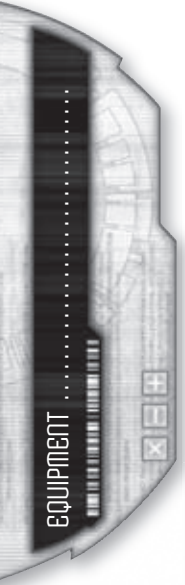
#### Superficial Cybernetics

To hide your meat body, you can get modified cybernetic casings that make you appear augmented. Superficial cyberware can have some functionality like cyber spurs and blades, but they have to fit over the existing limb (items such as cyberguns or raptor cyberlegs cannot be included). Superficial cybernetics can appear as either obvious or synthetic. Cyber scanners do not register them as cyberlimbs. Superficial cybernetics cost ten percent of the actual standard cyberlimb/partial limb replacement. They add a +1 modifier to Disguise Tests when an individual is using them to prevent themselves from being recognized by people who know their non-augmented appearance.

### CYBERWARE

Cyberwear	Essence	Availability	Cost
Jigsaw Skull (Rating 1-4)	Rating x 0.6	12 + Rating	Rating x 15,000¥
Rotational Joint (per limb)	-	8	5,000¥

Game Info.....





Swiss-cheesed car. What you need is clean car coating (CCC). It's a combination memory alloy and flexible battle coating. The alloy removes dings and dents, while the battle coating seals up immediately after a bullet hole, leaving a black-powder-scored pinhole. It works so quickly that a distant gunman might not be sure if their shot hit the car. Battle coating is very scratch resistant. Any deep gouges become minor imperfections, as the coating rebinds. CCC is good example of the illusion of perception; while the outside doesn't show any bullet damage, the insides of a vehicle may still have some real problems thanks to the bullets that were ricocheting around inside them.

## Commlink

The commlink is so prevalent in today's society that security officers tend to not think of them as a risk, leaving it up to the security spider to manage any Matrix security risks. It's not surprising then to learn that a secret agent can easily camouflage another device to look like the more common commlink or add on some handy features. Just don't overdo it—if you add too much to the 'link, it often doesn't look right. Some of the more commonly added features described in MI-6's commlink manual include *gas deployment*, which allows the commlink to dispense a single dose of a gas, and the *fingerprint scanner*, which is a special cover on the commlink that can scan the fingers or palm of anyone who picks up the device. A step up from that is the *cell collector*, which can collect and store skin and hair samples for later analysis (remember that if you want to use hair in DNA analysis, you need the root). Additionally, there is the *small explosive device* that can destroy the commlink, and possibly take someone's hand or head off at the same time. *Drone movement*, similar to propulsion systems available for weapons, is also available. Commlink displays can be configured with brighter LEDs that allow it to function as a *flash-pak*. With the addition of highly compressed napalm/oxygen, the commlink can fire over a two-meter stretch as a *mini flamethrower (one shot)*. The commlink can contain a small reel of monowire for a *garrote*, or high-tensile microwire cable for a *gyroscopic winch*. If you are stuck in a bind, the commlink can extrude *nanite cutters* in a paste or pop out a *flechette microgrenade* in an emergency. A commlink can also be stuck against ballistic glass and become a *harmonic resonator* before blasting the glass.

- I see you got your own copy of the MI-6 manual. For the right price, I can give you the CIA's manual, too.
- Fianchetto

## INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

There is so much data to be gathered and so many lovely ways to do it. We're not discussing visual surveillance—instead, we're focusing on new gadgets that go after the electronic details. Here's what I've gotten from the intelligence gathering of the lead engineer at Ares' Albuquerque facility, Dr. Laura Cross.

//Upload Encrypted Uniformat textfile :: User Plan9 //  
//Running Decrypt Set Stormy Ocean //

### Classified Results: Personal Files

October 15, 2072 [Alameda Lab]

From: Dr. Cross

Subject: ELINT

As popular as RFID tags are, some security systems still rely on keycards and maglocks for controlling access to areas of a facility. Our card skimmer and reader use a relatively simple method for obtaining keycard data. The card skimmer is a transparent 0.1-millimeter-thick membrane that is placed over the magnetic strip. This membrane records all the keycards that pass through the maglock without interfering with the device. A card skimmer reader can then pick up the data from the skimmer, which can then be used by any key maker in the forging of a maglock keycard. This alleviates tracking down the passkeys and figuring out which ones work with which maglock.

Along the same lines in cybernetics is the cyberpalm magcard. Instead of stealing the card, scanning it and then printing out a new card, this allows someone to handle a keycard and temporarily copy it into their hand—the hand, in effect, becomes the card. Pickpockets will have a field day with this thing.

Lab forty has taken the basic nanospy and reprogrammed the nanites to record macroscopic details from a display. Called screen-capture coating, this spray coats any optical display (commlink, contacts, glasses, vid screen) with a sensor array designed to capture images projected from or through the device. For contacts and glasses, it records augmented reality displays sent through the lenses. It's hard to notice the coating, which constructs an RFID to wirelessly send the recorded images. The coating degrades over time, with the self-cleaning nanites removing evidence of the coating at the end of their lifespan. The coating records up to 72 hours of activity before degrading.

- Note to self: Wash commlink in blue goo.
- Plan 9

There are those occasions when data is not stored electronically and standard recording techniques are too risky (circumstances which are increasing as people worry about the security of data in the Resonance realms). One option is scan gloves, second-skin style, which allow an individual to simply run their hands across a document taking a high-quality scan of it. It's a subtle way to record a document, and it is also sensitive enough to record surface deviations like Braille or grooves from a writing implement.

- Who is this?
- 2XL



## COMMLINK ACCESSORIES RULES

Note that these commlink accessories have no failure pool rate, and generally speaking commlinks can only hold three of them. Visually these modifications blend in with the commlink, but weaponized modifications (flechette microgrenade, mini flamethrower, monowire garrote, stun gas, small explosive device) can be detected by scanners that would normally detect items of that nature (e.g., chemsniffers for grenades and the flamethrower).

### Cell Collector

This adds the capability of detecting small amounts of meta-human skin or hair cells within ten centimeters of the commlink. It also has a small compartment that can preserve these cells for analysis. The compartment can preserve collected cells for ten days before they degrade to the point that analysis is impossible.

### Drone Movement

The commlink can be modified to have drone movement, as with the propulsion system weapon modification (see p. 152, *Arsenal*).

### Fingerprint Scanner

This is a special cover on the commlink that can scan and record the fingers or palm of anyone who picks up the device.

### Flash-Pak

The display has been modified to include two quartz-halogen microflashes beneath the screen, which can be triggered to function as a flash-pak. The intensity of the flash burns out the display, making it unusable.

### Flechette Microgrenade

The commlink conceals a microgrenade (about 25 millimeters by 15 millimeters) that can be popped out or remotely dropped from the device. Note that this is still detectable by a chemsniffer unless the compartment holding it is hermetically sealed, which costs 100 nuyen.

### Gyroscopic Winch

The commlink has been augmented with more durability and structural integrity through the use of carbon-fiber-reinforced polymers, and equipped with a high-powered winch, capable of lifting 250 kilograms. It does not contain the wire needed to hoist objects; that must be carried separately then threaded through

the winch. Attach the commlink to a belt or harness and the cable to a grappling hook, and it can lift the person with ease.

### Harmonic Resonator

The commlink's vibration capability includes the power of the harmonic resonator allowing high frequency vibrations. Reduce the armor of the barrier by 2. Only works with glass or ballistic glass.

### Mini Flamethrower

The commlink contains a small container of gasoline gel. Using the commlink's power source, it can ignite the fuel into a two-meter stream of fire. The amount of fuel is good for one shot only. The weapon uses the Exotic Ranged Weapons: Flamethrower skill; it inflicts 4P damage (along with fire damage), AP -half.

### Monofilament Garrote

A ballistic plastic handle is concealed on the commlink. When pulled, it reveals fifty centimeters of monofilament wire. It requires the Exotic Weapon skill to use, and does 8P damage with a -4 AP modifier.

### Nanite Slicers

The commlink can deploy a paste containing nanites that are good for slicing through bars, locks, rope, etc. A dispenser contains enough paste to cut through 100 square centimeters of material at a rate of 10 square centimeters every three seconds. It can be applied in a single application or spread out in multiple uses.

### Stun Gas

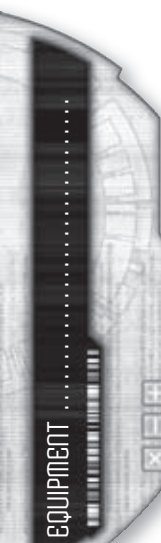
The commlink has a special aperture to allow the deployment of gas from the device (for lists of possible gases, see *Toxins*, p. 257). It can be remotely activated to deploy the gas, and up to three doses can be included.

### Small Explosive Device

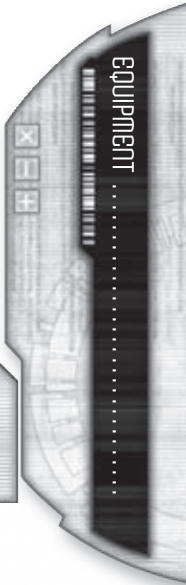
The commlink can be packed with a small amount of explosives so that it can be detonated like a grenade. Treat it like a fragmentation grenade, but reduce base damage to 10P(f). It is good for a single charge only. For twice the listed price, the device can be hermetically sealed so that it will not be detected by chemsniffers

## ADDITIONAL COMMLINK OPTIONS

Accessory	Damage	AP	Availability	Cost
Drone Movement (same as propulsion system, p. 152, <i>Arsenal</i> )				
Stun Gas Deployment	Chemical	—		50¥ + cost of chemical
Fingerprint Scanner	—	—	12F	2,000¥
Cell Collector	—	—	12F	2,500¥
Small Explosive Device	5P (1m radius)	-2	12F	100¥
Flash-Pak	Special	—	6	200¥
Mini Flamethrower	8P	-half AP	14F	600¥
Monofilament Garrote	8P	-4AP	18F	2,200¥
Nanite Slicers	—	—	2 + nanite availability	200¥ + cost of nanites
Gyroscopic Winch	—	—	6	600¥
(w/ 50m of high-tensile microwire)				
Microgrenade	as grenade	-2	as grenade	20¥ + cost of grenade
Harmonic Resonator	—	—	6R	700¥







- Dr. Cross is an eccentric and brilliant scientist from Ares working with various intelligence projects, including the reverse engineering of competitors' products. I have found her files to be very informative. She got her BS at MIT in '60 and then an MS and PhD in physics and electronics, respectively, in '66 and '67 at CalTech. She was a speaker at the metamaterials conference in Karlsruhe, Germany, discussing plasmonics and photonics at the 64<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Academics, and she should be at the 66<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Academics in Barcelona, Spain, discussing nanomechanical systems. She enjoys skiing at Celsius Intellect, mimosas, and little terrier dogs.
- Plan 9

Our attempts to build an ice cube microphone continue to have limited success, but our work in that area has improved our ability to deal with dynamic fluid density acoustics. Our hydrophones can be modified to handle a wide range of aquatic conditions, and they can filter out most background noise. We have encapsulated the microphone in a shell so that it can be dropped in a water pipe. Filaments then grow from the capsule and deposit the device on the wall of a pipe.

- The advantage, of course, is that most bug sweepers don't look in a building's pipes for listening devices. That's bound to change in the near future, but for the moment hydrophones are less likely to be detected than conventional bugs.
- Thorn

**October 17, 2072 [Alameda Lab]**

**From: Dr. Cross**

**Subject: General Intelligence**

Even though we live in an almost paperless society, there's enough of a security risk with digital data that traditional paper is still used and put through shredders when no longer needed. Today's paper shredders do an excellent job at rendering a document unreadable but that doesn't deter those who are looking to get a glimpse at what we are doing. The Assembler is a device that can recover such documents. The unit is 40 centimeters long, 25 centimeters wide, and 70 centimeters tall, and it weighs two kilograms. The Assembler scans each strip of shredded paper fed into it (saving you the time of photographing each strip in detail), then compares the scans looking not only at the patterns of letters and other designs on the printed page, but also at the pattern on the edge of the shredded material. As long as you give the machine enough time—and all the needed strips of paper—it can re-create original documents.

End of dictation.

//End of File

## SOFTWARE

**Plan 9:** One of the biggest tasks in espionage isn't acquiring data, it's acquiring the *right* data. Information (unorganized data) is everywhere, and sorting out what is worthwhile from the piles of noise is tricky. Corporations and law enforcement organizations are just as interested in data gathering as we are, and their work, combined with tweaks from some of the shadows' finest hackers, have provided some valuable software tools, which attack the mass of data out there in different ways.

One of the tricks of sorting through information is dealing with the many languages, dialects, argots, and newly invented slang that fill up the world. CarnivoreGold, with its word association tools and strong fuzzy algorithms, is ideal in identifying and translating slang and foreign languages in both verbal and text recordings. The software also provides graphical representation of word relations and frequency of use, which can be useful in basic wordprint analysis to identify speakers (assuming basic voiceprint efforts do not provide enough information).

For sorting through the forest of faces you may encounter, there is MonaLisa. This software helps in identifying faces in a crowd as well as extrapolating emotional context from their expressions when possible. Law enforcement agencies use this when they are trying to pick particular faces out of a crowd captured by surveillance cameras. More morbidly, MonaLisa can do facial reconstruction from skulls.

While the trids have long had a bad habit of acting like every surveillance camera has a microphone that perfectly captures any nearby relevant conversations, the truth is that a whole lot of them have no sound recordings at all, and in plenty of other instances the sound you want to capture is inaudible due to background noise or distance from the microphone. The Lip Reader program can help you when your footage didn't record the conversation you really wanted to hear. It can take video and extrapolate language based on mouth movements, giving you a transcript of inaudible conversations. Since this technology doesn't rely on actual source audio, devices like white noise generators, window tremblers, sub-vocal mics, etc. do not inhibit your ability to acquire the information you need. It is a considerable breakthrough for gathering intelligence, though if someone's mouth is obscured or not in view of a camera, you cannot get the info you need.

- When using Lip Reader, you can always set up two or more cameras—put up an obvious camera or two that your targets will turn away from, then have a hidden camera that gets you the angle you need.
- Fianchetto
- MonaLisa combined with Lip Reader can be a powerful tool. Law enforcement can get a read on a crowd, see if anyone is saying the type of things that makes law enforcement nervous, and ID the potential troublemakers. If you're in a crowd in a public place, it's a good idea to assume that both these tools are in operation.
- Aufheben

November 2, 2072 [Alameda Lab]

From: Dr. Cross

Subject: Infiltration and Diversions

The ever-expanding applications of nanotechnology can be seen in a Renraku device called the Speak Up. It is a spray that works as a projector or speaker, taking its cue from the nanospy. Imagine, if you will, that one of our fine espionage teams is rummaging through somebody's office and security walks in through the door, guns drawn and ready to take them down. The team can activate their Speak Ups, giving their opposition the impression that the odds have changed with the sound of a gun being cocked and an assertive voice telling them to drop their weapons. What impresses me most about these little units is the quality of the audio that they're able to broadcast—it's certainly lifelike enough to buy a few seconds for teams that may need it.

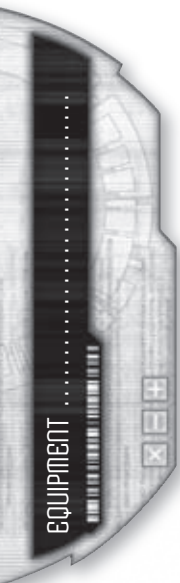
Evo has made some very interesting advances in the arena of non-lethal light-based defense systems with their Pulse Weave material. An intense form of light-emitting clothing, Pulse Wave can flash pulses of light across a wide visible spectrum. Essentially you turn your clothing into a large flash-pak grenade, though the fabric can only hold a charge for one use before it needs to be recharged (adapter included). Unlike flash-pak grenades, this will go off right by the user, so they'd better be ready, or have good flare compensation, or both.

When the Pueblo Corporate Council established the Kivanet for educating TMs, they also looked into ways to contain their subjects. What they came up with was subtle and moved along the same lines as the development of mage hoods and mage cuffs. The final result was Universal Mirror or UM Fabric, a material that can reflect radio directly back instead of at a ninety-degree angle. It can be used to get a better signal profile from a target covered by this fabric. Hoods and body bags are made from this material to prevent communication of RFIDs contained within, or to block a technomancer's connection to the Matrix. I prefer this fabric to Faraday liner because Faraday-lined containers are not as flexible.

If you want to send a message from some location with the signal strength you need, the comm tends to broadcast your message all over the place. Site-to-site laser communication requires LOS, so what you need is a Fresnel cover on that comm. Fresnel material works on radio waves the same way a lighthouse works on light: focusing it and giving it a specific direction. It's handy for helping you sneak a signal through to a particular target that you cannot see.

- The lack of visual contact makes using this tricky. Plan ahead, and make sure people know where they're supposed to be when so that they get what they're supposed to receive.
- Fianchetto

Any good espionage agent knows how to do their job without leaving a trail, but sometimes it can be more to their advantage to leave a trail that points in the wrong direction. Fingerprint morphing is cyberware that blends in with your skin but can allow you to change your fingerprints at will. Users can enter in patterns they want the morphs to assume, and they can even get a quick scan of someone else's prints if the wearer can either take a detailed picture of them or touch their fingerprints with the morphs.





## INTELLIGENCE GEAR

### Assembler

This device re-assembles documents at a pace of one page per minute, regardless of the style of shredder used.

### Card Skimmer

There are two parts to this device: a card skimmer, which is a thin membrane that adheres to the maglock's reader, and a card skimmer reader, which is compatible with most keycard copiers. The card skimmer is hard to detect (Perception (4) Test). It takes a Palming (2) Test to apply to the card reader without detection. The skimmer can record up to ten keycards that go through the card reader. After that, no further data is recorded—the skimmer only saves the data from the first ten swipes. The skimmer does not transmit data wirelessly. To access the stored data, a keycard copier with a skimmer reader can then be passed through to transfer the keycard information from the skimmer. The skimmer reader can also trigger the card skimmer to dissolve after transfer.

### Hydrophone

Signal range is Device Rating x 25 meters in picking up noises. Software is needed to process the noise of moving water out (Edit + Computer (2) Test). Locating the proper pipe can be difficult and time-consuming (Perception + Electronic Warfare (12, 30 minutes) Extended Test). The capsule can be programmed to grow filaments after a certain time, allowing for a rough estimate as to how far it has traveled into a designated pipe.

### Scan Gloves

Scan gloves can look like any glove or second skin. The gloves can detect and record surface variations in both color and texture as they move across the surface of an object. Add the rating of the gloves to Perception Tests in detecting and recording surface changes.

### Screen Capture System

This spray coats any optical display (commlink, contacts, glasses, vid screen) with a sensor array designed to capture images projected from or through the device. For contacts and glasses, it also records both the reality and the augmented reality. A successful Perception (5) Test detects the coating. The nanites also construct a secure RFID to send the recorded images. The coating can record up to 72 hours of activity before looping. Rating determines the number of days that the coating lasts.

Name	Availability	Cost
Assembler	—	600¥
Card Skimmer (per strip)	12F	650¥
Card Skimmer Reader	12F	2,000¥
Hydrophone	6	125
Hydrophone Capsule	6R	100¥
Ice Cube Microphone	(see <i>Camouflage, Alternate Materials</i> )	
Scan Gloves	5 + Rating	150¥
Screen Capture Spray	8 + Rating	Rating x 200¥

### Software

The programs listed are common use programs, and like other common programs they can be bought up to Rating 6 (p. 232, SR4A).

### CarnivoreGold (Computer)

This program translates languages and argots that users may have no other way of translating, including modes of communication that may have been developed solely for communication between a limited group of people. The program's rating plus the user's Computer skill are then used in Language Tests to understand what was said.

### Lip Reader (Computer)

The program and the user's Computer skill can be used to try to understand what people are saying in a video without audio. The threshold is determined by how clearly visible the subject's mouth is (unobscured mouth has a threshold of 2, mouth slightly angled away from camera has threshold of 3, etc.). The use of Kinesics by anyone on the recording can increase the threshold. The amount of information acquired depends on the number of net hits (see *Lip Reading Test* sidebar).

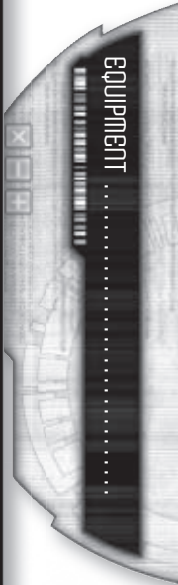
### MonaLisa (Computer)

The software's rating plus the user's Computer skill is used to identify faces that are part of databases that the user can access. The threshold for this test is 2, which can be increased if there is no clear shot of the individual's face. Accessing databases with facial information is a separate activity.

### LIP READING TEST

#### Information recovered

2 net hits	The general subject of the conversation, but not the specifics.
3 net hits	The subject and each participant's attitude toward it.
5 net hits	The entire conversation for all visible subjects.



If you have to deal with inconvenient security guards or bystanders, there are nonlethal ways to help keep them quiet. Pharmaceuticals have developed a drug called short circuit that stops the formation of short-term memories for up to twelve hours. It doesn't knock the person out like laes does, so it's less noticeable but it makes the person very absent-minded. The subject has a task retention time of fifteen to thirty seconds, similar to the onset of dementia. This drug makes it difficult for investigators, as the subject has a hard time recalling any details during and after that time period. Mind probing is also ineffective, as there are no memories stored.

End of dictation.

/End Transcript

### COMMLINK KILLED THE SECURITY BADGE

Posted by: Bull

I think back twenty plus years ago to when wage slaves and security guards carried badges as the equivalent to today's RFIDs for security clearance. Like maglock passkeys, they were much easier to duplicate or steal. All I needed was that badge to walk around a corporation. In those days, we also didn't have to worry about a pair of pants or a candy wrapper wirelessly advertising to the world.

With 99 percent of the corporate population already sporting a commlink that spits out their SIN and other trivial details, it didn't take long for corporate access to move into the commlink. This made it more challenging to get through security or to impersonate someone since you can't just stick your pretty face on a commlink. Think about it. If it wasn't for the payments we get from Johnsons trying to preserve their deniability, how often would we see credsticks? The average law-abiding Joe or Jane might not touch one for years. Some of the same rules apply to physical security badges. Security teams don't need to worry about checkpoints to look at a badge—they can throw sensors around their facilities to pinpoint the location of every sarariman walking around the building using their commlinks. All this has totally altered infiltration.

There is a silver lining to this story. The security goons began to be dependent on data feeds. A false sense of trust is put in the data being sent from AROs and nodes to their display links. Spoofing and interception become key skills in faking out security personnel and their systems. It makes hackers a lot more important. While keeping yourself hidden helps, spoofing security so that they don't pay attention to cameras and doors opening adds to the success of the mission. With decent signal strength from my comm and a satellite uplink, it allows me to make good on the promise of my longtime sig line: "The Best Ork Decker You Never Met!"

Short circuit's nice for infiltration, but it has other uses. Give some middle manager a dose and watch his work performance fall. He may be demoted or fired, which can be helpful if you've targeted the guy for extraction, or if you just don't like him.

- Cosmo

### SURVEILLANCE

November 4, 2072

From: Dr. Cross

Subject: Visual Enhancements

Terahertz waves exist at the very upper end of radio waves, just below the very bottom of optical frequencies. They straddle the region between waves and particles, and they are an ideal energy source for surveillance. It helps that the waves can be tightly controlled from the emitter, making them difficult to detect. We've used these waves in terahertz-ray goggles, which are lightweight and effective up to 100 meters. They operate for three hours on a single charge, and they possess the "Superman" setting (i.e., the ability to see through clothing). T-rays will penetrate a single wall constructed from wood, masonry and even concrete, but they do so at a decreased range of fifty meters.

We have continued to work on scattered x-ray vision in conjunction with t-ray vision to cover all possible combinations



Urgent Message...

EQUIPMENT



## ADDITIONAL RULES

### Fingerprint Morphing

The skin on one hand can be made of bioplastic memory material that can build up the ridges of a finger or palm print. The data from a print scanner can be sent to the hand to change the fingerprints or it can scan a touch with another person's fingertips. Make an Opposed Test between the fingerprint duplication rating and the fingerprint scanner rating (p. 263, *SR4A*).

### CYBERWARE

Cyberware	Essence	Availability	Cost
Fingerprint Morphing	0.2	12F	Rating x 10,000¥

### Fresnel Fabric

Material that can focus and concentrate light or radio waves like the lens on a lighthouse. This allows for a smaller device with less signal strength to be boosted as the signal passes through the fabric. Add 50 percent to the signal rating range with a minimum increase of 1 meter in one direction. Because the boost is directional, the device must be pointed in the direction the person you want to send the wireless signal to.

### Pulse Weave

This clothing addition turns the suit into one large flash-pak, disorienting and blinding opponents. Anyone facing the pulse weave suit receives a -4 dice pool modifier on Attack Tests (flare compensation reduces this modifier to -2). The pulse weave can only carry a single charge; after it is used, it needs to recharge for fifteen minutes.

### Short Circuit

Duration of the drug is (10 - Logic attribute of target) in hours, minimum 1 hour. During that time, subject has a -2

to any Intuition or Logic linked skills, and cannot remember things that happened more than fifteen minutes ago (though they have full access to memories created before they were given the drug).

### Speak Up

The spray-on nanites build up a small acoustic or imaging device and enough storage for an agent program. The agent can then broadcast whatever the agent has been programmed to say (or they can be spontaneously re-programmed wirelessly should the situation require it). This can be used to distract guards or as part of an intimidation ruse. The imaging device can project two-dimensional images. The nanites can be triggered wirelessly. Rating of the device is the number of hours that the nanites last. Using Speak Up allows +1 die to Intimidation or Infiltration Tests.

### Universal Mirror Material

Universal Mirror Fabric reflects light or radio waves directly back to the device, reducing its access to wireless communications. It reduces the signal strength of anything inside the material by twice the material's rating. The rating of both the hood and body bag is 1.

Name	Availability	Cost
Fresnel Fabric	14R	3,000¥
Pulse Weave	+8	3,000¥
Short Circuit	8F	750¥
Speak Up	5	175¥
UM Material (per square yard)	8F	Rating x 250 ¥
UM Body Bag	6F	800¥
UM Hood	6F	250¥

of material. What we call the third-eye system sends out radioactive energy from a central "eye," which is flanked by two sets of flat optical receptors to reflect the returning energy beams back to two receptors. What you get is a stereoscopic view through solid objects (concrete, plastic, steel, etc.). Materials have distinct t-ray signatures, so by using the scanner you can generally tell what type of materials you are looking at. Explosives have been one particular area of focus for people using these scanners.

While developing this technology, corporations have also worked on counter-measures. They include potassium-40 (which can be found in bananas) in their bioweaves or, more dangerously, they use hot materials from nuclear facilities to obscure them from x-ray observation. Alternatively, removing the device's third eye provides a visual Geiger counter representation of radiation within the area. This is good for locating rounds of depleted uranium—or a load of smuggled bananas.

On a side note, we have included the ultraviolet spectrum as a visual enhancement for some of our surveillance cameras.

UV vision enhancement takes ultraviolet light and creates a safe visual overlay translating UV images into something metahumans can process. UV is an overlooked wavelength in surveillance at present, but countermeasures to UV surveillance are already being developed and, in some cases, deployed.

Existing methods of looking through materials are helpful, but there are occasions when you need to physically see what's on the other side of the wall. The pinhole camera/cutter is the right tool for these jobs. Our pinhole camera incorporates demolisher nanites that bore a hole through the targeted material in a precise straight line, allowing a fiber-optic camera to be fairly quickly pushed through a wall or other surface.

Another method of looking at what's on the other side of a wall is the holographic imager, which can provide through-wall imagery. Our current system weighs eight kilograms and fits into a gym bag, including the tripod. Note that this is not a passive system—this unit stands out quite distinctly with a microwave frequency detector (tuned to the 3.5 GHz frequency). Regular

exposure to microwaves at this frequency (i.e., three months or longer) has been shown in medical studies to elevate certain liver functions and lead to a measured increase in urea and creatinine in kidney functions. While the damage is generally not fatal, we would suggest that surveillance teams be rotated every two weeks with four weeks off.

Hyperspectral imaging processes light across the whole electromagnetic spectrum and uses software to make the results understandable to the viewer. It was originally designed to help find burial mounds. In a nutshell, a decomposing body feeds the plants; the plants grow healthier and reflect more of a specific “green” in the color spectrum. Also created by Ares is cryptochromic imaging. This enhancement overlays the visual spectrum with magnetic fields. Functionally, this helps construction and demolition crews to find hot wires or other electronic components.

- Computers are optical now, right? How can they have a magnetic field?
- 
- Well, annoying recurrent anonymous poster, though computers are mostly optic, there's still electrons moving in their power supply, which will generate a magnetic field.
- Clockwork

To help mundane troops spot magic threats, the CAS/UCAS governments initiated a joint effort in the development of a biological film that can see astral forms. Most of the work was done with glomoss extracts, though it wasn't until deepweed and finally xutuli extracts were thrown in that the product was successful. When the user comes within a few meters of an astral object, there is a blue tinge that the eyes pick up. There's not a whole lot of detail except for general location and power (the darker the blue, the closer the astral object is).

**November 5, 2072**

**From: Dr. Cross**

**Subject: Tracking**

Marker cigarettes are a personal favorite of mine. These cigarettes are modified with a fluorescing UV compound that, when burned, will mark not only the smoker but also everyone within a two-meter radius (under optimal conditions) with a UV glow at 1400 lumens, with a half-life of six hours. Field tests have shown that at night you can pick these individuals out with an aerial drone at a distance of 500 meters. After initially smoking one of these cigarettes, the test subject actually exhaled a cloud of neon green for 30 minutes which could be spotted at a distance of 100 meters at night. Obviously to see these marked individuals you need UV-capable vision devices. This compound introduces a new health risk to the smoker, though it is not more severe than those already in the product. We have cartons upon cartons of all the most popular brands treated, sealed, and ready for use.

- This may be new to Mrs. Cross, but MI-5 has been using UV as part of surveillance for a while, just not at that luminosity. They must have some poor vision, or bad tracking skills, to need such a beacon.
- Thorn

In the ongoing war of technological one-upmanship, omnipresent RFID tags have been countered by tag erasers. The response to that is a compound called Spectre 1, a biotag that is used to mark and track down targets. Targets can be marked through direct application of an aerosol spray or with dormant bacteria encapsulated in a waxy shell (similar to the way scratch-and-sniff products work). While the bacteria are active, they create a unique odorless gas compound as a byproduct. The compound is very stable, allowing for long traceability with a gas spectrometer. Once applied, the bacteria can only survive for a limited time.

Not to be outdone by other corporations, Saeder-Krupp built a more prolific bacterium, a microorganism with a tri-stage chemical byproduct that they called Spectre 2. The byproduct is a liquid so it, and the bacterium, can be left behind as the coated object comes into contact with other things. It is invisible except by UV light. As it runs through its lifecycle, the UV-traceable chemical becomes modified, going through three distinct stages of dimness before finally fading altogether. What this means is that there's a sort of chronological traceability.

- Saeder-Krupp Prime has several variants of Spectre that they add to secure areas to tag any unauthorized visitors.
- Fianchetto

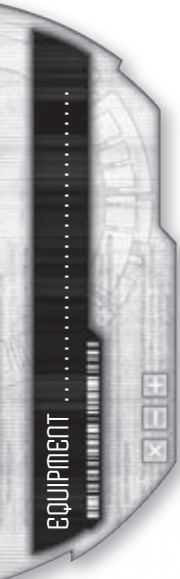
The Red Hand of Doom is one of those serendipitous practical jokes turned into a tracking mechanism. Originally used for a dry chemical solution to clean rooms, this permanganate compound, dried and ground into white powder, turns skin bright red as it reacts with its natural acidic oils. It also generates heat as it oxidizes, causing the skin to sweat, which perpetuates the reaction and irritation. Used creatively, this dust can help you determine who has been touching things they should not.

- The use people think of for this at first—coating valuables with it—is really not that effective, since anyone stealing valuables seldom does so with their bare hands. But if you are clever, there are some good uses for it. I know of one Denver Mafiosi who makes his mistress coat her brassiere with the stuff.
- Traveler Jones

For the general detection of someone moving through a room or touching things, there is a microsphere-filled chemical solution that I call Microcapsule Gel Identification Coating or MGIC. (Note to self: try to get an “A” in there so we can promote it as “MAGIC.”) When you wipe this stuff on a floor, keypad, or glass, it goes on clear and slightly greasy. Take care in applying it because when a capsule breaks, the chemical inside reacts with the outside solution, forming a gel. When someone steps on or touches an object that is coated in MGIC, the spheres break and the solution solidifies quickly. The spheres are small enough that you can capture fingertip ridges in detail. It also absorbs green spectrum after the reaction, allowing for easy visibility under special lighting. There is some tactile sense to the coating after breakage that can't be helped, but at least it's not sticky. It's good for finding who touched an item, the path a person walked on a clean floor, or even what things were placed on a table.

End of dictation.

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**THE ART OF NANOSMOKE****Posted by: 2XL**

Let me build on what Plan 9 said at the opening about getting people to see what you want them to see. If you're going to disperse something, or try to spray something, you want to do it in a way that will make people take no notice of what you're doing. Perfume atomizers aren't bad disguises, but once you start spraying what you have on something besides yourself, people may notice. Smoking, on the other hand, doesn't attract much attention, no matter where you exhale. With the latest in nanosmoke, I can do more than take a refreshing break—I can turn fellow smokers into sensor drones, or mark them with UV for a wetwork or kidnapping operation.

Now, nanosmokes shouldn't be used like regular cigarettes. You don't just want to keep puffing away, waiting for the right target to come along, because every time you inhale you'll be leaving nanites in your lungs. I haven't seen any long-term health studies about the effects of these in your body, but I'd rather be safe than sorry. Shallow breaths are best—keep as much smoke as you can in your mouth instead of pulling all of it into your lungs. When you're getting ready to exhale, do it through your mouth—the nose is designed to catch things, and you want as many nanites as possible getting to your target instead of being stuck on you.

The beauty of nanosmokes is that you can throw just about any nanites in a cigarette, cigar, or joint and release them in a puff of smoke (though you probably want to avoid putting the more destructive types into your lungs). They need an important programming adjustment though, so that as few as possible will activate on you. The first is that they are on standby when they move through the filter; the second is the number of seconds that they delay before activation (giving you time to get them to their target). Breathe in the direction that you want the nanites to go, and that's it. I like these things so much that I added an extra measure of protection to keep too many from implanting in my lungs; my trachea filter has been modified to handle the stray nanites with cleaner nanites.

Range is tricky with nanosmokes. You're simply not going to get a high concentration of them on anything more than a meter or two from you. You need to be subtle—blowing smoke into someone's face is generally a bad idea, and leaning forward and blowing on their back looks odd. But for something like taggers, where you don't need a dense concentration of the nanites to hit the target, it's not hard to get the proper amount of smoke in the right place.

If you can't get the nanites in the right place by inhaling, as a last resort you can consider using the smoldering cigarette butt. The taggers can slip out that way, too—just be careful about the burns you'll leave behind. If you're going to leave your butts behind, remember to use sealant lipbalm when smoking. It reduces the DNA signature you leave on the cigarette filter (it also helps if you don't leave the thing sitting in your mouth).

Plan 9 mentioned mini rocket smokes to me. I've played around with them. These dart-like rockets, with a small signature of propellant and explosives, are small enough that a single one might not be detected. They are dangerous in that the rocket is pointed at your face when you light it. There is no smartlink or anything like that to aim it with. It's all old-fashioned eye-balling. Range and damage are comparable to a hold-out pistol.

- Sharkskin coating is one counter to all these biological-based tags. This is available both as a spray coating and as an option for fabrics. Originally designed for medical purposes, the coating makes non-porous microscopic pyramids on the surface of the item. This prevents biological organisms from getting a good foothold for growth on the surface. I prefer the sharkskin coating to spray cleaners. I was cleaning my clothes and gear in antibacterial solutions up to four times a day, and people thought I was OCD crazy.
- Plan 9

**DRONES****Classified Results: Personal Files****November 14, 2072****From: Dr. Cross****Subject: Drones**

While any drone can be used in surveillance, there are particular drones made specifically for this field of work. The first is called the blob, which is a good description of this drone. It's a small ball of fluid filled with micro cameras. It looks, frankly, like a ball of snot, but it is very flexible. The cameras can move 360 degrees as they float around within the ball. Because of its fluid nature, the blob can squeeze





government agents. It's a gyrojet vehicle that can be smuggled in parts and quickly built. It's hard to categorize this vehicle, as it can be used for surveillance, infiltration, and escape. The Icarus is very similar to the Lockheed Sparrow, though it replaces the two vector thrust engines with a single autogyro. It is very silent with less downdraft than a helicopter and, once broken down, can fit into four suitcases and be taken anywhere. Compared to the Dawnglider, the Icarus can ascend and has more controlled maneuvering. It's been used by the PCC publicly after the twin quakes for search and rescue missions, since its size and agility helped in scouting safely in the terrain. While too small to carry a second passenger, it does have space for cargo.

End of dictation.

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itself through openings as narrow as a millimeter. The outer surface of the blob is covered with tiny Velcro-like hairs allowing for vertical and inverted climbing movement. The ball can fold its membrane to grab a small object and roll with it back to its controlling rigger.

Field agents often find themselves in need of a couple of extra sets of eyes. The Flying Eye is 25 millimeters wide from wingtip to wingtip, with a flying motion similar to that of a housefly. They have optical sensors but limited signal range, and they are best left on remote and retrieved after their primary mission is complete. They are surprisingly durable with flexible memory metal frames, as we found out by accidentally stepping on one. They are well suited to short-term surveillance requirements. I would encourage agents not to think of these as disposable.

New sensor technology has been designed for Mesametric Tekkei-050. Based on mantis shrimp vision, the most complex eyes in the animal kingdom, it's a special compound eye with 10,000 individual "eyes" with 16 different photoreceptors giving detailed vision with full depth of field. As a drone sensor, the MSOS Mk I already includes ultraviolet and infrared as part of the package. This sensor also helps the drone to see transparent or camouflaged prey, giving them a better chance at defeating our current level of chameleon technologies. While I have yet to replicate the visual capabilities of the mantis shrimp, I have been able to make considerable advances, and we are field-testing the MSOS Mk I sensor package.

Evo has developed a particularly nice drone that incorporates new sensor technology. The Bloodhound Mk III has the olfactory capabilities of the male Moon Moth, which can smell the female of the species up to 9.7 kilometers away. This medium-sized aerial drone has a pusher prop (a propeller at the tail) design that incorporates horizontally mounted fans in its wing, giving it VTOL and hovering capabilities. With a push prop, the front of the drone can open, allowing a large scoop to collect air particles for the olfactory sensor. Under ideal conditions, the Bloodhound Mk III can track down a signature odor or pheromones at levels far below human detection. In our studies, we have found that three of these drones are optimal for triangulating and tracking a target, one taking up the point position and the other two flanking out at a range of a kilometer to either side of the point drone.

Icarus is the third personal stealth vehicle to be built and used by

## COUNTERINTELLIGENCE

With all the bugs, RFID tags, and corporations looking over your shoulder, you need equipment to help you keep a low profile or to disable any surveillance attempts in the area of communication. Wireless is everywhere, and so are hacking attempts. The Micro-Transceiver is a good, short burst communication device that is hard to trace, but it still uses the commlink for its full range of functions. To this end, I recommend grabbing a few cheap, disposable commlinks. Keep the information and programs you put on them simple, and be ready to drop them at a moment's notice. They're great for keeping hackers out of your main 'link and for leaving a decoy trail when you need to. Higher-end electronics dealers don't sell too many of these—the margins are thin, and the questionable uses of these 'links draws the wrong kind of business—but electronics stores in dumpier neighborhoods usually have plenty.

In intelligence, it's good to do the unexpected, and in a wireless age using wires is not something people generally are looking out for. G-line, or GouBau Line, is nothing new, but some people are getting back to it because people are too good at intercepting and decrypting wireless transmissions. G-line allows two or more devices to communicate over an electrical power cable through modulation of the electricity at high frequencies. This accessory can be added to a commlink or other device that you want to have a non-wireless connection. College students at tech-based schools have been doing this to create small, private networks for piracy trades.

- Corps use G-lines frequently for internal systems. The convenience of wireless is great, but they know better than to trust their most important data to the wild world of the air.
- Cosmo

### Classified Results: Personal Files

November 27, 2073

From: Dr. Cross

Subject: Counter Intelligence

When looking to defeat surveillance, why settle for a white noise generator when you can be so much more obnoxious? That's the thinking behind the babblers. Measuring 8 cm x 5 cm



## SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT RULES

### BioTag Spectre 1

Once sprayed onto a target, the microorganisms give off this gas for ten hours. If the tracker can detect it, the presence of the gas adds +2 to Tracking Tests. The gas can only be blocked by a vacuum.

### BioTag Spectre 2

The organism generates three distinct levels of UV lighting, fading abruptly from one level to the next every two hours. After six hours, the glow disappears. This gives a chronological indicator for tracking a target. Trackers add +1 to Tracking Tests, while marked subjects receive a -1 penalty for opposed Tracking Tests when they try to avoid being followed.

### Mage Sight Eye Drops

Each dose of mage sight drops lasts 6 hours. With a Perception Test (8 - Force/Magic rating of the astral object), the user of mage sight eye drops can discern a blue tint in his field of view of the astral object (ward, spell, spirit) if he is within two meters of it, but not know the exact nature of the object. Mage sight eye drops are similar in function to the glomoss, only adding direction and location to the equation.

### Microcapsule Gel Identification Coating

Microcapsule coating creates an instant mold of an item that puts enough pressure on the coating to break the microcapsules. The capsules are small enough to capture fingertip ridges and can be seen under special lighting. The coating can be perceived with a Perception (2) Test. One dose can cover 100 square centimeters.

### Mini Rocket Cigarettes

These short-range rockets are narrow enough to fit in a cigarette. They require Exotic Weapon skill, as the mini rockets have a short fuse hidden in the tobacco and fire in the direction of the filter. Range is comparable to hold-out pistols. Damage is 4P.

### Nanite Smoke (released via cigarettes)

Nanite cigarettes, cigars, and joins are modified with a mouthpiece/filter that activates dormant nanites that are in the smoking device. Nanospy and biotag nanites are commonly used in this way. Range of the nanite smoke to successfully deposit nanites is 2 meters.

### Red Hand of Doom

This has the same effect as a mild allergy until the material is washed off. In addition, if the person's hands are uncovered, individuals performing Tracking or Perception Tests against them receive +1 die.

### Sharkskin Coating

Sharkskin coating mimics the microscopic pyramid shapes that shark scales have, ridges that prevent barnacles from connecting to the skin of a shark, though on a much smaller scale. This coating reduces biotag's lifetime by half. It also provides +1 die to Disease Resistance Tests (see p. 130, *Augmentation*) against any diseases that are bacterial in nature. Sharkskin coating is also available in a spray to coat devices.

Name	Availability	Cost
T-Ray	+15R	8,000¥
Scatter x-ray	+13R	8,000¥
UV	+8	2,000¥
HyperSpectrum	+4	1,500¥
Cryptochromic	+4	1,000¥

### VISIBILITY MODIFIERS

	T-Ray	X-ray	UV	Holographic Imager
Metal/Water	-8	-2	-8	-6
Radioactive Material	-2	-	-0	-0
Glare	0	0	-4	0
Light Fog/Mist/Rain	-4	-1	-2	-2
Heavy Fog/Mist/Rain	-6	-2	-2	-2
Thermal Smoke	-4	-2	-6	-2

### EQUIPMENT TABLE

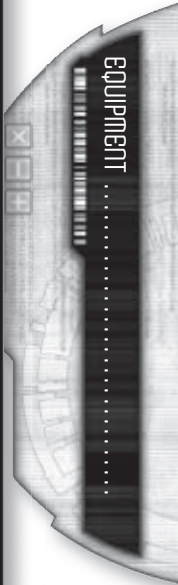
Name	Availability	Cost
BioTag Spectre 1-2 (per dose)	6R	300¥
Holographic Imager	10	2,500¥
Mage Sight Eye Drops (per bottle w/ 10 doses)	16	5,000¥
Microcapsule Gel Identification Coating (1 dose)	5	300¥
Mini Rocket Cigarette	8F	100¥
Nanite Smoke	4 + nanites	150¥ + nanites
Red Hand of Doom	5	200¥
Sharkskin Spray	5	400¥
UV Marker Smokes (per pack of 8)	5	250¥

### DRONES

#### Blob

The blob is a membrane-like container filled with a magneto solution and micro-cameras. It moves by a dynamic current, which solidifies the solution against the membrane, weighing the membrane down and causing momentum. The cameras are also regularly in motion. Because of its fluidity, the blob can squeeze itself through spaces 1 millimeter wide. The outer surface of the blob is covered with tiny hairs allowing for vertical and inverted climbing movement. Because the form is flexible, it can grasp onto things and carry them along.

**Std. Upgrades:** Gecko Tips and Special Machinery (flexible body shape allowing for movement)



**Bloodhound Mk III**

This olfactory sensor has a range of four kilometers and an effective Rating of 5. Its range of detection can be modified by prevailing weather conditions including temperature (reduce range by one kilometer for every 10 degrees under 20 degrees Celsius), precipitation (reduce range to two kilometers during and in the four hours after significant precipitation), and wind (for every ten kilometers per hour of windspeed, increase or reduce the range by one kilometer depending on whether the source is upwind or downwind).

**Std. Upgrades:** Vertical Takeoff and Landing, Level 2, Sensor Package with Olfactory Booster

**Flying Eye**

**Std Upgrades:** Vertical Takeoff and Landing, Level 2, Improved Sensor Array

**Icarus**

The Icarus is similar to the Lockheed Sparrow, though it replaces the two vector thrust engines with a single autogyro. The Icarus is very stealthy and silent with less downdraft than a helicopter. It can be broken down into 4 suitcases and taken anywhere.

**Std Upgrades:** Signature Masking 3, Chameleon Coating

Drones	Handling	Accel	Speed	Pilot	Body	Armor	Sensors	Avail	Cost
Flying Eye (Micro Drone)	+1	2/10	10	3	0	0	1	11	800¥
Blob (Mini Drone)	+2	5/10	30	3	2	1	3	12R	4,500¥
Bloodhound Mk III (Medium Drone)	0	10/25	80	3	5	1	3	12R	35,000¥
Icarus (Personal Vehicle)	+1	10/30	90	3	3	2	1	12R	20,000¥

**NEW DRONE SENSORS****Bloodhound Olfactory Sensor**

This sensor is capable of tracking an individual by actively detecting an odor or pheromone.

**MSOS Mk I (Mantis Shrimp Ocular Sensor)**

The vision capability of this sensor adds +3 to Perception Tests to detect characters concealed through light manipulation such as the improved invisibility spell or the use of a chameleon suit.

Sensors	Capacity	Availability	Cost
Bloodhound Olfactory (Rating 1-6)	[3]	5	Rating x 300¥
MSOS Mk 1	n/a	8	1,500¥

x 2 cm and weighing a scant 100 grams, the babbler resembles the ubiquitous white noise generator. Unlike the WNG, the babbler functions by recording and analyzing the voice patterns of individuals and then broadcasting a random conversation that is designed to be unrecognizable. Think of it in terms of being in a restaurant and not being able to make out the conversation in the booth behind you. That is the babbler. Because it presents the background noise surveillance crews are expecting to hear, it is less conspicuous than the white noise generator. The thought that the opposition is sitting there in surveillance and desperately trying to increase the fidelity of their signal to overhear what's being said always makes me smile.

For a more offensive countermeasure than the camera neutralizer, we have produced an IR laser that is capable of cooking optics at a distance. The camera burner will look for reflective optics associated with image-producing sensors from IR to UV. Once found, it fires off flashes of multiple high-energy shots from our class 4 laser, melting or burning the sensor. This device makes a great impression in field tests—we set up one in an auditorium with flying eyes, skimmers, and crawling drones along with stationary cameras. I couldn't help but smile when I would

see one of those drones pop into view of the burner and then hear swearing over the comm as a tech's drone was blinded. Note: The camera burner comes with a target recognizer that will not allow it to fire at people.

To keep a low profile while sending data, I have designed data capsules, which can help in transferring data in and out of a secure facility. A data capsule can look like a mundane pain-relief gel cap. The capsule has an induction pad that allows data to be transferred from a port on a device into it. Dropping the gel cap into your favorite beverage causes a transformation to take place. The capsule dissolves, forming a transparent coating along the sides and bottom of the beverage container. This allows you to pass through a security checkpoint with relative ease. Security may very well check to see that there are no false bottoms on the containers, or even that the liquid itself holds something in suspension. To retrieve the data simply pour out the contents of the container and add silicon powder. This triggers a final transformation of the nanites into a rudimentary memory chip, readable through an induction pad.

Taking a cue from the Cold War, I have developed nanodots, which function precisely in the same manner as microdots did. A



single nanodot is so small that you could put five hundred of them in the period at the end of this sentence. Obviously, they are incredibly hard to detect as they do not require any electronics to store data. We produce a field version inscriber that can read data, wirelessly or through a data chip, and then take that information and inscribe it onto the nanodots and apply it to whatever item is placed under the nanodot inscriber. We have fitted conventional lighters with the ability to inscribe five hundred such dots at any given time. We also have the extra trick of inscribing the edge of the nanodot so we know which ones are ours. It takes an electron microscope to read a nanodot.

- One thing I like to take with me on vacation, or whenever I have to stay at places outside my comfort zone, is the Faraday bomb. After sweeping for bugs, I set this off. It fills the room with metallic dust and magnetized particles in a fine mist. When the dust settles, it significantly reduces the signal rating of any device or bug that was left in the room. The particles are fairly sticky and are a pain to clean off devices, though of course my stuff is usually in vacuum-sealed bags, so it's clean when I'm ready to use it. It would take someone several hours of clean-up before they could get a decent signal through. This gives me plenty of time to find another safe house. Camera burners are fun, but they don't take care of any listening devices that don't need line of sight.
- Plan 9

**December 3rd, 2072**

**From: Dr. Cross**

**Subject: Document Washer and InKryption**

As I have mentioned previously, paper documents are still occasionally used in the corporate world, as well as bureaucracies the world over. Physical contracts and paperwork are considered the best backup, especially after two Matrix crashes, and some people still want hard copies and/or real signatures instead of digital. That being said, we have created a document "washer" that will strip the paper of any chemicals used to mark on the document (ink, pencil, etc.). It even thermally presses the document in order to get out any indentations left in the fibers. This goes well beyond the recycling treatment and confidential shredding of other corporations' documents. Paper that has gone through the document washer can be reused almost immediately.

- In theory you could wipe out parts of a document and forge your own, but a better use is sending messages without using the Matrix and wiping them out after reading.
- Pistons

It is now common practice that printer cartridges contain identifying markers called InKryption to ensure that documents are authentic. Many of the bigger corporations and governments have printers and pens that deposit etched gold particles within the ink. These particles are engraved with a code that identifies the printer, company,

## CODE TALKERS

**Posted by: Pistons**

In the final days of WWI, the Germans started having trouble breaking the Americans' code. They were doing well in intercepting and decrypting transmissions until they were stumped by messages in Choctaw language, which was difficult to learn. The same tactic was used by the Americans in WWII against Japanese decryption efforts, this time using Navajo "code talkers" in their transmissions. Such tactics are difficult to pull off in today's world—the Matrix can take a language sample and find a linguasoft translator for it, and the number of languages from different cultures and regions has been significantly reduced through the events of the last century. What languages remain, in addition to a few extinct ones, have been catalogued by the Global Heritage Project, the same people behind the Doomsday Ark and Seed Vault. What this means is that it's harder to find code talkers than it used to be, but people may be willing to pay decent nuyen if you can track some down for them.

The hazards of electronic communication have made several people agree with those spies who are worried about having their data duplicated in the Resonance realms. These people try to avoid the Matrix altogether in their messaging. Temporary signs with Zignature paint and E-paper are great, as they can be passed and wiped. Old-fashioned real paper and even old-fashioned animal carriers are being reused. Some genetic artists code their messages into strands of junk DNA, which is not a place that most people look to for communications. The physical item can be passed between agents without the message being detected. Some use mold, insects or even viruses inside a metahuman carrier. One Ikebana artist (flower arranger) could send two messages at once: with the physical arrangement of flowers, and within the DNA of the flowers.

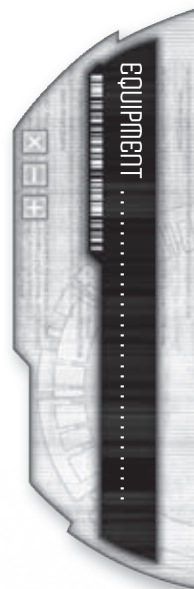
- He was an Imperial double agent working for the PCC. Got out after the PCC took over Los Angeles. His artwork is still displayed in LA.
- Plan 9

E-paper is ingenious for espionage. Better than invisible ink, which still leaves a chemical trace, E-paper allows you to hide something as complex as a photo. With a jolt of electricity, all the microspheres embedded in the paper flip from black to white. Of course, standard paper can be acceptable for communication, if it's destroyed afterwards.

Passing along physical messages often requires a drop box. While the first two help you to communicate, if you need to pass a package off to another person, you need a way to do it without meeting the other person and blowing your cover. The drop box is any container that is camouflaged into the surrounding environment and whose contents are hard to detect. A drop box's contents can range in size from data-only to a corpse. Sometimes, the corpse could actually be the drop box.

Modern, data-only drop boxes most commonly have a touch-link surface. Discreetly touching or leaning on the object creates the connection in which the data can be transferred. The data on the commlink can be deleted or the chip burnt. I've heard of syndicates talking to gangs through special graffiti tags this way. For larger objects such as chips, hard-copy documents, etc., there are larger containers with masking that make them look like the real thing.

Urgent Message....



person, and time code. If the signature is from the VP of Production and the ink code is from a printer at reception, it will be detected with a simple document scan. This is also how non-digital documents are known to be official. The document washer will remove these markers from the document as well.

- Hard currency and some corporate scrip are like that. It's a good idea to scan the inKryption to see if the paperwork is legit. I've gotten burned once that way with a briefcase of bogus "official" intel.
- Sticks

End of dictation.

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## ESCAPE

I think anyone in a bad situation appreciates any help they can get. There are a number of little accessories that can help you out of a tight spot. Let's say you've messed up and gotten yourself zip tied—thermal wrist guards are coming back in fashion for the urban jumpsuit and form-fitting armor. Thermal pads around the wrist (and ankles for form-fitting armor) heat up rapidly to 225 degrees Celsius in three seconds, and then cool down in an equal amount of time. At this temperature, most plastics and nylons melt, allowing you to break free.

- When a man doesn't take no for an answer and grabs my arm, you bet I'll give him the third degree burn, just before I kick him in the knee. And then break his nose.
- Pistons

Also popular are pocket frills to keep the contents of the wearer's pockets safe. It's based on the same principal as shock frills but thinner and on the inside of a pocket. Local insulation and a skin-link SRFID keep you from shocking yourself, while anyone trying to search you for a weapon or pick your pocket will get a nasty shock.

### Classified Results: Personal Files

January 4, 2073

From: Dr. Cross

Subject: Escape Vehicles

Getting out of a location sometimes requires going out the window long enough for the threat to pass, and hanging by your fingertips is never a good idea. A silksteel harness can help, in combination with either a skyhook or grapple hook. This harness is woven into the fabric of your jeans or slacks and is invisible. We created a harness virtually identical to one used in rock climbing and built it into a pair of pants. The belt loops can function as the equivalent of D rings, so with a bit of microwire and a piece of gecko tape you can get pretty comfortable underneath that balcony. You can also use it for rappelling or rock climbing without ruining your suit.

The skyhook is a large cabled blimp drone with a hook on top. It is programmed to get clear of a building and reach a height requested by a rigger. When an aerial vehicle with something for the hook to grab onto approaches, the vehicle

## ADDITIONAL RULES

Items not described below work as described, without the need for additional tests (for example, no test is needed to have the Document Washer erase ink from a piece of paper).

### Babbler

All Perception Tests to overhear a conversation within 6 meters of a babbler receive a negative dice pool modifier equal to the babbler's rating. If more than one babbler or white noise generator is in use, only count the one with the highest rating. Babblers have the additional -4 concealment modifier to aural Perception Tests in perceiving that the device is in use.

### Camera Burner

To determine if the burner detects a camera, make a Device Rating (Burner) x 2 (2) Test. Visibility modifiers apply, and micro-sized cameras increase the threshold by 1. The device also uses its rating x 2 as the skill in attacking sensors of drones in a Called Shot Test. On a successful hit, the camera is destroyed. Cameras with flare compensation may make a Device Rating (Camera) x 2 (2) Test to resist the damage and remain functional.

### Faraday Bomb

Aerosol can that sprays metallic dust and magnetized particles in a fine fogging mist. As the dust settles, it creates a layer that blocks signals. Reduce signal rating by 4 for all devices in the room or within five meters of the bomb if there are no barriers between it and the bomb. The reduction decreases through air circulation and the breathing of room occupants at 1 Rating point every eight hours. In an unoccupied room, that rating decrease is 1 point every 12 hours. Any device that is in the fog for less than 4 hours will have its signal reduced by 2, which lasts for 4 hours or until cleaned.

### G-Line Accessory

Devices with the G-Line can be connected to each other without worry of signal strength or Wi-Fi inhibitors. They do however have to rely on being connected to the same power circuit. It takes an electronics kit and Hardware + Logic (4, 5 minutes) Extended Test to connect the G-line cabling. The only way to detect G-Line communications is checking the electrical fluctuations of the electrical system (Electronics + Scan (4) Test).

### Nanodot Inscriber

Successfully inscribing a nanodot in a fashion that can later be read requires a Computer + Logic (12, 1 minute) Extended Test. Each dot can hold a message of up to 200 characters.

Name	Availability	Cost
Babbler	1 + Rating	50¥ x Rating
Camera Burner	8 + Rating	200¥ x Rating
Faraday Bomb	6	350 ¥
G-Line	6	400 ¥
Document Washer	4	100 ¥
InKryption	4	75 ¥
Nanodot Inscriber	16R	5,000¥



and skyhook drone coordinate the connection between the two. When the aerial vehicle passes, the drone hooks onto it, and both the skyhook and attached target at the end of the cable are pulled away from the building. Once clear, the skyhook drone then winches up the attached target. It's an unceremonious way to exit a building.

- I've always wanted to try one of these, but I'm worried that someone would fuck up on the plane's trajectory or the winch won't pull me up fast enough, and I'd end up bouncing off buildings on the next block.
- Mika

For heights between 30 and 500 meters, exiting a building might be a problem. Therefore, we have concealed BASE-jumping equipment into clothing. First, a thin airfoil is concealed within a jacket and pants, or in a jumpsuit. When deployed, the space between the arms and legs fills out into one large wing as fabric moves down along the arms and legs. The airfoil suit has a maximum wing load of 320 kilograms and contains ailerons along the arms for controlling speed. The airfoil suit allows the user greater control in their descent and, conceivably, a controlled landing without parachuting (much like a flying squirrel). The airfoil suit can be accessorized with small jets for maneuverability and speed in a descent, but they are not as concealable.

With advancements in nanotechnology and materials engineering we are able to produce spider silk in thin layers, allowing a BASE parachute to be concealed in the back of a jacket or jumpsuit in what we call the safe jump. The jacket or jumpsuit has the proper security harnesses, and the usual parachute failsafe of an accelerometer and altimeter that auto-deploys the parachute if needed. Though, if the person is unconscious, a safe landing will be tough to come by. There is a manual release built into the article of clothing for when the operative has reached the ground. After deployment, the safe jump can only be repacked with specialized equipment that is not portable. It also ruins the outfit—this is a one-use item.

- The airfoil would really be handy with gecko tips. I could fly from one building to the next!
- Mika

**January 5, 2073**

**From: Dr. Cross**

**Subject: Microwave Microprocessor Disabler (MMD)**

The MMD represents an interesting bit of technology that focuses on microwaves operating in the 350 to 1350 Megahertz range. Energy in this frequency is capable of disabling a vehicle's electronic control module and damaging its microprocessor out to a distance of one hundred meters. At present the smallest version that we have is vehicle mounted. It is composed of a power source, tunable RF oscillator, and a high gain antenna. The power source is a ten-kilowatt generator tied to the vehicle's fuel cell or gas tank. In controlled tests we have noted that exposed microprocessors can suffer catastrophic failure if continuously exposed for a period of more than ten seconds. A target vehicle's electronic control module can be disabled in twenty seconds. Individuals within the directed path will notice disruption of their commlinks and other

electronic devices that employ microprocessors in six seconds of continuous exposure (they'll also notice their skin is becoming painfully hot). Technicians are working at a feverish pace on shielding technologies.

End of dictation.

//End of File

**Plan 9:** In the field of tools that can help you get the hell out of Dodge, there are several new options. First, let's hypothesize that a run has gone really badly, your hacker has been dumped, and the only thing between you and certain doom is a maglock. Most gun bunnies would shoot the lock, though that only disables the interface on their side of the door. A magnetic scrambler would come in handy at that moment. This device creates a strong magnetic field that does two things: holds the lock in place and disables the reader on both sides of the door. This forces that "certain doom" to take out the door or the lock. Either way, it buys you a few seconds to GTFO.

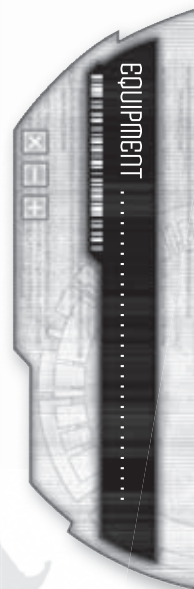
- What about the glue sprayer? It's just as effective and probably cheaper.
- /dev/grrl
- Sure, but what if you have to go back the way you came? The magnetic scrambler can just be popped off to make the door function. I'd also save the glue for portals that don't have maglocks. I guess it's personal preference.
- Plan 9

In another scenario, let's say Lone Star or security is chasing you down the stairwell of some building. When you hit one of the doors, drop a slick grenade on your way out and POW! Listen to the sounds of a SWAT team pileup as they are unable to stop before the imposing door, or possibly they're tumbling down the next set of stairs. With a combination of Zipoil and powdered Teflon, the slick grenade explodes, coating the floors and walls with a friction-free substance. Good for giving you more distance as you escape—just make sure your escape route doesn't go back over any areas that might be coated.

- Oh, so that's what they are called. Some guy on my team was fiddling around with something when I heard a "pop." The next thing I see is him fumbling around with his gun, unable to get up or hold onto his weapon. I left him there to clean up his own mess.
- 2XL

Along the same lines would be the instant snare. These grenades airburst a flechette of barbed darts tied to a spool of microwire. This is one of the most pain-in-the ass devices that Dr. Cross's group ever created. It's not strong enough to entangle vehicles, but drones, guards and innocent bystanders are fair game in the ensuing chaos and confusion that this device creates.

Third scenario, say you're out on a balcony and need to reach the window above. It's more than a high jump to reach the ledge. What do you do? You couldn't have snuck a ten foot ladder in your pocket, could you? The Victorinox rope is the bigger, cheaper



## ADDITIONAL RULES

### Concealed Harness

The concealed harness is an additional lining under a jacket or armor. It is similar to a five-point harness in a racing car, as it has to disperse the kinetic energy evenly so as not to hurt the person being extracted at high speeds. The harness can be used with gyroscopic winch or skyhook.

### Instant Snare

This device is thrown as a grenade. Use the Airburst Link rules (p. 322, *SR4A*) in detonating. This grenade creates a microwave web six meters in diameter. Any net hit from the Instant Snare attack means that the target is considered hindered by the snare. Agility and Reaction are reduced by the net hits while in the web; if either attribute is reduced to 0, the target is immobilized. To break free, it's a Strength + Body (6 + number of net hits, 1 combat turn) Extended Test. Trying to move through an area affected by an instant snare is an Opposed Test of Strength + Body or Agility + Gymnastics against the web's dice pool of 8. Failure means that the target is now entangled in the web and has to break free (add number of net hits from the Opposed Test to the Escape Test).

### Magnetic Scrambler

Magnetic scramblers seize up maglocks from being opened or closed through normal means—the only way to get the door open or closed is either breaking down the door or disabling the lock, which requires a successful Hardware + Logic (Maglock rating x 2, 1 combat turn) Extended Test.

### Microwave Microprocessor Disabler (MMD)

The MMD is a directional jamming device at a larger scale. It is mounted on a vehicle's weapon turret. Using the device against a vehicle or large drone requires an Opposed Test of the rating of the MMD vs. the Pilot rating of the vehicle. If successful, each net hit disables the vehicle for 1 combat turn. Drivers whose vehicles are disabled in this way must make an immediate Vehicle skill + Reaction (3) Test each combat turn to avoid crashing that turn. Also, the disabled vehicle loses speed each combat turn equal to its acceleration. Increase the crash threshold to six for flying vehicles.

### Airfoil suit

The airfoil suit can be maneuvered from building to building instead of the ground or used in conjunction with minithrusters. In either case, the airfoil suit requires a Pilot Exotic Vehicle (Airfoil) Test.

### Pocket Frills

Pocket Frills do 4S(e) damage. They are resisted by half the target's Impact armor.

#### Skyhook

A large blimp takes a cable away from a building into clear airspace for a flying vehicle to grapple and fly off with the target. Std Upgrades: Lighter Than Air, Signature Masking 2, Special Machinery (Miniature Winch).

Drones	Handling	Accel	Speed	Pilot	Body	Armor	Sensors	Avail	Cost
Skyhook (Large Drone)	0	5/15	15	3	4	4	2	10R	9,000¥

### Slick Grenade

Treat throwing this device as per a grenade. The grenade doesn't explode; instead it expels material through multiple ports covering the sphere. This blast coats an area four meters in diameter with the slickest material available to chemistry today. Individuals attempting to move through this area are required to make an extended Gymnastics + Agility (5, 1 Combat Turn) roll to get through the area. Any glitch in making this Extended Test indicates that the unfortunate individual falls prone, which adds +1 to the threshold in the Extended Test. In addition, targets that are coated with this substance suffer a -1 dice pool for all physical activities until the material is cleaned off.

### Thermal Wrist or Ankle Guards

Thermal guards generate enough heat to melt plastic. Apply an AP of -6 against restraints when trying to break the restraints. Thermal guards have a DV of 3P damage if anyone holds on to them for the three seconds it takes to heat up.



**Victorinox Rope**

Victorinox rope is made of blended myomeric fibers that, when charged, go stiff and are able to support 200 kilograms in weight without bending. Most purchase a three-meter section to be used as a pole to climb up a wall, as a tightrope, to brace a door closed, or wielded as a quarterstaff. Longer lengths of six meters can be purchased. A single electrical device at an end sends a charge through the rope. The device can hold five charges; each charge lasts ten minutes.

Name	Availability	Cost
Concealed Harness	4	50¥
Instant Snare	6R	45¥
Magnetic Scrambler	6R	1,000¥
Microwave Microprocessor Disabler	10+Rating F	5,000¥ x Rating
Airfoil	8	2,500¥
Airfoil Minithruster	6R	400¥
Pocket Frills	6R	100¥
Safejump		6 120¥
Slick Grenade	6R	40¥
Thermal Wrist/Ankle Guards	6R	120¥
Victorinox Rope	4	200¥ per meter

brother of the Victorinox SmartStaff, that fancy multipurpose military weapon. It's stronger than standard myomer rope you can currently buy, weighs less than a kilo, and is easy to conceal. It also has the advantage of using electric current to turn the rope as stiff as a steel pole to lean against a wall or fence to climb. Tie two together and you have a bridge. So in this scenario, tie a little foot brace around the Victorinox rope before stiffing and you can shimmy up the pole to get to the other window.

- If you coil it up before activating it, it becomes an improvised booby-trap as the ends whip around. Also the short pieces can make a handy club.
- 2XL

**MAGICAL ESPIONAGE/6TH WORLD SPY**

There are many ways magic helps in espionage. With a wave of a hand, spellcasters can change clothes, become invisible, or probe someone's head to pull out thoughts and secrets. I recently managed to get a hold of some corporate research into more awakened projects. J. Ansil is not the researcher's real name. He's a black ops wagemage consultant and a historian who is a walking encyclopedia on the development of magic over the past few decades. These documents came from a facility with financial ties to Wuxing.

//Upload Encrypted Uniformat textfile :: User Plan9 //  
//Running Decrypt Tom's Ye Ancestor //

**Classified Results: Testing Facility**

**From: Dr. J. Ansil**  
**Subject: Magic R&D**

Magic R&D has made progress in the complex spell formulae for new communications. Here are summaries of some of our latest research efforts.

**Code Name: Secret Handshake**

One of the keys to secure communications is making sure information is getting into the right hands. Secret Handshake is designed to let two people who need to be in contact covertly recognize each other. Just as there is a large number of one-time pads floating around the espionage world, there are many different variations on this spell. Each variation does one simple thing—it detects other spells of its exact formula. By casting it, then, a mage will be able to discover who else is sustaining a spell of that particular formula, thus allowing them to recognize an individual whom they are trying to contact.

A formula for Secret Handshake could also be passed to a spirit (or a mage could simply cast it on a spirit), give them a message, and tell them not to pass that message on to anyone unless the Secret Handshake spell detects a match.

- About time someone found another use for watchers.
- Lyran

**Code Name: Synesthesia**

The project that has been developing a stronger link between a magically active agent and an unbound spirit has been renamed Synesthesia. This new technique for initiates allows for the remote observation of a location through the spirit with a remote service task. The agent can replay the observation through illusion (possibly with the aid of a sustaining focus).

- This is a danger, but the counter is fairly easy. Some spirits can be used to observe, others can be used to watch out for observers.
- Man-of-Many-Names

**Code Name: Looking Glass**

We have made good progress in the manipulation of matter, allowing light to be transmitted through it. It's a challenging manipulation and works best on a small scale. Looking Glass is designed for one-way light transmission, making a piece of a wall or other barrier transparent.



INCOMING FEED .....

### Code Name: Hidden Pocket

Along the same lines as Looking Glass, we have found a way to manipulate matter in such a way as to push one item through another. Displaced material moves evenly away from the object like water. The insertion of one object causes disruption, which varies based on the size of the object being inserted. The effect can be as mild as a slight thickening of the material around the inserted object, and as dire as device failure if the receiving item is electronic. Our labs continue to study the interaction of the inserted and receiving objects. A transparent inserted object remains transparent. The inserted item is not bonded to the receiving item, or held in by any undue pressure—if part of it remains protruding, it usually can be removed by a firm, non-magical pull, though this leaves a hole in the receiving object. Removing the item while the spell is sustained (or by casting it again) may leave the receiving object in the same state it was found.

- I suspect the seeds of this spell have been around for years. I wouldn't be surprised if the honeycomb that was placed in Rodger Hailey's bat in the infamous Yankees vs. Orioles scandal was put there by an Awakened gambler who had money on the game.
- Plan 9

### Code Name: Delay Spell

The Delay spell has made some progress in managing predictable time delay and has some interesting usages. Not as complex as quickening, it allows the magically active entity to cast a spell that is delayed in the timing of its completion. While the spell may

take effect late, the delay does not mean that mages no longer have to see their target; if they lose visual contact with the target of the spell, the spell dissipates without taking effect.

### Code Name: Blood Sight

This has been a controversial project as it comes very close to blood magic. We have reformulated our designs based on other spells such as Detect Life and combined it with careful observations from the field. In controlled testing of multiple blood samples, our test subjects managed varying degrees of success in identifying specific details of the blood. All of the subjects were able to identify blood type and whether or not the source of the sample was human, though less than half could then determine metahuman race. A rare few were able to give us an accurate visual description of the person whose blood was in the sample. We are trying to eliminate environmental effects from the samples to see how they factor into this project.

### Code Name: Recorded Room

Our new Detection spell has exceeded our expectations. The Recorded Room spell records the light within the area of the spell. While sustained, the magician can change their perspective within the area of the spell as if they were standing or floating there to get a better perspective. The magician cannot manipulate the view like moving a paperweight or opening a folder but can read what is out in the open.

//End of File



**NEW SPELLS**

**Blood Sight (Detection)**

**Type: M Range: LOS Duration: S DV: (F/2) +2**

Blood Sight allows the caster to discern details of the person who left blood behind. Factors that hinder blood sight include from magical cleansing to C-Squared Cleaner (p. 82, *Arsenal*).

**BLOOD SIGHT THRESHOLD FACTORS**

Threshold Modifiers	Description
+ Force	Cleanse Spell
+ Rating	C-Squared Cleaner
+1	Per 6 hours of exposure to the environment and contaminants

**BLOOD SIGHT TEST**

Net Hits	Success Description
1	Blood type, if the person uses nanites, if the person uses drugs, if the blood is human
2	Sex of the person, type of drugs, type of animal (if not human)
3	Ethnic and metagenic race
4	Is Awakened, had gene therapy, or infected by HMVV
5	Can display a mana-based illusion of the face of the person whose blood it is

**Hidden Pocket (Manipulation)**

**Type: P Range: T Duration: S DV: (F/2) +3**

The caster can change the properties of the material of one object, allowing it to be displaced by another object. The number of net hits equals the number of cubic meters of the receiving object that can be affected. The spell must beat the Object Resistance Threshold of the receiving object to be affected. Material displaced is spread over the surface area of the receiving object. The gamemaster may modify Perception Tests to see the inserted object based on how deeply it goes in and the disruption it causes in the receiving

object. If the spell is sustained or re-cast, the casting mage may make an Agility + Strength (2) Test to remove the object and leave the receiving object in the appearance in which it was found (though internal damage, such as that done to electronic devices by insertion, is not repaired).

**Looking Glass (Manipulation)**

**Type: P Range: T Duration: S DV: (F/2) +3**

The caster can change the properties of solid materials to allow light to pass through them. The number of net hits divided by two (round up) equals the cubic meters that can be affected. The spell must beat the Object Resistance Threshold of the target object to be effective. An object that is affected by the Looking Glass spell allows true LOS to targets on the other side.

**Recorded Room (Detection: Passive Area)**

**Type: P Range: LOS(A) Duration: S DV: (F/2) +3**

This spell scans in detail all the possible visible aspects of a room, including details not available from the perspective of the observer. This is similar to Spatial Sense as the physical layout of a room is recorded, but Recorded Room also records what is written on documents left in the open, living things in the area at that moment and any visual display components on electronic devices. If something is obscured by another object, like a book partially covering a document, then the words underneath the book would not be recorded. As a complex action, the caster sustaining the spell can view the room from any angle and observe any details to the level as noted on the Detection Spell Results table (p. 206, *SR4A*).

**Secret Handshake (Detection: Active, Area)**

**Type: M Range: T Duration: S DV: (F/2) -2**

This spell detects other versions of itself, as long as those versions were learned from the same formula. It is specific enough that it will not detect a version of the spell learned from a different magical formula. This allows those who know a specific version of the spell, and who are sustaining that spell, to detect each other.

**From: Dr. J. Ansil**  
**Subject:**

**Code Name: Demara**

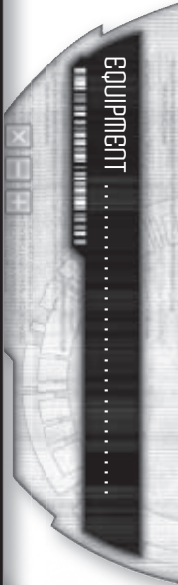
Subject "Jerred" has shown remarkable mimicry of a skill after watching someone performing the same activities. Previous tests show an almost 100 percent success rate in the repetition of the same task. To rule out photographic memory, we tested Jerred with tasks of varying degrees of similarity to those which he observed. We have found a 70 to 76 percent success rate. We are now isolating the visual and audio exposure to see if that has any effect on the success rate. [Auto mechanic Demonstration [link](#)], [Surgeon Demonstration [link](#)]

//....Gopher Searching.... one related statement //

Replication of training techniques are postponed for Project Demara, as the test subject is temporarily unavailable to us.

**Project Ascoyne**

We have completed our observations in Operation Fu Manchu and are initiating Project Ascoyne. Please note the caution we are taking after tagging the target in ten photos of seemingly different individuals in a 30-day period and confirming that they are indeed the same subject [Photo [link](#)]. The changing of height, weight, even metahuman traits are remarkable and present significant security risks. At the same time as we progress with Project Ascoyne for our infiltration operatives, I recommend adding genetic testing security in the most sensitive areas.



## NEW METAMAGIC

### Synesthesia

This metamagic technique allows the caster to be able to remotely observe through the “eyes and ears” of a bound or unbound spirit. The spirit can be anywhere the caster can telepathically communicate, so a remote observation of metaplanes is still impossible.

### Spell Masking

While sustaining a spell, the initiate can mask his spell within the background count. Any attempt to detect the spell such as assessing or Detect Magic becomes an Opposed Test vs. the initiate grade + Magic. If the initiate scores more net hits, then the spell effects cannot be detected.

### Delay Spell

Allows the caster to delay the completion of a spell. It is limited to nonspecific target spells that are instant such as Manipulation spells. After casting, the caster can make an additional Sorcery Test, where each hit delays the spell by one combat turn or 3 seconds. Half of the hits used from this test are added to the drain of the spell. The spell appears amorphous in astral space until it completes. It can be countered, but if the countering caster does not get enough successes to totally counter the spell, it completes immediately. The casting mage must maintain LOS contact with the target area of the spell in order for it to go off. If the mage loses consciousness before the spell completes, its effects do not occur. This counts as a sustained spell until it completes.

### Inculcate (Adepts only)

This metamagic is similar to Cannibalize, except that for every three boxes of physical damage inflicted on the “donor,” the adept temporarily gains either the knowledge of one new active skill known by the donor or increases their existing active skill knowledge if the donor has that skill. The maximum total skill the adept can have is 6 + initiate grade from Inculcate. The enhancement lasts for (Magic x initiate grade) Combat turns. If the adept immediately spends Karma equal to the total skill points gained, he may extend that duration to (Magic x Initiate grade) days.

### Skin Walker (Adepts only)

**Prerequisite:** Cannibalize, Masking

This advanced metamagic requires

knowledge of the Cannibalize technique. It allows the blood adept to temporarily look like the subject, both astrally as well as physically. The “donor” must be killed at the end of the ritual and the blood adept immersed in the victim’s blood in order for the transformation to be completed. The disguise lasts for (Magic x initiate grade) in hours and gives adepts +5 dice on their Disguise Test. The blood adept may extend this duration to (Magic x initiate grade) in days by spending 3 karma points. Skin Walker only changes the appearance and doesn’t transfer any knowledge or skills of the “donor” to the blood adept; the blood adept’s attributes remain unchanged. The blood adept gains the flaw Astral Hazing (p.116, *Runner’s Companion*) for the duration.

## ADEPT POWERS

### Demara

**Cost:** 0.5

This power allows the adept the use of an untrained skill, without the penalty, after watching an instruction trideo of one or more subjects actively performing the skill. Requires one hour of careful observation, after which the adept can use that skill at rating 1. The effect lasts the adept’s Magic rating in hours. Demara doesn’t include restricted skills nor remove the requirement of tools or software. It also has no effect on the Karma of obtaining the skill in character advancement.

### Keratin Control

**Cost:** 0.5

An Adept with Keratin Control has the ability to accelerate the growth of his hair, nails and horns within limits of normal appearance for the character’s metatype. For instance, a human would not be able to grow troll horns. Keratin Control does allow hair to grow straight or curly and horns to grow in shapes indicative of the troll’s ethnicity. Full beards and/or long hair require a minimum of 6 hours to grow. Keratin control is permanent, but taxing on the body. It causes 1 box of stun damage for each hour reduced from the minimum 6 hours to grow hair/nails/horns (gamemaster discretion for the minimum required hours for more subtle changes).

### Kinesics Mastery

**Cost:** 0.5

**Prerequisite:** Kinesics

Kinesics Mastery allows for a full silent language to be developed without any verbal components, using the body’s natural subconscious communication. A

careful observer would not hear the actual conversation being communicated or would see just the subterfuge. Two adepts with Kinesics Mastery who are within sight of each other can have two conversations: one verbal and one nonverbal at the same time. While basic messages and emotional states are easily done, Kinesics masters can relate specific names and places through minute face and body motions, increasing their vocabulary.

### Light Touch

**Cost:** 0.25 per level

Light Touch allows the adept greater control in the palming or pick pocketing of an object and preventing anyone from perceiving the act. It imposes a -1 Perception modifier per level of Light Touch to anyone observing or being targeted by the adept.

### Master of 1000 Faces

**Cost:** 0.5

**Prerequisite:** Keratin Control, Facial Sculpt, Melanin Control

The Adept using Master of 1000 Faces power can change their physical appearance to any possible metahuman or ethnic trait with a few exceptions such as becoming cyclopic or growing multiple arms. It also allows the adept to change his height by (Magic + initiate grade) x 10 centimeters (minimum height of 1 meter, maximum 3 meters) or weight by (Magic + initiate grade) x 5 kg (minimum weight 60 kilograms, maximum 300 kg) in 24 hours. This change lasts (Magic + initiate grade) days. This transformation is taxing on the body, possibly requiring additional caloric intake (gamemaster discretion on additional costs for the change, such as lifestyle or clothes). The change can be completed faster, but causes 1 box of physical damage for every 2 hours reduced from the minimum 24 hours. If the adept is trying to resemble someone, it requires the Disguise skill and adds an additional +2 modifier to any Disguise Test in addition to the levels of Facial Sculpt.

### Existing Powers Related to Espionage

- Melanin Control
- Kinesics
- Analytics
- Commanding Voice
- Cool Resolve
- Facial Sculpt
- Linguistics
- Three Dimensional Memory
- Eidetic Memory
- Traceless Walk
- Voice Control



Also note that there is a 12 percent probability that the target of Operation Fu Manchu was not terminated in [Embedded Level Encryption].

### Operation Twitch

Enough study of opposition agents has been made to hypothesize that some of the strange tics and twitches we have observed in their agents are likely part of a communications strategy. Detailed images show these individuals have remarkable control of small muscles. Information is being fed to codebreakers in order to try to understand the messages they are sending, though the facial gestures could only be the first level of encryption. Continued surveillance is essential so that we may gather more data on how their communications work.

**To: Colonel Hamand**

**Subject: Fort Brigg Incident**

The deceased subject appears to be reverting back to her original form as of 0400 hours Thursday. Full spectrum images were taken once the deceased was brought into lab 8 at 0334 hours. At 1015 hours, the personnel the subject was impersonating, Officer Clemens, was found. Autopsy began at 1100 hours. Subject had implanted personnel's SRFID tag in arm. Subject also has organic particles embedded in her skin that match the officer's DNA. Autopsy of the officer shows removal of skin prior to death. We have placed all the details of the incident under the code name: Skin Walker.

### THE CLASSIFIED SECTION

This is where I throw out some of the rumored stuff hiding in the dark, and I don't mean the recesses of my mind. These are things I don't have rock solid evidence for, but there are enough interesting (and corroborating) stories out there that I plan on keeping an ear out for more information. Perhaps the rest of you should as well.

- So this is about on the level of your story about JetBlack still being alive?
- 2XL

### Number Stations

Number Stations are a mysterious audio stream of numbers that are supposedly an encrypted communication, and though they have been around for over a century, no one has currently deciphered the codes—at least, not consciously—or understood why they have computer-generated voices presenting the numbers. No one has been able to trace the source of the transmissions. Over the years, for whatever purpose, the transmissions have been slowly leaving apparently random messages for us.

I believe that the purpose of the transmissions is to push ahead our technology. Through them, the seeds of ideas were subliminally planted in humans that, once they sprouted, helped them build the internet and then the Matrix (our conscious minds cannot understand the numbers, but I believe they unlock parts of our unconscious brains). The eventual result: AIs finally being able to manifest in our world. While the numbers used to only come over the air, streams have migrated to the Matrix. Data trails of numbers from anonymous locations on odd frequencies

can be found, and they are as difficult to decode as ever. I suspect that since the appearance of the AIs, these commands were sent to the "Scouts" or whatever they call themselves. This led to the Renraku arcology disaster, the appearance of the otaku and, finally, a second Crash. From this came a more wireless Matrix, "Matrix critters" and technomancers.

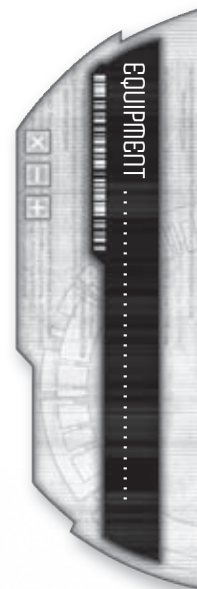
AIs are slowly invading our world, and no one seems to see it. They've started to change us and our world. Someone needs to figure out what the numbers mean and who is behind them. Otherwise, we might find ourselves slaves to the machine instead of visa versa.

- Maybe whoever is behind all this is also behind the movement to bastardize humanity with people whose brains are Matrix tools instead of regular human minds.
- Clockwork
- Fuck you.
- NetCat
- Number stations are communications from the future or a parallel dimension. That's why they appear to be coming from out of nowhere, when it's actually from a valid device only from the future. We just need to build a computer to do what our brains are already doing—understanding the codes on an instinctive level.
- Arete
- What if those numbers are stray thoughts from some larger being that is slowly waking up? Think about all the data moving through the air, the energy that is moving around. What if it's one large Matrix being, and AI are like white blood cells or something? If the tree huggers can believe that the whole Earth is Gaia, then why not a less physical being encompassing all electronics as a giant brain?
- Plan 9
- Um, because technology doesn't work that way?
- Slamm-0!

### The Palantir

On the cutting edge of science is a device rumored to be developed by Ares called the palantir. It is a communication device using entangled atoms and quantum mechanics. These communication devices can communicate with each other without a form of transmission (laser, radio, etc.) and without a time delay over distance. Think about it: Earth to Mars networking real-time instead of a ten-minute delay or, even better, no four-hour wait to call Neptune. Why would Ares develop the palantirs? I suspect they are planning to build a large interplanetary vessel or vessels, somewhere close, probably by Mars, and they're trying to keep the ruse and be ten minutes ahead of everyone else. With such a ship, or ships, they would have superiority over other corporations in the space race. Their ultimate goal: colonization and conquest of this galaxy.

- The Mars angle is the one I'm sure they're excited about. This product could pay for itself easily simply in insider knowledge—if a corp's Earth-side operations are able to be the first to get word



of resource discoveries on Mars, and they can hit the markets ten minutes before everyone else does—well, earning a few million nuyen would be child's play.

- Mr. Bonds

### Lonestar's Commlink Clause

When people buy a commlink, they often fail to read the fine print on the contract. I found something once in a software upgrade clause that presented plenty of scary thoughts. The gist is this: when not in corporate jurisdiction, Lone Star and other security organization have the right to collect and/or hack commlinks in the investigation of criminal activity. Not that they are conducting an investigation of you, but that your commlink could have recorded the criminals in a crime. If an arcology shut down today, you better believe that security would be all over the place getting their hands on whatever piece of intel they could find. With this, I suspect it's a smaller part of a bigger conspiracy to keep tabs on events on a global scale.

- Over my dead body would they take my commlink! Where the hell did you read this? Even after '64 I never heard of anything remotely like this. London's Big Brother system and Manhattan's network of sensor systems are there because no one has tried to legally confiscate the existing population's commlink data.
- Aufheben
- I can send you my interpretation of Lone Star's 96-page amendment to several commlink operating systems' user acceptance agreements. I'm not saying it would be triggered by some measly terrorist attack. I'm thinking something on a larger scale.
- Plan9

### Degauss

I picked up this out of a Denver communication:

**//Upload Encrypted Uniformat textfile :: User Plan9 //**

Corporations or runners can wipe data from a node, but the Resonance remembers. A lot of people wish it didn't, though, so they're working to change that. We have been getting rumors of irretrievable data from Shadowland and other nexii. Little things, like old commlink messages that were stored for reference. It wasn't until a few requests on data retrieval failed against Mitsuhama that I noticed anything was wrong. It was as if the data never existed—not even for a technomancer. The theory that we're working with is that someone is diving deep into the Resonance to find the inception of the data documented in the ether. From there, they... well... I can only describe it as some kind of Resonance version of Degaussing. The realm is clean, with minor random bits floating around. To figure out what's happening, I'd need to know how long the now-missing information has been around, whether it has been deleted in the real world, how much data there is, and how many copies exist. I plan to have people look into the Endless Library to see if there's any trouble there.

**//End of File//**

To me, this raises the possibility of a change to the Matrix entities, possibly a heating up of a digital schism. I don't know all about the Resonance and Dissonance, but to be able to finally

remove data altogether and not be detected shows purpose and infiltration. How much of their data trail are they hiding or have they hidden?

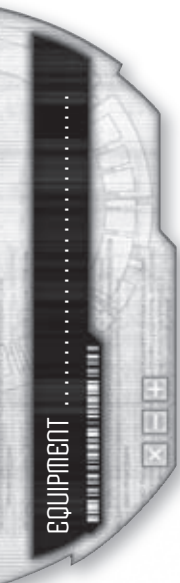
- Maybe it's more like a bad sector in Resonance memory. Or what about those critters who munge data? Could there be something more entropic that erodes the realms back to a more "empty" state?
- Rigger X

### The Order of Skull and Bones

Global Heritage, Doomsday Ark and Seed Vault are tied by a common thread: they are all projects that are preserving human culture and living things on earth in case of an apocalyptic event. The top philanthropists financing or operating these projects also have something in common: they are all part of the same Order of Skull and Bones. Established almost 250 years ago, the Order of Skull and Bones began as part of a prominent college, and its supposed list of members are in high-ranking government and corporate positions dictating policy for 200 years. Collectively, these guys can give dragons a run for their money in global influence and destruction and are supposedly behind an awful lot of corporate schemes. I believe that their organization makes heavy use of extraplanar intelligence—some people say the skulls in their famous connections represent some of the spirits they have worked with (though they've been collecting skulls since well before the Awakening).

Now here's the real kicker: my sources say that the Palantir, the Lone Star commlink clause, and Degauss have all been designed by the Order of Skull and Crossbones. They have been putting together something big. I believe they are getting ready for an event even bigger than the beginning of the sixth world and are watching it coming. Global Heritage, Doomsday Ark and Seed Vault are specifically made for Armageddon and the rebuilding of humanity. They have put together plans for an eventual war and are hedging their bets by saving some of our humanity and earthly things.

- Does anyone else ever amuse themselves thinking about what it sounds like when Plan 9 and his "sources" get together for a chat?
- Winterhawk
- One word for all of 'em: lithium.
- Pistons
- Dose: Two fifty. Thirty six. Uno. Cuarenta y cinco. Quarantasette. Novantadue. Ni hundred og fem. Femiättte. Quarantase. Konets.
- That isn't funny ... FastJack?
- Plan 9
- On it, but this is trickier—and far more annoying—than I thought it would be.
- Fast Jack







## ... HOOKS AND SEEDS ...

Below are brief adventure hooks and seeds based on material in *Spy Games* that can be used as part of a larger espionage-themed campaign, or they can be used as brief diversions set in locations detailed in this volume.

### APEX PROTECTION

Apex Plasmids is sick and tired of runs being staged against them, and they're looking to hire some street-smart, temporary help. Runners are employed to plan security around a research facility and prevent any of their talent from being extracted. The situation becomes more complicated, though, when one of the scientists—who is disgruntled with his current employer—gets in touch with them and offers to pay them an extra fifty percent if they will fail at their job and let him be extracted. The runners have to decide between the money and their reputation.

### ARMS RACE

Ares is not happy with the progress Mesametric is making as an arms contractor, and they realize that if Mesametric establishes themselves through their own designs, the competition will be stiff. They want runners to infiltrate a Mesametric plant and interfere with the plans that are being fed to their drone assembly line so that the final product coming off the line is far less effective than it is supposed to be. Then they want to make sure trideo footage of the faulty unit in action is recorded and distributed widely over the Matrix.

### BACK CHANNELS

There is no love lost between President Colloton and Iain Lesker, the UCAS representative to the Council of Denver. Likewise, the conflict between the DPIFA and DIA is growing. Colloton has Lesker pushing for expanded rights to maintain a permanent military force in the UCAS sector. Despite their differences, Admiral Dominguez and Director Benavides cooperate in assigning Firebird to push Ghostwalker towards these

conciliations, since he's more amenable to spirits than meta-humans. Benavides is worried, though, that Firebird is in fact a back channel agent between Colloton and Ghostwalker, and now Lesker is hiring runners to track Firebird through the Hub. Firebird isn't the person he's after, but by stoking their paranoia Colloton is hoping to force them into doing something that will allow her to fire them. Committing illegal espionage against her could do it, if the runners play along.

### BAD DIRECTIONS

In the ongoing battle for tourists, CAS government has been hiring runners to change maps in the Matrix so that people receive wrong directions to hotels and restaurants in the other sectors. They have also been vandalizing the physical address markers and AR displays at these locations. Some gangs have caught on to this, and they've learned how to ambush unsuspecting tourists when they show up at the wrong location. In response, the UCAS sector is hiring escorts to guide tourists to locations near the Aurora Warrens. A particularly high-priced job puts the runners directly in the path of the Aurora Angels, who have really been enjoying the expensive electronics they have lifted off of tourists. If the runners want an even bigger payday, they can find proof that the CAS government is behind the tampering with directions.

### CASTLING

Johann Castle narrowly escaped an attempted assassination, and he is quite irritated that a large portion of the public believe he staged the whole thing as a publicity stunt. The ZDF isn't treating the case seriously, and since it happened in UCAS territory, he can't get his own people to investigate. He hires runners to look into the matter. In the end, he didn't need to leave his own territory to find the source. CAS patriots, upset that a carpetbagger like Ramsay McMulkin had been elected president, had targeted Castle as a way to hurt the president.

## CITIZENSHIP CONSOLIDATION

A number of PCC citizenship shares hit the black market in the wake of people using forged SINS to claim shares going to Ute citizens. The ongoing effect of this has been to drive PCC shares down, and the PCC board is sick of it. They are willing to fund an effort to reclaim as many shares as possible and bring them back into the PCC. This will be tricky in two ways—first, runners will have to track down the various parties who are selling the shares, and then they'll have to convince them to sell. A lot of the black-market sellers have no love lost for the PCC, which means that if the runners have a trace of official PCC connections on them when they contact sellers, things could get ugly.

## CONTROL THE STORY

NABS reporter Tamika Lord has some juicy footage of Sioux military groups delivering a ferocious beatdown to some unarmed residents of an Anglo reservation, and she's going to air it in three hours. Mr. Johnson, working at the behest of the Sioux, tells you that one of the victims of the beating has since died, and his corpse is somewhere on the reservation. If the runners retrieve the corpse and retrofit it with augmentations so that it will seem the victim was armed after all, that will help the story not look as bad. But every minute Lord's story is out there without firm evidence of a rebuttal hurts, so time is of the essence.

## COURIER RUN

Horizon operatives have made contact with a paranoid operative claiming to have information about how Aztechnology is influencing Utes in the PCC. He refuses to commit this information to the Matrix in any form—if Horizon wants it, they need to pick up the paper its printed on. The operative is in the Aurora Warrens, and he hasn't been paranoid enough—a few people with good cybereyes have caught images of what he is working on. Word has got out that Horizon will pay money for this info, so several of the Warrens' more desperate residents are coming to get the paper, and so is a Aztechnology-funded team. If the runners want the pay day, they'll have to get the paper first—and hold on to it once the denizens of the Warrens come after them.

## CURRENCY COLLAPSE

Anarchists based in the Allied German States are looking to destabilize currencies across the NEEC. They have decided that if they can make people lose faith in the European Central Bank, economic chaos could follow—and where there is economic chaos, there is government weakness that could aid their cause. They are hiring runners to find evidence of assassinations authorized by the ECB in an effort to portray it as a rogue agency. The runners can find some evidence without too much difficulty, but they need to be careful—the ECB has doctored up fake evidence of assassinations, and they are perfectly willing to leak it to their opponents to make it look as if anyone spreading that information lacks credibility. If the runners get their hands on some of this bad information and pass it on to the anarchists, they might be blamed for its poor quality.

## ENDOWMENT FIGHT

The rebuilding University of Colorado is on the verge of receiving a major gift from a private donor that would enhance its endowment and provide a boost to the Anasazi Holding Company. Wuxing does not want that gift to be finalized. They hire runners to go to Boulder and fake evidence that the students running the AHC are skimming money off the top, which could persuade the donor that a gift to them would be a bad idea. The evidence isn't hard to forge, since some students are, in fact, skimming money. They're not skimming it for themselves, though—they're using it to grease the wheels of government to make sure the reconstruction of the university continues smoothly. Exposing their actions could bring down the displeasure of the dragon at the top of the city.

## EXPERIMENTAL REVENGE

Bruce Colvin wants revenge. He was a promising speed skater for the UCAS, but the "training regimen" team doctors put him on left him a blinking, twitching mess. When he concentrates, he is capable of tremendous bursts of speed, but those bursts only last for fifteen seconds. The rest of the time has trouble controlling his muscles. He wants to find the doctor who gave him the injections that ruined his career. He knows that exposing the doctor's deeds won't have any effect, since no one would really care, but he'd love to be able to give the doctor a taste of his own medicine. The doctor in question, Edward Klein, used to work for the Aurora Village Sports Medical Center, but he is no longer there. He has become the personal physician of Kimberly Pressfield, a VP at Steven Ridgemont's Warpdrive Systems, which complicates the matter.

## FACE CHANGE

Steven Ridgemont has been harassed enough by Wuxing, and he feels its time to strike back. A Mr. Johnson working for Ridgemont hires runners to extract a VP from burgeoning Malaysian Independent Bank operations in Denver. The good news is that the VP, a man named Adnan Tanusha, is eager to jump ship and start working for Ridgemont. The bad news is that he has enough sensitive information that Wuxing is not going to let him live long outside of their grasp. The runners need to get Adnan set up with a new identity that will let him slide into his new role with the Anasazi Holding Corporation before Wuxing hit squads catch up to him.

## FAMILY AFFAIRS

Ramses, the chief bodyguard for Don Lucho Casquilho, has had it with Consigliore Peder Vazquez. He wants him dead, but pulling that off will be tricky. The death cannot be tied to him, of course, and a violent hit of any kind will likely be blamed on a rival mob family, which could cause the mob wars to re-erupt. Poison could be an option, but Peder uses poisons so often himself that he is paranoid about it and has built up immunities to all common toxins. The runners could opt to travel to Amazonia to find some rare substances that don't show up on most tox screens (ones that Peder hasn't prepared for), or they can try to find some other way





to make Peder's death look natural. Alternately, they may wish to let Peder know of Ramses' plan, and help him root out the treacherous cancer in the Casquilho organization.

## FOLLOW THE MONEY

Mr. Johnson, who says he is contacting you on behalf of "the toothy guy who is in charge," tells you of suspicions that they believe that the Carroll Construction Company is a shell, and that it is funneling Aztlan money to the Aztec Cultural Studies Center. They want proof that this is happening. The investigation shows that Carroll Construction is indeed involved in money laundering, but not on behalf of Aztlan or the ACSC. It's taking money from various First Nation operations and pooling it for a planned arms purchase. Ghostwalker may be interested in this fact, but the Koshari might pay extra for it—as long as the runners can live with the fury the Koshari might unleash when they discover what the First Nations gang has been up to.

## GEOMANCY

Everyone in town is certain that the use of geomancy is playing a large role in the ongoing construction of Wuxing's new headquarters, but it is not entirely clear just how they are using the basic principles. One theory is that they are building several electromagnets in the wall to better control the flow of qi around the building. Opponents of Wuxing need to know about these magnets if they want to have a chance to mess with Wuxing's energy. The runners are hired to find the hidden magnets and report on ways their magnetic flow could be interfered with if need be.

## GUN CONTROL

The ZDF has received word that a shipment of Terracotta weaponry is going to go "missing" so that it can be sold to the Chavez family. Ghostwalker thinks Terracotta needs to be brought to heel a little bit, and he has authorized the use of "sufficient" force to stop the shipment (remembering that what is "sufficient" to a dragon is "excessive" to everyone else). All the ZDF has is a vague time when the delivery will happen, and no details on the place—the runners will need to do some fast legwork to find out when the deal is going down, and then stop it.

## MAP PROJECT

Saeder-Krupp went to a lot of trouble to build their new headquarters and keep the design secret, and the end result was a building that did not appear to be extraordinary in the least—on the outside. Most observers, though, believe that the real effort went into the interior, and there are some truly curious observers who would like to know what's going on in there. Some of them will even pay for the information. The building has plenty of magical and mundane security, so the runners must dig deep into their bag of tricks to map the entire vast complex. The job becomes even more complicated when a free spirit with a grudge against S-K starts casting Shape Plasteel and Shape Concrete, changing the shape of the complex—and possibly undermining its structural integrity.

## OFF THE RESERVATION

The Anglo reservations have been a point of contention between the UCAS/CAS and NAN, especially Sioux, for decades. Part of the Sioux's negotiation strategy is to show that the reservations are a national security threat because they are being used as havens for smugglers, terrorists, and organized crime. In Coeur d'Alene (formerly of Idaho) a former Wildcat named Windsinger sent to investigate those allegations has disappeared. Its proximity to Boise on the Tír Tairngire, Salish-Shidhe, and PCC borders makes it too hot for the Sioux to send in more people. Daniel Black Crow, the OMI station chief in Seattle, hires the runners to bring him home. The runners discover that Windsinger has gone native—he wants to remain in the city and wants the city to remain relatively independent. If the Sioux think he has turned on them, the runners' mission changes from rescue to kill. Windsinger is clever, and he may convince the runners to facilitate his own operation against the Sioux to keep them away from him.

## OLYMPIC SCANDAL

CAS athlete Georgia Shayburn won a surprise alpine downhill silver medal in the Winter Olympics, but she is not satisfied—she thinks she deserved the gold. She is convinced that the gold medal winner, the Scandanavian Union's Marit Dybdahl, had magical assistance, but she has not been able to prove it. Naturally, identifying an astral trace of what happened will be impossible at this late date, so finding proof will be difficult. Dybdahl is due back in town for a World Cup race, which might present a good opportunity for some investigation. It helps that Dybdahl is not too popular with her teammates, and with the right treatment they might be induced to talk. In the end, it turns out Dybdahl indeed benefited from magic, though she didn't know about it—the spell was cast by her troll mage brother. A confrontation with him won't go smoothly.

## THE PAST RETURNED

For the most part Iain Lesker has successfully played off some unpleasant, anti-meta speeches he made in the past as "youthful indiscretions," and his residents aren't holding that against him. If they found evidence that he still entertained those views, things might get very difficult for the UCAS council rep. There are rumors that Lesker's plan to clean-up the Aurora Warrens was actually cover for mass removal and even extermination of metahumans. Lesker hasn't left any evidence of this, so runners are asked to go undercover, find a way to talk to Lesker about his plans for the Warrens, and get him to confess his true motives. As a long-time politician, Lesker is quite cagey, and making him slip up will not be easy.

## PRESSGANGED

The runners are hired to infiltrate UnlimiTech's offices in the Hub and free some spirits that have been imprisoned there. Shortly after they are hired, though, Ares gets their hands on Mr. Johnson and is able to learn about the job from him. That means they are waiting for the runners. They don't care much about the non-Awakened members of the group (though of course they



will take steps to make sure their mission does not succeed), but they will let the runners infiltrate their facilities with the hope of snaring the Awakened members of the group so that they may use them as test subjects in future experiments.

## SISTER'S KEEPER

As the treaty negotiations continue in earnest, the CAS and Texas governments have been conducting even more clandestine meetings with their Aztlaner and Aztechnology counterparts regarding the ongoing border dispute. One of the ongoing points of contention involves the continued use of the Sons of the Alamo as agents for their own counterintelligence purposes. As a show of good faith, the DSI and Aztechnology Corporate Intelligence have promised to not only renounce the use of some agents in Texas and Denver, but also to turn over information on embedded assets—namely, Sons in Aztlan and Los Espejos in Denver. One of those Sons is Marta Guzman, who happens to be an undercover Texas Ranger, and the Rangers protect their own. Theresa Vasquez, the former governor of Texas, contacts the runners to extract Guzman from El Paso and bring her to San Angelo, where Ranger Thom Anderson will get her across. ACI has knowledge of this, however, and has sent a team of Leopard Guards to arrest her to tilt the negotiations in their favor. The DSI discovers this through their own mole in ACI, and they will do whatever it takes to keep this under wraps—including killing Guzman and the runners.

## SPIRITUAL ALLIES

Marion Newton is a UCAS Army Criminal Investigation Division agent, but also a spy for the DPIFA. Gathering intelligence in Nairobi on the Corporate Court's actions during the Teketeza, he has discovered that there are external forces at work within the tribes that are dividing the allegiance to spirits in the region. Some have decided it is best to make peace with the corporations, and some are in it for more selfish reasons. Meanwhile, runners from Australia and South/Southeast Asia have been appearing and meeting with tribal elders and local spirits. Without resources of his own, and with DIA assets unwilling to cooperate, Newton reaches out to runners in Capetown and Dubai (through his boss, Joanna Krstic) to make contact with metahumans and spirits alike. The spirit Altjira in Australia is attempting to shore up support for the anti-corporate tribal forces and spirits in southeast Africa, but now corporate magicians and some local spirits are pushing back, locally and across the metaplanes. They see the runners as valuable assets in their struggle.

## UNIVERSITY TIES

Ghostwalker's administration wants to know just how connected University of Denver President Jorge Molinera is to Aztlan and whether he is working behind the scenes to promote the Azzies through the university (he knows that an official investigation will be too noisy and will draw too much attention). Molinera is indeed doing some work, but it's not through the university—he's using some personal funds to buy up PCC shares on the black market (see **Citizenship Consolidation**, p. 168). He plans to sell them to people who will support the Aztlan cause.

## WARRIOR PRIDE

Sioux businessman Riley Chaska has been arrested for attempting to use a false SIN to cross into the PCC. The SIN carried the name Icahn Reed, which has most people believing the SIN was slipped to Chaska as a practical joke by Mark Longfeather. Chaska wants revenge, and he has a free spirit ally named Rocko who can provide all sorts of problems for Longfeather. Longfeather, though, claims this was not his handiwork, and he wants runners to find out who actually did it so he can get Chaska off his case. Finding the culprit won't be easy, as the data trail is very well covered, but intrepid runners may discover that one of the admins at the Denver Data Haven was responsible for the job, for the simple fact that he was mad at being banned from a Sock-n-Wrench outlet because he messed with the store's AR displays.



# ... GLOSSARY ...

Posted by: **Fianchetto**

Okay, folks. As in the shadows the intelligence world has its own language and shorthands. FastJack had me put this together as a helpful reminder when dealing with your intelligence handlers and contacts.

**Agent:** An asset acting on behalf of an intelligence agency to commit espionage or related operations.

**All-sources intelligence:** The collection of intelligence by all means, methods, and in all fields. Generally applies to smaller nations' intelligence apparatus, which is consolidated into one or two (foreign and domestic) agencies.

**Asset:** Any source used to gather intelligence.

**Burn:** To completely eliminate any connection between an intelligence agency and an asset.

**Burn Notice:** Information related to which assets an intelligence agency has burned. Used as a warning and threat.

**Casablanca:** Neutral territory

**CI:** Counterintelligence

**Clandestine:** Activities that take place without identifying the true nature or purpose of an action.

**COC:** "Children of the corn." Term for otaku that has since been applied to technomancers.

**Covert:** Activities that take place without identifying the existence of an action or individual.

**Covert Operations/Action:** European and Asian term for special operations.

**CS:** Chief of Station. Top spy in a foreign area of operations, usually based out of an embassy.

**ELINT:** Electronic Intelligence

**EP:** Executive Protection, a.k.a. bodyguards

**EXPINT:** Extraplanar Intelligence

**FISS:** Foreign Intelligence and Security Service

**FOO:** Field Operations Officer. Specially trained officers who conduct covert and PM operations.

**Handler:** Any officer who recruits, trains, and controls an agent.

**FUD:** Fear, uncertainty, and doubt, a.k.a. disinformation.

**Galahads:** Social adepts generally, and specifically adept spies.

**Hague Accords:** The international agreement signed in light of the Business Recognition Accords that granted certain corporate citizens the same rights and privileges as diplomats protected by the Vienna Convention.

**HUMINT:** Human Intelligence

**Intelligence Officer:** A trained and sworn intelligence operative who works for an intelligence agency.

**Jack Johnson:** Government term for corporate spies, specifically handlers.

**MAGINT:** Magical Intelligence; catch-all term for intelligence gathered through exclusively and predominantly magical means.

**Manny:** Common, usually derogatory, term for a freelance or private intelligence corporation officer or agent. A gun-for-hire.

**MI:** Military Intelligence.

**Moscow Rules:** A term for elaborate counter-surveillance techniques used by spies to evade or dissuade pursuit by particularly vigorous CI.

**NOC:** Non-Official Cover. An agent that lacks any official cover, usually operates undercover as a civilian, and acts without any Vienna Convention/Hague Accords diplomatic protection.

**OC:** Official Cover. An agent that has a diplomatic or corporate identity; an officer who works under that receives diplomatic immunity and protection under the Vienna Convention or Hague Accords.

**Ping:** To declare a person persona non grata under the Vienna Convention, forcing their immediate expulsion from the country.

**PM:** Paramilitary. Generally refers to FO officers and dedicated personnel who conduct military-style operations.

**PSC:** Private Security Contractor

**Raven:** Spirit (free, bound, other) asset. Term is a reference to Odin's ravens, Munin and Hugin.

**SCIF:** Sensitive Compartmented Intelligence Facility

**Secret Service:** UCAS law enforcement agency. Everywhere else it refers to an intelligence agency.

**SIGINT:** Signals Intelligence (includes Matrix-based intelligence, espionage, and SO)

**Smiler:** Corporate espionage term for a government spy.

**Special Operations:** North America. Any quasi- or illegal action involving the use of force; in other words, a shadowrun.

**TECHINT:** Technical Intelligence

**Tom:** Magical spies, originally a U.S. Army reference to Thaumaturgical Officers, but now in common use worldwide.

**Vienna Convention:** The international agreement that provides diplomatic immunity and other protections for certain government personnel serving in foreign countries.



**Posted by: Thorn**

We've already given a breakdown of many of the most active agencies and spy shops that are active in the shadows, but it helps to have all the relevant information in one place. The following is an overview of the shops you are most likely to encounter or work with.

## GOVERNMENT

I've omitted most military intelligence services, but remember that the majority of militaries maintain active intelligence programs. The ones listed here are the exceptions, those services that tend to exceed that general mandate.

**Allied German States OBIS** (Office of Confederate Internal Security) (Domestic All-Sources; CI)

**Amazonia Intelligence Service** (All-Sources, MAGINT; CI)

**Australian Intelligence & Security Enforcement** (All-Sources; CI)

### CAS

**Department of Strategic Intelligence** (Foreign All-Sources; Foreign CI)

**Department of Domestic Investigations** (Domestic All-Sources; Domestic CI)

**Extraterritorial Relations and Liaison Agency** (Domestic All-Sources)

**Cuban Dirección General de Inteligencia** (Intelligence Directorate) (All-Sources; CI)

### France

**Direction Generale de la Securite Exterieur** (Foreign Security Directorate) (Foreign All-Sources; CI)

### India

**Intelligence Bureau** (Domestic All-Sources; CI)

**Research & Intelligence Directorate** (Foreign All-Sources; CI)

### Israel

**AMAN** (All-Sources, MI; CI)

**Mossad** (Foreign All-Sources; CI)

**Shin Bet** (Domestic All-Sources; CI)

**Japanese Intelligence Agency** (All-Sources, CI)

**Pueblo Corporate Council**

**Competition Analysis & Management Office** (Foreign HUMINT, CI)

**External Affairs** (Foreign All-Sources; CI)

**Pueblo Security Forces Intelligence** (Domestic All-Sources; CI)

### Russia

**Glavnoye Razvedovatel'noye Upravleniy** (Military Intelligence Directorate) (All-Sources, MI; CI)

**Ministerstvo Vnutrennikh Del** (Ministry of Internal Affairs) (Domestic All-Sources; CI)

**Upravleniye Gosudartstvennoy Bezopasnosti** (Directorate of State Security) (All-Sources; CI)

**Sioux Office of Military Intelligence** (All-Sources; CI)

**Sovereign Tribal Council Truth Dancers** (MAGINT, CI)

**Tír Tairngire Information Secretariat** (All-Sources; CI)

**Tír na nÓg Tír Republican Corps** (Domestic All-Sources; CI)

### UCAS

**Central Intelligence Agency** (HUMINT, TECHINT; Foreign CI)

**Department of Homeland Security** (Domestic CI)

**Defense Intelligence Agency** (HUMINT, EXPINT, MAGINT, TECHINT; CI)

**Drug Enforcement Agency** (HUMINT, MAGINT TECHINT; CI)

**Federal Bureau of Investigation** (Domestic All-Sources; Domestic CI)

**National Reconnaissance Office** (ELINT)

**Nuclear Regulatory Commission** (HUMINT, TECHINT; CI)

**National Security Agency** (Foreign ELINT, SIGINT, TECHINT)



## United Kingdom

**General Communications Headquarters** (ELINT, SIGINT, TECHINT)

**MI5—Security Service** (Domestic HUMINT, ELINT, MAGINT, TECHINT; CI)

**MI6—Secret Intelligence Service** (Foreign HUMINT, ELINT, MAGINT, TECHINT; Foreign CI)

**Oversight Office** (Domestic CI)

**Ministry of Defense Special Reconnaissance Regiment** (HUMINT, MAGINT, TECHINT, MI; CI)

## CORPORATE

Some of these firms outsource their intelligence resources to government, corporate, or private clients. Their primary purpose, however, is to serve their corporate owner.

### Ares

**Ares Arms Military Systems Division** (All-Sources, MI; CI)

**AresSpace Information Resources** (ELINT)

**Knight Errant** (All-Sources, HUMINT; CI)

**Aztechnology Corporate Intelligence** (All-Sources; CI)

**Esprit SDEI** (All-Sources; CI)

### Evo

**Special Security Detail** (HUMINT; CI)

**Yamatetsu Naval Technologies** (All-Sources, MI; CI)

**Federated-Boeing Intelligence Services** (All-Sources; CI)

**KITT Research and Information Solutions** (All-Sources)

**MCT Intelligence** (All-Sources; CI)

**Monobe Global Information Operations** (All-Sources; CI)

**NeoNET Novatech Information Solutions** (All-Sources, SIGINT; CI)

### Renraku

**Fuchi Intelligence Systems** (ELINT; CI)

**Keruba Military Solutions** (All-Sources; CI)

**Saeder-Krupp Prime** (All-Sources; CI)

**Shiawase Market Information and Forecasting**

**Department** (All-Sources, SIGINT; CI)

**Wuxing Office of Market Research and Analysis**

(All-Sources, ELINT, MAGINT; CI)

**Yakashima Corporate Resources Analysis** (All-Sources; CI)

## FREELANCE

**Aegis Cognito** (All-Sources, especially HUMINT and SIGINT)

**Argus** (All-Sources; CI)

**Horizon Dawkins Group** (HUMINT; CI)

**Infolio** (All-Sources)

**Millennium Consulting** (All-Sources, especially MAGINT)

**Special Information Service** (All-Sources; CI)

## INDEPENDENT/ NON-ALIGNED/OTHER

**Anarchist Black Star** (All-Sources; CI)

**Corporate Court Crisis Coordination Committee**

(All-Sources; CI)

**Corporate Court Matrix Authority** (All-Sources, SIGINT; CI [ARM/RH])

**Fallen Seraphim** (All-Sources, HUMINT; CI)

**Free Watchers** (HUMINT; SIGINT; CI)

**Holy See**

**New Society of Jesus** (All-Sources, MAGINT; CI)

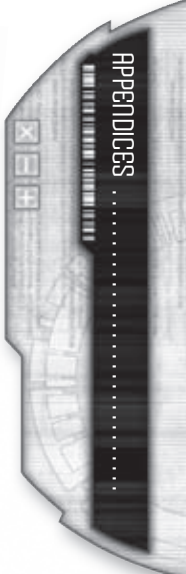
**New Templars** (All-Sources; CI)

**Vigilia Evangelica** (All-Sources, ELINT; CI)

**United Nations**

**Anti-Terrorist Coalition** (All-Sources; CI)

**Committee on Megacorporate Affairs** (HUMINT; CI)



## CAMOUFLAGE RULES AND EQUIPMENT

### CAMOUFLAGING DEVICES

Device Mod	Threshold	Tools	Cost	Special Skill
Advanced Materials	30	facility	Device x 4	Artisan
Alternate Material	20	shop	Device x 2	
Camouflage	16	kit	500 for Rating 1, 2 250 x Rating for Rating 3-6	
Disassembled	24	shop	2,000	
Micro/Nanoization	30	facility	Device x 3	
Secondary Functionality	20	shop	Device x 2	

### CAMOUFLAGE GEAR

Name	Rating	Availability	Cost
Drone Case (Mini)	3		25¥
Drone Case (Micro)	4		50¥
Drone Case (Small)	6		75¥
Face Case	1-3	4*Rating	500*Rating¥
Novelty Mask	1		15¥

### Clean Car Coating

Clean Car Coating (CCC) applies cosmetic, but not structural, repairs to a vehicle. It activates every time a vehicle is impacted enough to damage it. Anyone firing at the target needs a Perception (4) Test to see if they actually hit it, as the coating seals up in less than a tenth of a second.

### Drone Case

The drone case comes in three sizes: micro, mini, and small. The case's armor rating is 1/2, and it stacks with the existing drone's armor. Example drone cases: Micro: button, earring, cufflink; Mini: pen, key, credstick; Small: shoe, commlink, concealed pocket.

### Face Case

The face case adds its rating to the dice used in a Disguise Test (p. 133, SR4A).

### Jigsaw Skull

Like the false front, the jigsaw skull changes the facial features of the subject, though the jigsaw skull gives the user even more control by working at a deeper level. No drug adjustment is necessary to mimic a target. If the subject has the Disguise skill, they can use it to manually adjust their face rapidly, using a Disguise + Intuition (4, 3 Combat Turns) Extended Test. (Do not add the rating of the jigsaw skull to the test when manually adjusting their face.) This does not stack with false front; if the user has both, use the higher-rated device in Disguise Tests. The process of re-arranging the skull takes two minutes and is painful; the user takes a -2 penalty to any tests (besides the Disguise Test) made during the process of altering their appearance. That penalty is reduced to -1 for the subsequent five minutes as the pain fades.

### Rotational Joints

Rotational joints allow for more flexibility and movement than is otherwise possible for our skeletal structure. Add +1 die to Escape Tests (+2 if more than one limb has rotational joints) and allow the use of Active Skills with the limbs bending in the opposite direction with a -3 dice penalty in performing those activities due to the difficulty in paying attention to activities in different directions. Rotational joints only work in full cyberlimbs, and they take up two capacity slots.

### Superficial Cybernetics

To hide your meat body, you can get modified cybernetic casings that make you appear augmented. Superficial cyberware can have some functionality like cyber spurs and blades, but they have to fit over the existing limb (items such as cyberguns or raptor cyberlegs cannot be included). Superficial cybernetics can appear as either obvious or synthetic. Cyber scanners do not register them as cyberlimbs. Superficial cybernetics cost ten percent of the actual standard cyberlimb/partial limb replacement. They add a +1 modifier to Disguise Tests when an individual is using them to prevent themselves from being recognized by people who know their non-augmented appearance.

### CYBERWARE

Cyberwear	Essence	Availability	Cost
Jigsaw Skull (Rating 1-4)	Rating x 0.6	12 + Rating	Rating x 15,000¥
Rotational Joint (per limb)	-	8	5,000¥





## INTELLIGENCE GEAR

### Assembler

This device re-assembles documents at a pace of one page per minute, regardless of the style of shredder used.

### Card Skimmer

There are two parts to this device: a card skimmer, which is a thin membrane that adheres to the maglock's reader, and a card skimmer reader, which is compatible with most keycard copiers. The card skimmer is hard to detect (Perception (4) Test). It takes a Palming (2) Test to apply to the card reader without detection. The skimmer can record up to ten keycards that go through the card reader. After that, no further data is recorded—the skimmer only saves the data from the first ten swipes. The skimmer does not transmit data wirelessly. To access the stored data, a keycard copier with a skimmer reader can then be passed through to transfer the keycard information from the skimmer. The skimmer reader can also trigger the card skimmer to dissolve after transfer.

### Hydrophone

Signal range is Device Rating x 25 meters in picking up noises. Software is needed to process the noise of moving water out (Edit + Computer (2) Test). Locating the proper pipe can be difficult and time-consuming (Perception + Electronic Warfare (12, 30 minutes) Extended Test). The capsule can be programmed to grow filaments after a certain time, allowing for a rough estimate as to how far it has traveled into a designated pipe.

### Scan Gloves

Scan gloves can look like any glove or second skin. The gloves can detect and record surface variations in both color and texture as they move across the surface of an object. Add the rating of the gloves to Perception Tests in detecting and recording surface changes.

### Screen Capture System

This spray coats any optical display (commlink, contacts, glasses, vid screen) with a sensor array designed to capture images projected from or through the device. For contacts and glasses, it also records both the reality and the augmented reality. A successful Perception (5) Test detects the coating. The nanites also construct a secure RFID to send the recorded images. The coating can record up to 72 hours of activity before looping. Rating determines the number of days that the coating lasts.

Name	Availability	Cost
Assembler	—	600¥
Card Skimmer (per strip)	12F	650¥
Card Skimmer Reader	12F	2,000¥
Hydrophone	6	125
Hydrophone Capsule	6R	100¥
Ice Cube Microphone	(see <i>Camouflage, Alternate Materials</i> )	
Scan Gloves	5 + Rating	150¥
Screen Capture Spray	8 + Rating	Rating x 200¥

### Software

The programs listed are common use programs, and like other common programs they can be bought up to Rating 6 (p. 232, SR4A).

### CarnivoreGold (Computer)

This program translates languages and argots that users may have no other way of translating, including modes of communication that may have been developed solely for communication between a limited group of people. The program's rating plus the user's Computer skill are then used in Language Tests to understand what was said.

### Lip Reader (Computer)

The program and the user's Computer skill can be used to try to understand what people are saying in a video without audio. The threshold is determined by how clearly visible the subject's mouth is (unobscured mouth has a threshold of 2, mouth slightly angled away from camera has threshold of 3, etc.). The use of Kinesics by anyone on the recording can increase the threshold. The amount of information acquired depends on the number of net hits (see *Lip Reading Test* sidebar).

### MonaLisa (Computer)

The software's rating plus the user's Computer skill is used to identify faces that are part of databases that the user can access. The threshold for this test is 2, which can be increased if there is no clear shot of the individual's face. Accessing databases with facial information is a separate activity.

### LIP READING TEST

#### Information recovered

2 net hits	The general subject of the conversation, but not the specifics.
3 net hits	The subject and each participant's attitude toward it.
5 net hits	The entire conversation for all visible subjects.

**ADDITIONAL RULES**

**Fingerprint Morphing**

The skin on one hand can be made of bioplastic memory material that can build up the ridges of a finger or palm print. The data from a print scanner can be sent to the hand to change the fingerprints or it can scan a touch with another person's fingertips. Make an Opposed Test between the fingerprint duplication rating and the fingerprint scanner rating (p. 263, SR4A).

**CYBERWARE**

Cyberware	Essence	Availability	Cost
Fingerprint Morphing	0.2	12F	Rating x 10,000¥

**Fresnel Fabric**

Material that can focus and concentrate light or radio waves like the lens on a lighthouse. This allows for a smaller device with less signal strength to be boosted as the signal passes through the fabric. Add 50 percent to the signal rating range with a minimum increase of 1 meter in one direction. Because the boost is directional, the device must be pointed in the direction the person you want to send the wireless signal to.

**Pulse Weave**

This clothing addition turns the suit into one large flash-pak, disorienting and blinding opponents. Anyone facing the pulse weave suit receives a -4 dice pool modifier on Attack Tests (flare compensation reduces this modifier to -2). The pulse weave can only carry a single charge; after it is used, it needs to recharge for fifteen minutes.

**Short Circuit**

Duration of the drug is (10 - Logic attribute of target) in hours, minimum 1 hour. During that time, subject has a -2

to any Intuition or Logic linked skills, and cannot remember things that happened more than fifteen minutes ago (though they have full access to memories created before they were given the drug).

**Speak Up**

The spray-on nanites build up a small acoustic or imaging device and enough storage for an agent program. The agent can then broadcast whatever the agent has been programmed to say (or they can be spontaneously re-programmed wirelessly should the situation require it). This can be used to distract guards or as part of an intimidation ruse. The imaging device can project two-dimensional images. The nanites can be triggered wirelessly. Rating of the device is the number of hours that the nanites last. Using Speak Up allows +1 die to Intimidation or Infiltration Tests.

**Universal Mirror Material**

Universal Mirror Fabric reflects light or radio waves directly back to the device, reducing its access to wireless communications. It reduces the signal strength of anything inside the material by twice the material's rating. The rating of both the hood and body bag is 1.

Name	Availability	Cost
Fresnel Fabric	14R	3,000¥
Pulse Weave	+8	3,000¥
Short Circuit	8F	750¥
Speak Up	5	175¥
UM Material (per square yard)	8F	Rating x 250 ¥
UM Body Bag	6F	800¥
UM Hood	6F	250¥