

SHADOWRUN®

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STATE OF THE ART: 4



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THE SHADOWS NEVER STOP

"New toys hit the street every week, omae. Wiz new tech to exploit security holes, rapid-assembly weapons disguised as Nerps™ to sneak past the scanners, wicked new adept fu to kick some major hoop. To keep up with the Johnsons, ya gotta scan what's coming down the pipe, otherwise you'll end up as the unfortunate example in a field-test report."

State of the Art: 2064™

examines the latest groundbreaking developments in five aspects of the *Shadowrun* world. It explores the current state of police organization, technology and prisons and details the murky world of spycraft and political espionage. It also delves into both adept characters, discussing new paths, powers and metamagic, and European-specific magical traditions such as street witches. Finally, it provides briefs on the latest trends in mainstream and underground culture, sports and entertainment, with an eye towards shadowrunning opportunities. These sections include a selection of new gear, techniques and rules for both players and gamemasters. For use with *Shadowrun, Third Edition*®.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS



INTRODUCTION	4	Brothers in Arms	53	Division of Paranormal Investigations	80
IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN ...	5	Experimental Troupe Six	53	Division of Drug and Chip Enforcement	80
GAMES OF STATE	6	Gladio	54	Division of Special Tactics	80
Rules of the Game	6	Jamil Islamyah Monastery	55	Division of Investigation	82
SIGINT	8	The Sisters of Eglantine	56	Non-Enforcement Divisions	83
IMINT	9	The Alexa Group's Songbirds	57	Dealing with the Law	84
HUMINT	10	Evolution in Fast Forward	57	Bribes	84
Patriot Games	12	Focusing Your Center	57	Cop Contacts	85
The Prize Purse	12	Adept Artwork	59	Operations	86
The Playing Pieces	17	Technoadeps	59	Stops and Searches	86
The Gameboard	26	Game Information	60	Patrols and Arrests	87
Game Information	29	Running Ways	60	We Know Who You Are: Forensics	88
Running an Espionage Campaign	29	New Ordeals	60	The Big Leagues:	
New Edges & Flaws	32	New Metamagic	61	Cops and Shadowrunners	90
New Spells	33	New Powers	64	Sting Operations	90
New Equipment	33	New Foci	68	Busted: Detention, Trial, Prison	90
THE PATH OF THE ADEPT	40	BEHIND THE BADGE	69	In the Joint	91
Walking the Ways	42	Modern Private Police Groups	70	Modern Prisons: Dueling Philosophies	91
The Spirit Way	43	The Power Players	72	Prison Culture	93
The Warrior's Way	44	Legal Issues	73	Friends In Low Places:	
The Artists's Way	45	Lethal Force	73	Prison Gangs and Organized Crime	94
The Athlete's Way	46	Cyberware	74	Prison Tech	94
The Invisible Way	47	Magic and Paranimals	74	Working For The Man: Prison Industry	95
The Speaker's Way	48	Surveillance and Interrogation	74		
The Shamanic Way	49	Jurisdiction	75		
The Magician's Way	51	Policing Functions	77		
The Whale Riders	52	Division of Patrol	77		
		Division of Matrix Security (aka "GridSec")	79		



Rehabilitation Methods	95
Offers You Can't Refuse	96
Game Information	96
Playing with the Police	96
Resolving Arrests	97
Running in the Joint	97
New Gear	98
New IC	98
New Vehicles	98
OLD WORLD MAGIC	99
Neo-Pagan Undercurrents	100
Witchcraft Reloaded	102
Druids	105
Norse Pagans	109
Roman-Hellenistic Pagans	110
Ethnic Magic	111
A Question of Paradigm	112
Roots of Conflict	112
Rules of the Game	113
The Classic Schools	114
Modern Schools	117
Minor Schools	120
Magic & Christianity	120
Catholic Order of	
St. Sylvester	122
Westphalian Theurgists	122
Orthodox Exarchs	122
Game Information	122
Neo-Pagan Magic	122
Wicca	123
Witches	125
Druids	125
Nordic Pagans	126
Hermetic Paradigms	
and Schools	127
CULTURE SHOCK	128
Orxploitation	128
Power to the People,	
Chummer	128
Tonedead Ujnor	132
Tuskadelic	133
Saturday Night War	134
Corp Vogue	135
Children of the Corporation	136
Buying Your Loyalty	137
Other Leashes	138
Link Clubs	138
Gene Art	139
Gambling	141
Gambling and the Law	141
Illegal Gambling	141
Do You Know Where	
Your Bookie Is?	142
Gambling Hot Spots	143
Top 10 Shadowruns	
of 2063	144
Top 10 Most Wanted	
Criminals	147

Top 10 Most Wanted	
Suits/Scientists	151
Top 10 Runner Haunts	154
Top 10 Paranormal Incidents	156
Top 10 Shadow News	
Stories of 2063	159
The Road to Amazonia: 2064	162
For the Nuyen of the Game	163
Meet the Contestants	163
Five Rings, Five Sectors:	
Denver 2072	164
The 2063 Sports Recap	165
Baseball	165
Basketball	165
Chess	165
Combat Biker	166
Football	166
Formula 1	166
Hockey	166
Horseracing	167
Tennis	167
Track & Field	167
Turf	167
Urban Brawl	167
Game Information	167
Orxploitation	167
Corp Vogue	168

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INTRODUCTION

State of the Art: 2064 takes a look at some of the latest developments in the world of Shadowrun. Like the previous year's sourcebook, *State of the Art: 2063*, this book focuses on five areas of particular interest to shadowrunners. This time around, however, the focus is on the spy business, adept magic, police ops, European magic and the latest developments in culture. It's important for shadowrunners to keep abreast of the latest advancements in magic, technology and society so that they can adapt and take advantage of them.

State of the Art: 2064 is presented as a series of electronic documents posted by Captain Chaos, sysop of the vast Shadowland archive and data haven—the number one source for shadowrunners on what's going on in the world of *Shadowrun*. The documents come from a variety of sources, underground and mainstream, but are directed towards an audience of shadowrunners. These sources are each unique in outlook and perspective. Influenced by their own particular prejudices and interests. Each article is marked up with a running commentary by shadow denizens who add to, revise and contradict the original post. These inserted comments add innuendo, allegations, opinions, rumors, misconceptions, misinformation, lies and sometimes even the truth to the information presented. It is left up to the gamemaster to decide what information is correct and which is just filling, as appropriate to his or her game.

The first chapter, *Games of State*, provides an overview of modern spycraft and how it has changed in the aftermath of the Awakening, global balkanization and rise of the megacorps. In addition to detailing intelligence (and counter-intelligence) methods, it also covers major players, hot spots and new spy gear.

The Path of the Adept delves into the philosophy and mindsets of the various adept ways, expanding upon the information given in *Magic in the Shadows* (and the out of print second-edition sourcebook *Awakenings*). A slew of new adept powers and metamagic techniques are included, broadening the range of abilities available, especially for social adepts.

Behind the Badge explores the world of modern policing, with a specific focus on privatized police groups like Lone Star and Knight Errant. Similar to the out of print *Lone Star* sourcebook, it defines what different police units do and discusses various issues related to legalities, jurisdiction, police operations and forensics. It also dives into prisons and prison culture, giving details on what a shadowrunner can expect when he goes to the Big House. Suggestions for running prison campaigns are supplied, along with some new cop gear and drones.

The section on *European Magic* supplements some of the material originally introduced in *Shadows of Europe*. The nature and outlook of witchcraft and various pagan magical paths are expanded upon, as is the academic debate between various hermetic schools. Magic and Christianity is also touched on. This information can serve as an excellent source to flesh out the philosophy and trappings of a character's magical tradition. Rules are also provided for giving some of the traditions a unique flavor.

Culture Shock focuses on the latest news and cultural trends, both mainstream and underground. It starts off with a lively description of the latest phenomenon to influence mainstream culture—orkxploitation—and moves on to discuss the methods and consequences of megacorp loyalty, including corporate gangs and point systems. Gambling, genetic art and a new

type of networked club are also featured. A number of top ten lists are provided that relate to numerous events that have occurred in the shadows over the past year, from most wanted criminals to paranormal phenomenon. The top ten news items progress a number of plotlines previously introduced in other *Shadowrun* books. Finally, an overview of the sports industry is given, including features on the 2064 World Cup in Amazonia and the latest on the maneuverings surrounding the 2072 Olympics. Overall, this chapter includes a wealth of plot hooks that gamemasters can use to fill out their campaigns and construct adventures.



IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN



It's hard to believe that a year has already gone by since we posted the last State of the Art folio. We've seen a lot happen with various dragon maneuverings, corporate infighting, the founding of the NEEC, a brewing mob war in Europe, and the continuation of civil warfare in Poland and the Philippines. The screamsheets have not been lacking for newsworthy material—which means that our line of biz is doing just fine.

But let's not get cocky. With the changes our world goes through every day, it's becoming an increasing challenge to keep up with the latest developments. If you don't suspect that an adept might try running across water to sneak up behind you or that a spook might have a taser concealed in that hollowed-out credstick, then you're not doing your job. We all know that staying alive means keeping ahead of the game, being prepared so that we can laugh at our opponent's "big surprise" and tell him that was last week's vaporware.

Once again, as roll over our calendars to the big '64, I present you with a file collection that compiles some of the latest advances that you should be watching out for, some intel on the cutting edge. Just like last year, I've focused on five areas of particular interest to shadowrunners. This time, I've chosen to feature modern espionage, adept paths and magic, police operations, European magic traditions and the perennial favorite, that slop that passes as "culture" these days.

The spy game material is a friendly reminder that nation states still play in our sandbox just as much as corporate agents do. The material on adepts is a bit overdue, as there are many types of adepts out there who haven't gotten the recognition they deserve, and they have plenty of nifty new powers up their sleeves. The material on cops just seems a necessity, as they are the number one opposition shadowrunners need to keep an eye out for, so we should all know what they're up to. The exploration of Euro magic is an add-on to the Shadows of Europe folio we recently posted, since so many of you have had run-ins with magicians who didn't fit the North American norms. And finally, the culture section should give you some ideas on where to look for work, as well give you a heads-up on world events in case you've had your head buried in a Matrix game node for the past year.

Remember kids, it's not just enough to scan this information—it's how you use it that counts. There are plenty of items here that can save your hoop in the right situation, and plenty of facts that can lead to you cashing in on a sweet run. So quit slacking and get to work.

♦ Captain Chaos

Transmitted: 20 December 2063 at 16:22:20 (PST)

GAMES OF STATE



You know the cliché: information is the only valuable commodity in the world. As annoying as it sounds, it's true, especially for us in the shadows. We'd be out of a job were it not for people trying to find out things they're not supposed to know.

No one knows this better than intelligence agencies around the world. They were plying the trade of info-hoarding long before the megacorps even knew the meaning of "proprietary information." And because one wrong move can spark a war no one really wants, the spooks have learned how to be real quiet about it.

I put out a call for the scoop on the spy scene, and Spavin agreed to put something together. Spav used to cruise the grids of Shiawase's spy department, the MIFD, before a little disagreement forced them to part ways. So listen up, because if someone else told you this, they might have to kill you.

• Captain Chaos

Transmitted: 20 December 2063 at 16:31:54 (PST)

The Great Game. Ever since Kipling coined the phrase in *Kim*, diplomats have adopted this euphemism to beautify an ugly exchange of betrayal and treachery. Still, old Rudyard captured the essence of intelligence and covert operations. In espionage, there are rules to follow and conventions to uphold. Most important, make sure you never get caught cheating.

RULES OF THE GAME

The technological innovations of the last century, not to mention magic's return, have radically altered the ways intelligence agencies go about collecting information. While double agents and dead-drop letters still have an important part to play, nowadays satellite imagery, electronic signal collection, Matrix taps, aura scans, detection spells and many other measures overshadow the old-fashioned cloak-and-dagger methods.

When it comes to methodology, most intelligence-gathering boils down to one of three categories: signals intelligence (SIGINT), imagery intelligence (IMINT) and human intelligence (HUMINT). Here's a look at the current trends in playing the spy game.





SIGINT

Ya gotta love technology. Whether it's radio, telephone, trideo or the Matrix, electronic transmission has made it ridiculously easy to send information from one far-flung corner of the world to another. This has made electronic communication the favorite form of media, which subsequently makes SIGINT the biggest portion of many intelligence agencies' operational budgets.

As any technoweenie fanboy will tell you, signals intelligence consists of two major categories. The collection and interception of electronic data falls under the category of electronic intelligence, or ELINT. The other side of the coin is communications intelligence, or COMINT, which involves decrypting and decoding of the data.

- Depending on which agency you're talking about, there's also a third type of electronic intelligence called GRIDINT that covers Matrix-based intelligence gathering. It incorporates elements of collection and decoding, so it's a hybrid of ELINT and COMINT. Spavin didn't mention it, partly because he's a purist, but also because it's far from universal. The Russians, for example, still haven't completely embraced the Matrix and so relegate GRIDINT ops to a different department in the UGB from conventional electronic warfare. On the other hand, the UCAS takes the attitude that "data is data" and integrates Matrix operations seamlessly with other signal collection under the umbrella of the National Security Agency.

- Melkon

- When it comes to encryption and coding, broadcast encryption tends to be a lot more difficult than data encryption. At least with data encryption, the data's going to stay the same over time, but in broadcast encryption, the signal is changing, and more often than not, so is the coding. You're making an on-the-fly effort, so the odds really stack up against you.

- MC Jammer

Bugs In the System

The traditional hidden microphone has come a long way in the past seventy years. Not only do the listening devices keep getting smaller, but they also collect a variety of other data. Video, trideo, chemical spectrography, GPS coordinates, ambient temperature, you name it—if it can be recorded, there's a bug out there that will track it.

- The UCAS Nuclear Regulatory Commission has a specialized bug to fight illegal trafficking in radioactive material, particularly for home-brewed nukes and so-called "dirty bombs." The bug is an ordinary activate-on-demand voice microphone, but it also contains a GPS receiver and micro-sized radiometer for measuring radiation levels. Whenever they suspect someone of trafficking, they plant this "glow bug" on him. That way they can monitor whatever suspicious characters he's talking to, and can also pinpoint his location and determine whether (and sometimes what) radioactive materials are present.

- Seabrook

- Watch out for some of the newer bugs the UGB uses for anti-insurgent ops. These bugs incorporate inertial sensors, and if they detect the bug moving more than a gentle nudge, they'll trigger an explosive charge capable of considerable collateral damage. Since too much movement means the operation is already compromised, or so the Russkies figure, they might as well try to take down as many as they can.

- Zampolit

It's amazing how small a listening device can get sometimes. The smallest bug I've heard of is microchip-sized, inserted by a hardware technician into a cyberdeck—not to monitor the decker's online mischief, but to monitor his offline conversations with his chummers! Keep in mind, however, there's usually an inverse relationship between size and performance. Reducing a bug's size also decreases other important capabilities, such as transmission range, duration, data storage and the ability to record other types of data like video or spectrography. If you want a bug that does it all, don't be surprised if it ends up being too large to hide.

- Bugging isn't just a physical operation. Many intelligence deckers plant "bugs" in nodes by using sniffer utilities to intercept data streams and copy all the data traffic being tapped. Most of the time these sniffers send their data to a dead-drop: a chip writer that taps into the Matrix from a public location and writes it onto a chip that an operative later picks up. That way, if trace IC pinpoints the destination, the trackers end up going to a public telecom anyone could have used.

- Arclight

One feature that's becoming increasingly common on most covert surveillance devices is activate-on-demand (AOD). Since it isn't on all the time, AOD helps lengthen a bug's operational duration. Furthermore, with recent advances in pattern recognition technology, newer AOD models can be programmed to activate only under certain criteria: for example, when a certain person speaks, or whenever certain keywords are spoken.

- The tech isn't foolproof, though. It all depends on the context, so there's always a chance of getting a false positive. You have to be pretty careful how you program the bug. For example, if you program it to activate whenever it hears anything about Seattle bombings, it'll go off if it hears, "I can't believe how badly the Seattle Seadogs bombed last night against Kansas City."

- fhqwhgads

- Come on, fhqwhgads. Where've you been the past couple of years? The technology isn't absolutely reliable, but the software has gotten better at interpreting context.

- Midnight Runner

Riding the Airwaves

Whether it's conventional radio, cellular phone, microwave or satellite, the easiest way to transmit and disseminate information goes through the airwaves. Of course,

it's also the easiest to monitor, intercept and sometimes even mess with. The boys and girls in intel figured this out long ago, which is why they maintain a lot of assets to monitor the airwaves. And with the wireless Matrix craze starting to really take off, with things like the European Wireless Matrix Initiative, the airwaves are going to be even more of a playground for all sides.

- By the same token, the intel agencies are reluctant to pass highly classified information via electronic transmissions. Even with encryption and countermeasures like frequency-hopping and such, there's still a chance some unwanted party will figure out the key and decode the data. It all depends on how sensitive the intel is. Routine administrative traffic usually passes through with standard encryption, but highly sensitive data from deeply placed sources might come strictly through dedicated landlines or even personally by courier. Of course, these secure methods are resource-intensive and not very timely. It's a matter of risk management. Ya rolls yer dice, ya takes yer chances.

- Whistler

- Because so much traffic passes through the air, the watchers scanning the airwaves might miss something in all the noise. A couple of cells have figured this out and sometimes use adolescent chat rooms and message forums to pass coded messages. The signal-to-noise ratio is abysmally low, so it may be easy to pass an announcement about an upcoming terror strike, disguising it as gossip about the latest boy band or teen idol.

- L-Ja

Right now, the hot topic in electronic intelligence is the revival of interest in wireless communications and technology, such as the Wireless Matrix Initiative being developed in Scandinavia. For a long time wireless just couldn't overcome the hurdle of delivering full-sensation Matrix simsense at broadband speeds, but this WMI looks like it may just make that breakthrough. Saeder-Krupp Prime is already involved, attempting to force its way into Erika's labs, and just recently my old pals inside Shiawase MIFD told me it's a hot item on Director Kiyomoto's agenda. From what I've heard, even the NSA and the ERLA are getting in on the action.

IMINT

People say a picture is worth a thousand words. Me, I wouldn't know firsthand, because MIFD's Imagery Surveillance Section sucked major hoop. Others, like the CIA, have had great success with imagery analysis, so it remains a staple of intelligence gathering and analysis.

Nowadays, drones do the majority of the grunt work for obtaining imagery data. Drones come in all shapes and sizes, from handheld microdrones to giant high-altitude unmanned aircraft. This allows them to get cameras into places no human

being (or dwarf, for that matter) can. Sometimes the drones store the images in onboard memory, but most of the time they transmit the footage in real time to nearby riggers.

- It's actually a good idea in some circumstances for the drone to store footage onboard and disconnect from the rigger network. Even though drone networks are more secure than most RF transmissions, the signals can still be potentially monitored and intercepted. This is particularly true if you're operating under EMCON (Emission Control, a.k.a. radio silence) conditions and don't want to tip your hand with an unidentified transmission.

- Rigger X

- Because drones do most of the paparazzi work for the spooks, counterintelligence also puts a lot of effort into training and equipping intelligence riggers to thwart them. Spook riggers are real damn good (they have to be to stay on top of the game), and they employ clever uses of MIU, with particular emphasis on meaconing and intrusion techniques. Jamming and interference are brute-force effective, but most spook riggers I know think they're crude and unsuited and shy away from them.

- MC Jammer

Though drones bear the largest share of image collection work, manned vehicles and personnel still have a role to play. When inserting eyes on the target is extremely difficult, an intelligence rigger has to be on site to position the drones in a perfectly angled yet surreptitious vantage point. Most of the time, however, manned surveillance serves to coordinate magical overwatch with technological assets. Between detection spells and astral projection, magical surveillance can reveal important information that even the best sensors can't. On the other hand, information gained this way is mostly in the magician's mind and can't be transcribed for later analysis. Consequently, it's important to corroborate magical information with other reproducible sources.

- Even though digital photography is ubiquitous in public life, the intelligence community still uses traditional film photography quite a bit. Intelligence analysts frequently enhance, clean up and otherwise hand-wring image data to find obscure details. Film photography, with a resolution that's practically on the molecular scale, holds up better to such scrubbing than digital images.

- Ansel A

- Intelligence agencies also use a lot of specialized film for capturing emissions on normally invisible spectrums. For example, they frequently use infrared film for shooting photography at night without the use of flash or low-light imagery (usually the case when operatives are working undercover).

- Twilight Platoon



• One of the latest advances in the intelligence community is astral-sensitive film photography. Back in the nineteenth century, when photography was in its infancy, a number of plates revealed phantom images of otherworldly people in the picture. (For example, the Cottingley fairies, first regarded as a hoax, were later vindicated by post-Awakening magicians as real.) At the time, these spectral photos were blamed on bad developing, but since the Awakening, psychometric analysis has revealed that the images were indeed ghosts, or rather, astral imprints left by the recently departed.

Now before you head down to your local camera store, I should point out a few things. First, the tech's still classified, obviously. Also, the equipment is bulky and difficult to use. To capture astral imprints on film, the technicians had to revert to early daguerreotype cameras, often with long exposure times. The models being fielded are impractical for casual snapshots, but with advance preparation, they can provide invaluable coverage of critical areas.

• Holgrave

Eye in the Sky

The biggest gun in the arsenal of imagery intelligence, without question, is the spy satellite. Only a small number of agencies actually possess their own spysats. The UCAS (partnered with Ares), Russia, Imperial Japan, Novatech and Saeder-Krupp have the most significant satellite networks. Aztechnology, Shiawase, the CAS, Israel, MET2000/Argus, India, Yamatetsu, Amazonia, the Pueblo and Great Britain also own spy satellites, but their capabilities are substantially limited.

• Though only a few agencies own satellites, many of the others can "borrow" satellites from them, usually through favors, strategic alliances and so on. Mitsuhamu, for example, doesn't own any satellites, but they often call on Shiawase for assistance, usually appealing to Japanacorp solidarity against common gaijin adversaries.

• Metsuke

• Given the pitiful state of Shiawase's satellites, I'd say MCT would be better off without it.

• Naginata

With scant exceptions, the large majority of spy satellites operate in low earth orbit (LEO), staying close to the surface to maximize scanning resolution. With LEO, however, the satellite can't perpetually loiter over a location (the usual time ranges between 12 and 60 hours). This means agencies often have to pray for luck that they'll have a satellite with the right capabilities in the same general zone of coverage. (Not to mention that the weather will cooperate as well!)

Satellite scanning comes in three different flavors. Optical satellite scanning has the best resolution, capable of reading the license plate of a passing vehicle. Furthermore, it's the only one that can scan in full color. On the other hand, optical scans have severe line of sight limitations: they can't scan at night, and the least bit of cloud cover will block them.

• Though the image quality is so good it's like looking over someone's shoulder, more often than not the conditions required to get that are less likely than finding honest, unbiased reporting during an election year. I've heard many veteran spies don't bother to request satellite imagery, because nine times out of ten, it'll either be too cloudy, too dark or not in the right position to get anything useful.

• Orbital Bandit

• Yes, but on that tenth try, the picture quality is so clear that it can often make or break a case. As with anything, patience and a little bit of luck is what's needed to play the Game.

• Agent Midnight

The next level down from optical scanning is infrared imaging. Infrared scanners function just as well at night as they do during the day, and they also have limited ability to penetrate cloud cover. (A partially overcast day won't hinder them, but a good storm will.) The image is monochromatic, however, and the resolution isn't as good. An infrared scan can pick out the front-page headline of a screamsheet fax, but it's doubtful any spy could read the actual text of the article.

The lowest rung on the satellite scanning ladder is conventional radar and millimeter wave imaging. You can forget about pretty pictures for this one, unless you consider telemetry data artistic, but by the same token, it's also the least impeded by weather and visibility. This one mostly has military intelligence applications, because metal vehicles show up real well on radar.

• Radar imaging is pretty much useless for spying in urban, industrial and other built-up areas, but it's very useful for areas where there shouldn't be a lot of metal. Counterterrorist operatives, for example, use satellite radar to locate terrorist training camps in the wilderness. All those explosives, vehicles and cyberware give distinct signatures that don't resemble rocks or trees. The same holds true for border patrols, which find satellite imagery useful in watching for smugglers over large regions, particularly places with lots of dead spots that local ground radar tends to overlook.

• Ryan

HUMINT

For all their fancy gizmos and gee-whiz devices, sometimes the only way the Intel boys can figure out what's going on is by asking the man on the scene. This is especially true in counterterrorist and counterinsurgent operations, where members rely on secrecy and word-of-mouth to evade the authorities. Despite all the advances in technology over the past century, human intelligence remains a critical component.

Because HUMINT relies on secrecy and deception, it involves lots of the disguised gadgets that are the staple of James Bond and other simflicks. Advances in microtronics and miniaturization technology permit an amazing variety of special electronics to be fitted into ordinary handheld objects, like a ballpoint pen, pocket secretary or digital reader. Additionally,



with contact chemicals like DMSO, many pharmaceutical agents such as truth serum or NeuroStun can be disguised as personal hygiene products. And I could go on at length about the variety of disguised weapons used for wetwork.

- Naturally, most of these gee-whiz toys stay in the hands of their various agencies, but every now and then a few make their way into the shadows. Sometimes an agency hires runners to steal gadgets from a rival agency, and as part of the payment, they get to keep a portion of the plunder. Also, like everyone else, the various intel groups have their own private list of runners on retainer, who get access to these toys in exchange for their souls—excuse me, loyalty.

- R

- Simchips are popular with intelligence operatives in maintaining cover identities, particularly personafix BTLs, since they subsume the user's actual personality to that of the chip. A chipjack is a dead giveaway to counterintelligence officers, so most of these are uploaded through induction datajacks into headware memory. Espionage personafixes (sometimes known

as "aliaschips") probably wouldn't be popular on the black market. Instead of roleplaying Neal the Ork Barbarian, you'd be roleplaying Neal the Ork Janitor.

- Agent 99

Magic Cloak and Enchanted Dagger

Of all the methodologies employed, HUMINT has seen the greatest amount of change from the Awakening and the resurgence of magic. This shouldn't surprise anyone. With spells like mind probe, trid phantasm and invisibility wielded even by street magicians, the presence of magical support can make or break the most sophisticated HUMINT operation. No surprise that the large majority of magicians working in intelligence specialize in HUMINT operations.

- Don't forget spirits as well. Watchers are common with intelligence conjurers, and spy types are the only ones I know of who use focal and formal rituals to make watchers smarter and more effective. Air elementals are also very common, because they aid detection spells. There aren't a lot of shamans in intelligence work, so nature spirits are pretty rare. This is true even in



the NAN, where shamans hold a prominent place in society; the Sioux Office of Military Intelligence (OMI) has far more hermetic mages than the rest of the Sioux Council.

- Cardinal

- Intelligence agencies love to use aspected magicians, such as sorcerers and conjurers. The spooks rely heavily on compartmentalized information to prevent and minimize leaks, and a full magician that can do it all has a lot of resources to find out more than he's supposed to know. He may be a more effective spy, but the full magician is also a bigger liability.

- Silicon Mage

Going Deep

While most HUMINT operatives maintain a cover role for only a short time, a few are in it for the long term. Called deep cover agents, these operatives play their cover identities to a tee, sometimes not even consciously aware of their secret role. Most of the time, deep cover agents don't come into play: by maintaining their roles as ordinary Joe and Jane Wageslave, they strengthen their aliases as something other than spies. When the time is right, the agency activates the agent, who over time will have wormed his or her way into secrets an ordinary operative could never access.

Because magic makes it really easy to read someone's mind, deep cover agents undergo extensive brainwashing to hold up to the rigors of mind probes and psychometrical analysis. These techniques utilize a combination of programmable ASIST biofeedback and magical psychometrical alteration. It's expensive, torturous and not always successful, but if done right it's indistinguishable from the real thing.

- Even to its victims. One tactic the Seraphim have recently adopted is "recruiting" unwilling personnel for brainwashing. A Seraph operative is inserted as a clerk into Human Resources, Social Services, Payroll or other offices with access to personnel records. From there, he identifies people with access to targeted areas that Lucien Cross wants to spy on. Once the "recruiter" makes and refines the short list, a Cross team kidnaps those people, brainwashes them into deep cover agents and then returns them. All they remember is being sick with a bad flu for the past few days.

- Fallen Angel

This sort of extensive brainwashing makes it very likely that deep cover agents will forget their real selves, so agencies often program a memory "key" to unlock the agent's real personality, which is sublimated deep below the unconscious mind. Often the key is linked to a strongly emotional event from the past, and the spooks make sure it's completely irrelevant to the agent's current cover so that no one can invoke the key accidentally. When it's time to bring the agent back, the agency handler uses a phrase or picture to invoke the key, and the agent's true self re-emerges.

- It's not always that simple. Most of the time after extraction, an agent still has to go down for rehab, to erase any residual personality traces and false memories. Skipping rehab is usually a bad idea, because there's a good chance the cover will start to "leak" into the real personality—usually at the wrong time, like the middle of a gunfight or interrogation.

- Quaid

- One new trick performed with deep cover agents by the Cuban Intelligence agency, la Dirección General de Inteligencia (DGI), is hiring voodoo initiates. These houngans wield their metamagic to possess personnel with access to sensitive information and use them to get into secure areas.

- Flak Jack

PATRIOT GAMES

If you really think about it, espionage is a broad term that describes just about everything that ever takes place in the shadows. To some degree, we are all freelance covert operatives, using anonymity and deniability as cover while we dig out secrets, wreak sabotage or perform other kinds of covert mischief.

THE PRIZE PURSE

The methodologies described above—SIGINT, IMINT, HUMINT—are just means to an end, the tactics of the battlefield. Just like war, however, a strategy guides these tactics and dictates where to fight the battles. Intelligence takes place in different arenas, each of which has its own goals and sometimes its own rules.

Political Intelligence

Political intelligence is old-school espionage: back-room meetings at the embassy ball, bugged prostitutes sleeping with politicians, staff moles and so on. Basically, it's all about people: spying on prominent figures to uncover hidden agendas.

Of course, in the Byzantine landscape of the Sixth World, political intelligence extends beyond embassies and politicians to include megacorporations and non-governmental organizations like the Draco Foundation. What distinguishes this type of operation from the typical shadowrun is that the subject matter tends to be more societal than technological: the CIA doesn't spy on Mitsuhamas to get the scoop on their latest drone program, for example, but cares a whole lot about an organizational reshuffling that moves jobs out of the UCAS into CalFree. Even though the scope has expanded beyond nations, politics and social intrigue remain central in the realm of political intelligence.

- Speaking of social intrigue, what happened to Spook, our resident joygirl-turned-spy-turned-shadowrunner? I would have expected her to chime in, but we're halfway through and not a peep. What gives?

- Limozeen

- Spook's past her prime, chummer. She's been out of the Game for more than a decade, and she's long in the tooth for a runner. Forget her.
- Agent Midnight

• Actually, a mutual chummer found out Maria got picked up by her old handlers in the CIA. I don't know why they're interested again after fifteen years. Maybe something she knew from way back when, or maybe they needed her for one last mission. Anyway, she hasn't been heard from since. Hope she manages to come back.

- Clever Dan

One of the peculiarities of political spying is that, to a limited degree, it's expected, even tolerated. Political asylum, extraterritoriality, diplomatic immunity—it's all part of the Game governments have developed over the centuries. These things began as a means to keep a country's legitimate ambassadors safe from legal entrapment while abroad, but over time, they've evolved into convenient excuses to place spies somewhere.

• Diplomatic Immunity is a double-edged sword. It may make you safe from prosecution, but that doesn't always mean you can brazenly walk the streets. They might not arrest you, but they'll definitely follow you around. The cops can also temporarily detain you while they're "verifying your credentials," usually at the most inconvenient time. Lastly, to possess diplomatic immunity, your name has to be on file somewhere, which means all your dirty little secrets are there for public inspection.

- spudman

• Also, if a country or corp is going to grant you something as valuable as diplomatic immunity, fve will get you ten that they've done a background check and know lots of little secrets you might not know yourself.

- Bourne

• And just because the authorities can't arrest you doesn't mean they can't hire deniable assets like shadowrunners to take you out. Diplomatic immunity is no protection against a bullet.

- Murtaugh

One item that a lot of people forget about is the diplomatic pouch. Legally speaking, a foreign official can't open a diplomatic pouch; it's sealed from the moment it leaves its home country until it arrives at its destination embassy or consulate. In theory, there's no limit to the size of a diplomatic pouch; you could mark a modular cargo container as a "diplomatic pouch" and no one gets to open it. In practice, though, most diplomatic pouches don't get much bigger than a large briefcase.

• A diplomatic pouch may legally protect its contents from being searched, but they can still be snatched. A couple of months ago the FBI hired me and other mates to intercept a CAS diplomatic pouch going to the Confederation consulate

in Boston. The Feds suspected someone on the staff was using the pouch to smuggle in BTLs from Nashville to sell on the Southie streets. When we intercepted the pouch, we inserted a tracker chip into it, which helped to finger the culprit.

- Hammer

Here's what's currently hot in political intelligence circles:

The Grand Tour: This European traveling party has evolved into *the* event to see and be seen, and lots of Europe's VIPs make a point to attend one of the soirees on either the summer or winter circuit. With so many decision-makers in one place, just about all of Europe's intelligence services couldn't resist the temptation to throw in a few ringers to eavesdrop on conversations. Heck, even some outsiders like the CAS and Israel have a few agents crashing the parties to get the scoop on what's going down.

• The CAS angle Isn't too hard to figure out. Ever since Ghostwalker took up roost in Denver, Saeder-Krupp has been getting pretty cozy with the Confederation. The Confederationists aren't dummies, however, and they probably trust Lofwyr as far as they can throw him. The ERLA has been leading negotiations with Saeder-Krupp, so I guess they placed a few agents on the Grand Tour to make sure the CAS didn't get double-crossed by the dragon.

- Espion

Ibn Eisa: Damn the fool who set up that assassination attempt on Ibn Eisa. Up until that point, most of the intelligence circles had almost managed to figure out what was going on in the Middle East. But ever since someone took a shot at the head of the Islamic Unity Movement (IUM), Ibn Eisa's a new man, and everything we thought we knew about the Middle East has been turned on its head. All the intelligence work over the past thirty years has now amounted to nothing. On behalf of all the spooks risking their necks in the Middle East, frag you very much.

• Though everyone initially suspected Mossad of doing the deed, most intelligence agencies have pretty much ruled them out. I don't know why people thought of them in the first place. It would have amounted to suicide for the Israeli state. Of course, that leaves a tougher question: If the Israelis didn't do it, who did? A lot of signs point to the merc group 10K Daggers in Constantinople, but then you have to ask who hired them.

- Zartan

Military Intelligence

War and intelligence practically go hand-in-hand. Many of the premier intelligence agencies today either started out as part of a nation's armed forces or came into existence during wartime.

Sometimes the line blurs between military intelligence, as performed by intelligence operatives, and reconnaissance, as performed by soldiers and mercs. Both seek information: troop movements, operational plans, tactical communications and so



on. For the most part, military recon takes place in the field near the front lines, while intelligence takes place further to the rear, particularly around military headquarters, shipyards, air bases and so on.

If you look across the globe, it might strike you as peculiar that many countries employ two agencies for military intelligence, one mostly composed of civilians, the other mostly of service members (officers and enlisted). In theory, the two branches are supposed to cooperate; the civilians talk to the diplomatic attachés, while the uniforms go into the field to coordinate with the force commanders. In practice, however, branch rivalries and mutual suspicion often thwart any coordinated effort, instead resulting in miscommunication and lost opportunities.

- You can always use this civilian-military rivalry to your advantage. Because the two sides generally don't trust the other guy to provide the full story, they often put their own assets in the field, resulting in a duplication of effort. Sometimes the two don't even know the other side also has field operatives involved in the mission.

- Arctic White

- Scan that. Lockheed once hired me and my buds to steal the plans for an attack helicopter prototype from a CAS test facility in Dallas. After doing initial legwork, we found that the UCAS was also interested in this project, and both the CIA and DIA (Defense Intelligence Agency, a civilian intelligence outfit working for the Pentagon) had sent teams down. We played both sides by pretending to be the other agency and sending them scurrying in different directions. From what I heard, they still haven't figured out in DeeCee just what the hell was going on.
- Diamondback

With the North American Pacific Coast primed for war, most of the military attention is focused there. Many of the conflicts are advancing toward hostilities, so the intelligence work is shifting toward battlefield support. Covert ops, however, still have first priority in the following situations:

The California Protectorate: Saito's failed attempt to seize the Central Valley dam poured cold water (pardon the pun) on the Little Colonel's megalomaniacal dreams. It cost him a lot of men and resources just when support from his backers was declining, so he's had to retrench. This situation has created an opportunity for a three-way intelligence alliance to form between Japan, Tir Tairngire and Pueblo. The three share information, not only because of concern over Saito, but also because each has a different strength; Japan has the best chance of placing covert operatives in Saito's military, Tir Tairngire excels in magical espionage and the Pueblo cover the technical aspects.

UCAS-Sioux Cold War: Ever since the NAN managed to carve out part of the American West back in 2017, the UCAS and the Sioux have never gotten along. The border between the two is always on guard, with each side daring the other to make

a mistake. While neither side really wants to go to war, both the Sioux Office of Military Intelligence and the UCAS DIA probe each other to find exploitable weaknesses should it occur.

- And caught right in between is Ares Macrotechnology, particularly Knight Errant, which handles most of Ares' intelligence duties. On the one side, Ares Arms maintains cozy relationships with the Defense Department and technical agencies like the NSA and NRO. On the other side, Knight Errant's boss, Roger Soaring Owl, is a Sioux expatriate and has lots of friends in the Sovereign Tribal Council. Both the OMI and the CIA suspect Ares of playing both sides, but their superiors have overruled the agencies. If you don't mind sneaking around a bunch of military types, there's plenty of work proving if this suspicion is real or not.
- Squire

Technical Intelligence

It's a simple truth we all know: the SOTA never stays still. If you want to get ahead in life, you gotta stay ahead of the curve. It's the reality of the shadows, and also of intelligence work.

Despite the name, technical intelligence actually incorporates technology and magic, plus operating methodologies and doctrine. The focus is spycraft, the methods and tools used to gather intelligence and be sneaky about it. As such, it covers a wide array of topics: encryption algorithms, weapon systems, new spells and ritual techniques, conventional electronics, tactics and standard operating procedures and so on. If you know what's in the other guy's playbook, you're halfway toward beating him.

Because megacorporations do the actual research, development and production of all the gee-whiz toys and spells, corporate intelligence services do the grunt work of technical intelligence. Government intelligence agencies, however, keep a few fingers in this particular pie. Part of this is academic, the tactics and methodologies I mentioned before. The spooks also want to stay abreast of what the corps are doing, what tech they're developing and to whom they intend to sell it.

One particular aspect of technical intelligence that's always been a priority is tracking the development of weapons of mass destruction. Whether it's biowarfare agents, nukes or ritual blood magic, developed nations are very concerned about WMD proliferation, particularly among those notorious for state-sponsored terrorism. In a lot of cases, many countries and certain corps have set up specialized agencies solely dedicated to tracking WMDs.

- The Sioux Office of Military Intelligence has one such department operating under the code name Task Force: Tyee. TF Tyee tracks the development and usage of grand ritual magic like the Ghost Dance and Azzie blood magic, not to mention Awakened phenomena occurring on a wide scale, like the resurging forests in Tir Tairngire or the Mists of Brittany. Though the NAN was the first to use grand ritual magic, their magical edge has severely eroded to the point where it's no longer the trump card it used to be. In particular, revelations about Azzie

blood magic over the past several years have the Sioux worried; they used to be allies, but nowadays the Sioux see Aztlan as a threat to match the UCAS.

• John Bigboote

• Nukes are the biggie when it comes to WMD. A lot of the old nuclear powers broke apart during the course of this century, and so there are a lot more players in the nuke game than there ever were before. Here's a quick rundown of the major players by region.

North America: When the old US of A split apart, so did its nuclear triad. The CAS inherited most of the US sub fleet, the UCAS got the silos in the Dakotas, and the two divided the bomber force between them. Both keep them up-to-date, the UCAS to ward off the threat of another Ghost Dance, the CAS to discourage the Azzies from moving further north.

Europe: Despite the changes in the political landscape since the Manhattan Project, the European nuclear powers (Great Britain, France and Russia) have remained mostly intact. Russia lost a good chunk of its arsenal to the Ukraine when the Soviet Union broke up in 1991, but the Ukrainians got rid of most (but not all) of them. France still conducts regular underground testing, mostly offshore from French Guyana, as a show of bravado against Amazonia and Saeder-Krupp.

The Far East: A major earthquake in the Tai-Hel mountain range sealed China's primary arsenal in 2017, pretty much the final nail in the communists' coffin. Every now and then a warlord claims to have a few, but most of those remaining are in the hands of the major fragmentary states: Sichuan, the Canton Confederation, Henan and Shaanxi.

Officially, Japan has no nukes, but don't believe it for a moment. After Korea II, Japan sent Imperial troops as "security watch" over North Korean nukes, and the Imperial Court also helped build up MCT's stockpile, provided that Mitsuhamu put them at the empire's service when needed.

Central Asia: A nuclear exchange with Pakistan back in the 2020s turned most of Kashmir into a wasteland. India still maintains a capable stockpile, not only as a deterrent against Pakistan, but also against Sichuan and Japan. Pakistan's nuclear program is notorious for its leaks, particularly from unscrupulous scientists and generals selling secrets to terrorists and polyclubs.

The Middle East: When Israel nuked Libya in retaliation for a chemical attack on Tel Aviv, it put to rest all debate about Israel's nuclear capability. Since Israel doesn't have a lot of real estate, most of their nukes reside on board missile subs. Rumors say Mossad has a few underground nukes buried in strategic points across the Middle East as a final option.

The Megacorps: While all of the Big Ten (and a few AAs) have at least a token stockpile (a dozen or less devices), only Ares, Saeder-Krupp and Mitsuhamu possess significantly large amounts. Saeder-Krupp has the biggest devices in terms of yield, most of them hidden in mountain sites under the eyes of





S-K Prime, Arès maintains mostly orbital nukes for high-atmosphere EMP strikes, plus many low-yield devices for "surgical" strikes, like they used against the bugs in Chicago.

- Skywarp

- Another important but often-overlooked form of WMDs is bioweapons, like Doom, Strain-III, Ebola Plus and that old favorite, anthrax. Unlike nukes, many of the major players in the bioweapons game tend to be corps rather than countries: Universal Omnittech/Aztechnology, Shiawase, Cross, Proteus and several others. This fact alone makes many intelligence agencies nervous, especially when you consider the top bioweapon stockpilers have no political agenda other than selling to the highest bidder (all too often someone who does have a dangerous agenda).

Surprisingly, not many countries actually employ bioweapons. Most either have nukes or powerful magic rituals as part of their arsenals, both of which tend to be flashier and more attention-grabbing. Bioweapons also tend to be notoriously unpredictable, which makes them very bad for PR.

- Daniels

Counterintelligence

As any sportsman will tell you, sometimes the best offense is a good defense. While it's important to learn the other side's secrets, it's just as important to the spooks to protect their own. That's the role of counterintelligence (sometimes abbreviated as CI): to suss out the moles and double agents inside their own organizations.

- CI spooks aren't the most popular people, especially on the inside. Because they're always on the lookout for moles, they trust no one and suspect everyone.

- Haisley

- Counterintelligence also covers disinformation, the deliberate planting of false information for other spies to report back to their handlers. Agencies do this for several reasons. In some cases, the agency is trying to fool the other side into believing something that isn't true; this hopefully forces the other side to make the wrong decisions. In other cases, the agency spreads disinformation as a way of blowing covers. They disclose the info to a small number of suspected moles; if the fake news turns up elsewhere, the agency then knows where to look.

- Cardinal

Because espionage is a criminal activity in practically all jurisdictions, CI is often the responsibility of law enforcement. For example, the FBI handles most counterintelligence cases in the UCAS. More authoritarian countries, however, may keep CI together with other agency duties, effectively forming a secret police force.

- With civil unrest rising in many countries, like Tir Tairngiré and Great Britain, many intelligence agencies are getting pressed

into service to help catch agitators and infiltrate resistance movements.

- Little Drummer Girl

Like HUMINT for external operations, CI has transformed significantly since the Awakening. With spells like mind probe and analyze truth, it's become hideously easy to sniff out insiders who shouldn't belong. With the way magic has revolutionized CI, many agencies have developed other tricks to counter these techniques.

- Mind probe spells aren't as common in counterintelligence as everyone thinks. For one thing, mages are a scarce resource: there's only one magician for every 150 or so personnel, and many of them are assigned to operations other than CI. Also, mind probe spells are just as excruciating for the magician as they are to their target. (Small comfort for anyone who's been mind-raped.) Over time, extensive usage of mind probe erodes the magician's own personality and results in a major psychological breakdown. Considering how scarce magicians are in the first place, intelligence agencies don't like burning out the few magicians they have.

- Carnac the Magnificent

- Carnac's hit it on the head. Mind probe is the magical equivalent of a full-cavity strip search. Intel magicians, however, have other, less intrusive spells that are just as effective. Recently, the CAS's main intelligence agency, the Department of Strategic Intelligence (DSI), developed a spell they call word recognition. Basically, the caster telepathically transmits a name, image or person into the mind of their target and gauges the subject's subconscious reaction to it. For example, if a DSI staff clerk shows reaction to the name of a CIA handler, chances are good she's a mole reporting to the CIA officer.

- Interrupter Jones

As mentioned before, simsense brainwashing is the most effective cover from mind probes, but it's expensive, time-consuming and tortuous. Also, repeated treatments tend to lose effectiveness. Alias personachips are the next step down, but they sometimes risk BTL addiction. Non-addictive chips are also available, but they're less effective.

One technique agencies have hit upon lately is "flooding" a target area with covert operatives whose sole purpose is to decoy CI magicians. Because magicians are a scarce resource, they can't track all those spies. With so many possibly suspicious characters around, the spooks hope the mage locks onto a red herring, while the real operatives get lost in the crowd.

Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency

More than any other time in history, the threat from terrorist and trans-national subversive groups has put counterinsurgent operations high on many agencies' agendas. In some countries, armed subversives are more of a threat than hostile neighbors or megacorps.

Though some subversives receive funding from other nations, in many cases these groups are self-motivated by cause and receive funding, material support and recruitment from like-minded people. Because of these groups' highly personal nature, many agencies rely heavily on HUMINT tactics, with electronic surveillance and image collection falling into support roles. Many subversive groups employ a cell structure, so placing agents among the real decision-makers is a chancy and time-consuming effort.

- One tactic adopted by intelligence agencies in Europe and North America is using agents to lead pseudo-subversive organizations. The British originally developed this practice during their colonial days in Ireland and Africa. These phony groups recruit from the disaffected and divert their anger and resentment into safer, ineffective directions. This takes away the recruitment base from the real subversives and also creates infighting and ineffective leadership among them.
- Reilly

The subversive threat varies from region to region, but two particular groups have been raising a bunch of red flags with agencies around the world.

Winternight: Given their stated intent to initiate global apocalypse and their obsession with weapons of mass destruction, Winternight ranks near the top of many agencies' priority lists. Thankfully they still haven't eclipsed the Chicago Shattergraves as the worst terrorist incident in history, but that just makes a lot of people even more nervous. Statistically speaking, they're due to stage a major attack soon. The word out of Europe is that Winternight has put their plans for global apocalypse on the back burner while they plan something major against the Matrix, which Winternight hates with a passion. If the rumors are true, they're plotting something that will make the Crash of '29 look like a minor system glitch.

Deus: When you look at it in a certain way, the Renraku Arcology lockdown *could* be classified as a terrorist act. Though the arcology has been freed, lots of questions remain. Many of the AI's banded otaku are still at large, and not everyone's convinced Deus itself is entirely gone. There's a good chance of the AI and/or its otaku staging another lockdown, anywhere, anytime.

THE PLAYING PIECES

With the fragmentation of many countries over the past century, far too many intelligence agencies exist out there to summarize in one upload. Instead, I thought I'd choose some of the major players in intelligence circles today.

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)

Headquarters: George H. W. Bush Center for Intelligence, Langley, North Virginia (UCAS)

Director of Central Intelligence: Robert Henninger

One of the grand dames of the Great Game, the CIA has garnered a reputation for being the biggest bunglers in the intelligence community. I can tell you that ain't true. Though

the CIA has seen some pretty spectacular blunders, most of their so-called "failures" are media spectacles to lull their foes into a false sense of security.

As the senior UCAS intelligence service, the CIA (known as "The Company" among UCAS spooks) provides guidance and direction for the other specialized intelligence agencies. The structure of UCAS intelligence is peculiar, with independent agencies handling most specialized intelligence ops. For example, the National Security Agency conducts all SIGINT ops, while the National Reconnaissance Office runs most of the UCAS spy satellites and the FBI handles domestic counterintelligence. In many cases these jurisdictional disputes hamper ongoing operations, as different jurisdictions find themselves working at cross purposes. Nominally the CIA is responsible for coordination and strategic leadership, but the ugly reality of internal politics makes it hard to implement.

- Even given the strange way UCAS intelligence is subdivided, these obstacles can still be overcome with the right leadership. The problem is, right now there isn't any. The current DCI, Robert Henninger, has been waging a personal feud with the Secretary of Defense, Michael Broeder, ever since his appointment. This has resulted in a lot of infighting among the agencies, with the CIA on one side and the Pentagon on the other. The smaller sub-agencies, like the NSA, NRO and so on, have been picking sides, allying with one and switching sides when convenience dictates otherwise.
- Quinn

Despite all the setbacks faced by the US and then the UCAS, the CIA still is one of the most technologically advanced intelligence agencies, rivaled only by the Imperial Japanese and the Pueblo. This is due in no small part to the friendly relationship between the UCAS government and Ares Macrotechnology. On the other hand, this relationship puts the CIA in a bind, because Ares uses its government contacts to run interference anytime the CIA turns its eyes on them. This has infuriated DCI Henninger, since he's convinced Ares is deliberately exacerbating tensions between the UCAS and Sioux to profiteer on government contracts.

- Henninger is right, but he's got the wrong culprit. The first rule of dirty tricks is "Don't drek where you eat," and the UCAS is Ares' home base. Someone is definitely escalating hostilities on both sides, but it's not Ares.
- Bullet
- The New Revolution?
- Poly Chromatique

One item gaining attention within the CIA is the upswing of independent political advertising in the UCAS. 2064 is a presidential election year, and the political machines are cranking up for the Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary. The CIA, however, has noticed an unusual amount of smear cam-



paigning and negative advertising, most of it by policlubs whose affiliations are a mystery. CIA analysts suspect outside tampering, and their eyes are turning south.

- I doubt they'll find the answer here. Our political season is starting up too, and we've spotted the same increase in mudslinging by dubious policlubs. Somebody's messing with the elections of both countries, that's for certain.
- Atlanta Spy

The UGB

Headquarters: Lubyanka Square, Moscow, Russia

Chief Director: Rassily Romanov

The *Upravleniye Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti*, or UGB, has as widespread and notorious a reputation as their historical rival, the CIA. The UGB is the latest incarnation of the Russian secret police, starting with the tsarist Okhranka and continuing through the Leninist Cheka, the NKVD of World War 2 and the KGB of the Cold War. The current UGB came into existence in 2010 after Chelenko came to power and reconsolidated the various KGB departments dispersed at the end of the Cold War. Though the UGB saw its authority reduced under the

Democratic Recovery Alliance after the Euro Wars, it remained intact and regained authority when the National Soviet Reconstructionists took control of Russia.

- When the DRA cut down the UGB after the Euro Wars, they also eliminated many of the agency's dirty tricks departments, such as assassination. Many UGB ex-assassins, however, saw the writing on the wall and went freelance in advance, forming the hit-group-for-hire Chimera. (In case you forgot, many folks think Chimera assassinated Seattle Mafia Don James O'Malley.) How's that for irony? In an effort to clean up the UGB, the Russian democrats ended up creating the deadliest freelance assassin group in the world.
- Anya
- I think the UGB still has ties with Chimera's founding members. Last year Pavel Surzpoi, a bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church in St Petersburg, died from a lethal injection of ricin delivered from a ballpoint pen. Surzpoi had a lot of political friends and was gaining a level of influence within the NSR that the UGB deemed a threat.
- Grigor

One distinction that sets the UGB apart from other intelligence services is that it runs the Border Guards, a militarized force responsible for securing Russia's borders and providing first-line defense against invaders. Ever since the Yakut secession, most Border Guard units have shifted east to protect the Trans-Siberian Railway and the narrow corridor to the Russian Far East. Because of this responsibility, UGB agents often have easy access to heavy military weapons and vehicles. UGB intelligence operations tend to be more thuggish, placing heavy emphasis on assassination and intimidation.

- What an understatement. A couple of years ago, the UGB suspected Colonel Piotr Ridzik, an intelligence officer with the Russian Army, of selling information to Saeder-Krupp Prime. They arranged for him to hook up with a dinner "escort" at a restaurant in St. Petersburg. She got up to powder her nose and left her purse at the table. Her purse contained a bomb that blew up the entire restaurant, taking out Ridzik and a dozen others! Calling the UGB thugs is way too kind.

- Tikonov

- It was a wasted effort, too, because a couple of shadowrunners (I won't say who) managed to get in and spirit Ridzik away before the bomb went off. The good colonel now works for Saeder-Krupp under a new identity somewhere in Europe.

- Rabid Fox

In the Byzantine intrigues of Russian politics, the UGB is one of multiple factions jockeying for advantage within the government. The UGB, however, suffers from its own internal factionalism. Rassily Romanov, Chief Director of the UGB, currently heads up the strongest faction. He has the backing of Saeder-Krupp, which has close ties to the UGB Border Guards. Opposing Romanov is Boris Petuchkin, head of Service R, the department responsible for foreign operations. Petuchkin has ties to Zeta ImpChem, who also have a significant presence in Russia, particularly around Nizhny Novgorod. Another faction strong enough to challenge Romanov is led by Anastasia Becherzvezda, head of Department K, domestic intelligence. Department K has many suspected ties to the Vory mobs, who pay off the UGB to shield their criminal operations from the MVD.

- With the General Secretary's recent illness, the UGB has been putting considerable thought into who should succeed the leader of the Russian Federation should he pass away. (Which, according to my sources, may happen very soon.) UGB supporters within the NSR are garnering support for Viktor Kamendin, the Chief Director before Romanov. Kamendin is a consummate politician and stepped down from the Chief Director's position only to pursue more power in politics.

- Stormavik

- One faction that hasn't gotten much notice (and probably should) is Department Y, in charge of securing Russia's nuclear arsenal. Department Y keeps a low profile amid all the intra-

departmental bickering in the UGB, even going so far as to sever Matrix connections for several sites. A couple of months ago, though, a report circulated through British Intelligence that several known Department Y operatives met with members of the Scandinavian Aesir Society. Why should this raise concerns? Aesir has ties to Winternight; it shouldn't be too hard to make the connection.

- Novichok

Lately, the UGB has been directing an unusual amount of attention eastward, toward Yakut. Since last year, the UGB Border Guards have started hiring mercs out of Constantinople through front companies. Reports I've heard also suggest the UGB has been putting out feelers toward insurgents in and around Lake Baykal. If you like traipsing around in the woods and you speak Russian, you should probably check this out. Something big is going to happen, and pretty soon.

- Yeah, I remember that. Picador mentioned that last year. Didn't someone post something about a white rock or whatever? Anyone figure out what that was about?

- Flak Jack

- Apparently there's a site called Sagan Zaba ("White Rock") on Olkhon Island offshore from the western edge of Lake Baykal, some 200 kilometers or so northeast from Irkutsk. The Sagan Zaba is actually a cliff of white rock jutting up from the water, and some caves have formed in the crevasses between the rocks. In and around Sagan Zaba are some petroglyphs (stone drawings) and other remains from an ancient Siberian settlement dating back several thousand years. Perhaps some relic or ancient secret there can be used against the Yakut shapeshifters?

- Ancient History

- You may be onto something, AH. But isn't Olkhon haunted? I thought no one could step onto it and live.

- Novichok

- Only by following the Path can one approach the White Rock.

- Tsangara

- Careful, now, Children shouldn't play with fire.

- Orange Queen

Mossad

Headquarters: Tel Aviv, Israel

Director: Amos Ben Yakhin

Mossad, short for *Mossad le-Modiin ule-Tafkidim Meyuhadim* ("Institute for Intelligence and Special Tasks") is Israel's primary intelligence service. Responsible for human intelligence collection, covert action and counterterrorism, its focus has centered primarily on Arab nations and Arab organizations throughout the world. (Hardly surprising, given Israel's



perpetually precarious position.) A secondary mission is helping Jewish refugees escape from regions where they are persecuted (like the Middle East, Africa and Europe) to safety in Israel.

Because of the constant threat Israel faces from Arab terrorists, Mossad has become one of the best counterterrorist intelligence agencies in the world, often lending out its expertise to allies like the CAS. Its experience gives Mossad particular insight into the workings of policlubs and armed activist groups all over the planet. Other strengths include psychological warfare, propaganda and assassination.

- The Israelis are adept at integrating magic into intelligence operations as well. Ever since magic went mainstream back in the 2020s or so, there have been rumors that Mossad had a cell of Qabbalist magicians at its beck and call, making it one of the first intelligence agencies to use magic in its operations.
- Malachite
- Some people suspect the Israelis also got covert support from the great dragon Nachtmeister, before Lofwyr snuffed him out over Frankfurt. One of Israel's biggest investors was the Frankfurt Bank Association (FBV), and in the fallout after Frankfurt a lot of ties have emerged between Nachtmeister and the FBV. With Nachtmeister dead and the FBV entangled in the mess with Proteus, the Israelis have been searching for another ally. Word is they've been looking at Aden lately. The great dragon loves causing trouble in the Middle East, and Israel has been nothing but trouble since day one.
- as Sadiq

With the firestorm of controversy surrounding Ibn Eisa's apparent death and resurrection, Mossad has found itself under siege, from outside and within. The Israeli government is upset that Mossad may have undertaken such a high-profile hit without consultation, especially given the mounting threat posed to the country. Mossad has been desperately seeking the actual killer to back up its own claim to innocence, while still trying to figure out what to make of the new situation. A lot of ongoing missions in North America and Africa have moved to the back burner while Mossad turns to its now-critical priorities: Ibn Eisa, the Islamic Unity Movement and the New Islamic Jihad.

- Why is everyone on Shadowland willing to acquit the Israelis of this crime? The so-called link to 10K Daggers is tenuous at best and smells of a red herring. Tel Aviv is only mad at Mossad because the assassination blew up in their faces.
- Ammar
- I'm not sure if we'll ever know just who ordered the hit on Ibn Eisa. I don't think we can rule out the Israelis just yet, but given how public the assassination was, it would be hard for Mossad to keep it covered up this long.
- Saevar

Argus

Headquarters: Zentrum für Auskunftverwaltung, Baumholder, Badisch-Pfalz (AGS)

Commandant of Intelligence: Generalleutnant Otto Seicean

In this century of megacorporate domination, it's inevitable that some independent organizations provide freelance intelligence services. Argus is one such freelancer, the intelligence arm of the mercenary group MET 2000. Though initially formed to provide military intelligence support to MET 2000, Argus has grown to the point where it now takes on its own intelligence contracts independent from the organization. This has made Argus one of the world's major intelligence-for-hire agencies, along with Aegis Cognito, Infolio and Esprit.

With more than ten thousand agents worldwide, Argus is the largest independent for-hire intelligence agency in existence. As a derivative of MET 2000, Argus specializes in military intelligence, and its major clients include governments and organizations unable to maintain a standing intelligence agency, including the United Nations and the Allied German States. (Argus also performs the majority of non-military intelligence on behalf of the AGS.)

Argus has spent most of the past year trying to figure out the Proteus mess. After the great dragon Lofwyr bested Nachtmeister in a death match over the Frankfurt skyline, hidden ties began to surface linking the dead dragon to the mystery corp. With its draconic master gone, Proteus found itself the target of a shadow war with its one-time partner, the Frankfurt Bank Association (FBV). From there things get even more complicated, as Ares gets dragged in, the biggest naval battle since Jutland takes place in the North Sea and Proteus ends up suing Ares in the Corporate Court. (They only settled recently.) If Argus has this tangle sussed out, they haven't told anyone yet.

- They haven't told anyone because someone inside Argus knew too much about what was going on. Proteus paid off someone to look the other way on certain details that would have gotten the AGS and certain Eurocorp clients of Argus up in arms. Even the Inspector General from MET 2000 has been down here demanding to know what's going on, and apparently the blood is running ankle deep in Baumholder.
- Jagdpanther
- The Argus cover-up is just a symptom of the problem. Bitter factionalism and rivalry within Argus often pits one department, branch or action team against another. As a for-hire agency, Argus often finds itself in a situation where a department working for one client may be in direct conflict with another Argus department working for the opposition. Of course, Argus maintains a strict neutrality policy and has procedures in place for dealing with these conflicts of interest. Over time, however, some ugly internecine rivalries have erupted that literally drew blood.
- Dalton

• Picador, if you're out there, I've got some new information for you. If what I heard is right, one of these factions within Argus may have assassinated Matador last year in the Northwest. Someone in Argus hired Matador and a couple of others for a mission in Asia, and apparently something happened recently inside Argus that forced Matador's employer to take him and the others out as a means of covering tracks. This probably isn't the best place to discuss it; drop me a line through the usual channels at the Outpost.

• Kraker-Jack

• Jackson Richards, a.k.a. Kraker-Jack, was found dead yesterday, less than 48 hours after posting the above message. His deck was still connected to the Outpost when he flatlined. According to the initial prognosis, his brain-death resulted from an ASIST spike caused by a Black Hammer attack. His cyberdeck's storage memory was wiped clean.

Picador, I hope to hell you know what you're getting into. These folks really mean business.

• Televiper

The ERLA

Headquarters: Chambliss Center, Kennesaw, Georgia (CAS)

Chief Registrar: David Mobley

In this new world order of corporate extraterritoriality, you really shouldn't be surprised to see at least a few agencies dedicated exclusively to spying on the megacorps. The CAS Extraterritoriality Registry and Liaison Agency (ERLA), headquartered just outside the Atlanta sprawl in Kennesaw, is one of them, and I have to admit they were one of the worthiest adversaries I've ever tangled with while I was with the MIFD.

When the Confederation seceded from the infant UCAS back in the early 2030s, no doubt they were still smarting from the Seretech and Shlawase court decisions back around millennium's end. Established under the Commerce Act of 2032, the ERLA maintains a registry of all extraterritorial property within Confederation borders, and it also has the unusual power of final approval over real estate transactions with extraterritorial entities. This gives the CAS the option of "evicting" a corp from its facility and ending extraterritoriality.

• The CAS has only used the so-called Eviction Clause once, back when Cord Insurance and North American Eagle were fighting in the streets of Atlanta. When it became apparent that Cord would outlast NAE in the war of attrition, the Confederation invoked the clause on Eagle offices within city limits, as a preemptive move to end the conflict. Already wounded by its fight with Cord, Eagle subsequently broke up and got absorbed by Cord, HKB and Aztechnology. The CAS knows better than to try that against a healthy AA megacorp, let alone the Big Ten, but it did nevertheless serve notice that the Confederation was willing and able to play hardball if it had to.

• The Keynesian Kid

That, of course, is its nominal purpose, tracking the extraterritorial corps and leading negotiations with them. In practice, however, that purpose provides a convenient cover for its real mission: spying on the megacorps and running black ops where extraterritoriality would normally keep the CAS out. In contrast to its DSI counterparts in the State Bureau, the ERLA generally plays down electronic intelligence and prefers a more personal touch, placing a strong emphasis on human intelligence.

• Because of their predilection for HUMINT, the ERLA generally has better magical intelligence assets than any other Confederation agency. When the CAS issued its injunction against voodoo practitioners during the early shedim scare, the DDI (Department of Domestic Investigation) had to beg for magical help from the ERLA in tracking down houngans and mam-bos. The ERLA has been saving that favor for a rainy day.

• Atlanta Spy

Oddly enough, the ERLA's specialty has led to some unusual cooperation north of the border with the CIA. Ares Macrotechnology has historically maintained a cozy relationship with the UCAS government, and the megacorp uses its connections to run bureaucratic interference every time the Company turns a suspicious eye toward Detroit. Subsequently, the CIA established an under-the-table relationship with the ERLA. In exchange for any dirt dug up on Ares, the CIA provides the ERLA with secret assistance in infiltrating extraterritorial corps on UCAS soil. The politicians on both sides of the Mason-Dixon aren't happy with the arrangement, but it gets results, so they don't complain too much.

• The relationship between the ERLA and the CIA was coziest back in the late 2040s and early 2050s, when the UCAS and CAS were establishing a sort of détente. At one point, the CIA used its relationship with the ERLA to bypass government oversight on certain black ops, under the cover of a fictitious agency called Consular Operations, or ConsOps for short. Because they technically weren't UCAS operatives, ConsOps got away with a lot of things the CIA couldn't. After the debacle with General Trahn in 2055, however, Secretary of State Gerald Humphrey brought ConsOps to an abrupt end, following accusations of CAS meddling with the Compensation Army.

• The Chromed Accountant

• ConsOps may be history, but many of the ERLA agents the CIA "borrowed" are still active players in the Game. Most of them have been reassigned across the continent, to keep them dispersed. Quite a few have been seconded to the DSI, which uses them to keep tabs on insurgents and militia groups in the NAN and Texas.

• KAOS



• I heard a funny thing the other day: Many ConsOps folks who retired from the ERLA later went on to find work with various media companies across North America. Anyone got a scan on that?

• Kidd Trideo

• I don't like the sound of those two posts. Ever since Humphrey shut down ConsOps I'd heard rumors that a good chunk of the ConsOps leadership quit their jobs to work for the Unity Coalition pollclub. I have to wonder if ConsOps (and by extension, the ERLA) may have been a stronghold for the New Revolution.

• The Observer

The Information Secretariat

Headquarters: Corvalis, Tir Tairngire

Operations Director: Prince Jonathon Reed

The Information Secretariat is Tir Tairngire's intelligence agency. Unlike most agencies, which usually form to support military operations, the IS grew as an extension of the Tir's police force, the Constabulary Division, as its "secret police" arm (with all the powers and dirty tricks that phrase conjures up). Over time, the IS grew in size and eventually graduated to a full-fledged spy agency.

• Spavin isn't kidding around. The Council of Princes generally regards great dragons as potential threats, and the IS dedicates a lot of effort toward keeping track of them all. Right now the two North American greats—Hestaby and Ghostwalker—are giving the IS the most fits. Especially Hestaby, with her now on the Council.

• Spes

• Over the past year the Information Secretariat has been planting more operatives in California's Northern Crescent. They've been canvassing entire regions with scads of listening posts, and they've also been trying to insert deep cover agents into the gypsy bands roaming the Crescent. According to the official story being circulated in the Star Chamber and the Princes' Council, the agents are there to keep an eye on Saito, but I think that's a cover for the real reason: digging up more dirt on Hestaby. Since she's on the Council, Prince Reed has to be careful about what he says in his reports, official and otherwise.

• Magnificent Edward

Within the intelligence community, the Information Secretariat is particularly well regarded for integrating magic in intelligence operations, particularly with covert operatives and deep-cover agents. The IS uses a lot of adepts, with favor shown to those following the invisible way or the speaker's way (the so-called social adepts). Some also speculate the Secretariat has enlisted the services of a free spirit (known only as Eidolon), but a lot of spooks are pretty skeptical.

• Eidolon's no spirit. I've met her (I won't say how or why). She's just an adept and a very good operative.

• Kirei

• Who walks through walls on a regular basis?

• Lara

Right now, the biggest item on the Information Secretariat's agenda (next to Hestaby, that is) is the Rinelle ke'Tesrae rebellion. As government efforts to suppress Rinelle have been largely unsuccessful, the IS has been shifting its tactics toward long-term infiltration, inserting deep-cover and double agents over time, to improve their chances of penetrating the Rinelle leadership. To do this, they've had to persuade the Peace Force to ease up its pressure on the group. (That's no small feat, persuading General Gardener to change her mind.) This has been going on for the better part of last year, so the IS hopes that by now their agents may have burrowed deeply into the cell organizational structure.

• The infiltration effort hasn't been entirely successful. In one particularly gruesome case, the Rinelle members outed the IS mole and sent her eyes, ears and tongue back to Corvalis as a warning.

• Zora

• That took place early in the year. I haven't heard of a lot of "examples being made" recently, but that could go either way. Either the IS has backed off, or the moles are burrowing deeper.

• Aegls

Recently, a number of observers have noticed a lot of internal activity rolling the Information Secretariat. Most believe IS counterintelligence uncovered a number of Rinelle moles in the agency. Though no one's said as much, judging by the activity I'd guess at least one of these moles is highly placed within the organization, perhaps even in a senior leadership position. That's just my hunch, so if any of you have more information for or against, post away.

• Oh, it's a senior position, all right. From what I heard, the highly placed Rinelle mole is none other than Prince Jonathon Reed!

• Moerke

• Bye Moerke, it was nice knowin' ya. Where should we send the flowers?

• Bung

• The rumor that Reed is involved with Rinelle has only just popped up. No one on the Council, however, wants to investigate. Reed has the High Prince's full confidence, and most of

the others are too afraid to challenge either Surehand or Reed. The bigger question is, if Reed is involved with Rinelle, how deep? It wouldn't be implausible to think Reed holds some key leadership position, but I doubt he's running the show.

• Spes

MI-5

Headquarters: Thames House, London, England (UK)

Director General of the Security Service: Dame Elise Cole

MI-5, officially known as the Security Service, is Britain's domestic intelligence service. Originally formed under the Home Office prior to World War I for counter-espionage against German naval spies, MI-5 has evolved into one of the best counterintelligence agencies in the world. Though nominally still part of the Home Office for administrative purposes, it reports to the Oversight Board.

• A lot of rivalry exists between MI-5 and MI-6, the foreign intelligence agency. Both jealously guard their jurisdictions; for example, if a counterintelligence operation ever leaves British soil (including territories like Barbados), MI-6 is quick to demand that "Five" transfer the case to them. More than a few times, the two agencies have hired runners to continue intelligence operations outside of each agency's jurisdiction without their counterparts' knowledge.

• Streak

In addition to counterintelligence, MI-5 also gathers intelligence on internal groups posing a threat to the government. The current unrest going on with the mysterious agent *provocateur* called Pendragon and the burgeoning social movement has kept MI-5 particularly busy.

Part of the problem is the eclectic nature of the factions comprising the movement. Well over several dozen factions exist, ranging from moderate to ultra-extreme, driven by different motives: neo-anarchism, feminism, eco-activists, anti-corporates and so on. There seems to be no unifying theme other than dissatisfaction with the government, and even that is weak; some want simple reforms, others want wholesale revolution. Classic counter-insurgent theory maintains that the movement should have collapsed already, overwhelmed by infighting. The movement is actually growing, however, and becoming even more coordinated.

And then there's Pendragon himself. To even a junior agent fresh out of the academy, it seems like a foregone conclusion that he and the movement are linked—there's even a faction of the movement calling itself the Pendragon Underground. But if they are, Pendragon seems to have no interest in rallying his troops. He's never seen with them, and on several occasions he actually *refused* to meet with some of the movement organizers.

• Our King need not communicate with us. Simply seeing and hearing him is enough to bring us all together.

• Crier

• Uh ... yeah. It's just his smile and pleasant demeanor that keeps the movement together. This is that odd British sense of humor, right?

• Skeptic

• I wonder if Pendragon is one of those so-called social adepts we've been hearing about lately? I know, it sounds like a copout, pinning it all on magic, but it seems to be the only theory that makes sense.

• Superbum

MIFD

Headquarters: Osaka, Japan

Director: Ichiro Kyomoto

Ah, the good old Market Information and Forecasting Department. I gave some of the best years of my life and most of my soul to those Shiawase bloodsuckers. So it's only fair if I air some of their dirty laundry in public.

As the name implies, the MIFD officially serves as Shiawase's marketing division, apparently gathering information to forecast market trends and consumer demographics. Under the surface, MIFD spies on *everyone* and *everything* that has even the remotest relevance to Shiawase's businesses, especially when it comes to industrial espionage.

• The MIFD places a tremendous amount of importance on street buzz. On occasion they've been known to hire runners to tail fixers and Johnsons, even those not directly involved with Shiawase at the moment. They believe forewarned is forearmed, especially when it comes to street action.

• TacFire

Within the intelligence community, MIFD stands out for its expertise in Matrix intelligence. The agency owns several hosts dedicated expressly to collecting, indexing and analyzing the terapulses of data the department collects. These rely a lot on pattern-detection algorithms and sophisticated proto-AI knowbots, and a lot of that expertise has spilled over into other areas: applied cryptography, chaos theory and so on.

They've also taken a keen interest in developments in artificial intelligence and the otaku. During the whole mess with the Renraku Arcology in Seattle, the MIFD brought in dozens of experts to watch and take notes. Their interest has brought some unwanted attention, though, particularly by Deus's followers. Last month a bunch of otaku broke into the MIT&T campus and kidnapped Hitomi Shiawase, the daughter of CEO Tadashi Shiawase. The FBI tracked down the otaku and rescued Hitomi twelve hours later, but daddy went through the roof when he heard the news. Since then, MIFD agents have been coming to Cambridge in droves to keep an eye on Hitomi and track down the tribe responsible for abducting her.

• Geez, Spavin, don't you know anything? Hitomi Shiawase is an otaku. I don't know exactly how it happened, though it had something to do with the Matrix glitch in Seattle a few



SERAPHIM OPERATIVE AND ASSIGNMENT ORGANIZATION

OPERATIVES

- H1 Affiliated external personnel ("concerned citizens," shadowrunners, etc.)
- H2 Administration
- H3 Consultation and data analysis
- H4 Security services
- H5 Human and magical intelligence
- H6 Operations
- H7 Imagery and signals collection
- H8 Research and development
- H9 Strategic management
- H10 ???

ASSIGNMENTS

- C1 Passive collection and observation (routine)
- C2 Passive collection and observation (priority)
- C3 Passive collection and observation (urgent)
- C4 Covert action, non-destructive (routine)
- C5 Covert action, non-destructive (priority)
- C6 Covert action, non-destructive (urgent)
- C7 Covert action, destructive (routine)
- C8 Covert action, destructive (priority)
- C9 Covert action, destructive (urgent)

years back. That's why she pushed to go to MIT&T to study computer science.

• Metsuke

• Really? That I didn't know. It does explain a lot.

• Spavin

• Breaking news from Boston: the buzz on the street says MIFD managed to identify the folks responsible for the kidnapping: an otaku tribe called Ex Pacis. They think the tribe was trying to recruit her, but some of the deckheads here don't agree. From case details that have leaked so far, some of the experts think the kidnappers deliberately left some clues behind so she would be rescued, but only after a certain amount of time had passed.

• New England Patriot

Well, that's enough kiss-and-tell for today. Any of you want more, drop me a line and a little deposit into my ShadowPal account. (Except for you, Savalon ... and don't think I'm going to fall for that Dorothy trick again, jabroni.)

The Seraphim

Headquarters: L'Assomption, Quebec

Chief Executive Director: Antoine Carsieur

The Seraphim, the intelligence branch of Cross Applied Technologies, is one of the best-known corporate intelligence

agencies, at least to the public. Next to the MIFD of Shiawase, the Seraphim are one of the most advanced corporate intelligence agencies, on par with or even surpassing some government agencies.

Officially (according to annual securities reports filed in Quebec), the Seraphim are a special consulting services division, and they *do* actually perform some legitimate services, such as bodyguarding, security consultation, information analysis and threat management. However, the revenue generated from these legitimate ops is small potatoes when compared to the illegitimate work they've undertaken for outside clients. When Lucien Cross was first getting his company started, he organized the Seraphim as shadowrunners on retainer, contracting them out to various Johnsons and taking a cut from their pay.

• The Seraphim still perform this "angels for hire" service, though in a much smaller capacity than they used to. (They need most of their agents for "in-house" projects.) The Seraphim have a team in place in most major shadow sprawls, including Seattle, Hong Kong, Frankfurt, Constantinople and Vladivostok. These teams are free to work for anyone (even Ares!), as long as they don't take a run against Cross without clearing it first. Of course, the retainer teams provide a major intelligence service to Cross as well, by keeping their ears open to shadow chatter and the word on the street.

• Fallen Angel

• If you're in Europe, watch out for a runner team called Équipe Triade, a three-person group based out of Switzerland. The trio is one of the best runner groups in Europe and has even landed missions in North America. Two of the three—Nicole Vertogne and Giovanni diSmarco—are ex-Seraphim, so it's a good bet they're angels-for-hire.

• Force Majeure

Unlike many other intelligence agencies that organize their departments based on region or assignment, the Seraphim organize based on function and priority. Operatives are categorized from H1 to H10, while assignments range from C1 to C9. (I've attached a little table that summarizes this pretty well.) You may notice that I've left the H10 category blank; I have no idea what they do, nor do a lot of other folks I know in the intel community. Some think these agents answer only to Lucien Cross. A few wackos actually believe that Mr. Cross alone is H10, or that H10 refers to Lucien Cross body doubles. (Don't take my word; I'm just repeating what others have said.)

• I've heard H10 refers to the inner council that actually runs the Seraphim. Antoine Carsieur, the Seraphim's chief executive director, is just a public figurehead who takes his marching orders from the H10. Nobody knows who they are exactly, but they're referred to by Biblical names and imagery: "Gabriel," "Cardinal," "Angellique" and so on. They're involved in some

sort of strange mysticism and hold some interesting philosophies, though I couldn't tell you what their core beliefs are.

• Kon Kan

• Another amateur fooled by smoke and mirrors. Don't believe the Bible imagery for one second, chummers. It's a well-established fact in intelligence circles that code names have zero relevance to the mission or operative they're assigned to. This keeps the brainiacs from trying to figure out the mission's true purpose. In fact, if you do hear of a Seraphim agent or operation with some Biblical name attached, chances are it's disinformation CrossCorp is using to deceive its enemies.

• Ritter

• Generally true, but I wouldn't dismiss the "Gabriel" rumor too quickly. I've heard the name mentioned too many times by reliable sources to dismiss it as a Seraphim deception. Kon Kan is right that Carsieur is mostly an administrative figurehead, with someone else calling the shots behind the scenes. The only sure thing is that Gabriel is not Lucien Cross, but he (or she) is a very close associate of the good doctor.

• Spavin

• It's probably worth pointing out that in Judeo-Christian-Islamic mythology, Gabriel is the messenger of God and the number two archangel, behind Michael. If this behind-the-scenes head Seraphim chooses to call himself (or herself) Gabriel, then it begs the question: Is there a "Michael" in CrossCorp, and what does he (or she) do?

• Bartholomew

For the past few years the Seraphim had been preoccupied with internal matters, following the arrival of Nicholas Aurelius and his loyalists from Ares. Quite a few high-level Seraphim, thinking *they* knew what was best for the company, saw Aurelius as a threat and took it upon themselves to keep a watchful eye on him and his followers. Last year several H9 operatives ordered an unsanctioned C9 assassination attempt against Aurelius, who survived thanks to some independent runners he had on retainer.

When Lucien Cross found out, he was furious. (They said you could hear his screaming as far away as Ottawa.) Cross fired the then-chief director (literally, according to some) and replaced him with Antoine Carsieur, whom he ordered to initiate a massive Inquisition within Seraphim ranks. Most of the bloodletting is done now, but I still think a few surviving "Fallen" (as the rogues have been called) have gone into hiding.

• That's because Gabriel was behind the attempt. Lucien was so pissed that Gabriel had no choice but to let the purge run its course. So she protected the key organizers from exposure, biding time until the opportunity presents itself to try again.

• Dominic

With most of the Seraphim's attention turned inward during the past few years, the agency has lost a lot of ground in external operations. Ares, for example, found out about the purge and used the distraction to uproot many Seraphim infiltrators within its own ranks. CrossCorp's attempt to expand its presence in Russia has similarly stalled, as many needed Seraphim agents got caught up in the intrigue and deprived Cross of the ability to outmaneuver Zeta-ImpChem and the Russian Orthodox Church. It's likely CrossCorp will be spending the next two years catching up.

The Watchers

Even though Dunkelzahn's been dead and buried (well, *dead*) these seven years, I have to give a nod to his spy organization, a loose informal group known simply as the Watchers. Not only was the wyrm abreast of current events, in many cases the Watchers kept him several steps ahead. Of course, it helps having a wizwurm mastermind the organization, but without the Watchers there's no way the Big D could still be manipulating events from the Beyond.

Dunkelzahn ran his organization similar to the classic cell setup. The dragon was at the top, and communicated to a small group of people he knew. Each individual in that group knew their own set of people, and each individual in the second tier knew *their* own set of people. And so on and so on, down to the lowest level: the shadowrunners doing the actual grunt work.

A couple of things, however, set the Watchers apart from the rest. First, Dunkelzahn divided his people into two categories: fixers, who hired runners to do things, and watchers, people on the lookout for information. Most of us know about fixers already from our shadow work; they weren't too much different in Dunkelzahn's organization. Watchers were something else: they watch, but they don't act. Sure, on occasion, a watcher might hire runners to break into somewhere and find out something, but that was it: no extractions, no sabotage, no wetwork.

• This isn't much different from the way established spy agencies run. They divide their spooks into two categories as well: Intelligence, desk-bound analysts who sift through the raw data and figure out what it all means, and Operations, the field agents who go out and do the grunt work. The only difference is that in Dunkelzahn's case, everyone was in the field, so he had to make a distinction to keep the pure information-gatherers separate from the black ops folks.

• Agent 99

To keep his organization from being compromised by outsiders (mostly the other dragons), Dunkelzahn relied on one primary strategy: misdirection. For one thing, his public image as a media celebrity lulled most of us into complacency. Behind the scenes, however, Dunkelzahn communicated with his first tier through out-of-the-way channels where no one would think to look: Mason City, Iowa; Enid, Oklahoma; Walldürn, Württemberg; Hainan, China; and many others.



After Dunkelzahn died, his organization eventually crumbled. It took a lot longer than one would expect, but without the dragon to keep them in line, the end was inevitable. The Draco Foundation absorbed large chunks of the Watchers, particularly those operating in the Americas and Europe. When Ghostwalker showed up a couple of years ago, he co-opted a lot of Watcher cells as well. (If I were to guess, I'd say the DF and Ghostwalker each absorbed about a third of the Watchers; the remaining third I'm guessing went independent or chose to work for other players.)

- Ghostwalker's been making a hard push to round up as many holdouts as he can. After Dunkelzahn died, most went into hiding, to avoid being scooped up by the other dragons, but apparently Ghostwalker knew how to contact many of them. I think he may have tipped his hand recently, however, and some of the other dragons—particularly Lofwyr, Aden and Celedyr—are trying to snatch the remaining Watchers up before Ghostwalker gets them.
- Southern Cross

THE GAME BOARD

The Game is played everywhere around the world, but some places attract spies more than others. National capitals and intelligence headquarters are obvious examples. Here are some other places that have seen a lot of intelligence activity.

Austin

A lot of spies were disappointed when Ghostwalker kicked the Azzies out of Denver. With six national jurisdictions inside city limits, Denver used to be an espionage haven, particularly for NAN, CAS and UCAS agencies getting a peek into Aztlan. But when Ghostwalker told the Azzies to shoo, so did a good chunk of the interest.

- There's still plenty of spying going on in Denver, though. The Sloux and the UCAS carry on their border posturing here, and the CAS loves playing nosy neighbor. And since the Azzies are itching for a little bit of payback, they'll pay well for any dirt they can dig up on Ghostwalker, not to mention the Pueblo and CAS (since the Azzies would have to go through them to get to the dragon, after all.)
- Delta Juliet



So with the interest in one divided city diminished, the spooks moved to another one: Austin, capitol of Texas (if only in name), straddling the Colorado River that also divides Aztlan and the CAS. Besides the two neighbors, other countries with agents in Austin include the UCAS, Pueblo Corporate Council and the Sioux (spying on behalf of the Sovereign Tribal Council). Pueblo and UCAS base their operations from the Confederation side of the city, but the Sioux base theirs out of their consulate on the Aztlan side.

- The University of Texas, which sits on the CAS side of the city, has become a hotbed of espionage activity. Lots of UCAS and Pueblo agents have come to UT posing as students or visiting faculty. Most of the time, they're trying to make contact with spies on the Aztlan side of Austin. The CIA has also inserted agents at UT to keep an eye on the CAS and report activity along the CAS-Aztlan border.

- TJ

- On the Aztlan side of the city, Zilker Park has become a popular gathering place. The park sits on the river, and it's easy to get ashore from the CAS side. Rather than try to keep the spies out, the Azzies have loosened up security around the park and put up hundreds of listening posts in the immediate vicinity. They figure the spies are going to get in anyway, so why not channel them to a place where they can keep tabs real easy?

- Riggs

Beirut

It's hard to say if history will repeat itself yet again. After Lebanese President Elias Khouri died in a suspicious car accident, Prime Minister Abdul Karami "invited" Syrian peacekeepers into the country, setting off waves of protest and resentment among Christian and Shi'ite minorities. Things got even hairier with the death and apparent resurrection of Ibn Elsa, a friend to both Karami and the Syrians. When it looked like the Israelis were making moves to invade again, I'm pretty sure the UCAS ambassador twitched every time a truck passed by the embassy.

- Not funny,

- Ollie

Well, it's been three years since the trouble began, and everyone in Beirut is getting tired of wondering when the other shoe will drop. Things aren't getting better, but they're not getting worse, either. It's hard to tell which way things will go, which I suppose explains why there's so much intelligence activity at the moment. For Mossad, Beirut is just a hop and a skip from Tel Aviv, which makes it a convenient backdoor into Arabia. The IUM and NIJ probably see it the same way, only going in the other direction. And while a lot of businesses have fled Lebanon because of the unrest, it's still the primary Arab shipping port into the Middle East, so none of the Big Ten or even the Eurocorps are going to close up shop any time soon. I hear even Argus and 10K Daggers have come to town, to see

which way the winds are blowing and who's got the most reliable merc contracts.

- The growing split between the IUM and NIJ has put a strain between Karami and his Syrian handlers. Karami believes in the IUM philosophy and just wants to see Lebanon integrated into a new unified pan-Islamic state. Many of the Syrian occupiers, however, are turning toward the NIJ and want to see Lebanon cleansed of its "infidels," en route to a full-scale invasion of Israel.

- Levantine Son

- Lost in the background amid all the questions about the IUM, NIJ, Ibn Elsa and Israel is a running shadow war between the pawns of Lofwyr and Aden. Saeder-Krupp maintains many offices here to manage oil production and political payoffs. By the same token, Aden also has many followers, particularly among the dissident Christians and Armenians living in Lebanon and Israel. For the two dragons, Beirut is the setting for a shadowy game of chess, as pawns of each move against each other.

- Wurm Watcher

Brussels

The rise of the NEEC put Brussels back on the map as the administrative center of Europe. This in turn has resulted in a flurry of intelligence activity. Many countries and Eurocorps that were bitter rivals only a few years ago are now partners, but old suspicions die hard. Consequently, the close proximity of each other's VIPs and apparatchiks is too tempting to pass up.

- Here's a perfect example: HKB and Transys Neuronet. There's certainly no love lost between the two ever since Celedyr boot-ed HKB out of the catbird seat on Transys' board of directors. HKB is a full-fledged member of the NEEC, however, while Transys' membership is pending approval. So in Brussels, Transys has to play a little bit nicer than usual until they get admitted to the club. Of course, that just means their black ops plunge deeper into the shadows than usual.

- Money Man

Of course, the establishment of the New European Economic Community has also attracted a fair share of interested onlookers. Both the UCAS and the CAS have a lot of political and economic ties to the Old World, so the CIA, DSI and ERLA all have a vested interest in maintaining stations in Brussels. The same can also be said of the Corporate Court, which has hired independents like Argus and Aegis Cognito to keep a finger on Brussels' pulse.

- Dunkelzahn's old Watcher network has also seen a lot of activity around Brussels lately. When Dunkelzahn was alive, his agents in the area often routed information through Namur, which isn't too far from Brussels. After Dunkelzahn died, most of



his Watchers in this area got co-opted by the Draco Foundation, but some of them recently swore allegiance to Ghostwalker. Both have a vested interest in keeping a watchful eye on Lofwyr and how he might manipulate the NEEC through Saeder-Krupp.

- Neon Dragon

Geneva

Geneva is the so-called crossroads of Europe. Being relatively reachable to all of Western Europe's major cities, Geneva is home to many international organizations: the UN, the Red Cross, the International Standards Organization (ISO) and plenty of others. With all these non-corporate entities in one place, is it any surprise the megacorps keep tabs on the area? The MIFD maintains a major office in Geneva, and you'll find more Seraphim from Cross prowling here than in any other place outside of Quebec.

- A lot of major policlubs like Humanis also have a significant presence in Geneva, most of them within a stone's throw of UN headquarters. As almost all of them have some axe to grind against either a certain nation or megacorp, their Geneva offices become regular targets of espionage and infiltration.
- Pooltizer

Hainan

Once part of the People's Republic of China, Hainan is a large island some 400 kilometers southwest of Hong Kong in the South China Sea. Its balmy tropical breezes and lush beauty spots make it a prime vacation getaway. Most visitors come from the Canton Confederation and Hong Kong, but all kinds of Asians make the trip to Hainan, even from as far away as Korea and Singapore.

After the communists collapsed in 2018, local Hainan leaders found themselves in a precarious position. Hainan possessed significant ethnic Chinese minorities, and it also held a key strategic position between the Gulf of Tonkin and the South China Sea. If civil war and ethnic cleansing didn't consume Hainan, then it risked a takeover by Vietnam, the emerging Canton Confederation or even Imperial Japan.

To this day, no one's entirely sure what backroom deals the Hainan government cut, but the results became obvious quickly. Weeks after the communists' collapse, the Hainan island government staged a news conference in the central city square. The government declared strict neutrality for the island of Hainan; furthermore, Hainan would be a military-free zone, with no armed forces allowed within its territorial waters. Anyone attempting to violate this, the governor warned, would face "the wrath of the heavenly regents." Suddenly on cue, a large white Oriental dragon (later introduced as Bai Zhenzhu, a female adult dragon) descended out of the clouds and landed behind the stage, glaring at the assembled cameras and reporters.

Ever since then, the nations in the region have respected Hainan's neutrality, under threat of draconic retribution (supplemented by Hainan's own small but capable militia). Under the treaty, no armed vessel may enter Hainan's territorial

waters, but anyone regardless of ethnicity or race is welcome to enter and leave freely. Without fear of invasion, Hainan continues to thrive as a vacation resort, especially one serving as residence for a dragon.

- I know dragons are powerful, but aren't we overstating the case a little bit? A full squadron of fighters could take down a single dragon, though it may sustain some heavy casualties. And once the dragon is down, any task force could overwhelm the island militia.

- Skeptic

- Maybe you should get out of North America once in a while and see how the real world operates, Skeptic. A sufficiently concentrated force could overcome Bai Zhenzhu and the militia, but the reality is that most of Hainan's neighbors don't have that kind of force. The strongest would be the Canton Confederation, and if we did that, both Sichuan and Taiwan would be on our backs like white on rice.

- Lo Fu Chee

- Besides, if anyone were so stupid as to try to wipe out Bai Zhenzhu, then Lung, Ryumyo and all the other dragons in the Far East would burninate them in retaliation. The dragons of the East may not get along, but they'll cooperate enough against a mutual threat—like uppity Asian warlords who don't know their place.

- Wyrm Watcher

- Rumors have gone around ever since Hainan went independent that they had another card up their sleeve: nuclear weapons. At that time, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) suspected Hainan had acquired a Type 94 Qin-class Chinese missile sub, but they could never prove it.

- Hans

Despite (or because of) Hainan's military-free zone, the island has become a hotbed of international espionage and intrigue. Hainan holds a commanding position over the South China Sea lanes, so many intelligence agencies maintain covert listening posts monitoring communications and maritime traffic. Because no one wants to risk Bai Zhenzhu's wrath, the various spy cells in Hainan have maintained a gentleman's agreement not to frag with each other on the island. So long as they're willing to keep the peace, Hainan turns a blind eye to them.

- On the other hand, shadowrunners are deniable assets, so there's plenty of work available for covert runs to intercept or manipulate spy data before it reaches its destination. Just be quiet, or you could end up as dragon poop.

- HK Kid

As far as Bai Zhenzhu herself, she keeps a low profile. Apart from that initial press conference, the dragon has had little contact with the island government and lets them run



things as they please. Most of the time Bai Zhenzhu stays inside her huge dragon-sized villa, which she maintains in the island's interior. She sees few guests, but the ones she does see are very interesting. Most prominent figures in Southeast Asia have come calling at one time or another, but her most frequent and well known visitors are the other great wyrms of Asia: Lung and Ryumyo. On several occasions, Bai Zhenzhu has hosted them both together, where they drink tea, play Go and Mah-Jongg and have conversations I'm sure others would kill to overhear. Recently, the great dragon Masaru has started attending these get-togethers with his elders.

- There's more to the story than what's being let on. An adult dragon on sociable terms with the most powerful dragons in the Far East, both of whom hate each other, must have something on them.

- DragonIX

- I hear that Bai Zhenzhu was an agent of none other than Dunkelzahn. Apparently Dunkelzahn assigned her to act as an arbiter between Lung and Ryumyo, and one of the reasons she went to Hainan is because the yin and yang of the dragon lines are naturally balanced on the island.

- Kagayama

- That would explain why Nicholas Whitebird met with Bai Zhenzhu last month. Ever since Ghostwalker set himself up in Denver, he's been appropriating some of Dunkelzahn's Watchers for his own use. Curiouser and curiously.

- Lobster Quadrille

Seattle

Much as I hate to stroke the ego of you Shadowlanders, I'd be amiss to overlook Seattle's role in the Great Game. As a UCAS city in the middle of the NAN, on the edge of the Pacific and around the corner from Tir Tairngire, Seattle is the ultimate intelligence hotspot. The CIA, DSI, UGB, Information Secretariat, Imperial Military Intelligence and many other agencies all have a lot of resources tied up in Seattle, watching the various people coming in and going out, in addition to each other.

- The Information Secretariat has been pouring a lot of assets into Seattle since the problems with Rhelle ke'Tesroe started. Back in the old days, the Tir Council of Princes used to dump their dissidents here until they realized that once the dissenters were out of the Tir, the princes had a lot less control over the exiles. While many dissidents know they're not far enough away to be untouchable, a lot offer covert assistance to Rhelle in the form of money, materiel and information. The IS can't let that happen, so they've been assigning agents up here to intercept the pipeline and identify (and eliminate) outside supporters.

- Smiley

With the status of the arcology still undecided, a lot of agencies have had a field day picking away at the carcass to

gain more information about Deus, what it was up to and whether or not it's really gone, as Renraku claims. They've also been trying to pick up leads on the surviving otaku and Banded, since it's possible that some or all of them could regroup elsewhere.

- Of course Deus isn't dead. Renraku managed to break his power base and reclaim the arcology, which in PR terms is the same as a win. But they didn't catch all (or even most) of his otaku followers, who've now scattered across the globe and are carrying out his plans elsewhere.

- Arclight

- I'm beginning to believe Arclight may be right. Overwatch has been getting reports that many of Deus' Banded are congregating elsewhere: Kuala Lumpur, Tallinn, Albuquerque and many other places. It's clear Deus had a plan in case of his demise. But what is that plan? We haven't figured that out—and frankly, that scares me.

- Peregrine

- A limbo large and broad, since called The Paradise of Fools to few unknown.

- Pax

GAME INFORMATION

This section provides game information and rules for using the material presented in *Games of State*. Included in this section are rules and statistics for new equipment, along with information and suggestions for gamemasters interested in running a *Shadowrun* espionage campaign.

RUNNING AN ESPIONAGE CAMPAIGN

In many regards, an espionage campaign isn't much different from a regular shadowrunner campaign. Like shadowrunners, intelligence operatives are deniable assets performing dirty deeds on behalf of their agency. One can even argue that shadowrunners are nothing more than freelance covert operatives working for the highest bidder.

Because most people associate espionage and intelligence with secret government agencies, an intelligence campaign frequently revolves around characters employed by an organization like the CIA, UGB or Mossad. Player characters may alternately be spying on behalf of a megacorporate agency (MIFD, the Seraphim, Saeder-Krupp Prime), an independent agency (Aegis Cognito, Argus) or even a great dragon (the Watchers)!

Though intelligence agencies perform their share of dirty work such as assassination and sabotage, the large majority of missions revolve around information: finding out what's going on and who knows about it. Agencies already have established networks in place for gathering routine information, so it's assumed the player characters are special operatives called upon for unusual situations. For example, the agency may receive information on a project they're particularly interested in and ask the player characters to find out more. Similarly, the agency may notice an anomaly in routine



intelligence reports and send the characters in to figure out just what's going on. (In the latter scenario, as the characters are already in place, the agency may then assign the characters to do something about it.)

Requisitioning Gear

As employees of the agency, the player characters automatically receive the necessary equipment to do the job, within limits. Agencies have finite budgets, after all, and can't cater to *all* of their agents' whims, no matter how good the operatives are. So if the characters want a Thor shot on call, they'd better have a damn good reason for it.

During character creation, players of agent characters may opt to set aside up to half of their nuyen from Resources Into a Budget Pool. They can then use the Budget Pool to requisition mission-specific gear from the agency as called for during a specific mission. Players may combine multiple Budget Pools to form one large pool for high-priced items, like vehicles or special gadgets. During character advancement, players may use Good Karma to increase their characters' Budget Pools, at a rate of 1,000¥ per point of Good Karma spent. Players should not spend more than half the Good Karma earned in a single adventure toward increasing their Budget Pool.

Whenever characters wish to requisition gear for a mission, the gamemaster should first check if the Budget Pool (or combined Budget Pools) is adequate to cover the cost. If so, make an Availability Test using the character's Etiquette skill against the Availability target number, as if the character were trying to obtain the gear off the street (see *Availability*, p. 272, SR3). Deduct the base cost from the available Budget Pool; don't worry about Street Index or negotiations (haggling with your boss is not a good way to advance your intelligence career, after all).

Satellite Imagery

Agent characters working for certain major spy agencies like the CIA or the UGB may occasionally gain access to satellite imagery. If it's central to the mission, the agency will make any necessary arrangements. On the other hand, if it's not absolutely urgent, the characters will have to convince their superiors otherwise. Make a Negotiation Test and apply a +2 Annoying to NPC modifier (p. 94, SR3). If the character wins, his superior has agreed to check for availability.

Ordinary shadowrunners may also gain access to satellite imagery from time to time. If it's vital to ensuring successful completion of the shadowrun, Mr. Johnson will make any nec-



SATELLITE IMAGERY AVAILABILITY TABLE

Agency	Coverage			Setup Time	Scan Time
	Optical	Infrared	Radar		
Aegis Cognito	2	3	3	3D6 x 4 hrs	1D6 x 5 hrs
Amazonia	4	3	4	3D6 x 4 hrs	1D6 x 5 hrs
AresSpace	5	9	10	2D6 x 2 hrs	2D6 x 5 hrs
Argus	2	4	3	3D6 x 4 hrs	1D6 x 5 hrs
Aztechnology	3	4	6	3D6 x 4 hrs	1D6 x 5 hrs
CAS (DSI, ERLA)	6	8	6	3D6 x 2 hrs	1D6+2 x 5 hrs
Cross Applied Technologies (Seraphim)	3	4	3	3D6 x 4 hrs	1D6 x 5 hrs
Hisato-Turner Broadcasting	5	2	3	2D6 x 2 hrs	2D6 x 5 hrs
India	3	3	4	3D6 x 4 hrs	1D6 x 5 hrs
Israel (Mossad)	4	6	3	3D6 x 3 hrs	1D6 x 5 hrs
Japan (Imperial Military Intelligence)	4	6	6	2D6 x 4 hrs	1D6+2 x 5 hrs
Novatech Orbital	6	9	8	2D6 x 2 hrs	2D6 x 5 hrs
Pueblo Corporate Council	3	3	3	3D6 x 2 hrs	1D6+2 x 5 hrs
Russia (UGB)	8	6	8	2D6 x 2 hrs	2D6 x 5 hrs
Saeder-Krupp	7	7	7	2D6 x 2 hrs	1D6+2 x 5 hrs
Shiawase (MIFD)	3	3	3	3D6 x 4 hrs	1D6 x 5 hrs
Sioux (OMI)	2	2	4	3D6 x 4 hrs	1D6 x 5 hrs
Tir na nOg	4	5	3	3D6 x 4 hrs	1D6 x 5 hrs
Tir Tairngire (Information Secretariat)	4	4	4	3D6 x 4 hrs	1D6 x 5 hrs
Trans-Orbital	6	7	7	2D6 x 2 hrs	2D6 x 5 hrs
Transys Neuronet	5	4	5	3D6 x 2 hrs	2D6 x 2 hrs
UCAS (CIA, NRO, Pentagon, etc.)	8	10	8	2D6 x 2 hrs	2D6 x 5 hrs
United Kingdom (MI-5, MI-6, OOO)	4	5	4	3D6 x 2 hrs	1D6 x 5 hrs
Yamatetsu	4	4	5	3D6 x 4 hrs	1D6 x 5 hrs

COVERAGE MODIFIERS

Situation	Modifier
Major hotspot (ex. CAS-Aztlan border, Renraku Arcology)	-3
Significant military/intelligence site (ex. Pentagon, Norfolk, Langley)	-2
Major metropolitan area (ex. Seattle, FDC, London, Hong Kong)	-1
Minor metropolitan area (ex. St. Louis, Prague, Bangkok)	0
Large remote area (ex. Rocky Mountains, Sahara Desert)	+1
Small remote area	+2

PERCEPTION TEST MODIFIERS

Situation	Optical	Infrared	Radar
Ambient light			
Daylight	0	+1	0
Twilight	+1	0	0
Night	+4	+2	0
Weather conditions			
Clear	-1	-1	-2
Partly cloudy	+1	0	-1
Overcast	+2	+1	0
Heavy coverage/storms	+4	+4	+2
Object Type			
Organic	0	0	+2
Metallic	0	0	0

LEVEL OF DETAIL

Satellite	Level of Detail
Optical	Capable of scanning barcodes and reading small text
Infrared	Capable of reading large text (poster-sized and larger)
Radar	Can only detect presence of people, vehicles and drones. Extra successes further narrows down the type.



essary arrangements to set it up with the characters, albeit on his client's terms. If it's not central to the shadowrun, however, the runners will have to hit up on their contacts. In this case, the character must have the Friends in High Places Edge (p. 27, *SRComp*), and the contact should be at least Level 2. As with agent characters, make a Negotiation Test, but apply a +4 Harmful to NPC modifier (wasting a million-nuyen asset for an outsider could get the contact fired, after all).

Even if the characters get access to satellite imagery, there's no guarantee that a satellite will be overhead at the time they want it. Consult the Satellite Imagery Availability Table and look up the Coverage Rating, based on the sponsoring agency and the type of satellite desired. Roll a number of dice equal to the Coverage Rating against a base target number of 5; apply modifiers as appropriate. If the test is successful, a satellite is available over the area covered. Roll randomly to determine the setup and scan times, as listed for each agency. (At the gamemaster's option, extra successes on the Coverage Test may be used to adjust the dice results up or down, as desired. Each extra success alters the result by ± 1 .)

While scanning via satellite, characters make Perception Tests as normal to notice any significant details. Apply modifiers per the Satellite Perception Test Modifiers Table. The Level of Detail table indicates the type of information that can be gleaned from each type of satellite scan.

NEW EDGES AND FLAWS

The following edges and flaws may be helpful to player characters, either covert operatives in an intelligence campaign or ordinary shadowrunners performing intelligence-related shadowruns.

Diplomatic Immunity (Social Edge)

Value: 2

Characters with the Diplomatic Immunity Edge are under diplomatic protection from a host country or extraterritorial corporation. (This edge includes certain extranational entities such as the UN and the Corporate Court, as appropriate.) A character with diplomatic immunity may not be arrested, charged with or convicted of a felony or misdemeanor while abroad in another country (including corporate extraterritorial property) that recognizes the sponsoring entity. The character also may not be searched without his permission. The character may be expelled from the country, however, as *persona non grata*, and if immunity is revoked, cannot set foot outside the host country's embassy or other extraterritorial property.

Diplomatic immunity does not give a character carte blanche to openly commit crimes. The home sponsor can withdraw diplomatic immunity if the character becomes an embarrassment or diplomatic risk. A character may also be temporarily detained for questioning while law enforcement checks his diplomatic credentials. Furthermore, a character with diplomatic immunity is still subject to the home sponsor's legal system and can be prosecuted under those laws or extradited, if the sponsor so chooses.

To have diplomatic immunity, the character must possess a SIN under the host sponsor's identification system. This

means the character's identity can be tracked and logged. Additionally, the host sponsor will have conducted an extensive background check on the character, so they may know more about the character than the character does himself.

Dossier on file (Social Flaw)

Value: -4

Characters with this flaw have an extensive profile stored in a government or corporate intelligence database. This dossier is more extensive than a simple SIN; in most cases a SIN is simply an index number that links to various financial and legal databases. A dossier not only contains the character's identity, it also tracks all other cover identities and lifestyles the character has used prior to acquiring the flaw; a relatively recent and accurate holo-pic; a history of social contacts, dependents, friends and enemies; and even a comprehensive biographical analysis, including relative strengths and weaknesses. In some cases, the dossier may include things about the character she herself does not know.

This flaw indicates only that someone has a detailed profile on the character; it doesn't necessarily mean the character is being hunted by an enemy. The large majority of covert operatives, for example, have a dossier on file with the agency that employs them. Similarly, an agency might keep a dossier on file for prominent local shadowrunners, in case they need to use them in the future.

Since a dossier contains a lot of sensitive information that can be used against the character, there's always a chance an adversary may access and read this dossier. Gamemasters should reserve this event for major enemies with substantial resources; lesser foes wouldn't have the means to break into an intelligence host, and one-time antagonists aren't motivated enough to make the effort. If using the rules for enemies on pp. 68-70 of the *Shadowrun Companion*, an enemy's Knowledge rating automatically jumps to a minimum of 5, which also lifts the enemy's overall rating accordingly. (In almost all cases, this results in a +1 increase to the overall rating, so gamemasters should only use this if they deem the raised hostility justified.)

Dossiers on file are almost impossible to modify or erase. Given their sensitive data, agencies often keep multiple duplicates online, guarded with the blackest of IC, with backups in cold storage behind the most stringent security. Attempting to erase a dossier on file should be the basis of a major adventure, either as a shadowrun against the agency holding it or as a massive favor to the agency in exchange for its destruction.

Incomplete Deprogramming (Mental Flaw)

Value: -2

A character with Incomplete Deprogramming was once a deep-cover agent for an agency, but after being extracted his deprogramming was rushed, interrupted or suffered some unexpected glitch. Subsequently, residual traces of the cover identity remain and may rise to the forefront during stressful situations.

Whenever this character faces a stressful situation (for example, an interrogation, combat or injury), make a Willpower (4) Test. If the character fails, the cover identity tem-

WORD RECOGNITION SUCCESS TABLE

Successes	Level of Recognition Determined
0	The caster gets no response.
1	The caster determines whether or not the subject has at least a fleeting recognition of the concept. If the subject knows the name of the person or place or has heard the term before, the caster will get a positive response.
2	The caster determines whether or not the subject has at least a minor recognition of the concept. If the subject has met the person, been to the place at least once or has a textbook understanding of the term, the caster gets a positive response.
3-4	The caster determines whether or not the subject has a solid recognition of the concept. If the subject has met the person several times recently, frequented the place or has in-depth knowledge of the term, the caster gets a positive response.
5+	The caster determines whether or not the subject has an intimate recognition of the concept. If the person is a close friend, buddy, lover or boss of the subject, or if the place has significant emotional attachment to the subject, or if the subject has a vested interest in the term, then the caster will get a positive response.

porarily takes control. (The length of time depends on the gamemaster and can last anywhere from a few minutes to a few hours, whatever best suits the adventure.) During this time, the character has the personality and memories of the cover identity and must behave as such. In some cases a character might even "forget" some skills or specializations that he possesses, using them either at a reduced level or defaulting.

Sometimes stress can force the character's real personality to re-exert control. When faced with another stressful situation, make another Willpower (4) Test. If the character fails this time, the real personality re-emerges. During a protracted fight, a character may lapse and relapse several times throughout.

NEW SPELLS

The spells below were developed by intelligence magicians to help them in covert ops. Ordinary magicians can learn them only if they have the appropriate contacts in the right intelligence agency.

Sound Barrier (Illusion)

Type: P • Target: 4 • Duration: S • Drain: +1 (M)

The Sound Barrier is similar to the Silence spell (p. 196, SR3), but instead of creating a mass area of silence, it creates a perimeter of silence around the area of effect. Those inside cannot hear outside noises but can hear sounds within the cone normally and vice versa. Only sounds traveling across the border between inside and outside are affected, in the same manner as the Silence spell. This spell also affects infrasound and ultrasound.

Word Recognition (Detection)

Type: M • Target: W • Duration: S • Drain: (M)

Word Recognition is a limited form of Mind Probe that is less intrusive. Rather than exposing the entire mind, Word Recognition shoots a name, image or one-word concept into the brain and gauges the target's reaction to it. The number of successes determines the minimum level of familiarity detected.

To use this spell, the caster must cast it against a person within line of sight. The subject will notice that the concept being sent has risen to his attention for no apparent reason, and may attempt to notice the spellcasting as normal.

Hainsley is an ERLA magician on a counterintelligence case against two suspected Seraphim moles, Tennant and Lowe. (He's half right; Tennant is a Seraphim plant, while Lowe is clean). Hainsley doesn't want to tip his hand and use Mind Probe, in the hope that his investigations might uncover further spies. Instead, he casts a Word Recognition spell as he passes them in the hallway, using the name of a known Seraphim intelligence officer as the key.

Hainsley makes a Sorcery Test against Tennant and gains 2 successes. As the spell gently filters the name through Tennant's mind, Hainsley picks up a small flash of recognition. Tennant may be working for the Seraphim officer, but then again, she could simply have overheard the name elsewhere. It's not solid, but it's enough to warrant further investigation. Had Hainsley gotten more successes, he would have discovered stronger signs of recognition that would prove the link.

Hainsley makes another Sorcery Test against Lowe and does better, getting 4 successes. However, as Lowe has no association whatsoever with the Seraphim officer, and has never even heard the name, the result is no recognition. Hainsley feels confident that Lowe isn't working for that Seraphim officer—but that doesn't mean Lowe isn't working for someone else ...

NEW EQUIPMENT

The gear listed below can often be found in the hands of spies and covert operatives on intelligence missions. Occasionally, some find their way into the shadows and may be used by freelance snoops and assassins.



CONCEALABILITY OF ORDINARY ITEMS

Concealability	Typical Items
12	Microchip, earring
11	Coin, passcard
10	Wristwatch, bracelet, cigarette
9	Ballpoint pen, wallet, credstick
8	Holdout pistol, paperback book, CD player, shoes
7	Light pistol, hardcover book, pocket secretary
6	Heavy pistol, large hardback book (e.g. dictionary), plush toy
5	Submachine gun, walking cane, boom box, briefcase
4	Small cooler, desktop computer, suitcase
3	Rifle, large cooler
2	Large suitcase, footlocker
1	Skis, household furniture

Disguising Equipment

Intelligence agencies often disguise special equipment as everyday items to fool casual observers. Rather than list an infinite array of disguised items, gamemasters may use these rules for disguising equipment as an otherwise ordinary object.

Look up the equipment's Concealability and compare it to the Concealability of Ordinary Items Table. Equipment may be disguised as any ordinary item that has a Concealability less than the equipment's. If the Concealability of the disguise is greater than or equal to that of the equipment, the equipment's Concealability has to be increased so that it exceeds that of its disguise. Each +1 increase to Concealability increases the item's cost by 50 percent. Concealability may not be raised more than +3 above normal.

If more than one piece of equipment is to be disguised within an ordinary object, the Concealability rating of all equipment must be at least 2 greater than that of the object in which they are concealed.

Because these kinds of equipment are specialty items made exclusively for intelligence agencies, it's highly unlikely shadowrunners will find them on the street. For purposes of requisitioning a Budget Pool, they have an Availability Code of 8/96 hours (see *Requisitioning Gear*, p. 30).

Agent Midnight has been assigned to kidnap a professor of magic who has information her superior desires. Posing as a college student, Midnight decides she needs a taser disguised as a student textbook. When she gets close enough to the professor, she will fire the taser and stun him, making it easy for her to spirit him away to a safehouse.

Looking at the Equipment chapter of SR3, the gamemaster notes that a Defiance Super Shock taser has a Concealability of 4. The gamemaster then checks on the Concealability of Ordinary Items Table and determines that a college textbook should have a Concealability of 6. To fit a taser into the textbook, the taser's Concealability has to be at least 7. This is a +3 increase to Concealability, so the price of the disguised taser increases by 150 percent (2,500¥).

When carrying an item disguised as something else, the base target number to spot the disguise is equal to the disguise's Concealability plus 4. If the spotter gets 1 or more successes, he spots the item as phony. Additional successes help determine the true nature of the object. Disguised objects do not fool chemsniffers, MAD detectors or other security scanners that rely on input other than sight to function. If a device that would not be fooled by the disguise scans the object, use the item's normal Concealability Rating instead. (For example, chemsniffers still pick up disguised chemicals or firearms, while MAD detectors still detect disguised electronics.)

Agent Midnight is shadowing her professor when she spies him walking through a magnetic detector to get into a restricted area. If Midnight were to walk through the magnetic detector with her disguised taser, the Concealability Rating for the object is 4, the original Concealability of the taser.

Listed below are some sample disguised objects that runners may commonly encounter:

Ballpoint pen micro-transceiver: This device resembles a fancy twist-top roller-ball pen, rather than the cheap throw-aways sold in packs of ten at the local Stuffer Shack. It actually consists of three devices: a Rating 1 micro-recorder, a Rating 1 micro-transceiver (capable of receiving transmitted signals from a listening bug) and a digital memory core capable of storing up to 500 Mp of data. The twist-top cap also contains an imbedded wireless earpiece, so the user can listen in on conversations through the transceiver. (The transceiver has a Flux of 0, so maximum range is only 250 meters.)

Chemical Cosmetics: These look like ordinary cosmetic or hygienic products, such as a makeup compact, lipstick, cologne or deodorant (aerosol and roll-on). The "cosmetics," however, are actually gels laced with DMSO, mixed with a pharmaceutical chemical of the agent's choice. The makeup compact can hold three separate chemicals, with up to 10 doses. The lipstick, cologne and deodorant hold only a single chemical, but contain many more doses (100 for the lipstick, cologne and roll-on; 200 for the aerosol.)

Briefcase Rocket: This resembles an ordinary briefcase, but it carries a nasty surprise: a single-shot high-explosive rocket. To arm the rocket, the user lifts and twists the briefcase handle 180 degrees. To fire the rocket, the user presses the brass nameplate set underneath the handle. Use the same statistics as the M79B1 LAW rocket (p. 28, CC), but reduce all ranges to half normal.

Hollowed Objects: Even in the micro-digital world of *Shadowrun*, the classic hardcover book with a hollowed-out space between the pages still plays an important role in espionage. This group of objects includes other classics such as the false-bottom suitcase. As a general rule the hollowed space should be no greater than half the normal volume of the object.



Special Weapons

Ares "Screech" Sonic Beam

Rifle: The Screech is the latest development by Ares Arms, the first non-lethal firearm for riot control use. When fired, the rifle projects a beam of intense high-frequency sound that creates nausea and disorientation in metahuman targets, rendering them harmless until the effect wears off. The Screech can operate in single target mode (for picking off instigators in a crowd) and in a wide-beam "spray" mode capable of affecting multiple targets.

In game terms, the Screech creates temporary Stun damage that wears off over time. Targets hit by a sonic beam from a Screech make their Damage Resistance Test using Willpower instead of Body. Armor does not apply, but sound dampeners do. Ordinary earplugs provide 3 points of "armor" protection, while cybears dampeners (p. 299, SR3) provide 4 points of armor. A Silence spell (p. 196, SR3) or Sound Barrier spell (p. 35) provides armor protection equivalent to its Force. Stun damage inflicted from a Screech wears off at a rate of 1 box per



Combat Turn. (Players should mark this damage differently, to distinguish it from other types of Stun damage.)

A Screech may be fired in single-target and wide-beam modes. When firing the Screech in wide-beam mode, use the rules for shotgun spread (p. 117, SR3) to resolve dispersion and power loss. The "choke" for the Screech can be set anywhere between 2 and 10. The Screech is powered by the same hip-mounted battery pack used by the Ares MP Laser III (p. 30, CC).

Characters use the Laser Weapons Skill when firing the Screech. Use the Shotgun Range Table to determine range.

Cigarette Micro-rocket: The cigarette micro-rocket appears like an ordinary nic-stick, but instead of tobacco it contains a micro-sized rocket. To activate, the character lights the cigarette as normal, which ignites a delayed action fuse. The rocket launches a few moments later (long enough for the user to take a drag and "aim" the rocket) at a target no further than 50 meters away. Two types of micro-rockets are available: a fragmenting warhead effective against personnel and a high-explosive warhead for minor material damage.

Disguised Items

Ballpoint Pen Micro-transceiver

Chemical Cosmetics

Makeup Compact (3 chemicals, 10 doses each)

Lipstick (1 chemical, 100 doses)

Cologne (1 chemical, 100 doses)

Deodorant, roll-on (1 chemical, 100 doses)

Aerosol (1 chemical, 200 doses)

Hollowed Objects

Hardcover Book (100 ECU / 0.04 CF)

False-bottomed Suitcase (0.2 CF)

Conceal

Weight

Cost

9

—

4,500¥

9

—

300¥

10

—

1,500¥

9

—

1,000¥

9

—

1,000¥

9

—

2,000¥

7

0.5

60¥

4

1

330¥

Disguised Weapon

Briefcase Rocket

Conceal

Ammo

Mode

Damage

Blast

Scatter

Weight

Cost

6

1

SS

12D (HE)

-1/0.5 m

2D6 + 2

2.5

1,400¥

Special Weapons

Ares "Screech" Sonic Rifle

Cigarette Micro-rocket

Anti-personnel rocket

High-explosive rocket

Conceal

Ammo

Mode

Damage

Weight

Avail.

Cost

St. Index

Legal

3

15

SS

10S Stun

6

24/3 wks

120,000¥

3

2-K

12

1

SS

8S (f)

—

12/6 days

120¥

3

2-|

12

1

SS

10M

—

12/6 days

120¥

3

2-|



Firing a cigarette micro-rocket requires its own special skill. Use the Hold-Out Range Table to determine range. Cigarette micro-rockets may be obtained individually or in packs. (A typical pack holds about 12 cigarettes.)

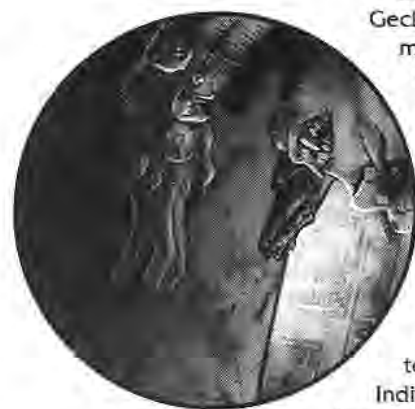
Clothing

Null Suit: A null suit is a thermally insulated bodysuit designed to mask body heat, through a combination of cooling microcapillaries and a photoelectric transformer that converts infrared emissions from body heat into a higher bandwidth beyond the range of most thermographic sensors. This technology renders the user undetectable not only by thermographic emissions, but also by motion sensors (which primarily operate by measuring sudden changes in infrared radiation).

Characters wearing a null suit receive an additional +2 modifier when thermographic sensors or motion detectors are trying to detect them. This +2 modifier also applies to the character's Signature, if vehicle sensors attempt to detect the character. On the downside, the suit is extremely bulky; reduce the character's Combat Pool by 2. (If combining the null suit with other forms of armor, use the Armor Layering rules on p. 285 of *SR3*, but treat the null suit as if it had an equivalent Ballistic Armor Rating of 8.)

Gecko Tape Gloves:

Gecko tape gloves are made of a special type of dry adhesive called gecko tape. Instead of sticky glue, gecko tape incorporates a surface covered with millions of microscopic hairs so fine that intermolecular bonding melds the surface to another object.



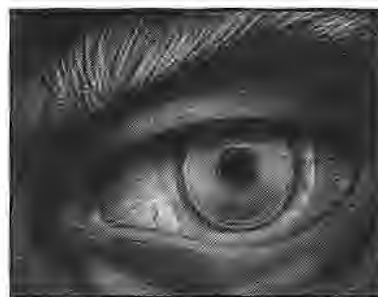
Individually these bonding forces are insignificant, but when combined, they are strong enough to stick a troll upside-down on a ceiling.

Gecko tape gloves come as a set that includes gloves, kneepads and slip-on soles. When used during climbing, treat the character as if he were performing assisted climbing, but use the movement rate for unassisted climbing. (In other words, apply the -10 assisted climbing modifier, but do not reduce the climbing speed.)

One primary disadvantage of gecko tape is its extreme susceptibility to water; it becomes useless if wet. If it ever gets damp, its effects are cancelled out until it dries. (Heated air generally destroys the surface, so the gloves must dry out at ambient room temperature, a process that takes several hours.)

Vision Enhancers

Night Vision



Contacts: Night vision contacts consist of layered magneto-plasmic gels that amplify incoming light, allowing the user to see normally in the dark. The technology used is similar to that in plasma flat-screen televisions, and the lenses

themselves recharge continually with every blink of the eye.

Treat characters wearing night vision contacts as if they possessed cybernetic low-light vision enhancement. Night vision contacts may be combined with other technological devices (such as cybereyes or goggles) to further improve low-light capability on par with natural racial vision, but it does not enhance it any further. Night vision contacts may be used in conjunction with spellcasting without violating line-of-sight.

On the downside, night vision contacts are very sensitive to intense light and not very durable. Compared to cybereyes or goggles. If exposed to normal light levels for more than five minutes, night vision contacts burn themselves out and become useless. Also, if a flare or flash attack affects the character (such as flash packs or the Flash spell), double the effectiveness of the attack. (The flash attack also instantly burns out the contacts.)

Communications

Cellular Trigger: A cellular trigger is a specialized cellular receiver. Whenever a user dials the trigger's number, the trigger sends a signal to an electronic device, causing it to activate. For example, a cellular trigger can detonate a bomb remotely, or it can order an activate-on-demand tracking signal to turn itself on. A cellular trigger is effective only in an area that receives cellular telephone service; if it is taken outside of cellular coverage, it cannot be activated.

RF Trackers: Radio-frequency detection systems, or RF trackers, are highly sensitive transmission detectors that enable an operator to pinpoint a transmission over long distances.

CLOTHING	CONCEAL	WEIGHT	AVAIL.	COST	ST. INDEX	LEGAL
Null Suit	—	20	16/14 days	15,000¥	3	Legal
Gecko Tape Gloves	8	—	6/72 hrs	250¥	1.5	Legal
VISION ENHANCERS	CONCEALABILITY	WEIGHT	AVAILABILITY	COST	STREET INDEX	
Night Vision Contacts	12	—	6/48 hrs	300¥	2	

Most intelligence agencies employ portable versions to provide SIGINT support for local operations.

An RF tracker works in a similar manner as a radio scanner (p. 289, *SR3*) and can monitor and scan radio frequencies in the same way. An RF tracker, however, has the additional ability to pinpoint a signal it has intercepted. (If an RF tracker is scanning through a range of frequencies, then it must make a Scanner Rating Success Test, as specified on p. 289 of *SR3*.)

To pinpoint a signal that the RF tracker has intercepted, make a Tracker Rating Success Test against a target number equal to the transmitting device's Rating +3. Electronic Warfare may be used as a Complementary Skill for this test (see *Complementary Skills*, p. 97, *SR3*). The transmitting device must be operating for at least thirty seconds (ten Combat Turns), but every additional thirty seconds of scanning time adds another die to the Success Test, up to a maximum equal to twice the RF scanner's Rating. (For simplicity, players should make only one Success Test, at the end of scanning time.) If the test is successful, the scanner has located the transmitter and can pinpoint it to a certain degree of accuracy. Count the number of successes and consult the RF Scanner Accuracy Table to determine the accuracy.

RF Trackers can only pinpoint signals within the transmitter's range (as determined by the transmitter's Flux). Extra-sensitive models with larger arrays are available that can pinpoint a signal up to 10 times the transmission distance. These models tend to be bulkier, as they rely on larger antennas and arrays to increase their sensitivity. Briefcase-sized modules double the normal transmission range, while backpack-sized units increase range by 5 times normal. The most sensitive versions (10 times normal) are extremely bulky and generally mounted in vehicles.

Universal Receiver: The universal receiver is a modified cell phone designed to eavesdrop on nearby cellular conversations. (It basically intercepts the wireless signal between the cell phone and the nearby cell tower.) It can also obtain the phone number for a transmitting cell phone. (This gives it a distinct advantage over other methods like the Triangulation Utility, which require the user to know the cell phone number beforehand.)

To use the universal receiver, the user must be within range of the cell tower with which the target phone is com-

municating. (To keep things simple, the user should have the target phone within line of sight.) Make a Rating Success Test against a Target Number of 5. (The gamemaster may apply modifiers for electromagnetic interference as appropriate. Consult the Sensor Test Modifiers Table on p. 136 of *SR3* as a

suggested guideline for appropriate modifiers.) On a single success, the user has intercepted the phone call and may attempt to listen in on the conversation. If the test results in 3 or more successes, the user has also obtained the number for the target cell phone.

Surveillance Measures

Image Manipulation Software:

With the advent of digital imaging around the turn of the millennium, there has been a corresponding rise in image manipulation software. Most commercial software can manipulate images well enough to fool even attentive spotters into thinking a faked image is real.

A character intending to create false or doctored images needs a computer with image manipulation software loaded on it. To forge a doctored image, the character makes a Computer Open Test. The character may use visually based Knowledge skills in a Complementary Skill Test, as appropriate. Examples include photography, art, art history, graphic design and so on. The result of the Open Test is the base target number used on Perception Tests to spot the forgery.

Film Photography: Though digital photography has replaced film photography in practically all facets of life, film photography still has certain uses, mostly artistic. The intelligence community also makes ample use of specialized film for capturing images that commercially available digital cameras may not get, and for taking pictures under low light or other poor visibility conditions without resorting to a flash that might give away an agent's position and intentions.

Infrared Film: Infrared film is specially treated to be sensitive to infrared radiation. It enables a photographer to take pictures in dim light or darkness without resorting to a flash. Treat images shot with Infrared film as if viewed with cybernetic low-light vision.

Mana-sensitive Film: Mana-sensitive film is a special film capable of capturing magical activity and astral images. The technology derives from early silver daguerreotypes in the nineteenth century, when photography was in its infan-

RF SCANNER ACCURACY	
Successes	Accuracy
1	Within 2 kilometers
2	Within 1 kilometer
3	Within 500 meters
4	Within 10 meters
5+	Within 1 meter

Communications	Concealability	Weight	Availability	Cost	Street Index
Cellular Trigger	12	—	4/48 hrs	100¥	1.5
RF Tracker	8	1	Rating+2/48 hrs	Rating x 200¥	2
Extra Sensitive (2x)	4	5	Rating+3/72 hrs	Rating x 250¥	2.5
Extra Sensitive (5x)	2	10	Rating+4/96 hrs	Rating x 500¥	3
Extra Sensitive (10x)	—	25	Rating+5/8 days	Rating x 1,000¥	4
Universal Receiver	10	—	Rating+4/96 hrs	Rating x 250¥	2.5



cy. During that time many daguerreotype plates captured ghostly images initially believed to be development errors, but after the Awakening, research magicians revealed the phantoms as astral images. A similar type of photography, called Kirlian photography, has been shown to capture various forms of aura emissions and astral spell signatures.

Mana-sensitive film requires its own special type of camera and film plate. Shooting mana-sensitive film is a long and arduous process and requires a Complex Action. The camera only holds one plate at a time, and changing a plate requires a Complex Action to perform.

The effectiveness of mana-sensitive film in capturing astral images depends on the nature of the phenomenon and the skill of the user. Mana-sensitive film easily captures manifesting magicians and spirits; this requires no Success Test. Other phenomena—background count, dual-natured critters, aura scanning and spell signature analysis—require a Success Test (usually using a photography-related Knowledge Skill). In this case, treat the number of successes generated as if the user had gotten *half* the number of successes on an Astral Perception Test.

Chips

Aliaschips: Aliaschips are personafix chips, BTLs that override the user's personality with that of the chip. Unlike recreational personafix BTLs for illicit entertainment, aliaschips contain the personality traits and knowledge of ordinary people: janitors, secretaries, Stuffer Shack clerks and so on. Covert operatives and deep-cover agents often use these chips to mimic the personality of a cover identity, to better avoid detection by counterintelligence. The rating used is often proportional with the level of infiltration: one-shot missions requiring a tight cover might only require a Rating 1 or Rating 2 aliaschip, but long-term deep-cover missions,

where the agent is maintaining cover over the course of years, may require ratings as high as 8, 9 or even 10.

Common programming options for aliaschips include Cluster, Implant, One-Shot, Optimization, Partial Peak Controls and Personalized. (See pp. 67–68, CC, for more information on BTL programming options.) Occasionally an aliaschip may also incorporate the Black Death option, a senseless variant on the old spy trick of the cyanide capsule in the hidden tooth. Typically the trigger for activating the Black Death option is the termination of the aliaschip program.

Aliaschips exist only in direct input format. Chips for dreamdeck playback are unheard of, as the playback device is too conspicuous for undercover work.

Vehicles

MCT Indrahar O-5P Surveillance Drone: The Indrahar O-5P surveillance drone is a specialized intelligence drone manufactured and sold exclusively to military and intelligence clients, particularly in the Far East, where the Indrahar is a staple of the Imperial Military Intelligence, Korean central intelligence and the Wanguo Anbu of Shaanxi. Recently the Indrahar has turned up in North America, as many of Saito's forces are deploying the Indrahar for their own intelligence operations.

Similar Models: Ilyushin IL-86 "Maskirovka," ATT Nachtfalke

Other Features: ECCM 6, Enhanced Sensors 6, Remote Control Interface, Rigger Adaptation

Ford E-255M Media Van: The "M" variant of Ford's E-255 series of commercial vans is a staple of news and media agencies worldwide. In addition to ample electronic bays for recording equipment, the E-255M also incorporates a telescoping signal tower, increasing transmission range substantially. Intelligence agencies also find this model very popu-

Software	Availability	Cost	Street Index			
Image Manipulation Software	4/48 hrs	650¥	1			
Surveillance Measures	Conceal	Weight	Availability	Cost	Street Index	Legal
Film Camera						
Commercial Grade	6	0.5	4/24 hrs	250¥	1	Legal
Professional Grade	6	1	6/48 hrs	2,500¥	1	Legal
Photographic Film						
Color/B&W (per 25 shots)	9	—	4/24 hrs	1¥	1	Legal
Infrared (per 25 shots)	9	—	6/48 hrs	10¥	1	Legal
Mana-sensitive Film Camera	4	2.5	6/8 days	5,000¥	2	Legal
Mana-sensitive Film (per plate)	7	0.5	6/8 days	50¥	2	Legal
Chips	Dreamdeck Base Price	Direct Input Base Price	Availability	Street Index	Legality	
Aliaschip	NA	Rating x 75¥	6/24 hrs	1	3-Y	



ENHANCED SENSOR SYSTEMS TABLE

Sensor Level	CF Consumed*	Design Points	Customization Cost	Weight (kg)	Availability	Street Index
1	0/1	50	5,000¥	12	4/7 days	2
2	1/2	75	7,500¥	20	4/10 days	2.5
3	2/3	100	10,000¥	25	5/14 days	3
4	2/3	125	12,500¥	35	6/21 days	3.5
5	3/6	150	15,000¥	50	8/30 days	—
6	4/8	200	20,000¥	75	10/45 days	—
7	6/9	300	30,000¥	110	12/60 days	—
8	10/12	500	50,000¥	150	14/3 months	—
9	12/16	1,000	100,000¥	200	16/6 months	—
10	16/20	5,000	500,000¥	250	18/1 year	—

*The first number is the CF consumed if the sensor is installed during vehicle design. The second value is the CF consumed if the sensor is installed during vehicle customization.

lar, as its ubiquity makes it easy to insert an electronic surveillance team anywhere without attracting attention.

Similar Models: Opel-DeMeKo Vigila, GMC Savana (NewsNet custom variant)

Other Features: Electronics Port, Large Portable Satellite Dish, Power Amplifiers 4, Satellite Link 3

Vehicle Accessories

"Peel 'n' Stick" Vehicle Armor: Peel 'n' Stick armor consists of armored plates with an adhesive backing that may be attached to vehicles to temporarily augment protection. Peel 'n' Stick armor behaves like normal vehicle armor and adds its rating (up to 3 points) to the vehicle's normal armor rating. After 24 hours, however, the adhesive loses its stickiness and the plates fall off. Additionally, if an attack with a base Power greater than twice the augmented armor rating strikes the vehicle, it reduces the effectiveness of the Peel 'n' Stick armor by -1.

Installing Peel 'n' Stick armor takes 6 hours and does not require a Skill Test. Peel 'n' Stick armor reduces Load by $(\text{Body}^2 \times 5)$ kilograms, but it does not consume CF. The cost for Peel 'n' Stick armor is equal to its rating times weight in nuyen. (In other words, Rating $\times \text{Body}^2 \times 5$ nuyen.)

Enhanced Vehicle Sensors:

Ordinary vehicle sensors only have a magnification capability equal to Sensor Rating $\times 20$ magnification (p.

135, SR3). Enhanced vehicle sensors increase the magnification to Sensor Rating $\times 500$. Enhanced vehicle sensors also increase the sensor's audio capabilities, enabling them to detect sounds at normal hearing levels and pitches at that distance. However, these enhancements come at the price of the vehicle's other non-audio/visual sensing components, such as radar. Improvements to audio/video sensors (such as thermographic imaging, high/low frequency sound, flare compensation and so on) may be added to enhanced vehicle sensors, up to a limit equal to the Sensor Rating.

Design Specifications

See Enhanced Sensor Systems Table.

Customization Specifications

See Enhanced Sensor Systems Table.

Equipment Required: Vehicle facility

Base Time/Skill Test: 16 hrs per level/Electronics B/R (4)

Model	Hand	Speed	Accel	Body	Armor	Slg	Auto	Pilot	Sensor	Cargo	Load
MCT Indrahara O-5P	4	60/300	20	3	0	6	0	3	6	2	100
Ford E-255M	4/8	85	4	4	0	2	2	—	0	40	1,180

Model	Seating	Entry	Fuel	Econ	S/B	L/T	Chass	SI	Avail	Cost
MCT Indrahara O-5P	—	—	JP (500 l)	3 km/l	—	STOL	Lg. FW UAV	1.5	6/6 days	108,825¥
Ford E-255M	1 + 1b	2d + 1x	D (100 l)	4 km/l	—	—	Van	1	2/48 hrs	37,900¥

THE PATH OF THE ADEPT



I like to think I know a lot about the denizens of the shadows and that I keep up with the latest advances, whether they're tech, social or magic. But on a night out on the town recently I learned a few things from a chummer over some drinks that made me realize I was behind the curve when it came to adepts. I realized that it's been many years since I set my sights on those whose magic takes on a very personal, and often very physical, quality. I figured it would be interesting to ask my pal to offer Shadowland users some insight into the mindsets of what may paradoxically be one of the least understood types of magic users. He's a bit of an academic, being a studied fellow, but he knows his stuff.

• Captain Chaos

Transmitted: 20 December 2063 at 16:44:06 (PST)

by **Elan Vital**

I'm what most of you know as an adept, a follower of the inner path. Since the very first manifestations of adept powers, magical theorists and academics have tried to categorize and quantify this particular expression of magic. In recent years even the scientific community has acknowledged that the range of adept powers is becoming significantly broader, making old labels inadequate. Many adept abilities simply aren't sufficiently distinct, visible and evident enough to allow traditional categorization. The scientific community's ineffectual attempts to definitively catalogue adept abilities underline the plain truth that the Sixth World still lacks a comprehensive definition of what it means to be an adept.

• Mainstream awareness of adepts has also taken longer. During the decade or so following the Awakening, those whose Gift expressed as inner magic went mostly ignored as folks' attention focused on flashy sorcery and conjuring.

• Magister

• It didn't help that many of the first expressions of adept powers were discreet boosts to people's natural abilities and not particularly glaring. It was only when Rodney Cole ran the one hundred meter dash in under 8.5 seconds at the 2018 World Championships that people really caught on.

• Olympiad





Constantly evolving variations and previously unidentified abilities are not uncommon. Accurately categorizing adept powers has proven next to impossible since similar powers manifest in so many different forms. Most often intense focus and training shape an adept's abilities, but sometimes the subconscious itself shapes the way powers manifest.

- That's an interesting thought. Most magic use relies on focused conscious willpower. The fact that adepts can, at least partially, mold their magic subconsciously is pretty unique and even contrary to some schools of thought regarding the nature of mana.

- Miss Tick

- Yeah, the field is getting broader. Just this week I caught on to the fact that my fixer is an adept. He's been using his talents to run circles around us every time we sit down to negotiate. Just ain't right I tell ya, when a man can't even trust his fixer.

- Crow

- Right, and you think I haven't caught a whiff of Dinah's pheromones by now? All's fair in love and business, chummer.

- Chessman

Since the first registered instances of adept abilities back in the teens, understanding and perceptions of what adepts are and what they are capable of have changed significantly. It's becoming more and more obvious those gifted with inner magic are naturally versatile at channeling mana into different somatic expressions and powers. This, as well as the interest and money pouring into research, points to adepts as one of the segments of the magic community showing the greatest growth.

- An MIT&T study shows a 3 percent increase in the adept population worldwide over the last 5 years. Charles University and Cambridge have it as high as 5 percent.

- Silicon Mage

- This has a lot to do with the fact that a number of new ways have been identified and previously unaccounted-for adepts now figure in the numbers. It isn't strictly a population growth issue, so much as a discovery of existing Talents.

- Talon

WALKING THE WAYS

My username, Elan Vital, is a term conceived by Henri Bergson, a nineteenth-century French philosopher. It was his term for "the stuff of life." You'll have to excuse me if I turn too academic here, but Elan Vital, more specifically, defines a hypothetical force responsible for the evolution of human will. I like the name, and Bergson's concepts, for if he lived today in the Awakened world, his thoughts might have best described the concept of various adept's ways far better than my own. If I were to further his thinking, I would suggest that in the metahuman species magical expression is simultaneously affected by con-

scious introspection and subconscious residual image (an image projected externally by the adept).

Now, before I completely frighten off readers, let me try to put that in layman's terms. In practice, the ways adepts follow are a deceptively simple and natural aspect of adept development, but they are also a complex concept for theorists to nail down. At the risk of oversimplifying, a way is a focus for personal development, a path an adept consciously or sometimes subconsciously follows toward a personal ideal. This archetypal focus and its inherent mental outlook defines the adept's abilities by channeling his inner magic in specific ways. For instance, a follower of the artist's way is far less likely to develop destructive abilities when his gifts are naturally focused toward creation, while an adept of the speaker's way will naturally tend to develop socially oriented powers, as opposed to physical ones.

- So a way defines an adept's abilities?

- GnuB

- There's no doubt ways guide the manner in which an adept develops his abilities. For some adepts, these abilities express spontaneously; for others, their abilities are developed through focused training. Some powers, especially metamagic, only seem obtainable by formal training. Arguably, adepts who naturally express their abilities learn faster, but those who cultivate their talents with lessons have more control over the direction they take. And there's always the fact that your subconscious sometimes harbors dark and disturbing things, like repressed feelings and buried animosities, that may affect an adept's personal development.

- Hiro

- The real question is, does the magic enhance your natural interests, or is your way defined by the abilities you express? Does the Gift send you down a given path or do you choose which path to follow? Now there's a tough one.

- Silicon Mage

- Bet your hoop that some corps out here have teams of behavioral psychologists and mind-control technicians hard at work figuring out if they can mold an adept's inherent abilities through cheerful methods like strict control of the childhood environment, response conditioning and any other manipulative methods their sick minds can devise. Just think what a corp could do with an army of self-made adepts.

- Tom-Three

In Western cultures, "ways" are not seen as bodies of beliefs, codes of conduct or symbolic constructs like a magician's tradition. They are much less restrictive and reflect an individual's personality, ideals and outlook on life. As such, knowingly or not, most adepts follow a way, though many individual and cultural variants exist. In fact, most of the ways we explore in this piece should be seen as archetypal of

Western cultures rather than globally representative. Western magical theory acknowledges "ways" as personal, though other cultures across the globe believe these life paths are inseparable from other cultural mores and beliefs.

It also bears mentioning that there are a few cases of adepts who have yet to find their way and those that never do. These are sometimes called the "Lost" and they inevitably find it harder to develop their skills and gifts without the focus that a way provides.

- These "Lost" are not as uncommon as Elan seems to think. Some people simply lack the kind of personality to adopt a way, others find they drift away when something happens to make them lose their direction or shake their belief in their way. Still others never reconcile the fact they are Awakened. Without the focus of a way's mindset, an adept's powers and gifts become harder to develop, and his magic is usually channeled by random necessity and desire.

- Kwai Chang

THE SPIRIT WAY

Part of my responsibility in this upload, and probably the easiest aspect of the entire chore, is to explain the philosophy of the spirit way, which I follow. The spirit way embodies the harmony of the physical and the astral worlds. The physical world is an empty shell without the astral, and many of the mysteries and secrets of life and the spirits are revealed when an adept walks this path. I learned the guidance of my way from my grandfather, who once wrote an essay on Shadowland on this very subject.

All followers of the spirit way have the Sight, the ability to view the astral plane at will. Without this ability, it is impossible to find the center of the ideal the way drives toward, the essence of the "other world" and its impact on your personality, your strength of will and the power of your mind. It isn't necessary to develop the body with this way. While I like to keep in shape for my health, this way does not advocate building physical strength or health, as with the athlete's way or warrior's way.

- I believe the body must have the mind, and the mind must have the body, especially for the Awakened. Think of the magicians who have been lost on the astral plane, their spirits separated from their bodies, dying in a very short time. I would caution readers to keep harmony in body and mind.

- Fortune

My specialty is the study of the metahuman soul, aura, life force or whatever other term for the "stuff of life" you prefer. I use my gift to learn, and I have learned to study the astral—a world ripe with hidden knowledge for those who would seek it out. I have full confidence I will succeed in every case I take for my profession, as a private detective and hired counsel by many governmental agencies. I excel at solving riddles and unraveling mysteries, and I always rely on the guidance of the astral world.

- I'll vouch, Elan's a damn fine PI and a consultant for the FBI in cases involving mumbo jumbo they can't figure. I've crossed tracks with him once, while "unofficially" investigating a job (my employer didn't trust the authorities to get it right). Better to steer clear of that gaze of his. It'll bore a hole straight through your brain and leave you jelly-legged to boot.

- SPD

When I perceive the astral, I have the ability to absorb a host of clues in a matter of seconds. My magic calls out the emotions and feelings of those who have passed through, interacted or dwelt in the scene. When I perceive a soul, I learn far more about the soul than he or she could imagine, and far more than even most other Awakened. I can sense the inner and outer motivations of the soul, even when those motivations were meant to remain hidden. The naked eye is blind in comparison. The physical world can deceive, but the astral doesn't lie.

- When I first learned of adepts exploring the astral, like many of my peers, I laughed. Adepts are Awakened, but let's face it, the astral world is the domain of magicians.

- Neo-stradamus

- The world is ever changing, chummer, and you better hop on board. I've met Elan, and he's one of only three folks I know able to tag me as a mage regardless of my Masking. The other two were my mentors. His sight is keener than any mage's I know.

- Fatima

As a result of prolonged use of true Sight, my physical sight has become exceptionally sharp. Scientists will tell you that people must be born with a photographic memory or suffer traumatic brain injury that creates a savant-like memory—but not the Awakened, for many of us develop a faculty for dimensional memorization, an evolved photographic memory.

- This claim isn't substantiated by science. I've been privy to research into the subject and there was no conclusive evidence of "dimensional memory." It was dismissed.

- Logik

In the pursuit of my way, I have yet to delve into the denizens of the astral world, though many adepts of the spirit way spend decades studying and learning them. They pursue understanding of the true nature of spirits, the duality of soul and being and the mysteries of the higher planes.

- Many would say the true calling of the spirit way lies less in the study of the metahuman aura than in study of spirits.

- Magister

- There's no right or wrong take on a way, other than a man's natural calling. As my grandson Elan said up front, ways are simply conventions to label individuals with similar outlooks.



Assuming one person's perspective on a way is more valid than another's is misleading. Ways are as personal as a personality, and in the end each person's perspective is as unique as his retinal scan or fingerprint tests.

• Nathan Mack Sr.

THE WARRIOR'S WAY

Finding a follower of the way of the warrior to handle this bit proved much harder than expected. Not because they are rare and hard to find, but because few of the ones I know could be bothered to take the time to actually write down their thoughts. Guerrero may have a checkered past, but in this case it plays in his favor. He has severed his former affiliations and now is a free agent out of Denver.

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Strange how things work out. Two years ago I was an elite Jaguar Guard operating in the Yucatán; today I'm just another runner eking out a living in Denver's shadows. It's amazing what a close encounter with a great dragon will do to your career perspectives. Not that I had high hopes to begin with; I had too much Anglo blood in me (or "not enough commitment," as my officers called it) to make the high ranks. I never played along with the priests or developed into one of the cold-hearted fraggers people think of when they think of Jaguars. I never did get the souped-up foci and blood gifts they reserve for their fanatics. Then again, maybe that was for the best. I was working security at the Pyramid when Ghostwalker trashed it. I survived. I took the hint and changed my lifestyle.

• The Jags aren't the only ones that recruit adepts; most Native American nations and quite a few other militaries go out of their way to locate and sign up adepts, including testing all new recruits for Talent. They don't usually get outstanding treatment unless they show particular promise, in which case they're scooped up for special forces and black ops work. Sioux Wildcats and Tir Ghosts number more than a few warrior's way adepts.

• Wynde

• What about the Order of Cu Chulainn and the Reach Fullieach in Tir na nÓg, they follow this way too?

• DeWinter

• Sort of. No matter what the Danaan mumbo jumbo they pile on it, it's just a cultural variation on a theme.

• Mikhail Z

• Don't ye believe it, term. I've run into them and I can tell ye they're not yer average adepts.

• Hotwire Martyr

I'm here to tell you about the path I follow, what my drill instructors simply called *El Camino*, known up north as the way of the warrior. As you can probably guess, I'm not the most well-adjusted guy in the world: all my life I've been a scrapper.

Growing up a *gringo* in a tough *barrio* of Tenochtitlán and getting the short end of the stick, even after my Talent brought me to the attention of the Jaguars, means I've always carried around a lot of pent-up resentment and anger. That's fine, though, since my way is all about learning to direct and focus that aggression, channeling that destructive emotion to make me a better fighter. Warriors are one of the most common adept types in the shadows. The violent nature of the biz naturally appeals to them.

• Warrior adepts come in all shapes and sizes, from Viking berserkers to zen archers. Their common denominator is a focus on conflict and turning their destructive bent into an art form. What separates a Gladio pit fighter from a world-class boxer adept isn't his ability but outlook: an athlete strives to excel in his field, a warrior lives for conflict. It's all in the mind.

• Johnny Zen

• Unlike the traditions of full-on magicians, ways allow for a lot of leeway. While a street fighter finds a focus for his natural aggressiveness and thrives on violence for its own sake, others follow a code and see the way of the warrior as a path to martial excellence. Different strokes, but both use conflict as a path to an ideal.

• Samurai Jack

The abilities and gifts I've developed through focus and training make me the match of any razorboy, though initiation has made me stronger, faster and more lethal. Some warriors like myself prefer to concentrate on one fighting technique or weapon. My weapons of choice are blades of all types, from throwing knives to monoswords. Something about the way they feel, like extensions of my body. But I've met warriors who are martial arts monsters and masters at other weapons, both in the Jaguars and among the shadows. In all cases, our gifts make us superhuman fighters: resilient, deadly and lightning fast.

• And people say I've got an attitude!

• Prime Runner

• No less dangerous. For these guys combat is a vocation.

• Brand

• Saw a gunslinger showing his skills off at a rodeo down in Dallas/Fort Worth, sharpshooting from a speeding bike. As he flashed past the stands, we heard one long crack from his revolver. Thing is, when the camera crew replay went over the rodeo's big screen, it showed a neat 6-pack of bullet holes in the target. At first I thought he was cybered, but I peeked at his aura between shows and lo-and-behold: an adept.

• Zoomer

As anyone who's been in a fight will tell you, it isn't all about being able to beat the tar out of an opponent or take someone out with a killing blow. Somatic adepts who follow



this way also develop the abilities their Talent grants them defensively. There's no point in winning a fight if you're as fragged up as the enemy. Some try to make themselves impossible to touch, others boost their physical endurance to take the hits. Ultimately a warrior goes with whatever it takes to be the last man standing.

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- Maybe that's what Guerrero was taught, but victory without honor is no victory.

- Kwal Chang

- Come off your high horse, any fight you can walk away from is a good fight.

- California Mountain Snake

THE ARTIST'S WAY

Zephyr is a friend I know from a period I spent in Denver. She wasn't my first choice to cover this bit—to be honest, she wasn't even on the short list. But in hindsight, I think what she has to say will be an eye opener to anyone who assumes that artists are those intellectual snobs you see parked at gallery openings guzzling champagne.

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Hi y'all, this is Zephyr and I'm gonna talk about my views on adept magic, life and all that good stuff. Elan called me a while ago and asked if I knew any artist types. I asked him if I would do. Before he could get out an objection, I told him to think about it. Well, he thought about it and agreed.

People I've worked with usually think of me as a rigger or a driver. I prefer to think of myself as more of a mechanic, though even that doesn't really cover it. Sure, I can drive almost anything, but that's not my true passion. My thing is tech: gadgets, toys, cars, you name it. Believe me, what I can do with hard tech is nothing short of artistry. That's my knack; I'm a maker and a tinkerer. I can build almost anything, jury-rig and tweak any kind of device, take apart just about anything and put it together again better than new.

Nothing beats the thrill of designing something completely new, though! I'm lucky I live in the shadows, where I can practice my art as I see fit, without worrying about things like "marketing potential" or "profit margins." Spirits, but I love building and coming up with new stuff!

- Yeah, you could say Zeph Improved my Scorpion in much the same way a painter "improves" a canvas.

- Blitzkrieg

Since we don't have some megacorp's resources at our fingertips, an added bonus of life in the shadows is gear scrounging. "Nothing to fear if you've got the gear!" is doubly true if you've designed and built it with your own two hands. I know my creations' limits like I know those of my own body, probably better in some cases.

- There's a lesser way emerging these days. We call it the way of the savant, and as far as I can see, Zephyr fits the mental profile close enough, though her creative outlook makes all the difference. She obviously loves getting her hands dirty, not really our sort of thing.

- Idle Savant

- You've hit the nail on the proverbial head. It's all in the head; everything depends on your outlook. The difference between an artist and a savant is that the first loves the act of creation while the latter craves the mental challenge. Sort of like how an athlete fights for the pleasure of competition, while to a warrior it's just what he does.

- Silicon Mage

Don't assume I'm an antisocial techno-geek, locked up in my workshop all the time, and never hanging out with people. While I do spend a lot of time elbow-deep in grease, I'm far from a shut-in. I like hanging out with my chummers as much as the next gal. I care for them, and when a bike I customized saves a friend's life, it's like I've done it myself. While art is its own reward, the appreciation of others is important.

Now, to be honest not everything I do is art. When the chips are down and I need the cash or someone calls in a favor, I do just about any tech job. Honestly, it depends on the person, but for some of them, my heart just isn't in it. Doesn't mean I don't do my best, but the result just wasn't the same.

- Not all artists produce something material; some of us are performers who value the reaction of the audience as the most important thing. Zephyr hints at this when she talks about her friends enjoying her work, but for those who don't create a physical object, it's the connection to the audience we're looking for. By the way, I said "reaction" for a reason. Sometimes we're trying to get a message across, rather than just produce entertainment—of course, we'd like to get back to that someday.

- Olivier

My Talent's proved a huge help in my work. Most of the work I do will void the warranty, so service access wasn't part of the design criteria. My body's real flexible and my fingers don't shake at all, which are big help with my work. Extra strength helps too when extracting an engine or mounting a door.

- Or if your power steering gets shot out. Magic would be nice sometimes.

- Zoomer

Despite the trid archetypes of adepts as combat monsters, our magic can enhance our bodies in less obvious ways too. For example, almost all tech has some horribly deadly poisons involved in either manufacture or use—hydrozine jet fuel can kill you if you touch a wet spot on the pavement—but I've



been able to develop a resistance to toxins. Magic even boosts my mental agility, my ability to plan and reason, and I can skim the manual while hacking the work at the same time.

- Personally, I like being able to “see” my audience. Nothing helps you gauge a crowd like astral perception.
- Social Adept

My magic has increased my devotion to my art, and vice versa. I can’t imagine one without the other. I might be the same person without my magic, but then again, I might not. I’m sure nothing else would be the same.

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- Magic’s great, it’s amazing what you can make when your hands can chip marble. Just recently, I found out that it works on hoodlums too.
- Handiwork

- Eddie Mwabe’s drummer can play from across the room. He tries to hide it, as Mwabe’s the big front man and he’s worried about his job, but sometimes he moves a little farther back than he should and still makes a beat. Looks neat if you catch the right angle. Heard buzz about him wanting out, Eddie wanting him gone and the label wanting to give him a more active role.
- Cobalt Blue

THE ATHLETE’S WAY

For the next piece, I’ve asked for the help of not one but two old friends. Both follow the way of the athlete and though they’re twins, they’ve taken completely different paths in life. So much for stereotypes. Sandi is an accomplished acrobat with the *Cirque du Soleil* troupe in Europe and Samantha is a prize-fighting kickboxer on the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) circuit. As to how I know the twins—well, that’s a cherished memory I think I’ll keep to myself.

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Sandi: Let’s get this show on the road. You start, sis.

Sam: Right. The way Elan explained this to me, he seems to think it’s interesting that Sam and I took such different roads in life, being twins, somatic adepts and followers of the same “way.” He says it’s an “exemplary case of divergent subconscious projection in sibling rivalry.” Reminds me why we don’t date anymore. Anyway, back to us. Sandi and I grew up in Portland—yes, we’re both elves too, stop drooling. As you may or may not know, schools in the Tir make physical fitness a priority; it’s almost a national craze—a sound mind in a sound body and all that. It’s billed as preparation for the Rite of Progression, which is physically demanding. Even back then, Sandi and I were on different frequencies, she the gymnast and me the track-and-field nut.

Sandi: Keep in mind that the Tir does extensive testing for magical talent; it even has its own version of the Dumas Test called the Xavier Exam. Sam and I tested negative during primary and secondary school. Not surprising really, most people in Elfand do, regardless of the Council’s propaganda. You could say we were late bloomers.

• The Dumas Test isn't 100 percent accurate; more Talents slip through than people realize. The twins must have been just such a case.

• Mandrake

• Or not. The Dumas Test and its counterparts were designed to detect active magic potential, but in many adepts the Talent lies dormant until subconsciously kickstarted when an adept's natural abilities are pushed to the limit. It's far more common among athlete adepts than other types, too.

• Talon

Sam: I was the first to manifest my Talent. I was walking home from practice one evening and a couple of Tuskboyz looking for some action jumped me. They got more than they bargained for. Our older brother's a Peace Forcer and he'd been teaching us carromaleg. I went into defensive stance as one grabbed for me and something quite literally kicked in. The two thugs were down in a heartbeat. Both had to be hospitalized.

Sandi: For me it happened a few months later, during the try-outs for the national gymnastics team. I was trailing and I really needed the points on the asymmetrical bars. My routine went okay, but I was way too tense, too stiff. Suddenly everything faded, the bars came into clear focus, my body swung and twisted through my routine with incredible ease. My muscles rippled with new strength, my mind was crystal clear and my confidence grew. On the fly, I decided to improvise the ending, something really flashy. I swung up and out, and shocked myself with a perfect triple Lermetov. To cut a long story short, the jury boasted a mage, and despite my complaints I was disqualified for using a Gift I didn't even know I had!

Sam: Ironically, our new found Gifts put an end to our budding athletic careers, at least as far as official competitions went. Magic is still seriously frowned upon in both international athletics and gymnastics. Neither of us was much interested in the offers that were fielded for us to join the Peace Force and even paladin groups. In fact, life in the Tir was getting unbearably repressive back then. We pooled our savings and moved to Seattle despite mum's pleas.

Sandi: I was getting desperate to find work when a talent agent who'd been in the Tir and seen my performance rang me up. He asked if I'd be interested in a career in showbiz. I'm not entirely sure why I said yes, but I can't say I regret it. A couple of seasons as part of a Vegas extravaganza was enough for the *Cirque du Soleil* to pick up my multi-trapeze act. The *Cirque* boasts quite a few adepts among its acts, and I fit right in, even though I had to move to Europe to get the job.

• Sandi isn't kidding either. While circuses nowadays with their big stage extravaganzas and musical features owe less to Barnum than to the Moulin Rouge, human talent is the big draw. Barred from pursuing their Gift in sports, athlete adepts make for excellent contortionists, knife-throwers and acrobats of all sorts.

• Big Ring

Sam: Me? I liked the thrill I got from that fight. Not the violence, but the power and skill. When we moved to Seattle I joined a sparring club run by an adept named Johnny Zen and eventually made my way into the only league—legal, that is—that takes adepts: the UFC. These days I'm ranked ninth worldwide, but I'm in no hurry.

• Wait, this is Sammy K? Wow! I saw her take down Lucy Marriot last month in Atlanta. Chillin' fighting girl, I'm impressed. Hey Sammy, if you ever take to the shadows, drop me a line.

• Riot Grrrl

• The UFC has a fair number of warriors as well as athletes in the ranking. Sammy's one of the new generation who's moving in on the big money prizes.

• Hammer

Sandi: People tell me my way is all about striving for an ideal of physical perfection, to excel as an acrobat; that it's about facing my physical limits and overcoming them. Personally all this "way" business seems a little silly. I just want to be one of the best, or at least the best that I can be. I don't think of it as a deliberate path in life. I never have. I bet Elan would tell me I'm still "subconsciously developing toward an idealized self-image" but that's just my point; it's not a conscious decision for me, or for Sam or a number of athlete adepts I've met. Compared to those of some adepts out there, our abilities are actually pretty dull. In most cases, they simply boost natural skills and abilities to exceptional levels.

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• Better say "superhuman" levels—which is why adepts are banned in most non-augmented leagues. Professional sports authorities still view magical enhancement as detrimental to the sport, like cyber, and keep adepts off the field.

• MVP

• The overall anti-magic bias in the sports world is pervasive. Magic is viewed with suspicion by many fans and purists who believe it's a game-breaker. Any inkling of magic use at a major Olympic event, for instance, is still enough to disqualify the participants. A few countries make exceptions but in most cases they still place magically enhanced athletes in separate leagues.

• Neon Teal

THE INVISIBLE WAY

The following is the result of an honor debt that I called in. You see, a proponent of the invisible way that engages in criminal activity should be expected to remain, well, invisible. Sometimes that isn't possible, particularly if I am on the job. Anyway, this testimonial comes from someone highly respected among his peers and remarkably capable of slipping out of sight and mind.



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My street name is Neko. In English, it translates to cat, and when I started out, it seemed appropriate. When I was young, I envisioned making a name for myself; born with natural, swift, cat-like reflexes and matchless grace, moving with the lightest footfalls on rooftops and across hallways. I studied ballet for a time as a child, and I studied kenjitsu under my father. As a man, I now embody the traits of the cat I once aspired to, and the name Neko bears my reputation. But I have grown in my way, and I find it no longer represents me in entirety.

Why, you may ask? Because cats, for all their wonderful grace, can be seen and heard and caught. Were I to choose a name today, I would take the Latin term *Nemo*, or *Mumeishi* in my native Japanese, "nobody" or "anonymous" in English. To be unknown is a crucial advantage in my line of work, and my powers bring me closer to that end every day. Though you have likely never heard of me, I am a member of what is known in law-enforcement circles as the Nightingale Syndicate. We procure fine treasures from the clutches of those who would hoard and lock them away.

- C'mon man, call it by its name. You're a thief. That's T-H-I-E-F.
- Cynic
- Aren't most shadowrunners? Actually, Neko's a brilliant cat burglar. He's made "Most Wanted" lists in twelve countries and all the security corps know his handle. But a name is just that, without a face. Apparently, nobody really knows what he looks like or who he is.
- X-Star

I am writing this today because I was caught once, by my friend and rival Elan. There is great irony in describing my mindset to you, for my master would no doubt question how I can remain out of sight and mind by registering in print the things that make me so. But nonetheless, a debt is a debt, and I am nothing if not honorable.

- So there really is honor among thieves. Not the ones I've known.
- Don-o

I must address the name of my path, the so-called invisible way. At first read, it conjures images of ancient ninja in the night and the unheard whispers and movements of the darkness. While often these traits are true, even of myself in my younger years, it is also important to recognize the scope of the term *invisible* beyond its obvious implications. After all, this is the path of not being obvious.

- Despite Neko's digression, there is in fact a thriving invisible way subculture comprised of modern day adepts styling themselves as ninjas and silent assassins. They are actually the most common followers of the way, from what I have observed.
- Riddick

I envision the invisible way as affecting all senses: to touch and leave no trace, to bear no smell, leave no sound, to have keen sight of the interaction your body has with its surrounding. To be invisible in life is not only to be unheard and unseen but to embrace the concept of being *unknown*.

My way defines my life. While on the job, I simply cannot be found if I choose not to be. My feet caress the grass and blades bend underfoot, yet no sound or track will ever be seen. My balance is without equal and I can scale sheer walls at a sprint. I can contort into the smallest of boxes or crawl-spaces should I need to hide (I was once smuggled into a high-security hotel in a carry-on suitcase) or drop several floors without harm if haste is required. If I am detected, the person will be left uncertain of his senses, with only a growing shadow of doubt as to what I was crossing his or her mind. Even in the open, under direct scrutiny, I am humble and easily overlooked, or mistaken for something other than what is sought.

In my early years, if spotted I would appear in the following manner on the trid; dressed in all black, with a mask on my face and a hood covering my head, operating only at night. But I have felt my power evolve over the years, as I have grown closer and closer to the embodiment of *Nemo*. I have learned to actually *become* Joe Nobody, by altering my facial muscles and bone structure, and by lightening or darkening my skin tone. I can physically mask my Japanese heritage, and I have been known to change my appearance multiple times in the course of a penetration. With a few seconds of concentration, I can make myself anonymous. I have expanded the concept of invisible and may walk in the light of day indiscriminately, unnoticed, invisible in the mind's eye. My true identity becomes a listless fog in the mind of those I meet; indeed, sometimes even in my own mind I begin to forget.

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- I knew a guy like this. He could walk into a high-security building, stroll past the guards without getting a glance and make himself unsuspecting, as if he just belonged. He would rob places in the middle of the day, right in front of everybody and maybe even recruit some help hauling the goods out. Poetry in motion.
- Silk

THE SPEAKER'S WAY

The following is an excerpt of a speech given by Sister Mary Eiledon, recorded at a local chapter meeting of the Sisters of Eglantine by Donald Fereh, a reporter and editor of the "Life and Magic" e-zine. The Sisters of Eglantine, as the name indicates, are a community of women linked to the Mutter Erde polidub. Given the current election year, the Sisters have been very active in their community, so representatives of various candidates and other support groups were present.

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Words enchant. Mystify. For centuries, words have instigated wars, built and destroyed nations, terrorized races, or inspired great, profound discoveries. Words carry magic when



spoken from certain mouths, and in centuries past, before the Awakening, they carried truth.

But I submit to you that the speaker radiates power and magic, for words may be empty or weak. How often have you all heard an electoral candidate utter the expression, "for the children," or a lawyer whine, "taken out of context." There is no power in those words.

There is a passage from a speech that I learned as a young woman in college, an excerpt of which reads: "If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven played music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well."

Powerful. These words stir the heart. Martin Luther King Jr. cared about his home and his passion, and his words inspired me in my youth. I care about my home, my community. These streets are our responsibility. There are forces at work, attempting to drive the soul of Goddess out of our home, attempting to destroy the majesty and beauty of the community, and for "only a cheap nuyen," as my mother would say. The Sisters of Eglantine will step out in force on the streets this year, speaking to the homeless, the chip-induced lost, the wayward souls in need of faith and love. We have the power of the magic in our voices and Goddess is with us, and our counsel inspires hope in the hopeless.

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- There's heavy irony in the fact that we're reading the words of a supposedly powerful feminist orator, thereby stripping her of all her power. But even in just writing, she certainly seems persuasive.

- Whisper

- Interesting quote. The Sisters are street sweepers themselves. If they want you off the street, then they get you off the street—and they don't just use words, prayers or kindness. Ask my chummer, Hot Rod, who was laid up for three weeks at Ngyun's chop shop.

- Slow Mob

- They've got nuyen, chummers, coming from somewhere. My fixer once hit me up for gang cleanup, nothing big, but supposedly funded by the "kindnesses" of the Sisters. Would have been very profitable.

- Conspir-I-See

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Fereh: Miss Mary, your speech was riveting. There wasn't one interruption from the crowd, not one bathroom break or cough. How do you hold the audience so well?

Elledon: It's a matter of self-discovery and confidence. Everyone has the power within him or her for speech. For the Awakened, the potency of our words can transfix and sway a crowd. Splash in some passion and the words inspire. My voice is my gift.

- My voice is my gift—I follow this way—but I don't claim false nobility for my acts. My knack is simply to convince people to give me things they had previously thought valuable. I'm not God's (or the Goddess's) gift to metahumanity. I'm just very, very persuasive.

- Griffer

Fereh: Are you saying that being Awakened helps you in this job?

Elledon: It is not a job, Mr. Fereh. It is a life's passion. And yes, having been blessed by the Goddess with powers greater than the average person is a tremendous advantage. But it is not the gift that helps, rather how you use the gift. I have rescued children from the streets with soft, kind words and an open heart. I have restored hope to aging souls drowning their lives in abuse of the temptations of the streets. I grow more confident with my voice, and my knowledge can bring people back to a real life.

- It's not just activists and con men making use of their social talents. Other speaker's way adepts include politicians and lawyers (well, ok, bad examples), teachers, actors—hell, even the coach of the Texas Lone Stars is a speaker adept (and they got to the World Series last year!)

- Griffer

Fereh: You say the Goddess blessed you with powers. Who is she and what exactly did she give you?

Elledon: She has had many names and identities over the years. Most look upon Diana as the finest embodiment. She blessed me with the power of sense. To speak to someone, especially a person without hope, requires keen senses. I empathize with their grief. I can see their despair with my eyes. Mr. Fereh, hear it in their voice tone, feel it in their touch. When I speak to someone, I can feel my power, my emotion coursing through the person's soul. Could you not feel my disposition growing on you during my speech? To be an effective speaker, one must understand and open one's soul to the powers of the higher senses. To truly give and to receive. Speech is far more than voice and words.

Fereh: Do you ever prepare your speeches?

Elledon: Of course, to some extent. But often the impact of prepared speech is weaker than of inspired spontaneity. The act of drawing the words from the heart while standing in the fire of the audience is part of the majesty of the moment.

Fereh: Thank you, Miss Mary, for your time and beautiful words.

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THE SHAMANIC WAY

Followers of the shamanic way are far more common among the NAN and other tribal cultures than the urban shadows. Like shamans, these adepts follow totems, but have a distinct approach from their magical counterparts. The shamanic adept—also called a totemic adept or a follower of the animal way—tries to embody the idealized qualities of his totem, seeing it as a way, a path or an ideal to emulate. This expresses best in the powers they manifest, which often mimic enhanced versions of the totem's natural abilities. I've called in a friend to



bring you the inside perspective on the shamanic way. He's a little gruff, but someone you can count on when in a bind, that's just his style. Without further ado, here's Howler.

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My given name is Jack Thunder, but my friends call me Howler. I'm a Sioux half-blood of the Yantonais tribe, and I was a Wildcat until I ran into some trouble with an officer. You might say I have problems with authority figures—must be the Wolf in me.

Vital and I share a history. I still owe him for help in tracking down a couple of fugitives that skipped into the Salish-Shidhe. That's what I do by, the way, I'm a bounty hunter. Appropriate, since my totem is the great hunter himself, Brother Wolf. Which is why Vital asked me to give this a shot. I'm what the eggheads call a shamanic adept.

- Various Eastern martial arts boast "animal-like" abilities and techniques, though their approach to totemic power is completely different. Adepts who train in these traditions distill the animal's natural savagery through zen techniques until they are at one with the beast and control its abilities.

- Kwai Chang

- What about the animal warriors in Azanian tribes? They tattoo symbols of their totem on their bodies to power their gifts.
- Elijah

Unlike others that I've known who follow Brother Wolf, I'm not the type to run with a pack—a lone wolf, as it were. Old Dancing Crow, my tribe's shaman, once told me Wolf was particularly strong in me. When I used his gifts he might come out and I would walk in his skin. A street mage friend of mine calls it a shamanic mask, but what does he know?

A wolf on the prowl is a scary thing. I recall the time a Cherokee gunrunner got the drop on me outside Butte. When he saw Brother Wolf descend on me, he freaked and got off a couple of rounds—one grazed my temple and knocked me out cold. Unfortunately for him, he pissed himself too. I tracked him for two days through the woods on scent alone. Still wear a couple of his gold teeth as a charm.

- The totems lend us their eyes, ears, reflexes, speed, stealth and claws as they see fit, but each warrior's relation with his totem is unique. To me, Bear is the guardian and wise chief. To my mother, Bear is a healer and wise woman, hibernating to seek the deepest truths, the honey of life.

- Bearclaw



• Many tribes make no distinction between a full shaman and a shamanic adept—they are both touched by the spirits. They're considered the tribe's guardians and guides.

• Notch

I can't speak for anyone else—I've heard there are those who resist the totem's call or even try to tame it—but it's exhilarating to feel Wolf's breath, look through his eyes, smell the world through his nose. There's nothing quite like running with Brother Wolf, tracking prey, ripping with his claws and teeth. To be honest, sometimes it's fraggin' hard to rein him in. If I get hurt or lose it in a scrap, the blood lust just takes over. When Vital first helped me out, tracking down a runaway tribal kid up Seattle way, we were cornered by some Yaks running protection for the bunraku parlor that had the kid. The Idiots taunted me way too much, even nicked me with a katana. Brother Wolf was not happy when he came out. I ripped them to shreds, not even aware of what I had done until we had finished tracking the boy.

• Sounds cool, but I don't see a difference between Howler and the scrappers who follow the way of the warrior.

• GnuB

• Howler actually believes he's embodying Wolf. I'm not going to tell him he's wrong. Are you?

• San

I keep hearing shamanic adepts have a way with animals. Though it's strange for a hunter, it's true for me. I'm not sure it's that common, though. This affinity thing gave me a surprise last winter. I was following up on a bounty, a lone she-wolf ripping up Genetique cattle up Billings way. I tracked her over the snowdrifts after a kill, moving downwind. She smelled sick to me, maybe the genemeat she'd been feeding on, maybe something worse. Took her down nice and clean just outside her lair. Heavy with a meal, she was no match for Brother Wolf's reflexes. I was about to leave with the pelt when I heard scrabbling from inside the rock lair. It couldn't be a mate. I would've sniffed his mark. Turned out to be a cub, no more than a couple months old. I couldn't bring myself to leave it out there to die, so I took it in. Blizzard is coming along just fine and we get along real nice, family-like. Who'da thought? Not the commitment type, me, but I think Brother Wolf was giving me a hint.

Dancing Crow tells me he's got a trick to teach me, something about going on a vision quest with Blizzard so he can share Brother Wolf's gifts. I'm game. Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks?

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• Bleeding heart sentimental drek.

• Bung

• Magic or otherwise, there's a lot of folklore about wildmen and human-animal bonding. I don't think it's surprising that an Awakened variant should crop up in this day and age.

• El Sprito

The Magician's way

Adepts of the magician's way are often seen as oddities, partially because they are relatively rare and partially because they occupy their own niche in the Sixth World's magical ecology. After asking around, I picked Warden off the list of references because of his uniqueness. Warden started out like a mage and discovered his adept abilities later in life.

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To introduce myself, I'm a mercenary, mage and what Elan would call a "magician's way adept." Now, I'd call Elan a "stuffed shirt way adept," but he's more or less on target. I'm part adept, part magician. On the magician's side, I'm hermetic; on the adept side, I could be considered a speaker's way adept. Some people say that I can only be a dabbler in both, a master of neither—I say these distinctions we have between traditions are a lot thinner than most Awakened want to believe.

I was just your standard issue hermetic until a year ago. As Picador mentioned in last year's update, magicians aren't all that useful on a modern battlefield. Spells are about as useful as arrows against panzers and arrows don't drain you as much. Anyway, my job was mainly to ward stuff, order elementals around and talk to the locals. The last part's the fun bit; most of my squadmates are sick of yabbing to me after a couple weeks and elementals are as talkative as the rocks they come from.

I discovered the magician's way when the smuggler I was riding with failed to dodge a rocket 'bout 20 meters above the Yucatán. We jumped out and clung to the tree as the chopper crashed next to an Azzie patrol. We stayed up the tree as I talked the ear off the Azzies for about two hours before some rebels ambushed them. Convincing the rebels not to sacrifice us to their gods was easier.

I found out I was an adept from the rebel doc, while he removed some shrapnel and a bullet from my back. Couldn't have been more surprised if he'd mistook me for a troll. He thanked me for the distraction. Looking back, I had to talk my way out of so many situations during that trip. I'm not surprised magic was involved.

Since then, I've read everything I could on this topic and talked to all the followers of the magician's way I could find. The only similarity I've found between us is that we are all different. I get stir crazy if I don't have someone to chat with. I once worked with an ex-jaguar rebel of the magician's way who followed some sort of shark totem; saw him stun a squad and then tear through them with tooth and claw. The only time I could sleep was when that fragger was on patrol.

For me, hermetic magic is like math—when you're doing it, you know it. But being an adept just feels natural; I'm not sure where talent ends and magic begins. It's not the same for a friend of mine who follows Coyote. To her, the adept powers, spellslinging and conjuring are all gifts from Coyote. During a stint in Africa, I ended up tutoring our guide's kid who also was multi-talented. He had the hardest time understanding spell magic. When I started teaching him, he was the hero of his village, could outrun people five years older, pretty much ignored the heat, beat up kids twice his size, you get the idea. He did everything on a subconscious level. I



tried to show him how to cast levitate, but he couldn't do it unless it was clear he wasn't gonna make it across the ditch. Never mind that this was obvious before he leaped. It's not like the kid was dumb or anything, but he couldn't cast a spell until the last second. It was the planning, the mental symbol manipulation that was difficult. What he would do was study the spell formulas so thoroughly that they became reflexive, like running or jumping. After that, he had no problem using spells at the appropriate time, like they were an extension of his body, some sort of weird astral extra limb. But he never did get the hang of ritual magic.

That's my scoop on the magician's way. We can throw spells, call spirits and tap our inner magic potential. How you rationalize it is pretty much up you.

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- The term "magician's way" can be a misnomer. Some adepts do consider the magician's way their true calling; they focus on the blending of spellcraft and somatic magic—almost like a unified theory of magic. But most followers of the magician's way also adhere to another adept mindset, such as the warrior's way or way of the athlete. Likewise, they can adhere to almost any full magician tradition, from the path of the shaman to the path of wuxing.

- Magister

- I heard blood mage adepts can slice up normal adepts and temporarily steal their powers, above and beyond what they normally get from slicing up others. Heard anything about that?

- Morbid

- Wouldn't be too surprised, wonder if they're worth two million?

- Warden

THE WHALE RIDERS

There are countless cultural and ethnic ways and variations out there, and I was finding it next to impossible to choose one over another. Strangely enough, one of the first things I found caught my attention and provided me with a compromise solution—or, perhaps, a cop-out.

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National Geographic Travelers: The Whale Rider—Maori Legend Come True

According to ancient legend, passed down from generation to generation, the Maori people came to the islands of the South Pacific riding on the back of a whale. For centuries now, the mythic whale rider—the ultimate symbol of the Maori people's profound connection to nature—was simply regarded as a curious legend, entertaining ethnic folklore. The descendants of those ancient heroes, however, are now the hereditary leaders of a vibrant tribal culture—or so historians and anthropologists would have us believe.

It's easy to scoff, of course. But those who do would be surprised to walk into the peaceful village of Tauranga, overlooking the Bay of Plenty on New Zealand's Eastern Coast, and

see a whale rider performing a ritual greeting with a great humpback whale in the shallows. He is 17 years old and his name is Roi Taimana. Like his father and grandfather before him, he is the whale rider of the Tauwhare tribe.

While showing us his marvelous tattoo work—which he promptly assures us is powerful magic to his people—Roi explained what it means to be the whale rider.

Roi: My people were losing a struggle to preserve our culture and traditions, and we would have lost had it not been for the Awakening. It brought new power and meaning to the old ways. It showed some the ancients had been right all along. But the people didn't believe. Too much had been lost. Too many people had lost faith. My grandfather always said our people needed a symbol, a standard. That was when the first whale rider surfaced, Mark Winitana. Soon there were more, one from each tribe. My grandfather was the first of our line. The whale riders are the heralds of change as they had been heralds of a new land in the past.

NGT: But what exactly do you do?

Roi: We are the guardians of Maori culture and our way of life. We are the bond between Maori and nature.

NGT: Sounds romantic being a legend.

Roi: It is a responsibility and an honor, not a privilege. We are brothers to the whales. We ride them out to sea and we speak to them as they sing to us. Together we are more than the sum of our parts.

NGT: Yes, but how do you do such things?

Roi: You would call it magic. The professors at the University of Auckland say that we are "adepts." To me, it doesn't really matter. Those are details. What matters is the legends were true and riders are again the symbol of my people's pact with nature. We are its protectors and stewards and in return we are granted its gifts.

NGT: Protectors?

Roi: You have heard of the problems with the Japanese fishing fleet off Aotearoa? We rode with the protestors and eco-activists and now with the navy. We will not let them strip our seas as they have done in the Philippines.

NGT: That sounds very political. Is that part of being of a hero of legend?

Roi: You make fun, and you are missing the point. It doesn't matter if I can speak to a whale or ride it into the depths, it doesn't matter that I don't feel the chill of the ocean, that I can swim faster and hold my breath longer than any ordinary human could. That is not power, and that is not why I am a rider. True power is the ability to change things for the better, to live up to the traditions and to protect my people and our land. That is what the whale riders are—forces for change and guardians of the covenant between man and nature. Without that, we are nothing.

NGT: Well, thank you for that impassioned explanation and for your time.

After the break we will return with more on our visit to enchanting Aotearoa, the island nation of New Zealand.

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- Now that was weird.

- Kid Code



• Not more so than any other cultural variation on a way. You get all types of exotic variations.
• Magister

• You should see some of the berserker adepts that prowl around with the Viking gangs up here in Scandinavia. Truly scary. They try to emulate the original berserkers using chips, drugs and good old spirits to induce frenzies.
• Munin

• Elan is right, there's an immense number of cultural ways. Some are variations on major ways like the Xhosa Rainwarriors, Oni-do ninjas or the Jaguar Guards' Camino. Others like whale boy here are culturally unique. I won't even get into all the weird stuff on the very fringes.
• Johnny Zen

• Well, the twisted way deserves a mention. You know how Elan said the ways reflected personal ideals? Well, what happens when an adept is seriously screwed up in the noggin? When his ideal self-image is twisted and psychotic rather than positive? These guys are nasty pieces of work. Really nasty.
• Cannonball

• And dangerous too. I crossed swords with a freak like this in San Fran a while back. Schrek by name. Got a kick out of pain, dealing it and taking it! Faster than lightning and built like an ork. Cut him and he'd just smile right back at me.
• Marklar

• Twisters are nasty pieces of work. Their inner darkness consumes them with an insatiable hunger fed by hatred, fear and aggression until there's nothing left of the person they used to be. Every one of them a bloody waste.
• Johnny Zen

• There's no such thing as a "twisted way." They're just adepts gone psycho.
• Brunnen-G

• It's a chicken and egg argument. Was the adept mentally unstable or did his powers frag him up? Because of the nature of their Gift, adepts are far more susceptible than normal people to a number of psychological disorders. Every year a few powerful adepts go barking mad, fooling themselves into believing they're truly invulnerable or untouchable Nietzschean supermen. Some end up believing they're more than human. Above "mere human" laws and morals, they lose their sense of humanity and become cold and psychopathic.
• Soclo Pat

• The truly dangerous ones are unstable but don't show it. The ones that get a kick out of causing pain and damage but write

it off as cold-bloodedness. True pros to the rest of us, fraggged-up every which way on the inside.

• Nacht

• The Blackburn killings in the news last Christmas? The ones everyone thought were caused by a rogue vamp? Turned out the crazy son-of-a-slit behind it was an adept, completely raving mad. He believed he was "powered up" when he bathed in a victim's blood! Took a full team of Star SWAT to put him down in the end.

• Nightline

BROTHERS IN ARMS

In the next section I'll be briefly introducing a few adept groups with distinctly different profiles to give you a general idea of how varied this aspect of "adept culture" really is. Given who'll be reading this upload, I've tried to keep things relevant and I'll be covering groups that are rumored to have, shall we say, a shadowy side.

Despite all their superhuman abilities, adepts are ultimately just gifted metahumans, and metahumans are still social animals who congregate with like-minded individuals for social, intellectual and professional reasons. Like magicians, adepts take advantage of the fact that many such groups naturally combine secular functions and agendas with initiatory practices or dedicated beliefs. Some groups give preference to adepts who follow a specific way, others allow any adept who shares their agenda or dedication and yet others have no membership restrictions, allowing both adepts and other magical types, operating for all intents and purposes as standard magical groups. Some groups stand alone, others operate under the umbrella of a bigger organization. Regardless of their form and goals, they are essential elements of adept society and represent safe refuges from the bigotry and exclusion that mainstream culture still levels against certain adept types.

EXPERIMENTAL TROUPE SIX

Next up I'd like to introduce an off-beat group that is still making waves despite being past its prime. Experimental Troupe 6, known as the Cohen clique in artistic circles, was formed around the vanguard gurus and patrons of the arts Anthony and Lillian Cohen back in '32. Tony became famous as the lead vocalist for alternative novastars *Efemero*, while Lillian was a ground-breaking installation artist. Fabulously successful in the turbulent American arts scene in the Twenties, the couple poured a lot of their wealth into helping out emerging artists—especially adepts. They were spurred on by Juan Gardel, star of the Modignani Dance company, live-in "friend" and adept dancer.

• I can't even count the number of times the neighbors called the Star because of the noise and disturbances. Not that they ever did anything; the Cohens are too well connected.

• SPD



• The parties are no longer as wild and loud as they used to be. Both the Cohens have gone quiet and introspective in their old age. Tony has retired from public life, though Lillian still puts on the odd show. Her productions still rock.

• Arty Nouveau

The Cohen art soirees held at their Everett (Seattle) open space gallery and loft were a cultural event not to be missed on par with Warhol's Factory. From music to sculpture to avant-garde sim-experiences, the Cohen shows had it all, earning a rep for introducing a crop of talented adepts to rich connoisseurs and patrons. To help their protégés—and themselves—to reach their full potential, the Cohens decided to form an initiatory group: Experimental Troupe 6 (so named for its six founding members).

• Maybe somebody would like to comment on Lillian's overfondness for Tantric Centering? Or the group's use of BTLs to reach "higher states" during initiations?

• Auntie Acid

• There's always someone to sling mud at what they don't understand. The Cohens and EXTSix have inspired a generation of cutting-edge acts across the arts spectrum. If it wasn't for them, you'd never have heard of Karjevich, Romero or Luna Gora.

• Allison K.

• While the Cohens are infamous for living it up, I know for a fact they're protective of their little group. They've been known to hire shadow talent to guard aspiring artists and even to teach the odd unscrupulous gallery owner a lesson or two.

• Six

• Way I heard it, "protective" isn't the word. "Obsessive," maybe.

• Samantha

EXTSix's focus has gradually expanded to include the promotion of other Awakened arts, through trend-setting multimedia shows and events. These days the group's successful (and now-wealthy) ever-renewing membership raises funds in support of artists and art projects, manages local and traveling art shows with a rotating roster of artists, and promotes art education at the high school and university levels.

• Tony can't be too happy with the pics of Lillian facehugging hunky rock star Gate all over the scandalsheets last month. By the by, Gato's an adept too, with some serious moves on stage and a voice you wouldn't believe.

• Rolling Stone

• I dated a Trouper back in the Fifties. Turned out to be a selfish prick who believed hanging with a tusk babe with a little Talent would be good for his image. He was cute. I was young and naive. You do the math. Didn't really know the Cohens,

talked to them a coupla times, seemed nice, but I can't say one way or another. But I slept over at the Loft the night my (in)significant other went through an initiation. I shouldn't have, but I crept down to the gallery where they held all their dos and peeked. Lillian and Gardel were dancing stark naked in a pool of weird glowing mist. My SO was sprawled on the floor while the other members sat zoned out in a circle. The mist kept rolling about, as if there was a breeze, and abstract images flickered in and out of focus. When I shifted to the astral for a look-see, I almost crapped my pants. I've since seen bug queens, toxics and even fey, but that avatar is still in the top three weirdest spirits I've ever come across.

• Fatima

GLADIO

Gladio is an example of adepts coming together in reaction to bias and segregation, in this case in professional sports. Adepts in personal combat sports have long suffered from discrimination; their abilities are banned in a number of different leagues and championships, either removing them from general rankings or restricting them to showcase bouts.

• Understatement of the decade. No adepts are allowed in the Olympics and most world championships. When they are allowed to participate it's only in separate leagues, not much different from African-American athletes back at the start of the twentieth century. Even in augmented sports, use of magical abilities is looked down upon, and the media spin in some places is that we're somehow cheating when we use our natural talents.

• John Bull

• Too true. A number of urban brawl and combat bike teams keep their adepts as benchwarmers, trotting them out for the ratings when the crowd is pro-magic biased.

• Brick

• There are those of us that think sport should be about skill, mental and physical prowess, and not an enhancement arms race. Magic, cyber or drugs, it's all cheatin' the game. Why don't you find your own Special Olympics and leave the real deal to true athletes?

• Hawks Fan

In '59, James Royce, a former Kumité champion, brought a number of adepts together as an initiatory group for professional fighters, calling it *Gladio*. About a year later, the group began pooling its resources, raising funds and establishing itself as a force to be reckoned with in pro sports. Royce and company showed exceptional business savvy, investing their winnings and savings to buy out the flagging Ultimate Fighting Championship franchise, which was losing ground to tridcast blood sport channels. With Gladio assuming management, it was opened up to both magically enhanced and cyber-augmented competitors and has since become the premiere combat sport show with



broadcasting deals in 120 countries and several multi-million nuyen licensing and marketing deals.

- Despite the broadcasts, most UFC fights sell out days before the event. All fighting styles are allowed and contestants are organized by weight class. Some offensive cyber and lethal adept abilities are forbidden, but otherwise it's a free-for-all until the opponent is either KOed or bows out.
- Cannonball

In recent months, the lucrative franchise now boasting American, Asian and European leagues has come under investigation by the feds for its ties to several underworld rackets. So far, no conclusive evidence against Gladio has come up, but the authorities are investigating the conspicuous disappearance of several Gladio prize-fighters. Rumor is that some of the real hardcore brawlers are playing the underground pit fight circuits on the side for extra cash. Pit fights are far more brutal, fatalities are not uncommon, and the local syndicates often run the operations. Death fights are especially appreciated and the winner can walk away with huge profits. Gladio's high membership fees and enormous profits allow it to bring in some serious legal talent. But if the feds dig up proof, they're in real trouble.

• This Ban guy is full of crap. The UFC is clean. This isn't the first time there have been false allegations, and it won't be the last. People can't see a good thing without wanting to drag it down. Dreki.

• Ultimate Fan

• Sorry to break it to ya, Fan, but where there's smoke, there's fire. Royce's second, Mikael Kyrin, turned up floating in Boston Harbor last week. He was all bruised up from a fight, but we all know he retired from the business a couple years ago and just ran recruitment for Gladio.

• Kingpin

• Right facts, wrong conclusion.

• Shi

JAMIL ISLAMYAH MONASTERY

I thought long and hard before adding this group. The main reason, to be perfectly honest, is that most of my knowledge of this group comes from word-of-mouth. I think it might be enlightening, however, since I have mentioned the existence of myriad cultural ways and the fact that not all cultures view magic in the same way. This is particularly visible in



Islamic cultures, where traditional hermetic or shamanic magic is often misunderstood—while, ironically, followers of the Inner Path are seen as touched by Allah, their somatic powers simply God's gifts to his *mujahidin* (holy warriors).

• There were cruzados too, during the Euro Wars. Most were Christian zealots all too common here in Spain, but several became famous on the Andalucian front. Nowadays, I've begun to suspect a few were New Templars too. Pardon my magical ignorance, but I'm wondering if there's any real difference between these crusaders and the *mujahidin* other than they follow different faiths?

• Sepherim

Jamil Islamyah is not a sect, but a conservative Sunni movement within the Islamic community, a brotherhood of missionaries, *ulemas* (teachers) and "evangelists" that has been around for about a hundred years and whose influence once spanned the globe. The group was one of the Alliance for Allah's main pillars and has never truly recovered its former status since the Alliance disintegrated. Seeking a new direction, its leaders were confronted with the notion that the destruction of Tehran, the Alliance's failure and the mysterious assassination of mullah Sayid Jazrir might have had different outcomes had Islam been ready to fight fire with fire.

Islamyah's leaders were aware that the Islamic world was lagging behind in the magical arms race and decided to undertake a concerted program to correct this. It was understood that they were treading a dangerously fine line that might bring the ire of their former allies down upon them. In 2041, however, Islamyah established the first of five dedicated monastery *madrassas* (schools) near Medina and sent out the call for Islamic magicians and adepts alike to prove their faith and devotion by coming to train there to serve Allah. The first class of magical *mujahidin* came out of the Aleppo citadel *madrassas* in '47.

• Each new class forms its own magic group. Each group numbers between five to eight *mujahidin* and is led by an *ulema*. Groups combine magicians and adepts and train intensively to work together as a formidable force. Such groups almost never divide, taking assignments together and returning to the monasteries to assume the role of experienced teachers when the group loses too many companions.

• Sayyid

In 2061, following the reunification of Arabia, Jamil Islamyah's leaders swore allegiance to Ibn Elsa's Islamic Unity Movement and began providing men to aid the IUM's plans for the Middle East.

• Ibn Elsa's Infamous Jinn bodyguards—the ones that failed him in Makka—were a group of *mujahidin* from Aleppo. I hear the current ones are too, which explains their rumored magical talents.

• Finis

• Ironically enough, many of the practices and training used in the *madrassas* follow the Sufi teachings that modern Sunnis so often revile.

• Suleiman

THE SISTERS OF EGLANTINE

In case the name Eglantine isn't familiar to you, she's a leading member of Mutter Erde, an international policlub with an intense feminist agenda. The Sisters of Eglantine haven't been together for long, and yet in five short years have established a network of over fifty female adepts dedicated to the deity they call the Goddess. The network operates twenty-three known branches in cities worldwide, with headquarters in four major sprawls: Seattle, Atlanta, Los Angeles and Chicago. The leadership of the group, exclusively adepts, aggressively recruits mundane volunteers to aid and support the group's social agenda. Though rumors suggest more branches and members, none have been officially confirmed.

On the surface, the group's mission statement seems fairly straightforward: promote womanhood, bring faith and hope to the streets of every community, while helping folks turn their lives around for the better, particularly those that live on the streets and suffer from "addiction, starvation or hopelessness." They believe that politicians and local governments do not work hard enough to better the lives of the destitute and impoverished, so someone must. The group's leadership boasts several strong, well-educated, articulate leaders, including Sister Agatha Harello. Sister Harello and several other Sisters are adepts of the speaker's way.

• Shades of the Universal Brotherhood, anyone? I'm not going anywhere near these chicks. Feminists, self-righteous, Wiccans to boot

• Skeptic

• Dreik. I'm sick of the unofficial Shadowrunner Boys' Club around here. Where do I sign up?

• Patricide Girl

Having been privileged to access confidential files on the group, it appears the Sisters' activities stretch well beyond the scope of friendly community service when strong resistance is encountered. More than one report suggests the Sisters have targeted offending gangs to remove them permanently from the neighborhood.

• I can confirm that. These Sisters are not above buying-out turf or hiring deniable assets to remove entrenched "undesirables" from a neighborhood.

• D1fool

They've also legally purchased numerous seemingly worthless plots of land, riddled with dilapidated, uninhabited buildings or ruined and abandoned structures. With diligent work and hired hands, they turn these into community centers (and safe havens) equipped with gyms, sleeping quarters,



Olympic-size swimming pools and temples—all guarded by state-of-the-art security and the Sisters themselves.

- Not all of these purchases are strictly legal. They're currently involved in a legal battle with Weinstein's Developers over two plots of land they developed but didn't own. Clayton Weinstein is in protective custody after claiming his life was threatened by someone representing the Sisters.
- Legal Eagle

Beyond local community activism, the group has a knack for landing in the headlines with controversial (and sometimes illegal) protests. In one such protest, the group gathered over a hundred local squatters to storm the property of Ingersol-Berkley's CEO, claiming his plant that bordered their community was releasing toxins into the local water supply. They invaded his private compound, pitched tents and cots and protested all night long. How did they get past security? The executive claims they hacked the security network and brought it down minutes before the protest kicked in and that they also hired a gang, fully armed with nonlethal weapons, to take out the active security.

Of course, none of this was substantiated by any authorities. The network outage really did occur, as did the gang hit according to some eyewitnesses, but they were officially logged as coincidental events.

THE ALEXA GROUP'S SONGBIRDS

On the surface, the Alexa Group isn't very noteworthy. Publicly, it sponsors scholarship programs and promotes trading/stock beneficiary programs as educational awards. Its undisclosed membership roster includes many suits and professors who hold teaching positions, work as stockbrokers or sit on boards of directors. Yawn, right? Well, the interesting bit is that the scholarship and reward programs Alexa supports are *exclusively* for adept students seeking a higher education. Still yawning, I see. How about this, then? The group's membership oddly includes a rather high percentage of elves. Ah, now I see some ears perking up.

It gets better. The FBI intercepted an encrypted file that hints toward a secret group of adepts within the Alexa Group known only as the "Songbirds" (don't ask how I got the FBI file). Given that the leader of this group, an initiated adept codenamed Lasher, is a former member of the Moonlight Thorns, it's possible that this group is pursuing some sort of black ops agenda. The Thorns were Tir paladins, a covert action team assumed to be working for one of the Tir princes that disbanded in '62 following some major fiasco.

- Oakforest, Ni'Fairra and Lavery were the prime suspects rumored to run the Thorns. Oakforest's currently touring Europe, but Ni'Fairra and Lavery have been unusually quiet of late.
- Aegis

The purpose of the Songbirds is a major mystery. The feds seem worried that they're a magical spy agency for the Tir. Some of the Alexa Group's members make this a possibility. One member linked to the Songbirds is Livonia Geldon, the founder

and CEO of the multinational advertising agency EarthWyrn Media and Communications, Inc. That company, responsible for the Tir's huge tourism campaign, is supposedly a shell-of-a-shell linked to Prince Jenna Ni'Fairra. Another Alexa member with rumored ties to the Songbirds is Halpern Nowell, who sits on the board of directors of Revlup Security. Revlup provides security for several corporations tied to other Alexa members, including a small independent archaeological group named Riddlework Explorers that is suspected of trafficking in the artifacts and relics black market. There's quite a mystery waiting to be cracked here.

- It should be no surprise at this point that Revlup Security is in bed with Riddlework Explorers, providing the site and logistics chain security.
- Elijah

EVOLUTION IN FAST FORWARD

Though low-key and understated compared to advances in the high-profile field of thaumaturgy, understanding and developments regarding the abilities of adepts in the past decade have evolved immensely. Cataloguing programs such as those established by the Zhengtang Institute and MIT&T have widened the horizons significantly, both in terms of previously unidentified power expressions and in entirely new abilities developed spontaneously but reproducible through training. In the past couple of years alone, three new metamagic techniques and several new foci directly oriented at the adept community have been patented and licensed. These are now trickling into common usage; more will certainly follow. Rather than waste everyone's time trying to do an exhaustive review of recent developments regarding adepts that I found interesting, I decided to let others have a say. I posted some headlines and media clips on a dedicated Magicknet SIG as a guideline and invited a bunch of friends, acquaintances and Magicknet regulars to comment. The following is an edit of the resulting posts. Apologies to those whose comments were cut, but I kept only those I believed most relevant.

FOCUSING YOUR CENTER

Link: "Focusing Your Center—Expanding the Bounds of Metamagic Centering" *Visionary Academic Journal*, July 2064

- For those of you with ADD, here's a summary. Researchers are now licensing several advanced Centering techniques that allow adepts exceptional control of certain aspects of their powers. One enhances somatic control over the body, another enhances intellectual faculties, while a third actually allows the adept to temporarily expand his selection of abilities.
- Scholar

• There's been a lot of interest in this field recently, and I say it's about damn time! Adept metamagic has been lagging behind the SOTA for decades. Corporate magic research divisions and academic magic departments stand to make a killing from the patents and licensing of new techniques. Adept powers may be



individual, but metamagic can be developed through practice and training, so the race is on for the next best thing.

• Caltech

• Don't get too excited. Many of these "new techniques" are fairly old. They just haven't been in wide circulation. It takes about five years for stuff to trickle down from the labs to the streets, and many magicians are traditionalists at heart. Studies in adept magic have only been catching up recently because corps are catching on that there's a profitable unexploited market segment out there.

• Academe

• Wuxing and S-K subsidiaries are leading the field right now, but MCT is catching up through their partnership with MIT&T. If these new Centering techniques are being licensed out, you can bet they've got more tricks being worked on in their thaumaturgic labs.

• HK Kid

• Not all of them are coming from the halls of academia, no matter what the eggheads at MIT&T claim. From the descriptions I've read in the specialized press, some of this stuff is staggeringly similar to stuff I've seen in the Far East, Mainland

Chinese schools, Indian fakirs, heck, even the islanders down in the Gulf of Mexico have been using similar techniques for years. It's undeniable that us Westerners have been slow to catch on to a lot of cultural and tribal lore. Just last year we were all hyped up about Channeling, when the Aborigines have been using it for Ghost knows how long.

• Brin

• That's what it is then! I'd heard the Golden Acorns in Cal Free were using zen-centering to boost their powers. Now that I think of it, it sounds like one of these techniques.

• Chico Man

• Some of the best surprises are just next door. For those that don't know, several NAN magical institutes have an open policy regarding new advances. They don't license metamagic techniques, they just charge a steep tutor's fee for teaching them. The last big breakthrough was last spring when they made headlines with something they're calling Attunement. The stuff I heard about was all about animal handling and tuning into critters' minds, but on a stopover in Boston a friend told me MIT&T's patented a variant that works on cars and stuff.

• Siouxie Sue



• Yeah, it's out there all right, and it isn't new. I ran into a Cascade Crow band last winter up in the Rockies when my T-bird had to make an unscheduled stop. They were nice guys, all things considered, but they had a half-dozen mountain lions lying around their campfire and acted like it was nothing. I thought it was some sort of spell keeping them tame, now I know better.

• Josie Cruise

• Don't know what it's called, but Blizzard and me have learned a few tricks from Dancing Crow. With a little bit of concentration I can see through Blizzard's eyes and hear what he hears. Damn useful in my line of business to have another pair of eyes on a hunt.

• Howler

• I keep hearing about some adepts being able to go astral too. Never seen it myself, so I'm wondering if there's any truth to the buzz?

• Curious George

• Anyone?

• Curious George

ADEPT ARTWORK

Link: "Da Vinci, Mozart and Michelangelo—Proto-Adepts? LifeScience Investigates In This Week's Show

• This reminds me, there's an exhibit by Lucas Albright at the Bellevue Grenadier gallery. It's a huge hit and his art is mind-blowing. Albright is a Puyallup artist done good; he's also an ork and an adept. In his own unique way, he's contributing to the ork culture fad. He molds statues from intelligent plastics that react to the touch with constantly changing low-light emissions and thermal output. He calls the collection "Captive Auras" and they're impressive when seen from the astral. The gallery's caught on, though, and they are trying to charge admission to astral forms by warding the whole place up.

• Larissa

• What's magical about that? There are plenty of amazing new and classic concepts out there on par with Albright's stuff. Smenko's and Wauneka's virtual sculpts are still ultra-hot and Silva's "solid air" creations are just as impressive—and none of them are adepts.

• Gossip

• That's because magic doesn't improve innate artistic vision. What it can do is enhance a person's ability to express themselves better through their creations by refining their acquired skills. In the case of performing arts, it can enhance their presence, oratory and singing skills. Artists are limited by their tools; the body and mind are just some of those tools.

• Hiro

• Which reminds me, are these self-proclaimed bards that are all the rage in France and the UK really adepts?

• Deep Lavender

• Some of them are adepts, some of them are magicians with an artistic bent and some are mundanes egged on by the Celtic-hype sparked by all the media frenzy over the weirdness involving Pendragon, Lyonesse and the Wild Ley.

• Union Jill

• Don't assume those bards are all Renaissance fair types, either, though you get some of those coming over from Tir na nÓg every so often (this from the country that spawned classic acts like U2 and Gæa, oh how the mighty have fallen). A great many bards are modern rocker and dance types, backing up their music with real talent and more than a little bit of magical spice.

• Carabas

• Though it hasn't caught on internationally yet, the Celtic stylings are big hits over here in the Smog. Every other club's playing Celtrance or Twenties revivalist stuff like Lyn Riordan or the Gaeans.

• Beeste

TECHNOADEPTS

Link: "Technoadepts, Truth or Fiction?" Magicknet SIG discussion.

• Certainly I've heard of adepts who are extraordinarily adept (sorry, bad pun) with technology: guns, vehicles, even decks. Though to be honest, those I've met seem to have a knack with mechanical items rather than high-tech electronics.

• Josie Cruise

• I've been thinking along the lines of the potential of these new ways that keep cropping up. Savants, for instance. Anyone got the skinny on these guys? Seems to me they're just the types.

• Curious George

• Folks following the "way of the savant" are what you'd call mental adepts. Not to be confused with psionics. Their focus is honing their minds; developing deductive, perceptive and intellectual abilities beyond the human norm. From aesthetic zen masters to intuitive sherlocks, their common knack is overcoming mental challenges. Of course, this makes them handy around tech, but what these guys can do puts some geniuses to shame: cracking ciphers in their head, making intuitive and deductive leaps on minimal input, calculating tactical scenarios on the fly, you name it.

• Johnny Zen



- Yeah, they sound like just the type to make the best out of all sorts of tech, and they're not the only ones. Anyone catch the NewsNet item on the German autobahn jousts? A kid named Doom came right out and said he was an adept. The stuff he did for the cameras made my jaw drop—and I'm a rigger.

- Torque

- You haven't seen anything yet. Doom is a complete nutter; he does stuff with his bike I never dreamt. Impossible stuff. I've seen him jackknife his Blitzzen round corners at 150 plus clicks and flash through heavy traffic without touching the brakes. I should know—I was in pursuit.

- Schupo

- And then of course, there are otaku. Who's to say they're not an entirely new variety of adepts? Something completely unique!

- Lone Gunman

- Otaku adepts? I don't think so, someone would have noticed.

- Material Girl

- I've still to hear of a confirmed case of a magically active otaku. Then again, didn't somebody say athlete adepts sometimes pass scans because their powers only manifest when they're in exertion? Anyone ever assense an otaku while decking? Maybe they are adepts after all, or their magic is so different we still haven't identified it.

- Mandrake

- There's always someone bringing otaku into everything. Give it up, people. Otaku are not the missing link or the key to every unsolved mystery in the Sixth fraggin' World.

- Cynic

- You don't know everything.

- Pax

GAME INFORMATION

The fiction and rules in this chapter were conceived to complement and flesh out the basic material on adepts in *Shadowrun, Third Edition (SR3)* and *Magic in the Shadows (MITS)*, both of which provide substantial information on a number of subjects mentioned here.

While the adept character has become a staple of most shadowrunner teams, he often finds himself limited to specific combat or stealth-oriented roles, suffering from a two-dimensional portrayal as a combat monster. The introduction of new non-combat-oriented ways and powers will hopefully allow greater character versatility. The following material introduces a number of new ways, powers, metamagic, foci and other options that will allow both gamemasters and players to expand the usual roles of adepts in the game to entirely new fields.

RUNNING WAYS

The material presented above expands and expounds on some of the better-known adept ways. Many others exist, of course—those presented here can serve as guidelines. Almost all adepts follow a way, even if it is sometimes personal and unique. As explained in *MITS*, ways represent a unique focus that each adept develops to improve his body and mind. Ways function as paths that both reflect the character's personality and guide his powers and abilities in a specific direction.

Ideally, ways should be seen as more than simply role-playing guidelines; they reinforce a character's concept and also provide a framework for the character's development (in terms of behavior, personality and powers). Gamemasters are encouraged to let players detail their character's personal approach to his particular way and actively incorporate this into the roleplaying aspect of the game, especially in terms of plot and character development.

The Lost

"Lost" adepts, those who lack a focus because they have yet to find or lack the drive to follow a particular way, have greater difficulty and less control in developing their powers. If a character has yet to find a way or simply does not choose to go down that path, his magical development may be hampered. Magic in the Sixth World works best—and is less dangerous and random—when given a particular focus.

Gamemasters who feel it necessary to underline this fact may choose, as an optional rule, to increase the cost of adept powers by 25 percent for those characters who have strayed from or simply lack a way. The same might also apply to adepts who stray from their original way, treading a path that contradicts their outlook and personal convictions. Adepts who lose their way might even be punished with a loss of powers until they regain their focus.

NEW ORDEALS

The following ordeals expand on those already available to adepts for initiation, as outlined on pp. 58–61, *MITS*.

Masterpiece

A masterpiece ordeal requires the character to spend at least a month working on an original piece of art. The work must challenge the artist and requires complete concentration, not allowing for daily activities such as work, study or shadowrunning to distract the artist. Additionally, the work must be completely original. The adept undertaking this ordeal must either know the virtuoso metamagic technique (p. 64) or learn it during the initiation he is currently undergoing. The adept must also have an appropriate art-oriented Knowledge skill. The adept must succeed in creating a virtuoso piece or the ordeal fails and the artist must start over. If an artist chooses to perform subsequent masterpiece ordeals, she must start anew, and the work must have a new theme that distinguishes it firmly from other works.

Way Ordeal

A way ordeal requires the character and gamemaster to devise a trial appropriate to advancement in the character's



chosen way. The trial must be a significant step in the character's philosophical development along his path. Way ordeals should require a significant sacrifice of resources, time or even attribute points, as the gamemaster deems appropriate. Way ordeals must also have measurable results. Below are some examples of a way ordeal's trials.

- A follower of the speaker's way must make a groundbreaking speech appropriate to the character's ambition, whether it be a televised speech as a keynote speaker advancing a scientific agenda or a political cause or an emotionally charged counseling session that saves the life of a chiphead or abuse victim on the brink of suicide—or pulling off a major con rife with risk.
- A follower of the athlete's way must enter and win a contest of great significance to the sport or perform in a show considered to be the premiere performance venue in the field.
- A follower of a cultural way where faith is an important aspect must earn the respect and admiration of his peers by undertaking a pilgrimage, publishing an evangelical work or searching for and recovering a lost religious icon.

NEW METAMAGIC

As an adept develops a better understanding of his gift, self-knowledge and insight will allow him access to abilities and metamagic unavailable to other types of magic users. For instance, magical R&D into Centering has resulted in the discovery of adept-specific advanced Centering metamagic techniques. Some of these grant adepts expanded self-awareness or enhance different facets of an adept's abilities. Other new metamagic recently catalogued covers the range from a limited form of astral projection for magician's way adepts to enhanced artistic talent.

It's also worth noting that in addition to Centering, Divining, Masking and the techniques described here, adepts may also learn the metamagic techniques of Sensing (p.110, *Target: Awakened Lands*) and Psychometry (pp. 49–50, *SOTA: 2063*).

The metamagic techniques listed below are only available to adepts.

Attunement (Animal, Item)

Throughout history, animal companions and certain signature items have figured in legends. The Attunement metamagic could be said to be the Sixth World's manifestation of this concept.

In practical terms, Attunement allows the adept to invest Karma toward establishing a mystical bond with a specific animal or object—similar to the way he would bond a focus—granting him a unique affinity with that critter or item. Attuned animals or items may be used as a material ritual link to the adept (p. 34, *MITS*).

Before bonding is possible, Attunement requires the adept to go through a familiarization process with the animal or item until handling it is second nature. When familiarization is complete, a bonding ritual of some sort is needed. The gamemaster and player should tailor this to the character's cultural background, belief system and/or way. For instance, a shamanic adept might best a wild animal in combat to

A NOTE ON ATTUNING ANIMALS

The description of the Attunement (Animal) power assumes the animal is of a "normal" size (between cat and horse size). At the gamemaster's discretion, the adept may be able to bond to a homogenous group of smaller animals (rats, sparrows, cockroaches, etc.) as if they were a single animal, requiring a single ritual and Karma expenditure. The adept may use Sense Link with any animal from the group (but only one at a time).

Likewise, if the adept wishes to attune to a much larger animal (elephant, rhino, whale, etc.), the gamemaster may wish to increase the target number for the Animal Handling Test as well as the bonding Karma cost appropriately.

As an optional rule, the gamemaster can allow the adept to attune to paranormal or cybered critters, but this should only be allowed after careful consideration. By their Awakened nature, paranimals are less domesticated, more resistant to mundane training and simply more powerful. The same is true for cybered animals that are half-crazed by implants. Allowing such an attunement can easily threaten the balance of the game. A gamemaster should only approve it if it fits the character's development and the story and the player won't abuse the power. Both the Animal Handling Test target number and the Karma cost for bonding should be increased accordingly. As a rule of thumb, increase both by 1 for each critter power the animal has and/or each Essence point lost to implants. Especially potent powers (Essence Drain, Hardened Armor, Magical Skills, Magic Guard, Regeneration, etc.) may increase both even more if the gamemaster chooses. The Karma cost for bonding cybered critters is based on the creature's original Essence (before implants).

Sentient or even semi-sentient creatures (satyrs, centaurs, merrow, naga, sasquatch, shapeshifters, leshy, faeries, etc.) can never be attuned to with this power.

become the alpha. A warrior adept might give his weapon a baptism of blood by cutting himself with the edge. During the appropriate ritual, the adept sacrifices some of his Good Karma to attune to the target. Adepts may also perform a deed ordeal (p. 60, *MITS*) with the animal or object as a bonding ritual.

Attunement has different effects depending on whether the target is an object or animal. Note that Attunement metamagic only applies to a either animals or items; if an adept wants to learn to attune to both animals and items, he must learn the metamagic technique twice. A character may only be attuned to a number of items or animals (total) equal to his Initiate Grade. He may not receive a bonus from more than one attuned item/animal in any single action. Attunement may be voluntarily severed at any moment by the adept (Invested Karma is lost) and is cancelled if the animal dies or the object is destroyed.



OBJECT RESISTANCE EXAMPLES

Gear	Object Resistance
Handcrafted quality blade	5
Production-line gun, modern katana	7
Lockpick kit, dirt bike	8
Car, dikoted katana, racing bike	9
Monofilament whip, thunderbird	10

Animals: Animal Attunement allows an adept to bond with a friendly, mundane, non-sentient animal. To do this, an adept must first befriend the animal and gain its trust, requiring an Animal Handling (or similar skill) (5) Test with a base time of two weeks. Extra successes maybe used to divide the duration. A failed test means the adept's time was wasted and he must start again. The process will not work if the animal is coerced. Once a rapport is established, the adept may perform the ritual bonding, paying Karma equal to the animal's Essence.

A bonded animal gains the power of Sense Link (p. 109, *MITS*), allowing the adept to experience the world through the animal's senses. The adept may also issue simple, low-level telepathic commands to the animal through this link. (These commands do not automatically succeed, depending on the disposition of the animal—especially if the command puts the animal in danger. The gamemaster may call for an Animal Handling or other appropriate test.) This power has a range equal to the adept's (Magic + Charisma + Willpower) x 10 meters. If the animal goes beyond this range, contact is lost. Likewise, if the animal suffers a Moderate Wound or greater while the power is in use, the link is immediately broken and the adept suffers Light Stun damage; contact may be re-established when the animal is healed.

Items: Attuning a vehicle, weapon or piece of gear allows an adept amazing intuitive control and uncanny insight into its operation. An attuned item feels like a physical extension of the adept's body and makes it easier to perform incredible feats and difficult stunts. The familiarization process requires that the adept become thoroughly acquainted with the item's characteristics and limitations. This entails a relevant B/R Skill (5) Test (for example, Edged Weapons B/R for a katana or Bike B/R for a Yamaha Rapier) with a base time of one week. Alternately, the adept may elect to build/forged/construct the item from scratch. Success in the test allows the adept to attune to the item by means of an appropriate bonding ritual. The Karma cost to bond to an inanimate object like a vehicle, weapon or other gear equals the item's Object Resistance (see p. 182, *SR3*, or the accompanying table).

In game terms, Attunement reduces the target number for any skill tests involving use, control or handling of the item by 1. Attunement, however, provides no bonus when the item is controlled through a cybernetic interface (VCR, datajack, smartlink, etc.). Attunement does not aid Magical skills such as Sorcery, Conjuring, Centering or Enchanting.



Cognition

Cognition can only be learned by adepts who already possess the Centering technique (p. 72, *MITS*) and a Centering skill.

Cognition allows an adept to hone and expand his mental, perceptual and intellectual faculties. It also reflects the character's enhanced ability to interact with and comprehend his environment, as well as his increased mental resilience and social and intellectual adaptability.

In game terms, Cognition allows the adept to Center for success or reduce modifiers on Intelligence Tests, including Perception and Learning Tests. This requires a Free Action. The adept may also use Centering to reduce modifiers when defaulting to Intelligence from Intelligence-linked skills. Cognition also adds one die to the adept's Knowledge and Language Skill Tests.

Adepts who have learned Cognition have mastered their own ability to assimilate new knowledge. To reflect this, decrease the Karma cost to increase skills by 1, to a minimum of one.

Empower Animal Companion

Only adepts who already know the Attunement (Animal) technique (p. 61) can learn this metamagic.

Empower Animal Companion builds on the bond between the adept and an attuned animal companion, expanding the mystic connection between them to allow the adept to share some of his power and magical abilities with the critter.

To use the Empower Animal Companion technique, the adept first chooses one of his adept powers and then performs a ritual similar to the one used originally to attune to the animal. During this ritual, the adept must pay Karma equal to the power point cost of the chosen power $\times 4$. This allows the adept to take a Free Action and temporarily transfer that power to the animal through the Sense Link. The adept may not use a power himself while it is transferred to the animal. The adept and animal must be within the Sense Link power's range.

If the use of a power transferred to the animal calls for a Skill or Attribute Test, the gamemaster should use the animal's Reaction as the default skill rating (though Intelligence and Quickness might also be appropriate) or the animal's relevant attribute.

The adept may conduct similar rituals in order to gain the ability to transfer additional powers to the critter. The adept may even empower more than one critter companion, though a power can never be transferred to more than one animal at a time. Also, the amount of power points transferred at one time may never exceed the adept's Initiate Grade (note that this means an adept may simply be unable to empower an animal with some of his more costly powers).

Infusion

Infusion can only be learned by adepts who already possess the Centering technique (p. 72, *MITS*) and a Centering skill.

Infusion enhances an adept's understanding and command over both the magic that powers his abilities and his capacity to channel mana. Infusion allows the adept a measure of control over his body's own somatic gifts, temporarily extending the limits of his original powers or even temporarily

manifesting new ones. Such a magic surge has its cost, however, as adepts suffer temporary burnout afterwards.

To use Infusion metamagic, the adept takes an exclusive Complex Action and makes a Centering Skill (4) Test. Each success grants the adept 0.25 power points that can be used to either boost an existing power or acquire new powers. The adept cannot score more successes than his Initiate Grade. The adept may purchase only one level of a power he does not already possess. These enhanced/new powers can be used for (Magic attribute \times Initiate Grade) minutes, after which they fade.

As soon as the power boost ends, the adept immediately suffers Drain equal to (Centering successes)5. This Drain is Stun damage, resisted by Willpower, and reflects the body's fatigue from channeling increased levels of mana. In addition, the adept loses the same number of power points' worth of powers for a period equal to the number of minutes the temporary powers were in effect. The gamemaster chooses what powers are temporarily "burned out"—the adept should not know a power is inaccessible until he tries to use it.

An adept should always be able to increase the level of a power he possesses, but the selection of new powers is limited by the Initiate's Grade in power points, to prevent it from being an all-purpose adept power. The gamemaster can either ask the player to choose one power point worth of available powers each time he initiates or note a power each time it is temporarily gained by this metamagic and cut it off when the total reaches the adept's Initiate Grade: from then on, the selection is limited to powers previously chosen.

Limited Astral Projection

Only magician's way adepts who already know the Astral Perception power may learn this metamagic technique.

Limited Astral Projection allows a magician's way adept to astrally project in the same manner as full magicians (p. 172, *SR3*). Since the adept's magical abilities are firmly rooted in his physical body, however, the adept's physical body loses Essence at the rate of 1 point every minute rather than every hour (see *While You Were Out ...*, p. 173, *SR3*). Adept powers function normally while the adept is projecting.

Somatic Control

Somatic Control can only be learned by adepts who already possess the Centering technique (p. 72, *MITS*) and a Centering skill.

The Somatic Control technique embodies the adept's progress in both awareness and control of his own body and physicality. This advanced metamagic represents the purest distillation of his somatic gift and grants an adept greater control of his physiological abilities, allowing him to better understand and overcome his physical limitations and even to enhance his attributes beyond their normal ranges for brief periods of time. The most obvious effect of this technique is the temporary redistribution of the body's resources to enhance certain Physical attributes at the expense of others.

In game terms, the adept can shunt points between attributes, raising one by lowering another. To use this technique, the character takes an exclusive Complex Action and makes a



Centering Skill (4) Test. The maximum number of points that may be shifted between Physical attributes is equal to the number of successes scored. The adept cannot score more successes than his Initiate Grade. This change in attributes lasts for up to (Magic attribute x Initiate Grade) minutes, after which they revert to normal levels and cannot be shifted again for 10 x the number of minutes they were modified.

The body's reallocation of resources makes trained skills less effective, however, decreasing an affected attribute's linked skills. For every point an attribute is decreased, decrease all linked skills higher than the new value by 1.

Radical bodily changes of this sort are strenuous. After the attributes return to normal, the adept may suffer from painful cramps and muscle sprains. To reflect this, the adept must make a Damage Resistance Test using Body against Stun damage with a Power equal to the number of attribute points shifted. The Damage Level is Serious if an attribute was boosted above the Racial Maximum, Moderate if an attribute was boosted above the Racial Modified Limit, and Light otherwise.

Note that changes to an adept's Quickness may affect Reaction, Initiative and Combat Pool. Temporarily shifted attributes do not affect the Karma cost of skills or learning.

Virtuoso

Initiated artist adepts created this metamagic technique. An adept using this metamagic focuses all of his artistic skill into the creation/composition of a piece of art, pouring talent and magic into the creation and attempting to forge something truly sublime. The technique only works on original and inspired artworks. The resulting creations are truly magical masterpieces. Fueled by the adept artist's enhanced creative talent, each virtuoso piece possesses a singular and powerful aura, one that is almost intoxicating to astrally perceive such that even mundanes find it immensely emotional. Both physical works of art and performance pieces can be virtuoso creations.

In game terms, to produce a virtuoso creation an adept must make a Skill (9) Test using an appropriate artistic Knowledge skill (Composition, Dancing, Drawing, Painting, Poetry, Sculpting, etc.) with a base time of one month. A number of dice equal to the adept's Initiate Grade may be added to the test. The successes indicate the rating of the virtuoso piece; alternately, some successes may be used to reduce the base time. Good Karma may be used to increase the piece's rating at the time of creation at a rate of one additional point per 2 Karma invested (Karma spent cannot exceed the creator's artistic skill). The completed artwork generates a Background Count equal to the piece's rating, charged with an emotion appropriate to the piece. This Background Count is aspected to the creator adept and does not interfere with him.

Virtuoso performance art must first be composed by the adept, as described above. Each time the adept performs the virtuoso piece, he must succeed in a Skill (6) Test using the appropriate performance skill to evoke the emotional/Background Count effect of the piece. The gamemaster should decide the roleplaying side effects of the piece's emotionally charged Background Count, which affects both the astral and physical planes.

Virtuoso pieces have been known to inspire mesmerizing awe in those who experience them for the first time. Apply the effects of Enthralling Performance (p. 65) to any character viewing such a virtuoso artwork or performance (add the adept's Initiate Grade to the Open Test).

Both physical and performance virtuoso artworks are highly sought after for their artistic and collector's value—especially by Awakened collectors. Material pieces are occasionally sought because they are useful in enchanting—such virtuoso items can be considered exotic materials for enchanting. The piece is not destroyed during enchanting, however, but becomes integral to the final product, which will likely earn the enchanter the artist's wrath.

Physical virtuoso art also acts as a material link (see p. 34, *MITS*) to the creator.

NEW POWERS

The following new adept powers are available to adept characters. At the gamemaster's discretion, they may be learned at character creation or by standard character advancement.

Aid Spell

Cost: 0.5 per level

Aid Spell allows an adept to channel her inner magic so that a magician may tap into it to aid his spellcasting. Physical contact between the adept and spellcaster is necessary. The adept must take an exclusive Complex Action and concentrate on acting as a conduit for mana. This power allows the adept to provide one die per level to a magician that is casting a spell in the same Initiative Phase. Each use of Aid Spell requires the adept to make a Drain Test using Willpower (mana spells) or Body (physical spells) against (spell Force ÷ 2)M Stun.

Animal Empathy

Cost: 0.25 per level

An adept with Animal Empathy has a natural affinity for handling animals. Each level adds +1 die for any skill tests involving the non-threatening handling of animals or attempts to threaten or frighten an animal.

Commanding Voice

Cost: 0.5

This power channels magic into the modulation of the adept's voice. As a result, the weight and importance of the adept's words subliminally influence targeted listeners. An adept with Commanding Voice may make take a Complex Action and issue a forceful but simple order (three words or less) to another character. The adept pits his Charisma against the target's Willpower in an Opposed Test. For each additional individual past the first, the adept suffers a +1 target number modifier. If the adept wins, the target character takes his next available Free or Simple Action to either obey the adept or pause in indecision (gamemaster's call). The order does not carry any weight beyond that immediate impetus, however, and determined characters will immediately go about doing what they originally meant to do. This power is useful for temporarily distracting or flustering opponents.



Commanding Voice may only be used on metahumans who can directly hear and understand the adept. It does not work when the voice is amplified or transmitted via technological means (bullhorn, loudspeakers, etc.). It is less effective on subsequent uses; apply a cumulative +2 modifier each additional time an adept tries to use Commanding Voice on the same character within a 24-hour period.

Cool Resolve

Cost: 0.5 per level

An adept with Cool Resolve has a confident and unflappable presence in social situations. This power protects the adept from being manipulated, fooled or intimidated by others. The adept receives one die per level for resisting the use of Charisma-linked social skills against him. This power does not protect against spells or critter powers, but it does function against other adept powers.

Deep Rooting

Cost: 0.5

Deep Rooting is an advanced version of the Rooting power (p. 151, *MITS*). It has the same effects as one level of Rooting and additionally allows the adept to root himself in place so thoroughly that he acts as a highly stable firing platform. Deep Rooting reduces all recoil penalties by half (round down). The adept has a firing arc of 90 degrees to the front and may only turn up to 90 degrees per action. Disengaging Deep Rooting is a Complex Action. (Note that the Rooting power is not a prerequisite for Deep Rooting.)

Eidetic Sense Memory

Cost: 0.5

An adept with Eidetic Sense Memory has a photographic sight memory in addition to a very keen memory for noises, smells, the way textures feel, the way foods taste and so on. The adept can always remember these senses and recall what or who they are in future encounters. Adepts with this power can also photo-read, greatly increasing the rate at which text can be read.

Elemental Strike

Cost: 0.5

Elemental Strike can only be purchased by adepts who already know the Killing Hands power.

Elemental Strike allows an adept to channel his power into creating a secondary elemental effect (see p. 51, *MITS*) when he strikes a target with Killing Hands. The specific elemental effect is chosen when this power is purchased. When the power is active, it appears as a visible effect around the adept's hands or feet. Creating the elemental effect requires a Simple Action, and it remains in effect for (Magic attribute) Combat Turns or until the adept uses a Free Action to extinguish it.

Elemental Strike may not be used with Distance Strike or Delay Damage.

Empathic Healing

Cost: 1

An adept may heal another person by transferring some or all of that person's wounds onto himself. The adept makes a Magic Test against a target number equal to 10 – the target's Essence (round down). The number of successes determines the maximum number of damage boxes that can be transferred. The base time for this process depends upon the wound level transferred (use the Permanent Spell Base Time table, p. 128, *SR3*). Extra successes may be used to reduce the base time.

The adept must maintain physical contact with the wounded character during this entire process. Only Physical damage can be transferred in this manner.

Empathic Reading

Cost: 0.25 per level

An adept with Empathic Reading has a greater ability to determine if a target is telling the truth or imparting factual information. The adept is sensitive to the unconscious physical body language and biological signs a person exhibits while trying to lie. The adept receives a –1 target number modifier per level to determine if a target is lying. To determine if a character is lying, the adept makes an Intelligence Test against the lying character's Negotiation Open Test—Empathic Reading reduces the result of the Open Test by 1 per level for the adept.

Enhanced Balance

Cost: 0.5 (Level 1) or 1 (Level 2)

Enhanced Balance increases an adept's balance for athletic maneuvers such as climbing, tight-rope walking, gymnastics and so on. Each level of Enhanced Balance reduces the target number for any Physical Skill Test involving balance or Knockdown Test by 1.

Enthralling Performance

Cost: 0.5

An adept must have an artistic performance Knowledge Skill (Dancing, Oration, Singing, etc.) to purchase this power. The power only applies to that select performance skill (Enthralling Performance must be purchased separately if the adept would like to use it for more than one Knowledge Skill).

This power channels magic into the adept's performance, mesmerizing the audience with the flow of his movements or the cadence of his words and putting the audience at ease. Enthralling Performance induces a mild hypnotic state in the audience. The adept makes an Open Test using the appropriate performance skill. Any audience members who fail to beat the Open Test with a Willpower Test give the adept their full, unwavering attention. While mesmerized, such characters suffer a +4 distraction modifier to Perception Tests (rather than the usual +2 for distraction). Entranced audience members who are subject to an act of stress (such as being knocked over or threatened) or obtrusive environmental distractions (like a gunshot) will automatically break out of the trance. The maximum period the adept can keep others entranced is equal to his Charisma x 10 in minutes.

Facial Sculpt**Cost:** 1

An adept can change her facial features through slight shifts in musculature, bone, cartilage and skin angles for a number of hours equal to her Magic attribute. Use of Facial Sculpt requires (10 – Willpower) minutes of concentration. The adept makes an Open Magic Test to determine the target number that observers use on Perception Tests to recognize her. Examples of changes include raising or lowering the cheek bones, thickening or thinning of the lips, stretching the eyelids, altering the angle or height of the ears, squaring or rounding the chin or drawing up or fattening of the nose. It can alter the character's perceived metatype (at least in the face), though depending on the character's body mass this may look odd. Facial Sculpt can create the facial structure necessary to speak Or'zet (see p. 167) without penalty. If used in conjunction with the Disguise skill (see p. 104, *SOTA: 2063*) to imitate the appearance of a specific person, the target number of the Disguise Test is reduced by 2.

Gliding**Cost:** 1

Gliding allows an adept to run up to (Magic attribute) meters across tangible surfaces that would not normally support his weight, such as water, thin ice or a fragile tree limb. Any attempt to run longer distances requires break points or landings and multiple uses of Gliding. Any attempt to use this power with acrobatics (such as jumping from the surface) will require an Athletics Test against a target number established by the gamemaster and is considered a difficult maneuver. The secondary effects of the adept's motion still occur, such as sound or vibrations (leaves shake and water ripples). This power may be combined with Traceless Walk to remove the secondary effects of the adept's motion.

Improved Ability (Expanded)

Improved Ability is described on p.169, *SR3*. Increasing numbers of adepts, however, have learned to expand the limits of this ability through training, practice and natural talent beyond its original scope, so that it is now applicable to other skills. The expanded skills are listed on the Improved Ability (Expanded) Table with their associated costs.

Inertia Strike**Cost:** 0.5

An adept with this power performs a powerful melee or unarmed attack channeling energy into knocking the opponent

off of his feet. The base Damage Level of the attack is reduced by one, but the opponent must make a Knockdown Test (even if no damage is caused) as if the Damage Level was one level higher than the base. A character who suffers a Serious Wound or worse is automatically knocked down.

Iron Gut**Cost:** 0.25 per level

An adept with Iron Gut can eat nearly anything and his body will digest and pass it without harm. Each level of Iron Gut reduces the Power of Ingested toxins by 2.

Iron Lungs**Cost:** 0.25 per level

An adept with Iron Lungs has a dramatically expanded lung capacity. Each level of Iron Lungs increases the amount of time an adept can hold her breath by 45 seconds (see p. 47, *SRComp*). Additionally, each level of Iron Lungs reduces Fatigue Tests by –2.

Kinesics**Cost:** 1 (Level 1), 2 (Level 2) or 3 (Level 3)

An adept with Kinesics has complete control over his body's nonverbal and subconscious communication and social

cues, even when engaged in stressful social scenarios. This control includes facial expressions, body movements, posture, eye movements and internal biological stress functions such as heart-beat, blood pressure and sweat glands. The adept is also gifted at reading others' body language and cultural-specific affectations and mimicking their cues to his advantage. As a result, this power boosts the character's natural presence and social charms.

Each level reduces the adept's target number for Etiquette and Negotiation Tests by 1 to a minimum target number of 2. The adept also adds 1 die per level to any social situation Charisma Success Tests the character makes. Additionally, apply a +2 modifier per level to any test to discover whether the adept is lying or not (including magic and technological tests).

Two adepts with Kinesics and within sight of each other can use a Complex Action to nonverbally communicate simple notions to each other, using body language alone. Only basic messages and emotional states can be conveyed: yes, no, I don't want to, I'm angry, look out behind you and so on.

Linguistics**Cost:** 0.25

Linguistics allows an adept to absorb a new language in a very short time by exposure to it. Only (10 – Magic attribute) hours of exposure to the language are required to learn it. At the end of

IMPROVED ABILITY (EXPANDED) TABLE

Skill Category	Cost per die
Artistic/Performance Knowledge Skills	0.25
B/R Skills	0.5
Social Skills	0.5
Vehicle Skills	0.5

LINGUISTICS TABLE

Language is:	Target Number
Common (Arabic, Aztlaner Spanish, German)	4
Uncommon (Sperethiel, Swahili, Ukrainian)	6
Obscure (Latin, Or'zet, Sami)	8



this time, the adept makes an Intelligence Test against an appropriate target number as noted on the Linguistics Table. If successful, the adept gets the Language skill at Rating 1 at no Karma cost. Increasing the skill costs the standard amount, but reduce the base learning time for the adept by half.

Living Focus

Cost: 1

Living Focus allows an adept to channel mana into her own body in order to sustain a spell cast on her (an effect similar to a sustaining focus). Thereafter, the magician that cast the spell does not need to sustain the spell. The adept, however, suffers the usual +2 modifier for sustaining the spell. The Force of the sustained spell cannot exceed the adept's Magic attribute. Only one spell may be sustained at a time in this fashion.

Melanin Control

Cost: 0.25

An adept with Melanin Control has the ability to alter his hair or skin color *within the limits of natural skin tone* for the character's metatype for a number of hours equal to his Magic attribute. Use of Melanin Control requires a Complex Action to shift either hair or skin color one grade. There are four standard grades of skin color: albino, tan, brown and black. There are four standard grades of hair color: white/gray, blonde, red/brown, black. Therefore, to shift albino skin to black requires three Complex Actions.

Motion Sense

Cost: 0.5

An adept, through magical sensory perception of minute disturbances in the surrounding mana, can unconsciously detect the presence of objects, people or animals that move within Magic attribute meters, even when sight, sound or smell detect nothing. An adept makes a Perception Test against the appropriate target number given on the Motion Sense Table or against the result of the target's Open Stealth Test (if stealthing); apply a target number modifier equal to any Background Count present. Only one success is needed to detect the movement. If a target is detected, the adept receives a -2 reduction to any visibility modifiers to strike at it (so an invisible target, normally +8 to strike, would only be at +6 to hit for the adept). This sense cannot detect movement on the other side of astral barriers.

Multi-Tasking

Cost: 0.5

Multi-tasking grants the adept the ability to gather information from multiple senses simultaneously and also to concentrate on two separate actions/thoughts at the same time. The adept may use two Free Actions per Initiative Phase. For example, an adept can read data off a vid-screen and simultaneously listen to the commlink, providing full attention and focus to each.

Nimble Fingers

Cost: 0.5

Nimble Fingers allows the adept to perform simple reflex and timing tricks more efficiently and effectively. It grants the adept +1 die to Stealth or Quickness Tests that involve sleight-

MOTION SENSE TABLE

Moving Thing Is:	Target Number
Smaller than the average cat	8
Smaller than average mid-sized metahuman (human, elf, ork)	6
Average mid-sized metahuman	4
Larger than average mid-size metahuman	2

of-hand actions. Additionally, Insert Clip, Pick Up/Put Down Object, Remove Clip and Use Simple Object are Free Actions for the adept.

Pain Relief

Cost: 1

Pain Relief allows an adept to channel energy into his hands and apply it to chakra points on another target (the adept cannot use Pain Relief on himself). Used in many Asian techniques like Reiki, acupuncture and Shiatsu massage, this technique allows the adept to dissipate fatigue, stress, muscle tension and pain. To represent this energy manipulation, the adept makes a Magic Test against a target number equal to (10 - the target's Essence), rounded down. Success reduces the target's Stun damage by one level (i.e., from Serious to Moderate). The technique requires a base time of 30 minutes of uninterrupted concentration (divided by the number of successes) and requires the adept to maintain skin contact with the target. Pain Relief can be used to alleviate Drain.

Penetrating Strike

Cost: 0.75 (Level 1), 1.5 (Level 2) or 2.25 (Level 3)

An adept with this power channels great force a short distance forward while making an unarmed melee attack, thereby bypassing a target's Impact armor. Each level of Penetrating Strike allows an adept to reduce the target's Impact armor by 1 for the purposes of determining damage only. This power may be combined with Killing Hands, but not Distance Strike.

Resilience

Cost: 0.25 per level

An adept with Resilience has the natural power to stabilize Deadly Wounds and minimize secondary effects associated with extreme wounds such as severed or maimed limbs, cracked bones or heart attack. The adept gains +1 die per level for his stabilization tests (see *Deadly Wounds and First Aid*, p. 129, SR3). The adept also receives an extra die per level when checking for permanent damage resulting from Deadly Wounds (see *Deadly Wounds and Permanent Damage*, p. 127, SR3). Additionally, the adept reduces the target number by -1 per level when testing for wound effects (see *Determining Wound Effects*, p. 126, *Man & Machine*).

Side Step

Cost: 0.5 per level

An adept with Side Step can read the subtleties of motion and body language to anticipate the timing and location of a



THREE-DIMENSIONAL MEMORY TABLE

Time Passed Since Memorization:	Target Number Modifier
Less than 24 hours	+0
Less than a week	+1
Less than a month	+2
Less than a year	+3
A year or more	+4

ranged or melee attack. Each level of Side Step grants the adept one additional Combat Pool die only for the purposes of Dodge and Full Dodge attempts.

Sprint

Cost: 0.25 per level

An adept with this ability has refined her muscular control and force of surface contact to increase running speed. Every level of Sprint grants an adept +1 Quickness for determining running distance.

Sustenance

Cost: 0.25

An adept with Sustenance replenishes the same amount of energy and health from three hours of sleep and one solid meal a day as a normal person would with eight hours of sleep and three meals a day. Additionally, the adept's body processes food and drink very efficiently, and therefore the adept requires only one trip to the restroom each day.

Three-Dimensional Memory

Cost: 0.5

An adept with three-dimensional memory can memorize an area viewed first-hand in exact, three-dimensional detail by performing a Complex Action. At a later date, the adept may make a Perception Test to mentally walk through the area, searching and exploring as if the adept were walking through the scene for the first time. Nothing in the scene can be disturbed or manipulated in the memory, and an adept only recalls things he actually saw or sensed, even if incidentally. For example, the adept cannot remember what is within a desk drawer unless the drawer was open when the adept memorized the area. Each individual area memorized in this manner can be no greater than the adept's (Magic attribute in square meters. An adept may memorize a number of areas equal to his Magic attribute.

The target number of the Perception Test is modified by the elapsed amount of time since the memory was "captured," as noted on the Three-Dimensional Memory Table.

Voice Control

Cost: 0.5

An adept with Voice Control has an amazing level of control over the properties of her voice. The adept can change her voice's pitch, modulation and tone at will, as well as increase her volume. This allows the adept to mask her voice and imitate sounds within the normal range of metahuman vocalization (i.e., no infrasound

or ultrasound), including mimicking the voices of others. This trick can be used to defeat voice recognition systems. Use the adept's Intelligence in an Opposed Test against the system's rating, or against the Intelligence of other characters the adept is attempting to fool. Voice Control also allows an adept to "throw" her voice up to (Magic attribute) meters away.

Wall Running

Cost: 1

Wall Running allows an adept to move up to (Magic attribute) meters on a sheer wall or vertical surface. Any attempt to run higher distances requires break points or landings and multiple uses of Wall Running. Any attempt to use this power with acrobatics (such as jumping from one wall to another) will require an Athletics Test against a target number established by the gamemaster and should be considered a difficult maneuver. The secondary effects of the adept's motion still occur, such as sound or tracks, though this power may be combined with Traceless Walk to remove such secondary effects.

NEW FOCI

The following new foci are available to adepts.

Adept Focus

This focus is a variant of the power focus specifically designed (and only of use to) adepts. It increases the bonded adept's effective Magic attribute by its Force. This does not grant adepts additional power points, but does affect the amount they can have active at a time, as well as affecting tests, ranges, etc that use the adept's current Magic attribute. The adept focus also grants dice equal to its Force for the adept's Drain Resistance Tests, but it does not affect whether Drain is Stun or Physical. Costs (both nuyen and bonding) are the same as a spirit focus of the same force.

Infusion Focus

An infusion focus allows the adept bonded to it to tap into his inner potential and activate a specific adept power that he does not normally possess. An infusion (Combat Sense 2) focus, for example, would give the adept the power of Combat Sense 2 for as long as the focus was bonded and active. Infusion foci are dedicated to a specific power, and an adept who knows that power must participate in the enchanting process. Likewise, when an adept bonds the focus, another adept who knows the power must be present to teach him how to use the focus to unleash it.

The rating of the infusion focus must be equal to the power's point cost $\times 2$ (So a Combat Sense 2 infusion focus would be Rating 4). Powers gained by an infusion focus count towards the total number of powers an adept may have active at one time. The Magical Power (p. 22, *MITS*) may not be activated through use of an infusion focus.

Costs (both nuyen and bonding) are the same as a spell category focus of the same force. Infusion foci tend to be rare and hard to find, however, so their Availability is 8/72 hours.

BEHIND THE BADGE



We've been inundated with requests for an updated file on the ins and outs of police operations, so here it comes, complete with all the Inside Information you can shake a stick at. We're lucky enough to have a few ex-cops on Shadowland and what they have to say has changed the way I do business. The modern policeman is evolving, folks. From the patrolman all the way up to CSI, they're figuring out ways to slow us down. You want to stay ahead of the learning curve? I suggest you glue your eyes to the next few pulses because these cops ain't Keystone anymore.

• Captain Chaos

Transmitted: 20 December 2063 at 16:49:53 (PST)

by Wolf Larson

Seeing as I'm on your side of the law these days, I thought I'd make it easier on the two or three slags out there that'd love to go about their business without having bullets slung at 'em. Law enforcement is a tough nut to crack. At the center of it you have an army of underpaid foot soldiers whose primary job is to hold back the sea of corruption and violence that threatens to drown the cities they've sworn to protect. Each officer steps into the field knowing that today could be the day they lose their life. What we as shadowrunners don't really consider is that those same officers have families to come home to and they are willing to do absolutely anything it takes to make sure it happens. That may mean some fragile justices get abused in the process.

• Drek: Sure, the Star might be people too—but they're people who want to keep me from doing my job, ever again. If it comes down to me or them, I know where my money is.

• Razor

• I concur. Sorry to say, but I don't buy this portrayal of cops as noble knightly figures who only do bad things in response to criminal threats. Cop recruits don't go through any sort of testing to ensure that intend to serve the public or otherwise take the job in pursuit of lofty moral ideals. There's no measuring of integrity or empathy. So instead you get the men who were playground bullies and aren't schooled, smart or refined enough to get an office job. Sure,



some of them may start off with good intentions or romanticized notions from watching cops on the tvid, but once they're on the streets, the harsh reality, danger and power trip of the job change them into callous, cynical, controlling people. And there's no one to hold them accountable except other cops.

- People Watcher

- The role of police in our society has changed. In response to an increasingly organized and armed criminal element, they've been militarized to the point where police units are indistinguishable from military units. Cops no longer have the traditional support of the populace; they've gone from beloved protectors to mistrusted agents of a faceless governmental machine. In fact, I'd wager that many of the private police outfits take that reputation and run with it. Your standard Lone Star, Petrovski or Knight Errant cop prefers to be feared rather than respected.

- Socio Pat

- Let's be blunt, the role of cops is to protect the rich from the poor. That's why the plgs don't give a damn when one ganger guns down another—but if you break a store window downtown, the cops won't hesitate to shoot your punk ass. Property is valued more than (meta)human life.

- Class Warrior

- You are all ignoring the specialized offices many police group have to combat these precise problems. For example, NYPD Inc. has a unit called CPR—Courtesy, Professionalism, Respect—which indicates they're interested in creating a rapport with the community that casts them in a very friendly, role model oriented light. Every existing police corp has a unit like this, dedicated towards re-establishing the historical role of police in society.

- Doctor Spin

- All of those community policing strategies are just propaganda and data-mining tools. The cops convince the "respectable" (read: affluent) part of the population that they're making a difference by feeding them intel and ratting out anyone they think is suspicious (read: ork or squatter).

- Class Warrior

- I don't think the suits running these police corps have any illusions as to what role they play—I'm sure they're quite comfortable with it. Despite what they tell the communities they're protecting, having a large criminal threat is good business for them and helps the corps in general maintain useful social controls. It's a balancing act between creating and maintaining a sense of security among the citizens to keep their reps polished and creating a sense of fear of (and among) the criminals.

- People Watcher

Since my business with the Star concluded, I've been keeping time with a shadowrunner named Kyra. She'll tell you how to break the law and not get caught doing it. Kyra and a handful of others out there like Argent and Peg have seen me through the rough transition into shadow work. Consider this post my way of saying thanks.

MODERN PRIVATE POLICE GROUPS

The law is big business. Private police contracting was well underway decades before Lone Star signed its first law enforcement contract. Faced with major headaches like union issues, smaller budgets, crippling police brutality lawsuits and rampant corruption, city governments turned to privatization as a solution. The bottom line for many municipalities was that hiring a private police force was just plain cheaper than doing it themselves. By making it a bid process between corps, many cities were able to cut costs without cutting quality.

- Yeah, it's cheaper because you're getting a shoddy, unregulated product. Government-run police administrations are held to a strict standard of conduct. Private groups don't have to be so rigid, so they can cut corners on their employees by trimming wages, benefits and even training. When governments are looking to save money, they latch on to the least expensive firm. Why do you think that firm is so inexpensive?

- Atlanta Spy

- There are a million reasons why it was better for governments to let private companies do their dirty work. Better technology and the breakup of superpower nations led to increasingly well armed criminals and gangs. When the government couldn't keep up with the growing sophistication of the criminal element, there was no choice but to hand the job over to corporations that could. On a smaller scale, a lot of rich neighborhoods and universities ensured their elite status by using private cops to help protect their little corner of sprawl.

- Turner

- Let's just call this what it is; class warfare. When the cops got privatized, the people who got shafted the most were those who lived in poor neighborhoods. If you're a cop corp, there's no overhead in putting money and resources into shanty-towns and squats. And since these "citizens" weren't even citizens anymore (thanks to strict SIN laws), in many cases they had no legal recourse to force the government to provide protection. Face it, Lone Star's policing philosophy in Z-zones is one of letting the strong prey on the weak as long as the strong stay in their place.

- Class Warrior

- Civil liberties also went in the dumpster around the same time private police became popular. Lone Star and their ilk quickly figured out it raised profits to keep people in a near-constant state of panic. Citizens who are fearful of their safety will let you do almost anything to them as long as you promise them they'll be safe.

- Cynic





The organizations that offer policing services aren't mom and pop outfits like you find with corporate security subcontracting. The insurance rates alone are crippling—cop abuse and wrongful arrests settlements are costly. As a result, most cop contractors tend to have the resources of a megacorp backing them, or they are megacorps unto themselves.

It's important here to understand the distinction between a private security service and a law enforcement provider. While many firms take on both types of jobs, there are key differences regarding functions and legalities. A private security service is contracted to protect private property, like a private home, a corporate installation or a gated community. A law enforcement service—please try to read this without gagging—is contracted to help secure a safe and just society. They uphold the law and are deputized to act with its full authority. If a law enforcement provider fails to protect the streets or maintain the support of the people they are protecting, it won't belong before there's a new law in town.

THE POWER PLAYERS

So, who is the law? It depends on what part of the world you're in. Only 30 percent of North American cities are still run by old-fashioned government-controlled police forces ("govpols"). Several cities are hybrids with private firms handling specific policing functions only, such as traffic control and detention systems. Hybrid cities usually keep their govpols on hand for sensitive tasks like crowd control or investigating and combating major anti-social criminal acts (murder, kidnapping, terrorism).

Overall, private policing is dominated by two major companies, with a handful of smaller companies taking up the slack.

On the Beat: Lone Star

When Clayton Wilson bought up Bartholomew Security, Inc. and Absolute Software, Inc. in 2017, it signaled the start of a new trend, though few knew it at the time. Out of the merger arose Lone Star, hyped up with the imagery of Wild West marshals. They were gunslingers with badges, backed by formidable computer and information assets—the perfect card to play in Texas. Three years after opening its doors, Lone Star was taking on law enforcement contracts all across North America and especially in the CAS. Today, they are the largest private police force in the world, with offices in most major urban centers. Most carry the Lone Star name, but a few such as the Gendarmerie in Quebec are subsidiary organizations. When you hear about law enforcement, odds are people are talking about the Star.

I worked as an undercover officer for Lone Star until they buried my career for a chance to improve the bottom line. Despite my involuntary unemployment, I still respect my cop roots. Lone Star officers are proud and disciplined, representing the finest that law enforcement has to offer. A lot of what I'm about to tell you is based on the Star's Operational Procedures Manual. Star officers do everything by the book, so if you're caught by a Lone Star officer, any case they bring is gonna stick.

- Wolf is still too much of a loyalist for his own good. While it's true that Lone Star has a higher conviction rate than the other private forces, a part of that figure is due to what happens after they have you in custody. Lone Star is infamous for their deep interrogation methods that sometimes include illegal mind probes. It's harder to get away with crimes if the cops know where you buried the evidence.

- Kyr

- He also makes a huge generalization about Lone Star operations. While you can expect fair treatment from Star officers in Charlotte, the Star in Toronto will be all too happy to soften you up a bit over the hood of their car before telling you what they think you've done wrong.

- Razor

Backup: Knight Errant

Damien Knight wants to rule the world. If he tells you otherwise, he's full of crap. Not only does he command one of the ten largest corps in the world but he polices a large chunk of the northern hemisphere. Knight Errant (KE) is the clear number two in the privatized police corp arena. No one else even comes close to having as many contracts or troops as KE and Lone Star. KE is tied into Ares's military operations around the world and many of their top execs, including Executive VP Roger Soaring Owl, come from a military background. As a result, KE is run more like a militia than a police force.

- KE focuses on corpsec contracts rather than municipal policing services. They also specialize in more extreme policing actions, stuff that crosses the border into merc territory. They have shock troops on call to handle crises and civil disturbances, seek-and-destroy anti-terrorist units and anti-insurgency and infiltration specialists. Not to mention their elite commando Firewatch teams. They've saved more than a few governments from being toppled—and you can be sure they use it to their advantage.

- Errant Knight

KE saw an upsurge in business after their Firewatch units helped quell bug outbreaks in many cities, and again when they cleansed the bug spirits from Chicago using a strain of astrally active bacteria. Chi-town hasn't been the same since, but it earned KE a few new police contracts, including Chicago itself. KE even went so far as to establish a division to specifically monitor and counter paranormal events, called the Awakened Control Center.

- A Firewatch squad tried to nuke Chicago in a misguided attempt to abort the bug outbreak. Keep that in mind if KE is guarding your urban center—they have no qualms employing full-force scorched earth methods when necessary.

- DefCon5

- Ares has another security firm called Hard Corps that handles less reputable cities and corporate clients (mostly supple-



menting govpols rather than holding full policing contracts). Hard Corps also has more detention facilities than KE (usually KE subcontracts prison details out to Hard Corps) and isn't common outside of North America. Both Ares and KE use Hard Corps as a dumping ground for problem personnel, so Hard Corps goons are not exactly fun to deal with. Hard Corps used to harbor a lot of Aurelius sympathizers, but most of them have skipped out now that Aurelius switched to Cross.

• Squire

On Call

Though nowhere near the size of Lone Star or KE, a few other cop corps deserve mention. Most of these sideline in private and corporate security gigs as well.

Centurion: One of the first major European private police corps, Centurion has over the past few decades centered its activity in areas of Africa where tribal disputes have made it nearly impossible to have an unbiased native police force. It still maintains contracts in several Spanish, Italian and Balkan cities.

Eagle Security: Eagle took a big PR hit when it failed to prevent the bug outbreak in Chicago, not to mention losing some top brass inside the Containment Zone. Despite this, it's still one of the major providers in North America, holding contracts throughout the CAS, UCAS, Sioux and Salish-Shidhe lands.

Petrovski Security: A subsidiary of Mitsuhama, Petrovski has a global presence, though it often operates via local subsidiaries with different names. Many runners don't realize, for example, that the Ertxantxa police in Euskal Herria are sharing the same databases and personnel as the Total Service cops in Korea.

Sakura Security: This subsidiary of Yakashima has contracts throughout the Japanese empire. Not surprisingly, it blatantly engages in metatype profiling and has a disturbingly high rate of instances where metahumans have been gunned down during routine stops (often with excuses that the Sakura cops thought that they were going for a gun when they were actually going for a credstick to show ID).

Wolverine Security: Wolverine has a similar lousy track record of excessive force and police abuse cases, except they don't seem to discriminate based on metatype—they're equal opportunity ass-kickers. Wolverine is especially notorious for their gang-suppression policies, which typically involve solving gang problems with lethal hails of bullets.

LEGAL ISSUES

A private law enforcement contract endows its holder with the civil authority of the court within the realm of their jurisdiction. They are the law until they step out of the area they are paid to protect. Seems exceedingly uncomplicated doesn't it? That's what I thought until I hit the streets. When you're out there working, you have to deal with private licenses, extraterritoriality and my personal favorite, the federal authorities.

It's getting to be so you need a license to walk your dog. Why not? You need a license to do just about everything else. All legal Matrix activity is licensed and monitored through the tracking chips they put in over the counter decks. Anything

magical short of a fetish requires a license not only to use but to carry. Firearms are no different. Nor is cyberware that is licensed according to grade and function. These licensing legalities differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, of course. But what many of you may not realize is that private cops need licenses too. Policing contracts include all sorts of restrictions and legalities regarding what weapons and levels of force the cops can use, what magic they can employ, what utilities and IC they can use, how they can spy on criminals, subversives and the population at large, what records they must or can't keep, drekcetera, drekcetera.

I can hear you saying "so what?"—the cops are the law, so they can break it whenever they want, right? That's certainly true to a degree, especially when you're talking about minor infractions or dealing with dangerous criminal scum like shadowrunners. But in an age of perpetual surveillance, the cops know that a lot of what they do gets caught on camera, and breaking the rules in some ways can lead to mass outcries and riots or worse—investigation and punishment from higher authorities, potentially leading to a contract severance.

• If you ask me, if I was taking a run against some KE goons, I'd want to know whether they're legally allowed to only use small arms or if they're permitted to have high-caliber machinegun-racked drones and milspec gear. It could save my life.

• Jet

LETHAL FORCE

Unlike standard private security services that can only act in self-defense, law enforcement contractors have the right to use lethal force to ensure public safety. That means that officers don't need to be in mortal danger themselves in order to cack a perp. I'm not saying that a cop can cram a bullet into the back of your skull while you're escaping with stolen goods. If you're a perceived threat to public safety, however, they have every right to take you out. If you're armed, using magic or showing off dangerous implants, you can bet your hoop they will.

• Some jurisdictions allow private sec firms to obtain lethal force licenses as well. So just because you're not running up against cops or an extraterritorial corp doesn't mean the guards might not try to kill you.

• Highwire

• The lethal force laws don't work in a runner's favor. If a sec-corp doesn't have the license, they can still try to wound you or claim it was self-defense. If they do have a license, then they can geek you as soon as look at you and get away with it with minimal justification.

• SPD

When I was still a patrolman I was called to back up a squad car in pursuit of a stolen vehicle. The driver had hijacked a Brumby and was tearing down Fleet Street like hell itself was chasing him. The perp didn't have any regard for the other cars on the road or the pedestrians on the sidewalk. Twice he slideswiped cars in order to make them spin out in front of us. When he was close to



the I-5 on-ramp, the lead chase car radioed that they were going to try and take him out. They felt that if this guy reached the highway there was no telling what kind of damage he would do. The officers tried to ram his rear left tire and force the Brumby into a spin. When that didn't work, they pulled alongside him and pumped several rounds into the driver's seat. The perp died on the scene, either from the crash or from lead poisoning; I never bothered to find out which. What mattered was that the killing was justified because the perp presented a threat to those around him. That's the way the laws work now. So if you're racing away from a run in your armed and armored getaway car, don't be surprised when the cops do their best to kill you.

- There still has to be justification for the shooting if you want to keep your job afterwards. The media sits around waiting for stories about over zealous security people shooting innocents over mistaken intentions. Drek like that makes a sec firm look ultra-bad. It's all just checks and balances in the end.

- Prof

- This all becomes a moot point when you're running against a mega on its own property. Extraterritoriality makes it so they can fragging well do whatever they like with you once you're over the wall and on their property. This means geeking you, letting paracritters snack on you or using you in medical experiments. Megs don't have to play by the rules—they make them.

- Corp Watcher

CYBERWARE

You've probably heard that Lone Star doesn't have much in the way of cyber except for a few exceptional cops. This is true, but it's changing more every day. New recruits and long-term personnel are both offered incentive deals to obtain implants at like datajacks, comm units, biomonitors, reflex boosters and smartlinks at steep discounts, deducted from their paychecks on an easygoing payment plan. The program is pushed as a way to climb the ladder quicker or get offered a position in the department they desire. It's also protection from what is waiting for them out on the streets—namely us.

- The downside for personnel that go under the knife is that if they don't read the fine print too closely they may not notice the Star is including a few "extras." The same goes for cops injured in the line of duty—the Star has clauses that essentially give them free rein with your body, since they're footing the bill. I hear they've been experimenting with biomonitoring equipment and sime sense recorders, with all data going straight to R&D so they can make a better cop.

- X-Star

- Police corps that run prison facilities get a fair bit of used 'ware that they pluck from cybermonsters before throwing them in the tank, or from prisoners who die in their care (since they usually have a clause that gives them full possession of the remains).

- Skinner

MAGIC AND PARANIMALS

For the most part, magic is treated like just another weapon in the cops vs. criminals arms race. Lethal combat spells and the like are usually allowed just as guns are, but non-lethal spells are preferred. The only spells that are strictly off limits are control manipulation spells—though a good Mob Mood spell could avert a riot, putting mind control powers in anyone's hands is considered too much of a danger or temptation—especially considering that private companies may have a conflict of interests. The metamagic technique of possession is also typically off-limits to cops.

Spirits are also considered weapons, and police magicians who don't handle theirs with care can expect to get into hot water. There have been far too many cases of accidental fires caused by elementals and other cases of structural damage, evidence destruction or injuries caused to onlookers. Most jurisdictions clearly restrict their magicians from calling on the use of certain spirit powers, specifically any that cause fear or mass panic.

Though common with some private sec services, law enforcement does not have much need for paranormal creatures, and so they are rarely licensed. Though many police forces use horse-mounted officers for patrol or crowd control duties and canine units for bomb-sniffing, the use of paranimals is considered too risky for public service activities. At best, you might find an animal control unit employing a specific critter to help it locate and drive out other animal nuisances.

- Rather than mess with paranormal licenses and the associated pains of caring for Awakened critters, many cop corps are pursuing canine cybernetics. Let me tell you, I'd rather go up against four hellhounds than one cybered-up pooch.

- Sentry

- I keep hearing rumors that Eagle Sec has been discreetly hiring on shapeshifters for their magic and paranormal squads, even in areas where shifters aren't technically legal. Seems like they find their natural abilities to useful too pass by. My question is, why would a shifter want to work as a cop?

- Two-Fists

SURVEILLANCE AND INTERROGATION

With few exceptions, the civil liberties of the past have been soundly trimmed in favor of surveillance—a watched society is an orderly society, or so the theory goes. Cops have free reign to put cameras, microphones and other sensors in public areas as they see fit. They can search for records on you in any databases they can get their hands on. They can intercept any form of wireless communication with impunity (because broadcast transmissions are "in the public domain"), and they can monitor your Matrix activity without a warrant. As a general rule, they only need warrants to read files/messages or tap comcalls—and even then they can do it without a warrant in "emergency circumstances" and explain themselves later. Your local laws may vary.

Law enforcement usually doesn't have the mage-power to patrol astral space, but when it comes to astral surveillance legal



opinions get a little murky. In most cases, astral space is treated as if it conforms to the conjoined physical space. So an astrally projecting cop can follow you around in public, but once you enter the privacy of your home he needs a warrant or probable cause to follow. Spirit surveillance with watchers is usually disallowed, cuz the spirits aren't under direct control and can't understand legal boundaries. Spirit testimony usually isn't allowed in court.

Detection spells are even trickier as local laws vary wildly. Some places allow police to use spells like Analyze Truth, Clairvoyance and Mind Probe without restriction, whereas in others they require warrants or are not admissible as evidence in court.

- In NAN countries like the Sioux Nation, magicians can use spirits and spells with almost no restrictions—hell, some tribal courts even allow divination results as evidence.
- Two-Fists

JURISDICTION

"In compliance with the Business Recognition Accords, any individuals located on properly designated extraterritorial corporate property shall be granted the privilege of immunity from all applicable state and federal laws so long as their actions do not extend past the boundaries of their corporate territory. This privilege shall also be extended to certain authorized diplomatic delegates of recognized corporations."

—Lone Star Operational Procedures Manual

Drek like that makes it easy to remember that Lone Star is a corp at heart. On the streets, extraterritoriality only becomes an issue if your collar runs onto megacorp turf in order to avoid arrest or the perp flashes diplomatic credentials and bleats, "You can't touch me."

A policing contract grants the force control over areas of the city not specifically protected by the Business Recognition Accords. Take this data to heart folks. It means that the cops can't touch you once you step onto property owned by an AA rated or higher corporation. It doesn't even have to be a significant piece of property so long as its borders are clearly marked and a sign of some sort on the property gives notice of the company ownership. I always hated it when the guy I was chasing would shimmy a fence right into a corp's warehouse space. They knew I couldn't follow them. All you can do is have your superiors contact the corp in order to negotiate a temporary writ of action order within that territory. Now that I'm a runner, I'll admit that it's slick to take advantage of boundaries like that. Odds are, the cops are waiting for you on the other side, but if you've pre-arranged some sort of pick-up within the corporate territory then it allows you a chance to get in the air without being shot at.

- Runners are big on this tactic. Corporate space is dangerous in its own right, but a rarely used corp facility with low security can be a safe-haven when Lone Star is bearing down on you with a Hughes Stallion and a pair of Citymasters.
- Winky



- Walt—so you're saying that if the cops are chasing me, I can just dip into my local arcology and the police can't follow me?
- GnuB

• That's how it works, except the local police will always make corporate authorities aware of what's going on near their territory. So when you bust through the doors corp police will be waiting to snatch you up as a courtesy to the city. They'll turn you right back over—after ensuring that the data you stole is in no way valuable to them. If it is, they'll relieve you of your score and then hand you over.

- The Chromed Accountant

• Unless, of course, you happen to work for the corp you ran into. Then the corp will make up an excuse, like claim that you were killed entering or something equally false in order to make sure their assets remain protected.

- Ren

• Anything of that nature is certain to bring down the wrath of the Corporate Court. Larger firms like Lone Star and KE have a voice with the court and will petition for the extradition of wanted suspects. Fortunately, it rarely gets to that point.

- Wobbly

• So, if big sec corps like the Star and KE have extraterritoriality, does this mean that their police stations and prisons follow their corporate laws, rather than the laws of the city they police?

- GnuB

• Unlikely, as that creates conflicts of interest and the potential for civil liberties violations. Usually the contract requires law enforcement facilities to follow local laws.

- X-Star

These same rules apply to physical jurisdictions. Knight Errant polices Chicago, but their authority ends at the Chicago border. There are all sorts of "jurisdiction extendors" that police can use to get around these limitations, though. Some police have statutory authority to act *within a given distance* outside of their geographical area (so long as the officer stays within the state, or whatever the next tier of authority is). Some states also have a "close pursuit" clause so that officers may maintain authority while chasing someone they have probable cause to arrest outside of their jurisdiction.

• It pays to know the local laws, chummers. The last thing you want to do is slide to a stop after clearing a border to thumb your nose at the cops only to realize that they're crossing the border to nab you.

- Prime Runner

• Corps sometimes make similar arrangements with local cops, so that they can temporarily extend their corpsec officers' authority

outside of corp grounds in pursuit cases.

- Highwire

• If the laws are in your favor, these jurisdiction spots can be a boon, especially when you get two cop agencies that don't play well together. A New York chummer of mine was running from a Winter Systems officer in Manhattan a few years back. He stepped into Washington Heights, officially KE territory, but the cop continued pursuit outside of his jurisdiction. KE officers saw the Winter Systems cop shooting at my chummer and drew on both of them. Officially, the Winter Systems cop's pursuit was against the law, and my chummer used the standoff to get away. He got lucky. In my opinion, it's rare that the cops will shoot it out and let the perp walk, even if they're competitors.

- Donjon

Now, if a cop needs to go outside the municipality's boundaries to pursue an investigation, he can request "credentialed empowerment" status within that other jurisdiction as a special agent of the city/corp in question. A credentialed officer enjoys the jurisdictional privileges of a police officer, but not the full immunity of a diplomat. In most cases, though, the local police will send someone along to make sure the credentialed cops do what they're supposed to be doing and nothing else. The credentials typically only last for a pre-assigned amount of time and cannot be renewed. Such credentials usually require a great deal of string pulling, so they're reserved for special occasions where the only legal recourse is to send your own people in to get the job done.

• And if it's too much hassle to get the credentials, they'll just hire some shadow talent to do the job on the sly.

- Argent

• These sorts of credentials are very rare between sec corps. When you have two competing companies pursuing the same investigation they almost never share information with one another. It would be like Yakashima helping Cross sell product. It isn't beneficial to the company doing the sharing because it makes them look bad for not being able to solve the crime and makes their rival look good for getting the job done.

- Corp Watcher

• It's worth pointing out that armed medical service providers also have to pay or otherwise wrangle authority so that they are free to act to ensure the safety of their clients within the jurisdiction of the local police force. A medical operations license like this can apply to the entire jurisdiction or just certain sections. In Seattle, for example, Doc Wagon is authorized to operate anywhere within Seattle sprawl limits except for extraterritorial megacorp land and Council Island, neither of which are under Seattle's jurisdiction. You pop your wristband on Council Island, and it'll cost big nuyen. DocWagon will consider it a high threat situation automatically because they have

SAMPLE CRIMES UNDER FEDERAL (FBI) JURISDICTION

Assassination
 Bank Robbery
 Bribery
 Conspiracy
 Crimes on or Involving Government Property
 Espionage
 Extortion
 False Entries in Records of International Carriers
 Fraud and Embezzlement
 Irregularities in Penal Institutions
 Kidnapping
 Sabotage
 Theft from International Shipment

to buy temporary clearance to even go in there without Island authorities opening fire on them.

• Eli

• Wolverine is famous for denying full operational clearance to armed medical providers in their areas. When CrashCart tried to set up an office in Cleveland, Wolverine authorities denied them weapon privileges. If they wanted to perform medical extractions, they'd have to do them unarmed. No response yet from CrashCart, but I'm certain that they're trying to find a way to change the corp's mind.

• Mawdryn

Jurisdiction issues also arise over the types of crime. In the UCAS, FBI authority supersedes local police authority when it comes to federal crimes and criminal activity that crosses state lines. Elsewhere around the globe, there are similar ranking agencies that reserve the right to assume command of an investigation at any time. Since the government is paying private police firms, they have no choice but to step aside. Rivalries develop here when local cops see cases taken out of their hands that they think they can handle, or when they're forced to cooperate and work with another agency—especially when those agents have elitist attitudes. On the other hand, they can be a blessing; if your perp heads to Chicago to escape a Seattle collar, the feds will bring him back. It doesn't matter to them that competing police companies handle law enforcement in those two cities.

• The rule applies to military and espionage agencies as well. It's an important distinction in nations like Tsimshian, where the MCT-funded military often steps into civil matters in order to ensure that the voice of the people is not heard.

• Digital Samurai

POLICING FUNCTIONS

Your basic police force is divided by function. A different department or division—depending on the size of the jurisdiction—handles each policing task. Some are handled from a central office, others are run on a precinct by precinct basis.

The best way to cover all of the functions is to use Lone Star's unit structure as an example. Other cop agencies will organize differently, but they'll handle their duties in a similar way.

DIVISION OF PATROL

Patrol is the public face of the police, the ones who cruise the streets and are first to respond to emergency calls. These are the cops on the front lines, the ones who put their lives at risk dealing with crime on a daily basis.

The Patrol Division constitutes the bulk of the manpower a police force has. The best way to prevent crime is to keep a visible presence in the sprawl; the effectiveness of a force depends on its day-to-day patrol activities and response times. If you run into cops on the street, either by accident or because they're responding to a call, these are the cops with whom you'll be dealing.

• If the cops that tag you aren't from Patrol, then you're either being watched or some department is actively looking for you—bad news either way.

• SPD

Patrol officers are expected to have good judgment and to use caution. They're trained to seize control of a situation right away, so they don't tolerate people that don't follow orders. They receive daily briefings and real-time updates, and they can cross-reference databanks from the field, so they're expected to be aware of everything happening within their designated patrol sector.

• The days of growling at your local PD officer are long gone. The force has to

appear tough to the criminals no matter what back alley payoffs are going down, so if you get mouthy with an officer in public, expect to catch a beating for your trouble. On the other hand, these forces still have quality assurance units patrolling the affluent neighborhoods; pretty fraggers all dressed up to make the police presence seem like a privilege to the rich and influential.

• Minx

Patrolling officers aren't out there on their own, of course. They're in constant communication with dispatch (who may even have video feed) who can send backup their way in minutes. Patrols are supplemented by a saturation of surveillance cams, spotter drones and other sensors (everything from Gridlink sensors to audio pickups that listen for gunshots and pinpoint the origin).

LONE STAR ENFORCEMENT DIVISIONS

Patrol
 Matrix Security
 Paranormal Investigation
 Drug Enforcement
 Special Tactics
 Investigation



- It's not uncommon for law enforcement to float surveillance blimps in place over high-security areas, so that they can call down an aerial viewpoint of a situation in seconds. It's hard to run from an eye in the sky like that.
- Rigger X.

At the Star, the Division of Patrol is divided into six departments; traffic, shore, air, street, highway, and FRT.

Department of Air Patrol

The flyboys of Lone Star run the Department of Air Patrol. Spotter drones, RPV's and fixed radar stations keep an eye on licensed air traffic. Any commuter air vehicles operating without transponders or logged flight plans are investigated and warned to land. The bulk of personnel here are riggers, either patrolling in one-man Northrup Wasps or running Wandjina attack RPVs to intercept unauthorized or dangerous traffic.

- Knight Errant's air traffic policy is about peace through superior firepower. Thanks to Ares, KE air jocks are outfitted with top of the line patrol copters and even attack helicopters and jet fighters to keep the skies safe in extreme circumstances.
- Errant Knight
- Petrovski's been known to use fixed SAM batteries to shoot down rogue air traffic. They're very careful about where they use them—they don't want a stray missile taking out a skyscraper penthouse—but who cares if some SINless squatters are showered with debris?
- Blue Thunder

Department of Highway Patrol

Highway cops use photovoltaic paint schemes to ride undercover and catch speeders and other traffic offenders. They also handle accident investigation and run random stops to intercept smuggler traffic. Their real task, though, is keeping the highways safe from predatory go-gangs, joyriders and underground racing clubs. They have a technological upper hand with souped-up interceptor vehicles, drone coverage and directional radar and video surveillance, but truthfully they lack the manpower to cover every stretch of highway, especially at night. As a result, some strips are by default left to the gangs, though the Star will run random checkpoints and area saturation sweeps to keep the street thugs on their toes.

- Knight Errant has been using undercover cops as drag racers to goad gang members into a challenge and then arresting them after the race ends.
- Jammer
- Highway Patrol uses lots of other toys to bring chases to a quick end. Aside from the regular spike and zapper strips, they'll use vehicle override codes to remotely shutdown the engines if possible. They also have a device that fits in the trunk of a patrol

car that can be used to fry the electronics of a vehicle directly behind it, forcing it to stall.

- Rigger X.

Department of Shore Patrol

Shore Patrol is usually the first department to take a hit when it comes time to slash budgets. Shore's primary operations are on the open water, hauling in smugglers and taming pirates. They receive a great deal of support from air patrols—drones cover larger areas of water than boats can. Ground patrol units are usually called in to assist any arrests.

- Smugglers have gotten a lot smarter these days and are taking their business underwater. A couple of cop shops also use Vulkan Dolphins to patrol beneath the surface.
- X-Star

Department of Street Patrol

Street Patrol includes your neighborhood beat cops, bicycle or horse-mounted officers, motorcycle cops and standard squad car patrols. As a rule, patrols are done in pairs, except for beat cops in high-security 'hoods. Shift changes are staggered between precincts and even between units, so you can no longer get an edge by planning your run during shift change. Patrol cops tend to become intimately familiar with their neighborhoods. They get to know the snitches, the delinquent juveniles, the gangers and the "concerned citizens" who point them in the direction of any trouble.

- Unlike the Star, most other forces have patrol units that are specially designated as tactical gang crimes units. These officers patrol undercover in areas with increased gang activity, often working hand in hand with vice or organized crime units.
- Serpico
- Modern patrol officers are personally wired direct to dispatch with encrypted radio, biomonitor feeds, GPS data and sometimes even video. That means that if you cack a cop in an alley, central dispatch is going to see his vital signs flatline and send units to that location right away. Patrol vehicles are also decked out with radio, wireless Matrix links and numerous data-recording sensors.
- Kyrä

- Since these are the cops us runners are most likely to run into, let's take a scan at what gear they'll be carrying.

Your standard squad car is a Lone Star-modified, armored Ford Americar. It's onboard computer is linked to an encrypted radio, wireless Matrix links and onboard cameras and sensors. A windshield heads-up display and fold-out monitors allows the cops to access data without jacking in (which they never do on the street). Shock plates are mounted on the exterior and embedded in the back seat. Front and rear-mounted flashpaks are integrated with the light and siren array. You'll typically find two Mossberg combat shotguns and strap-on armored torso

plates in the trunk, along with extra handcuffs, plastic restraints, mage masks, pulse cuffs, jackstoppers, skillswitchers, and DNA, blood and cyberware scanners.

The officers themselves will be packing Defiance Supershock tasers, stun batons, Ruger Thunderbolt heavy pistols and either armored vests or light security armor, with helmets.

• SPD

Department of Traffic

These are your meter maids and slags left to stand in the middle of the street directing traffic when something goes wrong with the automated systems. Traffic cops use radar and laser equipped drones to spot speeders as well as air and street lamp mounted camera drones to watch for repeat offenders. GridGuide and drones handling parking and traffic management in many areas, but in lower security zones these grunts do it manually. It's not uncommon for them to drive around and scan every vehicle they come across, so be careful about parking your hotwired wheels on the street.

Fast Response Teams

Lone Star uses Fast Response Teams the way other corps use SWAT. If an officer sees something they know the average uniform can't handle, they'll radio for the FRT. The FRT is literally doing nothing but sitting around, suited up, waiting for such a call. They immediately assess the situation and decide what level of response is necessary.

A standard squad is twelve officers broken down into two fire teams. Each team arrives on the scene in its own armored Citymaster or WK-2 Stallion rotorcraft. FRT teams are armed and armored to the gills. Everyone wears heavy security armor with active helmet display and carries the standard Thunderbolt sidearm. Primary weapons differ from member to member, mood to mood. They always have a sniper armed with an MA 2100 rifle and a breach officer armed with a CMDT combat shotgun. Additional members carry either HK-227 SMG's or the favored AUG-CSL assault rifle. Each team includes at least one magician, usually a mage—though shamans and adepts are also mixed in on occasion.

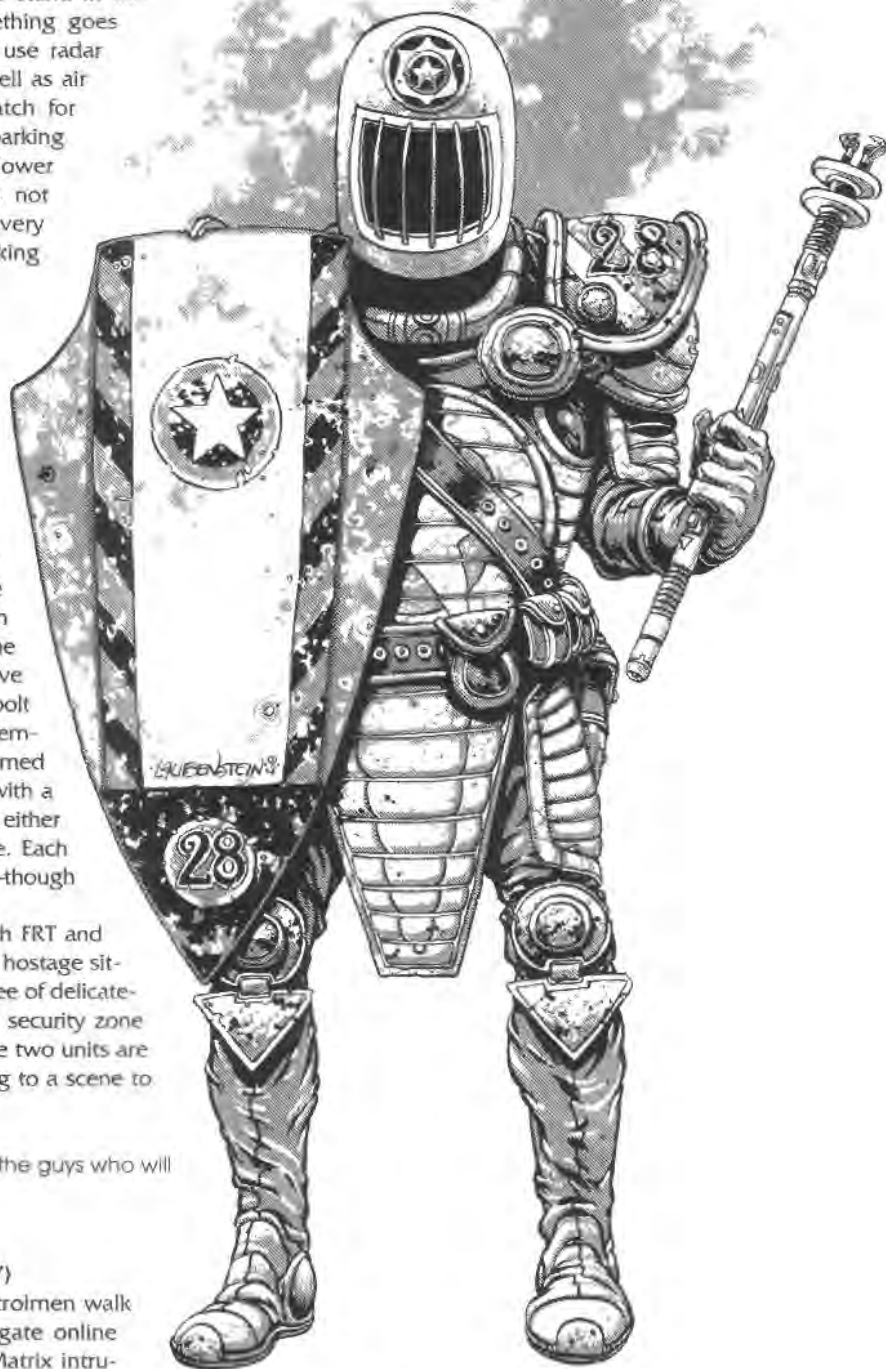
In the interest of redundancy, the Star has both FRT and SWAT teams. Officially, SWAT is supposed to handle hostage situations and similar high-risk situations where a degree of delicateness is needed. FRT handles brute squad stuff, low security zone dangers where collateral damage is not an issue. The two units are in constant competition with each other, often racing to a scene to be the first unit there and thus the unit in charge.

• If you're a decker and you get traced, these are the guys who will be sent to your location to pick you up.

• Glitch

DIVISION OF MATRIX SECURITY (AKA "GRIDSEC")

GridSec cops patrol the local grid the way patrolmen walk a beat. They monitor public Matrix space, investigate online anomalies and crimes and respond to reports of Matrix intrusions or deckers aiding criminal activity. Contracted law enforcement is restricted from accessing non-public govern-





ment grids, however (that pesky conflict of interest thing again), so don't expect to find Lone Star deckers watching over government datafiles. That task falls to the Department of Justice Matrix Marshals, who have authority over government grids and Matrix crimes—in the UCAS at least. GridSec only gets invited in to government or corporate systems that lack their own security deckers, or in emergencies.

- Matrix crime jurisdiction is entirely relevant to where your "consciousness" is. If you're hacking an Ares host from a jack-point on the Seattle grid, that crime is under Ares's jurisdiction, not Lone Star Seattle.

- FastJack

- The cops don't publicize it, but the majority of Matrix crimes are unsolved. The Matrix is simply too big and too complicated to catch all those deckers, however, so the cops have a different philosophy—make flashy examples of those they do catch. Media coverage of apprehended Matrix criminals is usually sensationalized, taking up almost 30 percent of crime coverage for what amounts to about 2 percent of crimes reported. Matrix criminals can also expect stiffer punishments to deter all those hackers still at large (because that tactic is obviously working, ahem).
- Tuttle

- Lone Star has a new psychotropic IC program called Snitch that compels its victims to report on their criminal activities and those of their associates to authority figures.

- Grid Reaper

The other major task of this division is protecting Lone Star's own computer assets. All of those criminal records, personnel histories, police reports and investigative files are secured away by a small army of GridSec deckers and more IC than the North Pole.

- A lot of other divisions and department heads are nervous about GridSec sniffing around in their files and business—especially if they have something to hide. Internal Affairs keeps a close eye on GridSec to make sure they don't abuse their position—rumors are that they even have their own secret computer security department.

- X-Star

DIVISION OF PARANORMAL INVESTIGATIONS

With the exception of FRT and SWAT combat mages, this is where most Awakened personnel in Lone Star end up. The "Dips" are in charge of almost every policing function involving magic. Unlike other Star divisions, the DPI functions semi-autonomously with separate offices and an entirely independent budget. The Dips demand the newest technological and magical accessories in order to handle their laundry list of responsibilities, and they get it. It's no secret that Dips are both feared and despised by the rest of the Star for their elitist attitudes and overbearing natures.

Every precinct has a small unit of Dips who do nothing but spend all day lying in bed attached to medical support so they can respond immediately to calls for astral backup—usually with a few elementals in tow. The Dips are also called in on any investigation of crimes involving the use of magic. Lone Star also maintains a Dips unit in each city charged with paranormal and spirit control duties.

- The Dips don't bother "arresting" spirits that commit crimes. They settle for banishing them outright.

- Shetani

The Dips are also in charge of regulating magician's licenses and registering foci and magical materials. So if you're reported as being an unlicensed mage or suspected of dealing in unregistered teslas, it's the Dips who will come knocking. This is actually a big revenue source, so it's no surprise that Lone Star lobbies hard for stricter magic laws. A large section of the DPI is also devoted to magical research.

- The Dips run a subsidiary to the Star called Silver Dawn, an independent security consulting firm that helps to pay the bills of magic central and fund the private goals of the division's top spell jock, Fraser Simington. Associate Coordinator Simington has spent the last decade undertaking top secret research deep in the belly of the DPI's main office in Austin, CAS. Nobody really knows what he's up to, but rumor says it involves astral journeys lasting longer than most would assume is possible.

- Magister

DIVISION OF DRUG AND CHIP ENFORCEMENT

Curtailing the drug and chip trade is considered by many to be a losing battle, but vast police resources are still dedicated towards it. Often the policing of mindbenders is tied in with a vice squad, but Lone Star prioritizes it enough to make it a separate department. Drug and BTL control officers usually work closely with the Organized Crime Department, since the gangs and syndicates are the ones handling manufacturing and distribution.

- Or the corps are. Remember 2XS? That was a Yamatetsu-engineered chip sold on the black market to unsuspecting beetleheads who became involuntary test subjects. Word is that the neo-now chip making the rounds is another corp idea. It enhances the senses in the same way as bliss, except that it makes you feel like you're living in the Matrix with your ASIST jacked all the way up.

- Chip Runner

DIVISION OF SPECIAL TACTICS

The Division of Special Tactics, or TacDiv, runs a number of smaller departments that you, as a shadowrunner may come into contact with. These departments include Demolitions, Riot Control, SWAT and Dispatch.

Demolitions

Better known as the Bomb Squad, Demolitions is responsible for defusing or dismantling any explosives threats levied against the public. These days the Bomb Squad is comprised of riggers with a small squadron of bomb-sniffing and utility drones to handle explosives removal or controlled detonations. Some Bomb Squad units also use trained dogs and chemsniffing drones to seek out hidden bomb threats. The occasional odd magician will also be posted here to use spells and spirits to contain explosions and fires.

Most police forces also have biohazard units to handle chemical, nano and bio-warfare attacks. These officers are trained in identifying threats, quarantining the situation, preventing contamination and handling media spin to keep mass panic from breaking out.

- These units used to worry about major terrorist attacks or virus outbreaks, but lately they've faced off against smaller-scale bloware threats. A few cults and terror groups have started using bloware chemical glands to sneak nasty viral bugs past scanners into populated areas like travel centers or sports stadiums so that a simple exhale can poison hundreds or thousands of people.

- Holy Fire

- Demolitions also disposes of outdated police firearms and materiel. There have always been rumors that a lot of demo units sell the guns rather than destroy them but the paperwork proves otherwise.

- Balthazar

- And if you believe that, then I own Mitsuhamu. Those late model guns end up on the streets sooner or later.

- Minstrel

Riot Control

Riot control focuses on non-lethal responses to large-scale demonstrations that have spiraled out of control. Nowadays, police forces will trot out the riot squad every time there's a gathering of more than fifty people. Different agencies handle agitated crowds differently. Some prefer to keep a situation defused and focus on containing and not provoking the crowd. Others will try to intimidate a mob into dispersing with targeted arrests and displays of force. Others will go straight to declaring the mob an illegal assembly and will use whatever means it can to disable and conduct a mass arrest.

Riot squads have a lot of toys at their disposal: flash and stun grenades, tasers, gel rounds, pepper spray and tear gas, freeze foam, slip spray, splat glue, water cannons and sonic rifles. Generally, they will soften a crowd up with tear gas or sonics and then roll in with full security armor, taser clubs and electrified macroplast shields. The shields carry enough voltage on the front side to stun anyone who touches them. The taser clubs double as projectile tasers that can accurately take out a target at ten meters.

Riot control teams prefer the classic Citymaster for heavy-duty assignments. When dealing with overwhelming

numbers they shut down the electrosields and flip on the water cannons.

- This is a load of drek. Both the Star and KE have long records of "accidental" deaths when quelling riots. Wolf neglects to mention the chronic overuse of gel rounds or the fact that those tear gas canisters are often aimed at specific targets and are fired with enough velocity to kill. Riot control squads are a breeding ground for anti-meta types who are just itching to crack a few skulls.

- Antifa

SWAT

SWAT, or Special Weapons and Tactics, is called in for high threat situations (that means you, chummers). A SWAT unit's aim is to incapacitate the threat as quickly as possible with minimal civilian injury. Most units train together in order to function with one brain, thinking and moving as one.

SWAT team makeup varies depending on the force. Lone Star SWAT squads have sixteen highly specialized members. Eight are rifleman, four are snipers, two are spotters and there is also a decker and a combat mage. Centurion SWAT teams consist of a sniper, spotter, grenadier, medic, rigger, decker, field commander and two breach officers. Standard SWAT gear includes the equivalents of standard light to heavy security armor, AK-98 or Ares Alpha assault rifles with underbarrel grenade launchers, CMTD or Remington 990 combat shotguns and MA 2100 rifles for the snipers.

- The grenadier is the explosives and chemical weapons specialist. Their job is to incapacitate the runners before the breach officers and everyone else piles into the hot zone. They'll be armed with thermal smoke, sleeping gas and various other chemical agents (some which may officially not exist). They also bring prep any charges for blowing open barricades.

- SPD

- SWAT teams set up interlocking fields of fire over a target the moment they hit the ground. The basic team strategy is to use the grenadiers or riflemen to lure the targets into a kill zone where the snipers have their best chance of getting a clear shot. In the case of Lone Star, four snipers break apart into teams of two, each with a spotter calling out the targets. This is particularly effective during hostage situations. A good sniper squad can have eight hostiles down before anyone is the wiser.

- Argent

Dispatch

Dispatch represents the nerve center of any police operation. Modern dispatch centers are virtual nodes, with dispatchers running on response-boosted SOTA cyberdecks for maximum interaction and networking. Each node features a zoom-enabled detailed map of the city with icons that note the locations and status of active duty officers, surveillance cams, Panicbuttons and more. GridGuide is linked directly into this system for real-time traffic data, and other databases are with-



in easy reach. Several security deckers monitor the node for intrusions, and the physical location of the dispatchers is also a secured location.

- Lone Star signal experts would like you to believe that it's impossible to break into police channels. If that's true, then why are the trid snoops always on the scene before the cops get there? Police officers do use heavily encrypted radio channels, but truth is, there's always someone smart enough to break the code.

- Glitch

- Dispatch offices change the crypto key everyday, though. Officers receive the new key when they start their shift. Sure, you can crack it each day, but it's easier to get the day's code from a cop contact.

- Skater

- Dispatch officers communicate using unit codes for cops on the street and code numbers for different criminal incidents and situations. If you're going to scan their comms, learn their lingo.

- Sneaker

- A little known secret is that off-duty officers are often tracked by their implants and required comm gear just as on-duty ones are. This is rarely done, except for emergency cases when dispatch needs an officer somewhere right away and the only person who can get there is an off-duty cop—or in the rare instances when Internal Affairs is investigating a cop corruption case.

- SPD

- Dispatch always faces a major headache with bogus panic button calls, fake bomb threats and crank calls of every persuasion. It could be kids playing a joke, a crazy person doing their thing or shadowrunners creating a distraction to lure cops away from a particular location. The only way to know for sure is to send a squad or drone to the location for a physical check.

- X-Star

Irregular Assets

From time to time, Lone Star and similar cop corps will call on professional bounty hunters to track down a skip or handle a wanted criminal that they neither have the time nor desire to track on their own. These may be wanted criminals, suspects or just witnesses the department lost track of. The Irregular Assets department assigns a contract for each person, according to their ranking on the list. Technically, bounty hunters are subject to stringent screening, licensing and background checks before they are hired.

- The process includes a thorough background check, fingerprint analysis, and retinal scan. Most bounty hunters are ex-cops who have either retired or been kicked off the job for one reason or another. Unfortunately for us, they still feel like they're the law, but don't feel like they need to observe any laws when trying to bring their bounty in.

- Kai

Naturally, Irregular Assets also sometimes turns to the shadows for work they need done off the books. Each department usually keeps a small group of fixers on the payroll who are charged with arranging personnel to discretely handle problems that Lone Star has no official jurisdiction over. This is all extremely secret and deniable, of course. Lone Star is supposed to be catching criminals, not hiring them as problem solvers.

- Don't consider a job like this to be free rein to run amok without persecution. The Star will make it clear that you should avoid collateral damage or breaking laws unnecessarily. If you go too far, they'll have no qualms about taking you down—and since they'll want to keep you silent about your arrangements, that means they'll probably aim to take away your breathing privileges.

- X-Star

DIVISION OF INVESTIGATION

This is where all the good trideo material comes from. Investigation includes the departments of special investigation, homicide, vice, robbery, surveillance, organized crime

and forensics. In other security firms, precinct level investigation departments break down into much smaller groups; a couple of detectives deal with all the robberies, others get stuck with homicide, others still get sex crimes and so on. Cases that relate to multiple departments will have a team composed of members from each relevant department to work on it.

- And just like on the trid, these intradepartmental teams are dysfunctional messes. Petty rivalries, bad attitudes and career ambitions get in the way of basic cooperation more often than not. It's usually not so bad as to ruin the investigation, though. In private cop corps, detectives know that if their interference hurts the bottom line, they'll be out of a job.

- X-Star

- Knight Errant handles these department-overlapping cases differently. They assign the case to one department only, based on a hierarchy of crimes (homicide over robbery, for

LONE STAR POLICE CODES

Code Number	Situation
04	Homicide
06	Magical Assault
08	Assault
09	Backup Requested
12	Robbery
14	Auto Theft
20	Pursuit in Progress
99	Astral Backup Requested
00	Officer Down

example), available personnel, experience and, of course, internal politics. They have less competition and interference that way, but you will occasionally get a detective who refuses to stop after his case has been re-assigned to another team. Most detectives have too much workload, though, to complain about losing a case to someone else.

• **Errant Knight**

• You'll of course find that investigations involving crimes against the wealthy or influential take precedence over the murder of some gutter punk. And if the suspect of an investigation is SINless, expect the cops to arrest him first and then figure out what evidence they can put together afterwards with no regard for his basic rights. If they can beat, blackmail or intimidate a confession out of him, all the better—after all, cop corps have an economic incentive to "solve" cases.

• **Blade**

• Or they may just cack the perp. That way cuts down on the paperwork.

• **Star-Crossed**

Forensics

Crime scene investigators (CSI) are more doctors than they are cops. They specialize in evidence recovery, something you'll want to learn about before you waltz into that corp and start touching everything. The Captain tells me that Dirk will be filling us in on forensics ops later on, so let's move on.

Homicide

The purpose of this department is obvious. It's actually one of the most prestigious departments in the Star, as some cases are high-profile and sensational and make good trid fodder.

Organized Crime Department (OCD)

I spent the better part of my career in OCD. This department works against the local syndicates, gangs and any other group deemed an organized criminal organization by the higher-ups. Yes, that means established runner crews as well. OCD is broken down into separate task forces for each major syndicate (Mafia, Yaks, Triads, etc) and one that handles the miscellaneous leftovers (runners, gangs, smugglers, etc).

OCD relies heavily on street-level contacts and informants for their investigations. Major effort is put into ways to apply pressure to key underworld figures to either intimidate or blackmail them into ratting out their colleagues. Though the information from snitches isn't as reliable (after all, many snitches have a monetary incentive to hand over intel—whether the intel is true or not), they are preferred over actual undercover agents as undercover work is riskier and more time-consuming. Nevertheless, OCD puts agents as deep undercover as they can go. I was with the Cutters for over a year, never once coming up for air. Other guys in my department stayed under much longer than that. We're gangers, Yaks and sometimes runners. All of it to make a bust on the people we learned to call our friends.

• I met Wolf through his work with the OCD. I thought he was with a local gang called the Cutters. When I needed gang backup, I'd hire his crew to be my muscle. Never once did I suspect that he was a cop. He shed blood with his gang, even killed for them. I would have stayed in the dark too if he hadn't told me he was a cop and his cop buddies were setting me up for the big fall.

• **Kyra**

• Hey Kyra, how can you be sure he's really turned his back on his old mates? You heard what he said: OCD puts agents under as deep as they can go. I'd watch your back if I were you.

• **Cynic**

• OCD is a runner's worst nightmare. Take note, police work is usually judged by the collars—the fewer collars made, the less effective the officer and department is perceived to be. OCD receives massive funding and manpower, yet it scores relatively few collars, simply because the syndicates are more organized (not to mention other reasons that certain mob bosses seems to be immune from prosecution). So in order to justify themselves, OCD sinks a lot of effort into busting gangers and shadowrunners—after all, we're not as well connected as a mob boss or syndicate crew can be. We live in the shadows, SINless and without regard for public safety. It's the perfect media tool to promote the effectiveness of a division that on average isn't very effective.

• **X-Star**

Robbery

Unlike Homicide, the Robbery Department is considered low prestige. The grunt work is tedious and the majority of cases are never solved. Quite often a robbery investigation leads to an organized crime or drug link, so the case is handed over to the appropriate department.

Special Investigations

This is where all the cases that no one else wanted end up. Special Investigation covers everything from missing persons to cold case files. It's also the branch of the Star that handles investigations for clients who want to hire the Star on a one-shot basis.

Surveillance

These cops handle the technical details of tapping comm lines, monitoring Matrix activity and even tailing suspects. Surveillance is mostly a high tech operation. Most security firms divide their surveillance departments into remote surveillance and hands-on tracking teams. Physical tailing is a manpower-intensive operations, so it's reserved for important cases. Shadowing teams typically involve multiple officers on foot and/or in car, aided with drones, who switch off tailing the suspect every few minutes to avoid suspicion.

Vice and Morality

This department handles rape, prostitution, suicide, domestic abuse, illegal gambling, hate crimes and so on. These



officers are exposed to some of the worst aspects of metahumanity, so the turnover rate is high and they tend to be jaded and depressed.

NON-ENFORCEMENT DIVISIONS

There are two sides to law enforcement; crime prevention and everything else. Specialized areas such as psychology and penology fall into the "everything else" category. Most of the personnel working this side of the job aren't officers, they're negotiators, lab techs and other support staff. A few of them deserve special mention.

Internal Affairs

These are the guys who theoretically keep the Star on the straight and narrow. They police the police, dutifully watching for any sign of corruption or wrongdoing. They're responsible for investigating wrongful death, excessive force, discrimination and police abuse claims.

Don't believe it for a sec. Lone Star is a corp, and what it's most interested in is its bottom line. The Star couldn't give a drek whether some yuppie snob feels his rights were violated. So Internal Affairs ends up being more about keeping up appearances than actually stopping any wrongdoing. Sure, if they catch a cop on film beating an ork for no reason, they'll take "disciplinary action"—which usually means transferring that slag off to another city and putting him right back out on the street.

Penology

The Department of Penology handles the transition to the big house as well as providing "temporary care" for offenders in jail awaiting their hearings. Penology also monitors cons on probation or parole.

- There's money in prisoners the same way there's money in students. The government pays corps an annual fee for every convict that a corp watches, be it through parole or pre-release monitoring. The money stops when the ex-con is no longer in the system. There are only two ways out of the system: staying clean for the duration of your parole or you can be executed by the state. In most cases, an ex-con will break the law again and get sent back inside. Star cops have a nasty habit of trying to make ex-con's screw up—after all, cons are the prisons' meal ticket.

- Muckraker

Parole is an early release system designed to reduce the number of bodies in prisons. Once you've served a portion of the time you were sentenced to, you meet with a parole board. They decide whether or not it is safe to release you back into the public on a parole basis. Once released, a con is mandated to meet regularly (usually weekly) with a parole officer and adhere to restrictions regarding curfew, residence, employment and even personal associations. These terms are decided on a case-by-case basis. Parole can last longer than the original sentence, given the fact that the time is done on the outside and therefore counts for less.

Parole officers also handle probation, which is essentially parole without prison time. Probation is usually awarded to first time offenders and accompanied by several hundred hours of community service. People on probation must meet regularly with a parole officer and adhere to any terms put on them by the sentencing body. Any violation of the probations terms will result in that person being imprisoned for the rest of the sentence.

- Parole officers can be nasty fraggers. They understand that being marked as a convicted felon seriously limits the type of work you can get hired for. So they give you a job list crammed full of people who will hire you, people who tend to have an off-the-books arrangement with the parole officer about what happens with your paycheck. A lot of these places that hire ex-cons also deal in the illegal and are expecting to use parolees as muscle.

- Jaz

- Parolees are often tagged with a GPS tracking bracelet so that the police are notified if they leave city limits or violate any boundary restrictions they're given. They are also notified if the bracelet is removed or tampered with.

- SPD

DEALING WITH THE LAW

by Kyra

Having a contact within the system is vital to how we do business—and vice versa. Just because a cop is willing to feed a runner data it doesn't mean he's corrupt. It's usually just an exchange of information that helps the officer do his job better. There are few people who are as tuned into the streets the way your average runner is. Cops appreciate that and are willing to give a little for the greater good you can provide them.

Of course, a lot of cops are corrupt too. When you spend that much time fighting back the bad things in our world, it's easy to slip over the border and become one. The larger the police force, the greater the chance you'll see a corrupt cop or group of cops. It's easier to get away with being dirty when your actions are not so closely monitored. This line of work isn't supposed to be about money, but let's face it, everyone wants to be rich. If you can offer a cop a taste of that good life, chances are the term "dealing with the law" won't scrunch your face up the way it does for most people.

- Corruption happens on smaller scales too, except when a small outfit is corrupt, everyone in it is corrupt. You have to play along in order to work there, or you're going to have an "accident" a few days into your new job.

- SPD

BRIBES

Street cops pull in close to 40K a year, which is what a runner can get for a single job. It's enough to live on but it isn't luxury money. You want to get a cop to deal with you, offer him something he'd consider substantial. According to the rule of one runner I knew, offer 100¥ for the cop to look the other



way, 500¥ for him to disappear. Prices went up for harder to perform tasks such as destroying evidence. An officer can double his salary feeding scraps of information and aid to runners. Others will do it for information or favors that can be called in later. I get my data from a Star who has a secret fetish for ork women. He'll keep giving me what I need so long as I can discreetly arrange for his "special encounters."

Word to the wise, check out the cop you're interested in approaching before you do so. It's not tough to spot a cop that's willing to take a bribe. Check 'Im out for a few weeks, pay close attention to who he talks to and whether or not any money is being exchanged in these encounters. Look for older and jaded cops, cops who've taken bribes before. If it's a newbie you're after, it'll take more than a few creds to win him over, especially if he still has any starry-eyed idealism or romantic notions. But give him time.

One way to go about it is to set up a situation to make a cop need money, and need it fast. That requires a lot of research and effort, though, and you risk making him suspicious of a setup. Another way is to get to know an officer away from the job. Find a way to meet casually and then, over the course of the developing friendship, bring up the opportunity for them to make some cred on the side.

- Above all, be discreet and don't offer a bribe that can be traced. The cop will be worried about Internal Affairs, after all. And don't rely on a bribe to get you out a messy situation. There's no way a cop's going to take a bribe to do something that will raise a lot of questions in his direction.

- X-Star

If at all possible, only negotiate with the cop when you're on equal or superior terms. If you get pulled over for a random check and an APB comes over the radio with your description because of a run you just pulled, trying to bribe the cop ain't likely to work. The cop knows he has by the short and curlies, so he's more likely to take your nuyen and arrest you anyway than he is to let you walk.

COP CONTACTS

Naturally, some badge bunnies are more worth knowing than others. Some can help you out by letting you know where the other cops are, or by providing some evidence crucial to your next run.

Standard patrol cops are a good first choice. These slags are the first line of defense against crime. They're so close to the dirt that they're usually in it. Patrol duty is also the first stop

in an officer's career, so it's a good opportunity to win someone over who could later grow up to be police chief. Police riggers are also good to have on the payroll, as they can tell you where the cops' eyes and ears are—valuable intel if you plan on avoiding them. Detectives and GridSec cops have access to all sorts of interesting databases and case records—including info that regular beat cops won't have access to. Need some data on a Mafia Don? Try an OCD detective.

- OCD detectives are good to know because they can warn you about trouble before it reaches you. They make a living keeping an eye on what's going on in the underworld, so they can throw you a heads up if a Yakuza captain plans to get rowdy at your favorite nightclub. They also know who's who, so they can tell you whose palms need to be greased to ensure that you don't have problems in the 'hood.
- Wolf Larson

• Earlier Wolf mentioned the problems cops have with extraterritoriality. A corporate liaison officer is the person in the district who makes or takes the phone call that can mean the difference whether you get chased across extraterritorial boundaries or not.

- Corp Watcher

OPERATIONS

• Operations might not be the most exciting part of police work, but it's something that every shadowrunner should know something about. If you end up on the wrong side of the law, there are worse things to know than how the cops are supposed to do their job stopping, searching, arresting and processing you through the system. Even though everybody over the age of ten knows that things don't always happen that way, at least you'll know the theory. I've asked X-Star, formerly of Lone Star, to give us the rundown.

- Captain Chaos

by X-Star

You know that expression about doing things "by the book?" Well, you might be surprised (given the way things often go down at crime scenes in the real world, anyway) to find out that in the case of law enforcement there really is a book. For Lone Star it's called the Operational Procedures Manual, but you can bet every police department and most private cop organizations have their own version. How well they follow it is another matter, as I'm sure most of you know—there's a big difference between what someone does when they think they're being watched and when they know they're not. Cap has asked me to give you the official take on things, but to also provide how things happen in reality too.

I'm not going to parrot back chapter and verse of The Book—that'll just waste your time and mine, since anybody sufficiently enterprising can track down a copy on their own. Instead, what I want to do in this file is give you a feel for how all the dry rules and regs work—and don't work—in the real

world and how they might affect you as a shadowrunner. Naturally, there are variations from country to country, city to city and force to force, but the examples here should serve as guidelines (that's your cue to do your own local research).

STOPS AND SEARCHES

You'll be happy to know that (at least in theory) the cops aren't allowed to just pull you over and search you because they don't like the color of your car. According to The Book, a search warrant is usually required before police can search your private property. This includes your vehicle—unless the officer can see something inside, she'll need your permission to check places she can't see, like the trunk or under the seats.

• This only goes for private cop organizations like Lone Star—the govpols and feds can search anything they want as long as they have "probable cause," and believe me, they're great at coming up with reasons after the fact for why it was perfectly logical for them to do the search.

- Stir-Crazy

• The feds can search (non-extraterritorial) corp property too, though it's a lot harder for them to get permission to do it. The private cops can't do it at all. Something about "conflict of interest" and "ulterior motives."

- Tusker

• Don't forget that failing to give permission for a search looks suspicious all by itself—sometimes if you don't have anything illegal in there it's best to just let them do it and get it over with. Of course, if you are carrying something iffy, you'd better hope you can turn on the charm. They won't search you right away, but likely as not they'll find some reason to make sure that car's not going anywhere until they can figure out how to get permission to do it. You'd be amazed at what they can come up with: expired registration, license plate problem, reckless driving—they've got a million of 'em.

- Noid

• If they really want to search, they'll search with or without permission. Sure, they've got cameras in their cars so they have to be careful, but "temporary technical difficulties" occur far more often than they should. When it's the cop's word against a lowlife shadowrunner like you, who do you think the judge is gonna believe?

- Zed

• It's worth a mention here that digital cameras in cop cars have the ability to "pre-record"—they're always on, storing footage in a buffer so when the cop hits "record" it's actually picking up a minute or longer before he hit the button. Useful for collecting evidence—or for catching unwary perps.

- Harvey

• Before you let them search you because you're clean, don't forget that this is a great chance for them to plant something in your vehicle. Never trust the cops.

• Finnegan

• And finally, to cap off the litany of warnings. All of the above only pertains to people who have the right to claim rights. If you get pulled over and present your fake ID and they catch it, you're busted. If you don't have a fake ID and you don't have a legal SIN, you're busted. If you have a legal SIN but you also have a criminal record, you're busted.

• Kyra

If the officer needs a warrant before performing a search, he must fill out an affidavit describing what they're looking to find and why they expect to find it on your property, get a judge to sign off on it and then serve the warrant. There are "no-knock" warrants, but usually they're supposed to knock before entering unless they suspect that you can destroy the evidence before you come to the door. For example, if they suspect you of possession of drugs you could flush down the drekker or BTLs you could burn, they might not knock, but if the warrant's for a stolen car, odds are you can't destroy the car before they can get inside, hence a knock is required.

• I don't know if it'll do you any good with Joe Cop breathing down your neck, but the thing about warrants is that they're for a specific purpose, and only evidence pertaining to that purpose is admissible. Some warrants are open-ended, but those types are a lot harder to get a judge to go for. More likely it'll say something like "search the premises for evidence of stolen cyberware or drug paraphernalia or firearms or whatever"—if they come in looking for evidence hooking you to an office break-in and in the course of the investigation they find stolen vehicle parts, they aren't supposed to seize the vehicle parts during the search. It doesn't always work that way, of course, but that's the rules.

• Rumbler

• That gets a lot muddier if they find illegal items in your possession—for example, they're searching for clues about your office break-in and they find your kitchen table covered with illegal drug paraphernalia. They're still not supposed to seize the stuff, but in cases like that I wouldn't count on getting off scot-free even if there's no sign of the evidence they were looking for in the first place.

• Stoner

• Also keep in mind that a lot of the judges they get to issue these warrants are close personal friends of high-placed corp muckety-mucks. So when someone says a certain kind of warrant is hard to get, that just means an extra phone call from the appropriate executive is in order. If they suspect you of something and they want to have a look at where you live, there really isn't drek you can do about it.

• Errant Knight

PATROLS AND ARRESTS

Contrary to what a lot of people (including a lot of shadowrunners) believe, the cops don't just arrive at a crime scene and cuff everybody who looks suspicious. Before making an arrest, an officer has to either see the perpetrator committing the crime or else be able to gather a preponderance of evidence that the person either did it or was conspiring to do it. That's not always as easy as it sounds.

What You Can't See Can Catch You

Don't think that just because Joe Cop isn't patrolling the area in his unit he can't see what you're up to. Patrol cops are mostly just there for visual deterrent: the real surveillance is happening with spotter drones, traffic cams, astral sweeps and all sorts of eye-in-the-sky tech that most people don't even think about until after they've been nabbed by it.

In any areas with a halfway decent security rating, a small army of quiet drones buzzes around patrolling the streets with facial recognition software running. If the drone spots a known criminal or a crime in progress, it relays the data to dispatch who alerts the nearest officer. The drone net is supplemented by the cops' access to integrated surveillance technologies such as GridGuide and external corporate security cameras that occasionally lend their images to the police datanets.

• Some of the nicer neighborhoods even have resident drones that live in drone houses on top of streetlights. These keep an eye on things and they can even be used to detain criminals if a call comes in or a crime is detected.

• Margay

• Physical vehicle and foot patrols tend to overlap, crisscrossing over the blind spots in the police's electronic surveillance net. A good way to know where the electronic eyes aren't is to look for where the cops are.

• Teddy

Making the Collar

Keep something in mind when dealing with an arrest situation: this might sound really obvious, but cops are people just like you and me. They want to stay alive so they can go home to their spouses and kids at the end of the shift. Any time a cop arrives at a crime scene, it's an unknown and potentially dangerous situation. They don't know what's going on, and believe me, that's scary. Maybe they've got some advance information, but that never prepares them for what they may find.

When dealing with these kinds of situations, their first priority is to secure the scene so nobody—and that includes you—gets hurt. This doesn't mean that they won't get rough: if that's what it takes to get things under control, they've got the authority and the means to use reasonable force to take control of a crime scene. The key word here is *reasonable*.

• Yeah, right—we all believe that. I haven't met a cop yet who doesn't get off on knocking heads because he can. Especially when dealing with SINless scum like us.

• Bung



- A lot of how they respond depends on how you respond. Nobody expects you to just stand around meekly and wait to get hauled off, but the cops are going to treat you a lot differently if you start shooting at them (especially with lethal force) than if you do your best to get your hoops away from the scene.
- Snakebite

The second priority is to detain anyone who might be a witness, victim or culprit. Cops have the option of detaining you for up to 72 hours in the UCAS before actually charging you with a crime. In most cases, cops will only detain you until they feel they've adequately questioned you, unless they're hoping to or are planning on charging you, but just need some more time to collect evidence.

- What's really scary is how much the cops can make use of all kinds of correlated databases to gather a pretty complete picture of whomever they pick up. Think about it: they can do things like look at all the incidents that have occurred in a given area over a given time. Then pull up the addresses of anybody convicted of a particular type of crime in a particular area. And then pop up your rap sheet along with a list of all your known associates. There ain't no such thing as privacy anymore. Best just not to get stopped at all.
- Blood Brother

- X-Star doesn't mention one of the nastier aspects of police work—racial profiling. Sure, the cops pretend it doesn't happen, but trust me, it does. Officially the cops are supposed to treat everyone equally—unofficially, trolls and orks are more likely to get stopped, searched and hassled (especially if they're in the "wrong neighborhood"). Things also tend to go more harshly for metas than for norms, even if they're clean.
- Bung

Once the scene's secured and the suspects are rounded up, the party shifts to the local precinct house where you'll be processed and booked into the system. If you don't already have a SIN, this is where you'll be assigned a shiny new one. As if that wasn't bad enough, what you get isn't a John Q. Public-type SIN, but a SIN of the criminal variety. In short this means that you get all the hassles of having a SIN without too many of the benefits.

- These criminal SINs are a bitch to get rid of once you've got them, too. They hang on like leeches, even when (or if) you get back out.
- Mister B
- Something to note in passing: when they've got you in the squad car, keep your mouth shut. They're recording everything that happens in there, even if they forget to mention it to you.
- Carl

Processing continues with a series of scans designed to verify your identity: blood test, cyberware, DNA, fingerprint,

hair-sample and retinal scans. When they get done there isn't much about you that they don't know, and unfortunately for you, all this data is linked up with your new SIN.

- Yeah, and remember, all this usually happens before you get to see your lawyer and before you're formally charged with anything. You can bet the cops aren't all that forthcoming about getting rid of all this data if it turns out you didn't do it after all.
- Mean Green
- Not just that, but all this stuff makes a great ritual link too. If you do happen to break out, you'd better make sure somebody takes care of this stuff or else they'll be on your tail as soon as they can get the magic boys mobilized.
- Hallow Man

Finally, any illegal cyberware you're sporting (and we all know that for shadowrunners that's usually the rule, not the exception) is dealt with. Note I say "dealt with"—not necessarily "removed." There are plenty of horror stories going around about suspects who've had their 'ware ripped out by none-too-compassionate surgeons without much regard to things like attention to detail, but surprisingly it doesn't often happen that way anymore. Disabling cyberware is a lot cheaper and easier than removing it, and as long as the prisoner can't make use of it, it doesn't really make a big difference which one they choose.

- This is true. Ever since the Star lost a big lawsuit a couple of years ago when they yanked the wires out of the son of some big corp suit who was slumming it for a night, they're a lot more careful about that kind of thing. This doesn't mean they show tender loving care in disabling things, but at least there's a chance that with a good cybersurgeon you might be able to get it fixed once you get out.
- Kestrel

- If you're a magician under arrest, you're in for a ride. They'll slap a magemask on you right away and crank up the noise generator to keep you from concentrating. You'll then be subject to an array of drugs to keep you doped up so there's no risk of you slinging magic around.
- Shetani

WE KNOW WHO YOU ARE: FORENSICS

- Don't think that just because you finished your run and got your hoops away clean, your troubles are over. With the kind of tech and techniques modern-day forensics departments have at their disposal, the grief might be just beginning. I've asked a forensics geek to explain it all to us.
- Captain Chaos

by Dirk

Let me tell you right up front that, despite what you see on the trids, there's no such thing as the perfect crime. I've

worked alongside the nerd squad long enough develop a strong belief in the idea that no matter how careful you are, no matter how many precautions you take, you will always leave something behind. Usually it's something physical: a fingerprint, a shoe print, a hair or fiber; the tiniest flake of skin or drop of blood is like an open book to these boys and girls. Even if you somehow manage to get in and out without a trace, that in itself provides its own information. Some forensics specialists concern themselves with the physical, while others focus on the psychological: motivation, habits, small quirks and tells that you might not even know you're displaying. Even without magic (forensic thaumaturgy is handled by a different department), a lot of what these folks do appears nothing short of supernatural to anybody who doesn't know how it works.

Most law-enforcement organizations have at least a majority of the following sections: Questioned Documents, (Meta)Human Identification (this includes fingerprints and DNA), Ballistics and Firearms Investigations, Toolmarks and Fibers, Forensic Chemistry and Biochemistry, Forensic Toxicology, and Forensic Photography. Some of the smaller outfits include magical and technological forensics as well, but in the bigger organizations like the Star, these are part of separate departments.

All of these departments are important and highly valued parts of the investigation. To me one of the organization's strongest assets is the front-line crime scene investigation team. I don't think it's being dramatic to say that a criminal investigation can live and die by what these people do (or fail to do). They're the first on the scene after the crime has been reported and they take the first systematic and comprehensive look at the evidence in its natural setting, rather than having to deal with second-hand info in the form of photographs, samples and written reports.

When a team arrives at a crime scene, their first priority is to seal it off so the evidence can't be contaminated any more than it already is. This means physically cordoning off the scene as much as practical and limiting access until after they've completed their investigation. Afterward, the next thing a good investigator does is simply look over the scene, gaining impressions and noting them down in written or recorded form. If the team has a magician, she might do an astral scan for impressions and emotions, or a Catalog spell to note potential evidence. The team often uses sniffer drones or handheld chemsniffers to detect traces of chemicals that might get missed by a live investigator, and recordings from any nearby surveillance cameras are also identified and logged. The more experience a team has, the more likely it is that these first impressions will result in insights that reveal useful information.

At this point, the real work begins. You might have seen some trid shows about forensic investigators, but I've worked with these guys and let me tell you this can be one of the most boring, tedious jobs in existence. It doesn't all wrap up in an hour with a catchy soundtrack. Forensic work—searching for trace evidence, examining blood spatter and bullet trajectories, making a trid of the scene, taking photographs and measurements from every angle to document the scene and searching

for the elusive clue that unlocks the case—can take hours or even days to complete.

- When he says photographs, he means it—old fashioned film-type ones. Digital photos are usually not permissible because they're way too easy to tamper with.
- Snaps
- He makes it sound like every time Grandma's pet Fluffy gets catnapped, the whole Sherlock squad shows up to examine every inch of the house for clues. No such luck, friends. Show me a law-enforcement department that's not either strapped for cash, up to its ears in crimes to investigate or both, and I'll show you a really good fantasy novel. In reality, they try to investigate everything but a lot of crimes get only a cursory once-over (if that). Yeah, if they put all their efforts toward finding you they'll probably succeed, but for them to do that is a lot more rare than you think, particularly if there are no deaths or VIPs involved. Don't get lazy, but you can relax a little bit.
- Froggy

Once the team has gathered all the evidence they think is necessary, they release the crime scene and head to the labs. Other forensics staffers swing into action analyzing the blood, skin, hair, fiber, trace evidence, photos and whatever else the CSI team has gathered up, attempting to put together a coherent picture of the crime that fits the evidence. Again, you don't see this in the trids because it's too boring, but the majority of crimes are solved by the simple matter of matching things like fingerprints, DNA samples, ballistics information and other trace evidence to the perpetrator. For example, any gun that was ever legally sold has a ballistic "fingerprint" on file somewhere, which means it can be traced by checking it against the databases. Same with actual fingerprints: sure, maybe you never committed a crime before, but that doesn't mean you're not on file. Did your parents get you printed when you were a kid on one of those "keep your child safe" campaigns? Then you're on file. Don't assume that every organization you might have given a sample to shares information (sometimes even different police organizations don't), but just keep in mind that it could come back and bite you.

Of course, none of this is infallible and plenty of mistakes get made, but over all a lot of crimes are solved by the simple application of scientific principles to the evidence. Not as exciting as car chases and firefights, but that's reality, friends.

- There are ways to fool some of this forensic wizardry—just a couple that come to mind are splashing bleach around the scene to make any blood evidence it touches useless (Sterilize spells work even better). Wearing fresh clothes for each run minimizes things like hair and skin traces. Flats work great for this: just take 'em off and dump 'em (or burn 'em if you're really paranoid) at the end of the run.
- Harpo



- I've got a chummer who takes this one step further—he collects "souvenirs" from people he doesn't like and leaves them around when on a run. He once got a ganger who fragged him off arrested because the guy's hair samples were found at the scene of a firefight.
- Nuyen Nick

THE BIG LEAGUES: COPS AND SHADOWRUNNERS

by Wolf Larson

As you might imagine, police don't generally respond the same way to shadowrunner activity as they do to a report of the local Stuffer Shack being knocked over. Newsflash: shadowrunners scare the drek out of most cops—at least the ones who have any sense. Think about it: runners are generally better armed, loaded up with more cyberware and mojo and better trained than your average two-bit street criminal—and if they've managed to last on the street for any period of time, they're probably smarter as well. What all this means is that the cops are going to bring out the big guns when they have to go up against shadowrunners.

What are the "big guns," you ask? Unless the situation goes to drek in a hurry and they have to use whatever assets they have in the area, the cops usually send out heavily armed and armored teams. For the Star, this means a Fast Response Team or SWAT (sometimes both but not often—the two teams have a lot of bad blood between them and don't play that well together). Cops don't take chances with shadowrunners: it's not at all uncommon to see armored ground vehicles, heavy weaponry, magically active personnel and even armored rotorcraft responding to this kind of activity.

- What he doesn't mention is that this only happens when the activity in question is on public property, or corps too small to be extraterritorial. For the big corps, the cops can't do a thing even if they see it going down. This can really chap their hoops sometimes when they get word that somebody they're after is in the area but they can't touch him.
- Tanner

- Just a word of advice: don't geek the cops if you can help it. They've got a lot of friends and very long memories—and believe it or not that goes both ways. If your team gets a rep for going out of its way not to kill cops, they might just cut you a break next time you're in deep drek.
- Ocelot

STING OPERATIONS

Blazing guns and car chases aren't the only way the cops nab shadowrunners: many times sting operations are cleaner, safer and more successful than resorting to brute force. This is something to keep in mind at all times, especially if you know the boys and girls in blue are after your hoop—they might just try to snare you into doing something you'll regret for a long time. One of their common techniques is to arrange for a Johnson (unwitting or otherwise) to assemble a team for a job, ensuring that one or two of the team members who show up

are working for the cops. Some of these deep-cover guys spend years establishing their identities in the shadows, using all kinds of disguises, plastic surgery and sometimes even magical techniques to keep their real faces out of the lime-light. What's good news for you is that when the cops bring out assets like this they're usually looking for a particular individual or group, not just fishing for whatever runners they can take down.

- I know a guy who got nailed in one of these stings a couple years back—he was an adept and a sadistic fragger who liked to kill cops just to show he could. Unfortunately for him, he also had a soft spot for Renaissance artwork. The Star arranged to have a particular piece from a "private collector" in town to be delivered to a local museum, then employed a Johnson (without the guy's knowledge—they were playing both ends against the middle) to set up a team to steal it. Our adept bit, not realizing that three of the team members were Star plants. If he's still alive, he's probably making Bubba the Love Troll very happy these days.
- Mackie

- One thing to keep in mind is that, officially at least, the cops can't entrap you. That is, they can't hire you to do something illegal and then grab you when you do it. Of course, in cases like Mackie describes, it's going to be almost impossible to prove that the Star arranged for the Johnson. If the defendant's rich enough, there might be money to be made working for the defense lawyer to track down these connections.
- Orkney

BUSTED: DETENTION, TRIAL, PRISON

by Wolf Larson

So—you've been a bad boy or girl and you've gotten yourself busted by the long arm of the law. What's in store for you after you're hauled down to the station house, gotten your fresh new criminal SIN, and have been booked into the system?

First thing is, you're going to spend some time cooling your heels in the company of people you'd probably rather not associate with. That means the police facility lockup, where you share quarters with whatever low-life individuals happen to be enjoying the cops' hospitality at the moment.

- Don't remind me. Last time I was inside, my roommates were a cross-dressing ork named "Mimi" (don't ask) who hadn't taken a bath in at least a year and an elven joyboy who kept trying to proposition me.
- Conker

Somewhere in here, you'll have your first court hearing, which is where you'll hear the charges against you and the judge will determine whether you'll be allowed bail and if so how much. If bail is denied or you can't scrape up the funds (with or without the help of a bail bondsman) then you're sent back to cool your heels some more until your trial. This can take awhile to set up, so you'd better hope that you have some way of posting bail. You will also need to find yourself a good lawyer.

If you don't have one already. I can't underestimate the importance of this point. Do whatever it takes to get one—mortgage your mother, hock your dog, call in old favors—because the modern-day legal system is nothing to try to negotiate without skilled professional help (or at least a really good law knowsoft). If you show weakness (in the form of no lawyer or a bad one), it will chew you up and spit you out, and you'll be spending the rest of your life in a federal prison. Get a lawyer.

- He ain't kidding. Fortunately for when I got arrested for attempted murder, one of my closest chummers was the college roommate of one of those hotshot lawyers you see on the triid news sometimes, and he agreed to take my case. He played those guys like a cheap piano and got me off on some two-bit technicality about how the evidence was gathered or something. I was broke for quite a while afterward, but he was worth every nuyen I paid him. Free and poor is better than rich and in prison.

- Willard

The next step is arraignment, where you enter a plea. Naturally, most defendants enter "Not Guilty," which results in a trial. Depending on what you're accused of, your trial might be before a jury or just a judge. Either way, this is where your lawyer becomes very important. (Oh, by the way: If you *did* get bail, here's another friendly reminder: either show up at your trial or make damned good and sure that if you skip it's to some place where they can't track you down. Bounty hunters are very good at what they do and most of them don't care much about what condition you're in when they hand you over.) Trials can be very short or very long, depending on a lot of factors—either one can work in your favor if your lawyer knows her stuff.

- Trials are funny things, especially jury trials. Logic isn't always the most important thing, even though it should be. Your lawyer can use this in your favor if she can play to the jury's sympathies. There's a lot of money to be had in things like digging dirt on jurors, finding out what makes them happy or makes them cry and, if they're not sequestered, what motivates them to vote a certain way (if you get my drift).

- Mason

- This is assuming that the jury is even in the same room with you—this doesn't often happen these days. Trials are usually conducted by simcast, so the jury (and the judge) could be thousands of kilometers away and a lot harder to influence with subtle manipulation.

- Legal Beagle

- Keep in mind that this whole file has been very UCAS- and CAS-centric. Trials in places like the NANs (assuming you get one in the first place) can be a lot different, so check the local laws before you commit any crimes.

- Wonko

At the close of the trial, obviously, comes the verdict. If you're lucky enough to get a "not guilty" verdict—good for you—you're allowed to go free.

- Yeah, right. Sure, they let you loose, but now you've got your criminal SIN and if they have a pretty good idea you did it they're going to keep an eye on you anyway. "Free" is a relative term when you've been charged with a crime.

- Bung

If, however, you are found guilty, then I hate to say it, but things just went from bad to worse. This is when you get sentenced, and that can be bad news. You'll get an appeal, of course, but these things can drag on for a long time and in the meantime you're still deprived of your freedom. Your best hopes are either that your lawyer is good enough to get you probation (which is most likely if it's a first offense and if you haven't done anything particularly heinous) or that you can buy off the judge (if you've still got the cred left to do it). The overcrowded prison system makes both of these options more viable than you might think, but make no mistake—you're fighting for your life now. Take my word for it, you do not want to end up there.

IN THE JOINT

- The possibility of getting caught and going to prison is something that everybody who makes a living performing illegal activities (that means you, my shadowrunning chummers) has to keep in mind. It's not a pleasant topic, and of course everyone thinks, "It can't happen to me," but let's assume for the moment that it can. I've asked Hardcase to give us the low-down on life on the inside, so maybe if you do get caught, you might have a slim chance of surviving long enough to get back out again.

- Captain Chaos

by Hardcase

What do a phoenix, a cockatrice and a shadowrunner who's been to prison and lived to see daylight have in common? I'll tell you: they're all rare birds that you're not likely to encounter in your lifetime. It's an understatement to say that the prison system isn't kind to us members of the shadow community, and the joint has achieved kind of a bogeyman status among most runners: get sent to prison, game over, thank you for playing.

It ain't necessarily so. Cap has asked me to talk a little about prisons, prison life and what to expect when you end up in the Graybar Hotel sporting cyberware or mojo. I'm also going to provide you a glimmer of hope that there's light at the end of the tunnel (the non-train variety, that is) if you do happen to find yourself cooling your heels in the joint.

MODERN PRISONS: DUELING PHILOSOPHIES

These days (at least in the UCAS and CAS, which is what I'm talking about here), the majority of prisons are no longer owned and operated by the federal government. Law-enforcement corporations like Lone Star and Knight Errant have a sizable part of the market but many of the extraterritorial megacorps are making significant inroads. It didn't used to be that way—the prevailing



philosophy was that the feds should run all prisons, because with a private operator there's no kind of oversight or regulator agencies. The problem with this is that there were enough stories of various abuses at the federal level. With the corps there's no such thing. Used to be that all the prisons were run by the feds to avoid these kinds of potential problems, but not any more.

All that changed in the early Twenty-First Century as the lockups become increasingly overcrowded with no end in sight to the growing number of people convicted of crimes. To deal with the situation, the feds were forced to change their approach to the incarceration of criminals. They did this in two ways: by increasing research into rehabilitation methods (object: to get the inmate out of prison and back into life as a good little conformist citizen), and contracting out prison-minding duties to law-enforcement corps like Lone Star. Naturally, each of these approaches has its supporters: the hard-liners want the perps to suffer for their crimes, while the bleeding hearts think even the worst criminals can be integrated back into society.

Neither of these approaches is a bowl of cherries for shadowrunners, especially the ones with cyberware or magical talents. Let's face it: the prison system is set up to deal with your average perp—the folks who knock over Stuffer Shacks, mug little old ladies or run citywide crime operations. Add in the capability for large-scale mayhem and it tends to make the people who run the lockups more than a little nervous. In situations like this, "nervous" means they're going to do everything they legally can (and in some cases "legally" doesn't enter into it) to neutralize the threat. If you're the threat, this could seriously affect the quality of your stay in the big house.

Oh—before we go on, let me clarify one thing: don't get "prison" confused with "jail." Jail is where you go while you're working your way through the justice system, exhausting your appeals and doing everything you and your lawyer can to make sure you don't get convicted. Prison is where you go *after* you get convicted. Night and day, chummers. When you get arrested, your best chance at getting out in one piece is to get the best lawyer you can—since once you get convicted you get credit for time served. You'd be surprised at how many people manage to serve out their whole sentence in jail before the conviction finally gets handed down. That's the way to do it if you can. It's the times you can't that we're talking about here.

- It's also worth mentioning a little more about the difference between a corp prison and a federal prison—the most important difference being that the federal prison at least theoretically has to follow the rules, while a corp prison makes its own rules. You'd better pray that if you get sent up the river you end up in a fed prison.

- Horatio

- This is mostly true, but the Star and the other law-enforcement corps still have to deal with quite a few regulations as well. They're not great, but oversight committees and inspections keep them mostly in line. It's the other corp prisons that are the real nightmares.

- Bitrunner

PRISON CULTURE

"Don't do the crime

If you can't do the time ..."

—Old flatscreen vid cop show theme song

So your appeals are history and you've gotten your ticket to the big house. The name of the game for you now is *survival*. Whatever prison horror stories you've heard about from friends of friends, the reality's worse. I can guarantee it won't be pleasant (not unless you've got some heavy-duty organized crime connections, and I'm going to assume that's not true in your case), but you can minimize the negative aspects as much as possible by doing two things: cultivating powerful friends and keeping your head down. Let me tell you a little about what to expect as you arrive at your new home.

First thing: do you have cyberware? Whether you get to keep it or not depends on a lot of things: how potentially dangerous it is, what kind of resources your particular prison has access to, the political climate in the area and the attitudes of the people running the place. The stories about what happens to cyber in prison are usually exaggerated: it's simply too expensive for them to go in and rip out your 'ware, when it's easier, cheaper, and less invasive to simply disable it. If you're lucky, they do this by cutting a few wires and deactivating the connections that make it work. If you're *not* so lucky, they do nasty things like inserting tiny bombs in your implants that are programmed to go off when you activate them. Data and chipjacks are usually just fitted up with a jackstopper, though it's not unknown for them to remove it to facilitate simsense-based rehabilitation, punishment or reward techniques. Sometimes they do remove your 'ware entirely, but this is rarer than you might think.

- Magicians have it worse. Strong and tough the prison system understands. Guys who can throw spells and send themselves off wherever they want to are a little harder for it to deal with, which means you can usually sum up their approach to magical prisoners in one word: overkill. Mage masks, 24-hour simsense feeds, hallucinogenic drugs—let's just say that most magician types have an even harder time of it in the joint than your garden variety pumped-up sammy type. If they're lucky, they get tossed in one of the more progressive prisons where they use things like underground holding facilitiles, astral bacteria and special manacles that prevent astral jaunts. Still no fun, but at least you might make it out with your sanity intact.

- Collide

- The other problem faced by magicians in prison is that most prisons have a hideous background count. All of the pain and suffering pile up pretty quickly. This can have a serious psychological effect on the Awakened. It is not unusual for some prisons to deliberately place the mages in their population in the areas where horrible acts have occurred in the past. Also of note are rumors that some magically active prison guards become "attuned" to the background count, becoming more sadistic and brutal in the process.

- Magister

- If no one else is going to do so then I'll say something about Blackstone Prison. This is the notorious "mage prison" you might have heard about. Blackstone was built about 30 years ago on top of a mana warp found in eastern South Dakota. No one has determined yet what caused the mana warp, but MCT was quick to buy the land and build Blackstone on it as a site to house the "dangerously Awakened." Most of the inmates are mages or adepts but there are also some really nasty mundane fraggers. Blackstone's mana warp seems to induce a range of emotional effects from depression to catatonia, making for a docile population.

- Sirius

Next: do you have a SIN? Regardless of whether you had one before or if you got a criminal SIN when you were first arrested, it will continue to haunt you through the prison system. Don't get the idea that a criminal SIN gives you the same rights and privileges as a regular John Q. Public one, either—it's there just to keep track of you.

Your accommodations will be less than five-star. Increased overcrowding in most prisons these days necessitates putting more prisoners per cell, which means that you're likely to have as many as three roommates. The good news is that they usually separate the metatypes for safety—if you're human you might end up with an elf or dwarf cellmate but no orks or trolls.

- Most prisons maintain separate cell blocks for orks, trolls and everybody else. Trolls represent a challenge since they're so big and strong—mixing them in with the general population usually results in a seriously decreased quality of life for anybody they decide they don't like. Meals and exercise periods are usually run in shifts to prevent problems.

- Goblin-Boy

- Speaking of meals, prison food is a good enough reason to stay out of the joint. They get their food service from the lowest bidder, and you never know what might turn up on your plate from day to day. Oh, it's nourishing enough, but little things like flavor and freshness aren't high priorities. It's even worse when you're getting disciplined: they take everything and lump it all together into this vile thing they call "the loaf." It'll keep you alive, but you'll wish you were dead.

- Gourmand

- Not to mention the fact that prisons are used to field test new food products. Sometimes this means the prisoners get a treat—but not very often.

- Boge

So—how do you stay alive in this hellhole? Like I said before, the keys are friends and keeping your head down. If you're already part of a group that has members inside (a gang, Yakuza, Mafia, etc.) you're in better shape. Organized crime types have it best because they usually have the best



connections to the outside world, and that can make all the difference not just for how you're treated, but for how much useful stuff you can get brought in or smuggled in.

- This is true. Contraband keeps the prison economy running, and the more wiz stuff you can get your hands on to trade—both with guards and other inmates—the better your life will be. Cigarettes, music and trid chips (especially chips like Cal Hots—chipjacks are one of the few things they usually let prisoners keep, since it keeps 'em quiet) and drugs are the most popular, and if you can keep a good supply coming in you'll be very popular.

- Stir-Crazy

If you don't have connections, your best bet is to start making them right away. Trust me, this isn't the time to be picky about your acquaintances. Unless you're the toughest troll on the block, you won't make it as a loner. You might find it repugnant to hook up with gangers, ork supremacists or Humanis goons, but remember that the name of the game is survival. You know that old expression about politics making strange bedfellows? That goes double for prison life. Let's put it this way: make it true figuratively so it doesn't end up being true literally, if you know what I mean. Some of those guys in the joint get pretty lonely, they still have urges that need satisfaction and you do *not* want to catch their eye as easy prey.

- Another thing you can do, though you have to be a little careful about it, is cultivate friendships with guards. The best way to do this is to get them things: money is best, but they don't get paid much so anything they'd find interesting will pay dividends. Just keep it subtle and don't let the other prisoners find out about it. And don't assume it'll last forever, since a guard's loyalty usually lasts until somebody else starts bringing him better stuff.

- Max

- One thing nobody mentioned here is that if you handle it right, you can actually make the prison experience work for you. They don't call it "school" for nothing—you can pick up all kinds of useful skills, techniques and intel on the inside if you hook up with the right people.

- Bulldog

FRIENDS IN LOW PLACES: PRISON GANGS AND ORGANIZED CRIME

I mentioned it up above, but I want to touch a little more on gang and organized crime involvement in your prison lifestyle. Pretty much wherever you go they're going to be well represented. Sure, the composition will change—you'll find more Mafia in the East and more Yak and Triads in the West, for example—but regardless of where you end up doing your time you're going to run into them.

Most of the big gangs have a presence in the prison system—the Ancients, Cutters and Halloweeners, for example—both the gangs and the various organized crime syndicates treat prison like a kind of extended convention where you can get together with your fellow crims and learn some new skills. While

they tend to keep to themselves and don't take kindly to outsiders, if you play your cards right you can use them to your advantage. They're the ones with their fingers in all the good pies—smuggling goods and intel in and out via mules and keeping on top of all the good rumors and news from the outside. Plus, most of them have some subset of the guards in their pockets. This means that if you can manage to get on their good side, you might be able to make your stay a little more pleasant.

- Be careful with this, though—even the smaller local gangs have power if they've got enough members inside, but none of these groups are going to give you anything without expecting something in return. Often you'll end up a lot tighter with them than you want to be, even after you get out.

- Torque

- This isn't necessarily a bad thing, especially for runners who haven't made their rep yet. You can do worse than hook up with a group that can help you out even on the outside.

- Candlepower

- Don't write off the smaller gangs as potential help, either—a lot of times the crime syndicates make use of smaller groups inside to aid their smuggling operations so they can keep their own hands clean. Just make sure you find out who a gang's affiliated with before you make any overtures.

- Aloysius

- Don't expect instant results, though. A lot of these gangs are going to demand a "loyalty test" from you if you're looking to hook up with them. This usually means you have to do something too risky for them to have a regular member do. If you do it and survive, you're on your way in. Otherwise you're pretty well fragged.

- Tusker

PRISON TECH

I've been going on a lot about the guards in this file, but flesh and blood security measures aren't all you'll have to deal with. In fact, live guards are by no means the primary way to keep prisoners in line, especially in the big federal lockups. Think about it: guards can be bribed, taken hostage, corrupted or otherwise turned against the system, not to mention the ever-present chance that some punk with a good lawyer will manage to make a brutality charge stick. No, modern prisons rely far more on high-tech measures to maintain security and order.

You'd be surprised at how much of a prison is automated these days: security riggers and automatic systems use drones for patrolling, and you'll find cameras and other surveillance systems just about everywhere you can see and a few places you can't. A word to the wise: never assume that you're not being overheard or observed when you're inside. That doesn't mean you always are, but it's safer to be sure. This is doubly important when you realize that prison officials supplement technological surveillance with astral mages and spirits who can be wherever they need to be. Privacy and prison are two words that don't go together.

If one or more prisoners do get up to no good and start a fight, riot or other disturbance, the officials are more than capable of handling it without risking live guards. Many common areas have taser-capable floors or gas-delivery systems that can knock out a whole roomful of rioters without causing permanent injury. For smaller disturbances, drones wielding stun weapons move in to handle the situation.

- This isn't just true in the common areas—In most prisons the tech extends into the cells themselves. For example, most of the newer ones have self-cleaning mechanisms like the ones they use in coffin hotels. Just move the prisoner out and hose the place down once a week or so. Dehumanizing, but effective.

- Kearney

- Sometimes tech can be a good thing, though—I've heard of a couple of federal prisons where they actually maintain an isolated Matrix system for the prisoners. They can't contact each other, of course, but if they keep their noses clean they can jack in and enjoy a little entertainment. I guess they figure the prisoners are easier to control when they're distracted. I hear they've even been experimenting with allowing some prisoners access to pornography and virtual-sex sims, on the theory that if they get their needs met in cyberspace they might leave their cellmate alone.

- Toreador

WORKING FOR THE MAN: PRISON INDUSTRY

So here you are, cooling your heels in the pen for the foreseeable future. You don't think they're just going to let you sit around on your hoop watching the trid and playing in the exercise yard, do you? It costs a lot of cred to feed and house prisoners, and most prisons pass as much of that cost as possible along to the inmate population in the form of putting them to work in various prison industries. Nowadays we've come a long way from license plates and the prison laundry—inmate labor produces everything from textile goods to industrial supplies to electronic components and a lot more besides. Most of a prisoner's wages go toward his upkeep, but usually he is allowed to keep a small percentage on account for buying discretionary items like cigarettes, magazines and other goods.

- This is true only if the prisoner's exhibited good behavior, of course. Any funny business and they yank all that stuff away faster than you can say "punitive measures." For that matter, your willingness to be good and play the game determines what kind of job you get, too—if you're smart and the guards like you, you can get some pretty plum assignments. If not, I hope you enjoy cleaning the drekkers and the grease traps.

- Prole

- If you're assigned work in a trusted area you can sometimes turn it to your advantage. I know a decker who got put on the line to make chips and boards for some of the non-critical portions of cyberdecks—he ended up coordinating his escape by

etching various information into certain lots slated for a corp where a friend of his worked.

- T. C. Pjp

REHABILITATION METHODS

Believe it or not, the system would prefer to rehabilitate criminals and get them back into society rather than warehousing them in prisons. It costs them a lot less, cuts down the burden of overcrowding (which can lead to a lot of problems they'd rather not handle) and makes the bleeding-heart politicians and citizens happy because at least they're doing something positive. The problem for you is that most of the rehab methods they use these days make a few years in prison look like a preferable alternative.

Rehabilitation hasn't changed much in the past few years—mostly it involves using simsense, behavioral conditioning and other brain-warping techniques to convince you that you really don't want to do whatever it is that got you tossed in the joint in the first place. I don't have any personal experience with these methods (if I did, I probably wouldn't be posting this file), but from what I've heard, most recipients of these "progressive" rehabilitation experiments don't come out the same people they were when they go in.

- Lone Star has been experimenting for years with various simsense-related conditioning techniques designed to eliminate violent impulses in criminal types, so when they get out they'll be good little citizens who won't bother anybody. Unfortunately they haven't gotten much better at it. The brain is a delicate instrument that we still don't understand completely, and mucking around with it more often than not produces unexpected results. A lot of these test subject end up averse to violence, all right, but with the side effect that they wig out when confronted with any kind of violence—including things like Urban Brawl games on the trid or getting mugged on the street.

- Sigmund

- Another technique that's starting to see wider use after being in the experimental stage for years is a scary little thing called "brainlocking." They're still keeping quiet about how they do it, but it works like a broader version of standard Pavlovian aversion conditioning. For example, they can make it so anytime you think about visiting New York City, using a weapon or driving a car, you're overcome with feelings of nausea, pain, overwhelming guilt or whatever the guys in the white coats want to instill.

- Skinner

- I've heard that the newest thing they're experimenting on in a couple of the prisons is magical rehab techniques in conjunction with the standard psychological and chemical stuff. They say that using mind-based magic can help them pinpoint the approaches that will be the most effective on each individual prisoner, so they can tailor the rehab program to fit. They claim it's more "humane," but I can't see how having a mage poking around your brain is any better than a psychologist.

- Targa

OFFERS YOU CAN'T REFUSE

So I've made this all sound pretty bleak, but here's the good part: you *can* get out, and I don't mean at the end of your sentence or feet first sporting a toe tag. I also don't mean escaping—it's been done, but with today's modern prisons it takes a lot more coordination and planning than I can go into here. No, what I mean is that sometimes the Powers That Be (or more likely their corporate buddies) need something done, and if you've got the talents they need, they might just make you an offer—do the job and they'll forget about the rest of your sentence.

This can be very good or very bad for you. The corps have been using prisoners with a history of being a runner as a source of cheap labor for a long time—all you have to offer the poor slot is his freedom, which doesn't cost them a thing. Since they've always got their eye on the bottom line, this is a cost-effective solution. The problem for you is that most of the time these jobs are not exactly the most desirable. Often they're downright dangerous. Usually they have a high probability of your ending up dead (hey, it's cheaper than the death penalty and they know that too). If you agree to do the job and you manage to pull it off, though, you're sitting pretty. That's how yours truly is speaking to you today.

- The corps keep a pretty close eye on the prison population, just watching for the kinds of expertise to do certain jobs that they can't hire free runners to do. Don't think it's out of the kindness of their hearts, either—usually they fit the prisoners up with everything from GPS trackers to cortex bombs to make sure they don't just fly the coop as soon as they're over the wall.

- Palo

- Don't think they'll automatically just let you go, either. If you're smart, you'll do the job they want you to do but stay well out of their reach when you communicate the results. You might have to get the GPS or the bomb disconnected, but if you show up in person they're likely as not to just say "thanks, sucker!" and stuff you back in the hole again. Nobody cares—it's not like you're a "real citizen" with rights or anything. The good news is that they almost never go after you if you skip after you've done the job, since it doesn't serve the bottom line.

- Cougar

There's another way, but it's a lot more dangerous and unpredictable. Corps need a lot of things, and not all of them are shadowruns. Sometimes they just need a few guinea pigs to test their newest product on, and since prisoners (especially formerly SINless ones) are basically expendable, they don't have any qualms about offering them the chance to play lab rat in exchange for their freedom. The problem with this is that there's usually a reason why the corps in question are using expendable people for test subjects: because there's a better than average chance that you won't be around to collect your shiny prize. Remember that they get as much useful information from you after you're dead as they do when you're alive. Sometimes they don't give you a choice, but if they do, don't do it. Prison is better than dead.

- Listen to the man. I spent a few months in the joint before my outside connections got me sprung, and two different cellmates took the corps up on their offer to be a test subject in exchange for getting out. They thought I was a fool for turning it down, but I never saw them again after that. Another inmate told me he'd seen their bodies wheeled out a few days later.

- Chumley

- Dead isn't the only thing you have to worry about, especially if you're a magician. A mage chummer of mine ended up in the joint and got "volunteered" for some experiment. They let him out afterward—but he was never the same again. Mostly he just sits around and smiles now, and I haven't seen him do any mojo since he got out.

- Sasha

GAME INFORMATION

This chapter provides plenty of background for using cops like Lone Star in your Shadowrun campaigns. If you and your players are interested in running a police-oriented campaign, check out the options starting on p. 116 of the *Shadowrun Companion*. This possibility would allow the players to experience some of the unique challenges that face law enforcement in the world of *Shadowrun*.

PLAYING WITH THE POLICE

The main interaction shadowrunners have with police is when they screw up a run and bring the law down on themselves. It's important for the gamemaster to handle these situations carefully, as law enforcement has a lot of resources at its disposal. Close encounters with the police can make for dramatic moments, but try not to force your players into a battle with the cops. An exchange of gunfire with the police rapidly escalates into a chase sequence/running gun battle. The police will bring many assets to bear in situations like this, including area surveillance coverage, Fast Response Teams, astral backup, roadblocks and more. Runners that don't play it smart may quickly be overwhelmed and either killed or captured. This may not be the direction you want your game to go, especially if you're in the midst of a plot. While you want to present the police as a challenge, you also need to make sure to give your runners a way out of the situation.

It is important to remember that most shadowrunners do not possess a legal SIN. This becomes very important when dealing with the police since a person who has no SIN technically has no legal rights. This means that the police are well within their rights to do whatever they like to a runner before they give them their criminal SIN. The flip side of this is that the police are very wary around shadowrunners, since they know that the typical shadowrunner has skills, equipment and abilities far superior to the average police officer. The combination of these two facts will often lead to the police using excessive force against shadowrunners whom they capture or incapacitate.

Cop Contacts

Cops don't always have to enemies of the runners. As detailed on p. 85, they can make valuable sources of information.

It's important to remember that a cop's actual job description has an impact on the data and assets accessible to him. A run-of-the-mill Street Patrol cop doesn't have access to the investigative files on the local Triad, for example, but he is likely to know what local street gangs have been feuding lately and where you're likely to run into trouble. Keep in mind that cop contacts are not likely to give out information that will endanger other police officers.

RESOLVING ARRESTS

So what happens if a player character is arrested? It's up to the gamemaster to decide how detailed you want to make the proceedings. You can roleplay out the entire situation, from lock-up to arraignment and bail hearings, playing out the character's interactions with guards, other prisoners, the judge, etc. This allows you to give the character a glimpse of life on the inside and perhaps meet some new contacts. You can also give her a chance to escape, or smuggle info out to friends who are looking to break her out. If the character makes bail, does she return to court or does she go on the run? If the character goes to trial, you can arrange it so the character and other runners can influence the trial by finding a good lawyer, locating, intimidating or bribing witnesses, destroying evidence, pressuring the judge or jury and so on. A character with Law skill can even try to defend herself, though such a task isn't easy.

Alternately, if the character pleads guilty or the case is pretty open and shut, you can just proceed directly to punishment and either probation or incarceration.

RUNNING IN THE JOINT

Most players (and many gamemasters) believe that once a character is convicted of a crime and sentenced to prison, they might as well file the character sheet away and make up someone new. This is because most players believe that nobody will ever see that character again. Prison in *Shadowrun* is consistently portrayed as a brutal place populated by corrupt guards and dangerous inmates and administered by a system that's inherently biased against shadowrunners. On top of this, cybered characters face having their cyberware removed, and magically active characters have to fear experimentation, insanity or loss of magical abilities. All in all, not a pleasant place to run a campaign.

Still, allowing prison's reputation as a black hole to scare you away from letting your players experience it for a short term means missing out on some potentially interesting gaming opportunities. As a gamemaster, you'll have to be creative in finding believable ways to bend the rules a bit to keep the characters from suffering permanent losses of cyberware or sanity (unless that's the sort of game you and your players enjoy, of course). Once you've done that, prison can provide an intense and rewarding experience that the characters aren't likely to forget.

The key to running satisfying prison games is to keep everything temporary: instead of removing cyberware, the cash-strapped prison simply deactivates it. Sure, the character in question might have some trouble getting it re-activated again when he gets out (this could be the subject for a game, or even a series of games, in itself), but at least he won't have to have it replaced. Same for magicians: come up with experimental techniques that would allow the character to remain

with the general prison population instead of isolated with a mage mask and a simsense loop. For example, perhaps this particular prison is testing out special manacles to prevent astral travelling or a (removable) mental implant that causes intense pain when magical activity is detected.

Another option is to begin a campaign in prison: the characters start out inside with their cyberware and magical abilities neutralized (or, in the case of cyberware, perhaps it was removed). At some point shortly after the campaign begins, the characters are contacted by a former employer, a corporate representative looking for a team to do a dangerous job or similar errand. This contact then arranges for them to be released in exchange for doing the job.

Remember, it's entirely reasonable that most large corporations keep some track of who's in the prison population and what kind of special skills they might have. Because shadowrunner prisoners are good sources of high-quality work at low-to-nonexistent prices, they probably get more attention than most. Add that to the fact that the incarcerated runners are highly motivated to earn their freedom and it becomes worth the corp's while to assign a decker a side job of monitoring who's in and who's out. You can use this as a convenient way to let runner teams have a taste of prison life without doing hard time.

One more way to run an enjoyable series of games set in prison is to have the characters plan an escape. Naturally this is going to be a difficult thing to do, but you could get several game sessions out of interacting with contacts, bribing guards, making plans, and finally pulling off the job. If the players come up with a good enough plan, give them a chance of succeeding—after all, this could develop into an entire campaign as the team tries to stay one step ahead of the long arm of the law (who might even have useful goodies like ritual samples on the team). Paranoia is your friend—if you're the gamemaster, that is.

Adventure Seeds

Here are a few adventure seeds that you can use for prison-based games or campaigns:

A runner team is hired by a Johnson they trust to infiltrate a prison to get hold of something—a bit of information from a prisoner or guard, a file from a system not connected to the Matrix, or even a physical object currently located inside the prison. The Johnson arranges for their cover identities and provides them with contacts inside the walls.

A group of player characters begins a campaign inside a prison, where they have a chance to get acquainted with each other during a couple of preliminary adventures inside the prison walls. At some point, each of them is selected by a shadowy corporate contact to perform a dangerous job in exchange for their freedom. After they complete the job, the corporate contact keeps her word and arranges for the characters to be released, and she can serve as an initial source of jobs until the characters build enough reputation to go out on their own.

The player characters are all members of the same organized crime syndicate (Mafia, Yakuza, Triad, etc.) or gang inside a large federal prison. Because of their connections, they are afforded more privileges than the standard prisoner, allowing them greater freedom. Adventures for such a group could

include following directions from higher-ups outside, smuggling contraband, conflicts with rival syndicate or gang members, blackmail, or even planning an escape with the help of bribed guards and outside contacts.

The guards in a prison are running various illegal operations (smuggling, pit fighting, drug dealing, etc.). The player characters can get involved in several ways. Three possible ideas include aiding the guards in running these operations to gain extra privileges, competing in the pit fights, or getting offers from prison officials to spy on the operations and relay information in exchange for everything from privileges to a reduced sentence.

NEW GEAR

The gear described below is not standard issue for your run-of-the-mill beat cop, but will be brought out and used under appropriate circumstances. Most of it is covered with police markings or easily recognized as belonging to the police so runners who get their hands on it should be careful in its use.

Electro Riot Shield

The Electro is a large riot shield with contact plates on the face of the shield that deliver an electric shock to anyone they touch (see *Shock Weapons*, p. 124, SR3). The current is controlled by a switch on the insulated handgrip of the shield and can be turned on and off at the officer's discretion.

Jupiter Taser Club

The Jupiter is a stun baton with a built-in one-shot taser, so that riot cops can also zap targets from a distance at need.

NEW IC

Snitch Psychotropic Black IC

Similar to Judas IC (p. 108, *Matrix*), Snitch is a subliminal compulsion to secretly report wrongdoing to authority figures. A character affected by Snitch will alert the appropriate authorities to any upcoming or recently committed legal activities that he's aware of. He will call anonymous crime prevention hotlines, report incidents to 911 or find the nearest person with authority to report the crime too (corpsec guard, manager or even mob lieutenant). The Snitch-conditioned character will specifically seek out authorities who have jurisdiction over the criminal act, or

those affected by it (so if he sees a runner gun down a gang member in a Z-Zone, he'll report the incident to the gang boss). The afflicted character is unaware that he is ratting out his friends, acquaintances and even himself. Just like Judas, he will deny this activity if confronted.

Whenever a Snitch-affected character has an opportunity to report criminal activity, make a secret Willpower (Snitch IC Rating) Test. If the test succeeds, the character resists the compulsion, but still remains completely unaware of his inner conflict.

For programming size and game purposes, treat Snitch the same as Judas.

NEW VEHICLES

Lone Star Sherlock Crime Scene Analysis Drone

The Sherlock is a microskimmer drone that is brought into particularly delicate crime scenes in order to take and record data readings. Its small size (less than half a meter across) and ability to float above the ground ensure that it does not disturb any evidence.

Similar Models: Opel-DeMeKo Vigila, GMC Savana (NewsNet custom variant)

Other Features: Remote Control Interface, Rigger Adaption, Chem Sniffer (Rating 6), MADS (Rating 6), Mechanical Arm (STR 2), Camera, Trideo Recorder.

Lone Star Spectator Surveillance Drone

The Spectator is a next generation "spyball" surveillance drone that has recently seen use by FRT and SWAT teams. This drone is no larger than a racquetball and makes use of state of the art gyroscopic propulsion systems to roll its way across flat surfaces, under doors and into secured areas without notice. Once in place, it stabilizes its position and begins recording data until asked to make a burst transmission to the controlling rigger. Once in place it is able to record sound and images and transmit them to a nearby rigger or receiver equipped vehicle. Lone Star also makes extensive use of the Spectator in prisons it controls.

Similar Models: None

Other Features: Remote Control Interface, Rigger Adaption, Micro-Recorder (Rating 6), Micro-Camcorder, Universal Receiver (Rating 4, see page XX)

	Conceal	Ballistic	Impact	Damage	Weight	Avall.	Cost	St. Index	Legal		
Electro Riot Shield	2	2	3	6M Stun	3	12/14 days	2,200 ¥	3	4-V		
	Conceal	Ammo	Mode	Damage	Weight	Avall.	Cost	St. Index	Legal		
Jupiter Taser Club	4	—/1	—/SS	10S/8S Stun	3	12/14 days	1,800 ¥	3	4-V		
Model	Hand	Speed	Accel	Body	Armor	Sig	Auto	Pilot	Sensor	Cargo	Load
L. S. Sherlock	3	75	8	1	0	8	0	2	6	1	25
L. S. Spectator	4/4	30	4	0	0	12	0	1	0	—	0
Model	Seating	Entry	Fuel	Econ	S/B	L/T	Chass	SI	Avall	Cost	
L. S. Sherlock	—	—	E (120 PF)	0.4 km/PF	—	—	Sm. Skimmer	2	12/3 wks	180,000 ¥	
L. S. Spectator	—	—	E (14 PF)	1.5 km/PF	—	—	Special	2	14/1 mo	67,000 ¥	

OLD WORLD MAGIC



Our upload on Europe triggered a flood of requests for more details on a number of topics. Hundreds of queries hit Shadowland and the Helix from users intrigued by the short primer to the Awakened and magical aspects of Europe. Since I am all about bringing you the goods on the surprises you might encounter in our line of work, I tapped Helix's Magicknet sysop Mime to pull the curtain back on the magical traditions you might come across in the Old World.

• Captain Chaos

Transmitted: 20 December 2063 at 16:54:27 (PST)

by Mime

Like everything on our fair continent, Europeans approach magic with schizophrenic flair. Considering the Old World's cultural diversity, it's no wonder the local magic community is an eclectic morass. Hanging out for any amount of time on the local Magicknet Undernet will give you a taste of just how weird things can get.

Followers of the hermetic path—Prague academics, German Faustians or French seers—appear to dominate the magic scene. Once you step out of the spotlight, however, a number of neo-pagan traditions come to the forefront, as well as local idiosyncrasies and the wiz-styls of ethnic minorities. Nature and shamanic traditions come in many different shapes and styles, though are much less visible due to a mistrust of the visceral magic of witches, druids and their kind. This forces many to find employment on the fringes of mainstream society and in the shadows.

• The bias extends to the corporate and academic communities. When the cards are down, however, the suits go with anything that works, while the world of academia has been slow to come around. In that respect, Europeans are more bound by tradition than North Americans.

• Marcel Black

With modern society being what it is, there's a multitude of minor traditions and schools with small footholds as well, from wujen to voodoo. On our trip through European Awakened culture, though, I'll focus on the best known factions—it's too easy to get lost in the details otherwise.



I've asked some of the regulars on the Euro Magicknet to give me a hand in profiling the major traditions, beliefs and magic groups found in Western and Central Europe. It's a big place and there's a lot to see, so sit back and buckle up, we've got a lot of ground to cover.

NEO-PAGAN UNDERCURRENTS

Before we cover the splintered hermetic scene, let's investigate a tradition you're probably less familiar with—neo-paganism. The differences in the traditions of neo-pagan nature magic tend to be much subtler.

Since the dawn of man, spiritual beliefs and religions cyclically rise, decline and are reborn. People are always looking for answers, and the Sixth World poses a lot of questions. The Awakening threw every known religion into chaos and rekindled both reactionary dogmas and old faiths that never quite died. Fueled by the manifest power of many of its animistic rites, it isn't surprising that neo-paganism—in a broad sense, those who follow nature-worship, classical or shamanistic faiths—drew many new converts. Fifty years hence, it is clear neo-paganism has had a lasting appeal. Wicca, druidism and other old faiths claiming roots in ancient Europe pervade all aspects of European society.

Even so, many Europeans see nature magic as second-class thaumaturgy. Charles University in Prague and Erfurt in the ACS are the only three to offer higher degrees in nature magic. Thanks to the efforts of the Unificationists, more so than nature magicians themselves, things are slowly changing.

- You can't really speak of paganism except in the broadest terms. Nordic Ásatru and Wicca may have minor things in common, but philosophically they're a world apart. Ásatru is a warrior's religion at heart while Wicca is all about nature and balance.
- Socio Pat
- Depends which Wiccans you're talking about. The rabid feminists of the Ste follow a radical version of Goddess worship and are just as militant as a raubritter go-gang.
- Neostrodamus
- Whether ultra-feminists or neo-Luddites, Wicca has its share of extremists too. Even though they're not representative, they boast a higher profile than most and give the rest of us a certain, ah, reputation.
- Labrys

Even the stuffiest hermetic will admit that magic, belief and culture are intertwined. It's important to remember neo-pagan faiths are religions, and though magic is integral, it is only one aspect. Also, while neo-pagan faiths do not share a common creed or cosmology, most do share an interwoven magical "tradition"—a conceptual framework or mental construct of forces, symbols and correspondences allowing magicians to focus their will and do what they do. A neo-pagan finds their faith provides them with a metaphysical "paradigm"

(as the academic crowd would put it) regarding the nature of mana, the use of magic and the origin of spirits, making neo-pagans far more tolerant of the Awakened. In most communities, the Awakened are regarded with high esteem and even perform the duties of a spiritual leader.

- A lot depends on the particular belief. In most druidic communities, the Awakened are considered touched by the gods and tend to rise to the top of the pile. Ásatru see their magicians as the chosen of the gods and they are often dubbed priests. On the other hand, most Wiccan covens tend to prize individuality and maintain a balance in their hierarchy between Awakened and mundane individuals.
- Malleus
- So these guys actually believe Thor and Zeus are out there somewhere looking down on us?
- Gnuß
- Yes and no. There are cults and groups that adhere strictly to the old ways while some believe the gods of old represent human archetypes or avatars of elemental forces. I've seen instances of both, but I'm not stupid enough to make a call one way or another.
- Magister
- You'll think differently if you ever see Thor riding his chariot over a Viking gang rampage. Scared the drek out of me!
- Hagar
- Hey Hagar, how about signing up for one of those detox programs the Scand Union offers?
- Red Erik

A neo-pagan magician's relationship with his deity, though reminiscent of the relationship between a shaman and his totem, is a tad more complex. While Native American cultures are pretty clear on what the higher powers are and what they stand for, neo-pagan traditions are not. Each deity boasts a substantial mythology, providing a far more complex philosophical patchwork and imagery than the primal archetypes of Native American and African totems. Though some pagans are inspired by pre-Celtic shamanistic beliefs (such as the wild druids of Northern Britain) following animal and nature totems, most dedicate themselves to elemental nature, particular gods, resurrected pantheons of old or even complement their pagan beliefs with hermetic rituals to replace lost rites.

This diversity is particularly obvious when observing different magicians dedicated to the same deity. To one Nordic *gode*, Wotan may be the All-Father, font of all wisdom, while to another he's the war god guiding him in battle. Surprisingly, these different views are equally accepted by the community and seen as devotion to different facets of the same power.

Para-sociologists have coined the term "idol" to describe the specific aspect of a neo-pagan magician as it relates to their





patron of choice. The academic opinion, however, deems these "idols" as simply mental constructs guiding the magician, and not as a spirit or god. This matter is one of heated debate.

- I don't waste my time arguing whether Wotan is real or not, I let my spells speak for me!
- Heimdall

- Like it or not, the issue remains unresolved. Is he truly a god or a construct of your own mind? Professor Miles Swinbourne's thesis, *Metaphysics of Gods and Men*, is still mandatory reading for any Comparative Thaumaturgy post-grad, and thousands of pages of new arguments are published every year.
- Silicon Mage

As a rule of thumb, a neo-pagan magician should be considered in the context of his or her religion rather than as a singular entity. Where North American and African shamanism are highly individual practices, nature magic in Europe tends to be communal. The majority of European nature magicians congregate in magical groups of the same belief (covens, circles and lodges), or at least neo-pagan movements of the same disposition. Larger groups, such as the French Druidic Revival, the British NDM and the German Grand Coven boast considerable influence in cultural and political spheres.

- True enough. The Weisse covens are the heart of German Wicca. In Scandinavia, the Aesir Society is the driving force of the Ásatru revival and boasts many magically active góde and gyðje priests.
- Kopke

- In Britain, even though many New Druidic Movement druids and mundane members aren't true pagans, they recognize the power and symbolism vested in the old ways and incorporate it into their hermetic styles. In the opposite corner, the Celtic druids in the UK, Tir Na nÓg and France truly subscribe to pre-Christian beliefs and follow the rites of the Ancients.
- Wednesday

- They wouldn't know the "rites of the Ancients" if it parked on their face! The last of the druids died out millennia ago.
- O'Reilly

- Really?
- Myrddin

- You're forgetting extremists like Winternight and, to a lesser extent, mago-fascists like Runenthing.
- Audun

- You better believe there are guys who fake the old ways to heart—and I don't mean crazies like Winternight, either. There are plenty of intelligent people into the neo-pagan revival. Scandinavia is chock full of back-to-basics types who accept

the Aesir Society's beliefs and philosophies.

- Munin

WITCHCRAFT RELOADED

For those of you not familiar with me from Magicknet, I'm what is commonly referred to as a "street witch" in this corner of the world. What does this mean? Well, it's less a formal magic tradition and more of a catch-all term for street mages and urban shamans. I bring it up now because the term "witch" is tossed around liberally in Europe. The first thing most people (even in the shadows) think of in relation to non-hermetic magic is witchcraft, and for good reason. The most widespread non-hermetic traditions in Europe are indeed the various varieties of the craft—Wiccan magic, traditional witchcraft and the hodge-podge wizstyles of street witches.

Wiccans

by Persephone

I could get used to this. First the Helix crew, and now Mime and Captain Chaos come calling. I must be more popular than I thought. I'll start by underlining what too many people tend to forget: Wicca is an officially recognized faith in most of Europe, ranking fourth in followers just behind Catholicism, Orthodox Christianity and Islam. In Germany, the Netherlands, Britain and the Czech Republic (where I hail from), Wicca is popular among both mundane and Awakened. The reactionary Catholicism in Spain and Italy makes the south slightly prejudiced against Wiccans.

For those of you who've been living in a hole for the past hundred years, Wicca is a religion of fertility and nature worship, similar to druidism, but with several significant differences. The most glaring is the personal relationship Wiccans possess with the Goddess and the God and the belief that everyone has some small spark of "talent". Despite claims of a return to the old ways, we owe as much to nineteenth and early twentieth century spirituality, modern New Age philosophy and ceremonial hermeticism as to ancient faiths.

Awakened and mundane Wiccans traditionally gather in covens and circles, numbering less than thirteen members. Although many claim the contrary, most covens are urban-based and our religion is rooted in sprawls across the continent.

- Of course, there's no such thing as a single Wiccan faith. Of all the neo-pagan beliefs, Wicca is the most individualistic and divided in nature. It seems like each coven has its own set of beliefs and philosophy.
- Green Lady

- That is what kept it from being officially recognized. Pluralism is good, up to a point.
- Door

Wicca isn't a monolithic creed. Rather, it is a grouping of several diverse sub-traditions or *lineages*, as we call them. So what do Wiccans have in common? Well, several elements are sufficiently widespread to be considered common among Wiccans:



- **Belief in the God and Goddess**, who represent the balance of forces at the heart of nature itself. Different groups envision different relationships between the two powers, but the majority acknowledges both.
- The understanding that **magic is the essence of all things**. It is the neutral spiritual force, neither inherently good nor evil. Intrinsic to everything.
- **The Wiccan Rede** is essentially an ethical code of conduct rather than a law, and can be summed up in two phrases "An Ye Harm None, Do What Ye Will." Its interpretation varies significantly.
- **The Law of Return**—also known as the Rule of Three or the Threefold Law—is one of the legacies of the old ways. In its most common form, it reads, "Ever Mind The Rule Of Three, Three Times Your Acts Return To Thee. This Lesson Well, Thou Must Learn, Thou Only Gets What Thee Dost Earn."

Wicca stands outside the hermetic and shamanic paradigms. Both paths are seen as equal forms of the "Craft of the Wise," the harnessing of Earth's natural energy through our workings. I was trained in the most common form of Wicca in Europe, the Gardnerian tradition, similar to the hermetic outlook. The other major branch of Wicca, the nature and fertility rites of witches following revived Goddess worship is our direct opposite, closer to shamanism. There are numerous other lineages, from the feminist "Dianic" Wicca (after the goddess Diana) to Celtic Wicca, which shares much of its pantheon and symbolism with druidism. The "eclectics" combine the styles and beliefs of various branches into their own creation, not unlike chaos mages. Though some bickering is natural, Wicca sub-traditions don't share the one-upmanship seen among hermetic schools and study circles.

- All Wiccan lineages have slightly different leanings regarding magic. Magicians tend to associate with the lineages they feel most comfortable with.
- Imagica
- Gardnerian Wiccans have strictly organized hierarchies. Many secrets are reserved only for initiates. In some countries, like Germany and the Czech Republic, covens double as dedicated hermetic groups for Wiccan believers.
- Bookworm
- Founded by Zsuzsanna Budapest in the 1970s, the Dianic tradition is strongly feminist. Many Dianic covens are women-only and their rituals focus on the Goddess. Though not all are as extreme as the Sic, some radicals exclude the God altogether.
Soclo Pat
- Most Wiccans also subscribe to the immortality of the soul and karmic balance.
- Green Lady
- Karmic what?
- Kid Code

- Karmic balance—"What comes around, goes around." Though this applies to all things in life, many believe it even explains magical drain. When a magician manipulates energy, he must pay a price. The more energy, the bigger the price.
- Green Lady

Though Wicca is the most widespread neo-pagan tradition in Europe, thanks to the absence of central organization, internal bickering, bad publicity and resistance from institutionalized religions, we don't possess the political and social clout you'd expect. Most Wicca communities are small and decentralized. The best organized are by far the German Wiccans, who are structured in covens, grand covens and a Great Grand Coven. Grand covens coordinate rather than command the covens in each region, while the Great Grand Coven represents them all and throws its weight around on a national level.

Tools of the Craft

So, how does one spot a Wiccan? Personality-wise, Wiccans aren't particularly conspicuous. In fact, Wiccans are often community-minded and blend in well. When all decked out for rites, Wiccans often wear simple dark robes with cords to denote initiation, but day-to-day they tend towards practical and comfortable dress. The occasional giveaways are pentacle and crescent medallions, bracelets or tattoos (while not an absolute they are pretty common) and carrying an *athame*, or ritual dagger (depending on which country you're in, this may be considered illegal).

Wiccans of all lineages have a number of common foci and ritual regalia, used by both shamanic and hermetic magicians: the traditional *athame*, *bolline* (a white-handled cutting knife used to prepare herbs and ritual materials), sword (ritual, often owned by the coven as a whole), wand (for manipulating mana and invoking spirits) and the chalice (heavily symbolic, representative of the Goddess). One clear aspect of Wicca's hermetic heritage is the common practice of each coven possessing a *Book of Shadows*, which functions as a grimoire and hermetic library, but also as a link to the coven's avatar (in the case of magical groups). Candles, staffs, cauldrons and brooms are also quite common. Fetishes and ritual wares handcrafted in Brittany, Marienbad and Eastern Europe are particularly popular among Wiccans, and most of these items can be found at the local talismaner's shop.

- Mileage will vary depending on where you are. While most talismaners in Germany and the Netherlands cater to Wiccans, down in Lisbon, Wiccan lore stores tend to be hidden away in back alleys and out of the way quarters. Good luck finding a street dealer for Wiccan materials in Madrid or Rome.
- Restelo
- There's a profitable black market in arcane wares from Eastern Europe through the Czech Republic. The Doanescu Rom have a handle on it, but the Cherkezov Vory and Albanian crews are trying to expand their cut. Smuggling is well worth it if you're willing to face some cutthroat competition.
- Persephone



Traditional Witchcraft

by Willow

You've all heard of the hallmarks of my craft—hedge magic, charms, hexes, the evil eye, clousing, herbal lore, midwifery. These are aspects of a distinctly different approach to witchcraft, more traditional and ancient than Wicca. Witches like me don't belong to a formal tradition, at least no more so than the average chaos street mage. Witches don't like to talk about their workings. They tend to be solitary. Me? I'm a modern girl and while I won't be spilling any trade secrets, I have no problem giving Mime a hand.

Weisse frau (Germany), *sorcière* (France), *strega* (Italy), *bruja* (Spain) or *bruxa* (Portugal)—these are just some of the names we go by throughout Europe. Thaumaturgical pundits refer to us as "traditional" witches. We're the true grassroots magical tradition of Europe, the wise women—midwives, seers, herbalists, crones and spirit guides—found in the backstreets of both sprawls and villages, rooted among minorities and the underclass, and in the rural areas. At best, our craft is viewed much like alternative medicine was in the last century; at worst it is disregarded as fraud.

• Many of the southern countries that publicly denounce witchcraft have a strange love/hate thing going with traditional witches. Witchcraft remains a complement to the dominant Catholic mindset and though they often clash, many people don't mind popping in on the local witch to buy a potion or have a hex cast on the competition.

• Ozzie

It's worth noting that we are *not* Wiccans. Wicca implies a certain belief system and a form of worship, and in truth, most witches conform closer to fairytale images of hex-casting old women than neo-pagans. A few are practicing Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants and Muslims, while others don't subscribe to any form of organized religion, though there is a definite ambiguity towards faith and belief reflected in many aspects of our magical trappings and paraphernalia. We're notorious for having no compunctions about incorporating Christian, neo-pagan and hermetic symbolism into our incantations. If it works for us, we use it.

Another departure from Wicca is that traditional witches are almost exclusively women (at least in this part of the world). Hereditary lore passed down orally from witch to apprentice for generations. Exceptions are rare and only really occur when a witch lacks a female heir and the line risks being lost.

• Romany magic has many similarities to witchcraft, and gypsies and witches have all too often been lumped together and persecuted.

• Ambassador

Witches reject the ritualistic trappings of Wicca and hermetic high magic, weaving magic the way they always have through the earthy and subtle power of incantations, poxes, potions and spirits. We prefer to combine traditional medicine

with strong magic, subtle charms and hexes with basic psychology. We're not exactly a common sight in the shadow community, but if you cross a witch's path, show some respect. We aren't flamboyant spellcasters by nature, but never doubt our power. I might not smite you where you stand, but you might find it unpleasant to vomit up newts during our next meet.

• And you better believe witch charms work. After a run-in with Lusitana goons, I was seriously fragged up and developed a limp. Really got in the way of my work. I ended up taking a friend's advice and visiting a bruxa. She cooked up this potion I take to ease the pain and give my leg normal flexibility. Cost me plenty, but it was worth every penny.

• Xunga XL

• One theory out of Prague is that traditional hedge magic was originally a Dark Ages form of chaos or street magic, mashing elements from different traditions and philosophies together into something unique. Kinda like a proto-Unified Magic Theory.

• Acolyte11

• There's something immensely funny about old hags beating the eggheads-in-pointy-hats to a metaphysical truth by more than a thousand years.

• Bookworm

Peculiarities of the Craft

Though a few traditional witches are full-fledged magicians, most of my sisters take a unique approach to the Craft. Our understanding of magic is slightly different from other traditions. We believe affecting major changes to the way of things is begging for trouble from the powers-that-be (whatever they might be). Instead of learning sorcery like a hermetic, Wiccan or shaman would, we are taught to weave far more subtle magic. Many of my sisters make a good living by selling charms.

• Judging by what Willow is saying, I'm assuming they draw a lot of aspected magicians, but it's hard to tell since there hasn't been a detailed study of traditional witchcraft. Probably because disdainful academics and authorities fail to see that "different" doesn't equal "lesser." Some even claim that witches fake their gift.

• Silicon Mage

• Idiots! A cute young witch in Sarajevo wove a charm into my favorite gun while I was doing a stint in the Balkans. Saved my bacon a couple of times.

• Flak Jack.

• I saw a witch do her thing in a small town near the Harz Mountains. The hex she wove wasn't your normal spellbinding. It involved some sort of astral construct, a matrix if you will, that stored the spell primed for use. Never seen anything quite like it.

• Magister



- Maybe the contempt mages have for witches isn't as simple as it seems. It's rumored hermetics have been "discovering" and publishing original formulas for stuff witches have been doing for years. Anchoring metamagic is just the most blatant example.

- Miss Tick

- Frog you and the broom you rode in on.

- Schiller Undergrad

Street Witches

by Mime

So when is a witch not a witch? When he's a street witch. A "street witch" is simply what Europeans call the urban shamans and street mages that inhabit the edges of mainstream society. It's a catch-all term for every other magician who thrives on the streets of our sprawls. What started out as a snub gained a life of its own and, these days, people like me bear it with pride.

We count all sorts: independent-minded Wiccans, self-taught street mages, traditional witches, chaos mages and black magicians. Though we're a generally disorganized band of solitary players, there's barely a sprawl in Europe where you won't find a street witch coven. We're the dropouts, the independents, the runners and the 'mongers. Consequently, street witches represent the majority of the magically active in the European shadows and on the streets of Paris, Frankfurt and Vienna. We also number many of the independent talismongers and fixers specializing in arcane wares.

- Remember most Europeans follow the Wicca custom of using "witch" for both male and female magic users. It's fallen out of use when referring to mundane Wiccans though.

- Willow

- Street witches tend to be more the loner than neo-pagans and other magicians, too individualistic to follow the stricter traditions.

- Socio Pat

- True: When they do get together, they form multi-tradition magical groups. They get along far better with magicians of other traditions than your average stuffed-shirt hermetic or druid.

- Ergo Sum

- Necessity oblige.

- Leoric

- The Camden Irregulars in Northern London are one such group. They number street mages, a druid or two, a couple of adepts and even a Haitian houngan. Some of them freelance in the shadows, but mostly the group keeps the peace up around Camden, where the protests are bringing down the cops something fierce. Depending on who you listen to, they're either aligned with Pendragon's boys or they're card-carrying members of the Anarchist Black Cross.

- Citizen Rat

- You get local groups like that all over the place. The anarchist group Die Autonome Hexe in East Berlin and the Green Cell Loudstall crew in Amsterdam are two equally politicized groups. There's many more out there.

- Magocrat

To make things even more confusing—just the way we like it—there isn't a dominant style or path among street witches. We're too mismatched a group for anything like that. You'll never know until you ask if this King Rat person your fixer is introducing as your street witch backup is a Rat shaman or a houngan.

A recent trend among urban shamans and street-grown types on the Helix is their construction of their own patchwork philosophy from various magical paradigms, similar to the stylings of the chaos mages. Personally, I'm not too fond of this hodge-podge approach. Can't get my head around blending neo-pagan spiritual systems with Gnostic creation myths, meshing Wicca and Qabbalistic ritualism with classical symbolism; but street witches have a saying, "Fortune favors whatever works."

- Street witches are pretty common in the shadows, since their styles and personalities are not exactly corporate wagemage material. But don't make the mistake of thinking they're all self-taught spell slingers. More than a few had Th.D.s or formal training in one tradition or another before they fell through the cracks.

- Persephone

DRUIDS

by Erwen

Like all things natural, the path of the druid is not straightforward. We are the stewards of the Earth for the higher powers. We are its custodians and healers, but we are also the caretakers of the balance between nature and man. Contrary to popular belief, druidism understands this to be a symbiotic relationship, rather than one of blind deference to nature.

There's considerable evidence druidism predates European Celtic culture. Some scholars point to roots in Paleolithic shamanism or to the Indo-European Aryan culture, while others claim its origin lies with the mysterious Vedic culture that conquered the peoples of the Indus valley and founded Hinduism. Independent of who originally stumbled upon the path, most historians believe the Celts absorbed primeval druidism and made it their own, much in the way it was engulfed by Christianity. What references to ancient druidism survive come not from the Celts, but from the cultures of antiquity that encountered them such as the Romans. For centuries now, scholars, mystics, historians and revivalists have searched for the revelations and mysteries of druidic culture, slowly piecing together the puzzle that is neo-druidism today.

Though we may never know the paths the ancients walked, we seek to reclaim the essence of their heritage and strive to build a spiritual system—a religion and a magic—that would meet with their approval. Equally, we seek a belief that serves the needs of today's folk, and the land in which we live.



We hold that the powers of the self (intellect, feeling, intuition, instinct and flesh) refined by the secrets of initiation (wisdom, love and power) should be used for the good of the community. We believe in the immortality and the transmigration of the soul. When the soul completes its stay and dies, it ascends to the higher planes where it rests until rebirth and its return to *Abred*, the material plane. The work of the druid is to consecrate the bond between our lives and the spirit of the land, to open the gates of the soul to the higher mysteries. From these sparse roots sprang the grand oak that is druidism today, one of the most widespread shamanic traditions in Europe, with its two great branches: Celtic druidism and "wild" druidism.

Celtic druids follow a pantheistic nature belief—wherein the Celtic deities are the primordial avatars of elemental nature—while wild druids follow a deeply primeval totemic tradition that allegedly predates Celtic influence.

- Erwen isn't including the Danaan and their bastardization of Celtic mythology or the New Druidic Movement, who appropriate druidic trappings and symbolism for their latent mystical potency, though they are just dressed-up hermetics. Their vaunted stewardship of the land has been twisted into egotistical power-mongering and self-interest.

- Oakthorn

- Let's not go completely overboard; British druids have done a lot of reclamation work in the spills and toxic zones. There's no need to dump the basket for a few bad apples.

- Union Jill

- On the other hand, I could point out that Lord Marchmont—one of those bad apples—basically runs the entire country. Oops, I just did.

- Anonymous Botch

Like Wicca, neo-druidism is equally a religion and a magic tradition. It considers both sexes as equal and essential to natural harmony and boasts both mundane and Awakened followers. It provides a religious and social context to the faith, however, and there is a clear distinction between the common follower and the druidic "clergy," a separation Wicca does not embrace. Though there are local variations, Awakened members seen as "touched by the divine" ascend naturally to social preeminence and the title of druid simply by merit of their gift.

On the other hand, wild druids tend to be mostly hermits and outsiders, very shamanistic in their views, favoring a deeper immersion in nature and watching over society from the outside.



Celtic Druids

By far the most widespread, the Celtic variety of druidism—sometimes known as the path of *Awen*—is better organized and politically active than its counterpart. You've probably all heard of its revival in Tir na nOg, but the faith is also proving popular in the troubled United Kingdom, Spanish Galicia, Central Europe and French Brittany, where it's the dynamo of the populist and influential *Aznevezenti drouizel Breizh* (Druidic Revival).

Celtic druids have revived ancient Celtic traditions and culture wholesale—at least what has been possible to reconstruct—showing devotion to the sanctity of the land, gods, heroes and sacred animals of the Celtic pantheon. These vary slightly from country to country; a Scottish druid will use different names and rites than a Britton or a Spaniard though they are all still considered a single tradition.

- Examples of such pan-Celtic deities include the great hunter Herne ("Cernunnos" in Irish, "Hern" in Welsh); Lugos ("Lugh" in Irish, "Lieu" in Welsh), youthful god of the sun, light and fire; Nodens ("Nuada" in Irish, "Nudd" in Welsh), otherworld lord and warrior god; Belenos ("Balor" in Irish, "Beil" in Welsh), solar grandfather god; and Don ("Danu"), primeval river goddess and mother of the gods. And those are only the variants on the British Isles.

- Scholar

- Don't forget the Celtic belief in the sanctity of the land comes with a warrior ethos and a ritual fascination with bloodletting.

- O'Reilly

- Term, you're just asking for a rumble aren't you?

- Calleach

The druids of old were more than just mystics, they played an active role in society. They were priests and priestesses, teachers, healers, philosophers, guardians of lore and judges. They viewed themselves as an intellectual caste whose purpose was to serve, rather than lead, society. This aspect of our heritage is why modern Celtic druids see it as our duty to help guide political and social movements. Druids have been gathering strength in social and cultural movements for decades, and though individually we subscribe to different ideologies, we all agree on certain issues. In a modern world of political indulgence, corporate exploitation and hermetic dominance, druids often favor the anti-establishment underdogs and ecological causes.

- The Celts are by no means as unified as Erwen makes them seem. While most druids believe in the traditional role of druids, a vocal minority believe a return to the old ways is too slow in coming. Wherever they crop up, they're pushing for a new order within the druidic movement where the three mystical castes—druids, bards and voi—actively lead society during this transition.

- Maub

- For those who aren't up on their anthropology: voi (also vates or ovates) were the religious and ceremonial initiates, true Celtic priests; druids were the mystics and wise men, and bards were the storytellers and "lore keepers" of the Celts.

- Elijah

- Where they exist—Tir, Brittany and Scotland mostly—the voi are secretive about their true function and often pass themselves off as mere druids, assuming their role as voi in closed circles devoted to the "true" Celtic ways. If you saw the gore of their ceremonies, you'd understand why. Of course, this is seriously frowned upon by mainstream druids, and there have been a growing number of violent "differences of opinion."

- Carlyle

- The Celts had a thing for the number three. Druidic wisdom was believed to come in the form of triads: the three gifts of music—sleep, laughter and tears; the three druidic virtues—courage, brotherhood and selfless service; the three great powers—fire, intelligence and life.

- Kinder

The Celtic revival has different expressions throughout Europe. The High Circle of Alba in Scotland believes the druid caste should be reserved for the gifted, as do several smaller groups across the British Isles. This has caused friction that has kept the British druids from presenting a united front. Strangely enough, some of these "true" druid circles in Scotland and England allow hermetic druids admission, as long as they follow the Celtic ethos—possibly because many are well placed politically and socially.

In contrast, in my native Brittany, the Druidic Revival treats "druid" as a title and bestows it upon both Awakened and mundane elders. Here too, we have idiosyncrasies. As a reaction to the troubles that have plagued Brittany, the Revival established a dedicated warrior arm, the *Ambact*. Once made up of former French Legionnaires and Euro Wars vets, the *Ambact* has attracted a number of adepts drawn to the ethos of the ancient Celtic warrior of the same name.

- Warrior adepts are not all the Revival attracts. Brittany has a vibrant cultural scene with a number of Celtic-inspired music and dance groups (both contemporary and traditional). Adepts of the way of the artist known as "bards" are common.

- Leoric

In Germany, the *Vereinigte Orden der Druiden* represents the Celtic faction, taking a middle-of-the-road stance and keeping their distance from another druidic group, the *Reichsgroßhain of Germany*. The *Reichsgroßhain* are unexpectedly friendly with the Order of Thule and uphold some pretty radical views. Strangely, many of the younger *Orden* druids seem to be taking their cue from the "true" druids elsewhere.



Wild Druids

It is difficult to speak of our "wild" brethren for a number of reasons, but primarily due to their self-imposed isolation. Wild druids tend to be hermits, living in the wilderness, trying to live in harmony with the natural world. Occasionally, they gather in small groups or clans, sometimes forming circles for a particular ritual. They shun modern society, and like other druids, they hold the land sacred and worship its power. Though their magic is more primeval, and they worship animistic, mythical and elemental powers or totems such as Oak, Wyrn and Moon, we are much alike. I am told there are remarkable similarities between this form of druidism and both North American and Central Asian shamanism. Perhaps it is true we all share common roots.

- The similarities are more than just appearances. Any anthropologist can see the evolution of a totemic Stag to the Horned Man, to Celtic Herne and Cernunnos.
- LepreCon

Wild druids are found in the wilderness throughout Europe, from the Scottish Wildlands to Spain's Asturian forests to the rural areas of the Czech Republic. Some even whisper of wild druids living in the hostile Awakened forests such as the ones in Spain and Scandinavia, though these might in truth be fallen druids who follow the dark paths.

Wanderers

A few druids are known as "wanderers." These druids have chosen to remain outside of circles and instead honor the land alone, walking its length and breadth on obscure quests for their patron deities and totems. They follow the shamanic conviction that the magician should be an outsider, an impartial guardian of all the land and its people.

- Wanderers aren't really restricted to one branch of druidism or another; both feel the call. Don't be surprised to find one on his "walkabout" in Seattle or Denver either; these guys are notorious for getting round.
- Silicon Mage
- There's some evidence that ancient druids traveled to the British Isles from all over Europe to be trained in the higher mysteries. This may have contributed to the relative homogeneity of pan-Celtic culture, but it suggests they were less attached to specific communities as modern scholars believe. I wonder if it had anything to do with the high number of aspected power sites across Britain.
- Elijah

Common Grounds

There are many similarities between the two branches of druidism and the differences may simply be more philosophical than practical. In fact, wild and Celtic druids have been known to cooperate on numerous occasions, most recently and visibly in the weaving of a new Wild Ley in the British Isles.

Most druids, irrespective of cultural orientation, seek a circle even before initiation. Circles are the backbone of Awakened druidic society. During ritual work, most circle druids use ceremonial robes of white and gray with elaborate brooches and torques to denote rank and initiation. In the Celtic rite, the eldest druid always leads the proceedings, regardless of rank.

- The hermetic wannabes in the NDM imitate the getup too. Bunch of wankers.
- Beeste

Mundanes sometimes participate in rituals as a token of our respect and bond to our communities. While different cultures celebrate different days, there are four major annual festivals of immense ritual significance celebrated by all druids: Imbolc, Beltane, Lughnasad and Samhain. Druids often reserve great rituals for these festivals (as was the case with the unleashing of the Wild Ley during the Summer Solstice of 2064) and always reserve initiation rites and ordeals for those sacred occasions.

The power sites used for our gatherings and ritual spell work are considered communal property, shared by all druids. These sites vary from monolithic stone circles and natural caves to hidden glades and burial mounds. All are sacred ground. Although a number of ancient sites and stone circles fall on natural power sites and ley nexi—further evidence of the power of our ancestors—modern druids are trained in geomancy and sensing techniques. When a new circle is laid, it is almost always placed on a conveniently located power site. Many such sites are slowly Aspected towards druidic magic while others seem to boast a natural affinity.

- Which explains what's been going on in Britain over the last few years. The Celtic and wild factions are trying to reverse the aspecting covertly carried out by the NDM on the old henges and ley nexi. It all hit the headlines with the Callanish incident a couple of years back, but last summer it really heated up when they tapped an entirely new ley which re-aspected all the sites along its course. The NDM called on the Lord Protector and the Ministry of Defense and they sent in the SAS and Oversight Templars to secure the sites. Apparently, the lads had their noses rubbed in it by the druids.
- Myrradin
- Some of the newer circles are unwittingly built on unstable power sites and are sometimes subject to strange mana fluctuations and phenomena. Since the mana surges of '61, there have been reports of some of these opening up astral rifts and shallows.
- Maub
- Another peculiarity seems to be that a druid's power over nature spirits is enhanced when in close proximity to henges and circles. Something to do with being particularly attuned to those domains.
- Ravena



NORSE PAGANS

by Mime

The old Norse paganism, Ásatru, has gotten a remarkable boost in Scandinavia in recent decades. Scandinavians have quite a relaxed attitude towards religion and magic, yet on the fringes of their society, a different mentality is growing.

Ásatru has been embraced by the members of a loose network of raider and biker clans known as Vikings, which grew out of a cultural fusion of criminal biker gangs, neo-nazi groups and the Scandinavian heavy metal scene. Not really a surprise, as their lifestyle harkens back to that of the old Norse. To a corp suit, the idea of dying in battle to ascend to Valhalla isn't particularly enticing, but to a North Sea pirate, the idea is a bit more relevant.

Ásatru has also been adopted by the Siida communities, which offer an alternative to those who fit in with the modern urban rat race. Metas, neo-Luddites and those looking for a new start flock to these communities or start their own in the deserted Scandinavian interior. The Siida provide the Vikings with safe havens along the Norwegian coast and the Vikings recruit from the youths who've grown tired of the Siida's quiet life.

This revival of Norse paganism isn't formalized and lacks any central organization. Each group, be it a pirate crew, a Viking street gang or a Siida village, has a *gode* (priest) or *gydje* (priestess) as their connection to the gods. As with other neo-pagans, these are often Awakened individuals.

An exception to the disorganization of most Ásatru is the Aesir Society. Making its home in Uppsala, Sweden, it has spread throughout Scandinavia and recruits all kinds. It has a more typical neo-pagan outlook, preaching a gospel of how the old Norse had things right. They prefer to live in farming villages and compounds owned by the sect, trying to live more like the ancients. They're much more peaceful than the Vikings who they believe "bring shame upon the Aesir."

- It's the Aesir Society that brings shame upon the gods. The weaklings prefer to go the frozen wastes of Hel than die like true men.
- Jotun

Not all magicians among the Norse pagans, however, act as priests. A *voive* is a special kind of priestess claiming to have a unique spiritual bond with Norns, the goddesses of fate; a *ganner* is your typical spell slinger; a *seidman* falls into wild trances to perform their brand of ritual magic or to conjure spirits; and a *runemaster* uses runes to enhance his magic. Runemasters seem to have learned (some claim "rediscovered") a unique enchanting technique, where the rune carving imbues foci with additional potency.

- Runecasting is a difficult skill to master. Each rune has a special meaning that changes when combined with another. Runes may also limit the use of the focus, making it vulnerable to steel or sunlight or requiring you to do things like pour beer on it to make it work.
- Sunnica





- I thought runes were used in divination?
- Wiz Kid

• They are, but among traditionalist Norse pagans the practice is frowned upon. There's no real indication of the ancient Scandinavians using runes for divination, at least not in the manner favored by street witches. Norse pagans who prefer to "stay true" avoid this modern adaptation. Not all seem to care much, though. Knowledge is power after all.

- Sunnica

Possibly the most infamous variety are *berserkers*, warriors that display magical abilities when in a combat frenzy. Most of these appear to be some form of adept, but there are those who display a wider range of powers. Typically, berserkers use drugs or drink to induce the frenzy. Local magic mushrooms and imported Awakened drugs are very popular, though some seem to be able to "go berserk" at will.

- Berserkers in action are a scary sight. They look like wild animals, but don't be fooled, they'll fight with the precision of a martial arts adept.
- Ola Krok

- Some do in fact look like wild animals when they go into frenzy. When I first saw it, I thought the guy was a shifter, but a Sami friend says it's some kind of shamanic mask.
- Rodina

Norse magic is essentially shamanistic and pantheistic. While most devote themselves to the entire pantheon equally, others dedicate themselves to a particular *Ás* (singular of Aesir).

The cults of Odin and Thor are the most popular. Both are essentially warrior cults, though the Odin devotees are slightly more mystical than Thor worshippers, who are known to party hard, drink harder and brawl hardest. The cults of the Vanir are slightly more peaceful, focusing on the nature and fertility deities of Norse lore and resembling Wiccans in outlook. They're most popular among the Siida, but there's no real friction between the cults. The real schism among the Norse pagans is regarding metahumans. Some view metas as incarnations of the *Jotnir*, the mythic enemies of the Aesir, while others openly accept metas, showing how mixed the foundations of Norse neo-paganism really are.

Both Awakened and mundane Ásatru gather for great ceremonies known as *blots* based on the ancient custom. These are usually held on Midsummer's or Midwinter's Day and the spring or autumn equinoxes, but also happen whenever there's a good enough reason. Among the Vikings—where the blots are most popular—these might at first seem like a typical rock or biker festival, but the animal sacrifices, drinking of blood and scary religious and magical rituals are eye-openers.

- Doesn't that imply blood magic? They sacrifice animals and do magic—shouldn't there be a bounty on these guys?
- Set

- Some guys tried to collect a bounty on some Vikings last year, but the Dunkelzahn Foundation in Copenhagen let them loose. Seems like the sacrifice was strictly religious in nature and there's no bounty on that. Though it is illegal to sacrifice animals in the Scand Union, I don't think the Vikings care much about the law.
- Hugin

- Still, many Norse magicians are initiated during blots, and they believe bloodletting enhances the magic performed during the rituals. Maybe those sacrifices aren't so "innocent" after all.
- Red Erik

ROMAN-HELLENISTIC PAGANS

While the Norse pantheon has found a fiery following in Scandinavia, the Roman and Hellenistic pantheons have seen a slow burn revival in southern Europe. The ancient beliefs of Greek and Roman mysticism are probably the best recorded in history and many have turned to this well of knowledge. Wiccans and street witches borrow heavily from classical mythology to shore up their own traditions, but among the small neo-pagan groups truly dedicated to a revival of these beliefs, a few stand out.

The most influential is the Oracle of Delphos. At first glance, they're a magical and pagan group dedicated to the worship of Apollo, revitalizing the ancient tradition of the Oracle and offering divination to anyone who's willing to make an "offering to the Gods." They also operate as a consultancy firm, which even boasts a councilor seat on the Hellenic Federal Council. Their power springs from control of the potent power site of Delphos and the lesser known Larissa site. According to speculation, these sites are naturally aspected towards divination. Aside from its consultancy business—known as Orakle—the group is also involved in several nature conservation projects in the Epiros and the Cyclid Islands. During the past few years, growing competition from the now-international French Seer's Guild has prompted Orakle to become more business-like and expand beyond Greece. Though limited to the initiates of the Cult of Apollo, the Greek group now has offices in several Mediterranean countries, including Italy, Spain, Constantinople and Tunisia.

- Buzz in Athens is that Orakle is doing well on the stock market, defying common knowledge that divination can't predict with precision.
- Verby

- I don't think so. Even the Seers can't pull that one off. It's more likely a case of making things happen. Orakle is rich enough to hire not-so-spiritual guides to see things get done.
- 01110110111

- Doesn't anyone wonder where the group got all its funding? Of course they make a bundle on divination services, but when they started off in the '40s, Greece was a country ravaged by war. Their temple was up and running mere months after the group got together for the first time.
- Lone Gunman



Another group is the Orpheists. The modern variant focuses on Dionysian rites and the Orphic ideal of mysticism and artistry embodied by the original pre-Platonic Orpheists—not unlike Eastern Tantric traditions. They've borrowed heavily from later traditions and cults to fill in the gaps though. Like the troubadours of antiquity, they believe in the divine power of voice and music and in living life to the fullest, often assuming deeply hedonistic lifestyles. They number a few Awakened, both artistic adepts and magicians, and are sometimes found performing to crowds of adolescent fans on sprawl corners throughout Europe. It's in the isolated communities of Italian Mezzogiorno, however, that they're most common, where their hedonistic mysticism and artful magic finds easier acceptance.

A small group definitely worth mentioning is the Aesculepian brotherhood. The Aesculepian cult mixes classic mysticism, traditional medicine and herbal lore to great effect. These traveling magical healers adopt a mendicant lifestyle reminiscent of Dark Ages friars; always on the move, working in exchange for gifts, room and board, and always searching for something nobody has been able to figure out. Their selfless vocation makes them very popular in isolated communities, war-torn countries and lawless places like GeMiTo. The locals will go out of their way to protect them.

There are several smaller groups dedicated to either the Greek or Roman pantheon sprinkled across Greece, Italy and the rest of Southern Europe. Both the Orthodox and Catholic churches oppose the growing popularity of these pagans as best they can, but popular culture seems to love the old pantheons. The Roman and Hellenistic groups draw followers from all over the world, but most relocate to the Mediterranean, the cradle of their beliefs.

- There are a couple of major sims in the works this year based on classical mythology. Expect an upswing in interest in these flakes.
- Valens

ETHNIC MAGIC

To round out the undercurrent in the European magic scene, I must mention the many non-European ethnic traditions. Leading the underdogs are the Muslims, by far the largest European cultural minority with more than 15 million people. Since the Second Ottoman Jihad, Muslims—even those who are third and fourth generation Europeans—have suffered prejudice, discrimination and sometimes outright hatred.

- Too true. In many parts of Europe, it's easier to be an ork than to be a Muslim. be you Algerian, Somali, Turkish, Arab, Pakistani or Albanian.
- Almond White
- European Muslims got the sharp end of the stick, even though many actively opposed the Jihad. Some even fought in the ranks of the French Foreign Legion and MET2000 in Spain and later Greece, but still they're seen as the enemy.
- Ambassador

The end result is that most Muslim communities have folded in on themselves and Islamic movements aren't doing much to change it. While European Muslims are far more open regarding metahumans and magic than some of their Middle Eastern brethren, they find it very hard to find acceptance in academic circles and develop their talents outside their communities. Many join *madrasahs* (religious schools attached to mosques) or travel to the Maghreb and less radical nations of the Middle East to receive formal training at the hands of Awakened imams and mullahs. Some follow the Sufi dervish tradition; a few learn Arabian alchemy and many adepts and mages are trained by the Jamil Islamiah into *muhajedin*, guardians of the faith. Those that do return often join politicized Islamic polyclubs from radicals like Jihad X to the reformers of the Moorish-inspired Islamic Renaissance Movement.

Other major ethnic groups include the Romany, the East Indians, Chinese and Africans, all of which have brought their traditions with them. Their influence is quite localized, and among the relevant ethnic groups, they occupy the same role traditional witchcraft does within European under classes.

- There are exceptions of course. Prague, Berlin and Merseysprawl are particularly open, and in the first two there are even numeros clausos at the universities for students of non-European magical traditions.
- Ersatz
- Doesn't mean they fit in.
- Acolyte11

Romany witchcraft is pervasive. Gypsies are present in almost every European nation from Ireland to Russia and their culture is steeped in little understood mysticism even today. We believe their magic resembles traditional witchcraft, but gypsies are notoriously insular and reserved about their secrets, preferring to let speculation do its job instead.

- Don't you believe it! Last month I saw a Rom smuggler in Katowice hold off a nosferatu working for the local syndikat with a brace of flashy spells. Nothing "subtle" about them.
- Oczyniebleskie

Wujen has its niche among the thriving East Asian communities in Britain and France, and is actually better accepted than many of its counterparts. Most wujen magicians find it relatively easy to find gainful employment and fewer trickle down to the shadows than you would expect. The Trilads, particularly in the UK, employ a number of wujen, preferring to keep things "in the family." Voudoun and Santeria have a place among the numerous West Indian populations in Britain, UNL and Scandinavia where they provide a strong cultural focus for the local communities and sometimes act as magical protectors. African shamanism and witchcraft are less common but are found in popular ports, merc hangouts and pirate havens like Lisbon and the Canary islands. Hindu mysticism, mostly centered on the UK where there's a sizeable Indian minority,



remains secretive, though it's a common knowledge Brahmin only use magic to aid Hindustanis.

Finally, there are several small primitive shamanistic traditions spread throughout Europe, such as Lappish shamans and Balkan animists, rooted in ethnic minorities. As I said before, our cauldron contains a very interesting mix.

A QUESTION OF PARADIGM

by Flamel

If you're meddling in anything involving mages in the European shadows, you should be aware of the academic conflict. In Europe, different schools of thought—or "paradigms," as the academics like to call them—are locked in a race for dominance over the hermetic magic scene, leading to an extremely diverse landscape. The conflict mainly affects the universities and research labs, but since the victors stand to gain considerable prestige and influence (not to mention the big bucks from corporate interests), myriad agents meddle in the conflict hoping to reap the results of this magical arms race. The conflict also affects North America, though not to the same extent due to the heavy dominance of one particular paradigm there—Renewed Hermeticism.

But let's back up a little. Observation and logic are not absolutes when it comes to magic. There's no "what goes up must come down." Thaumaturgy constantly bends the established laws of reality and physics out of shape. What's more, the very nature of magic is such that different theories regarding the nature of magic not only exist, but cannot be objectively disproved by empirical testing and comparison. This happens not only between different magical traditions but also within monolithic hermeticism. These are known as *paradigms*.

Each paradigm can be thought of as a distinctive school of hermetic magic—a basic theoretical framework defining fundamental principles, accepted methodologies, philosophy, ideology and metaphysics describing the ultimate nature of magic and the world.

Paradigms, however, are *not* absolute and complete systems of magical theory. Each still harbors huge debates and vast gaps in theory. Hypotheses are debated, revised and developed within dedicated study circles and conferences, and through publications by the scholars that support them. These are the main actors in "the academic conflict," the race to define which paradigm is most efficient, versatile and effective. While the academic nature of the conflict may make it seem inconsequential to a layman, the amount of money, breakthrough developments and new theories it generates make it extremely interesting for anyone from a Saeder-Krupp senior exec to a lowly shadowrunner.

- The competition extends beyond the academic spheres. Since most wagemages have a Th.D., corporations usually align with one of the paradigms, depending on where they recruit their magical talent. This is mostly for practical reasons, since mages of different paradigms usually have difficulties working together. Only megacorps can afford to split up their magical departments, not relying on only one school.

- Gemini

- And people wonder why I can't stand hermetics!

- Halo

- They probably don't like you either.

- Killjoy

ROOTS OF CONFLICT

To understand how the different paradigms developed, we have to skip back to the beginning of the century, or the "dawn of the Sixth World" as the history trids call it. When the initial shock of the Awakening loosened its grip, people tried to adapt. The ability to wield magic was rare and barely understood at the time. Feverish research in the then United States was soon dominated by military concerns, leading to a very scientific and rational approach, directed at discovering how to control this new power and only secondarily, what is it?

- More accurately, how the hell can we counter the Great Ghost Dance?

- Beach Boy

While government agencies and megacorporations led thaumaturgical development in North America, public and private universities led the charge in Europe. By late 2012, multiple programs had been instituted on both sides of the Atlantic to study the new phenomena, but it would take decades for scholars to catch up with harbingers like Howling Coyote's shamans and the New IRA, who had an inexplicable head start over everyone else.

Early studies were hampered by scientific preconceptions that tried to rationalize mana through modern science, believing it to be a manifestation of some other known force. Parapsychological approaches did produce minor results, however, and the military soon started to recruit and train "psionicists." Some of these still linger and there's actually a Psionic Studies Institute in New Jersey that still holds on to the antiquated views.

Despite the tentative advances in America, most European research took an entirely different tack. Ravaged by eco-catastrophes, Europe saw magic as a potential answer to its prayers, and research was much more diverse. Given the obvious Awakened power of traditional magic in America, Ireland and Asia, European scholars went looking to the past for answers exploring different avenues. They soon discovered that in the right hands, the rituals described in ancient texts sometimes produced extraordinary results. Though unimpressive by today's standards—most of the early spells didn't actually do much—the fact that they did *something* was a breakthrough. This led towards a rekindling of mystical traditions of antiquity from classical sources like the Codex Hermeticum and other less known works.

Charles University in Prague was the first to establish an actual Hermetic Studies curriculum in 2016; others quickly followed. Such programs received significant backing in Europe, less so in an America shaken and apprehensive in the aftermath of the Great Ghost Dance. What would become known as Classic Hermeticism soon ruled academic circles, though folklore and nature magic also proved valid models as the druidic and Teutonic variants would later demonstrate.



When the shift in American academia came however, it proved decisive. Born not from the undeniable power of shamanism, but from the seminal work of Akiko Keno and Arthur White Eagle, it introduced an entirely new methodology built on the foundations of hermeticism, but which remained scientific in nature. Extrapolating upon classic hermetic theory, they developed a theoretical paradigm that convinced the "rationalist" scientific community that magic should be viewed as a science in its own right. This melding of classic lore and modern conceptualization was revolutionary, and Keno and White Eagle's work influenced even the most die-hard Classicists in Europe. What became known as Renewed Hermeticism, however, also first divided the hermetic tradition between traditionalists and reformists and ignited the academic conflict as we know it today.

Magical studies have come a long way and hermeticism has become even more splintered as new paradigms and theories evolve. In a world where everyone wants a piece of the pie, it was inevitable that academics throughout the world would begin to compete for resources and influence. Megacorps and governments want any extra magical edge they can get. They sponsor and recruit from different schools, fostering this magical arms race in the hopes of profiting from the inevitable results of the quest for a better hermetic.

- If you thought industrial and high-tech R&D was scalding hot paydata, you should see what corps fork out for thaumaturgical breakthroughs. This whole "academic conflict" thing means plenty of pickings for us in the shadows.
- Sepherim
- It's also seriously dangerous. Think tanks involved in this esoteric R&D race guard their secrets jealously with the best magic money can buy.
- Tell

RULES OF THE GAME

This is a battle of influence and there are two ways of measuring it: prestige and human resources. Prestige comes to those who produce the best results. Since all forms of magic actually work (from psionics to the Cult of the Great Toaster), the name of the game is to demonstrate how your approach *works better*. Major innovations bolster the prestige of a research lab or magical group, but also the reputation of the entire paradigm from which they derive. Though paradigms are quick to incorporate any "new" developments discovered by rival philosophies, there isn't much fame in being a copycat. Is there? This leads to great secrecy surrounding major research projects, and consequently, to well-paying work for "curiosity seekers."

- If every researcher in Prague spent as much time on his own work as he spends on watching everybody else, we would probably get a revolutionary breakthrough every week.
- Felix
- What would Czech runners do then?
- Kafka 2.0

Human resources are the other half of the coin. Magical talent is uncommon. Magical innovators are even more rare. The more people on your side the better, but not everyone is of equal interest. The most talented individuals are sought after, and this is where "study circles" enter the picture. Study circles are magical associations (almost like fraternities) connected to universities and research labs, each pursuing a paradigm and internal agenda. One could claim the whole conflict is actually a rat race between competing study circles. Originally, university students formed these circles for support in their studies, but many have grown into significantly more. Uniting like-minded people, many circles develop agendas beyond mere academic support—some gain political agendas, others develop into "good ol' boys" networks, some even become mystic mafias. Many of the magical organizations you've heard of like the Illuminates of the New Dawn (IOND) and the New Druidic Movement (NDM) began as study circles.

- I thought the IOND traced their roots back to the Bavarian Illuminati in the eighteenth century.
- Scorpio
- Don't take everything you read at face value.
- Skeptic

Like many magical groups, study circles offer lifetime membership. Simply because you've earned your Th.D. doesn't mean you have to leave. Indeed, former alumni are the keys to power for most study circles. When firmly entrenched at a corp, they ensure funding for the "right" student programs and provide connections to powerful sponsors and possible employers for the next generation. Becoming a member of a study circle often means you're assured a job right out of college. This is just as much a benefit for the corporations as it is for the students. Magical talent is in high demand and the study circles provide a ready source. Some study circles have undoubtedly become little more than recruiting fronts for corporations, though others maintain their independence by not relying solely on one backer.

- Corps also play these groups off each other, as much as the other way round. MCT and S-K are all over the Sorbonne and Charles campuses financing groups and snatching up blooming talent and research results. Meanwhile the groups are using the corp cash to finance their own interests.
- Magister
- Which makes for a very profitable poaching industry on behalf of the corps that can't afford to get in on the game but are just as hungry for that extra magical edge.
- Linette

Some study circles are relatively large organizations, numbering several smaller magical groups, and boasting a presence at several campuses. Some universities are totally dominated by one study circle, pushing its paradigm through the



official curriculum. Larger universities are academic "battle zones" where several study circles and paradigms compete in perpetual academic one-upmanship. Though less common, some universities have reacted to the emergence of different hermetic paradigms and have divided their magical faculty into several smaller departments, each with a different curriculum and research programs.

- How large are these things? There aren't that many Awakened out there, and even with sponsorships and scholarships not everyone is cut out for university life.
- Struwwelpeter

- The very largest study circles number a thousand members tops, including a few mundane students of magical theory. The numbers of Awakened students attending college, however, are slightly larger in Europe than in UCAS, thanks to government grants and the recruiting efforts of groups like the Dr. Faustus Society.

- Magocrat

THE CLASSIC SCHOOLS

The Classic Schools do not represent a single paradigm, but rather many. They are what early European magic scholars developed from pre-Awakened occultism and mystical traditions. While they appear very different in outlook, many argue the differences between them are more cultural than philosophical and that they really should be understood as a single paradigm. The most common Classic Schools are Classic Hermeticism, Qabalah, Egyptian Hermeticism, Black Magic and the variants Hermetic Druidism and Teutonic Hermetic. Some also include the Asian wujen and other non-European magical systems among the Classic Schools, though these have negligible influence in Europe.

What should be understood is that the Classic Schools aren't mere scientific frameworks, but entire spiritual and philosophical systems. Without a proper understanding of the philosophy, you won't be able to understand the old texts that form the foundation of these schools. Mages belonging to the Classic Schools adopt the whole package, and are thus naturally opposed to the Renewed Hermetics who focus solely on the magic elements. This doesn't prevent in-fighting between the Classic Schools, though.

Classic Hermeticism

Most Important Universities: Athens (FRH), Cologne (AGS), Madrid (Spain), Venice (Italian Confederation)

Famous Study Circles: Society of Elemental Studies, The International Order of Hermes

Publications of Note: *The Trismegistus Review*, *The Elemental Quarterly*, *Journal of Hermetic Thought*

Classic Hermetics, or simply Classicists, argue that the ancients knew far more about magic than we currently do and thus metahumanity should seek to learn from them instead of "trying to reinvent the wheel." Their initial successes back up this claim, but further evidence is inconclusive. Their primary references are the works attributed to Hermes Trismegistus,



written in the first centuries before and after Christ. These texts, the *Corpus Hermeticum*, are the root of the hermetic tradition, but even the Classicists expand on these and draw upon a variety of ancient sources: Qabalah, medieval grimoires, Egyptian papyri, Rosicrucian ritualism and even nineteenth and twentieth century occultism. This creates a certain overlap with smaller sub-traditions, both hermetic and otherwise.

- Note that they always refer to original texts. Latin and ancient Greek are compulsory for a true Classicist.
- Schiller Undergrad

Classicists were the first successful hermetics and their models form the basis for all later theory. Understanding their approach is fundamental in understanding all others. The base precept is that mana is the mythical quintessence of the universe. While they don't deny the value of hard science, Classicists view magic—the "spiritual axis of the universe"—as inherently superior. Mana is mind, energy and matter, making those distinctions illusory. Magic is thus beyond pure science; it is the highest art form available to mankind—an art that demands deep understanding of philosophy, ethics, science and artistic creativity, making the path of the magician the path of true enlightenment.

- That bit is similar to the propaganda spewed by the Illuminates of the New Dawn, though they recruit mostly from Renewed Hermetic circles. In their case, it is more propaganda and high ideals than a pragmatic approach. There's a small Classicist faction in the Paris IOND chapter, which is lobbying for change.
- Idle Savant
- So Classicist study circles are simply a worse version of the IOND?
- Fletch
- Some are, but most Classicists oppose the idea of a magocracy. They think mundane matters would take their minds away from "the high art." Many Classicists believe enlightenment is actually available to all of metahumanity. The Gifted simply have a short cut, but there are other paths. Some even believe anyone can awaken to magic if they seek hard enough.
- Carabas

A fundamental aspect of Classic Hermeticism is the focus upon the four elements, the building blocks of their metaphysics, which not only correspond with basic natural forces, but also have mystical affinities to human spirits. Though spiritual balance between these forces is the ideal, some devote their focus to one particular element. Hard-line Classicists often frown upon such "misguided" approaches, but elementalists gain much from their specializations.

Classicists are a major presence in France and around the Mediterranean, where they form small study circles associated with particular universities. This doesn't mean they lack

organization, but rather that they opt to link up around publications and conferences rather than magical groups. The exceptions are the International Order of Hermes (IOH) and the Society of Elemental Studies (SES). The IOH represents hard-line Classicists, dedicated to upholding the ethical standards in the hermetic discipline and focusing strongly on the spiritual and transcendental aspects of magic. The SES shares the concern for ethical standards, but focuses upon magical research, especially in the fields of astral constructs and conjuration. In fact, SES patented invocation metamagic. This has made them a strong contestant in the academic conflict, not to mention their close ties to several corporations, including S-K and Sol Media.

To date, though the Classicists have been able to keep up with more modern paradigms, their outlook allows little room for innovation and fewer ancient texts have been uncovered in recent years. The well of knowledge from the ancients seems to be drying up. They are dogmatic regarding their hermetic strictures and systems, too much so for many young practitioners. In outlook and magical style, Classicists are as traditional as they come.

- To counter this problem, some Classicists have devoted their attention to arcano-archeology. The DIMR and Atlantean Foundation have openly welcomed cooperation, though the pop version of Atlantis pushed by the Foundation doesn't appeal to most Classicists.
- Augustus Max
- A more potent, but still untapped well of knowledge, are the Vatican libraries. A long lasting dispute with Rome rages on, as petitions to the pope by several universities for access have been rejected multiple times. Many classic hermetics feel the church is keeping some of the most significant tomes in history from the public.
- Bookworm
- The Vigilia Evangelica keeps the knowledge to itself and not without good reason. There are still things men were never meant to trifle with.
- Dante
- But what is the cost for the secrecy?
- Padre Pedro

Hermetic Druidism

Most Important Universities: Cambridge (UK), Oxford (UK)

Famous Study Circles: New Druidic Movement's Inner Circles

Publications of Note: *The Oxford Almanac*

Conferences: Bi-annual Cambridge Conference

Hermetic Druidism is an off-shoot of Classical Hermeticism, with a slightly different focus. Rather than the path of enlightenment, Hermetic Druids try to embody the Celtic ideal of the druid as a philosopher, wise man and astrologer. According to the New Druidic Movement, Hermetic Druidism is the true modern inheritor of the old Celtic



magical and philosophical heritage. Though essentially hermetic, it blends neo-pagan and ancient Celtic symbolism with hermetic trappings and formula, with a strong emphasis on ecology and conservationism in general.

Like Classicists, Hermetic Druids view mana as the quintessence of the natural world. Hermetic Druids, however, see elementals as spiritual representations of their true element, rather than the typical hermetic concept of para-elemental states. They conjure elementals of earth, sky, sea, lightning and fire instead of elementals of earth, air, water and fire. Most theorists believe these elementals are simply peculiar manifestations of those other hermetics conjure. Like their nature-revering cousins, Hermetic Druids have developed an affinity for geomancy, druidic power sites, the ancient calendar as well as an aptitude for astrology and artificing.

The stronghold of Hermetic Druidism is England, where it completely dominates the magic scene. Though there are some Hermetic Druids throughout Europe, most notably in Spain, Germany and France, they mostly take their cue from the UK universities. The New Druidic Movement, besides being a political mainstay in the UK, is also the main "study circle" for Hermetic Druidism. Their inner circles form at universities and membership in a circle (and thus the NDM itself) is almost mandatory at Cambridge and Oxford.

- Though half of the talented in UK are Hermetic Druids, most foreign corps are reluctant to hire them on—they don't trust their ties to the NDM. This gives the University of Edinburgh crowd, who boast the most supporters of the Unified Magic Theory and Renewed Hermeticism, a slight edge.
- John Dee

- Dissention in the ranks of the NDM is at an all-time high. Reformists are rallying around the Duke of Oxford while dissatisfaction with the strict regimes of British universities is pushing many youths towards the Celtic faction. Figure in the popularity of the Pendragon and the anti-establishment movement, plus the media hype surrounding all things Celtic, and you can see trouble brewing.
- Havelock

- What planet are ya on Havelock? Pay attention why don't ya? Troubles have come and gone. These days it's war. Pure and simple. Callanish was the harbinger, the Wild Ley was the opening volley and now the heat is truly on.
- Beeste

Teutonic Hermetics

Most Important Universities: Erfurt (AGS), Uppsala (Sweden)

Famous Study Circles: Order of Thule

Publications of Note: *The Saxo Review*

The craft of Teutonic Hermetic mages is inspired by ancient Norse and Germanic mysticism. Their underlying magic theory is similar to Hermetic Druidism, but boasts enough idiosyncrasies to classify it as a distinct paradigm. Most peculiar is

the theory of "eternal ice." Eternal ice is seen as a cosmic force, the natural opposite of mana, encapsulating the Gaiasphere. The ebbs and tides of this great eternal ice cyclically crush the Gaiasphere and metahumanity. The Teutonics are also fierce believers in a previous age of magic, symbolized by the mythical nation of Thule. The Order of Thule, the best known Teutonic study circle, is dedicated to "creating a renaissance of the magic of Thule." Regardless, the Teutonics are so few in number that if it weren't for their development of runic enchanting they wouldn't be worth mentioning.

- Except they more or less lifted the process wholesale from the Aesir Society, claiming it as their own.

• Jürgen

- This isn't the first appearance of the Order of Thule. There was another one in the 1930s that numbered many prominent Nazis. If I remember correctly, that was also where the theory of the eternal ice first surfaced.

• Echee

- The modern Order of Thule is politicized too. Though relatively meta-friendly, Order of Thule acolytes have been linked to the Deutsche Nationalsozialistische Partei and similar far-right parties.

• Elsmann

- Buzz is the Order of Thule and its radical cousin, the Runenthing, provide groups like Volksfront and Nationale Aktion with magical backup. EuroPol found some protective runes carved into one of the escape vehicles used in the theft of the VITAS samples released upon the Munich Olympiapark Stadium shanty town a couple of years back.

• Schupo

- While doing some browsing for links on the Atlantean Foundation, I stumbled upon something called the Thule Society. Seems like the Teutonics have their own foundation going.

• Roland

- A Northern Atlantis Indeed?

• The Laughing Man

Other Minor Classic Schools

There are several off-shoots of Classic Hermeticism that don't really participate in the academic conflict. Both Hermetic and Orthodox Qabbalah have a significant presence in Prague, Vienna, Budapest and New York. Egyptian magic saw a surge in popularity in the UK early in the century, rivaling the Classic Hermetics, but the influence of the NDM has since routed this school. Black Magic, or Magick as it is properly known, a twentieth century occult tradition, retains a few followers, but with the exception of a few minor colleges, this tradition has no significant presence anywhere.



- Not among wagemages that is. On the streets there are many of us who pick up Magick, though we're usually lumped together with street witches.

- Aleister

MODERN SCHOOLS

The main competition to the Classicists are the so-called Modern Schools: the Renewed Hermetics, Reformed Ritualists, Avant-Gardists and Unified Magicians.

Renewed Hermeticism

Most Important Universities: MIT&T (UCAS), Washington (UCAS), Prague (Czech Rep), Paris (France), Tokyo (JIS)

Famous Study Circles: Renewed Order of Hermes, Groupe X-Polytechnique, the Hawkins Group

Publications of Note: *Journal of Magical Theory*, *Hermetic Digest*

Renewed Hermeticism is the scientific brother and rival to Classic Hermeticism. Though they share much, the schism between them is the deepest among the paradigms. The offspring of parapsychological methodology and hermetic theory, fused into a scientific approach to thaumaturgy, Renewed Hermeticism is rooted in the works of Kano and White Eagle, the theorists behind the "magical revolution" in the '20s and '30s, who eventually got the first Nobel Memorial Prize.

Renewed Hermetics claim the source of magic is found beyond the pre-Awakening model of the universe. Unlike the Classicists, they view mana as a form of energy, though with different properties than other forms of ambient energy like matter, light and electricity. To the Renewed Hermetic, magic is simply an arcane science. The spiritual is a Jungian ideal imprinted on malleable astral space. They believe spirits are simply semi-sentient entities molded by the human will, much like a spell.

Renewed mages (Lab Coats or Noobs if you want to pick a fight) frown upon "redundant New Age spirituality" and especially "the nostalgic notion that ancient is better." The absence of a moral and spiritual obligation leads many to condemn it as "degenerate."

- Ironical that the Lab Coats would be nowhere without the Classicist theory

- Mandrake

- Verifiable phenomena can't be denied, but that doesn't imply one should take the first and best theory on it for granted. A testable hypothesis is always a better approach than a conceptual treatise dug up from an old book, simply because it can be disproved.

- Shetoni

- Well, most Renewed Hermetics privately hold a much more esoteric view than they are willing to admit. It is a wee bit difficult to live in a world of spirits without getting spiritual (pun intended).

- Reciprocity Rik

Renewed Hermetics take a very pragmatic approach, attempting to apply magic to practical applications. This of course makes them popular among corporations who are happy to see sensible results from their investments. This is a double-edged sword since this approach proves to be a strait-jacket when it comes to intuitive and creative breakthroughs.

- The exception is cybermancy, but that's only used as "proof" as to how ethically corrupt Renewed Hermeticism has become.

- Doc Shock

- Wasn't cybermancy developed by Aztechnology? Azzle bloodmages are a far cry from Renewed Hermetics.

- Miss Tick

Most Renewed Hermetics belong to corp-sponsored study circles, though there are a few dedicated to "upholding scientific standards." Most notable is the British Royal College for Astral Studies and the Renewed Order of Hermes (who lent their name to the paradigm).

Reformed Ritualism

Most Important Universities: Lyons (France), Stockholm (Scand. Union), Jena (AGS)

Famous Study Circles: Dr. Faustus Society

Publications of Note: *Concordata Ultima*

Also known as the German school, Reformed Ritualism builds upon early German attempts to recreate the medieval and Renaissance Hermeticism. In some respects, it can be seen as a bastard child of Classic and Renewed Hermeticism with a focus on the cooperative ritual aspects of magic. The emphasis in ritualist metatheory is that mana manipulation is exponential in nature. Focusing multiple mages through ritual magic and strict organization, the potency of both sorcery and conjuring is enhanced. To Reformed Ritualists, membership in groups, strict discipline and initiatory hierarchy are the keys to magical advancement.

University classes among Reformed Ritualists are always organized as ritual groups, though membership is not exclusive and participation in other groups is actively encouraged. The Dr. Faustus Society is a prime example of a Ritualist "study circle," wielding considerable power in the German Alliance.

- The Corps Astralis Jenense is a Ritualist upstart rooted in the Jena University campus. Originally focused on astral research, it appears they have had a change of heart. It seems now they want to contest the Faustians' influence on the German scene, but their agenda remains unclear and the group comes off as fairly immature and idealistic.

- Matthias

- Their young leader, Mathias Elssen, is the son of Silke Rothstein, a preeminent member of the Bavarian Illuminati chapter. That may give a clue as to what their goals are.

- Rofomagus



- Ritualists have come up with some of the biggest advances in astral techniques and ritual conjuration on record. There might be something to the belief that group power is more than just the sum of its parts.

- Magister

Avant-Garde Thaumaturgy

Most Important Universities: Vienna (Austria), Paris-Sorbonne (France)

Famous Study Circles: Arcadian Society, Club Amsterdam, "Art! Art! Art!"

Minor players in the conflict, Vanguardists are our *enfants terribles*, the counter-establishment alternative. To a Vanguardist, the channeling of mana is an inherently personal and creative act. Magic is an art form rather than a science, a path of personal and creative development, and traditional research is a useless straitjacket for the narrow-minded. Vanguardist mages value creativity and individualism above all else and the school isn't particularly successful in academic circles. Its freeform approach to magic development is seen as unproductive, though it's infamous for unexpected advances and breakthroughs that have stymied scholars of other paradigms.

Though many are too individualistic to join any magical group, there are a few "collectives" around. Formed in 2054, the Vienna-based "Art! Art! Art!" was the first. Though a shock to the otherwise conservative Austrians, they maintain a thriving presence on the Vienna campus. Their platform has inspired many young magicians elsewhere, and a few corporations in the media sector have started sponsoring them. What the corps want, of course, is not the flashy style and individualism, but the effusive creativity. Much like artists working in advertising, with a little guidance, a Vanguardist can turn their creativity towards results that actually pay off.

- I'm glad I'm not working in any of those corps. Every Vanguardist I've ever met was an egocentric, arrogant and self-absorbed bastard. I got fed up with the "artiste" thing pretty darn fast.

- Vienna Sophomore

- Not all of them are that bad, though Vanguardists have a talent for being gaudy and ostentatious. Unfortunately, this seems to account for their popularity and makes them inexplicably attractive in jet-setting circles. The Grand Tour troupe has its fair share of Vanguardists.

- Spider

- Those who aren't as lucky try to make a living as performance artists or slide into the shadows.

- Bishop

Unified Magic Theorists

Most Important Universities: Erfurt (AGS), Prague (Czech Republic)

Famous Study Circles: None known

Publications of Note: *Thaumaturgica Universalis*, *Theuric Quarterly*

The universities of Prague and Erfurt, both being among the largest in Europe when it comes to magical research, have adopted a practical solution to the differences between competing paradigms. Where other universities are plagued by the power struggles of study circles and supporters of different schools among the faculty, Charles and Erfurt universities have given each paradigm their own playground. The magic departments are divided into different institutes, each focusing upon research and education within a particular paradigm. This measure allowed for peaceful inter-paradigm discussion and cross-pollination, which eventually led to the creation of the Unified Magic Theory and its paradigm.

Though the youngest paradigm, it was the Unified Magic Theorists who actually introduced the term paradigm to differentiate the schools of magic. Rooted in years of discussion and debate, the establishment of this paradigm came during Prague's annual Universal Thaumaturgical Conference in 2060. The conferences in subsequent years have been the main forum for the promotion of the concept and it has spread quite quickly. In 2060, there were only 50 delegates, mostly from Erfurt and Prague. By 2063, there were nearly 500 from all over Europe, the UCAS and Asia.

To be frank, I must admit I'm a supporter of UMT. I've tried to be as unbiased as possible in the presentation of the other paradigms, but it would be wrong to not state my opinion here. As Unificationists, we believe all magic stems from a single source, and as such, all variants of thaumaturgy should be viewed simply as different routes to the same truth. Instead of the competing paradigms model, Unified Magic Theory defends they are all equally valid. From this starting point, adherents to UMT try to develop a magical style devoid of dogma and prejudice, which tries to learn from all traditions. This way, we will be able to learn the most about magic, and eventually develop a magical style that combines the best from all.

- Nothing new here, chaos mages have been doing this for years.
- Whiplash

- How many chaos mages do you know who actually consider the theoretical implications of combining Qabbalistic symbols with Wiccan invocations in their formulas? How and why do they retain their significance when the magician doesn't subscribe to either belief system? There's a lot more here than meets the eye.
- Bookworm

- Unsurprisingly, UMT is absorbing the school known as Chaos Magic. Mostly dominant in some American universities, it was

diminished in Europe until the conference in 2060. Unified Magic Theory is what chaos magic becomes when it grows up.

- Vaughn

- Unificationists have managed what the Chaos Mages never could—they got magicians from different traditions and paradigms to work together and accept each other as equals.
- Magocrat

In the wake of the '61 Conference, Charles University started a program dedicated to researching non-hermetic traditions. While there were several nature magic curriculums in effect earlier, this new program was directed at breaking down the barriers between the different traditions. The theory states the barriers are artificial constructs and that the traditions are equally valid. As Arthur White Eagle himself put it at last year's conference, they are "cultural blinders set on us by centuries of mistrust and misunderstanding."

- Wasn't Arthur White Eagle the guy behind Renewed Hermeticism? Did I miss something?
- Curious Sam

- In fact, he's been a firm advocate of the UMT for a decade now. The Lab Coats have just chosen to ignore the delusions he's getting in his old age.
- Erfut

- What Flamel fails to mention is that there already is a schism in the UMT. One faction, the Unificationists, want a new magical style that combines the best, while the Pluralists believe that having lots of different perspectives around is better.
- Schiller Undergrad

- Arrrrgh, how fragging anal retentive can you get?
- Slamm-0!

- Actually, a couple of months back, Charles University in Prague announced brilliant breakthroughs from their wujen-hermetic analysis team leading to the unprecedented conjuration of elemental spirits by hermetic mages. Now that's what I call revolutionary!
- Ang

- Seems like the announcement was premature. The mages lost their ability to conjure elementals. It's been hushed up, but if you check the lab reports (publicly available on their Matrix host), it's there in black and white.
- Acolyte 11

- Though the UMTs are the "peacemakers" and dismiss the system of competing study circles, there's an unofficial study circle among them consisting of several top-notch researchers and professors in Prague. They don't have a name, but it is usu-



ally referred to jokingly as Schwartz's High Magic Squad. Anyone want to guess who their patron is?

- Magister

MINOR SCHOOLS

Outside of the Classic and Modern Schools, a few other paradigms deserve special notice.

Concordance Alchemique

Most Important Universities: European Academy of Alchemy (Brussels)

Famous Study Circles: Nouveau Laboratoire Alchemique Pratique, The Middle Pillar

Publications of Note: *Prima Materia, Concordance Alchemique*

Concordance mages were the first to master the venerable art of alchemy in the modern age. Though enchanting, artificing and the creation of radicals are the common usages, an entire hermetic paradigm has grown from the underlying theory. Whereas hermeticism defines thaumaturgy as the channeling of ambient mana through a mage's willpower and the potency of symbols, Concordance Alchemists believe in a greater "inner potential" locked in all things. Tapping this "well-spring of mana" would increase the astral potency of sorcery and conjuring.

- Same logic as blood magic if you ask me. Tap into something else's life force to power your magic.
- Divis Male
- Let's not get started down that track, please.
- Miss Tick

Academically demanding, Concordance Alchemy draws many of the brightest minds worldwide, but the complex metaphysical framework prevents it from becoming popular. Concordance mages invest heavily in magical research focused mainly on materials, searching for the keys to their "secret fire." They combine hermetic lore with modern science, quantum theory, nanochemistry, particle theory and dimensional physics into a complex and demanding paradigm.

The ultimate goal remains the "Philosopher's Stone," the metaphorical key to everything's inner potential. By understanding the true nature of the world, the Alchemist hopes to understand himself and metahumanity, becoming a true philosopher and achieving true enlightenment.

- Their quest for this "inner fire" produces numerous byproducts that the corps just lap up. Some stuff has frightening potential. Other stuff is too esoteric to ever be of use. Mystech Labs up in Boston is one of the few Concordance think tanks. They've caught on to the fact that their byproducts are the next man's SOTA developments and make a killing licensing their incidental creations. Last I heard, it was thaumo-sensitive paint additives and some sort of astrally-sensitive film.
- Digitalis

- The disorganized methods of most Concordance Alchemists don't help the bottom line. The few corps sponsoring Alchemist labs do so only in the hope that they might use the off-shoots for something useful. Like the medieval rulers who sponsored alchemists in the hope they might create gold.
- Magister

Pythagoreans

Most Important Universities: Madrid (Spain), MIT&T (UCAS), Atlanta (CAS)

Famous Study Circles: Circle Descartes, Pentateuch group
Publications of Note: *Mechanica Celestial*

To the Pythagoreans, math is the language of the universe, and thus language of magic. Though they have revived the math-mysticism of the ancient followers of Pythagoras, modern Pythagoreans have also adopted the full range of mathematical theory developed since. A modern computer is an essential crutch.

Pythagoreans are aptly nicknamed Mathmagicians as their spell formulas appear to be nothing more than an algorithm or a geometrical expression. As a nod to the more esoteric views of ancient Pythagoreans, they incorporate the harmonics of spheres (the metaplanes), π as a number of profound mystical significance and the dodecahedron (a twelve-sided polygon) as having magical properties. The Pythagoreans believe they now have the tools to fulfill the quest Pythagoras began, and reach a full understanding of the world through mathematics. The "Omega Equation" is the Pythagorean version of the Philosopher's Stone, the key to the greater truths.

The Pythagoreans are a small group, but their ideas have had an impact upon the Renewed Hermetics. The mathematical approach has an appeal to those who believe magic should be a hard science.

- Reading a Pythagorean spellbook is impossible if you don't have a university degree in advanced math. Can't see what they need all those numbers and formulas for when they don't do anything more than a witch with a kitchen knife.
- Digitalis

MAGIC & CHRISTIANITY

Christianity remains an omnipresent reminder of Europe's past. The Protestant work ethic is still socially pervasive, the Orthodox patriarchs played a decisive role in getting Eastern Europe back on track after the Euro Wars, and millions world wide still hang on the words of Pope John XXV, even though Catholicism is secretly divided between conservatives and reformists.

Though the myth of the "Burning Times" during the Inquisition has been largely dispelled, there is no denying the practitioners of witchcraft, hedge magic and Qabbalah were indeed persecuted by the church. This prejudice was still glaringly obvious when Pope John Paul IV denounced the harbingers of the Awakening—magic and metahumans—as unholy and demonic. I won't get into the fallout (you can find that in



the *Shadows of Europe* folio, if you're interested), but it's crucial to understand that even the Vatican was forced to do an about face with the landmark *Imago Dei* encyclical. Several other denominations followed suit.

Aside from declaring magic as neither good nor evil and spirits as the elemental forces of God's creation, *Imago Dei* significantly established that magic is *not* divine intervention and hence not a miracle.

- Of course it took ten years for John XXV to bring the church around and the conservatives are still going strong today. Higher-ups in the Spanish and Italian clergy just pay lip service to *Imago Dei* and the pope's agenda.
- Padre Pedro

- *Imago Dei* also reversed church doctrine regarding metahumans, something the German Catholics did not take lightly. When it was first introduced in 2014, they broke with Rome. They do make exceptions for magic; as long as the magicians are members of the clergy and only practice theurgy.
- Cain

So what does this mean to magicians who practice Christianity? Faith and belief are major factors in the way magicians perform and perceive magic. To the European Christian leaders, magic is a powerful force created by God and bestowed upon mankind, just like any other force of nature. As great power corrupts, however, magic is carefully regulated and controlled. Hence the creation of theurgy, a variant of hermeticism purged of pagan references and infused with Christian symbolism. The churches only enforce this tradition and its teachings among clergy; believers are free to follow or disregard the guidelines set down by each church, at their own peril, of course.

- That last bit is important. The church doesn't say there's anything inherently wrong with other paradigms, but requires its own clerical magicians use theurgy. Your average street mage can be a good Christian, but if he decides to devote himself to a religious vocation, he's got to learn theurgy.
- Magister

Miracles are believed to be beyond Awakened man. It is divine intervention and reserved for saints. Christianity toes a fine line regarding the shamanistic path since this belief stigmatizes shamans who believe their power comes directly from God. In Catholic congregations, such shamans are often rejected for presumption—if not outright sacrilege. Reformist Protestant Churches like the Anglicans (UK), Lutherans (Northern Europe) and the Orthodox Church in Eastern Europe, on the other hand, have a liberal policy regarding magic use, not attributing any significant theological or metaphysical connotation to the gift. The issue of conjuring and spirits does raise some issues, but nothing substantial. No matter how fuzzy the distinction between magic and miracle might be in the Sixth World, most of the Christian churches agree it exists.



CATHOLIC ORDER OF ST. SYLVESTER

Though Catholic conservatives opposed the move, the pope changed church doctrine and allowed Catholics to use magic under the tenets of the *Imago Dei* Encyclical. Most notable amongst these magic users is the Order of St. Sylvester, devoted to using magic for good and to protect humanity from evil magic and Awakened threats. The order consists of magically active priests and friars. These magical guardians are also the church's primary exorcists, battling everything from insect spirits to shedim.

- Unfortunately, the Sylvestrines have been infiltrated by the New Knights Templar. Many of the methods of the NKT are in direct violation of the beliefs of the order, so trouble is definitely brewing.
- Roland

- Sylvestrines also host schools that teach magic to those who can't afford formal educations. The most famous of these is in what used to be Turin, Italy.
- Linote

- The Sylvestrines are more tolerant of shamanism than the rest of the Catholics. In Tir na nÓg, they've even gotten chummy with the Celtic druids.
- Lorelei

WESTPHALIAN THEURGISTS

During the early years of the Schism, some groups within the church resisted the new pope's pro-magical and pro-metahuman doctrines. Foremost amongst these was the Westphalian (AGS) clergy. When these ultra-conservative Catholics saw the reversal of doctrine was inevitable, they broke with Rome, expelled many metahumans from their new theological state and banned the use of magic among the nation's population.

They did make an exception, however, for "clerical white magic"—or theurgy—as practiced by the German Catholic Church. They reasoned that the gift "comes from God" and if properly controlled and regulated by those "appropriately trained" and "pure of spirit" then it could become a force for good. This hypocritical reasoning has served them well, and a strong recruitment program has given gifted youths a choice: if you wish to develop your talent, join the clergy or leave the country. Despite its small size, the Holy Church of God and his Saints of Westphalia numbers almost as many magicians as the Catholic Church does in Europe.

ORTHODOX EXARCHS

The Greek Orthodox Church was one of the first to come to terms with the true extent of the Awakening. Almost overnight, Greece became a magical hotspot. Rather than seek conflict, the Orthodox patriarchs sought to understand and adapt to the new realities, something facilitated by the traditional Orthodox openness to mysticism.

Realizing the dangers of the Awakening were very real, the Orthodox clergy collected its magical resources in small groups under the command of regional patriarchs. These

"Exarchs" would fight fire with fire, and like the Sylvestrines, they would target the evil abuse of magic. While they keep a much lower profile than their Catholic counterparts, the Exarchs proved decisive in holding the line in several Eastern European countries against the bug outbreaks in 2056.

- The main training ground for the Exarchs is the dozens of monasteries around Mt. Athos in Greece. The monasteries are also famous for preserving a number of texts and treasures dating back to Roman and Hellenic times, and though they've been sacked numerous times, the Orthodox Church has always seen fit to rebuild them. Makes you wonder if the Vatican is the only one keeping secrets.
- Papadimitris

- The Orthodox Church is less homogenous than the Catholic Church and is divided into several different factions. Normally, the Greek Orthodox are at odds with the Russian and Ukrainian churches over who boasts more influence, but with the latter two focusing their attention on the developing events in Russia, the Greek Patriarch has made a push to bring several smaller patriarchies in the Balkans and Eastern Europe under his control.
- Timora-T

GAME INFORMATION

The new rules and background information on European magic traditions build on material previously presented in the *Shadowrun Third Edition* rulebook and the *Magic in the Shadows (MITS)* sourcebook. Both books are necessary to use many of the new rules. Additional material, including both setting information and a number of advanced options and rules can be found in *Target: Awakened Lands*, *Target: Wastelands* and *State of the Art 2063*.

NEO-PAGAN MAGIC

The magical systems of most neo-pagans abide by the rules for idol followers and shamans (p.16, *MITS*). The accompanying chart may also prove useful as a basic guideline for associating gods and idols. A few exceptions, such as hermetic-oriented Wiccans, use the standard rules for hermetic magic. In the Sixth World, neo-paganism has much wider acceptance and appeal making it a more numerous and mainstream faith. Many magicians are affiliated with neo-pagan magical groups or at least wider neo-pagan movements, of which those mentioned in the fiction are only a brief sample. Gamemasters are encouraged to expand upon these and develop their own.

Gods, Idols, Totems and Other Complications

As noted in the fiction, many European pagan magicians follow a pantheistic belief system that entails a mystic framework for magic and devotion to a particular deity or pantheon. While the rules for this are presented in *Magic in the Shadows*, an additional note should be made regarding the roleplaying aspects of this belief. The connection between the game concept "idol" and the character's belief in a god isn't always as straight-forward as one might suppose.



PAGAN GODS

Wiccan

God/Horned Man/Pan/Manon
Goddess/Diana/The Mother

Celtic

Herne/Cernunnos
Lugos/Lugh/Lieu
Nodens/Nuada/Nudd
Belenos/Balor/Bell
Don/Danu

Norse

Wotan/Odin
Huntsman

Thor

Freya

Loki

Hel/Hela

Heimdall

Njord

Fenrir

Roman/Hellenic

Jupiter/Zeus

Juno/Hera

Neptune/Poseidon

Pluto/Hades

Minerva/Athena

Apollo

Venus/Aphrodite

Diana/Artemis

Ceres/Demeter

Bacchus/Dionysis

Vulcan/Hephaestus

Prometheus

Pan

Vesta/Hestia

Mars/Ares

Cronus/Saturn

Hercules/Heracles

SUGGESTED IDOLS

Horned Man, Wild Huntsman
Great Mother, Moon Maiden

The Horned Man, Wild Huntsman, Dragonslayer
Sky King, Wise Warrior, Dragonslayer
Dark King
Sky Father, Wise Warrior
primeval Great Mother, Lover, female Sea King

Creator, Dark King, Sky Father, Wise Warrior, Wild

Dragonslayer, Wise Warrior

Great Mother, Lover

Adversary, Trickster, Coyote (use description only)
(female) Dark King

Wise Warrior

Sea King, (male) Great Mother

Fenrir (toxic idol)

Sky Father, Wise Warrior, Bacchus

Great Mother, Siren

Sea King

Dark King

female Sky Father, Wise Warrior

Sky Father, Wild Huntsman (without the nature focus)

Lover, Seductress, Siren

Moon Maiden, female Wild Huntsman

Great Mother

Bacchus

Firebringer, Creator

Firebringer

Horned Man

Firebringer

Wise Warrior

Adversary

Dragonslayer

Many European neo-pagans view an entire pantheon as equally important. The pantheistic pagan magician follows the standard rules for pantheistic shamans (p. 16, *MITS*), though he associates the varying advantages or disadvantages granted every lunar cycle with the dominant deity of that celestial period.

Festivals

Neo-pagans associate special mystical significance to certain days of the year when the spirit world is closest to Earth and the ebbs and tides of magic are at their highest. Several different faiths share the celebration of Midsummer's and Midwinter's Solstices and the Spring and Fall Equinoxes. The background count at sacred sites and on ley lines during these symbolic sacred dates is also subject to fluctuations.

At the gamemaster's discretion, the Background Count in question (either generated by the festival/blot itself or by mana fluctuations) may help in initiation rituals. A Background Count of 2 or more decreases the cost of initiation by 1 Karma point. This only applies when the initiate is actively participating in the rituals and belongs to a magical system which places significance on those dates.

Urban Witches (Optional Rule)

In the metaphysics of European witchcraft, spirits of the sky don't possess any true spiritual connection with cities and sprawls. Therefore, urban shamans (p. 16, *MITS*), conjure ancestor spirits (p. 106, *MITS*) in addition to

spirits of man, instead of spirits of the sky. Otherwise they follow standard rules for urban shamans and totems.

WICCA

Wicca is a modern nature-revering pagan religion that melds reconstructed pagan lore with modern spiritualism and hermetic ceremonial magic. Wicca comes in many variants ranging from animists who follow nature totems (and rules for wilderness shamans) to quasi-hermetic mages. Some Wiccans follow the rules for mages, some for shamans. This varies from witch to witch, even within the same coven, as Wicca allows many individual interpretations and revelations. For further guidelines on Wicca and its trappings, refer to p. 26, *MITS*.

Most large Wicca groups combine both hermetic and shamanic magicians, but some focus on hermetic magic (best

An idol represents a set of mystic, symbolic and intellectual ideals that have spiritual significance to the idol follower and thus, in game terms, focus his magic much as a totem would. For the neo-pagan character, this is often seen as direct empowerment by his god. Since idols are archetypal ideals, several gods within the same pantheon might be represented by the same idol, and a particular god (ie. Odin/Wotan) might be worshiped through several different aspects/idols (ie. Bacchus, Dark King, Horned Man, Sky Father, Wild Huntsman and Wise Warrior all fit Odin/Wotan mythology).

Gamemasters should make it clear to the players that "idol follower" is a game term, one which represents a particular aspect of a god or goddess. This means that two gods of the Cult of Odin might have different modifiers to their magic in game terms, but *roleplay* the identical set of basic religious beliefs and rites.



represented by Gardnerian Wiccans) and the Goddess cults often focus on shamanic (idol followers of Great Mother, Moon Maiden). Some Wiccans invoke other gods in their rituals, but treat these as facets of the god and goddess. A minority (such as Celtic Wiccans) are truly shamanic and follow nature, animal and mythical totems.

As befits a tradition that melds many different beliefs and mythological frameworks, Wicca has traces of both shamanic and hermetic practices in many fundamental aspects. One shamanic aspect is the use of sacred groves, circles, shrines, glades, temples and other appropriate natural locations as ritual sites. These function as regular shamanic lodges during rituals, but are normally inert unless the area is a power site or boasts a particular background count. Some Wicca ritual sites may also have permanent hermetic circles too, though each has to be created separately following standard rules. As part of their hermetic heritage, most Wicca covens and circles adopt the use of a grand grimoire—the Book of Shadows—that doubles as a library for hermetic Wiccans (max. Rating 6), acts as a material link to all group members and as a focus for the group's avatar to manifest.

Typical magical gear for Wiccans includes the *athame* (a dagger used for rituals, and quite often as a focus), chalice, sword, wands, pentacle, cauldron and broom. Rituals include singing and dancing, sometimes performed "skyclad" (nude) and usually answering to the cycles of the moon.

Rumors persist of secret Wicca and druidic metamagic that allow them to channel the power of the moon and to conjure strange spirits such as the Wild Hunt and the Morrigan. Their existence and specific abilities are left to the gamemaster. If based on fact, these techniques should be beyond the knowledge of anyone but a select few high-level initiates, and certainly beyond non-devoted shadowrunners. These forces would possess the power level of a totem or an avatar.

Other rumors of Wicca sacrifices and use of blood magic probably result from a misunderstanding of Wicca's ritual respect for nature, whereby nothing can be taken from nature without giving something back (but who knows).

Adventure Seeds

- A Wicca coven's Book of Shadows has been stolen and the thieves are holding for ransom and threatening to destroy it. Sounds like a job for ...
- The Grand Coven finally decides to become politically proactive and begins seeking out AGS politicians it believes will be sympathetic to their interests. The influential Dr. Faustus Society is not too happy with the competition and neither are the conservative Westphalian clerics or the New Templars. Any and all of the sides may resort to deniable assets to get their point across.
- Serpentine Wicca has become clearly popular among covens in the Czech Republic and AGS. Runners might be hired by a number of factions to investigate if there really are ties to any dragons.



WITCHES

Whereas most other magical traditions were re-invented after the Awakening, traditional witches haven't changed much. While it's not common for witches and shadowrunners to cross paths, it does happen, often with interesting results.

Traditional witches follow the general rules for shamans with a few idiosyncrasies that establish them as a unique tradition. Such witches have no totems or idols and as such gain no bonuses or disadvantages. Witches conjure nature spirits as shamans, though they may elect to invoke ancestor spirits rather than spirits of man. Individuals may also be considered urban shamans (p. 16, *MITS*), even though they might not live in a city, but rather in rural villages and townships.

The unassuming style of magic used by a traditional witch has peculiar advantages and limitations. The main drawback is that traditional witches cannot use sorcery as other mages or shamans; instead they are limited to ritual sorcery and a variant of anchored spells. Followers of this tradition possess knowledge of anchoring metamagic (p. 70, *MITS*) from the outset, at the expense of non-ritual sorcery. Hexes are simply normal spells cast on potions, fetishes, trinkets or gear—such items must be handcrafted using the rules for anchoring. Potions and jewelry are the most common items a witch will hex (see the anchoring examples on p. 71, *MITS*) and common trigger conditions include ingesting, crushing underfoot and breaking after being thrown.

Most witches are full magicians, even though they are subject to the limitations of their tradition. Aspected witches may be sorcerers or conjurers per standard rules, or they may choose to be aspected healers or aspected diviners. Aspected healers may cast healing spells (as normal) and conjure spirits of man (or alternatively ancestor spirits) and otherwise follow standard rules for aspected magicians. Aspected diviners are more limited, as they can't use sorcery or conjuring, but possess divination metamagic without requiring initiation. While this is a rare magical expression, expert diviners can be very dangerous foes and useful friends. Several other magic groups also boast aspected diviners, such as the Seers' Guild and the Oracle of Delphos.

Charms

Only witches can create the simple enchantments called charms, or luck charms. An Enchanting (6) Test (no formula needed) is required to charm an appropriate item (which must be hand-crafted). If successful, the enchanter can then invest 1 point of Good Karma into the item. Charms must be freely given by the witch and the recipient is considered to have bonded it. This has no cost.

From then on, the owner (Awakened or mundane), may tap the invested Karma in the charmed item by touching it (with a Simple Action) *exclusively* for the purpose of re-rolling a test. Charms are one-shot foci. The charmed item's aura burns out rendering it inert, making it unable to hold future

Powerful Druidic Sites

Grand Lodges on minor leys	1
Grand Lodges on great leys	2
Warwick Castle	3
Caerleon	3
Callanish	3
Heart of Broceliande forest	3
Stonehenge	4
Lyonesse	4

Typical Background Count

1
2
3
3
3
3
4
4

charms or to be used as foci. Charms are individual and personal, and may only be used one at a time. All charms bonded to an individual (whether on his person or not) also "empty" and burn out *without effect* when one is used. For all other purposes (such as Focus Addiction or Astral Combat), treat charms as a Force 1 focus.

Adventure Seeds

- A runner discovers his recent streak of bad luck is the result of a hex cast on him by a traditional witch. Did he unwittingly cross her? Was she hired by a foe? Or is something more ominous afoot?
- Through a divinatory dream, a traditional witch learns of a conspiracy by a secret society to kill a high-ranking French Bishop linked to the Vatican. She knows some of the conspirators are close aides of his, but not which ones are behind the plot. She needs evidence and she needs to speak to the bishop personally to warn him. The only person she can turn to is an old runner friend who owes her a favor. Things get complicated when the bishop turns out to be the leading French agent of the New Templars and those out to kill him are the Black Lodge.

DRUIDS

Celtic and wild druids are the inheritors of an ancient culture of natural philosophy and elemental nature magic. The vast majority of Celtic druids and all wild druids are varieties of wilderness shamans. While wild druids follow both nature and animal totems appropriate to their local culture (such as Sun, Moon, Oak, Stream, Wildcat, Bear, Eagle, Wolf and Wyrn), Celtic druids follow idols (see the pagan gods and idols table on p. 123 for various possibilities) as well as nature totems representing the divinities, elemental forces and sacred animals of the Celtic pantheon. General guidelines on druidic magic can be found on p. 25, *MITS*, and the following should be considered optional expanded rules.

Druids are naturally adept at the metamagic technique of sensing (p. 110, *T:AL*) and it is often one of the first techniques they pick at initiation. To reflect their natural aptitude, druids get +1 die to any Sensing Test. This awareness of ambient background count (especially when aspected in favor of the

Foci
Charm

Availability
4/48 hours

Cost
1,000¥

Street Index
2

Bonding Cost
0



druid) also allows them greater ease in gathering talismonger materials in the vicinity of their sacred circles. Many druids are also expert herbalists, allowing them to use Herb Lore as a Complementary skill on all Enchanting Tests involving appropriate materials. All herbal materials must be gathered with the consecrated golden sickle carried by all druids.

As long as they are within their sacred circle, druids also have the ability to summon appropriate great form spirits of the appropriate domain, even if they do not possess invoking metamagic.

Like many neo-pagans, druids celebrate four major annual festivals of immense ritual significance: Imbolc, Beltane, Lughnasad and Samhain. Druids often reserve great ritual workings for these festivals (for example, the unleashing of the Wild Ley during the Summer Solstice of 2064), and always reserve initiation rituals and ordeals for those sacred occasions.

Bards

Some followers of druidism, magicians and adepts alike, see themselves as heirs to the bardic tradition of Celtic lore rather than the priestly one. They focus on the bardic

virtues of lorekeeping, storytelling and performance associated with traditional Celtic culture, even if they resort to modern mediums to do so. From Celtic rockers to traditional troubadours, bards are found among most European druidic cultures. The most famous are the Cornish bards in Britain and the Breton troubadours in France. It is not uncommon for such bards and minstrels to form magical groups under the guise of traveling musical or theatre troupes.

In game terms, bards are mainly Celtic-inspired magicians with artistic skills and artist's way adepts, though their troupes and companies normally include mundane musicians, actors and stagehands.

Many of these bards are quite political in their outlook and are connected to various policlubs and movements with social and ecological agendas, using their skills and powers to promote those causes. In England, for instance, some of the best-selling bands of the moment are bards associated with the anti-establishment movement. In Brittany, major festivals during Beltane and Samhain draw many thousands of tourists to see the annual contests between the bards and bands on show.

Adventure Seeds

- The Breton druids of the *Aznevezenti drouizel Breizh* find themselves having to decide whether to side with their Celtic brethren in Britain or with the reformers within the hermetic NDM led by the Duke of Oxford. Their support could have a significant impact on either faction's fortunes. Both factions will be sending representatives to speak before the Breton High Council, but first they need to get out of Britain safely before the Lord Protector's Templars cut their plans short.

- A powerful Celtic circle in Tir na nOg is desecrated with toxic waste and contaminants. It is unlikely the Seelie would do such a thing and the druids boast no other enemies. Deniable assets are the best choice to track down the culprits and discover the reasons behind the ominous desecration.

NORSE PAGANS

Norse pagan magicians follow the rules for shamans. They either devote themselves to the Norse pantheon as a whole (per the rules for pantheistic shamans) or to one god (becoming idol followers of a given aspect of the divinity). Popular sects include the Cults of Odin, Thor, Freya and the Vanir. In most Asatru cults, the Awakened fulfill the roles of priests and advisors. Among the warrior cults, however, the clerics are at least as bloodthirsty as the rank and file and lead by example. For further guidelines on Norse magic, refer to p. 26, *MITs*.

Rune Enchanting

Rune magic applies conditional restrictions (similar to geasa) to foci. Rune enchanting requires more than simply carving Futhark runes into your foci. To use the technique, one must possess the Rune Lore Knowledge skill in addition

to the standard Enchanting skill. This skill teaches the proper way to weave the enchantment, the meaning and function of each rune and how to combine them properly (since the meaning of the runes and function changes when placed in different configurations).

A player who wishes to use rune enchanting must say so before starting on a focus formula (p. 42, *MITS*), as the runic restriction must be incorporated in the formula. Using runic restrictions doubles the base time for creating the formula. After the normal Enchanting Test, the player must succeed in a Rune Lore Test against the Force of the focus. If the test fails, it counts as if the Enchanting Test had failed. Enchanters without Rune Lore cannot use runic restrictions in a focus formula. The base time for the Enchanting Test is also doubled.

Runic restrictions are treated as geasa (p. 31–33, *MITS*) except the foci *only* functions if the restrictions are met. Typical restrictions are: "cannot be exposed to sunlight," "must be soaked in beer," "cannot touch steel," and "must be exposed to moonlight." At the gamemaster's discretion, very specific geasa—"can only be used under a full moon" for instance—may count as two geasa. Each restriction decreases the Enchanting Test target number and both the first and standard bonding Karma cost by one. Runic foci count towards foci addiction normally and may even be taken as a condition of a normal talisman geasa.

Runes may be (and are) used in enchanting without applying runic restrictions, but in these cases they offer no bonus effects.

Berserkers

Berserkers (originally *bearsarks* or bear-skinned) are warriors who boast magical abilities when they enter a combat frenzy (go "berserk"). Most are warrior adepts with a combat frenzy geasa applied to all their magical powers, though some are also magician's way adepts. Berserkers may also be shamanic way adepts as they usually bear the skin of a wild (and fearsome) animal who is their spirit guide. Some powerful berserkers have been known to display a shamanic mask effect when in a combat frenzy. All berserkers may go berserk in the same way as Bear shamans do (p. 163, *SR3*). Certain drugs, BTLs and alcoholic beverages may also be used to induce combat frenzies. Awakened drugs that have additional effects are especially popular among berserkers. Initiated berserkers may go berserk at will through a Willpower (6 – Initiate Grade) Test.

HERMETIC PARADIGMS AND SCHOOLS

Paradigms and the various schools of hermetic lore are designed to introduce more variety to those interested in role-playing mages beyond the traditional "general practitioner"

and provide more depth and color to the rather uniform hermetic path. They also provide interesting and unique plot hooks, particularly for a gamemaster running magic-focused campaigns. Finally, they also serve to underline that even the hermetic view of magic is not monolithic but that the nature of magic remains elusive and mysterious.

In game terms, paradigms follow the rules for hermetic schools on p. 17, *MITS*. Gamemasters may wish to increase the positive and negative modifiers to +2 or –2 when using hermetic circles and libraries of other schools for particularly distinct or opposite schools (such as a Vanguardist using a Hermetic Druid circle). Another option is to extend such negative modifiers to the use of foci, spell formulas and ritual trappings of particularly different schools (such as a Hermetic Druid trying to use a Pythagorean's formula).

Finally, gamemasters may also wish to expand on how these different paradigms affect the local foci and talismaning markets by increasing prices (+20%) and availabilities (+50%) of ritual materials and foci for followers of schools which have a limited local presence. Note that most academically trained mages in North America follow the Renewed Hermeticism paradigm, though Unified Magic Theory is gaining popularity at MIT&T. Several schools may boast these additional modifiers:

Hermetic Druidism: Benefit from the same advantages as Celtic and wild druids at sacred circles and during the four major festival dates; otherwise treat as standard hermetics.

Reformed Ritualism: Ritualists receive +1 die for all ritual magic Sorcery Tests, but a –1 die for all other Spellcasting.

Avant-Garde Thaumaturgy: The empiric Vanguardists have a flare for developing new spells and get +2 dice for Spell Design Tests when creating an entirely new formula (though not for a variant of a published spell). Their individualistic approach means they do not work well in groups and suffer a –1 die modifier to all group ritual magic Sorcery Tests.

Unified Magic Theory: Groundbreaking techniques allow advanced UMT initiates (Grade 3 or higher) to change their Conjuring orientation from elementals to nature spirits (or back), instead of acquiring a new metamagic technique at initiation. The mage doing this, however, is then unable to conjure the type of spirits he previously did. UMTs do not suffer penalties for using the tools and trappings of other schools or traditions (including shamans, houngan and wujen), but do not get any positive modifiers for using their own tools and trappings either.

Concordance Alchemists: Alchemists gain +2 dice for Enchanting Tests, but to understand anything of alchemical theory (and thus be an alchemist) one needs to have both Chemistry and Physics Knowledge skills at a minimum rating of 3.

Pythagoreans: Only trained Pythagoreans or mages with a Math Knowledge skill of 4 or greater may use or Interpret Pythagorean spell formulas and magic circles.

CULTURE SHOCK



The entertainment, culture and leisure section I put together for last year's State of the Art folio was wildly popular. The developments we need to watch to keep our edge as shadowrunners aren't always taking place in corporate boardrooms or top-secret labs: quite often they're happening right in front of us, on the street or on the trid. I've sampled from a variety of sources for this year's collection, some mainstream and some not. As always, feel free to pipe in, especially if you have any personal anecdotes.

• Captain Chaos

Transmitted: 20 December 2063 at 16:59:58 (PST)

ORXPLOITATION

by the KA-POW! KA-POW! team

Hoi shadowteens! Welcome to a special edition of KA-POW! KA-POW! Strap on your seatbelt and get ready, we are bringing you a jam-packed report about the latest and greatest revolution that's hitting the 'plex!

POWER TO THE PEOPLE, CHUMMER

They used to be the ugly ducklings of music, but not anymore. You won't see any of them wearing Vashon Island suits or dishing out la-di-dah rhymes in Sperethiel (yawn) ... but they have tusks, guitars and attitude—*lots* of it! Goblin rockers are ruling the music world, with "orxploitation" as their banner.

Sure, you might have heard the term on RockNet and countless other trid channels in the 'plex, but what is orxploitation? To answer that, we need to go waaay back in history ... 2057 to be precise, right after President Dunkelzahn was killed and his will unveiled. Amid all the riches and relics doled out to the famous and infamous, nobody seemed to notice two nobodies who claimed two obscure but important inheritances.

• "Waaay back?" But that's only six years ago!

• Histobuff





- Just remember who this tabloid is aimed at: hyped up teens with an attention span of less than 30 seconds. Not that some runners are any better of course ...
- Socio Pat

To Robert Page, I leave my copy of an ancient text that proves elves are not the only race to possess a unique language. Take pride in your heritage and continue to promote the rights of your people, for the orks have always fought to rise above the position in which others would keep them. May this document aid your struggle up from below.

To Maureen Williams, I leave the trust fund at Silicon Valley Virtual Bank, account 0456 967 0145 8620, for the purpose of establishing a free school in Orkland.

You're probably wondering what these two people have to do with music, right? Pretty much nothing: the first one was a respected civil rights activist in San Francisco, while the later was a UCLA faculty member.

- God, I love politically correct media. Page belonged to the October 25 Alliance, the metahuman group trying to turn Tokyo-by-the-Bay into good ol' San Francisco once again. Williams had a lackluster career until Dunkelzahn showered her with nuyen. Seems the wyrm knew how to inspire her.
- People Watcher

So here was Ms. Williams, with a chunk of Dunkie's money and a mission. Faster than you could say "goodbye City of Angels," she jumped out of LA and into San Fran, waving her almighty Wand of Nuyen to create the Orkland Community Center (OCC).

- That almost sounds as fantastic as this news actually was. The Japanacops that ran the Bay Area were dead opposed to the project, convinced (correctly) that the OCC would become a spawning ground for the pro-meta resistance. But Williams either had enough money to make some serious bribes and/or she received approval with the help of some (gaspl) illegal activities. Either way, the OCC was founded.
- Bay Jewel

• That's the story, but not everyone's buying it. Some people think that the Japanacops only approved it after Maureen made some secret agreements—most likely aiding them to spy on dissidents there. Once it was running, Williams worked hard to keep the radicals from organizing there too much, saying that she wanted the focus to be on improving the ork community rather than fighting the Japanese. Some of us still think she may have been selling us out—when Salto took over, some top October 25 Alliance people who were involved with the OCC disappeared.

- Partisan

- Bulldrek. There's no doubt the Japanese were spying on the OCC, but Williams wasn't working with them. If she was really so anti-radical, then why did she allow the MPA to keep a stash of Kalashnikovs hidden in the basement?
- Chompsky

First on her hiring list was Page, who had the sole task of translating the Rosetta-like book the dragon had left him.

- What's a Rosetta?
- Curious George

- The original "Rosetta Stone" was a stone tablet with the same text in three different languages: Demotic, Greek and ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics. It was a breakthrough for archeologists as it allowed them to decipher hieroglyphics for the first time. In Page's case, Dunkelzahn left him a huge tome with metallic pages containing the same text in Sperethiel and an unidentified language presumed to be an ork tongue.
- Champollion

- I could give a frag about ancient languages, real or not. How much is it worth?
- 9-Finger Steve

- If it's for real, as it seemingly is, then it's priceless. I heard that Page refused an eight-digit offer from a private collector, who then sent a team to "convince" him. Only one came back from Orkland to tell his boss the answer was still "no."
- Aegls

With a team of Sperethiel translators and linguistic experts provided by the Draco Foundation, Page was able to analyze and decode the text, publishing his initial findings in 2060. *The Or'zet Codex*, as he called it, established the basics of an ork language and spread through academic and social networks.

- Draco's help didn't come cheap. Page and Williams had to give them privileged access to certain parts of the book. Yes, I'd also give my right cyberarm to know what's in those pages.
- Lexicon

- I can't believe you all are buying into this drek. There is no "ancient ork language." What nonsense! This is nothing more than a scam perpetrated by Page and his Draco accomplices, a manufactured language like Esperanto or Klingon. It's a shallow attempt to give orks some sort of mythic lineage and racial pride, just like the elven snobs have pulled in Tlr Tairnglre. Next thing you know they'll be telling us that "ancient ork warriors" used to ride dinosaurs into battle. And then we'll hear how humans have always been keeping the orks down, treating 'em like second-class citizens. Bull. Fraggin. Drek.
- Buzz



• Look, the Codex has been verified by academics from all over the world. Though Page adapted some vocabulary to fill in the blanks, the rest seems pretty legit. Heck, even Ebran the 'ragglin' Scribe vouched for his work.

• Lexicon

• Well, what did you expect? The dandelion eaters also need to justify their invention.

• Buzz

• Whoops, looks like someone just set the Tacoma Humanis Hall on fire. What a shame. Time for you to buzz off and join your racist buddies, I think.

• Antifa

• While there are certainly conspiracies to contemplate, this isn't one of them. The ork language is real, and there will be many other hints of the lost history of orks and other races to come. Just keep in mind that some buried history is better left undisturbed.

• Wordsmyth

• Go ahead, feed his paranoia.

• Orange Queen

The OCC started teaching Or'zet in 2061, but its efforts came to a halt when General Saito crashed the party in San Francisco. The Codex project was publicly condemned by Saito's regime as a scam, and staff working on the Or'zet project were jailed for "conspiracy to commit fraud" and intentionally deceiving investors and public officials. All work related to the project was confiscated and publicly destroyed.

• More accurately, Saito's goons rounded up all the researchers who hadn't gone underground yet and jailed them for "disseminating enemy propaganda." They even held an old-fashioned book burning (well, chip and e-paper burning) where they destroyed all the work they had seized.

• Chompsky

• Not that it was a surprise. The MPA was already starting to use Or'zet as a clan-

SAMPLE OR'ZET VOCABULARY AND STREET SLANG

Or'zet Term

Translation

buunda

interj. Expletive, often accompanied by an obscene gesture to show contempt for the recipient. "She gave her boss the buunda!"

cerri

n. Sibling. Or'zet has no separate words to distinguish brother and sister. Slang: A chummer, especially an ork or troll gang member.

djoto

n. Life, literally "the way of life." Slang: SINless, a life of crime.

drundeah

n. Execution. Slang: To murder someone.

egrand

n. Protector. Slang: Crime lord, gang boss.

egrand'rohodo

Slang: A pimp or a girlfriend's parents.

ereth

n. Home.

ereth'cerri

Slang: Ghetto or turf.

eth

n. Group. Slang: Gang.

eunabo

adj. Best pick of the lot. Slang: Sexually desirable.

fahd

n. Sacrifice. Slang: A personal sacrifice for a chummer. "He gave it up for me, man, he threw down a fahd and told the Star it was his gun."

glok

n. Runner. Slang: Shadowrunner.

grumoge

v. To fight. Slang: A brawl. Usually screamed before starting one by punching someone's face or kicking his family jewels.

hez

n. Tusk. Slang: An ork's courage, nerve and sexual prowess. "Check out the hez on that one!"

hurlg

n. Alcohol. Slang: Booze.

norgoz

n. Weapon. Slang: Gun.

quaalz

n. Idiocy, as in "full of quaalz". Slang: The police.

rohodo

n. Sex.

skraa

interj. Greeting shout.

tharon

adj. Dead. Slang: Corporate.

turgma

n. Traitor. Slang: Snitch.

ujnori

n. Non-orks.

vrukart

(inf) n. Boyfriend.

vruken

(inf) n. Girlfriend.

vut

n.(vul.) Drek. Used as an expletive.

wejoto

n. "Against the way." Slang: An ork rights activist.

yerz

n. Money. Slang: Someone's bribe or cut. "Vut! The Spikes' yerz'eth is gonna ruin me!"

zakhan

n. An enemy.

[For a full download, access ORK-CODEX-4-U on the KA-POW! KA-POW! node. Only 10¥ for the text edition, Shadowteens!]

• Many modern words were adapted to fit an ork's pronunciation. Curiously enough, Or'zet and Sperethiel seem to share a few traits here and there, especially when it comes to non-modern words. Maybe there's a common root?

• Alden

• Root, tree and fruit.

• Script Diver



destine communications code, so the Imples were just trying to nip that in the bud.

- Windtalker

- The Protectorate keeps a substantial reward for any information that leads to the capture of these terrorist instructors. For additional information, please contact the nearest Marine officer.

- Hatamoto

- What about Page? He's probably worth his weight in gold.

- Manhunter

- Page and the original book have been MIA since Saito's coup—not even his friends in the People's University know his whereabouts. There are plenty of rumors though: from hiding with some Big Sur pirates to Lofwyr snatching him for a secret project and everything in between. I guess someday we'll be hearing stories about him sharing a drink with Elvis in Las Vegas, or relaxing in the starship with Juan Atzacotzalco.

- Groucho Marxist

The Protectorate's crackdown, however, came just a little too late. Page and friends had already programmed the first Linguasoftware for Or'zet, and they released this and other Or'zet-related material online, where it quickly circulated through various underground Matrix nodes. Within a few months, MetaErgonomics released the first Or'zet linguasoft chip through its worldwide distribution channels. Though incomplete and condemned by many pundits and even some scientists as a fabricated language, Or'zet was an instant hit among young orks!

- And almost immediately they began garbling it with their own unique interpretations and slang.

- Tuskadero

TONEDeAF UJNORT

Though ork rights activists were quick to pick up on Or'zet, goblin rockers beat them to the punch. Almost overnight, Or'zet began to pop up in songs, mixing politically charged lyrics with a strong sense of pride. These songs were instant hits among the ork youth fan base who were excited to see Or'zet used in media. The ork musicians using or'zet had a clear political message about the discrimination orks face on a daily basis, and their *cause célèbre* was the clampdown on Or'zet's birthplace: Orkland, California.

"We had to do something," say the members of Riot Squad. "this breeder in California doesn't just want to lock us in ghettos, he's out to exterminate us, plain and simple. To me, the crackdown on Or'zet is just the beginning of a cultural genocide. We have to stand up for ourselves, because the suits in Washington are too comfy in their seats to do anything." Tough words from the kings of alternative music, indeed!

- Cultural genocide? Orks have no culture of their own, no matter how hard they pretend to. They're as ethnically divided as humans are. Next thing you know, though, the corps will be selling us "ancient ork secrets" in the guise of laundry detergent, hot sauce and booze.

- Hood

It wasn't long before the entertainment industry smelled a potential new market. Early this year, well known ork artist CrimeTime shocked his fan by scrapping his Eurotour and releasing *Djoto*, the very first album to be mostly in Or'zet. *Djoto* combined the mandatory political message and CrimeTime's trademark carefree outcast attitude.

- Don't even buy for a nanosecond all that PR drek about CrimeTime weeping for his poor CalFree carri. The album is just a carefully designed commercial record aimed at the ork market. Besides, the language isn't even pure—there's plenty of bastardized cityspeak jargon filling in the blanks

- Character Assassin

Pay attention, shadowteens, because here comes the funny. You see, CrimeTime's latest and most infamous squeeze is none other than Tiffany Brackhaven. Now, little Tiffany happens to be the rebellious granddaughter of Karl Brackhaven, leader of the Humanis Policlub. Needless to say, Grandpa Karl has become something of a laughingstock in the late night shows.

- Then why didn't he ice the frog? All it takes is an overdose.

- Warthog

- I suspect that has something to do with CrimeTime's Vory friends.

- Argent

When CrimeTime released his new album, Brackhaven made his move through Humanis' media hound, the Legion of LICAS Decency (we here at KA-POW! KA-POW! love to hate the LOUD, their 2057 lawsuit still fresh in our minds). The LOUD launched a vicious smear campaign against the ork artist. The plan seemed foolproof ...

- Pinky, are you pondering what I'm pondering?

- Bung

... And it was a spectacular failure. The attempt to ruin CrimeTime's career left him with a reputation as a polemic, charismatic street mobster. Almost overnight, *Djoto* became the best selling album ever and "orkploitation" was born.

- MWAHAHA! *Ahem* Sorry, chummers, my fault. Move along, move along ... there's nothing to see here but a Humanis lynch mob crying like a bunch of little girls.

- Bull

- I can't believe the LOUD didn't see it coming. Controversy sells, especially when attacked by self-proclaimed guardians of public decency. What were they thinking?
- Socio Pat

[Want some Djoto songs? Access *ORK-MUSIC-NOW* on the *KA-POW! KA-POW!* node. Just 2¢ a piece, Shadowteens!]

TUSKADELIC

Suddenly, the music industry realized it had found a gold mine and rushed to profit from it. In no time, tusker rock entered mainstream culture, thanks to novahot stars like sensuous Orxanne, no-nonsense Tusk Master, party boy MC Bacchus and the perennial troll heavies, Darwin's Bastards.

- The market's flooded with cheap clones and crappy songs, and there's more every day. The gullible masses buy everything the corps throw at them. Just look at this year's charts: Delrdre is the lone non-ork or troll act in the Top 10, and only because of her rumored affair with Aztechnology's Domingo Ramos boosted her sales.

• Teddy X

- The Ork Boom has been so huge and fast that the music labels are hiring anyone who can sing in Or'zet. Drek, rumor is that MegaMedia even developed a linguasoft specifically oriented for singing, rapping and rhyming in Or'zet that they're only using for in-house artists who want to break into the market.

• DJ Skraa

- Tusker rockers are a carefully protected commodity nowadays, which means extractions galore. Last week it was Aurica/Pollux's turn, when Genghis Fang joined Hez Music's payroll.

• Prime Runner

- That's not the only reason for Hez Music to have the hottest artists in town. CrimeTime works for them and uses his connections to find the real talent—who wet themselves at the mere thought of being produced by The Man himself.

• Sonic

- Something this article doesn't mention is that producers hand out money for initial album and lifestyle costs (when in Rome do as the Romans do), so artists start heavily indebted from square one and quickly become the company's wage slave. It's a golden birdcage, but a birdcage nonetheless.

• Idoru

The public's reaction has been a commercial frenzy of unsuspected proportions. Fans like to mimic their idols, but this time the craze isn't limited to that: plastic surgeons have reported an explosive increase in tusk implantations. Like an elf fan in Bellevue told us, "tusks are so kewl, my *vruken* loves them!"

- I heard Grandpa Karl fainted when he saw Tiffany's new look ... w00t!
- I33t Decker

- Ork posers ... *Sigh* I guess we'd eventually come to that.
- Kham

- Verily! Sperethiel is so passé, didn't you know?
- Dodger

But what do orks and trolls think about this phenomenon? Some, like Howard Pratt, a member of the Ork Rights Committee (ORC), have a negative opinion: "This is a typical example of humans abusing us for their own gain," he blasted. "The music industry doesn't think about our plight, only its bottom line. And the club kid ork posers are even worse. They see us like a toy: funny to play with, but something you can put away at the end of the day."

"I've heard some concerns about the image we're giving of our people" countered Hez Music's President Joe Radek, "but the truth is that money isn't the only thing flowing into the community. Take a walk through the poorest ork neighborhoods and you'll see that our artists have given them a renewed sense of pride."

- Pride doesn't help when you're starving to death.
- Jasper

- Wait a sec—Joe Radek? That name sounds familiar, give me some time to find out why.

• X-Star

Others, like Kate Grant, were cautious, though they welcomed the new interest in orks. "We at Mothers of Metahumans have always struggled to improve our children's situation. I think it's too early to predict the political fallout, but give or take a few years we might be seeing a change. There's potential in this movement, but also risks."

- I think one measurement of this fad's life expectancy is looking at how many people are actually learning Or'zet, versus just slotting it on chip. Sadly, most folks are taking the instant gratification route, which is also the path of least longevity.
- No Chummer Left Behind

Change might be slow in politics, but it's already happening in the entertainment industry. Amalgamated Studios has confirmed that the next Neil the Ork Barbarian flick will feature none other than CrimeTime. Knowing our Man of the Year's style, we just can't wait for it! Stay tuned, shadowteens!

- Amalgamated has built a huge set in Puebla, with thousands of extras as horse-riders or something like that. The Atlantean Foundation is helping with the historical realism. It's going to be one of the most profitable movies ever—or the biggest flop in history.

• Ancient History



SATURDAY NIGHT WAR

- Cap, I got this memo from a friend at Lone Star Seattle. There might be more to this than we thought ...
- X-Star

//Begin Attached File//

To: [deleted]@lsss.seattle.net

From: [deleted]@lsss.seattle.net

Bill,

I know you're busy with that serial killer you mentioned last week, but we're having serious problems with the music industry here. I wish our only worries were the fights between goblin rock fans and the racist fringe, or the Humanis and LOUD pickets outside concerts turning uglier than usual. Truth is, we'd been expecting violence from day one, we just didn't think it would be this bad.

The rivalries between ork and non-ork artists are spiraling out of control, frequently ending up in violence. What's worse, many musicians have gang connections and they're calling in for reinforcements. Last week was a perfect example of what could be on the way. After days of petty bickering in the media and nightclubs, Tusk Master's buddies at the Rusted Stiletto almost killed the drummer of Darwin's Bastards in a firefight. Two days later, the Spikes leveled Tusk Master's favorite hangout. Net result? 11 dead, 42 injured.

We've talked with the rockers' managers to no avail—they don't give a frag about the situation. In fact, we're investigating an executive from Mitsuhama Music for hiring shadowrunners to fuel trouble between two of his own label's musicians. Yes, it sounds insane, I know, but that's why I'm a cop, not an agent.

- It's not insane, it makes perfect business sense. There's nothing like a tragic death to pump up sales. Hell, they can even sell a posthumous deluxe special edition every year, at three times the normal price.
- Tupac

• Has anyone noticed how some media outfits that originally ridiculed or downplayed Or'zet music had a drastic about face in the past few months? I'm talking about corps like MCT Music, the same ones that reviled or ignored CrimeTime and other pioneers at first. Now they're glorifying the genre so badly that you'd think the entire board of directors had Goblinized.

- Media Watcher

- Orxploitation is profitable and that's all she wrote.
- Reality Czech

• True, but I think Media Watcher has a point. They're not focusing on the music, but on the "lifestyle" of these artists: get-rich-quick attitudes, crime, violence, hedonism. The kids in the slums are being bombarded with the notion that all those things are right. I have a bad feeling about this ...

- Mom on the Run

- Isn't everyone reading this trying to get rich through crime and violence?
- Cereal Killer

On top of this, Organized Crime has warned us that the industry is being infiltrated by the Vory v Zakone through beachheads like Hez Music. This company is owned by two Russian nationals: Josif "Joe" Radek and Sergei Malenkin. Radek has long been a big name in the West Coast Vory, while Malenkin has been tentatively connected with a group of guns for hire. We don't have much more information on their operations yet, but we are proceeding with caution.

- That's why I remembered Radek, he's one of the scariest mobsters I've seen—smart, slick and charming, but with a diamond sharp mind and heart of pure ice. And Malenkin is a Russian expatriate connected to Chimera, those drek-hot KGB assassins gone freelance. Personally, the mere idea of the Vory and Chimera teaming up is enough to give me nightmares.

- X-Star

- Word is that Malenkin's no longer the contact point for Chimera—he's retired, pursuing (semi-)legit biz.
- Kosak

- That's not the kind of job you just retire from. You can be sure he still has his contacts with the group. Makes you wonder who's handling things for Chimera now.
- Argent

- What the frag is CrimeTime doing with this people?
- Tuskadero

- Originally, it was the Vory who were feeding his chip habit. Now things have changed, but my guess is that the poor fragger is nothing more than a moneymaking puppet for the Russkies.
- SPD

OrgCrime suspects they've been using concerts for money laundering and BTL traffic, but there might be more. It seems that some fans disappear after attending a concert or taking part of an artist party, only to resurface in prostitution and pornography rings. It won't be long before the other syndicates try to get themselves a piece of the pie, a move that could cause a dramatic escalation in violence.

- The Vory is cutting into turf dominated by other syndicates here (The Yaks in Seattle and the Mob in LA). Expect someone to send them a big, bloody warning sometime soon.
- Cottonmouth

- Don't forget Karl Brackhaven. He's so obsessed with revenge that he's set Humanis on a collision course with the Vory. Word is that he might try to abduct Tiffany to deprogram her at a rehab clinic in Renton, deep within Humanis



territory. Meanwhile, the LOUD is still trying to sink careers and the more militant cells are trying a more direct approach.

- Puget Deb

- Many stars are hiring runners as protection, following a nasty rumor about untrustworthy corporate bodyguards. That's what saved Orxanne from making the obituaries while touring Europe.

- Synner

- Many of those killed so far were the ones refusing to follow the corporate script, the ones who still remembered what this was all about. I don't know who's behind these hits—they tell me they're far too sophisticated for Humanis thugs. Mark my words, though: someone is trying to silence us.

- Orxanne

- Music is the messenger no one can silence. Never forget that.

- Maria

CORP VOGUE

by Spiderhawk

I have this chummer, a shadowrunner, I won't give his name because what I'm about to tell you could seriously frag up his reputation. He was hired to do pre-extraction surveillance on a Shiawase employee. The usual: get close to him, figure out the guy's routine. He got all dressed up in his best *Victory* jumpsuit and headed into the arcology to have a look

around. It was easy to spot the extractee, the guy ran on a timer. Every day at 1:15 sharp he adjourned for a late lunch in the atrium, just as it cleared out of high school kids scurrying back to class. Well, on this day, a handful of high school toughs decided to give my chummer some static on their way back to class. It was the jumpsuit that set them in motion apparently. They marked him from the moment he walked in the door but had hesitated since they didn't know whether he was being deliberately disrespectful by wearing a rival corp's gear or simply didn't know the rules. It turns out that he really didn't know the rules, but it was too late to correct the mistake; the kids blew his cover. When they started razzing him, the extractee got a good look at who he was. There was no chance of continuing surveillance after that. A whole run ruined just because my friend wore the wrong jumpsuit.

- Brand name and logo recognition has always been common among the fashionistas and glitterati of high society, but now a new consciousness of certain clothiers' corporate affiliations is developing among certain corporate circles. Among the upper ranks of certain megacorps (particularly Japanacorp), it is increasingly becoming passé or even disloyal to not sport threads produced by one of the corp's subsidiaries—or even worse, to wear a rival corp's fashions. Attending a meeting with S-K execs in a Zoë suite, for example, is akin to slapping them in the face (Zoë is close to the Graf-Belolt family, who have an unfriendly history with Lowfyrr).



This label consciousness is now spreading among corporate youth as well—only this time, certain brands are the equivalent of gang colors. Wearing ME duds (MetaErgonomics, a Yamatetsu subsidiary) onto Renraku turf can get you hassled or worse.

- Black Knight

- Not everyone in the corps play the clothing game. Plenty of suits either don't care, are open-minded or simply don't pay attention to fashion faux pas. Increasingly, however, some corps are pushing corporate pride and awareness, and it's becoming clear that if you want to climb the ladder, you'll have to play the game.

- Trickle-down

- Sometimes the bias is more based on culture than corp. Consistently wearing the latest Japanese fashions will get you some odd looks in Wuxing's halls, while the Pueblo urban-tribal styles are frowned upon in Aztechnology offices.

- JongWK

CHILDREN OF THE CORPORATION

The fraggers that ruined my friend's day were part of a corp "gang" (known as "bratpacks" to other gangers), a common type of teen corp kid rebellion. I know, because I used to be in one during my corp days. Kids who go to corporate schools get pumped so full of corp pride you'd think it was in the drinking water (actually, it probably is). When you're on the inside, you're taught history through the lens of your company's achievements. You grow up believing that your megacorp is the center of the universe. From a very young age, they groom you to be a cog. You're molded to think, live and dress in a certain way. And the entire time you're told that if you work hard, devote yourself to the corp and do as you're told, you will be rewarded greatly.

Corp gangs are like hooligans or frat boys, all caught up in corp nationalism and pride. If someone comes along acting contrary to their corp's way of things, then these kids react. They tighten ranks and suddenly everyone who isn't with them better start thinking about getting out of the way.

My first corp gang experience took place in elementary school. Everyone in the school knew that this one kid's parents had been negotiating to transfer to another corporation. By default, their son, my classmate, was turned into a pariah. No one sat with him at lunch. He was always the last one picked in sports. But that wasn't enough to get the message across. Some of the older kids started talking about how that one kid made us all look bad. So they spread the word that

it was time to take "corporate action." The word came down the student pipeline that at a specified time and place everyone who still believed in the corp was to come together and show this poor kid why switching sides was a bad idea. I didn't even know most of the kids who showed up that day, but we all had one goal on our minds. We beat the kid badly enough to require corrective surgery, but not one of us was ever disciplined for our actions.

- No one ever gets in trouble, so long as the "message" that is sent doesn't result in death. The gangs are organized so that the kids handing out the beatings usually don't even know each other or the person getting beat; it's a coordinated, anonymous corporate effort to weed out the inferior members of the herd. In Asia, they've been at this kind of brainwashing so long that it has bled into the non-corporate youth. Here we have corporate posers who get together in order to throw their weight around in the name of a corporation they're really not a part of. They can be worse than the actual corp kids because there is no corporate authority to hold them in check.

- Death Angel

SAMPLE CLOTHIERS CORP AFFILIATIONS

Clothing Line
Beaux Retail
Bodyline
Europa
ME, MetaL
Très Chic Cosmetics
Victory
Wellington Bros.

Corp Affiliation
Cross Applied Technologies
Spinrad Industries
Renraku
Yamatetsu
Aztechnology
Ares
Shiawase

- Bratpacks will start trouble over anything viewed as a slight to their corp. Anything from dating a girl from the wrong corp to having a new trid set from a competitor could result in violence. It's become dangerous to attend private high school sporting events because you never know when a bunch of goons from one corp are going to decide that they want to recreate the Desert Wars right there in the bleachers.

- Blinky

- Funny you should mention the Desert Wars, because they have a lot to do with corporate jingoism. A lot of these brat-pack kids want to grow up and serve in the corporate military in order to be like their corp's Desert Wars idols. This way the corp even gains the loyalty of kids who aren't suit material, who are on the fast track to being janitors and grunts.

- Corp Watcher

- Some of these corp gangs have been around long enough that they're actually turning into mature criminal projects. Not only do they supply the bored and rebellious corp kids with BTLs, drugs and other corp contraband, but they're graduating towards gambling, prostitution and other rackets.

- Cosmo



BUYING YOUR LOYALTY

The corp gang phenomenon is just one example of how the megacorps mold the minds of their subjects. These days, the megacorps employ all sorts of tricks to buy their employee-citizens' loyalties and keep them in line. One common tactic is the establishment of reward programs, where citizens who perform well or go out of their way to serve their corp are rewarded with vacation time, increased housing privileges, credit with company stores and so on. A lot of corps have taken this a step further, however, initiating point-based incentive programs. If you're a Shiawase citizen, for example, you'll be awarded points every time you do something positive for the corp: buy Shiawase stock, finish a project before deadline or watch a requisite amount of corp programming on the trid. The points accumulate and serve as a sort of status system within the corp. If your points are high enough, you may be eligible for certain discounts or benefits programs. If your points are higher than another employee, then you'll beat him out to get that interoffice job transfer. When you reach a certain threshold of points for the first time, you may be surprised with an invite to a private dinner with some corporate nobility (all trideod of course, for broadcasting as corp propaganda later).

- When I was coming up in Yamatetsu, we used to earn points by wearing clothing with the corporate logo on it. Now it's common to see young executives sporting company tattoos because of the points it'll score with the brass.
- Long Tooth

- Heck, when I was in the Star, I knew a captain who handed out extra points to officers that roughed up metas.
- X-Star

- That's where these systems get abused. I've been party to several hastily negotiated bargains where someone low in the corporation will carry out a secret assignment for someone higher up in exchange for the promise of points. It usually ends up involving shadowrunners.
- Corp Watcher

- Sometimes it doesn't matter how many points you rack up, you're still going to get overlooked. Try being a meta in a Japanacorp. Your SIN might also matter. Each country and megacorp has its own range of SINs to issue to its citizens, so the SIN you get at birth indicates which corporate "parent" you have. If your SIN starts with 873, for example, that means you were born as a Yamatetsu citizen. That number follows you from birth to death, unless you get a new SIN or change your identity. So if a wageslave has a SIN that says he's been a corporate citizen from the day he was born, then he's more likely to get better marks at his monthly review than a guy who's fresh off the street. That's the way megacorp trust works. You're born there, you stay there and they reward you. Life is even difficult if you're born into one mega and go to

work for another. Sure, you may have switched over to Shiawase for now, but the mentality there will never fully accept someone who's SIN prefix screams Renraku—you can never really trust someone who has already turned away from a corporation once before.

- Expatriate

Points can be lost as easily as they are gained. In the system you are taught to believe that company policy is gospel. If you go against policy, you'll lose points for yourself and, depending on the severity of the incident, possibly for family and friends as well. Before I was recruited by special ops, I was given a shot to earn big points by an exec I met. He asked me to ruin a date between two co-workers of his. I arranged for both meals to be spiked with a laxative. The date was over before the main course. Normally that kind of incident would have made the co-workers look bad, but I hadn't done my homework. It turned out that they weren't co-workers at all. She was the daughter of a prominent VP from another division. He was her fiancé. The two were able to trace the sabotage back to me and I went from promising young student to hopeless reject in a day. Anyone who continued to be around me risked losing points by association. It got so bad that I tried to kill myself. Fortunately Crashcart found me before I finished myself off.

- It's likely that Spiderhawk's disgrace was a setup from the beginning. The exec who hired her used the promise of points to take her down a few notches.
- Fallen Angel

- Sometimes the fraggers that run these points programs will intentionally create a situation where you lose a large portion of the points you worked hard for, as a test of your company loyalty. Sometimes they'll do this right before handing you an important promotion or assignment, to make sure you have what it takes. And if you don't have what it takes, if you fall apart and commit seppuku—well, there's always someone else to take the job.
- Renraku Fox

- The situation is worse in regards to those who show magical aptitude. Magic is an asset to any organization and when they have the opportunity to make you believe that your life should be dedicated to the preservation of that organization, then they'll do whatever is necessary to make it happen.
- Après Glow

- Corps do what they have to do in order to keep their assets in place. They don't have to worry about jumping ship with all your research secrets or that deltaware they crammed in your head if they own your heart and soul. If you believe in what your corporation is doing, then you're less likely to want to leave. I've handled plenty of unwilling extractions where the person I was pulling out actually fought to stay. And if



wasn't because they were afraid of what the corp would do—it was that they were afraid of what the corp would do without them.

- Argent

OTHER LEASHES

Naturally, corp gangs and reward programs are just the tip of the iceberg. The megacorps use plenty of other tactics to keep their citizens in line. For example, many corporations encourage their employees to have families. Not only does this help establish a corporate populace that will have been raised under the corp's tutelage and care, but families are also a sign of a stable employee—i.e., person; one who isn't going to run off in pursuit of better employment. After all, families serve as excellent hostages and emotional leverage if the employee is thinking of leaving or needs to be kept in line.

- Works both ways. Yakashima, Tanamyre and many other corps encourage their employees to live a detached "plug-in" lifestyle. It helps the companies shuffle their employees around, moving them to where they're needed, without digging up too many roots. Telestrian takes it even further by encouraging temporary marriages. The corporation arranges for new couples to take in foster children from the streets of Portland to create that illusion of a family, only to break them all apart and send them on their separate ways months later when their skills are needed elsewhere.

- Wylthlen

- Telestrian learned its tricks from Hisato-Turner. The homeless children they rescue look like angels plastered all over propaganda ads that show how valuable the corporation is to the community. In reality, the kids are being recruited as part of the corporate machine. They're encouraged to join into the social networks established by the corp, and as adults usually end up as part of internal snitch groups reporting aberrant behavior among their colleagues. Some grow up to become counselors charged with operating allegedly "impartial" counseling services that in reality scan the ranks for troubled employees.

- Corp Watcher

- The host couples themselves are often married through cult-like devotional churches wholly sponsored by the corporation. The cults operate on a pyramid philosophy, requiring certain trials such as marriage, psychological counseling and evaluations in order to advance higher in the ranks. No matter how long you remain in the cult you never reach the top of the pyramid to unlock those life altering secrets you were promised when you started at the bottom. By then you've been so conditioned by the system that the end destination doesn't matter; it's the endless journey to get there.

- Fanatic

Trideo is another overlooked control mechanism. By controlling what's on the trid corporations are really keeping corp citizens as sheltered as possible from the real world and indoctrinating them with corp jingoism and a corp-skewed version of reality. Visit Tsimshian sometime, there's nothing that hits the airwaves out there without MCT saying it's ok first. I bought into every bit of drivel my corp shoved at me. After twenty-seven years it finally took being left for dead in order to stop believing in what they had to say.

- Making your own trid programming and running multiple trid stations can be quite taxing. Certain lower level corps specialize at editing and filtering programming for their peers and the big boys. The biggest name in this biz is the Horizon Group, a bunch of nova-hot PR and media pros.

- Mary Meme

LINK CLUBS

by Connie Connoisseur

OK, Captain Chaos asked me to look into the club scene and I was like, "What for?" I mean club culture is getting so old these days. There's nothing to add because nobody wants to try anything new. Then I heard about a place called Link. The buzz for the place was huge. I hadn't given it much thought because the buzz for all new club openings is huge. If it isn't, then you're not going to survive opening night. What caught my eye was that Link did it one better. Link had clubs that were opening all around the world on the same night. It was supposed to be a 24-hour party spot where you could club with friends a world away. I whispered into a few ears and got a hold of a pair of VIP passes. Wanna hear a first? I was really impressed.

Scan this, the Link clubs are networked, and not just in the usual way. First off, when you walk in the door you can check out a wiz and surprisingly fashionable headset that receives wireless from the club's Matrix node. The headset beams laser data onto your retina, so that your field of vision is overlaid with Matrix data (your standard augmented reality—all you office drones know what I'm talking about). Why is this cool? Because the Link clubs are virtually linked with sister clubs across the globe. Sophisticated tridcam nets and holo-displays allow you to "see" and party with people in certain areas of similar clubs around the planet, using your headset's earphones and microphone. Bands and DJs that are performing at one club are also simulcast to the other clubs (but on different channels, so you can choose who to groove to).

- If you have a headware radio and an image link, you can receive directly from Link's wireless node. Or if you just have a datajack and image link you can rent a micro-sized wireless receiver and jack in that way.

- Glitch

- The simulcast around the world is a big draw for artists. You're getting your music heard at several dozen clubs at once, which

means you're getting paid more and you have a chance to reach an audience that's probably never heard you before.

- **Technocrat**
- It's also attracted a lot of hackers who'd love to strut their stuff by bringing down the network mid-concert. An attack like that would kill Link, so they invested heavily in IC and hired freelance deckers to supplement defenses. You can never be too safe when your nuyen is on the line.
- **FastJack**

It gets better. The clubs are also linked to their own Matrix hosts, allowing virtual visitors to transmit their icons real-time and interact with meatworld partygoers.

- The Matrix hosts are sculpted so that they feature real-time trid from each of the clubs in different rooms. So you can log in, sit on a couch and chat with someone who's physically sitting at a similar couch in London, then get up and go to another room to dance with someone transmitting from New York. The weird thing is that since so many of your fellow partiers are virtual representations, people walk "through" each other all the time.
- **Neurosis**
- It's a handy way of meeting folks who are spread out around the world—or keeping tabs on someone from far away.
- **Ice Rider**
- This augmented reality tech has been around for a while, but it's getting more popular. There's a similar system that's soon to go online in a city in Japan. Renraku was originally behind it, but they backed out due to internal problems, and now Transys has taken it over.
- **Renraku Fox**

The Link's augmented reality system also makes full use of social networking tools, making it easier for you to spot a potential partner or someone with similar interests.

- What this means is that when you "look" at people, you'll see whatever information they've entered in the system that they want to "transmit" publicly—likes, dislikes, hobbies, drekcetera. The clubs also allow you to tag virtual "post-its" on people and share them with others in your customized peer network. Think a guy is creepy? Tag him with a virtual note that only people you have earmarked as friends can see.
- **Glitch**

As of now there are only seven Link clubs around the globe in Sydney, Chiba, Tokyo, Seattle, New York, London and the Rhine-Ruhr Metroplex. The Seattle club manager tells me that clubs are opening up in Boston, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Vladivostok, Kyoto, Tenochtitlán and Paris all in the next year.

GENE ART

by Trychosope

Genetics doesn't have to be about curing diseases, making the perfect metahuman or anything else so abstract. Talk to the gene artists living on Park Avenue and you'll find out that genetics can be a form of artistic expression. Just as Michelangelo trumpeted his concept of genetic beauty with David, so too can gene artists play God, painting their masterpieces through the miracle of DNA.

Though genetic art has been around since the Millennium with the unveiling of Alba the fluorescent green rabbit, gene art really bloomed in the 2030s after the Euro Wars. A group of corresponding European geneticists who had fled the continent to avoid the conflicts found themselves in North America, where they began to focus on the transgenic (using traits from two or more different species) configuration of plant and animal genes. These doctors shared ideas and research, collaborating to create modifications to a genetic structure that would allow a biological organism to possess traits not previously seen in its species before. In essence, these doctors were creating new species of plants and animals. Don't confuse their intention, however, they weren't making super beasts. They were making art.

- **Art my arse.** How were they getting funding unless they were doing something with business or military application?
- **Richter**
- Remember the time period. The world was in chaos, and nations and corps were gobbling up hot shot scientists and throwing money at them regardless of results. Besides, they owned the trademark rights on completed work.
- **Corp Watcher**

Today's genetic artists manipulate the base genome to add or delete cosmetic features such as color, size, smell, life expectancy and many others. One of the top artists, Samuel Byrne is known for creating vivid multi-colored roses that stay in bloom for up to a year under proper conditions. Two other top gene artists are Jonathan Gonzales, known for his breathtaking work with butterflies, and Ichiro Iwamura, master of the Fibonacci carnation. This year's Telfair art show in Soho, NY, featured many new genetic artists; among the top money winners was a genetic replica of a dodo bird, a turtle with a frog's tongue and a bioluminescent tabby cat.

- People used to do these kinds of modifications to pets through breeding. Genetics has taken mating completely out of the loop, but it has opened the door to manipulations that simply weren't possible before. Similar work is being done in the corporate sector, of course, but the goals are vastly different.
- **Kephalos**

Gene art is immensely popular among the ultra rich and corporate elite who love to commission pieces and impress their friends with unique pets.



- The prestigious artists who have been producing for years rake in big profits. Tobias Vierheller has made millions marketing pink-maned ponies to ultra-rich teenage equestrians. The most unusual art I've encountered however was a falcon that had gills and webbed feet. The bird would dive underwater and remain there for hours at a time.
- Siobhan

Unlike genetic research that might seek to create and then breed new species, the purpose for most genetic artists is to create unique life forms that are not reproducible. As such, most genetic art lacks reproductive capabilities. Many artists also "brand" their work with a unique personal "watermark" in the genetic code that creates a unique marking at the cellular level, verifiable by art dealers. Many artworks also feature built-in obsolescence.

- The rich collectors just eat up this one-of-a-kind, signed work dreck. Your hypoallergenic jet black collie with golden eyes is only worthy as a status symbol if your peers can't get one of their own. Of course, that just makes it worth stealing to somebody.
- Bung
- And when it dies after two years, Mr. Rich Noob will be right back at the artist's door to purchase a new animal. If there's anything I can't stand, it's art snobs who wave away artwork

as passé when it's a living creature.

- Guerrilla Girl
- Eco-activists love to go after these genetic artists who think they're playing God. Some have even been known to target collectors, hoping to intimidate them from commissioning more work.
- Green Pixie
- Commissioned work often includes a contract clause that the artist will destroy all of his preparatory work so that the same organism can't be duplicated.
- Ladybug
- Cloning is still a possibility with genetic art, of course, and there is a market for knock-offs, especially when rich lady X realizes her one-of-a-kind non-reproducing feathered puma is about to kick the bucket, but she can't go on living without bird-kitty at her side. The watermark used by many artists is nearly impossible to hide, however—though some artists keep the nature of their watermark a secret, so who's to know?
- Doc
- Some genetic artists do create lifeforms that can reproduce. Call it viral advertisement for their work. Others do it just as an experiment to see how far their breed spreads.
- Ladybug

• All drek aside, this gene-mod stuff is all just a big ploy to breed out metahumanity.

• Jaxon

• We aren't quite there yet, Jaxon. Even if we were, I don't think it would be as simple as you make it sound. When it comes to genetically altering metahumans, there's still a lot of unexplored country. And there are a lot of people opposed to seeing people messed with on that kind of genetic level. But who's to say what the corps are really up to behind those sentry-gun-armed walls?

• Blastoma

GAMBLING

by Leisure Suit Leo

You don't have to be a wiseguy to appreciate the sound of your cred multiplying with each toss of the dice or flip of the cards. Everybody gambles. The little old lady at the supermarket, the nosy neighbor who opens the door every time you come home, your fixer—hell, even your pastor goes for a couple of spins when the mood hits him. Gambling is a huge part of our mainstream culture. It's also completely corrupt. Gambling went sideways a long time ago. I can't tell you when it happened but there isn't a bet that gets covered these days without a Yak, a Mob wiseguy or someone else taking a cut. The last clean gambling frontier is probably the national lottery systems, but guys like the Chromed Accountant will tell you that the government is taking more than its share of taxes.

• My work here is done. On to the next SIG.

• The Chromed Accountant

Surprisingly, Matrix gambling ventures are less corrupt than their physical counterparts. I think it has to do with how nervous people are to begin with when it comes to gambling online. When I'm playing cards, I feel a whole lot safer with the actual cards in my hand than I do with bits of code clutched between my digital fingers, even though there's no difference in the chances of me actually getting hustled. A good dealer can do anything to my cards that a decker could, but when it happens online more people are willing to blame the format. Matrix casinos keep it pretty close to the vest for that reason. The card and dice games are as fair as can be.

• Casinos had to ban certain types of headware from the roulette table. A chummer like me with an encephalon and a math co-processor can determine odds like nobody's business.

• The Muffin Man

GAMBLING AND THE LAW

When you put gambling and law in the same sentence, you're focusing on the drek that the government says is acceptable to bet on. Usually that's casino gambling and betting on regulated sports such as football, combat biking and

basketball; the stuff that you can find Vegas lines on in your morning e-paper. Crime syndicates love legalized gambling, not only for the money it makes them, but also because it gives them a safe avenue to launder money from less legal operations. If someone loses a hundred grand in BTL money at the casino, nobody asks the casino where they got the money. That makes gambling a quick fix for a syndicate's laundering needs.

Gambling legislation varies from nation to nation. The majority legalize it in certain designated areas like authorized casinos and riverboats. Off track betting offices and similar organizations allow you to place bets on the dogs and ponies. Most corps have patterned their casino operations along similar lines when they have them at all. Then there's bingo and keno that you can find at almost any church. Local authorities put a nuyen limit cap on that type of activity, but churches can get around that by making it look like a portion of the take is going towards church donations. You wouldn't believe me if I told you how often we had to send wiseguys to talk to the local pastor about his Saturday night party. As for everything else, only a handful of cities are treated to privileged policies that allow gambling anywhere within city limits.

• Don't go to the OTB Matrix kiosks, go to a live office. You'll usually find someone there who is willing to handle your other gambling business.

• NASCAR Dave

Matrix casinos are supposedly under the jurisdiction of the host nation but most data sites are hosted offshore or through orbitals where federal jurisdiction doesn't apply. They can set whatever cap they want on betting and don't have to follow what state and federal gambling commissions refer to as a minimum internal control standard. Without that, your odds for winning go down a drekload because a slot can payout at whatever percentage the owner wants it to. That could mean that the average nickel slot pays only once every forty or so pulls. High dollar betting is what pays well in these places. If you keep the rich customers happy, the cred keeps flowing.

• Shibanokujl Freefall resort hosts a gambling deck. The Matrix system there is so vast that it made me wonder what else it was being used for. I nosed around and found a floating backdoor that lead to an isolated portion of the network. This isolated area turned out to be The Rose Garden, a massive private Matrix casino that was thought to be hosted somewhere on the Switzerland grid. I wonder what the Corporate Court would think about an unregistered casino?

• Fastdax

ILLEGAL GAMBLING

Illegal gambling covers everything from the office betting pool to underground pit fighting. You can bet on anything if you can find someone to take your action. The most likely candidates are the organized crime syndicates. The Mafia and the

Yakuza are top notch when it comes to gambling. They're the ones you see operating gambling houses in the back of restaurants or upstairs in the club's "special" VIP room. Both groups run numbers, a lottery style bet that's limited to certain neighborhoods. Daily winnings for the numbers are only around four or five grand but your odds for winning are high because you're only playing against people from your own neighborhood.

- The Yakuza aren't always top notch. They run a lot of small-time pachinko parlors nestled away in Asian communities, with games like mahjong, fan-tan, lotteries, dice games and more. The Triads do the same. These places are a lot more corrupt; they rip people off like there's no tomorrow, but their customers always come back and don't complain.
- Robo

First tier organizations cover every type of bet, even hosting their own events such as paracritter matches and pit fights. It's sometimes tough to get into one of the events, though. Security screens people that the organization doesn't normally do business with in order to avoid police infiltrating the operation. We had a tournament in Seattle get broken up last month because a runner blabbed to the wrong person.

Second tier groups like the Triads and the Seoulpa Rings try to be more specialized. The Triads are big into pit fighting and ponies. Seoulpa Rings like to pretend they're junior Yakuza and cover all the gambling they cover, but on a smaller scale. The Vory do a little bit of everything.

Street gangs and independents make up the last level of illegal gambling operators. Fixers fall into this last category as do the majority of sports bookies. Don't get me wrong, the Mob does have its own bookies, but your local bookie may not be with the Mob. He's probably just a guy who has the money to cover his friends' bets and has access to a Matrix gambling site.

- If that's the case, then the Mob isn't doing their job. You don't let a freelancer work your turf. It can cost you profits. Guys like that get fitted with a pair of new sea boots, know what I mean?
- Made Man

If you're looking for the down and dirty stuff like cock-fighting, then it's the street gangs you want to talk to. I've only dealt with a few, but I know the Ancients up in Portland run no-holds-barred dogfights. When I was overseas, I went to a Yardies party where they were betting on devil rats. Believe me, if it can fight, someone will bet on it.

- It's interesting what people consider a sport these days. For four months out of the year all I hear about are the Desert Wars. It's our most intense betting season, and I know we're not handling everyone's business.
- Meso-Soprano

- I handle a lot of business from American bookies who send their shadowrunners over here to the Sahara just to get a closer look at the corp teams so they know how to set the odds of winning in their favor.

• Sand Warrior

- Gambling isn't limited to sport or violence. In my former line of work, I came across a fair number of corporate gambling oddities such as black stock exchanges where gamblers bet on the end of day figures of the S&P 500, the Dow, NASDAQ and similar indicators. The most interesting of these corporate betting schemes were the so-called "futures markets," where you place bets on the outcomes of world and corporate situations, conflicts and developments. Naturally, you can make a killing here if you helped to shape those events that are about to go public.

• The Chromed Accountant

DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR BOOKIE IS?

You want to find a bookie? Go to a bar, preferably a sports bar. He'll be the one staring at the sports ticker and making notes in his p-sec. Street bookies will take just about anyone's bet. They may not be able to cover every sport or every amount though. If he can't handle your action, he'll know someone who can. It's a bookie's job to know what action is going on in their neck of the woods. They'll know where the higher level gambling is in a city, just like a fixer knows where a shadowrunner can find work.

The amount of money a bookie will allow you to bet also depends on how well they know you. The first few times you bet with a new bookie you'll be capped at a very low number to make sure that you can pay and more importantly, that you're not a cop. If you pass the test phase your average bookie will give you a line of credit they know you're good for. There are different ways of handling folks who don't pay up come collection day. Most of them result in a trip to the hospital.

- The major cruise lines are sensitive to the needs of their clients. In addition to legal gambling, they'll keep a stable of bookies on board to handle special requests from the passengers.
- Sea Bee

Finding an online gambling den is even easier than catching up to a bookie. The entry level spots are legal so all you have to do is search the net till you find something you're comfortable with. Sleaze past all the "our spot is better than yours" drek. It's just like the Vegas strip; your odds are pretty similar wherever you bet, the only thing that changes is the scenery. When you're done playing around, try to hook up with someone who looks like they know what they're doing. The big time net casinos have recruiters looking for players who are ready to spend money. If you seem to be a person willing to play with the big boys, and you have a large credit balance, you'll get an invite.



GAMBLING HOT SPOTS

Here are a couple of tips on where to go if you want to do some serious gambling. All of the places below are the best I know. Some are good for beginners, while others you shouldn't try unless you're willing to sacrifice a big bankroll.

Grid 19

The Grid is a Matrix hotspot for people who have the habit but don't have a whole lot of cred to support it. Grid slots pay out around 20 percent of the time, higher than anywhere else I've cruised. Their payouts are low nuyen but you can enjoy yourself for hours on a handful of cred. If you're into betting on sports, the Grid can take your action. I go there to place my Desert War bets. They also do the horse races, same as OTB.

- Grid 19 has been known to cover high-limit action from their regulars. There's a standing Tuesday night poker game that's five grand just to get in, with a 100¥ ante.
- Slamm-O!

Las Vegas

The Strip still sizzles after all these years. Vegas has it all: gambling, glitz and girls, girls, girls. The Comanche Mob dug its claws into the city's illegal operations, but the Verontesse family is still in charge. Gambling is legal anywhere in the city, something the families take full advantage of. The law doesn't bother much with stopping the illegal stuff, so long

as they get their cut. Check out the warehouse district if you're interested in seeing what a paracritter can do up against a metahuman. Spread a little cred around and you'll find that doors open rather easily down here.

- If you win a multi-million dollar payout in Vegas, don't bother collecting it. The Vegas mobs don't want to pay that kind of cred. It looks good to see someone win, but you ever wonder what happens to the big winners afterwards? The casino is going to try to convince you to stay on a little bit longer so you can gamble it all away. They'll comp you a super suite, free show tickets, dinners and anything else to hold on to you long enough to get their cred back. If all else fails, you might happen to get cacked climbing into your shiny new limo on the way to the airport.
- Cigar Chomper

New Monaco

I've been following this Grand Tour thing on the news, trying to figure out the angle on it. All I can see is that a lot of folks like me are making money because rich folks want to prove how much they can spend. Don't bother with Monaco in the summer if your credstick ain't ebony. New Monaco belongs to the tour and gambling is both fashionable and mandatory to maintain social status. The city's world famous waterfront casinos host international prizefights year round, culminating in championship bouts during the tour season. The European Jai-lai league holds its all-star game in New Monaco every summer, timed with tour travel.



- The Monaco Grand Prix gets a bunch of attention, not just from the Grand Tour crowd either. NASCAR bettors always put money on the race because some of their drivers originally came from this circuit. A bookie can make a sizable stake if she pulls in enough local and international action from the race.

- Spotlight Sally

- Organized crime is deep into New Monaco. The Marseilles Milieu are the people you hear the most about, but the Sacra Corona Unita was slowly moving in. Tensions have dropped off, though, as both outfits are focused on the conflict with the Vory further north.

- Shadow Dragon

- A number of the newer, high-end Matrix casinos came from this area. The government is soft on Matrix gambling, allowing its casinos to expand online. The physical casino people know how to run the business, but they don't know as much about protecting its Matrix counterpart. Some have taken to using Matrix gangs to supplement house deckers.

- Tulkas

Lesvos Island

Go there for the tanned Grecian women, the hot springs or the castle on the hill, but don't leave until you've sampled one of the all night poker games. Lesvos has a secret life after dark. The gambling community congregates in basements and dock houses engaging in the fiercest betting I've had the pleasure to take part in. It's all completely illegal, mind you, but the cops are trading cred just like the next guy. If you're into organized sports, there's a stadium on the sister island of Lemnos that hosts soccer matches and combat biking. Betting goes all through the night, ending with the illegal meta duels deep in the Petrified Forest. There's plenty of work for shadowrunners here, running security or recruiting for the duels.

- You can also get work crossing over into the Epiros Forest and hunting for wild satyrs to battle local contestants. For some reason the locals seem afraid to do it.

- Grip

Atlantic City

Call it Old Faithful, a little burb outside of the Newark sprawl that forgot a long time ago what the rules were. Atlantic City is one of the oldest gambling cities in North America. The casinos are empty more often than they are full. The streets are run down and choked with the SINless. Everything you want in a city for gambling, neh?

Atlantic City still has its regulars from Newark and New York, and every so often a good commercial campaign will spring up and renew interest in the place. That wanton desperation is what's appealing about Atlantic City. Desperate people tend to look the other way for a fast buck. You'll find that the locals are willing to do just about anything for cred, including betting on their lives in human hunts or Russian roulette.

- Once a year the glitterati descend on this city for the Miss America pageant. It's a strange tradition if you think about it. Eleven months out of the year Atlantic City is a wasteland for washed up gambling addicts still trying to live the good life, then once a year they dust off the street sweepers and call in NYPD Inc. for extra support so they can parade a gaggle of supermodels in front of a runway camera and pretend that everything in the city is well and good.

- Holly

TOP 10 SHADOWRUNS OF 2063

- As a workforce, shadowrunners are vastly under-appreciated. How many times have you been given credit or props for your best runs? If you do your job right, the answer should be "not at all." Let's face it, the nature of our business means that we can't talk about our business, which means that the most successful runners are the ones the public hasn't heard about.

It's nice once in a while, though, to see some evidence of our handiwork make the news. So with that in mind, here's a small homage to some of the most interesting, under-reported, influential, well-executed or just plain gutsy shadowruns we caught wind of over the past year. I've pulled these news summaries and comments straight from our SIG boards.

- Captain Chaos

1. The Crash of RDA 319

GENEVA (SOL)—Search and rescue teams report finding no survivors in the wreckage of suborbital flight RDA 319, which crashed in a remote part of the Swiss Alps two nights ago. The Federated-Boeing 828 was en route from the Europort to Cape Town, carrying 144 passengers. Authorities now believe the craft was hit by debris from a re-entering satellite. <Posted 9-13-63>

Constantinople (AP)—German journalist Montyn Reinhart, known for his coverage of NEEC corporate politics, was found dead in his hotel room last night. Police report that Reinhart committed suicide by overdose and say there is no evidence of foul play. <Posted 11-14-63>

- That suborbital crash wasn't a freak accident, my friends. Reinhart was looking into it when he was killed. He had already turned up records indicating that the Mitsuhamas Oblos 4 satellite implicated in the crash was supposed to crash down in the Pacific Ocean. Security records show an unauthorized outside connection to the satellite just moments before it re-entered. Much to Mitsuhamas's dismay, Reinhart turned up some Oblos satellite hardware floating around on Constantinople's black market. Rumor was the parts included some embedded datachips with interesting info on them. Whatever he scored, though, was missing from his hotel room when they found his body.

- Kenzie

- The real question is: who was onboard RDA 319 to warrant a strike like this? There were at least two prime targets that I

scanned; Rudolph McDonald, an NEEC representative, and even more interesting, Karl Mannstein, one of the top engineers of Erika's Wireless Matrix Initiative. They both died, along with the rest.

- Hugin

- Smart money is on Mannstein. Erika is getting close to some major breakthroughs in some of their wireless projects and Mannstein was a lead designer for a nova-hot R&D team. Of course Mannstein was also sending out feelers to S-K as recently as a few days before the crash. I guess Erika wanted to keep their secrets.

- Kimi

- Matrix traces of the linkup with the satellite lead back to a small village in Switzerland, close to the crash site. I also know fixers in Amsterdam and Lisbon were scouting for runners with space know-how less than two weeks before the crash. That's some mighty fine work, if shadowrunners were behind it.

- Red Wraith

2. Epoxy Factory Explosion Leaves Novatech in Sticky Situation

EAST ST. LOUIS (NN)—Novatech Press Secretary Mike Falcone announced earlier today that residents displaced by last week's Epoxitech factory explosion could now return home. Residents were displaced last Thursday when an explosion at the plant sent a mile-high plume of toxic smoke into the East St. Louis skyline. Nine people were killed and twenty-five injured in the blast.

Falcone refused to comment on the effect that the loss of Epoxitech would have on Novatech as a whole. Epoxitech, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Novatech, was the sole remaining holding that produced a proprietary heat-resistant epoxy vital for the production of top of the line cyberdecks. Formerly, Novatech possessed three companies capable of producing the epoxy. Late last year it was forced to close two of the three to cut expenses. Renraku is the only other major worldwide producer of an epoxy similar to the one that had been produced by Epoxitech. Renraku declined to comment at press time, but it is unlikely that they would undertake a favorable contract with Novatech given a recent accusation of price fixing Renraku made against a Novatech subsidiary.

Novatech's stock price was unaffected by this announcement. Novatech is a privately held company and its stock is not traded on any major indexes. <Posted 11-12-63>

- This couldn't have come at a worse time for Novatech. Their CAS subsidiaries have suffered a rash of hostile takeover attempts lately, among numerous other setbacks and problems the corp is facing. Word is that Novatech's budget is so deep in the red that the other AAAs are starting to make some pointed comments and suggestions in Corporate Court meetings—not to mention circling like sharks.

- Marketeer

3. Local Militia Repels Invaders

CHICO-OROVILLE (AP)—Ares forces today reported repelling a "significant" attack from General Saito's troops after receiving help from locals. Several motorized columns of Protectorate troops initiated what one Ares spokesperson described as a flanking maneuver. An Ares checkpoint unit engaged the troops, but was quickly driven back. The column, however, encountered stiff resistance at the hands of local militia and was forced to withdraw. Other skirmishes were also reported in the area, but no casualty reports are available. Chico-Oroville Mayor Mallory Tarkington condemned the attack and called upon General Saito to lift his "siege" of the Chico-Oroville Greater Metropolitan Area. <Posted 2-7-63>

- That "local militia" wasn't exactly that local. Ares hired every runner on the west coast they could find on two day's short notice, told them a location, set up an ad hoc command hierarchy and sent them to repel Saito's forces. The only Ares forces on hand were the troops guarding the dam and airfields—and Mr. Johnson.

- Cougar

- Saito must be kicking himself for not moving to take that dam early on. If he gets control of it, he can put major leverage on the whole Central Valley, which depends on it for their water supply. But he spent too much time rounding up metahumans, so Ares and various locals managed to scramble together enough of a defense around Chico-Oroville to make it too costly for Saito to try. This latest move was Saito's attempt to finish surrounding the COGMA and completely cut it off.

- Arlo

- I was there. Most of my team has merc experience, so we were positioned right at the front. There wasn't any goal other than "stopping the attack." Some got paid in equipment, but it was mostly a BYOG ("Bring Your Own Gun") affair. We only won because the shadowrunners actually put up a good guerrilla fight, and we had the element of surprise. I think a few groups took care of some personal business in the fighting too.

- Standard Issue

4. Attempted Theft Turns Into Bloodbath

HONG KONG (AP)—A reported break-in at a private estate turned to carnage when authorities responded Wednesday, leaving twenty-three dead. Thieves invaded the Victoria Peak mansion of corporate financier Pan Xin early in the evening, but were discovered by security in the process of opening a safe. Knight Errant personnel responded to the scene, but failed to contain the thieves. A raging battle culminated in an 8-kilometer pursuit, drawing in security forces from around the city. In the end, four of the thieves were killed while two escaped. Police estimate that the cost of damage may reach into the millions, as part of the mansion succumbed to fire, five vehicles were destroyed, two helicopters were downed and three prize leopards from Pan Xin's personal collection were slain. <Posted 8-28-63>



- Word is the op was supposed to be a stealth run. It's a festo-ment to the team that two of them actually escaped with the goods. Too bad the rest didn't make it. They were good people.
- Lei Kung

- Well those other two may not be alive for long. Pan Xin's tied to the Yellow Lotus Triad, and you can bet your hoop they have assassins on the trail.
- HK Kid

- Especially considering what they stole. You can bet that Wuxing won't be happy about that at all.
- China Doll

5. Zeppelin Helst

BOGOTÁ (NN)—Gulf Stream Cargo and military officials announced today that they had recovered a missing zeppelin convoy a mere four hours after it was reported missing. Communications and instrument failures were blamed. <Posted 9-9-63>

- Typical Azzie spin doctoring; the truth was far more inter-esting. It seems the zeppelin convoy in question was carrying a massive shipment of sparkling new Aztechnology military materiel from Panama City intended to upgrade military units along the Amazonian border. Despite by-the-second remote tracking and a military escort, the entire load went poof for at least four hours. By the time the scrambled Jaguar Guards located the blimps' landing site near Bogotá, the majority of the goods were long gone.
- Lynch

- Air piracy on those supply lines isn't uncommon. The over-grown rainforest makes shipping logistics a nightmare down there, so zepp cargo-hauling traffic is high. Someone pulled some major magic or misdirection here; a shipment of that nature is more closely monitored than Nadja Davlar's waistline.
- Paquito

- It will be interesting to see if any of the Yucatan rebels or maybe some of Hualpa's troops are sporting any new gear soon, spotlessly scrubbed of all Aztechnology logos of course.
- Decker del Sur

- I don't think the Amazonians did it—their agents have been asking lots of questions about it around Bogotá. It seems they're as interested in finding out who did it as the Azzies are.
- Lynch

6. Software Premier Marked By Glitches, Laughter

SEATTLE (NN)—What was supposed to be a gala event for the unveiling of MCT's new top-of-the-line cyberdeck for young adult users turned into a media spectacle and public relations nightmare. Upon booting up the new deck to dis-

play its functions to the media, a scene resolved on the vid-screen displaying a group of metahuman cartoon icons engaged in various scatological functions. Attempts by MCT's techs to fix the problem resulted in the icons hurling crude insults in street slang and also a colorful description of several security and safety shortcuts taken by MCT's engineers in the creation of the new deck. While members of the media present described the event as "entertaining," an MCT spokesperson issued an immediate apology and stated the deck would not be released for another six months.

- Looks like Transys is going to beat them to the market by a couple of months now with their deck for young adults. Pity.
- MesoStim

- So was this a typically immature decker that did this or some snot-nosed otaku tribe?
- Buzz

- Say what you will, but people are going to be talking about this long after the body count from your last adventure was filed away in some forgotten data archive. Style my friends. It's all about style.
- Slamm-0!

7. Draco Foundation Announces Record Bounty Payment

BOSTON (NN)—At a press conference today, the Draco Foundation announced it was holding a group of four individuals tentatively identified as toxic shamans in custody pending their arraignment for violation of several international treaties. The Draco spokesperson declined further comment, but speculation is rampant that this announcement may be related to reports made by corporate troops who claimed to have witnessed an abduction outside of Völklingen last month. <Posted 12-06-63>

- Yeah the DF got itself a real coup on this one. Not only are two of the four guys it has in lockdown toxics, but they claim to follow a Radiation totem. The other two are both glow-punks who have levels of mutation beyond what a living metahuman should be able to sustain. All four of them are scary fraggers. I don't want to know how Zhi Lung and his crew kept them in containment for the trip over.
- Talon

- Zhi Lung? I thought he and the crew of the Golden Sun usually pulled runs between Hong Kong and Vladivostok. What were they doing in the AGS?
- China Doll

- We were made an offer we couldn't refuse. That, and the ancestors spoke to me and asked that I help to contain this blight.
- Uncle

8. DocWagon Loses Executive

SEATTLE (NN)—Employees at DocWagon's Seattle branch today mourned the loss of Chief Operations Officer Michael Davenport. Davenport perished during a shareholder's meeting announcing new techniques in epilepsy treatment. While onstage, terrorists rushed across the theater and engaged security forces in a pitched battle. During the fray, a stray bullet struck Davenport in the heart while he acted to protect his personal assistant, Ashlee Worm, and Margo Fleming, Vice President of Marketing. DocWagon personnel on duty attempted to rush him to treatment, but the terrorists destroyed the fleeing vehicle. Only the charred remains of Davenport and the medical crew were recovered.

Rumors among experts speculate that Davenport was to announce his retirement and step down after the meeting. <Posted 8-19-63>

- HAI "Charred remains"—one of the oldest tricks in the book. I bet he's alive somewhere in the Carib League sipping piña colodas and deciding how to spend his death benefits!
- Justin Tyme
- Well, you're right about Davenport being alive. My sources tell me he's the secret behind DocWagon's newest competitor in Seattle. A little plastic surgery and Michael Davenport becomes Walter Broward, CEO of Rose Croix! He engineered his death and now has the inside paydata on DW. Look for some "opportunities" here, boys!
- Honda

9. Industrialist Murdered

AMARILLO (NN)—Billionaire industrialist Patrick Goodman, founder and CEO of Texas-based Cavalier Arms Ltd., was found murdered in his home early this morning. He had been shot to death with his own signature six-shooters. Lone Star Security Services are holding Dallas industrialist Alexander Kane, CEO of Kane Heavy Industries and Goodman's hand-picked successor as CEO of Cavalier Arms, on suspicion of Goodman's murder. <Posted 6-23-63>

- Seems pretty open and shut. Why's this such a big deal?
- Derek
- Kane loved the Old Man like a father. It's extremely unlikely he'd kill him, even after one of their famous arguments. Goodman was a member of the Sons of the Alamo policlub, and he helped fund the Azzlewatch data haven. It's possible that the Azzles decided to fake him out and set up Kane to take the fall.
- Texas 2-Step
- Novatech-CAS doesn't seem to buy it, either. Buzz is they're offering a fortune to find out who really did it and show them the profound error of their ways.
- Night Train

10. Last Minute Scandal Upsets Kentucky Elections

FRANKFORT (AP)—Controversy still surrounds the stunning surprise victory of Archie Raden in the 2063 Kentucky gubernatorial election. Raden, the dark horse Republican candidate, beat Technocrat incumbent Carter Boden after an unknown policlub sent documentation and footage to news desks apparently showing Boden conspiring to rig the election. The Kentucky Technocrat Party has filed complaints with the UCAS Federal Election Commission.

Raden announced his candidacy late in the primary season and earned his party's nomination after the leading Republican candidate, Harrison Snyder, died in a freak car accident on a campaign stop in Bowling Green. <Posted 11-8-63>

- Freak accident, my hoop! Snyder got geeked because he was showing pro-CAS sympathies. One idea he was stumping was "Improved relations" with Confederation neighbors Tennessee and Virginia. And just recently rumors have surfaced of ties between Snyder's staffers and agents of the Confederation DSI.
- Wild Blue
- You're fingering the wrong Republican. Archie Raden moved north from Tennessee before they seceded from the UCAS, and he still has friends in Tennessee (some of them in high places, too). I'll bet those "rumors" are just false leads the DSI spread to throw the CIA off Raden's trail.
- Rockytop
- Does anyone know anything about this "unknown policlub" that leaked the allegations against Boden? Sounds like more DSI meddling to me.
- Bullet
- Too much spotlight after Snyder got geeked. My bet's on the New Revolution.
- Taranchula

TOP 10 MOST WANTED CRIMINALS

- Now that we've given some recognition to shadowrunners who managed to stay out of the spotlight, let's give a hand to some interesting characters who have been exposed and who are now in high demand. I penned this section myself. Most of the names making this list have appeared on the Most Wanted lists of various government and corporate policing agencies, but a few are given recognition because they've earned high prices on their heads from some player in the shadows, or simply because they've stirred up such a buzz. So without further ado:
- Captain Chaos

1. The Pendragon

There is probably no man in all of Europe that the New Druidic Movement would like to get their hands on more than "the Pendragon." Since he made his first appearance



late last year at the Midwinter Festival in London, he's been everywhere the government doesn't want him. Wherever he goes, he gathers crowds, but still, somehow, manages to elude capture or positive identification. The appearance of the so-called "Wild Ley" has only added fuel to Pendragon's fire. His supporters claim credit for its creation and the NDM has yet to come up with a truly coherent explanation for it.

- Yeah I love the "manosphere resonance from the comet" theory they tried to float.
- Connor

- Recent word is that the Pendragon managed to get himself onto Lyonesse, that freaky island that rose out of the sea, and snatch something from under the Lord Protector's nose. There must be some truth to it since the bounty they got out for him doubled in the last month.

- Locksley

2. Ex Pacis

The renegade otaku known as Pax, infamous for her role as one of the AI Deus's top lieutenants, has been busy in the shadows over the past few years. Since escaping from the Renraku Arcology, Pax and her crew of otaku troublemakers—known as Ex Pacis—have been involved in one mysterious scheme after another, each bloodier than the last. Our friends at Overwatch tell us that they think Pax's crew is responsible for the deaths of nearly forty otaku across North America in the past year, including two whole tribes that were completely wiped out. Dozens of other otaku have gone missing, presumably kidnapped or killed by Ex Pacis. Their cell seems to be working towards some fast approaching goal as their actions have increased in frequency and sightings of key members have been more common.

- Pax's little minions have been hard at work creating more of her so-called "dissonance wells." We've gotten reports from otaku who have stumbled across areas of the Matrix that they make them feel unclear and impede their connection to the Deep Resonance for a period after contact.

- Syzygy

- While Pax herself has managed to remain free and clear, there are reports that Amor was nearly killed in a shoot-out in Quebec earlier this year and that he was seriously wounded.

- Glitch

- Amor must have recovered pretty quickly since he was in St. Louis last week with a handful of Ex Pacis on a "recruitment drive." The three street kids supposedly killed in that ritual murder that the media has been going on about were his doing. They were all otaku, and the youngest girl was very strong. His near-death experience seems to have made him even more of a twisted fragger than he was before.

- Zephyr

3. Nico di Rocco

Have you ever seen a big shot Vory boss plead for his life? If not, then you missed the tridclip making the Matrix rounds of the execution of Vory *lideri* Pjotr Vanavskaja. Vanavskaja was shot in the head in the middle of the sidewalk of Antwerp's busy shopping at midday, surrounded by horrified onlookers. Public network like this happens to be the typical handiwork of Nico di Rocco. This enigmatic Italian killer-for-hire has systematically been weakening the ranks and morale of the Vory in the City of Diamonds ever since he sided with the Albanian gangs in the current European mob war. Di Rocco seems able to appear out of nowhere to take out even the most heavily secured targets. Backed by a band of shady mercenaries and runners, he's been icing Vory soldiers, lieutenants, middle-men and diamond traders, one by one.

- Di Rocco is not only working hard to rack up the body count—he's also responsible for some very lucrative diamond heists, stealing hundreds of these little gems from Russian controlled vaults.

- Ill Padre

- This fellow is some kind of a mystery. With no records, nobody knows who he is or where he comes from. The most persistent rumour revolves around his ties with the Marseille Millieu, the French branch of the Alfa Commissione.

- Crime Watch

4. Henry "the Diplomat" Uribe

BTL dealers have had a rough year, thanks to the CAS, Pueblo and UCAS all cracking down on illegal shipments and high-profile raids on several high-volume BTL factories. At least one person has gained from this dry spell: one Henry Uribe, the so-called "Foreign Minister" for the Ghost Cartels. If your sprawl has seen an influx of good old-fashioned narcotics, you can bet that Uribe has been in town to have a friendly talk with the local authorities. Uribe fronts for various cartels with similar interests, which makes him *numero uno* on the competition's hit list. Word is that several Mob families are looking to remove him from the picture.

- The Diplomat's been racking up the traveler clicks lately: Manaus, Lima, Quito, Atlanta, Washington and, get this, Geneva.

- Airline Amy

- Uribe isn't busy just smoothing the path for old-fashioned novacoke and nitro to get into North America. He's also arranging new shipment routes for specialty cargoes: Awakened drugs, telesma and radicals and allegedly some new bio-engineered goodies.

- Tweaker

5. Sayid Mujtaba Musawi

Musawi, second-in-command of the New Islamic Jihad, recently earned a price on his head from Argus for the assassination of ten delegates to the Balkan peace talks in

Sarajevo last summer. Under contract to the NEEC, Argus accidentally flagged Musawi's insertion into the region as a low priority, assuming he was meeting Muslim leaders in Islamic enclaves ahead of the conference. Remote surveillance analysis later confirmed that Musawi met for several hours with the three suicide bombers who blew themselves up at the Sarajevo City Hall, killing ten peace delegates and fourteen other bystanders.

- Eyewitnesses and electronic records indicate the suicide bombers waded through a hail of bullets from heavily armed MET2000 mercs assigned as security for the talks. They ran right into the main atrium and blew themselves up in the middle of a stunned group of Serbian, Dinaric and Croat diplomats. This has set the peace process back a decade and left many people scared drekless.

- Flak Jack

- Big on magic or high on drugs?

- Invisible

- The Jihad has used both, and various combinations thereof. I doubt, however, that Musawi could have brainwashed them in a few hours. Maybe it was just zealot's fervor?

- Zartan

- Maybe the killers were already primed? Trained at one of those NIJ training camps the Albanian government conveniently overlooks on the borders with Macedonia? They've been churning out cannon fodder for Bosnian and Kosovar Muslim militias for years now.

- Saevor

6. Matthias Hesse

This second-generation neo-fascist is the son of Christian Hesse, leader of the Hamburg Volksfront chapter (2018-2039) and founding member of Nationale Aktion. (Currently Dad is in a Hannover prison for life for masterminding the 2047 bombing of the AGS Labor Union Conference.)

As the saying goes, "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree," and Matthias has become more extremist than even his father. Embodying the ultranationalist and xenophobic spirit that modern Germany hoped was dead and buried, the young Hesse is suspected to be one of Nationale Aktion's top leaders. Hesse apparently planned the Munich Olympiapark VITAS attack of 2061, which claimed the lives of over 8,000 metahumans and aid workers. Like all Nationale Aktion leaders, Hesse has a 50,000 prize on his head and tops Europol's Most Wanted list.

- Hesse went underground after Munich, but intelligence reports suggest he's been in London, Vienna, Zurich and Oslo. Busy little terrorist isn't he?

- Schupo





- Interesting factoid: Matthias has a close friend in Gunter Zoller, son of Heinrich Zoller, one of daddy's chummers from his Volksfront days. Gunter is an initiated Teutonic mage and leading member of Verband für Völkische Zauberei (a.k.a. Runenthing, mago-fascists with a German-Nordic inspiration). Anyone want to lay money where Aktion's magical support is coming from?
- Poolitzer

7. Canary

The Denver Zone Defense Force has posted a reward for information leading to the capture of a magical terrorist whom they have identified only as "Canary." Canary is believed responsible for more than forty raids from Seattle to Australia. Spell signature analysis links all these attacks to Canary, an individual of powerful magical ability. Eyewitness reports from several raids report that the perpetrator escaped by shapeshifting into a yellow bird, hence his nickname.

- There's an interesting pattern to these attacks. All targets were great dragon holdings, sometimes quite indirectly. The Draco Foundation and Ghostwalker account for six incidents between them. Why frag with great dragons in this way?
- Dragon Watcher
- I think I may have done a run as a distraction for Canary once. He seemed more like an adept: magician's way, I think. He changed into something that was more like a man-sized bat creature than a bird.
- Gretchen

8. "Mr. Brown"

The con artist known only as "Mr. Brown" (some of his better known aliases include Fats Walker, Neil Gregorich and "The Straight Man") preys on ambitious fixers and fences. He's allegedly Awakened, though nobody's sure if he's a magician or an adept. He is suspected to be able to change his apparent age, size, weight, skin tone and even metatype from score to score. Typically, his schemes involve posing as a Mr. Johnson with a highly lucrative shadowrun offer that requires a substantial investment from a fixer to pull off—only once the run has gone down the haul goes poof, and the fixer's resources along with it. He has also been known to pose as a fence laundering goods or a fixer middleman who shakes down both Johnsons and runners. Two unidentified women have occasionally joined in on his scams. So far, he has reported as operating in Santa Fe, Seattle, Chicago, Boston and Atlanta.

- C'mon, nobody knows for sure that this is the same guy. Hell, it could be a crew of con artists who just switch off taking the lead role.
- Price
- It's interesting to note that this Mr. Brown only scams underworld types, or people involved in shady, illegal activity. Think

he's got some sort of moralistic streak?

- Matchstick Man

- That's a quick way to get killed, you ask me.
- Bubs

9. Kane

The self-proclaimed "most notorious man in the CAS" has been living up to his own hype of late. There are bounties out for his detention or elimination for piracy and numerous related charges in seventeen countries now and he has apparently broadened his sphere of operations to the Mediterranean and along the West African Coast. Like most of his ilk, Kane seems to thrive on the media attention gained through his exploits.

- Hey Kane, whatever happened to that competition between you and the Gingerbread Man? He kick your hoop?
- Bung
- Hell no. I don't even know if the cookie cutter pirate showed up or not. I got distracted by a big fat cargo ship carrying industrial machinery for DeBeers-Omnitech en route to Africa. I just couldn't let that go—it'd be against the pirate code y'know. After that, I felt like going out and partying a bit so I sunk me a few Azzie patrol boats 'round Panama way. I never did hear back from GB, but I hear his show is still very popular with the senior citizen circuit.
- Kane

10. Chakira Ramone

"Nothing personal, just business." Yeah, try telling that to this chica. Chakira, an elf magician originally from Denver, has some serious anger management issues, in that she takes everything personally. Even if you have the misfortune of just being in her way, she'll go out of her way to extract her "kilo of flesh," as she likes to say. It doesn't matter who you are; she once crucified (yes, cross and all) a Pueblo Mr. Johnson on his own front yard and subsequently had to flee to Seattle, leaving a trail of dead double-crossers in her wake.

- Chakira is dead. I shot the slitch myself last fall.
- Josie Cruise
- Much as we all appreciate it, JC, I'm afraid you didn't follow through. A few chummers of mine ran into her last week; they had the bad luck of being hired to extract the same suit her team was nabbing, and only one of the three lived to tell. He says it's her or she has a twin sister who's even nastier.
- Pinky Carruthers
- Hey Josie, you ain't the only one who's killed her. I saw my buddy gun her down with a LMG about two months back. The next day, we get word that she's up and about and

killing my friend. I've been doing some research on her and I think she might be one of them dead spirit shedlin' things. I met a guy who used to run with her and he says that there was some frag up one run when she was doing some astral scouting. Seems the Chakra that came back was different than the one who left her meat body.

• Beedle

• That would certainly explain why her group seems to have a level of almost fanatical devotion to her. I hope you're wrong Beedle, but I'm afraid you're right.

• Pinky Carruthers

TOP 10 MOST WANTED SUITS/SCIENTISTS

• Not everyone with a price on his or her head is a shadowrunner. I compiled this list from various rumors, news reports, SIG discussions and interviews, listing out ten of the most sought-after businessmen, researchers or what have you. Some of these are wanted intact for their brains and research, others are wanted not-so-intact because of their nasty corporate maneuverings. I know that there's at least ten fixers out there holding job offers that individually concern one of these names—odds are, there are more than that.

• Captain Chaos

1. Art Dankwalther

So anyone with a lick of economic sense can see that Novatech is struggling. What few people, particularly outside of the shadows, are willing to say is that this is due in no small part to a man named Art Dankwalther. (Some of you may remember our expose on Art in the *Threats 2* folio. To summarize, he inherited enough nuyen from Dunkelzahn to be a gazillionaire, only he's rather sore that Fuchi canned him and so he's taking it out by attempting to take Novatech down.)

Though Richard Villiers and Novatech have deftly maneuvered to deflect many of Art's sabotage efforts, Mr. Dankwalther has proceeded from nibbling around the edges to taking whole bites out of Novatech's holdings. Novatech's situation wouldn't be so bad if they were on stronger footing, but the megacorp was heavily leveraged in its bid to take Fuchi's Corporate Court seat, and it still hasn't recovered.

Novatech has sent Mr. Dankwalther several peace offers in an attempt to buy him off, but all were summarily refused. The latest news is that Novatech has placed a five million nuyen bounty—dead or alive—on Art. Of course, a counter rumor floating around is that Dankwalther is willing to beat that offer if whoever takes it pulls an unspecified job for him instead.

• Some of those peace offers were returned in pieces. Dankwalther's thirst for revenge has only intensified since he started going after Villiers directly. There's been some talk around the executive back rooms at Novatech that maybe it's time for Villiers to step down.

• Einstein

• The shadows are hot with ops and counter-ops between Novatech and Art. Novatech is getting desperate, which is driving the prices up, and Art is more than generous and looking to hire top talent. Ahhh, it's a good time to be a shadowrunner!

• Wetworks

2. Johnny Spinrad

SALZBURG (DMK)—Spinrad Industries (Spln) medics rushed megacorporate magnate Johnny Spinrad (58) to a Spln private clinic in Switzerland after a harrowing accident during a freestyle snowboarding event at the Salzburg Annual Alpine Games. Halfway through a particularly exacting mid-air maneuver, Spinrad's personalized snowboard inexplicably shattered, leading to a seven-meter fall onto the hard-packed snow ramp. Though both SAAG medics and Spln Public Relations have declined comment, Spinrad is apparently in critical condition from major internal injuries and trauma to the legs and back. The Euro-jetsetter, avid sportsman and unabashed thrill-seeker has been a staple of the Alpine Games for the past two decades, often acting as a vehicle for his corporations' latest enhancements for the sports crowd. <Posted 12-12-63>

• Accident my hoop! This has Lotwyr's clawmarks all over it! Bye, bye, Mr. Spinrad.

• Linate

• Spinrad's survived worse in the past six months—he has more SOTA augmentations than an Azzie cyberzombie. That car bomb in Lisbon last June tore off one of his cyberlegs, but he was up and running in Cannes and Monaco by August. The guy has more lives than my cat. I'll believe he's dead when I see it.

• Mediaweisse

• Hard Ice-capped, high-velocity round rigged for max penetration and secondary dispersal, shot from a precision Walther MA-2100 at less than 500 meters. So what if the board got in the way, he never stood a chance. It was a thing of beauty, if I do say so myself.

• Red Menace

• You better hope so. Otherwise your Johnson's going to be mighty pissed.

• Flak Jack

3. Robert Page

Robert Page is the ork who inherited a Rosetta Stone of sorts from Dunkelzahn that led to the publishing of the Or'zet Codex, the beginnings of an ork language (see the *Orxploitation* entry in this compilation). Page went underground when Saito sent troops to seize him and the Codex files. Though the Codex is now available on the Matrix, Page is still wanted on charges of sedition by the Protectorate and more than a few wealthy and powerful individuals would like to get their hands on Dunkelzahn's original texts. There are many rumors flying as to



Page's current hideout, but the most likely seem to indicate he's still in hiding in the Protectorate and helping to coordinate Metahuman People's Army activities.

- I know for a fact that a certain Welsh dragon has been trying very hard to locate Page's whereabouts. Page's supporters are very tight knit, however, and they're letting nobody near him—especially anyone who's not ork, and double especially anyone working for a dragon. Oddly enough, from what I can tell, the wyrm doesn't want to buy or steal the Codex—he wants to give Page something that he'll find useful for his continued translation efforts. I expect plenty of people would be interested in intercepting that exchange.

- Champollion

4. Jørgen Masterson

Zeta-ImpChem has its hounds searching after Jørgen Masterson, director of research and development at Z-IC's Nanotech Research Center 12, after unknown shadowrunners extracted him from the site. The runners killed all the guards, scientists, and technicians on duty in the white room where Masterson was working at the time. Highly sophisticated micro-drones jammed electronic surveillance, disabled rigged security systems and later self-destructed. The intruders destroyed all computers and backups with magically created electrical surges.

Masterson, a practicing Asatru Norwegian and multiple PhD graduate of Oslo University, made a name for himself as the brains behind the pioneering nanotech startup MicroFlek. Z-IC bought MicroFlek and its multi-million nuyen licenses in 2062. Masterson stayed on with Z-IC as R&D director, working on security and military nanotech applications while pursuing his own nanotech projects on the side. Z-IC has not yet disclosed whether Masterson was a willing accomplice or not in the deadly extraction.

- I knew Masterson back in university: real nice guy, until he fell in with the Aesir Society and got in deep with some of the end-of-the-world, back to nature zealots. He even dropped out for a few years. I was surprised to hear he got his act together and came back into the game. He graduated with honors and went on to get a couple more degrees.

- 011011011

- Maybe old friends came calling?

- GnuB

- No, the article says the intruders used high-tech means: drones and such, not Luddite-style.

- Hangfire

- Apparently the intruders did more than just attempt to erase the doc's research data—they went out of their way to nuke the site's private Matrix hosts. That's just overkill.

- Pistons

- Asatru connection? Crippling Matrix attack? Scary nanotech research? I'm seeing pointers to something that makes me worried.

- Conspir-I-See

5. Uwe Kleinfort

As if their current problems with Celedyr and Transys Neuronet aren't enough, now Hildebrandt-Kleinfort-Bernal have some family problems to deal with. This past summer, co-founder Dietrich Kleinfort died in his sleep, leaving the largest share of his stake in HKB to his son Uwe. Now Uwe's gone missing—right after the Leipzig police came around asking new questions about Old Man Dietrich's demise.

- Guess Uwe shouldn't have listened to Anthony Hildebrandt after all. Hildebrandt's been unhappy with Paul Bernal since the Transys fiasco, but Dietrich Kleinfort was sticking up for Bernal and thwarting efforts to have him removed. Junior, on the other hand, was wrapped around Hildebrandt's finger, so he figured it was in the company's best interest if Dietrich hastened his exit from this mortal coil. Too bad Uwe is just as incompetent in murder as he is in finance.

- Money Man

- You'll never guess where Uwe Kleinfort was last seen: Cardiff, Wales. You think someone should remind him what they say about dealing with dragons?

- Hyfrydol

6. Antonio Popé

Remember Antonio Popé? Once tapped as the next chairman of the Pueblo Board of Directors, Antonio saw his fortunes fall after his mentor Carlos Estefan was assassinated and his brother Jonathan outmaneuvered him out of power. Desperate to return to the top seat, Antonio has been seeking sponsors to help. Rumors are flying about who he's talked to: Ghostwalker, the New Revolution, Aztechnology and so on. Two names, however, have made Antonio the subject of speculation again: the Ute Nation and Novatech. Novatech's recent difficulties have made any news related to them interesting, and changes brewing under the surface within Ute have many people alarmed.

- A lot of people here are whispering that Antonio has been making contact with Ute underground dissidents to foment an overthrow of the current government. They say he hopes to take control of the new regime—either as a gift to make up with the Pueblo board, or as a power base to stage a hostile takeover.

- Whisper

7. Aris Damocles

It's probably easier to ask who doesn't want Damocles rather than who does. Earlier this year, this corporate takeover shark earned a million-nuyen bounty on his head.

albeit only for a ten-day period. Not only did he survive, he also managed to inflict damaging hits on Lusiada, ESUS, Kvaerner-Maersk and several other Eurocorps during that period. Last seen around Stuttgart, Württemberg in the Allied German States, Damocles is someone a lot of Eurocorps want to talk to, and not in a friendly chat sort of way, if you understand what I mean.

- They're too late. The Mr. Johnson who hired runners to protect the guy got himself surgically altered, betrayed Damocles at the end of the ten days, and took over his identity. He made off with Damocles' personal fortune (several hundred million euros) and stiffed us all, the motherfragger.
- DoWhile-D

- On the contrary, Signor Johnson's attempted deception was quite impressive, but unfortunately his asking price did not match Damocles' counteroffer.
- Magellan

8. Jonathan Blake

Late in 2063, Nadja Daviar took a vacation to the Vatican. She was supposed to be vacationing but came home with a souvenir—missing S-K executive, Jonathan Blake. Call it a last jab from Dunkelzahn. Y'see, after the dragon died, Blake had gone underground, leaving his position as an acquisitions VP at S-K and melting into the shadows. Rumors surfaced that Blake may have been one of Dunkelzahn's so-called Watchers. With Daviar bringing him in from the cold, those rumors returned with a vengeance.

After returning to the states, Blake was bequeathed a large amount of Wuxing stock, presumably from an undisclosed portion of the dragon's will. He took a VP of executive operations position with Wuxing and was immediately ushered off to Hong Kong.

- A throwback to the seven year plan?
- Capricorn
- More like a twenty-seven year itch. Blake was with special acquisitions longer than anyone. The people around him ended up either promoted or fired while Blake just watched them move on. He was stuck: too valuable to let go and too much of a loose cannon to promote. Now that he's switched flags, you can assume that Lofwyr won't let him keep breathing for long.
- Ice
- Blake's as cold as they come. Every time he came calling with a job, it was something more dangerous and less likely to see me alive on the other side of it. If I lost people along the way, he'd just shrug and offer extra 'yen to tide my crew over. Our relationship ended when I took a gig for him back in '51 to pull a bunch of orphans out of what he said was a

human smuggling ring. I found out later that the kids were being smuggled out of harm's way. S-K wanted them for some unknown reason.

- Argent

9. Dr. Kristine Martin

Some long-in-the-tooth Shadowlanders may remember Dr. Kristine Martin, a.k.a. KAM, one of Universal Omnitech's top genetics experts, who graced these forums a few times. The good doctor vanished this last spring under mysterious circumstances. Someone extracted her from a Universal Omnitech clinic hidden somewhere in Central America, while another team snatched her daughter right out from under the nose of Aztechnology COO Diego Chavez in Tenochtitlán. I hope the money was worth it, because I doubt Chavez will take it lightly.

- Wait. I know of that clinic. Isn't that where they treat ...?
- Corona
- The Big Blob himself: Roxborough. They should have killed him while they were at it.
- Alice

- This is the second time KAM has fled UniOmni. They snagged her back after her first disappearance in '62 and put her right back to work. That slimeball Roxborough just doesn't know how to take "no" for an answer. No amount of gene therapy can make him a decent human being again.
- Pistons

- Roxborough wasn't there, otherwise we might have not escaped despite Dr. Martin's backup plan.
- Anonymous
- Ah, so it was a friendly extraction? I wonder what the offer was?
- The Smiling Bandit

- A once in a lifetime opportunity.
- Mutatis Mutandis
- Traitors.
- Roxy

10. Dr. Chandra Dasari

Dr. Chandra Dasari of Griffin Biotechnology has been a hot item lately. Her studies released through the Seattle University Medical Journal have led to significant breakthroughs in the treatment of epilepsy. Adopting technology from cybernetic systems such as move-by-wire neural implants, Dr. Dasari has been able to bridge muscular control signals from healthy brain tissue to tissue that has suffered previous trauma. The result is controlled muscle activity



without drugs, as one side of the brain compensates for the other. This technology has already been licensed to DocWagon, though several other corporations are involved in financing the prototype and future development. Naturally, many other corps want a piece of the action, and the easiest way to get it would be to bring Dr. Dasari directly to their labs—willing or not.

- Still not a cure, but it's a start. I'm sure some people out there will be happy to have their left hand know what the right one is doing.

- Doc Cod

- Dasari's personal security contingent was doubled last week after a Matrix intrusion was detected targeting her personnel files. She doesn't go anywhere without several top-notch bodyguards looking out for her. That's got to be putting a cramp in her social life.

- Null

TOP 10 RUNNER HAUNTS

- It's always nice to give a nod to the places us runners can call home, whether it's a sleazy dive bar or an entire urban sector lost to the shadows. The following may not be the top ten in terms of popularity, but they all rank notice as interesting places to score work or safe places to lay low for a while.

- Captain Chaos

1. Module OMZ13—Apollo Station, Low Earth Orbit

If you want to scope out what's *really* going on up the gravity well, then OMZ13 is the place you want to be. Hanging on the fringes of the Mall Zone on Elevator 3, OMZ13 used to be a biotech lab module before the original owners sold it off for bankruptcy liquidation. Now it serves as a bar, catering mostly to freelancers, indies and the small fries renting oxygen from the big boys. Just like everywhere in space, accommodations are a little cramped, but in a cozy sort of way.

- OMZ13's a good place to go if you're looking for a freelance pilot to take you to an orbital with no questions asked.

- Toos

- It's also the preferred meeting place for those who have a pathological fear of spell slingers.

- Magister

2. Addis Ababa, Horn of Africa

Ok, it's hot, dusty, crowded and filthy, but you've got to admit, the Addis Ababa sprawl breathes a certain atmosphere that an enterprising shadowrunners can readily appreciate. It has bazaars full of smuggled goods, useful contacts everywhere and an amazing nightlife. The shantytown sprawl of Addis Ababa is the only real stable area in the chaotic dustbowl known as the Horn of Africa. The self-governing five million inhabitants know this and the streets are pretty well secured—by African standards.

- The top attraction, besides the smuggling and mercenary business, is the change-your-identity industry. If you want to lay low for a while or want a completely new face, just go to Addis. Shadowclinics and fake SINs are around every corner. With no governmental or corporate influence to speak of, you can just walk off in the crowd and simply disappear.

- Anonymous

- The only real problem is getting there. There are no regular flights to Addis—heck, their airstrip is completely covered with mud brick houses and shacks—and travelling through the desert is not advised, at least not without some good protection (read: weapons).

- Asad

3. The Scrap—Tinkertown, Atlanta, CAS

Owned by Harry, a dwarf who claims to be an underworld entrepreneur, the Scrap is a converted furniture store in Tinkertown. It now serves as a dual-concept establishment: a gritty street dive with a high-class restaurant above it. The basement is an industrial style pit with bleachers and bars featuring flame-blowing bartenders. Every night, drone fighting contests draw large crowds of locals off the street. The ground floor, in contrast, is a top-notch restaurant with real non-soy entrees, and a skybox view of the fights. There is plenty of security both above and below given the clientele and nature of the establishment.

- Lots of highbrow socialites brave a danger-filled trip into the Atlanta sprawl to visit the Scrap. It's also a great place to find someone to fix up your bike, or help you get your hands on military surplus gear. There are lots of tech-heads that hang out and compete here.

- Rigger X

- Harry is a fast-rising fixer. He's kinda hard to take serious, with his cigars, flower shirts and sandals, but he's got a head for the business and is slicker than snof.

- Jr. Woodchuck

4. The Red Lion—Waterfront District, Cape Town, Azania

If the biz ever takes you down around Azania, make sure you have a chance to swing by the Red Lion at some point on your trip. Situated along the Waterfront district of Cape Town, the Red Lion boasts not only some of Azania's finest cuisine, but also has some of the best jazz to be found south of the equator. (The world-famous Athlone Feet played here many nights before stardom took them trotting around the world.) The owner, Micah Annobil-Dodoo, used to run the Azanian shadows, so he knows everyone and everything important. Just make sure you're polite and discreet, though; Micah doesn't like it when his high-spending highbrow clientele get scared away by some smelly cybermonster.

- It's rumored that during his running days, Micah ended up developing a special working relationship with the great

dragon Mujaji. Many of the Rain Queen's agents are "regulars" at the Red Lion, where they keep an eye on what's going down in Cape Town.

- Xhosite

- Early in the year, Rhonabwy apparently paid a visit to the Red Lion, disguised in human form, to catch an Athlone Feet show. It's possible he may have also been mixing business with his pleasure, like meeting with Mujaji or causing trouble for the Zulu elves.

- Lynch

5. Mercado—The Meat Market, Lisbon, Portugal

If you're ever in Lisbon, hop down to the old flooded waterfront. Within walking distance of the big ferry and rail terminal of Cais do Sodré lies the Mercado. Formerly a grand old market, it has now been transformed into a partially open-air nightclub and pit-fight venue. It's serviced by a number of elevated catwalks and every form of water taxi you can imagine, so getting there is easy. Getting in is not so easy. Trambolho and Martelo, the troll bouncers, are pretty selective of who they let in—the more cred you look like you have, the likelier you are to get in. The place is run cooperatively by the Baptista mob, who handle the gambling and chip trade, and the Kussunduloia Cartel, who handle the flesh trade—which ironically makes it the safest place in town.

The Mercado is a fave with mercs on R&R, runners and executives looking for a good time, making it the perfect place to do biz. Plus the background noise of the pit-fight crowd is useful and the fights are an attraction unto themselves, from grudge matches between mercs to UFC gladiators to paracritter fights.

- Obviously, this isn't the warmest and friendliest place to have your meets, but it's the place to go to get some anonymity and the regulars are discreet if nothing else. Plus you can even put some money on the fights or get in on the casino action that takes place on the first floor enclosed terraces.

- Flak Jack

- Some of the biggest names on the European underground fight scene make their start in the Mercado. Some Gladio members also stop in during their underground tours.

- Kildare

- A lot of them never leave ...

- Navarre

6. Sparta—Buenos Aires, Argentina

No one can blame you if you hear "merc haunt" and imagine a sleazy, noisy bar where grunts spend their cred on booze and joygirls; truth is, plenty fit that description, but not Sparta. This small Argentinean country club breaks the mold. The drinks are okay, the golf course is good and the cuisine is out of this world. The real fun is the no-nonsense crew visiting it: mercs, military officers, corp suits, diplomats and intel-

ligence agents flock to the place, making it wiz for finding new contacts or getting juicy jobs. That is, if you get invited.

- Want to hear something really funny? All the people at Sparta have served on the front lines in one campaign or another against Amazonian expansionism. Makes you wonder what else goes on behind those walls.

- Che

7. Gunther's—Ork Underground, Seattle, UCAS

Few people think of the Ork Underground and "great place to grab a bite to eat" in the same sentence—unless you have a taste for devil rats. A troll couple named Gunther and Bertha are changing that, though, setting up a barbeque joint that is starting to turn heads. Gunther, a Gator shaman, recently retired from running the shadows because, as he says, he "wasn't getting enough ribs—not to mention enough trid." While the service may be a little slow, the ribs are some of the best in town and the beer is quality Ork Underground homebrew. While it is an equal opportunity establishment, Gunther prefers orks and trolls. If you're a shadowrunner, especially tusk-endowed, it's a great place to meet, talk shop and occasionally get some healing from the owner.

- And don't even think of starting trouble there. Bertha wields shish-kebab spikes like a master ninja.

- Pincushion

8. Wiki Stopover—Seattle RTG

Wiki for short, this is one of the oldest and most eclectic clubs in the Matrix. Originally a prototype host for the collaborative and distribution software used for Shadowland, the Wiki Stopover's primary feature is its user-editable decor. Patrons can download a utility to make new rooms or alter existing ones. Any room ever created is accessible, though the system removes rooms that haven't been visited for extended periods, and some unpopular rooms are harder to find. The primary "common" areas have stricter rules on redecoration, but the décor nevertheless evolves continually. The main Wiki system provides movement, services and support, but icon artists have a fair amount of latitude in the imagery they can use.

- Wiki's a showcase for upcoming sculpting talent, not to mention Matrix vandals who like to be able to cut loose without setting off alarms. The clashing atmosphere and styles can get irritating, but you can also use your filters to cut down on this. The cool thing is just how much of it there is. You can spend days in there without repeating rooms (and even if you do they may have changed).

- Grid Reaper

- The sculpting for the interface connecting all the rooms changes regularly too. Initially it was an endless corridor of doors, but I've also seen a flat plain of gopher holes and a galaxy theme. Some popular rooms are "1 cm Tall."



"Picasso," and "FastJack's Morph Room," which moves out-of-sight stuff around randomly.

- Slamm-O!

- Not all rooms are accessible—there are a few tricks you can use to make them private, which is handy for secure virtual meets. And the system doesn't always delete old rooms—rumors persist that certain hacker crews use some of the older and more inaccessible rooms as secret stashes for their own paydata archives.

- FastJack

9. The Flying Dutchman—Fort Dauphin, Madagascar

Sea Ghost is a "retired" pirate that decided he could make a better cut selling stale beer and cheap rum to his mates than he could getting shot at by naval cutters. So he settled down on the only spot of land in Madagascar that even remotely resembles civilization and opened the Flying Dutchman. He's made a fairly good run at it and now owns one of the hottest places to do biz on the pirate isle. If you need anything, literally, Sea Ghost or one of his patrons is probably selling it. If not, they know where you can get it, cheap, quick and no questions asked. A word to the wise, though; Sea Ghost has more tolerance for runners than most pirates, but some of his regulars will still test you if they smell the shadows on you.

- And be sure to come well armed and able to use what you're packing. I was in there a few months back and saw some idiot kill himself when he got entangled in his monowhip. He didn't die immediately; the pirates let him bleed out on the floor for a few hours before he went quiet.

- Bloody Rackham

10. The Fish Hop—Galveston, CAS

This world-class Gulf Coast underwater resort is the hot vacation spot for folks with nuyen to blow. Its proximity to Aztlan also makes it a shadowhaven, renowned for spawning some big time runs in recent years. Privacy is unrivaled, as each main room at the Fish Hop opens into an underwater bowl with thick glass walls that reveals a startling view of the oceanic world. Physical security is respectable, and the magical security is downright scary.

- The Fish Hop isn't really fully underwater. They have built off of three old oil rigs that they now house the generators for the place. Those places are where most of the security is concentrated, for obvious reasons.

- Miami Dice

- Carib pirates love to prey on the tourist boats on their way to and from this place.

- Jollee Rancher

- The Fish Hop also houses one of the finest casinos in the world, and sponsors the World Series of Poker each year.

- Starfall

TOP 10 PARANORMAL INCIDENTS

- The Year of the Comet reminded us that we can't take the Awakening for granted, and that we can expect the unexpected to shake things up for years to come. To reflect that, I've pulled together ten of the more interesting paranormal events that have floated across my radar over the past year.

- Captain Chaos

1. Killimanjaro Tragedy?

NAIROBI (Round Square)—Masai shamans are crying foul, claiming that corporate interests unleashed some sort of magical effect that has driven spirits away from Mount Killimanjaro. Atlantean Foundation authorities have demanded an explanation from the Corporate Court, denouncing the incident as a magical attack. <Posted 07-01-63>

- They're not kidding. The corps got fed up with the spirits interfering with their plans to build a maglev launcher on the mountain, so they went all out. We're talking a Wild Hunt or Ghost Dance type of ritual here. Almost every spirit near the mountain was banished and those that remained were shredded by crack anti-spirit astral strikes. Word is that the corps already have some sort of spirit barrier half-completed to keep them from coming back. This is one project the corps aren't playing around with anymore.

- WizKid

2. Martian Meteor Mystery

SAN FRANCISCO (NN)—A Mitsuhamu Thaumaturgical Research lab was leveled Thursday by a devastating blast that claimed the lives of 19 personnel. Internal documents leaked to NewsNet indicate that Mitsuhamu was studying a nakhlite, one of the rare Martian meteorites known to have fallen to Earth. This particular nakhlite was part of a shower that rained down on an Egyptian village in 1911. It was likely created when a large meteor impact struck the surface of Mars, ejecting pieces of the planet into space that eventually found their way to Earth. The cause of the explosion remains unknown, as is the fate of the meteorite. <Posted 01-10-63>

- Magical space rocks? Give me a break. Sounds like a cover story Mitsuhamu concocted to hide whatever research they really had underway.

- Cynic

- On the contrary, I think there may be something to it. That particular Martian meteorite is one of only three whose whereabouts are still known to the scientific community; the 30 other known meteorites were all stolen from researchers and collections over the past three decades, many of them



disappearing on the same date in 2034. Something about these Martian rocks is interesting to somebody.

- Rockhound

- What the report isn't mentioning is that some witnesses report seeing some sort of dracoform fleeing the scene.

- Seikie

3. Spirit Squat Evicted

COLOGNE (DMK)—A squat eviction turned surreal Tuesday when the resident artist collective turned out to be a nest of free spirits. Knight Errant officers raided the highly publicized squat near the Cologne Cathedral at 2 am, at the tail end of an exhibition opening of "alien art." The squat was seized only a few days earlier by a quirky artist's collective called Exquisite Corpse who announced the exhibit as a response to the "stifling alienating of corporate consumer culture." Knight Errant expected some resistance from the squatters and their anarchist supporters, but was surprised when the artists turned out to be spirits in metahuman form. Several officers were hospitalized after being overwhelmed by "crippling laughter" and other magical effects, before an emergency unit of magicians drove the spirits from the scene. <Posted 03-07-63>

- The Knight Errant mages weren't able to banish these spirits, they just forced them to leave. Rumor is that these spirits are still circulating in the Cologne shadows and are looking for a new way to "shake up the mundanes."

- Pooltizer

- The price of the works being exhibited has gone through the roof obviously. All of the European high society is desperately trying to get a hold of genuine "spirit art."

- Caballero

4. Swamp Static

ANTWERP (DMK)—A Shiwase meteorological station confirmed reports of seismic activity yesterday, registering several localized earthquakes in uninhabited areas of the northern United Netherlands. The largest disturbance reached 6.2 on the Richter scale. Witnesses also reported a number of unusual phenomena at the same time, including lightning storms, tornadoes and a drastic increase in airborne static electricity. Three members of a geological survey team were seriously injured when the swamp water they were wading in was electrified, while reports that two aircraft crashed due to electrical malfunctions are still being verified. <Posted 11-10-63>

- I've heard some witnesses describe the events as a series of natural EMP charges.

- Tjibbe

- Maybe it has something to do with the mining of gas and oil deposits in the region—the drilling may have triggered some sort of mana fluctuation. We all know the pollution from

the Black Tide has twisted magic in the area, creating some weird phenomena.

- Ecotope

5. Ghost City Sighted in Sahara Mountains

TAMANRASSET (UPI)—Tuareg nomads roaming in the southern half of the Sahara Desert have reported sightings of an ancient city in the highlands of the Tassili n' Ahaggar, approximately 400 kilometers southwest of Tamanrasset. Overhead satellite imagery scans have revealed no traces of the city, however many experts believe that it may be a form of "astral construct." The Desert Wars operations staff has posted requests for explorers to form expeditions to investigate the city. With the second half of the 2063 Desert Wars season starting in a few weeks, concerns are being raised that the city might cause some magical interference with battles in the Mountain Quadrant. <Posted 08-19-63>

- I know at least one team that was sent out never returned. Opening Day had to be pushed back two weeks while the staff rescheduled all the Mountain Quadrant battle scenarios to take place in either the Tripoli Hot Zone or the Cyrene Quadrant. I don't know who was madder, the mercs or the media people.

- ReLode

6. Devil's Garden

LI7ka Jesenica (MS)—MediaSim has asked EuroPol for aid in tracking a 28-person documentary team that disappeared while filming on location in Croatia's Devil's Garden area. The crew was filming a report on dozens of unique paraspecies of plants and animals residing among the enigmatic cluster of lakes and forests. MediaSim believes Dinaric militias may have been taken the crew hostage. <Posted 11-03-63>

- Devil's Garden is the sort of place you don't want to get lost in. The place is a fountain of paranormal activity, with an eerie mist occluding sixteen ever-changing lakes and waterfalls. Packs of Awakened wolves (called storm wolves by the locals) haunt the lakes and drive out intruders. The place is a botanist's wet dream, but few are willing to risk studying there for long.

- Eljah

- Dinaric militias my ass. The only metahuman in the Devil's Garden is a Wolf shaman called "the Black Queen." The locals know not to mess with her, and the mercs and militias serving the local warlords and criminal interests steer clear.

- Dio

7. Hellcow Outbreak Shakes India

NEW DEHLI (UPI)—Indian authorities announced yesterday that the bos malus outbreak had been contained, though not before claiming 142 victims. Commonly known as "hell-cow," the bos malus has routinely plagued the cattle industry



worldwide since 2061, when it was initially mistaken for a bovine SURGE mutation. While an infected adult is a peaceful herbivore, its offspring are voracious omnivores that will eat anything from metahumans to soft metals. <Posted 10-24-63>

- The original appearance of hellcows was a nasty shock to the Hindus. They managed to contain most of them, but outbreaks are still common. A lot of the hellcow herds are now receiving pilgrimages from Hindus who consider them to be a divine omen from Lord Krishna.

- Auntie Social

- It was a little easier to convince some of the locals to geek the hellcows since they hardly look anything like their sacred cows. More like a hybrid of avian and reptile, with a huge mouth. Absolutely monstrous.

- Mime

- Agrlicorps loathe these pests. The initial outbreaks almost ruined them.

- The Chromed Accountant

- Their loss is the biotech industry's gain, though it's hard to find runners willing to bring them a live specimen to study. Can't imagine why

- The Smiling Bandit

8. "Flatline Killer" Arrested

SANTA FE (NABS)—Pueblo Security announced today that they had captured the "Flatline Killer" and charged him with twelve counts of murder. Dylan Risius, a 21-year old ork, was arrested after what police called a "pitched magical battle." Risius was not registered as a magician, and authorities believe his magical talent was previously undiagnosed. Risius is charged with incapacitating his victims with electrical surges and hooking them up to the Matrix before anchoring stasis spells onto them. Authorities believe Risius then used some sort of illegal biofeedback program to kill his victims. Risius admitted to the killings, claiming that spirits within the Matrix ordered him to bring them sacrifices or they would disable the grids. <Posted 05-09-63>

- The interesting thing is that police haven't located any sort of black IC program in Risius's possession, and there's evidence that his victim's took days to die. To make it weirder, while there's evidence that Risius made virtual contact with many of his victims, there's nothing to show that he actually made physical contact with any of them. So the question is, how did he disable them with magic, force them to stay Jacked in and then kill them without any sort of utility? Weird, eh?

- Grid Reaper

9. Great Anaconda Corpse Missing

LIMA (NN)—The corpse of a 25-meter long anaconda just recently announced by scientists returning from an expedition along the Aztlan-Amazonia border has been lost under unknown



circumstances. Previous reports of extremely large snakes inhabiting South America's rainforests and swamps had been dismissed until this specimen was revealed. <Posted 04-25-63>

- They're real, chummers. My team was decimated by one of these in Amazonia's rainforest. It came out of nowhere, gobbled up two of my team before we could even react and then disappeared. My remaining mates and I decided to hightail it out of there. Picking plants was supposed to be an easy job ...

- Condor

- There's a debate about these great anacondas—some reports claim they're intelligent and have magical skills. Some have suggested a link between these snakes and nagas, aitaras, wyverns or even feathered serpents.

- Wright

- It's been rumored that Hualpa's right hand is a great anaconda called M'Boi. Like others of his kind, M'Boi is very secretive and only shows himself when absolutely necessary. The dead 'conda was probably retrieved to protect the species' secrecy. If and when you come to South America, remember the name M'Boi. Hualpa might be the top dragon, but every person or thing with power manipulates its own personal pawns.

- Artemis

10. Frankenstein Returns?

BENSHEIM (DMK) Reports of strange lights in the mountains and vandalism in local graveyards have many residents in the southern Darmstadt and Bensheim districts wondering if the Frankenstein legend is actually true. Police have increased local patrolling, and members of the Dr. Faustus Society have been called in from Frankfurt to investigate.

During the seventeenth century, a local alchemist named Konrad Dippel took residence in one of the local castles, the Burg Frankenstein, and was accused of robbing graveyards for alchemical ingredients. English novelist Mary Shelley learned of the legend while visiting Darmstadt and used it as the basis for the horror novel Frankenstein. Currently the University of Heidelberg maintains the castle under trust. <Posted 09-12-63>

- Not again. Every few years the Ancient Wisdom channel shows that Hour of the Magi rerun about the novel, and a few dozen newbies come rushing over from North America to Darmstadt to see if they can find anything new. Never mind that magic professors from Heidelberg have stripped clean the entire castle.

- Struwwelpeter

- It's different this time. There haven't been many of those dreadful Americans around, and lately the Bergstraße region has seen an increase in shedim reports. Many incidents have actually been far south of the Frankenstein castle, closer to Bensheim and

Alsbach. There are many other mountainside castles in the area besides Frankenstein, so it's possible one of them (like Auerbach Castle) may be the actual epicenter of activity.

- Echo Sleben

TOP 10 SHADOW NEWS STORIES OF 2063

- Big events on the world stage tend to have an impact in the shadows. One thing can send shockwaves rippling through the status quo, creating situations where people in power turn to shadowrunners to help them take advantage of the situation, protect their interests or get back in the game. Here's a recap on the top ten news items of relevance to shadowrunners over this past year.

- Captain Chaos

1. Polish Resistance Routs Counteroffensive

WROCLAW (AP)—The Polish Liberation Army announced the defeat of a combined Polish nationalist and Russian counteroffensive driving for the rebel capital of Wrocław. The combined forces launched the counteroffensive in late July, following reports of sinking morale and a loss in confidence of the leadership of General Marszałik. Shortly after the counteroffensive begun, however, a Russian command and communications failure led to artillery and air strikes against their own units. Taking advantage of the stalled drive, rebel forces launched a flanking attack that routed the nationalist and Russian troops. <Posted 08-01-63>

- One for the history books, all right. Though the vaunted Summer Offensive petered out, Marszałik was ready for this attack. Rebel commandos—funded by S-K Prime, no matter what they say—infiltrated the Red Army's command and control nexus at Poznań, deep within nationalist territory. They pulled a flawless job, not only stealing the battle plans from the Russkies' isolated system, but also inserting camouflaged knowbots and viral packages to seed chaos and keep the Red Army deckers busy.

The result? A total rout. The Russkies ended up firing on themselves. Meanwhile, the AW volunteers were waiting for them in hardened positions, serving as anvil to the Hussaria's flanking attack hammer. Plans are already cooking for a new offensive in January 2064.

- Invisible

- No prize to guess which corp installed the Russian network in the first place and knows all its weak points. Seems like Marszałik really has sold his soul to Lofwyr.

- Warrior '53

- I thought that this was Captain Zbik's handiwork, but if you're right about Saeder-Krupp, then it's probably propaganda.

- Babinicz

- I don't know Warrior. If the dragon gave him the means to pull this coup off, it does go a long way towards supporting



his change of heart. Maybe the naysayers in the Liberation Army will realize they need that kind of clout and capital on their side or there won't be a future.

- Macko

2. Tsimshian Walks Out of Peace Talks

CHEYENNE (NABS)—The Tsimshian government slammed the door on private discussions with the Salish-Shidhe, hosted by the Sovereign Tribal Council. After months of virulent press attacks by Sioux and Salish-Shidhe officials, STC mediator Joshua Proudree resigned. Despite eight months of work, he failed even to end the regular border skirmishes and covert operations by both sides. <Posted 10-08-63>

- Meanwhile, Tsimshian stockpiled enough surface-to-air missiles to shoot down the SSC air force, while their Mitsuhamo advisors supervised troop training and field supply buildups.

- Janet Running-Wolf

- Like they were the only ones preparing for war. The Salish-Shidhe paid millions to Fed-Boeing to upgrade three squadrons of air fighters and staff two advanced communications centers. Local biotech companies are also raking in cred with implant, combat drug and biowarfare protection sales to the SSC Rangers.

- Wenatchee Warrior

3. Editorial: Novatech in Financial Trouble?

WASHINGTON POST—Do a series of events over the past weekend in Kentucky indicate that Novatech is in far worse shape than previously thought?

A copy of First Kentucky President Steve Darby's personal calendar, leaked by an internal source, indicates that Darby met with Novatech Executive Vice President Henderson Gustav Friday afternoon. They were to discuss a pending 500 million nuyen loan agreement that First Kentucky had promised months ago but not yet delivered. The following Monday morning, employees and customers arrived at First Kentucky to find the doors locked, lights off.

Darby's notes indicate that he was well aware that the bank was approaching insolvency and did not have the money to loan to Novatech. Why he met at all with Gustav regarding a loan that First Kentucky was unable to make is unclear.

Monday morning, Northwest Financial filed suit against Novatech in UCAS federal court for defaulting on a billion nuyen corporate loan. Sources indicate that this is only one of several notes that indicate Novatech is currently in default. <Posted 07-12-63>

- That's right, chummers. Novatech is hemorrhaging nuyen like you wouldn't believe. Scuttlebutt says that Villiers and the upper ranks have a big surprise planned, but if Novatech doesn't get back in its game soon, it won't have the funds to stave off litigation attacks, much less do anything else.

- Corp Watcher

- Novatech ain't just sitting idle while its arch-nemesis Mr. Dankwalther tears away chunks. It's made some strange moves over the past year, either acquiring or undermining odd corps that normally wouldn't even be a blip on their radar. I'm betting that these were forays to either block or investigate the activities of our good Mr. Dankwalther.

- The Chromed Accountant

4. Juan Carlos Rescinds Claim to Spanish Throne

MADRID (SOL)—In the midst of raging controversy, Prince Juan Carlos stunned his supporters yesterday by relinquishing his claim to the Spanish throne. This paves the way for Alfonso, former King Felipe's illegitimate ogre son, to take the crown. A coronation ceremony is already scheduled for January, though Juan Carlos's supporters have vowed their opposition. No explanation was given as to the prince's change of heart. Pope John XXV is expected to preside over the ceremonies. <Posted 07-22-63>

- Score one for the pro-meta faction: they won this leg of the race. Someone got to Juan Carlos—blackmail, maybe?—before someone writhed Alfonso (though that's still a possibility). The battle's far from over.

- Melga

- Cardinal Estrellas was so livid after Juan Carlos's declaration that his head nearly burst. He's not taking the news lying down, though. The Spanish Church has something big in the works, and it's not going to be pretty.

- Padre Pedro

- The Monarchist Party is also making plans—word is that they're sussing out support for a military coup.

- Sepherim

5. Shakeup in Portland

PORTLAND (AP)—After months of infighting, civil unrest and political bickering it seems that the Tir Talngire Council of Princes is finally at full strength again, though the situation in the country seems far from stable. The problems started over a year ago when the motion to grant the council seat vacated by Prince Oakforest to James Telectrian III was contested. Jenna Ni'Fairra disagreed with the High Prince's choice and advanced another candidate, Feana Sterling, for the position. This forced an open debate on the council over the matter.

While this struggle played out, Ebran the Scribe stepped down from his seat, leaving a second spot vacant on the council. With Ebran gone, Ni'Fairra had the votes to get Sterling a seat, and a compromise was reached where Telectrian took the other.

Sterling's stint on the council was short lived, however, as she was assassinated by a Rinelle supported terrorist three days after being officially named a prince. This action touched off riots and a brutal suppression of dissidents personally led by



Jenna. While there are no longer protestors on the street, there is a high level of unrest in Portland. <Posted 10-27-63>

- Things are getting mighty hot in Portland these days folks. The Rinelle also tried to geek Jonathon Reed, but they botched it and he managed to get away with only a few scratches. Our sweet lady Jenna is convinced that it was a human plot to overthrow elven leadership that killed her friend and she's been chomping at the bit to unleash the paladins on some of the non-elven neighborhoods.

- Arcflight

- Things have gotten so bad that Surehand (at Hestaby's recommendation) has hired a media and PR firm called the Horizon Group to try and smooth things over. It owns New Line and Polyaural and is supposed to be savvy at image redesign and rebranding. These guys have a rep as being meta- and Awakened-friendly and kinda touchy-feely, which plays well in Tir. But the fact that the princes are resorting to outside help should tell you how bad things have gotten.

- Monitor

6. Rømrø Arkoblock Disaster

HANNOVER (DMK)—Witnesses report a massive explosion in the vicinity of Proteus's Rømrø Arkoblock yesterday. Sources from afar as 20 kilometers away reported a flash of light, wave disturbances and a massive plume of smoke and water. Proteus officials denied comment, but military spokespeople say they are investigating the matter. The Rømrø Arkoblock just finished completion and is minimally staffed. <Posted 06-06-63>

- "Massive explosion" is putting it mildly. Truth is, Ares nuked it from orbit with a Thor shot. Alarms all over Europe went off when Ares dropped that rock.

- Hangfire

- Apparently it was a retaliatory shot. Remember those rumors about Ares ships getting sunk in the Sea of Japan? It's all part of some corp conflict going on between Ares and Proteus. The whole matter was apparently dragged in front of the Corporate Court, where heads are rolling, hands are being slapped and compensation is being awarded. Nothing but another day of biz for the megacorps. Meanwhile, how many people are dead?

- 0111011001

- There's a lot more to the story. This incident is just a spin-off of the power grab going on between the Frankfurt Bank Association and Proteus. Just another shockwave from the death of Nachtmeister at Lofwyr's claws.

- Felix

7. Yamatetsu Mars Mission Lands

SVOBODNIY (ITAR-TASS)—Cosmonauts from the Valentina Tereshkova sent back live footage from the surface of Mars to mission control at the Svbodnly launch facility today. The Tereshkova—a joint project between Yamatetsu, Russia and the Pacific Prosperity Group—is the first manned mission in history to land on the red planet. The Tereshkova launched from Yamatetsu's Shibanokuji orbital yard in February and reached Mars after a six-month journey. The team will remain on Mars until January 2064, to be back in Earth orbit around June. <Posted 09-16-63>

- Before you even ask—no, they didn't send any pictures of Martian dragons or pyramids. So far. (Unless Yamatetsu's keeping them hush-hush, that is.) The astral observations of their Awakened specialist, on the other hand, are a hot topic among experts worldwide.

- Spiderjack

- Too bad it isn't actually the first manned mission to Mars—or even the second. NASA's Operation Discovery made it there first.

- MUFON Boy

- You're talking about that alleged secret NASA Operation Discovery mission aren't you? That's just myth, like Area 51. In any case, the world thinks Yamatetsu made it first, which is a big boost to their space program, especially after losing the probe race to Ares.

- Skywarp

8. Arcology Handed Over To Metroplex Guard

SEATTLE (NN)—Major General Angela Colloton, commander of Joint Task Force: Seattle, announced yesterday that stewardship of the Renraku Arcology was being handed over to the Seattle Metroplex Guard. UCAS and Renraku Red Samurai forces finished their relief efforts earlier this year, securing the arcology from any remaining or future terrorist threats. Though quiet on the matter for many months, Renraku America is preparing a "Schultz-Aneki Community Project" proposal to the Seattle Council next month. <Posted 08-30-63>

- Renraku America didn't have the money to reclaim the building alone, and the UCAS is holding on to the arc until they can settle on Renraku's bill. Sherman Huang, Manager of Renraku America, is hoping the new proposal will make it seem like he's resolved the situation—just in time for Renraku's upcoming shareholders' meeting that should elect a new board and maybe a new CEO.

- Renraku Fox

- Despite their claims, the arc isn't fully recovered. They still have a few "contained" problem spots, and now the Guard has a new problem on their hands in the form of, get this—

squatters. It seems that some of the old Ork Underground passages have been re-opened now that it's safe and the Guard doesn't have the manpower to track all the squatters down.

• Marcelles

• Colloton hasn't pulled all of her troops yet—they're still guarding the reactors in the basements, along with a few other key points.

• Hangfire

9. Night of Liberation Declared

MANILA (AP)—Rioting continued for the fourth straight day as protesters attempted to storm the military facility at Subic Bay and were fired upon by troops. There are unconfirmed reports that a dracoform, possibly the great dragon Masaru, appeared in the sky over Manila yesterday evening during a pitched street battle between protesters and corporate troops.

As the situation in the Philippines stretches on, it also seems as though corporate troops already on the island may have to wait a while longer for reinforcements. Two MCT cruisers wandered into the midst of joint Ares and Yamatetsu naval maneuvers and sustained significant damage due to incidental fire. Both Ares and Yamatetsu have issued formal apologies for the incident and have promised to keep their troops free from any fighting on the islands to avoid any further incidents. <Posted 09-27-63>

• Ha ha ha. So it looks like Masaru's little revolution got kicked into high gear. Ares and Yamatetsu may be keeping all their uniformed people in their compounds, but the streets are crawling with "new recruits" to the revolution. Not to mention that rumor of a Knight Errant FireWatch team undertaking some "training exercises" at an undisclosed location in the South Pacific.

• Hangfire

• Masaru—or someone—better get the situation under control soon or it'll get past the point of no return. A lot of refugees that came over when Yomi shut down have been using the riots to settle old scores. There are at least three Yakashima compounds that have been totally frogged since the rioting started.

• Tonkin

• Word is that Masaru has had several face-to-face meets with the boy Emperor in the past two weeks. Maybe they're hammering out a peace solution.

• Arnsador

10. General Secretary Absent From Sickness

MOSCOW (ITAR-TASS)—A spokeswoman for the office of the General Secretary acknowledged yesterday that Arkady Korolenko, General Secretary of the National Supreme Soviet, has taken a leave of absence due to illness. Spokeswoman Valeri Kirovovna would not provide specific details, but she emphasized that Korolenko is expected to recover, though no specific date was given for when he would return to an active

schedule. Korolenko's failure to appear at recent public events had raised concern that the leader of the Russian state may have to step down due to failing health. <Posted 11-24-63>

• Spin doctoring, chummers. Korolenko's not just sick, he's dying. And not just "recently"—he's been suffering from liver cancer the past nine months. Valeri made the announcement only to stall the inevitable power struggle before Korolenko has a chance to anoint a successor. He could go at any moment. If what I hear is true.

• Bogatyr

• That would explain why he looked so bad at the May Day speech. I've heard he's already handpicked his successor: General Dzhermilya Ogurznev, chief political officer for Russian forces in Poland. Apparently Korolenko's waiting for Ogurznev to finish his tour in Poland before making the announcement.

• Stormavik

• Of course if things keep going the way they have been in Poland, then Ogurznev may be out of a job real soon.

• Invisible

THE ROAD TO AMAZONIA 2064

by Tina Duarte, *GloboTrid*

Urban brawl might be flashier and combat biking more acrobatic, but soccer remains the world's most popular sport. Few things can combine such passion, talent and beauty.

• And money, especially money.

• Goalkeeper

Every four years, the world paralyzes for a month as 32 countries vie for glory in FIFA's World Cup. Next year will see its return to a land that is synonymous with soccer: Amazonia. After decades of relative isolation, the country is starting to open up to tourism and investment. The tournament will be the crowning achievement of Amazonia's thirtieth anniversary, an event that will draw global attention.

• This championship is just a giant-sized PR tool for the wizards. All they want is to shake off their reputation as war-mongering eco-terrorists and improve foreign relations.

• Centurion

• A slave can always use his master's weapons against him.

• Tiradentes

Amazonia '64 will also be a historic milestone for FIFA, as it will become the first World Cup open to both genders. While this is the norm in the South American colossus, thanks to long-standing laws against discrimination, not everyone is thrilled about it. The event has drawn protests from less-enlightened countries, but FIFA has already stated that from now on all international tournaments will be mixed, something they hope will benefit the sport.

• The reporter's bias is showing: no one's complaining about women, they're just worried that infected changelings can compete. They should have a league of their own—think of the health hazards if they don't.

• Buzz

• Why you little (2.5 Mp deleted)

• Play nice, kids. Don't make me use the red card.

• Captain Chaos

FOR THE NUYEN OF THE GAME

Amazonia '64 is already an economic success. Most tickets have been sold in advance, tourism is skyrocketing and stores can't keep up with the demand for merchandise. The sale of broadcasting rights alone has left record sums in the government's coffers.

• Sol Media's execs are aflame over the broadcasting rights. They thought they had bagged them, until GloboTrid got the nod from Hualpa.

• The Keynesian Kid

• Well, what did you expect? GloboTrid has always put a positive spin on Amazonian news—just remember all the hype about Alcantara after the Probe Race. They're probably collecting their paycheck.

• Bira

• GloboTrid isn't the only regional outfit to benefit from the tournament. The Amazonian government was pretty generous with the small fish, leaving only the scraps for the big boys.

• Banderante

Amazonia has invested heavily in infrastructure, with the Novo Maracanã stadium being the most prominent example. The stadium is a testament to Amazonian engineering, with high tech alloys and organic materials interwoven for amazing results. With half a million seats, Novo Maracanã is the biggest stadium in the world, *o mais grande do mundo*.

• That monster is awe-inspiring, especially when full (not an uncommon occurrence, given Metropole's size), I can't even imagine how it looks like from the astral.

• Brother Data

• Consider yourself lucky, chummer. It's completely inebriating, like drinking tequila straight from a fire hose.

• Artemus

The World Cup is also fertile ground for player scouts and corporate sponsors from all over the world, looking to spot the newest and hottest talents. No one forgets that Barcelona snatched Justin Estrada in 2060 for a mere million nuyen, a real bargain considering the Pueblo superstar is now worth a cool 120 million.

QUALIFIED COUNTRIES

Africa: Azania, Egypt, Kenya

Asia: Arabia, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, undecided (Henan-Sichuan playoff)

Europe: Allied German States, Czech Republic, England, France, Israel, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Netherlands

North America: Aztlan, Caribbean League, Pueblo Corporate Council, undecided (CAS-UCAS playoff)

Oceania: Australia

South America: Amazonia, Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay

• Aztlan's playing? I thought they were Amazonia's nemesis.

• Code Kid

• They are, but they've never officially been at war. Besides, after Aztlan lost WC '56 against Amazonia in Tenochtitlan, the Aztecs have been itching for payback.

• Pyramid Watcher

• Watch out for Andrea Silva, the Amazonian striker. She's just seventeen, but foreign teams are already at war for her contract.

• Vanzen

MEET THE CONTESTANTS

Manaus, Metropole, Fortaleza, Florianópolis, Porto Alegre and Salvador will act as host cities for the thirty-two teams, some of which remain unknown. In North America, the playoff between the CAS and UCAS will decide which of them gets the NAMLS's fourth slot.

Hot games are always the center of attention, especially when politics are included. There could be some really interesting games after the first round, like Israel vs. Arabia and Russia vs. Germany.

• Or, heaven help us, Amazonia against Argentina or Aztlan.

• Lynch

The final game promises to be unforgettable. The government is keeping the details under a tight lid, but it's been rumored that several dragons will be making an astonishing display of magic power. While we can't confirm this, we are certain that it'll be unlike anything the world has ever seen.

• Some people will do anything to ensure their country's victory. That could mean a food poisoning incident that forces a star to skip a crucial game, dirty pictures that ensure someone doesn't play as expected or a very tragic (and very fatal) accident that leads to an untimely retirement. Pick your job and pick a winner.

• Prime Runner

THE AMAZONIAN MARVEL

He is considered the best player of all time, a living legend. To some, this son of Rio's slums represents the Amazonian dream of a better tomorrow. To others, he is Sergio Da Matta, captain of the Amazonian national team. To his fans, he's simply Maravilha: the Marvel.

Tina Duarte: So how does it feel being the world's greatest player?

Maravilha: <laughs> Well it feels great! Really, other than the NERPS! sponsoring, I'm just a normal guy who enjoys normal things.

TD: You know, when I was a teenager I dreamed of meeting you. You're an idol for most people in this country, as a matter of fact. Isn't it a heavy responsibility?

Maravilha: Yes, of course it is. You're carrying the people's hopes every time you enter the field, and you know you can't let them down. That's what encourages us when we play a tournament like this.

TD: Now that we're at it, whom do you think is going to win?

Maravilha: Who's gonna win? Amazonia, naturally!

TD: OK, so what's your pick for second place?

Maravilha: Tough call. We lost the title against the Germans in 2060 and I'd love to get it back from them, but Argentina and Pueblo have very strong teams too.

TD: Anyone else?

Maravilha: I think ... no, only those three. The other teams are good, but not that good.

TD: One more question. Some people find it hard to believe that you're still playing at 52. What makes you go on?

Maravilha: Tina, you know that I spent my childhood in the favelas. Being an elf wasn't easy then, and I was lucky to survive that time. Gang wars, drugs, hunger and poverty ... those things are gone now. We're a new nation, with a whole new destiny awaiting us. I want to see it happen, while doing what I love most.

- Oh come on! Couldn't we get something less biased? This looks like a brochure from the Amazonian Ministry of Tourism! Oh wait, let me guess who paid for it ...

- Auntie Social

- Wrong on that one. Care to guess which soccer star has been dating Duarte lately?

- Glitter Hound

- Truth is, the government made big efforts to fight the pervasive poverty, but the slums are still a warzone for gangs and drug dealers. One thing he was dead right on about, though: most Amazonians are convinced of their destiny and act accordingly.

- Abrojo

- The Amazonians like to think the cartels are gone, when in fact they own the favelas. No one says that loud, of course, because everyone in the slums deals with them. In Maravilha's particular case, this allowed him to climb to the top by removing younger, better players who threatened him. Like my brother.

- Ipanema

- He should have known better than that.

- Ze Pequenho

FIVE RINGS, FIVE SECTORS: DENVER 2072

by Timothy Hayes, *UCAS Today*

With the IOC making its final decision in mid-2064, bid cities are scrambling to gain critical support ahead of the vote to choose the host city for the 2074 Winter Olympics. The race has become awfully hot, especially with a last minute bid from the Treaty City.

The biggest buzz is Denver's bid, which was presented by Ghostwalker himself at a star-studded press conference. The proposal is fully endorsed by the CAS, NAN and UCAS governments, all of whom have touted it as a great step towards improving North American relations. Many corporations have also thrown in their lot and the city stands to reap huge benefits.

Other bids like Tir Tairngire are also doing their best to court the IOC, as the Olympics would certainly create a tourist boom that could revive the country's economy. While Portland suffered some setbacks, like major riots early this year, the city enjoys enough international support to make it a contender.

- That's because the princes are threatening to drag certain skeletons out of other people's closets.

- Danis

Meanwhile, Yamatetsu's controversial bid has been endorsed by Russia, Hong Kong, Chile and several Asian countries. The Pacific Prosperity Group has also stamped its seal of approval all over Vladivostok, which could give Yamatetsu a huge economic leverage in the vote. The corporation wants to achieve corporate history—but it will have to wait until the IOC decides if it's a valid entry.

- Yamatetsu has gone so far as to promise zero-g sports at Shibanokujl, but that doesn't seem to have impressed the IOC. Not after they learned about several malfunctions last month.

- Orbital Bandit

- Malfunctions? That's Japanacorp slang for sabotage, right?

- Skeptic



This year's big loser was Québec, which quietly dropped the race after a series of incidents severely compromised its bid. Chief among them were declarations by Antoine Somma, head of the local Olympic Committee, opposing the inclusion of changeling athletes.

- Given that NBS got the tape straight from above, I wouldn't be surprised to know that Somma was set up.
- Newshound

THE 2063 SPORT RECAP

by the *World Sport* staff

BASEBALL

October: It's been a strange week for baseball. CAS and Aztlan are still exchanging accusations, after five people died in a terrorist bombing during the Texas Lone Stars vs. San Diego Jaguars playoff game. With both teams refusing to keep playing, the World Series has gone to the Boston Red Sox by default.

BASKETBALL

February: Evan Kresler and his metahuman teammates have been granted political asylum, following their collective

defection during yesterday's Golden State Warriors vs. Seattle Supersonics game. The players hope to sign new contracts with other teams in the next few days, though the CalFree team has threatened to sue anyone who hires them.

- Yeah, like the other teams are going to pass on the cheap talent.
- Air Mike

CHESS

August: An embarrassed Damien Knight has made the headlines after losing to sixteen year old Christine Anderson in the Ares Goodwill Tournament. Miss Anderson, who's tutored by former world champion Juan Jesus Diaz, is evaluating several scholarship offers from prestigious institutions.

- More like dodging the extraction attempts. Otaku that humiliate CEOs in just eighteen moves are too much of a tempting target. Lucky for her. Diaz and his gang have been in a paternal mood lately. Just don't say it near them, the Dicemen are the meanest hombres in Houston.
- Diamondback



- And with good reason. The Dicemen got a huge boost from an unknown source right before Anderson joined them: guns, cyberware, nuyen ... you name it, they have it.
- Icepick

- Remember that antique chess set Knight used for his games? I know someone who's willing to pay top nuyen for it.
- Fallen Angel

COMBAT BIKER

June: Shocking news for Combat Biking today, as Novatech's William Ager announced his purchase of the Oakland Hogs. With the franchise's move to Seattle, the city will become the only town with two home teams.

- Well, there goes the neighborhood. Knowing that Billy Bob is a close chum of the Brackhavers, who's willing to bet the Hogs will become a human-only team in no time?
- Tuskadero
- Actually, they're keeping most of the metas. I guess our beloved racist-in-chief-wannabe's toady needs some cannon fodder, after all.
- Kagetenshi

FOOTBALL

September: A week after miraculously escaping a car accident, George "The Mauler" Thornton made a spectacular comeback, leading the Seattle Seahawks against the Detroit Lions. Seven opponents, including MVP quarterback Jimmy Wolcott, remain at Harborview Hospital.

- The car hits a wall at 180 kph and Thornton is unharmed? There's no way he could have survived that.
- Sludig
- You're a Lions fan, right?
- Seahawk
- For the right nuyen, I'll be a fan of any team. I might even fix your opponents' brakes as a matter of courtesy.
- Sludig

FORMULA 1

May: The FIA has greenlighted test runs for the new armed league, baptized as Formula X or FX, with the first tournament tentatively scheduled for mid-2064. While safety concerns had been raised at earlier meetings, the biggest names in Formula 1 are now endorsing it.

- It isn't as surprising as it seems once you learn about Ferrari's plans to replace its Appaloosa Light Scout. FX allows them to test some of their ideas while actually making some money out of it.
- Josie Cruise

- Most FX drivers are drek-hot mercs or smugglers, but several F1 hotshots have also made the switch. I thought they were taking it as a professional challenge, until I learned that the corps had them hooked on p-fix combat chips.

- Hot Wheels

- Who cares? It's been confirmed that Redmond will be hosting GP Pacific Northwest, so we're bound to see some action.
- Outrunner

HOCKEY

July: Still reeling from recent drug and political scandals, hockey has now been hit by a schism, with North American teams leaving the INHL to form the NAHL. The new league rejects the changes proposed by the INHL and will be sticking to the traditional rules for next year's season.

- Karl Gunzenhauser, the INHL's CEO, is knee-deep in drek because North America was its biggest source of income and he alienated the team owners. Expect a revolt by the Europeans to sack him in the next assembly, unless he somehow manages to calm the waters.
- Panzergeist

The NAHL is still shaky and not everyone joined it to protect hockey's "purity." For example, many believe the Calgary Flames' support is a way to clean their reputation, especially after their use of Awakened spiritual boosters was disclosed by the media.

- Turns out the players were heavy on Immortal Flower and they didn't even know about that until two of them died of an overdose. Talk about unscrupulous managers.
- Witch Doctor
- Wake up chummer, what makes you think they're the only ones doing it? Everyone takes every possible advantage, up to and including drugs. The Flames were just sloppy.
- Shadow

- That might not be the only reason for them to join. An unofficial "Manitou national team" has been touring the NAN for exhibition matches, something the Azzies and their Algonkian lapdogs haven't taken all that well. The NAHL has received a lot of pressure from Aztechnology to ban its teams from playing with them.
- Pyramid Watcher

HORSERACING

October: After months of negotiations, *Old Admiral* has finally been allowed to compete in the Triple Crown. Details are still sketchy, but it's been leaked he was part of a gentlemen's agreement to test his kin. While genetically engineered horses have excelled all over the world, the Triple Crown has barred them until now. Several protests have been registered since the announcement, including eco-terrorist threats that closed Belmont Park last weekend.



- First they taint our food, now they corrupt Nature? Is there nothing sacred for them?
- Deep Green

- Eco-freaks are not the only unhappy people. It takes a lot of resources to breed one of those beauties, the kind that only a corp has. The Mafia fears that they'll ruin its scam.
- Cigar Chomper

- Are you trying to imply something?
- Secretariat

- The house always wins, remember that.
- Cigar Chomper

- Treehuggers and wiseguys ... now that is an unlikely ticket.
- Bung

TENNIS

June: In a statement delivered to the media yesterday, the Nationale Aktion policlub claimed responsibility for Sunday's AGE-Roland Garros bombing. The blast killed ten people, including tournament champion Kurt Schneider and French Foreign Affairs Minister Pascal Marat.

Kurt Schneider first made the headlines in 2061, when he won Wimbledon after entering as a tournament wildcard. The ork's rise in the ATP's ranking was meteoric, winning twenty tournaments until his untimely demise. His body will be returned to Berlin tomorrow for a family funeral. Mr. Schneider was 23 years old and is survived by his wife Petra.

A close ally of President de Paladines, Pascal Marat was a well-known figure in European politics and a fervent supporter of the NEEC. Widely considered a potential heir to President de Paladines, his death is a serious blow to the French government. Monsieur Marat was 52 and leaves no surviving family.

- Sic semper tyranni
- Robespierre

TRACK AND FIELD

March: The 100 meters world record is now at 8.9 seconds, thanks to Josephine Simmons' stunning performance at the Toronto Championship. The "Speed Queen" has raised some suspicions, but tests for enhancements or magical talent have been negative. While feminist groups denounced the suspicions as a smear campaign, Simmons spends her free time in goodwill tours organized by the Empowerment Coalition.

- It's about time we had a role model for the younger generations.
- Girl Power

URBAN BRAWL

April: NAUBL authorities are investigating an Illegal Intelligence accusation made by the Tsimshian Warriors against the Lakota Arrows. The Warriors claim that the Arrows' communications equipment was in clear violation of ISSV rules, which state that it may not be used for external help. The Sioux-based team has strongly denied the allegations.

- I've taken a look at those gadgets and I understand why the Warriors are whining. Helmet radios with drek hot encryption and communications systems, BattleTac capability ... You'd think they're getting ready for a war rather than a game.
- Digital Heroin

- Think the OMI is testing some new toys? If so, I might have a job for you.
- Nightfire

GAME INFORMATION

Culture Shock is intended to help you bring your game to life by adding some vivid cultural elements. It also introduces a number of plot hooks as well as moving existing storylines forward. Aside from flavor and a developing world background, the best way to use this chapter is to pick one of the references and build an adventure off of it. Some additional suggestions for using this material are included below.

ORXPLOITATION

Is it a turning point in mainstream culture or a colorful fad? Will goblin rockers reclaim their cultural initiative, massacre each other in turf wars or sell out to the soulless media machine? Will Or'zet musicians bring public pressure to bear on Saito's policies? Are the Vory carving out an empire for themselves, or will they step on other syndicates' toes and stir a mob war? Is Malenkin actually going semi-legit, or is Chimera backing the Vory and CrimeTime? And what about Humanis's plans? Whatever the answers are, orxploitation remains a phenomenon that has visibly impacted society, though commercial interests and petty conflicts have tarnished it.

A character might want to join the fad, but there are other ways to involve runners: they could be hired to find out what happened to Robert Page, protect a novahot music star, rescue a contact's daughter from a prostitution ring or help the Vory fight off Brackhaven's zealots. Last but not least, runners can also learn Or'zet.

Or'zet Language Skill

Characters can learn Or'zet just as they would learn any other language, but Or'zet is still incomplete and therefore difficult to learn. On top of this, ork youth and musicians are already twisting the tongue to fit their own slang needs, so the language is already changing as it spreads and gains mainstream acceptance.

In terms of skill improvement Karma costs, treat Or'zet as an Active skill (see p. 245, *SR3*). If using the *Optional Training Rules* (pp. 48–51, *SRComp*), the base target number for purposes of reducing training time is equal to the new skill rating being trained for plus 4. Characters may also default to Intelligence per standard rules. Or'zet linguasofts are limited to Rating 3.

Additionally, only orks and trolls are able to speak Or'zet correctly. Other metahumans lack the jaw structure and tusks required for a correct pronunciation, so they apply a +2 target number modifier when speaking Or'zet. Characters may have tusks implanted and their jaws surgically altered to avoid this modifier, but they may suffer social penalties due to their odd appearance.

Gamemasters should make sure that the learning process becomes an interesting experience for the characters. Instead of hiring a boring professor in Seattle, a runner could find herself tracking down a fugitive Orkland Community Center researcher in California. Once in San Francisco, she would have to convince him that she's not a Protectorate agent, probably by working against Saito's regime.

CORP VOGUE

The intricacies of corporate jingoism fall under the province of various corporate Knowledge skills. A character with the Knowledge skill of Mitsuhaman 4, for example, has a good chance of knowing what fashions are favored by MCT employees, as well as what sort of reward systems MCT offers to its citizens. The Etiquette (Corporate) skill reflects knowledge of how to behave in corporate social situations, which includes what type of clothing to wear, how to address people and similar corp social customs.

Gamemasters can use this information to help players get a clear sense of what they are dealing with when they run against the corps. A limited form of nationalism exists in every megacorp. The majority of the lifers working for the corp believe in what they're working for, or at least pretend to if someone is looking. This also extends to any corporate contacts the characters might have. If the runners are not sensitive to the corporate mindset, they risk pissing a valuable contact off (unless the contact is jaded, cynical, open-minded or simply antagonistic towards their patron corp).

Bratpacks

Corporate gangs can be used in any public situation where nationalistic corpsters may play a role. Some gangs are little more than a collection of corp-minded careerists who

will stand up for their corp's name and image, especially if provoked by an antagonistic opponent or outsider. Other corp gangsters really take their corporate identity to heart, showing off tattoos, logos and corp colors and starting trouble with rival bratpacks or non-corpsters. Mostly they'll stick to verbal harassment or basic brawling. A few bratpacks have transformed into actual criminal elements, actively creating trouble for people outside their corps as well as engaging in illegal activities like smuggling, chip-dealing, vandalism, running prostitution rings and even robbery or protection rackets. Corp gangs will usually back away from seasoned shadowrunners but will be unlikely to give ground to citizens of a rival corporation.

Average Bratpack Member

Metatype: Human

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
4	2	4	3	4	4	5.8	—	4

INIT: 5 +1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 5

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 2/3

Active Skills: Clubs 4, Etiquette 3 (Corporate) 5, Intimidation 3, Pistol 2, Unarmed Combat 4

Knowledge Skills: Corporate Politics 3, Corporate Social Structure 5

Cyberware: Datajack

Hooks

Here are some corp vogue adventure hooks to get you started:

A corporation needs to know if their new executive is compatible with the company philosophy. They hire runners to make contact with the executive and form a friendship. If the runners can convince the executive to give them confidential information about the corporation within a two-week time frame, they will receive twice the amount that they were hired for. It also means the end of the new exec, who will be killed if the runners achieve their goal.

Kelis Samuels made a mistake. He didn't think anyone would find out about his weekend rendezvous with the girl from Yamatetsu. Dating outside of the corp has hurt his personal rating, possibly blowing his chance at a job with acquisitions. He decides to earn some quick points. His weekend let slip that a Yamatetsu bratpack was planning to break into one of his corp's housing enclaves and stir up trouble. If he can find out what they're planning and stop it, his little weekend tryst might be forgiven. He hires runners to follow up on the information.