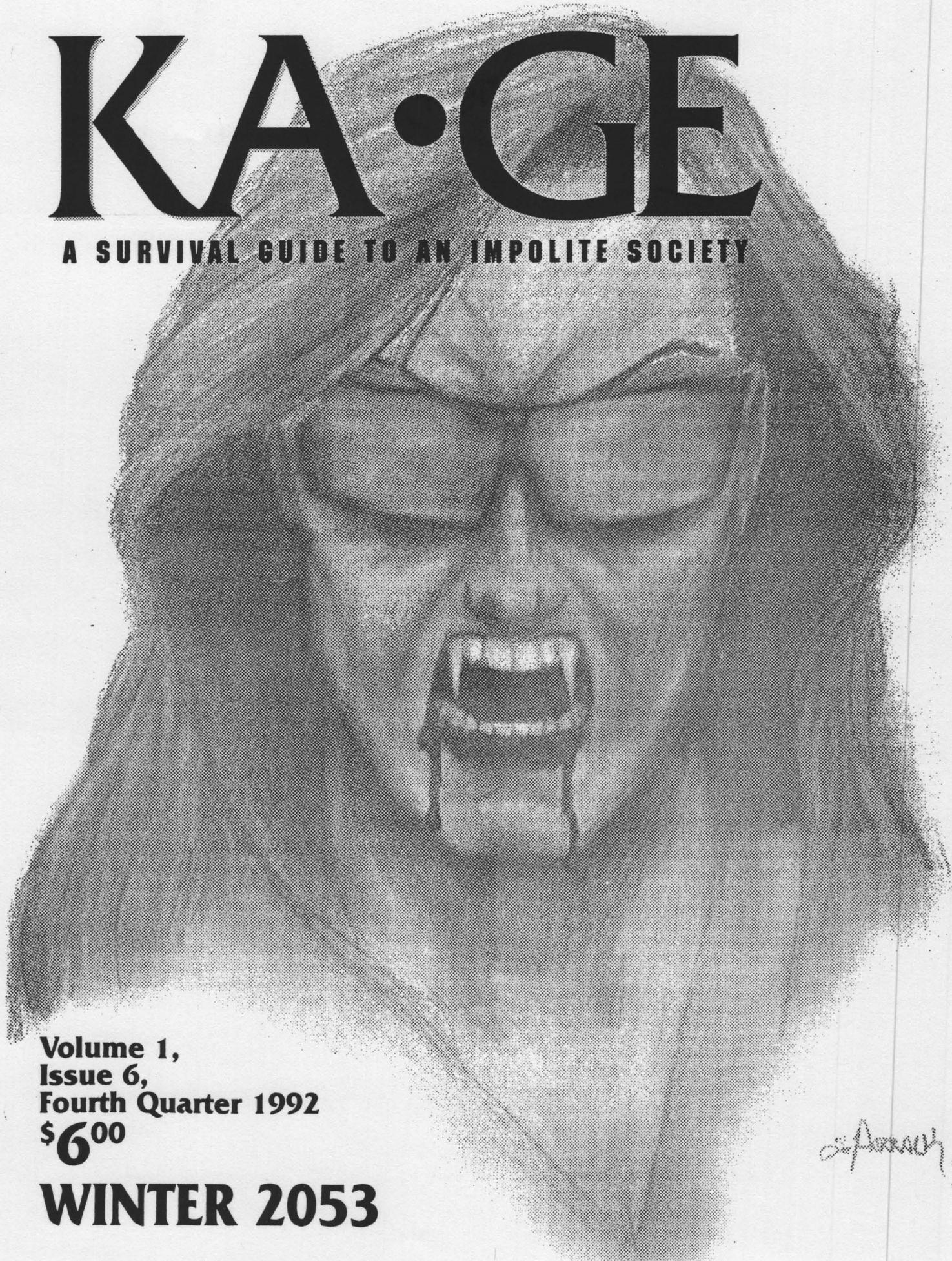


KA•GE

A SURVIVAL GUIDE TO AN IMPOLITE SOCIETY



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Fourth Quarter 1992

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WINTER 2053

Spencer 92



Greetings,

As you can probably tell, this issue is out a little ahead of our normal schedule. We wanted to get this issue out before the normal Christmas rush. If all is going well with the US Postal Service, you're reading this and making a Christmas list instead of worrying about exchanges.

There are only a few things to report here, but they are both important, so listen up.

First, this newsletter and the Shadowrun Network in general were not designed to be a Gamemaster-only organization. This is supposed to be a player's organization. That means this newsletter, and everything in it, should be open to the players. It might sound strange to some people, but we've heard cases of players being THROWN OUT OF GAMES because they acquired knowledge NO SHADOWRUNNER WAS MEANT TO KNOW. That's drek. If there is something in Ka•ge that is designed for the GM only, we'll tell you so in big bold letters. Everything else is fair game. If a GM has something that should be kept a secret, the GM should design it on his own.

Second, we've have a hard time with our phone message system. I believe we've gotten the problems taken care of, but for a long while we were not able to update the messages. Thanx to all the members who remained patient and gave us the chance to fix the problems. I'm sorry to those who had to write in. The message system was supposed to make things faster and easier. Maybe now that will happen. To check it out just call 1.314.446.AWOL (2965).

Finally, AWOL Productions will be "closed down" during the holidays. From November 26 to January 12 we'll be operating on a light duty schedule. All of us here have full-time day jobs and full-time AWOL jobs. Most of us have been working for over 22 months without a break and it's starting to show. In short, we'll be answering the mail (for the most part), filling orders, and updating the answering machine (semi-regularly), but that's about all. Thanx in advance for the patience and support.

Did I miss anything? Probably, but I know you'll tell me in time for the next issue.

Enjoy,
Jim

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Is an
AWOL PRODUCTION

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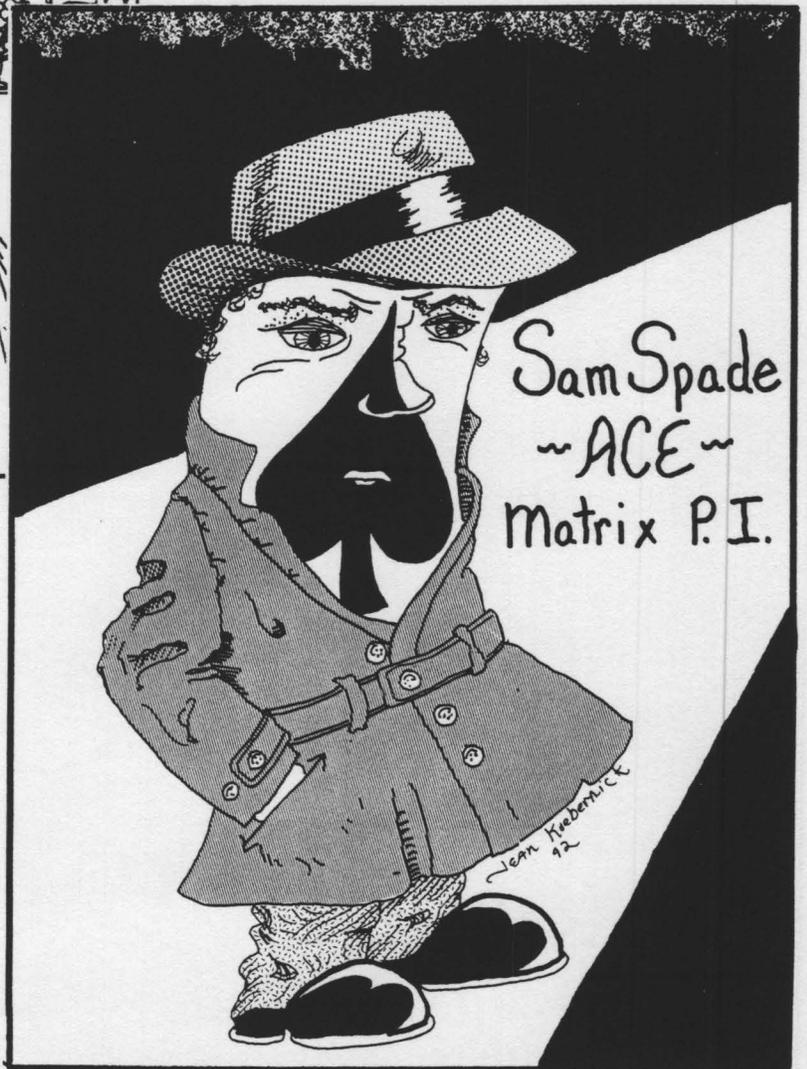
For FASA
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Fan Art by Robert Hemedes



Fan Art by Jean Koebernick



Paterson Field Guide to the Minnesota Awakened Forest

New Animals for a New Age

Carrion Crow

Corvus Caronia





IDENTIFICATION:

The Carrion Crow is a large raven that measures a 1.2 wingspan. It has a glossy black plumage, with hints of streaking in purple or dark blue. It has strong claws and a razor sharp beak. Its lack of any type of call is a telltale sign.

SIMILAR SPECIES:

Related to the Stormcrow and non-Awakened raven.

HABITAT:

Any non-settled or civilized lands.

MAGICAL CAPABILITY:

Innate.

HABITS:

Carrion crows are omnivores, but they seem to prefer fresh meat. Unlike their non-Awakened cousin, carrion crows will attack larger game rather than simply wait for it to die naturally. Carrion crows are normally found in flocks of 15 to 50, but this has been known to be higher. Carrion crows are somehow able to communicate with each other without the need for the obnoxious "cah" of the crows.

YOUNG:

Normally produces a clutch of 3-5 eggs each year.

RANGE:

Within the Awakened Forest and along its borders.

COMMENTARY:

The carrion crow has been growing rapidly bolder in its attacks on larger animals—especially man. In 2049 a flock of over 300 birds descended on a small town on the shores of the Lower Red Lake. Although exact reports are still being analyzed, no less than 35 people were killed and over 110 were injured.

POWERS:

Confusion, Pestilence

WEAKNESSES:

Vulnerability (fire)

GAME INFORMATION:

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Damage
Carrion Crow	2	6x2	1	-	3/4	3	6	4	5L

CARRION CROW

Corvus Coronia

HABITAT

Any

RANGE

Western hemisphere

RANGE



SIZE COMPARISON





Cooper's Fox

Vulpes Movere





IDENTIFICATION:

Cooper's Fox stands about 0.5 meters at the shoulder and weighs almost 20 kg. It has a reddish colored fur that is streaked with patches of silver and gold.

SIMILAR SPECIES:

Demonstrates similar mental abilities to the Bogie.

HABITAT:

Forested areas and light woodlands.

MAGICAL CAPABILITY:

Innate

HABITS:

Cooper's Fox is a skilled predator that uses its psychokinetic ability to either distract or startle its prey by causing something to move or fall on the side of the victim opposite to the fox. It can also use this ability to bring items within reach that it could not normally obtain. Cooper's Fox seems to also have acquired a curious attraction to small items with highly polished surfaces. The reason for this attraction is unknown.

YOUNG:

Normally produce a litter of six kits each year.

RANGE:

The woodlands, forests and borders of the Awakened Forest.

COMMENTARY:

Cooper's Fox is yet another paranormal animal that is rapidly losing its fear of man. Because of its special ability to create distractions, the Cooper's Fox has been able to successfully enter camps or farms and make off with food or any other items it wants despite the most attentive of guards or watchdogs. Fortunately, it does not understand electronics and cannot distract cameras or other monitoring devices. The excessive costs of these items, however, has made farmers and campers unwilling to completely guard against this clever fellow, who takes full advantage of their lack of concern all too often. Evidence of the Cooper's Fox intelligence suggests that rumors of it using its powers to move objects to strike prey or even hunters could very well be true.

POWERS:

Psychokinesis

WEAKNESSES:

None known

GAME INFORMATION:

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Damage
Cooper's Fox	2	4x4	1	-	3/4	2	6	5*	3L, -1 Reach

COOPER'S FOX

Vulpes Movere

HABITAT

Woodland areas

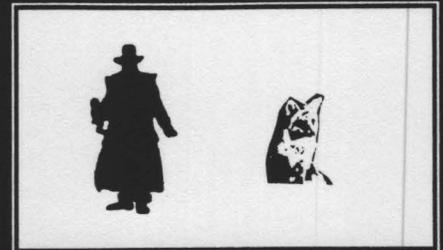
RANGE

Central regions of North America

RANGE



SIZE COMPARISON





Fenris Wolf

Canis Feroc





IDENTIFICATION:

Standing 1.3 meters at the shoulder, the Fenris Wolf is one of the largest predators in the Awakened Forest. Fur coloring ranges from tan-brown to brown-grey, although rare cases of a true black or even albino have been sighted. It is built much like its progenitor the Timber Wolf but is larger and much broader thru the chest and shoulders. It has extremely powerful jaws and can cleanly snap off a man's arm with one bite.

SIMILAR SPECIES:

Similar in size and shape to the Shadowhound, but much more like the Hellhound in its demeanor.

HABITAT:

Woodlands and deep forests.

MAGICAL CAPABILITY:

Parabiological

HABITS:

One of the more powerful and fearsome predators of the Awakened Forest. The Fenris Wolf is fast, strong and hunts extremely efficiently either alone or in packs. A pack of as few as three has been known to pull down a Snow Moose or White Buffalo. Packs are nor-

mally extended families that range from 3 to 20.

YOUNG:

Average birth rate is 3 to 4 pups per year.

RANGE:

Interior areas of the Awakened Forest. There has never been a confirmed report of a Fenris Wolf within fifty miles of the edge of the Awakened Forest, although a rumor exists of a band led by an albino roaming the southern edge of the forest.

COMMENTARY:

The Fenris Wolf is perhaps the ultimate predator in the Awakened Forest. Extremely fast for its size, the Fenris Wolf is also capable of a burst of speed that allows it to catch any prey. Its size and ferocity ensure it can kill whatever it catches. The Fenris Wolf has not displayed fear of humans or metahumans during any encounters but has learned to be wary of them. In fact, the Fenris Wolf is purported not to fear anything. Its lack of fear of man became clear in 2050 when a pack of them attacked a simsense film crew making a movie near the Boundary Waters (without permission however). Despite being well armed and experi-

enced, only the second film unit team, who were in an elevated platform, survived the attack. Fifteen crew members were killed along with only one wolf, although several wolves were wounded.

POWERS:

Enhanced Physical Attributes, Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Smell, Low Light and Thermographic Vision), Enhanced Reaction

WEAKNESSES:

Vulnerability (silver)

>>>>>(These things are incredible. I never thought I would ever see anything that could tear a troll apart as fast as these critters can.)>>>>> - Stoneface<18:29:41/09-12-52>

>>>>>(Can they be trained? I'd bet they would be worth some serious cash as guard animals.)>>>>> - Mithras<20:35:31/09-12-52>

>>>>>(No way, not even really controllable. 4-M tried a project last year with three of them. Lost six trainers and used a heavy response team from the MSD to finally put them down.)>>>>> - Stoneface<34:01:52/09-12-52>

GAME INFORMATION:

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Damage
Fenris Wolf	9	6x4	8	-	3/4	2	6	5*	10S

FENRIS WOLF

Canis Feroc

HABITAT

Woodland

RANGE

North central regions of North America

RANGE



SIZE COMPARISON





The downpour continued its onslaught on the dark and exciting streets of the Seattle metropolx. Rivers of mud filled the grungy gutters and carried away the filth and vermin of the street. Lightning boomed overhead, casting instantaneous skeleton-like shadows of the Seattle skyline. Sarari-men rushed to reach their safe little abodes before the night awoke, looking always in every dark corner to avoid any confrontation. Though their vision revealed little, other eyes, paranormal and cybered, followed the wageslaves' path. It was a powerful night for those who could sense the power. A night where only the squatters would roam. But one lone figure dared the storm in a forgotten alley near The Pink Door.

The figure was tall, but not too tall, about 6 foot 3. Long sandy blond hair hung lifeless from the rain. Wearing a relatively chic armor coat, the figure adjusted his dark glasses. The light gray jacket hung to mid-thigh and was trimmed in heavy leather. Something was in the air tonight, and he could feel it, but couldn't place it. The mysterious figure continued to peer down the cluttered alley to the street...waiting.

Startled, another figure sloshed down the alley. Failing to step over the debris in his path, the figure tripped and hit the ground with a muffled splash.

"Fraggin' rain!" he cursed. He slowly got up to brush himself off when the lone figure questioned sarcastically.

"Have a nice...trip?" The other man jumped at the voice and pulled his Predator.

"Now, now, let's not be hasty, Dice, it's only me, Blaze."

"Jeez, Blaze, ya scared the livin' drek outta me. What the hell are ya standin' in this crummy alley for? I was expectin' ya ta be inside."

"Just waiting for you," he replied calmly, watching Dice holster his weapon. "Where's Patches and Gronk?"

"Huh," Dice said continuing to clean off his already soiled clothes.

"Oh, them, they ain't here yet?"

"No," replied Blaze stoically.

"Well, I don't know, chummer. All I know is that if I stay out in this fraggin' rain any longer, I'm gonna shrivel up like a prune." He never did like the rain or anything else associated with water and cleanliness.

"All right, we'll wait inside even though its not my kind of place."

The two walked into the restaurant/bar of the Pink Door. The lighting was rather subdued with the occasional flickering pink neon bordering the walls. The light wafting of fresh baked bread filled the area. Seats were available throughout the restaurant and bar with the occasional booth filled by the off-work corporate wage slave. The two found a secluded booth in a corner of the bar area and sat down. Blaze still sensed something big was going to happen, and the feeling un eased him.

Outside the rain continued to pour.

"Ya sure like wearin' them glasses don't cha, Blaze. It's rather strange ya know." Blaze just ignored the comment and continued to look around. A waitress came to the booth and asked about drinks.

"Gimme a bloodshot morning," ordered Dice. Blaze just raised an eyebrow and looked at him. "What? I can handle it. I ain't no lightweight, ya know."

The waitress turned to Dice's companion, "And for you sir?" Blaze, not turning to look at her, just replied monotonously, "Nothing." A little unbalanced, she turned back to the bar.

"Ya gotta learn to lighten up, chummer", said Dice breaking the thick silence, "this tough-guy attitude ain't gonna get ya far socially. Look at me for example, I'm a rather outgoin' fella if I say so myself. Because of it, I get favors, if ya know what I mean, as well as have a good time. Heh, heh, sometimes a little too much good time."

Lighten up, Blaze thought to himself. To lighten up would be to let one's guard down and be vulnerable to the many curses the Sprawl possessed. To lighten up would mean to express one's emotions outwardly. Emotions. To Blaze feelings were just another opponent in the rat-race. Probably the strongest opponent Blaze had to deal with. For love, the strongest emotion of all, had always stabbed the mage like a sharp knife since the loss of his fiance, the loss of his love. And with the loss of love went the loss of emotions.

Blaze replied bitterly but calmly, "I don't want those kind of favors—I had it all once and now it's gone. Now all I want is to know where Patches and Gronk are." The lightning let out a thunderous boom as the barmaid return with Dice's concoction—a fiery red thing sizzling with effervescence.

"There's your drink, chummer, good luck", mused the maid. "Oh, there is a call for a certain Blaze fella at the bar; would either of you happen to be him?"

"That's me," said Blaze, "Where's the phone?"

"It's over by the cashier."

"Thanks," clipped Blaze as he moved for the phone, the same uneasy feeling washing over him in waves. He reached for the phone looking at the young cashier boy standing there in the haze.

"Yes," said Blaze cautiously.

"Shut up, chummer, and just listen," came a husky voice, "We got yer people and they're alive for now. If ya want them to see daylight again, do as I say. Understand?"

"So ka." Blaze whispered, clenching the phone.

"Don't try any funny stuff or yer pals get geeked. Got it? Bring da deck ya stole and da money ya ripped from us to the warehouse district by da piers near Alaskan and Broad street at midnight. When ya get there, wait. Ya break da meet, this show is over, got it!" The phone clicked suddenly. Blaze set the phone gently down and



stared into his reflection in the mirror behind the bar.

Yea, pal I got it. Blaze angrily answered him to himself. There it was again, that great opponent, emotion. Frag it! Here I was not two minutes ago thinking about how these damn feelings cloud one's judgment. And here they are, permeating me again. Oh, just shut up, we've got problems.

Blaze shook his head to try to clear it, to regain control. He thought about Patches and Gronk, his other "people" as the husky voice put it. He thought about how Gronk carried him (after Blaze pushed that magical envelope between control and real power) out of that hosed run two months ago in the Barrens. Because of his new encumbrance, Gronk had taken a few rounds while carrying him out, but they all managed to escape. For that, Blaze owed his life.

His thoughts also fell to Patches, who seemed to be physically attached to Gronk. The twosome were never far from each other and yet, they were not completely immersed in one another either. They had some special relationship that Blaze couldn't understand—not many did. However, any friend of Gronk's was a friend of Blaze, and besides, she had proven herself magically time and time again as a valuable ally.

"You O.K., pal?" asked the cashier interrupting Blaze's thoughts. Blaze turned to look at him behind emotionless shades.

It's none of your business, Blaze thought. Then he returned to the table.

"So who was on the comm?" ques-

tioned Dice smiling a smirky half drunk grin.

"The evening's change of plans," he replied. "It was those wannabe's we ran into back at Simline Productions on our last run. It seems they have Patches and Gronk and want that deck you stole and the money we heisted. If we don't meet them on the docks, they



geek our players."

"Those little brats!" screamed Dice. "Wait'll I get..."

"Enough." interrupted Blaze, "What we need to do now is act rationally. They'll get what's coming to them. Right now, I want you to go back to your place and get the deck and any gear you want. Meet me at Broad Street and Elliot at 2330 sharp."

"And what about you?"

Blaze rubbed the ring he wore on his left hand gently and whispered some inaudible words. Dice saw this routine before as the flesh on Blaze's hand seemed to knit itself into an interlaced leather.

"I'll be ready," he said coldly. And with that, he turned toward the door from which the two entered.

Blaze waited in the shadows at Broad Street and Elliot for Dice, anxious yet focused. He remembered the little fraggers who took his chummers back at Simline Productions. They were definitely small time and posed no real threat. But somehow they managed to get Patches and Gronk, who was one of the largest and strongest troll samurais Blaze ever met. And Patches, even though not offensively active in her magic, was still a formidable opponent. No, the kidnapping was no small accomplishment.

Blaze considered they had other inside help, but small timers like these couldn't afford that kind of muscle—unless Blaze underestimated them! Blaze shook off the feeling. One of the primary rules of the biz was to never underestimate your opponent, and Blaze considered himself a better runner than to

make such a gross error.

Blaze's thoughts were interrupted by the sloshing of someone coming down the sidewalk in the now torrential downpour. Blaze guessed it to be Dice but didn't want take any unnecessary risks. He quickly pulled out his Colt Manhunter and flicked the safety.

It was, however, Dice. Dice, a man currently out of his element on the



street and in the rain. Albeit he was vital in the group as the decker, he preferred the quiet solitude of his squat, plugged in to the magnificent panorama that was the Matrix. Blaze waved a hand to Dice as he approached.

"Fraggin' rain, it ain't fit fer man nor beast out here," said Dice brushing back his soaked hair.

"It's better that way," replied Blaze. "You got the deck?"

Dice reached around his back and produced the sport bag he had slung across his back and unzipped it to reveal a Sony CTY-360 in a protective case.

"Got the little trinket right here." Blaze nodded his approval and Dice unzipped the bag.

"Why in the world did you pick up that low tech drek in the first place?" questioned Blaze.

"Oh, I don't know. Coulda sold it. Coulda used it for spare parts. Coulda gave it as a gift. Don't know. Just felt the impulse to be klepta... klepto... ta just take just take the fraggin' thing. Case is good, least of all."

"Are you going to get cranky if it gets damaged or lost?"

"Naw, like I said, it's just a trinket. I can always heist another later on in life. So, anyway, ya got plan, chummer?"

Blaze looked him over with dark shaded eyes, contemplating his next move. He knew Dice was loyal and desperately wanted to help, but his aid would be limited. If it were a battle of computer icons and programs, Dice would be lethal. However, this fight would take place in the real world, where bullets were more than just electrical computer spikes.

"I want you to get on the roof of one of the warehouses near the meeting place, ready to cover my butt if things get dicey, pardon the pun." Blaze quickly smirked, and Dice just looked at him as if the joke went over his head. Blaze continued, "I'll go in myself. After all, these wannabees shouldn't be too tough, right. Give

me the deck."

Dice handed him the bag as ordered and said, "Ya sure ya can handle it yerself? I'd hate ta lose ya, ya know." Dice could get along with almost everyone and he hated to lose any friends in any way—especially Blaze, Gronk, and Patches.

Blaze took the bag, slung it around his shoulder and responded, placing a hand on Dice's shoulder, "Don't worry, I can take care of myself." That seemed to put Dice at ease for he knew Blaze's power.

They moved quickly to the site of the meet. Upon arriving at the old warehouse district by the piers, they began to scope out the area under the cover of night.

The piers were abandoned except for the occasional scared rat that skimmed across their path. The huge warehouses loomed over them like silent watchers of the corps they supplied. The rain continued to drum against the docks, tortured by the choppy waters that beat against them. The area was dark, lit only by the few streetlights that tried to pierce the wet cloak of falling water.

"Helluva place fer a meet", whispered Dice, anxiously tapping his fingers on a nearby dumpster. Blaze continued to look around. "Where do ya want me?"

"There." Blaze pointed to the nearby warehouse rooftop nearly five stories up. "That should be an adequate perch point."

"Got ya," responded Dice, "See ya in a few ticks." Dice scampered over to the warehouse and shimmied up the building ladder to the roof. Once on the roof, he pulled out an AK-97 he swiped from Gronk's stash back his place. The weapon normally sported a laser sight but Dice exchanged that with a low-light imaging system Gronk never needed to use. He hunkered down and waited for hell to break loose.

Blaze leaned back against the dumpster and proceeded to go to astral for a quick search of the area.

Blaze figured that the goons would be ready and waiting for the meet. His astral body flew over the dock, in and out of dark corners and piled barriers. He was right. His opponents were there already. Two figures he could see clearly without any dimmed areas.

Non-cybered mundanes, he thought. His search continued, finding two more less clear astral entities which he concluded to be the muscle of the group. He also found two auras he knew well, Gronk and Patches, as well as an aura that looked mundane but untrue. Blaze focused his perception at the aura. It truly looked mundane, but it strengthened the uneasy feeling he'd been experiencing all night. He noted the figure for future reference and returned to his meat body.

The mage checked his chrono. It read 2354 hours. Blaze shrugged and figured if he came in early it wouldn't really matter. He clicked on the comm between him and Dice and said, "I'm going in, get ready." He didn't wait for a response and cautiously jandered in to the opening at Alaskan Way and Broad Street.

Minutes ticked like hours as the mage stood in the opening. He figured he shouldn't have been so cocky as to just mosey on into their line of fire. But he was playing on their inexperience and after all, somebody had to make the first move. Finally, Blaze heard movement near the box pile where he assented one of the vat jobs. From the shadows came a powerful looking ork in black leather from the top of his pointed head to the tip of the big clodhoppers at the end of his legs, sporting an UZI III with a cable link between the gun and the monster's head. The ork looked around cautiously and jandered up to Blaze.

"Y-Youse got da deck?" he stutted quickly, trying to cover his anxiousness. Blaze stifled himself from laughing at the big brainless bruiser standing before him. He wanted to reply mockingly but regained his composure.



"Yes. Do you ha..."

"Let's see it!" the trog interrupted. Blaze admired the ork's cautiousness but remained cool.

"After I see my friends, chummer." The ork grumbled and lifted a hand to a shadowy corner near a warehouse building. Out came Patches, untied but fit to be and Gronk, whose arm-chains clanked and clinked with each step. Both were escorted by two "normal" looking humans and another cybered ork.

That makes four out of five. Where the frag is the ^th?, Blaze ought to himself.

"There's yer friends. Now, lets see da hardware and da dough."

"Certainly." Blaze slowly pulled the bag from his shoulder and set it on the ground, never taking his eyes off the group. After

opening the bag, he pulled out the cyberdeck.

"Here's your deck. Now, let my people go."

"Hold it, breeder, where's da money? Da deal was fer da deck and da money," the ork questioned gruffly.

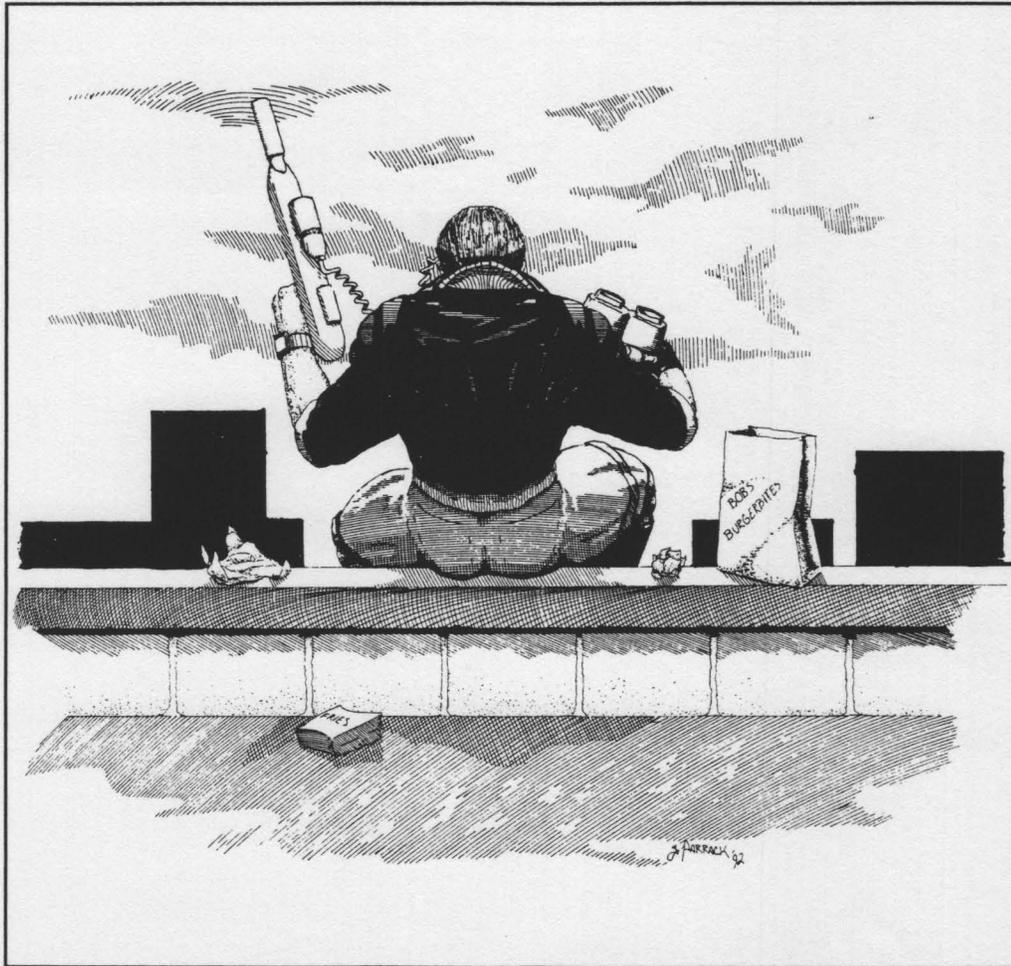
"It's in the bag. If you want to see it, here." Blaze tossed the bag and eck a good ten meters equidistant .om himself and the ork. The ork's

eyes seemed to glow red with anger in the dim light cast by the street lamps. He shouldered his UZI and moved toward the bag. Blaze took off his sunglasses in hopes to signal his compatriots. They'd known Blaze long enough to recognize his habits, one of which was that he rarely took off his glasses unless things were really going

Then the drek hit the fan as Blaze and Patches ducked for cover as a hail of rounds sprayed from the two humans' Ingrams. Wooden boxes and pavement exploded as the rounds hit, sending splinters and rocks in all direc-tions.

Gronk, who remained standing while the humans capped off their

frenzied shots, body-blocked his ork slave master, knocking both off their feet and into the alley from which they all emerged. The troll regained his composure and rolled beside a pile of rotted debris near him. He knew the ork would be back to finish him, and he knew he had a good chance at that if he didn't get rid of his bindings. Patches found only the small ramp to the warehouse for cover as the



to get hairy. They got the message and readied themselves for action.

The ork opened the bag, pulled the deck out and rutted around the inside searching for a certified credstick, paper bills, anything, but to no avail.

"Hey, breeder, yer going to d...." The ork's words were cut short by the quick snap of the bullet that ripped through his thick skull. His body fell to the ground with a muffled thud.

cacophony of the world around her made itself known. She wanted to get to Blaze but knew that would be impossible under the circumstances, so she hunkered down and began to chant an erie hissing song.

Blaze was also readying a spell. His words were only mere whisperings, but the magic he called forth would be more easily heard. At the end of his little speech, the tips of his fingers



started to glow a fiery red and orange color. The color grew more intense until his whole hand radiantly glowed.

Now all I need is the proper opening, he thought. But we're still missing another player. Frag, where is he?

Dice was continuing his pot shots at the crowd below him. His first shot was right on the mark, but Dice knew his skill was rather lacking. And now, the targets were moving and diving for cover. He targeted one of the humans, placing his head in the center of the crosshairs. Quickly he pulled the trigger, jerking the weapon upward as he did so. His shot cleanly rang over the target's head.

"Drek!" he cursed. If only he had listened to Gronk when he was giving marksmanship lessons, and that bloodshot morning wasn't helping matters much either.

But Dice's shot was not in vain. It gave Blaze the opening he needed to fire his bolt of magic. Jumping and rolling to a dock tie near him, Blaze directed his blast. Magic leaped from his outstretched hand in a malevolent shriek ripping the air as it moved. The target human could only look into Blaze's piercing eyes before the shot hit. The human was propelled backward from the force of the fiery spell, the heat exploding extra rounds and adding to the target's demise.

The second human ducked as the shot contacted his partner. His scream of anger and fear ripped through the night. He drew himself together and came up to Patches, clinging to his Ingram in bitter rage. He directed the muzzle to her, the red laser pin dot finding it's place on her forehead.

Patches knew the end was near if her magical defense couldn't save her. As the human readied his shot, Patches looked up to him, her face appearing elongated and leathery, her pupils vertical bars on yellowish balls that were her eyes. Her tongue flipped out, pointed, thin, and appearing forked at the tip. She hissed the final note of her song and an instantaneous breeze tousled her long and seemingly

coarse hair. The spell leaped at the human, knocking him backward a step. He shook his head as if to discharge the affects of the spell. After a second, it appeared as if he succeeded. He moved toward Patches slowly but certainly to finish her off.

Meanwhile, Gronk was having troubles of his own. His ork friend was coming for more. The two had their words while Gronk was in captivity about who's better in combat, a troll or an ork. Now the ork was ready to prove his race was superior. He didn't want to do it quickly and easily with his Enfield AS7 shotgun, but rather with his Redstone survival knife where he could feel the thrill of the hunt. This, at least, gave Gronk a chance.

The ork stalked slowly in, a maniacal toothy grin on his contorted face. Suddenly he shrieked forward, razor sharp edge of the blade glinting in the night. Gronk rolled right, but too slow. The blade cut deeply into his leather jacket, slicing a nice gash across the troll's left arm. The troll gritted his teeth as to not make a yelp of pain. It hurt, but he didn't want that ork to know that. After all, pride is very important in the Sprawl.

The ork came back for another attack. He was thoroughly enjoying this battle. However, Gronk was ready for him. He threw his leg out, catching the ork deeply in the stomach. A breathy wheeze escaped the ork's mouth and he fell back, buckled at the waist to regain his breath. Gronk arose silently to his feet and waited until the ork lifted his head.

Slowly regaining the breath that was knocked out of him, the ork slowly recovered to revenge himself on his attacker. He lifted his head only to eat boot as Gronk, with amazing speed and agility for his size, whirled a back roundhouse to the head of his opponent. The ork slammed against the warehouse and spun to the ground, blood trailing from his mouth, a small tusk attached only by a thin thread of flesh.

"That'll teach ya, ya fragger!" he

scoffed.

Blaze, slightly winded from his attack, scanned the dock for a tactical appraisal. Gronk and the ork seemed to have disappeared and the loud clap of Dice's shots could still be heard. There was still one mundane unaccounted for, but for the life of him, he couldn't see him in the dark rain. His search was distracted as he heard the other human's cry from Patches's magic and his stalk toward her. Blaze whispered an incantation.

Patches stared at the red dot that flickered in front of her eyes. She knew her time had come, and she was ready to meet her maker, her totem, her afterlife. But suddenly her hair was fluttered by a breeze, and the statue of death before her was flung hard against the warehouse garage door with a loud crash. The figure slammed against the ground with a thud and began to shake himself of the dizziness. He moaned at the pain in his torso, most likely cracked or even broken ribs.

Just as he figured himself well enough to continue, a force picked him up again. The human flailed his arms and legs violently to try to break the invisible grasp that had taken him. He found himself rocketing into the air with incredible velocity, the wind and rain pelting him with painful fury. Abruptly in mid-flight about fifty meters off the ground, he stopped, floating in the night sky. The human trembled in anticipation as to what was happening to him or going to happen to him.

Suddenly he began to plummet. He didn't just fall, he plunged with greater and greater speed toward the cement below as if something was pushing him downward. His scream was stifled as his body slammed into the concrete, cracking it. Patches looked, slightly horrified, over to where Blaze had thrown himself to see him resting against the boat tie, smiling. He waved to her and she waved back. He never ceased to amaze her.

Despite Gronk's last kick, the ork



got up for more. The troll was still at a disadvantage due to his bindings, but now he had a good mad on and the adrenaline and wired reflexes had him pumped. He threw another kick into the mid-section of his opponent lifting him a nearly meter off the ground. The ork howled in agony as he felt a rib break off fully inside him.

Gronk came in closer to stomp on the ork when his opponent painfully dodged his attack and threw a dragon's tail kick, knocking Gronk back against the dumpster with a thunderous crash. Both opponents were hurt and moving slowly now. It was just a matter of who wanted it the most.

The gladiators of the alley slowly got to their feet, hunched over in pain and fatigue. They stood, facing each other in a last stand of muscle and cyberware. With a snarl and a scream, the ork lunged toward the troll at full speed. Gronk tried to dodge but his chains snagged an outcropping of metal on the dumpster. Trapped, the troll took the full force of the ork's attack. With a mighty clash the two slammed together into the dumpster knocking the fray against the wall of the warehouse, screechingly ripping a hole in the permaluminum wall.

Gronk's head spun from the blow and unconsciousness almost claimed him. He shook the birdies away and found himself unsnagged from the dumpster. He judged his opponent hadn't fared well either. As a matter of fact, he hadn't fared well at all. A strip of the wall, forged by the impact of the oversized ash can and the warriors who jammed into it, crafted a sworded

edge that had seared the ork from his neck, diagonally across the torso, and out from the hip. The ork stared blindly into the rainy night sky, blood washing away from his deep gouge to the overflowing gutters.

The big troll heard footsteps and thought it was the grim reaper himself trodding up to take both fighters to

Blaze slowly got up, darting his glance left and right, waiting for still another to come charging out of the night. But still there was nothing. He jogged over to where he saw Patches run, pulling out his ever present shades.

"We've got to get him out of here," said Blaze anxiously, yet tired as well.

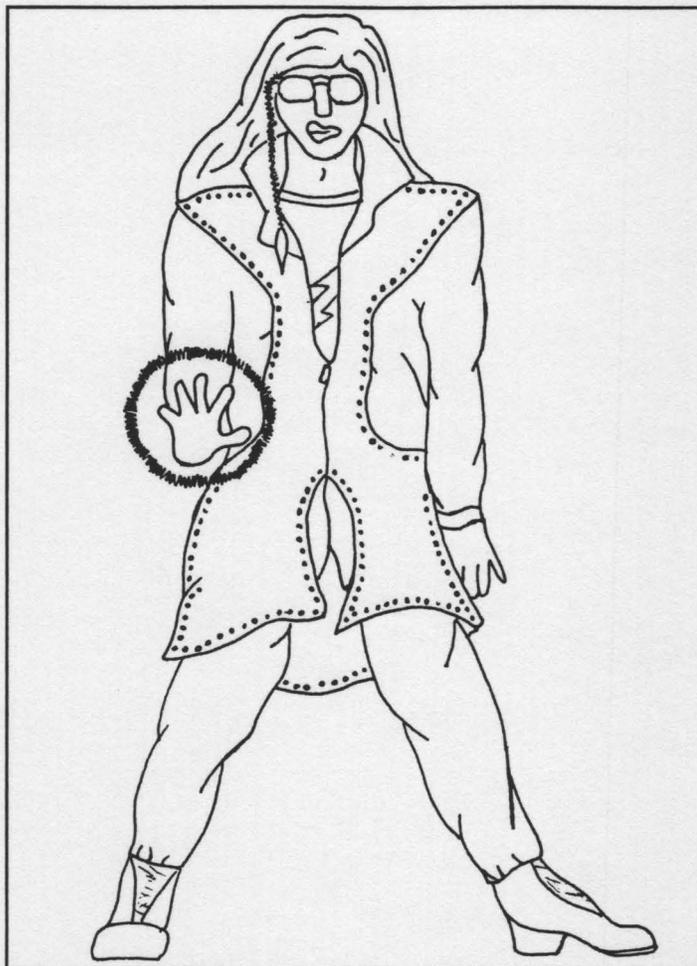
"It'll take all of us to help him up. Patches, you think you can take care of him."

She looked him over and said, "Null perspiration," giving the big metahuman a little wink.

"Good," replied Blaze as he heard Dice approach. Dice had stopped his relentless and useless shots just a moment before. On his way over he had picked up the satchel carrying the deck still protected in its case. They all got the troll to his feet and started to move to safer ground. Blaze looked over his shoulder, just waiting for something to jump out and geek the lot of them. He knew something else was out there. A mundane he had figured, but the uneasiness in his gut still remained.

And indeed, there was something else out there. A force powerful enough to wipe out all Blaze's group, powerful enough to wipe out many a group. Tonight's little stroll in the rain proved to be rewarding, and judging by

the way the one in the medium length coat dispersed his opponents, an encounter would have to be arranged. But that encounter would have to be met in a different place, a different time. Yearning for that future rendezvous, that something watched from the shadow...waiting.



Fan Art by Chad Olson

their dismal afterlife. It was a much more friendly sight, however.

"Gronk! Are you O.K.?" called a female voice. Sloshing footsteps drew nearer and he was suddenly looking into the fair face of Patches. He wanted to tell her that he wasn't fragging O.K., but all that came out was a tired gasp of breath.



FORMER ELECTRONIC WARFARE SPECIALIST

"You would not believe all the messages corporations send in code these days. Yah, the days when you could get corporate secrets just by tapping into any telephone line or digging through an office paper recycling station are now long gone, but I can't complain. Renraku pays me good money to break their competition's codes. Yah, real good money! Fortunately for you, I have some free time this week. So, let me take a look at this hot coded disk you acquired, but can't read. I can break that code, for a price."

QUOTES

"Yah, I got my training in military intelligence. But I got out. The pay was too little, the hours too long, and my job was too dull. So I left for higher pay and more excitement. At least I'm making a real difference for either my corporation or on the streets; can't say the same for my friends still in the service."

COMMENTARY:

The former electronic warfare specialist is an expert at electronic warfare and intelligence gathering. Most former electronic warfare specialists work for major corporations. Their duties are to intercept, and then break, the thousands of coded sent by message corporations, government agencies, Shadowrunners, and criminal organizations. These specialists are also drawn to major corporations, as the corp's starting pay is at least three times higher than in the downsized armed forces.

For any team of Shadowrunners, the former electronic warfare specialist has had months of intense training with active sensors like radar and sonar, plus passive sensors like infrared cameras and physical noise detectors. She also knows how to use electronic countermeasures to disable everything

from radar to radio transmissions. Also in her bag of tricks are radios that send false coded messages to confuse the enemy or lure them into a trap. Consequently, she can disrupt the opposition's command, control, and communication networks long enough to let a team of Shadowrunners pass through a defended area undetected. Sometimes, if the work at her office is slow, she will join a run, either for a thrill, the money, or just to keep all her skills sharp.

ATTRIBUTES:

- Body: 4
- Quickness: 5
- Strength: 4
- Charisma: 5
- Intelligence: 6
- Willpower: 6
- Essence: 5.8
- Reaction: 5

SKILLS:

- Armed Combat: 3
- Computer: 4
- Computer Theory: 4
- Electronics: 6
- Electronics B/R: 3
- Military Theory: 4
- Unarmed Combat: 3
- Firearms: 3

CYBERWARE:

Chipjack

CONTACTS: (pick one)

- Any Corporate type
- Any Merc type
- Any Active Military type
- Mr. Johnson
- Fixer
- Dwarven Technician

GEAR:

- Armor Jacket
- Combat Knife
- Military Radio
- Utility Belt, with Tools and equipment
- Pocket Personal Computer w/500 Mp

- Data Codebreaker (rating 3)
- Dataline Tap rating (rating 3)
- Bug Scanner (rating 6)
- Data Encryption System (rating 4)
- Dataline Scanner (rating 6)
- Jammer (rating 6)
- Browning Max-power Heavy Pistol w/ 4 clips APDS





FORMER COMBAT ENGINEER

"When most mercs use C4, they either use too little or too much. If they use too little, they will waste time setting up another charge and will expose themselves and/or their team members to hostile fire. Or, if they use too much, they waste explosives, the items or persons they were hired to snatch, and sometimes themselves. On the other hand, I can blast a hole from that storm drain into any basement with the minimum of attention. That is what you want me to do tonight? Ok, let's discuss my fee."

QUOTES

"Some people create art with paint or music. My artistic medium is C4."

"Go ahead and burn down your edges—we'll build more."

COMMENTARY:

The former combat engineer is a woman who sells her skills to anyone with enough nuyen. Like most former military personnel, she saw little or no opportunity for advancement in the now scaled-back armed forces so, now she works for either a corporation or as a merc for hire. With her advanced skills in demolitions, she can blow a human-sized hole in a steel reinforced concrete wall and yet leave delicate computer hardware, just a few meters away from the blast area, intact. On the way in, she can get a team through any well defended border, such as clearing a safe path through a minefield. During field operations she can build temporary shelters to hide the team and their vehicles, run field generators, or tap into communications networks. And while bugging out she can place obstacles and bobby traps into the path of any pursuing enemy. Consequently, she's the woman to hire for any runs against fortified structures or across hostile territorial borders.

ATTRIBUTES:

Body: 3
Quickness: 4
Strength: 4
Charisma: 3
Intelligence: 6
Willpower: 4
Essence: 3.05
Reaction: 4

SKILLS:

Car (Truck: Construction Vehicle): 6
Armed Combat: 3
Computer: 3
Physical Sciences (Engineering): 5
Gunnery B/R: 4
Computer: 4
Ground Vehicles B/R: 4
Demolitions: 6
Military Theory: 3
Firearms: 3
Stealth: 3
Unarmed Combat: 3

CYBERWARE:

Datajack
Radio
Vehicle Control Rig (1)

CONTACTS: (Select 2)

Any Corporate type
Any Merc type
Any Active Military type
Mr. Johnson
Fixer
Dwarven Technician

GEAR:

Partial Heavy Armor
Form fitting Armor, Level III
Combat knife
Protective Goggles
Utility Belt, with Tools
Backpack
2d6 Signal Flares
Flare Gun
Wrist Personal Computer w/ 250 Mp
Uzi III w/ Silencer and 5 clips

5 pounds C-XII Plastic Explosives
5 pounds C-IV Plastic Explosives
5 Radio Detonators
5 Timers





Sporting Goods Salesman

"People always want to have a good time, no matter what is going on around them. They can always count on me to provide the gear they need to play their favorite games. Of course, in these modern times, it's sometimes hard to tell the games from real life. Yep, good times or bad times, people always want to play, and when they do, I'll be ready to supply the gear."

Quotes

"Look at the action on this thing."
"Warranty? Of course its got a warranty. Do you think I'd sell something that can come back and haunt me?"
"Credit? Not a chance, chummer. This is strictly cash and carry."

Commentary

Most games require some type of equipment, whether the game is physical or sedate, and sporting goods stores are there to provide all the right equipment. Staffed by the people who play the games (at least on an amateur level), they are experts on the games they play and the gear they require. Of course, games of the 21st century can be very rough and the gear required can be very expensive.

Attributes

B	S	Q	C	I	W	E	R
5	5	4	3	2	4	6	3

Skills

Etiquette(Street): 4
Negotiation(Bargain): 4
Athletics: 6



Arcade Owner

"Sure, I know I'm just a baby-sitter, but I'm a well paid baby-sitter. You should see those kids drop their nuyen into the slot. I've seen parents abandon their kids in front of my store with who knows how much nuyen and come back four hours later. If the nuyen runs out, mommy and daddy have plenty more. I might get some bad apples now and then, but I've got a good location, so there's usually no problem."

Quotes

"Hit the machine again and you're outta here. Understand?"
"You playing or you hanging? Play and stay, otherwise make room for the customers."
"...that's right. See that blue box? Grab that and you'll jump to the next level, but watch out 'cause there's a samurai waiting to split you in two when you get there."

Commentary

One of the few socially acceptable places for the young to gather, arcades have been around for nearly one hundred years. The games have advanced, but the climate is still the same. Groups of kids loiter around the newest games and spend their nuyen to beat their friends and the machine. Amid this ocean of youth stands the owner, an island of experience (or maybe just a kid who never really grew up).

Attributes

B	S	Q	C	I	W	E	R
3	3	3	3	3	2	6	3

Skills

Etiquette(Street): 6
Computer B/R: 4
Electronic B/R: 4





>>>>>(Data Entry: Access Code - Wildfire 003)>>>>>

>>>>>(Access Code Accepted. Enter Program Request)>>>>>

>>>>>(Request Latest Threat Condition Report MSP Metroplex)>>>>>

>>>>>(THREATCON REPORT AS OF 22:15:38/10-08-52

onage, blackmail, smuggling, and extortion. Much of the success of this organization relies upon the documented criminal genius of Childe and the reputation he enjoys for being the only individual ever to escape from the Maximum Security Facility in the MSP Metroplex (Crystal City).

The in-flight theft of the 4-M shipment of pulse laser weapons is suspected to have been the work of the Brain Childe gang. A current Agency investigation is also underway to determine the purpose behind 4-M transportation of



CLASSIFIED

Current Threats in MSP Metroplex:

1. Criminal Organization: Brain Childe Crime Ring

This organization operates under the control and direction of the criminal mastermind Michael Childe, alias Brain Childe. At 32, Childe has established himself as the kingpin of a highly successful crime ring involved in industrial espionage,

sensitive weapon systems, although it is suspected to be the latest in 4-M's attempt to dislodge the Dwarfish monopoly in the Minnesota Iron Range.

The Brain Childe organization prefers to operate in secrecy, unlike the Shadow Guild. Current estimates place the Brain Childe organization at 75 members.

EVALUATION: There appears to be a major war developing between these two criminal organizations. The Metropolitan Security Directorate (MSD) is making preparations,



but because the efforts to infiltrate either organizations have failed, no reliable information is available. Efforts of Federal Agencies to infiltrate the MSD have also been unsuccessful due to the close screening process employed by the MSD.

2. Positive Paranormal Threat: Vampiric Threat of Unknown Origin

Somewhere within the MSP Metroplex is a cadre of active Vampires. This group is responsible for at least 45 deaths within the last 18 months. Little effort has been made to conceal the nature of these deaths, and analysts suspect this cadre is directed by a particularly sadistic Vampire who relishes the paranormal power enjoyed by Vampires. This threat is well known within the MSP MSD which has formed a special task force to deal with the situation. This task force, designated the Helsing Squad, is a highly secret entity and operates completely covert from the other law enforcement agencies within the MSP Metroplex.

Efforts to determine the location of this cadre have proven extremely hazardous. The Helsing Squad has lost three members in the past 6 months. Current Agency efforts have met with similar results, including the deaths of agents Connor, Delancy, and Ringwood four weeks ago.

EVALUATION: There have been three recent cases of unexplained and unreported deaths of vampires suspected of belonging to this cadre. The nature of the wounds and the apparent violence which accompanied these deaths lead analysts to conclude that they were killed by another vampire. The prospects of a "vampire war" have led to declaration of the MSP Metroplex as a **THREAT CONDITION II**.

3. Probable Paranormal Threat: Suspected Shadow Spirit

Recent evidence supports the theory that MSP Metro-

plex has become home to a highly developed and extremely dangerous free Spirit that possesses a very violent and sadistic nature. This Spirit has been responsible for numerous deaths and at least three riots of significant savagery. Agency mages in the MSP Metroplex investigating this theory have documented a particular 'shadow' in the aura of suspects apprehended in the investigation of various particularly brutal crimes. These suspects have all died mysteriously while in custody, however, preventing any

further investigation. Similarly, both Agency mages working this case, and all their accumulated research and data, are currently missing. Their controlling agent, Samuel Waterson, a fourteen-year veteran of this Agency, was found murdered in a condition that has still not been completed analyzed.

The last report received from Waterson indicated that the mages had developed a theory regarding the origin of this Shadow Spirit. They had uncovered evidence that suggested this Spirit has been in the north central area for a significant period of time and may even have been ultimately responsible for the considerable number of deaths on Lake Superior dating back over three hundred years. They were in the process of gathering additional evidence when they disappeared.

EVALUATION: Waterson and the two mages, Gun-

derson and Diaz, are the latest victims of this Shadow Spirit. The Arcane Division of the Agency is currently assessing the situation in order to make recommendations to the Director for the next agents to send into the MSP Metroplex. Volunteers for this assignment are not anticipated.

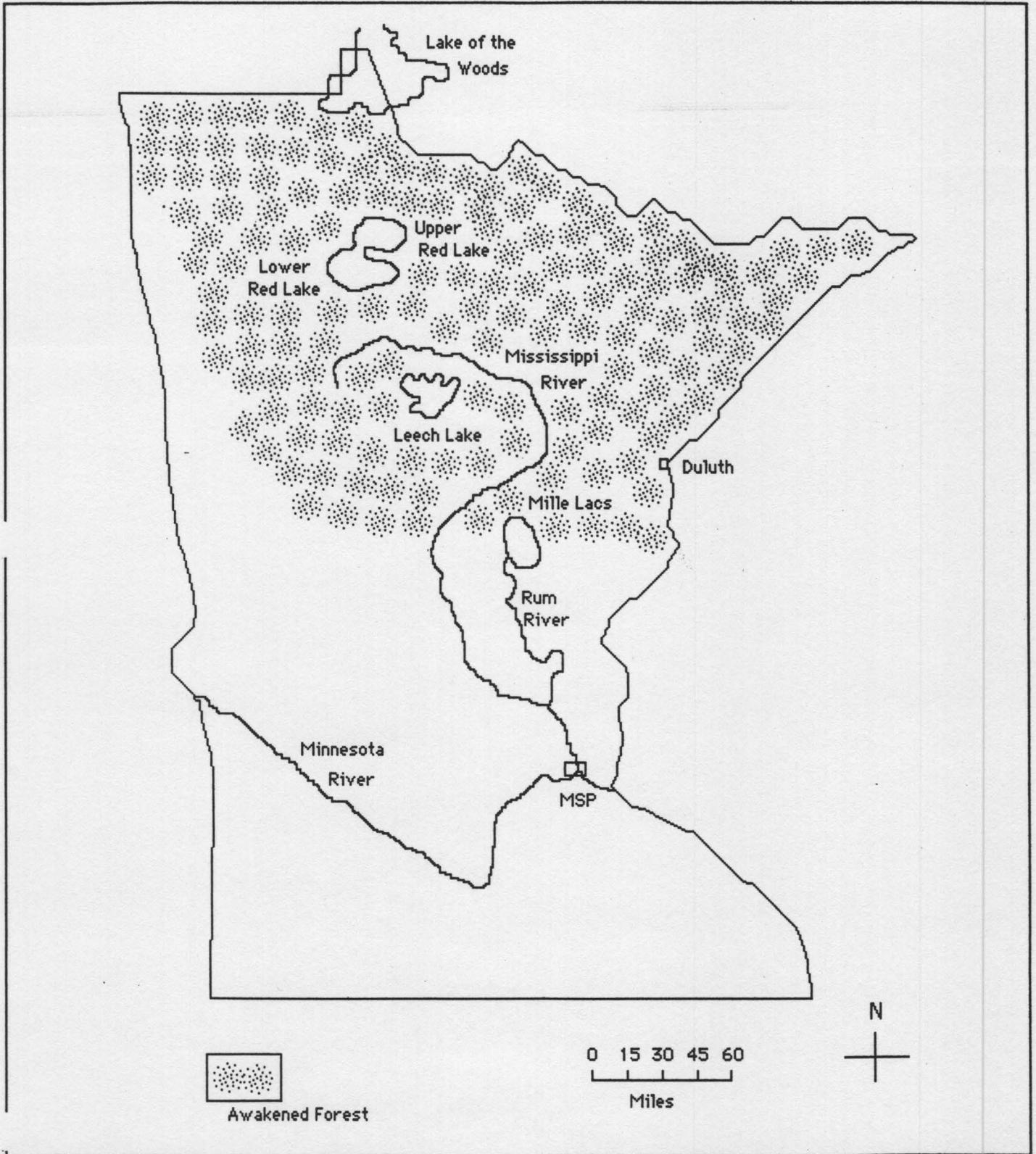
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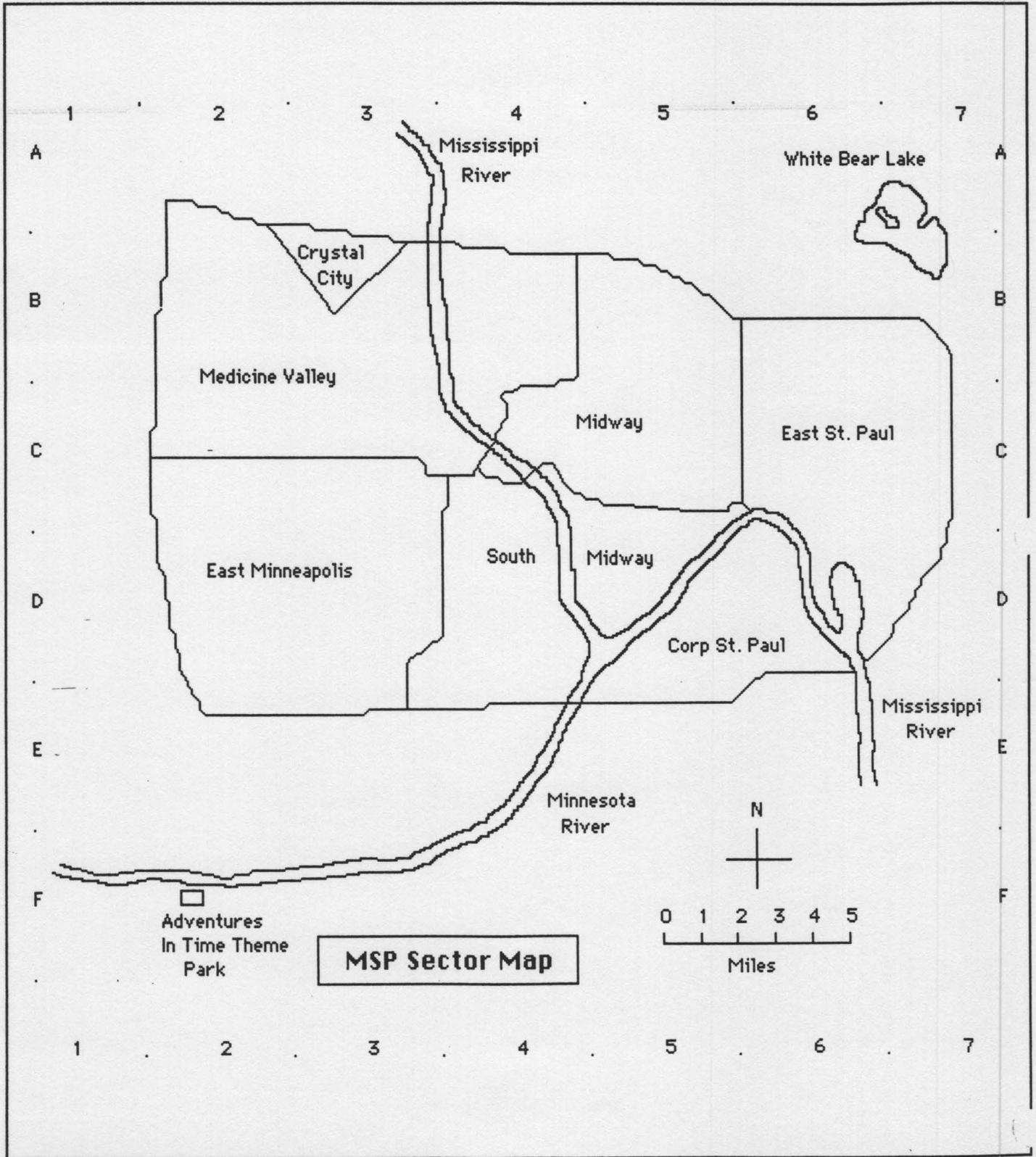
End Current File Report. Another File?)>>>>>>

>>>>>(Negative. End Transmission)>>>>>

-NW Sector Control Chief, Federal Building, MSP Metroplex









MEDIMAGIC HEALTH CARE:

Home Office Location: Medicine Valley, MSP

President/CEO: Dr. Zindar Gor

Chief Products/Services: Magical research and health care specializing in the treatment of Mages and Shamans.

Business Profile:

Medimagic Health Care specializes in the treatment of the magically enabled. Medimagic is in a current partnership with Blue Cross/Blue Shield to receive all their magically endowed clients for treatment. In addition, Medimagic is doing research into magical healing specifically in the area of new healing spells, devices, and artifacts. Recently Medimagic has been able to successfully develop two new spells to aid in the treatment of their clients.

Relieve Pain:

A spell similar to the Resist Pain and Treat spells but is effective only for Mental Damage. This spell will alleviate the penalties based on the number of successes but will not eliminate the mental damage sustained. If a deadly wound has been sustained and the target is unconscious, the Relive Pain spell can be used to revive the target. Once treated with this spell, a target cannot receive additional benefits until new mental damage has been sustained.

Intensify Healing:

This spell does not increase any benefits from magical healing but increases the body's own healing process. For each force level of the spell, the target's healing capacity increases five percent. This spell cannot be used to increase the speed of growing new limbs but has significantly increased acceptance of forced growth limbs.

Security/Military Forces:

Physical security is provided by wards and astrally by spirits and elementals. Matrix and mundane security is provided by the Dwarfish security company Hammer and Shield.

ZORGON CYBERSYSTEMS:

Home Office Location: Medicine Valley, MSP

President/CEO: Dr. Vasilev Zorgon

Principal Divisions:

Division Name: Skillwire Division

Division Head: Dr. Yuri Zorgon

Chief Products/Services: Research, design, development, manufacturing and marketing of Zorgon Skillwares.

Division Name: Skillsoft Division

Division Head: Dr. Nadia Zorgon

Chief Products/Services: Research, design development, coding and marketing of Zorgon Skillsofts.

Business Profile:

Zorgon Skillwires is a subsidiary of Zorgon Enterprises, which is currently based out of the New York metroplex. Vladimir Zorgon, the corporate CEO for Zorgon Enterprises, sent his brother Vasilev to MSP in 2041 to set up a production facility for manufacturing Zorgon Skillwires. Since 2048, the Zorgon name has been a world leader in the manufacturing of Skillwires and the coding of skillsofts.

Currently Zorgon Skillwires is working with the Genesis Foundation under a UCAS government contract to provide skillwires to UCAS special forces.

Security/Military Forces:

Zorgon Skillwires use a combination of spirits, cybernetic animals and paranormal animals to provide security at their MSP facility.



Zorgon Skillwires:

Zorgon Skillwires are specifically designed for the individual recipient, allowing a superior interface between the skillwires and remainder of the body. Prior to implantation, Zorgon Cybersystems take a week with the recipient, performing DNA typing and tissue sampling in order to get an exact match. In addition, the coding of the Zorgon Skillsofts is such that when combined with the Zorgon Skillwires they add +1 to any Zorgon Skillsoft inserted.

>>>>(Many of my chummers say that all these skillwires are only alpha cyberware. However, I know a Mr. Johnson who says the tissue sampling and DNA typing is only used on a special organize interface unit which is what makes Zorgon Skillwires so superior. All the other cyberware is identical to your ordinary skillwires and, thus, Zorgon is able to charge more than normal skillwires but much less than alpha cyberware. However, I don't work there, and since when could you trust a Mr. Johnson offering something for nothing)>>>>-

Bramage<02:05:17/01-09-52>

CHROME CENTURIONS

Home Office Location: Corp St. Paul, MSP

President/CEO: Ian MacAlister

Principal Divisions:

Division Name: Security Administration and Operations

Division Chief: Anna Dobrevnik

Chief Products/Services: Marketing and coordination of security operations and customer relations.

Division Name: Security Material

Division Chief: Dr. Mary Donegal

Chief Products/Services: Research, development, design and manufacturing of Body and Combat Armor.

Division Name: Security Personnel

Division Chief: Dr. Samuel Johnson

Chief Products/Services: Training and recruitment of security personnel, including bodywear augmentation.

Business Profile:

Chrome Centurions was organized in 2049 with the discovery of a light-weight, high-strength, crystal-metal alloy. This enabled Chrome Centurions to develop highly superior armor protection for its security personnel at a fraction of the weight of conventional armor. Ian MacAlister then decided to market his own security personnel device, selling the security suits themselves. In late 2050 Chrome Centurions introduced a security service with personnel wearing the revolutionary new body armor. The body armor has the same amount of protection as medium security armor but, in addition, has built-in extra sensors and increased battlefield management capabilities.

In early 2052 Chrome Centurions introduced their new combat armor, which provides the same amount of protection as heavy security armor but, like the body armor, is equipped with a full range of sensors and a battle management system. Chrome Centurions has only recently completed training security personnel in the use of the combat armor, making it available as the premier security service.

Currently Chrome Centurions holds the security contract for Corp St. Paul as well as various other corporate security contracts.

What allows the Chrome Centurions to provide such special resources in these suits is the special toxin removal system with which each guard is augmented. Without a special toxin removal system, the body rapidly builds up an overload of natural toxins and ketones. The normal human anatomy is unable to adapt to the increased stresses and strains, resulting in death shortly after jacking into the suit without sufficient protection.

Body Toxin Removal System:

The Body Toxin Removal System was developed by the Bionetic Research Division of the Genesis Foundation under a contract with Chrome Centurions. The Body Toxin Removal System is designed to remove body-produced toxins such as lactic acid by increasing the rate the body toxins are first broken down and then removed. The first stage is accomplished



by increasing the size of the liver and the gall bladder. This increases the amount of bile produced by the liver to assist in breaking down the various body toxins. With the increased liver and gall bladder size, the rate of toxin breakdown is effectively doubled. To keep this ratio, the Bionetic engineers at Genesis decided to double the size of the kidneys and shorten the colon. The combination of these two procedures, along with the ingesting of a specially designed protein to increase the size of capillaries, allows the augmented body to effectively double the removal efficiency of the toxins and ketones that build up from use of the body and combat armor.

This not only halves the time the body needs to recover from fatigue, including mental fatigue, but also retards the build-up of the various body toxins, allowing the recipient to tire less rapidly and exhibit remarkable endurance. This will add 1 dice to a centurion's athletic rolls and will halve the time needed to recover from mental wounds, along with halving the stun damage or fatigue the centurion sustains. However, the centurion needs to ingest not only a specially designed protein to increase the size of his arteries, but his food intake also needs to be doubled due to the higher metabolism, as is the case with the symbiotes. Possibly even more potentially detrimental would be the affect of an installed Adrenal Pump since the Toxin Removal System removes any bodily-produced substances from the body, which will effectively halve the amount of time the adrenal pump is effective.

The estimated body cost of the entire Toxin Removal System is 3.

>>>>(I knew a razor guy with one of these. The chummer never seemed to get tired.)>>>>
-Valkyrie<15:18:17/02-09-52>

>>>>(From what I hear, the armor that Chrome Centurions has designed has so many whiz toys in the suit it's like an arcade, but a very real and deadly arcade. I guess since you're plugged straight into the system it places a major drain on the operator.)>>>>
-Knightmare<15:22:37/020-9-52>

Security/Military Forces:

Providing security to Corp St. Paul, Chrome Centurions maintains significant physical and matrix security. Most of their security personnel are outfitted in body armor; however, since early 2052 many of these security personnel have been upgraded to work with combat armor.

>>>>(Be aware, chummers, that Chrome Centurions build their security personnel from scratch, implanting both bioware and cyberware, making these guys extremely nasty.)>>>>
-Jerax<07:43:37/03-22-52>

>>>>(You chummers really missed the boat or something. If you would lay off the BTL chips for a couple of seconds, you would realize that it's not the guys, but the suits that are so deadly. I hear this battle management drek they don't talk about consists of a tactical computer and orientation system among other things. The weaponry is equally as wiz also. And here's a big safety tip for you chip heads. Think twice before trying to steal one of these suits. A chummer of mine tried and fragged himself real bad. Climbed into the suit and plugged in. After about 30 seconds he gave a loud scream and collapsed. The Bear Shaman who was with us said his heart simply burst apart, and his mind had turned from jello into mush. Wasn't a pretty sight.)>>>>
-Barak The Bold<07:45:13/03-22-52>

NEW AGE ARMS:

Home Office Location: Medicine Valley, MSP, UCAS
President/CEO: Jack Callahan

Principle Divisions:

Division Name: Mjolnir Division

Division Head: Nancy Young

Chief Products/Services: Design, development, manufacture, and marketing of Plasma Shock anti-vehicular weapons.

Division Name: Thunder Bolt Division

Division Head: Frederick Opelmyer

Chief Products/Services: Design, development, manufacture, and marketing of Plasma Shock assault rifles.



Division Name: Lightning Division

Division Head: Gerald Switt

Chief Products/Services: Design, development, manufacture, and marketing of Plasma Shock heavy pistols.

Division Name: Munitions Division

Division Head: Theodore O'Brien

Chief Products/Services: Manufacture of Plasma Shock ammunition of the Mjolnir, Thunder Bold and Lightning.

Division Name: Special Projects Division

Division Head: Gerhard Schmidt

Chief Products/Services: Responsible for the development of new products or services and the exploration of international and domestic markets for Plasma Shock technology.

Business Profile:

"Plasma Shock" technology was born with the discovery of a room temperature super conducting plasma by the Materials Research Division of New Age Labs in 2044. Following this discovery, New Age Arms was formed and initially placed under a large contract by the MSD to develop a Plasma Shock anti-vehicular weapon. After the successful completion of this contract in 2049, New Age Arms continued to design, develop, and market the Mjolnir and follow-on Plasma Shock weapons and ammunition. In 2050 the MSD shifted its street police, the MPC, to exclusive use of Plasma Shock weaponry. New Age Arms has also begun to expand into the design of defensive counterpart systems for MSD security vehicles.

The possibility of exporting Plasma Shock technology to international as well as domestic metroplex security forces is being explored. Negotiations have already begun with U.K. security directorate in London for acquiring Plasma Shock weaponry and defensive systems. An 18-month test evaluation period was started in October of 2051 with Knight Errant Security in Seattle, New York, and Chicago metroplexes. Each test site has a New Age Arms branch office to monitor performance and provide technical assistance and training. Initial evaluation reports indicate positive results after overcoming limited initial user hesitation.

The charging unit is kept well guarded at each test site. Rounds that are shipped out from the New Age Arms facility in MSP contain a neutral charge. Once received at the test site, the rounds are placed into the special charging unit, making them available for use in 24 hours. Unless this charging unit is used, Plasma Shock rounds are just gel rounds with no kick.

Security/Military Forces:

As with all corps in the MSP metroplex, New Age Arms is allowed to keep only enough security forces on hand to provide internal security. Curiously enough, these forces are armed with lethal weapons vice any Plasma Shock weapons.

>>>>>(These New Age guys must hate riggers because all the riggers I know hate them. Let's see if I can explain a Plasma Shock weapon hit. It's like a poke in the eye with a real sharp stick or plugging two fingers into an electrical outlet and, chummers, we're talking a fragging big outlet.)>>>>>

-Citizen Cain<02:14:04/02-27-53>

>>>>>(The defensive system or protective skin they talk about is supposed to be a big secret, but the way I understand, chummers, is as follows. As any rigger out there who has been on the wrong end of a Mjolnir knows, a vehicle's armor is useless against this type weapon. This protective skin, however, conducts the Plasma Shock charge away from the vehicle and the rigger. I think the charge is conducted into the ground, but I'm not absolutely sure. Anyway, this skin effectively is a type of armor for a vehicle used exclusively against Plasma Shock weapons.)>>>>>

-Bramage<02:36:44/02-27-53>

>>>>>(For those who don't want to spend all that nuyen, I heard the 2nd Floor Store is selling a vehicle circuit breaker that will frag instead of both the vehicle's electronics and rigger getting fried. Unfortunately, these little devices make it extremely difficult for the rigger to control his vehicle at times and for some of the riggers I know, this might be worse than being hit by a Mjolnir.)>>>>>

-Knightmare<02:16:04/02-27-53>



He sees you when you're sleeping, he knows when you're awake.

He'll fix you up with runs for a percentage of the take...

Didja know that Santa is alive and well and living in Seattle? He and his helpers got a little toyshop downtown, but he doesn't make his rounds with reindeer no more. Uh-uh, he travels in the most expensive limo Mitsubishi makes, and Rudolph is his chauffeur.

Don't do the chimney thing either, 'cause his people know how to break open maglocks. Ol' Santa's got enough connections to know just how bad or good you really are...not to mention your credstick balance.

I like Santa 'cause last year he left a Panther assault cannon under my tree—even put a pretty red bow on it.

He's one of the most resourceful men in Seattle, but every oncē in awhile I really gotta wonder about his judgment.

He arranged for my partner Taz and me to get hired to extract an unwilling wiz from his cozy corporate office. Our Mr. Johnson didn't tell us why and we didn't really care. It's not our job. Long as we git paid, that's all that really matters, and we ain't never had no trouble with jobs fixed up by Santa.

We decided we needed a little mage help in case our target or any of his lil' magic buddies tried to stop us. If Taz didn't get him right off, things could get pretty messy. When we asked for advice, Santa found us the 'Mighty' Starfire.

Now, I don't usually have anything against magic or magicians. I've had my butt saved by them as often as I've saved theirs, but this guy was one ta give even Taz a good run on arrogance. We figured he was fresh outta one of them high class magic colleges and on his first run. He musta figured he really hit the big time.

Now, Taz and me, we been on the streets a long time and Santa's been good to us since we've known him, but we don't do babysittin'. Runs are so dangerous and unpredictable to be playin' nursemaid to a wet-behind-

the-ears amateur.

He told us we didn't haveta give the little twerp special treatment, just let him sink or swim on his own. I liked that cause we get paid the same no matter how many of us there are, and if he don't make it, we split the cash one less way.

So we met the guy. He took one look at my butt-ugly troll face, and me bein' over three-and-a-half-meters tall and got kinda nervous. Then he saw Taz, who's one of the best lookin' razor-babes in the business, and stared with his mouth open down ta his navel.

Taz smiled, all sweetness, then popped twenty-five centimeters of razor sharp steel alloy blade outta the back of her hand and ran it through her long white hair, tuckin' it behind her pointed ears. The Mighty Starfire looked about ready to wet himself. "Santa didn't tell me you were trog-er, metas," he said to Taz.

"So?" I answered, stretching up to my full height so's I could give him my best glare.

He suddenly looked real pale. He should. I'd spent months perfecting that glare. I save it for special occasions.

I couldn't believe Santa'd set us up with a bigot. Santa don't like them folk and don't usually deal with 'em 'cept ta fix runs against 'em. I figured he musta owed somebody a big-time favor.

While Starfire was tryin' to compose himself, Taz started. "I'm sure if Santa'd thought it should make any difference to you he'd have let you know. Santa only tells his people what he feels is important to the run, and if he doesn't feel it's important, he won't tell you, so you can figure that since he didn't tell you, he didn't feel it was important enough for you to know, and I wouldn't get all worked up about something that's really not important, so neither should you."

I never could figure out how she can say all that without taking a breath. I guess it must have ta do with

her bein' wired to the gills. She's got her reactions jacked up so high she can stand up, turn around, draw a gun, fire, put it away, and sit back down before whatever poor joker she's up against gets his hand on his weapon.

"Which one of you is Nuke?" Starfire asked.

I just kinda looked over at Taz and shrugged. If I was lookin' at a slender break-her-in-half-with-one-hand elf babe and a huge ugly-on-a-stick troll, I think even I could figger out which one of 'em would be called Nuke without havin' ta ask, and I ain't no wiz. I'd always been told mages is the figger-it-out kind. Guess this guy was an exception. So, I set him straight and laid down the plan.

It was a pretty standard extraction. The mage in question was not supposed to have any idea that he was in danger (strike two for mage intelligence), and the security at that corp headquarters was about as tight as a corporate call girl. In fact, I didn't figger we'd need magic help at all 'cept in an emergency, but I like to be prepared.

Starfire had a hissy-fit when I said that. "What about magical wards?" he shrieked. "You know what those are don't you? Much magic. Big bad ju-ju."

(I've always wondered why people figger that if you're big, ya gotta be stupid.)

"Only an ignorant brute like you could even think of going in without magical assistance! Anyone with any brains could tell you it would be suicide!"

That was it. When the run was over, he was gonna get snapped in half.

Taz took a deep breath and I knew that spelled trouble. "I think you misunderstand. We are not planning on doing this without magical assistance or you wouldn't be here, and since you are here that does seem to indicate that maybe we just might know what we're doing and just might be a little more experienced in this kind of thing than you, and if I was a mage on



my first run I sure wouldn't go shooting my mouth off at the guy who's gonna be guarding my back, and if you don't watch what you say, I'm afraid Nuke might just get offended enough to start ripping pieces of you off, and that would make it very difficult for you to cast spells now, wouldn't it?"

I gave the runt the glare again. "So," I said watchin' him take a couple steps away from me, "we get in as quietly as possible, grab the mage and get out as quickly as possible.

"Got any problems with that, Presto?"

He didn't say nothing.

The night of the run was a normal Seattle night—cold, wet, and miserable. Guess Master Starfire hadn't figured on bein' outside for any length of time since he showed up in a brand spankin' new black velvet robe. After a 2K walk in the rain he was soaked to the skin, and that wet velvet clung to him like a groupie on a simsense star.

Taz and I both wore Kevlar, and I got dermal plates almost as thick as my own natural hide, but that fraggin sorcerer didn't have a scrap of armor on him. Guess he had some kinda magical protection. Me, I'd take Kevlar over magic any day 'cause Kevlar don't wear off.

I left my Panther at home since it's no inside weapon, and I figured a good SMG would do just as well. 'Sides, if all went as planned, I shouldn't have to fire a shot until we

were on our way out... 'course it never works out that way.

Starfire seemed pretty happy to see that I had not only the SMG, but a Predator or two, my favorite shotgun, various grenades and, of course, my tungsten steel baby, the one and only



Wallacher combat axe. (No troll's complete without one, don'cha know.)

He then gave me this approving kinda look that I'd a loved ta have smacked off his pretentious little face.

So then he goes ta give Taz the once over (like he's got a clue what ta look for). He took one look at the

compound bow slung over her shoulder, sword at her hip and long, flowing purple cloak and looked like he wanted to scream. "You don't expect to do any damage with those archaic things, do you? These aren't the middle ages. There are going to be heavily armored security guards in that building."

Taz smiled. "I'll have you know that an arrow shot by this bow can penetrate most high-tech security armor because armor these days is designed to stop hi-velocity objects like bullets, not low velocity razor sharp projectiles like my arrows and, just in case, I have some arrows with explosive tips which have a pretty wide blast radius and blow through walls. It's also a completely silet. weapon which is essential if we are to invade the building in silence, which, I believe, is the objective of this particular little mission.

"I can't believe you are so appalled with me when you do not have any weapon other than your magic, which I think is the height of stupidity, and you're relying on only that one talent which, tell me if I'm wrong, is not infallible."

I couldn't tell if he felt put in his place or if he was just confused.

Whichever, he didn't say another word.

I made sure Santa had supplied us with fake ID's good enough ta get us past the front door security. He even made it so they was expectin' a team of specialists. The fat security orc at the desk sniffed 'em once and then



waved us through (just before going back to sleep at his console, I'd bet). It was just too bad he'd prob'ly lose his nice cushy job after this.

Once past the lobby, Starfire dropped the spell he'd had on us to make us look like Joe Security cause his brand of spell couldn't fool cameras, only people. I never said mages weren't useful... just annoying. I wasn't too worried about it, 'specially with Joe Security Orc snoring at the console.

Taz took the front. She can be the quietest li'l thing when she wants to be and is a great point man. Thankfully, her pointed li'l ears include auditory enhancers. She really can hear a pin drop. She kept close enough for me to see and scouted ahead. Once she knew it was safe, she'd wave us on. Damned if that fraggin' mage didn't make more noise than me and that's goin' some. I think we'd a been quiet if I'd carried him, but I needed my hands free in case I had to shoot.

She stopped at a corner, and she was drawn up 'bout as tight as her bowstring. She held her hand up to signal a stop, and I had to grab Starfire by his collar to keep him from goin' ahead. The guy had no sense at all.

She just crouched there, bow in one hand, arrow nocked and ready in the other. I coulda swore she vibrated like a spring wound too tight, but she was a little too far away to be sure.

Without a word, she released the arrow and then another one. I'd been too busy watchin' her fire a third to notice that Starfire was on his way to help. You'd have thought he'd figger that she'd ask if she needed it.

Okay, maybe I coulda just tripped him up a little, but after that "Much magic, big ju-ju" crack, I figgered a right proper belly-flop would be more effective and more satisfying, too. 'Course I mighta broke a coupla his ribs but runs are dangerous. It's real easy to get hurt.

When Taz gave us the sign that it is safe, I hauled the wheezing starfire to his feet and dragged him

around the corner where three security guards lay sprawled, arrows pierced right through their armor. I saw him give them a real close once over and figured he was gittin' some respect for my partner's 'archaic' weapons.

"Too bad all Taz's got is middle ages stuff, huh, Presto," I said just in case he hadn't gotten the hint.

Taz found the room and Starfire rolled up his sleeves, wincing a little as he struck the most arrogant pose I ever saw. "He's right inside the door," he said. "Break it down and I shall deal with him."

Since the last thing we needed was a magical duel in our laps, I plucked one of my sleepgas grenades off the bandolier and handed it to Taz. She took one look at Starfire gettin' ready to prove his worth, rolled her eyes and pulled the pin as I punched open the door.

It went down (as things tend to do when I punch them), the grenade went in, and our prize was gettin' a second dose of beauty sleep (which he badly needed) by the time Starfire got his first abra-cadabra out of his mouth.

I saw Taz put her hand on his shoulder. "Gotta be quicker, Presto."

With that done and the arrogant little snot staring in disbelief because we'd just ruined his moment of glory, it was time to get ourselves back into friendly territory (if any place in Seattle can be called friendly). I slung our prize over my shoulder and we started back out.

We met up with another coupla security bozos just before the stairs. Taz shoved a pistol in Starfire's hands and, as usual, took out two of them before they even realized we were there.

I had one arm full of unconscious magician and so had to use my Beretta SMG one-handed, firin' down the corridor to keep their heads down.

Starfire just kinda stood there with his mouth hangin open like he'd never seen a real fire-fight before. It took him a coupla close calls with bullets whizzin' by his ears before he figgered

out that maybe he should do something. By the time he gathered his wits enough to try some magic (which, of course, was the reason we brought him), there were no more targets.

Taz threw open the door to the stairway. We could hear footsteps comin' up. She musta decided that there were too many of them 'cause she backed right out. She glanced over at Starfire. "I certainly hope you are adept at climbing because we'll be taking an alternate route."

That's a short sentence for her.

She led us to the elevators and pushed the call button. Starfire shot me this pleading look as if he was sure Taz had gone way off the deep end and maybe I should stop her. I just shrugged and changed the clip in my Beretta. Taz knew what she was doin'.

The problem with most corp security dorks is that they figger nobody takes the elevator. It would be stupid. So, usually, they don't bother turning them off unless they know someone's in 'em.

From my experience, ridin' down in an elevator is one of the stupidest things you can do. If you're caught, you're a sittin' duck. That don't mean they don't have other uses.

The elevator showed up and Taz got in, smilin' like a cat at Starfire, who looked completely clueless. Gotta give the guy credit for keepin' his mouth shut though when the doors closed leavin' us on the outside.

I gave it about ten seconds and then pulled the doors apart. Taz dropped a rope down from the elevator car which she'd stopped between floors and fastened it tight.

We'd gone down lotsa elevator shafts this way. It really torques the security guys off 'cause there ain't no cameras in the shafts, and they never know what floor you're gonna come out on until they catch you on camera, and they can't mobilize anyone until they do. Almost makes me feel sorry for them...almost.



It was about that time that I added acrophobic ta Starfire's list of endearing qualities. He kinda stared down the shaft and turned all green. "You're kidding, right?" he whimpered.

I made sure our unconscious mage buddy was secure ta my back and swung out onto the rope. "Nope."

I didn't figure he was sufferin' enough. "Make sure you got a tight grip, it's a long fall."

I saw Taz peering down from the elevator as Starfire continued to stare down the shaft. "Well?" she said. "If you expect to get out of this alive, I suggest that you get your butt out onto that rope and start climbing, because I doubt Nuke will wait for you and I'm certainly not the waiting type. As soon as I've completely disabled this car I'm coming down, and if you're not on the rope by then, I guess we'll just have to leave you here."

Wish I coulda seen the little wimp's face.

"Put my gun away first so you don't drop it," I heard her tell him, "and use both hands."

Two floors later, I heard struggling and looked up to see her harnessing Starfire to her belt. I figured he was definitely gonna be in pain on the trip down that way, 'cause Taz won't stand for delays. He latched onto her so tight I was surprised that she could move, but she's stronger than she looks...not as strong as me, but strong enough ta keep a wimpy wizard in line.

We got out of the shaft on the third

floor. Starfire was white as a sheet when Taz set him down. He couldn't even stand on his own and she was long past impatience. "Master Starfire," she said, "we have just stolen a very important asset from this place and are now back within sight of their

than what you have sustained and will have to do so again. Nuke and I are leaving. You may follow or take your chances with the guards who, I'm sure, will treat you with much less care than we have."

With that, she turned and left, heading down the corridor to the stairs. Starfire pushed himself up onto his elbows, wincing in pain and looked up at me with a face that almost made me feel sorry for the little runt. I could hear Taz on the stairs but no sounds of gunfire.

"Aw hell," I grumbled and hauled Starfire onto my back.

I beat feet to the stairs and took 'em two at a time in the hope of catchin' up ta my partner. She sometimes forgets that I'm not near as fast as she is.

Starfire grunted in pain every time I landed but then I figured he should be grateful I was even botherin' with takin' him in the first place. If he hadn't been one a Santa's, I'd a let him stay.

Taz was waitin' outside the complex when we got out. She had a mirror in one hand and was combing her hair. She didn't say a word ta me when she noticed that I was carrying two mages instead of just

one. She just nodded and then we ran a few blocks further down the street before stopping. I dumped Starfire onto the ground. "Don't know why I bothered," I grumbled. "He was more trouble than he was worth."

"I don't know," Taz remarked, "even though he was a major pain, he



security cameras. Very soon they will send all available forces to this location to take back what we have, and I certainly don't want to be here when they do."

He moaned a reply. "I don't care how you feel. I have had to make escapes with far more serious injuries



did provide us with a much better disguise than we could have ourselves, and we didn't have to be bothered with disassembling any of the weapons to hide them which you know can be really dangerous if we run into trouble before we're ready, and he did tell us the mages exact position in the room which was helpful because otherwise we might not have gotten the drop on him and then we'd have had to deal with fighting magic so it might not have been quite as easy without him so I wouldn't be too upset with him even if he is an arrogant little pig."

There was a retching sound from the sidewalk. Starfire glared up at us. "You could have been a little more careful," he said to me. "I'm pretty sure your tackling me broke several ribs and the way I was carried only served to aggravate the injuries. Are you always that careless?"

Let me add ungrateful to the list.

"Can't let you jeopardize the run, Presto, " I said interrupting Taz before she started, which is the one of the few times it's possible.

She hauled him to his feet. "You survived and we did what we came to do which is the best you can ever hope from a run, and I think you're being a little ungrateful to Nuke here and to me when either one of us could have just as easily left you to die in there instead of hampering ourselves with carrying you, however ungently. I think you owe each of us an apology and thanks."

Starfire grumbled out both.

As we headed back to the rendezvous point where a Mr. Johnson would be waitin' with the payoff for the job, Taz began goin' on about life at the court in Tir Tangaire which she knows nothin' about but has made up quite a bit.

See, Taz seems pretty normal most a the time, but she's as elvish as corps are honest. Her jacked-up reflexes have made her unstable, but instead of urning into a raging killing machine ..ke most chromed runners, she's just

got herself convinced that she's a thousand-year-old elf from Tir Tangaire. Taz is livin' proof that if ya get too much stuff replaced, it does weird things to your mind. All things considered, it's pretty harmless...most a the time.

'Course, when she started, I had no idea that Starfire knew anything about it. It wasn't until I noticed him lookin' at her real funny like he was tryin' to look into her soul that I realized that he was about ta do somethin' real stupid.

I s'pose I coulda warned him, but he prob'ly wouldn'ta listened ta me anyway.

"You're not really elvish," he announced.

Taz gave him a weird look. "Of course I am."

(Now, I'd a figgered that a highly intelligent mage, like they're all s'posed ta be woulda got his first clue from her short reply. Strike four for the magic guys.)

"You're lying," he told her, gettin' this uppity tone ta his voice. "You've just been cosmetically altered. And, after listening to what you've said and knowing how the elves of Tir Tangaire treat any but their own, I doubt you've ever been inside the boarders, let alone at the court."

Taz's expression changed. Her eyes narrowed and her fists clenched at her sides. She began bouncing on her toes as if she was venting extra energy and really looked like she might hit something. I thought again about warnin' Starfire, but he was on a roll, and if he was too stupid ta know danger when it was in his face, he'd never survive on the streets long anyway.

"You don't even have any of the names right," he continued, proving that he was about as observant as orcs are attractive. "You're a complete fraud."

He faced her, arms crossed over his chest and face as smug as if he'd just solved the mysteries of the universe.

"Oh," was all Taz said.

Her eyes changed, losing any hint of sanity. They flared with fury as she popped that blade out the back of her hand, shoving it up to the knuckles into Starfire's chest and that was that.

She withdrew the blade and then turned away from him as if he had never existed, as if she hadn't just wasted him there in the street. She turned ta me and I watched her return to normal, that sweet expression replacing the homicidal one.

I hoped like hell she couldn't read what I was thinkin'. The girl's a true psychotic and sometimes, when she does stuff like that, it really hits home.

"We'd better get going or we'll be late and I don't want Mr. Johnson figuring that we didn't do the job and backing out on the deal or getting spooked 'cause we're not there when he shows, and I've already decided where I'm going to spend my part of the money, and I'm counting on this, and I didn't much like Mr. Johnson in the first place."

She looked down at her right hand where the metal spur was wet with blood. "Now where did that come from? You know I always do my best to keep them clean, and I sure don't remember getting them dirty, and who's blood is it anyway?"

She wiped it carefully on a rag she keeps for just that purpose and retracted it. She paused and glanced over at me. "You know, I feel like I'm forgetting something, and I really hate it when that happens because it will bug me for a week until I figure out what it was that I forgot, and I try so hard to remember the important things. Do you have any idea what it was?"

"Nah," I said as I picked up our prize and stepped over the still bleeding corpse on the sidewalk. "Lets go."

Yep, I figure Santa knew exactly what he was doin' sending that little runt with us. I don't figger he expected him to make it. Probably wanted to get him out of the way without makin' it look like his fault. Guess it worked.

Sometimes Santa's so good, it's scary.



Spells

Relieve Pain

A spell similar to the Resist Pain and Treat spells but is effective only for Mental Damage. This spell will alleviate the penalties based on the number of successes but will not eliminate the mental damage sustained. If a deadly wound has been sustained and the target is unconscious, the Relive Pain spell can be used to revive the target. Once treated with this spell, a target cannot receive additional benefits until new mental damage has been sustained.

The target number is 8 minus the target's Essence. The time required to sustain the spell is the same as for the normal healing spells. Extra successes can be used to reduce the healing time. The Drain Resistance Test target number is equal to one-half the force of the spell, and the Drain Level is equal to the current Wound Level of the target.

Note: The effects of this spell cannot be used with other magic casting. If you knock yourself into a near-coma, this spell will not help you cast another killer combat spell. The astral link is still "fatigued" and further casting will reveal this. The spell will help you regain your wind at the end of a marathon, but it will not help your further spell casting (or drain resistance, or summoning chances).

Type:	Mana
Range:	Touch
Target:	8 - Essence
Duration:	Permanent
Drain:	(F/2) (Wound Level)

Intensify Healing

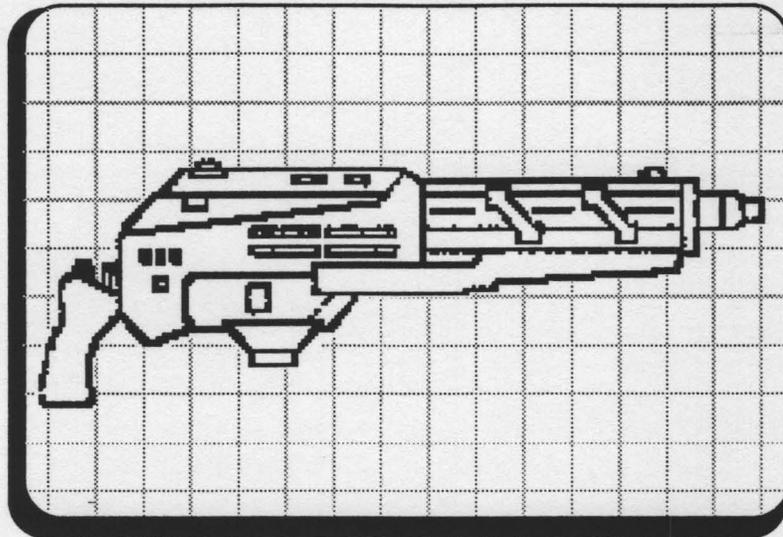
This spell does not increase any benefits from magical healing but increases the body's own healing process. For each force level of the spell, the target's healing time by one day. This spell cannot be used to increase the speed of growing new limbs, but has significantly increased acceptance of forced growth limbs. (Reduce the Forced Growth penalties by one per force level of the spell used.)

Unlike most spells, additional successes cannot reduce the time required to sustain this spell.

Type:	Mana
Range:	Touch
Target:	10 - Essence
Duration:	Permanent (20 turns)
Drain:	(F/2 + 1)S



Gear



Mjolnir Plasma Shock Cannon

"If it's good enough for THOR, it's good enough for you."

The Mjolnir Plasma Shock Cannon produced by New Age Arms is the latest in anti-vehicular weaponry. If you want to incapacitate a vehicle without destroying it or its contents, hit it with a Mjolnir. Firing state-of-the-art charged super conducting plasma, the Mjolnir is guaranteed to knock down anything, even that pesky troll samurai who's on your tail.

Type	Concealability	Ammo	Damage	Weight	Cost
Cannon	N/A	20(clip)	14D(stun) 7S*	20	50,000¥

*Versus vehicle

>>>>>(I was recently on a "ride" and everything was going whiz until a MSD Heavy Response team showed up and one of them pointed a Mjolnir at us. I never saw a rigger move so fast as when he was jacking out.)>>>>>
-Barak The Bold<08:16:04/03-12-53>

>>>>>(You ever see a rigger after his vehicle has been hit by one of these suckers? Looks sort of like a piece of burnt toast. I thought his brain had slagged as he was just sitting there, all bug-eyed, with smoke coming out his ears. No wonder riggers hate these things.)>>>>>
-Valkyrie<08:18:04/03-12-53>

>>>>>(Ouch! Sounds like extensive blown cyberware, chummers.)>>>>>
-Bramage<08:18:54/03-12-53>

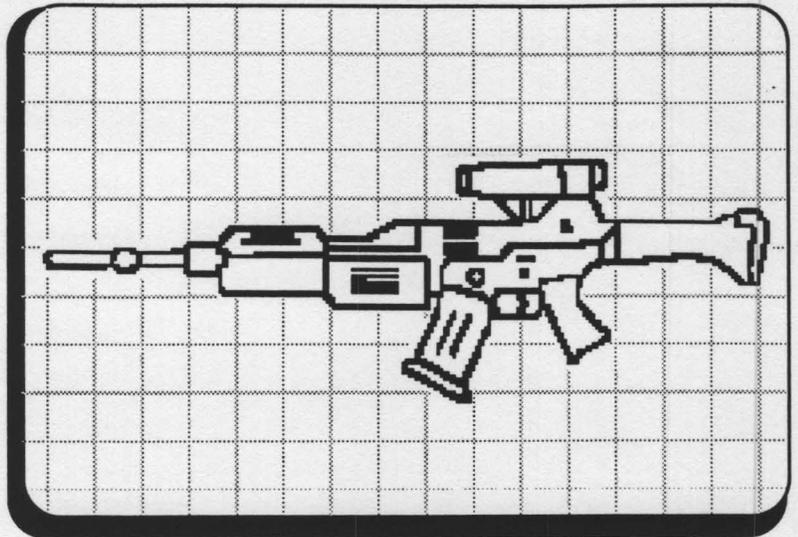
>>>>>(Wait, I got it now. This is your rigger. This is your rigger on Plasma Shock. Any questions?)>>>>>
-Barak The Bold<08:20:13/03-12-53>



Thunder Bolt Assault Rifle

"When Zeus wants someone's attention, he uses a Thunder Bolt! So can you."

The Thunder Bolt Assault Rifle delivers that much needed non-lethal impact that has been sadly lacking in our security agencies. Now if you need to take your opponent down without killing him, New Age Arms offers a much better option than a Narcojet.



Type	Concealability	Ammo	Damage	Weight	Cost
Assault	2	24(clip)	8M(stun)	6.0	5,500¥

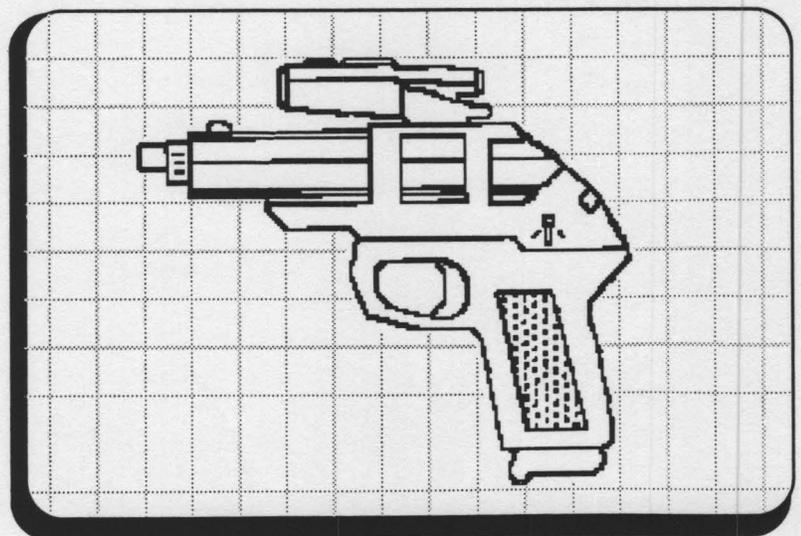
>>>>(Man, I saw one of these used on one of those Combat Cycle Drekheads when he tried to ride down an MSD trooper. Looked like the chummer plugged himself into an outlet. Talk about being "wired"!)>>>>

>>>>(Well, what do you expect from a wanna-be samurai? Anyone with half a brain knows you don't mess with anyone in the MSD. Drekheads 0, MSD 1 (again). End of story.)>>>>

Lightning Heavy Pistol

"They say lightning never strikes twice; well, think again, chummer."

New Age Arms has done it again. What the Thunder Bolt did for the assault rifle enthusiasts, the Lightning does for the heavy pistol industry. No longer do you have to walk around with a Predator II to play with the big boys. All Lightning pistols come equipped with reflex triggers for that quick second shot and an integral laser sight.



Type	Concealability	Ammo	Damage	Weight	Cost
Hvy Pistol	4	12(clip)	7M(stun)	3.0	3,500¥



Plasma Shock Ammunition, per 10 Shots

	Concealability	Damage	Weight	Cost
Mjolnir	3	As Weapon	1.0	2,000¥
Belt 100	Seriously?	As Weapon	11.0	18,500¥
Thunderbolt	7	As Weapon	.5	1,000¥
Lightning	7	As Weapon	.4	750¥

Tooth Replacement

A variant of the Hollow tooth, this is a "soft" dental appendage that can be removed. If the tooth is squeezed it will release any fluid stored inside. On the street this modification has earned the nickname "the Squirt."

	Normal Replacement	Standard	Hollow	Squirt
Concealability:	10		10	10
Weight:	-		-	-
Essence:	0		.01	.01
Availability:	Always		4/6 days	4/8 days
Cost:	500¥		750¥	1,000¥
Street Index	.5		1	1

>>>(Some nasty stuff can be put into those Squirts, from your favorite stim to classical Cyanide. In the larger molars, a Hollow can serve the same capacity as a Fingertip Compartment.)>>> - Dr.Dentistry <14:22:19/10-11-53>

Meta-style Tooth Replacement

The latest in counter-culture, these items are set into the jaw bone and work just like the real thing on Orks and Trolls. The exact version depends on the length the tooth protrudes above the lips. During the implantation the muscles of the jaw are reinforced to provide additional strength. Although most teeth are made of enamel, metal versions are available. Damage for both versions is 3L. Teeth are always implanted in sets and only two can be implanted.

	Enamel	Metal
Concealability:	NA	NA
Weight:	-	-
Essence:	.03	.03
Availability:	4/6 days	6/8 days
Cost:	1,500¥	3,500¥
Street Index	1	1

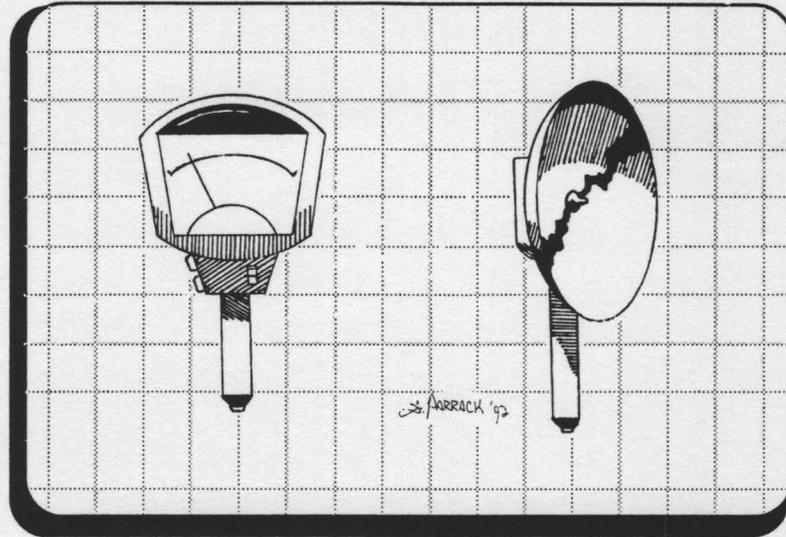
Canines

Normally called fangs by those who wear them, these are usually smaller than Meta-styles, but they are much sharper. These replacements are normally installed in sets of four (two upper and two lower). Only slightly more expensive for the retractable version, which can be lowered into their sockets on micromotors. Damage for fangs is 2L.

	Standard	Retractable
Concealability	8	10/8
Weight	-	-
Essence	.05	.07
Availability	4/6 days	6/8 days
Cost	6,000¥	10,000¥
Street Index	1	1.5



off the shelf >>>>(new gear & equipment)<<<<



Bomb Sniffer

New from Kelmar Technology's micro-electronics division, the long awaited hand-held bomb sniffer is finally available! Field tested in known terrorist targeted airports from London to Berlin, Ensenada to Hong Kong. It has proven itself superior to dogs again and again.

Rating	3 to 9
Concealability	5
Weight	1.2
Availability	Rating/7 days
Cost	4,500¥ x rating
Street Index	2
Legality	Legal

Description:

Small enough to be held in one hand, the bomb sniffer looks much like an old-fashioned Geiger counter. It even has a top handle and an audio warning that "clicks." The speaker-shaped device on the half-meter long, retractable cord analyzes air molecules and, after its micro-computer excludes molecules commonly found in the air (such as nitrogen and oxygen), transmits its findings to the main computer which looks for a match between all the remaining molecules known to be used in explosives. If a match is detected, the bomb sniffer gives a visual read-out of the presence of a bomb as well as the suspected type and size of the bomb.

The device is very accurate and unlikely to give false reading where no explosives are present. The bomb sniffer can be defeated by bombs that have been sealed in truly airtight containers; but unlike dogs, it cannot be fooled by packing the bomb in something with a strong odor. The more sensitive models are also known to detect explosive ammunition. Nevertheless, if the filters of the sniffer are not cleaned properly, and on a regular basis, the sniffer could miss a stick of TNT in a coat pocket.

Rating of the bomb sniffer is the number of dice used in a resisted success test against the Stealth of the person who tried to conceal the explosives. The base time to detect a bomb is one minute, halved for each extra success.

>>>(Although the bomb sniffer is legal, Lone Star and other security forces tend to be very curious about people who feel they have the need for one. Although registration is not yet mandatory, you can be certain Lone Star keeps tabs on anybody they catch with one of these things.)>>> - Rodeo <11:44:56/10-03-53>



Questions and Answers

1. If you lose essence (but are not killed) by an Essence Draining Critter, is the essence loss permanent or temporary?
Any essence lost in such an attack is PERMANENT. That's what makes these critters so fearful.
2. In astral combat, if you are maintaining (or have a spell locked/quicken) Increased Attribute spells, do these spells affect your attributes in Astral Space?
No, if the mental attributes have been enhanced, the affect will not carry to Astral Space.
3. Is a deluxe gyro mount cumulative in effect with a gas vent?
Yes. You can mount one item at every weapon location. Accessories cannot be mounted at the same location; for example, you cannot mount a silencer and a gas vent.
4. Can vampires regenerate mental fatigue damage?
You bet.
5. The general rule for casting spells is line of sight. Can a mage or shaman cast a spell at a person behind a wall with a +8 (blindside) modifier?
No. You have to be able to actually see the target of a combat spell. This is a big difference between firearm combat and spell combat. You can target an unseen opponent (with t8) if casting a manipulation spell.
6. I placed different types of ammo in an SMG, three each of explosive, regular, and APDS. How do I resolve damage for a burst?
To some extent, this is up to the GM. Most GMs will probably assign damage based on the best case (or worst case). If ambitious, the GM could assign a probability to each ammo type and make a random roll to see how the affects are applied. The key here is to resolve the damage as a single type of ammo.
7. I fire a SMG and push the damage to three steps above deadly. After I eliminate the armor protection, do I start resisting at the deadly mark, or at three steps above deadly?
*For S1: There is no place above deadly. Extra successes simply reduce the effectiveness of armor and, therefore, do not count toward lowering the power of the weapon. Unarmored targets must resist at the full power of the weapon, but two successes will save the target's life.
For S2: This is not really an issue.*
8. My character is an accomplished physical adept. He has eight automatic successes in athletics. He is pushed off a 100 (or 400 or 1,000) foot building. Because he has eight automatic successes, he reduces the damage (#D2) to nothing. Is that right?
*For S1; NO! You have to have one success before you can start counting automatic successes. In this case a single success would equal nine (one plus eight).
For S2: There is no "automatic successes in S2.*
9. Will a mage know if he is being mind probed? How about a mundane?
Yes and yes. The target will always feel the presence of the other mind in his head.



10. Will a summoned spirit know past events that have happened in its home domain?
Not unless the spirit was summoned and present to witness the events. If not summoned, only very general information will be known. Not only will the spirit's perception of the events be different from a human's, but the intelligence of the spirit (which will be equal to the force) might not be high enough to correctly interpret the events. Even at best, the only thing revealed will be good, bad, death, etc.
11. I've been told that bullets lose speed due to air resistance. Doesn't it make sense to reduce the power level of a firearm over the range?
Yes, but do you really want to add that level of complexity to the game? If you must, try this. Power level is the average power of the firearm over the entire range. Add one to the level at close, subtract one at long, and subtract two at extreme (if you're sure you really want to do this).
12. Shouldn't the range of scatter depend on the range to the target?
Yes, but see question eleven. If something that is rolled up doesn't make sense, adjust it as the GM. Remember, even aerodynamic weapons can take a strange bounce.
13. Do Treat-Heal spells heal all wounds, or only magically inflicted ones? If Treat-Heal must be done in the first hour after damage, and Heal can be done at any time, can Heal be used to raise the dead?
Treat-Heal spells can be used to cure all types of physical damage. Heal spells cannot resurrect dead persons. Healing must have living tissue to work on. Dead is dead, chummer.
14. If a mage allocates dice for spell defense, is this ability visible from Astral Space?
It would not be visible until the defense was actually used. Just having the defense at the ready would not be detectable, but the moment the mage's defenses sprang into action, anybody (or thing) in Astral Space could see the mage's defenses (and identify the mage accordingly).
15. If an astrally perceiving mage is hit from Astral Space with a physical spell, does he save with his astral body or his physical body?
He would save with his physical body.
16. What is the load rating of Black IC?
Black IC has the same load as equivalent Grey IC.
17. How much do toxins cost?
That depends on the GM; however, they should be prohibitively expensive to Shadowrunners. These biologicals are the types of things governments spend millions to develop. Acquiring them (from any source) will be difficult, if possible at all.
18. Would being punched or kicked with a cyberlimb do the same damage as a limb with bone lacing?
No. Although the cyberlimb would be strong, and could be chrome-covered, the metal-meat joint is limited by the strength of the meat. Additional stress on this joint will cause the meat to fail, possibly damaging the interface (and ruining the metal). To get the effect of bone lacing, you'd have to strengthen the entire structural system behind the cyberlimb (which means the structure all the way to the spine).



The Grimoire II

At first glance this sourcebook looks a lot like the original, especially in the form I received it—layout is finished, but there is no art. The contents look very much the same, but there are new headers and the whole thing seems to make more sense. The book starts, not with history, but with people and organizations. History not covered in S2 is revealed through the people and organizations who made it happen. After a brief explanation of the differences between shaman and mages, it's off to the races.

The first major section is The Arts (not counting The Ways, which is the intro). Enchanting is added back to the skill web and the method for manufacturing magical items is brought up-to-date. Druids are covered in detail and they are very well done. They are truly practitioners of a different branch of magic, fitting somewhere between (and off the side of) shaman and mages. They have their own totems, like Sun, Moon, and Oak, and they operate in their own way. Adepts are expanded with the addition of the Elemental Adept and an expanded list of abilities for the Physical Adept (yea!). The final part of the section revolves around Ritual Magic.

The next section is The Higher Mysteries. As you might guess, this involves Initiation, metamagic and groups. The work is very well done and provides a wealth of information on expanding the power and ability of magical characters. All forms of metamagic are covered in detail, with lots of new information on how to make the abilities work. I know there will still be lots of questions, but the authors have done a good job answering most of them before they've been asked. The section on magical groups is pretty much the same as it was in the beginning, but that was one of the strongest sections to begin with, so nothing is lost there.

The section on The Beings is going to be one of the most useful and often

referenced (especially by the GM). In addition to basic explanations on spirits, the text covers Allies, Watchers, and Free Spirits in depth. Free Spirits receive the most attention, which is fortunate. Topics covered include motivations, true names, powers, and how to design your own. Cool, eh?

The Places, which are covered next, provide information on Astral Space and the Metaplanes. The explanation on Astral Bodies is very helpful, and the details provided under Astral Combat are bound to make the everybody's life easier (to play, I mean; Astral combat is still deadly).

The last two sections are on Magical Threats and Spells. The Threats covered are already known, at least to some degree. The Toxic Shaman is much the same in motivation and ability. There are several new things about the Insects, however. My favorite is the individual Insect Spirit. Sound interesting? Roaches and Mantids are on the way. The spell section will be the most immediately useful to players. Spell design is covered in detail and there are examples of how the spells work, with topics on elemental effects, and general spell effects. There are lots of new spells, listed by category and, like the first edition, there are complete spell tables. There is also a Spell Design Form which, while not strictly necessary, makes the task much easier.

Paranormal Animals of Europe

First of all, I have to admit something out loud—I'm a yank. Born American, with American attitudes and outlook. Some people will tell you there's no such thing as a typical American, but you don't have to go too far to realize Europeans, even the British, look at things differently than Americans. This book is a perfect example. I doubt an American could have written this book and gotten the flavor just right. FASA said they wanted their European sourcebooks to be

written by people with firsthand knowledge of the area, and it looks like the idea paid off.

The sourcebook was written by Carl Sargent (where have I heard that name?). The intro and Faerie Critter section are very well done, but my favorite is the Critter section. I guess that makes sense. There are all sorts of good critters to throw at players, and most of them are best used subtly. The variation is excellent, and my only complaint is you have to get the players to Europe to use them.

Although players will have little direct use for such a sourcebook (as opposed to GMs), the reading makes this book an excellent choice. The review copy was not in layout form and there was no art, so I don't know how the book will end up, but if the art matches the text, I'm going to have to figure out a way to get my Shadowrunners across the pond.

Tir Tairngire

Even more than you might suspect, this is an ambitious project. FASA has hinted at the Elves and provided a host of half-truths and clues, so the payoff had better live up to the billing. Elves have always been "cool" to play and play against. That's why you have to pay extra when creating an Elf character. You have to pay for the "cool factor" even if the advantages never really lived up to the loss of skills, gear and attributes.

I'll admit I didn't really think it could be done. I wanted to believe, but the Elves were just too slick. Their culture was just too, well, cultured, especially for human standards. I must admit, however, that after the first pass at the manuscript, I am very impressed. Nigel Findley has done a great job of making humans Elvish.

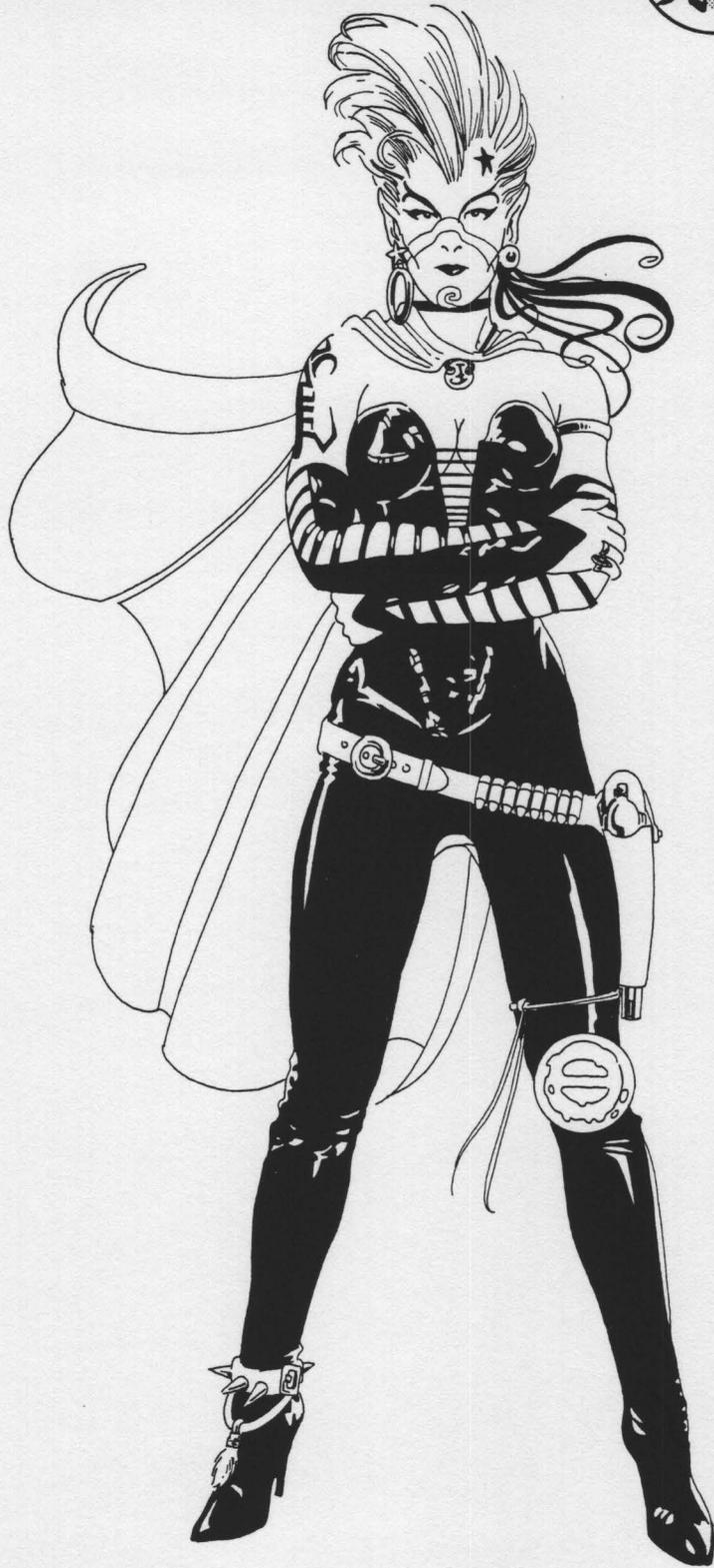
The book covers all sorts of new material. It has been written in a manner similar to the Seattle Sourcebook, but on a national scale. The entire country is covered. Because the culture of the Elves is so different, most



the books covers those differences. Things like the government, the law, sports, daily life, and security all receive attention. Nobility and one's place in the country is very important to the Elves, and it shows in this book.

Half the book seems to be written by members of the matrix, which means there are lots of opposing views. With this approach you can get lots of different viewpoints on the same topic, which has worked well in sourcebooks in the past, but is especially important in a book like Tir.

There is no release date for this product as yet. That's understandable considering the importance of the product and its scope. It still has to go through development, layout and art. Maybe we'll see something soon, but it will probably be spring of next year (at least).





Total Eclipse

by William Tracy
Rating 3.0 out of 5

One Stage Before

by Nigel Findley
Rating 4.0 out of 5

These two scenario books both deal with the world of rock music in the Seattle Sprawl. They are the latest releases from FASA to support the Shadowbeat sourcebook, and they are good examples of life at the upper and lower ends of the musical spectrum.

In *Total Eclipse* the band is more of a means to an end, and the action does not follow the world of rock and roll. The band is struggling and, therefore, they are much more at the mercy of their managers and agents. The plot they get involved with is certainly twisted, but it quickly shows how band members can become the pawns of the people around them.

In *One Stage Before* the band (The Shadows) is the hottest group in the sprawl. They have much more say in what is going on. The adventure revolves around the band and their upcoming show at the Kingdome and stays firmly in the realm of the music industry. Although the plot may be a little more straightforward since it stays in the music industry, it contains lots of little plot twists that make it very good.

Pros

The pros with both books start with the covers. Both are well done works of art. The styles are very different, but they are each effective. Inside, the artwork is similarly well done. I am a fan of Smif's and Aulio's work, which are featured in *O.S.B.* You can't mistake Aulio's style, which is among the most unique in the industry. The dark, somber pieces always seem to hint at more than you can actually see. I don't have to tell you about Smif's

work. Dan Smith is a regular contributor to this newsletter, and his work is always first rate.

As I said before, both the stories are well done. In any Shadowrun adventure most players know they are going to be double-crossed before the final payoff. Experienced runners know they have to stay one step ahead of their opposition, and often the best they can expect is to come out of the adventure alive. In these two cases, there are definite payoffs to successfully completing the adventure, both in terms of nuyen and in terms of karma. The plots are well thought out, and although they lead to different conclusions, they are rewarding when completed. Likewise, when the players hose the job, there are suitable penalties. It is possible to mess up once (or twice) and still be successful in the end.

In both books the characters are well done and detailed. They have a wide range of emotions, and they definitely have a wide range of motivations. It makes it hard to tell what some of the characters are up to, which is necessary for any Shadowrun story, and provides many of the plot twists. In *T.E.* the band plays a much more central role, and their stats are much more important. Characters will not react with the band members of *O.S.B.* nearly as much. In the end, however, that's all right. There are plenty of good characters to work with.

Cons

This subject is probably best handled separately. My biggest complaint in *T.E.* is the handling of the band members themselves. Although each is unique, their stats are almost identical. At first I thought it was a misprint, but a second look confirms they are just too close to identical. Their attributes are nearly identical (once you eliminate racial modifiers), and their skills are even closer (all band members have Instrumental Music 6 and Musical Composition 4,

even the singer, who has no singing skill).

One Stage Before's main difficulty is the plot itself. Hardened Shadowrunners will know something is up and be on guard. They will be looking for something to go wrong and be prepared if, and when, it does. Although that is probably good game play, it also means the GM will have to work twice as hard to make some of the "surprises" really surprising. In the end, however, this is not as difficult as it could be as there is enough going on to keep the players guessing.

Conclusion

I rate *O.S.B.* slightly higher as it covers ground that has not been covered before. The runners will get to work within a single realm (the music industry). The GM can develop a style and keep with it throughout the adventure. All the events are interrelated and do a good job of building the topics covered in *Shadowbeat*.

Although *T.E.* is a good product, it quickly strays from the music business and has the runners tracking down the band members throughout the sprawl. This book is more about magic than music, which is certainly not bad, just unexpected. It works as a scenario, but it is not as strong as *O.S.B.*

Although I recommend both products, *One Stage Before* is a better investment. Although it is slightly more expensive, (\$9.00, versus the \$8.00 price tag of *T.E.*), the extra price is worth it. *O.S.B.* is sixty-four pages while *T.E.* is only fifty-four.



>>>>(Re-posted from the newsnet for your convenience.)<<<< - Quirk (12:23:31 - 11/28/53)

TODAY'S HEADLINES

INTERNATIONAL

DESTROYER SINKS OFF GULF COAST

The CAS Destroyer "Garfish" disappeared on a routine mission Thursday, the military reported yesterday. Communication was lost with the ship seven days ago but trouble was not suspected due to the communication interference caused by the storm front that hovered over the coastal area all week. The reasons for the strange storm are not known at this time. A search of the gulf area was started Wednesday evening at 19:30 hours. More information forthcoming.

NATIONAL

BODIES FOUND TO HAVE A HOME AFTER ALL

The bodies found floating in the Seattle harbor, originally believed to be homeless and illegal aliens, have turned out to be undercover Metropolitan Security Directorate officers from M.S.P. The three men were apparently investigating organized crime when their true nature was discovered. When questioned about possible leaks at M.S.P., P.R. spokesman Jack Wayne had only two words to say. "No Comment." For more on past (suspected) security leaks in major UCAS cities, see page 102.

LOCAL

SAN FRANCISCO TUBE DOWN FOR REPAIRS

The Ressah Maglev bullet train that runs between Seattle and San Francisco will be closed down for nine days to allow workers to replace and repair

switching units and sensors. The closure dates are from Friday at 18:00 till Sunday at 12:00. A railway spokesman said, "The new switches will allow us to run the cars at a greatly increased speed with a greater amount of safety and reliability than currently possible. The new sensors are going to allow us to pinpoint where each car is to within 500 yards." For more on MAGLEV technology, see page 127.

BUSINESS

NEW AGE ARMS ANNOUNCES NEW PRODUCTION FACILITIES

New Age Arms of M.S.P. announced yesterday the planned development of a production facility and research park for their new, soon to be patented Plasma Shock technology. The weapons, which have been on the streets in the hands of local law enforcement agencies since July, have made a strong impression on their users, and sales are expected to be brisk. Though they will only be available to military and law enforcement organizations, a spokesman for New Age Arms expects sales to be hot, as many organizations are looking to upgrade their arsenals at this time. More on Plasma Shock, page 69.

ENTERTAINMENT

SHADOWS HIT HARD, HOT AND SWEATY

The Shadows, the newest hot four-some, have been seen playing small clubs around the country. Apparently, little warning is available as they are always billed under different names. When they take the stage, word quickly spreads and riots have been known to start at a few of the clubs once they reach capacity. The band has been rumored to be dissatisfied with, as they put it, getting away from their roots. It is not known if the group is to

continue this practice as they could not be reached for comment. See Rock Riot on page 201 for more information.

SPORTS

COMBAT BIKE CHALLENGE TOSSED OUT

Georgie "Ballbreaker" Hammer challenged Agrippa Bates to a grudge joust in a news conference last night. A grudge joust is when two players ignore normal scoring and concentrate on knocking each other off their bikes until one or the other is taken off the field on a stretcher. "This activity is highly discouraged by the Combat Bike Owners Organization," James Lowrey, chairman of the association, said in an interview shortly after Hammer's announcement. When asked about the announcement, Agrippa would only say something that sounded like "Garnghhh" and has since been unavailable for comment.

