

SHADOWLAND

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VOL. 1

Artwork by John Zeleznik

SHADOWLAND

An Official Publication Devoted to FASA's Shadowrun Roleplaying Game

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Sword of the Knight
Publications, Inc.
2820 Sunset Lane #116
Henderson, KY 42420 USA
Voice/Fax: 502-826-1218
Net: SwrDKnht@aol.com

Editor

Kevin D. Knight
Associate Editor
Brenda K. Knight
Macintosh Guru
Richard Biever

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The Editor Speaks...

Greetings and welcome to the first issue of Shadowland, the new Shadowrun support magazine brought your way by Sword of the Knight Publications! We hope you enjoy and come back for more!

Thanks to everyone who's written us the past couple of months, especially those of you who included submissions! Also, thanks to the fine folks at FASA, especially Mike, Jill, and Lou, for letting us publish this magazine. And a special thanks to all of you who buy this magazine so we can KEEP publishing it!

Kevin Knight

Letters

Dear Sword:

I hope your publication is somewhat better and more punctual than KAGE. I never received an issue of that worthless rag of a magazine, and I had subscribed many months before they apparently went belly up. Alas, all of my phone calls and voice mails were to no avail. Ah well, this is not your problem. As I said, I have great hopes for your magazine, and I am looking forward to my first issue.

Bill Scherer

Bill:

We'll try to do better! Promise! We received many letters similar to yours and we'll definitely be easier to get a hold of than AWOL. The best way to get in touch with us is to send email to SwrdKnight@aol.com. If you need to send a snail mail letter, please enclose a SASE and we'll be sure to get back in touch with you! Thanks!

Kevin

Adventure Gamefest '95

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If it has to do with Shadowrun, we want to see it! We are looking for adventures, critters, equipment, cyberware, locations, archetypes, fiction, etc. to publish in future issues of Shadowland.

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Submissions: We are looking for good articles and illustrations for Shadowland. When submitting manuscripts and artwork, enclose a stamped and self-addressed envelope with appropriate postage for the return of your items if you want them returned. We also would appreciate that article submissions be presented on IBM compatible diskettes along with hardcopy. Electronic submissions (the preferred method for articles) are received at our internet address.

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To The Bone

by Vicki Kirchoff-Martin

{The fairy's gossamer wings shimmered as their colors shifted and changed. Her bell-like laughter echoed across the node. "Come on, Glitch," she said.

A slender white arm reached out to grab one of the metal chains attached to the leather jacket his icon wore. "Come dance with me."

In this decker hangout, icons of all kinds conversed around them. It was a place to trade secrets and stories. Glitch usually preferred to keep his secrets and stories to himself, but enjoyed the social interaction. It was something he seldom got outside the matrix.

"Don't have those kind of programs, Pixie," the sullen youth replied.

His icon's black hair was slicked back and the hands were shoved deep in denim pockets. He stared down at his old scuffed leather high-top tennis shoes. The one hundred year-old fashion looked slightly out of place in the high tech world.

A tiny hand brushed his face. "I mean for real, Glitch. I've been asking around, but no one has ever seen you."

"That's the way I like it," he said brushing the hand away.

"You're a shadowrunner, aren't you," she said.

"That would be a pretty stupid thing to admit, don't you think," he said. "Even if I was, I wouldn't go bragging about it. It's a good way to get yourself killed by some corporate hotshot looking for a bonus."

She looked disappointed. "Well, shadowrunner or

not, I want to meet you."

"You'd be unpleasantly surprised. You wouldn't recognize me, anyway, I don't look anything like this in the real world.

She laughed and buffeted him with her wings. "Like I do? Please, Glitch, just once?"

He shrugged. "Some other time, Pixie," he said and jacked out.}



As always, the smell of reality hit him first. It was that nauseating combination of mildew, acid rain and cordite. He shook his head to clear it and opened his eyes. His one room place was a hole with nothing more than a mat to sleep on and the LTG. But that was okay, as long as he had the Matrix, he didn't need anything else.

His stomach reminded him that it had been a long time since his last meal. He stood up, wincing as the resurgence of blood in his legs made

them burn.

Pixie had been trying to meet him for weeks. He figured she was some bored corp decker who wanted the thrill of meeting a real shadowrunner. He had a pretty good idea how unthrilled she'd be if she ever figured out that he was an ork.

He grabbed his denim jacket, a far cry from the classy leather one his icon wore, and let himself out. The stairs groaned as he descended. Like the rest of the

building, they were decaying and old. He just hoped they didn't decide to give way while he was on them.

At least it wasn't raining when he stepped outside, but the cold damp air sank into the holes in his jeans. He kept telling himself that he should buy himself some new clothes, but he always managed to find some software or a chip that he wanted more... even more than food sometimes.

People like Pixie thought a shadowrunner's life was glamorous. He knew they needed to slot a few more reality chips.

He was so distracted that he hadn't even notice the brawny arm blocking his way. It until he'd run into it. He followed the arm up to the scowling human face sitting on wide shoulders and very little neck. They guy was built like an ork and Glitch recognized the Humanis Policlub tattoo on the arm.

"S'cuse me," he said and tried to move around.

The arm moved and the body with it, blocking Glitch's escape. "Whassa matter, trog boy? Why don't you watch where you're going?"

He looked up to see a circle of others around him. They were all human and, though not all of them bore the mark of Humanis, he was pretty sure they all shared the prejudice. He started to worry. Against this group of 8, he was no match. He began to hope they would be satisfied with hurting him.

"I'm sorry," he said, knowing it was useless gesture. "I was thinking."

The man laughed. "Thinking? Everyone knows you trogs ain't got a brain in yore heads. Thinking. Now, that's funny."

The others laughed with him. Glitch felt his anger rising, but knew better than to do anything about it. In spite of his larger than human normal build, he was underdeveloped for an ork and had no experience in fighting. "Really," he said. "You're wasting your time with me. I'm nobody."

"Hey guys, we're gonna get off kickin' nobody's ass."

He slammed Glitch up against the building wall. "Your kind belongs underground, with the rats. I don't like seein' you in daylight. We're gonna teach you and yer entire filthy race a lesson, trog boy."

Glitch didn't bother to struggle. He figured that fighting would just aggravate the injuries they were already determined to inflict. He had hoped that, if he didn't fight, they wouldn't think him any fun and would leave him alone. He also knew it was mostly a vain hope.

The tattooed one held him against the wall with an arm across his throat. One of the others pulled out a shotgun and Glitch's hopes of surviving began to plummet. He'd heard of this game; they'd take target practice, shooting at one limb at a time until he bled to death or they killed him.

The man with the gun grinned at those around him. "Where do I start?"

The others began naming body parts as he braced the butt of the weapon against his shoulder. It was a clip fed model, but the clip was missing. They might just be trying to scare him. Clip or no clip, it was working.

His legs seemed to be the most popular part as the guy cocked the weapon. If that shotgun has been

loaded, Glitch knew his leg would be gone to where magic couldn't even bring it back. Still, the knowledge that the barrel was empty didn't stop him from closing his eyes as the man squeezed the trigger.

The click of the unloaded weapon brought shouts of disbelief from those around him. The man with the gun reached down for where the clip should have been.

"You look for this?"

All eyes turned to see a young Amerindian girl standing calmly on the sidewalk tossing the clip from hand to hand. Glitch recognized his friend Woman Who Would Be a Man immediately.

Those around him were not impressed. Of course, they didn't realize that those wide brown eyes hid a mind full of mischief and magic or that Woobie was an accomplished follower or Coyote. She ejected the shells and threw it back. "I done with it. You have it now."

The man caught it and growled. "This is none of your affair, kid. I don't know how you did that, kid, but get the frag outta here before we stick you up beside the trog."

She smiled. "I do it same way I do this."

Glitch couldn't see what she was holding, but the crowd scattered, leaping behind cars and dashing behind buildings. The man holding him even fled.

Woobie took his arm and dragged him away. "Hurry, before they find out."

He let her lead him. "Find out what?"

She handed him a small metal object. It was grenade pin. No wonder the crowd had scattered. Still, the thing should have gone off by now unless it had an unusually long time delay.

"Geeze, kid," he said. "That's a good trick. You yanked this off one of them with magic?"

"No," she told him. "That is spare. They will know soon and not be happy. We go fast now."

He held the pin. Woobie was relatively new to city life, having been raised in backwater Ute country. Apparently, she was adjusting faster than he'd given her credit for.

His stomach growled as he caught the smells of the Blue Flame which was now only about a block away. The food there was nauseating and the liquor was watered down but it was one of his favorite places.

Woobie led him in. The bartender waved to them as they entered. She chose a nice, solitary booth in a corner. No place in the Flame was quiet.

Angel, the Flame's dwarven cocktail waitress shoved her way over to them. "Whatcha havin' Glitchie?" she asked.

"Beer."

She stabbed a finger at the young shaman. "No tricks out of you today, little one," she said in spite of the fact that Woobie was over a foot taller.

Woobie gave her one of her best innocent looks. Angel snorted and shouldered her way to the bar.

Glitch waited for her to get out of earshot. "So, what were you doing around my neighborhood?" he asked.

"Santa called."

Glitch's interest rose. Contact from the fixer probably meant work. "What'd he say?"

"Prancer is meet us here and let us know," she replied. "Santa has new run."

"Prancer? Which one is that?" he asked wondering how much of her lack of knowledge of English was real.

"She think she was runaway slave in past life," Woobie replied.

"Fraggin' mages," Glitch grumbled.

"Spoken like a true slave to technology."

A tall, slim Asian woman appeared beside Woobie. "It is very bad Karma to insult a business associate."

Prancer slipped into the booth. "Perhaps, my friend, if you knew what you were in your previous lives, you would find this one easier to deal with."

"Well, if my past lives were worse than this one, I don't want to know," Glitch snarled. "What's the job?"

She glanced over at him. "You are unusually sullen, this evening."

"Yeah, so?"

She sighed. "Well, this is mostly a matrix run so it is important that you are at peace with yourself. Are you up to it?"

"Matrix run on who?" Glitch asked.

"Ares."

"What, did we torque Santa off so bad that he's sending us on a suicide run? I can't break the kind of IC Ares has and that's not counting all the corp deckers that do nothing but hunt people like me. You've got to be nuts."

Prancer smiled, "Have a little faith in yourself and in us. You are one of Santa's favorite new teams. He believes that increasing your reputation will help his. As they say, what goes around comes around."

This run will challenge you, but is not beyond your capabilities. The file you're after is a miscellaneous personnel file. It's not even an executive. If you enter the system from the inside, it should facilitate the extraction."

Glitch grumbled. A file like that wasn't likely to have anything but weak grey IC. Still, the Ares system was tough.

"You good decker, Glitch," Woobie said. "Can do

it. Null persecution."

She glanced at Prancer. "Ares not someplace we just walk into. Guards shoot first and then footprint the corpse. How far we have to go in?"

"Probably to the first I/O port you see. We figured going in from the inside will get you past the exterior barriers and we've provided you with ID's that will be good for the next two days. These, combined with a little magic, should fool anyone."

"Come on, Glitch," Woobie said. "We get in quiet. No one know you there and you just sneak in and do it."

He sighed, "Null persecution, right Woob?"

She nodded. "All right," he sighed, "What is it I'm after?"



(Just inside the Ares system, it all seemed so easy. Under cover of Woobie's masking spell, and the fake ID's they had strolled into the complex unchallenged. He'd kept waiting for the gunshots, but they never came. Maybe he'd just been paranoid.

He returned his attention to the job at hand. The first thing he noticed was chrome. The system was covered in it. It took him a moment to adjust to his new world and he adjusted a couple of programs in the hope of giving him an edge or, at least decreasing his handicap. The I/O port he'd just come through looked like a high-tech door from a bad space simsense

chip. Ahead of him were thousands of tiny data robots and space. It was dotted with millions of stars and stretched out infinitely from where he stood. The programmers at Ares had done one wiz job of making him acrophobic. The dataline to the nearest node seemed so thin and it looked way too easy to plummet off into the blackness.

"C'mon," he scolded himself. "It's a data path like any other data path. You can't fall off."

It didn't stop him from wishing for something to hold on to.

The first node had a door not unlike the one he had just come through. There was a retina scanner beside it. Glitch slipped an extra subroutine into his Sleaze program and approached the device wearing dark sunglasses. He snuck past the IC without an alarm and breathed easier. The quicker he got used to the Ares sculpted system, the quicker he'd regain his edge.

Robots of every shape and size, glistening chrome glided by. None seemed to notice him. He cruised the green nodes, sleazing the IC and taking no time for sightseeing. The first orange node he encountered was guarded by a security robot that looked uncomfortably like an overchromed shadowrunner. The eyes were dark and it stood its post unmoving.

Glitch rewrote the Sleaze a little more and slipped past the motionless figure. He thought he saw a flicker in the eyes, but then it was gone and the robot remained still.

"No more sightseeing," he scolded himself. "Time for business."

He slipped into the SAN and glanced around. There were several data stores, any one of which might have what he was looking for. They were orange as well. He glanced back at the IC behind him. He would have to fool it each time he tried a different data store. That would take too much time. He needed to make it believe he belonged.

It didn't even stir as he moved into contact range. Its lifeless eyes stared straight ahead. Glitch was trying to figure out what kind of recognition code it needed when the arms that had been motionless at its sides, were suddenly pinning Glitch's arms. The eyes glowed but that and the iron grip were the only signs that it was even aware of his presence. It hadn't even put the system on alert.

Glitch knew he was in trouble. He had never faced IC of this type before. It was not trying to damage him or his deck or even trying to steal his programs. It had simply immobilized him. He couldn't jack himself out and there wasn't even an alarm to let Woobie know he was in trouble.

He tried to find a weakness, a faulty subroutine or incomplete algorithm, but it seemed invincible. Whoever had designed it, had known what they were doing. He sighed, knowing he had no choice but to wait.

His doom came in the form of a corporate decker. The chrome android stayed in sensor range and watched for awhile before coming closer. "Glitch?"

Having no idea how an Ares decker would know who he was, he didn't respond. This whole thing was becoming too much like bad simsense.

The decker stared at him some more. "Oh my God, Glitch, it is you."

The decker withdrew a mirror and held it up to him. The image of the android in the mirror shimmered and a fairy with gossamer wings stared back. "You are a shadowrunner."

"Pixie?" he asked, knowing his butt was so far into the fire at this point that it didn't matter.

The decker's chrome foot tapped and she put the mirror away. "This is bad," she said. "And not how I wanted to meet you."

Glitch gave one more feeble attempt at freeing

himself and then sighed. "Yeah, well it's not that great for me either."

She glanced at the IC. "It's nice to know this works, though and it's even better than I'd hoped. You really can't move or jack out, can you?"

He grumbled. "I'm glad you're happy."

"But, Glitch, I designed it. The head programmer said it would never work. It was my idea to capture intruding icons as a whole, not just a program or two. Let's face it, the corps just aren't producing the caliber of deckers that the streets do. It's kind of a recruiting tool."

"Look, Pixie, it's not like it's not nice to be talking to you and everything, but I've got stuff to do."

"Oh, crap," she said.

He sighed. "I'm the one caught intruding in a major corp system and you're upset?"

Her foot was still tapping. "Well, if I let you go, then I have no proof that my IC works, but if I turn you in, then I may never get to see you. I can't very well let you go running around the system either. What is it you're after anyway?"

"I can't tell you that."

"Then you'll be sitting here for a long time."

He decided that, since the run was completely fraged anyway, he might as well get out with his butt intact. "It's just a personnel file."

She held out her hand. "Let me see."

"The info chip is in the right front pocket of my jeans."

The corp standard icon wasn't capable of much in the ways of facial expressions, but the smile she did manage made him wish he'd stored the info in his jacket.

His icon wasn't designed to react to that kind of stimulation, but he was pretty sure his meat body was suffering from the mere thought of Pixie's hands in his front pockets. He was glad that the arms of the IC obstructed his view.

She examined the chip and started to laugh. "Latangia Johnson? This is somebody's secretary. Geeze, Glitch, what would anyone want with this?"

She slipped out of the node without another word, leaving him in the arms of the steel guardian. It seemed like an eternity before she returned. "Here," she said, holding out a chip. "Funny thing, all this fuss over a secretary. Oh and you might want to let whoever hired you know that it's been tampered with."

The IC released him and he reached for the chip. "Not so fast," she said. "I'm not letting you off that easy. I could get in big trouble if they find out that I helped you. You owe me."

He sighed, "Okay, what do you want?"

"Dinner. You and me. The real you, now, no more icons. Lets say 8 o'clock at Harvey's, Friday night."

"Pixie..."

"No arguments. You want the chip, I get dinner."

"Okay, Harvey's at eight."

She handed him two chips. "There's the info you need. The other is a picture and description of me. Don't be late."

He took the chips and glanced over at her IC construct to make sure it was still dormant. "What are you going to tell your superiors about this?"

She laughed. "The truth. That I came to see what it had found, but it was just a Glitch."

She waved to him as he jacked out.)

Glitch strolled down the street. He was surprised at how few people bumped into him or stared at him. One gogang babe even gave him a wink and a smile. It was eerie.

He stopped by a shop window and checked his reflection. Thanks to the gold earring Woobie had given him, his appearance had been changed.

His hair was the same, but his eyes were now set in a human face. His ears were rounded, his teeth were straight and the tusks were gone even though he could still feel them. His denim jacket looked clean and the bullet holes had disappeared. His jeans had no holes in them and his sneakers looked brand new.

He stared for awhile, trying to penetrate the illusion, but the vision of the striking human never wavered. The strange face in the window regarded him with curiosity as if it thought that he might disappear. It moved its hand as he did, the expression changed, the face split into a grin that showed perfect white teeth. The grin widened. Woobie's magic had done its job. Pixie was in for a pleasant surprise, he thought and turned away from the window. He took a couple of steps and stopped, gazing again at the human reflection. The whole point of this meeting was that she wanted to see the real him. What he was now, was like just another icon... just another lie. It wasn't him.

He sighed and yanked the earring out. He glanced at his reflection again and saw the scrawny ork staring back at him. He stuck the earring in his pocket.

The bar wasn't too much further. It was a higher class place than what he was used to and the bouncer gave him a threatening glare, but let him pass. Glitch was all too familiar with the we-don't-like-your-kind-in-here look.

He'd taken a long look at the picture he'd downloaded and picked Pixie out almost as soon as he walked in. She was sitting at the bar dressed in

shadowrunner chic. She wore army issue pants so new that the creases hadn't worn, a tight, low cut, spandex blouse and a synthleather jacket. Her appearance screamed corporate slummer. He hoped she had a bodyguard or big friend around somewhere to take her home after dark.

Her eyes passed over him briefly as he entered.

She gave him a disgusted look as he walked over and planted himself on the bar stool beside her. "Hi, how are you?"

She ignored him and stared at the door.

"I don't mean any harm," he said. "I'm just curious."

"I don't think that's any of your business," she said finally.

She was still trying to ignore him, probably hoping he'd go away. "So, are you waiting for someone?"

She kept her eyes on the door and said nothing. "Are you sure it's not me you're looking for?"

She glared at him. "Completely. Now, go away or I'll tell the bouncer that you're bothering me."

He decided that was enough and stood. "I don't know who you think you're waiting for, Pixie, but you're right, it's not me."

He stopped. "Sure hope you find your Prince Charming."

He left the bar without a look back. He had no idea whether she'd made the connection or not and frankly, didn't care. It was raining when he walked out.

"What you care 'bout what some corp girl think?"

Woobie stood in the rain, leaning against a van, her hair dripping wet. "I think you one real hot decker."

"Thanks, kid. What are you doing here?"

She flipped him a chip. "I thought LTG and access code to local Humanis boss would make you happy."

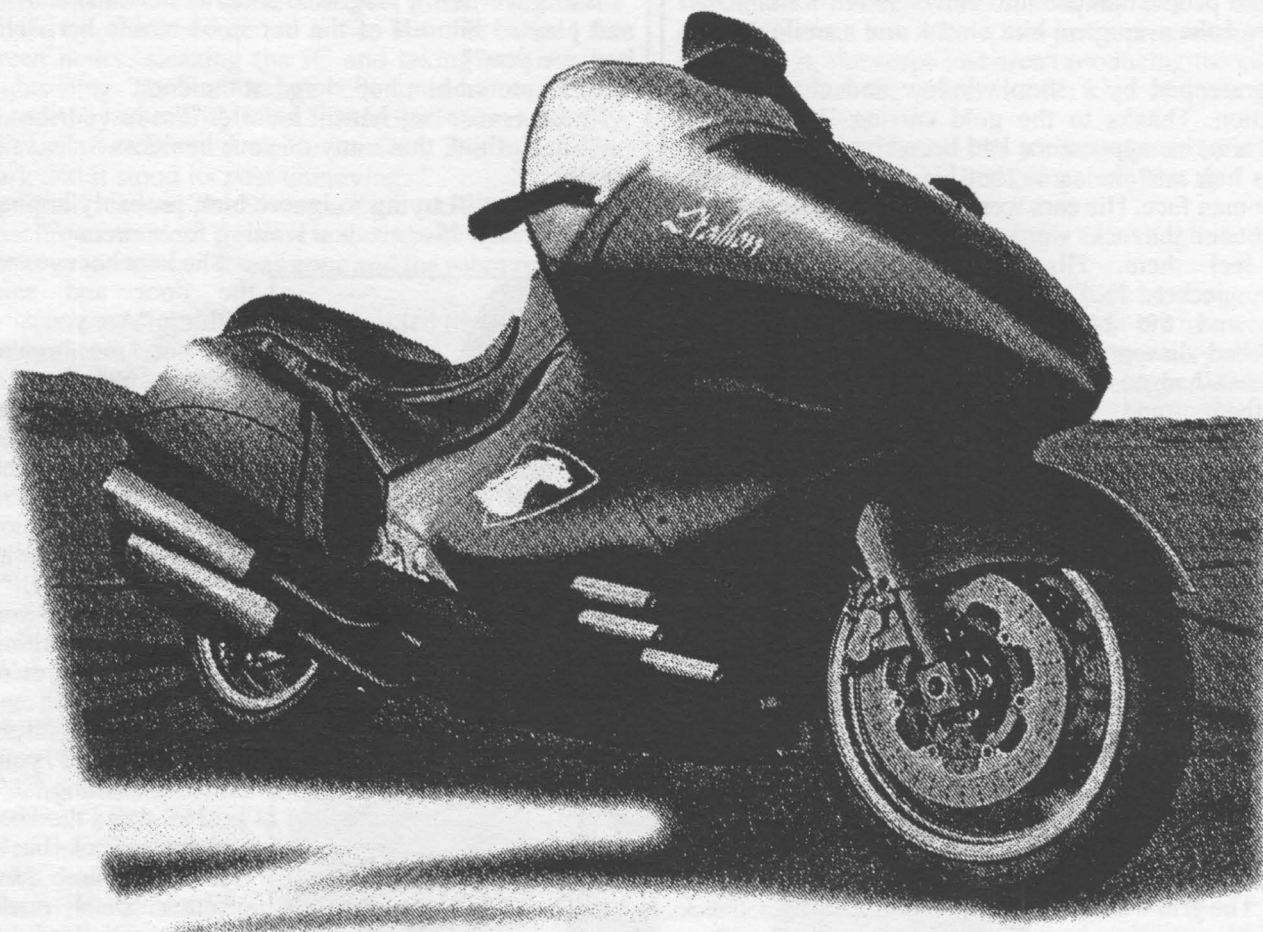
He stuck the chip in his pocket and smiled, Pixie's rebuff fading as his mind started on all of the things he could do with the information Woobie had just given him. "You know, kid, if you were a couple of years older..."

She laughed and they headed home.



Nissan Stallion

by Andrew Ragland



Not for the faint of heart, the Nissan Stallion is the top-of-the-line Nissan model for the combat bike market. This massive bike works best under rigger controls, due to its weapon capacity. The distinctive horsehead insignia is often painted over by street runners, as it tends to say "Bust Me" to the PlexCops. The bike's profile is sufficient to provoke law enforcement interest. Let's face it, any bike manufactured with firm or hardpoints is going to attract the wrong sort of attention. With the onboard ECM (standard) active, a highly skilled rider who knows the area can usually leave a PlexCop far behind - unless he's riding a similarly high-powered bike.

	Handling	Speed	B/A	Sig	APilot	Cost
Nissan Stallion	4	80/200	4/2	2/5*	1	25,000¥

Seating: 1 front

Economy: 25 km per liter

Fuel: IC/35 liters

Storage: 2 CF underseat + 2 CF sideboxes

Options: 2,000Y/firmpoint; 5,000Y/hardpoint; Firmpoints cost 1 point, hardpoints cost 2 points. The bike can carry 5 points of weaponry.

*The higher Signature rating reflects activation of onboard ECM.

THE GROSS-FRANKFURT SPRAWL

Part 1: FRANKFURT am MAIN

by Jonathan Szeto

While not as large as the Rhein-Ruhr Megaplex, nor as intriguing as the Berlin metrozone, the Gross-Frankfurt City-State still plays an important role in the AGS. Unfortunately, the Germany sourcebook glosses over the sprawl with only brief descriptions of the region.

What follows here is a more detailed description of the largest sprawl in the South German States. This in-detailed look is broken down into three installations; this first one covers the actual city of Frankfurt am Main. The second deals with the surrounding Rhein-Main region, which includes the cities of Mainz, Wiesbaden, Offenbach, Hanau, Aschaffenberg and Darmstadt. Part 3 covers the southern extension of Gross-Frankfurt, the Rhein-Neckar region, which includes the cities of Mannheim, Ludwigshafen, Worms and Heidelberg.

"MAINHATTAN"

The city-state of Frankfurt is the second largest megaplex in Germany, and there are plenty of reasons why. For one, it holds the headquarters of AG Chemie Europa, a powerful megacorp in Europe, just short of the global multinational megacorps themselves. Also, Frankfurt is the capitol of German banking and the heart to Deutschland's financial lifeblood. So hectic is the lifestyle in Frankfurt that it has received the nickname of "Mainhattan."

>>>>>[The full and proper name for Frankfurt is Frankfurt am Main, not to be confused with the town of Frankfurt an der Oder, located on the border between Poland and the Land of Brandenburg.]<<<<<

---Idle Savant (20:33:19/09-APR-55)

>>>>>[Located where?!?!?]<<<<<

---Sachsen-Squatter (13:40:34/10-APR-55)

>>>>>[Just a formality. Like anyone's ever going to get THAT confused.]<<<<<

---Bischof (19:39:52/10-APR-55)

>>>>>[Well, anyways, in this and subsequent posts, Frankfurt am Main will indicate the actual core city, while Frankfurt will refer to the entire Sprawl in general.]<<<<<

---SysOp (12:31:05/11-APR-55)

GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

Greater Frankfurt is a river valley resulting from the merger of the Main and Neckar rivers into the Rhein, all situated in the midst of several mountainous highlands. The Taunus mountains run along the northwest from Wiesbaden to Bad Homburg, providing the region's northwest border. Directly east of Greater Frankfurt lie the Spessart Mountains. Running down the length of Greater Frankfurt from Dieburg to Heidelberg are the rolling hills of the Odenwald. To the southwest of the Sprawl lies the

highlands of the Pfälzer Wald in the Badisch Pfalz (not to be confused with the Pfälzer Wald in Franconia). Finally, running along the length of the western boundary of the Sprawl are the vineyard-covered hills of the Rheinau wine region.

Temperature ranges within the region do not vary as much as other places in Germany. In the winter, temperatures range anywhere between -1 and 0.5 degrees Celsius, and precipitation usually takes the form of rain, except in the highlands in the Taunus or Spessart, where snow is possible. During the summer,

temperatures range between 10 and 20 degrees Celsius; however, within the past two decades, heat waves as high as 40 degrees Celsius have occurred, the longest being 45 days of continual heat and humidity. High ozone levels often accompany these heat waves, which



usually result in health warnings during the period from late July to early September.

HISTORY

The origins of the Greater Frankfurt Sprawl trace back into the last decade of the twentieth century, shortly after the reunification of East and West. In 1991, a joint coalition of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Green party won control of the Landtag (state legislature) of the state of Hessen. Occupying a position of power, the joint SPD/Green coalition pushed through progressive legislature that attempted to curb unfair business practices and environmentally-friendly measures. Over time, though, this "progressive" legislature became restrictive and draconian.

One example of this was the unusual heat wave in 1994. During that summer, temperatures hit all-time highs, registering in from thirty to forty degrees Celsius (86 to 104 degrees Fahrenheit). The Hessen state government did the unthinkable in Germany, restricting speeds on the autobahn to 90 kilometers per hour (55 mph). Additionally, environmental laws strongly discouraged the installation of air conditioning in homes and small buildings, which meant most people suffered throughout the day without relief from the sweltering heat and humidity.

Businesses in particular chafed against the restrictive legislation. Since the majority of commercial activity in Hessen concentrated in the southern region of the Rhein-Main-Neckar valley, this area became the focal point for resentment against the SPD/Green agenda.

Additionally, a geosocial rift was beginning to develop between northern and southern Hessen; the Rhein-Main region was beginning its slow evolution into a Sprawl, a result deriving both from workers migrating southward from the Ruhrgebiet, as well as from being situated at the international traffic hub of central Europe. Southern Hessians looked down at the backwater opinions of the less-developed north, while northern Hessians saw their southern brethren as being corrupted by the cancer of rapid development.

Secession and Coup

Following the near-meltdown of the Biblis nuclear reactor near Mannheim in 2004, the SPD/Green coalition government introduced and passed a flurry of new environmental laws, aimed at preventing the ecological disasters ravaging Germany and Europe at that time. This provoked the ire of plant managers in the Rhein-Main, who denounced the resolutions as Luddite regression. In fact, the measures forced several plants to close, the most noteworthy being the Merck processing plant in Darmstadt, as well as the BP refinery in Gustavsburg. Local representatives to the Landtag and Landesrat (state council) returned home that winter to face angry mobs of unemployed workers.

On May 1, 2008, the administrative districts of Frankfurt am Main, Offenbach, Hanau, Darmstadt, the Bergstrasse, Gros-Gerau, Main-Taunus and Wiesbaden announced their secession from the state of Hessen, to form the new state of Rheinhessen. Furthermore, the

city of Wiesbaden added insult to injury by submitting a notice of eviction to the Hessen state government. State representatives that morning found themselves locked out of their offices by the local polizei and run out of the city by armed mobs. Exiled to Giesen, the state government took retaliatory measures and ordered Federal Border Guards in to put down the revolts. However, the new state of Rheinhessen preempted them by seizing Border Guard and Bundeswehr armories in their territory, and they were training their own militias in abandoned American kasernes in Russelsheim, Munster and Offenbach, closed after the end of the Cold War.

>>>>>[Speaking of the Americans, why didn't they do anything during this time? With all the turmoil going on, one would think they would step in to assist the Federal Government in restoring law and order.]<<<<<

---Stein (02:36:10/11-APR-55)

>>>>>[A number of political reasons. The United States was caught in a dilemma: if they mobilized troops in Europe, Russia would be quick to point it out as an example of how America was "conquering" Europe. Although anyone can recognize this as diplomatic posturing, the US and the European Union were afraid that the Russian accusation would scare off the Eastern Europe nations from joining NATO.

On the other hand, most of the American kasernes were located in the prime trouble spots in Germany: Bavaria, Baden-Wurttemberg and Rheinhessen. The new regimes demanded that the US recognize them, or else they would throw out the Americans, by force if necessary. Of course, if the Americans did so, they would be snubbing their ally Germany.

Faced with this dilemma, the United States sought the politically popular course of action: they did nothing.]<<<<<

---Prof. M (10:38:41/12-APR-55)

>>>>>[Don't forget also that local militia forces threatened to attack American bases if Germany (or the EU, for that matter) asked the US for help. In Frankfurt, militia leaders made it known that they were positioning SAM weapons in the nearby towns of Kelsterbach and Zeppelinhelm to attack any warplane approaching Rhein-Main Air Force Base. Meanwhile, to the south in Babenhausen, militia forces besieged the American kaserne in that town, threatening to overrun it and seize the MLRS rocket artillery, Bradley fighting vehicles and Apache helicopters stationed there. Faced with this threat, the Pentagon notified the US European Command to place all forces in Germany at full alert, which effectively shut off the Americans from the rest of Germany.]<<<<<

---Bischof (08:22:19/13-APR-55)

In 2009, the federal government ended the question of Rheinhessen's secession by dissolving both state governments and imposing martial law. During the military junta's restructuring of the federal Lander, the military government officially recognized the state of Rheinhessen in 2010, in order to break the opposition

from the Greens and the remains of the SPD. Additionally, they annexed the districts of Mannheim and Heidelberg to Rheinhessen, to punish the state of Baden-Württemberg for seceding from the Federal Republic.

It was also during this time that two of Frankfurt's most powerful residents took form. In 2011, Deutsche Bank and Commerzbank merged together to form the Frankfurter Bankenverein, which then proceeded to devour the smaller banks in the Rhein-Main-Neckar region. At the same time, the chemical corporations of Degussa, Solvay and BASF combined to form AG Chemie Europa, who then joined forces with ZetalmpChem in buying out and dividing up Hoechst AG. AG Chemie then plundered the remains of Hoechst's Stammwerk in Frankfurt and used its property to build their corporate headquarters.

Birth of the Sprawl

Although the years between 2011 and 2023 were marked with tumultuous changes in the new state of Rheinhessen, these same changes were also taking place across all of Germany. The next significant event to occur in the Sprawl's history took place in 2023 with the annexation of the city of Offenbach to Frankfurt am Main.

>>>>>[Offenbach has historically played the role of ugly stepsister to Frankfurt. Historically and economically more significant than its other, Frankfurt has absorbed all the glory and all the money, leaving Offenbach with the remaining scraps.]<<<<<

---De-kannter (00:13:09/01-MAY-55)

By 2023, both the Frankfurter Bankenverein and AG Chemie had expanded their base of operations within Frankfurt am Main, effectively taking control in that city. At the time AG Chemie was seeking a site to build their new cryochemical processing. However, available land within the city was becoming increasingly limited, as workers began pouring in from the surrounding regions. Since both corporations already owned most of Frankfurt directly or indirectly, AG Chemie could not simply tear down old structures; the corporation had to seek out a tract of land they didn't own which was large enough to build their cryoplant on.

The largest tract of land available was undeveloped property east of the neighborhood of Oberrad, yet it was still too small for AG Chemie's needs. However, next to this tract lay another tract of undeveloped land, in the city of Offenbach. Combined together, these two spaces would be sufficient for AG Chemie's needs. AG Chemie submitted a proposition to the city of Offenbach to purchase this land; Offenbach refused.



AG Chemie tried again and again, resorting to underhanded and dirty tricks to force Offenbach into signing. Again and again the city council resisted the megacorporation's tricks. Finally, out of frustration, AG Chemie used its lobby in the state government to sponsor a bill that proposed the merger of Frankfurt and Offenbach, under the auspice of Greater Frankfurt.

A vicious fight broke out in the Rheinhessen

Landtag, as representatives from Offenbach opposed the plan as another ploy by the megacorporations to subjugate the city. AG Chemie-backed legislators, on the other hand, countered by pointing out the inevitable growth of both cities; over time, it would be impossible to distinguish the two cities apart. Merger was the logical conclusion, they argued, resulting in a streamlining that would enhance the efficiency of social services. Their argument won out, as the Landesrat approved the measure by a narrow margin.

>>>>>[Logic, my foot! AG Chemie won because the representatives from the other districts were more bribeable than those of Offenbach.]<<<<<<

---Sachsen-Squatter (12:21:41/10-APR-55)

With this precedent now set, AG Chemie, the Frankfurter Bankenverein, and the new megacorporation Mueller-Schluter Infotech used similar tactics to force the mergers of other nearby towns and cities, including Bad Homburg, Neu Isenburg, Russelsheim, Maintal, and Hanau. After the merger of Hanau in 2034, though, the confederate government in Hannover recognized what was going on. Trying to head off a confrontation, the megacorporations, through their lobbyists, convinced the government to acknowledge that Rheinhessen was transforming into a Sprawl city-state, in the same manner that the state of Nordrhein-Westfalia had become the Rhein-Ruhr Sprawl.

As a result, the confederate government accepted the proposed changes that the megacorporations, through the state, drafted. The state of Rheinhessen would now become the free metropolis of Greater Frankfurt, and the state legislature would move from Wiesbaden to Frankfurt am Main (most other state offices remained in place, though). In exchange, the new metropolis would concede most of its undeveloped areas on the outskirts to its neighbors, Baden-Wurttemberg and Hessen.

War and Pieces

During the opening scenes of the 2040's, the neighboring state of the Rheinland Palatinate fell prey to the aftermath of the Night of Rage. Racial unrest led to the formation of the Troll Kingdom of the Black Forest and the Grand Duchy of Westrhein-Luxemburg. Additionally, as a deterrent against repressive anti-metahuman legislation in the south, metahuman magicians caused the eruption of volcanoes which dammed up the Rhein and Mosel, wiping out the city of Koblenz and devastating the state capitol in Mainz. For all intents and purposes, the Rheinland Palatinate was in ruins.

The council of Greater Frankfurt recognized within this disaster an opportunity to expand and alleviate the growing pressures of overpopulation. Approaching the confederate government, it offered a generous aid package to its neighbor. In return, the city-state would annex the administrative districts of Ludwigshafen, Worms and Mainz. Hannover approved, and by 2043 these three cities became a part of the Greater Frankfurt Sprawl.

>>>>>[Lebensraum, anyone?]<<<<<

---Echo Sieben (19:48:12/01-JUN-55)

Shortly thereafter, the northern regions of Bavaria seceded to form the state of Franconia. During the secession, though, the city of Aschaffenburg chose to secede even further from Franconia. Fearing reprisals, the riverport city approached Greater Frankfurt and offered to merge. Not one to look a gift horse in the mouth, the city council quickly approved.

>>>>>[The merger didn't happen as smoothly as the text misleads it to be. See the city description later >>in Part 2<< for more details.]<<<<<

---Gold Main-er (08:12:49/31-JUL-55)

During the mid-30s through the late 40s, Frankfurt was the target of numerous terrorist attacks. Fueled by the dissolution of order in Berlin, splinter anarchist cells arose throughout Germany to strike a blow against ordered society. Nowhere more was this epitomized than in the entrepreneurs who lived and worked in Frankfurt. Various cells, such as the Neu-Baader-Meinhof and the Walter Ulbricht Korps, targeted and killed executives at random.

>>>>>[Kill the head of the corps, and surely the body must follow, so they figured. Unfortunately, corporate dynamics just doesn't work that way, as history proved time and again. You'd have thought they'd have learned that a century ago.]<<<<<

---Prinz Cortio (21:49:59/19-MAY-55)

>>>>>[You're the one who hasn't learned anything, you corporate apologist.]<<<<<

---Rote (02:24:38/28-MAY-55)

>>>>>[The next time you want to change society, you rakkng thug, maybe you ought to study it the way it is. Don't think Herr Linderhorst has forgiven you for geeking his wife as a pathetic attempt at bringing down AG Chemie.]<<<<<

---Ammonia Euphoria (10:13:23/29-MAY-55)

The worst of it was from late 2041 to 2043, when the policlub Der Nachtmachen bombed the Fernmeldenturm in Bockenheim, setting half the neighborhood ablaze from the rain of fiery fallout. For the next few months Der Nachtmachen held the city hostage in a grip of fear; even the reputed counterterrorist group GSG-9 seemed unable to counter the Der Nachtmachen. It was not until the collapse of Der Nachtmachen's core leadership, that the wave of terrorism in Frankfurt had ceased.

>>>>>[Ceased? Sorry, nice try. After the collapse of Der Nachtmachen the violence would nowhere near approach the levels it had during the 30s and 40s, but it still happened. Hardly a week goes by without either the Hauptbahnhof or Flughafen receiving a bomb threat.]<<<<<

---The Frankfurt "Rat" (07:15:16/14-APR-55)

VITAL STATISTICS

Population: 1,870,000

Human: 75%

Elf: 5%

Dwarf: 11%

Ork: 6%

Troll: 3%

Per Capita Income: EC 91,000

Below Poverty Level: 28%

On Fortune's Active Traders List: 1.2%

Corporate Affiliation: 89%

Education:

High School Equivalency: 51%

University Equivalency: 23%

Advanced Degree: 9%

Hospitals and Clinics: 14

Telekom Code: D-04-10 or 049410

GETTING THERE

Plane

Frankfurt Flughafen receives all major international carriers and is capable of handling transorbital flights. Tickets to Frankfurt are approximately 25 EC higher, since Frankfurt is the first and largest of Germany's international airports, made even larger when it

annexed Rhein-Main airbase from the US Air Force.

>>>>>[Gotta pay for that drawdown, y'know.]
<<<<<

---The Frankfurter "Rat" (09:12:52/14-APR-55)

Frankfurt Flughafen also offers local service to all the major German cities. Standard coach fare connecting Frankfurt with any of the other major cities is approximately 60 to 75 EC one-way, except for Berlin, in which case a one-way ticket costs 125 EC (plus insurance).

Train

The fastest land route into Frankfurt a.M. is the Transrapid line running through Hannover in the north past Stuttgart and Karlsruhe in the south, stopping at Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof.

In addition, Deutsche Bundesbahn provides conventional rail service running into Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof, running in the four primary directions (i.e., north, south, east and west). InterRegio (IR), InterCity and EuroCity (IC/EC) lines connect Frankfurt with the Rhein-Ruhr megaplex, as well as all other cities in and slightly beyond Germany. Fare from Dusseldorf to Frankfurt is approximately 39 EC, plus an additional surcharge (zuschlag), 3 EC for IR, 6 EC for IC/EC.

InterCity Express and EuroCity Express (ICE/ECE) trains connect Frankfurt with most of the major cities in the AGS, as well as many foreign cities, namely Paris, Brussels/Antwerp, Warsaw, Prague and Vienna. Second class ICE/ECE from Stuttgart will gouge you around 110 EC.

Automobile or Bus

Frankfurt is a major transportation hub, where several major autobahns converge. From the northwest comes the A3 out of Koln, running through Frankfurt past the Flughafen, heading west through Aschaffenburg towards Wurzburg and Nurnberg. A5 runs north-to-south through Frankfurt, connecting the city with Giesen in the north (where any number of connecting autobahns will take you to points north) and Karlsruhe in the south, running through Darmstadt and Mannheim. A66, which originates west of Wiesbaden, runs towards the city of Fulda in Hesse (where one can catch the A7 to Ulm in the south or Hannover in the north).



>>>>>[If you're not actually going to Frankfurt, you oughta get off the autobahn onto a bypass highway or a Bundesstrasse running around the city. Otherwise, you're gonna get trapped in a Stau when the autobahns merge into the city streets.]<<<<<<

--- Blitz Burke (22:22:44/08-APR-55)

>>>>>[And if you are actually going into Frankfurt, be damn sure beforehand you know where you want to turn off. If you aren't then you'll be caught up in the tide of traffic and swept off to the other side of the city.]<<<<<<

---Bad Krotchrot (05:16:17/09-APR-55)

GETTING AROUND

Frankfurt is serviced by an extensive public transportation system, under the umbrella of the Frankfurter Verkehrsverbund (FVV). The FVV incorporates bus, strassenbahn (streetcar), schnellbahn or S-bahn (city train) and U-bahn (subway) lines which interconnect with virtually all points in the city, as well as the neighboring Rhein-Main region as far out as Wiesbaden, Darmstadt or Hanau. Prices vary with distance traveled, though on the average travel within the city costs DM 2, while travel from Frankfurt to Darmstadt costs DM 6, while to Wiesbaden or Hanau it could cost up to DM 10.

>>>>>[Fast and economical---if I didn't have to spend over an hour waiting at the interchanges.]<<<<<<

---Sachsen-Squatter (13:47:52/10-APR-55)

>>>>>[Let's talk security for a moment. Within Frankfurt am Main itself, there are three tiers of trains available, based on range: the U-bahn (subway trains, mostly restricted within the city itself), S-bahn (city trains, which range further out, to the Taunus and Bad Homburg zones, as well as neighboring districts like Wiesbaden or Darmstadt), and regular local and express trains which will take you to the far-reaches of the city-state, as far as Aschaffenburg or Mannheim.

On the U-bahn, which happens to be run by FVV BTW, security is tighter than a rat's hoop. It's this way, since these trains stop regularly in the high-money districts, such as Frankfurt Flughafen, Westend, Niederrad and the downtown area. Armed guards (Bahnpolizei) frequently patrol the stations (both the upper and lower levels) and place at least one guard in each car of a train. The bahnpolizei are usually polite folks (consider whom they protect), but they can be really nasty fraggers when they want to. Their chrome is subtle and unobtrusive, but lethally effective.

Security is also pretty intense on the S-bahn, which extends services to well-to-do places like Wiesbaden or Bad Homburg, though it nowhere near the paranoid levels on the U-bahn (most of the fat cats take their own private transportation into the city anyways). Usually only one or two guards in a station, though they still place one guard in each car. (in particularly hostile zones, though, such as the Ostend or Frankfurt Nord, the bahnpolizei tend to consolidate in one car for mutual protection and leave the others to fend for themselves) Most of the guards are not chromed, and

those that are sport only the bare basics.

The regular and express trains, run solely by Deutsche Bundesbahn, are another story. The only "security" on board is the sole train conductor, and that's usually to prevent chipped-out slagheads from geeking him for the ticket purse (or the sheer pleasure of it). Station security is nonexistent, and the trains themselves are abused on a regular basis.]<<<<<<

---Struwelpeter (12:33:57/29-MAY-55)

In addition to the autobahns, Frankfurt's road system is also supplemented by a number of Bundesstrasse connecting it to the Rhein-Main region. The prominent ones are the B3, which runs from Giesen to Darmstadt and Heidelberg; the B44, which connects Frankfurt to Mannheim; the B45 which borders Offenbach and Hanau; and the B8, which passes through Konigstein on its way to Aschaffenburg.

Frankfurt also hosts a limited number of helicopter and tilt-rotor traffic within the city and Land itself. Major carriers include Frankfurt LuftExpress, Wiesbaden Schnellflug and Rhein-Main Flugbahn. Local air travel is a luxury afforded only by well-off executives and businessmen, providing quick connections to all of the city's major buildings. A typical flight from Frankfurt Flughafen to Frankfurt Stadtmitte costs around 150 ecu.

TOURIST INFORMATION

The Verkehrsamt Frankfurt am Main, located inside the Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof and in the concourse at Frankfurt Flughafen leading to the airport's S-bahn station, offers brochures, maps and personal assistance. Also featured are interactive tridscreen terminals which offer various sorts of information. Information is available in German, English, French and Japanese, and the information assistants speak German and one of the other listed languages.

>>>>>[If you're in the Hauptbahnhof, look for the last booth(s) in the back, marked with an "Out of Order" sign. One of these terminals offers a read-only link to Frankfurt's Shadowland server.]<<<<<<

---The Frankfurter "Rat" (10:54:02/14-APR-55)

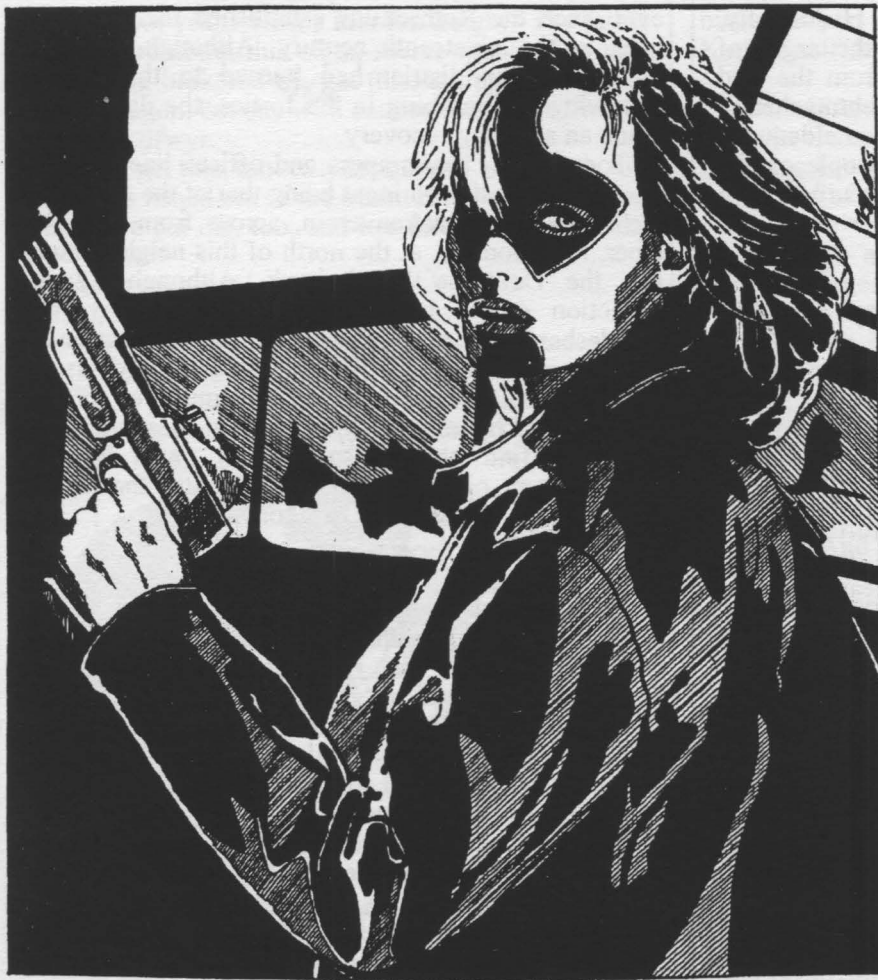
>>>>>[Great, just tell that to everybody in the world. Not everyone here's an in-your-face slag, ya know. If the corps knew what's good for them (and they must, cuz they're still around), they'd have an ear to the ground. Expect to see that booth fixed real damn soon.]<<<<<<

---Bundes-weird (05:53:18/18-APR-55)

ECONOMY

The business of Frankfurt is business. Any and all financial operations, matters or interests take place in this city. Though the Frankfurter Bankenverein dominates all local financial business, many major European and world financial firms (including the megacorps) do a considerable amount of business here and establish sizeable branch offices.

Finance, while Frankfurt's main breadwinner, is not its sole industry. Chemical research, engineering and



growth in electro-technology manufacturing has been arising in the Taunus valley, particularly along the stretch of towns along Autobahn 5. While its heavy industry and electronics nowhere nearly compares to the Rhein-Ruhr, it does account for a sizeable portion of business income in Frankfurt.

CRIME

With many of Europe's and several of the world's biggest banks and other corporations doing business within city limits, Frankfurt has an understandably lower rate of street crime than other metropolises in its class. Sometimes it seems like one can't go without finding two or more different corpcoops hanging out at the local Backerei.

That's not to say that Frankfurt is without crime. Long before the megacorps imported their own brand of organized crime, the mafia has enjoyed a dominant presence in the Frankfurt underworld. Around the turn of the century, though, a bloody gang war wiped out most of the German mobs, as the Russian mafia swept through central Europe, following the decline of the Italian mafia under extreme right-

manufacturing occurs in the western sectors of the city, near Höchst and along A66. Other chemical plants are located in the east end of Offenbach. The chemical plants in Höchst tend to have an industrial bent, while those in Offenbach tend towards the pharmaceutical side.

>>>>>[Yeah, if you can consider nerve gas as a pharmaceutical.]<<<<<

---Bischof (22:11:48/05-MAY-55)

>>>>>[I've heard those rumors, too. Unfortunately, no one has found a shred of hard evidence to back it up.]<<<<<

---Ammonia Euphoria (02:11:56/06-MAY-55)

>>>>>[No, but I'll tell you this. Otto Frisching, the director of AG Chemie's Offenbach plant is commonly called "Otto von Giftmacher" (poison maker) by local residents.]<<<<<

---Bischof (04:22:35/06-MAY-55)

In addition, some heavy industry, focusing on production of machinery and precision instrumentation occurs on Frankfurt's east banks, near Offenbach, heading out towards Hanau. Also, Frankfurt maintains a brisk business in the manufacture of electronic components, mostly in the southern sectors near Neu-Isenburg and heading out towards Langen; however,

wing reform.

Since then the Russian mafia has held sway over the Frankfurt underworld scene. Over the past decades, though, their power base has been eroding, as competition - remnants of the German gangsters, yakuza from Tokyo, triads from Hong Kong, mobsters from North America, etc - have been biting small yet sizeable chunks out of the pie.

For the most part, mob criminal activities usually revolve around illicit financial operations, from black market currency exchange to loan sharking to extortion. In addition, drug trafficking has been a chronic problem for the Frankfurt Polizei and is more pervasive in this city than its descendant, BTL chips.

>>>>>[Two facts. Fact one: drugs continue to remain strong here while they have lapsed into obsolescence and obscurity in other sprawls. Fact two: AG Europa, one of Europe's biggest chemical conglomerates, maintains its headquarters here. Gee, do you think there's a relation? Nah, didn't think so.]<<<<<

---Bischof (22:22:22/22-MAY-55)

>>>>>[Nevertheless, security in and around Frankfurt in general is tighter than most other cities in Germany. As the financial center of the AGS (and, to a degree, of central Europe), a lot of business heads

have rubbed elbows within the sprawl. Historically, industrial leaders in Germany have been the targets of terrorist bombings and assassinations, from the Red Army Faction in the Cold War to Der Nachtmachen in recent times. Remember the Fernmeldenturm massacre? That set a lot of important people on the edge. Since then a lot of key corporate executives have vowed that it would not happen again.]<<<<<<

---Prinz Cortio (18:31:40/24-APR-55)

STADTTEIL (NEIGHBORHOODS)

Innenstadt (AAA++)

The downtown Innenstadt district is the heart of Frankfurt a.M. Among the other landmarks here are the Alte Oper, Frankfurt's opera house and arts/entertainment center, the Hauptwache, a kilometer-long pedestrian zone that is Frankfurt's closest approximation to a megamall, and the Borse, Frankfurt's stock exchange, where nearly all of Germany's business transactions are held.

>>>>>[Pay particular attention to the double pluses in the security code. Remember what Cortio said earlier. Subtlety and smarts is the key to working this city; outright violence invariably leaves you dead.]<<<<<<

---Knif (19:12:45/14-MAY-55)

Altstadt (AA)

If the Innenstadt is the heart of Frankfurt, then the Altstadt is its soul. Surrounded by buildings dating back to the city's origins during the late medieval era, the Altstadt is home to the city Rathaus (Council Building, where the city legislature and executives sit) and the Stadthalle (City Hall, which houses most of the government bureaus), as well as the Landtag, the legislative assembly which governs the Land of Gross-Frankfurt. The Altstadt is also the spiritual center of Frankfurt, where one can find the ancient cathedrals of the Pauluskirche (St. Paul's Church) and the Dom St. Peter (St. Peter's Cathedral).

>>>>>[Yeah, the buildings are old-if you can call 1950 old. Most of the Altstadt got bombed out with the rest of the city during the Second World War and were rebuilt in the old style about a hundred years ago. Only the Pauluskirche and Dom St. Peter date back as far as the Dark Ages (the ORIGINAL Dark Ages, for you post-millennial drekheads out there).]<<<<<<

---Sachsen-Squatter (14:04:56/10-APR-55)

>>>>>[The Altstadt is also known for its trade of books and art. In particular, the Goetheplatz has a particularly wide selection of literary choices, from complex technical subjects, to even Altbuchhandlers, which deal in old, printed books. Not surprisingly, a number of lorestores and talismongers do business in this district.]<<<<<<

---Schwarzauberer (01:11:14/13-APR-55)

Westend (AAA)

Westend has been the financial center of Frankfurt,

ever since the Rothschilds established their dynasty back in the nineteenth century. Although almost a quarter of the district had burned to the ground following the bombing in the forties, the district has made an amazing recovery.

Today many skyscrapers and offices line its busy streets, the most prominent being that of the towers of the Frankfurter Bankenverein, across from the Alte Oper. Additionally, at the north of this neighborhood lies the Deutsche Bundesbank. Although a pale reflection of its image in the past century, the Bundesbank still maintains the important function of regulating currency flow of the ecu and the deutsche mark. In addition to businesses, a number of foreign governments have established bases in Westend. Here one can find the consulates for most foreign governments on speaking terms with the AGS, including the UCAS and CAS consulates.

Bockenheim (A)

Primarily a working-class district, many of Frankfurt's metahumans and gastarbeiter (foreign workers) live in this district. Also located in Bockenheim is Frankfurt's own university, the Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe Universitat, which brings in thousands of students from all parts of Germany. Also located in the northwest corner of the district, opposite of the Deutsche Bundesbank, is the recently-rebuilt Fernmeldenturm, a giant media/telecommunications tower which dominates the Frankfurt skyline.

>>>>>[Although the official blather puts the blame on Der Nachtmachen, the real truth is that no one actually knows for sure who bombed the TV Tower. Oh, sure, Der Nachtmachen claimed responsibility, but so did a dozen other polis and terrorist cells, all of which could have done it as well. Because of the high meta population in Bockenheim, the Nationale Aktion were also prime suspects (rumors also abound that link the American terrorist group Alamos 20,000 to the bombing). Because the Deutsche Bundesbank is directly opposite the Fernmeldenturm on Rosa-Luxemburg-Strase, it's also possible that any number of terrorist policlubs could have done it (Neu-Baader-Meinhof and the AIA come to mind).]<<<<<<

---The Frankfurter "Rat" (11:05:20/9-MAY-55)

>>>>>[Lately I've been hearing a few stories about the late unlamented Der Nachtmachen. One of the reasons they were able to pull off the bombing of the Fernmeldenturm, so I've heard, is that they received some massive support and funding from an unnamed secret agency.]<<<<<<

---Anonymous (01:28:55/14-MAY-55)

>>>>>[I've heard the same thing. I'm not inclined to put a lot of weight into it. Back in the Cold War, when terrorism was also in fashion, a lot of groups, notably the Red Army Faction, were being backed by the Stasi, i.e. the East German secret police. Sounds like too much of a copycat to be true, especially since their isn't any Stasi-kind of organization around today.]<<<<<<

---Prinz Cortio (19:34:46/15-MAY-55)

>>>>>[Oh, yeah? How's this for weight? The latest word I heard about this oh-so-secret agency was that it was being brokered by, get this, a dragon. And not just any dragon, but one with connections to that worm in Essen, Lofwyr.]

Oh, and get this, too: two days after I heard this, my source was fished out of the Main. Had her tongue and hands were cut off, too, and her throat was slashed.]<<<<<

---Anonymous (11:14:38/18-MAY-55)



>>>>>[You don't mean Alamais, do you? It (he?) supposedly got iced almost a year ago. Though from what I hear, "iced" may not be the accurate term.]<<<<<

---Just Another Grunt (05:29:36/6-24-55)

>>>>>[Yeah, well, when wizworms are involved, anything's possible. It might not be listed under Paterson's Guide to Paranormal Animals, but I wouldn't be surprised if "Coming back from the Dead" is one of their abilities.]<<<<<

---Doc Salvage (05:11:53/7-9-55)

Flughafen (AAA)

With the acquisition of Rhein-Main Air Force Base from the former United States in 1919, Frankfurt's international airport has grown to become one of the

busiest airport in all of Europe, not too far behind Hong Kong Kai Tak, Seattle SeaTac and Chicago O'Hare.

>>>>>[Frankfurt Flughafen is probably the only place in Germany where German is a SECONDARY language.]<<<<<

---Bischof (01:04:51/23-MAY-55)

Although all international carriers travel through here, the largest without a doubt is Deutsche Luftbahn AG, which makes Frankfurt Flughafen its central base of operations. Hangars allocated to its maintenance and freight operations take up more than a third of the acreage of the airport, and its passenger operations completely fill Terminal 2, banishing all competitors to the older Terminal 1, or Terminal 3 on the Rhein-Main side.

>>>>>[And just who happen to be the top stockholders in Deutsche Luftbahn? Oh, look, there's AG Chemie and Frankfurter Bankenverein at numbers one and two....]<<<<<

---Konwacht (13:07:18/11-JUN-55)

>>>>>[Arriving or departing Frankfurt via Terminal 3 is a real pain in the butt. For one thing, the Terminal itself is little more than an annex tacked onto the old Air Force MAC flight terminal (which is half the size of the annex). For another thing, Rhein-Main is on the opposite side of the runways, separated from the conference centers and shopping venues at Frankfurt Airport Center. The respective support services at Rhein-Main are pretty shoddy.]

Then again, the security on the Rhein-Main side IS considerably looser than at the main airport....]<<<<<

---Sprind (23:31:44/14-JUN-55)

Due to the high threat profile posed by international air travel, the city-state of Greater Frankfurt garrisons its Federal Border Guards within the airport complex, which includes four GSG counterterrorist teams, one of whom is on standby at all times.

>>>>>[Great. Can I go home now?]<<<<<

---M.F. (03:34:02/18-JUN-55)

Gallus-Viertel (B/C)

The southwest Stadtteil of Gallus-Viertel (The Gallic Quarter) is, for the most part, one giant rail yard. In addition to housing the Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof, Gallus-Viertel also contains the Hauptgüterbahnhof, which handles the majority of rail freight traffic into and out of Frankfurt. Also located here, on the banks of the Westhafen (western river port) are the offices of the Zollamt, which handles tolls from foreign trade coming in off of the Main River.

>>>>>[All that industry's really depressed the real estate prices, though. Other than Sachsenhausen, the Bahnhof Quarter is probably your best bet for finding a safe house in metropolitan Frankfurt.]<<<<<

---Century 22 (23:57:04/28-APR-55)

Ostend (B*)

The majority of the Ostend Stadtteil is dominated by the sprawling industrial zone along the Main River. Lying here are the docks of the Osthafen and the Guterbahnhof Ost, which bridges river freight traffic from the west with rail traffic from the east. Many corporations maintain numerous warehouses and some manufacturing plants in this zone, taking advantage of the transportation nexus offered here.

>>>>>[*Varies depending on whoever owns the patch of land you're on at the moment. The median falls out somewhere around B.]<<<<<

---Century 22 (00:01:31/29-APR-55)

>>>>>[Ostend and the Gallusviertel share many similarities in shadow activity, though each has its own unique flavor. Because of the many potential targets here, Ostend sees a lot of raid-type shadowruns within its bounds. The Gallus-viertel, on the other hand, is more of a hotbed for free-trading and other forms of smuggling, due to the concentration of transportation avenues located there.]<<<<<

---De-kanter (23:06:22/30-APR-55)

Sachsenhausen (A/B, C/D at night)

Lying directly opposite of the Innenstadt is the district of Sachsenhausen. Here is where many of the wageslaves and low-wage sararimen come home to at night after a hard day's work. Along the riverfront neighborhood, though, lies Sachsenhausen's Altstadt. Sachsenhausen's old town has the liveliest night life and is well known for its local specialty, ebbelwei (apple wine).

>>>>>[Walking the beat here can be pretty spooky. The narrow cobblestone streets, bordered by tall brownstones on either side, gives the Stadtteil an eerie quality, which turns into a nightmarish maze after dark.]<<<<<

---Konstabler-watcher (11:35:13/08-APR-55)

>>>>>[When people say Sachsenhausen has an active night life, we're not just talking about swinging nightclubs. Adjacent to the wealthy Innenstadt and bordered by the poorer district of Oberrad, Sachsenhausen attracts many shadowrunners and other shady figures like a magnet.]<<<<<

---Sachsen-Squatter (14:13:33/10-APR-55)

Every Saturday morning, Sachsenhausen holds a flea market (Flohmarkt) along the banks of the Main River. Vendors from all across the Sprawl come to hawk their wares, and just about anything can be found if one looks hard enough.

>>>>>[Even for shadowrunners looking for something, ah, controversial.]<<<<<

---The Frankfurter "Rat" (13:01:19/14-APR-55)

Niederrad (AA)

Niederrad is the third of the major three business districts in Frankfurt am Main, located only a few

kilometers north of the Flughafen on Autobahn 5. Anything that doesn't belong to AG Chemie or deals primarily in finance locates here. Renraku-Frankfurt and Saeder-Krupp, among others, maintain their regional headquarters among the patchwork of corporate enclaves and quasi-arcologies which cover this Stadtteil.

Hochst (AA/AAA)

Often referred to as "Frankfurt West," the Stadtteil of Hochst attracted most of Frankfurt's secondary industries as they were being pushed out of the city by offices and high-rises. Today the skyline of Hochst is dominated by the dark blue marble obelisk that is the headquarters of AG Chemie Europa. The other major site of interest here are the sprawling Stammwerk, belonging to Hochst AG (a subsidiary of AG Chemie), which is so large that it has crossed the river and spilled over into Schwanheim.

Bad Homburg (AAA)

The northernmost city in the Rhein-Main area, Bad Homburg has been well known for its spas, which at one time serviced the needs of Kaiser Wilhelm II. Today Bad Homburg is still very much a playground for the rich, with its casinos, hot springs and Kurpark nature park.

Bad Vilbel (A/B)

Lying to the northeast of Frankfurt, the Stadtteil of Bad Vilbel, as well as neighboring Karben and Schoneck, swelled in size as industry was forced out of Frankfurt proper. However, unlike the Taunus district, Bad Vilbel has no autobahns running through, with the only major avenue being B3. Consequently, Bad Vilbel and the rest of the northeast grew into a predominantly middle-class bedroom town.

A number of small industrial plants are located in Bad Vilbel. The largest one is the Konica Optikwerk, which produces precision optical instrumentation for a variety of applications, from industrial-scale lasers to photo-electrical converters in cyberdecks.

>>>>>[Expect a large number of corporations to take an interest in Konica real soon. The buzz on the street has it that Konica Optikwerk has been conducting clandestine R&D into the development of optical processor devices.]<<<<<

---De-kanter (13:59:57/01-MAY-55)

>>>>>[Impossible! Something like that defies the laws of physics!]<<<<<

---Doctor 'Y' (22:13:22/01-MAY-55)

>>>>>[But don't computers use optical processing already?]<<<<<

---The Fun Hun (02:22:42/02-MAY-55)

>>>>>[You're thinking of something entirely different. Optical chips are used by computers to store data on disk or in memory, but for them to crunch that data, they have to convert it into electrical digital signals. When De-kanter says optical processing, she

means that the processing chips crunch digital light pulses, with no electronics involved whatsoever. If it works, optical processors could relieve heat buildup in electronics and make them less susceptible to E-M events such as electrical storms, power line interference, solar flares, etc.]<<<<<<

---Technicky (04:16:39/02-MAY-55)

>>>>>[Which is what I say is impossible. To produce an electronic function so simple as a gate or a switch requires atoms capable of switching their reflective coef>>block delete: 167.3 Mp<<<<<<

---Doctor 'Y' (05:00:23/02-MAY-55)

>>>>>[Pardon the interruption, but I had to move this discussion over to the Tech bulletin board when things started to get too technical.]<<<<<<

---Sysop (05:01:00/02-MAY-55)

>>>>>[The old Doc is like that sometimes. I hope you erased his access privileges as well.]<<<<<<

---Bundes-weird (07:11:25/02-MAY-55)

>>>>>[No, but I told him to go to his BBS and not come out until he could talk nicely about something non-technical.]<<<<<<

---Sysop (07:12:31/02-MAY-55)

Eschborn-Schwalbach (A/B)

Situated along the Nordwestkreuz Frankfurt, where A5 intersects with A66, the towns of Eschborn and Schwalbach in the Taunus region grew into industrial centers as they absorbed the traffic runoff from the two highways. As big business and big finance began taking over Frankfurt, industry was forced out of the city into the outlying communities, namely these two towns. Eventually the two towns swelled in size, merging to form the Stadtteil of Eschborn-Schwalbach.

Kelsterbach (A)

Sandwiched between the industrial parks of Schwanheim and the Frankfurt Flughafen, the Stadtteil of Kelsterbach is little more than a commercial staging area, for cargo and passengers coming in and out of the airport. Many storage and moving companies base their operations in Kelsterbach, and warehouses and storage areas carpet the area around the town.

OTHER NEIGHBORHOODS

Mitte Security Code

Nordend: Middle Class A

Bornheim: Middle Class B

Nordweststadt

Bonames: Lower Class B

Dornbusch: Upper/Middle Class AA

Eckenheim: Middle Class A

Eschersheim: Lower Middle Class A

Ginnheim: Middle Class A/B

Hausen: Middle/Lower Class B

Heddernheim: Middle Class A

Kalbach: Lower Class B/C

Nieder-Eschbach: Lower/Middle Class B

Niederursel: Lower Class B/C

Praunheim: Middle Class A

Rodelheim: Middle Class A

Nord Security Code

Bergen-Enkheim: Middle Class A

Berkersheim: Lower Middle Class B/C

Harheim: Lower Class C/D

Massenheim: Middle Class A

Nieder-Erlenbach: Lower Middle Class B

Preungesheim: Middle Class A

Ost Security Code

Bischofsheim: Lower Class C/D

Fechenheim: Lower Class C

Maintal: Middle Class A

Riederwald: Lower Class B/C

Seckbach: Middle Class A

Sud Security Code

Neu-Isenburg: Middle Class A

Oberrad: Lower Class B/C

Schwanheim: Upper Class AA

Zeppelinheim: Middle Class AA

West Security Code

Griesheim: Lower Middle Class B

Hattersheim: Middle Class A

Nied: Middle Class A

Sindlingen: Upper Middle Class A

Sossenheim: Middle/Lower Class B/C

Zeilsheim: Middle Class A

Bad Homburg (vor der Hohe) Security Code

Burgholzhausen: Middle Class A

Dillingen: Middle Class A

Dornholzhausen: Middle/Upper Class AA

Friedrichsdorf: Luxury AAA

Gonzenheim: Upper Class AAA

Koppeln: Middle Class A

Kirdorf: Upper Class AA

Ober-Erlenbach: Middle Class A

Ober-Eschbach: Upper/Middle Class A

Saulberg: Middle Class A

Main-Taunus Kreis Security Code

Bad Soden: Upper Class AA

Hofheim: Middle Class A

Kelkheim: Upper Class AA

Kriftel: Middle Class A

Kronberg: Middle Class A

Liederbach: Middle Class AA

Oberursel: Middle/Upper Class AA

Steinbach: Middle Class A

Sulzbach: Middle/Upper Class AA

PLACES OF INTEREST

RESTAURANTS AND BARS

Hoffman's

Mid-size Restaurant Archetype/Friedrich-Ebert-Strasse 6/Karl Hoffman, Owner/No Racial Bias/Telekom 0494-12-569-29523.

Located outside of the main city in Eschborn-Schwalbach, Hoffman's is more or less you typical Gasthaus-except that it has the widest variety of beers to be found. All brands of beer-from the toxic soy mixture that passes for American brew to genuine Pils from Plzen in the Czech, can be found here, as well as around the world (including the soy swill from the UCAS, just for the sake of rounding out their collection). Every three months or so, Hoffman's hosts its 'Round the World contest, where patrons attempt to sample each of Hoffman's 200 or so different varieties of beer. Though the crown goes to the drinker who imbibes the most, no one to date has completed the "Tour."

>>>>>[Most usually pass out after attempting to try an evil-smelling concoction called Welsh Guinness. Don't ask, and don't ask to try.]<<<<<<
---Bischof (22:01:54/03-MAY-55)

Kilcenny's Pub

Bar Archetype (2 floors)/Rittergasse & Klappegasse/Timothy Kilroy, Owner/Subtle Bias Against non-English speakers/Telekom 0494-10-551-86395.

A two-story pub in the heart of Sachsenhausen, Kilcenny's Pub is a favored watering spot, particularly for the city's English-speaking residents. Like all other pubs in Sachsenhausen, Kilcenny's carries, along with the standard lagers and liquors, the locally brewed ebbelwei, or apple wine.

Zippaner Bar

Small Restaurant and Bar Archetype/Steigenburger Hof, Am Kaiserplatz/Marlene Schulen, Owner/No Racial Bias/Telekom 0494-10-550-56488.

Regarded as the most elegant bar in town, the Zippaner boasts crystal mirrors and authentic wood paneling and furniture. International drinks are available, with the prices ranging as much as 30 DM (15 ecu).

NIGHTCLUBS

Club 1850

Nightclub Archetype/Wurnbachstrasse & Am Weingarten/ Bernhardt Pierz, Owner/Bias Against Modern Wear/Telekom 0494-10-552-57862.

Located in the heart of Bockenheim, Club 1850 is well known for its dress code: period wear of the mid-1850's. No one is admitted without a periodically accurate costume. Additionally, Club 1850 lives up to its reputation by playing only classical music, though remixed with a rock beat.

>>>>>[Good if you're into rocking with Marie Antoinette to a remix of Mozart, though I'm sure young Wolfgang's doing the disco in his grave....]<<<<<<
---G-Mann (10:17:26/29-APR-55)

Der Raketer (The Rocketeer Club)

Nightclub Archetype/Dwight-Eisenhower-Strasse 7/ Kristina Locke, Owner/No Racial Bias/Telekom 0494-13-758-99374.

A former soldiers' club for the US Air Force Rhein-Main airbase, the Rocketeer still maintains the flying ace motif, decorating the place with pictures, artifacts and mementos from combat pilots in North America and Europe.

>>>>>[A good breeding ground for up-and-coming samurai, riggers and other joystick jockeys. If you're looking for some fresh new talent, look here.]<<<<<<
---Prinz Cortio (20:52:03/05-MAY-55)



>>>>>[New talent, yes, but not necessarily GOOD talent.]<<<<<<
---Burnt Umbrage (18:05:34/06-MAY-55)

Gustav's BierStube

Nightclub Archetype (2 floors)/Munchnerstrasse 52/ Gustav Meyer, Owner/Subtle Bias Against Metahumans/Telekom 0494-10-550-56963.

This heavily-timbered beer hall is a precise display of Teutonic nostalgia. Molded in imitation of a mountain chalet, this nightclub plays two bands regularly, one an ethnic Bavarian brass group, the other playing the cutting edge in modern music. Many of the private booths have Matrix-link access, for private

electronic conversations with anyone one cares. Meals are available, anything from light snacks to heavy Bavarian dishes, though the prices can be a little steep.

>>>>>[Rumors accuse Gustav Meyer of being a collaborator with the Siegfriedbund. Although the policlub has not held any formal meetings here, it's well-known that many members frequent this place.]<<<<<

---Hans Gluck-in-der-Luft (23:24:47/18-MAY-55)

>>>>>[What a load of anti-Bavarian drek. Just because the Bierstube has a strong Bavarian atmosphere doesn't mean it has its attitude. Get your nose out of the air and look at reality.]<<<<<

---Cruel Philip (18:30:23/22-MY-55)

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

Alte Oper

Opernplatz/Philip Strassmann, Director/No Racial Bias/Telekom 0494-10-550-71232.

The Alte Oper is Frankfurt's opera house, the nucleus of Frankfurt's cultural center. Besides classical performing arts, the Alte Oper also hosts more contemporary performances, the latest being Ricardo Conceau's highly acclaimed Twilight Summer, the first production which relies purely on magic for its special effects.

>>>>>[Impressive as the show was, what was even more impressive was the security measures they took, since the embarrassing spectacle at Munchen. I swear, they must have hired all the street mages in Frankfurt and brought in some extras from Heidelberg to watch out for astral intruders.]<<<<<

---Safir (14:49:06/30-APR-55)

>>>>>[When you consider that across the street from the Alte Oper is the corporate headquarters for the Frankfurter Bankenverein, that ain't so impressive.]<<<<<

---The Frankfurter "Rat" (23:27:23/1-MAY-55)

Hauptwache

Mall Archetype (of a sorts)/Zeil.

The area known as the Hauptwache is Frankfurt's glitter street. Almost three blocks long and two blocks wide, the Hauptwache is a pedestrian-only zone with shops opening up onto the streets. The central square is particularly busy, with two lower levels of shopping levels opening like amphitheater pits onto the square. The subway station below the Hauptwache is a central hub for Frankfurt's rail system, where one can catch all of the U-bahn and most of the S-bahn trains for all points in the metropex and beyond.

>>>>>[North American chummers scanning this dump should take note, that, as a rule, there's no such thing as a shopping mall in Germany, at least defined strictly. Mostly a couple of blocks of pedestrian-only streets (Fusganger Zones) lined with small shops, plus maybe one or two huge department stores (such as

Hertie or Kaufhaus) in the big cities. And definitely no square kilometers of parking lots; instead, numerous underground Parkhauser, which provide service to the city first.]<<<<<

---Connie Connoisseur (22:58:11/3-31-55)

>>>>>[There are exceptions, of course. Some places, like the Hainerburg Center in Wiesbaden or the American Mall in Hanau-Wolfgang, were left behind by American forces when they pulled out and took on a life of their own. Others, like Renraku's Rhein-Main Center in Niederrad, were built by corps for their employees' benefits. And there are one or two of those honest-to-goodness humongous mega-malls. But those are few and far between. Still, remember, these are just exceptions to the rule.]<<<<<

---Flyboy (16:21:33/4-4-55)

>>>>>[The Hauptwache S- & U-bahn station is a really complex structure, and there are quite a number of newsstands, snack bars and small shops in the station for it to qualify as a mall in and of itself. And no, despite what you hear, people do not get lost in the Hauptwache bahnhof, never to be seen again.]<<<<<

---The Frankfurt "Rat" (21:55:01/15-APR-55)

>>>>>[Though if you do want to pull a disappearing act, here is the place to do it.]<<<<<

---Tannerly (02:32:51/20-APR-55)

Palmengarten

Main Entrance: Am Miquelallee/Josef Kantrof, Park Director/No Racial Bias/Telekom (Park Director's Office) 0494-10-550-17462.

Located in the Westend suburb, the Palmengarten is the largest city park in Frankfurt. Co-located in the Palmengarten is the Frankfurt Botanical Society, which collects and studies all manner of plant life. Particularly impressive is the Ober-terrarium, which contains a large collection of paranatural plants.

OTHER LOCATIONS

Frankfurt am Main Hauptbahnhof (Central Train Station)

Am Hauptbahnhof/Elisa Traumin, Station Manager/No Racial Bias/Telekom 0494-17-069-19419.

The Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof is the center of Frankfurt's rail traffic, from local traffic across the Main to monorails coming from Madrid, London or Budapest. A large number of shops above and below ground offer services for travelers around the clock, and parking can be found in the three-level underground parking lot under the station.

>>>>>[The area around the Hauptbahnhof also has the dubious honor of being Frankfurt's red-light district. After sunset the area around the Hauptbahnhof becomes dangerous, as all sorts of unsavory elements start coming out of the shadows. Although the security rating is AA during the day, it drops down to D or E at night.]<<<<<

---Sachsen-Squatter (22:00:01/05-MAY-55)

>>>>>[Outside the Hauptbahnhof, that is. Security is still tight within the terminal itself.]<<<<<

---Walter Gropius (05:43:19/07-MAY-55)

UCAS Consulate

Siesmayerstrase 7/Charles Danning, Consulate General/Telekom 0494-10-550-2715.

>>>>>[Would-be activists who wish to "fervently express" any criticism of the UCAS or its policies should be advised that there is a Bundeswehr office directly across the street, and Mr. Danning has made a point of maintaining a cordial "good neighbors" policy with them.]<<<<<

---Son of Abby (11:16:04/25-JUN-55)

CAS Consulate

Bertramstrase & Adickesallee/Robert W. Chase, Consulate General/Telekom 0494-10-550-6254.

>>>>>[Ditto, except that the good neighbor is a Polizeiprasidium.]<<<<<

---Son of Abby (11:22:14/25-JUN-55)

Japanese Consulate

Hamburger Allee 1, Am Ludwig-Erhard-Anlage/Tochiro Funimuchu, Consulate General/ Telekom 0494-10-550-14128.

BUSINESSES

Ares Macrotechnology C. W. Abrams Complex

Main Gates: Hansaallee & Lubeckerstrase/ Thomas Milford, Director of Frankfurt Operations/ No Racial Bias/Telekom 0494-10-550-6428.

This arcology used to be the former headquarters of the US Army V Corps, until they moved out and relocated elsewhere in Germany. After the Army left, the Complex was used as a police barracks for the Frankfurt polizei, until it was seized by the military government to serve as a regional headquarters for occupation forces. After the abdication of the military government, the complex had been used as office space by AG Chemie, until about five years ago, when Ares Macrotechnology purchased the complex, lock, stock and barrel.

Since then Ares has used the Abrams Complex as a regional management office to regulate Ares operations within the Gross-Frankfurt district. Knight Errant securities also maintains a garrison on the complex to marshal and dispatch its forces as business requires.

>>>>>[The buyout of the Abrams Complex came as a complete surprise to everyone in Frankfurt, prompting a rash of rumors and speculations as to the reasons why to this very day. Besides the fact that the Abrams Complex is a sizeable chunk of real estate, you also need to consider (1) the origins and history of the complex, and (2) the street talk about a month before that Saeder-Krupp had approached AG Chemie with a request to lease the site.]<<<<<

---De-kanter (22:49:35/03-MAY-55)

>>>>>[To put all you drekheads out there in your

place, there is absolutely NO substance to the rumor that the battle was over lost military technology left over by Uncle Sam or the Bundeswehr. V Corps' move out of Frankfurt happened during the mid-90's, well before the upheavals that occurred in the New World. They had plenty of time and no outside pressure to do the job quickly, so they could afford to be thorough about their move. The same goes with the outgoing military regime.]<<<<<

---Prinz Cortio (0:07:19/06-MAY-55)

>>>>>[Though it is true that of the few runs into the Abrams Complex (all of them ending in a brilliant display of fireworks of one form or the other), almost all of them could be traced back to Saeder-Krupp, through several intermediaries. Though unconfirmed, the latest run against the Abrams Complex was organized by one Hans Brackhaus himself, the enigmatic Mr. Johnson of Saeder-Krupp.]<<<<<

---Dragon Watcher (19:58:34/07-MAY-55)

Die Borse (Stock Market)

Casino Archetype (It IS a casino, sort of)/Am Borsenplatz/Jurgen Holz, President of the Borse/No Racial Bias/Telekom 0494-15-152-12457.

Standing since the nineteenth century, virtually all of Germany's stock and bond trade takes place in this location. Economists pay close attention to activity in the Frankfurt Borse, as the performance here of corporate stocks in all industrial sectors reflects in the Dax, Germany's leading stock index, as important to German business as the Dow Jones is to American business.

Like most modern exchanges, the trading-floors are mostly quiet nowadays, with the majority of transactions done on-line.

>>>>>[German corporations don't establish as close a relationship between business and the stock market, like their counterparts do in England or North America. Yeah, the stock market is important, but not so much as that the fate of a corp depends on the share price.

Instead, German business maintain a close relationship between industry and the banks, who own major blocks of shares in the companies they invest in. It's so close that it's standard for a representative of the bank to sit on the Supervisory Board.]<<<<<

---Komma Kamilion (03:11:56/02-MAY-55)

>>>>>[The stock-exchange is also a great neutral-ground meeting place where the sharks in power suits from different companies can get together and discuss "delicate negotiations." Ever thought of that?]<<<<<

---De-kanter (23:01:04/03-MAY-55)

>>>>>[Don't even think of SPITTING anywhere around the Borse. Think about it; all the corps in Germany do business here, including the heavy hitters like Saeder-Krupp, AG Chemie, and even a few multinationals, such as Renraku and Ares. And natch, each one of them brought along their bully boys to complement the Borse's already scary security forces.]<<<<<

---Nullpunkt (18:09:33/07-MAY-55)

Nightstalkers

by Steve Kenson

>>>>>[I copied this profile from the Business Thaumaturgy Datanet. Whaddya know about these guys?]<<<<<<

Argent (22:05:43/08-04-56)

>>Business Thaumaturgy Datanet

Profile: Nightstalkers

Nightstalkers, Inc. is a private organization intended to help those with problems unique to our Awakened age. We specialize in dealing with hazards such as hauntings, possession, magical intrusion and infestations of creatures such as ghouls. We offer reasonable rates and are registered with Lone Star Security Services and the American Association for the Advancement of Thaumaturgy as an accredited security provider. If ordinary measures can't help, look to the extra-ordinary. Call LTG 7306 (NIGHT) for a free brochure download and consultation.

>>>>>[Pretty much as advertised. The 'Stalkers are basically shadow-runners who hire out to handle astral / magical security. They also do bounty-hunting of "creatures of the night" like vampires, banshees and ghouls. They're pretty good at it, too.]<<<<<<

Talon (20:02:13/08-05-56)

>>>>>[Sick. Some of the "creatures" that these fraggers hunt down and kill are human beings who are only doing what they have to to survive. These aren't animals, but people with medical conditions that we should be looking to help.]<<<<<<

Avreel (13:10:24/08-06-56)

>>>>>[Hey, chummer, it it's a choice between some bloodsucker and a normal human, it's no contest. If you ask me, it's a public service the 'Stalkers are providing.]<<<<<<

Impact (23:17:29/08-06-56)

>>>>>[That's still pretty cold-blooded (pardon the pun). Don't vampires and ghouls have legal rights like everyone else?]<<<<<<

Argent (00:20:10/08-07-56)

>>>>>[Technically, yes (provided they have a SIN), but not in practice. Since vampires and ghouls (for example) have to break the laws of the land simply in order to survive, they are almost inevitably deemed criminal from the moment they change.]<<<<<<

Legal Eagle (11:23:45/08-08-56)

>>>>>[Yeah, but couldn't a vampire drink donated blood or something? There's a vampire in Frisco who's

registered with the local government and they let him run a downtown bar.]<<<<<<

Grade (20:04:56/08-08-56)

>>>>>[No. Vampires don't live on blood, but human life force. The blood is simply a medium for the transfer of life force, so any victim of a vampire is either killed or permanently harmed, which is a crime no matter how you look at it. I don't know what that vamp is San Fran is up to, but he sure as hell isn't peacefully living off of donations from the local Red Cross, Inc.]<<<<<<

Talon (21:07:18/08-08-56)

>>>>>[I say frag 'em all.]<<<<<<

Impact (23:45:32/08-08-56)

>>>>>[Okay, children, carry this debate elsewhere. Try and talk about the Nightstalkers, okay?]<<<<<<

Quirk (08:53:47/08-09-56)

>>>>>[I hear that the Nightstalkers got in good with the metroplex govern-ment when they tracked down and scragged a Nomad spirit that was behind a series of serial killings. They even let Lone Star take the credit for it, which kept them in the Star's good graces, too.]<<<<<<

Tangent (18:48:29/08-09-56)



The Nightstalkers: Game Information

Leader: The founder and head of Nightstalkers Inc. is Martin King, a mage who was raised in the Confederate American States. King's father was a fire-and-brimstone minister who preached that the Awakened were touched by Satan. When Martin began displaying magical abilities, his father assumed him to be devil-ridden and made several efforts to "exorcise" the demons. His inability to do so was blamed on young Martin's own "wickedness" and lack of true contrition. The elder King was eventually attacked by a spirit that Martin subconsciously conjured to protect him. When the remorseful boy willed the spirit away, he discovered that his gift could be used against the very "demons" that he believed haunted him.

King is a skilled mage, even though he is self-taught and self-initiated in his own unique tradition that blends folk magic and religious trappings. He can cast some spells, ward and astral project (although he prefers not to do so). King uses conjuring to banish hostile spirits and protect against spirit powers. He never conjures spirits of his own, although he will sometimes take control of another mage's elemental and turn it against him. King is a firm believer that magic is dangerous and tainted at its very heart.

Martin King is in his early forties, with an average build, greying dark hair and ice-blue eyes. He favors dark, semi-clerical type garb with some light armor and wears a silver cross on a chain around his neck that serves as a Rating 4 Power Focus.

Attributes

Body: 3
Quickness: 4
Strength: 2
Charisma: 6
Intelligence: 4
Willpower: 6
Essence: 6
Magic: 7
Reaction: 4

Skills

Chanting (Centering): 4
Conjuring (Banishing): 7
Etiquette (Corp): 4
Etiquette (Street): 3
Firearms: 3
Magical Theory: 5
Negotiation: 4
Sorcery: 6
Theology: 4

Initiative: 4 + 1D6

Threat/Professional Rating: 4/3

Initiate Grade: 1

Cyberware

None

Spells

Fireball 4
Slay Vampire 6
Spirit Bolt 4
Detect Enemies 3
Detect Ghouls 3
Antidote Serious Toxin 3
Heal 5
Prophylaxis Serious Disease 4
Resist Moderate Pain 3
Light 2
Mana Barrier 5
Poltergeist 4

Gear

Colt L-36
Armor Clothing (3/0)
Magical Library
Silver Cross (rating 4 Power Focus)

Membership: Martin King has gathered several trained "specialists" for Nightstalkers Inc. to provide various security services. They have trained and work well together under fire.

Kane: Karen Kane's education prepared her for a business career, but her heritage dictated otherwise. While still in the business degree program at Pacific University, Karen discovered that she was a magical adept. During a wizzergang incident, she instinctively used her abilities to protect herself and several others from a stray fireball. The incident hit the newsnets within half an hour and Karen was an instant celebrity. Her fame lasted about 36 hours before the media moved on to other matters, but her small taste of action had inspired in Karen Kane a hunger for more than a life in an office. When Martin King heard about her exploit and offered her a job with the Nightstalkers, she jumped at the chance.

Kane is the general business manager for the company, as well as a field operative. She handles most of the day-to-day details of keeping the company running and thrives on all of the activity. She also uses her magical abilities in the field when needed, although that isn't always as often as she'd like.

Attributes

Body: 3
Quickness: 5
Strength: 2
Charisma: 4
Intelligence: 5
Willpower: 5
Essence: 6
Magic: 6
Reaction: 5

Skills

Business Administration: 4
Etiquette (Corp): 5
Firearms: 4
Magical Theory: 4
Negotiation: 4
Sorcery (Spell Defense): 8
Stealth: 3

Initiative: 5 + 1D6

Threat/Professional Rating: 3/2

Spells

Detect Enemies 3
Detect Spirits 4
Spell Barrier 5

Cyberware

None

Gear

Ares Viper
Armor Clothing (3/0)
Pocket Secretary

Splinter: On the edge street samurai. Splinter is loaded with cyberware and his Essence hangs by a narrow thread. While this means that essence draining creatures cannot affect him (find his polluted Essence distasteful), his low Essence also makes Splinter a

fairly unstable personality and he is somewhat heedless of his own safety. He has an almost childlike glee in combat and has something of a subconscious death-wish that keeps him in his dangerous line of work. He carries an testubo (iron staff), a set of four knives carved from fire-hardened wood and a Ruger Super-Warhawk loaded with silver bullets as well as a regular sidearm. He has a trained Fenrir Wolf (see Paranormal Animals of Europe, p.42) named Loki that generally accompanies him.

Attributes

Body: 6(8)
Quickness: 4(5)
Strength: 6(7)
Charisma: 2
Intelligence: 5
Willpower: 5
Essence: 0.1
Magic: 0
Reaction: 5(9)

Skills

Armed Combat (Blades): 7
Car: 3
Etiquette (Street): 4
Firearms: 6
Stealth: 5
Unarmed Combat: 5
Vampire Lore: 3

Initiative: 5 (9) + 3D6

Threat/Professional Rating: 3/3

Cyberware

Cybereyes with Low-Light and Thermographic
Dermal Plating 2
Muscle Replacement 1
Retractable Hand Razors
Smartlink
Wired Reflexes 2

Gear

Ruger Super-Warhawk with silver ammo
Tetsubo
Wooden Knives
Ares Predator
Armor Jacket (5/3)

Walker: Greyson Walks-With-Spirits is a Tribal half-breed who is a "ghost-hunter" physical adept, one whose powers make him well suited for dealing with spirits, astral creatures and other magical threats. Cool and calm, whether dealing with a hostile poltergeist or a raging wendigo. He often "counts coup" on his kills, taking on a deadly paranormal creatures in hand-to-hand combat. Walker carries several weapons, but prefers using his more "natural" magical abilities. He is the voice of calm rationality in Nightstalkers and does not think that all Awakened are necessarily evil or dangerous, but that many are and need to be dealt with harshly.

Attributes

Body: 5
Quickness: 6
Strength: 4
Charisma: 3
Intelligence: 4
Willpower: 5
Essence: 6
Magic: 7
Reaction: 5

Skills

Armed Combat: 5
Athletics: 5
Etiquette (Tribal): 3
Firearms: 4
Sorcery (Astral Cbt): 6
Stealth: 6
Unarmed Combat: 6

Initiative: 5 +3D6

Threat/Professional Rating: 4/3

Initiate Grade: 1

Cyberware

None

Gear

Beretta
coup staff
tribal fetishes
lined coat

Powers

Astral Perception
Low Light and Thermographic Vision
Killing Hands (L)
Increased Reflexes (2)

Headquarters: Nightstalkers Inc. is based out of a small office park. They rent office space in the park and manage to maintain it by offering a discount on their services to their neighbors to ally their concerns about having the professional "monster hunters" in their backyards. The offices have fairly standard physical security measures and are protected a Force 5 ward that King renews on a regular basis (use the Office Archetype, p.20, Sprawl Sites).

Common Activities: The Nightstalkers offer a variety of services. They provide magical and astral security to small companies and private individuals, offer advice and consultations on magical problems, perform exorcisms and ghost hunting on properties that are haunted or otherwise troubled by spirits and fill out the remainder with bounty-hunting creatures like ghouls and HMMVV-infected individuals.

NIGHTSTALKER ENCOUNTERS

1) Okay, you've been hired for some pretty weird things, but this one takes the fraggin' cake. Some Johnson is paying perfectly good nuyen for you to break into a fraggin' morgue and cremate some Joe SINless' body, which the coroner's dept. is going to do anyhow eventually. Wetwork on a corpse? What next?

Quotes:

"No traces of the body or records concerning it should remain."

"The job must be completed in the next 48 hours."

"There's always more to the dead than meets the eye, my friends."

Notes: The runners' employer is a vampire who became careless and infected a drained victim with HMMVV and was forced to flee the scene before he could dispose of the body. He now wants the runners to eliminate the body before it rises as a vampire that can remember the attack or an autopsy can trace the attack back to him.

The morgue has only just run a Hartz-Greenbaum

blood series on the body to test for HMMVV. They have locked the unawakened vampire in a freezer and called in the Nightstalkers as consultants to aid in the investigation. When the runners enter the morgue King and Splinter will be there, going over some test results and waiting to question the new vampire. They will naturally object to the team destroying their only leads.

Archetypes:

The Nightstalkers: Use King and Splinter.

Newbie vampire: SR11, p.231

2) "Nothing personal, just business," is the saying on the streets. Things just don't always work out that way in life, and certainly not in death. It's kind of difficult to tell a guy you killed not to take it personally when he comes back from the grave to haunt you, ya scan?

Quotes:

"What are you going to do? Kill me again?"

"There is only one way for my spirit to rest."

"Don't worry, we're professionals."

Notes: After a particularly harrowing shadowrun, the runners have an unusual complication: someone killed during the run has come back as a ghost to haunt them. The gamemaster should use some NPC killed in the last adventure as the haunt, or even a player-character if one bought it recently. (What? Nobody ever dies in your adventures? What kind of Shadowrun gamemaster are you?)

Initially, the specter will manifest itself with annoying but harmless poltergeist phenomena. It will follow the runners around and trip them, throw off their aim, snatch away fetishes, etc. Eventually, it will escalate to scare tactics, frightening illusions, chilling touches and then to dangerous psychokinetic tricks like flinging a drawer full of knives or pulling the pin on a runner's grenade...

When the incidents start to get dangerous, the spirit will tell the runners the only way they can be rid of it is a ritual at its grave site (or site of death) that will give it some of their life force (Karma). That's when the Nightstalkers come along and explain that the "ghost" is a Free Spirit they've been tracking that pull this scam to get more Karma and increase its power. They try to convince the runners to appear to go through with the ritual so that they might have a chance to learn the spirit's True Name and bind it.

Archetypes:

The Nightstalkers: Use full roster.

The Spirit: A Force 4 Free Air Elemental with Spirit Energy 2 and whatever spirit powers the gamemaster feels are appropriate.

3) When a distraught corporate VP hired you to find his missing wife you figured on having to deal a simple kidnapping at most. Instead, you're in the depths of the Barrens, poking through a graveyard in the middle of the night and can feel the pressure of starting eyes all around. Call it instinct, but you're getting a bad feeling about this...

Quotes:

"Don't you think I'm pretty now?"

"There's no reasoning with creatures like this."



Notes: Mr. Johnson's wife has goblinized into a ghou. Feeling from her home, she sought shelter in the Barrens, where she was adopted into a small community of ghouls that live near the remains of an abandoned graveyard. Investigation by the shadowrunners turns up some of Mrs. Johnson's jewelry in a nearby pawnshop and eventually leads them to the fixer she used the money to buy several guns from.

Unknown to the runners, the Nightstalkers have been tracking this particular tribe of ghouls for several weeks on suspicion of some mysterious deaths in the area. They plan on finding the ghouls' lair and clearing them out for the bounty money. The runners may have a hard time convincing the 'Stalkers to spare their client's wife from the general slaughter.

Archetypes:

The Nightstalkers: Use full roster.

Ghouls: p. 225, SR11.

4) Another day, another datarun. This time it's some small security company with the pretentious name of "Nightstalkers Inc." It's the usual routine: get in, get the data and turn it over to Mr. Johnson. What could go wrong?

Quotes:

"This place gives me the creeps."

"This file reads like the guest list for a Halloween party."

"We're working for what?"

Notes: The job itself is routine: break into the Nightstalkers' office and steal their datafiles. What's not so typical is the 'runners' employer, who is a wendigo who would like to see the Nightstalkers' investigation into her activities in the metropolis stopped, or at least seriously slowed down.

The Nightstalkers' offices have reasonable sophisticated security: maglocks, motion-sensors, etc. as well as unusual measures like anti-bacterial filters and the like intended to keep out vampires in mist form. There are also several anchored spell booby-traps and Splinter's pet Fenrir Wolf Loki, who serves as guard dog for the place. Possible complications include one of the group coming in to work late (as they often do) or another of the 'Stalkers' enemies deciding to attack their offices while the runners are there.

Archetypes:

The Nightstalkers: Use the full roster.

5) You haven't seen your friend in a long time, so you're surprised when he calls you up and tells you he needs your help. Some crazy monster-hunters are following him around and he's afraid for his life. They call themselves the "Nightstalkers."

Quotes:

"I don't know why, they're nuts!"

"You don't know the whole story here, chummer."

"How do we know that you're clean."

Notes: The 'runner's friend has suffered a tragic fate: he has been possessed and turned into a flesh form Ant Spirit (see The Grimoire). The Nightstalkers were hired to locate him, but now that it is too late, they intend to try and use the spirit to lead them back to its hive. The spirit pretends to be the runner's old friend in order to get some allies to run interference with the 'Stalkers so that it can get away. The Nightstalkers will

initially think the runner are other flesh forms or agents of the Hive until they are convinced otherwise.

Archetypes:

The Old Friend: Soldier Ant Spirit, p.104, Grimoire.

The Nightstalkers: Use full roster.

6) Violence almost seems to follow you when you're a shadowrunner. It started out as a night's trip into the Barrens to scope out a little biz at some of the local hangouts and now you're in the middle of a totally unexpected gang war, fighting for your life. Just when you think it can't get any worse, you catch the image of a grey cloaked figure out of the corner of your eye. It turns towards you and the deep violet glow from within its hood seems to brighten...

Quotes:

"Rock and roll! I wanna see some blood!!!"

"You picked the wrong night to get in our way, meat."

"We've got to find some way to stop it before the violence grows out of control."

Notes: While the runners are going out on the town to look for some action, some action comes and finds them in the most unexpected of ways. A large, violent gang war breaks out in an area where nobody would have expected, relations between the two gangs being fairly good (as far as gangs go). The runners are caught in the middle and have to fight against both sides (each of which assumes they are on the other side, natch).

What the runners don't immediately know is that the evening's conflict has been inspired by a Wraith that is hovering nearby in astral space and feeding on the violent emotions. The Nightstalkers arrive to investigate the unusual bout of violence and will enlist the help of the shadowrunners in keeping the combat contained and under control long enough to deal with the malevolent spirit. If they are successful, it could be the start of a good professional relationship between the two groups. If they aren't careful, however, the Wraith might well try pitting the two teams against one another...

Archetypes:

The Nightstalkers: Use full roster.

The Wraith: p.110, Paranormal Animals of Europe.

The Gangers: Gang Members Archetypes, p.54.

Acers

by Andrew Ragland

>>>>>[We'd like to thank Wheels'N'Treads for generously offering this article for redistribution. Saved us the trouble of scamming it ...]<<<<<

-- Photon Rocket, Hardware Sysop, Shadowland (12:12:12/06-Oct-2056)

Wheels'N'Treads normally only covers ground vehicles. We make exceptions for drones launched from ground vehicle racks, and the occasional panzer or semi-airborne vehicle that's just too chill to let slide.

But we have never seen anything like what you're about to get the low-down on, let me be the first to tell you. This doesn't fit anywhere in the usual classification scheme. Forget about everything you think you know about rigging, chummers, because the world has just changed.

We all know about Vehicle Control Rigs, or VCRs. You go to your friendly neighborhood doc and walk out with a control interface hardwired into your brain. A few mods to your favorite street machine, and you can jack into it and drive by thinking about it. Becoming one with the machine is what this 'zine's all about.

Let's take it a step further. Instead of jacking into something with wheels or treads or air skirts or vectored thrust nozzles, jack into something with legs. No, I'm not talking about some hulking battle 'bot like you see in the trids. No, chummers, this is up close and personal. I'm talking about armor.

We've all seen industrial exos, those big strap-on forklift systems. But they're slow, you say, and the control systems needed to set them up for rigging are just too fragging bulky. You'd end up looking like an arthritic gorilla trying to rig one of those, every joint doubled in bulk with servos and gyros and transceivers and stuff. That was then. This is now.

Enter the Armor Control Rig, or ACR. A whole new generation of rigging technology has rolled out. Ares Macrotech has it, Renraku has it, and word on the street is that any ripperdoc you can get beta-grade from has it. The control circuits work on a whole new set of algorithms. The remote units are trimmer, using centralized control and taking advantage of a lack of transceiver equipment. Everything's hard-linked to the controller. That's right, chummers. You strap on a suit of powered armor and jack into it.

The bad news is that VCRs can't be retrofitted for ACR tech, and ACR algorithms won't translate to vehicle control opcodes. If you're already rigging a panzer, you can't switch to rigging armor. Acers can't drive by jack the way riggers can. Beyond that, there's a major difference in skills. Acers focus on personal combat rather than tactical driving, firearms rather than gunnery, and the tech itself is radically different. Even the tools aren't completely compatible. Beyond that, let's not even talk about street-legal. You gotta be in corp security and on your own turf, or have some fragging major permits just to own the suit. Walking

down the street in it is a guaranteed way to get the chrome squad rolling down on you.

However, once you've seen one of these guys in action, you'll never look at your Westwind the same.

>>>>>[This could explain the Harlech knights. An acer with some serious anchored and/or Quickened magic ...]<<<<<

-- Hard Johnny (01:02:03/08-Oct-2056)

>>>>>[Speculation in this area could be hazardous to your health.]<<<<<

-- Lieutenant Rhys Davies, KH (05:10:15/08-Oct-2056)

Here's the breakdown on the rig itself:

The ACR is installed just like a VCR, with the same cost to your system. That means it whacks your bod hard, leaving you more chrome than meat, but if you wanna meld with the machine, you gotta make some sacrifices, right? Instead of giving you a boost in driving reaction time, it gives you a boost in personal combat speed. There's also a major boost in physical strength provided by the armor's man-amp systems. The average Troll can put his fist through sheet steel. The average Acer can put his fist through the average Troll.

Price is definitely a limiting factor here. The rig itself only comes in one rating, and that's at the top end. Unlike a VCR, there ain't no cheaper low-end model. It's all or nothing, but hey, life's better when you live it at the redline, right? You're gonna pay half again what you would for a comparable-quality VCR. Tools are the same, half again what you'd pay for vehicle stuff. You're gonna have to learn Power Armor Maintenance, which is impossible to get on chip right now. Even when it does go to skillsoft, expect to pay through the nose and owe several large favors to get your hands on a copy. Can you say restricted?

The rigging gear itself is sweet. Half the bulk of vehicle servos, armor controllers use a lot of flat motor tech, optical connectors and relays, and have the advantage of no transceiver. It's all hardwired, which does wonders in the bulk department. However, once again there's a serious cost. Armor controllers are priced out at 150% of vehicle controllers. You have to have a controller for every major joint. That's shoulders, elbows, wrists, hips, knees and ankles. Hands take a special controller that's 250% of vehicle cost, and feet controllers are 200%. The suit has to be gyro-stabilized, and takes a 10,000¥ onboard computer to run it all.

So what's the bottom line? You start out with a heavy security suit -- what's the point of rigging light armor? You pay 12,000¥ for the suit. Add the controller units for 67,500¥. Enviroseal the suit and add full helmet mods for 24,550¥. Throw in the 10,000¥ onboard computer and you end up spending 114,050¥ for the

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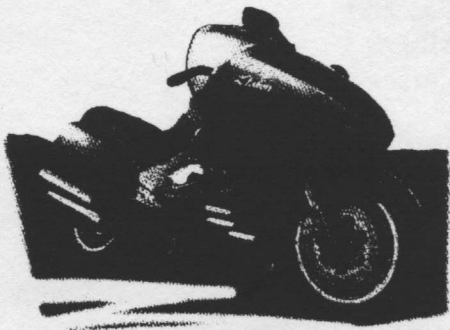
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Shadowrun



Nissan Stallion

Nissan Stallion

Handling: 4

Speed: 80/200

B/A: 4/2

Sig: 2/5*

APilot: 1

Cost: 25,000¥

Seating: 1 front

Economy: 25 km per liter

Fuel: IC/35 liters

Storage: 2 CF underseat + 2 CF
sideboxes

Options: 2,000¥/firmpoint; 5,000¥
hardpoint; Firmpoints cost 1 point,
hardpoints cost 2 points. The bike
can carry 5 points of weaponry.

* The higher signature rating reflects
activation of onboard ECM.

armor before you even think about ordnance.

Weaponry for the suit has to be modified extensively. There ain't no pintle mounts on acer armor. Pay double the base gun cost for the weapon mods, double again if you go with an AUG-CSL with the autoconvert feature that lets you change modes by rig command. Ammo storage is a real pain. You either live with the clip capacity of the weapon and double your reload time thanks to the safety covers on the bin, or you carry a backpack with a chain feed and worry about taking a hit in the ammo dump.

Hand-held weapons don't require any mods, but you'd do well to remember the man-amp systems and buy heavy-duty gear. The Wallacher Axe holds up well. A standard combat axe came apart under our testing conditions. Of course, if you can afford it, Dikote your weapons. In our tests, an acer on loan from Ares Macrotech armed with a Dikoted Wallacher turned loose on a car left illegally parked in front of our offices. He shredded it into bite-size pieces faster than a chef at a Japanese restaurant. By the way, if the owner of the vehicle will call us at the LTG number in the masthead, we'll arrange a reimbursement from our insurance company. It was worth it to see an acer at work.

Acers end up being darned expensive, both in terms of gear and biosystems impact. However, the return on the investment is sizable. Imagine a strap-on panzer, and you've got a good assessment of the firepower. Maneuverability is maxed out, acers being able to go anyplace your average Troll will fit. Corporate security just got a whole lot nastier in the AAA zones, and the high levels of the shadows a lot tougher.

Mechanics:

The ACR can only be installed at a rating of 3, costing 5 points of Essence. Monetary cost is half again that of a VCR. Acers can run their rig at a rating of 1, 2 or 3. The rating it's run at is added to QCK and RXN, adds a die to Dodge and Combat pools, to Init, and adds to all T#s for physical activities. Built-in weapons do not receive this penalty, as the onboard computer compensates for the effect of the rig. STR of the suit is a 12.

Example Sheet:

Attributes

Body: 5
Quickness: 5
Strangth: 4
Charisma: 2
Intelligence: 4
Willpower: 4
Essence: 0.8
Magic: 0
Reaction: 5

Skills

Armed Combat: 5
Unarmed Combat: 5
Firearms: 6
Stealth: 4
Athletics: 4
Armor B/R: 3
Electronics B/R: 3

Combat Pool: 6
Control Pool: 8

Cyberwear

ACR 3 (EL 5, Cost: 300,000¥)
Datajack (EL 0.2, Cost 1,000¥)

Gear

Aug-CSL/Autoconvert (18,000¥)
Monosword (Dikoted) (2500¥)
Riot Shield (3000¥)
Wallacher Combat Axe (1750¥)
Net Gun (Large) (2300¥)
Grenade Launcher (3400¥)
Gas Vent 4 (Aug-CSL) (2000¥)
Grapple Gun (Stealth) (8620¥)

Armor

Rating

Cost

Heavy Armor	7/5	12000
Armor Rigging	5	67500
EnviroSeal		12000
Helmet:	4/3	500
Magnification		650
Low Light		700
Thermographics		700
Flare Compensation		700
Smartgun Link		3000
Transceiver		2500
Tracking	5	500
Locater		1000
Heads Up Display		1000
Ultrasound Sight		1300
Onboard Computer		10000
Funds Total:		456620

MAO Inhibitors

by Andrew Ragland

Hoi, chummers, Doctor Devious with the latest stage in the arms race twixt shadow and security. We all know about supra-adrenals, that's last year's news. People with them started carrying MAO inhalers to switch themselves off if they got too excited at the wrong moment. Now, that's monoamine oxidase for those of you who care, and that's an enzyme that clears adrenaline out of your system. It didn't take long for the corporate goon squads to figure out they could load an Ares Squirt with DMSO and MAO. Some runner starts getting hyper on them, they out with the Squirt and blap the runner with a gel round. Hey presto! Bye bye adrenaline rush!

Well, here's the cure for what ails your run. MAO inhibitors are a class of psychopharmaceutical -- that's head drugs for you nonmedical types. What they do is stop the action of MAO. Gee, you say, if I took MAO inhibitors I could totally ignore the goon with the Squirt, couldn't I? Well, more or less. There's always complications.

See, MAO inhibitors are really touchy. They don't mix well with pretty much anything else, especially serotonin reuptake inhibitors, which you'd know as mood elevators or happy pills. MAOIs also have a really bad reaction with an enzyme called tyrosine. You just have to avoid tyrosine, right? It's never that simple. See, the stuff occurs naturally in four popular foods: red wine, aged cheese, smoked meats and chocolate. If you're well off enough for a decent lifestyle, you're gonna have to lay off the Italian restaurants. You low-life types are gonna have to watch out for pizza joints that use real cheese or meat. That slice of pepperoni could be your ticket to Cardiac Arrest City. You South Am types should know tyrosine is also found in betel nuts. No chaw, guys. Rumor has it some of the stuffers at the Shack are loaded up with tyrosine. Why, I have no idea. Not like it's a preservative or somesuch.

There's also this thing called clinical blood levels. In short words, you have to take the stuff for a while to build it up in your system before it works. The drug also takes a while to clear out of your system when you stop taking it. Figure three to four days before a run for the ramp-up to the threshold level, and at least a week after for clearance.

So, you got a big nuisance factor, plus high cost and low availability on the street (but come see me -- I can cut you a deal on large quantities...). On the other hand, it can all be worth it for the look on some corp type's face when you wipe off the Squirtsnot and tapdance on his head.

Mechanics:

A character who has taken clinical doses of MAO inhibitors for a minimum of 3 days (see chart) may ignore the effects of MAO delivered by injection or DMSO gel round. The character becomes vulnerable

to tyrosine reactions on the second day. After consuming foods containing tyrosine, the character will take 5M damage, and must make a BOD save against a 4 to avoid heart damage (S wound that requires medical intervention to repair). The damage increases in power by 2 and one stage for each day on MAOIs, to a maximum of 9D, and the BOD save likewise goes up to a maximum of 10. The damage code drops after discontinuing the drug, one stage and power 2 every other day, and the BOD save likewise.

Species	Doses/Day	Establish	Clear
Human	2	3 days	7 days
Elf	2	3 days	7 days
Dwarf	3	3 days	5 days
Ork	3	5 days	8 days
Troll	4	6 days	10 days

Addiction	Tolerance	Strength	Price	Street Index
5M	2	9	60¥/dose	2.5

>>>>>[Oh, yeah, like anybody paying for this stuff can afford real chocolate. Anybody here ever even taste the stuff?]<<<<<

-- Whacko Raider (01:26:30/10-Oct-2056)

>>>>>[Got news for ya, chummer. Soy's just chock-full of tyrosine. Now whattaya gonna eat?]<<<<<

-- Klevver Kevvin (22:55:43/10-Oct-2056)

>>>>>[You're full of it. Processing takes all the tyrosine outta the beans before they get made into soypro. I did a run on a processing plant a while back.]<<<<<

-- Gronk (08:01:01/11-Oct-2056)

>>>>>[What, you couldn't get enough soy legitimately? Har-har.]<<<<<

-- Klevver Kevvin (08:03:22/11-Oct-2056)

Drak's Drek

by D. L. Knox

...lly, really hate this kinda drek! If you didn't have those pictures of me an' dat slitch in yer lawyer's safe, baby I'd ... Waitaminnit! This thing is voice-activated!?!

(ahem)

Hoi, Chummers!! Welcome to the first installment of the new (and with my luck) on-going advice column

for the Shadow-runner-On-The-Go.

Considering the life I've led during my many years in the shadows, it was brought to my attention that there is a need of those less experienced out there to get a little ahead of the game, so to speak. For this reason I have been blackmailed, err....-convinced- to offer my experience "to the young runners lookin' for easy nuyen."

For those of you out there that have big dreams about being Robin Hood or Dillinger, the first thing I'll remind you is that those guys never got shot at with Victory Rotary Assault Cannons. They also didn't have mages, like yours truly, out there lookin' to turn them into cockroaches.

(Damn, but i love that trick. If you time it just right...oh....sorry) The point is, the world we are all in is dangerous and the one in the shadows is just plain ridiculous. A chummer once told me that the only advice he ever heard worth anything was, "Shoot straight, conserve ammo, and never cut a deal with a dragon." Very good advice, but somebody should have warned that frag-headed about how it ain't healthy to torque off Ares Microtech either.

And we all know what happens when someone gets too cocky to learn anything in this biz. Can you say "flatline", boys and girls? I knew you could!

In this biz there are two kinds of runner. One's smart.

The other kind regularly gets sold as spare parts off near Beaver Lake in Redmond. Problem is that these days, even with everything chipped to the max, with wiz-wizards and sharp razors, you can still get royally hosed if you ain't more than a few steps ahead of the other guy (or thing).

It all boils down to a question of what you've already

been through and how good your karma is. However, if you would rather find out about a lotta painful drek without having to be slapped around first, get back to me in twelve and I'll see if I can enlighten ya.

In the future I'll be dropping by post to this same RTG as long as you want to learn from a guy that retired to someplace warm and sunny, with all his body parts intact, after some long and highly informative years on the street.

Oh yeah, did I mention that I retired as a multi-millionaire? It tends to slip my mind every now and again. (Hey, can I tell about the time I invested in Cattle Futures and had a guy on the inside fix the market? I made a killing and if it hadn't been for that little investigation I wouldn't have bailed when I did. As it was I made a profit of 100%!!! Oh, okay....but you sure



take the fun outa doin' this drek)

Anyway, I hope you found this informative and I look forward to chatting with you again soon. Till then, may all of your runs be profitable and all of your losses be in your cred-account and not in your body account.

(Whew! It's over! Now, dear, will you tell me how to turn off this techno-drek thing-in-a-whatsis you hooked me up to? Never shoulda married a fraggin' reporter....Hunh? Waddya mean yer still recording?!? YOU BONY-HOOPED SLITCH! I OUGHTA.....

Yuki No Onna

by Steve Kenson

>>>>>[Here's the latest download from the infamous Patterson's Guide to Paranormals series. As usual, all of the harmless, cute and boring critters from the original file have been deleted. If it can't geek you or hose your run, its not here. Those interested in Patterson's endless commentary on meta-oysters and other things are advised to buy a subscription to the Guide.]<<<<<<

Control (13:04:52/4-15-56)

Identification

Translated as Snow Woman, the yuki no onna is apparently a type of nature spirit, similar in taxonomy to the Man of the Woods, and similar powerful, independent nature spirits that dwell in wild areas away from civilization. The yuki no onna always appears as an attractive oriental woman with very pale skin, dressed in white or pale grey garments regardless of the weather that it is encountered in. The spirits seem to appear most commonly in cold weather, especially during snowfalls.

Magic Capability

Innate

Habits

Yuki no onna fiercely protect wilderness areas, especially in cold, wooded areas such as mountain slopes. They resent any human intrusion into their territory and will often attack unless they are convinced that the intruders mean no harm to the trees or animals of the area under the spirit's protection. Most typically, the spirit will create a fierce snowstorm and then appear to its victims and lead them through the blinding snow until they are hopelessly and lost and die of exposure to the extreme cold.

Powers

The snow woman has the magical ability to manipulate the weather and to produce extreme cold. They often appear in violent snowstorms of their own making, sometimes pretending to be lost or helpless travelers.

Weaknesses

Due to their association with extremely cold temperatures, yuki no onna are vulnerable to heat and flame.

>>>>>[You know, I heard recently that a team of Renraku surveyors froze to death one night in the mountains on Honshu. Greenwar claimed responsibility for the incident and I assumed that some eco-shaman of theirs had done it, now I wonder...]<<<<<<

Johnny Zen (11:13:03/4-21-56)

>>>>>[Any information on magicians being able to conjure or control the snow women?]<<<<<<

Talon (22:32:22/4-21-56)

>>>>>[Several teams of Renraku and Mitsuhama wagemages have been working on it, but no luck so far. Their methods and their purpose are such that they will never achieve the enlightenment required for such magic.]<<<<<<

Kazuo (05:06:17/4-24-56)

GAME INFORMATION

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
6	6x2	6	6	5	5	6A	5	Humanoid

Initiative Dice: 1D6 (+10 in manifest form, +20 in astral form)

Powers: Accident, Alienation, Cold Aura, Confusion, Manifestation, Weather Control

Weaknesses: Vulnerability (fire)



Virtual Realities 2.0

a preview from FASA

The following excerpts offer a preview of the exciting new revision of the Shadowrun Matrix rules. The rules in VR 2.0 take a fresh look at cyberspace, and address the ongoing concerns of Shadowrun players and gamemasters who find the current Matrix rules time-consuming, clumsy and disruptive to their games.

Intrusion Countermeasures

IC stands for intrusion countermeasures. (For all you Matrix virgins, it's pronounced "ice.") Some IC just impedes the decker, maybe tries to get a network ID on him. Other programs are designed to crash his icon off the Matrix. Still others go after his deck. Finally, there's black IC - which flat out tries to kill him. IC is a major functional element of most host systems, which were covered in the previous section.

Gray IC

Gray IC programs attack a decker's cyberdeck and utilities directly. Any damage caused by a gray IC attack permanently affects the deck's ratings. Damaged chips and other components must be replaced to restore the deck's original ratings.

Worms

Worms are reactive virus programs used to booby trap subsystems. Any System Test against a subsystem infected with worm IC prompts the worm to infect the MPCP of a decker's cyberdeck. Deckers can detect worm IC programs by performing Analyze Subsystem operations. However, if a worm inhabits the

subsystem, it tries to infect the decker when he analyzes it. Deckers can destroy worms by performing Disinfect operations or by cybercombat. However, if an attempt to destroy a worm fails, the worm can infect the deck's MPCP. Worms have no IC Rating as such, so destroying one by either means does not affect the security tally. To determine whether a worm successfully infects a deck's MPCP, make a test using the Security Value of the host against a target number equal to the MPCP Rating of the deck. On 1 success, the worm has invaded the MPCP. If the deck has Hardening, this test must result in a number of successes greater than the deck's Hardening to infect the MPCP.

Once a worm infects an MPCP, it cannot be erased. The decker has to cook a whole new MPCP chip. A worm infection cannot be detected unless a decker actively tests for it, a task requiring Computer skill (or an appropriate Hardware or B/R skill) and a Base Time of 10 hours. The decker may run the test periodically, as often as caution - or paranoia - dictates, or if he experiences problems that suggest the presence of a worm. Worm IC v1.0 was developed as a Matrix weapon by Lone Star's

GridSec programmers. More recent worm programs - **dataworm** and **deathworm** - have increased dramatically the dangers presented by worm IC.

Dataworms

Dataworms log information about a decker's runs and report it to their owners. Each time a dataworm-infected deck logs onto a grid, roll 1D6. On a result of 1, the dataworm tries to send a report chock full of incriminating evidence to some specified delivery address. At the same time, make a Sensor (8) Test for



the decker. If the test fails, he doesn't even know the system has a dataworm. If the test succeeds, the decker notices the dataworm report and may engage it in cybercombat to destroy it before it gets away. In cybercombat, dataworm reports always act as standard icons with 3D6 Initiative and an effective Evasion Rating of 8. They possess no offensive capabilities, but will maneuver to Evade Detection (see Cybercombat for a complete treatment of these concepts). The effects of dataworm reports depend on the events in the adventure. If the decker gets arrested, the reports serve as admissible evidence against him, even if he was not arrested for Matrix crimes. If the decker uses his deck in a detectable pattern, the dataworm will report it. This allows a gamemaster to reasonably give non-player characters the e-mail names and addresses the decker uses, the identities of people with whom he communicates, and the BBSs he logs on to, as long as he employed that specific data while using the infected deck.

Deathworms

A deathworm infection increases a deck's target numbers by 2 in cybercombat. This increase applies to all Attack and Resistance tests made by the decker. If the deck picks up multiple deathworm infections, each additional worm increases the target numbers by an additional +1.

Tapeworms

Tapeworms erase files downloaded onto a deck. To determine how much data the tapeworm deletes, roll 1D6 _ 1 at the end of each run. Subtract the result from any Paydata Points the decker downloaded on the run. If the decker downloaded a specific datafile to obtain information, roll 1D6. On a result of 5 or 6, the tapeworm corrupts the needed information and renders it irretrievable.

Once a tapeworm infects a deck's MPCP, it continues to affect all the deck's downloads in this manner until the decker replaces the chip.

Black IC

Black IC is a form of proactive IC that samples the command transactions between the decker and his deck and then injects dangerous biofeedback responses into the deck's ASIST interface. These feedback responses raise the deck's simsense signal to the same levels as a BTL chip on overdose intensity. As a result, the signal may overload the decker's neural connections and in turn render him unconscious, trigger psychological disorders, brainwash him, or cause death from stroke, heart failure, respiratory paralysis, aneurysm, or neurotransmitter autotoxicity. And those are just a few of the possible effects.

"Cool" decks, which use weaker ASIST signals, do not produce lethal simsense signals in such situations,

though deckers using cool decks remain vulnerable to stun damage and psychotropic IC. Only the most feeble, non-simsense terminals, the so-called tortoises, provide protection against these effects.

Psychotropic Black IC

Psychotropic black IC functions in the same manner as non-lethal black IC, with the following exceptions. When a decker jacks out or is rendered unconscious by damage and dumped, he makes a Willpower (Psychotropic Black IC Rating) Test to determine if the IC program caused lasting psychological trauma. Reduce the target number by 2 if the decker is using a cool cyberdeck.

If the test succeeds, the decker suffers no psychological effects. If it fails, the IC implants its psychotropic effect in the decker's mind. These effects may vary widely, but a few of the commonest ones are described below. Creative gamemasters may devise numerous delightful variations on these themes as they wish.

See Recovering from Psychotropic Effects for information on recovering from the various effects of psychotropic IC.

Cyberphobia

Cyberphobia is a profound fear of the Matrix, decking, and all related concepts. Any character afflicted with cyberphobia must make a successful Willpower Test against the rating of the psychotropic IC that caused the phobia before he can jack into a system. Also, add the IC's rating to the target numbers for all tests the character makes when decking, programming, working with hardware, you name it. As a rule of thumb, the phobia affects any task involving computers or the Matrix. Drugs or spells inducing fear-free responses, tranquilizers, and the like may reduce the phobia penalty by up to half. Adrenal conditioners with endorphin analogues are the best bet. These drugs are only mildly addictive, cost 25 nuyen per rating point and are available without prescription up to a rating of 4. A dose lasts for about a day. Once medicated or under magical treatment, a decker suffering from cyberphobia can begin recovering.

Judas

The so-called Judas effect is a subliminal compulsion to betray one's self and one's colleagues. A decker suffering from the Judas effect leaves clues, both in the Matrix and the real world, that lead to his location or reveal the identities of his colleagues. An afflicted decker is not aware, however, that he is doing this. To simulate the effects of the syndrome, the gamemaster may simply lie about tests made to defeat trace IC programs or increase the decker's target numbers in such tests by a penalty equal to the rating of the psychotropic IC program that caused the Judas effect.

The afflicted character simply performs other

roleplaying actions without any conscious awareness. For example, if someone were to ask the decker if he was the one who scrawled the samurai's commcode on the corporate office's front door with hot maroon lipstick, he would really believe it when he said "No." He'd even beat a lie-detector test. Make a secret Willpower (Psychotropic IC Rating) Test for the character whenever he is about to perform a compulsive act that would betray himself or others. If the test succeeds, he resists the compulsion. (However, all this is subconscious and the decker has no idea what his mind is up to.) If the test fails, the decker carries out the compulsive act with an effective Stealth Skill Rating equal to the rating of the psychotropic IC that infected him. If another character is present when the decker performs a compromising act, make an Intelligence (Psychotropic IC Rating) Test for that character. If the test succeeds, the other character notices the decker's actions. The same test applies to any character monitoring the decker on a Matrix run or reviewing logs of his runs.

If the decker's companions detect his condition and prevent him from acting out his compulsion, he may begin recovering from the effects.

Matrix Maniac

A decker infected by Matrix maniac IC recovers consciousness in a maniacal state of rage. He may attack persons at random, flee in howling terror, gibber, rant, you name it. In combat, the decker fights no-holds-barred, firing weapons full-auto if he can, using his nastiest weapons in physical combat, and so on. This state lasts until the decker is killed or knocked out. However, the state resumes when the decker regains consciousness.

A foolishly over-kindly gamemaster may allow the character to make a Willpower (Psychotropic IC Rating) Test every 24 hours to see if the decker finally wakes up in a non-psychotic state of total exhaustion (though the Matrix-maniac conditioning might be designed to produce periodic maniacal states, of course).

Magic or drugs may suppress the rage and allow the character to recover. Tranq patches (p. 250, SRII) or equivalent medication with a total rating equal to the psychotropic IC's rating suppress the rage for 24 hours, whether they knock the decker out or not. Control

Thought or Control Emotion spells (p. 156-57, SRII) also can be used.

Positive-Conditioning Psychotropic IC

Positive-conditioning psychotropic IC (PCPIC), more commonly known as "I-love-the-company" IC, is not truly black IC because it does not harm the decker. PCPIC compels the decker to jack out, rather than damaging him. Use the usual rules for black IC, but the decker has to make a Willpower (Psychotropic IC Rating) Test to avoid voluntarily jacking out. If the decker has taken damage, apply a target modifier based on the character's Damage Level (+1 for Light damage, +2 for Moderate damage, +3 for Serious, and +5 for Deadly). The character repeats the test every turn after the IC hits, so it's only a matter of time before the decker is forced out of the system.

Once the decker has jacked out, he may make a Willpower (Psychotropic IC Rating) Test to negate all subsequent effects of PCPIC.

If the test fails, apply a +2 target modifier to all tests the decker makes when he performs actions that

might harm what he perceives as the best interests of the company or other group or individual that employed the psychotropic IC. This involves not just Matrix actions ("steal data from them? Never!") but anything

else ("Help you break in and steal hard copy documents from that corporation? I'd rather shoot my granny"). The decker may make a Willpower (Psychotropic IC Rating) Test to avoid this penalty on each occasion.

For actions that normally do not require a test (such as deciding to infiltrate the company's premises illegally), the decker must make tests using a relevant Attribute (usually Willpower) against a Target Number 6.

Corporate programmers with a sense of humor have been known to include more positive elements in PCPIC as well. These PCPIC programs not only make the decker reluctant to participate in acts against the company, but impel him to buy their products. Honestly.

PCPIC may not be part of any party IC in combination with any other form of black IC.



Recovering from Psychotropic effects

Characters may recover from psychotropic IC effects by making Willpower Tests against the rating of the psychotropic IC program that infected them. A character afflicted with the Matrix maniac effect must make the test daily. For other effects, characters repeat the test weekly. If the decker is under appropriate medication or magical treatment, reduce the target number by 1.

If under intensive psychotherapy, which requires the Hospitalized Lifestyle, reduce the target number by 2 (medication is part of therapy, so these bonuses are not cumulative). If kept under maintained, locked, quickened, or other spells with the desired effect, reduce the target number by an additional 1.

Recovery from PCPIC is more difficult because it involves aversive counter-conditioning (i.e., the decker has to be conditioned with graphic images showing the corporation to be utter bastards, despoiling the environment, murdering children, and the like). Raise the target number for these tests by 1 to reflect the unpleasantness of the procedure.

The Otaku

Consider the otaku, the so-called children of the nets. Fast coming into their inheritance, the oldest known otaku are in their late teens today. And their numbers keep growing-some otaku reportedly go under the laser for their first jack as young as seven or eight. No one knows for certain, however, how many otaku exist or their true influence on the Matrix. In fact, many observers deny the existence of the otaku altogether. Despite the lack of statistically significant evidence, rumors that these mysterious individuals ply their remarkable skills in the net refuse to die out of the decker community.

The role of the otaku in his Shadowrun game is entirely up to the gamemaster. He may choose to leave them offstage-almost legends, like those presented in *Denver, The City of Shadows*, with powers and limitations unknown to the players. Or the gamemaster may use the model presented here, but limit the otaku to non-player-character roles. Or the gamemaster may allow players to create otaku characters.

Playing an Otaku

You don't know who birthed you, whether they dumped you or died on you. Didn't make much difference back there. Cold and hunger were your heritage, scrounging half-spoiled stuffers out of trash dumps, hiding from the bigger kids who'd take them away. From time to time, the word flashed through your tiny world that the hunters were out, and with the stink of your fear cutting sharp even through your normal reek, you went to ground until they were gone. Now you know who they might have been. The list is

long: sweepers for the kiddy shops, organleggers looking for easily implanted young tissue, "sporting" folks hunting prey that could run and think and maybe beg for mercy. But there wasn't any mercy back there. Not for anyone.

You survived somehow. Then one day you found a handful of older kids around your hidey-place. They didn't look like the kids you knew. Now you know the difference between malnutrition and health, between clean clothes and dirty rags. Back there, you just knew they looked different. And they talked to you and brought you here.

They showed you new things and gave you words for them. They taught you numbers, and what the numbers did. They taught you a new thing you liked almost better than anything. You learned it was called friendship.

They gave you your first datajack and showed you how to use it. Then you discovered the Deep Resonance and began to learn the channels, the complex forms, the ways of your newfound home - the Matrix.

Playing an otaku means that your character, in all likelihood, spent his earliest years as an abandoned child in an environment of extreme poverty, surviving by begging, theft and scrounging, and subject to the predations of some of the worst walking garbage in the Sixth World. Older otaku recognized the potential to become an otaku in your character and rescued him from this life. They gave him food, shelter, education, and a sense of community - the first he ever experienced.

Outside the tribal structure of his otaku community, your character may be significantly socially handicapped, wholly deficient in social skills. Of course, mental stability has to rank high in the things otaku look for in new members, or they'd all be crazy as bedbugs after such severe childhood trauma. But you aren't going to find an otaku who comes across like a cute kid from a sitcom, either. Don't expect non-otaku to like your character too much; they're going to think he's weird and they'll probably make tracks to avoid him whenever possible.

At their best, young otaku are often rude and anti-social, even by shadowrunner standards. They are arrogant in anything involving the Matrix and more than half convinced that nothing outside the Matrix matters a frag unless it affects their personal comfort or security. The well-being of fellow otaku in their own community is important to them. The well-being of other otaku comes next. Personal friends, if they have any, third, and the rest of the world a very distant fourth. These priorities may manifest themselves as intensely brattish behavior or as cold-blooded ruthlessness without a trace of what the shrinks call "affect." Certainly, otaku can grow into more well-rounded human beings, given friendship,

responsibility, even trust, within the shadow code. But no one is likely to enjoy the company of an otaku while he matures.

Cyberadept or Technoshaman?

Otaku fall into two broad groups: the cyberadepts and the technoshamans. Both groups exhibit identical abilities, but they hold different views of the Deep Resonance and their own places in the world.

Cyberadepts are rationalists, technophiles - perhaps psychologically more attuned to the specific workings of programs and the organization of data than other otaku. They view their state as a natural and inevitable blending of humanity and technology and tend to express their concepts in precise terms, almost formulae.

Technoshamans see the Matrix as a living being, which they have learned to blend with spiritually. They are more mystical, more holistic in their descriptions of computer operations and performance than other otaku. Many technoshamans maintain that the Deep Resonance proceeds from spirits resident in the Matrix. If the gamemaster wants to play up these differences in his games, he may apply the following cyberadept and technoshaman bonuses:

Cyberadepts apply a +1 modifier to the effective rating of any complex form they learn. They must create the form before getting this bonus, but it does not affect the size of the form. This bonus reflects the cyberadepts' particular insight into the details of Matrix operations.

Technoshamans reduce target numbers by 1 when using their channels. This bonus reflects their approach to the Matrix as a gestalt with which they blend.

Players choosing one or the other of these orientations should roleplay their character accordingly.

Mystery of the Otaku

Even the otaku don't know why they experience the Deep Resonance. The technoshamans of the Denver Nexus claim that the work of Shiva and the other sysops who maintain the Nexus has somehow created a cyberspace where they, the true children of the Matrix, see deeper into its truths than the old-tech dinosaurs. Some of them believe that true Spirits of the Matrix exist in this environment. Others claim the Deep Resonance is an actual evolutionary step, and that cyberadepts are the next step in the long march from the first hominids.

Among non-otaku, even wilder theories abound. Some older elves agree with the technoshamans that a Great Spirit has learned to manifest in the Matrix, native to the Matrix the way other nature spirits are native to their domains. A very experienced decker in Seattle advanced the theory, before he disappeared, that the Virus of 2029 had evolved into a cybernetic

life-form, as homo sapiens evolved from the primal goo of Earth's earliest seas, and that it was helping the children of the Matrix evolve into a form similar to its own. A top-secret report to the board of Aztechnology suggests the existence of a super-AI somewhere in cyberspace, which is now functioning independently and using the otaku as its agents. Hard to say what else the author thought.

She committed suicide a few days after submitting the final draft of her report, which her superiors dismissed as the work of an unbalanced mind. A reporter in Berlin left partial notes suggesting that aliens from outer space were taking up residence in the Matrix and grooming earth children as a conquering army of netsoldiers. His editors considered running the story after the traffic accident, but couldn't find the rest of his files, so they spiked it instead.

Given this track record, other folks with theories about the technoshamans and cyberadepts may be playing it smart by keeping quiet.

Regardless of these differing explanations, the experience of the Deep Resonance follows certain patterns. Technoshamans report a sudden transport to a place unlike any in their Matrix or physical experience. Here they encounter a being, or beings, who give them the seed knowledge that grows into their ability in the Matrix. Cyberadepts, on the other hand, claim that they know they are still in the Matrix, but perceive connections and networks of dataflow that transcend the interface of the deck. Both emerge from the experience with the abilities described in this text. Sometimes they enter these states again, and when they return they have gained new abilities or received a mission which they must carry out.

Headache

by Chris Hussey

Headaches are short shadowruns for an average size team of shadowrunners. These 'aches are designed to be played out in one or two sessions and can be used as stand-alone runs or as a sideline to a current mission, or even as a plot element to further confuse and frustrate the players (sadistic gamemasters only please...).

The following headache takes place in Seattle but is easily adaptable to any urban loaction. The scenario is fairly self-contained but allows for gamemaster tweaking and modification. The end of the headache gives hooks for possible plot expansion and potential runs down the road.

I NEED A FAVOR...

Tell It To Them Straight

He wants what? Oh drek, this is not what you need right now. You've got your mind on other biz, and if you don't get this job done right and soon, your rep is going to take a serious hit.

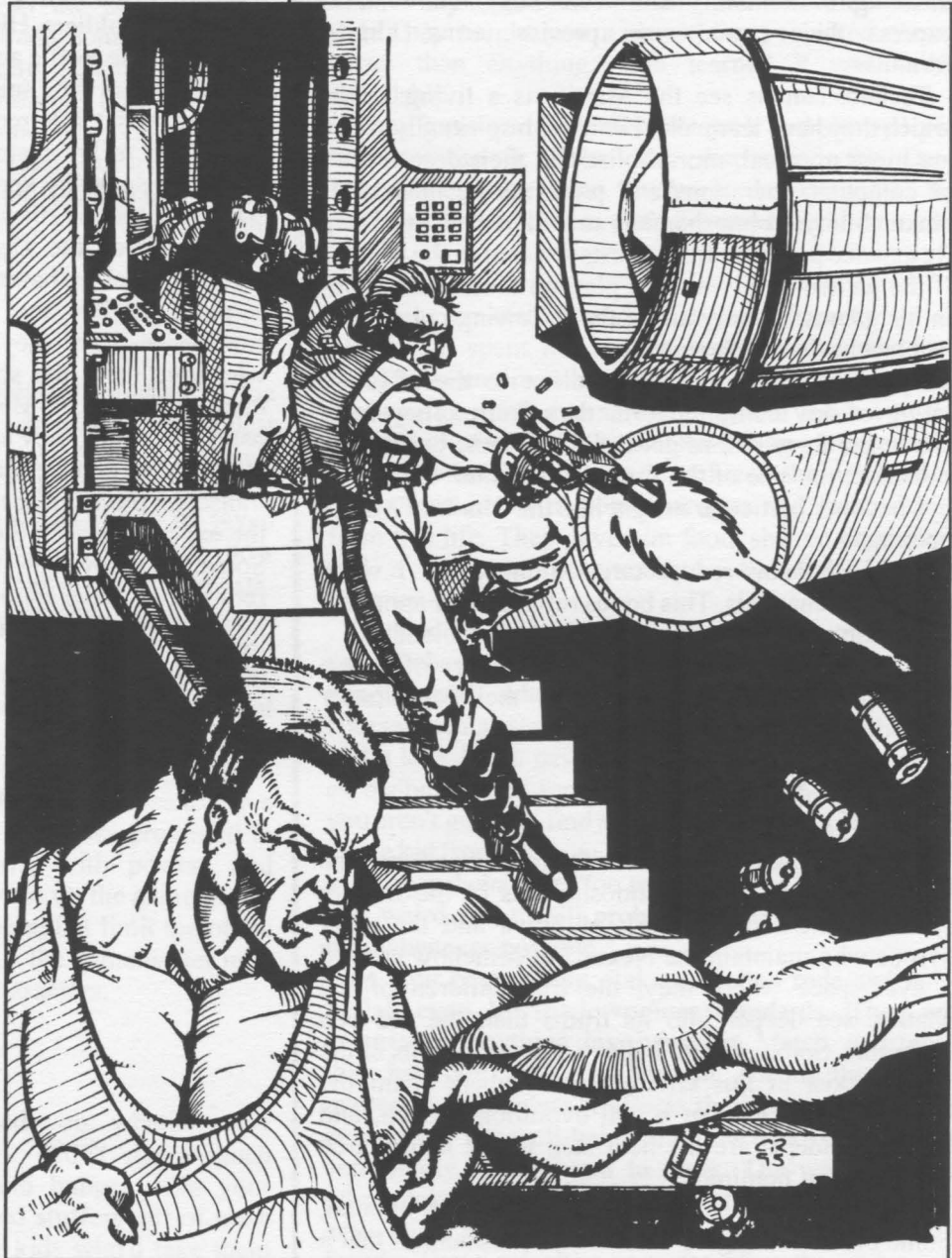
But, he is a chummer and he did save your hoops back a ways. You did say that you owed him...

Behind The Scenes

A friend/contact/fellow runner/former employer (further referred to as "Friend.") that once saved the runners butts is now calling in that favor the team members said they owed him. Friend contacts the runners via any means he has (phone, messenger, watcher spirit) and lets them know he needs to meet them soon so they can return a favor. He doesn't explain what the favor is, just that he needs to meet them in one of their favorite hangouts in three hours. He'll be waiting in the back room.

When the runners reach their place of partying, read the following...

"As usual, the place is jumping tonight. That's good, though. Quiet bars make you nervous. Besides, the less people that see you out and about suits you all the better.



"This meet had better be worth it. You wind your way through the crowd and pulsing screech-rock. You check pass the backroom bouncer with ease. The beefy ork gives you a slight grunt as he motions you back

to the private rooms. Walking to Room 3, you rap lightly. A raspy voice responds, "Come in."

Behind The Scenes

Friend is waiting in Room 3 for the team. Friend's voice is usually not so raspy, but he has good reason right now. Friend has been wounded, and he's not in good shape.

Friend is kind of hot right now. He was doing a solo run for a Mr. Johnson. It involved a "retrieval." Friend got the item in question (he won't say what it is, because he doesn't know), and hid it in his apartment.

While there, waiting for the right drop-off time, Friend's place was hit. Friend was barely able to get out alive, but had to leave the goods behind. He's positive that the goods are still there, as they are hidden quite well. They are stored in a small box in a double false floor in Friend's living room.

Friend needs the runners to go back to his doss, retrieve the goods, and drop them off by midnight, at a monorail station in Fort Lewis. Friend himself lives in the Kent neighborhood of Tacoma.

Friend needs this favor bad. The Johnson offered good nuyen to Friend, and he's willing to offer the runners a cut if they seem reluctant (hey, friendship only goes so far...). He offers a total of 3,000 nuyen for the team.

If the runners accept, Friend tells them the location of the monorail station and informs them that the goods need to be placed in locker #150.

Friend can tell the runners that one of the hit team members was either an Ork or Troll. One was also a magician of sorts. He is not sure how many were in the hit team, but he knows it was less than six.

FRIEND'S PLACE

Tell It To Them Straight

Friend's neighborhood isn't so bad. At least the people keep the streets free of wreckage. The night's nice weather has people out on their lawns and relaxing. Your given several strange glances and even some suspicious glares as you exit your vehicles and head into Friend's apartment building.

Punching in the passcode, you make your way into the building and to the second floor. Friend's apartment is at the end of the hall...

Behind The Scenes

This is where Friend lives. Friend's neighbors are pretty normal folk, but aren't too surprised by the characters appearance or manners.

Friend lives in apartment 202, and his place is utterly trashed. After the hit team failed to kill Friend, they trashed his doss hoping to find the goods. No luck. The goods are indeed still in the double false floor in the living room. The runners will have no trouble finding

the locked box.

No one is physically in the room, having left over an hour and a half ago. Astrally is a different matter, however. Two Force 3 Watcher spirits are present here. One functions as an Attack Dog to any astral intruders, while the other flees and alerts the mage of the hit team (see below).

If the runners wish to investigate Friend's apartment, they may make a Perception 10 test. A single success will reveal that the hit team consisted of approximately four (4) members. More successes will reveal that one of the members was indeed a Troll.

Watcher Force 3

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	23

Initiative: 23+1D6

Threat/Professional Rating: 1/4

This tiny little shark with an amazingly large dorsal fin will attack any and all astral intruders until destroyed.

THE MONORAIL STATION

Tell It To Them Straight

You didn't think there would be that many people at the station at this hour, but Seattle does not snooze, that's for sure. All the late shifters and homeless are wandering about. You check your paranoia but don't see anyone too out of the ordinary. The wall of lockers faces you as you rest against the telecom booth. Time to make the delivery...

Behind The Scenes

The monorail station is a simple layout. If the Sprawl Map is available, the gamemaster should use it. Otherwise, the gamemaster can use the map provided below.

Approximately twelve other bodies are milling about the station. (Meta)human traffic flows constantly in this station despite the late hour, although not as heavy as during the day. People get on and off trains, mill about, up and down the escalators (which are not working). The keyword is activity.

The runners are being watched. The hit team from Friend's apartment is here as well and waiting for the runners to drop off the goods. Once the characters make their move, the team will strike.

The hit team's primary goal is to retrieve the box and get away. They are not in for a sustained fight, and will act accordingly.

Hit Team

Use the following Archetypes and statistics for the Hit Team:

Barry Bonebuster (Troll) - Use Former Company Man Archetype (SRII, p. 55), but use the following stats:

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R
9	3(4)	8(9)	2	3	3	1.3	3(7)

Initiative: 7+3D6

Threat/Professional Rating: 3/3

Sheena (Human) - Use Bodyguard Archetype (SRII, p. 49)

Threat/Professional Rating: 3/2

Glip (Dwarf) - Use Dwarf Mercenary Archetype (SRII, p. 53)

Threat/Professional Rating: 3/3

Artain (Elven Mage)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R
3	6	3	7	6	6(10)	6	6

Armor: 4(10)/2

Initiative: 6+1D6 (3D6)

Threat/Professional Rating: 4/2

Gear: Defiance Super-Shock Taser w/3 extra magazines, Lined Coat, Spell Lock (Increase W +4), Spell Lock (Increase Ref +2), Spell Lock (Personal Bullet Barrier 6), Manipulation Spell Focus 2,

Skills: Sorcery 7, Firearms 4, Conjuring 5

Spells: Magic Fingers 4, Stun Bolt 6 (8), Personal Bullet Barrier 4*, Resist S Pain 3, Stunblast 5(7), Powerbolt 4 (6), Ice Sheet 3*, Invisibility 4, Mob Mind 4*, Increase W +4 2, Increase Reflexes +2 2.

Spells in paranthesis can be cast as exclusive. Spells with *'s are expendible fetish required, and so increase their effective force by 2. Artain has enough expendible fetishes for the spells. Artain also has cast Resist S Pain on himself.

Team Tactics

The team is already placed around the monorail station near the locker wall, stairways, and ticket booth. Artain is currently invisible and standing by a pillar near the locker wall. The target number for detecting Artain is 10. Artain also has the service of two more Force 3 Watchers. They are functioning as Attack Dogs. The spirits will immediately attack any astral intruders.

When the runners go to deposit the box, Artain will try and grab it with Magic Fingers. If unsuccessful, he will drop his Invisibility and Stun Bolt the depositing character. After that, the other team members will join the fray, trying more to disable the runners and get the box, than to outright kill them.

If the team does get the box, they will flee via the unworking escalators. Artain will discourage pursuit by casting Ice Sheets and Mob Minds.

What Else is Going On?

Once the action starts, the other occupants of the station will duck for cover. The three security guards (Corproarte Security Guard, SRII, p. 205) will press the PANICBUTTONS and try and keep the various station patrons safe. Only under extreme circumstances will they engage the runners or the hit team. Lone Star will show up in about 5 minutes once alerted.

Debugging

The Hit Team may well take the box from the runners, which will then lead on a merry chase. If this happens, the gamemaster will have to alter events so that the runners have a chance to catch up with the hit team and get the box back.

PICKING UP THE PIECES

Once this is all over, the runners debt to Friend is paid. Depending on how rough it went for the team, Friend may pay them once he gets paid. The runners are now free to finish whatever work they were on before. However, several plots could grow from this adventure:

Friend's Favor

If Friend didn't pay the runners much, he may feel that he now owes the team something. The team may call on Friend to return the favor, or Friend may show up at a critical time to save the runners hoops once again.

Johnson's Revenge

The target of Friend's run may not take too kindly to the runners actions, and attempt revenge on the characters. This may take the form of a simple hit to messing with the runners' personal life.

What's In The Box

No one knows, not even Friend. There may be powerful parties that are interested in what was in the box, and may hire the runners to find it once again and steal it. A more sinister twist may have these powerful individuals coming after the runners thinking they know what's inside the box.

KARMA

This is a pretty no-brainer of a run, but if the runners pull it off with few hitches and good role-playing, they can earn 2 Karma apiece.

Cop Gear

by Andrew Ragland

>>>>>[Okay, chummers, I hope you appreciate this. I went to a lot of trouble to scam this out of Lone Star's stack. I figured we oughta make it public what sort of gear the law enforcement vehicles are carrying. After all, they know everything about what we have available. Fair's fair and all that. Don't bother sending me thanks. Won't get to me. After this upload, I'm going to jack out and burn my MPCP chips. Already have a new set cooked, so I'll be back under a different icon with a new ID squawk.]<<<<<<

-- Crystal Viper <23:59:59/20-Oct-2056>

>>>>>[Won't help, scumbag. We can find you no matter how far you run, how well you think you're hiding. We're gonna make an example outta you. Nobody busts Lone Star's stack and gets away with it.]<<<<<<

-- Lt. Parris <01:15:13/21-Oct-2056>

>>>>>[Yeah, yeah. Been there, done that, got the fraggin' t-shirt. Oh, one more note, chummers: Possession of most of this stuff by private citizens is a Class C felony. Like that matters.]<<<<<<

-- Crystal Viper <01:16:22/21-Oct-2056>

Hardshell

This industrial-grade portable terminal has a constant link to the Police Matrix stack, plus 5000 Mp of onboard memory and receptacles for datachips (6 on the bike model, 10 on the car/van). The case is heavily armored and Envirosealed. The terminal is not of sufficient quality for decking, having keyboard and voice input only, and is hardlinked to the Cop stack, so all throughput is monitored by police syscops.

Standard: Van, Car, Bike

Cost: 7,000¥

Case rated Ballistic 6, Impact 5

Vehicle ID Scanner

Every vehicle that's registered with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) carries a SIN on its tag. The ID scanner reads the holographic decal on the license plate and links the embedded SIN to the cop vehicle's hardshell, bringing up the DMV record for the scanned vehicle. Mounted on a joystick or rig controlled swivel by the roof lights on a car or van, the scanner is mounted in a hand-held pistol grip shell with a pintle mount for a bike, usually sharing its housing with a speed gun. A slide selector on the side chooses function. Autotargeting locks onto the decal when the scanner is pointed at a vehicle. Only under extreme circumstances does the scanner fail to read.

>>>>>[This means that your ECM is only half as effective as normal, chummers. The scanner's not trying to put a round into you, just acquire your sticker. And it's optical, not electronic, so jamming won't help.]<<<<<<

Standard: Car, Bike, Van

Cost: Car/Van 1500¥, Bike 4000¥

The scanner has a Targeting Rating of 6. Target vehicles only get half their Signature and ECM to avoid the scanner. No targeting roll is required if both vehicles are parked.

Speed Gun

A combination doppler radar and doppler laser unit that can lock onto any vehicle within LOS, with an effective range of 1 km, the speed gun gives true groundspeed of the target vehicle. Movement of the cop vehicle is accounted for with a speedometer link. Mounted on a detachable dashboard swivel with a pistol grip in cars, the gun is mounted in a removable housing with a pistol grip and a pintle mount for bikes, sharing its housing with an ID Scanner.

>>>>>[These things are so fraggin' efficient because they use military targeting algorithms. Theoretically, if you could get the routines off the targeting chip, you could get the same effectiveness for your vehicular weaponry. Problem is, if you try to decompile the chip, it melts down. Literally. I had to replace my cooker.]<<<<<<

Standard: Car, Bike

Cost: Car 2000¥, Bike 4000¥

The scanner has a Targeting Rating of 6. Target vehicles only get half their Signature and ECM to avoid the scanner.

Silhouette Recognition System

A scanner head with 360 degree capability is mounted on the cop vehicle, next to the takedowns, that continuously selects vehicles from the surrounding area. Profiles of vehicles are run through comparison against known illegal vehicle modifications and vehicle types commonly associated with illegal activities. Silhouettes are stored on a datachip for fast access, with bimonthly updates of the database provided to licensed owners. When such vehicles are located, ID is read (if possible) and all available info is automatically displayed on the cop vehicle's hardshell. Data can be shunted to temp storage and the previous display restored with a keystroke, and vice

versa. An alarm can be sounded in the cop's earpiece receiver.

>>>>>[For those of you who don't speak the lingo, takedowns are the flashing lights on top of the cop car that the officer switches on when he wants to take somebody down, meaning bust them.]<<<<<

Standard: Van, Car (1-3), Bike (5-6)

Cost: 12,000¥ including scanner, datachip, software
Scan can be avoided on a Resisted test, Signature against a 9 for a van or car or 8 for a bike.

Chemical Olfactory Detection System (CODS)

Known more commonly as a dognose, the CODS is a handheld system that analyzes airborne substances. It can detect concentrations as low as 1 part per million, picking up traces of drugs, toxins and particulates too faint for even a trained narcotics dog. Mode is set with a touch-sensitive pad, with a confirm to avoid accidental mode changes. Modes include narcotics, toxins, industrial hazards and fire. Parts per million and substances detected are displayed in real-time, enabling the officer to sweep an area quickly to locate the strongest concentration of the detected substances.

>>>>>[How sensitive is this? Well, lemme put it this way. I once saw a cop catch a sniff of something illegal, whip out the scanner, and walk straight around the corner and down an alley right to where some hapless chummer was smoking a joint. Chummer ate the butt to keep from getting busted, but that didn't do him any good - he got busted for having the stuff on his hands and clothes. Scanner records proved he'd smoked the stuff and away he went.]<<<<<

Cost: 5,000¥

Standard On: SWAT weapons, hand-held units for foot patrol, vehicle mounts as ID Scanner. This is a rating 10 chemical detector. Use the standard rules for detection of substance traces.

Portable Magnetic Anomaly Detector (P-MAD)

The P-MAD does for ferrous metal what the dognose does for chemicals, providing a real-time readout of concentration of iron, direction and distance in a handheld unit. The P-MAD is most often used as a cyberware detector. Even the most advanced optical chip systems still use iron-laced steel components in the connectors and structural framing. With a P-MAD, the officer can easily obtain a readout of potential cyberware and hidden weaponry from a safe distance. More advanced models can run the iron concentration patterns through a database on chip and provide a best-guess diagram of probable cyber configuration.

>>>>>[Sit up and take notice here, folks. The military arms people, like Ares, have been building smart rifles with P-MADs and dognoses and the like integral with the smart sights for a while now. These weapons have found their way into the hands of Lone Star, among other law enforcement agencies. That SWAT trooper may be able to get a complete picture of what you're carrying, both internal and external, through the sight on his rifle, or through his vidlink if he's got one. As a rule of thumb, if a cop points something bigger than a pistol at you, assume that he knows what you have. And that last line should be taken seriously. The database is only as good as its last revision date, but to get the manufacturing permits, the chrome makers have to file MAD signatures with the LE boys.]<<<<<

Cost: 8,000¥ for basic, 13,500¥ for signature analysis version

Standard on: SWAT weapons, handheld unit for foot patrol, vehicle mount as ID Scanner. This is a rating 10 MAD scanner. Use 8 minus the cyberware's Essence impact as the target number for detection, modified by standard targeting adjustments. For weapons, halve their Concealability for detection rolls.

Reactive Restraints

Strong enough to hold an angry troll, these four-point restraints have an added bonus. Tungsten steel braided cables encased in the restraining rods link through a pulley system to provide counterbalancing tension. What this means is that the harder the restrainee pulls, the harder the restraints pull back, using the perp's own strength against him to keep him immobilized. Once this system is locked into place, the most wired-up go-ganger on combat jack can be handled like a suitcase, tossed into the back seat of your transport with no fear of his getting loose at an inconvenient moment.

>>>>>[These suckers are flat-out nasty. You can wear yourself out trying to break loose, and never move a centimeter.]<<<<<

Cost: 2500¥ per set for human sized, 4000¥ for ork/troll

Standard on: Riot control units, tactical response units, the occasional patrol officer who works a bad neighborhood. The lower the law level, the more likely the officer will have a set in his vehicle.

To break out of reactive restraints takes a Resisted roll pitting STR against a 12. Every success the restraints make over the character's is taken as a box of mental damage to represent fatigue.

CRIMSON AVENGER

by Andrew Ragland

The original designer's name is lost, which is a crying shame, let me tell you. Whoever built this smart frame did an elegant piece of work. The Crimson Avenger is one of the nastiest assassin free frames I've ever seen. Just give it an icon and an ID squirt and let it run. The Avenger will hunt down the target and take care of your problems for you.

When the target jacks in, if the node he's in can handle a load of 12 or more, the standard Matrix interface is replaced with a sculptured environment.

mugs and eating with knives and fingers. The target decker is standing at one end of a stained and knife-gouged bar. At the other end is a tall, thin man in Cavalier garb: silk shirt with frothy lace at the throat and cuffs, slashed doublet, tight pants with an ornate codpiece, high boots and a plumed hat. He has a mustache waxed out 6 cm on either side in an elegant curl. His shirt is white, boots black and all other clothing is deep red. There's an efficient looking sword with a very plain wire-wrapped hilt at his hip. Give this

SHADOWLAND



ACCESS: CRIMSON AVENGER (21:55:09/12-01-56)

The hapless decker finds himself in a tavern straight out of The Three Musketeers, with plaster walls, exposed beams, a smoky fireplace with a large stone hearth, and a cute wench in a low-cut blouse tending the cooking.

Wooden trestle tables are scattered about with a few uncouth-looking patrons swilling beer from ceramic

frame an extra five points for style right off.

If the node cannot support the sculpted environment, a wireframe of the bar itself is generated, and all other environmental trappings are discarded. The Avenger's icon, however, will retain its sculpted appearance. After all, it's just an icon, no matter how fancy, and that's included in the total load for the frame.

"We seem to have a difference of opinion," the Cavalier says to the decker in a soft French accent. "You prefer yourself alive, while I prefer you dead. Shall we discuss this?" He waves a hand at the door.

If the decker resorts to tortoisening before he meets the Avenger, he starts receiving e-mail inviting him to a local LTG# "to discuss a matter of grave interest." If the decker uses a tortoise after meeting the Avenger or for the meet at the LTG, in the hopes of avoiding trouble, further messages express disappointment with his behavior. Outright accusations of cowardice are never made, but the Avenger is frugging clever with innuendo and double entendre. As well, the Avenger will interfere with the decker's online activities, following him around, deliberately setting off IC and generally being a pain. Eventually, you have to deal with the Avenger.

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If the decker jacks out at this point, that's okay. The next time she jacks in, the guy in red is standing a little closer, and continues the discussion as if there had been no interruption. Eventually, the decker has to take on the Cavalier. See later on for what happens if you try to dodge this sucker.

If the decker chooses to parley, the Avenger explains that the decker has offended someone highly placed, committed a great crime against this person. "M'sieur, if you do not know whom you have offended, I weep for you, but your ignorance will not stay my hand." The Cavalier's speech remains calm, polite and elegant, perhaps a bit flowery, but not Elvish. There's no "thou" and "hast", although the double entendres can get nasty. The Avenger is willing to talk for quite a while, but there's no way to argue him out of his intention to boot your hoop. Only a duel can assuage the insult to the honor of the Cavalier's patron.

When the two step outside (or if the environment is not sculpted, when the decker agrees to fight), both end up in a backwater node of the system, a low-security datastore or the like. The Avenger draws its sword, gives the decker a fair chance to load his Attack utility, then the fight is on. The Avenger will yield if mortally wounded, and will accept surrender on the decker's part. The code duello is part of the Avenger's programming. If you think you've got an enemy who can afford this puppy, learn the code. It's available from most any European infosource, although the Avenger seems to prefer the Heidelberg rules.

Mechanics:

Program	Rating	Mp
Armor	4	48
Mirrors	5	75
Cloak	4	48
Analyze	5	75
Scanner	5	75
Attack	8	128
Shield	4	64
Relocate	4	32
Sleaze	7	147
Auto Exec	6	36

Totals	
Mp	728
Base Load	7.28
Frame Load	8.01
Smart Load	9.61

Use the standard Matrix Combat rules to resolve the fight.

The Avenger will back off and stand ready in a defensive posture if the decker says "Yield" or anything like it. Attacking after yielding breaks the code duello, and the Avenger then fights to kill with no quarter given.

After taking a Serious or building up to one, the Avenger will try once to yield. If the decker accepts the frame's surrender, it leaves, goes back to its boss and reports a failure. If the Avenger's surrender is not accepted, it fights to disengage and tries to bolt. The frame will return after it's had a Restore run on it, and will give no quarter on the return engagement, attacking on sight and fighting dirty. Extra copies may be generated, at the discretion of the decker running the frame, resulting in a dishonorable decker facing a squad of Avengers on the return.

THE GENERAL STORE

by Andrew Ragland

>>>>>[Hello. No, I'm not IC, or a syscop. Put down that cheap Attack program. I'm almost insulted you thought it would be effective.

Who am I? Let's start with who you are. No, don't bother with handles. I'll give you one. Clueless. You have potential, but no idea how to handle yourself in the Net. Take that trace program over there, sniffing at your feet. Didn't notice it, did you? Let me help.

There, much better. Now we can talk in private. Let me guess, you've been hanging out on Shadowland for a while, traded some low-level paydata for some cheap warez, picked up an Attack, a Browse and a Sleaze and thought you were ready to take on Renraku. Clueless, you need to have your eyes opened. Follow me. Where are we going? Someplace you can get some real utilities.

Here we are. Tricky route, eh? That's to sort out the real from the lame. Don't mind the dog, he won't bite -- as long as you stay close to me. If the Rose likes you, she'll make you a friend, so Montana won't take your jack off if you come here alone.

Festus! How have you been? Yes, I've brought another fledgling. Show him the stock. I need to talk to the Rose.

Stay chill, Clueless. I'll be back shortly. Ogle the shelves, be polite to Festus and don't try to leave without me. Jacking out would be impolite.]<<<<<

Welcome to the General Store, a sort of mini-Shadowland, owned and operated by the Neon Rose, a semi-legendary semi-retired decker. More peripatetic than Shadowland, decking into the General Store

requires a lead from a previous customer and a Decking Etiquette test against a 10 for new customers. Repeat visits require a Computer (Decking) roll against an 8, or a Decking Etiquette against a 9. The Rose uses more extenders than your favorite soyburger, and is never in the same node twice.

The General Store environment is a virtual store done in an Old West theme, complete with squeaky board sidewalk, cluttered shelves, an old-fashioned brass register, a large hound dog asleep by the door and a grizzled proprietor.

Festus' icon is a grizzled old cowboy in a red gingham shirt and worn but well-kept jeans, who walks with a limp. He addresses the Rose as Marshal Rose. Festus is a smart frame capable of a great deal of independent action. He handles the store, selling copies of the Rose's unique utilities. Don't be fooled; the limp is for character only and does not affect his combat capabilities. The Rose recompiles him every now and then to upgrade his capabilities, so the same trick never works twice. Anyone who starts a fight with Festus will not be able to deck back into the General Store again. Not with the same MPCP chips in their deck, anyway.

The Neon Rose herself is a decker who's been around for quite a while; not since Echo Mirage, but a long time. Her icon is a slender

Chicano woman in Western garb: green blouse, faded and dusty jeans, tooled boots, black leather vest with fringe and silver medallions, black leather gunbelt with silver fittings, and wide-brimmed flat-crowned black leather hat with a silver hatband. Carrying the Western motif the logical next step, her Attack program is a massive Colt sixgun. Her Analyze program is a coal-oil



railroad lantern that turns from red to green when it lights on payday. She runs a modified Fairlight Excalibur with a tandem-mounted Fuchi Cyber-6 that carries Festus. She's semi-retired at this point, and makes most of her money from the General Store, taking only those runs which offer enough challenge and loot to make it really worth the effort. She's recently introduced a whole line of dumb and smart frames that can do a lot of the work for deckers who can afford them. Watch out for her Attack smartframe, a hound dog named Montana.

The Rose has a cover identity as a cat breeder. She raises kittens for familiars for hermetic mages.

About the Inventory

A. In Stock: Software

IC DISASSEMBLY:

The Neon Rose has written a trilogy of utilities for dealing with IC that, in their own way, are better than simply suppressing it and leaving it to be found by a system sweep. Their drawback, of course, is that they take time to run, time which the decker may or may not have. A truly hot decker, on the other hand, can reduce the time by application of his skills. It's all a matter of how much time and effort you want to invest in the stack penetration.

Pack It:

Used to prepare suppressed IC for download. When run, two large gorillas in coveralls and carrying crowbars appear, and pack the suppressed IC up in a large wooden crate. The IC can now be downloaded and removed entirely from the system, so that it no longer has to be suppressed. Of course, this leaves a hole in the system that the CPU is bound to notice. Pack It can only pack and download IC of equal or lesser ratings.

ICD 1010

Mem: 3R2 Mp

Designer: Neon Rose

Yo Boss:

A utility that is uploaded into the target stack by the decker and run on their equipment, Yo Boss is a reporting module that responds to CPU sweeps with a Situation Normal report. Yo Boss comes with mimicry capabilities for the standard IC, such as the Good Times Barrier. Bear in mind that if the system is using custom IC, proprietary reporting protocols or passcode reporting, this utility will not be effective. Yo Boss can have the reporting module from the IC it's replacing installed prior to uploading into the target stack. This requires The OR or a similar disassembler/recompiler utility. The substitution will be noticeable on direct inspection of the node by a decker hound unless the IC's icon is also implanted. One round is required for any module to be compiled into Yo Boss. See The OR for details.

ICD 1020

Mem: 2R2 + 0.25R of IC that it's replacing.

Designer: Neon Rose

The OR:

A decompiler / disassembler environment that provides dissection and analyzation tools online, The OR allows the decker to dissect IC that has been suppressed, packed and downloaded. Make a Resisted Success Test, the OR rating plus dice from the Hacking Pool against the IC's rating, to extract any module. Modules normally extracted are Reporting, which responds to system inquiries; Icon, the Matrix visualization of the IC; and Passcodes, found only in mobile IC. This last module is an auto-request subroutine that notifies the system that the IC is moving to a new node and requests a single-use passcode for this move. It cannot be used manually by deckers, but can be compiled into smart frames. Dissection and removal of a module requires the IC's rating in turns, reduced by 1 for every unresisted success.

Example: Blaster 6 IC is defeated, packed and downloaded. The OR rating is 5. The decker's hacking pool is 4. The decker keeps one die out for safety precautions, and rolls 8d against a 6. The decker gets 3 successes. The IC resists, 6d against an 8, and gets 1 success. Dissection and removal of the targeted module will take 6 (the IC's Rating) minus 2 (the unresisted successes), for a total of 4 rounds. Each module's removal must be rolled for separately. Bear in mind that The OR, Pack It and a copy of Yo Boss must all be loaded to make this work. Hope your deck has lots of Active Memory and you don't have to close to Effective Range while working. For one thing, you're now a fat deck with a big load. For another, operations that are interrupted normally trash the IC. If you have to defend against mobile IC that walked in on you, the patient dies on the table.

The OR can also be used to install your own private backdoor passcodes. You must decompile the IC, using the same Resisted Test as module removal. A Computer Skill Test, Resisted vs the IC Rating, is made to install a new passcode in the IC. The IC is then recompiled, taking the same time it took to decompile. Hence: IC is Killer-6. OR is Rating 5. Hacking Pool has 6 dice. Computer Skill is 6. Decompile the IC: OR Rating plus Hacking Pool equals 11 dice vs. a target of 6; 4 successes are rolled. The IC resists, 6 dice against a target of 11, and rolls no successes. The decompile will take 6 rounds minus 4 successes for a total of 2 rounds. Install the passcode: 6 dice vs. 6, 2 successes rolled. The IC resists, 6 dice vs. 6, and rolls 1 success. The passcode is successfully installed. Recompile: 2 rounds, equal to decompile time. Repack, upload and unpack the IC: 3 rounds. The entire process, not counting the time it took to defeat and suppress the IC initially, takes 11 rounds. A long time, yes, but if you can pull it off...

ICD 1110

Mem: 3R2

Cost: +20% over normal utility cost

Note:

It is possible to extract the Reporting module, plug it into a copy of Yo Boss, then upload the Yo Boss to cover further work. The decker could then remove the Icon module, download Yo Boss, install the Icon, and re-upload Yo Boss. This is tedious, but it cuts down on the chance of being spotted doing all this work.

Bonzo's Monkeys

Bonzo is a decker who works both sides of the street, designing both IC and anti-IC utilities. His Monkeys are both hated and respected by both deckers and corps.

See No Evil:

A small chimp leaps onto the back of the IC and clasps its hands over the IC's eyes. Blind-4, degrades 1 per turn.

Mem: 48 Rating: 4

MKY 1010 Price: 9,600

Designer: Bonzo

Hear No Evil:

A small chimp leaps onto the back of the IC and clasps its hands over the IC's ears (or approximate location). Slow-4, degrades 1 per turn.

Mem: 64 Rating: 4

MKY 1020 Price: 12,800

Designer: Bonzo

Speak No Evil:

Using the Neon Rose algorithm, a small chimp leaps onto the back of the IC and clasps its hands over the IC's mouth (or approximate location), and invokes Suppress-4. This suppresses 4 rating points of IC. The utility degrades 1 per turn. When its rating drops below that of the IC, it stops suppressing.

Mem: 48 Rating: 4

MKY 1030 Price: 9,600

Designer: Bonzo

Special:

When the above monkeys are used together, they degrade on alternate turns. For example, if See No Evil is invoked on turn 1, then Hear No Evil is invoked on Turn 2, See does not degrade on Turn 2. If Speak No Evil is called on Turn 3, none of the monkeys degrade that turn. See No Evil will degrade then on Turn 4, Hear No Evil on Turn 5, Speak No Evil on Turn 6, etc..

B. Catalog Orders: Hardware

Egg Timer:

The egg timer monitors the decker's EEG and cuts the power to the deck if the readings stray too far from baseline. Mods to the datajack cost 10,000Y and .1 Essence, and require a Resisted Success test of the Doc's Biotech or Surgery Skill against (10-Essence) to implant the internal EEG leads. Hardware installed in

the deck requires an Electronics B/R roll against a 6 to hook up properly. The egg timer has a max rating of $\frac{1}{2}$ the deck's MPCP, and requires R*24 hours to install. Cost for the egg timer is R*10,000Y.

When the decker encounters Black IC, the egg timer helps protect the decker. Each time the IC hits the decker, the egg timer makes a Resisted Success Test of its rating against the Black IC's rating to shut down the deck and jack out the decker before any damage occurs. Usual rules about being dumped out of the Matrix apply, and of course any processes such as downloading are interrupted.

Cost: R*10,000



Impact Gel:

Ever have your hardened deck case bounce a slug only to find out some vital connection was jarred loose inside -- the hard way? Like the line surge suppressor that's a vital part of your Hardening? I-Gel is a nonelectroconductive colloid that fills the airspace inside the deck case and absorbs shocks that could knock loose or damage delicate components. Put two

small holes in your deck case, one on either end. Mix the two solutions together and inject the resultant goop into the case. When the stuff quits oozing out both the holes, seal the holes. It's that simple. The deck is now physically hardened, getting a Rating of 3 to resist physical shock damage. On an hour's exposure to dry air, the I-Gel dries to a fine, non-adhesive powder that can be blown off with compressed air. Be sure to use a drier on your air compressor, though; you don't want to get the I-Gel moist again.

Cost: 2750¥ for one kit, does one deck.

Military Cases:

Genuine military surplus deck cases, don't ask us where we got'em and we won't ask questions about where you got the nuyen. High-impact protection like the real pros use.

Case	Impact Ballistic		Cost
Level 4	5	4	10,000¥
Level 5	6	5	25,000¥
Level 6	7	6	50,000¥

The Magazine Rack

A. Nasty As They Wanna Be: New IC

Vicious Attack Poodle:

A 3 stage construct that becomes steadily more obnoxious the longer the decker sticks around, this IC initially manifests as a small white poodle with large red bows on its ears that bounces around frantically, yipping at the top of its lungs. In the next round, if the decker does not succeed in eliminating the IC, the poodle pees on his leg. In the third round, if the IC is not eliminated or suppressed, the poodle bites the decker on the ankle and refuses to let go. The IC breakdown is as follows:

- Round 1 Reveal-5
- Round 2 Marker-5
- Round 3 Binder-5, Blaster-5

Load: 19 Rating: 5
VAP 2175 Price: 365,000¥
Designer: Henry the Head

Monkey On Your Back 1.0:

The original mean monkey, still in use in some systems. A chimp leaps onto the decker's back and beats him over the head with a banana, invoking Killer-5.

Load: 5 Rating: 5M
MKY 2010 Price: 10,000¥
Designer: Bonzo

Monkey On Your Back 2.0:

A substantially more obnoxious version, similar to Vicious Attack Poodle in that it's a three-stage IC. The difference is that all 3 stages can invoke simultaneously, based on the IC's evaluation of the intrusion threat. This is Expert IC of rating 1. Monkey

2.0a has only the first stage; Monkey 2.0b has stages 1 and 2; and Monkey 2.0c has all three stages. Stage 1 is Jammer. The chimp puts its hands over the decker's eyes. Stage 2 is Marker. The chimp hoots frantically. Stage 3 is Blaster. The chimp beats the decker over the head with a banana. Note that if the Blaster stage is invoked, the other two stages are also.

Load Table by Rating

Monkey	4	5	6	7	8	9
a	3	4	5	6	7	8
b	6	8	10	12	14	16
c	11	14	18	21	25	28

B. Shoot These People: New Virus Releases

Uncle Leo's Payday:

This altered version of the famous utility works the same as the regular version of Uncle Leo with an exception. Every time it's run, it takes 20¥ out of the decker's personal account and deposits it in one of 50 drop-box accounts at random. These drop-boxes are harvested randomly by a smart frame that will be difficult (Target of 8, 3 or more successes) to trace. Velvet Underground, the decker who created this setup, is really fragging clever and will be hard to catch. If found, he will express respect for the decker, and offer a military icebreaker (Attack-10) as recompense. The icebreaker is genuine, but will degrade one rating point each time it is used. The code is loaded on a non-copyable chip (treat as a Red datastore with Scramble-8).

Rose Colored Glasses

by Phillip T. Adams

Tuesday.....
December 12, 2054.....
Seattle.....

Rain. Cold steel rain. Screaming out of the sky like the angry hand of an avenging god. Scouring towers of glass and steel in acidic waves. The rain was constant, part of the city's cycle.

A solitary watcher stared as the rain washed down out of the boiling sky. A prisoner of his own melancholy. Seventeen floors below, the street, a smear of washed-out neon, seemed surreal. Home to the shuffling masses, wrapped in acid-resistant neo-cosmopolitan rain wear, as they droned through the predestination of their lives like insects.

As the rain rolled over the city, fragments of memory flashed through his mind like a razor. They were gone now. Not the memories, they still burned. But those who haunted them were gone. Nothing left but shadows in his mind. Jason was gone. Dead. And she was gone. Nothing but memories remained, like smoke on the water.

* * *

"What do you see?"

"What?" he had seen him come in. His reflection in the glass.

"I said," he could see the reflection watching him, "what do you see?"

"Nothing."

"I see," the reflection hesitated, "shall we begin?"

"Yes."

"Very well, Mr. Hallis," the reflection gestured, "please sit down."

He settled slowly into the thick synth-leather chair. Across the desk, the reflection, a Lone Star head shrinker thumbed through a plain folder.

"Detective Sergeant Jordan Hallis," he began, "assigned to the..."

"Why am I here?" he interrupted.

"To determine if you're fit enough to complete your assignment."

"To see if I'm sane."

"We all have our own peculiarities, Sergeant."

"I don't want the assignment."

"According to your file you have two years remaining on your contract. I'm sure you are aware that clause 270-3B states that you can be assigned according to the needs of the company."

"Yes."

"I thought so. Now, may we please continue." No reply. The shrink adjusted his glasses and shuffled the contents of the file. Jordan Hallis was a killer after all.

"You performed admirably at the academy, Mr. Hallis," the shrink began after the papers settled in the dossier. "Top of your class. Assigned to a vice unit in the Barrens after completing a six month probation period. Again high marks. Requested reassignment to central precinct C-Tac. Why C-Tac, Sergeant? Do you find the violence appealing?"

"No."

"Then why? It's a dangerous assignment."

"To stop it from happening again."

"To stop what from happening, Sergeant?"

"People like her, getting hurt, by psychos."

"Her, Sergeant?"

"A woman I knew." The shrink watched him carefully now. His glasses slipping down the bridge of his nose.

"What was her name?"

"Dane."

"Just Dane?"

"Media stunt. She was a model."

"I see. Where did you meet?"

"A party."

"A party, that's peculiar."

"Why?"

"I think, Segeant," the shrink adjusted his glasses after a pause, "that this would be more productive if I asked the questions. Now, tell me about Ms. Dane and this party."

"Protection detail out of the 13th precinct."

"Now I understand, please continue."

"Promotional event pushing a new line. Lot's of bio-sculpted types, simsense stars, models. Real party crowd."

"And who were you there to protect?"



"All of them."
 "From who, crazies, gangers?"
 "No."
 "From who then?"
 "From each other."
 "Ah, I see. Please go on, Sergeant." No reply. The shrink waited, scribbled in the file and looked up.
 "How did you meet Ms. Dane, Sergeant?"
 "She met me."
 "How so."
 "Said she liked my eyes."
 "Your eyes," the shrink regarded Hallis, whose watery steel-grey eyes were more intent on the dark recesses of the room than their conversation, "what do you mean?"
 "Asked if they were real or Jiko."
 "And then what?"
 "We talked."
 "About what?"
 "Lots of things."
 "Sergeant, it would be to your benefit to answer my questions more fully. What did you talk about?"
 "The Barrens."
 "She was fascinated by this?"
 "Yes."
 "Did she like to sprawl, Sergeant?"
 "Yes."
 "What do you think drew her to you?"
 "She said I was trying to change the world. Not seeing things for what they are."
 "Through rose colored glasses?"
 "Yes."
 "Are you?"
 "What?"
 "Trying to change the world, Sergeant."
 "No."
 "But you were."
 "I suppose."
 "And now?" No reply. Hallis shifted slightly in the chair and stared. Silence hung in the room like a pallor. The only sound was the tattooed thrum of the rain on the windows and the shrink's breathing. "You became lovers?" No reply. "What happened to her?"
 "She's dead."
 "How did she die, Sergeant?"
 "Killed by gangers."
 "Sprawling?"
 "Yes."
 "Did you try to stop her?"
 "Yes."
 "So you requested a reassignment to C-Tac?"
 "Yes."
 "To kill the gangers that killed Ms. Dane?"
 "No."
 "Why then?"
 "To stop them."
 "From killing anyone else?"
 "Yes."

"Your record shows 13 neutralizations and only six arrests over the course of the last year." No reply. "Did you enjoy killing them, Sergeant?" The shrink never saw him move. He was just there. Leaning over him. Screaming through clenched teeth.

"I was authorized! Extreme prejudice on all nineteen! I brought six in alive! The others wouldn't stop! Not until they were dead! They were like machines. They wanted to die!"

"So you killed them?"

"Yes!"

"To stop them?"

"Yes!"

"From hurting anyone else."

"Yes!"

"Because you had to."

"Yes." Hallis slumped back into the chair. His voice weary.

"Because it was your duty?"

"Yes."

"And do you ever dream, Sergeant?"

"Yes."

"About Dane?"

"Yes."

"About the killing?"

"Yes."

"And do you wake up screaming?"

"Yes!" He was screaming now, again. The Lone Star head shrinker leaned back in his chair.

"I'm recommending that you're fully capable of carrying out your assignment, Sergeant."

"I don't want the assignment!"

"I know. That's why it has to be you."

* * *

The staccato bark of a heavy pistol and the acrid stench of gunpowder shattered the solitude of the firing range. The Predator coughed again and again, barely moving from the considerable recoil. Held steady by the newly grafted muscles of the shooter's forearm and wrist. Round after round punched through the target ten meters downrange with frightening accuracy. Two more to the silhouette's chest and then head. It was easy, almost too easy. Efficient. Like a machine. He had been called killer before, when he was just meat. Now what? What was he now?

In the palpable silence following the big gun's last report the shooter heard a footfall. Whirling, almost faster than the eye could follow, he spun dropping into a crouch. Fingering the smartgun's trigger a crosshair sprang to life in the periphery of his vision sweeping around following the gun's arc, coming to rest on the forehead of a figure leaning against the wall in the shadows.

"A little late for target practice don't you think, Sergeant?" the man said coolly stepping from the darkened recesses near the door. He was well made,

wearing an expensive suit and a dark trenchcoat. His olive skin and slick black hair were momentarily illuminated when he struck a match on the wall, next to the NO SMOKING sign, and lit up.

"Lt. Anthony Mancini, Covert Operations," he paused coming forward a step and extending his hand, "call me Tony."

The shooter rose slowly, like a panther from a crouch. The crosshair flickered from life on the internal surface of his optics as he took his finger off the Predator's trigger. The shooter lowered the gun, but didn't extend his hand. Mancini stuck his hand back in his pocket and hauled on the cigarette. He eyed the shooter up and down.

"How are you feeling?" he asked casually with no real edge of concern in his voice. The shooter just looked at him, as if he didn't understand or it didn't matter. "The implants, the grafts, the wiring, all functioning normally?" The shooter nodded.

"Good. The cosmetics are top of the line. Your own mother wouldn't recognize you." Mancini took a long drag on the cigarette and then crushed it out. Reaching slowly under his coat he removed a hard copy file and handed it over. "Standard departmental precis. Look it over at your leisure. The target's," Mancini paused as the shooter slowly looked downrange at the well ventilated silhouette, "ah... the subject's name is Akiko Torii. Her father was a zaibatsu, out of the Raku mother office in Tokyo. Nipponjin. Privileged life. The whole bit. Then daddy disappeared and the Red Samurai got it into their heads that he had or was going to jump. Well, there are rumors, but let's just say the girl and her big brother slipped through the cracks and vanished."

"Where?" the shooter asked fixedly staring at the precis' picture of a fresh faced twelve year old looking much too serious in an expensive private school uniform.

"Unknown," Mancini paused, "until recently that is."
"Why her."

"Remember the Raku bombing last month?" he asked. The shooter nodded. She didn't look much like a terrorist, but then things and people change. "The Apostles of the Apocalypse claimed responsibility. They're radical anarchists. Garden variety malcontents, lunatics and social deviants. Violent and pissed off. You know the type."

"So."

"Well," Mancini paused to light another cigarette, "the word on the street is that this particular gang has a leader. A dangerous leader. Called Solomon Kane. People listen to him. Even worse they believe in him. The word in the gutter is that their calling him a messiah. You know, the salvation of the oppressed. Down with the corps. Society cleansed by the fires of change. Up with the dispossessed. That kind of drek."

"And."

"And," Mancini combed back his hair with his

fingers and took another drag, "Ms. Torii has been connected with a number of the scum that run with the AOA and she is arriving in Seattle tomorrow."

"So, pick her up."

"And what? Have her head plumbed by one of our wagemage brain pickers," Mancini continued.

"Why not?"

"I'm hoping that she can lead us to Kane. But, I'm afraid she might not know where he is yet. The goons in the AOA are crazy, but they ain't stupid. If we get too close to Torii, we won't get anywhere near Kane. Too loose and she slips us. Back to square one. You follow?"

"What do you want from me?"

"Get close to her. If you can't actually get to see Kane try to plant this on her," Mancini removed something from his pocket, glittering silver and gold. "It's a locator, but it won't transmit until it's remotely activated. So it's harder to detect."

"How?"

"I've got that all worked out, Sergeant. Trust me. I've got it all worked out." Mancini set the locator down on the range table.

"Why me?"

"Because the company needs someone they can count on," he held the shooter's eye levelly, "someone who can handle whatever comes up."

"Why the metal?"

"These are crazies, Sergeant. Who knows what the hell will happen once you get out there. No back-up on this one. I thought you could use every advantage you could get."

"When it's over?"

"I've got a nice quiet cell reserved for Kane at the Metroplex prison." Mancini punctuated his point by flicking his cigarette to the floor and crushing it with an expensive shoe.

"The girl?"

"She'll do some light time and then be relocated."

"And me?"

"Don't think the company takes this one lightly, Sergeant. We know what kind of a sacrifice you've made already and what you're getting into. You'll get your choice of assignment and maybe, if I have anything to say about it, a promotion."

"Sure," he said absently, seemingly transfixed by the locator now dangling from his hand on it's silver chain.

"Trust me on this. The company will take care of everything."

* * *

At a glance, odds are, no one would recognize Ms. Akiko Torii. Unless they were looking very closely. Which Jordan Hallis was. If not for the girl's classical nipponjin features, which were partially hidden under stylized face paint and pink round wire framed shades, she could pass for an amerindian. Braided hair, a

fringed charm festooned leather jacket and a worn carrybag completed the look. She hustled off the Falcon Express bus with the rest of the passengers and anonymously melted into the crowded confines of the King Street Station.

Hallis crushed the photo he had brought with him, dumped it in the trash, and followed. He laid back and played it loose, even though she seemed oblivious to her surroundings. As she exited the busy station, it became apparent to Hallis that her surroundings weren't oblivious to her. He had made the Halloweeners on the way in. A big skin-head and one with a wild black mane and a nose-ring roughing up a cheap trideo game in the corner that didn't seem to be letting them win. A sharp elbow from nose-ring and the skin-head abandoned the game with a stout kick for good measure. With little effort to hide themselves they began to follow Torii.

It was rush hour and the streets were clogged with electric cars and busses. Wageslaves, battling their way home after another day of the corporate grind, fared little better on the sidewalks. With two busses having discharged their human cargo in the station the crush was on in the street outside. Torii won free of the crowd and began walking down the street with the rest of the rush hour masses. She seemed more interested in the towering buildings around her and the shops than in her fellow pedestrians. The Halloweeners began to close having impolitely bashed their way through the crowd in front of the station. Hallis was tall and well made to begin with, now that the departmental hacks had added another 15 kilos of pure grafted muscle he topped out around 115 kg, and had no arguments from the crowd as he forced his way out of the crush of people.

Were the gangers a coincidence, just looking to toss some unsuspecting tourist, or Mancini's idea of a way to establish contact. The Halloweeners, chains, spikes and black and orange leather from head to toe, closed on the girl. Either way it was showtime.

Score one for the girl, at least she wasn't totally out

of it. She spotted the gangers as they closed and made a run for it. But one of them, the one with the nose-ring, must have been wired and he was on her in a heartbeat. Hallis broke into a run as the Halloweener grabbed the girl by the arm. He hooked the closing skin-head's leg as he went by sending him crashing to the pavement with a startled grunt. As the crowd began to scatter, nose-ring made Hallis and slapped the girl to the ground knocking off her glasses. He came in fast and low. Faster than Jordan Hallis used to be. Not anymore. Faster than the eye could follow he pivoted, grabbed the ganger's jacket as he overextended, and crushed his nose and teeth with a palm strike. Nose-ring went down choking on his own blood and mucus.



By now the skin-head was back on his feet and from all appearances pretty pissed. He came at Hallis, in what seemed like slow motion, putting all of his considerable weight behind his Sunday punch. Hallis ducked grabbing the Halloweener's arm and shoulder as he stumbled past. He twisted the ganger's arm, intending to bring him down. Which he did. Hallis looked down in shock as the big Halloweener gasped in pain clutching his mangled arm. The big bone of his arm glistened white and ragged where it tore through the ganger's skin.

Hallis gaped as the skin-head groaned and slumped to the pavement succumbing to shock. If the Halloweeners had been sent by Mancini, by way of untraceable connections, they were just pawns. Hallis had just wanted to drive them off and make his connection with the girl. Now they were both lying unconscious, bleeding and badly hurt.

His attention jerked back into focus when the girl grabbed his arm.

"Time to slot and run, chummer," she said. Still obviously frightened she continued to pull Hallis away from the fight, picking up her glasses as they passed.

After winding their way through back streets and alleys from the King Street Station, the girl slumped down next to a dumpster, tired and seemingly more than a little lost. As her breathing steadied she began to clean and inspect the pink glasses. Glancing nervously at Hallis she settled the glasses back in place.

"Why did you help me?" she asked, studying his face as he squatted across the alley, breathing easy. He could imagine, or hope, what she thought of him as he looked back across the alley at her. Tall and thickly grafted, he had a shock of short white hair. His eyes were hidden behind black razor-thin sunglasses and he wore a grey armored longcoat, black tightskin high necked pullover and blue surplus army pants tucked into high black boots adorned with chains. Street muscle, maybe high grade, but muscle all the same.

"Don't like gangers," he answered flatly.

"Any reason?" she continued looking over her glasses.

"Hurt someone...someone I knew once."

"Someone you cared for?" she pressed a little. Hallis just looked at her without answering. "So ka, I know how it feels to lose someone you care about."

"Well, domo," she continued, picking up her bag as she rose and started to leave the alley. Stopping half way she turned, "listen I could use someone like you." He stood. "I can pay," she added as an afterthought.

"Biz?"

"Hai, biz," she confirmed.

"How much and how long?"

"500 nuyen. I gotta meet I have to keep. See me through it and it's a done deal."

"Good enough."

"Wiz," she smiled and jandered out of the alley. Leaving Hallis confused. This kid was nothing like any crazy or terrorist he had ever encountered before. And he had seen more than his share. But the company had her slotted as a bad seed. Involved with the kind who were going to see a lot of people hurt and probably killed.

Jordan Hallis took a deep breath pushing his doubts aside and followed.

* * *

Dumping the car Akiko had wired near Devil's Lake in the Barrens, they skirted the burn zone, stronghold of the mage Fade, and made their way towards Israfels in Raven territory. The mage lived deep in their turf and paid a high price for the Raven's protection. Their leader Poe owned and managed Israfels. He made your average run-of-the-mill lunatic seem frighteningly sane.

They moved carefully through the steady drizzle and darkening twilight. Hallis kept the girl close, his eyes relentlessly sweeping the deepening dark. A neon angel, wings swept back, perching above the door marked their destination in the encroaching gloom. In the drizzle the door was unattended and they slipped unmolested into the dim smokey confines of the bar. Ravens swathed in black leather were in abundance along with a myriad collection of gutterpunks and assorted street trash. Poe held court at a table in the corner near the bar. Round black glasses covered his

eyes and a mane of swept back blue-black hair framed his gaunt impossibly pale features.

More than a few of the gangers sized up Hallis as he and Akiko took a table and ordered a round of Sam Soys (the finest in soy beer) from a waitress who looked like an S & M poster girl.

After the beers arrived, the girl took a long pull and introduced herself, "they call me Kiko." Hallis hesitated for a moment as she waited for a response in kind.

"Dane, Pariah Dane."

"That's kinda harsh don't you think?"

"Feels right."

"So ka, whatever you say," she sipped from her beer, "It shouldn't be too long."

They finished that round and another in silence before an elf in a painted coat slipped out of the rain into the somber bar. He scanned the room until his eyes rested on the table where Kiko and Dane sat and then he scanned the room again before approaching the table.

"Hoi, Kiko," the elf eyed Dane as he greeted the girl. Kiko gestured for him to sit and flagged the waitress for another round of beers.

"Hoi, Tzei. This is my chummer Dane." The two men simply locked eyes and nodded by way of introduction. "How's every little thing?"

"Wiz. Just wiz. Taking care of biz. You know how it is," Tzei replied in a sing-song voice. The elf sipped his beer and eyed Dane. "We all set?"

"Hai. Certified stick. Like you wanted. You've got the merchandise?"

"You bet. Knucklebones is holding it for me. All we have to do is go pick it up."

"Great, lets do this thing. I have places to go and people to see."

"What about him?" Tzei asked as he got up to go.

"He comes," Kiko answered.

"That will make Knucklebones nervous. You know how he is."

"Too bad. Knucklebones makes me nervous. He comes or it's no deal," Kiko retorted leaving no room for argument.

"Have it your way," Tzei grudgingly agreed and led the way out of Israfels.

It was full dark now and the streets were quiet on account of the rain. A few gutterpunks huddled together seeking shelter in dumpsters and abandoned buildings. Tzei led them through the rain towards one such abandoned tenement. The building was almost completely gutted and only provided minimal cover from the rain. The elf ducked inside without hesitation. Kiko followed and Dane brought up the rear. He was edgy and guarded as he scanned the darkness for danger. His attention locked on a shadow that detached itself from the deeper gloom. A big ork in street gear with a necklace of small bits of bone came from the dark carrying a synth-leather satchel. Tzei walked

forward and greeted the ork.

"Wait here will you," Kiko asked and then joined the other two. They spoke in low tones and the ork opened the satchel so Kiko could examine it's contents. Seemingly satisfied she withdrew a stick from inside her jacket. As she handed the stick to Tzei, the elf bowed and stepped back. The ork, presumably Knucklebones, handed over the satchel. The girl had only taken two steps when Dane saw a shadow slip past one of the gaping vacant windows.

"Trap," he cried in warning, dropping to a crouch and drawing the heavy pistol from its hiding place under his longcoat with blinding speed. The shadow reappeared in the window and leveled what looked like a shotgun. As Dane's smartlinked Predator swung around crosshairs swept up following the gun's path projected on the internal surface of his optics. He fired twice in rapid succession as the targeting scope came to rest on the shotgunner's center mass. The shadow's cry of surprise and pain almost instantly faded to a gurgle as he toppled from view.

Dane spun, his new reflexes top-of-the-line, and fired again. Knucklebones, hit in both the chest and head, was dead before he hit the ground. Dane never saw the third ork or where he got in. His beefy arm wrapped around Dane's neck from behind and a wicked knife plunged towards his chest. Dropping the Predator he twisted just enough to take the first stroke on his armored longcoat and intercept the second by grabbing his attacker's wrist. The ork tightened his grip around Dane's throat and began to force the knife down towards his face.

As Dane struggled in the ork's iron grip Kiko turned on Tzei. The elf had a pistol trained on her and spoke calmly, "I'll take that satchel if you please." The pistol wasn't as large as a Predator or a Manhunter, but Kiko's jacket wasn't armored. It was enough. She handed over the satchel.

"Domo, pretty. Just taking care of biz. Nothin' personal," Tzei grinned wickedly and backed away.

The ork, a vatjob, proved stronger than Dane and by the centimeter the knife advanced, now hovering just over his right eye. Dane stepped back dropping to one knee using his momentum to throw the ork over and off of him. The ork rolled and came to his feet, knife at the ready. He was good, advancing on Dane swiping back and forth with the knife in an abrupt controlled

manner. Retreating, Dane backed into a crumbling plascrete support column. The ork grinned and charged. Dane fainted, exposing his ribs, and twisted to his left. The knife slashed under his coat and gouged along his ribs, but he spun away as the ork surged past. His charge carried him into the column, but he thudded off it and whirled.

"You're fast breeder. Now you....," the ork's threat was cut short and his eyes widened at the sight of Dane's Predator, now back in hand, pointed at his chest. The big gun barked twice and the ork stumbled back as the rounds slammed into his torso. His arm went slack and the knife clattered to the floor. Dane shot him in the head splattering the column with bits of skull fragment and brain tissue.

Meanwhile, Tzei had reached the closest window and, slipping one long leg out, turned to make his escape. His entire form went rigid and his mouth gaped as a razor-sharp throwing knife sprouted from his back. His legs went numb and he slumped to the floor with a groan. Kiko leaned over the dying elf and jerked the knife out with a twist. After wiping it clean on his painted coat, she retrieved the satchel and looked down.

"Nothing personal, fragger," she spat as the life started to slowly fade from the elf's eyes. She turned and saw Dane watching her. "Time to fly, razorboy." With Dane in the lead they moved out into the rainy dark. In the lobby of a cheap rooming house in Purity she paid him 500 nuyen in cash.



Pariah Dane stared fixedly at the cracked plaster and peeling wallpaper as Kiko cleaned and bandaged his wounded side. When she had finished, he stood and retrieved his slashed and blood caked shirt.

"You don't have to go," she said hesitantly as he started to pull on his shirt. He stopped and looked at her.

"I mean you could stay." He just kept looking at her and didn't say anything. "I'd feel safer if you did."

"You trust me?"

"You helped me when you didn't have to," she said coming closer. His shirt dropped to the floor forgotten. "No one ever did that for me before," she continued, her hand resting hesitantly along the side of his face.

"I trust you." She looked into his eyes as their lips met hungrily and their bodies came together. They fell on the bed like those who had been starved to long. "I trust you."

* * *

She traced the scars, from the muscle grafts, on his chest gently as they lay together amidst the tangled sheets some hours later. Her fingers came to rest on the worked gold pendant that lay across his chest, hung from it's silver chain.

"It's beautiful. Where did you get it?" she asked her voice still a little husky.

"A gift."

"From someone special?" she asked looking at the pendant more carefully. He didn't answer. He simply slipped it off placing it around her neck so it dangled between her breasts glittering in the light from the neon outside the open window.

"I can't," she moved to take it off.

"I want you to have it," he said, gently taking her hands to stop her from removing the pendant.

"Domo arigato," she thanked him nuzzling closer. "No one's given me anything without wanting something in return for a long time. Not since my mother gave me those silly glasses. It was right before....," Kiko hesitated. Dane turned so he could see her face more clearly. "She said she always wanted me to see the good side of things. And people. So, she gave me those. Rose colored glasses. You know how the saying goes," she finished.

Dane stared at her as her breathing slowly steadied and she fell asleep. He just stared. For a long time.

* * *

He woke late. Later than he had intended, but he hadn't slept like that in a long time. Dreamless. Kiko had left a note:

"Taking care of biz.

Meet me tonight at the Glass Onion if you can.

Dinner's on me.

Domo,

Kiko"

Dane dressed quickly and left the rooming house to find a comm and call Mancini.

* * *

Lone Star Security Services, through spokesman Captain Anthony Mancini, released a follow-up statement today regarding the raid in Redmond that resulted in the deaths of all known members of the terrorist organization the Apostles of the Apocalypse. Violence ensued when the terrorists resisted arrest. The

body of their reputed leader Solomon Kane has been identified as that of one Anjiro Torii whose father was a highly placed Renraku executive until his untimely death six years ago. Detective Sergeant Jordan Hallis, who was instrumental in locating the terrorists, was granted the departments Medal of Honor posthumously during funeral services at an undisclosed location.

-Datafax (18:07:23/12-17-54)

* * *

A solitary figure stands alone, as alone as only one who dwells amongst millions can be, on the bridge silently watching the dark waters of the river below swirl past. A pair of twisted and broken glasses dangle from his hand. Pink lenses cracked and filthy.

They had offered him a promotion. A place in the company. Mancini had said something about breaking eggs and then sputtered threats through his smashed teeth and crushed nose. In the end he was right. Jordan Hallis was dead.

The glasses fell noiselessly disappearing beneath the inky waters like a memory. Pariah Dane turned and walked away. The shadows engulfing him like a shroud. Vanishing like smoke on the water.

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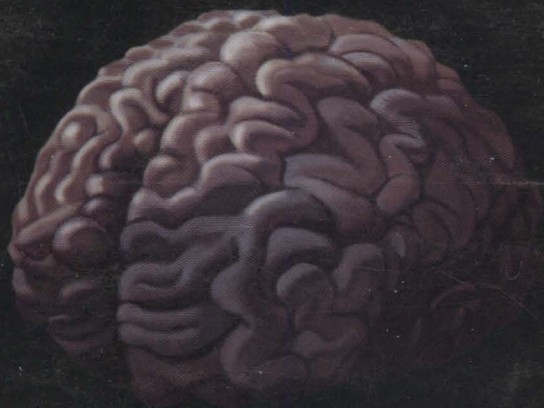


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