

The Shadowrun #* Supplemental **13*

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FASA CLOSING!

Early thoughts on the closing of FASA

THE TRUE FACADE

A new feature debuts - shadowcomments from the "real world"

How Much Did You Say He Weighed?

A Third Edition update of this popular article about realistic heights and weights!

SwiftOne Speaks

SwiftOne gives his take on FASAs recent releases, and the closing of FASA



And more!

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Editorial Verbiage

Adam Jury (adamj@dumpshock.com)

Stop the Press!

I was literally a few hours worth of editing and tweaking away from releasing this issue of The Shadowrun Supplemental when the word came in that FASA had decided to call it quits. A tersely worded note on their website at <http://www.fasa.com/PressReleases/PRClose.html> was the only official word.

As expected, this has created quite a stir through the Shadowrun internet community, and much speculation is going on as to the fate of Shadowrun and FASAs other games. Shadowrun does have a new owner, and Dumpshock has a Frequently Asked Questions list on the closing at <http://www.dumpshock.com/FASA-FAQ.html>

For the short term, this doesn't mean a lot for The Shadowrun Supplemental - aside from having to re-write some sections of this issue on short notice, there are no plans to change or stop the magazine in any way yet. Issue #14 is still planned and submissions are being taken for it.

This issue contains the debut of a new feature - The True Facade. The True Facade has its roots in the Bulldrek v0.2 message boards (<http://pub11.ezboard.com/bbulldrek>), but has now migrated to its own board at <http://pub23.ezboard.com/btruefacade> - all the material in And So the Armies Rolled Forth... is taken directly from one of the threads in The True Facade. Anyone is free to participate, although there are some rules and regulations that should be read before doing so - they're clearly listed, so you should have no trouble finding them. The True Facade aims to discuss real world Shadowrun issues from a "non-runner" viewpoint. As you can see from the selection in this issue, the in-game contributors run the gamut from 'runners to ordinary citizens.

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Call for Art

As I've mentioned a few times, one of my back-burnered projects is to re-release the old TSS issues, edited and laid out to the new standards. I've mostly finished issue #1 (it was really easy, after removing the huge block of reviews from Gurth, which are now up on his page - it's more like a flyer than a magazine, now..), but I'm missing some art. So this is what I'm looking for:

- 1 cover piece. Colour or black and white. Similar size to the cover pieces from recent issues.
- 2 small (2x2 or thereabouts) black and white pieces, suitable for filling in the corners. These can be either illustrations or "fake" advertisements from the Shadowrun world.
- 1 half page piece (approx) - can be either half a vertical page or half a horizontal page. If this had some sort of 'munchkin' theme - big guns, over the top armour, lightsabers and lasers - that would be cool.

Once I've procured these it shouldn't be long before the revised #1 is released, and I can move onto #2.

Format for submissions: TIF or PSD preferred, 300DPI, attached to an email to adamj@dumpshock.com - please include your real name for copyright purposes and your nickname if you don't want your real name published.

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Highlander v1.0

By Steven "Bull" Ratkovich (bull@dumpshock.com)

Princes of the Universe

The ork walked into the bar, and pulled off his black duster as he walked to a booth in the back. A young man with glasses sat in the booth, watching the ork carefully as he approached, an untouched beer in front of him. The man noted that while he knew the ork always carried an English longsword on him at all times, he appeared unarmed at the moment. The man motioned for the ork to sit when he reached the booth.

"Johnathon. It's good to see you again." The man smiled warmly.

"You too, Alex." John replied, returning the smile. "How have you been?"

"Good, good. You want a beer?" Alex motioned the waitress over and ordered a beer at John's nod, then continued. "You're looking well. And your head is still attached, so that's always a plus."

The ork chuckled. "Yeah, though Eagle tried his best to take it a couple nights ago." Alex's eyebrow shot up at that comment.

"Really? I hadn't heard that. None of the watchers have said anything about any Immortals dying in the last couple months."

"Yeah." John replied, sighing. "I was in the middle of a run, and the bastard jumped me on the way out. Blew a sizable bonus we were supposed to get for silence."

"Run?" Alex asked. "You mean that shadowrunning stuff you mentioned last time? You doing that again?"

John shrugged as he drank his beer. "Yeah, I gotta pay the rent somehow. I ain't got the advantage of having 500-year-old antiques and 200-year-old savings bonds to fall back on like some of the others. And running's the only thing I really know how to do."

"Can you-- Can you tell me about it?" Alex asked, his internal audio recorder clicking on so he could write up a full report for the Watcher Council later on. "About your team, about the run, and about Eagle?"

"Sure, why not." John replied with a chuckle. "It's not like you're gonna blab or anything, or you'll blow your own cover as a Watcher. Besides, you're picking up the tab." The last was said with a coarse laugh as he waved the waitress over again. "Another round, please."

I moved down to the end of the stainless steel corridor, the only sound around me the soft hum of machinery and the soft tread of my boots. I held my Predator loosely in one hand as I reached the end of the hall and peeked out around the corner, ready to strike if any guards appeared. We had broken into the Gaetronics power plant easily, and I breathed a sigh of relief as I saw the hall was clear. Not only were we getting paid extra if we could pull this job off without leaving any trace of our presence, but I don't particularly care for killing.

As a shadowrunner, it comes with the territory, and as an Immortal, I have had to defend myself a couple times as part of some stupid cosmic Game. But that doesn't mean I have to enjoy it. The guards were just doing their job, and the fact that I wanted to make money this way didn't mean they should die for the way they made theirs. It was just a shame the rest of my team didn't feel that way.

Mac is a decent enough guy, though a little obsessive about planning these missions out, and he freaks a bit if we have to improvise. He's a good team leader, though, and an excellent fighter when push comes to shove -- fast as hell and good with both his katanas and his guns. I survive The Game by my sword, and I'm just damned glad I don't have to face Mac. According to his brother, Kam, his obsessive behavior comes from his failure to keep a former team alive a few years ago on a run.

Kam is our decker, and if it weren't for Mac, I'd have probably told him off long ago. I can throw him further than I trust him, though he's (apparently) one hell of a decker, and has a top-of-the-line, custom-built cyberdeck in his head, complete with satellite uplink. He's a ruthless, back-stabbing bastard who claims to believe that the best way to avoid getting caught is to make sure all your enemies are dead. And he considers everyone an enemy....

Krieg is a riot. He's a strange little dwarf from Hawai'i, a variant they call a Menehune. He doesn't talk about how he got 'em, but he's modded to the hilt. Kid Stealth cyberlegs, retractable horns and teeth, a spaded cybertail, and some sort of mod that lets him turn his skin red with a thought, so he can go from mildly unusual to looking like a 3-foot-tall demon in a heartbeat. He's quick as lightning, is a terror with the spurs on his feet, and plays the drums in a band called Blitzkrieg. He can also drink a troll under the table.

Mysty is a mystery. She wasn't with the team before my Quickenings. They had another mage working for them, some insane dude named Chaos, but apparently he decided it was time to retire, so they recruited Mysty. She's a beautiful dark-haired elf, and she seems nice enough, but she always gets real quiet around me. Don't know if it's cause I'm an ork or because I'm Immortal. Either way, she's a wiz with illusion spells, if you'll pardon the pun, and she doesn't like to kill either, so she usually uses stun spells of some sort.

We'd been hired to break in and insert some sort of data chip into the Gaetronics main computer system, which was of course not hooked up to the Matrix, hence our breaking into the building. So far the run had been a cake-walk, as promised by our Mr. Johnson, the guy who hired us. This made Mac even more nervous. The nastiest jobs a runner ever goes on are the ones where you're told it's an easy job.

The rest of the team approached my position. "So what's the plan, bossman?" I asked Mac.

"Krieg and Mysty go first. Krieg, keep them damned metal legs of yours silent on these floors. Once you're in position, set up an illusion to cover us." Mac nodded at the Dwarf and the Elf Mage, and looked over at his brother. "Kam, you have those cameras taken care of?"

"I told you before, 'big brother', yes, the cameras are suppressed." Kam sneered.

"How do you have them set up?" Mac asked.

Kam really hates it when Mac questions his actions. "I have the cameras set up on a feedback loop fed through an internal imaging program I have set up and running on a dumb frame. The security is really light in the local system, and I have the frame dug in deep. There's no way they'll find it till later this week when they run a diagnostic of the system. Satisfied?"

Mac nodded. "OK, once Mysty is in place, John, you and Kam will go in under cover. Kam will insert the computer chip while you cover him. It could take a few minutes depending on the security, and we'll only have about 7 minutes before the guard makes his next pass through here."

Everyone but Kam nodded, and Krieg and Mysty crept forward to the end of the hallway. Mysty closed her eyes for a moment, and then she and the dwarf vanished. "OK, the illusion is in place. You guys go." Mac whispered.

We moved quietly up the hall, pausing at the door long enough for Kam to run a forged passkey through the security lock and get us in. Then he sat down at the computer and jacked in. While he's got a sat-link for his Head Deck, he only uses it when necessary. Slows him down otherwise, he says. He popped the chip in, and we were good to go.

We were two minutes ahead of schedule, according to Mac, and ahead of the guard patrols. We hurried to get off the grounds to safety. We'd just left the main building and were crossing a courtyard between the main power station and the offices. That's when disaster struck, in the form of that weird tingling sensation I get around other Immortals.

"Err, Mac?" I muttered, pulling my sword out. Mysty gasped slightly as I did so. One of the first tricks I learned after my First Quickening was an ability to conceal my sword, almost magically, as long as I'm wearing a coat. This was the first time I'd needed my sword on a run, and Mysty'd never seen me use that trick before. I gave her a thin smile and fought the butterflies in my stomach. Shadowrunning is easy, especially since I became Immortal, and I knew that Mac would drag my corpse out of any situation, even if I wouldn't heal back up for an hour or so. But facing off against another Immortal always makes me nervous, since it's a kill or be killed situation. And as you know, Immortals can die. "We have problems."

"Oh hell." Mac muttered. "You've got to be kidding me!"

"What is it?" Krieg asked nervously.

"Remember my condition? And the reason I left you guys for a while?" I muttered, looking around. I can sense when

another Immortal is close by, but I can't tell exactly where he's at. "Well, don't forget there's a downside to my new powers, and this it."

A man stepped around the corner of the building, and I knew where my enemy was. He was a big man, an Amerind, and stood nearly seven feet tall with a shorn scalp and an enormous battle axe held casually in one hand. If it wasn't for the lack of tusks or pointed ears, I'd have sworn he was an ork. Behind me, I could hear the rest of the team readying weapons.

"I am Eagle who Soars through the Mountains, of the Blue Mountain Sioux Tribe. And I challenge you." He glared at me, his eyes dark and hard.

"Let me handle this guys. You can't interfere." I muttered under my breath to the rest of the group, hoping Kam wouldn't get jumpy and try shooting the guy. Looking up at the Amerind, I straightened. "Look, do we have to do this? We're sort of busy at the moment. We could always --"

"What do I care for the affairs of these mortals?" The Amerind said, his words cutting through the night. "You have no choice in this, Immortal. Face me."

"Shit." I muttered again. "Guys, go. I'll catch up with you when I'm done here." If I survive, I thought to myself.

"You sure, John?" Mac asked. "I don't like this."

"I don't like this either, Mac, but I don't have any choice. Go on, I'll be fine."

"We can't leave him!" Mysty said as Mac turned.

"It's something he has to do, Mysty. We can't interfere with this, do you understand?" Mac asked quietly. Mysty nodded once, and he turned, walking away. The rest of the team knew what had happened to me, but Mysty was new and apparently they hadn't filled her in. She gave me a plaintive look and I tried my best to smile reassuringly at her, then she turned and quickly followed the rest of the team.

"Face me!" Eagle shouted as it began to rain. We had counted on the rain to help aid our getaway, but it would only make this fight more difficult. I sighed and leveled my sword at the man.

"All right. I, John Guilder of Seattle, accept your stupid challenge." I said, a bit irritably. "If nothing else, to shut you up!"

The Amerind snarled and leaped at me, his axe coming down quicker than I would have thought possible for a weapon that big. I ducked and rolled to the side, my heightened reflexes saving me by barely an inch. I leapt to my feet and ducked again as Eagle brought down his axe again, and managed to parry a third attack.

Desperate, I lashed out with my foot, aiming for his kneecap. I missed and hit his thigh, though it threw him off balance long enough for me to regain mine and make an attack of my own.

For over a minute the fight went back and forth, both of us

dodging and parrying. Despite the fact that I was an Ork and Eagle was human, it was obvious that the Amerind was far stronger than I was. Should he connect with the axe, I was in serious trouble. Fortunately, the axe was a clumsy weapon to use in a battle like this, and that helped balance out the fact that I was also not as skilled as he was.

I ducked again, and parried a second blow that followed on the heels of the first, almost faster than I could think. I was working off of pure instinct, and I reflexively slashed out after his, and scored a slash across his rib cage. It was little more than a scratch, but Mac had taught me a lot about sword combat, and in an extended fight like this was proving to be, any wound, however small, could seriously hinder a combatant.

Eagle roared and rained down blows on me again, and once more I was on the defensive, parrying and dodging his blows. Then the lights came on and a shot rang out as a security guard fired a shot into the air. Eagle and I froze and looked up.

"What the hell is going on here?" The guard yelled through the increasing rain. Then the air around him shimmered and he collapsed to the ground. I ducked suddenly, without even realizing it, as Eagle's axe whizzed through the air where my head had been a second before. I dropped another blow, and rolled a few feet away from the enraged Amerind. As I stood up, I could see Mysty watching from across the yard, and I realized she must have stunned bolted the guard. I smiled to myself, then dove to the side as Eagle lunged at me with his axe, the blade digging deep into the ground.

As the big Amerind pulled his blade out of the ground, I saw an opening and lunged, my sword punching through his bare chest. He gaped at me and dropped his axe to the ground, then fell to his knees next to it. I muttered a mantra I had learned from the first Immortal I met following my First Quickening, something that steeled my resolve in each of the few combats I had been in so far: "There can be only one". Then my sword fell, separating his head from his shoulders.

During the Quickening, I'm barely conscious of what's happening. It's hard to describe, but I see snippets of not only the life of the Immortal I just killed, but of others as well. Maybe they're bits of Immortals that this Immortal had killed before. Either way, I absorb a bit of them into me. And every time I come to from a Quickening, usually with every bit of metal around me sparking from the electrical lightshow that accompanies the Quickening, I always have to question for just a second exactly who I am. Was I John Guildler, a SINless ork making a living as a Shadowrunner, or am I Eagle who Soars through the Mountains, an 87 year old Amerind who prides himself on his strength? And for one brief moment, I am both.

John sighed and tipped back the beer bottle, finishing off his fourth one, and signaled for another. "The power plant was just about wrecked after we were done. According to the team, the electrical bolts that the Quickening let off struck the Gaetronics power lines and the main transformer, blowing them in a brilliant fireworks display. We also managed to kill power to a large portion of downtown for about 15 minutes, until they rerouted power. Kam figures the Quickening Storm probably

did a good bit of damage to the internal mechanics of the Power Station as well."

"We got the hell out of Dodge and called up Mr. Johnson, who was none too pleased with what happened. We didn't tell him all the details, just that there was a fight and that the power station must have gotten damaged during the fight. It was all Mac could do to get the remainder of our payment out of the Johnson, and our sizeable bonus for stealth was out of the picture. Still, we did get paid, and I managed to survive another attack by an Immortal with my head, though it's sheer luck that I'm still alive. While it's kinda cool to not be able to die, it's a pain to have chumps coming out of the woodwork every month or two trying to take out the newbie Immortal, you know what I mean, Alex?"

Alex nodded, though both knew that he didn't quite know what it was truly like. "So how did the rest of the team react? I believe this is the first time any of them saw you fight another Immortal."

"Yeah, it was." The ork replied with a sigh. "Freaked 'em all out. Especially Mysty. She's really cute, and I'm grateful for what she did. That security guard could have really mused things up, cause I don't think Eagle would have stopped the fight for him. He seemed to have no respect for Mortals. But I don't think she was ready to handle the aftermath and the brutality of the whole thing."

"The rest of the team handled it pretty well. Mac is, well, Mac. He takes everything in stride. He was pretty upset about not getting away quietly as planned, but he also knows it wasn't our fault. Though I really hate the way some of these Immortals like to track others down. Kam hasn't said much, but then, Kam hates everyone anyways. And Krieg thought it was pretty cool. Says he'd love to get a shot of that going on with his band playing during it. Want to revive some old songs by a band named King and do a music video."

"So how do you feel, John?" Alex asked, watching the ork carefully, his beer still sitting untouched in front of him.

"If you mean about the fight, I feel lucky and sick. I'm lucky to have survived, and I'm already sick of the fighting." John almost snarled. "If you mean about the whole 'taking your enemies power' bit, I'm not sure. I think I'm stronger, but since that seems to have been the focus of Eagle's power, that's not all that surprising, right?"

"Anyways, I gotta go." John said, looking at his watch then standing up. Alex stood up with him. "We got a team meeting in an hour and I need to pick up some supplies. We might have another run coming up."

Alex shook the Ork's hand. "Thanks for this John. You know you don't have to do this, but it makes my life a lot easier. Chronicling an Immortals life is difficult enough without having to guess why the Immortal is doing what he is. And hopefully, I'll be able to let you know ahead of time when someone like Eagle comes to town."

John nodded, then shrugged resignedly and walked out the door.

Watcher Chronicle Entry #6725.1

July 26th, 2061

My name is Alexander Kinnor, and I am a Watcher. This is my first Chronicle entry, and will contain the summation of the knowledge I have gained thus far on the Immortals, as well as my early observations on the newly awakened Immortal Johnathon Guilder.

No one knows how the Immortal came about or how long they have been around, despite the fact that the Watcher organization has records stretching back thousands of years. Because of this, all we have are theories as to what the Immortals are. The only clues to base these on is the fact that many Immortals seem to be without confirmable parentage, often being found on a doorstep or suspected orphans. Theories include:

- Angels and Demons fighting out a Holy War on Earth, and the Prize for the Gathering is that their side wins the War once and for all.

- Simply tools of Satan out to rule all Mankind. The Renegade Watchers (they call themselves the Hunters) came about because of some Watchers who felt this way.

- Some take a religious and historical view of things, and trace their origins to Adam and Eve, citing Immortals as having the closest blood ties to the “first man and woman.”

- One theory places them as alien criminals, banished to Earth to battle as their punishment, with the winner of the Prize gaining his freedom.

- Another theory follows the one above, but believes the Immortals are criminals sent through time, either an offshoot race of Humanity lost to the past and History through disaster (Atlantis), or are the next stage in evolution.

The Quickening is a term with a twofold meaning to Immortals. It is used to describe both the “awakening” of an Immortal the first time he dies (I call this the First Quickening), and also it is used to describe the effect of what happens when one Immortal kills another, by taking their heads.

Until a Potential Immortal has his First Quickening, he ages naturally. It has been recorded in the past of one Immortal who was trapped in the body of a child, and more than one Immortal who is in the body of a “senior citizen”. Almost every Immortal meets their First Quickening after a violent death. Some Watchers theorize that a violent death is necessary to trigger the Immortals First Quickening, and if the potential Immortal were to die of natural causes, he would die, and never realize his Immortal potential.

It takes a new Immortal some time to regenerate following their First Quickening. They usually wake up about 24 hours after their first death. More than one Immortal has had to claw his way out of the ground after being buried by his loved ones

and family. No Metahuman Immortals from before the Awakening in 2011 are known to exist. Any Metahuman Immortals are “newer” Immortals, such as the Immortal I watch, John Guilder, who is an Ork, born after the Awakening.

Once someone becomes an Immortal, they become just that: Immortal. They regenerate damage extremely quickly, and can even come back from the dead. There are limits to this, however. The only documented case of a severed limb, Xavier St. Cloud, had lost his hand in a duel with the Immortal Duncan MacLeod. It is the belief of the Watchers that his hand may have regenerated over a lengthy period of time, but it is not known for sure as Xavier was later defeated by MacLeod and lost his head.

The only known method for truly killing an Immortal is to sever his head, triggering the “normal” Quickening. When one Immortal is killed in this fashion, it releases energy, speculated to be the Immortals life force, or even the energy that gives an Immortal his power. If another Immortal is nearby, this power will be drawn to him, engulfing him, and that Immortal will absorb a portion of the defeated Immortals energies, growing in power.

The Quickening often appears as an electrical storm, with bolts of lightning shooting out from the body or the sky, striking and entering the nearest Immortal. Other manifestations have been noted, with whirlwinds, flames, and brilliant flashes of light, individually or in combination with other effects. The Quickening effect will also strike nearby items, usually anything metallic that can act as a lightning rod, striking and damaging these items. For this reason, most Immortals choose to fight in remote locations, away from the threat of detection, and often away from areas where they can do a lot of collateral damage after a fight.

When one Immortal defeats another, he absorbs a portion of that Immortal’s power and experience. Immortals often display traits similar to those of Adepts, those Awakened beings that channel magical energies into their body to enhance their physical prowess and abilities. After a Quickening, Immortals will often find they have learned a new ability, or find that one of their prior abilities has been enhanced. The Immortal seems to have little control over how the new power manifests, and they seem unable *to* learn or adapt their abilities the way an Adept can through practice, experience, and Initiation rituals. How the Immortals first learned their abilities is as shrouded in mystery as how they came about.

Many Immortals differ in the reasons that they fight. Some are seeking power, or a rush that they get from The Quickening. Others are simply seeking to test themselves and their abilities. However, the most common reason is that Immortals believe in something called “The Gathering”. Legends among the Immortals say that one day, when there are only a few of them left, they will be compelled to travel somewhere, where they will have to face each other in one final confrontation. The winner gets “The Prize.”

Just what the prize is, nobody seems to know, not even the Immortals. It is assumed that it will be the accumulated power of all the Immortals, and that it will be the Ultimate Prize. The power to be a God or simply enough power to rule the world are two theories common among those Immortals who lust for power. Others believe it is the Ultimate Knowledge and Wisdom, allowing the Immortal to help better the world and mankind (And of course, some would argue that Ultimate Knowledge is Ultimate Power). And there are those that believe that anything will be possible, and it will be up to the winning Immortal to choose their prize. It is my sincere hope that a “good” Immortal like one of the MacLeods or my own charge, John, win the Prize.

All Immortals are subject to 2 major Rules of the Game, so to speak.

• **Holy Ground is Sacred, and Immortals must never fight on Holy Ground.**

• **Fights honorably, always with a blade and one on one.**

Holy Ground is any land or temple that has been consecrated to any deity, whether it’s an ancient Roman God, an Indian Burial Ground, or a Mormon Temple. Holy ground is sanctuary for any Immortal that wishes it, and no Immortal will break this rule. No one is certain what would happen if two Immortals met and clashed on Holy Ground, but legend says that the Island Volcano at Pompeii exploded when one Immortal killed another while battling on Holy Ground.

Honorable Combat means always fighting with a blade, one on one, face to face. No attacks from behind, no sniper shots from a rooftop and taking you while you’re recovering, and no “teaming up”. The Immortal Larker got mortal followers to try and capture Duncan MacLeod on Holy Ground, breaking the second rule, and circumventing the first.

The second rule has been broken on several occasions, though the perpetrators have never survived for long. Breaking the second “Rule” will often bring about severe repercussions from other Immortals, who declare the Immortal Renegade, and will hunt him using any methods necessary, as he is no longer considered part of The Game. The more honorable Immortals will do everything in their power to even the odds and defeat the Renegade(s) in honorable combat. Less honorable ones will hunt them down simply for the enjoyment of it, and to avoid getting a knife in the back or a Sniper shot to the spine, taking the Immortal while they are regenerating.

Rules

When creating an Immortal character, players pay either 30 Build Points or choose Priority A to be an Immortal (depending on the character creation system you are using). The character starts with the powers Immortal Regeneration, Immunity to Aging, Immunity to Disease, Immortal Detection. Also, all Immortals have the Bio-Rejection flaw, even during their “Potential” stage prior to the First Quickening.

It is assumed at Character Creation that the Immortal is a “new” Immortal, having just completed his First Quickening. This he will start the game with a Magic Rating of 1, and 1 Immortal Ability. The Ability chosen is subject to GM approval.

Immortal characters work similar to Adepts, and through The Quickening can gain Adept-like abilities. However, they are not Adepts, and cannot Initiate (Though, as with the Adept-Like powers, some of their abilities mimic Initiation powers). They can buy additional points to spend on increasing their abilities, but they cost 40 karma per point - double what an Adept pays.

Immortals appear mundane on the Astral Plane, unless someone Assensing the Immortal achieves 7+ successes, in which case they are noted as having an unusual aura about them. They do not appear magically active, and unless the perceiver has successfully Assensed an Immortal before, he will not recognize what this Aura means.

The Rules of The Game

The rules of The Game are relatively simple. One of the Rules is a matter of self-preservation. Bad things happen as a result of a Quickening on Holy Ground. The exact effects are up to the discretion of the Game master, but keep in mind that Pompeii could very well have been a direct result of a breach of these rules.

The Second Rule, honorable combat, is also a matter of self-preservation, though this is less direct. Most Immortals do not take well to the idea that one of their fellows is resorting to dangerous and deadly guerilla tactics, and will declare the Immortal a Renegade. Renegades are no longer subject to the Second Rule, and as such are vulnerable to the same types of actions that got them declared renegade. Needless to say, they rarely last long.

Immortal Regeneration

Unless an immortal has his head severed from his body, he will regenerate from any damage sustained. To regenerate, make a Body Test with a Target Number equal to $2 + 1/\text{level of damage (with a max of +4 at Deadly Damage)} + 1/\text{box of overflow}$. Divide 6 Hours by the results to determine how long it takes the Immortal to heal all damage from his wounds. After the time has passed, he awakens fully healed. Until that time, he appears to be truly dead to any and all tests and astral sensing.

Severed body parts will regenerate normally if held against the “stump” within one minute of the wound being caused, and held there for the duration of the healing process. This will heal the limb fully, but will leave a very nasty scar, which will not heal.

Severed limbs will regenerate, but very slowly. They regenerate at a rate of 1CM per year. Immortals cannot regenerate Stun Damage, nor do they suffer a Magic Rating loss for taking Deadly Wounds.

Immortal Detection

Immortals can sense when other Immortals, or Potential Immortals, are nearby. Their Detection ability works at a range equal to their Magic Rating x 10 Meters, with a maximum range of 200 meters. This sense does not allow the user to automatically tell another Immortal just by looking at him, but it will let them sense how far away that Immortal is, so often they can figure it out pretty quickly.

Whenever another Immortal is near, the Game Master should secretly roll a perception test for the player, with a Target Number of 12 minus the Immortals Magic Rating. Potential Immortals have a Magic Rating of 0, and Immortals with a Magic Rating of 12 or more are automatically detected, unless they have the Masking ability (See Immortal Abilities, below).

The Quickening

The Quickening process usually takes anywhere from 30 seconds to 5 minutes or more. The more powerful the Immortal that was killed, the longer the Quickening lasts. It lasts a number of rounds equal to the Magic Rating of the defeated Immortal.

The Quickening takes its toll on the Immortal, however, and leaves him weakened and vulnerable. Players take Stun damage with a power of 10, and a damage code of M if the Immortal killed was of equal or lesser Magic Rating, S if the Immortal had a higher magic rating, and D if the Immortal had a Magic Rating of twice the MR of the victor.

The Quickening will also affect an area around the defeated Immortal. The discharge of the Quickening will strike all metallic objects within an area of MR/2 Meters with the electrical elemental effect, doing damage equal to what the winning Immortal takes.

Once the Quickening is completed, the Immortal gains some of the power and experience of the defeated Immortal. He gains a +1 to his magic rating, and 1 point to spend on Abilities. They may only spend this point toward learning an Ability that the defeated Immortal knew, or he may save this point, and spend it later, combining it with one or more points to buy a more expensive power from a defeated Immortal later.

Note: When a point is saved in this manner, and combined with points to buy an expensive power, the points spent do not have to all come from Immortals that know the new power. Only the recently defeated Immortal needs to know this power.

Example: *John is attacked by an Immortal and kills him. He wants to purchase the Concealment power; but not only does he not have enough points stored up, the Immortal he defeated didn't know the power anyways. Several weeks later, John is challenged by another Immortal, and comes out the victor. This Immortal knew Concealment, and John is able to spend the point he had saved as well as the new point to purchase this ability.*

Immortals may only buy 1 power each Quickening. Thus, they can't save multiple points, and then buy multiple powers later on from a single Immortal.

Immortal Abilities

Immortal Abilities are identical in name, point cost, and effect as the Adept powers. All Adept Powers are available as Immortal Abilities with the exception of Distance Strike, Killing Hands, and Mystic Armor. Immortals also have access to the Fast Recovery and Concealed Weapon Abilities, which are Abilities unique to Immortals.

Fast Recovery (.5 Point per Level)

Fast Recovery gives the Immortal 1 automatic success for his Recovery Test while regenerating damage.

Concealment (2 Points)

Concealment allows the Immortal to place his sword under his coat and out of sight almost magically hiding it from view. As long as the Immortal is wearing a long coat or very baggy clothing, he can add +6 to the concealability of any normal sword. Great Swords, Claymores, and the like are impossible to hide, even with Concealment.

Masking (2 Points)

The Immortal can attempt to "Mask" his Immortal presence from the senses of a fellow Immortal. The Masking Immortal makes a Will (4) test, adding a modifier to the Detection Target Number equal to the number of successes he gets. Masking is a sustained ability, and for as long as it is sustained applies a +2 penalty to all actions the Immortal takes. It is a simple action to use this power.

Advanced Immortals (Optional Rule)

At the GM's discretion, this option allows a player to play a more experienced Immortal. The Player can raise his Magic Rating (and choose powers accordingly) for 5 Character Points per MR Increase. It is strongly recommended that no more than 2 Increases be allowed.

Author's Notes

First off, I realize there are a couple of things I left out. One of the biggest that jumps to mind is the Dark Quickening. I've already had questions about this, so I'll specifically address this. Simply put, the concept of Good and Evil are very loose and hard to define concepts, and they really don't apply easily or well to Shadowrun. So this was left out. I tried to include as many things as possible that I could remember or find out from research, and while I gave the Immortals as much as possible, I tried to keep the characters balanced well. Overall, I think this version does that well.

Secondly, as a warning to Game Masters, Immortals are **powerful**. As much as I limited them, the fact remains that regeneration alone makes them very powerful. Plus the fact that their growth depends heavily on the GM means that they should not be allowed unless the GM can work them into his campaign relatively easily. An Immortal is no fun if they never encounter another Immortal, and thus can't really grow. However, an Immortal character has a lot of potential for fun and entertainment in the hands of a skilled roleplayer.

Lastly, to the Nitpickers: Yes, I watched the show. I've seen all three movies, though I've not seen every episode, I don't have them on tape, and I only saw a couple episodes of The Raven. However, I believe I remained faithful to the show. So don't sweat the small details, and enjoy!

Shadowrun D8

by David Buehrer (graht@uswest.net)

Why Eight-Sided Dice?

Don't get me wrong, using six-sided dice to play Shadowrun works just fine. However, there's one little statistical hang-up that comes into play regarding Shadowrun's Rule of Six.

Because of the Rule of Six, the chances of succeeding whether the target number is a six or a seven are the same. The odds of rolling a 6 on a six-sided die is one in six. Using the Rule of Six, the odds of rolling a 7 is one in six, because the player must first roll a 6 and then roll a 1. The odds of rolling a 1 or better on a six-sided die is 100%.

The Twist

When using eight-sided die for Shadowrun, treat any 8 as a 0. I.E., treat the die as if it is numbered 0-7, substituting 0s for 8s.

By using an eight-sided die that is numbered 0-7 and changing the Rule of Six to the Rule of Seven, the aforementioned statistical hang-up is eliminated. If a character needs to roll an 8 to succeed, and one of his dice comes up a 7, his follow up roll might be a 0. Now every negative modifier (increase to the target number) counts.

What's the Downside?

Aside from spending money to buy more dice, I haven't found one. And I've thoroughly playtested this with my group.

The odds of success for any given target number generated by using eight-sided dice numbered 0-7 are almost the same as the odds of success generated by using six-sided dice numbered 1-6. For some target numbers the odds are a little bit better, for some, a little bit worse. But generally the play of the game changes very little (except for those players who have been taking advantage of the quirk of the Rule of Six).

Using eight-sided dice numbered 0-7 for initiative creates a little more variance. But since everyone is using the same dice, the quick are still quick, and the slow are still.. well.. slow.

Making Dice Rolls

As with the standard Shadowrun rules, the gamemaster will provide the player with a target number against which he will make a dice roll. The player rolls the indicated number of dice and then compares each die result individually to the target number. Each individual die that scores equal to or greater than the target number is considered a success. The more dice that score successes, the better the result.

Target Numbers

The gamemaster determines the target number necessary for success in a test normally. See p. 92 of the Skills section for a list of target numbers based on the difficulty of the activity.

No target number can be less than 1. If modifiers reduce the target number below 1, consider the target number a 1 for purposes of making tests.

Modifiers

Apply modifiers to the Target Number per the rules.

Rule of Zero

Any time a die roll result comes up a 0 in a test, that die is an automatic failure, no matter what the target number. But the test can still succeed as long as the other dice succeed.

If **all** the dice rolled for a test come up 0s, it means that the character has made a disastrous mistake.

Use the Rule of Zero when the rules refer to Shadowrun's Rule of One.

Rule of Seven

The Rule of Seven allows tests to succeed against target numbers greater than 7. When making a test against a target number greater than 7, the player may re-roll any dice that comes up a 7 and then add the new result to the 7. The player can re-roll additional 7s if the current die result total is still less than the target number.

The Rule of Seven does not apply to initiative tests.

Optional House Rules

Target Numbers

No target number can be greater than 21. If modifiers increase the target number above 21, consider the task to be impossible.

Rule of Seven

Do apply the Rule of Seven to one initiative die. If a player is rolling only one die for initiative, than the Rule of Seven is applied to that die. If a player is rolling multiple dice for initiative, then apply the Rule of Seven to one odd colored die.

The Corporate Review by Chrome Tyger (chrome@badkarma.org)

◆ Okay, so I was up late a few nights back and decided to hit one of my old haunts, DeeCee. While flying down datastream ZHDA-004788 I looked off to my left and saw the big black scarab of Onyx Military Industries in all it's iconoriffic grandeur. Well, I just HAD to check it out. Here's what I learned.

◆ Chrome Tyger

Posted: <10:45:12/08-08-60>

Onyx Military Industries, LLC

Home Office: Washington DC
President/CEO : Callan DeMaan
Chairman of the Board : Vince Incidero
Corporate Status: Military/Government Contractor

Major Shareholders

Callan DeMaan (approx. 52 percent)
 Vince Incidero (approx 12 percent)
 Jordan Dutch (approx 5 percent)

Major Interests

Infantry small arms
 Infantry armor and personal defense
 Small unit communications
 Vehicle communications, weaponry, armor, electronics/avionics

Operations

Fiscal :	8
Intelligence :	7
Management :	9
Reputation :	9
Security :	8
Magic :	7
Matrix :	7
Physical :	7
Military :	8 In-house, professionally trained

Primary Business

Onyx corporation has been a major military and paramilitary manufacturer since before the turn of the century. Their specialties are in small arms, armor, and vehicle accessories with some special contract work in advanced avionics, drones, suborbital defense platforms, and matrix security hardware. Their popular PWS-2000 remains a main field weapon for the European Alliance and Caribbean League. Though not as big or widely produced as Ares, Onyx is well known for products of superior quality. This reputation is well founded.

Corporate Structure

Founded by an ex-military weapons specialist, the company started out and has maintained a strong military recruitment. Some of the world's finest weapons designers and testers are employed or contracted by Onyx. The subdivisions are divided into smaller task groups, each arranged by order of superiority and experience.

Their headquarters, located on the rural outskirts of DeeCee, includes a proving ground and test range within the same grounds as the shiny black Onyx pyramid. There are several branch offices including Grand Rapids and Mt. Pleasant, Michigan (their wilderness equipment testing facilities), Jamaica, Denver, and Seattle.

◆ Word has it that the CEO and possibly a couple of the other execs are in tight with the UCAS military and some shadow intelligence group, some remnants from the old CIA. But this is only rumor and I can find no evidence of it. What makes me wonder is that the person I heard this from can't be reached for further comment.

◆ Stark

Security

Physical security is tight. Professionally trained security guards armed with Onyx's latest and greatest armor and weaponry roam the grounds of every Onyx property. Some light armored vehicles patrol the more remote facilities such as the Michigan wildlands test site, but for the most part guard patrols are personnel only. Remote perimeter defenses have been equipped with multi-range sensors, cameras, and surveillance drones from Onyx's own labs.

Magic security is maintained by a combination of in-house talent and outsourced mages. A high level of screening takes place for all security mages, internal or outsourced. Primarily, the mages provide watch spirit services around the clock but are all well trained in combat scenarios should a breach occur.

Employing many matrix security specialists from the military and government labs, they security layers are tight and efficient. A specially designed high-speed IC hosting mainframe provides a host of bleeding-edge IC written by ex-Fuchi coder Riyuko Takawara. Several members of the matrix security staff are ex-military and ex-government, keeping with Onyx's habit of hiring.

◆ This was a tough nut to crack, trust me. I had to make three runs and finally drop a good chunk of savings on a Russian packet mask so I could get myself past their access node intact. I didn't get much sniffing done, just general touring. Their datastore looked pretty heavy with crash and burn IC to keep the files intact and trash them if not.

◆ Chrome Tyger

The True Facade is an online community where people can come together for in-character discussion on issues of the 2060's world of Shadowrun. Anything from magic and the Mafia to cloning, computers and corporate living is being discussed and debated by characters pulled straight from the world of Shadowrun. Visit The True Facade on the web at <http://pub23.ezboard.com/btruefacade>

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And so the Armies Rolled Forth...

Poster Profiles

Operator

Even though the Corporate War has ended, the aftershocks are still being felt today. Corporate espionage forces and "deniable assets" seem to have more work available than ever before. The mysterious shutdown of the Renraku Arcology and the unknown cause for the influx of Red Samurai, the end of the Quarantine Zone in Chicago, the race to claim former Fuchi assets, and the change from the Big Eight to the Big Ten have only led to even more action for these forces. What does this bode for the future? Is another even larger Corporate War on the horizon? What does this mean for the general public? For the shadow community? For the corporate world?

Agent Orange

More business. Being a ChemApp Consultant is surprisingly profitable right now, what with everyone upgrading security systems and all. Just finished work on an Ares system up Seattle way for about 50K. On the other hand, it's going to be a bit more lethal for everyone from now on...

Smiley

I'll tell you what it means for us in the shadow community. It comes down to something really simple. There will be more Johnsons who have their little puppets on strings doing more jobs than ever before.

All in all. It should be quite fun.

Jitters

Bout... I done a lot of work getting into the Containment Zone before it was opened, and I'll tell you right now, it was all a show how Lonestar went in and killed a few bugs. There were more hives in that place than I got ammo.

Lonestar's in league with the bugs, there's no two ways about that. They're allowing themselves to be taken by the insect spirits, so they become more powerful. They're spreading. They're all over the UCAS. Even Seattle ain't safe. Nowhere is. Before at least you could be sure the bugs weren't

Operator

Independent News Network
Discussion Board SysOp
25
Male
Elf

Agent Orange

Freelance Chemical
Applications Consultant/
"Fumigator"
30
Male
Human

Smiley

Shadowrunner
29
Male
Human

Jitters

Cybered Strong Arm
42
Male
Human

And so the Armies Rolled Forth...

Poster Profiles

on the move, but now, who knows where you'll find one of em..

"The greatest trick the devil ever played was convincing the world he didn't exist."

Crispy

And people call me paranoid...

Jitters

You begin to understand when you hafta survive being hunted in a bug infested storm drain, listenin' to my pals dying screams echo in the tunnels. If we don't stop 'em this whole world's just gonna be one giant Chicago..

Operator

Jitters, this is your warning. Keep it on topic, and keep the conspiracy theories to a minimum. While I appreciate the knowledge you have presented on the threat that insect spirits pose, you are stepping over the line a bit. I'll see about starting an appropriate thread for such information. But you've been warned. Next time you start bringing out your zealot side, it will be one strike against year. No hard feelings, but are we clear?

Jitters

Well I wouldn't call 'em conspiracy theories. More like fact. But I get the point. So I'll close with this warning for all the would be runners out to make a little cash in the newly opened Chicago...

The bugs are definately on the scene, and they might be behind the jobs you pull. Two of my mage buddies have discerned as much, and you gotta ask yourself if thats really the kinda cred you want.

What this means for the Joe Citizen, I don't know, probably nothing for a long time, but it's something to think about.

Duncan Idaho

Jitters, you truly do need to get your terminology and corporate affiliations correct. It was Knight Errant that did most of the 'cleaning up' of Windy's... er, pardon me, the Chicago Containment Zone; not Lone Star. If anyone should be looked upon as implementing a poorly thought out operation, it should be them and not the other. But, as the INN Operator has requested an annulment to that conversation, please feel free to reach me via my personal mtX-box <<display mtX_port PNV-IDF-ADMIN@IDAHO.MTX>> if you want to discuss it further.

Crispy

Freelance Systems

Specialist

25

Male

Human

Duncan Idaho

Cmdr. PNV- *Idaho's Forge*

Age Timeless

Unimportant

Free Entity

And so the Armies Rolled Forth...

Poster Profiles

<< *display ad Private Carrier for Hire* >>

TRON-JEH DANIELS

Jitters, your ignorance amazes me. It's because of slags like you that Chicago got so much out of hand. Nothing worse than having civilians interfering with your mission. I really wish I could have been there.

Quote: DUNCAN IDAHO said: *"If anyone should be looked upon as implementing a poorly thought out operation, it should be them and not the other."*

Let's not forget the surprise element and uniqueness of the situation. No-one had ever encountered anything of this magnitude; Knight Errant was no exception. But in the end, who gained control of the city, wiped out the hives, and saved thousands upon thousands of civilians? And promptly set up a global network of "bug" specialists, ready to deal with any future incidents?

*That's right: Knight Errant. << *display_salute* >> << *display_grin* >>*

Jerry Pegleg

The Corporations have never really paid attention to the problems that their petty disagreements cause to the general population. I am shudder to think what will happen if there ever was another Corporate War. There are ten megacorps now. Not just eight. If there is another Corporate War I believe that it will be worse than the one that began in 2058. You can bet that metahuman rights will just get trampled worse than ever. The Corps are only worried about their bottom line, not people. That's what started this whole mess to begin with

Daniel Barmeowitz

I'd been working with Renraku for a long while, and then suddenly they sacked me, citing that I was too lax on security. You know, I checked everyone's background and identifications thoroughly, but they say someone got past me somehow . . .perhaps with a fake ID. I swear, I believe that there's some professional mercs out there that know how to bypass regular security. Rumors said that another megacorporation had hired them to steal from Renraku.

Let me tell you, Megacorporation life is not the way because it harbors too much violence, no matter if there's a war or not. I have seen the war first-hand. With the change from Big Eight to Big Ten, I must tell you that it's bound to get much dirtier—uglier than you think. Many innocents will die because of their petty wars.

*No matter what, megacorporations will continue to grub for money. I have witnessed the whole thing first hand, and I want it to stop because it continues to disgust me. </i>*display scowl*> Hah, like it will stop.*

TRON-JEH DANIELS

Knight Errant Close-quarters
Specialist
27
Male

Jerry Pegleg

Metahuman Rights Activist
34
Male
Troll

Daniel Barmeowitz

Security Guard
45
Male
Human

And so the Armies Rolled Forth...

Poster Profiles

Jerry Pegleg has said most what I wanted to say. I must quote it: "The Corps are only worried about their bottom line, not people." I cannot tell how true it was. I made no mistakes in many of my security checks. . .I have stopped and arrested about 50 people a month sometimes. But. . .if something got screwed up, the corps would just sack people, and fill in with new people. In fact, they sacked me because some professionals got past them and they needed someone to take the fall. My seven years of service meant nothing to them.

TRON-JEH DANIELS

That's Renraku for you. <<display_frown>> Something about their ancient and out-of-date *Bushido* way of managing their corp. Understand, that to the suits upstairs, you're a disgrace to the company. Doesn't matter that you've performed admirably all your life; one screw-up even if you're not responsible and you're history. Just be glad we're out of the middle ages, or they would have you commit seppuku! <<display_smile>>

I'm forwarding you a number to a friend of mine in recruiting, in case you're looking for a new job. I firmly believe in giving hardworking people second chances.

Quote: JERRY PEGLEG said: "The Corporations have never really paid attention to the problems that their petty disagreements cause to the general population."

Indeed? And what problems would these be? A wider selection of consumer products? Lower prices? More workplaces? All caused by "petty disagreements", also known as "competition".

Quote: "There are ten megacorps now. Not just eight."

So? More competition, better/cheaper products. Happier consumers.

Quote: "You can bet that metahuman rights will just get trampled worse than ever."

Now, how did you reach that conclusion? <<display_bewilderedexpression>> Most likely, the increased competition will result in a wider range of meta-human specific products/appliances.

Lenny

It's true. In the corporate world there is little room for failures. That's one of the reasons a corporate life never held much for me. Your future is determined by your worth and, quite frankly, the execs don't put a lot of worth in people.

Lenny
Shadowrunner
31
Male
Human

And so the Armies Rolled Forth...

Poster Profiles

Though, it is sad that people in my business sometimes cause perfectly innocent people to lose their jobs. I do apologize for the general population of deniable assets, Daniel. A lot of us actually have families of our own to support. No matter that the trid shows, us Shadowrunners do have lives beyond the shadows. I'm sure my weak apology doesn't mean much right now.

Another Corporate War might be a good thing. A lot of power has changed hands over the past few years. I know one person in particular that's happy that Fuchi sunk when it did. Another war would be bigger than the last simply because there are more players now. I wouldn't be surprised if the next one is more public than what has happened before. Most of the real dirty work was behind the scenes. The kind of thing that the average person still doesn't know about. I could tell you some stories that would make the Euro-Wars look like a picnic. I wonder that if there is a next time the megacorps will even bother to take things quietly or bring it out into the open.

Agent Orange

I keep getting images of small canisters labeled Seven-7 when I think about that...

Mallory

Putting the motives and intentions of the various corps aside. To be honest, they're pretty obvious to most, I'd just like to see what people have noticed down at the short end of the stick. Now, obviously most people will have noticed that corp security has been beefed up, but have many noticed how it's been done? One word. Mercs. It used to be just your average Joe guarding these little enclaves, but of late I keep running in to more and more professionals, who are not so given to non-lethal force. Security is being maintained in a military manner.

Unpleasant, certainly, but then I've found that the military mind is much easier to bewilder with some fast talking and a little 'magic' than the average Joe, so my life, amusingly, is easier these days.

Corinthia Silverman

Quote: MALLORY said: "Security is being maintained in a military manner."

You state this fact as if, by itself, it is something horrible. Once again I ask, are modern megacorps really so different from nations of any other era? Of course we use military force to protect our interests—nations of all sizes have been using standing militaries since time immemorial.

Mallory
Entertainer
33
Male
Human

Corinthia Silverman
Novatech
33
Human
Female

And so the Armies Rolled Forth...

Poster Profiles

Mallory

Ah, Corinthia, I have no problem whatsoever about enclaves being defended with lethal force. Hell, if I can do it with my apartment, why can't a corp do it with a multi-million nuyen installation? All I was trying to do is point out that this is happening, which can be important to a lot of people, not just runners. I wouldn't want to make any of these guns for hire nervous, so I'm betting the public don't want to do anything to set them off either. I'm just saying the game has gone up a notch.

TRON-JEH DANIELS

So? If you ask me, it was about time they did. Most of the other megas had gotten really sloppy and lax on their security

Take old Fuchi, for instance. While I'm personally pleased that Villiers was able to snatch most of Fuchi America from the claws of Nakatomi and Yamana's Japana-corp, I also believe that, had Fuchi had better trained and equipped personnel, the situation today would be a very different one. Although no Knight, Villiers is an admirable person; pulling his JRJ-trick was simply beautiful. Watching Fuchi implode was almost funny in a sense.

And let's not forget Renraku. They lost their friggin' arcology! Although their Red Samurai have certainly come a long way from being a purely honorary guard, I have a feeling that they had been lulled into a state of drowsiness, caused by relative internal peace and self-delusion. When the shutdown was suddenly thrust upon them, they had simply lost their edge and the ability to defend themselves from whatever forces have taken their precious arcology.

As for the other megas:

Aztechnology: *Who the frag knows what they are up to. But increasing pressure caused by their civil war and the partnership with Universal Omnitech a very big target of most megas may have caused them to focus more on their defenses. Or maybe the Azzies are just feeling more paranoid than usual.*

Cross Applied Technologies: *When traitor Aurelius fled the country, they just made it to AAA status. And they want to stay that way, so they up their sec forces.*

*Also, a lot of former Ares employees, unhappy by suddenly finding themselves on CATCo's paycheck, wish to return to their former workplace. Only, this is of course hindered by the self-righteous bastards that keep them like slaves. Fearing the crush of someone many times their size, they put these people, these American people, under very close surveillance. But I can guarantee all those American people that they will be rescued! *ahem**

And so the Armies Rolled Forth...

Poster Profiles

Mitsuhaman: Well, M is always making new deadly drones and sentry weapons, and with Renraku suffering from the arcology blow, they're suddenly in the leading field of the IC market. I guess they would like for things to continue that way.

Novatech: Maybe you could have Ms. Silverman come and yap out some public relations excuse for tightening their security? <<display_smile>> However, they're still the smallest of the megas, and many facilities are still suffering from the Fuchi-to-Novatech restructuring. I'm guessing they still have some holes in their systems that need extra manpower until they're able to fill those holes.

Saeder-Krupp: I'm not touching this one. Although rumors abound that the wyrm has given its division heads more freedom to perform as they see fit, so maybe that affects the security of the individual facilities as well. Anyone?

Shiawase: Lots of internal problems, especially in the family that runs the corp. I suspect that various subsidiaries have upped their security to protect them from attacks from rivaling managers/family members. Fraged up.

Wuxing: Also a new player, and head of the Pacific Prosperity Group. The latter status alone puts them in a lot of heat, especially from the Japana-corps, of course. I'm still waiting to see what these guys are up to, and whether they can hold their newly appointed Corp Court justice.

Yamatetsu: Well, given the fact that they have ork chairman, relocated their headquarters from Japan to Russia, and are pushing a big pro-metahumanity campaign, the Japana-corps aren't too happy with them. That, and several attempts on chairman *Shibanokuji's* life may have persuaded them to bring their security up to date.

And as for Ares. Check out other The True Facade threads to learn more about Knight Errant's newest service.
Well, I guess we're just SOTA. <<display_biggrin>>

But those are just my opinions, based on recent events and well-known corp history.

Corinthia Silverman

Why does everyone in these forums simply assume that megacorporations are machines of pure evil? We are nations of people just like any other. In every era, there are nations that are more powerful than those around them, and they are always resented by those around them. In ancient times, it was Rome or the Ottomans. In more recent times, the Spanish or British empires. And just before our current age, the "superpowers" of the USA and USSR. In our age, these superpowers

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have moved into the next stage of evolution and are extra-territorial nations rather than the more traditional sort. But that doesn't make us so different.

Misunderstanding and resentment is understandable to a degree. We are wealthier, healthier, and more educated on average than other nations. But rather than being jealous or angry, other nations should be taking cues from our example.

David Gerish

I suppose that it has something to do with the fact that most corporations do not treat its citizens as true citizens. I use the term loosely when applying it to a corporate context. Corporate Court is a lot different from more conventional government judicial systems which have a respect for due process and the concepts laid out by the fore fathers of the UCAS.

TRON-JEH DANIELS

Quote: CORINTHIA SILVERMAN said: "But rather than being jealous or angry, other nations should be taking cues from our example."

Finally, someone with a degree of insight! and certainly a pleasant one, when coming from someone as talented and photogenic as yourself <<display_wink>>

I heartily agree. The one thing I detest more than anything is the simultaneous petty jealousy and unwillingness to make an effort that a lot of people use to blame the success of a corporation.

Although I was glad that you didn't jump ship to one of the Japana-corps when Fuchi folded, I'm a little disappointed that you didn't choose Ares. <<display_friendlysmile>>

Quote: DAVID GERISH said: "Corporate Court is a lot different from more conventional government judicial systems which have a respect for due process and the concepts laid out by the fore fathers of the UCAS."

Of course the Corp Court is different. Your Constitution, upon which the USA, and later the UCAS, was founded is terribly outdated and inefficient. How many Amendments does it take before your government realizes that a new, revitalized Constitution is required?

As to your "due process", can you honestly say that your country lives up to these goals? Anyone with a drekhot lawyer or a bought judicial system can commit whatever crime he chooses and still stay out of jail. And if you don't own a SIN you're not even entitled to a trial.

David Gerish
UCAS Gov. Employee
43
Male
Elf

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Corinthia Silverman

Quote: *MR. GERISH said: I suppose that it has something to do with the fact that most corporations do not treat its citizens as true citizens.*

I take serious exception to that, Mr. Gerish. That is nothing but UCAS propaganda. Just because we do not embody what your constitution interprets as the ideal of representative democracy does not make us less perfect than your government. Again, I point to the fact that our citizens, on average, are by far healthier, wealthier, and better educated than the UCAS populations you represent, Mr. Gerish. Our citizens are well adjusted, happy and safe—how is this wrong? By what measure, does your nation consider itself superior to ours? I don't get it

Lastly, to more directly address the topic at hand: I do feel that the "corporate war" continues to this very day. It is not as overt as it once was. We limit our skirmishes mostly to the financial fronts and PR battles. Do I think that more obvious physical violence may erupt again? Given human nature, that is very possible—nations have always been at odds. But more and more, we are finding mutually advantageous agreements, that make us rely more and more on each other. This is good.

Charles Alvin Lang, Ph.D.

"Mutually advantageous agreements."

I like the sound of that. For the uninitiated in the audience, that's corpspeak for "leveraged buyouts" or "hostile takeovers." Ya know, where you make another lil' corp an offer it can't refuse, sometimes with some blackmail or assassination to drive the point home, chop it up and keep the parts you want, and dump the rest at a profit?

Speaking hypothetically - what is advantageous for Novatech also becomes quite advantageous for XTZ SoftDesigns, now that it's a Wholly Owned And Operated Subsidiary. What's left of it, at least. But it's hardly advantageous for the hundreds to thousands of ex-XTZ employees who either get hired on at a loss or are out of a job.

And in the vast majority of cases, these employees never know what's gonna happen. No one consults them before the merger, and sometimes they even think it's a blessing for a month or two, before the "restructuring" when their ten years coding experience suddenly comes to an abrupt and startling end. And, of course not surprisingly, there's not all that much they can do about it.

And it's even worse when XTZ used to fit quite nicely under the umbrella of another well-known American mega. Again, that's just business as usual for the suits - but it's moot to the casualties of this little non-violent conflict.

Charles Alvin Lang, Ph.D.

Scholar
50
Human
Male

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TRON-JEH DANIELS

First of all, when a larger corp buys up a smaller one, it's usually because that particular corp has a product/research results that the larger corp finds compatible and advantageous to its existing products. Why on earth would they suddenly want to rearrange people, and have them work on other projects?

And most smaller companies are more than happy with the additional resources, contacts, and market shares a bigger corp usually brings with it. How do you think Cross Applied Technologies made it to AAA status? Yup, when that shadow of his father and traitor to Ares as well as to the UCAS Leonard Aurelius, jumped ship, he took most of his portfolio of shares with him. And CATCo certainly don't seem to be suffering, do they?

And logically, if someone doesn't perform his or her job at the expected level of efficiency, is it any wonder they get fired? Happens all the time, chummer, especially to bums too lazy to get off their hoops and make things happen. I wouldn't want such a person to be working for me, would you?

Dade Mitchell

***Quote:** CORINTHIA SILVERMAN said: In ancient times, it was Rome or the Ottomans. In more recent times, the Spanish or British empires. And just before our current age, the "superpowers" of the USA and USSR.*

Ms. Silverman, the logic of your argument is that because past governments and ruling powers have always used war as a means to ends, that it is somehow "okay". This logic requires making the assumption that the status quo is always correct, which frankly, I am not quite ready to make. I believe that all the other past powers you have named, also just as the corps do, used unnecessary force in some way or another.

You also compare the extraterritoriality granted by the law to Corporations to that of an actual nation. This is an absurd contrast. The obvious function of a nation, and government is to serve the people. The obvious function of a corporation on the other hand, is the bottom line. That's what makes the true difference, and that's why the corps will always be seen as the evil they are. People aren't people to a corp, they're a name and number on a payroll, a consumer, or a potential consumer. They are out there to make the biggest buck, not out their for the people, or their "citizens".

Your corps may appear efficient enough, but as a smart lady once said, "The more complete the despotism, the more smoothly all the things move on the surface."

The corps merely serve to put a price on everything, and de-value life itself.

Dade Mitchell
People for a Free World
(PFW)
31
Male
Ork

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Ashes

Damn straight. <<display_nodhead.mif>>

Corinthia Silverman

Mr. Mitchell, your statements are pure rhetoric and are insulting and de-humanizing to those of us who are citizens of corporations. I'm actually familiar with your periodical, and I am not impressed. It is full of liberal propoganda and anti-corporate slogans while being short on verifiable fact.

Quote: *DADE MITCHELL said: The obvious function of a nation, and government is to serve the people.*

I would not say that that is obvious. A better statement would be: "In an ideal world designed by Dade Mitchell, the primary function of government would be to serve the people." But how do you define "serve"? Are people best served by giving them as many choices as possible? Are they best served by ensuring they are safe and fed and clothed and educated? Are they best served by ensuring that they are happy? How about reaching for their potential? How about being able to express themselves? Corporations most certainly serve their citizens and serve them well. You spit out your contempt for us, but I will rephrase my question now for a third time, since nobody seems to have an answer for it: Our citizens are, on average, healthier, wealthier and better educated than any other population on earth—how is this wrong? In what way are our citizens not being served?

We've heard that we are evil, that we only care for the bottom line, that we don't treat our citizens as people, that we are despots. How so? Someone give me actual details. The people of Novatech are, in general, very well off and very happy about it. We are glad to be citizens of a successful corp and are glad for the many advantages this allows us. Show me the evil.

Dade Mitchell

I'll show you the "evil" as plain as can be.

You keep your "citizens", your scientists, your guards, and executives healthy, and more educated for a single reason; to keep profit up. If they aren't those things then you wouldn't have the edge in the corporate community. One of the main reasons that you can claim that all your citizens are healthy, wealthy, safe, educated, and adding something to the corp, is that if they weren't those things, if they weren't, you have the ability to fire them, cut off their "citizenship" so that they will no longer drag you down. I'm sure the UCAS's citizens would all be perfect if they could just declare that everyone who isn't near perfect, is simply not a citizen. It all makes business sense though, you fire an employee if they aren't keeping up on their tasks

Ashes

burnout decker

37

Male

Human

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And even regardless of whether or not corps maintain their own citizens, their very presence worsens the world at large. Corps still conduct covert wars, sending men and women to their deaths for the cause of cred. It's also no secret that corps have had secret experiments and projects that cost lives, and for what? For cred. How many of Renraku's "citizens" died inside the Arcology because of some project they had?

The fact of the matter is that corps hold an enormous amount of sway in today's world. They have the power to influence governments and institutions. But in the end, they aren't governments, and they aren't nations. They are entities with a superior amount of power, that value profit over anything else. The bottom line. Cred. That's what corps are made for, and they'll try to get it at any expense. That's what makes them "evil", so to speak.

Duncan Idaho

I must find that I tend to agree with what appears to be the general consensus that dealing with the megacorporate organization is a dangerous, and oft-ill fated operation. There does seem to be an exception however.

If the assets involved are the corporations own people, its own gear, there does seem to be a tendency to protect them well enough in most regards. Yes there is always a fall guy for an event, and that is saddening, and it often breaks up the integral social structures that are in place.

As for the event of 'another' corporate war, I like to feel that the 'War' have never really stopped, it has only slipped into a false sense of annulment for the time being. I have seen the events of megacorporate conflict first hand, and probably at a level most of you would be completely unfamiliar with. I've seen and helped to deliver small corporate resources into areas where a corporation may not have as much as they would want for instance, and I've seen the results; both good and bad, that often come of such actions.

'War' is such a dramatic, climactic, term and to be honest I fail to see why metahumanity must utilize it so often. I know that War is a necessary component to the development of a civilization, and even perhaps a culture as a whole, but I do not understand how it can be used so often and in so often what seems a misunderstood manner.

Ashes

You said all megas care about is the bottom line. I really don't think war is all that profitable if the corps themselves are fighting it. If they want a war, it's between nations, so they can sell the supplies at wartime production. You know that the only people that got rich during the 19th century gold rushes were the ones that sold the shovels and pickaxes.

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The Pantless Wonder

Yeah, and Krupp and Mauser made millions off the world wars. A better analogy than the gold rush I think.

Max

I don't know, I've done all right for myself in light of the late unpleasantness. Of course, my shares in Ares played no small part in that.

TRON-JEH DANIELS

Ashes, that's ridiculous. Ares broods wars as much as the suppliers of shovels made gold valuable. <<display_shakinghead>>

Ashes

You misunderstand me. I merely meant that war is not profitable, except when one can reap teh benefits of wartime demand while swallowing little of the profound human anguish that comes with war.

As for your story: You are one lucky bastard. I wish I could have shown my decking skills back when I seriously slung one, and gotten hired in some relatively cushy job as a secdec. Instead, I'm eating soy-based "food" and hustling harder for info than a runner ever did on his legwork. I still get shot at regularly, too. At least I feel better knowing I'm not on the wrong side of the law anymore. The pay's not as good, but I get a warm fuzzy feeling when I help a scared corp-girl find her programmer daddy. Or when I find the Mafia's connection to the recent flooding of the market with cheap brainfriers. Then again, I might be getting that feeling from the money, too.

I recently saved up to buy a real nice trench. The acid rain just rolls right off. If I didn't get it, I would have thought about how much use would it be. Now that I do, I hardly think about it. I guess the same applies had I some one-in-a million rags-to-riches story. You're the exception, not the rule. You say that if it hadn't been for Ares, you would be much the poorer without them. Doesn't that prove that their hiring and using you only happened because they thought that it would be efficient for them. A lot of corps I dealt with are ruthless, but the ones with human beings in 'em won't go too far over the line. The question is, how far is too far? The answer is up to them in the end, and we can do jack about it.

Dade Mitchell

The fact of the matter is that the corps are there for the dough, and nothing else. If tomorrow it becomes profitable to give each bag lady a place to live and enough to eat, they'll do it. If tomorrow it becomes

The Pantless Wonder

Freelance Bum

23

Male

Ork

Max

Tactical Operations

Specialist

25

Male

Human

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profitable to spread diseases among third world nations thus killing off huge parts of the world population, they'd do it. They have the power to do a lot of damage, I'm not saying they don't have a lot of power to do a lot of good as well, but there is no check, they have complete free will to do what they please with virtually no checks.

Are you willing to put trust into something that ultimately follows the scent of cred, and only cred?

That's not a step I'm willing to take.

Daniel Barneowitz

I am not sure about people of the streets, but I do know one thing, corps will help people off streets if they are willing to support the corp. I am saying this because I was taken off the street by the corp. Renraku kept me because of my potential inside me, they hired me and gave me several series of intensive trainings. I suppose that I'm "profitable" to Renraku for time being. . .

Ahhh. . .Check and Balance. That are what is keeping megacorporations in balance. If a megacorporate, in my opinion, becomes too strong, then several megacorporates will combine to beat down that megacorporate. After this threat is gone, the combined megacorporates will dissolve and go on their own ways. This is exactly why you don't want a megacorporate to be "all-powerful." I believe that a megacorporate that does horrible things to everyone would be shut down by other megacorporates because it is profitable for them to do so. The reason why it is profitable is the fact that if this megacorporate is gone, then there will be more customers to other megacorporates.

Dade Mitchell

It's simple dear friend. The checks and balances won't work like that forever.

In nature, we know heating water causes it to become steam. In economics, we know that the nature of corporations and business is to try and conglomerate, thus forming one entity to remove competition and gain the highest profit possible. The function of the government was supposed to regulate this nature. Now with megacorp extraterritorial rights, it's only a matter of time before there is truly only one megacorp.

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John Wise

Ah, but if there is single megacorporate, then we can easily divide people into two groups: Megacorporate and non-megacorporate. Since this ONE megacorporate is ruling everything in business, etc etc, then non-megacorporate people will rise and strike against the large empire. Remember that the population of people who is NOT affiliated with any of corps is much larger than those who are affiliated with the corps. This type of uprising has appeared so much throughout the history, especially peasant-king relationship, oilworker-boss relationship and many various relationships throughout the history. Basically, non-megacorp people will "check" the megacorporate because people do not like to be treated like inferiors under "false God" Granted, a lot of non-megacorporated people will die, and eventually, the megacorporate will run out of sources to profit from, and collapse. If there is ONE megacorporate, I will guarantee it will collapse apart in few pieces. Perhaps violently like what happened to Julius Caesar. Perhaps peacefully. The history has shown a lot of check and balances in different forms, and I believe that it will continue.

Dade Mitchell

That's great, we can wait until there is only one megacorp, and wait for the people to shatter it and then wait till the cycle starts all over again... Or, we could take away the extraterritorial rights and allow the government to regulate corps so they don't have such overwhelming power.

White Lightning

Mr. Mitchell, I don't see how the Governments would be able to regulate something so large as the Megas are now. Maybe I'm lacking in experience, I've only had a couple of years dealing with them, you've obviously had more, but the Megas already have ways around such a "small" thing as taxes, what's to keep them from finding ways around other situations as well.

Here's a situation, and I believe it is valid. Megacorporations no longer have extraterritoriality...MegaCorp A issues a hit out on Mega B...using some 'expendable assets'. Mega B hires a Security Firm...a lower-end company on the list of companies owned by the mega, and uses them to deflect the hit. Okay, so the Shadowrun team is geeked in the process. But the Mega B doesn't have to worry about anything because they contracted the service of an 'outside' security firm. A couple of calls and the security firm no longer has anything to do with the Mega.

I think my point is, that there are so many loopholes the corp can dive through. Extraterritoriality no longer MEANS anything, they'd do it anyway.

John Wise

Historian

88. . .or is it 82? Damn, I can't remember my own age...

Male

Human

White Lightning

Unarmed Combat Specialist

19

Male

Human

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Roberto Santiago

I am so pleased that my own employers decided to stay away from such a petty, worthless conflict. A useless waste of time and resources. So distasteful.

Pegasus

Since you're a cadet, I'll break this to you lightly. I know several people who have been hired by your wonderful corporation to pull hits on other corporation. Believe you me, you're part of what keeps the war machine rolling whether you like it or not.

Roberto Santiago

I have no doubts that my own employer used "expendable assets" to accomplish certain goals to insure my homeland's growth and success. But we do not involve ourselves in petty feuds such as those between the former Fuchi and Renraku. I understand the role of "expendable soldiers." Perhaps you overestimate your role to my employer.

Pegasus

So you mean to tell me that your employers didn't get the slightest bit irked when Ares pulled that job on Solaris Systems last week? Isn't Solaris one of your subsidiaries?

Duncan Idaho

***Pegasus:** Solaris is such a small holding that even if it were to go into hock completely on the International Exchange Board ... it could still be written off as a business expense.*

A Question of Tactics if I may. With all the advances metahumanity's Science has gained in this century and the last, do any of you believe it possible to apply animation enough to operate a larger operation and have it related back to say ... a few living Operators?

What kind of obstacles would likely be in the way of such an operation, and what would be required to overcome them? I am most interested in this aspect, as those like me of the past are quickly becoming obsolete as it no longer does require massive crews of people to keep some things up to maintenance.

<<display ad Carrier for Hire>>

Pegasus

Advanced Systems

Specialist

18

Male

Human

Places to Go, People to See

This month, Places to Go, People to See contains submissions from Adam Jury (adamj@dumpshock.com), Reika (ladyreika@geocities.com) and Daniel Sauve (ahsdreamwalker@home.com). To submit People and Places for Places to Go, People to See, please use the submission form at <http://tss.dumpshock.com/tss-cd.html>

Bob's Quick and Fast

When you're hungry, you're hungry **now**, not in 45 minutes. If you're in Auburn, Renton, or Tacoma you'll have your pizza within 25 minutes - no ifs ands or buts. Four locations to serve you on time and piping hot. No 20 nuyen "2 for 1" pies here, either. What you want is what you get, and you can hold us - and the delivery boys - to it!

Centrestage INC.

A heartre supply store, based in Toronto. Sells everything from props to scripts and performance rights to bits of theatre rarities (team has to recover a Shakespere manuscript for a Centrestage Johnson?)

The Dark Tower Publishing Company

Publishers of spellbooks and other magic related texts, their stores also carry other publisher's books. No supplies besides the books in various forms.

The Joy of Music LTD

Instruments, scores, CDs and chips-- any music supply you could want can likely be found in the stores or via their very good "seek the sound" service (Occasional running employment to get the more rare goods?).

Xenogenesis

A co-operative of Deckers, their little stores have to be hunted for... but when you find one, it is like a candy store. The Deckmeisters are the types to nurture budding deckers, and can often provide leads to jobs. Membership in the co-op involves pulling supply runs to stock the shop-- and is worth the very good discount. The corps have tried numerous times to shut this group down, only to end up worse off.

The Legacy

Type: Conspiratorial

Members: Unknown

Limitations: None

Strictures: Belief (to protect (meta)humanity from paranormal threats), Deed, Fraternity, and Oath

Resources/Dues: High/500 nuyen a month. Main locations are set in London (the primary chapter house), San Francisco, Moscow, Tokyo, Cairo and Paris, with smaller houses located in large metropolitan centers such as Seattle, Portland, New York, Berlin, etc.

Patron: unknown

Customs: To deal with paranormal threats quietly without bringing undue attention to themselves and those they strive to protect. To be open minded in all situations and that all beliefs are equally valid.

The Legacy was founded centuries ago to protect humanity from various paranormal threats, and while there wasn't much magical activity in what is now called the Fifth World, there were enough incidents to warrant the founding of the order. The order largely remained quiet due to the fact that many people of the supposedly rational Fifth World didn't believe in ghosts, spirits, demons and other supernatural beings, and also to protect themselves from that which they were formed to combat. With the coming of the Awakening the members of the Legacy have been faced with even more threats, and so were forced to open more houses and to recruit more members to help them in their never ending war. Due to the fact the order was founded by mundanes, they are willing to admit (meta)humans that are either mundane or Awakened. A few of the chapter houses even have non-humans in their ranks, such as shapeshifters and some of the more intelligent paracritters.

Acknowledging the fact that there are times their own operatives are unable to complete an assignment, a Legacy chapterhouse will often hire shadowrunners to deal with the matter, and in fact have recruited from the runner community some of their permanent members. Frequently the Legacy investigators will come across dangerous artifacts, which they will contain in deep underground vaults that are heavily warded and tend to be guarded by powerful elementals and spirits.

Typically members of a Legacy house live in the house, but they are aware that some members prefer to live independently for one reason or another. All they ask is that a member give them a means to contact them if an emergency arises.

Each chapter house has available to their members a rating 10 hermetic library, a rating 10 medicine lodge, along with huge libraries of ancient texts. The group can also offer other resources, however they can only be used for missions associated with the Legacy, but members do have an opportunity to purchase items for their own use through the group.

“How Much Did You Say He Weighed?”

Corrected Weights & Measures (and Why They’re Useful) for Characters in FASA’s Shadowrun, 3rd Edition

By Patrick Goodman (pgoodman13@cox-internet.com)

Trolls. Everybody knows about trolls, right? They’re big, they’re bad, and they’re ill tempered. What else do you need to know?

How about this, then, my chumlies: They’re seriously, perhaps even dangerously, underweight. The same goes, to a lesser degree, for orks and elves. Dwarves, on the other hand, are a bit heavier than they should be for their size. This article is going to offer one solution to this problem.

This article saw its genesis back in 1990. Shadowrun (SR1) didn’t have any edition numbers yet, and it was all still new and cool. The average weights for the player character races were way off base, though, a situation that persisted into Shadowrun 2nd Edition (SR2). In SR1 and SR2, trolls weighed in at 120 kg, or about 265 pounds. That’s right. The average troll, according to the original rules, only weighed 265 pounds. If that seems a bit light for someone who averages a height of 280 cm (about 9’2”), it should. To put it in perspective, I stand approximately 193 cm (6’4”, more or less), I’m not particularly muscular, and I weigh in at 104.3 kg (230 pounds). Quick, someone tell me what’s wrong with this picture. By contrast, dwarves weighed in at 72 kg (159 pounds), in the neighborhood of three times what a human of that height would weigh.

One of the first things I noticed when I started playing Roscoe, my troll rocker, was how light a troll really was and thinking, “Something ain’t right.” It was terribly distracting, and as a result I didn’t play to the top of my form and poor Roscoe nearly got scragged in a barroom brawl of epic proportions. This, as you might imagine, didn’t make me particularly happy. With this in mind, I began to look over the other player races and discovered that trolls weren’t the only ones with weight problems. The situation has been aided somewhat in Shadowrun 3rd Edition (SR3); all the races have had their weights modified at least slightly, with dwarves and trolls getting major changes that bring them much closer to realistic body weights. A few minutes with a calculator showed me where the remaining problems were, and a few more minutes yielded the tables that accompany this article.

According to SR3 rules, the original five player races have the official heights and weights given below in Table 1 (which are shown in both English and metric measures). In addition, the Shadowrun Companion (SRC) and Cyberpirates offer a variety of player race variants; their official heights and weights, where mentioned, are shown here as well. Where specific items aren’t mentioned, I tried to extrapolate it from the available information in both SRC and other books (for instance, some information on ogres and minotaurs came from Paranormal Animals of Europe (PAoE), page 122). In a few cases, I took the plunge and just made something up. This extrapolated (or created) data is shown in the table in red.

Table 1. SR3 Standard Heights & Weights

Race (English)	Height (Metric)	Height (English)	Weight (Metric)	Weight
Cyclops	310 cm	122 in (10’2”)	249 kg	549 lbs
Dryads	120 cm	47 in (3’11”)	45 kg	99 lbs
Dwarves	120 cm	47 in (3’11”)	54 kg	119 lbs
Elves	190 cm	75 in (6’3”)	72 kg	159 lbs
Enkanto	190 cm	75 in (6’3”)	72 kg	159 lbs
Fomori	280 cm	110 in (9’2”)	225 kg	496 lbs
Giants	350 cm	138 in (11’6”)	281 kg	619 lbs
Gnomes	110 cm	43 in (3’7”)	40 kg	88 lbs
Hobgoblins	180 cm	71 in (5’11”)	90 kg	198 lbs
Humans	170 cm	67 in (5’7”)	70 kg	154 lbs
Koborokuru	110 cm	43 in (3’7”)	72 kg	119 lbs
Menehune	110 cm	43 in (3’7”)	72 kg	119 lbs
Minotaurs	230 cm	91 in (7’7”)	225 kg	496 lbs
Night Ones	190 cm	75 in (6’3”)	72 kg	159 lbs
Ogres	170 cm	67 in (5’7”)	95 kg	209 lbs
Oni	190 cm	75 in (6’3”)	95 kg	209 lbs
Orks	190 cm	75 in (6’3”)	95 kg	209 lbs
Satyrs	160 cm	63 in (5’3”)	80 kg	176 lbs
Trolls	280 cm	110 in (9’2”)	225 kg	496 lbs
Wakyambi	280 cm	110 in (9’2”)	106 kg	234 lbs

Revision History

Version 1: Original article, written for *Shadowrun*, circa April 1990. Didn’t take any sourcebooks into consideration.

Version 2: Modified for *Shadowrun 2nd Edition*, circa August 1993. Takes into consideration the *Street Samurai Catalog* and *Shadowtech*. Mostly *Shadowtech*, since there really wasn’t any “heavy” cyberware in SSC.

Version 2.1: Modified for *Beyond the Shadows: The Shadowrun Companion*, circa March 1998. Added the metahuman variants, and also a couple of pieces of ware from *Cybertechnology*.

Version 3: Modified for *Shadowrun 3rd Edition*, circa January 1999. Originally offered to the public in *The Shadowrun Supplemental*, Issue #9. (Available at <http://tss.dumpshock.com/tss.html>)

Version 3.1: Modified for *Man & Machine*, circa April 2000. Added new cyberware and bioware options, and also added metavariants mentioned in *Cyberpirates*.

The tallest human being on record, according to the Guinness Book of World Records, was Robert P. Wadlow. At the time of his death, Wadlow stood 8'11" (272 cm) tall and weighed 439 pounds (199.1 kg). At his heaviest, a few months before his death, Wadlow weighed just over 490 pounds (222.3 kg), about the same weight as the average troll. He wasn't particularly muscular, and the proportions of his body were normal (he was, in fact, a bit slender; proportionately, he would have weighed around 110 pounds had he stood 5'7"). Clearly a troll, with his massive musculature and heavier skeleton, should weigh more than a human of the same approximate height.

The figures that follow are based on simple proportional mathematics and solid geometry; an object's weight is proportional to the product of its linear dimensions. If you change one of these, you have to change the other two by the same percentage to maintain proportion. To figure the new weight, determine what percentage of the original's size the new object is. For example, on average a human female is approximately 92%, or 0.92 times, the height of a human male, and her other dimensions have been scaled down by a similar amount. To figure her weight, you take this percentage, cube it (multiply it by itself once for each of the three dimensions, or 0.92 times 0.92 times 0.92), and multiply this number by the male's body weight.

They're also based on what a human would weigh at that height, with specific modifiers applied based on the physical attributes of Body and Strength, and the racial bonuses to those stats. After all, in our world we don't have elves and orks to measure, but we do have humans. Humans were the common denominator in the Awakening, which Unexplained Genetic Expression (UGE) and Goblinization played upon to produce the other races of humanity.

The figures shown are approximations, and are rounded to the nearest centimeter or the nearest inch, as appropriate, for height. Likewise, they're rounded to the nearest tenth of a kilogram or the nearest pound, again as appropriate, for weights.

Humans

Since humans were the one common denominator before UGE and Goblinization created the various sub-races of humanity, it seems logical to start this discussion with them.

The SR3 rules place the average human at 170 cm, about 5'7" tall, with a weight of 70 kg (or 154 pounds). Though this is about right for human males, human females are typically several centimeters shorter than males. This article assumes that there's a size difference between genders of eight percent, which is a bit larger than normal but a bit smaller than what most games provide. This gives a female human a height of 156 cm. Taking the official weight of 70 kg for a human male as a base would give the female a weight of 54.5 kg on the average.

Elves

Of all the Awakened, elves (well, your garden-variety elves, anyway) are the most like humans in terms of general appearance. Two of the subspecies, dryads and wakyambi, still look mostly human save for their size; the Night Ones still look mostly human

if the humans you know are midnight blue and fuzzy. All the elven species also display as great a difference in overall size between genders as do humans, with the exception of dryads, who only appear as females.

Officially, an elven male at 190 cm weighs 72 kg, slightly more than a human male. The Night Ones really differ from normal elves only in their coloration and the velvety fur covering their skin, so they have the same height and weight figures. Likewise, the enkanto and enkantada of the Philippines are virtually identical to normal elves, so they too use the same height and weight figures. (“Enkanto” is masculine, and “enkantada” is feminine; unless gender is important, I'll use “enkanto” as the plural form.) The wakyambi of Africa are as tall as trolls, around 280 cm; no official weight is given that I've been able to uncover, but extrapolating from normal elves and doing simple multiplication, the “official” weight would probably be in the neighborhood of 100 kg to 110 kg. Dryads are a little harder to figure, since they stand at just over a meter tall. I put them at 120 cm, since there's little canonical guidance, and figured their “official” weight at 45 kg.

Although elves are traditionally gaunt by human standards, 72 kg is dangerously thin. An elf this gaunt would probably not be able to handle weapons or any kind of heavy equipment, simply because they lack the necessary muscle mass. The primary reason for their gauntness is genetic. Their skeletal structure is thinner and lighter. Their muscles are smaller and flatter than a human's are, though they're just as powerful, and their bodies are relatively free of fat. Despite this, an elf weighing only 72 kg seems rather low.

Proportionately, a human male standing 190 cm tall would weigh about 97.7 kg; a human as tall as a wakyambi would weigh in at 312.8 kg. Elven males, both standard-issue nobilis and Night Ones, with their thinner skeleton and their smaller, flatter muscles, would probably weigh about 80% of this, putting them at approximately 78.2 kg. Wakyambi are even thinner than normal elves, so I put their multiplier at about 75%. With this in mind, a male wakyambi elf weighs in at 234.6 kg. This is still quite slender, but no longer emaciated.

Elven females, like human females, are about eight percent shorter on the average than males. This places elven females at 175 cm, still taller than the average human male, with a proportional body weight of approximately 60.9 kg. A female wakyambi would be about 258 cm tall, and weigh about 182.7 kg.

Dryads

Dryads are the only elven species too heavy, proportionally, for their height. A female elf scaled down to 120 cm would weigh 19.6 kg, or about 43 pounds. Dryads take a penalty to both Body and Strength of -1 each. This would put a typical dryad at 88% of that weight, or 17.2 kg; this is about 70% of what a human would weigh at that height. This is an extremely light body weight to be running the shadows with, but the available data are so limited that it's almost impossible to justify any increase in weight.

Orks

Orks are the Awakened counterparts of the elves. Standing at the same 190 cm as an elf, an ork is stockier, more muscular, and heavier. They weigh in at 95 kg, which is just a little bit shy of what a proportional human would weigh at that height (about 97.7 kg). They're more powerful than humans, though, and should weigh more as a result.

It can be argued that an ork's muscle-to-body fat ratio is a good deal better than a human's, as the character generation rules allow orks a Strength bonus of +2 and a Body bonus of +3. Muscle mass is proportionately heavier than fat mass. Taking these things into consideration, I used the Strength and Body modifiers found later in this article to modify the 97.7 kg human just mentioned and make him an ork. The total modifier became 1.28, which gives us a male ork weighing 125.1 kg, or 276 pounds. This places them firmly in the bounds of many modern-day human professional athletes. The oni of Japan have the same modifiers as ordinary orks, and weigh the same.

While orks show a difference in size between genders, it is not as severe or as noticeable as that shown by humans and elves. Those two races show a difference between genders of about eight percent, while orks only show a difference of four percent. This gives ork females an average height of 182 cm, somewhat taller than a human male. Ork females are substantially heavier than human males, though, weighing in at 110 kg. Female oni are the same height and weight as female orks.

Orks and trolls both show a remarkable diversity in size and shape among their variant types. Closer in general to humans than the typical robustus are the hobgoblins, which have a shorter and thinner stature than their cousins do; however, not much else was said. I gave them an average height of 180 cm, since there was little canonical guidance. A human at 180 cm would weigh 83.1 kg. A hobgoblin has a Body bonus of only +2, and a Strength bonus of +2, for a total modifier of 1.24, for a final weight for a male hobgoblin of 103 kg. A female hobgoblin stands about 4% shorter than a male, for a height of 173 cm and a weight of 91.4 kg.

Satyrs

The satyrs of the Mediterranean area are considerably smaller than their more common cousins, standing only about 160 cm in height. They also have a slighter build than orks do, though they're huskier than a human of the same height. Their slight stature is an illusion, since they have the same bonuses to Body and Strength that orks do; their muscles are flatter and denser, and their bodies are exceptionally free of fat. A human of 160 cm would weigh about 58.4 kg. With the final modifier of 1.28 in place, a satyr weighs in at 74.8 kg. Unlike the other ork subspecies, satyrs don't appear to have a significant difference in size between the genders.

Ogres

Ogres present a little bit of a problem. The scant information available in SRC and PAoE indicates that they're shorter and stockier than regular orks, but it's never mentioned how much shorter or stockier they actually are. Therefore, as with many of the metaspecies variants in this article, I had to wing it. I placed them at 170 cm, approximately the same height as a human. An ogre gets the same Body and Strength modifiers as an ork, for a total modifier of 1.28. Multiplying this times a normal human's body weight yields 89.6 kg. However, SRC and PAoE both also state that ogres have the same approximate body weight as orks, which is stocky and broad-shouldered indeed; to do this would take a modifier of more than 1.7, almost the same modifier used for a dwarf (see below). So, the same 70 kg multiplied by 1.7 yields a weight of 119 kg for a male ogre. Ogres exhibit the same 4% variance in gender size that most other orks species do; this puts the height of a female ogre at about 163 cm, with a body weight of 104.9 kg.

Trolls

And now, here we are, back at the beginning again. We've arrived at the biggest, baddest, most dangerous members of Awakened society. Trolls and their variants are, quite understandably, feared and respected by the other races. They are large, incredibly strong, and capable of taking enough damage to fell a company of Marines and still keep coming at you. We have already shown, though, that they are dangerously underweight. A normal human built to a troll's size specifications would weigh in at an impressive 312.8 kg.

Trolls have more going for them, physically, than any of the races, even the orks. The basic troll's Strength modifier of +4 is higher, as is their Body bonus of +5. In addition to this, they have their bony dermal plating going for them. Bone is heavy, and the additional bone of their armor makes up a sizable portion of their total weight. Their arms are disproportionately long for their bodies. All this adds up. I used the modifiers in the next section to take all this into account, and arrived at a modifier of 1.57 times the weight of a proportional human. This gives the average troll a weight of 491.1 kg. Unlike humans or elves, trolls show negligible size differences between genders, giving female trolls the same stats as males.

Giants

The giants of the Nordic regions of Europe are even more impressive, standing at 350 cm. No official weight was given, but given the track record for the other races, it probably wouldn't have been more than about 150 kg or so in SR2, and probably about 285 kg in SR3. A human as tall as a giant would weigh 610.9 kg. Even without the dermal armor of their smaller cousins, the giants have an impressive weight multiplier of 1.6, brought about by their +5 bonuses to both Strength and Body. This puts a male giant's weight at 977.4 kg. Unique among the troll variants, however, giants show the same 8% difference in average size between genders that humans do; this is probably related to their tendency towards genetic reversion, though scientists are still debating the matter. A female giant stands around 322 cm, and weighs 761.1 kg.

Fomori

The fomori of the Celtic isles stand as tall as an ordinary troll does, but they're not as massively muscled, nor do they have the bony dermal armor of their cousins. Their Strength and Body bonuses are lower, giving them a final weight multiplier of 1.4. Multiplied by the 312.8 kg that a normal human would weigh at 280 cm gives a typical fomori a normal weight of 437.9 kg. There is no appreciable difference in size between male and female fomori.

Cyclops

The Mediterranean basin gives us two troll sub-species, Cyclops and minotaurs. A cyclops is the more massive of the two, standing an impressive 310 cm tall. Their bonuses of +5 to Body and +6 to Strength combine for a total modifier of 1.68. A human 310 cm tall would weigh 424.5 kg; multiplied by their 1.68 stat modifier, this gives a cyclops an average body weight of 713.2 kg.

Minotaur

The minotaur is shorter and stockier than any other troll sub-species, standing (according to PAoE) a mere 230 cm. However, again according to PAoE, they also weigh the same as their taller, more common cousins. It would require a multiplier of around 2.8 to accomplish that, though, and that's just not happening; a minotaur weighing as much as a troll would be more or less cube-shaped, if he wasn't spherical. A minotaur's bonuses of +4 Body and +3 Strength give him a normal modifier of 1.4. To take his broader dimensions into account, I boosted that up to 1.6. A human standing 230 cm would weigh in at 173.4 kg; a minotaur, therefore, weighs 277.4 kg.

You might have noticed that the various troll races are heavy. I mean, they're really heavy. How can their skeletons support this much weight? It shouldn't be possible, since even trolls are basically human in proportions, and the human skeletal structure simply can't support the mass without some kind of help. Structural strength is a product of two dimensions (width and depth), while weight is a product of three dimensions (length, width, and depth). Genetics provide a part of the explanation; the troll skeleton is, proportionately, a bit heavier than a human skeleton, but it's still not strong enough to support upwards of half a ton (and in the case of giants, that's considerably upwards). At the heart of it is the only real explanation: magic. UGE, at its very heart, is a magical phenomenon. Many experts in the field of thaumaturgic medicine have said that there is a mystical “energy field” that helps the Awakened races at least partially ignore some of the more mundane physical laws. Others explain it not as an “energy field” per se, but a magical “recoding” of the DNA. There's not a general consensus in the medical field, and there's not really an easy answer to this one.

Dwarves

Last, but by no means least, we come to the reversal of the above paradoxes. Unlike the rest of the player races, which were unaccountably light for their size, dwarves are unaccountably heavy for theirs. While dwarves are strong and very massive, a dwarf standing 120 cm and weighing 72 kg, as SR2 had them

listed, was rather drastic. A human that tall would weigh a mere 24.6 kg; a dwarf as tall as a human would weigh 199 kg. Clearly, there's something wrong with that. Even at the 54 kg given them in SR3, they're a little more chunky than they should be.

While not as powerful as a troll or an ork, a dwarf's +1 Body modifier and +2 Strength modifier are nothing to scoff at. Trolls and orks are essentially human in proportion, though, while dwarves aren't. Placed next to a human the same height, a dwarf is over twice as broad across the shoulders and chest, and almost twice as thick through the chest. His skeleton is the opposite of an elf's, being nearly twice as thick and heavy. His muscle tissue is similarly very dense. The modifiers for Body and Strength only give a weight modifier of 1.2, however, for a body weight of 29.5 kg. This doesn't take a dwarf's off-kilter body proportions into account, either. Even a troll's body weight modifier of 1.57 doesn't yield what would seem a proper body weight for this particular branch of humanity. With a modifier of 1.57, a dwarf only weighs 38.6 kg, still not quite heavy enough for our purposes.

A modifier of 1.8 was used to take into account the great breadth and thickness of a dwarf in comparison to his height, as well as his dense skeleton and musculature. This yields a more satisfying 44.3 kg, more than heavy enough for running the shadows without being freakishly high. Like the trolls, dwarves show almost no difference in size between genders, so these figures are accurate for female dwarves as well as male.

Unlike some of the other racial variants, the various dwarf subspecies don't offer much in the way of size variation. The koborokuru of Japan and the menehune of Hawaii are both a little shorter than dwarves are; both races average about 110 cm, at which height a human would weigh 19 kg. The koborokuru, in fact, use the same 1.8 multiplier that ordinary dwarves use, which gives them a body weight of 34.2 kg. The menehune, while having a better Body bonus than an ordinary dwarf, is actually a little bit lighter because his body proportions aren't as off-kilter as a dwarf's. Menehune only receive a 1.6 multiplier; while not as blocky as a dwarf, he's still a lot bigger than a proportional human is. Menehune weigh in at 30.4 kg.

Gnomes

Gnomes, while receiving the normal Body and Strength modifiers for dwarves, are both shorter and slighter than their cousins are. Like the other dwarven races, I placed their height at about 110 cm, since there wasn't anything more specific in SRC. At a height of 110 cm, a human weighs 19 kg; with the stat modifier of 1.2, this gives a gnome a body weight of 22.8 kg. Unlike the other dwarves, gnomes are essentially human in proportion, and don't get any additional modifiers to increase their weight. Like that of the dryads we dealt with earlier, this is an extremely low body weight to be running the shadows with. Such light bodies would have trouble with the recoil of most modern weapons simply because of the limited body mass; how this is handled is left to the individual GM.

All of these revised figures are shown in Table 2, on the next page.

Table 2. Revised Heights & Weights

Race	Height (Metric)	Height (English) (Metric)	Weight	Weight (English)	Weight Multiplier
Cyclops	310 cm	122 in (10'2")	713.2 kg	1,572 lbs	1.68
Dryads	120 cm	47 in (3'11")	17.2 kg	38 lbs	0.70
Dwarves	120 cm	47 in (3'11")	44.3 kg	98 lbs	1.80
Elves, female	175 cm	69 in (5'9")	60.9 kg	134 lbs	0.80
Elves, male	190 cm	75 in (6'3")	78.2 kg	172 lbs	0.80
Enkantada	175 cm	69 in (5'9")	60.9 kg	134 lbs	0.80
Enkanto	190 cm	75 in (6'3")	78.2 kg	172 lbs	0.80
Fomori	280 cm	110 in (9'2")	437.9 kg	965 lbs	1.40
Giants, female	322 cm	127 in (10'7")	761.1 kg	1,678 lbs	1.60
Giants, male	350 cm	138 in (11'6")	977.4 kg	2,155 lbs	1.60
Gnomes	110 cm	43 in (3'7")	22.8 kg	50 lbs	1.20
Hobgoblins, female	173 cm	68 in (5'8")	91.4 kg	202 lbs	1.24
Hobgoblins, male	180 cm	71 in (5'11")	103.0 kg	227 lbs	1.24
Humans, female	156 cm	61 in (5'1")	54.5 kg	120 lbs	1.00
Humans, male	170 cm	67 in (5'7")	70.0 kg	154 lbs	1.00
Koborokuru	110 cm	43 in (3'7")	34.2 kg	75 lbs	1.80
Menehune	110 cm	43 in (3'7")	30.4 kg	67 lbs	1.60
Minotaurs	230 cm	91 in (7'7")	277.4 kg	612 lbs	1.60
Night Ones, female	175 cm	69 in (5'9")	60.9 kg	134 lbs	0.80
Night Ones, male	190 cm	75 in (6'3")	78.2 kg	172 lbs	0.80
Ogres, female	163 cm	64 in (5'4")	104.9 kg	231 lbs	1.70
Ogres, male	170 cm	67 in (5'7")	119.0 kg	262 lbs	1.70
Oni, female	182 cm	72 in (6'0")	110.0 kg	243 lbs	1.28
Oni, male	190 cm	75 in (6'3")	125.1 kg	278 lbs	1.28
Orks, female	182 cm	72 in (6'0")	110.0 kg	243 lbs	1.28
Orks, male	190 cm	75 in (6'3")	125.1 kg	278 lbs	1.28
Satyrs	160 cm	63 in (5'3")	74.8 kg	165 lbs	1.28
Trolls	280 cm	110 in (9'2")	491.1 kg	1,083 lbs	1.57
Wakyambi, female	258 cm	102 in (8'6")	182.7 kg	403 lbs	0.75
Wakyambi, male	280 cm	110 in (9'2")	234.6 kg	517 lbs	0.75

Note that these are for average adult members of the species. There are shorter giants and taller gnomes than those shown, for instance. Variation in height can be as much as 35% either way in most species, with a proportional gain or loss in weight. To get a proportional weight, determine the new height as a percentage of the average height, convert that to a decimal number, cube that figure, and multiply it by the average weight. If the character is taller or shorter than average, and has stat bonuses or penalties, figure the appropriate weight for her height first, and then come up with a multiplier based on exceptional physical stats or cyberware (see Table 5).

For example, let's say we have a really big male giant (which is redundant, I know, but bear with me). Say he's 380 cm tall, and we want to determine what his weight should be. The new height is about 109% of the giant's average height of 350 cm, or 1.09 times that height. The cube of 1.09 is approximately 1.3,

which we now multiply times the average weight of 977.4 kg. This gives us the thoroughly impressive figure of 1,270.6 kg, or 2,801 pounds. This is certainly not someone (or something) you'd want pursuing you down a corridor with a large axe of some sort, by any means.

Youngsters are going to be smaller and lighter than an adult, though the same theory as above holds true for figuring their weight. Simply figure out what percentage of the adult height the youth is, and you can figure his weight.

The figures given are guidelines; if you want to run an obese character, for instance, use the figures shown as a guide and add on another 15 or 20 kg, or whatever figure seems appropriate. Emaciated characters would subtract several kilograms. Just try not to overdo it.

Exercise, Cyberware, and the Weight-Conscious Shadowrunner

A word that’s been seeing a lot of use in this article is “average.” All the figures shown are for an average member of that species. What if your character is above average? Or below average? How does this affect body weight within the game system? What the frag is “average,” anyway? Good questions, all. Let’s take a look and see if we can find some answers.

The two character statistics that bear on the question of body weight are Body and Strength. The SR2 rules define Body as “general health and resistance to injury and pain,” while Strength is “the ability to lift, carry, and cause physical damage.” The SR3 definitions are longer but essentially the same. Both Body and Strength are aspects of physical fitness. Body represents overall conditioning and muscle tone, and Strength is muscle mass and physical power. The average values of these two stats for each race are shown in Table 3, below.

Table 3. Average Body & Strength Scores

Race	Body	Strength
Cyclops	8	9
Dryads	2	2
Dwarves	4	5
Elves	3	3
Enkanto	3	3
Fomori	7	6
Giants	8	8
Gnomes	4	5
Hobgoblins	5	5
Humans	3	3
Koborokuru	4	5
Menehune	5	5
Minotaurs	7	6
Night Ones	3	3
Ogres	6	5
Oni	6	5
Orks	6	5
Satyrs	6	5
Trolls	8	7
Wakyambi	3	3

Body is associated with a character’s general good health, muscle tone, and muscle-to-fat ratio. Characters with higher Body scores are going to have a higher muscle-to-fat ratio, and thus a higher body weight, since muscle is heavier than fat. Characters with lower Body scores are going to have a lower muscle-to-fat ratio, and will tend to be lighter. Note that they’ll be lighter only if their bodily proportions stay the same as the average character, since characters with lower Body scores quite often tend to be obese couch potatoes. It is left to the individual GM’s discretion as to how to handle these cases, though, as the scope of this article is on those characters with average proportions, not extremely skinny or extremely obese characters. For each point of Body above average, add an extra 4% of the basic weight shown in Table 2 to your character’s weight. Note

that this does not cover Body-enhancing cyberware, which will be dealt with in the next part of the article. This also works in reverse. For each point of Body below average, subtract 4% from the basic weight.

Strength is concerned more with raw muscle mass and bulk than Body, and is therefore going to have a much greater impact on a character’s body weight. For each point of Strength above average, add an extra 8% of the basic weight shown in Table 2 to your character’s weight. This includes exceptional Strength due to muscle replacement; for more details, see the next section. As with Body, this works in reverse, too. For each point of Strength below average, subtract 8% of the basic weight from your character’s weight.

As an example, say we have an average human male. Normally, he stands at 170 cm and 70 kg. However, he has Body 6 and Strength 6 (and speaks in a Teutonic accent, but that’s not important right now). Average scores on these two stats for humans are threes, so he has Body +3 and Strength +3. For the Body, he gets to add an additional .12 to the base weight, and for the Strength he gets .24, for a combined total of 36% additional weight. Taking the base weight and multiplying it by 1.36, we get (70 x 1.36 =) 95.2 kg. This puts him in the same class as a competition bodybuilder of today. (The Teutonic accent? It’s phony; this razorguy idolizes Senator Schwarzenegger, that’s all.) Weight modifiers for Body and Strength, as well as for a variety of cyberware, can be found in Table 5 at the end of this article.

What about cyberware or bioware? What effect do they play on body weight? For the most part, they don’t. Most cybernetic replacement parts, especially cyberlimbs, are specifically engineered to weigh about the same as the meat component they’re replacing, so that the recipient’s sense of balance won’t be wildly thrown off. Ditto for the bulk of your biological enhancements. Things like retinal modifications and the vast majority of headware are virtually weightless, consisting at the most of a couple of optical chips and a few ounces of wire. Even a radio implant or a cranial cyberdeck weighs less than a kilogram. Most of your cyberweapons are going to weigh the same as their non-cyber counterparts, less than 5 kg total in most cases. Some modifications, though, are hardly that considerate.

One of the heaviest alterations your character is likely to get is dermal plating. This consists of composite fiber plates placed under your skin to provide protection from things like sword thrusts and assault rifle bullets. They’re also heavy. For each level of dermal armor your character has, add 5% of their basic weight.

Similar to dermal plating is dermal sheathing, which provides the same benefits without being as obvious, or as heavy. Dermal sheathing adds 3% to a character’s base weight per level.

Orthoskin, the bioware approach to personal protection, thickens and strengthens the skin, interweaving it with fortified collagens and cartilage. While not as heavy as the other armoring alternatives, it does add a little bit to the character’s weight. For each level of orthoskin, add 1% to the character’s base weight.

Muscle replacement is almost a tricky matter. If muscle replacement is already a part of your archetype, you don't have to do anything; just figure weight modifiers based on Strength as you would above. If he decides to add on some muscle replacement after play begins, simply add 8% of the base weight from Table 2 for each level of muscle replacement.

Muscle augmentation, as presented in Shadowtech, works in a similar manner, but isn't as massive as muscle replacement. It gains its benefits more from increasing the tensile strength of the existing muscle fiber, rather than laying on the bulk, as muscle replacement does. For each level of muscle augmentation, add 4% to the character's base body weight. It should be noted that Man & Machine changed the presentation of muscle augmentation, splitting out the Quickness and Strength increases into two different pieces of ware, muscle augmentation and muscle toner. Muscle augmentation is going to be the heavier of the two modifications, adding 3% per level to the character's base body weight, with muscle toner adding 1% per level.

A new piece of ware introduced in Man & Machine was the balance tail. Another of the weighty options, it presented a bit of a problem, since it never mentioned how much one of the things weighs. Winging it once again, I estimated a balance tail would probably weigh about 5% of a person's body weight. The other issue was length; it made sense to me that a tail meant to improve a human's balance would be longer than one needed for dwarves, and shorter than one for trolls. The official length for a balance tail is about a meter. Assuming this is for an average human, you can figure the length for the different races by dividing their height by the height of an average human (170 cm); the result is the length of the tail in meters. For instance, an average troll (280 cm) gets a balance tail. It's going to be $(280 / 170 =)$ 1.65 m long, and it's going to add 24.6 kg to his weight $(491.1 \times .05 = 24.55$, rounded to 24.6). To make life a little easier, I've listed the standard weights and lengths of off-the-shelf balance tails, in Table 4. Custom tails, of course, will have to be measured on a case-by-case basis.

One bit of cyberware that can significantly alter a character's weight is bone lacing, which introduces extra materials into the bones in order to strengthen them, and of all the pieces of cyber in the game, this is the only one that I can recall that mentions a specific weight. Unfortunately, the weight it mentions is just plain messed up. The Shadowtech sourcebook states that plastic bone lacing weighs 5 kg, to be used against a character's load. It goes on to say that aluminum bone lacing weighs 10 kg, and titanium bone lacing weighs 15 kg. As with plastic lacing, these weights are meant to count against the character's load. This presents a couple of problems. The first is the actual weight of the bone lacing itself. Doesn't it make sense that bone lacing on a gnome is going to weigh less than bone lacing on a troll? By the same token, given the difference in size between genders found in most metasppecies, wouldn't bone lacing in a male weigh more than the same bone lacing in a female? With that in mind, I took a calculator and came up with Table 5 below, using the figures in Shadowtech as a base, and multiplying them by the ratio of the target race's height compared to a human's, and

Table 4. Balance Tail Lengths & Weights

Race	Length	Weight
Cyclops	182 cm	35.7 kg
Dryads	71 cm	0.9 kg
Dwarves	71 cm	2.2 kg
Elves, female	103 cm	3.0 kg
Elves, male	112 cm	3.9 kg
Enkantada	103 cm	3.0 kg
Enkanto	112 cm	3.9 kg
Fomori	165 cm	21.9 kg
Giants, female	189 cm	38.1 kg
Giants, male	206 cm	48.9 kg
Gnomes	65 cm	1.1 kg
Hobgoblins, female	102 cm	4.6 kg
Hobgoblins, male	106 cm	5.2 kg
Humans, female	92 cm	2.7 kg
Humans, male	100 cm	3.5 kg
Koborokuru	65 cm	1.7 kg
Menehune	65 cm	1.5 kg
Minotaurs	135 cm	13.9 kg
Night Ones, female	103 cm	3.0 kg
Night Ones, male	112 cm	3.9 kg
Ogres, female	96 cm	5.2 kg
Ogres, male	100 cm	6.0 kg
Oni, female	107 cm	5.5 kg
Oni, male	112 cm	6.3 kg
Orks, female	107 cm	5.5 kg
Orks, male	112 cm	6.3 kg
Satyrs	94 cm	3.7 kg
Trolls	165 cm	24.6 kg
Wakyambi, female	152 cm	9.2 kg
Wakyambi, male	165 cm	11.7 kg

multiplying that by the weight multiplier used for each race earlier in this article (see Table 2). For example, I want to figure how much plastic bone lacing would weigh for an average male wakyambi's skeleton. I use the formula $(280/170) \times .75 \times 5$ kg, which gives you, approximately, 6.2 kg.

As with the body's weight, the weight of bone lacing will be greater for taller members of a species, and lighter for shorter members. As with the body's weight, find the percentage difference between the character's height and average height, cube that, and multiply it by the average weight listed above. For example, a human male standing 180 cm gets Kevlar bone lacing. His height of 180 cm is about 6% higher than average, or 1.06 times average. Cubed, that 1.06 becomes 1.19, which when multiplied by the 5 kg that Kevlar bone lacing weighs for an average human, yields a weight of 5.95 kg, which is added to the character's base weight after all other modifiers are taken into account.

The second problem presented with bone lacing is that the weights are supposed to count against a character's load. My uncle's left femur (the bone in the thigh) has an aluminum shaft permanently attached to it, the result of a rodeo accident. The chunk of aluminum weighs about a pound and a half, if I

Table 5. Bone Lacing Weights

Race	Plastic	Kevlar	Aluminum	Ceramic	Titanium
Cyclops	15.3 kg	15.3 kg	30.6 kg	50.0 kg	50.0 kg
Dryads	2.5 kg	2.5 kg	4.9 kg	7.4 kg	7.4 kg
Dwarves	6.4 kg	6.4 kg	12.7 kg	19.1 kg	19.1 kg
Elves, female	4.1 kg	4.1 kg	8.2 kg	12.4 kg	12.4 kg
Elves, male	4.5 kg	4.5 kg	8.9 kg	13.4 kg	13.4 kg
Enkantada	4.1 kg	4.1 kg	8.2 kg	12.4 kg	12.4 kg
Enkanto	4.5 kg	4.5 kg	8.9 kg	13.4 kg	13.4 kg
Fomori	11.5 kg	11.5 kg	23.1 kg	34.6 kg	34.6 kg
Giants, female	15.2 kg	15.2 kg	30.3 kg	45.5 kg	45.5 kg
Giants, male	16.5 kg	16.5 kg	32.9 kg	49.4 kg	49.4 kg
Gnomes	3.9 kg	3.9 kg	7.8 kg	11.6 kg	11.6 kg
Hobgoblins, female	6.3 kg	6.3 kg	12.6 kg	18.9 kg	18.9 kg
Hobgoblins, male	6.6 kg	6.6 kg	13.1 kg	19.7 kg	19.7 kg
Humans, female	4.6 kg	4.6 kg	9.2 kg	13.8 kg	13.8 kg
Humans, male	5.0 kg	5.0 kg	10.0 kg	15.0 kg	15.0 kg
Koborokuru	5.8 kg	5.8 kg	11.6 kg	17.5 kg	17.5 kg
Menehune	5.2 kg	5.2 kg	10.4 kg	15.5 kg	15.5 kg
Minotaurs	10.8 kg	10.8 kg	21.6 kg	32.5 kg	32.5 kg
Night Ones, female	4.1 kg	4.1 kg	8.2 kg	12.4 kg	12.4 kg
Night Ones, male	4.5 kg	4.5 kg	8.9 kg	13.4 kg	13.4 kg
Ogres, female	8.2 kg	8.2 kg	16.3 kg	24.5 kg	24.5 kg
Ogres, male	8.5 kg	8.5 kg	17.0 kg	25.5 kg	25.5 kg
Oni, female	6.9 kg	6.9 kg	13.7 kg	20.6 kg	20.6 kg
Oni, male	7.2 kg	7.2 kg	14.3 kg	21.5 kg	21.5 kg
Orks, female	6.9 kg	6.9 kg	13.7 kg	20.6 kg	20.6 kg
Orks, male	7.2 kg	7.2 kg	14.3 kg	21.5 kg	21.5 kg
Satyrs	4.7 kg	4.7 kg	9.4 kg	14.1 kg	14.1 kg
Trolls	12.9 kg	12.9 kg	25.9 kg	38.8 kg	38.8 kg
Wakyambi, female	5.7 kg	5.7 kg	11.4 kg	17.1 kg	17.1 kg
Wakyambi, male	6.2 kg	6.2 kg	12.4 kg	18.5 kg	18.5 kg

remember correctly. Uncle Charlie tells me that it threw off his balance for about four months or so once he was finished healing; after that, except for the twinge he gets in cold weather, he barely notices it's there. That's bone lacing, at least on a primitive level. While it really does add to the character's weight, one of the local house rules is that it only adds to the character's load for a while as the character's body adjusts to the new weight. This adjustment usually takes several months; I use the formula $24 / [(Body + Willpower) / 2]$ (round up) to determine how many months, since healing is as much a process of a character's will to get better as it is that character's level of fitness. For purposes of this calculation, you should use the unaugmented values for Body and Willpower.

It's time now for a much more complex example, to show you the whole system (well, most of it anyway) in operation. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you the late, great Keith Patterson, human soldier of fortune, and a man with more heavy modifications to his body than most people will even consider. Keith was a human male, standing 197 cm and having an unaugmented Body and Strength of 5 each. His height is about 1.16 times that of an average human. Before any augmentation, his weight was an already impressive

135.4 kg (1.16 cubed is 1.56, times 70 kg is 109.2 kg, with additional Strength modifiers of .16 and additional Body modifiers of .08, for a total multiplier of 1.24; $1.24 \times 109.2 \text{ kg} = 135.4 \text{ kg}$).

Keith had muscle augmentation 4 and muscle toner 4, which also contributed to his body weight. The muscle augmentation added a .12 multiplier, while the muscle toner added another .04, for a multiplier of 1.16. Multiplied by his base weight of 135.4 kg, this gives us 157.1 kg.

Finally, he had titanium bone lacing. With his height being considerably higher than average, this added up quickly. He was 1.16 times the average height of a human male; cubed, this gives us 1.56 as a multiplier. Multiplied by the weight of titanium bone lacing for an average human (15 kg), this yields 23.4 kg, which is added to his weight of 157.1 kg, for a total of 180.5 kg, or about 398 pounds.

Under normal circumstances, such replacement items as cyberlimbs and even cybertorsos aren't going to adversely affect a

character’s body weight. Such replacements are normally designed to match the rest of the body, and are balanced so that, as far as the body’s equilibrium is concerned, they’re the real things. However, if the limbs are equipped for increased Quickness or Strength (or both), or if the torso and/or limbs are armored, all bets are off and character weight can increase dramatically in short order.

Cyberlimbs are designed with Strength, Quickness, and Body (which Man & Machine refers to as Integrity when dealing with cyberlimbs) equal to the racial averages for the race of the character in question. At this rating, they’ll weigh about the same as the meat limb that they’re replacing. Each limb can have different ratings for each of these physical attributes, though. For Body/Integrity increases beyond the average rating, add 2% per point, per each limb so enhanced. Likewise, add 2% per limb for each point of Quickness above average added. For above average Strength ratings, add 3% per point for each enhanced limb. Some GMs may allow these attributes to be lowered so that they match the body they are being attached to; in such cases, it’s easier to simply assume that the limb weighs as much as its original flesh counterpart, and that the character weighs what he did before the limb was attached.

It should be noted that Man & Machine added a wrinkle by making cyberlimbs default to a different rating for each Attribute, which means that all off-the-shelf cyberlimbs from Man & Machine weigh more than their pre-Man & Machine counterparts. How this is handled is up to each individual GM; they can either rule that the basic limbs from Man & Machine weigh the same as limbs from earlier editions, or they can add the appropriate modifiers to the average ratings to determine the new weight. I’ve found it easier to take the former route, but for those wishing to take the latter, Table 6 offers the new base ratings for the three Attributes as described in Man & Machine.

Cybertorsos and cyberskulls can have either soft or hard armor plating added to them, which adds to the amount of weight you’re carrying around. For soft armor on a cyberskull, add 1% per point, and for hardened armor add 2% per point. Soft armor on a cybertorso is going to weigh about 4% per point, with hardened armor coming in at 8% per point. Cyberlimbs can carry armor plating, too. Soft armor on a cyberarm is going to add 2% per point, with hardened armor adding 4% per point; soft armor on a cyberleg is going to add 3% per point, and hardened armor will add 6% per point. These additions for cyberlimbs are on a per-limb basis.

All of these modifiers are collected in Table 7. There are likely to be other things that will

Table 6. Average Cyberlimb Attribute Scores (per Man and Machine)

Race	Bod	Str	Qui
Cyclops	8	10	4
Dryads	2	3	4
Dwarves	4	6	4
Elves	3	4	4
Enkanto	3	4	4
Fomori	7	7	4
Giants	8	9	4
Gnomes	4	6	4
Hobgoblins	5	6	4
Humans	3	4	4
Koborokuru	4	6	4
Menehune	5	6	4
Minotaurs	7	7	4
Night Ones	3	4	4
Ogres	6	6	4
Oni	6	6	4
Orks	6	6	4
Satyrs	6	6	4
Trolls	8	8	4
Wakyambi	3	4	4

affect body weight, but these are the primary considerations. With that in mind, and the tables provided, it should be easy to determine changes that need to be made. Enjoy.

Table 7. Weight Modifiers

Item	Modifier to Basic Weight
Balance Tail	+5% (also see Table 4)
Bone Lacing	See Table 5
Cyberarm hard armor	+ 4% (.04) / point / limb
Cyberarm soft armor	+ 2% (.02) / point / limb
Cyberleg hard armor	+ 6% (.06) / point / limb
Cyberleg soft armor	+ 3% (.03) / point / limb
Cyberlimb Body/Integrity increase	+ 2% (.02) / point / limb
Cyberlimb Quickness increase	+ 2% (.02) / point / limb
Cyberlimb Strength increase	+ 3% (.03) / point / limb
Cyberskull hard armor	+ 2% (.02) / point
Cyberskull soft armor	+ 1% (.01) / point
Cybertorso hard armor	+ 8% (.08) / point
Cybertorso soft armor	+ 4% (.04) / point
Dermal Plating	+ 5% (.05) / level
Dermal Sheathing	+ 3% (.03) / level
Muscle Augmentation (<i>Man & Machine</i> style)	+ 3% (.03) / level
Muscle Augmentation (<i>Shadowtech</i> style)	+ 4% (.04) / level
Muscle Replacement	+ 8% (.08) / level
Muscle Toner (<i>Man & Machine</i> style)	+ 1% (.01) / level
Orthoskin	+ 1% (.01) / level
Point of Body above/below average	+/- 4% (.04) / point

Damage Control

By Steven "Bull" Ratkovich
(bull@dumpshock.com)

I've been asked why I'm writing these articles. Basically, for two reasons:

1) I sometimes have players who do their best to work "around" the rules. They don't necessarily break them, they just bend them into a pretzel-knot. And while throwing a ruling out to the crowd in the middle of a game session to cover a whacked out event that happens, or to fix a "bald spot" in FASA's rules is perfectly fine, I have a bad tendency to forget these by the end of the game session. Or, when I sit back and look at them, I go "Why did I do that? This would work so much better!"

2) Because I like well balanced rules. I could care less how "realistic" something is, as long as it's balanced and makes sense. So this column let's me try and work with some of the stuff I don't think is necessarily balanced.

Enjoy! And if you have any questions, comments, or any rules you think are broken or at least utterly bendable by anyone with a mildly abusive streak, let me know! I'll see what I can do with them.

Controlled Autofire

Whether the gun fires 10 shots at a time, or 15, Automatic Gunfire can be a powerful, yet difficult to use feature on a gun. After all, spraying that much lead, it's downright difficult to control the gun.

However, somewhere between a 3 round burst, and the full blown, balls to the wall 10 or 15 round Full Auto hail o' lead, you have your selective burst. This allows a player to select how many shots he wants to fire, if he doesn't want to waste bullets. Unfortunately, there's a downside to this ability, and our friend the Munchkin often uses this to the fullest potential!

Only have 7 points of recoil modification available for your gun? Fire a 7 round burst! No modifiers, and you can do +7 power, and +2 Damage Code! Or why waste that 10th bullet? After all, if you're firing full auto, you get one extra damage code for every 3 bullets! So after 9 shots, what's one extra point of power? Is there really that big of a difference between a power of 16 and a power of 17?

And yes, while we all know that under combat situations, you don't have time to think about how many shots you're firing when you're just hosing the lead out as fast as possible. And more importantly, as a character you're not really able to make a distinction between "Damage Codes" and "Power Levels". A hail of bullets is a hail of bullets. But, there are a lot of players who always try to minmax out their combat rounds as much as possible.



So how do you, as the world weary, much maligned, and often misunderstood Game Master handle players like this?

Well, in all honestly, not much if they have a smartlink. The Smartlink allows a lot of control over a gun, including selecting firing modes as well as the number of shots that the gun will fire in Full Auto mode. You can choose to make the mental selection of shots a Simple Action rather than a Free Action, as this gives you some control over the situation again, but it's a minor quibble.

However, if they don't have a smartlink, it's a different story. You, as the GM, have a couple of options.

1) Don't allow "selective firing". The PC basically simply fires the full load of bullets (or as many as he has left in the clip, whichever is fewer). Obviously, this is not all that realistic, even for Shadowrun, so I would suggest against it.

2) Allow for "Random" bursts. First, roll 1D6. If the number is a 1-2, the gun fires low. On a 3-5, the gun fires high. On a roll of 6, the gun fires the number of shots called. In the case of a high or low count, roll a D3 (1d6 divided in half, rounding up) and add or subtract that number of bullets. Work out damage accordingly.

This doesn't fully fix the Full Auto rules, not by a long shot. Unfortunately, short of changing the way Firearm Combat system works (along with possibly the whole combat and damage system), I'm not so sure it CAN be fixed. Just patched!

Either way, good luck! And try to persevere against the odds (and the Players!)

A Little Learning... ... is a dangerous thing! by Lady Jestyr (jestyr@iname.com)

Although this column took a hiatus last issue, we're back with more skills to flesh out your characters. These skills are quite general and should be portable between any Shadowrun campaign; the descriptions focus on the knowledge and abilities conveyed by the skills, rather than on specific game mechanics.

Note that it's quite possible for players to choose a Specialization of a Knowledge Skill as a General Skill instead. For example, a detective magician might possess the Forensic Magic specialization of Forensics as a General Skill instead, representing the fact that they are skilled at assessing magical evidence in a forensic sense, but know nothing about other fields of Forensics.

Knowledge Skills

ELINT Techniques

Default: Security Devices*

Specializations: Audio, Image/Video, Matrix Surveillance, Tracking

ELINT (ELectronic INTelligence) Techniques are typically known by spies, journalists, surveillance teams, and others whose livelihood relies on covert data collection about particular people or places. This skill includes knowledge of various ELINT devices (including the Surveillance Measures and Countermeasures equipment listed on pp 289-292 of SR3), the capabilities of such devices and how to use them.

Using ELINT Techniques, characters can place surveillance equipment and tracking devices for best effect. They may also use this skill as a Complementary Skill for Perception Tests to detect surveillance attempts being made by other people, although this requires the character to have the relevant information in the first place – such as anomalous scanner results that may indicate bugs or tracking devices, or being able to see minicams and audio pickups in place.

Forensics

Default: None

Specializations: Forensic Medicine, Ballistics, Scene of Crime, Forensic Magic

The Forensics skill, familiar to fans of legal dramas, allows a character to assess a static situation and assess what has transpired by examining the evidence left behind. This skill covers a wide range of crime-scene examination, and is vital to anybody in an investigative profession. Use of Forensics can allow a character to identify ballistic and medical evidence, preserve biological samples for later analysis, and recognize a wide range of subtle indicators that can clearly indicate what has happened in a particular location.

Using this skill may also allow a character to fake evidence or conceal crimes more effectively; by understanding the information a forensic scientist can analyse, a character can plant false clues to mislead, or conceal incriminating evidence more effectively.

Law

Default: Police Procedures

Specializations: By jurisdiction, by historical period, Corporate Law, Criminal Law, Environmental Law, etc.

This skill covers a wide range of legal knowledge, including legal statutes, appropriate penalties and sentences, and legal and courtroom procedures. Using this skill allows a character to assess the legality of a given situation or action, and assess the likely consequences of being 'caught in the act'. Note that this skill only covers official legality; the real practices 'on the streets' are quite another matter and are more appropriately covered by skills like Etiquette, Police Procedures, or Megacorporate Operations (depending on the given jurisdiction).

Megacorporate Operations

Default: Megacorporate Politics, Stockbroking

Specializations: By corp, by type of division, by locale

This skill governs knowledge of the day-to-day business and policies of various megacorporations – members of the Big Ten megas, important AA extraterritorial corps, and relevant local A-rated multinationals. (See Corporate Download for more information about the various tiers of megacorps.) A character with the Megacorporate Operations skill can identify the major players in most corporate markets, has a solid understanding of standard corporate structures and business practices, and is familiar with the more famous names of the corporate world.

Megacorporate Politics

Default: Megacorporate Operations, Stockbroking

Specializations: By corp, by market/industry, by locale

A vital skill for intriguers and corporate plotters, this skill gives an understanding of the relationship between various corporate entities. Who's in bed with whom; who's plotting against whom; Megacorporate Politics gives a character the information required to negotiate the tricky minefields of corporate relations. Using this skill, a character can predict the likely targets for hostile corporate action, or guess at the probable perpetrators of such action. While this skill seems most important for industry analysts, brokers and corporate sharks, it can also be vital for shadowrunners who want to know the facts behind their missions.

Pharmacology

Default: Chemistry, Biology, Medicine

Specializations: Medicinal Drugs, Illegal Narcotics, Improvised Manufacture

Pharmacology governs knowledge of the chemical properties and effects of a range of legal and illegal drugs. Using Pharmacology, a character can assess the likely effect of medication or narcotics on a person, predict the results of combining drugs, prescribe substances to treat particular symptoms, and so forth. Characters can use Pharmacology as a Complementary Skill when making Biotech or Medicine skill tests relating to drug use or administration. At the GM's discretion, Pharmacology (or the Improvised Manufacture specialization) may also be used as a Complementary Skill when home-cooking pharmaceuticals and narcotics (as per the rules in *Man and Machine*, p.108).

Psychology

Default: None

Specializations: Applied Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Group Psychology

Psychology, in its broadest sense, allows a character to assess the actions and words of a subject and draw some conclusions about his or her motivations, mental state, and likely behaviour. Psychology allows characters to interpret words, facial expressions, body language, actions, and any omission of all of the above, in order to better understand the subject.

Psychology (and the Applied Psychology specialization) also allows a character to better manipulate a target. At the GM's discretion, characters may use Psychology as a Complementary skill for Charisma-related skill tests (such as Etiquette, Negotiation, and Intimidation). This represents the character's conscious ability to tailor their behaviour for the appropriate response from the target. This should be monitored carefully by the GM, and only permitted in appropriate situations. Note that if the target also possesses the Psychology skill, they may well recognize the character's attempts to manipulate them.

Tourist Trivia

Default: Area Knowledge, Geography

Specializations: By region, by type of attraction

This skill gives a simple, generalised knowledge of social geography; without knowing intimate details about any area, the character knows a decent amount about a wide range of places. Usually acquired by a lot of travelling – or a lot of studying tourist Matrix sites and guidebooks – this skill grants general knowledge about most publically-accessible and populous areas of the world.

A solid grounding in 'tourist trivia' can be exceptionally useful for a shadowrunner, both as a general guide to an area they may be visiting for work purposes, and as a foundation for any number of false identities from all around the world.

Active Skills

Acting (Charisma)

Default: None

Specializations: Improvisation, Method Acting

A skill in Acting gives a character the ability to convincingly portray another role or persona. Using this skill (particularly the Improvisation specialization) is in many ways akin to roleplaying, as the character can invent convincing dialog and background information on the spur of the moment.

This skill is particularly useful for shadowrunners whose work involves a lot of social infiltration and pretense; to be able to believably portray an innocent civilian – or research scientist, janitor, or security guard – can smooth many a runner's path to nuyen.

Legerdemain (Quickness)

Default: Escape Artistry, Stealth

Specializations: Sleight of Hand, Light Fingers, Card Tricks

Legerdemain is the old trickster's art of 'the hand is faster than the eye'. It covers all sorts of magician's tricks, from concealing small items undetectably to palming valuables without notice. It also allows flashy, stylish gestures to distract attention from other activities. At the GM's discretion, Legerdemain, or the Light Fingers specialization, can be used as a Complementary Skill for Stealth tests to steal small easily-concealed items (such as jewellery, datachips, or credsticks).

SwiftOne Speaks

by SwiftOne (swiftone@bigfoot.com)

Gencon has come and gone, and the first batch of reviews following Gencon is traditionally a time of great excitement, as the newest metaplot events are revealed, and large rule expansions inspected.

But not this time.

This is the third time I have written this introduction. The first time, I chastised FASA for reaching the 2nd anniversary of 3rd edition without any invigorating storyline additions.

The second time, I merely revised the first draft to acknowledge that **Target:Matrix** had been printed in the time TSS-13 was being assembled.

Then FASA announced it was closing, and a complete rewrite was called for.

While it is early yet, it appears that the Shadowrun line will be continuing in some form or another under its new owner. This means I can perform the traditional analyst duty of criticizing previous procedure and recommending changes. Since all of my gaming experience is from the fan side, all of this commentary should be taken with a large grain of salt.

3rd edition represents a significant cleaning up of the rules system for Shadowrun. It also represents a change in focus, from existing players to new players. Finally, it represented the end of the evolution of the Shadowrun line. New metaplots weren't being released, and new world locations weren't being detailed. The change in focus moved Shadowrun from its gritty cyberpunk roots to more of a larger-than-life comic feel.

What hadn't changed was FASA's customer service. Their website went through a renewed promise of content every six months. Errata and product schedules are available through dedicated fan sites, but not through the manufacturers themselves. Even the cleaned up third edition products don't answer basic questions new players may have, such as "Does Invisibility work against metahuman thermographic vision?", and any such confused players can forget about asking FASA directly and getting a timely response.

What should WizKids do with Shadowrun? Fairly simple:

1) *Provide customer service.* It counts for a lot, and as the RPG market grows more competitive, it will count for more. Even if there isn't staff to provide individual answers, FAQs, errata, and product schedules can be made available and updated with minimal investment.

2) *Produce new material, not just talk about it.* Third editions of all of our existing books are nice, but there's a lot of the world that hasn't been covered. Japan, Australia, Tibet, etc, are all areas that have been discussed at length, but haven't been written about (in english, at least.) This is all in addition to continue metaplot, which should be developed, but remain optional.

3) *Never produce another cursed Rigger book.* The Rigger Black Book ushered in the announcement of Shadowrun 2nd Edition. Rigger 2 was quickly followed by 3rd Edition. Rigger 3 was sent to the printers only shortly before FASA announced it would be closing. It started as a joke, but it really looks like Rigger books are a curse...

Matrix

AUTHORS: Mike Mulvihill, Rob Boyle, et al

TYPE: Rulebook

PAGES: 174

PRICE: \$20.00

ISBN: 1-55560-401-3

The Matrix is a bit of a controversial book, coming as it does so relatively soon after Virtual Realities 2. (Rigger Redux is even more hotly debated.) I remember the confusion that was Shadowtech, (a first edition supplement that was still in print and not updated until Man and Machine was released, bringing no small amount of confusion to second edition) and I think the release is worthwhile. FASA had promised to try to release a listing of the changes from VR2 to The Matrix on their Website (They mentioned at Gen Con 2000 that this was not going to happen -Editor), but they also promised an online errata sheet for Rigger 2 when it was released, and that has yet to see the light of day. Regardless, I will be largely reviewing The Matrix from the viewpoint of an expansion to SR3. VR2 users should be able to determine if it is worth investing in.

The Matrix is the book expanding the role of (you guessed it) the Matrix. It is primarily "the decker book", but it includes some content for non-deckers. The first section is an 8 page history and description of just what the matrix is. This is clean, straightforward, and a lot better than the jump into the rules that SR3 had. This is a very small section, but I feel that it is an important one. If SR3 is trying to target new players, it's quite possible that not everyone will come with a full Gibson/Vinge/Stephenson background. (I didn't figure out *what* a rigger was in first edition until the release of The Rigger Black Book. I'm sure others without the background can be even more confused.)

An area I found both enjoyable and disturbing was The Matrix User. This described the normal Attribute and skill assortment of decker characters. Clearly listing this section early on is a definite improvement in usability (Compare to VR2, which had the skills crammed into a small paragraph on page 76). The disturbing part was the increased usage of Knowledge skills. While I thought that listing numerous relevant knowledge skills was good, I was bothered by how many skills become essential. If I wish to have a decent decker who can program his own utilities, assemble his own deck, and create some frames, I pretty much have at least 7 required Knowledge skills, in addition to the actual programming and hardware skills. This seems gratuitous and reduces the likelihood that decker characters will have more well-rounded skill bases.

Cyberterminal construction is the easiest set of rules I have seen yet, while still requiring that deckers devote a fair amount of effort. The VR2 listing of utilities, system operations, and programming options are present, with only minor changes.

There is an entire section devoted to using the Matrix and Matrix contacts to search for information, which is probably the most common use of the matrix.

While The Matrix attempted to cover how the matrix affects non-deckers, I would have liked to see more on this: Telecoms, Trideo, messaging. The matrix should be a significant presence in any campaign, even those without deckers. Non-deckers with a Computer skill of 1 or 2 should find that they can do more than those without the skills. Perhaps the upcoming Target:Matrix will deliver more on that.

Otaku finally get coverage beyond a page or two. An interesting statement I had not seen before: "in fact, otaku lose their abilities as they grow up." I can't say I agree with this decision. In addition to rendering otaku largely unplayable as a player character, it shuts down an interesting future plot development. Regardless, otaku rules are finally given somewhat complete coverage and expanded (initiation for otaku? Sure!), so otaku players should be quite happy.

Players hoping to try and make sense of some (relatively) recent events affecting the matrix will be both pleased and disappointed. There is a listing of known AIs and their current fates, but the most vague points to date are still not clarified (Alice, of the Dragon Heart Trilogy, is not mentioned at all, but some of the background of the novel Psychotrope is.)

There is a short section on corporations and groups that affect the matrix, which is adequate and unremarkable, except for the creation of the "Corporate Court Matrix Authority's Grid Overwatch Division", which seems to be the latest (so far small) contribution to the Shadowrun metaplot.

Lastly, there is a short collection of tables in the back, but no index. While the layout is more clear than previous incarnations, there is still enough diverse material to warrant an index.

When Virtual Realities 2.0 was released, I declared that deckers were now playable. The Matrix streamlines the rules introduced there, and corrects some minor bugs. I find that deckers that can do more than just deck are all the more playable, and characters with minor computer skills can still find some useful activities. While decking no longer has to intrude on the rest of the players, the decker player will still have to ensure that the rest of the game is not boring.

The Matrix is a very good supplement for SR3, and a largely insignificant replacement for VR2.0.

Pros: Simplest Decker book to date, some material for non-deckers.

Cons: Less "new" content, no index, explosion of skills.

Target: Matrix

AUTHORS: Many.

TYPE: Sourcebook

PAGES: 136

PRICE: \$20.00

ISBN: 1-55560-476-5

Decking has long been the most maligned activity of Shadowrun gaming. VR2 (and now, Matrix), struggled to make deckers more playable, but decking remained somewhat mysterious.

Target: Matrix is the descriptions of several significant Grids, Systems, Groups, and NPCs. You'll find the ACIFs and security sheafs for many systems, mostly higher security, but with one-or-two lower security ones. I mention this because a collection of ready-to-run systems is a frequent request.) What it isn't, is highly useful in games that don't spend significant time in the Matrix.

The first section, Grids, is a Shadowcomment area discussion different grids of systems, such as Pueblo's famous grid, Saeder-Krupp Prime, Chicago's Noose Net, and others. This is an area rich in (decking) plot hooks and adventure seeds. It also represents one of the first significant returns of Shadowcomments since the release of SR3 (indeed, all the section until the Game Information section are Shadowcomment areas). Unfortunately, the descriptions vary wildly in believability, and many entries, such as MagickNets' "Decker on the Threshold" seem too comic-style for a supposedly gritty future. Target: Matrix is also plagued by fake parallels to modern day, such as UOL (UCAS Online), PlanetLink, and of course, our friend Brian W. Gates III of Microdeck. Gah.

The next section is Data Havens, and it covers Data Havens in general, as well as specific ones, including Shadowland, the Nexus, and a few that are new. This is all useful info, and is solid gold to the decker player.

Next we come to Virtual Seattle, which goes over the megacorp systems and a few others of significance in the Seattle Grid, where most characters will be spending a lot of their online time.

Hosts follows, describing assorted hosts of interest, including a lot of fleshing out of the Matrix scene. Online games, clubs, and brothels are discussed briefly. Not much detail is given, but simply reminding the GM that there's a lot more to the Matrix than corporate hosts is valuable.



Personas discusses ten famous NPC deckers, of varying levels of Superhuman-ness. This is a collection of authors' pet munchkin characters, be they the quiet power such as Fastjack, or the extreme absurdity of Michael Sutherland. A rare few of them are believable and have known motivations, and could serve as valuable plot hooks.

Organizations covers a handful of groups: The "G-men" of the Grid Overwatch Division, The Dead Decker's Society, a new plot hook known as the Exchange, and the future of the Chaos Computer Club: Die Shockwellenreiter. There's also a short but nice section of Matrix gangs, although some may question some of it's assumptions (I for one, would definately believe that Matrix gangs would adopt some hosts as their "turf".)

Next up is a pure Shadowcomment section discussing various elements of the storyline that FASA doesn't feel like explaining yet: Alice and Wonderland, the true nature of the Deep Resonance, etc.

The Game Information section gives a short paragraph of any relevant rules for each entry in the previous sections. There are tables of random fluctuations or changes to feed deckers that are showing signs of complacency. The best part of the book is the three pages of Security Sheafs in the back which, while for actual specific systems, can be used if a decker hits a system unexpectedly and you need a good sheaf.

The different sections of the sourcebook vary widely in tone and feel. You will not be able to identify the primary author of any section because the writers have been lumped into one group on the credits page, a recent trend in Shadowrun products. I only only really noticed it with this book because some of the sections had work that I would wish to avoid in the future.

On the whole, despite the sometimes non-gritty feel to it, Target: Matrix meets all it's goals: The Matrix will end up a more detailed and varied place. Most groups will only find worth the money if they spend enough time in the Matrix to have the improvement matter.



Pros: Adds detail to a lot that has been vague in the Matrix

Cons: "Comic book" feel, useless to non-decking games.

Tails You Lose

AUTHORS: Lisa Smedman

TYPE: Novel

PAGES: 273

PRICE: \$5.99

ISBN: 0-451-45819-2

There's a saying that some writers hold to: "There are no new ideas." Lisa Smedman must have some faith in that belief, because she begins her newest novel with perhaps the most cliched concept in science fiction: our primary heroine, Alma, is one of a batch of genetically modified Superkids.

Proponents of this belief in the lack of core originality do not dismiss all modern literature. Old ideas can be presented in skillful and refreshing ways. Fortunately for anyone who reads **Tails you Lose**, Ms. Smedman is at least somewhat successful at this, although the raw been-there-done-that reaction to many of her plot devices is a lot to overcome.

The story is fairly low-key in comparison with recent FASA offerings. More in line with one of her previous novels, **The Lucifer Deck**, it is the tale of two women, the meticulous corporate security executive Alma and the unpredictable shadowrunner Night Owl, dealing with a sudden chain of events that shatter their routine and makes them pawns in a larger game.

The entire story is based in Vancouver, but you have to get a few chapters in to discover that. The setting is sadly undetailed and bland, with only a few exceptions. The reader will get no sense of culture or presence from Vancouver. This is the same problem that plagued her novel **Blood Sport**, but is even more vexing since she, as a resident of Vancouver, should have more familiarity with the details of the city than she would be with Atzlan.

Overall, **Tails you Lose** was a mildly interesting set of events, told through some fairly interesting characters. It would have been a much more impressive novel if the surprises and plot twists had actually been surprising. Fans of genetics will cringe more than once as the author follows popular fiction over science, but that doesn't affect the quality of the story, unlike my other concerns.

Pros: Good spin, good characters.

Cons: Cliched plot device, few surprises, weak setting.

