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# NEO TRIBES



THE NOMADS OF NORTH AMERICA

CYBERPUNK®

— N E O —

# TRIBES



THE NOMADS OF NORTH AMERICA

CYBERPUNK

**CREDITS****WRITERS**

Ross Winn  
Eric Oppen

**CHICAGO BACKGROUND**

Dan Longoria

**COMMENTARY**

Angelina Acevedo  
Tristan Heydt  
Gilbert Milner  
Marian Rosensriehl  
Janice Sellars  
Mark Schumann  
Chris Williams  
Benjamin Wright

**ABOVE & BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY**

Laura G. Winn

**SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE**

Michael Pondsmith

**ART DIRECTION & LAYOUT**

Mark Schumann

**COVER ILLUSTRATION**

Hector Gomez

**BACK COVER ILLUSTRATION**

Cary Polkovitz

**BACK COVER COLOR**

Mark Schumann

**INTERIOR ILLUSTRATIONS**

Cary Polkovitz  
Eric Hotz  
Malcolm Hee  
David Ackerman  
Mark Schumann

**INTERIOR ILLUSTRATION SHADING**

Mark Schumann

**EDITORS**

Derek Quintanar, Senior Editor  
Edward Bolme

Special Thanks To My Family: Roger, Sandra, Scott, Amy, Whitney, Deidre, Ellie, Karen, Brian, Ann, Bill, Hazel, Blanche, Rik, Karen, Wendy, Billy, Gil, Steve, Benjamin, Steve & (#1) Laura.

This Work Dedicated To The Memory Of John J. Gallagher (1935-1994)

**WELCOME TO THE  
NEOTRIBES.**

**S**OMEWHERE DEEP IN OUR HEARTS WE ARE ALL NOMADS. SOME OF US ARE LESS MOBILE THAN OTHERS, BUT NONE CAN SAY WE HAVEN'T AT SOME TIME WANTED TO MOVE. WE WERE MOVING LONG BEFORE MAN BEGAN TO FORM CULTURES AND FARM THE FERTILE SOIL. NEOTRIBES IS A PRODUCT OF MY OWN MOVEMENTS ACROSS AMERICA WITH MY FAMILY AND, LATER, WITH MY WIFE ALONE.

I HAVE MOVED THROUGH MOST OF OUR COUNTRY. I HAVE SEEN THE RANGE OF SUNSETS WE SEE. I'VE WATCHED THE SUN FORMING THE SKYLINE OF MANHATTAN INTO CONCRETE CANYONS OF DARKNESS. I HAVE SEEN THE AUTUMN SUN DISSOLVE INTO THE KANSAS HORIZON, TURNING THE WHEAT FIELDS INTO GOLDEN-ORANGE FIRE. AT THE PACIFIC, I HAVE SEEN THE SUNSET OFF THE COAST OF CALIFORNIA DISAPPEARING INTO THE COLD ROLLING OCEAN.

NOMADS ARE AS DIVERSE AS AMERICA; EVERY BIT AS TERRIBLE, AND EVERY BIT AS GREAT. IN THIS BOOK I HAVE LABORED TO ILLUMINATE THE GOOD IN THEM, AS I BELIEVE WE SHOULD TRY TO SEE THE GOOD IN ALL OF US.

TO THOSE WHO WISH TO ADVENTURE IN THE NOMAD CULTURE I CAN ONLY GIVE ONE SMALL PIECE OF ADVICE: NEVER, EVER, TURN AWAY FROM YOUR FAMILY.

MAY THE ROAD RISE UP TO GREET YOU...

ROSS WINN

CALIFORNIA, JANUARY 1995.

**ERRATA**

In the *Pacific Rim* sourcebook, we mistakenly credited Mike Ebert with the cover painting. Actually, the cover was painted by Hector Gomez, who also painted the fantastic cover to this book. This mistake will be corrected in the next printing of *Pacific Rim*. We apologize for this error and promise it will never ever happen again. Really.





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R. TALSORIAN  
GAMES, INC.

PUBLISHED BY R. TALSORIAN GAMES, INC.  
P.O. BOX 7356, BERKELEY, CA 94707, USA

ISBN #: 0-937279-72-2  
PRODUCT: CP3371

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Brought to you by the letter "A", the number "0", and the phrase "Nomad Guns"



# NOMADS IN AMERICA





**T**here are about seven million nomads roaming the North American States today, although there may have been as many as twenty million at some point during the catastrophic Collapse that shredded the fabric of 20th Century America. Yet, despite this decline in numbers and the myriad setbacks they have suffered, the nomads of 2020 have developed a vibrant and colorful culture which has weathered crippling adversity to become a force of arguable power in the Cyberpunk Age. These are the people who rebuilt the shattered cities of America from Los Angeles to Washington D.C.; these are the people who almost single-handedly constructed the TransContinental Maglev System that holds together the coasts of a divided land. The nomadic "NeoTribes" were born during a crisis—The Collapse—but they survived by their skill and determination, and they flourished through competition and the indomitable American Spirit. They are, some say, the future...

**T**he popular media has always portrayed nomads as stereotypical murderers, thieves, raiders, and worse. But in reality, nomads are far better than that. Only a tiny minority of nomads are the menacing hordes of mechanized Mongols the media so loves to portray, and those few sociopaths are as despised by the rest of the nomads as they are by any suburbanite. The sensation-hungry popular media loves to detail the "exploits" of nomad groups with a great deal of embellishment, but this gives the average man in the street very little sense of the hardworking, family-oriented pack member who is the cornerstone of nomad life today.

## THE CULTURE OF MOBILITY

When the average cyberpunk thinks of nomads, he usually thinks of huge convoys of vehicles moving down the dusty roads of post-apocalypse America. To a large extent, this is accurate; nomadic culture is defined by its rootless nature and its reliance on vehicles. What makes modern nomad culture unique in human history is the scale and scope of its operations.

While there have always been nomadic cultures, not all of these cultures have been what we define as **mobile**. Mobile, for our purposes, is a motorized culture; civilization in cars, as it were. Though many early nomadic cultures had the ability to move by horseback, foot, or water, they could not move much farther than ten or twenty miles a day. With the birth of the modern nomad came the ability to move a hundred miles a day in large groups, and much further than that in smaller ones. Mobile nomads can move to wherever the money, food and work are, in large numbers and on short notice. They are used to living on the road.

In an age when most Americans huddle in the fortified wreckage of their cities, it is this mobility that makes nomads suspect in the eyes of the common man and feared by the repressive governments that still hold tenaciously to power. A culture on the move is a new thing, and in 2020, the new is often dangerous.

## Nomads and Statics

The 2019 Webster's Dictionary defines *static* things as objects that do not move, thus it is not surprising that nomad slang brands their non-mobile urban neighbors as statics. Statics and nomads have a great many misconceptions about each other. What the average American does not see is that nomad society is as structured as any corporation, and more peaceful than most. In many ways nomads live like their more settled counterparts, they just do it without a permanent mailing address.

And, like their static neighbors, nomads come in many different styles. There are mercenary nomad packs with military order and discipline as the rule of the day. There are also some very casual tribes, living like anarchists in the eyes of the others. Certain nomads are implicitly trustworthy and much-admired, while others—such as the Raffin Shiv, who prey on their own, and in fact anyone who crosses their dark path—are universally despised by their fellow wanderers.

## The Nomad Contribution

Few statics also are aware that nomads are not relegated exclusively to the highways; many nomads are also a part of daily static life. When camped in an area, they provide a valuable source of skills and economic clout rarely if ever mentioned in the fevered headlines of the corporate-controlled media.



## A NOMADIC TIMELINE

- 1989** —End of the Cold War.
- 1990** —Start of the First Central American Conflict.  
—Jonathan Meta participates in "Operation Blind Faith", attempting to control the Panama Canal Zone.
- 1992** —The Aldecaldo "clan" forms as a protection society in East L.A.  
—As cropland dies and rainfall declines, farmers and rural populations are forced into migration to the larger cities. These "Jodes" are labeled as parasites by media and some city governments.  
—DEA Drug War begins with coca bio-plague, it quickly accelerates to complete havoc, and as a result the First Central American Conflict spreads into South America.
- 1993** —The first coherent nomad families appear and are identified by the corporates and the media.  
—The Jodes leave Oklahoma, heading both north and west in an attempt to escape the "dust bowl".  
—The Aldecaldo, because of increasing pressure from police and gangs, are forced to move out of East Los Angeles.  
—Gangs war openly with police and each other in Miami. After a six month-siege, the government gives up, unable to commit resources which are needed elsewhere. The gang war lessens and several power structures begin to form.  
—Terrorists nuke New York, fifteen thousand killed immediately, many more die as a result of contamination.
- 1994** —Nuclear accident in Pittsburgh. The Federal Government declares "The Pitt" a Superfund site, but no assets are allocated to deal with the problem. After a very public debate it is determined that nomad labor will be used in reclamation. The Aldecaldo Clan is hired to administer the project. The clan must travel almost two thousand miles to Pittsburgh, but accepts the contract.  
—Stock market crash, beginning of the Collapse.
- 1995** —The Bloods unofficially run (or own) all of Miami, other gang structures are subsumed into the Bloods by relatively peaceful treaties or agreements.  
—Beginning of the Emergency Welfare Relocation Program. The program is administered by the newly created Bureau of Emergency Relocation.
- 1996** —Martial law is declared in America.  
—The so-called Nomad Riots. In actuality, few of the aggressors are actually nomads; the term is misused by a popular media figure and sticks.

Since the vast rebuilding projects at the turn of the millennium, construction jobs remain a huge part of the nomad economy and guarantee them a place in society for the near future. There is still a great deal to be done if the entirety of North America is to be reclaimed. Nomads finished arcologies in the Northeast. Nomads helped repair Mexico City. Nomads are rebuilding the nation, piece by piece, job by dirty job.

Some nomad families can't find construction work, or don't want to be on a government or corporate payroll. Whatever the reason, they still need a way to support themselves, and in a collapsed society, salvage is the easiest way to do this. Areas of many of America's metropolitan cities rot in abandonment after riots and conflagrations stripped them of economic viability. Nomad groups move into these ghost towns across the nation and pull wire, electronics, precious metals, and other valuables from the rubble to sell on the open market. Some salvage groups even work in concert with construction nomads, stripping the areas before rebuilding begins.

Nomads, being mobile and well-armed, are also in demand for the transportation of cargo. Nomad convoys are secure and knowledgeable; they are used to the troubles that life on the road can bring. And consumer goods are not all that need to be moved; messages as diverse as crop reports and intelligence briefings must sometimes be verified by hardcopy documents. In other cases, electronic transmission of data is deemed too vulnerable to hackers, so the nomads provide physical delivery instead. And of course, as a natural complement to transport and courier services, smuggling has become a profitable business; a huge market exists for regulated, heavily-taxed, and downright illegal goods. In fact, the shadow economy that extends across America could not exist without the nomad distribution network and the innovations of their technical people.

Mercenaries are also a needed resource in this time of struggle. Since nomads must keep themselves heavily armed to counter banditry, there is demand for nomad warriors, arms and expertise. Some tribes market themselves exclusively as military or security services, and do well in the marketplace.

Bread and circuses also have their place in helping to keep civilization civil. Many nomads deal with the bread part—agriculture. Crop-picking, seeding, clearing; any farming job that robots are not smart enough to do are done by the agripack nomads which travel the U.S. in slow pursuit of the seasons. Finally, circuses provide the livelihood of some nomads: carnies, vishows, and other entertainments are provided by these packs.

The nomads are not merely an adjunct to American society, they are a complete society existing in symbiosis with static culture.

## Know The Code

All nomads, whatever their stripe and lifestyle, have a code of behavior and honor:





- **PROTECT AND RESPECT YOUR CLAN, AND ABOVE ALL, YOUR FAMILY.**
- **YOUR WORD IS YOUR BOND.**
- **SHARE WITH YOUR CLANFOLK.**
- **RESPECT THE PRIVACY AND PROPERTY OF YOUR CLAN.**
- **NEVER CAUSE TROUBLE FOR YOUR CLAN.**
- **TAKE ONLY A FAIR WAGE FOR A DAY'S WORK.**

These are simple rules for a simple culture: work hard, be fair, protect the family. Words to live by, and words to die for. The nomad lifestyle is far more than a vehicle, a tent, and an attitude; nomad life is governed by imperatives as powerful as any corporate regulations, and a whole lot more moral besides.

Following these simple rules, nomad families eventually coalesced into larger and larger groups, all centered on this common ethic. Today the majority of nomads are affiliated with one of the Seven Nations; each is a major nomad group and a powerful economic and political force to be reckoned with. Although the Nations act independently, they are united in their respect for each other's cultural and social roots.

## **DIVERSITY AND UNITY**

It is now accepted among historical scholars that in the decades before the Collapse, America suffered from the sicknesses of racism and "cultural identity". Everyone wanted to be seen as special. Every group had to be "equal" to or preferably better than its neighbors, and fought to protect its "special" rights. If anyone had something that someone else wanted, they were painted as racist, sexist, elitist or worse. This divisive "me first" attitude eventually tore the fabric of American culture apart and caused it to self-destruct in a fireball of competing ideologies, none of which truly recognized each other's validity. Diversity led inexorably to anarchy.

In contrast, the key to the survival of the nomad culture have always been unity. The nomads understand that they are nomads first. All the cultural identity in the world will not save them if they do not help each other. Their common condition ensures few disagreements on cultural issues. Where once members of the Jodes and Aldecaldos almost went to war over the reconstruction rights for Los Angeles, there is now a bidding etiquette and compensation for losing parties. Where

—Millions of homeless people are killed or imprisoned.

—First true boostergangs appear.

**1997** —Mid-East Meltdown. The nomad and agricultural community scrambles to become less oil-dependent. Most vehicles are converted to synthetic lubricants.

**1998** —Los Angeles is devastated by an earthquake that leaves Northern California almost untouched. Some seventy thousand die immediately, between one hundred and two hundred thousand within days. Over three million are homeless or starving. Total losses are estimated in the range of two hundred and fifty billion eurodollars! Eight amusement parks are destroyed in post-quake riots.

—Construction of the Intercontinental Maglev System is begun. In a last minute change, the western terminus is moved from L.A. to Night City.

—Emergency Welfare Relocation Program ends as a total failure.

**1999** —The Federal Government opens the bidding for a contract to salvage and rebuild Los Angeles. A bitter feud begins when the Jodes are awarded the contract over the regionally local Aldecaldos Family. A series of skirmishes between the two clans is reported; no federal action is taken. The Jodes begin reconstruction of Los Angeles.

—The Bloods, formerly a Miami gang and now nomads, take over "The Greatest Show On Earth".

**2000** —The Bloods leave Florida for their first "National Tour".

—The Aldecaldos Clan begins the reconstruction of Mexico City.

—Firestorms rage across the Pacific Northwest destroying some of the last old-growth forest in America.

**2001** —The salvage of Los Angeles is completed. Three nomad clans successfully bid construction jobs (including small elements of the Jodes), but most of the Jodes "organization" are out of work.

**2002** —Food Crash, most of the U.S. is untouched. Huge sections of the Pacific Northwest are tilled over to farmland. The Jodes go back to agricultural labor for a time.

**2003** —Beginning of the Second South American War.

**2004** —The First Corporate War begins.

**2005** —The Los Angeles construction contracts are completed and most of the nomad community leaves southern California.

—The First Corporate War ends.

**2008** —Rock Strike on Colorado Springs

*Continued on page 8*





*continued from page 7*

—The Transcontinental Maglev System is completed.

—Second Homestead Act begins; an attempt to repopulate the abandoned Southwest. Some Nomad families see this as another gov't attempt to shut down the lifestyle.

**2010** —The Second SouthAm War ends. The United States Government, almost totally bankrupt, simply maroons over a million nomads and so-called "civilian contractors".

—The "Long Walk" Begins.

—The New Homestead Act is shut down and considered a failure. Most areas opened to the public require vastly more infrastructure support than could be provided.

**2011** —A large group of renegade "civilian contractors", under the leadership of Jon Meta, hijack several ships and an abandoned oil platform in the Gulf Of Mexico. Pirates call the flotilla MetaKey.

**2012** —The Chicago Bioplague destroys the city utterly.

Later that year the Federal Government begins construction of the Chicago Port Facility. For the first time, the structure is totally designed by, and built by, nomads.

—The "Long Walk" ends. About 10% of the reported half a million who started the walk survive. Exact figures are impossible to calculate.

**2013** —Johnny Silverhand, Rogue, Santiago and Thompson all go into hiding with the help of the Nomad Community, especially the Aldecaldo Clan.

—The Mexico City rebuilding is completed.

**2013 to 2015** are called "The Tribulations" by the nomad community. The combination of a more competitive nomad economy and the influx of new nomads from the Long Walk lead to increased government attention (and pressure).

**2015** —MetaCorp is formed.

**2017** —The Seven Nations are established.

—MetaCorp sells the JackSuit to Militech.

**2018** —MetaKey is moved near Tampa. Salvage of the city begins.

**2019** —Storm Technology begins operations in Chicago.

**2020** —Storm Technology signs a contract with the Aldecaldo and Jode Nations for salvage/rebuilding in Chicago.

—Elements of the Snake and Folk Nations are contracted to build the Boston extension of the Maglev.

once the Meta and the Bloods feuded over limited medical resources, they now *share* resources like The Library and MetaKey (see pg. 28). Their shared ideals and common hardships have made the nomads form a unique culture, one secure enough to allow differences and variety to keep it strong.

## NOMAD CULTURES

Among the Seven Nations there are several distinct cultures, and knowing them is important for any who intend to deal with them face-to-face. What are the strengths, weaknesses, beliefs and customs of these groups? The following section is only a brief glimpse, but it is far more than the average static of the megacities will ever see.

## AGRIPACKS

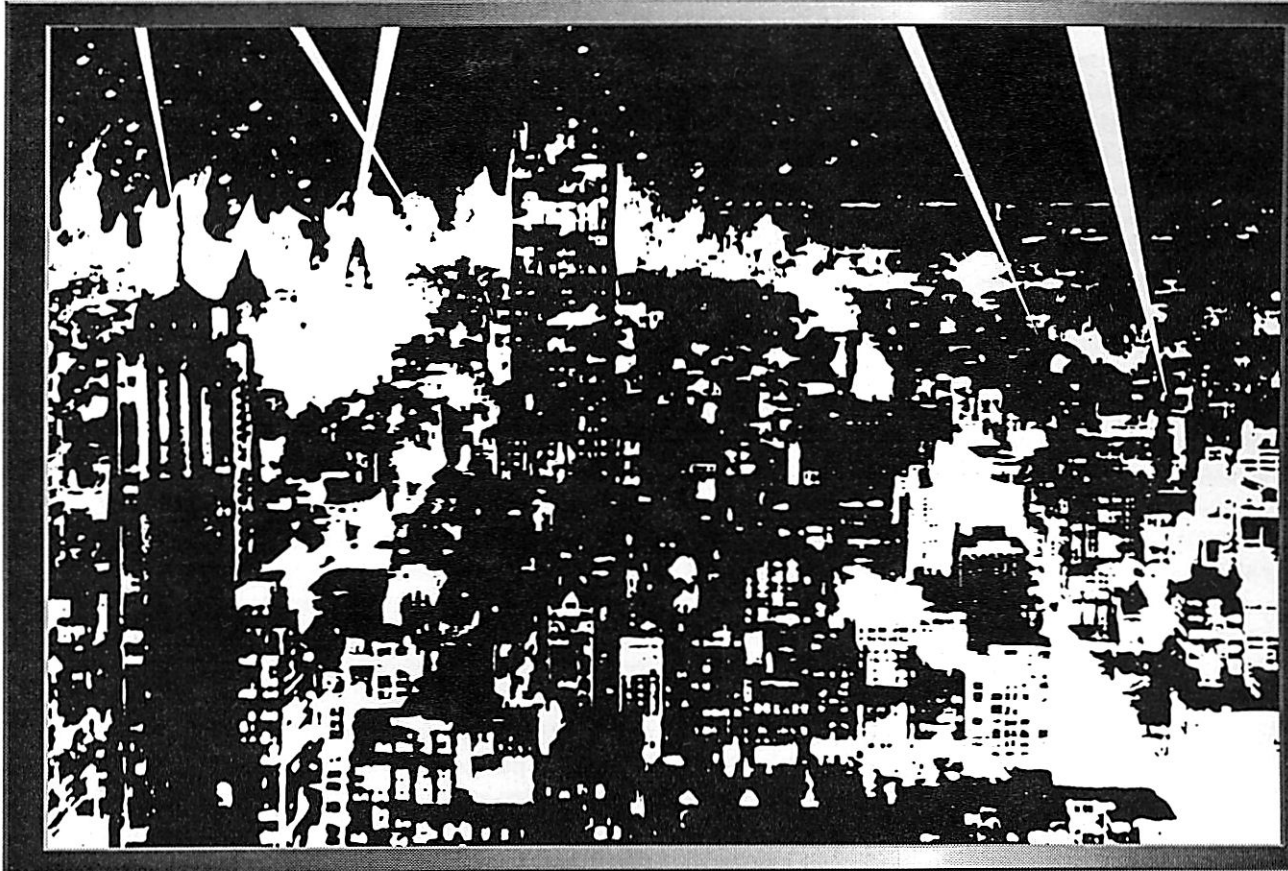


Even before the Collapse, there had long been an invisible mobile culture in America, the migrant laborers of the agricultural industry. Migrant laborers have done the dirty work of farming for many years: minorities, illiterates, and illegal aliens who were paid slave wages, fed poorly, and housed in trailers. Deeply religious (usually Roman Catholic) and of Spanish-speaking descent, these migrants suffered more than their share of racially-motivated violence. They rarely struck back at their oppressors, instead working to circumvent them through extensive family networks and alliances. Similarly, after the government passed many laws restricting or refusing services to suspected illegal aliens, the migrants didn't complain, they simply devised new ways to beat the system. The harder the government attempted to destroy them, the harder they worked to survive.

Probably twenty-five to thirty percent of nomad society is directly descended from these groups, which are now known as pitchforker or agricultural nomads—agripacks. When the dust bowls came and stripped the land of its wealth, it also stripped the agripacks of their means of support. They were already mobile, they were already disenfranchised, so they just changed how they made a living.

To many people, the agripacks are the archetypal nomads, moving across the landscape in ragtag caravans, picking up a living doing scut work for the agricorps, and nurturing their bitterness in their makeshift camps. They seem closest to the "generic nomad" as portrayed in popular entertainment. This is partly because they are by far the most common type of nomads, and partly because one or two agripacks occasionally pick up a few extra euro as extras in such fine entertainments as *Nomad Rage*, *Big Bad Nomad*, and *Wild Riders*. Though the media has portrayed these people as lazy and stupid, or at best a good people corrupted by drink and crime, this is not an accurate picture.





Unlike most of the other nomad types, agripacks do not have any particularly distinctive dress or vehicles, preferring to use what ever is available and cheap. Their living quarters are usually either RVs or army tents stolen from the concentration camps they were forced into during the hard times of the past. Traditionally, agripack camps are loosely run. Instead of a single leader, they are often led by a council made up of all adult members, or sometimes by a group of respected elders. Decisions are taken by majority vote after a lot of discussion. In an emergency, everybody has a pretty good idea of their responsibilities, but for day-to-day decision-making this method works as well as the more structured forms other nomads use.

A great many of the original migrants were illiterate, so these days education has become a primary focus for agripack communities. Visitors are often surprised at the amount of resources devoted to sophisticated computers, immense book-on-chip libraries, and teaching machines. All bilingual, of course.

Another distinguishing feature of an agripack is the custom of communal dining. In most nomad groups, cooking and eating is done separately, family by family, but agripacks eat at least one meal a day in a single group. They feel this system is more efficient, more fun, and it certainly does a lot to cement group solidarity.

## NATIVE AMERICANS

Commonly referred to as "Indians" by other Americans, the indigenous peoples of North America have had a long, dark history of hardship and persecution. Since the first treaty was drafted (and broken) in 1795, Native American people have been mistreated, misled, and mismanaged by the Federal Government and its so-called Bureau of Indian Affairs. This maltreatment taught them not to rely on outside aid, so that when The Collapse came, they were no worse off than anyone else, and better off than those Americans who relied on some sort of government subsidy. They were even envied by some.



On many of the reservations in the northwest and north-central United States, there were already farms, light industry, and even entertainment; everything the people need for survival. It was not a good life, but it was a life; and when the crash came, they weathered the storm fairly well. In the Southwest and Texas, things were not as good; when the dust bowls came, pretty much everything the local tribes owned blew away with the topsoil. Tribes that depended on gambling and entertainment as their main means of support were also hard-hit, as starving people don't gamble with the little they have.



The biggest transition came among the old warrior tribes of the Great Basin. The Plains tribes had once been nomadic; when their reservations could no longer support them and the government couldn't help, they went back to the old ways. Some had been nomadic before, and some had not, but all had the knowledge and skills that could make life on the road viable. They were the first to take to a mobile lifestyle, and paved the way for many others.

As they spent more and more time on the move, many Native Americans reverted to their ancestors' ways, rediscovering that they were wonderfully well-adapted to this lifestyle. Conventional furniture was soon discarded in favor of "lazy-back" or hiker's chair supports for sitting on the ground. They adopted slightly modernized versions of their ancestors' clothing. The heavy boots they wear on the road to keep their legs in one piece are replaced by moccasins as soon as they set up camp. About the only Indian custom they did not revive was the ornate headgear; it got in the way and was seen as a waste of resources at a time when no waste could be afforded.

In fact, many other non-Indian nomad packs have been inspired by Native-American imagery and have co-opted it themselves. Native American patterns and ornamentation are common on much nomad clothing, and also adorn their vehicles in paint or on tapestries flown from radio whips.

Some tribes even perform Native American festivals as a source of secondary income. A small arcology, agri-colony or corporate habitat will often pay an "Indian" tribe well to live there for a few weeks, demonstrating traditional dances, food and lifestyles. Many entertainment corps also willingly pay for authentic Native American expertise when they're filming a scene set in the past—many nomads still find work as extras in Italian-American spaghetti-western revival films.

Most tribes are run in a traditional Native American fashion. There may be a chief (either a man or woman), but the people of the tribe are not absolutely bound to follow the chief's advice. There is usually a Council of Adults (*Kith* or *Family* of at least +5), or a Council of Elders (adults over age forty with a Rep of 7 or more). Most day-to-day life is not regulated in any particular way; everybody knows that if you do not work, you do not eat; and if you steal you will be left beaten and tied to a tree (or other convenient stationary feature). Native American nomads do not have time to mess with people who cannot discipline themselves or keep agreements.

People with disputes are usually decent enough to work it out themselves, even if it's via a fist fight. Should the parties not be able to work it out (even with a brawl), they go to an elder, who interviews both sides alone and then comes to a decision. Both parties are requested to abide by the decision, and if one side violates the agreement, then the issue goes to the Council. Convening a Council over a trivial dispute is not seen as an act worthy of adults, and earns the offenders tribal censure. It is

important to note here that there is no difference between violating the letter or the spirit of an agreement; playing semantic games is something only a dog would do. Attempting to argue this way usually gets the offender expelled, or at least censured for a few months. If a Council arbitrates a dispute and someone violates the agreement, they are banished from the tribe with a day's ration and whatever they can carry—no vehicle can be taken. In cases of serious sex crimes (especially rape and child molestation) or murder, the offender is executed. It's harsh justice, but it works—there are no repeat offenders.

## GYPSIES



The Gypsies (or Romany or Rom as they call themselves) are probably the oldest continuously nomadic culture of all, having been in America for well over two hundred years. Facing deep-seated cultural prejudices, the Rom generally hid, moving unnoticed by static culture while maintaining their nomadic lifestyle in trucks, cars and RVs. While some of them worked honestly as fixers and middlemen, the majority garnered a well-earned reputation as untrustworthy con artists and thieves, living, as they felt they had to off the gajo (non-Gypsy) population's credulity and carelessness.

To the Romany, conditions seemed ideal for their way of life in the unsettled, chaotic conditions of North America during and after the upheavals of the Gang of Four. With information accessed much faster and more easily than before, they could research a tempting target carefully before swooping in to relieve the foolish gajo of excess wealth. The Gypsies' enemies—governmental and police forces—were much less feared during this time; they were largely impotent or preoccupied with guarding their corporate masters instead of protecting private citizens from the attentions of small-time swindlers.

At the same time, however, the Rom found that their victims were less easily duped. The spread of communications technology also meant that exact descriptions of Gypsy methods were easily available to anybody wishing to pay a small fee for the data. When the general descriptions of their modus operandi were accompanied by pictures, voiceprints, and depositions of previous marks, the Romany often felt the sinking feeling known only to a con-man whose would-be mark settles back and tells him exactly what his next move (and the ones after that) will be. Another new peril the Rom faced—one they thought had been left behind in Europe—was direct action against them by their victims. Fleecing a streetpunk may be easy, but when he found out that he had been taken for a sucker, he was very likely to come back and discuss it at length, with a bunch of his fellow gangers along to provide emphasis by tearing up the Gypsy's oficina (place of business). And maybe the Gypsy's wardrobe, vehicle, trachea...



Still, as always, the Rom adapted. Some of the women put away their fortune-telling paraphernalia and took up the ways of the Net. Some of the men gave up providing "pavement" for driveways and began buying broken gear and selling it as new after a quick repair. Still others switched from peddling fraudulent items to dependable fencing and information brokering. Romany children still sell things on the street and beg,, with a little theft thrown in, their skills often augmented by cybergear as they grow

Gypsy social structure is based on the kumpania, or company. These groups, usually made up of several families who are more or less blood-related, are led by the patriarch or matriarch of the largest family. Amongst themselves, they speak Romany, the Indian-derived language of Gypsies, partly from tradition and partly because Romany language chips are almost unknown in modern America. Once widely varied between groups of Gypsies, the language has been homogenized somewhat as the necessities of survival dictated interlinked communications.

Romany dress like anybody else from day to day, only bringing out their traditional accouterments for special occasions. However, there are other ways to determine Romany heritage; ethnic Gypsies are usually dark-skinned and dark-haired, and many (though fewer every day) speak Romany, and still observe many of the cultural ways.

Gypsies abide by many taboos which have served to keep them separate and distinct as a culture. They call any sort of opponents "gajos," a term which at first could have been translated as strangers, then later came to mean "marks", but is now generally defined as a bad person. Gypsies normally have little to do with gajos outside of "business", a term sometimes synonymous with illegal activities. Since Gypsies believe in an angel of death (who peers through the window to size up a target before striking), they keep their windows heavily curtained. Some Gypsies still consider women who have recently given birth unclean, and most do not like cats for the same reason. Gypsies do not usually use a dining table for anything else, believing that stacking possessions on it will render it unclean. Another taboo is the practice of keeping a separate set of eating utensils for every Gypsy, to be used only by the owner. With the widespread outbreaks of disease in the early parts of the Collapse, this became an unwritten law between all of the nomads. In general, Gypsies are a cornerstone of nomad culture, and many of their ways have been adopted and contribute to the survival of the culture as a whole.

## CARNIES

Although they are perceived as similar if not identical to the Gypsies, the "carnies", or circus people, are actually quite different. The carnies, as their name indicates, derive their



culture from the people who made their livings in the old carnivals and huge corporate circuses that were once a regular feature of American life. Traveling around the country and turning their backs on 'normal' life, the carnies have been treated with suspicion by settled people. In response, the carnies developed a group solidarity and raised cheating to a fine art.

The rise of easily-accessible electronic entertainment in the latter part of the twentieth century doomed the smaller old-fashioned carnivals. These had depended on the starvation of small-town North Americans for entertainment and variety, and when the new electronic commodities became available to anybody, carnivals could no longer compete. After all, if you could experience what it felt like to fly the hottest fighter planes available right there in your own living room, Ferris wheels lost some of their glamour. The more marginal shows went to the wall first, but by 1990, the old carnivals were dead — outside of a few special nostalgic tourist attractions like the Iowa Permanent State Fair, or a beleaguered few carnivals hunkered down in towns so out-of-the-way that the pickings were barely worthwhile.

Larger circuses were still viable however, and many of them were family-owned. They took in some of their less fortunate brethren and kept on going, but the nature of the business changed somewhat. The circuses became a huge extended family, with hirelings being as much adopted family members as employees. The adopted performers and workers helped keep the owning family alive and intact, and in return they received shelter under the family wing. This system has remained intact, with the central family enjoying a position of power among the clan, much more than even an unreasonable employer could ever hope to exercise over corporate underlings. While the word of a family member might not be law, such words are generally best disobeyed by leaving the carry clan.

The circuses continued to evolve. Traditionally, circuses traveled with exotic animals and daring acrobats. These were kept and the acts improved as concerns for safety grew thinner and legal enforcement more lax. Circuses used to travel with sometimes silly or mind-numbingly dull sideshows. These have been scrapped and more exciting attractions were installed in their place; weird cyber-freaks, sex shows for adults, all sorts of chemically-induced entertainments, and even gladiatorial bouts — these were what the new public's taste demanded.

When the Collapse came the circuses were needed again. As many people lost power or the communications links provided by technology, or else sold their electronic equipment to pay for some more food, the circuses were a welcome break from the all-too-common wait for death. Once more, circuses became an American pastime.

Naturally, to keep the public happy, carnies have elaborate, showy, and sexy costumes. These clothes are made for show, and although they are functional, they are rarely comfortable. Because the carnies must wear these costumes so often, when



on the road they favor extremely comfortable clothes like sweats, shorts, t-shirts, and sandals. There's no nomad group more scruffy than a carry clan on the road.

While most carries earn their keep by bilking—er, entertaining the statics across the country, some have become veritable remoras of nomad society, setting up their games and amusements at any large nomad get-together. Since such get-togethers are usually held far away from the prying eyes of traditional law enforcement, the carries often end up running what amount to mobile casinos, with thousands of euros changing hands in any given day. Though the odds favor the house slightly, everyone knows full well that anyone — carry or nomad — caught cheating would have made a mortal error.

## BIKERS

Many of the most negative nomad stereotypes come from the "outlaw biker" culture of the twentieth century, as personified by the famous Hell's Angels or the lesser known (but no less mean) Outlaws. For about thirty years before the start of the Collapse these gangs were seen only on the fringes of American society; they were generally blue-collar males frustrated with what they saw as a rigid stratification in America. In open rebellion, the bikers took up the point position of societal outsiders, though they always remained loyal to their chosen families. This is a position they still dominate today.

There were several large biker organizations in North America before the Collapse: the Pagans, based in the east; the Bandits, who operated out of Texas and the old Southwestern states; and the Outlaws, who were usually found in the Southeast. There were also numerous smaller clubs such as the Iron Cross, the Gypsy Jokers, and the Plague Bringers found across the land. The largest group by far was the Hells' Angels, inspiring books, films, and practically supporting a certain American motorcycle manufacturer in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

In the beginning, most of these bikers were fairly static. They moved around from time to time, especially to yearly gatherings like Daytona "Bike Week" and Sturges, SD. They were often involved in illegal activities like smuggling and drug distribution. Some associated with hate groups like the Klan or Aryan Nations. Most, however, were good people who felt out of place in what was called normal society. As many of the original bikers got older and settled into a more sedentary life, the biker subculture began to grow and prosper. Its members took to running businesses (legal or otherwise) and integrating themselves into their communities. Yet they still kept the biker mystique alive; riding a motorcycle was considered rebellious and a little wild, no matter who the rider was.

As society changed around them and easily-bribed or intimidated government police were replaced by ever-increas-

ing numbers of ruthless corporate cops, the biker gangs found it expedient to spend more and more time moving about. Since they did not need much in the way of possessions, they had an easier time taking to the road than many other people would have had. Bikers also had less emotional attachment to the old society; they saw themselves as outsiders and outlaws already.

Biker nomads can be identified in several ways. The easiest is to look at their motorcycles; if the bikes in an unknown nomad group are heavily customized, odds are that they're bikers. If there's not a single four-wheeler to be found, they're bikers. And since most biker nomads wear their gang's colors on their jackets streetpunk-style, identification of which group they are is also not as difficult as it is with other classes of nomads.

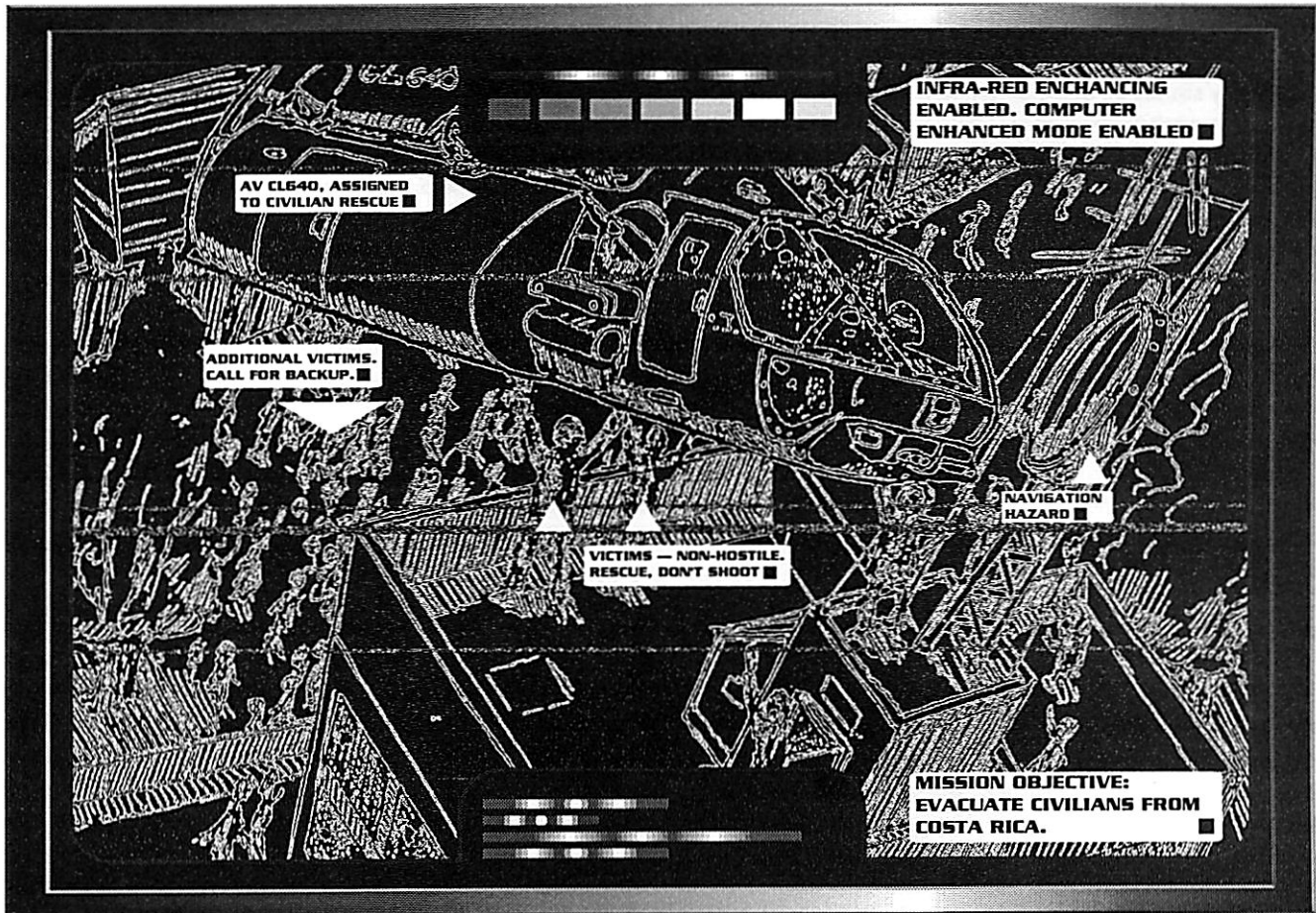
Organization within a biker nomad group is fairly tight, reflecting their view of the world as a dangerous place that is out to get them. The president of a biker clan is the toughest member, and most of the time he is one of the smartest, as well. He (most presidents are usually men) attains his office by fighting any other would-be presidents barehanded. Directly under him are the meanest members, who are organized into a special enforcer squad. Any low-level member, much less a "prospect" (apprentice member) who disobeys orders from the president or one of his immediate subordinates can look forward to expulsion, complete with a new set of bruises and a distinct lack of a motorcycle.

As mentioned, the bad reputation borne by all nomads stems largely from the excesses of the biker nomads. Any given biker is pretty harmless when alone, but when in a group of his peers, he becomes unpredictable. Even other nomads are wary of the bikers, not knowing when one will decide to "show class" by doing something like riding his motorcycle into a tent and out the back, or grabbing a girl that looks available (or just attractive), or taking a swing at someone. Since one of the few iron laws the biker nomad clubs have is that when one member gets into a fight, all other members join in, a casual swipe at some outsider can turn into a full-scale riot. Other nomads, when bikers are in the same area, keep their guard up and their weapons handy, and keep communication lines open to any allies they may have.

Luckily (for everyone else), bikers spend at least as much time fighting among themselves as they do intimidating outsiders. Biker clans, when dealing with non-bikers, usually try to help each other out. However, when two biker clans go to war with each other, any notions of unity go out the window.

Though no one remembers how it started, and no one is left to claim victory, the most violent inter-club war known was the long feud between the Hells' Angels and the Outlaws. With its roots stretching back into the twentieth century, it nearly ended nomad culture as a whole. Angels and Outlaws, if they met anywhere not designated as neutral ground, would shoot each other on sight. After a while it was simply too dangerous for townfolk to allow any bikers around, which to statics meant





any nomad of any sort. Suddenly all nomads found themselves being driven out of every town they tried to enter, and so having aroused the ire of every other nomad group, the Angels and Outlaws were hounded to near extinction.

In short, outlaw bikers are as unpredictable and dangerous as street gangs or cyberpsychotics. They often don't survive because they waste resources fighting among themselves instead of working together for survival. Even the early nomad groups did not trust the bikers, and this may be the reason most inter-tribe warfare is not overtly violent. Nevertheless, bikers have become a viable part of nomad society, often as smaller clubs or as members of larger organizations willing to put aside their petty squabbles. And while nomads today are not ashamed of this darker aspect of their past, they don't particularly celebrate it, either.

## ASSORTED OTHER GROUPS

There are many other groups involved in North American nomad culture; groups as diverse as the Spanish-speaking migrants covered earlier to expatriate Quebecois who grew tired of Canada. Other notable ethnic groups well-represented in

nomad tribes are the Caribbean Islanders (including Haitians and Jamaicans), African-Americans (including recent African immigrants), Chinese-Americans, and Pacific Islanders. There are all types of people integrated into the nomad culture, but only these still retain a cultural identity. Many nomads within these smaller groups have also chosen to simply be nomads, abandoning their previous culture. These choices are left to the family. After all, society cannot force someone to be part of a culture they belong to only by ancestry.

## NOMAD FAMILY STRUCTURE

No matter what their origin, the nomads of America have been classified into several distinct structures based on group size: family, clan, tribe, and nation. Each group represents a different set of interests, but these differences are only vaguely understood by statics, if they are recognized at all. Most of these definitions are general and could vary in size by as much as forty percent either way. Although the media and governments use many of these terms as synonyms, they are not.



### Family: 10-100 people

The family is the basis for all of nomad society. It was from classical family structures that the nomad community rose up. Only those cast adrift in the Collapse with a strong sense of family and/or cultural identity had the strength and spectrum of abilities necessary to survive the hardships that faced them. The loners and social misfits either became parts of the inner-city gang structure, or died alone and unmourned.

### Clan: 300-1200 people

The clan was the first of the neotribal family units. It represents the extended family we get from marriage and community, or in urban environs, from the "neighborhood". It was Juan Aldecaldo's extended family that formed the core of the Aldecaldo Nation. The extended families of a small town are the basis for other nomad clans and nations like the Jodes, formed from the barren farm towns of the dust-bowl period.

### Tribe: 10,000-30,000 people

The tribes are the most familiar of the nomad cultural groupings. It was the tribes, albeit several of them working in concert, that set the precedent for the nomad economy. There were almost twenty different tribes working the Mexico City Reclamation Project, however, they were all under the supervision of the Aldecaldo. As tribes, they were independent of the Aldecaldo; as workers they were not. When on the move through less-hospitable areas, tribes may split into individual clans.

### Nation: 100,000 to 1,000,000 people

The nation is the largest and newest of the nomad family structures. The nation is a group of allied tribes that are joined together by a common struggle or cause. They are usually groups of related tribes. The concept of a nomad nation is believed to have begun when several different types of construction tribes joined with a couple different specialties of scavenger and transportation nomads to form a coalition to perform a major corporate contract. An entire nation will gather in one place only a very few times a year; the logistics required for such large gatherings are problematic at best.

### Excerpted from Jamm Sammwich's *In Your Eye: An Interview with Jakob Mojave*

**JS:** Thank you for taking some time to see us today, Jakob. Why don't you begin by telling us a little bit about yourself?

**Mojave:** My name is Jakob Mojave. I am thirty-two years old. I have a partner of six years—Sarah, and a two-year-old son, Rik. We ride with the Ghost Dancers and usually winter in southern Utah. Not much else to tell, really.

**JS:** Who are the Ghost Dancers?

**Mojave:** We're a pack that does mostly construction work and a little salvage. We're also affiliated with the Snake Nation.

**JS:** The Snake Nation? Weren't they implicated in some kind of juice near Seattle? Something about a bombing or something?

**Mojave:** Not really, well... (long pause) You must understand that the Snake Nation isn't like the Aldecaldo or the Folk. The Snakes are a nation because all of the unaligned tribes wanted to stay unaligned. Snake Nation was their way of sending representation to the other nomad groups without kow-towing to someone.

**JS:** Why are they called the Snake Nation?

**Mojave:** Did you ever study early American history?

**JS:** Not too much, I was informally educated.

**Mojave:** Well there was a flag that we used to use in America, and the flag had on it the likeness of a snake. The flag also had a saying. It said: Don't Tread On Me. That was what the founding fathers were trying to say to England—we are a snake, and if you step on the snake, then it will bite you. That is what the Snake Tribe wants to say to Corporate America. We are the Snake, and if you try to walk on us...

**JS:** You want Corporate America to leave you all alone?

**Mojave:** Of course not. I mean, how would we make a living without the corps? We just want to be treated with respect. I wouldn't put on a suit every day and motor home to the 'burbs; but the corporations can be decent employers if you get it in writing first.

**JS:** So you don't trust them?

**Mojave:** No, not really.

**JS:** Is there a story behind the name Ghost Dancers?

**Mojave:** Not that you would understand.

**JS:** Try me.

**Mojave:** You must have some other questions?

**JS:** So you aren't gonna tell me?

**Mojave:** No.

**JS:** Tell me about your partner, Sarah.

**Mojave:** When I was a boy we used to get all cranked around girls. They just seemed so alien to me. My brother Bobby was the king, he could talk to girls and not even get nervous. When I got older I got pretty good with girls, too. I dated a lot—and even thought of marrying this one girl from the Folk Nation. When I met Sarah it was like I was ten all over again. I got so cranked up I couldn't eat or sleep. I had never met a woman like her. She was hard and soft at the same time. One night I was on sentry. I was scanning the horizon with the scope, and there she was. She stood out there and talked to me for the whole six hours. When my relief showed up she asked me to



walk her home. At her brother's tent she kissed me on the cheek. I knew right then she was the one. I courted her for months, then we got a job in Vegas building this casino, she asked me to move in. The rest is history.

**JS:** So you said she's your partner, are you going to be married?

**Mojave:** Marriage is an antiquated custom. People who get married really mean well. I even have some married friends; but marriage brings all the baggage about love, honor, obey and all that. The partnership ceremony is about being equal. Even calling it marriage is sickening.

**JS:** Sorry. So do you have a religion that you practice?

**Mojave:** Yes.

**JS:** Does that mean you don't want to discuss it?

**Mojave:** Let me just say this. We usually don't discuss religion personally. I mean, I am a fairly spiritual person. I don't get chilled on buttons and commune with God or anything like that, but I am personally religious. A lot of people have died because some people thought that if you didn't think the way they did then you should be killed. Even here in America. We, at least most of the brothers and sisters I know, feel that if you need religion in your life then go find it. Occasionally it will find you. But do not go around screaming about it — some people could be offended.

**JS:** A lot of nomads are Christians and a lot are Muslims; does this cause problems?

**Mojave:** No, because we keep to ourselves. We respect each others' freedom to believe. I also respect everyone else's right to be mistaken. (laughs)

**JS:** Aren't women considered property in Islam?

**Mojave:** Would you read a book or something? No one in their right mind sees any person as property. Women are. It's that simple. I would like to see you say that to Sarah — she's a Muslim. (laughs again)

**JS:** You aren't a Muslim?

**Mojave:** No. What's your point?

**JS:** Don't they have food taboos?

**Mojave:** Sure, but most of us have similar feelings in the Tribes. We rarely eat meat anyway, most of our protein comes from scop tanks, and dairy is just too damn difficult to keep on the road. So we don't have problems that way. Next topic?

**JS:** What do you do in the Ghost Dancers?

**Mojave:** I'm a doctor.

**JS:** That must be pretty exciting.

**Mojave:** Not really. I mean it was. When the Collapse came I was about eight. My dad was a doctor so we did okay. There was an outbreak of AIDS-3 in Portland so we headed out. We hooked up with a group of bikers heading toward Colorado. We ended up with one of the first families of the Folk Nation for a while, Dad would patch them up and I would help so I could learn. I also read a lot. Now there isn't as much excitement,

mostly people just ask for my opinion. When there are no bodies to tend I also cook.

**JS:** So people ask for your opinion. Why?

**Mojave:** I know a lot of different things. Some people call that wisdom. Mostly I just try and see things from both sides. My dad is better at it, though.

**JS:** Your father is still alive? How old is he?

**Mojave:** He's sixty-two.

**JS:** What is it like to know your father? I never did...

**Mojave:** My dad still amazes me. He has seen so much. He was a doctor, so he had a really great education to start out with, but it always seems like he has seen something or done something that applies to any question. We were travelling across Montana, and this big... (grimaces) nah, that story will take hours to explain to a static. I'll just say that I wish there were more people like him.

**JS:** Your mother?

**Mojave:** She died before we left Portland.

**JS:** Does being a father yourself allow you to understand him better?

**Mojave:** Well, I understand why he did some things that puzzled me at the time. Rik, my son, teaches me a lot too. Children are very important. That is something that most statics don't seem to understand. Children are the future. Without them things would just end. There were these kids we picked up in Boise. They were thirteen years old and couldn't read anything but icons. How could anybody allow their kids to grow up like that? Their mom was strung out in front of the tube all the time. We put them in school one day after they were caught stealing food. You should have seen them. They thought we were going to kill them. Some of the warriors were slapping them around a little. I took both their hands and put them down at terminals. After sixteen hours I made them log-off. They wanted to learn, so we taught them. Their mother didn't seem to care what they did, so they came with us when we left. One of them is studying to be my apprentice.

**JS:** Education is important, I'll concede that, but why is it important to you?

**Mojave:** Because being ignorant makes it easy for The Man to manipulate you. The Man wants us all ignorant, because if we don't learn we will not question. The Man does not like to be questioned at all.

**JS:** Who's The Man?

**Mojave:** The Government, the corps, the fascists, the socialists — the enemy. Anyone who tries to tell you that you don't know what's best for you.

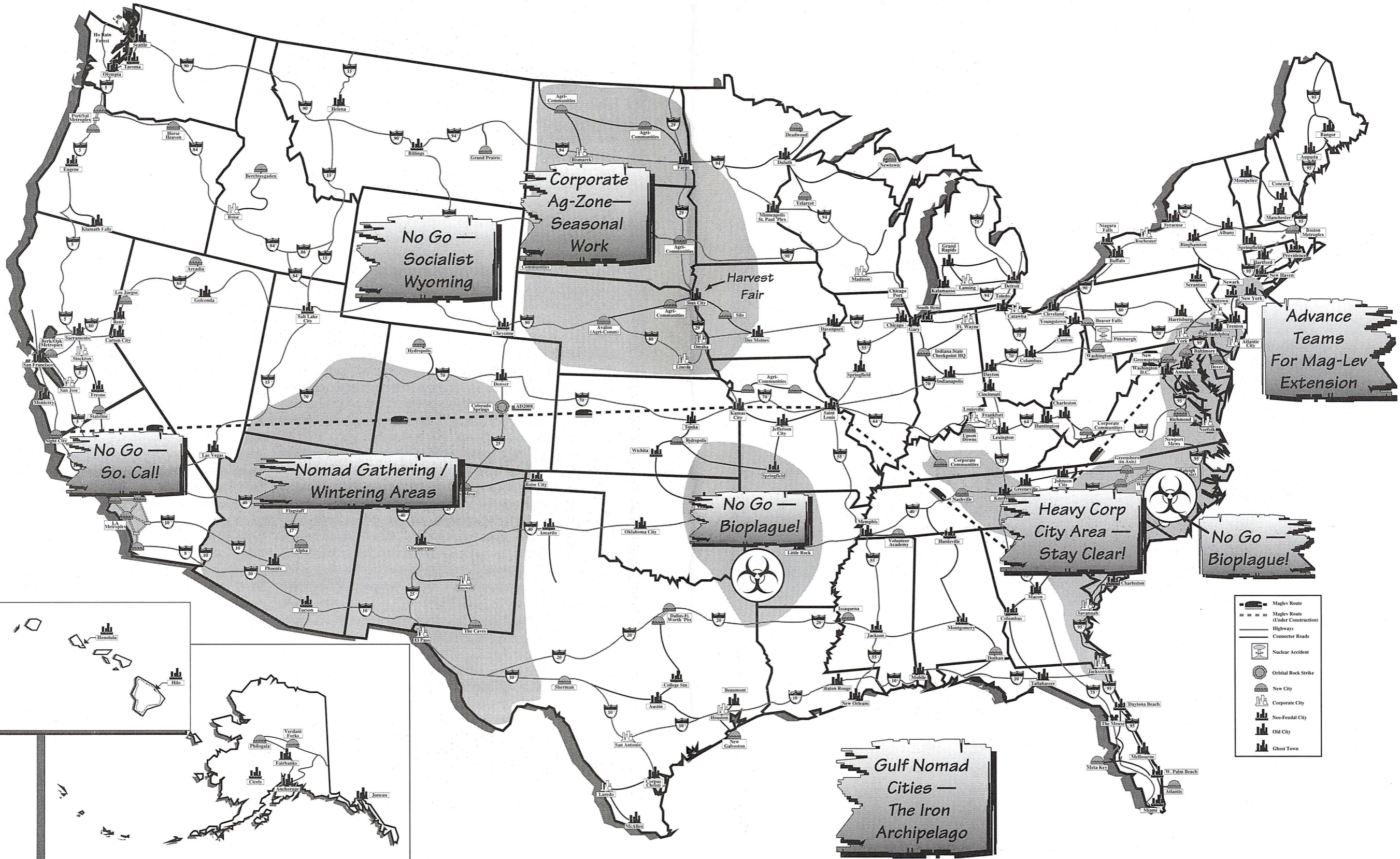
**JS:** So what can we do to keep safe from The Man?

**Mojave:** Arm yourself. Read books, keep a weapon, read different newsfeeds. Most importantly, never believe anything you hear on the tube, unless you see it with your own eyes. If you believed the tube, then all nomads are mad-dog killers. Not somebody you would want to interview, right?

**JS:** Right.







- Maglev Route
- Maglev Route (Under Construction)
- Highways
- Connector Roads
- Nuclear Accident
- Orbital Rock Strike
- New City
- Corporate City
- Neo-Feudal City
- Old City
- Ghost Town

# THE SEVEN NATIONS



**I**n America there are just over seven million nomads; over half of them have given their allegiance to one of the seven Nomad Nations of North America. These groups are composed of clans, tribes and families which share common interests, enemies, or goals. The largest of the nations calls itself the Snake Nation, while the smallest is a nomad-owned corporation: MetaCorp. Found between these two extremes are the Blood Nation, the Folk Nation, the Jodes, the Thelas Nation, and the Aldecaldos.

The Seven Nations were formed by a series of unofficial treaties and conferences across America, and these meetings and gatherings continue today. The largest meetings between Nations come at the end of harvest time. The harvest is special to the nomads, since many are descendants of agricultural migrants. It represents a time of plenty; plenty of food, plenty of work, and therefore plenty of celebration. In times past, up to forty percent of the nomad population of North America has come together in various locations to discuss issues and celebrate during that late fall period.

## SNAKE NATION

**O**fficially the largest of the nomad groups, the Snake Nation is not a true nation in the eyes of many Americans, nomad and static alike. Nomads are generally a very libertarian and independent people, and the Snake Nation is a loose confederation of those who, though they wanted to preserve their autonomy, wanted a voice in nomad politics. Unofficially, they can be said to speak for the entire independent nomad population, and it is generally true that they faithfully represent the views of non-aligned nomads in North America.

The Snake Nation was created in response to the formation of the other six nations. As these larger groups began to influence and affect both nomad and static communities, the smaller nomad groups realized that to advocate their (ofttimes differing) views, they had to solidify as well. The Snake is the most loosely organized of the Seven Nations; their philosophy is clearly shown by their Revolutionary-era-inspired flag. On a field of red is the white likeness of a sectioned snake. When apart these

sections are seemingly benign, but joined together, they can strike their enemies. The Snake Nation motto is simple, "Don't Tread On Me."

The Snake Nation's ranks are the most diverse of all the nations, and they have no set base of expertise upon which they base their economy. Unlike the Bloods with their circuses and the Metas with their marine construction, the Snake Nation is an aggregation of families involved in all areas of the nomad economy. In the last two years, the Snakes have invested a great deal of effort towards acquiring larger and more lucrative construction and salvage jobs. There were Snake Nation packs involved in the construction of the TransCon Maglev, Balsam City, and the ConAg projects in Kansas, thereby building for themselves a solid base of experience, as well. It has become a policy among those of the Snake Nation that they must improve their marketability versus the well-rounded crews sent by other nations to these types of projects. The Snakes are not happy about how this competition has shaken out in the past.

The nation's current leader is Freddie Douglas. Freddie came from a Mormon family out of the Utah desert. He is not amused by the power games that other groups play, and he would much prefer a world where he did not have to deal with other nations and could instead return to the simple life of an independent nomad. As a leader, Mr. Douglas is relatively inexperienced—he's only been a nomad for about a decade—but he was chosen for this post because of his stability and willingness to work with outsiders. His counsel has been good, and many value his opinion and respect his achievements even if they don't like him personally.

### FREDDIE DOUGLAS SNAKE TRIBE

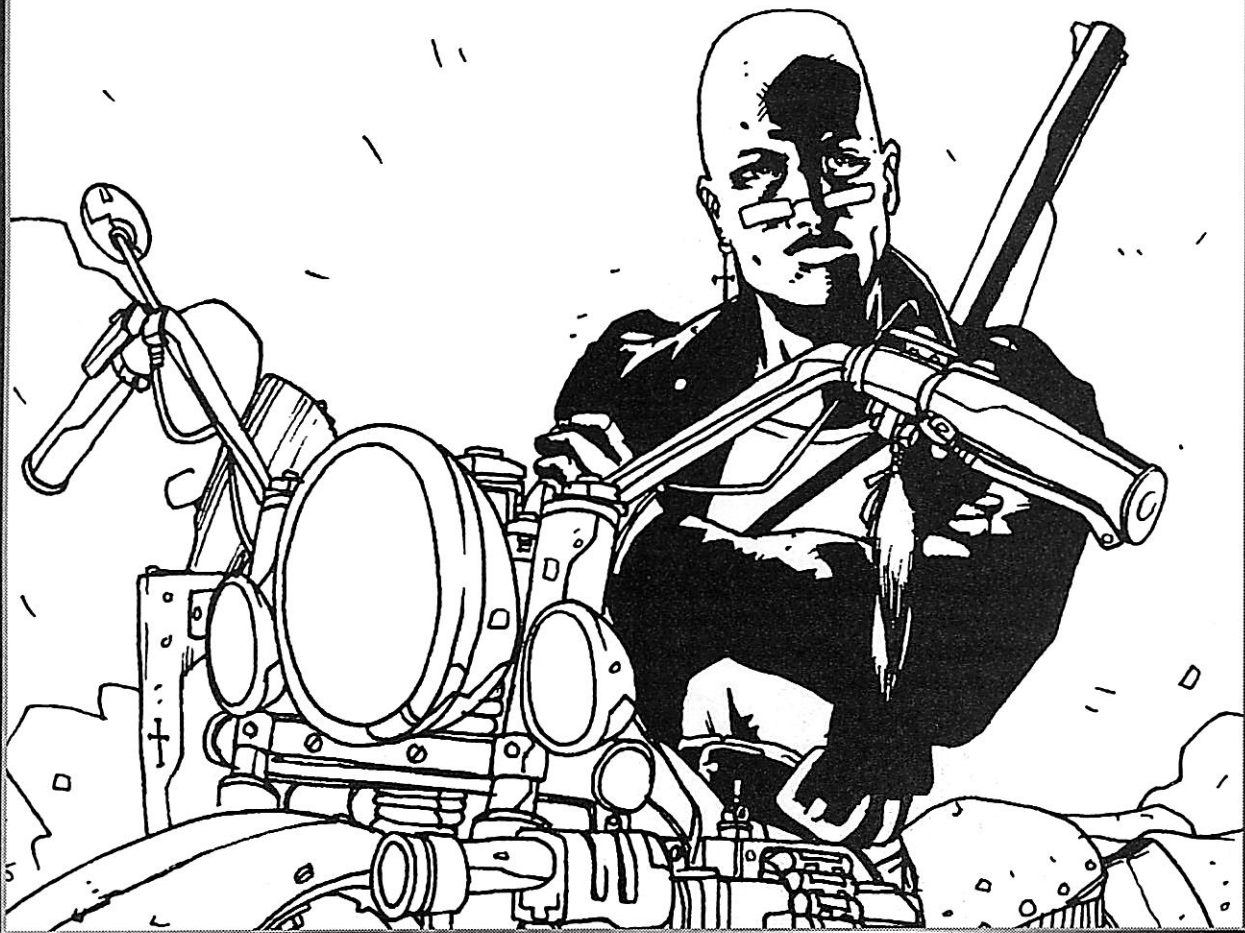
INT: 8	REF: 7	TECH: 8	COOL: 10
LUCK: 7	MA: 6	ATTR: 7	BODY: 6
EMP: 6	SA: FAMILY +10	REP: 9	

Freddie Douglas came to the Snake Tribe from the general area of Utah. An Anglo-African mulatto, Freddie was none too popular in his early career. Before he took the name Freddie Douglas, he was known as M-Dog. As M-Dog, he controlled a great deal of the Pacific Northwest drug trade from Seattle. When the viral bomb was dropped on South America, M-Dog was as out of luck as his drug-dealing competitors.

The war between the distribution networks for the remainder of the drugs in North America was fought only half-heartedly. The dealers all knew that the real war was already lost, and all they were fighting over was the scraps. M-Dog saw his organization start to crumble around him, so he took his closest friends and he left the trade.

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Over the next few years, the Dogs, as their group became known, did what they could to survive. They had a head start on the rest of America, because for them, the Collapse came a few years early, and they were already making it when the rest of the country slid down. Like other emerging nomad groups, the Dogs made somewhat of a name for themselves, gathering good people, organizing, and overcoming. The Dogs evolved into a powerful force in the Pacific Northwest, but not without a price.

Aryan separatist groups like the Order had long made the Pacific Northwest their home, as well. They did not like the people that became the Dogs, they being rebellious black criminals; and they did not like Freddie (as he was now called) most of all. In one of the last clashes between the two sides, Aryan groups raided the Dogs' camp. Over a hundred were killed that night on both sides. Freddie lost his wife and young son, as well as his left eye and use of his left arm, when a crude missile struck his car.

After years of grieving, he has learned to persevere. The organizational skills he learned as a drug-dealer served him well in organizing his clan. When the Nations formed, Freddie was there. He watched carefully, as did many of the nomads who attended, and he maintained constant communication with the leaders of several other sizeable tribes of similar opinion. He was determined to stay independent, but it did not come to be. As things began to shake out, Freddie and the others became nervous of the size and power of the new Nomad Nations. They felt they had to be equal to compete, and they had to compete to survive. They chose to form a coalition to protect their interests: the Snake Nation. Freddie was chosen by the other leaders to be their representative.

Freddie Douglas is a capable man, gifted with both the strength to see his will done, and the intelligence to know that strength is often not the best solution. He has seen the power-games that other groups play, and he has not been amused. In fact, he often wishes he could go back to being a simple clan elder.



## THE JODES

The original Jode family came from Oklahoma, Texas and Kansas. They were not driven out by economic crisis, but by ecological crisis: as the agricultural lands died, the people who worked them began to die as well. In 1998, the great dust-storms obviated the possibility of anyone farming for quite a while, and those that had the strength began heading west towards California for no other reason than it seemed easier than going east through the more densely-populated areas of Collapse America. This mass of farming peoples (not yet organized in any fashion) drifted into Colorado and there, finding a place where they could rest, settled for a few months.

Life was harsh during this period for the people who would become the Jodes. They wanted nothing more than to rest a while, gather some food, and spend the coming autumn in relative peace. There was enough food to be gathered (if one knew where to look), and the families had to prepare for the crossing of the Rocky Mountains. The locals, however, were not pleased with the influx of hungry strangers. One evening, a few hundred locals mounted a raid to scatter these new refugees.

The farmers and townies that made up the travellers were no different from the farmers and townies who were coming to kill them. They were private people who kept to themselves and wanted no trouble, but they were also prepared if trouble came. Most of these families had basic hunting or protective arms of some sort, and since each understood that other people in America were in as bad a shape as they were, most groups of families had posted sentries. When the attackers struck in the night, they did not have the easy victory they had hoped for; the poorly-planned raid fell apart rapidly, and the evening degenerated into a series of disjointed fire fights across the Colorado countryside. Nevertheless, surprise and concentration of firepower worked to the advantage of the raiders, and they withdrew without many casualties.

This unwarranted attack enraged the travellers, for over four hundred of their people were killed during the night. The next day, Malachi, a man of God (or so it is told), came up with the idea that each family should send a representative to council. The representative should not be the most capable member of the family, whom he said should stay on watch in case the attackers returned, but someone trusted by all.

That morning, one hundred and twenty refugees sat in council. Malachi, by virtue of having had the idea, chaired the meeting. All of them were tired, he said. They still had a long way to go to get to California, and yet what would they do once they arrived? He had heard of people who had lost their homes and livelihoods, as they had, forming a coalition to do jobs for the government—salvage work, irrigation projects, things many of them had done at home. He talked about defending themselves, protecting their children, and the hard winter to come. Malachi asked the representative to speak their minds on the issues at hand. Each, being men and women of few words, spoke succinctly. After about four hours it was clear that everyone present was in accord.

## WILDING

One of the most common "rituals" in the nomad community is called (by the anti-nomad media) wilding.

Wilding is when a group of nomads, usually all youths, venture into static society to "see what it's all about." It is a fairly new occurrence in the nomad community, but has gained an increasing interest among the youth. Despite the name and media portrayal, most wildings are peaceful and boring. However, some are a bit more lively. The latter type makes the news and forms the inspiration for those "based on a true-life drama" shows.

One of the most common wildings is a party. A party revolves around an event or gathering, often a rock concert that both nomads and statics attend. A group of young nomads rides out of camp to the location of the event a few days early. Curious, they frequent bars and wander the area, trying to see what it is that makes this place "tick" and why any sane person would want to remain there for so long without moving on. Sometimes a static romances a few nomads, sometimes it goes the other way around, and usually the nomads end up staying a while. On frequent occasions trouble arises with angry lovers, streetpunks, or the local law. This is where things get sticky. Nomads usually keep to themselves; they are used to a society that looks down on rebels. To the locals, the nomads are rebels, their very existence is seen as rebellious. With these assumptions on both sides, it's no wonder trouble is so frequent. After a scuffle with any of the aforementioned parties, the nomads usually opt to move on; that's their way of life. Sometimes this involves brothers and sisters of the clan riding in on big white horses (metaphorically speaking, of course) and assisting their brethren in escape. Many nomads joined the clans because of a wilding adventure—and many left because of it, as well.



## MALACHI JODE THE JODES

INT: 10    REF: 7    TECH :7    COOL: 9  
 LUCK :8    MA: 7    ATTR: 5    BODY: 6  
 EMP: 9    SA:FAMILY +10    REP: 10

Malachi Jode has been called the first nomad. His vision and influence united the original members of what became the Jode Clan. In his Nation, he is revered with an almost religious awe. But in his few personal statements to outsiders, Malachi has down-played his reputation as much as possible. It is tough to be a legend, although, as his hair has turned from red to grey, Malachi has endured the title with aplomb.

He is reluctant to discuss his early life. It is believed he was in his twenties when the dust bowl hit Oklahoma, working as a farmer, a preacher, a convict, or a soldier. In his opinion, his past does not matter. Nor does anyone else's; to him, what any of the Jodes did before they came to the tribes is irrelevant, only what they do with their lives once they are here is important.

Malachi has always had a vision for the nomads. At first it was only that they maintain a fair and equitable relationship among themselves. Then his vision grew to call for fair play among packs who had to work together; and onward until the Jodes became the first Nation to have treaties between its major tribes. The Jodes have been active in all of the nomad industries, both by choice and by circumstance. They care little about the exact task at hand on any specific day, as long as they have the opportunity to survive, prosper from their labors, and raise their children.

As the Jodes became larger, Malachi was challenged in many of his beliefs. He was challenged for allowing the children of statics join the Jode schools, for hiring gangs to keep them from vandalizing nomad projects, for accepting refugees from the Long Walk. Yet in every incident, time has vindicated his decisions, which in turn caused many of his personal beliefs to be embraced by the Jodes as a whole. Nevertheless, Malachi has not rested on his laurels, and like Juan Aldecaldo, he would prefer to spare his nation the politicization of their future. But he realizes that he is getting older, and unless he finds a successor soon, there will be no choice.

Malachi Jode is a tall, gaunt man with hair the color of ash and sand. His skin has been darkened by the sun and his features are neutral enough that his ethnicity is a subject of quiet debate. He speaks in a quiet, even, and powerful voice; the voice of authority. Malachi dresses, as do the other members of the Jodes, in denims and loose handmade shirts. His clothing is adorned with patterns reminiscent of Navajo designs. Malachi also usually wears an army surplus load-bearing vest which is reinforced and armored, with numerous pockets carrying small equipment. Malachi usually travels with fewer people in his entourage than the other nomad leaders, and he eschews air travel for all but the most important occasions.



All wanted protection for their families, revenge on their attackers, and the freedom to leave this potential coalition when they felt the time was right. Malachi replied that all their fears and wants were well-founded, and that they could meet these adversities together by signing a partnership. Great ideas should always be put to paper, he said; the Mayflower Compact, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution were written down for all to see. No one is sure who wrote the original version of the Compact; its origin is fast becoming a matter of folklore and legend. The wording is generally attributed to Malachi Jode, but he denies it. But the agreement they signed the next day was simple, and was the basis and inspiration for the current Nomad Code (see page 7):

- **Protect your family first, then protect the Clan.**
- **Steal nothing from the others in the Clan.**
- **Hoard nothing that could benefit others in the Clan.**

It was also decided that the able-bodied should go into town to repay the locals for their malicious attack, despite Malachi's objections to revenge. They did not plot an overt slaughter, as had been attempted on them. Rather, they planned to steal from the town their livelihood, leaving them without the resources to live through the winter. It did not go that way.

The town was a farming community of about two thousand. During the night, the nomads crept in and ransacked all the farms, stores, and homes they could reach. Several of the nomads got out of hand and killed for spite or vengeance, some raped and burned, and some kidnapped young men or women





as was their taste. Of course, alert townsfolk fired on the nomads. After a few hours, events degenerated into total chaos. By morning, the nomads had killed a third of the populace, kidnapped many others, and looted everything of value from the town.

Malachi was furious, as were many of the other nomads. They realized that whatever law still existed would be looking for them soon, perhaps with the remnants of the National Guard. They did all they could considering the circumstances: they ran.

A week later, the Earthquake of '98 stripped Los Angeles of its status as a land of milk and honey. Initially, this distressed the nomads, but the more level-headed among them realized there might be work for them there, so they camped in a remote area and sent emissaries to speak with the authorities. As it turned out, the Jodes beat out two more experienced groups for the Los Angeles rebuilding contract, at that time the most lucrative deal that nomads had landed. In order to maintain good relations, the Jodes took the lion's share of the work, but let the more experienced Aldecaldo clan supervise the project and recruit additional labor as needed.

The Jodes worked hard and prospered in LA. After that contract ended, they moved into the Northwest, tilling burnt-out forest into fields. Some stayed in California working other construction jobs, and some joined their nomad brethren on the TransCon Maglev. In every field of endeavor, the Jodes have continued to prosper.

Despite this, the clan was shunned for a time by the rest of the nomads. Their roots were very different from most early nomads, and their ready acceptance of strangers made them suspect. Many of the other clans felt the Jodes would become another gang, and make life more difficult for the rest of them. All of these fears turned out to be unfounded, but it took years for the Jodes to prove it to the rest of the nomads.

The name "Jode" was not something that was adopted by the clan themselves, it was a reference to the Okies in the Steinbeck classic, *The Grapes Of Wrath*. First used in a CNN news-blurb in early 1998, the term was a general reference to the dispossessed of the dust bowls of that year, but with the clan's high profile in the rebuilding of LA, the name soon became synonymous with that particular group of nomads. After a while, some members co-opted the name for signing legal documents. The first was Malachi, who signed the name "Jode" on the contract with the City of Los Angeles. There are still debates whether his doing so was a prescient move or a tongue-in-cheek social statement.

Unlike other nomad groups, the Jodes have worked actively to reject the culture of the statics, and are very uncomfortable in what they perceive as "static" situations. Jode encampments are never found within the limits of a city. Many former superstitions have gained religious importance with the clan: the ghosts of the city, the spirits of the open road, the zeitgeist, fear of imprisonment, and many more beliefs now shape their world view.

## THE BLOOD NATION

**A**s a side effect of the Collapse, the city of Miami completed its slide into a total war zone. Miami had been the center of the North American drug trade for almost twenty years, and in the years before the Collapse, it had also been subjected to massive immigration, both legal and illegal, from Cuba and Haiti. The flow of illegal refugees increased alarmingly as South and Central America heated up, and Miami swelled to bursting. A great many of these immigrants were connected with the various criminal organizations of their home countries before coming to America. Without those connections, most wouldn't have been able to leave the war zone.

Naturally, these organizations were dominated by the various drug cartels. After the bioplague destroyed the drug crops in 1992, their authority faded away to nothing. One by one, the drug-producing areas of South America were destroyed. With no commercial crop to provide cheap raw materials, and no end to the drought in sight, these criminal elements began to feed off each other in a desperate attempt to monopolize the synthetic drug industry. In the beginning, violence increased nation-wide as the drug cartels beat themselves to death. But while the shooting eventually stopped in most places, it only got worse in Miami, until eventually the city was in flames. Unable to stop the warfare, the government cordoned off the area and let the combatants exhaust themselves. It was not a question of refusing to save innocent lives; most of the honest (and moneyed) people had fled Miami at the beginning of the troubles. The city had already been destroyed, and the gangs had vowed never to give up their turf.

By early 1996, the war was over; Miami was as bad a city as Beirut, a wasteland of half-demolished buildings and bullet-riddled car wrecks. Above this splendid kingdom stood the Bloods—just in time for the worst of the Collapse.

The original Bloods were a criminal organization with chapters across the United States, though they probably originated in the wastelands of South Central Los Angeles. The Bloods who emerged from the ruins of Miami, however, were of a different mold. Haitian and other Caribbean immigrants to Miami had brought with them both Santeria and Voudon. The Bloods were now a mish-mash of Caribbean, African-American, and Cuban/South American cultures—they were battle-hardened survivors and they had a faith.

The Bloods today are so far removed from their gangland roots that they do not even resemble the pre-Collapse



## SANTERIA AND VODOO

**Santeria and Voodoo (as *voudun* is mistakenly known in America) are polytheistic faiths that were integrated with Christianity when it was brought to the New World.**

**Christianity as practiced in most of South America has never been a monotheistic religion. While the missionaries preached the Gospel, the followers of the indigenous polytheistic religions were busy looking to the saints and lesser prophets as aspects of their own demigods.**

**Mother goddess figures became the Virgin Mary, and why pray to a God who handles all sins, when you can ask a kind Saint (who knows what you have been through specifically) for a little intervention? So instead of allowing themselves to be converted, these Caribbean peoples twisted Christianity into another aspect of their religion. The Bloods of Miami are strong adherents to these religions.**

**As Santeria and Voudon became rooted in the Bloods gang structure toward the middle of the Miami conflict, the gangs converted over to a matriarchy. First the Houngan (and other priestesses) became advisors to the different gang leaderships. As violence took its toll, these advisors assumed control of the gangs. When peace finally came to Miami, the Blood's female leaders (like Nelly Sin and Mary Panacea) rebuilt the packs from the ground up, separating the hard-core violent members into dispersed groups. The leaders were mindful that a single warrior can do much less damage than a group, and eventually used this dispersal as a means to weed out these incorrigible violent elements.**

Bloods. When the Collapse hit Florida, it was just another in a string of disasters; the state had been rocked by civil unrest, hurricanes, and industrial accidents in the decade previous. What set the Collapse apart was that help never came, things never got better, and more people died, until there was almost nothing left except the Mouse, the Everglades, and the Circus.

The Mouse was the Walt Disney Corporation. Disney had spent years and billions investing in the Florida economy. They had built roads and infrastructure, most of the Orlando area economy relied on them, and they even had their own city, Buena Vista. As the Collapse descended on the Sunshine State, they prepared for the worst. Disney was a large and powerful corporation, controlling other large and powerful corporations, so they had contingency plans for almost every eventuality. As the situation worsened, The Mouse dug in and waited. It was the declaration of Martial Law in 1996 that finally forced the park's temporary closure, a closure that would last five years. During that time, The Mouse's reserves drained away. The Disney Corporation filed for reorganizational bankruptcy in 1998. Sometime in 1999, the Bloods moved from the ruins of Miami to a derelict Walt Disney World, and there they found their calling.

Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey Circus has long been known as "The Greatest Show On Earth." Once headquartered south of Tampa Bay, the circus was sold to Disney just before the crash of 1994. When the Collapse made it too expensive (and too dangerous) to continue touring, the Circus moved to safer, permanent facilities at Buena Vista. As the parks closed, many of the employees' and shareholders' families were allowed to move onto the grounds to keep them safe and loyal. When the Bloods took over in 1999, the families who remained were allowed, and in fact welcomed, to stay. The combination of the Disney employees, the Circus, and the Bloods created the greatest travelling entertainments of the new millennium. In the year 2000, the Bloods left on their first National Tour. At one time, over ten-thousand people traveled with each of the four caravans, although now that number has been reduced to about five thousand per show. Smaller entertainments also struck out on their own, some relying on high-tech and low-tech "sensory experiences." The Bloods entertained not only statics, but other nomad groups as well; two of their longest and most profitable early stops were for those employed in the reconstructions of Los Angeles and Mexico City. They are also one of the few nomad groups to be allowed access to the Canadian market with its lucrative hard-currency corporate clientele.

In the beginning, they relied as much as possible on the country's shattered rail system for travel. The circus had






**MALCOLM KENT-SMITH**  
**THE BLOODS**

INT: 10	REF: 7	TECH: 7	COOL: 10
LUCK: 10	MA: 8	ATTR: 6	BODY: 6
EMP: 10	SA: FAMILY +9		REP: 10

As the first-ever male head of the Blood Nation, Malcolm Kent-Smith has a great many eyes watching him. Like his predecessor, Tina Blood-Johnson, he follows Santeria, and it often makes others uncomfortable. In 2016, he was elected to the elders at the unheard-of age of only thirty-two. It has been widely speculated that the elders of the Blood Nation want a leader with a good balance of youth and wisdom to help them privatize and transition to a nomad-owned corporate system similar to that of MetaCorp.

In a way, the Bloods have always been a business first and a nomad clan second. When they took over Miami, they did it for the business. Miami was, at one time, the center of America's drug business. Many of the penthouses and condos in Miami that the older generation retired to before the Collapse were built with drug money. Unfortunately, when the drugs went away, so did Miami.

The Bloods and the Carnys were thrown together in a marriage of necessity. Their goals were the same: survive and make money. They stayed together, and it worked. Malcolm was only twelve when the Bloods took over the Disney com-

plex, though he was a lot older and more experienced by the time they left. Malcolm was a model Blood, if that term can even be used. He was raised on the streets, his mother a run-down drug addict and his father any one of countless gangers. The Bloods took him in because he was smart, stealing food and selling it for more food and favors before he was ten. The rest is history.

Malcolm listened, learned, and worked the angles. He ran his own set before he was seventeen years old. He controlled most of the synthetic drug trade in the Bloods organization

almost as it started. At age twenty-two, he was one of ten people who controlled the majority of the Bloods' organization. He was in a minority, however: he was a man. Men have not been in positions of power in the Bloods since the collapse of the drug trade in the early nineteen-nineties, and since that time, the women have had little patience for "the hare-brained schemes of men." As far as women like Tina Blood-Johnson were concerned, men were not to be trusted.

Malcolm was not a foolish man, and he wisely chose not to challenge the matriarchal powers directly. He was an ambitious man, so instead he chose to beat those in power at their own game. Malcolm ran some of the most lucrative carnivals the Bloods had ever seen. He was always there with the answers, the money, and the connections. He worked day and night and never slept. He wanted to be the best, and he was. When the time came for Tina Blood-Johnson to retire, there was simply no one else to fill her shoes. Malcolm lobbied hard, and eventually he won enough support to gain power. He had to make some hard promises to get here, and he will have to keep them to stay.

Malcolm affects the dreads of his Rastafarian brothers. His hair is long, but he keeps it neat. He wears loose trousers and open sleeveless shirts to show off his ritual scars. When he can find the time, he reads a great deal, especially classics like Thucydides and Sun Tzu. He carries a Book of Changes with him at all times.

done so for many years, but it soon became evident that the rails no longer met their needs. Eventually they used the facilities at Disney World to construct huge trucks and airships to transport themselves across the Americas.

In 2008, as civilian control was reasserted in America, the Bloods were forced out of the Disney Complex. The Lazarus Group was hired to reclaim the Complex by interests owned in part by the Disney Corporation. As the troops massed on the western end of the area, the leaders of the Bloods hurriedly met to decide their action. The key point of the meeting was the brief speech by Malcolm Kent-Smith. He wept openly as he said, "There will be great death and suffering here if we choose to stay. Doubtless there will also be reprisals on our travelling elements, which are our best hope for survival. I believe we must take to the road, but should we choose to defend here, I wish to lead the first counter-attack. My first loyalty will always be to the extended family of the Bloods, but I cannot bear to live if I must see us destroyed." These words sent the Bloods into a pure nomadic existence; they simply took whatever they felt was valuable, and left. (Lazarus' employers accused the mercenaries of avoiding a fight and letting the Bloods get away with the spoils. Lazarus spokesmen maintain that a protracted war through the massive underground systems integral to Disney World, EPCOT, Disney/MGM Studios, and the various resorts would have resulted in far more collateral damage than the losses incurred by Blood theft.)

The Bloods were not bitter or vindictive (with the exception of a few ex-Disney elements), because the Dixie region was not getting any better as a place to live. Services or infrastructure were failing without the support of the Disney Corporation, and they knew that even if they wanted to, they could not hold against a true military force.

The home-clan Bloods then returned to Miami, where they began construction of the Atlantis complex in cooperation with elements of the Aldecaldos Clan. They also sent large groups to travel abroad. They now control the largest travelling entertainments in the world, and have never looked back. Though they are the second youngest of the nomad groups—not becoming fully mobile until 2008—they are doubtless better equipped than almost any other nation. After all, they had almost a decade of access to a sound base of operations and manufacture. Unfortunately, none of this will make the coming decade much easier. As the Bloods' first male leader in a generation, Malcolm Kent-Smith has a lot to live up to. There is increasing pressure from both the government and the economy—pressure that could result in the destruction of the Bloods, Malcolm himself, and the entire nomad community. Even the clan shamans say that the way ahead is cloudy and fraught with disaster.

## THE META (AKA METACORP)

**T**he Meta are the youngest and strangest of the Seven Nations: youngest as they were formed during the Long Walk, only nine years ago; and strangest because they are a Corporation. Originally, those of the Meta Family were mostly ex-military and support services people in South America. Jonathan Meta was an Army Officer with years of service and an armload of decorations. The war was all but lost, yet the Government refused to stop. Most who fought in the SouthAm were not able to remember Viet Nam—but Jonathan Meta remembered.

Jonathan Meta was born in Lincoln, Nebraska in 1960. He had a relatively happy childhood until 1969, when the full weight of the anti-war movement came to his home town. In 1970, his uncle (also named Jonathan) died in Viet Nam. The funeral was a sorrowful thing, while outside, demonstrators waved banners calling Jon's uncle a baby-killer and worse. Jon was unable to understand how the protesters could hate his uncle and his family when they did not even know them. Above all, he could not understand how the people could be so cruel when his uncle had received the Congressional Medal Of Honor. He had been honorable and loyal and had saved dozens of people, yet the demonstrators threw tomatoes and rocks at the casket.

From that day, Jon vowed that he, too, would be a soldier. Being the nephew of a Medal of Honor winner opened a lot of doors, and at age fifteen he entered West Point. The stigma of the Viet Nam War had not worn off, and it was not a good time to be in the Army, but Jonathan Meta persevered. He graduated well up in his class.

Jon's career becomes sketchy around 1984, and what is known is part true and part conjecture. Jonathan Meta's military records, like so much else, were completely destroyed in the Collapse. Even the hard copies were lost in his case, and this has allowed him a great deal of latitude in later life. After serving as a platoon commander in an armored division and earning a masters' degree in Electrical Engineering at Texas A&M, he disappeared into the bowels of the newly formed RDF (soon to be called Central Command) where his activities are completely unknown. He was seen in various surprising places, and even filmed at some public appearances carrying the "football" for the President. (This key position involves transporting the access codes and transmitter for launching America's nuclear missiles.) At the beginning of the first Central American conflicts, he disappeared again, this time apparently into the jungles of South America with the newly formed Eleventh Special Forces. He is also rumored to have





been a member of the Rangers, Delta Force, the PITTMAN Project, the Medellin Drug Cartel, Disney Corporation, and the Dallas Cowboys— most of which is probably untrue.

In 2008, when the civilians “redesigned” the Federal Government, Jonathan Meta did not exist. He was not aware of it until the Second SouthAm War ended in 2011. There was much to be done —equipment had to be moved, reassigned, given away— and then there were the people. There were a lot of Americans in the area, and many would not go home with the troops. Jonathan Meta, the one the military still had records of, had died in Viet Nam, so, like almost two million others, Jon was simply denied transportation to the United States. Under normal circumstances, he could have gotten it all straightened out in the end, he being a general and all. Unfortunately, he was the commanding officer of a unit that did not officially exist, in a Special Forces Group that did not officially exist, in a war that did not officially exist.

Some time in late 2011, an angry Meta left the American Command at San Jose, Costa Rica, and with the aid of several hundred men hijacked three C-5B Galaxy aircraft to the Port of Panama. There they met up with several thousand more Americans who had been cast adrift, and, with bluster and clever planning, grabbed anything that could float, including the remains of a carrier battle-group and three offshore drilling platforms off the Panamanian Coast. Later that year, they declared

### JONATHAN META CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD & PRESIDENT, METACORP

INT :10      REF: 6      TECH: 9      COOL: 9  
LUCK: 6      MA: 5      ATTR: 7      BODY: 8  
EMP: 7      SA:RESOURCES +9      REP: 9

Jon Meta was an enigma to the nomad community for a long time. He has went out of his way on every possible occasion to claim brotherhood with the nomads, even when it was in his best interests to do otherwise. Those of the nomad community were wary at first, then puzzled. Why would a man put himself in danger for people he did not know? None of them knew that Jon considered himself a nomad from the moment he hijacked the first C-5B. At that moment, Jon Meta ceased being just an American.

Meta was raised to be a good boy. His family and their hardships taught him honor, decency, and responsibility, and his career as a military officer reinforced that. He was taught that an individual soldier is insignificant compared to the power of the unit in which he fought. Yet despite the honor and responsibility, Jon Meta was ordered to commit some deeds that troubled him, and as things got worse his fears were confirmed.

As the truth about the SouthAm became more and more evident, the soldiers who fought there had to make a choice; accept or rebel. The soldiers who left with Jon Meta understood that they had all been betrayed by the people who led them, and they were angry. Forming a corporation was a way of refusing to give in any more to the Gang of Four, to the other corporations, or to their own nightmares. They stole and cut deals to make it, but make it they did.

At sixty, Jon Meta shows no sign of slowing down. He has completed MetaKey, no doubt to the amazement of all critics. It is one of the two largest private construction projects ever attempted. The completion of MetaKey is only the first step in a larger plan: Jon Meta has grown obsessed with the idea of building his nomadic corporation a home. Not just an island like MetaKey, but somewhere to go if things get even worse on the surface of the Earth. Somewhere under the sea.

An undersea city would be safe from almost any natural disaster, and most man-made disasters, as well. It would also be a beacon to the people of the world, a flagrant message that if you want something fiercely enough, you can get it, even if you have to build it yourself. Huge underwater farms will feed it, and new technologies will allow it to grow.

Jon Meta is a driven man, with eyes are set like jewels in his hard face. His dress is formal for a nomad, though very casual for a corporate. Casual suits and paramilitary working clothes give him a hard edge. He is balding and pale, and is only a little heavier than he was in his prime. "Fail" is not in his lexicon.



independence as a sovereign nation, and boasted the threat of nuclear weapons to make refusal to recognize them inadvisable. Now, these moves were not as spontaneous as they seem. All of the original board of directors for MetaCorp were angry men who had again fought in a war, only to be shunned by their fellow citizens. The conduct of their fellow officers who had been running America under martial law also sickened them. They refused to be a part of this society unless accepted on equal terms—separate from their corrupt brothers and sisters. However, declaring independence was not on the original game-plan. All they really wanted was a way home (which the ships finally provided) and to be left alone, but by then, the military wanted them all dead, so there was no way back. Counting on the billions in hardware they took with them, they instead founded MetaCorp as a security and maritime construction firm.

By the end of 2013, MetaCorp was involved in construction of Atlantis Phase II and New Galveston. They used the profits from their other jobs, including their growing security division, to construct MetaKey. The Key was completed early in 2020, and opened to the public with great success. MetaKey is a mobile island-city, freely owned by MetaCorp, and has no national laws to deal with. Everything except murder and slavery is legal, almost every major corporation has an office there, and security is fairly enforced. It is Hong Kong, Rio, and Zurich all in one, sitting in the Gulf of Mexico.

One of the things that made MetaKey possible was Meta's development of the JackSuit. Whether the original research was done under US Army funding or not, MetaCorp built the first working ACPA unit in the world, then sold the patents (with a ninety-nine year lease-back for corporate use) to Militech in 2017. One of the reasons that there is so little police trouble on MetaKey is that the police are only allowed minimal cyberware. All of MetaKey's law-enforcement is taken care of by lightly-augmented officers (who must pass rigorous psychological screenings) or by ACPA Tactical Units, working in triplets.

All this would lead many to see the Meta as anything but a nation, had it not been for "The Troubles." Between 2012 and 2015 there were considerable stresses within the nomad community: an increase in competition and a resulting decrease of available work, the transition to a civilian government who wanted taxes from nomads, and the integration of survivors from the Long Walk. The Meta supported those who made the Long Walk from the beginning. They air-dropped supplies and water when they could—after all, they had just been in the same bind—and they provided air cover against the bandit attacks which the Government said "never occurred." The Meta have actively sought to subcontract employment to other clans, including hiring outside help for MetaKey. In the seven years since their independence, the Meta have funnelled over three billion dollars into the nomad economy, and this has forced others to accept them as a nation.

## THE ALDECALDOS

The Aldecaldo family was the first true nomad family to form, though at the time they were not nomads, but casualties of the city. Before the Collapse, Los Angeles was arguably one of the greatest cities in the world. It was also, in some areas, one of the worst. In the 1980s and 1990s, parts of Los Angeles devolved into a war zone, as did so many of America's inner cities. There was rampant drug-dealing, prostitution, gang activity, theft, arson, and all species of violence. The only thing missing was hope.

Los Angeles was not just where they made movies, it was also what they made movies about. The movies were about cops and gangs, the rich and famous, and the city that made the movies. They still have not made a film about Juan Aldecaldo and with everything that has happened, they never will. Juan's story begins before that, before the quake took so much of L.A. into the sea...

Juan started life as a migrant. He had a stable home life, and received a decent education in the California school system. He went to College, the first of his family to do so, and received an engineering degree. From there, he entered the defense industry and tried to raise his family as best he could. There never would have been a story had things not changed.

The defense industry took numerous hits in the two decades before the Collapse. A lack of war and a lack of budget forced much of the industry to down-size, putting Juan out of work. Much of the extended Aldecaldo family depended on Juan, and he did what he could to help them; taking a job in a grocery to ward off collectors, selling his home to buy enough food. In spite of his efforts, the family spiraled downward into cheaper neighborhoods, again and again, until they were living in the city's worst slum. He implored his son and his daughter to remain in school and escape their bleak future. His daughter, Maria, was killed in a car accident the day before her seventeenth birthday. His son Ramon, greatly distressed by his sister's death, eventually dropped out of school. He started seeing a Filipino girl who was a member of the Red Dogs gang, and eventually he became a member as well. Ramon was shot to death in a so-called robbery/homicide on his nineteenth birthday. His father was only a few blocks away when it happened. The police and of course the ever-present media were at the scene. No one knows what the newsmen said to Juan Aldecaldo, but his reply was replayed on television screens all across America.

"There is no place for you here! I want to see the surveillance camera tapes! Do you even have the sense to look? What are you people, jackals and vultures who make your living off of the poor victims of this country? My son was a good boy—you tell your audience that. He was a good boy with a good family in hard times. If we had been able to send him to school he



would have been a great man, not like you and your cameras, a good man. All he wanted was for his mother not to be threatened. For his family to have a nice house. Who of you has such lofty goals? You are as bad as the police. They come here and fill out their reports. They say they will do 'all they can' to find the killers of my son and they lie!

"The police think this is one less Red Dog they have to deal with, one more number in their reports. They do not care about us; you people do not care about us; you have no soul! Like the King up in Washington. He does not care. His wife and child are safe without a care in the world. You tell that son-of-a-bitch for me that he should come here and help me bury my son! Let him see this family torn apart, see what happens when you are a good man, and you try to work for a living, scraping by like an animal! When did that political whore ever care about anyone but himself!? He would sell his own mother for four more years in office!

"You tell that pendejo son-of-a-bitch that the next time somebody comes to my house they had better have an answer for this misery! He is a piece of trash to the working people, a traitor! Who will lead the people of America? Not him, he will lick the boots of his patrons, and he will get his thirty pieces of silver. Now get away from here, leave me alone!"

Juan's brief oratory caused a reaction he did not anticipate. At his son's funeral there were over seven thousand people. His parish priest, a man named Jonah Dominguez, gave an impassioned speech that brought the crowd to tears; they had all lost something to the gangs and their violence. Juan Aldecaldos only sat and watched as his son was lowered into the ground.

After the funeral, Juan lost all will to live. Cancer had claimed his wife years earlier. The only thing that kept him going was his pride in his children; now they were gone. Father Dominguez visited regularly, and eventually Juan joined him at his small mission, working to help orphans and other lost parents. One day both were injured when a local gang did a drive-by on the mission house. They were angry, and they decided to do something about it. Father Dominguez, the man who would eventually become known as the Padre, was tired of dealing with an enemy who would not show his face. Juan Aldecaldos was tired of seeing others forced to bear the same loss as he had.

They started with their block, the block the mission house sat on. They armed themselves, gathered a few of the faithful and kept watch from rooftops. They called the police incessantly, and the local beat cops began stashing extra body bags into their patrol cars. One block was reclaimed, then two, then four. The gangs, becoming wise to the game, started striking deliberately at the defenders, but this caused more and more people to come to help; they wanted their homes freed from the vermin that plagued the city, too. Soon they controlled a small subdivision in East Los Angeles. The city government was not very happy having citizens take up arms, especially because it looked like law enforcement was ineffectual. Hassles from officials and

attacks by gangs continued to rise, until it became obvious that things were not getting any better in L.A., and they never would. So the disaffected left in the night, almost five thousand strong: those who were living in the blocks that Juan and the Padre called their own, and those who were just fed up with the city. Many were happy to see them go, but none were as happy as those who left. They chose to leave in the summer, so as to get work in the fields. Then they got work doing whatever they could.

The next year, the Pitt-Arco reactor went meltdown. The Aldecaldos group was hired by the Federal Government to begin reclaiming "specific resources", and the clan was in business. They would, in a few years, lose the Los Angeles contract to the Jodes, a wound would take years to heal, but the clan's economy was established. Juan and the Padre led the Clan well in the early years; they were looked-to almost immediately as the only choice. Juan's celebrity, brief as it was, kept the media on the entire group; and that helped avert reprisals by police and others. By the time the bottom truly fell out, the Aldecaldos were well-armed and ready to help themselves.

In 2002, the Padre died of a heart attack in his sleep. Juan struggled on alone, leading the family as best he could, and the Aldecaldos continued to prosper and grow under his guidance. He began seeking a successor as he grew older, though none would be found for a long time. Elders argued for an election, but Juan wanted no part of politics; he knew any type of internal competition would eventually ruin the family. Just before the Mexico City re-development contract was signed, Juan Aldecaldos suffered a heart attack, and though it set him back personally, he pushed the family forward.

The years in Mexico City were good for the Clan. Juan's health improved, and the family had time to consolidate and re-equip themselves. Though grisly in the beginning, Mexico City proved to be very lucrative as well. When the walkers came across Mexico, they received help from the Aldecaldos, and assistance moving on to other nomad families if they wanted it. The Government was not happy with the Aldecaldos' actions, and they tried to prevent the clan from coming back over the border. There were too many nomads, though, and not enough border guards.

When the Aldecaldos Clan returned to the U.S. in 2015, they brought a few extras with them. They brought the body of Juan Aldecaldos, to be buried near his wife and children in Los Angeles. They brought a new group of nomads, fresh from the Long Walk, and bitter about the way they had been treated. They also brought back America's favorite Rockerboy, Johnny Silverhand, who had been hiding with them for most of two years. Their most telling change, however, was a new leader: a man named Santiago. Born in Los Angeles, raised in the Clan, and tempered by dealings with the Long Walk, the charismatic Santiago was appointed leader at Juan's deathbed. For many years he was simply Santiago—but now he was Santiago Aldecaldos.





### SANTIAGO ALDECALDO THE ALDECALDOS

INT: 7      REF: 8      TECH: 8      COOL: 10  
 LUCK: 6      MA: 6      ATTR: 6      BOD: 8  
 EMP: 8      SA: FAMILY +10      REP: 10

Santiago Aldecaldo began life unceremoniously in an Army Hospital near Berlin, Germany. His family traveled often during his life, and Santiago would never stop moving. Culturally, his mother was a Chicano woman of mixed Native American and Hispanic descent. His father was a second-generation Filipino immigrant. His first family was large and diverse with many cousins and other relatives. His father served a short time with the State Department overseas (where Santiago was born), but a career doing consul work was not a safe job in those days. His family returned

to the States in time for the Lawyers Purge and the family was forced underground into the early nomad community.

Santiago had his share of troubles growing up. By the time he was sixteen, his family had changed so much as to be unrecognizable, however, having been raised in a constant state of flux, the young Santiago was not fazed by these changes. He was small for his age until almost eighteen, and it caused him some hardship and rejection. He decided to leave his half-formed clan just before his nineteenth birthday and went to work doing work which was less respected in nomad culture. He worked as a soldier, a bodyguard, and a roadie for several different bands. It was on the road that he met a solo named Rogue and a rocker named Johnny Silverhand.

The true tests of Santiago as a man came through his relationship with Johnny Silverhand and other edgerunners. After the Arasaka riot in 2012, these friends went underground among the nomads. It was then the other nomads were able to see what Santiago sought, and he was also able to show them what they should be fighting for. The nomads of the Aldecaldo clan liked what they saw in Santiago, and things began to change.

As he became more famous and more visible in his community, Santiago suddenly found he was a leader. He met Juan

Aldecaldo shortly before the great man's death. He was given a mission: he had to help the Aldecaldo, so they could help others. It was not a responsibility he took lightly, or in fact easily, but he did take it.

Personally, Santiago is reserved and quiet. He often comes across as a slightly crude nomad stereotype. To some degree he cultivates this image, in part to fool the statics and in part because it gives him an excuse to pursue fast women and faster bikes. If his enemies underestimate him, that is their mistake. Santiago is a skilled negotiator and a hard-working man. He sees a great deal of conflict coming in America, and considers it his duty to make his Nation as immune as possible to the effects.

Santiago took the name Aldecaldo out of respect for the great leader, and at the great meeting in Omaha he asked others to join him. They responded in vast numbers. The Aldecaldo is the most powerful Nation, second only to the conglomerate Snake Nation in total size.



## THE LAS NATION

**M**arine nomads, sea nomads, and water nomads are all names the government has ignored. Because such people are seen as lawless, they are lumped together by the government and called pirates. It is a term which, to some degree, they have come to enjoy.

The pirates derived their culture from fishermen and the coastal inhabitants of the Caribbean and the southern seaboard. When they were being plagued by waterborne gangs (or worse, government forces), and the central authorities could not or would not protect them, many loaded their families into boats and took to life on the water. It seemed to make sense: boats were difficult to locate for government agents and gang members alike, and finding work was easier because you could bring your whole home to wherever it was. Other cultural influences included so-called "boat-people" of many different persuasions, who were refused emigration and had no choice but life on the sea; as well as the former drug smugglers who now had many high-quality boats and nothing to do with them.

The label of pirates was originally applied because some nomad captains refused to register their ships and boats to any home-port or nation. Under old international law, this makes such a vessel a pirate which can be stopped, boarded, and confiscated by any navy. At one time, the navies of the world were strong enough to prevent such unregistered shipping, now they are relatively powerless. America had one of the largest navies, and even a Coast Guard at one time, but they have never had the manpower or the resources to scan all the waterways in North America. Controlling even the Mississippi Delta region is practically impossible.

Thus, once these pirate nomads got started, the idea spread rapidly. More and more discontented people along navigable waters took to the nearest boats, hoping to hook up with other waterborne wanderers. Soon they numbered in the thousands; and were present all along the Mississippi, Missouri, Saint Lawrence, and Columbia rivers, as well as the Great Lakes and all the coastal areas of the North American continent. Since the Collapse, many of these pirates have even co-opted a number of former drilling platforms and formed mobile marine cities, moving from place to place to build coastal projects like New Galveston and Tampa on the Gulf Of Mexico. Today, nobody knows just how many of these nomads there are. Theirs is the most mobile of major nomad lifestyles—the aerial nomads are perhaps more mobile, but they number a mere few hundred.

The typical sea nomad is a crewman on a small, versatile ship with both motor and sail. The crew of a nomad ship is very close-knit, co-educational and egalitarian. They have a captain, but he only takes unquestioned command in times of emergency. At other times, the quartermaster is the actual boss of the

ship. Most other officers are either specialists (i.e., the navigator, the medtech, the engineering techies) or are "in reserve" in case the person they're understudying dies or leaves the ship. This, combined with the fact that many of these pirates are families, can make the command structure quite confusing to outsiders.

Sea nomads work at a variety of jobs both for hire or for personal gain. These pursuits range from marine farming and other aquaculture, to smuggling, legitimate cargo hauling, refugee transport, and broadcasting.

Certainly broadcasting was not a field that pirates had sought, but it became one of their most profitable sidelines. Some media concerns hire off-shore transmitters for legal, grey market, or even illegal programming. Continuing this noble tradition, places like Del Rio, Texas (which is actually in northern Mexico) have been broadcasting news and entertainment not subject to government or corporate control for years. Most of this broadcasting is from international waters, but pirate transmissions can originate from almost anywhere in the nomad community. This is an effective way to break local and government monopolies on information; any retaliation falls on expendable dinghies, and further action by the targeted government usually involves it in disagreements with other governments and corps at least as strong as they are. The nomads themselves like this work; it requires minimal manpower and can often be done in tandem with other activities, and best of all, it appeals to their anti-authoritarian nature.

Some sea nomads do practice traditional piracy. Targeting vulnerable freighters, they learn what cargo the ship is carrying via shore-based connections, and mass to attack at a point where their target ship is forced to slow down. Disabling the ship's communications with a well-aimed anti-aircraft or anti-tank rocket, they swarm and board before the opposing crewmen can stop them. When the ship is looted (at least of the particular cargo the nomads wanted), it is let go. Unless they meet unusually fierce resistance, nomads will not kill the crew of pirated ships, preferring to let them go to spread the word that non-resistance pays. The freighter crews themselves understand this, and do not usually wish to give their lives for a cargo they don't even own. The nomads then dispose of their loot ashore, often through the offices of the same corporation that set them on the scent of a rival's shipment.

Most of these "pirates", however, are actually subsistence-level fishermen who feel they have no choice but to steal anything that they can sell to help make ends meet. For the most part (excepting the waterborne Raffin Shiv), they stay away from slave trading and kidnapping. Media portrayals to the contrary, a pirate action normally does not involve boarding actions and never includes swinging onto the decks from mysteriously-suspended ropes. Pirating involves stealing small cargoes, or parts of large cargoes, from poorly guarded ships in the night. It also involves smuggling, blockade running, and other forms of tariff evasion.





**JOHN "SILVER" WILSON**  
**THELAS NATION (PIRATES)**

INT :9      REF: 7      TECH: 10      COOL:10  
 LUCK: 8      MA: 7      ATTR: 4      BODY: 6  
 EMP: 10      SA:FAMILY +9      REP: 9

It was inevitable that any pirate leader named John would inherit this salty name of the seas. Were it not for his diminutive stature, he would doubtless also be called "Long John". Those in the Thelas Nation are almost as independent as the Snake Nation's members, so Silver really only controls his own clan, which is admittedly the largest of the waterborne pirates. Silver's clan, the SeaSnakes, numbers almost ten thousand, and he rules it like a patient father.

Silver was a nautical man before the Collapse came. He worked as a rigger on the oil platforms in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico for five or six years before being injured in a fall. Unable to continue as a rigger but wanting to stay on the water, he took a job as a crewman on a pleasure boat out of Galveston. When things got bad, he and his skipper took to fishing and running the occasional contraband to help make ends meet. They ran the coastline all across the Gulf. When the skipper died, John was left with the boat and not much else.

Things started to get really bad when Silver hooked up with several other families on a run near New Orleans. The families were mostly kids and young adults who had boats and wanted out of the hole that New Orleans had become. He taught them the ways of the sea, and they made a meager living. As more and more people took to the water and fished the Gulf, Silver and company moved into the Caribbean. Yet even there, especially near the American Islands, thousands had taken to the sea. Only on the open sea was it easy to find food, and only on the open sea was it hard for the gangs to steal it from you. But to survive on the open sea required a tightly organized group.

Silver and his new family worked the angles and got themselves and a few new allies organized. Soon other captains were asking his opinion and offering their services. The family got larger and larger, and as it grew it became harder to keep everyone above the waterline (so to speak). The construction work at New Galveston provided an opportunity for the pirates to make a better living, at least for a while, and Silver used the proceeds to reinvest in the fleet. He tried to distribute things equally, and for the most part, he succeeded.







Now the Thelas work all across the coastlines of America; John Silver's clan in the Gulf, an allied group on the California coast, and another on the eastern seaboard. These pirate packs do not form a sturdy nation as do their land-lubber counterparts; these alliances are strictly handshake agreements. The great majority of the Thelas families are still independent. They work with the larger packs when it serves their ends, but they certainly will not risk their lives for a relationship of convenience.

John Silver usually wears a wide-brimmed hat, but any hat will do in pinch. He also wears a jumpsuit and non-slip sandals when on board a ship, and always wears sunglasses. His face shows the scars of the skin grafts and operations he has used to fight the skin cancer that is slowly spreading across his body. He could, with new drugs or a more radical skin replacement, live another decade, but that kind of cash money is not readily available. Instead, he lets the enhanced antibodies and the nanosurgeons scour what cancers they can from his system, and fights on.

## FOLK NATION

**T**he Folk Nation is another late entry into nomad society. A nascent black culture based on pre-Collapse gang structures, they have come a long way from their old Chicago roots. In the mid-'90s, the Folk Nation (as it has been called from the very beginning) was one of the most powerful gangs in the world. They had long superseded the Bloods and the Crips for dominance of middle America. Some say their structure was so close because they formed as a response to the other violent gangs in the eighties and nineties. Some say they were just another gang. No one knows for sure, but they are still here now.

Originating in the Chicago area, the Folk Nation had a very strong sense of family and unity from the very beginning. Many of the people who became involved with them were cast out from their more traditional family structures. When referring to the Folk as a nascent "black" culture, we are speaking more of the sociological sense. The Folk adopted the common urban dialect of English that was favored in the black community at the time. They affected all elements of that urban culture including music, fashion, views on drug use and habits, child-rearing, and community.

It was disconcerting to people, at the time, to see people descended from other ethnic cultures casting off their native cultures in favor of this new way. To the members, it just seemed a good way to be. They had made a conscious decision, somewhere in their lives, to leave the cultures they felt had abandoned them, and try something different.

By the beginning of the Collapse, the Folk Nation controlled over fifty-thousand active members. There were easily another fifty-thousand affiliates and hangers-on. As the worst of the Collapse descended, the Folk wisely kept to themselves. They dug in and chose to fight only those battles necessary for their survival. Although elements of the Folk had engaged in widespread criminal activity, as things got worse they simply made surviving martial law — and helping others survive it — their overriding concern. A large black-market distribution network was run from their headquarters in Chicago. The Folk evacuated their members out of dust-bowl areas like Oklahoma City, and took all the others they could transport as well.

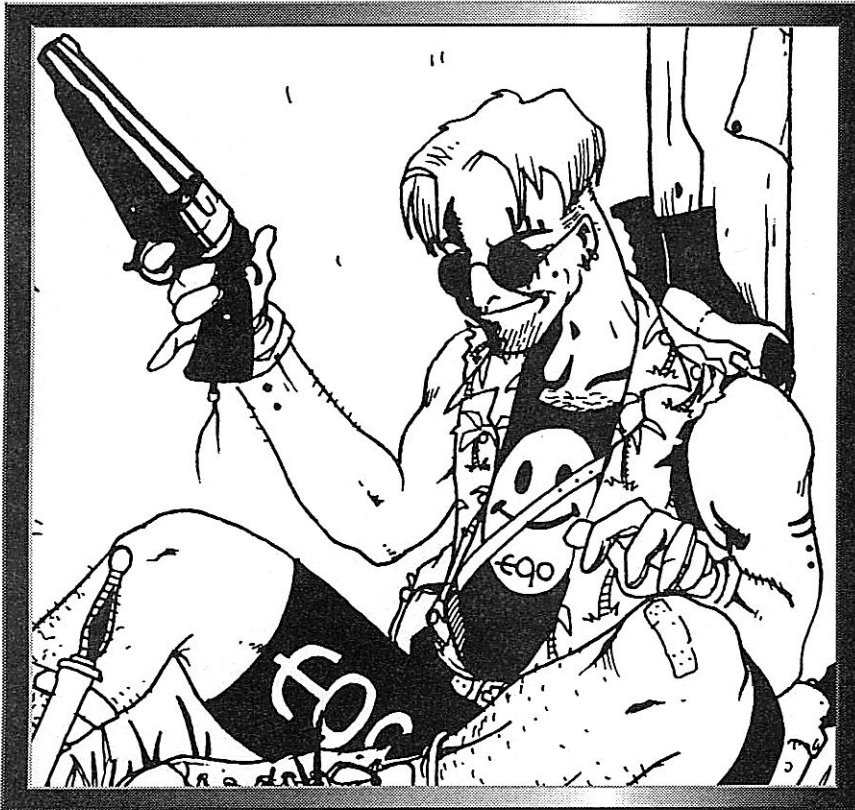
In return, they asked only for favors and help — they understood that people had nothing to give them but promises. Through that network of favors owed they were able to survive fate's worst blow: the Chicago Bioplague of 2012. The Folk Nation was decapitated by that tragedy. Most of the upper leadership was in Chicago, and once the crisis began, the Army let no one out. Out of the ashes of that disaster came Cool and the rebirth of the Folk Nation as a nomad group.

Cool was a leader in the Kansas City area. He had done some fairly large scale transportation and smuggling operations in the past, and saw in transport the ability to survive. In his opinion, remaining in one place was to tempt fate to strike the Folk Nation again with a different cataclysm. Urging other surviving leaders to get on the move, he sent emissaries to some of the other nomad groups to look for work, finding it in places like Balsam, NC, and Stateline, CA. Continuing to rebuild the country after the destruction of Chicago, Cool feels strongly about the nomad community as a whole and has accepted many of the Long Walk refugees, especially those originally from the Midwest. This cemented his reputation among many nomads, and caused others to send work his way as thanks.

The Folk are primarily interested in transportation as a business. There is a large nautical element within the Folk, since they had previously done a good deal of business on the Great Lakes. They became a major nation because of their strong allegiance to the concept of family and responsibility. As a result, the illegal businesses that the Folk used to run are closed now. Still, some state governments are moving against their grey-market dealings as well, such as the sale of medical supplies.

From the beginning, the Folk have been strong supporters of any plans to rebuild Chicago. They feel the Chicago area would be an excellent base for a nationwide transportation network. Many of them are also tired of moving and want to settle somewhere; a second compelling reason for support of the Chicago project. Not only can they base a legitimate business there, the nation can also appropriate housing and real estate for their families. This makes the Folk Nation the only nomad nation that would prefer to return to being statics.





### MR. COOL FOLK NATION

INT: 8      REF: 8      TECH: 7      COOL: 9  
 LUCK: 8      MA: 5      ATTR: 5      BODY: 8  
 EMP: 5      SA:FAMILY +10      REP: 10

The Folk Nation was the last of the Seven Nations to solidify. This is due to two reasons: the Folk were undergoing an internal power struggle, and they were fighting a war they could not win.

The Folk Nation was born in the ghettos and suburbs of Chicago. Even at their most mobile and affluent, a significant percentage of their people lived there. The Folk survived as a gang structure because they were a family first; when they became mobile, they looked to the family for guidance, supported the family as their responsibility, and led the family as time went on. For all these reasons, they simply could not just leave Chicago. The Windy City was a homeland, and many of the Folk chose to remain.

When the bioplague took Chicago away, it also obliterated almost twenty percent of the Folk Nation. Included in this twenty percent were all of the upper echelon leadership, and almost two thirds of the elders. The Folk began to tear apart as rival factions struggled to seize leadership, and as other nomads moved into the area to construct the new city of Chicago Port.

The fighting continued for almost four years, until Cool emerged from the fray. Cool was a young buck whose family had been in Chicago and gone down with it. He had been an enforcer and dog-soldier for the Milwaukee set of the Folk. The Milwaukee Folk were heavily influenced by Native American culture, and hard-line in every way. He was becoming powerful in his own right when suddenly the plague took everything away. When the various factions moved to seize power, he did all he could to block their efforts. He made a great many enemies in the process. Cool was clear to all in his motives; he felt that what was left of the Folk should gather their resources and decide together how they should proceed. He also wanted the families to pressure the government to go back into Chicago and clean up. Cool has always believed it was the government that caused the plague, and he always will.

One by one, he solidified agreements with all of the power structures within the Folk, primarily by playing enemies off against each other and thereby convincing each individually to secretly back his hand. One by one he killed or coerced the less-cooperative elements as well. By the time the other Nations formed, Cool had almost accomplished his goals, but things would continue to be difficult for him.

Cool was nearly assassinated at the Harvest Festival in Omaha by a rival Folk leader, shot eight times at close-range by a small calibre pistol. In the ensuing struggle, the assassin was killed by dog-soldiers. Because he was so adamant about leading his people, Cool chose cybernetic replacements for most of his wounds. He is fully half cyborg now, and it has not slowed him down at all. He used the assassination as a soapbox for his plea for unity, and he branded his enemies as traitors for what they had done to try and usurp the Folk to fuel their greed.

Cool eventually succeeded. The Folk are one of the smaller Nations, but they are a Nation. The reconstruction in Chicago has vindicated many of his beliefs, and he hopes to see some of his brothers and sisters live there some day.

Cool is fond of retro clothing from the America he knows from the movies. He wears loose khaki slacks to cover his cybernetic legs, crew neck shirts, and a leather vest. He also wears a fedora and oversized sunglasses to hide his facial reconstruction. Cool wants to have his cyberware replaced with organics someday, but he can never seem to find the time.



## THE EIGHTH NATION—THE RAFFEN SHIV

**T**he Raffen are the most hated of nomads. Even among the normally permissive nomad society, these people are considered sub-human. The Raffen Shiv (the name is a derivation of several colloquial contractions and perjoratives) are scavengers and sociopaths who prey on the innocent and the weak in nomad tribes — they are generally found in places beyond the reach of the law — and the rest of American culture. They are outcasts, renegades, and betrayers. They steal from, kill, or enslave any whom they can trap.

It is inevitable that any society will have its outcasts, and the Raffen are that and more. Probably the largest of the Raffen groups are the Wraiths. This group travels mostly at night and preys on the sleeping and unwary. It is hard to believe that there are any unwary left in this age, but the Wraiths, and the other Raffen, show no signs of weakening. Many of the smaller Raffen groups have given up on the open road, opting instead to move into cities, terrorize them for a few weeks, and then move on.

Raffen are indistinguishable in appearance from any other booster. They affect chrome 'ware and are usually well armed and armored. Their vehicles appear more combat-oriented than the average nomad. Some are total cyberpsychotics; Dogkiller, the leader of the Wraiths, is rumored to wear clothing made of human skin.

The Raffen culture is oppressive. Stronger members are physically abusive to weaker ones, either for cause or sport. Weaker members or hangers-on are called "bitch" and sometimes traded like cattle. The Raffen are thoroughly repulsive to all but the most hardened cyberpunks. Nomads dispatch dog-soldiers and war parties to eliminate them wherever they are encountered. At the same time, the Raffen are sometimes cultivated by the corporations. They will do any job, no matter how dirty or heinous, and usually for a lower price than any other mercenary group. Of course, arranging meetings for negotiation and payment is occasionally difficult...

## NOMAD VS GANG CULTURE

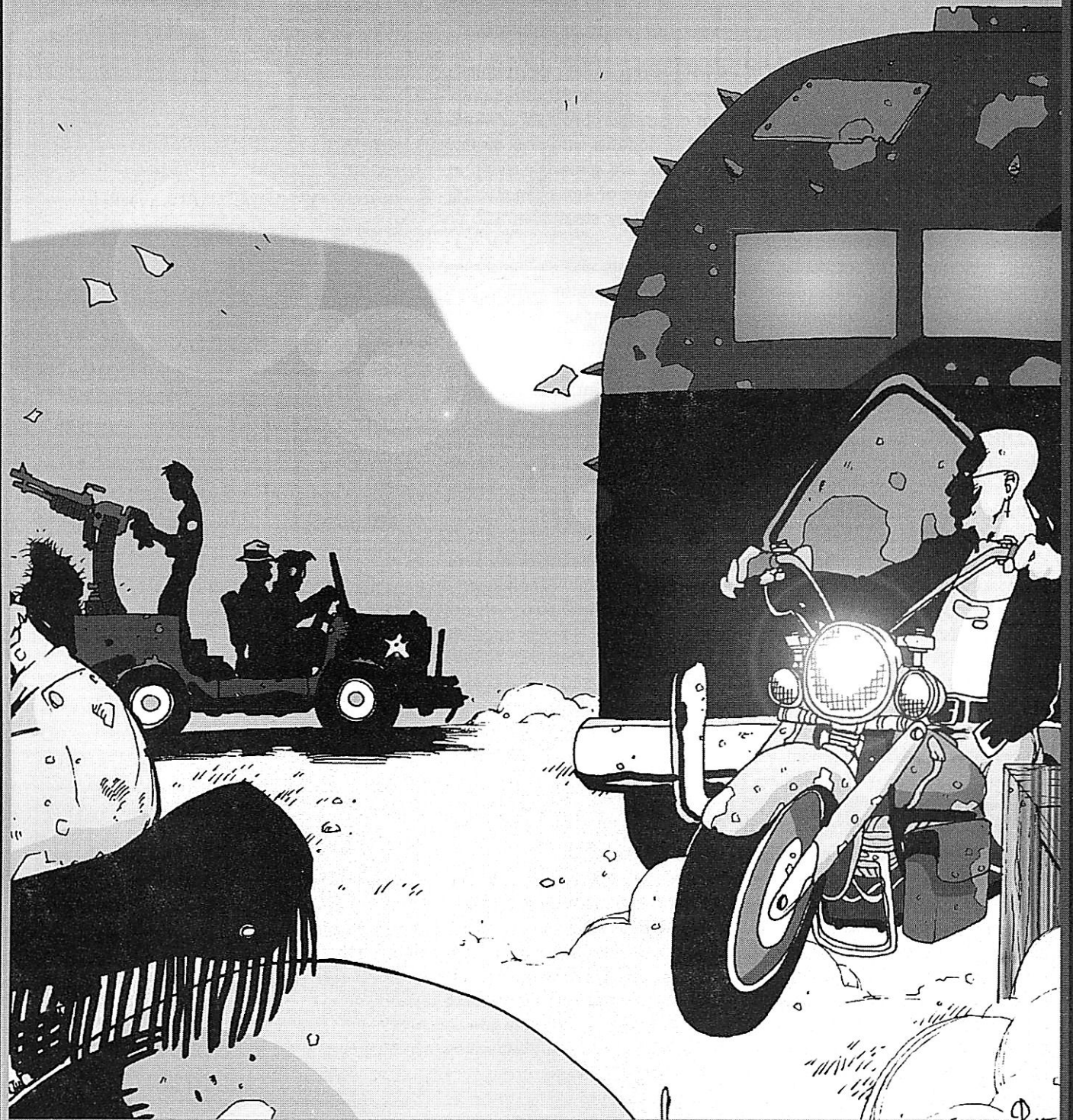
There are many parallels between gang culture in 2020 and nomad culture (having sprouted from the same roots in the Collapse). The two groups have sometimes come to violence over territorial and economic issues. This is greatly mediated by economic factors. The employers of the nomad groups are not subtle. If a gang should disrupt the work of a nomad group then the employer usually has no qualms about eliminating the gang utterly. Feeling no ill against the gangs (especially since many of the Tribes are descendant of pre-Collapse gang structures) the nomads avoid angering the gangs. During jobs the nomad tribes even employ some gangs in tertiary capacities (sometimes even straight payoffs of goods or services).

### A NOTE ON THE USE OF ENGLISH

**You may notice throughout the book and in the adventure that nomads speak very good English, even though the roots of nomad culture are in the poor and functionally illiterate. In The Gang of Four's paranoid quest for military might and world dominance, the education system was gutted. During the peak of the crisis, many of the poor and weak died because they were ignorant, while those with know-how survived. As a result, nomads have a deep respect for education and educators. Almost 98% of the nomad population is literate in 2020 -- this is a higher percentage than mainstream 1990's American society. All are taught to read and write English, and study other languages prevalent in their culture as well. Most are fluent in a second language by adulthood, and some can speak three or more tongues. As a force of habit, nomads do not use much slang or colloquial English. The nomads understand it, but choose not to use it.**



# CREATING NOMAD CHARACTERS



**N**omads are different from other characters in the *Cyberpunk* world. They are flexible and adaptable people; those that are not leave the tribes (voluntarily or otherwise) and settle into other areas of society. Panic-prone people who cannot take care of themselves usually fall victim to the perils of the lawless open road. There have been many people who could have become nomads but chose instead to settle; some of these people grew tired of the nomad way, and others were simply not suited to it.

There are many different types of nomads; dog-soldiers, pirates, warriors, runners, and shamans. You could say that there are as many different nomads as there are people. For the purposes of this book, however, there are three kinds of nomad characters: Those born to the nomad lifestyle (the so-called "true nomads"), those who came to the nomads as adults, and those raised among the nomads who left the tribes to pursue other interests. Each of these situations is handled differently, and each has its own rewards and pitfalls.

The rarest is the true nomad. These are the people who have been in the tribes all of their lives. This is not as common an occurrence as one might think; the modern nomad has only existed for about thirty years, and some tribes have only been around for as little as ten or fifteen years. Consequently, these true nomads are younger than many edgerunners. They are a minority, even in the nomad community, because most nomads come to the tribes from other walks of life in times of duress or hardship. These are people who had skills, families, careers, and, once upon a time, homes. Other people are hired by the nomads for the skills or abilities they possess, then find they want to stay. One of the traits that has kept the nomad culture so vibrant and chimerical is their acceptance of outsiders. Without new blood many tribes would fall to attrition.

True nomads use the plotpath and background events from this book. Nomad characters who leave the tribes in adolescence use the family tables from this book, but use the regular lifepath from *Cyberpunk 2020*. Those characters who join the nomads later in life use the regular family and background generator, substituting "Join A Nomad Pack" for "A Local Nomad Pack Befriends You." You can see what kind

of family you joined by using the "Family of Origin" chart on page 48, or by consulting with the the referee. For complete Nomad Lifepath charts, see page 48-51.

## SPECIAL NOMAD CHARACTER ROLES

In *Cyberpunk 2020*, the basic nomad skill template covers the nomads that most people outside of nomad society meet. Unknown to these statics, inside this diverse culture there are other roles that play important parts. These roles are poorly understood at best by outsiders.

### **Family: The Nomad Special Ability**

*Family* is the generic nomad Special Ability. It is a gauge of many things in a nomad's life, not just the number of brethren who will come to their rescue in a crisis. The "nomad cavalry" seems to ride in and out of many campaigns without so much as a hint of the nomad's responsibility to the pack in return. In *CP2020*, much as in real life, there is no such thing as a free lunch. Sure, the pack may haul your butt out of the frying pan this time, but they may also ask for favors in return. From simple reimbursement for gas and ammunition (with a little thrown in for the less fortunate) to a dangerous trek across the plains riding scout for a group heading back East, there is always a responsibility to the pack to be satisfied.

Of course, there are also times when the pack cannot come to your aid. So without a sure rescue and with a price tag attached, why be a nomad? Simple. Family is not just a cast of extras. It's a culture.

### **Kith: The Other Nomad Special Ability**

**Kith: According to the dictionary, kith is "acquaintances, friends neighbors, or the like," and "a group of people living in the same area and forming a culture with a common language, customs, economy, etc." There you have it. Nomads.**

As has been mentioned, most statics only really deal with and understand the generic nomad; these are the workhorses of the society who have the special ability of *Family*. There are also techies, fixers, and other types in a family or pack that perform valuable services, and are valued members of nomad society. The various specialist roles in a nomad pack have Special Abilities according to their vocation, but they



have a lesser version of the Family Ability as well. This is called Kith.

Kith relates to Family the same way that *Streetwise* relates to *Streetdeal*. The protocols of doing business on the street are very different from those of a pack, clan or nation. Kith and Family give the networking ability within nomad culture that *Streetdeal* and *Streetwise* provide in an urban environment. Attempting a task with Kith that would usually call for Family is always at least one difficulty level higher: an average task becomes difficult, and a difficult task becomes very difficult at least. Kith is a COOL-based skill with an IP modifier of 2, but getting started is a little different.

If the players are starting out in a nomad campaign and everyone is generating a new character, simply have all the players purchase Kith as a pickup skill. This does not include runners, shamans, outriders, and warriors, all of whom have Kith as part of their Special Ability. If the players are in an existing campaign, and role-play some significant event that brings them into the nomad culture, use the following guidelines to award Kith as a skill.

- For each TECH skill at level three or more, +1.
- For each TECH skill at level seven or more, +2.
- For each medical skill or Wilderness Survival at level three or more, +1
- For Reputation of five or more, +1.
- For Reputation of nine or more, +2.
- For each nomad friend or connection (from Lifepath or Plotpath), +1.
- For a nomad sponsor (of that particular pack), +1.
- For a heroic and selfless act that saves a member of the pack, +2

Add up these points and divide by two. This will be the character's potential Kith skill level; potential, yes, for we are not finished yet. This possible skill rating is not immediate; everyone starts out at +1. Tech skills, reputation, and worthiness of sponsorship must be demonstrated before full pack acceptance is achieved. While this is being done the character's Kith improves at one point per month, until the possible skill level is reached. After that the character gains IP according to the regular IP system in *Cyberpunk 2020*.

In a nomad campaign, *Family* (as well as the other nomad Special Abilities) and *Kith* also determine the character's responsibilities to the clan. For each level of *Family* (*Warpath*, *Reconnaissance*, *Counsel*, *Vehicle Zen*) roll a d10 each month. On a roll under the Special Ability level of the character (seven or less for a Family of seven, etc.), some time must be spent on pack business. Specifically, for each point of difference between the roll and the character's Family, one day must be spent doing things like attending clan meetings, assisting other members, or

being sent on some errand that only the character is suited for. In the case of nomad fixers, this is in addition to the time spent maintaining their network (see *Wildside*, the Fixer Role Book for more details on networks). If the character has Kith instead of Family, the time required is halved. For all characters, this duty of service is in addition to the responsibilities which the daily life of a nomad requires; making and breaking camp, travel time, maintenance, eating, policing their areas, and so on.

Family, and to a lesser extent Kith, also represents a type of Resources skill when the character is out and about on clan business. Techs use this to acquire the equipment necessary to do their job. Fixers use this to acquire manpower to set up deals. Runners use it to acquire modifications and improvements to their vehicles. These resources are very valuable to the pack, and should a character lose these resources (without excellent cause) they will be required to replace them. If they cannot replace them then they can be severely punished (though usually not physically) and sometimes even banished until restitution is made.

## WARRIOR

In any society there are fighters; in the static society there are solos, and in nomad society there are warriors. Warriors are a sub-role of solos, but there are many differences. While solos are intensively trained and modified to be killers, nomad warriors rely more on natural aptitude and toughness to be combatants.

Warriors exist because the nomads have been in constant struggle for their very existence from the start. Nomads need these people to survive, but warriors should not and will not endanger themselves unnecessarily. Nomad warriors have two styles of fighting; very close combat, usually at night and without gunfire (to keep from harming their brothers and sisters), and very long-range with extreme prejudice (they do not want aggressors near their camp). These styles of fighting have evolved a very different type of combatant from the modern urban solo.

Those who are mercenaries notwithstanding, violence is generally distasteful to the nomads. This distaste does not preclude self-defense or protection of property; these fall under the nomad imperatives of self preservation. It is violence for its own sake which is distasteful. Nomads feel that life is precious. The older generation has seen too much death for the causes of money or power, and they have done much to impress this on the young. Violence is the last action that most nomads will take.

Warriors are necessary to nomad survival, but they are not necessarily revered. In the nomad mind, it is the people with less experience who feel that the only way to solve a problem is to force their will upon others. The futility of armed struggle could destroy the nomads, so they have tried to channel this energy.





Nomad warriors are encouraged to settle their disputes (as are all the young) by a competition called "counting coup". Borrowing from Native American culture, counting coup is the act of mock fighting. A group of warriors attacks the camp of their enemies and strike them with non-lethal clubs or paint-ball rounds. Some antagonists stage elaborate war games with pugil sticks as their only weapons. The point of all this is to solve disputes with little bloodshed, and thereby to create less friction within nomad society.

Counting coup is a measure of prestige for younger warriors. Being able to score a hit on an older, experienced warrior is a badge of honor, though usually one that will be avenged. Counting coup is also sometimes targeted on statics who have offended the nomads somehow; it is this mock assault that caused the media to label any such action 'wilding.' Wilding usually happens after a few drinks and a real (or imagined) slight to some nomad or nomad group. The young warriors then ride into town and raise all kinds of hell. Most smaller towns have had experience with wilding, and some big cities as well. This does not stop someone from occasionally taking great offense, hauling out a real weapon, and letting go. This sort of misunderstanding has led to many dis-

putes, and a few all-out battles. Warriors caught wilding in this fashion are always severely disciplined by the elders, and so they are usually quite clandestine about their activities.

The evolution of the War Chief in some tribes was inevitable. In cultures throughout history, those who made the best peace-time leaders seldom made the best generals. War Chiefs are warriors who are elected by the tribal elders to lead the pack for the duration of a crisis. In many cases, election to the position of War Chief means that after the tenure is finished, they leave the tribe. This is not a permanent banishment, but rather an agreement that lets the nomads of the pack know that there will not be a power-struggle at the end of a crisis. A former War Chief typically lives with another tribe for a time, usually within the same nation, until the elders feel that the habits of command and the potential for other personal conflicts (which arise from the stresses of a wartime leadership) have blown over.

The Totem Warriors are another fairly new archetype in the Seven Nations. As Neo Paganism and other animistic sects arose in the nomad's shamanistic tradition, they collided with the technology of the exotics. Some warriors feel that by taking on the physical characteristics of their totem ani-



mals they gain some spiritual power over their enemy. It is true, even in 2020, that being beset by a two-meter tall bear with an ax can be very unsettling. These totem warriors are usually led by a shaman of considerable skill, and can be a vicious and terrifying ally for a tribe. Even some nomads are unsettled by the totem warriors, especially the more urbanized Totem Warriors with their rats, insects, and dogs. Hence Totem Warriors maintain themselves a little bit aloof from other nomads. This detachment is further enhanced by the fact that totem warriors are rare; few indeed are the nomads who can afford to undergo such radical surgery and transform virus treatments.

### Special Ability: Warpath

The Warpath Special Ability is based on the nomad philosophy of fighting. Most combat skills are directed towards long-distance or very close-quarters combat. It is a rare thing to see a nomad with a sub-machine gun blazing away in camp—after witnessing such an act, fellow nomads are likely to kill the miscreant rather than allow such irresponsibility to endanger the children. If small arms are necessary in camp, pistols or carbines are the weapon of choice. Pistols are easier to control and discourage “spraying” an area, and carbines are single-shot weapons that are more accurate.

Warpath is added to *Initiative* and *Awareness*, but is only half as effective when fighting opponents besides nomads. Warpath is also added to Melee skill at half Special Ability level (round down), but this is not halved when fighting non-nomadic opponents. The Warpath skill bonuses do not apply to situations out of combat. Warpath also gives all the benefits of the more general nomad skill called Kith.

### Template: Warrior

#### SPECIAL ABILITY: WARPATH

AWARENESS	WILDERNESS SURVIVAL
WEAPON TECH OR BASIC TECH	RIFLE
HANDGUN OR HEAVY WEAPONS	BRAWLING OR MARTIAL ART
ENDURANCE OR FIRST AID	DODGE & ESCAPE
MELEE OR FENCING	OUTRIDER/PATHFINDER

A moving nomad convoy is an awesome sight, but they could not move without their outriders. Also commonly called scouts, outriders are the extended eyes and ears of a nomad pack. Outriders usually travel in pairs, sweeping the way ahead of the column as well as along its flanks to ensure the way is safe from predators and hassles. Sometimes, especially with larger tribes, outriders travel in larger groups, but even with the largest columns, never are more than six outriders encountered at a time.

When deployed in pairs, outriders favor motorcycles because they are fast, maneuverable, and allow a single outrider to flee should something happen to the other. If the outrider team is larger, or in cases where the team is made up of life partners (and leaving them is not a consideration), sometimes the outriders use a rail-buggy or modified FAV (Fast Attack Vehicle/dune buggy). Outriders are the most romanticized of the nomads, much like cowboys were years before. Outriders are considered crazy and a little antisocial—which by nomad standards means they are normal—but they are not as crazy as the pathfinders.

Pathfinders are a sub-role of the outriders. There were never many to begin with, and as time passes, fewer and fewer pathfinders are found in the nomad culture. Pathfinders are the craziest and most solitary of any of the nomads. Pathfinders slip into hostile areas a pack wants to travel through and assess the threat and how best to avoid it. Shortly thereafter the main body of the pack rolls in, sometimes with the pathfinders engaging the enemy in diversionary actions.

Pathfinders and outriders have the Special Ability of *Reconnaissance*. Aside from giving the benefits of the general nomad skill of *Kith*, *Reconnaissance* represents the ability to notice danger, and the ability to avoid it once it's been found. Reconnaissance adds its level to *Awareness* and *Hide/Evade* in situations when the outrider (or pathfinder) is sneaking around and reconnoitering. Standing in a bar does not count. Watching an enemy's camp from a wooded hilltop does. Engaging an enemy in a fire fight does not count either, but fleeing from a fire fight does. Simply put, this is generally a defensive ability.

### Template: Outrider

#### SPECIAL ABILITY: RECONNAISSANCE

AWARENESS	HIDE/EVADE
WILDERNESS SURVIVAL	SMG OR RIFLE
ENDURANCE	ATHLETICS
BASIC TECH	BRAWLING OR MARTIAL ARTS
MOTORCYCLE OR DRIVE	

### Template: Pathfinder

#### SPECIAL ABILITY: RECONNAISSANCE

AWARENESS	HIDE/EVADE
WILDERNESS SURVIVAL	SMG OR RIFLE
ENDURANCE	ATHLETICS
BASIC TECH	BRAWLING OR MARTIAL ARTS
SHADOW/TRACK	







## SHAMAN

This role also appears in the *Pacific Rim Sourcebook* and *Rough Guide To The UK*.

**Author's Note:** This role is not intended to draw magic into the game. The shaman is a vital part of most human tribal societies. Many "impossible" things are accomplished every day in modern America, and most do not require magic, only discipline and training. This is also not an endorsement of any specific religion, philosophy, or sect; though it may be colored by the perceptions, beliefs, or views of the author.

Shamans have been a constant force in human society. Whether they had some true power from the deities of a culture, or some special force of personality that allowed them to be leaders apart from the rest of mankind, they were always there. Some say that as mankind grew more sophisticated the shaman

ceased to be a force. Others say that the shaman simply went by different names; poet, teacher, artist, evangelist, priest, singer, parent. Whether they disappeared or went incognito during the latter part of the last millennium, the shaman has returned in the dark future. In all the cultures of the world, people are becoming more spiritual, more desirous of non-material answers to their questions. Shamans advise, treat, and lead their people on spiritual issues, and on some secular issues as well.

Shamans are primarily older people; the youngest found are aged thirty, and there is no upper limit on age other than that imposed by death. This long tenure owes itself to the fact that the older generations, and the knowledge they have gained from age and experience, have again become reason for respect. No longer are they perceived as the out-of-step objects of ridicule as they once had been. America before the Collapse was a country obsessed by the fashion of the Now. In the years before the turn of the century, the younger generations constantly ignored the lessons of history, claiming they did not apply to this brave new world. The youth claimed intellectual and moral superiority over their elders, and sage advice went unheeded. Their poor judgment allowed the repetition of some of the same mistakes that led to Viet Nam (in the SouthAm) and



the Great Depression (the Collapse itself), as well as the destruction of the American Culture. Older people, whether or not they are shamans, are greatly respected for having lived through the trials which led to the Cyberpunk Revolution. They formed the Seven Nations of the nomad culture. They built the TransCon Maglev. They took the Long Walk back to America. They have survived through the Collapse and the tribulations afterward, so they are to be admired. The bottom line: without an older generation, there would be no younger generation.

In the beginning of the nomad movement, older Americans were the hardest hit. They were, in many cases, involved in professions or segments of the economy that evaporated. They had been killed by the thousands in the Collapse, because many of the young felt that these people were to blame for their problems. Mindless reactions to the older generation, like the Lawyer Purge of 1996, were a futile attempt to create a new order by destroying the old order of things. Those who recognized that older Americans were a resource of wisdom and experience, as did the nomads, were well on their way to social recovery even before the rescindment of martial law in 2012.

The people who became shamans in the beginning of American nomad culture came primarily from two pre-Collapse backgrounds: doctors and spiritual leaders. Doctors are some of the most learned people in our society. Their ability to understand the body with its myriad functions and interrelationships leads to a firm grasp on analytical thought and deductive reasoning. Spiritual leaders, especially people involved in the rural churches and religious groups in America, have a strong love of community and a strong base in philosophy through their training. Many so-called spiritual leaders are no longer dogmatic in their beliefs, but all of the nomad shamanistic traditions have strong foundations influenced heavily by Christianity. Both of these groups had—at least in their more likable members—a personal commitment to helping people, wisdom enough to keep their own counsel, and compassion enough not to force their views on others.

Shamans in the American nomads still typically have a background in either medicine or religion, and their skill template reflects this. Eventually, older shamans grow to be reasonably skilled in all of these areas, just as older netrunners learn a lot about being a techie or older solos learn about being a fixer. In the beginning, however, a shaman must have an area of primary study.

### Special Ability: *Counsel*

Counsel is the ability to argue, speak, and influence that is similar to the rocker's ability. Counsel may also be seen as a sort of cross between Credibility and Charismatic Leadership, especially because a shaman's Counsel is only as good as his or her reputation. A shaman who fails the greater goals of the Tribe or Nation they are serving loses the

ability to lead. Outside the nomad culture, shamans use their ability at half strength, reflecting the urban culture's general distrust of nomads. Counsel also gives all the benefits of the more general nomad skill called Kith.

### Template 1: Doctor

#### SPECIAL ABILITY: COUNSEL

AWARENESS	EDUCATION
DIAGNOSE	FIELD SURGERY
PHARMACEUTICALS	HUMAN PERCEPTION
PERSUASION OR ORATORY	WILDERNESS SURVIVAL
RIFLE OR OTHER WEAPON SKILL	

### Template 2: Spiritual Leader

#### SPECIAL ABILITY: COUNSEL

AWARENESS	DANCE OR ORATORY
COMPOSITION	TRANCE OR PERFORM
HUMAN PERCEPTION	PERSUASION
WILDERNESS SURVIVAL	RIFLE OR OTHER WEAPON SKILL
EXPERT: THEOLOGY OR HISTORY	

## RUNNER

This role also appears in the *Hardwired* and *When Gravity Fails* worldbooks, and in the *Pacific Rim Sourcebook*

A large part of the nomad economy is supported by the transportation of goods. Whether or not the goods or the method of distribution are legal is largely immaterial to the nomads. The fact remains that goods move with or without the nomads, and so most nomads have discarded the moral argument in favor of income; few are the packs which refuse to deliver illegal cargoes. Nomads smuggle almost anything. They do shy away from slavery, baby-legging, and harder drugs, but other cargoes are generally fair game. So what is a nomad runner? Simply put, runners are the meat behind the machines.

Sometimes called jocks, these are the people who accomplish the main business of smuggling and transportation inside and outside the nomad community. Most runners, especially very good runners, have considerable skill in maintaining their vehicles as well. Runners are an oddity outside of nomad culture, and even within the tribes, few have reached prominent positions of leadership to date.



## Special Ability: *Vehicle Zen*

The runner Special Ability is called Vehicle Zen. Vehicle Zen represents the near-mystical ability of select people to meld with their vehicles and accomplish amazing feats. Vehicle Zen adds to any vehicle operation skill, and also to initiative rolls while piloting or driving. Vehicle Zen also gives all the benefits of the general nomad skill of Kith, if the runner is part of a nomad pack.

## Template: Runner

### SPECIAL ABILITY: VEHICLE ZEN

AWARENESS / NOTICE	STREETWISE
PILOT/DRIVING (USUALLY TWO OR MORE VEHICLE TYPES)	
TECH (FOR SOME OR ALL OF THE VEHICLE TYPES USED)	
BASIC TECH	HIDE/EVADE
BRAWLING	ATHLETICS

## OTHER ROLES IN A NOMAD PACK

There are many different people that make up a nomad tribe. There are the techies, medtechs, netrunners, fixers, solos, and even administrators, politicians, dancers and prostitutes. All of these various people can be grouped into two basic types of activities. They either deal with nomads, or with groups outside the nomad community. Very few do both, and the majority of those that do are techs. Each of the roles outlined below have their own functions and responsibilities and their own pitfalls and taboos.

### Netrunners

Nomad netrunners are the most similar to their static counterparts. The Net is the same wherever you choose to jack in, and the challenges and rewards are no different when you're on the road. Though many younger nomad netrunners are pack-raised and educated, many of the eldest have spent long periods away from the pack, so they can sometimes understand non-nomad viewpoints more readily than others.

Many nomad netrunners are less skilled in the beginning of their careers than are their static counterparts. After all, they must still pull their own weight in the tribe as well as learn the intricacies of the Net. However, many have multiple tech skills as a result and are a strong source of income for less populous tribes.

Netrunners from outside the tribes are well-received (for a static) because of their stronger skill. They are given ample time and instruction in their nomadic responsibilities, though as a result some elect to leave the culture instead of spending so much time "in the meat". Many families who rely primarily on netrunners and techs for support allow them considerable lati-

tude in domestic matters. Most nomad rumbles happen in real-space, so there is not as much netrunning in these disputes as there might be in corporate encounters of similar intensity.

Nomad netrunners spend a lot of time in the Net working for their keep. Since they're usually less proficient in combat or driving skills, they earn their way scouting the Net for threats to the pack and nullifying the danger, or warning the pack if elimination is too dangerous. A warning is often all a pack needs to deal with a threat, since to nomads, evasion is the first strategy. Since many statics think of nomads as barbaric (or at least backwards) they often assume nomads have no Net security. Usually this mistake is made only once, but some people never learn.

There are many wireless communications systems scattered across North America, so a netrunner can jack in most anywhere. Parts of the world, however, are still dead space where connections to the Net are difficult if not impossible. Long-range short-wave radio communications are not fast enough for serious netrunning, so a nomad netrunner may need to be able to communicate directly with a passing satellite to run the Net. Examples of dead spaces include most of the Grand Canyon system, the rural Southwest, and both Chicago and Manhattan Island. Most abandoned cities are also dead space as well. A simple rule of thumb is: No Power = No Net.

Nomad netrunners do not travel alone, as driving is dangerous at best while jacked into an alternate awareness. They also travel lighter than most any other nomads; a portable deck and some firmware doesn't take up much space.

### Techs

Techs are a necessity in the nomad culture. Without people to service the machines, a nomadic lifestyle in the modern world is almost impossible. There are water purification, tool manufacture, vehicle service, and defense instrumentation to be tended to. All of these make the nomad life possible, and all the other cool stuff makes it more fun.

Any decent tech can make a living traveling with a nomad pack and repairing and customizing equipment for them. Once the tech proves competence, the pack cheerfully provides any equipment they feel may be needed. Senior techs and their families may even have a mobile shop on a flatbed or in a box-truck, and the tech can generally call on any nomad in hearing distance for an extra pair of hands for even the grimmest of work. Techs are also a valued income stream, because they can take in some outside cash work if times are hard.

In return, each tech is expected to do his or her level best to keep all the pack's equipment in top form (or at least the best shape the pack can afford). This can mean anything from making pickup on a crippled motorcycle—winching the bike into the back of an RV and commencing repairs while the pack is still in motion—to realigning a failed communications satellite from the control unit (not all packs are low-tech). A smart tech has, or



**SCAVENGING**  
**One aspect of a tech's Jury Rig skill that is not covered in the main skill description is scavenging. Scavenging allows a tech to notice useful parts in what many would consider useless junk, and to put together usable gear from what anybody else would dismiss as random parts. This is similar, but not as ephemeral a repair as a Jury Rig. As long as the skill roll is made to initially salvage and install the part, the part will work normally until regular wear and tear bring it down. A power-supply from a microwave oven will function as a power-supply for a computer. It may be a little more delicate than a standard power supply, it may be older and more worn, but it will work. Some referees may want to assign a maintenance rating to certain equipment, and use the maintenance rules from *ChromeBook 3*. For more info, see the *Scrounge Special Ability in Wildside*.**

learns quickly, all there is to know about the pack's equipment in general, and the vehicles in particular. After a while, some techs grow so familiar with the pack's equipment that when something goes down, the tech already has a good idea of just what's wrong and where to begin fixing it. This ability is highly regarded by nomads, and a pack with such techs in it is considered very lucky indeed.

Another duty a nomad tech has is to train apprentices. The nomad life is dangerous, and the pack knows that an accident can claim any one of them without warning. Therefore, techs are expected to pick out youngsters with demonstrated mechanical aptitude and take them as apprentices. Though all nomad children learn something of their machines, a pack can never have too many trained techs. The relationship between a tech and his or her nomad apprentices is usually very close. The tech is generally quite pleased and flattered by the apprentices' eagerness to learn, and the apprentices themselves are delighted to learn a skill that will make them valued members of a pack (or help them outside the pack, should things come to that). Many apprentices become so attached to their mentor that they decide to stay with him or her permanently.

### Medtechs

Nomad medtechs are highly valued as well. There is nothing worse than a pack struck with disease and no one to cure them. Combative tribes (especially the dreaded ranks of the Raffin Shiv) have even been known to "commandeer" large groups of medical personnel. Medtechs are uncommon in nomad society, and this is one of the reasons that most shamans are fairly skilled physicians as well.

There is an impressive though largely unknown medical expertise within the Seven Nations. Nomads have had to work in some pretty desolate, polluted, and radioactive places at times. Had they not had excellent medical personnel and equipment, cancer and other diseases would have destroyed the nomads years ago. Nomad medicine, in the form of even extremely sophisticated immuno-boosters, are what will make it possible for the nomads to decontaminate and rebuild Chicago and New York. In many cases, the transform viruses and grafts necessary for exotic modification like those used by totem warriors were originally developed by nomad medtechs!

The only real drawback to nomadic life for an edgerunner medtech is that many nomads are conservative with respect to cybergear. To a medtech, the challenge of something new and different is half of life, and stitching up mundane wounds, teaching a class in hygiene, or setting the occasional fracture can be dull.

Other than that, a nomad medtech lacks for nothing at all that the pack can provide. Unlike most pack members (the aged, very young and women carrying children are also excepted), a nomad medtech is not expected to fight unless in extremis. When the pack's under attack, the medtech and any apprentices make themselves ready to treat the wounded, in the middle of the protection of the group if possible. Should that protection be breached, any nomad who observes an attack on the medtechs does whatever is necessary to keep them alive.

### Fixers

Nomad fixers are some of the most hyper-social people of 2020 America—they can make Mafia Capos seem like hermits. They are supreme social chameleons as well; comfortable in a suit, a set of buckskins, or a street-punk's armorjacket. The nomad fixer has to be adaptable and able to get





along with many different kinds of people (including many who dislike them merely for being nomads). They must have a strong ability to perceive desires and the capacity to make those desires reality.

Fixers are, as in the static world, the go-betweens that make things happen, both between separate packs (or clans, or tribes, or nations), and between a pack and the static world. Most urban edgerunners only meet these fixers when they wish to hire nomads, or perhaps be hired by them. An outsider wishing to hire nomads must contact one of the pack's fixers. They know who is available, and what skills the packs have. The fixer puts together a deal that both parties are satisfied with and takes his commission off the top of the fee, though custom dictates that the lion's share of the fee goes directly to those in the fixer's pack who cannot work. If the nomad group fails to give satisfaction, the fixer looks into what happened, and either arranges repayment on the unfulfilled parts of the contract or sees to it that the contract is carried out. Nomad fixers hate to fail; it damages both their own rep and their pack's. Just like their urban counterparts, nomad fixers must maintain their organization. Unlike the urban fixers, at least half of any nomad fixers' organization is made up of nomads from other packs, tribes or nations.

Persons wishing to complain to the pack leadership about a particular pack member (or group thereof) must also deal first with a nomad fixer. For a fee, the fixer arranges a meeting, and then helps the party present their case in the best possible light. Many volatile situations have been saved by a fixer's effort to keep things going smoothly. Without the fixers, the outsiders would be lucky to gain an audience and would have a much more difficult time pleading their case to the pack's leaders. This function makes the fixer valuable both to the pack, for even the toughest pack doesn't need unnecessary enemies; and to societies that must deal with nomads. Conversely, nomad fixers occasionally garner enemies within their pack; no one ever wants to end up paying for the things they do in a wilding.

The fixer also has the connections and the street-sense to know what gangs are present in a given town and where their turfs are. Without this knowledge, a nomad pack could inadvertently camp in gang turf without permission, or worse, in an area disputed between two gangs. Although a fixer rarely attains leadership of a nomad clan or tribe, their advice and connections are essential to the survival of the pack, and no pack will ignore them. A pack may get along without a fixer for a while, but their path will be harder than those of the packs that have such members.

## Medias

There are two kinds of nomad medias: those who cover the nomads and their interests from inside nomad culture, and

those who are sent in from the outside. A very few skate the line as do nomad fixers, but these are the exception which prove the rule. Nomad medias are a curious breed; even in a profession where danger and exotic surroundings are commonplace, they stand out for their eccentricity, toughness, and craziness.

If the medias are assigned by a major corporate concern to cover a well-known pack's activities, or actually to ride with them (with or without permission), there can be friction. The nomads themselves are of two minds about medias: on the one hand, if there is an enemy looking for you, having a reporter right in the middle of the camp broadcasting where you are is not a comfortable thing; but on the other hand, if The Man is pushing you around, friendly media coverage can be a useful weapon. As a result, nomads are wary and careful around medias, treating them as though they had some strange mystic power. It is difficult for a media to readily gain a pack's trust in the beginning, though on rare occasion, as a relationship builds, the media may become a member of sorts (like Bes Isis with the Aldecaldo Nation).

The normal path to become an "outside" nomad media is to be assigned to cover a pack. The media's concern will contact the pack directly or through the pack's fixers, and arrange for access to the camps and for permission to ride with the pack as it moves across the country. Once this is done, the rest is up to the media. If the media is friendly (not condescending or hostile), treats the nomads like fellow human beings, and respects their customs, all is usually well. A media who is truly trusted by nomads is a fortunate person. The nomads will show him or her almost anything, offer protection in dangerous situations, and do all they can to make life comfortable and happy among them. A media who treats nomads with disrespect, ignores their mores (even after being warned), and is condescending, may end up delivered to the parent mediacorp, fractured, trussed and gagged. The fixers get on the line with the corporates, explaining exactly what led to this ejection, and after getting out of the hospital, the offending journalist may well find that the only available job is hosting an afternoon cartoon show.

One example of media-nomad alliance is the infamous Newer Orleans Nomad Riots of 2017. The Mardi Gras festivities had attracted many nomads, and many of the local streetpunks believed their camps would be easy pickings. When the nomads defended themselves, the (local) authorities came down on the side of the (local) streetpunks, and were preparing for an all-out assault on the camps. Medias traveling with the packs were transmitting live, however, and the outcome was different than the police had planned.

As they closed in, the police were horrified to find themselves on international airwaves, fielding pointed questions about why they were attacking people whose only crime had



been to defend themselves from streetgangs. When this came onto screens in the New Orleans area, gang-weary citizens began demonstrating outside police stations, and many of them went out to the camps to make sure that the police were defeated. As a result of the media coverage, the police chief and many of his assistants were sent to prison — the aroused medias had been able to unearth evidence and film statements that the police had been in the pay of the streetgangs for years. Disgraced, the police pulled back from the nomad camps.

Because of events like this, no pack will knowingly be offensive to a media, though in some packs even the most accepted media gets treated rather like a gossip at a large family gathering: loved and respected for his or her sterling qualities, but never witnessing anyone doing or saying anything that they'd be willing to have the whole world know.

## Corps

Nomad corporates may seem like a contradiction in terms to many people, but they are becoming more and more real. There are two kinds of nomad corporates: the "nomad liaison" that many corporations keep around to interface with their nomad work force, and the executives of the newer nomad corporations.

Many corporations find that it pays to have a nomad liaison on their payroll. As specialists in the nomad culture, they are invaluable when a corporation has to deal with the nomads. Many are of nomad origin themselves, and parlay the knowledge of their people into secure positions (either contract or salary) within a corporation. The life of a nomad liaison is schizophrenic to many; they wake in their fancy conapt, surrounded by luxuries they 'just couldn't do without', and go to sleep that night in a scruffy tent amongst a tribe where anything you can't pack on the back of a bike is excess baggage. The nomad corp has to be able to deal with both the corporation and the nomad packs on their own terms and without a bobble. Some find that after a few years they are nomads of a different order, living a double life out of a suitcase and a wallet full of chops.

They keep appropriate clothing ready to go at a moment's notice — showing up in biker leathers at a boardroom meeting is generally to be avoided (although at times it is an excellent tactical move), and a typical corporate suit doesn't last long in the harsh conditions of a nomad camp. The life of a nomad liaison is difficult, involving a constant tightrope walk. If either side comes to distrust him, his usefulness is ended. His first loyalty is always to the agreement, but he must never endanger either his nomad pack or corporate partners. Some who are assigned to this type of work eventually "go native" and join a pack. Some use the liaison post as a way to lever themselves out of the nomad life.

Recently, some have also used their knowledge to start their own corporations.

The nomad corporations are new and relatively rare in 2020. The oldest is MetaCorp, founded by the Meta Nation. Nomads have also started their own construction concerns, and even a few have become small mercenary companies. These corporates are very similar to their static corporate brethren in all except world-view. While the ultimate goal of a corporation is to make money, many nomad corps view profit as a tool to be used to support their family and accomplish other goals they may have—in essence, nomad corporations are static corporations with a personality. One advantage of the nomad corporations is their employee's loyalty. The term birth-to-death employment was never so true as is the case with them, and there have been few acts of corporate betrayal in their ranks.

## Cops

The Seven Nations, being a civilization on wheels, have a certain amount of police work that needs to be done. Stopping the occasional brawl, preventing domestic disputes from getting out of control, finding thieves, and arranging guard duty—all of these call for the people that the statics know as cops.

Known to the nomads as dog-soldiers, these police are appointed by the pack elders. They take a special oath to the pack and are given a great deal of authority to keep life within the pack peaceful. Most of a dog-soldier's work is fairly straightforward. Nomads like to discipline their own, and repeat offenders are usually left by the roadside, whereafter they are either killed or recruited by the Raffen Shiv. Occasionally, when a crime is so horrible that simple banishment is not enough, the dog-soldiers pursue the criminals relentlessly and execute them ruthlessly.

A dog-soldier's authority depends, in the final analysis, on the consensus of his or her packmates that the job is being done well. Abusers of authority soon find themselves stripped of rank; there are few secrets in a nomad pack, and since all members can appeal to the pack elders for redress, there are few incidences of graft or bullying.

Dog-soldiers and city cops have a natural distrust for each other, but often have to work together. Investigation of federal crimes committed within the camps is near impossible without the active cooperation of the nomads and their dog-soldiers. The nomads are also at a severe disadvantage when dealing with the static population without the help of the urban police. Some large police departments have a "nomad squad." Staffed with officers much like the corporate officials described above, they become specialists in nomad affairs. As much as possible, they live among nomads, learn their customs and lore, and do their best to gain trust. They



earn the favor of the nomads by easing their relations with the static police, and doing what can be done to help any nomads in trouble with the law. Like the corporate counterpart, a nomad squaddie walks a tightrope, and has to please both sides of a chronic feud who famously distrust each other. Concurrently, the Seven Nations maintain liaisons who can travel to help defend nomads in their packs.

In some extreme cases, particularly in the case of large riots or civil unrest, trusted nomads might even find themselves deputized by the static police. Under police command, nomads have gone into action against rioters in several cities and have helped blunt the impact of the raids of some warlords along the US-Mexican border.

## Rockers

Rockers may seem very similar to the nomad clans' shamans, but they are actually very different. Rockers speak to the world, while shamans concern themselves with a smaller audience. This is not to say that some rockers have not been true nomads—they have—but rockers generally are more interested in issues with national or global impact, while the shamans are only interested in the pack.

Many rockers find that traveling with a nomad pack is a cheap, easy way of getting from gig to gig. If they start doing better, most find other ways of traveling, but some of them stay with their nomad friends. In some cases, successful rockers have had nomad packs doubling as their road crews, providing technical services, protection and crowd control. This arrangement suits both sides; the nomads get to travel around and live free, well-paid lives, and the rocker gets service and devotion beyond what money could buy. The most famous example of this is the relationship between **Justifiable Homicide** and a large family affiliated with the Aldecaldos, known as the El Dorado Cruisers. Since the Long Walk, the two groups have been inseparable, and as a result Barry Miyung (JH's front man) has become a respected shaman as well.

Rockers who specialize in instruments that are difficult to move are almost never found among nomad packs. Any instrument that is easily man-portable is suitable for rockers who live among the wanderers. With the services of the clan's techs, the most complex, delicate electric instruments can be kept playing, but people whose instruments take little maintenance are at a big advantage.

The nomads' attitude toward their rocker friends is one of admiration for their skill at getting their audiences excited about something, occasionally blended with wonder at their naiveté. Nomads lead lives apart from the mainstream, and sometimes find it difficult to get wildly excited about things that do not relate to them. A rocker's attempts to get his nomad buddies fired up about some example of corporate

or government abuse usually meets with little success, unless the abuse affects the nomads themselves or goes beyond what they consider inevitable.

The nomad market is not large enough to support many rockers catering specifically to it. The few who do are many times nomads themselves, singing about the things that affect their lives with a perspective that even the most sympathetic outsiders cannot achieve. Such rockers can stir the nomads to action, should they wish to do so. One thing all nomads agree on is that music makes a bad day good, and a good day better. Most any nomad will go to the aid of a rocker in trouble, unless it is very clear that the rocker invited the trouble foolishly. Attacking a rocker that's been accepted by a nomad pack is one fast way to meet new friends in the emergency room—if you're lucky.

## Solos

Solos are fairly rare outside of the mercenary packs in nomad society, but former solos are not so few (see *Changing Roles in Listen Up, You Primitive Screwheads: The Cyberpunk 2020 Referee's Guide*). The Nomad Nations have always been someplace to go to get away from whatever hounds you. Many solos tire of their constant running, their necessary paranoia, their required disregard for life. The packs offer a safer, quieter, more social existence. Other solos and the police know that nomad packs are frequently used as refuges, so biosculpture and a new identity are sometimes necessary to help a solo blend in. These solos who seek sanctuary are usually tired of fighting, so the nomads encourage careers in non-violent disciplines. The number of former operatives from the Gang of Four days that are now nomads would be impressive, if anyone knew about them. These solos are very aware of the nomad's kindness, and many begin totally new lives with families and other responsibilities; trying to locate these people and pursuing them through the nomad community is difficult at best, and deadly at worst.

Active solos that are members of the nomad society are usually mercenaries. Their life is little different, from the outside, than that of the other solos who work as mercenaries. From the inside there is a greater difference. Unlike full-time mercs bereft of the comforts of life, nomad solos are men and women with families, a sense of purpose, and a strong will to survive. It is different from the army or professional corporate mercenaries, because to a corporation your unit is your family, not vice versa. Nomad solo families are as strict in discipline as any military unit must be, but there is a greater latitude given in personal deportment. Uniforms may be irregular and equipment is rarely top of the line, but these nomads fight not only for their employers, but to protect their family as well.



# NOMAD LIFEPAATH CHARTS

## 1 — FAMILY BACKGROUND

Family of origin is defined by two separate parameters: how well-off the family is, and what type of work the family does. To generate the socio-economic rank for a nomad character's family, simply roll two ten-sided dice, add the two numbers together, and divide by two. This average is the status (equivalent to the nomad *Family Special Attribute*) of your parents. This status does not really mean much outside nomad culture, but may be important to the character's story.

What is important to nomads is the type of work the character was raised doing (which should therefore influence the background skills the player chooses). Families could be affiliated with any of the seven major nations, or be an independent group affiliated with none of them, depending on the ideas of the player and referee. If the character was raised outside of the nomads, use Family Ranking from *CP2020*.

### FAMILY OF ORIGIN (Choose or Roll One)

1	Construction Family
2	Salvage Family
3	Transportation Family
4	Outrider Family
5	Warrior Family
6	Shaman/Doctor Family
7	Technical Family
8	Entertainment/Carny Family
9	Agricultural Family
10	Raffen Shiv Family

Go to **Parents**.

### PARENTS (Choose or Roll One)

1	Child of Single Mother, Father Unknown
2	Child of Widow/er or Divorcee
3	Child of Two Parents
4	Child of Group Marriage
5	Orphan, Refugee, or Runaway
6	Feral Child*

\* Feral children are rare but not unheard-of in *Cyberpunk*. These children were lost or abandoned while very young and lived as animals. This usually happened before the base socialization skills were learned (about age five). In some cases the children were older, but all previous development had been blocked out by some traumatic incident. Feral children are always taken in by nomads; even though they are not prepared for social life, they can be taught socialization and be made better, if not well.

Go to **Parents' Current Status**

### PARENTS' CURRENT STATUS (Choose or Roll 1)

1	Parents Alive (Go to <b>Family Status</b> )
2	Parents Alive (Go to <b>Family Status</b> )
3	Something has happened to one of your parents (Go To <b>Something Happened to Your Parent(s)</b> )
4	Something has happened to one of your parents (Go To <b>Something Happened to Your Parent(s)</b> )
5	Something has happened to both (or all of) your parents (Go To <b>Something Happened to Your Parent(s)</b> )
6	Something has happened to both (or all of) your parents (Go To <b>Something Happened to Your Parent(s)</b> )

### SOMETHING HAPPENED TO PARENTS (Choose or Roll)

1	Parent(s) died in warfare
2	Parent(s) died in a road accident
3	Parent(s) were murdered
4	Parent(s) imprisoned
5	Parent(s) died of heart attack or other premature cause
6	Parent(s) incapacitated by illness or injury
7	Parent(s) got lost or vanished
8	Parent(s) died committing a crime
9	Parent(s) left the pack
10	Parent(s) abandoned you

Go To **Family Status**

### FAMILY STATUS (Choose or Roll One)

1-8	Family standing among your clan is good, even if your parents are missing and/or dead. (Go to <b>Childhood Environment</b> .)
9-10	Your family is not in good standing with pack. (Go to <b>Family Tragedy</b> .)

### FAMILY TRAGEDY (Choose or Roll One)

1	Family was expelled from pack for breaking the Code.
2	Family was last survivors of a pack.
3	Family was unable to travel with the pack.
4	Family was separated from the pack.
5	Family was held responsible for pack misfortune.
6	Family was involved in an intra-pack feud.





**1 — FAMILY BACKGROUND (CONTINUED)**

**CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENT (Choose or Roll One)**

- 1 Spent happily, with normal nomad pastimes.
- 2 Spent unhappily, due to circumstances beyond your control.
- 3 Spent away from your family (use **Childhood Environment** from the main rulebook if this option is chosen).
- 4 Spent separately from the main body of the pack.
- 5 Spent in juvenile institutions (Go to *CP2020 Lifepath* section).
- 6 Spent on the Street (Go to *CP2020 Lifepath* section).  
*Go To Siblings*

**SIBLINGS (Choose or Roll One)**

You may have up to seven brothers and/or sisters. These do not necessarily have to be blood relations, simply children you grew up with and with whom you share a special bond of one sort or another. In fact, if you were a feral child or an orphan you have no known blood relatives. Roll 1d10. 1-7 is the number of brothers and/or sisters you have. On 8-10, you are an only child.

For Each Brother or Sister:

- 1) Roll 1d10. Even, the sibling is male, odd, the sibling is female.
- 2) Roll age, relative to yourself. Even is older, odd is younger.
- 3) For each sibling, choose or roll their feelings about you.

- 1-2: Hatred
- 3-4: Dislike
- 5-6: Neutral Feelings
- 7-8: Like
- 9-10: Very Close Ties

*Go To Motivations.*

**2 — MOTIVATIONS**

**PERSONALITY TRAITS: (Choose or Roll One)**

- 1 Outgoing
- 2 Neutral
- 3 Aloof
- 4 Indifferent to Outsiders
- 5 Cautious
- 6 Perfectionist
- 7 Altruistic
- 8 Defensive
- 9 Compulsive
- 10 Manic

All nomads see the group's survival as a goal at least as important as saving their own lives. Teamwork is an absolute necessity in nomad society. People who will not work with others, are rebellious to the culture, or who place themselves above the whole, usually leave the society (if they are not forced out).

**PERSON YOU VALUE MOST: (Choose or Roll One)**

- 1 Your Family (in particular)
- 2 A Sibling
- 3 A Friend
- 4 A Lover or Ex-Lover
- 5 The Pack (in general)
- 6 Yourself or No One
- 7 A Pet
- 8 A Personal Icon or Hero (you may or may not have met)
- 9 A Religious Leader
- 10 A Teacher or Mentor

**WHAT DO YOU VALUE MOST? (Choose or Roll One)**

- 1 The Pack
- 2 Money
- 3 Personal Integrity or Honor
- 4 Honesty
- 5 Knowledge
- 6 Vengeance
- 7 Good Times
- 8 Power or Influence
- 9 Skill
- 10 Friendship

**HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT MOST PEOPLE? (Choose or Roll One)**

- 1 Indifferent
- 2 Neutral & Negative
- 3 Neutral & Positive
- 4 Refuse to Make Judgments Until Known
- 5 They Are Useful Tools
- 6 People Are Basically Good

*Go To Life Events.*



### 3 — LIFE EVENTS

You may either use the system in the main rulebook or the one presented here for determining events in your character's life up to the beginning of play.

#### LIFE EVENTS

1-3	Big Problems, Big Wins (use the charts given here)
4-6	Friend & Enemies (use 2020 charts)
7-8	Romantic Involvement (use 2020 charts)
9-10	Nothing Much Happened That Year

### 3A — BIG PROBLEMS, BIG WINS

Nomad life is very risky indeed. Even with a pack of tight brothers and sisters backing your play, there are times that things just won't go right. But, for every time that things turn up terrible, there's a time when life just fits into place like a well-made engine. Roll 1d10. On an even roll, you scored big. On an odd roll, you got yourself hit.

#### DISASTER STRIKES! ROLL 1D10:

- 1 Expelled from the Pack: You screwed up something awful and have been banished for a period of 1d10 months. You may choose not to go back (use regular CP2020 Lifepath from here on out if you so choose). Even if you return, subtract one from your Reputation.
- 2 Imprisonment: You have been in jail or prison, or were held by a gang, corporation, or personal enemy. Maybe you were even held as a hostage by a rival nomad group. Roll 1d10 for the length of your captivity, in months.
- 3 Illness or addiction: You became sick or addicted to something. Lose one point of a random stat as a result.
- 4 Betrayal: You have been back-stabbed. Roll 1d10. 1-3, it is by a fellow pack member; 4-10, it is by an outsider. Roll another 1d10. 1-3, you are being blackmailed; 4-6, a secret was exposed to the pack or the outside world; 7-10, a close friend or lover turned against you.
- 5 Accident!: You were in some sort of accident. Roll 1d10. 1-3, you were disfigured and must subtract one point of ATT (Referee & player's discretion); 4-6, you were hospitalized, either in a static hospital or in the pack, for 1d10 months; 7-9, you lose 1d10 months of memory; and on a 10, you constantly relive nightmares of the event (1-5 on a d10 each night), and sometimes wake the camp with your screaming.
- 6 Lover, friend or relative killed: You lost someone you really cared about. 1-3, they died of natural causes; 4-8, they were murdered by unknown parties, or fell in battle; 9-10, they were foully murdered, and you know who did it!
- 7 Economic disaster: Roll 1d10: On 1-7, the pack is behind you, so you only lose your ready cash; but on an 8-10, the whole pack was caught in the same trouble, and you're all up against the wall pretty badly for a while.
- 8 Hunted: You're being pursued by enemies (for something you did or didn't actually do). Roll 1d10: 1-3, it is by a rival nomad pack (or other large group); with a 4-6, it's a corporate arm, a police force, or even a church (a medium group); on a 7-10, it is a few local cops or a gang (a small group);
- 9 Pack Tragedy: Roll 1d10. 1-3, your pack was destroyed in hostilities with enemies when you were elsewhere; 4-6, it was broken up by "the Law" for crimes (real or otherwise); 7-10, it got stomped by a corporation. Roll a die for every year after this event; on an even roll in any year, you find a new pack.
- 10 Mental Breakdown: Roll 1d10. On a 1-4, it's a nervous disorder with a physical cause—schizophrenia, heavy fever-induced hallucinations, or something of the sort. Otherwise, you just couldn't hack things for a while, and needed help getting your head put back together.

Go To **What Are You Going To Do About It?**



### 3A — BIG PROBLEMS, BIG WINS (CONTINUED)

#### WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?

Choose or roll one for every disaster:

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| 1-2:  | Clear your name                                       |
| 2-3:  | Put distance between you and the problem.             |
| 4-5:  | Hunt down and kill those responsible.                 |
| 6-7:  | Get an appropriate pay-back out of the situation.     |
| 8-10: | Blow it off — life's too short to waste with grudges. |

Go Back To **Life Events** And Roll The Next Year

#### YOU GET LUCKY (Roll 1d10):

- 1 A powerful nomad from another pack owes you a favor! This counts as *Family* skill 6 with their pack, but only once.
- 2 You got some equipment, either by scrounging or some aggressive bargaining. Roll 1d10x400 for value in eurodollars (and don't forget to pay extra for black market or illegal goods).
- 3 You got a chance to learn something useful. Add 2 to any INT or TECH skill.
- 4 You score big on a job or deal you're doing on your own. Roll 1d10x50xSpecial Ability for amount in eurodollars.
- 5 Powerful corporate exec owes you a favor. Counts as a *Resources* roll at the exec's resources skill once.
- 6 You did something really good for the pack. Add 1 to Rep or *Kith* (referee's discretion).
- 7 You made a friend in the police. You may ask for inside information at the cop's *Authority* when dealing with that person.
- 8 Powerful rocker takes a shine to you. You may ask him or her for one favor a month.
- 9 You did something heroic, and now everybody knows about it. Add 1 to your Rep or *Family*.
- 10 Find a Combat Teacher. Add +2 to any weapon skill, or any martial art.

Go Back to **Life Events** and Roll the Next Year.

### 4 — PERSONAL APPEARANCE

#### DRESS AND PERSONAL STYLE

Roll	Clothes	Hairstyle	Affectations
1	Tribal Dress	Dreads	Scarring, Branding
2	Paramilitary	Shaved	Tattoos
3	Leathers	Natural, Long	Jewelry
4	Denim	Short, Neat	Piercing
5	Generic	Colored	Hats/Caps
6	Coveralls	Braids, Wraps	Gloves/Boots
7	Ethnic Dress	Wild & All Over	Makeup
8	Short, Open	Spiked	Skin Tints
9	Normal Clothes	Shoulder Length	Goggles & Gear
10	Mixed (Roll 2)	Mohawk	Mixed (Roll 2)

#### CULTURAL / ETHNIC BACKGROUND

Roll		Roll	
1	Hispanic	6	Native American
2	Romany	7	Caribbean
3	African American	8	Asian
4	European	9	Other
5	Cultural American (of any ethnic group)	10	Polyglot (choose or roll any two or more)



# NOMAD EQUIPMENT



## General Note:

Prices given in this section are for new equipment. Most nomad equipment was, at least in the beginning, second or third-hand. Today nomads can, and sometimes do, buy new equipment. For the sake of continuity with the rest of *CP2020*, consider that used goods are modified in price by between thirty and eighty percent, either up or down depending on the scarcity and quality of the used goods. A referee may use both the maintenance rules presented in *ChromeBook 3* and the cost modification rules in *Listen Up, You Primitive Screwheads* in conjunction with these figures.

## Mundane Equipment

### Tools

**A-FRAME** 100EB  
A wheeled carriage and winch used for pulling and installing engines in cars and trucks. There are usually several in any pack.

**AIR COMPRESSOR** 200-1000EB  
Air compressors are a necessity when using pneumatic tools. They drive wrenches, paint sprayers, and metal shears. Air compressors range in size from that of a five-gallon water bottle to a large motorcycle. The larger versions are usually only mounted in static shops and garages. Some smaller versions are even built in to vehicles.

**BASIC TECH KIT** 500EB  
This represents a basic mechanical tool set carried by most nomads. It is comprised of a range of wrenches (socket, open-ended, and box), a set of screwdrivers, a hammer, a saw, pliers, wire cutters, soldering tools, and a few simple diagnostic tools. With it a nomad can attempt most simple repairs without negative modifiers. Simple repairs include changing v-belts in a vehicle, replacing a water pump (on most vehicles), rewiring a room, or building a simple structure.

**BUNGEE CORDS** 10EB+  
Bungee cords are used for almost anything from holding a load down to restraining a hostage. They range in size from a foot to several meters, and usually have hooks on both ends.

**ENTRENCHING TOOL** 50EB  
The entrenching tool is a piece of equipment that armies of the world have carried since civilization began. The modern version is a combination shovel, axe and saw. It is made of metal alloys, and collapses into a package the size of a large book. With this tool a nomad can dig a latrine, chop down a tree, or saw through an obstacle. Entrenching tools can also be used as a fairly vicious weapon if nothing else is available.

Melee • -1 • L • C • 2d6(+Strength) • n/a • n/a • 1m • VR • 50eb

**HAND-CRANK GENERATOR** 50EB  
These small generators are used as a last ditch power source for recharging batteries, running lights, and heating tents.

**SMALL GENERATOR** 250EB  
Generators supply electric power for anything that might be in a nomad camp. These suitcase-sized generators will supply enough power to run six or seven appliances. Most generators (other than hand-cranks) run on CHOOH<sub>2</sub>, a gallon of which fuels the generator at full output for about four hours. Any given nomad family has at least one small generator built into, or stashed aboard, their main vehicle.

**LARGE GENERATOR** 1200EB  
The large generators most nomads use (stolen or built from stolen designs) were originally made for the Armed Forces to power radar and communication equipment. These generators also burn CHOOH<sub>2</sub> and one gallon of fuel runs the generator at full output for 30 minutes. A large generator can operate several houses or a block of apartments. Some really large mobile generators are fueled by hydrogen and can power small towns; they are worth over 10,000eb.

**GUN CLEANING KIT** 50EB  
One of the most neglected chores of the *Cyberpunk* world is cleaning your weapons. All weapons, especially small arms, must be cleaned and maintained every time they are used! A weapon cleaning kit consists of solvents, oil (or synthetic lubricant), a cleaning rod (sometimes broken into several screw-in sections), a collection of brushes, and cleaning cloths. Exploding gunpowder leaves a corrosive residue that can destroy gunmetal. Removing these deposits preserves a weapon for a long time, but neglecting them reduces a weapon's life. Every day an autoloading/automatic weapon is used without cleaning lowers the reliability of the weapon by one level. Cleaning takes fifteen minutes (for a pistol) to over an hour (for automatic rifles). Many nomads even have competitions to determine who can strip, clean and reassemble their weapons fastest—sometimes in the dark. *Weapon tech* skill can reduce the time necessary (1/2 normal time on a Difficult skill check).

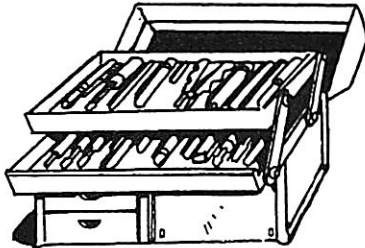
**LIFTS** 100EB (DRIVE-ON) TO 500EB (SCISSORS)  
Lifts are used to raise vehicles so they can be serviced from underneath. In many larger vehicles the nomads install a type of built-in lift, but the smaller and more common cars and trucks cannot support this kind of option. The lifts are heavy and awkward, weighing as much as fifty kilos each. The most common type of lift is a scissors lift. It is made up of two units that are placed under each side of a vehicle. Screws are turned (by hand or by machine) that work the scissors and lift the vehicle. For maintenance that does not require removal of the wheels, drive-



on lifts can be used. These are metal or heavy synthetic ramped frames that are simply set in front of the wheels, and driven onto.

**MASTER MECHANIC'S TOOL KIT 25,000EB+**

This is a set of tools that any tech would envy: a complete set of diagnostic equipment, matched sets of pneumatic, electric, and hand-held tools and all sorts of other gadgets allow almost any vehicle repair or construction task. Rewiring a complete electrical system, rebuilding a blown motor, or building a complete vehicle from wrecked parts—anything is possible with the right tools.



**HAND-DRIVEN AIR PUMP**

**10EB**

There are times when things need to be inflated. These pumps are no different from bicycle pumps, but they can handle larger pressures.

**Foodstuffs**

**KIBBLE**

**1EB PER BAR**

Like most people in the *Cyberpunk* world, nomads eat a lot of kibble. Kibble is a staple foodstuff, especially for people who must carry several days of food with them. Outriders and Pathfinders usually make a decent breakfast from whatever is available in the morning, and then chew kibble at intervals during the day.

**MRES**

**100EB EACH**

MREs (or Meals, Ready to Eat) are one of the most common military surplus items found in nomad camps. They were manufactured by the millions, and though stocks were depleted during martial law, the manufacturers kept right on making them. In 2020, there are hundreds of companies making preserved foods using MRE technology. A basic MRE is a plastic pouch containing several foods, usually freeze-dried or chemically preserved. Also included in the package are paper goods, instant coffee, matches, etc. One MRE should keep a nomad going for most of a day, or longer if the situation requires. MREs are so valuable and so reliable that they are a common unit of currency in barter exchanges.

**SCOP TANKS**

**2000EB + SUPPLIES**

Scop (or Single Celled Organic Protein) is the second most common food eaten by the nomads. Scops are used in almost every processed foodstuff. They are similar to a gengineered form of tofu. They can also be seeded with other enzymes that create differing flavors and textures. Families and packs usually carry several tanks that they use to grow their own scops to supplement their diets. A standard tank is about a cubic meter in vol-

ume. With supplies, it can create enough food every week to feed a family of ten for two days. The most common scops are used to make high-protein noodles or sandwich slices, but they are also used in soups and as a snack food packaged like candy bars. Scop seed cultures cost between ten and twenty eurodollars on the open market.

**Survival Gear**

**BACKPACK STOVE**

**20EB**

A very small, single burner stove originally designed for use by backpackers. The entire unit (without the fuel tank) weighs only one hundred grams. The fuel is supplied by a small tank that lasts for approximately one hour of constant use. The unit is used primarily for heating water and to reconstitute freeze-dried portions of MREs.

**CANTEEN (10 LITER)**

**50EB**

This is a large collapsible canteen. Several are carried by every family and are usually used to store an emergency supply. Less-affluent nomads simply use old plastic milk jugs or old multi-gallon jerry cans.

**CANTEEN (PERSONAL)**

**10EB**

Most nomads carry a personal canteen. It is usually one or two liters' capacity and can be anything from an old soda bottle to a classic wool-sided aluminum surplus canteen. Nomads also carry chemical purification tabs to use when filtration does not seem safe.

**DISTILLATION RIG (FAMILY)**

**400EB**

Nomads distill their water to discourage the spread of disease. Setting up a family distillation unit takes about an hour. Most use a very simple steam distillation process; water is boiled and then the steam is condensed back into liquid. This type of process can even distill salt water, toxic run-off or urine. A family distiller can process between fifty and one hundred gallons a day, but they must have fuel to feed the boiler, and someone must tend to the tanks. Some nomads have units built into their vehicles which use the heat of their engine to evaporate the water so they can perform distillation on long drives.

**DISTILLATION RIG (PERSONAL)**

**100EB**

This is specially-manufactured unit for use by individual nomads. It can only process a few gallons a day, but it allows a Pathfinder to survive in a toxic environment for a while.

**FILTER MASK**

**10EB**

This is a fairly ubiquitous piece of equipment in urban environments. It filters the breather's air of larger pollutants and carcinogens. Agripacks wear these masks in the field because



of airborne pesticides. Many nomad visitors to the cities find it hard to breathe without them. The masks are good for a few days, but then the filters must be changed (3eb).

**FIRE STARTER**
**1EB**

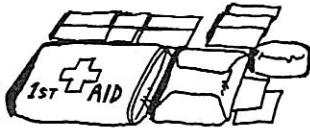
This is like any of the millions of disposable lighters made everywhere in the world. It will last for about a thousand seconds, and can also be used to read a map or light the way for a few seconds.

**ALL-WEATHER FIRE STARTER**
**5EB**

This is a block of magnesium with a flint imbedded into it. To use it, you scrape the magnesium, forming a pile of shavings on whatever you want lit. Then you strike the flint with a steel object (like the knife you used to make shavings), and the sparks ignite the magnesium. The shavings burn very hot for a few seconds, but that is normally enough to start a fire in damp kindling.

**FIRST AID/SNAKE BITE KIT**
**20EB**

First aid is important out in the field. Snake bites, lacerations, gashes, and other minor injuries are common. This kit contains what most nomads need in the field. There is a large dressing or two, a selection of disposable bandages, snake bite serum, a small scalpel, sutures, antiseptic, and so on.


**FRAMED BACKPACK**
**200EB**

This is a very well-made commercial frame backpack. Almost all nomads carry one, even if they have vehicles. One never knows when a vehicle will break down irreparably, leaving a few miles walk to the city. The pack is usually kept partially loaded, and in the case of bikers, fully loaded at all times. Cheaper versions may be simple wooden frames with bags tied on to them.

**GAS MASK**
**200EB**

A standard US Army version, this filters most impurities and many airborne agents. They are, however, very hot and uncomfortable. Filters must be changed at regular intervals to prevent clogging, and cost 10eb. The two filters can be changed sequentially in toxic environments, to minimize the chance of exposure. These masks also incorporate a drinking apparatus and fog-free lenses. A standard comm-link can be installed in a few minutes with no difficulty. If used in conjunction with an Army MOPP suit, complete protection from all but very expensive nerve agents is possible. Gear like this is common at toxic clean-up sites.

**IMMERSION HEATER**
**15EB**

Standard heat coil for warming a mug of water. This unit can be either battery powered or corded; batteries hold enough charge for a dozen uses.

**PERSONAL KIT**
**VARIES**

There are personal accessories that everyone needs, and the nomads are no exception: shaving gear, combs, brushes, soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and manicure tools. Because of the fast spread of disease, everyone keeps a personal kit and hygiene is of paramount importance. Nomads may not always have the water necessary to keep a clean environment, but they try. Nomads also keep separate personal sets of utensils, and most families keep dishes within their group.

**SUN BLOCK - SPF60**
**10EB**

Spending all that time in the sun under an ozone layer that sometimes resembles Swiss cheese can be a serious health risk. Sunblock is a necessity on the open roads, because skin cancer is one of the leading killers in the nomad population. Skin cancer treatments are very expensive and are not always one hundred percent effective. Sometimes, people suffering from skin cancer are distinguished by the strips of duct tape across their cheeks. Sunblock is applied regularly and liberally, and even in intense heat, as much skin as possible is covered with clothing.

**"SWISS ARMY" COMBINATION TOOL KNIFE**
**50EB**

A portable tool almost all nomads carry. Having the right tool can mean the difference between life and death, but sometimes having any tool can make things better. Usually this type of knife includes several cutting blades (for wire, wood, plastic, and flesh), screwdrivers, punches, scissors, corkscrews, tweezers, toothpicks, and pliers.

**TENT STOVE**
**75EB**

These small stoves are used to cook, and to heat the portable living spaces of the nomads. They are usually ceramic (which allows them to distribute heat better), and offer the cooking capacity of a two-burner range with a small oven. These stoves burn wood or fuels (liquid or solid) and are easily convertible from one to the other.

**TIRE CHAINS**
**60EB**

Tire chains are fitted to a vehicle's tires to allow travel (at greatly reduced speeds) on icy and snowy roads that would otherwise be impossible. Tire chains are normally made of metal, but some are also made of nylon, carbon fiber, or a mixture of two. Heavy off-road tires may be less needy of chains.

**WATER PURIFICATION KIT (PERSONAL)**
**50EB**

Purification is important in a constantly-changing environment when water comes from so many different sources. As a carrier of so many diseases, impurities and toxins; water purification is a matter of life and death. Most nomads carry a personal water purifier that can filter most microscopic organisms

and harmful compounds. The unit resembles a giant syringe. Water is forced through the filter under pressure into a receiving reservoir (usually a cup or canteen). In extremely contaminated situations, the water is then boiled, or chemically treated. This type of filter can usually process between one and two-hundred gallons of water before needing to be replaced. A small chemical testing kit is included, but doesn't allow full analysis.

#### WATER PURIFICATION KIT (FAMILY)

A larger version of the above, usually carried in the family vehicle. These units rely on the combination of osmosis filters and boiling. Larger units also include full analysis water testing equipment.

## Clothing And Armor

#### BOOTS 100EB

A pair of boots are worth as much as a weapon in the nomad culture. Leather boots are a sought-after status symbol, but are increasingly rare. Good boots are made of synthetics, and some even incorporate armor.

#### DUSTER COAT 200EB

The classic long rancher's coat.

#### GLOVES 50EB

Gloves protect the hands from chapping and debris. Usually made of synthetic leather, they provide protection equal to SP4.

#### MOTO-CROSS ARMOR 750EB

This is a specially padded and articulated set of Metalgear™ hard armor for use in motorcycle competition. It is also widely used by nomad outriders in known hostile territory. This suit does not include a helmet.

#### MOTORCYCLE HELMET 100EB

The standard motorcycle helmet used all over the world. Most helmets have a flip-open face shield, but are otherwise solid. Armor Protection of SP8 is standard.

#### SMART HELMET 800EB

This is the king of helmets, and represents the heavily-modified versions that are becoming popular. Armor protection is SP18, and the face shield is armored as well. Smartgoggles are integrated into this system with Low Light, IR, and TargetScope included. A personal comlink (see description) is also installed. Hearing is not boosted, but the addition of some clever molding allows for normal hearing with no penalty.

#### MOTORCYCLE JACKET 200EB

The leather motorcycle jacket of old has been replaced by these synthetic copies. A variety of cuts are available, including harley-

cut, bomber, and racing styles. The synthetic leather gives an SP of 4 to protect against road-rash and debris. Additional armor (to SP12) can be purchased for the torso area for an additional 100eb, but make the jackets difficult to live in (something nomads normally do).

#### MOTORCYCLE PANTS 150EB

Made of the same durable material as the jacket above, the most popular cuts are "jeans" style and racing style. Armor is not usually added because of the flexibility needed to ride motorcycles.

## Furniture And Shelter

#### SLEEPING BAG (-10° C) 60EB

This is a standard sleeping bag with a removable liner. The bag provides a comfortable sleeping environment to -10° C.

#### CUSHIONS 10-50EB

Most nomad furnishings are light and easily moved. Cushions range from fairly normal pillows to big futons.

#### HAMMOCK 20EB

A hammock can be strung anywhere, even inside a vehicle. They fold and stow easily, and require little maintenance.

#### HIKER'S CHAIR 15EB

A collapsible chair-back used for sitting on the ground. Can be folded into a small tube.

#### RUG (FOR SMALL TENT) 100EB

Nomad rug-making is as much an art as it is a necessity. Rugs help keep the cold from the ground under, and not in, the tent. The amount of decoration varies.

#### TENT (10-PERSON) 500EB

A standard family tent, this can be set up or packed in about twenty minutes or so. These tents are usually set next to a family vehicle, so the occupants can flee to cover if necessary. A great many of these are former Army property or surplus, though some are handmade from scraps.

#### TENT (2-PERSON, OR "PUP") 150EB

A smaller tent carried by scouting parties or young couples. Usually these are commercially manufactured, and can be set up or stowed in about ten minutes.

#### TENT (6-PERSON) 250EB

A medium-sized tent for small families, or single people with higher status. Set up or stowing takes approximately 15 minutes.





**TENT (BIG TOP)****12,000EB**

The really big tents are used by the entertainment families (Especially the Blood Nation) to keep the weather from ruining business. These tents are huge, requiring a truck to carry them and a crew of ten four to six hours to set up or stow.

**TIPI****200EB**

Developed by Native Americans hundreds of years ago, tipis are easy to set up, easy to stow, and easy to manufacture. A standard tipi shelters six to eight people; though larger versions could be made, they usually are too cumbersome. The tipi poles support the structure and the tipi cover keeps you dry. There is a ventilation hole at the top of the tipi so smoke can escape.

## Communications

**PERSONAL COMLINK****100EB**

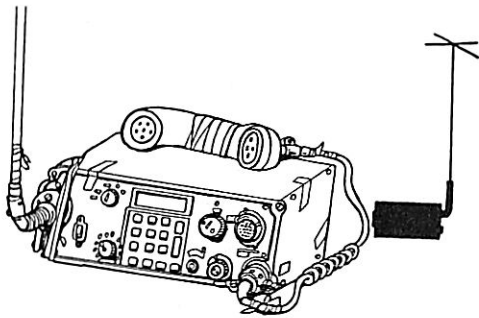
This is a small radio in the five-watt range which allows relatively clear communications up to 6km, depending on terrain. The unit is the size of a deck of cards, and weighs under a kilo. It can either be used as a hand-held unit, or be fitted with a combination ear-piece/microphone for hands-free operation. Most nomads carry a personal comlink whenever they are out of earshot of the main camp (finances permitting). Outriders usually have a booster unit attached to their vehicle that increases the personal com's range to 20 or 30 km (300eb). The unit is powered by a battery allowing four hours of constant use.

**FAMILY COMLINK****500EB**

Analogous to (or copies of) the mid-range radio equipment used by the Army, these are backpack-sized transceivers in the fifty-watt range, allowing all types of data transmission at ranges of 30 to 50 km. The unit is powered by a battery allowing about four hours of constant use. In the nomad community, most communications of longer than 50 kilometers either use satellite bounce, or couriers.

**SHORT-WAVE RADIO 500EB USED**

This is an old single-side-band short-wave radio that has huge range and is very vulnerable to jamming. Nomad packs use these to communicate with other packs, so they are not as vital as internal communications gear is. This unit weighs about ten kilos and requires considerable power. No one really makes these anymore, and even the nomads are upgrading to better gear.

**SATELLITE UPLINK****1000EB**

This is a four-kilo satellite transceiver, not much larger than an copy of *Jane's Small Arms of the World*. The antennae are a pair of forty centimeter tubes connected in an "X" and supported by a handle. Any type of radio can be connected to this transceiver, and almost all data tasks can be accomplished with this equipment, though netrunners will suffer potentially fatal time lags.

## Vehicles

Nomad vehicles are not ordinary vehicles. They are not merely a means of conveyance, they are also home and, in many cases, livelihood. When your life depends on your vehicle, your vehicle becomes a great deal of your life. Nomad vehicles are commonly part transport, part combat, and part habitat. No two nomad vehicles are ever really the same. Most are modified, with the possible exception of some pure-military vehicles used by mercenary packs. They are modified to suit different needs, as well as personal tastes. Most nomad techs can't keep anything standard, and any two examples of these vehicles may have at least one major modification and several options, but there are also many similarities within the different types of nomad vehicles.

One modification that almost all nomad vehicles have is they are off-road capable. Given that nomads often travel on roads that are badly maintained or hazardous, this is hardly surprising. Another things that identifies a nomad vehicle is the lack of outward decoration. Nomads generally favor simple dull paint colors that do not draw attention from a distance. Inside their vehicles, they decorate loudly, sometimes upholstering and chroming to the limits of taste and beyond. Their suspensions are heavily beefed up, and many have gunports installed. Armor, usually unobtrusive, is common, especially kevlar or nylon-based armors because they are light and do not sacrifice much maneuverability. Particularly belligerent or militant nomads even mount gun turrets to their larger vehicles, not unlike those found on armored personnel carriers. Most nomads use weapons only for defense, however, and they want no enemy to be so close as to be a direct threat.

When entering neutral or civilian territory, all vehicle-mounted weapons are stowed to prevent legal difficulties. If a pack is carrying military vehicles, or weaponry is not concealable, they usually set up a camp outside the city limits, instead.

Some vehicles used by nomads are purpose-built, either from scratch or based on a recycled frame. This is because many nomad vehicles have extremely specific uses, and since no urbanite needs such vehicles, no manufacturer will produce them. Nomad vehicles are primarily powered by CHOOH2, or cruder home-cooked alcohol fuels. Many use modified military-spec power plants and are multi-fuel capable, able to burn almost anything flammable. There are probably as many types of nomad vehicles as there are examples of nomad vehicles. No single look



at a nomad vehicle can be conclusive, but these examples show both the uniqueness, and the color, on the road.

All vehicle stats are given in the form originated in *Maximum Metal*.

**1 THE BUG**

TOP SPEED	80MPH	ACC/DEC	18/30
CREW	1	RANGE	400 MILES
PASSENGERS	2	CARGO	200KG
MANEUVER	+0	SDP	32
SP	16	TYPE	CAR
MASS	12 TONS	COST	10,000EB

**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:**

Headlights w/ IR filters, simple security system, long range radio w/scrambler.

**WEAPONS:**

None Standard

**NOTES:**

If bought new, this vehicle would cost about 10,000eb. Most nomad versions are fifth- or sixth-hand and have been rebuilt a number of times, so the cost is less, about 4,000eb.

Not coincidentally, "The Bug" is reminiscent of the "people's car" that so dominated the nineteen-sixties American automobile market. Even though the classic Bug was discontinued (in the U.S.) in 1974, it was manufactured in Central and South America until well into the Collapse. There are literally millions of these frames operating in various countries of the world.

Most Bugs have been completely stripped and rebuilt. These vehicles are extremely effective in the desert, as they are air-cooled designs. There is usually a light machine-gun mounted, if the area is known to be hostile. These are the most common scout vehicles, because they are very small, fast, maneuverable, and efficient. Outriders and pathfinders usually carry little in the way of equipment, preferring to live "off the land" as much as possible. The Bug, with its minimal cargo space, fulfills this requirement quite well.

**SCORPION FAV (FAST ATTACK VEHICLE)**

TOP SPEED	100MPH	ACC/DEC	15/40
CREW	3	RANGE	400 MILES
PASSENGERS	0	CARGO	400KG
MANEUVER	+1	SDP	30
SP	0	TYPE:	CAR
MASS	800KG	COST:	12KEB

**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:**

Off Road Capable

**WEAPONS:**

Normally, there is a machine gun mounted forward and a machine gun or AGL mounted in the rear.

**NOTES:**

Like the Hummer, this vehicle was manufactured for com-

mercial sale. It has also been copied extensively. Scratch-built versions are also not uncommon. The low-maintenance air-cooled power plant is a marvel.

Another common nomad scout car, the Scorpion was designed for the US Central Command's light vehicle program. This is a slightly larger three-man version of the original, and it is sometimes also called the Warrior. The vehicle was primarily designed for speed, hence the lack of armor. Though the vehicle's speed and maneuverability make it a difficult target, most crews wear personal armor. The vehicle performs especially well in desert terrains and open plains. On these terrains, it can make full speed with no problems. During operation, the driver has no other responsibilities. The gunner sits next to the driver and fires the forward machine gun, and the mechanic sits behind and fires the rear-facing machine gun or AGL. Cargo and other equipment (including a spare tire) is strapped on top and around the frame giving some illusion of armored protection.

**2 LONGRIDER GENERIC 500CC MOTORCYCLE**

TOP SPEED	120MPH	ACC/DEC	18/30
CREW	1	RANGE	400 MILES
PASSENGERS	1	CARGO	54KG
MANEUVER	0	SDP	25
SP	0	TYPE:	MOTORCYCLE
MASS	100KG	COST	3500EB

**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:**

Long Range Radio w/ Scrambler, Simple Security System, Halogen Headlamps w/ IR Filters, Off-Road Capable.

**WEAPONS:**

None

**NOTES:**

None

An enduro-style on- and off-road motorcycle. There is no one design that has gained prevalence. Those who can afford them usually go for a heavier cycle (Harley Davidson produces several in the 1000 to 2500cc range) if possible, but these are severely limited in off-road use; not to mention an expensive status symbol. Moto-cross cycles, on the other hand, are not practical for the large amounts of road travel that nomads routinely do. A 500cc enduro-style motorcycle combines speed, efficiency, and range in a serviceable (if not terribly stylish) vehicle. A few even mount battle-rifles in outboard pods. The outboard mount necessitates a HUD or smartweapon link, a need usually filled by smartgoggles.

**3 KAWASAKI BLITZKRIEG**

TOP SPEED	100MPH	ACC/DEC	18/30
CREW	1	RANGE	500 MILES
PASSENGERS	1	CARGO	60KG





MANEUVER	+1	SDP	35
SP	5	TYPE	MOTORCYCLE
MASS	160KG	COST	15KEB

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:  
Off-Road Capable, IR Baffled

WEAPONS:  
None

This powerful, maneuverable, recumbent bike is a nomad favorite. With its sturdy drive and low-maintenance engine, it is the choice for nomads who spend long periods out of contact with the main pack; when your brothers and sisters are two days' hard riding away, it's not a good time for your personal vehicle to throw a tantrum. Ceramics and plastics are the primary material for the construction of this bike. The unique ceramic cooling shroud design gives the same effects as IR damping.

**"SIDEWINDER" CUSTOM RECUMBENT**

TOP SPEED	120MPH	ACC/DEC	20/30
CREW	1	RANGE	400 MILES
PASSENGERS	0	CARGO	0
MANEUVER	+3	SDP	40
SP	10	TYPE	MOTORCYCLE
MASS	180KG	COST	32KEB W/ WEAPONS

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:  
IR baffling, damage control, cybernetic linkage, long-range radio w/scrambler, navigation system, auto-pilot, halogen headlamps with IR filters, sensory suite with image enhance, low-light, telescopic, thermal imaging.

WEAPONS:  
7.62 Minigun in articulated mount forward with two magazines in outboard pods. +2 Targeting Computer linked to smartgoggles or optics.

NOTES:  
Too bad no one builds bikes like this for commercial sale. 24keb sans weapon.

There will also always be those who choose to overkill, and in 2020 many of these are outriders. This is a huge custom-made recumbent battle-cycle. It is not intended to go against heavy weapons and vehicles as much as to intimidate and defeat soft vehicles and civilians. The peculiar weapon mounting is unique, or close to it; most cycles that mount weapons use outboard pods near the rear axle point. If not for the heavy cargo boxes mounted at the rear, this vehicle would be dangerous to ride. There will certainly not be a large number of these beasts in any tribe.

Most nomads riding this type of bike have spent years bartering, scrounging, and tinkering, so their bikes sometimes end up costing twice the listed price. Attempting to steal a bike like this (while remaining in a tribe, or even within the nomad culture) usually results in death very quickly. No one in a tribe tolerates stealing, and these cycles are as distinctive as a retinal pattern.

**BUILDING A NOMAD MOTORCYCLE**

So you've joined a nomad pack, or have grown up in one, and you're ready for your first motorcycle but the prices they're asking for even a tenth-hand Thundergod or Blitzkrieg make you dizzy? Well, my brother, there is an alternative to buying a motorcycle - build one. There's no reason that you can't buy one or two wrecked bikes and rebuild them into a machine any nomad would be proud to own.

First, strip it down to the main components: frames, engine, wheels, forks, fuel tanks, and electronics. Make sure that the frame you want is compatible with the engine you've already got, or you will have to buy or fabricate one from scratch (this last is not expensive, just a lot more work).

Once you've got your frame, sand-blast it to bare metal, then prime it and paint it. Install your engine. Add the front fork and the shocks. Then put on the seat, tank, and electronic components (lights, nav, display) and maybe even interface controls, and there you go! For less than half the price of a new bike, you've got a one-of-a-kind motorcycle that you can tailor to your exact physical measurements, quirks and special needs.

One advantage to this method is that a person who's built his or her own bike gets a bit more respect from nomads than someone who bought one right off the shelf (+1 on reaction rolls when meeting new nomads). To nomads, a person who builds their own vehicle is considered to be much more serious about riding and the nomad lifestyle. Even if you just did the grunt-work, being talked through the more complicated stuff by the pack techs, you are thought of more highly for having the gumption to do it (+1 to Rep, referee's discretion). Those who built their own bike may gain one points on their Basic Tech skill, too (also referee's discretion).





The HUD and targeting functions are handled by cybernetic controls linked to a smart goggle system. This gives full optical readout from the cycle's impressive sensory suite and allows this data to be overlaid onto the normal vision field of the driver. The weapon does have a limited articulation system allowing it to target about five degrees off-center. Attempting to fire the minigun more than five degrees off-center will result in serious handling problems (very difficult motorcycle roll, or ditch the bike, -5 if traveling over 75mph).

The auto-pilot of a motorcycle is not as "hands-off" as those mounted in cars or aircraft. The bike can travel on well maintained highways, and does retain all the map and location features of standard auto-pilots.

**4 "THE BIG BUS"**

TOP SPEED	70MPH	ACC/DEC	10/30
CREW	1	RANGE	400 MILES
PASSENGERS	40	CARGO	5 TONS
			10 SPACES.
MANEUVER	-2	SDP	300
SP	10	TYPE	BUS
MASS	15 TONS	COST	140KEB

**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:**

Halogen Headlights, Portable Fire Extinguishers x4, Off-Road Capable.

**WEAPONS:** None

This is basically a motorcoach bus (think Greyhound) with a heavily-modified suspension. Some tribes own as many as a hundred of these vehicles, and use them primarily to transport children and older persons in the middle of the convoy for protection.

**5 40-TON 8X8 TRUCK**

TOP SPEED	60MPH	ACC/DEC	10/30
CREW	2	RANGE	400 MILES
PASSENGERS	VARIES	CARGO	40 TONS
			76 SPACES
MANEUVER	0	SDP	300
SP	20 CAB ONLY	TYPE	HEAVY TRUCK
MASS	15 TONS UNLOADED	COST	185,000EB

**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:**

IR Baffling, Crash Control x2, Environment Control, Fire Extinguisher, Smoke Launcher x4, Military Radio w/Scrambler, Auto Pilot. Sensors: IR, LL, Thermo, Laser Detect, TeleOptics, Searchlight x4

**WEAPONS:**

None installed, though a 360° ring mount capable of mounting anything up to a 25mm chain gun is a common option

**NOTES:**

These stats are for the non-articulated truck version.

This is a borrowed or stolen M984A1 (OshKosh HEMTT Heavy Truck). Over fifteen thousand of these trucks were manu-

factured for the US Army prior to the Collapse. There are Armor Recovery, MRI Support, Fuel Truck, Articulated Tractor-Trailer, and several other versions still in service. There are over two thousand five hundred examples of this vehicle present in the Nomad Nations. Several of the Nomad Nations have requested manufacturers to restart production, but unless the Army orders more, production is unlikely.

**6 MEDWAGON**

TOP SPEED	100 MPH	ACC/DEC	10/30
CREW	2+2	RANGE	700 MPH
PASSENGERS	6 PATIENTS	CARGO	3 TONS
MANEUVER	-2	SDP	60
SP	20	TYPE	
MASS	3 TONS	COST	50KEB MINIMUM

**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:**

Medical Equipment (varies)

**WEAPONS:**

None, but there are six gunports.

**NOTES:**

Each of these vehicles is custom, usually built from any large available vehicle. Some may include very advanced equipment, especially if the family is affluent.

This is a modified RV, such as a Winnebago Wanderlust. They are fully-equipped clinics on wheels, owned by the clan as a whole. Armor is there, as well as a few gunports, but the med-wagon is parked in the middle of the camp and travels in the protected center of its pack on the road.

As much as possible of the medical machinery aboard is compact, some of it developed originally for use in cramped spaceships or submarines. Automation is also used to reduce the strain on the medtech's abilities, and a satellite uplink to a medical database is standard equipment. When properly set up, a med-wagon can handle any medical emergency from a splinter to major surgery.

**CRASH WAGON**

TOP SPEED	100MPH	RANGE	300 MILES
CREW	2	CARGO	6 TONS
PASSENGERS	2-6 TECHS	SDP	60
MANEUVER	-2	TYPE	TRUCK
SP	20	COST	30KEB+
MASS	5 TONS		

**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:**

Usually includes a towing rig, other equipment varies.

**WEAPONS:**

None, but fixed mounts and gunports are common modifications.

**NOTES:**

Each of these vehicles is an individual creation, built from a bare frame by the owner pack. The actual price depends very heavily on the actual equipment packed, and whether or not it is bought new, used, or scrounged.





This vehicle, built from a bare truck, is absolutely essential on a nomad run, or any time a pack is changing locations. It has heavily-reinforced shocks, towing gear, and a covered bed big enough for a nomad to repair a motorcycle in, equipped with as complete a workshop and machine shop as the pack can afford.

The main use for this is as a mobile workshop, tow truck and general emergency repair vehicle. As a pack roars down the road, a nomad having vehicle problems pulls to the side of the road, and the crash wagon(s) following the main body of the pack take appropriate action. A car or truck is taken in tow, while a motorcycle is lifted aboard bodily, to be repaired while the crash wagon continues down the road. Since almost any nomad knows his or her own machine intimately, many repairs can be made in a short time with the facilities, spare parts, and tools available aboard the crash wagon. When the bike is repaired, the owner signals the crash truck's driver, who pulls over to the side of the road long enough for the bike to be off-loaded and started. Daring nomads (or those traveling in very dangerous areas) may opt to restart their cycles "on the fly," but this is a rare practice.

### Air Superiority

Nomads do not commonly carry much in the way of air superiority. Aircraft are expensive to purchase, and even more expensive to maintain, though each Nation's leadership maintains a few light jets used to fly to negotiations or potential worksites. Smaller nomad groups only maintain airships and a few light craft, if any. One notable exception is Commander Cody and the Sky Pirates, a group affiliated with the Snake Tribe (see *Home of the Brave*).

### RPVs

Remotely-piloted vehicles are primarily used to survey and reconnoiter work sights and to supplement outriders. They range from small model airplanes fitted with camcorders to mission specific military vehicles built with state-of-the-art technology. One of the most common is the Bulldog RPV. Originally built by the Israeli military, this design has been appropriated by most nomad tribes. See also the RPVs in *ChromeBook 2* and *Protect and Serve*.

TOP SPEED	25MPH	ACC/DEC	5/5
CREW	0	RANGE	100 MILES
PASSENGERS	0	CARGO	0
MANEUVER	0	SDP	5
SP	0	TYPE	RPV
MASS	20KG	COST	1000EB

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:

Camcorder, Video Link, Radio Controlled.

NOTES:

The radio control unit weighs two kilos and includes the radio and video link.

### ULTRALIGHTS

Ultralights were popular hobby aircraft before the Collapse. Though closely related to hang-gliders, piloting one of these aircraft requires considerable skill and a large measure of faith. Most nomad groups use single seat versions, though tandems are manufactured.

TOP SPEED	50MPH	ACC/DEC	5/5
CREW	1	RANGE	200 MILES
PASSENGERS	0	CARGO	10KG
MANEUVER	-2		10
SP	0	TYPE	ULTRALIGHT
MASS	50KG	COST	2500EB

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:

Parachute

WEAPONS:

None

NOTES:

The parachute is deployed by pneumatic rocket, and is effective at altitudes as low as one-hundred meters.

### Weapons

Nomad weapons are broken into two categories: personal defense, the weapons nomads commonly carry all the time; and tribe defense, the long-range weapons used to keep pack enemies at a distance. Usually these weapons differ from the classic military weapons of 2020 for several very good reasons.

First and foremost, nomads want a single serviceable weapon to carry most of the time. It cannot be too bulky, and it must be effective at the longer ranges (100m or more) at which nomad combat usually takes place. It must be easily serviceable, and not overly complex or uncommon—this helps to speed repair and conserve resources. For all these reasons, the nomads usually carry cased-ammunition weapons, generally carbines. Carbines offer good portability, power, range, and accuracy. Carbines are usually lower-powered than assault or battle-rifles, and so are more easily used by the slight of frame. Lastly, like the pioneers of the old west, it is convenient to carry a pistol and carbine chambered for the same caliber. Bullets are resources that must be maintained, so carrying common-caliber weapons makes logistics simpler.

Nomads also prefer to deal with many threats at a distance. Many outriders and warriors carry a long-range weapon. By the nomad definition, these are used to engage the enemy at a distance of at least 750 meters (preferably a kilometer or more). The combination of a simple, easy-to-use personal weapon and a long-range, hard hitting, sniping weapon serves their needs adequately.

Nomads primarily use cased weapons because of resources. Caseless ammunition may be lighter, and even cheaper in the short run, but the equipment and supplies necessary to



manufacture caseless ammunition are more expensive than reloading tools. These simple machines can be made themselves from available steel, quality gunpowder is a relatively simple chemical formulation, and many kinds of slug-metal are cheap and accessible. What more could a nomad ask for? Nomad science has even come up with a polycarb-cased cartridge that can be reloaded ten to fifteen times. With some supplies, very few tools, and a little knowledge, a nomad can even reload these cartridges in the field!

This is not to say that the nomads do not have other weapons at their disposal—they usually do. However, they pick and choose what they carry on a daily basis carefully. If they are going off to raid a military supply depot, they carry the best of what technology has to offer (if they can afford it).

The most popular personal weapon caliber for the nomads is .357 magnum. The round has good ballistic stability, fair penetration, and excellent availability. It is easy for even a child to effectively use on the fly (instead of creating a slow-moving and overburdened target). Some have said that this round is too underpowered for “real killing,” but the nomads primarily carry weapons for defense. It may not drop a boosted psycho, but it will keep one busy while the warriors get the heavy artillery. Used against gang kids causing trouble, hungry wildlife, and other nuisances, it has served the nomads well.

Nomad weapons are very reminiscent of the American West. This is not by the result of any conscious decision on style—the nomads simply wanted serviceable, easily repaired, dependable weapons. Most pistols are wheelguns or, if autoloading, very simple designs. Rarer weapons, with difficult-to-find parts, are not very widely used for obvious reasons. The trials of nomad life are hard on weapons (and all equipment for that matter), and with space at a premium, compact design is also a big plus.

Though carbines are a popular weapon among nomad tribes, they are by no means the exclusive nomad weapon. Nomads use almost any type of weapon available, and scratch-build some that aren't. Some of the odder weapons, which could have come from the bizarre 20th-Century post-holocaust films, are designed for ultra-specific tasks. The hand crossbow, pneumatic rifle, and smartwhip are prime examples of this. Many of these weapons are unique to the nomad community, or are made only by nomads, so their prices may seem a little high. Generally, it may be assumed that nomads get these weapons 20-30% cheaper, if they are buying them from another nomad and they succeed at an average Family check.

The standard CP2020 data string is used in all weapon descriptions: name, type, accuracy, concealability, availability, damage (ammo), shots, ROF, reliability, range, cost. These descriptions represent unmodified weapons firing from iron sights, unless otherwise noted. Like all nomad equipment, weapons are usually modified for style, use, or personal taste. For complete weapon customization rules, see *Solo of Fortune 2*.

## Pistols

### .357MAG REVOLVER

P ● 0 ● J ● C ● 2D6+3 (.357mag) ● 6 ● 2 ● VR ● 50m ● 250eb

The .357mag cartridge is ideally suited for matched rifle and pistol use. “Magazines” for this weapon are usually two three-round “half-moon” carriers that can be easily loaded and removed. Reloading takes one round if using half-moons, three rounds without.

### .357MAG AUTOLOADER

P ● 0 ● J ● C ● 2D6+3 (.357mag) ● 8 ● 2 ● VR ● 50m ● 300eb

Based on the Colt M1911, this pistol is sturdy and user-friendly. It uses a standard box magazine, reloading takes one round.

### .44MAG REVOLVER

P ● J ● U ● 4D6 ● (.44mag) ● 6 ● 1 ● VR ● 50m ● 375eb

Usually carried by nomads using the .44 lever-action rifle, it is based on the classic large-frame Colt revolver.

## Sub-machine guns



### “STEN”

SMG ● -2 ● L ● E ● 2D6+3 (.357mag) ● 30 ● 1/3/30 ● ST ● 200eb+

This is a generic nomad term for any homemade sub-machine gun, in honor of the original Sten gun. The stats given are for a typical example, but they range from very reliable to almost-certain-to-blow-off-a-shooter's-hands. They are available in several different configurations, and may be chambered for any ammunition from .22 LR to 12mm. Also known, in streetpunk culture, as zip-guns.

### CALICO 9MM WEAPON FAMILY

These Calico 9mm weapon variants are based off the pre-Collapse Calico .22 and 9mm weapons. Featuring a helical-feed magazine that was unique and revolutionary at its debut, it packs a lot of ammunition in a small package. Modern weapons like the MiniGat, Miniauto 9, and many others have copied the basic principles. These weapons had a magazine capacity of either fifty or 100 rounds, using cased ammunition. The Calicos were popularized by survivalists and sport shooters in the late nineteen-eighties. Though originally quite prone to malfunctions and jams, the improved designs are quite sturdy and reliable. The weapon has been chambered at one time or another for most pistol calibre rounds and/or straight casing ammunition (including a failed 40mm grenade launcher version for use on ACPA). This weapon is manufactured in most countries of the world, either by license or illegally.

These weapons are available in assault pistol, submachine-gun (capable of fully automatic fire), or rifle variants (with a fold-



ing stock and bipod). Many parts are interchangeable, which is important to the nomads.

#### CALICO 9MM ASSAULT PISTOL

Pistol ● -1 ● L ● C ● 2D6+1 (9mm) ● 50/100 ● 2 ● VR ● 50m ● 450eb

-1 WA if using the one-hundred round magazines because of poor balance and general awkwardness.

#### CALICO SUBMACHINE GUN

SMG ● 0 ● L ● C ● 2D6+1 (9mm) ● 50/100 ● 1/3/20 ● ST ● 750eb

This is the sub-machine gun variant of the Calico pistol, configured much like the pistol, but with a folding shoulder stock and balanced to accept the 100-round helical-feed magazine. The SMG variant is prone to jam if fired for longer periods of time.

#### CALICO 9MM RIFLE

Rifle ● +1 ● L/N ● C ● 2D6+1 (9mm) ● 50/100 ● 2 ● VR ● 650eb

The rifle variant of the Calico. Comes with a removable bipod (+1 WA if prone and aiming for at least one round)

All three variants accept both fifty- and one-hundred-round magazines. The fifty-round version is most widely used on the assault pistol. One-hundred-round magazines are commonly used with the rifle and SMG variants, but they are heavy and very seldom used with the pistol.

## Rifles & Carbines

#### .357MAG LEVER-ACTION CARBINE

RIF ● +2 ● L ● C ● 2D6+3 (.357mag) ● 9 ● 2 ● VR ● 100m ● 300eb

Based on a 140-year-old Winchester design, this weapon is extremely accurate and well balanced, in part due to improved machining and materials technology. The magazine is a non-detachable tube under the barrel. Rounds must be loaded one at a time, reloading takes three rounds.

#### .44MAG LEVER-ACTION RIFLE

RIF ● +1 ● L ● U ● 4D6+2 (.44 Mag) ● 8 ● 2 ● VR ● 200m ● 650eb

This is carried by those nomads looking for a little more punch. Outriders favor it. It is similar in all respects, save caliber, to the .357mag version.

#### .357MAG AUTOMATIC CARBINE

RIF ● 0/+1 ● L ● C ● 2D6+3 (.357mag) ● 30 ● 2/3 ● VR ● 100m ● 400eb

Based on the same concepts as the Uzi and AK-47 (which trace their designs back to the German Schmeisser), this is carried by nomads who are expect action and use their weapons a great deal. The weapon may either be fired single-shot or in three-

round bursts. When fired single-shot (ROF 2) the accuracy is +1. This weapon is intentionally not capable of true automatic fire. The magazine is a standard box type, reloading takes one round.

#### GENERIC 7.62MM BOLT-ACTION RIFLE

RIF ● +2 ● N ● C ● 6D6+1 (7.62) ● 6 ● 1 ● VR ● 400m ● 500eb

A fourth or fifth-generation copy of an original design, this is a time-tested survivor of the 20th century, differing very little from its predecessors. Examples include the M70 sniper rifles used by the US Army and Marine Corps before the Collapse.

## Shotguns

#### META "WARHAMMER"™ 12GA. ASSAULT SHOTGUN

SHT ● -1 ● N ● P ● See Below (12ga Mag) ● 16 ● 1/3 ● VR ● 75m ● 700eb

Pancor was a small company that was built on one excellent product: the Pancor Jackhammer. The Jackhammer was a revolutionary weapon in many ways. Materials technology unavailable until the late nineteen-eighties allowed light-weight and reusable cartridges. Rotary action and a drum-type magazine allowed unparalleled reliability. Improved choke, barrel stabilization, and compensation made the weapon deadly accurate. The original Jackhammer was probably the finest weapon designed in America since the MAC-10. Unfortunately, the military was not interested. Corrupt procurement practices ignored a great many good weapons and systems just before the Collapse.

When the Collapse came, Pancor was one of the companies destroyed by it. The weapon, except for a few hundred examples owned by police departments, special operations units, and survivalists, disappeared. When the Meta Corporation was formed in 2012, one of the technical support personnel from Pancor, who had been deployed with Central Command to the SouthAm, reapplied for a patent on the Jackhammer. The patent was approved, and passed to MetaCorp. The Warhammer, an improved version of the Jackhammer, was released in 2016. The Warhammer sports a larger magazine capacity, more efficient cerametal barrel, and optional Smartlink™ targeting system. These improvements are complemented by a wide range of ammunition types, giving the weapon impressive tactical versatility.

#### "WARSHOT"™ AMMUNITION SYSTEM

Developed as an evolution of the Jackshot™ system, originally designed for the Pancor Jackhammer, Warshot™ uses an improved nylon polymer case which is stronger and lighter than conventional plastic or brass casings. Warshot allows a slightly greater payload than a standard 12 gauge casing. Warshot also allows reloading, even in the field, with minimal equipment.





**OO BUCKSHOT::**

4d6+2 damage. Cost is 1eb per factory load. Reloads cost 0.5eb for supplies and require an average weapon tech, or difficult basic tech roll.

**BOOMER:**

High Explosive Slugs: 3d6 damage, 1m radius. 2eb per shot, 1.5eb per reload (see above).

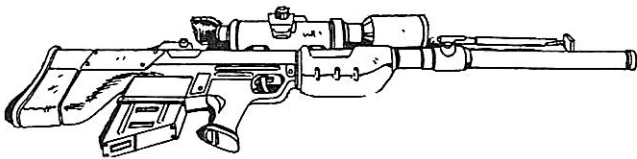
**PENETRATOR:**

AP Slugs: 3d6HEDP (see CB2, pp. XX). 3eb per shot, 2eb for reloads (see above)

**"WHIPPET" 12GA. SCATTERGUN**

SHT ● -3 ● J ● P ● 4D6 ("OO Buckshot") ● 2\* ● VR ● 15m ● 200eb  
Carried by horrid marksmen and people who are not real particular about what they hit. Take a standard breech-loading shotgun (side by side or over and under) and saw the barrel off at about twelve inches. The result is a vicious up-close weapon with no real range and a shot pattern the size of a garage door. Finding one of these home-made wonders is not difficult, finding one new is nearly impossible (unless you happen to have an autolathe, etc.). The handle is usually sawed-down as well, with masking tape or some other substance used as a grip. Some even sport pistol grips.

\*Technically both barrels may be fired at the same time. However, should a character attempt this they should also subtract one point from WA for every point of BOD less than 6. This is a bear to fire, so most only use one barrel at a time.

**Heavy Weapons****15MM "LONG" RIFLE**

RIF ● +1 ● N ● P ● 6D10 ● (15mm BMG) ● 9 ● 1 ● ST ● 900m ● 3000eb

Although the adoption of the 15mm BMG round (to replace the antique .50 cal/12.7mm machine-gun round) in the mid-1980s was never fully implemented, there were a great number of weapons manufactured and developed to jump on the 15mm bandwagon. The Collapse brought most of these companies to the ground, leaving a these weapons behind with no one to use them. A few years later the Aldecaldos came across an old weapons factory while salvaging in The Pitt. Over three hundred examples of 15mm BMG weapons were at one time tested or designed there. All the necessary tools and equipment were present to manufacture them, and so the Aldecaldos did just that.

Now most all of the nomads use the 15mm BMG for anti-vehicle and sniping work. They also occasionally use the 20mm Arasaka, or the 12.7mm/.50cal, but neither of them have the range or the stopping power of a 15mm. The media have taken to calling them nomad long rifles, or even Kentucky long rifles. These weapons are huge and heavy, but when emplaced on a hill they allow combat at a great distance — something the nomads prefer. You must possess a BOD 9+ to fire this weapon from a standing position.

The most common version includes a scope mount with a 10x optical scope and light intensifiers, muzzle brake, flash hider, solenoid trigger, custom furniture, and can be disassembled into three component parts (stock, action, barrel). All these options are included in the price listed above.

**Other Weapons****HAND CROSSBOW**

SPCL ● 0 ● N ● R ● 1D6+1AP (bolt) ● 1 ● 1 ● ST ● 20m ● 100eb  
This weapon is sometimes used by nomads to flatten tires and distract drivers, usually while pursuing them on motorcycles. The weapon is AP, but damage is not halved. It is ineffective beyond 20m. The weapon is usually found in pistol form, but the basic frame can be strapped to the forearm, and fired by a string trigger tied to a finger.

**PNEUMATIC BOLT GUN**

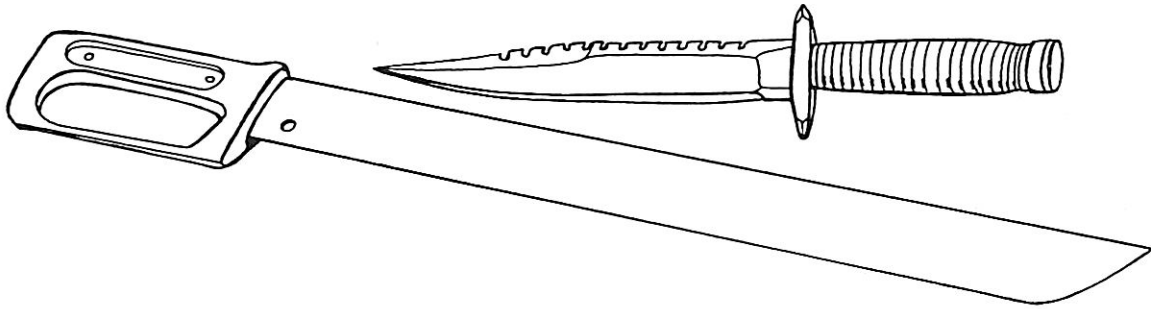
SPCL ● -1 ● N ● R ● 3D6 AP (bolt) ● 4 ● 1 ● ST ● 25m ● 350eb  
This is an air weapon based on pre-collapse paintball weapons. It has four rotating barrels and fires a much larger bolt than the hand crossbow. It is also used for harassing drivers and shooting tires. The weapon is AP, but damage is not halved. Damage drops to 2d6 over 25 meters and the weapon is ineffective over 50m. Air is supplied by a cylinder that doubles as a stock. There is enough propellant to fire eight bolts. New cylinders cost 30eb, but recharge cost is negligible, providing the user has access to an air compressor.

**"PERSONAL WEAPON DERIVATIVES"**

RIF/SMG ● +1 ● L ● P ● 5D6 (5.56n) ● 50 ● 2/3 ● 150m ● VR ● 500eb

Derivative of designs by FN and others (P90, Steyr TMP, Bushman IDW) the Personal Weapon was designed for vehicle crews and rear echelon personnel that did not have the need to carry a full-sized assault weapon. This is a severe bullpup





design, with the magazine 90° off the weapon axis along the top of the weapon. Most of the construction of the weapon is nyllex-based material, with only the receiver and barrel being metal alloys or cerametal. The personal weapons usually fire 10mm, 12mm, or in older versions, .357mag cased rounds. This weapon could be called either an SMG or an assault rifle, so it is included here to prevent confusion.

#### SMARTWHIP

Melee ● 0 ● J ● C ● 1D6+2(+Str) ● n/a ● n/a ● ST ● 1m ● 600eb

The smartwhip was first seen in combat at a demonstration held by members of the Blood Tribes in 2015. This is a whip that uses myomer technology and neural interface to create a very dangerous weapon derived from a bullwhip. Parts of the weapon can be made to flex or be rigid on command (and if the tip becomes rigid while travelling one hundred kph, it really hurts when it hits you).

#### BOOMERANG

SPCL ● -1 ● L ● P ● 2D6 (+str) ● 1 ● 1 ● 30m ● VR ● 20eb

This is not the "look, it comes back" version of the boomerang, it is a heavier killing design that will not return. One arm of the weapon is cut short and sharpened to split open the target.

#### SLING

SPCL ● 0 ● P ● 1/2D6 (+str) ● 1 ● 1 ● 20m ● VR ● 10eb

One of the oldest weapons in mankind's arsenal, this weapon is still popular with children and people who wish to remain silent. Ammunition is usually a small stone. Makes for easy reloading.

#### UTILITY SWORD/MACHETE

Melee ● 0 ● L ● C ● 1d6+3AP(+Str) ● n/a ● n/a ● VR ● 0.5m ● 60eb

These are used by almost all the nomad tribes as an agricultural tool, utility knife, and last-ditch defensive weapon. The utility sword can differ in style and appearance from a 'trench-knife' style to a 'machete' style. Many of the tribes have adopted specific styles or knives, like the Aldecaldo's machete, as a badge of tribal alliance.

#### BAYONET/SURVIVAL KNIFE

Melee ● 0 ● J ● C ● 1d6AP(+Str) ● n/a ● n/a ● VR ● 0.5m ● 50eb

Analogous to the KCB-70, M9 Bayonet, or other survival knives, this weapon has many features including a sharpening stone (in the scabbard), screwdriver, wire cutter, compass (on the pommel), bottle opener, and saw blade. The pommel can be unscrewed to open the hollow handle, which is waterproof to 40 feet. Inside is a 3m fishing line with 2 hooks, 10 strike-all water-resistant matches, and a small packet of blade oil. The weapon can also be attached to any rifle or SMG with a standard bayonet lug.

## Weapon Options

#### BRASS CATCHER

Brass catchers were developed pre-Collapse to prevent leaving casings around. They also kept an area clear of flying brass, which is useful in enclosed spaces. Now, since most weapons are caseless, they are less common. The design is very simple: there is a catcher that fits on the weapon, and a hopper that holds the casings. The catcher is a frame that goes around the ejection port. It can be removable, depending on personal preference. Both soft bags and hard boxes are commonly used as hoppers to hold brass. Soft types weigh less, and are easy to service and make. Hard types are heavier, and usually hold less, but can take impact better and wear out slower. Both hard and soft types are available for about one-tenth the cost of a weapon. Soft types can hold one standard magazine's brass and hard types can hold half that. Emptying takes one round in addition to any time spent reloading.

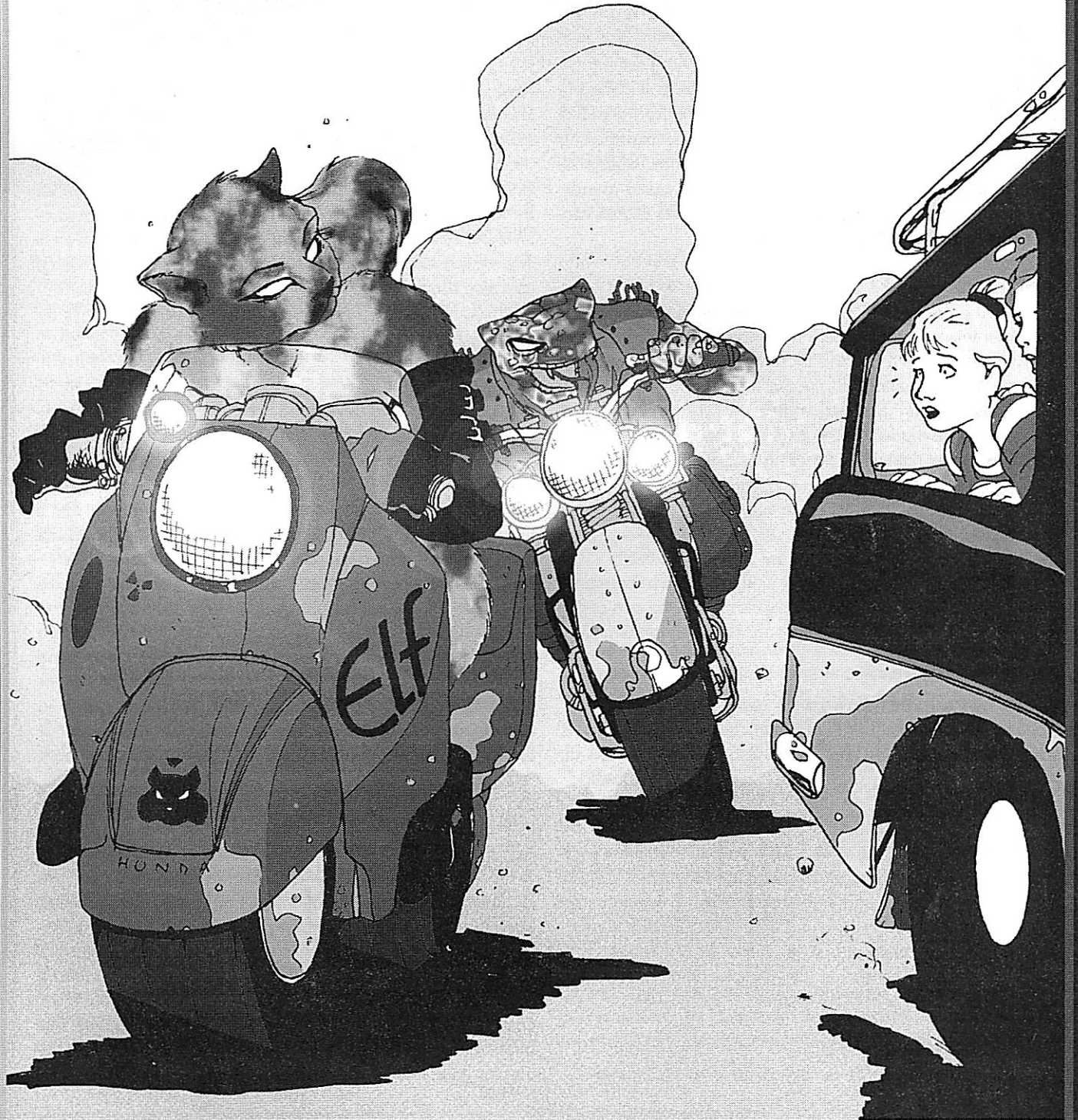
#### BAYONET LUG

Bayonet lugs and sleeves add the ability to attach a bayonet to the barrel of a weapon. Many types of equipment attach to a standard bayonet lug including rifle grenades, training equipment (like the US Army's pre-Collapse MILES system), flashlights and sometimes even a simple, old boring bayonet. Bayonet lugs are really awkward on anything smaller than a submachine gun. Bayonet lugs and sleeves cost one tenth the cost of the weapon they are installed on. Many assault and battle rifles already have them installed (see weapon description for each individual weapon).





# RUNNING NOMADS



## NOMADS IN AN EDGERUNNER CAMPAIGN

Running a nomad campaign is quite different from running a typical urban campaign. There are different needs, different goals, and different challenges. Running a nomad character in an urban setting can also be difficult. Nomads are, to a degree, defined by their families, clans, tribes and nations; so taking nomads out of their normal environment and forcing them into an urban game opens the possibility of abuse of a nomad's family status. At the other extreme, some referees feel that the *Family* special ability's unique qualities can unbalance the game, and so limit the nomad to being a second-rate solo or (even worse) a chauffeur. In short, nomads should be run in nomad campaigns.

Nomads work best as the focus of a team, rather than as an aspect or team-member. Having a nomad in an urban team encourages the down-play of nomadic goals for the benefit of the team's greater play enjoyment. It is hard to put pressures on a team if they can call for their nomad member's family to pull them out of a bind, and a nomad's responsibility to the family can also put unwanted strings on a team that can ruin playability. Having both a nomad and a fixer in a team can put such responsibilities on a play group that other goals simply cannot be addressed; and while this effect may be true to reality, it makes for lousy gaming. In comparison, having the nomad be the central figure in a campaign allows the responsibilities of being a pack-member to be blended with exciting game elements, similar to the corporate "special tasks" agents we usually see in *Cyberpunk* campaigns. In the following pages, we'll address the various challenges of nomad campaigns.

## FITTING EDGERUNNERS INTO A NOMAD CAMPAIGN

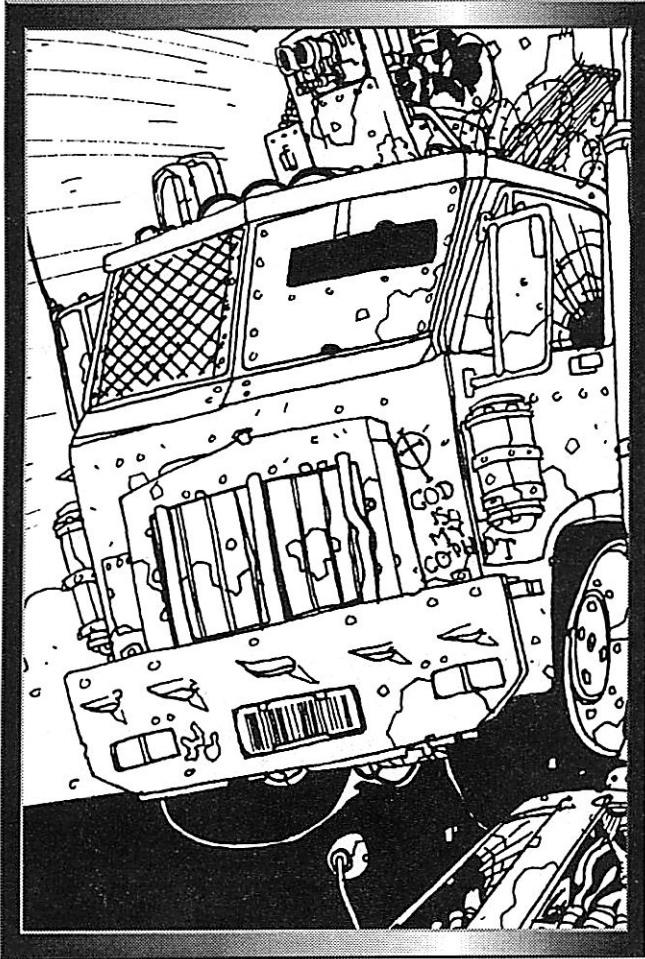
Referees who run a nomad campaign will always find themselves with players who want to be other kinds of edgerunners. From the ever-present solos to the occasional street-punk, there is room for any character with the right background and motivations.

Edgerunners in a nomad campaign commonly have strong connections to the nomad community. They may have been raised among nomads, or have close nomad friends. It is usually best to have these connections attached to player-characters rather than non-player characters, because having the relationship be a part of the team's motivations helps

If the referee has never run a *Cyberpunk 2020* campaign before, we recommend *Listen Up, You Primitive Screwheads, the Cyberpunk 2020 Referee's Guide*. The book contains detailed analyses of style, theme, technology, and story (and some neat new rules), as well as a detailed look at the problems involved in running different kinds of campaigns. Listen up, and check it out.

Some referees may choose to eliminate certain roles from a nomad campaign, while some might disallow all non-nomad roles. These are perfectly acceptable alternatives, but such decisions should be explained to the players before they begin developing their characters.





## GENERAL NOTES ON RUNNING NOMADS

The first thing to remember about nomads is that they are a mobile culture. Nomads traditionally choose to move rather than face impossible odds or unbeatable foes. Running away can be a great tactic, and it is something that many *Cyberpunk* players could put to good use. There are times that the average 'punk pulls out a piece and starts shooting, when instead a hasty retreat is far more intelligent a choice. There is an undeniable truth to that whole "live to fight another day" line, and nomads can make full use of this maxim thanks to their vehicles.

### Nomad Vehicles

In an urban *Cyberpunk 2020* game, vehicles are as much a hindrance as they are a benefit—characters must worry about parking, theft, and vandalism to their vehicles. Nomads on the road lack these problems, because there simply are not huge amounts of people out there in the wilderness. *Cyberpunk* characters, as presented in the basic game, do not have the resources to keep, maintain, and protect their vehicles. In a nomad campaign, however, they must have these vehicles.

Nomad characters rely on their vehicles, and in many cases, they are defined by them. If the referee wishes to assign vehicles to players according to the character concepts, then that is a great solution. Each vehicle should have a maintenance rating, or a set of ratings, depending on the complexity of the vehicle. Referees may also let the players become more attached to their vehicles by allowing them to help in the design process by allowing them a set amount of money to build with. In the case of runner campaigns using panzers, or smuggling campaigns using aircraft, this may even be a great deal of money. The referee is free to assign restrictions on equipment or weapons based on how the vehicle was originally procured. A thirty year-old aircraft is not going to have state-of-the-art cybernetic controls. Through the course of a campaign, the players can dedicate time, resources and energy to modifying, converting, or improving the vehicles, all of which makes the characters grow more attached to them.

Some players may feel they should be given a cash grant and allowed to design whatever death machine they wish. This is always a mistake. Simply giving a team of players a few million dollars leads them to believe that they control cash, and this is not the case in nomad society. The nomad economy is based on the barter system; if a nomad pack does a job for a corporation, they receive compensation, sure, but they only take ten to twenty percent of the

solidify team identity. Team motivation that is challenged by adversarial play in a scenario (especially adversarial relationships between two players) is always a very negative aspect in a game. This unwanted internal struggle can occur when a large portion of the team is made up of uncommitted and unmotivated members who have no direct connection to the goals of the campaign (which, for the sake of discussion, is here a nomad family or group). Common enemies and common goals are the easiest motivations for a team, and employment and survival are close seconds.

Almost any of the roles presented in any of the supplements for *Cyberpunk 2020* could be integrated into a campaign. We discussed many of the different roles and how they interact within nomad society in the Characters section of this book. Of course, different families also have different ratios of non-nomad roles. There are many more rockers and prostitutes in the Blood Nation because they are focused on entertainment. There are more solos in MetaCorp than in most other Nations because of their security concerns. Referees can even form other nations, packs or families with specific interests and specialties with which to integrate other desired roles.



total in cash. The rest they receive in food, supplies, equipment, new tech, services, and access to corporate resources. Using this system, the nomads have built a mobile infrastructure without the need for static controls and resources. The nomads consider this freedom and power much more important than the security of being a lap-dog to some petty corporate warlord, as many in the streetpunk society have become. The equipment that the nomads control is simply too valuable to be quantified by dollars, euro or otherwise.

## Nomad Economics

Cash, in general, is not viewed with the same affection in nomad society as it is in static society. Resources are considerably more important—not just consumable resources food, water, fuel, and bullets; but also enduring resources like spare parts, machinery, guns, and transport. The nomad economy is based on barter, and the objects of barter can be anything, including favors. Favors are a very nebulous commodity in *Cyberpunk 2020*. A favor can be as serious as a debt of blood, or as all-encompassing as a debt to an entire tribe. Favors can be easily quantified by the referee in three ways. The first is by dollar amount. Yes, it is crass to the nomads to quantify favors in euro, but to a referee it can be a real help in bookkeeping. The second way to evaluate favors is by lives; if your life is saved by another person's sacrifice, then you are indebted to that person until that life is somehow repaid. Finally, favors can be measured by jobs, if you can somehow employ a family, tribe, or clan. Giving them work and allowing them the opportunity to earn a living can sometimes even cancel a debt of blood.

People who can employ nomads, or get them access to opportunities for employment, are viewed with a great deal of respect. Characters who continually employ or represent nomad interests commonly receive *Kith* as a pickup skill. This is especially true with non-nomad fixers. Should the referee feel these methods are too cumbersome, a favor system can be quantified by any way the referee sees fit.

In some nomad circles, especially in the larger groupings of clans and nations, cash is viewed with a certain amount of distaste. Throughout nomad society, a brother or sister who can accomplish a goal simply by trading a few favors is considered skilled and prestigious indeed. On the other hand, nomads consider cash dishonorable, and very large cash transactions are viewed with distaste. Among nomads, people who insist on cash over favors are perceived as dishonorable and untrustworthy. Nomads understand that some types of transactions must be paid in cash, especially with people from the static community who are on the run and won't be around to repay favors. Some other types of commerce are paid in part by cash, especially in some areas of smuggling and corporate work. In these circumstances cash is necessary, and so has fewer negative connotations because it cannot be avoided.

## Resources

Resources, financial or otherwise, are a major consideration to the nomads. How they live and how they expend their resources can greatly effect their reputation—even the highest and most revered of nomad leaders must still be considerate.

Nomad leaders, especially those of the Nations, must have a "work face" and a "home face." The home face is what the rest of the family sees; at home, they must live simply and not flaunt the wealth and power that leadership gives them.

## SCREWS

**Screw(s): a plot device to twist the players. This is the sort of damned-if-you-do and damned-if-you-don't decision that people must make every day in the *Cyberpunk* world.**

**This is not, however, intended to screw the players in the more colloquial sense; this is a plot-twist or climactic choice that makes for good role-playing. There is always a way out, even if it is not the way the players would like.**





In comparison, they require assistants and expensive equipment for their work face, even including planes and fashionable clothes for the highest leaders. Putting on a face of casual acceptance of power gives the nomadic leaders equal footing in the eyes of the static leaders, but they always remember it is only a face. Using these benefits for personal gain instead of for the good of the clan will cause them to be stripped of their authority. As an example of proper nomad leadership, Malachi Jode is famous for keeping his power nearly invisible. He has even gone so far as to refuse interviews for the last few years just to keep his personal fame in check. He lives and works in a simple vehicle (with a rather impressive satellite communications suite) and only a few assistants. He eats communally with the other Jodes, and even takes guard duty when time permits.

One of the reasons that nomads are so "poor" in relation to other edgerunners is their views on wealth—flaunting personal wealth is never a nomad goal. Most nomads give half of their earnings to the clan community chest, because having a large, healthy family to cover your back is much more important than a few extra bucks. Nomads view resources with reverence because they have all had to go without at one time or another in life. They still occasionally do without now; it can take weeks of work by an entire pack to equip one tech with the proper tools. Sometimes members of the clan go without food or medicine to accomplish clan goals, which is why if a clan member were to steal or hoard signif-

icant resources for personal gain, they are ejected from the pack or killed outright.

All of this can provide volumes of ideas for campaigns or simple one-shot adventures: stealing or appropriating resources to save a life, finding and punishing thieves and killers. Occasionally, though, an even more pressing situation arises. It is the constant fear of all nomads that they will have to make the most difficult choice. An edgerunner or a nomad might have the ability to give a nomad pack something they've been working for, yet know that giving them that thing could cause greater damage, or even instigate the destruction of the family! Many nomad families have ridden against greater enemies, over atrocities and injustices that deserve retribution, only to be destroyed by lesser forces coming from unforeseen angles or even from within themselves. Often, the only clear way to resolve this sort of dilemma is for the characters to sacrifice themselves, and leave the pack. On occasion, the pack may realize their mistake and seek to reclaim the lost members, even showering them with gifts like prodigal children. At other times, the characters are reviled and hated for their betrayal. Either way, this is a "screw" that can twist your players to new heights of tragic-hero role-playing.

## USING THE NOMAD NATIONS

Referees may want to use the various nations to give a style or identity to the players' nomad group, especially when gaming with new and inexperienced players. Referees who feel that their players are too solitary and too uncontrolled to be a part of the pack may be cast out as Raffin Shiv, forcing them to find a home in a whole new society, or else to find a way back into the good graces of their pack. The first option is a dangerous one, and the latter requires a lot of personal sacrifice and demonstrations of remorse.

Nations may also be used as social controls and reinforcing mechanisms to limit the conduct of a nomad team, especially in the case of ultraviolence. As mentioned before, the characters can always be cast out of a pack, but that punishment is usually reserved only for repeat offenders. Having the packs' dog-soldiers raid the characters' camp and reclaim all the clan's equipment is usually a good hint that the team is missing the mark. There are other reasons that characters might be disciplined by the clan leadership, as well. Hoarding, living too flamboyant a lifestyle, wild spending, shorting the rest of the clan their fair share of goods or services, failure to accomplish assigned goals—all of these are reasons for discipline. Referees can also decrease reputation, even into negative numbers in some cases, for certain behavior.



Finally, the Nomad Nations may be used as pressures or “screws” to twist the players into various predicaments. The Seven Nations do not always agree on issues or even lifestyles. Exchanging guests (i.e., hostages) between nations, clans, and packs is a way to limit reprisals and seal treaties between rivals. After all, no leader wants to defeat their enemy at the expense of killing a clan member—at least no leader outside the Raffin Shiv. Placing players into the grey area between rival or competing nomad groups can lead to great role-playing and exciting adventures. Some especially devious referees place players in situations where loyalties work at cross purposes. Sometimes a team is beholden to two warring (violent or otherwise) factions or groups, and they must either choose one or the other. This means betraying one group, garnering their enmity; or staying in the middle and risk offending both sides. This is one of the most common plot twists in cyberpunk fiction, and can be a great source of high tragedy.

Many resources that are shared by the Nomad Nations are guarded by complements assigned by the different Nations, and this situation can make for great political intrigue and high drama. The most famous of these is the Library. Guarded by many of the best warriors and dog-soldiers from the Seven Nations, the Library is a source of pride for the entire nomad community. It moves across the length and breadth of the Americas searching for codified knowledge to assimilate. There is also a satellite library in each of the Seven Nations. The Library has even sent emissaries to the rest of the world, gaining knowledge for the good of all in the NeoTribes.

## ODDS AND ENDS

### Good Guys & Bad Guys

In most of the *Cyberpunk* world, there is no right and wrong, or it is so clouded as to be invisible. However, in the nomad setting, there are strong cultural imperatives reinforcing what is right. Protecting the family is the right thing to do; keeping your friends alive is the right thing to do.

The Raffin Shiv provide a perfect example of what is wrong. These are who are also in many cases the enemy. This is a different kind of enemy than the government or the corporations, because the nomads know that all the Raffin are the enemy. Corporations may be adversaries at times, but they are also good in many ways. Corporations provide employment and supply goods. The Raffin just steal and kill, and do anything else to survive and enjoy it.

Thus, nomad campaigns can center on “Good Guys and Bad Guys,” with strongly-delineated right and wrong. This may be too simplistic a viewpoint for many of the referees,

or it may be too boring to be the focus of the campaign. Nevertheless, it is one of the few easily-defined plot elements in the *Cyberpunk* world.

### Campaign Goals & Storytelling

All of these are good ideas, but they are not the only ideas. Some referees may have developed complex nomad groupings and societies of their own, and these are just as valid after this book’s publication as before. It is most important to remember that we have no controls on your *Cyberpunk* world. If your game has other elements that we do not know of, then how NeoTribes effects your campaign is at the referee’s discretion.

### Zeroes in the Nomad Community

Zeroes, the people who live completely outside the government system, or have been cast out of it, are a large minority in the nomad community. These are people who were, in an official sense, lost in the Collapse, the SouthAm, or the Long Walk. They are the most staunch of the libertarians in the nomad community; they ask for nothing, and expect nothing in return.

The zeroes are an increasing problem in the eyes of the government and the corporations. They are untaxable and untraceable 95% of the time, as their records were purged from the databanks and that data will never be recovered. They capitalize on their anonymity, and some have made powerful enemies.

Many zeroes do not want to be back in the system. They have heard the increasing rumors that the Federal Government wants to standardize the SIN identification system in America, and they view this potential action as a direct threat to their way of life. Some have even gone so far as to become terrorists and ideologues fighting against this possibility.

### Nomads, HiWay, and the US Marshals’ Service

“Uneasy peace” is the only way to describe the relationship between nomads and these enforcers of the law. Both sides understand that the other is simply trying to do their job, but neither likes it. HiWay troopers, who enforce the law that controls the wastelands between the cities in the different states (see *Protect & Serve*), are generally the most tolerant. With the exception of Appalachia, the laws restricting travel are nebulous. In Appalachia, the laws are in many cases





unjust, but there are too many nomads for this to be a threat to the larger groups. Small groups of nomads (under 500) almost never travel through Appalachia without an express contract that will guarantee safe passage. There is still considerable animosity about incidents during the Balsam construction period, over a decade ago. Still, most HiWay troopers are leery of trying to enforce restrictive laws on nomads without a great deal of back-up.

Those in the Marshals' Service do now what they did at its inception: hunt down federal criminals as they cross state lines. This has been especially important in the Free States (where federal marshals generally work undercover). The criminals hunted by federal marshals are serious bad news, and no one wants to let them remain on the streets. The politics of crime, however, demand that the individual states apprehend them, and then the extradition process takes place. The Feds are less than happy with this, and simply ignore certain sovereignty issues. With the power of the Federal Government on the upswing again, these abuses will probably continue.

When pursuing criminals (like nomad edgerunners) who have fled into the nomad community, the marshals use the same tactics they use in the Free States: deceit and espionage. Occasionally they use civilian bounty-hunters. Unfortunately, many of people pursued by the Marshals' Service are to the nomads, heroes or leaders. These cases are bad news for the marshals, and their success rate apprehending these felons is abysmal. On a very few occasions, the nomads have worked with the marshals to apprehend criminals lairing with the Raffin Shiv. It gives the nomads a good excuse to rid the world of more scum, it does a little to smooth relations with the forces of the law, and it helps their image with the media. A fugitive hunted by a team of marshals and dog-soldiers is truly doomed.

## Nomads and Cyberware

Nomads generally use little cyberware. In the beginning, many could not afford the expense. Then, as they watched the troubles of many cities with C-Psycho and Max-Tac units unable to control cybernetic situations, nomads were pleased that many had not taken that road. There is no strict cultural taboo against cyberware; a little is good, too much is bad.

Interface plugs for techs and netrunners are, of course, a necessity. Some packs, especially mercenaries, use plugs for the operation of vehicles. Headware is fairly common among nomads, as it requires the least maintenance and offers the most advantages. Limbs are relatively uncommon, as they require more maintenance. Full-conversion cyborgs within the nomad community number less than a dozen,

total; they are simply too expensive. Contraceptive implants are quite common, especially in younger people. Nanotech use by the nomads is on the increase; even though it's expensive, the advantages, especially for older people trying to extend their lives, greatly outweigh the costs. Implanted weapons and fashionware are fairly rare in general, though they may be common in some smaller groups.

The Totem Warriors are an obvious exception to this trend of minimal cyber conversion. They modify their bodies in an attempt to incorporate elements of their chosen animal spirit's power into themselves. Most use only minor modifications, but some (after years of work) have major reconstruction done. These warriors use the transformation as a way to become more centered. For game purposes, referees may allow Totem Warriors to buy their exotic cyberware with Intensive Therapy as a bonus. This represents the ritual and support of a like-minded community, and it allows minimal humanity loss (see *ChromeBook 2* for more details).

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# SAMPLE PACKS



GARGOYLES



## THE GARGOYLES

The Gargoyles are a construction pack of almost three hundred members. As construction workers, they are a minority in the Blood Nation, which concentrate primarily on entertainment. The Gargoyles have always had relatively heavy equipment for a nomad pack—some of the members were originally employees of Disney, and they absconded with cranes and earth-movers when they took to the road almost fifteen years ago. The family makeup has changed considerably from the days when they and the other packs of the Blood Nation lived at the Disney Complex; many newcomers have been accepted to compensate for the old-timers who have passed on.

The leader of the Gargoyles is a so-called houngan named Sadie Jacobs. She comes from a long line of religious women with roots on the island of Santo Domingo, but never felt that the religion she was brought up in was all that useful. She is not that religious in her own life, despite the fact that as the daughter of an influential houngan, she got a *lot* of exposure to it. In the pre-Collapse years, her struggle to rise out of poverty motivated her to become a dedicated student. She took a degree in civil engineering at the U. of Florida, and then moved back to the Miami area to work. The Collapse, and various personal setbacks returned her to the poverty and struggle of her earlier life, but with one difference: she knew she could get out, because she had done so before. Her expertise in civil engineering made her a valuable asset to the Gargoyles, and her knowledge enabled her to teach the theory behind the labor.

Sadie is an older woman now. At the age of sixty, she is in a very small minority. The younger nomads in the pack have studiously learned the trade that hopefully will keep them solvent for many years to come. Sadie may step down soon; she has talked of settling down somewhere. Having worked hard all of her life, she wants to rest in her last years.

In general, the Gargoyles do not rest much. Their experience has led not only to many small jobs for them, but also to jobs as supervisors for other nomad families working on large construction jobs. They hope to start work soon (with about six thousand other nomads) extending the TransCon Maglev to New York City, the site of the nomads' next major reconstruction project (preliminary work on NYC should start by 2023). A pack delegation from is currently negotiating with several other Nations for labor and transportation services for the Maglev project, while at the same time, other Gargoyles are negotiating with the American government for the job itself. When the project will actually happen is still up in the air. New York will be rebuilt, but who will get the elusive contract is another question altogether.

Over all, the Gargoyles are very well-off nomads with skills and abilities above the norm. They also work themselves to death—even among nomads they are considered "work-

holics". They live by their deadlines, and favor projects which offer lucrative bonuses for early completion. Consequently, the family relies on a lot of technology; almost half the Gargoyles are techs or engineers. Being affluent also allows the pack to support many children and the educational equipment necessary to teach them valuable skills. Any family with children carries several books, and most have a fully-equipped VR education system like the SegAtari RUSH (see *Chrome Book 2*). There is slightly more cyberware in the Gargoyles. This is largely due to the constant danger of construction accidents; when working with equipment and materials that weighs tons, they can easily shear off a limb. Having neuralware helps avoid these accidents, and new chrome limbs help one recover.

**Vehicles:** Families and couples usually have a personal vehicle like a converted RV or camper trailer. Some also keep small cycles for local commutes. In addition they have several ex-Army HEMTT trucks to transport and assist their construction equipment. Their outriders favor heavier muscle cars and larger cycles, as these are status symbols in nomad society. A pack has 15 twenty-eight-wheel semi tractor-trailers with flat beds (transporting bulldozers, cement mixers, two three-hundred foot cranes, a large water purification system with well-drilling equipment, portable metalworking equipment, twenty fully-equipped mobile shops, backhoes, graders, and three complete autolathe machine shops), ten forty-ton 8x8 trucks (transporting ten large generators, a complete cable-laying system, and several hundred smaller pieces of construction equipment), six buses (both for transporting children on the road and for transporting workers to job sites when camped), 35 converted RVs or pickup/trailer combinations, 6 muscle-car outrider vehicles and twelve heavy motorcycles.

All vehicles have at least one fifteen-millimeter Long Rifle in an open mount, and most have some type of light machine gun, either in tandem with or instead of the 15mm. All four-wheeled outrider vehicles have at least one heavy machine gun in a ring mount with a wire-guided ATGM or other anti-tank weapon in a fixed forward launcher. The outrider motorcycles usually forego the ATGM for a LAW or similar man-portable weapon.

**Primary Personal Weapons:** 10mm pistols or carbines are carried by most members at all times (pistols are carried even on a work-site). Most adults have an assault rifle chambered for 5.56mm NATO ammunition. Original manufacture varies from surplus US Military M16A2 or HBAR, to custom-made weapons of nomad manufacture. Warriors and outriders also sometimes carry PI-M205 (or similar) 25mm support grenade-launchers mounted under the barrel. As Bloods, all adult Gargoyles carry the sugar-cane style machete on formal occasions as a tribal badge of sorts. The dog-soldiers carry a slightly different version as a badge of office. Some may carry custom weapons, but all are chambered for 10mm cased or 5.56 NATO cased ammunition.





## THE BLAINE FAMILY

The Blaine Family is made up of agricultural workers who can do everything from simple labor to soil management. Using their size as a criteria they should probably be called a clan, but Tommy Blaine, the leader, is adamant that they refer to themselves as a family.

The Blaines are part of the Aldecaldos Nation. At times Tommy has threatened to leave because of one dispute or another, but he never has—he is very passionate about life, and this passion sometimes makes him rant. Tommy knew Juan Aldecaldos personally for many years before the Nation's founder passed away, and he is unsure of the wisdom and leadership qualities of this young Santiago. He does, however, admit that the "youngster" (as he refers to Santiago) has done an admirable job so far in his position.

Tommy Blaine is a nomad in the truest sense of the word. He has no static family, no static friends, the tribes contain his whole life's work. His partner of twenty years is a woman called Marthe. She claims to have no last name, and is known as Mom to most

of the family. Tommy Blaine has one son named Daniel who is a warrior guarding the Library; his daughter Marie was killed in an accident on the road a few years back, and silently he still grieves.

Agricultural nomads are forced to move almost constantly, both by the nature of their work, and by the agricorps which feel that keeping the nomads moving will keep them dependent on the corporations for support, fuel and parts. Of course, like many plans, this has backfired: it has actually made the nomads less reliant on the corporations, and more reliant on themselves. Without a guaranteed paycheck, and with the immediate cessation of support when a contract ends, these nomads have become very distrustful of their employers. They buttress their beliefs with a lot of awareness, self-respect, and faith. away. The religion they practice primarily is Judaism—it is only in smaller cultures like nomad packs that Judaism has survived. The Blaines are deeply religious, and at the same time very private about it. They believe that the young will do things that some of their older relatives do not approve of, and that there is no way to stop them without driving them away.

As an agricultural pack, the Blaine are lightly equipped. They do have many vehicles, however, and could safely trans-



port almost twice their number. Their vehicles tend to be light, which means they have no combat capability or armor to speak of. Their main vehicles are semi-tractors equipped with a mixture of trailers. The box trailers contain the earth-moving equipment, two combines with varied accessories and attachments, two well equipped shops, and a scop tank system. One tanker carries CHOOH for the family vehicles. One flatbed carries the family's tents and living accessories, lighter earth moving equipment and supplies. Three flatbeds are fitted to carry passengers; they have a canopy and cooking equipment so those carried can eat on the go. One of the semis has a control unit for the family's RPV which occasionally supplements the outriders.

The Blaine family has five outrider teams. They are usually deployed with three teams forward and two teams behind, one on each rear flank. The forward teams are made up of three pairs of motorcycles, all equipped with 25km scrambled radios and LMGs or long-range battle-rifles (6.5mm or better). The flanker teams are equipped with bugs.

There are no warriors in the Blaine Family. Youngsters who aspire to that career (like Tommy's son) are given the opportunity to join another Aldecaldo pack with the blessing of the Blaine. There are no runners in the family, at least none which profess their talent. Nevertheless, sometimes at night there is a commotion as a panzer or fast armored truck comes into camp and leaves soon afterward. Somehow, no one ever knows anything about it.

This is because Tommy and the rest of the family are a link in a large smuggling network. Along with ten or fifteen other families, the Blaines' network can reach almost anywhere in America, and do so quietly. The Blaines keep their illegal activities almost invisible; they have to. If local law enforcement—or especially HiWay, which has jurisdiction on interstate smuggling—knew of the Blaines' complicity in those operations, the nomads would be arrested and their property confiscated. Smaller nomad groups cannot ignore the law in static areas like some larger nomad groups do; six or seven well-armed police vehicles could easily cripple the Blaine family's ability to make a living. If they were rendered unable to move, the Blaines would be destitute, so they play things close to the vest.

**Equipment Of Note:** 10 semi tractor-trailer rigs. 4 flat-beds, 1 tanker, 5 box trailers. Two "Bug" outrider vehicles with LMGs in open mounts (top). 6 "LongRider" enduro-style motorcycles with rifles or LMGs in outboard pods. Two vehicle-portable shops including A-frames and lifts.

**Primary Personal Weapons:** 9mm or .357mag rifles and carbines, some personal weapons chambered for .357mag as well, 15mm long rifles, a few man-portable light anti-tank weapons (primarily LAW Rockets), and 7.62mm light machine guns. The group also has a single 81mm mortar, very well-hidden, in one of the semis.

## THE FORCE OF NATURE

**T**he Force of Nature (TFON) is a group of totem warriors of the Folk Nation. Most members of TFON are of Native American descent, but a large minority are not. They are also primarily young adults; only two are over the age of twenty-five. TFON warriors believe that man's ability to manipulate the forces of nature has allowed them to incorporate their spirit-guides (which usually take the forms of animals in dreams and folklore) into their physical being. They make themselves over in the images of their dreams and beliefs, despite the fact that this brands them as fanatics, even among other Native Americans. Orthodox adherents of Native American religion feel that there is something unnatural about the entire idea, and most statics think of them as freaks, but both are wrong.

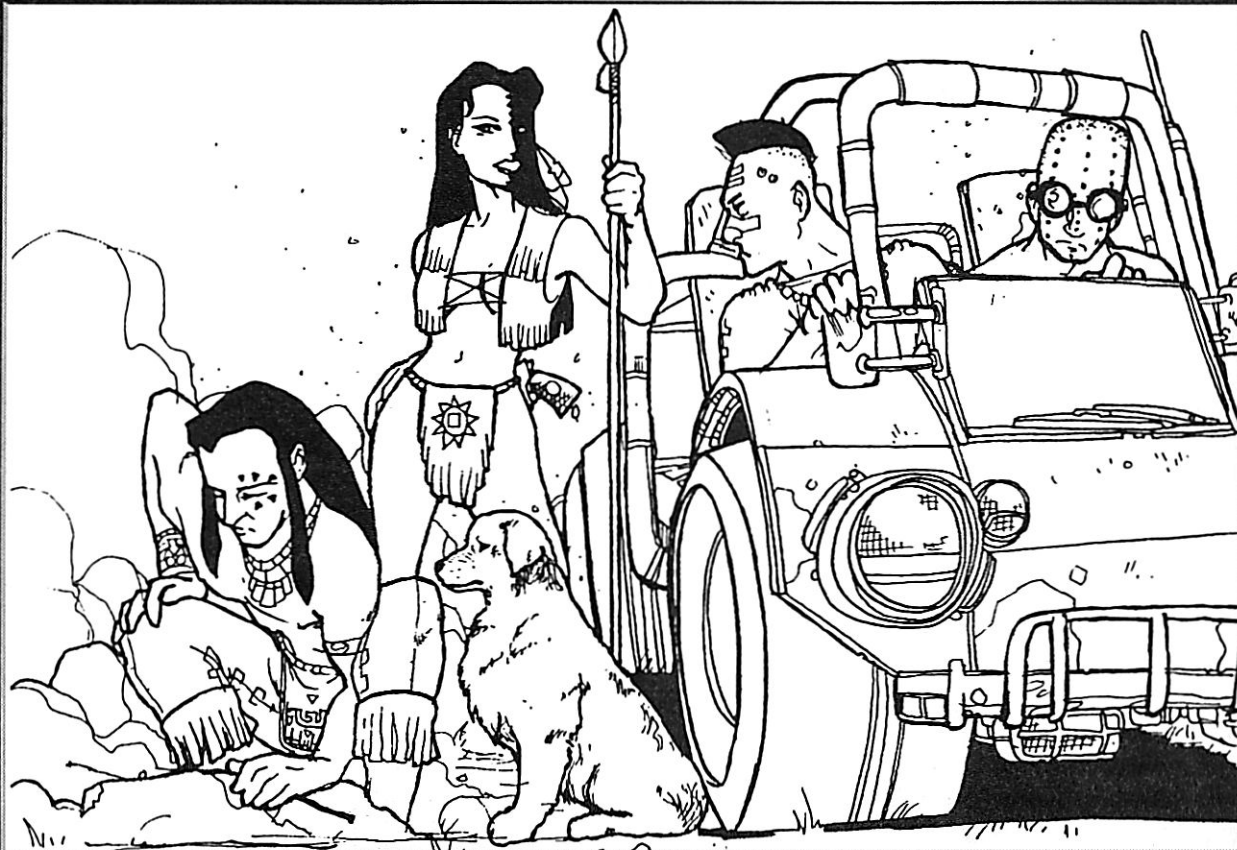
Within every society there are those who choose to seek out the most different, radical, or non-conformist groups because they feel lost in mainstream society. Membership in a group like this requires tireless dedication, hard work, and an ability to ignore a society's pressure to conform. This describes the members of TFON perfectly.

TFON is used as a sort of special forces by the Folk Nation. They are mostly warriors, and good ones at that, but their ranks include techs and medtechs, as well as a shaman and a fixer. Each member has a totem spirit they feel attached to. There are dogs, wolves, coyote, bears, raccoons, and many other animal types found in TFON. These totems are all worshipped—and this is a very free usage of the word worship—in different ways by the individual members. The members also share a common spirituality based on the spirits of the earth, wind, sun, and moon. They are led by a shaman called Remus, who takes the form of a wolf. Negotiation, with outsiders and other nomads both, goes through the family's fixer, Fred, who takes the form of a cat. Remus and Fred are the pack's oldest members, with years of experience before forming TFON. (Note: the image on the next page shows the more "normal" of the group; for full Totem Warriors, see the picture on pg 68)

There are thirty members in TFON, and they are one of only a few totem groups in the Folk Nation. These groups are rare because they are expensive. Given a nomad's limited income, very few nomads could save enough money to become totem warriors and still survive, even if they wanted to. As many Nations do with their totem warriors, the Folk Nation's leadership has sponsored TFON and expects many favors in return for this capital investment. TFON also takes work outside the nomad community to help keep themselves solvent; corporations, rock bands, and even the U.S. Marshals' Service have employed them at one time or another.

The primary means of TFON transportation is the motorcycle. It gives them maximum mobility over a variety of different types of terrain, and allows them full advantage of the scatter-





and-swarm tactics common in their fighting style. Being a larger group of totem warriors than average, TFON also has support vehicles: a large wrecker-equipped pick-up, and a utility truck which carries their fuel and common supplies. The individual warriors also carry a pack with the supplies necessary for seven days' survival, with the exception of water. Most TFON cycles are heavy-duty enduro-style cycles which are customized or built by each individual rider. Many of the members have oddly-shaped joints and other physical alterations which make it very difficult for them to use stock motorcycles.

**Vehicles:** TFON members use conventional (not recumbent) motorcycles. These are primarily 16-24SDP heavy bikes with some combat modifications, including two bikes with small smoke dischargers. There are no pod-mounted rifles or machine guns on these cycles; TFON considers these to be too limited in use. The pack also has a large tow truck capable of towing almost anything including heavy trucks and some semis. The wrecker has a slightly outdated comm suite, and a small generator as well. The utility truck is a heavily-modified ten-wheeler, similar to the Army's newer 2&1/2 ton trucks. It mounts a small generator and some advanced communications gear, as well as a small distillation and filtration unit for water. Both vehicles are equipped with heavy winches (two on the utility truck, and three

on the wrecker) mounted front and rear. Both also mount 7.62mm miniguns in ring-mounts on the cab with a clear armored shield (SP20) to protect against wind and stray shrapnel. These weapons are used sparingly, as the larger vehicles enter combat only as a last-ditch measure.

**Primary Personal Weapons:** TFON relies on speed and agility in their vehicle-to-vehicle combat. They consider accuracy to be somewhat less important. All members of TFON carry Meta WarHammer assault shotguns with laser-sights. They chose the WarHammer because it has a slightly heavier punch than a standard assault shotgun, and the ammunition is field-reloadable. Precision shooting is also terribly difficult when both the target and shooter are moving, so the use of a shotgun makes more sense. TFON members also dislike ranged combat; unlike most nomads who would like to see as little of their foes as possible, TFON warriors like to get up close and personal, and shotguns make them more formidable in these situations. They are also vicious hand-to-hand fighters, and they carry varied melee weapons as well as a combat/survival knife. Many TFON warriors pack implant weapons like claws or rippers instead of worrying with hand-held weapons. Three TFON warriors are marksmen and carry sniping weapons similar to, the Galil or Hk PSG-1. These are chambered in 7.62mm NATO cased ammunition.





## THE TECHNOMANCERS

Also known as Technologues, Technogenies, and Resourcerers, the Technomancers are one of the most mysterious nomad packs in the entire country. They take no new members from outside the nomad population—no statics—and they have but one area of expertise: they are technical mercenaries and literal wizards of technology. Rumors of their origins are diverse; some claim they are renegades from the pre-Collapse “Shop” (a high-tech, James-Bondian, super-secret research organization; the existence of which is conjectural at best), and others that they are outcasts from the domed city of Alpha (see *Home of the Brave*). Most theories have been debunked, but some can be neither proven or disproven.

These technically-oriented nomads are not directly affiliated with any of the Seven Nations, though they have very loose ties to the Jodes. The pack displays a strong disinclination to take sides in disputes, because it is bad for business.

As mercenary scientists, they travel North America looking for extremely complex problems to solve. They have been a great asset to corporations willing to pay for their services

(MetaCorp, Malour, IEC, Microtech and Raven have all used them), and they have helped the nomads as well. Most of their wealth revolves around the control of patentable technology. They license these patents to some manufacturers (like Meta-Armson for the optical assault rifle’s unique battery system), or sometimes sell them outright when they cannot trust the corp in question for a long-term agreement. The Technomancers can also repair or create almost any machine imaginable.

In the last few years, they have worked with the Digital Librarians (more commonly referred to simply as “the Library”; see *Home of the Brave*) using their combined resources to reclaim knowledge that was thought lost in some areas of the world. They are currently working together in Chicago, somewhere near the University, to solve the problems involved in decontaminating an entire city. They are also assisting in materials research that may allow the Sears Tower to be salvaged instead of demolished. For now, the tower sits like a dark specter over the skyline. The nomads are unsure of what lives in the tower, and whether or not it is still sound structurally. A scout team sent into the structure by StormTech never came out. They are seemingly content with the work they have in Chicago, and have even done some consulting for StormTech of late. In the night a few weeks ago, two of the trucks moved



out of the city, but no one knows why. Some believe that they have taken a second contract elsewhere, as the trucks have not been seen anywhere near Chicago.

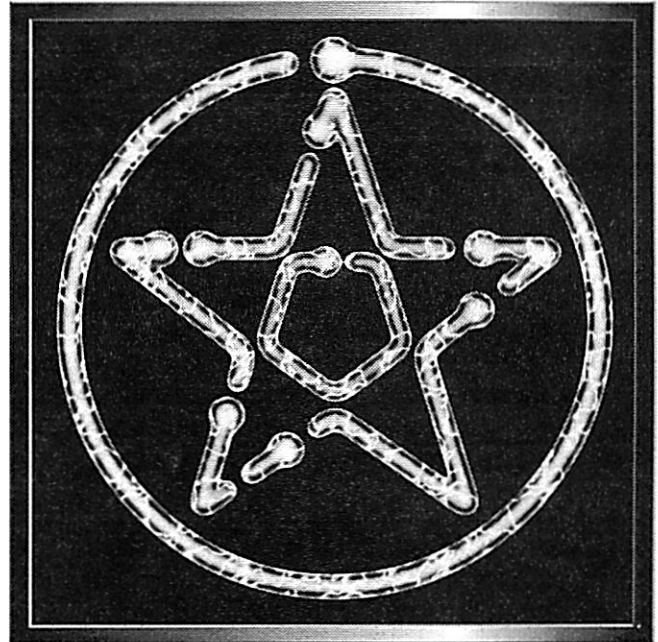
The Technomancers travel the roads in seven articulated, tandem, super-semi tractor-trailers of their own design. They use a closed-system steam turbine for power which is almost three-hundred percent more efficient than the average CHOOH2 engine. Within these vehicles are no less than four fully-equipped auto-lathe shops, an impressive biotech research lab, a ten-bed state-of-the-art hospital, an artificial intelligence (known simply as The Elders), and living quarters for thirty of the members. There are also several customized vans owned by members with families. Their are fewer children than would be expected of a group this wealthy, but that is yet another eccentricity of the Technomancers, and is casually overlooked by other nomads.

Though much of their equipment is extremely advanced, most all of it is scavenged, reworked, or modified. Their vehicles, impressive as their contents may be, appear cryptic and arcane—assemblies of electronics, tubes, wires and other apparatus crop up in all the wrong places in the eyes of outsider techs. All of the Technomancers' vehicles have air filtration equipment. With a wide-brimmed hat, dark goggles, a filter mask and heavy clothing, members of the Technomancers appear sinister and suspicious as they walk out of the wastelands on foot (as is their habit when coming into town on small errands).

The Technomancers do not have outriders or scouts of any kind. They have traditionally hired other nomads to act as outriders for them, but lately they have had an escort of warriors and outriders provided by the Seven Nations, much as the Library does. The Technomancers have a single AV-6 they use to travel on strange errands now and then, but for the most part, it stays lashed to the roof of one of the trucks. It is armed with a collection of esoteric missiles and a large laser weapon, along with a seemingly standard chin-mounted chain-gun.

There are only about sixty actual members of the Technomancers, although their escort adds another twenty or thirty at most. Individual Technomancers commonly carry tools and machines that are too specialized for simple nomads. The average Technomancer—if the word 'average' can be applied to them—has at least two areas of technical specialty (skills of +5 or greater). Many have multiple advanced degrees, or would have if they had ever attended an accredited university.

**Vehicles:** Seven turbine-driven super-semis with articulated tandem-box trailers (description above), eight customized vans, one AV-6 Aerodyne. The vehicles are all heavily-armed and -armored with at least one vertical or standard launched ATGM (or other anti-tank weapon system) per vehicle. All vehi-



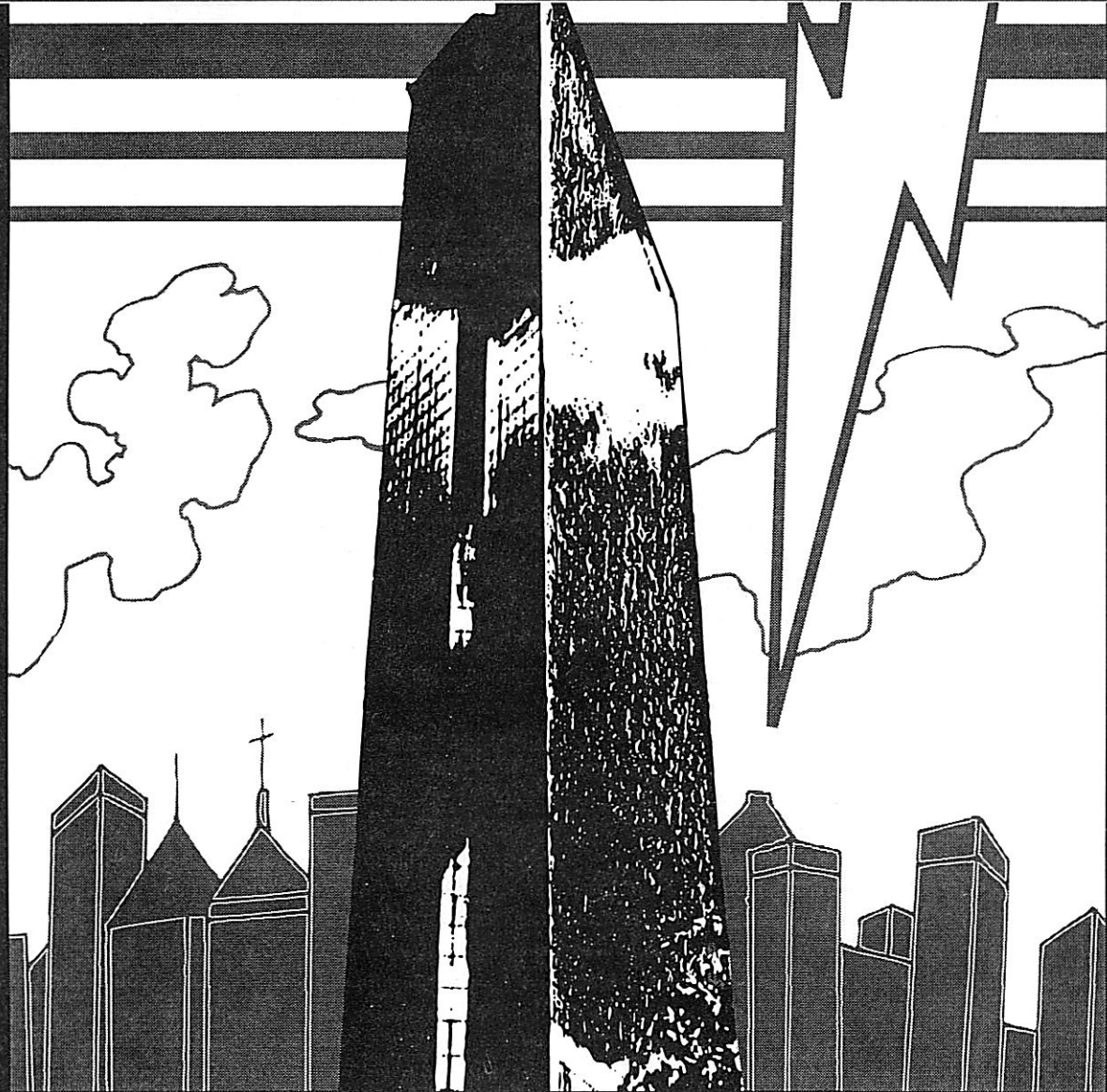
cles also have composite armor of at least 30 all around. The vans usually sport a roof-mounted machine gun in a shielded ring mount, and several firing ports in the hull. The rigs also have several firing ports on each side and in the rear. Each rig has a 20mm Vulcan Phalanx with optional cyber-controlled override and a high-angle traverse system. With cyber control, these weapons can track and fire effectively on ground targets and personnel.

**Primary Personal Weapons:** The Technomancers, being adept at manufacturing, carry caseless ammunition weapons. The most common calibres are 10mm for pistols and SMGs and 6.5mm Militech for assault rifles. Any common weapons of these calibres can be found among their escorts, but the Technomancers themselves usually carry a personal weapon (see equipment section) chambered for 10mmCL (2d6+4). All other statistics for the weapon remain unchanged. Technomancers do not usually travel in groups of more than four, discounting any escorts or bodyguards.

Stats for a super-semi should be extrapolated as follows: Take the Semi found in *MaxMetal* and double all statistics except top speed (increase by only twenty five percent), Acc/Dcc (remains constant), Range (triple), and Maneuver Value (always -2). The crew listing should be 3 (driver, mechanic, weapons operator). Each Phalanx will have two magazines mounted under armor in the cab. The turrets are armored to SP30 with the rest of the vehicle. It should be noted that those these vehicles are articulated, they cannot be detached from their trailers like a normal semi. These trucks are also off-road capable, and are all equipped with superior (though varied) sensors and auto-pilot systems depending purely on the personal taste of the driver and crew.



# CHICAGO: THE ADVENTURE



**"STORM TECHNOLOGIES-  
REBUILDING CHICAGO!"**



## CHICAGO: THE ADVENTURE

**I**t's light outside. The only reason that should make you happy is 'cause most of the people gunning for you sleep in the daytime.

—Santiago Aldecaldó to Johnny Silverhand, 2014

This adventure is designed to give the players either a starting point for a new campaign, a segue between two campaigns, or a stand-alone adventure. Several of the design elements in *Listen Up, You Primitive Screwheads: The Cyberpunk Referee's Guide*. (like power-level, style, and theme) are used here to help you, the referee. This adventure can take place after any campaign, and is focused primarily on introducing players to the nomad lifestyle. There are three distinct parts of the Chicago Adventure: players begin with *The Gathering Storm*, continue through *Into the Storm City*, and end with *The Chase*. There is also an epilog and afterword. The adventure could be continued into a campaign, but for the purposes of drama and ease of use, we have scripted a well-defined end. This adventure assumes that both the players and the referee have read the material presented in this book. Of course, the players should not read the actual adventure before play. Most major events and plot elements are included here, but it is assumed that you, as referee, have certain subplot elements you want to insert. This is an especially good idea if you are using this as a segue or bridge adventure. The subplots you introduce do not have to be resolved within this adventure, and can provide strong continuity elements between old and new campaigns.

## A NOTE ON STYLE

The campaign style presented here will move away from the familiar urban ambience to a very different feel. You may want to refer to old movies on the Depression, spaghetti westerns, and post-holocaust films like *The Road Warrior* to get a strong feel for the type of dusty, abandoned America that the nomads call their home. First the characters experience this feel, then they move back into the city. Chicago is a dark, polluted and ruined city, but a city nonetheless. Strive for a "Ghost Town" feel here. You may also want to introduce some style elements: background music, lighting changes; whatever is necessary for the mood.

As the players move through the three phases of the adventure, they advance towards more than one goal. In the first, as they learn to be nomads, the players are clearly led by Jakob and Carrie. By the time the team battles the Raffens out-

side of Chicago, they are seen as equals by the nomads. During the Chicago phase of the adventure, they lead the adventure and somewhat overshadow larger plot elements. It is important that you as referee stress that none of the events would have been possible without the team's intervention.

## THE GATHERING STORM Up Against The Wall

The purpose of this segment is to bring the team to the point where they need to get away for a while. Usually, this involves a situation similar to the one portrayed here, but if you feel another situation is more appropriate, use it.

The characters are tired. Life is getting a little too hairy. Most of the time they sit in the apartment, eating pre-pack and drinking soda. They watch television and play cards. They've built solid reputations; they have the best tools, guns, and cyberware that money can buy. But still, if they go outside, too many people will come gunning for them. It has been this way before. Maybe for a few days, maybe for a week or two on the really big jobs. This time it has been almost two months, and things are just tough. They may have even gotten an eviction notice from their landlord, just today — seems he has been told that if the team keeps hiding there, he could lose his building. So the team discusses where they should go, or what they should do... and no one has the answers.

The phone rings.

Everybody jumps.

Somebody answers the phone, and somewhere a door opens...

## A Way Out

*"GATO, IZZAT YOU? (PAUSE) THIS IS THE MECHANIC. ARE YOU BUSY? (PAUSE) LISTEN, I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU AROUND LATELY. ARE YOU ON A JOB? (PAUSE) OH, MAN, HEY, I NEED SOME PEOPLE FOR A GIG. THE RATE IS ONLY AVERAGE, BUT THERE'S A NICE TRAVEL BONUS. IF YOU'RE INTERESTED, I NEED SOMEONE, PREFERABLY YOU AND YOUR CHOOMBAS, TO COME TO THE SHOP NOW. (RESPONSE) NO, I MEAN RIGHT NOW. THIRTY MINUTES TOPS, YOU GOT ME? (PAUSE) SEE YA."*

The Mechanic is an average fixer. He isn't a Yakuza, or a Mob guy, or even a pusher. He's just some guy who "fixes" things. Some members of the team have met him a few times, one or two may have even done the occasional job for him. Strictly legit—the Mechanic is a fixer who has carved out a middle-of-the-road niche for himself. If one of the players is a fixer, or can check with a few fixer friends, they find The Mechanic's reputation is spotless.



The Mechanic is a plot device. If the campaign has another hazy, well-respected fixer NPC, use that one instead. The important thing is that the players (in a less than strong bargaining position) meet a fixer who offers them this job.

The Mechanic is an older guy, about fifty. He has long grey hair tied in a ponytail, and wears whatever was recently fashionable. He wears sunglasses all the time and doesn't use any visible cyberware. In any other time, he would have been called a little husky. In 2020, he is probably one of the most overweight people the players know. He keeps a little office space in a near the "bad side of town"; the players can walk there in fifteen minutes, or five minutes by car.

When they get to his office, the characters see a large custom van parked outside. There are a few bullet holes in the side, and the engine is still warm. A quick inspection reveals a blood trail going from the driver's door to the Mechanic's office. As the team approaches, the door opens, revealing a girl. She looks about fifteen, wears a hodgepodge of clothing that can only be called "nomad," and carries a double-barreled "whippet" shotgun. She quickly waves the team in. As they walk into the room, the players realize that she is quite beautiful, and quite scared.

## The Office

*THE GIRL SHUTS THE DOOR BEHIND YOU AND WATCHES THE WINDOW NERVOUSLY. "THANKS FOR COMING SO FAST," SAYS THE MECHANIC. "HAVE A SEAT, DON'T BE SUCH STRANGERS." HE GESTURES VAGUELY TOWARD THE MANY COUCHES AND CHAIRS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM. IN ONE OF THE CHAIRS IS THE OWNER OF THE BLOOD OUTSIDE. "LET ME INTRODUCE MISTER JAKOB MOJAVE."*

*JAKOB MOJAVE IS A TALL THIN MAN IN BLOODY CLOTHING. HE SITS WITH A BIG UGLY .357 REVOLVER POINTED AT THE MEDTECH WHO IS CLEANING AND STITCHING A TRIO OF MESSY BULLET HOLES IN HIS ABDOMEN AND RIGHT LEG. HIS CLOTHING HAS BEEN CUT AWAY, AND HE SMOKES A CIGARETTE WHILE THE DOCTOR WORKS. HE APPEARS CALM, AND THE ONLY APPARENT SIGNS OF DISTRESS ARE AN OCCASIONAL FACIAL TWITCH AND THE SWEAT WHICH BEADS HIS FOREHEAD. HE NODS TO THE TEAM BRIEFLY AND RETURNS TO HIS WATCH OF THE MEDTECH.*

Here is the deal: The characters are asked in a hurried dialog with The Mechanic, Jakob, and the girl (introduced as Carrie Laisson sometime in the conversation) to escort them to Chicago, which (providing they make a *General Knowledge* check at 15+) the team knows is the site of a huge nomad salvage and construction project. Each character will be provided with ammunition and living expenses in kind —no cash, just supplies— and each will be paid 4,000 euro in cash. Payment can either be made at completion, or the funds can be secured in

escrow by The Mechanic now, not to be disbursed until completion. Including down time and time for transport back from Chicago (to be paid by Jakob Mojave or his agent), the whole job could take as long as 30 days.

The destination is Chicago, although, since your players' team might be starting anywhere in the US, the distance, duration, and pay of the mission can be modified. The pay should not exceed 1000eb per week. To calculate travel time, assume 200 miles a day. If asked why the job takes so long, Mojave answers that they may not be able to use highways and might be forced to go off-road to evade police and the Raffin Shiv. If asked about the Raffin, the nomads answer that they are the scourge of mankind, and the characters should consider them to be "nomad boostergangs." They prey on the weak and the unprepared, but they should not be a problem to this group, especially if the team is half as good as their rep says they are. None of Jakob's enemies even knows of this trip. If the characters ask why he wants to go to the city, he relates the following story:

*"THE NOMADS OF THE SNAKE NATION ARE A VERY DIVERSE GROUP. UNLIKE, THE OTHER SIX NATIONS, WE'RE INDEPENDENT. WE BANDED TOGETHER TO PROTECT AGAINST OUTSIDERS, AS WELL AS TOO KEEP FROM BECOMING BEHOLDEN TO ONE OF THE OTHER NATIONS. IT IS DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN. IN TIMES OF CONFLICT, IF WE FEEL JUSTIFIED, WE HELP EACH OTHER.*

*"A FEW WEEKS AGO, A PACK FROM OUR NATION TOOK A JOB FOR THE CITY GOVERNMENT. IT WAS A SMALL PACK, ABOUT THREE HUNDRED, BUT THEY HAD A LOT OF YOUNG PEOPLE. YOU KNOW THESE KIDS TODAY, ALL THEY WANT TO DO IS FIND A PARTNER AND RAISE A LITTLE HELL. IT GOT OUT OF HAND ONE NIGHT, AND THERE WERE SOME ARRESTS. SADLY, THERE WAS A DEATH. AS A SHAMAN — THAT'S WHAT THEY CALL ME IN MY PACK — I AM OCCASIONALLY ASKED TO RESOLVE DISPUTES BETWEEN PEOPLE. ONE OF MY COMPANIONS, A FIXER NAMED BILLI, SHE CAME ALONG TO SMOOTH THINGS OVER WITH THE LOCAL LAW. THE REST OF THE FOLKS WERE JUST ALONG FOR MORAL SUPPORT. CARRIE'S COUSIN SENT HER SO SHE COULD SEE THE CITY. SHE SAW A LOT MORE THAN THAT.*

*"WE WERE AMBUSHED LAST NIGHT BY SOME LOCAL BOOSTERS. SEEMS WE DID SOMETHING TO ANGER THEM. WE DIDN'T STOP TO SEE WHO THEY WERE; WE JUST RAN, AND JUST BARELY CAME OUT OF IT ALIVE. CARRIE IS SO SHOCKY, I'M SURPRISED SHE'S STILL WALKING. WE WANDERED AROUND ALL NIGHT BEFORE WE FOUND THE MECHANIC, HERE. PEOPLE, WE REALIZE THAT WE CANNOT PAY YOU AS MUCH AS SOME OTHERS COULD, BUT WE WOULD BE INDEBTED TO YOU IF YOU WOULD TAKE US BACK. WE HAVE TO GET TO CHICAGO; MOST OF OUR FAMILY HAS MOVED THERE, AND OF COURSE THERE IS THE TOTEM."*

Jakob reaches over to the chair next to him and pulls a blanket away from something the characters had previously dis-



missed as junk. It is a large totem of animal spirits encrusted with all manner of decorations, including computer chips, precious metals, semi-precious stones, and odder bits here and there. Carrie then pleads for the characters' cooperation. She is an attractive young girl, alone and scared, and she'd do most anything to get back to the clan. She explains the totem's religious significance; it is a sort of good luck charm that was lost during the fracas. It is important to the tribes that it be returned. She asks again, will they please help?

Of course, this becomes a very short adventure if the players refuse. If the characters do refuse for whatever reason, have them simply return home to find their apartment has been bombed into wreckage, and everything they left behind is gone. After this happens, let them stew for a while and then have someone's cellphone ring again. Offer them the job one more time, and stress that the job involves getting out of town for a few weeks. If the characters accept the job, they need to leave immediately. No time to get supplies or do anything else, just go. Jakob takes care of everything. If the Netrunner's cyberdeck or a character's only weapon is lost in the apartment bombing, Jakob provides a replacement for them. Maybe not the exact item, but close. If asked why he has all this spare equipment, he simply says that he buried quite a few friends here last night, and he's sure they wouldn't mind. The group is off as the sun begins to lower in the west.

### THE MECHANIC

INT: 8      REF: 6      TECH: 8      COOL: 8  
 LUCK: 5      MA: 5      BODY: 6      ATTR: 6  
 EMP: 8      SA: STREETDEAL +6      REP: 5

#### NOTES:

The Mechanic is a very well-respected fixer in the city, who does nothing but "legitimate" work. Characters who succeed at an average *streetwise* roll have heard of his involvement with various nomad groups in the past.

#### EQUIPMENT:

Office with full comm suite and espresso machine.

### JAKOB MOJAVE

INT: 7      REF: 5      TECH: 7      COOL: 9  
 LUCK: 7      MA: 9      BODY: 7      ATTR: 6  
 EMP: 8      SA: COUNSEL +7      REP: 4  
 (8 w/ NOMADS)

#### NOTES:

Jakob Mojave is a secretive but friendly man. He tells the characters exactly what he feels they need to know; no more and no less. He will not divulge any information that compromises any other trusts or agreements he has made. In the beginning, he seems enigmatic to the non-nomad

characters. Shamans are perceived differently by nomads in the team. They are considered wise and mysterious to younger nomads, and they're viewed with considerable respect even by elders. See page 41 for a more complete description of the shaman role. If there are any nomads in the team, and if they succeed on a Difficult *Family* skill check, they have heard of Jakob. He is a respected shaman in the Snake Nation and his reputation is clean.

#### CYBERWARE:

Muscle/Bone Lace, Nanosurgeons, Enhanced Antibodies, Toxin Binders, Anti-Plague Nanotech.

#### EQUIPMENT:

Custom van, E-book style personal computer (with cell and radio-packet options, also heavily ornamented with what can only be called religious symbols), medicine bag, .357 revolver and lever-action carbine (matched), Long Rifle (in van), tons of equipment from dead comrades, nomad kit (in van).

### CARRIE LAISSON

INT: 6      REF: 8      TECH: 7      COOL: 7  
 LUCK: 6      MA: 8      BODY: 6      ATTR: 8  
 EMP: 10      SA: FAMILY +5      REP: 2

#### NOTES:

Carrie is an attractive and scared girl who can nonetheless handle herself admirably in a crisis. She is only sixteen years old, and is not streetwise in any way. She admires and respects any character, male or female, who treats her as competent and acts mature. If you feel the play group is mature enough, she can become romantic interest for one of the team-members. She is not easy or loose, but is at an age when we all fall for people quite easily. You can switch her to a male character if the romantic interest is a female character, it is unimportant. If the romance is not included, she is friendly and attentive to all, especially if she can learn something.

#### CYBERWARE:

None

#### EQUIPMENT:

Whippet shotgun, Personal Weapon\*, smartgoggles (image enhance, lowlite, target scope), light armorjacket, nomad kit (in van). \*See Equipment Section for stats on the Personal Weapon.

Resolving the meeting and such will probably finish the first session of play. There is no time to do anything else before setting out. If you (the referee) have never used the "in media res"—literally in the middle of the action—play style which disallows the edgerunner habit of shopping trips before the main action begins, it is wise to discuss it with the players now. Some players may feel that you are trying to pull a fast one and deny them



some critical piece of equipment. This is not the case here. Rather, you should explain that you are trying to instill a sense of urgency to the adventure and promote good role-playing. After all, if the team needs to go to the store before they can get the job done, are they really cyberpunks???

## The Vehicle

Any vehicles owned by team-members have to be left behind. Vengeful NPCs can blow them apart as they did the aforementioned apartment building, The Mechanic could hide them for the duration of the adventure, or (if you've had time to prepare) they could have been stolen an episode or two prior to this adventure. Vehicle-based characters other than runners are rare, so removing their personal transport should not be a problem. One action that is definitely not good is bringing along big boxes of heavy weapons from the team's vehicle (or apartment) to Jakob's van; this adventure has minimal violence, so overkill should be avoided.

## On The Road

This section introduces the team to the nomad way of life. There is little in the way of conflict, and it may be boring to the players if it is simply sped through drily. To flesh it out, allow the characters to develop new skills (probably *Wilderness Survival* or *Drive*) and cement a relationship with Carrie and Jakob through personal interaction and role-playing.

The characters must get acclimated to the nomad way of traveling. Nomads do not speed down the highway without care or concern. They usually use less-traveled (and more poorly maintained) roads when trouble is about. They do not push on without rest. They make about two hundred miles a day on the highways, and a lot less when traveling off-road. There are the rituals of meals, weapon maintenance, and upkeep (like baths and shaving) that all must attend to. Many tasks are shared. Foremost among them is driving, and if some team members do not know how, Jakob and/or Carrie will teach them. Role-play the frustration; humorous faux pas are great material for style-conscious edgerunners to struggle through. And of course, if one team member becomes too vocal and critical, have that character be called upon next. You could spend an entire session getting the characters used to the rituals of camp. At first, the characters will probably balk at sleeping under the stars; corn fields and broad horizons outside the city are alien to most urban characters. So are field mice or insects crawling across your face in the middle of the night. The night air is very quiet... at least until a screech owl passes overhead. If the characters insist on sleeping in the van for a night or two, stress how uncomfortable it is. After two days, if the characters still won't sleep outdoors, Jakob and Carrie begin to complain that they are not giving the van time to breathe.

Sentry duty is another important chore that is shared, and Jakob and Carrie expect the characters to pull their share. In addition, they teach the characters some games, build fires if it is too cold, and show the statics the intricacies of nomad camp life, especially the taboos of food and eating. The characters are required to keep their own individual set of utensils. Finally, this camp time is an excellent opportunity for Carrie and her new-found romantic interest (whether he knows it or not) to spend some quiet time under the stars—but never during either's guard shift.

The countryside is empty a few hours outside of town. There is simply not much between America's sprawling cities, especially in the west and southwest. The only landmark which breaks the monotony is the occasional truck stop. Always heavily-fortified and well-stocked with all manner of supplies (but no black market or newtech), the team can get a greasy urban meal every day or two, and a real shower for ten bucks.

Jakob appears more and more relaxed as the team moves further away from the city and closer to their goal. In all likelihood, after a Cyberpunk session as quiet as this, the players will begin to feel edgy. You should probably include a visit to one of those cyclone-fence enclosed truck-stops on the highway to fuel up their vehicles. A few brief encounters, but no gunplay, will also help to break up the monotony and put the players in a less restless mood. Helping a fellow traveler with a broken-down vehicle or picking up a hitch-hiker are good encounters of this sort. Jakob tries to avoid any major cities in their journey, and he also occasionally has the team take small detours for no apparent reason.

During the middle of an otherwise typical day, Jakob turns off the road and sets up a small satcomm receiver. Then he asks for some privacy in the van, and calls home. After a while, he emerges from the van looking very tired. He asks someone else to drive off-road for a while, and gives the team directions to another rendezvous. Carrie navigates, or drives if need be, while Jakob falls into a fitful sleep in the back of the van. A day or two after that, they meet up with the Gargoyles in a city somewhere along the route (choose any city you feel appropriate). The Gargoyles primarily do heavy construction and high-steel work for the corps (see page 76 for a full description of the pack). They are currently building a large skyscraper. There are seven or eight other groups working with them, but this interlude only deals with the Gargoyles.

## The Gargoyles

This segment shows something of nomad justice. It should impress upon the team both the nomads' dim view of anti-social behavior, and their deep respect for life in general. It also shows that Jakob is more well-known and respected than the characters may have realized.





The team arrives in the middle of the day, when all but the elderly, the infirm and the children are off working. Some people come over to talk with them, but few are capable of helping the characters much. It is hot and dry, and Jakob is in a surly mood and full of fire. Carrie is visibly upset by this, but if a character asks why she's so upset, she admits that Jakob's positive and strong demeanor has kept her going for the last few days, and now that he is angry, she is losing her composure. Carrie is looking for support and a shoulder to cry on—don't forget that she lost family members and friends only a few days ago. She is also very lonely; her romantic interest and Jakob excepted, and she does not know them enough to really let go and grieve. Hopefully, this will lead to an intercession on Carrie's behalf by her romantic interest. If necessary, an NPC can suggest it to the character.

After a few hours, the bulk of the Gargoyles return. They are happy and courteous, but insist that there be no drinking by the fire this night. Their project is behind schedule, so the Gargoyles are working a seven-day schedule for the next three weeks to try to catch up. After everyone settles in to dinner, two men approach the team. They are dressed like engineers, and look quite a bit older than most of the nomads in the camp. They ask to speak with Jakob at length, in their office. A few hours later, after dinner, Jakob and the totem disappear again for a long while. Meanwhile, Carrie talks to the team about her family. After the conversation winds down, Jakob returns. He places the totem back in its place in the van and calls the team's attention.

*"I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO SIT IN JUDGMENT OF A MAN," HE SAYS. "HE WAS NOT AN HONEST MAN, NOR A DECENT MAN IT SEEMS, BUT HE WAS A NOMAD LIKE US. ALONG WITH TWO OTHER ELDERS, I HAVE LISTENED TO THE MAN AND HIS ACCUSERS TELL THEIR STORIES, AND WE HAVE A GRAVE DECISION TO MAKE. COME OUT TO THE EDGE OF THE CAMP WITH ME, MY FRIENDS. SEE HOW WE TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN."*

Jakob walks out of the tent without waiting to see if anyone follows him. Carrie hushes them and says they should come and see. When the team reaches the edge of the camp, they see the entire population, almost three thousand, standing in a rough half-circle facing the darkness away from the camp. In the center of the group is a lone tent, around which is the complete contents of the tent; clothes, weapons, blankets, tools, packs, and jewelry. Standing next to the tent is the owner, obviously nervous, with three well-armed dog-soldiers guarding him. He is larger than average build, with dishwater-blond hair and dark skin. He wears a handmade shirt and a pair of denim pants. As the team settles in to the crowd, Jakob, an older woman, and a very tall man all step out of the group and face the assembled nomads with their backs to the night.

*FIRST THE WOMAN SPEAKS. "MY NAME IS DOROTHY PARKER. I HAVE NO BIAS AGAINST THIS MAN. HE IS NO KIN OF MINE. WE HAVE NOT*

*HAD DISPUTES IN THE PAST. WE WERE NEVER PARTNERS. I SAT IN JUDGMENT OF THIS MAN AND I FIND THAT HE HAS HOARDED GOODS, HE HAS ABUSED HIS POSITION, AND HE HAS ABUSED A CHILD. THIS MAN IS EVIL, HE IS RAFFEN SHIV."*

*THEN THE TALL MAN SPEAKS. "MY NAME IS NELSON MCCALL. I HAVE NO BIAS AGAINST THIS MAN. HE IS NO KIN OF MINE. WE HAVE NOT HAD DISPUTES IN THE PAST. WE WERE NEVER PARTNERS. I SAT IN JUDGMENT OF THIS MAN AND I FIND THAT HE HAS HOARDED GOODS, HE HAS ABUSED HIS POSITION, AND HE HAS ABUSED A CHILD. HE IS WITHOUT REMORSE, THIS MAN IS RAFFEN SHIV."*

*LASTLY, JAKOB SPEAKS. "MY NAME IS JAKOB MOJAVE." THERE IS A MURMUR OF SURPRISE FROM THE CROWD, BUT IT DIES QUICKLY. "I HAVE NO BIAS AGAINST THIS MAN. HE IS NO KIN OF MINE. WE HAVE NOT HAD DISPUTES IN THE PAST. WE WERE NEVER PARTNERS. I SAT IN JUDGMENT OF THIS MAN AND I FIND THAT HE HAS HOARDED GOODS, HE HAS ABUSED HIS POSITION, AND HE HAS ABUSED A CHILD. THIS MAN IS NO LONGER ONE OF US, THIS MAN IS RAFFEN SHIV."*

*AFTER A SHORT PAUSE, JAKOB CONTINUES. "THIS IS OUR WAY. YOU ALL KNOW THE CODE, THE TENETS BY WHICH WE LIVE OUR LIVES IN HARMONY. THEY ARE ALL IMPORTANT, BUT MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANYTHING IS THE PROTECTION OF OUR CHILDREN. THIS MAN WHO IS NO LONGER ONE OF US, WHO NO LONGER HAS A NAME TO BE REMEMBERED, HAS KILLED A CHILD! HE WILL TAKE NOTHING WITH HIM AS HE GOES, HE WILL LEAVE US AS HE CAME TO THIS EARTH — NAKED AND WITH NO TOOLS."*

*MANY WANT TO KILL THIS MAN, AND I UNDERSTAND THAT. BUT THAT IS NOT OUR WAY. WE HAVE SEEN TOO MUCH DEATH, TOO MUCH PAIN, TOO MUCH KILLING, AND TOO MUCH LOSS. HE WILL GO FROM US NOW, BECAUSE THIS IS OUR WAY. WE MUST REMEMBER TO KEEP OUR WAYS. UNNAMED MAN, I CAST YOU OUT!"*

*THEN THE OTHER TWO JUDGES REPEAT "UNNAMED MAN, WE CAST YOU OUT." THE ENTIRE ASSEMBLY OF NOMADS RATTLES THE VERY EARTH WITH THEIR CRY. "UNNAMED MAN, WE CAST YOU OUT!" THE THREE DOG-SOLDIERS STRIP THE MAN OF CLOTHING.*

When the dog-soldiers step away, some of the assembled throw rocks. Carrie mentions that those are the victim's family. As the man begins to run away from the camp, more of the older nomads throw rocks at him. Soon he disappears into the darkness, and is gone from view. Old women strip the tools from the condemned man's kit, taking all that is metal and burning the rest. Quietly, all the nomads return to their homes. If the team tries to ask a question, they are hushed. Carrie whispers that no one can speak until sunrise; that way they can hear if the Raffan Shiv tries to sneak back into the camps.



## Final Leg

Things begin to get tense on the road once again — it's been too quiet for too long. By the end of this segment, the characters are forced into several actions, some of which they will probably hate.

The next morning, the team awakens to find Carrie and Jakob cleaning their weapons. They suggest that everyone get ready. Any questions about the incidents of the night before are met with quiet reservation. They say only that a child was killed in a drunken act, and that the unnamed man should never be mentioned again. Breakfast is a quiet thing, and several of the elders show up as it is being completed. They shake hands and embrace Jakob, wish the team a safe journey, and give the characters a warning:

*"THE RAFFEN SHIV ARE A DANGER FOR THE REST OF YOUR JOURNEY. THEY SMELL THE MONEY IN CHICAGO, AND YOU ARE ONLY ABOUT TWELVE HOURS FROM THERE NOW. THEY WILL STRIKE AT NIGHT, AND THEY WILL SHOW YOU NO MERCY. BE QUICK WITH YOUR WEAPONS. THEY ARE ANIMALS. TAKE OUR BROTHER AND SISTER SAFELY TO THEIR DESTINATION, AND WE WILL ALL BE INDEBTED TO YOU. PLEASE TAKE THESE GIFTS FROM US, USE IT TO PROTECT THEM"*

The team is presented with .357 automatic carbines of excellent manufacture, one for each character. They are distinctly new. Should any of the characters have plugs, they are outfitted with smartgun options. They are also customized with extended barrels and compensators. Each weapon has with it 5 magazines and 300 rounds of loose ammunition. Each weapon is worth close to a thousand euro. The team should be properly thankful and humble to please the nomads.

**.357MAG CUSTOM AUTOMATIC CARBINE**  
RIF ● +2 ● L ● C ● 2d6+3 (.357mag) ● 30 ● 3 (single shot or burst ROF is 3) ● VR ● 125m

Before the sun has been up long, Jakob signals that it is time to go. The team leaves with little fanfare on the last leg of their journey. Most of the trip is fairly uneventful. Jakob makes sure that everyone is watching out the windows and aware. By six o'clock, the team should be edgy from waiting and watching. Jakob stops at a truck stop to top off the tanks. He remarks that this station is too quiet, and gives one of the team some money to pay for the fuel. He also asks them to find out why it is so quiet. Inside, the clerk is noticeably edgy, looking up a little too fast when the characters enters. If asked directly, he says only that there have been problems lately, "a lot of those nomad fellas causing trouble," or something to that effect. If asked if they are still around, the clerk only says he hopes not, and goes back to whatever he was doing before the characters came in.

Jakob inquires as to what the characters found when they come back to the van. The answers make him pause and say, "It could be nothing, but I doubt it. Sounds like trouble; we better saddle up." They leave, and about forty miles beyond the truck-stop, the team comes upon a wrecked car with smoke still coming out of it. Bullet-holes perforate the wreckage and two dead, stripped bodies lie nearby. Jakob accelerates, mentioning that this could be bait to draw them into stopping. Since the sun is setting, Carrie puts on her smartgoggles. Jakob also fishes a pair out of his kit and turns off all the van's lights. The team is soon screaming along the highway in total darkness. This is not the darkness of the city, which only throws shadows from the artificial lights, this is total darkness under a new moon. Characters without optics are unable to sense anything but each others' nervousness.

An attack does come, at the hands of a group of Raffens Shiv, but it is up to you as the referee to make the wait as long and arduous as possible. Characters may even begin to see things in the darkness—or think they do. The tension should be thick enough to cut with a knife. Jakob finally sees the Raffens Shiv, coming up behind, and coming up fast. The last thing before the shooting starts, Jakob says, "Don't bother shooting for the bikes, just shoot for the bodies." Carrie fires up the radio and calls for help just as the first of the Raffens Shiv comes up alongside.

The Raffens Shiv are on bikes with hand crossbows, carbines, and other small arms. Two or three are in an FAV with some heavier small arms, and two in a refitted Crash Wagon with a 7.62mm machine gun in an open ring on the cab. All are wearing typical post-apocalypse kitbashed armor with an SP of 14 on the torso and arms, plus the cycle riders wear regular helmets with SP18 on the head only. No one has heavy weapons, and only a few fire full-auto. The Raffens are desperate; they need to hijack this van without much cost.

One of the Raffens who appears is the shunned and nameless man cast out from the Gargoyles. He rides up at some point and throws a molotov cocktail at the van. He misses, but at the team should be able to identify him, verified by Jakob if they are not sure. Jakob calls him Colin, and describes him as both an outrider and a mean son-of-a-bitch. He may be shot, but don't let Colin actually die at this point.

Throughout the running battle, Jakob chooses to keep driving on into the night. This is an example of the classic nomad battle tactic of "run away, and live to fight another day."

The battle is more drawn out than most. Initially, the Raffens don't shoot at the tires and endeavor not to damage the vehicle other than to shoot through it and kill the team. They want the vehicle badly. Have Carrie get hit by a bullet sometime near the beginning of the battle. Her romantic interest should put on a show of how distraught he is, and try to stop the bleeding. The more Raffens the team seems to kill, the more come out of the night.



**COLIN**

**INT: 8**      **REF: 7**      **TECH: 6**      **COOL: 8**  
**LUCK: 5**      **MA: 7**      **ATTR: 6**      **BODY: 8**  
**EMP: 4-6**      **SA: RECON+4**      **REP: 2**

**NOTES:**

Colin has fallen in with this group of Raffens. He guessed that Jakob would be traveling this way and wants to kill him. He also wants the totem, as he believes it will bring bad luck on his enemies.

**EQUIPMENT:**

Motorcycle (not a great one), Pneumatic Bolt Gun with two reloads, .357 Revolver with three extra half-moon clips, one Molotov cocktail and kitbashed armor (SP14 torso and arms) with no helmet.

**RAFFEN THUG**

**INT: 6**      **REF: 8**      **TECH: 7**      **COOL: 8**  
**LUCK: 6**      **MA: 7**      **ATTR: 6**      **BODY: 5-8**  
**EMP: 4-6**      **SA: RANK +4**      **REP: 2**

**NOTES:**

You may give the Raffens cyberware, weapons, equipment, or higher skills to counter a larger or more cybered or skilled player group. The Raffens Shiv are quite poor, and have little access to cyberware and other cool stuff.

At some point before the characters reach their limit, the tide turns in favor of the Raffens—they get a few lucky hits and take out both rear tires. At this point, they don't just want the vehicle any more; they also want to kill the team. Jakob tries to keep the vehicle steady, but eventually loses control and the van rolls several times. The Raffens close in as the characters regain their wits. Since the characters are inside a van on its side, they may not be able to see too clearly, if at all. Some of the enemy may even make it halfway into the vehicle itself. Basically, the feeling you should develop here is one of desperation. The inside of the van is smoky as the conscious characters help their injured friends and shoot at the Raffens. After several minutes of this, the team hears a lot of gunfire from the outside. None of it hits the van, so the characters may hazard taking a look.

When they do, they see a group of exotics (known to any nomads as Totem Warriors) on bikes, knocking the stuffing out of the remaining Raffens Shiv. They seem to be almost toying with the Raffens. The Totem Warriors number about twenty, and all are dressed or body-sculpted as animals. When the shooting dies down, several warriors move about stacking the bodies of the fallen Raffens. One of the warriors calls to the van: "Hello in there, do you need help getting out?" If the team has already begun to disembark, they get help from some able-bodied warriors. All the characters should be wounded, bleeding and bruised. Jakob

is unconscious at the wheel, with a gash on his head bleeding profusely. Carrie is unconscious and bleeding again, and the van, of course, is totally trashed.

When the team is out of the van, the leader of the exotics introduces herself. She is known simply as The Rat, and her brothers and sisters are collectively known as The Force of Nature. They are totem warriors from the Folk Nation, and the Chicago area is their home.

Soon The Force of Nature's two medtechs stabilize the wounded, and proclaim that all are safe to travel. They hook the van to their wrecker, load the team into the van, and get them to the hospital in Aurora. If one of the characters asks why they are towing the van, they are told that they should know better than to waste resources. The exotics do not take the player's weapons or post a guard, though one of the medtechs may ride in the van to tend to Jakob. The players are very much "at the mercy of others" being towed around in a broken-up van. For some characters, this is the only time in their lives that they have had to trust complete strangers totally. Starting a fight with these good Samaritans could earn someone another bullet wound.

## INTO THE STORM CITY

### Aurora: Point Of Entry

This segment reveals to the team what is going on. Having survived the journey here, they are trusted and respected by the nomads, and receive some benefits from their labor. After about three hours of being towed in a wrecked van while wounded, the characters will be overjoyed to be anywhere else. Make a point of the rough ride. The entire team should be wounded, unconscious, exhausted, or a combination of these as they reach Aurora. Fortunately, Templeton Hospital is their final destination. As they arrive, they see more nomads outside the windows of the van, more than most have ever seen. Almost forty thousand nomads are being processed through this station and others like it, so that they can safely enter the ruins of Chicago.

Aurora, Illinois is a suburb of the Chicago ruins. Like other suburbs in the area, it was abandoned after the bioplague incident in 2012. One of the military garrisons that patrolled the area was stationed here, and some locals stayed to service that market. Since the contract for the Chicago Project was signed in 2019, the Army has pulled out. Aurora was turned over to the nomads, along with the responsibility of keeping the area secure. Warrior and mercenary elements of the Blood and Snake Nations, as well as MetaCorp, are involved in security work here. Aurora has become a reborn community. There are small markets popping up, and many nomads have begun repairing some homes to use during the coming winter.







Templeton Hospital is the major center of activity in Aurora. It was kept up by the Army, and now the nomads use it as their major treatment center. Before anyone can safely enter the Plague Zone, they must undergo a complicated anti-plague viral treatment. Each nomad must be scanned thoroughly and their DNA analyzed. After that, special nanoware is individually tuned for the patient.

This nanoware is a full-spectrum immuno-booster and has several benefits: it combines the effects of Enhanced Antibodies, Anti-Plague Nanotech, and Toxin Binders. It also adds +4 to BOD for all stat checks involving illness and infection. The 'ware is specifically tailored to the individual user, and removes all free nanites (Nanosurgeons, Enhanced Antibodies, and anything that does not anchor to a single location) from the bloodstream. Muscle & Bone Lace, Skinweave, or most transform viruses from *Deep Space* are not affected. This new nanite has been specifically developed by nomad engineers. Its life span is 12-18 months, but can be sustained with booster treatments. The nanotech's Humanity Cost is 1/2d6+2.

Jakob, Carrie, and the whole team are loaded onto stretchers and rushed to treatment rooms. They may chance to overhear that people with open wounds are the most susceptible to the bio-agents that remain. After this, there is only blackness as fear, fatigue, injuries, and anesthetics take their toll. It is intended that all the team be unconscious for some time at the beginning of their stay at the hospital. They are sedated, scanned, and inoculated before they awaken naturally to help them heal faster. They are also given a DNA masking virus while they are asleep, but they will not know that. When they awaken, they are well on

the way to recovery. Some may not arrive until after surgery, but all end up in the same place: in a common ward which is locked and marked (if one of the characters reads it backwards): **BioPhase, No Visitors Without Level One Controls.**

As the characters awaken, each is contacted by a nurse on their bedside intercom. The nurse simply says that they have been treated with an anti-viral that necessitates close monitoring for the next few hours. If asked how long they've been unconscious, the nurse says two days. Other than that, she only says, "Get some rest, watch TV, eat something—just don't try to leave, please, because it could kill you." Jakob and Carrie are in the same ward, sleeping peacefully. About three hours after the first character awoke, Jakob asks them all to gather around, because he has something to tell them.

*"IT WAS NO ACCIDENT THAT WE CALLED YOU PEOPLE. THE MECHANIC HAS BEEN A FRIEND OF OURS FOR SOME TIME. WE NEEDED YOU, AND YOU NEEDED US. WE KNEW, THROUGH THE MECHANIC, THAT YOU WERE AT YOUR END. MANY EDGERUNNERS LIKE YOU HAVE BEEN AT THEIR END, AND FOUND THEIR WAY TO THE SEVEN NATIONS. WE HAVE A PLAN TO PROTECT SOME OF YOU, AND TO PROTECT OURSELVES. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS PLANNING TO CONSOLIDATE THE SIN IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM AGAIN. THERE ARE MANY OF US WHO ARE CALLED ZEROES. THE GOVERNMENT MEANS TO DENY US OUR RIGHTS, PROPERTY, AND HONOR. THEY WANT TO DRIVE NOMADS TO EXTINCTION, BECAUSE WE ARE BECOMING MORE THAN CHEAP LABOR. WE ARE BECOMING TOO POWERFUL AND TOO WEALTHY. THOSE WITH SINS ARE GRANTED MORE RIGHTS, AND MANY OF US WANT SINS SO WE CAN VOTE. SOME, LIKE YOU, NEED NEW IDENTITIES. WE HAVE THE MEANS TO GIVE MANY WHAT THEY NEED, AND TO HIDE THOSE WHOM WE CANNOT.*

*"THE GOVERNMENT HAS SOME DATA FILES SO LARGE, HUNDREDS OF MU, THAT THEY CAN ONLY BE OPENED AND MANIPULATED IN VERY LARGE COMPUTERS. ONLY THE GOVERNMENT AND A VERY FEW CORPORATIONS HAVE COMPUTERS OF THIS MAGNITUDE. HOWEVER, WE HAVE ONE OF THESE LARGE MAINFRAMES HERE, IN CHICAGO. WE HAVE MADE IT POSSIBLE TO INSERT DATA INTO THE FEDERAL SYSTEM. WE HAVE MADE IT POSSIBLE TO CREATE IDENTITIES FOR A COUPLE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF US. FOR HELPING US, WE CAN GIVE YOU ALL TOTALLY CLEAN, NEW IDENTITIES.*

*"THERE IS ALSO THE PROBLEM OF DNA SCANNING AND IDENTIFICATION. WITH HELP FROM SOME OF OUR ALLIES, WE HAVE CREATED A TRANSFORM VIRUS THAT WILL MASK CERTAIN SECTIONS OF YOUR DNA. THESE CHANGES ARE VERY, VERY SUBTLE. WE CANNOT CONFUSE YOUR CELLS; THEY MUST REMAIN ABLE TO REPLICATE. THE VIRUS AMPLIFIES CERTAIN REACTIONS TO THE CHEMICALS USED TO TEST YOUR DNA. IT IS LIKENED TO A MEGAPHONE IN A SMALL ROOM, INSTEAD OF A SINGLE VOICE WHISPERING. THIS IS WHAT MAKES YOUR NEW IDENTITY COMPLETE.*



### A Different Identity

The nomads have developed a benign virus which disguises genetic code by the amplification of certain types of chemical triggers. They have released this virus to all of the people in Chicago. This type of viral modification would scream of DNA tampering, had not Storm Technology already advertised a ton of different viruses living in the Chicago ruins. Some of the more skeptical still smell something fishy, but won't understand why for years. It is also very possible that the nomads released viruses of their own to keep others out of Chicago; it would be very easy for them to do, and they could easily inoculate their own against the viruses.

*"WE NEEDED YOU, BECAUSE YOU WERE NOT ONE OF US. YOU HAD NO OBLIGATIONS THAT WOULD CAUSE YOU TO BE TORN BETWEEN ALLEGIANCES. YOU WERE SIMPLY THERE. WE USED YOU, AND FOR THAT WE APOLOGIZE. WE OFFER YOU A CHANCE WITH US, AND A NEW IDENTITY. WE NEED YOUR SERVICES FOR JUST A LITTLE LONGER, TO GUARD THE TOTEM. YOU SEE, THE FINAL DATA MODULE IS INSIDE THE TOTEM. WE MUST TAKE IT TO THE JOHN HANCOCK BUILDING IN ONE PIECE. IT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN MY LIFE, OR ANY LIFE. I AM, AS THEY SAY, TOO HOT. WE WILL TAKE THE UNIT OUT OF THE TOTEM. I WILL GO ONE WAY WITH THE TOTEM, YOU WILL GO TO THE HANCOCK BUILDING WITH THE UNIT. YOU MUST HIDE IN THE CITY FOR TWENTY HOURS. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU BE IN THE LOOP. THERE ARE FEW PEOPLE THERE, AND NO ONE WILL KNOW YOU. THERE ARE OTHER OUTSIDERS THERE, AND MANY OF THEM ARE SICK; EVEN THE NOMADS WON'T GO THERE. YOU CAN ACT SICK AND HIDE THERE. I WILL GO ELSEWHERE, AND HOPEFULLY LEAD OUR ENEMIES AWAY. AT THE APPOINTED TIME, GO TO THE HANCOCK BUILDING AND MEET WITH THE NOMAD LEADERS. WE WILL BE THERE IF WE CAN. THERE IS A GUARD IN THE FIRST LOBBY BY THE NAME OF TEDDY. YOU WILL RECOGNIZE HIM, AS HE IS A TOTEM WARRIOR OF THE BEAR SPIRIT. HE WILL RECOGNIZE YOU FROM THE OTHER NIGHT, AND WILL TAKE YOU WHERE YOU NEED TO GO.*

*"WE CAN ONLY THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE. SOME DAY THE ENTIRE SEVEN NATIONS WILL THANK YOU."*

Jakob offers an even trade; there is no further remuneration for this part because the services asked are more than paid for by the new identities. After the conference, Jakob also tells them that the virus they have been given is a viral immuno-booster. Even in the worst areas of Chicago, they need not fear the plague. They will also not be able to be DNA-mapped for several years; time enough to rebuild Chicago and, hopefully, New York.

The team is fed and cared for by doctors and nurses dressed in decon gear, to keep from giving the team any bugs. Their equipment and clothing is returned to them, after being cleaned and sterilized. Early in the morning, Jakob wakes and removes the unit from the totem. He places it in the hands of

one of the characters and replaces the coverings which make it appear to be simply a religious artifact. After lunch, the team departs into the city.

### STORM TECHNOLOGIES INCORPORATED



*Computer and Cybernetic Devices, Weaponry  
and Vehicles*

- Main Office:** Chicago
- Regional Offices:** New York, Dallas, San Francisco, Boston, New Orleans, Denver, Toronto, Geneva, Crystal Palace
- Stock:** 2,274,582 shares
- On Market:** 252,174 shares
- Name and Location of Principle Stockholder:** Dr. Richard Storm, Crystal Palace/Chicago, holding 32.8% of the shares.
- Troops:** 3,000 combat-ready
- Covert Operatives:** 500, mostly involved in sabotage or surveillance of competitor's research and development projects.
- Equipment and Resources:** 31 AV-4s, 21 Osprey IIs, 22 Corporate jets, 8 C-25 cargo jets, 1 C-OTV, 1 D-OTV. In addition, every office has 2 helicopters and a surgical infirmary. Storm is developing a space plane project of their own, and has one functional scramjet built already (the Tempest) with another under construction. Storm Technologies has access to large storehouses of advanced weaponry and equipment. They also maintain an 8 module workshack in equatorial orbit dedicated to research and manufacturing.

### Background:

Storm Technologies was started by Dr. Richard Storm in the late 90's, a low profile company which quietly watched, waited, and learned. In May, 2005, while the rest of the business world was avidly watching the OA/EBM war blossom, Storm made its move, using amassed capital to buyout dozens of smaller companies. By February, 2006, EBM and OA came home to find a new kid had moved onto the block and they were in no position to do anything more than minor harassment. Since then, Storm has engaged in a wide variety of high technology fronts. They manufacture mainframes, microcomputers, cyberware, vehicles, and weaponry, and they dabble in other fields such as genetics and aerospace. While they can't always offer the high-quality merchandise that their competitors can, Storm has made enough innovations to make their opponents nervous.

StormTech has been assisted and funded by some of the Seven Nations to mask certain developments in the nomad community. These developments include biotech and nanotech development, transform virus research (see *Deep Space*), the purchase of limited amounts of military hardware, and other goals. StormTech did this originally because of a blood debt owed Malachi Jode by Richard Storm. However, the relationship



has evolved from simple giri to a business relationship which allows the nomads some security, and helps StormTech to compete with larger corporations. The reclamation of Chicago is a huge and lucrative project for StormTech.

With toxicity down to manageable levels and much of the nomad population short of work, StormTech has been able to negotiate a lucrative deal with four of the Nations to begin the reconstruction of Chicago in earnest. StormTech's connections with many other corporations has allowed it to acquire secondary capital for the project, as well.

Storm Technology is a Chicago company. Many of the people who came to work for StormTech at Chicago Port were survivors of Chicago. StormTech has, since 2017, been sending groups of people into Chicago to salvage certain critical resources. They were one of MetaCorp's first customers in the Jacksuit Project; light ACPA with sealed environments and tool suites allowed employees to work in safety and comfort while inside the plague zone.

## CHICAGO: CITY BACKGROUND

Chicago was a city hit hard during the Collapse, especially in the beginning. The Windy City was a focal point for commodities trading, food production, manufacturing, and the hub for America's rail system. The damage done to Chicago during the Collapse was massive, but could not compare to the damage done by the bio-plague. What was the plague of 2012? It's a good question, and still unanswered. The Federal Government tells anyone silly enough to ask that they think it was a derivative of the ebola virus. What it was, in all honesty (and this information is not available to anyone outside of government circles) was biological warfare, plain and simple. The American military had spent millions on the study of biological warfare, and had developed a number of interesting viral weapons targeted at livestock, people, and (as was demonstrated in South America in 1992) plants. Most of this research was handled in universities across America, with the most deadly research taking place at locations like Heartland. Heartland was a super-secret complex in Chicago built during World War Two, and originally intended for the Manhattan Project. When primary research went much faster than planned, the complex sat in disuse until the early 1960s.

Just before the start of the Viet Nam War, Heartland was converted to a bioagent and chemical research facility. Most of its funding came through the NSC/DIA, and was never audited. Literally billions were poured into this hole in the ground, and much of America's bio-arsenal originated there. Located underneath the University of Chicago, people came and went for most of thirty years. Despite the successes of biological warfare in

South America, Heartland was closed. The facilities were simply too outdated and cramped to bear another round of remodeling. The closing of the facility was not complete, and much remained behind. There were things that could not be moved without tearing up old and established parts of the University. A few staff took up permanent positions as UC custodians. This move saved millions in decontaminating some of the less dangerous areas, most notably the non-airborne and non-persistent weapons storage. Samples of some of the most deadly diseases on the planet just sat there. When the worst of the Collapse came, there was really nothing the powers that be could do to change the situation. The more sensitive parts of the installation were a Class 100 clean room, completely sealed, but there were no resources to guard it. In the end, the NSA filled the entry corridors with cement, slapped biohazard warnings all over the place, and left to fight a war against the government and military with the rest of the Gang of Four.

Of course, things did not go well for the NSC during the Collapse. Most of their records and personnel files were destroyed. No one knew Heartland was there for almost eight years. Sometime in late 2011, reconstruction on the University campus demolished some old buildings. The complex was discovered when one of the buildings was dynamited, and over fifty different viral weapons were unleashed. The Midwest COG was quick to respond and the entire area was cordoned off, but it was too late. Within six months, the entire city had been destroyed. The final death toll was estimated to be close to two hundred thousand, and though some outlying areas were still livable, people there fled to safer parts of America. Chicago Port was built after the military had determined that most of the danger was past, and realized that without Chicago, Great Lakes shipping was crippled. Nomad labor designed and built Chicago Port, but there was always an eye toward reclaiming the entire city someday. That dream has finally become a reality.

Looking at Chicago from outside the city in daylight is one of the most depressing sights in the world. The horizon is black with the husks of burnt and lifeless buildings. In the daytime the long streaks of algae and rust are glaringly obvious. At night, some artificial lighting is visible within the city. Across the face of the John Hancock Building is a blue neon StormTech logo, and lights are visible on the upper floors. Across a good deal of the Loop there is some street lighting, as well as the lights underground (only visible from the air) from the mouths of Emerald City.

Chicago is not always as bad as it seems from the outside—at least not in those pockets of Chicago that are inhabited again. Some nomads have set up housekeeping in New Town and Old Town areas, although most nomads are still leery of coming into the city, no matter what kind of nanotech they have. The Loop is under the protection of Storm Technology, and this is where the main reconstruction efforts are centered. There are police in



these parts of Chicago: nomad dog-soldiers in the nomad-held areas, and Storm Technology troops in the Loop. There are also merchants, gangs (though few) and some "natives" — which is the name the nomads gave to those few people who stayed in Chicago during the plague and survived.

In spite of all this, ninety percent of Chicago is just empty. Neither nomads nor StormTech personnel venture out of their secured areas in groups of less than six with combat-gear, even in the daytime. This is because they are concerned about the natives (or, as they are referred to, "mutants"). The natives are neither sane, normal, nor healthy. Some of them live off animals, some off each other. They are the cause of innumerable fires and destruction in the area, and it is quite clear that they just do not care. Although some might have a hope of rehabilitation, for many it is kinder to shoot them. Deformed and deranged, they have little opportunity for a normal life, even by 2020 standards.

## The Loop

Technically, the Loop is that part of downtown Chicago which is encircled by the elevated train tracks that run above the streets, forming a circle around a good part of the downtown area. The locals consider the Loop to be the entire downtown area; everything from the Magnificent Mile to the museums, and west to LaSalle. Much of the elevated train system has been repaired, but the trains do not yet run. Starting on the corner of Dearborn and Randolph, one sees Dearborn Center, the city's old court building and judicial offices. Across the street westward is where the even older courthouse building is, gothic in architecture, and is, according to local legend, home to several gargoyles. Going east, one crosses State Street. A block or so south is Marshall Field and Company, one of the country's largest department stores. Most everything has been picked over a hundred times, now it is just a shell. A half block north is the Chicago Theater. Built in the style of an opera house, it was the most luxurious movie theater in the city. Its three balconies overlooking the main floor give a convenient means to those who enjoy throwing enemies onto the seats below, and its gothic architecture complete with gargoyles doesn't look out of place amongst the older buildings which line the street.

Proceeding east, one crosses North Wabash Avenue. The most distinguishing feature about Wabash is that an elevated train runs parallel to the street, keeping it in constant shadow (this is the eastern end of the Loop). A few blocks south is what was once the world's largest bookstore. Krock and Bretano's is a single story and basement affair. Many of the books are still there, though much the worse for the years. A delegation from the Digital Library nomad pack is cataloguing the knowledge and saving some of the books, guarding it twenty-four hours a day. Continuing eastward one more block puts a walker on Michigan Avenue. Here's where you'll find some of Chicago's

landmarks: the Tribune Tower, the Playboy Building, the Old Water Tower, and the John Hancock Center. The John Hancock Center is the center of StormTech's reclamation efforts. StormTech needed a large safe structure to use as a base of operations. Starting at the top of the center, they sent teams in to seal the floors and decontaminate them. One floor at a time, they retook the building, then the underground around it. Soon, they had sufficient viral samples to begin formulating the antiviral nanites necessary to work without cumbersome biochem gear. Now the building is the local headquarters of Storm Technology and once again the center of Chicago.

Turning north from the Center, a traveler winds up on East Wacker, overlooking the north branch of the Chicago River (many called the entire river simply the Canal). All manner of material can be seen to travel down the Canal. Cross the street over the water, and one stands at the south end of The Magnificent Mile, technically called North Michigan Avenue. Numerous high-priced stores and restaurants once lined the avenue. Now, many of the newer businesses in Chicago have gravitated here. Of course, the newer businesses are on the order of three guys with a cart and some junk, or a woman selling mangy dogs (not for pets), so things have changed.

South Michigan Avenue is where the Art Institute of Chicago in Grant Park and the 40-story Prudential Insurance Building can be found. While North Michigan is lined by buildings on both sides of the street, South Michigan's eastern side is open to Lakeshore Boulevard and the lakefront proper. Southeast of here, about two miles away, is the Field Museum of Natural History, and across the street from it is the Shedd Aquarium and the Adler Planetarium. All three are located on a peninsula of land that juts out into Lake Michigan. The south side of the Museum faces Soldier Field, once home to the Chicago Bears. Two miles further south is the Museum of Science and Industry. To this day, it is home to the U-505, a German WWII submarine.

All of Chicago has been stripped of most salvageable material—even the Museum's exhibits. There are more than a few corpses in every structure. As the plague worsened, many simply dropped dead in the street and lay there untended. Some were ripped apart by animals, some sat in their favorite chairs and decomposed. There has been no smell of decay for over five years, although inside the buildings the smell of mold and mildew is overpowering. Without a mask and goggles it brings tears to your eyes and causes even the mildly allergic to have strong reactions.

## Emerald City

Beneath downtown are several underground streets which traverse almost the entire Loop area. The Emerald City gets its name from the green fluorescent lights that illuminate the streets





twenty-four hours a day. At one point, a junction runs parallel to East Wacker, allowing a visitor the opportunity to see the twin Marina Tower Apartments which overlook the Chicago River. Though it once was a busy commuter route, now it is inhabited by dwellers whom the locals refer to as Morlocks. The Morlocks are not a real gang as much as a group of people who have no other way of life. Many of the Morlocks are rumored to be cannibals. Some of the Raffens who have managed to infiltrate this far are holed up here. There is power again, because of the reconstruction effort, so some enterprising Raffens ran a jumper to the lighting controls for parts of the Emerald City and tapped enough juice to run the lights.

A single underground thoroughfare designed for pedestrians runs parallel to the Chicago River, but is separated from the rest of Emerald City by a brick wall with one or two large holes in it. Once lined with small restaurants, it is now a maze of small rat-holes, bars, and rooms that only the most desperate hide in. Fluorescent green lighting has been added, giving the walkway the tag Emerald City II. The pedestrian traffic is never heavy, due to the filth, which is indescribable, but for the most part it's pigeon guano. During the summer months, the smell is particularly strong and has a tendency to stay in one's clothing. Pigeons, like rats and cockroaches, never seem to give up.

## New Town

Located on North Rush Street is New Town. It was once an upscale residential area that was run into the ground, but it has lately been cleaned-up to some extent. Single-story homes are commonplace, with lawns converted to small vegetable gardens. After work in the evening, many nomads work to prepare the houses for winter. Most of them were well-built, but have suffered a great deal of damage in the last eight years. New Town is home to many families. Most are nomads, but some are employees of StormTech or independent contractors. If any disturbances break out, StormTech and the dog-soldiers show up and heaven help the perpetrators. The area is well-patrolled after dark, and lightly patrolled in the daytime as well. It is unlikely the team will come to New Town during the course of the adventure, but they may come here if they choose to stay afterward.

## Old Town

Old Town is located at the tip of North Wells Street. This two-block stretch, like New Town, looks like its name suggests. It also is a residential neighborhood, the majority of structures here being two-story brownstone apartment buildings. Mixed in amongst the brownstones is the strangest collection of businesses ever to grace one street: this is where the nomads who make a living entertaining other nomads hang out. It is also

where the majority of drinking, wilding, and fighting happens in new Chicago. In some of the bars, you'll find incredibly attractive women (who turn out to be men), transvestites, and others. Those who populate this part of town are of the nomad variants of the wild singles. Here they hang out together for the purpose of getting laid or having a good time. The dance music has a tendency to be either electronic or old-time instrumental, and the bars are what are referred to as "Smart Bars." Instead of alcohol, they serve flavored drinks high in phosphotydle choline, a neuro-adrenaline producer. The choline is the active ingredient that literally stimulates the brain into making the chemical that enhances short- and long-term memory.

Directly across from Ripley's Believe It or Not Museum is a large open-front building simply called The Arcade. Except for the restroom facilities, it is one huge atrium. The north and south walls are lined with the latest interface video games, while the rear wall is lined with older pinball machines. In the center of the room are long counters, where merchants sell inexpensive chipware and the chemical inhalers. Some of the oldest video games in existence are here, and many still work.

During the daylight hours, not a soul can be seen anywhere. But from the time the sun has dropped from view until the first rays of dawn, every freak in town is here. The gangs are not here to cause problems, but to people watch. The traffic on Wells Street does not allow vehicles, because prostitutes work the area. The Arcade is where you'll more than likely find teens; most are here for the games whereas a rare few are looking for the sex, drugs, counting coup, or violence will make them more respectable to their peers.

## THE CHASE

This is a classic hurry-up-and-wait adventure. The team must enter Chicago—this is easy, because buses are constantly transporting people into the city to work—then they must wait out eighteen hours until their appointed time. During that time, the characters can move through Chicago and do a little exploring, but should be leery of straying too far into the dead areas. That time can also be filled with sitting in bars, hanging out and people watching, or even sleeping. If they check out the locals, the characters may notice that many of the streetpunks and other non-nomads are ill. Some are just a little pale, but others sport sores and other obvious physical signs.

About two hours before the meeting, preferably when they're sitting around idly passing the time, the characters are beset by a gang. Someone appears out of nowhere and lobs a grenade in the lap of the character holding the unit. This will obviously startle the character (even a Solo, as the perp is a Prowler of reasonable skill). When the character reacts, whether to throw the grenade back or simply ducking and covering, another Prowler grabs the unit and runs. Both are just fast



enough not to be shot, but lead the characters on a chase. The thieves are Raffens Shiv, as one might expect. After chasing them a few blocks, the team catches sight of other Raffens—the same ones that attacked them on the road outside of Aurora. One is the shunned man, Colin, from the nomad camp. Move the chase through any areas of the city, but have it end up in Emerald City. The characters and the Raffens slow down over time as exhaustion sets in, but since both are basically running for their lives, the chase goes on. Endurance rolls are good here, and the characters may even pick off some of the Raffens, but they won't get too close until about twenty minutes have passed.

Running through Emerald City is strangely incongruous. Heavy footfalls echo off the cement and tile walls. Smells and sounds assault the groups from all sides. The occasional Morlock or other weird street person jumps from the wreckage, both startling and being startled by the team. Soon the team begins running out of breath—and out of time. Just as they consider giving up, or become too exhausted, they round the corner into a dead end. Facing them out of breath, and with their backs against the wall, are the Raffens. All the Raffens show various signs of extreme sickness, and most have eyes wild with fever. Sweat is almost running from their skins, and their clothing is drenched. Colin speaks first, gasping, "What do you want?" as he slides down the wall into a sitting position with his gun still drawn. The team should try to threaten, reason, or cajole the Raffens into giving them the unit. Face-downs and threats will come from both sides, and though the Raffens have the advantage of close cover (boxes, crates and garbage on both sides of the dead-end corridor), the team does not have the fever to slow them down. Eventually, someone is going to start shooting. All of the Raffens dive for the cover and panic-fire their weapons until the ammo is gone, then they reload and start again. With superior tactics and cooler heads, the characters should prevail, but time is running out. Fortunately, the unit is unharmed by the battle (no one knows this, but it has an SP40 casing).

Now the team must get out of Emerald City. A great deal of role-playing should be made of the team moving out of the underground, walking, crawling; carrying each other. They can even surface three or four blocks away from the John Hancock Center and have to drag themselves, tired, wounded and bleeding, to a guard checkpoint. The characters should mention the rendezvous with the Bear to get past the sentries. They are eventually brought there anyway, but it goes faster if they mention it. Climbing the outer steps of the Center, they see the Bear waiting, totally nonplussed. He helps the characters into an elevator, inserts a card key, and pushes the button for the top floor. He stands outside passively as the elevator doors close. This is an express elevator, so the trip is very fast. As the doors open on the top floor, another man helps the team toward a conference room. Inside are sixteen people, all very happy to see the unit.

## EPILOG & AFTERWORD

Jakob arrives, badly injured and without Carrie, who was rushed to the Hospital after they were ambushed by unknown parties. He introduces the characters to the leaders of the Seven Nations and the president of Storm Technology, Dr. Richard Storm; then he asks for the unit they carry. Also present are seven netrunners who are not introduced. They are jacked into the system and have penetrated to the very heart of the government's computers—they only wait for the data the characters carry.

The team's netrunner (if they have one) is asked to jack in and assist. Basically, the seven netrunners are inside a huge government computer. There are anti-system programs assaulting them from all sides, and the team's netrunner is told to run interference so the data can be inserted. Fortunately, there is only one human in the system at this time. Unfortunately, there is also a clever AI of INT12+.

The data is fed into the huge computers that are linked to this room. Each of the Seven Nation's leaders adds data from their own units. The seven netrunners then begin their work in the core of the American government. The entire room is completely still for twenty minutes. Everyone can't help but watch a holo-tank in the center of the table which displays the action. Three or four of the netrunners are brain-burned during the course of the run. Finally, all the data is inserted, and the 'runners jack out.

When the transactions are completed, the entire room erupts in spontaneous applause and cheers. The team is thanked warmly by all present, the netrunner (who may have felt useless for a lot of this adventure) is congratulated as well, most especially by Jakob Mojave. Carrie, especially if romantically involved with one of the team, is wheeled in on a stretcher and joins in the celebration. After all have been thanked, Josef Meta calls the room to order.

*"YOU HAVE RISKED YOUR LIVES TO SAVE MANY WHOM YOU DID NOT KNOW. WHAT YOU DID COULD NOT HAVE BEEN DONE FOR MONEY OR FAME, BECAUSE YOU AND YOUR DEEDS ARE NOW HIDDEN FROM THE WORLD. WHAT WILL YOU DO NOW? PLEASE DO NOT ANSWER HASTILY. I HAVE SEVERAL OPTIONS TO SUGGEST TO YOU.*

*"YOU MAY WORK FOR THE NOMAD COMMUNITY UNDERGROUND. THERE ARE MANY LIKE YOU WHO ARE GOOD PEOPLE BUT WHO ARE LOST. THEY NEED TO BE BROUGHT IN, AND YOU CAN DO THIS FOR US. YOU HAVE CONNECTIONS, AND KNOW PEOPLE THAT CAN HELP US.*

*"STORM TECHNOLOGY NEEDS PEOPLE LIKE YOU AS WELL. SOME RIGHTLY SUSPECT THAT WE WORK IN CONCERT ON PROJECTS. IT IS*



GETTING HARD FOR STORMTECH TO KEEP GOOD OPERATIVES. IT WILL BE DANGEROUS, BUT YOU ARE USED TO THAT, I AM SURE.

"YOU COULD ALSO COME WITH ME. I AM BUILDING A NEW WORLD UNDER THE GULF OF MEXICO. YOU CAN DISAPPEAR FOR A WHILE, OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH. IF YOU GROW WEARY OF THE SEA, I COULD ALSO EMPLOY GOOD PEOPLE LIKE YOU IN OTHER CAPACITIES.

"OF COURSE, YOU COULD ALWAYS JOIN ONE OF THE NATIONS. PEOPLE LIKE YOU ARE ALWAYS NEEDED. IT HAS BEEN, I THINK, A GOOD LIFE FOR ALL OF US HERE. YOU COULD EVEN CHOOSE TO LEAVE US, BUT YOU WILL NEVER LEAVE OUR DEBT.

"TAKE TIME, DISCUSS IT AMONGST YOURSELVES. TONIGHT WE CELEBRATE ONE SMALL VICTORY."

This entire campaign could constitute the significant role-playing event necessary for a change of role (as first presented in the *Referee's Guide*), and a character may choose to become a nomad. Whether this option is exercised or not, there are several possibilities for our players after the end of this campaign:

If the characters choose to work for StormTech they could:

- Act as corporate liaison between StormTech and the nomads involved in the Chicago Project.
- Act as recruiters for other nomad families interested in employment.
- Run ops against other corporations who are working against StormTech's goals.
- Extract or pick up and transport other edgerunners who want to work for StormTech.

If the characters choose join the Nomads they could:

- Act as go-betweens for different families working toward the same goals.
- Assist families who are trying to find places to live in the Chicago Ruins.
- Support a runner network that buys supplies for the nomad anti-viral nanotech, and help smuggle the supplies in from points across the world.
- Join MetaCorp and help build a new world "off the face of the earth", underneath the waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

If the characters choose go off on their own they could:

- Use their new connections to help other edgerunners go underground.
- Take a working vacation in Europe (see *Eurotour*).
- Visit Night City.
- Undertake another epic cross-country adventure (see *Land of the Free*).
- Get some biosculpture and, under cover of their new faces and DNA masking, try to make this a better world

UP AGAINST  
THE WALL,  
PUNK?

OUT OF LUCK? OUT OF  
CASH? OUT OF EURI? OUT  
OF AMMO? THERE'S JUST  
ONE SOLUTION.

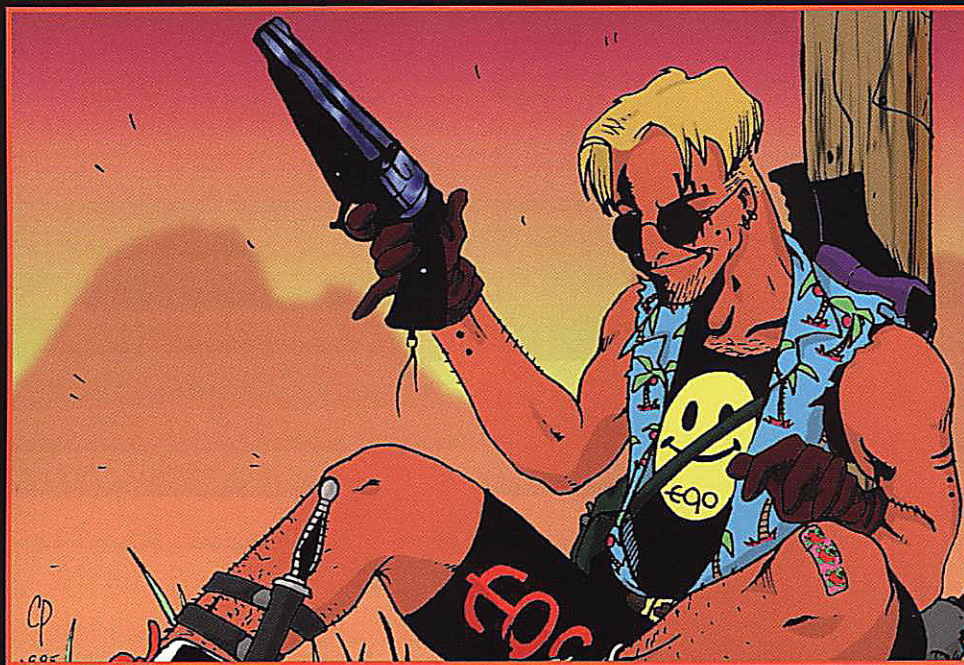
TEMP.

IT'S NOT JUST FOR  
SECRETARIES ANYMORE.  
ARASAKA, MILITECH,  
RAVEN, AND OTHER BIG  
COMPANIES ARE LOOKING  
FOR TEMPS TO FILL MANY  
POSITIONS. PAY DETER-  
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