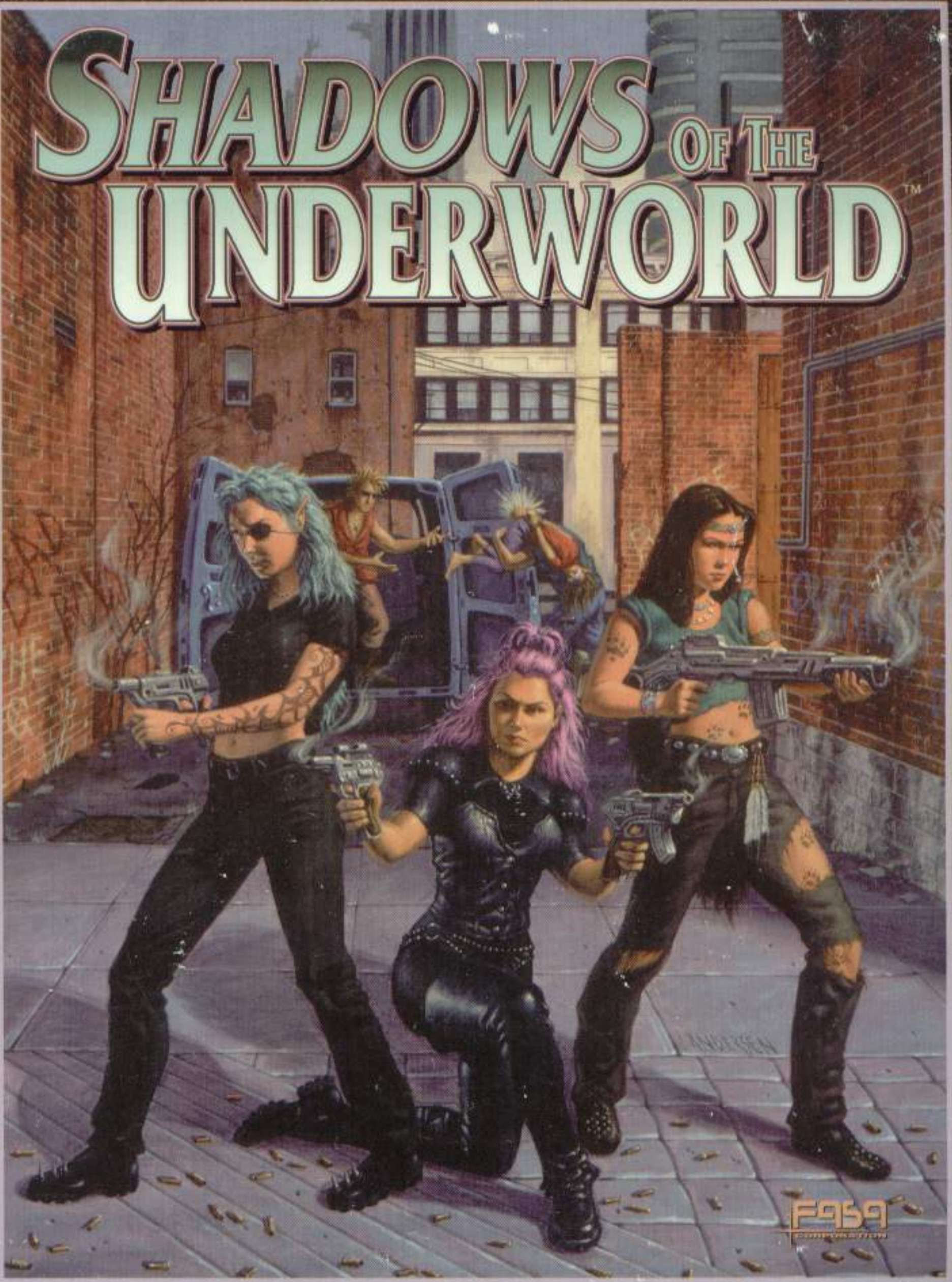
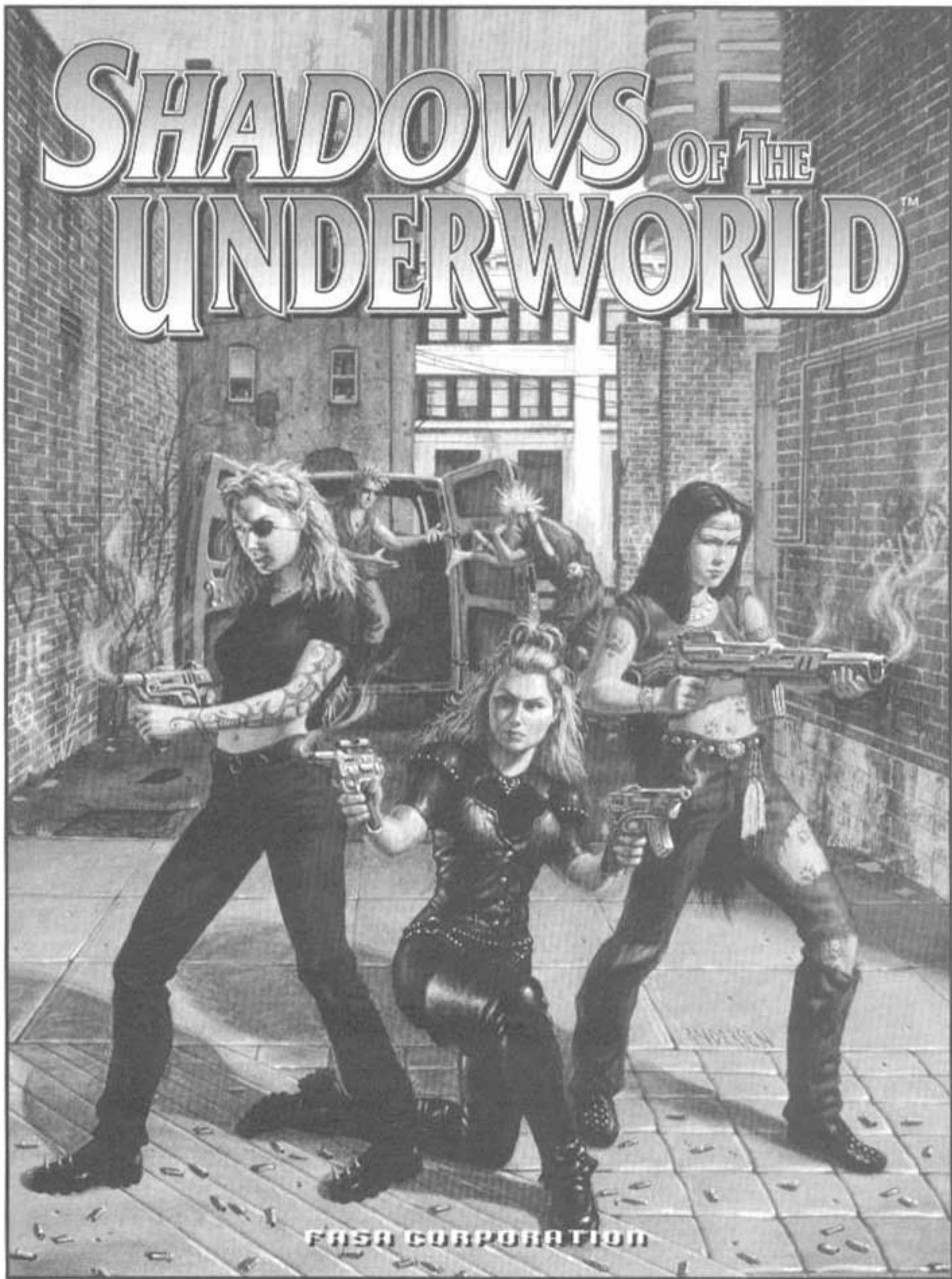


# SHADOWS OF THE UNDERWORLD™



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# SHADOWS OF THE UNDERWORLD™



FASA CORPORATION

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# SHADOWS OF THE UNDERWORLD

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# SHADOWLAND V2.0

"I have taken all knowledge to be my province."—Francis Bacon

"Humankind cannot bear very much reality."—T. S. Elliot

## A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR:

Even the bad guys use shadowrunners. It seems that some unscrupulous types broke into Galberstam Printing in Minneapolis and changed the print run colors on the Big D's campaign posters. We all know him as dark blue and silver; but the posters came out with a gold and green dragon. Galberstam pleads innocent, Dunkelzahn laughs the whole thing off, and someone someplace is sitting pretty with a pocket full of UCAS bills (at least, until the Big D decides he doesn't want to be a laughingstock and sends some big hurt up Twin Cities way).



### THE BACK STOCK

New Magic Download (The Awakened World all spelled out)  
Cybertech Download (Man, Machine and Magic ...)  
California Free State (From the Tir to Aztlan and everything in between)  
Campaign 2057 (Vote early, vote often!)

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### THE DAILY SPECIAL

Threats (Paranoia, conspiracies, and secret stuff)

This one would be funny if it wasn't so scary. Are these the scrawlings of paranoid conspiracy theorists with chips on their shoulders the size of the Lite Nation, or is there some truth buried in the rantings of these nutcases? A year or so back, when we got a post about the bugs infesting Chicago and the government's plan to geek them with tactical nukes, we didn't believe it. Who knew ... ? Maybe this time we'll be prepared—for whatever.

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### COMING SOON

While the politicos are getting their second wind, Shadowland is getting back in business ... non-election biz, that is. Here's a quick peek at some upcoming stuff (and quit salivating, it mucks up the screen).

Organized Crime (Mobsters and gangers and secret societies, oh my ...)

Flashpoints (high-stakes jobs for high pay—get the skinny here first, and maybe you'll live to spend it)

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**N****E****W****S****ABSENTEE BALLOTS**

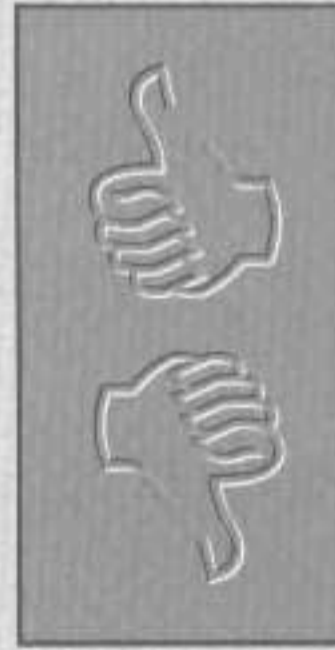
The UCAS bigwigs are urging everyone to vote. And what better way to vote than by absentee ballot—isn't it about time you got some use out of those extra SIN numbers? Heck, you might even win prizes! Click here for the UCAS press release.

**NEW UCAS FLAG UNVEILED**

It's been five years in the making, and it might be the only thing all six candidates agree on. The new flag is finished, it looks cool, and it's giving the UCAS a reason to stand proud as election fever run amok tears our cities apart. Click here to see it waving in the wind.

**POLL RESULTS**

Brackhaven's "Do you really want one of *them* in the White House?" speeches are turning heads as his campaign picks up steam. Dunkelzahn still leads at 22%, but Kenny-boy is breathing down his scaly neck. Here's the standings: Brackhaven 21%, Yeats and Vogel 20%, Hernandez 15%, and Booth still at a laughable 1% (tied with Undecided). Click here to get all the breakdowns.

**WEIRD STUFF**

The powder keg of Austin, Texas has just gotten hotter. The Big A has cordoned off a five-kilometer area about 35 clicks south of Austin for what looks like an archaeological dig. Rumor has it that mages, scientists and the ever-elusive Jaguar Guards are popping up regularly on-site. Whatever they're looking for must be important ... Click here for big news south of the border.

**It's 07:19:28. Do You Know Where Your Meat Body Is?**

# CANDIDATES PAGE



## ARTHUR VOGEL

Democratic

"One World" Party

VP: Gary Grey

**Slogan:** Save the Earth

A dwarf eco-lawyer and a troll Eagle shaman—now *there's* an image! Seriously, folks—these two aren't your usual crackpot tree-huggers. They're smart, savvy, articulate, and just might have a shot at the

Big Chair—assuming no nasty skeletons come popping out of Lawyer Vogel's closet.



## GENERAL

## FRANKLIN YEATS

Republican Party

VP: Anne Penchyk

**Slogan:** Rebuild America

"Rebuild America" on the backs of the Native American Nations, the Confederate American States, and the California Free State. Nothing like a hot war to prop up a sagging economy ... with a savvy ork veep in pin-

stripes to make sure metahumans get their slice of the pie. Will the UCAS's favorite hawk lead his troops to the White House?



## DR. ROZILYN HERNANDEZ

New Century Party

VP: Ramsay McMulkin

**Slogan:** Our Magical Future

Revenge of the nerds, anyone? Magical goombahs and techno-weenies have a home in the New Century Party, dedicated to better living through electing mage-o-crat Roz and her gorgeous simstar

veep to be our Supreme Leaders. (He's pretty, but can he type?)



## KENNETH BRACKHAVEN

Archconservative Party

VP: William Ager

**Slogan:** A Holy War for the Soul of the Nation

Respectable businessmen ... or Monsters From the Id? Only their speechwriters know for sure! Meet the new poster kids for Traditional Values—they're rich, they're reactionary, and they want all

the mages and metahumans out of the clubhouse. Race-baiters-R-Us goes to Washington?



## JAMES BOOTH

Technocratic Party

VP: Brandon Ekimatsu

**Slogan:** The Status Quo

Slick Jimmy and the Suit—a ticket only their mothers could love. Special message to Mr.-former-veep Booth: your status is ZERO and nobody wants your (quid pro) quo. Give up, go home, take up flower arranging. Just get off the fragging stage, 'kay?



## DUNKELZAHN

Independent

VP: Kyle Haeffner

**Slogan:** A New Golden Age

A new-minted UCAS citizen, and *already* he wants to run the place? We'd say more power to him, except that a great dragon doesn't need any. With a human philanthropist veep to make nervous voters

feel comfy, the Big Wizworm might take the prize—but can he deliver?

# INTRODUCTION

**Shadows of the Underworld** is a collection of roleplaying adventures set in the Awakened world of **Shadowrun** during the summer just before the UCAS presidential election. The year is 2057. Advances in technology are astonishing, with humans able to blend with computers and travel through the electronic netherworld of data known as the Matrix. Even more astonishing is the return of magic. Elves, dwarfs, dragons, orks, and trolls have reassumed their true forms, while megacorporations (rather than superpowers) rule much of the world. Moving through this world like hushed whispers in the night are the shadowrunners. No one admits their existence, but no one else can do their secret work.

Though government power is giving way to megacorporate money in 2057, politicians and national leaders remain a force to be reckoned with in many places. The adventures in **Shadows of the Underworld** focus on the effect of the presidential election on the streets. Politicians play the same games as the megacorporations, but using their own rules—power and prestige, blood and tears, fear and panic. The streets are erupting in violence, from fanatical cults supporting Dunkelzahn to various factions of anti-metahuman forces destroying everything they can in the name of purity. All the rules have changed; even the hottest shadowrunner can no longer control the shadows of the underworld!

## GAMEMASTERING NOTES

**Shadows of the Underworld** is slightly different from the standard **Shadowrun** adventure. The five short adventures that make up the overall story line are not directly connected to each other, but they all share a common backdrop—the street-level chaos caused by the tainted UCAS election of 2056. The streets are a hotbed of fear and conflict between metahumans grasping for power and those who oppose them “by any means necessary.” Each adventure contains a short fictional prologue and an **Introduction** that capture the feel of the street during the long, hot summer of 2057.

Though the player characters may find themselves in demand for “political” shadowruns as the movers and shakers in the public arena start to recognize the importance of “controlling the streets,” the gamemaster may choose to run these adventures between events already planned for his or her **Shadowrun** campaign.

The adventures in **Shadows of the Underworld** combine decision-tree and linear story formats. For each adventure, the player characters may arrive at different locations in the story via different paths, or follow one event in the story directly into the next. The gamemaster should think of each adventure as the bare-bones plot and should feel free to make any changes necessary to flesh it out and give his players more choices. To aid the gamemaster in this task, the individual sections of each adventure

include suggestions for gamemastering the various situations that may arise. **Shadows of the Underworld** is designed for a team of four to six shadowrunners with a wide variety of talents.

## SHADOWRUN RULES

To run **Shadows of the Underworld**, the gamemaster needs a thorough familiarity with the material in this book, as well as a working knowledge of the **Shadowrun, Second Edition (SRII)** rules. The gamemaster should also be familiar with the expanded magic rules in the **Grimoire, Second Edition (Grimoire II)**, and the revised Matrix rules of **Virtual Realities 2.0 (VR2)**. To run the adventure **Two Solitudes**, the gamemaster should be familiar with the **California Free State** sourcebook. All the information contained in **Shadows of the Underworld** is for the gamemaster's eyes only.

All specific information, particularly game statistics, appears in **SRII** format. Gamemasters still using the first-edition **Shadowrun** rules will need to make a few adjustments to non-player character, weapon and spell statistics.

## MAKING SUCCESS TESTS

During the course of **Shadows of the Underworld**, the players will make a number of Success Tests using a skill and a given target number. These Success Tests are indicated by the name of the skill, followed by the target number in parentheses. For example, a Sorcery (5) Test refers to a Sorcery Success Test against a Target Number of 5.

## SUCCESS TABLES

At times, the gamemaster will use success tables to determine how much information the players receive from inquiries and investigations. Each success table lists different information obtained for differing numbers of die roll successes. Rolling a higher number of successes always reveals the information for the lower numbers of successes as well. For example, a character rolling 3 successes would learn the information for 3 successes, and also the information for 1 and 2 successes.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Aside from the **SRII** rules and those in the sourcebooks listed above, this book includes all the information needed to run **Shadows of the Underworld**. The gamemaster should read through each adventure before attempting to run it. Some important plot developments do not become apparent until well into each adventure, but the gamemaster must lay the groundwork for these developments early on. He or she can only accomplish that by being familiar with each story line.

Though **Shadows of the Underworld** as written tries to cover all the likely and even some of the unlikely ideas that the players might come up with, it is impossible to foresee every





possible action the players might choose to take. Therefore, the gamemaster must be prepared to improvise if necessary.

Each adventure begins with a fictional prologue. The prologue gives the gamemaster a feel for the setting of the adventure. The **Introduction** following the prologue explains the nature and specific background of each adventure. The sections within each adventure follow standard **Shadowrun** format. Most of them contain four parts: **Tell It to Them Straight**, **Hooks**, **Behind the Scenes**, and **Debugging**.

**Tell It to Them Straight** is read aloud to the players. It describes where the player characters are and what is happening to them as though they were actually there. Depending on the player characters' previous choices and/or the point in the adventure at which the encounter occurs, the gamemaster may need to adapt the text to suit the situation.

The second section, **Hooks**, gives the gamemaster hints and tips about imagery to use in the scene, emotions to convey, sounds, sensations, textures, and so on. The information provided in this section varies in form and content from scene to scene, ranging from general themes to specific emotions.

The next section, **Behind the Scenes**, tells the gamemaster what is really happening in each encounter and proposes a potential sequence of events. Any maps needed to play an encounter are included in this section. Information the players can discover and possible consequences of the player characters' actions also appear here. Non-player character statistics needed to roleplay the encounter are usually included here as well. This section may also contain hints and suggestions for handling a particular encounter.

The final section of each encounter, **Debugging**, offers suggestions for getting the story back on track if things go too far wrong; for example, if the player characters overlook a vital piece of data or if half the team meets an untimely death. The gamemaster need not use any of the suggestions given in this section; if he or she has a better method of redirecting the game, he should feel free to use it. As always, the gamemaster may also let the chips fall where they may.

At the end of each adventure, **Picking Up the Pieces** provides tips on wrapping up the adventure and awarding Karma, as well as offering suggestions for answering unresolved player or player character questions.

## PREPARING THE ADVENTURES

It is impossible to create a published adventure that provides the appropriate opposition level for every group of player characters. Some groups are inherently more powerful than others.

The gamemaster must adjust the game statistics and capabilities of the published opposition to provide an appropriate level of difficulty for the group. If an adventure does not suit the player characters' strengths and weaknesses, the gamemaster may use the published version as an outline to develop an adventure of his or her own. Or, if it works well except for a quirk here and there, the gamemaster can change any part of the plot and story events to make the adventure a better one for the players.

Each adventure suggests Threat and Professional Ratings for each of the NPCs. As explained in **Shadowrun, Second Edition**, use Threat Rating dice in place of Dice Pools for these characters (p. 187, **SRII**). Gamemasters should adjust the actual Threat Ratings to better reflect the level of opposition presented by the player characters, especially in those adventures where maintaining game balance promises to be exceptionally tricky. The gamemaster should feel free to modify Threat Rating dice on the fly during an encounter to provide the proper level of opposition. To that end, the text occasionally includes notes on how tough a battle or encounter should be for the player characters.

The gamemaster will find such manipulation crucial to keeping some of the encounters in each adventure at a manageable level. The fights in **Shadows of the Underworld** work best when choreographed like an action movie. Though lead and magic flies everywhere, only a few of the bad guys actually get a clean shot at the heroes at any one time. That limitation, and the application of the **SRII** Professional Rating rules, should help keep large-scale fights under control.

For gamemasters using the first-edition **Shadowrun** rules, the Professional Rating system works as follows. Non-player characters with a Professional Rating of 1 will withdraw from a fight after taking a Light wound, those rated at 2 will withdraw after taking a Moderate wound, those rated at 3 after a Serious wound, and those rated at 4 will fight until unconscious or dead.

# EXCELSIOR

## SACRED VISION

It pained me to see what men and women had done to Her and to the land that is Her body. And I went into the wilderness to better speak with Her, away from the blanket of smoke that covers cities like sweat. And I walked among the trees, seeking blue sky and clear waters, and I emptied my body and mind of all that man's evils had polluted. I walked until I could breathe again, until I could taste air that She had kept clean. I did not find it.

And I cried out, weeping for all the children born into the world, their innocence helpless to purify it, their strength not enough to carry their fathers' sins. And I asked Her why, I asked Her what I could do to change this injustice. It had not helped to fight for the whales and the forests or for the children who starved so that corporations could grow. It had not helped to work for my own salvation, my own purity of heart and soul and oneness with the world, while others pulled themselves daily farther away from Her.

And I asked Her for a sign ... anything to tell me that She had not abandoned us, that She would not let Her world die. And at that moment, when my soul was empty of all but love of Her, I raised my eyes upward and saw, above the trees, a blue that stood out like purity against the smoke-stained sky. The beating of his silver and azure wings created the freshening air I breathed. And I knew that this was Her sign, Her word. The Dragon, the one we now know as Dunkelzahn, is our only salvation.

—Excerpt from Jaelle Lester's *Revelation*, 2012

## INTRODUCTION

In *Excelsior*, the player characters receive a job offer from Martha Delaney, a member of Dunkelzahn's campaign staff. She wants them to help provide security for a rally in Madison Square Garden, scheduled in the next few days. The campaign has heard rumors of potential trouble from Humanis-based hate groups in the area, and Dunkelzahn wants some extra bodies on hand. The meet takes place in Windows on the World, a ritzy restaurant at the top of the Empire State Building, on the same "floor" as the observation deck. It coincides with a gathering of yakuza and Shiawase businessmen, and the restaurant also just happens to be a well-known hangout for Aztechnology and other nasty corporate types. Ordinarily, the runners could easily avoid trouble by keeping a low profile—if they don't bother the yaks and the corp execs, the yaks and the execs won't bother them. Unfortunately, someone else on the scene has no intention of leaving anybody in peace—the Whole Earth Adventists, an offshoot of the Church of the Whole Earth Inc.

The Church of the Whole Earth Inc. is a half-New Age, half-evangelical religious group that first appeared in 2005. The group's founder, Jaelle Lester, came close to giving up hope for the world in 2012. Caught up in a crisis of faith, she went into the wilderness on a desperate search for the Goddess and saw Dunkelzahn make his first appearance in the Awakened world. Convinced that the dragon was a sign from the Goddess, Jaelle turned her tiny group of followers into a much larger organization dedicated to redeeming the world. Over the years, the Church of the Whole Earth has collected a fair number of fervent believers, among them a few fanatics who call themselves the Whole Earth Adventists.

When Dunkelzahn decided to run for UCAS President, the Whole Earth Adventists became convinced that their time had arrived. The Adventists believe that Dunkelzahn is destined for the presidency—and that anyone who disagrees with this notion does not deserve the privilege of living in the dragon's utopia. Therefore, they will eliminate all such problems as a gesture of faith in their savior. Dunkelzahn does not approve of the Adventists' attitude but believes they are all talk and no action.

Unfortunately, this is one of those rare occasions when the great dragon is wrong.

The Adventists know that mob and corporate bosses frequent Windows on the World. The Adventists want to purge the coming utopia of organized crime and unfeeling megacorporations, and they're planning to start early. On the night of the meet with Delaney—while the runners are negotiating with her in a private room—a group of Adventists breaks into the building, kills most of the complacent on-site security and prepares to carry out a "purification." The Adventists intend to call the local media and tell them that they are striking a blow for Dunkelzahn by purifying the world of such filth as organized-crime syndicates and corporations that deal with them. They will then blow the top fifteen floors or so off the building, escaping via blimp. However, the Adventists did not count on a crew of shadowrunners, a Dunkelzahn representative with a headphone, and the abilities of the dragon's own agents.

The terrorists herd the runners into the main room of the restaurant with the rest of the clientele and then contact their idol, letting him know of the purge they intend to undertake for the greater glory of his name. The minute the Adventists make contact, Dunkelzahn's deckers block all Matrix-based communications so that the Adventists cannot get the full network coverage they demand. Meanwhile, the Big D himself maintains contact with Delaney via her headphone. The dragon wants the situation defused without the media finding out about it, and he will pay well to make sure that happens. As the experts on the scene, the runners get this job by default. (Not many people say no to a dragon when he asks them for a favor.)

The runners must sneak out of a well-guarded room, get all the way downstairs without working elevators and without being spotted, and find the location of several bombs—as well as the central trigger. They must then defuse the explosives and capture the terrorists before the terrorists' blimp arrives ... all without endangering a single innocent life. Dunkelzahn does not want any blood on his talons and is unforgiving if crossed.

This run works best set in New York City, but it can be set in any major UCAS city that contains a skyscraper and a large convention hall. The **Debugging** section of **Ever Upward** (p. 12) explains how runners from "out of town" might make the trip to the Big Apple.

## EVER UPWARD

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

People say that the Empire State Building is small compared to Fuchi-town, but it sure looks big when you're right under it. This time of year, the smog hangs so low you can barely see the top. It may be old, pitted, rusty, and patched with ferrocrete shoring up some of the damage from the 2005 quake, but this building still looks pretty chill. Too bad the security thumpers aren't.

A few tourists blithely walk past you through the Knight Errant Gateway weapon detector. The Gateway is festooned with snazzy, hi-tech doohickeys like some kind of cyberpunk Christmas tree; it looks like a plastic fork might set it off. One of the bruisers-with-a-badge returns your innocent look with a what-the-frag-you-lookin'-at stare. Time to look at something more pleasant. You scan the crowd and spy someone holding a placard with the name DELANEY printed on it. That's the name your fixer told you to look for.

The placard-holder is ... interesting. He ...? she ...? stands about 1.7 meters tall, with bright blue eyes and a willowy figure, and long blond hair pulled back in a pony tail.

"Glad you showed up," the placard-holder says. "Are you all here? I've rented a few lockers in case you'd like to store any, uh, *valuables* before we go up."

#### After the characters pass through the metal detector, read the following aloud:

The elevator's the high-speed kind, but a few minutes crawl by before the way-too-smooth, simulated voice says, "Windows on the World Restaurant and Observation Deck, 101st floor." You step out of the elevator, and the view draws you right over to the nearest huge window. From this high up, you're practically staring down the throat of the Vote-For-Dunkelzahn advert blimp that's been flying over Seventh Avenue all evening. The blue-and-silver caricatured head smiles at you as it slowly rotates away. You glance at the well-stocked bar, but the pony-tailed blond waves you over to a smaller door to the left of the restaurant's main entrance.

The little room is windowless (which kind of defeats the purpose of coming up here, doesn't it?) and is set up for a seminar, with one large table in the middle and several chairs around it. Your guide walks to the end of the table and sits beside the

woman waiting there. She's as nicely dressed as any corporate PR specialist, but the confident set of her shoulders and no-nonsense clothing suggest she might be equally comfortable on your end of things. The door closes with a little air pressure on your ears. Sound baffling in the walls, white-noise generator and jammer in the table centerpiece—this is one slick setup.

"Good evening," the woman says. "My name is Martha Delaney, and this is Percy. We are here on behalf of someone you all probably know of—hopefully, you'll even vote for him."

### HOOKS

Make the beginning of this encounter lulling in its normalcy. The bewildering array of sights and sounds in New York, which is still one of the greatest metroplexes in the world, should make locals and visitors a little antsy, but once inside the Empire State Building everything seems to proceed in slow motion. The elevator is slower than most, and the tourists make the place feel as if the runners have somehow stepped back into one of those sim-flicks from the 1990's. The building even bends naturally in the wind. The Windows on the World restaurant is a posh place, with thick carpets, lots of brass, a jazz trio and exotic plants—all of which probably cost more UCAS dollars than the average runner dreams about. This place is so upscale even the security is hidden. Now *that's* class.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

The Empire State Building in 2057 is a dinosaur of a structure, but it carries prestige. Shiawase, Aztechnology, and Ares pack office space for several subsidiaries into the New York landmark. When the World Trade Center went down in the big earthquake of 2005, the proprietors of the Windows on the World restaurant that had graced the destroyed skyscraper pulled a few strings and licensed the name to the restaurant just below the Empire State's observation deck. Photos and plaques around the restaurant tell the story.

In the lobby are six Knight Errant security guards manning the two Rating 8 magnetic anomaly detectors (MADs; for more information, see p. 92, **The Neo-Anarchists' Guide to Real Life**). For good measure, KE's personnel are running a chem-sniffer wand (Rating 3) over everyone's bags. The Empire State has a flat no-weapons policy, and building security will slap taser restraints on anyone whose Class C cyberware trips the MADs. People with any detected cyberware will be asked for their SIN numbers, so any runner without a decent fake SIN is in some serious dreck. (The gamemaster may want to mention this to any hard-core ganger types in the player group. Faked identification is a wonderful way to make player characters poorer but wiser.) Any runner dumb enough to carry a weapon with a Concealability of 2 or less will get to watch one of the guards call for back-up while four others pull out their guns and the fifth politely suggests that the team not start anything.

The lockers in the lobby are made of steel (Barrier Rating 6), have Rating 4 maglocks ready to encode onto a credstick and are fairly roomy. UCAS gun-control laws are lax enough, and the KE guards are busy enough, that they won't bother anyone stashing guns in a locker before taking the elevator. Percy will pay for as many lockers as needed and then give the credstick to a member of the runners' team in a gesture of good faith.

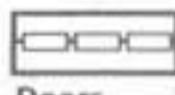
WINDOW TO THE WORLD

FLOOR 101

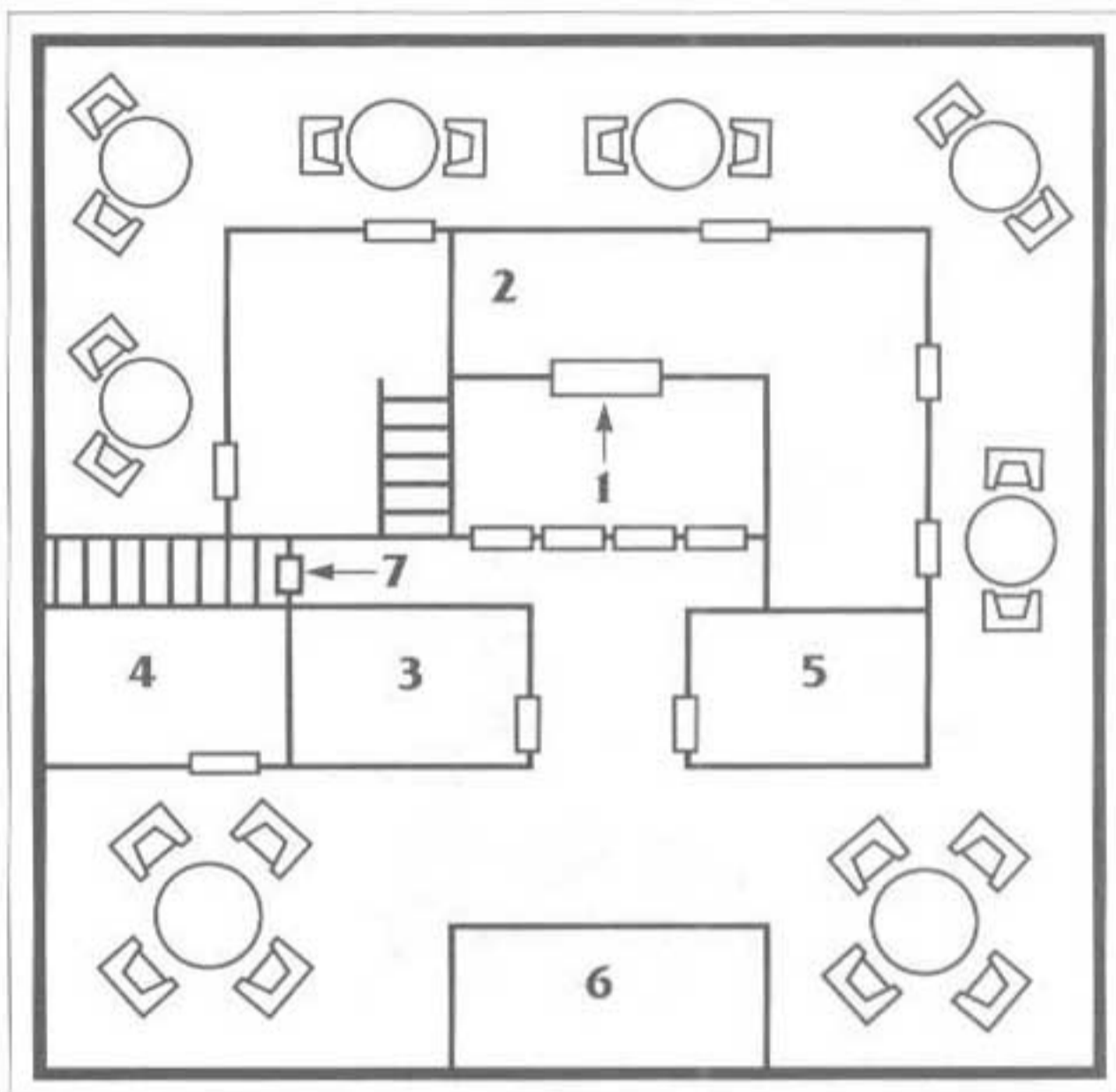
- 1. Elevators
- 2. Kitchen
- 3. Meeting Room 1
- 4. Meeting Room 2
- 5. Meeting Room 3
- 6. Bar
- 7. Door to Observation Deck



Stairs



Doors



**Knight Errant Guard Squad (6)**

B	Q	S	I	W	C	E	R	Armor
4	3	4	3	4	3	5.5	3	6/5

Initiative: 3 + 1D6

Threat/Professional Rating: 2/3

Skills: Armed Combat 3 (Clubs 5), Car 2, Computer 1, Etiquette (Corporate/Street) 3, Firearms 5, Police Procedure 4, Stealth 2, Unarmed Combat 2 (Jujitsu 4)

Cyberware: Smartlink

Gear: Securetech Armored Jacket (5/3), Security Helmet with Radio, AZ-150 Stun Baton (10S stun), Colt Manhunter [Heavy Pistol, 16 (clip), SA, 9M, w/Smartgun Link and 2 extra clips], Almost Donuts, Coffee, Newsfaxes

The private room that Ms. Delaney has rented is soundproof and equipped with a hermetic circle (Rating 4) around all but the outermost edges. The circle is part of the security provided by the restaurant. Once the runners sit down and shut the door, Delaney explains that she is in charge of Dunkelzahn's New York security staff. Dunkelzahn has authorized her to contact freelancers in the area with a rep for getting rid of trouble while keeping their clients safe. She needs professionals for crowd control at the Dunkelzahn

for President rally scheduled next week at Madison Square Garden; if the runners are New York natives, she's also interested in their advice. Delaney wants to know who in the metroplex might want to wreck the rally, and she will ask the runners to search through their contact networks. She will ask professional bodyguards, street samurais, deckers, and the like for opinions on how someone might try to sabotage the set-up at the Garden. She promises a flat fee of 25,000 UCAS dollars apiece for consulting fees, and runners who negotiate for more can knock the price up 10 percent per success. Delaney intends to take them to the Garden the following day for a walk-around. Play this job offer out—if the runners live through what's coming next, Delaney will hold them to their word. Then go to **All Chipped Up**, p. 12.

Percy is Delaney's personal secretary. He's wonderful if the runners should happen to need someone to answer six phones at once while filing papers from the last six months' backlog, but he's not much use when looking down the smoking end of a gun. If statistics for him become necessary, use the Corporate Secretary contact (p. 205, **SR11**). If you need to kill someone at the beginning of **All Chipped Up** to show that the Adventists mean business, Percy has "cannon fodder" written all over him.



## DEBUGGING

If the characters are not native New Yorkers, the gamemaster can introduce them into the adventure in a variety of ways. If the characters played **Dry Run** in the **Super Tuesday** adventure set, Carla Brooks can recommend them for just this kind of work. And if the characters have already played **C.O.D.** in this adventure set, their freshly gained reps as friends of dragonkind might prompt a call from Dunkelzahn's agents.

If the runners' reps are hot, Delaney may offer to fly them out because she has heard they are some of the best in the biz. If their reps are medium-warm, have someone contact them in Seattle for security consulting. From there they join Dunkelzahn's campaign road show, meet Ms. Delaney and go to dinner at the Windows to talk biz while in New York.

If the characters are stupid enough to start a firefight in the first ten minutes, Delaney does not hire them and makes a note not to listen to her fixer any more. If this happens, it may be time for a lecture on when to let go of the guns. If the runners cannot get up to the restaurant, then they cannot make the deal. If they

already know that Dunkelzahn is involved, the gamemaster can tip his hand to keep the runners from making stupid choices—no one wants to anger a wyrm, especially one that might soon be the president of the UCAS.

## ALL CHIPPED UP

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You hear a gentle knock on the door and the waiter steps in with a tray full of dessert—vanilla mousse topped with whipped cream and chocolate sprinkles, followed by your side order of autofire, blood, and nasty gurgling noises.

Oh, drek. It's going to be one of *those* nights.

A woman with an MZZAZ covers the left. An ork with steel teeth and an HK covers the right. For the moment, at least, they don't seem inclined to yank the triggers.

"We're in charge!" snaps the woman. Now that you've got a second to look at her, you notice that she's decked out in Armante's latest "Effervescence" armored evening gown. The ork looks quite dapper in his Boot Brothers suit: very macho, goes well with the G12 and the muscles. Were they in the restaurant? How come the bad guys *always* get to keep their guns?!

"Hands up, slowly," says Miss Congeniality through her teeth. "Throw a spell, move too fast, and you're chunks, GOT IT?" She looks like she's expecting an answer.

## HOOKS

Keep the tension high in this encounter. Don't let the characters talk among themselves. Yell short commands; repeat "we are in charge" a lot. Point out that the MZZAZ has an underbarrel grenade launcher and that the woman waving it looks psycho enough to use it in the tiny room.

When Alicia (the psycho-woman) begins her speech, the player characters should realize that she is a religious fanatic who believes that her violent actions will help Dunkelzahn. This should give them pause. Are these the sort of people who will come to power if the Big D is elected?

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The Adventists have taken over the restaurant lobby (sound-proof private rooms sometimes have their disadvantages). The waiter is dead, and the desserts land via the scatter diagram (p. 97, **SR11**). Alicia Bayone and Noah Koh are the two gun-wielding terrorists; they have the job of searching the private rooms and herding their occupants into the main seating area where it's easier to keep an eye on them. Statistics for Alicia appear in **Cast of Shadows** (p. 24); for Noah, use the statistics given for generic ork terrorists in **And No Place to Go**, p. 14. The Adventists have never tried anything on the scale of this operation before, and so they are nervous and trigger-happy. If the runners try to fight back, Alicia will shoot whoever is nearest. At the sound of any gunfire, another five terrorists will come in to reinforce Alicia and Noah.

If the runners cooperate with their captors, Noah leads them into the main restaurant with Alicia bringing up the rear. The runners see eight more terrorists covering the restaurant, most of them

well-dressed, "fingers" McGillis (see **Cast of Shadows**, p. 24) is among them, scanning the crowd for magic and removing any unmasked spell locks and foci. Forty-one hostages in addition to the runners are crowded into the center of the main seating area.

When the runners have joined everyone else, Alicia starts her spiel.

"Pay attention!" she yells. "We are the warriors of the Whole Earth Adventists. Comply with our demands and you will live. We come to cleanse the earth of corruption, hate, racism and pollution. These will have no place in the coming Golden Age. They must be stopped now, or our children will learn evil from them."

She steps up to a dignified-looking Asian man in a designer suit and stares him down.

"Isn't that right, Mister Hsoi of the Yamaguchi-gumi yakuza?" She walks over to another executive type and gives him the gimlet eye. "And Mister Nodalto of Saeder-Krupp?" She shifts her hard stare to a woman standing nearby. "And Ms. Reilly of Shiawase Atomics?"

Alicia steps back and surveys the room once more.

"Changes will be made, starting now. And they will continue when the great wyrm leads us, his chosen people, to the future!"

Following the ranting, Alicia reads from Jaelle Lester's *Revelation*. (Read **Sacred Vision**, p. 9, aloud to the players at this point.) Alicia continues speaking for a while; gamemasters may improvise more ranting or summarize, depending on their players' tolerance level for melodrama.

Meanwhile, Delaney goes stiff and closes her eyes. Perceptive runners notice that instead of sitting like the other hostages, their Ms. Johnson is almost underneath a table, behind the largest runner. She is mumbling to herself, clearly talking on a cyberphone.

After Alicia shuts up and Noah heads to shut off and watch over the elevators, Delaney murmurs unobtrusively to the runners, "I called my boss. If this gets out, Brackhaven and all the Humanis goons will splatter it through the press. You know what that means. People will blame him. He's got some of his most trusted Trix watchdogs in the Grid. They can probably prevent word getting out for the next hour or two, but we've got to stop this before then. He'll pay you top cred." She grins at the team. "You want a new job?"

During her phone conversation with Dunkelzahn, the dragon authorized Delaney to offer the characters up to 100,000 UCAS dollars each to "defuse the situation." Most characters will realize that this is not a great time to bargain, but if they try, she is willing to raise the fee by 15 percent.

## DEBUGGING

The players can seriously derail this encounter by fighting the terrorists rather than complying. If the players seem likely to do so, tell them that the Adventists have a Held Action, which means that they do something at least once before Initiative is even rolled. If the players decide to have their characters attack anyway, make the characters expend Simple Actions to get out of their chairs. Also, remind any runners with cyber-restraints that their chrome won't work. (To release the restraints, the runners must reach the restraint "keys," which are down at the security desk in the building lobby.)

If the runners attack anyway, a few three-round bursts should shut them up. Alicia will back up and fire a grenade if she has to. If only one runner plays troublemaker, feel free to give him or her a Deadly wound. If the runners need to see just how ruthless the Adventists are, Percy is expendable. Make everyone else work under a tight time limit.

If the runners do not accept Dunkelzahn's new offer, let them wait around for a while and then overhear that the terrorists plan to blow the place up. The runners will have to stop the Adventists on their own to save their skins, and they won't even get any money out of it. They can always go back to Delaney and say they've decided to help the dragon after giving it some thought.

## AND NO PLACE TO GO

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You can't remember the last time you've seen so many suits in one place. Under other circumstances, you might even consider taking a shot at the place yourself. But not now. Right now, you have to figure out some way out of this box.

At least the crazy biff finally shut up. One more word from her about how pure and sweet and wonderful the world will be when "the voice of the Goddess" gets elected, and you might have taken a nose-dive out of one of the windows. Utopia has its good points, of course—no corps, no yaks, SInS and legitimacy for everyone. On the other hand, that'd put you out of a job.

Time to boot up the brain, people. You need to get out of here, get your gear, stop these loons, collect your cred and have one heck of a party. Now if you could just come up with a plan. ...

## HOOKS

If the runners are accustomed to solving things with guns and magic, the adventure could end with this encounter. Weaponless, well-guarded and watched for signs of magic use, the runners need to "think sideways" to form a feasible escape plan. Encourage creativity; accept cinematic solutions even if they seem a little implausible.

Emphasize the sheer number of people involved. The characters may agree with the terrorists that corporate and organized-crime figures are drekheads, but does that justify wholesale slaughter? Some of the player characters may like Dunkelzahn, but this encounter pits them against people with a screw loose who are supposedly on the dragon's side. Feel free to stretch out the roleplaying and be prepared to improvise. Introduce some prepared non-player characters. Have people spill their life stories. Make people bond. Take things slowly but make sure the story doesn't bog down.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The characters can get out of the room in a number of different ways. Allow them to plan among themselves as long as they speak quietly. If they talk too loudly or seem to be whispering together for too long, fingers comes over to break it up.

A distraction is the strategy most likely to work, allowing the characters to sneak past the remaining guards while most of them are occupied. If the runners pull a classic "medical emergency" scam, Alicia and Fingers will check it out. These two are much more likely to act sympathetic toward a metahuman and won't even bother look at anyone obviously corporate- or yakuza-affiliated. If the sick act is convincing, several Adventists troop off to find their leader and ask what to do, while Fingers and Alicia stay with the "sick" person. This gives the runners far fewer guards to deal with, and they should easily manage to slip past the two remaining terrorists one by one. The runners may also start fights among the other prisoners, forcing several guards to break up the fights. Distracting Fingers somehow will enable magician characters with invisibility, shapechange or other relevant spells to escape without being noticed. The most effective strategy may be to try several distractions in combination. Delaney and Percy (if he is still alive) will do what they can to help out. If the characters are having trouble, feel free to make the other prisoners potentially useful people—out-of-work Broadway actors, media personalities, members of the Illuminates of the New Dawn and so on.

If the runners try to negotiate with the terrorists, they find some more sympathetic than others. Making a public speech will not work. Alicia will cut them off and the terrorists will present a united front against the player characters. If the characters talk to any of the terrorists alone, have the player or players roll an opposed Negotiation (Willpower) Test. Make them put their argument into words. If all the runners can say is that innocent people will get hurt, the terrorists are unlikely to listen. If the runners point out that terrorist tactics might make people dislike Dunkelzahn ... well, maybe the Adventists will listen after the Kamikaze wears off.

Talking to Alicia will get the runners hurt. She wants her moment of homicidal glory, and she's going to get it no matter what.

The runners might convince Noah, though this is unlikely. He harbors grudges against corps and yaks and views this mission as doing the world a favor. Fingers is the most susceptible to manipulation. If the characters make successful Perception (6) Tests, they realize that he envies Alicia her status. If the runners play on this envy by suggesting that Alicia plans to pin all the blame on him if things go wrong, they may convince Fingers to help sabotage the operation.

The seven backup terrorists are three humans, an elf, two orks and a troll. Two of the humans have cyberware, as do the elf and the troll. At least four other terrorists are wandering around the stairwells and other floors looking for trouble, and there may be even more. (Create enough terrorists to be plausible and give the runners a challenge, depending on the runner team's size and experience.) Use the following terrorist stats. Numbers in parentheses for Body, Quickness, Strength, Willpower and Reaction apply while the terrorists are under the influence of Kamikaze. For humans, Essence in parentheses reflects the presence of cyberware. The Body statistics in parentheses for trolls indicates dermal armor. A dwarf terrorist has the same statistics as Fingers but lacks magic abilities (see **Cast of Shadows**, p. 24) and carries the gamemaster's choice of the gear listed in the terrorist stats. If desired, provide the Adventist terrorists with additional mages, adepts or shamans.

All of the terrorists believe strongly in the Adventist cause, and most of them are on Kamikaze. If the characters delay anywhere from 10 minutes to an hour before talking to them, the drug's effects may wear off. The single dose listed under Gear is all they have left. Between doses, they get irritable—under the influence, they are twitchy as all hell.

#### Terrorists (7+)

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
Human	4 (5)	4 (5)	3 (5)	3	3	6 (7)	6 (5.25)	3 (4)	3/1
Elf	4 (5)	5 (6)	3 (5)	5	3	6 (7)	5.25	4	3/1
Ork	7 (8)	4 (5)	7 (9)	2	3	5 (6)	6	3 (4)	3/1
Troll	9 (10/11)	3 (4)	8 (10)	1	1	3 (4)	5.25	2	3/1

**Initiative:** Reaction + 1D6 (+2D6 on Kamikaze)

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 3/4

**Skills:** Car 2, Day Job Skill 2, Etiquette (Street) 4, Firearms 5, Interrogation 3, Negotiation 4, Unarmed Combat 4

**Cyberware:** Level 4 Datajacks, Smartgun Links

**Gear:** Boot Brothers Armored Suit, Heckler & Koch G12A3z [32/clip, SA/BF/FA, 8M, w/Integral Gas-Vent II, Shock Pads, Laser Sight and Smartgun Link (for cybered terrorists)], Gags, Metal Restraints, Micro-transceivers (unencrypted), 1 dose Kamikaze

#### DOWNSTAIRS

Once the runners get out of the restaurant, they must figure out how to stop the terrorists' operation. But they'll probably need to get to the ground floor and rescue their gear from the lockers first. Noah has control of the service elevator—the terrorists sent the six regular elevators to the ground floor and then shut them off manually (the switch is physically off, so no one can grab control via the Matrix). If the runners do not want to attract lots of unwanted attention by going through Noah, they have to take the stairs down. However, the stairs are for emergency use only. Opening a door into the stairwell requires a successful Electronics (4) Test; if the character has no Microtronics Toolkit or similar gear, the target number rises to 8. Walking down all the stairs takes about an hour, jogging takes half an hour, and whipping by takes fifteen minutes. A conjured spirit with movement power will come in incredibly handy. Characters without two cyberlegs must make 3 successful Athletics (5) Tests to resist Light Stun Damage. Going up the stairs all the way to the top floor causes three 5S Stun wounds, which characters without cyberlegs must resist the same way.

Dunkelzahn's deckers have intercepted the Adventists' every attempt at communication and control, dumping the Adventist's decker from the building's system several times. After a few failed attempts the decker will give up and tell one of his fellow terrorists to go outside and make a call from a public terminal. This command will be relayed to all the Adventists, and so the runners have a chance of overhearing it whether they are in the restaurant's main room or conveniently close to one of the terrorists. Whether or not they do anything about this information is up to the players.

Feel free to invent any number of encounters for the runners on the way down to the lobby. Some of the terrorists may be posted at random intervals along the stairs, and the characters must either sneak past them or kill them without alerting any-



one. (Use the four already mentioned as roaming the building or add a few Adventists who are canvassing each floor.) One of the building's janitors may have hidden in the stairway when the attack began and is still there; when he sees the characters, he begs them to save him and refuses to be left alone. Or perhaps the terrorists didn't check too carefully when they shut the elevators off; the runners may find a small group of trapped people in one, pleading for rescue. For a darker twist, one of the terrorists may have taken a night secretary out of an office and dragged her to an empty room to have his way with her, and the runners must save her.

The Adventists strike well after regular business hours, so most of the building is empty. The gamemaster decides exactly what all of the rooms are used for. Most of them are uninteresting office space, but if the runners look through them they may find evidence of illegal activities or even some unidentified chips or inventions that could serve as a jumping-off point for another adventure.

Emphasize that the lobby is a long way down, and that the characters have no idea what they may encounter while getting there. How many terrorists are there? Where are they? What are they planning? After the runners have gotten their weapons back (assuming that's what they wanted), go to **Change of Art**, p. 16.

The restaurant kitchens yield a number of improvised weapons, as do most of the office floors (fire axes, fire extinguishers, and so on). The terrorists make a head count of the crowd every fifteen minutes and of themselves every twenty-five, so the characters will be missed if they dawdle for too long. The windows are made of thick plastiglass (Barrier Rating 4), so knocking someone through them is difficult.

Two human Adventists lurk in the lobby behind the cerametal security desk (Barrier Rating 10). They have set up an Ares MP-LMG on a tripod, pointing toward the exit door. If these two get word that runners are on the loose, they will point the gun toward the stairs and will take their dose of Kamikaze before the player characters hit the lobby. The outside door is closed and locked, and a handwritten sign posted on it says Closed for Extermination.

Assuming the runners take out the two ground-floor thugs, they can find a vital clue to the terrorists' plans. One of the heavies, a bruiser named Chunk-Style, has written out the plans in simple words to help himself keep things straight. In his pocket is a sheet of paper that reads, "Lobby, Lock Doors (Very Important!), Security Central (4th floor), Guards, Check, Roof, Bombs, Check, Restaurant, Check, Com Call, Final Check, Wait, Deck." This should give the characters needed hints that the Adventists have planted bombs, that "Security Central" might contain something useful, and that the observation deck is the final stage in the plan.



**Ground Floor Heavies ("Chunk-Style" and "Napalm")**

B	Q	S	I	W	C	E	R	Armor
5 (6)	5(6)	5 (7)	3	5 (6)	3	4.3	4	6/4

**Initiative:** 4 + 1D6 (+ 2D6 on Kamikaze)

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 3/4

**Skills:** Armed Combat 2, Athletics 3, Car 3, Demolitions 2 (Plastic Explosives 4), Etiquette (Street) 4, Etiquette (Underworld) 5, Firearms 5, Gunnery 3, Rotorcraft 2, Unarmed Combat 2 (Boxing 3)

**Cyberware:** Cybereyes with Low-Light and Flare Compensation, Smartgun Links

**Gear:** Securetech Armor Jackets w/helmets (5/3), Ares MP with "No Smoking" written on its side [LMG, 500 rounds of exploding ammo (belt), BF/FA, 8S, w/Tripod, Gas-Vent II and Smartgun Link]; Ares Predators [Heavy Pistols, 15 (clip), Sa, 9M, w/Smartgun Links], Ballistic-cloth Duffel Bag (adds ballistic/impact Armor Ratings of 3/3 to anything inside); Micro-transceivers, Pocket Notebook, plus assorted gear taken from the Knight Errant security guards

**Note:** Because of their Kamikaze addiction, these Adventists have only eight boxes of damage to be filled in on their Condition Monitors. Additional Essence loss also comes from addiction to Kamikaze.

**DEBUGGING**

If the runners make no effort to escape, blow them up and get them out of the gene pool. If they try but screw up because of lousy dice rolls, fudge things to let them succeed. In this adventure, it's the thought that counts. Feel free to make escaping as hard or easy as you like. For players who like puzzle-solving, make getting out the key. For die-hard roleplayers, allow time for interaction between the runners and the other characters, both prisoners and terrorists. Play up the feeling that getting caught equals death; if a runner tries something like Magic Fingering a gun his way, the terrorists have an obvious reason to kill the runner to whom the gun flies. Subtlety keeps the runners alive.

If the runners let things drag on forever, let the terrorists' message get out to the media. No cops will come to help, as one of the Adventists' demands is that no cops show their faces within six blocks of the Empire State. They have warned that if anything funny happens, hostages will start dying and furniture will start plummeting out of seventieth-story windows into traffic.

If the characters miss Chunk-Style's paper but search the first-floor directory, they will see that the building security office is located on the fourth floor. Possible other clues that the security office is the next place to go include guard logs that list the security cameras' location, the security manual for the Empire State Building Matrix Log, and so on.

If the runners do not bother searching the Adventists and simply walk out the door, the building goes boom half an hour later and Dunkelzahn arranges for an investigation. His agents already know the runners' fixer, and his lackeys will make the runners wish they had never been born. Smart runners can anticipate this outcome. If the runners head back up and assault the restaurant without finding out about the bombs or the security center, play it through. If the Adventists in the security center hear a scuf-

file over the transceivers, they send a few folks to see what is going on. If the runners are doing too well, the Adventists try to bail, first via their advertising blimp and then by foot if all else fails. Once they are safely out of range, they will blow the building, and woe betide any runners still inside.

**CHANGE OF ART****TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT**

Next time you see one of those Stairs-O-Strength infomercials, you're going to shoot the trid. You pause and rub your aching thighs. From now on, you're only going to insist on meeting potential clients in single-story buildings. At least these freaks left the lights on ... the better to spot trouble coming, you'd guess. You wander down the well-lighted hallways, following the enameled plaques that point the way to the security center. As you get closer to your destination, you can't help remembering a cliché from those old war trids—"It's quiet. Too quiet."

At the end of the fourth-floor hallway looms a plasteel door, pocked with bullet holes. Bloodstains dot the floor. The security camera stares at you like an unblinking eye as you approach.

**HOOKS**

How the characters get to the fourth floor is unimportant. If they take an elevator, they must first switch it on; alternatively, they can take the stairs. On the way up they should run into more tense and even violent moments, restrained or not. Wandering terrorists make for a fun, action-packed stairwell chase; the tension of walking through an eerily empty building without knowing what may happen will also keep the characters on edge.

Play Arthur with charisma and conviction. He is an evangelist of truth (his truth, at least), and believes so strongly in the rightness of his cause that some runners may be tempted to join him. Though Arthur is not the real power behind the Adventists, he is in charge of this attack and knows it. Arthur is the "voice" of the team, the one assigned to make the big speeches for the media. He is on the spot in the security center so that he can start talking the minute his decker reaches the trid networks. As the Adventists see it, this whole venture is worthless without media coverage.

The runners' appearance will not blow Arthur's cool too much. Don't take too long with the combat in this encounter; save the big fight for the end. The real moment of horror should come when the runners realize that they are almost too late already.

**BEHIND THE SCENES**

Inside the room is the heart of the operation—spokesman Arthur Quazach and David "Pokerface" Ryan, a decker who is trying frantically to re-establish communications with the outside world. Arthur's statistics appear in **Cast of Shadows**, p. 25. Blood and Blade, two hired street punks who think they're samurai, stand watch at the door. They have been keeping an eye on the security camera, and so if the characters bust in, Blood and Blade will be ready for them. If the runners knock on the door and bluster their way in or do anything other than burst in with guns blazing, Blood and Blade will fall for any line the characters feed them.

Pokerface is concentrating on his job to the virtual exclusion of all else. He does not enjoy killing people half as much as the others do, and Dunkelzahn's agents in the Matrix have continually frustrated his efforts. They have crashed his deck a couple of times, and now the big D's friends have gone after him with Blaster-like attack programs. He wants out of here, but he remains cool under fire.

#### David "Pokerface" Ryan

B	Q	S	I	W	C	E	R	Armor
4	4	3	5	5	3	4,15	4	4/2

Initiative: 4 + 1D6

Hacking Pool: 3

Threat/Professional Rating: 2/2

**Skills:** Athletics 2, Car 2, Computer 5, Computer B/R 2, Computer Theory 4, Electronics 3, Electronics B/R 2, Etiquette (Matrix) 4, Etiquette (Street) 3, Firearms 2

**Cyberware:** Datajack (Level 4), Headware Memory (150 Mp FIFF), Skillwires (4), Softlink (4 ports)

**Gear:** Fuchi Cyber-4 [(MPCP 4/3/3/3/3), w/Response Increase 1 and a general array of programs (most of them burned—gamemaster's choice)], Lined Coat (black leather with a dragon shuffling cards and NEVER DEAL WITH A DRAGON emblazoned on it), Level 4 Skillsofts (Firearms, Unarmed Combat, Demolitions), Ruger Super Warhawk [Heavy Pistol, 6 (cylinder), SS, 11M, w/56 rounds belt-fed explosive ammo around Ryan's waist]

#### Blood and Blade

B	Q	S	I	W	C	E	R	Armor
5	6	4	2	2	4	2.5	4(6)	5/3

Initiative: 6 + 2D6

Threat/Professional Rating: 3/2

**Skills:** Armed Combat 3 (Edged Weapons 5), Bike 2, Car 3, Etiquette (Street) 3, Firearms 5, Unarmed Combat 3 (Cyberweapons 5)

**Cyberware:** Cyberears w/Hearing Amplification and Sound Damper, Cybereyes w/Low-Light and Thermographic, Datajack, Retractable Hand Razors, Smartgun Link, Wired Reflexes 1

**Gear:** Armored Jacket (5/3), Ingram Smartgun [SMG, 32 (clip), SA/BF/TA, 5M3], Knife [(STR)L Damage], Micro-transceivers, Sim Player w/Chip (*The Dragon Warrior*), Steel Knuckles (STR -1/M Stun damage), 2 doses Kamikaze (which they won't touch)

Though taken aback by the runners' appearance (which indicates an unanticipated hole in his operation), Arthur realizes that a head-to-head fight will only get everyone killed. He will remain calm, greeting the characters as though he had planned on their arrival. Quote or adapt as much of the following speech as desired, or create a new speech along the same lines. Arthur is betting on the fact that most SINless types like shadowrunners (and most metahumans, assuming there are metahumans on the team) tend to be on Dunkelzahn's side, and so may be less inclined to regard his words with skepticism.

"Hoi," Arthur greets them. "Glad to see you made it out. We never intended to hurt anyone except the soulless corporate types

you usually run into up there. I got pretty upset when I realized that we'd trapped some innocent people up there with them. As a matter of fact, I was going to tell Alicia to let the innocents go in just a couple of minutes."

Arthur is lying, but at the moment he has nothing against the runners (unless they have already killed some of the terrorists on their way here) and is willing to let them go. The Adventists intended to kill corporate and organized-crime VIPs—other casualties are just collateral damage. He continues in a lowered voice, trying to make the runners feel included in the conspiracy.

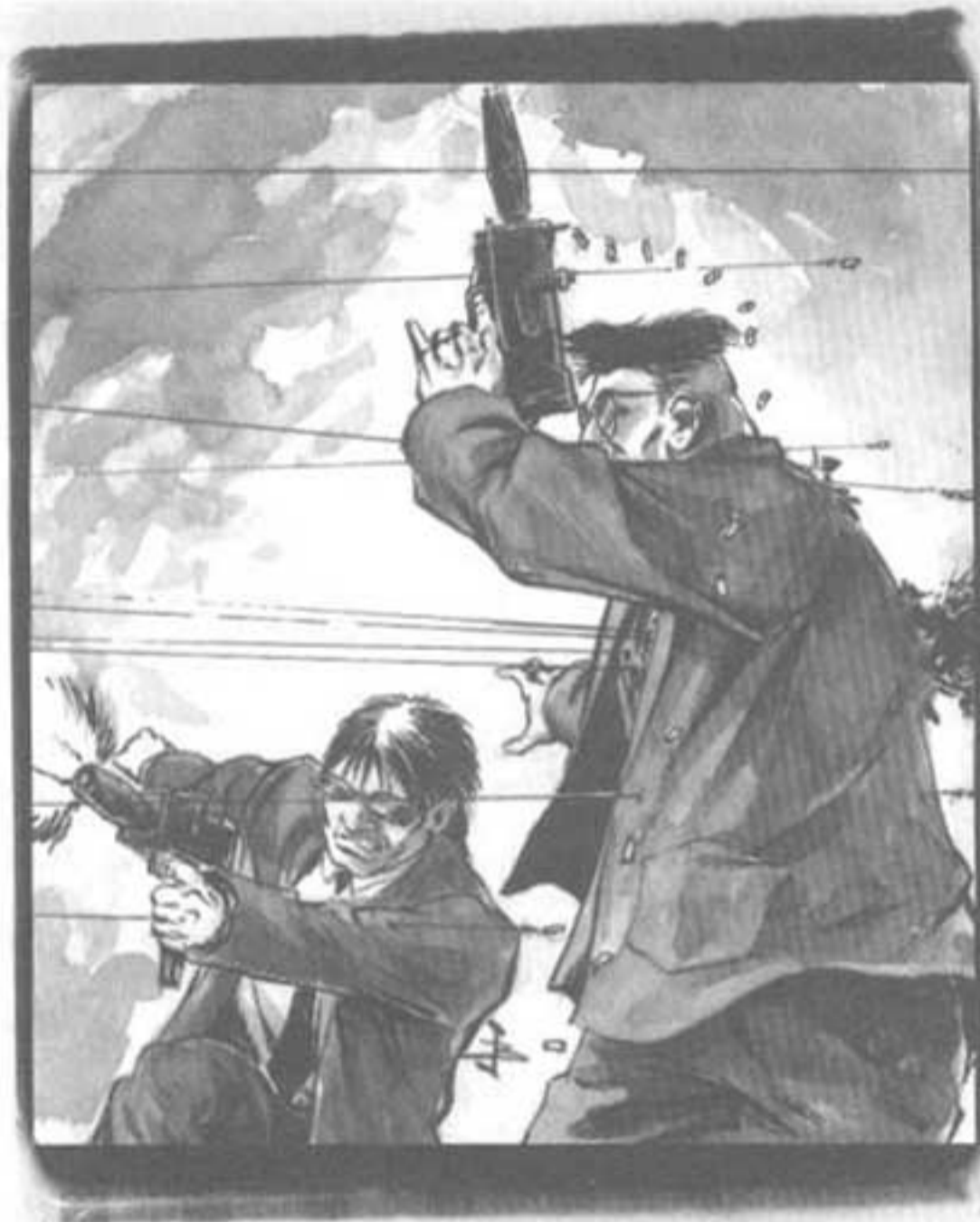
"I hate having to do this, but you know how it is. Sometimes things just have to be done to make a point. When Dunkelzahn becomes president, we're going to see an incredible change in this world. The corporations will be run by real people, interested in something other than profits. The SINless will finally have a voice again. Metahumans will be given the equality they deserve. The UCAS will finally remember its promises to its citizens that they will always live in the freest nation on Earth, where they can trust their government and each other." He shakes his head sadly. "But some people just can't see this. They're too blinded by years spent in the corps, by the cold mechanistic values of modern life—work, profit, efficiency. These people will only drag the future down. Good people can't let that happen. So today we're striking a blow for Dunkelzahn and all of our futures. We're showing the world that the great dragon and the Whole Earth cannot be beaten by the power of money."

If the characters seem at all sympathetic (meaning that they refrain from shooting him), Arthur tells them that they are free to leave and asks if they would mind just making a few phone calls to some of the local networks once they get outside. If they hesitate, he offers them 1,000 nuyen each "for their trouble."

At this point the runners must make a choice. If they stick with working for Dunkelzahn, they are putting themselves at greater risk, but for a greater payoff. If they take Arthur's offer, they turn a small profit, get out with their skins intact (at least for now), and help a cause for which they may have some sympathy. If they do choose to leave, Arthur allows them to go. He knows he cannot ensure that they will make the calls, but he is willing to take that risk. The runners, of course, are taking a risk of their own: double-crossing a dragon is never a good idea.

If the runners stick with their original job, they have several options. If they shoot Arthur, the remaining three terrorists will fight, but the runners should easily overcome them. If all four terrorists get killed, the runners can find additional clues to the terrorists' plans by searching the room. They will find a shorthand plan of operations, which notes that the bomb is to be placed in the maintenance room at the top of the building, but does not say precisely where or how to detonate it. They may also find Pokerface's Demolitions skillsoft, which any runner with skillwires can use. (This find will come in handy later, in **Boom With a View**.)

If the runners kill or chase away Pokerface and the two samurai and then interrogate Arthur, he stays quiet until the runners achieve 3 or more net successes on an opposed Interrogation (Willpower) Test, use a mind probe spell or apply some other form of pressure that the gamemaster deems workable. Arthur then tells the runners the bomb is in the maintenance room, but he



does not know how to disarm it. He tells them it is due to go off any second (an exaggeration, but he hopes it will make them leave him alone).

If the runners leave without killing Arthur, he alerts the rest of the terrorists that shadowrunners are loose in the building. He will order his compatriots to get out and then start the countdown. If Arthur is killed, the other terrorists will set off the bomb the next time they check with him and get no answer (D6 +15 minutes after the characters leave the security center).

## DEBUGGING

If the characters blow their way through everybody and do not hear Arthur's speech or search for the plans, that's their loss. The terrorists will blow the place sky-high in D6 +15 minutes, and the runners will have to deal with the consequences.

If the runners accept Arthur's offer ... well, Dunkelzahn already knows their names and their fixers. As might be expected of a teed-off dragon, he will take revenge. The runners better have solid aliases and the safest of safe houses, or they're dead.

This scene can play out in several different ways. Don't sweat it too much if the characters kill Arthur before he gets to speak or do something totally unexpected. The plot will go forward

regardless; as soon as the first terrorist gets no response from a call to Arthur, things go boom.

If a decker among the runners wants to try decking in to find out what the Adventists have been doing or take control of the building security, the gamemaster can handle it in a couple of ways. Delaney may have warned the runners not to try decking because Dunkelzahn's deckers are waiting to dump anyone who tries anything. Alternatively, the team decker can do some fast talking, letting Dunkelzahn's team know that Pokerface is no longer a problem. Dunkelzahn's deckers will hang around in case the team decker's communication is a ruse but will make no hostile moves unless the team decker does something to arouse suspicion. If the team decker decides to fight give Dunkelzahn's deckers statistics at 1 to 3 points higher than the player character decker. The Big D's deckers are equipped with Fairlight Excaliburs and state of the art programs per **Virtual Realities 2.0** (hey, Dunkelzahn only hires the best). The gamemaster decides how many deckers are actually on patrol outside the Empire State Building node.

## A BOOM WITH A VIEW

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Watching the numbers on an elevator scroll up has never been this gratifying. You don't know how much longer you've got before the bomb's gonna blow—if you had to walk all the way back up, you'd never have made it in time.

You slide your finger onto the trigger of your gun.

If these psychos have anyone posted upstairs watching the elevator, they're going to be ready for you. You're beginning to feel like the rope in an all-troll tug-of-war. You're still not sure what to do when you finally find the thing, but you'll think of something. You have to.

### When the runners reach Floor 100 (Maintenance), read the following aloud:

You exit the elevator and see a single metal door ajar in front of you. A smell of burnt oil, and the grinding noise of whirling machinery pour out of the door, grating on your ears. You approach the doorway and see a massive tangle of pipes, gears and turbines. Finding a bomb in that mess could take hours—but you've only got minutes.

### When the runners step inside the maintenance room, read the following aloud:

The whole floor is just one big room. Great. This'll be like searching for a simchip in a dragon hoard. Waitasec—did you just see something move?

You did see something move. What the hell is that thing over there? You have to look twice before you realize it's a human woman, bent over a couple of wires and fiddling with them. Her

skin is mottled gray with livid red lumps, some of which are oozing. She has no hair, and her scalp has the same wasp-nest look as the rest of her skin. One of her arms is dull metal; the other looks shriveled and skeletal. She turns around as you come in, and speaks in a voice that sounds like rusted metal cyberware being ripped from a flesh socket.

"W-w-what the f-f-f-frag do you want?!"

## HOOKS

Get out a stopwatch or an egg timer and start it. This encounter is the typical stop-the-bomb-while-you-watch-the-numbers-countdown. The runners have seen it a million times in action movies on the trid—now they have to live it.

Danger. No time to think. Must act quickly. Play up the fact that the runners have no idea how big the bomb is or exactly when it will go off. They only know that the Big Bang will happen soon. Everything hinges on this scene. If the runners don't get to ground zero in time, they might as well have saved themselves that long walk downstairs—they're dead, along with everyone else in the building. Talk quickly and in short sentences. Make the players understand that time is their enemy and the enemy isn't stopping.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

To reach the maintenance floor, the runners have three options: the stairs all the way from the lobby, the regular elevators or the maintenance elevator. The maintenance room is on floor 100—it's marked on the button consoles of the regular elevators and the maintenance elevator, so the runners should have no problem finding it. (The maintenance elevator also goes up to floor 102—the roof, which contains various antennae and satellite dishes.) If the characters call the maintenance elevator, Noah reacts right away, and the Adventists may start plugging innocents.

The maintenance room contains various pipes, fuse boxes and machinery. Aside from the door next to the elevator, the only other exit in the maintenance room opens to an emergency stairway.

The woman in the maintenance room fiddling with the wires is Eden Harper, a freelance demolitions expert hired by the Adventists for the occasion. For the purposes of this encounter, any action by the runners—attacking Harper, yelling at her, and so on—starts a combat round. Harper's job is arming the bomb, so she will take time to fire at the runners only if they fire on her first. If Harper survives more than one combat round, she will take 3 Simple Actions to activate the bomb's timed detonator. If the runners do not initiate a combat round while she fiddles with the bomb, she needs only 2 Simple Actions to activate it. Player characters can wrestle her away from the detonator controls using an opposed Unarmed Combat or Strength Test (Grappling-based concentrations apply).

If Eden successfully starts the bomb countdown, one of the runners must achieve 2 or more successes on a Demolitions (5) or Physical Sciences/Electronics (9) Test to disarm it. Somewhere in the maintenance room is the detonator for several smaller charges set at intervals around the top floor. The maximum number of

charges is thirty; the gamemaster determines exactly how many there are, depending on the power of the player group. These charges plus the big bomb will blow the top off of the Empire State Building. All of the explosives are C-13 Grade A military bang-bang, connected in a series and hooked up to a timer—no sense having a radio detonator if you plan to be several clicks away when it goes off. The timed detonator is set for fifteen minutes. The runners should start asking themselves just how long it took them to run down all those stairs—and how much longer it will take with a crowd of people.

If the characters take off immediately to save themselves, they can get clear of the collapsing tons of rubble from the top fifteen floors or so. Have them make Athletics Tests to increase their running multipliers, but any runner can escape falling ferrocrete and steel unless he or she has a Quickness of 1 and no Athletics Skill. Trying to herd the people out of the restaurant and down the stairs slows everything down. Some of the hostages are fast, some slow; they get in each others' way, have heart attacks, trip and so on. Forty-one people can fit in the elevators, if the characters have turned on all six. It takes three minutes for an elevator to go each way top to bottom, and about a minute and a half to get everyone out of the restaurant.

If a runner is still near the building when it blows, he or she takes 12D damage and gets pinned under rubble. Armor does not mitigate this damage. Any runners still on the top floor near the bombs are dead. (When you're 100-plus floors up at ground zero of a huge explosion, do you really need to bother making that dice roll?)

If shots are fired within earshot of the maintenance room (at Eden, in a nearby stairwell, and so on), Eden tips off the Adventists to trouble via her comlink with the terrorists in the restaurant. Noah will come to investigate with a small group of followers (whoever is left alive from the terrorists wandering the floors). The terrorists left in the restaurant will notify the rigger stationed on their getaway blimp to get ready for the pickup. Go to **Bullets Over Broadway**, p. 20.

## DEBUGGING

If the runners searched the security center in **A Change of Art** (p. 16) and found Pokerface's Demolitions skillsoft, any character with skillwires can use it to defuse the bomb. If none of the runners have skillwires, or Demolitions, Electronics or Physical Sciences Skills, they can try defaulting to the skill web or try coercing Eden into disarming the bomb herself. The latter will require some convincing roleplaying or a successful Negotiation Test against a Target Number of 11 (Eden's Willpower + Intelligence). A bribe or the promise that Dunkelzahn might help her in some way reduces the Target Number to 9.

If Eden dies, the runners must try to shut off the bomb by themselves. If they fail in their first attempt, tell them that the timer speeds up. If they blow it badly again ... well, it's time to run and they have a dilemma on their hands. They can try to get everyone out of the building, but the Big D will still be blamed for blowing up the Empire State. That outcome won't make the dragon very happy.

## BULLETS OVER BROADWAY

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The night wind coming down the stairs hits you like the hot, damp breath of something foul. Even up here it reeks of petrochem fumes and dockyard pollution. The observation deck is one flight up, and you know those maniacs are up there ...

#### When the characters reach the roof, read the following aloud:

You're wired as high as it goes, ready to take on a flock of terrorists because it's the last chance you'll get. Still, the dragon that floats into view from beneath the roof ledge gives you a start.

Waitasecond. The giant silver-and-blue head of Dunkelzahn is just the picture on the side of the monstrous advertising blimp, rolling around in hi-res ruthenium-polymer display. As you deploy across the rooftop and look down toward the observation deck, you see what's going on. The terrorists have cut through the old steel fencing around the edge of the deck—a big section of the fence is lying flat on the deck. A thick strand of mooring cable leads up to the back of the blimp; the web belts strapped to all the terrorists' waists give you the final clue about their chosen means of escape.

You see the scene with extra clarity, as if you'd suddenly developed super-vision. Terrorist goons all over, your buddies spreading out across the rooftop, the guy in the cockpit underneath the blimp pinning you with his metal-blue eyes. As the drek storm hits, you hear a sound above the wind—a high-pitched, electric whine.

### HOOKS

This is the big shebang. Keep the action fast and furious and scare the living drek out of the runners. Make the combat flashy. People who get hit go spinning off the roof and plummet to messy deaths. Play up how ungodly scary weapons fire is when getting hit means splattering on the cold, concrete ground 100 floors below. Streams of tracer ammo as bright as laser beams rip across the sky, concrete gets blown apart, and the guns are firing so fast that individual shots get lost in one vast ripping sound. Lots of explosions. Runners climbing into the blimp and shoving people out. This encounter should be one big rush of fear and exhilaration for players and their characters.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

No matter how fast and quiet the runners have been up to this point, Alicia knows by now that there is a problem. Any number of things may have tipped her off: the lobby crew or security-center team not checking in, Arthur not responding to a call, Noah spotting the maintenance elevator being called by persons unknown, possibly even dead Adventists all over the building. If nothing else, she will know for sure something's up when Eden screams a warning into her headphone.

As soon as Alicia realized that things were not going to go exactly as planned, she radioed for the blimp. By the time the runners reach the rooftop or the observation deck, she is on the deck. Before leaving the restaurant, she will send one terrorist to find the runners (and to help Noah, if he is still alive). Use the statistics for a

generic human terrorist in *And No Place to Go*, p. 14. After dealing with Noah, the characters have the following handful of options.

### RUNNING AWAY

Once the runners (or Eden) disarm the bomb, they may decide to bail out. If they do, they get no big dollar payoff—that's what happens when you leave your contact in a room full of terrorists. Sometimes, however, discretion is the better part of valor ... and they did keep the Adventists' scheme from succeeding (or did they?).

### GOING TO SEE THE WORLD (FLOOR 101)

If the runners decide to return to the restaurant after disarming the bomb and detonators in the maintenance room, they must go up one floor via the stairs or an elevator (regular or maintenance). Both the elevators and the stairway open into a small hallway, which contains the entrance to the restaurant and the observation-deck door. The deck door opens to a short stairway that leads to the observation deck. The door has been propped open and a lone terrorist is covering the exit. (Use the statistics for a generic human terrorist, p. 14 of *And No Place to Go*.)

If the runners enter the restaurant, Delaney will greet them and tell them that the hostages are all okay aside from a few bruises, welts and black eyes. She offers to escort the people out while the runners go after the terrorists. The runners can decide to leave with the hostages if they have taken too much damage, or if they feel that the odds are too heavily against them. If so, they will get their fifteen minutes of fame, possibly a few contacts from among the hostages (favours like saving lives get rewarded), and (of course) the usual questioning by local authorities. Dunkelzahn will pay them in full, but they will have earned themselves a prominent place on the Adventists' hit list.

### GOING TO THE ROOF (FLOOR 102)

If the runners enter the maintenance elevator at any time, either to hide or to ride it somewhere, they will see a button for Floor 102 (ROOF). If the runners select this floor, the elevator opens to a small room that contains the building's elevator machinery, as well as an exit onto the rooftop. This exit is used by workers who maintain the Empire State's antennae and satellite dishes. The antennae, satellite dishes, and small room on the rooftop give the players cover, as well as a clear view of the terrorists on the observation deck. The Adventists' rigger, Plastic Boy, will notice them if they fire on the rest of the Adventists. He will respond by opening fire on the runners with the blimp's minigun.

### GOING TO THE OBSERVATION DECK (FLOOR 101A)

The runners can also head straight for the observation deck on Floor 101a. They can reach the deck via the observation-deck door and stairway (see *Going to See the World*.) After dealing with the lone terrorist left to guard the deck door, the runners can take on the rest of the gang (however many are left alive). Now the real fun begins.

The Adventists planned to escape via the Dunkelzahn-for-President blimp for several reasons. Advert blimps stay low enough not to interfere with commercial and private flights, and



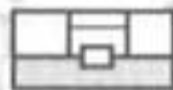
## OBSERVATION DECK

## FLOOR 102

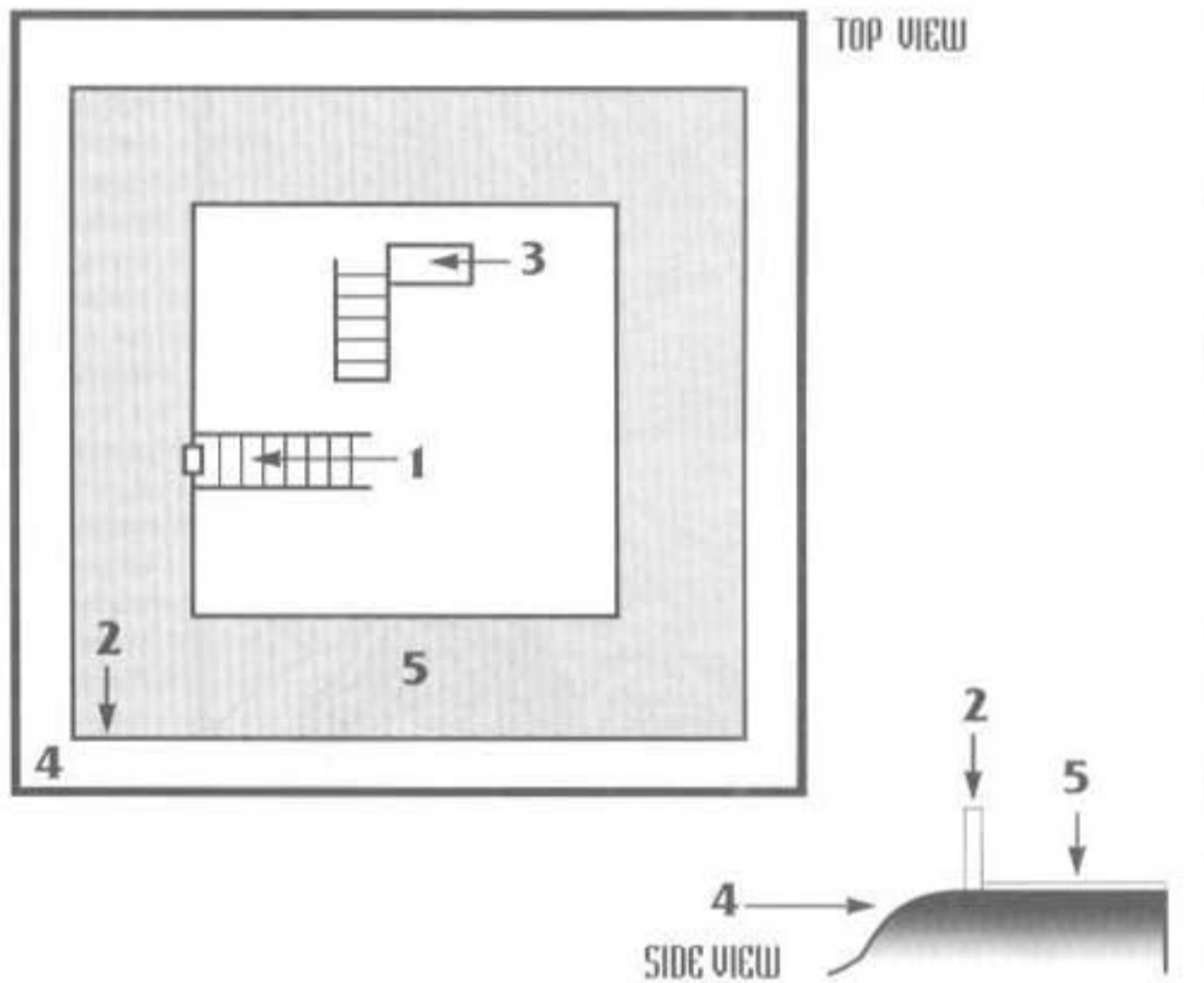
1. Stairs up from 101
2. Plexiglass Protection
3. Elevator
4. Sloping Roof
5. Observation Deck



Stairs



Door



so the blimp is practically invisible to most anti-aircraft sensors. Also, the blimp can change its advertising in a second and mix in with other advertising blimps roaming over downtown New York. Finally, no cop in his right mind will shoot a blimp over the city. If the Adventists get tailed by a police chopper, they plan to blast it to bits. Going out by ground means they have to get through the cops surrounding the area, and the Adventists want to avoid that kind of complication.

The blimp rigger is nicknamed Plastic Boy (use the Rigger archetype, p. 59, **SR II**). A staunch Adventist, Plastic Boy does not want to see his friends hurt, which can work to the runners' advantage. Plastic Boy will fire at anyone firing on his friends or trying to stop them, but he will not shoot just anyone. He is especially careful to avoid people dressed in suits or gowns unless he is certain by their actions that they are the opposition—the terrorists are still all dressed up, and Plastic Boy does not want to plug any of them by accident. Though he can pick his targets pretty well, he will skip anyone in melee combat range of the Adventists. The blimp's center is ten meters off the edge of the observation deck. (Blimp statistics are provided at the end of this section).

The terrorists' main goal is to get away. Each takes a Simple Action to hook himself up to the mooring cable, another Simple Action to clamber up the stone lip around the edge of the roof, and a Free Action plus a successful Willpower (4) Test to throw themselves off the building and toward the blimp.

Grabbing on to an Adventist and going over the edge requires a Strength (8) Test for anyone not hooked to the mooring cable. Failure sends the runner on a long, skating drop down the somewhat-steep ledge to the stone lip. If the runner makes successful Quickness (5) and Strength (4) Tests, he or she can stop the roll-and-slide number before going over the edge. If not, the runner had better be able to fly, because only a miracle will save them from a quick trip to the pavement.

A character can hold on to an opponent with one hand per success achieved on the Strength (8) Test. Three or more successes means that the runner's legs are locked around his opponent and his hands are semi-free. Terrorists can try to shake a runner off with an opposed Strength or Unarmed Combat Test, throwing off one "hand" per net success. Runners on the end of a cable cannot be hit by the minigun. Climbing up a cable takes two Complex Actions and a successful Strength or Athletics (5) Test; normally it would take more time, but the crank starts to reel in on Plastic Boy's first action.

Shooting a cable requires a successful Firearms Test against a base Target Number 12. The target number drops to 4 if a character first takes a Simple Action to grab a cable and hold his gun up to it. One success or more on this test cuts the cable. Any attempt to shoot someone dangling off the end of a cable takes a Target Number 16. All modifiers except those for distance apply.



A runner may also cut a cable with any edged melee weapon with a Power Rating of 6 or higher. To cut a cable, the runner makes an unopposed Success Test against a Target Number 7. If

the test yields 4 or more successes, the cable is cut. If necessary, runners can make multiple tests and combine the successes from each test to produce the required 4 successes.

Shooting the minigun is a Called Shot (+4 to target number). The minigun has no effective armor but its rugged construction enables it to "resist" damage—the gamemaster rolls 8 dice for the Resistance Test. If the minigun takes any "wounds," apply the standard damage modifiers to Plastic Boy's target numbers when he fires the gun. The gun falls apart when it has taken the equivalent of Deadly damage.

If the player characters attempt to board and commandeer the blimp, they must first deal with Plastic Boy. Unless they persuade him to fly the blimp for them, one of the runners must have a Vehicle Skill that might plausibly give them a snowball's chance in hell of maneuvering the blimp and landing it safely. Ultimately, this is the gamemaster's judgment call. Flying away in the terrorists' getaway vehicle, however, may land the runners in more trouble than they anticipated (see **Picking Up the Pieces**).

#### Zeppelinwerke Advertising Blimp

Handling	Speed	B/A	Signature	Autopilot
3	100/250	8/6	8 (12)	2

**Seating:** Folding benches

**Access:** 1 + 2 standard + 1 double-sized

**Notes:** Includes a 1,000-CF assault module modified to hold trideo projecting equipment and a ruthenium-polymer display surface (no imaging scanners—the display is hooked up to the trid to project a datachip of interesting images), plus two stadium amps and speakers. Passive thermal masking (+4), mechanical towing crank with sixteen cables attached, pop-up remote turret with Vindicator Minigun (1,000 rounds of normal/tracer ammo).

## DEBUGGING

It's gut check time. Once on the roof, the characters can determine the odds and decide for themselves to fight or leave. The terrorists don't really want to kill the runners—they want to get out of here and inform the media of their strike against the evil corps. This encounter is designed to provide some dramatic, fun combat—not to leave the runners as multi-colored splotches on the streets of New York. If the fight starts going against the runners, have Lone Star copters show up, watcher spirits appear, or even a Doc Wagon copter arrive to take care of a wounded runner or a panicked hostage. The gamemaster can also even the odds by having Plastic Boy accidentally shoot some of his teammates or by fudging the rolls so that the rigger blows away huge sections of the roof and antennae with the minigun. This may prompt the other terrorists to run away rather than gun the runners down.

## PICKING UP THE PIECES

Excelsior provides an excellent opportunity for gamemasters to introduce ongoing NPCs into their campaigns. The rich, the powerful, the hot-drek runners, the mobs, the policlubs ... anyone and everyone could be in the Windows on the World restaurant when the terrorists attack and may well approach the runners while they are all trapped together under the Adventists' guns. Strangers may start talking to one another, strike up conversations on inane topics, confess secrets because they expect to die and so on. NPCs who survive can be well-disposed toward the runners for saving them or hate them for trying to play hero and getting the survivor's (fill-in-the-blank) killed. Excelsior can serve as a prequel to many adventures.

If any of the Adventists survive, they hate the runners' guts. They are not particularly expert terrorists, but Alicia, Noah, Fingers or Arthur all have a good chance of finding out where the runners live and leaving something under the hoods of their vehicles. They don't care about percentage; revenge is one of their favorite pastimes, particularly in Alicia's case.

If the player characters duck out early to save their hoops—after they hit the lobby or talk with Arthur—they get no cash, no rewards and no peace for the rest of their days. The great wrym will exact revenge against the street scum who failed him and got a lot of innocent people killed, and dragons are notorious for their patience. It may take time for Dunkelzahn to deal with them, but the runners' lives will not be worth an old-time UCAS nickel.

## NEWS

Depending on how the runners handled things, they may get blamed for the terrorist attack, the destruction of the top fifteen floors of the Empire State Building, and the deaths of several dozen innocent people down in the Garment district of New York. In any event, the catastrophe will certainly make the news. If the runners pull everything off right and the crowd vouches for them, they may temporarily be lionized as heroes (fifteen minutes of fame for everybody!). Such notice may make future employers eager to hire them or nervous about them.

If the runners really foul up and the terrorists get away clean, Knight Errant will need someone to blame ... and guess who they'll pick? "Hey, here's a cybered trog in the wreckage ... you got a SIN, boy?"

The result of the attack will be the opposite of what the terrorists hoped to achieve. Dunkelzahn will look bad; the incident will simply remind everyone forcibly that the dragon is not a human or anything that resembles one, no matter how much time he spends in human-looking form. His staff will go into damage-control mode, disowning the Adventists as a bunch of freaks who should be punished to the full extent of the law. VP candidate Kyle Haeffner will make more and more appearances on Dunkelzahn's behalf, and Dunkelzahn will appear only in human form until other events bump this incident off the evening news.

## MONEY

If Ms. Delaney lives, she will pay up as agreed. She will be very impressed if all turned out well, and the runners' job at the Madison Square Garden rally is practically guaranteed.

If the runners took off with the blimp, Lone Star, Knight Errant, the UCAS military, and Dunkelzahn's agents will assume they are connected with the Adventists no matter what actions they took in the building. All four groups will be tracking that baby and are bound to catch up with the runners eventually. If the runners explain that they simply intended to land it in a safe place away from downtown NYC, Delaney will vouch for them (on her boss's behalf). They will also get a reward from the people from whom the Adventists originally rented the blimp—up to 10,000 UCAS dollars plus free rides ("Did you ever have an aerial view of an Urban Brawl game?").

If the players decide they want to keep the blimp, they won't find it easy to hide. Its base price is the same as a Goodyear Commuter-47 LTA (p. 58, **Rigger Black Book**) but fencing it is difficult. Delaney will deduct the price of the blimp from the total Dunkelzahn owes the runners.

The Big D's deckers have burned Pokerface's cyberdeck beyond recognition, so it is useless to the runners. If the runners get away with some of the C-13, the base price for fencing it is 1,000 nuyen per kilo, with a Street Index of 5. If they sell it in New York, there is a 50 percent probability that it will end up back in the hands of the Adventists.

## AWARDING KARMA

Award team Karma for the adventure as listed below. Award individual Karma according to standard rules (p. 199, **SRII**).

Surviving	1 point
Threat*	2 points
Disarming the bomb	1 point
Fewer than 2 innocents die	1 point
Terrorists don't escape	1 point

\*Ignore this award if the runners leave the building the first chance they get.

In addition, reward player characters for playing up the drama. If any runners get into long taunting conversations with Alicia over micro-transceivers, drop a penny out the window to nail one of the heavies sixty floors below, or ask to be beaten up in place of the "innocent" folks, they should get Karma. Make this your group's adventure, not the stock action movie everyone thinks of when they hear "terrorist" and "skyscraper" in the same sentence.

## CAST OF SHADOWS

Characters are listed in the order that they appear.

### MARTHA DELANEY

A competent woman in her late thirties, Martha Delaney has worked for Dunkelzahn only for the past year or so, since he



became a UCAS citizen. She has grown to respect him immensely, not just as a dragon but as a person and a sincere, caring boss. Before joining the dragon's staff on the organizational side of things, she worked as a Knight Errant rent-a-cop and is at home with the nuts and bolts of security despite her somewhat corporate appearance when the runners first meet her. She is a tall African-American woman with a pleasantly low-pitched voice and a commanding presence.

Martha has two children, ages four and two. She "retired" to an office job for their sakes and is very worried about what will happen to them if she is killed. Therefore, she will let the runners do most of the dealing with the terrorists to avoid drawing their attentions, though she will help if asked.

#### Attributes

Body: 5  
Quickness: 4  
Strength: 4  
Charisma: 4  
Intelligence: 4  
Willpower: 5  
Essence: 2.8  
Reaction: 4 (6)

**Initiative:** 4(6) + 1D6 (2D6)

**Combat Pool:** 6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 3/3

#### Skills

Armed Combat: 4  
Athletics: 3  
Car: 3  
Computer: 3  
Etiquette (Corporate): 6  
Etiquette (Street): 3  
Firearms: 5  
Negotiation: 5  
Unarmed Combat: 4

#### Cyberware

Datajack  
Smartlink  
Telephone  
Wired Reflexes (1)

#### Gear

Zoë "Retrovision" suit  
\$5,000 credsticks (1 per runner)

#### ALICIA BAYONE

At 28 years old, Alicia is the guts and guns of the Adventist operation. She believes that with the drekky life she's led, utopia has to be just around the corner, and she will kill to get it. A Mafioso's daughter gone bad, she grew up materially comfortable but emotionally starved and soon learned that violence got her all sorts of sympathetic noises and reform schools rather than prison. She sees other people as tools—no one has yet gotten close to her, and probably no one ever will. She has channeled what little remains of her vulnerable side into achieving "spiritual fulfillment"

by helping to usher in the new Golden Age. The fact that her fulfillment requires other people to die does not strike her as immoral or even inappropriate.

Tall and muscular, she cuts an imposing and attractive figure. Her charisma, however, stems from her intimidating manner and willingness to lead by example because she has little else in her life ... not from any softness or pleasantness.

#### Attributes

Body: 5 (6)  
Quickness: 5 (7)  
Strength: 4 (6)  
Charisma: 4  
Intelligence: 4  
Willpower: 6  
Essence: 1.6  
Reaction: 4 (9)

**Body Index:** 1.6

**Initiative:** 4(9) + 1D6 (3D6)

**Combat Pool:** 8

**Threat/Professional Ratings:** 5/4

#### Skills

Armed Combat: 3  
Athletics: 4 (Cardiovascular 6)  
Car: 2  
Demolitions: 2  
Electronics: 1 (Hot-wiring Vehicles 5)  
Etiquette (Underworld): 5  
Etiquette (Street): 3  
Firearms: 6  
Gunnery: 3  
Leadership: 4  
Unarmed Combat: 3 (Kyokushin-kai karate 6)

#### Cyberware

Cybereyes w/Flare Compensation, Low Light, Thermographic  
Plastic Bone Lacing  
Smartlink  
Retractable Hand Razors w/Improved Dikote Blades (STR - 2/M)  
Wired Reflexes (2)

#### Bloware

Muscle Augmentation (2)

#### Gear

Colt M22A2 [Assault Rifle, GasVent I, shock pad, 40 (clip), SA/BF/FA, 9M, w/smartlink and 3 extra clips of explosive ammo, underbarrel grenade launcher w/6 offensive grenades (10S)]  
Colt Manhunter [Heavy Pistol, 16 (clip), SA, 9M, w/2 extra clips, silencer, concealed thigh holster]  
"Effervescence" armored evening gown (3/1)  
Micro-transceiver

#### DUFF "FINGERS" MCGILLIS

A dwarf sorcery adept, Fingers is vain and more than a little distrustful of Alicia and Noah. His spell-locked Detect Enemies

and Detect Magic spells give him advance warning of just about any move an opponent might pull, but his near constant use of them has also given him a paranoid personality disorder. He assumes everyone is out to get him; he mumbles a lot and seems to be carrying on conversations with about thirty different people at once. His speech is hesitant because he always tries to listen to everything people are saying. To Fingers, paranoia is a way of life.

### Attributes

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

Initiative: 4 + 1D6

Combat Pool: 7

Magic Pool: 4/6

Threat/Professional Rating: 4/3

### Skills

Car: 2  
 Etiquette (Corporate): 2  
 Etiquette (Street): 2  
 Firearms: 3  
 Magical Theory: 5  
 Sorcery: 4 (Spellcasting 6)  
 Unarmed Combat: 3 (Judo 5)

### Spells

Combat  
 Manabolt: 6  
 Powerball: 5  
 Sleep: 5

Detection  
 Analyze Truth: 4  
 Detect Enemies: 5\*  
 Detect Magic: 6\*

Health  
 Heal: 4

Illusion  
 Chaotic World: 4  
 Physical Mask: 4

Manipulation  
 Magic Fingers: 7  
 Personal Physical Barrier: 6

\*Spells are locked at listed Force



### Gear

Sapphire nose ring (spell lock for Detect Magic spell)  
 Sapphire earring (spell lock for Detect Enemies spell)  
 Ares Predator [Heavy Pistol, 15 (clip), SA, 9M]  
 Lined coat (4/2)  
 Micro-transceiver

### ARTHUR QUAZACH

The oldest and by far the most sophisticated in this cell of Adventists, Arthur is the brains and voice of the operation. Though attractive and charismatic, Arthur suffers from a sense of emptiness; his search for meaning has lead him to bounce from one extremist group to another for most of his life.

As a young man he was an active member of the Humanis Polliclub, where he learned most of what he knows about fighting and motivating others. As he got older, he became increasingly disillusioned with the polliclub's bigoted message. After being forced to join in the slaughter of a group of elf children, he underwent a complete change of heart. He broke with Humanis, joined the Church of the Whole Earth to atone for his past sins and has since turned his zeal toward cleansing the world. He rationalizes that people like his racist, corporate-yes-man father taught him racism in the first place, and so all the "innately racist" corporate types must be eliminated so that everyone can live together in harmony.

Arthur is close to six feet tall, with graying brown hair and green eyes. He dresses well and speaks with a slight upper-class New England accent.

#### Attributes

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

**Initiative:** 4 + 1D6

**Combat Pool:** 7

**Threat/Professional Ratings:** 4/3

#### Skills

Armed Combat: 2  
 Car: 3  
 Computer: 4  
 Computer Theory: 4  
 Etiquette (Corporate): 4  
 Etiquette (Street): 3  
 Etiquette (Underworld): 5  
 Firearms: 4  
 Negotiation: 5  
 Leadership: 6  
 Unarmed Combat: 5

#### Gear

Ares Predator w/flechette rounds [Heavy Pistol, 15 (clip), SA, 9M/9S]  
 Form-fitting body armor (Level 3, 4/1)  
 Micro-transceiver  
 Sony pocket secretary

#### EDEN HARPER

Though only 29, Eden suffers from radiation sickness that makes her look wizened and ancient. She was living in Chicago near Cermak when the Cermak Blast occurred and got caught in its periphery. A shadowrunner by trade, she used her skills and contacts to escape the city, but her sickness and emotional trauma have driven her over the edge.

Since escaping from Chicago, she has sold her services as a demolition expert to anyone who can afford her price. She cares nothing for the rightness of any cause or who might get hurt. The only thing that makes her happy is the knowledge that her work has caused others the same kind of pain she feels. She has a year or so left before the sickness kills her and she knows it, which makes her willing to take extreme risks.

Physically, she is repulsive. Her skin is dry and flaking off, and her body is covered with large, untreated tumors. She replaced one of her arms with a steel cyberarm when it withered and lost function, and the other one is quickly deteriorating. She speaks in a raspy stutter and is often difficult to understand. If any runner seems to condescend to or feel sorry for her, she flies into a rage and attacks that character until she or the runner is dead.

#### Attributes

Body: 3  
 Quickness: 5  
 Strength: 3  
 Charisma: 1  
 Intelligence: 5  
 Willpower: 6  
 Essence: 1  
 Reaction: 5 (9)

**Initiative:** 5 (9) + 1D6 (3D6)

**Combat Pool:** 8

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 4/4

#### Skills

Car: 3  
 Computer: 4  
 Demolitions: 7  
 Demolitions (B/R): 6  
 Etiquette (Street): 3  
 Firearms: 5  
 Stealth: 6  
 Throwing Weapons: 4  
 Unarmed Combat: 3 (Cyberimplant 5)

#### Cyberware

Cyberarm w/smartlink and spurs  
 Cyberears w/dampers  
 Cybereyes w/Flare Compensation, Low Light, Thermographic  
 Datajack (Level 4)  
 Wired Reflexes (2)

#### Gear

Armored jacket (5/3)  
 Ingram Smartgun [SMG, 32 (clip), SA/BF/FA, Gas-Vent II, Smartlink]  
 Add'Pill painkillers  
 4 offensive grenades (10S)

**Note:** Because of severe nerve damage, Eden is insensitive to surface pain. She has 1 box of Pain Resistance on her Condition Monitor.

# TWO SOLITUDES

## FADEOUT

The light of the full moon was just bright enough to see by. Sho breathed a prayer of silent thanks to whatever god of luck might still exist; turning on a light might well be his death warrant. If the corporate enforcers located him, they would kill him. Then they would kill his parents. A lifetime of devoted service didn't count for much when your offspring stole valuable data and then vanished into the night.

Sho moved around the small dorm room quickly and quietly, pulling shirts, slacks and underwear out of drawers and stuffing them into a small duffel bag. Dark clothes were best; they wouldn't show dirt as fast, and heaven only knew when he'd get a chance to use a laundromat. *Maybe Hiro'll do my wash for me. Now there's service.* Sho suppressed a snort of laughter at the thought of Hiro in the local Duds-n-Suds, parking himself in a screaming-orange plastic chair and reading a cheap paperback while keeping half an eye on Sho's wash to make sure nobody swiped anything. *Some place for a free spirit, neh?*

There wasn't much point in taking much. A week's worth of clothes, a few raw materials for fetishes that he'd paid good cred for, a memento or two—not that he had many of those. Just the Honorable Mention ribbon he'd won at the freshman-class Spell Design Open, and the photo of his parents that he'd tacked above the cheap plywood desk where he could see it every time he looked up from his homework. Carefully, Sho tucked the photo into an envelope and placed it on top of the clothing. He zipped the duffel bag shut, swung it over his shoulder and turned to leave.

A flicker of movement caught his eye, and he froze. He stared out the window, scanning the dim outlines of the elm trees that lined the path to his dorm. *Maybe it's nothing. Just somebody coming back late from the library, taking the shortcut across the lawn.* Then a shadow detached itself from the dark bulk of one tree and flitted to the next.

Sho swore silently. He was trapped. A single pursuer probably meant they weren't sure he was here—if they knew for certain, they'd be sending in a team to take him. No, somebody at HQ was smart enough to figure he might come back to campus, so they'd sent a stringer to watch his dorm room. If he left now, the watcher would spot him. And if he didn't, someone else would figure out he was here, and sooner or later the corp enforcers would hear about it. Sho pressed his hands to his face in a futile attempt to ward off panic. *No way out. No matter what I do, there's no way out—*

"Sure there is," said a soft voice behind him.

Sho spun around. Hiro was leaning against the closed door, arms folded casually across his chest. The smile on his face made Sho breathe a little easier in spite of his fear.

"Yeah? What're you planning on doing, Hiro? Going out there and flaming the guy? That might attract a little unwanted attention, don't you think?"

Hiro laughed. It was a beautiful sound, rich and deep.

"I could do that, if you want. Or we could just confuse the poor fool."

Hiro straightened and extended a hand toward Sho, palm up and cupped slightly. He seemed to shimmer, face and form blurring like a dampened watercolor. Then the shimmer faded, and Sho stared in amazement at a carbon copy of himself.

"I go first," Hiro said. "Our friend follows me. Then I pull another presto-change-o, leave him chasing his tail. Meanwhile, you slip out and find a safe hiding place across the Bridge. I'll catch up." He walked over to Sho and took his hands, grinning. "And then we're home free."

"Home free," echoed Sho. The thought made him giddy. He gripped Hiro's hands hard, as if the spirit's touch alone could turn hope into reality.

Nils Hammarand didn't like what the voice in his ear was telling him.

"What do you mean, you *lost* him?" Hammarand asked. "How could you *lose* him? Wet-behind-the-ears suitboy whelp, knows as much about the real world as a baby rabbit, probably never been outside the corp compound or campus walls in his *fragging life*, and he gives you the slip? He gives a pro—excuse me, *alleged pro*—the slip? Explain to me how this happens. On second thought, don't. I don't want to hear it."

The voice on the radio voice squawked and crackled in reply.

"Bag the jetwash," Hammarand snapped. "First off, I don't believe in disappearing acts. Second off, it doesn't matter. What matters is that we find him—fast. Before Daddy's corporate goons do. Because if they get to him first, then all my hard work will have been for nothing. And I don't appreciate having my work spiked by someone else's *fragging* incompetence. You find that kid or you'll live just long enough to regret it."

Hammarand reached up and pressed a small button on the edge of his datajack, cutting off the answering voice in mid-squawk.

"Trouble, Nils?" asked a cool, cultured voice from the doorway.

Hammarand sat up straight, wiping the scowl off his face. Instinctively, he smoothed his hair and straightened his jacket.

"No trouble, sir. Nothing I can't handle."

"Excellent."

Hammarand's boss favored him with a small smile that might have made him look like a kindly old uncle, except that the smile didn't reach his eyes.

"You've always gotten results in the past—I expect this operation to be no different."

"Yes, sir. We'll have him in a day or two, sir, if not before."

Hammarand waited until his boss turned the corner, then let out a long breath. The boss would get Sho and his data, all right—though in somewhat damaged condition. No little corporate mama's boy would cause trouble for Nils Hammarand—not without paying for it.

## INTRODUCTION

In **Two Solitudes**, the player characters are hired by a Yamatetsu executive and his wife to find their son, who has mysteriously disappeared. The characters' investigation turns up a portrait of a talented and intelligent young man who is socially withdrawn and under a great deal of pressure from his parents and peers to succeed academically and professionally.

The young man, Sho Kojima, has been hiding the fact that he is gay from his friends and family for fear of the shame it will bring them. The "homosexual lifestyle" is one of the many "protected cultures" under the laws of Japanese-occupied San Francisco, and openly gay people are not allowed to live within the city limits or hold high-ranking positions in the city's corporate offices. Like members of other persecuted groups, they are forced to live in enclaves (read "slums") in the Oakland/Berkeley area outside the city proper.

Sho's life began to unravel when Nils Hammarand, a corporate watchman, discovered his secret. The position of corporate watchman is a brainchild of the great dragon Lofwyr's; Hammarand and those like him keep watch over Lofwyr's enemies, looking for exploitable weaknesses in people working for other corporations or anyone else who might get in Lofwyr's way. From his headquarters at Angelic Entertainment (Saeder-Krupp's subsidiary in Los Angeles), Hammarand monitors the activities of Lofwyr's competition through a sophisticated network of contacts, runners and plain old spies. When Hammarand's informants discovered that Sho Kojima was gay, Hammarand used that information in an attempt to blackmail Sho into providing him with information purloined from Yamatetsu. (As a high-level accountant, Sho's father has access to spreadsheets that never show up in Yamatetsu's corporate reports. Hammarand forced Sho to steal his father's access codes so that he could pass secret information on to Hammarand.)

Sho took some valuable data from the Yamatetsu mainframe in San Francisco but balked at passing it on. Afraid and angry, with no one to turn to, Sho attempted to conjure a powerful elemental to kill Hammarand. The spirit, however, proved too powerful for Sho's limited magical training. It escaped his control and became a type of free spirit known as an *animus*, impressed with Sho's own needs and desires. The spirit—which adopted the name Hiro—and the young mage eventually fell in love and ran off together to the Oakland/Berkeley sprawl to hide under the protection of the October 25 Alliance, a metahuman resistance group to which Sho has tenuous connections.

When the adventure begins, Yamatetsu and Saeder-Krupp both want to recover the data that Sho stole. Sho's parents are con-

cerned about their son's safety. The runners must find the runaway before the corporate hunters do, while avoiding the wrath of Hiro, who will kill to protect Sho. The runners must also win over resistance members unwilling to trust strangers but more than willing to shoot them at the slightest hint of a threat to the cause.

**Two Solitudes** is set in Japanese-occupied San Francisco, as described in the **California Free State** sourcebook. If the gamemaster wishes to relocate the adventure in another city, the setting and background must meet the following requirements. First, the city should have an active underground or "resistance" movement of some kind. Second, anti-government feeling and general distrust of everyone should run high; the runners should feel like fish out of water, as if they must "prove" themselves to suspicious underground members. Keep in mind that even if the runners have hot reps in the city, they are free agents working for cash. That fact alone will make them suspect in the eyes of those who pride themselves on fighting for ideals rather than nuyen.

## MEETING THE PARENTS

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The fixer told you he had a missing-persons job, just some simple detective work. You're meeting the Johnson at a small club called the Katana, just southeast of the Presidio, at 9:00 p.m. Fraggin' early for a meet, but maybe your Johnson has to get to bed before he turns into a pumpkin—or something.

You know a little about the Katana. The suits from Sanfran's various Japanacops hang there, along with the occasional off-duty Imperial Marine. It's intimate enough for a meet—just—but you'd still prefer to talk biz some place a little less public. Still, you need the work, so you decide to scope things out first, worry later. Dress to fit in, chums—designer rags if you can manage it, quality knock-offs if you can't. No sense borrowing trouble, neh?

You reach the place in plenty of time. The dragon lady at the door gives you a bad moment; her painted smile slips a bit when she sees you, despite your best efforts to make a good impression. When you inform her you're with the Johnson party, she puts the smile back on straight and escorts you to a large booth in the back of the restaurant, well away from the other tables. A middle-aged Japanese couple is sitting there, looking for all the world like fresh-off-the-boat tourists from Tokyo. You start to turn toward the retreating hostess to tell her there's been some mistake, when the seated man gestures toward the table.

"Thank you for being so prompt," he says, in a smooth voice with a heavy accent. "Please sit down."

As you take your seats at the table, he looks at the woman next to him and covers her hand with his. From the matching rings, you guess they're married. The wife stares down at the table while her husband nervously clears his throat.

"Please excuse my awkwardness," he says. "I have never been involved with any ... activity like this before. I want you to find my son. He is a student at the University of California, just outside the city. He disappeared a week ago. My company is looking into the matter, but as far as I know they have no leads.



They have been ... less than forthcoming."

He pauses a moment, his face tightening as he struggles for control.

"I am a loyal employee, I trust that my company will do all it can, but I fear for my son. I wish to employ you to find him, discreetly. I can offer you the sum of 10,000 nuyen for his safe return, or any information that leads to it."

He studies your faces, then asks, "Is this agreeable?" in a carefully controlled tone. His wife glances pleadingly up at you, tears in her eyes, before looking back down at the tabletop.

#### Once the runners have accepted the job, read the following:

"My name is Kojima. My son Sho is a student at the University of California at Berkeley, in the Occult Studies program. He has studied there for three years and will graduate next year.

"Sho was last seen leaving his magical theory class at 8 p.m. five days ago. He apparently went back to his dorm room—his roommate left school earlier in the semester, so he lives alone. When he did not appear for classes the next day, people simply assumed he was ill. He rarely missed his classes, but a mild flu had been going around, and so no one thought much of his absence.

"When he missed class again the following day, the school administration checked on him. Other students said they had not seen Sho for more than a day. Campus security reported that his room was empty and he was apparently nowhere on campus. No one recalled seeing him leave, and there has been no trace of him since." Kojima breaks off for a moment, blinking, then looks away as he continues.

"We are very worried about what might have happened to him."

## HOOKS

Tug on the runners' heartstrings in this scene. Make it clear that the Kojimas are way out of their element in dealing with shadowrunners—they are simply desperate enough to do what they once would have considered unthinkable. The runners are from a world totally alien to this straightforward couple. Mr. Kojima will do his best to maintain his composure and negotiate with the runners, while his wife provides a counterpoint of silent tension and hope.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The runners learn about this job from a fixer who has heard from a corporate contact that someone is looking for shadow talent to take a missing-persons case. It's not exactly a shadowrunner's usual fare, but a paying job is a paying job. The fixer tells the runners about the assignment and the initial meet as described in **Tell It To Them Straight** (p. 30) and says he will pass word on to the Johnson if the runners feel like showing up.

If the runners do not normally work in San Francisco, they could be there on other business when this job opportunity comes up. They might even know a contact from Yamatetsu who is a friend of the Kojimas, and who might call upon the characters to take this job as a favor.

When the runners meet the Kojimas at the Katana, it should be clear that this is not a typical job. These people have proba-

bly never seen a real shadowrunner in their lives before and normally would not dream of speaking to one, let alone hiring a shadowrunning team. But they are frantic about their son and will go to great lengths to find out what has happened to him. If the Kojimas need statistics, treat them both as Pedestrians (p. 25, **Contacts**).

When the runners arrive at the meet, metahuman characters (and non-Japanese humans to a lesser degree) invite stares and whispers from the Katana's patrons. The Kojimas do their best to disguise their discomfort at dealing with metahuman runners. Mr. Kojima will automatically assume that the first human male to present himself—or a human male of Japanese extraction, if the team includes one—is the leader of the group and will address him as such unless corrected. If any of the runners speak Japanese and offer to carry out the negotiations in that language, Kojima looks relieved and switches to it. Otherwise he sticks to English, occasionally speaking it slowly and clearly as if he is having difficulty or is not sure the runners can understand him.

If the runners want to try some hard-edged bargaining for more money, Mr. Kojima tells them that 10,000 nuyen is all he has to offer. He has not bothered with the street tradition of making an insulting first offer to the runners; he has little idea of what he is doing and is working mostly from what he has seen on trid shows such as *Shadowbreakers*.

If the runners agree to take the job, Kojima tells them all he knows about his son's disappearance and offers whatever other reasonable help he can.

## DEBUGGING

The only real problem with this encounter occurs if the characters refuse the job outright. If the runners need some additional incentive, one of the characters might know Sho Kojima or his family and thus have a personal reason for helping out.

Feel free to push all of the runners' emotional buttons to get them to take this job. Some of the runners must have parents, right? If nothing else, a tearful plea from Mrs. Kojima in somewhat broken English, begging the runners to find her child, should move even the most cold-hearted mercenary. Remind metahuman characters that this is their chance, however small, to convince at least a few people in San Francisco that metahumans do not lack compassion or decency.

If the runners suggest that Sho's disappearance would be better handled by San Francisco's corporate or military authorities, Mr. Kojima will tell them that he has never questioned the proper authorities, but that he fears there is something they are not telling him. He is concerned and wants someone who answers directly to him concentrating their efforts on finding Sho.

If the runners are simply too mercenary to take the job, the gamemaster has a couple of other options. The runners may be hired by Yamatetsu or Nils Hammarand. (See **Picking Up the Pieces**, p. 40, for background on Yamatetsu. If a larger role is desired for Hammarand, create his statistics from scratch or use the Company Man contact on p. 204, **SRII**.) Both of these parties are in much better positions to pay the runners but are also far more likely to double-cross them once they have recovered the young man and his valuable stolen data. This arrangement

requires a variation on the meet described in **Tell It To Them Straight**, with a Yamatetsu Johnson or Hammarand contacting the runners about the job. Hammarand or the Yamatetsu stooge will paint Sho Kojima as a thief who stole valuable corporate information that must be recovered before it ends up in the hands of some "undesirable" underground group in Berkeley or Oakland.

Naturally, a runner team that includes metahumans or outlandish street-types is already on thin ice in a place like the Katana. Remind any violence-prone players that threatening the Kojimas or anyone else in the establishment is likely to bring a squadron of Imperial Marines down on their heads before they can blink. The authorities in San Francisco prize order and take a dim view of metahumans and shadowrunners causing trouble. Such characters are likely to disappear into the Presidio and never be seen again.

## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Looking over the information the Kojimas gave you about their son, you can see you've got your work cut out for you. The dossier's pretty thin for a missing-persons investigation—mostly stuff out of their family photo-files and the sort of drek Sho's mom probably hung on the refrigerator. From the look of the profile you've got, the Kojima kid either had no friends or his parents didn't know of any. Either way, it's going to take some legwork to track down the kid or figure out who would have wanted to snatch him—or find out why he would've stepped into the shadows in the first place.

### HOOKS

In this free-form encounter, improvise the runners' investigations based around the information presented in the following sections. Additional material from **Hot Time in the Old Town** (p. 33) and **Going Underground** (p. 35) can be worked in and around the investigation to liven things up, along with other scenes in which the runners deal with their contacts and work around the problems of asking questions in a place as paranoid as occupied San Francisco.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

This part of the adventure is pretty much left up to the players: where they go from here depends on what they intend to investigate first, as well as how and where they do it. The following sections describe in general terms what and how the characters can learn about various facets of the case. If the characters pursue a line of investigation not discussed in these sections, simply improvise the information they learn and appropriate contacts, based on the supplied material.

Roleplay interactions with the various contacts and personalities described in this encounter to give the runners a feel for the problems of conducting an investigation in San Francisco. If the game starts to lag, modulate these interactions with a few Etiquette skill rolls.

### SHO'S DORM ROOM

Sho Kojima's dorm room at Berkeley is the first logical place to start looking for clues. It is a typical college dorm room: a rectangular cubicle with a bunk bed, a closet, a bureau and a desk. Sho decorated his room in Spartan style, predominantly Japanese with a few other touches best described as "early magic geek." While searching the room, the characters may uncover the following clues:

- There are no signs of a struggle. Several changes of clothes are missing, along with some chips, a portable chip-reader and a couple of books. These signs indicate that Sho left voluntarily and took the missing possessions with him.

- Like every other dorm room on campus, Sho's room has a telecomm/computer system installed. The telecomm logs have been erased, which is unusual. If a decker character tries to access the local telecomm switching system for the phone records, he or she must make a Computer (6) Test or perform a mini-run against the telecomm system Host if the gamemaster wants to play out a datarun. (The Host's design is up to the gamemaster.)

The telecomm records reveal that Sho Kojima called his parents every few days before he disappeared. The last call from the telecomm in his room was placed to an LTG number in Los Angeles, listed in the L.A. directory as "Angelic Entertainment." If one of the runners calls this number, he gets the office's voicemail system, which asks him if he wants to leave a message for Mr. Hammarand. The runners may leave a message, but their call will not be returned. Additionally, leaving a message tips Hammarand off to the runners' investigation, and Hammarand will contact Schreck. Schreck will try to disrupt the runners' investigation by killing their contacts and friends and attempting to kill the runners one by one, until the final confrontation in **Getting the Word Out** (p. 38). However, Schreck will be careful to conceal his identity while harassing the runners, and they should not actually see him until **Going Underground** (p. 35).

- A successful Perception (6) Test will reveal small traces of colored chalk dust on the wooden floor. A successful Magic Theory (4) Test will reveal that the dust is the remains of a small hermetic circle. Too much of the chalk has been brushed away for any character to be certain what the circle was for, but its small size suggests that the operation could not have been major. If the runners check with campus officials or other students, they learn that such magical operations are forbidden anywhere on campus outside of the lab rooms.

- A magician who assenses the room can obtain the following information:



#### Astral Perception (Target Number 4)

Successes	Results
1	There is a strong feeling of loneliness. Within the past week or so, there was a powerful surge of magical energy in the room.
2	Someone has conducted several minor magical rituals in this room during the past few months.
3	Underlying the feeling of loneliness is a brief surge of hope and happiness that occurred a short time ago. The traces of this are just beginning to fade.

#### UC BERKELEY

If the runners want to access Berkeley's computer system to check on Sho's student records, they can do so with little difficulty. The system Host is Green-4 with Rating 8 for all of the subsystems, running Trace-4 IC. The records contain little of interest that

the runners don't already know; they show that Kojima was a straight-A student with no apparent problems academically.

All of Sho's professors praise his work, saying that he shows a lot of talent. If the runners question Sho's fellow students, however, they learn that he has no real friends on campus and never does anything fun. Sho's classmates describe him as bright but bookish, shy and difficult to get to know.

#### SHO'S ROOMMATE

The runners might want to check on Sho's former roommate, mentioned in **Meeting the Parents**. College records list the roommate as Hal Conway, also in the Occult Studies program. Hal dropped out of school five months ago. Unknown to the university, the Kojimas or the runners, Conway joined the underground establishment known as the People's University.

If the runners try to track Conway down, they find his trail hard to follow. Apparently he has no family in the area. If the runners put out the word among their contacts that they are looking for Conway, allow them to make a Street Etiquette Test to get some information on his whereabouts. If the runners follow up on a lead to the underground, go to **Going Underground** (p. 35).



**Hal Conway (Street Etiquette, Target Number 4)**

Successes	Results
0 or 1	"Who? Is this guy worth something?"
2	"Looks like whoever this Conway kid is, he did a pretty good disappearing job. Maybe even stepped into the shadows. If he's still in Berkeley, he's got to be involved with the underground, one way or another."
3	"Heard from a friend that the Berkeley underground does a lot of recruiting at UC Berkeley. I think some of the faculty and students are sympathetic to groups like the October 25th Alliance and the drek they're doing to get the Japanese corps out of the city."
4	"You need to talk to someone in the underground. Talk to a guy called the Prof—you can get a hold of him at a local hangout called the White Horse, just off the campus."

**THE KOJIMAS**

If the runners bother to check Mr. Kojima's background, they can learn the following information.

**Kojima Sr. (Computer or Corporate Etiquette, Target Number 4)**

Successes	Results
0 or 1	"Who?"
2	"Kojima-san's a middle manager with Yamatetsu North America in San Francisco. He's been a trusted employee of the company for some time. His wife's originally from Osaka; I think he met her there on business. Very traditional Japanese lady."
3	"Funny, you're not the first to ask about Kojima. A few other folks have shown an interest in him recently—and before you ask, I don't know their names and I don't want to."
4	"This Kojima skag's in trouble. His company record's been red-flagged by internal security. Souncls like ISO has a bone to pick with Kojima."

**YAMATETSU**

Once the runners know that Mr. Kojima works for Yamatetsu, they might try to find out about any current events within the corporation that might be connected to Sho's disappearance.

**Yamatetsu (Corporate Etiquette, Target Number 6)**

Successes	Results
0	"Yamatetsu? Nothin' going on with them, chummer. Just leave it at that, okay?"
1	"From what I hear, there's an eruption building up inside the old steel mountain. Just some little rumbles now, but it could turn into a big one real fast."
2	"Nobody knows exactly what it is. Some kind of inside shake-up, something that's attracted the attention of the corp's internal security people."
3	"Hard to say, but if what I've heard is true, it sounds like the corp's got an internal security problem it's trying to fix before anyone else gets wise to it."

**THE UNDERGROUND IN BERKELEY**

If the runners make some discreet inquiries about Berkeley's underground resistance movement and the People's University, they can learn the following information.

**Berkeley Underground (Street Etiquette, Target Number 4)**

Successes	Results
0	"Don't know about them and I don't want to, chummer."
1	"The underground's divided into factions, and they disagree on just about everything except getting the Japanese out of the city. They do what they can about that, but it's not enough to budge the Japanacorps."
2	"The underground makes the occasional attack on the corps to get them to loosen their hold on the Bay, but every hit just makes them squeeze that much tighter."
3	"Word has it that some resistance group's gotten a hold of something that'll let them hit one of the Japanacorps where it hurts—right in their bottom line. Don't know how they're planning to pull it off, though."
4	"You need to talk to someone in the underground. Talk to a guy called the Prof—you can get a hold of him through a place called the White Horse just outside campus. Big local hangout, that place."



### NILS HAMMARAND

If the runners turn up Hammarand's name during their investigation, they can learn the following information from their contacts.

**Nils Hammarand (Street or Corporate Etiquette, Target Number 6)**

Successes	Results
0	"Who?"
1	"Yeah, I've heard of him. He's a recruiter or something who works for Angelic Entertainment in L.A."
2	"Everyone knows Angelic Entertainment's just a shell corp Saeder-Krupp uses to operate in the CFS. Hammarand may do the L.A. corp scene, but he's Saeder-Krupp all the way. Word has it he's looking to get a leg up and out of California and into one of the corp's European branches."
3	"Hammarand's an S-K <i>watchman</i> . He gathers little bits of information on anyone and everyone who might ever get in Lofwyr's way—information that the dragon can use to get such people <i>out</i> of his way, if you scan. Hamm's got snitches and informants all over the Free State. I think he's looking for a score big enough to catch the wurm's attention and get himself booted up the S-K corporate ladder."

### DEBUGGING

The investigation may hit a dead end, bog down or simply become boring for the players during this encounter. If any of those possibilities occur, feel free to spice things up with some events from the later encounters or a random encounter or two. Throw the players some red herrings and add a few unrelated encounters in San Francisco or the Oakland/Berkeley sprawl to maintain the pace of the story.

If the runners are coming up completely empty, fudge a few of the Etiquette Tests or provide the runners with some other means of getting the information they need. For example, the runners may do a favor for someone in the underground who might have seen or heard about Sho Kojima's appearance in Berkeley.

## HOT TIME IN THE OLD TOWN

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You sit in your San Francisco doss, watching the drizzle drip down the cracked windowpane. Your latest contact just signed off the comm—no decent leads from him, either. It's been that way all day—one disappointment after another. So far, it looks like this Kojima kid's managed to pull a real disappearing act. Somehow you didn't figure it would be so tough to track down a lost college kid. In fact, this assignment's been so tough that you're starting to wonder *why* Sho Kojima disappeared—and if he might have had a little help. The question is, from whom?

It's getting awfully warm in here ... unusually so, even for the Bay Area. You're even starting to sweat a little. Nearby, you see a faint shimmering in the air. Just as you recognize it, the shimmer explodes into an eye-searing burst of heat and light.

## HOOKS

The runners know that things are definitely not what they seem when an angry free fire elemental manifests right in front of them. The spirit—Sho's animus, Hiro—only wants to frighten the runners off in this encounter, and so he will not attack them outright. However, he will imply—quite strongly—that they should stop looking for Sho. Make the scene tense but don't turn it into a drawn-out combat. Treat Hiro's intervention at this point more as a natural disaster than a battle scene.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

At some point during the runners' investigation into Sho's disappearance, Hiro locates the runners and tries to dissuade them from continuing their search for Sho. The spirit visits the runners at a time and place when they are suitably vulnerable, possibly while they are asleep in their San Francisco doss (the spirit does not sleep and can wait as long as necessary for the perfect moment to make his appearance). If the runners' doss is too well protected by wards or other magical safeguards, the spirit waits until they are elsewhere, such as talking to a contact on the street or in a seedy bar. (If necessary, adapt **Tell It To Them Straight** to reflect the place where Hiro chooses to manifest.)

Hiro manifests in a fiery blast to scare the runners. Using his flame projection power, he ignites the room or building around the runners, which quickly becomes blistering hot and fill with choking black smoke (the smoke does suffocation damage each turn that the characters remain in the area). If the runners are indoors, they should try to get outside as quickly as possible. If they are outside when Hiro appears, a wall of flame will spring up out of nowhere and surround them.

Once the runners scramble to safety, the flames die out, leaving behind only charred wreckage and the words, "LEAVE SHO KOJIMA ALONE," burned into the nearest clean surface. The runners should get the message loud and clear: someone with plenty of mojo to sling around does not want them looking into Kojima's disappearance.

Hiro gives the runners virtually no opportunity to attack him. The free spirit will appear, leave his "message" and depart with the quicksilver speed typical of free spirits. If the runners have any sense at all, they will sprint for the nearest exit the minute the room bursts into flames. If a mundane runner tries to engage the spirit in melee combat (a bad move against an enemy sheathed in flames), inflict damage from minor burns or smoke inhalation on the character. Such a runner might get lucky and hit the spirit, not hard enough to disrupt it, but enough to surprise it so that an astrally perceiving character can get a good look at Hiro.

Magically active characters will probably suspect some kind of magical attack and may attempt some kind of defense. Spell defense provides no protection from Hiro's elemental powers, but a suitable spell or two might put out the flames he sets (saving Hiro the trouble of extinguishing them himself). A magician must move very quickly to take any action against the spirit. Keep in mind that Hiro is a free spirit, so he cannot be banished by anyone who does not know his true name.

A runner who is astrally perceiving or who shifts to astral perception immediately on Hiro's manifestation might catch a

glimpse of the animus before Hiro disappears into astral space. The character should make an Astral Perception (6) Test and consult the following table.

### Astral Perception

Successes	Results
1	You see a spirit-form in the midst of the flames. It is a fairly powerful spirit, a fire elemental.
2	The spirit has a strongly masculine aspect and it is very angry, much more so than any common elemental.
3	You sense powerful anger from the spirit—anger mixed with fear, concern, compassion and curiosity. The spirit is almost certainly a free being, with its own personality and desires.
4	You get the impression that this free spirit is fairly young for one of its kind, perhaps only recently free.

Once Hiro has left his warning and departed, the runners will likely want to search for clues about who or what was behind the attack. They can do so by examining the physical evidence left behind by the spirit, as well as traces that its actions have left in astral space.

### Physical Examination (Perception Test, Target Number 4)

Successes	Results
1	The flames appeared and disappeared so quickly that magic must have been involved. Also, the heat that cut the writing into the surface must have been intense.
2	The flames went out for no apparent reason. The speed with which the fire appeared and vanished seems to indicate that whoever or whatever did it wasn't looking to hurt anyone.
3	The pattern of the writing looks familiar to you; it is very similar to Sho Kojima's handwriting. (The character learns this information only if he or she has seen a sample of Sho's writing—say, from homework left in his dorm room or from something given to the runners by his parents. If not, the runner does not notice the similarity unless he or she encounters a sample of Sho's handwriting later in the adventure.)

**Astral Examination (Astral Perception Test,  
Target Number 4)**

Successes	Results
1	The flames were magical—they came from a spirit that appeared in astral space.
2	The spirit was a powerful fire elemental.
3	Strangely enough, you sense anger and concern connected to the lingering traces left by the spirit. This is unusual, because bound elementals tend to lack emotions. The presence of strong feelings suggests that the spirit might be independent.

**ASTRAL QUESTING**

Once the runners figure out that they are dealing with a free fire elemental, an initiate character might decide to go on an astral quest to the metaplanes to learn more about the spirit. Such a quest has a Quest Rating of 7 (Hiro's Force plus Spirit Energy). (For quest rules, see **Quest For The True Name**, p. 78, **Grimoire II**.)

The runners can learn Hiro's true name in this way, but keep in mind that the astral quest will take several hours at least. This will provide an ideal opportunity for someone like Hammarand's pet thug, Schreck (see **Cast of Shadows**, p. 42), to attack the runners. (Gamemasters who are roleplaying the astral quest can use such an attack to occupy non-magician players during the quest.)

**DEBUGGING**

If the runners are not smart enough to try to get out of a burning room, don't kill them outright. Have the flames lick menacingly toward them, perhaps trapping them in a corner or drawing into a tightening ring around them. The flames come perilously close to the runners and then vanish into thin air, leaving the runners untouched.

If a magician character wants to use astral projection to attack or pursue Hiro, remind the player that his or her character must either come into contact with the spirit's flame aura (while the spirit is manifest and the character is astrally perceiving) or leave his body to the tender mercies of the flames to follow the spirit before it can vanish. Neither option should be terribly appealing. If the player wants to try anyway, his or her character might be able to get one lick in before Hiro takes off but will probably suffer some minor injury in return. In any case, the spirit gets away.

If the runners glean little information about the attack from the available clues, don't worry. This encounter is mainly intended to show that this run is more than a "simple detective job" and give the players some hints about Hiro.

**GOING UNDERGROUND****TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT**

The White Horse Tavern is just a few blocks from the UC Berkeley campus. A nondescript brick building with narrow windows, the tavern looks like a holdover from the early twentieth century. The interior is nice and cozy—lots of dark wood and brass, with freestanding round tables spaced along the windows and across the hardwood floor. Several patrons are sitting at a lunch counter along one side of the room, and small groups of other people—mostly college students—are scattered at the tables talking and eating. A waitress breezes by with a tray, heading for one of the tables. She calls over her shoulder, "Sit wherever you want—be with you in a minute."

You find a table near the back and sit down, taking in everything. As you make yourselves comfortable, an old white-haired ork gets up from the counter and walks toward you. He janders right up to your table and checks all of you out. You can't read the expression in his beady black eyes.

"Good evening," he says. "Mind if I join you?"



## HOOKS

This encounter propels the runners into some fast action as they hook up with the underground and meet Schreck, Hammarand's personal agent in San Francisco. Schreck is also looking for Sho Kojima and the stolen data, and he'll use any methods necessary to get the job done. The scene should proceed quickly from delicate probing and negotiations to mayhem.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Use this encounter if the runners decide to investigate Sho Kojima's possible connections with Oakland/Berkeley underground groups. The runners' best bet for finding info here is to meet with the October 25th Alliance contact known as the Prof, who hangs at the White Horse Tavern.

The runners can arrange a meeting with the Prof if they make some discreet inquiries. The Prof agrees to see them at the tavern later that evening. When the runners show up, an elderly ork will join them at a suitably secluded table. He will introduce himself as the Prof and inform anyone who asks that the title dates back to his days as a member of the faculty at UC Berkeley before he got glibalized. When corporate sponsors took over the school shortly afterward, the Prof found his job sacrificed to "budget cuts" and ended up joining the underground.

The Prof knows that Sho Kojima is hiding out with the October 25th Alliance, but he has no reason at the moment to tell the runners that. They must convince him that they are working for Sho's parents before he will even consider arranging for the runners to meet with the young man. The Prof knows that Sho stole information from Yamatetsu, and he will assume that the runners are really looking for the data. If the runners display genuine ignorance of the stolen information, the old ork will be a bit more likely to trust them.

Play out the shadowrunners' attempts to win the Prof's trust. The runners need not be great actors, just sincere. If they win him over, the Prof tells the characters that Sho is with the underground and has no desire to return home.

At this point in the conversation, Schreck enters the White Horse and scans the room, obviously looking for someone. The Prof will notice this, as will any runner who makes a successful Perception (3) Test. The old ork will get nervous at the sight of Schreck and he'll tell the runners they can complete their conversation somewhere else. Then he will leave the table and slowly head toward the tavern's back door. Schreck will catch the movement and zero in on the Prof right away. Unless the runners intervene, Schreck will catch up to the Prof in the back alley behind the restaurant and interrogate him about Sho's whereabouts.

If the runners intervene, Schreck will do his best to get them out of his way so that he can keep working on the Prof. If the shadowrunners put up too much of a fight for Schreck, he will withdraw but won't hesitate to use the Prof or someone else as a hostage to ensure his getaway if necessary. (If the Prof needs game statistics, use the **Dwarf Technician** (p. 206, **SR11**, modified as appropriate for an ork.)

If the runners save the Prof from Schreck, they will earn the old ork's gratitude and cooperation. The Prof will offer to talk to some of his own street contacts and meet with the runners at the White Horse tomorrow. Go to **Enemy of My Enemy**, p. 37.



## DEBUGGING

This encounter foreshadows the action in **Getting the Word Out** (p. 38). Don't let this first meeting with Schreck turn into the final confrontation with him. The adept assassin will do his best to escape the runners if things turn against him in this encounter and will be better prepared for them the next time they meet. If the runners are loaded for bear and expecting trouble, Schreck's appearance can be just a quick glimpse before he ducks around an alley and disappears.

If the runners threaten or attack the Prof, they pretty much kill any hope of getting the underground's help in finding Sho Kojima. If they deal with the ork in a civil and honest way, they get results. Otherwise, they are on their own and will have to use other means to find Sho—other contacts, say, or ritual magic to track Hiro via his true name. An attack against the Prof will also trash the runners' reps with the entire Oakland/Berkeley underground; in **Getting the Word Out**, members of the October 25th Alliance will see them as no different from any other parties involved in the assault on the resistance hideout.

## ENEMY OF MY ENEMY

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The White Horse Tavern looks exactly the same as it did yesterday. In fact, quite a few of the customers look like they never left. You see the Prof walk in the front door and scan the crowd, nodding to some of the kids hanging around. He goes up to the lunch counter and says something to the waitress there, then walks through the kitchen door. You wonder why he doesn't just come up to you ... but then, after last night, you can't blame a portly old college professor who probably never saw the smoke end of a gun before for being nervous. Before you can decide on a plan, the waitress comes by and says, "I'm a little busy right now, but you can just go into the kitchen and tell Bobby the cook that you want your food."

This is definitely weird. Restaurants don't usually let paying customers into the kitchen ... and besides, you didn't order any food. You thank the disappearing waitress and stroll causally into the kitchen, where one chef is making sandwiches. When you ask if he's Bobby, he nods. "I'm looking for my food," you say.

"It's in the manager's office," Bobby answers, pointing toward a wooden door with the word *MANAGER* on it. Well, *MANGER*, actually, but you get the idea. You walk up and knock on the door, keeping your eyes peeled for anything unexpected.

"Come in," says a voice you recognize—it's the Prof.

All smiles, the Prof apologizes for all the back-room antics. He says he's met with a few of his contacts, who want to confirm your good intentions before letting you see Sho.

"We want you to do a little something for us—call it 'establishing your credentials,'" the Prof says. "If you don't mind?"

## HOOKS

Use this encounter to immerse the characters in the paranoid, prove-you're-my-friend-by-striking-my-enemy world of Oakland/Berkeley's militant underground organizations. These groups trust only themselves and those few others who have earned their trust. By saving the Prof's life, the runners have passed one test. But they need to pass another.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The Prof has a job for the runners—a test to prove that they do not work for Yamatetsu and that they intend Sho no harm. Specifically, the Prof wants the runners to aid the October 25th Alliance in an assault—possibly more than one—against a Yamatetsu target. This attack should be straightforward, with no tricks or traps set by the Alliance. Of course, the defenses at the chosen corp installation can be as tough as the gamemaster wants.

An underground-sponsored attack differs from a typical shadowrun in a significant way. Most such attacks are terrorist strikes—they produce no financial reward. The people who perform them are idealists fighting for causes, not runners working for nuyen. In fact, Oakland/Berkeley's guerrilla groups are usually quite suspicious of shadowrunners. But if the runners pass the test with flying colors, the Alliance will treat them as trusted friends.

The gamemaster determines the number and type of attacks as he or she sees fit. Keep things simple; the object of the attack is to scare the corps and the public, not to pull off the perfect datasteal. The Alliance tends to stay away from kidnapping; the corps rarely deal with kidnappers, and snatching people brings too much heat down on the organization. The Alliance also avoids all-out assaults, preferring to keep as many people as possible alive to fight another day. Possible "test jobs" for the runners include:

- bombing a Yamatetsu warehouse in Oakland
- tossing a fireball cocktail in the entryway of Yamatetsu's San Francisco HQ and spray-painting resistance slogans on the outside walls
- hijacking a shipment of Yamatetsu property and distributing it around the poorer sections of Oakland
- ambushing a slew of Yamatetsu security personnel on one of their regular forays into Oakland
- hitting Yamatetsu from the Matrix and from the real world (if the group includes a decker)

The latter option may especially appeal to this cell of the Alliance, as they have very little sophisticated decking equipment. The presence of a decker among the runners gives this Alliance cell a chance to hit the Japancorps in a way that they never have before.

If the runners do the Prof's bidding and acquit themselves well, the Prof takes them to the Alliance cell's hideout to meet Sho. If they refuse, they will still end up at the hideout—under much different circumstances (see **Debugging**).



## DEBUGGING

Make it clear that the runners cannot sleaze out of performing the required mission. If the runners want to reach Sho Kojima, they must prove their trustworthiness first, and the only way to do it is to go along with the Prof's request. If the players still refuse, play up this terrific chance to hit a corp for kicks. Tell them they get to keep whatever they find of value—no questions will be asked, and no Johnson will spoil their fun.

This assault should be a light workout for a group that up to now has been doing legwork, legwork and more legwork. If the characters will only do it for money, the Prof says coldly that he has clearly misjudged them. The Alliance will consider the runners enemies and will most likely keep tabs on them. This will make it easy for Alliance members to capture the runners when they finally track down Sho and approach his hideout (**Getting the Word Out**, below).

If the runners point-blank refuse to hit the corp, even for money, the Alliance will become convinced that they work for Yamatetsu. Many of the runners' contacts with connections in the underground will dry up, and denizens of the local shadows will react to the runners as if they are corporate goons. If necessary, turn up the hostility toward the runners until they decide to go back to the Prof and ask for a mission or the October 25th Alliance captures them. Go to **Getting the Word Out**.

## GETTING THE WORD OUT

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

As you look out over the Gauntlet, you realize that the local underground and the SanFran corps take their little war very seriously. The narrow corridor, where the monorail system enters and exits San Francisco, is a favorite site for terrorist attacks against the Japanese occupation forces. The burned out buildings along both sides of the elevated monorail track look deserted, but every time a train passes you hear shots ring out from them.

The Alliance's safe house is an old brownstone just a few blocks from the track, one of a small ring of reasonably intact buildings left in the area. The lower floors and basement have been cleared out and renovated with whatever modern equipment the underground members could scavenge, mostly second-hand and kit-bashed computers and communications equipment. All the tech drek is hooked up to a concealed satellite dish on the roof that links the brownstone into the greater Free State matrix. Not a bad set-up for a bunch of decadent Western subhuman rabble, eh?

### HOOKS

This encounter is the big wrap-up scene where all the forces in the adventure come together in an explosive confrontation. Time for the runners to get out all the aggressions they've built up over the course of their frustrating investigation. Blow the special-effects budget on this scene.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The runners can locate and reach the Alliance hideout several different ways. Depending on how they get there, the gamemaster may need to adapt the read-aloud text in **Tell It to Them Straight**. If the runners have passed the Alliance's test, the Prof or another Alliance representative leads them to the hideout; they will have fairly free run of the place and will see the things described above. If they track the place down magically or via legwork, they must approach the hideout carefully. Resistance members will assume that the runners are spies or corporate agents unless they can prove otherwise and will try to capture them for interrogation. If they can't nab the runners they will gladly shoot them.

### IF THE RUNNERS ARE FRIENDS

If the Prof brings the runners to the hideout to talk with Sho they find him and Hiro in one of the basement rooms. Alliance technicians are setting up some equipment in the room that will allow them to decode the encrypted data stored in Sho's bio-aware memory and transmit it over the local Matrix.

Sho tells the runners his story (see the adventure **Introduction**, p. 28) while Hiro keeps a wary eye on them. Once Sho has said his piece, Hiro confesses that he tried to frighten the runners into dropping their investigation. Sho has no desire to return to his family; he believes he will only disgrace them. Better that he remain missing and the truth never be known. He knows it will be hard on them, especially his mother, but Sho has found a new life and a new purpose with Hiro and the Alliance. He firmly believes that the occupation of San Francisco is wrong and must be ended by any means necessary.

### IF THE RUNNERS ARE CAPTURED

If the Alliance capture the runners, they will be relieved of their weapons and any obvious magical foci. Their captors will then take them to meet Sharon Greenfeld, the commander of the Alliance cell. Greenfeld is an elf and former citizen of San Francisco, whom the Japanese Imperials drove out along with all the other metahumans. Greenfeld will question the runners about their identities and their purpose. If they tell her the truth, she will allow them to speak with Sho Kojima but will not let them use force to persuade him to go with them. For Greenfeld's game statistics, use the Former Wage Mage archetype (p. 56, **SR11**) with the appropriate elven racial modifiers.

Once the runners have had a chance to talk with Sho, all hell breaks loose, as described in **The Factions Attack**.

### IF THE RUNNERS FIGHT

If the runners end up fighting the Alliance cell—either by breaking into the hideout or to break Sho out of it—they will face stiff opposition. The Alliance members are not all that tough, but their devotion to their cause gives them each a Professional Rating of 4. The runners will also face magical opposition from Sharon Greenfeld, Sho Kojima and Hiro; the free spirit will fight to the death to stop the runners from taking Sho. For the Alliance members' statistics, use the Corporate Security Guard (p. 205, **SR11**) armed with Uzi IIs and Lined Coats or the equivalent.

Once the runners have gotten into a good running fight with the Alliance members, company shows up, as described in **The Factions Attack**.

### THE FACTIONS ATTACK

Meanwhile, Yamatetsu agents have tracked the information theft back to Mr. Kojima Sr.'s access codes. A thorough and fairly brutal interrogation of Kojima revealed that he knew nothing about the disappearance of the data, but his missing son was an obvious potential culprit. Corporate agents have concluded that Sho Kojima took the data and intends to hand it over to his friends in the resistance movement. They have discovered the location of the Alliance cell and believe (correctly) that Sho has taken the data there.

At the same time, Nils Hammarand has been pursuing the stolen data through Schreck. After his initial encounter with the runners at the White Horse Tavern (**Going Underground**, p. 35), Schreck has tracked the Prof and Sho Kojima to the brownstone hideout.

Both corporate factions happen to pick the same time to make their bid for Sho and his data, and the runners get caught in the middle. The attack comes at night (if possible). Schreck severs the power lines to the building, and so the power goes out. Schreck is the first to enter the building, using stealth and his adept powers to overcome any obstacles between him and Sho Kojima. At about the same time that the runners suspect Schreck's presence and come upon him, a Yamatetsu assault team hits the hideout. Treat the Yamatetsu soldiers as Corporate Security Guards (p. 205, **SRII**) wearing partial heavy armor and armed with AK-97s. They are accompanied by a Combat Mage (p. 50, **SRII**). Set the total number of Yamatetsu and Alliance personnel at twice the number of runners. If desired, increase or decrease the Yamatetsu and Alliance personnel based on the size and expertise of the runners' group and the number of Alliance members in the building.

The attack quickly degenerates into a melee, giving the runners, Sho and Hiro an opportunity to overcome both Schreck and the Yamatetsu goons. Surround the runners' part of the fight with dashes between the corporate soldiers and the Alliance members, plus lots of incidental damage and explosions.

### DEBUGGING

The runners are faced with a bit of a quandary in this encounter. They have found Sho, but he does not want to return home. He possesses stolen information that has gotten a couple of powerful corps hacked off at him, and he's working with the underground. The runners might simply want to wash their hands of the whole mess and be done with it, or they might try to forcefully return Sho back to his family.

If the runners want to pack it in, they must fight their way out past the Yamatetsu goons and Schreck. Both the goons and Schreck will assume that the runners are on the Alliance's side. If the runners worked for the Alliance in **Enemy of My Enemy**, they have some allies and therefore a better chance of getting out alive. Assuming they survive the climactic battle, Mr. Kojima will pay them the full agreed-upon fee, as it was not the runners' job to force Sho to return home.

If the runners try to take Sho by force, Hiro and the members of the Alliance will try to stop them. When Schreck and the corporate soldiers attack the hideout, the fight will become a free-for-all in which everyone is after Sho and the data. The runners will have a hard time holding on to Sho, who will resist them to the best of his ability. Returning Sho Kojima to his family will effectively deliver him into Yamatetsu's less-than-gentle hands, a fate the runners ought not to wish on anyone.





## PICKING UP THE PIECES

After the attack on the Alliance hideout, the surviving members of the resistance cell (which should include Sharon Greenfeld) will make arrangements to download Sho's stolen data and send it out over the Matrix, where it will do the greatest damage to Yamatetsu operations in San Francisco. The Alliance will appreciate any help the runners offered during the assault and will owe them a future favor.

Sho Kojima and Hiro will remain with the Alliance. Sho will ask the runners to tell his family that he is safe and will contact them when he feels the time is right. Once the stolen data is publicized, Yamatetsu will lose all interest in the Kojima family. If either Sho or Hiro dies in the fighting, the other will be grief-stricken at the death of his partner and will want revenge on those responsible, which could lead to another adventure for the player characters.

If the gamemaster is feeling kind and wants to offer the runners some additional compensation for their trouble, Hiro can use his wealth power to give them gems and precious metals worth several thousand nuyen. The exact amount depends on how much additional cash the gamemaster wants to give the characters—preferably no more than an additional 10,000 nuyen.

Schreck will try to escape if things go badly against him in the final fight, and he may return to plague the runners in a future adventure. Nils Hammarand takes note of the player characters and may deal with them in the future. He may offer them a job involving other Saeder-Krupp interests in California, which may be either straightforward (if their talent impressed him) or a set-up (if he wants payback because the runners spoiled his plans).

Yamatetsu will not look kindly on anyone connected with the loss of their sensitive data and may blacklist the runners. (No more Yamatetsu-sponsored jobs, chummers—too bad.) The corp might also use an intermediary to hire the shadowrunners for a suicide mission.

## THE YAMATETSU DATA

The stolen Yamatetsu data—called "The Little Red Schoolhouse"—is a set of undoctored spreadsheets that blow a huge hole in Yamatetsu's metahuman-friendly public image. Yamatetsu has supposedly been offering metahumans places in top-notch corp-run schools, but the documents show that the "schools" are actually clearinghouses from which metahuman children and their parents are taken to labs in the rural Central Valley for "testing." The spreadsheets trash Yamatetsu's pose as a friend of metahumanity and prove to the entire resistance movement that Yamatetsu is no better than any other corporation in San Francisco.

Yamatetsu responds to the release of the data by announcing a round of firings. Top executives will claim that a rogue mid-level manager diverted the funds intended for the schools and set up the whole deal with the Central Valley labs. They will further claim that Sho's father discovered the incriminating spreadsheets and posted them at great personal risk to expose the bad seed at Yamatetsu. They will not mention Sho or any resistance group.

Sho's father, heralded as a hero, will get a promotion, and Yamatetsu will "make amends" by funneling nuyen and products (Yamatetsu's, of course) into some of the poorer sections of Oakland (until the spotlight is off).

## AWARDING KARMA

Award team Karma for the adventure as listed below. Award individual Karma per standard rules (p. 199, SR11).

Survival	1 point
Threat	1 point
Finding Sho Kojima	1 point
Helping the Alliance against Yamatetsu	1 point

## CAST OF SHADOWS



### SHO KOJIMA

Sho Kojima comes from a well-off corporate family and has the potential to be a capable mage someday, but he is not a happy young man. For years he has concealed his homosexuality from his parents and friends for fear of hurting them and damaging his career, and the effort has left him isolated and lonely. By throwing himself into his studies he has earned considerable praise from his instructors and his parents, but his outward achievements have only worsened his inner turmoil.

During the past few months, Sho occasionally snuck out to clandestine gay establishments in San Francisco. Nils Hammarand discovered these indiscretions and made Sho's worst nightmare come true by blackmailing him. Desperate to escape a terrible choice between dishonor and betrayal, Sho summoned an elemental to kill Hammarand.

That elemental, Hiro, proved to be the literal embodiment of Sho's dreams. Eventually the two decided to flee. Concerned about his family and confused about what to do next, Sho hooks up with the anti-corp resistance because he can think of nowhere else to hide. At first he simply wants to be left alone, but he gradually comes to believe in the underground's cause.

#### Attributes

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

#### Skills

Conjuring: 4  
 Enchanting: 2  
 Etiquette (Corporate): 2  
 Magical Theory: 4  
 Sorcery: 4  
 Unarmed Combat: 2

Initiative: 5 + 1D6

Threat/Professional Rating: 2/2

#### Cyberware

Datajack  
 Headware Memory (80 Mp)

#### Gear

Armor Clothing (2/0)  
 Yamatetsu Ronin™ Laptop Computer (250 Mp)  
 Hermetic Library (Rating 2) on optical chips

#### Spells

##### Detection

Analyze Magic: 2

##### Health

Treat: 3

##### Illusion

Mask: 3

##### Manipulation

Light: 2

#### HIRO

Hiro is a *kami*, a special type of animus spirit. Like every other *kami*, Hiro's form and life sprang directly from the innermost desires and hopes of his summoner—in this case, Sho Kojima. The newly free spirit has awakened to a world of sensations and emotions whose existence he never suspected, and he is passionately in love with his summoner. As suits his fiery nature, Hiro is dashing and fierce. He is utterly loyal to Sho and wants to protect him from harm at all costs. Unfortunately, Hiro is not well versed in the



nuances of the mundane world and knows little about corporations or human values. This makes him a poor planner. Shadowrunners who appear to have Sho's best interests at heart will be able to win Hiro over to their side.

#### Attributes

B	Q	S	I	W	C	E	R	Armor
8	6	9x4	7	7	7	8	5 (A)	Special

Initiative: 15 (25) + 1D6

Force: 5

Spirit Energy: 2

Threat/Professional Rating: 5/4

Attacks: 5 dice, 7M damage

Powers: Engulf, Flame Aura, Flame Projection, Guard, Human Form, Immunity to Normal Weapons, Manifestation, Movement, Wealth

Weaknesses: Vulnerability (Water)

Note: The Attributes listed apply to Hiro in manifest form. In astral form, all Attributes are equal to Force + Spirit Energy (7).



## SCHRECK

Schreck is Nils Hammarand's principal agent in **Two Solitudes**. A physical adept who follows the Twisted Way (p. 54, **Awakenings**), Schreck is a giant of a man, as tall as most orks and with muscles like bunches of steel cable. He has rough, chiseled features and a wild mane of white hair. He typically wears dark leather clothing studded with chrome spikes and chains and speaks with a slight German accent. He lives in Los Angeles and works as a "special security associate" for Angelic Entertainment, Saeder-Krupp's L.A. subsidiary.

Schreck is mentally unstable by almost anyone's definition. His magical path is focused solely on improving his ability as a killer. He claims to possess empathic ability that lets him draw strength and pleasure from the pain and fear of his victims. If he was on his own rather than working for Saeder-Krupp, Schreck would probably be a serial killer. As it is, his work for Hammarand gives him plenty of opportunities to indulge his addiction to inflicting pain on others.

Schreck prefers to fight opponents barehanded and crush the life out of them, but he is wily and capable enough to use what-

ever means are at his disposal. If he is clearly outclassed by a superior opponent, Schreck withdraws and begins plotting a new means of attack. Once unleashed on a target, he never gives up; he keeps coming back until he finishes the job or his corporate masters call him off.

The gamemaster should play Schreck as a shrewd character rather than a loose cannon. He is a master assassin and a professional, which means he is more valuable to his superiors alive than dead and he knows it. If the fight looks bad, he bails out and tries again at a better time.

### Attributes

Body: 6 (9)  
 Strength: 6 (10)  
 Quickness: 4  
 Intelligence: 4  
 Willpower: 5  
 Charisma: 2  
 Essence: 6  
 Magic: 10  
 Reaction: 4

**Initiative:** 4 + 2D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 6/3

**Initiate Grade:** 4

### Skills

Armed Combat: 6  
 Athletics: 6  
 Etiquette (Street): 4  
 Firearms: 6  
 Stealth (Urban): 5  
 Unarmed Combat: 8 (10)

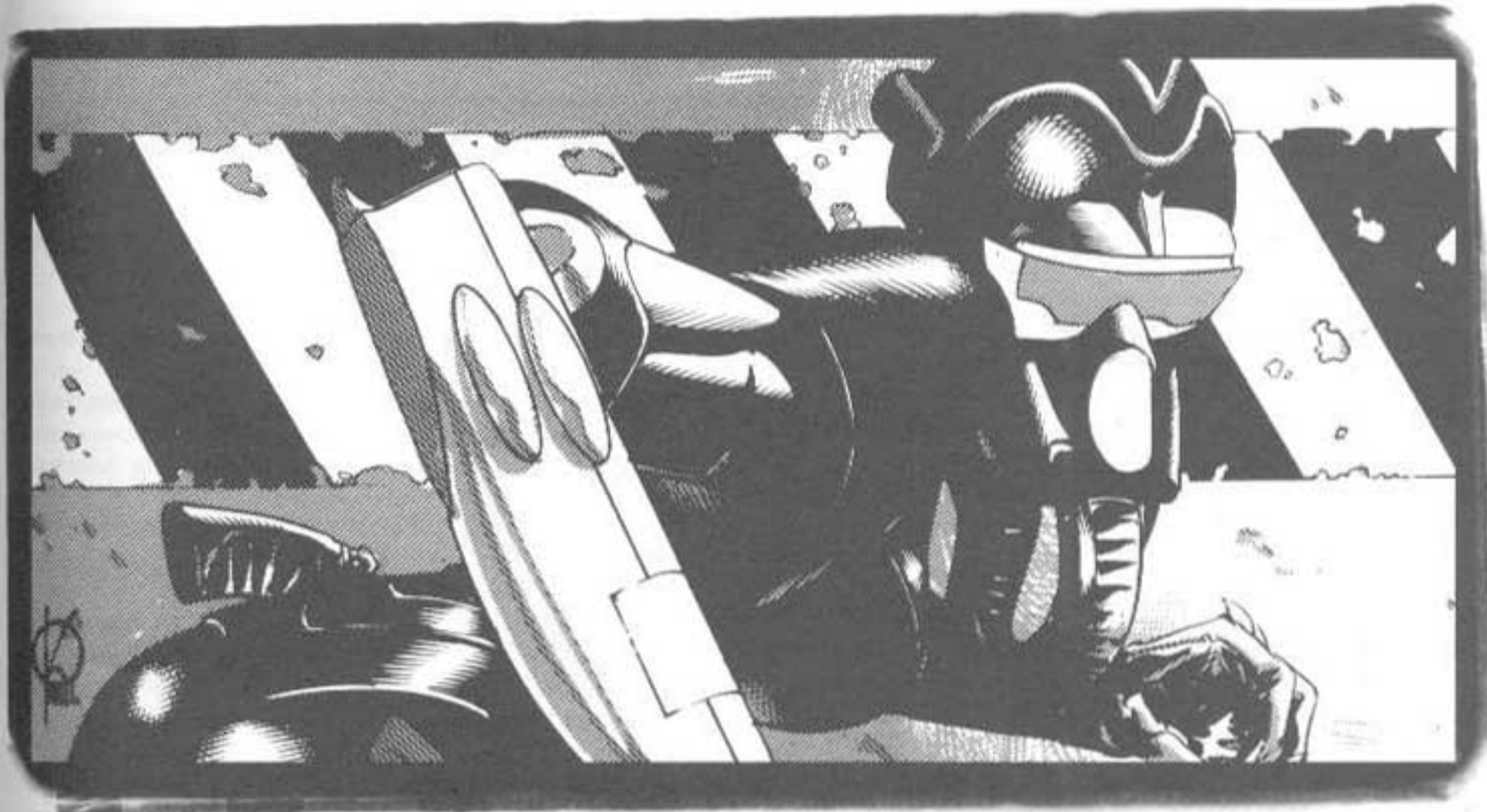
### Adept Powers

Empathic Sense  
 Improved Body +3  
 Improved Unarmed Combat (2)  
 Killing Hands (Moderate) (geas: only at night)  
 Low Light Vision  
 Pain Resistance (3)  
 Strength Boost +4 (geas: only while a victim is frightened or in pain)

### Gear

Armor Jacket over form-fitting body armor (total armor rating: 6/4)  
 Colt Manhunter [Heavy Pistol, 16 (clip), SA, 9M]  
 2 IR-smoke grenades

**Notes:** In addition to his adept powers, Schreck has the following spells Quickened on his person by a Saeder-Krupp mage: Enhance Aim (Force 2), Personal Spell Barrier (Force 6) and Increase Reflexes +1 (Force 4). The spell barrier adds +3 to the target numbers of all spells cast on or against him.



### OCTOBER 25TH ALLIANCE

The October 25th Alliance is one of the two largest anti-occupation, metahuman-rights groups in the Oakland/Berkeley area, and many smaller groups are loosely affiliated with it. The Alliance focuses its efforts on political action and non-violent resistance as well as terrorist-style attacks, in the belief that violence alone will not solve the "Japanacorp problem." As the Alliance sees it, guerrilla war may ensure the end of the occupation, but it won't do a thing toward building a just and equitable society once the Japanese corps and Imperial troops are gone.

Alliance members do a variety of things to annoy the San Francisco corporations, much of it without resorting to tit-for-tat violence. They send experts crawling through the Bay Area tax codes looking for loopholes that local businesses can exploit, so that residents of the Oakland/Berkeley sprawl will not have to work for the corps to keep eating. They also finance and run health clinics, co-op tenements and schools. The Alliance uses its money and manpower to supply all the social services once provided by the California state government.

The Alliance was the driving force behind the formation of the People's University in Berkeley, where people learn everything from vital job skills to effective ways to fight corporate power in the Bay Area. The university runs a medical clinic and several food pantries (these are the only parts of the university that actually have fixed addresses). The clinic provides medical care free of charge, no questions asked, to anyone who needs it. The food pantries provide staple food items to anyone who requests them. Both of these services have gone a long way toward alleviating the chronic poverty of the Oakland/Berkeley metroplex.

The university's classes "float" between various locations in the 'plex to protect both students and instructors, who are favored targets for corporate terror squads. The university offers a wide range of courses, including classes in basic literacy skills, computer technology, metahuman history, radical politics, medicine, law, and sociology. For interested students, the Alliance offers political forums and discussion groups through the university, where potential recruits to the movement can learn everything they need to know about the Alliance and like-minded political action groups. Workshop classes run by the Neo-Anarchists are perennial favorites—these offering include classes on how to run a successful political campaign, publishing political journals and pamphlets, getting around libel laws, making extraterritoriality laws work for you, and writing effective public speeches. Students can also take classes in such "specialized" subjects as weapon handling and technology, demolitions, hand-to-hand combat, tactical magic, decking, rigging, intelligence-gathering, espionage, and urban guerrilla-warfare techniques. In fact, the university often arranges lodgings for runners, deckers, and riggers willing to teach such classes.

In addition to providing city services, the Alliance and its fellow resistance groups act as law enforcement in the Oakland/Berkeley sprawl. Their people's tribunals can be hard on lawbreakers, so visiting runners are advised to refrain from messing with the locals. However, operations directed against corps or other San Francisco authorities aren't really considered crimes because the Japanacorps are the enemy.

## PLAYING WITH FIRE

"Once, before decades of weak liberal leadership pushed our once-great country to the brink of destruction, a proud and fearless America stood foremost among the nations of the world. Now the people of the United Canadian and American States stand at the brink, gazing down into the abyss. One more step in the direction we have been going, and the unnatural forces that have manipulated us for years will cast this country over the edge into anarchy and destruction. One moment of weakness, and the abominations that lurk in the depths of our cities will rise up to tear us apart. One push from unfriendly hands, and the greedy watchers that stare hungrily across our borders will swarm into our lands like locusts and consume every trace of our country's greatness. We can go no closer to the edge without falling, my fellow Americans, and it is this very election that will determine whether we fall forward or step back.

"If you will support me—if you, and thousands of normal Americans like you, are willing to defy those who would send us rushing headlong into damnation under the guise of 'progress'—then we can step back from that abyss. We can take our streets and our schools back from those who are using the weakness and fear of our so-called leaders against us. It will be a long and difficult road, but together, we can restore to this country the greatness that has always been, and will always be, its birthright. Will you take that first step with me?"

The responsive roar from the trid set was deafening for the fraction of a second before the dampers throttled it back to a dull murmur. Carroll smiled at the screen for a moment, watching as Kenneth Brackhaven made his way from the podium to his waiting limo, then tapped the OFF button on the desk-mounted control console. Turning from the screen, Carroll settled back into his chair and turned to face his guest.

"Your Mr. Brackhaven seems a very popular man, Mr. Carroll," his visitor said. The middle-aged Japanese gentleman smiled faintly, his white teeth barely visible between thin, papery lips. "His campaign must be going well."

Carroll grinned in return.

"Yes, Mr. Yamazaki, I'd say it's going very well. Every day, more and more people realize that he's the country's best bet for getting out of the mess we're in. And with metahuman violence on the rise the way it is, it's no surprise that he's gaining momentum." Carroll shook his head with a chuckle. "The stupid targs don't realize they're digging their own graves."

Impatient with Carroll's small talk, Yamazaki put on his "business face" and let his smile fade. As lucrative as the business arrangement with Carroll was, Yamazaki had never liked fanatics of any stripe, and the yakuza found dealing with the man personally distasteful.

"One would think the violence would have died down by now—the gangs must have a strong motivation indeed to continue their destruction at such a pace."

Carroll's smile tightened a notch.

"Strong motivation, eh? How strong do you think it would have to be?"

"I believe that a twenty-percent increase in funding would be sufficient for the next month, Mr. Carroll. After that, who can say? Such individuals are easily distracted, and holding their attention can be quite difficult."

"Twenty percent?" Carroll barked. "I'd be surprised if the go-gangs see a quarter of that. You're just looking to increase your clan's profit margin."

Yamazaki merely waited impassively. He was sure that Carroll was too pleased with himself to haggle over details.

"Well, hell, you people have earned your money so far, and the results are worth it. All right, you can have your twenty percent—but don't expect another increase next month."

Wordlessly, Yamazaki extended a platinum-ringed credstick over the desk. Carroll took it with a grunt, then slipped it in the reader and began tapping the keypad with his thick fingers, continuing to boast as he worked.

"We may not need to continue this particular project for too much longer anyway. We've got a lot more stuff in the works, including a dragon incident that's gonna blow Dunkelzahn right out of the fragging water." Yamazaki stiffened slightly, but Carroll didn't notice.

"We're gonna have this whole country so terrified of anything magical that they won't dare vote for anyone but Brackhaven."

"Dragon incident?" Yamazaki carefully kept his voice neutral, expressing idle interest and no more. If this had anything to do with recent rumors among his people, Carroll and his associates were even bigger fools than he had thought. "Street rabble are one thing, but I can't believe you'll be able to hire a dragon to cause public mayhem, particularly with one of their own running for president."

Carroll laughed out loud this time, a crude cackle that turned Yamazaki's stomach.

"Well, *hire* is probably the wrong word. Let's just say that those boys you sent over last week are really gonna come through for us. We've gotten hold of something that's gonna bring a dragon to town, mad enough to shake the walls down."

He pulled the credstick from its slot, rolling it in his palm momentarily before handing it back to Yamazaki.

"And when he does, the stupid worm is gonna send Dunkelzahn's campaign right down the drekker where it belongs."

Returning the credstick to his pocket, Yamazaki rose and bowed.

"A very clever plan, no doubt, I look forward to seeing it implemented."

Yamazaki wanted to press for more information but didn't dare arouse Carroll's suspicions. The man was a braggart and a fool, but he was not blind.

"Now, if you will excuse me, I will begin putting your generous donations to work for Mr. Brackhaven. *Konban-wa, Mr. Carroll.*"

Yamazaki returned to his limousine without a word, pulling his cell-phone from his pocket only when the car was well clear of the MCT parking garage. He dialed swiftly, punching in the appropriate security codes. As the call wound its way through a complex web of connections toward its destination, Yamazaki tried to determine the best way to present his news. Speaking to the oyabun always made him nervous, particularly when his call might interrupt important business. But this news could not wait, for even oyabuns fear the anger of great dragons.

## INTRODUCTION

In C.O.D., a Johnson hires the runners to pick up a large, mysterious package at a smuggler's way station just outside Seattle, keep it protected at a safe house for a day or two, then deliver it to a downtown Seattle address. When members of several gangs and a yakuza hit squad attempt to snatch the package from the runners, a paramilitary group helps the team fend off the attackers ... but the strangers refuse to identify themselves or explain their interest in the matter. When the runners attempt to deliver the package, they encounter a very upset great eastern dragon, who is intent on reclaiming the package—which contains a dragon egg!

C.O.D. is set in Seattle but can be moved to another city that could plausibly have yakuza operating within it.

## WHICH CAME FIRST?

The Human Nation works hard to get what it wants—and at the moment, it wants Kenneth Brackhaven to become the next UCAS president. So far, Brackhaven has gained popular support by exploiting people's fears of magic and metahumanity, and the Nation has been helping their candidate by stirring up as much metahuman gang violence as it can. (Apparently, Human Nation members figure that John Q. Public will grow more suspicious and afraid of metahumans—and more susceptible to Brackhaven's bigoted message—every time he sees meta-gang violence on the trideo news.)

In Seattle, the effort to stir up such violence is led by Lawrence Carroll, a mid-level manager at MCT. Carroll has been performing his mission by paying metahuman gangs to cause as much public mayhem as possible. To prevent the gangs—and anyone else—from learning of the Human Nation/Brackhaven connection to the whole business, Carroll has been using local yakuza as middlemen to contract and negotiate with the gangs.

Recently, in response to the great dragon Dunkelzahn's slow but steady rise in the polls, Carroll hatched a new plot designed to stoke people's fears of dragons. Using money from other Human Nation members as well as a considerable amount from



his personal funds, Carroll had his yakuza middlemen contract a top-flight team of runners to steal a single dragon egg from the lair of Masaru, a young great eastern dragon dwelling on Vancouver Island. Then Carroll hired some less expensive, more expendable shadowrunners (guess who!) to keep an eye on the egg until Masaru wakes up and seeks it out. (Carroll has no doubt that a being with the magical power of a dragon will be able to track down the egg, and he is correct.)

Knowing that the dragon will zero in on the stolen egg, Carroll directs the runners to deliver it to a busy downtown area—thereby ensuring that Masaru's attempt to reclaim his property will appear as an "unprovoked attack" and attract as much public attention as possible. Members of the Human Nation's paramilitary wing, the Flaming Sword, will be on hand to make certain that Masaru, the egg and the runners are all destroyed during the battle, thus removing any evidence of Carroll's plot. The incident will provide Kenneth Brackhaven with a wonderful opportunity to rail about the dangerous and unstable nature of dragons, and Dunkelzahn's poll numbers will drop faster than a penny off a skyscraper.

At Carroll's last meeting with his yakuza contact, he inadvertently dropped a few hints about the operation. The contact, Isao Yamazaki, had arranged the initial meet between Carroll and the egg-stealing runners, but Yamazaki had no idea at the time what Carroll was planning. Realizing that Masaru might very well trace the theft of its egg back to him, Yamazaki immediately began trying to recover the egg. However, Carroll's Flaming Sword troops are on alert to make sure that everything goes according to the plan.

Masaru, of course, wants his egg back, come hell or high water. If the dragon has to make a public attack to get it, Brackhaven's campaign will receive a major boost (and Dunkelzahn's will take a massive hit). The runners can prevent this—and perhaps avoid Masaru's wrath—by returning the egg to the dragon. However, the runners will also make themselves some very dangerous enemies among the Human Nation.

## SETTING THINGS UP

Before running C.O.D., try to make the characters aware of an increase in metahuman gang violence over the course of the election season. Playing the adventures in *Shadows of the Underworld*, as well as the ones in *Super Tuesday*, should accomplish this goal. The gamemaster may also involve them in attacks by metahuman street gangs or describe the increasingly frequent trid news stories about such violence. Gamemasters may also mention that Kenneth Brackhaven is talking about the gang attacks in his campaign speeches, but should take care not to expose the connection between Brackhaven and the attacks.

## PICK UP AND DELIVER

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The telecom's beep gets you out of bed at the crack of noon, which doesn't do much for your mood. You stumble over to the terminal and tap the ACCEPT key with a bleary, "Watchuwant?" The screen brightens to show your fixer's smiling face, and the day begins looking up as you hear him say the six magic words—"I've got a job for you." You could definitely use the cred right about now, and besides, it's been so long since anyone's shot at you that you're starting to miss it.

The meet's going down at a bar in Snohomish called the Eight-Sixteen, a charming little nightspot where honest, hard-working folks can toss back a few pints of soy-beer while the jukebox plays the latest twang country hits. Not the kind of place you're used to meeting a Johnson, but then, most of the Johnsons you meet in other kinds of places tend to frag you over, anyway. Maybe, just maybe, this one will be an exception.

After suiting up in your best honest-hardworking-folks clothes, you roll up to the bar a few minutes early to scan the place over. Seems like the whole crowd has a "Detect Strangers" spell on, 'cause the minute you step through the door, almost every eye in the place swivels toward you. The customers don't look exactly hostile, but they sure aren't about to buy you a drink. The looks don't bother you much—not after the drek

you've been through in your line of work—so you motion the bartender over and ask if your good buddy Johnson has been in tonight. "Back room," he says, waving his bar rag toward the rear of the place. "First door on the left, past the kitchen." The customers drift back to their own business as you make your way to the designated door.

Still, you can't quite shake the feeling that the patrons are watching [Insert name(s) of metahuman runner(s)] with a little extra caution. You get the feeling that metahumans aren't exactly regular customers here at the Eight-Sixteen. Then again, maybe they're just nervous because of all the metahuman gang violence that's been dominating the local news lately.

The back room is an unremarkable cinder-block cube, with a well-worn set of chairs and a battered old table that looks like it's made out of real wood. A gaunt, fortyish human with graying brown hair and pale blue eyes sits at the far end of the table. On first glance, he looks like most of the patrons out front. Then you notice his hideously expensive boots—looks to you like a typical corper trying to blend in with the locals.

"You're prompt," he says. "I like that." Hauling his feet off the table, he motions to the chairs. "Sit down, and let's talk business. My name's Lowery, and I need somebody reliable to take care of a package for me."

## HOOKS

The beginning of this scene may make the runners, especially any metahumans, slightly uncomfortable—they are clearly strangers in this section of town and not particularly welcome strangers at that. By comparison, the meeting with "Lowery" (actually Lawrence Carroll) should seem friendly and straightforward. Carroll is trying hard to present an honest and open demeanor to the runners, and he's a good enough actor to conceal his ulterior motives. He doesn't act arrogant or superior but he will make it clear that he's the boss at the moment, and he won't take any drek from the runners.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Carroll tries to make the runners feel at ease, offering to spring for drinks if the runners want them. However, he has no real desire to get to know the runners and will keep chit-chat to a minimum.

Carroll explains that he has a large and valuable package arriving in Seattle the following evening. He needs the runners to pick it up from the transport team and take it to a certain safe house in Redmond. The runners are to keep the package at the safe house, unopened and undisturbed, until Carroll tells them where to deliver it. Within 48 hours, he will contact the runners and give them a downtown address to which they must deliver the box. That done, they can return to the Eight-Sixteen to pick up the remainder of their fees.

If the runners push for more information, Carroll explains that he is an art collector, and he's adding a new piece to his collection. Unfortunately, the import and export duties on such objects are rather high, so he's using "non-standard methods"—i.e., shadowrunners—to deliver the item. He doesn't expect any trouble but can't afford to leave the package unguarded. He refuses

to go into any more detail, saying that the runners don't need to know more. However, he assures them (truthfully) that they will not be transporting bombs, drugs, BTLs, weapons or anything else grossly illegal or dangerous.

Initially, Carroll offers each runner a fee of 10,000¥ in certified cred—2,000¥ each up front and the remainder once the package is delivered. If the runners haggle, Carroll seems surprised—he's only asking the runners to sit on a box for a day or two, after all. (In fact, Carroll isn't expecting any trouble until the egg is being delivered, so his surprise is genuine.) Still, the runners can negotiate a higher fee by making standard Negotiation Tests (Carroll's Negotiation Skill is 5). Carroll does not expect the runners to live long enough to collect most of their pay, but he also doesn't want to arouse their suspicions, so he bargains as if every ruyen was coming out of his own pocket. If the runners do not have a vehicle large enough to transport the package (at least van-sized), Carroll arranges access to a no-frills VW Superkombi van (p. 31, **Rigger Black Book**), but warns them that any damage to the vehicle will be deducted from their pay. Other than that, he expects the runners to be responsible for their own gear.

## DEBUGGING

If the runners seem likely to reject the job, Carroll appears to be at a loss for words. To him it seems like easy money, and he's sure plenty of other runners will take the job if the team turns him down. Make the mission seem like a milk run and let the players feel like they're "wimping out" if they won't take it.

A ruckus in the bar is the only other potential problem in **Pick Up and Deliver**. The customers out front are hardworking blue-collar types, and they know they can't stand up to shadowrunners. If the runners cause trouble, the bartender immediately hits the PANIC BUTTON under the bar, and the patrons flee. Lone Star will show up promptly, and the runners lose any chance of being hired for the run. (If the runners are professionals, they should know better than to cause trouble at a meet.)

## SIGN HERE, PLEASE

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The stars are just starting to penetrate the evening smog as you roll through the gates of Flat City, a tiny airstrip in Redmond that specializes in, shall we say, *unscheduled* flights. You check the time—nineteen-thirty hours, which means your package should be arriving any minute now.

With a resounding *tchong*, high-intensity arc lights pop to life all over the airfield, illuminating the large, open stretch of tarmac that serves as the Flat City runway. As your eyes adjust to the sudden brightness, you see the rounded outline of a Sieder-Krupp *Komet* swooping in from the north for a perfect VSTOL landing. Whatever this package is, it's arriving in Seattle in style.

As soon as the *Komet* comes to a stop, the airfield lights shut back down, leaving the area dark except for your headlights and

the LAV's running lights. The T-bird's rear hatch hisses open, and two elves and a troll perform a military-style exit. The troll scans the area for trouble, assault rifle at the ready, while one of the elves scans the northern sky with a pair of night-vision binoculars. The other elf looks in your direction and then approaches, a SMG slung over his back.

"You the pickup team?" he asks. When you respond affirmatively, he motions you toward the *Komet*. "Bring your van up," he says, "let's get this thing transferred."

As you approach, you see the troll tromping down the T-bird's loading ramp with what you assume must be your package. It's a black, reinforced plastic case about a meter and a half tall by a meter square, and looks fairly heavy from the way the troll's handling it.

"Okay, chummers," says the elf in charge, "it's all yours now. Happy trails." The troll plunks the case down at the bottom of the ramp, and the transport team promptly heads back toward the idling *Komet*. Doesn't look like these three plan on hanging around to answer any questions.

## HOOKS

"Lowery" has arranged some high-quality transport and experienced escorts for a "harmless art object"—which should make the runners a bit suspicious, if they are not already. Play the transport team as skilled, savvy runners who want to hand off their cargo and be on their way. These runners are trying to make it a simple, businesslike transfer, but they're worried that Masaru might be pursuing them and want to put some serious distance between themselves and the egg as rapidly as possible.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The transport team has just arrived from Masaru's lair, where they managed to steal one of the dragon's eggs after knocking the dragon unconscious. (How? Don't ask—it involved a specially designed Stun Masaru spell, some very expensive fetishes, several elementals, precise timing, massive amounts of Karma and a generous dollop of luck.) They caved in the entrance to Masaru's lair to buy themselves more escape time, then raced to Flat City to drop off their package.

As soon as the characters have taken the package, the transport team members head back to their LAV and lift off. They're not sure just how far behind Masaru is, and they want to get far away from the egg before the dragon shows up. Additionally, their mage was badly wounded during the snatch, and they're anxious to get her some medical attention. Any character who makes a successful Perception (5) Test can see the banged-up mage in the LAV. Any astrally projecting magician can see the injured mage from astral space and recognize that she recently engaged in some powerful astral combat.

The transport team members are not sure who the characters are or what they're going to do with the egg, and frankly, they don't *want* to know. The characters can ask the transport team any questions they like, but they're not going to get much in the way of answers. Twiggs, the brusque elf samurai who acts as the team's spokesman, responds to any inquiries with comments like,



"Sorry, chummers, but if Mr. Johnson wanted you to know, he would've told ya."

### HOT PURSUIT

Once the characters have loaded the egg into their vehicle—along with the case, it weighs about forty kilos—they can set off for the safe house, a former firehouse located about ten kilometers away in the Hollywood area of the Barrens. On the way, have the driver (or any other character who says he is watching for pursuit) make a Perception (5) Test. On a successful test, the character notices a pack of about a dozen motorcycle riders following at a distance. If the character achieves 3 or more successes on the test, he can see that the riders are all human and are all wearing distinctive red and orange leathers under their heavy coats. Any character who makes a successful Street Etiquette (4) Test identifies the bikers as the notorious 405 Hellhounds go-gang and realizes that the Hellhounds are some distance outside their usual turf—which might explain why they're concealing their colors.

Isao Yamazaki has hired the Hellhounds to follow the runners and the egg. Yamazaki was responsible for hiring the transport team in the first place and knew that it would be using a *Komet*, so he simply hired several gangs to watch Seattle's secret T-bird landing sites. The Hellhounds are not looking for a fight; they are simply following the egg to its destination so that they can inform Yamazaki of its whereabouts. If the characters try to outrun or engage the gangers, use the standard vehicle combat and pursuit rules (pp. 104-107, **SRII**). The gangers drop back, take cover or scatter if fired on. They will not return fire because Yamazaki has threatened them with slow, painful death if the van's cargo is damaged, and the Hellhounds don't want to risk it.

If the runners manage to capture one of the Hellhounds, the biker knows nothing about the runners' cargo. The Hellhounds' boss simply told them to look for a *Komet* coming in to Seattle, find out where the *Komet*'s cargo was taken, then come back and report in. Any biker caught by the players will not know where the Hellhounds are to meet their contact.

### DEBUGGING

If the runners get into a scuffle with the transport team, they're in trouble. Twiggs's experienced team members have just returned from a run against a great dragon, so they're armed for bear. Use the Elf Street Samurai archetype (p. 7, **Contacts**) for Twiggs but give him an Intelligence of 5, (that increase makes his Reaction 6 (10) and his Initiative 10 + 3D6). The rest of his team includes an Elven Hitman (p. 206, **SRII**) packing a Mossberg SM-CMDT, a Troll Street Samurai (p. 13, **Contacts**), a human Rigger (p. 59, **SRII**) with Vectored Thrust: 4, and an unconscious elf mage. Every team member wears Light Security Armor and Security Helmets (total armor 7/6), and each has a Professional Rating 4 and Threat Rating 5. For combat purposes, treat the *Komet* as a *Banshee* (p. 264, **SRII**).

Twiggs' team does its best to protect the egg if the runners attack for some reason, but the team is not willing to die for it and will retreat without the egg if that becomes the best option. Additionally,

any scrap enrages Carroll, who will send a team of Flaming Sword commandos to kill the player characters and recover the egg.

If the players notice the Hellhounds, they may decide to ignore their assigned safe house and head somewhere else. Wherever they go, the Yamazaki will be able to track them down before too long. Furthermore, Carroll has hidden a tracking device inside the egg case and will be able to track its whereabouts easily. And Masaru's magical abilities enable the dragon to track down the egg wherever the runners take it.

If the runners proceed to a location other than the pre-arranged safe house, modify the description in **I Hear You Knocking** to match the new location.

## I HEAR YOU KNOCKING

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Through the driving rain on your grimy windshield, your headlights finally pick out the building you've been looking for—a two-story brick monstrosity that looks as old as Seattle itself. The building's in fairly good shape for its age, though, particularly considering the neighborhood. After opening one of the massive garage doors in the front wall, you roll inside and seal the place up behind you. The main room is a huge, empty concrete box with an oil-stained floor, a battered sofa, a cheap card table and chairs, an old trid set and an antique phone on one wall. Except for the rusty metal pole that extends through a hole in the ceiling to the second story, the place looks just like every other safe house you've ever been in.

You make a quick sweep around the place to make sure it's clear. It might not be much, but it's gonna be home for a while, so you make yourselves comfy and start waiting for the phone call.

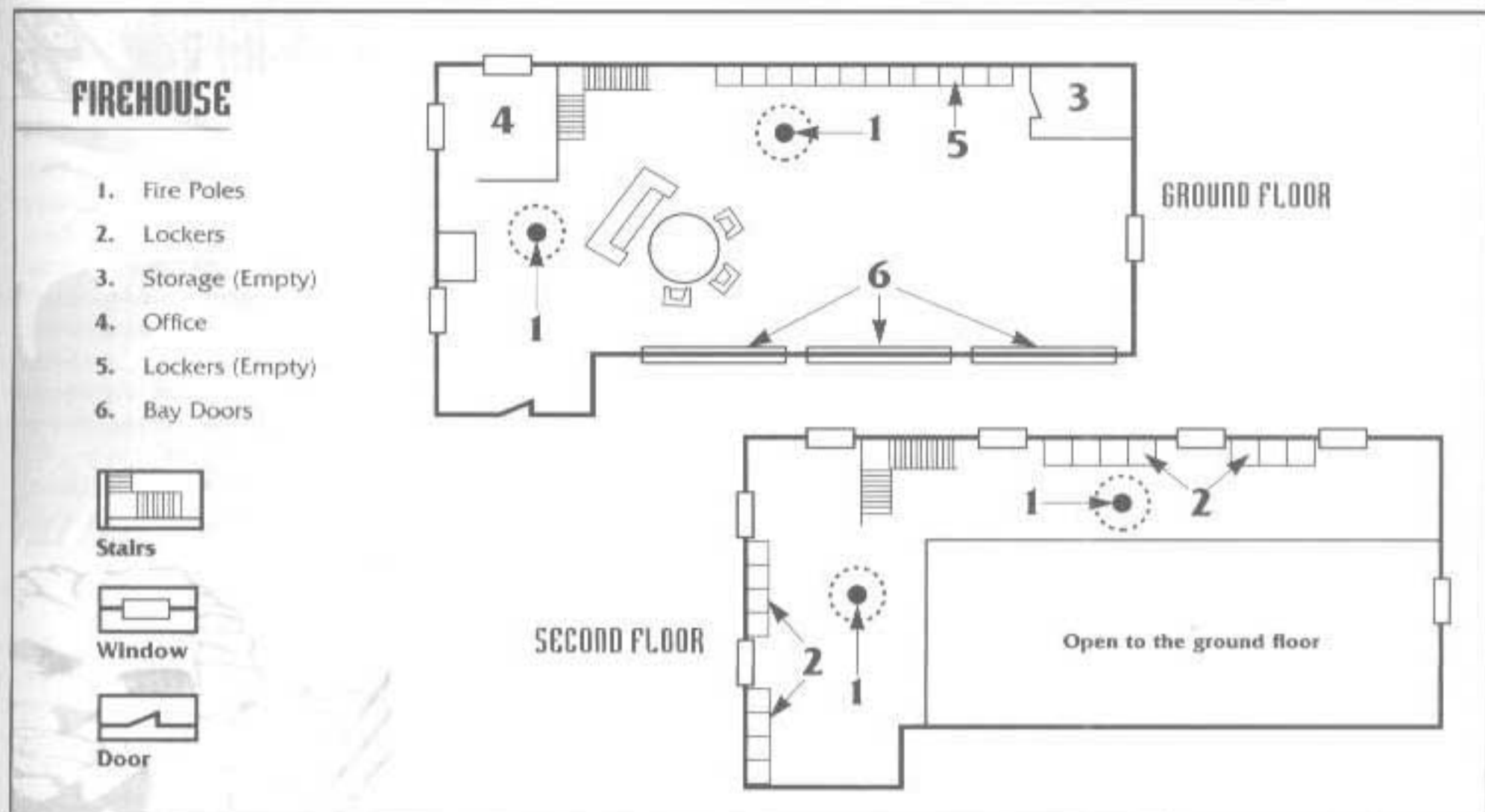
#### Read the following if/when the characters open the crate:

Finally, you get past the lock and flip the latches. Noiselessly, you raise one side of the crate. Under the thick gray packaging foam you see a smooth, oval shape, about a meter long and half as big around. It's a pale yellow color, lightly mottled with mossy green patches and flecks. It looks almost like plastic at first, but then you realize what you're looking at.

Only a few things can lay an egg that big, and none of them are the kind of thing you'd want to run into.

### HOOKS

Keep everything as quiet and calm as possible at the start of this scene. No trouble is in sight; even if the runners got into a skirmish with the Hellhounds on their way to the safe house, the gangers are nowhere to be seen now. Give the players a chance to roleplay a little, as they balance the need to guard their package with the insufferable boredom of an empty safe house. Maybe they'll get into an argument over whether or not to open the crate. If they start going off on wild tangents or showing signs of getting bored, hit 'em with the Red Hot Nukes attack (see **Bang Bang on the Door**, p. 50). Alternatively, the runners may open the crate and discover the egg during this scene. If they do, give



them a good long moment to realize what deep drek they're in, then hit them with the gang attack.

When the Nukes attack, start the combat like an Old West bushwhack. The gangers take potshots at the runners from behind cover but scrupulously avoid shooting anywhere near the egg case. However, the mood becomes much more up close and personal when the yakuza team starts mixing it up with the player characters. Use the quirks of the fire station setting to add flavor to the combat (heck, where else can you have a physical adept slide down a fire pole to attack an opponent?).

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The safe house that Carroll has arranged is a converted firehouse (see map, above). It's an old but sturdy building (Barrier Rating 12), with few windows but good visibility and lines of fire; any tacticians among the runners should find it nicely defensible. The main room can be entered through two large vehicle doors (Barrier Rating 6), which can be secured with heavy metal chains. The third, normal-sized door is secured with a Level 6 maglock (the credsticks Carroll gave the team contain the correct passcode). The surrounding rooms are empty, and the phone is set up to accept incoming calls only. In short, the safe house is a really boring place to spend a few days.

Outside, a team of eight Flaming Sword snipers, led by "Captain" Rob Sewall (see **Cast of Shadows**, p. 55) are carefully hidden on the surrounding rooftops. Two snipers are hiding on each of the four buildings surrounding the firehouse (front, back and each side). The snipers have two purposes: to keep the egg

safe until it's time for the runners to deliver it downtown, and to make sure that the runners don't screw anything up. The snipers will remain carefully concealed unless they need to defend the egg or take down renegade runners. Sewall carries a signal locator, which is locked on the tracking device inside the egg case; if the runners decide to take the egg somewhere else, he sets up his squad wherever the runners hole up. If the runners spot and confront Sewall or his snipers, see **Friends Like These** (p. 51).

The runners will probably take this opportunity to examine their package. As described earlier, it is a large black case made of reinforced plastic (Barrier Rating 8), the kind of foam-lined case used for shipping fragile electronic equipment or, presumably, art objects. The two halves of the crate are hinged together on one side and locked on the other with a Rating 8 maglock (the runners do *not* have the passcode). Several tape seals are set across the lock, so any physical tampering will leave obvious traces. Astral examination reveals nothing unusual about the crate from the outside. However, any astrally projecting character who attempts to reach into or pass through the crate will bump into something solid (the egg, though the character will not know this). Magician characters should realize this means that something in the crate is either magical, heavily warded or alive.

If the runners manage to open the crate, they find the egg wrapped in heavy packaging foam. Assessing the egg now will reveal that it is alive and strongly magical. Any character who makes a successful Perception (8) Test also notices a tiny pair of wires leading from the case's latch into the foam padding. The wires lead to a small transmitter buried in the foam. The transmit-

ter sends a signal to Sewall if the seals on the case are broken. If that happens, Sewall immediately phones the runners to express his disapproval (see **Friends Like These**, p. 51). Gamemasters may give particularly careful or skilled characters a chance to notice the wiring before they break the seals completely, perhaps enabling them to avoid triggering the alarm.

The packaging foam also conceals the tracking device that Sewall is using to keep track of the egg. If the runners use a bug scanner or similar equipment to scan the case, they notice the tracking device even before they open the case.

### BANG BANG ON THE DOOR

If the runners do not provoke a reaction from Sewall and his team or open the crate, let the rest of the night pass uneventfully. Then, shortly before dawn, have the Red Hot Nukes attack them. The Nukes number about two dozen dwarf gangers. They take cover behind various rubbish and wrecked cars around the front of the building and open fire; their initial volleys break some windows and wake any sleeping runners but don't do much damage. The dwarfs do not attempt to sneak around to the rear of the building or storm the firehouse. The gangers are content merely to stay under cover, fire at targets of opportunity and draw the runners' attention to the front of the building.

The Nukes attack is really a decoy for the three-man yakuza strike team that is sneaking in through the back of the safe house to recover the egg. After slipping in through a second-story rear window, the three yaks do their best to get to the egg and spirit it away unseen. They will fight if the runners spot them, but they will not kill the runners if they can avoid it.

Meanwhile, Sewall's snipers will be trying to take out as many gangers as possible. (The gang attack also distracts the snipers, who don't spot the yakuza sneaking in.) The runners may not notice the snipers' silenced weapons, but they will probably notice that the dwarfs are dying faster than the runners can shoot them. After the combat ends, the runners will certainly wonder just what the frag is going on and may poke around and spot Sewall's snipers. If so, handle the conversation between Sewall and the runners as outlined in **Friends Like These** (p. 51).

Statistics for Sewall, his snipers, and the yakuza team are provided in **Cast of Shadows** (p. 54). Use the following stats for the Red Hot Nukes:

#### Nukes Gang Members (12)

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

Initiative: 3 + 1D6

Threat/Professional Ratings: 2/2

Skills: Armed Combat 3, Firearms 3

Gear: Six gangers have Uzi IIs [SMG, 24 (clip), BF, 6M]; the rest carry Ares Predators [Heavy Pistol, 15 (clip), SA, 9M]; and all wear Lined Coats (4/2)

Don't worry too much about rolling Attack and Resistance Tests for each individual dwarf. The gangers aren't picking their shots too carefully, so the runners shouldn't be in any real danger as long as they keep their heads down. Furthermore, Sewall's

snipers pick off any available ganger targets.

The yakuza team, on the other hand, will not pull any punches in its efforts to reclaim the egg.

### ENTER THE DRAGON

Masaru escapes from his caved-in lair at approximately 0800 hours on the morning of the gang attack and immediately makes a beeline for Seattle. Shortly after the dragon leaves, Carol receives word of the dragon's departure. (Carroll has a ship in the area, watching the dragon's lair.) After phoning in some anonymous tips to the newsrooms at local trid stations, Carroll phones the runners and tells them to make the delivery. (If the runners have holed up somewhere other than the firehouse, Carroll calls one of them directly—he's obtained the phone number from the fixer who arranged the meet.)

At this point, proceed to **You Can't Make An Omelet** (p. 52). Even if the runners have escaped with the egg and are on the run, proceed to that section, because Masaru will find the egg and the runners wherever they go.

### DEBUGGING

If the yakuza team members manage to get away with the egg, Sewall sends half of his team to follow them (remember the tracking device!) while the other half accompanies him to confront the runners (see **Friends Like These**, p. 51). If the players can convince Sewall that they weren't party to the yakuza action, Sewall will insist that the runners join forces with his troops to get the egg back. If the runners agree, proceed to **You Can't Make An Omelet** (p. 52), but stage the slam-bang finale at the yakuza's headquarters, with Masaru sweeping in at a climactic moment in the battle to take back the egg and kill anyone who tries to stop him.

If the runners catch one or more of the yakuza team members, the prisoner(s) tells the runners about the theft of the egg (if the runners don't already know what they were guarding). The prisoner points out that Masaru is sure to come looking for his egg and will probably kill whoever he finds around it unless they immediately return it to the dragon. The yakuza member will try to convince the runners to return the egg or help the yakuza do that before it is too late. (Sometimes even the hated yakuza can be right.) However, Sewall and his troops will try to block any attempt to return the egg.

Of course, the runners may decide to simply abandon the egg and make a run for it. Sewall's snipers will still try to kill them, but Masaru will no longer be interested in them. In this case, go to **Picking Up The Pieces** (p. 53) to determine the consequences of this decision.

Finally, if the runners damage or destroy the egg, everyone turns against them. Carroll and the Human Nation will be enraged that the runners spoiled Carroll's plan. Yamazaki will be enraged because the runners denied him the opportunity to clear his reputation with the dragon. And Masaru will be enraged because the runners damaged or destroyed his egg. In a nutshell, the runners are pretty well fragged if they choose this option, so do your best to discourage them if they seem to be leaning toward it.

## FRIENDS LIKE THESE

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Read the following if the characters spot Sewall's snipers after the gang attack:

It doesn't take a genius to figure out that you weren't the only ones shooting at those gang-bangers. Clearly, there's somebody else involved here, and you'd better find out who.

As you survey the battleground, you spot a flicker of motion out of the corner of your eye. Spinning into a crouch, you turn, ready to fire or dodge at a moment's notice. A silhouetted figure rises from the roof of a nearby building, long rifle held low but ready, and calls down from the rooftop in a hard, stern voice.

"Calm down," the figure says. "Just think of us as backup."

Us? How many people are up there?

"A little extra security, courtesy of Mr. Lowery. You people just go on with your job. We'll make sure that nothing goes wrong."

From the way the mystery man is holding that sniper rifle, you realize that last sentence could be interpreted in two possible ways, and you don't like one of them at all.

Read the following if the characters have opened the crate:

Abruptly, the phone on the fire station wall rings, startling you out of your thoughts. Maybe this is your cue to deliver the egg and be done with this fragging run once and for all. You answer the phone with a simple, businesslike "Hello?"

A tight, angry voice comes back across the phone line.

"Your instructions were to leave that case unopened. You fragged that up. You people had better finish this operation according to the plan—*exactly* according to the plan—or you won't walk away from this one, understand? We're watching you, and we're not going to tolerate any more mistakes. Do I make myself clear?"

### HOOKS

In this encounter, the runners meet Rob Sewall and his Human Nation goon squad. While they won't know exactly who the HN troops are, make it clear that these guys are tough customers who intend to make sure that the runners fulfill their contract to the letter. The appearance of Sewall and his troops should also raise the runners' suspicions. After all, if Lowery can afford such high-grade security, why did he need to hire the runners? If they haven't already, the runners should now begin to realize that they have gotten into something pretty deep, and it smells more like fertilizer than flowers.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

Rob Sewall leads the Flaming Sword, the newly formed Human Nation military wing. Under orders from Lawrence Carroll, "Captain" Sewall has set up a squad of eight crack snipers around the safe house to make sure that the runners get the egg where it needs to go at the appropriate time. That means the snipers will help the runners fight off the Red Hot Nukes' attack and may even

pursue the yakuza team if it seems necessary. On the other hand, the snipers are also watching the runners for the slightest hint of treachery. Finally, once the runners take the egg downtown and Masaru attacks them, the snipers have orders to destroy Masaru, the egg and the runners (as well as anyone else who might be able to expose the plot).

Sewall tries to keep himself, his squad and its mission concealed, figuring that the runners are more likely to do their jobs if they think everything is going as planned. However, Sewall certainly takes action if anything seems to threaten the egg (like the Red Hot Nukes attack) or if the runners make an obvious deviation from the plan (like trying to leave without the egg). Even if the runners detect the squad or the squad reveals itself to the runners, Sewall will not disclose any information about the squad or its mission.

Sewall views the runners (especially any metahuman runners) as ignorant pawns in a war they cannot possibly understand. He has confidence in his troops and their ability to carry out their mission, especially because they have good cover and the advantage of high ground. Sewall figures that the runners won't dare disobey his orders if they know that they are surrounded by expert marksmen, so he'll have his squad make a show of force if the runners try anything stupid (in Sewall's mind, anything not part of the original plan constitutes something stupid). However, if the runners die, his troops will have to deliver the egg and expose themselves to considerable risk in the process. To avoid this outcome, he orders his troops not to harm any of the runners unless absolutely necessary.

### DEBUGGING

The biggest danger here is that the runners will draw Sewall's snipers into a fire fight. Sewall will not start a fight—he doesn't want to kill the runners until they have done their job and he certainly doesn't want to damage the egg—but he's too macho to back down if fired on. At first he will order his men to shoot near but not at the runners, trying to scare them into submission. If this fails or if the runners wound one of the snipers, Sewall tries to shoot one of the runners (he aims for any magicians in the group) in the leg. If this fails, he orders an all-out attack. Like most other Human Nation members, Sewall fears and hates anything magical, so he orders his troops to concentrate fire on any obvious magician runners first (the Flaming Sword squad has no magicians of its own). The Flaming Sword troops are also fiercely anti-metahuman, so any metahuman runners will be targets of choice for the troops as well. However, the snipers will attempt to kill all of the runners in the end.

If the runners kill Sewall and his squad, Carroll will not know about it until Sewall fails to make his hourly report. When Carroll does smell trouble, he sends another squad over to investigate and (if necessary) take over, but the runners may have time to escape or make another plan for dealing with the egg before the replacement goons arrive.

## YOU CAN'T MAKE AN OMELET

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The call comes just before noon; looks like Lowery was able to complete his arrangements sooner than he thought. Your destination is an office in the Jefferson Center Building, right on Ninth Avenue in the heart of downtown. You're not used to going to such public places during the lunch hour, but the prospect of getting this fragging package off your hands is enough to overcome any jitters.

Traffic's no worse than usual for a downtown lunch rush hour, which means it takes the better part of forever to get where you're going. Finding a legal parking space would take the rest of forever, so you double-park the van outside the Jefferson building and start to unload your package. You get a few odd looks, but no one seems to be taking any special notice until a young, agitated-looking sarariman steps up to you.

"That package," he says, pointing to the black plastic case. "Its contents belong to me." He has a strong accent that you cannot place. "You will give it to me," he continues. "Now."

He pulls off his mirrorshades, revealing catlike eyes the color of molten gold. They might be the newest trend in cybereyes, but somehow you don't think so. The pupils narrow to barely visible slits as he awaits your answer.

### HOOKS

This is it, the grand finale. Pull out all the stops, starting with Masaru's forceful confrontation with the characters and swiftly moving on with the action. Add one element after another; first Masaru, then the Flaming Sword snipers, then Masaru's transformation, then the yakuza, then Lone Star and so forth. Make the players feel like everything is happening at once, and make sure they know they're in the middle of it all. Nearly everyone on the street seems to have a gun or a spell, panicking bystanders are screaming and frantically trying to get out of the way—make the scene so fast and frenzied that the runners hardly know who to shoot.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

The agitated sarariman is Masaru in human form. The dragon has tracked the egg to the characters and has decided to give them one chance to surrender the egg peacefully. Masaru does not assume his true form immediately, but his eyes and demeanor should make it clear that he is more than just an upset middle manager. Any character who assents Masaru immediately recognizes the dragon's true nature—and his barely controlled fury. Smart player characters will turn the egg over immediately.

Of course, the Human Nation has no desire to see this confrontation end peacefully. Unless the runners have either killed or evaded Sewall's squad (by attaching the tracking device to a passing city bus, for example), the snipers will have taken up positions around the Jefferson building. If they see any sign that the runners are going to hose things up by handing over the egg, they open fire on the egg crate. The reinforced plastic is sturdy (Barrier

Rating 8), but it won't stand up to sniper-rifle fire for long. The egg itself has a Body Rating of 4 and 2 points of Hardened Armor—it's tough, but will likely sustain some damage before long.

Once that happens, Masaru blows up, figuratively and literally. The dragon expels his Noxious Breath into the surrounding area and assumes his true form, taking a full round to do so. If the egg is still intact after that, Masaru grabs the case in his talons and attempts to escape. The Flaming Sword snipers take a few shots at Masaru but concentrate most of their fire on the egg. The shots prompt Masaru to place a Barrier spell around the egg before he launches an all-out attack against the snipers.

Not surprisingly, a dozen disguised yakuza soldiers are also in the area, waiting for something bad to go down. Yamazaki isn't sure that attacking the snipers will keep Masaru from killing him for his part in the egg-napping, but he figures it's the best chance he's got. Once the snipers open fire, the yaks pull their guns as well and start blasting away at the snipers (and the runners as well, if the characters seem ready to harm the egg). Any surviving members of the yakuza team from the safe house are on the scene as well. All the yakuza members attempt to protect the egg (and, if possible, the dragon) from harm. Use the following statistics for the soldiers:

#### Yakuza Soldiers (12)

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

**Initiative:** 4 + 1D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 2/3

**Skills:** Armed Combat 4, Firearms 5, Stealth 3, Unarmed Combat 4

**Gear:** Form-Fitting Body Armor-3 (4/1), Ares Viper Silvergun [Heavy Pistol, 30 (clip), SA/BF, 9S(f)]

If and when the egg takes Deadly damage, Masaru goes completely berserk. The dragon begins attacking any available enemies, starting with the most obvious—which may well mean the runners, unless any of Sewall's men have been exposed. Hell hath no fury like a dragon peeved, and Masaru wreaks major damage on downtown Seattle. The runners' smartest course of action is running like hell and letting the dragon, the snipers and the yakuza duke it out until Lone Star shows up—but how often do shadowrunners do the smart thing?

Speaking of Lone Star, this is downtown Seattle we're talking about, so the first cops arrive within ten Combat Rounds. However, a pair of beat cops in a Chrysler-Nissan Patrol-1 is unlikely to have much impact on a fight this size, so screaming for backup will be the cops' first action. Within a few minutes, several High Threat Response teams begin arriving, not to mention numerous patrol helicopters, a few LAVs, and a large contingent of the Metroplex Guard. If Masaru is still around, the dragon will have a hard time escaping from that kind of force. The snipers, yakuza and any remaining runners may be able to slip away on foot in the confusion, however.

No one is waiting for the package in the Jefferson building; Carroll supplied the runners with the address of a suite that does not exist. He picked the Jefferson building and its environs as a densely occupied, highly visible location for a dragon attack.

To determine the aftermath of this chaos, go to **Picking Up The Pieces**, below.

## DEBUGGING

Despite all the firepower flying around in this scene, the runners actually have a decent chance to survive if they avoid attacking Masaru or the egg. The dragon concentrates his attacks on anyone shooting at the egg; the snipers divide their attention between the egg, dragon, and yakuza; and the yakuza concern themselves with eliminating the snipers. Of course, Sewall's men try to kill the runners if they see them escaping, and anyone the runners shoot at will most certainly shoot back. Additionally, any yakuza operative who survived the safe house raid may bear a personal grudge against the characters, depending on how that encounter turned out.

If the players do attack the egg or Masaru, they are in very deep dreck. If Masaru vents all his anger directly on the runners, your players had better start creating some new characters. If you would rather give the runners a chance to escape, have Masaru go crazy with rage and toss a few cars around, claw open a few buildings, bite the heads off a few snipers and so forth. Just make sure the runners know that the dragon is after their blood.

Finally, if the characters turn the egg over to Masaru and help protect it once the attacks begin (by returning it to the van, for example), the dragon aids them any way he can. Of course, the van may not be able to move, because drivers will abandon their cars and join pedestrians in a mad scramble to get out of harm's way. If the egg remains unharmed, Masaru limits his attacks to those attacking him or his egg. If the egg is destroyed, it's Godzilla time for downtown Seattle.

## PICKING UP THE PIECES

The runners can dispose of the egg in a number of ways. In turn, their decision may affect whether other parties attempt to dispose of them. A few possible resolutions are described in the following paragraphs, along with suggestions for follow-up adventures.

### OVER EASY

If the runners turn the egg over to Masaru without a fight, the Human Nation attempts to geek them for spoiling Carroll's plan. The Flaming Sword troops attack the runners during the final battle downtown; if the runners survive that battle, they earn a place on the Human Nation's top ten most-wanted list. Gamemasters can stage future, unexpected Flaming Sword attacks during any subsequent runs.

Masaru will not be particularly friendly toward the runners—after all, they were carrying the egg around in the first place—but the dragon will not attack them outright unless the runners attack first. On the other hand, if the runners return the egg to Masaru on their own initiative or help defend the egg, the dragon may appreciate their assistance and might even grant them a favor.

## POACHED

If Yamazaki's operatives manage to steal the egg from the runners during their raid on the safe house, they return it to Masaru as quickly as possible. As described in **I Hear You Knocking** (p. 48), Sewall will try to persuade the runners to join forces with the Flaming Sword squad in a raid on the yakuza base to reclaim the egg. If the runners participate in this assault, they incur the wrath of Yamazaki's entire clan (and still wind up with Masaru breathing down their necks). If they decline to take part, deciding to quit while they're behind, Flaming Sword hit men come after them within a few weeks in an effort to tie up the loose ends they represent.

## BENEDICT (ARNOLD)

If the runners simply abandon the egg at the safe house, Sewall and his men take it downtown and proceed as planned. Masaru makes a big, public assault, doing immense amounts of damage before Lone Star and Metroplex Guard units manage to kill the dragon. This course of action lets the runners avoid the massive combat downtown, but also sets them up for some heavy Human Nation and yakuza retaliation. Abandoning a run halfway through won't do their reps any good, either.

## SCRAMBLED

If the egg is destroyed, Masaru goes berserk. Carroll will have won, whether or not the dragon survives. Masaru's attack makes front page news across the UCAS, and Brackhaven makes the most of this golden PR opportunity. He gains several points in the polls, while Dunkelzahn's popularity drops sharply. Dunkelzahn, in turn, sends some hand-picked investigators to probe around in search of the real reason behind Masaru's apparently senseless attack. In fact, the runners may come under close scrutiny from the Big D's security forces, headed by the very competent Carla Brooks (see the **Super Tuesday** adventure set) When the Human Nation gets wind of the investigation, it sends a Flaming Sword hit team to make sure the runners don't talk. (Those darn Human Nation guys, they ALWAYS gotta send out hit squads.)

## AWARDING KARMA

Award team Karma as outlined below. Award individual Karma according to the standard rules (p. 199, **SR11**).

Survival	1 point
Threat	2 points
Returning the egg to Masaru	1 point
Keeping the egg from being destroyed	1 point

## LEGWORK

The runners will have to let their fingers do the walking for most of this adventure, because they cannot really invite their contacts back to the safe house. In truth, the usual channels won't provide much information anyway.

If the runners ask around about an art collector named Lowery, roll some dice but tell them that no one seems to have heard of him. That in itself may make them suspicious, particularly if one of

them has contacts in the art world. (Hey, it could happen.)

Inquiries about dragon eggs generally elicit blank stares and silence, a mixture of "How the frag should I know what a dragon's egg is good for?" and "I don't know what you've gotten yourselves into, but leave me out of it." Magical contacts, in particular, respond to such questions with a degree of reverence bordering on awe, though a particularly greedy talismonger or alchemist might offer to buy the egg for an exorbitant amount of money. (Needless to say, selling the egg would be a spectacularly bad idea, both for the buyer and the sellers. Eventually Masaru will learn what has gone down and take appropriate action.)

Handle questions about the Red Hot Nukes in the usual manner.

## RED HOT NUKES

### Appropriate Contacts (Target Number 4)

Any Gang, Police or Street contact.

Successes	Result
0	"Oh yeah, them little hot candies they sell at the Stuffer Shack. What about 'em?"
1	"Some buncha dwarf gang-bangers up in Redmond. Couldn't tell ya much more."
2-3	"I hear they're major players in the Barrens. They call themselves 'the littlest big gang in the Sprawl.' Get it? They're <i>dwarfs</i> ."
4+	"The Nukes have a hand in everything up there—drugs, BTLs, extortion, you name it. They do a lot of muscle work for the yakuza and the Mafia, too."

## CAST OF SHADOWS

The following NPCs are listed in the order they appear in the story.

### LAWRENCE CARROLL (LARRY LOWERY)

Lawrence Carroll was seven years old when an unthinking mob of orks and trolls burned down his father's electronics store. Hiding in a dumpster behind the store, Larry couldn't help but hear the crash of breaking glass and the screams of his mother and father as they vainly pleaded for their lives. The media would later dub the tragic riots the Night of Rage, but to Larry it was a night of fear and anguish.

In the weeks that followed, Larry was adopted by a wealthy elderly couple who had lost a son to the same violence. As the years passed, Larry's sadness and fear turned into hate and a desire for revenge. Eventually, he came to believe that humans were destined to rule the world and that he would play a major part in realizing that destiny. Larry came to recognize that he was stronger, smarter, and more cunning than others, and he vowed to use those skills to help rid the world of all metahumans—as well as anyone who tried to stop him.

Carroll's easygoing, good-old-boy demeanor hides a tough, cruel man who will order metahumans killed as thoughtlessly as he wipes dirt from his boots. Indeed, he views both actions as having much the same result—keeping the world clean for "real people." Carroll's experience in corporate negotiations has made him good at hiding his true feelings, however, and the runners will probably not even catch a glimpse of the man's black heart.

As a member of the anti-metahuman organization called the Human Nation, Carroll has proved quite creative and determined in his efforts to eradicate metahumans and ensure the future of "pure humanity." He views the Kenneth Brackhaven candidacy as the perfect opportunity to put various anti-metahuman plans into action and further the cause of human purity. For several months he has been using middlemen such as Yamazaki to hire metahuman gangs to perform random, senseless violence. Such violence, he believes, will help foster anti-metahuman fervor among UCAS voters and put Brackhaven one step closer to the White House. He feels some remorse for the "pure humans" who get caught up in the bloodshed, but he believes that the Human Nation's goals justify his brutal methods.

(For more information on the Human Nation, see the **Threat** sourcebook.)

### Attributes

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

Initiative: 5 + 1D6

Threat/Professional Rating: 2/2

### Skills

Car: 2  
 Etiquette (Corporate): 4  
 Firearms: 2  
 Leadership: 5  
 Negotiation: 5  
 Unarmed Combat: 3

### Gear

Remington Roomsweeper [Heavy Pistol, 8 (magazine), SA, 9S(f)]  
 Secure Vest (2/1)

### MASARU

Masaru is a great eastern dragon, but just barely. Masaru only "came of age" by dragon standards about fifteen years ago and is still rather insecure about his place in the complex society of dragons. Masaru moved to his current lair, an expansive underground complex on Vancouver Island, shortly after reaching maturity and has spent most of his time in quiet contemplation of the surrounding world. By nature, Masaru is a peaceful, philosophical creature, which makes his anger over the unprovoked assault on his home all the more terrible to behold.

Masaru was resting at home, contemplating the new life within his egg, when Carroll's runners broke into the lair and attacked. Fighting in self-defense, Masaru managed to severely injure the group's mage before being knocked unconscious by a powerful spell. When the dragon awoke, part of his home had collapsed and the egg was gone. As soon as Masaru fully awakened, he began breaking through the caved-in areas, intent on recovering the egg and avenging himself on whoever had committed this foul deed.

The egg represents many things to Masaru. As the source of a new life, it provides the dragon with spiritual solace and a wonderful basis for contemplation. It also serves as physical proof of Masaru's adulthood and represents a responsibility that will largely dictate the dragon's future. Most importantly, however, it is flesh of Masaru's flesh, and the dragon will let nothing come between him and the egg's safe return.

**Attributes** (values in parentheses apply in human form)

Body: 20  
 Quickness: 10 x 3  
 Strength: 40 (12)  
 Charisma: 8 (6)  
 Intelligence: 8  
 Willpower: 10  
 Essence: 12  
 Reaction: 9  
 Armor: 11

**Initiative:** 9 + 2D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 6 (7 when directly defending or avenging its egg)/4

**Attacks:** +3 Reach, 15D Damage

**Skills**

Sorcery: 9

**Powers**

Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision, Thermal Sense, Wide-band Hearing)  
 Hardened Armor  
 Human Form  
 Noxious Breath

**Spells (all at Force 10)**

**Combat**

Barrier  
 Powerball  
 Ram

**Detection**

Analyze Truth

**Health**

Heal

**Manipulation**

Mana Barrier



**ROB SEWALL**

Rob Sewall is a walking poster child for the Flaming Sword. Since childhood, he has always enjoyed beating anyone weaker than him. He soon learned that his brutality elicited ample encouragement and rewards when he targeted socially undesirable metahumans. Politics don't mean much to Sewall; to him, metahumans deserve to get stomped on because they're not like him and his friends, which means that they must be inferior.

Formerly a member of the Humanis polyclub, the "Captain" (an honorary title that he uses as if he was in the real military) has found a home in the Flaming Sword, the military arm of the Human Nation. He is a good soldier who trusts his superiors utterly, because obeying their orders usually allows him to kill metahumans. Homicidal psychopath though he is, Sewall is not stupid and is perfectly willing to hold his fire in the interest of advancing the anti-metahuman cause.

**Attributes**

Body: 5  
 Quickness: 5 (6)  
 Strength: 5 (6)  
 Charisma: 3  
 Intelligence: 3  
 Willpower: 5  
 Essence: 3.25  
 Reaction: 4 (6)



**Initiative:** 4 (6) + 2D6**Threat/Professional Rating:** 4/3**Skills**

Athletics: 4  
 Car: 4  
 Firearms: 6  
 Leadership: 2  
   Military: 4  
   Tactics: 6  
 Stealth: 4  
 Unarmed Combat: 5

**Gear**

Colt Manhunter [Heavy Pistol, 16 (clip), SA, 9M] with Smartgun Link  
 Walther WA-2100 [Sniper Rifle, 10 (magazine), SA, 14S] with Smartgun Link  
 Portable Phone  
 Secure Ultra-Vest (4/3)  
 Signal Locator (5)

**Cyberware**

Boosted Reflexes (2)  
 Muscle Replacement (1)  
 Smartlink

**THE FLAMING SWORD**

The Flaming Sword is the paramilitary arm of the Human Nation, a wide-ranging fraternity of powerful individuals united by their desire to eventually exterminate all metahumans (for a full description of the Human Nation, see the **Threats** sourcebook). Though the Flaming Sword began as a group of wealthy dilettantes who never outgrew their desire to play soldier, the Sword is led and trained by military professionals recruited from the world's best security services and private armies. Additionally, the group has augmented its forces by hiring professional mercenaries and other highly trained military specialists. In fact, the Flaming Sword commonly draws on this pool of professionals for important missions, such as Carroll's plan, and Sewall's snipers are all crack marksmen.

All of the snipers carry 2 clips of explosive ammunition for their sniper rifles, which they are saving for their confrontation with Masaru. These rounds raise the rifles' Damage Codes to 15S.

**Flaming Sword Snipers (7)**

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

**Initiative:** 3 + 1D6**Threat/Professional Rating:** 3/3**Skills:** Firearms 6, Stealth 3

**Gear:** Secure Ultra-Vest (4/3), Browning Max-Power [Heavy Pistol, 10 (clip), SA, 9M], Ranger Arms SM-3 [Sniper Rifle, 6 (magazine), SA, 14S, w/Recoil Compensation 2 and Magnification 3 plus Thermo]

**YAKUZA STRIKE TEAM**

This trio of human professionals works directly for Isao Yamazaki, who has been Carroll's main contact in the Seattle yakuza community. Yamazaki has sent the team to recover the egg, preferably unnoticed, and the team will attempt to do so as efficiently as possible. The team members are highly trained, disciplined professionals, so they should be able to steal the egg and take on the shadowrunners—or at least give the characters a good fight. If necessary, adjust the team members' statistics and gear so that they can achieve those goals.

**EICHI**

Eichi is the strike team's leader, and he is very serious about his team's performance. He deals with any mistakes harshly after the run. His team may not like him much, but they respect him. He, in turn, respects their skills and defers to their judgment in areas where their expertise exceeds his own. If captured and interrogated, Eichi gives nothing away.

Eichi is a skilled physical adept and an extremely dangerous swordsman.

**Attributes**

Body: 4  
 Quickness: 6  
 Strength: 5  
 Charisma: 4  
 Intelligence: 6  
 Willpower: 5  
 Essence: 6  
 Magic: 9  
 Reaction: 6

**Initiative:** 6 + 3D6**Threat/Professional Rating:** 4/4**Initiate Grade:** 3**Skills**

Armed Combat: 7 (9)  
 Athletics: 5  
 Firearms: 4  
 Leadership: 3  
 Stealth: 6  
 Unarmed Combat: 5

**Gear**

Forearm Guards (-/+1)  
 Form-Fitting Body Armor-3 (4/1)  
 Katana [treated with Dikote™, 9M Damage]  
 SCK Model 100 [SMG, 20 (clip), SA/BF, 7M, w/Sound Suppressor]

**Adept Powers**

Combat Sense (1)  
 Improved Ability: Armed Combat (2)  
 Improved Physical Senses: Low-Light Vision, Telescopic Vision (1)  
 Increased Reflexes (2)  
 Pain Resistance (3)

**SATO**

Sato is the team mage. While he respects Eichi, he is beginning to feel a bit stifled by his subordinate position and would like to lead a team of his own. On this run, however, he will be as professional as possible, trying to improve his standing by impressing Yamazaki with his performance.

Sato feels very strongly about the theft of the dragon egg, and if the runners capture the yakuza team, he is the member most likely to speak up. He will attempt to convince the runners that the egg should be returned to Masaru and that they should turn away from the "ice-hearted dogs" who hired them.

During this run, Sato keeps a Force 5 air elemental and a force 5 earth elemental standing by. Their primary purpose is to protect and transport the egg; one (usually the earth elemental) will carry it while the air elemental guards the first elemental.

**Attributes**

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

**Initiative:** 6 + 1D6 (3D6)

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 4/4

**Initiate Grade:** 1

**Skills**

Conjuring: 4  
Firearms: 3  
Negotiation: 4  
Sorcery: 6  
Stealth: 4

**Gear**

Form-Fitting Body Armor-3 (4/1)  
SCK Model 100 [SMG, 20 (clip), SA/BF, 7M] with Sound Suppressor  
Silver ring inlaid with jade (Power Focus 1)

**Spells****Combat**

Mana Dart: 6  
Sleep: 5

**Detection**

Combat Sense: 4  
Detect Enemies: 4  
Detect Life: 4

**Health**

Increase Reflexes +2: 4 (Quickened at Force 1)  
Treat: 4

**Illusion**

Chaos: 4  
Improved Invisibility: 5

Mask: 4

**Manipulation**

Magic Fingers: 4  
Shadow: 4

**REIKO**

Reiko is a female warrior in a male-dominated organization and is very aware of the extra scrutiny her gender elicits. She tends to play things very much by the book but will sometimes go out of her way to prove her ability if doing so will not endanger a mission.

**Attributes**

Body: 4  
Quickness: 6 (7)  
Strength: 4 (5)  
Charisma: 4  
Intelligence: 6  
Willpower: 4  
Essence: (1.58)  
Reaction: 6 (10)

**Initiative:** 6 (10) + 3D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 4/4

**Skills**

Armed Combat: 5  
Athletics: 4  
Biotech: 4  
Car: 6  
Firearms: 6  
Stealth: 5  
Unarmed Combat: 5

**Gear**

Form-Fitting Body Armor-3 (4/1)  
Ares Predator II [Heavy Pistol, 15 (clip), SA, 9M, w/Smartgun Link]  
Ingram Smartgun [SMG, 32 (clip), SA/BF/FA, 7M, w/Smartgun Link]  
Toyota Elite

**Cyberware (all alpha-grade)**

Cybereyes [Electronic Magnification (3), Flare Compensation, Low-Light, Thermographic]  
Muscle Replacement (1)  
Retractable Spur (5M Damage)  
Smartlink  
Wired Reflexes (2)

# DOUBLE DIPPING

## PATRIOT GAMES

The spark lit the Seattle night like the light of a firefly in a rural field in summer. It flared to life at the end of small wooden match, which Burt Aronson held to the end of his unlit cigarette. Burt inhaled deeply, savoring the smell and taste of the tobacco. The light from the match triggered a distant memory of chasing fireflies in a field. He was young back then ... just a child, so long ago he could hardly count the time. He sucked air through the cigarette, making it burn like a miniature sun.

His thoughts drifted back to those younger days. Life was so much easier then. He had family and neighbors, good close friends—all the same kind of people, with the same beliefs and values. And most important, the same appearance. Burt's father had taught him that. People who looked different were exactly that—different. It was one thing to be different superficially—fat or thin, tall or short, that kind of thing. What mattered was that, at the core, you all shared the same kind of face and body. A human face and body.

Burt's father had never understood metahumans ... what they were, where they came from, what they wanted. As Burt grew older, he couldn't understand them either. Elves and dwarfs were all right, he supposed—they didn't look *too* different from normal people. Orks and trolls, though ... no, Burt just couldn't get his mind around them. How could anything that looked so bizarre possibly be called a person, no different from a human being? *Monsters*, Burt's father called them. Once upon a time, Burt thought monster was too strong a word. Then he learned different.

Burt also learned that other people thought the same way and wanted to do something about it. One day, Burt joined them. He was tired of sitting on the sidelines ... he wanted to make a difference for people—*his* people. So he did all he could to make things right, make the world a good and safe place like it was back when he was a child. He'd been safe back then, too.

Now Burt had come into his own, in charge of his own operation. He had found others who thought like him, right here in Seattle. Action was dangerous, of course. It attracted attention, some of it from people who couldn't or wouldn't understand that sometimes harsh actions were necessary for a greater good. Burt and his friends might have been discouraged by the danger, might have kept themselves to talk, until the unbelievable happened.

Dunkelzahn—a dragon, not even remotely human—had chosen to run for president of the UCAS.

For days after the announcement hit the trid networks, Burt couldn't believe it. It had to be some newsie's idea of a sick joke, right? Dunkelzahn didn't really think the people of the UCAS would hand over the highest office in the land—frag, in the whole world—to a creature of stupendous power with absolutely no connection to human wants or needs? How could anything that

looked so monstrous possibly know or care about human beings?

In the months since, as Dunkelzahn's campaign clicked into high gear, things had only gotten worse. All over Seattle, all over the UCAS, metahumans started acting up. They went to rallies, they marched, they started demanding rights and respect. Some of them even started turning up in positions of power ... like that ork woman running on General Yeats's ticket. Burt knew it wasn't right. The world was going crazy. The metas wouldn't stay where they belonged anymore, and it was all the fragging dragon's fault. Burt and his friends had to stop it ... and they knew exactly how.

Burt leaned against the street lamp and slowly exhaled a long, gray stream of smoke. He gazed at the office complex in front of him, his eyes tracing the lines of the glowing logo that read "Zandras Shipping."

An ork woman walked out through the main doors, slinging her purse jauntily over her shoulder as she crossed the street toward her Westwind. *She's trying to act human*, Burt thought. *Can't she see what she is? Just look at her.*

The ork woman slipped into her sports car and the engine silently hummed to life. She pulled out of the parking space and headed northward, her passage down the Seattle streets marked only by two swiftly vanishing red tail-lights.

Burt smiled as he watched the car speed away. *See you soon, Kinsey*, he thought. *You'll be the spark that sets Seattle aflame.*

Burt took a long, final drag from his smoke and then flicked it into the street, just missing another passing car. Giving the Zandras logo one last glance, he turned away and vanished into the growing evening crowd.

## INTRODUCTION

In **Double Dipping**, the runners take on what looks like a straightforward kidnapping, then suddenly find themselves Public Enemy Number One when security footage showing the snatch in progress unexpectedly turns up. Unknown to the runners, their "simple kidnapping" is actually a move in a much larger political chess game, in which they are pawns of a local Humanis policlub branch.

Race relations between humans and metahumans have never been good, and the chaotic election campaign of 2057 has only made things worse. New policlubs, gangs, cults and crime bosses are appearing every day, many tied directly to political machinations surrounding the presidential campaign. Standing head and shoulders above these upstarts is the Humanis Policlub, a veteran player on the UCAS political scene. To ensure the election of its favored candidate, Kenneth Brackhaven, Humanis has decided to do "whatever it takes" to eliminate the competition—destroying their reputations, their allies, even their lives. Above all Humanis and its like-minded supporters need to win the PR game



they must so thoroughly discredit metahumans in the public mind that the average human will vote for Brackhaven as the "savior" of embattled human beings against the "innately violent" metahuman hordes.

A local chapter of the Humanis policlub, run by a man named Burt Aronson, has actively and successfully pitted different races of metahumans against each other as well as against humans. With the election drawing ever nearer, Aronson has decided to step up his group's activities. He concocts a plot to kidnap Kinsey Zandras, the daughter of one of Seattle's few prominent ork businessmen, and pin the blame on other metahumans—shadowrunners, to be precise. This, he believes, will blow the lid off simmering racial tensions between different groups in the metahuman community, provoking them to acts of retaliatory violence that will drive ordinary humans into Brackhaven's camp in droves. It will also allow him to advance another pet scheme—smuggling weapons to Humanis sympathizers in the Salish-Shidhe Council Lands. Kinsey's father owns Zandras Shipping, a firm with exclusive rights over certain shipping routes into Salish territory; Aronson intends to blackmail Malcolm Zandras into using his trucks to run guns for the policlub.

Aronson contacts the runners and hires them for what he presents as a simple snatch-and-grab—take a well-off ork woman from her home in the middle of a party and turn her over to Mr. Johnson. Simple in and simple out. The run goes well; the successful team takes their pay and gets on with their lives, believing the kidnapping safely buried from public view.

Unfortunately, they're wrong.

As planned, Aronson's people recover passive-security trideo footage at Kinsey's townhouse that shows the runners in action. Aronson's group sends copies anonymously to various media outlets, and the trid networks have a field day. The blurred images of a mixed bag of shadowrunners shooting their way into a rich ork's house and kidnapping a helpless woman, repeated endlessly on countless trideo sets, spark a surge in the metahuman-against-metahuman violence already present in the sprawl. Luckily for the runners, the footage is not clear enough to ID them beyond doubt. Unfortunately, they know that it is only a matter of time before someone figures out that they pulled the snatch. Once that happens, they are quite likely to become victims of vigilante justice. To have any hope of survival and to rehabilitate their compromised reputations on the street, the runners must discover their employer's real nature and expose the whole truth—namely, that they were unwitting pawns in the Humanis policlub's game. They may also have to rescue their kidnap victim from Aronson's clutches to prove beyond doubt that they are not his allies.

Learning more about Aronson is a tougher proposition than the runners might expect. As suspicion of them grows in the shadows, fewer and fewer of their contacts are willing to associate or even speak with them. They are getting far too hot, and no contact wants to deal with the marked team. The more questions they ask, the more attention they attract. Before long, a radical metahuman group known as the New Weathermen pays them a visit. The Weathermen have been watching Aronson for some time, and they suspect Aronson is behind the kidnapping. Convinced that the runners are Aronson's willing stooges, the

group decides to make examples of them.

The runners get a break when a reporter named Gilly Rellets contacts them and offers to tell their side of the story. In exchange for exclusive rights to that scoop, Gilly promises to help the runners find out where Aronson is holing up. If the runners can get to Aronson and find hard evidence of his mastermind role, they may be able to repair their shattered image. Aronson, however, sends his own hand-picked thugs after them to give them a lesson in keeping quiet. Hunted, hurt and paranoid, the runners have no choice but to fight back in the only way they can. They must undo what they did—by rescuing Kinsey Zandras and then taking down Aronson and his Humanis goons.

**Double Dipping** is set in Seattle, but can be relocated to any UCAS city with a vibrant metahuman community and enough Humanis activity to flesh out the background.

## SEEK AND TAKE

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You're just about to dive onto the futon when the comm beeps. You consider not answering, but it might just be your fixer ... and frankly, your cred's getting low—again. Deciding that shut-eye can come later, you hit the button. Your fixer's face flickers to life on the screen.

"Rough night, eh?" your fixer says, as irritatingly cheerful as usual. "I'm telling you, chow down a few painkillers *before* you go out. You'll feel better the next morning, chum. Works every time. But enough about that. I've got a real simple job for you. The Johnson's looking for someone with your experience, and I told him I knew just who to call. No details over this link, but if you're interested, he wants to meet you at the Seward Club—the Heffernan Room, at 2100 hours. Easy cred, chumminski. You'll love this one. Don't let me down, eh?"

The com flickers off. Nine p.m., this Johnson wants to meet ... that's a few hours away. One nap time, coming up. Gotta look your best, and bloodshot eyes don't usually convince people to send biz your way. You flop backward onto the futon, creating a cloud of dust large enough to blur your vision. Dear oh dear, it's been awhile since you've had the cleaning lady in. The dust bunnies are probably big enough to fire your FN-HAR by now.

The Seward Club, huh? Better dig out the good suit.

### HOOKS

The Seward reeks of money and class. Aronson is at home in this element, and looks it.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

Aronson is looking for a group of all or mostly metahuman runners to set up as patsies with this "simple" kidnapping. A team of any composition will work, however, as long as it includes some metahumans.

Aronson is waiting for the runners in the Heffernan Room when they arrive at the Seward Club. He is expertly disguised as

## ARMOR CLOTHING TABLE

	Concealability	Ballistic	Impact	Weight	Cost
<b>Armanté</b>					
"Venetian" dress	14	1	0	.5	3,500¥
"Starlight" dress	13	1	1	.75	4,500¥
"Ancien" shawl	14	1	0	.3	750¥
"Executive Suite" tuxedo	12	3	1	1	1,100¥
"London Fog" cloak	12	2	2	1	600¥
<b>Mortimer of London</b>					
"Greatcoat"	11	4	2	3	1,000¥
<b>Vashon Island</b>					
"Houndstooth" suit jacket	14	1.5	.5	1	*
"Houndstooth" pants	14	1	.5	1	*
"Houndstooth" suit vest	13	.5	1	.75	*
"Houndstooth" sports jacket	12	.5	1.5	1.25	*
"Hunt Ball" jacket	13	.5	1.5	1	**
"Hunt Ball" skirt	14	.5	1	1	**
"Hunt Ball" slacks	14	1	.5	1	**
<b>Zoë</b>					
"Retrovision" skirt suit	13	3	1	1.5	2,500¥
"Country Club" blazer	13	3	1	1	2,000¥
"Highland Laird" kilt	14	4	2	1.5	2,000¥

\*The "Houndstooth" collection is available as a package only and costs 2,000¥.

\*\*The "Hunt Ball" collection is available as a package only and costs 3,000¥.

an elf, a ploy he has used successfully in the past to lull metahuman marks into a false sense of security. He looks legit and plays his role so well that only the most observant characters can spot the deception. If desired, allow a character to make a Perception (15) Test. If the character achieves at least 2 successes, he or she detects Aronson's elf disguise.

### THE SEWARD CLUB

The Seward Club is one of Seattle's finer casinos, and its dress code reflects this status. Runners who wish to purchase fine clothing for the meet can take their pick from the Armor Clothing Table or buy what they want for 250 nuyen per point of Body the character possesses. All items in the Armor Clothing Table have a Street Index of .75; target numbers for Availability are equal to the combined Ballistic and Impact ratings of garments, and the base time is 48 hours.

The meet takes place on a Saturday night, and the Seward is jumping. Runners wearing obvious armor will not be allowed in, and the casino security staff will use Rating 4 MAD wands and chemsniffers to check all patrons for concealed weapons. Runners with potentially dangerous cyberware will be slapped with restraints.

The main area of the Seward Club is vast, ornate and noisy. Patrons are playing a wide variety of card games, both trideo and "flesh and deck" versions, at various tables. Crap tables and other dice games are scattered throughout the huge room, and trideo

slot machines line the walls. Also present are virtual-reality poker areas. These VR poker setups allow a person to don a VR helmet or jack in and play poker with any other patron in the club. The cash bar and attached buffet are doing a brisk business (particularly the former). If the runners arrive early and take time to enjoy themselves or case the Seward, an escort or security guard will conduct them to the Heffernan Room upon their request.

The Heffernan Room is one of many plastiglass-walled and -floored rooms that overlook the casino and all the action. The Heffernan contains a dining table, plenty of chairs and a couch or two, a wet bar, a telecom center, a few trideo slot machines and a private card table. The sole occupant of the room is Mr. Johnson, aka Burt Aronson.

### THE PITCH

Aronson will exchange pleasantries with the runners, expertly keeping his revulsion at the presence of metahumans in check. After concluding the small talk, Aronson will mention that he has heard about the runners' impressive success rate in extraction and kidnapping jobs. He wants to hear them brag a bit and will encourage them to talk about their exploits. After a bit of this, Aronson will get around to the job at hand. He wants the runners to kidnap Kinsey Zandras, the daughter of Malcolm Zandras, president of Zandras Shipping. Aronson will not discuss the reason for the kidnapping; he says only that the runners must take Kinsey

alive and deliver her safely to him. If the runners press Aronson about the reason behind the snatch, he says it involves a family dispute in which he is acting as an intermediary. He claims not to know any of the details.

In reality, Kinsey's kidnapping serves a dual purpose. Aronson intends to use the incident to stir up metahuman-against-metahuman violence in the sprawl and also to blackmail Malcolm Zandras. Zandras Shipping travels several established routes from Seattle to the Salish-Shidhe council lands, and Aronson wants to use Zandras trucks to smuggle weapons and other illegal items to his allies in Salish territory. Such an achievement will enhance his standing in the polyclub. And the idea of using a metahuman-owned company to aid Humanis's war against metahumans also appeals to Aronson's sense of irony.

Aronson will offer the team 20,000 nuyen total for the run, plus 5,000 nuyen up front for expenses. Aronson will also offer a 3,000 nuyen bonus if the runners bring Kinsey to him within two days. If the runners want to bargain with Aronson, he will raise the fee by 500 nuyen per net success achieved by a runner on an opposed Negotiation (Willpower) Test. Aronson's statistics appear in **Cast of Shadows**, p. 75 of **Picking Up the Pieces**.

**MOVING ON**

If the runners accept the job, Aronson will hand them a chip containing schematics of Kinsey's home and all the details of its security. Aronson also informs them that in two days Kinsey will be having a party. He prefers the extraction to take place then, as security will be stretched to its limit and the runners may be able to sleaze in as guests. If all goes well, the presence of a crowd of partygoers may keep anyone from realizing that Kinsey is missing for several hours.

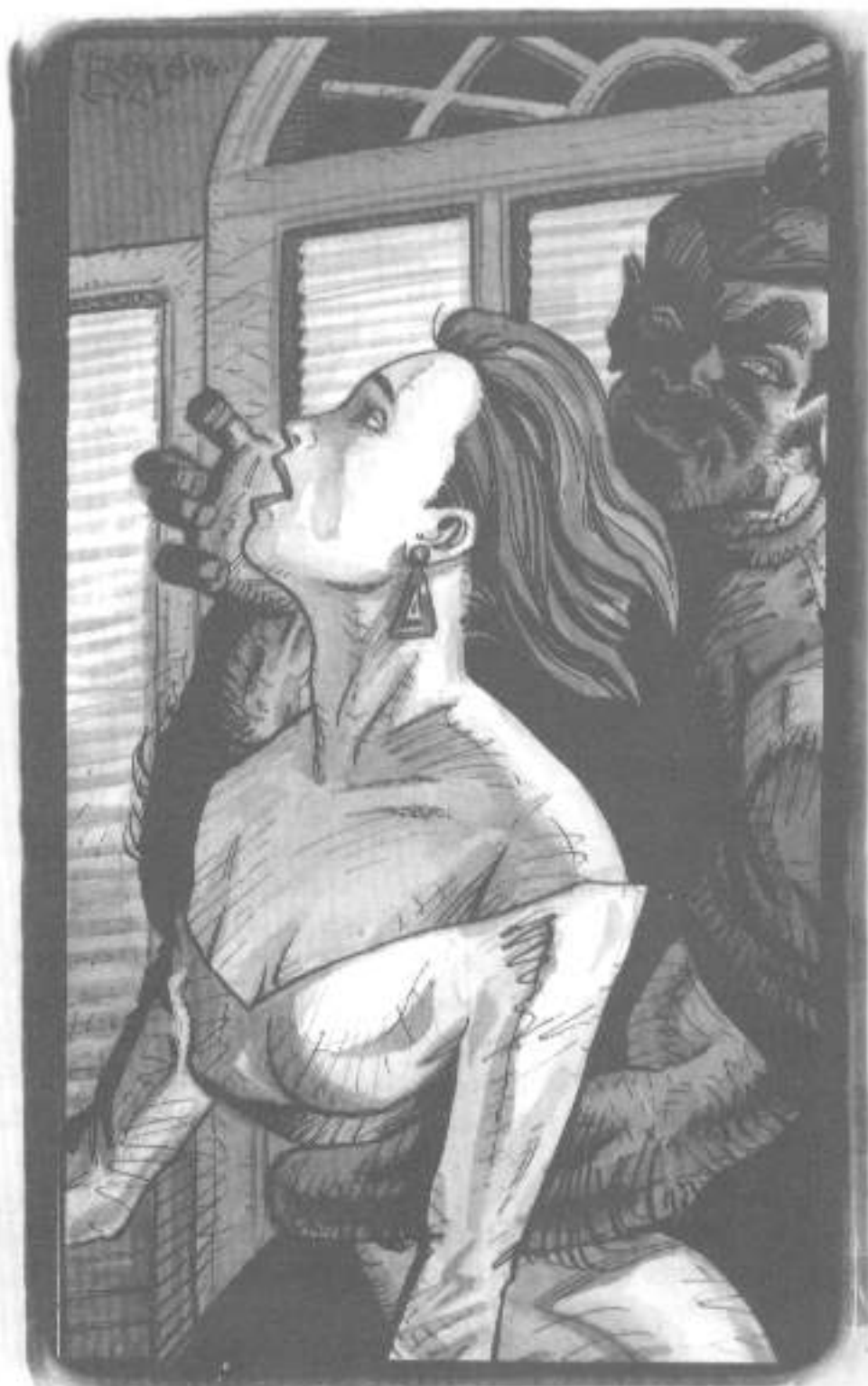
The chip also contains the location of the drop point. For specific details, see **Getting Kinsey**, below.

**DEBUGGING**

This encounter is pretty straightforward, but if the runners make good dice rolls they may get suspicious. If they confront Aronson about the fact that he is not what he appears, he good-humoredly confesses that he is a slave to current trends, and the "elf look" is one of them. If the runners appear skeptical of his sparse explanation for the kidnapping, Aronson reminds them that "family business is family business, not your business—or mine."

If the players accept the deal but do not want to expose themselves to a crowd at a party, they can invade the townhouse at any time using the setup described in **Getting Kinsey**. Aronson, however, demands that Kinsey be taken within four days of the meet. After that deadline, the deal is off.

If the characters seem ambivalent toward the job, spice it up with whatever will hit the runners where they live. Toss in extra nuyen, have Aronson make up stories about the Zandras family that might get the runners to see things Aronson's way. Or have Aronson mention "family business" again, and explain that a certain powerful person specifically wants the runners for



the job—and will be very disappointed if they refuse it. Aronson is an accomplished liar and con man and has no compunction about doing anything necessary to get the expendable patsies he needs.

**GETTING KINSEY**

**TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT**

Looks like Kinsey Zandras is doing OK for herself. Having a rich daddy will do that. You've passed through this neighborhood before but never stopped here. Street grunge like you tends to get noticed by the wrong people in ritzy areas like this.

The well-groomed lawn stretches before you like a green carpet, leading right up to the front entrance of Kinsey's elegant townhouse. The place and its surroundings seem peaceful enough. The night is quiet, so you need to be quiet as well. You'd best hope Kinsey doesn't raise too big a ruckus.

## HOOKS

Depending on what the runners do, this encounter can turn into a fun night out at a party of oversexed, bored, rich young adults all hanging out and having a good time. The runners should chat people up, then gradually make for the victim and sneak her out. Make it feel businesslike but very loose, with unexpected twists and turns in every room. If the runners decide to hit the townhouse at another time, make it a stealth run—very quiet, no heavy-handed gun play. If the runners have ever wanted to play spy, this encounter gives them an excellent chance.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Kinsey's townhouse is located in the Maplewood neighborhood of Renton. Kinsey lives here with one of her best friends, Emily Daly. Tonight the two young women are throwing a little party for about twenty of their privileged metahuman friends, plus any number of friends-of-friends. When the runners strike, the party is in full swing and nearly all the lights are on.

## SECURITY

If the characters decide to "crash" the party, they won't have too much trouble. The six security guards checking out the arrivals are too busy to call upstairs and verify every single guest, though they will react harshly toward runners carrying unconcealed weapons or any concealed weapon with a Concealment Rating lower than 6. The gamemaster determines how the guards react to obviously cybered characters—they may act suspicious, call upstairs, check SIDs and passes or even alert Lone Star. Two of these guards remain in the gatehouse at all times (see the Townhouse Map and key, p. 63); two more stand at the front door of the townhouse, and another two at the far end of the driveway.

The runners will find it much harder to sneak onto the grounds and into the house. Four attack dogs roam the grounds, and these animals will head for the runners as soon as they spot them. Six additional security guards—three teams of two each—are also patrolling the grounds, and they will stop and harass anyone not in the house or on the back deck.

Use the Street Cop contact (p. 211, **SR11**) for the guards. All twelve guards carry Ares Predators, wear armor jackets (5/3) and have transceivers. One of the patrollers is a mage; for her statistics, use the Combat Mage archetype (p. 50, **SR11**) without the foci and spell locks but with an Ares Predator. Though the guards may occasionally be distracted by the attentions of various beautiful young things having a good time, they are professionals more than capable of hurting careless or cocky runners. If desired, adjust the guards' gear to make them a better match for powerful player groups and also adjust the guards' statistics to reflect various metahuman members of the security team. The guards will hesitate to shoot into a crowd.

The attack dogs are beefed-up Dobermans bred to kill and modified with boosted reflexes, which give them extra edge in combat. Their teeth have been sharpened and steel-tipped to give them vicious bites. Their larynxes have also been removed to prevent them from giving away their presence by barking.

### Attack Dogs (4)

B	Q	S	I	W	C	E	R
3	4 x 4	3	-	2/4	3	5.5	4

**Initiative:** 4 + 1D6 (+2D6)

**Attacks:** 8M as Unarmed Combat = Reaction

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 3/4

**Cyberware:** Boosted Reflexes (1)

## WHERE THE GUESTS ARE

The guests have filled the townhouse to overflowing. All the rooms contain at least five people, unless otherwise noted in the Townhouse Map key. Emily is with a group of friends out on the back deck, listening to music and having a good time. Kinsey is upstairs in the Party Room, indulging in a little illegal chip action with another group of friends.

### Living Area (1)

This room contains several couches, chairs and a trid center. Jameson, head of the security team for the Zandras household, is present (for statistics, see **Cast of Shadows**, p. 75).

### Dining Room (2)

Almost filled by a massive pseudo-oak table, this room connects to the kitchen (3), deck (4), and garage (5).

### Kitchen (3)

Well-stocked cupboards, the latest in appliances and a connecting pantry fill out this room.

### Deck (4)

This deck is packed with people jamming to loud tunes. Emily Daly, another well-off young ork, is here along with Fred and Mandy, two more members of the house security team (see **Cast of Shadows**, p. 76–77, for statistics). The deck holds a few pieces of furniture and a spare refrigerator filled with beer.

### Garage (5)

The garage contains a small wall-mounted tool rack and two matching, deep red '57 Eurocar Westwinds. Though the garage is not a party spot, the gamemaster may have a few amorous party guests making use of the back seat of one of the Westwinds.

### Upper Floor Hallway (6)

Counterweight, another security team member, is sitting on a stool near the top of the stairs (for statistics, see **Cast of Shadows**, p. 78).

### Bathroom (7)

This well-designed bathroom contains everything one could ask for and more. More than one person may be occupying it intermittently, as the party guests use up every inch of available space.

### Bedrooms (8 and 9)

Emily's bedroom is room #8, Kinsey's is #9. Though both are technically off limits to guests, partygoers looking for amorous encounters may find their way into these rooms.

# KINSEY'S HOUSE

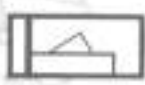
- 1. Living Area
- 2. Dining Room
- 3. Kitchen
- 4. Deck
- 5. Garage
- 6. Upper Floor Hallway
- 7. Bathroom
- 8., 9. Bedrooms
- 10. Party Room
- 11. Storage Closet



Stairs



Window



Door



MAIN FLOOR

### Party Room (10)

Emily and Kinsey have dubbed this upstairs living room "the Party Room." All the guests call it by that name, and they all seem to know where it is. The Party Room is where Kinsey engages in her illegal BTL habit, along with her fellow addicts. If the runners ask too many questions about where it is or how it got its name, they will give themselves away as not part of the usual crowd. If they ask about the Party Room within earshot of Jameson, he will make a note of their presence and tip off the rest of the security team to the apparent party-crashers.

When the runners enter the Party Room, they will find several people sprawled around the couches and the floor with chip players wired into their heads. All except Kinsey are in a near-catatonic state and pay little heed to the runners. Kinsey is using a warped reissue of *Neal, the Ork Barbarian*, and is pumped up, swinging her arms and flailing around. At this moment she is Neal, kicking hoop and taking no names. If the runners try to make a quick snatch, Kinsey will scream with rage and attack them in accordance with her BTL-induced dreams. Kinsey is savage, hyped-up beyond rational thought, and she will fight hard. She will try to incapacitate the runners, possibly even taking one of their weapons and using it against them. (The Threat/Professional Ratings in parentheses reflect Kinsey's chipped-up state.) A Moderate wound (Stun or Physical) will snap her out of her delusion, however.

### Kinsey Zandras

B	Q	S	I	W	C	E	R	Armor
6	3	5	4	5	3	5.8	4	0

**Initiative:** 4 + 1D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 1(4)/1(2)

**Skills:** Etiquette (Corporate) 4, Etiquette (Street) 3, Firearms 2, Negotiation 4, Unarmed Combat 3

**Cyberware:** Datajack

**Gear:** None to speak of. If the gamemaster wishes, he can have Kinsey dressed like Neal, the Ork Barbarian—synth-leather trousers, fur halter top and so on.

### Storage Closet (11)

This room holds cleaning supplies and a pile of dirty laundry that Kinsey threw in just before the guests arrived.

### MINGLING

A cross between a college frat party and a wealthy debauch, this party brims over with the young, neo-rich and shallow. By virtue of age and hard experience, the runners should feel completely out of place. Having to conduct business in this atmosphere is disconcerting. Of course, the fact that most of the runners are likely a bit older than the crowd will make them appear even sexier to partygoers interested in a *really* good time.



The unofficial "uniform" for young rich kids at occasions like this is mid- to high-level casual chic. If the runners come in wearing something different, they will attract attention. If they wear chic streetwear—leather coats, pants and boots that look just a touch dangerous—their fellow guests will tag them as chill posers rather than actual runners. That may make them sexier or laughable, depending on who is looking. Let the runners make all types of contacts, from casual conversation to flirting to sexual encounters. Play up the "anything goes" feel of a party full of youngsters who have no worries.

The runners should also come away with the feeling that none of these kids seem to notice or care how many different kinds of metahumans are there. Despite their differences, they all seem to be friends. Maybe there is hope for the Sixth World after all.

### SECURITY TACTICS

Jameson is all business. He will give a running commentary on everyone and everything to his fellow guards via transceiver. It is his job to make sure Daddy's "little darling" is safe, and he takes that job seriously.

The other guards are new to the biz and somewhat disoriented by all the people. If the runners attempt to distract the security team by making plays for them, let them succeed. If conflict erupts (or threatens to), Fred and Mandy act first before calling for help. They tend to show off, trying to impress the rich kids without realizing the extent to which they may be endangering those they are supposed to protect. Fred's hyperacute wires make him edgy and hard to control once he starts fighting, and Mandy cares too much for Fred to leave him behind. Both guards fight hard from the word go, attacking with intent to kill. They use their flash grenades first to disorient opponents, then move in to finish the job.

Counterweight is bored. No one spends much time in the upstairs hallway, so he will make conversation with anyone who approaches him. He can tell the runners who (if anyone) is in which bedroom, and if anyone mentions going to the Party Room, he looks shocked. He is new enough to this job that he has not yet heard Kinsey scream under the influence of *Neal, the Ork Barbarian*. When he hears that sound, he will briefly notify Jameson of trouble and then break into the Party Room.

More than likely, once the runners raise the hackles of anyone on the house security team, the others will hear of trouble brewing and come to their fellow guards' aid. The map key indicates the guards' locations at the time the runners arrive. Once trouble starts, the guards can be anywhere the gamemaster wants them to be.

The townhouse is wired with a passive trideo-camera system, used mainly for quick scans of the perimeter and grounds. The cameras are local and cannot be controlled via the Matrix. They are also not visible to the runners, and Aronson has carefully failed to mention them in the runners' briefing.

### DEBUGGING

As written, this encounter assumes that the runners crash the party or sneak in while the festivities are in full swing. Strategies for dealing with other approaches are given below.

If the runners go in with guns blazing, they will create chaos. The sights and sounds of screaming people running each other down, falling over the furniture and even jumping out the windows to escape gunfire will disturb the neighbors (they're accustomed to Zinsey's and Emily's parties, but this will be a bit much for them). Someone will immediately call Lone Star, and the cops will arrive between 2 and 12 Combat Rounds after the runners launch their assault. The gamemaster can choose the exact number of rounds or roll 2D6 and add the results together.

If the runners decide to make their move after the party, make the following changes. The outside security staff will drop from twelve to six, one of whom will be the mage, and the dogs will be on the grounds. At least five people will be in the townhouse, more if the gamemaster wants. One of the occupants will be Jameson; the other three named members of the security team are checking the grounds and will turn up immediately if Jameson calls them. Emily will be downstairs "cleaning up," picking up assorted bottles and plastic cups and paper plates with the help of a couple of friends to the accompaniment of loud music. Kinsey will still be in the Party Room with at least two others, chipping out on Neal.

If the runners botch the job, Kinsey's father learns of it and beefs up his daughter's security. Triple the number of guards inside the townhouse, using any appropriate archetypes or contacts desired. The outside guard force goes from six to twelve. The inside team will not let Kinsey leave the townhouse until they feel the heat has died down, well after Aronson's four-day deadline. This means that the runners are extremely unlikely to be able to snatch Kinsey, but their attempt will still be recorded. Go to **And Pick Up**, p. 66.

If the characters somehow discover the cameras and disable them, have one of the party guests just happen to catch the kidnapping on a cybereye camera for 10 or 15 seconds—just long enough to get footage that brings the heat down on the runners. If desired, the "guest" can be a plant by Aronson. If the players decide to have their characters observe Kinsey's routine and snatch her while on a daily outing or shopping trip, remind them about the four-day deadline; they do not have the luxury of taking too much time to get Kinsey's routine down. If they persist in this course of action, have one of Aronson's people (who has been spying on the runners for his boss all this time) just happen to film the snatch on a cybereye camera.

Once the runners take Kinsey, go to **Drop Off**.

## DROP OFF

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Everything's set. You've called Aronson, gotten the expected congrats on a job well done and headed off for the drop-off point. Now all you have to do is deliver the merchandise and pick up your pay. For once, your fixer was right about easy money.

You pull up a few hundred meters from the designated spot and survey the concrete lot where Aronson should be. The lot is deserted; the only thing on the flat asphalt is the cracked foundation of a razed building. You kill the engine and wait.

Five minutes or so later, a car pulls into the lot and shuts off its ultra-hals. Nice car—Ford Executive. This must be Aronson. You let a couple of your fellow runners out of your wheels for cover in case there's a double-cross. Then you fire up the engine again and drive slowly toward the Ford.

Aronson gets out as you pull up, smiling as you approach him with Kinsey in tow. "Well done," he says, producing a small case. "Your credsticks are here. I see you made an effort not to damage the merchandise ... good, good." He smiles at you like all the Johnsons do. You've never liked that smile. But what the hell—he's paying you, isn't he? You take the box of credsticks, give it a once-over to make sure they're legit, then hand over Kinsey. Just for a moment you wonder what's going to happen to her ... but runners who have to make a living don't have the luxury of too many scruples.

Aronson grins wider as a flunky steps out of the Ford and bundles Kinsey into the back seat.

"The family appreciates what you've done, more than you know," he says. "There's just one more thing—make sure this stays quiet." Incredibly, he *winks* at you. "After all, we know what happens to people with loose lips, don't we?"

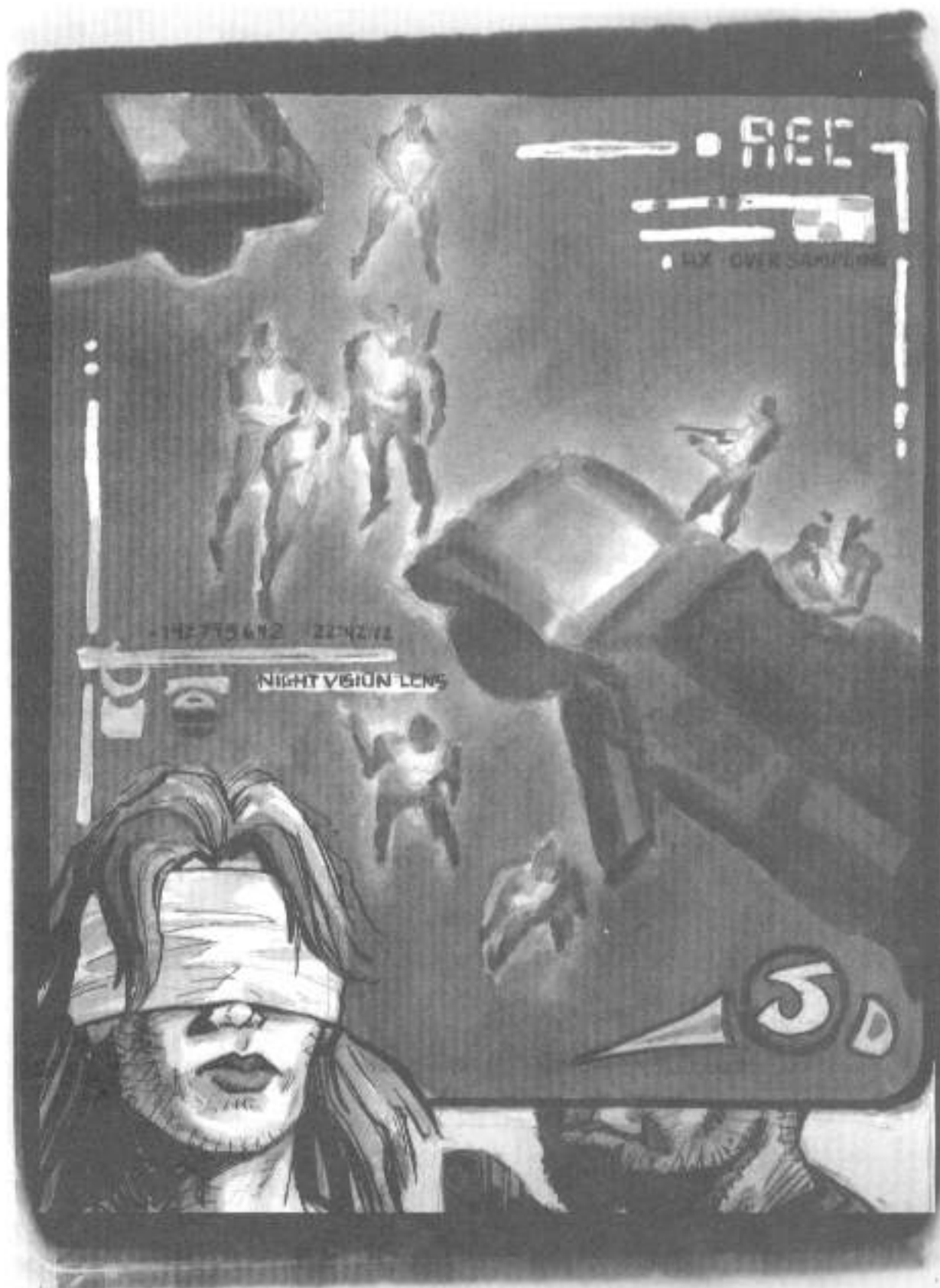
**HOOKS**

Aronson comes off as trustworthy, if a bit strange. His odd manner should make the runners a little nervous, setting them up for a full-blown case of paranoia during subsequent encounters.

**BEHIND THE SCENES**

Aronson is playing the runners like well-tuned instruments. Kidnapping Kinsey Zandras is just the first step in his plan; though the runners do not know it, they are about to become pawns in a deadly game to inflame racial hatreds within the metahuman community.

Aronson has lackeys everywhere. One of them is a Lone Star detective assigned to Kinsey's neighborhood. During the initial investigation of the kidnapping, the cop removed the security-camera tapes and duplicated them using equipment stored in the trunk of his car. Aronson plans to leak this footage to the network news as an "exposé of metahuman-on-metahuman violence in Seattle." He believes the publicity and the prominence of the victim will prompt the ork community to riot against other metahuman races in retaliation for the involvement of elves/dwarfs/trolls in the crime. He also knows that Lone Star will come down hard on the metahuman community at large in its search for suspects because the Zandras money will talk. The crackdown by a predominately human police force will only add fuel to the fire and may prompt riotous orks to target humans as well. The fact that Kinsey and her roommate are two members of the small, privileged group of metahumans allowed to live in wealthy human neighborhoods does not help matters, either.



In this particular scene, Aronson is completely straight with the runners, paying them the agreed-upon fee plus applicable bonuses. The briefcase contains unregistered credsticks, and a team decker can test them in less than five minutes. Aronson will wait around until the decker is satisfied that the sticks are legitimate (which they are). Once the runners have handed over Kinsey and left, Aronson will secretly contact Malcolm Zandras and begin the blackmail part of his scheme.

**DEBUGGING**

Not much can go wrong here. If the runners disabled the cameras in the Zandras house, the tape can come from a cybereye camera belonging to a planted party guest or to Aronson's pet cop, who made a point of patrolling Kinsey's street on the night slated for the kidnapping so that he could get footage of the runners "for insurance."

## AND PICK UP

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You ease yourself back down on the futon, looking forward to catching a few days' rest after a job well done. As you bring a spoonful of soy sherbet to your lips, you tell yourself you deserve a little vacation.

You hit the remote and the trid pops to life. You flip to channel 237 to see what's making the news today.

Suddenly you shoot to your feet, spilling your snack across the futon and the floor. That's you on the trid, taking out a security guard at Kinsey Zandras's townhouse! The images show you struggling with Kinsey, then hauling her away. The footage is grainy ... not good enough to ID you for sure, but good enough to make people ask questions. More than good enough to make you queasy watching it. Someone, somehow, caught you in the act. With all the emphasis your Johnson placed on keeping the job hush-hush, you never figured it would come to light. Looks like you figured wrong.

"This exclusive footage provides yet more evidence of the rising tide of violence within the metahuman community," intones the reporter, in her very best I'm-shocked-shocked voice-over. "The footage came from security cameras in the victim's townhouse in Maplewood. Kinsey Zandras, daughter of prominent businessman Malcolm Zandras, has been kidnapped by person or persons unknown.

"Little information is available at this time regarding the tragic crime. Lone Star Security Services is investigating. The Zandras family has declined to comment. NewsAllNite will offer round-the-clock updates of this fast-breaking story to our viewers as we receive them ... stay tuned for complete details.

"In other news ..."

You hit the remote, cutting off the anchor's voice in mid-word. Suddenly you're having trouble breathing. It won't be long before someone you know figures it out and IDs you. Then you'll be in serious drek. You've got to find out what the frag is going on ... while you still can.

### HOOKS

Paranoia and mistrust are the keys to this encounter. The runners have inadvertently started something that could set the Seattle sprawl on fire. They should feel betrayed and on the verge of panic. Once they start investigating the background of their "simple snatch-and-grab," they will feel growing distrust from their contacts and friends, who gradually come to hate the runners as they discover their role in the kidnapping.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

Aronson has released the incriminating security footage to the media, which is having a field day with it. Aronson hopes that this attack, clearly perpetrated by a mixed bag of metahumans and humans against a prominent metahuman's only child, will be the spark that ignites the tinderbox of tensions within Seattle's metahuman community.

Play up the importance of this event. The footage does not show the runners' faces clearly, but it does show their metatypes. The local ork community, all too ready to distrust elves and dwarfs and trolls at the best of times, will see the presence of non-ork runners as proof that other metahumans are just as bad as humans—maybe worse, because they are in a sense betraying "their own." Human runners in the group will not be spared; the orks will hate them too. In addition, many of their fellow humans will regard them as scum simply for associating with metahumans, let alone engaging in criminal activities with them. Non-ork metahumans, for their part, will fiercely resent local orks calling them filthy racists because of the actions of a few street-grunge shadowrunners. A lot of anger will boil up on all sides, and some of it will spill out into sporadic violence.

### RUNNING THE COURSE

Over the next few days, the runners may want to find out more about who Aronson really is and what he is doing. Keep the pressure on; emphasize that it is only a matter of time before some friend or acquaintance of the runners figures out that they are the kidnappers. Throw out periodic news reports of hate crimes and mini-riots; play up the panic sweeping through the Barrens and spreading throughout the entire sprawl. Anyone in the shadows asking about the Zandras affair will get the cold shoulder, and stoolies will have a field day. The more the runners ask, the greater suspicion they arouse. Metahumans in the group get even more hateful glares than usual, plenty from people who might normally give them a smile and a wave. Drive home the point that the runners need to do something dramatic to turn things around.

If the runners did any legwork on Aronson after their first encounter with him, they will not have learned very much (see **Legwork**, p. 73 of **Picking Up the Pieces**). Digging deeper in this encounter pays off somewhat better; this time, characters can learn the much more useful information contained in the Additional Legwork table for Burt Aronson (p. 74). Legwork will also reveal that the runners' contacts are deciding not to talk about the Zandras affair. The more the runners press, the more tight-lipped their contacts get. If the runners spill the goods to someone, the gamemaster decides whether or not this contact or friend reveals what he or she knows to the authorities or to the New Weathermen (see **Meeting the Radicals**, p. 67).

### DEBUGGING

Little can go wrong in this encounter. The gamemaster has wide latitude to manipulate events to make the runners go in the right direction, but the runners may feel that they have done nothing wrong and decide to take no action. In that case, have Aronson slip a runner's name to the press. The gamemaster may decide to do this anyway just to ratchet up the pressure. Needless to say, the unlucky runner's contacts will definitely refuse to talk to him or her. If the runners still refuse to act, have Gilly contact them (see **Meet the Press**, p. 68) in search of "the real story." Meanwhile, Aronson will send goons out to kill the runners—start with Shelly and her thugs on p. 69 and continue with the other bad guys, including Vander and Kandle (p. 72).



Eventually, the runners' questions should pique too much interest. Depending on which best fits the developing story line, go to **Meeting the Radicals**, p. 67, or **Meet The Press**, p. 68.

## MEETING THE RADICALS

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You don't usually trust calls from total strangers, but you haven't gotten many leads on Aronson. The skag on the comm said he had what you needed ... and right now, you need any scrap of information you can get. The whole thing screams *setup*, but you can't afford not to check it out. If it's legit and you bag it, you might just blow your only chance to find out anything useful. Besides, you've shot your way out of setups before. As long as you keep your eyes open, how badly can it go wrong?

So here you are in a strip-mall parking lot, watching a battered van with its headlights off pull up in front of the ChipWorld Outlet Store. Two elves and a troll climb out of the van and stride toward you. Nobody's pointing any guns—yet. A good sign; they must want to talk, or they'd have blown your heads off by now.

The troll stops about four feet away from you. The elves move to flank him. All of them nail you with grim, don't-make-me-hurt-you looks that raises your hackles.

"You've been asking a lot of questions about the Zandras kidnapping," says the troll in a flat, cold voice. "We'd like to know why. You give us the stone truth and we just might let you walk away—maybe. But don't lie. I can smell lies. You play any kind of stupid game with us, we'll break every bone in your motherfraggin' bodies. Do we have an understanding here?"

Suddenly four more vans come screaming out of the darkness and stop dead in front of ChipWorld. Orks, dwarfs, trolls and a handful of elves and humans pile out of them and move toward you, spreading out to encircle you as they advance. After number 25, you stop counting.

Better talk quick, chummers.

### HOOKS

Pour on the pressure. The runners have to say exactly the right thing, and they don't have much time to think about it. How much of the truth should they tell, and what will be the consequences?

### BEHIND THE SCENES

After a few days of poking around, the runners receive an anonymous call from someone who claims to know what they have been up to lately. He wants to meet with them, claiming he has the information they need. If the runners agree to meet, the caller tells them to be in the parking lot of a strip mall on the edge of Redmond at 11 p.m.

The troll, named Derrick, does have information about Aronson that the runners need to know. However, he wants information from the runners first. Specifically, he wants to know how they know Aronson, whether or not Aronson hired them to snatch Kinsey, and whether or not they are Aronson's willing

allies. If he believes that the answer to the last question is yes, he will take out his fury at the kidnapping on them. If the runners want to get out of this encounter alive, they had best convince Derrick that Aronson used them. If one of the runners has been publicly identified as a suspect in the kidnapping, the team will find it that much harder to win Derrick's trust.

Derrick and his friends belong to a violent group of radical metahuman-rights activists called the New Weathermen. The Weathermen target racist groups and leaders in terrorist attacks. Derrick, the leader of this particular Weathermen cell, has taken a personal interest in Aronson for some time. Based on rumors and his knowledge of Aronson's tactics and operations, Derrick suspects that Aronson is the mastermind behind the Zandras kidnapping, and he believes that the runners can confirm this.

If the runners confess to the kidnapping but convince Derrick that they are Aronson's pawns, he tells them the following:

"Aronson's no elf. He's a fraggin' racist pinkskin. He's in with Humanis real deep. He sees us metas getting together, and it scares the living drek out of him. He's been trying for years to frag it all up—Kinsey Zandras is just his latest effort. You ask me, he's been doing way too fraggin' well so far.

"If anything happens to Kinsey, the streets are gonna explode. They're close to that now, thanks to Aronson and his goons. You want to do some good and get a little payback, go spring Kinsey and bring us some proof that Aronson and his Humanis freaks were behind the whole thing. We don't have the resources to find her and get her out, but you do."

If the runners ask Derrick where Aronson is at the moment, he does not know. He tells them that according to street buzz, Aronson seems to have disappeared. Derrick will not offer the runners money or any other compensation for the run against Aronson. If they refuse to rescue Kinsey, he will simply walk away.

But if the runners maintain their innocence of the kidnapping or respond to Derrick's questions with hostility, let the blood flow. Thirty-six New Weathermen have shown up at the meet, anticipating a rollicking good time thumping some buddies of their favorite human-supremacist. For statistics, use the Gang Member (p. 57, **SRII**), Street Shaman (p. 63, **SRII**) and Street Mage (p. 61, **SRII**) archetypes, modified by race in any appropriate combinations desired. For Derrick's statistics, use the Street Samurai archetype (p. 62, **SRII**) modified for a troll.

### DEBUGGING

The runners may see the meeting with Derrick as a setup and refuse to go. If that happens, consider having the characters talk to Gilly first (see **Meet The Press**, p. 68). Both this scenario and **Meet The Press** can be run simultaneously to keep the action flowing and the runners a little off balance. Gilly is an associate of the New Weathermen and can assure the runners' safety for the meet. If they have not yet met Gilly, have a known contact call them to "approve" the meet. As a last resort, the New Weathermen can break into the runners' safehouse and strong-arm them into talking.

If the runners attack the radicals, the Weathermen will assume that the runners are actively working for Aronson and will

be only too happy to pound the "traitors" into the ground. If one of the runners is a troll or an ork, however, Derrick will try to appeal to that character before bloodshed begins. For the first time in their lives, the runners can actually win by telling the whole truth. The Weathermen will try to beat the runners to death, but a passing Lone Star patrol may send the Weathermen fleeing before this happens. In this case, Lone Star will arrest the runners and swiftly pin the kidnapping on them. Otherwise, the runners become just a few more statistics on Seattle's annual crime report.

If the runners defeat the New Weathermen and get away, the news media will be flooded with stories of metahuman violence, which will make the heat that much higher. No one will believe the runners' story after this, and Aronson may well get the explosion he wants.

If the runners have met Gilly, go to **Thieves Turned Heroes**, p. 70. If not, go to **Meet the Press**.

## MEET THE PRESS

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

If the group has not met the New Weathermen, read the following aloud:

The comm call comes late—so late it startles you. Why the frag do these cold-call pitchmen always dial in when normal people are trying to sleep? You decide to ignore the call, when the first words make you sit up and take notice.

"Listen up, chum. You don't know me, but you will. I know you've been asking around about the Zandras snatch, and I've got a hunch that you've got a story to tell. I'd like to hear that story, if it's all right with you. Let me just say that I don't think you're the bad guys here. Get me so far? All I want is the real story, and I can promise you a fair hearing. I can also get you the help you need and just maybe the info you're after. But nothing in this life is free, y'know? You've got to talk to me first. Chip-straight, understand? So let's talk somewhere quiet. There's a bar in Redmond called the Last Drop. I'll even buy the first round. See you in an hour."

**Read the following aloud when the runners meet with the caller in the preceding paragraphs, or if the group has met with the New Weathermen:**

Well, thank God, if there is one, someone believes that Aronson set you up. Patsies, that's you. Nothing stings worse than that. Of course, now you've bought yourselves a fresh load of trouble. Undoing what Aronson made you do ain't gonna be no picnic. You'd be tempted to forget the whole thing, except it's your best chance to get your old lives back. Pulling up stakes and starting over somewhere else is no picnic, either. Like the old saying goes, better the devil you know ...

Right now you need a drink, something to clear your head and calm your nerves. You know what you have to do, but how to start things rolling is a big fragging mystery. You need to find out where Aronson's gone to ground ... but from the way the past few days have gone, it seems the Powers-that-Be are fresh out of miracles. Yup, it's drek to be you today.

You jander into the nearest bar, a little place called the Last Drop. It's mostly empty, which suits you fine. You kick back a few brews, trying to decide on your next course of action. Gradually, you realize that the skinny elf at the corner table a few feet away is watching you. In fact, he's been keeping his eye on you for about ten minutes.

You're about to give him Lesson H&K-227 on Minding Your Own Fraggin' Biz when he gets up and walks toward you. Leaning on your table, he looks at you with fire in his eyes. "I know who you are" he says softly. "I can help you—but it'll cost you. Mind if I sit down?"

### HOOKS

Once again, keep the pressure building. If the runners have confessed to the New Weathermen, the encounter with Gilly can be the big break. If they haven't, Gilly should look like a potential savior ... but can they really trust him? Play up the high-stakes gamble. This skag in the bar may be the runners' last hope of getting out of the mess, or he may be out to get them. The runners have to make a split-second decision whether to trust Gilly or not. For his part, Gilly is trying his best to force the runners to give him a good story, and he thinks he as the right bait to get it.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

The runners have been feeling the heat for days, knowing that they were the catalyst for the escalating violence in Seattle. They have spent the past few days frantically searching for information, both to clear their names and (hopefully) to somehow fix the situation. Though they do not yet know it, their snooping has attracted some wanted as well as unwanted attention. Gilly Rellets, an elven reporter for the street-level news bureau Underground News, has heard about the runners and decided that their story is worth getting.

Gilly covers the metahuman beat. The Zandras kidnapping and resulting surge in violence have him humping night and day, covering the story from all angles. Some of his bits have been picked up recently by the big trid stations and newsfaxes. He is becoming the "voice of metahumanity" in Seattle, and he wants to keep the ride going. The runners' story is best shot at a real scoop.

Through persistent legwork, he has found out who the runners are and where they will be. Gilly has done more than a few favors in the past for the New Weathermen; if the runners agree to meet with Derrick (**Meeting the Radicals**, p. 67) before this encounter, Derrick or someone else from the radical group may have tipped Gilly off to it. Alternatively, he may have figured it out on his own, depending on how tight the gamemaster wants to make the relationship between Gilly and the New Weathermen. If the runners have not encountered the New Weathermen before **Meet the Press**, Gilly will call one of the runners (see **Tell It To Them Straight**, above). If a runner's name has gotten into the news, that runner receives Gilly's call.

Unlike some of the New Weathermen, Gilly does not assume that the runners are Aronson's allies. He thinks there's more to the kidnapping than meets the eye, and he thinks it could turn into a bigger story than it already is. And he has a hunch that the



runners are the key to what's really going on. He is prepared to offer the runners two incentives to give him the scoop: the current location of Aronson's safe house and a chance to clear their names by exposing Humanis's involvement. (Gilly's reporting has earned him a considerable amount of respect among the city's metahumans, and he promises to vouch for the runners if they're straight with him.) Gilly has been watching Aronson for some time and pulled in a bunch of favors to get the location of the safe house. However, he has no idea that Aronson is holding Kinsey at the safe house.

Gilly offers the deal straight out, promising anonymity to the runners as well. He will tell their story but change the names "to protect the innocent." Only after the runners have told their side of the story will he give the location of Aronson's safe house.

Once Gilly gets the story, he will ask the team to give him any evidence they have or might find to implicate Aronson in the kidnapping or any other crime against metahumans. He will offer to act as a future contact for the runners in exchange for this information. If the runners have not yet met the New Weathermen, Gilly will vouch for them if and when the Weathermen show up looking for blood.

Once they have told Gilly their story, the runners should feel overwhelming relief. During the interview, the bar's few other patrons gradually leave; by the time the runners wind down, they and Gilly are the only ones left. Because the runners and Gilly are caught up in the story, noticing the emptiness of the bar requires a successful Perception (11) Test. Send in Shelly and her fellow Humanis thugs any time after the bar empties.

Aronson has gotten word of the runners' snooping around and has decided to tie up all the operation's loose ends. He sends Shelly and her goons out to search the streets for the runners and to dispatch them using any means necessary. Shelly recognizes Gilly—he is at the top of Humanis's Most Wanted list. She marks him for death personally.

The Humanis goons can either slowly surround the characters or launch an all-out hit on the establishment. In either case, the runners should protect Gilly above all else. They need him to spread the truth, clear their names and tell them where Aronson is. Base the style of attack and the specific makeup of the Humanis forces on the size and abilities of the runner team.

### Shelly

B	Q	S	I	W	C	E	R	Armor
5 (8)	5	4	2	5	5	2	5	5/3

**Initiative:** 5 (7) + 2D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 4/4

**Skills:** Armed Combat 6, Firearms 6, Stealth 4

**Cyberware:** Dermal Armor 3, Smartlink, Wired Reflexes 1

**Gear:** Armor Jacket (5/3), Colt Cobra [SMG, 32 (clip), SA/BF/FA, 6M, w/2 extra clips, integral Smartlink, integral Gas Vent II (1), APDS Ammo], Colt Manhunter [Heavy Pistol, 16 (clip), SA, 9M, w/3 extra clips, integral Smartlink]



### Humanis Goons (5)

B	Q	S	I	W	C	E	R	Armor
4 (5)	4	4	2	4	4	4.5	4	5/3

**Initiative:** 4 + 2D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 3/4

**Skills:** Armed Combat 5, Firearms 6, Stealth 4

**Cyberware:** Boosted Reflexes 1, Dermal Armor 1, Smartlink

**Gear:** Armor Jacket (5/3), Colt Cobra [SMG, 32 (clip), SA/BF/FA, 8M, w/2 extra clips, integral Smartlink, integral Gas Vent II (1), EX explosive ammo], Colt Manhunter [Heavy Pistol, 16 (clip), SA, 9M, w/3 extra clips, integral Smartlink]

## DEBUGGING

Present Gilly as a person who will do what is right for metahumans. He sincerely believes that doing his job right will help metahumanity in the long run, and he knows how things work in the streets better than most. He wants to put Aronson in jail so much that the runners' story both thrills and scares him. He has never been so close to achieving his goal. If the characters seem

disinclined to deal with him, Gilly tells them what the Humanis Policlub has done to people in this area: the violence Humanis has stirred up, the fear it has caused, the innocents it has harmed. Play on the heartstrings of every runner on the team.

If Gilly ends up dead, the runners lose their best chance at clearing their names, and they have no idea where to find Aronson. This problem can be resolved in one of three ways. Most simply, a Humanis goon can escape from the fight and the runners can follow him back to the safe house. Alternatively, Derrick (**Meeting The Radicals**, p. 67) can contact the runners later and tell them that he received a package from Gilly containing all the information the reporter had on Aronson. (If desired, fill this package with game hooks for ongoing adventures involving the Humanis Policlub.) As a third option, Gilly has friends who will step in to fill his place and contact the runners. One of these friends may have some notes Gilly left on Aronson's whereabouts or may have his own ideas as to where Aronson might be.

If it looks like the Humanis goons are pounding the runners into the floor, have Derrick and some of the New Weathermen show up to help.

If the characters have not met Derrick and the New Weathermen, go to **Meeting The Radicals**, p. 67. Depending on how the runners have dealt with Gilly, the gamemaster may want to omit that encounter's opening confrontation and begin at the point where Derrick decides whether or not to trust the runners. Gilly will vouch for the runners if they have played things straight with him, but they will still have to tell Derrick their tale.

If the runners have met Gilly and Derrick, go to **Thieves Turned Heroes**.

## THIEVES TURNED HEROES

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The squat, crumbling brownstone looms over the empty street. Once upon a time it had neighbors, but they've long since been razed. From the look of it, this place should have been, too. You didn't realize Fort Lewis had such bad areas. Aronson and his group of bigot-boys must move around a lot; this building and this neighborhood don't look like anyplace you'd want to call home for long.

Eyeballing from the outside doesn't tell you much. Still, if Aronson's hanging out here, ten to one he's got Kinsey with him. She's quite a prize for a slug like him; he'll want to keep his own personal mitts on her, not hand her off to some flunky to watch. You still can't quite believe how deep in dreck you've gotten yourself, but just now clearing your reps is more important than safety.

### HOOKS

This is the final showdown. The runners make or break their reputations here. The brownstone is a dive of a hotel, at least on the first two floors. The top floor is where all the fun takes place; up there the runners will face serious trouble. Go for it!

### BEHIND THE SCENES

Aronson and his cell use this seedy hotel as a temporary safe house. They are holding Kinsey here, and Aronson plans to keep her for as long as possible. In addition to sparking riots among Seattle's metahumans, he is using Kinsey as a trump card to get her father to smuggle weapons and other resources into and out of Seattle for the Humanis Policlub.

Aronson and his men are no amateurs. Even though they are not expecting the runners to turn up—assuming that the hit team will take care of that little problem—they have set up observation points all around the safe house as a precaution. They are always on the lookout for trouble, which means that the runners won't find it easy to take them by surprise.

The Safe House Map and key describe the rooms and indicate the location of various Humanis thugs.

### LOWER LEVEL

In addition to being a Humanis safe house, the three-story brownstone is a real hotel. The first two floors contain guest rooms; Aronson and his friends occupy the top floor.

#### Entrance/Lobby (1)

The small lobby boasts a few chairs covered in torn, dirty grey fabric that smells faintly peculiar. A narrow counter opposite the door serves as the check-in area, complete with a half-drunken clerk. The clerk has no idea who or where Aronson is. If the runners ask, he just works here; the manager knows everything. Of course, the manager is out for the day on "business."

A bum in baggy wraps sits on one of the chairs, clutching a liquor bottle. The man sits silently in a stupor unless spoken to. The "bum" is Karl, one of Aronson's lookouts, keeping an eye out for suspicious characters. From the minute the runners walk in, Karl will watch them closely but unobtrusively. If they head upstairs, he will alert Aronson and then follow the team. Karl is also Shelly's boyfriend and will want the runners dead if he finds out the runners killed her.

#### Karl

B	Q	S	I	W	C	E	R	Armor
5 (8)	4	4	2	4	4	2	4 (6)	4/2

**Initiative:** 6 + 2D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 3/4

**Skills:** Armed Combat 5, Firearms 6, Stealth 4

**Cyberware:** Dermal Armor 3, Smartlink, Wired Reflexes 1

**Gear:** Colt Cobra [SMG, 32 (clip), SA/BF/FA, 8M, w/2 extra clips, integral Smartlink, integral Gas Vent II (1), APDS ammo], Colt Manhunter [Heavy Pistol, 16 (clip), SA, 9M, w/3 extra clips, integral Smartlink], Lined Coat, Monofilament Whip [105, +2 Reach], Transceiver

#### Manager's Office (2)

The hotel manager lives in this too-small room. It contains an archaic trideo set and a sagging bed, and the walls are papered with pornographic pictures.

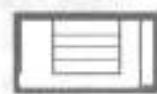
**SAFEHOUSE**

**LOWER (MAIN) FLOOR**

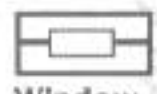
**SECOND FLOOR**

**THIRD FLOOR**

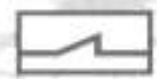
- 1. Main Lobby
- 2. Managers Office
- 3. Main Room
- 4. Spare Room
- 5. Vander's Room



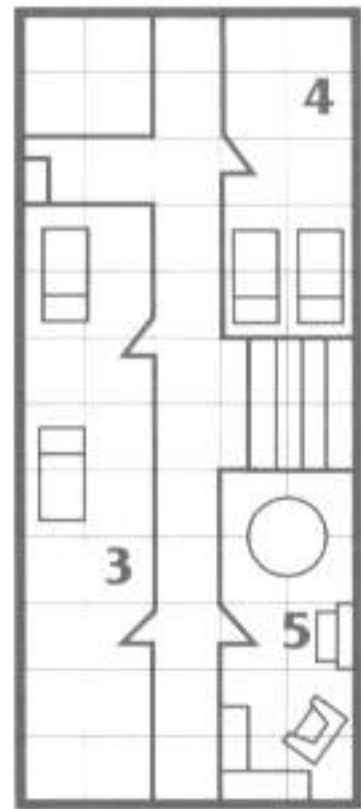
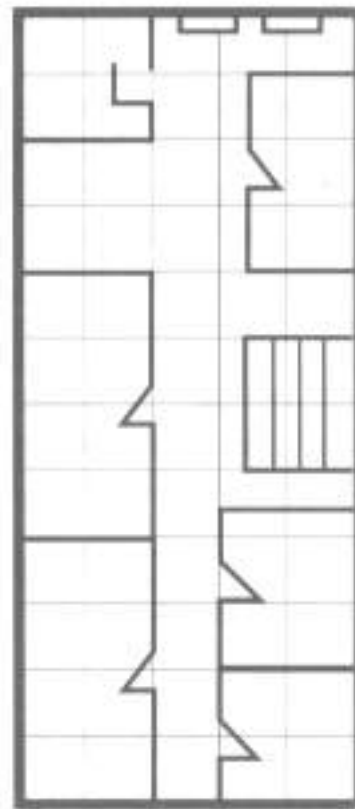
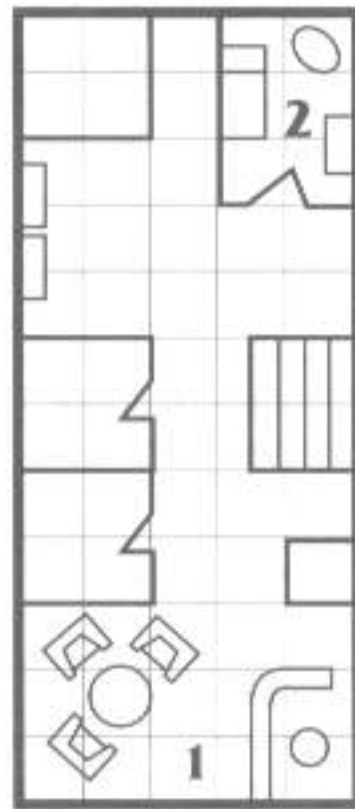
Stairs



Window



Door



**SECOND FLOOR**

This area is occupied by paying guests. One of the rooms contains a street samurai on the run from Lone Star. Braced for an assault by the cops, he sits tight in his room clutching his Colt M22A2, which is filled to the brim with APDS ammo.

**THIRD FLOOR**

Aronson and the rest of his gang are hiding out on this floor. Depending on the runners' actions in the lobby, Aronson may be waiting for them.

At the top of the stairs is a simple electric-eye sensor that will alert Aronson and the crew in Room #1. A character who makes a successful Perception (8) Test will spot the device, and the runners can avoid it by stepping over it. In addition to the sensor, three Force 3 watchers are flitting around. One will report any visitors to Vander in Room #3. The remaining two act as attack dogs and will close in on any astral presence they sense. These watchers are shaped like little Humanis men and carry vicious-looking tridents. When attacking, their weapons enlarge to four times their normal size. Finally, two Humanis troops are looking out the windows at either end of the hall.

**Force 3 Watchers (3)**

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

**Initiative:** 23 + 1D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 2/4

**Main Room (1)**

Several beds and footlockers are arranged in this room, which serves as bunkhouse, meeting place, kitchen and dining room. Aronson is in here with most of his men, including his enforcer, Kandle. Aronson looks different than when the runners last saw him; he is clearly human, not elven, and he is loaded for bear. In this encounter he wears an Armor Jacket (5/3) and carries a Colt M22A2 [Assault Rifle, 40 (clip), SA/BF/FA, 9M, w/3 extra clips, explosive ammo, Gas Vent III Recoil Compensation, Integral Smartlink].

This room also holds all of Aronson's important records—contacts, successful missions and their effects, details of plans not yet fleshed out, and so on. Aronson uses this extensive documentation of his activities to extract ever-greater amounts of money and power from those above him on the Humanis food chain. The records are his safety net as well as his proof of loyalty and effectiveness. They also contain the proof the runners need to back up their story and rehabilitate their reputations. The information about the Zandras kidnapping is on a chip labeled *Urban Brawl Scores*. Hard copies of various files are lying around the room, and if the runners search the place they can guess that a chip version may be there as well. Aronson is no decker, and a team decker can easily break the codes on the chip.

The Humanis troops with Aronson are devoted to the poli-club's cause. Like him, they see violence as the only way to protect the rights of humans in the Awakened world. To this end, they have gone under the knife and cybered themselves up to make them more proficient soldiers. Kandle, especially, is a chromed-to-the-max cyberwarrior; his body is so crammed full of parts not his own that he can barely keep himself together. Kandle is unshakeably loyal to Aronson and will fight to the death to protect him.



**Humanis Troops (3)**

B	Q	S	I	W	C	E	R	Armor
4 (5)	4	4	2	4	4	4.5	4	5/3

Initiative: 4 + 2D6

Threat/Professional Rating: 3/4

Skills: Armed Combat 5, Firearms 6, Stealth 4

Cyberware: Boosted Reflexes 1, Dermal Armor 1, Smartlink

Gear: Armor Jacket (5/3), Colt Cobra [SMG, 32 (clip), SA/BF/FA, 8M, w/2 extra clips, integral Smartlink, integral Gas Vent II (1), EX explosive ammo], Colt Manhunter [Heavy Pistol, 16 (clip), SA, 9M, w/3 extra clips, integral Smartlink]

**Kandle**

B	Q	S	I	W	C	E	R	Armor
6 (8)	6 (12)	6 (10)	2	4	6	.2	5 (13)	6 (8)/4 (6)

Initiative: 13 + 3D6

Threat/Professional Rating: 6/4

Body Index: 6

Skills: Armed Combat 6, Athletics 4, Firearms 8, Stealth 5, Unarmed Combat 6

Cyberware\*: Bone Lacing (Titanium), Cybereyes (Flare Compensation, Low Light, Thermographic), Move-by-Wire System 2, Retractable Spur, Smartlink II

Bloware: Damage Compensator 2, Enhanced Articulation, Muscle Augmentation 4, Orthoskin 2

Gear: Partial Heavy Armor, Colt M22A2 [Assault Rifle, 40 (clip), SA/BF/FA, 8M, w/3 extra clips, Gas Vent IV Recoil Compensation, integral Smartlink II, integral Grenade Launcher (2 mini IPE Concussion 16M Stun -1/meter, and two mini flash grenades, 5L + special), Colt Manhunter [Heavy Pistol, 16 (clip), SA, 9M, w/3 extra clips, integral Smartlink], Katana w/Dikote [13S +1 Reach], Transceiver

\*All cyberware except move-by-wire system is beta-grade.

**Spare Room (2)**

This room is used to store supplies, and also for bed space when additional Humanis members need to hide out. At present, three Humanis thugs are bunking in this room, two of whom are acting as spotters in the hallway when the runners arrive.

**Humanis Troops (3)**

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

Initiative: 4 + 2D6

Threat/Professional Rating: 3/4

Skills: Armed Combat 5, Firearms 6, Stealth 4

Cyberware: Boosted Reflexes 1, Smartlink

Gear: Armor Jacket (5/3), Colt Cobra [SMG, 32 (clip), SA/BF/FA, 8M, w/2 extra clips, integral Smartlink, integral Gas Vent II (1), EX explosive ammo], Colt Manhunter [Heavy Pistol, 16 (clip), SA, 9M, w/3 extra clips, integral Smartlink], Transceiver

**Vander's Room (3)**

Kinsey Zandras is in this room, along with Vander Peterson, Aronson's resident magician. Vander is an elemental adept with an affinity for earth who works hard at keeping Aronson happy

and expanding his own power. Vander has placed a Rating 4 ward around the room to secure it against outsiders and hide Kinsey from astral scans.

Candles and lamps illuminate the room, casting shifting shadows throughout. Vander lives in this room and has attuned it to aid him in working magic. The room has a Background Count of 1. For more information about using background count in game play, see p. 89, **Grimoire II**.

Vander has devoted much time to his craft and has set up his room to defend himself if necessary. He has anchored two spells in the room, an Acid Bomb 6 spell and a Bind 5 spell. The acid bomb spell is anchored to the tile floor just inside the doorway and can be activated by a simple spoken word from Vander. The bind spell is anchored to another floor tile just a few meters further in; this spell is also activated by a simple verbal command. In addition, Vander has conjured two Force 5 earth elementals to come to his defense.

**Vander**

B	Q	S	I	W	C	E	R	Armor
4(5)	4	5	5	6	6	7	5	5 (9)/3

Initiative: 5 + 1D6

Threat/Professional Rating: 5/3

Initiate Grade: 1

Skills: Conjuring 6, Firearms 4, Magical Theory 4, Sorcery 6

Special Centering Skill: Reciting Poetry (Edgar Allan Poe) 4

Gear: Elemental Spell Focus 3, Fetish Focus (3), Spell Lock (Personal Bullet Barrier) 4, Spell Lock (Shadow) 3, Colt Cobra [SMG, 32 (clip), SA/BF/FA, 8M, w/2 extra clips, integral Gas Vent II (1), EX explosive ammo]

Spells: Acid Bomb 4 (6)\*, Acid Stream 5, Barrier 5 (7)\*, Bind 5, Ice Sheet 3, Mob Mood 6, Personal Bullet Barrier 4, Shapechange 4

\*Spell can be cast with an expendable fetish at two Force levels higher.

**Force 5 Earth Elementals (2)**

B	Q	S	I	W	C	E	R
9	3 x 2	9	5	5	5	(5) A	13

Initiative: 13 (23) + 1D6\*

\*+10 Bonus to initiative when physically manifest, +20 while in Astral Space

Threat Rating: 5/4

Attacks: 5S as Unarmed Combat 13, +1 Reach

Powers: Engulf, Manifestation, Movement

Weaknesses: Vulnerability (Air)

Services: 3

**FINDING KINSEY**

Kinsey is in Vander's room, resting comfortably inside the hermetic circle against the room's far wall. Unfortunately, it may not appear that way to the runners. When Vander placed Kinsey inside the circle, he set a quickened shapechange spell on her that has given her the appearance of a small lizard. In this form, she is leashed to a spike in the floor. A magician in astral space can determine who the lizard really is; if the team does not include a magician character, the runners can deduce that the lizard is Kinsey by spotting such clues as her clothing scattered around the room, a plate of some half-eaten food particularly relished by orks,

or anything else plausible that the gamemaster can dream up. Luckily for the runners, Vander has just finished casting the shapechange spell when they arrive and is still engaged in sustaining it. If the runners manage to knock him out before the sustaining period is over (see **Quickening**, p. 44, **Grimoire II**), the spell collapses and Kinsey appears as herself.

Vander also placed a quickened Barrier 7 spell just inside the circle to prevent Kinsey from escaping. He will reverse the spell only if forced. A magician may try to dispel either of the quickened spells, using dispelling or any other means he or she can come up with (see p. 45, **Grimoire II**, for more information on breaking quickened spells).

## DEBUGGING

If the opposition seems too tough for the player characters, bring in Derrick and his New Weathermen buddies as reserves. The number of Weathermen should not exceed twice the number of runners. The gamemaster can decide which of the New Weathermen will show up, or the runners can ask for specific members as backup. If Gilly is still alive, he will want to come just to get the story. The gamemaster can decide how to play this—Gilly may try to sneak in after the raid has begun or may arrive with the main group of New Weathermen. Just to add to the chaos, the gamemaster can have the Zandras security team from the townhouse show up; they have presumably discovered Aronson's hideout from grilling his contacts.

When returned to normal, Kinsey is the worse for wear because of her BTL addiction. Luckier than many Humanis victims, she has not been tortured or brutalized; Aronson wanted her in good condition to make Zandras more amenable to striking a deal.

## PICKING UP THE PIECES

If all goes well, the runners will rescue Kinsey Zandras and return her safely to her family. Gilly Rellets' exposure of Aronson's role as mastermind, along with a sympathetic portrayal of the runners as ordinary people hard up for money who were duped by an evil man, will largely quiet the anger and distrust that Seattle's metahuman communities feel toward the runners and each other. Instead, their fury will turn toward the Humanis Policlub. The runners will also have learned a lesson in manipulation and the deceitfulness of potential employers.

The Zandras family will be grateful to the runners for their daughter's return, especially if she is unharmed. How this meeting goes is up to the gamemaster and the players. Keep in mind that Gilly Rellets' story does not identify the runners by name; it merely speaks of them as "a group of shadowrunners cruelly and unwittingly used by a bigot to further an evil scheme of whose true intent they knew nothing."

Even though Kinsey was high on BTLs at the time of the kidnapping, she may vaguely remember the runners. If so, she will wonder about their true motives when they attempt to rescue her. She may mention the runners' involvement to her father or keep it to herself, depending on how the runners treat her after getting her out of the Humanis safehouse.

Malcolm Zandras may want to reward the runners, but they must decide whether or not to accept anything he offers. Malcolm will offer each team member 9,000 nuyen for Kinsey's safe return; truly tactless runners can attempt to bargain up the reward, but will get nowhere.

If Aronson dies in the final battle, his death is a major blow to the Humanis movement in Seattle, particularly at the street level. Aronson was one of the policlub's primary organizers for local "direct action" (read: terrorist operations), and so Seattle's general level of racist violence temporarily ebbs. If he lives, the gamemaster can easily make him a powerful and vengeful villain for future adventures and campaigns (and of course, he will become even more powerful if Brackhaven makes it to the White House). Because the runners blew his operation, set his cause back several months and finished off some of his best-trained followers, Aronson will be chafing for revenge.

## AWARDING KARMA

Award team Karma as follows. Award individual Karma per the standard rules (p. 199, **SRII**), with the exceptions listed below.

### TEAM KARMA

Survival	1
Threat	1
Rescuing Kinsey	3
Presenting Gilly with evidence of Humanis involvement in kidnapping	1
Refusing to rescue Kinsey	-2

### INDIVIDUAL KARMA

Refusing reward from Malcolm Zandras	1
Bargaining for higher reward	-2

## LEGWORK

This section provides the information the runners are likely to get from their contacts and investigations. Each of the following success tables lists contacts likely to know certain information, the target number for obtaining it and the number of successes necessary.

Once news of the kidnapping and the involvement of shadowrunners hits the streets, the runners will find it increasingly difficult to get information. Many contacts will refuse to discuss the affair with anyone, lest they stick their necks out too far and pay the price. In addition, some contacts may suspect that the runners are the people shown in the security footage. No one should finger them for sure right off the bat, but some of the people they know best are likely to be thinking that the mysterious culprits on the news shows look more than a little familiar. To reflect the atmosphere of fear and mistrust, increase the listed target numbers for all contacts by 1 for every 24 hours that elapse after the broadcast of the incriminating footage. If Aronson has released a runner's name to the networks, target numbers for that character should increase by 2 every 24 hours.

Burt Aronson has two success tables, because the runners may want to investigate him both before and after the fun begins. Use Aronson's Additional Legwork table *after* the characters have gone through **Drop Off**, p. 64, or **And Pick Up**, p. 66.

**BURT ARONSON (PRELIMINARY LEGWORK)****Appropriate Contacts (Target Number 6)**

Any Media, Street, or Corporate contact.

Shadowland: Target Number 5/Search Time 18 hours

Successes	Results
0-1	"Sells furniture or something, right?"
2	"He's a playboy. Likes to hang out at casinos and play the night scene. Don't know much about what he does or where he gets his money."
3	"Snotty rich-boy elf, goes for the club scene. Sometimes I hear about an Aronson working the street, but I don't know who he works for or where—or even if he's the same guy. Could be."
4+	"You asking about the elf or the human? There's two guys with the same name. The elf's a party, party, party type. The human's a Johnson or something, I think. Real low-to-the-ground, if you know what I mean."

**KINSEY ZANDRAS****Appropriate Contacts (Target Number 5)**

Any Corporate Official, Corporate Secretary, Metahuman Rights Activist, or Reporter.

Shadowland: Target Number 6/Search Time 18 hours

Successes	Results
1	"She's a rare sight: the well-to-do daughter of a successful ork businessman."
2	"She's Malcolm Zandras's kid—he owns Zandras Shipping. Spoiled rotten, of course."
3	"Rolling in money, that chica. Lives in a ritz townhouse with a girlfriend, all paid for by daddy dearest. I hear he's even hired a special security team just to watch his baby."
4+	"Daddy's little girl loves to party. Parties all the time. Rumor has it she's a serious chiphead. But hey, who cares how the rich kill themselves?"

**MALCOLM ZANDRAS****Appropriate Contacts (Target Number 4)**

Any Corporate Official, Corporate Secretary, or Reporter.

Shadowland: Target Number 4/Search Time 12 hours

Successes	Results
1	"He owns Zandras Shipping, one of the most successful metahuman-owned businesses in the Seattle sprawl."
2	"He makes a lot of cred off deals with the Salish Tribal Council. He's got shipping routes through Salish that a lot of bigger companies wish they had."
3+	"He's done a lot to make things better for metahumans in general and orks in particular. Runs a clean business, loves his family—so much that he lets his daughter squeeze him for all the nuyen she can grab."

**ZANDRAS SHIPPING****Appropriate Contacts (Target Number 4)**

Any Corporate Official or blue-collar worker.

Shadowland: Target Number 4/Search Time 16 hours

Successes	Results
1	"Zandras is one of the biggest metahuman-owned companies around the Seattle area. They do good work, and there's nothing shady about them as far as I know."
2	"They do a lot of business with the Council Tribes."
3+	"They don't like smugglers much, and their trucks have security tighter than a tick on a dog. They use in-house security—ex-runners, I think."

**BURT ARONSON (ADDITIONAL LEGWORK)****Appropriate Contacts (Target Number 8)**

Any Street or Media contact.

Shadowland: Target Number 6/Search Time 18 hours

Successes	Results
1	"His name's been poppin' up a lot lately. Not sure why. He owe people money?"
2	"The elf's dropped out of sight—no one's seen him at his usual hangouts. He must owe somebody a stack of cred."
3	"We talkin' the human or the elf? The human Aronson is still in town—I heard a rumor some biz of his went down wrong recently. Does the elf owe you money?"
4	"Funny you should ask about Aronson. I hear he's gone into hiding somewhere around Fort Lewis. What else did I hear about him ... oh, yeah. Anyone asking questions about him is supposedly too hot to ... uh, sorry, chumbo. Urgent business elsewhere."
5	"Aronson ain't no elf. He's human, omae. From what I hear, he owes someone a lot of money—and anyone asking about him is as good as dead. So what color flowers should I send to yer funeral?"
6+	"I shouldn't even be talking to you, let alone saying what I'm about to. You didn't hear this from me, 'kay? Aronson's in tight with Humanis. I also heard he's been up to some drek-hot ops lately. Don't ask me what—I don't know, and I don't want to."

## CAST OF SHADOWS

Characters are listed in order of their appearance.

### BURT ARONSON

A tall and slender human in his late thirties, Burt Aronson finds it easy to pass for a slightly-burlier-than-average elf. He wears his whitish-blond hair at collarbone length, most often in a braid or pony tail. He moves gracefully and has a flair for style, whether corporate or street. He is highly intelligent, but fundamentally cold and unfeeling: though he can project warmth and charm convincingly when necessary, the warmth is never genuine. He maintains a cool facade at all times, hiding his feelings and thoughts. Extremely sensitive people find him creepy, though they can rarely put their finger on the reason why.



#### Attributes

Body: 4  
 Quickness: 5  
 Strength: 5  
 Charisma: 6  
 Intelligence: 5  
 Willpower: 6  
 Essence: 5.1  
 Reaction: 5

**Initiative:** 5 + 1D6

**Combat Pool:** 8

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 5/3

#### Skills

Etiquette (Corporate): 4  
 Etiquette (Street): 3  
 Firearms: 4 (Pistols: 6)  
 Japanese: 3  
 Negotiation: 4  
 Spherethiel: 3  
 Unarmed Combat: 5

#### Cyberware

Cybereyes (Low Light, Thermographic)  
 Datajack  
 Smartlink

#### Gear

Beretta 101T [Light Pistol, 12 (clip), SA, 8L, w/1 extra clip, integral Smartlink, EX explosive ammo]  
 Pocket Secretary

**Note:** For Aronson's gear in **Thieves, Turned Heroes**, see p. 70.



### JAMESON

Jameson and the rest of the Zandras security team were hired by Malcolm Zandras to guard Kinsey after some "undesirables" got too close to his little darling. All of them know of her BTL problem and see their main task as keeping others from using or abusing her while she is under the influence.

Jameson is an adept, a street veteran turned legit. Though relatively new to this kind of security work, his experience and capabilities make him exceptionally good at his job. He has honed his spellcasting ability to a fine art over the years and has also become proficient at dispelling magical threats. Because he can only perceive but not travel astrally, he is wary of keeping his foci activated too long. Usually, he activates them at the first sign of trouble. He thinks fast on his feet and is hard to rattle.

#### Attributes

Body: 6  
 Quickness: 4  
 Strength: 6  
 Charisma: 3  
 Intelligence: 4  
 Willpower: 5(8)  
 Essence: 6  
 Magic : 6  
 Reaction: 4

**Initiative:** 4 + 1D6 (+3D6)

**Combat Pool:** 6

**Magic Pool:** 8

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 3/3

**Magical Threat Rating:** 4

#### Skills

Conjuring: 3  
 Firearms: 4  
 Magical Theory: 4  
 Sorcery: 8

#### Spells

##### Combat

Slay Elf: 5\*  
 Slay Human: 4\*  
 Spirit Bolt: 4\*  
 Stun Bolt: 6\*  
 Stunblast: 6\*

##### Health

Increase Reflexes (+2): 2  
 Increase Willpower (+3): 2  
 Treat: 3

##### Illusion

Confusion: 5  
 Improved Invisibility: 3

##### Manipulation

Personal Bullet Barrier: 3  
 Personal Spell Barrier: 4

\*Spell uses an expendable fetish, allowing the spell to be cast 2 force levels higher.

#### Gear

SCK M100 [SMG, 30 (clip), SA/BF, 8M, w/3 extra clips, Gas Vent III, Laser Sight, explosive ammo  
 Combat Spell Focus (2)

Spell Lock (Increase Reflexes +2)  
 Spell Lock (Increase Willpower +3)  
 Transceiver  
 4 Fetish Foci (4)

Expendable fetishes for the spells indicated by an asterisk in **Spells** listing.

#### FRED

Fred is an ork from a rough neighborhood and belligerently proud of it. A bit of a loose cannon, he packs more cyberware than anyone else on the security team. He prefers to take targets down with full-auto bursts from his HK227 because he likes the noise. He is unexpectedly shy around attractive women and is skittish about guarding some of the party girls, but he will do his best to keep them safe. He considers Mandy his best friend despite her being human; in his mind, she is "different" from other humans.



#### Attributes

Body: 8 (11)  
 Quickness: 4 (7)  
 Strength: 7 (10)  
 Charisma: 2  
 Intelligence: 4  
 Willpower: 4  
 Essence: .1  
 Reaction: 4 (13)

**Initiative:** 13 + 3D6  
**Combat Pool:** 8  
**Threat/Professional Rating:** 5/3

**Body Index:** 3.1

### Skills

Firearms: 5 (Submachine Guns: 7 [8])  
 Stealth: 4  
 Throwing Weapons: 4  
 Unarmed Combat: 5 (Retractable Spurs: 8)

### Cyberware

Dermal Plating 3  
 Reaction Enhancer +3  
 Smartlink II  
 Wired Reflexes 2

### Bioware

Enhanced Articulation  
 Muscle Augmentation 3  
 Reflex Recorder (SMGs)

### Gear

Armor Jacket (5/3)  
 Colt Manhunter [Heavy Pistol, 16 (clip), SA, 9M, w/3 extra clips, integral Smartlink II]  
 HK227 [SMG, 28 (clip), SA/BF/FA, 7M, w/3 extra clips, Gas Vent IV Recoil Compensation, integral Smartlink II]  
 3 AFR-7 Flash Grenades [5L+ special]  
 Transceiver

### MANDY

Short, stocky and powerfully built, Mandy is a tough fighter and a loyal friend. She and Fred have been partners and buddies for several years, and she tends to keep her over-wired friend from getting too crazy. She prefers non-invasive bioware over other forms of cyberware. A close-combat specialist, she wields her katana with deadly force.

### Attributes

Body: 6  
 Quickness: 6 (9)  
 Strength: 5 (8)  
 Charisma: 5  
 Intelligence: 5  
 Willpower: 6  
 Essence: 5.1  
 Reaction: 5 (10)

**Initiative:** 10 + 3D6  
**Combat Pool:** 10  
**Threat/Professional Rating:** 5/3  
**Body Index:** 5.75



### Skills

Armed Combat: 4 (5) (Katana: 7 [8])  
 Etiquette (Street): 4  
 Firearms: 6  
 Stealth: 4  
 Throwing Weapons: 4

### Cyberware

Reaction Enhancer +3

### Bioware

Muscle Augmentation 3  
 Orthoskin 3  
 Reflex Recorder (Armed Combat)  
 Synaptic Accelerator 2

### Gear

Armor Jacket (5/3)  
 Colt Manhunter [Heavy Pistol, 16 (clip), SA, 11M, w/3 extra clips of EX explosive ammo, laser sight]  
 3 AFR-7 Flash Grenades [5L + special]  
 Forearm Guards (0/1)  
 Katana w/ Dikote [11S]  
 Transceiver



### COUNTERWEIGHT

A young ork, Counterweight is new to the security team, a raw recruit from Fred's run-down neighborhood. Fred knew Counterweight as a kid and recommended him for this job. Counterweight idolizes Fred and does his best to emulate him, even installing cyberware similar to Fred's. What Counterweight lacks in street experience, he almost makes up for with enthusiasm.

#### Attributes

Body: 8  
 Quickness: 4  
 Strength: 8  
 Charisma: 3  
 Intelligence: 4  
 Willpower: 4  
 Essence: 3.2  
 Reaction: 4 (8)

**Initiative:** 8 + 3D6

**Combat Pool:** 6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 3/2

#### Skills

Armed Combat: 4 (Spurs: 6)  
 Firearms: 5  
 Stealth: 3

#### Cyberware

Retractable Spurs  
 Smartlink  
 Wired Reflexes I

#### Gear

Armor Jacket (5/3)  
 Ares-Predator [Heavy Pistol, 15 (clip), SA, 9M, w/2 extra clips, integral Smartlink]  
 HK227 [SMG, 28 (clip), SA/BF/FA, 7M, w/3 extra clips, integral Smartlink]  
 Transceiver

## GILLY RELLETS

Gilly Rellets loves his job, especially the chance it gives him to prove that the keyboard is mightier than the assault cannon (in some respects, anyway). He gets drunk on words, and if given half a chance will talk the leg off a table; however, he is also an excellent listener. This skinny, scruffy-looking, intense elf has spent years working for the Underground News bureau and has a well-developed arsenal of contacts and plenty of influence within the metahuman community. He can make a useful ally or a bad enemy.

### Attributes

Body: 3  
 Quickness: 5  
 Strength: 3  
 Charisma: 6  
 Intelligence: 6  
 Willpower: 5  
 Essence: 3.4  
 Reaction: 5

**Initiative:** 5 + 1D6

**Combat Pool:** 8

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 2/2

### Skills

Athletics: 3  
 Computer: 4  
 Etiquette (Street): 4  
 Firearms: 3  
 Negotiation: 4  
 Reporting: 5  
 Stealth (Urban): 4

### Cyberware

Cyberears (Recorder)  
 Cybereyes (Camera, Low Light, Thermographic)  
 Chipjack  
 Datajack  
 Headware Memory (100 Mp)

### Gear

Armor Clothing  
 Beretta 101T [Light Pistol, 12 (clip), SA, 6L, w/1 extra clip]  
 Pocket Secretary





# DEAD RUN

## SPIN CONTROL

General Franklin Yeats stared for several seconds at the flat, black screen of the telecomm. Then he walked over to the built-in mini-bar and poured himself two fingers of scotch. He tossed half of it down, then strode back to the telecomm and punched three numbers into the keypad.

"Agent Harris," a crisp voice answered. "What can I do for you, sir?"

"Just a moment of your time, Mr. Harris—privately."

Smiling for the camera, Yeats watched Harris nod; then the screen went dark. Yeats opened the connecting door before Harris had time to knock. He ushered the Secret Service agent into the room and shut the door behind him.

"Some kind of trouble, sir?" Harris asked.

"Possibly. I received an interesting call a few minutes ago—very interesting." Yeats sipped his drink, then locked eyes with Harris. "Someone knows."

Harris raised an eyebrow. For him, that reaction equalled shock.

"How much?"

"Enough to raise questions—not enough to prove anything. But questions are the last thing we need in the middle of a presidential campaign—especially the kind of questions likely to be raised if these people take their allegations public."

Harris shifted his weight, subtly adopting a soldier-like "parade rest" stance.

"How do you want me to handle it, sir?"

"I'll handle it myself." Yeats finished his drink and set the glass down. "My caller wants a face-to-face meeting at the Plaza Hotel—tonight. It's best I go alone; frighten him off now, and there's no telling who he'll spill his story to. Keep your colleagues bottled up here, Harris—I don't want some overzealous glorified security guard seeing or hearing something he shouldn't."

Harris frowned.

"Sir, I don't think—"

"You're not supposed to think," Yeats snapped. "You're here to follow my orders and those of our superiors. We cannot risk exposure."

He stared at Harris until the agent nodded his head. Then he smiled.

"Relax, Mr. Harris. How much of a threat can one black-maller possibly be?"

The Plaza was less than three blocks away from Yeats's own hotel. Silently, the general congratulated his enemy on the choice of location—so much easier to slip out unnoticed on foot than in a car, and no cabby who might remember a face at an inconvenient time. Just a two-and-a-half block stroll on a fine

Seattle night. The desk clerk might be a bit of a problem, but Yeats's caller had helpfully provided him with the room number—no need to speak to the desk clerk or even look in that direction. Just walk in, head upstairs, and deal quickly and quietly with this unexpected problem.

Yeats took a deep breath, enjoying the soft night air. Seattle was getting on toward summer, and the wind held the scent of flowers from the carefully sculpted gardens in front of the posh downtown hotels. Amazing that it wasn't raining—and convenient. He wouldn't have to explain wet clothes or damp hair, should he be unlucky enough to run into anyone when he returned. Yeats smiled, reflecting on the rightness of a universe in which things could work out so nicely.

He stopped for a moment in front of the Plaza, admiring the delicate play of lights across the hotel's elegant facade. Just a jaunt across the lobby and a short elevator ride, then scratch one fool blackmailer. Then stroll out and home again, to the comforting attention of his Secret Service detail—all of whom would swear that he'd never left his own hotel that night. And the Yeats/Penchyk ticket would go rolling on its merry way, all the way to Washington D.C.

## INTRODUCTION

In **Dead Run**, the runners arrive at what seems like a straightforward meet only to stumble over the body of presidential candidate Franklin Yeats, who has been killed by an unknown assassin. Moments after the runners turn up, the FBI arrives and spots them standing over the body. As the FBI agents are inclined to shoot first and ask questions later, the runners are forced to flee. Unfortunately, bolting away from the crime scene at top speed makes the runners look guilty of the killing.

The characters work against time to prove their innocence while agents of the UCAS government try to track them down and simultaneously keep a lid on the explosive aftereffects of Yeats's assassination. The political implications of the event rock the UCAS, as all the other candidates scramble to take advantage of the situation and shift blame away from themselves in the process.

When the runners try to contact the fixer who hired them, they discover the real killers—a group of mantis spirits called the Empowerment Coalition. The coalition killed Yeats because he was possessed by a wasp spirit; his own vice-presidential candidate, Anne Penchyk (who helped "rescue" mantids from Chicago in **Casualties of War**, a **Super Tuesday** adventure), did the coalition's dirty work. Unfortunately for the runners, the Federal agents are hot on their heels—and who are the Feds more likely to believe—a well-known public figure or a bunch of scroffy shadowrunners who fled the scene of their alleged crime?

When the Feds arrive on the scene all hell breaks loose, but the runners narrowly escape. The runners start to investigate and believe they are just beginning to figure out what's going on when Penchyk and her allies show up. When the coalition's plans suddenly go awry, Penchyk and her allies realize they need help—and the runners are the only help around. To get the runners on her side, Penchyk tells them the awful truth behind the assassination. She says Yeats belonged to a secret faction of "good merges"—insect spirits virtually indistinguishable from normal people—who survived the purge of the Universal Brotherhood. According to Penchyk, these good merges—also known as the Secret Hive—were the puppetmasters of the Brotherhood. Since the purge, they have taken a new route to power through legitimate channels. By possessing strong-willed people in powerful positions, they are producing near-perfect bug possessions that allow them to gradually take control of human civilization.

Penchyk claims that the mantids intended to use the runners as fall guys for Yeats's death because they needed to shift the Secret Hive's attention away from the Empowerment Coalition. (Only by remaining hidden can the coalition continue to work against the Hive.) Penchyk offers the runners a deal, however; if they help the mantids out and keep the Hive from learning of the coalition's existence, Penchyk will clear their names. If they refuse or divulge the existence of the mantids, the Coalition will destroy them. To get out of the situation with their hides intact, the runners face a tough choice—do they help the mantids who set them up as patsies in the first place, thereby making enemies of the powerful Secret Hive? Or do they refuse and make enemies out of the equally powerful Coalition?

**Dead Run** is set in Seattle, but the gamemaster can move the adventure to any large city in the UCAS if he or she wishes. Ideally, the player-character group should include at least one magician who knows a little something about bug spirits.

### ADDING CASUALTIES

**Dead Run** is a sequel of sorts to the **Super Tuesday** adventure **Casualties of War**. Though some of the events and characters from that adventure carry over into this one, the players need not have run **Casualties of War** to play this adventure. However, gamemasters who have run **Casualties of War** can involve the player characters in the plot line of **Dead Run** in several different ways.

If the characters made a fairly successful run into the Chicago Containment Zone and escaped with Anne Penchyk, they might already suspect Penchyk's involvement with the mantis spirits. In this case, Penchyk remembers the runners from that mission—which gives her added incentive to use them as fall guys for the elimination of Yeats, thereby nicely tying up any loose ends.

If the runners failed their mission in Bug City and got trapped there as a result of Penchyk's "death" or some other disaster, Penchyk and the Empowerment Coalition arrange for a UCAS military team to rescue the runners from the Zone. At a site somewhere outside Bug City, the runners learn about the meet that turns out to be the set-up for the frame job.

If the characters did not take part in **Casualties of War**, they are simply a new team of runners chosen by Penchyk and the coalition to serve as fall guys. Perhaps they crossed one or more

mantis spirits in the past, or they simply have résumés that scream "patsies" (like a lot of runner teams). The latter is especially likely if any of the runners has a past that might be construed as subversive or opposed to General Yeats's political views. If the runners are known for doing wetwork, so much the better; the gamemaster can use the runners' bad reputations against them if he wants to drive home the point that actions have consequences.

## HOLDING THE BAG

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You've been in the biz long enough to know that a middle-of-the-night meet is just business as usual. So when a fixer named Donovan drops you the word of a meeting—a very private meeting—at one of the 'plex's poshest hotels, you're more than willing to listen to the particulars. Late night, ritz place—the possibilities for cred could be endless. And you've got plenty of uses for cred right now.

The hotel is the Plaza downtown—as posh as a CEO's private bathroom, done up with the very latest in modern-art decor. You show up in the lobby at the appointed hour in your "dress-to-impress" rags. The mention of the name "Johnson" and the room number Donovan gave you gets the immediate attention of the oh-so-elegant desk clerk, who smiles her perfect smile at you and points you toward the elevator.

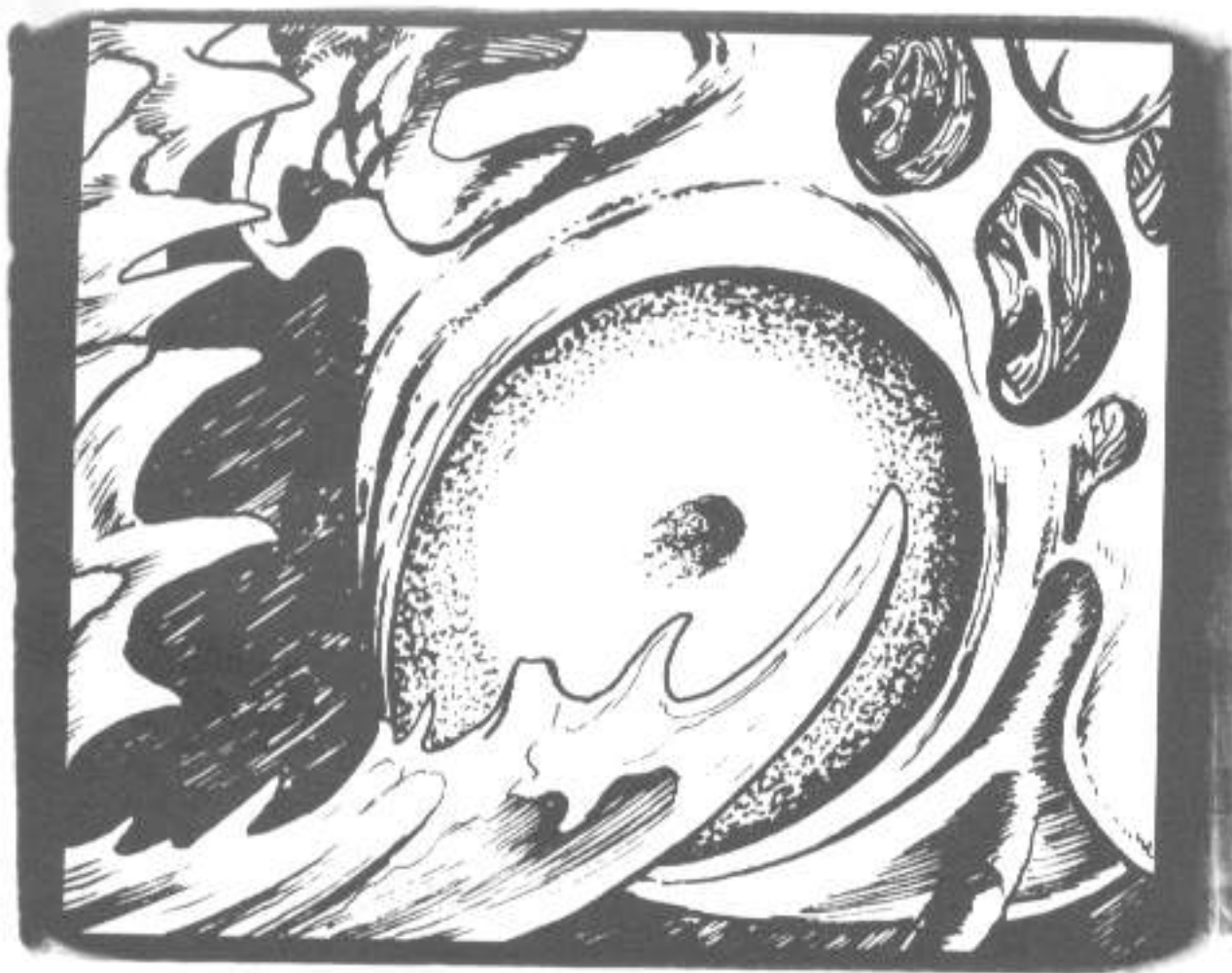
The elevator ride is a smooth six seconds up to the tenth floor. The doors whisper open; you step out and jander down the hall to Room 1013. Softly, as befits a polite hotel guest, you knock on the door. No answer from inside. You wait a moment and knock again. Still nothing. Lucky for you the desk clerk gave you a keystick so you could let yourselves in. Loitering in the hallway is always bad news, especially when the folks you're meeting want things kept discreet.

You slot the keystick and push gently on the door when the lock LED turns green. The door glides open to reveal a plush hotel room, larger than most of the apartments you've lived in. You see lots of sharp-cornered, sleek, modern furniture, most of it off-white and chrome. A broad set of floor-to-ceiling windows provides a view of the city skyline.

You move inside and start to look around. The Johnson must be planning to arrive last, just to make sure the place is secure. You decide to give everything a once-over while you can. It pays to check a place out—some surprises can really ruin your day.

The suite's main sitting room seems clean enough, as do the closets and the small kitchenette. As you prowl around, something starts to bother you. You can't put your finger on it, but somehow you can sense something's wrong. Something about the air, that's it. The air doesn't smell right. It smells—sweet. Sweet and metallic at the same time. You know what it is—you've smelled it somewhere before. If you could just remember where...

The door to the left of the sitting room is open just a crack. You gently push it open wider, and the sickly sweet smell comes flooding out. Suddenly you recognize it—the smell of blood. You peer into the room, and the hairs on the back of your neck stand up.



A man in a dark suit is lying on the neatly made bed. Under the man, a large, dark red patch stains the white coverlet. You swallow hard and move closer to get a better look at him, being careful not to touch anything. Something ripped clean through his throat; you can see the whitish ridge of his torn windpipe and the pale gleam of his spine. His face is intact; he's dark-skinned, looks maybe fifty or sixty. Haven't you seen this poor slot somewhere before?

Suddenly you recognize the face. The corpse staring blindly up at you is the body of General Franklin Yeats, UCAS presidential candidate.

## HOOKS

This scene wastes no time dropping the runners into hot water. They show up for what they think is going to be a typical business meet and end up finding the body of a leading presidential contender. The runners should immediately realize that someone is trying to set them up to take the rap for the killing. If they don't, drop a hint or two to indicate that they will be the prime suspects if someone discovers them in the hotel room. Therefore, discovery of the body should shoot the tension level through the roof and get the players thinking frantically about how they can possibly get out of this predicament.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The hotel-room meeting is a set-up. The Empowerment Coalition and Anne Penchyk orchestrated Yeats's death, and they have chosen the runners as the fall guys for the assassination. The coalition murdered Yeats because he was a member of the Secret Hive, a group of bug-possessed people virtually indistinguishable from normal humans. The Secret Hive originally pulled the strings

of the Universal Brotherhood; when that organization was shattered, the Hive members looked for new and less conspicuous avenues to power. The Hive hit on the idea of infiltrating all levels of society with "good merges"—insect spirits whose metahuman and human forms enable them to pass unnoticed among metahumans and humans.

The Empowerment Coalition, a group of powerful mantis spirits, is dedicated to stopping the Secret Hive. They need scapegoats for Yeats's death who will distract the Hive's attention and allow the mantids to continue destroying the Hive's operatives. The fixer Donovan is a dupe of the coalition and knew nothing about the double-cross. The runners might try to contact Donovan to find out more about who set them up, but they must do so before the mantids silence Donovan for good (see **The Fix Is In**, p. 88).

Though a political disaster, the assassination is not as terrible an event as the runners might initially think. General Yeats was possessed by a wasp spirit on his last visit home to Chicago before the Bug City incident.

Because of his exceptional willpower, the merge was an amazingly good one; Yeats showed no outward signs of possession, and the spirit gained access to enough of Yeats' memories and experiences to convincingly masquerade as the general. On the command of their queen, this spirit and several others of its kind began infiltrating the UCAS government.

When Knight Errant attacked and partially destroyed the Chicago Hive with a small nuclear device (see the **Shadowrun** novel **Burning Bright**), many other hives were thrown into chaos. The lesser worker and warrior spirits could not function without guidance, but the good merges discovered that the intellect of their human and metahuman hosts provided them with greater reasoning capabilities and allowed them to continue their work in secret. The 2057 special presidential election gave the spirits an ideal opportunity to take control of the UCAS: a victorious campaign by "General Yeats" would allow them to regroup and spread their influence through channels other than the disbanded cult of the Universal Brotherhood.

The mantids contacted General Yeats privately and informed him that they knew his secret. They told him to meet a representative at the Plaza Hotel to arrange for their silence on the matter. Yeats believed he was dealing with a simple blackmail attempt, so he agreed to attend the meeting alone, confident that he could deal with the blackmailer. To his surprise and dismay, the "blackmailer" turned out to be Anne Penchyk, his own running mate and an agent of the Empowerment Coalition. As soon as the general walked into the hotel bedroom, Penchyk summoned a true-form mantis spirit to kill the wasp spirit possessing the general while she killed the body that used to be Franklin Yeats. The deed done, Penchyk slipped out of the room, leaving the runners to take the rap.



The runners arrive minutes after the killing. The room is quiet and they have the opportunity to look around a bit. Apart from discovering Yeats's body in the bedroom, they find nothing of interest. Yeats brought fairly little with him, and Penchyk left nothing behind.

#### EXAMINING THE BODY

If the runners want to hang around and look for clues after discovering the general's body, have them make Perception (4) Tests and consult the Physical Evidence table.

#### PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Successes	Results
1	Yeats obviously died from the ragged gashes in his throat. The blood is still warm and liquid, which means that he probably died within the past hour.
2	The weapon that inflicted the wounds must have been fairly large and wielded by someone very strong.
3	No signs of a struggle are visible in the room, which means that Yeats was probably taken by surprise and died instantly. There appears to be no way in or out of the suite apart from the door through which the runners entered. The windows are armored glass and do not open.
4+	The wounds look too ragged to have been made by a smooth-bladed weapon. Whatever caused them had spikes or a serrated edge.

If a magician attempts to examine the scene astrally, have him or her make an Astral Perception (7) Test and consult the Astral Evidence table. The extreme and alien violence of the assassination has given the hotel suite a Temporary Background Count of 3, which affects any astral tests that magician characters attempt. An initiate with the cleansing metamagical ability (p. 100, **Awakenings**) can attempt to clear away the background count, but any such attempt will erase any astral traces of the killing as well.

#### ASTRAL EVIDENCE

Successes	Results
1	The powerful aura of death in the room almost overwhelms you. The killing was very recent and so violent that it has tainted the ether all around.
2	The violent, intense emotions associated with this killing feel strange in a way you cannot quite place. This room feels like no other death-scene you have ever assensed. The vibes are strangely warped, almost alien.
3	A powerful spirit presence was in this room very recently. Its energies still linger on the astral plane, but they are too faint for you to determine more. You can tell that the spirit was hiding its presence.
4+	In fact, you think two spirits may have been in the room, one more powerful than the other. Both were carefully masked, so you can sense only a faint, lingering echo of their power on the astral.

## DEBUGGING

If the runners are suspicious of the meeting right off the bat, congratulations—you've got a *really* paranoid group of players. If they don't want to show up for the meet in the first place, give them some additional incentive, such as the promise of big nuyen or a reminder of some favors the runners might owe Donovan. Pickings may have been a little slim for the runners lately, and how choosy can beggars afford to be?

If the player characters have been through **Casualties of War**, have Donovan drop Anne Penchyk's name as a last resort to get the runners interested. If the runners go, pulled out of the Chicago Containment Zone at Penchyk's orders, then they should definitely attend the meet. Penchyk will request it, and they owe her big-time for getting their fat out of the fire.

If the runners decide to bolt from the hotel room without looking over any of the evidence, no problem. They lose out on a few early clues about what's really going on, but this decision does not hurt the story either way. Go straight to **On the Run**, below. If the runners seem inclined to linger at the scene of the crime too long, move on to events in the next encounter to get things going again.

## ON THE RUN

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Time to haul out of here and get very far away, where you can figure out what the flying frag to do next. Time to jander out and pretend you never saw this body or this room—or this hotel, for that matter.

Taking care to leave everything untouched, you ease your way out of the room. You've hardly gotten five steps down the hall when a musical chime sounds from the elevator at the far end. The doors slide open to reveal a small knot of people in dark suits, long coats and shades: standard uniform for UCAS Feds. The guy in the lead has his pistol drawn. He spots you and yells "Freeze! FBI!" The other suits flatten themselves against the wall for cover, pulling their own weapons and pointing them straight at you.

Looks like it's your lucky night.

### HOOKS

This encounter kicks off the action. The runners must escape from the Feds, gather their wits and figure out what to do about the whole nasty situation. Make this scene challenging and exciting for the players, like an action-movie chase. Keep things hopping right up to the end.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

General Yeats's absence attracted a little attention, but agents of the Secret Hive loyal to the general have managed to keep anyone from taking potentially inconvenient action. The principal reason for the FBI's swift appearance at the Plaza Hotel is a tip they received from the Empowerment Coalition that General Yeats might be in danger.

The team of agents dispatched to check things out should arrive just as the runners are leaving the hotel suite—either immediately or after spending a few minutes checking it for clues. If the runners linger too long, the arrival of the Feds can prompt them into action. Leading the FBI team are Special Agents Scott Cohen and Meagan O'Rourke (see **Cast of Shadows**, p. 92); backing them up are a number of FBI agents equal to twice the number of runners present. Four agents remain in the hotel lobby, while the remainder split evenly into two teams led by Cohen and O'Rourke. Statistics for the FBI agents appear below.

Cohen's team takes the elevator while O'Rourke's goes up the stairwell. Ideally, the runners should see the elevator at the end of the hall open up and the agents emerge just as they are leaving Yeats's room. At that point, O'Rourke's team will be halfway up the stairwell; O'Rourke and Co. arrive on the tenth floor in approximately a minute (20 combat turns).

### GETTING PAST THE AGENTS

The runners' immediate problem is getting past the FBI agents in the corridor and the stairwell. They cannot get to the elevator without confronting Cohen's group in a head-on firefight. They might be able to reach the stairwell but must then get past O'Rourke and her team coming toward them. Cohen and O'Rourke will use their radios to coordinate their actions, so the runners are unlikely to surprise either of them.

O'Rourke is using a sustained astral sense spell as a precaution against a possible magical threat, and the spell's radius more than covers the area of the stairwell. Runners trying to sleaze past O'Rourke using invisibility or the concealment power of the hotel's hearth spirit will find doing so a tough proposition. The second anything triggers her astral sense spell, O'Rourke switches to astral perception to check the area.

The agents' primary goal is to capture the runners alive for later interrogation. They will not hesitate to use deadly force to defend themselves, however. The runners should be cautious about using force to get past the Feds if they want any chance of clearing themselves (see **Debugging**).

### GETTING OUT OF THE BUILDING

If the runners make it to the lobby, they must get past four more FBI agents posted there to keep watch. These agents are in constant radio contact with the other two teams, and so the runners have little chance to surprise them. If especially enterprising players come up with a workable plan to sneak through the lobby, consider how likely it is to succeed in light of the Feds' tactics. The agents in the lobby are all mundanes, so the runners may be able to bamboozle them by using invisibility, concealment, or some other magical ability.

#### FBI Agents

B	Q	S	I	W	C	E	R	Armor
4	4	4	3	4	4	4 (5)	4.05	4/2

**Initiative:** 5 + 2D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 3/3

**Skills:** Armed Combat 4, Car 3, Etiquette (Corporate) 3, Etiquette (Government) 3, Firearms 5, Unarmed Combat 5

**Cyberware:** Boosted Reflexes (1), Cybereyes with Low Light, Radio, Smartlink Level 2

**Gear:** Browning Max-Power [Heavy Pistol, 10 (clip), SA, 9M], FBI Identification, Lined Coat

### STREET CHASE

If the runners get out of the Plaza and into their wheels (or some alternative mode of transport), the Feds are hot on their trail within minutes. Play this part of the encounter like a classic chase scene; give the runners a bit of a head start before the FBI team comes rushing out of the Plaza to give chase. The runners can take the chase anywhere they please, but feel free to improvise suitable dangers (preferably requiring lots of Crash Tests, vehicle skill rolls to avoid collisions, and the like). Consult the Vehicle Combat Rules (pp. 104–109, **SRII**) for more information on handling vehicle chases and combat scenes. Suggested obstacles for spicing up the chase include the following:

- A drone tanker carrying alcohol-based fuel, liquid nitrogen or some other type of highly flammable liquid is crossing a busy intersection when the runners blow through the red light. The runners must make Vehicle Tests to avoid colliding with the truck; if they or any of their pursuers slam into the tanker, they create a spectacular explosion.

- O'Rourke sends an elemental or two to attack the runners and slow them down. Earth elementals can use their movement power against the runners or form barricades in front of them. Fire elementals might attempt to ignite the gas tank in the runners' vehicle. Fighting off these spirits can make a magician character's life interesting, especially if he or she is trying to drive at the same time.

- A local go-gang decides to join the chase for kicks when it passes through their turf. The gangers all ride Yamaha Rapiers; use the **Gang Member** archetype (p. 57, **SRII**) for statistics.

- As the runners head toward (or over) a bridge, it starts rising to let a large boat pass under it. Alternatively, the bridge has been damaged by a terrorist attack or a collection of rockworms (see p. 132, **Paranormal Animals of North America**). The runners must make Vehicle Tests to jump the gap or make a sudden detour.

- The chase goes through a road construction site full of heavy equipment, ditches, barricades and detours. Think lots of innocent bystanders in the way, and lots of platforms and scaffolding filled with construction materials for the runners to slam into, swerve around or knock over.

The gamemaster can improvise other obstacles and encounters as desired. The runners can only escape the pursuing federal agents by making a successful Escape Test (see p. 107, **SRII**) or creating an obstruction or distraction that the gamemaster judges substantial enough to foil the Feds. Keep in mind that the runners may also have to evade or fight off astral pursuit from Meagan O'Rourke and/or any spirits she has summoned. O'Rourke will withdraw from astral combat after taking a Moderate or greater wound, but may attempt to send a watcher spirit after the runners.

### DEBUGGING

Rather than a major battle, this encounter should play more like a series of short, fast skirmishes with the Feds as the runners try to escape with their skins intact. They should concentrate on getting somewhere safe and as far away from the Plaza as possible; facing off against the UCAS government's crack lawmen is a bad idea. Try to keep the runners moving; put the opposition just a few steps behind them all the way until they finally get away clean.

Picking off federal agents is a definite no-no. Slain federal employees could seriously complicate the runners' chances of proving their innocence later in the adventure and will certainly earn them no points with Meagan O'Rourke or Scott Cohen. Indeed, the two principal FBI agents will see any violence employed by the runners as clear evidence of their guilt. Runners who go out of their way to avoid killing the Feds in their escape arouse O'Rourke's suspicions about the whole case, making her a possible ally later on down the line.

Make the escape and the chase scene challenging but not too difficult. This scene is only the beginning of the fun, and so it should be tense and fast-paced—but not deadly. The runners should feel like they've escaped by the skin of their teeth.

## HIDING OUT

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You've managed to lose the Feds—for now. But the UCAS government isn't going to let this one slide. They think you geeked a major presidential candidate, and by now the word's most likely gone out to every badge in the metroplex. You can see it now—your mugs plastered on "WANTED" posters all over town. Just great for biz. And while you sit here taking up air, the Feds are mobilizing serious manpower to hunt for you. It'll get even worse when the public finds out about it. The Powers-That-Be can't keep the assassination under wraps for long, and when it gets out the angry public will want someone's head on the block for the crime. The Feds won't be too choosy about whose head they pick—considering they made you coming out of the dead general's hotel suite, your heads will do just fine.

So you've got two choices: find the cred for some serious reconstructive surgery and consider moving to another country, or dig up the dirt on who really cacked General Yeats. Not a difficult choice, is it?

### HOOKS

This encounter gives the runners a chance to regroup and decide what to do about the mess they're in. Use the runners' contacts to show them just how deep the drek is; the runners are one very hot potato that no one wants to touch. Have everyone except their most trusted contacts hang up on them or duck out of sight when they see the runners coming; make the runners roleplay and call in every favor they have just to get a little information out of people.



## BEHIND THE SCENES

Once the runners have evaded the FBI, they will want to hide out somewhere while they plan their next move. Encourage player paranoia in the choice of a hiding place. The UCAS government has substantial resources, and the Feds will be able to find most hidey-holes in fairly short order unless the runners are very careful. If the runners have a super-secure safehouse they've been saving for a rainy day, tell them it's pouring buckets; this would be a good time to use the place.

Once the runners have gotten to a safe location, they should start figuring out what exactly happened and what to do about it. If the runners want to try contacting the fixer who arranged the ill-fated meet right away, go to **The Fix Is In** (p. 88). If the runners want to pursue other lines of investigation, use the information given on the following Success Tables as a guideline for legwork. The final entry under **Anne Penchyk** is optional, intended for player characters who went through the **Super Tuesday** adventure, **Casualties of War**, or for gamemasters who want to add more Bug City threads to their campaigns.

In general, the runners should have a tough time getting information out of their contacts. Having been accused of a serious federal crime, the runners are quickly becoming too hot to handle for most people in the metroplex. Only the runners' very best friends and closest contacts will consider talking to them in these circumstances. Most other people will refuse to talk to the runners; some might even turn them over to the Feds if they discover where the runners are. The player characters should be cautious about who they talk to and how. Encourage the players to get paranoid about their characters' security; make them call in all the favors they've got to make sure their contacts don't stab them in the back.

To up the ante, consider having the hotel security cameras catch the runners "in action." Plastering the runners' mugs all over the media allows the gamemaster to have everyone from the pimple-faced kid flipping Stuffer Shack burgers to the local Lone Star beat patrol on the lookout for the "criminals." Someone might

even offer a reward for information—the Republican Party, Yeats's or Anne Penchyk's family, or the UCAS government—which should ratchet up the players' paranoia that much more.

## YEATS'S ENEMIES

### Appropriate Contacts (Target Number 6)

Any Government, Political or Corporate contact.

Successes	Results
0	"Sorry, chummer, can't talk right now. Call me back in thirty to life."
1	"Yeats made himself some enemies in DeeCee. I mean, who doesn't? If you're looking for suspects, check out one of the other candidates."
2	"Some of Yeats's more hawkish policies made him some opponents in DeeCee, but I can't see any of them arranging a hit. He's got more friends than enemies in the Capitol and the Pentagon. Try looking at some of the corps he's worked with."
3	"Yeats turned down a big contract with Aztechnology a couple years ago. The Big A might want him out of the way for some reason. Maybe they're afraid of him becoming president."
4+	"Way I hear it, Yeats has quite a collection of supporters in DeeCee and elsewhere. A real fanatical group. The good general can really rally his troops, know what I mean? I'd bet someone from one of the other camps tried to send a mole or two into Yeats's campaign."



## EVE DONOVAN

### Appropriate Contacts (Target Number 4)

Any Street or Corporate contact.

Successes	Results
0	"Never heard of him."
1	"Donovan's a fixer with a real rep. She built it the old-fashioned way, by earning every bit. She won't frag you over."
2	"Donovan was hot drek in the Seattle shadows about ten years ago. She dropped out of sight for awhile after one shadowrun, but then she started making a comeback. She has connections with the King's Crimson gang—did them a big favor when she got back into biz. They look out for her now."
3	"Donovan's 100 percent devoted to whatever cause she's being paid for this week. She stays bought, know what I mean? She really looks out for her client's interests."
4+	"Eve Donovan has been rebuilding her shadow career from scratch since she got back in the biz about six or seven years ago. She's had some setbacks, but she's been ruthlessly efficient in clawing her way to the top of the heap. She doesn't take shortcuts; she does whatever it takes to get the job done."

## COHEN AND O'ROURKE

### Appropriate Contacts (Target Number 8)

Any Government or Street contacts who might have run into the FBI in the past.

Successes	Results
0	"What, are they lawyers or something?"
1	"Feds—FBI. They investigate political drek, terrorist threats, that kind of thing."
2	"They've been working together about a year or so and seem to make a pretty good team. Cohen is one of the best in the investigation biz and O'Rourke is a real go-getter."
3	"I hear the partnership is a little strained. O'Rourke's real 'in tune with the universe' and uses a lot of forensic magic. Cohen doesn't trust that drek—he'd rather do things the old-fashioned way."
4+	"From what I hear, Cohen's on the edge. All those years investigating wackos and head cases are finally getting to him. People say he's gotten moody and withdrawn—doesn't love the job like he used to."

## ANNE PENCHYK

### Appropriate Contacts (Target Number 4)

Any Corporate, Political or Media contact.

Successes	Results
1	"Penchyk? Yeats's running mate. She's an ork, and from what I hear, a pretty savvy businesswoman."
2	"Anne Penchyk is a real do-it-yourself, hands-on type. She built her business on her own, and she likes to stay involved in things."
3	"Penchyk's a straight shooter. Honest and fair, but no pushover. She's real vocal about metahuman rights. In fact, she's real vocal about most anything she believes in. She's been big on taking care of business in Bug City since she got inside and saw what kind of a hell it was. Took a lot of guts, if you ask me."
4+	"Annie Penchyk isn't what she used to be. Sure, she's as tough and savvy as ever, but a lot of people say the campaign has changed her. I think she's learning just how ruthless you've got to be when you're going for the top slot."
5+	(Optional) "I've heard talk—and it's just talk, mind you—that Penchyk got involved in a run in Chicago a few months back when she was supposedly sick. They say she had some kind of pow-wow with a gang or something. I dunno. You ask me, the only reason to go into Bug City is to get bugs out."

## DEBUGGING

The gamemaster will need to improvise a lot of the legwork in this encounter. The runners should be doing more than just making skill rolls to track down this information—they should be out talking to contacts and looking over their shoulders a lot to make sure the law hasn't spotted them.

This encounter allows the runners to take a quick breather and gather information about what's really going on. Feel free to play around with the results of the Etiquette Tests if it looks like the runners may miss some vital clue, but for the most part let them figure things out on their own. If the investigation starts to bog down or become boring, go ahead and jump to **The Fix Is In** (p. 88) or introduce some side encounters. The runners might have trouble with Lone Star or a local gang, or they might be attacked by a bounty hunter out to collect the reward money (for the bounty hunter, use the Elven Hitman, p. 206, **SRII**, or some suitable NPC from your own campaign).



## THE FIX IS IN

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

For once you're in luck on this run—maybe. Donovan's agreed to a meet—or so says the King's Crimson gang leader who's watching Donovan's back these days. Too bad the jaw session's in the depths of the Barrens. Hell's Kitchen, no less—the perfect place for your luck to run out. But *if* Donovan didn't set you up in the first place, and *if* the gang wasn't in on the deal, then this meet just might show you a way out of this mess. For the moment, you try to forget that "if" is one of the scariest words in the English language. You're taking a gamble, hoping that you're not walking right into another trap.

### When the runners get to Donovan's safehouse, read the following:

The King's Crimson gangers guide you to Donovan's doss, a stone's throw from Hell's Kitchen in Puyallup. Fine gray ash lies over everything like dust coating a forgotten place and time. Most of the buildings are in terrible shape—filthy, crumbling, some half-collapsing. Faint light from the single functioning street lamp glints off the jagged edges of broken windows. Most of the tenements are abandoned—nobody lives here except for the real down-and-outers and the folks who want to make sure that no one ever finds them. The heavy smell of damp ash makes it seem like the Cascade volcanoes could erupt again at any moment, burying this whole place under another cloud of ashfall.

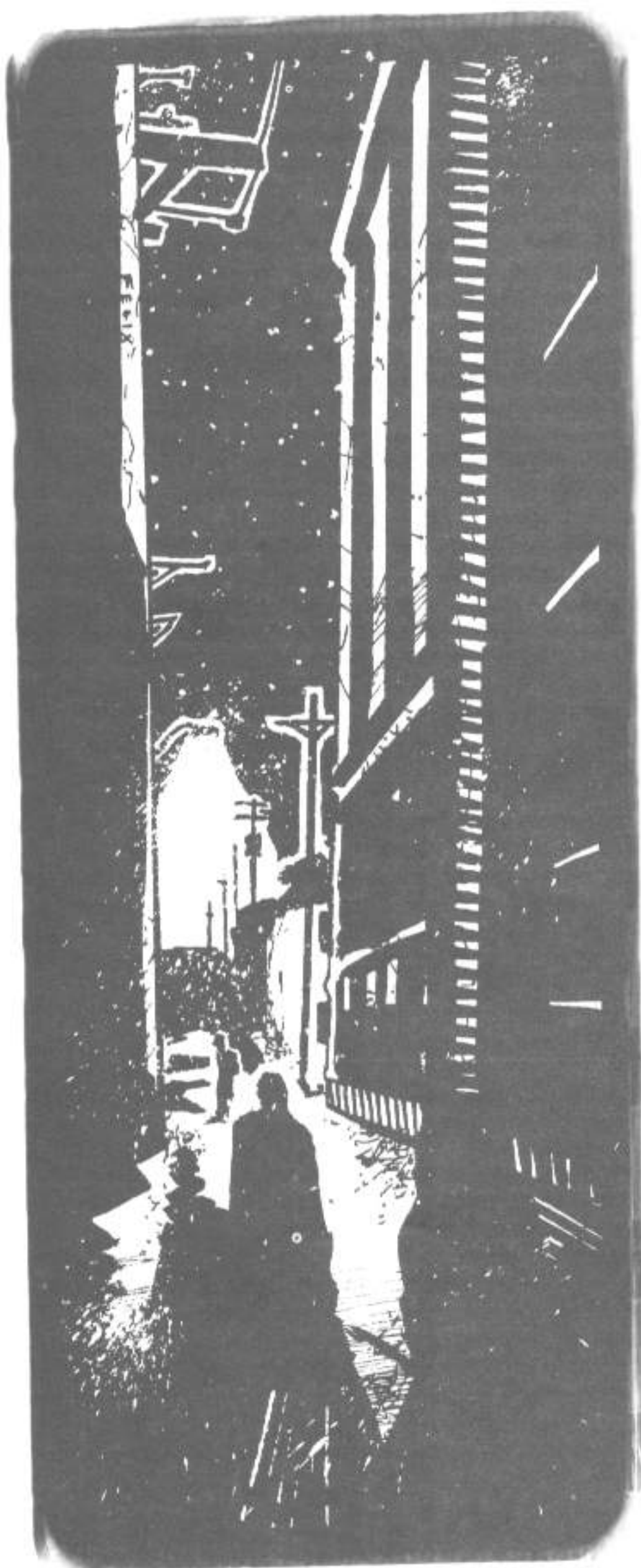
You jander up the cracked cement steps of an old apartment building, long since left to rot along with the rest of the area. Somebody shot out the glass that used to be in the heavy front doors, and the mildew-eaten tiles on the lobby floor are littered with dust-covered shards and other trash. The elevator is an empty shaft filled with rusting and rotting debris, so you start up the stairs. Suddenly, you hear the crack of a gunshot from above. Your ganger escorts stop dead for a split second, then dash up the stairs double-time. Sounds like trouble got here first.

### HOOKS

In this encounter, events take a decidedly strange turn as the runners discover that there is far more to General Yeats's death than they had imagined. Make this scene scary and slightly surreal, with a strong edge of menace to it. The runners must negotiate with mantis spirits to discover the truth and use it to clear themselves of complicity in the crime.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

Soon after arranging the Plaza Hotel meet for the runners, Donovan found out that it was a set-up. She immediately went to ground and sent out feelers to find out what was really going on. Donovan does not appreciate being used as a pawn in someone else's scheme, especially when it could cost her the solid rep that she has spent years building. So far, she has had no better luck than the player characters; few of her contacts are willing to pass on information to anyone connected with Yeats's assassination. As far as the shadows are concerned, it's everyone for himself.



The runners will find it easiest to get in touch with Donovan through the King's Crimson gang (for all ganger statistics, use the Gang Member archetype, p. 57, **SR11**). The gang leader, Alan Corliss, owes Donovan a debt of honor that makes him loyal to her interests. If the runners can convince him that they mean Donovan no harm and actually want to help her out of trouble (assuming they don't think she set them up), Corliss agrees to contact Donovan and request a meeting.

If the runners' investigation seems to be lagging, or if the players have shown no interest in talking to Donovan, the fixer might send one of the King's Crimson gang to ask for a meet with them. The runners should be justifiably paranoid about a meeting with Donovan, especially if they believe she intentionally set them up. The gangers will vouch for Donovan (whatever that's worth), and Donovan will give the runners whatever assurances she can that she is on the level.

Donovan agrees to meet the runners at her doss in Puyallup, one of the most dangerous and godforsaken corners of the Barrens. The mostly abandoned neighborhood provides anonymity and a certain security for outsiders. The doss is on the third floor of a virtually empty apartment building; no one lives there but a few squatters and some urban tribals. When Donovan set up her doss, she installed a new maglock on the door and a small security camera just above the entrance. The camera is hooked into the apartment's telecomm so that Donovan can monitor anyone who approaches. Two members of the King's Crimson gang are always in the apartment, acting as bodyguards.

Corliss and two other gang members take the runners to Donovan's doss. At about the same time that the runners arrive, the fixer receives some other visitors as well—some Empowerment Coalition folks who intend to tie up this loose end by making the fixer a host for a new mantis spirit. Anne Penchyk and two mantis spirits reach the doss just before the runners show up. The gunshot that the runners hear on their way up the stairs comes from one of the ganger bodyguards, who tries to shoot one of the mantis spirits when they assume their true form in front of him. (If the runners took part in **Casualties of War**, the two mantids with Penchyk should be the "survivors" that the runners rescued from Bug City.)

If the runners hurry, they reach the apartment in time to see Penchyk and another woman menacing Donovan. When the runners enter, the woman assumes her true mantis form and turns toward them. The second mantis appears in the hallway, forcing the gangers and the runners into the doss. The runners must decide whether to fight the powerful, deadly insect spirits or surrender.

#### LIVE TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY!

If the runners attack, the mantids defend themselves. They will not stay and fight for long, however. If it looks like they may lose the battle, one of the spirits will grab Penchyk and use its hopping power to escape. The other will stay behind long enough to make sure no one follows; then it will assume astral form and attempt to leave. The mantids have no particular need to kill the player characters; in fact, letting them live will serve the mantids' plans, as the runners will still be blamed for the death of General Yeats.

Killing the mantids will do the runners no good (though plausibly explaining the mysterious death of Anne Penchyk in a fixer's hideaway may mildly inconvenience the UCAS government). If anything, it will get them into even deeper trouble with the Feds; being first on the scene at the deaths of a major presidential and vice-presidential candidate certainly makes the runners look guilty of something.

If the runners surrender, Penchyk orders one of the mantids to take Donovan elsewhere and prepare her for a merge. Penchyk and the mantids then attempt to leave, but the Feds show up before they can do so. Go to **Exposing Bugs**, below.

#### Female Mantis Spirits

B	Q	S	I	W	C	E	R	Armor
5	20	5	5	5	5	(5)A	15	5

**Initiative:** 25 + 1D6 (35 + 1D6 in astral form)

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 5/3

**Attacks:** Skill 15, 8S Damage

**Powers:** Animal Control (Mantids), Compulsion, Enhanced Senses (Smell), Fear, Summoning

**Weaknesses:** Vulnerability (Insecticides)

**Note:** These statistics represent the physically manifest spirit. In astral form, all statistics are equal to the spirit's Force.

## DEBUGGING

The runners should try to avoid a fight with the mantids, if only because they cannot be sure of winning. Also, the mantids and Anne Penchyk might be their only hope of avoiding arrest for Yeats's murder (see **Exposing Bugs**). If the runners decide to off the spirits right away with no questions asked and no concern for Donovan's or Penchyk's life, go to **Exposing Bugs** or simply let the chips fall where they may. The arrival of the FBI agents will touch off another fight, and in the confusion Anne Penchyk will have a chance to talk to the runners. Only by listening to what she has to say can the runners give themselves the option of getting out of this mess. If the gamemaster decides to let the runners try to kill the mantids (and/or Penchyk), the Feds arrest the runners immediately when they arrive at the doss. If the mantids are still alive, they escape via the astral plane; Penchyk, intent on keeping her connection to the mantids a secret, does some fast talking and convinces the agents that she came to the doss in an attempt to solve Yeats's murder on her own.

## EXPOSING BUGS

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

A sound from the hall catches your attention. A heartbeat later, the door blows in and armed men and women pour in to cover the room while a familiar voice shouts, "Freeze! FBI!" Several of the newcomers stare in open-mouthed horror at the two huge mantis spirit—or maybe they're horror-struck at the sight of a respectable VP candidate in the same room with a pair of insect spirits and a band of shadowrunners that they think murdered General Yeats. Or both. With politics involved, who knows?

## HOOKS

This encounter is the big wrap-up. Within seconds of the agents' arrival all hell breaks loose, and the runners will have to make a tough choice. Do they help a band of insect spirits that set them up for a supposedly greater good, shoot at every bug in sight, or bail out and lose their only chance of getting their faces off the "WANTED" posters all over town?

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Using their own resources (and an anonymous tip from the Empowerment Coalition), the FBI agents managed to track down Donovan. They know she arranged the fateful meet at the Plaza, and they have discovered the location of her hideout. A team of agents show up to take Donovan into custody but find much more than they bargained for at the doss. Agents Cohen and O'Rourke are leading a team with four other agents (use the agents' statistics supplied in **On the Run**, p. 84). O'Rourke also has a Force 5 air elemental nearby in astral space in case of any magical trouble.

The FBI agents arrive at the apartment building and head straight for Donovan's doss. Characters who declare that they are observing the security-camera display on the apartment's telecomm spot the agents just before they kick the doors in; otherwise, everyone in the apartment is too busy keeping an eye on each other to notice anything else.

Once the agents bust in, things get interesting. Cohen is the last one to enter the doss, and the mantis spirits attack him the moment they see him. Cohen has no choice but to fight back in the only way that gives him a chance of survival—he reveals himself as a wasp spirit and uses his powers against the mantids. This development should shock the runners and the rest of the Feds into momentary immobility; the only one not taken by surprise is Anne Penchyk. She immediately grabs the nearest runner and dives behind the closest available cover, gesturing to the other runners to join her. When she has the runners' attention, Penchyk reveals the true story behind Yeats's assassination—she and her mantis allies killed the general because they found out he was actually a wasp spirit and a member of a Universal Brotherhood offshoot known as the Secret Hive.

According to Penchyk, the Secret Hive is gradually infiltrating disguised bug spirits into governments and corporations to increase its political and economic influence. The mantids discovered the general's true nature from information they dug up in Chicago, then arranged with Anne Penchyk for a mantis spirit to get close enough to Yeats to eliminate him. The runners are the Empowerment Coalition's plausible diversion; their arrest for Yeats's death was intended to distract the Secret Hive's attention from the real culprits, allowing the mantids to continue their efforts to destroy the Hive.

Penchyk finishes her story by asking for the runners' help in killing Cohen, whom she identifies as a Hive operative. If he survives this fight and tells his superiors what happened here, she says, the Empowerment Coalition will be exposed and its efforts to destroy the Hive will come to nothing. She apologizes profusely for involving the runners in Yeats's assassination and

promises to use "every means at my disposal" to get them off the hook in return for their aid now.

Meanwhile, the remaining federal agents have reacted to the shock of Cohen's transformation by opening fire on him, attacking all three spirits or bailing out of the doss. The gamemaster decides which agents do what, but must make sure that the battle is ultimately decided by the runners. If they join forces with Penchyk and the mantids, their intervention should put Cohen in deep trouble; if they bail out, they leave behind a fight that looks like a toss-up. For all they know, they may be leaving the Republican VP candidate to be fried by Cohen and any allies he manages to call up. If nothing else, refusing to help Penchyk means that she will not lift a finger to reverse the situation she helped create—the runners will still be sought far and wide as the assassins of General Yeats.

If the mantids look like they may win the battle before the runners get a chance to join in, have a few of Cohen's friends show up. The Secret Hive has been actively searching for Yeats's killer since the moment of the general's death, and Cohen has ordered some of his compatriots to meet him at Donovan's doss in case the fixer turned out to be an unexpectedly powerful opponent. Several male true-form wasp spirits show up after Anne Penchyk finishes her spiel; the number of spirits and the exact time of their arrival is up to the gamemaster. Statistics for the spirits appear below. The spirits may have a Force Rating from 4 to 8, depending on how powerful the gamemaster wants to make them. Again, keep in mind that the runners should play a decisive role in the outcome of the fight; Cohen should be backed up by enough wasp spirits to keep the mantids from winning hands down, but not so many that the runners (or the mantids) will be overwhelmed.

If additional wasps show up, they will fight savagely and desperately to keep the runners and those with them from exposing the Secret Hive's existence. At this point, the gamemaster may decide to turn the battle into a glorious free-for-all, with O'Rourke and the FBI agents, Donovan, the King's Crimson gangers and the mantids fighting alongside the runners. (O'Rourke will keep the runners from escaping if she can—she works by the book, and as far as she's concerned the runners are still criminals.) Penchyk will fight the wasps if someone gives her a gun. She would like to take Cohen alive and find out more about the Secret Hive but is willing to settle for killing him.

The battle can range throughout the apartment building, including the empty elevator shaft and other apartments. Both the bugs and the runners can use the hazards of the crumbling old building to their advantages. If the gamemaster can finish things off with the place collapsing in flames, so much the better. As soon as Cohen dies, Penchyk will try to take off. She has a car waiting and will leave the firefight to those equipped to handle it.

### Male Wasp Spirits (True Form)

B	Q	S	I	W	C	E	R	Armor
F	(F + 4) x 4	F + 3	—	F - 1	1	(F)A	F x 2	F - 1

**Initiative:** (Reaction + 10) + 1D6 [(Reaction + 20) + 1D6 in astral]

**Threat/Professional Rating:** F/4

**Attacks:** Skill = Reaction, Damage = STR(M) or as Power

**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Smell), Paralyzing Touch, Venom

**Weaknesses:** Reduced Senses (Sight), Vulnerability (Insecticides)

**Note:** These statistics represent the physically manifest spirit. When in astral form, all statistics are equal to the spirit's Force. Wasp spirits are winged.

## DEBUGGING

If the runners ball out rather than helping Penchyk and the mantids, O'Rourke will send most of the FBI agents after them. She will personally escort Anne Penchyk out of the building and let the spirits duke it out. Remind the players that aiding Penchyk and her allies offers them their best chance to clear their names, but if they still want to bolt, let them. Subsequent adventures might involve the runners tracking down the agents of the Secret Hive in the hopes of clearing themselves by exposing the Hive conspiracy to the UCAS government. Unless that happens, however, the runners will make permanent enemies of the Feds (who still suspect them of murdering Yeats), the Empowerment Coalition (the runners know too damn much) and the Secret Hive (the runners may reveal that Yeats was a wasp spirit, and the Hive can't risk that). Also, the reward for the runners' capture (if any) will make them prime targets for every bounty hunter in need of quick cred.

## PICKING UP THE PIECES

If the runners help fight Cohen, Anne Penchyk will keep her promise to get them off the hook (assuming she survives the climactic firefight). She will tell O'Rourke a carefully edited version of the truth, revealing the "tragedy" of Yeats's possession by a wasp spirit but leaving out her pivotal role in Yeats's death as well as her connection to the mantis spirits. She will also reveal the existence of the Secret Hive and Cohen's connection to it. O'Rourke will bring the story to her superiors in the FBI, who will clear the runners of all suspicion in Yeats's death. The UCAS government pins the blame for the assassination on Cohen, painting him as a "lone gunman" under the control of an insect spirit. A few days later, Penchyk will give a tearful televised speech eulogizing General Yeats and announcing her determination to continue the presidential race—as the candidate for the top slot. As for a new vice-presidential candidate, Penchyk leaves the selection up to the Republican National Committee.

Meanwhile, the government will quietly investigate the Secret Hive, appointing Meagan O'Rourke to head up the team. O'Rourke might well call on the runners for freelance help if she begins to believe that some of her superiors have been compromised by the Hive. Slowly but surely, the UCAS government will begin to root out the insect infiltrators in its midst.

If Penchyk does not survive, the runners can get themselves out of trouble if they think to tell O'Rourke about the Secret Hive.

Once O'Rourke passes the story along to the right people, the UCAS government and the Republican Party will issue press releases claiming that Cohen killed Penchyk to keep her from exposing him as Yeats's assassin. The government will not mention Penchyk's apparent association with the mantids. If the runners say nothing about the Hive to O'Rourke, she will report the events of **Exposing Bugs** to her superiors exactly as she saw them. The UCAS government will still end up blaming Cohen for Anne Penchyk's death and possibly also for the Yeats's assassination, but the runners will be wanted "for questioning." There will be no investigation of the Secret Hive because the UCAS government will not know of its existence.

No matter how the adventure ends, the assassination stirs up considerable public anger against the bugs and stokes the fires surrounding the Chicago issue, which the remaining presidential candidates use to their best advantage. The truth about General Yeats's spirit possession remains a secret; runners who want to enjoy continued good health will respect the UCAS government's decision in that matter. The Empowerment Coalition will continue working behind the scenes to destroy the Secret Hive and other groups of insect spirits as they arise; the runners may cross paths with the mantids in subsequent adventures.

The Secret Hive may attempt to use the runners as pawns or even capture them and use them as hosts to get at O'Rourke if the government orders an investigation. They may also want revenge against the runners for exposing their plot, or they may use the runners to find out more about the Empowerment Coalition.

Assuming Donovan survives the adventure, she will be grateful to the runners for helping to save her life and will want to work with them in the future if they are willing. The runners will also gain the King's Crimson gang as contacts.

## AWARDING KARMA

Award team Karma for the adventure as shown below. Award individual Karma according to the standard rules (p. 199, **SR11**).

Survival	1 point
Threat	1 point
Finding out the truth about Yeats	1 point
Informing the UCAS government about the Secret Hive	1 point
Finding out the truth about about Cohen	1 point

## CAST OF SHADOWS

The following section describes organizations and NPCs important to **Dead Run**.

### THE SECRET HIVE

The Secret Hive is a splinter group of the now-disbanded Universal Brotherhood. Using deep-cover contacts within the UCAS government, the Hive survived the government's purge of the Brotherhood just before the events that turned Chicago into Bug City. The Hive is made up almost entirely of flesh-form spirits that have made "good merges" with their hosts. These insect

spirits are virtually indistinguishable from normal humans and metahumans without an astral examination. The spirits can even mask their auras from most astral scans, making their true natures extremely difficult to discover.

The Hive has begun to infiltrate the UCAS government, and possibly the governments of other nations in North America. So far they have acted quite cautiously, careful to avoid the fate that befell the Universal Brotherhood. They have kept abductions of government personnel to a carefully planned and executed minimum, thus far snatching only those individuals that the Hive believed would produce good merges.

General Franklin Yeats, a retired UCAS Army official with considerable influence in DeeCee, became one of the Hive's most impressive victims shortly before the election scandal of 2056 broke. In the scandal's aftermath, the Hive put Yeats forward as a candidate for the UCAS presidency. Through a Yeats victory, the Hive intended to occupy the highest office in the UCAS and step up their plan to take control of the entire government.

Fortunately for the UCAS, a little-known citizens' group from Chicago calling itself the Empowerment Coalition discovered the Secret Hive's plans. The coalition—actually a cabal of powerful mantis spirits plus a few strong-minded human and metahuman allies—has been working with VP candidate Anne Penchyk to destroy the possessed general and keep the Hive from taking control of the UCAS presidency. The Hive wants to know who discovered its secret and eliminate the threat before the information reaches those levels of the UCAS government that the Hive has not yet infiltrated.

Thus far, the Secret Hive appears to be entirely made up of wasp spirits. The presence of other types of spirits in the Hive, as well as the location and nature of the Hive's Queen, remain unknown.

### THE EMPOWERMENT COALITION

The Empowerment Coalition is the same cabal of mantis spirits that appeared in the **Super Tuesday** adventure **Casualties of War**. If the player characters attempt to check out the Empowerment Coalition (in this or a subsequent adventure), they find very little; the Empowerment Coalition appears to have sprung full-blown from nothing. The most they can uncover is fragmentary evidence suggesting a vague connection between the coalition and an all-female Chicago street gang known as the Desolation Angels.

When the Bug City Containment Zone went up, the mantids were trapped behind the Wall. Working with contacts they had made in the outside world, the coalition managed to smuggle mantis spirits out of the city and introduce them to powerful, independent-minded women in government and certain corporations. By possessing these women or persuading them to ally with the coalition, the mantids have made themselves players on the UCAS scene. Though their agenda (indeed, their existence) remains obscure, one of their primary goals appears to be the destruction of the Secret Hive and other remnants of the Universal Brotherhood. Though this goal benefits civilization in general, the mantids seem to have little regard for the human races. The mantids hunt other insect spirits because they are predators by nature, not because they have the welfare of others in mind. They may,

however, claim to have humanity's interests at heart to win support for their cause; in fact, they used that very tactic to gain the backing of Anne Penchyk.

### SCOTT COHEN

Once a special agent for the FBI with fifteen years of experience under his belt, Cohen recently became a victim of the Secret Hive. A capable agent known for always getting his man, Cohen handled numerous cases for the Bureau all over the UCAS with considerable style, which earned him promotions and the respect of his colleagues. He came to know and admire General Yeats during the general's stint in the District of Columbia, and agreed with many of Yeats' views on military and government policy. When Yeats became a presidential candidate, Cohen was one of the first to pledge to vote for him.

Unfortunately for Cohen, the general wanted more from him than his vote. Early on in his campaign, Yeats arranged a meeting with the agent to see if he would make a suitable host for an insect spirit. Strong-willed, capable and good at his sensitive job, Cohen made an ideal candidate. Shortly after the meeting, operatives of the Secret Hive abducted Cohen and invested him with a wasp spirit. The merge was excellent, and Special Agent Cohen returned to his duties with no one the wiser. The only clue to his transformation is a slight tendency to moodiness and occasional trouble sleeping.

#### Attributes

B	Q	S	I	W	C	E	R	Armor
9	9 x 4	8	5	5	5	7*	5 (A)	4/2

**Initiative:** 17(27) + 1D6

**Force:** 5

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 4/4

**Cyberware:** Radio, **Smartlink Level 2**

**Skills:** Armed Combat 5, Car 3, Etiquette (Corporate) 3, Etiquette (Government) 5, Etiquette (Street) 7, Firearms 5, Unarmed Combat 6

**Gear:** Browning Max-Power [Heavy Pistol, 10 (clip), SA, 9M], Lined Coat

### MEAGAN O'ROURKE

Of the major NPCs the runners will meet in this adventure, only Meagan O'Rourke is what she appears to be. O'Rourke earned a master's degree in Occult Sciences from Georgetown University, studying for a time under professor-turned-presidential-candidate Rozilyn Hernandez. After graduation, O'Rourke decided to apply her talents to detective work and law enforcement and attended the FBI training academy at Quantico. Most of her work with the Bureau thus far has involved magical investigation and forensics. Intelligent and capable, she has earned considerable praise from her superiors at the Bureau.

A dynamic woman with an Irish temper, Meagan is all business on the job and expects the same from the people she works with. She and Cohen have been partners for the past year. They seemed to hit it off initially, but Meagan is a bit disappointed that they haven't become better friends since. She is unaware that her

partner is possessed by an insect spirit and has no cause to suspect him of any wrongdoing. However, the chance that Meagan might somehow penetrate Cohen's masking and discover his true nature has made him cautious around her.

## Attributes

Body: 3  
 Quickness: 4  
 Strength: 3  
 Charisma: 5  
 Intelligence: 6  
 Willpower: 5  
 Essence: 5  
 Reaction: 5  
 Magic: 6 (8)

## Skills

Conjuring: 6  
 Enchanting: 3  
 Etiquette (Government): 4  
 Etiquette (Street): 6  
 Firearms: 5  
 Interrogation: 4  
 Magical Theory: 4  
 Sorcery: 6  
 Unarmed Combat: 3

**Initiative:** 5 + 1D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 4/3

**Initiate Grade:** 1

## Cyberware

Datajack  
 Display Link  
 Data Management SPU  
 Headware Memory (50 Mp)

## Gear

Browning Max-Power [Heavy Pistol, 10 (clip), SA, 9M]  
 FBI Identification  
 Lined coat  
 Pocket-size 2-way radio w/earplug unit  
 Portable phone w/earplug unit  
 Small crystal ball (reusable clairvoyance fetish)  
 Carved ash wand (health spell fetish and Rating 4 Health Spell Focus)  
 Silver and garnet ring (Rating 2 Power Focus)

## Spells

### Combat

Redirect: 5  
 Sleep: 4

### Detection

Astral Sense: 3  
 Clairvoyance: 3\*  
 Mind Probe: 4



## Health

Heal: 4\*  
 Preserve: 5\*  
 Stabilize: 3\*

## Illusion

Improved Invisibility: 4

## Manipulation

Bind: 5  
 Light: 3  
 Magic Fingers: 3  
 Seal: 4  
 Thunderclap: 5

\* fetish required



### ANNE PENCHYK

Anne Penchyk has built her career and her life on not taking "no" for an answer. When she goblinized unexpectedly in her twenties, she refused to accept the disdain of her former friends and colleagues, refused to believe that her once-promising career in marketing and advertising was over, and refused to believe that her metamorphosis had changed her self-worth. Instead, she picked herself up and began all over again, moving back to her native Midwest and starting up her own marketing-consulting firm.

While building her new business, Anne also became active in local politics as a spokeswoman for metahuman rights. She donat-

ed hundreds of hours of time to political candidates and causes that she saw as benefiting the metahuman community and became very outspoken on the issue of metahuman rights. Her ad campaigns put several state officials in the Midwest into office, and her business practices reflected her ethical stance on equality for metahumans. To continue using her firm, several of her clients eventually changed their company policies to be more metahuman-friendly.

Penchyk's activism eventually led her to run for office. She served several terms as a UCAS Representative for the state of Wisconsin, becoming a strong voice in Congress for comprehensive metahuman rights. The debate over greater integration of metahumans into the UCAS military led Anne to meet often with General Franklin Yeats, a human who sympathized with her cause. The two became good friends, and when Yeats chose to throw his hat in the ring for the presidential race, he tapped Anne Penchyk as his running mate.

Following the events of **Casualties of War**, Anne Penchyk has become more concerned with helping out the Empowerment Coalition than with General Yeats's political agenda. Some people around her are noticing that she has become cold and distant, and many are chalking it up to the strain of the campaign. Though Penchyk remains her own person, she is becoming more and more deeply enmeshed in the Empowerment Coalition's mysterious plans.

#### Attributes

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

**Initiative:** 4 + 1D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 2/3

#### Skills

Administration: 4  
 Car: 2  
 Etiquette (Corporate): 6  
 Etiquette (Media): 4  
 Etiquette (Political): 6  
 Leadership (Political): 4  
 Marketing: 8  
 Negotiation: 6

#### Cyberware

Chipjack  
 Datajack  
 Display Link  
 Headware Memory (50 Mp)

**EVE DONOVAN**

Tall and athletic, Eve Donovan shows few signs of the rough life she has led. Her midnight-black hair is cropped short and her eyes are a natural deep blue. Everything about Donovan speaks of a cultured upbringing, a testament to her carefully tailored facade.

Born in Switzerland prior to the worldwide wave of goblinization, Donovan was raised in a Europe that rarely saw peace. Orphaned at ten when her parents were crushed to death by a mob, she grew up on the streets of Bern and Stuttgart, honing her body and mind to razor sharpness. Scouting greater opportunity in the New World than in the Old, Donovan moved to Seattle in her early twenties and set up shop in the shadows. Within a short time, she had built a reputation as one of the city's best fixers.

During a run in Aztlan almost ten years ago, Eve was nearly killed while riding in a helicopter struck by a heat-seeking missile. A long-owed corporate debt bought her rejuvenation in Seattle's blackest cybershops, including full cyber replacements for her left arm and leg. The cyberlimbs have no enhancements because Donovan refuses to use them.

Donovan wasted no time getting back on the horse and has painstakingly rebuilt her reputation as one of the best fixers in the biz. Donovan is all business during a run, but not to the detriment of the job. She pushes runners working for her to perform flawlessly, but asks nothing of them that she does not ask of herself first. Some of her associates call Donovan a "chrome-hearted bitch," but that is not the case. Donovan is extremely loyal to her current employer and the runners working with her.

**Attributes**

- Body: 3
- Quickness: 4
- Strength: 2
- Charisma: 6
- Intelligence: 5
- Willpower: 5
- Essence: 0.5
- Reaction: 4

**Skills**

- Armed Combat: 3
- Car: 3
- Etiquette (Corporate): 5
- Etiquette (Street): 6
- Firearms: 4
- Negotiation: 6
- Unarmed Combat: 3
- Vectored Thrust Vehicles: 2
- Winged Planes: 3

**Initiative:** 4 + 1D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 3/3

**Cyberware**

- Blood Filtration (3)
- Cyberarm, Left (Delta)
- Cyberleg, Left (Delta)
- Datajack
- Datasoft Link
- Display Link
- Telephone
- Skillsofts
  - Japanese: 3
  - Spanish: 3



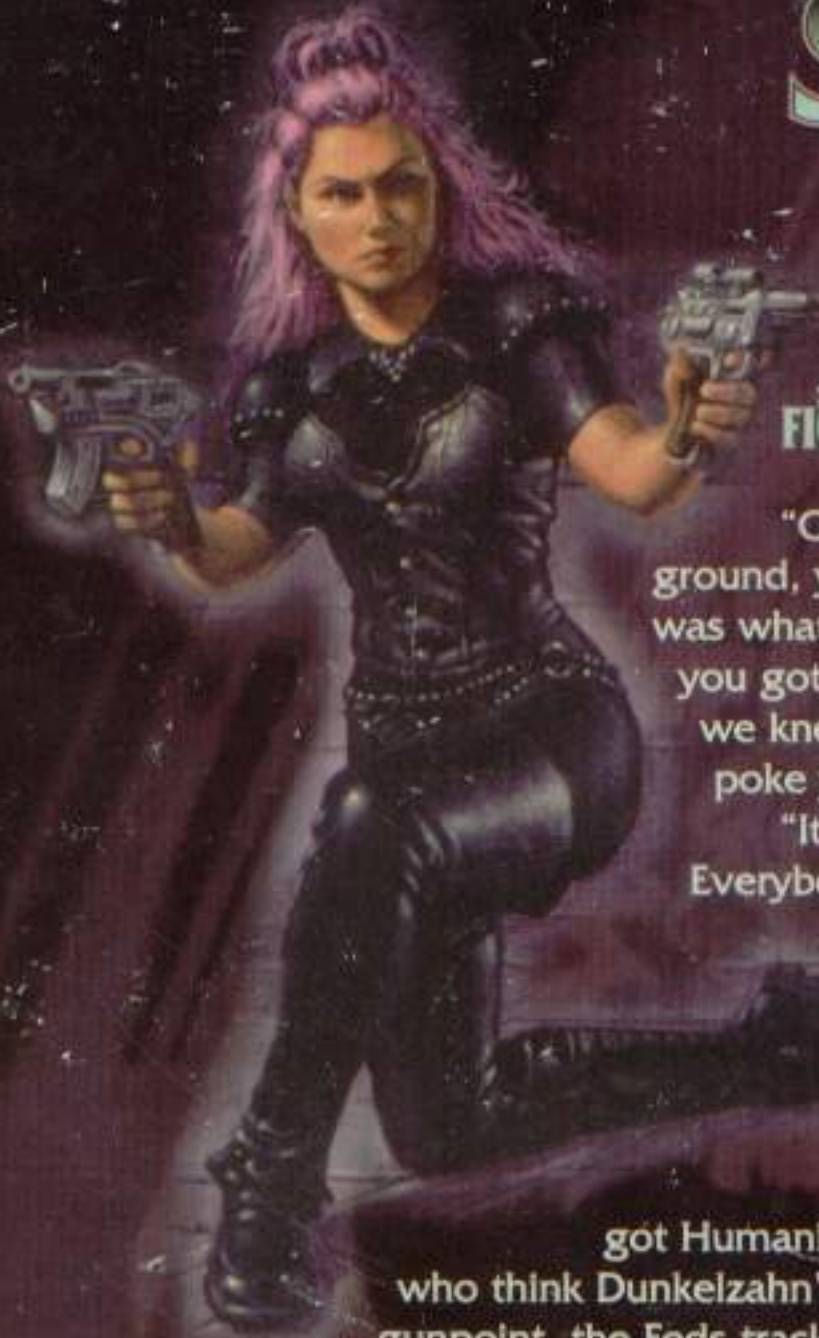
**Gear**

In this adventure, Donovan is on the run. She wears an Armor Jacket and carries a Colt Manhunter, plus any minor gear with which the gamemaster wishes to equip her Barrens hideout.





**F I N**



# SHADOWS OF THE UNDERWORLD™

YOU'VE GOT A CHOICE—  
FIGHT BACK OR GET OUT OF THE WAY!

"Once upon a time the shadows were home ground, y'know? If you belonged there, you knew what was what and you liked it that way. If you didn't belong, you got out fast—or you got hurt. Bad. Folks like me, we knew what to do, where to go, and where not to poke your nose. But all that's changed now.

"It's the fraggin' election, that's what it is. Everybody wants the Big Chair, and all that jockeying for power has brought everybody out of the woodwork. All looking for their piece of the datastore, know what I mean? And they'll do anything they can to get it. It's a fraggin' war zone in the shadows now. We've got Humanis stirring up riots among metahumans, freaks who think Dunkelzahn's the Second Coming and want to elect him at gunpoint, the Feds tracking an assassin through the streets of the Barrens ... I'm telling you, it's getting crazy out here.

"Runners like me, we've got a choice—fight back or get out of the way. Because anyone in the way is expendable."

**Shadows of the Underworld** is a collection of five **Shadowrun** adventures, set against the chaos of the United Canadian and American States Presidential election of 2057. The runners get entangled with everything from political agents to fanatical cults, from a gun fight on the top of New York City's most famous building to the secret world of Oakland's metahuman underground. **Shadows of the Underworld** is intended for gamemasters and players of all experience levels. For use with **Shadowrun**.

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