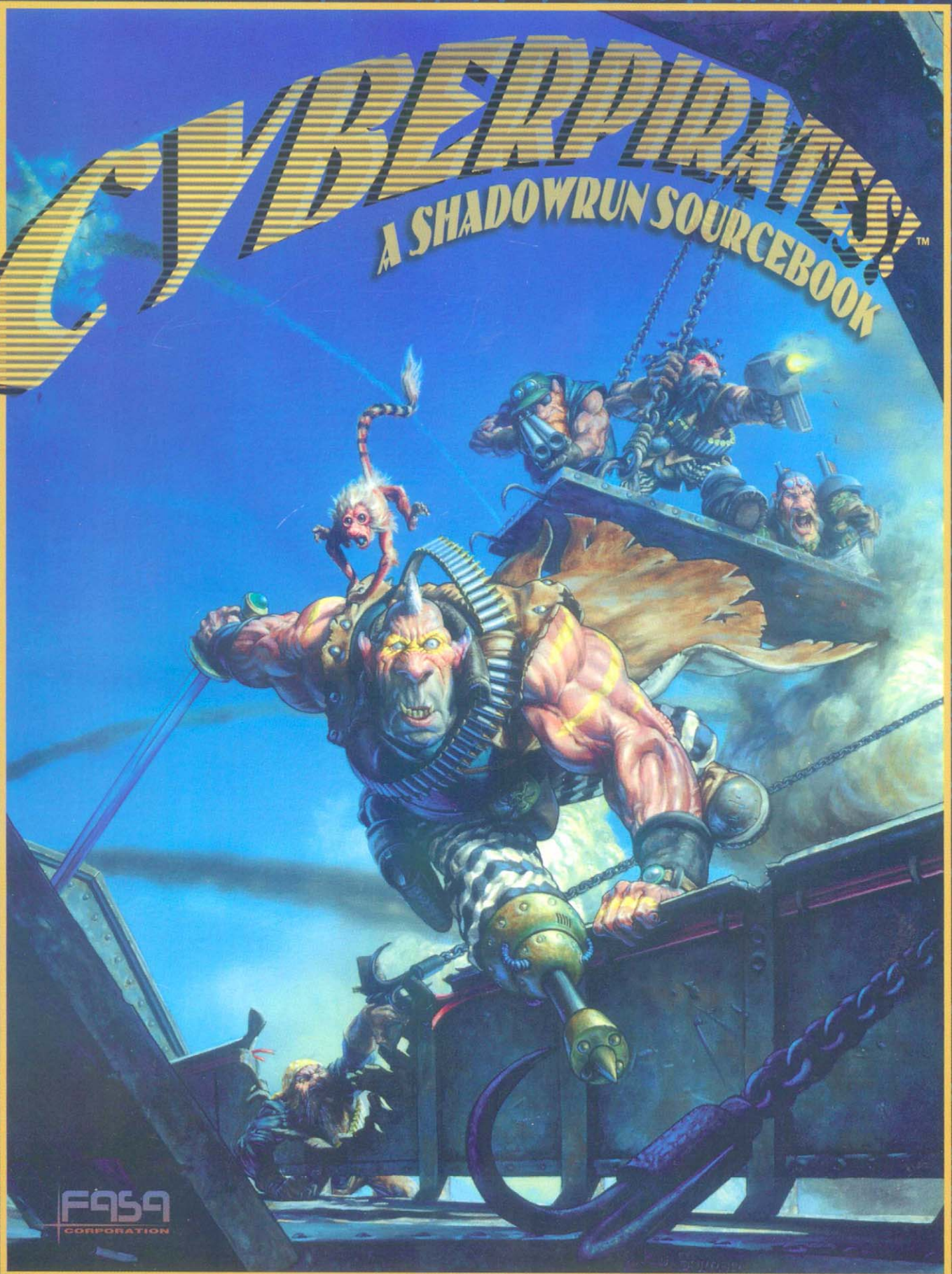


CYBERPIRATES

A SHADOWRUN SOURCEBOOK™



FASA CORPORATION

CYBERPIRATES!

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	6	Novilunio	53	The Asante Nation	99
The Developer's Say	6	The Voice of Ogon	53	Fanti Territories	100
NOT A SHADOW IN SIGHT	8	THE REBEL PIRATES		Sekondi	100
A WORLD OF PIRACY	10	OF THE PHILIPPINES	54	Asamando	101
Living the Life	12	My Declaration	56	The Baule Empire	
Quit Taking Orders	12	Joining the Revolution	57	and Anyi Lands	102
What Makes a Pirate	12	Becoming a Pirate	57	Modus Operandi	103
Supply and Demand	13	The Huk	57	Finding the Job	103
Contacts and Allies	14	Major Factions	58	Getting Hired	104
Who You'll Find	14	The Network	59	Up the River	104
Types of Teams	14	Joining the Huk	59	Pulling the Raid	105
Types of Pirates	15	Training	60	Aftermath	105
How to Host a Raid	17	Infighting	60	Ocean Pirates	106
Tactics	17	A History of the		Cashing In	107
Hideouts and Harbors	19	Republika Ng Pilipinas	61	Extractions and Slavery	107
Buyers and Payment	19	The Imbalance of Power	62	Gold and Minerals	108
Dodging the Law	20	The Coming of the Hapon	62	Usual Markets	108
The Approach	20	Usurping the Republic	63	Magic Markets	109
Getting Away With It	22	Condemning the Changed	64	Players in Coastal Africa	109
Taking Hostages	22	The Police State	65	Anyi Territory	109
THE SWASHBUCKLERS		The Japanese Lie	66	Ares Arms, Africa	110
OF THE CARIBBEAN	23	Targets of Piracy	68	Asamando	110
An Introduction		Mitsuhama		The Asante Nation	111
to Swashbuckling	24	Computer Technologies	68	Aztechnology,	
Welcome to the		Shiawase's Power	70	West Africa	111
Sunny Caribbean	24	Renraku's Projects	71	The Church of the	
VITAS and the Awakening	26	Fuchi's Takeovers	71	Whole Earth, Inc.	111
The Island Grabs	28	Yamatetsu's Subsidiaries	71	DeBeers-Omnitech	112
The League	29	Smaller and Local Corps	72	The Fanti Pirates	112
A Latecoming Miami	29	Modus Operandi	72	The Final Message	113
Style	30	Getting in Gear	72	The Guiding Hand	113
Pirating in the Carib	31	Beating the Security	73	The Illuminates	
After the Raid	31	Working Together	74	of the New Dawn	113
Reputation	32	Your Enemy	74	Phoenix Biotechnologies	114
The Situation Today	33	Financing the Struggle	74	Saeder-Krupp, Africa	115
Modus Operandi	42	Corporate Raiding	74	The Independent	
Going to Market	43	Selling to the Huk	75	City of Sekondi	115
Smuggling Routes	44	Moving on Out	77	Tan Tien, Inc.	116
Selling to Rim Countries	44	Foreign Markets	77	Yakashima, Africa	116
Players of the		Players in the Philippines	77	LONG HAUL PIRACY	
Caribbean League	45	The Hukbo Ng Bayan		AND THE PIRATE ISLAND	117
Batista and		Laban Sa Hapon's Forces	78	Piracy Worldwide	118
Gambione Families	46	Japanese Imperial Forces	81	The Arctic	120
Borinquen	46	Yakuza Operations	83	Australia	120
Crunch Time	46	Bahay Ng Isda	84	The Mediterranean	121
The New Republic of Cuba	46	Corporations	84	Southeast Asia	122
De Mon's Black Light Posse	47	THE SMUGGLERS OF		Southern Africa	123
Las Desharrapadas	47	THE GOLD AND IVORY COASTS	87	Madagascar	124
The Dominican		The Lure of Money	88	The Pirate Haven	125
Republic Territories	48	A History of the Gold		The Haunted Forest	128
David Lloyd Ford	49	and Ivory Coasts	90	THE COST OF LIVING ON THE SEA	136
The Gingerbread Gang	49	The Resource Rush	91	GAME INFORMATION	139
Gunderson Corporation	50	VITAS	92	From Shadowrunning to	
The Republic of Haiti	50	The Awakening	93	Piracy	140
Interpol	51	Normalization and		Finding Work	140
JHIH, Caribbean Division	51	the Asante Nation	95	Pirates and Money	141
The Kingston Machine		Coastal Magic	96	Creating Pirate Characters	142
Posse	52	African Shamanism	96	Availability	142
Natural Vat Technologies,		Paranormal Animal Life	98	Edges and Flaws	142
Inc.	52	Border Lines	99	Skills	144

Decking and Piracy	145
Ship Designations	145
Piracy in the Caribbean	145
Setting the Mood	145
Magic and the Voodoo Wars	146
Caribbean Critters	147
Piracy in the Philippines	147
Setting the Mood	147
Magic in the Philippines	148
Philippine Critters	149
Piracy in West Africa	150
Setting the Mood	150
Schistosomiasis	151
Magic in Africa	151
West African Critters	154
UNDERWATER ADVENTURING	155
Swimming, Treading	
Water and Floating	155
Swimming	155
Treading Water	156
Floating	156
Diving in the Sixth World	156
Shallow Water Diving	156
Scuba Diving	156
Deep Water Diving	157
Diving Time	157
Ascent, Descent and Buoyancy	157
Movement	158
Diving Hazards	158
Perceptions Underwater	159
Vision	159
Hearing	160
Combat	160
Surface-to-Surface Combat	160
Surface-to- Underwater Combat	160
Underwater Combat	160
Magic Underwater	160
Sorcery	160
Conjuring	161
Astral Space	161
Damage and Death in the Sea	162
Drowning	162
Exploding Scuba Tanks	162
Keel-hauling and Dragging	162
SHIP RULES	162
Ship Attributes	162
Speed and Cavitation Ratings	162
Hull Rating	163
Bulwark Rating	163
Signature Rating	163
Sonar Rating	163
Depth Rating	163
Accommodation Rating	163
Load Rating	163
Ship Sensors and Flux Rating	163
Ship Operations	163
Crews	163
Terrain	164
Ship Combat	164
Ramming	164
Boarding	165
Ship Weapon Systems	165

Missile Combat	165
Missile Defense	165
Ship Damage	166
Ships and Normal Damage	166
Antiship Weapons and Normal Damage	166
Damage Control	166
Taking on Water	167
Ship Repair	167
Underwater Operations	167
Depth	167
Underwater Terrain	168
Underwater Drones	168
Sensors and Sonar	168
Cavitation	169
Thermoclines	169
Underwater Vehicle Combat	169
EQUIPMENT	170
Weapons	170
Melee Weapons	170
Projectile Weapons	170
Firearms	171
Explosives	172
Diving Equipment	172
Standard Diving Gear	172
Drysuit	172
Diving Armor	173
Dual Tank Manifold Assembly	173
Full Face Mask	173
Enclosed Breathing Helmet	173
OXSYS Artificial Gill	173
JIM Diving Exoskeleton	173
Liquid Breathing Apparatus (LBA)	173
Cyberware	174
OXSYS Cybergill	174
Cyberfins	174
Nitrogen Monitor	174
Peg Legs and Hook Hands	174
Vehicles	175
Motorboats	175
Rotor Craft	176
Ships	176
Submarines	177
Ship Weapons	179
Vehicle Accessories	182
Torpedo Probe	182
Noisemaker	182
Decoy	182
INDEX	183

CYBERPIRATES CREDITS

Writing

Jennifer Brandes and Chris Hepler
Underwater Adventuring rules by
Jennifer Brandes, Chris Hepler, Jonathan
Szeto and Michael Mulvihill
Ship Rules by Jonathan Szeto

Additional Writing

Michael Mulvihill

Product Development

Michael Mulvihill

Project Editing

Diane Piron-Gelman
Sharon Turner Mulvihill

Shadowrun Line Developer

Michael Mulvihill

Editorial Staff

Senior Editor
Donna Ippolito
Managing Editor
Sharon Turner Mulvihill
Associate Editor
Diane Piron-Gelman

Production Staff

Art Director
Jim Nelson
Project Coordinator
Fred Hooper
Cover Art
Paul Bonner
Interior Color Art
Tom Baxa, Paul Bonner,
Jeff Laubenstein,
Larry MacDougall
Black and White Illustrations
Peter Bergting, Kent Burles,
Jason Felix, Fred Hooper,
Scott James, Jeff Laubenstein,
Mark Nelson, Alan Nunis
LAYOUT DESIGN
Fred Hooper

Dedication:

To our parents, Susan and Larry
Brandes and Art Hepler and Jennifer
James, who made sure we didn't grow
up anything like the pirates in this book.
Thanks for your love, support, good
humor and crates of material on piracy.
—JB and CH

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the Online Gaming area (Keyword "Gaming").
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Shadowland v3.0

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

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

A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR

They say the world's getting smaller every day ... and that's never been more true. There's more going on than even Shadowland can keep up with, in more places than most of you probably knew existed (especially if you dozed off during grade-school geometry class). So here's our couple-nuyen worth toward combatting ignorance in the year 2059—an expose of piracy, the latest hot "business opportunity," in places you never knew were so interesting ... and lucrative. And dangerous ...

THE BACK STOCK

The Big D's Will (Check here for your chance to win in the wyrm's lottery.)
The Underworld Sourcebook (The criminal underbelly)
Target: UCAS (Three major UCAS hot spots, up close and personal)
Rigger 2 (You gotta keep up with the SOTA!)

Go to Complete Library Archives

THE DAILY SPECIAL

Arrrrr, matey!

You think running the urban sprawl is tough? Try the high seas and wild waterways of the Caribbean League, the Philippines and Africa's Ivory Coast. Pirates—and we're not talkin' guys in fancy shirts with eyepatches and parrots on their shoulders—have grabbed the world's attention with a botched raid on a tanker full of nuke waste. Those guys were amateurs—Shadowland brings you the pros, along with profiles of the hottest places for piracy today and some timely advice on how to go from shadowrunner to scourge of the seas.

Go to Complete Library Archives

COMING SOON!

Target: Smugglers' Havens (Where pirates go for R&R, including New Orleans like you've never seen it before!)
New Seattle (The new face of the old home town—in all its gory detail)

Go to Complete Library Archives

Mags/Vids

Message
Boards

Private
Rooms

Misc.
Topics

Help

Decker
House

NEWS

BAD ARES, BAD!

An NBS emergency broadcast announces shakedowns in Knight Errant. Bug City survivors report that Jacob Hampstead, in charge of "Operation Insecticide," dropped Strain III with the full knowledge that certain bug spirits would survive it, while expecting high casualties in ghoul and mage populations. Click here to see what kind of evidence they've got.

It's 22:12:08. Do You Know Where Your Meat Body Is?

CORP ON THE MOVE!

Renraku's release of its newest programming tools and sculpting system has put it light-years ahead of the competition (as if Fuchi needed more problems). The new releases, plus the expectation that Renraku will up the ante on intrusion countermeasures, have shocked everyone. Talk about kicking a mega when it's down ... looks like we got ourselves a winner, and it ain't Fuchi.

SUITS' PARTY TIME IN DETROIT

It wouldn't be January without Shadowland's "Bug on the Wall"™ report of doings in Detroit as Mr. Knight, Mr. Leonard and Mr. Vogel get ready to jello-wrestle for the top prize. Word is, a deal between Ms. Daviar and Damien Knight has put DK in the enviable position of controlling the boardroom. Is this true? Find out as we bring you the inside scoop on Ares Macrotechnology's annual board meeting.

PIRATE BROADCASTS!

Everybody's favorite scoop-mongers and conspiracy theorists, the folks at KSAF, are under the gun. They've shut down legit operations in Seattle after their office went up in flames. Where will they turn up next? Your guess is as good as mine (I bet Denver) ... but if you've got something for them, send it to Box CB344, and they'll check it out. Click here for the newest broadcast times.

INTRODUCTION

Once brought to mind, the images stay with you forever. Trolls swinging out and over another boat on ropes, emptying their SMGs into the poor saps below. A rigger racing his boat toward his quarry, while an ork on the boat he is chasing aims a harpoon gun straight at him. An underwater fight with spearguns and exploding air tanks that attracts the attention of sharks and megalodons—the survivors get to pillage the sunken vessel, which is full of gold doubloons. Locations that many have only dreamed of, each as different as it is deadly. That's the life of a pirate and a smuggler—a life of daring and danger and big hauls, fully described in **Cyberpirates**.

Cyberpirates exposes a previously neglected side of the **Shadowrun** universe: the smugglers and pirates who are the shadowrunners of the high seas. These are the people who live by bold raids and smuggled goods and who sometimes even fight the good fight.

This sourcebook introduces players and gamemasters to piracy and smuggling in **A World of Piracy**, which shows the differences between pirates and shadowrunners and reveals the who, how and why of piracy from the pirate's point of view. This section offers a comprehensive overview of a piracy/smuggling operation, from hitting ships on the sea to negotiating a good price for your stolen wares on the dock.

From there it's off on a grand tour of hot spots for piracy, beginning with the Caribbean League. **The Swashbucklers of the Caribbean** introduces pirates who live as much on reputation and bravado as on nuyen. These ruthless braggarts can make nuyen off of anything, including making and selling vids of their own raids. Many are nothing more than glorified gangs, but some are powerful enough to rule islands as pirate kings. **The Swashbucklers of the Caribbean** also displays the Caribbean League in all its sordid glory, from the British island of Bermuda to the Mafia-controlled docks of Havana and Miami. Get the latest scoop on the voodoo war, metahuman experiments in Haiti, and how the UCAS, Ares, the CAS and Aztlan respond to pirate activity in Caribbean waters.

The next stop is the Philippines, where piracy and freedom-fighting go hand in hand. In the Philippines, pirates either work for the yakuza or belong to the Huk, a band of freedom-fighters/terrorists/revolutionaries sponsored by the great dragon Masaru and bent on ridding their homeland of the oppressive Imperial Japanese government. **The Rebel Pirates of the Philippines** shows piracy in a different vein, including the harsh realities of life under Imperial Japanese control and the methods by which the yakuza, corp patrols and the Huk attack each other.

Africa, always a continent rich in natural resources, is one big fat target for the corps in 2059. **The Smugglers of the Gold and Ivory Coasts** shows the virtually unrestrained corporate pillaging of West Africa, through the eyes of the pirates they use to do their dirty work. More like classic shadowrunners than the flamboyant pirates of the Caribbean League or the Philippines revolutionaries, West African pirates are usually corp-backed. And because there is

no law in Africa save what the corps claim is law, the actions of these pirates are frequently big, bold and brutal. The enemy in Africa is not Lone Star or some government, but the place itself—from the mysterious ghoulish kingdom of Asamando to the tribal city-states that change leaders more often than the pirates change clips in their guns, to the hazards of an Awakened world almost wholly untamed.

Finally, **Long Haul Piracy and the Pirate Island** gives an overview of piracy all over the world: which ports are the places to go to sell, trade and smuggle everything from sugar runs in the Arctic Circle to contraband tesmas in Tir Tairngire. The section ends with an open forum on Madagascar, also known as the Pirate Island, that describes the rough-and-tumble pirate havens on the coasts and includes a host of speculations on who (or what) really lives in the island's wild, mysterious interior.

The several sections of **Game Information** give players and gamemasters all the information they need to play pirates in any of the locations described. **Using the Book** suggests ways that the gamemaster can create adventures based on the themes highlighted in the fiction and offers new rules for creating pirate player characters, including new skills and Edges and Flaws. The section also covers the workings of magic, paranormal animals and totems specific to each region, as well as rules for local oddities such as ancestor spirits and the Bermuda Triangle.

Underwater Adventuring covers rules for swimming, diving, underwater combat and using magic underwater. **Ship Rules** applies the rules from the **Rigger 2** rulebook to ship-to-ship combat. Finally, **Equipment** is a smorgasbord of new toys, from peg legs and hook hands to spear guns, torpedoes and hunter-killer submarines.

Though they are not necessary to use this book, **Rigger 2** and the **Shadowrun Companion** will aid players and gamemasters in fully exploring the themes and ideas presented in **Cyberpirates**.

THE DEVELOPER'S SAY

The book you hold in your hand is not a typical **Shadowrun** "place" book.

I know what you're thinking: "Come on, FASA, of course it's a place book. It's got places in it—that makes it a place book. You may have killed a dragon and created a Mafia war in Seattle, but you aren't going to make us believe this isn't a place book. No way, no how."

The statement stands: **Cyberpirates** is a not a place book. It is a theme book.

It's not about the Caribbean League or the Philippines or West Africa. In fact, it's not about any place at all.

This book is about stretching the borders of what you can do with the game and world of **Shadowrun**.

Cyberpirates takes what gamemasters and players normally do in a whole new direction. The places covered in this book serve to illustrate by example what types of piracy exist in the Sixth World

and offer ideas on how to play them, or run adventures dealing with them. Each place has been rendered in glowing detail and includes enough concepts and ideas to allow gamemasters to base hundreds of hours of game play in each region (if not on each island and port or city). But the focus of this book is the theme of piracy and smuggling in the world of **Shadowrun**.

The settings described in **Cyberpirates** work because they illustrate the theme so well, but you can play pirates and smugglers anywhere that there's a body of water and/or a need to get some kind of goods in or out illegally. You prefer piracy on the Great Lakes to piracy on the open seas? The rules are the same—read the material on the Caribbean and apply it with a few twists to the St. Lawrence Seaway or Lake Superior. You want to play Tír Na nÓg freedom fighters based in Boston? Read about how the Huk works in the Philippines and use that group as a model for terrorists and smugglers in Beantown. If you want to play a fierce, proud, independent pirate who plies the North and Baltic seas, you'll find the basic information on playing an independent operator in **Cyberpirates**. From California's Big Sur to the coasts of Alaska and Aztlan, to the ports of New York, the Mediterranean, England and the Far East, the information provided in this book lets you play pirate adventures anywhere you want. That's the goal of a theme book: to give players and gamemasters ideas that they can use in multiple areas. You can use this book to set your pirate/smuggling campaign anywhere on the globe.

So the next question is, why piracy? Why smuggling? We created this book for three main reasons.

First, **Shadowrun** is a game in which deniable assets are hired by one group to perform clandestine, illegal operations against a rival or enemy group. In other words, shadowrunners are hired to commit crimes. Though the groups in question can be anything from policlubs to crackpot religions to toxic shamans with a grudge, most shadowruns center around operations against corporations. We've expanded the possibilities to include personal rivalries and feuds, political factions, governments versus other governments and various secret organizations, but no matter who's doing the hiring or who's the target, the fact remains that shadowrunners are hired to commit crimes.

So, as always when deciding what products to publish, we looked at ways to offer you fresh ideas for adventures involving criminal/secret activities, to keep your choice of operations (shadowruns) interesting and new. Smuggling seemed like a natural for shadowrunning; we've mentioned it in multiple sourcebooks, all the way back to the **Seattle Sourcebook**. Lately, we've made smuggling operations a minor focal point in multiple books (**California Free State**, **Bug City**, **Target: UCAS**, **Underworld Sourcebook** and **Mob War!** to name just a few).

Smuggling operations make excellent shadowruns because they involve small groups doing all their own legwork, controlling the set-up and situation and then trying to outwit those they stole from as well as the cops. Tailor-made for shadow ops. But smuggling also adds something of a new twist to the game of getting away with the goods; it tends not to depend so much on a Mr. Johnson, which gives the gamemaster and players more freedom to

act. Smugglers must usually get something from one place to another, giving gamemasters the perfect opportunity to throw everything—including the kitchen sink—at the players to stop them. Finally, a smuggling operation means going into someplace blind to make the delivery. Because the recipients are also doing something illegal, the gamemaster can really throw wrenches into things—sting operations, undercover agents or other uncomfy discoveries about who the players are really dealing with. The gamemaster can use all these opportunities to improvise (and be creative).

We decided smuggling was a theme worth investigating.

Second, we have an ongoing interest in expanding the **Shadowrun** world and making things more interesting, fun and unique. Smuggling is interesting and fun—but not very unique. It still pretty much relies on the basic Mr. Johnson-hires-you-to-perform-[blank operation] formula, without necessarily exploring new ground. Like all roleplaying games, **Shadowrun** works best when players and gamemasters create a story together. And a consistent complaint about **Shadowrun** is that the Mr. Johnson element keeps the players from co-creating the story. Players have no say in what jobs to take; only in how to perform them. So we asked ourselves, if the nature of smuggling means that the team controls their own destiny to a much greater extent, is there any way we can expand smuggling operations to make them unique and to drop Mr. Johnson out of the picture?

To help answer this question, we started asking where smuggled goods come from, which we needed to figure out for game-universe continuity and realism. Smuggled goods are stolen, but we're not talking the cat-burglar type of theft. We're talking much bigger hauls than that—say, hijacked shipments of valuables. Then it hit us: piracy. Good old-fashioned, avast-there-matey, we're-taking-your-ship-and-everything-in-it piracy. Smuggled goods come from pirated shipments ... and shadowrunners can be pirates, stealing goods and then smuggling them wherever they can make the most profit. The best part is, pirates aren't hired by a Johnson to do what they do. Piracy is their life, their means of survival. They don't need a Johnson to set up their operations—they do that themselves. Centering the theme of this book on piracy allowed us to combine smuggling, mentioned but not extensively covered in previous products, with unique elements that opened up a whole different way to approach **Shadowrun**.

The third reason (which may be the most important, depending on your point of view) is simply visceral. It's just so damn cool ... cool images, cool ideas, cool things for you to do and even cooler options for the gamemaster to play with.

Oh, yeah ... and we managed to cover three places in one book.

Have fun!

Play games!

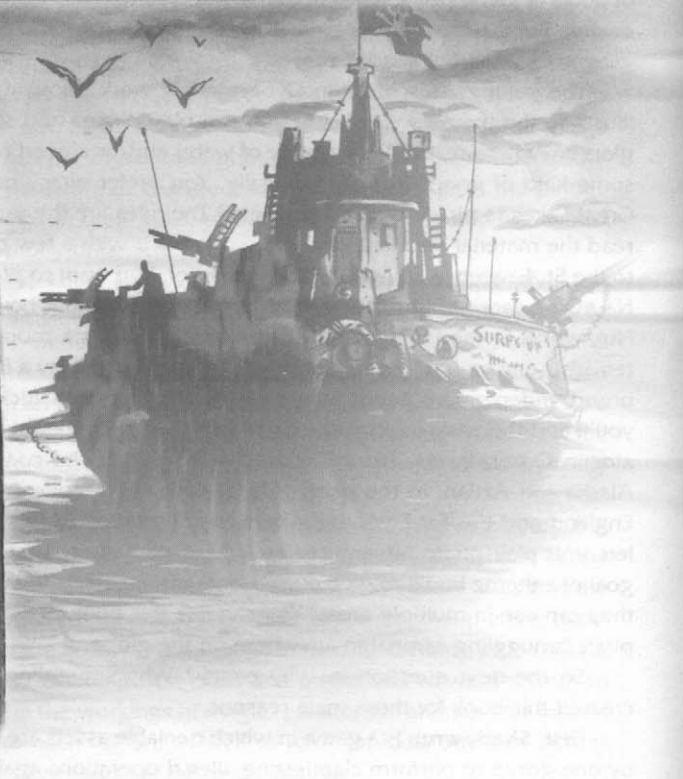
And remember the old sailor's rhyme:

Red sun at night, sailor's delight;

Red sun at morning, sailor take warning;

Red dragon over the hull ... get the drek out of there.

NOT A SHADOW IN SIGHT



[Video: Enable]

[Audio: Enable]

[Feed: JAN-6-59 14:32:50 EST, MEDIUM SHOT. OIL TANKER *GO JO*, COVERED BY CONNOLY ON BOAT #2. AZTLAN NAVY IN FOREGROUND. COASTLINE OF CANCÚN IN LOWER LEFT.]

CONNOLY: As you can see, the flag on the cargo vessel *Go Jo* is Imperial Japan's, but today they've found that some places are out of the empire's reach. For the past two days, the crew of the *Go Jo* have been held hostage by a group of pirates called Novilunio.

Our sources say Novilunio originally intended to hijack the vessel for its freight of oil, but the sudden appearance of the Aztlan Navy changed their plans. The pirates delivered their threats via radio, warning the navy that they have hostages and enough explosives to set off the ship's main tank. They demanded a lighter-than-air vehicle and safe passage to Jamaica. When the demands were not met, the pirates killed two hostages and threw their bodies overboard. Aztlan has not released the victims' names.

The Caribbean League government declined to comment when questioned about the frequency of terrorist actions in their waters, but astute viewers will note the boats clustered around us. We have been approached by no fewer than eight different crews claiming to speak for the Caribbean pirate community.

[CUT TO: AFRO-CARIB DWARF MALE, RED METAL EYES, DREADLOCKS, SITTING IN BOAT CABIN. WINE GLASS ON TABLE IS EMPTY. TIME/DATE STAMP IS ONE DAY PREVIOUS.]

CONNOLY: We're here with Mr. De Mon, a man many have called a pirate king and who talked with the Aztlan Navy earlier today. Can you tell us what happened, Mr. De Mon?

DE MON: Ya, dat's real easy. I heard about Novilunio's frag-up, an' I'll tell you what I tol' de Aztlaners. If dey tink dey're runnin' to Jamaica, dey're wrong. If de Aztlaners wanted, we'd go on board, shoot de idiots in de head, and be done wit' it. Dey fly to Jamaica, we shoot 'em dere, too.

CONNOLY: Mr. De Mon, I was surprised to see someone of your occupation on such familiar terms with a law-enforcement agency such as the Aztlan Navy.

DE MON: Guitierrez and me, we understand what's on. I asked if he need any help. These Novilunio clots gon' get someone hurt.

CONNOLY: Are you familiar with them?

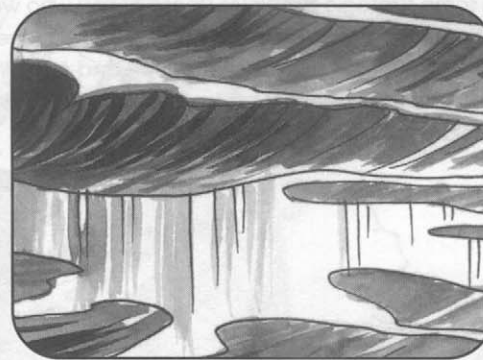
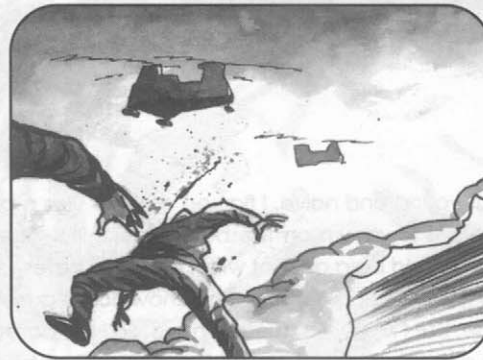
DE MON: Oh, ya. Dey were talkin' to de moon, sayin' they were gonna get twenty million nuyen of Japanese oil. Frag-ups.

CONNOLY: Are there places where they could sell that much oil?

DE MON: All over de Carib, all over de worl'.

[CUT TO: HELICOPTER. LONG SHOT OF C.S.S. *DEFIANT* ON OPPOSITE SIDE, BACK TO MEDIUM SHOT WITH CONNOLY IN FOREGROUND.]

CONNOLY: That was yesterday, before the C.S.S. *Defiant* destroyer out of New Orleans tried to claim jurisdiction. Though KSAF does not have details, the CAS has been in heated negotiations with the Aztlan Navy all morning, and—[AMPLIFY GUNSHOT] Whoa, you got



that? Some kind of fighting on the deck. Get down—[SHOTS].

[ZOOM ON DECK. SLOW MOTION. ENHANCE IMAGE OF JAGUAR GUARDS. OVERLAY TITLE OF UNIT AS NOVILUNIO PIRATE IS SHOT. FOLLOW SECOND AND THIRD PIRATES' DEATHS. REMOVE WALL AT 16.5-SECOND MARK TO SHOW CAS S.E.A.L. WOUNDED BY JAGUAR FIRE. FOLLOW JAGUAR GUARD DOWN. MATTE OUT BLOOD FOR PRIME TIME, KEEP FOR 11:00, HIGHLIGHT FOR TBC CHIP.]

CONNOLY: [AMPLIFY FOR KA-POW! KA-POW! QUOTES] I hate this fragging job.

[KEEP EXPLOSIONS NATURAL. DELETE CONNOLY'S OTHER STATEMENTS.]

CONNOLY: That's not oil in the water there. What the hell is it?
[END VIDEO]

As the world discovered seconds later, it was radioactive waste being shipped from the Philippines, en route to Libya. And it's making Aztlan, Carib, and Amazonian beaches very nasty right now. Let's have a round of applause for Shlawase Atomic's "safe and clean" nuclear reactors, and another one for that ship of fools, Novilunio.

For the terminally out of touch, let me fill you in. The UCAS media has been buzzing with this incident for the past week, and so has Shadowland. The Novilunio pirates came within fifteen seconds of jamming the *Go Jo's* distress call and getting away with what they thought was twenty million nuyen of black gold. Since then we have received countless messages asking for the identity and goals of these Novilunio clowns, what syndicate was backing them, what corp bankrolled them, did they know it was toxic waste, how often does this kinda drek happen—and the most popular question, "how can I do it and get away with it?"

Now Shadowland brings you the answers.

• Captain Chaos

Posted: 12 January 2059, 23:02:59 (PST)

A WORLD OF PIRACY



● Thirty hours ago, when I was young and naive, I figured a pirate was a pirate. And so I rang up our pals from CalFree to give me the lowdown on the buccaneer's life. After some arguing over who would be a waste of time, who would be a decent writer and who hates who because of some slight years ago, plus deciding who gets the bigger share—you know how it goes—I went with this crew. JAS Hook laid out the basics for me, but I knew we needed more. So I first called Miss Bay Jewel, who isn't a pirate herself but has put in enough service with San Francisco's October 25th Alliance to qualify as a "participant observer" with CFS pirates. Next, I took up Dread Pirate Paco's offer to explain the anatomy of a pirate raid and some strategic principles (those of you who want to dive in right now will find this material most interesting). Our last contributor, Kotick, has seen the other side of the biz and knows what he's talking about when it comes to border patrols and anti-pirate measures. True, Kotick focuses more on his home CAS than CalFree, but I haven't found anyone willing to give us tech specs on Imperial Marines, so extrapolate for a tick, okay?

● Captain Chaos

Posted: 13 January 2059, 18:37:12 (PST)



LIVING THE LIFE

by JAS Hook

From what Captain Chaos told me, you all are “professional shadowrunners.” I’ve seen it before: you’re all really just a bunch of call girls, waiting for a new Johnson to ring you up so you can get screwed again. Well, if you wanna do some *real* running, if you’re ready to tear millions of rock-solid nuyen from the belly of a corporate giant (and probably send some fatcat suit to an early grave), shut up and lemme tell you where it’s at.

Just because you’ve jacked the *Blood Under the Black Flag* simchip and lived as Nicky fragging Saitoh with his flintlock and hair gel, and you now think swinging a cutlass while wearing a soaking-wet ruffled shirt is as drek-eating wiz as a 250-kph chase with the Star, don’t mean you’ll survive a minute with us genuine smugglers. That’s right, pirates are smugglers, and it’s all for keeps—cuz chummer, in the real world there ain’t no scripts. The guns are full-auto and the dying’s for real.

QUIT TAKING ORDERS

As a pirate, I’m my own Mr. Johnson. It’s a good thing, too, cuz I’m the only Johnson I’d ever trust. From scoping the target to selling the haul, I decide who gets hit, when it goes down and whether or not it’s worth the effort. No one tells me the run’s cake when he knows Knight Errant’s Goons-of-Death are behind the one-way glass. If a job goes sour, I’ve got only myself to blame.

Pirates don’t answer to some motherfragger who doesn’t do the job himself. We don’t suck the corporate stick to lap up the cred. Johnson or Godfather or Mommy Dearest—whoever the frag is calling the shots—better be close enough to hide behind when I’m hit with return fire, or I walk. That way pirates don’t get used. Not as much, anyway.

- That’s not what I’ve heard from my chum Radebe. He says the not-so-mega-corps pay pirates to blow out the big corps’ shipping all the time; then they buy the goods at a tenth of their market price. He’s been to a plant in Grenada where workers stripped the cases off packages of electronics fresh off a hijacked ship, dropped them on a conveyor belt, and they came out the other end as the exact same model that the transport company reported to the big corp as missing in shipment—repackaged as a legitimate product, right down to the little corp’s stamp. Must have done sixty thousand units a night.

- Zero-Sum

- Naturally, corps’ll use pirates to stab each other in the back, same as with shadowrunners. But paid work isn’t a pirate’s job, like it is for a shadowrunner. It’s just a bennie. Real piracy is waking up one afternoon, deciding it’s a good day for a raid, finding a likely target, pulling some con or boarding the ship, and getting the goods to a buyer of your choice. That’s where you make mondo nuyen.

- Tikbalang

- And where you can frag up and come away without even the advance the Mr. J. gives you. And where you have to do all the research yourself. One shadowrun we pulled, the Johnson whipped out satellite maps of the compound as soon as we said “done.” I can’t match that intel, and I don’t think pirates can, either.

- Stainless@na.seattlenet105543.mil

WHAT MAKES A PIRATE

Piracy is the art of making a living by stealing someone else’s stuff. The gummint and the corps call it theft and smuggling. I call it the only way to live. But chummer, and pay close attention to this, the key point is “making a living.” You gotta pull off a raid, sell the goods and survive for at least two weeks. You want to be a failure, miss one of these steps.

But we’re not just small-time posers who grow some Awakened sea-sprouts near Daddy’s kelp farm and sell them off the back of our truck along Highway 101. We’ve got reps to uphold, and we have to prove ourselves better than all the other pirates, gangs, gangsters and runners who want to take our jobs and our hauls from us. Pirates don’t work nine-to-five, or midnight to eight, and then go home and sleep. We live the job; WE ARE THE JOB. We are on alert, always on alert, for payback from a raid pulled last month or last year. If we screw you in a deal, we *expect* you and all your pals to be gunning for us. And if you burn us, you’re not going to live to tell the tale. Orklanders may have heard about the six Racine Street Gang members found by the bay, their parts in twenty-two plastic garbage bags. The people who put them there were my crew. And I am proud of every one of them.

And I don’t mind posting that for all to see. We don’t have *omerta* or any other “code of silence” drek. That’s why you’re getting this from a real live pirate and not some “ex-friend of a guy who once knew someone he suspected took a cruise once.” It’s standard among crews to not rat out your buddies to the cops. But that’s not some fancy Mafioso concept about family and honor—it’s plain ol’ common fraggin’ sense. We have ourselves a saying here on the Left Coast—it comes from some old war thing last century: “Loose Lips, Break Hips ... and Arms, Necks and Skulls.” The last thing a pirate does is betray his crew, cuz eventually he’s dead. It may be swift, like a day later, or longer-term, like a month, but soon he’ll be in range and then pop. Elephants have nothing on pirates, chummer—not only do we remember, but we relish the pain and agony that we’ll inflict when we do get you.

- JAS, you uneducated goob! The phrase was “Loose Lips, Sink Ships,” and it was from World War Two, you complete imbecile!

- Dr. Happy@na.socal.la.UCLA.Hispop.edu

- Okay, wannabes, lesson number one. JAS is sending his post from the Free State off a deck with Shadowland’s thorough anti-trace measures. The Racine killing was three years ago, so by the time someone gets evidence on his crew, finds a real name and proves he’s the “JAS Hook” responsible for six SINless orks, not only will he be beyond the CFS’s statute of limitations, but Hell will have frozen over. He’s covering his hoop but still gets to look like the macho killer. Pay attention to these distinctions, they’re on the exam.

Oh yeah, and while we're at it—as easily as Dr. Happy illustrated JAS's shortfalls on history, pirates aren't stupid. They may act like it. But it's all part of the game. They pose, they squawk, they talk the talk and walk the walk, but the bottom line is that like any gang of good shadowrunners, they know their strengths. Even more importantly, they know their limitations. Do not underestimate them.

● Reality Czech

The serious difference between pirates and shadowrunners is that pirates are not professionals.

- BWAHAHAHAHA! You mean "you can be an unprofessional pirate and live to tell about it." Plenty of morons (pardon, extra morons) in the shadowbiz since Big Blue's will hit. I saw eleven cullied by syndicate shoot-ups and old enemies this year already.
- Fury

A shadowrunning team is often preselected by a fixer who pulls together the best people for the job. Do they always know one another? No. Sometimes that works, and sometimes one of you ends up on the floor of the local pub with a stomach full of cyanide and cheap beer while the others walk with the cred. On the sea, you've got to *live* with the folks who cover your hoop—not just before a job, but when you sleep, when you wake up and for days at a time when you're cruising the coast. A pirate crew is midway between a running team, a gang and your worst nightmare of a family. So if you frag over your chummers, you don't just turn around and join another crew. Hell, you'll be lucky if you can turn around at all.

When we hit land, we drink together, we eat together, we beat the drek out of local gangs together. We make our money together. When the drek hits the fan, we're back-to-back, guns pointed out. And you know a crew by the handshakes, the signals, the words they use and the colors they sport. Another phrase we created is that the anchor is only as strong as the weakest link. They're the words we live by.

●AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH! Stop him! Please, somebody stop him!!!!!!

● Dr. Happy@na.socal.la.UCLA.Hispop.edu

● Unit integrity. Team-building. You see the same principles among Special Forces teams, good shadowrunners, initiatory groups, good professional sports teams and most gangs. If a pirate crew's members hate each other, that crew is just another group of near-sighted idiots with weapons, and pretty soon one of them relieves the tension with a gunshot.

● Argent

You need the attitude that'll let you watch your friends get shot, waste their killers in return and then sail your comrades to a hospital when you're the only one standing. That's not easy, and I've only done it once. But I did it! You never cut and run and leave your buddies hanging. Only a coward does that. You need guts like that to not curl up and play dead, because drek *will* happen.

You gotta choose: are you a part-timer who rips off a couple crates watched by sleepy dock security, or are you willing to cross your fingers and tell a Panama pirate king to his face that you *didn't* screw him out of a shipment of BTLs? There's no in-between.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Frag economics textbooks. The most ironclad market is one made up of customers who *gotta* buy your stuff, either 'cause you got a gun to their head, they're addicted to your pile, or most importantly, you have something they don't have and you convinced them they want it bad (see gun reference above). Corporations run this scam all the time. They create a monopoly on a product. You live in blissful ignorance because you never saw or knew anything else. Then we arrive at your door with something else—either newer or better or more addictive or just different—and offer it to you for sale. You buy it and the monopoly begins to crack. The corps who kept you blind and ignorant cry foul and call us the fraggin criminals. We are the only solution to corporate monopolies, and whether we go above, below, around, between or through the law, it doesn't matter. The customer only cares how much your product costs.

● Telestrian pulled that trick on DeeCee during the Compensation Army debacle of '55. The Army needed weaponry from Telestrian, but the elves' agenda got in the way. "Gosh, we couldn't possibly move them across the continent until my supervisor gets back from his mistress's hot tub. Troops dying? Send us money or please hold." Now Ares Arms is raking in the defense contracts, as it oughta be.

● Maiden UCAS

If you're the only game in town (either literally the only mover or you sell your stuff far below "official corp" price), you can pick your market. That's right, play the corps' game. Create a need and monopolize it.

In the same way, as long as there are taxes and tariffs, people will smuggle. If Japan and Tir Tairngire are spitting and hissing at one another again, they'll crank up tariffs on any goods from the other nation. I don't mean twenty nuyen more on a hundred-yen VCR, I mean a 500-percent mark-up that effectively puts your product out of the customer's price range. 'Course, if you can get around such tariffs, you can become very wealthy very quickly, because people will snatch up your goods, no questions asked.

● Yeah, remember it's not just cheap goods or illegal street goods. It's anything that someone wants that you have, no matter how high-end. A case of Fuchi Excaliburs is worth its weight in gold, chummer. Going store price today—5.5 million nuyen. If you had a case of them (I believe there's eight in a case) you could pop them off at half price in any of a number of sophisticated environs and still be able to retire.

● Smuggler to the Rich

Just make sure you go where there's a need. Smuggling water from NorCal up to TP-Aleut isn't going to make you cred, cuz the TP-Aleut already has all the glacial melt-water it needs. The place to bring water is down into southern CalFree or into bloody rich desert Pueblo. Supply and demand create the need to smuggle, whether or not the goods are illegal. Drugs and guns are the primary goods for running because they're illegal or restricted (creating an unmet demand) almost everywhere. But in Siberia, fresh oranges might be as hard or harder to find than drugs, so smuggling in fruit nets you the same range of nuyen ... with a lot less trouble.

They say extortion, drug running and smuggling will always exist, no matter how many cops you hire. And if it's 50,000 nuyen a week from Far Eastern BTLs or stolen oil or 5.25 nuyen an hour at McHugh's, it's no contest for me. Snap goes the law.

- Ditto if you can't speak the language. Both pirate crews and ethnic Mafias frequently originate among immigrants in any country, because their job prospects are nil until they talk the talk. The native cops don't give them sympathy when one of their own gets hurt, so justice lies in the mob that speaks their language.

- Stonewall

CONTACTS AND ALLIES

So you so-called freelance runners are asking, "how do you carve your action without having a chat with a Johnson?" First thing, you need a bigger grapevine. Contacts and friends are more essential to pirates than to runners. You need to know who's moving what when, how well guarded it is, who can buy, whose toes you're stepping on and how likely they are to come after your hoop. And you need a crew, because sailing a big boat alone is a beast, let alone loading it or hijacking another one.

If you don't know by now how to make friends, you're not gonna learn it on Shadowland. But lemme say this: joining a pirate crew isn't as easy as walking up out of the blue with a gun and a six-pack. Most pirates are justifiably paranoid, and they sure as drek aren't gonna let you sleep within ten meters of them without some serious background checking.

- Hook underestimates the power of the words "on leave," shot glasses and a sexy smile.

- Lustin' Prussian

"Under the skin, we're all human."

Instead, they check you out with their friends, on Shadowland and in most ports of call, and you still need recommendations. Dead weight on a ship means less food, less money and more irritation for everyone.

Don't think you'll find us just by walking into a waterfront dive 'cause we all wear eye patches or cough up phlegm. All up and down the CalFree coast, you'll see pirates of every metatype, color and ethnicity. The best way to get on the "inside track" is to know the syndicate members who work the docks. They're the ones buying from free pirates, so if you bail their hoops out by acting as a lookout or cop bait, they can put in a good word.

After that, you're talking to pirates, and you're in it. I can't help you more!

- Well, you could help by saying that CalFree's pirates run Ares Macrotech's guns into the Tir shadows and run the white-hot Sperethiel linguasofts you can't find in any store back out, but that might get you some competitors, wouldn't it, chickendrek?

- Captain Monday

- New competitors are always on the way. Part of the reason is that in some places the runner market is glutted. I know a New Orleans team (no way I'm saying who) that poses as Johnsons to set up pinkies with screamer credsticks. Direct line to Lone Star. Bang! Dead cops, dead pinkies and the team is back in biz. Easier to go pirate.

- Strand

WHO YOU'LL FIND

by Bay Jewel

Enough with the generalizations about attitude and machismo. You'll get plenty of that once you hit the water. What you need to know is what types of pirates you'll see and whether or not they'll want or need *you* to join their team. Just for the record, I am not now, nor have I ever been a pirate. What I have been is the person who trained half the Frisco shadow-mages, including the pirates, and someone who's been buying from, selling to and chilling with pirates every time a crew makes it into port. CC asked me to give my take on turning pirate from the POV of someone who's seen the transition but never made it.

TYPES OF TEAMS

That "Nicky Saitoh simchip hero stuff" that JAS cracked on actually is a serious factor in some places. Because of CFS's racial problems, things around here tend toward the hard-edged, but in the Caribbean, "gallant" or "swashbuckler" pirate bands spring up wherever there's water. And for those of you who are clueless slugs, the Caribbean is ALL water. These guys are looking for reputation as much as money. If you want to join one of these crews, expect initiation rituals ranging from the funny to the downright insane. Watch out for the crazies; if they survive long enough for you to hear about them, they're either really good or really rich, and in either case are really really paranoid.

- Even if you're not working with swashers, you can get caught up in their tricks. Friend of mine bought a boat and crew to make some quick nuyen in the Gulf. Turns out the area was home to an Azzie gang called Estomagos Sanguenos. They didn't take to his being there, so BAM!, his boat's driftwood. Then they decided to "see if he had guts." No drek, they told him if he could water-ski for two clicks behind a harpooned megalodon, they'd let him go. He only got out of it because Chavez's Mafia boys were on "clean-up" that day, clearing all Aztlaners off the Texas coast.

- The Clone Ranger

In SanFran, syndicate-sponsored pirates are the norm. They're more conservative, more focused on profit. If you're a yak smuggler, your rep and warm fuzzies come from doing your work well and pleasing the oyabun, not making the evening news. Ditto for corp-sponsored piracy. Both tend to stick to low-risk, high-profit drug, chip and weapons runs rather than live cargo or hostage jobs. You're not likely to simply move into a band like this—most corps and some of the Seoulpa rings actually want job interviews and references before letting you on their ships. Corps and syndicates hire muscle to guard individual shipments, though, and they're pretty loose with the nuyen for jobs done well and silently.

Poor pirate bands are like family units, with everyone working together to do long-haul-courier routes around the world, rather than high-confrontation raids. Former residents of many of the NorCal towns destroyed in the Tir wars have gone this route, jacking boats and taking the long route up and down the coast bringing water and foci to select buyers.

● Bay Jewel's not drekking you. Check this out ... the coast of India, middle of the night. A half-dozen people wake me up by creeping around on my deck. I head up, see a few shapes emptying everything they can over the side. I shoot; they shoot; I'm down with a shin wound. After that, I just let 'em take what they want. The datachip I'd gone there for was safe in my back pocket, and everything else I could replace. On their way off the boat, I finally got a good look at them. Mother and five children, not one over sixteen, but they meant business.

● Cap

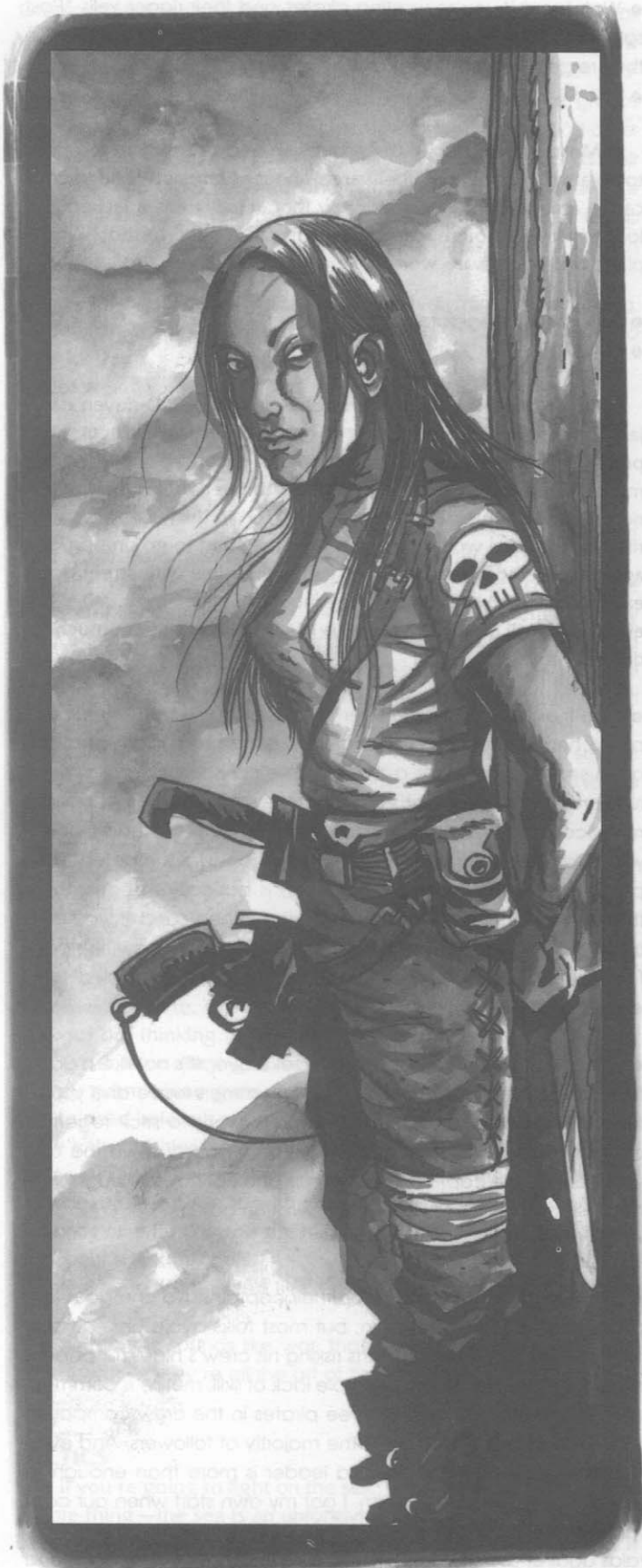
● That's pretty polite for pirates. I've seen some real crazies—the CFS has more than its share of personality cults. If you think people can do the impossible when they're desperate for clean water, wait'll they think they've got the Messiah on board telling them who to shoot.

● Annegram

TYPES OF PIRATES

An effective pirate crew needs the same make-up as a really good running team—three parts muscle, one part magic, a dash of transportation and a dash of intel. Unfortunately, there are even fewer *good* pirates than runners, so most crews make do with what they've got.

A rigger, whether he's got a VCR or just drek-hot skills, is a godsend for pirates. With so many confrontations in the open, you need someone who can maneuver like hell and get off the scene before the victims recover or the cops arrive. The rigger also bears the brunt of any drek from the authorities. If you come into a harbor, it's the rigger who's piloting and the rigger who goes in the records as boat-owner, so it's the rigger who the aqua-cops focus their attentions on. If you want to rig for pirates, make sure you know what's what in every dock's law books and how to make nice with the badges.



• Watch out if you're wasting pirates and their rigger yells "Past salvage!" That means diagnostics says their boat's toasted, so they're gonna drown unless they grab yours.

• Salt

Most pirates take up the profession because they're too poor to do anything else, so cyberware's about as rare as a college education among buccaneers. A crew that actually has a jacked and loaded rigger, though, can claim rights to a huge territory—sane pirates without 'ware won't take on a jacked crew.

• Sane ones? I feel safer already.

• Bung

Other cyber is even more rare. Even that 1,000-nuyen data-jack comes with the price tag of neurosurgery, which cuts into profits big-time. Smugglers can spring for second-hand wires, but most often they rely on sheer numbers to overwhelm their opponents. It's not unusual to face a crew of ten to thirty big guys with rifles—guys who would be eaten up if they had to go one-on-one against a jacked-up razorboy. In gangs that deal with street docs, expect to find an upswing in the amount of cyber, but realize that every mod will be geared towards killing—pirates aren't much for designer toys.

• Don't expect your big-nuyen chrome to win you a place in pirate hearts, though. While crews give riggers space, captains often see a razorboy as a threat to their authority. As a general rule, only join a gang that's on about the same level as you (technologically or otherwise) and don't ever outclass the leader unless you relish the thought of waking up stabbed. Competence at pirate ops (sailing, combat, planning) is basically the only thing that makes one guy captain over the others, and if you're a death-dealing razorboy making friends among the crew, the captain's gonna suspect a mutiny long before you even think of it.

• Sly Borg

• Even if you geek the captain and take over, it's not like a gang fight where some of the old leader's chummers leave and you're running the new show. Usually, the crew want to stick together, and it's easier to toss a troublemaker overboard, even the one who geeked the captain, than split up and not have enough connections and hands to keep the operation going.

• Sound

• Crews put a lot of pressure on their captains. No one goes into piracy for the retirement plan, but most folks avoid unnecessary risks. So when the captain starts risking his crew's hides for personal reasons, poor planning, or simple lack of skill, mutiny is common, usually with the best two or three pirates in the crew comparing jock-strap sizes until one gains the majority of followers. And even the impression of weakness in a leader is more than enough to make his followers turn on him. I got my own start when our captain was having problems with his squeeze. I engineered a couple raids against us in the middle of the night while he was busy, and

I made sure I was ranking crewman onboard able to handle them. Within a week, the crew was mine.

• Bloody Rackham

• I'll bet you were with the crew for years, not a solo punk who waltzed on with a head full of 'ware. After a mutiny, you lose profits while adjusting to the new leader, so most folks hold off until the old captain really loses it. And then they look to someone they've worked with before—another crew member—to take over the job. If a pirate crew lets a stranger take their boat and loyalties, they're either desperate or plotting to kill Captain Wireboy in his sleep.

• JAS Hook

Deckers are rare in most crews—remote decks are expensive, and satellite uplinks are even more so, and there aren't many phone jacks at sea. Occasionally, a gang keeps someone on retainer to intercept transmissions or to shadowrun a facility (you know, break and enter), but usually that's an on-shore friend, not a crew member. Info-finders are valued (and well-bribed) contacts, though, so if you want a nice piece of beach-front property, take a few hours a day to find out shipment schedules and break the Coast Guard codes, then sell the results to pirates.

Magical talent is the rarest part of any crew and the most valued after riggers. The magicians on deck tend to be intuitive, free-form types like shamans and houngans, not engineer mages with a degree.

• Us engineer mages who are intuitive and free-form take exception to your statement.

• Tikbalang

Even a bad mage provides an edge over a crew with no magic, but compared to two-mage-a-team Seattle runners, magical security is piracy's biggest weakness. The reception a magician gets is a coin toss, though. Some bands are scared enough to lynch wizworms on general principle; others realize the value of an asset like line-of-sight attack.

• And both attitudes can come together. Like with the razorboy, showing everybody else up can get you dead, dead, dead. On the other hand, when you're the meal ticket, you'll get used.

• Animal

That "line-of-sight attack" means a whole lot in a real little word package. A magician with a pair of binoculars on a clear day is your worst nightmare. I paid back a favor once by taking a quick sail around the SanFran Bay on a friend's ship. With no buildings or trees in the way, I could see far enough to knock out the entire crew of a Shibata Construction and Engineering ship a half-klick off. My chummers got the goods, and the People's University started a water-operations course for spellcasters.

Lots of runners stay away from Shark shamans because the second one stubs a toe, he destroys the entire facility with a power blast. But on the water, there are far fewer alarms to set off, and pirates want cheap, massive, long-range firepower. Physads

with weapon foci are almost as valuable just for killing sea spirits, especially off of LA or the Bermuda Triangle or other places where the free ocean spirits don't take kindly to human presence.

• Combat spells are useful? There's a stunning revelation. Take it from real pirates and not poser-posters: use your illusions. Invisibility spells rarely work if people can see the boat's wake and keel depression, but oh, the uses of Vehicle Mask.

If you were able to use one spell to take out a whole crew, that ship's crew was a bunch of peanuts. Pirates and any corp that's had trouble with 'em have a policy of keeping inactive crew members below decks to avoid being hit with a spell. More useful than a direct attack is the stuff spirits can do whether or not you can see the target. A water elemental can slow a speedboat to nothing as you crawl right behind the plume they kick up, or send it hurtling into the rocks at five times normal speed. Sea spirits can send an entire crew into hallucinations.

Word to the wise: don't assume that the tactics you use on land work the same way here. Those fire spells that so many of you rely on are not a good idea. Like Salt said earlier, if you destroy the ship of the guys attacking you, they've got to take your boat if they want to live. The object is to scare your attackers away or into submission, not make them so desperate that they're a worse danger to you than to themselves.

• Props

• Frag illusions, omae. If you can control animals' minds, you can be a god. Send those mana-ticklers into Mr. Leviathan's mind, make friends, and ride up on his back. Ain't nobody gonna want to find out what else you can do.

• Jacare

Most crews also include members who specialize in amphibious assault and underwater escape and evasion. In other words, they scuba dive under the target's boat, blow the hull and kill anyone who tries to fix it. These guys know demolitions, diving, submarine piloting and water-to-surface fighting and vice versa. If you don't believe this is a specialty, try it sometime. And tell me where your wreck will be so my chums can loot it.

• *Les Esprits d'Eau* near the Ivory Coast use a seal shapeshifter.

• Jason@na.cas.atlantantet443916.com

• What's it do? Balance a ball on its nose and render opposing crews helpless with laughter?

• Deezil

• I don't know about any ball tricks, but a seal shapeshifter can hold its breath for up to fifteen minutes, swim as strong and as fast as a seal, regenerate and go human whenever it needs to use its hands and sees and smells astrally. Drek, I'd hire all I could get.

• Jason@na.cas.atlantantet443916.com

• Here's some info of the type that always seems to fall between the cracks. Yes, there are female pirates, as anyone who's crossed

Grania O'Malley in the Big Sur knows. Females do hold power in all walks of life, as we discovered in the organized crime stuff a few months back. The fact of the matter is, most pirates base their relationships in racial or ethnic terms, which means that the groups revolve around mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers and other assorted familiar relations. Don't think that women can't hold their own. In many ways, women who captain a group of pirates are tougher than their male counterparts, if only because they made it to the top dealing with the, "I don't take orders from a woman shtick" still out there in the macho world.

Beyond that generalization, expect everything and anything. Pirates don't care if you're a satyr married to an oni—if you do right by them, they do right by you.

• Mercy

HOW TO HOST A RAID

by Dread Pirate Paco

If you fight a war at sea, know the terrain and use it to your advantage. And the sea is a terrain like no other.

The naval maneuver that galleons used, called "crossing the T," exemplifies the difference between the seventeenth century and today. Used to be if your opponent sailed north-south, you'd cross east-west right in front of her, like a capital T. A hundred guns on your broadside versus a handful on her stern, and she's holed. You take minimal losses.

Boarding was risky; frequently the cannons would still be roaring while you held only a few one-shot pistols, and then it was up to your skill with a blade.

• Some of us prefer those circumstances.

• Shinigami

Today, one pirate with a rifle possesses enough firepower to kill a crew of twenty in under thirty seconds. Crossing the T becomes obsolete. Boarding is nearly insane. So the fight is really about out-thinking your opponent, like chess.

What have they got, what have you got? You may have twenty submachine guns, but one high-explosive rocket means you're dead before it starts. Can you *tell* if they have a rocket? Ah, there's the problem. Now your troops must include spies. Better to spy while they're in the harbor and you can blend in with the crowd, right? And is it better to raid there or out at sea? That depends on who controls the harbor police and if you can jam the opponent's distress calls.

Now you are thinking like a pirate. Plan or die.

• If all this talk sounds like war, that's no coincidence. Running, piracy, war ... they're all the art of fighting and getting away.

• Wedge

TACTICS

If you're going to fight on the sea, you have to remember one simple thing—the sea is an unforgiving biff. Say you're a landlubbing runner, making your getaway down a megaspawl street. If



your car is destroyed, you can still run or carjack a passerby. If you're on the sea, things aren't so simple. Because if your boat sinks, you can't just jump out and grab another. When you're on the sea, every little problem becomes more complicated, and overcoming each complication takes time. Time in which you can die.

So remember that you are in a potentially hostile environment every second you're on the water, even when there's no one else in sight. And take the time to learn about that environment.

- Attention, runners turned pirate! Before you wear a six-pound armor jacket on a boat, here's a tip. Find a YMCA with a pool and try to stay afloat wearing said jacket, with clothes and boots, for just five minutes. Then you'll understand why this talk is so life-and-death. Most pirates don't wear armor for a damned good reason. If they do, it's poncho-style for ventilation, secured by Velcro.

- Rabid

- Almost everyone on a good pirate crew knows how to sail, drive and jury-rig boats, 'cause someday any one of them might be the one the rest of the crew is relying on to get them to shore. I've seen many rich, soft UCAS shadowrunners rely on their vehicle autopilots!

- JAS Hook

- And rarely do Denver shadowrunners run into hurricanes that frag up the attack plan. Here, they're just another distraction—or threat—or opportunity.

- Kermit

Combat on the open sea poses some unique problems as well. Every runner knows that surprise is the best weapon. Catch your opponent unawares, and the fight's halfway over. But how do you surprise someone when the sun is beating down and you're the only white spot in an endless field of blue water?

"Magic," the simpleton says. But I'm not magical, and I'll bet that 98.14 percent of you aren't either. The answer is *deception*—pretend to be something else. Think of all the tourists who are terrorized by "beach vendors" selling conch shells and clothes. Do you know how easy it is to fit an AK-97 under a pile of beadwork skirts?

- Old hat. Try "Ship in distress! Can we come on your boat?" Or "Drop anchor, we're the Carib navy," which I find hilarious 'cause people still fall for it. Or the "floating rum party" scam, where you get the suckers to actually come on your boat, and by the end of the night, they're tied up in your hold while you loot their ship. Plus, you get a party out of it.
- The Gingerbread Man

You'll also want to keep in mind all those paranimals lurking about under the surface of the sea and learn to recognize the signs of their presence. (It's always best to avoid tangling with these nasties if you can.) Juggernauts leave trails of stripped trees and footprints. But other critters simply surface quietly and provide no warning. Most sea animals see metahuman ships as curiosities filled with tasty little snacks. Kraken, megalodons, sea serpents and sea drakes are big enough to take on a crew by themselves, but even packs of mermaids, flocks of Awakened sea birds and flying piranhas can overpower a crew.

HIDEOUTS AND HARBORS

Because the sea contains so many dangers, pirates prize choice harbors and routes. In fact, a pirate band that finds a good harbor or secluded island will usually try to drive out any other folks and claim the island or bay for itself.

- This sounds as stupid as the gang obsession over turf. "A hundred nuyen for walking down my alley." Duh. Maybe I prefer two nuyen for the bullet I put through your head?
- Rathceet
- You have no clue what a gang is about, do you? Turf is where the gang lives. It's where their weapons are stored, where their families, squeezes and friends hang, and where they sleep at night. It's where their customers meet. In other words, where they make their fraggin' money.

You want to think gang? Think reputation and the presence of other gangs. If you let even one person refuse to acknowledge that you're in charge, someone might get wasted on your turf. If you let that happen with no retribution, every other gang sees you as a frag-up who can't protect your own people. For the gang a block over, that means they can take your operation and look slick so that everyone stops jumping on their butts, and they'll make peace with their rivals to cut you down. Now you're fighting your way out of a two-gang pile-on. Far better to beat down each guy with attitude over "turf" than risk that.

- Tish Bite

These harbors and routes are often spots with secret capabilities, hidden beneath the waves, the ground, camouflage nets or

even magical cloaking. I know a crew so rich they drilled a hole into the side of a sea cliff off the west coast of Aztlan and paid construction workers to build a grotto. It took a year of work, but now they have a hideout completely concealed during high tide, and the natural stone keeps out curious astral eyes. There are complications, of course, but so far no one has stumbled across it and lived to tell what they saw.

- Aaarrrrr! Stereotypical pirate talk off to starboard! Where's me parrot an' peg leg?
- Bung
- If it's stupid but it works, it's not stupid.
- Kane
- "FBI's Most Wanted #8—and dropping!"

A hideout is very useful when you're preparing stolen goods for resale. Filing off serial numbers, repainting goods, changing appearances, or spreading disinformation on the whereabouts of hot property—it's all considerably easier if you have a convenient hideout to work from.

- Many pirates have signature styles, flags or ships to make their prey quake in fear. But everyone, even the guys with iridescent mohawks flying the Jolly Roger, take precautions to avoid capture. Frag, the Gingerbread Man has his own trid show, but no authority has nailed him yet. As soon as people hear he's pulled a raid, five hundred fans everywhere claim to have seen him yesterday. None of them know where he is; they just make drek up. Poof—he's gone!
- Junta

BUYERS AND PAYMENT

After he's got his hands on some stolen goods, the pirate needs a buyer willing to pay top prices. And that usually means taking a little jaunt to an area where folks won't recognize the stolen goodies or where said goodies are harder to come by. Buyers rarely pay more than 10 to 30 percent what the cargo is worth, because they're never sure if someone will come looking for it. And if they have to ditch the goods, they don't want to be out a lot of money.

Pirates try to make up for this by finding desperate buyers. Say I killed a decker for his Fuchi-7 in San Francisco. I'd be a fool to sell it to a local fixer. Instead, I hop a commuter flight to Dallas with the deck parts stashed in a gutted stereo, and suddenly I can find a buyer willing to pay four times as much as a SanFran fence would. So that 30 percent of the list price suddenly becomes 120 percent. On a list price of a million nuyen or more, that adds up. And it only costs me a plane ticket and some time and effort.

- You'd have to know the Dallas shadows to pull it off, but the principle is sound. And you have to get it to the buyer, which usually isn't simple or easy.
- Argent

- Yet another reason not to show up the captain with your cyberware and magic. Few pirates have a serious fridge on board for organ-legging, but your 'ware and foci will keep until they get to shore.
- Death Angel

Then there's the last hurdle that cuts down many a pirate. Shadowrunners are sometimes paid individually, with the Johnson working out the price ahead of time. Pirate hauls are always split among the survivors who pulled their weight. Good crews split the hauls evenly, with a full share going into repairs and upgrades for the boat and hideout. If you join a crew that tries to shaft you, even as a newbie, chances are you're dealing with amateurs, and you'll want to depart quickly.

DODGING THE LAW

by Kotick

I have no doubt you psychos can easily manage to frag up some tourists and even successfully hit the Triads for a shipment of Golden Triangle heroin. But doing so only gets you a face full of Lone Star on the low end and federal agents on the high end. That's right, the Feds. You runners who think corp sec and the Star are stooges have never met real federal agents. They all have justifiably impressive names, like the Tir Paladins and the Sioux Wildcats—hell, the UCAS and CAS maintain actual Navy Patrols (and their associated special forces) to keep you from doing the crimes on the water that make life soooo much fun. Nearly every government in the world is still waging "wars" on drugs or BTL or telesma or even metahumans.

Unlike the corps that prefer to simply hunt down your worthless hide and leave you in an unmarked grave in the Barrens, governments (because they are the government, after all) use your misdemeanors to earn massive public support by parading you and your pals in front of a camera and saying, "Look what we found! A warehouse full of drugs, chips and guns! We're keeping your streets safe! Re-elect us!" With your face plastered all over the trids, you'll never work again in the shadows. You're worse than dead ... you are a target.

These governments have put together some serious and not-so-serious bad-ass security forces to handle these wars. And if you gun one of them down, you end up like Kane: a cop-killer, with

hundreds of Lone Star, AtSec and FBI agents ready to shoot you on sight. Chip-truth.

- I'm a bad example? Pick someone who's dead, eh?
 - Kane
- "Aztlan's Most Wanted #14 ... and dropping!"

In the old days, governments had a bitch of a time watching their countries' borders. In case you haven't gotten the clue, borders have gotten tighter in the twenty-first century. Why?

First, Sixth World nations (the NANs, the Tirs, and the like) and megacorporations are more draconian. Human rights ain't what they used to be.

Second, as the big countries break up, for example, Canada and the United States, borders have gotten significantly smaller. Naturally, the notable exception to this rule is Aztlan.

Third, detection devices have gotten more accurate, and border patrols have a whole new family of magical detection gear they didn't have before.

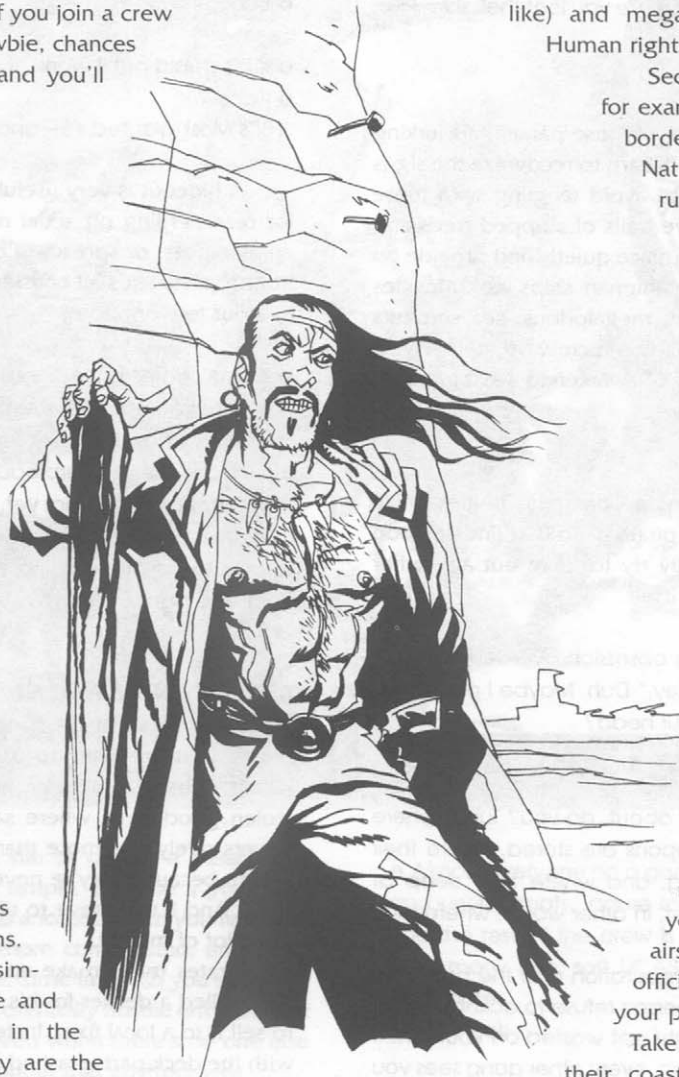
- Don't forget the massive rise in unskilled labor. In the 2030s, thousands of unskilled people went into federal and private security businesses. So now the number of badges in North America is at an all-time high.
- People Watcher

THE APPROACH

While you're off mixing your chemicals, burning your chips, or hooking your sex slaves, all you have to worry about is the local law. In most backwater Third World nations, that's no problem. But once you enter the 22-kilometer sea and airspace around a big country, you're officially on their stomping grounds and your problems begin.

Take the CAS as an example. They patrol their coastal airspace with mil-spec sensor-equipped LTA blimps carrying drones and enough ED and ECM to make a rigger wet his pants. These form a radar net that you can't escape by flying under it. As soon as the radar net detects you, the CASSies first notify any Coast Guard cutters in the area and second, any local military boys with real firepower.

So think about that as you come over the water or in the air. The radar net extends out 80 kilometers, so even if you're coming in at 960 kph, you'll be on the radar-screens for five long minutes before you reach the shoreline.



• Ah, Little Brother's slang-cannon is warming up. I'll translate for the civilians. LTA (lighter than air) blimps are variants of the newly redesigned Luftschiffbau Zeppelin (the LZ-2051-C version, for those of you who actually care about such stuff). These babies are rumored to be carrying the Cyberspace Systems Wolfhound Advanced Reconnaissance aircraft—drones, though riggers swear they act and react like a rigger is jacked into them. The LTA releases the drones at intervals known to only two or three CAS generals or admirals, so you can have no fraggin' idea when you may get spotted. They also carry milspec ECM (Electronic Countermeasures, for those of you who ain't savvy on the rigger-speak) and ED (Electronic Deception).

Now, if you think you have enough ECCM and ECD (those counter the ECM and ED), think again. The CAS military has been pushing the envelope on development of these toys in order to stay ahead of Azteckology advances. Hell, if there is an electronic way to see into the astral, the CAS has a team of specialists working on it. These guys have such high-end stuff that your sensors will say you are seeing a seagull right up until you nearly drive right into the side of one of those giant blimps with its Ruhrmetal Vogeljäger Multi-Role Anti-Air Missiles (MRAAM) aimed right between your eyes. More than one rigger has discovered too late that his toys are just that compared to the CAS-equipped border patrols.

If you're detected, whoever's nosing around will ask you to identify yourself, and if you're not headed to a legit port or airport (i.e., somewhere with a customs inspection station), they'll tell you to turn back. If you do something suspicious (like ignore them and head straight in), they'll blow you apart. And they'll give the "hunt" order long before they give the "kill" order, because they'd prefer to catch you. That's why the speed is so important. If they can't get you in range, you may be home free—unless they work with the cops to have you intercepted on shore.

• Virgil

If you're coming in by air, you'll be greeted by FB-Eagles piloted by some arrogant Air Force fighter jock with his quivering thumb on the button of some air-to-air missiles. If you're coming by water or skimming the waves, you'll have to deal with the speed-boat patrols. They've got their own sensor arrays, ED and ECM, and usually some astral boys on board. If you give their Sabers and MK-197s any trouble they scream for help, and then the CAS navy comes down on your hoop. And then, boyo, count yourself as just another visitor to the briny bottom of the Carib.

• More lingo—where would you all be without me? The FB-Eagle is a bit of an exaggeration. The CAS and the UCAS both use BAC-Dassault-MBBs for their border patrols and leave the really big planes for war, or to be called in when the real chase is on. As I said, the CAS interceptors will have the highest possible level of sensors, ECM, ECCM, ED and ECD. They take nothing for granted, and assume that even their own rigger jocks can make a mistake. The CAS (and nearly everyone else) uses SAAB-Sakker AIM-11R air-to-air missiles to hunt down their prey. These are for short range only, so if you're fast, and I mean real fast, you might be able to stay ahead of the ordnance. Good luck, chummer.

In order to stay one step ahead of us riggers, they'll use anything for water patrol that goes fast—Colorado Hydrofoils or any of the GMC water vehicles. Closer to shore, they use the Fokker Cloud Nine (this bad boy will follow you right up onto the shore) and the B & V River Commander. Every ship that can carries a Saber antiship missile to protect its country's sea borders. The most popular antiship weapon, however, is the MK-197, a torpedo used by everyone from pirates to Azteckology. It's about as common as an Ares Predator in the sprawl.

Outrunning an astral form is basically impossible, but the mages are usually on the Coast Guard cutters, rather than on land. So use your speed to avoid catching their attention. One of the most important things here is the communications network. The Coast Guard, Lone Star, the navy or whoever's in your neighborhood will ring up the others for help, and that destroyer is what pirates really fear, cuz they know every destroyer contains a bunch of navy gunners itching to "test" their weapons by blowing any hostile vessels to kindling. And if you're within that magic fifteen kilometers of them, they won't have any trouble doing just that.

• Virgil

• Now that the mandatory military bragging's out of the way, lemme tell you how, despite all this drek, you can still buy a fix of deepweed as far away as Seattle for eighty nuyen.

Let's start with the radar net. Get yourself some pass codes—the first thing those military types want to know is if you're friendly or not. By all means, act friendly. Give them the Yes Sir! No Sir! business. If your codes are old, blame the ground crew or the company you are working for or just about anyone else. There's nothing like a good lie to defeat all kinds of ECM mumbo-jumbo. If all else fails and you can get close enough, hit them first.

The next key to going in by air is to use more than one plane. The more the merrier, but you should go in with at least one plane that has real codes and one doing the dirty work. Space them a reasonable distance apart, but keep them close enough together to overload the poor slob working the radar desk; most likely he won't be able to do two things at once. But if you want to go in fast and solo, fly so low that a high wave could slap your plane. They'll probably pick you up on radar, but at that altitude there's enough clutter to keep them from shooting first without asking questions. By the time they run through their little bag of tricks to try to identify you, you'll most likely already be past them. Or you can jettison the cargo with a chute. What, you don't have a guy on shore with a couple of white-light lamps he can flick on and off and a big fishing net in the trees?

Entering by boat? The old trick of hiding your smuggled goods in the coffee beans still works today. The dogs they bring on board smell the coffee, not the drugs or gunpowder. But most harbor cops are immediately suspicious of coffee, so try old oranges that stink, tons of fish, or ambergris (more commonly known as whale vomit). The cops won't want to hang around long enough to search. And few of them know or care what ambergris should smell like, anyway. But don't count on anything working more than once. Next time you pull in, you might be subjected to an astral search, and those mages can pick a BTL out of a thousand million beans in an instant.

You got five hundred nuyen? Pay off the mob and the harbor cops. You got a hammer and screwdriver? Make hidey-holes and stash the goods in the boat. If you've got some serious plastic bags and deep-sea diving equipment, drop the drek overboard and go the sunken treasure route. Just remember your coordinates, then take a SCUBA vacation on the nearest beach when the cops leave. Inch by inch, anything's a cinch, right?

And pick your battles. Dropping half your crew overboard with supplies and having them break you out of jail is easier than fighting the fragging Special Forces. Better yet, get some com gear that lets you hear the navy talk and find out how far away they are, so you don't pull a Novilunio.

And if you do, run, run, as fast as you can.

- The Gingerbread Man

- And remember, the CAS hates pirates, smugglers and the big hostile power just south of them. But not all countries see the need to be so vigilant.

- Maiden UCAS

- No matter where you are, though, you gotta keep an eye out for Interpol. They don't have much to back them up in a fight, but the international community still supports their efforts to stop smugglers.

- Smiley

GETTING AWAY WITH IT

So now you've reached the shore. Well, we ain't done yet. Say you're flying in. Where are you going to land? You're going to need some kind of airstrip, most likely. And if anyone spots you, a call goes out to the guys at Lone Star (and believe me, the Star down south isn't as gentle as in Seattle). By boat you've got a better shot, but if you're entering a port like New Orleans, you're gonna have to deal with the harbor cops (Knight Errant in the case of the Big Easy) and the Mafia.

Let's say you're not a smuggler; you're a swashbuckler who likes to go after tourists and shipping lines. Well, you're still likely to encounter live security forces, because most folks like live bodies on their short-haul ships. Sure, they tried automation around 2024 when the autopilot first came out, but by the mid-thirties they realized that too many pirates were commandeering automated vessels. First, the shippers put tracking-signal transmitters on their ships, which the pirates countered with jamming equipment. Then the shippers went back to live security forces.

- Smugglers and swashbucklers are the same thing. It's all in the attitude. It's ignorant drekheads like yourself that take all the fun out of it.

- The Gingerbread Man

- Kotick's a little off. For real long hauls, shippers still use automated vessels. But live security teams go out to hop on the ships and escort them in from two hundred kilometers. But if the cargo is very

valuable to someone, the shipper will provide live and automated security for the entire trip. Actually, considering that aqua-cops are paid by the hour, escorting a ship for a month is good biz.

- Virgil

- A couple "ghostmaker ships" with Sentry guns and drek-hot autopilots make the haul from TP-Aleut to CalFree, but they make everyone edgy. Never can tell when the temperature change might make the guns or the autopilot go on the fritz. CRRUNCH on the harbor. BLAMBLAMBLAM at any moving shape. Un-pop-yew-lar.

- Prospector

TAKING HOSTAGES

Never mind the Atlantic Security guys with their assault rifles and medium machine guns. I should warn you what happens when you pull a stupid stunt like Novilunio did. If you end up in a hostage situation on land, Lone Star calls their SWAT teams of snipers and door-kickers to clear you out. But if you pull that drek on an American States ship, you get classified as a terrorist. That means you're targeted by the guys who taught the SWAT boys everything they know—SEAL Team Six.

Argent's said before that the military will kill you. Here's *how*.

It starts when your astrally scouting mage gets buzzed by an air elemental. That's a distraction so his defenses are down when the military spellslingers hit him with a Control Thoughts spell strong enough to make him think he's fraggin' Dunkelzahn if they want.

- That spell is banned in the CAS and the UCAS.

- Magister

- Your point being?

- Anonymous

With your mage either dead from astral combat, choked out by an elemental or hunting *your* hoops, you might not hear the silenced head shots on the fringes. Then an elemental manifests and fills your ship's rooms with a choking fog, your screams are shut off by silence spells, and flash and concussion grenades blind you. Finally, the beta-clinic wireboys burst in and start blazing away with full-auto APDS. Of course, they'll be in armor so heavy that if you puncture the SCUBA tanks on their backs, the explosions will just hurt *you*.

Gosh, you say. You heard two of the thirty-three Novilunio pirates escaped. Yeah, they did. But that's only 'cause the Jaguars and the SEALs were caught in a bureaucratic cluster-frag due to somebody's agenda. (Apparently someone wanted those teams spilling each other's blood on national trideo on a Shiawase freighter.)

End of lecture. Hope you live long enough to use this stuff. I may not be the greatest communicator in the world ... but I know what has kept me and my pals alive.

THE SWASHBUCKLERS OF THE CARIBBEAN



• Now everyone's asking *where* pirates profit. We've heard from all over—CalFree, CAS, the coast of Africa and Tripoli. But the first place folks associate with pirates is the Caribbean. This knee-jerk association comes from every twelve-year-old's favorite action trid show, *Cyberpirates of the Caribbean*, so we went to the authority on both the Carib and the show—the Gingerbread Man, the pirate on whom the NBS network based its kiddie blockbuster.

He sent us everything—macho challenges, holopics of things I hoped never to have seen and stories about every woman he's ever had (a quick count of names turned up more than 11,000 in this document alone). At one point he even boasts of everything from killing Dunkelzahn to putting the big wyrm up in a secret hideout. It was a fun read, but mostly useless. There was some information worth the trouble of hunting for it, but it took us so long to sift hype from fact that we decided to let another Caribbean local take a shot at showing us the skinny. We put Gingerbread's stuff in later—heavily edited so it made sense.

We asked Twitch, ex-pirate and mover from New Orleans, and Tiburón Negro, the Carib's oldest living gang member, to provide some basics on life in the CL. Enjoy, and remember, Shadowland is not responsible for the veracity of its contents. If you get killed trying to "board" an Azzie destroyer, don't blame us. Oh, and a special note to Gingerbread Man—honestly, stop reading your own press releases.

• Captain Chaos

Transmitted: 14 January 2059, 03:41:48 (PST)



AN INTRODUCTION TO SWASHBUCKLING

by Twitch

I disagree with our sysop. The first word in anyone's head when they think about pirates is "swashbuckling." Now, I doubt many people know what the word means. I did some time at Tulane, so I'll fill your heads with a fact from the archives. "Swashbuckle" was old Euroslang, meaning to beat the hilt of your rapier (swash) against your shield (buckler) to challenge all comers in earshot. By the way, a rapier is a sword ... and no monofilament or Dikote™ coating, either. In the old days, it was just a hunk of sharpened metal.

- Ah, the good old days ... when it took effort to kill someone.
- Dr. Happy @na.socal.la.UCLA.Hispop.edu

The important part isn't the shield-beating, it's the challenge. In other words, *reputation*. Pirates didn't swashbuckle to get into drawn-out sword fights with every punk who looked crossways at them. Pirating is hard work, and most needed their energy and ammo for ransacking. Swashbuckling actually saves energy by establishing a hierarchy.

Every armed society has a code of etiquette meant to keep people out of hospitals. In seventeenth-century France, young men dueled to first blood rather than death, stopping the fight once their point was made. Even animals establish dominance before fighting. Otherwise even the winner loses, because he's too tired or hurt to take advantage of the prize.

Swashbuckling only challenged people Ol' Peg Leg hadn't already fought and bested. Newcomers, wannabes or rivals fought. People in his band already *knew* if they were weaker or stronger. This was important, since loot was divided according to hierarchy.

- Same as modern gangs. I got forced to fight when I was seven. "Cowards" were stretched over a car hood by six kids and took more punishment than any single fight could possibly do. After you ran the line and knew who you could trash, everything was chill.
- Sound

- When did we start talking about dominance hierarchies? I watch Discovery Trid, too, but I thought we were talking about swinging through the rigging with an Ares Monosword in your teeth and leaving bloody notes to the cops at the scene of the crime. *Daring drek.*
- Moriarty

- What do you think that's for? Enhancing reputation. Committing crime on camera is like challenging the entire Caribbean League police force. If you get away with it, you've bested a couple thousand cops, rivals and concerned citizens.
- Tish Bite

- And you've made money at the same time. Style *and* substance, what more ya want? By the way, Morty, if you put a

monofilament sword in your mouth ... you should either be captain or locked up someplace away from us normal folks.

- Captain Monday

This phenomenon is everywhere. Corps play low-level execs off against each other to stop them from cooperating to out-think the boss. Syndicates do it more literally. When two yak enforcers face off in a pit fight, it's because they were getting too close for the oyabun's comfort.

Cultivating a reputation is the first thing a good pirate does. People in the Caribbean live and die on their reps. If you pull a crime without announcing yourself, everyone else gets sneaky, too, and the sniper shot comes home real quick. Without a rep, you're nobody, literally, so no one cares if you're killed. Challenge a few mid-levelers, set yourself firmly in the hierarchy, and no one'll bother you.

- Showing off can save your hoop. First time me and my lady were in a Carib bar, the locals saw my scars and guessed I wasn't a tourist. Six gangers start mouthing about me elbowing in on their turf. I don't like them surrounding me, so I grab a billiard ball and smash it between my hands. I said if I'd used my elbows, they'd know it. While they reconsidered, I paid the bartender, and we left. Easiest six-on-two fight I've ever had.
- Knight of Diamonds

- You have to watch who you're bragging to. If you tried that on most shadowrunners, they'd shoot you. Gangers do more fighting than killing, so they'll listen to posturing. If you're facing a runner or assassin, someone who believes "better dead now than hunting me later," they jump the gun. It's an ugly murder when one person wants to impress his girlfriend with a brawl, and the other thinks an eleven-mil is self-defense.
- Carousel

- Thanks, Carousel, for showing the difference between runners and pirates (especially Carib pirates). No pirate wants to get caught on land killing a stranger in a bar. Where's the profit; where's the style? All you get is a lot of heat and a rep for being a psycho. No one wants that kind of rep, because your enemies and friends will use it against you. A knockdown, drag-out brawl is one thing—a broken nose or arm or leg—drek, that happens in a fight. But to haul off and kill a guy in the bar ... that lacks style and common sense.
- Captain Monday

WELCOME TO THE SUNNY CARIBBEAN

by Tiburón Negro

I hear all you UCASers and Confederates talk about us. You think the Carib's a tropical paradise where your dreams'll come true, whether that's bikini-clad chicas and clear blue waters or assault rifles and beetles for a penny a pop. You think there's no laws you can't break, no one who can't be bought and no cops to track you while you hop from island to island.



You're right. And I ain't gonna tell you different.

But that ain't the whole story. If you saunter down ready to jump a ship and go full-auto, you're busted faster'n in downtown Seattle. Tourism's our lifeblood, and the authorities know that no amount of smuggling operations can make it up. If you want to blend, you gotta understand where we're coming from.

You gotta understand that most of us are descended from slaves, that we ain't had a native uprising 'cuz the Arawak and Carib Indians were killed five hundred years ago, that we've been an economic suburb of mainland North America since we broke away from whichever mother country pulled our strings. Mostly, you gotta understand how ninety islands with no common background, culture or even language became a League.

● *League*—keep that in mind. If you call it a nation, expect insults. Each island "knows" the others are the reason the League is the black hole of the West's economy, and they refuse to consider themselves members of the same country.

● Offred@na.docwagon313668.com

I can tell you everything that happened because I've lived here my whole life. Started as a look-out and steerer for the Kingston Machine Posse back when they still worked outta Kingston in 2001, and I've moved with 'em since. Seen every island and every year of history.

● If you're ever in Antigua and get offered candy by an old guy with a bad squint, a Jamaican accent and a scar running from his ear down his shoulder and onto his back, you've found Tiburón. Seventy-three years old and still in the biz. Whatever else, you've got to respect him for that.

● Darwin@na.cl.antigua687.com

● Candy? The guy sells candy?

● Frequent Flyer

● Candy, you idiot, means everything and anything you can dream of that may be illegal. Mindbenders of every kind, including BTLs. Weapons. Even sex slaves. Anything.

● Darwin@na.cl.antigua687.com

VITAS AND THE AWAKENING

In 2010, Kingston, Jamaica became the first Caribbean city hit by VITAS, most likely 'cuz Jamaica's big Indian population and tourist base drew large numbers of immigrants from New Delhi. After a few tourists died in local hospitals, wheezing with super-asthma, the US raised such a stink that the authorities had to shut the whole place down as they traced the sickness. By then, everyone knew the whole world was hit with plague. Islanders were scared. My sibs and me stayed inside and ate out of cans 'cuz no one knew if it spread through water. But once an island gets hit with something from the outside, it's only a matter of time. Jamaica had pretty decent facilities—tourism'll do that for you. Other places, like Haiti and the Dominican Republic, weren't so lucky.

The Center for Disease Control, along with Johns Hopkins University and Medical School, had already done research in Puerto Rico and Haiti for the old US government, so they were on the scene within the first thousand cases. Puerto Rico was still an American possession, so the States paid for medicine and corps gave "humanitarian aid"—which conveniently went toward keeping dead bodies and orphaned children off their vacation spots. Not that I'm complaining. Compared to Africa, say, most of us had it easy.

● What Tiburón's not mentioning is the price of that aid. Jamaica and Cuba footed their own bills, but smaller, poorer islands paid for aid by granting corps prime real estate, government positions, tax- and law-exempt status and so on. The Lesser Antilles went two-thirds of the way to privatization in two months. All the Big Eight's precursors bought resorts, of course, but it's the smaller corps like McHugh's and Federated Boeing that really cleaned up.

● Legal Beagle

With everyone scared of the bug, tourism dropped to almost zilch. Most governments spent their tax and embezzlement money on commercials, hoping to find rich Americans who wanted vacations once the danger passed. No one anticipated the Awakening, though, and between mutant babies, dragon sightings and Native Americans chucking tornadoes, most people canceled their flights and chewed their nails instead.

Point-eared babies didn't bother many in the Carib. Kids were hit hard by VITAS, so mostly we were glad for anything little and screaming. Lots of people had pawned their TVs for medicine (if they ever had them), so not many got spooked. Haiti didn't get many UGEs, and those they had tended to disappear. (But a lot of Haitian kids used to disappear back then, anyway.)

● It was no coincidence that almost all children who disappeared in Haiti between 2011 and 2014 were metahuman. The Human Nation recognized the "threat" even then and used the lack of supervision in Haiti to perform its original experiments on Haitian infants.

● Truthseeker

● Still believing everything you read on Shadowland, pinkie? If this so-called "Human Nation" is such hot drek, how come the FBI system in DeeCee has no file on them or the so-called "Flaming Sword?" How come not one of the 533 claims of responsibility in Dunkelzahn's death mentions the "Human Nation" or "Flaming Sword?" I'll tell you why. Because they're not real. They're shadowrunner-spawned rumors, like half the drek in the Matrix.

● Dr. Bones

● That's just what I'd expect you to post, "doctor." Truthseeker's talking about people who advocate the destruction of metahumanity through medical means, eugenics and social Darwinism. "Human Nation" is just a convenient label someone stuck on them. Medical corporations have performed inhumane experiments on Haitian children since before the turn of the century. Whatever the culprits called themselves, the fact remains that



those children were deliberately killed under the rationale of genetic purification.

● Tomtom

Haiti was the first to understand what the Awakening meant for magic. We all have the tradition; it's just got different names all over. In Jamaica and the Bahamas, we've got *obeah*; Trinidad's got its *shango* cult and *pocomania*. Our magic's for people who need help that no one else'll give them. Maybe Haiti needed a bit more, because as soon as the word "magic" hit the airwaves, hougans and mambos started organizing and saying how voodoo and spells work better and easier now. Americans may buy that "magic came back in 2011" drek, but in the Carib, it's always been around.

● Hermetic science has not found evidence of unusual mana levels in the Caribbean at any documented time prior to the Awakening. Any pre-Awakening "magic" was performed via subliminals, physics tricks and the power of suggestion. All of these are quite effective, but they do not constitute true mana manipulation.

● Anonymous

● The spirits have been here longer than you, mage. Come to Port au Prince. See what I can do without showing "mana" in your her-

metic tests. Then tell me what is magic. Your hermetics have studied magic for forty years. My people have lived it for centuries.

● Voodoo Lou

● Tibby's forgetting the other effects magic had. The Ghost Dance in 2014 fragged weather patterns as far away as Hawai'i. The Caribbean was alternately baked and flooded for two years as out-of-season hurricanes competed with weeks of drought. Disaster-relief efforts put everybody in debt.

● Professional Student

● Not to mention the destruction of sugar crops, the Carib's big source of legal income. With no crop for two years, Haiti, Cuba and some smaller islands tottered on collapse. Only Puerto Rico recognized the perfect food to grow when half-flooded—fungus. That's right, Natural Vat Food Technologies got started in Puerto Rico in 2015, growing mycoprotein and other fungi and inadvertently ushering in the synthfood era. Puerto Rico raked in money and became the richest island in the Carib before Aztech took over the little corp in 2021.

● Pyramid Watcher

THE ISLAND GRABS

Goblinization shook *everybody* up. With people falling down in the street with horns popping from their skulls, not even the most jaded pirate could feel comfy at night. Those who could afford to took to the waters and stayed there, trying to get away from the *bocor* who was crazy and powerful enough to curse that many people. Eventually, the U.S. doctors announced it was all genetic, but that still didn't explain *why* or *who* was causing the changes, so we all figured it was better to be safe than sorry. Us pirates stayed away from the populated cities until we got the message that it wasn't contagious and you couldn't deliberately cause it.

- They thought the boogieman waved his hands and POOF!, people starting goblinizing? I don't believe a couple million people in the twenty-first century still think that it's the evil eye and a warty old woman next door that makes bad things happen.

- Curious George

- You're not reading closely enough. The reason so many people believed in magic even before the Awakening is that it fills in the cracks that science leaves. Tiburón's not disputing that magic is genetic. He's just saying that fate determines who's born with the goblinization gene, and that apparent randomness might be controlled by spirits or powerful magicians. Plenty of people in the US thought goblinization came from "sinning." What we can't explain, we call magic.

- Talon

Obeyifa, obeah practitioners, and hougans gained even more power and position than they had before the Awakening because everyone thought they were either the cause or the cure. Not that anyone agreed on whether the new races were okay or sick or cursed. A lot depended on *who* goblinized. Back then like now, our leaders made sure they stayed "popular" no matter what. And if that meant shuttin' up everyone who dared disagree, tough.

Pay attention, 'cuz all this made the islands what they are today. When Joaquim Delmonte, the Dominican Republic's prez, turned ork, he *had* to make the Republic open to metas. There was a lot of migration as people moved to islands where they could walk around without mothers warning their kids away. VITAS II shut up most of the fuss about it, though Haiti was still fierce about keeping "the deformities" out, mostly to whiz off the Dominicans, in my opinion. I don't have a lotta love for that whole island. To me, both the countries on it are all screwed up.

- That's not really much of a change, historically speaking. Haiti and the Dominican Republic have spat on each other since before the Haitian revolution in 1803. When Haiti rebelled against France, a small group of Spanish settlers on the other side of the island of Hispaniola used the chaos to grab some land and turn it into their own country (the Dominican Republic). The two sides have hated each other ever since then, preserving separate languages, cultures and governments. Each has used the pretext of separating from the other to get more and more extreme—for

example, Haiti's constitution declared that legally every Haitian is black, while the Dominican Republic calls "white" lots of brown-skinned people that continentals think of as "black," just because they don't want to be associated with Haitians. Funny how meaningless all of that is now that we've got metahumans to dump on. After being the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere for three centuries, the Haitian government was happy to pick on the Awakened races as the only people less well-off than they.

- Professional Student

Those of us on the water didn't want to return for the replay, so we stayed on our boats. Some people never came back—they found empty rocks, called 'em islands and set up camp. Novilunio, those dreckheads who pulled that toxic-waste stunt, are that type, the real "pirate kings" who don't want to deal with governments at all. There ain't much to live on in the ocean, so we took to robbin' ships—and found out it's easy if you've got the people. The few who dryfooted it found that with governments reeling from metahumans and the plague, jobs were scarcer than ever. Pirating was the best way out.

- And with people scared of goblinization and wanting anything but to face the problems of the Sixth World, the Caribbean did a swift trade in mindbenders, fake goblinization cures and other escapism devices.

- BTL Bailey@na.ci.barbados689.com

- Don't forget guns. In 2021 it was still tough for someone without a job-related reason or underworld ties to get their hands on a firearm in some states. With the new threat of orks and trolls, demand skyrocketed. Cuban pirates cleaned up exporting cheap Carib-made and old Soviet guns to armchair meta-haters.

- Matador

- Also, back then the world was still operating as it had for decades—people kept sending those big ships through "international" waters. With the Panama Canal just south of the Carib, pirates were hitting what seemed like sitting ducks. They couldn't carry off enough goods. In fact, rumor has it that Carib pirates would line up to take cracks at boats leaving the Panama Canal, hitting them in order like cabs at an airport ... all lined up waiting for the next fare.

- Swash and Buckle

By 2022, the entire Caribbean was in danger of going corp. Most people weren't too eager for this to happen, given the corps' attitudes toward workers of the wrong color, meta-race or political bent. Weren't many choices, though. With the sugar fields destroyed, tourists scared off and every fledgling island business washed away by the decade of chaos, no island could stand alone as an economy or government.

Some of the smaller islands gave in completely—Lofwyr bought the Netherlands Antilles, Dunkelzahn the Caymans. Others were grabbed by ex-Mafiamen, drug kingpins and pirate kings. Cuba got scared when it saw everything being bought up.

Guadalupe Martinez and the neo-coms had come in six years before, and they didn't want corps and capitalists surrounding them. She agitated for everyone to rebuild together—under Lady Guadalupe, of course.

- Neo-coms?
- Dolan
- In 2014, Guadalupe Martinez revitalized the Cuban revolution by creating “neo-communism.” Allowing for a free-market economy while still keeping government control over necessities, she tried for the best of both worlds—the government got an iron hand around people without any responsibility to make sure they had jobs or money. Funny thing is, it almost worked. In the hell of the '20s, people were happy to *have* a government and went along willingly. Of course, with the government controlling the press, we wouldn't know if they'd objected.
- Auntie Social

THE LEAGUE

We preferred our chances with the corps—until Aztlan took an interest. When ORO grabbed NatVat in 2021, we fell all over each other to get behind Cuba. We'd been hoping to cash in on Puerto Rico's success, but ORO and Aztech were scoping us so close we knew we were next on the takeover block. Cuba'd held onto its navy, and after a few skirmishes with pirates, mobs and soldiers joining in with all the guns they could pilfer, we convinced ORO not to go further.

- Not the whole story by any stretch. According to ORO documents, the Azzies believed (I drek you not) that a Cuban pirate had “limited nuclear assets” left over from the Chinese wars. Not the government, mind you, but a fragging *pirate* who stuck a finger-smear of *uranium* on his death threat! Add to that the specter of Sixth World guerrilla war like the one the Amerinds waged against the UCAS, and you can see why Azzie and Amazonian flags don't fly far in the Carib.
- Steel Lynx

After that, it was just as easy to stay together. Joining together gave us some pull in the world's eyes and support to fall back on in bad times. No one wanted to give up their sovereignty, though, and after some bickering, we settled on the League.

- Bickering is an understatement. My dad worked for Guadalupe back then, and he says she had to pay off Aztech to sail around and look tough just to keep negotiations going. Without the constant reminder, the League never would've stayed together.
- BOP

As soon as the League was formed, every country in the world started asking us to join federations and alliances and all kinds of things. Because so many owners of the islands had stakes in Europe and North America, the League went along with it. If it meant tourism would increase and money would flow, we

would've sunk an island or two. All this political drek meant that the League had to support some international laws—like bans on piracy. Truth is, though, a law created by the League has no impact whatsoever on any of the individual islands. Everything depends on definitions, you understand? For example, on the day the League agreed to stop piracy in its waters, I became an “independent naval officer.” The League also agreed to stop anyone caught “smuggling illegal drugs as defined by International Agreement dated 2024.” From that day to right now, all coca, poppy and hemp products became our number one smuggled export. And for the first time in my life, I was rich. I'd spend it all sooner or later ... but hey, that's what money is for.

- Tiburón's not the only one who got rich. So did many other legitimate business and government folks in the Carib. The League agreed with whatever anyone wanted them to do, and then left it up to each island to enforce the laws ... but the League never had the power to make an island enforce a League law if local authorities didn't fragging well want to. I mean, the New York Mafia owns three islands. The League is going to tell them they can't run drugs or guns? Suuuure. All the Don has to do is say, “Get the hell off my island!” End of attempt to enforce the law.
- Lady Luck

A LATECOMING MIAMI

By the thirties, money was coming in, tourists were back and things looked pretty good, especially since the rest of the world was falling apart. The Crash of '29 stopped tourism dead, but gangs took up the slack, going trans-Atlantic to Africa—computer crashes don't drop the value of diamonds, gold or slaves. We were never dependent on high-tech business or elaborate record-keeping, so we shrugged off the Crash.

With the loss of property records, though, ownership of the smaller islands got reshuffled again, as corps forged documents to steal land from each other, and pirates grabbed anything forgotten. In 2034, the Sovereign State of South Florida joined the League, preferring to throw in with us rather than stick with the CAS.

- South Florida didn't *choose* to join the Carib, it was forced to. Miami was always different, always the Caribbean's gate to heaven. First came the Cubans during their island's first Communist Revolution, then the Haitians during their country's civil strife at the end of last century. Then came people escaping VITAS, goblinization and everything else the Awakened world threw at them.

When Aztlan closed its doors to immigrants, only Miami remained open, and the people just never stopped coming: metahumans escaping Haiti, pirates looking for newer markets (smuggling at one time was Miami's second biggest source of income after tourism), more Cubans after the second commie revolution, people fleeing Aztlan ... You name it, they went to Miami.

The conservative Southern cities of the CAS didn't think their nation should accept the dregs they felt were flowing freely through Miami. Insisting that all entrants speak fluent English was one way to limit the influx. And it didn't help that Miami was always half-Caribbean. Hell, it's closer to Cuba than it is to Tallahassee, the Florida state capital.



Without a functioning CAS military, private militias formed to "take back Miami." That was mostly an excuse to bash heads, of course. Good ol'-boy Confederates are always looking for a war, and the South's peaceful split with the UCAS meant they had to find one someplace else. Not wanting to lose a profitable market and a chunk of its population, Miami fought back, contracting Atlantic Security for protection. The rest of the CAS had other problems (Aztlán being the biggest one) and could care less about what was happening in South Florida. After two months, Tallahassee dropped South Florida and essentially built an "orange curtain" across West Palm Beach to the Keys. Miami leaders knew their city would never survive as an independent state, so when the League offered the city membership, Miami joined.

• Carousel

After that, all that changed were the names of the folks in charge. Keep this in mind, though. Just because this stuff's ancient history to you young fraggers, that don't mean it ain't important. You show up wearing Aztech logos in Cuba or use the word "trog" to a Dominican, you'll find out how important it is. Most Miami pirates won't talk to anyone with a CAS accent, and some older gangs haven't slept on land since goblinization. This is info you need, because if you're trying to work with us and we don't know who you are, you're just a tourist. And you'll be treated like one, like a target.

STYLE

by You-Know-Who

Every goddamned time I log on to Shadowland, I see some slag going, "Hey, Cap, where'd ya find this info, under a rock? What makes this guy so qualified when I could tell you drek about the Tir (or whatever) that'll make your hair curl?"

I say bulldrek to all you poser motherfraggers. I'm qualified 'cause I got six thousand pirates and a hundred million NBS viewers watching and waiting for me to slip up. You want to see the Gingerbread Man, the Man Who Cannot Die, Aztlán's Most Wanted, the Scourge of the Caribbean, the man who single-handedly out-fought four vampires from the Hell's Teeth posse on the deck of a stolen Aztechnology destroyer armed with nothing but a *hairbrush*, and yeah, the guy who wouldn't shut up if you put a bullet through his head because tomorrow there'd be five posers pretending to be me, ten made-for-trid movies and twelve apostles writing a book, yeah, *that* guy. You want to watch me die so you, your crew and every parent of a girl over thirteen within fifty clicks of the Gulf of Mexico can breathe a sigh of relief. I am the perfect pirate. Watch what I do and what I say, 'cause you'll never be able to do it as good as me ... ever.

• Well, he's good at reading people. I don't even watch the show, and already I want him dead. As much as I trust Captain Chaos, can anybody give me a data dump?

• Yolcuat

- Let's say, he's real enough for you to listen. But you don't have to like it.
- Fastjack

I'm qualified to write about Carib pirating, because I AM CARIB PIRATING! I won't give you examples, 'cause I *am* a living example! I'm still alive after eight years of Carib piracy and, I might add, five more of international piracy from Hong Kong to Lake Michigan to fragging Libya. "Libya," you say, "who pirates Libya?" I do, motherfragger, or at least I made *them* think that. Right now there are eleven boats of very confused hired killers who followed me there to grab loot I stole fair and square. Instead, I'm sitting here in my new chair, sucking on a 50-nuyen Cuban cigar and nursing a bottle of rum I could use for aviation fuel while they're staring at their sabotaged tracking receivers, getting burned by the tropical sun and fantasizing that every gull they shoot at is my head. Because I am *the* Carib pirate, and those drekheads—three ships of Salazar, two of Batista, two Renraku and four independent boat jocks I'm snubbing on the largest shadow board there *is*—will never come close.

- A joke going around Interpol is how you tell the difference between a shadowrunner, a mobster and a Carib pirate. The shadowrunner hijacks you because his Johnson in Seattle wants your cargo. The mobster hijacks you because his Don in New Orleans wants your cargo. The Carib pirate hijacks you because the media crew standing behind him is chanting "GO! GO! GO!"
- JJ Flash

PIRATING IN THE CARIB

Right now, you're either laughing or looking like a metacrab's using your hoop as a burrow. If you're laughing, you've got the right attitude. Now go dead serious. Now make a decision to kill someone or run. Now go arctic and start joking again, but never forget that moment of serious. That's living as a pirate in the Carib. You've gotta do that as fast as you shoot, because words are deadly—you just might not see it until it's too late.

"Well, talking can't stop a bullet, end line, right?" Damn straight—if it's moving at high speed. If it's still in a gun held by a human, then talking matters a drekload. 'Cause words make friends, friends carry guns, and guns carry other bullets. And your bullet in *my* head doesn't stop my friends' bullets. My talking's already got me friends.

This is the difference between the Carib at high noon and the Seattle shadows at 3 a.m. I watched eight so-called professional runners do a job in Denver. They planned and planned to make sure they didn't trip the alarms or motion detectors, devised strategies for defeating IC and mages and expensive security measures. But then once they were in the heart of it, one of them blew a guard away. They stopped thinking and started shooting.

For pirates, the target just ain't that hard most of the time. Guards wearing heavy armor? Knock them off the boat. Whip out a heavy machine gun with AP rounds, and who gives a drek how much armor they're wearing? I know a crew who slings water balloons full of gasoline onto AtSec ships, then gets on the mega-

phone and says, "Drop your guns or we light you up," while one guy waves his hands like a mage. The guards give in.

- Or they just shoot the guy. Is AtSec stupid, or is 'Bread lying?
- Matrixmaster

● Neither. AtSec couldn't afford the risk. Most of us were going Blackbeard, with burning hemp rope braided into our dreadlocks. And we had incendiary rounds in the machine gun and illusory fire on my hands. But it's a better story when Bread tells it.

- Props

AFTER THE RAID

The rough part is *after* the attack. Why? 'Cause you've got to look like you aren't a ship of bleeding pirates laden with valuables. That makes you target number one for every other pirate that didn't get your score. Hey, amigo, it's who gets the toys in the end that matters, and the game ain't ever over. Also, the corps and the cops don't need no legal paper to come searching your boat when no land's in sight. You got big guns. So? They have big guns, too, and you're already hurt—physically and mentally. In Nature, they say, some predators prey on the weak. We pirates prey on the stupid and weak. Same dif.

And if you got hit hard enough to bleed—I mean real blood and guts—you gotta worry about paranimals. I'm not just talking sea leeches and serpents; I mean on land, too. Them goatsuckers can do you like spiders do a fly.

- Actually, "goatsucker" attacks on adult metahumans are pretty rare. The average *chupacabras* is only about the size of an eight-year-old kid. Sure, they're creepy humanoid looking iguanas that can paralyze you with a touch, but generally they avoid anyone who looks like they can defend themselves (kinda like pirates that way). Make a lot of noise or puff yourself up and you'll be fine.
- Ferral

● Word to the wise. If you're tossing bodies, do 'em all at once. Better someone recognizes the dead than you leave a trail of floaters. Shark fishermen call that kinda thing "chum slick," and it's likely to lead a megalodon straight to you.

- Fresa

● Do *not* call a Carib pirate "chummer." Here, that's a word for someone who kills their friends and turns them to chum, and it's almost the worst insult you can give a pirate.

- Anago

● Having spent time with Bahamian pirates, I'd say the sure-fire fight-starting insult is "jumbie." It means you're like the living dead, serving a corp master or leash-holder. Beware Caribbers who load on local slang. They're testing you, almost like codes, to see if you're some pansy tourist. Lots of pirates feel out transplanted runners that way. All the wordplay is to show you who's the big man. Bread is being gentle with this post.

- Totenkopf

So what do you do about all those threats? You drop your cargo right away—hiding it with friends, in small-island hideouts, or sinking or burying it during the cool-off period. When the hurricane blows over, then you get your haul and start lookin' to sell.

- Aaaarrrr! Buried treasure an' sunken wrecks!
- Bung
- Laugh until you've fought off a team of divers a hundred meters under. Let's hear it for armed mini-sub.
- Kane
"Amalgamated Petrochem's Most Wanted!"
- The Carib's got so many pirates, they've set up networks of informants at hospitals and street clinics. As soon as a wounded pirate comes in, bang, two people go running. "She must have stashed her haul, see if her crew can still fight." Vultures.
- Offred@na.docwagon313668.com.

REPUTATION

In the Carib you'll find a balance of power that you don't see with the old school organizations. If one gang gets too big, or more importantly, if everyone *thinks* one pirate king or island or whatever is getting too big, dozens of alliances form to cut the motherfragger down, 'cause each individual goes "whoa, can I rob *his* hoop? With four other ships on my side? Hell, yeah!" The first guy's contacts tell him something's shaking, and then it's like fifteen spiders on one contact web. Unless, of course, the up-and-comer has a rep as a straight shooter, someone you don't worry about or just admire and laugh off. Like you-know-who.

If you can't be loved, you gotta be feared, but not so feared you get trashed in retaliation. So you gotta play by the rules.

The rules are easy to learn and easy to forget. If I can beat you up, that's a point for me. If I can beat up someone ten times your size, that's ten points, 'cause just imagine what I could do to your piddly face. And if I can do it with a handicap, or with style, better yet, since it means I can do it without even concentrating.

- I got to see a guy with hydraulic-jack cyberlegs and obvious jaw replacement leap ten meters from deck to deck with a harpoon in one hand and an Ingram in the other. He could've stayed onboard his ship and gunned down the other slags easy, but then he wouldn't be known as *El Pistolero Salta* who swings from the enemy's own rigging.
- Muffin Man
- Swinging from enemy rigging, holding weapons in both hands.
- D. Bunker
- As I said, it was pretty obvious he had his jaw muscles replaced.
- Muffin Man

You gotta draw the line between grand-standing and stupidity. You gotta improvise and scan people and judge your odds.

That's a good pirate. Always changing. Always adapting. Always making you look bad and me look good. That's the pirate way. Aware.

- It helps if you throw around money like it's saltwater. Doesn't matter if you're rich, just if you're generous with what you got. It marks you as a "good guy." People will front you on deals rather than demand eighty now and twenty later, like I got shafted at first.
- Death Angel

A pirate is aware of the guy he's scamming and aware of the place he's doin' it. Know your enemy and understand the land that made him. The CAS to the north? Big country that hates us. Aztlan to the west? Big country that really hates us and chops human beings up for national holidays. Amazonia to the south? No love there. All of 'em are territorial, bitchy powers who don't like foreigners—especially border bustin', entrepreneuring, no-respect, violent Carib pirate bastards.

So what's a Caribber to do when the jobs dry up? Hop island to island and hope tourist season is good? Not likely. Piracy. That's the answer.

The question is *quienes el hombre grande?* Who they going to remember? Some skinny Jamaican kid who's not even thirty, trying to get a trid show based on him? What Chicago or Hollywood agent would let him in the door?

- Am I the only one who noticed that Bread mentioned he was drinking and posting?
- Yolcuat
- Yeah, Cap. Shouldn't all this get posted in the fiction boards? All I'm learning is, some Jamaican yahoo can get drunk and type at the same time.
- Miles S.
- Then you ain't readin' close enough, *chummer*.
- Swash and Buckle

So who's the big man? A pirate king. A dictator whose every word is law. The guy who fed his family because he broke that law. A guy who made so much money off mindbenders that he commissioned a fifty-meter balloon shaped like a gingerbread man to be floated during Trinidad Carnival just to draw the black ops teams there while he's in the Florida Keys. A kid who got his own trid show, even if it's spliced with footage of him shooting real people, and the UCAS CIA offers an open bounty on any known associates.

The guy who wins is the big man. You got an island, you got your trid show, you win. Getting there is half hell and half heaven, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

That's Carib piracy. And you wouldn't believe how many pirates have their eye on the prize.

You're frowning. You better than me? Come on down, and we'll find out who the big man is in the crime world. Win or lose.

- Sounds like a buckler being swashed.
- Kane
"CAS Most Wanted #22 ... and dropping!"
- Sounds like macho male bulldrek no matter how much it's sugar-coated. I'll stick to shadowrunning.
- Lysistrata
- Who said you had to be a pirate to deal with Carib piracy? Do you buy guns? Where do you think they come from, the Great Form Gun Spirit? It's a pipeline, and the Carib is the pipe that backs up most often. My fixer paid for a trip down there to see what went wrong with his shipment of cannons. I didn't even know he dealt in military drek. But the shipment was so valuable, our pay was a drop compared to the advance he'd fronted.
- Knight of Diamonds
- C'mon, Lys. Where are you going to go when you retire and want to keep an ear to the ground? Seattle? Denver? They don't have nude beaches and duty-free rum. I vote Carib.
- Cindy Kit
- Four out of five runners prefer it. Frag, I had to track down the retired designer of MCT's "Rocky Road" research lab because somebody deleted the map of land-mine placements. Where was he? Tortola. Direct flights to Tortola? Not with this bad weather, sir. A boat? Sure, I say. Pirates can't be all that common. EHHHNT. They're so common that League dollar is nicknamed "the doubloon."
- Mist
- I'd take all this cautiously. Pirates are a diverse bunch. These are generalizations. Some want a name; some want Aztech out of Puerto Rico; some think drugs are ruining the League. I know some who take jobs running slaves or even working for the dreaded Aztech because they'd rather ride the train than stand in front of it.
- Salt
- Aztech money is as good as anyone else's ... and I'm doing the same thing our overexposed author or any of you are doing. Stealing from one big cat to give to another and making enough nuyen to live as I want. You're kidding yourself if you think working for a pirate or Ares or even the CAS is any different.
- Zash

THE SITUATION TODAY

Anywhere you work, you gotta know whose gangs can frag you up. The biggest gangs here are the ones with the flags everyone recognizes. You might call them governments. Hell, they call themselves governments, but they're just big gangs with a paper locked in a vault someplace that says they've got the legal right to call the shots instead of you. And somehow, they conned a couple hundred thou or million followers into believing that's true. It's the best scam ever created. Even I'm impressed.

We ain't one big happy nation in the Carib. We didn't fall for that line of drek. Every place you run, you find a new language,

new customs, and new folks who think they're hot drek. Any inner-city gleeb knows that when you're in gang territory, you watch your step, because across the street the colors and graffiti may change and you may get killed simply 'cause you're wearing red, speaking Spanish or being human. Here in the Carib, everywhere is gang territory.

Usually you'll hop a boat before reaching a serious change. To a conquering pirate, a coast is the logical border. On bigger islands, though, you'll get three or four *jefes* claiming that their territory gives them the orichalcum *cojones* to take the rest. Get yourself or a *cumpa* some chips in French, Spanish, English and Dutch so you recognize the curses, then pick up some Afro-Carib creoles. Once you understand the man who's saying that your wearing green gives him dibs on your girl, you won't feel bad when you introduce him to the pavement.

- If you can't speak the language, don't try one of those mass-market or college-course chips ... they make you sound even more like a tourist. Most of them teach you dialects, but not the sayings, curses and scatological insults they tend to throw around down Carib way with great pleasure. Get an authentic chip, from one of the local cities. They have some great ones in Kingston ... also in New Orleans, which gets a lot of Carib traffic. They ain't cheap, but they're worth it. Among other things, they'll let you describe the act of

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with or without a crowd, in eighteen different dialects.

- Lady Luck

- Bad girl, LL; you kiss your mother with that mouth. Keeping the world safe from Lady Luck and her filthy mind (by the way, meet me later in Node XU9PPKQ1).

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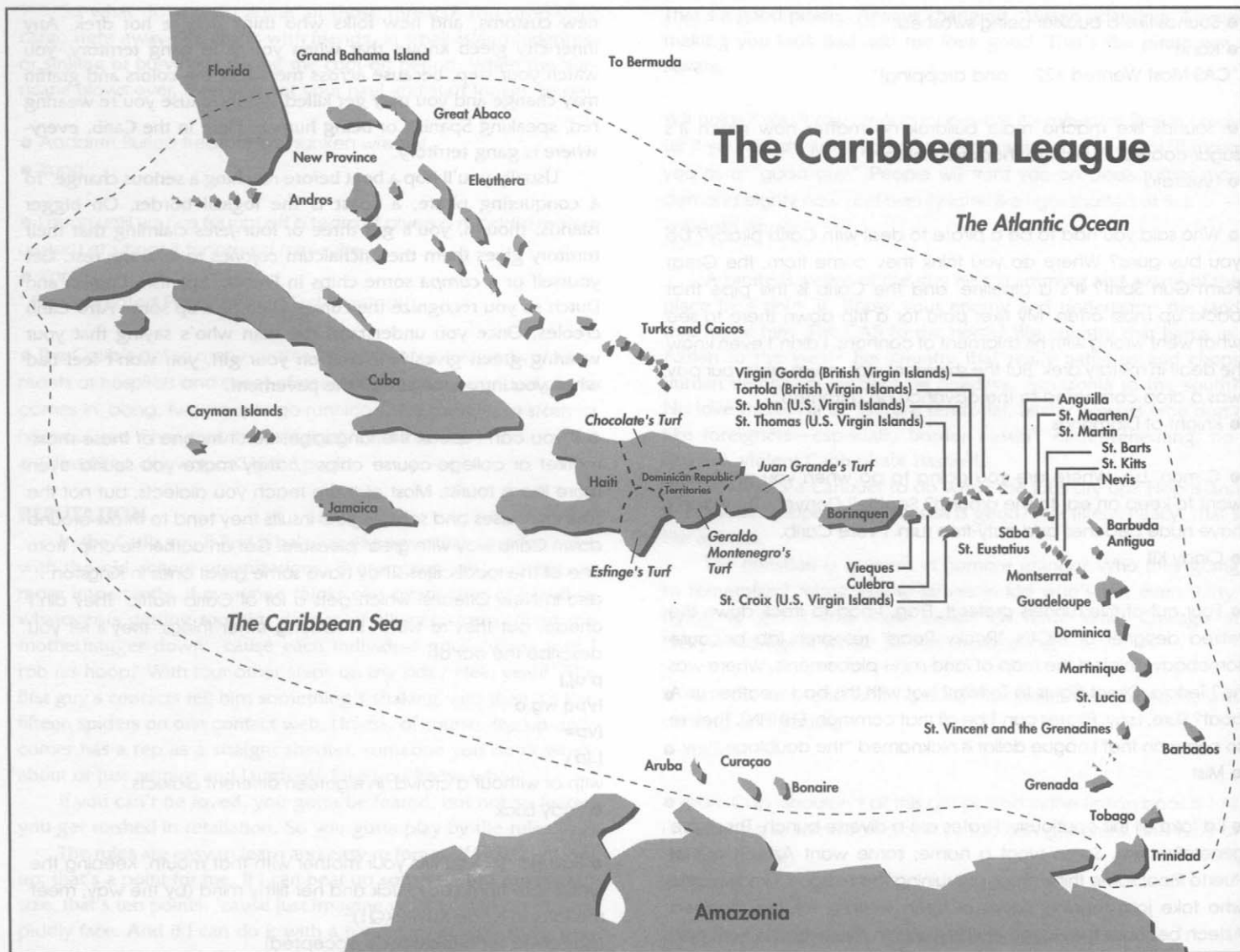
- Captain Chaos

Transmitted: 14 January 2059, 18:06:33

Cuba

Cuba will either be your first stop or the last place you'd touch, because it's got the only government beyond the "scratch my back or put a knife in it" level. The neo-coms still hold it, with Pretty-Boy Martinez, Lady Guadalupe's kid, the current super-comrade. He's plotting to make the Caribbean the big wheel of North America, so he's busy dressing fancy and wining and dining UCAS, CAS and NAN officials. By the way, for you politicos, he believes in communism as much as I believe Aztechnology is the savior of the planet, maybe less.

The one corp he won't suck up to is Aztech. He remembers Operation Reciprocity, when Puerto Rico let the corps use Mayaguez to launch their counterstrike against Aztechnology. Aztech blamed the whole League, and the boys at the top of them pyramids have long memories. Between that and every island's fear of getting annexed, Martinez realizes he'll be nobody's friend if he gives the Azzies a centimeter.



● Operation RECIPROCITY is one of those historical footnotes that gets lost in all the other events of the Awakened world. The Corporate Court decided (for various reasons that would take pages of text to explain) to teach Aztechnology a lesson on who was boss and who got to make the rules. The other corps used Puerto Rico as a staging ground for a feint attack to get the Azzies looking one way before hitting them in another place (the San Diego area). Aztechnology would love to find a friend in the islands who supports their cause (translation: buy a few islands, force all the other islands to their will, eventually own the whole Carib and make the CAS panic so they can pincer them like an Awakened lobster).

● Dr. Happy @na.socal.la.UCLA:Hispop.edu

● What Martinez hasn't figured out is that other megacorps are just as bad. His "communist" government gives them some of the best tax breaks in the world, and Hanque Dofflemeyer of Saeder-

Krupp has a bedroom in the Martinez mansion. He's either playing the big boys against each other, or he's on so many strings he can't blow his nose without the proper forms.

● Tin Lizzie

● S-K and Ares are the top two contenders for Martinez's loyalties. Krupp has done more business in Havana, but Ares worked out some kind of deal with the UCAS government and sub-leased Guantanamo Bay, the old USA military base on Cuba. I guess someone in the FDC decided if the UCAS couldn't maintain it, Ares—the UCAS military megacorp—could, and then just allow the UCAS to use it as needed. Martinez probably fears Ares much more than he does the UCAS military; corps have an even worse reputation for taking what they want than the UCAS. So he makes real sure not to hork off Knight or any of his minions. Cuba's tried to buy the area back numerous times, but the UCAS has held on tight since the CAS seceded, and this Ares deal only makes them stronger there. If it comes to war between the UCAS and CAS, a

base in the Carib is the best chance for the UCAS to fight without damaging their own capital.

- Maiden UCAS

- A war between the UCAS and CAS isn't very likely. It's more like the UCAS wants—no, make that needs—a base from which to watch Aztechnology and the Panama Canal.

- Dr. Happy @na.socal.la.UCLA.Hispop.edu

Martinez has this wacky idea that us pirates are bad for the Carib's rep (he can't get his peanut brain around the fact that we are the Carib's rep), so he's forbidden the media to mention piracy. He uses Cuban sailors to patrol between islands, looking for fools to round up to show the world that the League is fully behind the war on drugs ... the war on smuggling, the war on weapons ... he'd be for a war on tobacco and sugar, if the other nations wanted him to be.

- GM is making a funny ... Cuba's number one and two exports are tobacco and sugar (both the legal and illegal kind).

- Chromed Accountant

"It's all about dollars and sense"

Martinez also ain't figured out that if he cuts off the smuggling money that *built* his mansion, Cuba'll fall into the hole with the rest of the League (and drag the rest of the islands with him). Most of his *oficiales* are brighter (or greedier), so there are ways to get your unofficial imports "heavily taxed" in Havana rather than confiscated and then resold by Martinez's own distribution network.

After that, it's clear sailing if you can make nice with the Batista Mafia. They grab freelance help all the time, so if you're reliable and don't mind profit-sharing, you get the run of Havana. If the M-word scares you, you can come from the other angle, hit the coca, tobacco and sugar fields in the highlands directly, and grab excess equipment from the Cuban military training grounds in the north. Outside Havana, the place is one big drag strip.

- Who'd smuggle sugar? What a waste of a good raid.

- Matey

- Ah, a statement by someone who doesn't see the big picture. Sugar isn't just for breakfast anymore, Matey. It's used to make alcohol, especially rum, that gets smuggled out of the Carib. Stuff can be found in nearly every port along the Atlantic. You set yourself up a distillery and sell your firewater; even if it's only by the bottle, you make yourself some good money. Not a bad deal for stealing some sugar cane.

- Chromed Accountant

"It's all about dollars and sense"

South Florida

The Sovereign State of South Florida is probably where most of you conts will come from.

- Cont is short for "continentals." If you've got a northern accent and more than five doubloons to your name, you'll be pegged as a cont.

- Miami Dice

The Governor is Harold Goldsmith, elected in 2056 for his second term while recovering from stroke number two. At the ripe age of ninety-nine, and two more small strokes later, he no longer makes public appearances and only operates in the Matrix. So much for personality. He's nearly dead, and he still says stuff that makes no sense. Yep, he's a politician.

Still, he's popular for the good job he's done supporting Gunderson Corporation's "cleaning up Miami" efforts, and he looks likely to win a third term in November (if the old wheezer can live that long).

- Goldsmith's a vegetable. The last time he changed his own diaper, much less made political decisions, was '55. He's drooling happily in a hospital somewhere, while Hakutsu Hotosama of Atlantic Security runs his icon and his city. Drek, what do the farts care as long as their grandkids can play tourist and no one disrupts their bingo games?

- Miami Dice

As for Gunderson Corporation, the trid shows almost as much of their goons beating a poor smuggler into a puddle as it shows of me. I gotta have some respect for someone who steals my spotlight, even for an instant. The newsies call them atrocious violators of metahuman civil rights, but they control Miami with an iron hand. They bust gangs in the city, patrol old-folks' homes in the suburbs, shout curses across the border at CASies and pretend they control the docks instead of the Gambione Family. So what's a smuggling pirate to do?

Go outside of Miami, that's what. The area emptied out once the twentieth-century retirees popped off, so now you mostly see small towns. Almost all of them are isolated and paranoid, so it's best to show them you're their friend by bringing stuff in cheaper than they can get it from legit sources. In return they'll give you anything they can grow or process. It's a way to trade some useless stuff in a big city for food, drink, drugs or even a hideout.

- Gingerbread's mundane, so he ignores the best opportunities for mages. Every magical group in the world wants Awakened plants from the Everglades, which has more species than anywhere outside Amazonia. The Keys are also a big target. Anyone astrally active can harvest for a big gang or syndicate. Look around the swamp astrally, grab whatever looks pure. Usually this is an entry into enchanting; if you're caught by the law, it's just a bag of shed gator skin or naturally clean cattails. If you're a solid worker, you get invited in for the real money; making foci.

- Santo's Elf

- Not without getting sneaky. The Glades are a mecca for Gator shamans all over North America. Crunch Time, a group that's

sworn to protect the swamp, doesn't give pillagers any mercy. You know how Gator gets when he has his mind on something?

• Magister

Miami's the *real* life of Florida, but there are other ports like Fort Lauderdale, West Palm Beach, Hialeah and Boca Raton. When South Florida joined the Carib, it tried to take the governments of a couple of counties, paste them together and call it a legislature so it could spread the wealth around, but with half of its million residents crowded into Miami and Hialeah, they got the power and have been "revitalizing" ever since.

• Out of the SINers, most were retirees, wanting to enjoy sun, sand and early-bird specials. They couldn't stop the smuggling, and they couldn't stop the CAS from kicking them out, but gosh darn it, they could at least elect their own governor. Since then, they've kept control of the elections, keeping most office-holders in the sixty-five-plus age range. The people with real power (pirates, Gambiones and Gunderson) know the government is worthless.

• Sunshine

"Revitalizing" means trying to get you to come to South Florida so they can legally roll you for everything you own. Miami's still got old folks' homes and pretty white beaches (where they pay local kids five dubs to clear the hypos, dead dwarfs and spent clips off the sand every morning), but the "Bangkok of the Carib" (I saw it called that on the trid once) now makes its money off tourism—sex, gambling and nice places to do both. On my end of things, the cred's in running guns, drugs and electronics through the Orange Curtain. Most tourists stick to the big cities and beaches, where they pay to see what dwarf women can do that elf women can't and piss away their cred on rum and roulette.

• Miami is really a Mob town, probably the last in North America that still makes most of its money the old-fashioned way—drugs, docks and casinos. Freelancers aren't frowned upon—just don't harm the tourist trade or the Gambiones. Pay the protection fee if you can or get yourself a piece of their pie. They're really into growth, and as long as you don't bring the heat down on them, they can work with you. Gunderson's not above using runners and pirates, and smaller corps are always sponsoring runs against Gundies. And a bunch of local hospitals and cryo-labs are working on cheap leonization and anti-aging techniques, and they all spy on each other with shadow ops.

• Carousel

• Don't think you can make your money scragging tourists. Three years ago the Morlocks gang started eating tourists as an initiation ritual, and Gunderson cracked down hard. On the "Night of Law," they burned half the city and killed thousands of SINless—just to make a point. Now people stick to three-card monte, luggage stealing and phony busboy routines.

• Thumbs

Miami's biggest legitimate money-maker is renting out suburban land for corps and governments to situate prisons so their constituents don't have to look at them. The Batistas, Gambiones and big gangs keep a member or two on the inside to hear about criminal activity throughout North America. If you get friendly with this pipeline before you're busted, any time you do will be shorter and more pleasant. You can also make cred running messages and people in and out for gleebs who don't use the pipeline. For those of you who want to know more about me (which is all of you, I know) I have not spent one minute in any of Miami's fine "Reprocessing Centers." You have to catch what you want to cage.

• Geez, thanks, GM. No self-promotion for nearly two minutes—I thought you were slipping. An update on the pirates that brought us all here together on Shadowlands ... four of the surviving members of Novilunio are in an Aztech jail north of Miami. The ones who escaped are desperate to get their *cumpas* out before Aztech spills their guts. Literally.

• Chameleon

Haiti

Haiti is still the hellhole of the Western Hemisphere. I hate Haiti. The Gingerbread Man will make a prediction ... I will hit Haiti hard with an operation that will blow the mind of Barbin and his lapdogs. Look for it on a vid-channel near you!

• Ah, it's so refreshing to hear modesty in today's jaded world.

• Laughing Man

"HA, Fraggin' HA!"

After dozens of dictators and economic plans, Haiti still hasn't dragged itself out of the cesspool, or figured out that "life" is not a good length of term for leaders (although life seems to only be about ten years in Haiti). Each president gets voted out the easy way ... with an HK 227 to the back of the head. Our newest contestant, and so far clocking in at just under the ten-year marker, is every pirate's favorite target, the Right Honorable Pierre "Le Prof" Barbin.

Most of the time, in most places, you can make the claim that the cream will rise to the top. In Haiti, the cream can't outswim the scum to the top. Barbin is the latest in a long line of racist, human-purity, "death's too good for the goblinized freaks," lynch-mob-leading motherfraggers.

Oh sure, Haiti nods toward the rest of the world and the United Nations with their public metahuman-rights position, and "official policy" says they're making great strides ... which, of course, means that Le Prof gives his *gendarmes* free rein in the streets and countryside. Most like the "badge in one hand, nightstick in the other" policy. Can he help it if all metas in Haiti are drug-addicted criminals fit only to be locked up, driven out or experimented on? What's a poor President-for-Life to do to keep the peace for the rest of us good folks?

• JHIH is the real force behind the anti-meta policy. They rule Haiti—they're the biggest corp on the island, and their assets



dwarf the country's GNP. JHIH provides the majority of high-paying jobs and *all* health care on the island, so most Haitians don't mess with them. If your boss *and* the only corp that can treat your HIV-dysentery-malaria combo platter doesn't like metas, you'll usually shut up and toe the line. Especially with thugs ready to bruise you if you forget.

• Offred@na.docwagon313668.com.

- JHIH?
- Matey

• JHIH is what became of Johns Hopkins University. The U, a big player in disease research once upon a time, was caught experimenting on humans and metahumans just after the first goblinization occurred—back when infecting people with everything from AIDS to VITAS was at least nominally legal (if you chose your spot carefully and covered your hoop). Because the U was in DC, there was a public outcry over the possibility that the US government may have been involved. The people of the UCAS reacted and Johns Hopkins lost its university status. So what does a group like that do when they stop getting free government money? They become a corp and charge everyone for their services. They still

train doctors and do research, but their big claim to fame is that they still perform metahuman viral experiments and who knows what else (probably looking for "cures" for metahumanity and magic). The Haitian division has been in place since the twentieth century, under the university's name. And with Haiti's anti-metahuman stance, what better place to find plenty of "willing" subjects?

• Offred@na.docwagon313668.com.

• JHIH is owned by the Human Nation. The JHIH Haitian system contains three-year-old copies of the pamphlet Captain Chaos stuck on Shadowland.

• Tomtom

• Proving what? I have one, too. So does nearly everyone on this board. I was trained by JHIH, and I DO NOT experiment on metahumanity. I only try to help those in need.

• Dr. Bones

Not that metahumans can't pirate in Haiti. Le Prof's only as powerful as his men, and they're not everywhere. Away from Port au Prince, they're not that strong. Plenty of Haitians hate his policies, and most won't turn down a bribe from anyone. They'll give

you a place to stay or to drop your goods, or they'll have their kids look out for the *gendarmes*. There's also *La Famille*, a metahuman militia that likes to earn doubloons and guns by helping anyone making runs against "Le Prof."

- All Haiti needs to turn its policy around is some well-backed shadowrunners to take out ten or twenty of Barbin's key players. Get a meta-friendly corp to back you and have a puppet ready to insert, find out who to hit, and you've got a new place for metahumans.

- Kingmaker

- Oh, come on. Shadowrunners overthrowing governments?

- Lariat

- Where do you think the phrase "knock over the dictator of a third-world country" comes from? But be warned, GM said that the Prez for Life usually ends up as an ammo pincushion before long. So the key is to get a puppet planted. That's the really hard part, because the Prez and his "advisors" and generals almost always have the newest cyberware on the market. Call it boosted paranoia. These guys don't trust their own mothers, so putting in a plant means setting things up years and years in advance. Only a corp, another government or a dragon can afford to wait so long for a payoff. Otherwise, all you get is a prolonged civil war ... in other words, welcome to history the Haitian way.

- Kotick

The only group with enough power to give Le Prof a run for his money is the Voice of Ogoun, the biggest honfour in the nation. Everyone thinks "voudoun houngans" when they think of Haiti, but you can still spit without fear of hitting a real magician. Most houngans figured out they could make drekloads of money in Miami, the CAS, the NANs and the UCAS, and split town because magic *pays*. The Voice is what's left, and it's become one big dysfunctional family now, all 'cause of a dead dragon and a thirty-six million nuyen prize.

- Gingerbread hates Dunkelzahn. The dragon's death bumped his show off prime time, and he's never forgiven the wyrm.

- Muffin Man

- The Big D put all kinds of pressure on unstable environments with that will. He offered 36 mil to the person who could claim to be the chief houngan of the Carib League. Nothing like a voodoo war to make Haiti an even more interesting place. Le Prof is actively making sure no Haitian gets close to that money, 'cuz 36 mil could buy Haiti and about 20 other islands down there.

- JuJuJuan

The Dominican Territories

On the other side of the doubloon (or island of Hispaniola) is the Dominican Territories (aka the Dominican Republic). That's the place tagged as "the metahuman country" in the Carib—a name

they might not have chosen, but that's what happens when you share an island with the oh-so-noble Haitian regime. A digression for you geography-impaired (and another chance for me to show you how much smarter I am than you)—these two countries take up two sides of the big island called Hispaniola. In spite of sharing an island, though, they're as different as night and day.

Everyone from metahuman pirates to "political prisoners" to those out of favor with Le Prof runs to the Territories in droves. Some say Haiti's biggest exports to the Territories are metahumans and Le Prof's dissidents. The open door made the Dominican government popular with metas and with folks who don't hate metas, but the resulting influx of poor, often criminal metahumans led to the downfall of the legitimate government in the mid-2040s.

- Thank you, Simplification Man. It took three coups, but it's hard to tell which one was the final blow. Thus, no exact date.

- Professional Student

Since then, the nation's been ruled by an assortment of pirate kings. At times they've declared war on Haiti, at others they've contented themselves with slapping one another. Right now, three or four pirates are in the picture. Geraldo Montenegro is the current big shot, mostly because he's backed by the Sons of Sauron, a terrorist group that thinks it can bring about love and harmony for all by slaughtering anyone who doesn't agree with it.

- The Sons of Sauron? They exist? I always thought they were a nightmare made up by racists to scare their blue bloods at bedtime.

- Skeptic

- This is one of those what-came-first deals. I don't think these Sons of Sauron are linked to the ones that operate in the UCAS and other places. I think these guys saw what those other groups were doing and claiming and just took on the name. They're more like Alamos 20K in reverse. Half of them figure they have an excuse to act like monsters, and half want homogenous nations with only troll (or whomever) citizens. Montenegro believes the hype about a better future, but he will just as easily turn his eyes away when the SOS terrorists bomb human day-care centers to "even the population."

- Eve

The pirate kings know that to keep local support, they need to combine force with bribery. They try to out Robin-Hood each other, targeting corporate ships going to Haiti, Cuba and Borinquen and sharing the goods. They've been around for almost five years without change, so pretty soon someone's sure to cut them down to size. That's the way it is with those small-time operators.

- Only the Gingerbread Man would call a leader of a country (and a pirate to boot) a small-time operator. You just gotta love this guy.

- Muffin Man

Borinquen

- Puerto Rico, for those of you who still own maps from the old days—which is anything older than two years ago, when they changed the name.
- Dr. Happy @na.socal.la.UCLA.Hispop.edu

Borinquen's another place where you don't know who's in charge from day to day and street to street. After the megacorps commandeered the country during Operation Reciprocity in 2048, power was divided between Aztech, which held NatVat farmland, other corps that held estates and resorts, San Juan's warring gangs, and pirate crime lords in the ports and smaller cities. Lately, Maria Francisca, pirate queen extraordinaire, has begun to consolidate power on the island. Maria's not one you want to cross. She'll split you up the middle as soon as talk, and never comes out in public without her orichalcum-plated rapier at her side and her Ingram on her shoulder.

Maria'd run the seas for fifteen years before she decided she wanted dry land under her feet and millions of adoring citizens calling her "lady." With her smile, charm and hundred-doubloon party favors, she got San Juan under her thumb pretty quick. Most gangs were too busy trying to get in bed with her to fight each other. When it came time for the Carib Congress to meet last year, Maria declared that she was going, and there wasn't a single pirate big enough to tell her no. NatVat land's still important enough that Aztech could've stopped her, but they know where their bread is buttered. Plus, they figured the fewer people remembering they had the Vat, the better.

Cuba'd been making noises about annexing "troubled" and fragging rich Puerto Rico "until it reaches domestic stability," but Maria cured Martinez of that notion right quick. After a private talk, she declared herself *la presidenta* and renamed the island Borinquen after the original Arawak name. Even got the name changed in public records and LTGs. Said it would promote patriotism.

- Bread's not too objective. Neither Maria's popularity nor her power is assured. Most pirates saw through her "reunite and bring back the glory days" pose. Her "taxes" are protection rackets, and she just wants support as cover when she tries for NatVat. A few pirates are cooperating to fight her, so expect a battleground in San Juan.
- Whistler
- Maria won't grab corporate land until she's got all the island's gangs under control. The corps know this, so they've let her keep the title. Having the area united helps business and keeps Cuba from trying to annex the island, so they figure it's worth the occasional dust-up.
- Bluebeer

Jamaica

Everyone who's got something worth selling stops in Jamaica to find out the going rate. Ed Patterson, gun-runner gone dry, is the current head honcho in Kingston. He keeps the shooting away from the hotels so the tourists can sleep, but *everyone* knows

about pirates in Jamaica—drek, we're the attraction. You want pretty beaches? Hug the Lesser Antilles. You want pretty beaches *and* all the illegal entertainments you could ask for? Come home to Jamaica.

You also come here if you want to avoid being kicked outta gangs because of the color of your skin, the size of your teeth, the point of your ears or what language you speak.

- This is worth repeating. The average Joe in the Caribbean doesn't give a drek about metatype or ethnicity. But gang leaders and dictators know that the easiest way to look good is to pick a scapegoat that most of your constituents can feel superior to, and then start kicking away. Consequently, you get gangs and towns where it's policy to hate all the fill-in-the-blank-here. But Jamaica's a mixing bowl, with whites, blacks, Indians and Chinese, cross-reffed with all metatypes, including some rare ones. So most Jamaican gangs are based on neighborhood or ties of friendship, not ideology or race.
- Socio Pat

Hell, this is where you go to announce that you're worshipping the banana slug god, and you want followers. We've got cults all over the island. *Obeah* is the local magic tradition, and most *obeyifas* have a few customers who'll do anything for them. But generally such groups don't get too big or organized.

- Obeah is another religion/magical belief and follows voodoo philosophy and practices real close. The difference is that obeah followers don't believe in specific loa, and they don't organize themselves in honfours or temples. Instead, they view spirits as a general phenomenon. Their mambos and hougans don't tend to go for a specific loa. Some say that makes their magic weaker, but I think it's just more generalized: lots of basic spells at a lower power level. If you see old movies where someone goes to the woman next door to buy poison or get a hex or love spell, that was an obeyifa. The vast majority of obeyifa are mundanes and stick to poisons and herbal medicines. The magically capable seem to be a cross between enchanting and conjuring adepts. They do their work by conjuring nature spirits, but they can't do it without fetishes.
- Talon

Rastafarianism is an old fave among Afro-Caribs, though it's died down since the Awakening. The Rastas' belief that the Promised Land is Ethiopia and that the religions of whites and blacks are destined to war paled after metahumanity got the shaft.

The new craze is Fordianism. David Lloyd Ford is an ork minister who says life in the Awakening is God's test of noble souls, so metas should be leading society, not bowing under. Metas from all over the Carib, the CAS and CalFree have flocked to Jamaica to hear him. Newsfaxes are calling him the best chance for international racial peace. 'Course, he welcomes anyone who'll worship everything he says ... so they've got all kinds in Jamaica, including ghouls, vampires and anything with the right number of

limbs. They've been arriving in boatloads, joining the Hell's Teeth posse that bodyguards him.

- If you're doing biz in Jamaica, don't meet with buyers without bringing at least three guys for back-up. Ford turns a blind eye to his "lovable" followers' habit of eating or sucking or doing whatever to the flesh of an unsuspecting metahuman. He keeps it off the tourist beaches, so the heat backs away from him. But refugees are worse than SINless—they've got no home, no family and in most cases they don't speak the right lingo. Who's going to miss them?

- High Stakes

Elsa Walters, the official Speaker for the League Legislature, is from Jamaica.

- The "Legislature" is essentially an old-boys' club for rich pirates that meets four times a year for two-week sessions in Havana. Three meetings are mostly an excuse for Martinez to congratulate himself on his most recent snub of Aztlan; the rest of the time, the members debate what little policy there is. Usually, Walters lets them know what country in the outside world is planning on slapping them for violations of some kind, usually smuggling and open-seas piracy (big surprise).

The rest of the meeting is for voting on issues of international concern (with a strict one-island-one-vote rule, except for two-vote Hispaniola). But the League holds no real power over individual islands, so the only thing to vote on is who makes the periodic trid appearances to promise that the Carib nations will crack down harder on smuggling. Elsa's the Speaker because she looks sincere and expects nothing. She's an obeyifa who's more interested in spirits than trying to strengthen the government, and that's how everyone likes it.

The meeting is also a great party. The players or their proxies are all there, and it's like Mardi Gras with politicians, corp board members, Mafioso, pirates and their entourages and everyone else there who just wants to get freaking stoned, drunk or laid. Everyone should check it out once ... besides the fun, it's a great way to meet contacts and get the skinny on recent events.

- Domino

Private Islands

The Caribbean contains a string of small islands, including the the Caymans, the Bahamas, the Virgin Islands, Barbados, Antigua, Martinique, Trinidad, Tobago, Grenada, St. Martin, drekcetera. Plenty of these islands are controlled by pirates, who use them as headquarters and operational bases. Islands with good beaches are carefully sculpted and managed to look natural while keeping vacationers safe, clean and monitored.

- Everyone's laughing at tourists, but you should check these out: the Baths! The Blue Hole! Flowers to beat the band, wild iguanas, three-meter yucca plants, coral reefs filled with parrotfish, starfish bigger than dinner plates! The only coastal life that might give you

a problem are nurse sharks, barracuda, morays and jellyfish; just don't get out to deep-water megalodon country. Man, if paradise exists in this god-forsaken world, it's here.

- Professional Student

Islands with scruffy beaches or cliff faces sat empty for a few years, when foreigners abandoned them, until they were "rediscovered" by pirates. While Carib governments were cracking down on smuggling, pirates started using these islands as bases. Now lots of mid-sized gangs have taken pieces of the islands, carving out caves and building bungalows to store their drek in.

- Bread prefers flashy piracy, so he's forgetting the good money from espionage and extractions in the Lesser Antilles. They're popular meeting spots for corporations doing less-than-legal biz, and an invisible mage or discreet pirate can shadow important folk. When the meeting is with a big idea-man, it's not uncommon for the next island to ask you to "escort" the guy over to "renegotiate his contract."

- Mistress Mary

- Also, let's not forget something while reading GM's "I'm so great and so are my pirate buddies" text. Besides pirates, many of those little islands belong to private individuals and corps. Dunkelzahn proved that in his will. Plenty of pirate bands could be using one of Dunk's islands as a way station or maybe even as a port—as long as they don't bring a navy with them and they pay off the right people, they're in. So remember, when a pirate says he owns something, that usually means he paid off the right people and feels no threat there. Some pirates do control (and possibly even own) islands too, so just be careful whose beach you walk on. A pirate may be the least of your problems.

- Keynesian Kid

"Greed IS Good"

Most people running islands have some kind of official deeds and documents, but effectively the folks who have the gold make the rules. One of the Virgin Islands, a chunk of rock salt that sticks 40 meters out of the water, has eighty jerks from two different gangs fighting over its harbor and floating hospital so they can rent 'em to other gangs. The other pirates bring in food, money and guns, and the Salt Islanders agree not to torch the boats before the next morning.

- These are the real smuggler's paradises. Because there are so many little rocks, "government" is sometimes just a guy with a piece of paper and a turret-mounted Ares Victory autocannon aiming at the harbor. (That guy is on Norman's Island.)

- Smuggle Bunni

Bermuda

Bermuda's not actually in the Carib, but it's a great stopover on the smuggling route up to the UCAS or over to Europe and Africa. Bermuda is still part of the U.K. and functions under British law, so they're a lot more strict than the League about following



international laws and policies. Bermuda sometimes sends reps to League legislature sessions because it shares a common interest in tourism, but it doesn't have the stones to secede just yet.

◆ Nothing personal, Bread, but Bermuda don't need to secede. We got everything the CL wishes it had. One island, one government, one set of laws and all the money the Euro- and North American trash can send our way. We're sitting pretty.

◆ Bermuda Red

◆ Bermuda is a particularly hot place for shadowrunners, 'cause it's a good transition point. There are nonstop flights to Bermuda from all over the world, and they'll change money into almost any currency.

◆ Hangfire

◆ Bermuda's also home to more corporate deals than the Lesser Antilles put together. Most corps keep a token firm on the island for tough negotiations, and Bermudan banks are as popular as Swiss. Not to mention the number of big shots who retire here. Within five blocks you can find the new homes of three producers who fled Chicago, President Steele's CIA director, and Gumel Haibibulai and Nzifunga Ngayabarambirwa, the former dictators of Nigeria and the Kinyarwanda Rwandans. Money on the hoof.

◆ Boxer

A warning to those heading to Bermuda. Magic is screwy there. My wizzes tell me magic doesn't work real well—sometimes a simple spell goes off the chart, other times the most powerful spell doesn't work at all. I even saw a mage once cast a spell and his head exploded! Damn that was messy. We were cleaning off the deck for hours after that. Most folks just say "it's the Bermuda Triangle," and leave it at that, and so will I.

◆ There's more magic in the Bermuda Triangle than in the whole UCAS! I was hijacked in the Bahamas by pirates and started shooting the frag out of them. But then the air got hazy, and no drek, *the clouds split open and the lightning turned red*. A panzer—or some kind of ship—was overhead, controlling the storm. Everybody on both sides froze. Then the sea started to boil, and some *thing* poked its head out. It looked like a dragon or a sea serpent, but with no flesh on its skull! It stared at me with empty eye sockets for almost thirty seconds. I am *never* going back to the Bermuda Triangle, no matter how much I'm paid.

◆ Lightfinger

◆ Lighten up, mon. There's mana surges, but no Wild Hunts or dragons or stuff on that scale.

◆ Props

◆ I know what I saw, *punk*.

◆ Lightfinger

● And I know what I cast, *conf.* Don't you guys ever learn to throw one illusion up high and one down below? Special effects ain't just for Hollywood.

● Props

MODUS OPERANDI

So you want to be the next Gingerbread Man (no real chance, but maybe you might make it as big as Big Haul Bones), or maybe you just want to walk down the streets of Port Royal and toss hundred-doubloon bills to packs of kids like a Carib Robin Hood. But you've got no start-up cash.

Good. That's where you start. You start with nothing but your brains and guts, 'cause those'll save you after you have everything. Find a mirror. Stare in it. Say pirating is your life, and you'll shoot for the fragging Milky Way because even if you miss, you'll be among the stars. And you will do *whatever it takes* to get there, even get a job.

Whoa! I didn't tell you to *keep* it, I told you to *get* it. Doesn't matter if it's cleaning up horse dreck if it'll get you within twenty meters of start-up cash when there's only one guy watching it. Think in terms of big wads of valuables and who'll let you into their house. If none of your friends can scam a gun, get knives, pipes, machetes, whatever, and plan a hiding spot before you make the move. Relax. No matter how loud the pirate kings are, most of them started out as thieves.

● And swashers hate thief gangs. Not only did most swashers begin as thieves, but thieves cut into their biz more than anyone. It's ironic how many swasher gangs end up with all the troubles of law enforcement, because thieves target the guys with money—the swashers.

● Bloody Rackham

● When our team checked into a hotel in Santo Domingo a few years back, we were playing "couples on vacation." Acted like tourists down to the questions Aurora threw at the customs agent in this outrageous Long Island accent. You know what? The locals treated us like tourists—they ripped us off.

We were loading our boat when a bunch of kids clustered around asking if we were American mobsters. We talked for a minute, laughing and wondering if they were on to us, and *shoop*, some guys sneak onto our boat, cast off, and they're out to sea. Good thing for them we didn't have our *real* gear on us. I bet the kids and thieves had a deal going. I didn't want to beat up the kids—I was busy trying to chase the guys out of reach. Small-time, but they got our boat and clothes.

● Hangfire

● Doesn't all this piracy kill tourism?

● Maiden UCAS

● The pirate threat to tourists near resorts and on cruise lines is pretty low. It's when you get far afield sailing a yacht for three weeks that someone scopes you. The big swasher networks usually go for

one enormous haul to satisfy dozens of crew for a long time, and that means aiming at shippers, not yachts.

● Aqua-mon

Real Biz

Now you're in business, so get established and remember that "anything" promise. Ain't no shame in doing a small job, but if you do four in a row, you'll be pigeonholed as a small-time thief. So make sure everyone knows who hit them, who smuggled the goods past all the patrols in the world and who finally sold the goods right under their noses. You're the one-hundred-percent clean, fast, smart, armed, ruthless but merciful and controlled ultimate dude package. If a buyer says "I got other guys who are more reliable," say you can do it faster. Quieter. Cheaper. Or oops—the other crew's gotta scrape the big spray-painted Lone Star logo off the side of their boat before they go anywhere.

Most of the crews you'll run into have only one to three surface ships, most often one or two Dolphin II clones, and a rubber raft or Swordsman for night raids.

● I've heard about a gang using nuclear submarines and high-pressure JIM suits off the Cuban coast.

● Calico Syl

● That's impossible. The water ain't anywhere deep enough for nuclear-powered subs. It's an urban legend, like that uranium-laced death threat. Militaries weren't that stupid in the chaotic years, and not even Gingerbread claims to have those toys. They're just rumors.

● Bloody Rackham

If you want to make friends, follow a big-time pirate crew, wait until they hose up and give 'em help. If you're cruel, cack them and take their dreck. "Remora jobs," as they're called, are kind of a compliment and kind of a bane. Often, the big-fish pirate says to the remora, "okay, tag along, but you play decoy," or "lend us your guns for the raid so you don't cack us from behind." Rule number one ... don't ever agree to that second request.

When you've got the teeth to set up a raiding base and defend it, search around the less-populated islands like Dominica, St. Lucia, Cozumel or Montserrat. Despite the annoyance of walking on rocky coastline, get a cove protected by cliffs to cut the wind in case of hurricane. Nab any back-up spots you can, and load up on fuel, ammo, med-tech and hiding spots so you can make it look innocuous. If it's real remote, set up a center for growing, packaging or modifying hauls to rake in extra yen.

● The Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, and Virgin Islands are great for finding sheltered natural coves that you can modify with a little sweat. There's so many of them, even the pirates miss some good spots. If you can't afford to make modifications, find someone who has and either fight 'em for the spot or try to "lease" a hole from them—lotsa pirates will let you hide in their harbor in exchange for a percentage of your profits.

● Jollee Rancher

● Be warned, Bread finds a lot of piracy intuitive, like changing coves and boats often to evade local police, bribing rather than killing because it makes fewer enemies, playing off rivals with disinformation campaigns, doing good by other pirates and keeping track of favors owed, trapping the dock where your ship is stored and telling only the crew, and paying the gangs on shore who watch over your hideouts.

Not to mention the no-brainers like build bunkers in your secret coves and upgrade your boats, your body, your firepower, your life. See six sides to every deal, but when you act, act decisively. Anything five minutes ago is history if it has to be. And remember, nothing is ever useless.

● Miss Muffet

If you want to get big, you've got to be a mover as well as a producer. You don't just raid and sell to locals, you find a profitable market for your goods (like a Carib rim country) and let the movers on shore get it to the consumers. More people see your face, and you cut out the leechy fixer and chip up your profits big-time. Once you're up and running, never give up. If your boat's trashed, get your decker pals to see who's got one nobody will miss. Run scams on land, rent out your talent to local gangs, knock off a talismonger or rip off a corp. You're a criminal, so don't come whining to me saying you don't have a job. Just 'cause you're hurting doesn't mean you can't chant the magic mantra of the Carib, "I don't have the money on me, but can I get you something you need?"

● Keep "favors owed" in mind when you're thinking about wiring yourself. Showy chrome is usually the mark of a well-to-do pirate (the "cyberpirates" of the show are supposedly big-time honchos). But chroming your whole crew leaves you in hock to your street doc, and she may have her own agenda.

● Long Wong Silver

GOING TO MARKET

by Carousel

CC gave me the rest of the post. Seems Gingerbread Man didn't cover the less-than-high-profile stuff like trading and selling your haul. I guess that's beneath the Scourge of the Caribbean.

But what he did say about taking any size job is right on. A one-shot deal makes money and enemies, so take whatever you can. And what can you expect to make? As much or as little as you can sell it for. Simple as that.

Some rules of thumb on smuggling anything from coral to poppy to weapons. Don't keep hitting the same guys for the same thing and think the market will hold. If you bring enough of the most impressive exotic goods (slaves, telesma, old-fashioned heroin), it takes time for the folks who bought it to sell it. You bring too much, you're as unreliable as the guys who dumped their goods and have nothing. The best thing to do is to specialize. Bulk doesn't win you any friends, but variety does.

● Carousel is making some really good points here. First, we have the tried-and-true idea of supply and demand. Smuggling works because it brings in goods that people want (or can't get) at a price they can afford. But the single most important point to remember is (and write this on the back of your hand so you don't forget it!), never flood the market. Most pirates fail because they do just that.

So now you're saying, "How can I, a little ole smuggler, hope to flood the market for poppy in New Orleans when the place has about a million people and access to millions more?" Well, chummer, it all comes down to distribution. If the guy you're selling to can't move what he already has, then your shipment is undersold or never bought at all. So if you come into port with only one thing—let's say it's Ares weapons—and some other pirate beat you to the punch with the same stuff, then either you sell it for under its value or find someplace else to dump it ... both of which cost you more time and more money, and are possibly even worse for your crew's morale. The longer you sit on the cargo, the less active you are in the shipping lanes and the less cash you make and the more your crew thinks about seeing if you can outswim a sea serpent.

The way to beat this is to take everything and anything: rum, sugar cane, coral rocks, guns, BTLs, refined and unrefined drugs, other boats, drekcetera, and be willing to sell all of it.

Next, know your fences and buyers. If Johnny the Slug can only sell a crate of guns in a month, don't bother bringing him twenty metric tons of guns. That's a waste of time and money. You may hit that Ares shipment, and your eyes may bug out of your head at the awesome display of firepower in that ship, but don't get greedy—take only what you can sell, even if it means leaving stuff behind.

Finally, the more markets you can hit, the better off you'll be. You'll make more money, and your crew will think you're the greatest thing since Maria Mercurial.

Thank you, and I expect Christmas cards from all of you ...

● The Chromed Accountant

"It's all about dollars and sense"

● CA, I couldn't've said it better myself. Let me add this about the reason we're all here today—the hit by Novilunio on the Go Jo. No pirate or smuggler works with the big numbers unless they already have a buyer. For instance, Novilunio attempted to hijack an oil tanker. A fraggin' oil tanker with a gajillion tons of crude petroleum on it (or so they thought ... stay real clear of whoever they bought their info from, 'cause it was as reliable as a politician's promise).

So what happens? What you might've expected for something this big—the navies of two different countries (probably backed by the military security teams of at least two megacorporations) responded. I won't even mention who was waiting for them beyond the Caribbean. What pirate wants that kind of heat? And that's not all. There are only a few places they can unload that tanker, so to mount an operation like that you've got to have a buyer in hand, a port fully controlled by that buyer and a force the size of a small army to stop anyone trying to take it from you. In the long run you lose much more than you gain by

pulling that kind of stunt. And you have to deal with whoever set you up, because there just isn't any way to hide a tanker and sell it elsewhere for more nuyen. Hauling that hog into any port in the world would have you dead before the anchor reached bottom.

Here's the key. Instead of pulling a *Go Jo*, hit a tanker and hold it while you pump 25 or 30 metric barrels into your cargo hold. Then take off, fast—you're a smuggler now, and the standard security responses will go out from your target. But the heat dies down really fast because the buyer and the seller only lose a fraction of the tanker's load. Hell, they might not make a stink at all, especially if you don't kill anyone ... corps call that kind of thing "acceptance losses." But steal the whole tanker and all kinds of heat comes down. Governments, corps, media, other pirates ... anyone looking to make a name for themselves. You've gone from being a smuggler or pirate to being a terrorist. Face facts, your life ain't worth drek at that point.

So besides smuggling different things as CA stated, keep the amount small and manageable. Even the Mafia works small and manageable numbers on BTLs and drugs so that if Team A gets hit by the Feds, Team B makes it through. Having one team bring in a ton of poppy or BTLs means one hit and it's all over. Having Team A handle 500 kg here and Team B handling 100 kg over there works much better and means that more makes it to the final destination. If you need to watch how a top-of-the-line smuggling operation works, watch the Mob. They turned it into an art form.

- Keynesian Kid
"Greed IS Good"

SMUGGLING ROUTES

The majority of contraband from the Carib goes into the CAS, either from Miami through the Curtain or into New Orleans. As a rule, magic and weapons go through New Orleans, bound for either local militias or the Aztlan rebellion, while electronics, medicine and your more illicit material (BTLs, sex slaves, drugs) hit Miami.

- The Atlantean Foundation in Boca Raton, South Florida and in New Orleans has a long-standing offer to buy *anything* you can prove was found in the Bermuda Triangle for double its standard market value, no questions asked. They're picky about making sure it's legitimate, but I don't know anyone who's had a problem getting them to pay up.
- Miami Dice

Going around Florida and up the coast of the UCAS, the likely ports for smugglers are Manhattan and Baltimore, which have thriving drug and chip trades, and policlubs or gangs in the market for weapons and explosives. Boston's another big port, but the cops there are stricter because of the Stock Exchange and high suit-to-human ratio, so you need contacts ahead of time. And those contacts'll usually be seedier types like anti-elf terrorists and hard-core mobsters.

Most pirates have inefficient boats that are better suited to local jaunts, so these markets are usually handled by long-haul middlemen from Europe or Africa who circumnavigate the Atlantic every few months, hitting all the stops along the way.

- Carousel doesn't do the physical drop herself, so she's not mentioning why those ports and not others. New Orleans is the port of choice over Mobile or Pensacola because Knight Errant's so corrupted by the Mafia queen, la Dame du Morte, that they don't pass up bribes from pirates either. Most other CAS cities have Lone Star xenophobes all the way. In New York and Boston, the bribes rise with the cost of living, especially when you're competing with Don O'Rilley's lobster mobsters and corp-backed privateers. It's not the place for murder and mayhem, but you can drop off lots of weapons for terrorists on their way to Tír na nÓg. For smaller towns in Texas, Aztlan, or (if you risk it) Amazonia, make sure you have buyers in place in advance; you can't stay long, and small-town attitudes are unpredictable.

- Mistress Mary

SELLING TO RIM COUNTRIES

You've gotta watch out for roving Lone Star Drug Enforcement Division ships in the Gulf and all the way up the East Coast, too. In the Star's books, *anything* from the Caribbean is illegal, so they're not picky about shooting before searching. The Star maintains a lot of beachfront offices in Texas, which is another reason to stick to Miami or New Orleans. Faith Cordovana's the chief of Lone Star's Florida, CAS division. So keep an ear up if you hear the name. She's a virulent isolationist, thinks Miami is home to metahuman mutants, criminal Cubans and child-corrupting drug dealers (and probably the devil), and she wants to stop crime in the CAS single-handedly. If you piss her off, she'll hunt you for years, but she's overworked and underpaid, and you can slip by her as long as you don't spend too much time on the northern Florida coast. She has been known to go into Miami to hunt someone down and maintains some quality contacts with Gunderson. In an emergency, she can also command all the Lone Star agents patrolling from the Florida panhandle to New Orleans, but that doesn't happen very often.

Be warned, any corp or smuggler will have security in accordance with the value of their cargo. And frequently, the novahot drek like cyberdecks, orichalcum or telesma is moved by air.

- The "infrequently" is when someone sends a little viral infection into Miami International Airport's air traffic control system. The threat of planes landing on people's homes or in downtown Miami forces delays and rerouting of planes in the air and a near-complete shutdown of the entire city ... which means Fuchi has to ship its goods south by water if the corp wants to see its Amazonian profits by the end-of-the-quarter deadline. Then it's all hands on deck. The cameras roll and once again I spit in the face of the fat cats. It's good to be the king!
- The Gingerbread Man
- You gotta be drekking me.
- Salt
- It wasn't that simple, of course. But they don't know that.
- The Gingerbread Man

Most mind-benders are legal in the Carib. Because Carib League countries don't have many natural resources (like the UCAS or Azania) or tons of skilled tech-heads (like Pueblo or Japan), they profit off shaking down smugglers. BTLs are usually manufactured in the big cities—Miami, New Orleans, New York (those last get to the Carib via L.A., of course)—and are shipped down to the CL by the Mafia. The quality tends to be higher-grade because the natives don't buy the stuff—tourists and rich retirees do.

• The market really dried up after Bug City closed down. That practically shut down the Chicago Mafia pipeline. Euro-trash BTLs became the rage, 'cause the chips came in from Bermuda. At primo prices, of course. It's changed some since the Mafs secured the L.A.-Vegas-Denver-New-Orleans-Miami route ... there are more chips to be had, so the price is down some. Not much, though.

• Eponine

The natives of the Carib islands, on the other hand, do things the same way they have since their ancestors arrived in little boats (or however) ... all natural all the time. Mindfrags of choice are rum, marijuana and other hemp derivatives, poppy (for everything you can imagine) and coca. These ain't the refined "candy" that still finds its way into the inner cities of the UCAS; the stuff's still in a more natural form. In most cases it doesn't even affect the natives ... but one hit makes a non-native wonder what happened in the past two weeks. Everything but rum is illegal in most countries, so smuggling this drek still nets you good money. The Mafia controls most of the pipelines and many of the higher-quality processing centers, but the unprocessed stuff can fetch a nice price on the mainland. Highly refined concoctions or the stuff you make in a lab is usually created on the mainland and shipped into the CL.

• You can also make startup cash by hitting the UCAS with perfectly legal but hard-to-get stuff like coffee beans, Havana cigars, rum and even fruit. Oh, and don't forget the ever-popular sugar trade-off to the New Orleans panzer and blimp jocks, who run it up to TP-Aieüt and sell it for 40 nuyen a kilo.

• Trish

• I'll go you one better. I know twenty or thirty sugar addicts who'll get me *foci* if I front the money. When I sell those in the CAS on the reverse run, I can smoke half my hundred-dollar bills and still double your prize, Trish. If I want to make it look legal, I'll grab glacier melt-

water while I'm there and bring back a ton of sparkling fresh that pirate kings (who know drek about environmental management) will pay through the snout for. But gosh, flying that ten-ton cop magnet, you probably never thought of that.

• Kane

"Gimme some sugar, baby!"

On top of that, the Aztlan market for anything non-Aztech-made is large, especially low-end biotech and surveillance countermeasures. And then there's that little uprising in the Yucatan. The rebels don't have much cred, but they'll trade payday for all kinds of weapons. Take the payday to Amazonia or the CAS and you can pick out whatever size swimming pool you want.

You want to talk novahot items without worrying about corrupting youth, you're talking shadowruns again.

• Untrue, Carousel. You're thinking too small. Remember the *Go Jo*? She was coming from the Philippines. China, Japan, CalFree—all the corps send ships through the Panama Canal when they want to move serious loads to the CAS and UCAS without paying the NAN tariffs. Add to that the traffic in Ghanaian diamonds and Welsh orichalcum, and you'll find plenty of opportunities to make nuyen without troubling your conscience. Remember, everything comes through the Carib sooner or later.

• Bloody Rackham

PLAYERS OF THE CARIB LEAGUE

• For those heading down to Swashbuckling Central, I compiled this list of biggies. We got data dumps from 258 sources, many asking me to "filter" their data. Gingerbread contributed, so get out your salt shakers and set those filters on ultra-ego.

• Captain Chaos

BATISTA AND GAMBIONE FAMILIES

The Batista Don: Raul "Sugarcane" Batista

Heads of Gambione: Pablo, Ricardo and Maria Salazar; Pietro, Bianca, Marcus and Ambrosi Gambione; Jack Schreiber

Headquarters: Havana (the Batistas) and Miami (the Gambiones)



Don Batista is the Mafia's main man in Havana and the Carib League proper. The eight aforementioned *sottocapo*-level operatives, tied together by marriage and a blood-brother ritual, constitute the Gambione Family in Miami.

When Raul's uncle Garcia made his power grab in troubled Cuba in 2014, he planned ahead. After nearly dying in a magical firefight, he realized that whoever controlled the new power would eventually control the Mob. Rather than fight hougans and *obeyifas*, he nabbed profits from sugarcane refineries and paid the bail (and thereby bought the loyalty) of eleven magicians. With this core group, he terrorized his competition with supernatural attacks.

- Raul's followed that lead. He's constantly ten years ahead of other dons. He was the first to exploit the talismarket by floating loans to mages in exchange for magical services such as anchoring. He wore obeah fetishes long before other Mobsters started putting on saints' trinkets. The man even runs Mobster efficiency workshops and donates to inner-city schools. "Hook 'em old, hook 'em young, it don't matter ... just hook 'em," he says.

- Fumado

The Gambiones are more classic Mobsters, taking their cut and keeping their hands clean. When the old don died in 2041 with no apparent heir, a nasty succession war erupted. The top eight survivors eventually agreed to disagree, working as business partners to control almost all fixers and movers in Florida and all the way up I-95. Chances are if you're shoving it north, a Gambione makes money off it.

- The Gambiones also make cred on tourist traps like joytoy stables, buddy booths, casinos, bars, motels and other seedy, barely legal operations. Gunderson Corp's already got the protection racket handled. And beware—these types of equal-share deals in the Mafia always end in a bloodbath somewhere along the line when one of the players wants a bigger piece of the pie.

- Coral Reefer

BORINQUEN

President (self-declared): Maria Francisca

Prime Ports: San Juan, Carolina, Fajardo, Guayama, Ponce, San Germain, Aguadilla

If you're operating in Borinquen, the player to watch out for is Maria Francisca, otherwise known as *La Presidenta*. The smaller island gangs are either at war with her or working for her and ignoring newcomers at present. Maria herself has dozens of informants, and she considers anyone from the mainland worth a personal recruiting visit or warn-off. Corps and tourists think she's re-establishing legitimate government, so her boys have started patrolling resorts as well.

- The only way to avoid Maria's eye is to stay in a corpzone. Maria hates Aztech (and Ares, which has a big ol' airbase here), but the Azzies scare her drekless, too.

- Tin Man

- Even corpzones are dangerous now. Without many League deckers, Aztech skimmed on Matrix security. When Maria found out, she started offering rewards to any deckers who'd exploit that oversight. The Azzies haven't caught up yet, and Maria's making the most of her time. Expect a blow-up in the next few months.

- Jaxon

- She's got one of the best balanced gangs in the League. She's a physad, as are two of her seconds. Her gang also includes one high-ranking *obeyifa*, a Shark shaman she keeps on a short leash and a large group of soldiers with second-hand cyberware. In preparation for her anticipated war against the Azzies, she's opened ranks to mercs or deckers with real cyber and affordable loyalties.

- Big Haul Bones

CRUNCH TIME

Captain: Jacare, a.k.a. Bernard Heldannic

Membership: 15–20 with 100–120 supporters

Crunch Time is a group of folks dedicated to stopping talislegging, poaching, sulfur-dioxide pollution and other assorted ecosystem frag-ups. These numbers reflect only the group members who live in the Everglades, not the incoming and outgoing shamans who visit to appreciate the wildlife and back the group in a pinch.

- Despite what your Gunderson-approved television stations tell you, most of us are not toxic shamans. We simply work the way great Gator does. If you watch Gator, he will let you be. If you toss an ice-cream cone on his head, he will glare. If you are stupid enough to steal his eggs or despoil his water, he will bite through your skull.

- Jacare

- Whaddaya mean "most"?

- Selene

THE NEW REPUBLIC OF CUBA

President: Enrique Martinez, elected 2052

Noted Ports: Havana, Santiago de Cuba, Cienfuegos, Nipe, Matanzas

Cuba has the only Carib government that allows un-rigged elections. The Martinez family has been consistently popular since the thirties, though, so don't hold your breath waiting for policy changes. Enrique himself is only thirty-two, and a heart-throb among Cuban teenagers, as well as politically popular. His policies keep food on the tables and corporate jobs available to anyone willing to work, so most people see no cause for complaint.

- Cuba has changed drastically with the times. Its elections are still a far cry from those in the UCAS, but it doesn't need "fixed elections" any more because the only credible candidate to run for president is one of the Martinezes. Enrique bowed to a little outside pressure and ran against someone, but the guy was a patsy (hand-picked by Enrique, no less). This guy was so scared of winning and then getting assassinated that he actually campaigned

for Enrique. So the Cuban government looks to be holding genuine “free” elections, without the armed guards hanging out by the voting booths for last-minute “campaigning” like on some islands. But under close scrutiny, it’s the same old same old.

● **D. Bunker**

● Enrique’s pet project of militarily dominating the entire Caribbean has also generated plenty of popular support for his regime. Every time a corp loosens security on a little island, or pirates get too noisy fighting each other, Enrique starts having fantasies. The “Caribbean Navy,” manned almost entirely by Cubans, is his baby, and he personally participates in their “patriotic displays” outside Aztlan waters.

● **Pyramid Watcher**

● The navy started as a government-sponsored gang with enough firepower to give Aztech the hot foot. Recently, though, Rodolfo Serraza, “the Wizard of Az,” took control. A former Aztech Jaguar Guard, Serraza left Azzie employ after a falling-out with the upper echelons over something no one’s been able to pinpoint. Cuba granted him refuge in return for teaching Aztech magical and group tactics to the Carib Navy—which has made that navy a force to be reckoned with.

● **Bluebeer**

● Each naval crew contains at least one hermetic for controlling elementals and a houngan or shaman who’s in with Agwe or Sea spirits. And Caribbean combat troops commonly wear dermal armor, so they can shrug off small rounds and maintain maneuverability. If you don’t know they’re after you, they’ll wait until you dock, then confiscate your boat right out from under you. Serraza doesn’t do magic anymore—some kind of personal oath—but he knows his drek cold.

● **Megalo Don**

Cuba’s semi-privatized health care system, Estrella de Azul, is the only serious competitor for JHIH and DocWagon in the islands. Estrella provides free care for Cuban citizens and offers fee-based high-threat services to other islands, especially the Caymans, Jamaica and the Bahamas.

DE MON’S BLACK LIGHT POSSE

Leader: De Mon (Daniel Martel)

Lieutenants: Eighteen ship captains and ten local bosses

Symbol: The posse’s signature toys are ultraviolet flashlights stuck underbarrel to their guns.

Noted Ports: Jamaica, particularly Port Royal, and ports all over the Carib and Gulf

Approximate Size: Two hundred on deck, many more supporters, workers and growers

De Mon, the dwarf with red eyes you saw talking about Novilunio earlier, started work on the *Black Light*, an old motor yacht he’s handed down to his trusted lieutenants. Like the intro clip said, he’s a pirate king, and his fief is a large swath of land in Jamaica’s highlands. Besides fields, harbors and processing plants,

he’s got a lavish estate where he hosts posse meetings. You know you’ve made it in Jamaica if De Mon wants to talk biz with you by the pool.

Gingerbread started with these boys in the forties, and they’re still running maybe ten percent of Jamaica’s pirates. They control twenty covert landing strips for incoming flights laden with goodies. They’re not in the same league as the Carib Navy, but even Ed Patterson respects them. Like most Jamaican pirate crews, the posse is freak show of the Awakened, about seventy percent metahuman, including a few one-horned fomors and even a cyclops.

● De Mon’s a new breed posse boss. He prefers to rule with the proverbial velvet glove rather than the iron fist, but when that iron fist comes out ... ouch! In the old days when Mon was growing up, a pirate who ratted to the cops received a “home invasion.” The crew boss would send a few heavies over to the informant’s house to kill everyone in it as an example. Nasty, but word couldn’t spread through the rest of the posse fast enough for Mon’s taste.

In ‘56, a pirate took off with a real big shipment of Mon’s BTLs. Within a week, his runners found the guy. A few days later, at the big pirate Christmas party, De Mon had his girlfriend Maya, a *sukuyan*, suck out the guy’s soul in front of a packed dance floor of pirates. Then some of the chromed trolls grabbed the offender’s body and ... well ... made a wish.

● **Big Haul Bones**

● **Sukuyan?**

● **MagiManiac**

● A Trinidad vampire. I wonder if the UV lights are his pirates’ way of saying “not me.”

● **Tish Bite**

LAS DESHARRAPADAS

Leader: Vibora

Lieutenants: Four ship captains, eight or nine movers

Symbol: Yellow bandannas. Low-ranking members wear one tied around the right knee. Higher-ranking members wear them tied around both knees and their left arms. Vibora wears yellow bandannas around both knees and arms.

Noted Ports: San Juan, hideouts ranging southeast through the Lesser Antilles

Approximate Size: Ninety on deck, with rumored support

Nicknamed “The Nutrisoy Crew” behind their backs, these guys were small-time drug dealers in San Juan until this spring. Then they started hitting deep-water fishing vessels, and hemp and sugar boats. What’s curious is that survivors report mini-submarines and submersible drones with antiship weaponry. If so, they might have enough push to knock Maria Francisca off her high chair.

● If they sold out to Aztech as everyone suspects.

● **Bola de Potencia**

• Vibora's nineteen and laced up with second-hand 'ware. One time I saw him bushwhack a Renraku freighter, everyone on deck, guns blazing, when a corpcop swings the deck cannon over, points it at Vibora and pulls the trigger. End of story, right?

No. It blows off Vibora's right cyberarm at the shoulder. As the cop sits, wondering when the blood will start spurting, the pirate leaps over the cannon and gives him a face full of the other metal arm. No chicken, that kid.

• Washer@eu.brit.eng.londonet553123.mil

• Way too macho. Doesn't take women pirates seriously. Maria Francisca, of course, sees his very existence as a personal insult. That might corroborate the Aztech sellout rumor.

• Big Haul Bones

• Wow. A cybered macho jerk named "Viper." Maybe Seattle and the Carib aren't so different after all.

• Bung

THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC TERRITORIES

President: Officially, Anita Chavez, deceased 2046

Prime Ports: Santo Domingo, Puerto Plata, Sanchez, La Romana

With the collapse of official government in the Dominican Republic between 2043 and 2046, the island was torn apart by pirates. For a while, the situation changed almost hourly, but now three main players dominate the island: Geraldo Montenegro, Esfinge and a guy named Chocolaté.

• Without an official leader, Dominicans haven't had a voice in League decisions for more than a decade. But most are happy with the bread/jobs/trideo combo of the pirate kings, and the over-hyped "Haitian threat" provides a scapegoat for practically everything.

• Gamine

Geraldo Montenegro

Geraldo Montenegro is the most likely pirate to receive official recognition as president, because he controls Santo Domingo and three million people. He's an adamant believer in metahuman rights, continuing the territories' open-door policy for refugees, and he's kept together a lot of government infrastructure.

• Like the payoffs to "Dominican citizens' militia groups" to keep that border up.

• Baali Song

• Geraldo's not as clean a troll as CC makes him sound. He's an idealist, but those ideas don't work. He's got a dozen grandiose schemes to free the metahumans from every oppressive place in the world (you should see the room with his miniature battle plans for storming Yomi), but never notices the squatters outside his Santo Domingo mansion.

• Miami Dice

• He's not patient enough to carry out his ideas, so he entrusts them to his lieutenants, who dazzle him with the next project and keep his money. They're cold bastards.

• Halcon

• They're cold, yeah, but not because they're greedy. Everything they steal goes straight to funding Sons of Sauron terrorist strikes.

• Eve

• Not greedy. Yeah, and I'm Prez of the UCAS. They take the money and go on killing rampages. Tourist ships, anyone who doesn't look meta enough or just gets in the way becomes a victim for some psycho with a wad to blow on APDS ammo. I prefer straight greed to these fraggers.

• Sarafina

Esfinge

Esfinge, the elf woman who leads Verde Manana, an eco-terrorist gang, runs the rural western side of the island, which is home to about 500,000 people. Her group is small but vocal, and it may target Novilunio just to keep in character.

• The only way Esfinge keeps control of so much turf is because she's letting Tir Ghosts and Paladins use the island as a secret training ground. Cumpa of mine set up the deal between her and some Tir bigshots two years ago. Evidently her coral clean-up programs and population controls caught their attention, because they cut a deal with her—she sets aside some of that supposed "nature reserve" for them to train their crack troops away from the prying eyes of the UCAS, NAN and their rivals in the Tir. In return, they let her "playtest" their newest toys and "recycle" the older ones, giving her weapons and magic advanced enough to compete with the big boys if she wanted.

• Santo's Elf

• The Princes have plenty of private land to train on. I reckon they're down here to get experience fighting in tropical jungles, for an operation in Aztlan ... or some other tropical country.

• Arctic White

Chocolaté

Chocolaté is an ork pirate lord with ties to the Batistas. He runs Sanchez and the northeast, and he provides power for another two million folks, so they ignore his BTL plants and the storehouses filled with stolen goods.

• And don't forget Juan Grande as a player. He's only a kid, but a few months ago he managed to grab some land from Chocolaté, and no one's kicked him off it yet. If he keeps the turf, he's got the makings of a major pirate king. Not bad for a human raised in the Dominican Territories.

• Seraphim

DAVID LLOYD FORD

The founder of Fordianism influences Caribbers more than any pirate king. Hundreds of believers have been attracted to his message that it's time to start loving one another before the Almighty decides to start over. He describes the Awakening as "sudden-death overtime between the forces of good and evil," and he claims that love, caring and education will save us from our own ignorance and hate.

Either our deckers are failures or Ford is a clean, honest televangelist. He and his followers have been shoved into Lone Star jails and beaten by Aztech security, but he refuses to speak out against the Azzies. He wants to make Jamaica an example of interracial harmony and aid the world's sufferers. Rumors have it that he hires runners to break human-rights-abuse victims out of jails all over the world and drag them home for shelter under the protection of Hell's Teeth, his own bodyguard.

- I saw the footage of that beating he took outside Tenochtitlan, when he got his jaw broken with a truncheon. You can see him literally turning the other cheek and daring the guard to hit it.

- Fury

- He is the puppet of the Ordo Maximus. His message of unconditional love mocks everything it stands for. He tells criminals to let in ships crammed full of the undead seeking a place to prey on metahumanity. If we do not act, Jamaica will be the first of many to fall in an orgiastic blood feast.

- Stalker

- "Undead?" What part of the word "virus" don't you understand? Ford should be commended for having guts enough to say he'll back HMHVV-positive people.

- Tish Bite

- Have you hunted these creatures? Have you seen their power, their cruelty and their contempt for the living? I suspect not.

- Stalker

- Oh, get off it! I am a vampire! And if there's a conspiracy, I wasn't invited! I read your "theory," and it's full of holes to hype your book. Vampires can walk in the sun; it just hurts like a bitch, but that's

what metahuman-strength tan lotion is for. I'm sure the Ordo is up to no good, but slandering a guy who's got the most civilized attitude to infected victims North America has ever seen (3.2 Mp deleted by SysOp).

- Tish Bite

- Good night! Work it out in ShadowCell.

- Captain Chaos

THE GINGERBREAD GANG

Leader: The Gingerbread Man

Lieutenants: Thirty ship captains, most named after nursery rhymes. The ones on the trid show have no correlation to the actual pirates. Miss Muffet, Gingerbread's elven girlfriend, is the group's tactician.

Symbol: A gingerbread man with a skull for a head and crossed bones behind it. Sometimes the crew leaves cookies at the scene of a heist.

Noted Ports: San Juan, ranging southeast through the Lesser Antilles. They are rumored to use a labyrinth of sea caves as their home base.

Approximate Size: Three hundred on deck, with a thousand or more supporters, movers and affiliates

These guys started the flashy, outrageous trends you hear about. Bread and Muffet are always ready for spectacular stunts, though they're awfully good at reverse psychology and out-thinking people. When folks set traps, Bread either stays away or blasts through them with ten times the expected force. On the rare occasions that someone is caught, it's always an underling with a drek-hot lawyer, not the Man himself. Bragging or not, all available records have proven him right so far.

- I'd trust jack plus drek coming from him, and that includes all of this post. What's in the bragging for him if it's true? He's telling us techniques that will work because he wants competition? Come on.

- Tin Man

- You got a short memory, Tin Man. Who do you think crashed the "Lone Star in the CAS" post back in '54? Or at least the one slick enough to take the credit for it?

- Turner



● He taunts Shadowland and gets away with it? We should kick his hoop.

● Laser

● I hear he watches the Matrix carefully to see who he can trounce next.

● The Gingerbread Man

Intragroup competition is resolved through showy stunts and public taunting. But the Gingerbread Gang is a pirate crew first; if another gang cacks a member, its members allegedly will have their heads frosted in chocolate icing and delivered airmail to other crews with attached notes. This sort of stunt (whether real or not) cranks the Gingerbread Gang's reputation.

● Make no mistake, the firepower is real. But they also seem to have inside men on dozens of jobs. The only thing you can count on when being hit by the gang is that they'll come out of the woodwork. Often literally.

● Esfinge

They are legendary in their evasion of authority. I suspect there are deckers working overtime to provide the gang with a waterfall of false SINS so that the constant bribes and purchasing of new vehicles and specialty gear aren't connected to the members. Their network of contacts, including a fair number of shadowrunners, extends from Amazonia to the Athabaskan Council and over to Turkey.

● Doesn't anybody else see it? Ares controls G-Bay in Cuba, and they need a good "team" to maintain their presence and test their stuff. So Ares provides the "victims," who don't go to the cops, for Mister Bread to hit. His gang is a way for Damien Knight and Ares Arms to field-test milspec and espionage tech, and make money on the back end by filming it and selling it as a trid show.

● Calico Syl

● Possible. Though Gingerbread brags that he has no cyberware, Miss Muffet has more chrome than a Harley Scorpion, and the crew makes good use of magic and mayhem. And the lasers had to come from somewhere.

● Tomtom

● Or the Man himself is just a common ID for twenty or thirty mobsters, with poser-gangers modified to look alike so no one catches the Real Brains.

● Body Double

THE GUNDERSON CORPORATION

● Updating the info we gave right after the "slammed Dunk" post (as some of you wits have called it), we've heard buzzings about recent Gunderson shake-ups. Seems the company's CEO, Harvin the gambler, has been up to his tricks. TransSea, the inter-

national shipping division and target of many a high-end pirate, has been knocking on the doors of Bob's Cartage and Freight, North American Transport and Legba's Lines simultaneously.

● Whew! No mom-and-pop stand here. Wonder what Dunkelzahn saw in them? They're on their way to AA status if they keep going

● Surfin' Babe

The corp's Atlantic Security division, on the other hand, has been running to keep in place due to ugly incidents in the Everglades, an exposé by Denver's K MAG pirate station and the accidental shooting of two tourists.

● You mean their habit of grabbing everything they can has gotten them a few broken fingers, but they have plenty left. Biz as usual.

● Islander

Meanwhile, Montclair Industries remains mysteriously silent. For a company that other corps pay to build prototype drones, you'd think more runners would have bragged about janders through Montclair's datastores.

● All together now. "Quiet. Too quiet." Now we've gotten it out of our systems.

● Bung

THE REPUBLIC OF HAITI

President: Pierre "Le Prof" Barbin, elected in 2052

Noted Ports: Jeremie, Miragoane, Port-au-Prince (capital), Port-de-Paix, Cap Haitien

● Port-au-Prince became a free city in 2005 when the US stepped in to "assist Haitian development." It had a chance of pulling Haiti's economy out of the drekpile for a few years, but when Denver and Seattle emerged as the free-market cities of choice, the Americans gave up on Haiti.

● DC Insider

If the leader of a nation is the soul of the country, Haiti is plummeting toward a very hot place in a handbasket. Barbin and his terror squads were "elected" using the fancy remote-vote system installed in churches, honfours and community centers. His SMG-armed squads standing by the opposition's booths was sheer coincidence, I'm sure. That the "humanitarian aid" from the UCAS came through JHIH (the Johns Hopkins Institute of Health) was another miracle of timing. And that Barbin got his masters' degree from that same corp's university? Another coincidence.

● And that Le Prof's a member of the Humanis Policlub, Baltimore chapter? Fate.

● MoleMan

● Having met the man, I can say he goes in for pseudo-science, distortions of the truth and anything that will fulfill his personal



agenda, which seems to be running the country into the ground, making money and executing political dissidents.

- ◆ DC Insider
- ◆ Why does anybody put up with this drekhead?
- ◆ Eponine
- ◆ Why do you put up with the morons in Sacramento? Because going to a voting booth won't make much difference. He keeps up the major industries and trade, and his houngan squads target only his political opponents. Good enough for lots of people. If you hate him, you just hop the border or start pirating.
- ◆ Gamine
- ◆ The country's biggest export is houngans and medical research gained under dubious circumstances. But that profits Haitians jack drek.
- ◆ Bayou Blood

INTERPOL

Chief Officer: Vladimir Stravinsky

Interpol's been around almost forever. It dropped out of sight during the isolationist teens through thirties but was revived again after the dust of the Euro-Wars settled. All parts of the former US except California officially support its activities on behalf of world peace, international safety and other campaign promises. With most countries watching their borders, and important people using shadow ops, Interpol sticks to making busts that make the common citizen feel safer—primarily drug and chip busts in the Caribbean.

- ◆ The League's the only place with less money than Interpol. The Carib nations are the only ones that Interpol can pick on.

- ◆ Rasputin

- ◆ Interpol's budget depends on how much publicity (big smuggling busts) it makes each year. As pirates wise up, this gets harder, so Interpol has been hiring runners to pose as pirates. Interpol then catches the "pirate terrorists" and poses for the newsvid cameras.

- ◆ Munchkin

- ◆ Personally, I don't trust any job where you have to get arrested to get paid.

- ◆ Freebird

- ◆ Interpol's still got pull with intelligence agencies in several nations, but it uses them only during emergencies, like busting pirates running biological or chemical weapons out of Africa. To stop that, everyone cooperates, and it's a pirate's worst nightmare.

- ◆ Kotick

JHIH, CARIBBEAN DIVISION

President/CEO: James Houzer, Jr.

Caribbean Divisional Manager: Caroline Burke

Divisional Locations: Port-au-Prince (Haiti), Miami (Florida), Cockburn Town (Turks & Caicos Islands)

JHIH (it really doesn't go by the archaic Johns Hopkins Institute of Health anymore) was re-formed as a for-profit business (that means corporation) after the Institute of Health got caught in 2022 experimenting on every metahuman they could find. What made this blow-up different than anything any other corp ever did (or was ever accused of doing) was the scary fact that JHIH was training doctors who may or may not work on Joe Public and/or his kids. Plus, they were working closely with the U.S. government at the time, and U.S. voters didn't care at all for "their" gum-mint sponsoring metahuman experiments. Though JHIH hasn't tried to break into the armed medical services market yet, it holds the patents on eighty-two key medicines used by DocWagon, and JHIH researchers did groundbreaking work on the first and second VITAS strains. JHIH's corporate mission statement is "to provide humanity with the benefits of applied medicine and make health care both affordable and profitable."

- ◆ JHIH's Haitian fortress is the largest building in Port-au-Prince. The research goes on twenty hours a day, and the HIV center is twenty-four. But get the friendly "hospital" image out of your head. Instead, expect monofilament fences, gas dispensers and smartgunned guards openly wearing SMGs. Viral research is valuable stuff.

- ◆ Nurse Wretched

• JHIH is not officially extraterritorial yet. Barbin is letting Burke get away with murder. JHIH has a monopoly on the repressor treatments for the HIV virus, as well as for VITAS I and III! Don't toe the party line? JHIH cuts off your medical coverage, which for 2.2 million Haitians is a death sentence! These people are evil.

• Offred@na.docwagon313668.com

• Barbin's subsidies are the only thing getting the treatments into the country at all. JHIH could move its base to India and make more money off the various diseases there, but Burke stays in Haiti because of a personal friendship. Something wrong with that? If the citizens don't pay, they cut off service, just like your precious DocWagon. What more do you want?

• Dark One

• That the price get lowered to something citizens can afford? An 80-nuyen daily dose means everyone is in debt for life. And why, after thirty years of research with no end of subjects, hasn't JHIH managed to develop a *cure* rather than a *treatment*? The answer is behind the monowire and cascading black IC, now isn't it?

• Tomtom

THE KINGSTON MACHINE POSSE

Resident Shadow Trader: Fin

Noted Ports: Sint Maarten, Kingston, Corpus Christi, Panama

Despite its name, the Machine controls only fifteen percent or so of Kingston's criminal networks, and the people you need to talk to are on Sint Maarten. On the other hand, the old Machine has a better info network than other posses, and Fin is at the center of it.

• Fin's not a showboat like De Mon. She's usually in her restaurant/bar combo, The Megalodon's Gills, but is so busy keeping on top of everything that she doesn't frag around much. Don't let that 15-percent figure fool you. She moves as much money as Patterson, who's got triple the manpower.

• Megalo Don

• Heh, heh. The Machine has friends from Hawai'i to London. And one special one in FDC. Fin's prickly about other gangs hurting her friends in the Lessers, too. When a few runners set up shop on the French side of her island, talkin' trash to her own, Radar sprayed their house down with gas. They woke up on a slow boat to China.

• Tiburón Negro

• "Radar" is a dwarf hermetic, not quite right in the head. Enforcer and info-gatherer, he's an old-style posse boss. Do not mess with him

• Maumau@na.cl.borinquennet43244.com

NATURAL VAT TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

CEO: Armando Marquez

If anyone'd told the world a hundred years ago that Puerto Rico would become the richest nation in the Carib because of fungus, people would have laughed. But it happened. The holder of the patent of high-yield myco-protein, multiple soy products and those little flavor taps that mean so much to lazy bachelors, NatVat means synthfood.

And the Big A. Four-fifths of Aztlan's edibles come from Natural Vat's ... well, vats, which are controlled by Productos Cultivatos, which belongs to Aztechnology. The Vat brings in dough (so to speak) to almost every island except Cuba, where its presence is banned.

• The Vat's the focus of a lot of mixed feelings. On the one hand, it provides jobs and cheap chow. On the other, it means Aztech can show up to "protect its corporate interests." Fortunately, Armando is a PR master and keeps Vat operations quietly churning out product—except in San Juan.

Near the San Juan headquarters, Natural Vat troops are fifteen clicks from the Ares airbase. They're four clicks from Maria Francisca and all the San Juan gangs who want Natural Vat's standard-issue APDS ammo. But Armando manages to keep his opponents guessing by sending out fake shipments with free-lancers on board. That way, if it comes to a fight, he can weaken his opponents without losing his own people.

• Diamondback

• Ares and Aztech's close proximity makes Borinquen the capital of megacorporate presence in the League. You notice this is the only megasubsidiary CC listed; that's because most have little presence in the area.

As a rule, the Japanacorps don't run more than a few hotel chains, because most of their business is high-end computer and biotech that your average Caribber can't afford. All the megacorps have facilities in New Orleans and Orlando, though, with unusually high profits, so I suspect those offices are laundering money from a few underground corporate operations in the Carib.

Saeder-Krupp has several factories in Cuba and maintains the island's nuclear power plant. S-K also supplies the Carib Navy's warships, weapons and communications, and rumor has it that the corp is aiding Enrique's anti-Aztech operations with everything from bombers to engineered mages. Lofwyr's also got a T-bird base on Tobago, which makes Amazonia twitchy.

Both Ares and S-K have holdings on little islands for vacation spots and fishing, farming and mineral rights. Ares still has aerospace facilities in north and south Florida, including Cape Canaveral, and quite a place at Mayaguez. As the poster named Arlight and the **Aztlan** post theorized, Knight uses the Carib to keep Aztech in check.

• Mega Mouth

THE SWASHBUCKLERS OF THE CARIBBEAN

NOVILUNIO

Current Leader: Chispa

Lieutenants: Unknown

Symbol: A star-like field with a black hole in the center

Noted Ports: The Florida Keys

Approximate Size: Twenty to forty hard-core killers and raiders

As much as Bread spits on them, these guys are a serious consideration because they aren't in the biz for the style. Treat them like cybered-up wolverines with gut wounds. They're desperate.

The new boss is Chispa, an ork coke fiend with (understandable) paranoia. She's offering big money to get the four *Go Jo* raid survivors out of Aztech's jail in Miami or to anyone who'll kill them before they squeal. Novilunio's hideout location has never been revealed, though our data says it's a patchwork floating raft-village big enough to support a hundred people. The gang will do *anything* to keep Aztech's legendary torture methods from releasing (or confirming, assuming we're right) that secret. If Novilunio is as badly fragged as it seems, that means deals in the Florida Keys are up for grabs, so pirate politics are hot. Grab it now.

- Drek on pirate politics. Eco-activists and Aztlan citizens want them dead. Aztlaners are yelling that it's the CAS's fault that radioactive crud killed coral reefs that'll take years to regrow, poisoned shorelines in the Yucatan and made those toxic Awakened *things* in the water. And the CAS is yelling back, saying Lone Star's DED was authorized to go after the pirates and call in a *military* team for back-up. What the frag happened?

- Corpus Christina

- What happens if Aztech sends a milspec team to the Keys to clear the drekheads out?

- Info Bond

- Novilunio pulls in every marker it can and probably clears out. And ... I get jobs.

- Prime Runner

- You know it. Either Aztech goes balls-to-the-wall hunting Novilunio, in which case they do crafty work while they've got permission to be in the area, or they don't tell the League ... or the Cubans come out as the defenders of the League, keeping Azzies away ... or (1.2 Mp deleted by sysop) their secret spirit masters.

- Tomtom

- Has anyone ever told you to quit jumping to conclusions?

- lai D'oh

THE VOICE OF OGOIN

Leadership: Disputed

Membership: 90 (1,200)

The loudest, most attention-getting initiatory group in the Caribbean League, the Voice of Ogoun is a honfour to be reckoned with. And boy, is there a reckoning right now.

Dunkelzahn's will left "one year of talon clippings to the current head houngan of the Caribbean League." The estimated value of each clipping is 100,000 nuyen—which means that whoever is deemed the most powerful houngan will receive a cool 36.5 *million* nuyen. Understandably, power bolts are flying over Port-au-Prince, and it's not safe to be alone in rural Haiti—because there is no head houngan. Yet.

The Draco Foundation had a scheme about structuring the contest with appropriate points for each loa and adjusting for Rada and Petro, but on October 15, the lovely veep said, "Screw it, he left no rules in his will, so there aren't any. This contest ends December 31, 2060, at 12:59:59 EST. If no leader emerges, then we will evaluate the situation and offer a new deadline." That's when the Voice became ninety different solos. The Nobel Prize this is not.

- Frag Desert Wars! Media teams are flocking to Haiti, and the Draco Foundation is raking in side profits from advertisers on trid, radio and the Matrix. There're interviews with houngans, the ongoing "do mambos and bocors count" debates, and documentaries on voodoo up the hoop. Hitch a ride to a superstar, baby, just duck when they go nova. And we got over a year to go.

- Muffin Man

- It's not just Haiti. The Trinidad *shango* cult is muscling in, pirates are showing up with prodigal sons coming back for the prize, you name it. My boy, Claude-Michel Flaubert, was the one on ABS last night. He's the ork getting mounted by Agwe, with the water blasts hurling him onto the roof. All the way to the top, Claude!

- Top Hat

- Claude doesn't stand a chance against Justin Rochefort. Human Rada follower of Ogoun, he's the loudest voice in the Voice. A little out of favor because he learned in Louisiana, but studying abroad with mages and shamans lets him pull tricks that nobody's seen before.

- AKA-47

- What's up with twelve hundred members? With that kind of mana, can't the Voice just waste Barbin and JHIH and anyone else in their way?

- Jaxon

- The twelve hundred refers to religious practitioners, ninety of which are magical. Be warned, though, other Haitian initiatory groups don't like this grandstanding by the Voice, because voodoo is traditionally small, community-based and for the underdog. And Barbin's bocors, who're also clawing for that prize, number around eighty juju jumbies total.

- Mage XX

"Questions? It's all astral to me."

THE REBEL PIRATES OF THE PHILIPPINES



• While researching the *Go Jo*, we found it had a redundant system of bandwidth-hoppers that let its crew scream for help even above Novilunio's tricks. As it turns out, this gear is readied as standard operating procedure specifically to avoid known pirates' channels and broadcast across a wide spectrum of security-based uplinks.

When we checked out the *Go Jo*'s home port of Manila, we found mention of "rebel pirates." Naturally, we lit up the Matrix asking for info, because frankly, I'd never heard of modern piracy characterized as civil insurrection—but hell, what I do I know from pirates?

The info we received read very much like "thanks for asking, but we refuse to cooperate." Our reply was, "Hey, we're Shadowland ... everybody wants to help us." That got us no real response, either—which only made us mad. So we started calling in favors, going to the best and brightest wunderkinds and decker jockeys we could find. Seems we finally hit a nerve—this time we got warnings. Well, we've tangled with Aztechnology (and won), so we weren't about to back off from the gauntlet we'd tossed. And before long, we received this post.

Now, we rarely put much credence in any type of personal manifesto, but this one seemed too good to pass up. Us ordinary folks rarely receive anything from a dragon (unless he's just died), so after some thought we printed it in exchange for more information (a condition to which both we and the author of the following agreed). We took it in stride (another victory for the good guys!).

Politics aside, we still had no idea what a Filipino pirate did, so we called in a few favors and managed to get a decent post on pirate style in the Philippines (following the manifesto). So here we go. Grab your Uzis and your political agenda, boys and girls ... it's time to play "Whose side are you on?"

• Captain Chaos

Transmitted: 15 January 2059, 00:10:26 MT



MY DECLARATION

Greetings to the residents of Shadowland. And greetings to the pirates and shadowrunners who told me about their Caribbean League. I will return the favor, because your system operator requested that a qualified individual reveal what it is like to be Filipino in 2058, after thirty-seven years of rule by Imperial Japan.

"Is the country divided?" he asked. "I have heard there are pirates with a political agenda. Do they have any backing? Are the locals grateful for the regrowth of the rain forests?" These are all good questions, for there is much that the foreign media does not reveal. I can only answer by telling you a story.

One month ago, I requested and was granted an audience with the governor of the Imperial Prefecture of the Philippine Islands so that I might present grievances against Imperial rule of the islands. I told him that I knew this country better than he, but he doubted my words. He said that the young are impetuous and passionate about their causes and that among his people, my race is not known for its trustworthiness. He said that though I live here, I have a Japanese surname, and I have been out of the country for four years, so perhaps I was disconnected from its people. Most importantly, he said that I did not know what it was to be Filipino, for I had never had a hand in the government, and I had not seen what it had done for the citizens.

I granted him all these things and said I would give him one more month. I would seek the advice of the people, I would walk the streets, watch the ebb and flow of Filipino life and return.

Some said that I should not try to tear down a government that so many others had created for legitimate reasons. Others told me that they had a stake in its well-being and that the conglomeration of megacorporations and government agencies knew what was best for my islands. I listened to their words. They sought peace between Japan and the Philippines. I considered this peace as I watched for one month in Manila, in Cebu, in the rural lands and on the prison island of Lagu-lagu. When that month was done, I returned to the governor and I told him this:

"You first learned of the Philippines in an Imperial Japanese classroom. Like any other good student, you learned that some must suffer for the good of many. You learned that the Philippine islands are Japan's new hope for its growing population, that the rapid regrowth of the rain forests and coral reefs is in the spirit of ecological paradises like Amazonia.

"You have lived in the islands, but you don't know what it is like to be forced to share a neighborhood with people of your own metatype who do not speak your language. You have never been granted a job interview for a career that you have prepared for all your life, only to hear your interviewer begin speaking in the unintelligible sounds of archaic Japanese. You don't know what it is like when the word 'untouchable' becomes the first name of everyone in your family to the police, when 'sanitary food' means food prepared only by humans. You have never been stopped by a police officer who demands proof that the car you are driving is yours.

"You have never watched Imperial Marines burn down a Catholic Church as a 'center of subversion' or heard corporate soldiers tell yakuza members to kidnap young girls to be raped later

that evening. You have never seen a grown troll let himself be kicked to death by fourteen-year-old humans because he knows that if he resists, his entire family will be shot in retaliation. You have never seen a college student get his skull crushed at an airport for walking with a pair of sticks while professional criminals are not so much as searched.

"Only after you have experienced such things will you know what it is to be a Filipino in 2059.

"And if you do not believe me because of my race or because of my youth, then I will swear to you that this is true. I swear by the blood in my body, by the name I was given, and by the energy that passes through all things. If this is a lie, let me be destroyed and have my essences blasted over these eight thousand two hundred and sixteen islands, for I have come home.

"I am a Filipino first.

"I am alive.

"And I am a great dragon."



● Tokyo Joe, I don't read ideograms. Remember that favor you owed me? I'm calling it in, now. Who the bloody frag is this?

● Tomtom

● It says "Masaru," and it's written in big, bold Japanese characters, presumably so the emperor can read it without squinting or having it translated.

Masaru is a great eastern dragon last publicly seen in downtown Seattle several years ago. He was rumored to have lived in Vancouver or one of the islands off the coast there. He must've wanted a taste of the decadent West before his "official" return home.

He has a Filipino name as well. It's Mameleu, the Hiligaynon snakelike dragon that eats the moon and shakes the earth. Masaru is the Japanese approximation of this word, as everyone in the prefecture is required to have a Japanese name for official documents. That particular character configuration means "victory."

I decked the Japanese mil-nets for you, and boy, does the Empire have a file on Masaru. Among other activities, he is suspected of aiding pirates and conducting a personal vendetta against the yakuza as long as Dunkelzahn's will.

● Tokyo Joe

● Cool. Two eastern great dragons at war ... when's the gambling pit open? I need to put some nuyen on this one.

● Tomtom

JOINING THE REVOLUTION

by Siukoy

The Japanese call us rebels. I am not a rebel, for this is not a rebellion. This is a revolution—we are creating a fundamental change in people's hearts and minds, in the style of government and in the way things are done.

I have read of your Caribbean-style piracy. If you tried that here, you would die. Style is not important. Money and glory are not important. Only freedom is important. Freedom is what we crave. You may be able to make your dreams come true on the water, but stand in our way and you die. You need not be a member of the Hapon to feel our wrath; you need only prevent us from succeeding. In the Philippines, to be noticed means you are one step away from visiting your ancestors.

• Hey Captain Chaos, you need a Tagalog grammar checker? Hapon means "Japan." A member of the Japan? That makes no sense!

• Webster

• Hapon has been synonymous with "enemy" on some Philippine islands since World War II. Call it a colloquialism.

• Muntianak

BECOMING A PIRATE

A Filipino pirate cannot simply buy a boat and a gun and cast off. Boats, naturally, are restricted by Imperial Japan. Even those without polluting motors are classified as potentially hazardous to the protected environment (and Japanese business interests). Even the hand-rowed bancas that we have used for generations have been prohibited, because the Japanese authorities claim they can be used to store dynamite for blast-fishing and destroying coral reefs. (So our "fishermen" must work in factories and buy processed foods from Japan. It is merely a coincidence that our "protection" results in cheap labor and a captive market for the Japanacorps.)

• That's exaggerating. Rowboats and sailboats are allowed except on corporate property such as the Renraku lab—which has been targeted by pirates using such craft.

• Rosa

To be a pirate, you must know that if caught, you lose all chance of ever getting a legitimate job, of sending your children to school, of even having a permanent home. If you commit a crime and your last name is not Japanese, you will be "re-educated" by Mitsuhaman or the Imperial Marines. Your family will find that housing in their neighborhood is short and they have to move closer to Imperial supervision. And your crime may be so small as to have winked at the wrong girl or spoken your own language when picking your children up from school.

• Well, if you're telling your friend's kids that their dad should pick up the C-12 from your house at midnight, you ain't gonna say it in Japanese.

• Bagobo Blaster

In the Philippines, piracy is not a job for someone who wants quick nuyen, who sells contraband because he is too lazy to work. To be a pirate requires the dedication to work with people you may not like for years at a time. It requires the blood of a dragon to know that every marine, corpsec guard and yakuza considers you a target, and there is not a single law that tells them otherwise. And it requires the ability and determination to take on the security forces of a megacorporation, even though you are armed with only second-hand pistols and rattan sticks. You do all this knowing that there is no getaway car and no armed medical service to cover your escape. And you are proud that because of your actions, in some way your life or your family's lives will be better.

THE HUK

No one is smart or rich or strong enough to fight the Empire alone. That is why we work together. Most pirates here are involved with the *Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon*, the People's Anti-Japanese Army. We are not a single organization with rules and a strict hierarchy. Rather, we are a group of individuals who may or may not know or like one another, but who share a single motivation—forcing the Japanese to return themselves and their laws to Japan.

Very early, the Japanese realized the danger of letting Filipinos band together, so they created "anti-assembly" laws that prohibit groups of more than one dozen to gather without a legitimate pretext, such as a job or schooling. Supposedly this protects us from "organized crime," though well-known yakuza groups are allowed to rent hotels for their meetings.

Consequently, the Huk holds no meetings and maintains no official organization. Instead, we allow our most trusted leaders to coordinate our efforts, while each individual team of six to thirty pirates attacks and raids corporate ships and facilities.

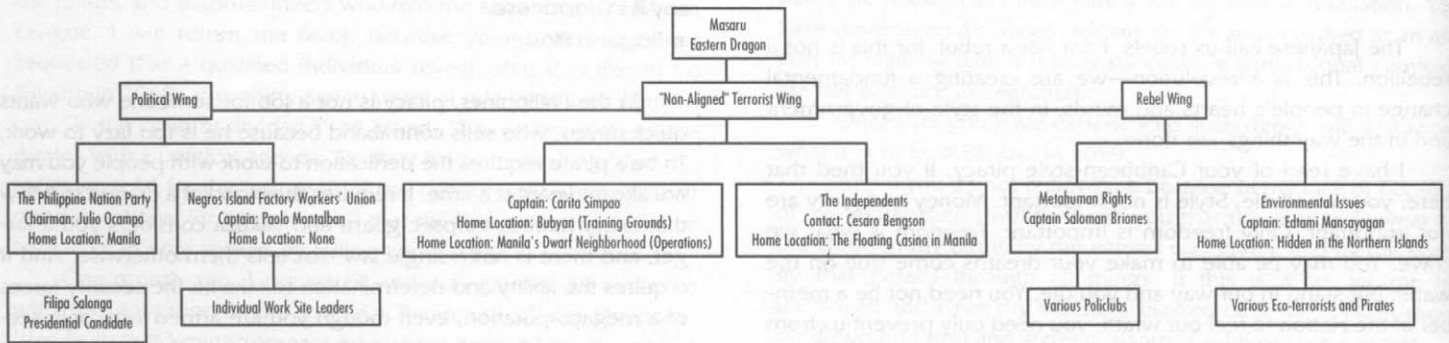
• Calling the Huk an "organization" is a misuse of the word. The Huk is basically a rallying point for everyone fighting Japanese influence. A few people know the broader picture, but unless you devote a lot of time and work and get the trust of the inner circle, you'll never see it.

• Judy

• "Not an organization" is a mild way of saying it. Think of it this way. Replace the word Huk with shadowrunners. The "members" of the Huk are all independent of each other, same as runners are. Now, most of us runners hit corps and would like nothing more than to bring the bastiches down a peg, so we have a bit of common ground. But that doesn't mean we all work together or even like each other. In most cases, we'll kill or set each other up to take the fall. Same for the Huk.

The key difference between the Huk and runners, and it's a big one, is that bit about the Huk being a rallying point. That's not

The Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon, "The Huk"



just a catchphrase—it means everything to them, so be careful when you're dealing with them. People will use the Huk to reel you in and set you up. If you have no stake in what's happening, if you're a total freelancer, then they'll set you up and spread the word that you are the Huk and are willing to take the Japanese down yourself. Try telling Mitsuhama security that you're not part of the Huk; you're just a pirate doing some innocent smuggling. Been there ... and have the scars to prove it.

- Water Nymph

MAJOR FACTIONS

Masaru is the only one who knows every accomplishment and member of the Huk. Such knowledge is too vast and dangerous for anyone less intelligent.

- Why's Masaru being this open? How come the Japanese don't take him out? If things are all that dangerous, would he let his name be posted on Shadowland?

- Cynic

- Taking out a dragon ain't what it used to be. The Big D proved that. But you can't just start cacking dragons ... one of them will take it personally, and the consequences don't bear thinking about. We have yet to see a dragon on the warpath (and frankly, I never want to).

Plus, Masaru went public. So killing him means an assassination, which brings all kinds of heat on the Philippines (and thus Japan and their megas). Such an action might also cause a backlash against the corps—and as we all know, nuyen is better than some bad press on an island chain no one really gives a frag about.

The Imperial authorities have tried to arrest Masaru, but they have no hard evidence of anything against him. He's admitted that he wants the Japanese to get the hell out, but he hasn't admitted to backing pirates and runners to do it or engaging in any other activities that could be labeled treason. Rumors that show up on Shadowland are not going to be admitted in a court of law, 'cause they're mostly hearsay by us SINless criminal elements.

Oh, and he always takes his natural form at police stations. The Cebu police department tried to interrogate him once. Half the force quit and moved to Manila. Believe me, it's a lot more

dangerous for mere mortals than for Masaru to take action against the Japanese overlords.

- Muntanak

- If the Imperials are smart, they'll drag their heels on this issue and wait until Masaru blows his top. Then hit him—that way, they can claim he was a risk to the world and that they did us all a favor. Isn't that how governments normally work?

- Secret Mole

- Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

- Masaru@as.phil.masaru.com

Under Masaru are the leaders of each major faction. All have joined because they know in their hearts that they must fight for our cause—we do not force anyone to join the Huk. Some of us fight corporate dominance, forming labor unions and holding protests and petitions until we are targeted by the police and must turn to direct sabotage. Some fight for the environment or metahuman rights. Some have skills better used to win the hearts of the Filipino people than to fight the Japanese; these individuals join the Philippine Nation Party and work to win the election. Others believe in "direct action" as I do and are willing to fight and kill whomever we must to accomplish Filipino independence.

- Others have another name for this "direct action"—terrorism. But Siukoy doesn't like that image.

- Gecko

- Not every raid is "striking a blow for the people" or some drek. Masaru may have a few million, but that's not enough to finance a war against the bottomless pit of Japanese Imperial/corporate nuyen. The Huk needs money, and lots of it, to keep a couple thousand pirates, refugees and their families fed, housed, armed and hidden. They've already got ships and weapons, so smuggling's the quickest way to make nuyen. When they attack a corporate shipment to "prove a point," the cargo gets sold or used. And there are plenty of individual thugs and bullies who think anyone in their way is fair game.

- Sound

THE NETWORK

There are also many who support our cause but do not want to risk themselves or their families directly. These individuals help us however they can without endangering themselves, providing a network that sells information, gives us food and places to hide and creates distractions when we need them. In return, we fight on their behalf, listen to their suggestions and free them to join our ranks if they are caught or decide that the risk is worth it. More than fifty percent of the Philippine population is affiliated with the Huk in some manner.

◉ That fifty percent isn't fixers and info brokers. Siukoy's including anyone who deliberately looks the other way or doesn't report a Huk crime to the cops. There's a lot more who are fired up about the election but would be horrified if they saw someone get shot.

◉ Tikbalang

◉ So what's this whole Huk thing mean if I try to set up shop?

◉ Prime Runner

◉ Crime is split about fifty-fifty between pirates and yaks. Because the laws are tough to bypass without a whup-hoop info network, almost no one works alone. So unless you're already in with one of the gumis and can get help from them, you'll have to at least work with the Huk, whether or not you give two dreks for their cause. It's possible to pull off small-time runs without help, but if you sell locally, you'll end up going through somebody's fixer. Once you cooperate with one side, even once, you're a target for the other. Better to choose for yourself than find out accidentally.

◉ Mongoose

◉ What Siukoy failed to get across is that the Japanese authorities assume that anyone who is not with them is against them. Thus, anyone who commits a crime directed against the Japanese is a member of the Huk. So if you get caught, you'll be treated like you're one of us, anyway. It's easier to join and know that you have friends willing to give you information on your target and bust you out of jail than to try to work alone. Plus, you sleep easily at night knowing you're doing the right thing.

◉ Tikbalang

◉ I can't believe everything is so cut and dried. What about the people who stay independent?

◉ Calico Syl

◉ What do you mean by independent? Do you mean not caring who wins the election but raiding the Japanese because they're rich? You would be called a member of the Huk. Do you mean not knowing Masaru personally but having friends and contacts who are Filipino? You would be called a member of the Huk. Do you mean trying to commit crimes without anyone to ask for help or any fixer to sell the goods to when you're done? Then you're called an unsuccessful pirate. We're all independent in thought and spirit, but working together makes the job easier.

◉ Tikbalang

◉ Well, what if I came from somewhere nearby, like Indonesia, and just raided Japanese ships when they came out into the South China Sea and took the goods back to sell somewhere else? Would that make me part of your precious Huk?

◉ Calico Syl

◉ No. That would make you an Indonesian pirate.

◉ Tikbalang

◉ Yeah, and if you hit a Huk weapons stall because that stuff is worth big gold on the open market, you're labeled pro-Japanese and are hated by the Huk. Same difference. It's all just talk. It's a family feud there, and outsiders always lose.

◉ Water Nymph

JOINING THE HUK

Pirates in the Philippines usually join the Huk after growing up in it, after taking one too many beatings or after hearing about us through a peripheral in the Network. Others are young men and women whom we have watched as they tried to change the system from within. When they find that Japanese justice is a luxury denied to Filipinos, we approach them and suggest they join the fight to take back their homeland.

Not everyone accepts the offer the first time it is made, but nearly all join the Network, receiving our assistance in struggles with their employers in exchange for information or an unlocked door. If they are caught in complicity with us, we again invite them to join. Most accept, realizing that they will not be allowed to simply live and let live. As a Filipino, you must fight even for citizenship in your own nation.

◉ Or they decide that piracy is better than jail and reconditioning. I don't believe the thousands of pirates I've seen are all dedicated patriots thinking only of their cause and not profit. Masaru's an idealist and so are most of the upper echelons—the teachers and the captains—but the average shipboard thug? Nope, I don't buy it.

◉ Encarta

◉ My first job in the Philippines was guarding a group of Shiawase employees. Three families had been killed and their homes ransacked. Corporate security was stretched thin protecting factories, so they paid me and a few buddies to guard the townhouses.

The third night, we caught six so-called patriots beating a twenty-two-year-old mother and her infant. We took them down without a problem (no chrome on them), and I was disgusted enough to ask why they did it before turning them in. "To give the Hapon a taste of their own medicine," was their excuse for crippling a young woman who had only moved in a month before. That's not patriotism; that's sociopathy. If that's how they expect to change their "beloved nation," I say bless the Japanese for civilizing it.

◉ Gecko

◉ Mistakes have been made by both sides. I suggest you try body-guarding the 20,000 Filipinas who are forced to prostitute them-

selves and their children to the “civilizing” Japanese before you judge either side.

- Tetchie

- Face facts, chummo, it looks like Masaru is setting you all up to be his own triad or yakuza. A loyal band of criminals out to make him profits and hurt his enemies.

- Gecko

TRAINING

New recruits go to halfway houses north of Luzon while they decide whether they are ready to give up servitude for piracy. When they choose to make a difference, they are introduced to old-timers who train them in fighting, sailing and escaping. Most training takes place on the newer islands off Palawan. The Japanese have declared them unfit for habitation until the volcanoes are no longer active and so do not patrol them. We have bases on the islands and in hidden sea coves that were created by earthquakes. Naturally, these caves are invaluable when one of our boats has just liberated cargo or prisoners.

- Don't let the image fool you—the distances between islands are usually too big for anyone but a marathon rower (a human one, anyway) to clear without sails or a motor. The islands are still volcanic rock with little soil, so most food has to be brought in (and they pay pretty damn good for it).

- Brazos Fuertes

Every accomplished pirate mentors three to five new recruits at a given time. The recruits learn to serve in all areas of the Huk before finding a specialty. This means starting off cleaning decks and carting supplies for more experienced members. No recruit fights right away, not until they can handle themselves and have learned to love their country enough to accept death before a betrayal of the Huk or anything it stands for.

- Also known as brainwashing.

- Higaonna@as.phil.ichiwakai.com

- Because most recruits are fresh-out-of-work wage slaves or peasant farmers, the Huk needs lots of trained talent. Foreign runners or pirates who speak English, Spanish, Japanese or Tagalog and can teach newbies how to skulk, shoot straight or pilot a boat are worth their weight in anything they can get. They're also valuable enough to skip the indoctrination and go straight to work.

- Zephyr

INFIGHTING

Because we are not gangs but a group of individuals with a cause, there is relatively little fighting between Huk members. To prevent myopic cliques from taking hold and blinding people to their real loyalty to our nation, we discourage permanent teams. Instead, all pirates are part of a pool out of which teams form for each mission. This allows for the best mix of talent for each action and prevents infighting, as incompatible individuals are kept apart.

- It's not as neat as Siukoy says. The high muckety-mucks may want things orderly and focused on fighting Japan, but their control only lasts as long as it's easier to work with them than against them. There are plenty of teams that stick together and even plan and profit from their own raids, only reporting to higher-ups as fixers. Like Mongoose said, unless you're in tight with the yaks, why not take advantage of the Huk's Network? It can provide contacts, info, a place to run and free medical care. In return you limit your attentions to corps, government or rich people who've “sold out.” (Oooh, don't throw me in that briar patch.) Plenty of pirates see it as a mutually beneficial arrangement rather than a plot to save the world or better the lot of their fellow man.

- Zero-Sum

- And when you've got a group of people who are trained to fight and don't like authority, there's always infighting. Pirates fight as much as ever, but rather than machine-gunning the crew, they'll call out the captain for a duel, a race or a “booty contest.”

- Tikbalang

- Yeah, a Filipino pirate's idea of a fair gun fight is who can show up the next morning with more rifles stolen from the Red Samurai.

- Bantaliwak Babe

- Keep this in mind. It means that when pirates get mad enough to murder each other, it can turn into a serious blood feud. Unless you're ready to declare an enemy for life, don't get drunk and start a bar brawl in the Philippines.

- Death Angel

Traitors and Spies

Occasionally, certain Huk members grow weak or greedy enough to accept Japanese bribes and provide information on their own people. When traitors are discovered, they are dealt with mercilessly. They suffer in one short time all the agony that they and other cowards have brought on three generations of Filipinos by cooperating with the Hapon.

- I was working off Palawan a couple of years ago when my captain, Luis, found out that one of the deck-swabbers had been leaking info about our next target to Renraku. They pulled the kid out of his cabin, tied his arms to his sides and brought him up on deck. Luis told him that even though he was too weak to do it during his life, at least he would die standing on his own two feet. Then he drove railroad spikes through the kid's insteps and tied him to the mast while he and the rest of the crew beat the kid with rattan sticks until the ropes split and he fell over. I've never seen anyone else frag with Luis.

- Bantaliwak Babe

- Even with measures like that, the Huk has its share of traitors. I mean, at least the Huk will stop once you're dead. If it's the Japanese after you, they'll torture your family and your friends and burn down your entire neighborhood.

- Sound

• And plenty of corps have started to realize just how big a threat this election is, and have been bringing in pirates from all over to pose as new recruits while spying for Mama Corp. Masaru's taking a big risk by asking Shadowland for outside help. With the new influx of non-Filipino pirates he's hoping for, it'll get twice as hard to tell who's a spy. Shows how desperate he is.

• Matador

• Also shows there are good bucks to be made if you're not above some double-dealing.

• Wirewalker

• Work ... I LOVE IT! Pay me and let me go. Is this world great or what!

• Prime Runner

• Here's the second post sent to us by our freedom-loving wyrm. As in most of the posts, read it with a grain of salt. But read it. Even if you don't care drek about politics or history, a little background can't hurt you as you smuggle in and out of the Philippines. Some of you might believe what the dragon says, maybe even get converted to his cause. If so, good luck. If, on the other hand, you think the bottom line is that dragons can't be trusted (even dead ones), then take this post for what it's worth ... and in your case, you'll need all the luck you can get.

• Captain Chaos

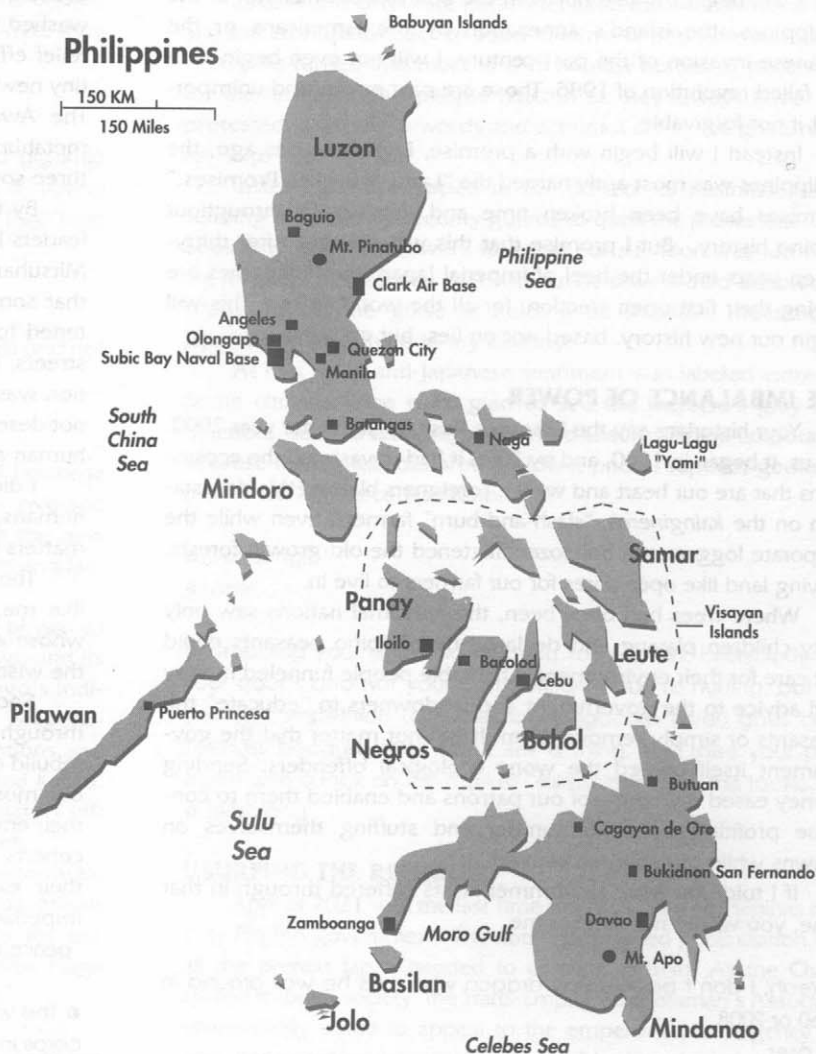
Transmitted: 15 January 2059, 01:35:24 MT

A HISTORY OF THE REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS

by Masaru

Captain Chaos has asked me to provide some background on my homeland. I will tell you the true story of the Republika ng Pilipinas, rather than the lies crafted by national security advisors. It is a story of oppression, injustice and servitude. But perhaps one day soon, you and all who will not idly watch the Japanese Empire destroy the Filipino people will join me and others like me to restore freedom in the Philippines and transform her sad history into a joyous tale of victory.

The first lesson anyone learns about the Philippines is that two nations pull at these islands. Every time you use a computer, every time you visit a library, and every time an Imperial Marine cross-checks your face in the visor display in his helmet, you are in the Imperial Prefecture of the Philippine Islands. Whenever you sail across the Cebu Sea, when you taste bananas pulled fresh from the trees in the Palawan rain forest, and whenever you assemble in groups larger than twelve, you are in the Republika ng Pilipinas.



• No kidding! I went there this summer, and I nearly got put in jail right at the airport. They ban personal body armor. They ban guns and decks and fragging cars. What's the code here?

• Rezmelster H

I do not expect you to read my words without cynicism or paranoia, or to care about my small, far-off country. Before today, you may never have given it a thought.

Do not hesitate because we speak different languages, because we are Eastern and you may be Western or because we do not look like you. These things are true, but we also have much in common. Corporations shoulder aside our governments. Trideos broadcast hypnotic lies to dull our thoughts.

And criminals profit in our shadows.

• That speaks my language. The only color that matters is the one on the credstick.

• Prime Runner

I will begin my tale not with the Spanish colonization of the Philippines, the island's annexation by the Americans or the Japanese invasion of the past century. I will not even begin with the failed revolution of 1986. Those are past errors, and unimportant if not forgivable.

Instead I will begin with a promise. Eight decades ago, the Philippines was most aptly named the "Land of Broken Promises." Promises have been broken time and time again throughout Filipino history. But I promise that this will change. After thirty-seven years under the heel of Imperial Japan, the Philippines are having their first open election, for all the world to see. This will begin our new history, based not on lies, but on honesty.

THE IMBALANCE OF POWER

Your historians say the Resource Rush began in the year 2000. For us, it began in 1960, and by 2008 it had devastated the ecosystems that are our heart and wallet. Foreigners blamed this devastation on the *kaingineros*, "slash-and-burn" farmers, even while the corporate loggers and bulldozers flattened the old-growth forests, leaving land like open sores for our farmers to live in.

Where trees had once been, the industrial nations saw only dirty children playing and declared that Filipino peasants could not care for their environment. Charitable people funneled money and advice to the government and landowners to "educate" the peasants or simply remove them. It did not matter that the government itself owned the worst ecological offenders. Sending money eased the hearts of our patrons and enabled them to continue profiting from our lumber and stuffing themselves on prawns while our children starved.

If I told you what environmentalists suffered through in that time, you would not believe me.

- Yeah, I don't believe any dragon who says he was around in 1960 or 2008.
- Laser
- Chill. He's just read books and talked to old-timers. You can find out most of this stuff yourself, if you want. I just scanned old text on the logging industry mob in the Philippines in the 1990s. And I do mean mob. Say "environment" in a bar, and big lumberjacks'd beat you. Protesters vanished and their heads were found in the river the next day. And that was before the Seretech decision.
- Professional Student

When VITAS struck, the nation sank into a severe economic depression. The Abeleda administration borrowed money from the wealthiest and most medically advanced nations, not knowing the price that our country would have to pay. Were it not for the increasing mana level, perhaps we could have repaid our fellow Pacific Rim countries in five years.

But the Awakening hit the Philippines like the fist of an angry deity.

THE COMING OF THE HAPON

In 2011, Hibok-Hibok, Taal, Mayon and Mount Pinatubo erupted, killing hundreds of thousands and forcing millions to

evacuate their homes. The earthquakes and tsunamis in their wake washed over the islands again and again, preventing widespread relief efforts. When the water finally stilled, nearly nine hundred tiny new islands had surfaced, still smoking, all around the nation. The Awakening had begun. Soon afterward, the islands' first metahuman children were born, and Filipinos sought help from three sources: the president, the church and the Japanese.

By the time I rose from my sleep, the president and church leaders had been killed by "security assets" owned by Shiawase, Mitsuhama and Keruba corporations. I looked around me and saw that some humans were valued over others, that they were listened to and respected. I saw that when they were shot in the streets, their murderers were punished. I was told that this situation was normal, that the humans denied such consideration did not deserve it because they were poor and inferior or weren't truly human at all.

I did not question this at first. After all, it was the business of humans, and my elders told me that our involvement in human matters should be minimal.

Then I learned that the "inferior" humans were the ones who, like me, called these islands home, who were born here and whose ancestors had died on this soil. And I began to question the wisdom of my elders. So I waited. And I watched.

Soon, Japanese corporations arrived and began to pick through the rubble of our republic. Under the guise of helping rebuild our nation, they appropriated our best land, our resources, our most profitable companies and the labor of our people for their empire. Apparently, the Japanese emperor and his corporate cohorts saw the Philippines as a convenient source of space for their expanding population and an opportunity to showcase Imperial power. Sadly, our government was impotent against this "peaceful" invasion of Japanese money.

- The wyrm is telling only half the truth. The Philippines invited the corps in. Shiawase Atomics finished its Luzon power plant in 2006, and MCT factories provided police and military gear. When Catholic protests against magic turned into the riots of 2013, Abeleda declared martial law to get the nation under control. There would have been anarchy without corporate help. Those executed martyrs were really rioters shot while resisting arrest.
- Cynic
- You believe the security reports? The number of "accidental deaths" of union protesters and native corporations who didn't like the keiretsu were simply too great to attribute to coincidence. And according to Manila police reports, yakuza-related crime skyrocketed in those years ... only to drop off in 2015, when MCT bought the cops.
- Tomtom
- The Philippines had the best medical technology in Southeast Asia, but there weren't enough personnel to treat all the disaster-related injuries and diseases, especially in rural areas where the national census had undercounted inhabitants. Abeleda knew it,

so when Shiawase Biotech offered support staff, he had no choice but to accept, even knowing they would not willingly leave. They were the first Japanese with a hold over our lives.

- Kermit
- Don't misinterpret all Japanese activity as part of a gigantic conspiracy. The Party of the Divine Heritage had a lock on voting blocs in 2012 and encouraged expansionist programs. Their hold today is less certain.
- Cellophane

● POV ... Point of fraggin' view. Why trust the wymm's facts and not mine or the Japanese's or anyone else's?

- Cynic

With the megacorporations came a steady influx of Japanese immigrants—executives and middle managers to oversee unskilled Filipino laborers, workers in industries serving the new corporate population and others seeking space for homes and factories. But this is proudly proclaimed in any textbook.

The wave of newcomers also included a new influx of yakuza as well. During that time, the newly formed Watada-rengo and its backers sought to monopolize Japanese crime. The rengo's individual families—the Shotozumi-, Nishidon-, Karatsa-, Shigeda- and Yamaguchi-gumis—began a campaign of assassinations and terror against the rengo's competitors in Chiba, Tokyo and Kyoto. Then the Watada-rengo offered its opponents a compensatory gift in return for leaving Japan forever—the Philippine market.

The Yamaguchi-gumi, Ichiwa-kai, Sumiyoshi-kai, Inagawa-kai and Kinsei-kai, which had long controlled the Philippine opium fields and enslaved our women in brothels and bars for sex tourists, grew like a cancer throughout Olangapo, Manila, Naga and Davao. Every day brought more imported criminals.

● Yeah, the Philippines had no opium fields before the Japanese came in with the megas and the yaks. More twisted history.

- Cynic

● Hey, Turner, you're always going on about how the yaks and MCT have no relation? I dug up dirt on the Yamaguchi-gumi, Filipino branch. Yuriyasu Ashiyo was given two million nuyen in 2005 just as Nippon Steel began merging with rice corps to make MCT. The money man was Mochizuki Fumio, the gumi's wakagashira! Want the data?

- Anago

● No! The question isn't "Do yaks influence MCT?"; it's "Can I bring the major stockholders up on charges?" Everything I see says no. The yaks in Japan and the Philippines don't hide who they are. They have their own newsletters, throw public parties when their members leave jail and drive big American town cars. When you get evidence that says MCT's money is from a specific crime, then maybe the public will care enough to shake Mitsuhamu up.

- Turner

Yakuza and corporate personnel filled the overcrowded cities and forced Filipinos back to flooded farms or into sidewalk shacks. As weeks turned into months with no new homes or decent jobs for the refugees, our people reacted as they always have. They protested, their angry words and actions a cry to the government for help.

Instead, Japan stepped in to "protect its business assets," sending paramilitary security guards to quell the protesters. Those of us who questioned were told that our situation was too unstable for such occurrences, that without help we would dissolve into chaos. Under the guise of helping us stabilize, thousands of Japanese guns arrived in my country.

At that time, anti-Japanese sentiment was labeled extremist. Some citizens were even glad to see the keiretsu's gray trade practices, such as dumping, crush and absorb Filipino corporations because these practices brought lower prices, superior goods and more "workplace competition."

- Dumping?
- Laser

● Dropping your prices so low you take a loss. Everybody buys your goods and not your competition's. You're hurting, but your poorer competition (anyone non-megacorp level) goes out of business because they can't sell a thing. You raise your prices again with a lock on the market. Yakashima loves this tactic.

- Tikbalang

USURPING THE REPUBLIC

April of 2021 was the last time the Republika ng Pilipinas had a truly Filipino government. The riots that greeted goblinization were all the pretext Japan needed to cement its hold. As the Change spread through society, the Trans-Empire Businessman's Association unanimously voted to appeal to the emperor for emergency support, because the "goblinization plague" had weakened their security forces and left their business interests unprotected.

Thus, on April 28, 2021, six divisions of Imperial Marines landed on Philippine soil.

● You can see the poison spreading. Who honestly believes a troll or ork guard is "weakening" a security force? Yeah, they'd be out for a week or two during the process, but were they kept on? No. Were their hospital bills paid? No. Turning into a "demon" wasn't covered by the health plan. The corps took advantage of *kawaruhito* pain to snatch nuyen.

- Fury

● They learned from the Lone Eagle incident in the US. They fired potential metahuman terrorists before they could seize a nuclear or munitions plant.

- lai D'oh

Then the first blows of the war were struck.

Both Subic Bay Naval Base and Clark Air Force Base were attacked by terrorists twenty-eight times in eighteen months. History calls the attackers Bannog Hukbalahap, Filipino nationalists

who wanted revenge on the Japanese. But when I watched from above, I saw no Filipinos, only Japanese who bore a suspicious resemblance to the Ichiwa-kai's paid assassins.

The government did not listen to me, however, but to the Japanese who feigned outrage with one face while demanding more and more concessions with the other. Only after Abeleda accepted the appointment of an Imperial prefecture "advisor" did the Japanese point their guns back down. Six years later Fukatsu Saru, the "advisor," was appointed governor as Abeleda stepped down and other Filipino candidates were all found to have "ties to terrorists."

It was then that I learned that to make a difference among humans, one must be rich.

Those Filipino candidates were corrupt. Check the PBN archives for the proof that both Gilego and Ladlad were funneling taxpayer money to metahuman terrorists, the same ones this lying dragon uses. Masaru extends his hate for the Shotozumi-gumi to all yakuza, and his enmity for Ryumyo to all Japanese. Our house has not sold out to corporate masters. We provide services—debt collection, loans and entertainment—nothing more. We do not dishonorably slay soldiers in their sleep.

• Higaonna@as.phil.ichiwakai.com

I have no enmity for the Japanese immigrants who live and work in our islands or for those who follow orders unwittingly. And I respect your culture and history. I wear the name Masaru with pride and have not returned to "Mameleu" because there are many things my people can learn from yours. But your culture belongs to your own land, not mine, and there is much to respect among my people as well.

And there is nothing fouler than cowards who bomb their own troops to rally them under a banner of hatred. Those criminals are abscesses that should be lanced and cauterized.

• Masaru@as.phil.masaru.com

And just how many good and noble Filipinos hooked their wagon to the Rising Sun in the East? Enough to matter, I guess, but not enough to get mentioned here. No one takes over an island chain like that without inside help.

• Secret Bloc

CONDEMNING THE CHANGED

Fukatsu's appointment turned the Philippines into a police state. The Japanese army and air force followed the Marines, and Filipinos had no choice but to tolerate their abuses. To satisfy Fukatsu's vision of a tropical Awakened paradise, he "separated native combatants for their own benefit," despite the fact that many of us were perfectly capable of living in peace with the Changed. Elves, orks, dwarfs and trolls were segregated by law and by island.

And when Imperial Marines tried to tell me that this was right and natural, I no longer listened.

Honestly, some people welcomed the separation. Even though most of us have been Catholic for generations, the Awakening

brought back old views of magic and monsters. When goblinization struck, the differences between a *binobaan* (ork) and an *aswang* (ghoul-vampire-weredog) became quite blurry for a time. I had the job of sorting the zoo out.

You think there's a lot of variation in Greek myths that influenced paranormal Awakening and regional meta-variants? Remember that the Greeks didn't have eighty semi-independent linguistic groups with their own mythic traditions or the diverse biological raw material of a tropical rain forest on which mana could act.

• Tikbalang

The separation might have been tolerable—indeed, in some North American lands, metahumans chose separate states—but the megacorporations and their emperor did not stop there.

Emperor Kenichi, Security Advisor Yasunaga and Saito Mariko of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry took the fate of millions in their hands when they consigned all metahumans to a prison colony on the newly formed volcanic island of Lagu-lagu. The island soon earned the Japanese nickname of *Yomi*, because it is truly a hell on earth.

Security Advisor who? There is no such position. The closest thing are four Regional Security Counselors in the Imperial Ministry, but none were named Yasunaga.

• DC Insider

I believe he is a representative of the Great Dragon Ryumyo. If my theories are correct, Ryumyo and Lung's syndicates each tried to gain control of the high-mana areas around Philippine volcanoes, which explains the triad-yakuza-pirate wars in Manila in 2021, especially if Masaru attempted a coup. He may be revealing the connection so that shadowrunners can capitalize on it and bring his enemies grief.

• Dragonslayer

• Say what?

• Orange Queen

Metahumans still suffer from this thirty-seven-year-old insult. Most Japanese see no difference between metahumans and criminals. Metahumans are banned from executive areas, given separate facilities for eating and drinking, their own neighborhoods, train cars and hospitals. I ask you Americans to look at us and remember. A hundred years ago you saw this in your own nation, before your justice system struck it down. For us, there is no justice.

It's not the same thing! Metahuman immune systems can incubate diseases that would have a human on the floor, coughing phlegm and vomiting, but they'll sit next to you on the subway anyway, because they don't notice they're infected.

• Dr. Dark

• The UCAS is doing fine without those laws, Dark Apologist.

• Huntress

• The UCAS is not a chain of tropical islands sitting on a powder keg of potential Awakened cholera and malaria epidemics. Do you know what happens to your immune system when UVs shine through the ozone layer hole directly overhead?

• Dr. Dark

• Scary—but just excuses. If my last “undercover operation” with a Renraku exec was exposed, she’d be demoted or fired and charged with adultery. She’s not even married, but the charges would go on her record, and social pressure would do the rest. That kind of law and pressure have nothing to do with disease, and you know it.

• Lustin’ Prussian

“Under the skin, we’re all human.”

After metahumans were segregated, it was a short step to government housing assignments in the interest of “efficient space management.” As silk-voiced trideo spokesmen told us that restricting native Filipinos to slums and farming villages was in our own interest, “to preserve our cultural purity,” I could not take it any longer. I left my home and traveled around the world, seeing how nations elsewhere treated their people.

But still, I watched.

THE POLICE STATE

In the late 2020s, the Japanese Empire owned the world. Goblinization had struck hard at those countries that sought to integrate the Changed rather than isolate them. As the United States fell apart, Japan consolidated its hold over the Philippines, censoring or controlling the media to better grab our people’s minds and hearts as well as lives.

As the endless trials and executions of Filipino “terrorists” were broadcast, our people began to assume the stereotypical behavior that the Japanese ascribed to them. With no avenue by which to legally improve their material conditions, hundreds turned to crime and protest to vent their frustrations or simply survive. But these individuals only provided the Japanese with further justification to turn the screws still tighter.

In 2026, the manufacture, sale and possession of firearms was banned for private individuals in the Philippines, and the carrying of any melee weapon exceeding seven centimeters in length was prohibited outside the home.

• My kitchen knife ... wait, my dinner knife exceeds seven centimeters. Under that law, I could get arrested carrying a stick in from the woodpile. Does anyone take this seriously?

• Ether

• Yes.

Japan’s banned guns for a long time ... its criminals still pack them, but it keeps the streets safer than in the UCAS, or so Japanese legislatures believe. When they moved into the Philippines, they looked at the murder rate and promptly outlawed the most common weapons.

See, the Philippines are home to what the UCAS military calls the deadliest martial art in the world, *arnis de mano*, and Japan banned everything associated with it. The Spanish conquistadors failed to recognize the potential of such a simple weapon as a stick, and the Japanese didn’t want to make the same mistake.

In karate and kung fu, a student learns unarmed techniques before weapons. A student of *arnis* immediately begins training with two weapons. Frag training for ten years; *arnis* can teach you how to kill someone in minutes, because with a knife or rattan stick, you realize how mortal everyone is, including people with guns. This isn’t a tournament sport or even self-defense, it’s how people used to go to war. Its prohibition doesn’t stop folks from teaching shadowrunners, but you can’t learn it in the high schools any more.

• Death Angel

• This place is more fragged up than Tir Tairngire.

• Pixel Pusher

• So? Lugh Surehand himself couldn’t keep track of ninety million people and eight thousand islands, many in active rebellion. Prohibition didn’t stop alcohol, and banning sticks won’t stop my next shipment of Enfields.

• Juan Woo

• At least they didn’t outlaw magic. Corporations test children for magical ability once a year from eighth grade on, funneling positives into appropriate career tracks. Curiously, the concentration of magically active Filipinos is low, though that may only mean magicians hide their abilities or do not receive sufficient training.

• Anonymous

As Fukatsu stripped away the rights of native Filipinos, he presented himself as a benevolent father to the rest of the world. Rather than looking at the mass underwater graves off Yomi or his regime’s suppression of the Catholic Church, the international trid networks focused on his concessions to the long-fought environmental movement. The Ministry of Environmental Resources declared the entire island chain a protected area, and all the resident megacorporations observed the new ban on internal-combustion engine vehicles and new factories. They also voiced their support for government promises to replant and repopulate the stripped rain forest. In reality, the corporations simply continued to use existing factories, pumping the pollution elsewhere, and the plunder continued.

The Crash of 2029 was our best chance for freedom. With the sudden reversal of Japanese fortunes, we might have negotiated our release from Imperial bondage. But rather than gaining the popular and military support necessary to free us from this regime, nationalists launched an ill-planned rebellion, and the Japanese cut them down like rabid dogs. The Rebellion of 2029 was a mistake made by the parents of today’s youth, a mistake we cannot repeat.

For when we fail, the Japanese grip gets tighter.



● You mean the megacorporate grip and the emperor's grip. Plenty of us think this empire drek is ancient history and should stay that way.

● Bosuzoku@as.japan.fuchiasia.com

● I apologize for simplifying. But if the ones who are shooting are Imperial Marines or groups like the yakuza, which claim to espouse Japanese values, am I to say they are not "the Japanese"?

● Masaru@as.phil.masaru.com

● Racism ... the two-way street of the damned.

● Apocalyptic Blues

THE JAPANESE LIE

Fuchi headed the corporate task force that rebuilt the Philippines after the Crash and the Rebellion. Corporate-owned Matrix servers and remote-vote systems for local elections gave them control over communications and politics. Construction corporations, geo-thermal power plants and agribusiness boomed, despite the steady stream of emissions-control laws and technological limitations applied to the average citizen and mid-sized business owner. Several Philippine businesses saw the failure of the Rebellion as a sign that the Japanese would never leave; they merged with Japanese corporations to form Yamatetsu and bypass the laws that hampered independents.

If you ask megacorporate executives about their environmental record, they will no doubt overflow with *nihonjinron* and say that their facilities run more profitably, more safely and more cleanly than others anywhere in the world. They consider it "the third Japanese miracle"; the first being Japan's incredible economic growth after World War II, the second the sighting of the world's first dragon and the third the megacorporations that rake in profits while aiding Gaia.

● *Nihonjinron*—that fancy word means the belief that Japanese goods or people are somehow inscrutable, mysteriously different and better just because they're Japanese. Like believing kenjutsu can outclass fencing or arnis without accounting for individuals and techniques.

● Sound

● Let's not start on the number of idiots anywhere who believe their country is an invulnerable butt-kicker.

● Maiden UCAS

And I watched, and I spoke and I listened. And I saw that everywhere the Japanese corporations went, they paved over freedoms with money. And I saw that yakuza followed, their crimes spreading cold fingers to every nation. And I could no longer wait.

The Empire must be stopped, and it will begin in the Philippines.

We have come full circle in sixty years. This is not the age of Awakened thought, where the astrally active have guided us to preserving the land. Megacorporations cannot regrow forests or

coral reefs with magic. They can only gerrymander their figures, seed the clouds and hope that people do not listen to ecologists who tell them that every kilometer logged not only kills trees, it increases runoff, creates stagnant pools that breed disease and starves the animals and people who depend on the land.

• Cry me a river. Would he prefer massive regrowth sped by magic like in the Tir, regrowth that steadily encroaches on human habitat? Not using forests for agricultural land and banning fishing so people starve? You can't go back to the land because no land will support ten times its normal population.

• DNF

• What are you babbling about? We are not trying to "go back to the land." We never left. The corporations do not have to live in the poisonous cesspools they create and then ignore.

• Crystale

Fukatsu Saru says that Filipinos are inherently unstable and that the Empire aids us because we do not know how to govern or keep peace in our own country. He says our mixture of metatypes, our diverse ethnic groups, our many religions and our "criminal element" lead to corruption and an inability to plan for the future. He looks at our history and sees a poor, backward country that has been given a hand up by the Spanish, by the Americans and now by the Japanese, but that refuses to stabilize because of some inherent evil.

• No drek, the place is a melting pot. There are about eighty native linguistic groups like the Tagalog, Igorot and T'au't Batu. The Atlantean Foundation uses the Tasaday and Ifugao as examples of life in the Paleolithic. The Badjao ("Sea Gypsies") teach pirates the ropes off southern Mindanao. And don't forget the immigrants from China, Korea, Malaysia, Amazonia and Japan. About seventy percent of the lot are Catholic, but the rest include old-school Buddhists, Japanese-approved Shinto, Islamic Moros and a huge mush I'll call "animism" the way Danchekker called Native Americans' belief "shamanic." Sparks fly plenty often.

• People Watcher

• The Filipino Catholic Church isn't like in Mexico. Filipinos back in the 1500s liked the religion enough to independently contact the Pope for bishoprics. They accepted Filipinas as holders of power, and then used Catholicism to fight Spanish dominance. Filipinas as a rule of thumb don't go for that "quiet, long-suffering wife" image of women in the Japanese media. Like you said, sparks fly.

• Professional Student

I see a country that has been forcibly conquered by greed, whose people have not had a voice for more than twenty years out of the past five hundred. From the Spanish to the Marcos regime to the Japanese, whenever a few rich individuals are in power, people suffer.

The Philippines is a victim who has been blamed for her own rape not once, but dozens of times. I have seen presidents and CEOs turn away from her because they see only the profit on a balance sheet. I have seen metahumans ignore their brothers' suffering because they fear the Empire's power. I have seen environmentalists who abandon the Philippines for other places that do not look as green.

I alone will take up the flag of our betrayed nation. And we will triumph.

This is why I persuaded the governor that the election to be held in February of 2059 shall be open, without the use of the remote-vote system, every vote physically counted by a neutral third party. I wish this known on Shadowland so that you too can watch and see or participate in the history that shall be made.

It is time to let our voice be heard. In the age of magic, perhaps enough belief and a constant will truly can change the world.

• If he breaks into a chorus of "Do You Hear the People Sing?", I'm out of here.

• Bung

• Stick around. Singing songs from that musical is considered "evidence of subversive acts" in an Imperial prefecture, so he probably won't do it.

• Eponine

• Who's going to be that "neutral third party"? Who's going to verify where the votes came from? Did you notice he left out mention of American corps profiting off Filipino labor? Plus, why shouldn't we think he's rigging the election in his own way? Too many questions, not enough answers. I have to say, he ain't no Dunkelzahn.

• Cynic

• Because the chances of getting away with it are pathetic. Even a great dragon can't face down five megacorps, Imperial Marines, yakuza and maybe even his own kind. But he's trying anyway.

What do you think "participate in the history that shall be made" means? If he said "Pirates and runners, if you want to turn up the heat on the Japanacorps and watch them dance, funnel us guns and we'll pay you off," he could be executed for treason. If you read between the lines, you'll see the truth. He's desperate.

• Matador

• If the wyrm can't face down the Empire, how'd he get them to agree to elections in the first place? Why didn't they kick him out on his hoop? Cuz they're scared. Nobody knows if he could take down the Empire. Nobody knows how much magic he's packing. And I agree, too damn heavy-handed to be a smooth operator like Dunkelzahn.

• Gecko

• Or the Japanese are tired of revolts in outlying islands and daily protests in Manila and San Fernando. If they allow open elections where their guy "just happens" to win (by manipulating the public through media or outright fraud), they'll quiet the protesters for a

through media or outright fraud), they'll quiet the protesters for a few years. If their guy loses, they'll be no worse off than they are now. Either way, they win. If you could win a war for the price of some advertising, wouldn't you?

- Kotick

- Masaru's too bright to fall for that. If he thinks the Japanese'll rig the election and kill him after, he won't go along with it. He's got to have fifty advantages he's not telling us. That's the way dragons operate. He can't only have a single plan. I think they would kick him out of the dragon union for that.

- Tomtom

- The Emperor agreed because Ryumyo told him to. The entire revolution is a strategy game between Ryumyo and Masaru. Do you really think one of these creatures cares for a nation or its people?

- Dragonslayer

- Your understanding of me is even more faulty than your speculations about my kind.

- Masaru@as.phil.masaru.com

- You forgot Lung. And Lofwyr. Oh, and Dunkelzahn's agents, and ...

- Orange Queen

- Lung—yeah, that's right. The Chinese have a stake here ... and Lofwyr's been too quiet lately ...

- Dragonslayer

- You are an idiot.

- Orange Queen

TARGETS OF PIRACY

by Retic

My first trip to the Philippines was a mandatory vacation sponsored by MCT. I was taken to Zamboanga and told to relax on the beaches, enjoy the all-natural fish and fruit and not leave the island without a pass and MCT guide. Even when I got permission to travel, it was under corporate escort. I found this suspicious, but my coworkers applauded our bosses for turning a poor South Asian country into a clean corporate paradise.

It's hard not to be taken in. Near airports and hotels, the place looks like Imperial Japan's tropical sim-experience or VR play-set. Each island is a sculptured landscape of nature reserves, quaint tourist shops and neat, newly constructed houses. People are arranged by ethnicity, metatype and corporate affiliation, with the quality of housing corresponding directly to the residents' economic and political status.

The streets are clean and quiet, the bicycle traffic occasionally interrupted by a car belonging to the super-rich, police, fire department or a Shiawase ambulance. Power is supplied by "safe and clean" nuclear reactors, and waste is shipped outside the "delicate Philippine environment." Even crime is organized, with gambling and prostitution in designated sectors where they won't

bother the tourists. Proof that segregation and corporate control work best to make a country prosperous, right?

- I thought this would tell us what corps are there and how to break into them. What's this tourbook drek?

- Roxy

- He's trying to show us the conditions we'll be running under. Japanese residents and imported corpers swallow that "tourbook drek" hook, line and sinker. This means concerned citizens actually call the cops when nervous ... and in areas with enough money to do biz, every citizen is concerned.

- Syn

- Most Filipinos aren't fooled, though. Imperial Japan never considered them worth impressing. Which is why so many are willing to help the Network, leaving corpsec to face a crowd in broad daylight, not one of whom noticed the three-meter-tall troll with chrome teeth carrying the gagged guy in a lab coat reading "Renraku R&D."

- Minute Man

However, the corporations are on shaky ground, and I don't mean the earthquakes. Each has specific strengths and weaknesses a pirate can exploit. I'll begin with my alma mater, because if you get away with crossing them, you're home free with the rest.

- Someone's got a few loyalties left. Mitsuhamma may be the big cheese militarily, but it's not all of the evil empire. In most of Asia outside Japan, Shiawase, the oldest mega, controls thirty percent of all business. The other corps focused on Japan, North America and Europe, while Shiawase nabbed China, India, and yup, the Philippines, giving it the largest base of popularity in the world.

- Mega Mouth

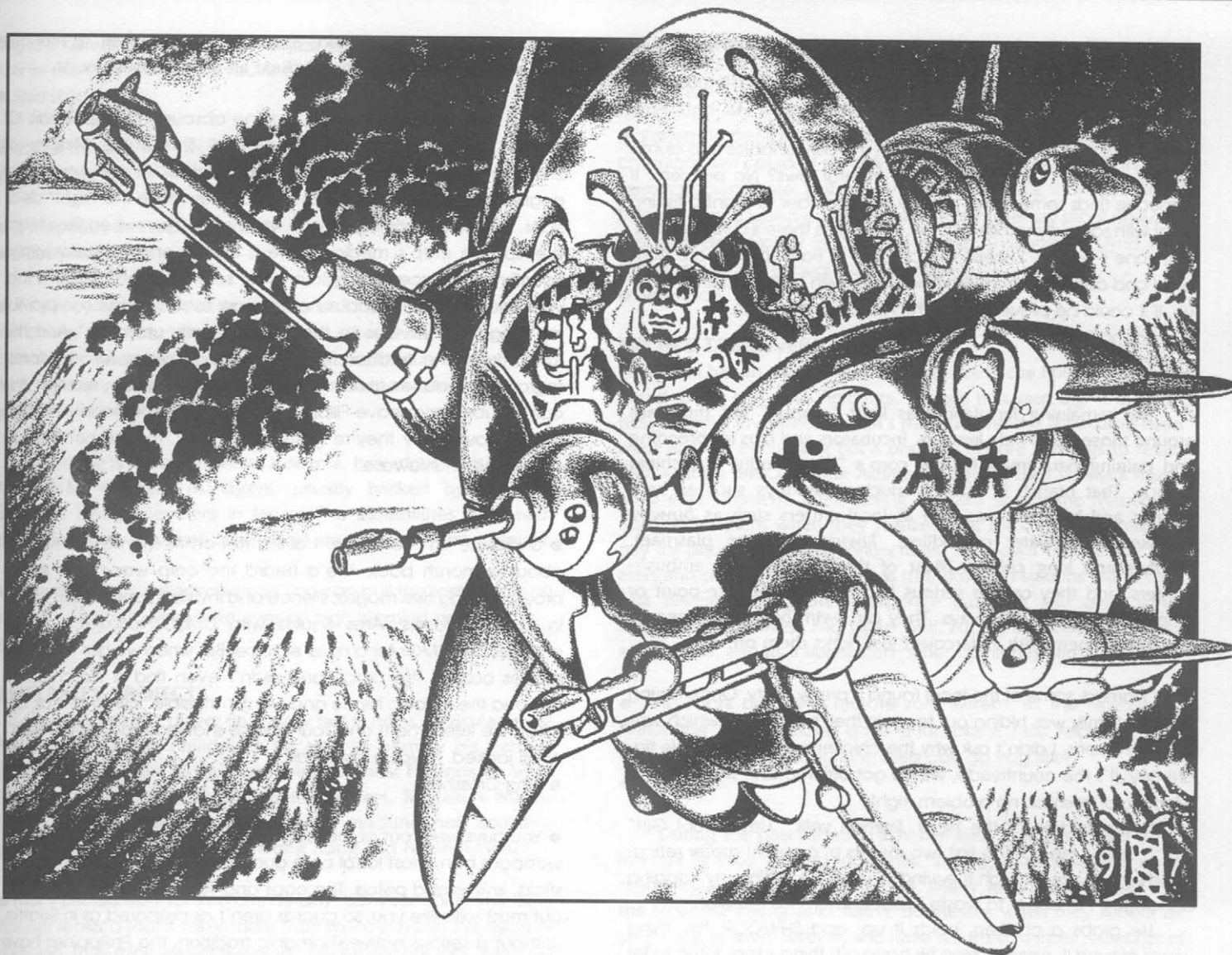
MITSUHAMA COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES

Mitsuhamma invested in real estate in the teens, buying rights to the most stable new islands, old fields devastated by strip mining and abandoned farms. They built factories on half the land and left the rest empty.

Military Landlords

When the Imperial Marines came in, it was clear why they'd waited. Owning almost all large expanses of flat land in the nation, Mitsuhamma had the military in the palm of its hand when they needed bases for 60,000 troops, mountains of logistics personnel and families. While the Empire decided whether to negotiate, MCT whipped out the deeds to Clark Air Force Base and Subic Bay Naval Base. Whether a last minute buy-out or a planned move, I'll never know, but the military gave in without a fight, suggesting back-room threats or prior agreement.

This left MCT as landlord to Japan's leathernecks, giving it a loud voice in troop placement and the organization of Imperial forces. The corp also built several munitions plants near the Clark base headquarters and holds an exclusive contract for providing weapons, armor and even vehicles to the Imperial forces.



- MCT's buddies in the Ichiwa-kai also provide "services" to the military. Olangapo, the largest brothel in the world with more than thirty square blocks of strip joints, massage parlors, buddy booths and BTL-bars, is right down the road from the base. Philippine-stationed marines have one of the highest satisfaction rates of on-duty troops anywhere.

- Lustin' Prussian

"Under the skin, we're all human."

- You disgust me. Not everyone is satisfied by sleazy sex. Quite a few military boys don't like the idea of their Imperial strings being pulled by yakuza or some crummy corp. The upper echelons don't fight the guys who own their beds, but plenty of enlisted men harass or arrest yakuza. Tensions good pirates can exploit.

- Cholo

- By giving MCT and their yakuza iron control over the military, Ryumyo consolidates his command chains. All those bases are located near volcanoes ... part of the Ring of Fire!

- Dragonslayer

- Listen, Screwloose ...

everything in the Philippines is near volcanoes in the Ring of Fire. They *are* the fraggin' Ring of Fire.

- Lava Lamprey

Factories

MCT is the largest employer in the islands. It has plastics and textile factories along Manila Bay and employs more than 100,000 skilled workers in its Baguio Arcology to make computer parts, programs and video games for Japanese schoolchildren. It processes minerals in its steel plants and oil refineries, but so far it has not built on the new islands or protected areas.

- Or so the press claims. Shiawase and Renraku both want to keep the ecosystem vaguely pure for their research, and they've got their hands in the Ministry of Environmental Resources up to the shoulder. But it's still the Imperial Marines who guard the nature preserves. Either MCT's mining behind the scenes, or they're just

waiting until legitimate supplies run out. You think a little law would get in the way of profit?

● Syn

● And locating all those factories on the bay enables it to dump wastes right into the water. Environmental laws? No problem. If someone finds some dying coral, just remember to plant a fishing boat with some dynamite nearby. As long as there's a scapegoat, everyone's happy. Except the children in Bataan who are born blind and asthmatic from fish and water with high pyrodimium levels. If it could be proven, even the Hapon might listen.

● Lakas ng Bayan

Parashield

The remaining farmland was kept "empty," but the walls around those fields hide kennels, incubators and labs for breeding and training paranimals for the corp's "eco-friendly" Parashield branch. That branch is mass-producing standbys such as hellhounds and barghests, as well as local critters such as *buwaya* (Awakened saltwater crocodiles), *kiwigs* (boar-like piasmae), pythons and king cobras. Most of these critters are ambush-hunters, and they can be serious bad news in a choke-point or when sniffing out stowaways. They can swim better than people and hitting them with a Narcoject just horks them off.

● Be warned, some of the local fauna is pretty nasty. Once during a run, a family was hiding our team in their basement, which was full of chickens. I didn't ask why the chickens were inside. We figure hey, it's the countryside, we've got disinfectant, we'll open a window for fresh air, no problem, right?

In the middle of the night, Ramon yells, "Hey! Shoo! Git!" which wakes me up. The first two meters of an eight-meter reticulated python are through the window, and it's sniffing my fragging bandages! I'm about to waste it, but Ramon has this plan.

He grabs a chicken, holds it up, and SHWOOP, the thing wraps around it, nearly taking his hand off. Thing's too dumb to let go, so we wake the family up, everybody grabs a meter of snake, and we carry it down to MCT's Parashield office. Sold the monster for a thousand flat, which was enough to put Ramon's hand back together and repay the family. So they say, "Great! Now we can afford a python-proof chicken coop!"

● Judy

SHIAWASE'S POWER

Shiawase is a close second in influence to MCT. It has fewer facilities but controls high-profit industries such as nuclear power, hospitals and consumer goods for mid- to upper-class Filipinos. The corp's control of the island's nuclear power gives Shiawase a strong bargaining position with the government. Its public image couldn't be better—it trumpets its package of affordable health care, family-friendly employment policies and its support for rain forest regrowth.

Shiawase Envirotech's local facilities are concentrated in Palawan and Bukidnon-San Fernando, where it took over the native Alemendras logging company to farm lumber, alternating planned-

acreage with wild hardwoods to keep the forests lush. Its monthly remote-drone crop dustings include air shows for the locals.

● And the corp is so corrupt its slime obscures its paper trail. Of course its nuclear power is "clean." The entire Ministry of Environmental Resources was trained in Shiawase's environmental engineering programs, and as long as they make the "right" decisions, Envirotech has cushy jobs waiting for them when their terms are up. The corp's medical care is cheap only to those with a "confirmed source of employment," so if you don't have a job, your price doubles because of "the risk factor involved in providing long-term services to the economically unviable." And the runoff from the fertilizer that Shiawase provides for rain forest regrowth produces toxic algae blooms. Of course, most of the corp's subsidiaries have Filipino names, so even if people do recognize how badly they're getting the shaft, they're not likely to connect it to Shiawase.

● Al-Lawig

● Shiawase isn't so tough. I did a run on its Manila Biotech lab about a month back. We'd heard the corp was nasty, so we brought along two mages, silence and invisibility spells, fiber-optics in case of lasers, Ares Squirts with DMSO/Narcoject, smoke charges and SMGs for a noisy escape. But when we got there, the mages buzzed the place and didn't even find a watcher. We hopped the electric fence and went in invisible. Kiwigs saw us, but when we killed them only four guards showed, and they weren't even jacked. It was a cakewalk.

● King Crosshair

● You guys were out of the league they were expecting. With the weapons ban, most local corp guards expect pirates armed with sticks, knives and pistols. The cops and immigration services keep out most folks like you, so guards aren't as prepared as in Seattle. Without a serious native shamanic tradition, the Philippines have few magicians who aren't university trained, so most wizzes already work for the corps. Even among pirates, loyal Catholics don't do magic without church permission, and most priests encourage "peaceable solutions" rather than fireballs. And the kiwigs eat most folks alive.

● Kommander

● Do you think it was a coincidence that two of your team got audited the next month and one got deported? Or that your Johnson was found after a "tragic suicide," and Shiawase re-released the file you stole anyway? You may have won a battle, but it works differently here.

They don't nod and say "no sense hunting the bastards, they'll only know a deniable Mr. Johnson. Hire another team and make profits elsewhere," like in Seattle. Here they're worried.

So they find the ID attached to your false SIN's fingerprints and run it through the main banks to search for other SINs with the same patterns. Then you've got to change your pattern—your face and fingerprints—to fool the search engines. If not, the police knowbots

flag any new SINs close enough for jazz, and when you apply for a license (like your next boat), you're brought in for questioning.

- Shiawatcher
- So call me a temp. I'm out of here, and I've got money.
- King Crosshair
- Is this piracy or shadowrunning? And don't just say "yes."
- Bloody Rackham
- It's piracy. Like the intro post said, no Johnson, no Mobster, no suit calling our shots, you pick the cash cow. If we borrow some operating procedures from our less-free shadowrunning brothers, it's a necessity to get the goods out and on the water.
- The Gingerbread Man

Shiawase is not as united as it seems. Its various divisions are headed by different managers, usually backed by separate Shiawase family members in Japan. The subsidiaries hate each other more than they hate other corps and often compete directly.

- They don't share information, so you can pull the same tricks on several branches without the eyes on high learning anything.
- Spider

RENRAKU'S PROJECTS

Renraku is a big player financially but is not a particularly visible presence in the Philippines because its primary biz, tertiary industry, keeps it out of sight and mind for most Filipinos. In addition to running the Philippine Matrix servers, Renraku's Manila offices design computer and deck parts, machine tools and simulators, all for export to Japan, Hong Kong and North America.

- Many pirates work for Renraku by day, between raids. The corp has not realized that it takes more than money to buy the heart of a Filipino. They think we will sweat to give Americans laptops when our brothers can't afford phones. Renraku thinks us such scrip-slaves that it hires two-nuyen-an-hour Filipino guards for its shipments and factories. Guard we do, minus a cyberdeck here, a passcode there. The corp will not use us much longer.
- Haring Ibon

The corp uses the regrown environment to research magic and natural medicines. Researchers at its two underwater laboratories off Luzon study Awakened coral and the effects of living plankton on mana. But the corp's most impressive venture is the half-finished Underwater Living project, a 25-kilometer-square domed city under construction near Negros. The small completed portion contains one thousand residents, who farm kelp and tropical fish for food and pet stores, and a half-dozen psychologists watching the effects of confinement on human behavior. The entire complex is expected to be completed in 2065, depending on the success of its preliminary experiments.

- Officially, the complex performs only non-experimental aquaculture. But it receives late-night shipments from boats without the corp's logo. My team intercepted one, and it was carrying industrial-strength pesticides, weed-killer and fertilizers as well as some chemicals we couldn't identify. Renraku makes no secret that it's farming down there, but what I want to know is why they need bug spray and weed-eaters, considering that every plant and animal was deliberately introduced to the environment. And why stuff that's strong enough to kill people?

- Serenade

FUCHI'S TAKEOVERS

Fuchi has an unusually small presence in the Philippines compared to the rest of its holdings. Though it started big in the thirties, its initial investments didn't pan out, and the Nakatomis have since sold off everything but a portfolio of core holdings to retain their seat on the Corporate Advisory Council. They've stuck mostly to entertainment, even letting Renraku snatch the Matrix out from under them when they realized that most Filipinos couldn't pay for phone or Matrix connections. They own several live theaters and concert halls, as well as trid/vid/radio stations that broadcast disappointingly tired corporate pabulum and even lamer shows from the West and Japan. Still, Fuchi's children's programs are popular, and its influence on public opinion is fairly strong.

- And Fuchi owns the remote-vote system, so the Nakatomis' "influence" may expand quite a lot, come next February. They think Masaru's hand-counting idea can go frag itself.
- Juan Woo

During the past month, Fuchi has inexplicably showed some interest in local Filipino industries, buying four Philippine sugar refineries and logging companies. Many local pirates don't like the Japanese taking over native businesses when they should be preparing to leave forever, and have resorted to open sabotage of anything Fuchi.

- Dunkelzahn's influence reaches even here. With Villiers' increase in power at Fuchi, he's put the other families in a panic. The Nakatomis are buying up all the businesses they can to ensure that their Asian empire can stand alone if Villiers makes a break for it.
- Uplift

- And man, are they vulnerable. They haven't had time to revamp their prizes' security and management, so a few strikes could hurt the Nakatomis severely.

- Ramon

YAMATETSU'S SUBSIDIARIES

Yamatetsu maintains no direct presence on the islands but is represented through its subsidiaries. The corp's MetaErgonomics subsidiary controlled city planning when the Japanese reorganized, putting people into homogenous neighborhoods located conveniently close to the workplace to avoid the pollution of com-

muter vehicles. The metahuman quarters always meet the standards of safety (one way or another) but lack the homey touches they put on the human neighborhoods. Yamatetsu-owned Shibata Construction and Engineering carries out most of these projects. Yamatetsu also owns some agribusinesses, hotel/entertainment centers for tourists and geothermal power plants at Mount Apo and Taal.

- Yama still treats metahumans a drekload better than other keiretsu.

- Judy

- Technically, yes, the corp's subsidiaries employ more metahumans ... but also more people, period, because you simply need more hotel staff and rice growers than computer engineers. You'll find very few metahuman executives at Yamatetsu.

- Mega Mouth

SMALLER AND LOCAL CORPS

Many smaller Japanese corporations were either bought out by megas or formed too late to grab anything significant in the Philippines. Having a Philippine branch is a status symbol in Japan, so many maintain a single building or token office. Yakashima's the only one that has successfully exploited the situation, taking advantage of the growth of wildlife to start a Farm-the-Seas branch and using the local nasties to expand into the underwater para-security market.

- There's a market for aquatic paranimals? Like what, were-seals?

- DeeZil

A few independent Filipino corps remain in the islands, but those are rarely targeted by pirates unless they blatantly cooperate with the Japanese. Most pirates would rather wait until all Japanese are out before they start preying on their countrymen, however rich.

However, Japanese and Filipino corps have cooperated to keep Saeder-Krupp, Ares and Aztechnology out of the islands by instituting severe tariffs and restrictions that preclude "foreign" firms from operating profitably in the Philippines. You can bet those corps are looking for a way to change that.

MODUS OPERANDI

by Bantugan

Captain Chaos and my pirate friends double-teamed me to persuade me to share the following info. "Tell them how we do it," they said, "but don't *really* tell them, so we don't get caught." Thanks a lot, guys. I'll see what I can do.

Legend has it that Japan is the all-seeing police state that'll arrest you for just *thinking* of committing a crime. They outgun us, out-magic us, and out-tech us. Even the *koban* police booths have that "enabling" legal system with the uplink to central mainframes so the cops can check for escaped convicts, all-points-bulletins, licensed car owners and such.

Well, the Imperial police force may have superior firepower, magic and technology, but they sure don't outthink us or outnumber us. That all-seeing stuff is a pile of drek. Like most modern security forces, the Imperial police practice a policy of containment—they concentrate their resources in specific areas. In other districts—certain rural and urban areas and a few islands—the cops maintain a token presence or none at all because the large SINless populations in those areas make crime-fighting virtually impossible.

- Not that this prevents them from grabbing a scapegoat with a SIN and "making an example" out of him. But if they did that too often in a place like Binobaan-town in southeast Davao, revenge would be swift.

- Bali Song

GETTING IN GEAR

To obtain a vehicle, you have to know the system as well as the corps do or better. You need to know which neighborhoods to raid and which to run to. You need your paperwork in order, and enough extra legal drek (most likely forged) to cover your hoop depending on who or what you run into. If you don't have that, a really good jailbreak team is a necessity. On water or land, you need fake IDs to prove you are legally entitled to own a motor vehicle. (In the Philippines, recreational or commuter usage is not considered a valid reason for vehicle ownership and operation.)

Getting something with a real engine requires a business license, an A-list citizen sponsoring you, and/or a pressing reason. Most folks take the bus, bicycle, or jeepney and truck taxi services, many of which are electrically powered. Small fishing boats are okay to own, but you'll still need a fishing license to show you're not "stealing natural resources." The only folks entitled to legally own and operate other vehicles are firefighting services, disaster-relief agencies, law-enforcement providers, ambulance services, the military and others considered "vital to state functioning" (i.e. megacorporate honchos).

This means you need to disguise yourself as a qualified vehicle owner, work without an engine or simply not get caught with the one you have. All three are doable. Concealing an outboard motor isn't difficult, but limits you to a banca or other small craft that can be easily outrun by an MCT-made Riverine clone. For serious hauls you'll need something the size of a Swordsman. (If you remove a craft's engine and fit it with sails, you can claim you were helplessly "blown off course" if caught in the wrong place.) Faking the documentation is relatively easy, as SINS are created, issued and deleted constantly.

The best place to grab SINS and IDs is from hospitals. The morgues and maternity wards are rife with black-market trading. The government likes keeping records, so people who apply for new SINS, especially in rural areas without an accurate head-count, are rarely refused. They check your prints, face and blood type against other processors, but usually just the main ones. If you always apply somewhere other than the Bataan/Manila sprawl, San Fernando, Cebu or Baguio, chances are the computer won't hit any clones. Just don't give them a reason to keep searching. If that's likely, deck the Ministry of Demographics and Records.

The processing power in the MD&R is immense, so a ready staff of deckers and knowbots constantly deletes outdated information. Naturally, those deckers can decide what gets archived and what gets erased. Also naturally, they can make some serious goofs (especially if persuaded with a little nuyen).

- I don't get it. Processing power for your name, rap sheet and blood type? I can do that with my old Sony cyberdeck. Even with ninety million folks, what's the bug?

- Judy

- Your Sony can't tap into the morph-seeking traffic computers that tell you where your car is now, down to the stoplight, and then archive that data in case the cops want it.

- Crossed Kris

- The car-spotting traffic eyes recognize faces, but if you wear a big enough hat, put your hand in front of your face or look down, it throws them. Dodging cop cars on foot is dicey, but if you can blend, all is wiz.

- Knight of Diamonds

BEATING THE SECURITY

On shore, security is tighter than at sea—it's easier to get a fishing permit than a gun or car. Inland factories can put magnetic anomaly and chemical detectors in their doorways, but delicate electronics don't stand up well to sea air, so the factories near the bay stick to old-fashioned guards and alarms. Boats rarely have security measures beyond armed guards, detection systems and SOS panic-buttons, unless they are carrying valuable or dangerous cargo such as gold or nuclear waste.

- You can still hit the inland offices, you just need to think like a shadowrunner. Frag, I learned how to get past the Empire's Gateway and wand detectors back in Frisco. Use cera-metal or composite plastic knives, not the Nicky Saitoh metal monsters. And there's not a stick in the world that'll set a wand off. And you can get guns and blocks of big-boom past the chems by wrapping them in plastic baggies and carrying them in buckets of ammonia-laced water or chum to disguise the smell.

- Sound

- Or use legitimate "weapons." Ever been hit by a block of soap in a sock? Or catch a hucked bowling ball? Or run over six hundred marbles? Your brain is still your best weapon (provided you can use yours, of course).

- Animal

- If you've got cyberware, fake your SIN with nonthreatening 'ware like artificial hips or stomach implants. The "I'm former military" line does not fly here. If you've got obvious 'ware, don't walk in a front door. Get a friend to disable it or sneak in, 'cause if you're detected, they'll take no excuses and search you in places you never even knew you had.

- Rosa



NUNUS '97

- And people say the Carib is cinematic. At least we don't pull this "gasp, go on without me" drek.

- Bloody Rackham

Most shipping hijackers favor night operations, when a metahuman pirate's night vision gives him a distinct advantage over human soldiers. Snorkeling and diving gear are unrestricted, so most pirates have back-up personnel waiting in the water with bigger weapons in case things get messy. Rarely do we begin with violence. Not only does Masaru frown on fighting, it is dangerous and unnecessary if you use your brains. Instead, we trick the corpsters into letting us on board or take them by surprise. When we do fight, it is without mercy, and we usually win simply because we are willing to kill and die for our nation as few corp guards will do for a job.

I was decoy on a raid once when we nabbed three tons of processed meat for the families on the rocks. I was the "drunken boater" who hit the side of the freighter. While I apologized to the pilot, a diving team with plastic-wrapped guns emerged from the water around us. I naturally went "hysterical" and begged the terrible pirates not to kill me, as they heaved the meat crates over the side, tied us up and "stole" my boat. The pilot freighter and I both reported the incident, but my crew was in no danger of being caught because the underwater back-up team was already moving the goods.

WORKING TOGETHER

Teamwork is the hallmark of our piracy. As the Japanese government suspects, we work with labor unions, for often we are the Filipino worker's only recourse against exploitation. Strikes and protests are frequently peaceable to avoid another Namfrel massacre, but a mass of a hundred picketers outweighs a single police car and overflows jails quickly.

- A lot of these union guys are pirate crews themselves. I cracked up when I got close enough to Ramon to find out his crew all work in the same office during the day. Talk about weekend warriors ...
- Judy

Unfortunately, the megacorporations have responded by using increasingly brutal tactics to quell demonstrations. Depending on where you are and which corporation or Imperial office you picket, you may be arrested, beaten down by yakuza strongmen or shot. We teach our recruits passive resistance, because even corp cops will usually arrest rather than shoot an unresisting person. And as long as you're still alive, even in jail, never give up. Rescue missions and jailbreaks are as common as those for profit. Because the Network rarely includes law-enforcement personnel, these missions require shadowrunner-level expertise and stealth. Often, we come into the jails through underground tunnels, while distracting all but a skeleton crew with the "riot" outside.

YOUR ENEMY

The civil police are the least brutal security forces you'll face at a demonstration. Though they are quick to use force to dispel crowds, they commonly employ nonlethal measures such as tear gas and rubber bullets.

The Imperial Police, however, have the responsibility of safeguarding the Imperial government and are much less "forgiving" than the civil police forces. They primarily concern themselves with gathering intelligence on subversives and potential subversives, including pirates. They subcontract security corporations to operate their holding facilities—if that does not scare your crew, it should.

The Imperial Marines are called in to quell any threats to public welfare that fall outside the jurisdiction of the corporations. Take hostages, cause widespread destruction or rioting, and you'll find yourself facing the Imperial Marines. Fortunately, most of them are honorable enough to accept a surrender and give you a chance in court.

This is not the case with megacorporate security forces, however, which maintain that criminals on their property become corporate property themselves. Anyone without an existing SIN can be issued a corporate SIN whenever the corp wants, so when SINless criminals are caught, they are corporate citizens under corporate jurisdiction. Such a trial is, shall we say, "efficient."

- Corps that nab SINless pirates or runners won't hesitate to "volunteer" you for research, so beware. The corp that catches you might just be in need of some sentient test subjects to determine the effects of massive HMHVV infection on its highly experimental

new cyberware, the effects of morphine addiction on physad magic abilities or the effects of death on a person's aura!

- Fury

A Filipino pirate convicted by the government can expect a sentence of ten to two hundred years, depending on his crime and metatype. If little can be proved, you may be fined, have your Matrix access limited with a "rider chip" or simply be deported to a low-status island such as Bohol, with few, if any corporate facilities, large metahuman populations and high disease rates. These punishments may delay or annoy you, but even the anarchy on the island hell of Yomi is survivable. And if you can get past the walls and guards, you are out on the water again.

- Frag, after dodging warlord gangs in Chicago for three years, doing time on Yomi was a piece of cake. Not an insect spirit in sight!
- Queen Lorna@bug-free-city!

If the government has some real evidence against you or you really frag them off, you may end up in Shiawase's 50,000-inmate "Meifumado" prison on Yomi, practically an arcology in itself. Mitsuhama, Renraku and Fuchi maintain their own prisons, but Shiawase ships offenders from all over the world to this leviathan. It is possible to break prisoners out, but given the stories I have heard, even one night inside will scar you for life.

FINANCING THE STRUGGLE

by Cholo

If Bantugan hasn't scared you off with tales of the Big Bad Hapon, maybe I should tell you why to come here. I don't expect you to care for the Philippines the way we do. But I do expect you to listen when I say that resourceful pirates and runners can obtain datachips worth thousands of nuyen and other corporate loot in the Philippines.

- Ooh, the wisdom of the East.
- Prime Runner

I can't give exact prices, but if it's got a Japanese logo on it, we can sell it.

CORPORATE RAIDING

The best way to make money and friends in the Philippines is by targeting the corporations. Anyone in the Network will help when you rob or raid a corporate facility, because the corporations destroy our land and our people. And there is plenty to find at any corporation to make the trip worthwhile.

Philippine labs are where the final stages of research for many projects are completed, and Philippine factories produce most of the electronics and computers the corps manufacture, often years before they are released in the UCAS. If you want a shipment of new prototype cyberdecks, come to the Philippines. No place outside of Japan has as many corporate research and manufacturing facilities as the Philippines.

• It's in the top fraggin' five, that's for sure. Quezon City is shadowrunner heaven. My crew spent two weeks bribing and mapping our way through sewers under the business district. After that, a simple monoblade and tool kit were all we needed to pop into a Mitsuhaman Automatonics facility and grab Mitsu's prototype deep-sea mining drone. Then we proceeded next door to Shiawase Biogenetic Laboratories, where we snatched some test batches of an experimental super-malaria drug, then down the block to a Fuchi factory for several crates of simchip blanks. Two weeks of work, then 400K worth of goodies in one night.

• Ramon

Corporate ships leave the Philippines every day, carrying Renraku cyberdecks and computers, MCT drones and Shiawase nanotech vats. And once you've loaded your boat, you need not immediately set sail or hide your cargo, for we have places where you can rest and recover.

But if you fear getting carved up by Imperial Marines when you hijack an escorted boat, we will work with you, hitting three or four places at once as a distraction to thin the police response.

If you are accustomed to land operations but like the quick getaway the sea provides, we can cue you with shoreline factories and close-to-land shipping. Most factories are located near Manila Bay so they can float their garbage into the South China Sea, so it's easy to park a boat beside one and bucket-brigade VCRs, trid sets, microwave ovens and halogen lamps until the alarm reaches the police. With five to twenty minutes to start a fire in the fuse box and depart, you sell the goods, the corp loses money, and sometimes faces a safety inspection for the faulty wiring.

• You can buy microwaves and lamps anywhere. Where's the profit in selling them on the black market?

• Rathceet

• In the UCAS, sure. Go to Aztlan some time and see how many stores carry non-Aztech-made consumer electronics ... meaning good consumer electronics. Britain, France, Azania and both Tirs restrict the Japanacorps, so goods double in demand ... and price.

• Maiden UCAS

• Corps trade in more than electronics. The Philippines are the world's seventh largest gold producer, as well as copper in Cordillero, oil in Mt. Apo and lots of real wood.

• Kaching

Or we can introduce you to the profits in corporate offices. Much original research is conducted in the Philippines, especially biotechnical and environmental. The NANs and Eastern European Green-party countries pay good nuyen for documentation of effective non-magical regrowth practices, and even more for new fertilizers or engineered organisms. And street docs anywhere, especially off-line African nations without access to hospitals, will pay gold, diamonds, minerals or magic for medical tech.

And if you have a vehicle to transport them, robotics are lucrative booty as well. MCT and Shiawase have made it a point

of pride to outsell one another with drones and robots this fall. Shibata Construction and Engineering actually builds them, from construction powerloader suits to riot- and fire-control drones and undersea crawlers. Many cost as much as the average sports car. Some are rigged machines as expensive as cyberdecks.

• Cholo's forgetting another profitable arena—playing corps against each other. When pirates find personnel records, blackmail material or dirty secrets, they usually junk it along with the rest of the building or try to use it themselves. Shadowrunners know how to pawn the info off to the corp's rivals. The corps-per-square-click density is so high that there's practically a standard rate for the stuff. Data that lets Corp A blackmail Corp B's top researcher into quitting or moving grosses you about half the guy's starting salary.

• Kommander

• Be scared, but not too scared, of selling mindbenders. Idealistic pirates frown on it. You can make plenty of money on mind candy here—beetles for corpsters, opiates for the poor—but the yakuza consider it their personal domain, and they'll cack you like they cacked the Triads.

• Paper Pusher

• What's the telesma market like?

• Talon

• Less than you'd expect. You can get mountain's-heart ash off some of the new islands, and there's always Palawan for monarch's eyes and ray tails, but the reforestation was accomplished through industrial fertilizers, and many other places have been devastated, especially reefs.

Telesma prices are high, but the market is small and specialized. If you're not a mage and can't fake the lingo, the chances of finding a buyer in the maybe 0.18 percent of the population that can both use and afford a focus are so low that the time it takes to sell it almost halves your profit. Much easier to take a truckload of computers and sell them for a few thousand apiece to anyone who walks in.

• Tikbalang

SELLING TO THE HUK

Many of you may have homes you care for as much as we care for ours, or you may not want to cast your lot with us permanently. But even a brief visit can be profitable.

One of the things I never understood about Seattle is how all of you walk around with guns and drive armored Saab Dynamits and buy tankfuls of flammable fuel, all the time, and the authorities don't give you trouble. I read your posts where you talk about comparison shopping for handguns and using mortars on a parking lot, and I collapsed on the floor laughing! No wonder Captain Chaos asked about different places all over the world to pirate. You must have blown all of yours up!

We "native criminal elements" have our locations reported to Manila and Kyoto if we are even seen at a gas station. I have been



picked up on suspicion of hoarding fuel, yet your poster Wedge burns ten thousand rounds of ammunition in a week! If he doesn't want them, send them here!

Naturally, it is illegal to bring restricted items into the nation and doubly so to sell them to suspected insurgents. But the navy has difficulty patrolling the outermost islands.

- A great big "duh" for Economics 101. With no readily available supply of guns and cars and a revolution that demands untraceable, disposable weapons and one-shot vehicles, people who can supply either can demand any price they want. Forget hitting the CAS to dump your magic and guns; you'll be muscling in on someone's market. The Huk pays top nuyen even for stuff way under SOTA, and they'll feed you, hide you and set you up with jobs.

- Carousel

- The Huk is mostly peasant farmers or factory workers, so most of their cash goes for basics like food and medical care. There's not much left for equipment. On the other hand, the Network brings in more information than they have pirates to act on, and their raids nab a lot of drek they don't use. If you bring a decent amount of goodies, you can make the return trip stocked with chip-players, laptops, trid sets and clock-radios, including expensive models not available in America. If you want action, the Huk will gladly swap everything they know about the nearby Renraku facility—including what they're researching, the building's layout, where the sec-badges are encoded and even who's sleeping with whom. After

that, you run on your own time, for your own profit and without a Johnson.

- Sencida

If you have extra weapons, cars, boats, even gasoline, the Huk will give you a warm welcome. More so if you have medical experience. The Imperial line holds that cyber-implant surgery creates physical, chemical and aerosol wastes that our ecosystem cannot absorb. As a result, cyberware is restricted to datajacks and headware for those with jobs handling more than 20 Mp per day. The Ministry of Health rarely sees a "pressing need" for "frivolous or dangerous" cyberware when surgeons are required elsewhere. But the corporate soldiers get a new enhancement practically every week. Bring us some surgeons, and we'll supply the parts. We can get the product and the plans for next year's line in return.

Our Network supplies us well, but few Filipinos overhear the highest levels of corporate or Imperial decisions. If the Empire gives up its propaganda and sugar-sweet cover story and openly wages war, we're going to need all the information on Imperial military plans or Japan's election strategy we can get. Masaru himself pays in such a case (if I might libel an upstanding citizen with an ugly pirate rumor).

- The Huk doesn't just pay in trade, by the way. Deckers work night and day to liberate nuyen from Japanese banks, so you might end up with negotiable Renraku bonds. Selling magic here has a good mark-up, but the market is mostly the corps. Unfortunately, Huk pirates view any work that'll help corpsec as work against the revolution. But most corps here use yak hit men

and deckers for work runners usually do, so corp shadow jobs are fairly rare.

◆ Knight of Diamonds

MOVING ON OUT

I don't know many Huk who sell their hauls directly. It leaves little time to run a revolution or plan for the society to come.

Instead, the Network extends outside the country in a web of movers and fixers who process, repackage and sell contraband from the Philippines. The Japanese are on good enough terms with Malaysia, Australia, Thailand and Indonesia that tariffs are low and demand for Japanese products can be met legally, but outside those countries Philippine goods can command high prices. And Chinese, Japanese and Australian tourists lap up the Philippines' "environmental paradise" image, making the island a tourism capital of the East. This means cruise and passenger liners rotate in and out daily, and exports are searched less often than imports.

With a few nuyen for the crew, you can arrange for any number of unmarked boxes to be dropped to a pick-up at their next stop. From there, it goes to independents who can make the long hauls to the Americas or Europe.

◆ If you don't want to make the haul yourself, stay at home but find out what ships are coming in from the Philippines, wait 'll you see activity, then swoop in with your gang and some locals. Odds are you'll outnumber their guards three to one if they've had to feed their crew for a month and you've hired yours for a day. Wham, you got the gold without the work.

◆ Bloody Rackham

◆ Others pull the "ship in distress" routine or hit the pick-up guy the night before the pick-up, then pose as his tugboat crew and load the contraband onto shore—right into their own vehicles. So don't trust anyone who approaches your ship as a "friend of the revolution," unless the Huk's already given you the name and description. Plenty of people are cashing in on the rebellion.

◆ Ramon

Eventually, you'll probably hit internal dangers if you're moving merchandise, though few pirates admit to it. Factions that deal in espionage or legitimate political protest make far less money than pirates and raiders, giving them less influence than the criminals. This stirs resentment and factions sometimes react by gumming up the information networks.

I once targeted a shipment of cyberdecks coming to Manila. I trusted a tip from one of my "fellow freedom fighters" and took a crew of thirty to it. Turned out it was escorted by Admiral Mishina Daini himself. We were lucky it was so close to our hide-out on ... well, we don't really need to disclose that. We ditched the boat before the torpedoes hit it and swam to the caves. Turned out the girl who told me about the shipment knew about Daini ... she just wanted to "prove that violence is wrong" by letting a pirate frag up publicly. Thanks, hon.

FOREIGN MARKETS

The Network's primary international markets are Aztlan, Amazonia, Tir Tairngire, Tir na nÓg, Taiwan and England. Entering these countries legally is difficult, so the Huk has cultivated contacts in the primary ports of each country. Most of the countries have equivalent resistance movements—the Yucatán revolt in Aztlan, the New Ulster Resistance in Tir na nÓg, and Students for a Democratic Tomorrow in Tir Tairngire—whose members help distribute restricted goods to the common people. They'll keep extra SINS on their boats; when they come out to meet you, you load your stuff in their ship, switch off a few people, and both of you rip around the countryside for a few weeks selling your haul.

◆ Ripping around the fraggin' Tirs?

◆ Zero-Sum

◆ Did you think we were all pretentious, sober and manipulative?

◆ Rosebringer

◆ Other groups support the Huk, too. The Mafia, Triads and Seoulpas are all happy to buy from anyone who'll frag up the yaks, and Ares and Saeder-Krupp have been known to plant ringers in the Huk to learn keiretsu secrets.

◆ Tonkin

◆ Or to buy the friendship of the revolution when it's still small and struggling. Then, they think, we'll remember them fondly when we govern our land, and they'll step into the Japanacorps' empty shoes. But we are not Hawai'i. We won't be manipulated by the corps.

◆ Naserena

Because of the friendliness between North America and Japan, and the wide availability of consumer goods in the UCAS and NANs, we sell little to North America. The exception is CalFree, where the lack of effective government and the economy has produced a large consumer market that is seldom satisfied. Often the trade is corporate contraband for telesma in the North or simsense in the South. These are funneled into the CAS or Seattle respectively, for guns, car parts or flat-out nuyen on the return leg.

PLAYERS IN THE PHILIPPINES

◆ I gathered a list of the major folks you're likely to run into in the Imperial Province. Because the connections and conflicts between them are as important as the players themselves, I've organized them into categories according to sphere of influence—the Huk, Imperial forces, yakuza and corporations. The pirate leaders' names are the aliases told to new recruits, so don't accuse us of betraying the cause, 'kay?

◆ Captain Chaos

Transmitted 15 January 2059, 00:15:13 MT



THE HUKBO NG BAYAN LABAN SA HAPON'S FORCES

As Siukoy explained in his part of this post, the Huk is a massive movement that can't all be listed in one place. It'd be like listing everyone involved in the American Revolution. What we can do is give you an idea of who'd be signing the Declaration of Independence were they stupid enough to give their real names. Mention a few of these aliases and you might get past the first screening by a member of the Network.

Because the Huk are less an organization and more a bunch of different agendas under one umbrella, we decided the best bet was to break them down by how you might encounter them. Except for Masaru ... he gets his own write-up below.

Masaru

by Red Wraith

The Empire's file on this dragon is a klick long, so let's sum it up. Awakened from beneath Mt. Mayon in Bantayan during a lunar eclipse in 2014, Masaru is the second latest riser of all the recorded greats (after Arleesh). The local Bikol call him "son of Kalaon," the peaceable son of the god of destruction. Negros Islanders call him the *mameleu*, and the Tagbanwa Negritos of Palawan call him *Taliakuod*, the snake that shakes the earth when displeased with its inhabitants. He seems to be the only great dragon in the Philippines, which also contains three other wyrms (again, this is recorded stuff, so your guess is as good as mine on how many there may really be). The other wyrms are Sawa (runs security at Shiawase's Baguio facility), Bacunawa (lives underwater, southeast of Mindoro), and Marcupo (in Cebu City). In Dunkelzahn's interview of April 30, 2018, he referred to Masaru as "the young one." But then again, what the heck does "young" mean when compared with short-lived metahumanity ... only 7,000 years old?

Wealth: Low-level for a dragon. Yep, that means he could still buy or sell us all a billion times. His worth seems to be in art objects, foci and other assorted modern-world assets. He's no Dunkelzahn or Lofwyr-level investor or market player by a long shot. Masaru does manage World Wildlife Fund money and has persuaded Yamatetsu city planners to build new facilities for the incoming Japanese population on Mindanao rather than the Visayan Islands (I can't find a solid reason for this). He also bought an expansive complex on Vancouver Island in 2042. What he may have hidden there is unknown.

Interests: Check this out—he loves books. That's right, old-fashioned paper copies. He loves to read them. He supposedly has agents in all kinds of countries supporting writers and thinkers who are banned by their governments. He supposedly also has a vast collection of post-realist and post-interdependence political theory tomes as well as dreklods of stuff from Templar Press and other anarchist's-cookbook folks in NorthAm. Between 2014 and 2024 he had several tons of philosophy, from Plato to Coleman, imported. He does not (publicly) sanction violence.

Enemies: Before the publication of the manifesto above and his declaration of everything but war (which has likely bought him the ire of some high-ranking Imperials and corporate presidents), his biggest personal enemy was definitely the yakuza, especially the Shotozumi-gumi. There was open conflict between them in

Seattle, but it happened so fast that very little made the news there. I got conflicting reports when I tried to dig deeper, but everyone agrees it had something to do with an egg.

- Jeez! How many of these fragging lizards are there? It's getting so a guy can't strafe a coastline without hitting something with scales.

- Kane
"One Public Enemy and only one!"

- I trust Masaru as far as I can throw him. A dragon swearing that he'd die for a nation? No, he's got a plan that'll outlast the Philippines by a hundred years.

- Dragonslayer

- Didn't seem that way in person. He was as down-to-earth with my team as any Seattle runner. It's weird. He listens and makes you feel wanted when all his bodyguards are more nervous than caffeinated cats.

- Mercy

- Before you pass judgment, Dragonslayer, remember that Masaru is young. Status may be on his mind, but he is not without passion. He appears sincere to me, though like all youth a bit headstrong.

- Orange Queen

- Let's hope the wyrm learns from those who went before him.

- The Laughing Man
"HA! Fraggin' HA!"

The Philippine Nation Party

Chairman: Julian Ocampo

Home Office Location: Manila

This political party formed out of the old Kaakbay, Partido ng Bayan and Nationalista parties in 2051, when neither they nor anyone else thought open elections would happen in the next decade. They had begun to establish ties with pirate communities when Masaru returned from his stay in North America and took charge of the reform movement. Ever since he forced the Japanese to declare an election and threw his support behind the PNP, they've been scrambling for supporters and legitimacy.

- That's a tough proposition, because Ocampo himself is a pirate of no mean reputation. I can't prove it, but I think he's the pirate Kanadih, and the Imperials have several dozen warrants out for his arrest on charges of sedition, assault, armed robbery, murder, conspiracy and treason. He made the yakuza his special target, so when they see through the plastic surgery/new name/new SIN combo, the party is in deep kimchi.

- Prospero

- To avoid them, he's been hiding with the Sea Gypsies in the Philippine Sea when not hosting benefit dinners. The Badjao aren't welcome in most ports, so they're paying freelancers to keep him

up to date on politics on the main islands. (Without legal vehicles, that is more complicated than it sounds.)

- Princesa

Filipa Salonga, the party's presidential candidate, was hand-picked by Masaru for her intelligence and determination. Because of her anti-corp stance, most of her broadcasts have been censored, forcing her to travel personally to every constituency to make speeches and gather support.

- Her road crew was the target of six yakuza attacks in the last month. Even with her hefty entourage, she's had her car bombed twice, her sound equipment stolen and sabotaged and her guest speakers kidnapped. If these are Japanese techniques to win support, how can you think they'd give up after losing an election? The only way to win is to physically drive them out.

- Haring Ibon

The Anti-Corp Faction

Captain: Paolo Montalban of the Negros Island Factory Workers' Union

This ethnically mixed faction of the Huk contains almost all of the nation's union members, including Japanese, Chinese and Anglo workers imported by the corporations. Many confine themselves to "traditional" labor-rights activities such as strikes, sit-ins and protests. Others, such as Montalban, lead double lives, peacefully protesting by day and sabotaging factories by night.

The faction has no base of operations, as all of its members work in legitimate society, but its Network branches extend everywhere, organizing unions in every business from migrant farm workers to computer programmers. Sabotage is performed by small, close groups of members, often workers from the same building. Each business district, cordoned off by nationality and metatype, forms a local union.

- Activists rarely do any serious pirating themselves, sticking to exposés of workplace horrors (crusading reporters take note) or destroying corporate property. On the other hand, they can be useful contacts for pirates, because the high-level members have responsible jobs and can be helpful when breaking into corp facilities.

- Kommander

- And when they get caught and stuck in corporate prisons, all the pirates they helped feel obligated to bust them out and let them join another faction.

- Roberto

The Environmentalist Faction

Captain: Edtami Mansayagan

Environmentalism has been a force in the Philippines since the 1980s, when peasant farmers realized that logging and strip mining were ruining their lands and threatening their livelihoods. Today they are the loudest, most well-known and violent faction of the Huk. After eighty years of fighting, they refuse to be satisfied with the cosmetic environmental regulations imposed by the

Imperial government, and they insist that only a democratic distribution of land will produce a stable ecosystem, because then the people working the land will have to live in the results.

- The story of their fight is amazing. When you read about the starving farmers in the Bukidnon 13 sending food to the wives of the logging truck drivers that they'd put out of business, because the real enemy was the corp and not its workers, you gotta respect them.
- Professional Student

Mansayagan is a Lumad tribesman who is determined that his tribe's history will never be repeated. When oil was discovered beneath the Lumad's ancestral home of Mount Apo in the 1980s, the nine tribes signed a *d'yandi* agreeing to fight to keep their homes. The fight was still raging when the Japanese arrived and agreed to respect their claim. But when the Philippines became a prefecture and MCT expressed its interest in the oil, the Imperial authorities moved the Lumad to reservations.

Mansayagan works from a northern island, rarely resting or leaving the boat with which he leads raids to destroy machinery and roads and replant forests with stolen seed. He personally attends each raid, so leaves intel-gathering up to a nondescript Anglo known only as "Manuel," who has an uncanny ability to find every place the Imperials skimp on environmental protection.

- Manuel's last name is "T'phthhht Auurhuuukk!" He's a seal shapeshifter. He can see, smell and taste pollution a human would miss. He wants the Japanese out entirely, especially Renraku, because his pod lives in the waters they're invading.
- Bali Song
- I'm gettin' me a club.
- Deezil

The Metahuman Rights Faction

Captain: Saloman Briones

Metahuman policlubs all over the world send money and people to aid the struggle to free the metahumans exiled on the island of Yomi. Of the native members of the Huk's metahuman-rights faction, half are escapees from the place, while the other half are metahumans and sympathizers who have held onto menial jobs. All of them hope that independence for Yomi will mean better opportunities, wages, housing and freedom.

- According to the Imperial government's official line, Yomi is an "experimental Awakened society" where metahumans with criminal potential form their own communities so they won't bother humans. In reality, it's 2,400 square clicks with 1.5 million penniless inhabitants stuck behind a 10 meter-tall wall, with a strip of land around the outside so the Imperial guards don't have to look in at the drek. The "society" consists of those who were there long enough to lose all compassion, robbing, raping and terrorizing newcomers. There is no place worse on earth. I live in Redmond now, and it's like paradise in comparison.
- Fury

- I've seen Yomi. There's no kids, none, even though people are raped all the time and there's no birth control. I think all of those people are a giant freaking experiment. If you have more information contact me at the drop slot below.

• Truthseeker@NA.SEA.6597466.shadowland.box 97

The faction operates as unobtrusively as possible, because all metahumans in the prefecture are under constant suspicion. Most of the group's actions are carried out by teams of two or three masked individuals, sometimes physads heavily trained in stealth. Often these teams target Yomi, killing guards, freeing prisoners or smuggling in food, clothing and soap. The group is based on the new islands off Palawan, putting them far from both Yomi and the government.

Saloman Briones, an Islamic Moro elf, organizes most raids but keeps a low profile outside the Huk. Supposedly, he works a day job where he's congenial to the Japanese, but he always keeps an eye out for dissatisfied metas to recruit.

- Miguel Mangahas is the real leader of the Revolution. He and the Bagong Hukbon Bayan will strike when the ranks are filled, and Mindanao will hold the first troll nation.
- Kalapaw

- It's because of idiots like you and Mangahas that the Japanese are so hard on us. All Filipinos have suffered—trolls do not have a monopoly on vengeance. You want too much too fast and bring unnecessary punishment on yourself and others.
- Naserena

The Terrorist Faction

Captain: Clarita Simpao

As far as I could tell, this is where anyone in the Huk without a more specific cause gets shunted. "Terrorist" is somewhat of a misnomer, but "Political," which I was originally considering, doesn't work either. This faction consists of anyone who is more obsessed with getting the Japanese out of power and establishing a Filipino government than with any specific aspect of Japanese oppression.

Some faction members are quiet types who know how to fight but don't want to directly attack anyone, so they hang out behind Salonga's campaign trail to protect her from yakuza vandals or assassins. Others are terrorists in the purest sense, indiscriminately attacking anyone and anything Japanese, making public threats and demanding concessions. Still others concentrate their work within the Huk itself, running distractions and jailbreaks to help Huk or Network members. But most are pirates, keeping their attacks and raids to water-based operations. They're a ruthless bunch, the ones who invented the "standing execution" Bantaliwak mentioned earlier.

Because the interests of faction members are so broad, the terrorist faction garners the most followers and contains the most highly trained, best-equipped and skilled of all the Huk's pirate factions. Their training grounds and equipment stores are concentrated near Bubayan, though their legitimate operations are directed from a dwarf neighborhood in Manila. They are loosely led by Clarita, a

dwarf conjuring adept who's worked for the Huk since 2026, long before many realized the dangers of Imperial occupation.

- She is one ruthless biff. I trained under her, and saw her version of on-the-job discipline. A couple of sixteen-year-olds had just completed training and were eager for their first raid. They picked their target, the private yacht of Kenji Miyata, the vice secretary of the Rice Farmers' Association, and sailed up at night, lights off, everything going well. Then Miyata's bodyguards approached from behind. Clarita could have sniped both guards, but she just watched as the kids got caught and "shot resisting arrest." I asked why, and she said if they had been worth saving, they would not have gotten caught. You better believe I always looked behind me after that.

- Azul

- She's gotten worse. Now she won't even work with newbies (lucky for them) but directs everyone to Josefa Escota, a troll who lost her left leg to the Imperial Police. Escota's constantly moving between different houseboats, so even finding her to ask about joining can be tough.

- Washer

- Houses aren't all she changes. She's also the voice of fifteen pirate radio jocks. With voice disguisers and some psychology, she targets each persona at a different audience, telling listeners what they want to hear to get their support in the election. Very slick.

- Muffin Man

Independent Pirates

Numerous independent Filipino and foreign pirates work with the Huk, but their main goal is to make money for themselves. Generally, these are criminals who would be pirating or running regardless of the political situation but prefer revolutionaries to yakuza for teammates. These are the guys you'll most likely contact first if you decide Pacific Ocean piracy is what you want.

- The so-called "independents" span the range from professional smugglers to gang members to kill-crazy terrorists. This document is all over how noble the Filipino cause is, but pirates are pirates.

- Markops

Our indie contacts tell us that Cesaro Bengson is the fixer to see in Manila if you're looking for work. A former shadowrunner who's worked throughout Asia, Bengson has enough skills, tact and influence to challenge the yaks on their own territory. His yacht is a floating casino, the only non-yakuza gambling den in the nation. He acts as a go-between among Huk factions and organizes independent runners for raids into China and Hong Kong to steal gear.

The transfer of goods from rebel pirates to transoceanic movers often takes place on his boat or one of his eight estates. Unless you do all your moving yourself, chances are "Slippery Cesaro" will squeeze a profit from you.

- He doesn't trust just anyone to get him the best price. His chief lieutenant is Yung Shon, a Korean dwarf, who circumnavigates the world every few months selling high-end contraband such as cyberdecks, computers and oil. Shon's an antisocial creep with a paranoid streak so wide he's survived eight years of runs into Tir Tairngire and Aztlan. He's a conspiracy nut, whose ideas about Elfland would make Lone Gunman's ears curl.

- Cholo

JAPANESE IMPERIAL FORCES

(THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT OF THE PREFECTURE OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS)

Governor: Fukatsu Saru

Technically, the Imperial government is "advising Filipino leaders until they can handle their own affairs." Sounds benign enough, but the Imperials have been here for thirty-seven years now. And the Imperial ministries and assembly (set up in imitation of similar Japanese government institutions) gives the lie to the idea that the Philippines are still a "republic."

The republic's elected president is technically in charge, but under the state of martial law declared in 2026, the assembly and governor, which report directly to the Japanese prime minister and emperor, write and enforce all legislation and administer the prefecture. Good assembly members pay some attention to their Filipino constituents so there aren't riots every month, but the assembly is about as responsive to the people as the American Congress was to its constituency back in the old USA—which is to say, not very.

The open presidential election in February will be the first in thirty years. Whether the voters elect a figurehead or a firebrand, Fukatsu's got no plans to step down.

- I hear Masaru "convinced" Fukatsu in his true form ... his face a meter from the guy.

- Mercy

- The Imperial government is quietly backing Carlos Consuni, the Liberal Catholic Voter's Party candidate. A former drama-sim star from Backbone Productions (Yakashima Entertainment), he says he'll stand up to the corps ... but not a whit to the Imperial government. Looks good until you discover his campaign is financed by every mega but Renraku, which doesn't like his stance on sea farming. Consuni blows his temper sometimes, but I would follow the money trail to find his real loyalties.

- Tikbalang

- To misquote Voltaire, that party is not liberal, not Catholic and not for the voters. What they are is backed by Fuchi and Yamatetsu, who own the media.

- Haring Ibon

- Fukatsu is hiring drekloads of security people and arming a militia, because he knows that if the emperor leaves him dry for even a day or two come February, plenty of people are going to come for his blood.

- Rosa



• He probably learned from Marietta Sasase, who leads the party. I think being blackmailed by six megacorps at once exceeds most politicians' quotas, so Yakashima and Renraku went for bribes instead. Ever tap her phone? She never makes a decision public without first running it by half a dozen of her executive friends.

• Tikbalang

The Ministry of Environmental Resources is the government's money pit. This ministry alone receives twenty-two percent of all funding to pay for its mission of reducing hazardous wastes, creating protective ozone in the troposphere to compensate for stratospheric loss, limiting logging and reforesting the Visayans.

• By building bigger smokestacks, you mean. There's no acid rain on Palawan or Cebu because those new smelters and those huge smokestacks release their poison into the wind current. Nishidojin looks at the receptor sites and smiles, while the drek comes down in New Guinea. There are no hazardous wastes because scrubber sludge isn't considered hazardous, even when it leaks into the groundwater. Don't get me started on the ministry's approval of Shiawase's nuclear reactors as opposed to Yamatetsu's geo-thermal and tidal energy plants. You saw the Go Jo. The ministry is nothing but a bunch of Shiawase toadies who are lucky I don't own a high-powered rifle.

• Kermit

• I had to escort Regina Enrile, the reforestation coordinator, to work last fall, dodging yak bullets all the way. She figures that at least the air here is clean and the imported fast-growing hardwoods make the islands green and not brown. If you get that rifle, give her a miss.

• Green Knight

The Imperial Marines

Vice Admiral: Mishina Daini

When the Big Switch was made in 2006, Japan reorganized its military based on the American model. Thus were born the Imperial Marines, specialists in amphibious assault and securing naval bases.

You know them from their work in San Francisco. The Imperial occupation force contains some 60,000 Imperial Marine troops and nearly 300,000 logistical support personnel, supplemented by about 15,000 air and naval personnel.

• Now is not the time for large-scale mercenary work, but soon. Guerrillas need military training and equipment to rival Japan's, but the Filipino army was dismantled in 2024, so training must be conducted on the sly. Neither the UCAS (President Haeffner) nor any non-Japanese corp (Ares, Aztechnology or S-K) have publicly sanctioned training Filipino troops.

• Matador

• What's "the Big Switch?"

• Do Boy

◆ The one-eighty the Japanese pulled by becoming an empire in 2006. Did you know Japan used to have no military at all—only a tiny Self-Defense Force? And the Emperor was a figurehead? There's a reason Japanese neo-anarchists fear megacorps. We remember who ended those days of peace.

◆ Shiawatcher

◆ Daini's boys are usually training to "defend the Emperor's holdings" (that means megas who want more territory or legitimate political protection). There ain't much call for the Japanese to take any more isolated land pockets or go to all-out war, so they tend to back any corp action they can get. In the Philippines, that means piracy—and they have their hands full because they can't rely on big pirate busts all the time. The mountains poke holes in the radar nets, which usually look up, not down. With air traffic, you can fake legitimate business more easily than by boat, especially in an eco-friendly LTA craft. What no one can figure is why they have Daini here. This guy is gung-ho and into the whole bushido mindset (granted, they breed those guys like rabbits in the Imperial Marines), and chasing pirates isn't what a warrior like Daini probably wants to do. My guess is he's either training some special forces for one hell of an invasion someplace or he pissed somebody off and is doing time. You make the call.

◆ Kane

"Frisco's Most Wanted #51 ... and dropping!"

YAKUZA OPERATIONS

Broken down by power blocs. You can't tell the players without a scorecard!

The Sumiyoshi-Kai

Oyabun: Asako "White Powder" Tsuburu

This clan hasn't got a lot of people in the Philippines, but they are influential beyond their numbers. They're big on the international scene, have cordial relations with most big corps (including Chinese ones) and they buy from Triad gangs to bring opiates from the mainland—which may give the lie to that Ryumyo nonsense.

◆ Except that Tsuburu's been seen meeting with a certain green-eyed Japanese man. The supposed cooperation between the Sumiyoshi and China is just a ruse by Ryumyo to plant moles in the kingdoms, the better to watch Lung.

◆ Dragonslayer

The Sumiyoshi-kai stick mostly to smuggling and distributing drugs from China and Africa, as well as guns and cyberware that they sell to independent pirates or keep for their own use. Because they target many of the same shipping lines and coastal facilities as the Huk, heated fights between the two groups occasionally occur.

◆ I'll say. Once my team was going after a Tan Tien shipment of chip encoders (great for starting up your own BTL operation). We had our conjuring adept call a sea spirit to confuse the freighter's captain; while he was seeing lights, we sent our two smallest on

deck to toss a few crates of encoders over the side. Easy, right? Well, while they were still tossing boxes down, the spirit fizzles. We look over and see a grinning Sumiyoshi mage. My guys jumped, and while the captain was trying to figure out what happened, the yaks whip out a fragging heavy machine gun and practically blow our boat out from under us. Then they wait—and grab encoders from the wreckage. I ain't fighting nobody with mages and HMGs. Not here.

◆ Senalda

The Ichiwa-Kai

Oyabun: Hasegawa Hasei

Major Bases: Manila, Olangapo, San Fernando

These guys left Japan in the teens and hit the Philippines just in time to grab control of the faltering Olangapo brothels as the American soldiers left. They cleaned the area up, offered higher-class service and added casinos and chip parlors to the existing strip joints. Pretty soon Olangapo had overtaken Bangkok as the prime destination for Japanese sex tourists.

Since then, the Ichiwa-kai have expanded their control to encompass at least sixty percent of all on-land, non-Revolution crime. (The Yamaguchi, Kinsei and Inagawas move more massive nuyen, but they're too legit to be listed.) The Ichiwa do plenty of hits and extractions and also run casinos, chip parlors and brothels on every island.

◆ And of course, they need a constant supply of women, children and farm animals to keep the brothels operating. They've got clubs where they don't give the girls birth control, because after five or six years the kids themselves are a draw. There are a lot of Amerasian and half-Japanese children walking around Olangapo. Their mothers call them "souvenir babies."

◆ Tetchie

◆ They bring illiterate peasants from the countryside in livestock trucks. While they're still doped up from the kidnapping, pimps feed them opium-laced food and water to keep them groggy. While they're high, they're alternately sweet-talked and intimidated, and also raped to keep them fearful and docile. After a week, the dosage is lowered to make them lucid but keep them addicted. Then they're put to work. Most stick with it, because if they run they find themselves alone in a strange city ... and experiencing excruciating withdrawal symptoms within hours. Even the ones who bail often crawl back. No chains or locks, but there's still no escape.

◆ Lustin' Prussian

"Under the skin, we're all human."

Hasegawa is elderly and does not involve himself with day-to-day Ichiwa operations. Instead, his wakagashira, Daigo Ieharu, coordinates operations and keeps track of corporate maneuverings so that the Ichiwa can take advantage of whoever's on top this week.

◆ Hassie's special pet is Cristina Roxas, a Filipina physad who acts as his primary enforcer. She's nuts. Had some prophetic dream

about how her destiny lies with the yaks, so every kill she makes for them will send her closer to heaven. She whispers this to her victims in detail as she tortures them. Scary ...

- Roberto

BAHAY NG ISDA

I'm including this restaurant chain as a separate heading because I got three different reports saying they're a front for a yakuza slavery ring, but no one has any proof or knows which family the chain is allegedly associated with. The chain includes nine restaurants in Manila, with others in Puerto Princesa, San Fernando and Quezon City. They're over-priced tourist traps, but people have been known to disappear after eating there. I don't know how many, and no charges have been pressed, so if they're doing it, they're good.

- The name means Coral Reef.
- Rick the Translator

I decked some mil-nets and went through four little shell companies and Monobe to get to the real owners. Turns out that the backer of this operation is a company rumored to be the main front for Ryumyo's business operations. The company, Trans-Pan ROF, owns 20 percent of Coral Reef and has a backer or two in a bunch of other Filipino businesses as well.

I don't know where the kidnapping stories come from. Far as I could tell, the Leyvas, an extended family that runs all nine restaurants, are clean people whose cooperation with the Japanese has just given them a bad name with the Huk.

- Carousel
- ROF!!!! ROF = Ring Of Fire! I knew it, Ryumyo must own that, and he's out to control the Ring of Fire. I am vindicated!
- Dragonslayer
- The kidnappings are real, but the yakuza is not the culprit. The people who disappear are taken to a hive on Luzon. Think about it—who needs more live bodies than insect spirits?
- Raid
- Vampires. The takeover cannot continue without sentient subjects
JH:OJP"
JFW)(89u
4tjq4=p4;)(k)-
● Stalker

(1.1 Mp deleted by sysop.)

- Thanks, everyone, for chiming in. All fifteen of you postulating that they're supplying everyone from Aztlan blood mages to Masaru (who's feeding his taste for human flesh) need to cool down in ShadowCell awhile. My personal bet is sex slavery or body-parts harvesting. (I tend to think the worst of metahumanity.)
- Captain Chaos

CORPORATIONS

Okay, guys, a list of every megacorporate division in the Philippines would be longer than Masaru's criminal record (where did you dig that up, Wraith?), so I'm going to skip the usual suspects. As a general rule, if they make it or sell it somewhere else, they do it here, too. I'm just going to point out the ones that are unique to the area or might be particularly interesting to pirates.

Lami Look Pagkaon (Delicious Bay Food)

CEO: Monique Desiderio

Home Office: Bataan

Lami Look Pagkaon grows algae, seaweed, shrimp, fish and underwater rice in the Moro Gulf. It supplies cheap food to much of Asia and is currently attempting to win one of Dunkelzahn's awards by growing cactus on the sea floor. Lami Look Pagkaon's main competitor is Yakashima's Farm the Seas, Inc. which moved in after the Big D made his bequest known. Yakashima has already tried and failed to take over Lami Look twice.

- And they'll keep failing. LLP hires all-Filipino workers at decent wages and lets the Huk hide people and equipment in their warehouses. We protect our own.
- Haring Ibon
- Yakashima may have given up on beating LLP in the food market and moved into the protection racket ... I mean market. With Renraku and Saeder-Krupp's underwater cities, and MCT and Aztech's deep-sea mining, they figured the time had come for aquatic watch dogs. They haven't been able to train anything as big, mean and stupid as a kraken, so they're sticking to cyber-sim-sense feeds and other mods that work half the time. The other half, the things go Godzilla and eat a village.
- Tikbalang
- They're not waiting to be contacted about security, either. No one's proven that the megalodon that ate the Underwater Living manager was Yakashima's, but they didn't wait a week to suggest he would have been safer with a guard-kraken.
- Abaca

Mitsuhama Philippines

Area Manager: Miruanosuke Akijui

Headquarters: Cebu

Technically a local division of MCT Southeast Asia, the sheer volume of the division's business has forced MCT to operate Mitsuhama Philippines as a separate branch. Miruanosuke has been in charge since the corp's first Militech branch plunked down on Cebu. He was one of the major backers of the rebuild-the-Philippines project, served five years as an advisor to the Imperial governor and personally oversaw the construction of barracks at Clark AFB. He has influenced the islands' development more than any single person.

• And seen it all. He's 105 years old and dependent on leonization treatments to stay alive. The only local vat-of-youth, though, is Shiawase's, and you can bet they've played hardball with him before.

• Rizzo

Principal New Divisions

Division Name: Mitsuhama-Benguet Mining

Division Head: Sakurada Funado

Chief Products/Services: Gold, bauxite, copper, steel

Division Name: Mitsuhama Militia-ware

Division Head: Miruanosuke Saeko

Chief Products/Services: Military vehicles, armor, firearms

• I thought MCT had drek-all in the way of militech. What's with this?

• Worm

• They're low in overall ratings because the Philippines are their only big military market, so the volume of product isn't real high. Quality may not be on par with Ares, but I still wouldn't stand in front of one of their tanks.

• Matador

Division Name: Mitsuhama Automatronics

Division Head: Hanashima Ito

Chief Products/Services: Machine parts, drones, and robotics. They are working on experimental undersea drones.

Division Name: Parashield

Division Head: Togami Ryo

Chief Products/Services: Paranimal security, veterinary care

Renraku Philippines

Division Head: Tev Greenwaldt

Area Manager: Aneki Hideaki

Renraku Philippines is the crowning glory of Renraku's Asia division, so Greenwaldt oversees operations personally from his Negros mansion when he's not attending international meetings. He cedes very little control to Aneki.

• A good thing for Renraku. Aneki's an incompetent moron who has trouble tying his own shoes. He's the nephew of the corp's founder, though, so the Renraku execs had to give him an "important" position. They stuck him in the Philippines because there wasn't much he could mess up under Greenwaldt's nose.

• Serenade

• He's been spending plenty of time with Cristina Roxas of the Ichiwa-kai lately. Undoubtedly his baby-sitters are nervous that Aneki and Roxas's pillow talk will wind up in MCT's boardrooms, so I wouldn't be surprised if Aneki had an unfortunate accident sometime soon.

• Roberto

Principal New Divisions

Division Name: Underwater Living

Division Head: Nabo Mutai

Chief Products/Services: Construction and operation of two underwater labs and one half-finished underwater city.

• I checked into Underwater Living. Didn't find much, but Nabo Mutai, the director, is a new face (the former division head lost a fight with a megalodon). Renraku brought Nabo in because he was tough, ruthless and likes the water. The corp also tightened security two-hundred-fold.

• Tikbalang

• I have seen Nabo's aura. Whale speaks to him but is choking in foulness. His magic is tainted. If he is working for Renraku, it is only to destroy them.

• Arimaonga

• A patient, undercover toxic? Keep shoveling.

• Laser

The Philippines Broadcasting Network

CEO: Mateo Diokno

Home Office: Manila

It is not widely known that this "independent" trid and radio conglomerate is actually a locally owned subsidiary of Yamatetsu. Unfortunately, the network has earned the trust of most Filipinos by carefully seasoning its corporate propaganda with relatively objective exposés of corporate and Imperial misdeeds and the occasional sympathetic presentation of Philippines history and culture.

• I don't believe PBN is Japanese! They must be trying to break away. Diokno's been working with us. I've personally had an on-line meeting with him to arrange a show that'll teach kids that they can change their country by joining the revolution.

• Baali Song

• Don't make any major decisions in the next few months. Those on-line meetings are an excuse to expose you to tracer IC and probably uncover any other links that Yamatetsu can find by monitoring your conversations. Yamatetsu is playing up bad blood between Huk factions. Once we start fighting among ourselves and using terrorist tactics that scare Juan Average, they'll shoot our credibility to hell.

• Cholo

• PBN's keeping its options open. It's courting Filipinos and Japanese equally and working with Tan Tien for sim-equipment. PBN and TT both want the drek to hit the fan so they can move in afterward. Hsiao-Tsing Tang, TT's division manager, was sent by the Chinese government to assess the situation. If the revolution succeeds, TT hopes to fill the vacuum created by the departure of the Japanacorns.

• Roberto

● Hsiao's a spy for Lung, who will make himself indispensable to either Ryumyo or Masaru and then turn on the winner at an appropriate time. Before or after the Ring of Fire opens the gateway, I cannot say.

● Dragonslayer

Shiawase

President/CEO: Tadashi Shiawase

Home Office Location: Osaka, Japan

Because Shiawase's management structure puts people in charge of divisions rather than regions, the corp has at least three major and twenty or more minor executives pulling strings in the Philippines. Don't make the mistake of thinking that they're small just because we don't see them much in the UCAS. Shiawase is the oldest mega and possibly the savviest—and the Philippines is one of its places of power.

Major Local Divisions

Division Name: Shiawase Envirotech

Division Head: Shiawase Mitsuko (Soko Shiawase's youngest daughter)

Chief Products/Services: Shiawase Envirotech effectively runs the Philippine reforestation program. Ironically, the same division that handles environmental regulations, reforestation and preservation also handles the corp's logging, mining and drilling operations.

● Check out new recruits carefully, pirates. Mitsuko has a lot of power and influence, and she likes being this far from home. Her mom told her that she's personally in charge of stopping this revolution, and you better bet she's trying. I caught a mole in a routine background check yesterday—half Filipino, served the Japanese in San Francisco for two years, owns a hundred shares of Shiawase stock. Do the digging, it could save you.

● Kommander

Division Name: Shiawase Health and Welfare

Division Head: Matsudaira Choei

Chief Products/Services: Medicines, surgical equipment, bioware. Runs most of the islands' hospitals and health care system.

Matsudaira Choei serves as the islands' surgeon general, as well as division manager of Shiawase Health and Welfare. He's an ork who inherited enough money for several experimental bio-brain-enhancers, compensating for the brain damage enough to get him through medical school and to the top of Shiawase.

● And he's pulled out his tusks, rounded his ears and rebuilt his nose. Only his DNA betrays his ork blood. He's metahuman, but under the skin, you'll find a slug.

● Eve

Division Name: Shiawase Atomics

Division Head: Shimada Iku

Chief Products/Services: Provides "safe and clean" nuclear power, services Imperial Navy submarines

Shimada Iku was the Shiawase exec on the trid apologizing for the nuclear waste mishap. She's requested and received a budget for ruthless security measures to prevent future incidents, including a core of specialists from Osaka.

● The words "pirate-killers" come to mind. Those "specialists" are nothing more than beta-enhanced evil. Take your chances with the krakens.

● Death Angel

Shibata Construction and Engineering

CEO: Shibata Takako

Home Office: San Fernando

SCE got its start-up money from Buttercup in Yamatetsu, and she's still got controlling shares. The corp works closely with Meta-Ergonomics, building troll- and dwarf-sized housing in metahuman neighborhoods. It also maintains a city planning division that uses surveys and neighborhood studies to research the effects of a segregated society and how best to make the divisions. On the less visible side, they build a good many of Yamatetsu's and other corps' designs. If it's in stores, chances are SCE has one sitting in its warehouses or chugging down its conveyor belts.

● Takako used to work for Meta-Ergonomics in the UCAS, but she was demoted to the Philippines two years ago after she became the focus of some nasty rumors of embezzlement. The charges didn't stick, but the big wizzes wanted her somewhere nearby. She's kept her nose clean for a year, so they're starting to take the pressure off.

● Mega-mouth

● She had a few meetings with Masaru's agents, and since then there's been a slow but sure shift of Japanese neighborhoods away from the Visayans and to the far south islands. It's almost like they're being herded closer together.

Or I could just be paranoid.

● Death Angel

THE SMUGGLERS OF THE GOLD AND IVORY COASTS



● On the Coasts, we didn't find anyone willing to talk to Shadowland for ego-gratification like Gingerbread, or for political reasons like Masaru. Instead, we spread around nuyen, made promises and did favors, and finally someone put us in touch with Ago, a Ga pirate from the former Republic of Ghana. As Ago will tell, that's how *everything* works in Africa. Nothing for nothing and something for everybody. Survival is the big prize; if you're alive at the end of the day, you win. Everybody knows it, everybody deals with it—because they've had no choice. Read on and find out why.

If you're like me and went to UCAS public schools, you probably don't know much about Africa—another reason to read the file before you make the career move to piracy.

Some pointers:

- 1) It's called the Mother Continent.
 - 2) Most likely any of the countries you may have read about in school no longer exist.
 - 3) If you wait six months, most of the countries you read about here will probably be gone.
 - 4) Africa is still probably the most dangerous place in the world (outside of a barfight in the Barrens).
- Captain Chaos

Transmitted: 17 January 2059, 08:36:12 MT

THE LURE OF MONEY

by Ago Krote

The Gingerbread Man says that he started with nothing. Masaru says that his people receive no sympathy from those in power. Both claim they have been pounded down by Fate and strike back to prove that they are more than they appear to be.

And yet they are both wealthy beyond the dreams of even successful Africans.

I have no need for such pretensions. I am a pirate because piracy means survival. It means I eat. It means I live. It means my family is not sold into slavery.

Unlike Masaru and Gingerbread Man, we cannot take money for granted. Money is why I risk my life every day. There is no glory. There is no honor. There is no greater good or other humanitarian goal. In Africa, you pirate and smuggle for gold because we can do nothing without it.

I live in the Free City of Sekondi, and I sell throughout the Gold and Ivory Coasts, because I can make money doing it. That is simple African piracy.

- Sell what?
- Rathceet

• You haven't met an African pirate before, have you? You know those stupid clichés like, "I'll take anything that's not nailed down," or "I'll kill anything that moves"? When they say them, *they mean it*. It's not just an expression. There are New York gangers who'll kill you for your wallet and Jamaican street kids who'll cack you for your shoes, but they draw the line at your socks and your feet, you know? In Africa, they take your money, they take your clothes, and if they can find a buyer they take you.

- The Gingerbread Man

I was part of DeBeers-Omnitech's army when it traveled upriver to destroy the village of Tolégbé. We killed every living thing, burning the corpses with surplus petrochemical fuel so that they would not attract predators and parasites. At the next village, people surrendered because they believed they could turn my heart with words. They do not understand what pirates need. I do. Once they were handcuffed and bound, I sent them overland to be sold as food for the *Sasabonsam*. I did not do this because I hate the people I kill. I feel nothing for them. They are the balance on a credstick. That is all.

You may be disgusted by this. Maybe you have a code of honor like your poster Matador, who fights for causes he believes in. He is not a coastal pirate. He can choose his jobs and still afford food, not die with his stomach swollen to twice its size from parasites. If I stopped to care about the people I steal from or kill, I would be caring for them more than for my own family. And if the man I worked with yesterday tries to kill me tomorrow because someone pays him, I expect it. And I will hate him for a time ... but hate passes, and I would work with him again. Money is more valuable than hate.

Where I live, we do not pretend to glory or pride or to be noble. We just survive.

• Tough talk. Tough actions, too. I don't doubt Ago's experiences, but lemme tell you, once you get past the inhuman exterior, you find the same loyalties: family, friends and crew. Coastal pirates are metahumans, not machines. But with enough experience they can do a damn good imitation, and I'm not talking about cyberware.

Around the Coasts, a drekload of people think like this. It throws foreigners, but if you've ever lived in a war zone, you'll notice the trend no matter what country. When you drop in on a contact and hear that her friends or employers were overthrown, and she's working for the next dictator like nothing ever happened, don't be surprised. It means your pal's smart. Heartless? Yeah ... for a little while. Until she's got the money to get out of there. Then—maybe—she'll think about it.

Ago's right about one thing. I worked my way up from the dirt, but compared to some folks, I was "rich" even in the gutter. I could drink piped water without human drek in it, and nobody invaded Jamaica every ten years to rape its land and people. We're dependent on tourist dollars—but at least we have tourists.

- The Gingerbread Man

Coastal pirates learn from the megacorporations that employ them. Nothing prevents a pirate from going overland or up rivers if that's where profits wait. Or robbing a burial mound and killing those who come to defend it. Or selling animal hides, meat and eggs ... from any creature. Some talk about the rights of "endangered species," but there is no one more endangered than me, and I would trade a hundred animal lives for one more day of mine. Animals are just money. Money flows by us all the time, and if we don't grab it, someone else will. We have been taught that lesson too many times to forget it.

I am alive because I kill my enemies before they kill me. In your countries, perhaps, there is enough to go around, and so you do not make *real* enemies. You may kill each other over symbols or allegiances or sex or honor, but not over food or the money needed to buy it. You have bar fights where people are only beaten, not torn apart by bullets. When you fight your enemies, both sides may live to fight another day.

We kill to live, because we can depend on no one but ourselves. "Mercenary," "spy," "terrorist" ... those are labels that Europeans and Asians and Americans attach to me because I frighten them. Yet they are the people who sell us weapons or buy the foci I rip from a shaman's dead hand.

They want the same things we want—money, and power over life and death. Some say they want to change the world or make something of themselves—but take away their food or shoot them in the shin, and they all say the same three things: "Please don't kill me," "I'll do anything," or "Frag you." I don't need to know more.

All I need is what will keep me alive. The Asante and the Fanti both have money, but who will last longer when both can be destroyed by Ares bombs? When Yakashima and Saeder-Krupp give me their "letter of marque," who will pay better or faster? Whose immunizations will keep me healthy? Who knows the terrain better, me or a leader who rose to power ten months ago? Would it help me to kill him and take over? These are the questions that matter, not who is right and who is wrong.



- The two-word summary: "Drek Happened."
- Dark Father

If you want the history of the Coastal colonial experience, or how Ghana achieved independence from Britain in 1957 and the Côte d'Ivoire from France in 1960 or why Zaire changed its name 11,000 times, look it up in an encyclopedia. What I'm including is the twenty-first century drek, so you'll have some idea of what your contacts have lived through (assuming you decide that the African Coasts are going to be your new playground). The main thing about colonialism that pirates need to know is its consequences for the language—specifically, what languages the local folks are likely to speak. Urban folks usually speak English or French in addition to local languages and the language of their corp employers.

- Colonialism is still the basis of some ethnic divisions, too. The groups favored by foreign powers are still resented by the less fortunate. That's part of the basis for the two large-scale wars right now, one between the Baule and Anyi and the other between the Asante and the Fanti.

- Hagar

- Oh, and as usual when reading anything from anyone's "official" history textbook—take it with a grain of salt. As far as I know, there's nothing actually out-and-out false in the World History text I swiped ... but that doesn't mean there isn't bias, unconscious or otherwise, in the interpretation of certain facts. (So you folks who love to nitpick whenever you see something that gets your goat, don't come whining to me. I'm just quoting here, and I warned you.)

- Captain Chaos

Transmitted: 17 January 2059, 12: 51:37 MT

THE RESOURCE RUSH

In 2004, the effects of anthropogenic climate change were conclusively proved for the first time. Alternating droughts and floods caused by aberrant weather patterns, bleaching of crops from increased ultraviolet radiation, and agricultural mismanagement reduced the yield of corn, millet, cocoa and coffee in West Africa to one-fifth of normal harvests. The nations affected responded by increasing emphasis on industrial manufacturing and mining, but the rapidly expanding megacorporations outsold or took over most local businesses.

- Ghana's last attempt to stay above water was to sink ninety-five percent of its investments into coffee. The government remembered the depression of the 1970s, when the economy failed because they expanded too rapidly without keeping up the basics. So the government subsidized thousands of farmers to grow coffee ... and the crops died.

- Shango

Meanwhile, the "resource rush" was going global. Extraterritorial megacorporations such as Shiawase, Dow Chemical and Keruba headed for Africa in search of profit, where they brought money to the deflating local economies, though

often at the cost of the environment and civil liberties. In some places, increasing megacorporate influence sparked local protests—Presidents Embaye Karase of Ethiopia and Raimi Ogundipe of Nigeria were ousted when they were found to have sold nationally owned mining operations to Shiawase. In the main, however, the corporations achieved their objectives in Africa with little opposition. **[LINK: West Africa <—> YES]**.

[LINK BACK: Introduction to Africa, History <—>]

The Volta Wars

In coastal West Africa, major rivers became lifelines for trade because the cropland near them was fertile without costly irrigation. Following several small earthquakes on December 10, 2005, alluvial gold and diamond deposits were revealed in the Black Volta. With a new imbalance of wealth between Ghana and the Côte d'Ivoire sitting right on the border between the two countries, Côte president Karel Bettencourt tried to claim the cropland and minerals in one stroke by seizing the Black Volta. After the successful surprise strike, Ghanaian president Duah Fosu feared a full-scale invasion and appealed to the United Nations for help, while massing an army of his own.

- And got the universal UN answer ... "Please hold."

- Cynic

Declaring national states of emergency, both governments restricted food supplies and foreign aid money to "high priority" citizens such as the armed forces, depriving peasant farmers and urban dwellers of necessities and causing mass starvation. This sparked intense resentment and unrest, which culminated in Fosu's assassination in June of 2006. The culprits were never caught, but General Asubonteng Ekuman—the first in a long line of quickly replaced dictators in both Ghana and the Côte—saw his chance and grabbed the reins of government. From 2005 to 2007, border skirmishes and coups averaged one a month in both nations.

As their governments neglected disaster relief and the upkeep of infrastructure in favor of warfare, many citizens in both nations led protests. They demanded the final dismantling of colonially designed governments in favor of a traditional African system that emphasized ethnic groups rather than nations. The Indigenous Government Party in the Côte d'Ivoire and the Ghanaian Akan People's Federation ultimately drove out the dictators and dropped out of the UN and international community between 2007 and 2009. While Western nations debated whether to back the rebels or the deposed "legitimate" governments, the two nations were placed under trade embargoes that destroyed their last chance to recover economically. Instead, networks of smugglers and criminals funneled the nations' gold, diamonds, bauxite, coffee and chocolate down the coast into South Africa or across the Atlantic to the Caribbean **[LINK: Caribbean History <—>NO]**.

- The Ghanaians aimed at our supply lines and destroyed our roads so that no one without a boat could move product. Swiss-bank politicians like Bettencourt, Molle and Horan took half the treasury each time they abdicated. Without smugglers there would have been no food or medicine. Without laws, there is no crime.

- Tissale

International corporations retreated from the war-torn lands, a move that further alienated the indigenous peoples' political movements. With no money or construction crews to keep up roads and buildings, many people migrated southward toward the coastlines, where young men could join one of the still prospering crime families or find a boat on which to leave.

- The biggest business at the time was running guns up and down the coast. The Fanti were the first to work with gun manufacturers to arm rebellions further south (some taking their pay in product). They were the first real pirate kingdom of the twenty-first century.
- Colonel Cobra

Then VITAS broke out and spelled an end to government as we know it in Ghana and the Côte d'Ivoire.

VITAS

In 2011, Virally Induced Toxic Allergy Syndrome (VITAS) broke out on the African continent. The primary incidence of infection in sub-Saharan Africa remains the highest the world has ever known. Nearly three-quarters of the population became infected, and those without medical help soon died from oxygen loss and shock brought on by bronchial constriction. Ghana and the Côte d'Ivoire begged for aid from the World Health Organization almost immediately, but medical resources were already stretched beyond capacity containing the plague in the Americas, Europe and Asia, where it hit first. Various international organizations—among them the WHO and Doctors Without Borders—air-lifted medicines and food into the most affected cities, but those in power tended to supervise their distribution. Predictably, the medicines often went to the rich and influential at the expense of the average citizen.

- Aw, just say it! Megacorps and WHO stopped VITAS. Did they sink money into poor, rural, *black* Africa? No, they helped rich nations first. Africa got *screwed*.
- Uhuru
- Don't oversimplify. Sure, most Western nations didn't give a rat's hoop what happened to Africa, but there *were* medicines available. It was West Africa's own leaders who didn't think it worth the effort to help their people, not foreigners.
- Tsofa
- Unfortunately, Tsofa's right. Since the end of colonization, a lot of African countries have had problems with selfish dictators holding onto both money earned and aid given to their country, reaping the benefits while their citizens suffered. Baako Okaija, chairman of the Akan People's Federation and pro-tem president of Ghana, received four hundred thousand doses of tetracycline from the WHO before supplies ran out—not enough to stop the plague, but it sure as hell could have slowed it down. Did he establish hospitals and try to stall the disease? No. He held onto it and doled the medicine out to his friends, family and the guys with the guns. When asked why he kept four hundred thousand doses

of medicine for maybe a thousand people, he said he wanted to make sure he didn't run out. With guys like him and profit-mad pirates controlling the distribution, no wonder nothing made it to the people.

- Professional Student

• That's still true today. The folks in control—whoever they may be this month—do their damndest to hold onto anything valuable, either for themselves or to sell to other people with money to pay well for it. Just about the only thing that flows freely from the smuggling pipelines to the ordinary chumbony on the street (or in the bush) is guns. If you can't pay mucho cred for a gun, somebody somewhere will likely give you one so's you can go use it to make trouble for the target of their choice.

- Tuchman's Disciple

Experts such as Awlings and Rant (2033) estimate the death toll from primary infection to be near 13.5 million in the Côte d'Ivoire and 16.8 million in Ghana. Secondary infections such as typhoid, bubonic plague, leptospirosis and cholera claimed the lives of an additional 2.3 million coastal Africans. Some historians (Hedley, 2054) have argued that VITAS-1 shaped the fate of Africa more than the return of magic.

• And they're wrong. Chopping the population down only lasts as long as it stays down. Goblinization? Astral projection? The use of spells to *stop* the plague? And the Awakened variety of nearly every beast changing the ecological balance across the continent? I'd say magic wins ...

- Talon

• It's an arguable point, though. Of the quarter of the world's population that died from VITAS-1, a good ten percent was in Africa. Textbooks downplay how scary the disease was by saying that those who got medical help usually survived. They forget to point out how rare medical help is in the rural Third World. Fraggin' near *everyone* who got sick in Africa, outside of the major urban centers—and plenty in the major urban centers who didn't happen to belong to the ruling class or the army—died.

- StatsMan

"Running the Numbers"

- A million deaths is a statistic.

- Rathceet

• Yeah? Maybe I can help you make it something else.

Visualize a football stadium that seats fifty thousand. Imagine you're in the top bleachers and the playing field starts piling up with bodies, about 1.5 meters tall, 20 cm thick and 40 cm wide. Kinda small on average, because we're factoring in the kids.

The corpses fill the field and head past the first row of bleachers. Not seated—just pile them flat, end to end, like planks of wood. But they compress more, so adjust for that. Keep stacking. They reach your feet at about 20.5 million.

But that's only the number of soldiers who died during World War I. Not bad enough yet. Let's add the Holocaust's six million Jewish victims to get us past the box seats, and World War II's actual soldier deaths as well. Frag, let's toss in the relative peanuts from the Vietnam War, Gulf War and the Eurowars. We're only on our second stadium when we finish, at a grand total of about fifty-three million dead.

And that is a fragging *rock fight* compared to VITAS-1.

VITAS killed seven hundred and fifty million people *just* in Sub-Saharan Africa. They died in churches, streets, hospitals, homes. In Madagascar, the toll was 10.5 out of 14 million dead. That isn't a statistic; that's the motherfragging *apocalypse*. Even today nobody's sure of the exact numbers, because who could count when three out of every four people were dead? Any idiot messing around with gamma-anthrax or something should think about what happened the last time Mother Nature slapped us silly with one microorganism.

• StatsMan

"Running the Numbers"

THE AWAKENING

In the face of massive casualties and apparent international indifference, many ethnic groups gave up hope for a medical-science cure and returned to their traditional medicines, magics and prayers. In the winter of 2011, as the Awakening struck, Sub-Saharan Africa saw a break in VITAS deaths for the first time as the spells and prayers began working. When word spread that shamans could cure the plague, other African societies gave up soliciting aid from the West and returned to their old ways, forming small nation-states based on specific, shared cultural traditions.

• ... or died off.

• Thanatos

• Many made up their "traditions" as they went along because a lot of urban folks didn't know the old ways. Others tried to follow every little rule and proscription, not sure whether it was the healing spells or the renewal of faith and obedience that was slowly ending the nightmare of VITAS. Chiefs and priests encouraged superstition because it tended to give them absolute control over their people.

• Uhuru

• Wait, I thought you couldn't kill retroviruses with disease-stopping spells.

• Tish Bite

• Yeah, but they tell you they did. Who're you going to believe? The guy who can make fire come from his fingertips, or the doctor who can give you a shot and only tell you that you might not get sick? It happened all over the world. So why not in Africa?

• Magister

• Hermetics at MIT&M believe that the heightened survival rate among the magically active in Africa led to an increase in chil-

dren with the magus factor. Now that doesn't mean that if you have magic you can prevent yourself from getting retroviruses (the cold I have right now proves that), but at the same time, there's got to be some explanation for why the numbers shifted so much. It's not a quantifiable correlation, but the immense effort it would take to verify the number of magicians in the population precludes it from being disproved.

Hermetics aren't sure of the difference between two individual mages casting the same spell, let alone shamans, let alone houngans ... et cetera. And there's no lack of innovative magicians in the Coasts.

• Talon

However, the new nations did not break strictly along ethnic lines. While some leaders rallied around a common language such as the Ga, others like the Asante (Ashanti) Empire were inclusive, adding Ewe and Twi to their ranks and synthesizing those tribes' languages and customs with their own. As borders got redrawn, mass ethnic migrations due to resource shifts and violent conflict further rearranged the map.

• Hey! Caught me some euphemisms! "Ethnic migrations!" "Resource shifts!" The Asante and the Fanti today are blasting the frag out of each other over these old grudges. That is, the grudge was the original excuse for war.

• Bung

• The Asante vaulted to prominence because they had dreklods of people in the military before VITAS, and they hung on to their toys. And they remembered being an empire once. It's a pattern you can see all over—they with lots of people or weapons or nationalistic fervor beat up them without. The Asante had all three.

• Big Haul Bones

When Unexplained Genetic Expression occurred, each ethnol nation responded differently. Some superstitious peoples practiced infanticide, while millions of other families were grateful to have any children.

• "Superstitious peoples?" They got cacked in England, Boston, all over the world. Some did, some didn't? How vague can you get? You call this history?

• Rabid

• Exactly the point Captain Chaos made up above. Excepting Nigeria and Azania, Africa has gotten the historical shaft. It's the Dark Continent to us. Damn few Westerners ever try to sort through the mess of individual ethnic, linguistic, original nationalistic, neo-nationalistic and "new ethnic" groups (like the Anyi, who think that only orks and trolls are "real" Anyi even though pre-Awakening Anyi were all human). It's like trying to sort through the UCAS states individually if the federal government fell apart and each neighborhood seceded. And we're just talking about two countries in this post.



No comfy university historian wants to risk his hoop studying post-Awakening Africa if he's gotta live in a war zone to do it—one where you can't even slot a skillchip to learn the language. Who makes skillwires to speak fragging *Beng*? Have you *heard* of the *Beng*? Are you learning their language before or after their linguistic drift as a political statement to distance themselves from the *Baule*? Get the picture?

● Professional Student

Goblinization

As each ethno-state dealt with UGE in its own way, the phenomenon did not threaten their stability or ability to rebuild. The trauma of goblinization in 2021, however, ruptured many of these young state governments. Ethnic groups such as the *Baule* split once again, this time by metatype, with humans and UGE children remaining *Baule* and orks and trolls joining with the goblinized *Anyi*. Intratribal fighting destroyed several fledgling ethno-states; other superstitious natives drove out all of the goblinized to fend for themselves. Rural areas, depopulated by *VITAS*, were resettled by

these metahuman outcasts, who formed their own neo-tribes. The two countries' sizable Akan-speaking ghoulish population, which consisted of nearly 25,000 individuals, migrated north to the Upper Volta, where it remains today.

● "Superstitious natives"? "Akan-speaking ghouls"? What's next, "they all live in huts"? The Brong-Akan languages cover most of Ghana, including the cities and government administrators. Here's a tip: the *Fanti* and *Asante* mostly speak *Twi-Fanti*; the *Ga* speak *Ga-Adangme*; and *Bassa*, *Kru*, *Bakwe* and *Baule* are all you'll really need for trade languages by the Ivory Coast.

● Professional Student

● Hey, are the African elves—the *wakyambi*—an ethnic nation in West Africa?

● Rathceet

● Hell, no. The wakyambi are in the jungles along the Congo River ... in central Africa.

● Uhuru

● Let me clarify. The incredibly tall, stick-thin elf variant that us NorthAms call "wakyambi" does live in West Africa; there's a village of two hundred along the White Volta. These *gyina* claim no kinship with other elves because they look nothing like them (except astrally/genetically). But the ones who call *themselves* wakyambi and the albinos Discovery Trid gawks at? They live in the heart of the Congo.

● Barnum

NORMALIZATION AND THE ASANTE NATION

In 2025, the United States Global Economics Task Force inquired as to the present and future state of West African trade, but only the Asante had the domestic stability to respond and apply for recognition as a country. The Asante Nation was recognized by the United Nations in 2026 as it opened its borders to international trade. With this sign that business was stabilizing, multinational corporations began moving back into Africa (or into it for the first time). The Asante Nation recognized the dangers of corporate influence and kept the corporations from establishing a large presence in Asante lands, but corporate facilities sprang up in the rest of West Africa over the objections of many local people.

● The Fanti hated it, because corp expansion cut into their market for shipping and smuggling.

● Sika

● I don't know about the others, but the Eotile, Avikam, Kru, Godie, Noyo and Kodia peoples have had enough of foreigners. We don't need you. The Asante are lucky the megacorps respect their government rather than thinking of them as "poor natives" whom they can exploit for massive resources.

We knew back in 2025 that West Africa has resources to rival Azania's, once you keep drilling. But we're not going to sell out like the Philippines, and we're not going to allow national or corporate colonialism. The megacorps see our ethno-nations as disunited and weak. And we are, compared to their armies. But that doesn't mean we're not legitimate.

● Adekunle

● Isn't your name Nigerian Yoruban?

● Professional Student

● "Resource shifts" moved me over. The Kru treat me better, anyway.

● Adekunle

With the frenzy of work at home after the Great Computer Crash, few Europeans or Americans explored Africa to map the new borders. Satellite photos taken in 2035 showed that the natural landscape from Cairo to Cape Town had undergone rapid terraforming changes, theoretically brought on by shifts in the mana

level at the earth's core. The "Gaia hypothesis" put forth by Lester (2024) and Scribe (2042) contends that if the biosphere is a living organism, its Awakening will cause "ripple effects" in minerals, soil and landscapes. **[LINK: Gaia Hypothesis <—> NO]** Whether or not this theory is accurate, there can be no doubt that the savannas, jungles and forests in the interior of the Gold and Ivory Coast nations have shifted.

● But no standing stones erupting like in England. Actually, a few places of power got buried or overgrown. Some plants grow as fast as kudzu here, and neglected forest sites got covered. They still radiate mana like a motherfragger, but you have to chop through miles of underbrush to find them. Astral scouting is a waste of time—everything's a living barrier in the jungle.

● Talon

Though the Asante came on-line in 2038, the majority of coastal West Africa never recovered sufficient economic power to regain or develop the technological capabilities of a modern nation. Between fluctuating boundaries and unstable governments, many a child of Ghana and the Côte d'Ivoire has been raised without the benefits of modern civilization, and in some cases, without ever seeing a foreigner.

The Asante city of Accra and the Independent City of Sekondi, however, are burgeoning trade cities, home to representatives of the eight megacorporations as well as recent additions such as Yakashima, Tan Tien Inc., DeBeers-Omnitech and Phoenix Biotechnologies. As such, their wealth has increased on an exponential scale.

● The cities' or the megacorps'?

● Cynic

The Gold and Ivory Coasts remain in flux today, keeping their economic and political futures uncertain. Because so many rural lands remain off-line and the indigenous people see no reason to pay or trade for the costly fiber-optics necessary to install Matrix capability, they remain out of touch with the global network of high-speed information.

● That's IT?

● Professional Student

● This hypertext brought to you by Manera, which was brought to you by Osgood Matrix Publishing, which was brought to you by Ares Macrotechnology. Who sure as hell isn't going to talk about Ares Arms and Saeder-Krupp's funding of ethnic wars, Aztech's strip-mining for every mineral known to man and all the corps' payoffs to pirates to waste one another whenever possible.

This is what happens when there's no national government to slow the corps down. They tell the world to look away, and then kill each other with impunity and work their indigenous labor to death. They perform human and animal experiments no one sane would approve. The corps and pirates are ruthless and out for themselves. They smuggle anything: gold, diamonds, oil, timber,

wildlife, people, whatever. Hell, they'll kill you for the gold in your teeth. This is war and genocide, and the corps pull every trick to get ahead. Until you've been there, you won't believe it.

• Tomtom

COASTAL MAGIC

• Our Carib and CalFree pirates agree that raiding in Africa is just plain "different" in some ways. The culture, religion and magic are linked in a way that NorthAm runners and pirates aren't used to. Catholicism in the Philippines and Haitian voodoo are not a big leap compared to Ivory and Gold Coast beliefs.

I decided to look for an academic expert rather than trusting any personal account. Once again, though, I found out how little anyone in the West has learned about Africa since the Awakening. I'm including the best I found, Wrzos's *The Guide to Non-Western Magic* (not for its detail level, but it gives the basics). Feel free to spice it up ... but only if it'll help others adjust to the Continent. No "my totem can eat your totem" comments, please.

• Captain Chaos

Africa is a continent of heavy magic, where even those unable to cast spells practice sympathetic magic as a way of life, where natural resources lend themselves to fetishes and foci, and where places and creatures of power abound.

• Get vague, Wrzos. Get *real* vague.

• Riffraff

Many primitive cultures had less difficulty adjusting to the Awakening than the urban societies of America and Europe, because they had never lost their belief in magic and spirits. Africa has a long tradition of magical thinking in religious practices and daily life. Though many African cultures are monotheistic—that is, they believe in one supreme god—others believe in many gods, and almost all postulate the existence of spiritual beings.

• I don't know if this is more condescending to religious Africans or NorthAm readers. African religion is much more detailed than that, and if you're working here, you'll have to understand it. Religion never got out of favor like it did in parts of the West, and the Awakening just reminded everyone that Western science didn't know everything.

The Akan word for God is Onyame; expect to hear him invoked at least once a conversation. Like the Christian God, Onyame is omnipresent, good, compassionate, omniscient and omnipotent. Unlike most Westerners, traditional West Africans feel that God's existence is so obvious it's not worth arguing (like saying "the universe exists") and that s/he is accessible to everyone without the interference of a priesthood.

• Auntie Social

• That's *also* simplifying. Onyame is not the only entity we believe in, and while He views people equally, the lesser divinities, totems and ancestor spirits play favorites. And of course, when some people started healing tumors without days of ritual first, some

shamans convinced their towns that Onyame *had* chosen a priest class—them.

• Aja@af.asante.publicuser192403.com

AFRICAN SHAMANISM

Since the Awakening, African spiritual organization has manifested itself in shamanic practices. Like Native American shamanism, African shamanism believes that the magically active person has been "chosen" by a spiritual totem in the form of an animal. Such animals commonly include mouse, parrot, python, dove, crocodile, deer, shark, leopard, falcon, crow, dog and bat in Coastal West Africa.

• Fragging hermetic. The totems are real. Even their pseudoscientific tests have proved the difference between our magics. And that list of totems is drek. Yes, those were the common Akan totems *before* the Awakening, but the spirits are not constrained by national boundaries (just ask my Af-Am buddy from Brooklyn how he felt when Lion called him), and many Southern African totems such as Lion, Cheetah, Cobra, Hyena and Jackal have called shamans further north.

• Tsofa

• Actually, the ones Wrzos listed are *clan* totems, not individual totems. The whole family group feels a connection to the animal from a real or legendary occurrence where that animal helped the clan—for example, the Nankesi are Leopard people because a leopard restored their ancestor's sight by licking his eyes when he was blinded. Nowadays, because it's hard for a family to survive without a shaman for medicine and divination, the clan totem is the chief shaman's totem, and everyone respects it. Often, that totem also favors that tribe's children, so a Leopard tribe begets a disproportionate number of Leopard shamans. The southern totems Tsofa mentioned are more like North American totems, choosing an individual shaman rather than a clan. It's one of those arguments that we still can't answer ... what came first, the chicken (the totem) or the egg (the belief).

• Doctor Detail@af.fuchi.universityofsekondi.corp

• And don't forget Anansi, the trickster Spider, possibly the most common figure in African mythology *and* among African shamans.

• Magister

• Anansi is just the most common among tales translated into English. Americans were fascinated with sly-animal stories in the nineteenth century, so that's what they published. Anansi is important, but no more than, say, Onini the Python.

• Tsofa

Ancestor Spirits

Unlike Native American shamans, whose summonings produce "nature spirits" representative of the surrounding terrain, African shamans call on the spirits of their ancestors. Though these spirits may physically resemble ghosts, they are not ghosts to the shaman. To the Akan, a ghost is an ancestor who did not com-

plete his tasks on Earth and therefore remains on the physical plane. The ancestors whom the people venerate are the spirits of those who died after their first marriage, of natural causes or in battle. Those who died of accidents or "unclean" diseases are thought to have been punished for some wickedness and cannot become ancestor spirits.

- Maybe this explains why so many were cured of diseases. They wanted to die pure and clean. Maybe they willed themselves well. Stranger things have been known to happen.
- Zinc Oxide

The spirits summoned by African shamans often take metahuman forms similar to the shaman's deceased relatives, probably due to the conjurer's preconceived notions impressing themselves on the spirit energy. They are believed to remain on a spiritual plane when not summoned, perhaps on one of the metaplanes. Summoning an ancestor spirit requires an elaborate ritual, which can be performed faster if more members of the shaman's family are present.

- Maybe they *are* his ancestors, and your lily-white mind can't accept that.
- Jackal's Howl

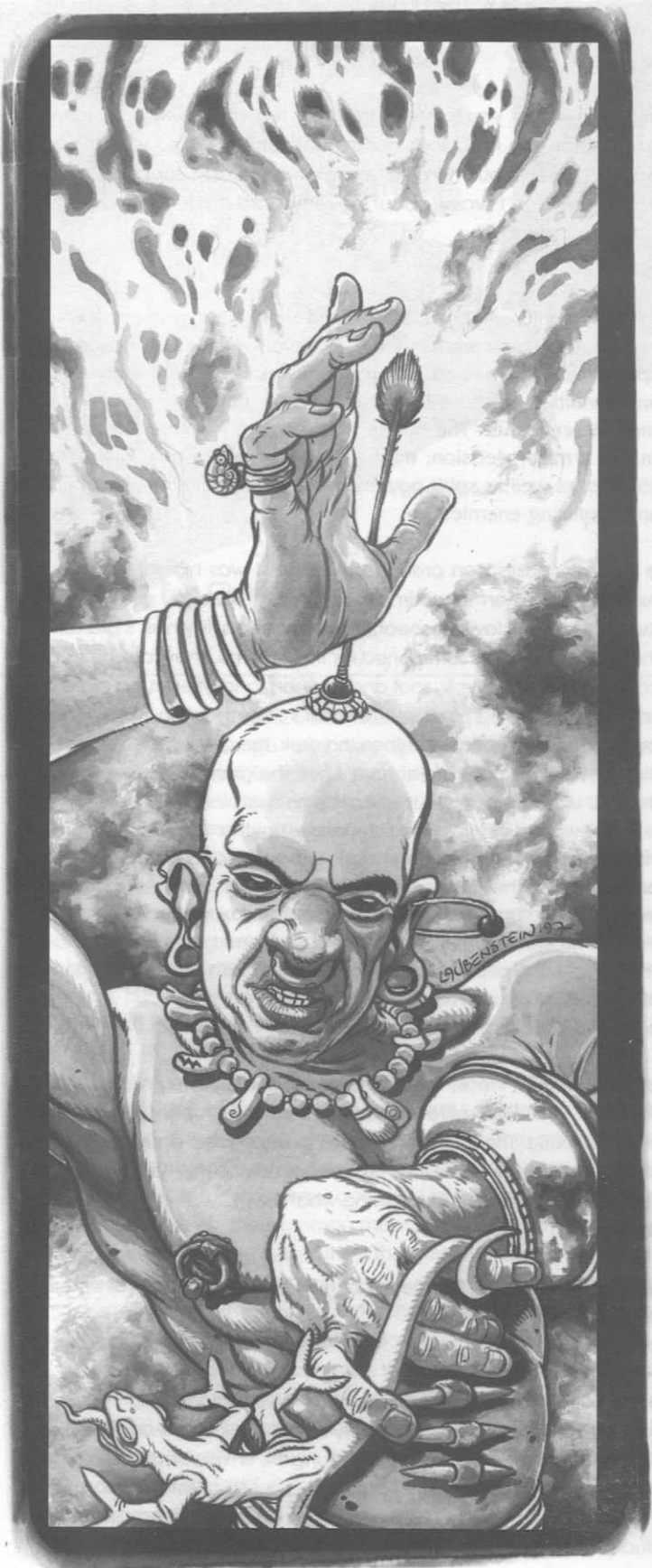
• It's a *new* metaplane. I went on an astral quest in Africa once and found a metaplane I had never seen before. It was filled with people of all sexes, races and ages, though no children, waiting for something I couldn't see. There was an overwhelming sense of sadness and patience, and great love. It was the afterlife, the metaplane of the dead.

- Watcher-of-Stars
- There may be several metaplanes undetected by hermetic science, but I doubt that ancestor spirits are the souls of the deceased. Astral energy cannot hold together after death; the aura dissipates into its components. The metaplane to which portions of it travel is not accessible accidentally, and holds far worse than what you saw. Name this plane for the dead if you like, but do not delude yourself into thinking you understand death.

- Anonymous
- Because most traditional coastal societies are polygamous, those families are really fraggin' big. A rich African pirate may have up to ten wives, six to ten children each. And orks? In lousy areas, infant deaths aren't traumatic—one or two is normal.

• Lustin' Prussian
 "Under the skin, we're all human."

- One must be very wealthy to pay so many dowries. But that's what smuggled diamonds are for, right?
- Gbwegen



• I can't believe women in the twenty-first century put up with this drek! Dowries?! Polygamy?

• Gemini

• What would you prefer? That we run away with our lovers rather than the husbands our parents chose? Who would care for us? When you marry a man who already supports many wives, you don't worry about poverty. And if you die, your children have a family.

• Amwe

The conjured spirits are treated with great respect, always asked rather than commanded to do favors for the summoner. The spirits are often viewed as intermediaries between metahumans and divinities, as those in the afterlife can intercede on behalf of their descendants. The spirits are consulted before the family makes a major decision; they appear to possess mild divinatory abilities, as well as spirit powers such as manifestation, searching and confusing enemies.

• Ancestor spirits *can* predict the future. I was hiding with some Asante once when Yakashima was hunting me, and I got there on Kwesidae, a holiday in respect of the ancestors. My host's grandfather was going to be summoned for the first time. They took his stool, covered it with egg yolk, soot and feathers, and offered it a plate of antelope meat and plantains. My host's wife chants in Akan, rolling her eyes back in her head—then, no drek, the guy is *there*, sitting on the stool and munching plantains. I met the grandfather once, and this spirit was him down to the scar on his wrist.

She asked how to avoid danger in the following months. Immediately, he said, "He should leave" and pointed at me. I protested, but they insisted, and set me up with some folks in a different village. The next day, Yakashima teams traced me to the original village, but they left the people alone because they had "thrown out the pirate." I got back together with my crew not long afterward, all of us alive. After that, I believed.

• Captain Jack

• The spirits aren't really seeing the future, and definitely not in detail. The UCAS and CAS militaries have researched prophecy magic all over the world. The spirits sense vibes over an area equivalent to a nature spirit domain, and they give better advice than a human, but you can still frag up while following what they say.

• Kotick

• What's with all this ancestor drek? I thought Africa was where voodoo was from.

• Gemini

• Okay, this gets a little complicated. West African religions, particularly Yoruban Nigerian, are very similar to Haitian voodoo. For example, a voodoo priest is a houngan, a Yoruban priest is an *oogun*, an Akan priest is an *aduru* and a Ga priest is a *tsofa*. All these terms imply magic with a focus on traditional medicine. Ewe rituals are closest to the voodoo that's been talked about on

Shadowland, because the Ewe's tribal roots are Nigerian. The Ewe god Egou corresponds to the loa Ogoun (Yoruban Ougoun), et cetera. West Africans who actually say they practice voodoo (yes, "voodoo" when you're talking without the French accent) are descended from people who were brought to Haiti or the Americas. The descendants returned to Africa, taking the voodoo mixture of African and Catholic religions with them. They are fairly rare, though, and for the most part, you can assume that African magic/religion works much like voodoo, but with ancestor veneration replacing the Catholic elements.

• Mountin' Doun

• You also gotta be careful, cuz like in the Carib, there's lots of priests or people who *think* magic without having the genes for it. They can get creepy stuff to work if enough of 'em believe, and discover lots of latent talent, but some of that's spirit help.

• Voodoo Lou

PARANORMAL ANIMAL LIFE

Traditional African beliefs also affected the appearance and names of Awakened animals and plants on the continent (or perhaps vice versa). The long-limbed *sasabonsam* replace our ghouls, and metahumans are known by different names—*mmotia* (dwarfs), *dzemawon* (elves), *kwagya* (orks) and *amanfi* (trolls). Little study has been made of such rare Awakened animals as the monkey-like *awonzole*, but they are believed to have Faerie abilities.

• Wzros obviously never traveled here. I've lived in the Baule Empire my whole life, and I've never heard of an *awonzole*, so don't worry about them. I'll tell you what to look for.

When traveling in Anyi land, make sure someone's watching the trees for *enwonzane*, packs of bandersnatches the size of an ork with long arms they use to grab travelers. But look down, too, 'cause there are agropelters called *asonwu* that are territorial and go for tactics like hamstringing you and mobbing you once you're down.

Closer to the Volta you have *ekyelebenle*, spitting Awakened green mambas, and *anwuma bavole*, an Awakened coastal bat with a two-meter wingspan that the Nzima people consider holy. They'll leave you alone most of the time, but they fixate on certain groups and follow them for days. The Nzima think that's a sign of God's favor. I think it's fraggin' scary.

Way inland, there are *alufye* (trilling foot-long roaches) and *bonzo* and *gagon* songbirds, all named after forest spirits. Not to mention the *gomatia*, a chameleon the size of a Doberman. It eats cats, rats, birds ... don't park a baby carriage near one.

• River Raider

• And offshore you get every type of Awakened shark, kraken and whale, as well as the *mami wata* mermaids that the Ewe train to hunt boats.

• Sika

• Yawn. So there's nasty wildlife here. That's money in your pocket. The prettier species—giant and mini Awakened parrots, off-

shore tropical fish, those big chameleons and the intelligent, trainable monkeys in Asante lands—sell for big bucks in the pet trade if young. Dangerous ones go to zoos or get cacked for parts. Teeth and ornaments go in bulk for fertility charms and aphrodisiacs to Asia and Aztlan, or in smaller quantities to the magic markets in North America. And live specimens of even normal animals are grabbed by universities and corp researchers—especially if you “witnessed some unusual behavior.”

● Kanzi

● You're sick. The corporations have already destroyed North America's and Europe's biomass. There will be nothing left in five years at the current rate.

● PETPA

● Money's money. I'd rather see a thousand dead *gomatia* than watch my crew starve. But if you worry about killing the endangered, do what I did. Catch a *Warek*, leopard shapeshifter. They're a renewable resource. Every time I skinned mine, he regenerated, at 1,500 nuyen a skin. I got 60,000 nuyen out of him before he chewed his legs off and got bloody enough to squeeze his head out. He's still out in the wild somewhere, alive and free.

Megalodon meat works the same way. I could feed the world if I had stronger facilities and fewer squeamish people like you.

● Ago Krote

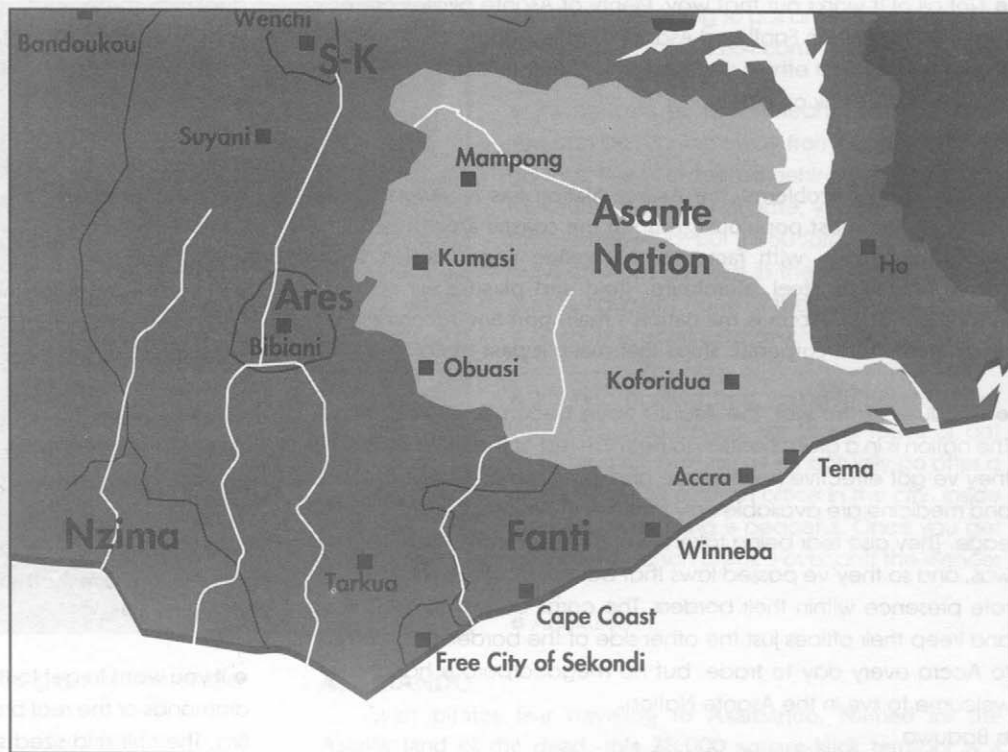
BORDER LINES

by Mawu

I've read everything you've read so far about Africa. If I didn't live here, I'd think it was a piece of cake waiting for my muscle and smarts to control. If what you read is all you know about this place, you will end up dead. You won't know where you're pillaging (or for whom, or even why). So I'm gonna give you a guided tour (on-line so you won't get attacked by wild dogs, ghouls or pirates while learning) of the places you'll deal with when traveling our coasts. I'll take you east to west, with some nudges north for big guys like Asamando or the Baule.

THE ASANTE NATION

The Asante Nation is the only area on most maps that remains the same year after year. That doesn't mean it's any more stable than anywhere else, just that the Asante decided it was worthwhile to impress the world by declaring a government and setting up computer mainframes. The nation is run by the Asantehene, a hereditary king, currently Osei Agyemang.



The nation's official borders as of 2049 encompass the mouth of the Volta, then go west through Greater Accra, then north almost to Sunyani. In reality, there's only so much they actually control. Their hold is strongest from Accra to Kumasi; the northern border is loosely guarded, since almost no one lives there to threaten it, though the Sasabonsam occasionally come south in search of food.

To the south, the Asante own the coastline from the Volta to Accra, but their control ends at the water, where Fanti pirates patrol to blockade Asante shipments. In other words, the Asante have a coast, but contested access to open ocean. Few people make it past the Fanti pirates, keeping the nation effectively land-locked.

● Sigh. Everyone expects you to know local politics. For those who didn't pick up on it, the Asante and Fanti have hated each other since the crises of the early 2000s. When the government of Ghana fumbled, most of the one-shot dictators were Asante who tried to keep the economy going by imposing harsher laws and more control of “the common man” and his money. Not all were unremitting bastiches, but they thought the answer was brutally effective laws. The Fanti, on the other hand, who'd been smugglers for years, thought that the British-established government was a dinosaur. They hoped the nation would fall and allow people to create their own countries that could survive on illicit trade. The two sides clashed. And after the borders collapsed, the Fanti grabbed some coastline and began raiding the Asante. Now both sides bash the other, 'cause otherwise they'd have to give people real reform.

● Takoradian

• Not all of it works out that way. Plenty of Asante pirates are on the seas, too. When Fanti and Asante meet far from home, sometimes they buy that ethnic revenge drek ... or they buy each other a beer. Don't bank on either.

• Gbwegen

Despite its problems, the Asante Nation has recovered and makes up the most populous group in the coastal area. It is relatively prosperous, with factories that refine sugar, coffee and cocoa as well as steel, aluminum, gold and plastics for sale in Europe and Asia. Accra is the nation's main port and receives frequent trade from corporate ships that make it past the pirates.

• Because of the war, the Asante have become very clannish. The nation is in a great position to help the rest of the Gold Coast—they've got effective health care and a surplus of jobs—but jobs and medicine are available only to those of Asante, Twi or Ewe lineage. They also fear being taken over by megacorps like Guinea was, and so they've passed laws that bar significant megacorporate presence within their borders. The corps can build factories and keep their offices just the other side of the border, and come to Accra every day to trade, but no megacorporate honcho is welcome to live in the Asante Nation.

• Baduwa

• Unless they work it out with the Asantehene ahead of time. Laws are strict, but nuyen is stronger. And you can bet that with the Fanti cutting off access to Accra at unpredictable times, the corps are putting a lot of pressure on the king to let them in.

• Kwesi

• Whatever the king says, the corps won't give up their trade. More jobs for us if he refuses; then they'll need pirates to hop the border and courier the goods.

• Golden Gulf

FANTI TERRITORIES

Fanti lands lie directly west of the Asante Nation, covering Wineba and the Cape Coast. The Fanti have no central leader; each family among them operates autonomously, though all can call on each other for help against the Asante. Family groups usually consist of a patriarch and his wives and young children, grown sons and their wives and children, and occasionally a brother or two.

• Almost all the large settlements in the Fanti lands are on the shoreline; most families spend their days on boats, running trade routes around the Cape and back. Inland territory is settled primarily by families too poor to own boats, who eke out a living farming rather than raiding and smuggling.

• The Fanti've got contacts all around Africa and some in Mediterranean Europe, but they're as insular as the Asante in their own way. Most bands are open to recruits only through marriage ... and only to human Fanti. They're not completely racist—they'll

deal with metas as trade partners and allow all-meta families to work the smuggling routes, but they don't think that metas and "normal" humans should mix.

• Captain Jack

• Not racist, my hoop! Sure, they'll trade with metas ... but at a quarter the going price.

• The Trog Prince

• It's called bargaining. They just start lower 'cause they think you'll fall for it. Did you?

• Soe@af.saederkrupp.sekondi.corp

• Ares and Saeder-Krupp don't like the agreement between the Fanti and Asante to prevent the corps from profiting more than necessary off their war (one of the few things both sides have ever agreed upon, to hear people tell it). So either corp would be happy to help you get some revenge, Trog Prince. Of course, you may violate a few other important principles in favor of equality ...

• Kingmaker

• If you want to get to the Volta, whether for Asante gold, DeBeers diamonds or the real profit, you've gotta worry about Fanti pirates first. They hit mid-sized ships and bring their "ethnic homogenization" onto the water, wasting every Asante or "foreign" merc they can find.

• Ko'biere

SEKONDI

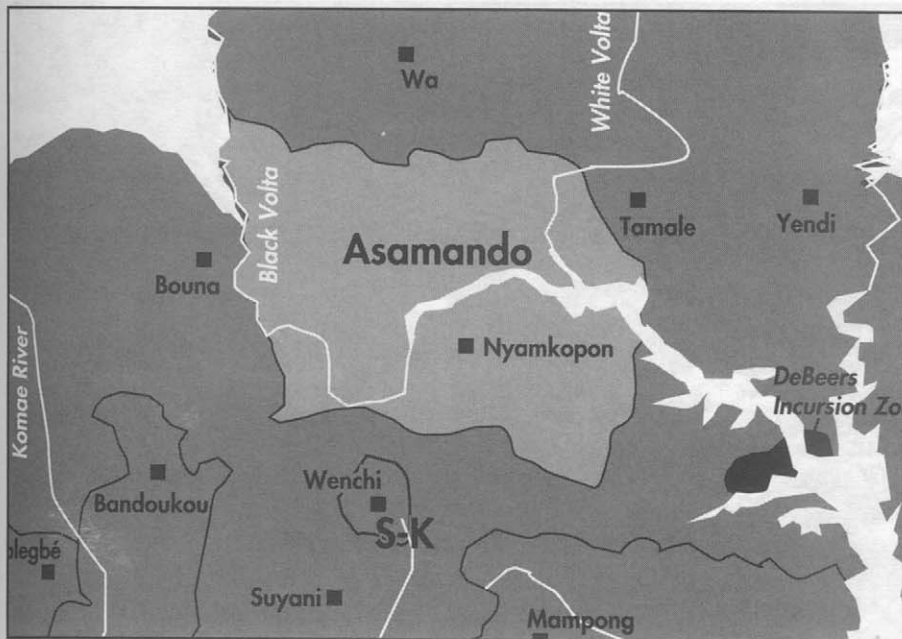
The Fanti and Asante tend to leave the independent city of Sekondi alone. When the Ga people were forced to either leave Accra or assimilate into the new Asante Nation, many fled to Sekondi, which had been virtually abandoned after VITAS and the first decade of war. Kontar Amatsewe, a prominent Ga businessman, grabbed control of the city's faltering government and declared Sekondi a refuge from Asante aggression. He made contact with several corporations, notably Keruba and Ares, and offered them a base of operations in Africa in return for protection.

The two corporations moved in, quickly followed by others who recognized the value of a (somewhat) stable refuge in the war zone. They walled off the city, set up a Civil Defense Force of corporate troops and forced the passage of laws giving the corporations freedom to determine their own policy for all situations.

• Extraterritoriality. Corps are corps everywhere.

• Jaxon

• Nuh-uh. In Seattle, extraterritoriality only applies on corporate property. If you're in your own home, owned by an independent landlord, the corporation can't touch you without a warrant for your arrest (kissing Lone Star hoop first). Otherwise, they need shadowrunners to kidnap you, and if caught, they face prosecution and probably jail. In Sekondi, the corp dresses its heavies in the corporate logo, marches into your home and shoots you in the middle of your birthday party, and they're in the right. Life in



Sekondi is like playing poker with God—you get the luck of the draw, and the corps have five aces.

- Rummy-500

Most corps that operate in this part of Africa have at least a warehouse or an office in Sekondi. DeBeers-Omnitech is the most inclined to throw its weight around, having recently made a deal with the ghouls of Asamando to mine for diamonds. They've been butting heads with Ares over access to the railroad inland. The corps cooperated on upkeep of the rail line for a while, preferring to share the cost of passage rather than pay pirates each time they needed to move goods. But since DBO's influx of diamond money, that corp has taken control of the whole rail system, using the trains for freight and personnel transfer and refusing to give Ares access.

- Behind on the news? Ares told my crew they "didn't approve of the monopoly that DeBeers had on the diamond market because it wasn't in the spirit of capitalism." They asked us to "acquire for Ares a share of the market while loosening DeBeers' grip." So we did. Laced the tracks with plastique, waited for the train to go over and BOOM! It was raining diamonds. Loaded our truck with 'em, our pockets with more, and went back to Ares. Got a base in Sekondi and a commendation for our "salvation of the free market" at nine this morning. Wonder if DeBeers'll start sharing again.

- High C

- Sekondi's a good place to wait for jobs. No one'll start trouble, 'cuz the corp-cops stop brawls quickly and take your money for the service. Just keep a chunk of your last haul to pay the entrance bribe and you're set. A lot of corps don't look farther than Sekondi for freelancers, cuz the streets are wall-to-wall with des-

perate pirates willing to pull anything.

- Dol@af.sekondi272084.com

- It's off-limits for hits. I mean totally off-limits. You can be running away from a pack of thirty guys just five or six meters behind you, and if you make it in the Sekondi gate, you're home free; they just give up. But if you forget to look both ways and get geeked in the tree line, the city guards figure it's none of their business.

- Soe@af.saederkrupp.sekondi.corp

- It's also agreed that you don't drek where you sleep. You can swear blood feuds or get hired for a hit, but you never actually go after a pirate or knock over an office in the city. Inside the wall, everything is peaceful. Once you get outside, the lunch break's over and the silencer is off.

- Adekunle

ASAMANDO

Even pirates fear traveling to Asamando. Named for the Asante land of the dead, this 28,000 square-klick territory is a nation of ghouls. The ghouls, mostly long-limbed Krieger-Laluastrain *sasabonsam*, are said to "own" the Black Volta river that runs along their territory's north and west borders. Their estimated numbers range from five to fifty thousand, but best guesses put them at twenty to twenty-five thousand.

Formed in 2030, when a small group of sentient ghouls and thousands of their brain-damaged fellows gathered in northern Ghana, the ghoul "nation" quickly grew as *sasabonsam* all over the continent immigrated to it, hoping for better treatment than their own people had given them. Thema Laula, Asamando's queen and founder, rules the place with an iron fist. She forces her followers to work twelve-hour days building houses and mining the huge stores of gold, diamonds and minerals they control.

- And they love it. She sees the future and knows they must work hard so that when their nation is recognized as legitimate, its wealth and cities will promote it to the status of a world power. They work so that their children will be considered metahumans and not animals. Nyamkopon, the largest city, has houses built into the trees so that the residents are safe from lions and hyenas attracted to the smell of their food stores.

- Jirgi

- You mean the piles of rotting human bodies kept for snacks?

- Carousel

- Jirgi's right, though—everyone in Asamando loves Thema Laula. I was on the DBO crew that made the deal with her for diamonds, and in person she radiates charisma. You wouldn't think a gray-skinned, blind, stooped woman who smells like a meat-packing plant and has limbs like a daddy-long-legs could move you, but



you gotta respect her. She's trying so hard to help all those half-blind, twisted unfortunates. When we asked if DBO could trade with Asamando, she just requested a fair share of the profits and that her representatives be treated with the same dignity as other metahumans.

● Gagon

● I don't care what noble-suffering-metahuman crap she pulls, she pays five to ten yen a kilo for metahuman flesh. I don't know the biff herself, but the only interactions I've had with sasabonsam is waking up to find one lowering himself onto our boat from a tree branch while another was munching on my first mate's fingers. Every one you kill, you're doing the world a favor.

● River Raider

THE BAULE EMPIRE AND ANYI LANDS

Southwest from Asamando, you hit empty savanna and forest controlled by roaming pirates and subsistence-farming villages. The larger corps also own land here; Ares and Saeder-Krupp each have a complex of factories, offices, laboratories and training grounds the size of a small arcology.

Both facilities produce weapons and mercenaries for the Baule-Anyi war in what used to be eastern Côte d'Ivoire territory. When VITAS broke out and the Ivory Coast's government col-

lapsed, the Baule—the dominant ethnic group in the administration—seized control of the military and treasury. They shut out needier groups while they tried to get the disease under control among their own population.

After they recovered from VITAS, they began trading with coastal pirates, selling crops and animals raised in the ruins of their capital city. They stayed mostly insular, trying to avoid the wars that were costing so many lives and so much money ... until self-proclaimed King Gyassale declared that the Baule Empire must take back the Ivory Coast and unite it under his rule. His first conquests brought money and food to his subjects, and ever since they've gone enthusiastically along with his delusions of grandeur.

● If you're human, dwarf or elf and want merc work, look into Baule. Gyassale's a bit self-important, but he pays in ivory and parts from paracritters that sell big in Southeast Asia. If you're feeling moral, he's not too bad. Any conquered non-Baule are second-class citizens, but they keep their houses, aren't sold into scrip-slavery, and he doesn't order wholesale slaughter or torture like the corps.

● Colonel Cobra

● He doesn't order it, no.

● Diamondback

• He destroys the land with his war, buying napalm and herbicides from Saeder-Krupp to ruin his enemies' fields. The animal parts he pays in are from endangered creatures who have done him no wrong. Any war not fighting for the environment fights against it.

• Kermit

At the moment, Gyassale has his eye on Anyi territory. The Anyi, a mostly troll and ork group formed out of the remnants of the old Anyi people combined with goblinized members from all tribes, hug the old border between Ghana and the Côte. They've survived the Baule onslaught so far because Krupp deals to both sides, but they'll lose eventually if they don't start hiring mercenaries.

• And if they continue fighting on two fronts. While the Baule are gnawing on their northwest border, the Anyi are trying to expand south to get a piece of coastline. The Nzima, whose land they want, pretty much belong to Ares, who keeps up the border between them and the Anyi to prevent Saeder-Krupp's market from getting access to open water.

• Jirgi

• The Baule and the Anyi are desperate for a coastline. Neither group's territory has good roads. Their rivers flood often and only run north-south, so transportation (of food, troops or money) is painfully slow even across relatively flat savanna and forest. No water also means no pirates, so trade has to be semi-legitimate, which isn't easy if you're at war with all your neighbors. The dozen or so little tribes along the bottom of the Côte, including the Nzima, Esuma, Abure, Mbato, Alajan, Ajukru, Ahizi, Avikam, Godie, Noyo, Wane and Kru, each just a few hundred families, cooperate to keep the bigger boys off their backs but also fight among themselves for prime jobs and land.

• River Raider

• Crazy, neither side has air power worth a damn. Someone's arming the Ajukru to keep the war contained. They've got fragging anti-panzer weaponry, and they're indiscriminate about using it. I assume someone gave 'em the missiles to keep the war contained by stopping airlifted supplies—either that or pirates are trading in frightening firepower.

• Rattler

MODUS OPERANDI

by Sika

When I told my Caribbean friend Doctor Dread that piracy took us upriver, he laughed and said, "Of course! You only have one border to run ... the coastline!" Dread explained how often he took advantage of the Carib's mix of languages, islands and rulers. He thought we had a unified government under the Asante. When he said that, I laughed so hard it hurt. One border? One nation? One language? Just because the Asante Nation is not an island chain? On my last raid, we avoided thirteen patrol boats

from four tribes and five megacorporations. Top that with your Caribbean stories.

[2.4 Mp deleted by sysop]

• Come on, guys, don't take him literally.

• Captain Chaos

I knew then that I could not simply list the jobs available here, because none of you would understand. Instead, let me show you the life of an African pirate through a story that happened to me.

• Uh-oh, guys. I've met Sika. He rented his body to Phoenix Biotechnologies to get start-up money. "Field-tested" a cerebral booster, then used the extra smarts to split before they took it back. The super-brain lets him see six layers into a situation, but he can't explain them coherently. I'll try to translate.

• Spice

FINDING THE JOB

It started in July when an Ares Macrotechnology mercenary team sailed in from the front lines of the Anyi-Baule war, carrying their wounded into the Sekondi docks.

• Sailed in? I thought they had no coastal access.

• Deezil

• Between June and August is the rainy season, meaning roads are out unless they're maintained by a corp. Instead, mercs and goods go by sea and river, the natural roads ... or get stuck in the mud as easy pickings.

• Woppler the Weatherman@UCASol.com

• And business kicks in. Crops grow, and there are baby animals for the pet trade. Parasites and diseases skyrocket, so biotech firms need supplies and pirate crews and merc bands need replacements for sick people. July through October are hot recruiting times.

• Arctic White

We knew Ares would try to make up their losses, so our crew prayed to their loved ones for help. Our prayers were soon granted; I heard Ares was hiring crews to go upriver near old Yendi. I told the corp rep that I could have a crew ready in an hour. We were lucky to get to the meeting without incident—I think my grandfather was guarding us.

• Sika means that literally. Ancestor spirits are handy for misdirecting the competition.

• Shango

• And he wasn't lying about how lucky that was. Piracy's the best way out of poverty in Africa, and mercing for someone as big as

Ares means money and future jobs. When one of the AAAs is hiring, crews will leave members in the street to "slow down" anyone who might reach the site before their captain.

• Spice

GETTING HIRED

The Ares rep said they had established friendly relations with the Dagomba in Sambu a few kilometers downriver from Yendi, so they'd obviously been planning for a while.

• It takes effort and nuyen to keep relations friendly enough that the village won't sell you out, so it only becomes worth buttering up the village president after you know you're gonna need him.

• Spice

• "President and cabinet" is a local euphemism for "warlord and his family" in villages willing to deal with corps. Independents refer to their leaders as *Tanga* with the suffix *saba*, *dan*, *dagena* or *tu*, which is closer to "priest-king." The priest-king is often aided by a magically active *kpal*, or soothsayer.

• Professional Student

• Does being a warlord make me a less legitimate ruler than the president of the UCAS? I need no government of three bickering branches to care for the Dagare people. I listen to those I govern and do not abuse the power that great Wea and Tintai have given me.

• President Sagongono@af.dagare.gov

That was not too surprising. Yendi had been empty since the Asante grabbed it ten years ago and slaughtered the resisters, so the forests had time to regrow. Once the corps heard that new villagers had moved into Yendi, they began to wonder if that meant there was enough merchandise in the land to be worth grabbing. Saeder-Krupp brought in scouting teams, who found gold deposits and moved their miners in. After that it was just a matter of time before Ares tried to get its share of the wealth.

• Because VITAS decimated the Coasts' population, large land areas sit empty for years at a time before villagers and corps move in. The first corpors are usually scientists, poachers and prospectors who hunt the wildlife, cut trees for lumber and mine any minerals they find. They leave once the land can't support them any more.

• Spice

• And wherever corps go, pirates follow, looking for jobs. The hot spot of the week is always surrounded with little boom towns of pirates hugging the roads and rivers to "redirect" shipments.

• Golddigger

The Ares representative said they wanted to "expand their Yendi market" and gave us temporary SINs as members of the Ares prospecting team. If we found any gold, Ares would buy it at market rate. However, we would have to prove to the rep's

superiors that she was not merely playing with figures and the gold did not come from an Ares source. This is corporate-talk for bringing back evidence that it was Saeder-Krupp we hit.

I told her we needed security against the local wildlife—pirate-speak for miniguns, mortars and claymore mines from Ares storehouses. We paid for them up front. There are too many pirates to keep track of, so corps don't front you equipment. The prices were low, so we would still profit from the run, but no one trusted us not to walk off with the goods.

• Just how big-time is Sika?

• Bloody Rackham

• This kind of thing isn't out of line in Sekondi. The Asante, Baule and big governments (such as they are) crack down on weapons, but if you grab a corporate uniform, it's a license to do what you want. This has two splinter effects—first, selling corporate uniforms is a lucrative market. Second, if you cause public destruction while wearing one, the corp in question and the government whose people or property you nailed squash you flatter than a bug while everyone cheers. Everyone knows they're one step away from death. They just want to designate who's playing in a particular bloodbath ... like Desert Wars.

• Vandal

• Except that nobody in Desert Wars slaughters the people living around the battlefield or sells off anything not welded down.

• Yawa@af.PBT54337.corp

UP THE RIVER

We avoided the Fanti pirates through sheer speed as we went down the coast. We bribed the Asante at the mouth of the Volta, promising them an extra cut on the return trip. By nightfall, we'd gotten as far as a DeBeers incursion zone and made our Nightrunner live up to its name. After two more days up the White Volta we could see Yendi, so we left the boat with the wives and kids to guard it and crept on shore to check out the competition. The Krupp pirates were second-rate—didn't even see us. The other prospectors hadn't made it this far.

• This is what we call a *quiet* job. Since S-K had a solid claim on the area, chances were everyone Sika found would be S-K loyalists or his competition for the gold. That meant little contact and lots of sneaking around and feeling out the enemy. Quiet's a misnomer, though, because once the killing starts, a job that's off your corp's turf means *anyone* goes. They're all enemy, and the more deaths S-K can't prevent, the harder they fall. Once Sika reaches Ares land, he can be noisy, because villagers see the uniform and back him in a pinch. On the other hand, he has to keep S-K pirates from following and giving Ares a rep for not guarding their borders. In land that's not claimed yet, anything goes. Noisy in, noisy out. Kill who you want.

• River Raider

• The "wives" reference is literal. Young women raid all the time, but once they're mothers, they're off active combat duty.

• Spice

To get information on where the gold mine was, we went for peasant clothes without the corp logo and traded ivory and elephant meat rather than nuyen and corp scrip for information and a bed in the village.

• Trading is a nice, neutral way of getting to know rural locals. One of the reasons the tiny ethno-nations aren't recognized is that they don't print and sometimes don't accept currency. The coastal ones use nuyen, just because it's the megacorporate standard.

• Matador

• "Nice?" He slaughtered an elephant for untraceable cash! What these pirates do to endangered animals is an international crime! Just because government has collapsed is no excuse to extinguish keystone species>>>>(5 Mp deleted by sysop)

• Deborah Bailey@UCASol.com

• I didn't say I liked his method. Some locals are staunch defenders of wildlife; others know it's their paycheck. Both pay pirates and mercenaries to defend their grounds. In some towns, the young men enlist in the Baule-Anyi war because they want training to defend their land against the Asante. Others work for corps to hurt their enemies' backers.

• Matador

• Rural folks pay in wildlife, crops, magic or bodies (alive or dead) ninety percent of the time. Not everyone's sitting on a gold mine.

• Northern Njogama

PULLING THE RAID

The mining facility had high security, but we watched their vehicles. Once we had learned enough to be useful, we left the area and then circled back, quietly sabotaged several trucks, gunned down the guards by the smelting and refining plant, and came away with several crates of gold dust.

• Sika's bunch combined three common types of jobs—destruction, assassination and theft. When corps hire, it's because another has what your employer wants or is doing better business. If it's the former, you bring their goods back to your boss. For the latter, you waste their buildings, trucks, drones and workers. You're paid in scrounge and corporate products.

• Spice

We lost our pursuers in the thick forest, reached our hovertruck and took off downriver, two lighter from bullet wounds and a mamba bite.

• The Coasts' forests and savannas are home to Jameson's, green and black mambas, all of which are lethal to metahumans. The four-meter black mamba, actually gray with bluish-black

gums, is the most spectacular unAwakened poisonous snake. If you're bitten, you have twenty to forty minutes before your heart and brain stop. They can travel at more than eleven kilometers per hour and pursue their natural prey, biting multiple times. Do not step on one, and more importantly, do not smell like prey by handling small animals.

• Anonymous

• Four meters of poison snake?

• Lariat

• They could be worse. They could spit, like their Awakened cousins.

• Anonymous

AFTERMATH

On the way back we sent a dinghy ahead to find out who was searching boats in Asante waters. It was not the man we had dealt with before. Hiding the gold dust in plastic bags, we declared only the crops we had stolen to feed our crew, and the Asante took half.

• Aren't the Asante catching on by now?

• Laser

• Sika's not spilling everything. The Asante search for smuggling compartments but don't usually cut someone in half or X-ray them to find the baggies of gold the pirates swallow and vomit up later, or strip-search them for that extra-special stash. This technique also conceals gold from astral eyes by surrounding it with living material. No mistake, smuggling is as big as in the Carib, but air-fields are rare as drek, planes expensive and the wilderness inhospitable. So the rivers are choke- and check-points.

• Blackstone

If caught, we would face local justice. Sometimes the Asante extradite us to the corporation we have hit; other times, they maim pirates, kill them or send them up the Black Volta. The word of the arresting officer is all that's required. If your crimes include sexual ones ... all I will post publicly is that "eye for an eye" philosophies prevail, and I never understood your Western countries' hesitance about public punishment.

• Frag, these people are barbaric.

• Nightmare@na.ucasnet293457.mil

• Who are "these people?" The Asantehene, who decides policy? The guys who search the boat? The judges who do the sentencing? The megacorporations who, because they're operating somewhere where public opinion means jack drek, cut loose and do what they want? Or maybe you were referring to the metahumans in the war zone, who are as screwed over as Bug City residents and resort to piracy for money?

• Galonchi



• There's still lag time between jail and trial, even if the trial is fixed. The Fordians back in the Carib are constantly up in arms about human rights abuses here. The small Ivory Coast chapter pays okay to crack jails and flesh-trade ships.

• Uhuru

When we returned to Sekondi, we turned in the license plate of an S-K jeep from the mine site and told the company woman to run it through her computer as a "background check." It turned up positive. With that evidence, combined with some DNA from a dead guard, we had our verification that no Ares sites were hit. She took the gold and paid us well. Because of that expedition, I own a house by the beach. It is not quite like the private estates I see in Baule lands, but there is space and food for my crew and wives.

• I give Sika six months before Lofwyr turns him into a red stain.

• Miz Liz

• Actually, I know Yendi. The facility there is Yakashima, not S-K, and it's only mining bauxite ... Sika is distorting his facts to cover himself. But he does own several houses because of his career, and I've been on raids with him where we heisted gold dust.

• Shango

• The license plate makes things easy. When your job is specifically to hurt workers, bringing back proof gets messier. Lots of corps, especially S-K, tattoo their workers to keep track of them and discourage kidnapers. When you kill them, you prove it by grabbing the tattoo.

• Kai@af.ares.sekondi.corp

OCEAN PIRATES

River piracy is only half the story, of course. Sea-going pirates attack the corporations as resources are moved off the coasts toward distant markets. Others come in from foreign countries, sent by corporations or syndicates who want the goods without setting up a Coast branch. The Mafia, for example, is a prime buyer in New Orleans for orichalcum manufactured inland. Several Caribbean ships have also realized that there is more money to be made plying the Coasts than in dozens of small-time drug or BTL chip runs.

Groups that travel outside Africa invest in cargo freighters big enough to make the trip worthwhile and tend to stay in Africa only long enough to load them and take off for somewhere more profitable. Foreign pirates are hated by local corps *and* by local pirates for cutting in on the market. They don't stay long, because dozens of crews cooperate to cut them out.

• Pirates in Africa are *fierce* about protecting their territory. Most bands are a group of brothers or cousins and their wives and kids running a boat. Like Sika said earlier, the wives and small kids watch the boat when the men go inland, but *everyone* fights on the water. Pirate kids handle guns starting at about age six, and boys are considered full grown at thirteen. The ones who haven't sold out to a corp spend years cultivating relations with coastal vil-

lages from the Côte to Azania, so they can sail up and down and trade at each stopping point. They're generally quiet, supplying their own needs and their customers', but if you make a move on their markets ... ouch!

• Chike

• Watch it when you say "sold out." Coastal pirates don't think of themselves like that even though they do a lot of work for corps. They see themselves as freelancers, like shadowrunners, taking jobs from Ares this week and PBT the next. To them, sell-outs are the ones who sign exclusive contracts with one mega. People with that kind of deal get better pay plus health care and housing, but most pirates stay clear of such arrangements because sooner or later you fall into debt and are no better off than the scrip-slaves who work the corp-owned fields.

• Gbwegen

• So this is just shadowrunning with a boat, right? Corp gives you the job, you make the run. Where's that pirate freedom we've all heard so much about?

• Rattler

• The corp tells you who to hit, but not when, where or how. Your instructions are "make Aztech lumber mills less profitable," not "steal the datachip on the Drekload-of-Nuyen Project out of Mr. Honcho's right desk drawer" like some shadowruns. And you have to find out who's hiring; no waiting for a fixer's call. You're in the street with an ear to the ground, and you do the research yourself. It's halfway between running and Carib piracy.

• Carousel

• And as profitable as either. Where do you think all those panzer jocks get their panzers, from Quik-Mart? If you want milspec equipment, go to a war zone and sign on for a month. Forty acres and a VTOL if you put in the work.

• Kane

"The Asantehene's Most Wanted #16 ... and dropping!"

Foreign pirates often do not understand us. I would not survive if I let a braggart like the Gingerbread Man on my ship. I must trust that my crew are professional and that they care for me and each other as for family. Often, we swear codes of honor regarding our families and crew. We have systems of determining revenge for our slain and our honor or whether a fight was fair, though you would doubtless find them confusing. I can only say that to understand us, you must live with us. You will be tested to see if you can survive a life far harsher than you ever imagined.

• In order to get in real special with some isolationist Adjakru, I had to pirate with them ... but I couldn't pirate with them until I was a member of their kinship group. That meant I had to join, and marriage was unlikely. Learning the language was hard enough, but speaking it fluently enough to out-talk their dead ancestors? Giving a ritual sample? Swearing oaths? It's a commitment.

• Berry

CASHING IN

by Tissale

Ago says he isn't rich. That's bulldrek. Here, either you're rich or you're poor. Either you've got a ship and can run over a village or corp facility, or you sell your blood and body to the corps for your next meal. You want to know how to get rich? I'm not a jerk like him, so I'll tell you. You scratch my back, I scratch yours—same as in Seattle or London.

The rich-poor dichotomy is pretty obvious. It's cheaper to get a corporate flight from Sekondi to DeeCee and get cyberware installed there than to get it locally. That cyberware has a 300-percent markup for those not sponsored by a corp ... which means only those who want to pay millions for mediocre 'ware in a chop shop, but with no corp strings attached. Most muscle do corp raids and go under the laser for slick but "complicated" chrome—complications like a bomb in the head or experimental add-ons.

Then there are the ethnic wars. Theoretically, they're aimed at military targets only, but that doesn't fool anyone. King Kouamé of the Anyi wants every Baule exterminated, along with any "supporters of the Baule Empire." That means the stuff you've seen on The Battle Channel: mass graves for the lucky, mass rapes to destroy "impure genetic lines" and mass shipments to Asamando. The same goes for the Asante, Fanti and Baule. No one plays nice. But collecting on the blood money means you have to prove that your victims weren't farmers—taking military uniforms, regimental tattoos and army boots will do it. For the ocean-running Fanti, bringing a ship with dead crew into the Accra harbor is the way to collect. If you're squeamish, both sides need other goods for the war, like bandages, antibiotics, boots, clothes and guns, guns, guns.

EXTRACTIONS AND SLAVERY

Now we hit the flesh trade. If you think slavery today is anything like that picking-cotton-in-the-field-with-chains history-book drek, I have news for you. Nobody needs unskilled labor nowadays. We have machines for that. The market today is either sex slavery or wage slavery.

• I made my fortune in living cargo. Shadowrunners in Seattle or Silicon Valley kidnap computer engineers and fly them to Baltimore, where I plunk them in my hold and sail for the DeBeers Asante facility. The cargo ends up improving the corp facility's Matrix security. I wouldn't call it "slavery." Sure, they get paid a few nuyen an hour and nobody else in the corp sees them, but they get fed and clothed. They just can't leave.

• Great White Hunter

• Lots of the history-book cotton-pickers got fed and clothed, too ... pretty well, if they had otherwise decent owners. That didn't make them any less slaves. They couldn't leave either, or make any kind of decisions about their lives. And people thought of them as property. That's what makes a slave, not how much you're brutalized. A gilded cage is still a cage.

• Eponine

• The extraction trade disgusts me. I've seen skilled, professional scientists, sanitation engineers and doctors working sixteen-hour days in offshore laboratories and massive research buildings north of Accra. Some are "encouraged" to get corporate implants with the unsubtle hint that other corporations might extract them and treat them worse; if they're marked with a corp logo, they'll supposedly be recognized and rescued. In reality, they're often killed and their implants used as evidence by pirates. Others are given additives in their food to make their organs unpalatable to ghouls and useless to organ-leggers, but the number of toxins running through the wage-slave's body means they'll die at about age fifty ... just before they'd retire and the corporation would have to pay a pension.

I helped ten or twenty wage-slaves break out of an Ares facility and take off through the wilderness to Burkina Faso, which has a more enlightened view. With our profits from the looted lab, we got them plane tickets to England, where most could fit in better.

• The Neon Samurai

• Ares does not trade in human misery. I won't deny that black-ops teams perform willing extractions, and some have been relocated to other countries—and yeah, Ares might have done a few. But once you're an Ares employee, they treat you well, like any corp that doesn't want its top talent running away. Neon's scenario is bull-drek.

• Nightfire

• Have you ever qualified as "top talent"?

• The Neon Samurai

• Lemme get this straight. Africans are kidnapping rich white guys from North America to put together their empires at low cost ... and the slaves are running north to freedom?

• Professional Student

• Nice irony ... but not entirely accurate. Not all NorthAms with valuable work skills and decent pay are whites. The pirates kidnap plenty of "rich" blacks, Asians and Hispanics—plus some who can claim every "racial" heritage under the sun. What do you think this is, the twentieth century?

• Tuchman's Disciple

GOLD AND MINERALS

The big attraction, gold, is cheap because there's so much of it. Every time Lofwyr, Mujaji or some other lizard drops a chunk of its hoard on the market, the price of gold plummets for awhile. Silver is relatively expensive because many metahumans can't work with the stuff. The funny thing is, the purity of gold, silver, mercury and copper only determines the price half the time. Unrefined materials haven't been smelted and purified, which lowers their price ... but refining means mechanical processing, which drops the price for telesma and orichalcum creation. So the raw stuff can make you rich with the right buyers. Lofwyr and Aztech have huge magical labs with mages working around the

clock making orichalcum, and I've heard Thema Laula is mining some up near Wa.

• The "mining" claim is propaganda. Orichalcum cannot occur naturally. The mana necessary to bind the metals together needs a living mind directing it. It's like expecting a robot to be formed from clay.

• Magister

• You miss the obvious. Someone created it ... a long time ago.

• Lone Gunman

• You miss the ridiculously obvious; ghouls allergic to sunlight work underground.

• Magister

I know a few pirates who have made off with orichalcum, but the guards mana-bolt to kill at a moment's notice. The real big-time stuff is out of your league, so just forget it.

• What's bigger than 880,000 yen a kilo?

• Auric

• Uranium mined and enriched by Aztechnology for fissile material.

• Kingmaker

• Yeah, and when was the last time either of you slugs saw a kilo of either one of those things? My guess is never, and my second guess is that you never will. Get your heads out of the clouds and get back to what you can realistically take.

• Zinc Oxide

USUAL MARKETS

The rich-poor dichotomy on the Coasts means there aren't a drekload of conspicuous consumers on the shore. Sure, you get mercs and eco-freaks and pirates, but the real smarts say buy here and sell in suburbia. If you don't have a boat that can get you to NorthAm or Europe, you'll go through a corporate mover, which cuts you off from the final profit but still nets you a fair chunk.

Once the goods are in corporate hands, they give it to the appropriate division for packaging and sale and then ship it out. This means seagoing pirates get their crack at it. This sort of stunt is so common that Saeder-Krupp ships make it a policy not to aid non-Krupp vessels in distress on the chance that they are pirates.

• So we raid them out of spite.

• Uhuru

• In the open ... where Krupp ships waste half of you before going down. That sort of attrition scares most pirates toward easier targets. Slowly but surely, Lofwyr will win, adding another chunk to his empire as his rivals lose money to piracy.

• Miz Liz

- Who are you, his press agent?
- Uhuru

Because of the weapon factories and freebies here, running guns to restricted countries (everywhere outside Africa) is big business. The difference between the cheap guns from an Ares factory here and the cheap guns from an Ares factory in the CAS is that you get *anything* you want here. You want APDS for the war? You can pay wholesale, because chances are you'll use it for a purpose that benefits Ares in a place Ares higher-ups don't care about. The same goes for munitions plants owned by other megas, and for all the heavy-magic foci and the blood from Awakened critters that goes into making those mage-swords. The big supply here means markup anywhere you can get past a Coast Guard. But be warned, if you're corp-sponsored or (shudder) corp-owned while you pull these tricks, the corp'll fine you for "distributing corporate goods without a license." When you're on corp property, they can do whatever they want ... usually just muscle in on your action.

Ports? There's the Caribbean, where you can practically dump the guns in the street and auction them off. That's good for distribution, but if you want to take home enough to fix your boat, feed your family and maybe buy yourself a piece of land, do the UCAS. UCAS shadows are full of idiots with some political cause, paramilitary groups and rich psychos who want weapons to blow the top off the Empire State Building or some other dumb stunt. Also self-styled "shadowrunners" who want weapons, the bigger the better. Oblige them. They'll pay through the nose. The chances of getting caught in Aztlan, Amazonia or the CAS are higher, so you're better off selling to the Carib and making the return trip double-time to load up rather than risking your boat getting blasted.

- With the Villiers-Nakatomi-Yamana cluster-frag, I'll bet my Vengeance that somebody passes more restrictive gun-control measures within a year in Boston, and the demand for weapons shoots up.
- Trisha
- Sucker's bet. Haeffner knows it, too. The Bureau of ATF&M is gearing up for a storm under the Attorney General's orders.
- Minute Man
- If you're willing to take a longer trip around Africa to the Pacific, we would also trade for your "corporate goods."
- Tikbalang

MAGIC MARKETS

The three major places to sell magical goods are countries with the most restrictive laws about magic: Azania, England and France. Azania, as the richest country on the continent, is a prime market for *all* African piracy, from Kenya to Congo river pirates to Morocco to Madagascar. The four different states that make up Azania have different policies regarding pirates, so most goods come into the relatively anarchic Cape Town, where they're handed off to land-based crims. In England, you sell to the tongs or greenie hermetics, as most traditional druidic and shamanic types

use home-grown orichalcum. France's dock gangs aren't too organized, so your price will fluctuate, but it's still about 160 percent of Seattle's list price on the low end.

Getting back to NorthAm, the animal trade is hot. Those *gomatia* monster chameleons are a big hit with folks rich enough to afford them—especially the ones living near Chicago.

- These things are dual-natured and can sniff out astral insect spir- its. Not that they can fight or eat 'em, but they tongue flesh forms so you know who's who. Search and destroy, motherfragger!
- Bughunter

Of course, to feed the beasts, you need rats (four yen a pop) or *alufye*, their natural food. *Alufye* breed quickly in captivity—cash in before the market falls.

The recent opening of Chicago means that ghoulish migration from Cabrini to Asamando is bound to happen. Smuggling ghouls to Asamando from the States means you go through Baltimore or New York. They're not much fun to work with, but oh, Thema Laula is big-time rich.

- Travel from the UCAS all the way to Africa with a boatload of things that look at me and see "GETCHER EATS HERE" scrawled across my forehead ... riiiiiiight. Not for all the cred in Dunkelzahn's will.
- Calypso

PLAYERS IN COASTAL AFRICA

- Here we go again, with your Captain's best attempts to give you names and faces to look for or steer clear of when working the West African coast. With few on-line records, I've had to rely strictly on word of mouth, so don't take it up with me if there's even less accuracy than usual. The players are listed alphabetically because some are too weird to categorize—there are more churches, pirate bands and secret societies than what we might call legitimate organizations.
- Captain Chaos

ANYI TERRITORY

King: Kouamé

Major Cities: Adzape, Agboule, Dimbokro, Abengorou

Major Rivers: Komae

Though not an official nation, this ethno-state controls a great deal of land in the southeastern Côte, including the Komae river, a major north-south trade route. The actual Anyi people were decimated by VITAS I and II; by 2023 only about fifteen thousand still survived, mostly orks and trolls.

The tribe almost fell apart in the face of that tragedy, but was united by King Kouamé. A troll, Kouamé drove out the few remaining humans, dwarfs and elves, and taught his followers that trolls were chosen by the gods, with orks as lesser beings created in their image and other races inferior pretenders to personhood.

By isolating the majority in the center of his territory and allowing only selected elite trolls to patrol borders or trade with

the outside, Kouamé has raised two generations to know no other way than his.

The Anyi, now about a hundred thousand strong (less than a fifth of which are trolls), are strictly regimented; trolls are the soldiers and leaders, while orks are essentially slaves. The Anyi are at war with the Baule (ironic, since many of their own members are ethnically Baule orks and trolls who left for a "better life with their own kind") as each group tries to expand its territory. Kouamé is starting to fill out his armies with orks to keep up with the Baule's hiring of mercenaries, which means he's showing the young population a different way of life for the first time.

- Kouamé's a Hyena shaman who embodies his totem perfectly. He's cruel, capricious and smells like drek. He's ruined his people's lives for thirty-five years, and I can't wait until the Baule run him over or he drops dead behind the magic he uses to look un-aging.

- Sipe

- Why do they stand for it? Eighty thousand orks versus twenty thousand trolls? The orks'd win for sure.

- Laser

- Nope. The trolls are trained, armed officers, and the orks can cook yams. Some resent Kouamé enough to run away, but no one except Asamando wants refugees, so many become bandits, pirates or just bodies. Others stay because they've never known anything else: most are under fifteen years old. When Kouamé dies, things will change. None of his kids are shamans, so they won't have magic to support them, and they're not as well-liked.

- Jirgi

ARES ARMS, AFRICA

- They sure do!

- Bung

Area Manager: Franklin Bonaire

Local Offices: Bibiani, Sekondi

Major Divisions: Manufacturing, military magic, armaments

Ares's official presence in West Africa is strictly as a manufacturer. The rare times it's mentioned in the UCAS press, Ares claims that the division is "providing jobs to Ghanaians to help the nation regain its feet." They say the factories produce Ares home-defense items and "consumer goods from natural products." Reality? Three Ms—militech, mining and magic. Their unofficial military magic division researches the effects of spells and spirits in war and also recruits traditional shamans to study the alleged prophetic abilities of ancestor spirits.

- They own or are fighting Saeder-Krupp for most of the Côte/Ghana border by arming the Nzima and buying or claiming unoccupied land. Ares's gold mines are the most productive in the world, and where do you think they got the fissile material for the Bug City nuke? Not to mention the millions they make selling

local Awakened plants to Shiawase and Phoenix Biotechnologies for drug research.

- Tomtom

- Bonaire's personally feeding the hatred in the Asante-Fanti and Baule-Anyi wars. Ares Arms sells guns to both sides in each conflict, including experimental models, and gets them tested immediately, Research and profit. He's a sick frag. You can see him with a video camera, recording the battles and taking notes on equipment malfunctions. Sells the footage to The Battle Channel for side profits.

- Golden Gulf

- You're full of drek. Bonaire's encouraging the wars, but he'd never sell footage to TBC. He's got people to do that for him, and besides, TBC's Aztech.

- Carousel

ASAMANDO

Queen: Thema Laula

Major Cities: Nyamkopon

Major Rivers: The Black Volta

When the sasabonsam flooded into North Ghana, filling villages and consuming or infecting their populations, the Asante and Fanti were too concerned with guarding against each other to assist their neighbors. Little did they know that the ghouls would someday pose a worse threat to them than the war. With no one to fight the thousands of ghouls, Thema Laula quickly seized the area, naming it after the Asante land of the dead.

To the surprise of many, she stopped her advance and began rebuilding the towns and constructing a capital city. She runs the area almost single-handedly, making all decisions herself and giving them to a few lieutenants to implement. Wanting to present a civilized front, she has built schools and trained an army to defend her borders.

- Bulldrek. Go there, and all you'll find are dirty ghouls living in bark tree houses with carcasses strewn on the ground. Her "army" is a pack of wild beasts, sentient or not. They demand tolls of flesh from anyone navigating the Black Volta, and often the packs overrun your ship and attack your crew whether or not you pay. If Ares wants to test weaponry, I've got forty thousand good ideas for targets.

- River Raider

- Thema Laula wants to create a ghoulish homeland and to better the lot of ghouls everywhere. Krieger HMHVV alters the victims' DNA, meaning that ghouls give birth to more ghouls who suffer from the same brain-damaging effects as the original infection. To get around this, Thema Laula has implemented a breeding program. Her more degenerate followers are sterilized and kept firmly controlled. The most intelligent ghouls are encouraged to breed often, to create a smarter race. The sasabonsam strain, natch, is seen as superior.

- Gagon

• And either Dunkelzahn's enticement or the massacre in Chicago put her in crusade mode. She's negotiating with Ares to get a special on NBS and met recently with the Asantehene about official recognition as a nation. Rumor says the meet went poorly, and there have been skirmishes in the no-man's-land between Asante and Asamando. Bring a camera; TBC's buying.

• Muffin Man

THE ASANTE NATION

Asantehene: Osei Agyemang

Major Cities: Accra, Kumasi, Koforidua, Tema

Major Rivers: The Volta

The Asante Nation is made up of a million or so Asante, Ewe and Twi, in southeast Ghana around the mouth of the Volta. The third nation in sub-Saharan Africa to come on-line after the Computer Crash (after the Confederated Azanian States and the Nigerian Kingdoms), the Asante Nation normalized relations with North America and Europe, to whom it sells cocoa, coffee and minerals. It imports computers, medicines and cars.

The Asantehene, king of the Asante, is absolute ruler, chief priest and commander of the armed forces. The present king, an ork named Agyemang, is widely reputed to be fair, competent, tough and smart.

• Except among the Fanti, where he's known to be stupid, lazy, underhanded and mean, as well as unnatural because of his several human wives.

• Ko'biere

Laws in the Asante Nation are strict, with no weapons allowed on the streets except the military's, and even minor crimes punished with maiming, beating, death or shipment "up the river." Despite this draconian atmosphere—or perhaps because of it—the Asantehene is respected by most pirates (the ones who know better than to start trouble they can't finish, that is). Many see the nation as a prime source of employment fighting the Fanti, and also as a place to rest between jobs.

• Pirates like Agyemang because he hates corps. After seeing several ethno-nations taken down by corporate "aid" and the Ga run over in Sekondi, the Asantehene has banned extensive corporate presence in his nation and refused corporate help or influence over his government. So for corps to get at Asante gold and land, they need freelance pirates for every job. Also, Agyemang has all but announced that pirates can use the Volta to go upriver and plunder as long as the nation gets a cut.

• Chike

AZTECHNOLOGY, WEST AFRICA

Area Manager: Jeffrey Switzer

Local Offices: Sekondi, Seguela

Major Divisions: Plastics, textiles, mining, Medicarro, The Battle Channel

Sit down before reading this, guys, because everything I can find on Aztech's West African division says they're clean. You still with me?

They've got factories all over, taking advantage of a rare place with land and labor cheaper than Aztlan's to produce the majority of their semi-raw materials like steel, aluminum, plastics and cloth. They like the magic words "Third World labor," but wages, though low by UCAS standards, are enough for a person to live on, and they don't practice scrip slavery (paying workers only in corp scrip, only good at corp stores, then raising prices but keeping wages constant until people work for free to pay their debts).

• Wrongo, Cap'n. Like you say, Azzie wages are enough for a person, singular. In Africa, each adult usually has four to ten dependents. If a worker wants his family to live on Azzie ground, he gets the scrip treatment, with the added threat that if he slows down, the "nonproductive units" (i.e. little kids) "become productive" (i.e. prostitution, drek-work or organ-legging). So the adults work like fraggin' demons.

• Nyamekye

All the factories are run legally, and even TBC (though in dubious taste) has passed censors in most nations as infotainment. The one big bug I've found is pollution. Without environmental protection laws, they use tech that was banned in the last century. They burn wood and coal without any filtration and dump their wastes straight into the Gulf of Guinea.

• Don't pirate for Aztech. They think killing freelancers is easier than paying them. And one change in weather will dump their atmospheric pollution into the cities. If you must deal with corps, *target* Aztech. Their guards are heavily armed and magicked-up, but there are few who can be bribed. Do the Earth a favor; destroy Aztech factories and redistribute their wares.

• Green Piece

Their Medicarro branch, introduced in 2050, services only Aztech employees or those willing to pay forty times UCAS prices for medicine. Last year, DocWagon opened up a small branch with fair prices, and Azzie customers flocked there.

THE CHURCH OF THE WHOLE EARTH, INC.

Founder: Jaelle Lester

Local Chief Guru: Gabrielle Irving

This pseudo-New Age cult was formed in 2005 to "work for Gaia and her reawakening." Typical fantasy bulldrek at the time, but with the Awakening six years later, they felt vindicated, and their numbers tripled, filled with thousands of fantasy fans who read one too many books about faeries and white-bread corpses who wanted to feel eco-friendly. The organization got darker after goblinization as splinter groups began to see themselves as avengers for magic and metahumans—and internal rifts meant more splinters than a sawmill.

Gabrielle's faction started as a few dozen African-American Earthies who saw going back to Africa as a way to get in touch with their histories while living somewhere "pure" and unpolluted.

● Fragging NorthAm bastards don't understand drek about Africa. They've got their happy little bean-curd and goat-milk colony built on the ruins of Sunyani and have cultish sessions about "connecting with the great Earth mother." They're blind to the hell around them, seeing the genocide and corporate warfare as "Indigenous aggressions" and therefore perfectly OK. Just the local noble savages biting each other's ears off in keeping with their native cultural values ... nothing to worry about or, God forbid, interfere with.

● Age Gawru

● I came over with these guys in '48. I was a back-to-Africa kinda guy then, but when I got here, I saw it wasn't paradise. Even without colonial governments run or funded by white people, the African nations still warred with one another. In DeeCee, black meant solidarity. Here, it meant nothing. Just the rich manipulating and crushing the poor, same way they do everywhere.

Going agricultural and traditional was kind of like disarmament—it only works when everyone does it. I thought Gabrielle's church had the answer, irrigating farmland and sterilizing water ... but when the corps showed up again, all too happy to sell people guns, I couldn't preach help any longer. I had to hurt the motherfraggers.

● Uhuru

Reality didn't suit them nearly as well as their idealized view of Africa, so they built a little town and stuck it inside a big wall. They sit inside with their imported crops and water-purification tablets, spending as little time as possible with their native neighbors. It's a little island of North America in the middle of Ghana, and Gabrielle's bright enough to realize that her followers wouldn't stay very long without at least some of the comforts they're used to.

● What does this mean for you? She's willing to let you crash behind her guarded wall and share food and water in return for electronics, medicines, batteries and other niceties from the outside. They've got some members still in the UCAS who agree with the back-to-Africa thing in theory but weren't ready to make the move just yet. Those folks also send money and toys. These guys aren't fools ... that's just the image. Their "increase-the-peace" line doesn't go more than skin deep. Gabby knows her enclave is a target for anyone who wants their luxuries, and she's armed a wall-guard to protect against "predators"—the kind with four legs or with two legs and fifteen-round clips. Some of the stuff she gets in from Ares is damn near mil-spec, but it all goes back to the UCAS with the next group of runners she helps, and the cred flows here. Mob connections, maybe?

● River Raider

DEBEERS-OMNITECH

President: Bas Groenburg

West African Division Manager: Pia Douwes

Local Offices: Sekondi, Akuse

Major Divisions: Mining, manufacturing

When the diamond market crashed in the mid-teens with the dragons' sales from their hoards, DeBeers, the South African diamond giant, realized it needed to expand its operations. Perfecting the technique of carbon coating, they brought Dikote™ onto the South African market just in time for the goblinization riots. Took forever to hit the Seattle shadows, though.

DeBeers merged with Universal Omnitech in the thirties but is nominally independent within Africa, mining diamonds and precious metals and manufacturing jewelry, industrial diamonds, tools and Dikote™.

● Fraggin' H big-time, guys. I got my entire cyberarm Dikoted in return for ice from the 'bonsam. What chrome shines brighter?

● Calico Syl

● They've been pulling a Manhattan Indian deal, buying all the land they can cheap. Hard to turn down any payment when the guys with assault rifles look like they'll take it anyway. They're one of the few corps the Asante let inside their borders, and they've got mines, plants and offices all up and down the Volta.

● Adekunle

● And they're *mean* about guarding their mines. "Their" mines include any they stumble over, like the alluvial deposits your crew is working when they find you. If you're not working for DBO, they're trouble. They think *all* pirates know where some hidden store of gold is, and if you don't have one to tell them about, they make up for it by selling you.

● River Raider

● They're from Oranje-Vrystaat, legendary for its white-human-supremacist jerks, some of whom filter into their ranks. Don't expect mercy.

● Uhuru

THE FANTI PIRATES

Captain: Kweku

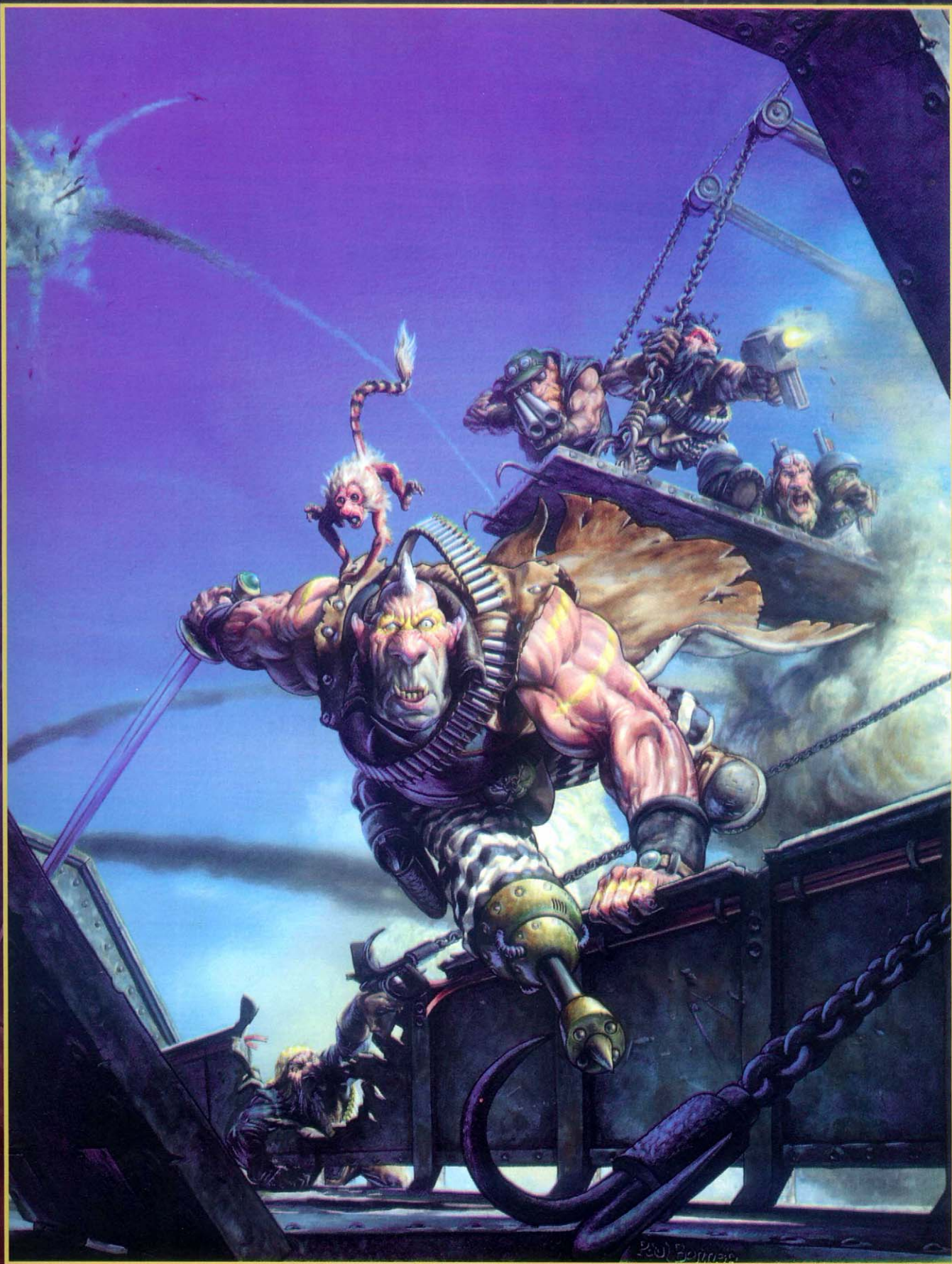
Major Bases: Cape Coast, Wineba

Mawu said earlier that there's no central leader of the Fanti, which is true, but some pirate patriarchs pull more strings than others. Kweku runs the group that blockades Accra (his family and about twenty others), so he's the one that most Asante, mercs and corps are gunning for.

● Ah-ah, Mr. Chaos. Just because Kweku's the patriarch don't mean he's in charge. He's a good pirate, great for tactics and actual fighting, but long-term planning is out of his league. He just manages the guns and money. His wife Akua says who to hit and when, and who would kick their hoops if they tried it.

● Kwesi

● Kweku really cares for his people. He wants the Fanti to triumph over Asante aggression and bring the Akan people together as a



By Paul Bonner

Promotional still for the hit triideo show, "Cyberpirates of the Caribbean."



By Tom Baxa

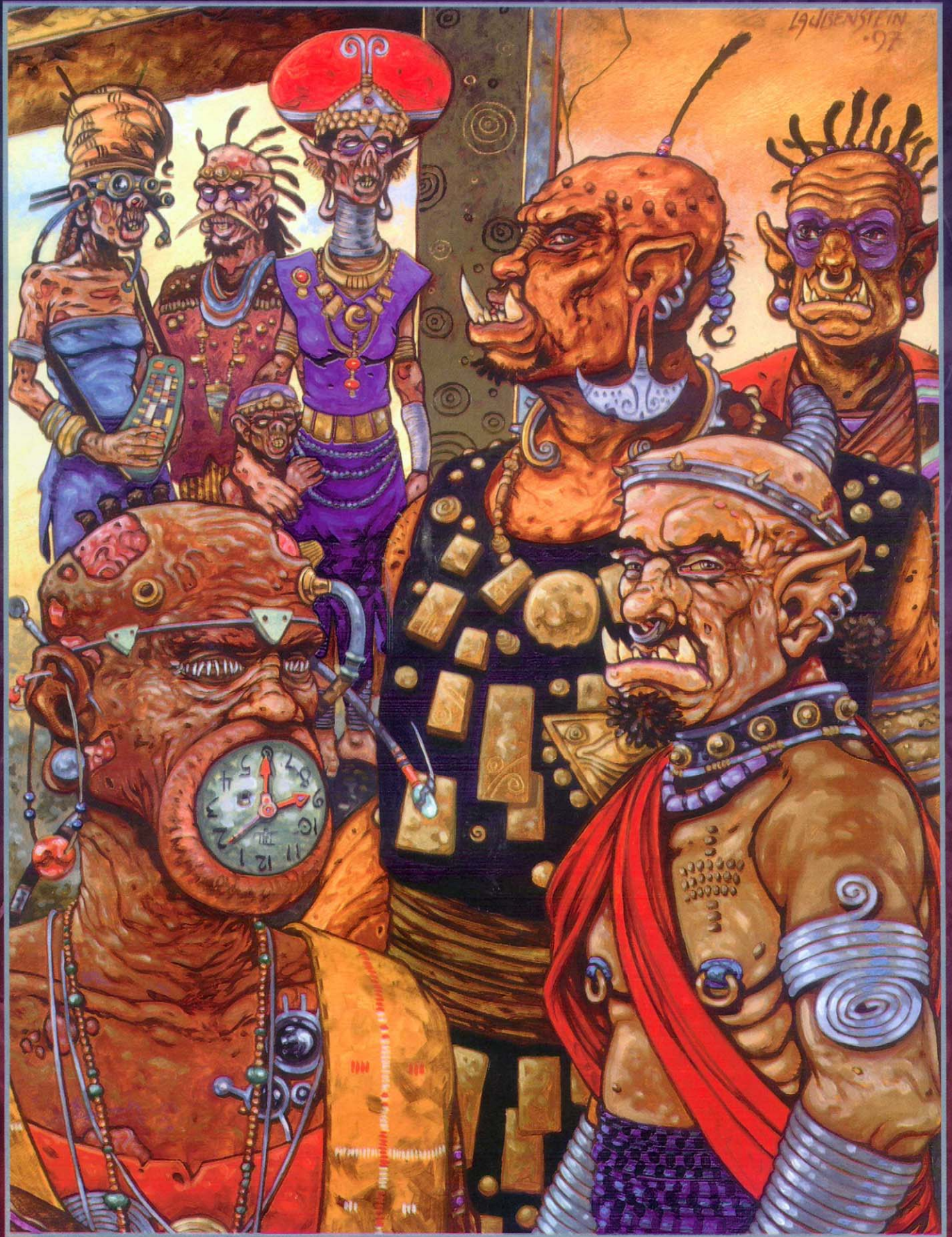
• Fools who hunt Gator in his home end up as 'gator food.
• Miami Dice



By Tom Baxa

• When voodoo houngans fight, no one who gets in their way lives.

• Dark One



By Jeff Laubenstein

◦ Few ever see the Queen of the Dead ... fewer still live to tell about it ...

◦ Uhuru



By Jeff Laubenstein

• When the Huk revolutionaries ask for your boat, you give it to them.

• Bantalwak Babe



By Larry MacDougall

•You want dangerous? Try corp-backed African pirates firing milspec guns from across the Volta.
•River Raider



By Larry MacDougall

• I've seen spirits dancing in Madagascar. What sprawl-bound runner can say the same?

• Tsofa



By Joel Bliske

• A good hideout for your haul is worth its weight in pirate gold.
• Diamondback

unified nation. Akua's colder. She knows if they win the war, the Fanti will be left with all the problems and responsibilities of running a government. She loves her people but prefers life as a pirate, so she's keeping the war to skirmishes and terrorism, stopping Kweku from going to a corp for assistance in finally crushing the Asante.

• Gagon

THE FINAL MESSAGE

Captain: Jonty Geldenhuys

Bases: Unknown

This group is pretty small (20–30 raiders, no families), but it caught my attention because of the captain's name. He's a bounty hunter from Azania. The info we had on him didn't make him look like the kind of guy who'd be leading Ewe pirates in the Côte d'Ivoire three years later, but he's a dead ringer.

His crew are a close-mouthed bunch who don't seem to actually do any biz. That is, they raid and go into the forests to explore and (presumably) exploit, but no one can find a market where the goods end up. And no one knows what "the final message" is.

• I got shipwrecked near them once and caught a ride downriver in return for the rest of my haul. They're weird. Don't talk much, even to each other, but work in perfect tandem. Jonty's the worst of the lot. Most of the time he was as silent and brooding as any, but at dusk he'd get real talkative, telling about his days as a bounty hunter and how he hadn't known his true purpose then.

When I asked what that purpose was, he got enraged—picked me up and threw me bodily off the boat. The worst was when I checked him out astrally. His aura was glittering black, blood red and fire white. I've never seen that much rage, hatred and exhilaration before. There's something seriously wrong with that elf.

• Jackal's Howl

• I also spent some time with the crew, and I snatched one of their recreational BTLs to ... um, check it out. It's a *bunraku*-style personafix, but it's off a serial killer or some drek. Turns sane minds into psychotics bent on the deaths of millions. I melted the thing.

• Jirgi

• Winternight's God chips?

• Dybbuk

• You have a name for those things?

• Jirgi

• Maybe. Depends. What's the most valuable thing they might be after in the Northern Côte?

• Tomtom

• The uranium mines, theoretically ... oh, drek.

• Jirgi

THE GUIDING HAND

Honorable Reverend: Jack Bayonne

Base: Somewhere in the former Western Province of Ghana

Another weirdo. Bayonne showed up five years ago with certification for the Seventh Church of the Guiding Hand, but no explanation of where he was from or what happened to the other six churches. He settled down in the scrub between the Asante and the Anyi, built his church, got a few followers and that was that, right?

But wait—there's more. The info we've got says he receives more shipments from Ares Arms than both sides of the Baule-Anyi war. And his followers are a tiny group of maybe a hundred local families if you look at a church service, but other days you can hear the marching and shooting of five times that many deep in the forest. When asked about the weapons, Bayonne says he's training his parish in self-defense, to fight conquest by the "godless" corps, but when given a gun, none of the locals know how to use it. And the only armed people who've been seen in that area are white.

• The church is obviously a cover story. The man's a retired Ares Desert Wars vet. He's training bug-hunters. Knight Errant would never have abandoned Chicago without a contingency plan.

• Soundbite

• I don't think so. He only gets mass-destruction rockets and missiles, or silent sniper-rifle assassins' weapons. Neither are great for bug-killing in a populous city.

• Diamondback

• Whatever he's training them for, they get to practice under live fire. Have you ever gone into those woods after the sounds die down? Dozens of dead bodies just left there. If you check them out, their fingerprints are burned off, and there are so many drugs in their systems it's surprising they didn't keel over without the wounds. This isn't a normal army. They're totally deniable "lone-nut" assassins—no name, no fingerprints, no memories.

• Yung Shon

THE ILLUMINATES OF THE NEW DAWN

Director of Education: Ernest Faldspar

Local Headquarters: Accra

The Outer Circle of the Illuminates has been doing charity work in Africa for at least a decade, and it didn't blink at Hernandez's candidacy and loss of the election back in the UCAS.

Most of the Illuminates' efforts focus on education. They provide disaster relief (to disease and natural disaster victims only; they don't touch the wars or pirate attacks), but most of their money is at home, so the efforts are small and immediate—food and clothing rather than funds to rebuild. They keep a staff of a few dozen hermetics (Inner Circle, I assume, but I have no proof) who run healing clinics and train locals with magical potential, paying for their education in Boston if they're cooperative.

• And brainwash them into thinking that their own magic and religion aren't good enough. Their offers of education bring disaster.



They take our children, lock them up in “boarding schools” and punish them if they listen to a totem rather than memorizing hermetic formulae. These “illuminates” are no different than nineteenth-century colonialists, wanting to destroy Africa and recreate it in their own image.

● Tsafa

● I don't think a few hundred people pose any real danger to Africa. What they do pose are job opportunities for us. They're looking for mana sites, telesma and naturally occurring orichalcum, and their staff is tied up in schools and hospitals, so it's freelancers all the way for virgin sniffing, talislegging and “native guides.”

● Nana Tongo

PHOENIX BIOTECHNOLOGIES

Divisional Head: Kacheda Honaw

Major Facilities: Sekondi, Accra, Grand-Bassam

The last thing I expected in Africa was Native Americans from Pueblo, but after an Asantehene-backed buyout of Nunoo Health and some money from Dunkelzahn's will, PBT set up shop with the king's approval. They're gene-banking massive numbers of animals in case they go extinct and are attempting to synthesize drugs from living plants and creatures.

● This means steady jobs, catching any rare variant on a paranimal. Found a croc with the desire reflection power? Drag it to PBT. Found the croc's little brother with magical adaptive coloration? Ditto. As long as it's still warm, they can bank it. Catching the beasts alive pays higher yet.

● Chepekwe

● Oh, gene-banking ... real eco-friendly, right? If we can't keep 'em alive, we'll have 'em on chip. That means genetic manipulation to reconstruct the critters. Not for repopulation, but for PBT's Nature Knows Best paracritter defense division back in Pueblo.

What would you pay for a chameleon who blends into the office wall and not only tongues bugs and astrals, but smells pistol ammo and snares the gun out of your holster? When PBT yells "Don't kill it, we must preserve it for science!" they really mean "Don't kill it, we can sell it for millions!"

- Smuggle Bunni
- Their pharmaceutical division is churning out new innovations left and right. Want something that'll stop schistosomiasis cold? PBT will dose you up. Want cheap birth control, no matter who you are? PBT. I wouldn't go for their drug-testing, though ... young women disappear sometimes when trying to collect. But they pay for donor organs and do dreklods of surgery, so I don't think the girls are organ-legged.
- Offred@na.docwagon313668.com.

- Schistosomiasis?
- Bloody Rackham

• Nobody gives pirates the most important tip. Don't drink out of the Volta. Don't bathe in the Volta. Don't *fall* in the Volta. Don't let your stomach swell up and die urinating blood.

- Offred@na.docwagon313668.com.

- Again, schistosomiasis?
- Bloody Rackham

• Thanks, Offred ... you're lots of help. It's a disease caused by a fluke (that's a tiny living creature, for you brainiacs out there) that lives in a snail. The fluke burrows into your body and breeds. As it breeds, your stomach swells up like you're pregnant with an elephant (for both men and women) and you urinate blood. Doctors have to hit you with heavy meds or mojo to get the fraggin' things out of your system. Offred's warning us about the Volta because that river has the snail in it by the billions. There ... sleep well.

- Zinc Oxide

SAEDER-KRUPP, AFRICA

Sub-Saharan Director of Agribusiness and Militech: Gerlach von Altbuser

Director of Resource Development and Environmental Engineering: Meinhard Braun

Major Offices: Grand-Bassam, Abingourou

Sigh. An administrative mess only the dragon understands. Their home office is in Cape Town, and all S-K African branches have to report to it weekly. Altbuser not only directs the guys with tanks, but the farmers and herders too ... but only after passing muster with the mining, smelting, reforestation and paranimal king, Braun.

• It makes more sense when you realize Lofwyr doesn't like Altbuser. He's been down to personally review the sap twice, and when Altbuser's armies napalmed an as-yet-uncovered mana surge site, Lofwyr visited the guy's house at three in the morning.

It gets better. He said Altbuser didn't coordinate things prop-

erly, overstepped his authority and lost potential magical profits in excess of three million nuyen. So Lofwyr downgraded his housing to Class B, effective immediately. And he exhaled. FWOOSH. No more house for Altbuser. The guy's been working his hoop off ever since.

- Cap'n Krupp

• Altbuser has a gentleman's agreement with Bonaire of Ares Arms not to escalate the Baule-Anyi or Asante-Fanti wars until they've squeezed out all the money they can. That's why you don't see Thor shots, planes with decent electronic warfare suites to stop the SAMs from the south, or real modern butt-kick. You do see a lot of house-to-house and armor-and-infantry fighting.

- Diamondback

• Braun pulls the strings for your scientist-napping Johnsons. Trying to figure out the rate of resource reduction, the impact of corps, and analyze everything from mana spikes to the growth rate of fungus means a lot of specialists, and Braun cuts costs whenever possible. He's got brain-booster tech, so he can multitask, but his hair is getting gray. If I wanted S-K to take a real beating here, I'd extract *him*.

- Tissale

THE INDEPENDENT CITY OF SEKONDI

Presidential Governors: Ako and Akweute Amatsewe

When the Ga heard rumors of Asante hyper-nationalism way back when, they "ethnically homogenized" by getting the frag out of town. They ended up in Sekondi. It took a lot of prodding and it wasn't clean, but the modern sprawl of Sekondi is everything the Asante nation is not—lots of foreign corporations, mixes of every ethnicity and a democratic, anti-traditional population. You'll find representatives from every megacorp here, triple-A through single-A. The docks are controlled by Ga pirates and the city's metroplex guard, who took advantage of the four militech-heavy corps inside. Whatever wars, pirating and mayhem you bring up to the city's border, it stops the second you get within range of the Sekondi guns.

• They've kept some traditions. Ako and Akweute are twins born on the day the city declared its independence, which among the Ga sets them up for special reverence.

- People Watcher

• I'd say they get special reverence because they're sharp business-people; plus their family was rich and practically owned the airwaves.

- Muffin Man

• He's not kidding about the guns. This is the most heavily armed and most polite sprawl I've seen. There's crime, but it's mostly petty theft and such. If you murder someone inside the city, maybe an hour might go by before someone takes you down. But if you tell someone "let's take this outside," you go out past the city limits, and only one of you's coming back. Works the same

way in reverse. The megacorps chase you wherever they want on the water, but if anyone on the Sekondi walls sees a firefight in their harbor, they'll remain "Sekondi neutral" ... and railgun you both, then pick through the rubble.

• BOP

• Ako is far from neutral. He wants to crush the Asante ... maybe he's got some inadequacy complex because his brother's a shaman (Anansi totem) and he isn't. He's been thwarted by Akweute in some of his more radical moves to get revenge for the Asante's "misdeeds against the Ga people," because both governors need to sign the papers to get anything done. Akweute is more popular with the Ga, whose businessmen and pirates wheel and deal as second nature.

• Northern Njogama

TAN TIEN, INC.

Regional Coordinator: Meng-Chen Tsao

Facilities: Bouake, Ferkessedougou, Sekondi

Currently engaged in a research war with Universal Omnitech's cybernetic and biogenetic labs, these upstarts bust hoop to do it faster, cheaper and better. Dunkelzahn left them data on cerebral series linkage and fifty million nuyen—they set up shop in West Africa as soon as the pressure started easing off their simsense studios in Hong Kong.

Tan Tien's Bouake branch is collecting paranimals galore for cybernetic modification. Not poison-tipped claws and such, but datajacks and muscular-signal-transference receiver rigs, testing chimpanzee reactions to SPISES technology.

• They're gonna teach a monkey how to deck, rig and chip BTL? Has everyone gone batty with animal fever?

• Cynic

• No, they're going to teach a rigger how to rig a monkey—and after that, a school of fish, eagles, dogs, and in the future, metahumans. They're trying to collapse the stealth drone market in one fell swoop. How much can the pigeon on your windowsill see?

And the 2XS technology that gives you such a high? Unrestricted experimentation with that kind of drek on the Coasts. If they can make your heart race with 2XS on command, they can give you an endorphin rush to wipe out your pain. With the right programming, that's a burnout chip at a hundredth the cost of a pain editor. Crunch to Universal Omnitech's sales, and Tan Tien rakes.

• Tomtom

• Do you have any evidence for the drek you spout?

• lai D'oh

• I have theories supported by personal encounters, yeah. But I don't give free samples.

• Tomtom

YAKASHIMA, AFRICA

Divisional Manager: Iwamatsu Mariko

Local Facilities: Practically everywhere

If it's sitting still for more than five minutes, Yakashima will strip-mine it or destroy it if there's money to be made. The takeover king is one lightning-quick parasite here, backing any megacorp that needs a loan of troops, pirates, money or equipment, and plundering anyone smaller than itself. It's currently supporting Fanti pirates around Kera and competing with DeBeers-Omnitech, Aztech and Tan Tien in the mining, forestry and biotech industries.

• Their legitimate operations are small, with the exception of agribusiness, but they've got an open offer for "free water-borne trade" (i.e. they'll buy anything if they like the price). When your corp connection is burning you and you need another buyer quick, Yakashima's often the saving grace.

• Uhuru

• Don't overlook that agribusiness. They bought out European interests in cocoa and coffee crops back in the early '50s, so now they're the number one producer of chocolate, hands down, and fourth in java. Their Yendi factory makes candy in all shapes and sizes ... but strangely, nobody ever goes in or comes out.

• Wonka

• It's automated and the directors live on-site where it's air-conditioned. I snuck an LTA drone over the fence and loaded up with two and a half tons of chocolate chips. Outfought the Yakashima guards the whole way back, shot stratosphere-side, came down again in Accra and moved the chocolate into a women's prison. They hadn't seen anything sweet in years, and now I've got 850 friends back out on the streets.

I swear, the craziest thing I ever saw was the molasses flood. Eighty tons of the stuff stored in a giant spherical vat to pump into the trucks, and they never asked "Gee, what would an HE rocket ripple do to this?" Not flammable like an oil refinery, but you ain't lived until you've seen corp guards squashed by a tsunami of liquid sugar. I'd hate to see the number of ants that came to that picnic.

• Kane

"Caffeine Cowboy Crashes Confection Kings—Vidcast at 2300."

LONG HAUL PIRACY AND THE PIRATE ISLAND



◆ As a pirate, you can't be as insular as some shadowrunners I've met who've never worked more than fifty miles from home or learned a second language. One Denver runner I knew had never taken a job outside that city, because in Denver there's always work inside the borders.

Unlike runners, pirates can't stay put and hope that jobs open up where they live. You pick your jobs, which means knowing your buyer in advance or finding one quickly. And that means understanding who wants what, and for what price, all over the world.

The man who'll try to show you is Cap'n Krupp, formerly a Mediterranean pirate on Lofwyr's payroll, who horked off the big lizard and has been running from port to port ever since. Some people said not to trust him if Lofwyr's letting him talk about piracy on Shadowland—it must help the dragon somehow, right? Maybe. See for yourselves.

◆ Captain Chaos

Transmitted: 18 January 2059, 18:32:35 MT



PIRACY WORLDWIDE

by Cap'n Krupp

As much as I hate people who tell you their life story on the first date, lemme tell you some of mine, so you can learn from it. I grew up in Athens, youngest of six. Dad lost his job when the factory got automated, drekcetera. When I realized there were no better chances waiting for me than for the rest of the family, I got rebellious. Instead of taking a dead-end job that barely paid for the plastic in my credstick, I watched the kids down the block who'd gone from rowboats to Westwinds in months 'cause they shuttled guns to the Austro-Hungarian-Czech citizens. (This was back 'round the time of the Euro-Wars, in the '30s.)

I showed up on their doorstep one day, with a gun I'd bought second-hand for fifty nuyen and no ammo, bragging how I was a crack shot who could double their money with my skill alone. They took one look at the skinny kid with the Beretta 101T he couldn't even hold right and laughed. Slammed the door in my face and took the gun for their trouble.

That made me mad enough to *learn* to shoot, and sail, and steal, and eventually run my own pirate crew. Which, ironically, gave me my first legitimate job ... pirating, but on Saeder-Krupp's payroll against Saeder-Krupp's targets. I got my usual haul, a bonus from Krupp, whatever info they could funnel me and assurances that I wouldn't be busted by their cops. My friends said it was a sucker deal, but it sounded good to me.

I worked for Krupp for six years before I fragged up. I got caught, and used my one phone call to ring up my Krupp contact to get me outta there—the ultimate no-no, 'cause it tied my awful crimes to mild-mannered corporate citizen Lofwyr. My contact was killed as soon as she hung up on me, and her number was disconnected and backdated so it looked like I'd called an empty apartment. I was left to rot, but fortunately, I'd kept my crew's loyalties while working for the lizard, and they busted me out before I "died in jail."

Since then, we've been doing what us smugglers refer to as "long haul" routes. We still need money to eat, and there's nowhere on land we can go where Saeder-Krupp isn't hunting me. So we keep to the water, because the world's a big place. Cover enough of it and not even a dragon can find you.

● If Lofwyr wanted you, he'd have you. If you're still alive, you're serving his purposes. From your story, I bet you'd sooner chew glass than get within spitting distance of a Saeder-Krupp facility—meaning that all your pirating is against other corps, hurting Lofwyr's competitors. Why bring you in when you're still doing the wirm's dirty work? Cross him again, or just retire and end your usefulness, and BLATTO. Just because it doesn't happen immediately doesn't mean Lofwyr won't get revenge.

● Roz?

● I think even the dragon writes off his losses once in a while, Roz. How much free time do you think he has? Running the world's largest megacorp in his fragging head isn't enough? He's gotta have personal vendettas against half the criminal population, too?

● D. Bunker

Most of you weren't as dumb as me, so you don't have a great dragon hunting you yet. But maybe you pissed off someone else, or robbed them, or embarrassed them. Maybe you haven't, but I assure you that if you follow the advice of anyone else in this document, you will. Because being a pirate means making enemies.

If you build an empire on sixty million nuyen of Golden Triangle heroin, you'll be hunted. If you run a revolution and kick the Japanese out of the Philippines, you'll be hunted. If you sell out, like I did in Africa, or try to make a reputation in Madagascar, you'll be hunted. Because you're a criminal, and being hunted is what criminals do best.

This is why the other posters have brushed off long-haul piracy; they said the boats were too expensive, or the rides long and boring, and recommended that you push your haul to a mover and let *her* make the ride across the ocean while you grab the bucks and run. Because they know that sooner or later every pirate ends up on that long-haul route.

● If you're lucky. Not everybody makes a successful jailbreak like the Cap'n, or they're just plain stupid and don't realize when it's time to give up the cartel and the Nightskys. They're too spoiled to go back to hiding and thieving, and eventually the cops or Mobs catch them. Once you've been the big man for a while, you get old, people get jealous, and you're either 200 clicks out on the open water or two meters under. Nobody stays on top forever.

But some of us set records!

● The Gingerbread Man

Just because I'm long-hauling, which makes me the selling end of things, doesn't mean I rake in nuyen by the bagful. Just the opposite. If you're on the lam, you can't afford to have your face seen on shore, especially not in a harbor or near a fixer or other known criminal. You become the go-between, the message boy. You buy the haul from an active pirate in the Carib (or Africa or wherever), sail it across the ocean to Europe, then use your short-wave radio to arrange to meet with a fixer on his boat a few clicks offshore where he buys the drek back. The buyer has you where he wants you. You can't auction your goods to the highest bidder without tipping off everyone from Interpol to corp stoolies to other pirates. You're a sitting duck with stuff to sell. One deal, one dealer. That's all you get.

● Jeez, this guy's a downer. What's with the never-set-foot-on-land-again drek? I mean, Lofwyr's got eyes most places, but you can always go *somewhere*.

● Jaxon

● Depends how bad your enemies want you. If you only shot one cop, sure, relocate. If it's a Mafia family or corp or (god forbid) Lofwyr, there's a good chance that even the pirate havens on Madagascar will be visited by someone who'll tell your enemies your whereabouts or geek you for the bounty.

● Spice



• And not everywhere's open to new pirates moving in. The reason you hadn't heard much about piracy before is that the UCAS strongly discourages pirate-smugglers in their waters. Places like Russia and Amazonia are even worse. They've got crime, of course, but something about ignoring tariffs and taxes gets those governments' blood boiling. Even in places with a lot of piracy, like Mediterranean Europe, you need to find a niche the locals don't already cover. Otherwise, you're up the proverbial creek with a shipment of BTLs and no one to buy.

When dealing with something as touchy as the black market, most people won't buy from anyone they don't know personally or who doesn't come recommended by several reliable friends. Otherwise you could end up buying from an undercover agent or just get stiffed. So to move in anywhere, you need to know someone, have a skill useful enough to buy acceptance or be *really* damn good. If you've already got a boat and know a fixer, it's easier to stick with the long hauls.

• Bay Jewel

That said, let me give you a crash course on what to expect around the world. I focus on smuggling at least a boatload of goods. I ain't into petty theft. I don't have the time for it. But you can figure that if I'm unloading a shipment at one of these ports every other month, there's a lot of in-between time for you smaller operatives. Just trying to help—one of you reading this might end up doing me a favor in return someday. My contacts are established, and until I become wyrm food, they're still good.

THE ARCTIC

With the oft-mentioned sugar-smuggling route up north, lots of pinkies have gotten it into their heads that the Arctic is a major and easy market for pirates. Neither of these assumptions is quite true.

Don't let anyone delude you into thinking that sailing the North Sea is easy. You need a weather-proofed boat with an internal heating system, food and water to last out a storm and *all* your fuel on board, 'cause there's nowhere to stop for hundreds of kilometers. And that's in the summer. In the winter you can't even make it except by plane.

- Did you know people used to take fragging boat cruises around Alaska in August? You'd be crazy to do that now. Storms abound. Another victim of Ghost Dance weather magic.
- Woppler the Weatherman@UCASol.com

First lesson, don't rely on anything above 58-degrees latitude as your primary market. You'll starve while you wait for the eight-month winter to end. But for a secondary market, you can't beat Siberia, Norway and Finland, or Trans-Polar Aleut, Athabaskan Council and Algonkin-Manitou on the other side of the world. There are more than six million people living above the Arctic circle in the NANs alone, most of them as bored as you would be. In addition to sugar, there's a big market for "recreational chips and pharmaceuticals" to make the time go faster, and also pretty much anything else entertaining, from sim- and cyberdeck stuff to

paper books to Matrix games. The market's a little flooded, but it's so huge it's easy cred. Hard to believe, but food is also a big seller—though you've got to be careful with it. If one NANer gets sick because of your food, they'll hunt you down like a pack of wild wolves the next time you come up. Fruit out of the Caribbean gets top dollar, though it's tough to beat the CFS Sur pirates in that market on the Pacific side.

• Few corporations put in the extra effort to maintain Arctic-capable facilities when the market is too small to make it worthwhile, so locals never get enough food, new clothing, electronics and other basics. The corporate contraband mark-up is high. Snare us some oil while you're up there.

• Tikbalang

Because of the money from oil and mineral deposits, cities up north have the nuyen to make your trip worthwhile, but the other prime exports are tuna and timber, so there just ain't high-profit one-shots worth smuggling out. Might be why the governments are so lenient about smuggling; they've got nothing to lose from stuff smuggled *in*.

• CK's forgetting where he's talking about. This is a Native American nation. You want contraband? Bring an armful of natural wood and a *gagon* beak from Africa along with your sugar. Get a shaman junkie to turn the stuff to foci. Stop in France on the return trip. Repeat as necessary.

• Golden Gulf

Heading up Prince William Sound into Anchorage takes you into the Athabaskan Council and every smuggler's best friend. No Mobs and little government interference, but a decent-sized population with some spending money. Quebec City, if you're coming through the Atlantic, has much tighter security, frighteningly so, but if you can get friendly with someone on the inside, the country's got cred to spare, especially with Cross Applied Technologies imitating a bacteria culture (eating everything and doubling in size).

On the other side of the world, check out Petropavtosk-Komchatskiy, a little Russian city that's just close enough to Japan to get jealous (not exactly Arctic, but close enough to spit). They're not particularly wealthy, but a lot of people live there, and they're desperate for decent consumer electronics because there's an embargo going on. There's also Vladivostok; it's Russian (but not in the Arctic), and it's a focal point for Chinese and Japanese markets. You can get to them without having to deal directly with either one.

Filipino pirates avoid the area because once they get out of the Prefecture, they like to stay far away from Imperial Marines.

AUSTRALIA

The island continent is a natural for pirates. Because of its relative isolation (too far to bother from the Americas, Europe or even Africa) most Aussie contraband comes from and goes to Southeast Asia. To tap into this market, you'll need contacts in one of Australia's port cities—Perth, Darwin, Cairns or Sydney—

because the coastline is crazily smooth. Other than the Gulf of Carpentaria or the Great Australia Bight, there are none of those coves, inlets or sea caves you're used to hiding your goods in.

Most of Australia's legitimate exports tend to be moderate-to low-tech, concentrating on food, textiles and furniture rather than delicate electronics, mainly because of the prohibitive costs of shipping and insuring computers and electronics for such long distances. Real wool can still fetch a good price.

Sydney, in the southeast, is the best place for pirates to stop because it's got a bunch of factories busy making cars, trucks, and most importantly, boats. If you need a new or better boat, or repairs or upgrades on an existing one, Australia's worth a trip.

In terms of the most lucrative stuff to smuggle out, think paracritters and things magical. Australia's odd native wildlife produced some strange and valuable paranimals for which you can find eager buyers in zoos and security firms—plus plenty of mages or other people interested in exotic pets. And the mana storms and Aboriginal magic traditions mean foci, telesma, new spell formulae and magicians are the most profitable contraband you'll find.

- Everyday folks Down Under'll pay a good 150 percent list price for computer goods, but information's the real currency. Home-grown corps are drooling to make the next Big Discovery, and they'll pay good nuyen for espionage on corporate developments. The further away the corp base from Australia, the higher the profit, so datasteals on Phoenix Biotechnologies, Gaeatronics in Sioux or Ares in Detroit can leave you rich.

But the mana storms are dangerous as all drek, and just *try* to get the tight-fisted government to let you have anything valuable. I wouldn't bother with smuggling drek out. It's a seller's market.

- Mistress Mary

- About those vehicles made in Sydney ... the Philippines are a much shorter trip away than the UCAS, and the words "cars," "trucks" and "boats" are music to the Huk's ears.

- Tikbalang

- Be careful if you're a new face, though. Locals are touchy about outsiders taking their biz. If you sell corp secrets, you'll be okay—but if you steal magic, you'll make enemies, especially where the Aboriginal states hold sway. They're as touchy as the Ute and Sioux about that kind of thing. Many Abos raid and smuggle for money, and some are accomplished terrorists, so expect every trick in the book. If you help them pull off an antigovernment strike, you can make lifelong friends and contacts. After that, careful smuggling of paracritters and plants is possible.

- Boonrai

- Australia's also got minerals and gemstones all over the place—sapphires, fire opals, iron, bauxite, copper, oil, natural gas ... Pueblo and Japan are rich as drek, but they're fragged for natural resources. I'd call that a buyer's market.

- Melanie

THE MEDITERRANEAN

After the Caribbean, the Mediterranean is where you're most likely to hear about piracy in Interpol records or international news. Tripoli gets as much biz as Port Royal.

During the Euro-Wars, a lot of average guys-on-the-street didn't see the point in fighting. Ironically, they took to piracy because they figured their chances were better there than in the wars, and everybody was still using ships to move stuff between countries. It's actually cheaper than flying, and with a war going on, anything in the air was fair game. So instead of enlisting like loyal citizens, "criminal elements" from Portugal to the Czech states took to the seas. The smart ones grabbed guns and ammo and looted storefronts before heading to North Africa and the Middle East to wait out the wars. But even after things stabilized, there was better money in piracy than in legitimate jobs in the "recovering," megacorporate-dominated economy.

- The goods being smuggled haven't changed much. The clusterfrag in the Balkans has too many sides and factions for the fighting to ever end, and that means a constant surplus of guns, ammo, armor and other toys welcomed in North Africa or the Middle East. It's funny, but both sides of the sea trade the same things. Guns go out, and different guns come back in. Everyone wants an edge.

- Diamondback

- Other goods are in demand, too. The guns just make the news every night. North Africa and the Middle East are mostly desert, so they import *everything*. Food, all-important pure water, raw materials like steel and organic medicines can get you oil and nuyen for the return trip.

- Offred@na.docwagon313668.com

Each country along the Mediterranean has its own port cities, and they all have a different flavor for smuggling. Nice and Marseilles in France go for the high-end tourist resort look, so don't call attention to yourself or you'll bring down the law, hard. The country's anti-magic laws fluctuate, but they're always restrictive, meaning a mark-up for you. La Familia's had a death grip on Sicily for ... well, forever ... and they're not letting go, so either take the lower price the Mafia offers and deal to them or skip Italy and hit Spain. The Spanish Mobs are small and disorganized, so slipping past them to get to buyers isn't a problem. Alexandria in Egypt and Tangier in Morocco are open to necessities and weapons, but stay away from drugs, chips or anything sexual, 'cause they're still pretty religious. Oddly, the slave market is excellent ... though they don't call it slavery, because some of them still think it's the natural order to consider their women property. Whatever you call it, though, exotic-looking women'll bring a high price (exotic to the locals usually meaning elf, blonde or Oriental ... me, I don't judge). Men aren't in as great demand, but you can still get a good price if a guy's got cyberware or, oddly enough, if he's a decker or rigger.



Istanbul's profitable if you want to funnel them guns for their war, but keep someone who looks native with you at all times if you're Anglo or Afro, because the war breeds uncomfortable tensions.

- The Mafia handles quite a lot of the smuggling into France and Spain as well as Italy. If you're running here, make sure you check out the local dons. They understand that there's too big a market for them to satisfy it all, but each branch of the Family has its own specialty that they'll kill you for elbowing in on.

- Megalo Don

The pirate crews in the Mediterranean are closest in style to the pirates of the Caribbean. With so many pirates selling the same stuff in the same body of water, style sets you apart. The balkanization of Mediterranean states means that a lot of gangs divide along metaracial or ethnic lines, because national boundaries change so often that they're insignificant. Policlubs sometimes back pirates to "spread their message," and some crews go along with it for the added rep or contacts in other countries.

- The Black Mariha crew is the exception that proves the rule. They've got the rep, numbers and guns to accept anyone, regardless of race, nationality or metatype. All you need is superiority—in chrome, magic, skill or attitude. They deal in weapons big enough that the Sicilian Mafia drools.

- Kirke@eu.greece.athens65434.com

- France still has ties to its former African colonies, at least through its criminals. French smugglers commonly trade back and forth

with their country's old possessions in North and West Africa—Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Senegal, Guinea, Togo, Benin, Cameroon, Gabon and, of course, the Cote d'Ivoire. One pirate band controls Moroccan access to the West African leg. Don't know their name, but I think of them as the Muppets.

- Dr. Teeth

- Meaning?

- Bung

- The whole gang's made up of "Night One" freaks. You know, the purple, furry elves? They're trying to look like bad-hoops in metal and leather, but I kept thinking of them as fifty copies of a stuffed kid's toy with grenade launchers and S&M gear even as they were robbing me.

- Dr. Teeth

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Asia's got the highest number of pirates in the world ... but that's not surprising 'cause it's got the most *people*, period. Piracy is concentrated in the south. The warmer weather means crews work year-round, and the generally poor economic conditions (compared to Japan, China and Korea) up the number of applicants who need ready cash and have no other options.

Because a lot of Southeast Asian governments are fairly repressive, Southeast Asian pirates tend toward small groups and stealth missions rather than noisy competition. No one wants to attract the attention of the well-armed thugs in government uniform—not good for business.

● Imperial Japan has a lot of influence over Thailand and Cambodia, but not as much as in the Philippines. And anywhere the Empire is, pirates follow—refugees from the regime or profiteers riding the corporate wave.

● Cholo

A fair amount of Asia's crime is organized, controlled by the yakuza, Triads, Seoulpa Rings or local variants, and smuggling isn't much different. There are some significant other players, however. All three of the well-known syndicates are north-Asia based ... which means they work the southeast, but it's not their prime concern. That leaves room for local concerns to take their cut of the smuggling market—everyone from the drug cartels to former military looking for more lucrative work.

The big tigers in smuggling are the opium cartels in the Golden Triangle (Laos, Thailand and Burma), especially Shan United. More than a few of these are members of former governments' armies, who bought or carved out criminal empires after being replaced by a new regime. Chon Buri and Sattahip, just south of the Krung Thep (Bangkok) sprawl, have big-time illegal pickups. In Malaysia, former-military Mobs have gotten the nod from most local corporate operations to handle smuggling, so getting in as a freelancer is tough. It's worth doing, though, 'cause there's profit waiting. Singapore and Kuantan haven't caught on to the layered security concept, so hit them while they're open. And of course, there's the motherlode sprawl, Hong Kong, but it cracks down on piracy hard these days. I'd stick to the shadows or look legit, or else a cop/Triad tag-team will put you permanently out of biz.

Most Southeast Asian pirates trade primarily with other Asian countries. High-end goods come in from Japan and China in exchange for magical materials, cheap or slave labor and drugs from the south. Some Southeast Asian pirates join the Philippine revolution to make contacts, though many don't target Japanese ships from the Philippines. They know any boat that sails out of Philippine waters unscathed either has enough security to keep the Huk pirates away or wasn't carrying anything worth grabbing.

Because so much of the smuggling trade stays in the region, Southeast Asia isn't a great place for newbie long-haulers to start out. Pirates who want to make the jump to the long-haul route usually head to Madagascar to hook up with an experienced crew.

● India deserves a special nod. It has relatively few pirates for its population, but they're especially dangerous because they've rejected society completely, going for long-haul, high-profit runs or funneling opium into other parts of Asia. They have no sense of community, like in the Philippines, or reputation, like in the Caribbean, to keep them in check. They're purely profit-driven. They're polite and quiet, but once they've picked a target, they don't let up. They'll watch for days before making a move.

● Boonrai

● You sound like you're describing the life habits of some wild animal. These are massive generalizations. Maybe the psychos

around what's left of Vishakapatnam are like that, but other Indian pirates have some semblance of civilization to them.

● Meera

SOUTHERN AFRICA

The four Azanian states that make up old South Africa are rich. That makes them excellent markets and targets. Azania has more natural resources than anywhere else its size, with over half the world's diamonds, everything the West African Coasts have but more of it, *plus* being the largest industrial power in the Southern Hemisphere.

The four states are the Cape Republic, Oranje-Vrystaat, the Trans-Swazi Federation and the Zulu Nation. Cape Town is the place to unload goods. It's on the water, has a decent number of slummers and hard-core crims, and you can get past border security no matter what race or metatype you are.

● Unless you're mixed. If you're Zulu, Xhosa, Indian or white, people of your own type will buy and distribute your stuff. If you're mixed races, you get spit on, and no one will smoke the *dagga* you're selling because it's not "clean."

● Kristen

The rest get progressively more pro-human racist and tighter on security. Trans-Swazi's okay, but it's inland, so you've gotta get through one of the others to reach its markets. Oranje-Vrystaat's a good market if you're white, human, and have very good fake SInS to bypass the tight security. O-V's got most of the diamonds (and DeBeers-Omnitech's home office) so if you can smuggle in something they want (mostly drugs), you come away rich. The Zulu Nation is the smallest, strangest and most secretive of the Azanian states, controlled by Zulu elves who protect and live off the land. Ever since the collapse of Kenya's government, Zulu has dominated the eco-tourism market, with its huge preserves for lions, giraffes, antelope and rhinos.

● And they *hate* people who hurt their land. But they've got mucho magic and virgin telesma drek that mages in Seattle will dance for. The best way to get in is to pay for a guided wilderness safari and do some judicious collection on the side. But you need a local contact to move the stuff over the border, because you don't leave a Zulu vacation without getting searched (uncomfortably) for contraband. If you smuggle stuff in to the right shamans, I know a few who'll anchor spells on you in return.

● Chike

Durban, to the northeast, has relatively tight security, but it's a small city, so there just aren't enough cops to check everything if you split your crew into ten or twenty little boats instead of one big one. From there, you lay low for a day or so—then you can rent a van and drive to New Hloblane, the capital of the Zulu Nation. It's got industry, magic and rich, rich tourists; it's also got the second-highest per-capita income on the continent, but the cops look it. Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vaal, the divided city with

the highest income, is too far inland for pirates to get to easily, but garden-variety crims can make a packet.

In the Confederation, the biggest demand is for mindbenders of all types. Guns (and magic, outside Zulu) also sell well because they're so tightly controlled. Buyers pay in corporate goods or minerals most of the time. Most African pirates stop here first as a matter of course, and the Caribbean does a lot of long-haul drug trading for higher profits.

◉ What about Amazonia? Nobody ever mentions them. They've got everything a pirate's looking for—restrictive government, a large population with a history of instability, magic and natural resources up the hoop. Does anyone go there?

◉ Laser

◉ Amazonia takes restrictive government to an extreme. I don't know anyone who's gone into the interior, and I know few who've spent time in the country at all. Everything I hear says play it straight—go as a tourist if you want, but crime pays better elsewhere. If you *must* pirate there, stick to northern coastal villages. They're fighting with Aztlan, so some people buy contraband guns, but often your buyers one month disappear the next. Personally, I don't think it's worth it. All they've got are drugs (which we do better and cheaper) and magic (which Africa's got in bucketloads, without a three-dragon-backed government to protect it).

◉ Big Haul Bones

MADAGASCAR

◉ While we've been doing all this research and getting in touch with contacts and friends of contacts, I've been blown away by the ignorance of people about other places in the world. In fact, Sika (a long-time poster and contributor to Shadowland) sent me the following e-mail ... which started out as an excuse for a good laugh but eventually led to a subject all you would-be pirates out there need to know about.

◉◉◉◉◉ Hey, Captain ... thought you would like to see this—I laughed till I cried.

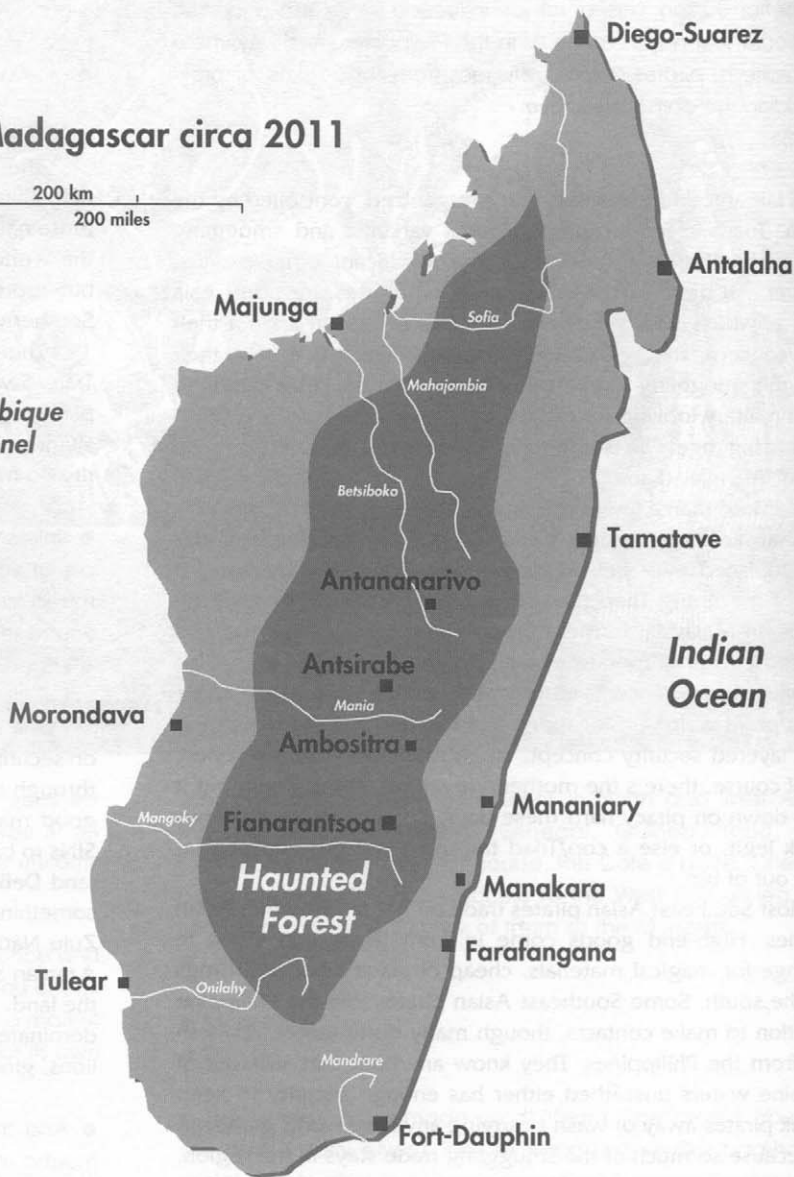
Sika

◉ Hey Sika, I read your post and it must real cool to be from Africa. But I gotta know. Isn't deepest, darkest Africa the >plac where

Madagascar circa 2011

200 km
200 miles

Mozambique Channel



strange primitives worship spirits and thirty-foot gorillas, and where there are entire cities and ruins full of snake and dragon worshipers. I here you can't even enter some areas of Africa you go through a ritual wher you have to prove you killed another person. The ritual ends with a tatoo being placed on your face. I even here that theres entire cities that worship death because hte towns full of bounty hunters, and they don't just have one tatoo but instead they have tatoos over their entire body. Is this true. Where is your tatooo? And how many people have you killed? My buddies and I want to become sahdowrunners and we have robbed a few Stuffer Shacks but nothing is as cool as being from Africa nd killing dragon worshipers and getting a tatoo.

◉ The Posse

◉

◉ Sika responds:

◉ Don't watch so much trideo.◉◉◉◉◉

I saw Sika later that day (in a node where neither of us was supposed to be). I told him I got the letter and that I'd find a place to put it, so that I could clear up any misconceptions about Africa. He answered by twisting his antennae around (as only his bee icon can) and said, "Pretty silly, eh? I thought they were talking about Madagascar."

That got me thinking. So I asked some of our pirate experts—Gingerbread Man, Sika, Cap'n Krupp and Cholo—if there was another hot spot for international piracy than the three we'd covered, and all of them pointed to Madagascar. So I started poking around ... and found even less information on it than I had on the Gold and Ivory Coasts.

The so-called Pirate Island isn't even the Third World ... in fact it makes the Third World look downright cozy. The word "primitive" comes to mind only because no other word even begins to describe it. The scanty history I did find was a joke. It ended before the Awakening. I know everybody's been saying, "around here, there's no government" throughout this post, but Madagascar really doesn't have one. Nobody looks out for the entire island ... not on paper, anyway. If there's a place on this world that's really become this isolated, there has to be a reason ... or maybe it's just the scariest place on the planet.

So let's hear it. If you've been to Madagascar, what's it like?

◆ Captain Chaos

Transmitted: 18 January 2059, 22:13:13 MT

◆◆◆◆CONFERENCE OPENED◆◆◆◆

THE PIRATE HAVEN

◆ Madagascar is officially listed as unoccupied in my software encyclopedia ... which is made by Fuchi, whom I trust not at all. Some long-haulers from the Philippines make a stopover there. Half of them come back with boats and tech and magic beyond imagining. The other half never come back. What's going on?

◆ Haring Ibon

◆ Quickie history, mate. VITAS cacked nearly everyone native to the place. International aid, corporate aid? Didn't do drek. Ten and a half out of fourteen million people died (numbers based on last recorded information, now more than thirty years old), and the rest either jumped ship or moved deep into the interior plateau and jungle. Earthquakes and cyclones in the teens convinced the corps to stay away, and pretty soon pirates all over Africa and Asia realized they could hide there, meet contacts and store loot.

No one really runs Madagascar. It's like Antarctica with a jungle—just an outpost on the edge, plus a few brave (or foolish) souls who attempt to go into the interior. Stay in the coastal shantytowns and trade for pure water and food, but don't live there. The Pirate Island sees more turnover than anywhere in the world, because it's the logical stopover for pirates going from Africa to Asia or vice versa. Pirates grabbed the dozen or so abandoned coastal cities right after VITAS and other pirates made new semi-permanent settlements in the coves, caves and beaches around

the rest of the island. Everyone who's left there now is a pirate, so you don't have to worry about getting arrested—just backstabbed.

◆ Down Under

◆ It reminds me a little of Sekondi and a little of the Carib. I was hanging in a bar with some ork pirates from India, and at first everyone was real polite-like, so I figured I was safe. Then some loudmouth drunk Caribber elbows me in the face, and I know I'm not gettin' out without a fight. So I'm on him, wham-wham-wham, and after a few shots, I've established my rep without killing anyone, right?

Wrong. Here, I just gave myself away. I showed how fast I was, and it wasn't move-by-wire super-chrome. So some jacked-up corp pirates from the Gold Coast tell me I'm kinda slow on the draw, and since I know I'll get no mercy in a gunfight, I buy them a round and get the frag out ... looking over my shoulder. And the Indian pirates are following me.

It's a dangerous place, 'cause you can never tell who's just watching and who's scoping you out. Everyone knows they won't see each other again, and there are no laws. But you meet more buyers, movers and professional bad-asses in six hours than in a week in the Carib.

◆ Bloody Rackham

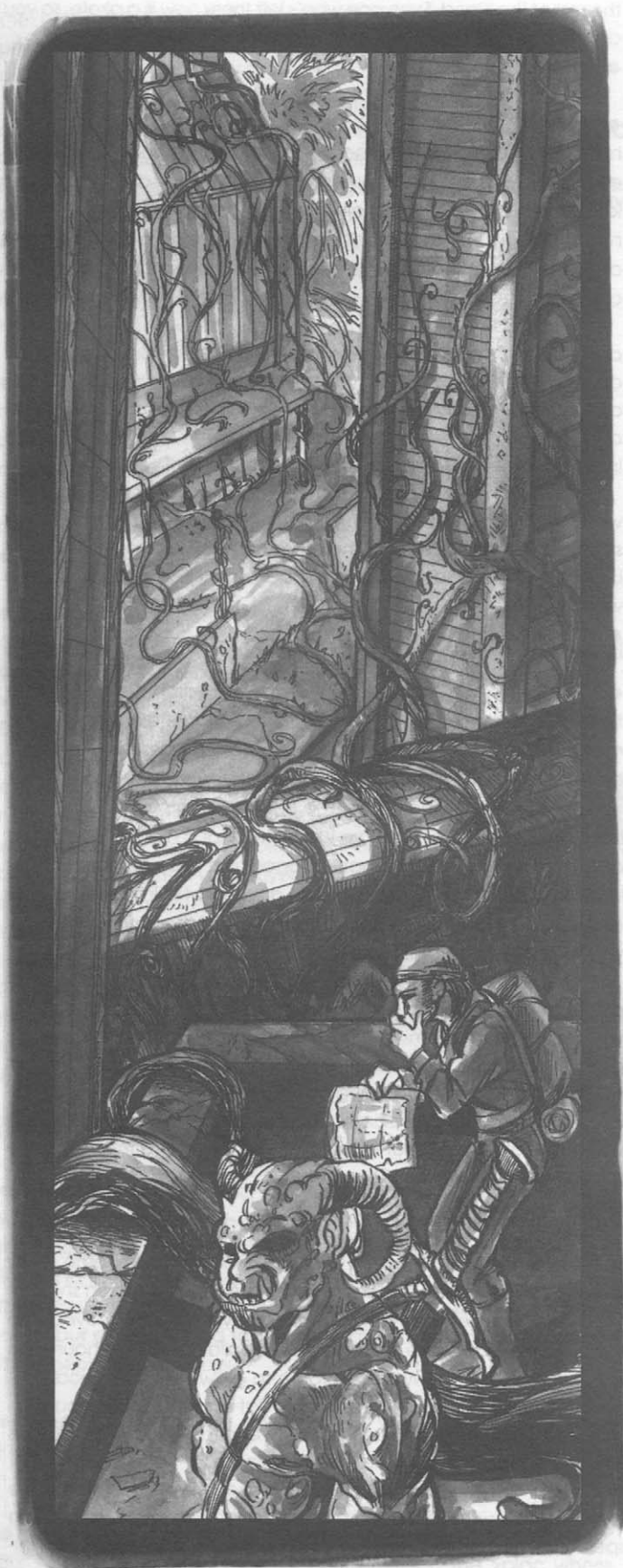
◆ The island's huge, bigger than Texas, so watch the generalizations. It has more than three thousand kilometers of coastline, mostly short beaches fading into scruffy half-desert with sagebrush, giant cactus and tumbleweed. If you've been to Pueblo, you know the sort of climate. The northeast and inland are tropical jungle. For pirates who are just looking for a night or two to rest and hide, you can find empty villages or a deserted beachfront without worrying about running into anyone who'll try to cack you or steal your haul. The west and southwest of the island are best if you're not looking for trouble.

On the east side, there's a long string of old cities grabbed by pirates. If you go to Fort Dauphin, at the southeast tip of the island, you might think for a minute that you got the wrong land mass. It's got tall glass and chrome buildings, is well-lit, and you can hear people talking and bargaining any hour of the day. Then you realize that the lights are campfires and battery lamps magnified when reflected in all that glass, and you won't find the language spoken anywhere else in the world.

◆ Cap'n Krupp

◆ Most of the Fort Dauphin pirates have no other home. They leave occasionally to raid some passing Asian or Azanian ships for food and supplies, but some families have actually moved into the bottom floors of the most stable old buildings or built houses on the outskirts where they'll have room to grow their own food.

The inside of the city feels like old flat-screen post-apocalypse movies. People from all over walk between the decaying buildings with guns bigger than they are, and you can trade anything for anything—animals, magic, weapons, boats, people. Someone somewhere'll want it. If you've got a buyer who wants something specific—the formula for a mind probe spell, a panzer, a gengi-



neered tame fire-drake—and you can't find it anywhere, come to Madagascar, but make sure you bring something equally wiz to trade. Nuyen sometimes flies as currency, but the majority prefer stuff for stuff, and any other money gets laughed at.

The insides of the buildings have mostly been stripped of anything useful, but not many people live in them because they're starting to fall apart. So you can sometimes go inside one and find a perfect homey little office set-up, covered in dust, that no one's touched in forty years.

It's a mind-frag.

● Krome Krow

● The newest rumor is that some of the pirates store their goodies in those abandoned buildings, in old refrigerators or basement rooms. Think about it. This was a living city at one time ... one of the biggest on the island, with tons of houses, apartment buildings and such. You could start searching each room in each building and spend your whole life there before you hit them all. The newest pirate maps are ones of city streets, and the "buried treasure" might be in a refrigerator on the twentieth floor of what used to be an office tower or high-priced condo.

● Zinc Oxide

● That language Krupp referred to is a mixture of Thai, Malagasy (Polynesian mixed with some East African sounds), Hindi, English, French and Afrikaans. Presumably it reflects the original pirate settlers' nationalities, but they've added words from just about every African language or dialect, plus Chinese, Japanese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Arabic and Spanish.

It's not so bad after the first month. Most groups speak their own language with their crews and the Fort Dauphin pidgin with others, so there're no words for discussing higher philosophy. But that's okay—most conversations revolve around food, shelter or threats.

The language is half-physical too, with big exaggerated gestures and facial expressions to make sure you get the point even if you just stepped on shore five minutes ago. You may not know what the guy is saying, but if he's got one fist balled and the other hand gesturing in front of him like some old-time Shakespearean actor, with his face screwed up like a hissing cat, you can usually get a clue.

● Blue Giant

● In Tamatave, about 800 clicks north of Fort Dauphin, you get the same kinda stich, but nastier. Most of the city was destroyed during the pirates' wars in the 2020s, so you don't get any illusion of civilization. It's just piles of rubble, sometimes pushed together into big walls, like little kids playing snow forts with bricks, furniture and human skeletons. No one lives there because they want to, but a lot of folks have no place else to go. Lots of the locals are the folks who get Interpol on their tails for trading in biowarfare agents and chemical weapons or the terrorists who get every European nation to cooperate in hunting them down.

If you ever need to stop in Tamatave to trade for medicines or rest for the night, do yourself a favor and leave your boat somewhere else. Just bring enough goods to trade with and a few other

things you don't mind losing. You'll face anything from completely mundane thugs and weapons to chrome you'll swear we don't have the tech for yet.

Don't start a firefight in the city itself—take it outside. Someone set off a frag grenade here about ten years ago, and shrapnel broke open a canister of delta-anthrax that some idiot was holding. No one knew what had happened until most folks were too sick to leave. Almost the entire city died. It was damn lucky that no one lives around Tamatave, so there was no way for the drek to spread further.

● Maningory

● No one's pushed inland to settle, though. Everyone's a pirate and none of them want to lose the coast. Strange that nobody's wanted to stockpile in all that space.

● Rosa

● There are a few groups who never leave the island—watch out for them. If you thought the Côte d'Ivoire had weird cults, double the dosage for Madagascar. I saw some onetime pirates in camouflage body paint who'd reverted to hunting and gathering in the Thorn Forest near Tulear. The place is a nasty tangle of vines and cacti, but these guys live on the wild tortoises and Awakened geckos native to the forest. Of course, they're still packing what modern conveniences they can, kinda like campers, so it's not like they're a lost tribe or some drek. I think it's some kind of initiatory or religious way of life. They told me their name, but I couldn't pronounce it. "Ihosaydudra," maybe.

Trouble is, their definition of "hunting" includes anyone or anything based on what they need, and "gathering" has meant sinking ships with Dynacore plastique to sift through the wreck.

● Calico Syl

● Manajaray is the leading gang on the Pirate Island. Anyone moving in gets trounced before they get their bearings, so Manajaray keeps its place. The gang—almost a thousand strong, not counting the kids—is named after its home base, halfway between Dauphin and Tamatave, but it roams all over. Khamla, the leader, is half-Thai and half-Malagasy, and she's seen most of the world pirating. She's old now and doesn't leave the island much, but that just makes her meaner. She won't touch Tamatave, but her crew collects "taxes" from everyone else in the southwest. If you don't cooperate, Khamla'll shoot you so many times your body won't float and toss you into the ocean. If you pay up, she uses what you give her to make the place livable, storing penicillin and planting food crops. You could do worse.

● Uhuru

● Old news. Khamla's had her face handed to her by the Isangoma, a group of Zulu pirates who've cut a swath through the regulars since they arrived last year. They come and go, which is why they didn't butt heads with Khamy before. They consider themselves Madagascar's rulers, and no one's told them no and lived. They've got some crazy elven ideal that they're trying to

spread around Africa, so any challenge on their "home turf" is dealt with directly. Radebe, the leader, used to be some hotshot in the Zulu government before he got kicked out.

● Namqua

● Radebe didn't get kicked out. He got *sent* out. That whole "disgraced official" drek is meant to cover up the fact that he's got a cortex bomb that makes him jump when the Zulus say frog. The Zulu government needs to keep clean, so they sent Radebe to feel out land ripe for conquest and resettlement by elves. Watch out for Muteniteni, that brainwashed wakyambi he kidnapped from the Congo. She's a physad. He's a Jackal shaman. They're both sneaky, vicious and heartless. There's nowhere on Madagascar to escape them ... when they're home.

● Lakwena

● What is this "nowhere to escape them" drek? The island's the fourth largest in the world, almost a mini-continent. If you can't hide among a few thousand pirates on the edge of a wild fragging rainforest, where can you hide?

It's not like everyone's a cutthroat, either. In Diego-Suarez and most of the smaller towns, each band stays to its own base without bothering anyone. Most of them can't communicate, whatever Blue Giant says, so they'd just as soon have nothing to do with each other.

Most folks aren't looking for a fight when they've docked to lick their wounds after a big haul. It's the folks who're there to make a name for themselves, or who want to loot weak pirates—they're the troublemakers. Stay away from the permanent settlements and you'll be okay.

● Tikbalang

● I don't know what Madagascar you've been to. The one we're talking about is off Southern Africa, and it's the meanest, roughest, loudest place on Earth. The dizzying number of different cultures doesn't keep people quiet—it means they get pissed when you don't understand them or look like them. And real pirates don't settle their differences with a chess match, y'know?

● Bloody Rackham

● Ah, it's not as bad as Yomi. Sane people don't use guns right away, because the other guy might be wired so high he'd shoot you with your own pistol. Instead, fighters agree on hands, knives or swords—that's the kind of fighting you might live through on sheer testosterone. Veteran pirates who don't like to fight but need to settle an argument let dogs, roosters or kids fight as proxies. But plenty of chest-thumping idiots waltz in and try to take land from someone who's had it for years just by waving a gun around. That can start a full-scale war, as everyone wants to make sure they shoot first.

● Fury

● Hey Gingerbread, if you're such a big shot, why don't you take on Madagascar? Not enough TV cameras backing you up?

● Kane

"Reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated."

● Look, putz, if you think you can do it slicker, come down and get served up. You want some, bring it.

● The Gingerbread Man

● No trial by jury in front of your peers? All the pirates in the world, and you're sticking to the Carib? I've been chased out of thirteen nations and I'm still raking nuyen. Haven't you heard the phrase "Everybody knows KANE!" ringing 'round the CAS?

● Kane

"Cuttin' me some cookies."

● Fraggers in the CAS are *scared* to say my name. Why don't you head down to Madagascar in your flyin' gas bag, land dead center on Mount Maromokotro, check your watch to make sure it's 12:00:00.00 Greenwich Mean Matrix-time February 1, 2059, and remember the exact moment I kicked your hoop, shaved you down and made you my cont jumbie *bitch*?

● The Gingerbread Man

● You insultin' the CAS? A hoop-kickin's too good for you. I'm gonna *humiliate* you. If you think a Haitian voodoo dust-up is hot drek, I'll drag down a haul that could buy and sell your whole fraggin' crew, NBS and Gavilan Ventures in the load. When I make more money in a month than you and your whole fraggin' network, you can get on your knees and put a smile on my face, like a good **(INTERRUPT by sysop. KANE has been logged off.)**

● Had a feeling that would happen eventually.

● Captain Chaos

Transmitted: 19 January 2059, 23:22:56 MT

● Frag off, CC; I'm sellin' tickets to that show.

● Muffin Man

THE HAUNTED FOREST

● It's funny how superstitious the pirates are about the jungle. All these bad-asses fighting over the coast, and nobody goes six meters past the treeline. They say it's haunted by all those who died on the island. I could conjure my whole dead family for 'em, but they still chicken out.

● River Raider

● The forests *are* haunted. The psychic energy of so many deaths created a background count that is almost tangible in realspace near the plateau. I was catching *gomatia* near Fianarantsoa when I noticed the eyes staring at me. Translucent, yellow eyes with no bodies ... dozens of pairs. Waiting for something.

You couldn't see them when you looked straight on, but if you glanced from the corner of your eyes, there were small,

shadowy bodies whispering through the leaves. The strange thing was, they couldn't have been more than one meter tall. And they weren't human.

● Adekunle

● Right after VITAS, the jungle started regrowing at an incredible pace ... four years *before* the Native Americans started their rituals.

Curious, eh? It points to magic beyond individual spellcasters, on a par with Tir, Amazonian and Native American reforestation rituals. And the overgrowth broke through the island's four airfields ... almost like it was targeting them. Few people suspect who *really* caused it, of course.

● Lone Gunman

● Actually, it's possible the Awakened rainforest biomass had enough variety to manifest great form jungle spirits capable of causing regrowth when working in tandem. It's been documented that field spirits can increase crop output, and paranormal animals like stormcrows can combine their magic when cooperating, even manifesting new powers. If we extrapolate, it is possible that great spirits work together to keep their domain thriving. And not an Atlantean elf in sight, LG.

● Talon

● But similar regrowth never occurred in other places with that level of living material. The forests of the Pacific Northwest needed metahuman help, and the coral reefs aren't spreading despite the presence of ocean spirits. Regrowth has never occurred without a suspected agency. On top of that, Madagascar's biomass fell enormously in the early 2000s. VITAS killed every lemur on the island between 2010 and 2012, just after their population hit its all-time high in '09. Everything that depended on them died in turn.

Those ghosts Adekunle mentioned, everyone I scanned says they're from the lemurs. They say on the edge of the plateau early in the morning, you can hear them chattering and playing in the trees. The branches even bend under them, but if you look closely, there's nothing there.

Anyone know what kind of magic makes a non-sentient critter leave behind psychic impressions?

● Professional Student

● The regrowth is either Ghost-Dance level ritual magic or a magical infectious agent that supercharges growth potential in plants. The question is, which is more likely?

A ritual requires a large group of metahumans and probably continual or repeated treatments over time. But the Malagasy government collapsed when humanity was first learning that spells *existed*, and the reforestation spell formulae are NAN and Tir state secrets. We can rule out the surviving natives. Evidence on the remaining Malagasy (wherever they are, if they survived VITAS II and III) is scanty, and no refugees have fled into South Africa, which implies a negligible number remaining. That leaves pirates, not usually powerful or cooperative. Unless a huge number of mages are hiding in the jungle and could tap mana from an immense power site, we can rule out rituals.



A magical infectious agent, though, whether it evolved or was released, could easily form a symbiotic relationship with the trees, stimulating their growth as part of its own life cycle. It is not inconceivable that such an organism could evolve, nor would it necessarily appear elsewhere, since island biology is often unique. Even if the agent were metahuman-designed, it's had plenty of time to mutate and go wild, and it wouldn't require any consciousness behind it to act.

Sound more likely than immortal elves from Atlantis, Gunman?

• Magister

• I've run deals through the Pirate Island for the last six years, and trust me, the place isn't abandoned by a long shot. Wilderness, yes. But there's *someone* in the jungle, and it's not the missing Malagasy. I've seen ships heading upriver to the interior. And a white-skinned shoulder and arm came down the Betsiboka just last week. I ran a scan, and the fingerprints matched the body of

some poor sap who'd worked for Ares ... who supposedly died two years ago, in *Azania*. Officially, it's wilderness; in real life, who knows? Off the record, under the jungle canopy, covered by living material, camouflaged and cloaked by background count ... anyone could live there.

• Yung Shon

• This is a change from running the Volta?

• Sika

• On the Volta, you can't find a phone jack. In Madagascar's interior, you can't find the fragging sky.

• Tomtom

• It's native. The urban industrialized powers of the West (and East) denied the power of magic. They lost touch (if they ever had that connection in the first place). It was the native peoples of the

Earth who maintained their cultures and their ties with the mystic center of the universe during all this time—the shamans and tribes of North America, the wicca of Europe, the druids of the Celtic and British lands, the monks of the Far East, the Aborigines of Australia and the tribes of Africa and Asia, too numerous to mention. In Madagascar, those natives powered the magic of their birthland, their holy land. Go ahead—try to find a way to describe it logically. You have already lost the fight. You will never understand.

● Ley Lines

● Whoever grew the trees back, there are real nasties hiding in them now. My crew was hanging out in the pirate towns in Farafangana, waiting for Yakashima's boats to give up searching for who'd swiped their gold. Got word that some mercs were huntin' us, so my crew split into the woods to avoid 'em. Dunno how far we got, but it was near nightfall when we heard the humming. Weird at first, then we realized it wasn't magic, just a whole lot of computers going at once.

We crept closer and were almost on top of the facility before we saw it; it was that well camouflaged. It was small, just four or five buildings, but had more tech than we'd seen in our lives. Computers that outdid Fuchi's newest by years and machines we couldn't figure out. And the people. Hundreds of them, packed into tiny rooms, elbow to elbow, barely breathing, plugged into the machines. When our mage checked them out astrally, he said they were dead, their auras held together with magic. That's when it hit us; this was the cybermancy we'd read about on Shadowland, only worse. Instead of cyborg commandos, these were cybermantic deckers, so much of their soul destroyed that their brains would never decay, only grow in processing power. Linked together, they could hold the entire Matrix in their minds.

● Lightning

● I brought the magic back.

● The Laughing Man

"HA! Fraggin' HA!

● I doubt it. Nice try, though.

● Orange Queen

● Look, "Lightning," anyone with a Fuchi-2 can trace your post and find out who you are—a sixteen-year-old kid writing from a home computer in New Jersey. You've got an active imagination, I'll give you that. But keep it off Shadowland. You could get people killed if they took you seriously and went on a wild goose chase in Madagascar's forests.

● Red Wraith

● Don't be so quick to dismiss him just because of whose computer he's writing from.

I don't know if Lightning stumbled onto the same place I did, but if so, watch for Saeder-Krupp's Matrix stocks to soar in the next few months, because the big complex in the middle of the Haunted Forest is Lofwyr's dirty secret. The big wyrm doesn't actually run S-K in his head, like everyone claims. What keeps him so

effortlessly ahead of the other megas is the secret advantage he's got hidden in Madagascar, no fewer than three hundred lesser dragons of all types, working day and night to make Lofwyr look good.

I don't think the other greats know it, but he's using his position as a great dragon to keep the younger dragons enslaved. There are magical domes and barriers and wards around there strong enough to stop God, but they've got dreck to stop a lowly human from sneaking in and gaping. Beneath their notice, I guess. If you want to hurt Krupp, free the lessers.

● Phased Array

● Three hundred dracoforms? PA, I think you found the poppy field instead. Eat any mushrooms while you were traipsing around the forest? Smoke anything?

● Bung

● What he speaks of is possible, but only by betraying that which is most sacred to dragons everywhere, their hatching grounds. Knowledge of Madagascar was lost at the same time the first dragons awoke. This was part of their plan to reawaken the island to its ancient purpose—to care for their young.

The supposed lemur ghosts are not ghosts, but powerful spirits who guard the forest most heavily around the Mangoky River. Lining the sides of the river like sequins are hundreds of smoky crystal eggs ranging from the size of a housecat to a Volkswagen-Elektro.

If Lofwyr has taken his own kind's children and forced them into servitude, even he will not be immune to the wrath of the others.

● Sagittarius

● I am Lofwyr, and you found me out.

● The Laughing Man

"HA Fraggin' HA!

● I wonder ... we've never found the legendary Elephant's Graveyard, let alone the dragons' egg stores. Do they lay one or dozens? Are they parthenogenetic, or do they need to mate? None of them talk about it. If they have, it's never hit trideo, not even KSAF.

● Reid

● Dragon eggs are not to be laughed at. We do not kill your young. Hunting down our hatching grounds will only result in metahumankind's ultimate folly.

● Loremaster

● Hey, Sag, you don't know the half of it. There may be eggs by the Mangoky, but how do you know they're dragon eggs? I think it's something else. Something even older.

How do we know that every dinosaur species went extinct? We don't. In fact, there has always been very good evidence—sightings of the Loch Ness Monster in Scotland and the Mokele-Mbembe in Cameroon—that isolated dinosaur communities survived. Nowadays people claim those were spike Awakenings, but isn't it simpler to just admit that we don't know half the earth's

secrets? Secrets that are best hidden in the middle of a jungle that no one explores?

● Surveyor

● Older than dragons ... cool. I hear Laughing Man left them there.

● Orange Queen

● WOW! Good looks and a sense of humor. I think I'm in love.

● The Laughing Man

"HA Fraggin' HA!

● I hope you two are having fun. Your display here is juvenile and disgusting. Please take this off the public boards before your "humor" sparks discussions into areas that should not be exposed.

● Lady of the Court

● One problem with your theory, Surveyor. The Madagascar forest was completely explored and nearly clear-cut before the Awakening. Where did your beasties hide when there were cities all over the plateau?

● Cynic

● Who cares? Surveyor's not writing a paleo-ecological dissertation on the things. He just knows they're there. And let me tell you, so do I.

About a month ago, my crew was doing bounty work in Madagascar, and we'd chased our quarry into the woods. On our fourth day of hiking, we'd lost the trail, but we found a settlement in the ruins of Ambositra. I couldn't tell what language the locals spoke, but we figured maybe they were African pirates who'd set up shop. They were friendly enough, but as soon as the sun started setting, everyone disappeared inside a gigantic wall, leaving us out in the cold. The wall was maybe twenty meters high, greased logs with razor wire, with fragging homemade coconut catapults in addition to one guy with an old-fashioned elephant rifle. After it got dark, the village got dead silent, and we heard *something* walking on the other side and snuffling like a coal locomotive. Juggernaut? Tyrannosaurus? I don't know. The guy with the rifle poked his head over and froze in terror. I think he figured it would just make the beast mad.

I heard some snuffling, then a lunge and scream of pain, then crunching bones. You could smell the blood even from the other side of town. There must have been something tastier than us hanging around that night, or I wouldn't be alive to tell you this.

● Judy

● How 'bout you kids listen while Papa Props shows why you're all wrong? That forest would be real fragging crowded if it tried to fit every one of your hallucinations, and I just don't see one little island having enough to feed three hundred dragons, dinosaurs, corporate facilities and whatever else.

The one thing no one's arguing about is that there are mana sites in Madagascar. Has anyone ever thought that they might project mirages, detailed illusions? Or that those jungle spirits Talon

mentioned earlier are protecting their domain the best way they can, by stimulating intruders' own paranoid fantasies? You walk into this fragging jungle wonderin' what's really there, half-hoping and half-dreading the moment you'll find it, and you're so busy being scared that when your expectations are realized, you don't question it. I've got five kilos of BTL for anyone who can prove that any of this bile is real.

● Props

● Why is it easier for you to believe that an entire island would be abandoned than to admit that Madagascar is left alone because it hides something? There's only one group of people powerful enough to ensure that Madagascar remains unoccupied, with a need for secrecy this great.

The megacorporations.

The corps are taking advantage of Madagascar to do experiments they can't do anywhere else. If you're researching some incredibly powerful magic, something on the scale of cybermagic, where would you perfect it without anyone's corporate spies finding out? Madagascar. No other corp wants it, the pirates on the outside keep settlers from moving in, and the rumors of ghosts and bogeymen cover for anyone the sec guards kill. On top of that, mana lines crisscross the island, allowing for long-term research in the center of effect, like building a lab on a stone circle in England. Perfect set-up. And the living jungle canopy keeps astral forms out ... or in.

There are few mana sites worldwide that aren't watched by *somebody*. We know about the *teocalli* because Aztlaners set up shop directly on power sites, right in the open. With navsat data, Shadowland info and a pack of mean motherfraggers, you can find one and blow it up, along with whatever they're doing, if you have the firepower.

In Madagascar, we don't even know where to look.

● Tomtom

● I'm not sure any corp could come up with security that gets so many hardcore motherfragger pirates this bloody scared.

One crew I knew, toughest bunch of Thai pirates you could possibly meet, were stopping in Madagascar and started thinking like you—must be something valuable in there that someone's hiding. So the next time they came, they took all the gear that twenty mil worth of heroin and sex slaves could buy—lasers, M107s on gyro-mounts, new wires and cyberware and foci for everyone, heavy military armor with infrared diffusion and ruthenium polymers so only Buddha would see them—and went searching for treasure. Told me to wait by the edge of the forest in case they "came back messed up."

I ain't never seen nobody more messed up.

For three days I hear nothing. Then, outta nowhere, my buddies are screaming, *crawling* outta the forest on their knees and elbows. Only half are there, and they're burned all over their hands, arms and faces. Took 'em to a corp hospital in Mozambique, and the docs ask if they work at Shiawase Atomics 'cuz they've got the worst radiation poisoning he's ever seen. All of 'em were flash-blinded, and not one remembered dreck. First time one saw a tree, though, it damn near sent him into psychogenic fugue.



Weirdest thing of all, when they come out like the devil's chasing them, there's some guy I never seen before, just too far away for me to see details, watching and smiling. An elf, wearing a leather jacket and jeans even in the heat. He don't strike me as out of place until later, cuz I'm too worried, but it's really strange that there'd be some guy in the middle of fragging Madagascar with his face painted like Bozo the clown.

• White Ninja

• Really? Perhaps this deserves more attention.

By the way, straight dope ... it's dinosaurs. A rich guy started cloning some DNA samples he found in amber, and the resulting beasts have been running loose on Madagascar for more than twenty years, breeding and getting worshipers and such. The guy wanted to turn the place into a theme park. But he died, his money dried up, his heirs left the place alone and the dinosaurs are still alive.

• The Laughing Man

HA! Fraggin HA!

• LOL! You kill me!

• Orange Queen

• The corps aren't the only ones with the power or the motivation. You know how much the UCAS CIA and Department of Defense want to keep the country a world player?

With Dunkelzahn's death, they're suffering from a severe "magic gap," kind of like the gap in nuclear missiles between the old US and Soviet Union in the Cold War. High-end magical security has always been a problem for the UCAS government. They're still scared that the NANs will pull out the Ghost Dance again, because they can't do any kind of ritual to stop it.

Now, it wouldn't be hard for the government to do the same research I did and discover the existence of the Atlanteans. They would realize that with several thousand years of training, the immortal cabal could throw a stealth/invisibility spell combo to get past any magical security, even around the White House, a nuke silo or a Joint Chiefs of Staff meeting. Of course, since Vice President Daviar is one of them, we have no hope unless she can be persuaded to side with us.

For the last forty-seven years, American state secrets have been up for grabs to anyone with powerful magic. They've got to catch up somehow, but they can't just make friends with a dragon, free spirit or something equivalent, because for all they know, all the big wizzes could be allied or equally bad. If you're depending on someone else to protect you, you're not calling the shots. You're sleeping with an elephant and hoping it doesn't roll over.

So what can they do?

Long-term secret research on a mana site, where they can perform inhumane experiments to hasten development and no one would ever find out. And where in the UCAS are you going to find a mana site surrounded by hundreds of square kilometers of triple-layer canopy?

• Lone Gunman

• Orange Queen, you think I'm the clown. Check out this guy!

• The Laughing Man

HA! Fraggin' HA!

• "Do the same research you did?" You mean string together the headlines of the Newsnet Enquirer? That's right up there with the "Dunkelzahn was killed by Bigfoot" theory.

• D. Bunker

• Or they could train a mage in low-earth orbit where the ambient mana level is so low, the mage would be super-powerful when given Earth's energy. Like a hypothetical beast that evolves in Jupiter's gravity and is phenomenally strong here.

• Yung Shon

• Power without refinement is useless. The sheer number of anchored cascading spells a six-thousand-year-old magician could affix would counter any assailant or detector, even your space-trained mage, without even actively channeling mana.

• Anonymous

• What all of you are missing is the fact that magic isn't like science. One guy can't research magic for the next guy to use except on the limited level of spell formulae. The actual power behind a spell comes from the magician herself. Say you train a mage on a mana site for forty-five years. That makes him sixty-something years old now, minimum. By the time your project sees results, your secret weapons are using bedpans every morning, and eventually dying. And leonization treatment damages magic. And you can't take what your hypothetical super-magician knows and teach it to his students, because the higher mysteries can only be learned through self-enlightenment.

So the only way to even get close to the magical knowledge a dragon has, for instance, is to make your magician live as long as a dragon. Which means that, assuming magic can't affect time flow (and all evidence says it can't), you'd need to make her immune to age and diseases and keep her very safe somewhere out of the way.

With a long enough time to train, you could get a supermage on par with Gunman's Atlantean elves. Whether you think it's elves, dragons, spirits or bugs, if there's a government or corp banking on the idea that immortal *anythings* exist, they're going to try to close the gap.

Is there any magical way to make someone immortal?

• Strand

• In order to make them live as long as a dragon, you'd also have to give them scales and an alligator's head, remove any semblance of a heart and double the size of their ego. Present company excepted, Orange Queen.

• The Laughing Man

"HA! Fraggin' HA!"

• There's a quick fix I can think of off the top of my head, *if* the UCAS government is really trying this—HMHVV infection. As far as anyone knows, HMHVV-infected humans are effectively immortal. The metabolism essentially stalls, and is coupled with almost complete immunity to drugs and diseases, plus being able to regenerate almost any injury.

I hear it actually helps magic if you keep well-fed.

• Tish Bite

• Exactly!

With careful training to avoid rogue psychos and with virus editing to eliminate negatives like the sunlight problem, you'd have world-class butt-kicking mages who'll live a thousand years and make sure there's somewhere the Atlanteans *can't* control.

It doesn't have to be the UCAS. It could be anybody who looks at the immortals and thinks about their declining place in the world, and has low-earth-orbit tech ... say, Fuchi or Ares. Add one vampire to the payroll after they come down the gravity well and get a squad of regenerating, unaging powerhouses *capable of regrowing a jungle*.

• Lone Gunman

• Except that HMHVV research has one major problem. It's a *human-metahuman* virus; it doesn't work on monkeys or rats. As a researcher, you need to either kidnap people for experimentation (costly, amoral and risky) or somehow engineer a sentient lab animal. Not gonna happen.

If there is HMHVV research going on in Madagascar, it's too small-scale for what you're thinking about. Otherwise someone would've leaked it by now. With thousands of subjects needed, all of whom can turn to mist to escape *and* who'll be some of the most powerful spellcasters on the planet, *someone* would've gone rogue. And do you know how many people would be disappearing just to feed them?

• Magister

• What *did* happen to those 3.5 million surviving Malagasy?

• Rosa

•••••**UPLOAD confession.document**• If you're reading this, we must be dead.

Six months ago, we entered the Madagascar jungle, traveling up the Tsiribihina River to chart, document and retrieve evidence of paranormal activity. To the usual manifestations of lemur ghosts, background count and abundant paranormal animals, we must append the following document (**LINK: HMHVV-template**) in memory of Brian MacCarthy of the University of Galway. His work on the unhinging of the "aural template" due to cybernetics and its relation to aura damage done by HMHVV-positive individuals has been superseded by the field research we performed in Madagascar. MacCarthy believed the chances for reincarnation were lowered by cybernetics, and, by extension, a creature that consumed the "essence" of others was (**LINK?DATA CORRUPT 32.3MP)*#R TRY AGAIN/?** by cybermatically preserved bodies, not for combat, but as deckers, reinforced by simsense triggers (**VIRUS INFINITY's** nine extra chromosomes **SYSTEMFrag**, I'm getting off-line>Adekunle*\$#soul-eaters, as he called them, rather than the colloquial "goatsucker" were **REROUTE SUCCESSFUL/VIRUS PURGED**) <<<<

• What in frag?

• Laser

• Huh! Someone else figured it out!

• Tomtom

• You're the all-knowing guru of the Great Red Island?

• Laser

• No. But it all fits together now. Don't you get it?

That "goatsucker" is the *chupacabras* that Gingerbread and Ferral talked about in the Caribbean post. They're common around Borinquen, but what's important is, they can drain blood and damage their prey's aura. They have huge eyes, a spiky crest like an iguana, opposable thumbs, and *their blood registers positive in a Harz-Greenbaum blood series, the test for HMHVV*.

You've all been saying it all along. Animals can't become vampires. Animals can't become ghosts. But something on the island of Madagascar can do both!

Either lemurs were far more intelligent than any researcher gave them credit for, or it's some other animal whose ghosts haunt the forest. An engineered lab animal, sentient enough to infect with HMHVV, of which many thousands would have died during the testing stages. Leaving *ghosts* behind.

Did you know that the chupacabras has fully functioning reproductive organs and gives birth to live young, like a primate? And its genetic code resembles a lemur far more closely than it resembles its supposed progenitor, the iguana? It's a small, controllable animal that breeds true to carry the virus, unlike metahumans, so you don't have to infect new specimens each time.



Chupacabras were named for supposed alien sightings, in twentieth-century Latin America and the Caribbean, of iguana-like creatures that sucked blood from farm animals. The Awakened variant's appearance is therefore assumed to have been influenced by the region's folklore, like "minotaur" trolls.

The problem with this idea, though, is that there was no folklore about chupacabras where the Awakened creature was first spotted—in Madagascar, not in the Caribbean! Madagascar records show the creatures in 2011; in the Carib, they were first photographed in 2022! The folklore-influenced paracritter theory is buldrek, unless someone found them in 2011 ... or earlier ... and shipped them to Madagascar secretly. Either way, they were there as everything died of VITAS, including the lemurs.

Those "lemur ghosts" are not lemurs. The ghosts in Madagascar are far more numerous than the endangered lemur population of 2000–2011, and the idea that VITAS works on lemurs like it does on humans is nuts. Even chimps, our closest relatives, were unaffected by the virus. For those things to die of VITAS

means they had to be *more closely related to humans than any other animal*.

Madagascar's lemurs were repopulated with a sentient, engineered strain containing massive amounts of human DNA. The ghosts are the offspring of that animal, the chupacabras, which bred with the native lemurs. Who has the power to engineer such an animal and to keep the project totally secret even *before* the island was depopulated? A megacorp that has created and researched metahuman vampiric magicians for a very long time.

● Tomtom

● You're crazy. The *chupacabras* is an Awakened iguana pest, about as related to HMMVV-positive metahumans as the ghede fly.

● Tish Bite

● You're all wrong. I've been quiet so far because I didn't want to talk about what I saw in the jungle past Tollara. Believe me, the truth is a lot more frightening than all your guesses. Six days north-east of the town, my team's compasses froze pointing dead north.

We had heavy astral interference and suspected magical confusion to keep us lost, maybe from Awakened trees. Late at night we heard cracking sounds, in rhythm, like someone drumming with metal on fallen logs.

We got closer, past a stone head carved out of basalt, and then we heard hand-clapping, bamboo strings and whistling. We took a nice, stealthy peek. No sense horning 'em off.

What do we find? Fifty meta and human dancers shuffling up a storm and at least twenty-eight manifested spirits right alongside them. Air elementals, lake spirits, the whole buffet. And this tribe is worshipping them. I'm a freedom of religion guy, but what made me shiver is what I saw going on astrally. The spirits were *free*, and they were growing as the natives fed them emotional energy.

An army of free spirits, with a steady food supply, congregating somewhere metahumans can't touch them.

• Dragonfly

• Oh drek, oh drek, oh drek.

Dragonfly, please answer me. Were there any ancestor spirits there?

• Tomtom

• Yeah. I think so. Why?

• Dragonfly

• If ancestor spirits are actually the souls of the dead, retaining enough memory to recognize loved ones, and *if* death transition wholeness is dependent on aural wholeness (supercharged from a well-fed HMMVV individual) and *if* ancestors can go free like any other spirit, isn't that immortality? And afterwards, the spirit needs worshippers to feed it karmic astral imprinting energy, not for food like a vampire, but to grow in power.

Someone (maybe the Illuminates of the New Dawn, a government-affiliated magical group whose members have been studying African magic longer than any other Westerners, I might add) could have gotten *one* native follower to flatline himself, manipulated his kids into summoning him and then cacked all the summoners so the spirit went free, right? And rewarded the ghost with energy somewhere "out of the way"?

• Tomtom

• You are one insane motherfragger. What's next, aliens?

• Tish Bite

• Well, the UCAS couldn't leave Roswell and Area 51 to the fragging Pueblo Corporate Council, could they? No matter *what* you believe was inside, you have to admit two things. It was a high-security installation in hostile territory ... and it didn't have astral security worth drek in 2011, not even enough to keep out one Hopi mage kid (like me). Its contents had to be moved somewhere out of the way, right?

The *chupacabras* were connected to UFO sightings in the twentieth century. Now, I'm not saying there's life on other planets, but unidentified flying objects? High-tech secret projects? Sure.

Consider: if Ebran the Scribe's theory of cyclical magic is correct, how many "magical ages" ago were the dinosaurs? The earth cooling? Spirits and dragons aren't in our fossil records. How many cycles back did they first appear? Sixty-five million years? Is that enough time for them to reach Mars, or farther, like those photos in Dunkelzahn's will? Enough time to wait out the ages while developing their own technology?

Don't dismiss pre-Awakening *chupacabras* sightings so quickly. I'm not saying they can drive a car, let alone build spaceships, but maybe they got loose, like stowaway rats, and were left behind during visitations by energy beings, like are mentioned in so many cultures.

Like spirits, which have since appeared all over the world! Spirits are sentient ... why couldn't they develop a technology wholly different from ours? And Ares, owner of NASA—wouldn't it take advantage of "alien" spirit technology and Madagascar's isolation to keep its place as a leader if it knew elves *were* immortal? Especially if spirits ... or Dunkelzahn ... told one man that the threat was real? A man smart enough to buy a corporation in a nanosecond?

And if I can think of this, surely Lofwyr, Damien Knight, the director of the CIA ... it's their *jobs* to think long-term! Go ahead, disbelieve my reasoning if you want. The point is, in Madagascar, while my Geiger counter was burning off track, I finally saw *them* a second time! *I saw a team of Ares representatives and the hairless men with enormous eyes! I have it on vide-*

(UPLOAD FAILED.

11.9 Mp deleted by sysop.)

(TOMTOM has been logged off.)

• Goodnight, Tomtom.

• Captain Chaos

Transmitted: 19 January 2059, 24:33:28 MT

• He believes what he sees?

• Props

• I don't know whether to laugh my ass off or say "you found us" and see what *that* does to your poor overtaxed brain, kid. But take free advice.

Your house of cards rests on three things. That magic is cyclical, that a stupid primate can be turned into a sentient being, and that there are immortal elves. The first is iffy. The second is a riddle as old as where life came from. I can say with confidence that the third is wrong.

• The Laughing Man

HA! Fraggin' HA!

THE COST OF LIVING ON THE SEA



• Captain Chaos asked me to take all the prices and markets we've seen and arrange them so we're all working on the same scale. A lot of these places have yo-yo governments and economies, so check the stock market or your fixer before going with what I say.

Because you're selling as well as buying in this particular biz, I'm broadening my usual categories and adding some new ones. Weapon accessories now include ammo and are assumed to be addressing the high-end, APDS/full auto conversion kits, not legal stuff. Electronics B&E (breaking and entering) includes microtronics tool kits and maglock passkeys. Cybertech is lumped together, as is security/surveillance and magic, and we've got new categories for medtech, drugs, BTLs, people, animals, consumer goods, espionage and false SIDs, so you'll see what you pay for identification. All numbers are figured off Seattle prices.

These prices are based on a drekload of averages. The story behind some is obvious. For example, in Africa you're either buying from a megacorp (directly or one step away) or you're not. In the Philippines, if you're on the approved lists, good Japanese cybertech is cheap (75 percent Seattle list price), but if you're selling banned and badly needed tech to rebels, you gouge them (300 percent), right? Similarly, if you buy natural mindbenders in Jamaica, you're paying beans, but selling your crop to the average tourist on Miami streets nets you the same price as Seattle. Cost of living affects availability and quality. The prices I gave are what a Seattle corper would pay to get the quality he's used to. Beyond that, it's all negotiable and it's never the same twice. Remember that. Oh, yeah ... Greed IS Good!

• The Keynesian Kid

Transmitted via Captain Chaos: 20 January 2059, 02:33:41 MT

THE COST OF LIVING ON THE SEA

● Don't forget, Kid ...

Let's get real-world. The prices are a start, but cost of living is real important because it indicates the area's general wealth. Megacorporate and rich citizens around the world pay for imported goods at the straight percentages. But if you're dealing contraband to a Malaysian peasant, multiply by the 35-percent cost of living in Southeast Asia, and you either deal cheap or you don't deal to him at all. He just can't afford more.

This works in reverse if you want to stock up with Third-World junk. If you take advantage of the COL and buy a godawful 60-year-old death trap with "Made in Ghand" on the side that the locals call a helicopter, sure, you'll pay 25 percent of the local Ares manufacturer's price, who's putting out decent helicopters at 75 percent of Seattle prices. But to sell it in the UCAS, you'll have to find a sucker. Places with high COL, the quality's the same, but locals get bilked (try buying Westwinds in Italy). Bad place to buy, but if you bring in mediocre goods and undercut the local dealers, you can still sell at more than the Seattle rate.

● Carousel

● Good points ... I assumed everyone knows that stuff. I just want to point out that almost always, your best bet when dealing with COL is to trade items for items. They need guns in the Philippines but can't afford to pay because they're dirt-poor farmers? Trade the guns to 'em for those Japanacorp electronics that are littering the streets. Sometimes the best deals are stuff for stuff. You know

what you have, and if you know what they have and you know a buyer (or port) where you can dump the goods, then go for the deal. Trade.

● The Keynesian Kid
"Greed IS Good"

● Kid, we are in total agreement. Now let me see if this works ... my new slogan.

● Carousel
"Nuyen makes the world go 'round!"

● Good one, Carousel. One last note—if my "numbers" chummers don't mind. Don't think you'll sell stuff for the list price. The list price is what some guy sells it for on the street to a shadowrunner. The price you get will normally be less, because you are selling it to the seller. He needs to make a profit too, and if you charge too much, you'll lose a contact and an outlet. Obviously the goal is to make yourself some nuyen, but remember, in most cases you took this stuff. So when you're figuring your price, add up how much the job cost you to pull, plus some profit for the party afterwards, and maybe even a little to put away so you can buy that island in the Carib someday. Then charge that amount. Never gouge your fences, boys and girls, because they'll find someone who'll give them a better deal. Hope that helps.

● The Chromed Accountant
"It's all about dollars and sense"

Cost of Living	Caribbean	Philippines	Gold & Ivory Coasts	Arctic	Australia
	70	40/100	25	150	90
Weaponry					
Accessories	80	300	75	250	120
Armor	100	180	75	280	120
Explosives	90	200	75	250	100
Firearms	80	300	75	130	130
Melee ¹	110/200	20/300	75	80/300	90/90
Electronics					
Consumer	175	40	250	300	150
Surveillance	180	110	150	150	140
B&E	140	250	175	400	200
Cybertech	130	75/300	75/300	300	90
Biotech	140	75/300	75/400	300	100
Medtech	130	60	10/400 ²	250	100
Cyberdecks	250	75/120	NA	400+	180
Magic	210	175	50	70	90
Raw Materials	200	80	50	80	90
Vehicles	150	500	110	200	100
Aircraft	90	200	75/NA	250	90
Boats	60	90	75	180	80
Drugs	30/100	70	90	75	100
Water	120	100	140	10	100/200
Food	90	100	80	140	100
Synthfood	20	120	140	200	90
BTL	130	50	300	75	150

	Caribbean	Philippines	Gold & Ivory Coasts	Arctic	Australia
Skilled Labor	100	90	300	260	110
Sex Slaves	50	50	50	500+	100
Animals	120	80	50	200	150
Espionage	180	200	150	80	210
False SINS	90	130	50	100	100
Escorts	200	200	80	210	75
	Mediterranean	SE Asia	South Africa	CAS	
Cost of Living	120	35	120	75	
Weaponry					
Accessories	80	80	250	75	
Armor	90	80	140	150	
Explosives	60	50	250	100	
Firearms	80	100	175	75	
Melee ¹	70/90	20/200	200	75	
Electronics					
Consumer	120	95	100	200	
Surveillance	90	150	150	250	
B&E	70	250	300	300	
Cybertech	100	240	75	280	
Biotech	180	150	80	90	
Medtech	175	200	100	100	
Cyberdecks	120	220	250	350	
Magic	180	90	90	250	
Raw Materials	250	100	50	95	
Vehicles	75	150	205	75	
Aircraft	150	400	130	200	
Boats	90	80	110	75	
Drugs	110	40/110	150	100	
Water	100	90	80	100	
Food	160	90	100	90	
Synthfood	90	70	110	110	
BTL	80	120	200	150	
Skilled Labor	80	185	60	105	
Sex Slaves	100	30	120	100	
Animals	90	60	290	150	
Espionage	130	75	150	200	
False SINS	120	95	150	100	
Escorts	120	85	100	90	

Notes

The number given for Cost of Living represents a percentage of the Seattle cost of living. The numbers given for items in each area represent the percent of those items' base cost in Seattle.

¹The number on the left is for simple stuff like knives and spears. The one on the right is for monowhips, laser axes and high-tech gadgets.

²Medical supplies in West Africa are real simple. Either you're dealing to people who are rolling in dough or they can't afford drak.

GAME INFORMATION



Cyberpirates explores new terrain in **Shadowrun**, both literally and figuratively. The world of Mr. Johnson and "sprawl crawls" gives way to smuggling operations and boat attacks in broad daylight. Smuggling in **Shadowrun** means providing anything someone wants but can't get (or at least can't get cheap), by whatever means possible. It is up to the players and gamemaster to decide how far to take this. You may choose to keep it simple (guns and electronics), make it exotic (paranormal animals and magical tesma) or make it disturbing (sex slaves and drugs).

Much like the **Underworld Sourcebook** and **California Free State**, **Cyberpirates** deals with themes that reflect the real world. We pride ourselves on the level of realism in our products, but we also realize that gritty reality may not be everyone's cup of tea. Ultimately, we believe our players can use this book to generate hundreds of ideas to fit their game sessions without having to print every disturbing detail or moral and ethical quagmire that suits the topic at hand. For those who love the "mean-streets" realism and prefer to explore darker issues and themes, this book also touches on many of the less savory aspects of smuggling and piracy. Here too, **Cyberpirates** contains plenty of ideas that can give rise to adventures as dark as you want to make them.

We recommend discussing which direction you prefer to take as a group, to make sure that your game is fun and enjoyable for everyone playing. Philosophical discussions are not to everyone's taste, but many times ethical and moral judgments need to be made in the course of an adventure. On the other hand, nothing says **Shadowrun** like a big, lead-flying dockside war. So read this book and use what you want from it—and whether you choose to play a freedom fighter, a hard-bitten survivor or just a group of newbie pirates trying to make a name for yourselves, have fun.

FROM SHADOWRUNNING TO PIRACY

Playing pirates or converting player characters from shadowrunning to piracy means that both players and gamemasters must adapt to the degree of self-determination that pirate player characters must possess to stay solvent. In a traditional shadowrun, a Mr. Johnson calls (directly or through a fixer), everyone goes to a meet and the characters then decide whether or not to take the job being offered. When the ball gets rolling, they talk to their contacts, dodge bullets and send some back, and eventually the team gets paid. Simple and effective—the essence of **Shadowrun**.

Piracy and smuggling have a different focus. Instead of being hired guns for a Johnson, the characters make their own way, deciding what to do and how and when to do it. The basics are the same, but the approach is different.

FINDING WORK

One big difference between classic shadowrunning and piracy is that pirates initiate the action by finding their own jobs.

A collective scream goes up from gamemasters and players alike: "Without Mr. Johnson, how do we do anything?" Be your own Johnson—that's how.

As pirates and smugglers, the player characters must keep their ears to the ground, listening to contacts and getting information on shipping, smuggling, corporate activity and what all the other pirates are doing. If a pirate band's New Orleans contact says "We need electronics down here," then it's up to the player characters to head someplace where they can find those things. If other pirates are bragging about a big score, it's up to the players to see if they can intercept those pirates and grab some of the goodies for themselves. As for the gamemaster, he or she must still stay one step ahead of the players in order to make a fun game and a great story.

Gamemastering Pirates

The first and simplest way to run a pirate adventure is to make them shadowrunners on the high seas—independent operators working for a piece of the action. Pirates like this have existed ever since piracy on the open seas began. Governments would give what they called a "letter of marque" to a pirate captain that allowed him or her to act freely in the king's name. In practice, this meant that pirates who had a letter of marque could do anything they wanted; if they got caught, they produced the letter, which worked like a "Get Out of Jail Free" card. A letter of marque remained valid unless the pirates attacked ships belonging to the king who gave them the letter. At that point, the letter of marque no longer applied, and the pirates were independent agents again. Most often, kings used pirates operating under letters of marque to hit their enemies on the high seas without having to openly declare war.

The letter-of-marque setup fits perfectly into **Shadowrun**. Pirates in **Shadowrun** can work for rival companies who send shipping through an area or, in the case of the Philippines, can work for the Huk and the local freedom fighters. They can also work for various crime families or for a network of operatives who need to make sure the black market stays open. This form of pirate adventure represents the closest thing to a traditional shadowrun

and is gamemastered pretty much the same way. The player characters get a job from someone, they do it and they get paid. This kind of adventure is a good way to introduce your characters to the world of smuggling and piracy.

The next step is to allow the players much more freedom in choosing the jobs their characters take. This takes away the familiar security of being hired for a job and puts pressure on the players to keep their characters busy. For the gamemaster, this means that instead of providing a single "here's your job" prologue, he must offer some well-placed hints about where to find one. The simplest way to do this is for the characters' contacts to provide a list of what goods are bringing in the most money on the black market; this tactic is especially useful when the gamemaster has some adventure ideas in mind. The research the characters subsequently do can hint at the adventure that the gamemaster is prepared to play out. For example, if New Orleans requires guns, electronics and teslas, the player characters must seek out the most likely candidates from whom they can heist all three. Through various of the characters' contacts, the gamemaster can set up a run to Haiti, a ship-to-ship attack in the Florida Keys and a warehouse attack in Kingston, Jamaica. The players decide what happens in the order they want, and the gamemaster has some ideas fleshed out already so he isn't caught off guard by what the players decide.

The toughest way to gamemaster a pirate adventure, but likely also the most rewarding, is to create open-ended adventures in which the pirates and smugglers "eyeball" the area in which they usually operate. Much like a gang that controls a certain turf, pirates control their ship and therefore their actions. They may choose to set sail to search for unprotected vessels, or decide that another pirate is getting too big and needs to be taken down a notch, or opt to raid a small island looking for anything they can grab—the actual choice doesn't matter. What matters is that the players themselves initiate what they want to happen. In this situation, the gamemaster needs to have multiple plans to fall back on that he can use no matter what the pirates decide to do. These plans will be sketchy at best (no gamemaster has ever successfully predicted what a group of players will do, so why try now?); they will likely involve contacts that can give the pirates information, a random encounter here and there, or even a subplot that snags the pirates on their way to the main event. In this type of pirate campaign, the players decide the plot while the gamemaster creates the specifics and the world. For example, when players decide they want to steal a bigger boat, the gamemaster decides who owns the boat they want, how well-guarded it is and so on.

Once a pirate campaign is underway, the gamemaster can continue to use all the options described above to keep the game fresh and the ideas flowing. A story that involves gamemaster and players alike in the decision-making is always more fun to play than one dictated solely by the gamemaster.

Gamemastering the Competition

The gamemaster should keep in mind that pirates are in direct competition with other pirate crews. The interest of other pirate gangs in stealing the player characters' jobs or contacts

should be an important part of any piracy adventure. However, the competition doesn't always offer a straight-up fight. Pirate competition takes many forms—bribing, blackmailing and killing contacts; spying to pull the same job an hour earlier; waiting until another crew finishes the hard part and then attacking for the haul, and so on. Player characters can pull these tricks against non-player character pirates and make money, Enemies and new plot threads at the same time.

So how do you choose who to swindle and who to run from? Reputation.

Reputation among pirates is roughly equivalent to the gang ratings used in the **Shadowrun Companion** but also takes into account how much the pirates promote themselves. The Gingerbread Gang, for example, has a Superhuman Reputation because of their bragging and trid show, regardless of their actual activities. But a gang of stealthy, cybered assassins might be so secretive that they have no reputation; the player characters will think such pirates are easy targets even though they can splatter the player characters and use their bones for toothpicks.

When player characters want to know how strong a rival pirate gang is, roll an Etiquette Test (choose whatever form of Etiquette seems most appropriate: Gang, Street, Maritime and so on) using the rivals' Reputation as the target number (6 for Inferior/Unknown, 5 for Equal, 4 for Superior, 3 for Superhuman). Three or fewer successes reveals the pirates' self-promoted reputation. Four or more tells the real story.

The player characters can inflate their own reputations by bragging, which may scare off Equal and Inferior competition. However, if they spread word that they are dragon-killers, they may be asked to kill a dragon (or worse, find a dragon looking for their heads).

Pirate Wars

Pirate crews number six to thirty, and it's easy to add to them by hiring mercenaries. Generally, **Shadowrun** is a smaller-scale game, but sometimes the drek hits the fan; corporate regiments in Africa may attack you, or Gingerbread Man's twenty-boat flotilla may appear in front of you. Such occurrences could mean mass combat that would take days to resolve. To simplify things, leave the spotlight on the characters in these situations. They should have a plan (if not, they'd better make one fast!). Handle gamemaster characters with the following method.

At the beginning of every Combat Turn, make a 1D6 "drek check" roll for each side. A result of 1-2 means something awful—the pirates' boat took a hit, part of the crew fell off the boat, the wind shifted and the boom swung into someone's head, and so on. On a result of 3-4, both sides' status is unchanged. A result of 5-6 means they nailed an opponent, sawed the enemy mast in half with autofire, or made five opponents dive for cover.

At the end of each Combat Turn, make an opposed Success Test with dice pools equal to each side's number of combatants. Alter the target numbers for the tests according to the groups' difference in power. Each success rolled by either side incapacitates one member of the enemy crew.

Obviously, the gamemaster will be running important non-player characters such as the opposing captain or leader and a few

top henchmen. The system described above simply allows for "outside events" to make an over-the-top gun battle look the way it should. Also, the gamemaster can make decisions regarding the outcome without rolling the dice so that he doesn't get strange or implausible results. In many cases, however, pirate battles end with both sides calling it a draw; this means that the player characters' side can win even if their boat capsizes or they have a fire in the hold.

Awarding Karma

While piracy seems to work counter to the basic concepts of Karma Awards in **Shadowrun**, the gamemaster has options when awarding Karma. The first and simplest is to allow characters to use the rules for Karma and the Amoral Campaign and the cash-for-karma option (p. 78, **Shadowrun Companion**).

Another option is to have the pirates gain Karma for maintaining their Reputation in any encounter. Coming up with stylish and reputation-saving (or enhancing) actions rather than bloody ones allows characters to roleplay their way out of situations and gain Karma for their efforts.

In games where the players are playing aggressive pirates and taking control of their own destiny, they should get Karma for achieving what they set out to do. If the players plan to hit a cruise ship for jewelry and food, they should be awarded Karma per standard rules (p. 190, **SRII**). Just because the player characters weren't hired for a job by a Johnson doesn't mean they set out without any plans or goals. The gamemaster should feel free to award Karma for spontaneous encounters, long-term plans, successful raids and successfully smuggling goods into an area.

PIRATES AND MONEY

A gamemaster must also increase the amount of money that flows through a pirate group above what's considered usual for the typical shadowrunning team doing the same job. For pirates, it takes money to make money.

Pirates have expenses that never occurred to their sprawl-based cousins. Pirates need to grease palms, pay off whoever and whatever they can to make sure they get the freshest news, the forged dock permits, the good price on boats, the right information and so on. Pirates don't have just one fixer to pay off—they have ten or fifteen and are probably running from the ones they've undercut.

Also, pirates tend to keep some of what they take. If a pirate crew hits an Ares weapons shipment, they're likely to keep as much of the haul as they can, but the more they keep, the less money they get. In fact, the reason pirates hit other pirates so often is because one pirate band needs the money or goods that another band of pirates is hoarding. The more goods kept, the less money the pirates have. The less goods kept, the more money they have. Each of these situations has its drawbacks, of course.

If a pirate gang has lots of goods but little money, they may not eat. In many cases, however, having lots of money is worse than having goods and no food. Word in the pirate community spreads much faster than in the shadows because everyone will sell everyone else out for the right price. If a pirate gang comes into port flashing big cred, that gang's fixers will want a larger

share, and other pirates will come after them. So it's often easier to spend money than to keep it—and pirates can spread the wealth like no one else. Give a 50-nuyen tip to the gutter rat who watches the pier and he'll remember you fondly forever—but stiff him once and watch the heat come down on you faster than a 100-ton weight.

The key is keeping in mind that pirates are not dragons. Rather than "He who hoards the most money wins," their motto is, "He who has the most fun wins." So your boat blows up, your house gets robbed and your contacts get killed. Take the hit, bounce back and rely on your brain instead of your money. If a megalodon eats your boat and a half-million nuyen worth of the Mob's brand-new poppy mixture, you've got no boat, no goods and some powerful Enemies. At that point, it's time to get a new boat and hit the high seas to get the money to pay the Mafia back, and hope you live to see the compounded interest you owe them fall from the triple to the double digits.

Finally, pirates most often trade smuggled goods for more goods. This means that the player characters might not get any cash or cred until they've made two or three smuggling trips. For example, say the player characters hit a dockside warehouse in New Orleans that's full of Ares weapons. They ship the haul to Aztlan and sell them to the Yucatan rebels—but the rebels have no money. Instead, they pay for the guns in paranormal animals, opium and an Aztechnology mage. The player characters then go to the Ivory Coast, where they trade the mage to Ares for more weapons, this time newer and better (keeping real quiet about the hit in New Orleans). There's no market in Africa for the rest of their haul, so they head to the Caribbean, where they give the opium to the Mafia in exchange for rum and the paracritters to Miami for money (their first cash sale). Next, they head back to New Orleans, where they sell the weapons and rum—this time for cred instead of more stuff. Now they can afford to repair their boat, make their contacts happy, pay off some debts, get the latest scoops and head out again—because once more, they have no money.

CREATING PIRATE CHARACTERS

Players create a pirate character the same way they create any other kind of character in **Shadowrun**—using either the Priority System in **SRII** or the point-based system in the **Shadowrun Companion**. Players can play any type of character as a pirate or smuggler.

The most basic system for creating pirate bands is the Gang Creation rules (p. 122, **Shadowrun Companion**), with a few minor changes. First, because pirates need vast networks of friends and informants, pirate characters begin the game with the usual number of free contacts but can purchase additional ones at a reduced cost of 1,000 nuyen each. Second, the pirate gang's turf is their home port, from which their bonus fixer operates. Third, the gamemaster may give the pirates any extra bonuses that their home port might grant. Finally, the Enemy gang will be a pirate gang rather than a street gang.

If the players want to start out as independents rather than using the Gang Creation rules, they may do so. Independent pirates start out like any other characters. They get the pirate gang's

reduced-cost contacts and informants, but cannot take on followers. Also, independents cannot have any starting contact above Level 1. They can buy Buddies at character creation, but must pay the full cost rather than the reduced cost. Also, Enemies are assigned at one level of Resources higher than the character possesses.

After character creation and after figuring out starting money, the independent group as a whole can purchase a starting port for 50,000 nuyen. This port becomes the group's home port, where any Buddies they have can be found. Independent pirates also receive passes to the home-port dock good for 30 days after character creation, along with valid IDs that allow access to the docks for that amount of time. The papers for the gang's boat or ship indicate the purchased port as its home port. After 30 days, the gamemaster determines (through contacts and roleplaying) how much subsequent costs for these benefits rise.

AVAILABILITY

Gear availability for pirates is based in part on the home port they choose as a beginning character and in part on their position at the beginning of the chain of distribution for illegal items. Characters who begin the game with an African home port can start out with weapons and gear of Availability 9 or lower. If they begin in the Philippines, where most equipment is banned, they may start with items of Availability 4 or lower. The Caribbean is too close to the UCAS, CAS and Aztlan to have any meaningful Availability penalties, and so pirates beginning in the Carib start out with the standard gear and weapons Availability of 6 or lower. Pirates just starting out have very little gear of their own, because they are more interested in starting their business than in stocking up on toys.

EDGES AND FLAWS

Edges and Flaws are an excellent way to make individual pirates unique and exotic. For more information on Edges and Flaws, see pages 21–33 of the **Shadowrun Companion**.

The following new Edges and Flaws were created especially for pirates and smugglers (though they can be used in all types of adventures and campaigns).

Braggart

Value: –1

While bragging is as much a part of piracy as the sea, this Flaw means the character doesn't know when to quit. The character with this Flaw will claim that things he or she did were better, tougher and just that much cooler than anything anyone else has done. The character will also falsely claim to have done things if doing so means he can one-up another pirate or crew.

The character must roll at least 2 successes on an Intelligence (4) Test to back down from a story or boast. Yes, the Gingerbread Man has this Flaw, and yes, this Flaw will cause bar fights.

Connected

Value: 3 or 5

At character creation, the player chooses one contact and one type of merchandise. This contact can buy or sell that contra-

band at a price that always benefits the player character. The 3-point Edge allows for a one-way transaction (for example, the contact will always buy or always sell weapons for the best possible price). The 5-point Edge allows for a two-way transaction (the contact will always buy *and* sell for the best possible price). Gamemasters should figure the buying price at Street Value and the selling price with no Street Index markup.

Liar

Value: -2

This character lies and sounds insincere even when he's telling the truth. Every time a character with this Flaw addresses someone, the gamemaster rolls 1D6. If the result comes up 1, the person or contact being addressed assumes that the character is lying. On any other result, the addressee will believe the character.

The next time the character meets the person who "caught him lying" (that is, the person to whom he was talking when he rolled the 1), the person refuses to believe the character on a result of 1 or 2. The chance of being "caught lying" increases by 1 for every encounter with this person thereafter; the next time they meet, the character is assumed to be lying on a result of 1-3, and so on.

Once the character gets "caught lying" on a result of 1-6, the person will no longer deal with the character. If the person in question is a contact, the character loses that contact permanently. The gamemaster determines if this former contact becomes an Enemy of the character.

Natural Immunity

Value: 3

This Edge allows a character to take one type of drug or poison without ill effects. The players and gamemaster must agree on the drug or poison to which the character has natural immunity, and it must be something with which the player character would plausibly come into contact. The character can take one dose of the drug or poison every (Body ÷ 2) days with no ill effects. If the character ingests more than a single dose in the time allotted, he or she takes normal damage from the poison but begins to recover after (Body ÷ 2) days (if the character lives that long).

Pirate Family

Value: 3 (see text)

This Edge can only be taken by players who want to play characters born and raised to the pirate life. The character has extended family in multiple ports who will come out of the woodwork to aid or annoy (as families tend to do) the character in various places around the world. These "relatives" do not count as contacts; instead, they are considered Friends of Friends and can hook the characters into and out of situations in ports and cities utterly unfamiliar to the characters. These "relatives" go beyond blood kin to include anyone who had any contact whatsoever with the family in the past: blood pacts between pirate crews, contacts held by a family member, family friends, mentors and other elders (and, of course, the families of all these assorted people).

In a creative gamemaster's hand, this Edge can become more of a curse. If gamemasters prefer to use Pirate Family to annoy rather than help characters, they can make this Edge a Flaw or reduce its initial Edge Cost to 1. Examples of negative uses of this Edge include an extremely disreputable or cutthroat family member who left many dead in his wake and whose actions cause problems for the character in ports around the world; having to deal with a family member's unpaid debts; or the character finding out that he or she is betrothed to someone in an arranged marriage made when the character was a baby.

Sea Legs

Value: -2

A character gets Sea Legs when he or she has been on land for 24 hours straight without setting foot on a boat. At the 24-hour mark, the character must make a Willpower (4) Test and achieve at least 2 successes; otherwise, the test fails.

If the test fails, the character looks for ways to get back to his or her (or any) ship or boat, even if it means dropping whatever he or she is doing at the time. Target numbers for all tests increase by +1 for each failure on the Willpower (4) Test, except for subsequent Sea Legs Tests.

Regardless of the outcome of the initial Sea Legs Test, the character must make another one every time the character's Intelligence in hours has passed. If the previous test was successful, the next test has a +1 target-number modifier. If the previous test failed, the next one has a +2 target-number modifier. The gamemaster must keep track of how many failures the player has rolled.

The tests end as soon as the character spends time on the water in hours equal to the number of failures rolled. If the character rolls more than 24 failures before spending time on water, the 25th failure means the character must spend 2 days on the water (24 hours, plus another day for the 25th failure) in order to stop making the Sea Legs Tests; the 26th failure requires the character to spend 3 days on the water, and so on.

Sea Legs can manifest in whatever way the player wishes: the shakes, stuttering, forgetting things, general malaise, extreme boredom, a queasy feeling, cramps and other physical pains and so on.

Sea Madness

Value: -4

A character with this Flaw gets Sea Madness whenever he or she spends 24 hours or more at sea with no sight of land. At the 24-hour mark the character must make a Willpower (4) Test and achieve at least 2 successes; otherwise, the test fails.

If the test fails, the character slowly begins to go mad. He or she will look for ways to get back to land, even if it means jeopardizing the mission or trying to take over the boat. The character remains well aware of his or her surroundings but begins to fear that others will dump him overboard or leave him out at sea. As the madness worsens, the character will sabotage his own companions and in extreme cases even try to kill them. The character's only goal is to get to land where he will be safe, and he will do anything to achieve it.

Regardless of the outcome of the initial Sea Madness Test, the character must make another one every time his or her Intelligence in hours has passed. If the previous test was successful, the next test has a +1 target-number modifier. If the previous test failed, the next one has a +2 modifier. The gamemaster must keep track of how many failures the player has rolled.

The character continues to make tests as long as land is not visible to him by his or her natural or cyber-enhanced vision. The character will not believe electronic equipment or another character who tells him that land is anywhere. After the character sees land, the madness passes in a number of hours equal to the number of failures rolled. If the character rolls more than 24 failures before seeing land, the 25th failure means the madness does not pass for 2 days (24 hours, plus another day for the 25th failure); the 26th failure means the madness will not pass for 3 days and so on.

Water Sprite

Value: 1 (per ability improvement)

A character with this Edge takes to water like a fish. The abilities granted to such a character are listed below.

Ability	Improvement per Edge Point
Holding Breath Underwater	+20 seconds (see Drowning , p. 162, for base seconds)
Swimming	
Distance Increase	Character gains +0.1 when multiplying his Swimming Rate; see Swimming , p. 155.
Fatigue	Character gains +1 to the rate of Fatigue (normally Body ÷ 2); see Swimming , p. 155.
Treading Water	
Fatigue	Character gains +1 minute to determine the time between Swimming Tests (normally Strength in minutes); see Treading Water , p. 156.
Taking Damage	The character gains -1 to the target number for the Damage Resistance Test; see Treading Water , p. 156.
Floating	
Success	Character gains a -1 modifier to all Buoyancy and Treading Water Tests except for tests made to resist Damage; see Floating , p. 156.
Length of time	Character gains +1 Body for determining the length of time the character can float; see Floating , p. 156.

SKILLS

In piracy, as in shadowrunning, the old adage holds true: "What you don't know might kill you." The sea plays by its own

rules; pirates must learn those rules or else check permanently into Davy Jones's locker. Listed below are new skills and new Concentrations for existing skills relevant to piracy and smuggling.

Armed/Unarmed Combat (Underwater)

The higher viscosity of water (as opposed to air) makes underwater melee combat very difficult, with penalty modifiers increasing the target numbers (see **Underwater Combat**, p. 160). The Underwater Concentration of the Armed and Unarmed Combat skills teaches characters maneuvers that allow them to bypass the negative effects of underwater combat.

Because underwater combat is adapted to the special conditions undersea, combatants will find themselves at a disadvantage fighting on the surface. Per standard rules for Concentrations (p. 70, **SRII**), characters using the Underwater Combat Concentration must reduce their Combat Skill by 1 for surface melee combat.

Specializations in the Armed Combat (Underwater) Concentration focus on the use of specific weapons, such as knives, spears, tridents and so on. Specialization in the Unarmed Combat (Underwater) Concentration increases the level of the Concentration.

Diving

The Diving Skill is an Active Skill that covers all forms of underwater diving. Characters primarily will use this skill to compute safe diving times and calculate oxygen-nitrogen-helium gas mixtures. Additionally, this skill covers the use of underwater diving equipment such as scuba gear and may come into play in the event of equipment failure.

The Diving Skill also provides technical knowledge about specific aspects of diving, and is used to determine surface intervals between multiple dives—an important factor in preventing decompression sickness.

On the Skill Web, the Diving Skill defaults to the Intelligence Attribute, separated by six dots (+12 default). Concentrations available include Deep-water Diving (JIM, LBA) and Mixed-gas Diving (see **Underwater Adventuring**, p. 155).

Etiquette (Maritime)

Seafaring is one of the oldest trades in civilization and has developed its own traditions, language and culture. The Maritime Concentration of the Etiquette Skill gives the character knowledge and insight into the language, customs and attitudes of pirates, sailors, submariners, divers and mariners of all types. Specializations include Diver, Merchant Marine, Naval Military, Pirate (by location) and Submarine.

Ship

The Ship Skill is a Vehicle Skill that governs the piloting, navigation and handling of a large surface ship, as described in **Ship Rules**, p. 162. On the Skill Web, it defaults to the Motorboat Skill, separated by one dot (+2 default). Specialization in any of the listed Concentrations means specializing in a specific class of vessel (SV).

Concentrations: Diesel (SV), Nuclear (SV), Turbine (SV).

Submarine

The Submarine Skill is a Vehicle Skill that deals with the control and maneuvering of underwater ships and boats. See **Ship Rules** for more information on submarines.

On the Skill Web, the Submarine Skill defaults to the Ship Skill (separated by two dots, or +4 default). Specialization consists of becoming proficient in a specific class of vessel (SV).

Concentrations: Deep Sea (SV), Large Diesel/Electric (SV), Minisub (SV), Nuclear (SV), Remote Operation (SV).

DECKING AND PIRACY

At first glance, piracy and smuggling seem to leave the decker out of the fun. In reality, a decker is worth his or her weight in Fairlight Excaliburs on the high seas. All of the larger ports and cities in all the locations described in this book have access ports, even those on islands small enough to fit inside the hull of a big oil tanker. Satellite uplink technology is common enough that all islands have some sort of connection a decker can use.

Also, all ships that routinely stay out at sea for 24 hours or more at a time are equipped with a permanent satellite uplink. Deckers getting aboard these ships can easily reach the outside world via this link. Finally, any decker on any ship can make his or her own satellite uplink by following the rules on page 88 of **Virtual Realities 2.0**. Just because the decker is out to sea or on an isolated Philippine island doesn't mean he or she can't still work for the team.

Information flows constantly through the Matrix, and information is nuyen to pirates and deckers—ship schedules and manifests, dock shift changes, well-placed misinformation, false alarms to get security and other pirates looking in the wrong direction, even the latest Urban Brawl score from Seattle. In the right hands, just about any information can be turned into money. The pirate crew with the freshest or most accurate information has the greatest chance of surviving, and deckers help make that possible.

SHIP DESIGNATIONS

A pirate knows the following abbreviations by heart because the ships that use them are usually chasing him or her from one ocean to another. Gamemasters can create others from countries or corps not listed below.

- ACS** Ares Commercial Ship (Ares Macrotechnology noncombatant ships, such as tankers and freighters)
- AFS** Ares Fleet Ship (Ares Macrotechnology Corporate Navy)
- BAA** *Barco de Armada Aztlan* (Aztlan Navy ship: Aztlan Navy and Aztechnology Military)
- BCA** *Barco de Corporation Aztechnology* (Aztechnology Corporate Navy ship: Aztechnology Corporate Shipping and Merchant Marine)
- CSS** Confederated States Ship (CAS Navy)
- DAS** *Deutsche Allianz Schiffe* (German Alliance Ship: Allied German States Navy)
- HMS** His Majesty's Ship (British Royal Navy)
- MF** *Miyasama Fune* (His Imperial Majesty's Ship: Imperial Japanese Navy)
- USS** United States Ship (UCAS Navy)
- SKS** *Saeder-Krupp Schiffe* (Saeder-Krupp Ship: used for military/security and regular shipping)

PIRACY IN THE CARIBBEAN

Of all the locations in **Cyberpirates**, the Caribbean may be the easiest for players and gamemasters to dive right into. All the major corporations are there, as well as other familiar elements such as the Mafia, drug lords, oppressive governments and even retired shadowrunners. Smuggling lanes are wide open, ports are plentiful, backstabbing is the normal operating procedure and tourists with their hard-earned "clean" money still come by the boatload. For starting pirates, this region may be the friendliest home port.

SETTING THE MOOD

The Caribbean is unlike any other place in the world because it owes its existence to a constant balance of opposites. Tourists pour in to spend their wealth on the beaches and cruises, but the local population as a whole is strictly Third World. The Caribbean League presents a unified front to the world, but in reality each island is its own kingdom whose leaders are constantly fighting each other for power and cash.

The Mafia is respected and the police are corrupt. Pirates are both victims and leaders, rich and poor, smugglers and economic theorists, braggarts and realists, heroes and villains.

The gamemaster should use these conflicts to keep players guessing. Is the dock worker helping the characters out for the money, and if so, will he go to someone who'll pay him more and leave the characters out in the cold when the next shipment comes in? Those pirates the characters beat last week just joined the Cuban Navy; now all of Cuba's ports are closed to the characters, even if they're working for the powerful Mafia.

Players will need to spend just as much time watching the shore as they do the sea, just to keep one step ahead of the constantly shifting allegiances. Gamemasters should use these changes to make the player characters proactive in uncovering information, paying contacts and watching their opposition. The need to be on their toes is also a good way to knock down a character's credstick balance. Finally, the gamemaster shouldn't worry about logical progression and slow-acting motives. In the Caribbean, enemies become friends and become enemies again in the blink of an eye. Everything is short-term, based on those on top trying to stay there while those below try to knock them down.

Pirates vs. Pirates

In the sprawl, shadowrunners are rarely forced to fight other shadowrunners. In the Caribbean, pirates' favorite targets are other pirates. Gamemasters should make opposing pirate groups equal in gear and general ability to the player characters, though individual enemy pirates can be of any rating (see pp. 84–85,

THE CARIBBEAN LEAGUE

Population: 38,500,000

Human: 61%

Elf: 11%

Dwarf: 6%

Ork: 16%

Troll: 4%

Other: 2%

Regional Telecom Grid

Access: NA/CL

Local Telecom Grid

Access: NA/CL-(individual island name)

Shadowrun Companion). Pirates rarely stick to a standard operating procedure, so the gamemaster can do whatever he or she wants to vary pirate crews. For example, some may be weak but aligned with a larger group who will hunt down the player characters and give them a chance to make amends. Others may be ruthless cutthroats who will kill the player characters as soon as look at them.

No pirate wins all the time. A shadowrunning team rarely has to give up their hard-won spoils—they may not get exactly what they wanted at the end of an adventure, but they usually get something. Pirates, by contrast, may not get anything if they're unlucky. If played correctly, however, adventures in the Caribbean should not pose that problem if a pirate can maintain his or her reputation.

Gamemasters obviously have considerable leeway in determining exactly how their NPC pirates will react in any given situation. However, every pirate should always keep in mind that reputation is as good as money in the Caribbean. If the player characters hit a weak pirate band only to find out later that they were working for the infamous Gingerbread Gang, they have many options. Giving the stolen goods back to the Gingerbread Man to show that his weak link has been exposed gets the characters no money, but scores them some points with a famous and powerful pirate captain. Selling them back gets the characters even more.

Gamemasters must also find a way to balance the player characters' desire for reputation against the kind of stupidity common to groups dealing with lots of loot and inflated egos. Characters demanding exorbitant prices from Gingerbread Man, telling him that he now owes their group big time, or refusing to make a deal with him at all may get a price on their heads—a kind of reputation they may not want.

MAGIC AND THE VODOO WARS

One word comes to mind when gaming in the Caribbean: voodoo. For a complete explanation of voodoo (also called voodoo), see the **Awakenings** sourcebook.

In the Caribbean, voodoo is both a religion and a magical style. Most people will claim some knowledge of voodoo even on the mainland of the CAS, regardless of whether or not they have ever seen a houngan or a mambo. It's in the air, and people believe it's real. Pirates should join up and accept it, or they risk making enemies.

Big D's Legacy

In his will, Dunkelzahn left a year's worth of talon clippings to the head houngan of the Caribbean League (p. 31, **Portfolio of a Dragon: Dunkelzahn's Secrets**). Trouble is, there is no head houngan in the Caribbean League. The bequest has therefore led to what the press calls "The Voodoo Wars"—town versus town, leader versus leader, island versus island in a battle to see who's on top.

As with any religious war, fanatics on all sides want their houngan elevated to the top spot. But the Caribbean isn't like the rest of the world, and there are just as many forces acting against the various voodoo factions to insure that no one gets that much power and prestige. Like pirates, shifting alliances, and lots of water, the voodoo war is constantly in the background. The

gamemaster should refer to it frequently and feel free to use it to upset the player characters' schemes or routine.

Obeah Adepts

Native to the Caribbean and West Africa, obeah is rare in other places, though spreading. Most obeah adepts, or obeyifa, have extensive knowledge of magical and non-magical herbs and poisons, a Specialization of Biology (Botany). The voodoo equivalent of shamanic conjuring adepts, they take magic at Priority B during character creation, and can conjure nature spirits and hold them inside specially created fetishes. Obeyifa are being used more and more often on the front lines of the voodoo war.

To conjure a spirit, the obeyifa must first create a fetish (p. 20, **Grimoire II**) to hold it; this fetish does not aid conjuring in any other way. Use the standard rules for conjuring nature spirits, with one limitation—the maximum Force of spirit that a given fetish can hold is twice the number of successes rolled on the Enchanting Test for the fetish.

A spirit held in an obeah fetish can only be commanded by its summoner. It remains trapped until all its services have been used up and does not disappear at dusk or dawn. While held, the spirit can be transported and called upon outside its domain, and it will remain in the fetish even if the conjurer is knocked unconscious (though it goes free if the conjurer dies). An obeyifa may hold at one time a maximum number of spirits equal to his Charisma.

Obeah adepts cannot conjure elementals or loas and must use an obeah fetish for all summoning. Obeah fetishes are specific to the user and must be created by the adept; they are not sold in stores. An obeah fetish is not astrally active unless the spirit residing inside is currently using its powers; for purposes of channeling spells through the fetish, treat an active fetish as a focus equivalent to the spirit's Force.

Obeah adepts can also enchant foci, per standard rules. Enchanting obeah fetishes is a Specialization of Enchanting (Talismongering).

Obeyifa are not astrally active, so they cannot use metamagic that requires astral sight. Also, they cannot cast spells.

The Bermuda Triangle

The legends of the Bermuda triangle predate the magical Awakening in **Shadowrun**, which means that people are extremely curious about what's there and (of course) how to exploit it. Bermuda and the Triangle are technically under British rather than Caribbean League rule, and so anti-piracy measures are much more heavily enforced. In fact, British Royal Navy ships have standing orders to blow known pirates out of the water in that area. Smuggling trips into and out of the Bermuda area require specialized teams, and goods brought in or out usually go to pre-arranged buyers and sellers. Going into the Triangle means that pirates must act more like shadowrunners. Stealth is the highest priority.

The Triangle has a Background Count of 4, for which no official explanation yet exists. Many organizations will spend big money to find out the reason behind this odd phenomenon. Magic works in the Triangle per the Mana Surge rules on page 82, **Shadowrun Companion**.

Critters appearing in the Bermuda Triangle possess 1 to 3 extra mutations or powers (see p. 147, **California Free State** sourcebook). These critters are not mutants or toxic; instead, the high level of magic has simply increased their magical awareness.

Finally, more free ocean spirits call the Triangle home than any other place on Earth. So bring your mages when you enter Bermuda's clear blue waters.

CARIBBEAN CRITTERS

The following critters are unique to the Caribbean. In addition, all previously listed paranimals with tropical habitats and all saltwater critters have variants in the Caribbean. To create toxic and mutant creatures, the gamemaster can use the rules on page 147 of the **California Free State** sourcebook.

Chupacabras

The chupacabras is a 1.2-meter-tall, bipedal reptile resembling a cross between an iguana and monkey. Its scales are green and covered with coarse hair. It possesses an iguana's spiky head crest, large red eyes, a short tail and opposable thumbs. It lives in tropical forests in the Caribbean (and is rumored to live on Madagascar). This secretive creature feeds on blood, preferring goats and cattle (its name means "goatsucker" in Spanish), and occasionally attacks metahumans in isolated areas. Females bear one live infant.

Named for a creature associated with UFO sightings in the twentieth century, the chupacabras is believed by some to be engineered because of the creature's genetic similarity to primates. Chupacabras tissues show a pattern similar to HMHV, but the creatures do not carry the disease.

B Q S C I W E R
5 4 x 4 3 — 3/5 6 2D6 5

Attacks: 3L, claw or teeth

Powers: Concealment (Personal), Essence Drain, Immunity to Pathogens, Immunity to Poisons, Paralyzing Touch

Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Mild), Essence Loss, Vulnerability (Fire)

Sukuyan

The sukuyan is the Caribbean variant of the European/North American vampire.

B Q S C I W E R **Attacks**
C C x 5 C + E C C C 2D6 C Humanoid

Note: Every vampire was originally a character and retains most of that character's attributes, designated C. A vampire's Strength is the character's Strength plus the vampire's Essence.

Powers: Enhanced Physical Characteristics, Enhanced Senses (Hearing and Smell), Essence Drain, Immunity (Age, Poison and Pathogens), Infection, Mist Form, Regeneration, Thermographic Vision

Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Severe), Dietary Requirement (Salt), Induced Dormancy (lack of air), Essence Loss, Vulnerability (Wood), in some a psychologically based Allergy (Holy Objects, Severe)

PIRACY IN THE PHILIPPINES

For players and gamemasters who want to fight the good fight and help struggling causes, the Philippines is ideal. Running a Philippines-based game means that every act of piracy is helping those who fight the yakuza, the Japanese megacorps and the oppressive Imperial Japanese government.

OK, press release over ... that's what the Huk wants you to believe and that's the spin the megas paint, but the reality is (as always) much grayer. A game based in the Philippines incorporates a political viewpoint—and as the Election of 2057 showed in the sprawl, politics plays by its own rules.

SETTING THE MOOD

The Philippines embodies everything that is wrong with the world in 2059. Megacorps control everything, with no government or any other power to restrain them. Instead, the corporate-controlled government squashes the will of the people like a schoolyard bully beating up his favorite victim. The people live as best they can on their separate islands, trying to survive in a society without freedom. For all practical purposes, the yakuza are the police, and their will is stronger than the authority of any governor or local police force. A political revolutionary, who also just happens to be larger than a house and can fly, claims to be a spokeswurm for the downtrodden, while training and equipping an army to take by force what his politicking can't win. Welcome to the Philippines.

When running Philippines-based adventures, the gamemaster and players should decide if the characters call the Philippines home or if they are only visiting. If the Philippines is home (or if the player characters are at least claiming a Philippines port or island as home), they will need to decide whether they are members of the Huk (freedom fighters, though the characters' level of involvement may vary), yakuza pirates (stealing and smuggling things that regular shipping won't touch with a 10-meter rattan pole) or independents (distrusted by the Huk and the yakuza and probably hunted by both because of the prevalent mind set that "those who are not with us are against us").

Freedom Fighters

If the players decide that their characters sit on the Huk side of the fence, most of their actions should somehow harm the megacorporations, the yakuza, the Imperial Japanese government and the Japanese Imperial Forces that remain on Philippine islands. These characters aren't in it for the money; instead, they are hoping that their small contributions to the "great struggle" help free the Philippines from Imperial Japanese and megacorporate domination. These pirates would also likely work "long

THE IMPERIAL PROVINCE OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

Population: 90,000,000

Human: 59%

Elf: 12%

Dwarf: 5%

Ork: 14%

Troll: 8%

Other: 2%

Regional Telecom Grid

Access: AS/PHIL

hauls," bringing smuggled or stolen goods from other parts of the world to supply Masaru's burgeoning revolutionary militia.

In many cases, such characters will be hunted more often and with more dedication than typical shadowrunners, because the authorities consider them guilty by association regardless of what they may have actually done. Also, games involving such characters tend to center on slow, stealthy missions—the opposite of African or Caribbean piracy, which tend to be more openly brutal or flashy. Big, noisy attacks make for equally big, noisy responses, and the pirates of the Philippines are not equipped for such battles. Also, the actions of Huk pirates ultimately reflect on their sponsor, Masaru—which means that an operation too over-the-top might be impossible to spin-doctor. Public sentiment has been the bread and butter of social revolutionaries for thousands of years, and if Huk pirates do something that cannot be swept under the rug or used to Masaru's advantage, he just might hang them out to dry.

Therefore, the gamemaster must constantly balance whatever the runners do with the freedom fighters' goals, and must also remember that the line between freedom fighters and terrorists is a thin one indeed. Blowing up a Japanese-owned ship might get a pirate band a pat on the back in some quarters but hatred in another, because the crew of the ship might happen to come from the town the pirates call home. Ultimately, the gamemaster must remember that the final arbiter of what is good and right among the Huk is a dragon who has his own plans.

Independent pirate characters who masquerade as Huk members run the risk of their deception being revealed. If this happens, the Huk will assume that the characters are spies (if they weren't, they would've joined up).

Masaru

The gamemaster decides where Masaru stands on issues brought up during game play. Keep in mind that Masaru is currently focusing on political legitimacy and that he bases his actions on achieving the public goal of freedom by ballot rather than by bullet. However, dragons are known for keeping entire decks of cards up their sleeves, and Masaru is no exception.

In human form, Masaru looks like a Filipino businessman. The statistics given below are figured from observation and apply as of 2057; gamemasters can manipulate these numbers as they wish. Numbers in parentheses apply to Masaru's human form only.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R
20	10 x 3	40 (12)	8 (6)	8	10	12	9

Armor Attacks

11 +3 reach, 15D Damage

Initiative: 9 + 2D6

Threat/Professional Rating: 6/4

Skills: Sorcery 9

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

Spells (all at Force 10): Analyze Truth, Barrier, Heal, Mana Barrier, Powerball, Ram

Pirating for the Oyabun

A pirate who works for the yakuza (whether because the character's contacts belong to the yakuza or because the character is actually a yakuza pirate) deals with goods that define the term "disturbing." The yakuza needs and will pay for drugs, BTLs, sex and other slaves, alcohol and exotic items from around the world. More ideas on what the yakuza traffic in appear in the **Underworld Sourcebook**.

Because the yakuza in the Philippines essentially control the docks and the entire local underworld, they have shut out their competition. This means they can take what they need from legitimate sources, and they don't need electronics or weapons or other mundane items. The yakuza will also use their own pirates to attack the Huk or anyone else who muscled in on their territory, including independent pirates looking to score without the oyabuns' permission. The yakuza is less concerned than the Huk with public image because they know they have the Japanacops and the Imperial Japanese government covering their backs.

If a gamemaster decides that in his campaign the dragon Ryumyo is an active supporter of the yakuza, then Ryumyo may push for open warfare against Masaru's Huk. In a war like this, deniable assets like pirates come in handy for both sides.

The gamemaster should not let pirating for the yakuza turn into a freak show, nor should it be as simple as showing up at the dock, off-loading a shipment and getting the nuyen. The Huk will hunt down known yakuza pirates, and independent pirates will hit yakuza pirates because they know that exotic yakuza cargoes tend to be profitable. The yakuza will protect pirates who work for them as long as those pirates are getting the goods or otherwise performing yakuza business, but won't necessarily bail them out of trouble in other situations. Also, not delivering goods as agreed or causing a yakuza member to lose honor can earn a pirate band an enemy even worse than other pirates—a yakuza enforcer.

Finally, though the yakuza present a unified front, political machinations are always going on beneath the surface. Player characters can find themselves in the middle of a yakuza war if they choose the wrong side.

Independent Pirates

Independents may be the most interesting type of pirate to play in the Philippines, but adventures involving them are also the most difficult for the gamemaster to run. Each situation forces the gamemaster to determine the response of the Huk, the yakuza and the megacops—and for really big hits, the Japanese Imperial Navy. The Huk tends to be the most forgiving, especially if the independents are bringing in items they need; they will frequently trade stuff for stuff rather than buy or sell outright. The yakuza and the corps are trying desperately to make the Philippines a Japanese version of the Caribbean (as the tourists see it, anyway), a haven of beaches and nuyen. Piracy blows a big hole in this illusion, so they tend to see it as something to be stamped out.

MAGIC IN THE PHILIPPINES

Magic in the Philippines has few local quirks. Because so many natives lack access to magical training, untrained or spontaneous manifestations of magic tend to be more frequent than in

other places. Most locals assume their magic is a gift from God, so gamemasters can use the religion-based magic rules (p. 105, **Awakenings**) to explain how people react to one of their own having unusual powers.

Shamanism is rare in the Philippines. The few existing shamans usually follow the Eagle, Dog, Snake (or Python or Cobra: see p. 153), Turtle, Crocodile (p. 153) or Whale totems. For information on previously published **Shadowrun** totems, see pp. 151–155, **Awakenings**.

Metahumans

The Philippines have numerous legends of magical humanoids, whose names they have given to native metahumans. In the Philippines, dwarfs are duwende, orks are binobaan, trolls are kalapaw and elves are dalakitnon. The only existing metavariant in the Philippines is referred to as enkanto (male) or enkantada (female). These people are fair-skinned, with blond or white hair. They have no divot in their upper lips, and many have a mild allergy to spices. Use normal elf statistics.

PHILIPPINE CRITTERS

The following creatures live on the various Philippine islands. Critters marked with an asterisk (*) are native to the Philippines and only found in those islands.

ASWANG*

Aswang is a general term applied to all “monstrous” Awakened humanoids: shapeshifters, ghouls, HMMVV-positive creatures and even “evil” metahuman spellcasters. Subvariants include the busaw, local variant of the North American ghoul; amalanhig, variant of the North American vampire; abat, boroka and mangalok, vampires who consume internal organs instead of blood; and malakat and pugot, dog and hog shapeshifters. These two and seal shapeshifters are the only shifter variants in the islands. In human form, malakat have enlarged canine teeth and pugot have extremely thick, hard fingernails. Statistics for all types of aswang appear below.

Busaw

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
7	5 × 4	6	1	4	5	(5)	4	Humanoid

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Smell)

Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Moderate; Citric Acid, Severe), Reduced Senses (blind or nearly so)

Amalanhig

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
C	C × 5	C + E	C	C	C	2D6	C	Humanoid

Note: Every vampire was originally a character and retains most of that character’s attributes, designated C. Its Strength is the character’s Strength plus the vampire’s Essence.

Powers: Enhanced Physical Characteristics, Enhanced Senses (Hearing and Smell), Essence Drain, Immunity (Age, Poison and Pathogens), Infection, Mist Form, Regeneration, Thermographic Vision

Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Severe), Induced Dormancy (lack

of air), Essence Loss, Vulnerability (Wood), in some a psychologically based Allergy (Holy Objects, Severe)

Abat, Boroka, Mangalok

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
C	C × 5	C + E	C	C	C	2D6	C	Humanoid

Note: Every vampire was originally a character and retains most of that character’s attributes, designated C. Its Strength is the character’s Strength plus the vampire’s Essence.

Powers: Enhanced Physical Characteristics, Enhanced Senses (Hearing and Smell), Essence Drain, Immunity (Age, Poison and Pathogens), Infection, Mist Form, Regeneration, Thermographic Vision

Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Severe), Induced Dormancy (lack of air), Essence Loss, Vulnerability (Salt, Wood), in some a psychologically based Allergy (Holy Objects, Severe)

Malakat, Pugot

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
5	4 × 5	5	5	3	3	(8)	5	Humanoid

Animal

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R
A + 2	(A + 1) × (A + 1)	A + 2	5	3	3	(8)	5

Attacks: (A + 1)(A)

Note: When shapeshifter is in animal form, refer to the animal Attributes, designated A, and add the following modifiers: for malakat, +1 Body, +1 Quickness, +1D6 Initiative. For pugot, +1 Body, +1 Strength and +2D6 Initiative.

Powers: Enhanced Physical Characteristics (in animal form), Regeneration

Weaknesses: Allergy (Silver, Severe), Vulnerability (Silver)

BUWAYA*

The buwaya is a small, fat crocodile, mostly green with a brown patch on its back. The buwaya uses its Search power to search for food and then magically compels the prey to come within biting distance. It is lazy, and will always take offered meat rather than attacking.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
10/4	4 × 4	8	—	1	4	6	3	10S

Powers: Compulsion, Enhanced Physical Attributes (Strength, three times per day for [Essence]D6 turns), Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision, Smell), Search

Weaknesses: None

KING COBRA

Both mundane and Awakened variants are found in Philippine forests. They prey on small- to medium-sized mammals and reptiles, including snakes. They are 4–6 meters long; Awakened cobras may be up to 8 meters long. Statistics in parentheses and powers in brackets apply to the Awakened variant.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
5 (8)	6 × 1	5 (8)	—	1/4	2 (4)	6 (6)	6* (6**)	6M

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Smell), [Immunity to Poisons, Hypnotic Stare (treat as Hypnotic Song with eye contact as range)], [Silence], Thermographic Vision

Note: A cobra that inflicts a Light wound or worse has injected a nonmagical venom that does 6S damage at 10-minute intervals.

KIWIGS*

Kiwigs are Awakened boars that resemble North American piasmae, but with cloven hooves rather than claws and pig-like snouts. Like piasmae, they are carnivorous.

B Q S C I W E R Attacks
11/2 4 x 5 13 — 2/4 4 6 4 9D2, +1 Reach

Powers: Enhanced Physical Attributes (Strength or Quickness, once per day each, for [Essence x 2]D6 turns), Enhanced Reactions, Enhanced Senses (Thermographic Vision, Wide-band Hearing)

Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Nuisance)

RETICULATED PYTHONS

These constrictors live in Malaysian and Philippine jungles, grow 6–10 meters long and eat most mammals. The Awakened variant may be as large as 14 meters long and 350 kilograms, with a head the size of a big shoe box. Statistics in parentheses and powers in brackets apply to the Awakened variant.

B Q S C I W E R Attacks
8 (10) 4 x 1 10 (16) — 1/5 2 (4) 6 (6) 5 8M

Powers: [Adaptive Coloration], Enhanced Senses (Smell), [Immunity to Pathogens and Poisons, Search], Thermographic Vision

Note: A successful predatory biting attack means that the python can start constricting, whether or not it did any damage. Constriction does (Str)L Stun damage every Combat Turn. Heavy armor resists this damage per normal rules, but any lighter impact armor has no effect. The python waits until its prey's heart stops before eating. Awakened pythons can attack and hold astral forms. Physically or astrally, escaping the coils requires a Complex Action and a successful opposed Strength Test.

PIRACY IN WEST AFRICA

If you want to shadowrun on the ocean or in an inhospitable country instead of in the sprawl, then Africa's Gold and Ivory Coasts are the place for you. Corps pay big money and hand out cutting-edge gear and weapons to pirates who help them frag over the competition. The downside, however, is dealing with an untamed Awakened world, constant warfare and creatures you didn't even know existed.

Piracy in Africa is as close as piracy gets to classic shadowrunning. Almost all pirate activity is sponsored by or somehow connected to the corps, just like most shadowrunning. In Africa, the pirates don't care about style or panache. They care about making their strikes big and loud and making sure the target knows who sent the demolition team. Piracy in Africa is done with a machete instead of a scalpel.

GOLD AND IVORY COASTS

Population: 18,000,000 (approximate count)

Human: 46%

Elf: 7%

Dwarf: 11%

Ork: 20%

Troll: 13%

Ghoul: 2%

Other: 1%

Local Telecom Grid Access: AF/ASANTE—Asante Nation, AF/SEKONDI—Free City of Sekondi

SETTING THE MOOD

In Africa, piracy and shadowrunning are pretty much the same. Think of Africa as a combo job—you get hired (as on a standard shadowrun), make all the arrangements yourself (like a pirate), do what you were hired to do and get proof that you did it (as on a shadowrun). And you get to keep or sell whatever you can carry out (like a pirate). The gamemaster can use all of the various archetypal adventure plots on pages 101–103 of the **Shadowrun Companion** in Africa without invalidating the concept of piracy.

The most important thing to remember is that piracy in Africa is anything but subtle. Government forces don't exist, and mega-corporate presence only covers the immediate area around each corp's local HQ. (There are no corporate security forces patrolling the jungle; corp guards are as just as liable to be eaten by lions as killed by pirates.) West Africa holds plenty of neutral territory, into which pirates can disappear for months at time without meeting anyone from offshore. Africa makes a great place to lie low as long as you don't mind roughing it.

Of course, just because the corps don't control the neutral territory doesn't stop them from trying to manipulate events in those areas. They will do whatever is necessary to expand their influence—backing a general against the President For Life here, supplying Tribe A in its war against Tribe B there, all the while swiping all the natural resources they can grab and pointing the finger at the other megas for beating them to the punch someplace else. With all this going on, there's plenty of room on land and sea for pirates.

Also, piracy in Africa tends to be a one-way trip—smuggling things out. The existing governments, cities and countries (such as they are) want the newest toy, biggest gun and newest high, just like people everywhere else—but real money is scarce in West Africa, and so player characters usually can't get a decent price for their goods. Trade, however, opens up all kinds of possibilities—precious stones, teslas, SOTA weaponry from the local Ares facility, paranormal animals, people (read: slave labor), the latest corporate experiments, documents and secrets. A pirate will find all of these worth trading for.

Finally, strategy is much less important than survival. Stealth and boasting, the mainstays of piracy in the Philippines and the Caribbean, don't matter in a place where the land or sea can turn

on you, and where your enemies have nothing to fear because they know Africa itself can destroy you. Because no one much cares what they do (or has the power to stop them), the corps treat Africa as their personal play room ... no rules, no adult supervision, no need to hedge your bets or play it close to the chest. No Lone Star cops or UCAS government agents are going to worry if a gang of pirates kills everyone in a village just because the place happens to be between the pirates and the Ares complex they were hired to raid; no authorities will come after you if you steal some software from a Renraku lab and then blow up the entire complex just for fun. Pirates in Africa fear only one thing: the wrath of Mother Africa herself.

Competition

Unlike the Carib pirate, who loves to play pirate-versus-pirate mind games, the African pirate does what he does to survive. Don't mess with him and he won't mess with you. Get in his way, and it's you or him. The economics of the West Coast of Africa are so screwed up, with so much wealth in the hands of so few people, that locals see piracy as legitimate work. Whole families will work together to make sure they get whatever job is going, and to perform it as well as or better than anyone else so that they'll get the next job, too. Extensive family connections give African pirates fantastically useful networks—they have cousins working in governmental or corporate enclaves, elders making trades with other pirates for anything and everything, kids following strangers through the city streets so they can tell the family about their actions. They do all this to make sure they get the job first. They may even be finished with it by the time your pirate gang gets around to meeting with Mr. Johnson.

This is what survival means to an African pirate. They're not trying to one-up anyone—they just want the money. It's professional, not personal. If another pirate band tries to take a job away from them or attack them, that behavior is dishonorable in their eyes. Should you happen to get the job, they won't try to take it from you—instead, they'll offer information or guides in exchange for a cut of the money. Dishonorable actions in Africa make you a target for everyone—the old lady selling APDS ammo, the little kids playing in the street, the young boys at the dock. One way or another, they will see to it that eye-for-an-eye vengeance is served. Play up this atmosphere; make the players see conspiracies and death threats everywhere. Once the matter is settled (through vengeance or a sufficient payoff), everyone goes back to business as usual. African pirates don't hold grudges, because grudges don't pay in cash.

SCHISTOSOMIASIS

Schistosomiasis is a parasitic disease caused by a fluke that lives in snails native to the Volta River. If a character dips in (or drinks from) an African river, roll 1D6. On a result of 1, the character is harboring the parasite. Symptoms of the disease don't show up for a month, as the parasite takes time to breed.

After 30 days, the first symptoms of schistosomiasis appear. The character's stomach swells to unnatural size, and he begins to urinate blood. A high fever also sets in; the character starts passing in and out of consciousness, and vomits up any liquid or food

given to him. The infected character begins to take Serious Physical and Serious Stun damage. To reduce this damage, the character makes a single Body (12) Test. Every 2 successes rolled reduces the damage by one box (starting with Stun damage).

Once the symptoms appear, the character takes one box of damage at [Body x hour] intervals. For example, if the character has a Body of 5, he will take another box of damage every fifth hour. No test may be made to reduce this damage. The character takes Stun damage first, then Physical damage. The character will pass out when all the Stun damage boxes are filled in but will continue to take Physical damage. Once all the boxes are filled in, the character dies. Physical overflow damage does not apply when resisting schistosomiasis.

All medical facilities in Africa, from corp infirmaries to bush clinics, can deal with this disease, but they will charge a lot for their services. The medicine takes 30 days, plus a number of additional days equal to the number of boxes of damage taken, to cure the disease. Each dose removes one box of damage and costs at least 200 nuyen (or the equivalent in trade or conscript labor). Gamemasters can adjust this cost, increasing it if the characters are being raked over the coals by a greedy general who has cases of medicine locked away or letting them work off the cost at a humanitarian clinic run by Catholic missionaries.

Once all damage boxes are removed (beginning with Stun damage), the patient may leave the medical facility under his or her own power, though he still needs the medicine for 30 days in order to eliminate the disease from his system.

If the patient refuses to purchase the remaining doses left after the hospital stay, the character may still have the disease. The gamemaster rolls 1D6 for every day remaining until the character is totally cured (up to 30, depending on how long the character remained in the hospital). The gamemaster may make all the rolls at once and keep the results secret. If the gamemaster rolls a number of 1s greater than the character's Body Rating, the character remains infected. The gamemaster can either inflict a relapse on the character immediately or hold it in reserve until another time.

Outside of Africa, only the best medical facilities (including DocWagon) have access to the remedy for schistosomiasis. The gamemaster must enforce the minimum 30-day bed rest in non-African countries because of the threat of spreading the parasite into other water sources if the character tries to leave the hospital too soon. This will, of course, cost the character a ton of money. Outside of Africa, even the medicine is more expensive: at least 2,000 nuyen per dose.

MAGIC IN AFRICA

Magic works differently in Africa. The mechanics are the same; the differences lie in the way people understand it and the reasons why things work. Shamanism is the only accepted form of magic in West Africa; even those who would be hermetic mages elsewhere worship the tribe's totem and assume that their powers come from it. Also, as in the Philippines, the lack of available training makes for a high number of untrained or spontaneous manifestations of magic. Because most people assume that magic is a gift from a totem, gamemasters can use the totem to explain

what happened and why. For example, a native character who conjures a fire elemental will assume that his tribe's totem made the elemental appear.

Metahumans

Like the Philippines, Africa has numerous legends of magical humanoid, whose names local people have bestowed on the region's metahumans. In West Africa, dwarfs are mmotia, orks are kwagya, trolls are amanfi and elves are dzemawon. The wakyambi elf meta-variant (see p. 42, **Shadowrun Companion**) is found in small numbers in West Africa.

Ancestral Spirits

Ancestor worship appears in many cultures around the world, including West Africa. Some West African shamans draw their power from the spirits of their ancestors rather than from Spirits of Man. In effect, an ancestor shaman may summon a specific set of Spirits of Man, who appear to him as ancestral spirits. An ancestor shaman must follow an animal totem as well, and uses all other magic per standard **Shadowrun** rules.

Ancestor shamans can summon ancestor spirits, but not other Spirits of Man. They conjure other nature spirits normally. All totem bonuses for conjuring Spirits of Man apply to ancestor spirits. Ancestor-spirit shamanic adepts can only conjure ancestor spirits and cast spells for which they gain a totem advantage. Ancestral conjuring adepts can summon any spirit that ancestor shamans can, but cannot use Sorcery.

The summoning process requires three fetishes appropriate to the ancestor being summoned. Usually, one of these fetishes is manufactured for every person before his or her death (a stool for the spirit to sit on, for example). The other two fetishes are most often food or items that the ancestor found pleasurable while alive. Not having the appropriate fetishes reduces the number of services that the summoned spirit can be commanded to perform by 1 per fetish (but really hot-drek summoners can still finagle help out of Grandma even if she has to stand all night).

The conjuring time is a number of hours equivalent to the desired spirit's Force, divided by the number of the spirit's relatives present (including the shaman). These participants need not be willing (no one said you have to like your family). Services and Drain are calculated normally. No Great Form or Ally ancestor spirits are known to exist.

The gamemaster is encouraged to roleplay the conjured spirits as much like living family members as possible. Whether or not they are actually the spirits of the dead, they sure look and act like it to the summoner.

These spirits seem to come from a metaplane of death that resembles popular images of the afterlife, death and judgment. This plane always dovetails with the summoning mage's individual views, background, beliefs and/or religion. Shamans can go on astral quests for their totem to this plane, but only after the ancestor spirit has agreed to guide them there. No magician has reached the "Plane of Death" without a guide. All other game rules regarding metaplanes remain the same (see p. 93, **Grimoire II**).

Ancestor Spirit

B Q S C I W E R Attacks

F + 2 F x 3 F + 1 F F F F (A) F (Strength)M Stun

Powers: Accident, Confusion, Divination, Guard, Manifestation, Search

Note: Quickness "x3" is the Running multiplier when the spirit is manifested. Ancestor spirits have no domain boundaries; their powers extend to a radius of five kilometers per Force Point.

Divination (Spirit Power)

This power, which comes into play whenever someone asks an ancestor spirit to prophesy the future, allows a spirit to sense the emotional drives and energy of every entity within its powers' area of effect, and to make a limited guess as to what these entities will do next. The gamemaster rolls a number of dice equal to the Force of the spirit against a target number based on the type of question asked.

Divination question is:	Target Number
Very vague (What does the next month hold for me?)	4
Vague (Are my old enemies catching up to me?)	5
General (Will I get hurt if I go on this next job?)	6
Specific (Has Mr. Kapakpa been taking bribes from Yakashima?)	8
Very specific (What is the name of the man in black who has been following me?)	10

The number of successes achieved indicates how useful the answer will be, at the gamemaster's discretion. No successes means the spirit answers cryptically, often drastically misleading the summoner. One or 2 successes results in a cryptic answer that contains an underlying truth. On 3 or 4 successes, the answer is mildly helpful. Five or more successes achieves approximately the level of detail the questioner wanted. Regardless of the number of successes achieved, however, the gamemaster should make the answer as specific or vague as suits the story, allowing the player characters to extrapolate what they think might happen based on the spirit's answer. The spirit may answer in up to twice as many words as its Force, but no more.

New Totems

African shamans are generally chosen by totems native to the African continent. The following are the most common among Ghanaian and Ivory Coast shamans. Any shaman may conjure ancestor spirits regardless of his or her totem, though the gamemaster and player must remove one Conjuring bonus granted by the totem and replace it with one for conjuring ancestor spirits.

Caribbean shamans with African ancestry may also be chosen by African totems.

Agwengwere (Hyena)

Characteristics: Agwengwere is aggressive, capricious and cunning, serving her own needs above all else. She is quick to

anger and fanatically defends her position against larger foes, fighting lions for her share of the kill.

Favored Environment: Savannah

Advantages: +2 dice for combat spells, +2 dice to Banishing

Disadvantages: -1 die for health spells. Must make a Willpower (4) Test to perform an action with no benefit to herself.

Anansi (Spider)

Characteristics: The African variant of Spider, Anansi has many aspects, from creator to destroyer to trickster. She waits and plots, carefully and deliberately. Her web is intricate and delicate, yet sturdy, and she strikes quickly and without remorse.

Favored Environment: Quiet, dark places where few ever look

Advantages: +1 die for illusion and manipulation spells; +1 die for conjuring spells

Disadvantages: +2 target modifier for Magic Tests made in open areas. +1 target modifier when shaman does not have time to consider a situation (gamemaster's discretion)

Asenna (Bat)

Characteristics: Asenna is well-traveled, rarely staying in one place. An active hunter and seeker, she sets far-reaching goals and gets restless when not moving. She is adaptable and will make herself at home anywhere.

Favored Environment: Anywhere

Advantages: +2 dice to detection and manipulation spells, +1 die to conjuring Spirits of the Sky

Disadvantages: +2 to all magical target numbers when in direct sunlight. Shamans get distracted and irritable if in one place for more than a week.

Awoba (Leopard)

Characteristics: Awoba possesses great stamina and can achieve enormous speed over short distances. He is aggressive, quick to anger and vicious when cornered. Awoba is reclusive and secretive, a nocturnal creature with superb night vision. He depends on his keen senses rather than on intellect, but may still be easily deceived by appearances.

Favored Environment: Forest and savannah

Advantages: +2 dice for combat and health spells; +2 dice for conjuring nature spirits during hours of darkness

Disadvantages: -1 die for Spell Resistance Tests made against illusion spells. A Leopard shaman must never allow his family to be harmed; he will attack any creature attempting such an action and fight to the death if necessary (he may not make any tests to avoid this responsibility).

Danwane (Dove)

Characteristics: Danwane is a peaceful messenger and mediator. She helps others to the point of martyring herself. She is in tune with her environment, and prides herself on remaining aware in all circumstances.

Favored Environment: Forests and savannah

Advantages: +2 dice for health spells, +1 die for detection spells, +1 die for conjuring Spirits of the Sky

Disadvantages: Dove shamans cannot cast combat spells.

They hate the thought of hurting others and must make a successful Willpower (4) Test to purposely kill a metahuman.

Nau (Crocodile)

Characteristics: Like Anlo (Shark), Nau is a relentless hunter and savage in combat. With no fixed home, he knows all the secrets of the sea.

Favored Environment: On or by the sea and rivers

Advantages: +2 dice for combat spells; +1 die for illusion spells; +2 dice for conjuring sea and river spirits

Disadvantages: If wounded in combat or after killing a target, the shaman must make a Willpower Test against an injury-modified Target Number 3. On 2 or fewer successes, the shaman goes berserk. For a maximum of 3 turns, reduced by the number of successes, the shaman attacks the closest living target, using his most powerful physical or magical weapon.

Onini (Python)

Characteristics: This huge reptile is slow and ponderous. Neither intelligent nor swift, he cannot seize the initiative when events transpire rapidly. But he has enormous strength and recuperative powers, and is merciless once he has gained the upper hand over his enemy. He is peaceful, but unforgiving if provoked. He can also use his singular power of will to dominate others.

Favored Environment: Jungle

Advantages: +2 dice for health and manipulation spells; +2 dice for conjuring jungle spirits

Disadvantages: If engaged in combat or any ongoing activity, the shaman must make a successful Willpower (6) Test to quit.

Osebo (Cheetah)

Characteristics: Like Jaguar, whom she resembles, Osebo is a skilled hunter and warrior. She cares little for subtlety, preferring the most direct route to any goal. A master of many skills, Osebo seems never at a loss, often to the dismay of her enemies. Cheetah shamans rarely specialize in a limited package of skills, preferring to acquire a certain level of competence at a wide variety of tasks.

Favored Environment: Savannah

Advantages: +2 dice for combat spells; +2 dice for conjuring savannah (prairie) spirits

Disadvantages: -1 die for health spells. Cheetah shamans have a minimum natural Reaction of 4. A Cheetah shaman prides herself on her competence and hates to admit she is incapable of any task.

Owoh (Cobra)

Characteristics: Owoh is a skilled and stealthy hunter, hypnotizing her prey to bring them close. She is slow to make choices but will not compromise. She deals on her own terms and does not like being surprised.

Favored Environment: Jungle

Advantages: +2 dice to combat and illusion spells, +1 die for conjuring jungle spirits

Disadvantages: Cobra cannot fight to stun. She will either abstain from fighting or go for the kill. She is slow to react when

startled, and if surprised must take a +1 modifier to all target numbers throughout combat.

Sase (Jackal)

Characteristics: Like his counterpart Rat, Sase is a stealthy thief too selfish to share anything, even with his companions. He is also a reluctant warrior who would rather run than fight. Unlike Rat, Sase is also mischievous and playful and prefers to act unconventionally.

Favored Environment: Savannah

Advantages: +2 dice for detection and illusion spells; +2 dice for conjuring savannah (prairie) spirits

Disadvantages: -1 die for all combat spells

Wurega (Parrot)

Characteristics: Wurega is a colorful, wisecracking show-off. Her plumage is the brightest, her voice the loudest and her magic showiest. She must be the center of attention, and will drop everything to get in the spotlight.

Favored Environment: Jungle

Advantages: +2 dice to illusion spells, +2 dice to conjuring jungle spirits

Disadvantages: Parrot's magic exists to bring applause. Apply a +1 modifier to magical target numbers when the shaman does not have an appreciative audience.

Revised Totems

The following totems represent standard totems called by a local name. Refer to pp. 151-155, **Awakenings**, for more information.

Agona (Crow): Use Raven statistics.

Anlo (Shark): Use Shark statistics.

Gbwegen (Lion): Use Lion statistics.

Gwobeag (Dog): Use Dog statistics.

Kpwire (Mouse): Use Gecko statistics.

Oyoko (Falcon): Use Eagle statistics.

Weme (Deer/Antelope): Use Horse statistics.

WEST AFRICAN CRITTERS

The following creatures are native to West Africa.

Alufye

These Awakened cockroaches are 30 to 40 centimeters long. They live in West African rainforests, under rotting leaves or fallen logs. They eat almost anything, preferring grubs and old fruit. They mate every three months and produce 20-120 BB-sized eggs. Alufye trill (like a pigeon's coo) when threatened, causing a pleasant lethargy to overcome the would-be predator. They are harmless, popular pets.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R
2	3 x 2	1	—	1/4	1	6	3

Powers: Empathy, Enhanced Senses (Smell, Taste)

Anwuma Bavole

Anwuma bavole are Awakened fish-eating bats, similar to North American birdmen. They live in coastal West Africa, where they hunt surface-feeding fish in the Gulf of Guinea. Anwuma bavole carry no diseases that affect metahumans. They sometimes fixate on groups of people, following them for days without eating or sleeping, for no apparent reason. The Nzima people see this as an omen of good luck and actively encourage the creatures by feeding them.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
1	4 x 4	0	—	1/4	1	6	4	1L1

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Low-light Vision), Sonic Projection (High Frequency)

Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Mild)

Asonwu

These animals are similar to the agropelter (a small humanoid metavariant of the rhesus monkey). They are carnivorous and hunt in packs to take down large prey. A few members hamstringing the prey with swift biting attacks; once it is down, up to fifty asonwu mob it. The symptoms of the disease inflicted by this creature's Pestilence power are itching, shaking, madness and eventually brain death.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
2	4 x 3	3	—	3/4	2	6	6	6L

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Improved Hearing and Smell, Low-light Vision), Pestilence

Note: Multiplier for asonwu movement is 4.

Bonzo and Gagon

Bonzo are awakened miniature parrots with a remarkable range of songs and mimicking abilities. Gagon are fat, insectivorous songbirds. Both live in the rainforests of coastal West Africa. They pose no danger to metahumans, and are popular pets.

Ekyelebenle

These Awakened green mambas are poisonous snakes up to 6 meters long, native to the savannahs of sub-Saharan Africa. Ekyelebenle are extremely aggressive and will chase anything dwarf-sized or smaller. They spit poison for defense and hunting, and bite multiple times. Use statistics in parentheses for non-Awakened mambas.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
5 (4)	6 x 2	6 (5)	—	1/5	4 (3)	(6)(6)	6**	6M (6L) biting

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Smell, Thermographic Vision), Immunity to Poisons, Immunity to Pathogens, Magical Resistance, Venom

Note: A snake that inflicts a Light wound or worse has injected venom. Mamba poison, from the mundane or Awakened variant, inflicts 5S damage at 5-, 10- and 20-minute intervals. The snakes can also spit this poison up to five meters. If the spitting ekyelebenle wins an opposed Reaction Test, its opponent is blinded for 2D6 hours divided by the successes rolled on a Body Test

against the poison's Damage Code. If the character achieves no successes on this test, the blinding is permanent.

Enwontzane

Enwontzane are nocturnal, arboreal predators similar to the sasquatch and bandersnatch. They stand almost three meters tall, weigh more than 400 kilograms and do not carry the HMHV virus. Native to the forests of coastal West Africa, they will feed on anything ork-sized or smaller. They hunt and live in family groups of up to ten and have one infant per year.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
8	3 x 4	7	—	2/4	4	(6)	4	8S2, +1 Reach

Powers: Adaptive Coloration

Gomatia

These Awakened chameleons grow to the size of a Doberman, and their magical camouflage makes them even harder to detect than their unAwakened cousins. They have large, rotating eyes, prehensile tails and toes, and a long, sticky tongue that reaches three times the lizard's body length. Variants are found in rainforests all over Africa, Madagascar and India. Gomatia are diurnal ambush-hunters that feed primarily on birds and Awakened insects but will eat anything up to the size of a housecat. They are stupid and will attack something many times that size if it smells like prey (insect spirits, for example). They breed once a year and bear 10–25 live young. Gomatia pose little danger to metahumans, though they may attack infants. They are sold as pets and are becoming a common security paranimal.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
6	3 x 1	6	—	2/6	3	(6)	3**	

Attacks: Tongue: 6L Stun (opposed Strength Test to get something out of its grasp, takes 1 Free action to drag something to its mouth), Bite: 6M.

Powers: Adaptive Coloration, Enhanced Senses (Smell, 360° vision), Immunity to Poisons

Mami Wata

Mami wata are West African mermaids domesticated by Ewe pirates, whose selective breeding has produced a slightly faster and smarter variant. Mami wata grow up to 1.5 meters long.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
4	6 x 4	6	—	3/5	3	6	5	6S

Powers: Enhanced Physical Attributes (Quickness, once per day, for [Essence x 2]D6 turns), Enhanced Senses (Improved Hearing)

Weaknesses: Dietary Requirement (Alcohol)

Sasabonsam

Sasabonsam are West African ghouls, infected with the Krieger-Lalua strain of HMHV. They have extremely long legs and arms and can run on all fours as easily as on two legs.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
7	5 x 5	6	1	4	5	(5)	4	Humanoid

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Smell)

Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Moderate), Reduced Senses (blind or nearly so)

Warek

The warek is a West African leopard shapeshifter, the most common type of shapeshifter found on the continent.

Human

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
5	4 x 5	5	5	3	3	(8)	5	Humanoid

Animal

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
A + 2	(A + 1) x (A + 1)	A + 2	5	3	3	(8)	5	

Attacks: (A + 1)(A)

Note: When shapeshifter is in animal form, apply the animal Attributes, designated A, and add +2D6 Initiative.

Powers: Enhanced Physical Characteristics (animal form), Regeneration

Weaknesses: Allergy (Gold, Severe), Vulnerability (Gold)

UNDERWATER ADVENTURING

If you play a pirate character, sooner or later he'll end up in or under the water. The following rules apply to the various situations characters will face when dealing with the sea. This section covers character actions underwater, including breathing, movement and perception, skills, combat and magic, and also offers guidelines for conducting adventures underwater. So check your tanks and batten down the hatches—it's time to take a dive off the deep end.

SWIMMING, TREADING WATER AND FLOATING

When characters are in water over their heads, they must swim, tread water or float in order to keep from drowning. Swimming means propelling your body through the water. Treading water means moving your limbs as necessary to keep your head above water, without trying to move to any specific location. Floating means relaxing and holding your breath so that the water propels you.

Characters may combine swimming, floating and treading water as necessary to stay afloat.

SWIMMING

Swimming is a Concentration of the Athletics Skill and requires a Complex Action. Characters swim at one-fifth their normal Running rate (multiply by .2), calculated after making any Athletics Tests to increase the distance that the character can travel (see p. 83, **SRII**). A character wearing swimming fins swims at half the normal walking or running rate. Shapeshifter characters in animal form use the rules given above to calculate the swimming multiplier, except for seal shapeshifters (see pp. 233–34, **SRII**).

These rules also apply to vertical movement through water. Characters diving into the water may add to the distance they can

travel a number of meters equal to the height from which they dove minus 1 (to a minimum of 1 meter).

Swimming characters sustain Fatigue damage unless they rest by floating. To calculate this damage, use the fatigue rules on page 91 of the **Shadowrun Companion**.

TREADING WATER

Treading water requires a character to make periodic Treading Water Tests against a Base Target Number 2, modified by applicable conditions listed on the Treading Water Modifications Table.

Each character must make a Treading Water Test when he or she initially falls into water, and once every (Strength) minutes afterward. A swimmer treading water gets tired, resisting Light Stun damage with his or her Body at a Power equal to the cumulative number of tests. As long as the character is in the water, these tests add up even if the character spends time floating.

A character who is treading water using a survival float makes tests and resists damage every 15 minutes, regardless of the character's Strength. In the case of rough seas, the gamemaster may reduce this time.

If a character fails a Treading Water Test, he or she begins to drown but can try to resume treading water or swimming after making a Body (8) Test to resist Light Stun damage. If this test is successful, the character can attempt to swim, tread water or float again. However, he continues to suffer from whatever fatigue and damage he took previously.

If the character fails the test and takes damage, he or she begins to use up his or her last 45 seconds of air. The character cannot attempt to tread water, float or swim until he or she makes a successful Damage Resistance Test or someone rescues the character.

FLOATING

Floating depends partly on natural buoyancy. In general, excluding cyberware or bioware from consideration, elves tend to be buoyant in water and can float on their own without external support (such as a life jacket). Orks and trolls have little buoyancy and usually sink without some form of external support. Dwarfs and humans may be buoyant or not, depending on their physical condition (highly muscular folks will tend to sink; fat people will float).

To float, a character makes a Body (4) Test using the appropriate modifiers from the Treading Water Modifications Table. If the test is successful, the character can float for [Body x success- es] Combat Turns. If the test is unsuccessful, the character must tread water or swim, or else he begins to drown.

DIVING IN THE SIXTH WORLD

The overwhelming majority of metahumanity breathes air (there are exceptions, but the merrow population in the shad-

TREADING WATER MODIFICATIONS TABLE

Character has:	Target Number
Cyberlimbs or torso	+1 per part replaced
Aluminum/Titanium bone lacing	+2
Waterlogged clothing	+1
Dead weight (clothes and armor)	+1 per 2 kilos
Metatype	
Seal shapeshifters	-2
Elves	-1
Dwarfs and humans	0
Orks and trolls	+1
Physical Condition	
Obese	-2
Physically fit	0
Out of shape	+1
Highly developed muscles or exceptionally low body fat	+1
Supported by a mildly buoyant object (plank of wood)	-1
Supported by a very buoyant object (life jacket)	-2
Wounded	Damage Modifiers apply
Rough seas (crashing waves)	+2 to +4

owrunning community is so small as to be insignificant) and must rely on gaseous oxygen to survive. Additionally, the fluid properties of water differ substantially from the properties of air, which means that any would-be diver must adapt to a wholly different environment and circumstances.

Over the past sixty years, magic and technology have allowed humans and metahumans the opportunity to explore deeper into the underwater world for longer amounts of time. Of the two, though magic has had some beneficial effect, technological advancements primarily allow air-breathers to survive and even prosper underwater.

Because of the wide array of technology available, underwater diving falls into one of three categories, based primarily on depth: shallow-water diving, scuba diving and deep-water diving.

SHALLOW WATER DIVING

Shallow-water diving covers all dives that descend no further than ten meters (thirty feet). Most recreational and sport diving falls into this category, since most of the undersea life that attracts sport divers resides above this depth.

The standard system for shallow-water dives is the oxygen extraction system (OXSYS), a lightweight artificial gill that extracts oxygen dissolved in the water. Fitting over the mouth, the OXSYS system allows the user to spend an indefinite amount of time in the water without the risk of decompression sickness and does not require specialized training.

SCUBA DIVING

Despite numerous other technological advancements, SCUBA (Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus) remains the predominant underwater system for some sport and most commercial divers. Requiring some specialized training, the scuba system is the norm for dives up to 300 meters (984 feet), though safety precau-

tions limit recreational diving to 33 meters (100 feet). For purposes of these diving rules, dives deeper than 80 meters are considered deep-water dives, regardless of the system used when making them (see **Deep Water Diving**, below).

The overall mechanics of scuba systems have remained unchanged for the past century. Scuba compresses air at high pressures (typically up to 4,000 psi) in a metal tank and slowly dispenses air at a reduced pressure (approximately 15 psi at sea level) to a diver on demand (in other words, whenever the diver breathes in normally).

DEEP WATER DIVING

Deep-water diving (below 80 meters) is a high-risk activity that requires extensive training in specialized systems. Because of the amount of training necessary (which is relatively expensive), primarily commercial divers practice deep-water diving techniques.

To cope with the high ambient pressure of the surrounding environment, deep-water divers use one of two systems: JIM suits and LBA (Liquid Breathing Apparatus) systems.

JIM suits consist of hardened, self-contained exoskeletons that maintain air at reduced pressure (one or two times normal atmospheric pressure). With the advent of ASIST technology in the 2020s, most JIM suits are wired for rigger operation.

The LBA system uses apparatus similar to scuba gear, except that the tank contains a "light" super-oxygenated liquid. The liquid floods the user's lungs, and the high concentration of dissolved, oxygenated gas makes it easy for the alveoli to draw it out of suspension. The system protects against the extreme pressure of the outside environment by compensating for its effect on the air cavities inside the body (the root cause of most diving hazards). The user needs an accommodation period prior to each dive to overcome the gag reflex and adapt to the liquid medium.

DIVING TIME

The most critical aspect of underwater diving is the amount of time spent underwater. Not only are lungs incapable of extracting dissolved oxygen from water, but water creates a high-pressure environment that has adverse effects on the metahuman body. Both factors limit the amount of time that characters can safely spend underwater.

Underwater divers breathe gaseous air with varying mixtures of oxygen, nitrogen, helium and other gases. Because of the near-infinite number of possible mixtures a diver can breathe, it is pointless for a gamemaster to track accurately how much time each mixture would allow a character to spend underwater and how deep it would allow him to dive. Rather than refer to several pages of diving tables applicable to different gas mixtures, the gamemaster may find it easier to use the system below to determine safe diving times.

Prior to making an underwater dive, characters will declare how long they intend to dive and the deepest depth (below sea level) they intend to reach. This declaration is not optional; calculating diving time is preparation that every professional diver

(which players are supposed to be roleplaying) makes before entering the water. The only time characters should calculate diving time *after* entering the water is in an emergency, when abandoning a scuttled submarine or a breached underwater habitat.

The Safe Diving Time Table below lists a general range of safe diving times for a given span of depths. After declaring an intended depth and time, the player makes a Diving Test against the appropriate target number. The player then counts the number of successes and uses that number to determine the safe diving time.

SAFE DIVING TIME TABLE

Depth	Target Number	Safe Diving Time	Maximum Safe Diving Time
0–10 m	3	240 minutes + 40 minutes/success	480 minutes
11–30 m	5	20 minutes + 20 minutes/success	150 minutes
31–50 m	6	5 minutes + 15 minutes/success	90 minutes
51–150 m	8	10 minutes/success	60 minutes
151–300 m	10	5 minutes/success	30 minutes

ASCENT, DESCENT AND BUOYANCY

When diving underwater, the aim is neutral buoyancy (that is, neither floating nor sinking). Achieving this state can be difficult, not only because of racial limitations and various augmentations, but also because the overall buoyancy of a diver, including equipment, tends to change with depth.

To overcome the buoyancy problem, divers use a buoyancy compensator, an inflatable vest connected to the scuba tank. Combined with a weight belt, a buoyancy compensator allows the wearer to fine-tune his overall buoyancy until neutral buoyancy is achieved.

Without a buoyancy compensator, characters must spend extra effort to ascend, descend or maintain a constant depth. Reduce the character's Running multiplier by 0.5 to reflect effort wasted compensating for the effects of buoyancy. Additionally, subtract two dice from the character's available Combat Pool to reflect strength spent fighting buoyancy.

Hazards of Ascent and Descent

The deeper a character dives, the greater the ambient pressure around him. As long as a character ascends or descends no faster than 1 meter per Combat Turn, pressure differences pose no threat. Normally, the body's air cavities are flexible enough to accommodate significant pressure changes; however, if a character ascends or descends too rapidly, the body cannot adapt quickly enough, and damage occurs. The primary hazards of pressure imbalance are ear squeeze and air embolism.

Ear Squeeze: Ear squeeze occurs whenever the character descends or ascends too quickly. In this case, the imbalance between the outside water pressure and the inside air pressure creates an uncomfortable swelling of the eardrum. If the swelling is great enough, the eardrum ruptures and cold water rushes against the inner ear. This afflicts the character with feelings of vertigo.

In game terms, if a character ascends or descends faster than 1 meter per Combat Turn, the player makes a Body (4) Test. Failure indicates that the character's eardrum has ruptured and vertigo has set in. The character becomes disoriented and suffers a +4 modifier to all target numbers for the next minute (20 turns). After a minute, the character recovers; however, he will suffer a +4 modifier to all hearing-related Perception Tests for 24 hours.

Air Embolism: Air embolism occurs more rarely but is far more dangerous. If a character ascends too quickly, the lungs expand too fast and create a tear in the chest cavity. An air bubble escapes into the blood stream and rises upward through the carotid artery into the brain, where it becomes trapped in one of the capillaries and blocks the flow of blood to part of the brain. The blockage causes an embolism.

In game terms, an air embolism occurs only if the character rolls all 1s when making a Body Test for ascending too quickly (see **Ear Squeeze**, above). Should this occur, the character must immediately resist 8D Physical damage every hour upon surfacing until placed inside a decompression chamber. If at any time the character takes Deadly Physical damage and survives, make a Body (6) Test. Failure to achieve at least 1 success permanently costs the character 1 point of Intelligence from oxygen starvation.

MOVEMENT

Characters attempting to swim underwater unaided (i.e., without fins) "walk" at a rate of 1 meter per Combat Turn and "run" at a pace equal to one-fifth their normal Running speed. Smart characters who swim with the aid of fins "walk" at their normal rate (equal to the character's Quickness Rating in meters per turn) and "run" a number of meters equal to half their normal Running speed.

DIVING HAZARDS

Even in the Sixth World, the underwater environment is generally dangerous to metahumanity. Special protection is required and special precautions must be observed to avoid potentially fatal effects.

If characters violate their safe diving time or go deeper than their planned depth (whether or not they are aware of doing either), they may fall victim to one of five possible diving hazards, based on the Diving Hazards Table below. The effects of each hazard on the character are described in the table key.

A character should only suffer one possible hazard at any given depth (though different characters may suffer from different hazards).

The safe diving time does not apply when a character is using LBA, wearing a JIM suit, riding in a submarine or is inside an underwater facility. In the latter three cases, the outer hull resists the water pressure and surrounds the character with atmospheric pressure, similar to that on the surface.

DIVING HAZARDS TABLE KEY

Oxygen Toxicity

Though the body needs oxygen in order to function, oxygen in excessively high concentrations or high pressures is toxic. Oxygen toxicity occurs whenever the character breathes pure

DIVING HAZARDS TABLE	
Depth (in meters)	Possible Hazards
0-10	Oxygen Toxicity
11-50	Oxygen Toxicity, Decompression Sickness, Nitrogen Narcosis
51-150	Oxygen Toxicity, Decompression Sickness, Nitrogen Narcosis, Helium Chills
151-300	Oxygen Toxicity, Decompression Sickness, Nitrogen Narcosis, Helium Chills, HPNS

oxygen at shallow depths or when the character breathes an air mixture too rich in oxygen at excessive depths. Characters breathing pure oxygen cannot dive below seven meters without risking oxygen toxicity.

If a character suffers from oxygen toxicity, he takes 1 point of Physical Damage each minute until he ascends above the safe depth (1D6 + 4). Additionally, he suffers a +4 modifier to all target numbers because of the following additional symptoms: muscle twitching, blurred vision, nausea and breathing difficulties. These symptoms will last until the character is treated for oxygen toxicity.

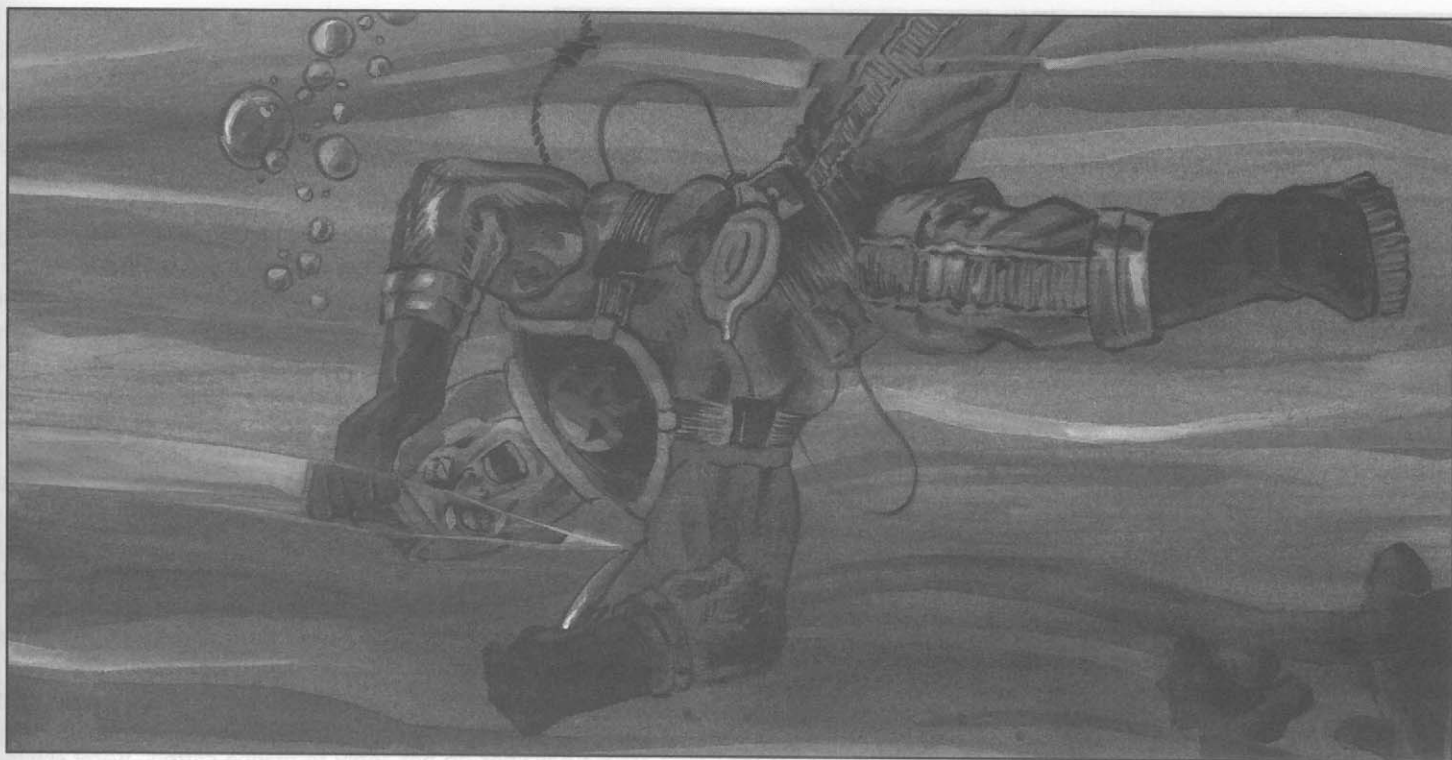
Decompression Sickness

Decompression sickness (also known as DCS or "the bends") occurs whenever the character spends excessive time at deep depths while breathing compressed air containing nitrogen. In simple terms, the body dissolves some of the nitrogen gas it inhales into solution within the body. The deeper a character dives, the greater the ambient pressure around him. At greater pressures, the body can dissolve more gas into its mass.

When the diver begins to ascend, pressure decreases and the nitrogen gas dissolved in the body condenses. If the diver ascends too quickly or absorbs too much dissolved gas, the gas is trapped in bubbles in the bloodstream, which has an adverse effect on the character's central nervous system. The bends can be fatal unless the character is put in a decompression chamber, in which the pressure can be equalized slowly enough for the character to rid himself safely of dissolved nitrogen.

The effects of decompression sickness do not set in until the diver has completed his dive and surfaced. Upon surfacing, the character takes one box of Physical Damage per hour until placed inside a decompression chamber. Characters suffering from the bends are virtually incapacitated from the intense pain; add a +4 modifier to all of the character's target numbers (plus modifiers for any wounds the character may have taken).

If the character exceeds his or her safe diving time, he or she can avoid DCS by making a decompression stop at 3 meters and loitering for an amount of time equal to a quarter of the time that the character was in the water. To find the decompression time, multiply the total time underwater by .25. For example, if a character was diving for an hour, he would need to wait 15 minutes at approximately 3 meters in order to decompress (60 minutes x .25



= 15 minutes). This allows the body to eliminate excess dissolved nitrogen before making the final ascent.

Nitrogen Narcosis

Nitrogen narcosis, also called “rapture of the deep,” results from breathing compressed nitrogen gas at low depths. In layman’s terms, as the partial air pressure of nitrogen increases, it has an intoxicating effect on the body similar to alcohol.

In game terms, if a character suffers from nitrogen narcosis, the player must make a Body (6) Test every minute. If any of these tests fail, the character becomes intoxicated. While intoxicated, the character’s judgment is impaired, and he or she will behave in a reckless and irrational manner. To reflect this, all target numbers for tests made by the character increase by +2.

Characters can eliminate the effects of narcosis simply by ascending 16 meters or more. Intoxicated characters must make a Willpower (6) Test to do this themselves (this number takes the +2 modifier into account). Once the character ascends far enough, he will shake off the narcosis in (10 – Body) Combat Turns.

Helium Chills

Of all the gases involved in diving, helium has the highest thermal conductivity; consequently, helium inhaled through the lungs absorbs even more body heat than do nitrogen and oxygen. This becomes a problem for divers because the deeper one dives, the more body heat is lost through the respiratory tract, leading to hypothermia over a prolonged dive. The use of helium for deep dives exacerbates this problem.

Whenever a diver suffers from helium chills, the player must make a Body (8) Test every minute. Failure indicates that the diver is suffering from hypothermia; he takes one box of Physical dam-

age and gains an additional +1 modifier to all tests due to the numbing effects of the cold.

High Pressure Nervous Syndrome (HPNS)

High pressure nervous syndrome (HPNS) occurs whenever a diver spends an excessive amount of time at depths greater than 200 meters. Caused by the ambient water pressure around the diver, HPNS induces muscular tremors and shaking in the voluntary muscles. Theoretically, HPNS can lead to convulsions and possibly death, though no diver has remained at such a low depth long enough to find out (those who do usually succumb to other hazards first—drowning, hypothermia or oxygen toxicity).

If a diver succumbs to HPNS, the player must make a Body (8) Test every five minutes. Failure indicates that the diver has partially succumbed to HPNS; add a +1 modifier to all subsequent tests the character makes. Modifiers are cumulative and affect all successive tests, including those made for other diving hazards.

PERCEPTIONS UNDER WATER

One factor that adds to the mystique of diving is that, to the air-breather, the underwater world represents a radically different environment. Water profoundly alters the properties of light and sound, thereby changing the way a diver sees and hears things.

VISION

The refractive properties of water actually improve normal, unaided vision slightly. Objects underwater appear approximately 25 percent larger and 25 percent closer than normal.

Water also absorbs light in gradual color stages. Shades of red disappear at four meters depth, oranges and yellows at ten, and greens and blues at twenty meters. This generally means

UNDERWATER VISION MODIFIERS TABLE

Depth (in meters)	Normal Vision	Low-Light	Thermographic
Subsurface (less than 4)	+1	0	+2
Shallow (4–15)	+2	+1	+4
Deep (15+)	+4	+2	+5
Murky waters	+4	+4	+2

that the deeper a character dives, the murkier the ambient light becomes and colors drain away to a dull gray. Low-light vision corrects this effect somewhat; thermographic vision, however, is confounded by it, as well as by the shifting thermal currents in water.

The Underwater Vision Modifiers Table lists modifiers for visual Perception Tests, based on the depth, type of water and type of vision used.

HEARING

Sound travels approximately four times faster underwater than in air. Though this aids hearing by making sounds seem louder, it also poses problems, because the sound travels too quickly for the brain to discern the time differential between the sound's arrival at the left and right ears. Consequently, determining the location of a sound source is virtually impossible.

In game terms, characters receive a -1 modifier to Perception Tests for detecting sounds. However, locating a sound source by sound alone is impossible without the aid of sonar equipment.

COMBAT

Characters on or in the water can engage in three types of combat: firing a weapon from the surface to a surface target, firing into the water and fighting in the water. Each has its own advantages and drawbacks.

SURFACE TO SURFACE COMBAT

If a character is in the water (but not under it) or on a floating platform, the waves made by the sea automatically add a target-number modifier ranging from +2 to +6, depending on the situation. A person treading in calm waters with his head and one arm above the surface may only suffer a +2 modifier, while someone standing on a platform after a motorboat has caught the platform in its wake may get the +6 modifier. The gamemaster can assess each situation as it arises and modify the target number for combat-related tests accordingly.

SURFACE TO UNDERWATER COMBAT

Shooting into the water is difficult. Each meter of water through which a projectile is fired reduces the Power Level of the weapon by 1. Once the Power Level is down to 2, each additional two meters of water reduces the Wound Category of any wound inflicted by the shot by 1 until the attack is harmless.

Water also refracts light, adding +2 to the target number of any test made when aiming from the air to a submerged target (for example, shooting a diver). Water is also slower to heat than

air, making thermographics less useful depending on the water's clarity. Use the standard Visibility Modifiers on page 89, **SR11**, when a character is firing into the water, but treat thermal and low-light vision as normal vision. Ultrasound sights still function.

UNDERWATER COMBAT

Regular weapons follow the restrictions for surface-to-underwater combat, except for weapons specially designed for underwater use, such as the speargun or the Colt water carbine (see p. 171).

Melee Combat

Melee combat is exceedingly difficult underwater. The greater viscosity of water particularly impedes hand-to-hand combat. To reflect this, increase target numbers for Armed and Unarmed Combat Tests by +2 automatically, then add another +2 if the character does not have a swim mask or cybereyes. Also apply appropriate modifiers for the depth and murkiness of the water (see the Underwater Vision Modifiers Table). Finally, subtract 1 from the character's Strength for the purposes of damage, except for choke holds and other attacks that use crushing strength instead of swinging or thrusting.

These penalties do not apply to marine critters, water spirits or characters using the Underwater Concentration of the Armed or Unarmed Combat Skill, except that characters with the Underwater Concentration still suffer the -1 penalty to Strength.

Explosions

Water conducts explosive shock far more efficiently than air does. Whenever a surface-designed explosive detonates underwater, increase the damage level (L, M, S or D) by one level. In vehicle combat, treat all explosions as armor-piercing; this means they do not reduce damage levels against vehicles per standard vehicle combat rules, and only half the vehicle's Armor Rating is used to reduce the Power of the attack.

MAGIC UNDERWATER

Being underwater does not affect most magic use. Though line of sight can sometimes pose difficulties (see **Vision**, p. 159), the watery medium does not impede most spells. Some magicians, however, may have difficulty fulfilling geasa or using Centering Skills underwater, as breathing rigs or other equipment may prevent the magician from speaking or moving freely.

SORCERY

Some spells may be limited or altered underwater. The following information describes alterations the underwater environment makes to different types of spells.

Combat Spells

Most combat spells are unaffected, except by line of sight considerations. Combat spells with elemental side effects, however, may not function or may work differently.

Blast and Fire combat spells don't work underwater. Water extinguishes flames from a Fire spell almost instantaneously; the air from a Blast spell coalesces into large bubbles that float harmlessly to the surface. If cast, these spells fail automatically, but the caster must still resist Drain.

Water impedes or dissipates Earth, Ice and Acid elemental effects, and targets gain a -1 modifier to the target number on their Spell Resistance Tests. Water spells work normally.

Lightning combat spells are affected by water's greater electrical conductivity. Normal lightning spells become area-effect spells, with a base radius in meters equal to the spell's Force. Area spells double their radius of effect. A magician character may withhold dice from his or her Magic Pool in order to contain spell energies and reduce the radius of effect normally (see p. 80, **SRII**).

Detection Spells

Water does not impede detection spells, and in fact may compensate for poor visual conditions (though not for spellcasting purposes).

Health Spells

Health spells generally work normally underwater. The Oxygenate spell (p. 129, **Grimoire II**) is a particularly valuable spell on underwater trips; characters on whom it is cast are immune to all underwater health hazards except for HPNS (which is caused by ambient water pressure rather than gas effects).

Illusion Spells

Casters of illusion spells must consider the effects of water when attempting to make an illusion convincing; for example, a human appearing at an extreme depth without protective gear is not very believable. The greater difficulty of perception underwater, however, can make illusions more difficult to detect.

Mana-based illusion spells are not subject to the refractive distortion caused by water; illusory objects created by these spells appear at their normal distance and size. Physical illusion spells, on the other hand, are affected by refractive distortion and appear larger and closer than the caster intended (see **Vision**, p. 159).

Manipulation Spells

As with combat spells, damaging manipulations may not function or may work differently underwater. Otherwise, the underwater environment does not affect manipulation spells.

CONJURING

The physical and logistical difficulties of getting all the necessary materials and performing a conjuring ritual while surrounded by ocean makes conjuring elementals virtually impossible underwater, unless done within an underwater habitat. Both elementals and nature spirits can appear normally in the astral space of an underwater area. However, some spirits may not be able to manifest physically underwater.

Earth and water elementals can be conjured in underwater habitats, if the proper materials are available in mass quantities. Air elementals cannot be conjured in such enclosed spaces, however, and open fires for conjuring fire elementals generally do not exist in such closed environments.

Elementals

If a magician has conjured elementals on dry land or in a habitat and forces them to go underwater, the following limitations apply.

Air and fire elementals cannot manifest underwater. They may appear and act in astral space, but they cannot carry out any physical services. Earth and water elementals may manifest and act normally, but earth elementals suffer the same penalties to combat as characters. Water elementals are virtually invisible underwater even in Manifest form. Spotting a manifested water elemental underwater requires a successful Perception Test against a Target Number of 8 plus the elemental's Force.

Nature Spirits

Underwater areas are normally the domain of Sea, Lake or River Spirits. As with water elementals, to see a Spirit of the Waters when manifested underwater requires a successful Perception Test against a Target Number of 11 plus the spirit's Force. Additionally, Spirits of the Waters can use their Guard power to protect characters from all underwater health hazards (including HPNS).

Inhabited undersea research stations and mining colonies are the domains of Hearth Spirits. Sea-going ships and submarines, where the crew eats, sleeps and lives together for extended periods of time, are the domain of Spirits of Man.

Ruined underwater areas like waste dumps, sewage outlets or petrochemical and nuclear fission spills are considered toxic domains (see p. 80, **Grimoire II**).

ASTRAL SPACE

Water offers no impediment or danger to astral characters or beings, provided that the magician has sufficient amounts of air for his or her meat body and does not exceed the safe diving time. The teeming clouds of micro- and macrobiological life make astral space underwater appear very bright, and so characters assensing astrally underwater do not suffer any of the usual visual distortions or Perception Modifiers (see **Vision**, p. 159). Shipwrecks and other places where large numbers of lives have been lost frequently have a background count (see p. 63, **Grimoire II**).

All astral activities occur normally underwater as they do on land. Characters attempting to astrally project while in the water must limit their astral movement to the standard Astral Quickness x 4 in open-sea astral regions. Coral reef regions reduce astral movement to Astral Quickness x 2. If the gamemaster determines an area to be sufficiently full of life, astral movement may be reduced to Astral Quickness with no modifier.

The level of life in water hampers astral sight and targeting, adding a +2 modifier to all target numbers for the average sea surface, +4 near a coral reef, and as much as +8 if sea life is overabundant. Currently, FAB (fat bacteria) cannot survive in either fresh or salt water. However, it will probably be only a matter of time before genengineers develop water-inhabiting FAB algae or FAB plankton (though practical deployment of such security measures would likely be tricky).

DAMAGE AND DEATH IN THE SEA

The sea may be full of life, but those who live on or near it know that it is also a deadly environment in which metahumans can die in some unique ways, as described below.

DROWNING

Under combat conditions, a normal character can hold his breath for 45 seconds (15 Combat Turns). After that time expires, the character takes 1 box of Stun damage in each phase of each Combat Turn in which he has an action. No test may be made to resist this damage. Once all the boxes are filled, the character passes out, and the lungs will attempt to breathe again. If the character is still underwater, he or she takes 1 box of Physical damage in each phase of each Combat Turn in which he has an action. When the damage exceeds the Damage Overflow Limit, the character dies.

Regenerating and Drowning

Regenerating characters do not heal drowning or fatigue damage until they are removed from the circumstances causing the damage (given air, a flushed system or a few minutes to rest). If such a character takes Overflow Physical damage, he or she dies per the rules on page 38 of the **Shadowrun Companion**.

EXPLODING SCUBA TANKS

If punctured with great force, a highly pressurized tank such as a scuba tank will explode. Treat a normal scuba tank as having a Body and an Armor of 4 each. A weapon with a Power Level of 6 or higher that causes a Serious "wound" to the tank with a single shot will rupture it (ignore lesser blows). The explosion causes 8D damage, resisted by the tank's Body. In addition, the damage is reduced by the tank's Armor and the Power is reduced by -1 per meter of water through which the projectile must travel. No Combat Pool dice may be used to resist this damage.

KEEL-HAULING AND DRAGGING

"Keel-hauling" is tying someone to a rope and dragging them under a ship so that they scrape against barnacles and cannot breathe. A character subjected to this punishment must resist 4D and 4D Stun damage using only his or her Body. The character may not use Combat Pool dice to resist damage.

If a sadistic captain and crew decide to destroy a character by dragging him along behind a moving vessel, the character suffers the following damage, depending on the surrounding environment:

Dragged through water only	(Speed ÷ 5)M Stun
Dragged over a sandbar	(Speed ÷ 5)M
Dragged over a reef	(Speed ÷ 4)S

The character must resist this damage during every phase in which the ship is traveling forward. This means damage is assessed in the rigger's, captain's or helmsman's combat phase. Yes, this means that a keelhailed character may take damage multiple times in a single Combat Turn. The gamemaster determines how many Damage Resistance Tests the character being dragged may make.

Similar damage may be inflicted if a character is hanging on to something while drifting in the water during a storm. The gamemaster should assess the damage as often as the severity of the storm warrants.

SHIP RULES

This section provides rules for large, seafaring ships capable of long-range travel across the world's major seas and oceans, as well as adapting the basic vehicle combat and other applicable rigger rules given in **Rigger 2** for water combat. (For information on smaller boats that pirate characters can use, see **Rigger 2**.) Ship Rules describe the use of SONAR, missile and torpedo attacks and provide additional rules for submarines and underwater vehicle operations.

SHIP ATTRIBUTES

In the **Shadowrun** game system, a ship is defined as any waterborne vessel with an overall length greater than 150 feet (50 meters) and displacement (the volume of water displaced by the floating vessel) greater than 100 tonnes (100 metric tons or 100,000 kilograms). Anything smaller than that, either in length or tonnage, is classified as a boat. In this section, wherever a rule refers to a vessel, it means the rule applies to both ships and boats.

This definition holds true for surface vessels and submarines (though by naval tradition, submarines are always referred to as boats). An underwater "boat," as defined in **Shadowrun**, is called a minisub. The watercraft described in **Rigger 2** are considered boats by the standard **Shadowrun** definition.

Ships, which can cross major seas or oceans, can be very large vessels. A twentieth-century *Nimitz*-class aircraft carrier, for example, which is more than 1,000 feet long by 130 feet wide and has a displacement of more than 95,000 tons, can hold a small village inside its hull.

Because of the sheer size ships can reach, applying standard **Shadowrun** vehicle rules to them can become somewhat unwieldy. For example, standard vehicle rules would give the *Nimitz*-class carrier a Body Rating of well over 100. Rolling a hundred dice for a Damage Resistance Test against an anti-shiping missile (which could conceivably have a Power of 50 or greater), while impressive, is not practical for a **Shadowrun** game.

To accommodate this size factor, ships have Ship Ratings and Vehicle Attributes that are different from standard Vehicle Attributes, as listed on pages 22-25 of **Rigger 2**. New Ship Ratings and modified existing Vehicle Attributes are listed on pp. 162-63.

SPEED AND CAVITATION RATINGS

In maritime circles, sailors measure speed in terms of knots, or nautical miles per hour. One nautical mile is equal to 6,076 feet, 1.15 statute (land) miles, or 1.85 kilometers. So one knot is equal to approximately 1.15 miles per hour or 1.85 kilometers per hour. To calculate a ship's speed in knots, multiply the Speed Rating times 1.54.

In addition to the standard Speed Rating, ships possess a second rating called the Cavitation Threshold. Cavitation results from ships moving at high speeds, which creates bubbling off the tips

of the propellers. If a ship moves faster than its Cavitation Threshold, it creates enough cavitation noise to reduce its Sonar Signature (see **Sensors and Sonar**, p. 168), making the ship easier to detect by sonar and more vulnerable to torpedo attacks. For more information on cavitation, see **Cavitation**, p. 169.

In a ship's statistics, the Cavitation Threshold appears following the normal Speed Rating and enclosed in parentheses. Because of a boat's small size and the insignificant water agitation caused by its smaller engine, boats do not have Cavitation Thresholds.

HULL RATING

Instead of the standard Body Rating, ships have a Hull Rating that represents the vehicle's size, weight and resistance to damage. The Hull Rating functions exactly like the Body Rating, except that it works on a much larger scale. The Hull Rating Table lists various Hull Ratings and corresponding ship tonnage ranges.

HULL RATING TABLE

Hull Rating	Ship Tonnage (in tonnes)
1	100–200
2	201–500
3	501–1,000
4	1,001–5,000
5	5,001–10,000
6	10,001–25,000
7	25,000–50,000
8	50,001–100,000
9	100,001–250,000
10+	More than 250,000

BULWARK RATING

The Bulwark Rating is the ship's equivalent of the standard Armor Rating and functions in the same way during ship combat as the Armor Rating does in standard vehicle combat. To convert Bulwark and Hull Ratings into standard Armor or Barrier Ratings, see **Ramming**, pp. 164–65.

SIGNATURE RATING

A ship's Signature Rating consists of two numbers. The first number indicates a ship's normal Signature Rating, used by radar, thermographic imaging and other standard vehicle sensors. The second number indicates its Sonar Signature, which reflects its vulnerability to detection and targeting by sonar systems. For more information on Sonar Signature, see **Sensors and Sonar**, p. 168.

SONAR RATING

The Sonar Rating reflects the capability and sophistication of a ship's sonar systems, as well as the waveform analysis systems that identify sonar contacts. For more information on sonar, see **Sensors and Sonar**.

DEPTH RATING

The Depth Rating applies to submarines, minisubs and all other underwater vessels, both boats and ships. The Depth Rating indicates the maximum depth (in meters) to which the vessel can safely dive. If a vessel dives further than its Depth Rating, it sustains damage from the crushing water pressure. For more information, see **Exceeding Depth Limits**, p. 168.

ACCOMMODATION RATING

The Accommodation Rating replaces the Seating Rating for standard vehicles. Accommodation indicates the maximum number of people (crew and passengers) for whom a ship can provide living amenities.

LOAD RATING

The Load Rating works for ships just as it does for vehicles, as described on page 24 of **Rigger 2**; it indicates the maximum amount of weight a ship can carry in cargo, ship modifications and so on. Rules for using the Load Rating also remain the same. However, in maritime circles, particularly around the merchant marine, weights are commonly expressed in terms of metric tons (or tonnes). One tonne is equal to one thousand kilograms.

SHIP SENSORS AND FLUX RATING

A ship's engines can provide a considerable amount of electrical power to boost the signals of the ship's electronic devices, increasing their transmission or scanning ranges and boosting their resistance to electronic warfare. This boost of electromagnetic power is reflected in the Flux Rating (see p. 30, **Rigger 2**, for more information on Flux Ratings). Ship electronic devices, such as sensors, ECM, ECCM, communication systems and so on can increase their Flux Rating by the ship's Hull Rating times 5.

There is, however, an upper limit to the range boost for surface-scanning electronic systems because the curvature of the earth acts as a natural barrier. If using electronic systems to scan for, jam or communicate with other surface contacts, the maximum range is 35 kilometers. This distance is often referred to as the horizon line.

This range limitation does not apply to ship electronic devices interacting with aircraft (such as air search radar), nor does it apply to aircraft aloft. A common naval tactic is to launch aircraft and send them to the horizon line to act as a communications relay and forward sensors.

SHIP OPERATIONS

Because of their size and purpose, ships operate in a significantly different manner than standard vehicles. This section covers rules for operating a ship other than in combat.

CREWS

Ships are big, complicated pieces of machinery that cannot be operated by one person, even if the ship is adapted for rigger operation. Though robotics, automated machinery and computer-integrated self-maintenance have significantly diminished the crewing requirements, it still takes more than one person to keep a ship running smoothly. A ship requires a crew to maintain it, repair it, manage its multiple functions and keep it sailing without interruption from breakdowns. Vehicle crewmen fall into one of four categories, based on function: helm, gunnery, comms and engineering.

Helm

Helm (also known in naval terminology as "the conn") is concerned with piloting, maneuvering and navigating a ship. With advances in autonavigation technologies such as GPS and SINS (Ship Inertial Navigational Systems), this function is generally performed by one person, called the pilot, or by a ship's autonav sys-

tem. The pilot makes all Driving Tests where called for in vehicle operations or vehicle combat, including the Driver Points open test for the Maneuver Score (p. 42, **Rigger 2**).

Gunnery

Gunnery crews man and operate any weapon systems the ship possesses. Each weapon system requires at least one operator to function (more, if specified for the weapon). However, weapon systems on a ship can also operate under the structure of a rigger network known as the naval weapons control network, with each separate weapon (gun turrets, air attack missiles, surface attack missiles, torpedoes and so on.) counting as a drone in the network. For more information, see **Ship Weapon Systems**, p. 165.

Comms

Comms are responsible for operating sensor, sonar, communications and electronic warfare systems. On non-rigged ships, a separate portion of the crew is responsible for monitoring electronic systems, with one operator dedicated to one type of system (communications, sensors, ECM/ECCM and so on). However, if a ship is adapted for rigger operation, the ship's pilot may also operate all electronic systems from the vehicle rig. An autonav system cannot operate ship electronic systems.

Engineering

Engineering crews maintain the ship, fix any breakdowns and ensure that the ship runs correctly. A ship requires a minimum number of engineering crew members equal to its Hull Rating plus 1.

If a ship does not have this minimum engineering crew, it accumulates Stress and risks breaking down in mid-journey. For every person short on a ship's engineering crew, the ship accumulates 1 point of Stress each day it is at sea. For example, a ship at sea for 3 days with its engineering crew one person short gains 3 points of Stress. Likewise, a ship at sea for 2 days with its engineering crew two people short gains 4 points of Stress.

TERRAIN

Terrain types are not the same for ships as they are for boats. Because ships are larger, they require more turning room. Additionally, ships have a deeper beam and float lower in water, so they cannot enter shallow water where boats can normally go easily. Terrain types for boats and ships are listed on the Boat and Ship Terrain Table below.

The conditions described in the table assume the weather is fair, with light or no precipitation and light winds (less than 25 mph). Marginal weather conditions (steady rain, thunder showers or moderate winds greater than 25 mph) reduce the terrain category by one (Open to Normal, Normal to Restricted, Restricted to Tight). Severe weather conditions (severe thunderstorms or high winds short of gale force) reduce the terrain category by two. Major storms, such as gales, tropical storms and hurricanes, reduce *all* terrain to Tight.

SHIP COMBAT

Ship combat follows the vehicle combat rules published in the **Rigger 2** sourcebook.

BOAT AND SHIP TERRAIN TABLE

Boat Terrain Types

Terrain	Description
Open	Open water, such as lakes, seas and bays.
Normal	Water lightly cluttered with obstacles, such as major rivers and city harbors.
Restricted	Water with a considerable number of dangerous obstacles, such as the Everglades or the dock areas of city piers.
Tight	Water littered with numerous dangerous obstacles, such as white water rapids, rocky shorelines, sandbars or extremely congested city harbors heavily populated by boat people (like Hong Kong, Venice or Miami).

Ship Terrain Types

Terrain	Description
Open	Open sea with no land in sight.
Normal	Waters dotted with islands, small islets or reefs within sight. Waters within one nautical mile (two kilometers) of shoreline.
Restricted	Waters heavily congested with islands and reefs, bays leading into city harbors, waters within half a nautical mile (one kilometer) of shore.
Tight	City harbors and shore areas.

An essential feature of vehicle combat in **Rigger 2** is the Maneuver Score, one component of which is Vehicle Points. These points add or subtract to the Maneuver Score, depending on how quickly (or slowly) the vehicle can respond to the driver's input. For ships, the Vehicle Point value is a negative number, equal to 5 times the ship's Hull Rating.

RAMMING

If a ship rams another ship, resolve the action as a normal Ramming action (pp. 47-48, **Rigger 2**). Use the Hull Rating in place of the Body Rating and substitute Bulwark for Armor wherever applicable. If either vehicle sustains damage, both must make a Crash Test unless they are in Open Terrain.

If a boat (or any standard vehicle, for that matter) rams into a ship (or vice versa), things operate a little differently. If the Ramming action is successful, treat the result as if the boat had collided with a wall or barrier. The Barrier Rating of the ship is equal to 8 times the sum of its Hull and Bulwark Ratings combined [Barrier Rating = (Hull + Bulwark) x 8].

If the boat does not penetrate the barrier, the ship takes no damage. If the vehicle breaks through, the ship takes Moderate damage. If any characters are in the hold near the point where the

boat broke through the hull, they must make a Damage Resistance Test against (vehicle's Body + 3)M explosive damage from the flying shrapnel caused by the collision. Reduce the Power by 1 for every meter of distance from the point of penetration that the character is standing.

Because a ship is so much larger, it never crashes if it rams or is rammed by a boat.

Running Aground

Normally, watercraft do not crash unless they run into obstacles jutting up from the water's surface (extremely rare on the open sea). However, ships and boats can run aground in shallow water.

Ships and boats may run aground in Normal, Restricted and Tight terrain. Whenever the vessel fails a Crash Test, it may have run aground against an underwater object. Roll 1D6 and compare the result to the table below. If the result is equal to or less than the number indicated for the particular type of terrain, the vehicle runs aground. Otherwise, it crashes into an above-water object.

If a vessel runs aground, it comes to a complete stop. The vessel suffers Moderate Damage from the crash, but the gamemaster may downgrade the damage to Light or upgrade it to Serious depending on the terrain and the possible underwater obstacles on which the vessel could have run aground. For example, a sandbar would do Light damage; a coral reef or underwater rocks would do Serious damage.

BOARDING

In order to make a boarding attempt, a vessel must execute a Position Action (p. 47, **Rigger 2**) to bring it directly alongside, adjacent to or above (in the case of aircraft) the ship or boat being boarded. The vessel's approach to its target takes an entire Combat Turn. At the start of the next Combat Turn, characters may declare actions to board the target vessel.

On many occasions, the deck heights of attacking and defending vessels may be uneven. If the attacking vessel's deck height is lower than the target's by more than one meter, then characters must climb or jump up the side of the vessel being boarded. Characters climb at a rate equal to one-quarter (25 percent) of the average of their Quickness and Strength, rounded down. Characters can jump a height equal to half the difference between the character's Strength and natural Body (unaugmented by cyberware, bioware or magic). For advanced rules on climbing and jumping, see pages 75–77, **Fields of Fire**.

Because ships are slow, ponderous objects, most boarding parties use faster vessels, such as small speedboats or helicopters, to get alongside such targets.

SHIP WEAPON SYSTEMS

As mentioned in **Crews** (p. 163), ship weapon systems can be run by a computer network. Early weapon control networks (such as the AEGIS weapon command system) consisted of noth-

ing more than an interconnected shipboard computer network. However, by the 2050s, rigger networks similar to those used by remote control decks or CCSS security systems are the norm for coordinating multiple ship weapons simultaneously.

Under the rigger network structure, each weapon (turrets, missiles, torpedoes and so on) has its own Pilot Rating, which allows the control station to control, monitor or launch weapons. Of course, a live operator can override the weapon's pilot system.

Guided munitions, such as missiles and torpedoes, require one control station to direct the weapon to its target. This requirement limits the number of missiles and torpedoes a ship can have active at any one time to the number of control stations dedicated to controlling the munitions.

Unlike a standard rigger network, in which one rigger controls the whole thing, ship weapon networks can accommodate multiple riggers interacting within the network. In this configuration, one rigger may sit in the captain's chair (p. 65, **Rigger 2**), while other riggers directly control one weapon system. This allows one person to maintain overall control of the network while subordinate riggers, who are in direct control of weapons, add their Control and Combat Pool dice to any Success Tests made with those weapons.

However, two riggers cannot occupy any position (captain's chair or direct control of a single weapon system) simultaneously. If a rigger is occupying a position and another rigger attempts to access that position, the system locks out the latter until the previous rigger either jacks out or is dumped.

MISSILE COMBAT

Naval combat in the twenty-first century is a battle of distance. Gone are the days of rolling barrages fired from twelve- and sixteen-inch naval guns; naval firepower is now a game of antiship missiles, launched from aircraft, submarines or other surface ships. While shorter-range systems like underwater torpedoes and conventional guns have their place, antiship missiles are the name of the game in the 2050s.

Missile combat works differently for ships than for other vehicles. Antiship missiles can be fired at extremely long ranges and are relatively slow flyers (most, in fact, fly at subsonic speed). Antiship missiles obey the Extended Range Missile rules given on page 89, **Rigger 2**. These rules treat missiles as vehicles with fixed Speed Ratings attempting to close in on and collide with their intended targets. If a missile succeeds in doing so, it detonates and damages the vessel.

Antiship missiles have one special feature: riggers running the missile system can directly control, or "ride," a missile to its target. If a rigger "rides" a missile to its target, the missile uses the rigger's Vehicle Skill in place of the missile's Intelligence Rating. Additionally, the rigger may add Control Pool dice to any Success Tests made.

Prior to the missile striking the target, the system safely "dis-mounts" the rigger from the missile, so the rigger does not suffer from dump shock.

MISSILE DEFENSE

Because ships are slow-moving, high-profile objects, they make particularly delectable targets for antiship missiles. To pro-

RUNNING AGROUND TABLE	
Terrain Type	Result
Normal	1
Restricted	2 or less
Tight	3 or less

tect themselves from this threat, ships employ anti-missile defense systems.

Anti-missile defense systems come in two varieties: interceptor missiles and gun systems. Interceptor missiles are surface-to-air missiles fired to blow up or knock the incoming missile off target. Gun systems consist of high-velocity miniguns or directed energy weapons that blow the incoming missile out of the sky.

Conducting missile defense is treated like attacking an aircraft and follows standard vehicle combat rules (plus the Extended Range Missile rules). Missile defense succeeds if the ship's anti-missile system destroys the incoming missile in mid-flight, or if the incoming missile fails a required Crash Test.

SHIP DAMAGE

Like other vehicles, ships use a Condition Monitor to track damage accumulated from weapon hits. Because ships are so much larger and heavier than ordinary vehicles, damage from antiship missiles is also several times greater than that from ordinary weapons.

Antiship weapons use a special damage code to indicate ship damage. The letter "N" (for naval) following the end of the Damage Code indicates ship damage codes (for example, a weapon with a Damage Code of 10SN indicates that the weapon can do Serious Damage to a ship). Ships resist against ship damage codes normally, just as characters resist against normal damage. Unlike standard vehicles against standard weapons, ships do not automatically stage the Damage Code down one level. Also, ships use their full Bulwark Rating to reduce the Power of the attack.

SHIPS AND NORMAL DAMAGE

Normal weapons, such as firearms, machine guns, assault cannons or even anti-vehicle missiles, cannot damage ships. However, normal weapons may be used to attack crew members, cargo or equipment.

Characters, cargo and equipment below decks or inside the ship's superstructure are protected by the ship's hull. As stated in **Ramming** (pp. 164-165), the Barrier Rating of the ship is equal to 8 times the sum of the Hull and Bulwark Ratings combined [Barrier Rating = (Hull + Bulwark) x 8].

Characters above deck are out in the open. The ship protects them from attacks originating below their position, but not from attacks coming from above, unless they are taking cover behind large objects on deck (tied-down cargo, cargo bay doors and so on).

The gamemaster may add standard target modifiers, including a modifier for partial cover, based on each individual attack per the standard combat rules on page 89, **SR11**.

ANTISHIP WEAPONS AND NORMAL DAMAGE

In the rare event that an antiship weapon strikes a metahuman, critter or ordinary vehicle, such targets are in for a world of hurt. The normal Power of the attack used for the Damage Resistance Test is 5 times the Power Rating of the weapon. The weapon also inflicts Deadly Damage, plus several levels of over-damage.

An antiship weapon with a Damage Level of LN inflicts 2 points of over-damage. A weapon with a Damage Level of MN inflicts 5 points of over-damage. A weapon with a Damage Level of SN inflicts 10 points of over-damage, and a weapon with a Damage Level of DN inflicts 20 points of over-damage.

In order for the character, critter or vehicle hit to survive, he or it must first generate enough successes on the Damage Resistance Test to negate the over-damage. Only then do any leftover successes reduce the damage level. Every 2 successes generated negate 1 point of over-damage. Leftover successes reduce the damage level of the attack per standard rules for characters and critters. Vehicles automatically reduce the over-damage by 1 point, and can reduce the damage level using their full Armor Ratings.

Given the slim odds of survival, gamemasters may find it easier to simply pronounce standard vehicles, metahumans or critters struck by antiship weapons as destroyed rather than going through the motions to find out how much more than dead something becomes as a result of the attack.

DAMAGE CONTROL

During ship combat, crew members not manning weapons or performing combat-related support functions (such as electronic warfare) may stand ready as damage control teams to patch hull leaks, put out ship fires, repair damaged electrical systems and so on. To be effective, a damage control team must have a minimum number of members equal to the ship's Hull Rating plus 2.

If the ship is hit or otherwise takes damage, the damage control team rushes into action to repair the damage. Make a Build/Repair Test, using the highest Ship Build/Repair Skill of all the team members. If the damage control team has more than the minimum number necessary, every two additional team members add one die to the Success Test. Up to three additional dice may be added in this manner.

The target number for the Build/Repair Test appears in the Damage Control Table, below.

If the test results in at least 1 success, reduce the Damage Level by one level. To determine how long the repair takes, divide the successes into the repair time. The result is the amount of time in minutes the repairs take (assuming that the damage control team is uninterrupted). Any interruption that lasts longer than 5 minutes aborts the damage control process, but the team can begin again when the interruption ends.

DAMAGE CONTROL TABLE

Damage Level	Target Number	Repair Time
Light	4	60 minutes
Moderate	6	120 minutes
Serious	8	180 minutes

Target Number Modifiers

Performing damage control under combat conditions	+1
Ship is a submarine	+2

If the Build/Repair Test generates no successes, the crew cannot repair the damage due to lack of onboard resources. The crew will have to wait until the ship is in port before attempting repairs.

If using the Vehicle Subsystem Damage rules on page 85, **Rigger 2**, damage control teams may also choose to repair one subsystem instead of the entire ship. If repairing ship subsystems, generating 1 or more successes restores the subsystem to full operational capacity.

TAKING ON WATER

If a ship or boat sustains Moderate or greater damage from a single attack, it develops a leak in its hull and starts to take on water. At every fifteen-minute interval thereafter, the vessel takes an additional box of damage on its Condition Monitor. Submarines take the additional box of damage at five-minute intervals, reflecting their greater vulnerability to hull leaks.

A ship will continue to take on water until a damage control team plugs the leak. Damage control teams assigned to plug leaks do not reduce the damage to the ship on a successful Build/Repair Test, but they do prevent the ship from taking additional damage from hull leaks.

Sinking

When all the damage boxes on a ship's or boat's Condition Monitor are filled, its hull integrity has been compromised beyond repair and the vessel begins to sink. Roll 4D6 and subtract 9 from the result. The final number is the number of minutes before the ship sinks beneath the water's surface. If the result is 0 or less, the vessel goes under at the end of that Combat Turn.

While a vessel is sinking, all of its systems are inoperative. If riggers are jacked into the ship when it begins to sink, they are dumped out of the system and suffer dump shock (see p. 50, **Rigger 2**). Characters may use the time that the ship is in the process of sinking to perform only non-vehicle actions, such as abandoning ship, launching life rafts or making a final stand against the opponent. After the ship has sunk, characters are in the water and must tread water or swim to another floating craft.

If characters are inside a ship when it sinks below the surface, they are trapped underwater. Characters must don underwater breathing gear, hold their breath or drown.

For submarines, the time between the beginning and the end of sinking represents the amount of time the crew has air available while in the submarine. For a submarine, "going under" means that all available air is used up.

SHIP REPAIR

While at sea, ships can only attempt damage control to fix ship damage. Once a ship arrives in port, ship repairs may commence in earnest.

Ship repair follows the standard Vehicle Repair Rules on p. 25, **Rigger 2**, with a few exceptions. First, ship repair is much more manpower-intensive. Ship repairs require a repair team with a minimum number of members equal to three times the ship's Hull Rating. When making the Build/Repair Test for the ship, use the highest Ship Build/Repair Skill of all the team members.

If the repair team has more than the minimum number of members necessary, every four additional team members add one die to the Build/Repair Test. Up to three additional dice may be added in this manner.

The base time for ship repair is a number of days equal to the number of boxes of damage times the ship's Hull Rating. A "day" of repair time consists of eight hours. Divide the base time by the number of successes generated on the Build/Repair Test to find the actual repair time. As with standard vehicle repair, repairs cannot start until replacement parts arrive in port.

If the ship must be put to sea while repairs are underway, the repair team must spend an additional four hours (which do not count toward the repair time) making the ship seaworthy. Once the ship returns to port, repairs continue from the point at which they left off.

UNDERWATER OPERATIONS

This section covers special rules dealing with submarines and other underwater vehicles.

In the world of **Shadowrun**, submarines are at least as important and perhaps more important than surface ships. The growth and prosperity of various underwater industries has played a primary role in the rise of submarines' popularity; another equally significant reason is the steady rise in maritime piracy since the turn of the millennium. With the fall of the Soviet and American navies, enforcement of maritime law has waned, and pirate flotillas and rogue naval battle groups have terrorized surface ships. Even the resurgent Japanese Imperial Navy has found its fleet too small to cover the vast reaches and depths of the Pacific Ocean, to say nothing of the rest of the world's major waterways. Subs, with their ability to avoid detection, make much tougher targets for pirates than surface ships.

When submerged, a sub is almost impossible to detect from the surface, and even underwater subs find it extremely difficult to detect one another. Certain pirate gangs and rogue naval crews that own subs use their vessel's relative invisibility to raid merchant ships with near impunity.

DEPTH

Submarines can operate at periscope depth or can dive deeper, to a number of meters based on their Depth Rating. If they exceed this limit, they take damage from water pressure.

Periscope Depth

A submarine at periscope depth is submerged just below the surface to evade visual or sensor detection. At periscope depth, a submarine can use all of its electronic systems normally, including sensors. It can also scan the surface of the water visually using a periscope mast.

When a submarine is at periscope depth, treat it as a surface ship. However, a +4 modifier applies to any visual Perception Tests or Sensor Tests for detecting or targeting the submarine, because only its periscope mast is visible.

A submarine at periscope depth can be detected by sonar. Certain subs (especially nonnuclear diesel and electric subs, which are noisier) are easier to detect by sonar than by visual or sensor scanning.

Exceeding Depth Limits

Submarines are designed to keep the atmospheric pressure inside the vessel significantly lower than the outside water pressure. Therefore, they can only operate safely down to a maximum depth. Below that depth, the pressure differential exceeds the hull's capacity to resist, and the water pressure begins to crush the sub.

Whenever a submarine dives below its Depth Rating, make a Body (6) Test each turn. If the test fails, the sub accumulates 1 box of damage on its Condition Monitor. Add a +1 modifier to the Success Test for every 100 meters below its Depth Rating to which the sub dives.

UNDERWATER TERRAIN

Submarines on the surface or submerged at periscope depth (up to ten meters) follow the same guidelines for terrain types as surface ships. Between periscope depth and the sea bottom, terrain is generally considered Open, unless a considerable number of obstacles (schools of fish, icebergs and so on) exist. In this case, the gamemaster should follow guidelines similar to those for high-altitude aircraft, substituting underwater obstacles for clouds or other factors that might obscure line of sight.

Submarines navigating close to the sea bottom operate in terrain similar to that for low-altitude aircraft on land. See the Sea Bottom Terrain Table for guidelines.

SEA BOTTOM TERRAIN TABLE	
Terrain Type	Description
Open	Flat abyssal plain
Normal	Abyssal plain with some rolling hills
Restricted	Jagged terrain with steep hills, buttes or other obstacles
Tight	Narrow canyons or crevasses

UNDERWATER DRONES

Because water absorbs light, drones intended for operation underwater must be connected to the rigger network by a communications cable. This limits the effective range of the drone to the length of the cable.

Occasionally, the cable connecting a drone to a ship may be cut, either voluntarily by the rigger or involuntarily from sudden movements by the drone or the ship. To determine if a cable is cut from sudden maneuvers, roll 2D6 whenever two or more dice on a Vehicle Test have a result of 1. If the total result rolled is less than or equal to the number of 1s rolled, the cable has been cut during maneuvers.

If a rigger is controlling a drone when the cable is cut involuntarily, the rigger suffers dump shock from the abrupt ending of the connection.

SENSORS AND SONAR

Water absorbs light and electromagnetic energy at relatively shallow depths, and also confounds thermographic imaging.

Consequently, regular sensor systems are useless for detecting objects underwater. Instead, ships use sonar to detect underwater objects. Sonar, which stands for SOund Navigation And Ranging, uses sound waves instead of light waves to detect objects.

Sonar can operate in passive and active modes. Passive sonar, sometimes also called hydrophones, listens for sounds made by external sources and determines the classification, range and bearing of those sounds from what it hears. Active sonar emits a high-pitched sound and determines the make up of its surroundings by listening to the echo.

Passive Sonar

Passive sonar uses sophisticated acoustical sensors, called hydrophones, to listen for noises made by external sources (such as surface ships, low-flying aircraft, marine life or other subs). Acoustic analysis then determines the type, range, bearing and heading of the sound source. Though the effective range of passive sonar is limited, it prevents a ship or submarine from giving away its position, because the ship is not emitting any noise.

Passive sonar works slightly differently than standard surface sensor systems. Instead of a detection range based on the power of the system, the range at which passive sonar can detect other objects depends on the sound source. A noisy source, like the diesel engine of a large freighter, can be heard from nearly a hundred miles away, while a nuclear submarine with a ducted impeller drive cannot be detected until it is too close to make any difference.

The farthest range at which an object can be heard is equal to 50 kilometers divided by the object's Sonar Signature. If a ship or sub with passive sonar lies inside this range relative to an object, it may be able to detect the object.

To determine if the ship detects the object, make a Sonar Test, rolling a number of dice equal to the ship's Sonar Rating. The target number is the object's Sonar Signature, adjusted as appropriate by modifiers given in the Passive Sonar Modifiers Table (p. 168). Depending on the number of successes, the listening ship may detect the object, and may also gain additional detailed information about it.

All ships, both surface and submarines, have a "sonar blind spot" located at the ship's rear, or stern. This blind area, called the baffles, is a 120-degree arc centered around the stern. (Using the analogy of the clock, with 12 o'clock as the bow of the ship, the baffles cover the region between 4 o'clock and 8 o'clock.) The ship cannot detect any passive sonar contacts located in its baffles unless it has a towed sonar array.

PASSIVE SONAR MODIFIERS TABLE	
Passive Sonar Modifiers	
Detecting vessel is a surface ship	+3
Distance to object is	
less than 1/3 maximum range	-1
between 1/3 and 2/3 maximum range	0
between 2/3 maximum and maximum range	+2

Active Sonar

Active sonar emits a high-pitched “ping” and listens for the echo when the sound wave reflects off another object. Active sonar greatly improves a ship’s ability to detect other objects, but it also makes the ship much more “visible” to other submarines.

Unlike passive sonar, active sonar’s range is based on the capabilities of the system. The range of active sonar is equal to its rating times 2,500 meters.

Whenever a ship uses active sonar, a -2 modifier applies to all Sonar Signatures within the active sonar’s range, including the ship’s own signature. This -2 modifier applies to both Sonar Detection Tests and Gunnery Tests in underwater combat (see **Underwater Vehicle Combat**, below). A ship using active sonar can still detect contacts outside the active sonar’s range by using passive sonar. However, the -2 modifier does not apply to those contacts because they are outside the active sonar range.

Active sonar modifiers are cumulative, but additional sources of active sonar only provide a slight increase because of waveform interference. If a ship or sub is within the range of two or more active sonar sources, it receives a -1 modifier to its Sonar Signature for each additional active sonar source, up to a maximum of -4.

After a daring raid against an Aztechnology offshore station in the waters off Corpus Christi, the infamous pirate gang known as Hunley’s Raiders is on the run from the Aztlan navy. Hunley’s Raiders are lurking in the depths of the Gulf of Aztlan in their submarine, the Captain Morgan, an old French Agosta-class diesel/electric submarine (Sonar Signature 6).

Pursuing the Captain Morgan is an Aztlan nuclear attack submarine, the BAA Zacatecas (Sonar Signature 8). Confident of his advantage, the skipper of the Zacatecas orders his sonar crew to use active sonar (Rating 4).

The range of the Zacatecas’ active sonar is 4 x 2,500, or 10,000 meters. When the Zacatecas’ sonar goes active, all contacts within a 10,000-meter radius of the Azzie sub reduce their Sonar Signatures by 2. This includes the Captain Morgan, so her Sonar Signature drops from 8 to 6. When the Zacatecas closes to within 10,000 meters of the Captain Morgan, the pirate sub’s Sonar Signature drops from 6 to 4.

SONAR TEST RESULTS TABLE

Number of Successes	Result
0	No contact. The ship does not detect the object.
1	Unknown contact. The ship has detected the object but cannot determine what it is.
2	Identified contact. The ship has detected the object and can determine what it is (biological life form, surface ship, submarine or low-flying aircraft).
3	Detailed contact. The ship can determine the specific type of object (whale, frigate, nuclear attack submarine, low-altitude aircraft and so on).
4+	The ship can identify features that distinguish the contact from all others of its class.

Directly proportional to a ship’s power output, this noise makes the ship more visible to other vessels’ sonar systems.

In game terms, whenever a sub or surface ship is traveling at a speed higher than its Cavitation Threshold, cavitation noise reduces its Sonar Signature by 2 (normal Signature is unaffected). If a ship is running at a speed higher than its normal Speed Rating, then cavitation reduces its Sonar Signature by 4.

A submarine can reduce its cavitation noise by diving to a deeper depth, as the higher water pressure counteracts bubble formation.

Submarines running at depths below 500 meters reduce their cavitation by 1. Submarines running at depths below 1,000 meters reduce their cavitation by 2.

THERMOCLINES

Thermoclines are sudden boundaries between warm and cold waters, created by ocean currents between solar-heated surface water and cooler deep water. Because sound travels more slowly in denser cold water, sonar signals are reflected when they hit a thermal layer. During World War II, when submarine technology had developed sufficiently to allow subs to dive deeper than 400 feet, submarine crews discovered that if they dove deep enough, ship-based sonar could not detect them because the sub had gone beneath a thermal layer.

In game terms, thermoclines occur at roughly every 100 to 200 meters of depth (the interval varies depending on local underwater topography, prevailing currents and other environmental factors). Neither active nor passive sonar can detect any objects on the other side of a thermal layer. However, torpedoes or drones that pass through a thermal layer may detect those other objects once they reach the other side of the layer.

Detecting and plotting the position of thermoclines in submarines is a relatively simple task; subs equipped for rigger operation automatically detect thermoclines. In a simsense rig, thermoclines appear as wavy lines, colored green for lower-depth layers or red for upper-depth layers.

UNDERWATER VEHICLE COMBAT

Underwater vehicle combat occurs whenever one or both combatants involved are submarines. In naval terminology, this type of combat is often called anti-submarine warfare (abbreviated as ASW).

Underwater vehicle combat follows the rules for sensor-enhanced gunnery (p. 58, **Rigger 2**), except that the Sonar Rating substitutes for the Sensor Rating, and the Sonar Signature Rating substitutes for the normal Signature Rating.

CAVITATION

Cavitation is noise made by air bubbles that form from the water churning at the tip of a ship’s propeller or impeller blades.



Remember that submarines can sometimes break sonar contact by diving below a thermocline. This action will prevent the other combatant from “hearing” the sub, but it will not protect the diving vessel from torpedoes or other anti-submarine weapons that also cross the thermocline.

If one sub knows that an enemy sub is on the other side of a thermocline, the first sub can still launch a torpedo, anti-submarine rocket (ASROC) or other anti-submarine weapon against its foe. However, the attack receives a +8 Blind Fire modifier (see p. 89, **SR11**).

Torpedoes

As with drones, riggers can guide torpedoes from the launching ship via a fiber-optic cable. Torpedoes follow the same rules for ship combat as antiship missiles. Remember that guided torpedoes can be directed or controlled from the firing sub as long as the cable connection remains intact. If the cable is broken, the torpedo is on its own. Use the Area Effect Attacks rules (p. 60, **Rigger 2**) to determine where a uncontrolled torpedo hits.

EQUIPMENT

This section describes weapons, diving gear, cyberware, vehicles and ship weapons that pirate characters will find extremely useful (if not vital).

WEAPONS

MELEE WEAPONS

Pirates are known for preferring a close-in fighting style and for using just about anything as a weapon. In addition to fists, swords and axes, pirates in the regions described in this book frequently use harpoons, spears and rattan sticks.

Game Effects

Harpoons: Use statistics for standard pole-arms (p. 254, **SR11**). Thrusting Point damage is (STR + 2)M.

Spears: Use statistics for standard staffs (p. 254, **SR11**), except that damage done is Physical. Thrust Point Damage is (STR + 4)L.

Rattan sticks: These lightweight clubs are used in arnis de mano, a martial art native to the Philippines. Use statistics for standard clubs (p. 254, **SR11**), with the following exceptions. Rattan sticks weigh only 0.2 kilos, and do damage as if they were flechette weapons. Increase the damage code to (STR + 1)S Stun against unarmored opponents. Against armored opponents, the opponent's Impact Armor Rating is doubled.

PROJECTILE WEAPONS

HARPOON GUN

The boat- or ship-mounted version of a spear gun, a whaling harpoon has the range of a sporting rifle. The harpoon gun must

be mounted on a vessel; it cannot be hand-held. Ammunition (harpoons, or bolts) can be mounted with normal or explosive heads. The latter are legal only in known megalodon territory.

The cost of a harpoon gun includes a basic pintle mounting. Any other mounting must be paid for separately, though the base cost remains the same.

Harpoons connected to ropes, cords or cables can only fly a distance equal to the rope's length. If the target is within range of the harpoon but further away than the length of the rope, the harpoon automatically misses. To tie or untie a rope from a harpoon is a Complex Action; to cut the rope is a Simple Action.

Game Effects

A harpoon gun has a Weapon Value of 1; for the weapon values of turret mounting, see page 135, **Rigger 2**. Firing a harpoon gun requires the Projectile Weapons Skill. The gun weighs as much as an assault cannon and comes with a standard bolt that does 12D damage. A bolt with an explosive head costs 200 nuyen and inflicts 16D damage. Because such ammunition is legal only where megalodon swim, Availability is 3/12 hours and Street Index is 2. Use Impact Armor to resist harpoon damage.

Harpoon Gun

Concealability: NA

Ammunition: 1

Mode: SS

Damage: 12D (standard), 16D (explosive head)

Weight: 20 kg

Availability: 3/24 hrs

Ammo (per harpoon): 1/6 hrs (standard), 3/12 hrs (explosive head)

Cost: 6,500 ¥

Ammo (per harpoon): 25¥ (standard), 200¥ (explosive head)

Street Index: 1

Ammo (per harpoon): 1 (standard), 2 (explosive head)

SPEARGUN

Spearguns use a powerful CO₂ charge to fire a long metal arrow. Though these weapons are most commonly used for fishing, quite a few divers carry spearguns as protection against the increasing number of dangerous underwater predators and Awakened critters (and sometimes metahumans). Two types of ammunition are available: standard spears for fishing and armor-piercing javelins for defense.

Game Effects

Use the ranges for the Heavy Crossbow (p. 88, **SRII**). Firing a speargun requires the Projectile Weapons Skill; use of a speargun can be a Specialization if a player so desires. Use Impact Armor to resist against speargun damage.

Speargun

Concealability: NA

Ammunition: 1

Mode: SS

Damage: 6M (standard), 8S (armor-piercing)

Weight: 2 kg

Availability: 3/24 hrs

Cost: 800 ¥

Street Index: 1

SLING LAUNCHER

This overgrown slingshot is used to hurl light objects ranging from rocks to grenades to water balloons. It requires two anchoring points, which can be anywhere on a vessel, and the space for at least a two-meter draw. The elastic pouch can hold any item that weighs less than a kilogram.

Game Effects

The launcher's range is equal to that of an aerodynamic grenade (see Grenade Range Table, p. 96, **SRII**) and scatters in the same way (p. 97, **SRII**). Firing a sling launcher requires the Projectile Weapons Skill.

Sling Launcher

Concealability: NA

Ammunition: 1

Mode: SS

Damage: Per item (see text)

Weight: 7 kg

Availability: 1/14 hrs

Cost: 40¥

Street Index: 1

FIREARMS

COLT M24A3 WATER CARBINE

The Colt M24A3 is a special design originally commissioned by the UCAS Navy SEALs. The firing chamber is completely sealed, with tubes running the length of the butt stock, ending at an air snap-inlet valve that connects to the diver's scuba tank or other external air source. Upon firing, the carbine draws air from the inlet valve into the firing chamber, allowing the gun to fire regular ammunition underwater. Positive pressure from the external air source ensures that no water rushes in during firing, and a purge valve built into the weapon flushes out any water while changing clips.

Game Effects

The M24A3 uses caseless ammunition. To determine the cost of caseless ammunition, multiply the price for the standard brass-cased ammo the player character wishes to purchase by 1.5. The ammunition's Availability is equal to the standard Availability plus 1.

Colt M24A3

Water Carbine

Type: SMG

Concealability: 5

Ammunition: 30 (c)

Mode: SA/BF

Damage: 6M

Weight: 3.5 kg

Availability: 5/48 hrs
Cost: 1,000 ¥
Street Index: 2.5

FN-AAL GYROJET PISTOL

The preferred weapon of the British Special Boat Squadron (SBS), the FN-AAL fires miniature 6mm rockets propelled by a reactive alkaline fuel mixture that combusts when mixed with water. Ammunition is available in ball, armor-piercing and explosive gyrojet forms (see table, below).

Game Effects

Hydrostatic shock increases the Power Level of explosive gyrojets by +2 instead of the standard +1 increase.

FN-AAL Gyrojet Pistol

Type: Heavy Pistol
Concealability: 5
Ammunition: 10 (c)
Mode: SA
Damage: 10M
Weight: 2 kg
Availability: 4/48 hrs
Cost: 600¥
Street Index: 1.5

FN-AAL Gyrojet Ammunition (clip of 10)

	Concealability	Damage	Weight	Availability	Cost	Street Index
Ball	8	10M	1.75	3/36 hrs	50¥	2
APDS	8	*	1.75	14/14 days	100¥	5
Explosive	8	12M	1.75	4/48 hrs	80¥	2.5

*APDS damage rules appear on p. 63 of the **Street Samurai Catalog**.

EXPLOSIVES

INK GRENADE

These small spheres spew a cloud of black ink that spreads into the surrounding water, restricting vision.

Game Effects

Ink grenades create a cloud of ink with an average radius of 5 meters. Characters caught inside an ink cloud receive a +4 modifier to all visual-based tests. This modifier is cumulative with other underwater vision modifiers (see **Vision**, p. 159).

Ink Grenade

Concealability: 6
Damage: None
Weight: .25 kg
Availability: 4/4 days
Cost: 40¥
Street Index: 2

DIVING EQUIPMENT

STANDARD DIVING GEAR

This set consists of the basic equipment used by all divers: face mask, snorkel, fins, wet suit, breathing regulator, buoyancy compensator/weight belt combination and scuba tank. It does not include specialty diving equipment used by professional or commercial divers.

A breathing regulator draws air from the scuba tank for the diver to breathe. The standard breathing regulator used by recreational divers and most commercial divers consists of a primary and secondary mouthpiece (the secondary mouthpiece is commonly referred to as an octopus), as well as a depth and pressure gauge and an inflator attachment for the buoyancy compensator. Because the diver must keep the mouthpiece in his mouth to use it, verbal communication is impossible while using a standard regulator.

A buoyancy compensator is an inflatable vest. Worn in conjunction with a weight belt, it helps a diver to achieve neutral buoyancy. Compensators can also be used to send a diver to the surface when he cannot do so on his own.

The scuba tank holds the air mixture that divers breathe. Standard scuba tanks in the 2050s are made of special aluminum/titanium alloys and hold air or mixed gases at a pressure

up to 300 bars (4,350 psi). The amount of breathing time to which this amount equates varies depending on depth, lung capacity and activity. Generally, metahumans breathe an average of 4 bars of pressure each minute.

Game Effects

The weight listed on the table below indicates the weight of the equipment when carried on dry land. When worn for diving, the equipment incurs no weight penalty.

For more information on the use of a buoyancy compensator and weight belt while diving, see **Ascent, Descent and Buoyancy**, p. 157.

DRYSUIT

Wet suits protect divers from hypothermia by trapping and warming a thin film of water around the diver. In contrast, drysuits enclose the diver in a sheath of air, sandwiched between an outer layer keeping out the water and an inner layer snug against the skin. Because drysuits insulate divers against heat loss even more efficiently than wet suits, divers use them for dives in Arctic waters or for dives deeper than 200 meters for extended periods of time.

Game Effects

A character wearing a drysuit receives a -2 modifier when making Body Tests to resist the effects of helium chills (see

STANDARD DIVING GEAR TABLE

	Weight	Cost	Availability	Street Index
Breathing Regulator	2.5	720¥	4/12 hours	1
Buoyancy Compensator + Weight Belt	12	475¥	4/12 hours	1
Face Mask + Snorkel	—	120¥	4/12 hours	1
Fins	.7	90¥	4/12 hours	1
Scuba Tank	18	3,000¥	4/12 hours	1
Wet Suit	1.2	290¥	4/12 hours	1

Helium Chills, p. 159). This -2 modifier also applies to any other underwater Resistance Tests against cold or hypothermia.

Weight	Cost	Availability	Street Index
3.5	1,500¥	4/36 hours	1.25

DIVING ARMOR

Diving armor is virtually identical to regular armor, except that it uses materials that do not absorb water and consequently does not drag the diver down to a permanent stay in Davey Jones' locker. Additionally, diving armor is streamlined so as not to impair swimming as would bulky standard armor.

Concealability	Ballistic	Impact	Weight
—	4	2	2
Availability	Cost	Street	
5/48 hours	1,750¥	1.25	

DUAL TANK MANIFOLD ASSEMBLY

Most breathing systems are designed to carry one scuba tank. However, characters may purchase a special manifold assembly that allows them to carry two tanks simultaneously.

Weight	Cost	Availability	Street Index
0.1	200¥	4/18 hours	1

FULL FACE MASK

A full face mask completely covers the diver's eyes, nose and mouth, with a quick-release assembly that allows the diver to attach a standard breathing regulator. Removable side plugs also let the diver attach communication systems, voice microphones or other add-ons.

Weight	Cost	Availability	Street Index
—	360¥	4/24 hours	1.25

ENCLOSED BREATHING HELMET

This specially constructed helmet is used by commercial divers who require verbal communication in order to perform their jobs. Hoses at the back connect to the tank, which fills the inside of the helmet with air or mixed gas, allowing the diver to speak freely. Built-in speakers around the mouth on the outside broadcast speech into the water for others to hear. The helmet also includes other accessories, such as a halogen head lamp (as

most divers requiring such a helmet work at depths where light is almost non-existent) and a speaker jack to connect into an external underwater radio or cablephone.

Weight	Cost	Availability
1	960¥	5/96 hours
Street Index		
1.5		

OXSYS ARTIFICIAL GILL

The OXSYS artificial gill consists of a wraparound face-piece with a series of filters along both sides of the jaw. The filters draw in water and extract oxygen from it by forced osmosis. Carbon dioxide and waste gases are then absorbed into the water through reverse osmosis and expelled from the system at the back of the neck.

Because they are light, compact, and easy to use (no training or certification needed to operate one), OXSYS systems are widely available for casual recreational diving. However, because they extract pure oxygen, they can only be used at shallow depths (less than 7 meters). Divers using them at deeper depths run the risk of oxygen toxicity.

Weight	Cost	Availability	Street Index
0.5	3,250¥	4/12 hours	1

JIM DIVING EXOSKELETON

The JIM diving exoskeleton, or JIM suit, is a plasteel mechanical exoskeleton that allows the diver to descend to depths as low as 600 meters. The interior of the suit is pressurized to 1 atmosphere, so the wearer does not risk decompression sickness or other diving hazards. The suit carries a self-contained air supply, which provides up to 20 hours of air.

Game Effects

The standard JIM suit has a Strength Attribute of 7. More powerful models with higher Strength Attributes exist, but for every additional point of Strength desired (to a maximum of 10), increase the price by 5,000¥. JIM suits have an Armor Rating of 6.

While wearing the suit, the user suffers a -2 modifier to Quickness and Reaction and rolls only one die for Initiative. A suit may be modified for rigger interface, which eliminates these penalties and confers the benefits of a vehicle control rig. Riggers jacked into a JIM suit substitute their Control Pool for the Combat Pool.

	Weight	Cost	Availability	Street Index
Suit	300	25,000¥	6/14 days	2
Enhancement	—	+5,000¥	—	—
		per point		

LIQUID BREATHING APPARATUS (LBA)

The LBA system uses a rig similar to scuba gear with an enclosed helmet, except that the tank contains a super-oxygenated fluid that the user inhales. This apparatus allows divers to dive as far down as 3,000 meters.

Game Effects

While using the LBA, the diver is immune to decompression sickness, oxygen toxicity and nitrogen narcosis. However, the diver is still vulnerable to HPNS.

The need to inhale a liquid medium makes speech impossible. Communication with others occurs through a radio link, using an electronic keypad or cybercomm link.

The cybercomm link consists of a transducer and a radio transmitter. The transducer translates thoughts into words so that the user need not speak aloud; the transmitter sends and receives these unspoken impulses. No external evidence of this system's use is visible or audible. Using it quadruples the number of words available as a Free Action (p. 81, **SR11**).

	Weight	Cost	Availability	Street Index
LBA	25	50,000¥	8/21 days	2.5
Cybercomm Link	—	62,000¥	8/2 weeks	3

CYBERWARE

OXSYS CYBERGILL

The OXSYS cybergill operates on the same principle as its noncybered analog. Implanting a cybergill requires extensive surgery; the gills are implanted on both sides of the neck adjacent to the thyroid gland, a cutoff valve must be installed in the lower trachea to prevent lung action during operation, and pulmonary bypasses must be inserted in the heart to reroute blood heading toward the lungs up into the gills during operation.

Game Effects

Because the cybergill transfers dissolved oxygen directly from the water into the blood, divers using cybergills are immune to oxygen toxicity. However, they remain vulnerable to nitrogen narcosis and decompression sickness from the residual amount of nitrogen trapped in the lungs.

As a matter of common practice, divers who choose cybergill implantation also install an internal air tank containing pure helium, in order to flush residual nitrogen out of their lungs.

	Essence Cost	Price	Availability	Street Index
Cybergill	1.5	12,500¥	5/72 hours	1.75
Air Tank	.25	1,200¥	4/5 days	1.5

CYBERFINS

Cyberfins are retractable spurs and webbing in the hands and feet. When extended, they allow the user to swim as if with standard fins. Additionally, the wearer can use cyberfins to attack (treat as hand razors). Cyberfins are not compatible with standard fins or gloves.

	Essence Cost	Price	Availability	Street Index
	0.3	10,500¥	5/48 hours	1.25

NITROGEN MONITOR

This valuable implant consists of a bari-spectrometer implanted in the lungs that monitors the partial pressure of nitrogen gas

and an electrolytic analyzer in the pulmonary vein that measures the concentration of dissolved nitrogen gas in the blood. If either component registers too high, it sends a signal via a sense link to the brain, warning of a possible risk of narcosis or decompression sickness.

Game Effects

Whenever a character is on the verge of succumbing to nitrogen narcosis or the bends, roll 2D6. On a result of 8 or less, the nitrogen monitor detects dangerous levels of nitrogen and warns the character (with a high-pitched shriek and red warning letters on a display link). Unfortunately, the nitrogen monitor cannot warn against oxygen toxicity, helium chills or HPNS.

	Essence Cost	Price	Availability	Street Index
	0.5	8,500¥	4/24 hours	1.25

PEG LEGS AND HOOK HANDS

Unlike a standard cyberleg, the peg leg is not shaped like a normal leg or foot, nor does it confer any Strength modifiers. Peg legs come in two different models: one attached at the knee, the second at the hip. Because a peg leg is not attached to any nerves that connect to the brain, its Essence Cost is radically lower than that of a standard cyberleg. Instead, an attachment plate goes over the stump of the meat leg and the peg leg is attached to the plate. The peg leg does not function like a regular cyberleg, and so the character's Quickness is reduced for figuring movement. Walking is reduced by 1 for the knee-high peg leg, by 2 for the hip-level leg. Running multipliers are reduced by 1 for the knee-high leg and 2 for the hip-level leg. Finally, a person with a peg leg cannot walk normally; a successful Perception (3) Test allows an observer to notice that the individual has a peg leg.

Modifications or other cyberware cannot be added to peg legs, though the leg can be hollowed out as a place to keep documents, jewels, keys or other items no larger than the character's fist in diameter and no longer than the character's forearm.

Peg legs can be removed from their attachment plate, and many pirates have a variety of peg legs for different occasions. A character may sharpen the point of the peg leg and use it as a weapon; such a weapon uses the statistics and damage code for standard hand spurs. The gamemaster determines whether the character loses his or her balance when using a peg leg as a weapon, depending on the situation.

A hook hand is a replacement for the hand that, like the peg leg, is low on Essence Cost but confers no frills or cyber-enhancements. As with the peg leg, a plate goes over the wrist stump and various hand attachments connect to the plate. Players and gamemasters can decide what types of attachments a character may have, provided that the weight of the attachment is no greater than the character's Strength divided by 10. For example, a character with Strength 5 can have a hook hand that weighs up to .5 kg.

Most hook hands consist of a hooked weapon or knife (hence the name). The base damage inflicted by a hook hand in melee combat is (STR + 1)M. This can be adjusted appropriately if the hand has a knife or spur attached to it rather than a hook. In those



cases, use the standard knife or spur damage codes. Hook hands can be removed (voluntarily or otherwise).

	Non-powered Banca	Outboard Motor	Sail
Handling	3	3	3
Speed	Varies	30	30
Acceleration	1	4	3
Body	2	2	2
Armor	0	0	0
Signature	10	5	10
Autonav	0	0	0
Sensor	—	—	—
Cost	150¥	300¥	150¥
Seating	8, front to back	8, front to back	8, front to back
Entry Points	Open	Open	Open
Cargo	4 CF	4 CF	4 CF
Load	40 kg	40 kg	40 kg
Fuel	None	Gasoline (10 liters)	Sail
Economy	NA	7 km/liter	NA
Other Features	None	None	None

If a character wishes to replace a hook hand or peg leg with a real cyberhand or cyberleg, follow the standard rules for replacing cyberware (p. 97, **Street Samurai Catalog**). Peg legs and hook hands only come in standard grade; alpha, beta and delta grades do not exist.

	Essence	Cost	Price	Availability	Street Index
Peg Leg					
Knee Length	.2	50¥		1/6 hours	Always available
Hip Length	.4	120¥		1/6 hours	Always available
Hook Hand	.1	30¥		1/6 hours	Always available

VEHICLES

Though pirates may own or hijack some of the following boats and ships, they are far more likely to be facing them as targets or opposition.

MOTORBOATS

BANCAS

A banca is a non-powered river boat used in the Philippines. The statistics given below apply to bancas and any similar small river boat found in all areas of the world. Bancas may also be fitted with sails or an outboard motor (see table).

Game Effects

To find the Speed Rating of a banca being rowed, add together the Strength Attributes of all rowers and divide by 2. The Acceleration of a rowed banca is always 1. Rowing a banca is considered a Complex Action.

MITSUHAMANA ANAGO

The Anago is a propulsion craft similar to a water scooter, except that it is capable of underwater movement. The Anago is designed to assist divers on long-distance swims, as well as transport bulky cargo to and from the surface. Also available is the "Fugu" variant, an armed model designed for underwater and surface assault.

Mitsuhama Anago

Handling: 3
Speed: 30
Acceleration: 3
Body: 3
Armor: 0
Signature: 5
Autonav: 1
Sensor: 0
Sonar: 0
Cost: 15,000¥

Seating: 1 bucket + 1 bucket + 6 hand-holds
Entry Points: Open
Depth: 75 meters
Cargo: 2 CF
Load: 400 kg

Fuel: Electric (75 PF)
Economy: 1 km/PF
Other Features: Underwater movement (no life support)

ROTOR CRAFT

HUGHES WK-2S SEA STALLION

The Sea Stallion is the naval variant of Hughes's widely popular WK-2 Stallion. It is designed to perform various support missions, particularly search and rescue, reconnaissance and anti-submarine warfare (ASW).

Hughes WK-2S Sea Stallion

Handling: 5
Speed: 190
Acceleration: 14
Body: 4
Armor: 0
Signature: 3
Autonav: 3
Sensor: 3
Cost: 925,000¥

Seating: 2 bucket + 3 bucket (x 3)
Entry Points: 2 + 1 double-sized
Cargo: 46 CF
Load: 2,000
Landing/Takeoff Profile: VTOL
Fuel: Jet (1,250 liters)
Economy: 0.2 km/liter
Other Features: 2 fuselage torpedo mounts (2,000 kg total ordinance weight), magnetic anomaly detector

SHIPS

CUNARD PRINCESS VICTORIA LINER

The latest liner produced by Cunard Cruise Lines, the *Princess Victoria* is a typical cruise ship of the 2050s: moderately large with a fair range of travel, though only a shadow of the transoceanic liners of the past century. Reputable cruise ships like the *Princess Victoria* stay close to established sea lanes, which are tightly patrolled by national and corporate navies. The same does not hold true for some other liners, which offer entertainment of questionable legal standing to their passengers.

Cunard Princess Victoria Liner

Handling: 5
Speed: 50 (15)
Acceleration: 1
Hull: 6
Bulwark: 0
Signature: 1/1
Autonav: 4
Sensor: 1
Sonar: 1
Cost: 150M¥

Accommodation: 350
Entry Points: 4 standard entry points + 2 cargo doors
Cargo: 8,000 CF
Load: 15,000 kg
Fuel: Diesel (15 kiloliters)
Economy: 200 km/kiloliter
Other Features: Lifestyle amenities (High)

MAERSK JORGENSEN-CLASS FAST FREIGHTER

The *Jorgensen*-class merchantman is relatively small as freighters go. A generic cargo freighter, the *Jorgensen* is an exception to the rule in a day and age when large, specialized haulers like container ships and roll-on/roll-off ships are the norm. Maersk Shipping produces *Jorgensens* for tramp shipping, a shipping style that does not adhere to a fixed timetable.

Maersk Jorgensen-class Fast Freighter

Handling: 5
Speed: 25 (10)
Acceleration: 1
Hull: 8
Bulwark: 0
Signature: 1/1
Autonav: 3
Sensor: 1
Sonar: 1
Cost: 80M¥

Accommodation: 25
Entry Points: 2 extra-large cargo doors + 2 standard entry points
Cargo: 270,000 CF
Load: 75,000 kg
Fuel: Diesel (24 kiloliters)
Economy: 150 km/kiloliter
Other Features: Crane (5,000 kg)

CSS STUART-CLASS CORVETTE

The *Stuart* class of fast attack craft is produced in large numbers for the CAS Navy. The CAS Navy makes wide use of these small missile boats for coastal patrol and defense and also to provide supporting fire for its light surface action groups (usually in a cluster around a *Merrimac*-class missile cruiser).

Typical armaments for a *Stuart*-class corvette include a Victory rotary autocannon in a medium remote turret and sixteen Block II Outlaw missiles (see p. 93, **Rigger 2**), launched from two medium remote turrets (one fore and one aft, each with eight missiles apiece). Some special-mission *Stuarts* dedicated to anti-submarine warfare replace the Outlaws with four MADCAPs, while others dedicated to anti-air warfare replace the Outlaws with Vogeljäger SAMs.

CSS Stuart-class Corvette

Handling: 3
Speed: 70 (30)
Acceleration: 5
Hull: 4
Bulwark: 6

Signature: 3/4
Autonav: 4
Sensor: 4
Sonar: 3
Cost: 30M¥

Accommodation: 35
Entry Points: 2 standard entry points + 1 extra-large cargo door
Cargo: 125 CF
Load: 2,500 kg

Fuel: Diesel (10 kiloliters)
Economy: 100 km/kiloliter
Other Features: Medium remote turret with Victory autocannon and 500 rounds, 2 medium remote turrets with 8 Block II Outlaw missiles.

SHIAWASE AOHANA-CLASS FRIGATE

The *Aohana* was among the first corporate warships to appear after the legal establishment of corporate extraterritoriality. Like frigates in other navies, the *Shiawase Aohana* provides armed escort, particularly ASW and anti-aircraft warfare, for corporate convoys in pirate-infested waters.

The *Aohana's* ASW arsenal is impressive. The ship packs six ASROCs and twenty MADCAPs and has a landing pad for one WK-2S Sea Stallion (Stallion not included in the ship's price). Its air defense capabilities are equally formidable: more than a dozen Javelot missiles and a Victory rotary autocannon mounted on an anti-aircraft turret.

The frigate's only drawback is its relative dearth of surface-attack weapons. It is equipped with only six SS-N-49 Siroccos and a light naval gun in a medium remote turret.

Shiawase Aohana-class Frigate

Handling: 4
Speed: 45 (20)
Acceleration: 4
Hull: 4
Bulwark: 9
Signature: 2/4
Autonav: 4
Sensor: 6
Sonar: 4
Cost: 100M¥

Accommodation: 300
Entry Points: 2 standard entry points + 2 standard entry points + 1 double-sized door
Cargo: 1,700 CF
Load: 50,000 kg
Fuel: Gas Turbine (50 kiloliters)
Economy: 80 km/kiloliter
Other Features: 2 medium remote turrets (one mounting a Victory rotary autocannon with 2,000 rounds, the other mounting a light naval gun with 500 rounds), 2 vertical launch systems (each with 12 tubes).

MF (MIYASAMA FUNE) AKIHITO-CLASS CARRIER

The *Akihito*-class nuclear aircraft carrier is the flagship of the Imperial Japanese Navy and the unquestioned key to Japan's naval superiority in the Pacific. Weighing in at more than 125,000 tonnes, the *Akihito* is powered by three reactors and carries more than fifty aircraft.

Typically, the *Akihito* relies on its aircraft for attack and defense. It carries some ship-based weapons as well, primarily for air and antimissile defense. The *Akihito* carries twenty-four sea-launched Saab-Saaker AIM-11RS surface-to-air missiles (see p. 93, **Rigger 2**). It is also equipped with four ANDREWS energy weapons for close combat against any stragglers that penetrate its aerial defenses.

As of 2059, six *Akihitos* are in commission. The lead ship, the MF *Akihito* (CVN 41), is stationed in Yokohama Bay in Japan; it patrols the Sea of Japan and the East China Sea. The MF *Meiji* (CVN 58) and MF *Hirohito* (CVN 52) are on duty in the Philippines, the *Meiji* near Manila and the *Hirohito* outside Subic Bay. The MF *Go-Daigo* (CVN 49) is the flagship of the Imperial Marine Expeditionary Force in San Francisco, CFS. The MF *Shotoku* (CVN 44) and the MF *Kammu* (CVN 47) are currently on roving patrol in the Pacific, though they shortly are expected to relieve the *Hirohito* and the *Go-Daigo*, respectively.

MF Akihito-class Carrier

Handling: 5
Speed: 45
Acceleration: 3
Hull: 9
Bulwark: 12
Signature: 1/2
Autonav: 4
Sensor: 7
Sonar: 2
Cost: 750M¥

Accommodation: 6,000
Entry Points: 1 plane elevator + 1 standard entry point + 1 standard entry point
Cargo: 3.75M CF
Load: 100M kg
Fuel: Nuclear
Economy: Effectively infinite
Other Features: Aircraft facilities, flight deck (300 meters long, with catapult and arrestor cables), 2 remote large turrets with AIM-11RS missile launchers (storage for 12 missiles each), 4 remote medium turrets with ANDREWS.

SUBMARINES

VULKAN ELECTRONAUT

Produced by the Allied German States, this two-person minisub is noted for its wide range of applications and the multitude of additional available utility modules. Initially built for recovery operations in the submerged cities of North Germany and the United Netherlands, it has gained popularity as a recreational vehicle along the Côte d'Azur and in the Caribbean.

Vulkan Electronaut

Handling: 4
Speed: 15
Acceleration: 4
Body: 4
Armor: 0
Signature: 8/8
Autonav: 2
Sensor: 1
Sonar: 1
Cost: 35,000¥

Seating: 1 bucket + 1 bucket
Entry Points: 1 hatch
Depth: 150 meters
Cargo: 12 CF
Load: 150 kg
Fuel: Electric (250 PF)
Economy: 1 km/PF
Other Features: Enviroseal (water and engine), life support (10 man-hours)

SAEDER-KRUPP D. J. LOCKER

The Locker is a two-person submarine used for underwater exploration, retrieval and rescue. Its independent air supply allows 50 man-hours of operations, and it can operate as far as 900 meters below the surface. Standard accessories include swivel-mount lamps and an extendible claw. The claw makes a poor weapon but allows underwater loading into the sub's isolated cargo hold.

Game Effects

The claw follows standard rules for operating mechanical arms (p. 34, **Rigger 2**), except that the operator receives a +3 modifier to all Success Tests because of the claw's clumsy design.

Saeder-Krupp D. J. Locker

Handling: 4
Speed: 30
Acceleration: 3
Body: 4
Armor: 0
Signature: 6/7
Autonav: 2
Sensor: 0
Sonar: 1
Cost: 55,000¥

Seating: 1 bucket + 1 bucket
Entry Points: 1 hatch
Depth: 900 meters
Cargo: 5 CF
Load: 400 kg
Fuel: Diesel/electric (300 liters/250 PF)
Economy: 1 km/liter; 1 km/PF
Other Features: Enviroseal (water and engine), life support (10 man-hours), mechanical claw arm (Strength 16)

VULKAN DELPHIN RQ7

This "big brother" of the Vulkan Electronaut holds up to eight people and is fitted out with accommodations for long-distance travel. Despite its larger size, it can still maneuver freely even in flooded tunnels. The model used by the *Wasserschutzpolizei* coastal patrols has four mini-torpedo tubes and a remote-controlled heavy machine gun turret, as well as a plethora of electronic toys.

Game Effects

Treat the mini-torpedoes as standard AVMs (p. 99, **SR11**), except that they only operate against waterborne surface or underwater targets. Mini-torpedoes do 4LN damage.

The Delphin RQ7 uses a dual diesel/electric engine. While surfaced, it uses the diesel engine; while submerged, it runs on electric batteries. When the sub is running on the diesel engine, the batteries recharge at a rate of 1 PF per hour.

	Standard Delphin RQ7	Coastal Patrol Variant
Handling:	4	4
Speed:	50	50
Acceleration:	4	4
Body:	4	4
Armor:	0	9
Signature:	6/6	5/5
Autonav:	2	2
Sensor:	1	5
Sonar:	1	3
Cost:	150,000¥	34MY
Seating:	2 bucket + 2 bucket	2 bucket + 2 bucket
Entry Points:	1 hatch	1 hatch
Depth:	150 meters	150 meters
Cargo:	160 CF	152 CF
Load:	1,500 kg	680 kg
Fuel:	Diesel/Electric (300 liters/ 300 PF)	Diesel/Electric (300 liters/ 300 PF)
Economy:	1 km/liter; 1 km/PF	1 km/liter; 1 km/PF

Other Features:

Standard Delphin RQ-7: Enviroseal (water and engine), life support (80 man-hours), living amenities (Basic)

Coastal Patrol Variant: Enviroseal (water and engine), life support (80 man-hours), living amenities (Basic), internal mini-torpedo launchers, small turret with HMG and 500 rounds ammunition.

**KVAERNER TRITON-CLASS
MEDIUM TRANSPORT SUBMARINE**

Weighing in at a modest 30,000 tonnes, the Triton is the most common commercial-transport sub in existence. Its bubble-fusion reactor provides substantial pulling power while guaranteeing reliability, with a maintenance schedule of one overhaul every twelve years. Its oxygen generator produces oxygen while the vessel is submerged, allowing it to remain so indefinitely.

Triton-class Medium Transport Submarine

Handling: 3
Speed: 30 (20)
Acceleration: 1
Hull: 7
Bulwark: 3
Signature: 5/4
Autonav: 3
Sensor: 2
Sonar: 2
Cost: 250M¥

Accommodation: 40
Entry Points: 1 emergency hatch + 1 oversize cargo hatch + 1 oversize cargo hatch + 1 passenger hatch
Depth: 4,500 meters
Cargo: 200,000 CF
Load: 25M kg
Fuel: Nuclear
Economy: Effectively infinite
Other Features: Electrolytic oxygen generator, Enviroseal (water and engine), living amenities (Basic).

KRASNAYA SORMOVA VANEYEV-CLASS HUNTER-KILLER SUBMARINE

Produced in the Russian shipyards of Komsomolsk by the Krasnaya Sormova shipbuilding company, the Vaneyev is an economical, medium-sized diesel/electric submarine used in many brown-water navies around the world. Rumors abound of several pirate gangs using Vaneyevs to prey upon merchantmen foolish enough to travel without an escort frigate.

Vaneyev-class Hunter-Killer Submarine

Handling: 3
Speed: 45 (30)
Acceleration: 2
Hull: 4
Bulwark: 9
Signature: 6/6
Autonav: 3
Sensor: 4
Sonar: 4
Cost: 125M¥

Accommodation: 85
Entry Points: 1 hatch + 1 emergency hatch
Depth: 400 meters
Cargo: 400 CF
Load: 50,000 kg
Fuel: Diesel/electric (18 kiloliters/10 kPF)
Economy: 175 km/kiloliter; 100 km/kPF
Other Features: Electrolytic oxygen generator, Enviroseal (water and engine), living amenities (Basic).

USS NEW HAMPSHIRE-CLASS ATTACK SUBMARINE

The *New Hampshire*-class attack submarine is the latest attack sub developed by the UCAS Navy, designed to replace the

Navy's fleet of aging *Seawolf II* and *Toronto* attack subs. In the time since the USS *New Hampshire* (SSN 29) completed her shakedown cruise at Groton, Connecticut, in 2048, ten more subs have been commissioned—most recently the USS *North Virginia* (SSN 42), completed in late 2057. Two more are expected to follow in the future: the USS *Manitoba* (SSN 45) within the next few weeks and the USS *Seattle Metroplex* (SSN 46) in late 2059.

New Hampshire-class submarines are impressive and powerful, designed to handle a wide variety of military and paramilitary missions, from the underwater insertion and extraction of SEAL divers to launching precision strikes with cruise missiles. The *New Hampshire* has four torpedo tubes that can launch both MADCAPs and Sea Sabers and can store up to forty torpedoes or missiles. Additionally, the sub possesses a sixteen-tube VLS cluster capable of launching long-range cruise missiles or Kingfisher SSAMs.

USS New Hampshire-class Attack Submarine

Handling: 4
Speed: 50 (35)
Acceleration: 2
Hull: 5
Bulwark: 9
Signature: 8/8
Autonav: 4
Sensor: 7
Sonar: 9
Cost: 800M¥

Accommodation: 105
Entry Points: 1 hatch + 1 emergency hatch
Depth: 750 meters
Cargo: 600 CF
Load: 75,000 kg
Fuel: Nuclear
Economy: Effectively infinite
Other Features: Electrolytic oxygen generator, Enviroseal (water and engine), living amenities (Basic), 4 torpedo tubes, vertical launch system (16 tubes).

SHIP WEAPONS

Because antiship weapons now use the Extended Range Missile rules on page 89 of the **Rigger 2** sourcebook, their ratings are presented differently from those of standard missiles. In addition to the standard ratings of Damage, Weight, Intelligence and Cost, antiship missiles also have the following Vehicle Ratings: Handling, Speed (which is fixed), Body (but not Armor, which would defeat the purpose of a missile) and Signature. They also have a Range Rating, which indicates the maximum distance the missile can cover in its flight.

Ship weapons have no Availability or Street Index ratings; these are left up to the gamemaster's discretion.

SS-N-49 "SIROCCO" ANTISHIP MISSILE

The Russian SS-N-49 Sirocco is an antiship missile sold widely throughout the world. Though the design is more than fifteen years old, it follows in the footsteps of its effective and fearsome Soviet/Russian predecessors.

SS-N-49 "Sirocco"

Handling: 4
Speed: 800
Range: 350 km
Body: 3
Signature: 5
Intelligence: 3
Damage: 20SN
Weight: 750 kg
Cost: 600,000¥

UGM-188 SEA SABER ANTISHIP MISSILE

The UGM-188 Sea Saber is the North American counterpart of the Sirocco. Produced originally for the UCAS Navy, it is also commonly used by the Confederate Navy and the British Royal Navy. Though it offers a shorter range than the Sirocco, it makes up for that potential lack in speed, smarts and by packing a bigger punch.

UGM-188 Sea Saber

Handling: 3
Speed: 1,000
Range: 250 km
Body: 4
Signature: 5
Intelligence: 4
Damage: 24DN
Weight: 900 kg
Cost: 750,000¥

JAVELOT AERIAL DEFENSE MISSILE

The French-produced Javelot ship missile is commonly used for long-range air defense against aircraft, antiship missiles and cruise missiles.

Game Effects

The Javelot may also be used to attack surface ships as well as aircraft. Against surface ships, it has a damage code of 8MN.

Javelot

Handling: 3
Speed: 1,100
Range: 120 km
Body: 3
Signature: 5
Intelligence: 4
Damage: 18D
Weight: 495 kg
Cost: 425,000¥

AN/EDQ-12 AIR DEFENSE NAVAL DIRECTED ENERGY WEAPONS SYSTEM (ANDREWS)

The AN/EDQ-12 Air Defense Naval Directed Energy Weapons System (nicknamed ANDREWS) is an energy weapon designed to protect a warship against incoming missiles. ANDREWS uses a particle beam to discharge megavolts of electron charges at the incoming missile. If ANDREWS scores a hit, the

discharge either fries the control circuits, causing the missile to fall off target, or detonates the missile in mid-flight. Either is equally likely to happen, at the gamemaster's discretion. If the missile flies off target, the gamemaster may wish to use the Area-Effect Scatter rules (p. 60, **Rigger 2**) for added realism.

ANDREWS may also be used to attack aircraft. Due to the system's massive power requirements, it may only be installed on ships powered by nuclear plants.

Game Effects

The ANDREWS system operates similarly to a laser weapon, such as the Ares Firelance vehicle laser. Reduce its Power by -2 at medium range, -4 at long range and -6 at extreme range. ANDREWS is considered an antivehicle weapon, so vehicles do not automatically stage down the Damage Level. Also, only half the vehicle's Armor Rating, rounded down, reduces the Power of the attack.

The Ammo Rating for the ANDREWS lists the number of shots it can fire before recharging. It takes 10 minutes to fully recharge the weapon. However, if the weapon is inactive between uses, it can recharge shots in the interim at a rate of one shot per four Combat Turns. The weapon must be inactive during all four turns to recharge one shot; if it is fired within three or fewer Combat Turns, accumulated recharge time is wasted.

If a rigger is jacked into or directly controlling a vehicle or missile when it is struck by an ANDREWS particle beam, he or she takes Physical damage from the ASIST backlash surge. See the Loral-Vought "Zapper" Static Discharge Rockets, p. 94, **Rigger 2**, for more information on this type of ASIST backlash.

The ANDREWS particle beam may be used to attack surface ships as well as aircraft and missiles. Against other ships, it has a Damage Code of 9LN.

ANDREWS must be installed in a medium or larger remote turret to function correctly.

ANDREWS

Type: L-ATGM
Concealability: NA
Ammo: 50
Mode: SA/BF
Damage: 20D
Weight: 1,200
Cost: 600,000¥

NAVAL GUNS

Though antiship missiles dominate most naval battles, ordinary naval guns and cannons still see extensive service in the 2050s. Usually they act as a backup weapon against targets too small to engage with antiship missiles. They can also be effective against ships, though their short range limits them to hitting ships that lack antiship missiles.

Thanks to advances in automation and electronic controls, most naval guns are remotely operated and possess autoloaders, eliminating the need for gun crews and making gun turrets smaller and lighter. Light naval guns are also capable of limited semi-automatic fire.

Naval guns fire high-explosive shells that do area-effect or ship damage. Naval guns currently come in two sizes: small and medium. Small naval guns are normally mounted on frigates, corvettes and some heavier coastal patrol craft. Medium naval guns are usually mounted on destroyers, cruisers and warships.

Game Effects

Naval guns have two Damage Codes, one for normal damage and one for ship damage. Naval-gun shells fired at normal targets do explosive damage and follow either the Manual Gunnery Rules or Indirect Fire Rules, whichever is appropriate (see p. 56, **Rigger 2**). The Power Level reduction for naval-gun shells is -1 for every 2 meters that the shell travels.

For purposes of determining turret space, light naval guns have a Weapon Value of 7; medium naval guns have a Weapon Value of 10 (see p. 135, **Rigger 2**).

	Light Naval Gun	Medium Naval Gun
Type:	Special (see below)	Special (see below)
Concealability:	NA	NA
Ammo:	500	500
Mode:	SA	SS
Damage:	20D/8LN	25D/11MN
Weight:	250	600
Cost:	225,000¥	475,000¥

Ammunition (per 100 shots)

Concealability:	NA	NA
Damage:	As weapon	As weapon
Weight:	2,500	7,500
Cost:	8,000¥	15,000¥

	Short	Range Medium	Long	Extreme
Light Naval Gun	100–2,500 m	2.5–6 km	6–12 km	12–18 km
Medium Naval Gun	100–4,000 m	4–12 km	12–18 km	18–25 km

MK 197 MULTI-ROLE ADVANCED CAPABILITY (MADCAP) TORPEDO

The Mark 197 Multi-role Advanced Capability (MADCAP) torpedo is currently the most widely used torpedo in the world of **Shadowrun**. Capable of traveling at speeds up to 75 knots, standard models contain an active sonar-seeker warhead; however, the MADCAP can be modified to accept passive sonar or thermal homing heads.

In addition to being launched by submarines and surface ships, MADCAPs can also be dropped like bombs from anti-submarine helicopters.

Game Effects

The torpedo activates as soon as it splashes into the water, so its range to the target is measured from the splash point. MADCAPs have a Sonar Rating of 1 for computing the range of active sonar.

MADCAPs are wire-guided weapons, so a rigger on a submarine can control them as long as the cable connecting him to the munitions is not severed. If the cable is severed, the MADCAP's Intelligence Rating kicks in automatically. MADCAPs dropped from anti-submarine helicopters have no wire connections, and so cannot be directly controlled by a rigger.

Mk 197 MADCAP

Handling: 4
Speed: 115
Range: 15 km
Body: 4
Signature: 5/5
Intelligence: 2
Damage: 14DN
Weight: 750 kg
Cost: 350,000¥

RUR-15D ANTI-SUBMARINE ROCKET (ASROC)

The ASROC is a surface anti-submarine weapon, consisting of a MADCAP strapped onto a rocket motor. The rocket launches the torpedo through the air, where it will travel 4 to 16 kilometers. Once the weapon is in the vicinity of its target, the torpedo separates from the rocket body, dives into the water and homes in for the final strike.

Game Effects

The aerial component of the ASROC is an unguided rocket. Therefore, while in flight, the weapon's Intelligence Rating does not apply. Similarly, ASROCs cannot be directly controlled by riggers after launch. ASROCs also cannot be used for blind firing against subs hidden by a thermocline.

RUR-15D ASROC

Handling: 4
Speed: Rocket, 750; Torpedo, 115
Range: Rocket, 16 km; Torpedo, 15 km from splash point
Body: 4
Signature: 5/5
Intelligence: 2
Damage: 14DN
Weight: 2,250 kg (950 kg for torpedo alone)
Cost: 350,000¥

UIM-199 KINGFISHER SUBSURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE (SSAM)

Designed to counter the threat to submarines posed by aircraft equipped with dipping sonar, the Kingfisher allows an underwater sub to destroy any airborne opponent without risking the danger of surfacing. Fired from either a standard torpedo tube or a vertical-launch tube, the missile rises to the surface and then into the air.

Game Effects

In order to launch an SSAM, a submarine must be submerged at a depth of 50 meters or less. Range for the Kingfisher is measured from the point where the Kingfisher surfaces.

A Kingfisher stored in a vertical-launch tube takes up less space than a standard antiship missile. Two Kingfisher missiles may be stored in a single vertical-launch tube.

UIM-199 Kingfisher

Intelligence: 4
Damage: 14D
Weight: 25 kg
Availability: 14/21 days
Cost: 15,000¥
Street Index: NA

	Short	Medium	Long	Extreme
Range	20-100m	101-220m	221-600m	601-2,200m

VEHICLE ACCESSORIES

TORPEDO PROBE

The torpedo probe uses the same body as the Mark 197 but carries a sophisticated sonar array instead of explosives. If it detects other subs, it transmits that information back to the main vessel via an optical cable link. The submarine can then use the data to plan its attack on opposing subs.

A torpedo probe travels at a fixed speed of 150 meters per Combat Turn (approximately 100 knots). An optical cable trailing from it allows it to travel for a maximum of 3 kilometers (total recon time 20 turns, or about 1 minute). The probe can be remotely controlled from the sub, via a joystick or through a rigger link if the sub has a remote control deck installed as an accessory.

Torpedo Probe

Handling: 4
Speed: 150
Range: 15 km (depth 750 meters)
Body: 4
Signature: 5/3
Intelligence: 2
Damage: None
Sonar: 4
Weight: 950 kg
Cost: 150,000¥

NOISEMAKER

A noisemaker is a perforated canister, approximately one meter long and half a meter wide, filled with assorted chemicals. When released into the water, the chemicals react to create a frothing mass of gas bubbles. This bubble mass confuses sonar and torpedoes, making it harder to target the submarine possessing the noisemaker.

Whenever a submarine releases a noisemaker, other craft must add a +3 modifier to all target numbers for tests made to detect or target the sub for the duration of that Combat Turn and the next two turns (ten seconds total).

Weight	Cost	Availability	Street Index
75 kg	500¥	6/48 hours	4.5



DECOY

A decoy consists of a torpedo body that contains a sophisticated sound system instead of an explosive warhead. When launched from a torpedo tube, the decoy generates noise that imitates a submarine in motion, misleading enemy torpedoes into striking the decoy instead of the submarine.

Whenever a decoy is deployed, torpedoes fired at the sub deploying the decoy must make an Intelligence (6) Test. If the test is successful, the torpedo remains locked on the target sub and may still strike it. If the test fails, the torpedo cannot tell the difference between the sub and the decoy and will strike the decoy.

Decoy

Handling: 4
Speed: 150
Range: 15 km (depth 750 meters)
Body: 4
Signature: 5/3
Intelligence: 2
Damage: NA
Sonar: 4
Weight: 950 kg
Cost: 150,000¥

INDEX

- A**
Abat, 149
Africa
Awakening in, 93-95
borders in, 99-103
history of, 90-96
magic in, 96-99
piracy in
cashing in, 107-9
getting work, 103-4
modus operandi, 103-7
money as lure, 88, 90
players in Africa, 109-16
VITAS, 92-93
Air embolism, 158
Alufye, 154
Amalanhig, 149
Amazonia, 32, 77, 124
Ancestor magic, 152
Ancestor spirits, 96-98, 152
Anwuma bavole, 154
Anyi Territory, 102-3, 109-10
Arctic, 6, 120
Ares Macrotechnology, 6, 72, 103-4, 110
Asamando, 6, 101-2, 110-11
Asante Nation, 88, 93, 95-96, 99-100, 104-6, 111
Asonwu, 154
Astral forms/space, 21, 162
Aswang, 149
Athabaskan Council, 120
Australia, 120-21
Azania, 109, 123
Aztechnology, 33, 54, 72, 111
Aztlán, 6, 29, 30, 32, 8-9, 44, 45, 77
- B**
Bahamas, 27
Barbin, Pierre "Le Prof.," 36, 38, 50-51
Bat (Asenna), 153
Baule Empire, 102-3
Bermuda, 6, 41-42
Bermuda Triangle, 146
Bonzo, 154
Borinquen, 39, 46
Boroka, 149
Breathing helmet, enclosed, 174
Briones, Saloman, 80
Busaw, 149
Buwaya, 149
- C**
Cape Republic, 123
Caribbean League, 6, 8, 24, 26, 29, 145-47
Bermuda, 41-42
Borinquen, 39
Cuba and, 33-35
Dominican Territories, 38-39
Haiti, 36-38
introduction to, 24
island grabs, 28-29
Jamaica, 39-40
marketing goods, 43-45
Miami and, 29-30
pirating in, 31-33
modus operandi, 42-43
reputation, 32-33
style, 30-43
players, 45-53
private islands, 40
South Florida, 35-36
VITAS and, 26-27
Voodoo Wars, 146
CAS, 6, 20-21, 23, 30, 32, 44
Cavitation, 162-63, 169
Character creation
edges and flaws, 142-44
gear availability, 142
skills, 144-45
Cheetah (Osebo), 153
Chocolaté, 48-49
Chupacabras, 147
Church of the Whole Earth, 111-12
Cobra (Owoh), 153
Colt water carbine, 171
Combat
ship, 164-65
spells, 160-61
surface to surface, 160
surface to underwater, 160
underwater, 160
underwater vehicle, 169-70
Conjuring, 161
Crews, ship, 163-64
Crocodile (Nau), 153
Crunch Time, 46
Cuba, 27, 28-29, 33-35, 46-47
Cyberfins, 174
Cyberpirate
attitude of, 12
composition of, 12-13
supply and demand for, 13-14
types of, 14-17
Cyberware, 16, 174-75
- D**
Dove (Danwane), 153
DeBeers-Omnitech, 112
Decking and pirates, 16, 145
Decompression sickness, 158
Deep water diving, 157
De Mon's Black Light Posse, 47
Depth, 167
Detection spells, 161
Diving, 144, 156-59
armor, 173
ascent and descent, 157
equipment, 172-74
exoskeleton, 173
hazards, 158-59
movement, 158
perceptions under water, 159-60
time, 157
Dominican Republic Territories, 38-39, 48-49
Dragging, 162
Drones, underwater, 169
Drowning, 162
Drysuit, 172-73
Dunkelzahn, 23, 28, 71, 78
- E**
Ear squeeze, 157-58
Ekyelebenle, 154
Elementals, 161
Enwontzane, 155
Esfinge, 48
Estomagos Sanguenos, 14
- Etiquette (Maritime), 144
Explosions, underwater, 160
- F**
Face mask, full, 173
Fanti Pirates, 88, 112-13
Fanti Territories, 100, 104
Fetish, 146
Final Message, 113
Floating, 157
Ford, David Lloyd, 49
Francisca, Maria, 39, 46
Fuchi Corp, 66-68, 71, 74
Fukatsu Saru, 64-65, 67, 81-83
- G**
Gagon, 154
Gambione Family, 35, 36
Gamemastering
competition, 140-41
freedom fighters, 147-488
pirates, 140
Ghana, 91-92
Gingerbread Gang, 49-50
Gingerbread Man, 30, 42, 43, 87, 88
Gold Coast history, 90-96
Gomatia, 155
Guiding Hand, 113
Gunderson Corporation, 35, 50
Gunners, 164, 181
Gyrojet pistol, 172
- H**
Haiti, 6, 26, 27, 36-38, 50-51
Hapon, 62-63, 74
Harpoon gun, 171-72
Haunted forest, 128-35
Health spells, 161
Hearing, underwater, 160
Helium chills, 159
High pressure nervous syndrome (HPNS), 159
Hook hands, 174-75
Huk, 57-58, 147-48
Anti-Corp Faction, 79
Environmentalist Faction, 79-80
factions of, 58, 78-81
independent pirates, 81
joining, 59
Masaru, 78-79
Metahuman Rights Faction, 80
Philippine Nation Party, 79
selling to, 75-77
Terrorist Faction, 80-81
Hyena (Agwengwere), 152-53
- I**
Ichiwa-Kai, 83-84
Illuminates of the New Dawn, 113-14
Illusion spells, 161
Imperial Marines, 74, 82-83
Ink grenade, 172
Interpol, 51
Ivory Coast history, 90-96
- J**
Jackal (Sase), 154
Jamaica, 26, 39-40
Japan, 6, 13, 56-57, 72
Japanese Imperial Forces, 81-83

- JHJH, Caribbean Division, 51-52
JIM suit, 173
- K**
- Karma awards, 141
 - Keel-hauling, 162
 - Keruba Corporation, 91
 - King cobra, 149-50
 - Kingston Machine Posse, 52
 - Kiwigs, 150
 - Knight Errant, 22, 44
 - Knots, 162
- L**
- Lami Look Pagkaon, 84
 - Las Desharrapadas, 47-48
 - Leopard (Awoba), 153
 - Liquid breathing apparatus, 173-74
 - Long-haul piracy, 6, 44, 117-18, 120
 - Arctic, 120
 - Australia, 120-21
 - Madagascar, 124-35
 - Mediterranean, 121-22
 - Southeast Asia, 122-23
 - Southern Africa, 123-24
- M**
- Madagascar, 6, 124-25
 - haunted forest, 128-35
 - pirate haven, 125-28
 - Mafia, 22, 106
 - Magic
 - in Africa, 96-99, 151-54
 - in Caribbean, 146-47
 - elementals, 161
 - haunted forest, 128-35
 - market for, 109
 - nature spirits, 161
 - in Philippines, 148-49
 - underwater, 160-61
 - Malakat, 149
 - Mami wata, 155
 - Mangkalok, 149
 - Manipulation spells, 161
 - Mansayagan, Edtami, 79-80
 - Markets
 - Coastal Africa, 108-9
 - foreign, 77
 - Huk, 76-77
 - for magic, 109
 - Marquez, Armando, 52-53
 - Martinez, Enrique (Pretty Boy), 33-35, 39, 46-47
 - Masaru, 56, 58, 73, 78-79, 81, 87-88, 148
 - Mediterranean, 121-22
 - Melee combat, 160
 - Metahumans, 38, 64-65, 152
 - Miami, 29-30, 36, 44
 - Mishina Daini, 82-83
 - Missile defense, 165-66
 - Mitsuhama Computer Technologies
 - factories, 69-70
 - military landlords, 68-69
 - Parashield, 70
 - Philippines, 84-85
 - Money, pirates and, 141-42
 - Montalban, Paolo, 79
 - Montenegro, Geraldo, 48
- N**
- Natural Vat Technologies, Inc., 52-53
 - Nature spirits, 161
 - Nautical miles, 162
 - Naval guns, 180-81
 - Network, 76-77
 - New Orleans, 44
 - New Republic of Cuba, 46-47
 - Nitrogen monitor, 174
 - Nitrogen narcosis, 159
 - Novilunio, 22, 28, 53
- O**
- Obeah adepts, 146
 - Ocampo, Julian, 79
 - Ocean piracy, 106-7
 - Oranje-Vrystaat, 123
 - Oxsys artificial gill, 173
 - Oxsys cybergill, 174
 - Oxygen toxicity, 158
- P**
- Paranimals, 98-99, 147, 149-50, 154-55
 - Parrot (Wurega), 155
 - Peg legs, 174
 - Periscope depth, 167
 - Philippine Nation Party, 79
 - Philippines
 - as police state, 65-66
 - Broadcasting Network, 85-86
 - Fukatsu's appointment and, 64
 - Hapon, 62-63
 - history of, 61-62
 - Huk, 57-58, 59
 - infighting, 60-61
 - joining, 56-61
 - training, 60
 - traitors, spies, 60-61
 - imbalance of power, 62-64
 - Japanese corporations in, 66-68
 - Masaru, 56
 - piracy in, 147-50
 - modus operandi, 72-74
 - Network and, 58
 - players in, 77-86
 - raids, corporate, 74-75
 - targets of, 68-72
 - Phoenix Biotechnologies, 114-15
 - Prices, 136-38
 - Puerto Rico, 33, 39
 - Pugot, 149
 - Python (Onini), 153
- R**
- Raids
 - buyers and payment, 19-20
 - corporate, 74-75
 - getting away with it, 22
 - hideouts and harbors, 19
 - hostages and, 22
 - tactics, 17-19
 - Renraku Corporation, 71, 74, 85
 - Reticulated pythons, 150
 - Riggers and pirates, 15-16
 - Rim country marketing, 44-45
 - River piracy, 104-6
 - Rockets, 179-82
 - Running aground, 165
 - Ryumyo, 148
- S**
- Saeder-Krupp, 72, 88, 115, 118
 - Sasabonsam, 155
 - Schistosomiasis, 151
 - Scuba diving, 156-57
 - Scuba tank
 - dual manifold assembly, 173
 - explosion of, 162
 - Security, beating, 73-74
 - Sekondi, 100-101, 115-16
 - Sensors, 168-69
 - Shallow water diving, 156
 - Shamans, 16-17, 96-98, 148
 - Shiawase, 86, 91
 - Envirotech, 70-71
 - Shibata Construction and Engineering, 86
 - Ship, 177-78
 - attributes, 162-63
 - combat, 164-65
 - damage, 16-67
 - designations, 145
 - operations, 163-64
 - repair, 167
 - sensors, 163
 - sinking, 167
 - skill, 144
 - taking on water, 167
 - weapons, 165-66
 - Simpao, Clarita, 80-81
 - Sinking, 167
 - Slavery, 107-8
 - Sling launcher, 171
 - Smuggling routes, 44
 - Sonar, 168-69
 - Sorcery, 160-61
 - Speargun, 171
 - Spider (Anansi), 153
 - Submarine skill, 145
 - Sumiyoshi-Kai, 83
 - Swimming, 155-56
 - Syndicate-sponsored pirates, 14
- T**
- Taiwan, 77
 - Tan Tien, Inc., 116
 - Terrain, 164, 168
 - Thermoclines, 169
 - Torpedoes, 171, 182
 - Totems, 152-54
 - Trans-Swazi Federation, 123
 - Treading water, 156
 - Trinidad, 27
- U**
- UCAS, 9, 32, 41
 - Underwater combat, 144
 - escape, evasion, 17
 - operations, 169-70
- V-W**
- Vehicles, 175-82
 - accessories, 182
 - licensing, 72
 - mask, 17
 - Vision, underwater, 159
 - VITAS (Virally Induced Toxic Allergy Syndrome), 26-28, 92-93, 94, 102, 104, 125, 128
 - Voice of Ogoun, 53
 - Volta Wars, 91-92
 - Voodoo Wars, 146
 - Warek (leopard shapeshifter), 155
- Y-Z**
- Yakushima, Africa, 88, 116
 - Yakuza, 147-48
 - operations, 83-84
 - Yamatetsu subsidiaries, 71-72
 - Zulu Nation, 123

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